Missing Pages: *first lines from index* (*italics indicate text not known elsewhere*)

[414 index] *Fiamhach liom turus Torna*
*[414 index] Ionmhain compán ro charus
[415 index] Taire a chumhtha red chomhradh [warning to Flaithrí Ó Maoil Chonaire]

LOVE POEMS, AND MISCELLANEOUS

[415 index] Beag liom mo bheandoct don bhás (love)
[415 index] Dia a naghaidh na hionmhuine
*[416 index] A bean do ní an truagh speacadh [*sic*]
[416 index] A fhir do ní an téd (love)
[416 index] Aithreach damh mo dhiochoisge (love)
[417 index] A dhuine chodlus go sáimh (love)
[417 index] *Mo bennocht mar dligim dheit*
[417 index] Ní taobhtha dhamhsa riom fein (love)
[418 index] Maith gach ní on easurraidh (love)
[418 index] *Ní saimh sásacht* [sic Hyde, MS i*achtacht*] *an aoibhnis*
[418 index] Aoibhinn duit a dhuine dhoill (love)
[419 index] Mairg duine bhíos antuigseach (love)
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[419 index] Soraidh slán don oidhche aréir (love)
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[422 index] Mor do níd daoine díbh fein (satire, on decay of poetry)
[42[.] index] Tugus gradh don fhuath (love)
[42[.] index] *Truagh do bhruid a bhean*

FLORILEGIUM OF FAITH: THE RELIGIOUS POEMS IN THE BOOK OF THE O'CONOR DON

Salvador Ryan

1. *Introduction*

THE ANTHOLOGY KNOWN as the Book of the O'Conor Don comprises the largest single manuscript collection of medieval Irish bardic religious poetry extant.[1] What is particularly significant, moreover, is that over 20% of the religious poems found in BOCD occur nowhere else, at least not in any of the manuscripts that are known to have survived. For these reasons alone, this compendium, which was compiled in Ostend between January and December 1631 for Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, son of Sir James of Dunluce, Co. Antrim, is of inestimable importance. What follows is a discussion of the collection of religious poetry found within BOCD. This article examines the basic structure of this anthology, especially the arrangement of groups of poems, and some of the major themes which characterize the collection as a whole. The period during which these poems were composed is usually taken to range from the twelfth to the seventeenth century.

The principal focus of this study, however, is not the provenance of the poems themselves, nor the identity of the poets. Rather, the focus is on their selection, appearance and arrangement in this seventeenth-century collection. Of primary importance, then, are not the authors nor the poems' original date of composition, but how they fit into the collection that is BOCD. Therefore, for convenience, in citing extracts from the poems themselves, I have chosen to simply refer to 'the poet' rather than naming the individual to whom the poem is attributed and providing his *floruit*.

These details can be found in the table below. This table lists the religious poems occurring in BOCD in order of their appearance. It provides for each poem a prevailing theme and, where appropriate, some suggested sub-themes. These themes are simply indicatory and do not pretend to be comprehensive. The attribution of each poem in BOCD (where known) is listed[2] and also a rough date of composition. For these details I have generally used Katharine Simms's Bardic Poetry

[1]For a discussion of the nature of bardic religious poetry see Ryan, 'Slighted source'.

[2]It should be noted that an attribution of 'anonymous' does not necessarily mean that a poem is not attributed to an individual or individuals in other manuscripts, but merely that no poet is mentioned in BOCD. Some forty-seven out of eighty-four religious poems in BOCD are without attribution.

Database.[3] In addition, the table places certain poems with similar themes or features into groups identified by alphabetical indicators. These can be understood by following the key which accompanies the table below.

2. *Structure*

One of the many interesting features of BOCD is the thematic arrangement of its material. Today 341 individual bardic poems survive in BOCD from an original number of about 371. The fact that 84 of these are religious means that these constitute over 24% of the original collection. This figure roughly coalesces with what we know about surviving bardic poetry in general – roughly 400, or about 20%, of the surviving 2,000 or so poems, can be designated as strictly religious.[4] This collection, then, appears to be broadly representative of bardic poetry in general in its split between religious and secular themes. The religious poems examined below begin at f. 43r through to f. 125v of BOCD. What should be noted is that the first six of these already appear in duplicate at the beginning of the manuscript from ff. 1r to 11v; therefore the manuscript opens with strictly religious poems before deviating from these into some miscellanea before resuming at f. 43r with the first six poems once again.

The opening poem, beginning *Glac a chompáin comhairle*,[5] is a long didactic poem of fifty-two quatrains based on a tract called the *Formula Honestae Vitae* of St Bernard of Clairvaux, and constitutes a raft of spiritual advice intended principally for members of a monastic order. At the other end of the collection, the second last religious poem, beginning *Gabh comhairle a Chríosdaighe*, is similarly didactic in its approach, but in this case its audience is far more general: here are featured lists such as the Five Senses, Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, the Ten Commandments, the Cardinal Virtues of prudence, temperance, fortitude and love, the Seven Sacraments and the Twelve Articles of the Creed. These basic catechetical tools, which were part and parcel of tridentine reform, also feature prominently in seventeenth-century works of the Irish Franciscan friars at Louvain.[6] These two poems, representing, in turn, the medieval and

[3]http://bardic.celt.dias.ie/ (consulted June 2009). In addition, I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Professor Pádraig Ó Macháin who very generously forwarded me a list of the poems from ff. 1–125 of BOCD, as I prepared this paper.

[4]Ryan, 'Slighted source', 75.

[5]Mhág Craith, *Dán na mbráthar mionúr* Poem 14.

[6]See especially Gearnon, *Parrthas an Anma*; also Ryan, 'Wooden key'.

tridentine mindsets, might be seen as bookends for the religious collection as a whole. It may, indeed, be no accident that these poems, *Glac a chompáin comhairle* and *Gabh comhairle a Chríosdaighe*, both offering spiritual advice, should appear where they do, for the BOCD collection of religious poetry, which is virtually enclosed between them, spans an entire period from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries, including one or two poems of a much earlier date. This also mirrors the wide range of texts found in the earlier corpus compiled for Somhairle Mac Domhnaill entitled *Duanaire Finn* (1626–7), texts which date from the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.[7]

In 1940, John E. Murphy published an article entitled 'The religious mind of the Irish bards'. Given that bardic poems were being composed from the thirteenth through to the seventeenth centuries, it is often tempting to conclude that because of the endurance of many features of this form of poetry – the form and style, the strict metre, the stock motifs – which often render un-attributed poems difficult to date accurately, the ideas within the poems themselves were similarly immune to development. This is not reflected in the corpus of bardic religious poetry which survives, however. Indeed, one can discern a significant degree of variation between both poems and poets, highlighting the development of subjects and themes over time in line with the changing contours of European religious devotion as a whole.[8] The bardic poets who composed religious verse between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries were certainly not all of one 'religious mind', no more than were their patrons. This is drawn out more fully in the examination of some of the themes of the BOCD collection below.

The placing of the religious poems within BOCD was no arbitrary exercise. While individual poems often contain a range of different themes, some prevailing themes can often be discerned and these are alluded to in the table below. In many instances (though certainly not in all) some patterns emerge.[9] For example, the six poems from *Lóchrann soillsi ag síol Ádhaimh* to *Beag nach táinig mo théarma* (poems 2–7 of the table) all treat in some respect of the brevity of life, the struggle between body and soul and an exhortation towards renunciation of the world. It is also strongly evident in the first poem *Glac a chompáin comhairle*; this broad theme, then, runs through all seven of the first

[7]See Meek, '*Duanaire Finn* and Gaelic Scotland'.

