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Paper abstracts

Brian Arkins, NUI Galway
Yeats' use of Byzantium

Byzantium met Yeats' requirement for unity of being, where a world view was shared by all. He articulated that in a famous passage in a vision about the Byzantium of Justinian. Then there are two famous poems about Byzantium from his greatest volumes, *The Tower* and *The Winding Stair*, in which he says, for example, 'I have sailed the seas and come to the Holy City of Byzantium'.

John Black, Moravian College, Bethlehem PA
Sacred landscape in early medieval saints' cults

Representations of landscape loom large in hagiographic narrative and iconography. From city to village to island to desert to fenland and beyond, topography figures prominently in texts and images that may otherwise seem to be unconcerned with representations of the 'factual' mundane or with verisimilitude. What functions do these sacred spaces serve in hagiography? How are these landscapes constructed as 'sacred'? A study of the representations and construction of place in the cults of Sts. Mary of Egypt, Guthlac, Cuthbert, and Æthelthryth, representing four different 'types' of saints venerated in early medieval England, elucidates something of the significance and the dynamism of place and of 'relocation' in the saints' cults. From providing a physical, identifiable locale as foundational element in the narrative of the saint, to reflecting the spiritual state and growth of the saint, to crafting the life of the saint as *imitatio Christi*, the multivalent contributions of sacred space invigorate hagiographic narrative and iconography not only by augmenting them with enriching detail, but also by investing them with deeper symbolic spiritual value.

Damian Bracken, University College Cork
Peace, concord and Columbanus

Balance, harmony, and concord were—according to the rhetoric—the guiding principles on which the ordered society of the Roman empire was established. What was outside the empire was chaos. This paper considers Columbanus's Letter 5, to pope Boniface IV, and argues that he shows some familiarity with the conventions of the 'concord letter' and uses this familiarity to subvert the rhetoric of imperial concord and challenge the assumptions it fostered about Ireland.

Aidan Breen, NUI Galway

Re-evaluating the critical text of Jonas, *Vita sancti Columbani* I

The construction of a critical edition of the first book of Jonas, *Vita S. Columbani*, poses many problems, textual and historical. The existence of 150 MSS, the earliest of them almost two centuries later than Jonas' original composition, reveals the existence of many textual emendations by later scribes, who had no familiarity with, or liking for, Merovingian Latin. The publication of several editions of Jonas, most notably B. Krusch (1902, ²1905), M. Tosi's diplomatic edition of Metz, *Grand Séminaire*, MS 1 (*s. ix ex.*) in 1965 and G. Roques' unpublished edition from ten MSS (Strasbourg, 1972), and H. J. Lawlor's study of 20 manuscripts (1904), has not resolved all the textual cruxes in this complex text. A new edition of Jonas, with an annotated English translation and a full introduction, is required. This paper will give an overview of the steps made in that direction as part of the Columbanus Project at the Moore Institute, NUI Galway.

Sébastien Bully, CNRS, UMR ARTeHIS Dijon-Auxerre

Avant et après Colombanus : archéologie du monachisme ancien dans le diocèse de Besançon

Entre le Ve et le Xe s., l'ancien diocèse de Besançon constitue en quelque sorte un « laboratoire d'expériences monastiques ». Cette région, bornée par les massifs jurassiens et vosgiens, accueille en effet successivement les établissements précoces d'influences provenço-orientales des Pères du Jura autour de Condat-Saint-Claude, les monastères irlandais de saint Colomban autour de Luxeuil, et les cella carolingiennes de Gigny et Baume à l'origine de Cluny.

L'intérêt scientifique de ces monastères est établi depuis longtemps par nos collègues historiens des sources écrites, mais les recherches archéologiques engagées ces dernières années permettent d'en renouveler les connaissances en abordant les questions des conditions et des modalités de fondations, comme celles du cadre monumental et topographique.

Before and after Columbanus: The archaeology of early monasticism in the diocese of Besançon (Franche-Comté)

Between the 5th and 10th centuries the diocese of Besançon constituted a sort of 'laboratory of monastic experience'. This region, bounded by the Jura and Vosges mountains, was the setting successively for the early establishments of the Jura Fathers around Condat at Saint-Claude, with Provençal and eastern influences, the Irish monasteries of Columbanus around Luxeuil and the Carolingian *cellae* of Gigny and Baume, derived from Cluny.

Scholarly interest in these monasteries has been long established by historians working on written sources; however, archaeological investigations carried out in the last number of years provide us with new understandings regarding the conditions and the operation of these foundations, such as their monumental and topographical contexts.

