

MYTHICAL AND LOCAL LANDSCAPES: DÁIBHÍ Ó BRUADAIR'S
IOMDHA SGÉIMH AR CHUR NA CLUANA

IOMDHA *sgéimh ar chur na cluana*¹ is one of two epithalamia composed by Dáibhí Ó Bruadair in a style known as *crossántacht*, in which verse composed in the syllabic metre *snéadhbhairdne* is interspersed with prose narratives.² The poem celebrates the marriage of Úna de Búrc and Dominic Roche, both from prominent Limerick families. Úna was the daughter of Seán de Búrc of Cahirmoyle³ and Anna Ní Urthuile of Knocklong;⁴ Dominic was the son of Jordon Óg Roche⁵ and Mór Ní Bhriain.⁶ The date of the *crossántacht* is uncertain; however, 1662–67 is a plausible estimate.⁷ By this time the Cromwellian conquest and confiscation of lands had reduced Ó Bruadair's Irish and Anglo-Norman patrons, and those few who regained a portion of their former lands were offered momentary relief but little security.

The point of this paper is to show how Ó Bruadair's language brings together a traditional understanding of marriage, which emphasizes a joining of

¹ John C. Mac Erlean (ed.), *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruidair, the poems of David Ó Bruadair* i, Irish Texts Society XI (London 1910) 88–117.

² For descriptions of the *crossántacht* see Eleanor Knott (ed.), *A bhfuil aguinn dár chum Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn, the bardic poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn (1550–1591)* i, Irish Texts Society XXII (London 1922) lxiii; Alan Harrison, *An chrossántacht* (Baile Átha Cliath 1979); Alan Harrison, *The Irish trickster* (Sheffield 1989) 60.

³ Cathair Maothail ('fortress of the biestings') is in the barony of Shanid, parish of Rathronan; see Art Ó Maolfabhail, *Logainmneacha na hÉireann, imleabhar I: Contae Luimnigh* (Baile Átha Cliath 1990) 88. Seán de Búrc is not named among the proprietors of Cahirmoyle outlined by T. J. Westropp (from 1317–1655); see 'The Ancient Castles of the County of Limerick', *PRIA* 26 C (1906–07) 55–108 (North-Eastern Baronies), 143–200 (Central and South-Eastern Baronies), 201–64 (Western Baronies), at 246 § 394. Mac Erlean proposed that he held lands under Daniel O'Brien (Ó Bruad. i 88). Mac Erlean does not note his source; however, Daniel O'Brien is named as proprietor of lands in 'Keanmoy, Cahirmeahill and Balliduan'; see Robert C. Simington, *The Civil Survey A.D. 1654–1656, County of Limerick* iv (Dublin 1938) 318–19 § 83. Later adjudications name 'Burke, John, Cahirmoyle, 6 July 1694'; see J. G. Simms, 'Irish Jacobites', *Analecta Hibernica* 22 (1960) 11–230, at 91.

⁴ Anna Ní Urthuile was the daughter of John Hurley 'of Cnockellonge', who is named as the original proprietor of Ballyduane and Lispeakan in the parish of Rathronan (Simington, *Civil Survey*, 320), and Ballyegnie, in the parish of Cluoneagh (ibid. 314). Mac Erlean identifies John as the brother of Sir Maurice Hurley (Ó Bruad. i, 89), who held extensive lands in Knocklong, in the barony of Coshlea. Cf. Simington, *Civil Survey*, 232–3. See further, Denis Hurly, 'Some account of the Family of O'Hurly', *JCHAS* 11 (1905) 105–23, at 114–15.

⁵ Jordon Óg Roche was Mayor of Limerick City in 1639, and had lands in the parish of Carnary in the city of Limerick and in the parish of Cahir Ivahally (Simington, *Civil Survey*, 469–71).

⁶ Jordon Óg Roche's marriage to 'Marne O'Brien' is noted in Hon. Vicary Gibbs (ed.), *The complete peerage of England Scotland Ireland Great Britain and the United Kingdom* ii (London 1912) 469. I thank Dr Kenneth Nicholls for directing me to this source. Ó Bruadair connects her to the O'Briens of Arra (Ó Bruad. i, 108, stanzas 29–30).

⁷ The date 1662–63 has been proposed by Mac Erlean (Ó Bruad. i, 90–91). Dr Dara Binéid has recently proposed 1661–62; see *Searc na suadh: gnéithe de fhilíocht Dháibhí Uí Bhruidair* (Baile Átha Cliath 2003) 121. For further comments on the date of the poem see fn. 90.

the couple, lineages and lands, with the contemporary reality of dispossession, which was increasingly manifested in the local landscape. The analysis focuses on two moments: a sequence of verse which depicts the couple's sexual union as a heroic 'leap' into a difficult but fruitful landscape (stanzas 16–24), and a prose interlude in which the legend of a magical release of the streams of Munster by the druid Mogh Ruith⁸ is juxtaposed to a contemporary account of a New English planter carving out his estate in a neighbouring village.⁹ The passages, which will be discussed below,¹⁰ differ in topic and style and occur at different moments in the poem; however, I propose a connection. The later prose narrative reiterates a theme of fertility established in the verse, where a breaking of barriers yields beneficial results; moreover, the poet extends the theme by bringing a mythological tale into the contemporary moment and the local landscape. Ó Bruadair recalls the druid Mogh Ruith's release of the waters into a barren land and, by doing so, he exposes the antithetical values of an expanding colonial culture, where natural abundance is hoarded to enrich the new estate. The juxtaposition of sexual and political themes within the marriage poem, and the mythological allusions which express these themes, give the occasion an important focus. For the guests who celebrated a union which offered some hope of offspring and communal well-being, the enterprise of the New English planter is revealed as contrary to all that the wedding feast promises.

Before turning to the analysis, I note that the passages cited here are taken from an edition and translation of Ó Bruadair's wedding *crossántacht* which I am preparing for publication. The text of *Iomdha sgéimh ar chur na cluana* is based on the oldest manuscript, RIA ms 21 (23 M 31), pp. 493–502 (M), written by Eoghan Ó Caoimh (c. 1695).¹¹ I also consider a copy in RIA ms 765 (23 C 26), pp. 55–60 (C), written by Tomás Ó Súilleabháin (1771–73).¹² John Mac Erlean based his edition of the poem primarily on a copy of Ó Caoimh's manuscript made by Piaras Móinséal in 1814 (P),¹³ and

⁸M. L. Sjoestedt (ed.), 'Forbuis Droma Damhghaire', *RC* 43 (1926) 1–123; *RC* 44 (1927) 157–86.

⁹Cf. also Mac Erlean, Ó Bruad. i 100–102 (stanzas 16–24), 111 [Prose E].

¹⁰The passages cited in this analysis are taken from an edition of the poem which I am presently preparing.

¹¹T. F. O'Rahilly, *RIA Cat.* fasc. i (Dublin 1926) 70. I am grateful to the Royal Irish Academy for granting me permission to examine the manuscripts. I wish to thank Prof. Seán Ó Coileáin for his generous assistance while preparing the translation of the wedding poems, and Dr John Carey for many references relating to the earlier literature. I also thank Prof. Pádraig Ó Macháin for his helpful comments on the text and manuscript readings. Any errors are my own.

¹²K. Mulchrone, *RIA Cat.* fasc. xix (Dublin 1936) 2355–62, at 2360. A comparison of scribal hands persuades me that he is the Tomás Ó Súilleabháin who wrote NLI G 22 ('Leabhar Gearr na Pailíse') in 1773. See N. Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland* ii (Dublin 1961) 13–18. An examination of the handwriting also confirms that he is not the Tomás Ó Súilleabháin who wrote Cork ms 59 (1812–15), for whom see Breandán Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhathie Chorcaí, 1700–1850* (Baile Átha Cliath 1982) 183. I thank Dr Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail for directing me to these manuscripts. I also thank the Boole Library, Special Collections, for sending me selections from Cork ms 59.

¹³Torna ms 45, pp. 55–60; see Pádraig de Brún, *Clár lámhscríbhinní Gailege Choláiste Ollscoile Chorcaí: cnuasach Thorna* i (Baile Átha Cliath 1967) 126–33. I thank the Boole Library, Special

seems to have dismissed Ó Súilleabháin's text.¹⁴ While I have approached the manuscript tradition differently, I am indebted to Mac Erlean's invaluable work.

Ó Bruadair urges the consummation of the marriage in verses which are structurally and thematically at the centre of the poem. The poetic diction mythologizes the sexual union, so that the couple's encounter is made visible within the public gathering, and yet is distanced and impersonalized. The bridegroom performs a heroic exploit; the bride is represented as sacred land:

Dís ré comhar clú do hearbadh
 Úna is Doimnic;
 stiúir ón Rígh do róin an fhairrge
 dóibh chum iomluit.
 Oighre Róistigh rátha Luimnigh,
 laochdha a mheanma,
 lingfidh léim bhus áirmheach oirbheart
 láireach leanbhdha.
 Lingfidh céim go gcead don eaglais,
 eadh fón dtearmuin,
 brisfidh bearna ar chladh na reilg
 bladh dá mheanmain. (Stanzas 16–18)

Two have been charged with a famous co-tillage—Úna and Dominick; the King who made the sea has ordained that they should perform.

The heir of the Roche of the fortress of Limerick—heroic his spirit—will leap a leap which will be bountiful [as] an exploit: [she is] a fruitful mare-steed.

He will leap a stile with the church's leave, a distance into the sanctuary; he will break a gap in the rampart of the churchyard—the fame of his spirit.

The union of the couple is a 'co-tillage' (*comhar*),¹⁵ and the two opening couplets depict a metaphorical ploughing of land and sea. A 'rudder' (*stiúir*) is given to them as a directive to 'perform' or 'toss' (*iomluit*), a word which

Collections, for permission to examine this manuscript. See also T. F. O'Rahilly, *RIA Cat.* fasc. i, 64; Torna, 'An tAthair Eóghan Ó Caoimh: a bheatha agus a shaothar', *Gadelica* i (Dublin 1912–13) 1–9, at 4n.

