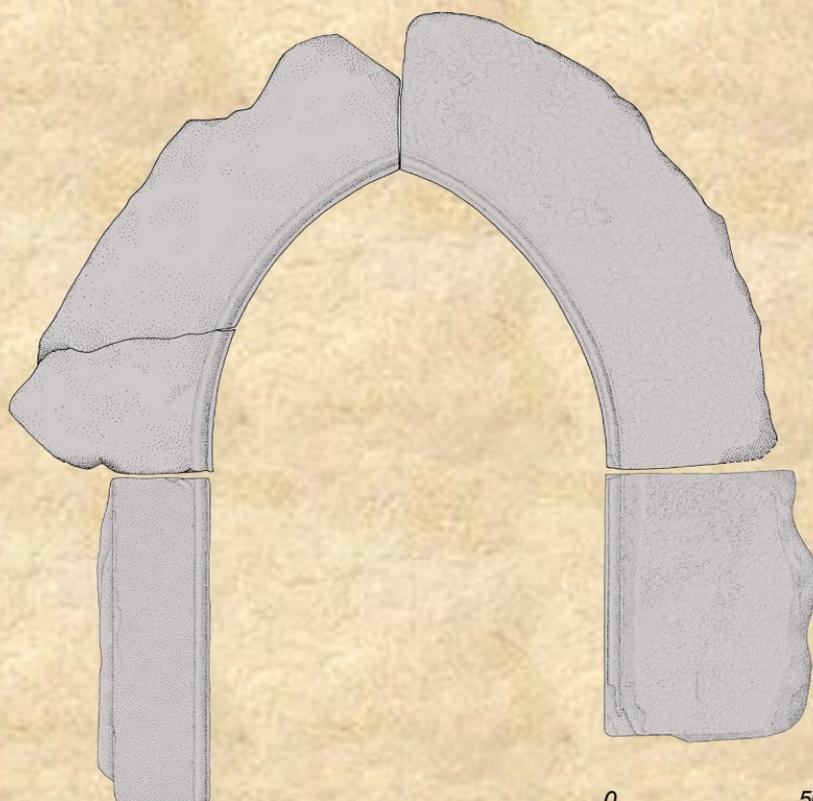




SYMPOSIUM 25-26 JANUARY 2020

A BREHON LAWYER'S SCHOOL  
IN  
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY IRELAND



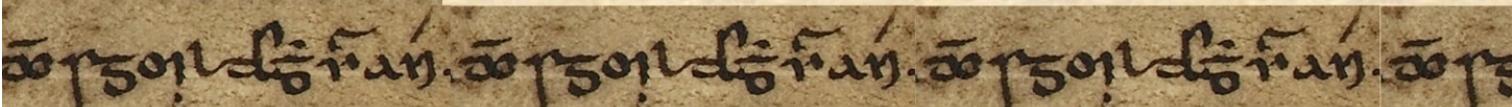
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ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY, LITERATURE

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/a-brehon-lawyers-school-in-sixteenth-century-ireland-tickets-84268107177>



Venue: Hardiman Building, Room G010,  
NUI Galway



## A Brehon Lawyer's School in Sixteenth-Century Ireland

This symposium will explore the environment, political context, works and legacies of the school of the brehon lawyer Domhnall Ó Dubhdábhoireann (O'Davoren) and his learned associates in later sixteenth-century Ireland. A panel of speakers from the disciplines of archaeology, celtic studies and history will address the archaeological evidence for school buildings and their landscape settings, the texts that constituted O'Davoren's book (1564-70), the political conditions and practices of brehon lawyers, and the fate of Gaelic legal family lands, properties and manuscripts after the schools.

The symposium commemorates O'Davoren's book, two parts of which (British Library Ms Egerton 88 and Royal Irish Academy Ms 23 Q 6) have been brought together for display at Galway City Museum, as artefacts of the exhibition *Keepers of the Gael: Culture and Society in Gaelic Ireland c. 1200-1600 AD*. The symposium includes a visit to view the manuscripts in the context of the exhibition theme.