Michael Clarke, NUI Galway

A case study in revisionist theology among medieval Irish scholars

Miriam Clyne, NUI Galway

Patronage and the White Canons in late medieval Ireland

Eight conventual houses for Premonstratensian or white canons were established in Ireland in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They were located in two regions which had different secular politics, cultures and ecclesiastical loyalties. The paper discusses the documentary and archaeological evidence for patronage of the monasteries and their temporal estates. In the north-east of Ireland, the foundations were part of the Anglo-Norman conquest and settlement of Ulster. John de Courcy introduced and patronized the Premonstratensians for political motives. The abbeys were built close to the lord's castle at Carrickfergus and within his demesne manor. In the western province of Connacht, where the monasteries were established independently from those in Ulster, the canons were settled as part of the continuing process of church reform. Their patrons were the bishops, the king of Connacht and the Gaelic lords. The Premonstratensian houses were situated in or near major ecclesiastical centres or medieval settlements with secular strongholds.

Anne Connon, Discovery Programme

***Acallam na Senórach* as a source for the political history of Connacht**

One of the key source for the political history of seventh-century Ireland is Tírechán's *Collectanea*. Modern scholars have used Tírechán's account of Patrick's journey through Ireland as an important aid to establishing the boundaries and *capita* of early medieval kingdoms and territorial units. The expanded version of Patrick's journey found in the likely ninth-century *Vita Tripartita* has been used in a similar way. This paper will investigate the degree to which the version of Patrick's journey found in *Acallam na Senórach* can likewise be used as source for political history. Concentrating on Connacht—where Ann Dooley has convincingly argued the *Acallam* was written—the paper will focus on clues provided by the saga to the location of important dynastic centres, and to the identity of ruling dynasties.

Caitríona Devane

The half-barony of Moycarn, etymology and context

According to local tradition, recorded in the early nineteenth century, Moycarn is called after the cairn 'beside the big tree in Kilbegly' which was built to 'mark the spot where Shane O'Kelly was murdered' (OSL i, 25; OSNB). For a number of reasons, this derivation is etymologically unsound, especially in the light of the older form, 'Clancarnan' that appears in the papal taxation of the churches of the Diocese of Tuam, relating to 1306 (CDI v, 288). This paper is a historic appraisal of the name and its possible connection with Síol Curnáin mac Áeda of Uí Briúin.

Ann Dooley, St Michael's College, University of Toronto

The *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and *Acallam na Senórach*

Lenore Fischer

Dublin's version of the Battle of Clontarf

The story of Clontarf as usually recounted derives from the *Cogadh* in a tradition going through Keating, LO and CCT as outlined by Ní Úrdail.¹ Reference is also frequently made to the Scandinavian version of the battle as told in the *Njalssaga*. This however, very likely originated in Dublin, and its message looked at from that point of view has not been sufficiently appreciated. In addition to this several later accounts clearly deriving from a vigorous oral tradition embody a Dublin perspective differing radically from the Irish *Cogadh*-based point of view. Brian is said to have lost the battle through incompetence and hastiness, the aggressors are unnamed foreign invaders, and in one instance, they are fought off, not by Brian, but by the earl of Howth. A Dublin perspective alien to the rest of Ireland continues to appear in the works of Dublin-based historians right into the twentieth century.

Áine Foley, Trinity College Dublin

'Poor man be hanged by the neck, rich man by the purse': The social status of victims of execution in late medieval Ireland

This paper will investigate execution in late medieval Ireland. It will include a discussion of the methods of punishment used within the judiciary of the English lordship, particularly that of the king's court. The social status and ethnic origins of those punished will also be examined and how the courts treated individuals based on these social and ethnic differences.

Michael Gibbons, Clifden

A critical evaluation of the proposed evidence for the existence of wooden table altars on early Christian sites in western Ireland

Research into aspects of the early church in the west of Ireland has received major momentum from the pioneering research of O'Sullivan and O'Carragain at Inishmurray and of Sheehan and O'Carragain in the southwest. Unfortunately however, this rigorous scholarship has been marred by some interpretive leaps which may not easily be reconciled with the available evidence.

In particular, post-holes at two recently excavated early Christian sites at both Inishmurray and Caherlehillan have been interpreted as evidence for early altars. At Trahanareear on Inishmurray a post-hole beneath a later *leacht* was interpreted as having held the upright for a wooden table altar; believed to be the first example excavated in Ireland. Similarly, at Caherlehillan the apparent presence of such an altar has been among the main pieces of evidence used to argue for the presence of an early wooden Church. In the case of Caherlehillan, the evidence that the structure in question was even a church is at best highly speculative; based on the interpretation of five post-holes and a curved drain interpreted as an ablution drain used to dispose of sacred altar wine following the practice of the mass.

