

Kevin Murray
'Gilla Mo Dutu Úa Caiside'

First published in *Cín Chille Cúile*, ed. J. Carey, M. Herbert and K. Murray (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2004), 150-162.

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Gilla Mo Dutu Úa Caiside¹

Kevin Murray

WE are fortunate in medieval Irish studies in having a number of studies focussed on individual poets. Among the more recent contributions we may instance Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin's study of the life and work of Máel Ísu Úa Brolcháin (†1086),² Donnchadh Ó hAodha's piecing together of the fragments attributed to Rechtgal úa Siadail (fl. late eighth /early ninth century),³ the various entries in books such as *The Oxford companion to Irish literature*⁴ and the *Dictionary of Celtic mythology*⁵ as well as the unpublished theses of Dóra Pódör on the poems of Flann Mainistrech (†1056)⁶ and of Peter Smith on the work of Gilla Cóemáin (fl. 1072).⁷ There are many more studies of this nature which have yet to be attempted while there are many other entries pending in the forthcoming *Dictionary of national biography* and *Dictionary of Irish biography*.

¹ I wish to thank all those who contributed to the discussion after this talk which was presented at the Twelfth International Congress of Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth, on 26/08/2003. I also wish to thank Dr John Carey for suggesting numerous improvements to the final draft. It was only shortly before the Congress that I had the opportunity to examine Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin's unpublished thesis on the metrical *Bansbheanas* (*An Bansbheanas filíochta*, Unpublished M.A. Dissertation (UCG, 1977)), to discover that she had already covered a lot of the ground under discussion here.

² M. Ní Bhrolcháin, *Maol Íosa Ó Brolcháin* (Maigh Nuad, 1986).

³ D. Ó hAodha, 'Rechtgal úa Siadail: a famous poet of the Old Irish period', *Seanchas: essays in early and medieval archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne*, ed. A. F. Smyth (Dublin, 1999) 192–8.

⁴ Ed. R. Welch (Oxford, 1996); see, for example, the entries on Cúán úa Lothcháin (†1024) and Flann mac Lonáin (fl. late ninth century).

⁵ J. MacKillop (Oxford, 1998); see, for example, the entries on Dallán Forgaill (fl. late sixth century) and Flann mac Lonáin.

⁶ D. Pódör, *Twelve poems attributed to Flann Mainistrech from the Book of Leinster* (1999, TCD, Unpublished Ph.D. thesis).

⁷ P. J. Smith, *Three poems ascribed to Gilla Cóemáin: a critical edition* (1997, University of Oxford, Unpublished D.Phil. thesis).

This paper focusses on the literary endeavours of the twelfth-century figure Gilla Mo Dutu Úa Caiside (fl. 1147).⁸ He is probably best known for his poetical compositions, *Éri óg inis na náem*⁹ and *Adam óenathair na ndóene* (popularly referred to as the metrical *Banshenchas*).¹⁰ Many other pieces attributed to him are also extant. By mapping out the boundaries of this work, it is hoped that a clearer picture of the man and his concerns will emerge. This may also help to illuminate the attitude of later generations of his fellow countrymen to his endeavours, by examining which of his literary efforts has met with the most favour in the centuries since his death.

To begin, we must examine what is known about the man himself.¹¹ His name is unique and of real interest. Gilla- names in medieval Gaeldom have been discussed by Marstrander¹² who notes that they became common from the tenth century onwards.¹³ In these names, *gilla* 'servant, devotee' is generally followed by a name in the genitive, often that of a saint; e.g. Gilla Pádraig. It is unclear with regard to

8 K. Meyer, *Primer of Irish metrics* (Dublin, 1909) 43, wrongly entered Gilla Mo Dutu's death under 1143 without indicating his source for this date. It is possible that he took it from the nineteenth-century RIA MS 23 C 33, where pp. 303–6 furnish the first lines of 90 poems with some notes on their authors. On p. 306 is written: *Giolla modhúda .i. dall clairineach abh-árd bracáin san mílbe déth 1143 aséth adbert an leth úd don reim riagra .i. éirinn óg inis na naomb.*

9 Ed. C. O'Connor, *Rerum Hibernicarum scriptores veteres I* (1814, Buckingham) cxlvii–clxxxiv; ed. B. MacCarthy, *Codex Palatino-Vaticanus*, TLS 3 (1892) 408–37; ed. R.A.S. Macalister, *Lebor gabála Érenn v*, ITS 44 (1956) 540–65. A new edition of this poem is forthcoming: G. Hemprich, 'Éri óg inis na náem', *Festgaben für Hildegard L. C. Tristram* (Hagen: Currach-Bhán Publications).

