C omhardadh cionnas is cóir⁴ represents the second in a series of technical poems being edited for the first time from the fourteenth-century manuscript NLI G 3 (ff. 76vb1-77vb5). It gives an account of the rules of rhyme in terms of consonant classes and vowels. The technical terms used (cláenaidh, brisiudh) indicate that the author is concerned with the metrical faults known as cláen comharduidh and brisiudh/brúilingeacht, which are dealt with in IGT V (§§2, 4, 5). Three faults arise when rhyming consonants are not of the same quality or of the same class respectively. The metrical ornament known as consonance (uaitne) is also mentioned and the piece is accordingly concerned with a further fault, termed in IGT V (§3) cláen uaitne, occurring where the quality of the final consonant or consonants in consonating end-words is not identical. Additional items of terminology employed include: (1) the phrases téid i n-isle/ji n-aíre (lit. goes downwards/upwards) which advert to palatal and velar vowels (14d, 15ab) as do the adjectives iseall ‘low’ (17b, 19f) and, probably also, comhard ‘equally high’ (13d, 20d). This is a usage which I have not encountered elsewhere; (2) the adjective teann ‘strong’ in the sense ‘unlenited’ (4c and n., 6b) and not restricted in use to the fortis consonants (class II). Further instances of this usage are attested in IGT V and the poem discussed in the next paragraph. See also notes on the terms snaidhm gaidhilge agus a glas (1c), coll comhlán (6b), ruis rogharbh (7b), comthrom (7d), coimthteann (7d), séimhidhe (8a),

1 I am grateful to Professor Pádraig A. Breathnach and an anonymous reader for comments on this article.

2 For the first in the series, including an account of the manuscript and conventions followed in the transcription, see Ó Riain (2008a); here the end of a line in the manuscript is indicated by ‘/’. A copy of the present poem in TCD H 1.15 (1289) 623-4 has no independent value. Verse 4 was published with translation in O Cuív (1983a) 10; vv. 14-19 were printed without translation, but with some suggested emendations, in Armstrong (1981) 708 n. 7. The piece has also been transcribed in McManus and Ó Raghallaigh (2010) no. 113 where the following misreadings occur: dho for i in[am?], [Da?]’ for Trí (11a), ‘e’ for ‘.c.’ (11c), mad for ínad (13d), ‘C.’ omitted (13d), inlan for imlan (15b), Iifin for inífín (16e), emancholl for hemancholl (19f); 16a-d appear in the following form owing to misplacement of a run-on (n. k in transcription below): ‘Ailm. fen onn. ebbadh leo/ůillin[n] [sic] on fín nemeo/ebad ea is ífín /u/ [aen?/tein?’; letters which are presented in square brackets and, in all but one instance, are accompanied by a question mark at 2b, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5b, 10c, 16d are fully legible in the manuscript; in addition, lenition marks are either added or not reproduced at 1b, 3d, 6c, 9d, 12a.

3 The verb brisiudh (1d, 2c) appears to be used in the sense of causing imperfect rhyme by not employing corresponding consonant classes and is accordingly equivalent to the term comhardadh briste used in GGBM 2587-91, 3574-81. However, in IGT V the term brisiudh is specifically concerned with a single consonant rhyming with a consonant cluster, whereas imperfect rhyme is denoted by the term brúilingeacht. Forms of briseadh appear to be used in both senses in the poem beginning Feedha an oghaim aithnidh damh, see Breathnach 1941, 37 q. 2c and 46 q. 50.

4 Elsewhere the adjectives iseal and ard are applied to plurals of nouns ending in a vowel which may either be identical to the nom. sing. (iseal), e.g. bogha dhearga ‘red bows’, or take dental inflection (ard), e.g. boghadha dearg, see IGT I §§18, 84 and GGBM 834-53.
Comhardadh cionnas is cóir may be compared to a longer composition on rhyme beginning Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh which was edited by R. A. Breatnach in Éigse 3 and which is found only in late copies (RIA 23 N 12 (488), 108-12; Maynooth M 49, 192-7). An attribution is lacking in the older copy, 23 N 12, but in M 49 the poem is attributed, perhaps questionably, to ‘Gofradh Fionn Mac an Bháird’. The initial section of that poem (qq. 3-7) treats of the same subject as verses 4-12 of Comhardadh cionnas is cóir and in both the consonants are listed according to their classes. None of this finds mention in Comhardadh cionnas is cóir, the remainder of which deals with consonant clusters and the effects of adjacent consonants on one another. None of this finds mention in Comhardadh cionnas is cóir, the remainder of which is instead concerned with vowels. Comhardadh cionnas is cóir has, in fact, fared unfavourably in a comparison between it and Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh made by Brian Ó Cuív who criticised it for being superficial. It may be presumed that both poems were composed with a pedagogical purpose in mind. However, we cannot know what stage of instruction the intended recipient of our poem had attained to and the ‘superficial’ nature of the piece, if it is to be regarded as such, may therefore have been intentional.

Comhardadh cionnas is cóir concludes with an internal attribution to Tadhg Ó hUiginn (v. 20). Since the manuscript was penned in the first half of the fourteenth century, he may be identified as one or other of two poets of that name with an obit in the fourteenth century. The first died in 1315 and is described in the Annals of Connacht as ‘a general master of all arts connected with poetry’ (sai chotchend cech cerdi da mbenand re filidecht). He may be taken to be one and the same as Tadhg Móir Ó hUiginn, author of two poems on Brian Mágc Shaimhradháin (d. 1298) and one each in praise of

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5 Ed. Breatnach (1941); cf. also a copy in RIA 12 O 7 (1258), 23-6 (John O’Daly). The copy in Maynooth M 49 was not known to the editor. RIA 23 N 12 was written by Mícheál (mac Peadair) Ó Longáin around 1763 and Maynooth M 49 was written primarily by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin between 1818 and 1820, RIA Cat. Fasc. 11, 1313-19 and Ó Fiannachta (1965) 95-7. Note that 23 N 12 was ‘in Mícheál Óg’s possession at least as late as 1817’ (RIA Cat. 1314) and contains a note by him dated to 1833.

6 Other ascriptions to a Gofraidh Fionn Mac an Bhaird will be found in: (1) RIA 3 B 9 (73), 273 (Diombráidh triall á thuilchaibh Fáil, ed. Murphy 1948, 11-13), (2) RIA F VI 2 (253), 208 (Éisdídh, a éigse Bhumhna, re húmráidh na healadhna, Ó Raghallachaigh 1938, 12-19) and (3) NLI G 127 (Richard Tipper), 316 (Fán raith imrid aicme Ir, cf. also RIA 23 Q 1 (570) (Edward O’Reilly). (1) and (2) were penned by Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin and these poems are attributed to different authors in other MSS (see Murphy, 10 and RIA Cat. Index Vol. I, 230 and 262); (3) is given to Gofraidh Mac an Bhaird in RIA E IV 3 (11), 59 and Gofraidh mac Briain Meic an Bhaird in Stonyhurst A ii 20 (Vol. II), 89; cf. AithD. Vol. I p. xxix.

7 Although vowels are not discussed in Feadha an oghaim aithnidh damh, the term claoin [sic] is mentioned in the final quatrain: Gibé do leangadh air sin, a gelcain (claim MS) is a mbrisde i ndhuanaibh, tearn donach’ chobhair cheann’sa leath-so ghabhaid feadha. ‘Whoever would pursue that [enquiry], the incorrectness and breaking of rhymes in poems, few there are who would not be helped . . .’ (Breatnach 1941, 47 q. 53).

8 Ó Cuív (1983a) 10.

9 AC s.a. 1315.22.
Fionnghuala inghean Í Chonchobhair (d. 1310) and Maghnas Ó Conchobhair (d. 1293); the latter piece is quoted from in IGT V. The alternative is Tadhg (mac Giolla Choluim) Ó hUiginn, ‘a worthy ollav and a charitable’ (ollam dingbala re dan γ re daenmacht), who passed away in 1391 and is possibly to be identified as the author of a eulogy in honour of Niall Máig Shamhradháin (d. 1362) beginning Fadógh ar griásaigh gnaoi Néill. The present piece ranks, therefore, among the earliest datable grammatical material from the classical period and reveals an early involvement of the Ó hUiginn family with such material.