In each case, the initial identification of these features with altars was acknowledged to be speculative but this caution has increasingly given way to certainty in recent publications. This increasing confidence appears to be based on mere repetition and has been 'opinion driven' rather than supported by the weight of the archaeological evidence. In both cases the evidence is weak and alternative suggestions have not been discussed. Since these sites have become so central to the on-going

1 Ní Úrdail, Meidhbhín, 'Foras Feasa ar Éirinn: Establishing a Literary Canon', *Léann Lámhscríbhinní Lobbáin: The Louvain Manuscript Heritage*, Éigse Publications 1, National University of Ireland, Dublin, 2007.

discussion of early Christianity in Ireland it is necessary to inject a note of caution into the proceedings to allow these results to be more fully digested.

Patrick Gleeson, University College Cork

Politics and ceremony in early medieval Munster: Finding the landscape and kingship of Cashel

Cashel stands as one of the most iconic and well known of Irish royal sites, but yet scholarship has almost entirely neglected it. This paper presents some initial suggestions regarding the landscape and kingship of Cashel. It attempts to get beyond the Rock's ecclesiastical connotations and examine the political, ceremonial, ideological and cosmological landscape that allowed Cashel emerge as Munster's provincial seat and challenge the Uí Néill's Tara hegemony. The traditional explanation of Cashel's 5th century founding by Conall Corc will be challenged, and it will be suggested that the archaeological evidence from survey and excavations in the area, and within Munster more broadly, paints a picture of a landscape fluxing in status, but competing with other rival royal landscapes for the status of Munster's provincial capitol. This paper focuses particularly on how that discourse played out at Cashel and in the surrounding landscape by examining the political landscape and its militarisation at the start of the early medieval period. This analysis is placed alongside emerging evidence for a complex and multi-faceted landscape of ceremony centred on the Rock, and focuses particularly, on the question of inauguration and the manner in which Cashel's kings were made.

Joanna Huckins, University of Connecticut

Landscape and lamentation: Conceptualizing sacred space in medieval Irish texts

Medieval Irish texts as varied as the *Acallam na Senórach*, *Dindsenchas Érenn* and *Triambuin Ghormlathie* reveal a landscape explicitly shaped by death and burial. This essay argues that, in these texts, the placement of the body within the grave creates a sacred space that provides the locus for lamentation and commemoration, rituals that inject shared human experience and cultural meaning into the sacred topography. Burial and lamentation space is sacred in the sense that it is *commemorated* space; the graves, and the bodies they contain, are considered worthy of preservation in cultural memory via literary compositions, monuments, place-names and sacred festivals. Such spaces need not be explicitly *Christian* spaces, as this analysis will reveal. The present study investigates categories of burial and lamentation space embedded in the medieval Irish landscape and attempts to understand the historical context surrounding the textual tradition. An analysis of the spatial narratives of death in the previously mentioned texts, when complemented with historical and archaeological sources, achieves a fuller understanding of medieval Ireland's sacred burial landscape.

Judith Jesch, University of Nottingham

Scandinavian culture along the Dublin–Orkney axis

The place of Ireland and the British Isles in medieval Icelandic literature is well-known and much discussed. The islands are presented as stepping stones for the earliest Icelandic immigrants, but also figure in many sagas as the locus of interesting or unusual events. Much of the discussion has turned on the insular origins of and sources for these sagas-references, and whether they derive from pre-settlement memories, or subsequent contact of the Icelanders with Ireland or parts of Britain. The paper will address whether, and if so in what way, these saga memories can provide evidence for Scandinavian cultural practices (runes, poetry, storytelling) across the Irish Sea region. Was the region

just a feeder of motifs and stories to Iceland, or was there a robust Scandinavian verbal culture there, distinct from both the continental homeland and the Icelandic colony?