10 M. Dobbs, 'The Ban-shenchus', *RC* 47 (1930) 283–339. A vastly superior edition and translation of the text is to be found in Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Bansheanchas filiochta*. A diplomatic edition of the poem is available in *LL* iii, 16428–17396.

The prose version is edited by Dobbs in *RC* 48 (1931) 163–233 and the indices are available in *RC* 49 (1932) 437–89. Ní Bhrolcháin has also re-edited this: *The prose Banshenchas*, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (UCG, 1980).

11 The character of Gilla Mo Dutu has already been examined by M. Ní Bhrolcháin, 'The manuscript tradition of the Banshenchas', *Ériu* 33 (1982) 109–35, at 109–18; eadem, 'An Bansheanchas', *Léachtaí Cholm Cille* xii: Na mná sa litríocht, ead. P. Ó Fiannachta (Maigh Nuad, 1982) 5–29, at 5–7. These articles have been used as the starting points for my investigations. There is also a short note by R. Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Halle, 1921) §14, 46–7: 'Gilla Mo-Dutu und das Banshenchas'.

12 C. Marstrander, 'Altir. gillae', *ZCP* 12 (1918) 309–22, at 313–4.

13 In a talk given to the International Congress on 26/08/2003, Kay Muhr noted that it was from the twelfth century onwards that Gilla- names became fashionable. In the late genealogies of the Cassidys (discussed below), Gilla Mo Dutu is the first of many of Uí Chaiside to have a Gilla- name.

Gilla Mo Dutu, however, who the saint in question may be. Mo Dutu is an otherwise unattested hypocoristic form,¹⁴ whose basis remains unclear.¹⁵ Probably because of its rarity, it regularly gets confused with the more common Mo Chuda (< Carthach) and thus our author's name is often written Gilla Mo Chuda. On the issue of his name, Gilla Mo Dutu has the following to say:

Giolla Moghoda ra a ghairm
Ag eolchaibh, is e m'forainm,

Gilla Mochuda, as I am called
By the learned that is my eke-name (i.e. my supplementary name).¹⁶

Thus, it seems that he had a separate birth name and that he may have taken Gilla Mo Dutu as his name for Christian life, a not uncommon feature in medieval Ireland.¹⁷

He also seems to have had physical disabilities; in the introduction to *Éri óg inis na náem* he is described as *dall cláirinech* 'blind, flat-faced'¹⁸ a description repeated in later sources (e.g. RIA MS 23 C 33, p. 306; King's Inns Library MS 3, p. 63m.).¹⁹ The boast is also made that *nír chan gó na cláen-senchais riam* 'he never

14 In the Martyrologies of Tallaght & Donegal for August 11 there is mention of the daughters of Dútu; this character seems not to be connected to our saint, the hypocoristic form of whose name would not be the same as the simplex.

15 P. Russell, 'Patterns of hypocorism in early Irish hagiography', *Saints and scholars: studies in Irish hagiography*, ed. J. Carey, M. Herbert and P. Ó Riain (Dublin, 2001) 237–49, at 241: 'The evidential problem occurs because we are not always clear a particular hypocoristic form presupposes the radical form of the name'. Prof. Ó Riain has suggested to me the possibility that Mo Dutu may be a hypocoristic form of the name Dubthach.

16 C. Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉrenn* (Oxford, 1922) §220: i, 260; ii, 252.

17 Elsewhere in the same Life (Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, §224: i, 264; ii, 256), Gilla Mo Dutu writes: *Ni bainm ele goirter diom / Acht Giolla Mochoda na naomb* 'No other name am I called by / Than Gilla Mochuda of the saints'. This seems to suggest that it is by his Gilla-name alone that he is known and that his birth name no longer has any currency.

18 Macalister, *LG* v, 412–3 (= Mac Carthy, *Codex Palatino-Vaticanus*, 408–9).

19 N. Jacobs, 'Drysni geirfaol y gwahanglwyf: *claf, clafwr, clawr, clafr*', *Hispano-Gallo-Brittonica: essays in honour of Professor D. Ellis Evans on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday* (Cardiff, 1995) 66–78, at 66: 'Ir. *cláirinech* and W. *wynepglawr* are well known to contain identical elements. Ir. *enech* (= *-ainech*) and W. *wyneb* are 'face'; Ir. *clár* and W. *clawr*, originally 'table, board', developed a general sense of any flat or level object, whence *cláirinech*, used of the flattened face considered symptomatic of leprosy'. N. R. Honey & K. K. Lo, 'Leprosy (Hansen's disease)', *Handbook of dermatology & venereology*, ed. P. Cabral, L. Leite, J. Pinto (Hong Kong, 2nd ed. 2003) chapter 17, define leprosy as 'an ancient stigmatizing disease of mainly the skin, peripheral nerves, eyes and nose. It is a notorious cause of blindness, nasal, hand and feet deformities with neurotrophic ulceration and neurotrophic ankle and feet joint

