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IRISH SCHOLARS IN DUBLIN IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The following versified list of Irish literary men residing in Dublin some two centuries ago is taken from H. 4. 20, p. 113, a MS. written by Tadhg (son of Seán) Ó Neachtain, the lexicographer, mainly during the years 1726-29. In the MS. no author is assigned to the poem ; but for many reasons, which it is hardly necessary to detail, there can be no doubt that its author was Tadhg Ó Neachtain himself.

The list professes to give the names of such Irish scholars as its author had been acquainted with in Dublin. Three priests, friends of the Ó Neachtain family, are honoured by being placed first ; and next after them comes the veteran Seán Ó Neachtain, who is here definitely stated to have been a native of Connacht. Among the other names are those of Aodh Buidhe Mac Cruitín, historian, grammarian and poet ; Diarmuid Ó Conchubhair, author of the first English translation of Keating's history ; and Dr. John Fergus, the well-known patron of Irish letters. In all 26 names are mentioned ; and of these ten are natives of Leinster, six of Connacht, five of Munster, one of Ulster, while in the case of four writers no indication is given as to their place of birth. Transcripts in the hands of most of those enumerated are still extant, chiefly in the libraries of the British Museum, Trinity College, and the R.I.A.

Ó Neachtain at first intended his poem to end with l. 88 ; but subsequently to writing these 88 lines in H. 4. 20, he added some extra stanzas. This would make it probable that the poem is not much older than the date of its transcription, which may with fair certainty be set down as 1728.¹

As far back as 1829 Ó Neachtain's poetic list was printed by Thaddeus Connellan in an exceedingly rare book entitled, I believe, "*An Duanaire, . . . A Selection of Irish Melodies, Poems and Moral Epigrams.*"² Connellan, rather misleadingly, heads the poem :

¹ Some lines on the preceding page (112) of the MS. are dated *Domhnach na Tríonnóide, Iún 16, 1728.*

² For a loan of some leaves of this book I have to thank Mr. S. Ua Caiside.

"A few of our Modern Irish Poets." In Irish he thus introduces it: *Ann so síos Ollamhna is Saoithe na Gaoidheilge le linn Thaidhg Uí Neachtáin, do sgríobh an dán so (réir mo bharamhla) tre chosamhlacht an tsaothair dheighionnaigh, ata le na chois.* His version, however, is very untrustworthy; many words are omitted merely (as it would appear) to save space in printing, while a number of others are corrupted or mutilated. He does not specify the MS. upon which he drew.

In printing the text below I have relied solely on H. 4. 20. I have made no alteration in the text of the MS. beyond regulating the use of accents, and attending to punctuation etc. Some of the characteristics of the Ó Neachtáin's dialect may be observed from Tadhg's orthography. For instance, final *-adh* = *-a*, as in Munster: hence misspellings like *scothadh*, *ceannsadh*, *pearsadh*, *Connachtadh*, passim. *sáraidh*, l. 22, is for *struigheadh* (p. pass.). Ó Neachtáin, it will be observed, uses both *a* (aspirating) and *o* (left unaccented in MS.) in the sense of 'from,' when indicating a writer's place of origin: cf. ll. 18, 42, 46, 86; 11, 59, 66. In the same sense he uses *os* or *ós* (non-aspirating), ll. 36, 49, 91, 99. These forms point to a confusion between three distinct prepositions, *ó*, *a(s)* and *ós*.¹ The preposition *a n-* is omitted ll. 27, 39, 40, 58; cf. *mar* for *mar a*, l. 24. *bhus* is Tadhg's spelling of the verb *is*, ll. 3, 47, 62, 100; in l. 84 it seems to stand for the conjunction *is*.

The metre is not uninteresting as showing the position to which Deví had fallen in the early 18th century. The counting of syllables is disregarded; the end-rhyming is of the freest possible description; while such refinements as *uaim* and *amas* are unknown. The degradation of the chief classic metre could hardly have been carried further. That even a learned and well-read writer like Tadhg Ó Neachtáin could write Deví in this fashion, shows how unintelligible the syllabic metrical system had already become two centuries ago, and how artificial and pedantic were the occasional later attempts to revive it.

¹ The sinking of *ós* in *as* is general in the spoken language: *ós comhair*, *ós cionn*, now *as comhair*, *as cionn*. Compare *as* spelt *os* in "*os amharc, os cuimhne*," 'out of sight, out of mind,' l. 93 below.

Sloinfead scothadh na Gaoidhilge grinn
 dá raibhe rém rae a' Nduibhlinn,
 acht an lucht bhus dearbhadh díbh
 nach ndearna treall do mo thathuidh.

5 Mac Aodhagáin feartach, an file fras,
 Pól pártach, an t-árd-éigeas,
 an bráthair bocht ó Chontae an Rígh ;
 bu searc gach scaith an seanchuidh

10 Proinnsias feartach, an bráthair bocht,
 gidh saidhbhir a n-earnadh 's a n-inntlacht ;
 ó Chlár Dara do chuim na bhfhann,
 Walseach oide-fhoclóir Éireann.