Amanda Kelly, NUI Galway

From Africa to Ireland in the 6th century AD: One sherd of evidence

The recent identification of a rimsherd of African Red Slip Ware, Form 91C, at the site of a ring ditch at Kilree 3, in Co. Kilkenny, constitutes an intriguing discovery. The bowl was originally produced in northern Tunisia while its profile represents the classic African flanged bowl dating to the 6th century AD, specifically 525–550. Distributions of African red slipped tablewares are extensive and stretch throughout the Mediterranean from Antioch through to Conimbriga. Campbell, building on Thomas' research, cites ten sites in Britain where the ware has been found but its presence in Ireland has gone completely undetected. This paper grapples with the difficulty in interpreting this highly-datable, but singular, African sherd found in a deposit containing other artifacts of Irish manufacture. What circumstances led to the deposition of a broken bowl from Africa at a land-locked site seemingly off the beaten trading track? I hope here to present this find against a backdrop of Mediterranean goods that found their way here in the 5th and 6th centuries AD, with a view to painting a more integrated portrait of Ireland at this pivotal watershed in the island's development.

Eamonn Kelly, National Museum of Ireland

The finding of the *longphort* of Linn Duachail

Controversy followed the 1996 identification of a Viking longphort now called Dunrally Fort, on the river Barrow. Further controversy resulted from the proposed identification of other longphort sites found subsequently at Woodstown (Co. Waterford), Athlunkard (Co. Clare) and Knoxspark (Co. Sligo). To prove conclusively the existence and nature of Viking longphorts, a research group was formed in 2004. Known as the Linn Duachail Research Group its founding members were Eamonn P. Kelly, Mark Clinton and Micháel McKeown, with John Maas joining the group subsequently. The main objective of the group was to find and excavate the longphort of Linn Duachail, historically one of the best documented Viking sites in Ireland. It was believed that such a discovery would show conclusively that Viking longphorts were a real phenomenon that formed a monument type which could be demonstrated by archaeological methodology. The proposed paper will outline the methodology employed that led to the successful test excavations of September 2010. The presentation will also give a broad outline of the research and of the excavation results and their significance.

Gillian Kenny, University College, Dublin

Silent witnesses: The women of the *Histoire de Guillaume le Mareschal*

This paper sets out to briefly examine how the women of the Marshal family are portrayed in the work known as the *Histoire de Guillaume le Mareschal*. This is a springboard to a wider examination of their roles within the political landscape of the lordship of later medieval Leinster and of the consequences and meanings to be gleaned from the presence of these women at the heart of later medieval politicking in Ireland.

Jeannine Kraft, Columbus College of Art & Design, Ohio

An assessment of the liturgical implications of the Irish high crosses

Beyond iconographical identification and indications of patronage for the commissioning of the Irish high crosses, a more difficult problem is to discover the liturgical implications of the high crosses as they functioned within their setting in the medieval monastic complex. The high crosses doubtless played a role within the liturgy of the Irish Church even if the specific role is yet to be discovered. The didactic nature of the more complex iconographical programs of the later high crosses would seem to reinforce this theory of specific liturgical implications. The role of the Cross within the liturgy of the Latin West and its visual manifestation in processional crosses and the later 'altars of the Cross' must be examined in an attempt to understand the liturgical function of the Irish high crosses. The interpretive approach which postulates multiple levels of meaning seems quite appropriate when applied to our understanding of the function of the Irish high crosses. This paper will examine the rise of the role of the Cross within early Church liturgy, its transmission into the Insular monastic milieu, and the implications for understanding the liturgical associations of the Irish high crosses within their monastic context.

Rob Lee, University of Exeter

Language ascription by use of character libraries

The ogham inscriptions of Scotland remain unascribed as to the language they are written in. Modern scholars have proposed Celtic and Norse but neither has found universal acceptance. This paper will discuss the possibility of using ngram character libraries to assign, on a neutral and statistically valid basis, the likelihood of an unknown text being written in any specific language.

Shane Lordan, University College Cork

Insert saint here: Reconciling Patrick to the apostolic Church

The seventh-century *Life of Patrick* by Muirchú recalls how Patrick journeyed to Rome to be trained in holy wisdom in order to preach to the peoples beyond the Empire. However, we are told he met the bishop Germanus of Auxerre and studied in perfect obedience 'as Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel' (Acts 22:3). Luke's account of Paul's education in Acts is acknowledged to have been an attempt to reconcile Paul to the particular Church structure he intended Acts to advocate. Yet with no formal training, Paul's position within that Church could not be demonstrated. Patrick posed the same problem, as the education and training he admits to in his *Confessio* do not come close to what was required by seventh-century standards, much less what Muirchú says he received. The account itself is believed to derive from information known about Palladius' training on the continent, yet its hagiographical function has not been thoroughly investigated. This paper will suggest that it was intended to provide Patrick with an origin for his training and doctrinal tradition, and so reconcile him to the structure of the Church.