The metre is ógláchas of deibhidhe with perfect end-rhyme throughout. Fifteen couplets are of the type known as deibide nguillnech where end-rhyme is between words of the same syllabic length (3ab, 5ab, 9ab, 10ab, 11ab, 12ab, 13ab, 14ab, 15cd, 16abef, 17ab, 18ab, 19ab, 20ab). In two couplets (4cd, 10cd) the final word in the second line is more than one syllable longer than that in the first. Alliteration occurs in all but four lines (3c, 8d, 9c, 20a). In-ternal rhyme occurs in 14cd; other instances, all but two in opening couplets, may be considered incidental, arising from repetition of the same word (5ab, 7ab, 14ab, 15ab, 16ab, cd, 17cd, 18cd). Imperfect rhymes occur in 8cd, 11cd, 12cd, 13cd and assonance in 5cd, 6cd and 7cd. Two verses (16, 18) consist of eight and six lines respectively; while v. 16 might have been divided into two quatrains, it is not so divided in the MS and this arrangement has not been altered.

The structure of the poem is most interesting in that it has been divided into two separate sections by means of a dúnadh, the first dealing with consonant classes, the second with vowels and diphthongs. The introductory verses (1-3) anticipate the second section, showing that this division is authorial and both the first and second dúnadh are indicated in the MS. The order in which the sections are presented, first the consonants, second the vowels, agrees with that suggested by line 1d (créad bhriseas nó créad chláenas), where bhriseas has reference to consonant groups and chláenas to consonant quality as indicated

10 Mag. no. 2 and 4 (beg. D’uisliabh taoiseach Banbha Brian and A fhír támig re tásig mBriain); DDána no. 114 and 98 (beg. Slán fat fhocladh and Gach éan mar a dhadh). On the identity of the author see TD II 320-1 and Simms (1998) 246. For the quotation see Ó Riain (2008b). Simms (2010) 197 suggests that he may also be the author of the poem beginning Bean ós mhnaíbh cáich Cailleach Dé (AithdD. no. 1). The poem An deimhin a-nos teacht don tairngire? for Tadhg Ó Conchobhair (d. 1374) (AithdD. no. 4) is attributed to ‘Tadhg Mór’ in IGT II 1163 and ‘Ó hUiginn’ in UCD-OFM A 32, f. 1r, but is given to Seáin Mór Ó Clunháin and Tadhg Mór Ó Coubthaigh in RIA A IV 3 (743) and RIA 23 H 8 (703) respectively.


12 In 10c alliteration between fhiodh and fhicidh does not conform to the rule that the penultimate word in a line must alliterate, for which see Mágh Craith (1969). Alliteration may be taken to be between g and radical ng in 11d, see Ó Riain (2008a) 36 n 9.

13 The rhyming of a word with itself was, of course, regarded as a fault; see IGT V §8.


15 For other instances of poems arguably divided into sections by a dúnadh see: Madh fiafraidh-each budh feasach, McKenna (1947) 69 q. 28; Gach éan mar a adhhiba, DDána no. 98 v. 9; Eire trom trillse Saidhbhhe, Mag. no. 16; Créchtach sin clann chais Chormaic, O’Grady (1929) 123 v. 37; Fada mé ar mearrugheadh sligheadh, Ó Cuív (1950) 286 l. 24.
by the accompanying vowel. It will be noted, however, that this order is reversed in v. 2 in an instance of chiasmus. The reversed order is reflected in the mention of vowels in v. 3, followed by the section dealing with the consonants (4-12). In the second section, the vowels are listed according to whether or not they are non-palatal (16) or palatal (17-18). The presentation of them represents an instance of double chiasmus in that non-palatal and palatal vowels are mentioned in that order in 14d and 15cd, but in the reverse order in 15ab.

A critical edition, transcription of the MS text, translation, notes and an appendix are presented below. In the normalised text the spelling ao has not been adopted for reasons which will be apparent from the discussion of graphs beginning with a in the appendix. Vowels in certain unstressed words have not been altered (see 3c n.).

**EDITION**

1. Comhardadh cionnas is cóir?
   ceisd is fhíarfaighthe d’oghmóir;
   snaidhm gádhhilge agus a glas
   créad bhriseas nó créad chláenas.

2. Guthaighe chláenas go cóir
   an comhardadh i gcéadóir;
   bristear aghaidh i n-aghaidh
   comhardadh ag consanaibh.

3. Áenghuthaighe is í fa dhó
   is amhlaidh is dligheadh dó,
   bidh cláen ach[t] mineb eadh raibh
   a dhó aghaidh i n-aghaidh.

1. ‘How is rhyme correctly made?’ is a question which should be asked of a scholar, what causes the binding of pronunciation and its clasp to be imperfect and what causes it to be incorrect?

2. Fittingly vowels make rhyme incorrect at once; consonants corresponding to one another make rhyme imperfect.

3. The same vowel occurring twice, thus is it (sc. rhyme) proper, it will be incorrect unless there are two (sc. identical vowels) as counterparts.

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1. Comardudh cindas is// cóir
   cesd asfhíarfaigh//thi dogmhoir
   snaidhm// gádhhilgi agus a glas
   craed// bhriseas nocraed claeenas/

2. Guthaichi chláenas go// cóir
   incomardudh .a.c.oír//
   bristear agaidh inaghaidh/
   comardudh agconsanaibh/

3. Áenguthaighi isi fadho//
   isamlaidh isdlifeadh dhó//
   bidh clæn ach mine beadh// raibh
   adho aghaidh inaghaid
4. Innéasad romham im ro[nn]
riaghail consaineadh gcomhthrom:
beithe teann, duir theann, gort glan,
triár ón comhthrom comhardadh.

5. Fearn, tinne go n-uath mar áen,
coll go n-uath an treas re [a] dtáebh;
ní uil ag soil ach[t] sf féin
do chomhardadh fá choimhréim.

6. Triúr ag beithe bhogtha bhán
tinne theann is coll comhlán,
trí feedha nach fríoth go sé
gan bheith comhthrom re [a] chéile.

7. Muin teann, nion teann, — ní treóir bhalbh —
luis teann, ngéadar, ruis rogharbh,
cúig consaine ceann i gceann
i[n] neoch is comhthrom coimhtheann.

4. I will relate below in my quatrain a rule of matching consonants: unlenited $b$, unlenited $d$, clear $g$ are three owing to which rhyme is balanced.

5. $F$ [and] lenited $t$ together, lenited $c$ is the third one along with them; $s$ has only itself to rhyme with as an equal (lit. in the same course).

6. Bright $p$, unlenited $t$ and complete $c$ have three, three letters which have not as yet been found not to correspond to one another.

7. Unlenited $m$, $nn$ – it is no unarticulated guidance – $ll$, $ng$, $rr$: five consonants together which are matching [and] equally strong.

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4. Innésaid romom imro. .../
"riaghail com$a" //sainead comrom
 .b.teand// .d.teand .g.glan
 triar// oncomrom comardad/]

5. .F.ti$ndi$ gon.h. maraen//
 .c.gon.h. intreas retaeb//
ní uíl agsoil ach si fén//
do comardudh$^b$ facomrem//
[77ra]

6. Triur ig.p.bhan
 .t.teand// iscoll comhlan
tri feedh//a nacfrith gose
gan// beth comthrom recele//

7. .M.teand .n.teann. ní// treoir bhalbh
 .ll.ng.t.// rogharbh
 .u.consaïne ceann// iceand
 .ineoch iscomrom// combtheand

$^a$ Written at end of preceding line.
$^b$ Hole between $do$ and $comardudh$. 
8. Beithe séimhidhe solas,
nion éadrom gan amharas,
agus luis éadrom eile,
duir go n-uath, muin séimhidhe,

9. gort go n-uath, ruis éadrom án,
imar dearbhthar isa[n] dán,
seacht bhfeadha do réir dhลhghidh
im[th]igheas ar áeинshlighidh.

10. R[e]anna, uaitneadha ána,
comhardaidh dirghе dána,
dá fhiodh ar fhichid díbh s[o]in
do chobhair ar consanaibh.

11. Trí beithe, dá luis, fearn féin,
soil, dá nion, dá dhuir ba-dhéin,
dá thinne, dá choll gan chol,
dá mhuin, dá ghort i[s] ngéadar.

8. Bright lenited b, n without a doubt, and another l, lenited d, lenited m,

9. lenited g, bright r, as is confirmed in poetry, seven letters according to custom
which travel on the same course.

