A POEM IN PRAISE OF
AODH ÓG MAG MATHGHAMHNA (d. 1496)*

MS COPIES

The poem Fa chroidhe cumthair flaithes is preserved in two MSS, RIA 24 P 4, pp 257–61 (P) and in BL Add. 40,766, ff 15–18 (A). Manuscript P was written around 1687 and contains a copy of the Stowe recension of Táin Bó Cuailnge, a prose tract on the rights of the Mac Mahons, poems on the Mac Mahons and other miscellaneous matter. The scribe of this manuscript was Padruic Mac Oghannan. According to Flower, Manuscript A was written near the end of the seventeenth century in Fermanagh, and contains both classical poetry and post-classical poetry of the seventeenth century. A semi-diplomatic edition of this poem has been published in Bard.Misc (no. 214) from manuscript P.

AODH ÓG MAG MATHGHAMHNA (†1496)

The subject of this poem, Aodh Óg mac Aodha Ruaidh Mhig Mhathghamhna had an eventful life that is fairly well documented in the annals. He must have been born by 1453, as his father Aodh Ruadh

* For comments and suggestions made in the preparation of this article, I am grateful to two anonymous readers, to Dr Máire Nic Cathmhaoil and to my colleagues Dr A. J. Hughes, Dr P. J. Smith and Prof. Ailbhe Ó Corráin. I alone am responsible for any faults that remain.

1 See RIA Cat. pp 272–5 for a full description of this manuscript. Two of the Mag Mhathghamna poems from this MS have been edited and translated by Hughes (1987, 1993).

2 I have not found this surname recorded elsewhere. It may be a version of Mac Eoghanán, which has been anglicised as Mac Cohenan, McOwenan, McConan and McKeonan. Some of this family lived around Magherlin Parish in the Barony of Iveagh Lower, Upper Half, in County Down. This same parish is close to Lurgan town in County Armagh, where the patron Arthur Brownlow lived around the end of the seventeenth century. It was for this patron that Mac Oghannan wrote MS RIA 24 L 36 in the year 1685 (RIA Cat., pp 385–6).

3 BL Cat II. p. 161. For a recent discussion of this MS, see Ó Macháin, pp 106–9.

4 This edition has been invaluable in preparing the present paper. My readings from this manuscript, however, differ from those in the Bard.Misc edition at 21b (torchar > torcar); 25c (meallfas > mheallfas); 27a (eis > èis); 28b (hardri > ardri); 32b (furtacht > furtacht); 34b (Conquhbeir > Conarbhair) and 356d (choiméid > choiméad); 41rf (an ri > na ri).

5 The foregoing is based on entries from the annals, citations from which are given here in chronological order: AFM 1453.1; ALC 1453.1, AU 1466.5; AFM 1466.17; AC 1466.26; AC 1475.20; AC 1484.3; AFM 1485.11; AFM 1486.35; AFM 1493.12, AFM 1494.8; AU 1496.1; ALC 1496.3; AC 1496.4; AU 1496.21; AFM 1496.1; AU 1496.25; AFM 1496.3; AU 1496.22; AFM 1496.2–3; AU 1496.31; AU 1496.36; AU 1496.37; AFM 1496.4; AU 1497.21.
A P O E M  I N  P R A I S E  O F  A O D H  Ó G  M A G  M A T H G H A M H N A

mac Rughraidhe Mag Mathghamhna, King of Oirghialla, died in that year. In 1466, Aodh Ruadh was captured by the foreigners of Meath after they defeated Feidhlimidh Mag Mathghamhna in battle. It is not clear whether he was with his brother(s) and the foreigners of *Machaire Oirghiall*, ‘The Plain of Oriel’, when they defeated the King of Oirghialla Réamann Mag Mathghamhna and captured him in 1475. This defeat of Réamann Mag Mathghamhna of Lucht Tighe, or Longfort Mhig Mathghamhna in the barony of Monaghan, instigated an internecine feud between the north county Monaghan ‘Lucht Tighe’ Mag Mathghamhna group and the Farney group of the family in the southeast of the county, who were descended from Aodh Ruadh mac Rughraidhe Mag Mathghamhna (†1453).

In 1478, Aodh Óg, a Farney Mag Mathghamhna, continued the feud with the Lucht Tighe group by raiding the lands of Brian mac Réamainn Mag Mathghamhna and capturing him. In 1483, Réamann mac Rughraidhe Mag Mathghamhna, King of Oriel, died in captivity in Drogheda and his nephew, our Aodh Óg rose to the kingship the following year. In 1486, he spoiled eighteen towns in *Galldacht Mhachaire Airghiall*, ‘The Galltacht of the Plain of Oriel’, and in 1493 he allied himself with Éinri Óg Ó Néill and Aodh mac Airt Mag Aonghasa to battle against Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill at the Moumes in Down. The next year, he joined [Seán mac Cathail] Ó Raghallaigh to defeat the English.

The year 1496 brought an escalation of the feud between the Lucht Tighe and Farney groups of the Mag Mathghamhna family that would prove fatal for Aodh Óg. It began with his sons, Giolla Pádraig and Rughraidhe, along with sixteen *sgológa*, ‘farmers’, murdering their cousin Glaisne mac Rughraidhe Mag Mathghamhna in Monaghan castle on the night of the eleventh of January. In the beginning of the summer of the year, Brian mac Réamainn Mag Mathghamhna burned the town of Aodh Óg at Lurgans in the parish of Magheross in the barony of Farney. Around the same time, the Úi Anluain murdered Aodh Óg’s son, Giolla Pádraig, and another of his sons, Eimer, was captured. Aodh Óg then fled to the protection of Ó Raghallaigh and the English, while Brian mac Réamainn Mag Mathghamhna and the sons of the murdered Glaisne, with the aid of Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill, moved from their territory in northern Monaghan into Aodh Óg’s lands in Farney. Before the eighteenth of April in 1496, Aodh Óg had been

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6 For discussion on the Lucht Tighe and Farney Mc Mahons, see Moore pp 22–9 and Ó Dufaigh and Duffy p. 11.
blinded,⁷ and Brian mac Réamainn had been inaugurated as Mag Mathghamhna. Aodh Óg died on the feast day of Mary in Winter in December of the same year. The occupation of Farney by the Lucht Tighe group, however, was to be shortlived, as they were replaced there in the following years by the descendants of Aodh Ruadh Mag Mathghamhna and once more returned to north Monaghan.

