THREE EARLY POEMS BY FEARGHAL ÓG MAC AN BHAIRD, WITH
NOTES ON THE DUANAIRE OF DOMHNALL MAC SUIBHNE

Poems I and II

NATIONAL Library of Scotland ms Advocates 72.2.14 (formerly Gaelic ms lxiv) is a late sixteenth-century paper manuscript containing an important anthology of religious verse from the bardic period.Dating from c. 1582, some of the named authors are those prominently associated with the composition of religious bardic verse, such as Pilib Bocht and Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn. In addition, a number of poems reflect a thematic selection, and relate to St Patrick’s Purgatory on Lough Derg, Co. Donegal. Six of these poems are written in sequence on two folios, ff. 28–9, while a seventh, the fragment beginning Róimh na bpeacthach uaimh Phádraig, is found earlier in the manuscript (f. 23r). They are the work of poets of the Í Uiginn (Tadhg Dall, Fearnghal Óg, and Aonghus), as well as Fearnghal Óg Mac an Bhaird and Tuileagana mac Torna Í Mhaoil Chonaire. Opinion is divided as to whether or not this sequence is the result of a group trip to the island, or is merely an anthology of poems reflective of individual visits. We know for certain that other poets visited the Purgatory before and after the poems in the sequence were written in the manuscript.

The poem by Fearnghal Óg Mac an Bhaird in this sequence is that beginning Slán uaim ag oiléan Pádraig (f. 29r), but the manuscript also contains three other pieces ascribed to him and occurring outside of the St Patrick’s Purgatory sequence. These are the poem beginning Ná déana diomas a dhuine (f. 27v) and the two short poems edited below. As pointed out elsewhere, the copy of

2 This date accompanies the single quatrains written by the scribe along the lower margins of ff. 1v, 6–9, 10r.
6 Leslie, Saint Patrick’s Purgatory, 172–3.
7 DDána Poem 43.
Ná déana diomas in this manuscript has relevance for the textual history of other poems by Fearghal Óg. In the context of Fearghal Óg’s entire work, 72.2.14 is among the earliest surviving sources for his poetry. Whereas most of his devotional verse may belong to a later period in his career, here we have evidence for the practice of the genre by him at an early period.

Poem I occurs on f. 21r14–18. The truncated argument and the absence of a dúnadh suggest that it is incomplete. This is not due to any chasm in the manuscript, however, as the poem beginning Teachtaire dileas go Díop immediately follows at f. 21v. Furthermore, being inscribed simply ‘Firgal Óg’, there is no certainty that the Clann an Bhaird poet of that name is the author, because of the presence of his contemporary, Fearghal Óg Ó hUiginn, in the manuscript with a single poem at f. 28r. The familiarity of the heading, however, would suggest that the author is in fact Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird.

There is no doubt about the ascription of Poem II, which immediately follows Ná déana diomas in the manuscript at f. 27v16–20. It is a brief prayer in which Jesus/God is asked to ignore the suffering endured for man’s sake, and to make peace with mankind. Fearghal Óg in this poem demonstrates the potential of the short poem in bardic verse, and his own mastery of that form. In secular verse his ability in this regard is most obviously in evidence in his poems to Brian Ó Ruairc and to Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir. Short poems such as these, metrically exact and somewhat longer than epigrams, convey a sense of intimate occasion or dedication, the ‘thank-you’ note to Mág Uidhir being a good example. It may be that Poem II is to be counted as belonging to the Purgatory sequence, expressing Fearghal Óg’s prayerful reaction to a visit to the island.

Poem I treats of a common theme in medieval literature: the request for the ‘gift of tears’. In the Church’s view, this represented the acceptable form of tristitia, and was associated in origin with the second beatitude. Tears are presented as an external manifestation of a repentant spirit, and the penitent’s

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10 Dáin Dé Poem XIV.
11 A similar situation obtains in the case of the fragmentary Róimh na hpeachtach uaimh Phádraig of which 10 lines occur at the end of f. 23r, followed on the verso by an entirely different poem.
12 TD II, 313.
13 Ir. Syll. Poetry, 23; David Greene, Duanaire Mhèig Uidhir: the poembook of Cú Chonnacht Mág Uidhir, Lord of Fermanagh 1566–1589 (Dublin 1972) Poem III. (Greene’s suggested readings (ibid., 241) for qq. 1d and 2d of this poem are confirmed by the manuscript, which reads ‘namdoibh’ and ‘dom rochtuin’.)
14 For examples of the theme in Irish literature see Brian Ó Cuív, ‘Some early devotional verse in Irish’, Ériu 19 (1962) 1–24, at pp. 4–6; Brian Ó Cuív, ‘A penitent’s prayer’, Êigse 14 (1971–72) 17–26; Murphy, Lyrics Poem 27; James Carney, Medieval Irish lyrics (Dublin 1967) Poem 30; A. Ó Dálaigh Poem LI.
heart is often depicted as frozen and incapable of being melted except through God’s grace. The theme is found in patristic writings, and, not unexpectedly, in medieval penitentials, and it occurs again in one of Fearghal Óg’s Louvain sequence, the poem beginning Mairg nach doirteann a dhéara.