10. Деихиддhe rhymes, bright consonances, strict fully-stressed rhymes, twenty-two
letters of those assist consonants.

11. Three b’s, two l’s, f itself, s, two n’s, two d’s themselves, two r’s, two c’s without
violation, two m’s, two g’s and ng.

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8. .B.semídhi solus
 .n.e/ф drom gan/ amphiθorus
 .agus.f edrom eli/
 .dh.m.tsemedhe

9. .G.gu.n.h.re.drom an/
  εima/ dearbhthar isadan
  seach/ feadha dorer dhλhghidh/
  imicθias araensλghid/

10. Randa uaitneada/ ana
 comhardaidh dir/ghi dana
 dhλhghidh ar .x.x/ dibh sin
docobhair arcon/sanaib

11. <Tri>.b. da.l.f.fen
 soil da/ l.n.da.d.ba/1/[77rb] dhen
da.t.da.c.gan// col
damhuin.da.g.ang//edor

Written at end of preceding line.
agus appears to have been added after l.
Written at end of preceding line.
Written at end of preceding line.
12. Two r's as poets say, according to poetry and custom, [this is] the number of correct consonants, all that represents their course.

13. Whoever will not understand this ample lay will not discover correctly how poetry is pure [or] rough or a balanced, matching position.

14. How is correspondence correctly achieved, how is it made incorrect in turn, it makes only two movements: upwards (velarisation) and downwards (palatalisation).

15. Bright i causes palatalisation (lit. goes downwards), full a causes velarisation (lit. goes upwards), that is twenty-two places without disgrace with a and with that i.

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12. Da.r.maraidh filid//
   edorerdhna// agus dligidh
   uimhir na gconsaineadh gceart
   is é sein uile a n-imdheacht.

13. Gebe nach tuigfe an laidh lóir
    nocha[n] fhionnn[fa] ceart nó cóir
    cionnas bhios éigse glan garg
    ná ionad comhthrom comhard. .C.

14. Cionnas is cóir cur fá seach,
    cionnas cláentar leath ar leath,
    ní bhí ach[t] dá char ’gá gcur dhé:
    dul i n-airde ’s i n-ísle.

15. I n-ísle théid iodhadh án,
    i n-airde téid ailm iomlán,
    dá phort ar fhichid gan oil
    go n-ailm is go n-iodhadh soin.

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12. Dá ruis ma[r] ráidhid filidh
    do réir dhána agus dlighidh
    uimhir na gconsaineadh gceart
    is é sein uile a n-imdheacht.

13. Gebé nach tuigfe an laidh lóir
    nocha[n] fhionnn[fa] ceart nó cóir
    cionnas bhios éigse glan garg
    ná ionad comhthrom comhard. .C.

14. Cionnas is cóir cur fá seach,
    cionnas cláentar leath ar leath,
    ní bhí ach[t] dá char ’gá gcur dhé:
    dul i n-airde ’s i n-ísle.

15. I n-ísle théid iodhadh án,
    i n-airde téid ailm iomlán,
    dá phort ar fhichid gan oil
    go n-ailm is go n-iodhadh soin.

---

12. Da.r.maraidh filid//
   קdorerdhna// agus dligidh
   uimhir na gconsaineadh gceart
   is é sein uile a n-imdheacht.

13. Gebe n ach [sic] thuigfe in// קlaidh lo"b
   nocho fhionndh no// coir
   cindas bi eigs glan// garg
   na"nd comntom comard.<C.>://

14. C.indas ascoir cur fa// seach
    cindas claintar leath//arleath
    nibi achdachar ga// cur dhe
    dul anairde san// isle

15. Anislitheh idhadh an
    an//airdi teid ailm in//lan
    dafort arthichead// ganoil
    gonailm isgon// idadh soin

a Written at end of preceding line.
b Written at end of preceding line.
c Written at end of preceding line.
16. Ailm féin, onn, úr, éabhadh .éo.,
   éabhadh .ea., [éabhadh .éu.] leó,
   uilleann ua, ifín [.io.] néimh
   is ifín .iu. fá áeinréim,
   ifín .ia. mar fhuaighid baird,
   eamhancholl .áe. aírd i n-áird;
   a gcur ’ma seach sin mar s[0]ín
   ar áenuaitne déag dealbhthair.

17. Eadhadh, ioddadh ceann i gceann
    agus éabhadh .éo. íseall,
    òir, uilleann .uai. gan fhorlann
    is [uilleann .ui.] i n-áenchonghlann.

18. Ifín .iai., ifín .iúi. ann,
   eamhancholl .[a]e. uaigheas rann,
   [eamhancholl] .á. bun i mbun

16. A itself, o, u, éó, ea, éú along with them, ua, brilliant io and iu on the same
course, ia as bards fashion, áe in line, having them correspond like that causes
eleven instances of consonance to be formed.

17. E, i together with palatal éó, oi, uai without oppression and ui in the same
likeness.

18. Iai, iúi are in it, ae which binds a quatrains, aí side by side, and ai along with it.
19. Cur ’ma seach ar a bhfuil feidhm
áenuaitne déag agá dheilbh:
edhadh, idhadh, éadhadh, óir,
dá uilleann mar nach éagóir,
dá ifín, dá uaitne dhé,
ná trí heamhanchuill ísle.

20. Gebé fhiarfaigheas an duain
ncia ro chum í[s] cia ro fhuaigh,
Ó hUiginn danadh aínn Tadhg
ro chum í go cóir comhard. com.ar.d.u.d.

19. A correspondence which carries out a function, eleven instances of consonance are created: e, i, one trigraph beginning with e, oi, two graphs beginning with u as is not incorrect, two trigraphs beginning with i, two instances of consonance are caused thereby, the three palatal graphs beginning with a.

20. Whoever enquires who has composed and fashioned the poem: Ó hUiginn whose name is Tadhg composed it correctly [and] in balance.

\[m^m\]

1a The initial consonants of all stressed words in this line are unmutated, resulting in an instance of the fault known as droichead uama (for which see GGBM 2859-62 and Ní Dhomhnaill 1972, 266-8). It may be resolved here by reading chóir; for lenition following the rel. of pres. ind. cop., see GGBM 2087-91, BST 199.11, IGT I §§90, 52 and 1b here. However, cóir has been allowed to stand as other instances of the fault occur in this poem (2d, 5d, 9b), and others (see Ní Dhomhnaill loc. cit.), and as examples of non-mutation are found following the rel. of pres. cop. (see Mac Cáthaigh 2002, 106 q. 4a n.). (Ní Dhomhnaill 267 discounts instances such as those at 2d, 5d and 9b, where only two stressed words occur in a line, suggesting that the necessity for alliteration supersedes the fault. This suggestion is without authority, however.)

b oghmóir This term is ‘applied to a person learned in the bardic language and vocabulary’, Ó Cuív (1965) 162.
c snaidhm gaidhilge agus a glas The specific meanings of these terms in the context is not entirely clear. Presumably gaidhealg is used in the sense of ‘pronunciation’ with reference to the phonetic basis of rhyme, cf. Ó Cuív (1965) 150 and IGT I §§3, 54. Snaidhm and glas could then be expected to refer to consonants and vowels, although if so it is not clear which term refers to which. (Compare the use of greim ‘hold’ in gidh lia’s fearr greim guthuidheadh ‘though consonants are the more numerous, vowels have the stronger hold’ McKenna (1947) 70 q. 44d; see also ga lión aicme na trí chonnsuineadh ndég sin iar n-úathadh do ghabháil greamadh dhíobh and Ga háoinfhiodh bog bláthmhar bún, /...ghabhas greim feadha is forba / chonnsuineadh is táobhomna? IGT I §§1, 10).

d bhriseas... chláenais For these technical terms, see Introduction.

nó The conjunction is rendered ‘and’ in the translation as both questions are answered in the course of the poem. For this usage, see DIL N 50.79-51.2.

2a cóir ‘correct, fitting’ is here applied as an intensifier to a statement concerned with a fault. In the context, this may be considered a pun. Compare, perhaps, the following assessment of a bad harper: dao i le’r dearbhadh cóir ‘na locht ‘a fool by whom correctness was declared a fault’ (MD I no. 6 l. 2).

a...i n-aghaidh This expression is used here and in 3d below. The phrase i n-aghaidh is also used of rhyme in passages of IGT V, e.g. Brisde aille agus airne a n-aighid aroile ‘aille and airne as counterparts to one another are imperfect’ (IGT V §4; cf. ibid. §142), and GGBM 2509, 2512, 2606, 2608. For i n-aghaidh in the sense ‘as an offset to, corresponding to’ see DIL s.v. agad III (g).

