# A DEATH-BED POEM ASCRIBED TO MUIREADHACH
# ALBANACH

THE POEM edited below from the Book of the Dean of Lismore[1]
(p. 19) is one of a group of three consecutive pieces ascribed, respec-
tively, to 'Muireadhach Albanach', 'Muireadhach as above' and 'Muireadhach
Ó Dálaigh of Lios an Doill, the poet (*fear dána*)'. Our poem, on
the familiar theme of repentance before death, comes first. It is fol-
lowed by the similar *Réidhigh an croidhe, a mhic Dhé* (pp. 19–20).[2]
The third poem in the group is *Créad agaibh aoidhigh i gcéin?*, Muir-
eadhach's appeal to Richard fitz William Burke after his estrangement
from Ó Domhnaill, which was edited by Osborn Bergin from RIA MS
23 D 14,[3] and has been set in its historical context by Brian Ó Cuív in
his fundamental study, 'Eachtra Mhuirígh Albanaigh Í Dhálaigh'.[4]

Transcripts of the text of our poem have appeared in *The Book of
the Dean of Lismore*[5] and in *Reliquiae celticae* I.[6] The former volume
also contains a transliteration into 'Scottish Gaelic'[7] and a 'translation'.[8]
The poem does not occur in any other extant source. Two interrelated
questions are immediately raised by the poem's occurrence in the Dean's
Book with its ascription to Muireadhach Ó Dálaigh. (1) Given the
'linguistic drift'[9] which has affected all BDL texts to a greater or lesser
extent, how different was the original poem from the form in which it
has been preserved? More specifically, how closely did it conform to
the linguistic and metrical norms of *dán díreach*? (2) Given the poem's
association in the manuscript with one of the genuine, 'historical' poems
of Muireadhach, how should one regard the ascription in this case? More
specifically, can it be correct?

In cases where (as here) we are wholly dependent upon BDL for the
text of a poem the answer to the first question has to be determined on
the basis of a careful and open-minded analysis designed to identify and,
as far as possible, to separate out the linguistic strata attested or implied
by the surviving text of the poem. The results of that analysis, which

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[1] National Library of Scotland MS Adv. 72.1.37, hereafter referred to as BDL. Note
that when discussing texts contained in BDL I use 'MS' to denote the actual reading
of the manuscript, and 'B' to denote the text which the Dean of Lismore may have
understood when reading his Book, and which we should understand on reading a
standardized version of it. See W. Gillies, 'A religious poem ascribed to Muireadhach
Ó Dálaigh', *Studia Celtica* 14–15 (1979–80) 81–6, p. 83 n. 6.

[2] See Gillies, *Studia Celtica* 14–15 (1979–80) 81–6.

[3] See O. Bergin, *Irish bardic poetry* (ed. D. Greene and F. Kelly, Dublin 1970)
88–92.

[4] *Studia Hibernica* 1 (1961) 56–69.

[5] Rev. T. MacLauchlan and W. F. Skene, Edinburgh 1862, 120.

[6] Rev. A. Cameron, Inverness 1892, 104–5.

[7] *Book of the Dean of Lismore*, 121.

[8] ibid., 157.

[9] W. Gillies, 'The Gaelic poems of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy (I)', *Scottish
Gaelic Studies* 13/1 (1978) 18–45, p. 20.

is conducted below, may be anticipated as follows. The text (or most of it) fairly readily yields up a poem composed in a form approximating to that of classical *séadna*. The poem so revealed employs a level of language which on the whole shows familiarity with the teachings of the bardic schools; but it also exhibits some forms and usages which would not be accounted 'classical' in the strict sense, i.e. as set out in the prescriptions of the metrical, grammatical and syntactical tracts.[10] In order to purge the poem of this element and make it comply with the norms of classical *dán díreach* one would have to resort to emendation of a more violent sort. This poses a dilemma. It would appear that *either* the poem was composed more or less as I have restored it, but not in the strict form which we know was employed by early classical Irish poets including Muireadhach Ó Dálaigh; *or* an original poem was so composed, but has been transformed to a degree which renders that original inaccessible to us. On either view I hesitate to claim that I present below a composition of Muireadhach Albanach.

One could, of course, seek to mount a defence for the authenticity of the poem (more or less) as it is. One could argue that the surviving tracts do not provide an exhaustive account of the range of linguistic and metrical usage preserved in the extant corpus of classical bardic verse, and still less of Early Modern verse in general. One could argue that not enough is known of the conventions which governed the form of informal compositions by professional poets for it to be safe to exclude poems like this one from the canon. One would, in making this case, lay stress on the earliness of Muireadhach's *floruit* within the classical period, and on the existence of at least one poem attributed to Muireadhach, preserved in quite different sources, which exhibits similarly non-standard features for possibly similar reasons.[11] (If however, the non-standard 'original' forms included Scotticisms it would be difficult to see why an early thirteenth-century Irish poet should have used them; and this would be true even if one could prove them to be early Scotticisms, i.e. established by the beginning of the Early Modern period rather than developments within it.)[12]

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[10] It should be added that the non-classical forms and usages which resist easy elimination include a couple which it is tempting to associate somehow with Scottish Gaelic: see notes on 6*d*, 7*d*.

[11] The examination which these and similar points have received in numerous articles and text-editions by Brian Ó Cuív adds up to the most authoritative view currently available on the parameters of Irish syllabic verse, and is one of his outstanding services to scholarship. See, in the present context, B. Ó Cuív, 'Some developments in Irish metrics', *Éigse* 12 (1967–8) 273–90. For the poem *Aonar dhuit, a Bhriain Bhanbha* see A. J. Goedheer, *Irish and Norse traditions about the battle of Clontarf* (Haarlem 1938) 45–59; and Ó Cuív, *Éigse* 12 (1967–8) 287–8.

[12] The development of a distinctively Scottish variety of Gaelic is a question which stands in need of refinement and reassessment. For example, if there is any historical reality behind the structural similarities which several scholars have perceived between Scottish Gaelic and Welsh in recent years, it must arise from linguistic interactions within the 'Old', or at the latest the 'Middle' period of the Gaelic language.

On the other hand, my understanding of the 'correct' level to which the poem should be restored may be faulty. I may have overlooked compelling emendations which would permit us to present the poem in a form more like those which we believe were definitely composed by Muireadhach. I offer it to Brian Ó Cuív in its present form in the knowledge that there is no one better equipped than he to resolve that question, whether or not he is disposed to rescue it for inclusion in the edition of Muireadhach's poetry which we hope he will now find the leisure to complete.

