THE following poem is a lament for Conchubhar Mac Conghalaigh, harper to Domhnall Ó Donnabháin, who was chief of Clann Chathail from 1584 until his death in 1639. In the thirteenth year of the reign of James I (1615) Domhnall surrendered and was regranted his lands. He was married twice: to Oileán or Eiléan de Barra, and subsequently to the daughter of Mac Carthaigh Riabhach mentioned in quatrain 12 below. A poem by Maol Domnhaigh Ó Muirghéasain in praise of Domhnall’s heir and namesake has also been published. The poet, Tadhg Ólacht Ó an Cháinte, is probably to be identified with ‘Teige on Canty, of Clansheane’, who is mentioned in a will of Elizabeth I dated 14 May 1601, along with his wife ‘Margaret ny Fynan’. He is mentioned in proximity to Fear Fessa Ó an Cháinte, to whom he may have been related. O’Rahilly suggests that Clansheane might be in the same vicinity as Curravordy to the north of Bandon, Co. Cork, the home of Fear Fessa. However, ‘Clanshane’ appears as part of the Carbery lands of Mac Carthaigh Riabhach in an inquisition of 1638. The townlands listed there show that it comprised the northern part of the parish of Desertsarges. It is likely that it was named from the Clann tSeáin branch of Clann Charrthaigh Riabhach.

One other poem, Úaidhe féin do pháis lós, is attributed to Tadhg Ó an Cháinte in the Book of O’Conor Don, but to Ó Dálaigh Fionn in Royal Irish Academy M3 254 (F ii 2) and Maynooth M 70, to Aonghus na Diadhachta in RIA 256 (23 G 23) and Maynooth M 72, to Aonghus Ó Dálaigh na Diadhachta in Maynooth M 96, and to ‘Aongas Ó Dála Ó Dála Fionn’ in RIA 252 (F vi 1). It is anonymous in RIA 24 L 5, and Maynooth M 84, M 89 and B 9. Since attributions of devotional syllabic poems to Aonghus na Diadhachta etc., especially those lacking

1 The authors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Damian McManus, who kindly read a draft of this article and made useful suggestions, Prof. Brian Ó Cuív, who was consulted on some difficulties, Mr Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, who provided historical information and helped to identify place names, and especially Dr Padraig Ó Macháin, whose expert advice was frequently sought in regard to the edition and translation of the poem. Such errors as may remain are solely the authors’ responsibility.

2 See note to 26 below for discussion on the correct form of this surname.

3 See below, note to 14.


6 J. O’Donovan, Miscellany of the Celtic Society (Dublin 1849) 132.

7 T. Ó Domhnaill (ed.), An Leabhar Muimhneach (Baile Átha Cliath [1940]) 153. This information including the preceding reference was provided by Diarmuid Ó Murchadha.

8 Edited by L. Mac Cionnith in Díoghlaim dán (Baile Átha Cliath 1931) 184–6.

9 See C. McGrath, ‘Ó Dálaigh Fionn cct.’, Éigse 5 (1945–7 [1946]) 185–95.
a closing quatraine dedicated to Saint Michael, 10 have to be treated with caution, it is not unreasonable to give more credence to the ascription in the Book of O’Conor Don.

Nothing else is known to us of Tadhg Olltach.

