



Title	A poem on the adventures abroad and death of Donnchadh son of Brian Bórainmhe
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Publication date	2012-11
Publication information	Ní Úrdail, Meidhbhín. "A Poem on the Adventures Abroad and Death of Donnchadh Son of Brian Bórainmhe." De Gruyter, November 2012. https://doi.org/10.1515/zcph.2012.010 .
Publisher	De Gruyter
Item record/more information	http://hdl.handle.net/10197/9076
Publisher's version (DOI)	10.1515/zcph.2012.010

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A poem on the adventures abroad and death of Donnchadh son of Brian Bórainhe*

Zusammenfassung

Donnchadh Ó Briain, Sohn von Brian Bórainhe, übernahm das Königtum Munsters nach dem Tode seines Vaters in der Schlacht von Clontarf (A.D. 1014). Die Annalen deuten auf Ó Briains unbeständige Herrschaft, bis er im Jahre 1063 abgesetzt wurde. Laut denselben Quellen starb er ein Jahr später in Rom, während er dort auf Pilgerfahrt war. Seine Zeit im Exil aus Irland und sein Tod im Ausland bilden den Kontext des Gedichtes Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain ('Ach die Reise von Donnchadh Sohn von Brian'). Dieser Aufsatz bietet sowohl eine kritische Ausgabe dieses Textes als auch eine Analyse seines Kontextes.

Introduction

Donnchadh son of Brian Bórainhe, the subject of the poem edited below, succeeded his father as king of Munster in the aftermath of the battle of Clontarf in 1014. This was by no means a smooth transition of power, however, as he faced inveterate opposition from his half-brother Tadhg, who, until the latter's death in 1023, was an equal claimant to the kingship.¹ According to some Irish annals, Tadhg's killing by the men of Éile amounted to an act of treachery (*feall*) which was carried out at the behest of Donnchadh himself.² Conell Mageoghagan, too, in his English translation of 1627 known as the 'Annals of Clonmacnoise', assures his reader that Tadhg 'was unaturally delivered by his owen Brother Donnogh to those of Elye o'Karoll, whoe accordingly killed him, as was desired of them by his Brother Donnogh'.³ While this murder fanned the flame of subsequent internecine struggles for supremacy within Dál gCais, Donnchadh Ó Briain had problems to contend with further afield also, and his political authority in the fifty or so years after the battle of Clontarf was at best a fitful one.⁴

His political ambitions were finally quashed in 1063 when Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain, son of Donnchadh's murdered half-brother Tadhg, supported by Diarmaid mac Maol na mBó, king of Leinster (1042–72), succeeded in deposing Donnchadh in that year and assumed the kingship of Munster.⁵ Donnchadh subsequently left for Rome, where his death is recorded in the contemporary *Chronicon* of Marianus Scottus (*alias* Móel Brigte) for the year 1064 as follows: *Donnchad, filius Briain, rex de Hibernia atque Echmarcach rex Innarenn, viri inter suos non ignobiles, Romam venientes obierunt* ('Donnchad mac

* I am very grateful to an anonymous reader for valuable suggestions regarding this article in draft. My sincere thanks are due also to Gordon Ó Riain for comments on a transcription and translation of the poem *Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain*, which I completed some years ago.

¹ *AU* s.a. 1023; *AI* s.a. 1023.3; *ALC* s.a. 1023.

² *ATig.* s.a. 1023, *CS* s.a. 1021 [= 1023]; *AFM* s.a. 1023.

³ MURPHY 1896: 173.

⁴ RYAN 1941: 142–6; Ó CORRÁIN 1972: 131–3; NÍ MHAONAIGH 2007: 102–7.

⁵ *AI* s.a. 1063.6; *CS* s.a. 1061 [= 1063]; *AFM* s.a. 1063.

Briain, a king from Ireland and Echmarcach, king of the Rhinns [of Galloway], men of no mean standing among their own, came to Rome and died’).⁶ His death while on pilgrimage also finds mention in the Irish annals, some of which locate it at the monastery of St. Stephen in Rome.⁷ This may be Santo Stefano Rotondo near Rome, where, interestingly, a later plaque in the basilica acclaims Donnchadh Ó Briain as king of Cashel and Thomond.

From Donnchadh’s pilgrimage and death in Rome, as recorded in historical sources, there emerged an assumption that he had family abroad. Specifically, we find that an Irish descent was fabricated for the Anglo-Norman families of Power, Plunkett and Eustace, thereby making them an integral part of the Irish population. Séathrún Céitinn, or Geoffrey Keating, touches on this in his *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, for example, although he expresses doubt as to its veracity:

Da éis sin do cuireadh Donnchadh mac Briain a ríoghacht agus do chuaidh da oilithre don Róimh go bhfuair bás ann i mainistir Steapháin. Agus an ní adeirid a lán gurab do shliocht Donnchadha Puéaraigh Eustásaigh is Pluingcéadaigh, ní bhfuaras laoidh ná leitir da dhearbhughadh gurab do shliocht Donnchadha ceachtar dhíobh, acht aon rann amháin atá san duain darab tosach: Cuirfead commaoin ar chloinn Táil, do rinne Maoilín Óg Mac Bruaideadha, fear comhaimsire dhúinn féin.

‘After this Donnchadh, son of Brian, was deposed from his sovereignty, and went on pilgrimage to Rome, where he died in the monastery of St. Stephen. And as to what many assert that the Pueraiigh Eustasaigh and the Pluingceadaigh are descended from Donnchadh, I have found neither lay nor letter [i.e. any kind of evidence] to prove that any of them were descended from him, except one stanza which is in the poem beginning: I will confer a favour on the clann Tail, which Maoilín Og Mac Bruaideadha a contemporary of our own has composed.’⁸

The ‘one stanza’ intended by Keating here is the following, quatrain thirty-one of Mac Bruaideadha’s poem:

Do shliocht Donnchaidh fós féghaidh
Puéaraigh is Ploincéadaigh,
— laoich thaghtha na bhfonn bhfásach —

⁶ WAITZ 1844: 559 with accompanying translation by ETCHINGHAM 2001: 182, n. 108; cf. GWYNN 1952–53: 196–7.

⁷ *AU*, *ALC* s.a. 1064 notice Donnchadh’s pilgrimage to Rome and his death there; cf. *AU* s.a. 1065, n. 6. *AI* s.a. 1064.5 refers to Donnchadh going to Rome where he died, to which *AB* (s.a. 1064) adds *coróin ri Erenn do breith leis dó* (‘taking with him the crown of Ireland’). According to *ATig.* s.a. 1064, Donnchadh went on pilgrimage to Rome where he died *a mainistir Sdefain* (‘in the monastery of Stephen’), and according to *AFM* s.a. 1064, Donnchadh died in Rome *i mainistir Stephain mairtír* (‘in the monastery of Stephen the martyr’). The record s.a. 1061 (= 1063) in *CS* notices Donnchadh’s death on pilgrimage to Rome *i Mainister Stepain* (‘in the monastery of Stephen’) while the ‘Annals of Clonmacnoise’ declare for the year 1063 that ‘Donnogh McBrian died in pilgrimage in the abby of St. Stephen the Protomartyre’ (MURPHY 1896: 179).

⁸ *FFÉ* III, 292, 293; for the phrase (*i*) *laoidh ná / nó (i) leitir* above, see *AiD* II, 238, poem 32, n. 11d; *DiD* 472, poem 100, n. 14c; *IBP* 264, n. 2; cf. Ó HÁINLE 2005: 144.

's an drong armtha Iúsdásach.⁹

'See likewise, of the race of Donnchadh are the Powers and Plunketts — choice champions with rich desmesnes — and the armed troop, the Eustaces.'¹⁰

Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh also included this quatrain in his *Leabhar na nGenealach* as part of a tract on the O'Briens and various other families claiming descent from Donnchadh Ó Briain.¹¹ Mac Fhir Bhisigh acknowledges Keating's 'doubt' (*amharus*) about the genuineness or 'purity of these genealogies and of the aforesaid quatrain' (*ar ghloine na ngenealach-so agus an rainn reamhraite*), but he accepts nonetheless that 'they could be pure' (*dob' édir a mbeth glan*).¹²

Contents of 'Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain'

It is Donnchadh's time in exile from Ireland and his death abroad which form the context of the poem beginning *Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain*. As well as the opening line, other references praising Ó Briain's ancestry are *Donnchadh Cliach is Cláire*, 'Donnchadh of Cliú and Cláire' (q. 15c and note 15c below). Further down, Donnchadh is hailed as the warrior *ó lios Luimnigh*, 'from the rampart of Limerick' (q. 26b), and as *Donnchadh dhúin Chuiric*, 'Donnchadh of Corc's fortress' (q. 29a and note 29a below).

