

BLATHMAC'S STANZAS 260–303 ON JUDGEMENT DAY¹

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Blathmac's Poems are two long religious poems, addressed to the Virgin Mary, that were only discovered as late as the 1950s by Nessa Ní Shéaghda and first published by James Carney 1964, stanzas 1–149 as Poem 1 (*Tair cucum, a Maire boid*), stanzas 150–259 as Poem 2 (*A Maire, a grian ar clainde*).² However, this edition is not complete. Stanzas 260–303, which constitute the final part of the second poem and which are contained on the last two folios of the seventeenth-century manuscript NLI MS G50,³ were not included in Carney's edition of Blathmac's Poems. Carney gives no explanation for his unusual decision not to include these stanzas with the rest of the text. It can only be surmised that he found the state of preservation of this part too challenging and solving all the problems associated with them would have unduly delayed the publication of his book. They were only published posthumously, posthumously both to the honorand and to the author, by Nessa Ní Shéaghda in a memorial volume to James Carney in 1999. Ní Shéaghda's diplomatic edition of what she called 'The Fragmentary Quatrains' (although only some of them are fragmentary) is accompanied neither by comments nor by a translation. The present edition seeks to address these shortcomings by providing a diplomatic and a normalised text and a translation of these quatrains, together with a commentary on their language and contents. The text follows the new, provisional edition in Barrett 2017b (with occasional improvements). After weighing the pros and cons it was decided to use this new edition also as the basis for all other quotations from Blathmac's Poems, not Carney's 1964 edition. Barrett's 2017b text, which is openly accessible at a stable institutional repository, differs substantially from Carney's in wording and in spelling practice. It would have burdened this article unduly if every divergent editorial decision on stanzas 1–259, which are not the topic of this article, had to be discussed in commentary or additional footnotes.

Apparently working only with her bare eyes, honed by her experience with manuscripts and perhaps guided by her professional instinct, it must be regarded a tremendous achievement that Nessa Ní Shéaghda was able to read so much of the text for her 1999 article. However, with the availability of high-resolution images via ISOS, which can be subjected to manipulations of contrast and colour, it is now possible to improve on many doubtful readings in Ní Shéaghda's edition. Ní Shéaghda was not consistent in how she indicated scribal notes and abbreviations, such as dots over letters and *n*-strokes. This edition aims at full clarity and consistency in rendering scribal abbreviations through diacritics.

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² A provisional new edition and translation of the poems was published in daily instalments in September and October 2017 at <https://twitter.com/ChronHib>.

³ For more about the manuscript, the sole witness to the text, and its history see Carney (1964: ix–xiii) and Barrett (2017b: 20–5). The MS is fully digitised at <https://www.isos.dias.ie/>.

Another invaluable aid for the work on this edition was eDIL through whose various search functions the identification of uncertain readings and the completion of fragmentary words was made appreciably easier. Contrary to our initial hopes, an attempt on 19 August 2018 at studying the MS in Maynooth University's hyperspectral scanner (Forensic XP-4010) led to no usable results.

Traces of 39 stanzas (260–88, 291, 295–303), ranging from some which are fully preserved to some in which only isolated letters can be read, are preserved and five more stanzas (289–90, 292–4) can be reasonably estimated to have been there originally, but lost through physical damage to the paper. In total, the poems must have initially consisted of at least 303 stanzas, but due to the bad state of the penultimate and the fragmentary state of the last folio, only more or less tiny fragments survive from around stanza 269 onwards. Beside the first poem's 149 stanzas, the second poem *Maire, a grían ar clainde*, must accordingly have contained at least 154 stanzas. If the verses continued on to the very bottom – now lost – of the last page, another four lines, i.e. two stanzas, can be added to this calculation. To judge from the thematic progression of Blathmac's second poem from the Annunciation over events in Christ's life that are central for salvation history, to the Day of Judgement, it is probable that the fragmentary last folio marked in fact the end of the poem.

While up to stanza 270 it is almost always possible to reconstruct all the words, from stanza 271 onwards the legibility of the manuscript deteriorates to such a degree that usually only isolated phrases can be read and understood. From these, as if from stepping stones over a river, one has to carefully find one's way ahead through the fog, by making inferences about how to fill the gaps in the contents and the message of the stanzas. These inferences can be informed by what is legible around the gaps – often the context narrows down the reasonable possibilities to just a few. Another help is to follow the guidance of Scripture. After all, Blathmac himself is following rather closely a securely identifiable passage from the Gospel of Matthew (25:31–46). When one knows which words one has to look out for, it is in turn possible to make inferences about the contents of Blathmac's Poems, and occasionally one recognises the trace of an expected letter in the correct place.

The edited text will form the basis for the commentary, but comments will of course be made on manuscript readings whenever that is necessary.

METHOD OF EDITION

An attempt has been made in the diplomatic edition to follow the manuscript readings as closely as possible. For this purpose, extensive use has been made of the possibilities that Unicode affords for representing characters on screen and in print in such a way that they resemble more or less closely how they are written in the manuscript. We regard this as progress over the traditional practice of expanding abbreviations in italics. While in the majority of cases expansions are uncontroversial, occasionally they can be ambiguous. The method chosen here maintains a non-biased approach on the level of the diplomatic edition. At the same time it signals to the reader what character or symbol the editors believe to have seen in the manuscript.

In particular, the following conventions have been adopted. The occurrence or non-occurrence of spaces is closely followed. Lenition is consistently marked by *puncta delentia*, not by *spiritus*, in the manuscript. Accordingly, the *puncta* are represented by suprascript dots, e.g. *ḃ*, *ċ* in this edition. For abbreviation strokes and *n*-strokes combining overlines (U+0305) will be used, and for the *m*-swiggle use will be made of the combining tilde (U+0303), imitating the position those diacritics take over the letters in the manuscript, e.g. *scarḟ* for *scarfaid*, *ceñ* for *cenn*, or *dochũ* for *dochum*. Like in the manuscript, overlines are ambiguous as to whether they stand for *n* or for abbreviation. Subscript and suprascript letters are subscript or suprascript after the letter with which they are associated, even if they are placed directly above or below their associated letter in the manuscript, e.g. *m^{oi}tred* for *móirthrét*, or *s_i* for *sin*. It is occasionally hard to decide if an *i* is subscript or just has a long descender. Ligatures are only specifically noted for *æ* (U+00E6) and *æ* (U+A735), all other ligatures, e.g. tall *e*, or the swan-neck-shaped *r* that can be attached to *o* or *b*, are rendered as normal letters since they still occupy the space of a full letter in the line. The *ocus*-note is represented by *γ* (U+204A), *con* by *ϙ* (U+0254). The character *q* (Latin small *q* with a stroke through, U+A757) stands for the note *ar*. The

letter *u* is represented by *u* or *v*, depending on how it appears in the manuscript (*v* is actually by far the commoner grapheme). // stands for *ceann faoi eitte*, i.e. the continuation of a line in the line below.

Subscript dots indicate uncertain readings, e.g. *ṁire*. Given the state of the manuscript, there are many shades of uncertainty, increasing gradually as the poem progresses, which make it infeasible to apply the same strict criteria consistently throughout the whole text edited here. Readers may find that letters in the latter parts of the poem have not received subscript dots, even though their reading would have been marked as doubtful if they had appeared in the early passages, which for the most part are still clearly legible. Holes in the paper or severe dark stains that obscure letters are indicated by (.), the dots between the brackets representing the estimated number of missing letters, while passages that are just illegible on the paper are indicated by square brackets [...]. In the normalised edition, text between square brackets indicates emended words which, although lost, can be restored with great confidence. Words of this type are also in brackets in the translation.

In the hand of the scribe of MS G50, *is* and *ir* are in most instances indistinguishable from *ss* and *rr*. In many cases, the precise reading has no consequence for the understanding of the text. Aside from those contexts where the sense dictates the choice of one over the other, the two spellings are equivalent in most cases. Accordingly, ambiguous readings of this sort will not normally be discussed in depth.

In many cases, we are aware that our proposed readings are not the final word and alternative readings are possible. Alternatives that we have considered ourselves, but that we consider less likely than the adopted reading, are given to the right of each line in the diplomatic edition.

After the diplomatic edition, variant readings from Ní Shéaghda's text are provided for comparison. Only where Ní Shéaghda's reading deviates substantially from ours will her text be cited. Trivial differences such as Ní Shéaghda's *doibh* for *doib*, or presence or absence of space, unless crucial for the interpretation of the text, will not be indicated. Often, Ní Shéaghda's method of editing indicates much wider gaps between legible portions than is actually the case. Again, this will not normally be noted since with the availability of the ISOS images the actual state of affairs can easily be ascertained by anybody interested.

The normalised edition of the poem presents the text in the orthographic shape of idealised classical Old Irish, taking manuscript spellings into account where several options exist in the normalised practice. All endings are restored to their expected eighth-century values. In this section, lenited *s* and *f* are represented with suprascript dots as *ṣ* and *ḟ*, although we are aware that this practice is anachronistic for the assumed period of Blathmac. Chevilles are enclosed between two dashes, i.e. – *cheville* –.

The translation is an English rendition of the normalised Old Irish text. Where the preserved text is fragmentary, the translation is fragmentary also, but it tries to echo the original as closely as possible. Scriptural quotations are from the Vulgate (after Weber 1969), and their English translation are taken from the Douay-Rheims translation.

METRICS

The Poems of Blathmac are written in *deibide* metre, the rhyme is of the *rinn-ardrim* type, and alliteration is frequent but not consistently found in every line, or in every stanza, for that matter. The arrangement of the lines in quatrains finds formal expression in the manuscript, in that the first letter of each stanza is written larger than the rest, and each line in the manuscript corresponds to one couplet of a stanza. Blathmac's metrical rules appear to be rather loose compared with the later strict system of *dán díreach*. In addition, the poet applies metrical rules which are absent from later poetry (more about this below). The combination of these factors is one of the indications of an early date for the Poems of Blathmac.

In as much as the fragmentary state of the manuscript permits one to observe, the final stanzas do not diverge metrically in any appreciable way from the bulk of Blathmac's two poems (see Carney 1965: xxx–xxxiv; Stifter 2015: 65–70). The following overview of the metrics encompasses by necessity only those stanzas which have been preserved intact, or where at least enough is surviving to

allow meaningful metrical statements about them. These are stanzas 260–72, and with reservations, stanzas 273 and 276, as well as the odd-numbered lines of stanzas 281–5.

As they appear in the manuscript, around 15% of lines of the two poems do not conform to the expected syllable count of seven syllables in each line. In the vast majority of cases, manifest copying errors have occurred in the transmission and simple emendations, normally also required by syntax or morphology, allow to restore heptasyllabic lines. There remains, however, a group of lines that cannot be healed. The present section does not differ in this respect. Of the 64 intact or completely restorable lines, seven have more than seven syllables. Six of these (ll. 1050, 1078, 179, 1081, 1088, 1090) can be brought down to the desired result by applying elision; in l. 1050 *i llaithiu mesa fria fírbráth*, we suggest that three underlying syllables, namely *fri + a + fír* have to be slurred into one to achieve the required syllable count (see the notes on this line). Only l. 1061 offers no opportunity for elision or any other metrical reduction of syllables, which leaves either a hypersyllabic line or necessitates an emendation of the wording. Otherwise, elision is not an obligatory rule, e.g. l. 1064 *in Coimdiu ima ithlaind* or l. 1084 *bochtu ocus adailcniú*. In ll. 1040 (*Síóin*), 264 (*biäs*), and 1066 (*miästar*), the metre requires hiatus, whereas in ll. 1037 (*at-tát*) and 1049 (*miästar*) hiatus has to be abandoned.

Rhyme is mostly of an unremarkable *rinn-ardrim* type. In ll. 1047–8 *cert : mesemmacht* and ll. 1075–6 *gel : samlastar*, the correspondence between the rhyming vowels is ‘weak’ (cf. Carney 1964: xxxii); in ll. 1037–8 *rigdae : dagdilaie*, a consonant cluster matches a single consonant, unless one emends *dagdiglaie* (see the notes on this stanza). In ll. 1073–4 *as-biur-sa : parbula* creates an imperfect rhyme between *-ursa* and *-ula*, unless the poet intended quite exceptionally a *rinn-ardrinn*-type rhyme between enclitic *-sa* as the monosyllabic rhyming basis and *parbula*. A similar situation may obtain in ll. 1091–2 [...]*nsem-ni : adid-roilli*, but the fragmentary preservation of the line does not rule out the possibility that *-ni* is not the 1pl. *nota augens*, but rather the indefinite pronoun *ní*.

As is the case in the earlier parts of the poems, complex ornamentation in the area of alliteration (Stifter 2016: 66–7) can be encountered frequently. Classical or narrow alliteration (for the definition see Stifter 2018: 187) is common. Most stanzas feature at least one instance, but it is missing in st. 263, 268, 271, but st. 271 has linking alliteration across the lines instead. Due to the loss of three syllables, it cannot be determined if st. 269 also lacked narrow alliteration. In st. 273, a fragmentary stanza, the only extant alliteration appears to be between *fairsinge* and lenited *fírbrotha*. If the word before *fairsinge*, *is*, is the reduced variant of the conjunction ‘and’, which itself causes lenition in Old Irish (GOI 145), the alliteration is perfect.

As regards alternative types of alliteration (see Lavelle 2018 and Stifter 2018), compound alliteration is found in ll. 1038 (*dagdilaie*), 1086 (*esamain*), 1088 (*fírfeirg*), 1104 (*dagdige*), all in the metrically predicted final position of even-numbered lines. In the last three examples, the compound alliteration is external, that is to say, the alliteration also encompasses other words in the line. Examples for complex alliteration (Sproule 1987) are ll. 1043 *fír fair*, 1044 *doínib demnaib, cruth Crist cath*, 1088 *áraillsem fírfeirg*. L. 1079 *de áesaib desaib*, which has to be elided to *d’áesaib desaib*, can also be included. Mirrored alliteration (De Vries 2015) occurs in l. 1039 *bith sí digde dér a mbróin*. Paired alliteration (Hollo 1990) is found in l. 1061 *scarfaid colg sin ocus cáith* and in l. 1127 *for mbochtáin feisin bátar* if unstressed *for* is allowed into the equation. Linking alliteration is rare, it connects ll. 1057–8, 1063–4. *Fidrad freccomail*, i.e. linking alliteration between stanzas, is almost totally absent.

Chevilles occur in ll. 1057, 1059, 1065, 1067, and perhaps in l. 1025. It is noteworthy that st. 265 and 267 have two chevilles each, both at the ends of line a and c.

LANGUAGE

Stanzas 260–303 contain a number of forms that had been previously unattested in Irish literature. The following list includes phonological, morphological and syntactical phenomena that are worth noting. Given the deplorable state of the manuscript, only items that are beyond doubt will be mentioned. Extensive discussions of each item are found in the commentary after the text.

Phonology

Hiatus is lost in *at-tát* (l. 1037), unless one read *at-tá*, and in *míastar* (l. 1049), while it is retained in *Síóin* (l. 1040), *biäs* (l. 1053) and *míästar* (l. 1066). Pretonic *o* is regularly represented by *o*, but is found as *u* in *ce ru-má* (l. 1041), perhaps in *du[* (l. 1136), but the rest of the word is missing, and perhaps in *du:foicherr* (l. 1069), although the MS reading is disputed and could also be *de*. As is common in Blathmac's Poems (see Barrett 2017b: 173–4), the 3sg. future of the copula *biith* (l. 1039) ends in a voiceless dental. In the rhymes *búada : mórbúana* (ll. 1053–4) and *gotha : firbrotha* (ll. 1089–90) the innovatory final *-a* of the MS was retained in the edition, even though it is quite likely that the original had conservative forms in *-o* for which the ending *-a* was mechanically substituted in the course of transmission, as it happened in the case of the rhyme *dó : chobfólo* (l. 175–6, MS *cobhfóla*; Stifter 2015: 71).⁴

Nouns

The nasalisation on the nom.sg. *cach mbert* (l. 1055) suggests neuter gender for *bert* ‘load, burden’ (but see the note on l. 1055). The acc.pl. *mindu* (l. 1068) of *mend* refers to ‘goats’ in general, not specifically to ‘kids’ or the ‘small of animals’. *Láthra* (l. 1073), plural of *láthar*, may be used in the meaning ‘interpretation’. L. 1074 contains the earliest attestation of *parbul* ‘parable’ < Lat. *parabola*, with the expected syncope and as the expected *ā*-stem, compared with later *parabuil* (eDIL dil.ie/34187). *Ois/áes* ‘folk, people’ occurs with both spellings of the diphthong: nom.sg. *ois* (l. 1077) and *áis* (l. 1085), dat.pl. *áesaib* (l. 1079). *Peccad* ‘sin’ occurs in the *o*-stem form *peccaid* of the genitive singular (l. 1077, 1085). *Iferm* ‘hell’ is used as a plural noun (ll. 1073, 1200). In l. 1080 *cairig* has a palatalised *r*, while in *caircha* (ll. 1068, 1070) it is non-palatalised. For the ending *-a* instead of *-o* of the genitive singular of *i*- and *u*-stems, see the preceding section on phonology. The nom.sg. *fiada* (l. 1081) ‘lord’ occurs with final *-a* in the MS. *Demon* ‘demon’ has the usual *i*-stem plural *demnai* (l. 1137).

Adjectives

There are possibly two occurrences of the rare adjective *dáen* ‘fine’, one in dat.pl. *dáinib* (l. 1079) and perhaps in l. 1089. The examples recorded in eDIL dil.ie/14228 suggest an *o/ā*-adjective, but the rhyme with *glanchairig* in l. 1079 requires a palatalised *n*, which speaks in favour of an *i*- or *jo/jā*-stem adjective. The adjective meaning ‘needy’, recorded in eDIL dil.ie/877 under the spelling *aidliccen*, but, like its abstract *aidilccne*, attested from early on in such a variety of spellings that its original form is challenging to determine, occurs in the acc.pl. *adaileniu* (l. 1084).

Adverbs

The demonstrative pronouns *sin* (ll. 1061, 1085) and *síu* (l. 1083) are used as temporal and local adverbs meaning ‘then’ and ‘here’ respectively. The discursive adverb *danó* occurs in its reduced form, spelt *dna* in the MS (l. 1065). The conjunction *ocus* may be represented by *is* in l. 1090.

Pronouns

The emphasising pronoun ‘-self’ occurs in the 1sg. *fén* (l. 1125), 3sg. masc. *fadeisin* (l. 1076) and 2pl. *feisin* (l. 1127). *Foidfidius* ‘he will send them’ (l. 1135) contains the 3pl. suffixed pronoun. The indefinite construction *ní* + genitive is used in *ní arrai* ‘any payment/commutation’ (see the notes on l. 1129).

⁴ On the other hand, the ending *-o* is retained in the MS in the rhyming examples *tegdaiseo* (l. 704), *finfólo* (l. 710), *cotulto* (l. 720).