Conchubhar Mac Conghalaigh belonged to a military family in the service of Ó Donnabháin of Clann Chathail. 11 There is some evidence for hereditary harping families: Uí Lonargáin of Ballynabanaba in Co. Galway were, it is claimed, harpers to Uí Cheallaigh. 12 Clann Sheanaigh were harpers to the Lords of the Isles at the beginning of the sixteenth century and held lands in South Kintyre by virtue of their office. 13 Many harpers, however, bore the surnames of important literary families. Ó Dhuibhgeannáin, whose most frequent profession is seanachas, or seanchas and fílíocht, 14 produced Duíchre [sic] O Dhuíbhgeannáin, doine ro blank suileuir [leg. súcháir] ‘a most affable musical man’. 15 Ó Chiainán of Fermanagh similarly produce one harper soi fair thead 16 and several senchaithe. 17 Ó Chiainán poets and musicians in Co. Kildare were pardoned in 1542. 18 It is clear that many Irish and Scottish harpers were blind, e.g. Niclas Dall Mac Piarais, 19 Ruaithrí Dall Ó Catháin, 20 Ruaidhri Dall Mac Mhuirich. 21 Perhaps because of the vagaries of musical talent, harping seems to have been more ‘open’ than other learned professions, which were usually the exclusive preserve of certain families. A blind person of an aristocratic background, suitably talented, would have had the opportunity of training as a professional harper in order to retain his social position.

To our knowledge the poem edited below, Tóraíoch ceol Cloinne Cathail, is to be found only in two manuscripts: RIA 5 (23 D 4), pp. 140–42, and RIA 888 (12 F 8), pp. 63–4. Since the latter is merely a

10 See L. M’Kerma, Déanta do chum Aonghas Fionn Ó Dálaigh (Dublin and London 1891) xiii.
11 See note 26 below.
14 W. M. Hennessy, The Annals of Loch Cé II (London 1871) 58 (AD 1384), 72 (1390), 154 (AD 1432), 192 (AD 1495), 336 (AD 1542); ollamh is used without reference to a specific discipline, ibid. I (1871) 632 (AD 1347), II (1871) 16 (AD 1377).
15 Ibid., 496–7 (AD 1589).
17 Ibid., 1584 (AD 1387), 44 (AD 1400), 54 (AD 1405), 198 (AD 1459), 226 (AD 1469), 534 (AD 1510); J. O’Donovan, Annals of the kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters IV (Dublin 1856) 656 (AD 1373), 1126 (AD 1453).
18 O’Rahilly, Irish poets . . . in English documents’, 111.
The music of Clann Chathail has ended, a grievous death has overtaken them, this is an affliction which will be perpetual anguish, the departure of their fairy musician.

2 An enigmatic profound musician, Conchubhar Mac Conghalaigh, their cause for laughter, their difficult deed, he departs from the descendants of Daire.

3 The music of the heroes from Glandore, woe, o living God, to those who have been deprived of it, a lively and reliable, knowledgeable, understanding finger, - calm and clear, sweet, ubiquitous.

c sin  dh sioguidhe 2 bh Coingéiste 3d ciung blinn

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4 Awakenings of grief, pain of tragedy, the sleep-music of the blood of Donnabhán, his death was a sorrowful event, the grief of royal women and men.

5 The famed descendants of Daire Cearb, from them indeed will not be perceived the joyful sound of melodies; Conchubhar is the cause of their lamenting.

6 Neither poets nor prophets believe, neither women nor young men expect, to receive any degree of cheer in his wake, the healer of grief of the descendants of Donnabhán.

7 A swift-moving hand loved by many, the Dallán Forgoill of the poets, a tender voice of lively spirit, the confidant of royalty.

8 The plaintiveness of his strings, the tune of his melodies – as he is today he promises no elation – the noble agility of the swift kingly finger, a subtle artist was our harper.

9 However great the love I received from him, I never felt in my companion – this blind man who was not blind of heart – but ever greater love in return for my affection.

4 Dùsgadh leisín, losgadh anáithd, ceol còdcoil cru Donnabhán, a éag rob gàn fomhradh ghoirmhe, bheàd rioghbhàn is rioghraidhe.

5 Slochd Dàire Cearb nàr ceileadh, uatha trà nì tuigìdhearn labhra faicille na bhfoghair; damhna a gcointe Conchubhur.

6 Nì shaolaid filidh nàd fàidh, ni mheasoid mnà nàd macàimh, céim scrìbhins ‘nà dhaide dh’Aghaigh, liaigh doirbhias ón Donnabhán.