chanted falsehood or a crooked history'.²⁰ Unsurprisingly, this assessment is echoed by later Gaelic writers. For example, in 'Betha Máedóc Ferna (ii)' we find the following: *Eittirbhretha Maodhócc annso do réir Ghiolla Mochoda Í Caiside an tsáoi fhesach, fhír-eolach* 'These are the decisions of Maedoc according to Gilla Mochuda O'Cassidy the knowing and truly learned sage'.²¹

It is clear from his own writings that he was originally either from or was attached to the ecclesiastical site of Ard Breacán in Mide (tl. / p. Ardbraccan, b. Navan Lower, co. Meath) and was later attached to the monastery on Daminish (Devinish Island on Lower Lough Erne, b. Magheraboy, co. Fermanagh).²² For example, his two most famous compositions, *Éri óg inis na náem* and the metrical *Banshenchas*, mention both places.²³ A late genealogical tract surviving in a nineteenth-century MS in St Colman's College, Fermoy (MS 6) records that he had at least one son, Maolmuire mór,²⁴ and in one eighteenth-century MS²⁵ and two nineteenth-century MSS he is said to have been a cleric;²⁶ this assertion, however, may be wholly based on his association with these two ecclesiastical sites rather than on other early independent information.²⁷

As Brian Ó Cuív has noted, 'the Uí Chaiside were prominent from the fourteenth century on in Fermanagh where many of them were hereditary doctors to Mág Uidhir chieftains'.²⁸ He refers to the late genealogical tract (mentioned above) where among others is noted: . . . *mc Ghiollamachuda mhóir mc (sic!) Caiside,*

changes'.

20 Macalister, *LG* v, 412-3 (= Mac Carthy, *Codex Palatino-Vaticanus*, 408-9).

21 Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, §221: i, 260; ii, 253.

22 It is clear that the monastery was thriving during this period as the construction of the famous round tower (still extant) is generally dated to the twelfth century.

23 Macalister, *LG* v, 562-5, §78, §D (cf. Mac Carthy, *Codex Palatino-Vaticanus*, 436); Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Bansheanchas filíochta*, §276; cf. Dobbs, 'The Ban-shenchus', *RC* 47, 315 & 399.

24 C. Ua Cadhla, ed. 'Geinealaighe Fearmanach', *Analecta Hibernica* 3 (1931) 62-150, at 136.

25 King's Inns Library MS 3, p. 63m. (alongside copy of *Éri óg*): Hoc Poema a G. Modudio de Ardbreacain Ecclesiastico A.L. 1143 compositum est (Oflaherty in *Dedicacione* pag:2). Posterior pars hujus Poematis a poeta cui nomen Dall Clairineach composita est Reim Rioghruidhe (NB potius videtur Dall Clairineach esse Epitheton G. Modudii).

26 Mánta Ua Gríobtha, writing in 1845, describes Gilla Mo Dutu as 'a writer of the 12th Century (*sic*) and a Prelate of Árd Breacháin' (reference from M. Herbert and P. de Brún, ed. *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in Cambridge libraries* (Cambridge University Press, 1986) 81. The MS in question is Cambridge MS Add. 6559) while in the unpublished tract in the nineteenth-century RIA MS 23 C 33, cited above (note 8), Gilla Mo Dutu is referred to on p. 306 as *abb- ard braccáin*.

27 However, the fact that he had a Christian name (Gilla Mo Dutu) alongside a birth name (unknown) would also point towards his being a cleric.

28 'The surname Ó Caiside', *Celtica* 19 (1987) 176.

do bhí na ollamb leighis agus Seannchuis a nÉirinn, mac Taidhg .i. an cheadfhear táinic go Fearmanach ar ttús do mbúintir Chaiside²⁹ '... son of Giolla Mo Chuda mór son (sic!) of Caiside, who was expert in Ireland in medicine and *senchus*, the son of Taidhg, i.e. the first man of muintir Chaiside who came to Fermanagh'. This is surely a reference, as Ó Cuív suggests, to our Gilla Mo Dutu. This reference ties in well with his known connections to co. Meath and the lack of information on the presence of the Uí Chaiside learned family in Fermanagh before the twelfth century. An ongoing Cassidy presence in this part of co. Fermanagh³⁰ is evidenced by the townland names Ballycassidy (p. Trory, b. Tirkennedy), Cassidy (p. Derryvullen, b. Lurg) and Farrancassidy (p. Inishmacsaint, b. Magheraboy), and by the fact that 'they were one of three erenagh families holding land on the island [i.e. Devenish] in the early seventeenth century'.³¹