Verbs

Aside from verbs that conform to the expected Old Irish morphology, this passage contains a number of forms and verbs that are here attested for the first time, including several especially noteworthy ones such as *·dechuid* ‘you have gone’ (l. 1124), *ítaigidir* ‘to be thirsty’ (l. 1102) and *gortaigidir* ‘to be hungry’ (l. 1099). Unsurprisingly for a prophecy, many verbs are in the future tense.

L. 1067 features a form of the rare verb *ad·ais* ‘to fear’, attested only in the present tense.

Deponent verbal forms are preserved throughout, *míastar* (l. 1049) and *míästar* (l. 1066) of *midithir* ‘to judge’, *rod·samlastar* (l. 1076) of *samlaithir* ‘to compare’, *ro·ngortaigsur* (l. 1099) of *gortaigidir* ‘to starve’. The only exception seems to be *ro·n·ítaigsu* (l. 1102) of *ítaigidir* ‘to be thirsty’, but the ending is difficult to read and the rhyming word is unclear. Both *gortaigidir* and *ítaigidir* were unattested so far. All other forms in *-thir/-ther* etc. are passives.

Scaraid and its compounds have *f*-futures: *etar·scarfaider* (l. 1055), *scarfaid* (ll. 1061, 1067). Reduplicated futures are found, namely 3sg. *memais* (l. 1045) of *maidid* ‘to break’, relative 3sg. *biäs* (l. 1053) of *benaid* ‘to reap’, relative 3sg. *míästar* (l. 1066) and *míastar* (l. 1049) of *midithir* ‘to judge’, and 3pl. passive *timartar* (l. 1137) of *do·immoirg* ‘to press, crush’. The 3sg. reduplicated future *du·foícherr* (l. 1069) of *do·cuirethar* ‘to put’ is written without *i* in the MS. The analysis of *(do·)coiser* (l. 1063), which appears to be a future verb, perhaps a compound of *sernaid* ‘to strew, arrange’ is unclear. The text features also the 3sg. *s*-subjunctive *·má* (l. 1041) of *maidid* ‘to break’.

L. 1103 *·tardisid* is the augmented 2pl. preterite of *do·beir* ‘to give’. *Ro·bá* (l. 1105) and *bá·sa* (l. 1109) are 1sg. preterital forms of the substantive verb. Two allomorphs of the verb *ad·roilli* ‘to deserve’, with the preverb *ad·* and *as·*, appear in immediately following stanzas, ostensibly without difference in meaning, namely *adid·roilli* (l. 1092) and *asad·roilliset* (l. 1096); *·árailsem* (l. 1088) presupposes *ad·*, too. An augment other than *ro·* occurs in *con·abboing* (l. 1043) of *con·boing* ‘to break’. The 2pl. augmented preterite *·dechuid* (l. 1124) of *téit* ‘to go’ was unattested so far.

Nach (l. 1046) may be the dependent negative 3sg. of the copula ‘that he is not’. The 1sg. past subjunctive is found in *cebin* ‘though I were’ (l. 1123), and the so far unattested 2pl. past is represented by *diamthae* ‘when you were’ (l. 1131). The initial letters of st. 276 *ba[* (l. 1101) could conceivably be what remains of a 3sg. or pl. or 2pl. imperative of the copula.

Findud (l. 1062) may be an early example of an analogical verbal noun of *ro·fínnadar* ‘to find out’, unfortunately in a fragmentary context.

Syntax

The clarification of the syntax of several stanzas is impeded by their fragmentary status.

We take *laihthe rígdæ* (l. 1037) as a temporal accusative ‘on the day of the Lord’, but in an alternative interpretation of the stanza (see the notes) it could be the subject. Preposed genitives occur in *miadamlæ mesemnacht* (l. 1048) and *cruithnechtae claind* (l. 1063). *Céin·mair* ‘long lives, happy who’ construes with the accusative *cach n·óen* (ll. 1051–2). The unusual word order VOS occurs in ll. 1063–4 *(do·)coiser cruithnechtae claind in Coimdiu*, if the first word is a verb.

L. 1043 *con·abboing fír fair* ‘on whom truth breaks = whom truth vanquishes’ contains probably a prepositional relative clause with stranded preposition.

Indirect speech is not morphologically marked in *nís·fítir* ‘that he doesn’t know them’ (l. 1082).

CONTENTS

A synopsis of the contents of the Poems of Blathmac helps to contextualise the ‘Fragmentary Quatrains’. Blathmac’s Poems are two religious poems addressed to Mary the mother of Christ. The first poem describes the human Christ, his birth, life, and especially his death. Blathmac begins by inviting Mary to join him in mourning the tragic death of her son (st. 1). Christ is presented as an exemplary man (st. 26–43) whose generosity and capacity to perform miracles so provoked the Jews that they became envious and plotted to bring about his death (st. 44–76). He outlines the nature of the twofold association that connects Christ and the Jews. He introduces the concept of their blood-relationship with him through the connection with Mary, and also their long-standing relationship with God as

their lord or king. Mary, his mother, is a Jew, which establishes his kinship with them (st. 44, 46, 97 and 100). Blathmac guides the reader through the history of the long relationship between God and the Jews beginning with God's rescue of the Jewish people from Egypt and their safe passage to the Promised Land (st. 77–107). This relationship is presented in terms of a king/client relationship with many elements of Irish legal terminology (Breatnach 2015). The existence of a king/client relationship places obligations on both parties. Blathmac presents God as an exemplary king who has been a meticulous provider to his clients. The poet's choice of the verb *ernaíd* 'to bestow' describes the transactions that took place between God and the Jews emphasising that God was a generous provider (Breatnach 2015: 108–10). Using this evidence, the death of Christ is presented as a kinslaying (*fin-gal*, st. 103) and additionally as the murder of a the son of a king, thus violating both the foundations of the principles of kinship and the obligations of a client. These offences are compounded by the prevention of the performance of an appropriate lament in the immediate aftermath of Christ's death (st. 124). The first poem culminates in the poet's heartfelt appeal to involve all people in a lament for the death of Christ. He restates his appeal to Mary to come to him so that they can perform a keen together. His wish is that the poems will be recited regularly and he asks Mary to grant access to heaven to those that do so.

Stanza 140–1

*Cech óen diamba figel sé
fo lige ocus éirge,
ar imdídnad diänim tall
amail lúirig co cathbarr,*

*cách nod-géba do cach deilb
i troscud aidchi Sathairmn,
acht rob fo déraib cen meth,
a Maire, nib ifernach.*

'Everyone for whom this is a vigil-prayer
at lying down and at rising,
for unblemished protection in the next world
like a breast-plate with helmet,

everyone, of every shape, who recites it,
fasting on Friday night,
provided that it be with tears without fail,
Mary, may he not be destined for Hell.'

While the first poem concentrates on the humanity of Christ, the second one emphasises his divinity. At the beginning of the second poem Blathmac acknowledges that there has been a response to the appeal of the first poem, and he refers to a keen which has taken place in the past. This is the only reference to keening in the second poem. Until recently both poems have been regarded as one long keen (Lambkin 2015: 119). Barrett (2017b: 57–81) argues that the second poem is not a keen at all, but may in fact be a different type of text which she calls *célmoine* after the word used by Blathmac himself. The word *célmoine* occurs three times in the second poem (ll. 598, 746, 761) and in each case the translation 'revelation' suits the context. The examination of other attestations of this word shows that it occurs fundamentally in two sorts of contexts. In some attestations it refers to a physical sign, such as a star, while in other occurrences it refers to a message which has been delivered to a human by a divine being. The word *célmoine* can occur within the text of the message and can refer to the message itself. When this observation is applied to the first stanza of the second poem of Blathmac it can clarify the words *a mba moí mo chélmáinde / do mac coínsimmar* 'when my revelation was mine, we keened your son' (st. 150). The poet is addressing Mary, he has had some kind of revelation apparently during a keening event. He uses *coínsimmar*, the 1st plural preterite form of the verb *coínid* 'to

keen' which may indicate that Mary has accepted his invitation of the first poem and has visited him with a revelation which is the inspiration for the second composition.

Stanza 150

*A Maire, a grían ar clainde,
a mba moí mo chélmáinde
do mac coínsimmar – scél maith –
sech is bithbéo, is bithflaith.*

Mary, sun of our children,
when my revelation was mine,
we keened your son – good news –
yet, he lives eternally, he is an eternal prince.

In common with the Book of Revelation, the poet delivers a message of hope to the good people in his audience and a warning for the bad. Those who serve God will have nothing to fear. Other parallels with the Book of Revelation include the description of Jesus as a triumphant king in heaven (Stanza 188, Revelation 4:1–2) or the destruction of God's enemies (Stanzas 243, Revelation 12:9). In the first section of the second poem the poet chooses events in Christ's life that demonstrate that he is the embodiment of many prophecies which are also revelations. The method of presenting evidence from the Old Testament which is used to great effect in the first poem is also found in the second one. In the first poem his interest lies in the twofold relationship between Christ and the Jews, while in the second poem he logically presents the evidence that Christ is the one whose existence had long been foretold, by repeatedly referring to the prophets of the Old Testament (st. 150–231). He lists the prophecies that were made about Christ: His conception, birth, circumcision, baptism, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension, the second coming and the last judgement.

Stanza 233–5

*Is dot mac – ce chot-certae –
do-rairrngertha mórrechtæ.
Ro-comallnad uile sé
inge mod a thuidechtæ.*

*A chompart nóeb, gein ó chrí,
a thecht fo recht n-imdibi,
a bathais, nib bán re ndul
fri croich ocus adnacul.*

*A eiséirge úasal án,
iar suidiu a fíresgabál,
a thuidecht do mes – mór trúí –
for bíü ocus marbu.*

It is of your son – though you may correct him –
that great laws have been prophesied.
All this has been fulfilled
save the manner of his coming.

His holy conception, born from flesh,
his going under the law of circumcision,
his baptism; he was not white
before going to cross and burial.

His noble brilliant resurrection,
 then his ascension,
 his coming to judge – great wretch –
 on the living and the dead.

The account of each prophecy about Christ is accompanied by an examination of the theological relevance and symbolism connected with them. For example, the stanzas about Christ's conception are followed by an elucidation of Mary's virginity (st. 157–64). His circumcision is likened to the cutting off of all our vices (st. 165). Christ's baptism was to save us from the sin of Adam (st. 166–71). The inevitability of the crucifixion is linked to Christ's obedience to God the Father (st. 173). His resurrection and triumphant welcome in heaven is described (st. 177–89). Furthermore the discussions of the mysteries of the Trinity (st. 196–7) and the Eucharist (st. 203–6) could suggest that these poems were a resource for religious instruction.

Since most of these prophecies have been fulfilled, the logical conclusion is that the remaining two, the second coming and the last judgment, will also come to pass. These two prophecies are the subject matter of the second half of this poem. Blathmac's second poem contains a unique account of how events have been prophesied to unfold in the days leading up to the second coming of Jesus and the Day of Judgement. He describes the extreme planetary changes that will be a signal to mankind that the day of Judgement is close. Texts about the Signs of Doom leading up to the Day of Judgement feature strongly in Irish eschatological tradition, both poetry and prose, and it is a recurring theme in both the Old Testament and the New.⁵ Martin McNamara (1975: 137) has pointed to the exceptional importance of the inclusion of the Signs of Doomsday in Blathmac's second poem due to its early 8th century date. In the Gospel of Matthew, which Blathmac largely follows, the apostles ask Jesus how they will recognise his second coming and he responds:

Statim autem post tribulationem dierum illorum sol obscurabitur; et luna non dabit lumen suum; et stellae cadent de caelo; et uirtutes caelorum commouebuntur. Et tunc parebit signum Filii hominis in caelo; et tunc plangent omnes tribus terrae et uidebunt Filium hominis uenientem in nubibus caeli cum uirtute multa et maiestate. Et mittet angelos suos cum tuba et uoce magna et congregabunt electos eius a quattuor uentis a summis caelorum usque ad terminos eorum.

'Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet and a great voice. And they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of heaven to the utmost bounds of them' (Matthew 24: 29–31).

Blathmac's version is found in stanzas 236 to 240.

Stanza 236–40

*Nallsa thuidecht do dúiri,
 imm-bruífea na mórdúili.
 Lasfaid talam ocus nem,
 tibre trethan bith aithgen.*

*Bid crúaid cuclige in sé,
 at-béla forgnúis dúile,
 beth tírmai trethan, ler, lind,
 do nim do-tóetsat cáinrind.*

*Beth comard a slíab fri fán,
 níba bec int athchomsán,*

⁵ See McNamara 1975; McNamara 2007; Herbert & McNamara 1989; Carey et al. 2014.

*beth clárchosmail in domun
conid-reised óenubull.*

*Is ret mac oirdnidu cen on
sifais int aingel dagthob.
Ata-resat frisa seinm
cach marb ro-boí i ndóendeilb.*

*Is lat mac beither – gním feidil –
immili isin mórtheinid
resú ro-mestar ruirí
for gnímu cach óenduini.*

‘Woe the coming of hardship,
it will utterly crush the great elements.
Earth and sky will blaze,
the laughter of the seas will be an ex-laugh.

This will be a severe earthquake
the form of the elements will die,
ocean, sea, pool will be dry,
from the sky beautiful constellations will fall.

The mountain will be as high as the hollow,
the attack will not be small.
The world will be boardlike
so that one apple could run over it.

Before your eminent unblemished son
the angel will sound a good trumpet.
There will arise at the sounding
every dead one who has been in human shape.

It is by your son – enduring deed –
that many thousands will be struck in the great fire
before the overking judges
on the deeds of every single person.’

McNamara proposes that, since Blathmac’s list of signs does not conform to any other text known to us, it may indicate influence from a list of signs dating from an early stage in the evolution of the tradition.⁶ Blathmac’s inclusion of references to other apocryphal traditions reflects the wealth of material which was circulating in Ireland at his time. The fact that so many apocryphal legends survive in these two poems is among the most extraordinary aspects of Blathmac’s work.

Blathmac’s references to the deaths of the apostles and martyrs is another significant apocryphal element of the poems. This is a relatively long section in the poem beginning with stanza 245 and ending 259 on the theme of martyrs whose deaths will be avenged. The list of names contains the names of eleven apostles (st. 248–51). Matthias, who took Judas’s place is named in the last of these stanzas along with Mark, Luke, Simon and Barnabas, who were evangelists and disciples. The deaths of only two of the apostles are described in the New Testament, namely James, who was executed by Herod (Acts 12:1–2), and Judas, who died by suicide (Matthew 27:5 and Acts 1:18). While other Irish

⁶ ‘[...] it is also quite possible that he [Blathmac] knew of a list of the signs before Doomsday, even if not any of those known to us. The early date of such a text, when the tradition was probably only in the process of formation, might explain the differences’ (McNamara 2007: 232).

texts describe the physical appearance of the apostles, Blathmac describes only their deaths. Several other texts within the Irish apocryphal tradition treat the subject of Jesus and the Apostles in a similar way, describing the manner in which they met their deaths along with descriptions in some texts of the colour of their hair and beards.⁷ All show much conformity in the descriptions of the apostles and in the manner of their deaths.

Stanza 248–51

*Claidbed Mathai – mórgnám glé –
con-ascríb in soiscéle,
crochad Petair, airlech Póil,
ocus suindiud Iácóib.*

*Martrae Aindrea – áin a chluith –
ferais fáilti fri cáinchrúich,
nád-foét ar bríg oculus bruth
ina bíu a thúasulcuth.*

*Claidbed Pilip – ba gnám mór –
guín da liach, da Iácób,
Tomás do rind – ba scél ngus –
Tatheus, Bartholomeüs.*

*Marc, Lúcas, Simón shuindter,
ro-cés ní in masmuinter.
Barnabas bán, Madían mas,
do-cótar cosa n-ermbas.*

‘The sword-slaying of Matthew – famous great deed –
who had written the Gospel,
the crucifixion of Peter, the slaying of Paul,
and the clubbing of James.

The martyrdom of Andrew – brilliant his fames –
he welcomed the beautiful cross,
he who did not allow through vigour and valour
to be released alive.

The sword slaying of Philip – it was a big deed –
the killing of two wretched ones, two Jameses,
Thomas by a spearpoint – it was a tale of ferocities –
Thaddeus, Bartholomew.

Let Mark, Luke, and Simon be mentioned,
that beautiful company has suffered something.
Pure Barnabas, beautiful Mathias,

⁷ Other Irish and Latin texts which give accounts of the genealogy, age, appearance place of death and burial of the apostles:

Incipit do bungenelaig na n-apstal, a text about the genealogy, deaths and physical appearance of the apostles (Stokes 1887: 362–5); *Eól dom aidid Crist na cét*, a poem of eight quatrains on the manner and death of Christ and the apostles (Stokes 1887: 352–5); *Becca na delba act delb Dé*, a poem of twenty quatrains which pays particular attention to descriptions of the hair and beards of Jesus and the apostles (Stokes 1887: 350–2; Ó Cuív 1997: 136–48); as well as five short Latin and Old Irish texts published by Ó Cróinín 1989.

they came to death by iron.’

A reference to the legend surrounding Enoch and Elijah and their association with the Antichrist appears in Stanzas 258 and 259. It is said that they never died but were brought bodily to some other realm. Their fate is that shortly before the Final Judgement they will do battle with the Antichrist who will kill them both. Then Michael the Archangel will slay the Antichrist.

Stanza 258–9

*Ó luid fuil Abéil fu fót
co martraí Eli Enóch,
is lat macc, a grían na mban,
fuil cach noib do-fíastar.*

*Is hé Michél, míl do maic,
gébas co claideb chomairt
do chorp Antchríst nád etal,
génathar do mórphecath.*

‘Since Abel’s blood went beneath the sod
until the martyrdom of Elijah and Enoch,
it is by your son, o sun of women,
that the blood of every saint will be avenged.

It is Michael, your son’s soldier,
who will attack with sword of striking
the body of Antichrist who is not pure,
who shall be born of a great sin.’

This legend is found elsewhere in Irish in *Fís Adomnán* ‘The Vision of Adomnán’ (LU 1939–2301), in *Dá Brón Flatha Nime* ‘The Two Sorrows of the Kingdom of Heaven’ (Dottin 1909), and in a text headed *Sgél Ainnte Crísd* ‘The Story of Antichrist’ (Book of Lismore f. 110a30–110c20; Hyde 1927).⁸ Blathmac’s fleeting reference to the manner of conception of the Antichrist is interesting. The conception of the Antichrist is dealt with in more detail in other Irish verse and prose texts (see Ó Cuív 1973: 87–8), all of which are much later than Blathmac. *Félire Oengusso* from c. 800 also alludes to the Antichrist (Sept. 29) but only to his death at the hands of Michael the Archangel, a tradition which finds widespread agreement across texts. Blathmac obviously had some knowledge of the tradition of the sinful conception of the Antichrist but sadly for the modern reader does not expand on it. A version of the tradition that Judgement day will occur three and a half years after the death of the Antichrist is preserved in *Sgél Ainnte Crísd: Ocus is ann sin impodis in uili Padanach ocus Iudaidhe ocus Chinidhech ar in credim Catolaca, ocus ni bhia acht tri bliadhna co leith iar sin gu lá in Bhrátha* ‘And it is then that every Pagan and Jew and Gentile will turn to the Catholic faith, and there shall be only three years and a half after that to the Day of Judgement’ (Hyde 1927: 395, 398).