7 Glac lùthbhhras iomar lia gean, Dallàn Forgoill na bhfìleadh, glòr bùidh budh clàidh croidhe, ciad ruin na rioghròidhe.

8 Taidhfiure a thead, tuin a chor – mar tì a-nì is neamhthuair meanman – lùth saor an rìghmhèoir mhìre, fìgheal’ air caol ar gcrùitire.

9 Dà mheàd do-gheibhinn dà ghràdhdh ni bhraithinn choidealche im dhomhán – an dallas nàr dhaill croidhe – acht barr annsa ar n-ionmhoine.

$^5$ a traith $^6$ a caoine $^7$ a filidhe $^8$ a dhìoigh $^9$ Forgoill $^{7a}$ Taighiure $^{8a}$ rimheoir mhìre $^{9a}$ bhi bheidheoir $^{9b}$ sìubhalaidhe $^{9c}$ ar ar $^{9d}$
‘MUSIC HAS ENDED’

10 Déanomh aoibhnis ni hešl damh
im thoicirim trá ná im dhúsgadh,
ar gclódh cèille, ar gcás cumhadh,
bás mo chéile Conchubhar.

11 Mear lúthmhur bhár lia anáir,
croidhe dil Í Dhomnabháin,
faidh amhra an scoitcheasa fuinna,
damhna doirbhcheasa Domhnuíll.

12 Cumhthaí ar aoi a daltain daill
ingean Eògáin mhic Dhomhnuíll,
is baoth mar oire a hosna,
saoth le chroidhe an Charrthacha.

13 Graifneadh muisigtheach meóir bhrais,
uaingeach na dhiaidh dá dhíoghráis,
teagar coinneach rob chaoín cuir,
toirseach dá thaolbh a dtorchuir.

TORCUIR // CEÔL // CLOINNE // CATHOL //

10 I know not how to enjoy myself in slumber indeed or awake; my loss of reason, my sorrowful predicament is the death of my companion Conchubhar.

11 The dexterous finger regarding whom was very great honour, the beloved darling of Ó Donnabháin, the wonderful seer of recondite melody, the cause of Domhnall’s painful grief.

12 Sorrowful for her blind darling is the daughter of Eòghan son of Domhnall; her sigh is senseless as a burden; this lady of Clann Charrthaigh is distress to my heart.

13 The musical inscribing of a bold finger – lonely in his wake are his intimates – a seemly gathering whose melodies were sweet; tragic what has ended on his account!

1a Clann Chathail, gs. Cloinne Cathoil: According to An Leabhar Mhuimhneach, 231, the Cathal in question was the father of Donnabháin (see note to above). John O’Donovan (Four Masters vi 243), however, on the authority of An Dubháltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh states that this Cathal was the son of Crom, a descendant of Donnabhán, and lived in the thirteenth century, and that Úi Dhomnabháin were divided into Clann Chathail, Clann Lochchainn, and Clann (or Sliecht) Aineisli, named after the three sons of Crom. Clann Chathail was the principal branch. Clann Chathail, Anglicized Clancachill, as a placename referred to a considerable area in Carbery, Co. Cork.
1b *éag anachain*: an (fh)achain or an (fh)ochain is a compound of *fachain*, which was originally a masculine *o*-stem but appears as *fachain*, *fachain*, *fachaid*, *fachaid*, a feminine *a*-stem, in *Irish grammatical tracts II* (declension) (ed. O. Bergin, supplement to *Éirí 8–10* (1916–28)) §150, genitive *fachne*, ex. 2000. Genitive singular *anachain*, therefore, appears to be at variance with Classical usage. Examples of the genitive singular of *anachain* are rare in this period. Céitinn uses *anfhochain* (O. Bergin (ed.), *Tri bhiorghaithí in bháis* (Dublin and London 1931) line 8461).

The word seems to be feminine and indeclinable in the modern dialect of north Galway and Mayo (Colm [Ó Lochlainn], *Éige 6* (1968–61) 271).