The question of the status of the poem may also be approached from a quite different angle. It is natural and legitimate to ask how it may have come to be included in the Dean's Book. Can one envisage circumstances which satisfactorily reconcile its appearance beside *Créad agaibh aoidhigh i gcéin?*, and its ascription to Muireadhach, with its apparent linguistic form?

There are some noteworthy differences between Muireadhach's poems and those of the other 'big names' of early classical verse – Donnchadh Mór and Gofraidh Fionn, Giolla Brighde and Tadhg Óg – as they appear in BDL. In the first place, the majority of the latter group's poems are also found in Irish sources such as the Yellow Book of Lecan, the Book of Fermoy, the Book of Uí Mhaine or the Book of O'Conor Don.[13] By contrast, five of the eight poems ascribed to Muireadhach in BDL are not found in Irish sources, and a sixth shares only its opening verses with Irish versions.[14] This suggests to me that the compilers of BDL had access to mainstream sources for the other poets, but drew on sources outwith the main channels of dissemination for at least the majority of their texts of Muireadhach. In the same way, a fair number of the BDL texts of the other early poets contain scribal emendations suggestive of the availability of more than one source.[15] By contrast,

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[13] The ascriptions need not be identical. Thus the poems ascribed in BDL to Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh tend to be anonymous in Irish sources (see T. F. O'Rahilly, 'Indexes to the Book of the Dean of Lismore', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 4 (1934) 31–56 §§ 7, 109, 144); one of BDL's ascriptions to Donnchadh Mór Ó Dálaigh (ibid., § 25) is part of a poem ascribed in RIA MS 23 F 16 (the O'Gara manuscript) to Tadhg Camchosach Ó Dálaigh; one of BDL's ascriptions to Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn (O'Rahilly, § 76) is associated with Giolla Brighde (Mac Con Midhe) in the Book of Uí Mhaine (and with Donnchadh Mór in several later Irish manuscripts); and so on. This inconsistency is, however, part of a wider uncertainty as to the authorship of early classical poetry; the point to stress here is that the poems in BDL recur in mainstream Gaelic manuscripts.

[14] O'Rahilly, *Sc. Gaelic Stud.* 4 (1934) §§ 24, 64, 114, 116 (the present poem) and 170, are not in Irish sources; §§ 39 and 115 are; and § 49 (*Déana mo theagasg, a Thríonóid*) corresponds initially to the Irish versions but then parts company from them.

[15] I exclude here changes and corrections obviously made by the scribe while entering the text into BDL, and minor alterations which could have been made by a critical reader polishing the text before him without reference to other versions. Of the present group of poems the most extensively 'edited' is Tadhg Óg's *Cia do-ghéabhainn go Gráinne* (O'Rahilly, *Sc. Gaelic Stud.* 4 (1934) § 34).

this sort of activity occurs in only one of Muireadhach's poems. This may suggest that BDL's compilers received most of their material on Muireadhach from a single source, perhaps (though not necessarily) the same source. It is surely significant that the BDL poem by Muireadhach which does display signs of editorial interference is *Créad agaibh aoidhigh i gcéin*, i.e. one of the two which also occur in the mainstream sources.

In view of these considerations, I believe we are justified in postulating a particular source (presumably Scottish) with a special interest in Muireadhach Albanach and access to strict-metre compositions (cf. *M'anam do scar riom-sa a-réir* and *Éistigh riom-sa, a Mhuire mhór*). The persons most likely to fulfil these conditions would be members of the Mac Mhuirich bardic family founded by Muireadhach; indeed, it would seem perfectly reasonable to expect his poetic *familia* to preserve specimens of his most famous and accomplished compositions for commemorative or didactic purposes. In fact, it is tempting to go further and suggest that the intermediary in question may have been the Eóin Mac Mhuireadhaigh who contributed courtly love and satiric pieces to BDL and whom we may hence deduce to have been a member of the Dean of Lismore's intimate circle.[16]

While this scenario accounts well, in my view, for the preservation of authentic *dán díreach* compositions by Muireadhach, and for their transmission to BDL, it may be asked whether it can as easily account for the rather different textual consistency of *Mithidh domh triall go toigh Pharrthais* as outlined above. I believe that it can, if we may assume that verses associated with the *eachtra* (or at least the biographical 'anecdotage') of our poet would have circulated informally within the poetic family of his descendants, or more widely amongst members of the Scottish learned order.[17] Such verses could well have included 'death-bed' poems, since death is a key point in any heroic biography, and 'last words' were obviously of interest in the case of wisdom figures like poets. They might even be the work of the poet himself, or at least based on compositions of his, though in some analogous cases the

[16] If Eóin were the Johannes Makmurich identified by Professor Derick Thomson ('The MacMhuirich bardic family', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* 43 (1960–63) 276–304, p. 287) as the 'Dean of Knoydart', who likewise contributed to BDL (O'Rahilly, *Sc. Gaelic Stud.* 4 (1934) § 6), then he would have had an additional link with James MacGregor, as an ecclesiastical colleague within the diocese of Argyll. This identification is not certain, however, since another Eóin Mac Mhuireadhaigh, who is actually termed 'Johannes McMurech Albany' on one occasion, held lands in Kintyre between 1505 and 1541: see Thomson, *Trans. Gaelic Soc. Inverness* 43 (1960–63) 292. (The Eóin who was Dean of Knoydart was dead by 1510). Another possible intermediary would be Giolla Coluim Mac an Ollaimh (O'Rahilly, *Sc. Gaelic Stud.* 4 (1934) §§ 55/141, 118, 126), if he is to be identified with the Gillecalum McMurrich who held lands in Kintyre between 1502 and 1505 (Thomson, *Trans. Gaelic Soc. Inverness* 43 (1960–63) 291; cf. J. Bannerman, *The Beatons: a medical kindred in the classical Gaelic tradition* (Edinburgh 1986) 13 n. 69).

[17] The single quatrain beginning *Seacht bhfichid míle fá sheacht*, attributed to Muireadhach in BDL, is good evidence for the existence of such traditions in the early sixteenth century: see Gillies, *Studia Celtica* 14–15 (1979–80) 82.

verses ascribed to a particular poet were evidently not composed by him.
During the course of their transmission, in relatively uncontrolled cir-
cumstances amongst people who were mostly capable of turning a verse
themselves, one may presume that a more or less continuous process of
textual dilapidation and renovation would take effect. Such a process
would naturally – given the personnel involved in a Scottish context –
have introduced Scotticisms of the sort admitted by the Scottish poets
edited by W. J. Watson in *Scottish verse from the Book of the Dean of
Lismore* (Edinburgh 1937). Although it cannot be proved beyond doubt,
I suspect that something like this did happen in the present case.[18]

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

    The salient textual and linguistic evidence may be set out as follows.

