

Abstracts of Papers

ICM 2021

Mariamne Briggs

Interpretation and artistry: translating similes in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*

Statius used approximately two hundred and forty-three similes in his epic *Thebaid* (c. 92 A.D.). In contrast, only seventy-nine similes appear to have been translated in the Middle Irish *Thebaid*. Many of Statius' similes were cut in the Irish vernacular narrative and of those which were translated, the process does not appear to have been a straightforward one. This presentation will explore the approach taken by the medieval Irish author to translating the similes from the wrestling match between Tydeus and Agylleus in *Thebaid*, Book 6. The focus will be on the translator's methodology in developing a new simile and creating a replacement simile in the vernacular narrative.

Anne Connon, Ohio Dominican University

Negative Space: *Acallam na Senórach*, intertextuality, and the pilgrimage to Lough Derg

Despite the strong Patrician focus of its Ireland-wide itineraries, *Acallam na Senórach* omits St. Patrick's Purgatory at Lough Derg – one of the most famous medieval pilgrimage sites in all Europe – from the circuits undertaken by Patrick and the remnants of Finn mac Cumail's *fiána*. This paper will argue that not only was the omission deliberate, but also that the *Acallam* further critiques the Lough Derg pilgrimage through the interplay of subtle inter-textual references to the *Tractatus de Purgatorio de Sancti Patricii*, *Bethu Phátraic*, and Patrick's own *Confessio*.

Noémi Farkas, National University of Ireland, Galway

'How a king of the right belief should first rule himself:' Self-restraint and Carolingian rulership in Sedulius Scottus's *De rectoribus Christianis*

De rectoribus Christianis is an influential mid-ninth century political treatise, written by the Irish monk, Sedulius Scottus. The text contributed to the development and consolidation of novel political discourses that legitimated Carolingian rulership. In the service of grounding a distinctly novel form of Carolingian kingship, Sedulius Scottus frequently draws on biblical and patristic notions of self-restraint, evoking the laws of the Old Testament and the strict monastic rules of early Christianity. This paper will detail and interrogate examples of self-governance in the treatise, such as direct quotations and anecdotes, and what they may reveal about the instituting of Carolingian authority and the ideal Christian ruler.

Aoife Haberlin

Thieves, Murderers, and a Disgraced Seneschal: The Troubled Hospitallers of Tully Priory, Co. Kildare

Conflicts between the Military Orders and their neighbours generally centred around land disputes or the abuse of privileges. This paper will examine a document found in the *Justiciar Rolls* of Ireland which shows that, in the late 1290s, the Hospitallers of Tully Priory in Co. Kildare were involved in court cases of a rather different nature. Prior Robert faced allegations of stealing from a grieving widow, while a decision to give sanctuary to known criminals led to fatal consequences, culminating in unlawful executions. This curious document not only provides a brief insight into the Hospitallers

of Tully's relationship with their neighbours, but also their wider attitudes towards the judicial system.

Mark E. Hall, Bureau of Land Management, Department of Interior (USA)

"...and things violently destroyed": Patterns of Raiding and Plundering Monasteries in Ulster (AD 600-1589)

Using Lucas' 1967 list as a basis, this presentation employs time series statistical techniques to examine the patterns of raiding and plundering of Irish churches and monasteries in Ulster from AD 600 through 1589. Change point analysis indicates there are 4 change points in the time series, while extreme value statistics place a threshold of 5 raiding events per decade. Corresponding to the change point analyses, levels of raiding over threshold occurred in the first three decades of the ninth century and throughout most of the twelfth century. Correlations between periods of raiding, political events in Ireland, and the reconstructed North Atlantic Oscillation Index, Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation Index, and sea surface temperatures are examined and discussed.

Richard Harrington, University College Cork

Siadal mac Testa: bearing witness to monastic Ardmore

The ninth-century *Monastery of Tallaght* manuscript contains the earliest documented attestation of the monastery at Ardmore, which it associates with the elusive cleric, Siadal mac Testa. This paper reconstructs the historical Siadal through analysis of the language of the text and the relationships and practice that situate Ardmore within a reformist ideal from a very early stage. The distortion and adaptation of his identity over time, in sources from the twelfth and seventeenth centuries, is here considered for its implications for Ardmore's campaign for recognition of its diocesan pretensions in the twelfth-century reform of the Irish Church.