**Authorship**

In A f. 15b, the poem is ascribed to ‘Tadg o Higinn’. This cannot be the prolific Tadgh Óg Ó Huiginn, who died in 1448, but may be the Tadgh Ó Huiginn whose father Brian died in 1476.⁸ There are no other poems extant that can be attributed to this Tadgh [mac Briain] Ó Huiginn with any certainty. In manuscript P p. 257, the poem is attributed to an ‘Ó Fáolan’. It seems unlikely, though not impossible, that the poet suggested here was a member of the Ó Faoláin family who were once a sept of the Déise⁹ and who were to become populous in southern Ireland.¹⁰ This family were not known to have been poets during the Classical era, but were involved to an extent in Irish learning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A ‘Séamus Ó Faoláin’ is mentioned as a possible scribe or collaborator on p. 83 of medical manuscript RIA 23 N 17, written in 1562 at ‘Baile an Airrséaraigh’, or Archerstown, par. Rahelty, bar. Eliogarty, Co. Tipperary, and a ‘Tomás Ua Faoláin’ made a copy of Foras Feasa ar Éirinn in RIA MS 23 Q 14 in 1662 in Tullamoylin, par. Ballynacloogh, bar. Ormond Upper, Co. Tipperary.

An alternative explanation may be that the scribe adopted the spelling Ó Fáolan for Ó Fialáin, and that this change in spelling has come about due to analogy with the spelling of the more widespread Ó Fáolan / Ó Faoláin. If this were the case, it would seem that the poet

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⁷ Blinding and mutilation were seen in Medieval Ireland and England as a way of eliminating political enemies. See, for example the eulogistic entry on the death of An Croibhdheirg Ó Conchubhair in AC 1224.1: *Rí is mo dorondi di crechaitb & do losctib ar Gallaib & Gaidelaib bitis ina agaid; Ri is eroda & is antrenta re hescardib tanice riam; Ri is mo ro dall & ro marb acus ro chirph do merlichib & d’escardib na rige* ‘the king who carried out most plunderings and burnings against Galls and Gaels who opposed him; the king who was the fiercest and harshest towards his enemies that ever lived; the king who most blinded, killed and mutilated rebellious and disaffected subjects’. For a general discussion of mutilation in Medieval Ireland, see Gillingham, pp 115, 118–19, 125–8 and 129–30. The purpose of this mutilation was to exclude the enemy as a potential rival king (Kelly, p. 19; Simms 1987, pp 50–2). Another notable case of mutilation in the fifteenth century is that of Brian Óg mac Bhríain mhic Éinrí Aimhréidh Ó Neill, for whom see Ó Rian 2010.

⁸ *TD I*, table preceding p. xiii. His obit does not appear in any of the annals.

⁹ *FFÉ* §34.

¹⁰ de Bhulbh, s.v. Phelan, Whelan.
suggested here was one of the Úi Fhialáin, several of whom were poets to Maguire and were enenaghs of ‘Botha Mhuintir Fhialáin’ / ‘Both Úi Fhialáin’ i.e. modern-day Boho, bar. Magheraboy, Co. Fermanagh.11 There were a number of poets with this surname in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century who could be potential authors of this poem, these being Seán Ó Fialáin (†1483),12 Eogan (mac Eogain) Ó Fialáin (†1489)13 and Ferghal (mac Eoghain) Ó Fialáin (†1510),14 who seems to have been the last of the Ó Fialáin poets who had his obit recorded in the annals.15

**Transmission and Edition of Text**

Only 36 of the 41 quatrains of the poem extant in P are contained in A, these being 1–6, 8–9, 11–13, 15–39. The order of the quatrains is slightly different in the two MSS in that P has q. 17 before qq 15–16. I have opted for the ordering of quatrains found in A for this part of the poem, as it offers greater narrative continuity in that q. 15 below continues the idea in q. 14, while q. 18 picks up the theme of q. 17. The two copies of the poem differ from each other quite significantly, and the edition of the text given below is a composite one. Some sound variants offering differences in meaning are found in the two manuscripts, i.e. (the preferred reading is given here in brackets) at 1c (A), 2b (A), 3d (A), 16c (A), 18d (P), 19a (P), 21b (P), 21c (A), 33a (A), 34c (A), 35d (P), 38a (P). Both manuscripts were written in the post-Classical period and contain some unique unmetrical and ungrammatical readings, i.e. at 1cd (P), 2b (AP), 3a (A), 4a (A), 5a (A), 6b (A), 7cd (P), 9ab (P), 10ab (P), 11ab (P), 12b (A), 15b (P), 16cd (P), 18b (A), 18d (A), 17ab (P), 19cd (P), 20ab (P), 20cd (PA), 22a (A), 22d (A), 24cd (P), 25b (A), 25cd (A), 26cd (P), 31cd (P), 33b (A), 33cd (P), 35ab (P), 38cd (A), 39b (P). In these instances, the reading chosen was that which adhered to Classical Irish orthography and grammar, and

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11 The Úi Fhialáin were still enenaghs in Boho at the time of the inquisition of 1607 (MGF, 108).

12 AU 1483.5; AC 1483.3; ALC 1483.2.

13 AU 1489.38; AFM 1489.73; ALC 1489.3.

14 AU 1510; AFM 1510.6; ALC 1510.1; AC 1510.4.

15 It is possible that these poets were ousted from their position as ollaimh to Maguire by the Úi Eodhasa (Hughes 1994, 77–8). The last of the Ó Fialáin poets whose poems have come down to us may be Donnchadh Ó Fialáin who wrote Fada an turas tug Eamhuint for Feidlim son of Fiach Ó Broin and Beannacht ag Baile na Corra for another unknown member of the O’Byrne family in Co. Wicklow. For these poems see L.Bran nos 36, 56. This poet is most likely the same ‘Donogh O Fylan’ of Donore in the parish of Multyfarnam in Corkaree barony in Co. Westmeath who was pardoned in 1601 (O’Rahilly 1921–24, §21).
met the requirements of the metre. In places where both manuscripts give readings that are unmetrical and / or ungrammatical, the text has been restored to Classical norms as found in *IGT* and *BST*.