    1. There is, as usual, an overlay of vernacular/modern pronuncia-
tions and forms. These are to be associated with the latter stages of
the poem's transmission, and may well be attributable to our scribe.
The following list is not exhaustive. It is confined to clear-cut categories
and examples, and ignores features which are obscured by imprecision
in BDL's orthographic system (e.g. with respect to the representation
of palatalized consonants or of the diphthongs /ia/ and /ua/).[19] The
point of linguistic departure assumed is classical Early Modern Irish.
Discussion of specific points will be found in the notes to the text.

    1.1. /e/ > /a/ before velar/velarized consonants: na$^t$ (*neach*) 1*d*;
lagga (*leag*) 3*c*; schal (*seal*) 6*c*; sachin (*seachain*) 6*c*; sakke (*seacadh*)
7*c*.

    1.2. (/a/ >) /o/ > /e/ before palatal/palatalized consonants: teig /
teyg (*toigh*) 1*a*, 1*c*, 5*a*; cherri (*chaire/choire*) 1*c*; el (*oile/eile*) 1*d*.

    1.3. Weakening or loss of internal spirants:

        – intervocal: meith/meicht (*mithigh*) 1*a*, 7*d*; doyn (*domhan*) 4*c*;
oyn (*omhan*) 4*d*.

        – preconsonantal: cwne (*cuimhnigh*) 2*b*.

        – postconsonantal: pharris (*pharrthais*) 1*a*; ymmi (*iomdha*) 5*d*.

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[18]Even if one accepted the suggestion that a *dán díreach* poem lay behind the
present text this would not necessarily lead to the conclusion that the poem was
composed by Muireadhach Albanach. Nevertheless, this would become a tempting
proposition in the new circumstances.

[19]A detailed analysis of BDL's orthographic practices and their phonetic and
phonological implications, based on the poems of Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy,
is to appear in *Scottish Gaelic Studies* in due course.

1.4. Weakening or loss of final spirants:

– closing stressed syllables:

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|---|---|---|---|
| $(\theta)$/h | > | $\emptyset$ | dlow (*dlúth*) 2*b*. |
| $(\eth)$/$\gamma$ | > | $\emptyset$ | ʒraw (*ghrádh*) 5*b*; he (*shíodh*) 4*a*; in nei (*do-níodh*) 5*b*. |
| x | > | h/$\emptyset$ | naᵗ (*neach*) 1*d*. |
| ṽ | > | h/$\emptyset$ | doṫ (*domh*) 1*a*. |

– closing unstressed syllables (post-tonic):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| $(\eth)$/$\gamma$ | > | $\emptyset$ | ardre (*airdríogh*) 5*a*; sakke (*seacadh*) 7*c*; begca (*bpeacadh*) 7*d*; threige (*thréigeadh*) 5*a*. |
| $(\eth')$/$\gamma'$ | > | $\emptyset$ | cwne (*cuimhnigh*) 2*b*; deche (*deachaidh*) 6*d*. |
| v'/$(\eth')$/$\gamma'$ | > | h/$\emptyset$ | chennyᵗ (*cheannaigh*) 7*a*; meith/meicht (*mithigh*) 1*a*, 7*d*; fegkiᵗ (*pheacthaibh*) 3*a* (?). |

– closing unstressed syllables (*iairmbéarlaí*):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| $(\theta)$/h | > | $\emptyset$ | tra (*tráth*) 5*b*. |
| x | > | h/$\emptyset$ | naᵗ/noᵗ (*nach*) 6*b*, 6*d*. |

1.5. Loss of final schwa:

– in disyllables: el (*oile*) 1*d*; ag (*aga*) 2*c*; dan (*déana*) 3*a* (?). Perhaps also in: (i) dane (*déana*) 2*a*, 4*a*; grane (*gránna*) 3*b*; aikre/aigre (*agra*) 2*d*, 3*d*; cholle (*cholla*) 7*b*; (ii) donna (*duine*) 5*c*; (iii) cherri (*choire*) 1*c*; ymmi (*iomdha*) 5*d*.[20]

– in trisyllables: ynnis (*innise*) 3*b*; ʒone (*dheónaighe*) 1*b* (?); ahyreiᵗ (*aithrighe*) 2*c* (?).

1.6. Loss of final -(*e*)*adh*:

– in nominal forms: scrut (*sgrúdadh*) 2*a*. Perhaps also (cf. note 20): sakke (*seacadh*) 7*c*; begca (*bpeacadh*) 7*d*.

– in finite verbal forms: perhaps (cf. note 20); threige (*thréigeadh*) 5*a*.

1.7. Devoicing of internal and final stops: scrut (*sgrúdadh*) 2*a*; ymmit (*iomad*) 2*b*; aikre (*agra*) 2*d*; chut (*chuid*) 3*c*; brek (*bréig*) 6*b*.[21]

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[20] The reason for the uncertainty in (i) is that by the early sixteenth century Scots orthography was using final -*e* without phonetic value, especially as an indicator of /V:C#/ in sequences of the shape *VCe#*. In (ii) and (iii) we have to reckon with stratagems employed in BDL to indicate word-boundaries – i.e. where (*C*)*Ci* and (*C*)*Ca* represent /C#/.

[21] Other points of interest at this level include the reduction of *do* (with whatever meaning) to *a* (as in *dod chuid a* 3*c*, *a-níodh* 5*b*); interchange of historical *dh* and *g*, especially in proclitics such as *d*(*h*)*o*, *d*(*h*)*a*, *go*, *ga* (e.g. *ga* for *dha* 4*b*); 'double nasalisation' (e.g. *gon dtéid* 6*d*, *rem bpeacadh* 7*d*); declensional simplification (e.g. *toigh* (accus.) 1*c*; *fiadhain* (nom.) 5*d*); and the development of *sul fá*ⁿ 'before' to *má*ⁿ (3*d*, 4*d*).