Poems I and II are in dán díreach metres: deibhidhe (Poem I) and rannaigheacht bheag (Poem II). Italic h indicates editorial lenition.

Poem I

Firgal Og .cc.

1. Bean glas dom chroidhí, a Choimhdhe;
fóir mě, a Mheic ar Seathairne;
ná leig gan aithrighe inn:
maithmhighe deid do dhlightfinn.

2. Osgail de go ndearnainn děir,
maír fhuan i n-oigh/reacht eisin:
mar shéad fine fuair meisi
an crídhe cruaidh cloichisi.

3. Rothrom chodlus mo chridhe:
mosgail ē rem aithrighe;
a-tám i doirrchim go trom
agus gan oirchill agam.

4. An dá dheirc lē ndearrna mě
do mhínēir, a Mheic Mhuire,
tabhair maithmhighe, a Dhé, dáïbh,
go rē aithrighe dh’fhaghail.

1. a choimhghhe; b nhic ar seatharne; c ind; d maithfidhe deit
2. c misi; d croidhi
3. a croidhe; b aithridhe; c go] co; d agus gan] sgan
4. b mic; c maithfidhe; d aithridhe

TRANSLATION

1. Unlock my heart, o Lord; help me, o Son of our Sister; do not leave us unrepentant: I should deserve forgiveness from you.

2. I received as an heirloom this hard heart of stone, woe to him who inherited that; open it that I may shed a tear.

3. Very heavily sleeps my heart: waken it that I may repent; I am in a heavy slumber and am unprepared.

4. O Son of Mary, the two eyes with which I disobeyed you, forgive them, o God, until it is time to receive repentance.

16 PH lines 6442–4; Mac Aingil, lines 125 ff., especially 300–312.
18 DDána Poem 39.
19 A transcription (with errors) of both texts is to be found in Damian McManus and Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh, A bardic miscellany (Dublin 2010) §§ 64, 413.
Poem II

An fear .c.na .i. Firghall Og Mac an Baird .cc.

1. Saor meisi a Mheic an Dūlíimh,
   a Mheic gan eiteach ēinhir;
   cosmhail sinn re síol Ādhaimh
   fa chīogh th‘álaidh rinn réidhigh.

2. Baoghal linn, a Dhē, ar ndearadh
   i n-eirr mo rē dā rabbh;
   bī ar mo thaobh dā dtī an phudhar,
   a chraobh umhal trī dtamhan.

3. Tar neimh ghona Dē dhūiligh
   nā congaibh mē, a Mheic grādhhaigh,
   a-muigh i ngioll rem ghnīomhaibh;
   sōdhaigh riom fa fhuil t‘álaidh.

4. Baoghal dōibh dāil do chrūsa,
   gidh mōr ar chāch do chīossa,
   bī soirbh red chloinn fān gcāssa;
   roinn grāsa oirn a Йosa.    Saor misi.

1. a misi a mhic; b mhic; d halaigh
2. a lín; b eir; c air, fphudhar
3. b condaimh, mhic
4. b chissa; d orn

TRANSLATION

1. Save me, o Son of the Creator, o Son who refuses no man; we are just like Adam’s seed: make peace with us in the matter of your wounded breast.
2. O God, if I were at the end of my life I would consider myself in danger of rejection; be at my side if the misfortune comes, o humble branch of three stems.
3. O beloved Son, despite the poison of the wound of God the Creator, do not exclude me because of my deeds; make peace with me in the matter of the blood of your wound.
4. Though great is your tribute on everyone, be easy with your children in this case, the shedding of your blood has placed them in danger; give us grace oh Jesus.

NOTES

Poem I

1b References to Mary as our ‘sister’ are frequent in bardic religious poetry; e.g. DDána 2.4a, 5.17d, 21A.9b, 26.34a, etc.
2a For the idiom ‘osglaidh de’ see D. Dána 65.14b, Dán na mBrathar Mionúr 3.6d, and DIL O, 165.38–42.
3d This line wants two syllables in the manuscript.
Poem II

Id Cf. ‘fan gcíogh rinn má réidighe’ Aith. D 59.19d.

3c a Mhieic gráidhaigh An example of non-lenition due to external sandhi, tolerated by the bardic grammarians (IGT i.51).

Poem III

This short poem is addressed to Mac Suibhne Fánaid, Domhnall, who became chief of his name in 1570 following the slaying, in the presence of Toirdhealbhach Luineach Ó Néill, of Domhnall’s brother and predecessor, Toirdhealbhach Óg, and of a second brother, Aodh Buidhe Ruadh. Domhnall’s career thereafter had two distinct periods, pre-conquest and post-conquest. From 1570 to about 1600, Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánaid was at the disposal of Ó Domhnaill, to whom Clann Suibhne Fánaid traditionally, but not exclusively, supplied gallógláigh, as did the two junior branches of Clann Suibhne Baghuineach and Clann Suibhne na dTuath. In the case of Clann Suibhne Fánaid, their history records that this arrangement dated from the time of Ó Domhnaill, Toirdhealbhach an Fhíona, in the late fourteenth century. In Domhnall’s time, the buannacht of the ‘three Mc Swines’ was estimated at 2,000 head of cattle per annum.