3 The same teaching is found in IGT V §85: ni [fh]regair guthaichi ar domhun a cheile i comardadh na rind acht a macleithed fen agus freagraid guthaichheadh a cheli i n-uaitne ‘No vowel corresponds in fully-stressed rhyme or deibhidhe rhyme except to its exact equivalent and vowels correspond to each other in consonance’.

a Áenghuthaighe The noun guthaighe is here feminine as indicated by the following pronoun í. The form guthaiga is given as a masc. noun only in DIL as opposed to the fem. form guthaigthe (DIL s.vv. guthaiga, guthaigthe). Perhaps we should read -guthaighthe.

b dó The noun comhardadh is the virtual referent here; virtual subject in 3c.

c...mineb The spelling of the unstressed vowels in these forms of the copula might have been normalised as budh and munab but has not been altered given the early date of the MS and the occurrence of similar spellings elsewhere in the MS, e.g. bidh, mine, dibadh IGT V §§9, 5, 17. Note also the spellings ba-dhéin (MS baðhén) and gebé (MS gebe) at 11b, 13a, 20a below, usually normalised as budhéin and gibé.

acht (MS ach) MS also has the later form ach in 5c, 14c. O’Rahilly (1932) 269 states that the spelling ach ‘but’ is found ‘in Irish MSS. from the fifteenth century’; these examples are, however, earlier.
The pronoun refers proleptically to the proposition in line d. For anticipatory use of the pronoun, see McManus (2000) 87 (23 n.); cf. also DIL E 56.45-53 for anaphoric use.

d a dhó Lenition after the particle a is unusual but occurs elsewhere in this MS, see Ahlqvist (1987) 11. Further examples will be found in a poem from the Book of Lismore in Ó Cuív (1983b) 103 q. 9d and GGBM 2291 (v.l. dó), 2294.

4a Innéasad (MS INnesaíd) A 1 sing. verbal form is clearly required. A similar reading (indesaid) occurs on f. 74r of this MS where a 1 sing. form is also necessary, see Ó Riain 2008a, 39 q. 8b.

c teann This term is most commonly applied to the fortis consonants. Here, however, it refers to unlenited stops and differentiates them from their lenited counterparts, a usage which is also attested in IGT V §142 and Feedha an oghaim aithnidh damh where the term is used alongside equivalent lom, see Breathnach (1941) 50 q. 52a n. and examples at qq. 17a, 25a, 26a, 28a and 29b.

5 The voiceless fricatives are also listed in the same quatrain as s in Feedha an oghaim aithnidh damh, Breathnach (1941) 37 q. 5.

b treas Substantival use of the ordinal numeral is noteworthy.

6b coll comhhlán ‘complete c’ While the adjective comhhlán need not be imbued with any deeper meaning than indicating an unlenited c, it is conceivable that it is used here to exclude the letter known as coll cumaisg ‘mixed c’. This arises when the first element of a compound word ends in sg and the second begins in c as in fleasgorr < fleasg and corr; teaching had it that the g of sg was first devoiced by the following c, only to be voiced again by the s, see IGT I §30 and GGBM 2373-7, 3770-6.

c sé For the long vowel supplied in this word and in dhé below (14c), see Breathnach (2003) 138, 135.

7b ngéadar For this form of the letter name, more usually ngéadal, see Ó Riain (2008a) 41 q. 6a n.

ruis rogharbh For the term ruis gharbh, equivalent to rr, see Ó Riain (2008a) 41 q. 6c n. and idem (2008c) 83.

d in neoch (MS ineoch) For the use of in neoch as a relative pronoun, see DIL s.v. nech III. See also SnaG IV §7.36 for related forms n(e)och and do neoch.

comhthrom This adjective may simply be used in a general sense of ‘balanced’, that is to say correctly rhyming, as in 4d, 13d. However, in other sources trom has a technical meaning when applied to the consonants rr, ll and nn which may be intended here (although not relevant to the full complement of consonants in this class). The term is found applied to these sonorants when they arise at the juncture of a compound word as a result of assimilation and are preceded by a long vowel or diphthong, e.g. gaolúith (< gaol + dlúith); see IGT I §§41, 44 and compare O’Rahilly (1942) 122 and Greene (1952) 214. Ó Cuív (1965) 150-1 states that ‘the term trom, literally “heavy” is sometimes used instead of teann.’

coimhtheann The term -teann is used in the technical sense of fortis consonants here.
8a séimhidhe This adjective is only used with the letters b and m (8d) here as opposed to the phrase go n-uath at 5ab, 8d, 9a (t, c, d, g). This is also the case in GGBM p. 4 fn. 15 (séimh) and Feedha an oghaim aithnish damh; instances with m and b occur at Breatnach (1941) 38, 40, 42, 43, 44 qq. 9d, 27ac, 32b and qq. 6a, 9b, 16a, 37c (séimh) respectively.

c eile ‘another’ This adjective is used as one type of l has previously been referred to in 7b.

d muin séimidhe (MS .m. tseimhde) The letter m is masculine according to IGT I §17. However, it prefixes t to s here and in the RIA 23 N 12 and Maynooth M 49 texts of Feedha an oghaim aithnish damh (fn. 5 above); see Breatnach (1941) 47 q. 4a n. and examples at 38 q. 9d (MS m. tseimidhe seagaind), 42 q. 27a (MS m. tseimide, is muin tean), 42 q. 27c (MS m. tseimhidhe), 43 q. 32b (MS in m. tsoeluis tseimhidhe). For ts in place of s(h), see Ó Cuív (1983a) 12 fn. 28.

9b imar This Middle Irish form of the conjunction, for which see Carney (1983) 199-200 and DIL s.v. immar, is confirmed by the syllable count. An example is also found in the EModIr text Caithréim Thoirdealbhaigh, O’Grady (1929) I 15, transl. II 17: Cidh tra acht dorighnetar a righmuinnter amair adubair Domnall ‘As Donall said, so his people did’. Compare the forms mar in 12a below and amair (for amhail) at IGT V §130. On the basis of the latter example, an alternative interpretation would be to read amhail or amhair for MS imar.

 Isa[n] For scribal omission of n (including other instances in this MS in another hand), see Carney (1969) 127.

Im[th]igheas It would also be possible to read imdhigheas.

10a Reanna (MS Randa) Text emended for sense. The three metrical ornaments which depend on consonant class and quality are deibhidhe rhyme, consonance and fully-stressed rhyme. Compare q. 7 of Feedha an oghaim aithnish damh where the three terms occur together: Seacht gcinnseine eile sin/-éadrom teagmhaid i bhfoclaibh-jón cóir uaitheadhaid, reanna, is comhardaidh choimhtheanna ‘...seven other consonants (light they occur in words) from which it is correct to form uaitheadhaid [consonances], deibhidhe rhymes, and equally strong rimes’ (Breatnach 1941, 38). Note that the scribe of G 3 also writes ‘randa’ for ‘reanda’ in IGT V §111: aig seo na r[e]anda is coir don c[h]aichi reanda. On the change of re- to ra-, see SnaG III §3.12.

Ab The first couplet appears to stand in no direct relationship to the second. Perhaps we are to understand: ‘(in the matter of) deibhidhe-rhymes etc., there are twenty-two letters of those to assist consonants’. Alternatively, we might read dá gcobhair in line d and translate: ‘Deibhidhe-rhymes etc. are assisted by means of consonants, twenty-two (letters) of them’.

cd The 3 plur. prep. pron. díbh (c) is understood as referring to the consonants listed in vv. 4-9 and the couplet as it stands taken to mean that there are twenty-two consonants available in total for the ornamental purposes of rhyme and consonance subject to the relevant rules; on this basis, the consonants are re-enumerated in vv. 11-12. Another possible interpretation might be to take the couplet as indicating that there are twenty-two letters (i.e. vowels)
which ‘assist’ consonants in the production of rhyme. However, this matter is dealt with in v. 15 and the force of \( \text{díbh} \) is unclear in this interpretation, unless it is taken as referring to \textit{feadha} ‘letters’ in general.