The requirements of the *deibhidhe* metre are fulfilled throughout the present edition except at q. 39a, which is hypermetrical, and at qq 8c, 41a, which have no alliteration.

In preparing this edition, the customary editorial conventions as found in *TD* I pp xciv–xcviii have been adopted, with the following amendments:

(i) final unstressed *-i* has been rendered as *-e*;
(ii) proper nouns have not been lenited without manuscript support;
(iii) where the two manuscripts give different readings for initial lenition, the readings which adhere to the rules in McKenna 1941 have been preferred;
(iv) *-úa, -ía, -éo* and *-äo*, have been rendered as *-ua, -ia, -eo* and *-ao*.

All true variant readings from the manuscripts are given at the bottom of each page of the text. In these readings, all manuscript abbreviations, including lenition marks, are expanded in italic script. A discussion is supplied in the textual notes on significant differences in readings between the two manuscripts.

**The Text**

1. Fa chroidhe cumthar flaitheas,
   sgaruid cách re comhaitheas;
   roinn gach neith dá bhfoighe fear,
   i leith a chroidhe cuirthear.

2. Flaitheas cumtha fa chridhe
   gé tá ag gach aon d’áiridhe;
   ni hé a chiall go bhfoighe fear
   mian a chroidhe acht le caiteamh.

**Translation**

1. A kingdom is apportioned according to generosity – let all people abandon the laws of inheritance, for the share of all things a man may obtain is [rather] granted to him on account of his generosity.

2. Although a kingdom apportioned according to generosity is in store for every man, this does not mean that a man may receive his heart’s desire just to consume it.

**Headings:** Tadg o higinn .cc. A; Ó Fáolan .cc. P

1  c rún g. P neithe P
2  a achoridhe A  b atá P agghach A ag aon P  c hé chiall A bhfuighe MSS
d  mian croidhe A
3. [For] from generosity – that is part of its fruits – , all produce can be increased; improvement in a man’s kingdom comes from the good that he does.

4. Although the wealth of the grandson of Rudhroighe is not equal to his generosity, his goodness benefits the kingdom of McMahon.

5. Ireland, Laoghaire’s Isle, would not be too much for a man of his generosity. What we have stated ought not to be credited were he on some periphery (i.e. in some outlying area) of Ireland.

6. One third of Banbha’s plain is Mag Mathghamhna’s by right, [as] his generosity has been greater than all that of the other two thirds of Ireland.

7. If the extent of his generosity were compared with the kingdom of Ireland, [it would be found that] Ireland does not exceed Mag Mathghamhna’s heart by the length of a single foot.
8. [Even] if he (i.e. Aodh Óg) may have got each contract that ever was from Ireland to the men of Oirghialla, he will not take them [hereafter]; let he who desires these contracts undertake them.

9. If the original benefit of [such a] contract had been investigated, then it would not be continued, for without the aid of Mag Mathghamhna, such a contract is not beneficial.

10. Often has he quelled a haughty man's conceit: pride cowers through fear of Mag Mathghamhna.

11. A man of his deeds warrants the alliance of high kings, and it is no small honour to receive from him [the position at] his shoulder in return.

12. If one were to humbly request [the return of] a hostage from Mag Mathghamhna, the hostage would return fettered in chains of gold.

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8 a ariamh A
10 c an u. P d mheig (quatrain missing in A)
11 b áird riogh A airdriogh P c nior ('s om.) P d na MSS
12 b sirthuigh A: sirthea P c na hóir P d abhráighe A
13. I gcéannas Chríche Banbha
dá mbeith ri gan fhreasabhra;
ní fhoil acht géill ar ghiallaith
mar soin ón fhéin Oirghiallaigh.
14. Uime nach áireómha sinn
sochair Oirghiall ar Éirinn –
aithnídh dhamh iad re haimsir
nár ghabh siad na sochairsín.
15. Ionann más fhíor na leabhair,
uaiseacht a ngéag ngaínealaigh;
fa choimhriaghail is cobhuih
Oirghiallaigh is Eoghanuigh.
16. Ionann ceart ar chlár Banbha
d’Ó Néill is Mhag Mathghamhna;
acht ceannas don té is treise,
do gheallas é d’inneise.
17. Muna leantaí leatrom sgéal
ar fhíonnfhuil Eachach Doimhléan,
síol Néill ní neasa do rath,
do réir fheasa na n-eolach.

13. If there were an uncontested king ruling the land of Banbha, [even] then would there not be (lit. there is not) such a submission of hostages from the warrior band of the Oirghialla.
14. It is for this reason that we shall not recount the rights of the Oirghialla over Ireland – [for] I have known for long that they have not undertaken such contracts.
15. If books are true, the nobility of the Eoghanaigh and the Oirghialla’s lineages is the same regarding governance and tributes.
16. Ó Néill and Mag Mathghamhna have equal rights to Ireland, except that the strongest may have leadership – this I have promised to proclaim.
17. Had the biased accounts not been heeded (lit. followed) about the fair kindred of Eochaidh Doimhléan, the O’Neills would not be (lit. are not) nearer grace in the lore of the learned.
18. I have found a case which has been ignored because of the ignorance of the biased ones – in the poems in the book, you will find stories which confirm this.

19. I will tell you now afresh the old stories of the battle of Cnámhros; I have only admitted secure knowledge – I lower not their sail (i.e. I do not disparage them).

20. I shall tell once more the of the fall of Fiachaidh Sreabhteine; should I desire to attain the counsel of these tidings, [this would cause] the eradication of ignorance.

21. It was by Breasal Bealach that Fiachaidh Sraibhteine fell in battle; not for our cause were [lit. are] he or his two brothers overcome.