Blathmac does not refer to any time period from the death of the Antichrist to the Day of Judgement, but his sequence of events is very much in keeping with that found elsewhere. The logical development of the narrative is that the signs of Doomsday and the death of the Antichrist will be followed by a description of the Day of Judgement and the terrible of image of Christ carrying his bloodstained cross, a motif which is found in Blathmac’s first poem and in other texts, for instance in *Saltair na Rann* (ll. 8271–2) *cona chroich deirg dodúalaig / fria aiss* ‘with his red evil (?) cross on his back’; or in the Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday (Stokes 1907: 316 §24) *conidh ann sin eirgis Rí na hinogbála con chroich deridh⁹ re ais* ‘and then the King of Glory will arise with his final cross on his back’; or in *Dá*

⁸ Translations of these three texts are found in Herbert & McNamara 1989: *Fís Adomnán* (137–48), *Dá Brón Flatha Nime* (19–21), *Sgél Ainnte Crísd* (149–50).

⁹ See Stokes (1907: 316 fn. 34): “Ms. *derigh*”. This could possibly be a form of *derg* ‘red’.

Brón Flatha Nime (LU 1370 = Best & Bergin 1929: 47) *Is amlaid dano dorróega chucu inti Isu Crist ocus a croch derg fria ais* ‘Thus will Jesus Christ come to them with his red cross on his back’.

It is fitting to introduce the fragmentary quatrains with Blathmac’s description of Christ coming to pass judgement, carrying his cross on his back:

Stanza 142

*Fri tuidecht do maic co feirc
cona chroich fria ais imdeirg,
ara sóerthar lat in tan
nach carae nod-coínfedar.*

‘At the coming of your son with wrath,
with his cross on his dark red back,
that at that time be saved by you
any friend who will keen him.’

The fragmentary quatrains edited and translated here begin with an account of the battle at Mount Zion in which Christ is victorious. This is followed by Blathmac’s version of the Final Judgement which closely follows eschatological discourse.¹⁰ Although one might expect a description of the end of days to make ample use of apocryphal material to flesh out the meager framework of the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 25:31–46), Blathmac’s account of the last day stays close to the evangelist. He also includes other elements from that Gospel, namely *The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares* (Mt. 13:30) and *The Separation of Wheat and Chaff* (Mt. 3:12), emphasising the ruthlessness with which Christ will judge the sinners. While Blathmac’s primary inspiration for this section of the poem is literary, Harbison 2016 proposed the hypothesis that Blathmac must have visited Rome and had been inspired by pictorial representations of Biblical scenes. He suggests that because Blathmac’s imagery is so strikingly visual that mosaics and frescoes were a likely source of inspiration. It must be more than mere coincidence that depictions of many of the events which Blathmac describes are found in churches and basilicas in Rome which, like his poems, are dedicated to the Virgin Mary. We have not specifically investigated this art-historical angle with regard to the final stanzas, but it can be noted that depictions of sheep, which are prominent in stanzas 267, 268 and 270 can be found in the oldest mosaics in churches in Rome.

Although we cannot be certain that the poem ends at stanza 303 there are hints in the last fragments that he is addressing Mary as *ingen* ‘maiden, virgin’ (ll. 1182, 1186). This may be an indication that he is preparing the environment in which to set his *dúnad* ‘closure’, a poetic device where the poet repeats words found at the beginning to indicate the end of the poem. *Saltair na Rann* and the Old English *Christ III*, contained in the 10th-century Exeter Book (fols. 20b–32a; Krapp & Dobbie 1936), also conclude shortly after the description of the judgment. They both have passages describing the misery facing the bad and the happy existence awaiting the good. Blathmac’s words *dagathair* ‘good father’ (l. 1188), *innocht* ‘completely naked’ (l. 1196) and *sírgnás bithifernm* ‘long lasting familiarity of eternal hell’ (l. 1200) could conceivably belong to such a context. Towards the end of *Saltair na Rann*, nouns describing the conditions that the sinners will endure in hell include *úacht* ‘cold’ and *gorta* ‘hunger’ and *crith for detaib* ‘chattering of teeth’ (l. 8360) which resonate with the words used by Blathmac. Though this is speculative, the combination of words pointing to a *dúnad* and the thematic parallels with *Saltair na Rann* and *Christ III* could indicate that Blathmac was nearing his conclusion.

¹⁰ For further discussion see Boyle 2015.

DIPLOMATIC TEXT

260

Ar attat laiti rioġġa donaiġ noebaġ andaġdila
biġi digdi der()a mbroin in morċat sleiġi s;oin

or: riotġa

261

Ceru ma re riġ na riog(niġ)re foirndeċt na aġbfior
as caċ a boing fior f(.iġ..)o doiniġ 7 deġnaib

or: (ni)re

262

crvġ meabass re cġ an cai ni dġ feiġ nac deġmnet
co mbreiġ fir f agniġ cert co miadamla mesemnacġ
ol as

or: meabais

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263

Olas iosia miastq caċ illaiti mesa fġ a firb^ath
ceiġmoir firioġ an tġ 7 ġ naġ bas travcar

264

As biġas band mġvada i llaitiv na m^obyana
eatarsqġfer ġ mbert coirci cv;ndf fri c^vitne[

265

Foidf fo tvaid c^vaid costġ an coirci dia oġlosġ
for a leit ndeis com^ad cert do breġ leis ac^viġns

266

Scarġ ċolġ s; 7 caiġ fria findvdh
[..]ċoiser c^viġneġai claind an coimde iġa iotlo[

267

[.]s ċo mac dna ni ba b^eg m;astq in da m^oiġred
scarġ mġg nat ais a tnv cairca geala fġ a mind[

268

Dyfo cerr fġ a leiġ ndes acaorċa iar na nġlainmeġ
ċo chv niferġ d^og b^eg foidfidior an gabqⁱred.

or: Deġo

269

IN[.]a lla[ġr]a as bivġsa as dot mac it parvvla
[.....](...)iosia cġ geal fa deiġ; rotsamlastq

or: [.f.b || [.fa] || aġ

270

oġs [.]n peċaid dol;g(.)dv;b ā coirce 7 an gabair
..aġ[...].b d[.]saib doin an c^viġneġ na glġcaoġf

or: oġeoġb

271

[...]ba q faċo q s; fġs na hingru nis fitir
[...]naġ fetatq soġm s;v boċta 7 adailcniġ

or: biġ aġ || baġa || maċ || laġ

or: na

272

[...]e[...] aṣ peçaid ṣi fōç[.]! nainbfial nesamain
[..]ra tarlai [.]ind do meirg cid in q aills;ō do // firfeir[

or:]eṣ aiṣ

or: çq/ṣa/çq tarbaṣ || ṣind di/ç/çen

273

[.....]daend[.]go[.]a aṣ fqs;gi do firb^ota
[.....](.)ns;ō ni çia meṣam adid roilli

or: ç/taerc;/de/ara d;a/tri[.] || ar/i

or: hi ç;d meṣa ni

274

[.]o[.....]doib çq gle e[...][d[...][a miadamlae
[.....]lōcgn[.]a or[...][i[...][asa(.)roillis;ot

or: [..]peç[|| eṣom || a[.]n d[|| bja

or: iro ||]qs[.]n/ron/sasa

275

[.....]feib ba r[.....](.) do[.]at rō goṣsvr
[.....]oṣ[...][e[...][d(.....)[...](.)a do dağivqa;

or: da b[

or: t(

276

Ba[...] dēn v[.]r[.]q lu[.](.....)[..]niç ron iotaisv
ni[.]q diṣ form c'de ni do dorṣaiḃ daghdige
Ro ba

or: bi || a[||]rṣq liy[|| lē hon || iur/s

or: m || rç || o gi

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277

Ro ba cen n(
niḃhṣ mḃ(

or: ni| or in|

278

Basa(
ni ra(

279

Ni g(
n(

280

(
(.....)d iar(.)m r(.....)rm(

281

(.)aḃsō dam çit gai(...) clq ni(
çeb inlobq in naç dv ni dech do(

or: gaṣ(

282

NI meis; fē cia atbeir dogreṣ(
fōr mboçtaiḃ feiṣi batq l(

283

Na cv;ng̃ ni arra ðam mes(
ar ni baoi lib diamtha bi (

or: air

284

Do ðera forra cen acht ṣ;r(
7 foifdivs iqṣ; dv[...](

285	Timq̄tq̄ deṁna in tan miṣ[.](air do reraçtaṭ aḷḷi ðo[.](	<i>or:</i> ṛ(
286	Raḡ.leo naç doṣeṣ(ar r(.)ṣ cqaṣaṭ ðit[.](	<i>or:</i> ðo ṣeṇ/feṛ(<i>or:</i> ðiceṇ(
287	Mairḡ ðimreḡa l[.](la an golḡai[.]i Aoṣ(	<i>or:</i> aḷoṣ(
288	B[.]rḡ deṁa(....)[.]rḡ( (	<i>or:</i> deṁāḍ[
289–290 missing		
p. 144		
291	)[.....]l̄o)[...].d[...]	<i>or:</i>]da[.].l̄
292))	
293))	
294))	
295	)[.]r[.](.....).[...].aṇ()[...].fiḡ[.](...)[.....](.)[.]targ(
296	)[.....].f̄[.]i[.]ma[.....].ṇiṅein (.))[.....].air	
297	)[.....].bq̄ta[....].ṇiṅein)[.....].r̄i[....].aṇ daḡatair	
298	)[.....].aḡmaca)[.....].ço[.]le	<i>or:</i> laḡaraça

299

)[.....]athçomsan

)[.....]aiđ iõmnoct

300

)[..]og b[....]ad[.]r abraibh

)[.....]ş;rgnas bitifiorñ

301

)[....]t[.]g[.]a

)[.....](.)bre

302

)[.]r aif[.]deder

)[.....]en[.]ifid̄ or:]er[

303

)[..](.)rvct

)

Variant readings by Ni Shéaghdha 1999

Only significantly divergent readings will be listed.

260a: rioghdha

261b: Maire

261c–d: fair. do

262d: mesamnacht

263b: ce fi[. . .]noir

264a: lan d(o)na uadha

264c: (on) mbert

264d: *cruithnecht*

266c: do coiser

266d: iothloinn

267a: d(u)a

267c: na tais

268a: Duso ferr *forra* a

268b: trogbreg

269a: (C)o lla(thi) a bas bi ur(*chra*)

270a: D(aes) [a]n pecaidh dob[uir]uibh.

270c: < . . . > s aesaibh d < . . . > aibh

270d: glanchaoir

271a: M < . . . > a ba(s) maith (s)ar sin.

271c: (as) nach fetar (tarc)uomsiu.

272a: < . . . > t as pec < . . . > an tan sin.

272c: < . . . > ar tarbas (a) rind do meirg.

273a–b: < . . . > cruaidh do g < . . . > tha. as fars(i)g

273c–d: Iosa *Crist* < . . . > nsion hic < . . . > . mesa ni274a–b: < . . . > doibh comairle / < . . . > *cht* a miadhamhlæ

274c–d: < . . . > lo < . . . > o < . . . > at / < . . . > as[. . .]roillisiot

275a–b: <...> feibh do br <...> / <...> dot atron <...> gortaidhsur
 275c: <...> rel <...> eo <...>
 276a–b: (Bear) <...> den u <...> ar l <...> / <...> on iotaigsu
 276c: (m) <...> ar <...> *cht* <...> arm o d <...> i
 279a: Ní sh [...]
 281a–b: [...] aos o dam <...> d it ga [...] / clar m [...]
 281c:] cel in
 283a–b: arraidham / nil s [...]
 286a: Ragha [...] leo nach thioses [...]
 287c: a (lo) [...]/
 288a: Borg de [...]
 291b: [...] a(i)r(e)ch
 292b: [...] da [...] l
 294b (= 294d): [...] (ain)
 294d (= 295b): [...] (ro) [...] ain
 295b (= 295d): <...> igh [...] tur [...]
 297d (= 298b): <...> (agan)aca
 298b (= 298d): <...> ceile
 298d (= 299b): <...> c a(i)sa(n)
 299b (= 299d): <...> a iomnocht
 299d (= 300b): <...> adir a brethaibh
 300d (= 301b): <...> th <...> a
 302b: <...> er
 302d: <...> fidh
 303b: <...> ucht

NORMALISED TEXT

260 (ll. 1037–40)

Ar at·tát laithe rígdæ
 donaib nóebaib a ndagdílæ.
 Bith sí dígde dér a mbróin
 in mórchath Sléibe Síóin.

261 (ll. 1041–44)

Ce ru·má ré ríg na ríg,
 [ní t]re fóirndecht ná anfir;
 os cách, con·abboing fir f[air],
 do doínib ocus demnaib.

262 (ll. 1045–48)

Cruth memas ré Críst in cath
 – ní don·fét nach deinmnetach –:
 co mbreith fir fora gním cert
 co míadamlæ meisemnacht.

263 (ll. 1049–52)

Ol is Ísu míastar cách
 i llaithiu mesa fria firbráth,
 céin·mair firíondaæ in tan
 ocus cach n-óen bas trócar.

264 (ll. 1053–56)

Is [é] biäs band mbúada
 i llaithiu na mórúana.
 Etar·scarfaider cach mbert
 corcai chuindfig fri cruithnecht.

265 (ll. 1057–60)

Fóidfid fo thúaid – crúaid costud –
 in corcae dia ógloscud;
 fora leth ndes – comrád cert –
 do·bérthar leis a chruithnecht.

266 (ll. 1061–64)

Scarfaid colg sin ocus cáith
 fria findud...
 †[Do] coiser† cruithnechtae claind
 in Coimdiu inna ithlaind.

267 (ll. 1065–68)

[Is] do mac dná – níba bréc –
 miästar in da mórthré.
 Scarfaid – mairg nád·ais a thnú –
 cáircha gela fri mindu.

268 (ll. 1069–72)

Du·foicherr fora leth ndes
 a chærcha iarna nglanmes.
 [Is] dochum n-ifernn drogbréc

foídfidir in gaborthrét.

269 (ll. 1073–76)
 [Inna] llá[thr]a as·biur-sa,
 is dot mac it parbula.
 [.....] Ísu Crist gel
 fadeisin rod·samlastar.

270 (ll. 1077–80)
 Oís in phecaid dolig duib
 in corcae ocus in gabuir.
 [Is de] áesaib desaib dáinib
 in chruithnecht, na glancháirig.

271 (ll. 1081–84)
 [As·béra] ar fíada iar sin
 frisna hingru nís·fitir,
 [ol] nad·fetatar-som síu
 bochtu ocus adailcniú.

272 (ll. 1085–88)
 [As·béra] aís peccaid sin
 focal n-ainbfial n-esamain
 ‘[.....]·tarlae rind di meirg?
 Cid i n-áraillsem do fírfeirg?’

273 (ll. 1089–92)
 ‘[.....dáen/crúaid] d[o] go[th]a
 is fairsinge do fírbrotha,
 [.....]nsem ní,
 cía mesam adid·roilli.’

274 (ll. 1093–96)
 [.....] dóib co glé,
 [.....]a míadamlae
 [...] olcgníma or[...]
 [...] asad·roilliset.

275 (ll. 1097–100)
 ‘[.....] feib ba [.....]
 [...]do[.]at ro·ngortaigsur
 [.....]
 [.....] do dagthúarai.’

276 (ll. 1101–4)
 ‘Bá[.] demnu [.] ar lú
 [...]nic ro·n-ítaigsu.
 Ní·tardisid form chride
 ní do dórtaib dagdige.’

277 (ll. 1105–8)
 ‘Ro·bá cen [...]
 [...]

nibu [...]

[...]

278 (ll. 1108–12)

‘Bá-sa [...]

[...]

nīm·ra[...]

[...]

279 (ll. 1113–6)

‘Ní·g[.....]

[]

n

[]’

280 (ll. 1117–20)

[]

[] íarum

[]

281 (ll. 1121–24)

‘[Ro·g]ab-som dam conid·gai[b]

[a] clár n-i[.....]

cebin lobar i nnach dú

ní·dechuid do[m chéilidiu].’

282 (ll. 1125–28)

‘Ní meise fên – cia at·beir –

dogrés [.....].

For mbochtáin feisin bátar

! [...]’

283 (ll. 1129–32)

‘Ná·cuingid ní arrai dam,

mes[...]

ar ní·boí lib diamthae bí

[...].’

284 (ll. 1133–36)

Do·béra forru cen acht

sír[...]

ocus foídfidius íar sin

du[].

285 (ll. 1137–40)

Timartar demnai in tan

mis[]

air do·réachtat a lli

do[]

286 (ll. 1141–44)

Reg[ait] léo nach do ses[...]

[]

ar r[o]s·carsat dit[]
[]

287 (ll. 1145–48)
Mairg con·imrega l[a ...]
[]
lá in golgairi i los
[]

288 (ll. 1149–52)
Borg deman[dae]
[]
[]
[]

289–290 missing

291 (ll. 1161–64)
)
[.....]lo
)
[]d[]

292–294 missing

295 (ll. 1177–80)
)
[...r [...]an(
)
[...fig[...]targ(
)

296 (ll. 1181–84)
)
[.....]forsin[.]ma[.....]n-ingin
)
[.....]ath]air

297 (ll. 1185–88)
)
[.....]barta[r...]n-ingin
)
[.....]rī[....]in dagathair

298 (ll. 1189–92)
)
[.....]dagmaca
)
[.....]co[.]le

299 (ll. 1193–96)
)
[.....]athchomsán
)

[.....]aid innocht

300 (ll. 1197–200)

)

[..]og b[...]að[.]r a brethaib

)

[.....]sirgnás bithiferinn

301 (ll. 1201–4)

)

[...]t[.]g[.....]a

)

[.....]bre

302 (ll. 1205–8)

)

[]r aif[.]deder

)

[.....]en[...]ifinder

303 (ll. 1209–12)

)

[...]rucht

[]

TRANSLATION

260

For on the day of the King
the saints have their good recompensations.
The great battle at Mount Zion will be
the compensation for the tears of their sorrow.

261

Although the king of kings should be victorious,
it is not through violence or injustice;
and everyone, truth can defeat him,
whether human or demon (lit. 'of men and demons').

262

The way Christ will win the battle
– a thing which shows us that he is not hasty –:
with judgement of man in accordance with his proper actions (lit. 'doing, acting'),
with estimation of honourable behaviour.

263

Since it is Jesus who will judge everyone
on the Day of Judgement according to his true judgement,
happy is the righteous one at that time
and everyone who is merciful.