Some of these divergences from the classical norm (e.g. loss of non-morphological -(e)adh) invite comparison with modern Perthshire Gaelic. Others (e.g. devoicing of internal consonants) would be regarded as characteristically Scottish. Others again (e.g. raising/fronting of /a/ or /o/ before palatal/palatalized consonants) are best described even more widely, simply as Modern Gaelic phenomena. That they may all be discounted for the purposes of apprehending the language of composition of the poem is rendered more than probable by the existence of more conservative, 'classical' pronunciations side by side with these 'progressive' forms. Thus, for example:

To 1.1: deche (*deachaidh*) 6*d*; phekke (*pheacadh*) 5*b*, cf. 3*a*, 7*d*; sermon (*searmoin*) 6*a*; chenny^t (*cheannaigh*) 7*a*.

To 1.2: sorve (*soirbh*) 1*b*; marga (*mairg*) 5*a*.

To 1.3: feyʒin (*fiadhain*) 5*d*; awʒeve (*Ádhaimh*) 6*a*, 7*a*; aveʒon (*aimhdheóin*) 4*b*.

To 1.7: haggrt (*shagart*) 2*a*; ag (*aga*) 2*c*; lagga (*leag*) 3*c*; marga (*mairg*) 5*a*; threige (*thréigeadh*) 5*a*; ded (*dtéid*) 6*d*; aigre (*agra*) 3*d*.[22]

Taking the phonological evidence as a whole we may describe the form of language attested by MS as varying along a spectrum whose poles are the classical Early Modern dialect and the local dialect of Perthshire Gaelic. It is not necessary for present purposes to go beyond that formulation; nor would it be an easy matter to do so, especially given the shortness of the poem.

2. Although the evidence is not so abundant, it would seem that a similar conclusion can be drawn at the level of morphology and syntax. Discussion of the following examples will be found in the notes to the edited text. I have, as before, avoided quoting examples which are obscure or vexed.

2.1. Non-classical forms which can easily and plausibly be replaced by classical forms: *toigh* 1*c*; *innis*/*innse* 3*b*; *má mbí* 3*d*, 4*d*; *fiadhain* 5*d*.

2.2. Non-classical forms which can *not* be replaced easily by classical forms: *déan* 3*a* (perhaps also at 4*a*; possibly also at 2*a*); *mí* 7*d*; *díon* 7*d* (?).

The existence of these categories beside the unexceptionable classical forms (whether visibly present or thinly disguised by a vernacular-oriented pronunciation-spelling) suggests the following conclusions. First, an element of morphological adaptation was involved in the transmission of the poem. This could be associated, like the phonological innovations, with the latter stages of transmission, and need not carry any implications for the composition of the poem. Second, and more

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[22]Cf. also ʒneve (*ghníomh*) 5*d*, beside evidence elsewhere in BDL for /#ɣn/ > /#ɣr/ etc.; di ʒul (*do dhul*) 4*c* and di heil (*do shíol*) 6*a* beside a chenn^t (*do cheannaigh*) 7*a*, etc. (see last note).

controversial, we seem to have a little hard evidence for sub-classical forms more deeply embedded in the text, which could indeed involve the 'composition' of the poem. On the other hand, I would wish to suggest that this does not necessarily involve the original composer. In order to clarify this point, we should consider briefly the more strictly textual evidence this poem provides.

3. In discussing the more problematic sections of the poem, I have at several points been led to suggest that B, as we have it, incorporates textual corruption of one sort or another. The categories of corruption which I identify as most likely to be involved are as follows. (See the notes for details.)

3.1. Corruption involving oral/aural misunderstandings:[23]

1*b* dhuinne [is] soirbh

2*c* aithrighe

4*a* lucht *dra. . .*

6*c* fulang a(n) bháis

7*d* rem peacadh

3.2. Corruption involving visual (i.e. scribal) misunderstandings:[24]

2*a* ⟨shagart⟩ sdiúraidh

In addition to the above, I would identify a third category, where the text makes sense (albeit sometimes rather feeble sense) but is artistically or technically sub-standard. Here I would raise the possibility of 'improvement', typically the result of textual degeneration followed by refurbishment, during the course of transmission.

3.3. Textual modification over and above categories 3.1 and 3.2:

3*c* dod chuid chleachtadh

3*d* agra diabhail

7*a* síol nÁdhaimh

7*c* ar a réir

Corroborative evidence for such textual 'growth' is not absent from the Gaelic poetic tradition as a whole, whether amongst the learned poets of the Middle Irish period or in the attempts of eighteenth- and

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[23] I leave open for the time being the question whether these may result from oral transmission at a pre-scribal stage (and, if so, whether the oral transmission nevertheless involved the scribe of our poem) or from 'dictation' to our scribe (and, if so, whether this involved a 'dictator' other than the scribe himself).

[24] I believe I have established the existence of written exemplars in the case of some of Duncan Campbell's poems: see, e.g. W. Gillies, 'The Gaelic poems of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy (II)', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 13/2 (1981) 263-88, p. 278. While additional evidence is lacking in the present poem, see Gillies, *Studia Celtica* 14–15 (1979–80) 85 (note on 1*a*), for the suggestion that the error in MS results from the misreading of an ornate capital 'R' as 'B' in the poem which follows ours in BDL, and was apparently written by the same scribe on the same occasion. If this is correct, an exemplar with the same orthography as B's is implied. The existence of lenition dots (e.g. doṫ (*domh*) 1*a*) and other signs of familiarity with Gaelic orthography and scribal practices does not count against this, since such familiarity was clearly part of the general equipment of the compilers of BDL.

nineteenth-century Irish scribes to cope with *dán díreach* compositions.
The aim of the interference could equally be to revise the substance of
a text or to retrieve sense which was actually or apparently lacking. It
flourishes as a corrective to the effects of oral transmission, though it
frequently compounds them. It can be shown to be present in BDL
where we have other versions of the same text to compare with B. It
is difficult to gauge its extent where a unique copy is involved, since
successful editing will in principle result in a reading which is at least
unexceptionable. Its presence in our poem would be particularly inter-
esting since it would offer a possible solution to the problem of a largely
but not completely strict text.

4. In this context, it is appropriate to conclude with a word about
metre, which is intimately connected with language in *dán díreach*, and
which may be expected to shed some light on the status of the text,
inasmuch as intermittent loss of finer metrical points might be taken as
a sign of transmissional re-working of a strict text. Professor Ó Cuív
has stated the rules for *séadna* in *dán díreach* compositions as follows:[25]

> In it the poem had to conform to the syllabic pattern $8^2 7^1 8^2 7^1$,
> with (1) perfect end-rime between *b* and *d*, (2) perfect rime (*aicill*)
> between the last stressed word in *c* and the last stressed word but
> one in *d*, (3) perfect rime between every other stressed word in *d* and
> a word in *c*, (4) alliteration in every line, the alliteration in the last
> line being between the last two stressed words, and (5) alliteration
> between the last word in *a* and the first stressed word in *b*.