[8]See Ryan, 'Slighted source'.

[9]This is also in evidence in the collection of secular poetry found within BOCD as demonstrated by Pádraig Ó Macháin and Katharine Simms in this volume.

religious poems. It will recur again in small clusters of poems later in the manuscript as can be seen from the table where it is classified by the letter 'B'. Indeed, it is one of the most pervasive themes running through the religious collection of BOCD. From poem 13 (*Iomdha sgéal maith ar Mhuire*) to poem 19 (*Bréagthar bean re séad suirghe*) inclusive, is found a series of seven poems (classified as M) in which the role of the Virgin Mary looms large as principal spiritual patron.

Within this collection on the Virgin is found a number of sub-themes such as her advocacy and intercession and descriptions of her physical beauty. Directly following these poems, beginning with *Marthain duit a chroch an Choimdhe* is found a series of three poems (classified †), all of which are directly addressed to the cross of Christ and which contain not only similar material but also (at least in the case of the latter two examples) some relatively unusual features in common, such as the depiction of the cross itself bearing wounds. These are followed by two poems, *Geall re maoinibh moladh Dé* and *Maithim d'urra dána acht Dia*, which praise the value of sacred poetry addressed to a heavenly patron over and against secular poetry (classified as SP). Further on, there are two poems (26 and 27) which address themselves largely to the topic of the Holy Trinity, *Éist rem fhuighlibh a athair* and *Naoi roinn do rinneas do thriúr*. Poems 32 to 36, beginning with *Truagh do thosach a dhuine* and ending with *A ógáin ón a ógáin* return to the themes of the brevity of life, the struggle between soul and body and its ultimate decay in death.

Particularly noteworthy is poem 40, an early Irish poem found in the eleventh-century Irish Liber Hymnorum beginning *Triúr ríogh táinic go teach nDé*[10] concerning the visit of the three kings to Christ's manger and their three gifts; it is surely no coincidence that the poem directly following it in BOCD is entitled *Fuaras trí tiodhluicthi ó Dhia*, in which the three gifts are named as being created in God's image, the gift of our souls and the third gift of intelligence and reason.[11] A series of eleven poems (47–57), all of which are attributed to Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird (except poem 49, *A chroinn ar ar toirling Dia*, which was composed by Aodh Mac Aingil), might be regarded as a set. Even if we take into account the interpolated poem by Aodh Mac Aingil, the sequence (classified as FÓg) might be regarded as having in common the Franciscan community of St Anthony's College, Louvain, of which Aodh Mac

[10]Bernard and Atkinson, *Liber Hymnorum* I, 194.
[11]M[urphy], 'Three gifts', 235.

Aingil was a member and with which Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird had important links.[12]

Further on in the collection, there are other examples of small clusters of poems containing related themes: two more on the special nature of religious poetry (*Mairg nach diongnadh dán do Dhia* and *Díomhaoin gach dán acht dán Dé*, poems 52 and 53 respectively) and then four poems which treat in some way of the subject of the Fall and Original Sin and its ramifications, beginning with *Eiséirghe dár éirigh Dia* and ending with *Crand do chuir amach Naoi nár* (poems 60–63 inclusive, classified as F). Somewhat later there is a return once again to the theme of the brevity of life and renunciation of the world for a further five poems, beginning with *Mairg danab soirbh an saoghal* and ending with *Ort do sheiseacht a shaoghail*, poems 73–7. Finally, there are two further poems relating to the Virgin Mary (*Ór na mban baincheann nimhe* and *Do geineadh inghean ón umhla*, poems 81–2) before one arrives at the penultimate poem, the didactic poem beginning *Gabh comhairle a Chríosdaighe*, alluded to above. Why this should remain in penultimate place rather than concluding the collection of religious poetry and mirroring its counterpart at the outset is not immediately clear. The poem that does claim this place, however, *Ar t'fhaosamh damh a Dhé athar*,[13] is no typical example of a bardic religious poem. It contains what can only be described as a litany of events from Christ's life, which indeed takes the form of a prayer:

> By my creation after thy own image, by thy mysterious coming on earth, by thy subjection to the power of men, take pity on me O Son of the Creator; by thy sheltering in the ass's stall, by all the indignities inflicted on thee, by thy birth, by thy tending at the hands of a handmaid, by thy being sentenced in the court of thy foes, by thy breast stripped naked, by thy side which we pierced, by thy crucifixion as a malefactor, receive me into thy presence.... [14]

And the poem continues in this vein. What is clear from its full length, however, is that it very neatly re-presents many of the major themes and concerns expressed in the eighty-three religious poems preceding it. Thus, it can claim to be not only a summary or, indeed, an *aide-mémoire* of all that has gone before, but also appropriately concludes the religious section in prayerful mode. Furthermore, the final seven verses of

[12]See especially Ó Macháin, 'Iconography of exile'.
[13]*Aithd. D* Poem 73.
[14]Ibid., qq. 9–11.

the poem re-visit that most dominant of themes in the BOCD collection – renunciation of the world and all of its allures; in the words of the poem itself 'the varied beguilement which man's eye sees and gazes on with delight'.[15] The companion theme of the repentant sinner making ready for a new way of life as he approaches death is also captured in the appeal of the poet to God to aid him on his pilgrim-path through this 'vale of tears' and speed his way to Paradise. Thus, *Ar t'fhaosamh damh a Dhé athar* can claim, with a considerable degree of justification, its rightful place at the close of the religious section of BOCD.

3. *Themes*

A large collection of religious poetry such as that found in BOCD will, necessarily, contain a broad range of themes, many of which may sometimes be connected in one way or another. This article cannot claim to exhaust this large number of themes; instead, what follows constitutes a general survey of three over-arching themes which characterized much of late medieval spirituality and which survived well into the early modern period: the conflict between the soul and the body, the figure of the crucified Christ at the Last Judgement, and the role of the Blessed Virgin as Intercessor.

Within these broad themes, a number of sub-themes emerge: for instance, poems treating of the perpetual struggle between soul and body also frequently advert to the nature of sin, the transience of the world and the inevitability of death and decay, often spelling out this process in lurid detail. Christ's judgement of the individual and of the world in general, for the medieval Christian, is clearly the judgement of the crucified Lord, returned to exact vengeance for mankind's rejection of him. Poems treating of Christ's judgement, therefore, often lay heavy emphasis on the physical marks of his passion and death, especially his five wounds, and also the instruments by which he was tortured. One cannot understand the late medieval Doomsday, then, without understanding the events of Good Friday. Finally, the theme of Mary's role as intercessor and advocate at Judgement is examined. As in previous examples, the Virgin's power to convince her Son to have pity on humanity derives from her history of mothering Christ and also from her very particular traits: virginity, humilty, obedience and poverty, and so on. One cannot appreciate the role of the Virgin at Judgement, therefore, without understanding something of the manner in which she was perceived to have lived her earthly life.

[15] *Aith. D* 73.21.