## Programme Saturday 25 January (NUI Galway)

### 9.00 Welcome

*Professor Michael Clarke, Director, Centre of Antique, Medieval and Pre-Modern Studies (NUIG)*

9.15 O'Davoren's Book: An Introduction. Liam Breatnach (DIAS)

## SESSION 1 The Built Environment

*Chair Dr Michelle Comber (NUIG).*

9.30 'I am in the Park': Brehon Law Schools and their Landscape Setting in Late Medieval and Early Modern Ireland. Liz FitzPatrick (NUIG).

10.00 'I am Domhnall who is in the school-house in Ballyorley today': The Archaeology of the O'Doran Law School at Ballyorley, Co. Wexford. Cólín Ó Drisceoil (Kilkenny Archaeology).

10.30 Re-imagining the Medieval *Cathair* Residence of the O'Davorens of Cahermacnaghten. Liz FitzPatrick and Dan Tietzsch-Tyler.

11.00 Discussion

11.15 BREAK

## SESSION 2 Politics and Practice

*Chair Professor Nollaig Ó Muraíle (NUIG).*

11.45 Political Change and the Legal Profession in Connacht and Thomond in the Later Sixteenth Century. Bernadette Cunningham (RIA).

12.15 The Dilemma of Anglicization: The Brehon Families and the Tudor and Early Stuart Government. David Edwards (UCC) and Áine Sheehan.

12.45 Discussion

1.00 LUNCH

## **SESSION 3 The Manuscripts**

*Chair Professor Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha (NUIG)*

2.15 Reuniting O'Davoren's Book and the Work of Irish Script on Screen. Ruairí Ó hUiginn (DIAS).

2.45 Miscellanies, Digests and Glossaries. The Law Texts in the Book of Domhnall Ó Dubhdábhoireann. Liam Breatnach (DIAS).

3.15 Language and the Learned Disciplines in the 'Book of Domhnall Ó Dubhdábhoireann'. Deborah Hayden (NUI Maynooth).

3.45 Discussion

4.00 BREAK

## **SESSION 4 Keepers of the Gael (Galway City Museum)**

**5.00 Welcome**

*Eithne Verling, Director, Galway City Museum*

Visit to the exhibition Keepers of the Gael with Liz FitzPatrick, curator (NUIG). Commentary on the O'Davoren manuscripts exhibited in the museum and the adoption of Ms Egerton 88 by Clann Ó Lochlainn, with Liam Breatnach and Ruairí Ó hUiginn (DIAS), and Dr Katharine Lochnan and Edward O'Loghlen (Clann Ó Lochlainn).

7.00 SPEAKERS SYMPOSIUM SUPPER

## **Programme Sunday 26 January (NUIG)**

### **SESSION 5 After the Schools**

*Chair Dr Richard Clutterbuck*

9.30 Hardiman, O'Curry, and the O'Davoren Manuscripts. Ciaran McDonough (NUIG).

10.00 After Cromwell: O'Davoren Landholdings and Settlements in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century. Eve Campbell (AMS).

10.30 Discussion

10.45 BREAK

11.15 A Future for the Study of Gaelic Learned Arts and their Practitioners in the Past: Environment, Culture and Context: Panel Discussion with Audience.

12.00 Symposium closes

## ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

### The Built Environment

#### **'I am in the Park': Brehon Law Schools and their Landscape Setting in Late Medieval and Early Modern Ireland.** Liz FitzPatrick (NUIG).

The places where brehon lawyers practised their art and conducted schools can be recovered by different means. In O'Davoren's book (1564-70), scribes situate themselves for writing in a building, which they refer to as a school-house (*sgoilteagh*). In this paper it is argued that brehons had school-houses separate from their residences by c. 1500 and that their settlements were purposely located in borderlands. The evidence for these findings is discussed in relation to the proposed school-house of the O'Davoren lawyers at Kilbrack (Cahermacnaghten) in the lordship of Boireann and the Mac Egan school at Park, in the shifting boundary between the lordships of Uí Maine and Clann Conmhaigh, where much of O'Davoren's book was written.

*Liz FitzPatrick is a personal professor of historical archaeology in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies, NUI Galway. Her research concerns how historical identities and cultural practices are expressed in the landscapes and settlements of Gaelic kingdoms and lordships. She has published nine books and over fifty papers. Bringing cognate disciplines together to address complex themes is a particular interest.*

#### **'I am Domhnall who is in the school-house in Ballyorley today': The Archaeology of the O'Doran Law School at Ballyorley, Co. Wexford.** Cólín Ó Drisceoil (Kilkenny Archaeology).