¹⁴Mac Erlean refers to RIA ms 674 (23 C 24) (Ó Bruad. i, 88); however, he does not record variants from this manuscript. The variants do not significantly affect the text of passages cited in this essay.

¹⁵For a use of *comhar* 'co-tillage' in a marriage context compare the Modern Irish triad: *Trí nithe bhíos geal 'na dtosach, breac 'na lár, agus dubh 'na ndeireadh, .i. cómhar, cleamhnas, agus éintigheas*. 'Three things that are bright in their beginning, speckled in the middle and black in their end: that is, joint-tillage, a match, living together in the one house.' See T. F. O'Rahilly (ed.), *A miscellany of Irish proverbs* (Dublin 1922) 68 § 238.

suggests movement and a plying of weapons,¹⁶ and which anticipates the action which follows. The ‘leap’ (*léim*) performed in a difficult landscape recalls earlier tales associated with a sexual union. No particular tale is specified, but several are suggested. The hero Cú Chulainn leaps three ramparts to win Emer;¹⁷ Finn Mac Cumhaill, in *Feis Tighe Chonáin*, leaps across *all dubh dua[i]bhseach domain gáibteach gráineamail* ‘a black, forbidding deep dangerous odious chasm’ to fulfill the brideprice (*coibchi*) imposed by Athnat, daughter of Dáire of the *sidhe*, who also requires, as the gift of the morning (*aiscidh maidne*), that the hero perform the leap every year.¹⁸ The collocation *lingfidh léim* (stanza 18) recalls a quatrain about Gormlaith, daughter of Murchadh mac Finn, whose marriages with a trio of prominent rulers are represented as her ‘three leaps’ (*Trí léimend ra ling Gormlaith*) in twelfth-century genealogies;¹⁹ and its recurrence in a later Munster compilation, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*,²⁰ makes Ó Bruadair’s familiarity with the collocation possible.

The final lines of stanza 17, *lingfidh léim bhús áirmheach oirbheart / láireach leanbhdha*, emphasize a productive union. A cluster of alliterating words (*lingfidh léim ... / láireach leanbhdha*), particularly noticeable since alliteration is frequently absent in line *d*,²¹ represents the coupling with playful ambiguity. The illustrious leap is performed by the bridegroom; however, the compound *láireach* ‘mare-steed’²² seems to involve the bride in the act of leaping. The adjective *leanbhdha* is otherwise attested only in a

¹⁶T. F. O’Rahilly, *Measgra dánta: miscellaneous Irish poems* (Corcaigh 1927, repr. 1953) 256.

¹⁷Arriving at the fort of Forgall, *foceird ích n-erred de tarsna trí lissu co mbaí for lár in dúinaid* ‘he performed a salmon leap over three ramparts until he was in the middle of the fort’; see A. G. Van Hamel (ed.), *Compert Con Culainn* (Dublin 1933, repr. 1978) 63 § 86.

¹⁸Maud Joynt (ed.), *Feis Tighe Chonáin* (Dublin 1936) 5.164–5, 6.194–203.

¹⁹*Trí léimend ra ling Gormlaith / ní lingfea ben co bráth; / léim i nÁth Cliath, léim i Temraig, / léim i Cassel, carnmaig ós chách*, ‘Gormlaith leaped three leaps which no woman will leap until Doomsday: a leap into Dublin, a leap into Tara, a leap into Cashel, the plain with the mound which surpasses all.’ See Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Tales of Three Gormlaiths in Medieval Irish Literature’, *Ériu* 52 (2002) 1–24, at 18 n. 105. Cf. M. A. O’Brien (ed.), *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin 1962, repr. 2005) 13; John O’Donovan (ed.), *Annals of the Four Masters* ii (Dublin 1851) 820 s.a. 1030. Dr Ní Mhaonaigh (ibid. 18 n. 105) has noted that a similar metaphor occurs elsewhere in the genealogies to describe the birth of three sons.

²⁰Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (ed.), *An Leabhar Muimhneach* (Baile Átha Cliath 1940) 339.

²¹E. Knott, *An introduction to Irish syllabic poetry of the period 1200–1600* (Dublin 1957, repr. 2005) 17–18. Alliteration in line *d* occurs in only 16 of the 45 stanzas of ‘*Iomdha sgéimh*’. Here, however, alliteration occurs within line *d* and also links lines 17d–18a *láireach leanbhdha / Lingfidh céim*.

²²I take *láireach* as a compound consisting of *láir* ‘mare’ and *each* ‘steed’. I am grateful to Dr Seán Ua Súilleabháin for providing me with the following example in a folksong taken down from Nóra Ní Chonaill in Muskerry in 1934 (*Roinn Bhéaloideas Éireann*/Department of Irish Folklore, University College Dublin, Manuscript 48, 229–32). The song was dictated by Nóra Ní Chonaill, na hUlláin, Baile Mhúirne, at some stage between 1934-01-08 and 1934-05-31, and written by Proinséas Ó Ceallaigh, Gort na Tiobhratan, Baile Bhúirne. *Cuirfí ór buí ar do chóistí agus láireach faíot* (MS *fút*) *is gach sórd de thrí sórdaibh dob fheárr le mnaoi, clócaí dubha ‘na róbaí led shálaibh síos. Ní gheobhad leat mar nóchar agus fág a’ tslí.* (Spelling has been simplified.) ‘Yellow gold would be put on your coaches and a mare-steed beneath you, and each of the three things preferred by woman; black cloaks as robes down to your heels.’ ‘I shall not go with you as a spouse and get out of the way’ (woman’s reply). Cf. *eachlair* (TBC Stowe, 4986), cited in *DIL* s.v. *láir*. An adjective *láireach* ‘mare-like’(?) would suit the context but is unattested.

poem by Fear Flatha Ó Gnímh, where it again describes a leap.²³ In the latter instance, the poet notes that *léimibh lúidh leanbhdha* ‘vigorous youthful leaps’ performed by the young aspirant to the chieftaincy are seemingly incompatible with the *tréidhibh tighearna* ‘the qualities of a lord’; however, the juxtaposition may be intended to depict the young prince’s natural ability to rule and, perhaps, to produce offspring. Ó Bruadair’s emphasis on a productive union suggests taking *leanbhdha* ‘youthful’ to mean ‘fruitful’ or ‘child-producing’;²⁴ and *áirmheach* ‘numerous’ may signify plentiful offspring.²⁵ That Ó Bruadair associated the ‘leap’ with both heroic attributes and procreation is further suggested by a religious poem composed by him in which the act of leaping is part of a metaphorical representation of the incarnation of Christ: *mar ghréin tré ghloin do léimeadh sibh / d’aonscrios uilc Ádhaimh* ‘like sun through glass you leaped to blot out Adam’s sin’.²⁶

Ó Bruadair creates a metaphorical landscape in which the sexual union is represented. The hero will encounter ‘a rough, secluded place’ (*droibhéal diamhair*)²⁷ and enter a protected, ‘sacred ground’ (*fón dtearmuin*). The defloration is represented as a plundering of a glen (*iomdha gleann dá ghné do coilleadh*); ‘striking against a bank’ (*béin fán mbruach*); and the ‘track of a weapon in the land’ (*rian san gcrích*). The terrain described can perhaps be compared to the inviting but prohibitive landscape depicted in the kennings exchanged between Emer and Cú Chulainn in *Tochmarc Emire*, where Emer identifies herself as *Temair bān* ‘fair (?) Tara’, a prominent sacred enclosure into which few gain admittance; as ‘a sprig which is not ceded’ (*gass nád forfóemthar*); and as a ‘rushland which is not traversed’ (*lúachair nád imthegar*).²⁸ The bridegroom likewise encounters an inaccessible but fruitful landscape:

Droibhéal diamhair lé dá bhfionna
fé ná deachadh
gan a lann i bhfraoch ’s i bhfulang
saoth ná seachadh.

²³ ‘Ós cionn tíre an tráth do bhiadh / cionnus budh héidir d’óigthriath / súil ar léimibh lúidh leanbhdha, / súil ar thréidhibh tigherna?’, Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (ed.), *Leabhar Cloinne Aodha Buidhe* (Baile Átha Cliath 1931) 167.37–40.

²⁴ See *DIL* s.v. *lenbda*, ‘childish, puerile’. I thank Prof. Máirtín Ó Murchú for suggesting this possible sense to me.

²⁵ A similar sense is suggested in verses by Pádraigín Haicéad (Tadhg Ó Donnchadha) (ed.), *Saothar filidheachta an athar Pádraigín Haicéad* (Baile Átha Cliath 1916) 74.21–8), where the *feis leabtha agus lámhe* ‘the feast of the bed and the hand’ (l. 122) results in *clann ba hamhra ar áille* ‘children who were renowned for beauty’ (l. 24) and (in the subsequent stanza) *tigheas flaitheamhail acmhuingeach áirmheach* ‘a generous, energetic, numerous household’ (l. 26).

²⁶ Mac Erlean, Ó Bruad. i, 20.9–10. The ‘leap’ occurs here with a widespread motif of ‘the sunbeam through glass’, for which see Andrew Breeze, ‘The Blessed Virgin and the Sunbeam through Glass’, *Celtica* 23 (1999) 19–29.

²⁷ The collocation *droibhéal diamhair* elsewhere describes an impasse encountered by a hero: ‘Láoch eli ag fáraidh do sgél / do-gheibhe a ndámhair droibhél’, *IGT* ii, ex. 915.