1. Conquering the world and the flesh

The late medieval period was not a time to be complacent about one's own mortality. When one considers that life expectancy even for the considerably wealthy in the fifteenth century was around fifty years of age[16] (and, of course, many did not reach this age), the concern with preparing oneself for death and judgement was a very pressing one. This was the age of the chilling *danse macabre* and the almost perpetual invitation to *memento mori*. Catastrophes such as the fourteenth-century Black Death merely made precarious living inestimably more perilous.[17] Beyond death, the medieval Christian was faced with the prospect of Christ's judgement. Philippe Ariès notes how a shift in how the end of time was portrayed from the twelfth century onwards involved the superimposition of the judgement scene of Matthew 25 onto the scene from the Book of Revelation, which made the return of Christ a far more terrifying prospect for people in the later Middle Ages than was the case for their predecessors.[18] The prospect of the Last Judgement, at which point a wrathful and bleeding Christ would appear in the clouds to exact justice for humanity's crimes, haunted the late medieval imagination, and the scene became a very familiar feature of iconography, being frequently depicted above rood lofts in medieval churches.[19]

At the heart of mankind's predicament was the idea that the human soul was dominated by an unruly and oppressive body which was its sworn enemy. Rejection, then, of the world, the flesh and the devil was paramount if one was to be saved. The famous work by Pope Innocent III (1160–1216) entitled *De Contemptu Mundi sive de miseria conditionis humanae* ('On Contempt for the World and the Misery of the Human Condition') encapsulates this broad view. An Irish version of this work is found in a late fifteenth-century manuscript of the Bibliothèque Municipale de Rennes (MS 598), the work of scribes working at a Franciscan house near Bandon, which also contains a large collection of religious poetry and prose, illustrative of its influence.[20] Irish bardic poems which treat of the world, the misery of the human condition and the oppressive and boorish behaviour of the body, could often be just as stark as their

[16] See for example Jonker, 'Estimation of life expectancy in the Middle Ages', 113–14. For most of the population who did not enjoy a wealthy background, life expectancy was, of course, much lower.

[17] See Kelly, *History of the Black Death in Ireland*.

[18] Ariès, *Hour of our death*, 97.

[19] See Ryan, 'Fixing the eschatological scales'.

[20] Fletcher, *Drama and the performing arts*, 72. See also Geary, *Innocent III's 'De Contemptu Mundi'*.

continental counterparts. The opening religious poem in BOCD, *Glac a chompáin comhairle*, spares little in its denunciation of the body:

> Be always mindful of the following three things: how you were in the beginning, what you are and how you will be. You were stinking sperm. What are you, though great your opinion of the beauty of your earthly vesture, but a vessel full of rottenness who, when you have finished your span, will be a feast for worms?[21]

The prospect of the body's decay after death is brought to the fore in the poem *Ná déana díomus a dhuine* in which the poet alludes to the shrivelling of the breast, the loss of hair and the discolouration of the mouth in the wake of death. In advance of this decay, however, the body is shown to conduct a terror campaign on the soul. In poems throughout the BOCD religious corpus, the body is variously described as a 'mad dog' (*Lóchrann soilsi ag síol Ádhaimh*[22]) and 'a deceitful tricky bitch ... an oppressive bear, a lithe snake with monster's head ...' (*Ort do sheiseacht a shaoghail*[23]). The wiles of the world as presented in both *Ort do sheiseacht a shaoghail* and the poem immediately preceding it in BOCD, *Saoghalta sin a shaoghail*, are captured in the depiction of the world as a 'knave with noose in hand'.[24]

In the poem *Fada atú i n-aghaidh m'anma* the poet states 'my body has killed my soul and is like a tree gone wild'.[25] In this poem, the body is also described as the paramour of the soul and this is set in opposition to the soul's true love who is Christ:

> If thou, my friend [the soul], wouldst serve Heaven's King, thy consorting with thy paramour – an act that wounds the heart of Mary's Son – is far from being the way to serve him.[26]

The implication that the soul commits adultery when it denies Christ was frequently used in literature on the Sacrament of Penance as exemplified by Aodh Mac Aingil, Franciscan friar of St Anthony's College, Louvain, in his depiction of Christ as the rejected lover in the penitential tract *Scáthán Shacramuinte na hAithridhe*, published in 1618.

[21] Mháig Craith, *Dán na mBráthar Mionúr* 14.30–31.
[22] *DDé* XVIII.33.
[23] McKenna, 'Denunciation of the world', 262 q. 10.
[24] Ibid., 261 q. 1; McKenna, 'Address to the spirit of the world', 294 q. 5.
[25] *Aithd. D* 56.1.
[26] Ibid., q. 22.

There is also, however, a more sinister depiction of the body's oppressive behaviour to be found in BOCD: the suggestion that the body has violently forced itself on the soul. The poem beginning *Cuir srian rem corp a Choimdhe* asks that the body (here depicted as an unruly steed) be bridled, for:

> My steed cannot, I fear, be trusted; her breed is nasty and spirited; her wicked ways are dangerous O God; save me from the danger of her being on top of me. As the wicked body is doomed one day to be thrown down, woe to him on whom she lies heavy; she is thus riding him.[27]

There are allusions in other bardic poems not found in BOCD, examples such as *Dona an t-each-sa fhuair mh'anam*, to a violent drunken body assaulting the soul in its cell:

> Thou harlot, I am the soul, in a cell poor and lonely, cursing thee, a drunken body; an assault has violently destroyed me.[28]

This theme was not uncommon in the wider European tradition of medieval religious poetry as in the work of thirteenth-century Italian Franciscan poet, Jacapone da Todi, who describes in Lauda 27 what can only be described as a gang rape of the soul by three brutes – the world, the flesh and the devil.[29] In the BOCD poem beginning *Atáid trí comhraic im chionn*, the world, the flesh and the devil are depicted as combatants in a war against the soul, and as ever plying their weapons. The poet ardently requests that his 'leech' or physician (Christ) not leave him lest any of these weapons pierce him.[30] In another poem, *Mairg danab soirbh an saoghal*, the poet speaks of Christ the Leech tending his soul which is as a bird 'with wings of sin-roots' and unable to fly.[31]

A request is made in the poem *Cuir srian rem chorp a Choimdhe* that the steed-like body be broken by the reins of humility, the halter of charity, the heavy bit of mercy, the steady saddle of pure love and the breast-piece of truth. Perhaps most importantly, this poem exhorts Christ to fix to the steed's bridle 'a cheek-piece of keen pure sorrow'

[27] *Aithd. D* 81.13–14.
[28] Ibid., 91.9.
[29] Vettori, *Poets of divine love*, 117.
[30] McKenna, 'The soul's three foes', 661 qq. 3–4.
[31] *DDé* VII.22.

and to 'fasten the strap straight and firm on every side about her'.[32] It is here that one arrives at the ultimate solution to the problem of the unruly body: sorrow for sin and the exercise of penance (both in the reception of the sacrament and the completion of its prescriptions). Many of the poems in BOCD dealing with the soul-body conflict exhort the reader to reject the world and not to delay the hour of penance any longer. Here the practice of emphasising the fleeting nature of one's life was designed to underline the urgency of repentance.