In a way that is reminiscent of the career of Mac Suibhne’s neighbour, Seaán Óg Ó Dochartaigh of Inis Eoghairn, an elegy for whom was composed by Fearghal Óg, part of Domhnall Mac Suibhne’s time was spent in demonstrations of support for Ó Domhnaill, while avoiding the claims and attentions of Ó Néill. In 1581 he was captured in battle while fighting for Ó Domhnaill against Ó Néill, who had united with Conn mac an Chalbaigh Í Domhnaill, who himself had a substantial number of Clann Suibhne under his command. In 1592 Domhnall attended the inauguration of Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill at their shared inauguration-site of Kilmacrennan, and in 1599 he was numbered among those who assembled at Ballymote in advance of Ó Domhnaill’s famous raid into Thomond. By this time, however, plans were already afoot to separate Ó Domhnaill from his vassal-tribes, among them the Clanna Suibhne.

In March 1601, under the orders of Henry Docwra, the Derry garrison seized Mac Suibhne’s strategically-important castle at Rathmullan, leaving Fánaid, in Docwra’s words, ‘bound and not able to escape’, and ‘thoroughly
quieted’. In June, Mac Suibhne and his son Domhnall Gorm submitted to Docwra. While the relationship between Mac Suibhne Fánad and the crown vacillated over the next decade, the older relationship with Ó Domhnaill had come to an end, and Rudhraighe Ó Domhnaill complained in 1607 that the three Clanna Suibhne and Ó Baoighill no longer paid their due tribute to him.Later that year Mac Suibhne Fánad was among the jurors at Lifford who convicted the recently-departed Earls of Tyrconnell and Tyrone of conspiracy and treason.

Despite being implicated by the Inghean Dubh in the revolt of Cathaoir Ó Dochartaigh, and regarded by the English as belonging to ‘a people inclined to blood and trouble’, Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánad received a grant under the Plantation of Ulster of 2,000 acres, at a rent of £21 6s 8d, in the civil parish of Clondavaddog, in the northern end of the Fánad peninsula. An inquisition recorded his death on 28 December 1618 and the succession of his son Domhnall Gorm, who was reported the following year as living at ‘Roynedeherg and Caroocomony’ (present-day Doocarrick and Muineagh), where he had ‘a good bawn, and a house of lime and stone, in which he dwells with his family’. Domhnall Gorm died 12 February 1636 and was succeeded by his son Domhnall Óg.

The Mac Suibhne Duanaire

The poem edited here occurs in the duanaire of Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánad, which is the third part (ff. 74–81, pp. 141–56) of Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne, RIA ms 475 (24 P 25), a composite vellum manuscript, the compilation of which spans virtually the entire sixteenth century. The first part is the most distinct, being a collection of mainly religious texts and exempla—including texts on St Patrick’s Purgatory—compiled in 1513–14 for Máire inghean Í Mháille, the wife of Ruaidhrí Mac Suibhne Fánad, and occupying the first 65 leaves of the manuscript, gathered principally in eights.

30 Cal. SP Ire. 1606–1608, 373.
31 Ibid., 555–6.
32 Colm Ó Lochlainn, Tobar fíorghlan Gaedhilge: deismireachta na teanga 1450–1853 (Baile Átha Cliath 1939) 69–70.
33 Cal. SP Ire. 1608–1610, 57–8.
34 Cal. Patent Rolls of James I, 210; George Hill, An historical account of the plantation of Ulster at the commencement of the seventeenth century, 1608–1620 (Belfast 1877) 327. The townlands mentioned in the grant are: Rindooghargie (present-day Doocarrick), Carrownamoney (Muineagh), Lehadmore (Leat More), Glinskie (Glinsk), Dowaghmore (Doagh More), Ararhinibiny (Arryheernabin), Arhirinymore (Rinmore?), Cashell (Cashel Glebe), Bolyheirinan (Ballyhiernan), Rindrome (sic, Kindrum), Twome (Toome), Fanavoly, Carrow-Inillan (?), Coolerry (Cooladerry), Glannavadd (Glenvar?), Dowaghknbine (Doagh Crabbin), Carrowblagh (Carruffyagh).
35 Inquisitionum in Officio Rotulorum Cancellariae Hiberniae asservatarum, repertorium I–II (Dublin 1826, 1829) I, Donegal, 15 Jac. I.
36 Cal. Carew manuscripts, 1603–1624, 408; Cal. SP Ire. 1611–1614, 208.
37 Inquisitionum . . . repertorium II, Donegal, 25 Car. I.
38 A digital version of RIA ms 475 (24 P 25) is available on Irish Script on Screen (www.isos.dias.ie).
The second section (ff. 66–71 (125–36), for ff. 72–3 see below) is an original historical work concerning Clann Suibhne, which brings their history down to the time of the father of Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánad, Toirdhealbhach mac Ruaidhri, the last event mentioned being the building of Moross Castle by him in 1532. From this detail Paul Walsh concluded that the text was written 'not earlier than 1532, and not later than 1544', the latter date being the year of Toirdhealbhach mac Ruaidhri's death. As the tract makes no mention of Toirdhealbhach's successor, Toirdhealbhach Óg, 1544 is a reasonable terminus ad quem for this part of the manuscript. Two things are worth noting in this connection, however. The first is that the building of Moross Castle is mentioned as being one of Toirdhealbhach's achievements, and is preceded by a reference to the hatred which Maghnus Ó Domhnaill and the descendants of Toirdhealbhach's cousin Domhnall Óg Mac Suibhne (†1529) had for him, 'and they plotted the abominable treachery against Mac Suibhne whereby his people were slaughtered and all his country destroyed by fire'. As it was by the sons of Domhnall Óg that Toirdhealbhach mac Ruaidhri eventually fell, it is possible that this is, in fact, a subtle obituary notice of Toirdhealbhach mac Ruaidhri, and that the writing of the text might be dated later than 1544.