Aistė Kiltinavičiūtė, University of Cambridge

Audible Sweetness: The Multisensory Sound of Dante's *dolcezza*

As one reads Dante's *Purgatorio*, the notion of the 'sweet sound' ('dolce suon') of music and poetry appears time and again in various inflections (*Purg.* VI.80, XXVIII.59, XXIX.36). The very frequency with which we encounter audible sweetness in the poem may obscure the strangeness of the metaphor, which suggests that we need a panoply of senses beyond hearing to navigate the medium of sound. This paper will analyse what precisely constitutes the sound of *dolcezza* and what role it plays in Dante's understanding of the ethics and aesthetics of poetry. The paper will look at how the ideas about auditory sweetness proposed in the *Commedia* compare to Dante's own earlier 'sweet rhymes of love' (*Convivio* IV.1). Moreover, it will also analyse how Dante's *dolcezza* relates to *dulcedo* as a technical term frequently employed by Virgil, Dante's 'sweetest of fathers' (*Purg.* XXX.50), and the religious tradition of *dulcedo Dei*. Finally, the paper will suggest that the analysis of *dolcezza* may expand our understanding of the synaesthetic qualities involved in listening to poetry not only in Dante, but also medieval lyric more generally.

Mary Leenane, Maynooth University

Deathly sounds in early Irish literature

Narratives of death are prevalent across surviving literature, sometimes as an ancillary feature with the *aided* tale-type reflecting a more specialized exposition of this event. While this is a complex and evolving theme, it seems important to record the way in which pivotal characters die. Horrific wounding is a feature, with, for example, Conchobar, Lóegaire Búadach, Deirdre and Medb all dying from devastating head wounds. Rather than quietly slipping away, these examples allude to a rather

unsettling even deafening ending. This paper will endeavour to determine the way in which sound is inculcated as a component of these narratives of death.

Sarah B. Lynch, Angelo State University (Texas, USA)

Educational Legacies in Late-Medieval French Wills

Wills are the ultimate expression of an individual's wishes and have long been used as a significant source to examine economic and even religious desires and motivations. This paper will continue this scholarly tradition to explore the nature and meaning of educational legacies in wills from Lyon and Toulouse in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This period saw both an increase in schooling and education and an increase in the involvement of a larger proportion of French society in will-making. Amongst the many legacies to family and friends and to religious institutions, there was a significant sub-section of bequests regarding education, ranging from leaving money or goods to support the education of a family member, to bequeathing books that were intended to be used at school or university, to donations to institutions of education. This paper will also consider the motivations behind these legacies, especially how gifts towards educational activities often served to promote the socio-economic position of the testator's family beyond their own lifetime.

Seosamh Mac Cárthaigh, University of Cambridge

'There will be no other king above me': The Devil's Rebellion in *Saltair na Rann* and the Old English Poetic *Genesis*

Saltair na Rann (SR) and the Old English poetic *Genesis* are some of the earliest examples of Biblical narratives being translated into vernacular poetic form in the Latin West. Similarities between the accounts of the Devil's rebellion in these texts has been noted, but not yet expanded upon. Using the accounts of the Devil's rebellion in the poems this paper will explore connections between these texts. Did they draw on common sources? Do they represent a tradition unique to Ireland and England? Looking closely at the language and presentation of the Devil in these poems this paper will offer an initial inquiry into the relationship between the vernacular, poetic accounts of Biblical history produced on the western edge of Europe.

Robbie MacLeod, University of Glasgow

Wives and/or Kinswomen: Women's Loyalties in Medieval Irish Saga

Women in medieval Irish saga must frequently balance loyalty to their family with loyalty to their romantic partner. Taking a selection of saga texts, including understudied tales such as *Aided Chon Roí*, this paper investigates how women answer such questions of loyalty. We see women condemned for remaining loyal to their kin after meeting their romantic partners, even if their unions are less than formal in legal terms. Our understanding of even relatively well-studied women, such as Sín in *Aided Muirchertaig Meic Erca* and the daughter of Eochaid in *Fingal Rónáin*, can be nuanced by scrutinising them in the context of conflicted loyalties.