An atmosphere of great sadness permeates Ireland in the opening section (qq 1–14). The departure of Donnchadh Ó Briain leaves the womenfolk of Ireland and those in the fairyforts of the land in mourning, and his journey abroad has also caused all natural order to collapse (qq 11–14). His pilgrimage *tar muir*, 'across the sea', to Rome (qq 1, 2cd, 11) finds a parallel in the opening quatrains of a poem addressed by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird to Cú Chonnacht Mhág Uidhir, Lord of Fermanagh (1566–89) and beginning *Cia re bhfuil Éiri ac anmhuin?*, 'For whom is Ireland waiting?' (54 qq). While Mac an Bhaird makes no specific reference to Rome in this instance, 'it was [he opines] a sorrow to Ireland that the highking should journey to Italy' (*sgéul do fhairbriogh le Fiadh Fáil / triall an airdríogh don Edáill*). Journeying *tar sál soir*, 'east over the sea', Donnchadh 'did not return from his pilgrimage [as] there were strangers to him in Ireland' (*dá oilithre an uair nár fhill / coimhighthe uaidh a nÉirinn*).¹³

As well as our poem and that by Mac an Bhaird, the pilgrimage by Donnchadh Ó Briain to Rome also finds mention in a fifteenth-century composition by Maol Eachlainn 'na nUirsgéal' Ó hUiginn, beginning *Leaba charad i gCorcaigh*, 'A friend's grave [is] in Cork' (42 qq).¹⁴ The poet's 'friend' in question is Aodh mac Pilib Méig Uidhir who died in Cork in 1428 after a journey abroad. Donnchadh's journey, which involved travelling

⁹ RIA MS 1080 (B iv 2), f. 87r in the hand of Michéal Ó Cléirigh, 1627–28; cf. *ABM* 139.31. Lenition and length-marks are inserted silently here, and I emend *thoghtha > thaghtha* (l. c) and *sa > 's an* (l. d); emending *is > agus* (l. b) is unnecessary given that *Puéraigh* may be taken to be a hiatus form.

¹⁰ Translation from BREATHNACH 1937: 51.

¹¹ Ó MURAÍLE 2003–4: 614, 615; cf. BREATHNACH 1937: 50, 51.

¹² Ó MURAÍLE 2003–4: 616, 617; cf. BREATHNACH 1937: 50–1 and Ó MURAÍLE 1996: 175.

¹³ GREENE 1972: 16–19.

¹⁴ BREATHNACH 1986.

to the east ‘to the relics of Paul and Peter’ (*go taisibh Póil is Peadair*), is the only indication that Mág Uidhir’s journey also involved a pilgrimage abroad, ‘save that Donnchadh’s body remained in exile’ (*acht corp Donnchaidh ’na dheóraidh*) whereas Mág Uidhir returned to Ireland and died in Cork.¹⁵

Donnchadh, in our poem, is portrayed as an able ruler at the time of his departure. He presided over *ceirtleath Éireann*, ‘an exact half of Ireland’ (q. 2a), but, somewhat ambiguously, he also enjoyed the loyalty of the men of Ireland at his coronation in Tara on the death of Maol Seachlainn Mór (q. 4) and reigned without opposition *ó gach saorfhlaithe*, ‘from every noble prince’ (q. 35d).¹⁶ Such ambiguity is found elsewhere. For example, Donnchadh is titled king of Ireland in the Annals of Inisfallen and he is likewise hailed in the contemporary shrine of the Stowe missal.¹⁷ Keating’s understanding, however, is that Donnchadh held ‘the sovereignty of Leath Mogha and the greater part of Ireland’ (*ríoghacht Leithe Mogha is urmhóir Éireann*).¹⁸ According to Keating’s contemporary, Conell Mageoghagan, it was ‘the Crown of Ireland’ which Donnchadh brought with him to Rome.¹⁹ Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird adopts a similar stance in the aforementioned poem in acclaiming Donnchadh as high king who ‘brought with him the royal crown of the men of Ireland from Ireland of the fair grass’ (*Coróin ríoghachta fer bhFáil / rug leis a hÉirind fhódbháin*), whereas in the poem by Maol Eachlainn ‘na nUirsgéal’ Ó hUiginn, mentioned above, Donnchadh is ‘Cashel’s king’ (*ri Caisil*).²⁰ Moreover, Donnchadh has the title *árdríg Eirenn* (‘monarch of Ireland’) bestowed on him in a collection of Uí Bhriain genealogies from *Leabhar Iris Chloinne Uí Mhaolchonaire*, a source which is now lost, but which, according to a note by the Cork scribe Seán Stac (fl. 1706–10), was originally compiled in 1611.²¹ The title high king of Ireland is also conferred on Donnchadh Ó Briain in *An Leabhar Muimhneach*.²²

The pejorative terms *garg* ‘fierce’ (q. 5a) and *iomthnúthach* ‘very fierce’ (q. 6d) are a more accurate indicator of Dál gCais dynastic dissension at the time of Donnchadh’s departure from Ireland. As mentioned in the introduction above, Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain, nephew of Donnchadh, had managed to impose his authority over Munster in the 1060s. Toirdhealbhach, in fact, also ensured the demise of Donnchadh’s own son, Murchadh, in the province, and the latter’s death in Teathbha (Teafa) in 1068 marked an end to the political sway held by Donnchadh’s descendants in Munster.²³ No claimant to the kingship of Munster would emanate from his line thereafter. Indeed, it would appear from the annals that, like Donnchadh, his descendants, too, were forced into exile. We find, for example, Donnchadh’s grandsons through his son Lorcán (ob. 1078) situated in the kingdoms of Cinéal nEóghain and Bréifne in the 1070s and 1080s, where they allied

¹⁵ BREATNACH 1986: 45–6, 51, n. 21d.

¹⁶ Maol Seachlainn’s death is recorded s.a. 1022 in *AU*, *AI*, *ATig.*, *ALC*, *AFM*; see also notes 2a, 4, 4ab and 7ab below.

¹⁷ *AI* 1068.2; MICHELLI 1996: 16–18.

¹⁸ *FFÉ* III, 290, 291.

¹⁹ MURPHY 1896: 179.

²⁰ GREENE 1972: 16, 17; BREATNACH 1986: 45.

²¹ O’GRADY 1929: I, 182; II, 192 and RIA MS 303 (23 L 37), p. 178, respectively. The earliest extant copy of these Uí Bhriain genealogies forms part of the contents of TCD MS 1292 (H.1.18), ff. 4v–13r, published as Appendix D in O’GRADY 1929: I, 171–92; for Seán Stac, see Ó CONCHÚIR 1982: 185–6.

²² Ó DONNCHADHA [1940]: 354.

²³ *AU* s.a. 1068; *AI* s.a. 1068.2; *AFM* s.a. 1068.

with rulers opposed to the expansionist policies of their Munster kinsman Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain.²⁴ Interestingly, in the opening section of our poem, exile is portrayed not only as a natural, indeed positive, choice for Donnchadh, but he wishes to remain apart from his native homeland (qq 5–6). It is tempting to suggest, then, that therein may lie an implicit message for his descendants, and specifically even, for those living in exile in Bréifne.

The next substantial section of *Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain* (qq 15–34) describes Donnchadh’s adventures in the Otherworld, his treacherous killing, instigated by the wife of the Emperor of Germany, and his return from the Otherworld. We have to do here with terrain typical of Irish romantic tales, namely *an Almáinn* (q. 15d), *Sorcha* (q. 16b), *an tír thoir* (qq 18a, 33c), *tír an tSamhdáin* (q. 34b), and we also confront a character typical of this *genre*, namely *Impear na hAlmáinne* (q. 15d).²⁵ Incorporating the Otherworld into Donnchadh’s itinerary *tar muir*, ‘across the sea’ (q. 2c), transforms him into the interchangeable hero of romantic tales in general — he who enters the Otherworld by going on a voyage overseas.²⁶ Indeed, taking *idir* to mean ‘between’ rather than ‘both’ in *idir eas agus inbhear* (q. 15b), Donnchadh enters this Otherworld by plunging into water, just as in the Irish romantic tale *Giolla an Fhiugha*, for example, where his brother, Murchadh, journeys to the Otherworld and reaches the ‘Land under Wave’ (*Tír fo Thuinn*) as well as the mysterious land known as *Lochlainn* by plunging into a lake.²⁷

We find similar traditions concerning Donnchadh Ó Briain as those presented in the supernatural interlude of our poem incorporated elsewhere. For example, the tradition concerning his visit to the land of the Sultan (q. 34b) is mentioned in an elegy on the death of Aodh Ruadh Ó Domhnaill near Valladolid in 1602 by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaire and beginning *Teasda Éire san Easbāinn*, ‘Ireland has perished in Spain’ (69 qq).²⁸ Just as Aodh Ruadh perished abroad, so too ‘The son of Brian Bóramha, foremost of Ireland, fell in the land of the Sultan’ (*Mac Briain Bhōramha, barr Fāil, / do thuit a ttír an tSabhdāin*).²⁹ Furthermore, the motif of the supernatural which our poem attaches to Donnchadh also forms part of an apologue, variants of which Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh in the fourteenth century and Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn in the sixteenth century incorporated into their compositions *Fuirigh go fóill, a Éire*, ‘Wait for a while, o Ireland’ (45 qq) and *Ísligh do mheanma, a Mhaoilir*, ‘Subdue thine arrogant spirit, Myler’ (43 qq), respectively.³⁰ According to the apologue, Donnchadh seeks out Aoibheall of Craig Liath in the Otherworld where he learns from her that the high kingship of Ireland is to pass from Brian Bórainmhe to Donnchadh’s half-brother, Tadhg. In order to ensure that the sovereignty of Ireland falls to him, Donnchadh kills Tadhg, returns to Aoibheall and informs her that the prophecy proved untrue. The supernatural woman reiterates that the

²⁴ HOGAN 1940; RYAN 1941: 149, 152; ZUMBUHL 2005; cf. BYRNE 1964: 73, 92–3.

