

**'Defining the Boundaries of Celtic Hagiography: Textual Sources Outside Lives  
and Martyrologies'  
May 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Abstracts**

Anders Ahlqvist

**'Forgotten Religious Poetry'**

A well-known manuscript preserved in continental Europe contains poetry that appears to deal with religious personalities. At this point, the manuscript is in poor shape. The four editions published so far date from the nineteenth and the (very early) twentieth centuries; none of them has proposed a full reading, let alone a complete translation. That is the aim of this paper. It will suggest a critical edition and a provisional translation. It will also ask a few questions, concerning the meaning and purpose of the text.

Elizabeth Boyle

**'More than Honey to my Mouth': Saints and the Psalms in Early Medieval Ireland'**

This paper will explore the textual interplay between sanctity and the Psalms in early medieval Ireland. Beginning with sources which use saints to promote the efficacy of particular Psalms and prayers – most notably the *Beati* – I will go on to discuss the 'Maledictory Psalms' and the 'Penitential Psalms' and their textual associations with saintly figures. I will conclude by offering some thoughts on the symbiotic relationship between saints and the Psalms in medieval Irish textual culture, in light of the ideology and performance of sanctity and the perceived salvific power of the Psalms.

Caroline Brett

**'Hagiography as Charter: the Example of the Cartulary of Landévennec'**

The Cartulary of Landévennec in Brittany is a series of property-records appended to a collection of house-hagiography in a manuscript dated 1047 × 1055. It falls into a group with three somewhat later Breton and Welsh 'hagiographical cartularies': the Cartulary of Quimperlé (1118 × 1127), Lifris's Life of St Cadog with its appended charters (late eleventh/early twelfth century), and the Book of Llandaff (1130s). Because of its lack of authenticating charter-protocol and the obvious inventions it contains, the Landévennec cartulary has often been dismissed as a feeble forgery, in spite of Wendy Davies's partial rehabilitation of it thirty years ago. I argue that in view of its early date, it should not be judged against the classic cartularies of the twelfth century but rather as a commemorative work closer to hagiography or *Gesta*

*abbatum*. It may have been directly inspired by Tirechán's *Additamenta* to the Book of Armagh (807). Out of the many possible combinations of charter and hagiography, I suggest that the reproduction of hagiographical narratives as 'charter'-texts – 'cartularized hagiography' – is particularly characteristic of Brittonic and Gaelic sources.

David Callander

**'The Late Medieval Welsh Poetry to Gwenfrewy'**

This paper examines the late medieval Welsh poetry to Gwenfrewy (Winefride), assessing the sources it used and how it can itself be used as a source. This will draw upon advances made in the study of the lives of Gwenfrewy by the *Cwlt y Seintiau yng Nghymru* and *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* projects. Although Gwenfrewy already had two Latin lives by the close of the twelfth century, vernacular texts concerning her largely survive only from the fifteenth century onwards. While late medieval lives of Winefride exist in Middle Welsh prose and Middle English prose and verse, the Welsh poems do not narrate her life in detail in the medieval period. The question of narrativity, how strongly narrative a text is, is thus central to whether we consider it a saint's life or otherwise, and I discuss this question with particular reference to Tudur Aled's *cywydd* to Gwenfrewy.

John Carey

**'Beyond Angels and Ancients: Saints and Their Uncanny Interlocutors'**

This paper will consider various accounts, both inside and outside formal hagiography, of dialogues between Irish saints and demons; and also conversations involving more mysterious, but still evidently supernatural, entities. Besides considering such episodes in an Irish context, I will note parallels and possible sources in earlier Lives known to have been current in medieval Ireland, such as those of Paul the First Hermit, Anthony, Martin and Juliana.

Thomas Owen Clancy

**'Hebridean Saints in and on the Margins: Approaching Saints Donnán and Cainnech through Peripheral Texts'**

There are a number of Gaelic saints who, although having some historical and cult presence in Ireland, are much more prominent in Scotland, in particular in the Hebrides and along the west coast. Saints Donnán of Eigg and Cainnech of Aghaboe are among these. Each presents different problems in trying to understand and explain their cults, and the way in which these saints may have been conceived. Whilst Cainnech has a putatively early Life, and notes Scottish episodes, it does not really explain his Scottish prominence. Donnán as a saint exists primarily in anecdotes and marginalia. This paper will seek to approach each of these Hebridean

saints through the evidence of these peripheral texts (poems, lists of companions, anecdotes) and draw clearer profiles for each of them. In so doing it will consider the methodological difficulties of using primarily Irish evidence to interrogate Scottish saints' cults.

Raymond Gillespie

**'Inventing Saints: the Construction of the Sixteenth-Century North-West Ulster Saints Lives'**

One of the responses to the rise of O'Donnell power in north-west Ireland in the early sixteenth century was an explosion of hagiographical writing. Some of this, such as Manus O'Donnell's life of Colm Cille and the life of Brendan, emanated from within O'Donnell circles. Other lives, such as the Book of Fenagh, the second Irish life of Maedog, the life of Naile or the life of Farranan, came from areas dealing with the implications of the changing balance of power relations. In some cases these lives were reconstructed from older versions but in others it seems that these lives were newly composed to deal with current realities. This paper is about how those newly crafted lives were written, focusing particularly on how the material behind the lives was adapted to meet changing realities.