As applied to our poem the above criteria yield somewhat contra-
dictory results. The rhymes show near-perfection as regards end-rhyme
and *aicill* (i.e. rules (1) and (2)), the only exception being the imper-
fect rhyme *aga* : *agra* in 2*cd*. But the results for rule (3), internal
rhyme in second couplets, are much less impressive: 5 perfect rhymes
out of a possible 12, or at best 9 out of 12 if suggested emendations
were adopted in quatrains 2, 3, 4 and 7 (see notes). This might suggest
that the poet had adopted a relaxed attitude towards internal rhyme,
and composed his poem in '*ógláchas* of *séadna*', rather in the manner of
the *ógláchas* of *rannaigheacht* and of *deibhidhe* found in BDL poets like
Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy.[26] However, it is noticeable here that
the rhymes which do appear are all (with the exception of *aga* : *agra*)
perfect rhymes, whereas Duncan Campbell and his like would admit
various relaxations in rhyming standards as a matter of course.

[25] *Éigse* 12 (1968) 288; cf. E. Knott, *An introduction to Irish syllabic poetry* 2nd
ed. (Dublin 1957) 16–17; C. Ní Dhomhnaill, *Duanaireacht* (Baile Átha Cliath 1975)
78.
[26] See the Introductions to Duncan's poems (Gillies, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 13/1
(1978) 18–45, 13/2 (1981) 263–88, 14/1 (1983) 59–82) for details of the relevant
metrical rules and practices.

There are similar difficulties with rules (4)–(5) governing alliteration. Whereas I reckon that up to 24 out of the poem's 28 lines contain (or could have been intended to contain, or could easily be emended to contain) alliteration, there are at least four lines (4*a*, 4*b*, 5*b*, 7*d*) where it is hard to envisage alliteration, at least without 'major surgery'. Moreover, the total of 24 requires the acceptance of five ('easy') emendations (2*a*, 3*d*, 6*a*, 7*a*, 7*c*), and includes three strictly unacceptable alliterations (2*a* as emended, 6*b*, 6*d*) and three alliterations in strictly unacceptable positions (3*d* as emended, 5*d*, 7*c* as emended). As for alliteration linking *a* and *b*, only one quatrain shows it (7*ab*) beyond doubt. (It could be present in the corrupt 4*ab*.) Is this sole occurrence precious testimony to an earlier stage in the poem's 'life', or mere coincidence?

To sum up, the linguistic and metrical evidence taken together would appear to suggest one or other of two conclusions. Either we are dealing with a poem composed, more or less as we have it, in a less than strict form of *séadna* by a poet who was careful to observe metrical rules (1)–(2), but pretty happy-go-lucky about rules (3)–(5); or we have a poem which was composed according to the strict conventions, but which was subsequently altered fairly extensively in transmission by tradition-bearers or scribes who understood rules (1)–(2), but whose number included persons with a relatively relaxed attitude to rule (3) and innocent of the niceties of rules (4)–(5). I follow Brian Ó Cuív[27] in believing that *óglachas* should not be defined in purely negative terms as a loose imitation of *dán díreach*. I am therefore impressed by the virtually unanimous correctness of the rhymes which are present in the poem, and hence tempted to entertain the second alternative.[28] But I recognize that this can be no more than a hunch.

EDITION

*Edited text*: The encrustation of vernacular and dialectal forms which characterizes B is eliminated here, so far as that is possible, and the poem is presented with editorial punctuation, etc., normalized to an Early Modern Irish standard. (The text of B is given, in an orthography which borrows where necessary from the practices of Scottish Gaelic writers or the editors of dialect texts, in the notes, wherever it differs from the edited text.) I have, however, been chary of introducing emendations into the edited text, beyond a necessary and obvious minimum level. (Where this occurs, square brackets ([ ]) indicate material supplied editorially, angled brackets (⟨ ⟩) indicate material to be deleted.) Discussion of all textual matters is contained in the accompanying notes. *Diplomatic text*: I give the text of MS as nearly as possible in the form in which it appears in BDL; italics indicate the few contractions involved (for further details see *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 13/1 (1978) 21–2).

[27] *Éigse* 12 (1967–8) 273.
[28] We should also bear in mind the rarity of *óglachas* of *séadna* in general (cf. Ní Dhomhnaill, *Duanaireacht*, 78).

## Au[c]tor Muireadhach Albanach

1　　Mithidh domh triall go toigh Pharrthais:
　　　　　an uair dhéonaighe dhuinne [is] soirbh;
　　cosnam an teach tréan gan choire
　　　　　gan sgéal ag neach oile oirn.

2　　Déana do sgrúdadh red ⟨shagart⟩ sdiúraidh,
　　　　　cuimhnigh go dlúth iomad t'olc;
　　na beir aithrighe go n-aga:
　　　　　sgéal is préamh re agra ort.

3　　Ná déan falachán id pheacthaibh
　　　　　gé gránna re innse h'olc;
　　leag dod chuid cleachtadh diamhair
　　　　　má mbí agra dhiabhail ort.

4　　Déan(a) do shíodh . . .
　　　　　dhá dheóin dhá aimhdheóin led chorp;
　　sgar red locht do dhul don domhan
　　　　　má mbí a olc is a omhan ort.

1　'It is time for me to travel to the hall of Paradise: when You will it, it is (an) easy (journey) for me (or happy is the hour that you grant it to me). Let me attain the mighty abode unblemished, (leaving) no-one else with a complaint against me.'

2　'Examine yourself in the presence of your spiritual guide, recall assiduously the multitude of your misdeeds. Do not bring equivocal repentance: you will be called on to give an account and explanation (of yourself).

3　'Do not make any concealment in respect of your sins, however unpleasant your wickedness may be to relate. Throw off your secret practice(s) (?) lest you make yourself vulnerable to the Devil's advocacy.

4　'Make your peace . . . with your body perforce. Part with your wrong-doing before leaving the world, lest its evil (taint) and its (cause for) fear weigh upon you.

