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# Abstracts of Papers

ICM 2019

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## Matty Adams (University College Cork)

### **Loki and Wildfire: Agents of Change**

Loki is often thought of as the Norse god of mischief and an essentially chaotic force within the Norse pantheon. While occasionally having positive outcomes (such as the forging of divine weapons), Loki's tricks and plots are often portrayed as having devastating and lethal effects. These can range from the kin-slaying of the beloved god Baldr to the spawning of his monstrous children: Fenrir, the Midgard Serpent, and Hel. In the mythological poems of the Poetic and Prose Eddas, Loki is often associated with fire: a force which is destructive, but has extremely useful qualities. Indeed, the natural phenomenon of wildfire itself appears apocalyptic, but does spur rebirth and renewal. Environmental destruction being followed by rebirth finds a striking parallel in the descriptions of Ragnarok and its aftermath in the eddic poem *Völuspá*. This paper will analyse Loki as a personification of the natural phenomenon wildfire (a herald of destruction and rebirth), placing Loki as an agent of change in opposition to the all-father, Odin, who constantly seeks to delay the inevitable destruction.

## Edel Bhreathnach (The Discovery Programme, Dublin)

### **The Saintry Mothers and Virgins of Early Ireland: a Diverse Group Remembered in Places, Personal Names and Genealogies**

Female sanctity in medieval Ireland is overwhelmingly viewed by scholars through the lens of the *vitae* of prominent saints, Brigit, Íte, Samthann and Moninne. In sources other than hagiography, especially in the corpus of early genealogies and martyrologies, other women appear, often fleetingly: many genuinely historical, others fictional or mythical. Their names survive in place names and as patrons of churches throughout the country. This paper examines these saintly women and attempts to establish their role in the process of christianization, in the establishment of an ecclesiastical organization, and in defining differences between the attributes of female and male sanctity.

## Tom Birkett (University College Cork)

### **Filling the Gap? Snorri's Masterbuilder Narrative and 'Necessary Failure' in Norse Myth**

Snorri's extended myth of the building of the walls of Asgard, with a possible allusion to the same myth in strophes 25 and 26 of the Eddic poem *Völuspá*, has often been interpreted as a recasting of the masterbuilder folklore narrative. This folkloric connection situates the myth as a story of a lucky escape from a hard bargain with a duplicitous supernatural being, and casting this as a narrative elevated from legend to myth downplays its wider structural import. By reading into the literal and narrative gap contained within the masterbuilder narrative, this paper argues that it expresses the central dynamic found throughout the myth cycle: that of necessary failure in the separation of the domains of nature and culture.

## Justin Byrne (University College Cork)

### **Exploring Old Irish Manuscripts for Text Relating to Metalwork and Other Practical Arts: Managing and Evaluating the Evidence from Practical Perspectives**

An exploration of how people with skills and experience in practical arts can potentially be in a position to read and interpret Irish text evidence on practical matters at deeper investigative levels. Skilled practitioners would generally be coming from outside the strict discipline of Old Irish studies and would need to acquaint themselves with a broad range of matters. The paper covers questions and issues relevant to cultivating a deeper and sensitive awareness of how to handle and manage evidence reliably. With a metalwork focus, topics explored include navigating text, chronology, credibility of evidence, grammar, language and genres.

## Nina Cnockaert-Guillou (University College Cork)

### **Chasing Mabon: A Study of the Links between Mabonagrain, Evrain and Owein Based on *Erec et Enide* and *Gereint uab Erbin***

This paper undertakes to study the ending of Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec et Enide* and of the Welsh *Gereint uab Erbin*. Mabonagrain in *Erec* has been widely recognised as a version of Mabon < Maponos, "divine youth". In *Gereint*, the knight remains unnamed but his uncle is called Owein instead of Evrain. I will present some medieval sources in which variants of all of these names are found. In an attempt to reconcile the conflicting evidence for their relationship to one another, I will conclude by suggesting hypotheses on the identity of Evrain based on manuscript readings of the *First Continuation of Perceval*.

## Claire Collins (University College Dublin)

### **Sister to a Legend: The Role of Lupita in the *vitae* of Saint Patrick**

Appearing initially in the boyhood deeds of Patrick, Lupita is the only member of Patrick's family who appears across the *vitae* with any frequency. While not originally depicted as a particularly religious figure, like Patrick, she grows into her faith. Yet, in the end, she succumbs to the sin of lust and is released from her mortal coil by Patrick himself—in a fit of rage, he runs her over in his chariot. This paper will analyse the changing narratives of Lupita's interactions with Patrick across the *vitae Secunda, Tertia, Quarta*, and *Tripartita*, as well as Jocelin's later *Vita Patricii*, in order to shed light on the increasing significance placed on Lupita by medieval Irish hagiographers as the female counterpart to Patrick's masculinity.