15 Peadar, pearsadh a n-eaglais Dé,
 Ó Muireagán ceannsadh caoimh-réidh ;
 a chompráid liom ríamh níor chas
 a ngaois, a bhfhoghluim, ná n-oideachas.

20 Seaán Ua Neachtuin, niamh na scol,
 seanóir ársaigh a chrích Connacht,
 ughdar fír-ghlic an Ghleacuidh Luinn
 's mórán staradh oile dá shamhuil.

Uiliam Ua Loingsigh luaitear linn,
 scath nár sáruidh a scríbhinn ;
 Áth na Gcliath char an chuim,
 mar [a] ndearnadh sé an Ghaoidhilg dfóghluim.

25 Ón Mhumhuin mhóir ro shín an saoi
 Ó Súileabhán, Seaán, an tsearc-ghnaoi ;
 [a] Ngaoidhiolg bu tréan an béarlach binn,
 feas don chrích a chlú do chanuim.

30 Thriall 'nar ndáil O Duinín donn
 le barr eagnadh 7 foghluim ;
 ón Mhumhuin dom Thadhg, ní cóir a chleith,
 oide fíorghaoiseach na Gaoidhilge.

- Aodh Mac Gabhráin, an Gaedhul glic,
's Ó Hisleanán ághbhar oirdheirc,
Cathal na gcumann chríche Cuinn,— 35
os Connachtadh do chím an c[h]rodhbhuinn.
- Aodh Mhac Curtaín, an crann os coill,
ailgmheasach Mumhain 'nois chanuim,
an file faobhrach [a] bhfhriotal Fáil,
feas a bhreath bheith [a] measg na mórdháil. 40
- An Solamh sochmadh, Seaán na searc,
a Thoigh Calláin thaoibhe Teamhrach,
cuim is sciath is tearmon dil
fhritil ársaidh mhacaibh Míleadh.
- Ó Baothán binn, an beartach suairc, 45
a thulach Teamhrach do ro-ghluais ;
bhus saoi an Seaán, bhus uasal méin,
Mac an Bheathadh a chraobh c[h]einéil.
- Ós Uladh ling Ó Luinín lonn, 50
Cathal do cheapach craobh gan chumann,
an Aiche mhórdha, truagh an dáil,
& do bhá ó cheart san chómhhdháil.
- Tiobrach ionmhuin ó Fhine Gall,
Roisteard na searc 's na sunneann ;
bu béarlach Gaoidhiolgadh gille an ghrinn, 55
a suin na sean 's a scríbhinn.
- Anluain ionmhuin, an t-aon, 'mo mheas,
[a] bhfhriotal na sean 's fearr do fuaras ;
ó Chloinn Magh Liradh don bhéarlach bhinn,
dom ionraic uasal Uailintín. 60
- Cathal Ó Conchubhair Chruachainn Cuinn
bhus ceart a raomhadh san gcrodhbhuinn
bu spailp an searc, ní fá a chleith,
a bhfhritiol gaoiseach na Gaoidhilge.

- 65 Muiris mórdha, an mhéin gan mheing,
ó Mhír Mumhan chímse chugainn ;
bu Gaedhul an gaoiseach, an Laittion glic,
Ó Nuabha úr álluinn ionnraic.
- 70 Stiophán ionmhuin Maolcraoibhe cóir
bu dearbh a dháil san gcoimhthineól ;
bu cliste an cléirech is bu ceart
a bhfhuihle algadh a annsacht.
- 75 Aodh Ó Dáladh, cia do rinn
mírér Thaidhg, thráth dhíbhsi canuim ;
bu Gaedhul an fear, fa fíor a chuid ;
don chrodhbhuinn bu duairc a d[h]earmad.
- 80 Ó Conchubhair fós Diarmuid díbh,
an Mhumhuin bu sean don staruidh,
do bhrígh ó locht gan saoi san mbith,
bhá a threabh do m[h]acaibh Míleadh.
- Gearóid díoghruis, ón Mhidhe mhóir,
Mac na Midhe, mear an coinnleóir,
's an deallrach Gaoidhiolgadh chríche Cuinn,
bhus ba feas a chraobhadh chanuim.
- 85 Ó Fearghail, fa dheóigh, Séamus seang,
a chrích Longphortach aird Éireann ;
bu saoi an searc san Ngaidhilg ngrinn ;
deire do mo shearc a shluinnim. Sloinnfead.¹
- 90 Aodh Ua Cobhthaidh an chroidhe ceirt,
an t-ionmhuin fíor uasal ionnraic ;
ós críoch Írmhidhe ghluais an fear,
an Gaedhul saothach, is an seanchadh.
- 95 Os amharc, os coimhne (mairg mé!)—
do dhearmod Éad[h]monn, an ghil-g[h]né ;
croídh gan mheabhail an bard gan locht,
bu Gaedhul 's budh ceart an cléireach.

¹ Slion 7c MS.