\textit{d chobhair} Breanach (1941) 50 q. 53c n. suggests that \textit{cobhair} may have a technical meaning in the quatrain cited at fn. 7 above, but does not offer any further explanation. Compare the use of synonymous \textit{cungnamh} to describe the prefixes which may be applied to initial vowels in various circumstances in IGT I §18 (transl. Murphy 1942, 220): \( \text{Trí conganta na nguthaidhe ó chonnsuinibh, tinne re treisioghadh, n. re huirrdhioghadh, h. re lomadh} \) ‘Three consonants are used to help vowels, t for strengthening [after the nominative masculine article], n for eclipsing, and h for \( \text{íomadh} \)’. The term also occurs in \textit{roibhríogh na ccongnamh cuirthear} ‘Let the force of their supporting particles be set forth’ (McKenna 1947, 70 q. 42d) where the editor suggests that the term may refer to ‘the various forms of the article, \( \text{an} \)-, \( \text{na} \)-’ (75). Compare also its use in GGBM 2497-8: \( \text{Ní congnamh nó toirmeas uama iairmbéarla} \) ‘An unstressed word is neither an aid nor a hindrance to alliteration’.

\textit{11a Trí beithe} The three \( b \)s are \( b \), \( bh \) and \( p \) (\textit{beithe bogtha} ‘voiceless \( b \)’).

\( ab \) Rhyme between \( \text{féin} \) and \( \text{bu-dhéin/fódhéin} \) is faulted in the tracts, see BST 232.6/14a.17 and IGT V §109.

\( d \text{ if[s]} \) (MS a) The conjunction \textit{is} ‘and’ is clearly required in the context. Compare other probable examples of \textit{i} for \textit{is} at 20b below; NLI G 75v (q. 6c), where ‘\( \text{ifhearn} \)’ should be read as \textit{is fearn}, and Mag. l. 3618: \( \text{taiseach as fhiu airdrigh} \) (MS taiseach ifiu airdrigh).

\textit{12d n-imdheacht} ‘course’ The verbal noun is understood as referring to the rules for consonant groups delineated in vv. 4-9. Compare \( \text{im[th]igheas ar déinshlighidh} \) (9d) and q. 32 from the poem beginning \textit{Madh fiafraidheach budh feasach} where Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh asks for more information about the ‘six roots governing all speech’ i.e. \( \text{feirinsgne, baininsgne} \), plural, singular, vowels and consonants (qq. 31, 39): \( \text{Dénasa a ndiaigh an tseisir/ a n-imdheachta d’innisin; /ar n-indisin a n-imtheacht/ innisidh a n-edircheart} \) ‘After naming these things, show us their processes, and after showing their processes give the distinctions between them’, McKenna (1947) 69, 72.

\textit{13b nocha[n]} The classical practice of employing \textit{nochan} before vowels and \( f \), for which see \textit{SnaG IV} §3.2 (c), has been restored. Absence of \(-n\) in the MS may suggest that the scribe intended nasalisation after the negative particle (i.e. \( \text{nocha bhf.} \)), for which see Ó Buachalla (1977) 132 fn. 117.

\( c \text{ glan garg} \) It is suggested that these adjectives are used asyndetically and that \textit{garg} refers to the less strict forms of poetry. For the adjective used in connection with a poet, see \( \text{ní file fiorgharg} \), Stokes (1893) 20 q. 66b and \textit{an t-ollamh glan gréasach garg} ‘the famous accomplished violent sage’ (of Athairne), McKenna (1918) no. 28 q. 10b.

\( d \text{ ionad comhthrom comhard} \) ‘a balanced, matching position’ This is understood as referring to an instance of correct rhyme; compare the use of \textit{ionadh} in GGBM 2511-14 and 2531-3: \( \text{Ní cóir gan consaine dhá aicme féin do dheith i n-aghaidh gach consaine oile dhá mbia san fhocul, acht amhán nac[h] fuil} \)
feid[h]m ar nísa mó iná dhá chonsaine ar gach taoibh a n-aoinionadh ‘It is not correct without a consonant of its own class corresponding to every other consonant which is in the word [i.e. the rhyming partner], except that no more than two consonants are of use on either side in any one instance [= one rhyming word]’ and Ní cón fócul do c[h]omhardadh ris féin muna rabh claochladh céille san dara hionadh aige, nó muna rabh breacadh ann ‘A word should not rhyme with itself unless it has a different meaning in the second instance, or unless there is ‘breacadh’. Compare also the use of port ‘place’ in 15c below, -ball in GGBM 2529 and, perhaps, inadh uama in IGT V §9. Possibly, we should read ‘na [h]ionad ch. ch.; transl. ‘how … poetry is in its balanced, matching position’.

There may be word play in this line based on ionad in the sense ‘position or office held by anyone’ (DIL s.v. inad II), where comh- is to be understood as meaning ‘wholly’ (see Murphy 1953, 243 s.v. comh-) and trom is used in the sense ‘great, vast, powerful, mighty’ (DIL T 317.64-76), transl. ‘a fully important office’; the message being that a student or member of the learned orders who does not grasp the rules of rhyme will not attain a very high position in life.

comhard ‘matching’ For the sense ‘even’, see DIL s.v.; cf. also lethard ‘lit. (high) at one side, hence uneven, unequal’ (DIL L 131.32-3). Since the abstract noun airede is used in 14d and 15b to describe velarisation, comhard is presumably used here and in 20c below in a technical sense, literally meaning ‘equally velar’, that is ‘of matching quality’. On this basis, it may be queried whether comhthrom should be understood as referring specifically to consonants, cf. 7d n. above.

14a cur fá seach I interpret this phrase to mean ‘placing in turn’, i.e. ‘correspondence (for purposes of rhyme and consonance)’, based on the context here and in 19a. For fá seach in the sense ‘in turn’, see DIL S 124.84-125.38; the phrase is not connected with cuirid fo sech ‘leads astray, upsets’ (DIL S 125.39-46). Alternatively, cur could be taken as shorthand for comhardadh do chur (cf. 3b n. above); however, this suggestion does not seem suitable in 19a.

c char The noun car is taken in the sense ‘movement’, for which see AithdD. II 279-80 s.v. cor. Examples of the phrase car do chur de include: is níor fhéad cor do chur dhí ‘could not stir it’ DDána no. 102 q. 25c (cited with transl. at DIL C 470.46-7) and d’éis gach chuir dar cuireadh dhí ‘after…all that has happened to Éire’ AithdD. no. 28 q. 11b.

15ab I n-isle théid / I n-airede téid Old compound verbs such as téid are found lenited and unlenited in relative position in Classical Irish, see TD I p. ci. BST p. 271 and Breatnach (1983) 418 fn. 5; for this reason, lenition has not been supplied in b. For relative clauses with prepositional phrases as antecedents in bardic poetry, see Ó Riaín (2008a) 40 q. 2d.

a iodhadh The form iodhadh is confirmed by rhyme with glan and siobhal in McKenna 1947, 68 q. 21cd and IGT I §17 respectively. The form idheadh also occurs: Mur théid igheadh a n-eaghadh, / an digheadh da [sic] dheimhnioghadh, ibid. (= McKenna 1947, 70 q. 48cd).
The adjective *iomlán* `full` is possibly to be interpreted as excluding the digraphs and trigraphs beginning with *a*.

**c phort** (MS fort) `places’ Understood as referring to the vowels listed in vv. 16-19 with reference to non-palatal (eleven `high’ places) and palatal (eleven `low’ places) offset. Compare the use of *ionad* and *car* in 13d and 14c.

**fhichid** (MS *fhichead*) Noun emended in accordance with IGT II §131.

**d** The text might also be rendered `'gon ailm is ‘gon iodhadh-soin ‘lit. at a and at that i’, however the use of the article with *ailm* would be unusual.

16-18: These verses enumerate the twenty-two vowel graphs which were recognised in bardic teaching, separated into non-palatal (v. 16) and palatal varieties (vv. 17-19); for the order in which they are listed see fn. 17 below. Some items have been omitted by the scribe through homoeoteleuton (16b; see n.) or mistakenly rendered through misreading of minims (*iu* for *ui*, 17d) and are restored on the basis of lists of the items in question as found in other sources. Textual restoration proves problematic, however, in the case of the four graphs beginning with *a*. The problem is discussed separately below in an appendix where reasons are given for restoring a series *ae, ae, aí and ai*.