264

It is he who will strike a victorious blow
on the day of the great harvest.
Each bundle of empty oats
will be separated from wheat.

265

He will send to the left – harsh manner –
the oats to be completely burnt.
To his right side – a fitting saying –
he will have the wheat brought.

266

He will separate then awn and chaff
in order to find...
He will strew out the produce of wheat,
the Lord, in his threshing barn.

267

It is your son, then, – it will not be a lie –
who will judge the two great herds.
He will separate – woe to him who does not fear his wrath –
bright sheep from goats.

268

He will put on his right side
his sheep after they have been purely judged.
It is to the hell of evil lies

that the herd of goats will be sent.

269

[The interpretations] that I utter,
they are parables of your son.
[...] bright Jesus Christ
himself has so compared.

270

The oats and the goats [are]
the folk of dark, black sin.
Of the fine, just people [are]
the wheat, the pure sheep.

271

Our Lord will say after that
to the impious (that) he does not know them.
Because they did not know here
the poor and the needy.

272

The people of sin then [will say]
a shameless, bold word:
'[...] happened to be a point of rust (?)
In what did we deserve your true wrath?'

273

'[...] of your voice
and the extent of your true anger.
[...] we [...]ed something (?).
Who is the worst who has deserved it?'

274

[He will say] to them clearly
[...] (of his?) honour.
[...] evil deeds [...]
[...] that they have deserved it.

275

[...] how was [...]
[...] (when?) I had been starving.
[...]
[...] of good food.

276

[May he/they/you be with the] devils [...]
[...] I had been thirsty.
You have not given upon my heart
anything of the pourings of a good drink.

277

I was without [...]
[...]

[...] was not [...]
[...]

278
I was [...]
[...]
you have not [...] me [...]
[...]

279
[...] not
[...]
[...]
[...]

280
[...]
[...] then
[...]

281
He has attacked me so that he takes it,
a board []
although I might have been a sick person in any place,
you have not gone to [visit me].

282
It is not I myself – although it is being said –
always [...]
your own paupers, they were
[...]

283
Don't seek any commutation from me,
[...]
since it was not with you when you were alive
[...]

284
He will bring upon them without 'but'
[...]
and he will send them afterwards
to[...]

285
The demons will be pressed/gathered at this time
[...]
because they have abandoned their lustre
[...]

286
They will go with them any [...]
[...]

because they have loved them [...]
[...]

287
Woe he who will accompany [...]
[...]
the day of wailing [...]
[...]

288
A demonic fortress [...]
[...]
[...]
[...]

289–290 missing

291
[...]
[...]
[...]
[...]

292–294 missing

295
[...]
[...]
[...]
[...]

296
[...]
[...] on the (?) [...] daughter
[...]
[...fath]er.

297
[...]
[...] daughter
[...]
[...] the good father.

298
[...]
[...] good sons.
[...]
[...]

299
[...]
[...]rebuke.
[...]

[...]es stark naked.

300

[...]

[...] (on?) his judgements.

[...]

[...] perpetual frequentation of eternal hell.

301

[...]

[...]

[...]

[...]

302

[...]

[...]

[...]

[...]

303

[...]

[...]

()

Stanza 260

While the final lines of p. 142 of the MS, and especially the lines containing st. 261, are – aside from a small tear – for the most part readily legible, it takes some effort to make sense of all the words of stanzas 260–2. The preceding passage was concerned with the signs of doom and the revenge for the passions of the saints. The stanzas immediately before the present section told of the slaying of Enoch and Elijah (st. 258) and how Archangel Michael would fight the Antichrist (st. 259). According to the Irish account of the Antichrist (Herbert & McNamara 1989: 150), the end of the world will happen three and a half years after the destruction of the Antichrist by the Archangel Michael.

For the initial section of the stanzas edited here, Blathmac draws on eschatological passages in the Bible. There are echoes of the prophecy of Zacharias 14:1–2:

1 Ecce dies ueniunt Domini, et diuidentur spolia tua in medio tui. 2 Et congregabo omnes gentes ad Hierusalem in proelium...

‘1 Behold the days of the Lord shall come, and thy spoils shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 And I will gather all nations to Jerusalem to battle,...’

and of the prophecy of Joel 2:1–2:

1 Canite tuba in Sion ululate in monte sancto meo conturbentur omnes habitatores terrae quia uenit dies Domini quia prope est 2 dies tenebrarum et caliginis dies nubis et turbis...

‘1 Blow ye the trumpet in Sion, sound an alarm in my holy mountain, let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: because the day of the Lord cometh, because it is nigh at hand, 2 a day of darkness, and of gloominess, a day of clouds and whirlwinds...’

Several key words of these passages are found in Blathmac’s poem: Sion is mentioned in st. 260, st. 260–2 are concerned with the final battle before Judgement Day, the Day of the Lord is probably referred to in st. 260. The trumpet was mentioned a bit earlier in l. 954 *sifais int aingel dagthob* ‘the angel will sound a good trumpet’. The first couplet of st. 260 develops the idea of the reward that is in store for the saints. This is based on Revelation 11:18:

18 Et iratae sunt gentes et aduenit ira tua et tempus mortuorum iudicari et reddere mercedem seruis tuis prophetis et sanctis et timentibus nomen tuum pusillis et magnis et exterminandi eos qui corruerunt terram.

‘And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest render reward to thy servants the prophets and the saints, and to them that fear thy name, little and great, and shouldest destroy them who have corrupted the earth.’

The second couplet links this idea with the notion of the cries for help and revenge of the persecuted, as expressed in Psalm 9:12–4:

12 Psallite Domino qui habitat in Sion; adnuntiate inter gentes studia eius 13 quoniam requirens sanguinem eorum recordatus est; non est oblitus clamorem pauperum. 14 Miserere mei, Domine: uide humilitatem meam de inimicis meis 15 qui exaltas me de portis mortis ut adnuntiem omnes laudationes tuas in portis filiae Sion.

‘12 Sing ye to the Lord, who dwelleth in Sion: declare his ways among the Gentiles: 13 For requiring their blood he hath remembered them: he hath not forgotten the cry of the poor. 14 Have mercy on me, O Lord: see my humiliation which I suffer from my enemies. 15 Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion.’

All these passages vary the themes of judgement, battles and the day of judgement, but Blathmac does not simply follow any of them directly. Instead, he combines passages and paraphrases them to create a pastiche of biblical imagery.

An entirely different proposal for this stanza has been made by a reader. This alternative will be presented and extensively discussed in one block at the end of this section.

1037 *ar at-tát*: We analyse MS *attat* as the 3pl. of the substantive verb *at-tát* ‘they are’, preceded by the conjunction *ar* ‘since, because’. Although in most cases Blathmac maintains hiatus in verbal forms, his treatment of hiatus seems to be so arbitrary (cf. Stifter 2015: 72–6) that the contracted variant *at-tát* is in the realm of plausibility. The expected form *at-taat* with hiatus occurs in l. 471. Other

alternatives, e.g., reading an otherwise unattested compound verb **ar-attat* (from *att* ‘swelling’?) are considerably less satisfying. Constructions with the verbs *ar-tá* ‘to be before; to be in store for’ or *ar-tét* ‘to compensate for’ do not work for syntactic or morphological reasons.

laithe rígdæ: There is a small tear in the MS around the words *laiti rioġda*, but no better reading suggests itself. The middle consonant of *rioġda* could also be a *i*, but the sense would require an emendation to *rígdæ* anyway. We interpret *laithe rígdæ* ‘royal day’ as a temporal accusative ‘on the day of the Lord’, a reference to the Old Testament prophecies cited above. Elsewhere in the *Poems of Blathmac*, Judgement Day is called *llaithe mesa* ‘day of judgement’ (l. 1050), *bráth* ‘judgement’ (ll. 472, 525) and *laithe na mórúanae* ‘day of the great harvest’ (l. 1054). Another variation is, for example, found in *Saltair na Rann*, namely *laithe na lánchaingen* ‘the day of full law-suits’ (l. 8225).

1038: *donaib nóebaib a ndagdílæ*: This line is octosyllabic. There is no possibility to reduce the syllable count, unless one were prepared to take the extreme measure of emending *do* for *donaib*, or to delete the possessive pronoun *a*. Either is clearly written in the MS and required by the sense. The legal term *dil* ‘requit, recompense, retribution; atonement, reparation; satisfaction, sufficiency; act of satisfying (a debt), paying’ in the plural compound noun *dagdílæ* seems to be used here to translate the singular Lat. *merces* ‘reward’ of Revelation 11:18 mentioned at the beginning. *Rígdæ* of line a does not make perfect rhyme with *dagdílæ*, but Blathmac occasionally permits himself poetic licences of this sort (Carney 1964: xxxii). Under this interpretation, the word order of the first couplet is V – NP_{temp.} – PP – S. While this deviates from the expected order where the subject should come immediately after the verb, Blathmac does occasionally display a certain freedom in the scrambling of constituents (Stifter 2015: 99–100).

1039: *bith sí dígde dér a mbróin*: The phrase *dígde a mbróin* occurs also in Blathmac’s first poem, ll. 375–6. A reader draws attention to the fact that in both passages the meaning ‘compensation’ fits better than the primary meaning ‘deprecating (anger), asking pardon, praying forgiveness; beseeching’ given in eDIL s.v. *dígde* dil.ie/16311. All examples of ‘compensation’ are recorded in eDIL under the separate headword *díge* dil.ie/16313, but the suggestion is made there that it is “perh. the same word as *dígde*”, which is surely correct according to the reader. Ll. 375–6 of Blathmac’s *Poems luid dano do dígdi a mbróin | dia cachtuir i mBaibilóin* can therefore be understood as ‘he went, indeed, to compensate for their sorrow | from their captivity in Babilon’. This phrase has also a close parallel in a marginal poem to AU 516 (*recte* 517), *digal dia seacht mbliadan | ba sí dígde a chridhe* ‘vengeance after seven years’ time, | it was the compensation of his heart’, although ‘prayer of his heart’ would make equally good sense. The quatrain from which these lines are taken is not contemporary with the events of 517 A.D. to which it refers, but has the appearance of normal Old Irish of the 8th or 9th century (Qiu forthc.). Another parallel, *ba sí dígde Dé* (Murphy 1956: 20 st. 4), probably contains a jussive subjunctive. Murphy (1956: 21) translates ‘let God’s pardon be sought thus’. In light of the above argument, ‘let it [i.e. the contents of the three preceding lines] be the compensation of (= from) God’ is also a viable translation. Another parallel between the latter poem, *M’óenurán im airiúclán*, and Blathmac’s *Poems* is the use of the expression *cen acht* (see commentary on l. 1133). Murphy (1956: 178–9) assigns this poem to the 8th or 9th centuries.

dér a mbróin: In the Old Testament, tears are a stock ingredient of the laments and supplications made by the suppressed and persecuted to God, e.g. Isaiah 38:5, Lamentations 2:18.

1040: *in mórchath Sléibe Síoin*: From usages such as in Joel 2:1 mentioned above, where Sion, properly a hill beside Jerusalem, is mentioned in eschatological contexts, the idea could arise that it would serve as the site for the final battle. For instance, in the *Fifteen Tokens of Doomsday*, the location of the gathering on the day before Doom is at Mount Sion.

IS é airrdina an láe ria mbrath .i. rí idhan na hinogbála .i. énnac ri[g] nimi 7 talman 7 ithfrinn, co n-imut diarme aingil 7 arcainigl nime .i. nói ngraidh nimi, ina choimidecht co mullacch sleibhi Síoin do mes a ngnim. idir maith 7 olc. ar cloimn eisidhain Adhaimh isin lo sin.

‘This is the token of the day before doom, to wit, the pure King of Glory, the only son of the King of heaven, earth and hell, with a countless multitude of angels and archangels, to wit, the nine ranks of heaven, in His company (will go) on that day to the summit of Mount Zion to judge their deeds, both good and evil, for Adam’s impure children.’ (Stokes 1907: 314–5 §19)

1037–40: Instead of the interpretation discussed in the foregoing, a reader recommends the following emendation of the stanza:

*Ar at-tá tláithe rígdæ
donaib nóebaib dagdíglæ;
bith sí dígde dér a mbróin
in mórchath Sléibe Sióin.*

for which the proposed translation is:

‘For there is the royal consolation of goodly vengeance for the saints; the great battle at Mount Zion will be compensation for the tears of their sorrow.’

This alternative involves the separation of MS *attat laiti* into *at-tá tláithe*, which has the advantage over our proposal of avoiding the contraction of the hiatus of 3pl. *at-taät* to *at-tát*. The meaning of *tláithe* in eDIL dil.ie/41009 is ‘feebleness, weakness’; it occurs with this negative meaning earlier in the second Poem of Blathmac, in l. 925 *is flaith do maic cen tláithi* ‘it is the kingdom/rule of your son without weakness’. The reader suggests that in the present context, however, it is used with the meaning ‘consolation’ as in the derivative verb *tláthaigid* ‘to console, appease’. In the second line, the possessive pronoun *a* together with its nasalisation *n-* before the following word has to be deleted, and for the MS’s *dagdila dagdíglæ* ‘of goodly vengeance’ is emended, which gives a neat rhyme with *rígdæ*. This emendation also chimes in with the emphasis on revenge in the preceding section, namely *bethus dígal dígrais dé* ‘they shall have unassailable vengeance of it’ (l. 1023), *dosfé in soismid slúagach* ‘the leader of hosts will avenge them’ (l. 1027), and *fuil cach noib do-fíästar* ‘the blood of every saint will be avenged’ (l. 1032). For *dígede* in the third line, the reader argues for the translation ‘compensation’ in line with what has already been discussed and adopted above in the commentary on l. 1039.

This alternative proposal has a number of strengths (reading *at-tá* for *at-tát*; linking the stanza with the theme of vengeance that is so prominent in the immediately preceding section; achieving a perfect rhyme between *rígdæ* and *dagdíglæ*), none of which, however, clinches the argument incontrovertibly in its favour. At the same time, there are also some weaknesses. eDIL dil.ie/41013 cites no examples of the verb *tláthaigid* in the meaning ‘to console’ from texts earlier than the Middle Irish period. The genitive *dagdíglæ* ‘of goodly vengeance’ at the end of l. 1038 depends on *tláithe* ‘consolation’ in the middle of the preceding l. 1037. Such a wide tmesis of the constituents of a nominal phrase (as opposed to the scrambling of the basic constituents of a sentence) is very unusual. No other example in the Poems of Blathmac springs to mind. Finally, this alternative proposal necessitates a number of emendations, whereas our own interpretation avoids any interference with the transmitted text, apart from trivial adaptations of the endings.

In the final analysis, both interpretations of st. 260 have arguments in their favour and in their disfavour. We have decided to retain our original proposal with minor adaptations, but the alternative must also be taken into consideration.

Stanza 261

The first couplet prophesies Christ’s victory in the final battle. The precise relationship of the second couplet to the first remains uncertain, but it is clear that it speaks about the final judgement that will be meted out to men and demons alike. To make sense of the stanza as a whole, one probably must not interpret each couplet as a separate unit, with a syntactic break between them, but rather line a serves as a forethought, and the adverbial phrase in line b already belongs together with lines c and d as the main idea of the stanza. Parts of the train of thought remain unexpressed. The stanza can be paraphrased perhaps as ‘even if the king of kings is victor [he will not act like a tyrant]; [therefore] it is not through violence of untruthfulness that everyone of men and demons on whom the truth [of Christ’s judgement] falls finds themselves [judged]’. Perhaps an alternative solution for the illegible first word of line b (here read as *[ní t]re*) will eventually produce a more satisfactory interpretation.

1041: *ce ru-má ré ríg na ríg*. The allomorph *ru-* for *ro-* in pretonic position is only found rarely in Blathmac’s Poems. Aside from the present line, it occurs in *ru:fes* (l. 35), *ru-llá* (l. 440) and *ó ru-llá* (l. 706). Note that in two of the four instances it occurs in positions where, as Thurneysen phrases it, it

“has the minimum amount of stress [...] between a particle and the verb” (GOI 63; cf. also Stifter 2014, especially 217–32). *má* is the 3sg. s-subjunctive of *maidid* ‘to break’. The logical subject of this sentence, namely *cath* ‘battle’, is not expressed, but it is in the following stanza in l. 1045.

1042: *[ní t]re forndecht ná anfir*: The reading of the first word of the second line is problematic. While the final *-re* of the word is readily visible, only the tips of three minims before that can be seen projecting out of a large blot that has obscured most of the text. Additionally, traces of the minims can be seen shining through the blot. This could be an *i*, but the free space between the *m* and the *r* is comparatively wide, so that it is not impossible that the minim actually belongs to an *a*, as Ní Shéagh-dha read it, followed by a now invisible *i*. However, the resulting nominative *Maire* makes no sense in the sentence; within the fictional setting of the poem – the poet speaking to the Virgin Mary – the name could only serve as a phatic interjection, but for its formally correct expression in Old Irish grammar, namely the vocative, the necessary vocative particle *a* is missing. Apart from one dative in a narrative context (l. 75), all other 24 occurrences of *Maire* in Blathmac’s Poems are in the vocative. The alternative reading *mire* ‘madness, frenzy’ would agree semantically with the other two abstract nouns of the line, namely *forndecht* ‘violence’ and *anfir* ‘untruth’, but in this way the line would remain syntactically isolated within the stanza. Therefore we suggest the emendation *[ní t]re* ‘it is not through’. Cf. *tri oirndnecht no nimbrathe* (Gwynn 1914: 142 §13), if this stands for *tri foirndecht na n-imráite* ‘through violence of thoughts’, as suggested by Binchy’s “per violentiam (?) cogitationum” (in Bieler 1975: 263). Reading MS *na* as the disjunctive conjunction *ná* ‘nor’ necessitates a negative particle at the beginning of the line.

1043: *os cách*: Following a reader’s suggestion, we take MS *as* to stand for *os*, preceding an absolute nominative (Binchy 1960: 78–9). Reading the copula is instead produces syntactically awkward sentences.

1043: *con-abboing fir f[air]* (the *-air* of *fair* secured by the rhyme with *demmaib*) is an instance of a prepositional relative construction with stranded preposition (for which see Ó hUiginn 2013), instead of the regular OIr. construction *fora-comboing* [-kouboŋ’g’]. Another example of a relative with stranded preposition, which is very rare in Old Irish, but becomes more common in the modern Gaelic languages, is found in l. 323 of Blathmac’s Poems (Stifter 2015: 100), namely *nacha-rultis námait lais* ‘on account of which the enemies could not chase them’ in a negative construction. The present relative clause is positive. The reading *con-abboing*, relative augmented 3sg. present of *con-boing*, for MS *ca boing* is to be preferred over *conna-boing*. The augment expresses potentiality here.

1044: *do doínib ocus demmaib*: The prediction that judgments will be delivered both on men and on demons on Doomsday is borne out further down in the poem, especially in the very fragmentary stanzas from 284 onwards.