1d *stodhaighe*: References to *stóth* and to *Tadh Dá Dánaí* musicians are often found in sylabic verse where musical skill is praised, e.g. E. C. Mac Giolla Eain, *Dánta amhráin is ceacht Sheasheadh Céitinn* (Baile Átha Cliath 1990) no. 7 §§ 5a–5d; Bergin, *Irish landic poetry*, no. 15 §§ 4b, 10a–15d; no. 25 §§ 4b, 6b–11d; no. 84 § 10d; C. McGrath, 'Two skilful musicians', *Éige 7* (1953–5) 88–90 §§ 1a–5b, 9a–d; M. Ó Cheallacháin, *Folkch Phadraigín Haicdadb* (Baile Átha Cliath 1962) no. 43 lines 253–6. For an example from accentual verse see P. A. Brennach, 'Róinnt amhráin ar conhfoirm', *Éige 23* (1989) 77–8.

2b *Cionghalaigh* is required for rhyming purposes against *Cionghéalaigh* of the **m**. In Rev. P. Woulfe, *Sloinne Gaedheal is Gall* (Baile Átha Cliath 1923) 334, 471, and E. MacLysagh, *Irish families* (Dublin 1967) 87, it is asserted that the correct form of this surname as regards the Cork family is *Ó* (or *Mac* *Cionghéalaigh*). Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, in *The family names of County Cork* (Dún Laoghaire 1985) 126, refers to them as *Clann Cionghalagh* and supposes them to be a branch of *Uí Dhonnabhain*. A family called *Uí Chonghédaigh* is mentioned in Mac Phir Bhíshigh's *genealogy* (University College, Dublin, **m** Add. 14, p. 442) as belonging to Díl Cairebre Aradh, who occupied lands in North Munster. Perhaps they are to be identified with the 'Connollys' of Co. Cork, but no evidence for such an identification has presented itself. The *Mac Cionghalaigh* form is supported by this poem, but it is also possible that the name was made to fit the metrical requirements: cf. *Eighein : ghlaínéolais* in a poem to Eoin Ó Gallâinín (F. de Brún et al., *Nua-dhuíomháin I* (Baile Átha Cliath 1971) no. 23 §1).

Seán Ó Coileáin, the Myross poet, mentions this family in his account of the inauguration of Domhnall na gCroiceann, the father of the *Ó Donnabháin* mentioned in this poem: '... Mac Conolly, who had served as captain under his father and grandfather, and whose ancestors, for a long time prior to that period had been a kind of hereditary life guard to the O'Donovan family, and on that account had seven ploughlands assigned to them by O'Donovan in the parish of Drinagh' (J. O'Donovan, *Genealogies, tribes and customs of Hy-Faichnach* (Dublin 1844) 445). A more detailed account of the lands occupied by them is given in an inquisition held in 1670 to discover the extent of Domhnall *Ó Donnabháin*’s lands: [''[That the quarter of Munan' *now Minane, in Drinagh parish*] 'and Lahanaighth, containing three ploughlands, holden of the said Mannor by the Slight of Clanconelig' [Clann-Connelly], '&&. That the quarter of Garren' *now Garrane*] 'and Ballyvoig, containing three ploughlands, is holden of the said Mannor by Slight Clan Conelagh,
That Kinglyn, containing one ploughland, is held of the Manor of Castell O'Donnyvane by the sept of Clanconelly, &c. [7] (O'Donovan, *Four Masters* vi 2442-3; forms in square brackets are supplied by O'Donovan). 'Ballyroig' is probably Ballyroe, and 'Kinglyn' Kiltinga, both in Kilmacabe parish adjoining Drinagh. Perhaps O'Donovan's identification of 'Garren' with Garrane in Caheragh parish is mistaken, the form 'Carran' used in the quaint quoted in the next paragraph being more correct, and it is to be identified with Corran North, South and Middle, also in Kilmacabe parish. The fact that the 'Connollys' were retainers to Clann Chathail need not imply that they were of the same family.