The poem *A dhuine chuireas an crann* addresses a man planting an apple tree: 'O man that plantest the tree, who shall live to pluck its apples? ... think of thy not remaining to pluck its blossom in the lovely green orchard ...'.[33] The care with which the owner tends frail apple trees is later contrasted with that which he applies to his soul.[34] Another poem, *Fada atú i n-aghaidh m'anma*, describes the world as 'rushing by us as a scudding shower' or 'rushing flood' and states that the world is allowed by God the Father to exist only for a short time 'like a trembling tree'.[35]

The theme of making provision for one's sins before it was too late pervaded late medieval preaching as is exemplified particularly well in a moralized diagram of a human hand found in Trinity College Dublin MS 667 (compiled in a Franciscan house, possibly in Clare, in the mid-fifteenth century) in which the thumb and each of the four fingers carried individual messages, one more sobering than the next:

> You don't know how greatly nor how often you have offended God. Your ending is bitter, your life brief, and you have entered the world in sin.
> You will take nothing hence other than your deeds, nor can you prolong your life nor evade death.
> You don't know whence you come, nor how nor when you will die.
> You will soon be forgotten by those dear to you, your heir will seldom make provision for you, nor will those do any differently to whom you leave your wealth.[36]

Similar admonitions appear in many of the religious poems found in BOCD. The poem beginning *Truagh do thosach a dhuine* warns that the

[32]*Aithd. D* 81.7.
[33]*IBP* 34.1–2.
[34]Ibid., q. 4.
[35]*Aithd. D* 56.11, 25.
[36]Fletcher, 'Preaching in late medieval Ireland', 77.

older a person grows the more difficult it becomes to repent: 'in mid-age, young man, thou shalt be, in thy giddiness, loath to bend the knee, seeking God's house'.[37] The poet draws attention to the future physical state of the person in death, having made an appeal for recourse to penance in good time:

> When thy lip is white, thy senses numb, thy eye-sockets dripping, see then if thy (present) vigour shall be admired. The shroud will be sewn round about thy body, O youth! Therefore, though the world be yet beneath thee, vain thy glory![38]

A few poems further on in BOCD (and as part of the same set of poems focussing on this theme), *A ógáin ón a ógáin* instructs a young man that the 'white-toothed maid' whose love he has enjoyed the day before is now lying in a grave, adding that, although bitter, the advice found within the poem (to consider one's end) is for the young man's own good.[39] Poems such as these, which cast in sharp relief the brevity of life and the ignominious end in store for the body, were a staple of medieval moralising.[40]

Medieval preachers were often anxious to emphasise the necessity of full disclosure of sin in confession. One item in a well-known medieval checklist entitled the 'sixteen conditions for a good confession', which appears in a number of Irish manuscripts,[41] calls for the confession of sins to be 'whole',[42] leaving nothing out, a point reiterated by the Franciscan Aodh Mac Aingil in his tract on penance in 1618:

> It is certain that whoever fails to confess a mortal sin, however terrible, out of shame, the only benefit he will gain from confession will be to add a new mortal sin to the sin which was on him before coming to confession.[43]

This concern with full disclosure also appears in an early poem (thirteenth century) entitled *Crand do chuir amach Naoi nár* which is found

[37]M'Kenna, *Aonghus Fionn* XLI.4.
[38]Ibid., qq. 8–9.
[39]Ibid., XLIII.5–7.
[40]For good examples of similar themes in English and Welsh medieval poetry see 'The three dead kings', in Turville-Petre, *Alliterative poetry*, 148–57; Siôn Cent, 'The Vanity of the world', in Clancy, *Medieval Welsh poems*, 290–93.
[41]See Ryan, 'Windows on late medieval devotional practice', 4–5.
[42]Ó Clabaigh, *Franciscans in Ireland*, 152.
[43]Mac Aingil, *Scáthán Shacramuinte na hAithridhe*, lines 2593–7 (my translation).

in BOCD. In a very imaginative fashion, the poet speaks of the work of the ploughman who turns the soil. He points out that while an upturned clod with its grass side showing might be more aesthetically pleasing to the eye, nevertheless no new seed can grow from it. Likewise with confession: unless one is willing to reveal the darker side of oneself in its entirety, no new growth can begin:

> The loamy upper sod is confession that conceals nothing; the green, grassy, overgrown thicket is the complacent and loud-mouthed man. ... Confession with its grass showing is a creation pleasing to the eye but fraught with filth; the craftsman of the elements is displeased with it when the earth-side is not uppermost. Let us throw up the brown earth, let us hide the side of the grass, fair to look upon; let us, moreover, plant seed – what point would there be in ploughing without that?[44]

Later in the poem, the poet refers to having being wounded by the eight sins of the world. He promises not to 'hide the erupting virulent abscess in my heart', asking that 'the coulter come to my swelling to burst it open, O King of Heaven'.[45] Here the poet continues the imagery of ploughing but also treats of sin as a wound that needs to be healed. This idea is related to the common depiction of Christ as a physician in the Sacrament of Penance, healing the wounds inflicted by sin.[46]

2. Christ: Judgement and Passion

This section examines the portrayal in the poems of BOCD of the event which was understood to follow death, namely the judgement of the soul, whether particular (or individual) or general (the Day of Judgement itself when all who had ever lived would be gathered together to hear Christ pronounce sentence).[47] Fear of Judgement Day or Doomsday (which would fall on Monday according to Irish tradition) permeates the poems of BOCD as a whole. Depictions of Doomsday in the later Middle Ages cannot be adequately appreciated, however, without some understanding of medieval devotion to the Passion of Christ and, in particular, to his five wounds. Mankind stood indicted for inflicting these wounds on Christ (in bardic descriptions, mankind is understood to owe an *éaraic*

[44]Williams, *Giolla Brighde* XXII.18, 20 and 21.
[45]Ibid., q. 28.
[46]See, for example, the poem beginning *Ag so an t-easlán dár-fribh* in BOCD. For the wider context see Thayer, 'Judge and doctor'.
[47]See Ryan, 'Fixing the eschatological scales'.

or blood-price for Christ's illegal killing). Yet the wounds of Christ were thought to work in two ways: as heralds of salvation or harbingers of condemnation, and on Judgement Day, when the bleeding body of Christ would appear in the sky, the distinction would literally be in the eye of the beholder; salvation or condemnation depended solely on whether the soul entrusted itself to Christ's wounds and the merits of his passion or not.[48] Both the wounds of Christ and the symbols or instruments of his passion could be invoked at Judgement.