The genealogies of Uí Chaiside link the family with the eponymous ancestor of Dál Cais.³² In a Cíarraige Lúachra genealogy there is a reference to *Tuath Láegairi la Daiminis for Loch Érne dia fuilid Húi Chaisidi .i. na leaga cona coibnesaib*³³ 'the territory of Lóegaire at Devenish in Loch Erne in which are the Uí Chaiside, i.e. the doctors with their relations'. Whether an Úa Caiside came north from Munster in the late-eleventh century with Cennétich and Conchobar Úa Briain who took service with Donnchad Úa Rúairc of Bréifne (as plausibly suggested by Charles Doherty) or whether they were merely linked with the Dál Cais (and thus with Munster) because of the name similarities, their most famous son, Gilla Mo Dutu, played an important part in Bréifne ambitions in the twelfth century.³⁴

Ard Breacán was in Lóegaire territory³⁵ and this may be the direct link which brought Gilla Mo Dutu to Daminis (in *Tuath Láegairi*, as noted above). However,

²⁹ Ua Cadhla, 'Geinealaighe Fearmanach', 136–7.

³⁰ P. Livingstone, *The Fermanagh story* (Eniskillen, 1969) 423, notes that in modern Fermanagh the Cassidy name is 'the thirteenth most common in the county and the fifth among the native Gaelic families'.

³¹ C. Doherty, 'The transmission of the cult of St Máedhóg', *Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Texte und Überlieferung / Ireland and Europe in the early Middle Ages: texts and transmission*, ed. P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (Dublin, 2002) 268–83, at 275.

³² See Ó Cuív, 'The surname Ó Caiside', 176; Doherty, 'The transmission', 275–6.

³³ CGH 158, 53tt (p. 288).

³⁴ If these Munster (particularly Dál Cais) genealogical connections have any validity, then it is possible that Uí Chaiside members travelled north to Mide along with Mór, daughter of Muirchertach Úa Briain, who married Murchad Úa Maíl Shechnaill, king of Mide (1106–1153; deposed and restored on a number of occasions). Some might have gone further north with Mór's daughter, Derborgaill, who married Tigernán Úa Rúairc, king of Bréifne.

³⁵ This territory comprised the baronies of Upper and Lower Navan, co. Meath.

Tigernán Ua Rúairc, king of Bréifne (1128–72) was overlord of both Ard Breacán and Damínis at periods during the twelfth century; it is he, and his wife Derborgaill, daughter of Murchad Ua Maíl Shechnaill from Mide and Mór ingen Muirchertaig Uí Briain of Dál Cais, who seem to tie together most completely Gilla Mo Dutu and his compositional concerns. For example, *Éri óg inis na náem* finishes with great lauding of Tigernán,³⁶ the metrical *Banshenchas* contains two stanzas in praise of Tigernán and Derborgaill,³⁷ while the material attributed to him from the Lives of Saints Mo Laisse and M'Áedóc, saints connected with Bréifne, seems directly linked to the spread of Bréifne power. The surviving corpus of his writings, therefore, would seem to point towards a poet/patron type of relationship between Gilla Mo Dutu and Tigernán and/or Derborgaill.

This corpus can be subdivided into various groups:

1. *Éri óg inis na náem*.
2. Material from the Lives of Saints Mo Laisse and M'Áedóc.
3. The metrical *Banshenchas*.
4. Other sundry pieces.

I. ÉRI ÓG INIS NA NÁEM

Of all Gilla Mo Dutu's work, by far the most numerous extant copies are of *Éri óg inis na náem*. This poem, which treats of the reigns of the kings of Ireland during the Christian era until the twelfth century, was composed by Gilla Mo Dutu in 1142³⁸ or more probably in 1143.³⁹ Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin has suggested that the metrical *Banshenchas* 'may have been intended as a companion piece' to this poem 'enumerating the wives of these kings'.⁴⁰ There is no doubt, however, that a large part of the popularity of *Éri óg inis na náem* in the eighteenth

36 See Macalister, *LG* v, 562 §77.

37 See Ní Bhrolcháin, 'The Manuscript Tradition', 110.

38 In the seventeenth-century MS Maynooth C 74j, the poem is preceeded by the tract *Do Flaithesáib Éirenn iar creidim* which finishes with the line: 'conid dhoibh sin ro chan Giollai Moduda . . . anno mxxlii'.