In a quaint of 1601 (17th Report of the Deputy Keeper of Public Records (1885) 266-7 no. 6515) we find the following: 'Donell O'Donovan alias O Donovan of Castledonevan, gent., Joan ny Carie, his wife, Donell m'Donell O Donavan, of same, Teige m'Donell M'Enestlia, of the Mynive, Conoghor O Flahavane, of Castledonevan, Conoghor oge M'Kennella...'. However several other M'Kennellas are mentioned in this quaint including some whose first names are also Conoghor: 'Conoghor oge m'Es M'Kennella, of the Carran, Donogh m'Conoghor m'Es, Conoghor, m'Donell oge M'Kennella... Conoghor m'Awilf M'Kennella, of Laghenaght... Conoghor m'Dermot M'Kennella, of Laghenaght'. It seems likely that the Conchubhar of this poem is the first mentioned, since it is appropriate for the chief's harper to be named among the family of the chief.

2c i.e. Conchubhar both entertained them and encouraged them to valour. Cf. *ús meannan do mhórughadh* 'expert in exalting courage' (Bergin, *Irish bardic poetry*, no. 54 § 11b).

2d Daire, 5a Daire Cearb, Eóghanacht dynast, son of Oilioll Flann Beag, ancestor of Uí Dhonnabháin (to which Uí Dhonnabháin belong) and Uí Liatháin.

3a Cuan Dor, Glandore Harbour, Co. Cork.

3cd Here, in 8a, cd, and in 11a, Conchubhar's skill is praised emphasizing the rapidity and accuracy of his fingerwork. These are qualities of a good harper frequently praised by poets along with the sweetness of the harp-music: e.g. McGrath, 'Two skilful musicians', 89 §§ 6bc, 7; Bergin, *Irish bardic poetry*, no. 26 § 2c; P. Ua Duinnin, *Dánta Pháraíse Feinistír* (Baile Atha Cliath 1963) 19 line 500; Mac Giolla Éain, *Dánta... Sheathrinn Géistinn*, no. 7 § 26cd; Ní Chéilecháin, *Fidócht Phádraig Háiread*, no. 17 § 1cd. Outside observers, beginning with Giraldus Cambrensis c.1200, also noted these features in Irish harpers: 'It is remarkable how, in spite of the great speed of the fingers, the musical proportion is maintained' (Giraldus Cambrensis, *The history and topography of Ireland* (transl. J. J. O'Meara, Portlaoise and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1982) 163-4). Edward Bunting also was pleasantly surprised by the speed at which the old harpers played at the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792 (E. Bunting, *The ancient music of Ireland, arranged for the pianoforte* (Dublin 1840) 18-19).

4b *cel eden*: In *The book of Magauran* (ed. L. McKenna, Dublin 1947) no. 11 § 28, we find the following instance of a chief being lulled to sleep by the harp: *Gan chrua ná gan chompoon téidhinn / ní thadh n-a chelladh crachad Liag; / [a] dá ghormshíód mar bhliath mbhuga / do mhongadhín ndith umha sád, i.e. 'Liag's branch never sleeps but to the strains of harp
or sweet stringed lyre; (only) brass strings can make their lashes close over his two hyacinth-blue eyes'. Among the gifts bestowed by the king in the poem Tilleadh Raghnall Oig is cruad fo theudan / Aghus cead a sean / ha sheòmar 'a stringed harp and permission to play it in his chamber', apparently a metaphor for the king's favour (A. M. MacKenzie, Oímar Lium: songs of John MacDonald, bard of Keppoch (Edinburgh 1964) 6-9 lines 66-7). What is possibly an early reference to the same custom occurs in The instructions of king Cormac mac Airt (ed. K. Meyer, Todd Lecture Series XV, Dublin and London 1908) no. 31 line 26: mísem ceol ceol i ndoirche 'music is sweetest in the dark'. Meyer ascribes to this work a date in the first half of the ninth century (p. xi). According to the Annals in 980 a Monaghan harper, Eismaid Ó Cairbre, cut the throat of his patron Aonghus Óg Mac Domnaill, son of the Lord of the Isles, at Inverness as he slept (A. Martin Freeman, The Annals of Connacht (Dublin 1944) 592-4, Hennessy, Annals of Loch Cé ii 186, Mac Carthy, Annals of Ulster iii 350, O'Donovan, Four Masters iv 1184). Cf. W. S. Watson, Scottish verse from the Book of the Dean of Lismore (Edinburgh 1937) 86-9, 286; A. Cameron, Reliquiae Celticae II (Inverness 1894) 162; J. R. N. Macphail, Highland papers I (Edinburgh 1914) 51-2 (= Collectanea de rebus Albiniscis (Inona Club, Edinburgh 1847) 318-19).