John Marshall, Trinity College Dublin

Enduring links: the partition of the transnational Marshal lordship, 1247

By 1245 Leinster had become the hub of English colonization and commercialization in Ireland and a headquarters of the vast transnational lordship created by William Marshal, its future seemingly secure. But then its fate was drastically altered by the death of the last childless Marshal heir, leading to the meticulous partition of this great lordship between his many heirs. Over a century ago Goddard Orpen called attention to the partition's substantial corpus of documentation, a collection largely neglected since. This paper provides a fresh analysis of the Marshal partition, while

surmounting national boundaries to consider the implications of Leinster's pivotal position within a sprawling transmarine nexus.

Vicky McAlister & Jennifer Immich

Drone Data Delivers: Employing Topographic Models to Identify Irish Deserted Medieval Rural Settlement – Three Case Studies from Anglo-Norman Ireland.

Phase one of the “What Lies Beneath: Identifying ‘Lost’ Medieval Landscapes” project successfully discovered the low-lying remnants of three nucleated rural settlements using drone collected photogrammetry data. This paper illustrates the potential of drone imagery to identify rural peasant settlement and declares that the future of landscape archaeology will benefit from the inclusion of such low-cost techniques. The three sites studied (Glenogra, Co. Limerick; Knockainy, Co. Limerick; and Ardmayle, Co. Tipperary), are all documented Anglo-Norman manors but with extant remains consisting of a medieval parish church and later tower house. Analysis of topographical data and photographs collected by drone indicates that peasant housing plots were situated close to tower houses at each site. Although invisible to the naked eye, using GIS workflows we successfully detected burgage plots at all three sites, in one case showing remarkable boundary survival to the present day. Historically scholars have struggled to isolate rural nucleated settlement in the Irish landscape, thus our analysis illustrates the need for technological answers to longstanding questions, including the basic identification of potential sites within the modern environment. A brief overview of the methodology employed to reveal rural medieval settlement will be given, followed by discussion of avenues for future research.

Joey McMullen and Dakotah Meadows, Indiana University, Bloomington

Eochaid Eolach, Diarmait Mac Máel na mBó, and the *dindshenchas* of Loch Garman

In “The Three Forms of the *Dinnshenchas Érenn*,” Tomás Ó Concheanainn casually notes that Eochaid Eolach composed an addition to the *dindshenchas* of Loch Garman (ll. 97-200 of the metrical text edited by Gwynn) on behalf of the well-known Leinster king Diarmait Mac Máel na mBó. This paper seeks to trace that connection more fully, exploring how the poem can be read as constructing a genealogy through the Wexford landscape in order to link Diarmait and the *Úi Chennselaig* to Cathair Mór and the high-kingship of Ireland, likely in commemoration of Diarmait's successful campaign to win Loch Garman back from the Vikings (and in support of his own political ambitions).

Carolyn McNamara, University of Glasgow

Recovering the reputation of Comgall of Bangor

Comgall of Bangor was highly esteemed and important in his day as a peer to Brendan and Columba. The decline of Bangor and the cult of Comgall caused his status to be less understood and acknowledged in modern times. This paper undertakes an interdisciplinary approach, including archaeological, art historical, and textual evidence to gather the surviving evidence for the position and value of Bangor monastery from its founding c. 558 through the tenth century, thus re-situating Comgall in his appropriate context as a peer of more popularly recognized saints and re-asserting the importance Bangor had in early medieval Christian society.

Tatyana A. Mikhailova, Moscow State University / Institute of Linguistics RAS

“Calling of Vikings” and “Invitation of Varangians”: Giraldu Cambrensis tracts and some Old Russian Parallels