²⁵ BRUFORD 1969: 21–32.

²⁶ BRUFORD 1969: 21–2.

²⁷ HYDE 1899; cf. BRUFORD 1969: 261 who gives a list of the tale’s sources as well as the discussion by Ní MHAONAIGH 1998: 2–11.

²⁸ BREATNACH 1973.

²⁹ BREATNACH 1973: 36.

³⁰ *DiD* 321–5, and *TD* I, 150–5 and *TD* II, 99–103, respectively.

high kingship would indeed pass to Tadhg, and this through Tadhg's son, Toirdhealbhach Ó Briain.

Finally, our poem's description of Donnchadh and the wife of the Emperor finds a parallel in Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, although in this instance Donnchadh has a relationship with the daughter of the emperor of Rome:

An béaloideas fós atá ag a lán do thuatadhaibh, mar a n-abraid iar ndul do Dhonnchadh ar eachtra don Róimh da oilithre gur chumaisc ar inghin an impire do bhí ann an tráth soin, go rug mac dhó, agus gurab ón mac soin tiocfaidís na trí chineadha do luaidheamar [Puéraigh, Eustásaigh is Pluingcéadaigh]; gidheadh ní héidir an scéal-so do bheith firinneach; óir ré ndul ar an eachtra soin dhó, do ba seanóir críonna cianaosta ós cionn a cheithre fichid bliadhan é, agus níor chosmhail d'inghin impire dúil do thabhairt do luighe ré n-a shamhailt d'athlaoch, agus fós níor bh'oircheas dó-san do chuaidh ar eachtra ar leirg oilithre is aithrige dúil do chur i mnaoi san bhíoth.

'Moreover as to the tradition that exists among many of the rustics who say that when Donnchadh went on a pilgrimage to Rome he had intercourse with the daughter of the emperor who was there then, and that she bore him a son, and that from that son might have sprung the three septs we have mentioned [the Powers, the Eustaces and the Plunketts]; this story cannot be true, for before setting out on that expedition he was a very old decrepid man of over eighty years of age, and it is not likely that an emperor's daughter would covet intercourse with such a veteran, and, moreover, it would have been unbecoming in him who went for the sake of pilgrimage and penance to covet any woman whatever.'³¹

Keating, then, dismisses entirely the story itself, and, as mentioned in the introduction above, the proposal of an Irish descent of 'the three septs', namely the Powers, the Eustaces and the Plunketts, from Donnchadh Ó Briain, he also regarded with some suspicion.³² Not so Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh, who, while acknowledging Keating's scepticism, countered in his *Leabhar na nGenealach* that 'a man has not a natural age at which he would be unable to procreate' (*ní bhí aosdacht aigeanta d'fíor nach ttiocfadh dhe clannughadh*).³³

The concluding section of *Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain* (qq 35–8) is quite different in tone and content from the two foregoing sections. Here, the poet considers his own futile lot now that prominent heroes of Dál gCais and Munster generally, and the Golden Age with which they are associated, are gone forever, and this he follows with an *envoi* for help to St. Michael. The *ubi sunt?* theme in this concluding section reminds us of that in a series of poems projected back into tenth-century Ireland and attributed to Mac Coise as well as to Mac Liag and to one Mac Giolla Caoimh, poets who came to be associated in Irish tradition with Maol Seachlainn Mór and Brian Bórainne.³⁴ The poet identifies himself as *Cam ó Chluain chlogbhinn Chláir*, 'Cam from Cluain of the sweet

³¹ *FFÉ* III, 292, 293.

³² See n. 8.

³³ Ó MURAÍLE 2003–4: 616; cf. BREATHNACH 1937: 50–1 and Ó MURAÍLE 1996: 175.

³⁴ Ó LOCHLAINN 1942; Ó LOCHLAINN 1943; Ó RIAIN 2007: 57–8.

bell of Clare' (q. 38c), and he is possibly 'Camcluana ó Dubhaccáin' whose death at the hands of the followers of Richard II in Dublin in 1394 is recorded by the Four Masters.³⁵ According to a variant entry for the same year in a fragment of annals dealing primarily with events in the vicinity of Lough Ree, Co. Longford, 'Ó Dubhagáin, i.e. Cam Cluana, *ollamh* of history, eloquence, and poetry, was put to death by stuttering Galls while in captivity'.³⁶ 'Cam Cluana', however, is in all probability not a real personal name at all, but rather a placename, and may well be the townland of Camchluain (Camcloon) in the parish of An Múr (Moore) and barony of Maigh Charnáin (Moycarn) in south Co. Roscommon.³⁷ Be that as it may, on the basis of the identification in q. 38c, it seems that *Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain* was originally composed in the fourteenth century, although it will emerge from the discussion below on metre that such a date is to be regarded with considerable caution.

Transmission

Our poem has come down in two scribal sources. A fragmentary text of nineteen quatrains is preserved in the sixteenth-century manuscript known as the Book of the Dean of Lismore which is now housed in the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh.³⁸ Only six-and-a-half quatrains of this fragmentary text are legible, and a diplomatic transcription of these was published by Quiggin as part of his indexing, transcribing and editing hitherto unpublished material from this classical Gaelic manuscript.³⁹ A longer text, comprising thirty-seven quatrains, has come down in a seventeenth-century manuscript, now TCD MS 1381 (H.5.9).⁴⁰ Quatrain three in the edited text below is unique to BDL, while q. 7ab in the same source belongs to a quatrain which has not been transmitted in the text of the TCD manuscript.⁴¹

TCD MS 1381 appears to be the work of at least three main scribes. Two of these identify themselves, namely Feidhlime Mháguidhir, who completed his work on 16 January 1698 and left it to his friend Father Tomás Ó Droma, and Toirdhealbhach Bán

³⁵ *Camcluana ó Dubhaccáin do mharbhadh la muintir Righ Saxan i nÁth Cliath (AFM s.a.)*.

³⁶ *Ó Dubhagan, .i. Cam Cluana, ollam seanchasa 7 deearrlabra 7 dána, do milledh le Gallaibh goda a mbruit (Misc. Ir. Ann. s.a. 1394.31)*.

³⁷ HDGP s.v. *Camchluain*; Ó MURAÍLE 1989: 195, n. 79.

³⁸ Adv. MS 72.1.37, pp 310m–11; cf. O'RAHILLY 1935: 41. For the manuscript and its contents, see MACKINNON 1912: 225–46 and MACKECHNIE 1973: 179–89.

³⁹ QUIGGIN 1937: 83. In the context of Scotland, 'classical' here predates 1600 and 'Gaelic' rather than 'Irish' is the preferable term (BLACK 1989: 150, 167).

⁴⁰ ABBOT & GWYNN 1921: 236–40; our poem appears on pp 18–12, i.e. with its contents in reverse order. A semi-diplomatic edition of this text appeared recently as no. 203 in *ABM*, although the following corrections to that text should be noted: leg. *Torrdealbach* (6c); leg. *phartrúaidh* (8b); leg. *os* (8d); leg. *faccbhuis* (10b); leg. *curr* (11c); leg. *sithmoill* (11d); leg. *chend* (12b); leg. *gan bee* (13a); *ghan* (13b); leg. *fon am-sin* (17b); leg. *Críostaidhibh* (17c); leg. *Eirionn* (18b); leg. *shodain* (18c); leg. *gacha ngile* (18c); leg. *ghaisriidh* (18d); leg. *torchadh* (19a); leg. *cead is fiche* (19c); leg. *airdrigh* (21b); leg. *haén* (21c); leg. *ós* (21d); leg. *cumann* (22c); leg. *cred í* (24d); leg. *íarr* (25d); leg. *cúain cubharbháin* (26b); leg. *ós* (27c); leg. *Chúirt* (28a); leg. *ionann* (28d); leg. *dáibh* (29b); 's a ngártha (29c); leg. *mainistir* (31a); leg. *shé* (33d); leg. *churaidh* (35c); leg. *Conchubhair* (35d); leg. *Chluain* (37c).

⁴¹ See note 7ab below. I am grateful to the Board of Trinity College Dublin for permission to publish from TCD MS 1381.

son of Cathaoir son of Philip Ó Raghallaigh, whose contribution includes the date 1684.⁴² Although no place of writing is mentioned, the contents of the TCD manuscript suggest that it was originally compiled in Bréifne, the territory of Uí Raghallaigh and Uí Ruairc comprising the modern counties of Cavan and Leitrim, who established themselves as rulers in East and West Bréifne, respectively. We may note, for example, a poem in honour of Aodh son of Toirdhealbhadh Ó Raghallaigh, *Ceann cléire Chille Móire*, ‘Head of the clergy of Kilmore’, probably Hugh O’Reilly (ob. 1653), who was appointed Bishop of Kilmore in 1626 where he remained until his transfer to Armagh in 1628.⁴³ There is, too, a poem in praise of Fr Maol Mórdha Ó Raghallaigh, a table of descent from Adam of the aforementioned scribe, Toirdhealbhadh Bán Ó Raghallaigh, and names of other O’Reilly family members are jotted throughout the manuscript.⁴⁴ Material relevant to Uí Ruairc constitutes the much discussed poem addressed to Aodh Ó Ruairc (ob. 1684), beginning *Féuch féin an obairsi, a Aodh*, ‘See yourself these doings, o Aodh’ (32 qq).⁴⁵ It also includes a eulogy on the latter Aodh and his brother, Tadhg, and a rough draft of an epitaph on Aodh Ó Ruairc who was buried in Rome.⁴⁶