It is noteworthy, secondly, that following the reference to Moross Castle there is a blank of twenty-seven lines, as though the scribe was allowing for the addition of more text subsequently. Following this blank he later entered a colophon in different ink at the bottom of the column (f. 71v.a (136)) in which he identified himself as Tadhg mac Fíthil. Although the name Fítheal is found once in the Clann Fhirbhísigh genealogies, this patronymic alerts us to the fact that we are probably in the presence of a member of the Í Mhaoil Chonaire family of historians and poets, and a remarkable one as well, as Tadhg gives us to understand that he composed the tract as he wrote it. Tadhg mac Fíthil also provides a link with the third and final part of the manuscript—the duanaire section—as it is in his hand that the fourth and fifth poems of that section are written (ff. 74–75ra (141–3)). Whether he is to be considered an older brother of Flaithrí Ó Mhaolchonaire is a moot point, however.

Though written on six leaves, the vellum provided for Tadhg mac Fíthil’s section consists of a gathering of eight (ff. 66–73 (125–40)), which again

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39 Walsh, Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne, 72 (§ 56).
40 Ibid., Iviii.
41 do chum … an mebal grana dochum Mic Shuibhe dar marbad 7 dar loisced a muintir 7 a duthaig uile (ibid., 72).
42 AFM V, 1484.
44 Walsh, Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne, 74.
45 The name Fítheal is found in more than one branch of the family. A cousin of the archbishop’s, Fítheal mac Éolais, is identified in Benjamin Hazard, Faith and patronage: the political career of Flaitheir Ó Maolchonala c. 1560–1629 (revised ed. Dublin 2010) 18 and Plate 1. There is also the case of the lost National Library of Scotland ms Advocates 72.1.32, one of whose scribes was Fítheal mac Flaitheir meic Aodha (Mackechnie, Catalogue I, 172). We might also note the ‘mac Fíthil’ mentioned in an anonymous bardic poem (Ó Macháin, ‘Poems by Fearghal Óg’, 259–60).
suggests that he intended to add further text to his historical tract at some later time. This did not happen, however, and the remaining leaves were later filled with (a) a veterinary text (71v–72r (136–7)) written by Torna mac Torna, another patronymic suggestive of Í Mhaoil Chonaire involvement; and (b) three poems, one to Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánd (72v (138)), and two to Domhnall’s brothers Toirdhealbhach Óg and Aodh Buidhe (73 (139–40)). After writing his Clann Suibhne history, and having left space for its continuation, Tadhg mac Fíthil began a new section (f. 74r (141)) with a poem and an appended caithréim, the subject of which is Ruaidhrí Mac Suibhne (†1518), for whose wife the first section of the manuscript was written. With rubricated initials in each quatrain, this is the most ornately-written of the poems in the manuscript, and it suggests that the idea of a duanaire for Mac Suibhne Fánad may have originated in the middle of the century, but was not fulfilled until the accession of Domhnall mac Toirdhealbhágh. Tadhg finished this poem on f. 75rb (143), and his work was then followed (75v–76rb (144–5)) by another scribe who wrote a similar combination of poem and caithréim referring to Maol Muire Mac Suibhne and his brother (according to Walsh) Toirdhealbhach.

In contrast to the two other sections, the duanaire presents a disjointed appearance. If we take it as beginning formally with Tadhg mac Fíthil’s contribution at f. 74 (141–2), with poems added later to ff. 72v–73 (138–40) as mentioned above, the present collation of the poembook (ff. 74–81 (141–56)) is as follows: i³ (75 a singleton, 74 and 76 conjugate), ii² (77–8 conjugate), iii¹ (79), and iv² (80–81 conjugate). The irregular appearance is added to by ff. 79–81 (151–6) being 6 cm shorter than the other leaves in the book, which measure 37.5 cm. Despite this ostensibly piecemeal construction of the duanaire, the division of hands shows that the different segments of vellum do not correlate with defined scribal stints. Ignoring seventeenth-century additions by Tadhg Ó Rodaighe, eleven scribes—three of whom identified themselves (shown in bold below)—contributed to the Mac Suibhne duanaire as follows:

1. f. 73 (139–40)
2. ff. 74–75ra (141–3): Tadhg mac Fíthil (cf. ff. 66–71va)
3. ff. 75v–76rb26 (144–5)
4. ff. 76rb27–77r (145–7); 72v (138)
5. ff. 77v–78r11 (148–9)
6. f. 78r12–78v (149–50), f. 80r1–19 (153)
7. f. 79r–79v.22 (151–2)