## Meredith Cutrer (University College Dublin)

### **Envisioning Invasion in Gildas and Bede**

The Anglo-Saxon "invasion" of Britain is one of the most transformative events in the island's history. Bede draws upon Gildas in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* for details of what both perceive as invasions. Both the British Gildas and the Anglo-Saxon Bede view the invasions as God's just punishment on a sinful people, but Bede departs from Gildas, influenced by his need to explain the continued presence of the Anglo-Saxon people in England, and recasts them as not merely invaders sent to punish, but as blessings responsible for bringing the island into redemptive history. By looking at their opposing views, we can see that both pivotal figures had very different interpretations of the invasion of Britain.

## Robert Cutrer (University of Sydney)

### Raider or Saint: The Icelandic Memory of Óláfr Tryggvason

Óláfr Tryggvasson was one of the most notorious Viking invaders in England under Ethelred's rule. In Iceland, however, he was seen as the king who converted the inhabitants—a patron saint. One monk, Oddr Snorrason of Þingeyrar monastery, remembers Óláfr as a saint, likening him to Moses. Oddr works hard within his two works, *Óláfs saga tryggvasonar* and *Yngvars saga víðförla*, to sanctify raiders in order to bring Iceland into the Christian story. His intentional recasting shows a deep desire for Iceland to be incorporated into the Christian narrative.

## Natasha Dukelow (University College Cork)

### Representations of Mary in the *Liber exemplorum*: Mother, Mediatrix and Virgin

The *Liber Exemplorum* is a Franciscan *exempla* collection compiled c. 1275-1279 by an English Franciscan friar who served as a master of theology, general advisor and lector at the Franciscan friary in Cork. The *Liber* provides textual evidence on the forms of Marian piety promoted by the Irish and continental friars. As a collection of preaching material to be broadcast to the laity, it helps us to determine the types of ideas being used to promote devotional behaviours to the Virgin Mary. This paper will explore Mary's role in the text as a mother, an intercessor and a virgin. It will also examine the frequency with which she is referred to using each of these titles, to determine which of these attributes is stressed more in her portrayal. The paper will also give an analysis of the other descriptors used in relation to Mary.

## Beatrix Färber (University College Cork)

### Tadhg Ó Cuinn's Irish *Materia Medica* (1415)

I have been preparing an unpublished edition and translation of Tadhg Ó Cuinn's Irish *Materia Medica* for the CELT website by the late private scholar Micheál P. S. Ó Conchubhair. His family donated the Herbal to the School of Celtic Studies, DIAS. In 2017 it was scanned and entrusted to CELT. Tadhg Ó Cuinn's substantial work abounds in botanical descriptions, medical information and advice for the practitioner, discussing 292 entries in alphabetic order. An English translation and a glossary are included. Based on TCD MS 1343, the edition lists parallels from three possible Latin sources, and unique entries without Latin parallels. Making it available online will greatly enhance our knowledge of Irish herbal medicine.

## Noémi Farkas (National University of Ireland, Galway)

### Biblical Exempla in Sedulius Scottus' *De rectoribus Christianis*

This paper examines selected biblical references from the *De rectoribus Christianis* in order to determine the extent of Sedulius Scottus' use and interpretation of the Scriptures, in terms of developing a Carolingian model of kingship. Biblical quotations are deployed throughout the text, primarily to illustrate the image of the ideal ruler by evoking the figures of Old Testament kings, and to justify the prescribed duties and roles of the Carolingian king. The Bible, thus, serves both as a source of ideological models and as a source of authority. However, there is a category of biblical references in the *De rectoribus Christianis*, which diverges from the text of the Bible. These textual variants reveal the development of a conscious political programme, and the relationships of power that constituted the context from which the text emerged. The textual divergences manifest in rephrased verses, or in the replacement of words, e.g. the consistent substitution of *pious* with *justus*.

This paper will explore the biblical textual variations in the *De rectoribus Christianis* in order to reconstruct Sedulius Scottus' interpretation of the Bible and his notions of kingship.