It may be no coincidence that *Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain* forms part of the contents of a manuscript which seems to point to a compilation in Bréifne. It is the case, for example, that a Bréifne bias is evident in a version of the Uí Bhriain propaganda prose text *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh* in TCD MS 1319 (H.2.17), which Todd refers to as D and which he dates to the middle of the fourteenth century.⁴⁷ Furthermore, attention has been drawn to the overall positive portrayal of Donnchadh Ó Briain in the final section of the only complete surviving text of *Cogadh Gáedhel re Gallaibh*, namely that

⁴² *Aniudh an seiseadh lá dég do mhi Ianúari, 1698 do chríochnaighes an leabhránsa, óir as é an préfás so um dhiaigh do bhí chum deiridh dhe, 7 as dóigh nach sgríobhuimsi a uirid eile a nGáoidhilg an feadh a mhairfead ... 7 fágbuim an leabharsa ag mo chairid .i. an t-athair Tomás Ó Droma óir as e tug aithfrionn ris an stúiaigh do sgríobhadh dhe 7 guidhim é féin 7 gach léightheoir ar chena, a n-onóir Chríosta 7 a mhathar .i. Muire Bhaintig[h]earna fa ghuidhe go duthrachtach re hanam an sgríbhneóra, gidh beó marbh é. Feidhlime Mháguidhir* (pp. 1–2), ‘Today the sixteenth day of the month of January, 1698 I finished this little book, for this preface below was at the end of it, and it is probable that I will not write as much in Irish as long as I live ... and I leave this book to my friend i.e. Father Tomás Ó Droma for it is he who said Mass with the roll which was written from it and I beseech him and every reader likewise, for the sake of Christ and his mother i.e. the Lady Mary to pray fervently for the soul of the writer, whether he be alive or dead. Feidhlime Mháguidhir’. Ó Raghallaigh’s signature appears on pp. 83, 125, 137, 152, while the date 1684 occurs on p. 104.

⁴³ *Ca bhfuair an t-ineach [= eineach] iosdadh?*, ‘Where did generosity find an abode?’ (25 qq), pp. 89–93; the raising of *e* next to a nasal > *i* in Irish is discussed by O’RAHILLY (1932: 194–5), while comparable examples occur in BREATNACH 1997: 99–100. Hugh O’Reilly finds mention among the Roman Catholic Bishops for the Province of Armagh from 1534 in MOODY, MARTIN & BYRNE 1984: 337, 349.

⁴⁴ *Tugas toil dho M[h]aolmhórdha*, ‘I gave affection to Maol Mórdha’ (34 qq + 1), pp. 115–21; the descent of Toirdhealbhadh Bán occurs on pp 83–7, as well as the jottings ‘Seaan O Raghallaigh’ (p. 38), ‘Connor O Reilly his hand and Thomas O Reilly his book’ (p. 134) and ‘Conner Reilly’ (p. 166).

⁴⁵ TCD MS 1381, pp. 27–32, edited by GWYNN 1921–23. Drawing on this poem, CARNEY (1950: 280–2) first identified the important theme of the poet as lover or spouse in bardic poetry; further Carney’s discussion in a chapter entitled ‘The *feuch féin* controversy’ (1955: 243–75). On the extensive use of the theme itself in bardic poetry, including that in this poem, see CARNEY 1967; BREATNACH 1983: 40–51; BREATNACH 1997: 72–82.

⁴⁶ *Éanchnú mogail maicne Ruairc*, ‘The sons of Ruairc [are] one nut of the same seed-pod’ (5 qq), p. 32, a semi-diplomatic edition of which is published as no. 204 in *ABM*; Ó Ruairc’s epitaph occurs on pp. 104–5 of the manuscript.

⁴⁷ TODD 1867: xiii–xiv; NÍ MHAONAIGH 1992.

in the seventeenth-century Brussels MS 2569–72 which Todd calls B, thereby suggesting that the work itself may have been produced for, or indeed by, his exiled descendants in Bréifne and thus amounts to ‘a saga of Donnchad’.⁴⁸ This interesting hypothesis notwithstanding, it alerts us to a literary legacy of Donnchadh son of Brian Bórainmhe to which our poem clearly belongs.

Editorial Method and Metre

This edition is based on the text of TCD MS 1381 except for the third quatrain, which, as noted already, is extant in BDL only. Capital letters, word division and punctuation are editorial. A macron in the text represents a length-mark which is not visible in the manuscript. The following normalized spellings have been adopted silently in the text: (i) expansion of contractions; (ii) the *us*-compendium is expanded as *-as/-ais* and *7* as *agus* (15b, 36b); (iii) tall *e/é*, or *e/é* when preceding a broad consonant, > *ea*, *éa*, respectively; (iv) *áo(i)/aó(i)* > *ao(i)*, *ía* > *ia*, *úa* > *ua*; (v) unstressed *-io-* > *-ea-* and unstressed *-o(i)-*, *-u(i)-* > *-a(i)-*; (vi) *cc* > *gc* (*gceann* 6c, *gcuan* 9a, *gcéad gcath* 34c) or > *g* (*fāgbhais* 11b, *tug* 17c, 22a, *tig* 26a, *gill* 35a), *sp* > *sb*, *st* > *sd*, *tt* > *dt*; (vii) non-historical *-gh(-)* > *-dh(-)*; (viii) the preposition *aⁿ* (‘in’) > *iⁿ*; (ix) the copula form *as* > *is* (16a).

In the manuscript readings, italics have not been used in the case of the contractions for *ar*, *air*, *cht*, *m*-stroke and *n*-stroke. Italicized *h* and *r* represent points of lenition and superscript vowels (i.e. *r* + vowel), respectively; the *er*-compendium is expanded as italicized *ear*, although it stands for *eir* once in *íarmheirghe* (see 28b in the manuscript readings below), while the *er*-compendium doubled is expanded as italicized *earr*; the *ur*-compendium representing stressed and unstressed *u(i)r* in the text is reproduced with an italicized *r*.

Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain is composed in *ógláchas* of *deibhidhe*. Examples of imperfect end-rhyme are: qq 3cd, 7cd, 14cd, 19cd, 20cd, 21cd, 27cd, 35cd, 36cd, 37cd. There are many instances of irregular syllable-count, and the following manuscript readings have been emended to give the required seven syllables per line: *a timcheall* > *timcheall* (6a); *sa bheith* > *bheith* (6b); conjunction / copula *is* > *'s* (9b, 9d, 13b, 33c, 37c, 38c); *is* > *agus* (10a, 10b, 35c); *annsa* > *is annsa* (10d); *na* > *ina* (11c); *trúagh* > *is trúagh* (21c); *do fhuráil* > *d'fhuráil* (24c); *gacha* > *gach* (27b). Remaining problems and proposed solutions are incorporated into the notes accompanying the edited text.

As mentioned above, the identification of *Cam ó Chluain chlogbhinn Chláir* in the final quatrain seems to suggest a fourteenth-century date of composition, but it should be noted that poems in *ógláchas* hardly feature at all in classical verse at this time.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the final quatrain as it has come down in TCD MS 1381 has no *dúnadh*. In fact, given that the final three quatrains (qq 35–8) are considerably different in tone and

⁴⁸ TODD 1867: xiv–xv; CASEY (forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr Casey for placing a pre-publication copy at my disposal.

⁴⁹ Of the 178 poems dating from the late thirteenth to the late fourteenth century listed in the Bardic Poetry Database on the website of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (bardic.celt.dias.ie/main.html), only six (including our poem) are in *ógláchas*.

content to those preceding them, they may not have belonged to the original composition at all. In this scheme of things, then, it is not unlikely that the *dúnadh* is in q. 32d and that qq 33–4 originally preceded q. 32 but that they may have been transposed during transmission. Accordingly, the compiler referred to in q. 38c and a concomitant fourteenth-century date for his composition must be regarded with suspicion as it would appear that qq 35–8 were more than likely attached subsequently to the original text.

Text

1. Dursan toisg Dhonnchaidh mheic Briain
dā oilithre dā hairdchiaigh,
ionnsa gan a theacht dā thoigh,
acht ciodh maith é dā anmain.
2. Ceirtleath Éireann — mōr an modh —
d’éis Briain do bhí ag Donnchadh,
gur aontaigh sé dul tar muir
ar mhaith dā anmain iodhain.
3. Teagaid fir Éireann uile
go hÁth Cliath fa chúlaibh
d’fhasdadh Donnchaidh — borb a bhreath —
sa léine uasail oilithreach.
4. Tugadar tighearnas dó
fir Éireann uile i n-aonló
’s a ríoghadh i dTeamhraigh Thruim
ōn ló nār mhair Maol Seachlainn.
5. ‘Ōs sibh-se an sluagh is garg gal
aithne dhūinn’ do ráidh Donnchadh,
‘ní thréigfinn an Róimh a-bhos
ar threill dá bhur dtighearnas.’
6. ‘Dul timcheall reilge Peadair,
bheith innte ’na hairdleabaidh:
nī thréigfinn í ceann i gceann
ar shluagh iomthnúthach Éireann.’
7. ‘Maith mo chairde i nÉirinn fhuair
dā mairdís a ndeachaidh uainn:
Brian, Murchadh, Toirdhealbhach teann,
Tadhg baisgheal, Dubhlaing, Domhnall.’
8. ‘Dā mairdís an seisear soin
ní fhūigfinn Éirinn iodhain;
ō nach mair gach saoirfhear seang,
marthain uaim d’aoibhneas Éireann!’
9. ‘Marthain do Chorcaigh na gcuan,
’s do Luimneach bhile bpartruadh!
Marthain do Dhún Inbhir uill,
’s do Dhún Trí Liag ós Lochdhruim!’