Stanza 262

1045: *cruth memas*: *Cruth* is the independent dative of *cruth* ‘form, shape’ used as the conjunction ‘how, in the manner in which’. Since this entails a nasalising relative clause, the reading of the following verb as *memas* with a relative ending is adopted here, although the form in the MS could also be read as *meabais* = normalised *memais* with a grammatically unexpected non-relative ending.

ré Críst: Christ is here identified as the battle leader and is implicitly equated with the ‘king of kings’ mentioned in l. 1041.

1046: *ní don-fét nach deimmetach*: This line which is perfectly legible in the MS is problematic. In the interpretation of the line, we follow a suggestion by Liam Breatnach (pers. comm.). MS *don feith* is taken as a spelling (corrupted by a copyist who did not understand the form) for *don-fét*, i.e. the verb *do-fét* ‘to tell, relate, show’ with a 1pl. infixed pronoun. Other interpretations, such as *do-feith* ‘to come, to go’ (eDIL *do-feth*), or *do-feid* (eDIL *do-fed*) ‘to lead, escort; take precedence over’, do not yield sufficiently good sense. Even less likely is the hypothesis that *nidon* is the negative of the copula + infixed pronoun 1pl. class C, in which case *feith* would have to represent the predicate of the copula clause. None of the multiple etymons of *feith*, *féith*, *feth* or *féth* fit the context. The verb *do-fét*, for which eDIL has no separate headword, but which it includes as a variant with preverbal substitution in the entry *ad-fét*, occurs one more time in Blathmac’s Poems, namely in l. 69. There it con-

strues, just like its more prominent ‘sibling’ *ad-fét*, with the preposition *do* to express the indirect object, whereas in the present line the infixed pronoun fulfils this function.

Ní is the neuter indefinite pronoun in its specialised use for ‘thing’, recorded in eDIL under dil.ie/33146, followed by a relative clause. *nach* is the 3sg. present dependent negative of the copula, *deimmetach* ‘impatient, hasty’ which provides the predicate of the clause.

1047: *co mbreith fír fora gním cert*: Following the recommendation of a reader, we understand *fír* as the genitive singular of *fer* ‘man’. If it were taken as the adjective *fír* ‘true’, the possessive *a* of the object of judgement would have to refer back to *cách* ‘everyone’ of the previous stanza, for lack of any suitable referend within the stanza. However, since *cách* encompasses ‘men and demons’ (ll. 1043–4), this would imply that judgment would also be passed on demons, which can hardly be the case.

1048: *co miadamlae meisemnacht*: *Miadamlae* ‘honour, dignity, glory’, here interpreted as ‘honourable behaviour’ following a reader’s recommendation, is a preposed genitive. Here it probably underlines the notion that Christ’s judgement will be objective, i.e. depending only on how honourably a person has led his life. Alternatively, the abstract *miadamlae* could stand in for the adjective *miadamail* and refer to the ‘dignified act of judging’ by Christ. In this and the following stanzas, Blathmac uses a variety of words to refer to ‘judgement’ and the ‘act of judging’: *breth*, *bráth*, *mes*, *meisemnacht*. These may variously refer to the judicial process and to the result of the deliberation, but which is meant in a given line cannot always be decided. Likewise, the English translation does not always bring out the subtle distinctions, if the poet intended there to be any.

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Stanza 263

1049: *ol is*: The information regarding the syntax of the conjunction *ol* is confusing in the way it is present in GOI, and misleading in eDIL. While Thurneysen rightly states that “The causal conjunctions **fo bíth**, **dég** and **ol** [...] are followed by a nasalizing relative clause” in GOI 318, the examples he provides later in the chapter on causal conjunctions in GOI 559 only consist of non-relative forms of the copula. eDIL (dil.ie/33757), on the other hand, states that *ol* is “foll[owe]d by absol[ute] form of v[er]b (rel[ative] form in 3 s[ingular of the] cop[ula])”.¹¹ Almost all examples quoted by eDIL dil.ie/33757, including the copula, are indeed non-relative, even though *all* verbs after *ol* ‘because’ in the Old Irish glosses that allow a formal distinction are relative (Ml. 29c10, 67d12 (leniting relative clause), 86d3, 91a10, 97d1, 101c16, 105d9; Sg. 40a16), with the one exception of Sg. 167a4 *ol atá*. In the case of the copula, both relative (Ml. 76a4, 121c15; Sg. 25b8, 90a7) and non-relative forms (Wb. 6c8, 13a13, 32a6; Ml. 56c17; Sg. 75b5 (2×)) are found. The MS reading *as* for the present line is ambiguous. Of the 84 occurrences of *as* in the MS, 79 stand for non-relative *is*, and only 4 represent the relative form. In comparison, the spelling *is* is rare in the MS, 11 times representing non-relative *is*, 3 times representing relative *as*. When followed by a relative construction, one might expect causal *ol* to require a nasalising dependent clause (cf. GOI 318) which should result in **nísu* in the present case. Weighing up all the evidence, it was decided to read *as* as the non-relative form here. See l. 1083 for *ol* + negative verbs.

miastar: The verb has to be read with two syllables here, as against l. 1066 where it has the expected hiatus *miāstar* < **mi-yes-* < **mi-yes-* < **mi-mes-* and counts for three syllables.

1050: *fria fírbráth*: This phrase, as it is transmitted in the MS, is made up of four autosemantic syllables. In order to arrive at the correct syllable count for the line, while at the same time avoiding to have to interfere with the fundamentally straightforward text, we suggest to contract the phrase to two syllables, approximately *fírbráth*. Alternatives to this highly unusual proposal have been recommended by a reader, namely to delete *fria* and to read *fírbráth* either as an independent dative (‘Jesus ... will judge everyone ... by his true judgement’) or to read *fír bráth* as two words. In the latter case, the

¹¹ The way how it is presented seems to imply that ‘non-relative’ is meant where the author of the lemma speaks of “absolute”.

resultant parisyllabic rhyme *cách* : *bráth* (*deibide nguilbnech*), although rare, has parallels in the Poems of Blathmac (ll. 267–8 *Dé* : *cé*; ll. 269–70 *cem* : *tem*; ll. 873–4 *tríst* : *Crist*). The reason why we do not adopt this recommendation is that Blathmac does not otherwise use independent datives with instrumental meaning. On the other hand, *fri* with various instrumental or local connotations is common in these poems (e.g. ll. 210, 261, 486, 543).

1051: *céin-mair firíonda*: In Blathmac's Poems, the verbal idiom *céin-mair*, translated in eDIL s.v. *maraid* dil.ie/31563as 'long lives, hence happy, fortunate', construes with the accusative: *céin-mair in macraid* (l. 81), *céin-mair cech ndúil* (l. 535); if *canais-moir* (l. 133, *sic* MS) can be read as *céin-us-mair*, the logical subject of the sentence is expressed by an object infix pronoun. In *céin-do-mair* (*sic?*, MS *cein do mhair*, l. 825), however, it looks as if a possessive pronoun has been infix. This reflects a tendency to reinterpret *mair* as a noun, cf. *cenmair ina fláith* 'prosperity in his reign' (*Baile in Scáil* 27), or *cen mo mair* .i. *cēn a cena, mair uita* [...] .i. *is fleth [= fled] mo betha* 'cen mo mair, that is, cen from [Lat.] *cena* 'meal', *mair* [means] life ..., i.e. my life is a feast' (OM 218). In ll. 533 and 725 the subject is expressed through a headless relative clause. While the case of *firíonda* cannot be determined, the second conjoined subject *cach n-óen* in l. 1052 is unambiguously marked as accusative.

MS *firiōn* can either be understood as containing an *n*-stroke or an suspension stroke. The reading *firiōnn* with geminate *m* would be both isolated in Irish literature, and leave the line one syllable short of the required 7. A trisyllabic reading **firiōn* is unlikely, cf. disyllabic *firián* in stanza 25 of *Tiughraind Bhécáin* (Kelly 1975: 86). Therefore it has been expanded as the acc.sg. *firíonda* 'righteous, holy' (eDIL s.v. *firénda*, *firénta*).

in tan: *Tan* 'time' is three times (l. 567, 1137, and here) used by Blathmac not as the conjunction corresponding to English 'when', but as a meaningful noun. In all three instances, it occurs in rhyming and therefore stressed position. The lack of palatalisation, which is confirmed by rhyme in two of the three instances (in the third, the rhyming word is missing), but which goes against the expected temporal dative or accusative of an *ā*-stem, suggests that synchronically the form may have been felt to be a nominative.

1052: *trócar*: The spelling of *trócar* with the apparent diphthong *au* in MS *travcar* is a hypercorrection and as such out of character with the rest of the MS text of the poems. For instance, *gó* 'falsehood, lie' (ll. 426, 675, 703, 842, 857) is never found in archaic orthography as *gau*. It is always in a rhyming position with *o*, usually a genitive in *-o*, which secures the spelling. The promise of happy life in eternity for the just and the merciful is reminiscent of the Beatitudes, especially Mt 5:7 *Beati misericordes: quoniam ipsi misericordiam consequentur* 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy'.

Stanza 264

From the brief account of the final battle in st. 260–262, Blathmac moves on to a long section of the poem that is devoted to the final judgement. It is based on an amalgamation of two originally unconnected passages from the Gospel of Matthew, namely the *Parable of the Wheat and the Tares* and *The Judgement*. Both sections describe the Son of Man associated with angels at the end of time, which may have been one factor to associate the two parables and equate their metaphors, i.e. the wheat/tares on the one hand, and the sheep/goats on the other (pers. comm. Elliott Lash). The *Parable of the Wheat and the Tares*,¹² which is the starting point for the two quatrains 264 and 265, is found at Mt 13:24–30:

24 *Aliam parabolam proposuit illis dicens: Simile factum est regnum caelorum homini qui seminavit bonum semen in agro suo. 25 Cum autem dormirent homines, uenit inimicus eius et superseminavit zizania in medio tritici et abiit. 26 Cum autem creuisset herba et fructum fecisset, tunc apparuerunt et zizania. 27 Accedentes autem serui patris familias dixerunt ei: Domine, nonne bonum semen seminasti in agro tuo? Unde ergo habet zizania? 28 Et ait illis: Inimicus homo hoc fecit. Serui autem dixerunt ei: Vis, imus et colligimus ea. 29 Et ait: Non, ne forte colligentes zizania, eradicetis simul*

¹² The Douay-Rheims translation of the Vulgate uses the English term cockles instead of tares.

cum eis et triticum. 30 Sinite utraque crescere usque ad messem et in tempore messis dicam messoribus: Colligite primum zizania et alligate ea fasciculos ad comburendum; triticum autem congregate in horreum meum.

‘24 Another parable he proposed to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seeds in his field. 25 But while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his way. 26 And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. 27 And the servants of the goodman of the house coming said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it cockle? 28 And he said to them: An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? 29 And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. 30 Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.’

The meaning of this parable is explicitly explained shortly afterwards in Mt 13:36–43:

36 Tunc dimissis turbis uenit in domum et accesserunt ad eum discipuli eius dicentes: Dissere nobis parabolam zizaniorum agri. 37 Qui respondens ait: Qui seminat bonum semen, est Filius hominis. 38 Ager autem est mundus. Bonum uero semen, hii sunt filii regni. Zizania autem filii sunt nequam. 39 Inimicus autem qui seminavit ea est diabolus. Messis uero consummatio saeculi est. Messores autem angeli sunt. 40 Sicut ergo colliguntur zizania et igni conburuntur: sic erit in consummatione saeculi.

‘36 Then having sent away the multitudes, he came into the house, and his disciples came to him, saying: Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field. 37 Who made answer and said to them: He that soweth the good seed, is the Son of man. 38 And the field, is the world. And the good seed are the children of the kingdom. And the cockle, are the children of the wicked one. 39 And the enemy that sowed them, is the devil. But the harvest is the end of the world. And the reapers are the angels. 40 Even as cockle therefore is gathered up, and burnt with fire: so shall it be at the end of the world.’

The *Parable of the Wheat and the Tares* has also parallels with the *Separation of Wheat and Chaff* (Mt 3:12).

Cuius uentilabrum in manu sua; et permundabit aream suam et congregabit triticum suum in horreum, paleas autem comburet igni inextinguibili.

‘Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.’

The prophecy of the *Judgement* comes immediately before Christ’s Passion in Mt 25:31–46:

31 Cum autem uenerit Filius hominis in maiestate sua et omnes angeli cum eo, tunc sedebit super sedem maiestatis suae. 32 Et congregabuntur ante eum omnes gentes et separabit eos ab inuicem, sicut pastor segregat oues ab hedis. 33 Et statuet oues quidem a dextris suis, hedos autem a sinistris. 34 Tunc dicet rex his qui a dextris eius erunt: Venite, benedicti Patris mei, possidete paratum uobis regnum a constitutione mundi. 35 Esuriui enim et dedistis mihi manducare; sitiui et dedistis mihi bibere; hospes eram et collexistis me; 36 nudus et operuistis me; infirmus et uisitastis me; in carcere eram et uenistis ad me. 37 Tunc respondebunt ei iusti dicentes: Domine, quando te uidimus esurientem et pauimus; sitientem et dedimus tibi potum? 38 Quando autem te uidimus hospitem et colleximus te; aut nudum et cooperuimus? 39 Aut quando te uidimus infirmum aut in carcere et uenimus ad te? 40 Et respondens rex dicet illis: Amen dico uobis, quamdiu fecistis uni de his fratribus meis minimis, mihi fecistis. 41 Tunc dicet et his qui a sinistris erunt: Discedite a me maledicti in ignem aeternum qui paratus est diabolo et angelis eius. 42 Esuriui enim et non dedistis mihi manducare; sitiui et non dedistis mihi potum; 43 hospes eram et non collexistis me; nudus et non operuistis me; infirmus et in carcere et non uisitastis me. 44 Tunc respondebunt et ipsi dicentes: Domine, quando te uidimus esurientem aut sitientem aut hospitem aut nudum aut infirmum uel in carcere et non ministrauimus tibi? 45 Tunc respondebit illis dicens: Amen dico uobis: Quamdiu non fecistis uni de minoribus his nec mihi fecistis. 46 Et ibunt hii in supplicium aeternum; iusti autem in uitam aeternam.

‘31 And when the Son of man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit upon the seat of his majesty. 32 And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. 34 Then shall the king say to them that shall be on his right hand: Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from

the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in: 36 Naked, and you covered me: sick, and you visited me: I was in prison, and you came to me. 37 Then shall the just answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, and fed thee; thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 And when did we see thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and covered thee? 39 Or when did we see thee sick or in prison, and came to thee? 40 And the king answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me. 41 Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. 43 I was a stranger, and you took me not in: naked, and you covered me not: sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. 44 Then they also shall answer him, saying: Lord, when did we see thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to thee? 45 Then he shall answer them, saying: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me. 46 And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just, into life everlasting.’

In both the biblical account and in Blathmac’s narrative agricultural metaphors, especially connected with cereal-processing, play a central role. For cereal-processing in Ireland, with which Blathmac would probably have been familiar, see the description in Kelly (1997: 240–2).

1053: *Is [é] biäs band mbúada*: The line is a syllable short and asyntactical in the MS. By introducing the subject pronoun *é* after the copula, a frequent construction in Blathmac’s Poems, a smooth sentence is arrived at. *Biäs* is the relative 3sg. reduplicated future of *benaid* ‘to strike’. Blathmac uses a similar phrase earlier in line 378 of the first poem, *ba óen dia búadaib primband* ‘it was one of his victories of eminent deeds’, featuring the plural of *búaid*.

1054: *mórbúana*: Following Stüber (2015: 116, 208), the genitive singular *búana* is here taken to be that of an *i*-stem *búain*, replacing earlier *búano*. Accordingly, the rhyming word *búada* also has to be a genitive singular, replacing earlier *búado*. The ending *-a* may have been introduced mechanically during the textual transmission so that *-o* may have been written for both words in the original (cf. Stifter 2015: 71). An alternative solution is to emend the genitive plural *búadae* (cf. the plural *búadaib* in l. 378) and the *ā*-stem genitive singular *búanae*. Pace Stüber (2015: 116), the genitive singular *búana* in Sg. 62b10 (and in *Thes.* ii 334.3) does not prove an *i*-stem. Innovative *-a* occurs ten times as the ending of the genitive singular of *ā*-stems in the St Gall glosses (11a1 (2×), 63b5, 66b24, 78b3, 88.3, 137b9, 193b2, 207b9, 207b24), against eleven instances of conservative *-ae*. In the case of *jo*- and *ǰā*-stem nouns and adjectives, the statistics are almost equally equivocal: beside 111 examples of *-ae*, there are 92 instances of *-a* where the ending *-ae* would be expected in Early Old Irish.¹³ Thurneysen’s idea that the verbal noun of *bongaid* was the *ā*-stem *búan* is accordingly still valid.

1055: *etar-scarfaider*: The verb *scaraid* ‘to separate’, which dominates the following stanzas as a *leitmotif*, appears here for the first time in the compound *etar-scara* ‘to separate’. *Etar-scara* construes with the preposition *fri* already in Wb. 8b3 or Ml. 79b2.

bert: eDIL dil.ie/5735, as well as Irlinger (2002: 391), give the gender and stem-class of *bert* as a feminine *ā*-stem, but also as a masculine *o*-stem. Since it has to be the subject of the passive verb here, the nasalisation after *cach*, if original to the text, shows that it is neuter. The divergent genders and stem-classes in later Irish sources are then a consequence of the loss of the neuter. However, since, as a reader points out, *cach* tends to nasalise any noun in later Irish (cf. the introductory comments in eDIL dil.ie/7528), it is not excluded that the nasalisation was introduced during the transmission of the text.

1056: Blathmac’s expression *corcae cuindfech* ‘empty oats’ is a literal translation of *auena fatua* ‘wild oat’ (Kelly 1997: 234), the Classical Latin name for a group of wild, economically valueless grains that can cause a significant reduction in the yield of crop fields. Since this plant is very similar to cultivated crops, it cannot be easily removed from the field. The best way to deal with it is to allow it to grow to maturity along with the wheat and then separate and destroy it at harvest time. The plural

¹³ Statistics extracted from Bernhard Bauer’s database of the St Gall Priscian Glosses, URL: <http://www.stgallpriscian.ie/forms.php>.

of the adjective *cuintbecha* on its own glosses *auenae* in the Philargyrius glosses on Vergil's *Eclogues* (*Thes.* ii 48.26; 363. V.37), where it is in turn glossed by *zizania*. *Zizania*, the word used for the weed in the Vulgate, is a borrowing from Greek. It is traditionally translated into English as 'tares' or 'weeds'. In the following stanzas 265 and 270, Blathmac – rather unfortunately – uses *corcae* without the qualifying adjective in the specific sense of 'tares', thus mirroring the usage of the Philargyrius commentary where the simplex *auenae*, normally 'oats', refers to weed, and not to crop.

cruithmecht: The ending of *c'itne[* is concealed in the binding of the MS, but the rhyme with *mbert* and the continuing theme make *cruithmecht* the obvious solution.