The correct arrangement of items in v. 18 is not apparent, however, as there are discrepancies in the ordering of letters within the subsets of vowel graphs in the various sources (see fn. 17 below). In editing, the graphs have either been marked long or left short in accordance with the teaching in GGBM 2414-27 that all trigraphs and the digraphs *ao*, *ua*, *eu*, *ia* are long and that the remainder may be long or short or have middle length, with due regard for modern editorial conventions affecting *ua* and *ia* which are not marked long (see further fn. 22 below).

16b éabhadh éu Verbal nouns beginning with *é* (*éra, élódh*) represent this digraph in an alphabetically ordered list in this manuscript published by Ó Cuív (1966) and are listed immediately after verbal nouns beginning in *ea*. On this basis, the omission of the digraph is taken to result from homoeoteleuton and placed first in the line. The same ordering of the digraphs occurs in IGT I §14 p. 6 l. 20 (Cáoladh .ea. *agus* éu. ag dul a n.e.) and GGBM 44 (ea, an *éab*[h]aidh ea; eu, an *éub*[h]aid*[h] éu), 2295 (ea, eu) but is inverted ibid. at 805-6 (*eu* in *e* <longam>, *ea* in *e* <brevem>, ut *préumh, don fpréimh*; *eu* in *e* <brevem>, ut *sreabh, don t[s]reibh*).

*bc éu; io* These digraphs are spelt *é* and *i* in some sources (see fn. 18 below) and might have been restored in these forms. They have, however, the disadvantage of obscuring their identity as digraphs.

**gh** Literally ’their placing in turn like that is fashioned on eleven pillars’.

**h -uaitne** DIL cites the term for the metrical ornament known as consonance under 5 *uaithe*. However, it is to be taken as the same word as *i* *úaithne* `prop, pillar’ as indicated by Murphy (1961) 90 s.v. *úaitne*. The older form with -*tn-* for which see DIL s.v. *I ú*. and O’Rahilly (1931) 67, 68 fn. 7, is written by the scribe in this piece and throughout IGT V and is metrically confirmed in the following examples: DDána no. 109 5a (: *cuairte*), DMU l. 2059 (sic leg.) (: *chuairte*; consonating with *duinte, fháilte*), O’Reilly Poems 660 (sic leg.) (: *buailte*) and Ó Raghallaigh (2006) 51 q. 17d (cf. n.) *uaitnibh*
: _buailtir_, consonating with _éantoil_ and _chúirtibh_. The form is, however, not given in IGT II §2 (_úaithe_, _úaidhne_ and _úaidne_) and _úaithe_ is the form used in IGT I §2.

_17c uai_ (MS _uaigh_) The scribe has attached -_gh/_-dh to a vowel graph here, in 18a (iaigh, iuigh) and at NLI G 3, ff. 72v-73r (eoidh, úidh, iaid(h), íúidh) (= Ó Cuív 1966, 287). Compare also _úillind uidh_ in BST 1bb.46, _eamhancholl aigh_ in BST 1bb.10, _emarcholl aigh_ [sic leg.] in IGT III §97 and _amhurchall aídh_ in IGT I §14 and BST 1bb.46-7 (for the correct reading of the latter passage, see Armstrong 1981, 639); further instances will be found in the Black Book of Clanranald, see Gillies (2005) 68 §2, where they clearly represent the names of the graphs (pace Gillies, 75). Rhyming examples of various vowel graphs serve to illustrate that these consonants are superfluous, namely .eo.: _leó_ (16ab above), .úu.: _-chüi_ (IGT I §17), .iu.: _neimhfiu_; .ia.: _cia_; .ua.: _ronua/ranua_, .ea.: _bhfuighthea_ (McKenna 1947, 68 qq. 20, 20cd, 21ab, 71 q. 49ab, 68 q. 22ab). The superfluous consonant is explicable as a reflex of the loss of _dh_ and _gh_ in this position, see _SnaG_ IV §2.11 (2), (3). It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that these spellings occur in a number of sources.

_18a ann_ Refers to _-chonghlann_ (17d).

_b eamhancholl ae_ (MS _eam.e_) The MS reading _e_ may be a mistake for _ae_; note that there is evidence for the pronunciation of _áe_ as _é_ as early as the twelfth-century (_SnaG_ IV §2.7) and compare _créad_ for _créad_ at 1d above.

_machéas raí_ (MS _e._) It is perhaps conceivable that _‘i.’_ is a correction of the preceding _e_. Alternatively, the MS reading may reflect the fact that _aei_ and _ái_ are sometimes used interchangeably in spelling, e.g. _Mag._ (MS) 3690 _baeis_: _ro iarrrmais_, 3812 _shaer_: _ro dhiansgail_, 4209 _taeir_: _achraibh_ as against ibid. 385 _shair_: _taibh_, 857, 2426, 2428 _baais_; see also fn. 31 below.

_machéas raí_ (MS _e._) _McKenna_ suggested that this phrase meant *probably the same as ceann i gceann*, _Mag._ 402 (210 n.), and translated it as ‘side by side’ (ibid. p. 295 q. 36).

_d .ai._ _in a fharradh_ (MS a.i.a. _na arrud_) The _a_ in the MS has tentatively been taken as part of the following combination of preposition _i_ and possessive adjective in spite of scribal word division and punctuation. Note the use of the singular possessive adjective which refers only to the proceeding graph, although the point applies equally well to all the graphs listed in this and the previous quatrain.
19d uilleann (MS uillind) The gender and stem class of this letter name have not been established to my knowledge; see DIL s.v. 2 uillenn. However, it may be identified as a masculine noun on the basis of the following example from Gillies (2005) 68 §2: Ur [sic] ar tús gach uillim uill (:_ amharchuill). (The nom. plural form is uilleanna e.g. IGT I §12.) On this basis, the MS spelling -ind is understood as representing -iond, rather than a fem. dual form.

e dhé For the prepositional pronoun in the sense ‘thereby’, see DIL s.v. 1 de, di (152.18-20). It apparently refers only generally to the foregoing statement as we would expect a third plural form if it had direct reference to dá ifin, although instances of the singular referring to the dual occasionally occur, see SnaG IV §7.30.

f trí heamhanchuill (MS triheman.choll) A plural form of the graph name is required. This is attested (in variant form) in IGT I §12 (na ceithre hamharchuill).

20a Gebé All examples to hand of gebé, gibé, gidh bé etc. involve alliteration with words beginning with b. See Mag. ll. 1461, 3760; DDé no. 9 q. 8a; DDána no. 40 q. 1b, 65 q. 1c, no. 86 q. 29c, no. 108 q. 16a; AithD. no. 69 q. 21a; IBP no. 14 q. 9a, no. 31 q. 3a; TD no. 1 q. 22a, no. 3 q. 4a, no. 11 q. 5a, no. 16 q. 2a, no. 26 q. 35a; O’Hara ll. 1278, 3657 and TD I p. lxvii.

b cia Compare the following example where cia is stressed and alliterates with gcú: a ccú cidh cia do mhinfhégh / lia cinél clú ’nar ccuilén ‘he who has studied their repute sees many more kinds of fame in the whelp of whom I speak’ (DMU ll. 2016-17).

i[s] (MS i) Alternatively, read í, referring to duain.

APPENDIX: Na ceithre hamharchuill

This note aims at identifying the four graphs beginning with a which were recognised in bardic teaching prior to the fifteenth century. This matter has previously been the subject of consideration by Brian Ó Cuív and John Armstrong, but as part of wider discussions. It is, therefore, appropriate to provide a comprehensive treatment here.