22. [These] sons of the king of Ireland were Eochaidh and Eathach Doimhléan – great the story. One would receive bestowals of land for [such] tales about the descendants of Cathaoir.
23. Three thousand champions fell in the battle to *Breasal Bealach*; this is their true count, when added to six thousand.

24. Nine thousand of the descendants of *Conn* were lost in the battle – what greater misfortune? Although they themselves were slaughtered, many of the *Laighin* also fell.

25. It is heard said that *Cnámhros* got its name from that battle – lore such as this I shall not falsify: the *dinnseanchas* proclaims it.

26. O readers of books who are beholden to reveal all knowledge, if judgements are made based on stories, look [then] to the Book of Leinster.

27. After having read the books, I am not easily refuted; I will reveal all the knowledge under oath to whomever desires it.
28. 'Ceathra bliadhna Colla iar gcath
  'na airdrigh tolcha Teamhrach',
  an rannsa créad fár cumadh,
  más bréag dhamhsa a ndubhramar?

29. Do ghabh ceannas Chláir na bhFionn,
    Colla Uais darbh ainm Cairioll;
    ní caol an ród a riaghail
    d'Aodh Óg agus d'Oirghiallaibh.

30. 'Na aghaidh – ní hadhbhar teinn –
    a bhfuil 'na éagmais d'Éireinn;
    ris féine a bhfuair fa Ghallaibh
    Éire as uair dá n-agallaimh.

31. Dá dhúthaigh Bóinn is Banna,
    's a bhfuil d'aibhnibh eatarra,
    fuinn chnódhonna i ngealann grian;
    tóranna fhearann Oirghiall.

32. A n-abraim is adhnáir linn,
    muna furtacht é d'Éirinn,
    téid sinn i dtaithleach teangadh,
    aithreach linn ar luaidheamar.

28. 'Colla was high king over the mounds of Tara four years after [the] battle': If all I have said is untrue, about what then was this verse composed?
29. Colla Uais whose name was Cairioll – not direct [was] his pathway to governance – took dominion over the Plain of the Fair (i.e. Ireland) for the Oirghialla and Aodh Óg.
30. Against him [now] are all who are lost to Ireland – no cause for hardship; to him alone belongs all that he took amongst the Foreigners of Ireland from the time of his dealings with them.
31. The Boyne and the Bann – and all rivers in between – are part of his patrimony; the borders of the country of the Oirghialla, [those] brown-nutted lands in which the sun shines.
32. If what I say is not for the good of Ireland I would consider it shameful; I would (lit. will) atone for my talk and would regret all that I have mentioned.
33. If Ireland were not in servitude, [and] if the precedent of the ancestors were followed, yours would be the district of Eamhain, which was part of your recent patrimony.

34. If you were to gain – as was gained before you – the headship of Conchobhar’s Plain, you would receive not only the worth of your generosity itself, but also that of your other virtues.

35. Fame above all men is the best exchange for your great bounty; all that you have received in place of these treasures is easier to keep than wealth.

36. You have no regard for treasure, or kine, or other such things; you are not allured by wealth, [though] the whole world is thus deceived.

37. Your generosity knows no bounds as you attend to entreaties; even the man who is most generous to supplicants does not surpass your liberality.
Ní taisgeadha ar a dtéid glas
do sheoid uaisle ná h’ionnmhas;
teagh séad Uí Chuinn gan chomhlaidd
do bhuing a n-éad d’ollamhnaibh.

39. Ní taisgeadha téid a-mugha,
más fior d’iúl gach éarlumh;
atáid ar cuimhne ag Aodh Óg
fuighle na naomh a-nallód.

40. Éireannaigh is Clann Cholla
- ’s ní d’iomarbháigh eatorra –
téid i leith ar fhéile d’Aodh
gé do bheith Éire d’éantaobh.

41. Ní fairsing croidhe dá mhéad
do rún croidhe meic Mairghréag;
dá fhéile go dtí a thogha
’na ri, is Éire in aontomha.

Textual Notes

1a  
  *fa chroidhe*  
  This idiom is uncommon in Classical poetry. I have taken it to mean ‘by generosity’, roughly following Carney (Butlers no. IX q. 1): 
  *Rath fa chroidhe chumus Dia / òs e a bhreitheamh, / dà gach àon don uile fhear, / sàor na cruinne dà ccreditear*  
  ‘It is in proportion to each man’s generosity that God, the maker of the universe in whom men believe, apportions (lit.

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38. No locked up hoard are your precious valuables and resources: the doorless treasure house of the descendant of Conn has taken away the jealousy of chief poets.

39. These treasures are not wasted, according to the knowledge of all the saints: Aodh Óg remembers the sayings of the ancient holy men.

40. Irishmen and the descendants of Colla have a (lit. and a) matter of contention between them: Aodh will succeed (lit. it goes to one side for Aodh) [in this contention] even if [all] Ireland is united [against him].

41. No generosity, no matter how great, is bounteous enough for the son of Margaret’s darling (i.e. Éire); until he is chosen as king for his bounty, Ireland [will be] celibate.
fashions) prosperity, because (in this matter) Christ is his Brehon'. The structure *fà + noun* meaning 'according to *x*’ is attested elsewhere in Classical poetry e.g. McKenna (1919) q. 1a, q. 2cd, q. 56d., *Butlers no. IX*, q. 1a., *A.Ó Dálaigh no. 10*, q. 2b.

**comhaitheas** This word is derived from the legal term *comaithches*. Kelly (1991, 233 n. 23) explains that the true legal meaning of this term comes from *com-aithech ‘fellow rent-payer’, and not from a compounding of *comaith ‘equally good’ and gnás ‘custom, practice’ as is stated in *Corpus iuris Hibernici*. I have taken the translation of ‘co-tenancy’ from *AL* p. 70. In the context of the present poem, it seems that *comhaitheas* references the practice of land being divided and held according to *Bretha Comaithchesa*. Charles-Edwards (104) has written of these laws that ‘the doctrine enunciated there was that neighbourhood [i.e. *comaithches*] was partible inheritance amongst kinsmen’.