Paul MacCotter, University College Cork

The 12th-century pre-Invasion Irish Church: Misunderstood and maligned

This paper rejects the traditional picture of the Irish Church of the period as backward, archaic and in need of reform, and rather argues that the contemporary Irish Church was a modern, already-

reforming organization open to renewal and no different to other national churches of the period. It is argued that the traditional picture of this church as corrupt and lacking pastoral care provision is largely due to the nefarious and self-serving propaganda of Continental reformers, the Papacy, the Angevin kings, and propagandists of the Anglo-Norman invasion. The promotion of this false picture was helped in no small measure by elements within the Irish hierarchy who actively promoted co-operation with the Anglo-Norman invaders.

Mícheál Mac Craith, NUI Galway

An Irish account of the Shrine of Loreto

Tadhg Ó Cianáin's narrative of the Irish Earls' journey to Rome contains an elaborate account of their visit to Loreto, 21-3 April 1608. By the 16th century Loreto was the foremost Marian shrine in Europe. As such it was strongly criticized by the Reformers and defended with equal vehemence by Catholic apologists. The shrine received further prominence when the victorious Christian armies at Lepanto in 1571 were placed under the patronage of the Virgin of Loreto. Loreto thus became a symbol of the triumph of Rome over both the enemy within and the enemy without. Both Don John of Austria and Vittorio Colonna, commanders of the Christian forces at Lepanto, made pilgrimages of thanksgiving to Loreto. In following their footsteps, Aodh Ó Néill was presenting himself in a similar fashion as a Catholic military leader of the Counter-Reformation. The decision to have gone to Loreto seems to have been quite deliberate, as it would have been much easier to travel to Rome from Milan by the western route than that actually taken.

Ó Cianáin's description of Loreto is the only part of his narrative where he specifically admits to have consulted written sources. The most obvious one would have been Pietro di Giorgio Tolomei's *Translatio Miraculosa Ecclesiae beatae Mariae virginis de Loreto* (1471-3), though pilgrims would have been more likely to read the summaries of this account posted within the walls of the sanctuary than the actual text itself. It can be shown that Ó Cianáin made ample use of Girolamo Angelita's *Lauretanae Virginis Historia* (1527-30), translated into Italian in 1574 and subsequently appearing in numerous Italian editions. The Irishman also consulted Orazio Torsellini's *Lauretanae Historia Libri Quinque* (Romae 1597). The Irishman can be quite critical in the approach he takes to his sources. He makes no mention at all, for example, of Torsellini's account of Archbishop Edmund Magauran's miraculous escape from pirates. As this putative miracle is not recorded in the archives of Loreto, it would seem to have no basis in fact. Furthermore, as Magauran and Aodh Ó Néill were personally acquainted, and since Ó Néill was actually carrying Magauran's pectoral cross to Rome to bestow on Peter Lombard, the Irish party themselves would have had their own views on the authenticity of Torsellini's 'miracle'.

The final section of Ó Cianáin's account regarding the proper comportment of pilgrims at Loreto, is strongly indebted to late editions of Angelita.

Emmet Marron, NUI Galway

Geophysics at Annegray: Preliminary findings of recent archaeological investigations at Columbanus' first foundation

Traditionally research on Saint Columbanus has focussed on the textual evidence relating to his life and legacy in the lands in which he settled. The archaeological remains of the monasteries founded by the famous saint, however, represent another invaluable source of information, one that until recently has not been exploited to its full value. This paper will focus on fieldwork undertaken at the site of

Columbanus' first monastery, Annegray, as part of ongoing research into the nature of these settlements under the auspices of the Columbanus' Life and Legacy project at NUI Galway. Geophysical prospection on the site, by a joint Irish and French team, revealed features that shine a light on the nature and origins of the monastery but that also raise interesting questions when placed alongside Jonas' account of its foundation in addition to challenging long held perceptions of the 'Irishness' of these sites.

Sarah McCann, NUI Galway

Irish asceticism at an Anglo-Saxon monastery: Adomnán of Coldingham

The monastery of Coldingham burned down in the late seventh century, as predicted by an Irish inhabitant of that foundation, known as Adomnán of Coldingham. Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* devotes a chapter to this Irish penitent and ascetic living in Northumbria, and praises him highly. However, Adomnán has been a neglected figure in studies of Bede's gallery of good Christians, forever eclipsed by his more famous namesake, the abbot of Iona. In this paper, I seek to look beyond the sparse details Bede provides to see how, why and when this man might have come to live in a double monastery in Northumbria. To this end I will consider the political and religious background of Anglo-Saxon Northumbria towards the end of the seventh century, I will look at penitence among the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons, and I will examine Adomnán in the context of the other ascetic figures Bede describes.