47 The upper margin contains Tadhg’s pen-test ‘† Ih c maria’, and there is a larger ‘Ih c’ on the upper margin of the following page. On this element of scribal practice see Pádraig Ó Macháin, ‘Observations on the manuscript of Tadhg Ó Cianáin’, in Fearghus Ó Fearghail, Tadhg Ó Cianáin: an Irish scholar in Rome (Dublin 2011) 171–205, at pp. 172–3.
48 Ó Macháin, ‘Elegy for Seaán Óg Ó Dochartaigh’, 95.
49 Walsh, Leabhar Chaillme Suibhne, 1x; Ó Macháin, ‘Elegy for Seaán Óg Ó Dochartaigh’, 95.
50 F. 75rb contains an item by Tadhg Ó Rodaighe.
Three Early Poems by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird

8. f. 79v23–z (152), 81rb24–81v (155–6): Mealladh Maighdine
9. f. 80r20–z (153)
10. f. 80va–b30 (154)
11. f. 80vb31–81rb22 (154–5): Fearghal mac Uilliam Óg

These pages are laid out in double column, 74–76r (141–5), 80v–81 (154–6), and single column, 76v–80r (146–53). In places, the division of hands brings out scribal preference for layout: scribe 4 has no option but to continue in double column when he begins at f. 76rb27 (145). Left to his own devices, however, he clearly prefers the single column with which he finishes that poem on f. 76v (146), and in which he writes another poem on f. 72v (138).

Of the scribes who write in single column, scribes 4, 6, 7 and 9 all write one quatrain per line of text. The two remaining single-column scribes, scribe 5 and scribe 8—writing thus on f. 79v23–z (152), but in double column on 81rb24–81v (155–6)—present contrasting styles of layout. Scribe 5 contributes one poem, and for most of it he does so on an unruled page (f. 77v (148)), in letters of varying height, the text written continuously, each quatrain beginning at the point on the page immediately following wherever the preceding one stopped, the absence of litterae notabiliores contributing to the chaotic appearance of the presentation. The final eight quatrains, however, he writes in a more orderly manner—though still continuously—at the beginning of the following page, which is ruled.

The single-column effort of scribe 8, who signs himself Mealladh Maighdine (see below) is equally interesting, and comprises the poem edited here. In contrast to scribe 5, his is a very orderly layout, but differs from the other single-column scribes in that his lettering is larger, and it is consequently not possible for him to fit one quatrain on a single line. His layout therefore involves the use of the return sign (ceann fo eite) twice every fourth line to take the run-over from two successive quatrains at a time. This contrasts also with the usage in other contemporary vellum duanaireadh such as those of O’Hara (G 1303) or, in part, Nugent (G 992, ff. 1–16r)51 where a single return sign is used in every third line and accommodates the run-over of just one quatrain.

Neither Fr Walsh nor the RIA cataloguer, Kathleen Mulchrone, noticed that the poem beginning at f. 78v11 (150)—‘Brian Mac an Baird’, Ni ar aos roindter rath buanna—is incomplete, and that there must be at least a singleton missing after that folio. This section is the work of scribe 6, and as there is an acephalous poem in his hand on f. 80r (153), the collation and the division of hands both suggest that the original arrangement of leaves may have been: ff. 74–78 (141–50) [chasm] 80–81 (153–6), 79 (151–2). This demonstrates that the duanaire once contained more poems than survive today. Such loss of leaves would not be unexpected, as the manuscript appears to have been loose within vellum wrappers (now pp. 157–60) until it received its present binding c. 1852, the date of the watermark in the endpapers.

Including the material on ff. 72v–73 (138–40), the Mac Suibhne poembook contains twenty-one poems, thirteen of which are addressed to Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánad. Nowhere is this section dated, but one may infer from the many references in these poems to Rathmullan (Ráth Maoláin)—most notably in Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn’s poem beginning Leithéid Almhan i nUlltaibh (TD Poem 27)—that Domhnall’s poem-book dates from the pre-Plantation period of his career. It belongs, therefore, to the context of an identifiable trend among the lordships in the second half of the sixteenth century, to which period a number of surviving duanaireadha may be dated, expressive of the status and independence of those for whom it was compiled, and to which, in part at least, may be traced the resurgence in bardic verse during this period.

Clann an Bhaird

Eight of the poems in the Mac Suibhne duanaire are ascribed to members of the bardic family of Clann an Bhaird of nearby Tír Conaill, and there is some evidence among the colophons and marginalia that members of that family had access to the manuscript, and were also involved in the writing of some of the duanaire. Domhnall mac Fearghail Mheic an Bhaird is given as the author of a poem to Toirdhealbhach Óg Mac Suibhne (brother and predecessor as Mac Suibhne Fánad of Domhnall) on f. 73ra (139), and a commonplace marginal quatrain signed by Domhnall mac Fearghail is to be found in the earlier section of the manuscript (f. 57v (108)), though the hand there differs from that of the scribe who wrote Domhnall’s poem.