**1c roinn** the reading from *P* here, i.e. ‘rún’ is sound, and may offer an alternative meaning to *cd*, namely ‘the secret / intention of everything a man may attain is that it is given to him an account of his generosity’. I have chosen ‘roinn’ from *A*, as it is more in keeping with the general sense of the quatrain that a man’s ‘share’ of a kingdom is dependent upon his own generosity.

**neith** this reading from *A* was chosen instead of ‘neithe’ from *P* as it avoids the metrical fault of ‘rofhad’, while ensuring perfect rhyme with *leith* in line *d*.

**2a chridhe** ‘chroidhe’, found in both MSS has been edited to ‘chridhe’ to ensure perfect rhyme with the corresponding *d’áiridhe* in *b*. For ‘cridhe’, see *IGT* I §83, II §§2, 3 etc.

**2b** The reading from *P* here is ‘atá ag aon dáirighe’, while the reading from *A* is ‘ge tá ag ghach aón dáirighe’. I have opted for the latter reading from *A*, as it offers a meaning more fitting with the rest of the quatrain i.e. ‘which each particular [person] has’ instead of ‘which one particular [person] has’.

**2c** Both *P* and *A* give the reading ‘bhfuighe’, which has been emended to ‘bhfoighe’ to ensure perfect rhyme with ‘chroidhe’ in *d*.

**4c** For *téigh + i dtarbha* meaning, ‘to benefit’ or ‘to profit’, see *DDána no. 15*, q. 2c., *MD no. 11*, q. 2b., *D.Mh. Uidh no. 10*, q. 6a., *Fl.Earls* p. 82, II 5–6.
4d fhlaítheas The reading ‘mhaítheas’ from P is metrically sound, and supports breacadh for this quatrain. The reading of fhlaítheas from A has been preferred, however, on grounds of meaning, as it allows for the continued discourse regarding the relationship between flaitheas and maítheas as per qq 1, 3.

5a niorbh fuláir For this, meaning ‘not too much’, see DIL s.v. foróil (d).

5b Inis Laoghaire Regarding this Bardic name for Ireland, see also DDāna no. 77, q. 8b., no. 74, q. 69b., Bard.Misc no. 253, q. 17b., q. 37b. Laoghaire may be identified with the son of Niall Naoighallach (L.Bran s.v. ‘Laoghaire’). See also Leb.Gab.iii: §614.

5cd This translation comes from the suggestion of an anonymous reader. For eite, meaning ‘borderland’, see AithD.no. 39, q. 30d.

6c ós cionn P gives ‘os ccionn’, and A gives ‘os a chionn’. The eclipsis on ceann as found in P is contrary to BST and IGT. The presence of ‘a’ (poss. pron. 3rd pers. sing.) in P, while not metrically intrusive, provides an unclear meaning. IGT presents no examples of lenited ós chionn but consistently gives ‘ós cionn / ós cinn’ i.e. IGT II §§2, 12, 31, 53, 12; III §80. I have therefore provided the reading os cionn.

7b fóid Iugoine For this Ioghaine, see TD II p. 211, §16.

8c dá bhfaghadh For this, P gives ‘dá bhíghadh’, which provides alliteration with ‘hé’, and while there are examples of this eclipsis of f as bhf in IGT I pp 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12 and 18, none
of these occurs at the beginning of a word that is alliterating with another word beginning with \(fh\) or a vowel. It is difficult then to accept this reading from \(P\), as it cannot be established with confidence that it adheres to Classical Irish orthography or to the metrical requirements of the poem. \(IGT\) III §22, shows that vocalic variants beginning in \(-agh\) and \(-ogh\) were permitted for \(-fagh\) and \(-fogh\) in \(do\)-\(gheibh\). Given this, a reading ‘
\(d\)á n-\(agh\)adh’, which is identical in meaning to the readings from the MSS, and which adheres to the metrical requirements of the poem, might be theoretically possible. I have found no examples, however, of vocalic variant forms such as \(d\)á n-\(agh\)adh, \(d\)á n-\(ogh\)adh etc. following the conjunction ‘
\(d\)á’. In the absence of a satisfactory conjectural reading, then, I have provided ‘
\(d\)á bh\(fagh\)adh’ from \(A\). This reading does not give alliteration in \(c\), but rhymes perfectly with its partner ‘
\(gabh\)adh’ in \(d\), and is also orthographically sound.

\(a\) héirinn

A reading of ‘\(a\) néirinn [= in \(Éirinn\)]’ meaning ‘in Ireland’ would perhaps provide better sense. On this point, it may be noted that \(P\) has the incorrect reading of ‘\(h\)’ instead of ‘\(n\)’ in q. 38\(d\). Given then that both MSS give readings of ‘\(h\)’ where ‘\(n\)’ might be more appropriate, it may not be unreasonable to suggest that a common textual ancestor also contained this mistake, or at least that a common textual ancestor contained renderings of the letter ‘\(n\)’ in which the ascender went above the x-line, thus causing scribes to interpret it as a ‘\(h\)’.

8d \(thoigéaras\)

This is the relative \(é\)-future of \(tocraid\) ‘desires to go, seeks a way, chooses’ \(DIL\); \(Bar.Syn.Tr\) 189.20.

9a \(inleanta\)

For this, meaning ‘continuable’, see \(TD\) no. 13. q. 42c.; \(LCAB\) no. 9, q. 10c.

9d \(chongnamh\)

This is unlenited in both MSS, but lenition has been inserted here in accordance with Classical usage as per \(IGT\) p. 4.1.36 and \(Bar.Syn.Tr\) 214.31–2.

10b \(míneaghadh leis\) for \(minigh\), meaning ‘quell, tame’, see \(DIL\) s.v. \(mínigid\) (b); \(TD\) no. 15, q. 50c, \(MD\) no. 48, q. 2b.

11ab

These lines refer to the right of the King of the Oirghialla to sit on the right hand side of the king of Tara, for which see \(Lebor.Cert\) II 1063–4, 1113–14 and \(ACP\) v. 49.