Lorna Moloney, NUI Galway

A comparative analysis of the emergence of the Gaelic lordships in Thomond in medieval Ireland

This paper examines the emergence of the MacNamara lordship in Thomond in Medieval Ireland. It comparatively analyses the growth of the lordship within the framework of Anglo-Norman conquest and early expansion. It assesses the strategic tools employed by a Gaelic lordship to establish an ideological traditional past through genealogy, marriage and propaganda in Medieval Thomond. The concepts of Gaelic lordship are comparatively analysed with their European counterparts.

Connell Monette, Al Akhawayn University, Morocco

Celtic elements in Moroccan Berber folktales

Since the 19th century, popular 'scholarship' and folklore has imagined an ancestral connection between the Berbers of North Africa and the Celts of Western Europe, an idea encouraged by the geographic closeness of the Maghreb to Ireland and Great Britain, and perhaps also similarities in toponymy, folk tradition and music. While this has been shown to be unlikely by anthropologists and linguists alike, nevertheless the oral traditions of the Berbers and Celts have been shown to contain parallel motifs of note. This paper considers a range of oral Berber (or more correctly *Amazigh*) tales from the Middle Atlas of Morocco, which contain parallels to Irish and Welsh tales of the medieval period. Particular themes are the concept of the heroine, the role of the *Síd/Jinn*, and the visit to the Otherworld.

Emma Nic Cárthaigh, University College Cork

Doomsday, Hell and homilies in the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*

The fifteenth-century *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum* contains mostly religious works including devotional material, cautionary anecdotes, hagiographical matter and a number of passions and homiletic texts. Many of the items in this manuscript are presented without a rubric, title or any indication of their intended use. This talk will focus on three texts: a short prose tract outlining the fifteen signs before doomsday; a poem describing doomsday coupled with a prose text outlining the torments of hell; and a prose text concerning the Resurrection, Christ's harrowing of hell and the appearance of hell on Christ's arrival at its doors. While there is no doubt as to the subject matter of these texts, the question remains as to why and to what end this material was preserved. It is possible that the prose style of the latter two texts mentioned here is in some way connected with the inclusion of homiletic material in the *Liber Flavus Fergusiorum*. In the course of this talk, I will examine the homiletic nature of the texts and their significance in the context of fifteenth-century Irish ideas of devotion, repentance and fear of the end.

Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, NUI Galway

Early Connacht tales and some implications for the so-called Heroic or Ulster Cycle

A key component of early Irish narrative tradition is the cluster of Old and Middle Irish tales whose primary setting is either Crúachu or Ros Commáin, in modern-day County Roscommon. The authors of these were evidently familiar with the local landscape, and with early medieval traditions concerning the royal couple, Ailill and Medb, and their role in 'the driving of the cattle from Cúailnge'. Is it more appropriate to ascribe these tales to a Connacht cycle than to an Ulster cycle? What inferences can be made from them about centres of learning and patronage in medieval Connacht? If allowance is made for an early Connacht cycle, what implications does this have for the evolution of the so-called Heroic or Ulster cycle?

Patricia Ní Mhaoileoin, NUI Galway

Heroic lives and unheroic deaths in early medieval Irish literature

The most important thing a hero has to do is die, but is the manner of his death important? Using the Ulster hero Fergus mac Róich as an exemplar for the martial hero in early Irish narrative literature, I will examine the definition of a hero, the aspects of his character that make him heroic, and the manner of his death. Examining the unheroic aided of Fergus mac Róich in the context of his own tradition as well as the mock-heroic death tales evident in the Ulster Cycle, I will pose the question of what these deaths mean, what they say about the society that produced them and finally ask if they are in fact heroic at all?

Ralph O'Connor, University of Aberdeen

Images of kingship in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*: Careless compilation or dramatic contrast?

At the heart of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* is a lyrical description of Conaire Mór in which the high-king is portrayed as both a fearless warlord and a terrified youth. This and other dissonances in the saga have tended to be explained with reference to the dominant scholarly view that the *Togail* is a somewhat careless compilation of at least two older versions of the story. In this paper I argue that the

portrayal of Conaire may be composite, but that (like many other instances of supposed contradiction in the *Togail*) it makes perfectly good narrative sense when not viewed in overly positivistic terms, and indeed has been composed with considerable artistic skill. If the multiple-source theory is followed, we may see the portrayal of Conaire as an example of the tenth- or eleventh-century author-compiler generating dramatic capital from divergences between his sources. The resulting contrasts may be interpreted as part of the saga's wider exploration of tensions emerging within the institution and theory of kingship in the Middle Irish period.