Elsewhere in the duanaire we find a poem beginning (f. 80vb31 (154)) An Cumhall céadna ag Cloinn Eogain addressed to Domhnall Mac Suibhne Fánad and ascribed to Pádraig Ó Gnímh. This poem was written into the manuscript by a scribe who gives his name as Fearghal mac Uilliam (scribe 11 above). This patronymic strongly suggests that the scribe is a son of Ó Domhnaill’s ollamh who died in 1576, Uilliam Óg Mac an Bhaird, and a brother of the poets Uilliam Óg mac Uilliam Óig and the more famous Eóghan Ruadh mac Uilliam Óig. If so, then he was also, presumably, the father of Somhairle mac Fearghail mheic Uilliam Óg Mheic an Bhaird to whom a poem dated c. 1649 is ascribed in RIA ms 4 (24 P 27), pp. 95–102.

52 There is nothing apparent in the acephalous caithréim for Domhnall (f. 80r (153)) to contradict this proposal. For Rathmullan Castle, the ruins of which are no longer visible, and Rathmullan Priory see Brian Lacy et al., Archaeological survey of County Donegal (Lifford 1983) 343–6, 382.

53 See Ó Macháin, ‘Two Nugent manuscripts’, 123.

54 Domhnall’s marginalium reads: [Truagh sin a leabair bric bain. tiucfa la agus budh fir. aderaid each rit monuar ni mair an lamh truaigh ro sgríb mheisi domhnall mac fergail do sgríb sin 7 as tuirseac ataim a ndiaigh fhanan.]

55 Fearghal’s colophon—written as a filler at f. 81ra.z (155)—reads: Misi fergal mac uilliam Óig do sgríbh an dansin 7 tabrad gac aon leghfas beannacht ar mannain truaigh.

56 AFM V, 1684; cf. Brian Ó Cuív, ‘The Earl of Thomond and the poets’, Celtica 12 (1977) 125–45, at p. 127, where the year of the poet’s death is given as 1580. Note that a similar patronymic (Fearghal mac Uilliam) is found in other contexts among Clann Aodhaígín: RIA ms 1230 (23 P 16, Leabhar Breac), p. 60; British Library ms Egerton 88, f. 5v.

The final poem in the Mac Suibhne duanaire is written by a scribe (number 8 above) who, after a colourful colophon on f. 81v (156), gives his name as ‘Mealladh Maighdine’. This pseudonym is also found in a previously unrecorded colophon, now barely visible, on f. 79v (152), at the end of the poem by Fearghal Óg edited here: *ac sin duit [...] suibne [...] o mhealladh maighdine*. In the context of the Clann an Bhaird presence in this manuscript, it is hardly a coincidence that it is in the heading to this poem that we find, uniquely, the most complete record of Fearghal Óg’s patronymic: *Fearghal Óg mac Fearghail mheic Domhnaill Ruaidh*. It is probable, therefore, that Mealladh Maighdine was also a member of this bardic family. Furthermore, it is possible to interpret the pen-name as a pun, and that it may represent the name Maol Muire. If this is the case, then it is likely that the Maol Muire in question is the poet Maol Muire mac Con Uladh Meic an Bhaird, who is associated particularly with Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill, and whose father, Cú Uladh mac Conchubhair Ruaidh, is represented in the *duanaire* with a poem at f. 75v (144) of the manuscript. Maol Muire mac Con Uladh was killed when part of the retinue of Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill, under the command of his brother Rudhraighe, was attacked by the English cavalry in Co. Sligo in 1597. This date would provide a plausible *terminus ad quem* for the Mac Suibhne poembook.

**Editorial remarks**

Fearghal Óg’s poem occurs on f. 79v23–45 (152) of the *duanaire*. Both Fr Walsh and Kathleen Mulchrone believed the poem to be incomplete, but while this part of the manuscript page is very stained, the two cases of dúnadh (qq. 15d, 16d) in the poem are visible, as is the additional quatrain to St Peter, and part of the colophon by ‘Mealladh Maighdine’ mentioned above.

The general thrust of the poem seems to be that Fearghal Óg is away from Mac Suibhne at the time of its composition; if any significance is to be attached to the use of the present tense in q. 3b, it may be inferred that the poet was in Connacht when he composed the poem. Such sojourns must have been commonplace, and one of Fearghal Óg’s earliest recorded visits to Connacht was the presentation of a poem to Cormac Ó hEadhra (with whom

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58 *Tabrad cecch aon léightfeas an dan sin bennacht ar anmuin an ti do sgríobh an dan sin ma tā nac diol ar in litir he 7f os is iomdha adhbharr aice do com beth co holc da madh muiit an litir fein .i. mairidhe dår mbodhradh 7 gillebrighdhi dar mbogadh 7 gráinne dar mallachadh 7 ni airmhim mé fein co roitim 7 ni gan adhbharr ataïsmi mur sin lor sin miss mealladh maigdine.*

59 The wordplay in the second element is straightforward; the first element might be construed as deriving from an inversion of Mael > Meal, and then being extended to form ‘Mealladh’.


61 AFM VI, 2016.


63 Beneath this, in the lower margin, traces of nine lines of erased text in a different hand are visible.
the poet had a long association) celebrating the latter’s accession to the chief-
tainship c. 1581.\textsuperscript{64} The language of affection in the poem to Mac Suibhne
(qq. 7–9) suggests that Fearghal Óg may have enjoyed a formal association
with Domhnall at this time, probably pre-dating his attachment to Aodh Mág
Aonghusa.