A ruined stone building in Ballyorley Upper, near Boolavogue in north Co Wexford, has been proposed as the school-house of the O'Doran brehons, hereditary lawyers to the MacMurrough Kavanaghs. The building and its surrounding landscape have been the subject of research funded by the Heritage Council O'Doran Law School Project. In 2008 the structure was excavated to reveal its full plan, work that supports its attribution as the O'Doran school-house. Topographical, geophysical and aerial surveys of a suite of surrounding earthworks revealed that its setting comprises an unexpectedly rich archaeological landscape palimpsest, a boundary landscape within the MacMurrough mensal lands.

*Cólín Ó Drisceoil is managing director of Kilkenny Archaeology, archaeological consultants. He directed the archaeological excavations at Ballyorley. His research encompasses a broad range of topics that includes the search for Palaeolithic settlement in Ireland, late prehistoric linear earthworks, pottery production in medieval Ireland, and the archaeology of medieval towns and gardens. He has published over forty research papers and co-edited the recently published book *William Marshal and Ireland* (Four Courts Press).*

#### **Re-imagining the Medieval *Cathair* Residence of the O'Davorens of Cahermacnaghten.** Liz FitzPatrick and Dan Tietzsch-Tyler.

This paper presents the challenges and result of an archaeologist and artist collaborating to produce a reconstruction drawing of the *cathair* (stone enclosure) residence associated with the O'Davoren lawyers of Cahermacnaghten in the uplands of the Burren, Co. Clare. The findings of an archaeological survey of the upstanding remains of the *cathair* were used to inform a drawing that envisages the complete *cathair* and its buildings, c. 1500.

*Dan Tietzsch-Tyler is an artist who has been working in the area of archaeological reconstruction drawing since 1990, specialising in series of drawings that illustrate the progressive changes made to historic monuments through their history. He has completed commissions for Irish government heritage services, local councils, museum exhibitions, private heritage organizations, commercial archaeological companies, and individual archaeologists and historians.*

## Politics and Practice

### **Political Change and the Legal Profession in Connacht and Thomond in the later Sixteenth Century.**

Bernadette Cunningham (RIA).

This paper considers the job prospects of the 1560s class of law students associated with the O'Davoren law school. The political ambitions of the local elite, in the context of the establishment of an English-style provincial presidency in Connacht and Thomond in 1569, shaped the society in which these law students would hope to work as legal professionals. Even as they transcribed Irish legal texts under the supervision of Donall O'Davoren, these young students would have known that they would need to be 'legally ambidextrous', able to work within more than one legal system, if they were to have successful legal careers in late sixteenth-century Connacht.

*Dr Bernadette Cunningham is author of *Clanricard and Thomond, 1540–1640: provincial politics and society transformed* (Four Courts Press, 2012). She is editor of *Calendar of State Papers Ireland, Tudor period, 1566–1567*, and *Calendar of State Papers Ireland, Tudor period, 1568–1571* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 2009 & 2010). She is a graduate of NUI Galway and UCD.*

### **The Dilemma of Anglicization: The Brehon Families and the Tudor and Early Stuart Government.** David Edwards (UCC) and Áine Sheehan.

Hand in hand with the extension of greater English power in Ireland, from the reign of Henry VIII (1509-47), came ambitious plans to re-shape the country through its Anglicization: Tudor rule would mean making Ireland English. This paper will examine how the Brehon families and their law schools responded to this potentially very dangerous development. It will reveal how, through negotiation and adaptation, the Brehon families managed to survive the initial wave of English expansion, under the Tudors, before finally falling away, under the Early Stuart monarchy at the start of the seventeenth century.

*Dr David Edwards is Senior Lecturer in History at University College Cork. A former director of the Irish Manuscripts Commission, he has authored numerous books and articles on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ireland. He is also founding editor of the book series *Studies in Early Modern Irish History* published by Manchester University Press.*

*Dr Áine Sheehan is an independent scholar based in Cork. She completed a PhD thesis at University College Cork in 2016, 'Law, Poetry and Medicine: The Literate Professionals in Autonomous Gaelic Ireland, c.1250-c.1630', and is currently preparing a number of articles derived from it for publication.*

