
Since the 1970s Patrick Sims-Williams has published around a dozen articles discussing the interrelationships between the medieval literatures of Wales and Ireland. His detailed and incisive studies have become the fundamental reading on the subject. This new volume helpfully brings them together between two covers, thus allowing the reader to consult them in a more convenient fashion than hitherto. More importantly, it provides an opportunity to consider in its entirety the case which Professor Sims-Williams has been building for more than three decades. Moreover, the volume contains a great deal which is new. Each study has been thoroughly revised and extended, the result being, as Sims-Williams assures us (p. xi), a book more than 90,000 words longer than the sum of the earlier articles which it supersedes.

Previous authors on this subject went into great detail regarding the possible channels by which Irish cultural influence could have reached Wales (e.g. O’Rahilly 1924, Slover 1926, 1927). Sims-Williams flatly refuses to do this in any but the most summary fashion, referring the reader instead to the works of these scholars (pp. 17–18). One can sympathize with his impatience here: it would be quite possible to fill a book of the same length as this one with all the historical and archaeological evidence for travel across the Irish Sea in the Middle Ages, without proving that any of that travel resulted in any Irish influence affecting medieval Welsh literature. Instead Sims-Williams summarizes his methodology as follows: ‘I shall be concerned only with the evidence for Irish vernacular literary influence actually having occurred, taking it as already established that “there were countless opportunities for the exchange of literary material”. The issue is whether these “opportunities” were actually taken …’ (p. 17) (the words which he is quoting are those of C. H. Slover). In other words, the starting point for examining the question must be concrete textual evidence for Irish influence on Welsh literature, rather than the theoretical contexts in which such influence might have occurred. In accordance with this strict principle, Sims-Williams focuses on Irish words — in fact mainly personal and place-names — which have been claimed, rightly or wrongly, to be found in Middle Welsh texts, and to a lesser degree on motifs, such as the ‘watchman device’ and the ‘Slavic antithesis’, which have been identified as occurring in both literatures. The quality of any analysis on these lines depends on the degree of scholarly rigour applied at the two crucial stages of the investigation. In the first place, Irish elements within Welsh texts must be correctly identified, and their Irishness established beyond reasonable doubt;
and secondly, these elements must be soberly evaluated in order to determine the extent of the debt to Irish literature which they imply and the weight which they carry within medieval Welsh written culture as a whole. Throughout the book it is clear that Sims-Williams has thought deeply about these two aspects of the problem, and in both cases the result may be described as a measured scepticism.

The motifs, which form the subject of chapters 4 and 5, are the weakest and most dubious material on which to base an analysis of literary influences, and so they may be dealt with first here. The author will not, I suspect, object to the adjectives ‘weak’ and ‘dubious’. Though his own criticism of the motif-led approach is characteristically more cautious, these two chapters perform a delicately phrased but ultimately damning demolition job. Sims-Williams clearly demonstrates just how difficult, if not impossible, it is to prove that a motif which occurs in two different literary texts, or in two different literatures, has been borrowed from one into the other. He also demonstrates, by the simple but devastating technique of citing parallels from many related and unrelated languages, how misleading it can be to treat any parallel between two texts or two literatures on their own, without considering the possibility that it might occur more widely. This should serve as a warning against juxtaposing Welsh and Irish texts simply on the grounds that they are both ‘Celtic’: there might easily be parallels, equally good if not better ones, between either text and some work in a third, non-Celtic or indeed non-Indo-European language, if only we thought to look for them there. It is not merely the difficulty of tracing textual links between those works which we happen to possess that bedevils this question; there is also the matter of the works which we do not possess. Neither the extant remains of Welsh literature, nor those of Irish, are likely to represent all the written narrative, let alone oral storytelling, which was produced in either country. We see only the tip of the iceberg; the greater part is submerged and invisible. That makes any attempt to write a history of narrative motifs extraordinarily precarious. Such a negative conclusion may be felt to be a poor reward for the reader who has worked through two such densely argued chapters, but these points needed to be made, and the presentation of so many parallels was necessary in order to expose the true fragility of the idea that it is possible to trace the movements of such vague motifs as the ‘watchman device’. Moreover the reader’s patience is rewarded by the conclusion to chapter 5 (pp. 130–3), which offers an inspired insight into the nature of what used to be called ‘Celtic magic’ before we became too embarrassed to use the phrase. This is without doubt one of the highlights of the book.

It is safer to abandon motifs and concentrate instead on proper names, for sequences of phonemes are more distinctive than narrative motifs and less likely to arise by polygenesis. Names, in essence, are the focus of the remainder of the book, chapters 2–3 and 6–13. Both early Welsh poetry (chapter 2) and the poetry of the later Middle Ages (chapter 12 and part of chapter 11) contain a modest number of Irish personal names (though not the same ones in each case), and both raise the question to what extent the Irish narrative background associated with these names was known to the poets and their
audience. This is in fact just one small part of a recurring problem within medieval Welsh poetry. The poets indulge in name-dropping on a huge scale, above all in drawing heroic comparisons. Because of the compressed, allusive, non-narrative technique of exposition, it is rarely possible to judge how much of these characters’ history or story was known to or was considered relevant by poet and audience. This applies just as much to the poets’ name-checking of characters from international Arthurian romance, biblical and classical history and indeed Welsh native tradition. The strong tendency not to provide these names with any narrative explanation can be read in two ways: either the audience was expected to be thoroughly familiar with their stories already, and thus able to appreciate their relevance, or else the names were a rather superficial adornment whose purpose — associating the patron with glorious figures from the past and the poet with esoteric knowledge — did not require the audience actually to be able to link every name with a known story. (This problem has been a familiar one ever since scholars began thinking about the learning of the medieval Welsh poets; see Lloyd 1977). Sims-Williams, it seems, tends toward the latter suggestion. One telling indication is that Lewys Glyn Cothi appears to treat Deirdre, the heroine of one of the most important Irish tales, Longes Mac nUislenn, as a man’s name. This hardly inspires confidence in the depth of his familiarity with Irish literature, though there is always the theoretical possibility that the name had become attached to a different story in Wales, one which does not now survive.

Much the same questions are raised by chapter 6, on the tale of Culhwch ac Olwen. As is well known, this tale is partly set in Ireland. In addition, the massive catalogue of heroes at Arthur’s court includes the names of a handful of Irish characters. In Sims-Williams’s view, all of this amounts to no more than that the author of Culhwch ac Olwen had some knowledge of Irish geography and some access to sources, probably written, which contained the names of Irish characters. There is no need to credit the unknown author of the tale with more than a superficial acquaintance with Irish sources. More telling still is what function this Irish material is actually performing in the text: ‘Insofar as it is not a barely euhemerized version of the overseas Otherworld of Preiddeu Annwn, the Ireland ruled by Odgar mab Aed is the stereotyped island of marvels, saints and savages that gripped the eleventh and twelfth-century European imagination’ (p. 187). In other words, this Welsh author was capable of thinking about the neighbouring island in a manner similar to, if not indeed influenced by, the dominant Anglo-Norman culture into which both Ireland and Wales were being drawn in the twelfth century. Talk of Irish influence scarcely applies here.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the so-called ‘Celtic Otherworld’. It broadens the scope of the book considerably, since it raises issues of common Celtic inheritance as well as of influence across the Irish Sea. It could be described as an exercise in demonstrating a fundamental principle which is often ignored in popular presentations of the ‘Celtic’. For us to be satisfied that an Otherworld qualifies as ‘Celtic’, we must logically have evidence for it within the cultural understandings of more than one people who speak a Celtic language;
otherwise, it would simply be a Welsh Otherworld or an Irish Otherworld. Moreover, it must clearly be shown to be a common inheritance from the Celtic past rather than an idea which arose in one Celtic-speaking culture and was simply borrowed into another. Through a forensic analysis of the precise vocabulary used in Irish and Welsh to describe what is situated beyond the visible world, Sims-Williams comes to the conclusion that the two cultures had very different visions of the ‘Otherworld’, with precious little overlap between them. Indeed, though the Welsh term *Annwfn* does appear to have denoted an Otherworld rather similar to the concept beloved of modern writing about the Celts, the same may well not be true of the various Irish terms which, the author convincingly argues, presuppose a multitude of ‘otherworlds’ situated in mounds and on islands, rather than a single realm. If common Celticity is hard to demonstrate here, the idea that the Irish conception affected the Welsh is equally difficult to prove. True, the Irish term *síd(e)*, referring to a hill reputed to house otherworld beings, did find its way into Welsh in the form *Kaer Sidi*. There are, however, few signs that it had any real life beyond the deliberately esoteric poems attributed to Taliesin, notwithstanding a thin scattering of later references which betray a direct dependence on the Taliesin material. In any case, an Irish Otherworld which is merely mentioned in Welsh texts does not qualify as ‘Celtic’. Once again, the balance of this chapter is a negative one. But at least we do arrive at a significantly more accurate understanding of the nature of imagined otherworlds in the two countries, and this should now be the starting point for any future research. It is to be hoped that anyone who wishes to continue to use the term ‘Celtic Otherworld’ will at the very least address the points raised by Sims-Williams before doing so.