## **Lenore Fischer (Independent Researcher)**

### **The When and Why of the *Leabhar Oiris***

The *Leabhar Oiris* (LO) has often been treated as though it were an ugly sister of the seventeenth-century *Cath Chluana Tairbh* (CCT). Internal evidence, however, suggests that the LO is substantially older than the CCT, compiled with radically different objectives in mind. While the CCT limits itself to a description of Brian's final battle, the LO includes annals from both before and after the battle. Their content indicates that the LO was put together in the early 1100s to support the claim of the O'Mahony segment of Uí Echach Mumhan against the rival O'Donoghue segment.

## **Ian Fisher (Independent Researcher)**

### **Locating *Tech Sacsan*: A Tale of Two Churches**

This paper will examine the conflicting claims of two medieval parish churches near Athenry (Co. Galway), Templemoyle and Templegal, to be the early monastic site *Tech Sacsan*. It is suggested that the confusion, which has divided scholars since Archdall, arose in the late medieval records of the prebends of Tuam Cathedral. Templemoyle adjoins, and was probably originally part of, the townland of Tisaxon. This site has produced an Early Christian iron bell and inscribed grave-slab and seems to be the likelier candidate.

## **Laura Fitzachary (Dublin Castle, Office of Public Works)**

### **Reimagining Medieval Dublin and the Role of the Guide in Public History**

This contribution will focus on working in public history and identify a shift in historical authority defined by the interaction of the general public and the guide within a museum setting. Dublin Castle is a former Viking settlement which subsequently from 1204 until 1922 was the seat of English, and later British rule in Ireland. Due to a fire having destroyed the medieval bastion, only a Viking defence wall remains beneath the foundations of a powder tower. The guide in this case must reveal the layers of the site and educate those visiting on what originally stood there. The role of the guide should be representative of and more interactive with the experts in the field of Irish medieval history, while maintaining an authority of his/her own. By being the front line in a museum setting, guides are the border between information and the public.

## **Joseph J. Flahive (Royal Irish Academy)**

### **The Irish Topographical Tales of Giraldus Cambrensis**

Gerald de Barry (1146-1223), a Cambro-Norman Francophone scholar and churchman, travelled through Ireland in the wake of the 1169 invasion (1183-4, 1185, and 1204-6), and he incorporated what he observed and heard into his works. These present a number of anecdotes that recognisably relate to a (purported) explanation of a toponym, that is to say, they fall within the tradition of *dinnshenchas*. His treatment of such material, however, seldom corresponds to the original intention. Gerald, who spoke little or no Irish, would not have automatically understood the intrinsic connexion between place-names and narratives and may at times have missed the point. Furthermore, as an outsider to this tradition, he freely refashions such materials and imposes his own purposes.

## Roy Flechner (University College Dublin)

### Penance and Manumission in Early Medieval Ireland

This paper explores instances in which penitentials recommend manumission as a form of commutation of penances. This procedure raises a number of questions which I shall attempt to answer: What is to become of manumitted slaves? Do they go on to become peasant dependants of churches? And how does this form of commutation sit with the disapproval of manumission in early Irish law?

## Britt Forde (Independent Researcher)

### John, the Irish Bishop and Martyr

In Adam of Bremen's *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* (c. 1076) Adam mentions John, or Johannes, an Irish bishop, as a person with qualities that he admires, in stark contrast to his own Archbishop Adalbert, who does not represent an exemplary bishop according to Adam. Adalbert makes John bishop of Mecklenburg, a newly converted area two days' journey from Hamburg. There John baptises thousands before he is martyred in a most brutal manner in the Slav uprising. This paper will look at John, his work and his martyrdom in the wider context of Adam's work as well as that of Helmod of Bosau's *Chronicle* (12th century).

## Ellen Ganly (Maynooth University)

### St. Abbán's International Identity

One of the most common ways in which Irish hagiographical authors manifested a saint's cult was by referring to the geographical locations in Ireland with which the saint was connected. When referring to places overseas, however, the author rarely cited any place aside from Rome, indicating that the international identity of an Irish saint bears little significance. Taking the source material on St. Abbán as a case in point, this paper will show that matters concerning his international identity go beyond the common hagiographical depictions of Rome. Examining the attestation of his cult outside of Ireland will further uncover the contemporary interests which promoted such fame.

## Neil Gordon (National University of Ireland, Galway)

### The Irish Annals: History or Literature?

The various annals of Ireland are an invaluable historical resource. They list important events and individuals in a chronological format for a period spanning centuries and are largely considered to be historically reliable after 600 AD. Their reliability makes it easy for historians to forget that they should not be considered purely as historical tools and that they have a literary aspect to them, with many annals containing entire sections of prose and poetry. This paper will explore the annals as literature and why this literary aspect means that we should treat the information contained within them with more caution.