## Aut°ʳ mvrreiᵗ albanaᵗ

[1]　Meith doṫ treyl gow teiġ pharr*is* nor a ʒone gon a sorve
　　　Cossnome i*n* teyg trane gi*n* cherri gy*n* skail ag naᵗ el orn̄
[2]　Dane dyᵗ scrut rad haggrt steir cwne gi dlow y*m*mit tolk
　　　Na bera a hy reiᵗ gy*n* ag skail is pr eve ra aikre ort
[3]　Na dan falchan̄ id fegkiᵗ ga grane re y*n*nis a holk
　　　lagga did chut a claċ davyr maʸᵐ be aigre ʒeyvil ort
[4]　Dane dyᵗ he ris in lucht draċ ga don̄ ga avezon lad corp
　　　Scar red / locht / ᵈⁱ ʒul dy*n* doyn̄ ma y*m* be olk se oyn̄ ort

5      Mairg do thréigeadh teach an Airdríogh
          ar ghrádh pheactha, tráth do-níodh:
      an t-olc do-ní duine go diamhair
          iomdha ainn-séin fiadhain 'man ghníomh.

6      Ag so searmóin do Shíol nÁdhaimh,
          mar shaoilim nach bhfuil sí i mbréig,
      fulang a(n) bháis seal go seachain
          an fear nach deachaidh, go dtéid.

7      [An F]ear do cheannaigh Síol nÁdhaimh
          d'fhuil a cholla agus dá chrí,
      ar a réir do-ghéanainn seacadh,
          gion go ndíon rem peacadh mí.

                                        Mithidh.

5   'Woe betide anyone who would shun the abode of the High King for the love of sin, whenever he might commit it: the evil that a man does secretly (finds) many a witness there to the deed.

6   'Here is a precept for the race of Adam; for I reckon that it is no lie that the man who has not (so far) departed avoids the suffering of death (only) for a while, until he (eventually) goes.

7   'The One who purchased the race of Adam by the blood of His body and by His flesh, in accordance with His will would I become set (in my ways) – even though that does not protect me from my (burden of) sin.'

[5]   Marga threige teyg in ardre er ȝraw phekke trra in nei
      in tolk in ne donna gi devyr ymmi in sin feyȝin moñ ȝneve
[6]   ag so sermoñ di heil nawȝeve mir helim na$^t$ vil sche$^{imbrek}$
      Fulling a vaissy$^t$ schal g°w sachin in fer no$^t$ deche goñ ded
[7]   Ar a chenny$^t$ seil nawȝeve dwl a cholle & da cree
      Er a rair gi danyn sakke gyn ga deine ra ym begca mee / Meicht

## NOTES

While the first and last verses are clearly spoken by the man who is approaching death, verses 2–4 are as clearly addressed to him. (Verses 5–6 are probably to be taken as part of the advice given to him, but could possibly be uttered by him.) The poem is thus a dialogue in form: cf. perhaps *A Mhuireadhaigh meil do sgín* (T. F. O'Rahilly, *Measgra dánta* II (Dublin and Cork 1927) no. 69).

Title *Muiríoch* B.
1 *a Mithidh* (rather than *mithigh* or *mithich*) is suggested for B by the non-lenition of *domh*.
  *toigh Ph.*: The original composition may have had *teach bP.*: cf. *toigh* for *teach* in *c*.
  *b nar a dheón(adh)* or *dheóna(igh)* or *dheónaighe(adh)* B. One could also consider reading preterite passive *deónadh* or *deónaigheadh*. (If MS *nar a* were taken as *nár*, *dheóna* or *dheónaighe* would be indicated.) The reading chosen harmonizes best with my interpretation of the latter part of the line.
  *gon a* or *gona* MS. (1) I associate this form with *donna* (5 *c*), *ʒonna* (*Scottish Gaelic Studies* 13/2 (1981) 281, VI 9 *a*), *donna* (E. C. Quiggin, *Poems from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Cambridge 1937) 77, LIX 6 *a*) – i.e. a BDL spelling of *duine* 'man'. Compare M. Ó Murchú, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 15 (1988) 26, for East Perthshire /dun/ for *duin(e)*, and see below 4 *b* for *g/dh* confusion. (2) While I can believe that our scribe may have thought the poem mentioned a *duine soirbh*, I cannot construe this 'affable fellow' within the verse as a whole, and believe that our scribe misheard or misread *duinne* as *duine*. (The former would appear more likely, in view of the omitted *is* before the *s-* of *soirbh*).
  *c an toigh tréan* B. Rhyme with *neach* necessitates the restoration of *teach*. The original composition may have had *an teach dtréan*.
  *cherri* (MS): cf. Mod. Sc.G. differentiation of *coire* 'flaw' (usually with centralized vowel) from *coire* 'kettle' (with [ɔ]). MS probably represents *choir(e)* or *choir*: cf. on *ymmi* 5 *d*.
  *d oile*: *eil(e)* B.
2 *a Déan(a) do sgrúd(adh) red shag(a)rt stíor(a?)* B. The reconstruction printed above assumes (1) that the uncommon agent noun *sdiúraidh* either generated a gloss (*sagart*) which then became incorporated into a later version of the text, or was taken as the (Scottish) genitive of the verbal noun *sdiúradh*, thereby generating the need for a preceding noun, which was then duly supplied; and (2) that the resulting hypermetric line has been subject to some desperate procrusteanizing by our scribe. The main difficulty with all this is the spelling *steir* in MS; for BDL elsewhere uses the expected *stur* (see p. 284 line 6, i.e. *Déana mo theagasg, a Thríonóid*, 3 *a*). Moreover, for what it is worth, the line lacks alliteration. Alternatives abound, but each raises fresh difficulties. (1) One could read *sc[h]eir* and construe it as *síor-chuimhnigh* in *b*; but this would have undesirable effects on the line-length of *b*. (2) One could postulate an early use of the modern *sagart sgíre* 'parish priest', since *sgíre* must have been in the language for a

long time; but this leaves the line-length problem unresolved. The reading adopted must thus be regarded as extremely tentative.

*b* *cui*(*mh*)*n*(*igh*) B.

*c* *ná beir* (?) or *na*[*ch*] *b'fhearr* (?) *atharaigh* (perhaps for *aithirghe*) *gan ag*(*a*) B. (The final -*a* of MS *bera* quite possibly has no syllabic value: cf. *lagga* (3 *c*), *marga* (5 *a*).) I have opted for the former alternative in view of the preceding and following imperatives; but (1) the verb *beir* is slightly unexpected with *aithrighe*, (2) sense requires us to replace the usual *gan aga* with the unusual *go n-aga*, and (3) the metre looks to require a word to rhyme with *sgéal* or *préamh* (i.e. with the shape *béar*). The second alternative would presumably lead us to restore *nárbh fhearr* and take the line as an interjection: 'would it not be better to repent unstintingly?'. This allows us to retain *gan aga*, but still does not provide an internal rhyme. Could one read *na*[*ch*] *béar*[*a*] . . . *sgéala* ('Will you not. . . ?')? The reading must be classed as uncertain.