The paper deals with the influence of archaic mythological motifs on the historiography, using the existence of different plots in the Old Russian and the Middle Irish sources. The chronicle tradition of 'calling the Vikings' is usually considered as an element of pseudo-historic narratives of migratory tales, as are the motifs of 'three brothers' (presumably from Old Testament – three sons of Noah) and 'marriage with a daughter of the local ruler' (from the Aeneid?). An analysis of Giraldus Cambrensis' historical tracts shows that the development of these motifs is partly based on Irish historical records and finds support in the Irish Chronicles. At the same time, a comparison with the pseudo-historical testimony from Old Russian "Primary Chronicle" (12 c.), telling of the 'Invitation of three Varangian princes' in 862 (Rurik, Sineus and Truvor), as well as the motive of 'three Ercs' in the foundation legend of Scottish Dál Riada, could demonstrate a stability of mythological base in historical narratives. So, the Norman Invasion of Ireland described with details by Giraldus, in particular with mentions of many 'brothers' and other kinsmen, is transformed by a historian from Ukraine (Afanasiev, 1906) into a short mention of 'Strongbow with two brothers'. The motif of two brothers from Saxonia, Hengis and Horsa, also will be taken into account.

Karen Murad, University College Dublin

Written in Stone: Re-evaluating the function of ogham stones in an early Medieval textual context

Ogham stones have traditionally been interpreted as grave markers and memorials or as indicators of territorial boundaries, and saga texts contain references to the stones' capacity to act as 'witnesses' in legal contexts as well. However, significant questions remain regarding their function and use in a society that was predominantly non-literate. This paper argues that by approaching ogham stones as texts rather than as artefacts, greater understanding of the possible functions of monumental ogham stones can be achieved through the recontextualisation of ogham stones within the milieu of Late Antique and early Medieval textual developments in Ireland.

C. Philipp E. Nothaft, Trinity College Dublin

The Practice of Latin Astronomy in the High Middle Ages

The high Middle Ages were a watershed period for the development of mathematical astronomy in Latin Europe, characterized by the large-scale assimilation of sources newly translated from Arabic, Hebrew, and Greek. While this historical picture can be regarded as securely established in its basic outlines, there are currently still major gaps in our understanding of how these translations impacted the ways in which the discipline was actually practiced by Latin scholars in the twelfth and thirteenth century. In this paper, I present results from a European Commission-funded research project, "Transformations of Latin Astronomy" (TraLA), which uses unstudied and neglected manuscript sources to provide new insights into the way Graeco-Arabic astronomy was assimilated in Europe during the period from 1000 to 1250. My particular focus will be on the practical aspects of medieval astronomy, as I seek to provide fresh evidence of Latin astronomers' active engagement with computational tables, instruments, and empirical measurement.

Aogán Ó hIarlaithe

Gúaire geilt?

Tá dán sa téacs meánaoiseach *Cath Cairn Chonaill* ina ndeirtear gur 'chac Guaire ar chraobhacha Aidhne'. Mar a thug an tOllamh Pádraig Ó Riain faoi ndeara, shamhlófaí gur thuas ina shuí ar ghéag a bheadh sé chun an cúram sin a dhéanamh. Bhí Guaire ina rí ar Chonnachta i lár na seachtú haoise. Bhí cáil na féile air ón luathré, agus tá go fóill. Ní gnách go luaitear é nuair a phléitear gealta agus traidisiún na gealtachta. Séard atá romham a dhéanamh sa pháipéar seo a iniúchadh an raibh traidisiún luath ann de Ghuaire mar gheilt.

Seán Ó Hoireabhárd

Royal women and wealth in twelfth-century Ireland

This paper explores the *coibche*, a 'bride-gift' or payment to a woman made by a prospective husband, in the context of twelfth-century Irish politics. This payment was linked to *eineach* or honour-price, a legal formulation that stipulated the value of different ranks in the social hierarchy and the increments owed for an offence.

This paper moves beyond the traditional frameworks used to evaluate female wealth, including both the law texts and hagiographical material mentioning female donations. Instead, it contextualises female wealth by the male honour-price to which it was linked.

The paper concludes that female wealth at this societal level increased markedly from the early medieval period. This has implications for our understanding of marriage relations, donations, and both political and ecclesiastical history.

Mícheál Ó Mainnín, Queen's University, Belfast

The 'poet-harper' in late medieval Ireland and Scotland: some insights from the Book of the Dean of Lismore

This paper will consider the 'poet harper', and poems which reference the harp, in the late medieval period in Ireland and Scotland. It will focus primarily on the sixteenth-century Book of the Dean of Lismore (BDL), a Scottish manuscript which contains material of both Irish and Scottish provenance, and which preserves copies of poems which suggest a special interest in harpers and the harp on the part of the compilers. Questions which will be considered include issues surrounding status, professional overlap, and social mobility between the learned classes; and the light which poems in BDL and elsewhere shed on the performance of poetry and its reception in differing contexts.