## Vitor M. A. Guerreiro (University of Porto)

### Medieval Aesthetics and Formalism

Before DeBruyne's pioneering work in the 1940s, it was received wisdom that medieval aesthetics was a non-existent subject. Although things have substantially changed, discussions of formalism in contemporary aesthetics usually employ the concept of "form" in only one of the senses that Tatarkiewicz registered of "form"

in *A History of Six Ideas*, namely: form as appearance properties; while the medieval notion of form as fit is neglected, with implications for how we frame the “non-perceptual” in aesthetics. I wish to show how subtler meanings of “form” in medieval aesthetics have far-reaching consequences for how we conceive the aesthetic today.

## **Maria Hallinan (National University of Ireland, Galway)**

### **The *Senchas Már* Status-Tract: Overview and First Insights**

Within the early medieval Irish legal corpus, we have several surviving tracts solely preoccupied with social status and rank. Scholarship concerning these ‘status-tracts’ has tended to focus on three key sources; namely *Críth Gablach* “Forked-Purchase”, *Míadslechtae* “Rank-Sections” and *Uraicecht Becc* “Small Primer”. There is, however, an additional significant tract belonging to this sub-group which has yet to be sufficiently edited, translated or evaluated in detail. This is an early medieval tract, dated to the 8th century, now fragmentary, which formed part of a compilation of tracts known as the *Senchas Már*; consequently, it is now referred to in scholarship as the *Senchas Már* Status-Tract. This paper seeks to give an overview of this lesser-known legal tract, in hopes of showcasing what insights it can offer us for the study of early medieval Irish law.

## **Jesse Harrington (Independent Researcher)**

### **Patrick and Coroticus: Curse, Transformation, and Exile in Muirchú’s Life of St. Patrick**

The fifth-century British leader Coroticus stands out not only as the contemporary figure treated at greatest length in St. Patrick’s writings, but for the memorable treatment of him in Muirchú’s Life where the saint’s curse turns him into a fox. I argue that the famous cursing episode is more intricate in its construction, allusions, and rhetorical messages than has been hitherto recognised: engaging closely both with Patrick’s own Letter to Coroticus and with biblical and patristic texts, while providing a sympathetic lament on human frailty and the bodily snares of the world, and a sensitive portrait of a physical and spiritual exile.

## **Megan Henvey (University of York)**

### **Communication Through Stone: The Iconography of High Crosses**

Modes of communication between ecclesiastical sites within the early Irish Church continue to be debated with reference to texts and archaeological remains; however, recourse has not been made to the substantial corpus of extant high crosses. Furthermore, scholarship on the high crosses has seen them explored as discrete groups defined along anachronistic geopolitical lines so that networks of connectivity impacting their production have not been apprehended. Focusing on the crosses of one such group, the so-called ‘Northern Group’, this paper will demonstrate that links between communities can be greatly clarified by the contexts of the sculptures themselves. This will significantly impact understanding of modes and routes of contact in the early Medieval period.

## **Annie Humphrey (Trinity College Dublin)**

### **The Viking Invasions in Middle Irish Heroic Literature**

*Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib* and *Caithréim Chellacháin Chaisil* served twelfth-century Gaelic patrons by glorifying their prominent ancestors. These literary heroes were valorised by hostility against the Vikings in Ireland. At the same time the descendants of the Vikings, the Hiberno-Norse, were important members of Irish society,

providing mercantile, naval, and fiscal power to significant Gaelic dynasties. The semi-historical, semi-fictionalised depiction of the Viking invasions in this later literature reveals attitudes and conceptions about the contemporary Hiberno-Norse. This paper considers the words used and attitudes encoded in these two sources and in similar Irish language texts.

## Lauren Jean (University of Notre Dame)

### Tadhg Ó Cianáin's Vocabulary of Honour

Within Tadhg Ó Cianáin *Turas na dTaoiseach nUltach as Éirinn* there are 221 mentions of *onóir* and its grammatical variants, prompting questions about its significance in the context of both medieval Irish honour culture and early modern European honour culture. On close examination of the *Turas*, it becomes clear that the deixical positioning Ó Cianáin associates with *onóir* frequently shifts between outward- and inwards-facing forms of *honour*. This patterning disrupts the current conceptualization of the discourse of honour in medieval Ireland and suggests a broader understanding of the term, expanded well beyond elites and males.