Stanza 265

This stanza and 266 paraphrase Matthew 3:12 (see above).

1057: *foiḍfid fo thúaid*: *Fo thúaid*, which usually means 'north(wards)', is here doubtless used in the sense of 'to the left', translating Mt. 25:33 *a sinistris* 'to the left'.

crúaid costud: The cheville 'hard (is the) gathering' serves as a negative comment on the foregoing.

1058: *in corcae dia ógloscud*: *Ógloscud* is an equivalent of Greek 'holocaust'. However, whereas a holocaust in the ancient Greek sense is an offering of one's entire possession in a situation of ultimate need, with the hope of divine intervention in one's favour, here (as in the modern use of the term) the 'complete burning' is a term of destruction and punishment.

1059: *fora leth ndes*: MS *leith ndeis* has perhaps arisen under influence from the feminine word *deis* 'right-hand side'. In l. 1069, the rhyme proves that *des* has to be read, and accordingly this has been emended here as well.

comrád cert: The favourable sense of the cheville 'fitting conversation' contrasts with the negative one in l. 1057.

1060: *do·bérthar leis a chruithmecht*: The MS has *dob̄t* which at a first glance seems to be *do·breth* 'was brought'. Since this makes neither sense chronologically (the future is expected, not the preterite), nor metrically (the line is a syllable short), we emend the future passive *do·bérthar*. We assume that in the exemplar this had been abbreviated as *dob̄t*. The copyist missed the second suspension stroke by a slip of the eye which produced the extant form.

Stanza 266

In the processing of cereal, the step after collecting the sheaves on the field is threshing, which frees the grains from the straw which can then be removed. This happens at the drying-kiln (Kelly 1997: 240–1). The Irish word for the threshing floor is *ithland*, a compound of *ith* 'grain' and *land* 'land, ground; building', which has exact cognates in OW *itlann*, W *ydlan*. Threshing is followed by winnowing which separates the chaff (*cáith*) and the awn (*colg*) from the wheat. In winnowing, the grain, which is still polluted by small particles, is thrown into the air with the help of a winnowing fan. The wind carries off the unwanted light particles, whereas the heavy grains fall to the ground again. This stanza describes this process, continuing the paraphrase of Matthew 3:12 as outlined above in Stanza 265.

1061: *scarfaid*: The writing is very faint. We considered the alternative reading *scanfaid*, the future of an unattested verb **scannaid* 'to winnow'. The compound verb *fo·scanna* 'to toss, shake, winnow' appears to lend support to such a notion, as well as the nouns *scann* 'membrane, winnowing fan', *scannán* 'membrane, film'. However, appearances can be deceptive. The nouns seem to be attested only in the modern Gaelic languages and are probably loans from Old Norse *skán* 'bark, crust' (LEIA S-33), itself related to *skinn* 'skin'. Contrary to VKG ii 613, the root of *fo·scanna* and *do·inscanna* 'to begin' is probably that also found in *sceimmid* 'to jump', i.e. PIE **skend-* 'to leap, jump' (LIV 554, KP 574–5, LEIA S-32). For the present line, it suffices to operate with the verb *scaraid* 'to separate', specifically since this ties stanzas 264–7 together like a *leitmotif*: wheat and tares, grain and chaff, sheep and goats will all be separated, like the blessed and the sinners will be separated from another before the final judge.

Sin occurs here in its rare use as the temporal adverb ‘then’. Other instances in Blathmac’s Poems are in ll. 487, 509, 977 and 1085.

1062: *fria findud*: The line breaks off abruptly. For once, the loss of text is not due to damage to the paper, but the scribe left a section intentionally blank. While the reason for this remains obscure, it may be speculated that already his exemplar showed the loss of text here. If this was the case, it can be further speculated that this passage stood on the last folio of the exemplar which may have carried signs of wear on its outer folios. Depending on whether *fria* ‘for their’ has to be read with one or two syllables, three or four syllables are missing from the line, among them a di- or trisyllabic rhyme with *cáith*. Combinations of vowel-final prepositions + possessive pronouns can be mono- or disyllabic in Blathmac’s language, depending on the metrical need (Stifter 2015: 74 fn. 92). eDIL dil.ie/22144 records only one other instance of the verbal noun *finnad/findud*, in the Early Modern Irish tale of *Cath Maighe Léna* (Jackson 1938: 56 fn. 1). Notwithstanding the lack of some words, the context suggests that the meaning of *findud* here was ‘act of finding out’. This example may indicate that for the meaning ‘to find out’, the verbal noun of *ro·finnadar* was the innovative *findud* already in Old Irish, whereas the inherited *fius* was reserved for the much more frequent usage ‘to know’.

1063: †[*do*] *coiser*†: *Coiser* or *cosser* is comparatively securely legible, although the *c* is very faint. The metre requires another syllable for the line. The page layout is such that there is space for approximately two letters before *coiser*, but the present condition of the MS does not allow us to determine which they are. With the reading *do* we tentatively follow the proposal by Ní Shéaghda, although it is not clear whether she actually saw anything or just followed her instinct. Finding a satisfactory analysis for [*do*] *coiser* has proved challenging. If, as is usual with Blathmac, a strong syntactical break occurs between the two couplets of the stanza, it follows that *coiser* must be part of a finite verb, of which *in Coimdiu* is the subject. For a finite verb, an additional preverb such as *do·* is necessary to account for the apparent ‘prototonic’ appearance of *·coiser*. The context makes one expect a future verb. A form of *con·serm* ‘to spread out, strew’, or of a further compound thereof, would be semantically attractive in the context of the deposition of grain in the barn, but no appropriate form is morphologically justifiable. As far as we can see, no future forms of the verb *sernaid* or its compounds are attested in Old Irish (cf. the absence of relevant forms in KP 601). This is a very striking gap. Clearly, there can be no semantic factor that would block the creation of a future of *sernaid*. From the point of view of verbal stem formation, a long *é*-future would be expected (McCone 1997: 48). MS *coiser* could stand for *coiséir*, but this has the appearance of the first person singular, whereas a third person **coiséra* is expected. An emendation to *con·séra* would produce a morphologically correct form, while at the same time filling the syllable count for the line, but it would mean a significant deviation from what the MS has. A formation from the H3 verb *sreid* ‘to scatter, hurl, cast’, which would have an *f*-future, is excluded. Analysing *coiser* as a nominal form, probably preceded by a preposition, leads to no satisfying solution either. Ll. 1063–4 would be left with a very awkward syntactical structure. Furthermore, the nominal formation based on the compound *con·ser-* is *cossar* with a non-palatalised *s*, even where syncope occurs. In conclusion, for want of a better solution, we translate this difficult form as ‘he will spread out’, simply because the context leaves hardly an alternative, but we put [*do*] *coiser* between cruces.

cruithnechtae claind: *Cruithnechtae* is a preposed genitive, *claind* is used in its original meaning ‘plant, produce of a plant’, like in l. 772 and, metaphorically, in l. 402. In l. 597 *A Maire a grían ar clainde* ‘Mary, son of our children’, the first line of the second poem, it occurs in its better known transferred meaning.

1064: *in Coimdiu*: The MS has *coimde* which could formally be a short dative of *Coimdiu*, or a genitive *Coimded* of which the final consonant was lost. Neither is syntactically satisfactory, and we interpret *in Coimdiu* as the subject of the couplet.

inna ithlaind: The last two or three letters of *ithlaind* (MS *iothlo*) are illegible.

Stanza 267

The narrative moves on entirely to the account of the Judgement Day as presented in parable form Mt. 25:31–46 (see above). All the nations are gathered before Jesus who separates them into those

who are blessed or cursed, like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Goats, like sheep, are economically important animals in the world of the Bible and are regarded as clean. Why they were chosen to represent the wicked in this parable is something of a mystery. Perhaps the notion derives from Ezek. 34:17 and 39:18 where rams are used as a simile for oppressors and tyrants. Blathmac combines the animal imagery with the previous image of the wheat and the tares to enhance the drama of the judgement. The parables emphasise the polar opposition among men between the good and the wicked. The motif of the sheep and the goats is rare otherwise in medieval Irish texts that describe the day of judgement. They are mentioned in *Cáin Domnaig*, an 8th-century text (O’Keeffe 1905: 200). There the separation takes place on Sunday, whereas traditionally the Day of Doom is scheduled for a Monday: *I ndomnach etarscarfas Críst in dá trét. i. trét na n-úan n-endac .i. na nóeb 7 na firían, fri gaburtrét na pechtach ndiúmsach in domuin.* ‘On Sunday, Christ will divide the two flocks, namely, the flock of innocent lambs and of saints, and of the righteous from the goat-flock of the proud sinful ones of the world.’

1065: [*Is*] *do mac*: The clause-initial copula has disappeared from the MS, except, perhaps, for a faint trace of the *s*, but there is enough space for it at the beginning of the line to render its original presence there very likely, probably in the spelling *As*.

dná: The reduced form *dna* of the particle *danó*, probably *dná* if stressed, is rare in Old Irish texts, but it becomes more frequent in Middle Irish. It occurs two more times in the MS of Blathmac’s Poems. In l. 375 *luidh dna do dighdhi ambroin* it could be emended away to *luid danó do digdi a mbróin* by assuming elision between *digdi a*. Note however that elision is not an obligatory feature of Blathmac’s scansion (Stifter 2015: 80). In l. 807 *is é dna do-forsat sel* (MS *as he dna do forsat seal*), however, there is no metrical option for emending to *danó*.

1066: *míastar*: Historically correctly, the verb is to be scanned with a hiatus here to achieve three syllables, against disyllabic l. 1049 *míastar*.

1067: *mairg nád-ais a thnú*: *Mairg* ‘woe’ can be followed by a noun in the accusative (l. 968) or nominative, but here it governs the headless relative clause *nád-ais*. Other examples for this construction in Blathmac are ll. 481, 529, 1145. The defective verb *ad-ais* ‘to fear’ is only found in the present tense. It loses its preverb in dependent position, perhaps under influence of the homonym *ad-ághathar*. *Tnú* is defined in eDIL dil.ie/41026 as ‘envy’, but here an intense outward emotion must be intended for which the meaning ‘fury, wrath’ seems more appropriate. This meaning allows its etymological unification with *tnú* ‘fire’ (eDIL dil.ie/41025) which perhaps goes back to the PIE root **tep-* ‘to be hot’ (cf. Stifter forthc.).

1068: *fri mind[u]*: The MS has *fria*. Since it is not evident why the wicked group should be specifically distinguished by the possessive pronoun *a* ‘his’, i.e. Christ’s, we follow the suggestion of Liam Breatnach (pers. comm.) to regard it simply as a modernisation for *fri*. The final letter of *mindu* is concealed in the MS, but the rhyme with *tnú* makes its reconstruction inevitable. *Mindu* is the accusative plural of *mend* ‘small animal’, particularly ‘kid’. The inherited meaning of the word **mendo-* was ‘small of an animal’, probably without preference to any specific animal; cf. W *myn*, *mynman* ‘kid’, Corn. *min* ‘goat’, Bret. *menn* ‘young animal’; VLat. *mandius* ‘foal, cow’; Tyrolean German *manz*, *menz* f. ‘barren cow’. Did Blathmac have kids or goats in mind here, or the young of the sheep (in which case the *-a* of *fria* could be the 3pl. possessive)? To meet the requirements of the rhyme, Blathmac could have used the more specific *gabru* ‘goats’. As has been seen several times in this section, Blathmac does not shy away from word repetition in order to conjure up a motival web, cf. the repeated occurrence of *cruithmecht* or forms of *scaraid* in the preceding stanzas. In balance, however, it is hard to see why Blathmac should have deviated from the unambiguous goats of his New Testament model.

Stanza 268

1069: *Du:foícherr*: The second letter of the first word has been rendered as *v* in the diplomatic edition of the MS *dyfo cerr*, although there is some doubt. The MS seems to employ the common *v*-shaped variant of *u*, but it is set unusually high, and the left stroke is perpendicular, whereas normally the gradient of the left stroke mirrors that of the right. What is visible, could also be the upper portion

of a tall *e*, with the lower portion lost through the deterioration of the MS. There does not appear to be in the MS a trace of the *i*, which is needed for *du:foicherr*, the future of the irregular verb *do-cuirethar* (GOI 409, 470).

1070: *iarna nglammes*: Even though *glan-* ‘clean, pure’ could be utilised here simply as a semantically bleached first compound member to achieve a disyllabic word, it can be speculated if *glammes* serves as a technical term for a judgment that declares the judged pure?

1071: *[Is] dochum n-ifernn drogréc*: The copula is missing (there is, in fact, not enough space for it in the MS), but it is required to achieve the full syllable count. In the first poem, ‘hell’ is a single place (ll. 84, 452, 472). In the second poem, it is preponderantly expressed as a plural (ll. 696, 718, 1071, 1200), with one exception in l. 896. Nasalisation on *drogréc* may be only missing in appearance. After *n*, nasalisation need not be expressed, or the double *nm* of *ifernn* actually contains the original nasalisation. Roma 2018 has observed that nasalisation was altogether not as consistently marked, esp. in the 8th century, as commonly assumed. The guttural of *drog-*, instead of normal *droch-*, has been assimilated in voice to the following voiced *b*, even though from the point of view of rhyme a voiceless fricative would be expected to match the *th* of *gaborthrét*.

1072: *gaborthrét*: The spelling *gabor* with *o* has to be emended for MS *gabair* in order to facilitate rhyme with *drogréc*.

Stanza 269

1073: *[Inna] llá[thr]a*: Only *lla()a* is reasonably recognisable on the image. At the beginning of the line, a capital N or maybe a capital IN can be barely made out. Alternatively, this could also stand for the negative copula *ní*. The translation of *láthra* ‘arrangements, dispositions’ as ‘interpretations’ is an educated guess to make sense of the line. Both options for the initial word can be framed in such a way to make sense: *inna lláthra as-biur-sa* ‘the interpretations (of the biblical metaphors) which I utter, they are parables by your son himself’; and *ní lláthra as-biur-sa* ‘it is not interpretations (i.e. speculations, lies, heresies) that I say, but they are parables by your son’. For the defensive attitude of the second option, compare l. 745 *ní scél n-eris deit in sé* ‘this (what I am saying right now) is no heretical tale for you’. Because the second option results only in a hexasyllabic line, we have chosen the first option.

as-biur-sa: For the rhyme with *parbula*, the enclitic nota augens *-sa* has to be treated as if it were an independent word. Another such case can conceivably be found in l. 1091. The end of the very deteriorated line can perhaps be read as *Jnsem-ní*, i.e. a 1pl. *s*-preterite + 1pl. nota augens which rhymes with *adid-roilli*, but in view of the bad state of the MS nothing definite can be said.

1074: *is dot mac it paruula*: While this line is perfectly legible, understanding *paruula* on the face of it as the Latin word for ‘small girl’, does not make any sense in the context. Instead, this is a spelling or a copying error for pl. *parbala* ‘parables’. The couplet may be inspired by Mt. 13:13 *ideo in parabolis loquor eis* ‘therefore do I speak to them in parables’ and 13:34–5:

34 *Haec omnia locutus est Iesus in parabolis ad turbas et sine parabolis non loquebatur eis 35 ut impleretur quod dictum erat per prophetam dicentem: Aperiam in parabolis os meum, eructabo abscondita a constitutione mundi.*

‘34 All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes: and without parables he did not speak to them. 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.’

The latter, itself a quote from Psalm 77 (78):2 *Aperiam in parabolis os meum; loquar propositiones ab initio* ‘I will open my mouth in parables: I will utter propositions from the beginning’, occurs immediately after the parable of the wheat and the tares, as it does in Blathmac’s poem.

1075: *Ísu Crist gel*: This is apparently a nominative and thus the subject of the couplet. Possibly an epithet for Christ, such as *ar fiada* ‘our Lord’ has been lost at the beginning of the line, or a fronting construction involving the copula, such as *is é* ‘it is he’. Three or – allowing for elision – four syllables have been lost. Insofar as it is legible, this stanza contains no form of alliteration. It is possible, however, that one of the lost syllables alliterated with *Ísu*.

1076: *fadeisin rod-samlastar*: The infixed pronoun in MS *rotsamlastar* is ambiguous. It could be taken at face value as the class A 2sg. pronoun *-t* ‘you’. However, the scribe of MS G50 very often writes pretonic, lenited *-d* with the letter *t*. Accordingly, this word could also be *rod-samlastar* with a class C 3sg. masculine or neuter infixed pronoun. The latter has been adopted since it yields the best overall sense. The reference of ‘it’ is probably the utterance as such. The alternative interpretation of the first word as *fā deisin* ‘under his right (hand)’, featuring the word *deisen* ‘right hand’ which is only attested in Blathmac’s Poems (ll. 548, 756; Stifter 2015: 98–9), has been rejected for lack of sense. Furthermore, *dess* ‘right hand’ construes with the preposition *for*, not with *fo* ‘under’.

Stanza 270

1077: *Ois in pecaid dolig duib*: The whole line is the predicate of a copula clause with unexpressed, ‘virtual’ copula. Its subject is the following line *in corcae ocus in gabuir*. The spelling *ois* for ‘folk, people’ preponderates 23:11 in Würzburg, whereas in Milan exclusively *ais* is found. Like in the Würzburg glosses, Blathmac makes use of both spellings of the word.

1079: [*Is de*] *áesaib desaib daínib*: The first word or words is illegible in the MS. The dative case of *áesaib* requires a preposition before it; syntactically the preposition *de* ‘from’, indicating the origin or appurtenance of persons, in a copula clause (cf. eDIL dil.ie/14787, section XXV (a) (α)), makes the best sense. There is enough space before *áesaib* to accommodate four letters. If the copula is realised, elision has to be applied between *de áesaib*, i.e. *is d’áesaib*. Conceivably, the first word could have just been *de* without elision, but a lot of free space after it would then have to be assumed. The MS has *doiñ* which superficially looks like *doínib* ‘people’, but since there is already a dative plural noun with fundamentally the same meaning earlier in the line, namely *áesaib*, the last word of the line has to be an adjective. It is easily understandable that a later scribe would have mistaken the rare word *dáen* ‘delicate, fine’ (s.v. *dáin* in eDIL dil.ie/14228), which did not survive into the modern language, with the far more common *doíni*. Although spelt *doiñ* in the MS, the rhyme with *glanchairig* (MS *glācaoiṛ*) requires the emendation *daínib*.

1080: *in chruithmecht, na glanchairig*: The metre necessitates an asyndetic construction for the two conjoined subjects.