In the poem beginning *Leighios an bheatha bás Dé*, therefore, the breast-blood from Christ's side-wound ensures heaven, and the crown of thorns acts as a dam of sorts to stem the tide of Christ's anger.[49] This is usually expressed by blood flowing from his wounds, described in another BOCD poem, beginning *Tuar feirge foighide Dé*, in the following manner: 'the death-wounds of the slender hands will shed showers of dark blood; the fast-flowing streams from the breast will be strange portents. The wound that was in his feet whose *éraic* awaits us, that wound will shed on dooms-day no less than it did the first time'.[50] In the late medieval world, therefore, the onus was squarely on the individual to gaze upon the image of the crucified Christ with love, preferably long before death, in order that at Judgement the sight of Christ's free-flowing blood would spell delivery rather than disaster. This paradox at the heart of medieval passion devotion is perfectly captured in the BOCD poem beginning *Tús na heagna omhan Dé* in the phrase: 'The Lord's crucifixion – tho' 'twas the saving of his people – will stand against them'.[51]

With the arrival of print in the fifteenth century, cheap works of passion iconography became more widely distributed. These depicted in increasingly graphic detail the extent of Christ's sufferings and became ever more accessible. By means of the use of woodcuts, small, cheap images and engravings could be produced for the mass market and sold at locations such as popular pilgrimage sites, often carrying with them the promise of pardon from sin for those who gazed at them with love and with sorrow.[52] With the increasing availability of portable images of the 'Man of Sorrows' in the form of small printed sheets, many could

[48]Ryan, 'Reign of blood'.
[49]*Aithd. D* 95.20
[50]Ó Cuív, *Aibidil*, 202 q. 9.
[51]M'Kenna, *Aonghus Fionn* XLII.9.
[52]Lewis, 'Rewarding devotion'.

respond to the invitation to 'pyteously behoild these Armys Christi'.[53] This emphasis on beholding or visualising the Man of Sorrows or the crucifix is underlined in many of the poems featured in BOCD. In *Slán arna mharbhadh mac Dé*, which describes the fifteen sorrows of Christ's passion in graphic terms ('the bursting of his breast, the splitting of his feet's white skin ...'[54]) the poet remarks 'ye have surely seen before your eyes the image of Christ, ye remember not the tortured body'.[55] Enormous indulgences were granted to devotees throughout Europe who gazed on images such as these.

In the poem beginning *Spéucláir na cruinne an chroch naomh* the poet states that 'when the Lord's wound-marks are beheld, his passion is read therefrom; thou seest on it our salvation',[56] underlining once again the primacy of the visual medium in the medieval world. The poem beginning *Uadha féin do fhás Íosa* is more directive still: 'till thou look on God nailed thou shalt not observe the Law'.[57] Indulgences attached to medieval devotional images such as the Man of Sorrows or the Mass of St Gregory often accompanied specific prayers to be recited before the image. More often than not, however, the prescribed prayers were pitched at the most basic level – the Our Father, Hail Mary and Creed – in order to allow the greatest number of devotees to gain the attached indulgence. But the primary focus was always the image itself; indeed, as noted by R. N. Swanson, 'devotion to the image merited indulgence, not the sophistication of the prayers'.[58]

Poems in BOCD often describe the passion-wounds of Christ as life-giving and transformative. The poem *Marthain duit a chroch an Choimdhe* relates the popular medieval tale of Adam and Eve's third son Seth and his return to a now vacated garden of paradise. There he glimpses a withered apple tree (the tree of life) upon which a young man is stretched. As the young man lies upon it, the tree begins to flower and bear fruit. Three apple seeds fall on Seth's breast and he brings them back to his parents who confess that they had been responsible for making the tree barren in the first instance. When Adam eventually dies, Seth places the three apple seeds in his mouth and thus, out of the skull of Adam grow three more trees, each of which is destined to play a key

[53]Moss, 'Permanent expressions of piety', 95.
[54]*Aithd. D* 78.24.
[55]Ibid., q. 33.
[56]McKenna, 'To a crucifix', 250 q. 3.
[57]McKenna, 'Poem to Christ', 472 q. 9.
[58]Swanson, *Indulgences in late medieval England*, 259.

role in salvation history, to be later encountered by Moses, David and Solomon. Most crucially, however, one of the seeds will grow into the tree that will eventually be used for the cross of crucifixion. At the point of crucifixion, this blackened tree was to be revivified once again when Christ lay across its beams: 'thou wert reddened for us by the breast and the hands of God'.[59]

The transformative nature of Christ's blood, which makes a withered tree fruitful once more, is shown to have a similar effect on the world as outlined in the poem beginning *Olc an connradh a chlann Ádhaimh*, in which the poet remarks that 'the whole world was a heap of withered wood when the (sacred) blood sank into it; that sufficed to change us'.[60] The motif of the cross of crucifixion as a tree laden with flowers (and bearing fruit for Christians to eat, as interpreted from Revelation 22) gained particular popularity from the thirteenth century onwards, especially in the wake of St Bonaventure's meditations on Christ and the cross found in his work *Lignum Vitae*.[61] Revelation 22:2 also refers to the leaves of the tree of life being 'for the healing of nations'. The depiction of the cross of crucifixion as an 'herb of healing' was quite common in medieval bardic poetry as is evidenced in *Spéucláir na cruinne an chroch naomh*: 'This cross which saved men is as herb to heal dread wounds; this tree whereon was laid Mary's Son is as a measuring-rod of mercy'.[62]

The central place which Christ's blood, and his passion more generally, enjoyed in late medieval spirituality brought with it certain consequences, however; one of them being that the deliberate invocation of the limbs or wounds of Christ in the form of swearing was roundly condemned. A couple of instances of this appear in the bardic poems from BOCD. In the poem *Éist rem fhaoisdin a Íosa* the poet declares that 'no day passes but I swear by the blood of thy limbs and breast';[63] similarly in the poem *Fada atú i n-aghaidh m'anma*, in what appears to be a brief catechetical quatrain for handy memory, the poet notes that 'to swear by the blood of Mary's Son is to wound him'.[64] That this reference had some contemporary currency is demonstrated by the writings of the Irish Franciscan, Aodh Mac Aingil, who was equally

[59]McKenna, 'To a crucifix', 209 q. 42.
[60]*Aithd. D* 98.20.
[61]Hatfield, 'The tree of life'. See also Harries, *Passion in art*, 66, and Rowlatt, 'Flowering cross', 95–7.
[62]McKenna, 'To a crucifix', 253 q. 27.
[63]McKenna, 'Confession of sins', q. 8.
[64]*Aithd. D* 56.24.

aware of the pervasiveness of swearing and, as part of his examination of conscience based on the Ten Commandments, in *Scáthán Shacramuinte na hAithridhe* (1618), included the question 'an ttugais fuil nó buill Dé a bhfíor nó i mbréig?'[65] Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, patron of BOCD, had some dealings with the Franciscan friars at St Anthony's College Louvain, who routinely served as chaplains to the Irish regiments in Flanders. It is recorded, for instance, that on 16 April 1632 he owed 150 florins to the College.[66] For an individual such as Mac Domhnaill, therefore, the injunction against swearing by Christ's blood was not something that was simply preserved in a bardic poem as an interesting archaism; rather, as in many instances of bardic religious material, this was something that he was likely to have heard preached in his own day.

3. Mary: Virgin Intercessor

For many medieval Christians, the Day of Judgement presented an opportunity for the greatest intercessor of all to step forward in support of humanity's bid for heaven: the Blessed Virgin Mary.[67] This section examines the figure of Mary as intercessor and the manner in which she is depicted in the poems of BOCD. Here, perhaps, it is appropriate to view some contrasting voices across the bardic religious poems of BOCD. As noted above, the entire surviving bardic corpus of religious poetry represents not just one religious mind but many, and the material in these surviving poems has been shaped and developed over time in line with broader developments in European devotion. The poems on Mary might serve to illustrate this.