*d* Cf. '*Innis dúinn* . . . *sgéala gach eóin don ealta, fréamha a n-eóil 's a n-imtheachta*' (E. Knott, *The bardic poems of Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn (1550-1591)* I (Ir. Texts Soc. XXII, London 1922 for 1920) no. 15 st. 27).

3 *a* *Ná déan fal*(*a*)*chán id pheacaidh* B (The final -*idh* could perhaps represent a treatment of -*ibh*, though vocalization of final /əv(′)/ usually results in -*ow*, -*ew*, i.e. /(j)u/, in BDL.) If the expected *déana* were read the line would be hypermetric: assuming *déan* seems the simplest way of understanding B, for what it is worth. Other ways of reconstructing the line so as to preserve *deána* involve further changes or difficulties: e.g. (*ná déana*) *faillighe id pheacthaibh* or *falach*(*t*)⟨*ann*⟩ *ad ph.* or *falachán feactha* (?). For *falachán*, which I am loth to discard, cf. T. F. O'Rahilly, *Dánta grádha* 2nd ed. (Cork 1926) no. 13 st. 1 (glossed as *clúdach* by O'Rahilly in *Laoithe cumainn* (Baile-Átha-Cliath agus Corcaigh 1925) 32). I take it that the idea here is of a 'cover-up'.

*b* *gá gránn*(*a*) *re innis*(*e*) B. In order to read classical *innise* one could omit *re* and take *olc* as genitive plural.

*c* *a clach* (MS) is problematic. It should include a rhyme with *aigre* (MS) in *d*, which seems to stand for *agra* like *aikre* in 2 *d*; cf. *threige* 5 *a* beside *brek* 5 *d* for variation in the representation of devoiced post-tonic /g/. Moreover, to judge from the practice in the rest of this poem, the vexed reading should provide alliteration with either *chuid* or *diamhair*. It is here tentatively assumed that MS corresponds to *a* (= *de*) *c*[*h*]*leacht*[*adh*] *d*[*h*]*iamhair* '(your portion) of covert practice(s)'. The difficulties are (1) the villainous rhyme, (2) the semantics, and (3) the syllable count. As to (1), it is possible that *agra* in *d* should itself be replaced by another word; see notes on *d* for some possible alternatives, including a couple which would rhyme better with *cleachtadh*. Regarding (2), the problem is that neither *cleachtadh* nor *diamhair* in itself carries the sinister associations we would expect here. One could supply this by reading [*do-*]*chleachtadh* (though *mí-chleachtadh* or *droich-cleachtadh* would be more usual for 'evil practice' etc.); but while this would solve (3) by adding the required extra syllable, it would bring further – and serious – problems for the rhyme with *d*. In the circumstances, I have refrained from attempting to go beyond the reading which seems to be suggested for B, though one could tackle the question of line-length in various ways – e.g. by adding an emphatic suffix to *cuid*.

*d mám bí* (or *bé*?) B (and so at 4*d*), i.e. a form corresponding to Sc.G. (*seal*) *mun*, *man*, etc., 'before'. See R. A. Breatnach, *Ériu* 17 (1955) 100–105, for these and comparable forms. One could, of course, suggest that B's form replaces *su*(*i*)*l mbé* or *su*(*i*)*l raibh*: cf. *su*(*i*)*l* (*d*)*tí* in the informal quatrain quoted in *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 13/2 (1981) 277.

*agra*: So, apparently, B (see on *c* above). However, the line lacks alliteration and the repetition of *agra* (cf. 2*d*) is weak; moreover, if *cleachtadh* is correct in *c*, the rhyme is sub-standard. If we can assume (see Introduction) that the poet and whoever was subsequently responsible for the preservation of the poem would have recognized the need for alliteration in the fourth line of quatrains, but that the rule for classical *séadna* as to the position of the alliteration was not so consistently understood, it becomes legitimate to question *agra*. Possibilities in *d*- include *deachtadh* 'designing, scheming', *deachradh* 'fury' or *deacra* 'troubles, difficulties'; possibilities in *b*- include *bagradh* 'threatening'.

4*ab* *déan*(*a*) *do shíodh ris an lucht dra.* . . (or *dtra.* . .) / *gá deóin gá aimhdheóin led* c[*h*]*orp* B. In view of the uncertainty as to the conclusion of *a*, *síodh* cannot be regarded as certain: e.g. one could take *heris* as one word and speculate on *déana do thairise*. Nevertheless, *síodh* is the most obvious reading for B.

On that hypothesis I see two possible ways of taking the couplet: (1) 'Make your peace with [certain people or similar] whether your body likes it or not', or (2) 'Make your peace [under certain circumstances] with your body (i.e. come to terms with your mortality) whether it likes it or not'. (1) In this case we should reconstruct *gé deóin gé aimhdheóin led chorp* which accords well enough with MS and B; cf. also Sc.G. *olc ar mhath leis* 'whether he like it or no, willy-nilly' for the general shape of the idiom. (2) In this case we should reconstruct *dhá d*[*h*]*eóin dhá aimhdheóin*, which equally does no violence to MS or B: cf. *corp* 4*b*, *teyg* 5*a*, *cree* 7*b* for omission of lenition, and *gon a* 1*b* for *g/dh* confusion in proclitics. Cf. also Sc.G. *a dheóin no a dh'ainneoin* (< *de dh. nó d'a.*) 'willy-nilly' for the continuation of the idiom.

One is thus thrown back on the vexed conclusion of *a*. It seems to have been taken by the scribe as containing *lucht* + defining genitive, but it is not clear to me what he understood (*lucht dréachta* 'the poets'? *lucht* [*g*]*rádha* 'the clergy'?). There is a problem, of course, with any such reconstruction, in that the line would be hypermetric, though one could supply a monosyllabic imperative *déan* or expel an intrusive definite article to remedy this. It would also be in keeping with B's orthographical practices (cf. on *c*) to write a word with internal -*cht*- as two words, to signify the careful or learned pronunciation /xt/. This raises the alternative possibility that we should be looking for a word containing the sequence /luxtra/. In either case we should be looking for (1) a noun (e.g. 'Almighty', 'Church', or similar) or (2) some adverbial phrase (comparable to *do dhul don domhan* in *c*). I am at present unable to identify such a word. (Under (2) I have considered some declensional form or compound involving *tráth*.)