Stanza 271

Whereas Blathmac’s first poem, *Tair cucum, a Maire boidis* essentially an elegiac-narrative monologue by the poet, albeit addressed to a fictionalised interlocutor, the second poem contains two passages of dialogue with direct speech, both modelled closely on the text of the Scripture. One is the short conversation between the Virgin Mary and Archangel Gabriel (st. 202–5) after the Evangelist Luke’s Annunciation (Lk. 1:28–35 and 42; Ó Dochartaigh 2015: 168–72); the other, considerably longer one encompasses stanzas 271–83 and stages the scene when Christ the Judge condemns the wicked to punishment. It amounts to a vivid exchange in which the sinners try not so much to justify their deeds as to demonstrating their ignorance of their shortcomings in life, attempting to rebut all responsibility *a priori*. While this forms only the second and shorter half of the scene in the Gospel of Matthew (Mt. 25:41–6; 6 verses), where precedence and emphasis are given to the just and their reward (Mt. 25: 34–40; 7 verses), Blathmac turns this into a dramatic scene that is entirely devoted to the chastisement of the wicked. The drama is played out through a dialogue between Christ and the sinners with constantly changing speakers. The beginning of lines a and c has suffered dramatically from the deterioration of the MS, and the text is accordingly very uncertain at these points.

1081: [] *ar fiada iar sin*: The word missing at the beginning must be a verb of saying. The two very faint letters before *ar* ‘our’ could be *ba*. If this reading is correct, the MS may have originally contained *As̄ba*, an abbreviation for *as-béra* ‘he will say’. The resulting line has eight syllables, but elision is possible both between *as-béra ar* and *fiada iar*. *Fiada* ‘lord’ has a final *-a* in the MS, but given the late transmission this does not rule out an earlier **fiado* (for the question, cf. Griffith 2005, especially pp. 63–4).

1082: *frisna hingru*: While the wicked are otherwise characterised as ‘sinners’ (*oís in phecaid*, ll. 1077, 1085), here the poet uses the adjective *ingor* ‘undutiful, unfilial, impious’ for them which accords better with Christ’s accusation that they lacked compassion during their lives.

Nis-fitir ‘that he know them not’ is reported speech, using a main clause construction without formal indication of clausal dependency. This has a parallel also in Mt. 7:23: *Et tunc confitebor illis: Quia numquam noui uos, discedite a me qui operamini iniquitatem* ‘And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, you that work iniquity.’

1083: [*ol*] *nad-fetatar-som*: The beginning is almost completely faded. The context logically demands a causal conjunction before the verb. Since *nad-fetatar-som* is in a dependent construction, the conjunction *ar* is excluded. There is no example of *úaire* in Blathmac’s Poems. This only leaves *ol*, which is followed by dependent negative verbs, cf. *ol nad-n-archós* ‘because it was not hindered’ (Ml. 97d1) or *ol nach[an]-diagar-ni* ‘because we are not avenged’ (Ml. 101c16).

Síu is used as a local adverb ‘here, in this world’.

1084: *bochtu ocus adailcniú*: The substantivised adjectives *ingru*, *bochtu* and *adailcniú* have the substantival ending *-u* of the accusative plural of the *o*-stems, secured by rhyme. Already in Old Irish, the adjectival ending of masculine accusative plurals is *-a* from where it later intrudes also into the nominative plural. However, as in the Milan Glosses, substantivised forms of masculine accusative plural adjectives actually preponderate over truly adjectival ones in Blathmac’s Poems. There is considerable variation in the second syllable of this adjective, namely *adailcn^o*, *aidilcn^o* and *adlaicn^o*, with or without syncope, anaptyctic vowel and palatalisation, attesting to considerable intraparadigmatic variation in the inflection and derivation of this etymon. For want of a secure etymological starting point (cf. the hesitant statement in LEIA A-17), we decided against emending to some other, by necessity hypothetical, form and kept the MS reading.

Stanza 272

1085: [*As-béra*] *áes peccaid sin*: Given that the object of the sentence is *focal* ‘word, statement’, it is easiest to restore the missing three syllables at the beginning of the line as *as-béra* ‘will say’. This has the added advantage of creating linking alliteration with the last word of the preceding stanza, *adailcniú*, and of creating anaphora with stanza 271, while at the same time underlining the emotional stress that pervades the scene by pushing forward the narrative.

Sin is used here in the temporal sense ‘then’, varying the more common expression *íar sin* ‘after that’ of stanza 271. Cf. l. 1061, and cf. *síu* in l. 1083.

1086: *focal n-ainbfial n-esamain*: The second half of *focal* is difficult to read, but a word for a type of utterance makes best sense in the context. The etymological spelling of *ainbfial* ‘shameless’ for the more common *anbal* emphasises its derivation from *fial* ‘decorous, seemly’. Perhaps it also implies a reanalysed, etymological pronunciation /'anʷvial/ instead of /'anʷl/.

1087: [.....] *tarlai rind di meirg*: No definitive solution can be proposed for this difficult line. Two syllables are lacking for the full count, both probably stood in the large space before *tarlai*. There remains a larger gap than usual between *tarlai* and *rind*, but probably nothing was lost there. *Tarlai* could stand for *·tarlae*, the augmented prototonic preterite of *do-cuirethar* ‘to put; befall, happen’. If so, a conjunct particle is required before it. How this can be squared with the final letters *Jra* or *Jca* that can still be vaguely discerned before *tarlai* remains unclear for the moment. An alternative reading instead of *tarlai* would be *tarbas*, the augmented preterite passive of *do-adbat*, i.e. ‘has been shown’. However, the fourth letter looks much more like an *l* than like a *b*, for which reason we adopt the reading *tarlai*.

rind: For the next word, the reading *rind* has been tentatively adopted, even though there are grave doubts surrounding the first letter. If the beginning is really *ri-*, the two letters would take up less space than usual. *Do-cuirethar* commonly construes with the preposition *do*. The conjugated preposition *dúmm* ‘to us’ would fit the context, but it is hard to see how the letters visible in the MS could be aligned with this.

di meirg: The next word is also very dubious. It is not excluded that our adopted reading *di* is just an artifact of the stain in this area. In any case, a preposition does make sense syntactically before

meirg ‘rust’, the only word in this line whose reading is beyond doubt. Since it is difficult to see how ‘rust’ could meaningfully fit into the context of the narrative or the dialogue, it stands to reason that it forms perhaps part of a cheville. *Rind di meirg* could be taken to mean ‘a weapon-point of rust’. Perhaps this is some sort of idiomatic expression, but for what? No parallel could be found. eDIL dil.ie/31807 records many examples of the idiomatic collocation *cen meirg* ‘without rust’, particularly from poetry. It is, however, very difficult to detect *cen* in the blotch immediately before *meirg*.

Given that the first couplet announced, almost like a stage direction, that it is now the sinners’ turn to speak, it is likely that this line is already the first part of their direct speech. If it parallels in any way the sinners’ feeling of bewilderment over their punishment that is evident in the following line, a question such as ‘(why) has a weapon-point of rust happened (to us)?’ can be pieced together from the disjointed elements identified so far.

1088: *cid i n-áráillsem do fírfeirg*: That the line is direct speech is proven by the verb in the first person plural. The verb *áráillsem* introduces the idea of merit and stresses the doctrine that the treatment one receives on the Day of Judgement is deserved through one’s deeds in life. The verb stands in a prepositional relative construction, literally ‘what is it in which we have deserved?’. This part of the dialogue has nothing that corresponds in Mt. 25. The poet inserted it for dramatic effect.

Stanza 273

The whole stanza continues the direct speech of the sinners.

1089: *dáen/crúaid*: Ní Shéaghdha believed to see *crúaid*. While a word for ‘harsh’ doubtlessly fits the context, we can neither confirm nor reject the presence of *crúaid* in this line. From a different angle, the remnants of letters could also be *dáen* ‘delicate, fine’.

d[o] go[th]a: The rhyme with *firbrotha* requires restoration of *gotha*, the genitive singular of *guth* ‘voice’, a word that fits in the context of a verbal altercation. In both cases, the original may have had the ending *-o* of the genitive singular which was mechanically replaced by *-a* during the textual transmission. The syllable before *gotha* has been tentatively restored as *do* ‘your’, in parallel with *do fírbrotha* in the next line, although it could theoretically also form part of the preceding word.

1090: *is fairsinge do fírbrotha*: Elision has to be applied in *do fírbrotha* to achieve a regular heptasyllabic line. The two phrases *X do gotha* ‘the (harsh?) X of your voice’ and *fairsinge do fírbrotha* ‘the extent of your true wrath’ appear to be paralleled with each other. In this case, the initial *is* of line b is best regarded as the short allomorph of the conjunction *ocus* ‘and’. *Is* for *ocus* occurs also ll. 364, 543, 650 and 718, always conjoining two closely paralleled phrases. The two phrases probably supply the object of the 1pl. verb that is lost in line c. Alternatively, *is* may be the copula whose subject would be expressed in the fronted phrase in line a. However, the resulting sentence ‘the (harsh) X of your voice, it is the extent of your true wrath’ lacks lucidity.

1091: *Jnsem ní*: Ní Shéaghdha saw the words *Ísu Críst* at the beginning of the line. Despite hard efforts, we have been unable to detect any trace of this. Furthermore, the name would make no sense in the direct speech of the sinners. *-nsem* is possibly the ending of an augmented 1pl. *s*-preterite of a W2 verb, referring to something that the sinners *have* done in the past, e.g. *coimid* ‘to mourn’, or *do-rochoíni* ‘to despair’, or *sluindid* ‘to name’, *do-sluindi* ‘to deny’, if the *d* was suppressed before the *s*. The letter before the final *i* looks like a *h*, but the deictic particle *hí* in this position is syntactically unjustified. Since a rhyme with *adid-roilli* is required, we interpret the two letters as the neuter indefinite pronoun *ní* ‘something’. This would have to be the object of the preceding verb, but note that it was argued above that the first couplet supplies the object. It is therefore not excluded that *-ní* is the 1pl. *nota augens*. Cf. l. 1073, where unstressed *-sa* of *as-biur-sa* seems to make rhyme with *parbula*.

1092: *cia mesam adid-roilli*: The line appears to consist of a self-contained question even though the subject of *adid-roilli* is unclear. The 3sg. neuter class C infixed pronoun ‘it’ refers to the condemnation to punishment. The line continues the motif of merit that was introduced in the previous stanza.

Stanza 274

This stanza belongs to the narrative frame and prepares for the change of speakers back to Christ.

1093: *dóib co glé*: Before *doib*, several specks are visible in the MS that could be letters, but they are unidentifiable at the moment. Since *glé* is the last word of the line, three or four syllables, depending on whether *doib* has a hiatus, are missing. The line may have begun with the 3sg. future of a verb of ‘saying, telling, relating, answering’, the subject being Christ.

1094: *a miadamlae*: *Miadamlae* could be a genitive like in l. 1048, in which case another noun, possibly in a prepositional phrase, would have to precede it, e.g. ‘through/with the X of his dignity’. Of the missing three syllables at the beginning of the line, only the letter *d* is recognisable, everything else is beyond legibility for the moment. *Miadamlae* ‘dignity’ was already mentioned in l. 1048 where, however, it referred to the ‘honourable behaviour’ of the person judged, not of the judge.

1095: *olcgníma*: Only the first three and the final letter of this word are partly visible, but hardly any other emendation is conceivable. The meaning ‘evil deeds’ fits the context perfectly. *Olcgníma* cannot have been the last word of the line, but a mono- or, less likely, disyllabic word rhyming with *·roilliset* is needed. Accordingly, a word or words of two or three syllables are lost before *olcgníma*. It can be speculated that one syllable would have been *a n-* ‘their’.

1096: *asad-roilliset*: The MS contains a hole – just about wide enough to cover one letter – after *asa-*. In parallel with *adid-roilli* in l. 109, it is assumed that the original text contained a neuter infixed pronoun class C. In pretonic position, the first preverb of *ad-roilli* alternates freely with *as-* (GOI 496). This alternation is amply evidenced in the Old Irish glosses, e.g. in Ml. 61b17. Since the verb, whose subject doubtlessly are the sinners who ‘have deserved’ their judgement because of their ‘evil deeds’, is in the 3pl., the entire stanza must be narrative, and cannot form part of a direct speech by Christ.

Stanza 275

This direct speech by Christ is modelled on Mt. 25:42–3. In contrast to the model, where the entire utterance is contained in two Biblical verses, Blathmac rolls it out over what appear to be seven stanzas (275–81), devoting one stanza to each idea. The stanza is too fragmentary to allow a reconstruction. Just enough is preserved to reveal that Christ speaks about being hungry and not being fed.

1097: *feib ba*: The conjunction *feib* ‘like, as’ appears to introduce a copula clause.

1098: *ro-ngortaigsur*: eDIL dil.ie/26430 only cites the meaning ‘to salt; to inflict pain, hurt, vex, embitter’ for *gortaigid*. This seems to be the first attestation of *gortaigidir* with a deponent ending and in the denominal meaning ‘to be hungry, starve’, from *gortae* ‘hunger’. The nasalising construction may be due to a temporal clause ‘when I have been hungry’.

1099: Nothing usable remains of line c. It possibly started with the negative *ní-* and a statement that the sinners did not provide (e.g., *ní-tardaisid*) something, parallel to line c of the following stanza.

1100: *J do dagthúarai*: Maybe a word with the meaning ‘bits, crumbs, morsels’, such as (*min*)*míra* or *bruara*, came before *do dagthúarai* ‘of good food’.

Stanza 276

The poem continues in the same sequence as Mt. 25:42 and speaks of Christ who was thirsty, but was not given anything to drink.

1101: *Ba[...] demmu [...] ar lú (ar lus)*: For the verse-opening *ba*, compare l. 1109 *bá(-sa)* ‘I was’ and l. 1005 *ro-bá* ‘I have been’. This would mirror the repetition of *eram* ‘I was’ in Mt. 25:35–6, 43. Alternatively, it could be a 3sg., 2pl. or 3pl. imperative of the copula, i.e. *bad* or *bat*. The accusative *demmu* ‘devils’ in this position of the sentence is perhaps triggered by a preposition, e.g. *la*, that is no longer visible. Together with the copula, the intended expression could be *bad/bat la demmu* ‘let him/them/you be with the devils’, i.e. ‘may the devils have him/them/you’, corresponding to the damnation in Mt. 25:41 and 46.

The letter before *lu* has been read as the compendium *ar*, but it is not excluded that the lower part of the letter is only the superscript *i* of l. 1103 *críde* that has been accidentally merged with whatever stands above it. In that case, the reading of the present letter is unclear.

lú/lus: The final word of the line is either monosyllabic *lú* or *lus*, for which there is a multiplicity of interpretations. Given the context, *lu* could be an instance of the verb *lúid* ‘to drink’ (KP 525–7;

eDIL s.v *lús(aid)* dil.ie/31111), but the exact analysis (1sg. *lú* contracted from *luu*? a verbal complex *ar-lú*?) is unclear. Alternatively, *lú* could be the dative of the rare word *ló* ‘water’ (eDIL dil.ie/30380). Or, if the reading is *ar lus*, this could be *los* ‘tail, butt, end’ in a prepositional phrase. Because of the unresolved issue of the rhyming word in l. 1102, no decision is possible at the moment.

1102: *ro-n-ítaigsu*: After the deponent verb *ro-ngortaigsur* in l. 1098, a parallel deponent 1sg. augmented preterite **ro-n-ítaigsur* would be expected, but the – not very clearly legible – reading seems to be *·ítaigsu* with an absolute (!) active ending. The *r* of *ro·* is only an educated guess for what is very blurred in the MS. No sense can be made at the moment of the letters before this.

1103: *ní·tardisid form chride*: Only isolated letters are legible in the MS, but the line can be reconstructed with confidence on metrical and thematic grounds. The verb *·tardisid* is the prototonic 2pl. augmented preterite of *do·beir* ‘you haven given’, the first attestation of this form with the syncope in right place, cf. the 3pl. *ní tartisset* (Wb. 1b17), in contrast to *ní thardsaid* (LU 2345) which shows syncope in analogy to the deuterotonic form *do·ratsaid*. The expression *form chride* ‘upon my heart’ must stand for ‘to me’. The suprascript *i* of *cride*, if it is there at all, is merged with the descender of the putative *ar*-compendium in the line above.

1104: *ní do dórtaib dagdige*: This line has *ní* ‘something’ followed by a partitive construction with *de*, against the alternative construction *ní* + genitive in l. 1129 and l. 738 *ní condalbae*.

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Stanza 277

Christ’s monologue continues. The poet combines the paraphrase of Matthew’s account of the Judgement with the Deeds of Mercy, two of which have been mentioned already, i.e., giving food to the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty. Matthew mentions six of the seven Deeds of Mercy, also called Corporal Works of Mercy, omitting only the one which refers to burial of the dead. St. 40 also refers to these Deeds of Mercy:

*Dánad túarae do cach bocht,
étach úad do cach innocht,
ar for-roichan mac Dé bí
ba ferr cách do thrócairi.*

‘The giving of food to every poor person,
clothing from him to every naked one,
for the son of the living God has taught
that everyone would be the better for (practicing) mercy.’

1105: *Ro·bá cen*: Although not more than two words remain of this couplet, it is almost certain that the poet paraphrases here Mt. 25:43 *nudus et non operuistis me* ‘(I was) naked, and you covered me not’. It seems that instead of ‘naked’, Blathmac used an expression such as ‘without clothing’. Since no suitable words for clothing, garment start with *n-* or *m-*, we suspect that *n*, the last visible letter, belongs to a phrase such as *na étach* ‘any clothing’ (or *nach n-étach*, since OIr. neuter *na* is always represented by *nach* in the MS). *Ro·bá cen* is the substantive verb, also recognisable syntactically by the following prepositional phrase.

1107: *nibu*: Instead of elaborating the theme of the first couplet, as the poet does in st. 275–6 and perhaps in 278, he seems to introduce a new theme in the second couplet. This could conceivably correspond contentwise to Mt. 25:43 *hospes eram et non collexistis me* ‘I was a stranger and you took me not in’, but the expression would be negative, not positive, and the subject needs to be a 3rd person.

Stanza 278

Still Christ speaking.

1109: *Ba-sa*: The addition of *-sa* points to *ba* being the 1sg. past of the copula, not the corresponding form of the substantive verb *bá*, although the latter cannot be excluded. If Blathmac follows the

order of the Gospel, this stanza corresponds to Mt. 25:43 *infirmus et in carcere et non uisitastis me* ‘(I was) sick and in prison, and you did not visit me’. Since the sick person is the topic of st. 281, here the person in prison must be meant. If the poet disregarded the order of the elements in the Gospel of Matthew, it could also correspond to *hospes eram et non collexistis me* ‘I was a stranger and you took me not in’ in the same Bible verse.

1111: *ním-r[]*: This must be what remains of a negative (*ní*) augmented (*r(o)-*) preterite verb with 1sg. infix pronoun (*-m*), probably corresponding to Mt. 25:43: *non uisitastis me* ‘you did not visit me, e.g. *ním-radallsaid* (with prevocalic *ro* instead of formally expected *·*árallsaid* or *·*áirlesaid* < *·*ad-r(o)-ell-as-aid*). If it is *non collexistis me* ‘you took me not in’, the verb could be *ním-ragbasaid* or *ním-ringbasaid*.