Fearghus fial, an liaigh gan locht,
 cráidhbheach diadha gan daorlot,
 Eóin ionmhuin os Iochtach Cuinn,—
 bhus cóir an caoimheach don c[h]robhuinn.

100

Maolm[h]uaidh muirneach, saoi na searc,
 Aodh úr, annsacht na hannsacht ;
 budh Connachtach an fear fial,
 a dhearmad ¹ measaim 'na mhídhriaghail.

NOTES.

At the end of the above (after l. 104) the following stanza is written in the MS. in a later and distinct hand :

*Seán O Héidéin, car mo chuím,
 an scríbhneóir alga adhuinn ;
 an Muimhneach mear, searc na saot,
 Dia dá shaora go siorrdhuidh. Amen.*

Connellan made this stanza the concluding one of the poem. This Seán Ó Héidéin, otherwise John Heyden, flourished in Dublin a few years later. The MS. 23D21 (R.I.A.), consisting of a copy of an Irish Glossary compiled in 1706 by the Father ' Froinsias Ualis ' alluded to above, was transcribed by ' Seadhan Ua Héidéin ' in 1739.

It may not be amiss to give here an abstract of the information conveyed in the verse above. In the case of some of the names I have added anglicised forms for which I have found authority :

- (1) Pól Mac Aodhagáin [Rev. Paul McEgan], O.S.F., a native of King's Co.
- (2) Proinsias Wallis [Rev. Francis Wallis], O.S.F., from Co. Kildare, author of an Irish Dictionary.
- (3) Peadar Ó Muireagáin, a priest.
- (4) Seán Ó Neachtain, author of *An Gleacuidhe Géaglonnach* and other romances ; a Connachtman.
- (5) Uilliam Ó Loingsigh [William Linch], learnt his Irish in Dublin [of which he was, presumably, a native].
- (6) Seán Ó Súilleabháin, a Munsterman.
- (7) Tadhg Ó Duinnín, a Munsterman.
- (8) Aodh Mac Gabhráin, a Connachtman.
- (9) Cathal Ó Hisleanáin, a Connachtman.
- (10) Aodh [Buidhe] Mac Cruitín [Hugh MacCurtin], a Munsterman.
- (11) Seán Mac Solaidh [John Solly], from Stackallen, near Tara.
- (12) Seán Ó Baotháin, from Tara.
- (13) Cathal Ó Luinín, an Ulsterman.
- (14) Risteárd Tuibear [Richard Tipper], from Fingal.
- (15) Vailintín Ó Hanluain, from Clanmaliere.
- (16) Cathal Ó Conchubhair, from Cruachan (in Co. Roscommon).
- (17) Muiris Ó Nuabha [Maurice Newby].
- (18) Stiophán Ó Maolchraoibhe.
- (19) Aodh Ó Dála.
- (20) Diarmuid Ó Conchubhair [Dermod O'Connor], a Munsterman.

¹ dhearmadh MS.

- (21) Gearóid Macnamidhe, from Co. Meath.
- (22) Séamus Ó Fearghail, from Co. Longford.
- (23) Aodh Ó Cobhthaigh, from Co. Westmeath.
- (24) Éadhmonn [surname not stated].
- (25) Eóin Ó Fearghusa [Dr. John Fergus], physician, a Connachtman.
- (26) Aodh Ó Maolmhuaidh [Hugh Molloy], a Connachtman.

One notices the omission from the above list of the name of Stiabhna Ríghis (Stephen Rice), a Munster scribe, who lived in Dublin at this time. That he was a friend of Tadhg Ó Neachtain's is shown by an entry in H. 4. 20 relative to some books and MSS. which Ó Neachtain had lent him.

It is remarkable, as showing how Irish was still spoken almost to the outskirts of Dublin city, to find that such a competent scribe as Risteard Tuibear was a native of Fingal. In 1717 Tuibear resided in 'Baile Mhistéil,' near Mulhuddart, in the parish of Castleknock (23 E 26, 23 L 32), and this may have been his birthplace. The inhabitants of the greater part of Fingal were of English extraction, and never acquired Irish,—a fact noted by several writers, including Fr. Peter Talbot in 1658, Sir William Petty in 1672, and Fr. John O'Heyne in 1706.

l. 37 *Curtain* (or *Curtáin*): a late hand, which resembles that of Eugene O'Curry, has written *Cruítin*, the correct form, over this.

l. 59 *Clann Magh Liradh* = *Clann Maoilioghra*, Clanmaliere, the district round Portarlinton in King's and Queen's Counties.

l. 62 *raomhadh* = *riomh*.

l. 75 *míréir Thaidhg*: what the nature of the difference between Aodh Ó Dála and the author was, does not appear.

l. 99. *Iochtach Cuinn*, i.e. *Connachtia*. Ó Neachtain is probably thinking of the derivation *Conn-íochta* given by Keating (FF. i. 116).

ailgmheasach 38, *cheapach* 50, *Aiche* (sic MS.) 51, and *spailp* 64, are obscure to me.

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