²⁸ A. G. Van Hamel (ed.), ‘Tochmarc Emire’, in *Compert Con Culainn*, 16–68, at 27 § 18. Or perhaps *Temair ban* ‘Tara of women’, though the phrase immediately following, i.e. *báine ingen* ‘fairness of maidens’, seems to suggest *Temair bān* ‘fair Tara’.

Iomdha gleann dá ghné do choilleadh
 créacht gan chrosadh,
 béin fán mbruach sin ní fáth scrupail,
 gnáth a losa. (Stanzas 21–22)

If he should find a rough secluded place of hers, let him not go into it without his blade furious and erect; let him not avoid hardship.

Many glens of its kind have been violated—a wound that is not forbidden—striking into that bank is no cause for scruple; its benefits are well-known.

Subsequent verses introduce a particularly condensed amalgamation of legends concerning Cú Chulainn and his famous weapon, the *ga bolga* (stanzas 23–4). The paradoxical attributes of wounding and healing, and the combination of the martial and sexual component, recall Cú Chulainn's encounter with the Morrígan, who attempted to seduce him, was wounded by him, and later returns disguised as a hag to be healed by him, *Dáig ní gonad Cú Chulaind nech ara térnád co mbeith cuit dó féin 'na legius* 'for no one whom Cú Chulainn had wounded ever recovered until he himself had aided in his cure'.²⁹

Cleas Chon Culainn an ghaoi bulga
 na mbeart lonnbhaoth,
 a rian san gcrích ní cneadh mharbhthach
 ó chear Connlaoch.

D'fhág do bhuaधाibh éigin aire
 d'éis a ghona,
 gurb é féin i ndiaidh a liosda
 liaigh is sona.

Cú Chulainn's feat of the *ga bolga* of the fierce, reckless exploits; its mark in the land is not a mortal wound since Connla fell.

After wounding him the consequence is, as certain virtues of care,³⁰ that the weapon itself, after its joust (?), is the most pleasant physician.

The diction employed is elevated but playful. *Liosda*, which I tentatively take as a borrowing from English 'list', draws attention to the arena of combat

²⁹*LL TBC*, 57.2105–6. Cú Chulainn's encounter with the Morrígan is described *LL TBC*, 54.1989–2113. For a recent discussion of the episode, which considers the interplay of martial activity and female sexuality, see J. Carey, 'The Encounter at the Ford: Warriors, Water and Women', *Éigse* 34 (2004) 10–24, at 17–8.

³⁰If Ó Bruadair adopts an earlier diction here, *aire* might be the prep. pron. 3 sg. 'upon it' (referring to the weapon); however, in later texts *aire* is found only in fixed expression with the copula, e.g. *is aire* 'on account of it'. See T. F. O'Rahilly, *Desiderius, otherwise called Sgáthán an Chrábhaidh*, by Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire (Florence Conroy) (Dublin 1941, repr. 1975) 14, 278.

and, by extension, to the action itself;³¹ however, Irish *liosda* ‘wearisome, tenacious’ may evoke other connotations.³² The referent *é féin* ‘itself, himself’ is the weapon *ga bolga* or the wounder *Cú Chulainn*, and the ambiguity may be intentional as both act as ‘the most pleasant physician’ (*liaigh is sona*). The wounding is depicted as a beneficial healing and replenishing of the land.

This kind of metaphorical language occurs in other later texts, and would probably have been known to Ó Bruadair’s audience. The hero Dubh Ruis, for example, entices Mis from the wilderness and cures her madness by means of the *cleas an chrainn* ‘spear feat’;³³ and *goin* ‘wound’ occurs as a double-entendre in a ribald kenning from a late version of the seduction of Guile’s daughter, where Guile’s daughter encourages her wooer in suggestive riddles: *gontar an mhuc tara fionna* ‘let the pig be wounded beyond its hair’.³⁴ And yet Ó Bruadair’s metaphorical language has an emphasis beyond bawdy entertainment. The poet’s language mythologizes the union and draws attention to its communal benefits. The bursting of the bank brings increase: *gnáth a losa* ‘its benefits are well-known’,³⁵ and the poet encourages the fruitful breach in the land. Similarly, in a later wedding *crossántacht*, Ó Bruadair acts as a ‘sort of priest’ (*sord sagairt*) and releases (*scaoil*) ‘locks from knees’ (*glais do ghlúinibh*), and, by that act, he ‘pieces together and marries’ (*píosaim pósaím*) the couple.³⁶ In *Iomdha sgéimh ar chur na cluana*, the act of a releasing a ‘lock’ and the image of a bursting against banks is developed in a particularly interesting way in a later prose passage (see below), where the poem’s interests become increasingly local and political.

As noted above, the prose passage, which will be the focus of the remainder of this study, does not immediately follow the verses analyzed above. I set aside the sequential order to explore the relationship of the couple’s sexual union to political themes which are particularly pronounced in the later section

³¹See *OED* s.v. ‘list’ sb.³. The ‘list’ is used of the palisades marking the enclosed space for jousting and, figuratively, for the arena of combat. For possible sexual connotations compare the following: ‘Now is she in the very lists of love, her champion mounted for the hot encounter’ (1592) Shakespeare, *Venus & Adonis*, xcix.

³²Irish *liosda* ‘wearisome’ (*DIL* s.v.) is only attested as an adjective; however, a noun is required here. An interesting usage occurs in the phrase *leadán liosda* ‘teazle’ (Dinneen s.v. *leadán*). John Cameron (s.v. *lappa* ‘burdock’) includes *leadan liosta* (*leadán*, ‘a head of hair’, *liosda* ‘stiff’) among names given to the ‘bur’ of the plant; see *The Gaelic names of plants* (Glasgow 1900) 52. Cameron’s list of popular names, i.e. *suirichean suireach* ‘the foolish wooer’, *seircean suirich* ‘affectionate wooer’ may suggest connotations known to Ó Bruadair.

³³Brian Ó Cúfá (ed.), ‘The Romance of Mis and Dubh Ruis’, *Celtica* 2/2 (1954) 325–33, at 330.67–73.

³⁴Caoimhín Breatnach, ‘The Transmission of *Ceasacht Inghine Guile*: Some Observations’, *Éigse* 32 (2000) 138–45, at 141. The text is based on the earliest extant manuscript, written in 1684–85. As Dr Breatnach notes, the seduction episode does not occur in the oldest version of the story; see Caoimhín Breatnach, *Patronage, politics and prose*, Maynooth Monographs 5 (Maynooth 1996) 44–63.

³⁵The earlier association of *los* with the produce or young of cattle may come into play here. See *DIL* s.v. *los* (e).

³⁶Mac Erlean, Ó Bruad. ii 48–97, at 70, stanza 40; p. 50, stanza 3. A translation *glais* ‘stream’ is also possible. See John C. Mac Erlean (ed.), *Duanaire Dháibhidh Uí Bhruadair, the poems of David Ó Bruadair* iii, Irish Texts Society XVIII (London 1916) 232 (corrigenda).

of the poem.³⁷ Ó Bruadair returns to a landscape, though it is not the nameless, mythologized landscape depicted in the verses which urge the consummation of the marriage, but an actual local landscape in the village of Ballingarry, Co. Limerick. The ‘real’ landscape merges with legend; and yet, the shift from the celebration within the feast to what is taking place outside in a nearby village indicates that Ó Bruadair sees the wedding feast as having a political and social significance. The mythical and local landscapes highlight, in a striking manner, a tension between a fruitful marriage union on the one hand, and the futile enterprise undertaken by a New English planter named Captain Odell, who asserts his sway in the locale.³⁸

In the opening line of the prose narrative, Ó Bruadair alludes to the ‘Greadhnach’, a stream which flows through the village of Ballingarry in the barony of Connello, Co. Limerick. A topographical survey of the barony confirms that the name was well-established in Ó Bruadair’s time,³⁹ and the stream is still known locally by that name, flowing through lands which contain traces of the former Odell estates.⁴⁰ We are, then, in an actual landscape, which merges with the landscape of legend. The stream has been flowing, Ó Bruadair claims, since the time when the druid Mogh Ruith released the ‘magic lock’ (*glas ginntlídhe*) from the pools of Leth Mogha.⁴¹ The saga allusion is brief, but it provides a vivid image of a release of the waters. Ó Bruadair then shifts abruptly to the activities of a New English planter named *Captaoin Óduil* (Odle, or Odell), who acquired lands in Ballingarry and presumably begins to carve out his estate:

Agus an Ghreadhnach, glaisín ghlanfhuar ghlionndrach isi, atá ag snídhe ré slíobhruachaibh Bhaile an Gharraoi ó gConuill ó an am fár scaoil

³⁷I have discussed the political themes of the wedding *croisantacht*, with particular reference to the passage analyzed here, in ‘The wedding poems of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair’ (Ph. D. thesis, Harvard University 1993) 5–6, 49–57, 269–270. Dr Dara Binéid has recently noted similar themes; see *Searc na suadh*, 131–2.

³⁸In an earlier study of the Odells, I noted John Odell, who resided at Pallice, c. 1659 (‘Wedding poems of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair’, 270n). Further research indicates that John Odell later acquired Ballingarry. See fn. 89.

³⁹Simington, *Civil Survey*, 252. See also Rev. G. F. Hamilton, *Records of Ballingarry* (Limerick 1928) 10. Hamilton derives the name from *greanach* (‘gravelly’). A recent study of the medieval villages of West Limerick shows a propensity to select riverine sites, thus ensuring a reliable supply of water. See Patrick O’Connor, *Exploring Limerick’s past* (Newcastle West 1987) 17.

⁴⁰See Brian de Breffny and Rosemary ffolliott, *The houses of Ireland: domestic architecture from the medieval castle to the Edwardian villa* (New York 1975) 63–6. I thank Dr Liam Irwin for this and other helpful references relating to the locale and Prof. Pádraig Ó Macháin for his advice on local contacts. I also thank many residents of Ballingarry who directed me to various sites in the village during a visit in March 2002, most especially, Noel Carmody, Jim Catell, Trudy and Paddy Trainor, Patsy Conway and Dan Connors and the proprietress of the Ballingarry post office. I am grateful to Mrs. Allott for her kind welcome to Odleville.