Jesse Harrington

**'Figuring the Saint's Curse Outside of the Lives: Hagiographical Discourse and Narrative Exegesis in *Aided Diarmata meic Cerbaill*'**

Saga-writing presents a challenge to our definition of the hagiographical 'genre'. Many of the kings' sagas have saints or saintly figures as dual protagonists, feature miracles or aetiologies which drive the saga narrative, and often indeed share entire narrative set-pieces with the more conventional 'Lives' within the saints' dossiers. The twelfth-century vernacular saga 'Aided Diarmata meic Cerbaill' ('The Death-tale of Diarmait mac Cerbaill'), famous for the Cursing of Tara by Saint Ruadán of Lorrha, is a case in point. The question arises of how much a saga such as Aided Diarmata can be considered to hold in common with hagiography in terms of its intended audience, purpose, and exegetical methods. Through close textual reading of the saga narrative in light of its scriptural resonances and allusions and through the Psalms in particular, one can recognise the saga as a compelling reworking of the traditions of Ruadán and Diarmait, and one which widens the boundaries of hagiography in twelfth-century Ireland.

Máire Herbert

**'Saints and Stories in Early Ireland'**

The paper seeks to assess hagiographical representations of saints' interactions with secular society, and to investigate how such interactions are rendered in other narrative genres.

Barry Lewis

**'Some Vernacular Expressions of the Cult of Saints in Wales'**

In this paper I will examine the interactions between hagiographical forms and wider medieval Welsh literature. There will be some consideration of the role of saints in non-hagiographical genres such as praise-poetry and secular narrative, but the main issues will be how a genre (or genres) of verse addressed to saints was constructed and how saints became a focus for genealogical writing. I will ask in particular how these emergent vernacular genres relate to Latin hagiography.

Alan Macquarrie

**'Creating a National Hagiography for Scotland: the Aberdeen Breviary (1510)'**

The *Aberdeen Breviary*, published in Edinburgh in 1510, is the most important collection of information we have about Scottish saints' lives, as well as having the distinction of being Scotland's first full-scale printed book. James IV issued a licence for the establishment of a printing press in Edinburgh to Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar, burgesses of Edinburgh, in 1507, specifying that they were to publish, among other things, breviaries and lives of saints. The task of giving Scotland a large-scale national hagiography, which had previously been approached haphazardly, was taken in hand by William Elphinstone, bishop of Aberdeen, at the king's prompting. The result is an eclectic collection of legends, drawn from a rich variety of sources. The ultimate success of the project, however, is very difficult to assess. Four more-or-less complete copies survive, but we do not know what the print run was, whether it was all taken up, or whether the printers found themselves with lots of remaindered stock. If the *Aberdeen Breviary* was less than totally successful, looking for the reasons for this we probably have to look no further than the shortcomings of the book itself. The text abounds in misprints and missing words, and is very difficult to use: its usefulness will have been vitiated by the many shortcomings of its text.

Diarmuid Ó Riain

**'Pushing the Boundaries of Cult: a Twelfth-Century Account of St Martin's Translation to Salzburg (BHL 5659)'**

"*Numquid duo habuit corpora?*" ("Surely he can't have had two bodies?") was the sceptical response of one later medieval reader to the *Translatio sancti Martini episcopi ad Iuvavum*, an unlikely account of the furtive translation of the body of St Martin from Tours to Salzburg Cathedral in the time of Emperor Otto I (†973). While

translations could often successfully lead to an expansion and reorientation of the cult of a saint, the Salzburg Church arguably attempted to push the boundaries of the cult of St. Martin too far with this legend, despite the anonymous author's attempts to bolster the credibility of his story. My paper will look at the evidence for the reception of the *Translatio* within and beyond Salzburg and for the promotion of Martin's cult in the later medieval cathedral. It will also argue that aspects of the *Translatio* narrative reflect the particular circumstances that prevailed in Salzburg in the second half of the twelfth century, a period marked by a long-running conflict between the archiepiscopal see and Emperor Friedrich I.

Pádraig Ó Riain

**'Irish Saints' Genealogies: Hagiographical Coordinates or Title Deeds'**

The purpose of this paper is to present further evidence to show that saints' genealogies tell us more about clerical lineages in pursuit of title than about the true origins of saints. It will also be argued that genealogical instability of the kind attested in the records of numerous saints with more than one genealogy points to the practice of much the same kind of itinerancy among hereditary ecclesiastical families as was characteristic of the *aos dána* or Irish learned families. Not all genealogies were liable to change over time but, even where this was the case, the saints themselves were often subject to replication.

Marie-Luise Theuerkauf

**'Baile Moling: Generic and Contextual Considerations'**

This paper will examine a poem of 47 stanzas transmitted in the Yellow Book of Lecan entitled *Baile Moling*. The poem is a prophecy fathered on Saint Moling and gives a list of battles fought by the Leinstermen against various other Irish dynasties. It concludes with a warning of what will happen to Ireland on Judgement Day. The focus of this paper will be on situating *Baile Moling* within the wider literature transmitted about Saint Moling on the one hand, but it will also be examined in light of other medieval Irish texts called *baile*. The manuscript context and the contemporary issues addressed in the poem will also be discussed.

Sarah Waidler

**'Demons, Ghosts and Angels: Independent Anecdotes of Irish Saints'**

This paper will explore various aspects of the corpus of short anecdotal texts related to Irish saints that occur in manuscripts 'independently', i.e. are not embedded within a longer text. Many of these anecdotes feature similar themes, such as concern for the soul after death, encounters with demons and angels, demonstrations of asceticism and explanations of customs on specific saints' feastdays. Focusing on a small number of examples of these short texts, this paper

will discuss their context and examine their position as texts outside a more formal hagiographical framework, such as a Life. It will also acknowledge that these texts are connected to both the production of literature centered on secular personages in Ireland and have a role in both the understanding of the past and the ordinary anxieties of the present.