Stanza 279

What little remains, suggests that this is still part of Christ’s sermon to the sinners.

1113: *Ní-g[]*: This is likely to be verbal form, either the present or past tense of a simple verb.

1115: *n[]*: This could be another negative particle, anaphorically continuing the sequence of negative expressions that is visible since stanza 276.

Stanza 280

Since the following stanza still continues the address of a plurality of people, i.e. the sinners, by one person, i.e. Christ, st. 280 probably also formed part of the monologue.

1119: *íarum*: The only word that can be recognised in this stanza is ‘then’.

Stanza 281

This is still Christ’s monologue.

1121: [*Ro-g*]ab-som dam conid·gai[b]: At the beginning of the preserved section of this line, there appears what looks like the lower parts of an *a* and a *b*, followed by the 3sg. *nota augens -som*. The only word ending in *-ab* in Irish is the conjunct 3sg. preterite of *gaibid* ‘to take’. Since there is the space for one syllable before that, it is most natural to emend either *ro-gab* or *ní-gab*. The preverbal particle could contain an infix pronoun. *Dam* is probably the 1sg. of the conjugated preposition *do* ‘to me’; *dam* ‘ox’ or *dám* ‘company’ are less likely. The idiom *gaibid do* means ‘to attack, to go for’. *Conid* could be the conjunction *co^N*. ‘so that’ + class C 3sg. neuter infix pronoun, or *co^N*. + 3sg. of the copula ‘so that it is’. As is normal in the MS, pretonic lenited *-d* is written *-t*. The final word has been tentatively restored as *·gaib*, echoing the verb at the beginning of the line, but it could also be *·gair*, or a noun, if *conid* is a form of the copula.

1122: [*a*] clár ní[]: There is no trace of the possessive pronoun or article *a*, but the hole and the space before *clár* are wide enough to accommodate it. *Ní[]* can be a noun or adjective starting with *ní-* or with *i-*, preceded by nasalisation.

1123: *cebin lobar i mach dú*: We follow the suggestion by Liam Breatnach (pers. comm.) to read MS *ceb in* as the conjunction *cia* + 1sg. past subjunctive of the copula. For the spelling of the ending *-in*, cf. *commin* (Wb. 24a11), *combin* (Ml. 91b7), *námmin* (Wb. 17d23), *nombin* (Ml. 20a4). This corresponds to the first part of Mt. 25:43 *infirmus et in carcere et non uisitastis me* ‘(I was) sick and in prison, and you did not visit me’.

1124: *ní-dechuid*: The abbreviation *dech-* is commonplace for *·dechuid*, which at a first glance looks like the augmented 3sg. preterite of *téit*. However, the sense dictates a verb in the 2nd person plural, referring to the sinners. eDIL quotes no example of such a form, except for the younger, manifestly ‘Middle Irish’ form *dechabair*. Given the attested *·dechommar* and *·dechotar* for the 1st and 3rd plural, *·dechuid*, homonymous with the 3rd singular, could be expected. The unexpected plural stem allomorph *·decho-* that underlies these forms, beside the singular stem *·dechud-*, can be explained via a complex chain of restructurings.

Based on the singular stem *·dechud-* << PC **dekoṽāt-* < **de-kom-ṽāt-* (KP 675–9), the expected forms for the 1pl. and 3pl. are **dechdammar* and **dechdatar* (see GOI 68 §108 for the special syncope rule that reduces the number of unstressed syllables in PC *dekoṽāt-*). In analogy to deuterotonic *do-códmarr* and *do-cótar* < **koṽād-ontor*, and under influence from the relationship between the unaugmented sg. *luid* vs. pl. *lodmarr*, *lotar* (stem *lud-*), the new forms **dechodmarr*, *·dechotar* were created. The 3pl. *·dechotar* < **dechod-tar* was in turn reanalysed as *·decho-tar*, as if built on a stem **·decho-*, on the basis of which the attested 1pl. *·dechommar* and the now attested 2pl. *·dechuid* are easily explained (cf. Bergin 1904: 140).

All attested forms of the augmented stem of *téit* presuppose that the inherited stem **dechoth-* /'d̪exoθ-/ < **dek(o)ṽāt-* (PIE root **uēt-* ‘to turn oneself’, cf. KP 675, 677; LIV 694) has been replaced by **dechod-* /'d̪exoð-/ as if it contained the root **uēdʰ-* ‘to lead’ (KP 678; LIV 659). Otherwise the 3rd person plural, the crucial pivot for the explanation given here, would have been **dechottar* /'d̪exot̪ar/ with a voiceless dental, and the necessary reanalysis would have been impossible.

do[m chéilidiu]: This must correspond to *non uisitastis me* ‘you did not visit me’. Since the finite verbal action is expressed by *ní-dechuid* ‘you have not gone’, the remainder of the concept must be rendered by a verbal noun construction + possessive pronoun to express the object. The dative verbal noun must end in *-u* for rhyme with *dú*, and it must have three syllables. The only suitable candidate is the neuter *jo*-stem *céilide* ‘visit’. For the construction, cf. ll. 591–2 *acht do-dichis-siu [...] do chéilidiu cucum-sae* ‘if only you could come for a visit to me’.

Stanza 282

This stanza corresponds to the end of Christ’s address to the sinners in Mt. 25:45: *Tunc respondebit illis, dicens: Amen dico uobis: Quamdiu non fecistis uni de minoribus his, nec mihi fecistis.* ‘Then he shall answer them, saying: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to me.’

1125: *cía at-beir*: We understand the somewhat unmotivated *cía at-beir* as a cheville-like insertion, similar in nature to l. 185 *ce no-láthrae* ‘although you may explain it’ and l. 929 *ce chot-certae* ‘though you may correct him’, that is, a hypothetical objection to the addressee’s stance, contrived by the speaker as a straw man argument to make his own position look stronger. Since it is often difficult to distinguish between *rr* and *ir* in the MS, the attested form could be *at-beir*, i.e. 3sg. present + 3sg. neuter infix pronoun Class B, or *at-berr*, i.e. 3sg. passive present + 3sg. neuter infix pronoun class B. The lack of the rhyming word prevents a decision. If it is *at-berr*, this would have to be regarded as a modernisation for *as-berr* since no 3rd person infix pronoun is allowed in a passive verb.

1127: *for mbochtáin feisin bátar*: Standing at the end of the line in stressed, rhyming position, *bátar* must be the substantive verb, not the *copula*.

Stanza 283

1129: *Ná-cuingid ní arrai dam*: We identify *arrai* as the genitive singular of *arrae* ‘payment’, the verbal noun of *ar-ren* ‘to pay or hand over on behalf of another, or to pay over (something) in place of (something else)’ (cf. Binchy 1962: 51). In ecclesiastical contexts, *arrae* is the technical term for penitential commutation, i.e. the substitution of a shorter and usually more intensive discipline for the normal penance prescribed by canonical or monastic rules. Christ is telling the sinners here that there will be no last-minute reprieve or reduction in penance from him. The genitive *arrai* is dependent on pronominal *ní*, i.e. ‘anything of payment = any payment’. This use of substantival *ní* ‘something’ followed by a genitive finds a parallel in l. 738 where we read *ní condalbae* ‘something of familial affection’ as a cheville. Carney has the syntactically impossible nominative *in chondalbae* instead, which he translates as ‘in kin-love’, but the MS has undoubtedly *ni*, not *in*. We interpret this construction as a rare variant of *ní* + partitive *de* (eDIL dil.ie/33145 section (b)) or as an alternative to the construction of adjectival *nech/na* + noun. The only parallel outside the Poems of Blathmac that eDIL provides is *ní gua em ... a crand* ‘a false thing [...] is the tree’ from *In Tenga Bithmía* §59 (Stokes 1905:

120–1), where *ní* is clearly followed by the genitive of *gáu* ‘lie’. eDIL records this under 2 *ní* ‘thing’ dil.ie/33146.

1130: *mesf*: This word can be restored in several ways: *meisse* ‘I’, or *messim* ‘worst’, or *mess* ‘judgement’, all of which are used by Blathmac elsewhere in his poems.

1131: *ar ní-boí lib diamthae bí*: We follow the suggestion of Liam Breatnach (pers. comm.) to read MS *diamtha* as the conjunction *dia* ‘when’ + 2pl. past of the copula. This is a previously unattested form.

Stanza 284

With this stanza at last, the poem switches back from dialogue to narration. It develops the theme of Mt. 25:46 *Et ibunt hi in supplicium aeternum: iusti autem in uitam aeternam* ‘And these shall go into everlasting punishment: but the just, into life everlasting’. As has been his practice throughout, Blathmac only focusses on the sinners, but says nothing about the more pleasant fate of the just.

1133: *Do-béra forru cen acht*: The context, after Christ’s speech to the sinners, suggests that *do-beir* is here used in the legal sense of ‘passing (a judgement)’. *Cen acht* ‘without a but’ occurs also in ll. 815 and 845, i.e. only in the second poem.

1134: *sírf*: The two letters after the *s* can be made out only faintly. This word probably expresses the object of *do-béra* ‘he will pass judgement’, and may have been a compound such as *sírchéssad* ‘permanent suffering’ (cf. Matthew’s *supplicium aeternum*) or *sírphian* ‘permanent pain’, or a more general word for ‘judgement’. Cf. *sírgnás* in l. 797, which is coordinated with *bithifernn* ‘eternal hell’.

1135: *Foidfidius* is a rare 3sg. future verb *foídfid* ‘he will send’ + suffixed 3pl. pronoun *-us* ‘them’.

1136: *duf*: An expression such as ‘to hell’ could be expected, but the common *dochum n-ifernn* (cf. l. 1071) is excluded since *dochum* is never written with initial *du-*. Perhaps it is the conjunction *dú* ‘(the place) where’, cf. l. 1123.

Stanza 285

1137: *Timartar demmai in tan*: *Timartar* is the contracted 3pl. passive reduplicated *s*-future of *do-immoirg*. The reduplication of the root is regularly lost in an unstressed syllable. For *in tan* see l. 1051.

1138: *misf*: A word in the semantic range of *miscais* ‘hate’ or *miscad* ‘malediction’ would fit the context.

1139: *air do-réachtat a lli*: *Do-réachtat* ‘they have abandoned’ is another example of the consistent use of the ending *-at* for the 3pl. of *t*-preterites in Blathmac’s Poems. The other instances are l. 51 *iar mi-foächtat* ‘they inquired’ (restored from MS *iar mi foacht*), l. 177 *con-gartat* ‘they summoned’ (MS *congarta*), l. 183 *at-n-ortat* ‘they beat him’, l. 406 *da-bertat* ‘they brought it’, l. 926 *do-rairrnger-tat* ‘they prophesied’ (MS *do rairrngiortsat*). There is no trace of the ending *-atar*, transferred from the suffixless preterite, which GOI 423 wrongly gives as the standard Old Irish ending. The sentence refers to the demons’ primeval uprising against God. The double *ll* of *a lli* indicates that *a* is the 3pl. possessive pronoun, i.e. ‘their own (original) splendour (in the proximity to God)’.

Stanza 286

1141: *Reg[ait] léo nach do-ses[.]:* This line is syntactically problematic. The ending of the verb after *rag-* is obscured in the MS. In theory, the ending of any person is possible. Since the subject of the second couplet appears to be a 3rd person plural, and since the theme of the passage is ‘they’, either the sinners or the demons, we tentatively emend the ending of the 3pl. *regait*, but 3sg. *regaid* is also conceivable. We normalised MS *rag-* to OIr. *reg-*; cf. *con-imrega* with expected *e* in l. 1145. *Léo* either refers to the demons who accompany the sinners to hell, or vice versa.

MS *do sesf* is reminiscent either of a verbal form, or of a partitive construction *dí* + noun, neither of which should be syntactically possible after the adjectival indefinite pronoun *nach*. The stem *do-ses-* looks like the subjunctive stem of *do-seim* ‘to hunt, pursue’, or, if it is rather *do-sen-*, the

future stem of *do·sní* ‘to impel’ or ‘to neglect’ (cf. eDIL dil.ie/18471), or of *do·snig* ‘to shower’. The sense of neither of these is immediately compelling.

1143: *ar ros·carsat dit[...]*: The emendation *ros·* for MS *r(.)s* is trivial. The reading of the final letters is very uncertain.

Stanza 287

1145: *Mairg con·imrega l[a ...]*: *Con·imrega* opens a headless relative clause; for this construction after *mairg* see l. 1067. The *l[*, which is very faint, probably belongs to the preposition *la* ‘with’, indicating the object of accompaniment. A monosyllabic word is required that probably refers to the devil or associated folk. *Olc* ‘evil (one)’ would have the advantage of providing alliteration with *con·imrega*.

1147: *lá in golgairi i ló*: The MS has monosyllabic *lá* ‘day’ instead of expected disyllabic *laë*. The line offers two opportunities for elision, namely *lá* (= *laë*?) *in* and *golgairi a/i*. It is therefore possible that the text originally contained the old disyllabic form of ‘day’. *Lá in golgairi* is reminiscent of the proverbial ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (*ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium*) of which Mt. 8:12 speaks.

The letter after *golgairi* is a capital A in the MS. Aside from the beginning of the stanzas, the use of capital letters is extremely unusual in the MS. It is restricted to a handful of sacred names, but it does not occur with function words. It seems that the next two letters are *os*, but no sense can be made of this.

Stanza 288

1149: *Borg deman[dae]*: The letters are only partially legible. The large *B* at the beginning of the line and the *g* are clear; only a part of ligature *r* is visible. Since *o* is the only vowel after which ligated *r* is ever written, *borg* ‘fortified town, stronghold’ is certain. We suggest emending the following *dema[* or *deman[* to the adjective *demandae* ‘demonic’. No parallel could be found so far for the striking expression *borg demandae* ‘demonic fortress’. The next word seems to contain *rg* (a repetition of *borg*?), but the rest is lost.

Stanzas 289–90

On the bottom of p. 143 there is space for four lines, that is, two stanzas. These stanzas are lost due to the loss of the entire width of the paper.

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The vertical extent of the stanzas was determined by comparing the ruler on the right-hand side of other odd pages on the ISOS images. The readings are very tentative.

Stanza 291

Only isolated letters are discernable.

1162: *]lo*: If this line really ends in *-lo*, l. 1161 possibly ended in *dó* ‘to him, for him’ or *gó* ‘falsehood, lie’.

Stanza 292–4

The text is missing.

Stanza 295

1177–8:)[...]r(.....)...[...]an(: Too fragmentary. It is not even clear if *-an* is the end of the line.

1179–80:)[...]fiġ[.](...)[.....](...)[...]targ(: There are only three etymons in Old Irish that contain the sequence *fig-*, namely *figor/fiugor* ‘figure, type, symbol’ and its derived verb *fiugraid* ‘to prefigure’, *figell* ‘vigil’, and *figid* ‘to weave’. Except for the third, the first two words have been used before by Blathmac.

Stanza 296

1181–2:)[.....]f̄[.]i[.]ma[.....]n̄ingein[...](.): The sequence *f̄[.]i* could stand for *forsin*. Given that word for family members are prominent in this and the following stanza, perhaps *ma[* is part of *máthair* ‘mother’. The one word that is securely identifiable here is the accusative of *ingen* ‘daughter, girl’. The initial nasalisation allows to postulate the accusative article with some confidence. The word reoccurs in the following stanza, again in line b. Every previous instance of *ingen* occurred in association with Mary. Blathmac associates Mary with Judgement day in ll. 567–8 *ara-sóerthar lat in tan | nach carae nod-coínfedar* ‘that at that time be saved by you (Mary) any friend who shall have keened him’. Perhaps Blathmac is speaking about some kind of intervention on behalf of the faithful by Mary at the time of Judgement. It would be fitting if the poet returned to her directly at what was probably the end of his two poems, in order to lay the foundations for *dúmad*, the correct conclusion to the poem.

1184: *Jair*: From what little remains, st. 296 and 297 seem to be thematically linked. Both have line b ending in *ingein*, whereas line d in st. 297 has *dagathair* ‘good father’. Perhaps the parallelism goes so far as to allow to restore the end of l. 1184 *Jair* to *athair*.

Stanza 297

1185–6:)[.....]bqta[....]n̄ingein: The middle sequence *Jbartat* could be part of a verbal form, e.g. a prototonic 3pl. passive of *do-beir*.

1187–8:)[.....]r̄[....]an dagatair: *Athair* occurs commonly as an expression for ‘God the Father’ in Blathmac’s Poems.

Stanza 298

1190: *Jagmaca*: The letters are comparatively well legible. Perhaps they form part of *dagmaca*, a late variant of acc.pl. *dagmaccu* ‘good boys’?

1192: *Jce[.]le*: Very uncertain.

Stanza 299

1194: *Jathchomsán*: The word *athchomsán* ‘rebuke, reproach’ is faintly visible at the end of the couplet.

1196: *Jaid immocht*: *Immocht* ‘stark naked’, which forms the last word of the stanza, may have referred to the plight of the sinners in hell. The word before it could be a 3sg. verb or an agent noun.

Stanza 300

1198: *Jad̄ir ab̄raibh*: The last word probably stands for *brethaib* ‘judgements’. The letters before it could form part of a passive ending.

1200: *Jsírnás bithiferm*: *Sírnás* is the ‘perpetual frequentation’. The mention of *bithiferm* ‘eternal hell (lit. ‘hells’)’ suggests that the overall theme continues that of the End of Days. ‘Perpetual frequentation of eternal hell’ is, incidentally, the last fully comprehensible phrase in Blathmac’s Poems which thus end on a less than cheerful note.

Stanza 301

Too fragmentary to allow any interpretation.

1202:)[...]t[.]g[...]a

1204:)[...]()]bre

Stanza 302

1206:)r aif[.]dēdē

1208:]en[...]iḡd̄: Provided that the reading is correct, the forms in *Jdeder* and *Jiḡid(er)* look like passives, the latter one clearly in the future. This indicates that Blathmac is still talking about the end of days.

Stanza 303

1210:)[.]()ručt: The ending looks like the dative singular of an *o*-stem or like a singular of a *u*-stem. Potential candidates are *brúcht* ‘burting forth’ or *drúcht* ‘dew’ or compounds thereof, or *rucht* ‘a tunic, garment’ or *rucht* ‘a noise of some sort, cry’.

ABBREVIATIONS

KP = Stefan Schumacher, *Die keltischen Primärverben. Ein vergleichendes, etymologisches und morphologisches Lexikon*. Unter Mitarbeit von Britta Schulze-Thulin und Caroline aan de Wiel, Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft 110 (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft, 2004).

OM = Moran, Pádraic, *De Origine Scoticae Linguae (O'Mulcomry's Glossary). An early Irish linguistic tract, edited with a related glossary*, Irsan, Nouveau Recueil des Lexiques Latin-Français du Moyen Age 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).

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