39 See Macalister, *LG* v, 560, §74. This date is also supported by the internal evidence of the poem itself. As M. Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias in *Cogad Gáedel re gallaib*', *Ériu* 43 (1992) 135–58, at 155, notes: 'the defeat of the king of Ailech by Ua Gairmledaig mentioned in stanza 75 also occurred in 1143'. Interestingly, a different hand to that of the scribe of the nineteenth-century copy of *Éri óg inis na náem* in RIA MS 24 M 26, fo. 37v, gives Gilla Mo Dutu's year of writing as 1191.

40 Ní Bhrolcháin, 'The Manuscript tradition', 110; she also puts forward this suggestion in 'An Bansheanchas', 8.

and nineteenth centuries was due to the fact that it was treated as a companion piece to Gilla Cóemáin's *Ériu ard inis na ríe*. It may not be stretching this association too far to suggest that Gilla Mo Dutu wrote it in imitation and continuance of Gilla Cóemáin's poem, even though Gilla Cóemáin composed just such a piece himself, *Attá sund forba fessa*.⁴¹ In the Appendix, I have listed many of the manuscripts which contain a copy of the poem.⁴²

The transmission of this poem in the various manuscripts is also of interest.⁴³ Two versions seem to have been current, a shorter one of c.54qq which generally seems to have been used when following Gilla Cóemáin's poem and a longer one of c.84qq–92qq which was more common when the poem stood alone.⁴⁴ Máire Ní Mhaonaigh has suggested that 'Ua Caiside was elaborating on an earlier poem composed about the time of Máel Sechnaill. In support of this, a *dúnad* occurs at the end of stanzas 53 and 54, both of which deal with Máel Sechnaill' and that 'having reworked earlier material, Gilla Moduda would no doubt have felt entitled to claim full authorship'.⁴⁵ This is an extremely attractive suggestion and might help explain why the shorter version of the poem (54qq) is usually coupled with Gilla Cóemáin's verses—this tradition might well have been established before Gilla Mo Dutu reworked the poem, if we believe that this is what happened. Also of interest in the transmission of this poem in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is the considerable number of copies which may be associated in one way or another with either Edward O'Reilly or the Ó Longáin scribal family.

2. MATERIAL FROM THE LIVES OF SAINTS MO LAISSE AND M'ÁEDÓC

Gilla Mo Dutu is cited as the author of five poems found in the Irish Life known as 'Betha Máedóc Ferna (ii)'⁴⁶ and three poems which form part of the

41 A diplomatic edition of the poem is available in *LL* iii, 15258–406. A quick comparison of the poems shows that they agree very closely in the order of the kinglists they present, but disagree quite substantially in the length of the reigns attributed to the kings listed.

42 This list is by no means complete. It has been assembled by checking through the indices of published guides to manuscript collections.

43 For example, a verse from this poem is also present in two MS copies of *Cogad Gáedel re gallaib*. These are the (fourteenth-century?) TCD MS 1319 (H.2.17) and the seventeenth-century copy made by Míchél Ó Cléirigh, preserved in Brussels MS 2569–2572—Eugene O'Curry made a transcript of this which survives as TCD MS 1408 (H.6.18). See Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias', 154–6.

44 The earliest extant MS copies of the poem (in *BB*, *BLec*, and *LUM*) would suggest that the 'long form' of the poem originally had 84qq.

45 Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias', 156.

46 Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, i, 190–290; ii, 182–281. The poems are *Ca lion mionn ag*

dossier relating to Mo Laisse, but which have not been incorporated into the Life proper.⁴⁷ The reasons for Gilla Mo Dutu being intimately bound up with compositions relating to the Lives of Saints Mo Laisse and M'Áedóc are quite clear. Mo Laisse was patron of his own place of residence (Daminis), while M'Áedóc was associated with Rossinver in Bréifne; and Gilla Mo Dutu's close connections with Tigernán Ua Ruairc and his wife, Derborgaill, would surely have provided the impetus to (help) write up his Life. 'Betha Máedóc Ferna (ii)' contains the following lines:

Mé Giolla Moghoda on ród
Do mhuinntir Molaisi is Maodhóg
I am Gilla Mochuda from the road (?)
Of the family of Molaise and Maedoc.⁴⁸

Thus, the author allies himself with both ecclesiastical communities at a time when it seems that Tigernán Ua Ruairc, king of Bréifne, was acknowledged as overking of Daminis, thus providing a connection between these ecclesiastical sites during the period when Gilla Mo Dutu was composing material that was later used in the compilation of the Lives of their patrons.