⁴¹In an earlier version of the legend the stream which bursts forth is named after Mogh Ruith’s poet Ceanmmar, who digs the ground with the druid’s spear (Sjoestedt, ‘Forbuis Droma Damhghaire’, 74 § 73). John O’Donovan locates the well of Ceanm Mor and ‘Sruth Cheansmhoir’ in the townland of Ballinvreena, between the parishes of Emylgreenan and Glenbroughaun; see Rev. Michael O’Flanagan (ed.), *Letters containing information relative to the antiquities of the County of Limerick. Collected during the progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1840* i (Bray 1929) 63.

Mogh Ruith, rígh na ndruadh, an glas ginntlídhe do ghormlinntibh Leithe Mogha, agus do lean an forainm greannmhar sin don ghlaisín-so ón am sin anall go haimsir Chaptaoin Óduil do ghabháil flathuis agus fórlamhais an bhaile réamhráidhte, agus do bhíodh an sruthánín suarrach sin do ghréas ag frithionnlacadh feoir agus fíodhbha agus fíoruisge dá tonnógaibh torthacha taobhuaine do dhaoineibh agus do cheathraibh a caoimhcheanntar gan chrosdáil, agus fós is mór d'fhóghnadh a biolar billeógach bláthúr agus a fothlachta feadánach fíorbhog ar bhochtánaibh a bruach gacha cruaidhbhliadhain; gidheadh is eagal go dtiocfa dá bhfuil d'íongantas inntleachta agus d'arrachtas acfuinne agus d'éagsamhlacht ealadhan ag an gCaptaoin dá chaithiomh ré gearradh a grinnill agus ré hionnarbadh a húire, ré sgannradh a sgáthbhruach agus ré fosdadh a fuairshreabh i n-aghaidh a ndúthchais agá gcruinniughadh ina gcnocánaibh croinne criadhamhla agus ina lochaibh luchtmhara lánmhóra ag beathúghadh n-anmann n-anaitnid, nách biaidh sí don phobal chómhchoitcheann, cómh tarbhach agus do bhí sí riamh, muna lingid longa náid luathbháirc lé torchurthaibh troma taibhseacha éigin a tíorthaibh imchiana do shochar na hárdóibre si, ní nach saoiltear.

And the Greadhnach is a clear, cold sprightly stream which has been flowing against the bordering banks of Ballingarry Ó gConaill since the time when Mogh Ruith, king of the druids, released the magic lock from the blue pools of Leth Mogha; and that humorous nickname stuck to that small stream from that time up to the time when Captain Odell took the chieftancy and supremacy of that same town; and that small, insignificant stream used to be continually conveying the grass and wood and pure water of its fruitful, green-sided wavelets without prohibition to people and cattle from the fair district; and besides, its leafy, flowery watercress and its very soft, reed-like brooklime are of great use to the poor along her banks during every hard year; however, it is feared that whatever wonder of ingenuity and strength of means and variety of arts which the Captain possesses will be used on cutting its bed and expelling its freshness, on scattering its shady banks and holding back its cool streams against their natural inclinations, by which they are gathered into clayey, compact mounds and large, capacious lakes feeding strange creatures,⁴² so that it will not be as beneficial to the common people as it always was, unless ships or swift barks leap forward with some heavy remarkable wrack⁴³ from far off lands as a result of this great work—something which is not expected.

Ó Bruadair's narrative joins layers of time: Mogh Ruith's legendary release of Munster's streams in the mythical past, his own present recollection of the Greadhnach's continual flow of pure water to people and cattle, and the apprehension of an uncertain future, as the new chieftain Odell asserts his authority with ominous arts. To interpret the passage and its relationship to the

⁴²For further comment on this phrase, see fn. 72.

⁴³For a discussion of 'wrack' (*turchaithe*) see p. 54.

whole poem, we must unravel the layers of literary and contemporary allusion and attempt to discern Ó Bruadair's purpose.

The story of Mogh Ruith's magical release of the streams of Leth Mogha is a prominent episode in the Middle Irish tale *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire* 'The Siege of Knocklong', which has been edited by Marie-Louise Sjoestedt from the *Book of Lismore*, a manuscript of the fifteenth century.⁴⁴ The siege (*forbhuis*) is mentioned briefly in a short text in the *Book of Lecan*, where Mogh Ruith is named as assisting in the battle, but with no reference to this act of wizardry.⁴⁵ The appearance of the title in a list of tales in the *Book of Leinster* suggests that some version of the story was known in the twelfth century;⁴⁶ however, as Dr John Carey has pointed out to me, the poem *Mog Ruith ríghhile gan gai*, also in the *Book of Lecan*, indicates that the main elements of the tradition took shape in the Old Irish period.⁴⁷ The poem alludes to events at Druim Damhghaire, and specifically to Mogh Ruith's release of a spring, which is named after his poet, Cennmhar:

In airm i corastair sleig
Moga [*leg. Mug*] Ruith ráidiss laíd
asa lathrach do-mebaid
tipra Cenmair caín.

Where Mug Ruith, of whom the poem tells, planted his spear,
from that spot there burst the spring of fair Cennmar.⁴⁸

The tradition requires further analysis; here I merely touch upon the subject by turning to the episode narrated in *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*, and later versions possibly known to Ó Bruadair, where the release of the streams of Leth Mogha is a prominent incident.

Forbuis Droma Damhghaire describes a siege led by the king of Connacht, Cormac mac Airt, against the armies of Munster at *Druim Damhghaire* ('the ridge of the bellowing of stags'),⁴⁹ later known as Knocklong. Fiacha

⁴⁴Cited fn. 8 above. For a Modern Irish version with an English translation see Seán Ó Duinn, *Forbhais Droma Dámhghaire: the siege of Knocklong* (Dublin 1992).

⁴⁵*The Book of Lecan. Leabhar mór Mhic Fhir Bhisigh. With descriptive introduction and indexes by Kathleen Mulchrone* (Dublin 1937) xxvi, fol. 167b, ll. 25–43. Cf. P. Mac Cana, *The learned tales of medieval Ireland* (Dublin 1980) 94. Mogh Ruith is also named as assisting *ar an forbhais* 'at the siege' in a tract on the territory of Fermoy, which outlines the boundaries of *caílle an dríadadh* 'the wizard's cantred (?)'. See J. G. O'Keefe (ed.), 'The Ancient Territory of Fermoy', *Ériu* 10 (1926–28) 170–189, at 172 §§ 1–2.

⁴⁶Mac Cana, *Learned tales of medieval Ireland*, 45.

⁴⁷*Lec. fo.* 124va. Since my submission of this article for publication, Dr. Carey has edited the poem ('Mug Ruith, ríghhile cen góí'); see Carey, 'An Old Irish Poem about Mug Ruith', *JCHAS* 110 (2005) 113–34. Carey tentatively proposes composition in the late Old Irish period, though offers persuasive evidence of an earlier date.

⁴⁸*Lec. fo.* 124va, ll. 24–5. I thank Dr John Carey for drawing my attention to this text, and for his helpful suggestions on this particular passage. John Carey ('An Old Irish Poem about Mug Ruith', 119 § 15) reads: *In airm i corastar sleig / Mug Ruith, ráides laíd, / asa láthrach do-memaid / tipra Cenmair chaín*. I cite Dr Carey's translation above.

⁴⁹*Druim Damhghaire* is also called *Cnuc na Cenn* and, later in the tale, *Long Cliach* (Sjoestedt, 'Forbuis Droma Damhghaire', 40 § 38, 42 § 40).

Muilleathan, king of Munster, refuses to pay a tribute imposed by Cormac Mac Airt. Cormac instructs his druids to use their magic against the Munster hosts; most notably, they conceal the rivers and streams of Munster so that the people and herds suffer a debilitating thirst. The king of Munster summons the aid of the druid Mogh Ruith (his foster father) and offers a reward. Mogh Ruith chooses the fertile land of Fermoy and praises its richness in a *roscadh*;⁵⁰ he also chooses a noble spouse.⁵¹ The wizard releases the streams of Munster through the power of a druidic spear, an incantation, and the assistance of his poet, Cennmhar.⁵² The waters burst forth, the hosts satisfy their thirst, and the people and cattle of the province are led to the rivers to drink. Other displays of Mogh Ruith's magical powers are elaborated in detail, though this episode is the most relevant to Ó Bruadair's prose narrative.

As Ó Bruadair's allusion to the tale is abbreviated, it is difficult to identify a particular source with certainty; however, later sources indicate the circulation of various traditions concerning Mogh Ruith which may have been known to Ó Bruadair. Ó Bruadair's mention of Mogh Ruith's release of a 'magical lock' (*glas ginntlídhe*, a detail which does not occur in *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*), suggests that he drew on Geoffrey Keating's abbreviated account of the battle in *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* (c. 1632).⁵³ A version similar to Keating's, and probably influenced by *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*, appears in RIA ms 707 (23 H 18), written by William mic Cartean, in 1701–02.⁵⁴ However, Keating's sources are unknown,⁵⁵ and later manuscripts introduce other narrative details. A slightly different narrative is found in two manuscripts written in 1773: NLI ms G 22, written by Tomás Ó Súilleabháin,⁵⁶ and RIA ms 897 (12 F 20), written by Laoiseach Mhadh Ceóch.⁵⁷ Here *Cath Droma Damhghaire* 'The Battle of Druim Damhghaire' is woven into a collection of tales and annals relating to

⁵⁰Ibid. 66 § 66; 160 § 66.

⁵¹Ibid. 72 § 72.

⁵²Ibid. 74–6 §§ 73–5; 160–161 §§ 73–4.