Russell Ó Ríagáin

The Career of William FitzWarin

William FitzWarin (ob. 1299) was a royal administrator active in England, Ireland and Scotland in the second half of the thirteenth century. One of two—if not four—similarly named contemporary figures, his career presents an ideal case study for exploring the tensions between settlers, natives and the metropole at the high point of the 'First English Empire', as R.R. Davies so famously described it. These tensions lay behind the de Mandeville–FitzWarin feud that began in the early 1270s and came to involve an array of allies on both sides. These extended from the Ua Néill, creole lords and knights settled in the Earldom of Ulster for several generations to the young Earl Richard de Burgh on the de Mandeville side, and the Uí Echach Cobo, more recently arrived lords and knights such as the Bysets, Henry III and Edward I on the FitzWarin side. However, this paper will go beyond this episode to treat FitzWarin's career prior to his appointment as Seneschal of Ulster in 1269 by exploring his origins, his holdings, his marriages, his subsequent career under Edward I—especially in Scotland—and the career of his son Alan, including the final settlement of the feud with the de Mandevilles in the late 1320s. Each of these sheds important light on Insular society and politics c.1250–1330.

Francis O'Reilly

Eriugena Kildarensis

The paper shows how the 9th century Irish philosopher Eriugena uses the Kildare Life of Brigit (*Vita Sanctae Brigidae*) in his great work, the *Periphyseon*, to tell us he was from Kildare. The main focus of the paper is on Eriugena's commentary on the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Mt. 25:1-13) at *Periphyseon* V (1011A–1018D).

Abby Riehl

Spiritual Cures and Physical Ills: Monastic and Secular Healing in Early Medieval Ireland

Sickness and disability was widespread and inevitable in the Middle Ages, but with the spread of Christianity, people throughout Europe began to worry about their spiritual health along with physical, with the spiritual at times taking precedence over the physical. This development of a new aspect of health therefore made the healing intercession of monasteries necessary, as there was no other place for someone to turn to heal their spiritual ills. Because of this, Christianity was able to carve out a necessary place for themselves and their monasteries in Irish society despite the presence of secular healers. Therefore, this essay will consider the types of sicknesses that were common in early medieval Ireland, how they were healed, and by whom, with the ultimate purpose of identifying the way in which monasteries built relationships with the local communities through their healing practices in order to establish themselves as necessary to, if not the cornerstone of, Irish society as a whole.

Francisco J. Rozano-García, National University of Ireland, Galway

The Old English *Pharaoh*: A Neglected *Ubi Sunt* Poem

The short Old English poem *Pharaoh* has often been associated with the *ioca monachorum* genre, while also resembling the phraseology of the Old English *Riddles* and the verse dialogue *Solomon and Saturn*. However, the poem more closely aligns itself with a specific vernacular adaptation of the *ubi sunt* motif, whose most notable examples in Old English can be found in *The Seafarer* and the *Meters of Boethius*. Contrary to conventional readings, this paper argues that the *Pharaoh* poet consciously followed the *ubi sunt* tradition in its vernacular form, which involved the recontextualisation of received learning and literary traditions to the demands of Old English poetic language and experience of the world.

Brendan Scott, Maynooth University

The creation of the Book of Fenagh, 1516

The Book of Fenagh was created in 1516 for Tadhg O'Roddy, the coarb of Fenagh, in what is now County Leitrim. The creation of this manuscript was linked to the unstable political situation in Muintir Eolais (now South County Leitrim), which led the O'Roddys to invest in the Book of Fenagh, hoping that the prestige connected with the manuscript, along with the implied threat contained within it towards those who threatened Fenagh's autonomy, would secure the family's position. This talk will explore the political and religious situations which led to the creation of the Book of Fenagh, an important manuscript survival from north Connacht.