However, the connections between these two saints and their communities goes deeper than that. In both Lives there is repeated mention of the great friendship and mutual respect that existed between the saints. For example, the Life of M'Áedóc asserts his right to tribute from Fir Manach. Furthermore, Mo Laisse sets aside a place near Daminis (Cella Becca) for the use of M'Áedóc and his followers (tl. Killy Beg, p. Inishmacsaint, b. Magheraboy).⁴⁹ To return to the couplet just cited above, Charlie Doherty has made the attractive suggestion that the *ród* mentioned in the above verse may be Bealach Ua Mithigéin⁵⁰ where St Mo Laisse's feast-day was observed down to 1630 at least.⁵¹ He speculates that

Maodhbócc mór §§196–8, *Cert Maodhbócc ar shluagh Mhancach* §§202–5, *Combrouinn Maodhbócc, fa mór modb* §§217–20, *Eittirbretha Maodhbócc min* §§221b–4, *Uasal an mac, mac Setna* §§264–5.

47 The Life was published by S.H. O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica* (London, 1892) i, 17–37; ii, 18–34. The poems remain unpublished in British Library Add. 18,205: (i) *Cia is fearr cairt ar dbáil mlāisi* (fo. 19r11–20r5); (ii) *Cia thairrngir mlaisi ria theacht* (fo. 20r6–v6); (iii) *Molaisi eolach na heagna* (fo. 22r1–v14). There are copies of nos i & iii in the nineteenth-century RIA MS 23 A 43.

48 Plummer, *Bethada náem nÉrenn*, §205: i, 251; ii, 243.

49 Ibid., §§ 199–205, i, 247–51; ii, 239–43

50 This passed through the modern tl. Derrynahimmirk, p. Rossinver. The modern Catholic parish preserves the name, i.e. Rossinver or Ballaghameehan (now called Ballymeehan).

51 Alternatively, however, the *ród* in question may refer to An Bóthar Mín (tl. Bohermeen, p.

this property may have been 'set aside by Máedhóg's federation for the use of the clergy of Devenish and [that it] was the counterpart to Cella Becca'.⁵² Whether these connections noted in the Lives reflect ongoing links between these religious communities before the rise in importance of Bréifne (embracing both communities) is unclear to me; the close physical proximity of the sites in question (less than 20 miles apart), however, probably points towards a continued history of association and cooperation.⁵³ Whichever viewpoint is taken, Gilla Mo Dutu's role in the middle of the twelfth century seems clear: the promotion of saints associated with Bréifne and its overlord Tigernán Úa Ruairc.⁵⁴

3. THE METRICAL BANSHEENCHAS

The medieval Irish collection of genealogical lore about women (the *Banshenchas*) is unique in early European literature.⁵⁵ Opinions differ on the primacy of the prose versus the metrical versions. Recently, Anne Connon has argued that 'based mainly on my examination of the historical section of the text, I am inclined to think the prose came first . . . the arrangement of the material in the metrical version suggests Gilla Mo-Dutu was working within the limitations imposed by the versification of a pre-existing text'.⁵⁶ If this is so, this would then be another example (to add to *Éri óg inis na náem*) of our poet building on and adding to pre-existing material to fashion a work of which he has traditionally been credited with the complete composition.

What does need some explanation, however, is the inclusion of praise for

Ardbraccan), perhaps Gilla Mo Dutu's native place.

52 Doherty, 'The transmission', 278–9.

53 As Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin has pointed out (*An Bansheanchas filíochta*, §2Biii), the connections between M'Áedóc and Mo Laisse are only to be found in one other source outside of their Lives, i.e. in Betha Naile (C. Plummer, *Miscellanea hagiographica Hibernica*, 100–51) §§ 24, 54–5, 58–9. The poem in §§ 58–9 seems to have been copied from Betha M'Áedóc (§§ 272–3) while the other three sections refer to Naile's time as *comarba Mo Laisse*.

54 In 'Betha Máedóc Ferna (ii)', Gilla Mo Dutu is cited as the author of five of the Life's constituent poems. However, his influence on other sections seems probable. For example, §§206–14 describe the close friendship between M'Áedóc and Ultán of Ard Breacán: again, Tigernán Úa Ruairc, Bréifne and Gilla Mo Dutu provide the common links.