The metre of the poem is \textit{deibhidhe}. I have offered suggestions (within
square brackets) as to the possible restoration of the text where it is obscured by
staining in qq. 6, 9–16, but these restorations are seldom more than speculative.
Two non-scribal interlinear corrections are incorporated in the text at qq. 3d
and 10b, for reasons of rhyme and syllable-count respectively. The remain-
ing editorial interventions are largely orthographical; italic \textit{h} indicates lenition
supplied editorially. The teaching (\textit{IGT} i.43 and 146) regarding the represen-
tation of the juncture of homorganic consonants is adhered to at qq. 2a and 7d;
and in 8c, 8d, 11d permitted variants are substituted to create perfect rhyme.

\textbf{Fearghal occ mac Fearghail meic Domnaill Ruaidh Meic in Bhaird}

1. Ní thréigfe mè Mac Suibhne –
crideadh cäch uaim m’hforfhuighle –
рè lann na frèimhe dà bhfoil,
mo chèile do chlár Chriomhthuin.

2. Aoineach dà dtiobhruinn a thoil
ní fhacamair i nUlltaibh,
ghéag is uaisle dà fhine
nàr bhreag uaimse m’oirbhire.

3. Neach dà dtréigfinn mo thriath fein
a-nois ní fhaicim ainséin,
óigfhlear ar nach uighthear locht,
i gcóigeadh chruithghéal Chonnacht.

4. Sgèal nach còir do chur i bhfad:
neach dà dtréigfinn triath Fánad
ní fhuair mè i mòmnhagh Mhunhan,
è fhìorghlan gan urrdhubhadh.

5. Uaisle clàir Laighean go lèir,
dà bhfaicinn uile iaidseín,
an saoirbeangán ôn tür thall,
ar n-ainleannan dìbh Domhnall.

6. Dòibh fòs, nì fachuin diomdha,
nì thréigfinn mo thighiora,
sluagh min[Mhidhe na múr nglan],
an rìghbhile ò Dhùn Dealgan.

\textsuperscript{64} O’Hara Poem VIII.
7. Gan adhbar ní thugas toil
do tar uaislibh fhóid Fhionntuim,
ní chuirse an tnúdth ionn uadha,
liom a rúin ’s a ríoguala.

8. Cnú mhullaigh mhaise Suibhne,
liom tar cách a chomhairle,

troigh sheang is ollmha eachtra,
’s is leam coibh a chaioimheabtha.

9. Liom a leathuelle i lár cháich,
liom fós a earradh órsináith –
neach nach ca[í]gealtach ar crodh –
’s a each aigeantach uasal.

10. Dá mheince tèighinn dá thigh,
m’oide soghrádha suibhír,
   rí is omhan i dt[u]ail treasa,
   folamh uaidh níor fhilleasa.

11. An rí féin, re cois a chruidh,
do[ghe][a]bhainn uaidh i nUlltuibh,
   [damh dá mbré]agadh a bhronnadh;
   a thréaghadh níor thogumar.

12. Ní threagioibh hé, òs í a thóil,
go dula ar ais i nUlltoibh,
   [ó’s aige an barr] nach bearair
   [do Gha]ll ná do Ghaoidhealaibh.

13. Sí do thréigean níor mheas mè;
an sèad nach iarr[thaí] uirthe –
   [gealltar tnúdth] na dámh dhi –
   le Gráinne dùinn do dháilí.

14. Sgéala a teasad[a] i gcéin do-clos,
acht gidh mè is fhéarra ma [heolas].
   [ní fuighthe] béim fá bronndadh:
   béim uirrthi ní fhuaromar.

15. Sgéal uirthe ní hai[t]hnedh d’fhior:
diomhda fa dháil a maoin[eadh] –
   [pailm fhín]ngheal do choill cheinín –
   [níor thóill] inghean EibhilíN.