⁵³G. Keating *Foras feasa ar Éirinn* ii ed. Patrick Dinneen (Irish Texts Society VIII, London 1908) 318–20, at 320.4979–80. A confusion at some stage between the release of a 'lock' (*glas*) and 'stream' (*glais*) is possible.

⁵⁴RIA ms 707 (23 H 18), pp. 100–102, at 101–102. See L. Duncan, *RIA Cat. fasc. xvii* (Dublin 1935) 2143–46. This version is noted among the variant readings supplied by Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (*An Leabhar Muimhneach*, p. 133 n. 99). Dr Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail has recently drawn attention to RIA ms 707 (23 H 18) as containing the earliest copy of 'version B' of *Cath Cluana Tarbh*, which she proposes is part of a collection of texts and annals entitled *Leabhar Gearr na Pailíse*, completed in 1648 by Eoghan Mac Cárthaigh, and probably influenced by Geoffrey Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*. See Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, 'Seachadadh *Cath Cluana Tarbh* sna lámhscríbhinní', *Oidhreacht na Lámhscríbhinní*, Léachtaí Cholm Cille 34 (Maigh Nuad 2004) 179–215, at 198–200. Ó Bruadair may have been familiar with tales in *Leabhar Gearr na Pailíse* as well as Keating's *Foras feasa ar Éirinn*.

⁵⁵Some details in Keating, such as a reference to *draoithe Albanacha* 'druids from Alba' (*Keat.* ii 318.4964–65), are not in the *Book of Lismore* version, as Sjoestedt has noted ('*Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*', 3, 74 n. 1).

⁵⁶Nessa Ní Shéaghda, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland*, fasc. ii (Dublin 1961) 13–17, at 16.

⁵⁷E. FitzPatrick, *RIA Cat. fasc. xxi* (Dublin 1936) 2612–15, at 2613.

Munster and known as *Leabhar Gearr na Pailíse* ‘the Short Book of Palles’.⁵⁸ Through the power of Mogh Ruith’s druidry, ‘the lock was released from the streams and wells of Leth Mogha’ (*gur sgaoileadh an glas do shrothaibh 7 do thibraidibh Leatha Mogha*);⁵⁹ Mogh Ruith also chants a spell, a detail absent in both Keating and RIA ms 707 (23 H 18): *do ghabh sleagh leis féin chuige, 7 do chan óraid éigin nár bhfios do chách (7 nách fios dámhsa leis) a ngráin na sleagha*, ‘he took his own spear, and chanted a certain spell which is not known to anyone (and which is not known to me either) into the point of the spear’.⁶⁰ The detail echoes *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*, where Mogh Ruith chants a *roscadh* as the poet Ceanmhar digs the ground with the point of the spear (*rinn na slighi*).⁶¹

Ó Bruadair’s tantalizingly brief allusion to Mogh Ruith’s breaking a lock and releasing the streams may have been sufficient for his audience to recall the tale’s basic themes and motifs: a host summoning the wizard in a moment of distress; Mogh Ruith’s ‘magical spear’ (*ga geintlighe*) piercing the ground; a spring leaping forth (*do ling tobar fíoruise*);⁶² relief from thirst, and a final victory for Munster at Knocklong. Indeed, the legend seems to be imbedded in Ó Bruadair’s description of the ‘real’ landscape of Ballingarry. The image of people and cattle rejuvenated by the waters is present in both the legendary and contemporary landscapes. The language employed by Ó Bruadair as he reflects upon the ‘wonder of ingenuity and strength of means and variety of arts’ (*d’iongantas inntleachta agus d’arrachtas acfuinne agus d’éagsamhlacht ealadhan*) possessed by Captain Odell is echoed in Mogh Ruith’s assertion of his powers in *Cath Droma Damhghaire*, (as narrated in *Leabhar Gearr na Pailíse*):

A dubhart Mogharuith, ‘a Airdrí’, ar sé, ‘an mhéid do cheangail inntleacht 7 árdeólas úghdar Leatha Cuinn 7 a ccónamh uile le chéile do dhaora na Múmhan an tan so: sgaoilfeadsa am aonar é dá naimhdheóin do sháora na Muimhneach’.

Mogh Ruith said, ‘O High King,’ says he, ‘as much as the intellect and lofty knowledge of the experts of Leth Cuinn and all their

⁵⁸NLI G 22 was written by Tomás Ó Súilleabháin for Edward Denny in 1773. The tale appears on pages 100–101. For recent comments on *Leabhar Gearr na Pailíse*, see Ní Úrdail, ‘Seachadadh *Cath Cluana Tarbh*’.

⁵⁹NLI G 22, 100–101, at 100. The text agrees with that of RIA ms 897 (12 F 20) 136–9, at 138.

⁶⁰NLI G 22, p. 100. The text agrees with that of RIA ms 897 (12 F 20) 138. There is a brief allusion to the battle of Druim Damhghaire in Egerton 106 (p. 50) and RIA ms 152 (23 K 37), a similar collection of annals and tales; however, there is no saga account. For remarks on these manuscripts see Ní Úrdail, ‘Seachadadh *Cath Cluana Tarbh*’, 198, and also Alan Harrison, ‘Who wrote to Edward Lhwyd’, *Celtica* 16 (1983) 175–8, at 176.

⁶¹Sjoestedt, ‘Forbuis Droma Damhghaire’, 74 § 73.

⁶²*Keat.* ii 318–21. The spear (*ga*) and waters leaping forth (*lingid*), while not present in Ó Bruadair’s prose narrative, are prominent images in the wedding poem. Cf. *gur líng sreabh fíorúaine uisge as an ionad ionar thuit an t-arm* ‘so that a stream of pure water burst from the place in which the weapon fell’ (NLI G 22, pp. 100–101); *san áit inar thúrling an gai do bhris tobar fíor uisce amach ann* (Ó Donnchadha, *An Leabhar Muimhneach*, 133 n. 99).

means have bound together to oppress Munster at this time, I shall release it on my own in spite of them to free the Munstermen'.⁶³

Mogh Ruith here acts as a hero of Munster, performing a violent but beneficial act of wizardry.

The question of whether Ó Bruadair was aware of Mogh Ruith's more sinister associations, for example his role in building the *roth rámhach* 'oared wheel' with the druid Simon Magus, and his association in medieval texts with a prophecy of doom for the Irish,⁶⁴ is not easily answered, though the account of Odell's 'arts' raises a sinister aspect. Mogh Ruith's heroic role is emphasized in the texts noted above; however, he is a figure of more dubious status in the poetic contention *Iomarbhágh na bhfileadh*,⁶⁵ where mixed traditions emerge. The poet Tadhg Mac Dáire, in an apparent effort to distance Munster's king from the druid's wizardry and extol the southern half of Ireland,⁶⁶ attributes the victory at Druim Damhghaire not to Mogh Ruith, but to the Munster king Fiachaidh Muilleathan, who he claims forced Cormac to go 'under the cauldron's hanger' (*fo ghabhail coire*).⁶⁷ His opponent, Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh, poses a direct challenge: Mogh Ruith, he insists, and not Fiachaidh Muilleathan, brought dishonour upon Cormac.⁶⁸ And indeed, a bardic poem in the *Book of Fermoy* which incorporates details from the tale of *Druim Damhghaire* seems to support the latter claim, as it is Mogh Ruith who exacts the humiliation: *re cur fa cuing frúth gach fer / d'íb Cuind ar ndúth a ndrúithead* 'after the loss of their magicians, every man of Conn's tribe was obliged to pass under the yoke.'⁶⁹ Ó Cléirigh also implicates Fiachaidh Muilleathan in the practice

⁶³NLI G 22 ('Leabhar Gearr na Pailíse'), pp. 100–101 (= RIA MS 897 (12 F 20) 137–8).

⁶⁴Mogh Ruith is said to have studied druidry with Simon Magus, with whom he made the *roth rámhach* 'oared wheel' which will pass over Europe at the end of the world in the year before his battle against Saints Peter and Paul. See Käte Müller-Lisowski, 'Texte zur Mog Ruith Sage', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 14 (1923) 162 § V. Medieval legend also associates him with the beheading of St. John the Baptist, a crime which brings a curse upon the Irish; see, for example, Annie Scarre, 'The Beheading of John the Baptist by Mog Ruith', *Ériu* 4 (1910) 173–181; B. Ó Cuív (ed.), 'Two Items from Irish Apocryphal Tradition', *Celtica* 10 (1973) 87–113, at 102–13. For a recent analysis of the apocryphal texts, see Aideen O'Leary 'Mog Ruith and Apocalypticism in Eleventh-Century Ireland', in Joseph Falaky Nagy (ed.), *The individual in Celtic literatures*, The Celtic Studies Association of North America Yearbook 1 (Dublin 2001) 51–60. See also Carey, 'An Old Irish Poem about Mug Ruith', 124–5 §§ 6–7.

⁶⁵Lambert McKenna (ed.), *Iomarbhágh na bhfileadh; the contention of the bards i–ii*, Irish Texts Society XX–XXI (London 1918). I thank Dr John Carey for drawing this text to my attention.

⁶⁶It is only in a later response to Lughaidh Ó Cleirigh's accusations that Tadhg Mac Dáire acknowledges that Fiachaidh was compelled to send for the 'old druid Mogh Ruith' (*an sean-draoi Mogh Ruith*). He repeatedly insists that it was Fiachaidh Muilleathan, and not Mogh Ruith, who broke the strength of the northern hosts (McKenna, *Iomarbhágh na bhfileadh* i 50–53, stanzas 174–7). See further *ibid.* ii 190, stanza 107; 192 stanza 121.

⁶⁷McKenna, *Iomarbhágh na bhfileadh* i 16, stanza 27; *ibid.* ii 190, stanza 107.

⁶⁸*Ibid.* 26.