Ruairí Ó hUiginn, NUI Maynooth
Tochmarc Emire: An exemplary tale?

Redacted over a period of many centuries, the tales of the Ulster Cycle served a number of functions at various stages of medieval Irish society. Viewed as part of Ireland's traditional history, they could be employed, as were other elements of that history, as exemplary texts that had a contemporary relevance for the audience for whom they were redacted. This exemplary function of traditions associated with the Cycle can be seen, for instance, is the use of such material to illustrate points of law, by providing examples of legal precedent or, in the later medieval period, by the use of Ulster tales and traditions in bardic apologues. While in these cases the material has an explicit function, in other instances it can be argued that tales carry an implicit message that also had contemporary relevance.

In this paper I wish to examine the possible exemplary or allegorical functions of the Early Irish tale, *Tochmarc Emire* ("The wooing of Emer"), of which we have two main versions, and will seek to show that each contained precepts relevant to different stages of the Early Irish period.

Diarmuid Ó Riain, Dublin
Searching for Christ's tomb in Charlemagne's tent: The *Schottenklöster* and the cult of the Holy Sepulchre

The promotion of the cult of the Holy Sepulchre among the Irish monasteries in Germany found its greatest expression in the establishment in the mid-twelfth century of the *Schottenkloster* at Eichstätt, which was dedicated to the Holy Cross and Holy Sepulchre and which boasted a monastic church built in imitation of the Anastasis Rotunda in Jerusalem as well as a precise replica of the edicule containing Christ's tomb. New evidence extracted from a fifteenth-century legend concerning Charlemagne suggests that this was not the first time such an architectural copy of a Jerusalem monument was constructed at an Irish monastery in Germany.

Anne Paton, University of Glasgow
Leprosy in medieval Ireland as seen through hagiography

This paper will discuss the little researched subject of leprosy in medieval Ireland. The lack of research may be due to the paucity of sources or because of the assumption that leprosy was dealt with in the same way in Ireland as in the rest of Europe—but do the sources tell us this was the case?

Recent archaeological finds have confirmed the presence of leprosy in Ireland but what do the textual sources tell us about how lepers were treated? Medieval Irish hagiography contains many references to lepers but are they purely symbolic or a reflection of daily life? The textual sources will be examined, paying particular attention to hagiography to see what information can be gleaned.

Robert J. Powell, University College Cork
Martyrdom in Muirchú's *Life of Patrick*

The *Life of Patrick* is a sophisticated theological document, but many historians have ignored Muirchú's theology and approached him primarily as a political propagandist. The hagiographer, however, used his text to dramatise patristic ideas in a way that would have been clear to his intended readership. This paper will focus on the imagery that he uses in a few key passages in the *Life*, arguing that he adapted the Christian understanding of martyrdom to make a statement about the nature of the episcopacy.

The theme of martyrdom will therefore be surveyed in the works of major Christian exegetes, as well as Hiberno-Latin and other medieval exegetical commentaries. Ultimately the paper will suggest that Muirchú's portrait of the saint can help modern historians understand what Irish clerics of the late seventh century expected of their pastors.

Rosemary Power, Birkbeck College, University of London
Norse-Gaelic contacts after the Vikings

This paper considers three distinct areas of contact between the Norse-Gaelic world that has left us with written sources. The first is contact in the Viking Age, which has left us a small number of stories in later Icelandic literature and sometimes folk tradition that seem to be of Gaelic origins, such as *álöggeasa* tales. The second is historical information acquired in 12th and 13th century, some of which concerns earlier times. It is argued that this was probably transmitted through contacts made in Norway between Icelanders and Hebridean or Manx monks and mercenaries. The third area concerns sources which are presented in Old Norse as history and where there appears to be a link with Gaelic accounts of events, such as the Clontarf episode in *Njáls saga*. There will be a summary of the main issues surrounding the use of the sources and a consideration of what they may be able to tell us about transmission of material, in which direction, and why it was deemed of interest.

Jan Erik Rekdal, University of Oslo
Viking warriors—Irish saints: Death of heroes and saints and literary resurrection?