16. A dhoirseoir Chrìosd caomhúin mhe, m’anam ó Airdrì[gh Nimhe]
   [tar] m’fhalaigh ná dúil tar dhi,
   ná tabhair diúltadh dùinne. N.I.t
1. I will not desert Mac Suibhne—let all believe my words—full moon of the stock from which he hails, my spouse from the plain of Criomhthan.
2. We have not discerned anyone in Ulster to whom I should give the affection which is his, most noble scion of his race who has not drawn my reproach from me.
3. I do not see anyone there now, in the beautiful province of Connacht, on whose account I would abandon my own lord, young man on whom no fault will be found.
4. A tale not to be bruited abroad: I have not found in the smooth plain of Mumha anyone for whom I would desert the prince of Fánaid, pure moon without eclipse.
5. Were I to observe them all, all the nobles of the plain of Laighin, our only lover of them [all would still be] Domhnall, the noble scion from yonder territory.
6. Not for them either, the host of level Midhe of the bright ramparts, would I desert my lord, the royal tree from Dún Dealgan; it is no cause for resentment.
7. Not without cause have I given affection to him in preference to the nobility of the land of Fionntan: mine is his confidence and [the position by] his royal shoulder; envy will not separate us from him.
8. Topmost fruit of the progeny of Suibhne, slender foot most ready for action, mine is his counsel, in preference to all others, and mine is one side of his fair bed.
9. In the midst of all, mine is [the place by] his elbow, mine again is his gold-embroidered garment and his noble, high-spirited horse—[he is] a person not sparing in the matter of wealth.
10. As often as I used to go to his house, my charming, cheerful tutor, a king fearful in battle-armour, I did not return empty-handed from it.
11. The king himself and [all] his wealth I would get from him in Ulster, if he could obtain its bestowal for me: we have not resolved to leave him.
12. Since it is his wish, I will not leave him before I return to Ulster, since his is the supremacy that is not conceded either to Irish or English.
13. I have not thought to leave her; the treasure not sought from her would be given to us by Gráinne; the affection of the poets is assured her.
14. Tidings of her reputation have been heard afar, though it is I who am most knowledgeable about her; no fault would be found regarding her munificence: we have found no fault with her.
15. No man knows of any fault with her: Eibhilín’s daughter—fair and radiant palm-tree of her race’s wood—has not earned displeasure regarding the dispensing of her riches.

**TRANSLATION**

1. I will not desert Mac Suibhne—let all believe my words—full moon of the stock from which he hails, my spouse from the plain of Criomhthan.
2. We have not discerned anyone in Ulster to whom I should give the affection which is his, most noble scion of his race who has not drawn my reproach from me.
3. I do not see anyone there now, in the beautiful province of Connacht, on whose account I would abandon my own lord, young man on whom no fault will be found.
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15. No man knows of any fault with her: Eibhilín’s daughter—fair and radiant palm-tree of her race’s wood—has not earned displeasure regarding the dispensing of her riches.
16. Protect me, oh door-keeper of Christ, do not refuse us; despite my sin, let not my soul be rejected by the supreme King of Heaven.

Notes

1a m’fhórffhuighle The manuscript reading ‘bforbfaoighle’ represents, perhaps, the influence of forbhfhaoilidh. Forms of uraghall, oraghall etc. are given in IGT ii 53 and iii 83. Forms in f- are common in the poetry, e.g. TD 8.19c, Duanaire Méig Uidhir 11.3b A. Dána 13.1d, etc.

1d Or, ‘my [choice of ] spouse for the plain of C.’

4c i mionmhaigh Non-infection of -mhagh is confirmed by rhyme, and is paralleled by ‘Magh Fáil’ (IGT ii 176) where a dative singular form is proscribed.

5c For the use of thall to refer to an adjacent territory see Ó Macháin, ‘Elegy for Seáin Óg Ó Dochartaigh’, 92 n. 26.

6d There was no association, historical or otherwise, between Domhnall and Dún Dealgan: subjects of bardic poems could be connected indiscriminately with prominent locations which were meant to represent Ireland: cf. TD I, p.lvi; Gerard Murphy, ‘A vision concerning Rolf MacMahon’, Éigse 4 (1943–4) 79–111, notes to 19b, 24a and 25b.

7c tnúdh Presumably a reference to the jealousness of other poets; for the negative connotation of the word in the political context of the time, see Ó Macháin, ‘Elegy for Seáin Óg Ó Dochartaigh’, 93.

8c eachtra The manuscript representation of cht consists of a combination of s + us-compendium in a form that has been noted by Liam Breathnach in Ériu 58 (2008) 3 n. 7.

10b suilbhir Cf. ‘ó Shaidhbh hsoghrádhuigh hsoilbhir’ OHara 29.10d; rhyming examples of suilbhir/soilbhir invariably show su- (DDána 17.32cd, Bard. P 19.18cd, etc.).

11a Presumably a reference to Ó Domhnaill as ‘king’ of Tír Conaill and overlord of the Clann Suibhne. The term rí had become rare as a quasi-official term of status (Katharine Simms, From kings to warlords (Woodbridge and Wolfeboro 1987) 38–9), but poets still used the word in reference to their patrons; e.g. in DDána 121.35 Fearghal Óg uses it of Rudhraighe Ó Domhnaill.

12. The meaning of this quatrain remains uncertain due to the condition of the manuscript. Line b is taken to mean that the poet will not abandon his affiliation with Mac Suibhne during the time that he is away from him.

13d References to Gráinne in other poems in the Mac Suibhne duanaire show that she was a daughter of Mac Suibhne Baghaineach, Maol Muire (TD 27.42b, inghean Mhaoil Mhuire 77v, 79r, 80r, 81vb), and Eibhilín/Aibhilín (15d in the present poem), a daughter of Ó Baoighill (fiúl o mBaoidhill 80vb). The Maol Muire in question was probably he who was killed in 1581 (AFM V, 1768).

14d Note the ‘breacadh’ in the rhymes gcéin : béim : béim.

16. The poem concludes with Fearghal Óg’s signature-dedication to St Peter, found in nearly two-thirds of his surviving poems (Ó Macháin, ‘Poems by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird’, 253).
ABBREVIATIONS


Murphy, Lyrics Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish lyrics eighth to twelfth century*. Oxford 1956.


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