Courtney Selvage, Ulster University

Attacked by Demons and Stung by Bees, Baithéne's Sainly Afterlife

Baithéne, the first successor of the abbacy of Iona, has received little critical attention. A saint himself, he consistently appears throughout the medieval and early modern literary tradition of Colm Cille as his trusted companion. He is also the subject of a medieval Latin life, *Vita Baithini Abbati Hiensis*, which has gone greatly unstudied, and which appears to have been partially translated into Irish in the later Middle Ages. Equally, Baithéne becomes venerated locally as a saint in some areas of Donegal and in Derry under a plethora of names such as Buadán, Baithín, and Baodán. This paper will examine the presentation of Baithéne in the lives of Colum Cille as well as the transformation of the character in his own hagiographical and folk tradition.

Margaret Smith, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

The Interpreter as Political Intermediary in the Submissions to Richard II

In 1395, Richard II received the submissions of dozens of Irish lords. In formulaic fashion, the parties prostrated themselves and paid homage before witnesses, and they swore an oath, usually in Irish, relayed through a trusted interpreter. The resulting notarial instruments, naming parties, interpreters, witnesses, and often their respective locations, reveal informal networks that exercised an often invisible influence on the ruling class of fourteenth-century Ireland. This paper visualizes the social and spatial networks in play and uses those networks to explore the role of the interpreter as a political intermediary in addition to (or instead of) a linguistic one.

Alice Taylor-Griffiths, University of Cambridge

God and the Southampton Psalter

The Southampton Psalter (St John's College MS C.9) is well-known for its lavish miniatures of David and the lion, David and Goliath, and the Crucifixion. Much has been said on the portrayal of Christ in the Crucifixion miniature, notably by O'Reilly, Ní Ghrádaigh, and Henry. Above the head of Christ in the Crucifixion miniature is another figure. In his catalogue of the manuscripts in St John's College, M. R. James comments: 'Above Christ's head are the head and ?arms [sic] of another figure, probably the Father.' To my knowledge, nothing has been said since on this figure. This paper looks at the style and symbolism of this figure, and asks: is this the earliest depiction of the face of God in Ireland?

Nicole Volmering, Trinity College Dublin

A View from Flanders: Ireland and the Irish in Jacob van Maerlant's *Spieghel historiael*

Few writers of the thirteenth century can claim to be as prolific as Jacob van Maerlant (d. c. 1288x1300). Best known for his vernacular adaptations, usually in verse, of romance literature and biblical history (the *Rijmbijbel*), and for compiling the first natural encyclopedia in Middle Dutch, he ended his life composing a metrical history of the world in four books known as *Spieghel historiael* (begun c. 1283). Jacob van Maerlant had at least two co-writers on this comprehensive project (Philip Utenbroeke, book II, and Lodewijk van Velthem, who finished book IV and wrote a continuation), which was patronised by Floris V of Holland, and as such it offers a unique and detailed perspective of history as viewed from late thirteenth-century Flanders. While van Maerlant drew largely on Vincent of Beavais' *Speculum historiale* for this work, for many shorter episodes sources remain unexplored. Focusing on books III and IV (c. 381-1250 AD), this paper outlines what perspective *Spieghel historiael* offers of Irish history and Irish persons on the continent and what sources can be identified from close analysis of the text.

David Woods, University College Cork

The Reverse of the Liudhard Medalet

Bishop Liudhard accompanied princess Bertha, the daughter of King Charibert of Paris (561-67), when she was sent to marry the future King Æthelberht of Kent (c.587-616) in c.580. A gold medallion struck in his name was included in a group of nine coins and ornaments discovered in the grounds of the Church of St Martin, Canterbury, in c.1844. The inscription on the reverse of this medallion has traditionally been dismissed either as meaningless or as too corrupt to read. It is argued here that this legend was intended to read AMEN, AMEN and that in conjunction with the depiction of a cross on a globe, it may allude to the prayer at Psalm 71(72):18-19 that the glory of God should fill the whole earth.

Nina Zhivlova, Moscow State University

This presentation examines traditions of the prehistoric kings of Ireland - Fothad Airgthech and Fothad Cairptech - in the context of the narrative and genealogical tradition of the Three Fothaid. We consider various genealogies, focusing primarily on the tradition linking the Fothaid to the North of Ireland and representing them as the descendants of Conall Cernach in the context of the story of the death of Fothad Airgthech (as told in the tale of Mongán).