4b Donnabháin, gs. Donnabháin, eponymous ancestor of Ó Dhomnaill, mentioned for having kidnapped Mathghamhain the brother of Brian Boru in S. Mac Airt, The Annals of Inisfallen (Dublin 1961) 160 (AD 976) and O'Donovan, Four Masters ii 706 (AD 974)). It is possible that he is the Donnubán mentioned in Annals of Inisfallen who died in 980. According to Cocha Gàidhel re Gaithbh (ed. J. H. Todd, London 1867) 102, he was killed in a battle with Brian Boru which is also recorded in Four Masters ii 707 (AD 976) and Annals of Inisfallen 162 (AD 977 § 3).

5a Dáire Cearb, see note on 2d.

5bc Other instances where the absence of music, or at least of joyous music, is a sign of distress are to be found in C. Ó Hainle, 'An ceol san fhíilocht chlasaiceach', Léachtai Cholm Cille VII (Má Nuad 1976) 34, 41-2.

6c Alliteration is wanting; no emendation suggests itself.

7b Dáltaí Forgoil, sixth-century poet, composer of Amra Choluim Chille, styled ardóllamh of Ireland in P. S. Dinneen (ed.), Foras Feasa ar Éireann: The history of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating, D.D. III (Tr. Texts Society IX, London 1908) 64, leader of the tromhármh in Tromhármh Guaire (ed. M. Joynt, Dublin 1941). This epithet implies that Conchubhar was also a worthy poet.