55 This was traditionally assumed to be a list of the wives of kings of Tara but it has recently been demonstrated that it makes more sense when it is understood that its main source was a list of the mothers of the kings of Tara: see A. Connon, 'The *Banshenchas* and the Uí Néill queens of Tara', *Seanchas: essays in early and medieval archaeology, history and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne*, ed. A. F. Smyth (Dublin, 1999) 98–108, at 101–8.

56 Connon, 'The *Banshenchas*', 101.

Tigernán's father-in-law, Murchad Ua Maíl Shechnaill, in two stanzas written in tribute to Tigernán and his wife, Derborgaill, at the end of the main body of the metrical *Banshenchas*.⁵⁷ Only three years previously, in 1144, a settlement between Ua Conchobair and Ua Briain at Terryglass had resulted in Tigernán losing control of part of Mide, granted him earlier that year by Tairdelbach Ua Conchobair, due to the reinstatement of Murchad Ua Maíl Shechnaill.⁵⁸ Praise for any member of the Uí Maíl Shechnaill (even a father-in-law) certainly went against Bréifne policy of the period. In the Bréifne additions to *Cogad Gáedel re gallaib*, for example, which Máire Ní Mhaonaigh would date to this period, she notes that 'no opportunity is lost to cast aspersions on the Uí Maíl Shechnaill, rulers of Mide and inveterate opponents of the expansionist policies of Tigernán Ua Ruairc'.⁵⁹ It may be because Gilla Mo Dutu was originally from Ard Breacán, and because the poem in question was the *Banshenchas*, that he was given license to praise Murchad in this manner. The suspicion may be that it was Derborgaill rather than her husband Tigernán who was his patron, and thus that praise for her parents was expected from Gilla Mo Dutu as a token of loyalty, particularly at a time when little love was lost between Bréifne and Mide.

4. OTHER SUNDRY PIECES

Two other compositions attributed to Gilla Mo Dutu are also extant in multiple copies.⁶⁰ The first is the poem beginning *Cuibdeas comanmann na ríe*. In the copy in *BLec.* (RIA MS 23 P 2, fo. 32va1-33ra10), the poem is attributed to Gilla Mo Dutu in the last verse (33ra9-10).⁶¹ This poem (regularly 51qq) is concerned with enumerating kings of Ireland. The second is the poem beginning *Sé ríe déag Eoghain anall*. Of all the extant copies, in only one that I am aware of (a 1q fragment in the eighteenth-century RIA MS F V 4, 57m.) is the poem attributed to Gilla Mo Dutu. This poem (regularly 13qq) is also concerned with enumerating kings of Ireland. Thus, these compositions are concerned with the type of material treated by Gilla Mo Dutu in *Éri óg inis na náem*.⁶²

57 Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Bansheanchas filíochta*, §§265-6.

58 Tigernán Ua Ruairc did not regain control of this part of Mide until 1149; see Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias', 153.

59 Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Bréifne bias', 150.

60 These are listed by M. Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Bansheanchas filíochta*, §2, n. 10-11.

61 The previous verse, however, ends in a *dúnad* (as does the last verse) which makes it possible to argue that Gilla Mo Dutu's name was added to an extant composition.

62 In *OnomG* s.v. a. *m(b)reacain*, a claim is made that the list of the Christian kings of Ulaid, followed by the pedigrees of certain kings, in the Book of Ballymote fo. 34a (p. 51b), was

CONCLUSIONS

In sketching the known life and career of Gilla Mo Dutu, a few observations emerge:

- (1) He was closely connected with Tigernán Úa Rúairc, king of Bréifne, and his wife Derborgaill; whether the primary relationship (probably that of poet/patron) was with the former or the latter remains unclear.
- (2) He was attached to the monastery of Daminis, and probably also to the church of Ard Breacán and seems to have been a cleric (though this is not certain).
- (3) He seems to have gone north from Ard Breacán to Daminis. The link between these two ecclesiastical sites may be that both were in Lóegaire territory or it may be provided by the rise of Bréifne from the latter half of the eleventh century onwards.
- (4) His name is well preserved in compositions thanks to his habit of naming himself in the final quatrains of his poems. However, we have seen that many of these compositions may have been created and/or finished by Gilla Mo Dutu from existing materials, although traditionally scholars have credited him with their entire composition.
- (5) For later generations of native scholars, it is *Éri óg inis na náem*, the historical poem with which he is credited, which was most in demand. His works constitute an important part of the Irish historical verse tradition.⁶³
- (6) Finally, a thorough linguistic and metric examination of the compositions attributed to Gilla Mo Dutu will be required to see if comparisons noted may help bear out the claim to common authorship of at least parts of the works mentioned here.

written by Gilla Mo Dutu. Having scrutinised this text, I can find no evidence to substantiate this claim.