Chapters 7–10 revolve around the tale of *Branwen*, and with these we at last reach more fertile ground for identifying Irish influences on a medieval Welsh text. These chapters, and especially 9 and 10, are the richest and most satisfying in the book, not least because they contain significant fresh evidence and arguments. Sims-Williams makes a strong case for the influence of two major Irish churches upon the materials which were used by the anonymous author of *Branwen*: Devenish in Co. Fermanagh and Ferns in Co. Wexford. According to his reconstruction materials from both Devenish and Ferns reached the author of *Branwen* in Wales. It is already well established that there was a connection between Ferns and St Davids, seen, for instance, in the hagiography of their respective patrons, SS. Máedóc and David. There also existed a friendly relationship, indeed an alliance, between Devenish and Ferns, which could have allowed material from Devenish to reach Wales via Ferns. Sims-Williams argues, convincingly to my mind, that the tale of Llasar and the cauldron of rebirth in *Branwen* is an imaginative combination of story elements connected with Devenish and its patron saint Lasrianus or Molaisse. Devenish-Ferns-St Davids thus represents a credible route by which the story of Llasar and the cauldron might have reached a Welsh author. That is not the sum of the case, however, for Sims-Williams also detects other materials underlying *Branwen* which are connected with Leinster itself: such are the traditions found in the lengthy eleventh-century Leinster tale *Bórama*. He posits a source similar to,
but not identical with, the extant Bòrama, from which could have come the name Brân, the story of the burning of the iron house (though the house in the extant Bòrama is not made of iron), the episode of the men hidden in bags, and the role of the cauldron in the story. The cumulative weight of these similarities between the Bòrama and Branwen is impressive. It remains to link the Bòrama to Ferns. In the form that has come down to us (in the Book of Leinster), the Bòrama looks like a product of northern Leinster, since it downplays the role of the south Leinster dynasty of Úi Chennselaig and of St Máedóc of Ferns, the patron of the Úi Chennselaig. Nevertheless, Sims-Williams presents a complex, subtle and very plausible case for the former existence of a Ferns version of the Bòrama which could have been read by the author of Branwen (pp. 281–4).

All this points to the importance of ecclesiastical ties in the transmission of Irish traditions to Wales – which in turn suggests that the medium of transmission may well have been Latin rather than the vernacular. The influence of Hiberno-Latin texts on Welsh literature is not, as Sims-Williams makes clear, the subject of his book (pp. 1, 20–4). It is nevertheless striking to note how often he raises the possibility that Irish influences reached Welsh through Latin, not the vernacular. This is suggested for Kaer Sidi (pp. 69–70), the names in Culhwch ac Olwen (pp. 185–6) and even the Bòrama-related materials which seem to have contributed to Branwen (p. 281). Ecclesiastical connections between Ireland and Wales are a fertile field for research, and there remains plenty more to be said regarding, for instance, cross-fertilization within the hagiography of the two countries.

This is a lengthy and densely written volume. True to their origins as separate publications, most of its chapters may be read on their own if desired. Nevertheless it is well worth the effort to read the whole volume consecutively. Not only does the book discuss many questions in great detail; it also raises important and troubling general concerns which should be of relevance to all who regard themselves as working within the field of Celtic Studies. The conclusion at which this volume arrives is, ‘Irish influence never dominated Welsh literature, it seems, but neither was it negligible’ (p. 339). Yet with the solitary exception of the tale of Branwen it is difficult to find anything in this volume which might lead one to regard that influence as anything more than limited and superficial. How, then, do we justify studying the medieval literatures of Wales and Ireland together? There are traditionally three reasons for students of early Welsh literature to look across the Irish Sea, just as there are too for Irish scholars to return the compliment. They are inheritance, influence and parallels. At the moment, the search for a common Celtic, let alone Indo-European, inheritance within the early literatures of Ireland and Wales has rather fallen out of fashion, for reasons which are admirably well explained in the introduction to this volume (pp. 4–16). Notwithstanding the author’s modesty (‘no doubt more remains to be discovered’, p. 339), the majority of readers may well feel that the subject of influence is looking fairly exhausted too. That leaves only parallels to be pursued; indeed, Sims-Williams remarks that ‘medieval Irish literature is more often a rich and indispensable quarry
for analogues than for sources’ (p. 334). The act of setting literary texts to talk to one another, to illuminate each other, does indeed enrich our ways of reading. But is there any reason why we should limit ourselves to comparing early Welsh literature with early Irish? Indeed, are there any logical limits to such comparisons at all? Why should we not compare the Four Branches with Homer, or for that matter with contemporary South American fiction? As chapters 4 and 5 of this volume hint, the possibilities are endless. Not, of course, that Professor Sims-Williams advocates a scholarly free-for-all: he is simply warning us against perceiving Irish influence, or indeed a common Celtic inheritance, when other explanations may be available.

What is not at all clear after reading this book is the future of the essentially comparative discipline of Celtic Studies. There was, for all the toing and froing across the medieval Irish Sea, a sharp cultural divide between Wales and Ireland, two quite divergent countries which spoke mutually incomprehensible languages and had very different historical experiences. It is becoming less and less clear how the study of these two cultures, let alone those of the other Celtic-speaking regions, can be accommodated within a single academic discipline. That may not at first sight bother those who focus mainly or exclusively on Ireland or Wales, but it has uncomfortable implications even for them. Celtic Studies, even at its most inclusive, has always struggled for critical mass within the university system. This is only going to get worse in an era of increasingly tight budgets and political demands for ‘relevance’ and ‘impact’. Outside of the Celtic countries, and even within them, the subject is increasingly under pressure. It needs to attract students worldwide, and as such it needs to appeal as widely as possible. What will be the consequences if, as seems to be happening, the scholarly use of the term ‘Celtic’ retreats ever more exclusively to the domain of historical linguistics? No one has done more than Patrick Sims-Williams to inject a healthy dose of scholarly rigour into discussion of the ‘Celtic’. Yet an academic discipline cannot survive forever on self-deconstruction. It must create new narratives as well as destroying older ones. Should Celtic Studies consume itself, will it be possible for Irish or Welsh to retain a niche in the university system, especially beyond the borders of Ireland and Wales? This is a fine book, to be sure, and a model of rigorous scholarship on a subject which is badly in need of some rigour. Nevertheless, it leaves the reader who cares about the future of Celtic Studies asking some uncomfortable questions.

References
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This new edition by Charlene Eska of the main Old Irish law-tract on marriage and divorce constitutes volume 5 in the series titled ‘Medieval law and its practice’. This hugely important law-tract was first edited and translated into English in volume 2 of The Ancient Laws of Ireland (1869), pp. 342-408. A German-language edition and translation by Rudolf Thurneysen appeared in Studies in Early Irish Law (1936), 1-80. All the materials on which to base a new critical edition — text, fragments, glosses, commentaries and citations — were published in D. A. Binchy’s six-volume Corpus Iuris Hibernici (1978) (hereafter CIH). There is one continuous copy of Cáin Lánamna extant, in TCD ms 1316 (H 2. 15A), printed at CIH 502.7-519.35; fragments with Old Irish glosses are found in TCD ms 1337 (H 3. 18), printed at CIH 903.19-36; and more extensive fragments with glosses and commentary are found in TCD ms 1336 (H 3. 17), printed at CIH 1804.12-1812.32 and 1947.22-1949.22. An English translation of the tract by Donnchadh Ó Corráin, based on Thurneysen’s edition, appeared in volume iv of The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing (2002), 22-6. Ó Corráin, Fergus Kelly, Thomas Charles-Edwards, Bart Jaski, Liam Breathnach and others have discussed aspects of Cáin Lánamna and other texts concerning marriage, divorce and women’s roles in early medieval Irish society in a variety of publications. And yet, notwithstanding all the work done, the production of a critical edition to modern standards of this difficult law-tract would still have to be regarded as a very daunting task.

The work under review evidences wide reading of primary and secondary sources, in the chapters titled ‘The structure of early Irish society’ (pp. 3-30) and ‘The law of marriage in medieval Wales and Anglo-Saxon England’ (pp. 30-34), and in the textual notes passim. A notable strength of the work is Dr Eska’s acquaintance with Celtic, Anglo-Saxon and Roman law-codes. The bibliography (pp. 355-69) is extensive, and no doubt readers will find it valuable. The editor took the decision to print and translate not just the glosses and commentary on the one continuous copy of Cáin Lánamna but also all passages of commentary on the text found in other legal manuscripts. This chimes with the burgeoning interest in the aims of the later commentators and their role in the transmission of legal ideas.

The edition, translation and annotation of the text, glosses and commentaries constitute the greater part (pp. 78-353) of the book. A glossary, for the canonical text only, is found on pp. 343-53. Regrettably, there are significant weaknesses in all aspects of the edition. Regarding the editorial method, Dr Eska states: ‘The canonical tract has been normalized to the language of the Old Irish glosses, particularly the main hand of the Würzburg glosses … and the Milan glosses … When in doubt, I have followed the main hand of the Würzburg glosses because that collection more closely approximates the majority of the orthographic features found in A than the
other collections of Old Irish glosses’ (‘Editorial Method’, at p. 63. ‘A’ stands for TCD ms 1316 which contains the only extant complete copy of Cáin Lánamna). Leaving aside the fact that the language of the Milan glosses (early ninth century) evidences various developments which were certainly not the norm in the main-hand Würzburg glosses (c. 750), there is the further issue that Eska posits a date of composition for Cáin Lánamna of c. 700 (p. 62). That being so, one may ask why she feels normalization to a date c. 750 is justified, a question for which an adequate answer is not given.

Dr Eska argues for a composition-date of c. 700 on the basis of two ‘archaisms’, accusative singular bein ‘woman’ and dative plural ödib ‘from them’ (p. 62). However these two forms alone do not constitute a strong argument for a date as early as 700 and, in any case, the form ödib occurs not in the text itself but in a gloss, from the stratum of glosses on this and other texts in the Senchas Már collection (to which Cáin Lánamna belongs) which have been dated on linguistic and other grounds by Liam Breathnach to the mid-eighth century or shortly thereafter (cf. his Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici (2005), 338-45). It is safe to assume that Cáin Lánamna was composed before the Senchas Már was compiled; the question is, how much earlier? Dr Eska’s discussion of the ‘Date of the text’ (pp. 61-2) which is confined to linguistic matters is far too brief to provide an answer.