7c This probably refers to Conchubhar's singing voice. The deaths of two harpers are recorded in the Annals of Ulster, both of whom are noted for their singing voices as well as for their accomplishments on the harp, described bud bhànn lamh ã bel (Annals of Ulster iii 346 (AD 1480)), and for budh roshand do bel ã do lamh (ibid., 398-400 (AD 1496)). Cf. Binn a ghall a gnum do bhéid / binn gotha na dtéid ã mheóir i.e. 'sweet youth of the singing of your mouth, sweet the sounds of the strings from your finger' (P. Walsh, Gleannings from Irish manuscripts (Dublin 1935) 113). In Mesce Chúmainch (ed. M. O Daly, Ériu 10 (1962) 78 § 8) the sound of a singing voice along with harp music is praised and a harper is requested to sing.
8c Alliteration is wanting; only a drastic emendation would supply it.
8d *figheoir*; *figleoir*? *a watcher* in *Dictionary of the Irish language* (Royal Irish Academy 1913–76), clearly unsuitable, is based on two examples on the same page of *Irish grammatical tracts II* (declension) § 50, (ed. O. Bergin, supplement to *Éiriu 8–10* (1916–28)) the first no more than a word in a list, the other in ex. 1301: *do-ghén t‘figheadh co heolach / a ‘inghean an fhíshléórach*. The word *fíleoir* appears in Rúdeard Flunéaid’s *Vocabularium Latinum et Hibernum*: *Foclóir Láithe 7 Gaoidheilge* (Marsh’s Library, Dublin, ms Z 42.5) of 1662 under the headwords *Classarius* explained in Thomas Thomas, *Dictionarium linguae Latinae et Anglicae* (Cantebadge [1587]), and Thomas Holycote, *A large dictionary in three parts* (London 1677) as ‘a ready fellow and diligent’, and *Tróissus* ‘A well set fellow; a dapper or delicate person’. (Flunéaid drew heavily on the Latin–English dictionaries of his day: references are to the first of the Thomas dictionaries and the last of the Rider–Holycote series.) Edward Lhuyd in *Archaeologia Britannica* (Oxford 1707) has *fíleoir* in the section *A comparative vocabulary s.v. Tróissus*, and in the section entitled *An Irish dictionary s.v. fíleoir*, gives ‘a spruce fellow, &C.’ but adds ‘a crafty fellow’ in the *Appendix* to this. Many subsequent Irish–English dictionaries give both meanings. It is so in Tadhg Ó Neachtain, *Foclóir Gaeilbhéarla* (1790), Trinity College, Dublin, ms 1290 (H.I.16), John O’Brien, *Foclóir Gaoidhile–Sach–Bháirle* (Paris 1768), Edward O’Reilly, *An Irish–English dictionary* (Dublin 1821). The word does not occur in Thomas De Vere Conynge, *An Irish–English dictionary* (Dublin 1849), which concerns itself mainly with the vocabulary of the Irish Bible, or in P. S. Dinneen, *Foclóir Gaedhlig agus Béarla* (Dublin 1804). In Peter O’Connell, ‘An Irish–English dictionary’ (1826), British Library ms Egerton 83, it is explained only as ‘a beau, a dapper or spruce fellow’. Lhuyd’s spelling with short *i* has persisted. Dinneen in his revised edition (Dublin 1927) introduces ‘a poetaster, a lover’, the latter due to an suggestion by Tadhg Ó Donnchadhia (‘Seán Ó Gadhra, filí V’, *Írisleabhar na Gaedhlig* 14 (1904–5) 854, 16 (1906–7) 206) that it is a cognate with Greek *phílos*. It means only a ‘poetaster’ according to N. Ó Dónnchadhia’s *Foclóir Béarla–Gaeilge* (Báile Átha Cliath 1977).

The late seventeenth- / early eighteenth-century poet Seán Ó Gadhra (An tÁthair [S.] Mac Domhnaill, *Dánta is amhráin Sheáin Úi Ghadhra* (Báile Átha Cliath 1958), as originally published by T. Ó Donnchadhia in *Írisleabhar na Gaedhlig* 14–17, 1904–7) has the following examples: *an díghthéas a deilge fiol* / *fíleoir deilge na Gaedhaidse* (30 lines 23–4), *séánchar an scríbhneoir gorm glic / fíleoir tréimhshar sa teicneir* (44 lines 15–16), *Scríbhneoir a díghthéas is éirith beal / Fíleoir na Tréonás a Pól na Gaedhaid* (48 lines 26–40). Dáibhí Ó Brudaír uses *fíleoir leictach* as a complimentary epithet (J. C. Mac Erlean, SJ, *Duanaire Dhaibhth Úi Bhruaidh*: The poems of David Ó Bruidaí (Ir. Texts Soc. XI, London 1910) 14 § 12a).

Ó Brudaír also provides two instances of *piséoir*, which may or may not be the same word. In both cases *piséoir* seems to be rather pejorative: *mum buadh eagal Dia fa dheoidh / don d’o phnoicfaidh piséoir* (Mac Erlean, Ó Brudaír II (Ir. Texts Soc. XIII, London 1913) 214 § 22ab, or C. Mhígh Craith, *Dán na mBrithar Munois* I (Báile Átha Cliath 1967) no. 88 § 22ab.)
and ni bhús congnamh cluas don phileor / lonnadh na genciann gcneosil d’fhas (Ó Bradaíríi 276 § 29cd). The word ‘fop’ or ‘delicate person’ makes sense in both contexts, and it is within the bounds of possibility that Pluincéad intends to convey both the positive and negative meanings of turossus. However it is equally likely that phileor is a separate word. Cf. The Oxford English dictionary, Piller and Peeler 1: ‘a robber, despooer, plunderer; a thief’, which is appropriate, especially in the second example.