10. ‘Dún Crot agus Dún Cláire
agus Dún Eochair Máighe,
gíodh ionmhain iad — mór an modh —
is annsa dún Chinn Choradh.’
11. Imdhighis Donnchadh ’na dhiaidh,
fāgbhais Mumha fa mhóirchiaigh;
ar ndul ina luing tar linn,
léigthear trí gártha i nÉirinn.
12. Guilid mná Baisginn amuigh,
guilid mná síthe Eochaidh,
guilid mnā síth Cearmada cuirr,
is mnā síth Eamhna síothmhoill.
13. Mnā síthe ós Loch Deirgirt deirg
’s mná Caisil gan chlaon cheinneirg,
guilid sin — bágach a ngul —
re mnáibh macacha Mumhan.
14. Trī lá is trī hoidhche gan bhé,
ba ghann beann bhuidhe,
gan sbéis i n-inghin nā mac,
d’éis mheic ríogh Éireann d’imtheacht.
15. Do fhágaibh iath Fāil na bhfleadh,
eidir eas agus inbhear:
téid Donnchadh Cliach is Cláire
go hImpear na hAlmáinne.
16. Is ē fa himpear ann soin
mac ríogh na Sorcha sothaimh:
fear thánaig i nÉirinn uill
re ré Bhriain is Maoil Seachlainn.
17. Tug Donnchadh dána dil
a lámh i láimh an impir;
tug impear na dtrágh dtana
a lámh i láimh Dhonnchadha.
18. Do fhás cogadh san tír thoir
ag Iúdhalaibh fon am-soin
re Críosdaidhibh — fáth gan on —
taom sin fa deas re Donnchadh.

19. Do cuireadh an cath go teann
san ló re fearaibh Èireann:
ar sodhain dar ghiall gach gile
lomnán don ghliadh a ghasraidh.
20. Fiche céad do torchadh leó,
dias fa gach fear — 's ní hainghleó —
do thuit céad is fiche fear
re láimh Dhonnchaidh 'na haonar.
21. Ní théarnó beó 'na mbeathaidh
do shluaghaibh Donnchaidh dheighbhreachaigh,
dhá chéad déag — is truagh an teidhm —
acht sé fir dhéag gan tuitim.
22. Tug bean an impir mās fhíor
grádh mór do mhac an airríogh
— a haonrogha don uile fhear —
is í dá ghuidhe ós íseal.
23. Do dhiúlt Donnchadh na dtreas dte
guidhe do ghabháil uaithe,
gurbh fhearr leis cumann an ríogh
nās a mhilleadh tre mhīghníomh.
24. Ō nār fhaomh sin Donnchadh dil:
gabháil a guidhe ōn inghin,
d'fhuráil ar a teaghlach tréan
marbhadh Donnchaidh 's a dheibhléan.
25. Iodhlacthar san lubhghort lán
Donnchadh 's a bhuidhean macámh,
nár bh fhidir neach thiar nó thoir
créad í uidhe Dhonnchaidh.
26. Tig an t-impear treall dá thigh
d'fhios an laoich ó lios Luimnigh;
ní fhuair a bheó thall nó a-bhos,
acht giodh do iarr dó áras.
27. Trí ráithe gan fhios d'fháil
ar slíoch gach cuain cubharbháin:
do bhí an t-impear tuirseach dhi,
dob fhíorchuimseach an chumhaidh.
28. Oidhche dhó 'na iomdhaidh féin

ag iarmhéirghe gan oilbhéim,
go gcuala san lubhghort ós linn
cantaireacht chluthmhar cheóilbhinn.

29. Aithnis uaigh Dhonnchaidh dhúin Chuirce
uadh ann ar feadh a radhairc;
toimhsis a taobh seada sin,
ionann comhfhad don dias-sin.
30. Admhar dhó-san díol Donnchaidh,
dáibh féin níor ghníomh cabhartha;
fa cruaidh an gníomh 's a ngartha,
truagh a ndíol 's a n-ardmhartra.
31. Loisthear leis an ríoghan ráin
a haois feadhma agus fíorghráidh;
níor thruagh liom deacair a n-uile:
feall ní dheachaidh gan díoghailt.
32. Do-ní mainisdir Mhuire
re hanam gach aonduine;
— i mbrígh ní dheachaidh gan dul —
's a ceathair dhíobh do Dhonnchadh.
33. Éangháire beó 'na dhiaidh sin
ní dearnadh leis an impir,
's ní dhearna creach san tír thoir
an fad do bhí 'na bheathaidh.
34. Ní tugadh re bliadhain bháin
cath i dtír an tSamhdáin,
nach beadh Donnchadh na gcéad gcath
's a shé fíor dhéag 'na dtosach.
35. Trí gill ó Mhurchadh mac Briain
do-uair Donnchadh diaidh i ndiaidh:
geall deilbhe agus geall dreiche,
geall suirghe ó gach saorfhlaithe.
36. Tar éis Domhnaill mheic Éamainn fhéil
agus Bhaisginn Uí Bhaisgín,
tar éis an churaidh go ngile,
rí Ciarraighe Ó Conchubhair.
37. Tar éis catha Cluana Tarbh,
mo ghrádh d'Éirinn is anmhall,

d'éis Briain 's Mhurchaidh go ngile,
Donnchaidh is Taidhg Uí Cheallaigh.

38. Tar ēis theaghlaigh thighe Briain,
ionnsa mo bheith fa mhóirchiaigh;
's mé an Cam ó Chluain chlogbhinn Chláir,
saor mē a Mhichéal ar mhórphláigh!

Translation

1. Alas the journey of Donnchadh son of Brian on his pilgrimage owing to its great sadness, it is sad that he did not return home, though it be good for his soul.
2. An exact half of Ireland — great the honour — Donnchadh had after Brian, so that he agreed to go across the sea for the sake of his pure soul.
3. The men of all Ireland follow him to Dublin to stop Donnchadh — foolish his decision — [to go on] pilgrimage in the noble alb.
4. The men of all Ireland gave him lordship on the same day as his coronation in Tara of Trim from the day Maol Seachlainn ceased to live.
5. ‘As you are the people whose valour is fierce’, said Donnchadh, ‘I know I would not abandon Rome in this world in exchange for a period of supremacy over you.’
6. ‘To wander around Peter’s burial place, to be in it in its chief resting place: I would not abandon it one by one for the very fierce people of Ireland.’
7. ‘My delay in bleak Ireland [would be] good if all who have departed from me lived: Brian, Murchadh, strong Toirdhealbhach, fair-palmed Tadhg, Dubhlaing, Domhnall.’
8. ‘If those six lived I would not leave faithful Ireland; since every graceful nobleman [of these] does not live, hail to the delightfulness of Ireland!’
9. ‘Hail to Cork of the harbours, and to Limerick of mighty-shored trees! Hail to vast Dún Inbhir, and to Dún Trí Liag above Dromore Lough!’
10. ‘Dún Crot and Dún Cláire and Dún Eochair of the Maigne, though they be excellent — great the honour — the fort of Ceann Coradh is more beloved.’
11. Donnchadh departed afterwards, he left behind Munster in a state of great sadness; having entered his ship across the sea, three cries are emitted in Ireland.

12. The women of Baisginn weep abroad, the women of the fairyfort of Eochaidh weep, the women of the fairyfort of eminent Cearmaid weep, and the women of the fairyfort of peaceful Eamhain.
13. Supernatural women above ruddy Lough Derg and the women of Cashel upright [and] redheaded, they weep — resolute their weeping — along with the son-bearing women of Munster.
14. Three days and three nights without a maiden [in sight], a yellow drinking horn was scarce, no concern for a daughter or son, after the son of the king of Ireland has gone.
15. He left Ireland of the feasts, between cascade and rivermouth: Donnchadh of Cliú and Cláire goes to the Emperor of Germany.
16. The affable son of the king of Sorcha was emperor there: a man who came to splendid Ireland before the reign of Brian and Maol Seachlainn.
17. Brave beloved Donnchadh placed his hand in the emperor's hand; the emperor of the shallow shores placed his hand in Donnchadh's hand.
18. A war erupted in the eastern land at that time between Jews and Christians — a reason without fault — that [was] an attack agreeable to Donnchadh.
19. The battle was fought vigorously by day by the men of Ireland: his [Donnchadh's] young warriors full of the combat [and] for that reason every radiant one to his hostage.
20. Two thousand were felled by them, a pair about every man — and it is not an extreme combat — one hundred and twenty men fell at the sole hand of Donnchadh.
21. Of judicious Donnchadh's hosts, twelve hundred did not escape living [and] alive — alas the calamity — except sixteen men without falling.
22. The emperor's wife if it be true fell greatly in love with the son of the high king — her only choice of all men — and she solicited him in secret.
23. Donnchadh of the fierce contentions refused to accept solicitation from her, because he preferred the king's affection rather than to destroy it by an evil deed.
24. As beloved Donnchadh did not consent to that: accepting the maiden's solicitation, [she] demanded the killing of Donnchadh and his pitiful ones of her powerful supporters.
25. Donnchadh and his troop of boys are buried in the abundant herb garden, so that nobody in the west or east knew what Donnchadh's journey entailed.