*c locht di* (MS) could be taken as *lochta*, the word-break indicating a phonetic sequence unfamiliar in the speech of the scribe: the orthography of BDL shows signs that the development /xt/ > /x(k)/ was established at the spoken level by that time. However, this would require us to read

*olca*, which is ill-attested as a nominal form, in *d*. We should therefore take B to read *locht do dhul*, with *do* added above the line, but apparently by our scribe at the time of writing. While the syntax is, to my mind, not impossible, it is not natural: one would have expected *ré*[n] or *ag* or *ar* sooner than *do*. But the scribe, who also inserted a slash indicating word-division within MS *redlocht*, may have taken the line differently: e.g. he may have taken *do* as 'thy'.

*d mám bí* (or *bé?*) B: see on 3*d*. Certainly, *suil rabh* (: *sgar*) would help metrically.

*se oyn* (MS): This would represent /siː oːn(′)/. Could the scribe have intended (rightly or wrongly) *Si-óin* 'of Zion'? (Presumably the reference would be to the 'ill' of Judgement Day.) Yet we should recall that a vernacular form something like \**Sia-thá(i)n* seems to be implied elsewhere in BDL: see *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 13/1 (1978) 27 (st. 7*a*). It is probably easiest to take the spelling *se* as a simple mistake for *si*[t], *sy*[t] or similar.

5*a Mairg* (*a*) *thréig*(*eadh*) B. The second *a* of *marga* (MS) is presumably orthographic, and the relative *a* counts as an insertion to the text. For the reconstructed 'original' one could as easily supply the copula: [*Is*] *mairg thréigeadh*. . . . Note that the *-g-* of MS *threige* seems to counsel against *thréigfeadh*. The secondary sequence is required by *do-níodh* (: *gníomh*) in *b*. The *th-* seems to follow Gaelic orthographic practice.

*toigh* B; cf. on 1*c* for the restoration of *teach*.

*b pheactha*: MS represents /fek/, i.e. *pheac*(*adh*) or *pheac*(*tha*), or /feki/, i.e. *pheacaidh* (the normal Scottish Gaelic o-stem treatment of verbal nouns in -*adh*). I print *pheactha* somewhat arbitrarily on grounds of compatibility with either *tráth* or *an tráth*: see next note.

MS *trra* has an otiose *r* on account of an *ra*-contraction over the *tr-*. Could this be somehow connected with the absence of the definite article, which is more normal when *tráth* is used as a temporal conjunction, and should perhaps be read here?

*a-ní*(*odh*) B.

*c dun'* B. (See on 1*b* for this form and spelling of *duine*.) The line is hypermetric as it stands: if we substituted the much less common *i ndiamhra* 'in secrecy', this would be resolved, and would also permit us to put classical *fiadha* for *fiadhain* in *d*.

*d ymmi* (MS) probably represents Perthshire Gaelic *iom'* for Scottish Gaelic *iomadh* rather than *iom*(*dh*)*a*, the final *-i* being an orthographical device (cf. *cherri* 1*d*) comparable to the -*a* discussed in relation to *bera* (2*c*).

*ainn-séin*: *an sin* B, but a stressed form is needed for alliteration. (If the elision between *iomdha* and *ainn-séin* were felt too harsh then the enclitic -*séin* could be omitted.)

*fiadhain*: see on *c*.

'*man ghníomh* (so B): This may be a careful pronunciation (since *g*(*h*)*n*-regularly becomes *g*(*h*)*r*- in B), or it may point somehow to an original '*man ngníomh*, which should probably be assumed in any case.

6*b nach bhfil* B (?); *am bréig* B.

*c a* (or *a'* ?) *bhása* (or *bháis-se* ?) B. The genitive *bása* is cited, but as an incorrect form, in O. Bergin (ed.), 'Irish grammatical tracts', *Ériu* 8–10 (1915–28) suppl.: Declension, § 96). In either case the line is hypermetric. The last point can be met by restoring the classically correct (and usual)

genitive *báis*: see text. However, B's reading (whichever is meant) is not easy to motivate; possibly the original had *fulang pháise*.

*cd* I take it that the message of the couplet as a whole is, 'We all have to die some day'. Cf. the anonymous quatrain quoted by Keating (O. Bergin (ed.), *Trí bior-ghaoithe an bháis* (Dublin 1931) lines 3810–13):

> Cidh bé agaibh is sia saoghal
> > isé an t-éan agus é i sás:
> ná maoidheadh sé a aga uainne,
> > ní fada ón té is buaine an bás.

There is a certain awkwardness about the text as printed, and it may be that it has suffered adaptation in its transmission before reaching BDL; cf. previous note and note the peculiar alliteration in *deachaidh dtéid* in *d*. As an alternative we might read *gé* for *go* in *c*, and translate: '(no lie) that although the man who has not (so far) departed avoids the suffering of death for a while, (eventually) he goes'. In that case we might have expected *go raghaidh* – unless, indeed, *téid* is an example of Scottish Gaelic present/future coalescence.

*7 a Fhear a cheannaigh/-aich* B. The missing alliteration could be supplied if we substituted *clann* for *síol*.

*b chrí*: see on *d*.

*c air a réir go ndéanainn* B (presumably with asseverative *go*[n] as often in Scottish Gaelic poetry). This lacks alliteration and internal rhyme with *d*: perhaps the original had *air, far-íor, do-ghéanainn . . .* 'for Him, alas, I would . . .'; or perhaps we should read *géin* in *d*.

*seacadh*: The basic meaning is 'freeze, become fixed'. Here an extension of meaning seems necessary. The translation offered is tentative; other possibilities might include 'I would waste myself (by self-mortification)' or 'I would become rigid or cold (in death)'.

*d gion gá díon(a)* B; cf. on *c*, however, for another possibility. The verb looks very much like a Sc.G. dependent future.

*rem bpeacadh* B, perhaps misunderstanding the delenition of the homorganic consonant after *rem* and hypercorrecting; or perhaps giving secondary nasalisation to an original *ré bpeacadh*.

*mí*: So B, and so the metrical requirement of a *dúnadh* echoing *mithich*. (Otherwise we could have considered *chré*: *mé* in *cd*.) The form *mí* is common in BDL poems of Scottish origin; and, of course, in Scottish Gaelic in general. It is not unknown in later Irish poetry (e.g. M. Mhac an tSaoi, 'Filíocht den tseachtú aois déag', *Celtica* 1 (1946) 141–57, p. 155 line 232); but it is, at the least, characteristically Scottish.

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