In the present case and in the unedited poem (kindly brought to the authors’ attention by Dr Fádraig Ó Mac hain) Beannacht ar anmuin Uilleam (RIA 3 (23 L 17), p. 148) the rhyming partner of fghleoir shows it to have a long stress vowel: rug an fghleoir gaill an ghrinn / ghrinneoir do bhfeor an Eanna. Since Seán Ó Gadhra’s rhymes cannot always be relied on, the fact that in examples of his verse quoted above it rhymes both with long and short i need not concern us. Neither does the phileor: gcneosil rhyme necessarily imply that the stress vowel of phileor is short since Ó Bradaírí elsewhere in the same poem rhymes short with long vowels in aicill, e.g. mughadh: muroth (Ó Bradaíríi 278 § 34cd).

It is likely that fghleoir is the correct spelling for fghleir, flegheir of the dictionaries. It seems that in a positive sense it means ‘a clever person’, ‘a skilled person’, ‘a knowledgeable person’. The Oxford English dictionary gives ‘skilful, dexterous, clever, ingenious’ as an archaic or dialectal meaning of crafty.


12b mghaín Eochair mhic Dhomhnull and an Charthacha refer to Domhnull’s second wife: ‘He married secondly about the year 1584 Joane or Joanna, the daughter of Sir Owen, who was the son of Donnell Mac Carthy’ (O’Donovan, Four Masters vi 2447).

12c In Dictionary of the Irish language the word baoth (s.v. baeth) is explained as ‘follish’, ‘silly’, ‘wayward’ etc. However in later language the meaning ‘buoyant, light’ [sc. of a boat] is also attested. Cf. ‘Do shámhaidh ana-bhaoth’, C. Nic Phaidín, Cuasach focal Í Uíth Ráthach (Baile Átha Cliath 1887) s.v. baeth. Under aeth in Pluincéad’s Latin-Irish dictionary of 1662 we find: eddict, baith, baeth, sgathánach, estáthach, ar a bhfuil sgathánach corresponding to light, quicke, swift, which hath wings in Thomas’s Dictionarium (1887). It is likely that a paradox and pun are intended here.

13a múisicreach, more correctly múissiceach also occurs in Pluincéad’s dictionary as a noun s.v. musicabundus, and as an adjective s.v. murmureabundus, where it means ‘a hummer’, ‘humming’. In this instance it could also be interpreted as a noun in the genitive plural, i.e. ‘the inscribing of musicians of bok finger’, but meári throughout refers to Conchubhar, and the third person singular possessive adjective, contained in dath in the next line, reads better with an antecedent in the same quatrain.

13b dgochnais occurs in the sense of ‘best beloved’, ‘favourite’, in T. F. O’Rahilly, A miscellany of Irish proverbs (Dublin 1922) no. 308: is dual desreath don dgochnais ‘the last place is meet for the best beloved’. This proverb is quoted or referred to in several bardic poems, references to which are given by O’Rahilly; see also idem, Measgair dánata II (Dublin and Cork 1927) no. 65 line 16, and J. Carney, Poems on the O’Reillys
(Dublin 1950) lines 143-4. Conchubhar's 'intimates' in this context are his fellow musicians, the 'seemly gathering' of the next line. However, the word can also mean 'artistic fervour or excellence'; cf. *an i do mhúin dióghrais duit / lámh Chraisfhinn*. . . ?, translated 'its secret' (Bergin, *Irish bardic poetry*, no. 28 § 7), and *dióghrais mh'ealadhna is hi an t-each* 'the fervour of my art is the horse' (P. A. Breathnach, 'The chief's poet', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 83 C 3 (1983) 49). The line would then translate 'scarce in his wake is his fervour'.

13cd i.e. the musicians of Clann Chathail have come to an end with Conchubhar's death.

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