## The Manuscripts

### **Reuniting O'Davoren's Book and the Work of Irish Script on Screen.** Ruairí Ó hUiginn (DIAS).

Ireland has inherited an extraordinarily rich manuscript tradition. Most of the manuscripts written in Irish or Latin are found in Irish repositories, but many are housed in libraries in the UK or further afield. The Irish Script on Screen project was established in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies twenty years ago. Its object was to digitise all of these works with a view to making them available to scholars worldwide and also to aid in their preservation. To date, over 400 MSS have been digitised. Digital technology also presents opportunities to bring together MSS the contents of which have become dismembered and separated, or to rearrange the contents of MSS that have been bound in the wrong order. Some of the possibilities that digitisation presents will be discussed, with reference to the O'Davoren manuscripts.

*Ruairí Ó hUiginn is a Senior Professor in the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. He was formerly Professor of Modern Irish at Maynooth University, and has held lecturing posts in Belfast, Bonn, Galway and Uppsala. His published work covers many aspects of Irish language and literature.*

**Miscellanies, Digests and Glossaries. The Law Texts in the ‘Book of Domhnall Ó Dubhdábhoireann’.** Liam Breatnach (DIAS).

*Liam Breatnach (MRIA) is a Senior Professor in the School of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, and co-editor of the journal Ériu, published by the Royal Irish Academy. His research interests are in the areas of Old Irish language; Middle Irish and the historical development of Irish; Early Irish law texts; and poets, poetry and metrics.*

**Language and the Learned Disciplines in the ‘Book of Domhnall Ó Dubhdábhoireann’.** Deborah Hayden (Maynooth University).

Among the wide variety of literary and legal texts preserved in British Library MS Egerton 88 is a copy of the medieval Irish grammatical compilation known as *Auraicept na nÉces* (‘The Scholars’ Primer’). While primarily concerned with setting out the rudiments of language and prosody, the *Auraicept* also sheds important light on the nature and scope of medieval Irish legal learning in a broad sense. This paper considers the contents of the Egerton 88 copy of the *Auraicept*, its relationship to other texts that form part of the so-called ‘Book of Domhnall Ó Duibhdábhoireann’, and the evidence it provides for connections between that codex and other extant medieval Irish manuscripts.

*Dr Deborah Hayden is a lecturer in the Department of Early Irish at Maynooth University, and currently Principal Investigator of the project Medieval Irish Medicine in its North-western European Context: A Case Study of Two Unpublished Texts, funded by a Laureate Award from the Irish Research Council.*

## After the Schools

**Hardiman, O’Curry, and the O’Davoren Manuscripts.** Ciaran McDonough (NUI Galway).

This paper explores the afterlife of the O’Davoren manuscripts in the nineteenth century. After discussing the collection and circulation of Irish manuscripts during this period, I will focus on two key Irish antiquarians, James Hardiman and Eugene O’Curry, who owned and used copies of O’Davoren’s Book. I will explore Hardiman’s sale of one copy to the British Museum in 1832, and how Eugene O’Curry discovered a copy of O’Davoren’s Book in the Library of Trinity College Dublin, which then proved essential to the translation of the corpus of medieval Irish law in the mid-nineteenth century.

*Dr Ciaran McDonough is a postdoctoral researcher in History at NUI Galway, where she works on the project ‘Hardiman and Beyond: Galway Arts and Culture, 1820-2020’. She was awarded a PhD by the same institution in 2017 for a thesis on nineteenth-century Irish antiquarianism.*

**After Cromwell: O’Davoren Landholdings and Settlements in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Century.** Eve Campbell (Archaeological Management Solutions).

This paper examines the fates of the O’Davoren family in the aftermath of the Cromwellian Transplantation. The settlement, implemented in the wake of a brutal war, had deep implications for the shape of landholding in Ireland. Four members of the O’Davoren family were granted land in the barony of Burren under the settlement. The paper outlines evidence for both continuity and change within the O’Davoren holding in this tumultuous period. By investigating the new settlements within their landholding, and interventions at existing sites, the manner in which the family negotiated and adapted to changing circumstances will be explored.

*Dr Eve Campbell is an archaeologist with Archaeological Management Solutions. She obtained a PhD from NUI Galway in 2012 for a study of the Cromwellian Transplantations. She has since worked on multiple projects including the Louth Field Names Project, the Archaeology of 1916, and as a field director at the Achill Field School.*