⁶⁹E. Knott, 'Address to David O'Keefe', *Ériu* 4 (1910) 209–32, at 226 § 52. The same motif occurs in the Old Irish poem on Mogh Ruith: *Luid fo inber caire la giallu. gnim sruith* 'He went beneath the spit of the cauldron with hostages; a deed of the ancients' (*Lec. f.* 124v., l. 44). Dr Carey supports my interpretation of the line, noting further instances of this ritual humiliation (*DIL s.v. gabul* 8.11–15); see Carey, 'An Old Irish Poem about Mug Ruith', 121 § 27, 129 n., 133 n. 75. He emends the text as follows: *Luid fo inber [in] choiri / la giallu, gnim sruith* 'He went under

of wizardry, and a hint at Mogh Ruith's more ominous associations comes into the disparaging verses:

Bréag ar Mhogh Ruith do fheadar
do chur sa sgéal so ar Pheadar
go ndubhairt ris ní rádh ceart
méaraídh choidhche do dhuidheacht.

I know that a lie about Moghruith is attributed in the tale to Peter;
how Peter said to him—a wrong thing to say—‘Your wizardry
shall abide forever’.⁷⁰

The ‘tale’ mentioned recalls an episode in *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*, where Mogh Ruith refers to his tutor, Simon mac Guill (i.e. Simon Magus) and to St. Peter: *is doigh nach bhfuil dibh sin eicean nach soidhfinn-sea dib, uair ita briathar mh’oidi-se, .i. Shimoin meic Guill meic Iarguill, agus Petair ris na soeidfidher orum mo dana cein bear beo* ‘it is likely that there is not among them a calamity which I could not turn away from them [the Munstermen], since it is the saying of my tutor, that is, of Simon Mac Guill meic Iarguill, and of Peter, that my arts will not be turned upon me as long as I shall live’.⁷¹ No trace of these traditions is found in Keating; however, Ó Bruadair may have been aware of them. His brief allusion to Mogh Ruith recalls only a fruitful release; however, it might also evoke, for Ó Bruadair and his audience, a sense of impending disaster.

In Ó Bruadair’s condensed narrative, the local landscape is juxtaposed to the legendary one, and the contemporary story that unfolds reverses the myth of a release of streams and all that it signifies. The ‘arts’ of Captain Odell are the ‘arts’ of a new planter on an ancient landscape. The banks will be cut; the waters will be stopped; fertile soil will be replaced by ‘clayey mounds’; the once blue pools of Munster will become stagnant lakes which breed ‘strange creatures’ (*ag beathúghadh n-anmann n-anaithnid*), suggesting a perversion of nature, and perhaps hinting at the proliferation of New English foreigners in the locale.⁷² Ó Bruadair’s depiction of an unnatural inbreeding of strange creatures is the antithesis to the noble breed presaged by the union of the couple. One senses that some building scheme—perhaps the construction of a dam or ornamental pond which commonly adorned the lands of the New English estate—is already in progress, and the poet responds with unease. The

the cauldron’s spit with hostages, a venerable deed’. I thank Prof. Katharine Simms for providing me with extracts from unedited poems in the *Book of Fermoy* which refer to Mogh Ruith (RIA ms 1134 (23 E 29), pp. 150, 202, 197). Although these quatrains do not refer to the battle, Mogh Ruith’s choice of land in Fermoy, known as *Cailli an druadh* ‘the druid’s cantred’, is lauded in *Formad ag cach re clu Muiris* (ibid. 202 § 33-4).

⁷⁰McKenna, *Iomarbhágh na bhfileadh* i 70 § 121-3.

⁷¹For comments on this passage and an early tradition about a blessing on Mug Ruith’s weapons, see Carey, ‘An Old Irish Poem about Mug Ruith’, 117-18 §§ 6-7, 124-5 n.

⁷²I have taken *anmann* as gen. pl. of *anmann* ‘animal’. Cf. *for seilg na n-anmunn n-aerda*, cited in *DIL* s.v. *anmann*. However, *anmann* could be taken as gen. pl. of *ainm* ‘name’, here alluding to a breeding of ‘foreign names’. Ó Bruadair commonly derides the New English by reference to their names; see, for example, Ó Bruad. i 36, stanzas 25-6.

mention of *biolar* ‘watercress’ suggests both an abundance of plant life along the river banks and also times of scarcity, as *biolar* is elsewhere described as food for the poor,⁷³ and as fasting fare during Lent.⁷⁴ The changing landscape reveals the opposite of natural abundance: a place detached from its original purpose.

The language employed here further indicates that the poet views the new *flaithius* or ‘chieftaincy’ established by Odell as a mockery of a just and fruitful rule. At the end of the passage, the poet briefly envisions relief in the form of ‘ships or swift barks’ (*longa náid luathbháirc*) carrying ‘heavy remarkable wrack from far-off lands’ (*torchurthaibh troma taibhseacha éigin a tóirthaibh imchiana*). The word *turchairthe* ‘valuables cast up by the sea’ or ‘wrack’,⁷⁵ frequently signifies, in bardic verse and other sources, a fruitful reign during which an unexpected godsend washes ashore in a time of scarcity.⁷⁶ The prosperity of Tara is visible in ‘her strands, her wrack’ (*a tráchta, a turchairthe*);⁷⁷ the northern chieftain Hugh O’Donnell (+ 1537) is eulogized in the annals as ‘a man in whose reign the seasons were favourable, so that sea and land were fruitful and rich in wrack’ (*fer aga rabhattar síona iar na ccóir fria reimheas gur bhó toirtheach turchurthach muir 7 tír ina fhlaith*).⁷⁸ Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh, in *Iomharbhágh na bhfileadh*, argues: *Tré fhíor-fhlatha feasach dhaoibh. tig mar deir Morann mac Maoín / iasg i n-inbhear ón aithbhe. is i dtrághaibh torchairthe*, ‘It is righteousness in rule, you know, which, as Morann mac Maoín says, brings fish into the estuary at ebb-tide, and wrack on the shores.’⁷⁹ Ó Bruadair, contemplating the deprivation of those along the sterile banks, briefly imagines such a godsend; however, the closing phrase *ní nach saoiltear* ‘something which is not expected’ undercuts the fanciful musings with subtle irony and emphasizes the sterility of Odell’s *flaithius*. The fruitlessness of his artful machinations appears all the more vividly when set within a poem which urges the ‘breaking of banks’ to further life, fertility and prosperity.

Ó Bruadair is doing something important here. For an audience gathered to celebrate a wedding, he recalls the legend to draw attention to a familiar and enduring landscape about to be altered, and reflects on a change which he and many of those gathered at the feast witnessed. For the modern reader, this brief but richly textured prose interlude offers a glimpse of the expanding demesne and the weakening of the old village community, seen through the

⁷³C. O’Rahilly, *Five seventeenth-century political poems* (Dublin 1952) 73.304–5.

⁷⁴Ibid. 139 n. 304. Cf. N. Williams, *Díolaim luibheanna* (Dublin 1993) 19. *Biror* (*biolar*), also features in ascetic diets in early Irish literature; see F. Kelly, *Early Irish farming* (Dublin 1997, repr. 1998) 309, 347.

⁷⁵*DIL* s.v. *turchairthe*.

⁷⁶I thank Prof. Damian McManus for drawing this usage to my attention. See further McManus, ‘“The smallest man in Ireland can reach the tops of her trees”: Images of the King’s Peace and Bounty in Bardic Poetry’ in Joseph Falaky Nagy (ed.), *Memory and the modern Celtic literatures* (Celtic Studies Association of North America Yearbook 5, Los Angeles 2006) 61–117, at 102–3.

⁷⁷R. I. Best, ‘The Settling of the Manor of Tara’, *Ériu* 4 (1910) 121–72, at 148 § 26. Best translates, ‘her strength, her wealth’.

⁷⁸J. O’Donovan, *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland* ii (1848) 1438 (s.a. 1537).

⁷⁹McKenna, *Iomharbhágh na bhfileadh* i, no. vi, stanza 67 (p. 62). The poet alludes to the testament of the judge Morann. See F. Kelly (ed.), *Audacht Morann* (Dublin 1976) 7 §§ 17–20.

eyes of the poet, who knew the landscape and community well. The narrative recovers a small episode in the ‘lost village biographies of Limerick’,⁸⁰ as neighbourhoods and kinship networks were replaced by the boundaries of the new estate. Ó Bruadair interprets the transformation in terms of a mythical story and describes what he sees in a traditional poetic diction. This in no way diminishes insight into the historical moment, or the concerns of the poet and audience gathered on this occasion; rather, it enhances it.

Captain Oduil (Odell), who assumes the ‘chieftainship’ (*go ghabháil flathuis*) in the village of Ballingarry, belongs to a planter class which acquired the forfeited lands of the Irish and Anglo-Normans following the Cromwellian wars.⁸¹ The particular Odell in question is not specifically named;⁸² however, Ó Bruadair probably refers to John Odell, or perhaps his brother Charles, who were both soldiers in Cromwell’s army and acquired land in Co. Limerick.⁸³ Charles held ‘Castle McGurry’, near Ballingarry, in 1660,⁸⁴ and while he was active in the region, the sources point more emphatically to John Odell. John Odell is listed as a gentleman living at Pallas in the 1659 census of Ireland,⁸⁵ but he steadily extended his influence. He served as Commissioner for Poll Money for Co. Limerick (1660),⁸⁶ and was among those granted lands in Co. Limerick in 1667.⁸⁷ Of particular relevance to our poem, these properties

⁸⁰P. O’Connor, *Exploring Limerick’s past* (Limerick 1987) 33. William Smyth describes a similar deterioration of the village community in Co. Tipperary; see W. Nolan (ed.), *Tipperary: history and society* (Dublin 1985) 104–38, at 136.