The editorial policy to normalize the orthography of the text to that of the main hand of the Würzburg glosses is applied erratically (see below). In addition, it has tended to obscure the fact that the manuscripts do actually contain a number of forms which, taken together, are suggestive of a date of composition closer to 700 than to 750. In attempting to establish the date of composition, due consideration should be given not only to the forms in the manuscript containing the complete text (TCD ms 1316) but also to those in the manuscripts containing only fragments (TCD mss 1336 and 1337) and to the citations in O’Davoren’s Glossary (British Library ms Egerton 88). This has not been done: while variant readings are listed throughout the edition (though they are hard to distinguish from the other forms of annotation), the cumulative evidence they present for an early date of composition has not been tested. Furthermore, readings that may represent early forms are sometimes replaced by later forms in the normalized text.

The treatment of the manuscript readings for three forms in § 5 of the text provides an example of this. For nominative singular cuma (vn. of con- ben), spelled thus in the continuous copy in TCD ms 1316 (at CIH 505.36), the reading in the corresponding fragment in TCD ms 1337 (= CIH 903.22) is curr, possibly for earlier cumbe. In the normalized text, Eska opts for an in-between form, cumae. For the phrase tinol cue (‘collection of a coshering’), spelled thus in TCD ms 1316 (= CIH 506.5), the reading in the corresponding fragment in TCD ms 1337 (= CIH 903.23) is Tinol cue. As Binchy pointed out in his article, ‘Aimsir Chue’, the second noun here is a feminine ā-stem, and genitive singular cu is found only in later Old Irish. Although Eska cites Binchy’s article, she adopts genitive singular cu in the normalized text. Both TCD ms 1316 (= CIH 506.17) and the corresponding fragment in TCD ms
1336 (= CIH 1805.17) have nominative singular *comul* (in the phrase *comul comair* ‘an agreement of joint ploughing’), vn. of *con-lá*, rather than later form *comal*. TCD ms 1316 (= CIH 506.27) has a second instance of nominative singular *comul* in the phrase *comul comsa* ‘an agreement of joint husbandry’ (the corresponding reading is lacking in both TCD mss 1336 and 1337). In the normalized text Eska opts for nominative singular *comal* in both phrases.

The normalization applied to the canonical text is far from consistent. Take the treatment of final vowels in nouns, for instance. In § 3 the genitive singular of the *u*-stems *troscud* and *élúd* appear in the one phrase as *troisc-the* and *élúda* (co imchim troiscthe nó élúda dligid). The genitive singular of the feminine *t*-stem *taithigid* is given as *tathigtheo* in § 4 (*fer tathigtheo*) and § 34 (*Lánamnas fir thathigtheo*), against all the manuscript readings, which concur in showing the expected ending in -*e*. The genitive singular of the feminine *ā*-stem *compert* appears as *compertae* in § 4 but as *comperte* in § 8; the manuscript readings are *comperta* and *coimperta*. The accusative singular of the feminine *ū*-stem *coibne* ‘kin’ and accompanying adjective *téchtai* appears as *fri coibne téchtai* rather than *fri coibni téchtai* in § 5; the manuscript reading is *fri coibne techta*. In addition, the noun is listed as masculine in the Glossary and *coibni* is identified there as accusative plural. The nominative singular of *imthogu* ‘mutual consent’ appears as *imthoga* in §§ 10 and 28, but as *imthogu* in § 34; the manuscript readings are *imtoga*, *imtocad* and *imtucu* respectively. Thurneysen, who suggested emendations in his edition when he felt this was necessary for sense but who did not otherwise normalize, advised ‘*imthogu*’ for the second of these three readings, a spelling that should have been applied in all three cases in the normalized text. Similar inconsistency is found in the treatment of final syllables. For instance, the nominative plural of the neuter *o*-stem *folad* appears correctly as *folad* in §§ 10 and 13, but in the later form *folaid* in § 28, even though Dr Eska cites Binchy’s discussion of the word in her footnotes to § 10. The manuscript reading in all three cases is *folaid*. Forms of the definite article which are not consistent with early Old Irish are allowed to stand, e.g. *dligud na mná* § 15; *in aile* (accusative singular masculine article) § 20; *cuit in ēir* § 34, etc.

The usual editorial conventions regarding the use of a hyphen (or raised dot) in verbal forms are only partially observed. Dr Eska tends to use a hyphen after the proclitic preverb of independent compound verbs in the present tense, and after perfective *ro* with simple verbs, but generally omits it in more complex cases. Thus, for instance, the normalized text in § 1 has ‘*Díles . . . cía rochaithea, cía tormala*’ (read *Díles . . . cíaro-chaithea, cía-tormala . . .*), ‘Free from liability . . . is whatever each may have used, may have consumed’. The use of hyphens in nouns is also erratic, e.g. *mac-slabrae* in § 11, but *mmaccaillig* in § 37. As the use of the *punctum delens* over *f* and *s* to indicate ‘lenition’ dates from the ninth century, one may quibble with its employment in a text as early as Cáin Lánamna. That said, its employment in the normalized text is inconsistent. For instance, it is not shown after the dative singular in the phrase *i ndligud flatha* in § 1, nor after the 3 singular
neuter possessive pronoun in the phrase Ní... cona fuillem in § 18, nor after the preposition de in the phrase do somaini in § 38.

In her translation of the canonical text, Eska strives to convey the meaning clearly, but her efforts are often marred by loose paraphrasing and by the introduction of additional words and phrases, sometimes within square brackets, sometimes not. Her translation of the following sentence from § 10 exemplifies some of these weaknesses:

Trian cach thoraid do thir acht lámthorad, trian do chethrai bes a bunadas ónd indud, trian do aurgnam.

‘One-third of all produce [goes] to [the owner of the] land except handiwork, one-third of the cattle born during the marriage [goes] to [the owner of the] original stock from which they were born, one-third to [whomever did the] labour.’

Here, and passim, the translation is heavily indebted to the intentionally non-literal one produced by Donnchadh Ó Corráin for the general reader of The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, though this fact is not highlighted and indeed the wording is often changed, usually not for the better. A more literal translation of the above sentence might read:

‘A third of all profit to [the owner of] the land, a third to [the owner of] the [original] livestock of what is sprung from the [livestock’s] young, a third to [the doer of] the labour.’

In the Glossary, there are many instances of carelessness in translating lemmata, e.g. ‘amsae f. hired military service, mercenary’ (an individual ‘mercenary’ is amus); ‘aurgnamaid m. workers or laborers involved in furnishing produce’ (aurgnamaid is singular); ‘somaine f. accept payment; dative singular somaini’. This last entry derives from a sentence in § 38 ‘Ní techta nechtar n-áe airtechta do somainí ná domaíni’, which is translated as ‘Neither of them has the right to accept payments or make payments’ (where the plurals forms in the English are at odds with the dative singular forms domaíni and somaini). Various words are listed under wrong lemmata. For instance, the dative plural of cobfodail is listed under comdál. The independent 3 sing. pres. ind. of do-aisic (taisic) is listed in the Glossary under taisccc where it is identified as a verbal noun, while it is translated as ‘it is returned’ in § 36. The dative singular of dia ‘day’ is listed under dead ‘end’, and is mistranslated thus in § 20. The 3 plur. pres. ind. of do-athboing is listed under do-boing. The genitive singular of treb is listed under the lemma treibe.

Probably the greatest weakness in this edition is its failure to take full cognizance of the discussion of aspects of the text by various authorities, most especially Thurneysen. A couple of examples may suffice to illustrate this point. The opening sentence of § 2 of the edition reads: ‘Cair: cis lir lánamnai do-chuisin la Féniu? Ní anse: a ocht. Cateat?’. The single manuscript reading underlying the final interrogative here is actually ‘CADIAT’; this occurs only in a citation of § 2 found in a legal digest (cf.
It is not found in the complete text, and it is absent from Thurneysen’s edition and from Ó Corráin’s translation. The further consideration that ‘CADIAI’ shows the 3 plur. independent pronoun which developed during the ninth century out of the original verbal ending -e(a)t should also have told against the incorporation of this form into the edition. In § 11 the phrase ‘mac-slabrae [sic] goire’ is left untranslated, and a long accompanying note shows the editor under the misapprehension that goire is the genitive of gor. Unfortunately she seems unaware of Thomas Charles-Edwards’s discussion of the phrase and this passage from Cúan Lánamna in pp. 109-10 of his Early Christian Ireland (Cambridge, 2000). In § 38 (= § 36 of Thurneysen’s edition) she renders the manuscript reading ‘NECH CONDARUICE AR GNAE’ (cf. CIH 519.24-5) as ‘Nech conda-ricc ar gnáe’, translating this as ‘Anyone who brings them together for sport’, and listing the verb in her glossary under con-ricc. She might have gleaned from Thurneysen’s retention of the manuscript spelling and his translation of the phrase as ‘der, der sie zum Spass zusammengebracht hat’ that the form in question is 3 sing. perf. of con-beir.

Dr Eska presents and translates not just the citations and glosses associated with Cúan Lánamna, but also six lengthy passages of commentary (see ‘Appendices’, pp. 303-341). These passages contain valuable detail on various types of skilled work (spinning, weaving and dyeing are particularly well-represented), and on divisions of labour, and profits, between men and women. It is striking that both text and commentary devote significantly more space to women’s work than to men’s, pointing up the importance of women’s work to the household economy and the concern with ownership of its products.

Cúan Lánamna is a key text for the social history of medieval Ireland, and throughout this volume one finds a wealth of information, on marriage, social organisation, comparative legal analysis, and many related matters. Dr Eska has enlarged on some of these in more recent publications, and one may hope for further publications from her fruitful engagement with law tracts and legal history. At the same time, an English-language edition of Cúan Lánamna based on a thorough and sure-footed linguistic analysis, one that would incorporate all the explicit and implicit decisions of Thurneysen’s German edition of 1936 and the insights of more recent scholars, remains a desideratum.