## Rosari Kingston (University College Cork)

### The Provenance of Some Plant Knowledge Today

The boundaries between the oral and learned traditions are distinctly porous and knowledge flows in both directions including knowledge about plant use. Mícheál Ó Conchubhair suggests, in his translation of the *Materia Medica*, that there are 22 herbs mentioned in the text which may represent an Irish indigenous tradition. By using the manuscript as a base line and comparing the information therein with herbals available in Ireland between the 15th and 21st centuries, it is possible to explore the provenance of the knowledge pertaining to a sample of these 22 herbs. This exploration may support Ó Conchubhair's assertion regarding these herbs.

## Ágnes Kiricsi (Károli Gáspár University, Budapest)

### Atmospheric Halos in Early English Chronicles

Halos are optical phenomena caused by the refraction and reflection of light in clouds containing ice crystals. As their nature was not understood in the Middle Ages, the appearance of a spectacular solar or lunar halo in the sky was considered a miracle, or a premonitory sign to which eschatological interpretation was often attached. Accounts of such "heavenly signs" are frequently misjudged and misinterpreted, and are rarely recognised as descriptions of atmospheric halos. My aim is to show examples of such accounts from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*, and by comparing them with modern observations, I intend to discuss whether these early descriptions and depictions could be regarded as having documentary nature.

## Mary Leenane (Maynooth University)

### Insinuating Royalty in Early Irish Literature

Early Irish literature is replete with different characters of both sexes fulfilling a variety of roles, with the singling out of a perceived elite for more specialised treatment. While a title such as "king" or "queen" alludes to royal status, other mechanisms are employed to reiterate this concept. Taking a thematic approach, this paper will probe the way in which apparel, laden with symbolisms, underpins key moments in the careers of



figures like Cú Chulainn, Conaire Mór and Cormac mac Airt. A brief consideration of broadly contemporary iconographies will provide further context and insight into the medieval narrative creation process.

## Máirín MacCarron (University of Sheffield)

### Gendered Networks in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*

The Leverhulme Trust-funded project *Women, Conflict and Peace: Gendered Networks in Early Medieval Narratives* (running from Sept 2018 to Aug 2020) analyses how historians and hagiographers in the early Middle Ages (fourth to eighth centuries) incorporated women and their networks into stories of conflict and peace-building, during a period marred by warfare and religious conflict. This paper will discuss the challenges involved in identifying and classifying such gendered networks, and will present the early findings from our network analysis of the role of women in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*.

## Máirtín Mac Conmara (Institiúid Diagachta Pháirc Bhaile an Mhuilinn)

### Josephus Scottus, Mac Léinn le hAlcuin, agus a Ghiorrúchán ar Thráchtairacht Iaróm ar an bhFáidh Íseáia

Tá eolas againn ar Josephus ó litreacha Alcuin, ceann amháin ó A.D. 790 go Colcu, York, oide, *magister*, Alcuin: “Tá mise, do mhac, agus Josephus do chomhthíreach, ar thogha na sláinte”; dhá litir go Josephus, ceann ón Bhreatain (A.D. 790-792) (tá a mháistir, oide, Colcu, *magister*, go maith); ceann eile (790-793?) ag déanamh soláis leis faoina dhrochshláinte; ceann eile (A.D. 791-796) faoina bhás. Is dealraitheach gurbh ó Chluain Mhic Nóis don bheirt. Seans gur fhill Josephus ar Chluain agus gur rinneadh ab ann de, agus gurb é an t-ab a fuair bás ann i 794: “Ioseph nepos Cernae Abbas Cluana Moccu Nois (obiit)”. D’iarr Alcuin air giorrúchán a dhéanamh ar 18 leabhar Thráchtairacht Iaróm ar Íseáia ag fágaint a thagairtí don Eabhrais agus leagain Gréigise ar lár, 7rl, rud a rinne sé i stíl álainn. Tá leagan criticiúil den ghiorrúchán curtha in eagar ag Roger Gryson díreach foilsithe (Brepols; 2018).

## Mícheál Mac Craith (National University of Ireland, Galway)

### Halle, Hapsburgs and Hugh (O’Neill)

In his account of the Ulster Princes’ sojourn in the Spanish Netherlands (18/10/1607—28/2/1608), Tadhg Ó Cianáin focuses on the Marian shrine of Halle more than anywhere else. Firstly, it was believed that the town was preserved through the miraculous intervention of the Virgin Mary when besieged by Protestant forces in 1580. Secondly, the Archdukes made pilgrimages to Halle at decisive moments in their careers. Encountering the *pietas austriaca* of the Archdukes at Halle, Hugh O’Neill learned how to fashion himself as a Catholic prince. This *pietas austriaca* also dictated the thrust of Ó Cianáin’s narrative as a protracted pilgrimage.