26. The emperor returned for a time to his house to seek the warrior from the rampart of Limerick; he did not find him alive anywhere, even though he knew it inside out.
27. Nine months without receiving knowledge at [the] edge of every whitefoamed harbour: the grief was overwhelming, [and] the emperor was weary of it.
28. One night in his own chamber at the quiet of dawn, he heard in the herb-garden above a lake recondite melodious chanting.
29. He recognized the grave of Donnchadh of Corc's fortress as far as he could see from him there; he measured its graceful side, the distance for those two [sides] was identical.
30. Donnchadh's treatment is revealed to him, for them [the queen and her followers] it was not a helpful deed; the deed was harsh [as were] their cries, lamentable their fate and their great martyrdom.
31. The glorious queen is burned by him [the emperor] [along with] her attendants and true confidants; I did not pity the affliction of their misfortune: treachery did not go without punishment.
32. He founded a monastery [dedicated to] Mary for the soul of every one — it was beneficial — and four of them for Donnchadh.
33. Not a single smile after that was given by the emperor, and he did not plunder in the eastern land while he was alive.
34. No battle was waged for this year in the land of the Sultan, that Donnchadh of the hundred battles and his sixteen men would not be in the vanguard.
35. Donnchadh received three honours one after another from Murchadh son of Brian: an honour of stature and an honour of countenance, [and] an honour of allegiance from every noble prince.
36. After [the death of] Domhnall son of generous Éamann and Baisgeann of Uí Bhaiginn, after [the death of] the radiant hero, Ó Conchubhair king of Ciarraighe.
37. After the battle of Clontarf, my love for Ireland is very guarded, after [the death of] Brian and radiant Murchadh, [and] Donnchadh and Tadhg Ó Ceallaigh.
38. After [the death of] the army of the house of Brian, my being in a state of great sadness [is] difficult; I am Cam from Cluain of the sweet bell of Clare, free me o Michael from great torment!

Manuscript Readings

1a Dursan dhonnchaidh mhic bríain (TCD) Dursin tosg (BDL) **1b** oilitre háirdchiadh (TCD) gow ardzle (BDL) **1c** gan tíacht (TCD) insi gon a heatht da heith (BDL) **1d** cidh (TCD) ath gar vach la ni na dew (BDL)
2a Cert [*tall e*] leith Eirionn (TCD) Fflayss Eyrin mor in moyve (BDL) **2b** bríain Murchadh (TCD) dess Vrane di ve ag Dun (BDL) **2c** gur sé tair (TCD) gyr smonten toyth er mvr (BDL) **2d** air anmhuin íodhain (TCD) er wach rani aymynn (BDL)
3a Teggy^t fir Eyrin vl **3b** gow hAc Claa fa chooli **3c** dasda Dunca borb a vra **3d** si leine ossil ollerytht [*quatrain in BDL only*]
4a Tugadar tigearnas (TCD) Tergidd' teorssny^t doo (BDL) **4b** Eirionn (TCD) ar anvin ne hymmirzoo (BDL) **4c** sa riogh^{dha} (TCD) si reich er Tawry^t rome (BDL) **4d** one lai na^t mor Meilsachl (BDL)
5a Osibhsi (TCD) Ma sussi in slove is garg gall (BDL) **5b** rádh donnchadh (TCD) di bannit dove er dim [*remainder illegible*] (BDL) **5c** marg roo reyy^t royve (BDL) **5d** air thrill da bhur ttighearnas (TCD) roozlas er teine di abyrt [*remainder illegible*] (BDL)
6a a ttimcheall peadair (TCD) Tymchil rolgy^t feddyr (BDL) **6b** sa bheith nt hárdleabaidh (TCD) da beine inta mir zleyid (BDL) **6c** noch cha treykfin ken ni keyni (BDL) **6d** iomnuthach Eirionn (TCD) er sloyn nyn mody^t ne (BDL)
7a cháirde **7b** andeachaidh **7c** brían Murchadh Torrdealbach teann **7d** basgheal dumhluin domhnall (TCD)
Di rae Dunchi is darve linn mally^t ea seil Veils [*text breaks off*] (BDL)
8a seisear sin **8b** Éirinn íodhain **8c** nach gach sáorfhear **8d** Eirionn
9b is do phartrúaidh **9c** martain **9d** is do os loch druim
10a is **10b** is eochaidh **10c** gidh ionmain **10d** annsa
11a donnchadh **11b** mudhma mhór chíadh **11c** na **11d** léig^{thear} trí gárrtha aneirinn
12b síth **12c** cearmada curr **12d** sithmoill
13a síth deirgthirt **13b** is mna gan chend **13d** magacha
14a gan bee [*second letter tall e*] **14b** bo ghan benn [*tall e*] **14c** gan **14d** mhic righ eireann
15a ffhleadh **15b** eadar inbhear **15c** donnchadh as **15d** himpear
16a himpear sin **16b** rí sóthaimh **16c** fear a ttanaic neirinn **16d** bríain
17a donnchadh dána **17c** impear ttra ttána **17d** dhonnchaidh
18a thsoir **18b** iudhlaibh fonamsin **18c** críosa^daidhibh gan **18d** donnchadh
19a cuireadh .K. **19b** sa fearuibh **19c** shodain dar ngiall gacha ngile **19d** lom lán [*latter words cancelled*] aghaisridh
20a Fithche céad **20b** gach fear sní hanghleó **20c** cead is fiche fear **20d** dhonnchaidh
21a Ni téno [*tall e*] mbeataidh **21b** shluághuibh donnchaidh dheighbhreachaigh **21c** dha céad dhéag trúagh an teidhim **21d** sé dhéug tuitim
22a bean impir fíor **22b** mac an airdrigh **22c** haén rógha fhear **22d** dá
23a donnchadh **23b** a guidhe ghabail **23c** gur ffhearr ls cumann righ **23d** milleadh tre
24a fháom donnchadh **24b** gabail guidhe **24c** do fthuráil air teghlach [*tall e*] tren **24d** donnchaidh sa

25a sa lúbghort **25b** donnchadh sa bhuidhean **25c** nar bhfidir *thsíar no thsoir* **25d** cread dhonnchaidh
26a timpear treall *da thoigh* **26b** dfios luime **26c** ffhuair *no* **26d** gidh
27a gan .ll. **27b** air *gacha cúain cubharbháin* **27c** timpear *tuirseach*
28a Oídhche *iomdha* **28b** íarmheirghe gan **28c** sa lúbghort **28d** chlúthmar
29a Aithníos dhonnchaidh dhún chúirt **29b** feadh **29c** toimhsios *a tháobh seda* [tall e] sín **29d** ionann an [*latter word cancelled*]
30a Adamhar donnchaidh **30b** dáibh pféin **30c** crúaidh an gníomhsa sa ngártha **30d** trúagh sa nárdmhartra
31a Loisgtear Is ríogan **31b** fédhmgha [tall e] as fíorghráidh **31c** thruagh a nuilc **31d** dheachaidh
32a mainistir mhuire **32b** gach aon nduine **32c** ambrigh dheachaidh gan **32d** sa chethar [tall e] dhonnchadh
33a Én ghaire **33b** dhearnadh Isan impir **33c** is ni dhearna creach thsoir **33d** bhethaidh [tall e]
34a tugadh **34b** K **34c** mbeadh donnchadh **34d** sa fhir [*latter word cancelled*] shé fir dhéag ttosach
35a A ttri ccioll o Murchadh mac bríain **35b** do fuair donnchadh **35c** is dreiche **35d** geall gach
36a domhnaill mheic **36b** bhaisgin **36c** churaidh **36d** ciathraighe conchubhair
37a Ka **37b** ghrádh déirinn **37c** bríain is Mhurchaidh **37d** donnchaidh táidhg uí cheallaigh
38a theghlaigh [tall e] bríain **38b** bheith mhór chiadh **38c** is me **38d** amhícháel air mhórphláigh

Notes

1ab *Dursan ... dā hairdchiaigh*: Given that the variant *gow ardzle* (BDL) suggests a form of a placename, an alternative interpretation might be ‘from lofty Cliú’, i.e. emending to *d’airdChliaigh*; cf. *ABM* 706, note 1b to poem 203. The atmosphere of ‘great sadness’ (*ardcheó*) is supported further down, however, in q. 11b (*mórcheó*). The 3rd sg. fem. possessive in *dā* I take to refer to *oilithre*.

1c *gan a theacht*: This emendation follows the reading *gon a heatht* (BDL); the variant reading *gan tiacht* in the TCD manuscript leaves the line a syllable short. For the expression *téit* (or other verbs of motion) *iⁿ / do ailithre*, see *DIL* A 125.29–36.

1d *ciodh maith é*: The pronoun seems to refer to the fact ‘that he did not return home’ in 1c rather than to *toisg* or *oilithre*, both of which are feminine.

2a *Ceirtleath Éireann*: ‘an exact half of Ireland’; an alternative translation might be ‘a rightful half of Ireland’. According to BDL, it was *Fflayss Eyrin* or ‘the sovereignty of Ireland’ which passed on to Donnchadh, which accords with the loyalty shown to him by the men of Ireland at his coronation in Tara (q 4) as well as his reign without opposition *ó gach saorfhlath*, ‘from every noble prince’ (q. 35d).