12b \(dá sirtheá\)

MS A here gives ‘\(sírhuigh\)’, presumably a non-Classical rendering of a pass. subj. form giving the meaning ‘[if
a hostage] were sent’. The -gh ending of this form precludes the elision of the following proclitic ‘ar’, thus leaving eight syllables in the line. The reading from P ‘[dá] sirthea’ giving the 2nd pers. cond. ‘if one would send’ is preferred as it facilitates the elision of ‘ar’ and gives the correct line length of eight syllables.

12c  *lais* this 3 sg. form of ‘le’ is found in both MSS, and is needed to ensure perfect rhyme with *ais* in *d*. For other examples of the present spelling, see *IGT II* §§2, 11; *IGT III* §§16, 106 etc.

‘*na ór*’ MS P here gives ‘*ina hór*’ presumably indicating a belief that *glas* was a feminine noun, with its predicate *ór* requiring a *h*-prothesis after the poss. pron. 3 sg. fem. *a* in ‘*ina*’.

*IGT* §96, however, shows that *glas* ‘a lock’ was considered a masculine *o*-stem, and therefore should be preceded by the poss. pron. 3 sg. masc., without a *h*-prothesis, as in ‘*na ór*’ as per *A*. On these grounds, I have chosen the reading from *A*.

This line may refer to the legend that if any of the chiefs of Clann Cholla, the ancestors of the Oirghialla, were taken as hostage and shackled, then their shackles should be made of gold, cf. *Lebor.Cert* ll. 1168–71; *TD* no. 9, qq 27–9. In keeping, perhaps, with this statement from *Lebor Cert*, the name *Oirghialla* has been construed to mean ‘golden hostages’ by means of a lengthening of its initial syllable, which was historically short (*TD* II, pp 228–30, 233). For the most recent discussion of the name *Airgialla*, of which *Oirghialla* is a Classical Irish version, see Bhreathnach (2005, 95).

13c  *foil* The MSS readings for this are *ful* (*P*) and *bhfuil* (*A*). I have edited this to *fhoil* to ensure perfect rhyme with *soin* in *d*.

13b  *chricle* For this, *P* gives *chricle* while *A* gives *criche*. I have preferred *P*’s reading as it adheres to the rule stated by McKenna in *Bard.Syn.Tr* p. 267 that ‘gens. like *cláir, fuinn, fóid*, &c. preceding a gen. of a proper name . . . are usually lenited’.

13cd  These two lines are echoed in *TD* no. 9, q. 22: *Adeirid éalaigh fóid Bhreagh / nach fuil ag righ Guirt Ghaoidheal / d’ainír acht gàill ar ghiallaibh / d’fagháil ón féin *Oighiallaigh* (The learned ones of Bregia’s land say that the king of the Field of the Gael gets no further homage from the warriors of the *Oirghialla* than an exchange of hostages).

14a  *áireómha* MS *P* here gives ‘aireobha sinn’. The -eo in ‘aireobha’, although lacking a length mark, may indicate that an
-eó future form was intended here. This quatrain is missing from A, and in the absence of a second textual witness or metrical confirmation for spelling, I have tentatively rendered this as an -eó future form of ad-rimi, for which see IGT III §68.

15a fhior As per Bard.Misc no. 214, q. 16a, I have amended ‘fior’ from the MSS to fhior for alliteration.

16d d’inneise MS A gives this as dfiadhneisi, which is presumably intended as a verbal noun derived from fiadnaise ‘witness, testimony’ DIL. I have not found any other examples of this form. P gives innisi, which does not conform to the metrical requirements of the poem. I have provided the readinginneise, loosely based on P. This form is not given in IGT, but is found elsewhere in Classical Irish poetry, i.e. AithD no. 98, q. 7b; DDána no. 107, q. 4d and LCAB no. 48, q. 5c.

17b Eochaidh Duibhléan Son of Cairbre Lifeachair and ancestor of the Oirghialla, for whom see MacNeill §62.

18a cuirthe i suim For cuir(the) + i + suim, meaning ‘heeded’, see IBP no. 33, q. 1b, no. 14, q. 4b, no. 55, q. 8a.

19a Inneósad For this, A gives ‘tiocfad tharra’, a sound variant which perhaps means ‘I will mention’. For tar (verb) + t(h)ar (prep.) giving ‘mention / speak of’ see DIL s.v. do-icc II (c) TAR.

19b seansgéala Catha Cnáimhros This is the story of the battle of Cnám(h)ros, which took place after Breasal Bealach refused to pay the bóramha, ‘cattle tribute’, to Cairpre Lifeachair, king of Tara, without a battle. After this refusal, Cairpre mustered Leath Choinn and marched to Cnámros, while Breasal went to enlist the help of the fian of Find mac Cumhaill. After some poetic deliberation, Find’s fian, ‘warrior band’, joined battle on the side of Breasal to help defeat Cairpre Lifeachair, slaying nine thousand of the men of Leath Choinn and three of Cairpre’s sons, namely Eochaidh, Eochaidh Doimhlén and Fiachu Roptene [al. Sraibhtine] (Bor. §§22a–36).

19c níor ghabh P here gives ‘ní gheibh mé’. This form is ungrammatical, as in Classical Irish a dependent form in -f(h)agh or -f(h)ogh should be expected after the negative particle ni (see IGT III §22), and the 1st pers. act. pres. analytical form suggested here is not permitted in Classical Gaelic grammar. The reading ghabh is supplied from A.
Both copies of the poem are corrupt here, which makes the second couplet of this quatrain difficult to translate. The line as given in $A$, i.e. ‘aséol ní hé go nislighim’, is hypermetrical, and the version in $P$, i.e. ‘a seól ní seadh islishim’, does not rhyme with c, while also giving the dubious reading ‘nì seadh’. Given then that the text is defective at the same place in both witnesses, one might reasonably assume that either (a) they were copied from a common source that was itself corrupt or difficult to decipher at this part of the text, or (b) they were copied from separate sources that were in turn copied from a perhaps common source that was corrupt or difficult to decipher at this point in the text. Either way, it may be suggested that the text as transmitted to both $P$ and $A$ has been corrupted, thus opening up the possibility of a conjectural emendation. I have rendered this line ‘a seói ní hé islighim’, roughly based on $P$. I cannot be sure that I have accurately conveyed the meaning of $seól$, but consider that the sense intended here is similar to that in Breatnach 1973 q. 7ab: Trí rígh do ríoghaibh fer bhFáil / tērna mar sin, seól tocrāidh ‘Three of the kings of the men of Ireland perished thus (miserable course)’. The translation of $islighim$ as ‘I discredit’ is tentative.