In this paper I will address the challenging question concerning a possible cultural exchange in the Hiberno-Norse semiosphere. The discussion will concentrate especially on so-called heroic poetry (Irish and Norse) and hagiography (Irish and Norse), and on how the two genres share their focus on death. Is it possible that this common feature may have contributed to the exchange.

Gísli Sigurðsson, Árni Magnússon Institute, Reykjavík
The Gaelic influence in Iceland: What difference does it make?

In my paper I shall discuss the authenticity of the various information we have about the culturally and genetically mixed group of people who settled in Iceland in the late 9th and early 10th centuries. In particular I shall focus on the people of Gaelic extraction and those who arrived from Nordic colonies in the British Isles (including Ireland, Scotland and the Isles) and how their impact on Icelandic culture has been played down by many. Most recent genetic studies have shown that there is reason to believe that the genetic input in Iceland from Ireland and Scotland is about as high as the most favourable interpretation of the written sources could possibly suggest. These conclusions call for an

overall re-evaluation of the evidence about Gaelic influence in Iceland and its possible impact on the culture there.

Cathy Swift, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Dynasty, Dalls and Merovingian marriage practices in early Ireland: A consideration of the *adaltrach*

The paper will look at the expenses involved for all parties who are involved in a polygynous marriage and their relative status in society. It is argued that, quite apart from church teaching, which seems explicitly antagonistic to the phenomenon, early Irish society felt these situations were not socially beneficial and were to be discouraged through economic penalties.

George Theotokis, University of Glasgow

Geoffrey Malaterra as a military historian for the Norman expansion in Italy and Sicily: Strengths and weaknesses in his narrative

The Norman achievements in southern Italy and Sicily in the eleventh century were amongst the most prominent and most remarkable in the history of the Norman people. Their fame as the most prominent warriors of their time owes much to the contemporary chroniclers that were documenting their achievements in the Italian peninsula, and it is indeed fascinating that even by eleventh century standards, the Norman activities are so well recorded. One of the chroniclers of the period was Geoffrey Malaterra, a monk from 'beyond the Alps' that was recruited by Roger Hauteville to write his 'Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his brother Duke Robert Guiscard', shortly after 1091. This paper will examine Malaterra as a 'military historian' of the Norman expansion in southern Italy and Sicily, from their establishment at Melfi in 1042 to the Illyrian invasion of 1081, and compare his work with other contemporaries like William of Apulia, Amatus of Montecassino and Anna Comnena.

A series of questions that will be addressed are: to what extent are the figures he provides for army size, reliable, both in absolute numbers and in the ratios given between cavalry and infantry? What is our chronicler's knowledge of the local geography where the military operations took place, and to what extent—if at all—was he familiar with the terrain of the battles or sieges, or the campaign routes of armies which he describes? How accurate or detailed is his description of castles and fortifications? Another major point is the extent to which Malaterra provides dating of major military events, and how far does his narratives permit the accurate reconstruction of a chain of events? What is the terminology used by our chronicler to describe the different types of warships, transport ships and siege machines used by the Normans, the Byzantines, the Venetians and the Arabs in this period and how accurate is it compared with other primary sources of this period?

Patrick Wadden, Exeter College, Oxford

Ireland and the Normans c. 1000: The evidence of Dudo of St Quentin's *History*

Despite their prominence in the titles of some seminal works on medieval Irish history, Normans are almost entirely absent from the historical record of early eleventh-century Ireland. Even the accuracy of *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*, long thought to have recorded the involvement of Norman soldiers at the battle of Clontarf in 1014, has recently been called into question. It is somewhat surprising, therefore,

to find the men of Ireland occupying a relatively prominent position in Dudo of St Quentin's *De moribus et actis primorum Normannie ducum* written during the 1020s. Dudo was a propagandist rather than an historian and historical accuracy was not his primary concern. Handled with care, however, his accounts of contact between Ireland and Normandy may shed some light on what is otherwise a dimly-lit subject. This paper will discuss Dudo's references to Irishmen and will suggest that they are indicative of Norman involvement in the politics of the Irish Sea World during the late-tenth and early-eleventh centuries.

David Woods, University College Cork

The Aurora Borealis at the death of St. Columba (*Vita Columbae* 3.23)

The sign whose occurrence in the sky on the night of the death of St. Columba is described in such detail by Adomnán is identifiable as an aurora, that is, it had a real, physical existence. The balance of probabilities suggests that it is identifiable with the great aurora described by Paul the Deacon and Fredegar for this period, and that this should be dated to 599. Hence the date of death of St. Columba should probably be corrected from the traditionally accepted date of 9 June 597 to 9 June 599.