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This beautifully produced volume is the culmination of many years’ research by Dr Roberts on the legal triads of Medieval Wales, both Welsh and Latin. She notes in her Introduction that while triads in general occur in the literature of many cultures, rarely do they occur in such great numbers as in the
Celtic literatures, being attested from Welsh, Breton, Cornish, Scottish Gaelic and Irish. She points out that it is difficult to turn to any genre of medieval Welsh literature without coming across a triad: they are scattered throughout the prose tales, as well as in medieval Welsh poetry, and are also found in the laws, bardic grammars and medical texts. The best-known medieval collection of Welsh triads is *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: the Triads of the Island of Britain*, of which a third edition (with substantial revisions) was published by Rachel Bromwich in 2006.

The aim of Dr Roberts is to present, as far as possible, all the legal triads found in the Welsh law manuscripts. There are two main types of triads in the law-texts: triads found on their own as part of a law tractate, and those in the large triad collections. Her main focus is on the triads of the collections, and hence she provides a full edition of these from pp. 40 to 245, with notes from pp. 246 to 329. The rest of the book is taken up with additional triads, triads from the Latin law-texts, conspectuses showing the order in which the triads occur in the manuscripts, a complete list of the triads in the edition, as well as a glossary, bibliography and indexes.

In the Introduction, she provides a useful account of the structure of the Triad genre (pp. 7–11). The simplest type consists only of a ‘heading’ and three ‘limbs’. The example she gives is *Teir gormes doeth ynt: meddawt a dryc anyan a godineb* ‘These are the three oppressors of the wise: drunkenness, and bad temper and adultery’ (X41), which is also of interest as it is gnomic rather than strictly legal in content. In the next type of triad there is an extension following the limbs: *Tri phryf a dyly brenhin ev gwerth pa le bynnac y llader: llostlydan, a bele6 a charlwng: canys ohonunt wy y dlyyr wneuthur amarwye6 y dillad y brenhin* ‘Three animals to whose value the king is entitled wherever they are killed: a beaver, and a sable, and a stoat; because from them the borders of the king’s clothes should be made’ (X48). In the third type, each limb is given an extension: *Tri gwerth kyfureith beichyogi gwreic: gwaed kyn delwad, wyth a deugein a dal o chollir drwy greulonder. Eil yw kyn dyuod eneid yndaw, trayan yr alanas a dal. Y trydyd yw gwedy el eneid yndaw, galanas gwbyl a delir amdanaw o chollir trwy grevlonder* ‘Three legal values of a woman’s foetus: blood before formation, it is worth forty-eight [pence] if it is lost through cruelty. The second is before life enters it, a third of the galanas is paid for it. The third is after life enters it, its full galanas ought to be paid if it is lost through cruelty’ (X39). Also worthy of note are the further developments of the basic triad form, such as the triad within a triad (p. 88, Mk99) and the long and complex *Tri phetwar* ‘three fours’ (p. 126, Q69).

Dr Roberts notes (p. 10) that Triads are mnemonic, and that certain devices were used to make the process of memorizing large numbers of triads even simpler. Alliteration was sometimes employed, as was the device of repetition in each limb, e.g. *Tri ofer llaeth ysydd: llaeth caseg, a llaeth gast, a llaeth cath* ‘There are three useless milks: the milk of a mare, and the milk of a bitch, and the milk of a cat’ (X27). Another feature is the occurrence of contrasting pairs of triads, which she suggests may indicate an oral source. It is worth noting that the Old Irish collection of triads entitled *Trecheng Breth Féne* ‘a triad of
judgements of the Irish’ (edited by Kuno Myer as vol. 13 of the Todd Lecture Series (Dublin 1906) ) has examples of all these mnemonic devices, though the use of alliteration is fairly uncommon. This Irish collection is mainly gnomic in content, but contains a substantial legal section (nos. 149–86). She also discusses (p. 11) the use of a climax or anti-climax in the third limb of the Triad. As this device is commonly associated with humour, she suggests that ‘perhaps humour would not have been deemed appropriate in a learning environment or within the serious confines of law’. However, she does manage to procure a nice example from her corpus: Tri pheth ni thelir kyn coller yn ranty; kyllell, a chledyf, a llawdyr ‘Three things which are not paid for if they are lost in a house where someone is lodged; a knife, and a sword, and trousers’ (X69).

In a short review it would obviously be impossible to discuss the content of this massive collection in any depth. I should however draw attention to the grace and originality of many of the triads edited, such as Tri chyuanhed gylat: meibon bychein a chvn a cheilogeu ‘the three [signs of] inhabitation of a country: young children, and dogs, and cocks’ (p. 90, U38) and Tri cho6ylla6c llys yssyd: ker6yn ved a braga6t a chathyl kyn y dangos y’r bre nhin ‘Three cowled ones in a court: a barrel of mead, and one of bragget, and a song before it is shown to the king’ (p. 148, Q114).

In conclusion, I warmly commend Dr Roberts and her publishers on this attractive and useful book.

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In spite of the surge of popularity in recent times of the biographic genre in the field of Celtic and Irish studies, the important figure of Whitley Stokes has merited little more than an entry in each of the main biographical dictionaries published in Ireland and Britain. Stokes was a giant of philology in his day, he was counted among the greatest of the world and was certainly the most extraordinary Celticist to have been born in Ireland. It is therefore to be celebrated that this anomaly has been corrected with the almost simultaneous publication in 2011 of two books which shed unprecedented light on the life and work of this great Irish scholar.

Dáibhí Ó Cróinín’s Whitley Stokes (1830-1909): the lost Celtic notebooks rediscovered results from an unexpected fortunate discovery. While researching in early 2007 at the Leipzig University Library the author’s attention was drawn to a collection of 150 notebooks containing all of the transcriptions
Stokes made from Irish manuscripts during his half-century-long career as a scholar. As Ó Cróinín puts it, of all the Irish manuscripts available to Stokes at the time, ‘there appears to have been almost no vellum manuscript containing Early Irish texts that he did not copy in whole or in part’ (p. 2).

The book is structured in two parts. Part I details Stokes’s Celtic Nachlass and discusses how it provides an insight into his work methodology and interests; Part II is made up of ‘R.I. Best’s ‘Bibliography of the publications of Whitley Stokes’ (1912)’ (pp. 93-135) and the various appendices (pp. 136-146). The last section of Part I comprises the inventory of the Stokes Celtic notebooks. Their contents and physical appearance are meticulously described. Annotations of date and place of copying, as well as notes, comments and opinions on the various texts are also given. Finally, a reference to the published work of Stokes a particular notebook is related to is supplied wherever possible.

Ó Cróinín’s examination of the Stokes papers has yielded two remarkable philological discoveries. The first of them is found in no. 634, entitled ‘Miscellanea Hibernica’. Among its diverse contents there are ten pages of Irish songs from Aran transcribed by Eugene O’Curry, collected during the 1857 British Association research expedition to the ‘Western Islands of Aran’. The tunes to which they were sung were published without words in Complete collection of Irish music as noted by George Petrie (ed. by Charles Villiers Stanford, London 1902-1905). Ó Cróinín has successfully matched (p. 20) the song beginning Tá teach fada i mbárr an bhaile (reproduced from the notebook in plate 30) with the corresponding of Petrie’s tunes: no. 296 in Stanford (reproduced in Appendix 3). The second notable find is in no. 644. This large bound volume contains, after Stokes’s translation of the Félire [Óengusso] (this is to be inferred from the title on the spine, although it is not overtly stated in the description of this notebook), his attempt at translating Saltair na rann. As is well known, the only available edition of this text is that by Stokes (Oxford 1883), and it was printed without accompanying translation. It is now revealed to us that Stokes had a translation in hand, albeit only a partial one (Canto I, lines 1-300 of his edition, with gaps). Why Stokes did not finish his translation we do not know; however Ó Cróinín points out that he was obviously unhappy with what he had thus far, and decided not to include it in his edition (the text is printed in Appendix 1).

The catalogue is preceded by an account of the career of Whitley Stokes in which the story told by the Leipzig collection takes precedence. Of particular interest are the circumstances of the transfer of Stokes’s papers to Leipzig, and their survival until the present day. The fact is well known that Stokes’s daughters opposed handing over their father’s library to an Irish institution and decided to present it instead to University College London in 1910. However, the Celtic transcripts had been separated from the rest of the collection and were not donated to the College along with the rest of the library. Ó Cróinín puts together evidence suggesting that Kuno Meyer was instrumental in bringing the collection of notebooks from London to Leipzig. The link is Ernst Windisch (1844-1918), long-time friend and academic colleague of Stokes
and Professor of Sanskrit at Leipzig University. It is to be presumed that ‘Meyer had separated Stokes’s Celtic notebooks from the rest of his library and arranged for them to be shipped to Leipzig at Windisch’s request’ (p. 23). Ó Cróinín notes, in connection with this, that Stokes’s collection of photographs from Irish manuscripts was in 1911 in possession of Meyer, to whom it had been bequeathed by him. Could the notebooks have been separated from the rest of the collection at the same time as the photographs? This remains unclear. Yet, a passing comment by Meyer in a posthumously published article seems to imply that Stokes’s Nachlass was also in his possession, and he thanked Stokes’s daughters for that (p. 23). One wonders if an examination of the letters from Meyer (71 in number) in Windisch’s Nachlass preserved in the Leipzig University Archives would shed light on the precise details of the transfer of Stokes’s papers to Leipzig (this correspondence is part of the Windisch papers that Ó Cróinín was unable to find in the Leipzig University Library (p. 24, n. 71); it remains to be seen whether this material bears any relation to a suspected collection ‘with more than 200 volumes in it’). Be that as it may, ‘sometime between 1918 and early 1919’ it was decided that the notebooks should be sent to Leipzig, where they were formally acquired by the University Library in 1919. During World War II they were stored away along with the rest of the library collections in safe places in the vicinity of Leipzig and survived, unscathed, the air raids on the city. (Ananya Kabir, in p. 94 n. 72 of her contribution to the Tripartite Life of Whitley Stokes (see below) notes the opinion of the librarians that the Stokes notebooks were transported to Moscow as spoils of war by the Red Army, and only returned to Leipzig in the late 1950s).