There is evident in the BOCD collection, as elsewhere, various shades of Mariological thought, ranging from what I might term a quite moderate to what might be termed an inordinately 'high' Mariology; that is, the degree of status, power and influence accorded the Mother of God. This can be seen in the varying degrees of expectation of Mary's assistance expressed by bardic poets. In the poem beginning *Beag nach táinig mo théarma* Mary is asked to cover the wounds of Christ that the poet has not atoned for (that they might not be displayed menacingly before him in judgement).[68] The poet requests the Virgin to intercede with Christ, reminding him how he drank at her breast and lay sleeping in her lap as a baby (q. 18). This might, it is suggested, win him over. Similarly in

[65] 'Did you take the blood or the limbs of God [in vain] [whether] sincerely or not?': *Scáthán Shacramuinte na hAithridhe*, lines 3261–2.

[66] Ó hUiginn, '*Duanaire Finn*: patron and text', 96.

[67] See Gray and Ryan, ' "Mother of Mercy" '.

[68] *DDé* V.17.

the poem beginning *Labhair liom a Mhuire Mháthair* Mary is asked to beguile her child at Judgement: 'As I dread that on the Monday of the Tribute – a hard case – the red cross and the death of Jesus will confront me, beguile thy child on that day'.[69]

In the poem beginning *Bréagthar bean re séad suirghe* Mary is depicted in a similar manner: she is a 'shaft piercing all hearts with its charms'.[70] Mary's role, then, at Judgement clearly involves conducting a charm-offensive on her Son. In many poems, she brings her particular attributes and virtues to Christ on humanity's behalf; for example, in *Leighios an bheatha bás Dé*, her virginity elicits Christ's openness to her request: 'our debt was remitted at Mary's request – her virginity merited this as a mark of regard for her'.[71] In the same poem, she is also shown to employ delaying tactics to stall the proceedings of Judgement: 'When ... I am hard pressed, the slow way of acting, which my sister [Mary] like all women has, will retard the urging of my debt against me on the muster day' (q. 22). Mary's tears of blood are also recalled in an effort to sway Christ in his judgement.[72] In an effort to embarrass Christ into a climb-down from his anger on Judgement Day, the composer of *Braon re ndubhadh diomdha Dé* decides that he will ask if he has ever sat on the Queen's lap (as an infant).[73] Bardic poets were generally fond of imagining Christ on Judgement Day as an infant in his mother's arms, his anger quenched by his mother's breast milk. Thus, the same poet can claim 'If the Virgin plead with the Lord that he drank at her breast, 'twill be easy to satisfy him'.[74] In the poem beginning *Bréagthar bean re séad suirghe*, merely the sight of the Virgin's breast suffices to arrest Christ's anger.[75]

This role of Mary as suckling Christ into submission on Judgement Day undoubtedly contributed to the huge popularity of images of *Maria Lactans* in late medieval Europe and, concomitantly, the ubiquity of relics of Mary's milk, including one held at Christchurch cathedral in Dublin.[76] Although not found in the BOCD corpus, the poem beginning *Múin damh do mholadh, a Mhuire* captures the message of many of the BOCD poems treating of this theme when it states that Mary's

[69] *IBP* 50.9.

[70] *Aithd. D* 85.10.

[71] Ibid., 95.15.

[72] Ibid., qq. 4 and 8. For the motif see Hull, 'Celtic tears of blood'.

[73] *Aithd. D* 84.7.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., 85.11.

[76] See Ryan, 'Persuasive power'.

breast and the milk which nourished Jesus signify humanity's pardon, and proceeds to ask that it be taken as a down-payment for the world's debt.[77] Much hope, then, was placed in Mary as mankind's advocate. The BOCD poem *Éasca ar nglanadh grás Muire* claims that 'she shall, with God's good will, save the world'.[78] Here, then, was one approach to Mary as intercessor. But there were others.

In what might be termed a higher Mariological key, some poems from BOCD portray the figure of Mary as far more assertive and in a different league in the power stakes. In *Clú nach caitear clú Muire* the poet declares 'she consents not to our rejection' and, more forcefully still, 'she lays waste God's wrath'.[79] In poems such as *Dleaghar muintear ag máthair Dé* she appears to work to actively subvert the course of divine justice, placing a ladder for the poet to climb into the castle of heaven and, furthermore, it is claimed 'she chained up justice'.[80] In the same poem, folk are said to 'trust in her blood' ('creidtear dá crú').[81] This may, of course, be a way of stating, as is done elsewhere in BOCD (in the poem beginning *Olc íocthar ar luach leighis*), that Christ's blood is only half his own (half is Mary's) and thus he should not be able to claim from humanity its full price. In his translation, Lambert McKenna adds '(*i.e.*, Christ)' after the words 'her blood', in order to clarify that it is indeed Mary's offspring that is really meant here. The line as it stands remains somewhat ambiguous, however. In examples such as those above, we meet Mary as *mulier fortissima*, a dominant and confident figure at Judgement. This is the woman who is relied upon in the BOCD poem beginning *Díomhaoin gach dán acht dán Dé* when the poet assuredly petitions: 'may Christ's mother, the Virgin, force me on her lamb'.[82]

There is, finally, yet another Mary to be discovered in the BOCD corpus, a depiction of Mary that is not often found in bardic poetry, but one which appears in the poem *Tuar feirge foighide Dé*, ascribed here to Maoilsheachlainn na nUirsgéal, and elsewhere to Pilib Bocht, Ó hUiginn.[83] Here the judgement of God is absolute and no amount of

[77] *Aithd. D* 97.33.
[78] Ibid., 93.2.
[79] Ibid., 87.8 and 10.
[80] Ibid., 82.17 and 23.
[81] Ibid., q. 2.
[82] Ibid., 90.8.
[83] McKenna, *Philip Bocht* Poem 25; Ó Cuív, *Aibidil*, 192–208. The tranlsation in the latter is used here.

intercessory prayer on the part of the saints or Mary can reverse it. The poet states that:

> if all the saints were to go together to protect me they could not save me from the just judge in the judgement at the time of the assembly. If God's judgement is not in my favour it will not save me from hell that Mary Mother beseech the Creator for me on her knees.[84]

The depiction of Mary as intercessor on her knees (often accompanied by St John) was quite common in late medieval art, Mary sometimes being depicted as baring her breast to her son to remind him of her suckling him as a baby.[85] Even this intercessory gesture, however, is rendered useless in the face of God's judgement in this poem. Here is an example, then, of an unusually 'low' Mariology for the period.

It is perhaps worth noting that this particular poem appears on a broadsheet of 1571, now housed at Corpus Christi College Cambridge, and which is the earliest example of an edition in print of an Irish bardic poem in strict metre.[86] It arrived at Cambridge via the papers of Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1575 and just may have some connection with Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish Primer published in Dublin in the same year.[87] If it was Ó Cearnaigh who provided the text of the poem for the broadsheet and if he did send it to Matthew Parker, as Brian Ó Cuív suggests, one wonders whether his choice of that rare instance of a bardic religious poem, which places clear restrictions on the intercessory power of the Virgin and the saints, was not a conscious one.