⁸¹Pallice, Lishensly Rossmore and Kilmeeady (284 acres), owned by Col. Francis Courtney, were mortgaged to Edmund Odell (*Civil Survey*, 274). Edmund may have been related to John and Charles Odell. An Odell married Jane —, whose maiden name is unknown. After his death, she married a Hawkesworth; then, between 1634 and 1642, she married Capt. Richard Bettesworth of Pallice. This is indicated by deposition regarding losses during the 1641 Rebellion sworn by Jane Bettesworth of Pallice (May, 1642), claiming compensation on behalf of her ‘sonne John Odell gent’. See de Breffny, ‘The Family of Odell or O’Dell: Supplement’, *The Irish Ancestor* 3/1 (1971) 41–8, at 41–2. For a genealogy of the family see also O’Flanagan, *Ordnance survey letters, Limerick* ii (Bray 1929) 26–7.

⁸²Mac Erlean does not identify ‘Captain Odell’, but notes a John Odell who was posted at Athlaccra in 1691 (O’Bruid. ii 111 n. 7). Cf. Binéid, *Searc na suadh*, 21. However, given the later date (1691), this may refer to the son of John Odell (also named John), as noted by Brian de Breffny, ‘The Family of Odell or O’Dell’, *The Irish Ancestor* 1/2 (1969) 114–44, at 116. Furthermore, it is the earlier evidence of John Odell’s presence in Ballingarry which is most relevant to Ó Bruadair’s poem. See fn. 89.

⁸³de Breffny and ffoliott, *Houses of Ireland*, 64. According to a local tradition, the Odells took shelter at a religious edifice in the townland of Rylanes known as the ‘Friary’ or ‘Priory’ during the Cromwellian Wars; see O’Donovan, *Ordnance survey letters, Limerick* ii 24–5.

⁸⁴See Westropp, ‘Ancient Castles of the County of Limerick’, 224 § 336, where he is identified as ‘Lt. Charles Odell’. Cf. fn. 81 below. Charles owned Castletown (Conyers) in Limerick, but later married (1678) and settled at Mount Odell, Co. Waterford; see de Breffny and ffoliott, *Houses of Ireland*, 77–8.

⁸⁵See Séamus Pender, *A census of Ireland, circa 1659* (Dublin 1939) 278. ‘Lieut. John Odell, of Palace [Pallis]’ is also named, along with his brother Charles of ‘Castlemcgury, Co. Limerick’, among those granted letters of pardon by the Earl of Orrery (25 April, 1661); see Robert P. Mahaffy, *Calendar of the State Papers relating to Ireland, 1660–1662* (London 1905) 318.

⁸⁶Pender, *Census of Ireland, 1659*, 624.

⁸⁷John Odell, Thomas Boone and John Gardiner were granted a total of 1,679 acres, including grants in Cork (Inrolled 24th December, 1667); see Maurice Lenihan, *Limerick: its history and antiquities* (Dublin 1866) 193.

included ‘the C[astle], mill and fair of Ballingarry’, which had been in the possession of ‘J. Mason’,⁸⁸ but were confirmed to ‘J. Odell’ in 1667.⁸⁹ All of these details provide persuasive evidence that John Odell was established in the village by 1667. The extent of his influence in Ballingarry before that time is uncertain;⁹⁰ however, in subsequent years the name ‘Odell’ comes up frequently in disputes over various holdings in Ballingarry.⁹¹

Two later historical documents are particularly relevant to Ó Bruadair’s poem. A letter preserved in the *Calendar of the Orrery Papers* concerns a conflict between John Massey, who had acquired Ballingarry Castle and a mill (formerly belonging to William de Lacy) after the Cromwellian wars,⁹² and an ‘O Dell’.⁹³ Massey complains against Odell and asks (in 27 October, 1676) that he be ordered to ‘pull downe the greate ditch or barocade against your honours’s mill and to allow it the ould way it ever had with the benefit of the hill and the iland below the mill’.⁹⁴ The ‘barocade’, or some comparable structure which perhaps stops the flow of the waters, suggests the kind of building enterprise which Ó Bruadair describes. I also note a letter, written and signed by ‘Capt John Odell’, among correspondences of James, Duke of Ormonde and Sir Robert Southwell (1678–1697).⁹⁵ It offers a view of the same village and fertile lands described by Ó Bruadair, but from the perspective of the New English planter, who asserts his claim on local lands. John Odell writes that he ‘hath been plundered by the Irish of a very considerable stock, and deposed of his Castle of Ballingarry [and] a plentiful estate. That the Castle of Ballingarry is very strong, and soe situate as to preserve most part of this

⁸⁸This would seem to refer to ‘John Massey’, named in the Civil Survey of Limerick as grantee of lands in Ballingarry ‘with a manor Castle a Mill and a Mill seate . . . marckett & a fayre’, formerly in the possession of William Lacy (*Civil Survey*, 281 § 38). Massey is also involved in later disputes with Odell (see fns. 87 and 89 below)

⁸⁹Westropp, ‘Ancient Castles of the County Limerick’, 223. John Odell also acquired Woodstocke and Cahyreenossa in 1668 (see *ibid.* 224), both near Ballingarry.

⁹⁰The reference to ‘Odell’ in *Iomdha sgéimh* raises questions about the date of the poem. Mac Erlean suggests composition in 1662–3 (O’Bruad. i 90). Dr Dara Binéid has proposed 1661–62 (*Searc na suadh*, 120). I find no clear evidence that an Odell was established in Ballingarry c. 1661–3, though it is possible that one of the Odells had begun to push into the village. John Massey held Ballingarry in 1654–5 (*Civil Survey*, 281) and, according to Westropp (see fn. 85 above), John Odell acquired Ballingarry in the Act of Settlement (1666–7). The question at least remains open.

⁹¹One dispute (16 March, 1674), for example, notes that ‘Baltinglasse, Cullum and Odell judgelled together to keepe the land’. See E. MacLysaght (ed.), *Calendar of the Orrery papers* (Dublin 1941) 126.

⁹²*Civil Survey*, 281. See fn. 84 above.

⁹³In the index to the MacLysaght, *Calendar of the Orrery papers*, 391, this Odell is identified as Charles, the brother of John. Cf. also ‘Capt. Odell’, who sought the ‘Short Castle in Ballingarry’ (*ibid.* 271). However, another letter (1683) states that ‘John Odell only got possession of Knightstreet and the Short Castle as assignee of the last 3 or 4 years of Nicholas Mancton’s lease thereof’ (*ibid.* 284). My attempts to confirm the identities have been unsuccessful.

⁹⁴MacLysaght, *Calendar of the Orrery papers*, 157–8.

⁹⁵Dublin Public Records Office, MS 2541 (Phillips MSS) 77. Cf. Richard Hayes, *Manuscript sources for the history of Irish civilization* iii (Boston, Massachusetts 1965) 609. Another letter in this manuscript, in which the unidentified author seeks horse and arms for the ‘Distressed Protestants of the Baronies of Conilo and Kenry’, appears to be in the same handwriting (*ibid.* 65).

county, and near it are considerable meadows and an excellent Winter Quarter for horse'. He seeks arms to defend his territory 'against the Enemy'.

Ó Bruadair's prose narrative is not a historical record, but it is a historical moment to which the poet is a witness. As Katharine Simms proposes in her discussion of bardic verse, such moments can be analyzed by sifting through the available evidence to 'yield the bard's intended message'.⁹⁶ Prof. Nicholas Canny has proposed that Ó Bruadair expresses admiration for Odell and appeals for the patronage of a successful planter;⁹⁷ however, the literary and contemporary details throw doubt on this interpretation.⁹⁸ Ó Bruadair's prose does not contain a virulent verbal attack on the newcomer, but the poet's account of Odell's venture conveys an unease which must have been shared by his audience. The prefaced saga emphasizes the direction of Ó Bruadair's irony. Mogh Ruith's arts break the lock and release the waters to all; Odell's arts obstruct the stream and benefit no one. The irony is subtle here, but vituperative verses composed by Ó Bruadair after the surrender at Limerick depict the greed of an Odell, possibly the same person, with unambiguous bitterness. Ó Bruadair, without the protection of his patrons, lives in fear of Odell grabbing his rough cloak:

Dám acfuinneach im aice anigh na sárleoghain
le gleachtainnse le macanas bheith áirleogach
re hairgiod an teallaigh sí gach tráth nóna
mo gharbhchuilt ní heagal liom i láimh Óduil.⁹⁹

(Were) the powerful company beside me today as mighty lions,
with whom I was wont to enjoy myself without restraint, I would
not fear every evening, my rough cloak being snatched by Odell
for the money of this hearth.

Ó Bruadair's prose interlude is not a direct verbal attack on Odell, but the 'chieftainship' (*flaithius*) is revealed as one based on greed, and it undermines the common good. One wonders if some trace of the ominous legacy of the Odells in the village of Ballingarry is preserved in the name of a large tumulus along the bank of the stream (curiously reminiscent of the 'clayey mounds'

⁹⁶K. Simms, 'Bardic Poetry as a Historical Source', in T. Dunne (ed.), *The writer as witness* (Cork 1987) 58–75, at 70–71.

⁹⁷Canny, 'The Formation of the Irish mind: Religion, Politics and Gaelic Irish Literature, 1580–1750', *Past and present*, no. 95 (1982) 91–116, at 105 n. 55.

⁹⁸In 'Wedding poems of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair', 51–3, at 52 n. 115, I have cited Dr Canny's remarks and questioned his interpretation of the passage. Dr Dara Binéid, also citing Canny's analysis, suggests that Ó Bruadair's tone is ironic here; see 'Dánta pósta Uí Bhruadair mar fhoinsí polaitiúla comhaimseartha', *Aimsir Óg* 2 (2000) 301–311, at 305; also Binéid, *Searc na suadh* (2003) 131–2. See also Claire O'Connell, 'Patronage, poetry, and politics in the Gaelic world, 1650–1700: the cases of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair and Iain Lom', *Irish history, a research yearbook* 2 (Dublin 2003) 103–18, at 110. I thank Dr Clare Downham for this reference.