1. According to bardic teaching, there were twenty-two vowel graphs, consisting of five simple vowels and a set of seventeen digraphs and trigraphs known as foïrfeadhá ‘additional letters’.¹⁶ The seventeen digraphs and trigraphs were divided into sets according to their initial letter and known respectively as na ceithre hébha, na trí huilleanna, na ceithre hamharchuill, na cúig ifín and óir.¹⁷ These graphs are listed in IGT I; in Seaán Ó Cearnaigh’s Aibidil Gaoidheilge & Caiticioisma; in Nugent’s Irish primer for Elizabeth I; in Giolla Brighde Ó hEódhasa’s Rudimenta grammaticae

¹⁷ There are discrepancies in the ordering of the graph names and also within the subsets of graphs in the various sources. The above list is taken from IGT I §12. The order of the graph names given in IGT I §4, namely éubhadh, óir, uilleann, ifín, amharchall, and reflected in the material in NLI G 3 discussed below appears to be standard and is also found in earlier sources, for which see Sims-Williams (1992) 31-5.
Hiberniae; in a tract preserved in the Black Book of Clanranald, and in an unpublished text immediately following the section on faults in the Rudimenta in TCD D.4.35 (1431), 173-7. These sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources provide the following list of vowel graphs: a o u e i; ao aoi ai ae; ea eo eoi eu; ua uai ui; ia iai tu tu io; oi. The foirfheadha represent both diphthongs and monophthongs, the scheme being ‘based on orthographic forms’. No consideration is given to vowel length, so that the number of sounds represented by simple vowels and by the foirfheadha is not identical to the number of orthographic forms; a and io, for example, represent both short and long vowels: a and á, io and ió. In this context, attention may be drawn to Giolla Brighde Ó hÉódhasa’s teaching that all trigraphs and the digraphs ao, uu, eu, ia are long and that the remainder of the vowels may be long or short or have middle length.

2. The teaching regarding the foirfheadha is also represented in material preserved in the fourteenth-century manuscript NLI G 3, the importance of which as the earliest source to preserve bardic doctrine on this matter need not be stressed. It occurs in vv. 16-19 of the poem on rhyme, beginning Comhardadh cionnas is cóir, edited above and in a list of verbal nouns found

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18 IGT I §§12, 14; Ó Cuív (1994) 64-5; Primer f. 9r (held in Farmleigh House and digitised at www.isos.dias.ie; for an account of the text, see Ó Macháin 2012, 132-7); GGBM 40-50, 2291-7; Gillies (2005) 68 §2; for the tract in D.4.35, see GGBM p. xxi. There is also a discussion of digraphs and trigraphs in Tadhg Óg (son of Tadhg Dall) Ó hUiginn’s grammar (GGBM 2948-57). They are not given in the form of a list, rather words containing the graphs are cited as illustrative examples but do not make up the complete set, io, éu and eo being omitted. The foirfheadha are not fully listed in IGT, but all seventeen are mentioned in §14. In Gillies, éabhadh eo has been omitted through a copying error. (Two further points concerning the list in this source arise: (1) the graphs beginning with e are printed as follows: .e.a. eabhadh; .e.u. eabhadh (é[. ]); .e.o.i. eabhadh (eóigh). The MS text, the pattern of the other graphs (e.g., .u.a. uillenn uath, where uath represents the graph, for which see 17c n. above) in addition to a similar pattern in GGBM 40-50 (e.g., eo, an éab[h]aid[h] eo; ia, ifín ia) indicate that they should, in fact, be printed in the following way: .e.a. éabhadh [e]; .e.u. éabhadh .é; [...].e.o.i. éabhadh eóigh (MS .e.a. eabhadh .e.u. éabhadh .é. e.o.i. éabhadh. eóigh.); for é representing éu see the list of verbal nouns below and compare .io. iñ'é (MS) in Gillies loc. cit. and §3.vii (3) below; (2) with reference to .e.i. éabhadh, Gillies (75) is correct in taking the MS reading ‘(ei) eaghadh’ as representing eadhadh, but incorrect in emending to eabhadh [sic] and suggesting that the letter ‘has been misplaced and classified as an e-vowel … instead of an e-diphthong’ (see Ó Cuív 1966, 288 and fn. 36 below.).

19 The date of the text in TCD D 4. 35 has not been established. The list above follows the order of the Aibidil and of Nugent’s Primer which agree. Note, however, that the position of oi in the latter source is not certain as it has been placed between two columns.

20 Ó Cuív (1994) 162.

21 Note the use of the adjectives fada and gearr with the letters i, ea, oi to specify vowel quantity in BST 191.8-11 (ighadh fhada; ébhadh ea fhada), 210.24 (ea ghearr éinshíola), 71b.31-2 (ebhadh ea fada), IGT III §97 (a n-óir girr) and IGT I §14 (ea ghearr éinshíola) and compare also such terms as gearradh and shinnidh fhadaighirr, loc. cit. The suggestion is made in Ó Cuív (1994) 163 that the graph éu indicates that vowel quantity was taken into account in one case; see, however, fn. 33 below.

22 GGBM 2414-27 (this passage is phrased differently in TCD D 4. 35 (D) where the trigraphs iai and eoi are omitted, ibid. fn. 6-8); 2 sing. verbal endings are mentioned as instances of short ae and long ea. See also ibid. 40-50 where at l. 49 the reading of MS A, viz. eu, should be adopted for eo on the basis of ll. 2414-27. This allows Ó Cuív’s suggestion, based solely on ll. 49-50, that Ó hÉódhasa has ‘overlooked the fact that eo is short in such forms as deoch and eoch’ to be dispensed with, Ó Cuív (1994) 163; cf. Armstrong (1981) 710.
on ff. 72v-73r published by Brian Ó Cuív in Éigse 11 (reproduced as Text A below).\textsuperscript{23} In both cases, however, the material presents certain problems owing to faulty copying. As the teaching in question is known from later sources, the texts may be restored on the basis of their testimony; nevertheless, a difficulty arises in the case of the four graphs beginning with \textit{a (na ceithre hamharchuill)}. The reason for this is that the spelling \textit{ao(i)} is first encountered in the fifteenth century and the modern convention of rendering the earlier spellings \textit{áe(i)} and \textit{áí} as \textit{ao(i)}, already reflected in the lists mentioned in §1 above, blurs the contrast between them to a certain extent.\textsuperscript{24} The list of verbal nouns may be presented at this point and discussed before assessing the case of the \textit{ceithre hamharchuill}.

\textbf{(A) List of verbal nouns}

Persanda a lan \’fhoclaiabh and seo sis

Breth, breth, brudh, \textit{búd}, lochrughudh, faisgin, fasdodh, fagbail, femdechtain, fedachtain, fis, feas, snim, nam, nochtadh, níamadh, denam, dul, teacht, tabairt, togbail, tegmail, tairsi, tairgsi, cnam, crudh, clodh, caí, maitheum, moradh, guin, gabhail, radh, rochtain, rigsin, agallaimh, anacul, anamhain, adhnadh, oslugudh, orduughudh, urmais, usgardadh, erghi, esdecht, indisi, indeagudh, easgar, eadram [leg. eadrán], eagur, era, eloil, oirbeartudh, oirheartudh, uaisleghudh, uáithiugudh, iaghadh, iarraidh, indsaighidh, indtod, incur, aithceodh, aradhughudh, aithi, aesceodh, aeradh.

Do rer uird aibidreach ata seo .i. persa no dho ar gach fidh do radh. agus ní hi seo uimhir na pearsand, óir ni roich aireamh orro. Ataid oct foireadh gan persanna do airmnigh ud uatho annseo .i. e. eoidh, uilleand úidh, uilleann uu, ifin iaid, ifin iaidh, ifin iui, ifin iuidh, eamancoll ai.

\textquote{This is in alphabetical order, that is, a verbal noun or two mentioned for each letter. And this is not the [total] number of verbal nouns, for they are innumerable. There are eight compound letters for which verbal nouns are not named here, they are [\textit{eoi, ùi, ua, iai, iai, iu, iui, ai}].}\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{Commentary:} Commencing with easgar, examples of verbal nouns beginning in the graphs \textit{ea, é (sc. éu)},\textsuperscript{26} \textit{oi}, \textit{uai}, \textit{ia}, \textit{io}, \textit{ai} and \textit{de} are cited and these are followed by an inventory of the graphs not enumerated in the list, namely \textit{eoi, ui, ua, iai (bis), iu, iui, ai}. There are, however, some difficulties in this text which have been noted and discussed by Ó Cuív:\textsuperscript{27} (1) The form \textit{athruaghadh} (fourth from end), which begins with a simple vowel, occurs