It is certainly miraculous that Stokes’s manuscripts have been preserved to our day and may now be consulted. Ó Cróinín’s discovery has ‘unearthed the entire life’s work in Celtic studies of one of the greatest scholars of the nineteenth century, arguably of the entire modern era’ (p. 25). The present catalogue bears ample testimony to his formidable scholarly achievements.

The second volume under review here is the publication of a collection of essays arising from the conference ‘Ireland, India, London: the Tripartite Life of Whitley Stokes (1830-1909)’, held at the University of Cambridge on September 18-19, 2009, which commemorated the 100th anniversary of Stokes’s death. The fourteen contributions here presented offer a multidisciplinary approach to the complex figure of Whitley Stokes, exploring different aspects of his personal, professional and scholarly life. These three main aspects of his personality have inspired the title of this book, which in turn reminds us of one of Stokes’s many important contributions to the study of Medieval Irish. Of the seventeen papers presented in Cambridge in 2009 only three have been omitted from this collection, notably that by Prof. Ó Cróinín, for the obvious reason that the discovery he announced was going to receive an exhaustive treatment in the separate publication reviewed above. The book is illustrated with eight black-and-white images and includes a bibliography (pp. 218-240), an index to the archival sources used (pp. 241-245) and a general index (pp. 246-252).
The opening essay in this collection, Jacqueline Hill, ‘Whitley Stokes senior (1763-1845) and his political, religious and cultural milieux’ (pp. 14-28) is appropriately devoted to the grandfather of the Celtic scholar. Whitley senior, a member of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland and Regius Professor of Medicine at Trinity College, was an Irish language enthusiast and an advocate of bilingualism, and Hill shows he was motivated by his Christian values and a devotion for the instruction and improvement of the poor. It is also pointed out that the senior’s active involvement in the promotion of the Irish language had a marked influence on the young Stokes. Pól Ó Dochartaigh, “‘A shadowy but important figure’”: Rudolf Thomas Siegfried’ (pp. 29-43), provides a biographical account of the German scholar who became the first professor of Sanskrit and comparative philology at Trinity College, Dublin. Elizabeth Boyle, “‘The impiety of the intellect’”: Whitley Stokes and the Pre-Raphaelites’ (pp. 44-58), draws on Stokes’s early translations of Danish ballads to expose his close connection with the Pre-Raphaelite artistic circle and the influence it had on his understanding of poetry. Nigel Chancellor, “‘Patriot hare or colonial hound?’” Whitley Stokes and Irish identity in British India, 1862-81’ (pp. 59-77), deals, as the author puts it, with Stokes’s ‘day job’ as a senior legal official in the British Government of India’. Ananya Jahanara Kabir, ‘Reading between the lines: Whitley Stokes, scribbles and the scholarly apparatus’ (pp. 78-97), is an elaboration on the idea that philological activity served the ends of British imperial colonialism. In ‘The Sanskrit legacy of Whitley Stokes’ (pp. 98-110), Maxim Fomin examines the ‘parallels existing between Early Irish and Sanskrit linguistic, literary and cultural traditions’ which Stokes observed and noted in his publications. John Drew, ‘Whitley Stokes and the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám’ (pp. 111-118), reveals the little known story of how Stokes rescued Edward FitzGerald’s translation of the Rubáiyát from total neglect and oblivion. Bernhard Maier, ‘Comparative philology and mythology: the letters of Whitley Stokes to Adalbert Kuhn’ (pp. 119-133), examines correspondence of Stokes (mainly) with the founder (1852) of the journal now known as Historische Sprachforschung, and presents the portrait of a scholar who, despite working ‘in relative isolation’ separated by several thousand miles from the main centres of learning in Europe, not only had set for himself the highest levels of academic quality and accuracy, but also maintained close epistolary contact with colleagues and editors. Alderik H. Blom, ‘Whitley Stokes and the study of Continental Celtic’ (pp. 134-143), discusses the work carried out by Stokes on the early Celtic linguistic remains, and shows that he left his mark as an accomplished philologist in two important ways: firstly, he was the first to use freshly published epigraphical evidence to reconstruct the nominal morphology of Celtic; and secondly, he identified a form of Gaulish language in the Todi inscription. In ‘Grilling in Calcutta: Whitley Stokes, Henry Bradshaw and Old Welsh in Cambridge’ (pp. 144-160), Paul Russell tells the story of the discovery and publication of the Old Welsh glosses in the Martianus Capella manuscript of the Parker Library (Corpus Christi Cambridge ms 153), and uses this as a case study of Stokes’s working methods. Thomas Charles-Edwards, ‘Whitley Stokes and early Irish law’ (pp. 161-174), addresses the question as
to why Stokes did not fully engage in the study of the early Irish law texts, but confined himself to making criticisms and corrections to the *Ancient laws of Ireland*. In Pádraic Moran’s “‘Their harmless calling’: Whitley Stokes and the Irish linguistic tradition’ (pp. 175-184) Stokes’s explicit dismissal of native linguistic scholarship is contrasted with his important editorial work on early Irish glossaries. In ‘Whitley Stokes, Standish Hayes O’Grady and *Acallam na senórach*’ (pp. 185-195), Geraldine Parsons discusses the relationship of the two Irish scholars, following the narrative lead of the circumstances of their respective editions of *Acallam na senórach*. An examination of a bitter exchange of letters between them reveals their perceived antagonistic roles, O’Grady’s as the vanishing traditional Gaelic scholar and that of Stokes as the modern, rigorous student of medieval texts. Finally, in ‘Whitley Stokes and Modern Irish’ (pp. 196-217), Nollaig Ó Muraíle discusses several aspects of Stokes’s relationship with Irish, particularly his notorious lack of competence in spoken Irish and his work as editor of early modern Irish texts.

This handsome volume is a fitting homage to Whitley Stokes. The variety of angles from which his figure is studied does justice to a long, rich and eventful life devoted to the study of Indian law and Celtic philology. The resultant contributions offer a fundamental insight into the vast output of *Macc Dá Cherdda*, ‘the man of the two crafts’ (as Stokes once signed himself), while also revealing much of the complex personal life of a very private man. The editors are to be warmly congratulated for drawing attention to one of Ireland’s most important cultural personalities with this worthy tribute.

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For many years ‘Companions’ to various disciplines have been thick on the ground. Indeed, it is thirty years since Blackwell first published Derick Thomson’s *The Companion to Gaelic Scotland* (1987), a small alphabetically-arranged encyclopaedia which is still a most useful reference work for accessing basic information quickly. *The Edinburgh Companion to the Gaelic Language*, on the other hand, is typical of the University-published ‘Companions’ published from the 90s onwards: a collection of exploratory essays allowing contributors the space and freedom to develop their own perspectives. In this publication, we have fourteen essays ‘written accessibly with a non-specialist audience in mind . . . for those requiring introductions to aspects of the Gaelic language . . . [for] those who are embarking on research on Gaelic for the first time’ (back cover). It seeks, the editors explain, ‘to reaffirm the links between the more traditional Celtic Studies approach to the Gaelic language and the recent innovations in the use of social scientific,
political scientific and stylistic/discourse analyses of the language’ (p. xv). On the whole, however, *The Edinburgh Companion to the Gaelic Language* succeeds in fulfilling the goal of the editors, even if there is some unevenness across the chapters in regard to their relative comprehensiveness.

In the first of the historical chapters, ‘A history of Gaelic to 1800’ (1-21), Colm Ó Baoill has taken on the unenviable task of condensing twenty-three centuries of linguistic development in a twenty-page overview. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that his treatment of the earlier periods tends to be sketchy and imprecise in places. His loose use of the term ‘Insular Celts’ (which ‘merely distinguishes them from their continental kinsfolk’) and an outmoded application of ‘P-Celtic’ vs. ‘Q-Celtic’ are incongruous with the form of the Insular Celtic hypothesis he appears to favour when he says (vaguely): ‘it is quite possible . . . that Gaelic developed as a Q-Celtic language in these islands rather than being a descendant of a Q-Celtic language imported from the continent’. A polemical tone colours his discussion and clearly evinces his sympathies with those who challenge the dominant view that Gaelic language was essentially an Irish import. That is all right as it stands, but the evidence he adduces is not presented in a convincing or even logical fashion. Following the archaeological work of Ewan Campbell, he questions the historicity of the ‘Dàl Riada Invasion’ and submits that it may have been in fact ‘the Q-Celtic Gaels, or their ancestors [?]’ who brought their language from Argyllshire to East Ulster. Further on, in his discussion of the beginnings of Gaelic literacy, he opines that Iona ‘may yet emerge as a viable candidate for the location of this first adaption of the Latin alphabet to the Gaelic language’. This view seems to be based on an incautious application of Kim McCone’s conjecture that the use of preposition + -(s)a in prepositional relative clauses (the norm in Scottish Gaelic) was of ‘northern origins’ and was probably adopted in the ‘written Old Irish standard’ in the learned circles of East Ulster (*Ériu* 36 (1985) 96-7). Having got these matters off his chest, Ó Baoill is on more solid ground in his subsequent treatment of the emergence of clearly recognizable Scottish features (as attested, for example, in the twelfth-century Book of Deer), the formulation of Classical Gaelic, and the early development of Scottish Gaelic orthography from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