4. *Somhairle Mac Domhnaill and the compilation of the religious section of BOCD*

Having examined above some of the broad themes found within the religious poetry of BOCD it remains to turn to the compilation of the collection itself by Aodh Ó Dochartaigh for Captain Somhairle Mac Domhnaill in Ostend in 1631. Some fundamental questions immediately arise regarding the religious material alone: who was responsible for the choice of poems – Somhairle Mac Domhnaill or Aodh Ó Dochartaigh? How much freedom was accorded Ó Dochartaigh in the selection of the poems or was Mac Domhnaill very specific in what he requested? From which manuscripts were these poems drawn and to what extent were the

[84] Ibid., 203 qq. 10–11.
[85] See Ryan, 'Persuasive power'.
[86] Ó Cuív, *Aibidil*, 191–212.
[87] Ibid., 1.

contents of the collection dictated by the poems which were to hand at the time? Was the ensemble, in the words of Joseph Falaky Nagy when writing about its companion collection, *Duanaire Finn*, simply 'the result of a combination of scribal selection and opportunity'?[88] How much of Somhairle Mac Domhnaill is found in the texts themselves? While the poems range across a number of centuries, how relevant did Mac Domhnaill consider their contents to be in his own day? Many of the poems in the religious collection feature poets who profess to be in old age, approaching death and wishing to confess their sins before their departure from this world. Although this is not an infrequent feature of bardic religious poetry, the relative number of these poems in the present collection is quite high. Was Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, erstwhile participant in the famous Battle of the White Mountain (1620) during the Thirty Years War, attempting to make good with God? Mac Domhnaill was still a relatively young man in 1631, no more than about forty years of age and thus does not quite fit the profile of a man waiting for death.[89] The nature of Mac Domhnaill's occupation, however, would have meant that the prospect of a relatively early death was very real. Interestingly, his listing as a captain in O'Neill's regiment in June 1632 is the last dateable reference extant for him.[90] This is just a year after BOCD was compiled for his use.

The answers to these questions may never be known. It can be confidently claimed, however, that the religious poems of BOCD exhibit signs of some systematic arrangement, which suggests that a significant degree of thought and planning went into the project. The poems represented span the entire period of bardic composition and represent many of the predominant features of medieval spirituality. Spread among these earlier poems, in significant numbers, are also more recent compositions by poets such as Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird who represent the challenging circumstances of a new and changing world. In these poems too, however, many of the older concerns and their expression remain, indicating (as is also the case with the broader catechetical and devotional literature of the Irish Franciscan friars at St Anthony's College, Louvain) that Irish exiles such as Somhairle Mac Domhnaill, who led lives perched on the cusp of change, nevertheless carried with them some very deep roots.[91]

[88] Nagy, 'The significance of the *Duanaire Finn*', 39.
[89] Ó hUiginn, '*Duanaire Finn:* patron and text', 86 n. 24.
[90] Ibid., 96.
[91] See especially Ryan, '"New wine in old bottles"'.

Thematic table of religious poems in BOCD[92]

No.	First line	Main theme	Sub-theme 1	Sub-theme 2	Sub-theme 3	Attribution (BOCD)	Date	Type
1	Glac a chompáin comhairle	Spiritual advice	Renunciation of the world	Silence better than speech	Heaven *v.* hell	Anon.	Early 17c.	A
2	Lóchrann soillsi ag síol Ádhaimh	Judgement	Body	Brevity of life	Sin	D. Mór Ó Dálaigh	Early 13c.	B
3	Leighios an bheatha bás Dé	Judgement	Mary's intercession			Anon.		B
4	Olc an conradh a chlann Ádhaim	Judgement	Brevity of life	Concealing sin		Anon.		B
5	Mairc mheallus muirn an tsháoghail	Renunciation of the world	Pains of hell	Joys of heaven		G. Fionn Ó Dálaigh	mid-14c.	B
6	Múin aitridhe dhamh a Dhé	Brevity of life	Repentance	7 sins	5 senses	Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn	mid-15c.	B
7	Beag nach trainig mo théarma	Brevity of life	Judgement	Mary as intercessor		Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn	mid-15c.	B
8	Náomhtha an obair iomrádh Dé	Holy conversation	Monks lose track of time	Holy Spirit in conversation		Pilib Bocht	mid-15c.	
9	Tuar feirge foighide Dé	Judgement	Wounds of Christ	Mary insufficient as advocate		Maoileachlainn na nUirsgéal	15c.?	

[92] First lines are as occur in the manuscript. The date cited for the poems is based on Dr Simms's database. The following sigla are employed in the final column ('Type'). **A**: Spiritual Advice. **B**: Body and Soul conflict / renunciation of the world / death. **CC**: Creator and Creation. **F**: The Fall. **FÓg**: Poems by Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird. **J**: Judgement. **M**: Marian poems (Mary as spiritual patron). **SP**: Sacred poetry *v.* secular poetry. **T**: The Trinity. **3G**: 3 Gifts. †: Poems relating to the cross of Christ

10	Cuir srían rem corp a Choimdhe	Unruly body	Virtues			Tuileagna R. Ó Maoil Chonaire	Early 17c.	B
11	Ag so an teaslán da ríribh	Body *v.* Soul	5 senses	7 sins		Maol Muire Mac an Bhaird	16c.	B
12	Slán ar na mharbhadh mac Dé	Passion	15 sorrows	7 sayings or words		Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn	Early 15c.	
13	Iomdha sgel maith ar Muire	Mary legend	Sign of the Cross	Incarnation – sunbeam		Anon.	15c.	M
14	Labhair liom a Mhuire mathair	Virgin Mary	Intercessor at Judgement	Mary's compassion		Anon.		M
15	Clú nach ccaiter clú Muire	Virgin Mary	Intercessor	Physical beauty		Anon.		M
16	Éascca ar nglanadh grás Muire	Virgin Mary	Intercessor	Redemptress	Mistress of universe	Anon.		M
17	Dleaghar muinnter ag máthair Dhé	Virgin Mary	Redemptress	Incarnation – sunbeam	Mistress of household	Aodh Ó Ruanadha		M
18	Mocht roinn molta do Mhuire	Virgin Mary	Role in Salvation	Physical appearance		Anon.		M
19	Bréagthar bean ré séd suirge	Virgin Mary	Mary's favour	Physical beauty		Anon.		M
20	Marthain duit a croch an Coímhdhe	Cross of Christ	Legend of Cross	Harrowing of hell		Anon.	Early 13c.	†
21	Speucláir na cruinne an croch náomh	Cross of Christ	Cross bearing wounds			Anon.		†

22	Líaigh mo chabharth[a] an croch náomh	Cross of Christ	Cross bearing wounds	Cross as leech		Anon.	Early 17c.	†
23	Geall ré maoínibh moladh Dé	Sacred poetry	Praise for Christ	Creation	Judgement	Domhnall mac Dáire	Late 16c.	SP
24	Maithim durra dána acht Día	Sacred poetry	Five wounds	Poem in exchange for heaven		Anon.		SP
25	Éisd rem fhaoísidin Íosa	Confession before end of life	7 sins and 8 sins	Commandments	Concealing sin in Confession	Anon.		
26	Éisd rém fhuighlibh a athair	Trinity				Anon.	Early 17c.	T
27	Naoí roinn do rinneas do triúr	Trinity				Anon.	Early 17c.	T
28	Mo cháomhna ar chóig creuchtaibh an tigerna	Judgement	Five wounds	Intercession of Mary at Judgement		Laoiseach Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	
29	Úadha féin do fhás Íosa	Creator and Creation	Passion	Beholding Christ crucified		Tadhg Ó'n Cháinte		CC
30	Náomhtha cerdcha mhic Mhuire	Christ	Praise of Creation			Anon.		CC
31	Seacht mbriatra an Coimhdhe san crann	7 sayings or words	Antidote for 7 sins			Anon.		
32	Trúagh do thosach a dhuine	Penance before death	Stages in life	Brevity of life	Judgement	Anon.	Early 17c.	B
33	Do mheallais misi a cholann	Body *v.* Soul				Anon.		B