## Brigid Mayes (Independent Researcher)

### Reading Tadhg Ó Cuinn’s *Materia Medica* (1415) in the Twenty-first Century

The *Materia Medica* is underpinned by Galenic theory. An aspect of the theoretical framework of Galenic medicine which chimes with our concerns today is the importance attached to health maintenance: regimen, including appropriate food and drink, was key to both prevention of illness and restoration of health. Ó Cuinn devoted chapters of his *Materia Medica* to barley as both medicine and food, consistent with the notion of nourishing food as part of a regimen which facilitates the restoration of health. Using Ó Cuinn’s presentation of



barley as a key, this paper seeks to show that while the *Materia Medica* is a product of its time, it holds much that is of interest in the twenty-first century.

## Alexa McCall (University of Notre Dame)

### Tadhg Ó Cianáin and Gregory Martin

Tadhg Ó Cianáin's *Turas na dTaoiseach nUltach as Éirinn* (1609-10) and Gregory Martin's *Roma Sancta* (1580) present complementary portraits of Counter-Reformation Rome in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. However, whereas Martin's *Roma Sancta* is a polemical account meant to inspire English recusants, Ó Cianáin's text is more subtle and political. It was meant to inspire faith in the Ulster princes and make a case for assistance from the great Catholic powers, particularly Spain. The political and polemical aspects of both texts should be read as complementary elements of a shared culture of Counter-Reformation in early modern Rome, which were applied differently to the geopolitical situations of England and Ireland.

## Carolyn McNamara (University of Glasgow)

### A Confusion of Lismores: Disentangling the Textual Record

There are two early medieval monasteries known as Lismore, the earlier of the two located on an island of the same name off the western coast of Scotland (founded prior to AD 592) and the second in County Waterford, Ireland (founded c. 635). Despite their differences, they have become muddled in the surviving sources. This paper proposes to examine the textual evidence for members of both these monasteries to see to what extent we may be able to further separate the two Lismores from each other in the textual record.

## Iordanis Notaridis (University College Cork)

### Aire Échta: The Enforcer of Lawful Revenge in Medieval Irish Legal Sources

Blood-feud was a lawful means of exacting justice in the case of murder in medieval Ireland, when the culprit and his *túath* were unwilling to pay the price for his crime. There were cases, however, where the two *túatha* (of a victim and his murderer respectively) were bound by a treaty; then the Irish legal system dictated that there should be a specific law enforcer, the *aire échta*, to organise, undertake and guarantee the lawful exacting of revenge. In my paper, I will outline the most important characteristics of this unique and fascinating aspect of medieval Irish law concerning blood-feud.

## William O'Brien (University College Cork)

### Garranes: An Early Medieval Royal Landscape in South-west Ireland

This paper considers recent archaeological investigations of the well-known ringfort landscape at Garranes, Templemartin, Co. Cork. The focal monument is an impressive trivallate ringfort (Lisnacaheragh), long identified as *Rath Raithleann* the seat of a regional branch of the Eóganacht dynasty, who dominated the political landscape of south Munster in the early medieval period. The results of recent excavation at Lisnacaheragh are presented, along with the investigation of an adjacent enclosure (Lisnamanroe), and three other earthworks in that area. The implications of these findings for an understanding of a minor royal landscape are discussed.

## Cian Ó Cionnfhaoilaidh (Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh)

### 'A Fhiond ... Indis damh céad-ainm tugadh ort 7 an dara hainm': Stracfhéachaint Diachronach ar Ainmneachaibh Eile Fhínn mhic Cumhaill agus mar a bhFuil mar Bhunús leobhtha

Sa chur i láthair so, tugfar stracfhéachaint ar ainmneachaibh Fhínn mhic Cumhaill mar a bhfaightear iad ina scéaltaibh beathaisnéise ó aimsir na Meánaoise go dtí an lá athá inniuimh ann. Is iomaí a thugtar ainmneacha eile ar Fhionn insna scéaltaibh beathaisnéise is doiche, ach gan bhunús na n-ainmeaha a mhíniú, agus is iomaí a thugtar comhthéacs agus sonraíthe breise insna scéaltaibh beathaisnéise béaloidis is deireanaí, ach gan na hainmneacha so a luadh go díreach. Mar sin, is é mar chuspóir agam, le linn na stracfhéacana diachronaí so, na scéalta beathaisnéise ós na haimsiríbh éagsúla a chur in iomaíocht dá chéile, féachaint an bhfuighidist solas tuisceana a chaitheamh ar a chéile agus bunús na n-ainmneacha dh'fhuascailt dúinn.