In ‘Language in society: 1800 to the modern day’ (22-45), Michelle Macleod takes up the historical thread in her account of the changes that occurred, firstly, with the demise of the traditional clan system and later with the highland clearances. She stresses the role of the churches in establishing Gaelic literacy from the mid-eighteenth century onwards and the importance of Gaelic organisations, periodical publications, and educational legislation in the nineteenth. The final section deals with major demographic changes of the twentieth-century, language shift, the restoration of Gaelic in state education at every level, and the proliferation of Gaelic in television broadcasting and computer-based media. In ‘A’ Ghàidhlig an Canada: Scottish Gaelic in Canada’ (90-107), Kenneth E. Nilsen (1947-2012, R.I.P.) has given a compendious history of the establishment of Gaelic-speaking communities throughout Canada from the late eighteenth century onwards. As might be
expected, the main emphasis is on Gaelic in Nova Scotia and Ontario; but he also draws attention to lesser-known settlements in Winnipeg and Manitoba (in the 1880s) and in Alberta (in the 1920s). Like Macleod (see above), he devotes special attention to the role of religion in education and language maintenance, citing, for example, the establishment of St Francis Xavier College (now University) in Antigonish, Nova Scotia, in which Gaelic has been taught continuously since 1891. The importance of Gaelic periodicals such as *Mac-Talla* (Cape Breton, 1892-1904) and the Antigonish *Casket* (1920-40) is highlighted. Nilsen concludes his chapter with an account of various efforts made since the 1970s to maintain, revive, and record Gaelic speech in Canada, including the establishment of an Office of Gaelic Affairs in Nova Scotia in 2006. He also mentions the valuable collections of Gaelic folklore made in Canada, much of it recent, including his own work in creating an audio-visual archive of the Gaelic spoken on mainland Nova Scotia and among emigrants in New England.

Richard A. Cox, ‘Gaelic Place-names’ (46-62), is the first of two chapters examining lexicon. After devoting some pages to a description of the formal linguistic structure of Gaelic place-names, he draws attention to others which evince periods of language contact with speakers of Pictish, Cumbric and Old Norse. This is followed by an interesting section on ‘function’ which analyses the derivational and legendary significance of place-names as categories of traditional *dinnseanchas*. He concludes his essay with a short onomasticon illustrating basic place-name elements and some observations on dating. In ‘Gaelic Vocabulary’ (218-28), Andrew Breeze presents a selection of lexical items illustrating first of all ‘the Indo-European element’ of Gaelic, and then loans from Latin, Pictish, Scandinavian, French and English. While non-specialists may find this chapter interesting and even entertaining, others will be disappointed by a certain degree of laxity in points of accuracy and general methodology. His citation of Gaelic *siùcar* ‘sugar’ as a loan from Anglo-Norman (as in Irish *siúcra* < *sucre*) and *bàta* ‘boat’ as a loan from ‘early English *bad* [sic]’ rather than from Norse *bátr* present obvious problems. More serious difficulties emerge in the last portion of this chapter in which he attempts to bring to light items, previously unattested in Scottish Gaelic, which survive only as loanwords in late medieval Scots. In several cases no attempt has been made to face significant phonological problems: it is suggested, for example, that *tod* ‘fox’ derives from Middle Irish *táid* ‘thief’ (with lenited *d*) and that *drumlie* (< *drúibly*) ‘clouded, troubled’ is related to Modern Irish *draoibéal* ‘mire’ and Old Irish *drobél*.

Moray Watson, ‘Language in Gaelic literature’ (63-89), is the only chapter in this collection which is specifically concerned with literature. For the most part, it examines the rhetorical features of modern Gaelic poetry as exemplified in the work of Derrick Thomson and Donald MacAulay. Drawing on the critical theory of Christopher Whyte, he describes the ‘caption/less’ technique of the former, in which the thematic significance (‘caption’) of a poem’s imagery emerges by implication or understatement in relation to a previously introduced ‘field of reference’. In Donald MacAulay’s ‘epigrammic’ style,
a poem builds towards a ‘moment of anticipation and release’: a ‘hiatus’ immediately followed by an overt thematic statement or ‘epigram’. (The modern approach and perspicacity of this analysis is impressive and one would have welcomed another essay in this volume examining the rhetorical techniques in the poetry of earlier periods.) Watson’s chapter concludes with an analysis of the morally didactic and socially critical dialogues known as còmhraidhean (‘conversations’), a genre represented most notably in the work of Rev. Dr. Norman MacLeod, first published in Caraid nan Gaidheal (1867).

Three chapters are given over to the ‘social scientific, political scientific’ approaches mentioned by the editors in their introduction. In ‘The Gaelic-language group: demography, language-usage, -transmission and -shift’ (128-45), Kenneth MacKinnon examines the demographic facts behind the decline of Gaelic in Scotland between 1881 and 2001, during which time the percentage of speakers in Scotland decreased from 6.76% to 1.2%. For the early years of this decline MacKinnon points the finger at the failure or lack of educational institutions. For the first half of the twentieth century, he notes a ‘substantial’ migration from the Gàidhealtachd to the Lowlands as well as a ‘reverse flow’ of a non-Gaelic-speaking professional class to the area where the language was already weakening. In regard to the present situation MacKinnon says that Gaelic-speaking communities need a third of their under-twenty-five population to be actively proficient in the language for viability to be realized. Disturbing figures reported in 2001 indicate the Western Isles (19.4%) are now further below this mark than the adjacent mainland regions of Argyll and Bute (26.3%) and Highlands (25.2%). More than half of Gàidhealtacht homes, he points out furthermore, are linguistically mixed. As the traditional power-base of the language grows weaker in individual households and local communities, language survival will require a ‘quantum step-change’ based on broadcasting, interactive electronic media, and distance-learning. Robert Dunbar, ‘Language planning’ (146-171), examines language policy and planning against the backdrop of recent socio-linguistic theory. Corpus planning (creation and modification of lexicon and grammar for official written and spoken communication), status planning (provision to expand the range of domains in which the language is used), acquisition planning (educational and institutional strategies for increasing the number of Gaelic-users). In addition to the seminal theory formulated by Joshua Fishman, recent theory for language regeneration (as in the economic models of Miquel Strubell and François Grin) are favourably evaluated. The author considers the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (2001), the Scottish Gaelic Act (2005), Bòrd na Gàidhlig (2006) as positive developments which establish language maintenance as a civil rights issue. Sadly, as he points out, the best of plans frequently fail at the point of implementation due to economic and political reasons.

Emily McEwan-Fujita, ‘Sociolinguistic ethnography of Gaelic communities’ (172-217) provides an excellent overview of work done studying language-shift and revitalization since World War II. Most of the earlier studies of this period accepted the native-speaker’s concept
of Gaelic-speaking as ‘a local practice in the nexus of home, family and crofting community’. This entailed a focus on ‘domains’ of language use, language shift plotted over time, and generational differences in proficiency. In more recent years traditional passive or essentialist concepts of identity and ‘domains’ have been replaced by dynamic, flexible, and ‘situationalist’ categories. She questions the simplistic equation made between maintaining or increasing numbers of speakers with the arrest of language shift and stresses the importance of educational institutions, business, and the ‘public media discourse’ in the revitalization effort.

These three essays on sociolinguistics and language maintenance, excellent as they are, take up a third of the volume and overlap considerably on various points. It might have been more judicious of the editors to have left some room elsewhere for a more thorough treatment of earlier historical phases which affected the development and subsequent fortunes of the language (e.g. the Lordship of the Isles, Jacobitism, the Land League movement, and mid-twentieth-century nationalism).

Ronald Black, ‘Gaelic orthography: the drunk man’s broad road’ (229-61), is a lively account centred on the orthographical innovations of Alexander Mac Donald (‘Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair’, c.1695–c.1770) and Alexander MacFarlane (fl.1740-55), a schoolmaster-catechist and a minister respectively, whom he describes as ‘jointly and inseparately … the founding fathers of Gaelic orthography’ (the latter ‘a sober man on the wrong road’, the former ‘a drunk man swaying about with inconsistencies on the right one’). Black traces the subsequent development of Scottish Gaelic orthography in various Bible translations made throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its eventual ‘rescue’ with the publication of Dwelly’s *Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary* (1901-11). He contrasts the practical standard achieved in the publications of the Scottish Gaelic Texts Society with less successful experiments that sprang from the *Gaelic Orthographics Conventions* report of 1978.

The chapters presenting Gaelic dialectology and descriptive linguistics are uniformly excellent and will prove invaluable to students entering the field. Seosamh Watson, ‘Hebridean and mainland dialects’ (108-27) examines the differences between the ‘standard dialect’ of the Western Isles and the adjacent mainland on one hand and the Gaelic of the Eastern Highlands on the other. His discussion is informed by the latest research, including his own studies over many years and the recent publication of the transcriptions of the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland* (DIAS, 1994-97). The main diagnostic features of Gaelic phonology, morphophonemics, morphology, syntax are dealt with in turn and a brief note on lexical differences is included. In ‘Phonology in Modern Gaelic’, (262-82), Anna Bosch’s aim is to ‘sketch out the basic phonological structure of Scottish Gaelic’ as well as pointing out important work carried out since Borgstrøm’s seminal Barra studies of 1937. The result is a model of clarity. She devotes most of her essay to fundamental topics such as pre-aspiration (or absence thereof), the phonemic status of the glottal stop, intervocalic hiatus, svarabhakti, and the problematic definition of the ‘syllable’. She concludes with a mention of various desiderata for further research.
David Adger’s two contributions, ‘Gaelic morphology’ (283-303) and ‘Gaelic syntax’ (304-51) are concise and systematic expositions in which the basic features are clearly set out with examples of increasing complexity. The former is aimed at ‘students of linguistics … and students of Gaelic who are interested in a perspective on their language that comes from modern linguistics’. The latter is somewhat less comprehensive, with the author limiting himself to what he considers ‘linguistically interesting or surprising’. Despite this difference, the two chapters together constitute an excellent introduction to terms and methodology employed in current research. The treatment of the material, it should be noted, is exclusively synchronic.