⁶³ Cf. P. Smith, 'Early Irish historical verse: the evolution of a genre', *Irland und Europa im früheren Mittelalter: Texte und Überlieferung / Ireland and Europe in the early Middle Ages: texts and transmission*, ed. P. Ní Chatháin and M. Richter (Dublin, 2002) 326–41.

APPENDIX

Manuscript copies of *Éri óg inis na náem*

(The MSS which are marked with an asterisk have copies of *Éri óg inis na náem* following on directly after *Ériu ard inis na ríge*)⁶⁴

- Maynooth MS M 68 (3 F 16) p. 22ff. [19thC] 90qq*
- Maynooth MS B 8, p. 255ff. [18thC] 90qq
- Maynooth MS C 42 (3 B 11) p. 49ff. [17thC] 54qq*
- Maynooth MS C 74j?, p. 5ff. [17thC] 52qq
- Maynooth MS C 88, p. 457ff. [17thC] 54qq*
- British Library MS Egerton 112, fo. 447ff. [1780–82] 53qq*
- British Library MS Egerton 174, fo. 33b ff. [18thC] 52qq
- British Library MS Egerton 118, fo. 62ff. [19thC] 91qq
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 G 12, p. 171ff. [19thC] 84qq
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 O 28, p. 41ff. [19thC] 54qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 D 9, p. 95ff. [18thC] 87qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 A 40, p. 160ff. [18thC] 83qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 M 18, p. 85ff. [18thC] 85qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 24 M 26, fo. 37v ff. [19thC] 73qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 24 C 8, p. 511ff. [19thC] 64qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 C 35, p. 44ff. [18thC?] 58qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 C 18, p. 1ff. [18th–19thC] 91qq
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 B 24, p. 274ff. [19thC] 54qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 P 2 (The Book of Lecan), fo. 311ff. [early 15thC] 83qq
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 P 12 (The Book of Ballymote) p. 49ff. [14th–15thC] 84qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 4, p. 142 [19thC] 1q*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 33, p. 127ff. [19thC] 64qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 Q 2, p. 5ff. [19thC] 91qq
- Royal Irish Academy MS 24 C 3, fo. 112v ff. [19thC] 54qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 K 32, p. 230ff. [17thC] 90qq
- Royal Irish Academy MS D iii 2, p. 130ff. [18thC] 81qq
- Royal Irish Academy MS 3 B 26, p. 174ff. [19thC] 54qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 K 1, p. 145ff. [19thC] 54qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 H 18, p. 147ff. [18thC] 54qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 H 28, fo. 29r ff. [18thC] 298ll*
- Royal Irish Academy MS 12 E 14, p. 202ff. [19thC] 90qq*
- Royal Irish Academy MS C i 3D, p. 1ff. [18thC] 83qq

64 Thus of the 48 manuscripts listed, 28 have copies of the two tracts side by side. The association between the two poems was so strong that in the nineteenth-century MS RIA 23 O 28, Gilla Cóemáin is given as the author of both poems.

- Royal Irish Academy MS 23 G 8,P) pp. 106–7, 112–3 [18thC] 81qq
 Royal Irish Academy MS 12 B² 8, p. 57ff. [19thC?] 91qq
 Royal Irish Academy MS 12 K 8, p. 444ff. [19thC] 54qq*
 Royal Irish Academy MS C vi 1, p. 38ff. [18thC] 75qq*
 Royal Irish Academy MS 23 G 1, p. 329ff. [18thC] 54qq*
 Royal Irish Academy MS 24 A 25, p. 252ff., 399q; fo. iff., 529q; [19thC] 91qq in total*
 Royal Irish Academy MS B iv 2, fo. 12ff. [17thC] 91qq
 Royal Irish Academy MS C iv 3, fo. 111ff. [17thC] 92qq
 Royal Irish Academy MS D ii 1 (The Book of Uí Maine) fo. 2ff. [late 14thC] 84qq
 St John's College, Waterford, MS 3, l. 33off. [19thC] 55qq*
 St Colman's College, Fermoy, MS 22, l. 307ff. [18thC] 54qq*
 Trinity College Dublin MS 1289 (H. 1. 15) p. 122ff. [no date] 91qq
 Trinity College Dublin MS 1348 (H. 4. 6, 7) p. 4off. [no date] 84qq*
 Trinity College Dublin MS 1356 (H. 4. 15) p. 54off. [18thC] ??qq
 King's Inns Library MS 3, p. 63ff [18thC] 92qq
 Cambridge MS Add. 6559, fo. 226v? [19thC] 55qq*?