These lines differ greatly in $P$ and $A$. I have based my edition of the lines on $A$, with $aighneas:aínbhfeas$ instead of $meólsa:eólusa (P)$ as the use of $aighneas$ ‘advice, counsel’ DIL allows for the continuation of the pseudo-legalistic argument from the preceeding quatrains.

See textual note 19b above.

$torchair le A$ gives ‘torchuir’ and $P$ gives ‘torchar’. I have emended this to Classical $torchair$, as in $IGT$ III §21.

$Breasal mBéalach A$ here gives uneclipsed $Béalach$. There was no definitive rule in Classical Gaelic to eclipse an adjective following a noun in the accusative unless the noun was governed by an article ($SnaG$ IV, §3.3), and McKenna (1941, 56) states that following masculine nouns in the accusative singular after preposition without the article ‘eclipsed and non-eclipsed epithets are about equally common.’ I have chosen the reading from $P$ with an eclipse following Knott’s statement in $TD$ I, ciii-iv that ‘when the adj. follows a noun directly preceded by a prep. eclipse is generally shown in good MSS when the prep. is one of those which governed only the acc. in the earlier language’.
This Breasal’s obit is given in AU 435.1, though O’Rahilly in EIHM 17-18, n. 2 thought that this date was perhaps too late. Gwynn Metr. Dind III, 503 has also pointed out that this obit may be incorrect, as Cairbre Liffachair, who is said to have fallen at the Battle of Cnámhos, is given an obit of 284 in FM. If the obit of FM for Cairbre Lifechair is taken as correct, then he and Breasal Bealach cannot have been contemporaries.

22b Eochaidh is Eathach In LL II 38360-5, the three sons of Cairpre Lifechair are named as Eochaid & Eochaid Domlén & Fiachu Roptene. In AFM 323.1; IGT I §52; Geneal.Reg pp 28, 66, as well as in our poem, Eathach is also used as a spelling for Eochaidh. For this, see O Mainnin, textual note on 33bc.

22c do ghéabha A gives do ghéabha, which seems to imply a third person verbal form. As it is difficult to establish the agent of such a 3rd pers. sg. form in this or the previous quatrain, I have chosen the 2nd pers. form do ghéabha based on P.

22d Clannuibh Cathaoir These are the families descended from Cathaer Máir, the ancestor of the Laighin, and the grandfather of Breasal Bealach; see EIHM pp 268-9. Unlenited ‘cathaoir’ is given in A, while a lenition is supplied in P. Breatnach (1973, textual note 14a), has noted that the survey of initial mutations in Classical poetry carried out by McKenna (1941) illustrates that there was no concrete rule regarding lenition of proper nouns in the genitive. I have chosen the unlenited reading from A based on unlenited examples of Cathaoir following chlannaibh from RIA MS 23 F 16 l.7 and ADV MS 72 1 44 f. 8r l.9.

23cd The number of slain at the battle of Cnámhos is also given as nine thousand in A Chóic.Chó. q. 14c, Bor: §36 and in Corp.Gen §327, while Metr. Dinds. III no. 17, q. 12 gives nine thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine.

24a gá mó For this, meaning ‘such great / how great’, see IBP no. 32, q. 9c.

24b ó gCuinn These are the descendants of Conn Céadchathach, among whom were Cairpre Lifechair and Eochaidh Doimhléan cf. Ir.Kings p. 280.

25a-d See note on 19b above.

27d fá luighe For this, meaning ‘under oath (to)’, see DIL s.v. luighe (b). A reading of fá luighe don té thoigeóras in d possibly
gives better sense, as léig, when meaning ‘let go, release’, is most often used intransitively with the preposition do. See DIL s.v. léicid (d).

28a This seems to echo the line cethri bliadna Colla iar cath in Gilla Cóem. §1, q. 144c. Given that this seems to be the poet’s source, I have chosen the reading ‘ceathra bliadhna’ from P instead of ‘tré bliaghna’ from A.

29a Cairell One of the three sons of Eochaidh Doimhléan who, along with his two brothers Muireadhach (al. Colla-Fo-Chri) and Áedh (al. Colla Mend) was given the sobriquet Colla cf. Corp.Gen §§ 74-5. For the most extensive discussion of the Three Collas, see Schlegel, who suggests the three Collas may have been Romano-Briton soldiers.

30c féine Both MSS give féin. However, the extra syllable ‘e’ is required here to ensure perfect rhyme with Éire in d, as in Bard.Misc no. 213, q. 30c. This emphatic form of féin is not, to my knowledge, found in IGT, but is widely attested elsewhere in Classical Irish poetry, e.g. in TD no. 24. q. 1c and DDána no. 97. q. 27c.

30cd fa Ghallaibh Éire In the annals from the thirteenth century onwards, the term Gaill Éireann, ‘Foreigners of Ireland’, denoted the Norman / Hiberno-Norman settlers, especially those who dwelt in the Pale (see AU 1222.0, 1315.5, 1380.5, 1425 etc). This couplet may be a reference to Aodh Óg Mág Mathghamhna’s raid in 1486 on the twenty-eight towns of Galldacht Machaire Airghiall ‘The Galldacht of the Plain of Oriel’ (see AFM 1486.36).

31ab This couplet is very similar to DDána no. 96, q. 5ab: Innbhear Bóinne agus Banna / is gach fonn dá bhfuil eatorra. These lines are from the poem beginning Foraire Uladh ar Aodh attributed to Maol Sheachluinn na nUirsgéal Ó hUiginn, who probably composed it around 1424 on Aodh Mág Aonhgusa; see Ó Riain 2008, 5 n. 8.