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The main chapters in this book are ‘Introduction: *Figmenta poetica* and heroic saga’ (pp. 1-14); ‘The Irish classical tales: texts and sources’ (pp. 51-94); ‘Classicism and *Togail Troi*’ (pp. 95-144); ‘Táin Bó Cúailnge and Latin epic’ (pp. 145-93) and ‘The rhetorical set piece and the *Breslech* of the Plain of Murthemne’ (pp. 194-244). The purpose of the book is explained on p. 13:

This book has been written for several audiences. The argument has been structured in acknowledgement that some readers whose background is primarily Old Irish and Celtic Studies will wish to begin with the later chapters concerned specifically with the *Táin*. Readers not necessarily familiar with medieval Irish but interested in the reception of the classics in medieval Europe will find their way eased in the early chapters, which present material familiar to classicists and general medievalists. In fact, each chapter has its own theme and may, hopefully, stand on its own. All the same, the progression of these individual studies is intended to constitute a cumulative argument for the existence of a literary movement which I take to be collateral to medieval Irish classical studies. I call this movement medieval Irish classicism.

In the course of this study, the reader is provided with a wide-ranging analysis of the nature of classical learning in medieval Ireland. There is also a comprehensive account of previous scholarship on the topics discussed in the individual chapters as reflected in the sixteen-page long bibliography (pp. 251-66).

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of the phrase *figmenta poetica* (which Miles translates (p. 2) ‘poetic products of artifice’ or ‘poetic inventions’) as found in the second of the two well-known colophons at the end of Recension
2 of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (hereafter TBC); both the colophons are cited and translated on p. 1. He refers to the discussion by Pádraig Ó Néill and Erich Poppe of the phrase and then discusses a previously neglected occurrence (pp. 1-3). He then goes on to consider the possibility that ‘association of *figmenta poetica* with Virgil especially may have become a commonplace in its own right by late antiquity’ (p. 4). This, in turn, is followed by the statement (p. 5) that:

> Even if Virgil was not felt to be the most obvious referent behind *figmenta poetica* in medieval usage, it is only in a world such as our own, where prose has taken over the role of verse in most traditional uses, that a person can miss the oddness of *figmenta poetica* as a comment on a composition primarily in prose. Such is the usage of the Latin colophon to the *Táin*. Given the connotations of *figmenta poetica* in the Latin tradition to which the author of the colophon was heir, an implied association of the *Táin* with epic is hard to miss.

Miles then proposes that both colophons may have been written by the original author of Recension 2 (pp. 5-6). His arguments are not very convincing, however. In speaking of the author of Recension 2, Miles assumes as follows (p. 5): ‘Other versions of the *Táin* existed before his, both oral and written, the latter in less rigorous forms and probably still circulating’. Such postulated versions quickly become real and it is then stated with regard to the author of the second colophon (p. 6): ‘Probably it is with reference to these less sophisticated versions that he concludes by noting how the tale contains things which have been ‘ad delectationem stultorum’ (‘for the delectation of fools’). It is then suggested (p. 6) that, alternatively, the author of the second colophon ‘is having some fun at his own expense and that of his readers. There is no offence, as only the non-foolish, that is, those with Latin, are in a position to get the joke and will assume themselves to be excluded’.

The remarks cited above lead to more general ones about the reading and interpretation of texts and it is stated (p. 6): ‘Most of this book is concerned with reading and interpretation. How we allow ourselves to read and interpret the colophon is preconditioned by what sophistication we believe the author and original audience brought to their own acts of reading’. This is a valid point. In reading and interpreting a text, however, one must always be wary of over-indulgence in speculation and especially of allowing initial unfounded speculation to become the basis for further unfounded speculation. At the end of the book, a more general observation is made (p. 248): ‘Literary historians for the most part enjoy looking for connections between literary works, especially if such connections can be described according to a pattern of influence. Caution is always required . . .’. The problem of course is that if caution is not exercised, one can explain even the vaguest similarities between two texts as being due to the influence of one on the other. Aside from the pitfall of speculation, a literary historian must also be particularly wary about contriving instances of narrative influence of individual texts or literary genres on other texts or genres. It is imperative that the potential imaginative powers
of authors whose works are being interpreted and the literary historian’s own imagination be kept distinct. The discussion of the different influences on various medieval Irish texts in this book is marked by questionable speculation as the following selection of examples is intended to show.

A notable feature of the book is the discussion of the significance of scholastic commentary on Latin authors in the case of the translation into Irish of classical literature and also in the case of TBC. It is observed (p. 98):

What has been absent from discussion of the classical tales hitherto is any thorough consideration of literary features which reflect, not the imprint of contemporary Irish historiography and storytelling, but the wholly different classical aesthetic of the Latin literary sources which underlie them.

On the other hand, at the close of a discussion of Togail Troí, it is stated (p. 94) that:

It is hoped that this relatively incomplete treatment of the antique material used to enrich Togail Troí dispels any doubt that scholastic sources have been exploited not only to display the author’s reading, but also to convey a humanist’s enthusiasm for ancient tradition. The Irish author time and time again evinces his literary appreciation through the wit and creativity of the transformation of his models, a technique known to ancient educators as imitatio.

The extent to which scholastic sources have been exploited in the case of Togail Troí is debatable, however. A discussion of the potential sources available to the author of Togail Troí is found on pp. 66-94, as part of which Miles states (p. 79) that ‘the interpretive activity of the Irish scholar is demonstrated in Togail Troí’s description of the building and destruction of the first Troy’. A section of the version of this text from the Book of Leinster is then cited in which it is mentioned that Laomedon betrayed Hercules concerning payment to the latter for rescuing Laomedon’s daughter, Hesiona, from a sea monster. The Trojans subsequently promised Hercules payment as follows (p. 79):

. . . ra gellsat a cethri cutrumma fein do .i. a cutrumma do ór 7 do argut. 7 a cutrumma do umu. 7 a cutrumma do iurn.

‘. . . they promised him his four weights equal to himself, that is, his equal weight in gold and silver, his equal weight in bronze, and his equal weight in iron’.

Miles subsequently states (p. 80):

Yet the most interesting feature of the Irish text is the payment which Hercules is to receive for rescuing Hesiona . . . The author here doubtless consulted Servius (at Aeneid 8.291), who recorded that Hercules’s payment for rescuing Hesiona was to be:
‘negatos sibi a Laomedonte equos divino semine procreatos’ (‘the horses, begotten from divine seed, refused him by Laomedon’).

Servius’s record of the promised award correctly reproduces the version accepted in antiquity. The Irish author has not misunderstood Servius, but, for equos, ‘horses’, he read aequos, ‘equal’. Understood with sibi the resulting phrase was taken to mean ‘(things in the plural begotten from divine seed) equal to himself’ . . . The discrepancy between what Servius wrote and what the Irish author read is not textual, but interpretive.

But if the Irish author did read aequos here, what exactly does ‘things from divine seed equal to himself refused from Laomedon’ mean and why would the author interpret this text in a way which makes little sense? Furthermore, as Miles himself subsequently points out (p. 80), the four metals in the Irish text ‘barely recall Servius’s “divino semine procreatōs”’. Imaginative interpretation (but whose?) does not end here as it is suggested (p. 80) that the four metals ‘probably display Irish biblical scholarship and allude to Daniel 2.31-35, King Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of a statue of himself composed of gold, silver, bronze and iron (with the addition of the famous feet of clay)’. There is even more speculation about this passage on pp. 80-1 which need not be discussed here.

Very speculative methods of interpretation are also applied to TBC as can be seen, for example, in chapter 4, ‘Táin Bó Cúailnge and Latin epic’ (pp. 145-93). In this chapter there is a section entitled ‘Cú Chulainn, Achilles and play’ (pp. 166-75). Various aspects of the possible influence of Latin epic upon the Macgnímrada or ‘Boyhood deeds’ section of TBC are discussed here. There is reference to the conclusion to the Macgnímrada where the danger that Cú Chulainn will kill everyone in Emain Macha is avoided when he is seized and thrown into successive vats of cold water (pp. 172-4). There is then reference (p. 172) to Statius’s Achilleid 1 in which it is described how the young Achilles, if not stopped, would disrupt religious rituals in his ardour. According to Miles, there is an orthographic ambiguity in the verse in Achilleid 1 in which it is related how Achilles’s mother, Thetis, manages to put out her son’s fire (ignis). The verse in question and translation are given as follows (p. 172):

\[
\text{aspicit ambiguous genetrix cogique volentem iniecit que (sic) sinus. (Achilleid 1.325-6)}
\]

‘She saw him hesitant and compelled him, though he was willing, and threw a dress on him’.

Miles then states that sinus in the plural can be used for any article of clothing and that this word is orthographically indistinguishable from ēimus. We are told that the latter word is rare and that ‘the sole occurrence of the word in Virgil is Eclogue 7.33’ and that it is explained in a note by Servius as ‘a kind of vessel’. Miles suggests (p. 172) that there is ambiguity in the verse
by Statius in that ‘accusative plural sīnus, ‘folds’, could, orthographically, be taken as accusative plural sīnus, ‘vessels’, provided that the latter is taken as a fourth declension noun like sīnus itself’. The proposed ambiguity is then discussed as follows (pp. 172-3):

The recognition of the ambiguity invites the reader, especially a medieval scholar whose interest is the Latin lexicon, to attempt an interpretation of the verse which would find a ‘vessel’ in ‘iniecitque sinus’. ‘She throws vessels (over him)’ fails to convince, not for grammatical reasons, but because it does not provide a credible visual of what might be meant. Pushing the grammar a little further, ‘iniecitque sinus’ might be understood as ‘iecitque in sinus’ or, perhaps, ‘in iecitque sinus’ with hyberbaton, and translated ‘and she throws him into vessels’.