34	Mairce dar compánach an colann	Body *v.* Soul	Decay of body			Athairn Mac Ceóghuin		B
35	Mairce do ní uaill as óige	Brevity of life	Inevitability of death	Bodily desire	Human life on loan from God	Athairn Mac Ceóghuin		B
36	A ogáin ón a ogáin	Brevity of life	Inevitability of death	Bodily desire		Anon.	Early 17c.	B
37	Uasal an tainm Eóin Bruinne	Sacred poetry	How John got his name			Anon.		
38	Osgail romam a Peadair	World, flesh and devil	Role of Mary	St Peter		Anon.		
39	Na déana diomus a dhuine	Inevitability of death	Decay in death			Gofraidh Fionn		
40	Triúr ríogh tainic go teach nDé	Three Kings				Anon.	Before 11c.	3G
41	Fúaras trí tíodhluicthi ó Dhía	Man in God's own image	Gifts of soul: intelligence and reason			Anon.		3G
42	A fhir treabhus an ttulaigh	Brevity of life				Maol Muire Ó hUiginn	Late 16c.	B
43	A dhuine chuirios an crann	Brevity of life	Caring for the soul			Giolla B. Ó hEódhusa	Early 17c.	B
44	An foltsa dhuit a Dhé athar	Self-offering	Judgement	Christ's passion		Anon.	Early 13c.?	
45	Tús na heagna omhan Dé	Penance before death	Judgement	Passion and wounds		Aonghus Ó Dálaigh	Early 17c.	J
46	Olc iocthar ar lúach leighis	Judgement	Role of Mary			Fearghal Mac an Bhaird	16c.	J

47	Dlicche a dhuine déanamh lóin	Judgement	Eucharist	Feeding of 5,000	Mary's compassion	Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	J FÓg
48	Ni maith altuighim mhonóir	Renunciation of world	Example of Job	Creation and the passion	Mary	Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	FÓg
49	A chroinn ar ar toirling Día	Dialogue with Cross	Francis and his Rule	Stigmata		Aodh Mac Aingil	Early 17c.	
50	Mairg bheirios díogha dá dheóin	Heaven v. hell	Mary as Intercessor			Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	FÓg
51	Iomdha fath ag feirg an Coimdheadh	Fall of angels	Adam & Eve	Cain and Abel	Crucifixion / Judgement	Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	FÓg
52	Mairg nach diongnadh dán do Dhía	Sacred poetry	Harrowing of Hell	Ascension	Mary secures reward for poem	Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	SP FÓg
53	Diomhaoín gach dan acht dán Dé	Sacred poetry	All poetry vain except sacred poetry	Nothing real except praise of God	Mary & St Peter as intercessors	Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	SP FÓg
54	Ni diol gradha gleann na ndeór	Brevity of life	Vale of Tears	Shadowy world	St Peter	Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	FÓg
55	Ni rí fíre acht flaith nimhe	Passion of Christ	Shedding of tears of repentance	St Peter		Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	FÓg
56	Mé ar tfháosam a ógh	Virgin Mary	Physical beauty			Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	FÓg
57	Mairce nach ttoirtionn a dhéura	Repentance with tears	Paul and Peter	Mary Magdalen	Longinus	Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird	Early 17c.	FÓg
58	Braon re ndubhadh diomdha Dé	Judgement	Mary's intercession	Tears		Anon.		
59	Fuighioll beannocht brú Mhuire	Mary	Joachim	Bethlehem	Massacre of Innocents	Anon.	Early 13c.?	

60	Eiséirghe dar éirigh Día	Harrowing of Hell	The Fall	Satan as narrator		Anon.	Early 13c.?	F
61	Fada atú an aghaidh mhanma	Brevity of life	The Fall	Body as paramour of soul		Diarmoid Mac an Bhaird		F
62	Cairt a síothchána ag síol Ádhaimh	The Fall	Cross as tree of salvation	Judgement	Finding of true Cross	Anon.	mid-15c.	F
63	Crand do chuir amach Naoí nár	Noah and the Flood	Concealing sin in Confession	The Fall		Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe	mid-13c.	F
64	Tugadh mo choimhéd do chóiger	Peter & Paul	Five Senses			Anon.		
65	Droichead na bpeacthach páis Dé	Cross	Four Woods	Bridge of Salvation	Five Wounds	Anon.		
66	Seacht ndealbha ar in Spiorat Náomh	Seven manifestations of Holy Spirit	The fruits of these			Anon.		
67	Día do bheatha a mheic Muire	Christmas	Incarnation			Anon.		
68	Atáid tri comraic am chionn	Body *v.* Soul	The Fall	Denial of Guilt	World, flesh, devil	Tadhg Óg Ó hUiginn	Early to mid-15c.	
69	Maith ogus maithfidhear dhuid	Forgiveness	Youth and pride	Hatred		Anon.	15c.	
70	Aoídhidh meisi ag mathair Dhé	Virgin Mary	Annunciation	Joseph	Mater Dolorosa	Anon.	mid-15c.	
71	Aithin mé dod toide a Eóin	John of the Bosom	Intercession	Mary and St John	Five Senses	Anon.	Early to mid-15c.	
72	Cía ghabhus manmuin re a ais	Dominic	Intercession	Unconfessed sin	Life of Dominic	Anon.	Early to mid-15c.	

73	Mairce danab soirbh an sáoghal	Rejection of wealth	Flight to wounds	Judgement, Original Sin and Fall	7 deadly sins	Anon.	Early to mid-15c.	B
74	Ata sinn ar slighidh	Brevity of life	Judgement	Incarnation	Wounds	Anon.	mid-15c.	B
75	Da chuireadh ar cloinn Ádhuim	Judgement, Brevity of life	Hell and Heaven	7 deadly sins	Commandments	Anon.	Late 16c. to early 17c.	B
76	Saoghalta sin a sháoghail	Brevity of life	Renunciation of World	Judgement		Anon.		B
77	Ort do sheiseacht a sháoghail	Renunciation of World	Murder of Abel	David and Abraham	Death of John the Baptist	D. Mór Ó Dálaigh	Early 13c.	B
78	Mo gheanor ceanglus cumann bainríoghna	Virgin Mary	Queen rules over her Son	Poem for intercession		Fear Flatha Ó Gnímh	Early 17c.	
79	Deacair foghnamh do thoil da thighearna	Christ *v.* Devil	Nature obeys Christ			Anon.		
80	Manam dhuit a Dhé athar	Incarnation	Crucifixion	Harrowing of Hell	Poetry and old age	Anon.		
81	Ór na mban baincheann nimhe	Virgin Mary	Physical beauty	Role in salvation		Ó Gnímh		M
82	Do geineadh inghean ón umhla	Virgin Mary	Physical beauty	Mater Dolorosa		Anon.	15c.	M
83	Gabh comhairle a Criosdaighe	Didactic	5 senses and 7 gifts	Articles of faith	Sunday observance	Anon.		A
84	Ar tfáosamh damh a Dhe a athair	Conversion	Litany of Christ's life	Brevity of life	Pilgrim petition	Eochaidh Ó hEódhusa	Late 16c.	