2b *d’éis*: Emending to *tar éis* would give the required seven syllables in the line.

Donnchadh: Following the reading *Dun* (BDL), referring to Donnchadh makes better sense here rather than to *Murchadh* in the text of the TCD manuscript.

3b *go hÁth Cliath fa chúlaibh*: This line is a syllable short.

3c *a bhreath*: The reading *a vra* (BDL) might also be understood as *an bhreath*, the article being pronounced as *a*’ before the lenited *b* here; cf. WATSON 1937: xxv, note 8.

3d *léine uasail*: A tentative rendering of the reading *leine ossil* (BDL) which leaves the line hypermetrical.

4 This quatrain seems inconsistent with the general idea of qq 2cd, 3 and 5–8, all of which deal with Donnchadh’s decision to go on pilgrimage and attempts by the people of Ireland to prevent him from journeying abroad. It may be that the quatrain as transmitted in the TCD manuscript suggests that Donnchadh was offered the high kingship to keep him in Ireland and that it lay vacant since the death of Maol Seachlainn (q. 4d); see also notes 4ab and 7ab below.

4ab *Tugadar tighearnas dó ... i n-aonló*: The variant reading of BDL might be rendered *Tairgidh tighearnas dó / ar anmhain ní hiomarghó*, ‘They offered him lordship in exchange for staying — it is no lie’, which seems to be less at odds with the general thrust of the narrative in qq 2cd, 3 and 5–8. Accordingly, *Tugadar* in the text of the TCD manuscript might be taken as a modal preterite, i.e. ‘they would have given’.

5a *Ós sibh-se*: ‘As you are’; the more forceful *más sibh-se* is rendered in the text of BDL.

6c *ceann i gceann*: ‘one by one’; cf. *DIL* C 125.55–6: ‘point by point’.

7ab The manuscript reading of BDL might be restored as follows: *De ré Dhonnchaidh is dearbh linn / maille i saoghal Mhaoil S[eachlainn]*, ‘Of Donnchadh’s reign we are certain as well as in Maol Seachlainn’s lifetime’, after which the text breaks off. Clearly, this couplet belongs to a quatrain which has not been transmitted in the text of the TCD manuscript, and once again the high kingship of Ireland seems to be associated here with Donnchadh.

7cd *Brian, ... Toirdhealbhach teann, ... Domhnall*: The heroes of Dál gCais who fell in the battle of Clontarf, namely Brian Bórainmhe, his sons Murchadh and Tadhg, and his grandson Toirdhealbhach; Dubhlaing Ó hArtagáin travelled from the Otherworld to assist Murchadh son of Brian on the battlefield and was also killed in the fray; cf. *Ní ÚRDAIL* 2011: 10, 11, 48, 49, 52, 108–9, 112–23. Domhnall probably refers to another of Brian Bórainmhe’s sons whose death at his home is recorded in *AI* s.a. 1011.4.

For imperfect rhymes of the type *teann* : *Domhnall* here, as well as *mac* : *d’imtheacht* (14cd) and *fear* : *haonar* (20cd), see CARNEY 1964: xxxii.

8d *marthain uaim ... d’aoibhneas*: The expression *marthain (ó) do* ‘hail, long life (from) to’ here and in the following quatrain is common in salutations. Other examples from bardic poetry are: *marthain do dhún Eamhna uann*, ‘hail to the Castle of Eamhain’ (*AiD* 24.25d); *marthain uaim don fhuirinnse*, ‘all hail to that stock!’ (*AiD* 41.23d); *marthain duid a Í Dhomhnoill!* ‘Hail to you, O’Donnell!’ (BREATNACH 1973: 47, q. 64d); *marthain d’Eoin do b’ionganta* ‘Hail to Eoin most wonderful!’ (MACKENNA 1931: 50 q. 35d); further examples are given in *DIL* M 66.4–9.

9cd *Dún Inbhir ... Dún Trí Liag ... ós Lochdhruim*: While there is a Dún Inbhir at Arklow, Co. Wicklow (HOGAN 1910 s.n.), it is more likely, in the context of this section of our poem, to refer to a placename in Munster. This seems to be supported by a poem beginning *Beir eolas dúinn, a Dhomhnaill*, ‘Bring information to us, o Domhnall’ (73 qq), in which Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh addresses Domhnall Óg Mac Cárthaigh (ob. 1391), Earl of Clancare, as ‘a Dhomhnaill Dúin Innbhir’ (*DiD* 74.47a), although its exact whereabouts remains unidentified (*DiD* 631 s.n.). Dún Trí Liag is in the barony of Cois Sléibhe (Coshlea), Co. Limerick, while Dromore Lough is in the barony of Inchiquin, Co. Clare.

10ab *Dún Crot ... Dún Cláire ... Dún Eochair Máighe*: Crota, i.e. Crota Cliach (Cliú) or the Galtee Mountains, Co. Tipperary, and Cláire in East Limerick (see note 15c below). The manuscript reading *Eochaidh* (with a suspension-stroke) is probably a garbled rendering of *Eochair*, i.e. *Dún Eochair Máighe* or Bruree, Co. Limerick; see HOGAN 1910 s.n.; cf. Ó TUATHAIL 1943: 115; MCGRATH 1953: 93.

11b *Mumha*: Nominative for accusative *Mumhain* which is accompanied by a prepositional phrase (MCKENNA 1941: 61 (ii) (a)). A similar instance is nom. *creach* for acc. *creich* in 33c; cf. also note 17b below.

12c *guilid mnā síth Cearmada cuirr*: This line is hypermetrical. Emending to gen. *Cearmaid cuirr* or, following 12d, emending to *is mná síth Cearmada cuirr*, would yield the required seven syllables. The former emendation seems preferable, however, as it provides a second instance of *breacadh* in the quatrain. The following examples of gen. *Cearmaid* are fixed by rhyme: *dhuid* : *Cearmuid* (*AiD* 46.6cd); *Cearmaid* : *imealbhuig* (*ABM* 174.2ab); *bhuig* : *Cearmuid* and *broid* : *Cearmoid* (O'DONOVAN 1849: 362, q 29ab, 364, q. 32ab). Note non-rhyming nom. *Cearmaid*, (*DiD* 65.28bc, 65.31a, 65.34b; *Magauran* 26.23b), but also non-rhyming nom. *-mad* in *Cermad Milbél fa marbh dhe / arm rinnéir mar an rinnéir* (*IGT* II 30); voc. *A Cearmaid* (*IBP* 24.14a); gen. *bás Cearmada* (*DiD* 65.27b), *Clann / do chloinn Cearmada* (*Iomarbhágh* 4.10a, *O'Hara* 12.15b, *TD* 28.14a), *clann Cearmada* (*Iomarbhágh* 6.62c), *clann / do chloinn Cearmada* (*TD* 28.15b, *TD* 28.16d), *ag cloinn Cearmada* (*AiD* 16.49d), *le cloinn Cearmada* (*AiD* 30.28d), *ó scoil Chláir Cearmada* (*Lbran* 23.36b), *trí meic cródha Cearmada* (*TD* 4.13b). For Cearma(i)d son of an Daghdha Mór *alias* Cearma(i)d Milbheoil, or 'Honeymouth', of the Tuatha Dé Danann, see O'CURRY 1873: 43 and *FFÉ* I, 108, 222.

13b *cheinneirg*: The reading of the manuscript seems to be *chend* with a hair-stroke rather than a length mark over the vowel. While a rhyme *deirg* : *cheinneirg* would not be permissible in strict *dán díreach*, our poem is composed in *ógláchas* of *deibhidhe* whence this emendation.

13d *macacha*: 'son-bearing', an emendation of the manuscript reading *magacha*, which makes good sense here.

14a *gan bhé*: Emending the reading of the manuscript *gan* (*g* + *n*-stroke) *bee* whereby the scribe has written a second *e* following a tall *e*; I am grateful to Caoimhín Breatnach for his considered opinion on this reading.

14b *ba ghann beann bhuidhe*: This includes an emendation of the manuscript reading *bo ghan*. The line remains two syllables short, of course, and a further possible emendation might be to insert the conjunction *agus* at the beginning of the line. Taken together with q. 14a, then, Ireland's beautiful maidens have withdrawn in mourning at Donnchadh's departure, resulting in drinking horns not being distributed by them in banquet halls. Taking *gann* in the moral sense, the generosity obtaining in the banquet halls of Ireland during Donnchadh's reign is now bestowed grudgingly, if at all. An alternative, albeit more drastic, emendation of *bo ghan* in the manuscript might be *bō gan*, thus *bō gan bheann bhuidhe*, 'a cow without a yellow horn', the implication being that just as a hornless cow is less well equipped to defend itself, especially against predators (KELLY 1997: 35), so too the people of Ireland now that Donnchadh has gone; *beann* might also be interpreted in the sense 'heed, attention, regard' and would be synonymous with *sbéis* in line *c*.

14c *gan sbéis i n-inghin nā mac*: Lit. ‘no interest in a daughter or son’, i.e. children are being neglected. Alternatively, the loss of Donnchadh has left Ireland’s youth bereft of any sense of respect or (social) concern.

14cd *mac ... d'imtheacht*: See note 7cd above.