## Tom O'Donovan (University College Cork)

### The Irish Sagas Online Website: Transcription and Translation

The Irish Sagas Online website ([iso.ucc.ie](http://iso.ucc.ie)) combines online editions and English translations of Irish sagas with Modern Irish versions in a unique format. This paper provides the background to the development of this website and outlines the benefits of this format. The features of the website are described in detail.

## David O'Mahony (University College Cork)

### Bede and the Saracens: An Eschatological Context

The paper examines how Bede, the Anglo-Saxon historian, writes about the Saracens in an eschatological context. Bede (d. AD 735) wrote at a time of sharp political and moral crisis. His understanding of this crisis was informed by his reading of scripture, and he saw it in the context of a potential divine punishment on a grand scale. The paper examines how he presents current events as reflecting earlier patterns in history such as the displacement of the Britons by the Anglo-Saxons (seen as a divine punishment), and how he incorporates the Saracens as a warning that the Anglo-Saxons could be displaced by another people.

## Francis O'Reilly (Independent Researcher)

### The Kildare Origin of the Book of Kells

The dragon and garment symbolism in the Book of Kells compared with the garment and "Battle of the Sexes" symbolism in Cogitosus' *Vita Sanctae Brigidae* suggests the Book of Kells belongs to the same preserve "Cogitosus" stored for the community at Kildare.

## Tadhg Ó Síocháin (Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh)

### Caoilte – Fuascailteoir Cleasach

Déanfar iniúchadh ar cháilíochtaí a chuireann ar a chumas do Chaoilte bheith ina fhuascailteoir éifeachtach agus ar an bparadacs agus ar an défhiús a bhaineann leis an ról sin aige. Tabharfar spléachadh ar aircitíopa an chleasaí, de réir mar a fheictear é i dtraidisiúin éagsúla. Déanfar tagairt do shamplaí ón traidisiún Gaelach, ón Sean-Tiomna, ón tseanlitríocht chlasaiceach agus ón litríocht iarchlasaiceach idirnáisiúnta agus bainfear leas an léargas a thugann Paul Radin ar thraidisiún bundúchasach Mheiriceá. Áiteofar go mbaineann tréithe agus caílíochtaí de chuid aircitíopa an chleasaí le Caoilte. Bunófar an chaint go príomha ar fhoinsí meánaoiseacha.

## **Camilla Pedersen (Independent Researcher)**

### **The Literary Representations of Metamorphosis through a Curse in Early Medieval Irish and Old Norse Narrative Traditions.**

The literary representations of metamorphosis through a curse is found in both the Early Medieval Irish and the Old Norse narrative traditions. This paper will show that both traditions show similarities with a wider worldview of the soul, the body, and transformation in general, and that both adhere to the tropes found in contemporary Christian thinking and writing. By examining the literary evidence of metamorphosis through curses, including what could be termed self-cursing, the paper will analyse individual texts, such as *Grettis saga*, *Hrólfs saga Kraka*, *Tochmarc Étaíne*, and *Feis Tighe Chonáin*, and attempt to place them in a wider context of philosophical and Christian ideologies of the medieval period.

## **Jim Reid (National University of Ireland, Galway)**

### **The Cultural and Political Contacts between the Kingdom of Munster and the Roman Empire in the Late Fourth and Fifth Centuries**

It is now understood that, although never invaded by the Roman Empire, Ireland was heavily influenced by its location on the “frontiers” of Roman society. This paper will examine the cultural and political contacts between the kingdom of Munster and the Roman Empire in the late fourth and fifth centuries. Evidence, from both archaeological and documentary sources, of “Romanisation” in the south, may explain why Munster emits a totally different “character” to the rest of Ireland in the early medieval period.

## **Áine Sheehan (Independent Researcher)**

### **Gaelic Medical Professionals in Late Medieval and Early Modern Ireland**

This paper will identify and locate the Gaelic professional medical families in the context of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ireland. It will illustrate the distribution of these families and their schools, and investigate the relationship between the physician and patron. The aim of this paper is to highlight the ability of these medical practitioners to move between the various ethnic communities in Early Modern Ireland, and to show how their medical expertise, derived from European sources, gave them valuable and much sought after skills that insulated them from the harshest aspects of the Tudor conquest.