31a-d TD no. 9, q. 35 seems to be based on this quatrain, i.e. Éirne is Fionn, Bóinn is Banna, / 'sgach tir dá dtá eatorra – / fuinn chnódhonna i ngealann grian – / tóranna d'fhéarann Oirghiall. This borrowing by Tadhg Dall happily supplies us with a more satisfactory reading for cd than that in P. In P, cd reads as fuinn cnó dhonn a agealann grian / tóranna fearoinn oirghiall. As it
seems likely that Tadhg Dall based his quatrain on an earlier version than that found in our witness (written c. 1687). I have seen fit to emend these lines in keeping with Tadhg Dall’s. As a rhyming pair, cnódhonn(a) / tórann(a) are also found in DDána no. 111, q. 8bd and in TD no. 17, q. 50cd; see also Bergin 1914, 27–8.

31cd A here gives ‘go seanfhonn oiligh ni an / fearonn cloidhimmh na ccolladh’ (to the old land of Oileach [...] / the swordland of the Collas).

31c chnódhonna P here gives the unlenited cnódhonna. I have provided lenition as per McKenna 1941, 52 and TD no. 9, q. 35c.

33a fa chion I am in agreement with Bard.Misc. no. 214, q. 33a, in regarding the reading ‘chionn’ here with final -nn as being erroneous: cion with a single -n, as found in A, allows for the given reading ‘fa chion’, which is translated here as ‘in servitude’ as per DBM no. 3, q. 2b.

33c duid The reading for this from the MSS is duit. It has been edited to duid to ensure perfect rhyme with cuid in d.

34a frioth Following Mac Cárthaigh 2003, p. 105, note 2a, I have emended fri P: frith A to frioth to conform with Classical Gaelic spelling as in IGT III §22.

34b chríche Both manuscripts give unlenited ‘críche’. For the addition of lenition here, see note 13b above.

34cd A reading based on A for these lines has been preferred here. P here gives ‘luach thfheile uile a mhán / dot threighe uile a fhághail’, the meaning of which is unclear to me.

35a aoinghir I have preferred the reading ‘aoinghir’ from A to unmetrical ‘aonfhir’ from P.

35b fhéarr Neither MS witness supplies lenition here. As per Bard.Misc no. 214, q. 35b, I have added lenition for alliteration with ‘iolmhaoimh’.

36b The reading from P ‘agad acht a aithearrach’ may imply the meaning ‘you have no love for wealth or kine but (rather) the opposite’ for ab. I have been unable, however, to find any examples form Classical poetry that support aithearrach meaning ‘the opposite’ in this way. I have opted for the reading ‘aguibh nó dá aithearrach’ from A, with aithearrach here meaning ‘other (wealth)’, as in aitherrach (c) DIL and in IBP no. 13, q. 12c.
Both MSS here give *chroidhe*. I have emended this to *chridhe* for rhyme. See note 2a above.

For this meaning ‘attend to an entreaty’, see *Dán Dé* no. 15, q. 7b.

Both MSS here give *féile*. As per *Bard.Misc* no. 214, q. 37c, I have inserted lenition here for alliteration.

There seem to be three possible translations of this word: (a) an intercessor, as in *DDána* no. 84, q. 6b, no. 7, q. 7d, or (b) a ‘suitor’, as in *TD* no. 19, q. 11a, or (c) ‘one who entreats’, coming from *impidhe* (cf. *DIL* s.v. *impide*). Given the context of this quatrain, where Aodh Óg’s munificence is being extolled, it is likely that the translation provided, based on (c) above is most appropriate.

The reading from *A* in this line ‘Ni taisgeadha ar a ttéid glas’ has been preferred to that of *P*, which is ‘Na taisgidhe ar a ttéid glas’, as it echoes *c* in this quatrain, and fits more satisfactorily with the general premise of these lines, i.e. that the munificence of Aodh Óg knows no boundaries.

The reading from *A* ‘Ni teasgeadha téid amugha’, i.e. ‘the treasures are not wasted’ is preferred to that of *P* ‘Na taisgeadha téid a mugha’, i.e. ‘the treasures are wasted’, as it supports the main thesis of the poem that the bestowal of wealth is the key to advancement on earth and in heaven. This line is hypermetrical in both manuscripts.

I am indebted to Dr Gordon Ó Riain for his advice on this quatrain. The translation here is tentative, and I have not found any other examples of ‘téid i leith do x’ meaning ‘x succeeds’, but the general sense of the quatrain, as translated here, is in keeping with the central thesis of the poem that Aodh Óg is a worthy leader owing to his generosity.

The manuscript is very smudged at this point, though a reading of *aontog<ha>* as in *Bard.Misc* no. 214, q. 41d seems possible. Such a reading may suggest a meaning of ‘unanimously’. I have emended it here to *aontomha*, i.e. *oentama* *DIL* ‘unmarried state, celibacy’, as this better suits the sense of the quatrain.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.O Dálaigh</td>
<td>L. McKenna, Dánta do chum Aonghus Fionn Ó Dálaigh. Dublin 1919.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caithr. CC</td>
<td>A. Bugge, Caithreim Cellachain Caisil. Christiania, 1905.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dán Dé</td>
<td>L. McKenna, Dán Dé: the poems of Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh and the religious poems in the duanaire of the Yellow Book of Lecan. Dublin 1922.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDána</td>
<td>L. Mac Cionnaith, Dioghlum dána. Baile Átha Cliath 1938.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIL</td>
<td>Dictionary of the Irish language: based mainly on Old and Middle Irish materials. Dublin 1913–75.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
51

Geneal. Reg

Gilla Cóem.

IBP

IGT

Ir.Kings

L. Bran

LCAB

LL

Leb. Cert

MD

Metr. Dind

MGF

O’Hara

Onom.

PGBMM

PH

Poem.Airg.

RIA Cat.
*Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*. Dublin 1926–70.

Scéla Lái B.

TD

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Níocláis Mac Cathmhaoil

Ollscoil Uladh