\textsuperscript{23} Ó Cuív (1966) with further discussion in idem (1994) 162-3.
\textsuperscript{24} For the date of the spelling, see SnaG IV §2.7; for remarks on the contrast, see Armstrong (1981) 711 n. 8 and Ó Cuív (1994) 163 and compare, for example, the forms \textit{méd an láe, méd an laí, na láe, na laí} etc. in IGT II §82.
\textsuperscript{25} Text and transl. Ó Cuív 1966 and idem 1994, 163. The manuscript has ‘fes’ for ‘feas’, ‘ursgardadh’ for ‘usgardadh’, ‘eadram’ for ‘eadram’ and ‘uáithiug’ for ‘uáithiugh’.
\textsuperscript{26} Regarding \textit{é} as representing \textit{éu} see fn. 18 above and fn. 33 below. Note, however, the recommendation that \textit{éa} be written as \textit{é} to avoid confusion with short \textit{ea} in IGT I §11.
\textsuperscript{27} See Ó Cuív 1966; idem, 1994, 163.
among verbal nouns beginning with digraphs and trigraphs. Ó Cuív noted that it ‘seems quite out of place in the list and should be in the preceding series of five vowels where the words show broad vowels before a broad consonant or slender vowels before a slender consonant’. The problem is, however, easily resolved by reading the variant form *aithreaghadh* and retaining the position of the verbal noun in the list.28 (2) The inventory of eight graphs or compound letters which are not exemplified is incomplete as one item (*iai*) is listed twice in error and, excluding this duplicate entry, the total number of vowels mentioned amounts only to fifteen. Ó Cuív suggested that the number of letters that do not occur is mistakenly given as eight and should in fact be nine, the missing items being *ao* and *eo*. His solution to the problem is slightly flawed, however, in that he introduces the later spelling *ao* into material from NLI G 3; given the date of the manuscript, this can in fact only represent *de* which is already listed.29 In accordance with the discussion below, the missing items may be taken to be *eo* and *ae*.

3. Having presented the evidence of G 3 and of the later texts, the following observations may be made:

(i) Six distinct normalised spellings of graphs beginning with *a* may be identified prior to the fifteenth century, namely *ae*, *áe*, *ái*, *ai*, *aí*, and *ái*. In practice, the use of the length mark will be limited so that the modern distinction in spelling between *ái*, *ai* and *ái*, for example, will not be adhered to. The employment of the superfluous glide vowel in *aei* will also be unstable; for example, this spelling occurs only once in IGT V (NLI G 3) and nine times in the Book of Magauran (NLI G 1200).31

(ii) Only four graphs beginning in *a* were recognised in bardic tradition as indicated by the designation *na ceithre hamharchuill* and the number of twenty-two vowel graphs.

(iii) Vowel length was not distinguished, so that *ai* and *ái* can be taken to represent a single graph without difficulty.

(iv) Three of the graphs were followed by palatalisation based on the evidence of *Comhardadh cionnas is cóir* (na trí heamhanchuill ísle, v. 19f).

28 The form *aithreaghadh* is listed in IGT III §106; for *aithreaghadh* (: *leanamh*) see the poem beginning *Uasal fearantas Fearghail* (Ó Raghallaigh 1938, 51 q. 36ab) and for the variation -ch/-gh- in verbal nouns see GGBM 911-13.

29 Ó Cuív (1966) 288. That the missing items were *ao* and *eo* was reiterated by him in 1994 (‘those missing being *ao* and *eo*’, 163). Having stated this, however, he went on to say: ‘[T]he spellings *áentughadh* and *aeradh* must be regarded as variants of *aontughadh* and *aoradh*, in which *ao* is not missing. However, in order to make up the full complement of seventeen *foireadh* we must include *ae* as being distinct from *aoi* [sic]).’ It is possible that this addendum represents a revised solution where *aoi* may be intended to represent *ái*.

30 Note, for example, the spellings *caech*, *taebhrem*, *tae(i)bhremi* and *caichi* in IGT V §111. Short *ae* is illustrated, for example, in IGT II §80 (*mac an ghillae, na gillae*); see also Armstrong (1981) 644 and SnaG IV §2.3.

31 IGT V §111 (example at §144, namely *thaer* for *thair* (?), has been excluded); Mag. 99, 1531, 1575, 1584, 1641, p. 112 (*dúnadh*), 3690, 3812, 4209 (examples at 1548, 4333, 4347, namely *diaeid(h)* for *craidhe* (= *croidhe*), have been excluded). Compare also instances where *ae* is written without a glide vowel and the same word is spelt with *ai* elsewhere, e.g. Mag. 20 (*taebhsheang*), 965 (*claenchlecht*) and 963 (*taibhglan*), 1001 (*taibhglan*).
(v) The fourth was therefore followed by a velar consonant and can only be identified as áe, as for example in áentughadh.

(vi) By recognising three palatal graphs, Comhardadh cionnas is cóir further illustrates that ae/áe which was followed by a palatal consonant, e.g. láe(i)thibh, is distinct from the vowel in point (v). The distinction between long áe (áentughadh) on the one hand and short and long ae on the other would then be one of velarisation/palatalisation.

(vii) It is suggested here that the spellings ae, áe and aei (all followed by a palatal consonant) were reckoned as a single graph. Taking ae and áe as representing a single graph is unproblematic as in the case of point (iii) above. For aei to be included, it may be suggested that the glide vowel i in aei was ignored and that the internal spelling was considered to be áe, which might, however, be realised as aei in practice as in láe(i)thibh (IGT II §82). This suggestion finds support in the following points:

(1) The term eamhancholl ae is found in IGT III §97 with reference to the spelling aei (raeineann H).

(2) The letter-name eadhadh represents e followed by a palatal consonant (or e in final position), that is both e and ei, the latter not being included among the digraphs but understood as a realisation of e under certain circumstances.

(3) The comparable form ifín (h)i (for ifín io) where the glide vowel is omitted occurs in BST 1bb.48, 22a.1, 68a.37 and Gillies 68 §2; in the second instance, a corresponding passage at BST 236.15 has io (without ifín).

The foregoing implies that the superfluous glide vowel i was ignored and that aei was not considered to be a separate graph. The only possible objections to this are the occurrence of ‘ae.i.’ in the MS text of the poem edited above and the form eamhancholl aei trasgartha in BST 12b.28-9 (RIA C ii 3). Possible solutions to the former have been presented above (18c n.). The reading of BST in corresponding passages in other MSS (RIA C i 3; 24 P 8) are: amurcoll ai trascurtha (BST 42b.14) and amharcholl aoi trasgartha (BST 221.25-6). Leaving aside the question of whether ae or aí is best suited to the context, it may be assumed that aei is either written for ae in the same way that ifín io is written for ifín i or may reflect the occasional interchange of aí with
aei in writing. Accordingly, the set of four graphs beginning with a which may be identified is: áe [before a velar consonant], ae/áe/aei [before a palatal consonant], ai/ái and ai.\textsuperscript{37}

\textbf{Abbreviations}


\textit{AithdD.} Lambert McKenna, Aithdioghluim dána. 2 vols (ITS 37, 40). Dublin 1939-40.

\textit{BST} Lambert McKenna, Bardic Syntactical Tracts. Dublin 1944.


\textit{DDé} Lambert McKenna, Dán Dé. Dublin [1922].

\textit{DIL} Dictionary of the Irish Language: based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials. Dublin 1913-76.


\textit{IGT} Osborn Bergin, Irish Grammatical Tracts I-V, Supplement to Ériu 8-10, 14, 17 (1916-55).


\textsuperscript{37}This follows Armstrong (1981) 709 who, in suggesting emendations to Comhardadh cionnas is cóir, supplied aé(i) to be distinguished from aí/i and ai as a separate graph: ‘Ifín iaih, ifín iuigh and/eamhancholl ae(i) uairheas rand/eamhancholl aíbun a mbun/ís eamhancholl áigh [or a(i)] ’na arrud’. The position is not clearly articulated or fully discussed by him. However, he does mention earlier and later spellings in passing and refers to the list of vowel graphs in GGBM 35-50 as ‘eclectic’ and ‘somewhat anachronistic’; aé(i) is explained as ‘aéi internally and ae finally’ and the graphs aé(i) and ai used in his article ‘in the interests of clarity’ as ‘better representing the cores’, ibid. 710. See also fn. 29 above. An alternative solution to that presented above would be to take the set of four graphs beginning with a as: áe, ae/aé, aí and ai with the graph ai representing ai, ai and ai as it often does in MSS. The difficulty in this case is that the core vowel in ai differs from that in aí/i. A further obstacle may be the fact that ai is listed twice (presumably for ai and ai respectively) in Text A above and that the examples of eamhancholl ai to hand refer to ai only (see IGT II §138 [sic leg.] and BST 14b.10).
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