## **Margaret Smith (Saint Louis University)**

### **Chieftains in Controversy: A Crisis of Authority in 15<sup>th</sup>-Century Carbery**

When Domhnall Riabhach MacCarthy died in 1414, he left behind a wealthy, stable, and flourishing lordship and five sons. Over the following decades, these brothers found themselves drawn into internecine conflict that spiralled out beyond Carbery, as Munster was plunged into crisis. By the middle of the century, Carbery was cleaved in two, fractured by dynastic challenges both from within the lordship and abroad. This paper explores both the causes of crisis and the new strategies of legitimacy that claimants to the lordship developed in response to these emerging crises, redefining lordly authority to accommodate new circumstances in a period of upheaval.

## Heidi Stoner (Durham University)

### **Inscribing the Cross: a Re-assessment of Viking Age Sculpture in the Irish Sea Region.**

Looking specifically at the variation of inscribed iconographic programmes on crosses from around the Irish Sea region it is possible to understand this crucial period in the development of the early Church in order to examine the complexity of thought and variety of interpretation. The practice of inscribing abbreviated iconographies can give scholars insight into exegetical and religious thought, thus framing this discussion as a period of both change and continuity, rather than a decline or break. The medium of stone sculpture, both public and mortuary, documents this period across various regions which are otherwise unrecorded in the sources; but through this medium variety of thought can be established. By examining this understudied corpus of material it will be suggested that a highly nuanced picture of Viking Age Christianity can be elucidated.

## Cameron Wachowich (University of Toronto)

### **The *Werden Orosius*: A Witness to the Study of World History in Medieval Britain**

In this paper, I will present the results of an examination of Duisburg, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Landesarchiv, Z11/1, a substantial fragment of Orosius's *Historiarum adversum Paganos Libri Septem* ("Seven Books of History against the Pagans"). This fragment, produced in Northumbria in the late seventh century, is the only known witness of Orosius's *Historiae* of Insular provenance and yet it has hitherto escaped scholarly attention. Its neglect is especially surprising considering that Orosius's work had a considerable influence on Insular Latin culture and even influenced the development of legendary history in both England and Ireland. I will present the results of a codicological and paleographical study of the fragment and elucidate its place in the stemma of the *Historiae*. Finally, I will present my own suggestions regarding the origins of the fragment based on linguistic analysis.

## Brega Webb (National University of Ireland, Galway)

### **The Decoration of the *Cathach* of Colum Cille**

The *Cathach* of Colum Cille (RIA MS 12 R 33) is arguably the oldest known manuscript to have been written by an Irish scribe. The decoration of the *litterae notabiliores* can be placed at the beginning of the later insular style of decoration that reached its zenith with the Book of Kells (Dublin, Trinity College Library MS 57 ). There is no evidence that the legend of its being written in haste is correct. I have examined the decoration on the initials, each one of which is unique and undoubtedly of early Irish origin. It is my contention that the manuscript was carefully planned and executed and I propose to describe in my presentation how I reached this conclusion.

## Alex Woolf (University of St Andrews)

### **The Origins of the Irish Ringfort: Some Historical Speculation.**

Over the last quarter century, work by a range of scholars and units across the island of Ireland, culminating in the EMAP project, has allowed us to gain a far greater understanding of the chronology and morphological development of the raths and cashels that typify the settlement pattern of the early Middle Ages. In this paper, I shall approach the question of why this type of enclosed settlement emerged in the course of the sixth century. In the light of our improved understanding of the archaeological evidence, I shall interrogate the textual evidence and suggest some potentially fruitful lines for further enquiry.

## **Niamh Wycherley (National University of Ireland, Galway)**

### **Tangible Blessings in Medieval Ireland**

In medieval Ireland there was a large proliferation of terms relating to the cult of relics. In fact, my current research project has yielded close to forty distinct terms. These include words for the remains of the saints, blessings, talismanic objects, portable reliquaries and monumental structures. The sheer number can be partly attributed to the fact that, in early Ireland, texts were produced in significant numbers in the vernacular, as well as in Latin. It is this bilingualism that has often deterred scholars from detailed historical examination of the topic. Linguistically, these words for relics can be crudely divided into three groups: Latin terms, Irish terms borrowed from the Latin, and “native” Irish terms. This paper will examine one subsection of words relating to the cult of relics in Medieval Ireland, that of tangible blessings. It will be shown that Latin and vernacular terms for saints’ relics repay scrutiny. They are often less transparent than modern histories assume, and some Old Irish relic-terms reveal more than their Latin counterparts about prevailing religious customs.