⁹⁹Ó Bruad. iii 220, stanza 2. The pattern of assonance suggests stress on the initial syllable of *Óduil*, which is anglicized as both 'Odele' and 'O'Dell'. This could be John Odell (senior), as he was still living at this time (c. 1693). See B. de Breffny, 'The Family of Odell or O'Dell', *The Irish Ancestor* 1/2 (1969) 116.

described by Ó Bruadair) which was, according to an antiquarian writing in 1906, popularly known as ‘Odell banshee mound’.¹⁰⁰

Many prose passages which distinguish the *rosántacht* seem to have been intended primarily for entertainment; however, as we sift through the layers of topographical, literary and contemporary allusion, Ó Bruadair’s narrative makes sense in terms of the whole poem and the occasion. The poet brings the couple together in the verse, and in a more subtle manner, continues that joining in the prose. The prose narrative reinforces the predominant theme of sexual and natural fertility, and the allusion to Mogh Ruith’s release of the streams of Munster at Druim Damhghaire also evokes the legendary history of the families of the bride and bridegroom. The local and mythological landscapes further intertwine the families of the bride and bridegroom: in particular, the Hurleys of Knocklong and the Roches of Fermoy.

Druim Damhghaire, where Mogh Ruith relieves the hosts of Munster, is identified in Keating’s account as *Cnoc Luinge*, or Knocklong,¹⁰¹ which was the hereditary seat of the Hurleys, the family of the bride’s mother, Anna Ní Urthuile. Anna’s father, John Hurley, and a relative, Sir Maurice Hurley, lost extensive holdings in the locale, and the families gathered would have been keenly aware of that loss, or imminent loss. John Hurley’s lands were granted to John Purdon, ‘an English Protestant’.¹⁰² Sir Maurice’s lands in Knocklong¹⁰³ were confirmed to ‘Cornet E. Cooper of Markree’ in 1669,¹⁰⁴ and Sir Maurice was transplanted to Doone, Co. Galway.¹⁰⁵ Fermoy, the chosen patrimony of the druid Mogh Ruith, is identified in Keating’s narrative as the land of the Roches (and the Condons).¹⁰⁶ In the saga *Forbuis Droma Damhghaire*, Mogh Ruith praises Fermoy in a *roscadh*.¹⁰⁷ The story, then, would have been particularly fitting at a wedding feast which celebrates the marriage of Dominic

¹⁰⁰Henry Molony, ‘Ancient Churches and Topography of Ballingarry Parish, County Limerick’, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 35 (1906) 255–63, at 260. The tumulus can still be seen along the left bank of the stream. I thank Mr. Connors for directing me to the mound during a visit to Ballingarry (March 2002).

¹⁰¹*Keat.* ii 318.4961.

¹⁰²Simington, *Civil Survey*, 320. For an account of the Hurley lands see fn. 4 above.

¹⁰³These are described as ‘the ruined C[astle], mills, two fairs, courts leet and baron’. See Westropp, ‘Ancient Castles of the County Limerick’, 195.

¹⁰⁴As I have noted elsewhere (‘Wedding poems of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair’, 44), the Act of Settlement confirmed Knocklong to ‘Cornet E. Cooper of Markree’ in 1669; see Westropp, ‘Ancient Castles of the County Limerick’, 195. Dara Binéid has also proposed this identification (*Searc na suadh*, 141). ‘E. Cooper’ was probably ‘Edw^d. Cooper’, who is named as a grantee of Knocklong (11 May, 1666), in Thomas Taylor, *Books of survey and distribution: the distribution of the forfeited lands in Ireland, pursuant to the acts of settlement and explanation. County Limerick* xii (RIA Stowe ms I ii 2, 1677), Costlea Barony, p. 6. I thank the Royal Irish Academy for permission to consult these records. Cf. James Grene Barry, *The Cromwellian settlement of the County of Limerick* (Limerick 1900) 22 and ‘Part 8’. An ‘Arthur Cooper’ (ibid.) is also named among those who received Sir Maurice Hurley’s lands in Kiltleely Parish.

¹⁰⁵R. C. Simington, *The transplantation of Connacht 1654–58* (Dublin 1970) 132, 209. His wife, Margaret O’Dwyer, and his mother were also transplanted; see Dr. S. C. O’Mahony, ‘Cromwellian Transplantation from Limerick, 1653’, *North Munster Antiquarian Journal* 40 (2000) 29–51, at 41 n. 81. See further Hurly, ‘Some account of the family of O’Hurly’, 114–15.

¹⁰⁶*Keat.* ii 320.

¹⁰⁷Sjoestedt, ‘Forbuis Droma Damhghaire’, 66 § 66.

Roche to the daughter of Anna Ní hUrthuile (Hurley), recalling the patrimony of both the Roches and the Hurleys, a release of the sealed waters, and a final victory at Knocklong (*Druim Damhghaire*).

The verses which conclude the poem praise Dominic Roche as a heroic defender of the fertile lands of the Roches, but suggest that these lands remain in the hands of the foreigners (*i nglacaibh Gall*),¹⁰⁸ Whether Dominic Roche regained a portion of these lands is uncertain;¹⁰⁹ however, an early history of the region conveys the uncertainty of the times and the insecurity of land titles, as it recounts Dominic Roche's return to Limerick City and his attempt to lay claim to 'two fields near the old castle': 'Mr Roche now set out to lay his complaint before the court of claims, but so unsettled was the kingdom at that period, so numerous the claimants, and so valuable the lands, he found the door shut against him.'¹¹⁰ And yet, while uncertainty overshadows the wedding feast, the poem ends with an image of a rich, fertile landscape—the promised patrimony of the bride and bridegroom—and with the prayerful plea 'May God bring it about' (*Dia dá chomhall!*). Whether real or illusory, the patrimony of Úna and Dominic is described as the idealized *flaithius*, tended by the rightful chieftain and his spouse:

¹⁰⁸Dominic had lands in the parishes of Killidie and Abbeyfeale in the Barony of Connello, the parish of Luddenbeg in the Barony of Clanwilliam, and holdings in the parish of St. John in the City of Limerick (*Civil Survey*, 85, 262, 269, 412–13, 416). These stanzas indicate a loss of at least some portion of the patrimony, as I have suggested in an earlier analysis of the passage (Griffin-Wilson, 'Wedding poems of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair', 44–5 n. 93).

¹⁰⁹Dr Dara Binéid has recently argued that Dominic Roche did not retain his former estate (*Searc na suadh*, 18–20). For further remarks on the stanzas cited above see Binéid, *Searc na suadh*, 133–4.

¹¹⁰J. Ferrar, *The history of Limerick, ecclesiastical, civil and military from the earliest records to the year 1787* (Limerick 1787) 352–3. Dominic lost significant holdings in Abbeyfeale Parish in the barony of Connello. It is noted that Knockredderymoddy and Cahirdagh were granted to Lord Kingston (14 July, 1668); Knocknashanna was granted to James Galloway and Nicho[las] Bourke (14 August and 30 January, 1663). See Taylor, *Books of survey and distribution* xii (RIA Stowe ms I ii 2, Connello Barony (7)). 'Dominick Roch' of Newcastle is named in a list of transplantations; see Simington, *Transplantation to Connacht*, 222–3. However, it seems unlikely that Dominic Roche, son of Jordon Óg, was transplanted, as he was later created Baron Tarbert and Viscount Cahiravahalla by James II (Gibbs, *Complete peerage* ii, 469.)

Iomdha lubhghort iomard abhlach
ionnfhuar aoibhinn,
is trácht éisdeas gan león lútha,
ceól ó fhaoilinn.

Iomdha caisleán beannach bláithgheal,
broc is baothdhamh,
éigne ballach, torc is trághna,
molt is maothmhart

i ngort geallta an ghille dhéidghil,
—Dia dá chomhall!—

is mór treabhthach fá thrias Úna
bhias ag foghnamh. (42–44)

Many herb gardens, apple-abounding heights, refreshing and pleasant;
and a strand which hearkens without yearning sorrow to music from a
seagull.

Many gabled, flower-bright castles, badgers and wild oxen; speckled
salmon, boars and corncrakes, wethers and fattened cows

In the promised pasture-land of the bright-toothed youth; may God bring
it about! Great is the number of householders who will be serving under
Úna's sway.

If we think of the marriage poem recited at the feast among local families, the reiteration of themes and motifs across the poem which I have described here would draw attention to its fundamental purpose. The couple's union is at the centre of the occasion and the occasional poem, both structurally and thematically, but it also connects to other parts of the composition, as the poet takes that central image of a noble, fruitful union and develops the same theme in another register. The poet's directive to the couple to 'perform' (*iomluit*) to 'rend in storms' (*stialladh i stormaibh*), 'to break a gap' (*brisfidh bearna*) to 'strike into that bank' (*béin féin mbruach sin*) with a 'weapon' (*ga*) which causes a breach but also heals, are echoed in Mogh Ruith's forceful release of the waters of Munster. Both acts typify the beneficial and tumultuous release of a 'lock' (*glas*) which ultimately 'pieces together' (*píosaim pósaim*), encourages fertility and affirms the natural order. Set against this fruitful release is Odell's futile enterprise, which stops the flow of the stream, perverts nature and brings barrenness. The prose and verse passages are both timely, belonging to and expressing the concerns of the moment, and timeless, as the old story and the new are intertwined to reveal the necessity of regeneration and interdependence. Ó Bruadair does not conceal the encroaching threat to all that the wedding poem promises, and uncertainty finally overshadows the feast in Cahirmoyle; however, he contains that threat, challenges it, and celebrates in spite of it.

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