15b *eidir eas agus inbhear*: ‘between cascade and rivermouth’, but also ‘both cascade and rivermouth’; see the discussion preceding the edited text at note 27 above.

15c *Donnchadh Cliach is Cláire*: Cliú is typically associated with Uí Bhriain and incorporates the eastern part of Co. Limerick, and the barony of Uaithne (Owney) and Ara (Arra), Co Tipperary; cf. *TD* II, 342 and Ní ÚRDAIL 2003: 46. Cláire refers to a mountain in the barony of Cois Sléibhe (Coshlea) in the Uí Bhriain territory of East Limerick (*HDGP* s.n. *Cláire*).

16c *thánaig*: An emendation of *a ttanaic* in the manuscript, i.e. *tt* + suspension-stroke with a *c* written above the suspension-stroke, which leads to an octosyllabic line.

17a *Tug*: Emending to *do-ug* would restore the required seven syllables to the line.

17b *a lámh*: Note nominative for accusative *lámh* here and in 17d, both of which are preceded by a possessive pronoun (MCKENNA 1941: 62 (v); cf. Ó MACHÁIN 1986: 61 note 3a); see also note 11b above.

17d *Dhonnchadha*: This emended variant genitive form of *Dhonnchaidh* in the manuscript ensures both final rhyme with 17c (: *dtana*) and seven syllables in the line.

18ab *Do fhás ... ag Iúdhalaibh fon am-soin*: *DIL* A 422.68–9 cites two examples of *ásaid* with the preposition *ag*, ‘arises, develops between’, especially of dissension, war etc. The manuscript reading *ag iudhlaibh fonamsin* leaves 18b a syllable short.

19c *ar sodhain dar ghiall gach gile*: This proposed emendation still leaves a hypermetrical line. It is difficult to make sense of the curious manuscript reading *ar shodain dar ngiall gacha ngile*. It may be that it reflects a mistranscription of a run-over, i.e. that part of the line was originally carried to a blank space at the end of the preceding line. However, restoring to *dar ghiall gach gile ar sodhain* and emending the latter to *sadhain* for the purpose of end-rhyme with 19d (: *ghasraidh*) seems a drastic editorial intrusion. Indeed, end-rhymes comparable to *gile* : *ghasraidh* occur in qq 30ab, 35cd, 36cd, 37cd.

20a *do torchadh*: Examples of impersonal forms of *do-tuit* registered in *DIL* (Degra-dúis 387.7–16) include passive *torcrad[h]* as well as independent *do cearadh* in a poem beginning *A shaoi re gliogar gibé thusa*, composed by Dáibhidh Ó Bruadair in the second half of the seventeenth century; for the lenited *c*, compare the Middle Irish active past

indicative 3sg. *torchair* which, along with *docher*, continues in use into the Modern Irish period in the sense ‘was killed’ (*DIL* Degra-dúus 385.17–18).

20b *fa gach fear*: Note accusative following this preposition, i.e. ‘about every man’, rather than dative in *fa gach fíor*, ‘under every man’; cf. MCMANUS 1994: 433.

20cd *fear ... haonar*: See note 7cd above.

21ac *Ní théarnó ... do shluaghaibh ... dhá chéad déag*: An alternative translation might be ‘Twelve hundred did not escape from judicious Donnchadh’s hosts living [and] alive’, i.e. interpreting *téarnaidh do* as ‘escapes from’; cf. *ní therna don tromdígail* in *Saltair na Rann* 5070 (*DIL* D Degra-dúus 256.81), which GREENE (1981) translates as ‘survived from the heavy vengeance’. Further, emending to sg. *shluagh* in 21b would restore the required seven syllables.

22a *mās fhíor*: The lenition following *mās* is inserted editorially, thereby restoring alliteration in the line.

22c *a haonrogha*: Emending to *rogha* would result in the required heptasyllabic line.

23b *guidhe*: The manuscript reading *a guidhe* leaves the line hypermetrical; see note 24b.

23d *a mhilleadh*: Lit. ‘its destruction’, i.e. referring to *cumann* in 23c.

24b *a guidhe*: This emendation of *guidhe* in the manuscript ensures seven syllables in the line. The reading itself and that in 23b referred to above seem to indicate confusion through *homoioleuton*.

25d *créad í uidhe Dhonnchaidh*: This line is hexasyllabic whereas pl. *créad iad uidheadha* would provide the required seven syllables.

26d *acht gíodh do iarr dó áras*: Lit. ‘even though it be a dwelling of his he searched’, which I take tentatively to mean even though he knew it inside out.

27a *d’fháil*: An expansion of the manuscript abbreviation *.ll.*; emending to *d’fhagháil* would restore the required seven syllables.

28a *Oidhche*: Note accusative for nominative *adhaigh*.

28c *go gcuala*: Emending to *chuala* would ensure a heptasyllabic line but this form is non-classical.

28d *cantaireacht chluthmhar*: Examples of *clithar* / *cluthmhar*, ‘sheltering, protective’ / ‘sheltered, comfortable’, associated with sound are not registered in *DIL* C 243.78–244.4, 263.30–6. As well as meaning ‘sheltered, warm / comfortable’ in contemporary usage, *cluthar* has also come to mean ‘secretive’ (*FGB* s.v.). Translating as ‘recondite chanting’

captures the nuances ‘unusual, secretive, mysterious’, although a possible alternative might be ‘comforting / warm chanting’.

29a Corc: The name features commonly in pre-Norman Dál gCais genealogies, as borne out by the following: Corc son of Ábhartach (CGH 245); Corc son of Anluan (CGH 237, 250); Corc son of Cú Báighe (CGH 236); Corc son of Feidhleacair (CGH 245); Corc Mend (CGH 242).

29cd toimhsis a taobh ... ionann comhfhad don dias-sin: On the use of *dias* for objects, see DIL Degra-dúus 66.13–15. Retaining the manuscript reading *a tháobh*, an alternative translation might be ‘he measured his [Donnchadh’s] graceful side, the distance for those two [sides] was identical’, meaning that Donnchadh’s body was intact. Emending to *a taobh* to mean the grave mentioned in 29a seems preferable in the context, i.e. the size of the grave was equal to that of Donnchadh as remembered by the emperor.

30a Admhar: Emending *adamhar* in the manuscript to this variant form gives the required number of seven syllables; *ad(a)mhaidh*, *adaimhidh*, *admhaighidh* < O.Ir. *ad-daim*, ‘avows, reveals, makes known; declares’.

30c an gníomh ’s a ngartha: The manuscript reading *an gníomhsa sa* leaves the line hypermetrical and seems to be an example of dittography. I take the 3rd pl. possessive pronoun to refer to the queen, her attendants and confidants mentioned in q. 31ab.

30d a ndíol ’s a n-ardmhartra: The 3rd plural possessives here I take to refer to Donnchadh and his troop.

31b aois feadhma agus fíorghráidh: ‘attendants and true confidants’; cf. DIL A 81.22–3, F 64.32–4, G 143.12–20. Emending the manuscript reading *as* > *agus* restores the required seven syllables.

32c i mbrígh ní dheachaidh gan dul: Taking the manuscript reading *ambrigh* to contain the preposition *iⁿ* (‘in’) > *aⁿ*, rather than the 3rd pl. possessive pronoun, seems preferable; the translation proposed is ‘it (the act of founding) did not not have an effect’, i.e. it was beneficial.

32d ’s a ceathair dhíobh: The reading of the manuscript is *sa chethar* (with tall *e*); I tentatively take this to mean ‘and four of them’.

33a Éangháire: For variants of this prefix, see *AiD* II, 267 s.v. *aon-*.

33c creach: See note 11b above.

34b cath: A possible emendation might be *aonchath* thereby ensuring a heptasyllabic line.

35a *Trí gill*: The manuscript reading *A ttri ccioll* results in an octosyllabic line; I also emend to pl. *gill* here.

35d *geall*: Emending to *is geall* would give the required seven syllables.

36a *Tar ēis*: Again, emending to the variant form *d'éis* would give the required seven syllables here and in 36c.

Domhnall mac Éamainn: I am unable to identify who is intended here.

36b *Baisgeann Uí Bhaigéin*: Baisgeann, the ancestor of Corca Baisginn, the inhabitants and territory in the baronies of Cluain idir Dhá Lá (Cloonderlaw), Maigh Fhearta (Moyarta) and Uí Bhreacáin (Ibrickan), Co. Clare; see *CGH* 428 and *HDGP* s.n. *Baiscinn*.

36d *rí Ciarraighe Ó Conchubhair*: Ciarraighe, i.e. Ciarraighe Luachra, the inhabitants and territory in the baronies of Triúcha an Aicme (Trughanacmy), Clann Mhuiris (Clanmaurice) and Oireacht Uí Chonchubhair (Iraghticonnor), Co. Kerry; see *HDGP* s.n. Members of Uí Chonchubhair, kings of Ciarraighe Luachra, appear in the annals and in ‘Mac Carthaigh’s Book’ as supporters of Uí Bhriain expansionist campaigns in Munster and beyond (*AU* s.a. 1067, 1103; *AI* 1067.2, 1103.3, 1115.8; *Misc. Ir. Ann.* s.a. 1151.1) or as political opponents of Clann Charthaigh, arch rivals of Uí Bhriain in Munster (*AI* s.a. 1124.4; *Misc. Ir. Ann.* s.a. 1128.2, 1138, 1151.3, 1152.1).

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