One can speculate whether there could have been a corrupt text, or even if the verse was simply remembered in a garbled form. Yet this interpretation is not a grammatical statement, but the extraction of a credible visual from a difficult Latin verse … However, there is no story in Statius of Achilles being thrown into vats of water, that is, no motif. The episode of Cú Chulainn’s immersions in the vats of water, if this interpretation is valid, is not an allusion to Statius’s story, but to the classroom exegesis that would have grappled with the poet’s diction.

This speculation soon becomes established fact which leads to further speculation (p. 173):

With Servius actually being quite useful here, it is no surprise that the imitatio in this episode does not suggest that the correct interpretation of sinus was missed. Mugain clothes Cú Chulainn in finery, as Thetis clothes Achilles, and cleaned-up versions of both boys are accepted into their new positions. Both senses, therefore, the correct and the fanciful, have been incorporated into the author’s imitatio.

What Miles regards as the only impediment to all this is then mentioned and accounted for in a somewhat facile manner (p. 174):

The only lingering impediment to seeing the influence of this wordplay on sinus in the Irish text is that Irish dabach, ‘tub or vat’, denotes a vessel which would appear to be larger than that suggested by sīnus. In this case, it is up to the literary critic to judge whether our notions of the relative size of a dabach and a sinus are adequate to dismiss the coincidence of the wordplay and the sequence of visuals shared between the two texts.

Highly speculative methods of interpretation are not confined to the influence of classical literature. In the course of a discussion of the Breslech Mór Maige
Murthenne (BMMM) section of TBC (pp. 196-7), for example, Miles states (p. 196) that BMMM ‘comes across as even brazen in its invitation to interpretative flexibility’. In discussing the healing of Cú Chulainn from mortal wounds, he says (p. 196): ‘Given the context of the hero, dead to the world for three days on a burial ground and then raised, healed from his wounds by his divine father, I do not think that contemporary readers would have failed to see an allusion to Christ in the tomb and risen on the third day’. But when Cú Chulainn’s sleeping for three days and three nights is taken in its context, it becomes apparent that the author did not intend any allusion to Christ. The text reads:

Teóra lá 7 teóra n-aídchí baí Cú Chulaind ina chotlod. Bá dethbir són ém ce ro baí do mét in chotulta boí do mét na a[th]scísi. Ón lúan íar samain sainrud cosín cétáin íar n-imolg níró chotail Cú Chulaind frisin ré sin acht mad mani chotlad frithisin mbic fria gáí far medón midlaf 7 a chend fora dor[n]d 7 a dor[n]d ima gáí 7 a gáí fora glún, acht ic slaidi 7 ic slechtad 7 ic aírech 7 ic esorcain cethri n-ollchóiced nÉrend frisin ré sin.

‘For three days and three nights Cú Chulainn slept. It was right that the length of his sleep should correspond to the greatness of his weariness. From the Monday after Samain until the Wednesday after the festival of Spring Cú Chulainn had not slept except when he dozed for a little while after midday, leaning against his spear with his head resting on his clenched fist and his fist holding his spear and his spear on his knee, but he kept striking and cutting down, slaying and killing the four great provinces of Ireland during all that time.’ (C. O’Rahilly (ed.), Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension 1 (Dublin 1976), p. 65, ll. 2136-42; transl., p. 184).

Further examination of the context in which there is mention of Cú Chulainn sleeping for three days and three nights brings to mind the old chestnut about the significance of the number three in Irish traditional literature. When Cú Chulainn awakes, he is disappointed to find that he has spent so long asleep as he thinks that the hosts of the four provinces of Ireland have been left unattacked during that period. Lug, however, explains that this is not so as:

Lotar in macrad antúaid ó Emain Macha trí choícat mac im Follomain mac Conchobair do maccab áig Ulad 7 dobertsat teóra catha dona slúagaib ri hed na trí lá 7 na trí n-aídchí hi taf-siú it chotlud innossa, 7 torcratár a trí comlín leó . . .

‘The youths came south from Emain Macha, thrice fifty of the kings’ sons of Ulster, led by Fallamain mac Conchobair and during the three days and three nights that you were asleep, they fought three times with the hosts, and three times their own number fell by them . . .’ (O’Rahilly, ibid., p. 66, ll. 2167-70; transl., p. 185).
Once allusion to Christ has been accepted by Miles, however, other extremely speculative inferences are made. In reference to Cú Chulainn being awoken from his healing sleep with what the author states to be incantatory verses titled Éli Loga, Miles suggests (p. 196) that ‘most readers not armed with the arsenal of Celtic philology would immediately judge that éli, “prayer”, in the title Éli Loga looks like a fairly obvious borrowing from Christ’s invocation to his father on the cross: Heli Heli lema sabacthani hoc est Deus meus Deus meus ut quid dereliquisti me (“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”) (Matthew 27: 46). There, the divine father removes the wounded hero’s ghost; here, the divine father signals that it has been given back.

What Miles refers to as the title Éli Loga is in fact a marginal note written in Lebor na hUidre, the full version of which is éli Loga inso sís, ‘The incantation of Lug here below’. Why éli should be regarded as a borrowing and an allusion to Christ here is not clear. The reason would seem to be the very spurious one that the fact of two words in two different languages spelt in a similar way signifies dependence of one language on the other. It is very likely, however, that éli is simply being used here in TBC because it appositely describes the text to which it refers and, in this regard, it may be pointed out that the word is used elsewhere in TBC where there is clearly no allusion to Christ; cf. DIL s.v. éle. Another significant difference here is that the invocation in TBC is not uttered by Cú Chulainn. Shortly afterwards in the book under review (p. 197), however, there is seemingly no doubt about the origin of the word here: ‘In the title Éli Loga, however, with its retained Hebrew . . .’.

By now, allusion to Christ is established without doubt. In a description of certain features of Cú Chulainn as he faces his foes, included among which is his brandishing of weapons, Miles states (p. 197): ‘Aside from the fact that the iron pieces in Cú Chulainn’s hands are weapons and not nails, these features can all be closely paralleled in the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion.’

Many sections of Irish and Latin texts are cited and translated in this book. The translations of Irish texts raise serious questions. In the case of Recension I of TBC, for example, O’Rahilly’s translations are sometimes left unaltered, namely, pp. 137, 208, 210, 215, 223 (this is inconsistently referred to as ‘O’Rahilly’s translation’ on pp. 137, 210 and ‘O’Rahilly’s tr.’ on pp. 208, 215, 223). On p. 236, however, we find the following text and translation:

Nicon fes immorro a árim 7 ni cumangar a rím cá lín dorochair
and do dáescoršlúag,

‘Their number is not known, nor is it possible to count the number of the common troops who fell there.’

O’Rahilly’s original translation (Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension I, p. 189) is: ‘Their number is not known nor is it possible to count how many of the common soldiery fell there’. It is not clear why this and many other translations by O’Rahilly have been altered, especially when the original translations are often superior. Some instances are (I give first text and translation from the book under review followed by O’Rahilly’s translation and page reference to TBC I):
Is and asbert Medb, ‘It was then that Medb asked’ (150-1); ‘And Medb said’ (126)
asa caini clú, ‘whose fame is fair’ (152); ‘of fairest fame’ (127)
7 co sescain a adarc dia chéle, ‘and one of the other’s horns was thrown’ (160); ‘and his opponent’s horn sprang out’ (237)
Amra brígi són!, Big deal!’ (166); ‘A mighty thing!’ (143)
frí gabáil ngaiscid do neoch, ‘to be provided when someone took up arms’ (167); ‘to provide for the taking up of arms by someone’ (142)
Tongu do dia, ‘I swear by the gods’ (169); ‘I swear by the god’ (147)
Tothéit iarom bantrocht nEmna, ‘The woman-troop of Emain went out’ (169); ‘Then the women-folk of Emain came forth’ (147)
It é óic inso condricfat frit indiu, ‘These are the warriors you face today’ (169); transl. ‘these are the warriors who face you today’ on p. 172); ‘These are the warriors who will encounter you today’ (148)
don Íhidba chnáma ‘from his jawbones’ (212); ‘from his jawbone’ (187)

Questions may also be raised about translations from TBC LL as the following examples indicate (I give first text and translation from the book under review followed by page reference to C. O’Rahilly (ed.), Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster (Dublin 1967)):

Nír súail ní risbud samalta leiss acht marbad hí in firminint dothuitted bar dunegnúis in talman, ‘he could not liken it to anything trifling, but that the firmament fell over the face of the earth’ (177); ‘it seemed to him almost as if the sky had fallen on to the surface of the earth’ (250)
Caíniu di fleathib in doimin, ‘Finer than the princes of the world’ (183); ‘finest of the princes of the world’ (254).

Many of Whitley Stokes’s translations in his edition of the version of Togail Troí from Trinity College Dublin ms H. 2. 17 published in Irische Texte 2, part 1 (ed. E. Windisch and W. Stokes; Leipzig 1884), pp. 1-114 have also been changed at the cost of accuracy. Examples are (I give first text and translation from the book under review followed by Stokes’s translation and page reference to Irische Texte 2, part 1):

co rotheilg úadi dar seinistir in tige ’na siadnaisi uile, ‘She then threw it through the window of the house before them’ (84); ‘and flung it from her over the window of the house in presence of them all’ (76)
ic déchain in leith ón muir na rámha icond imrum, ‘and to behold on the sea the rowing of the oars’ 112; ‘espying the side from the sea: the oars at the rowing’ (86)

dofúasnad mór fón Éuraip uile óthá tíre na Meótacda, ‘there was a great commotion throughout Europe from the land of the Maeotici’ (116); ‘there was a great commotion throughout the whole of Europe from the lands of the Maeotici’ (84)

achtonnaírc na maige ‘he saw the field’ (126); ‘he beheld the fields’ (100)

ní rised fer innisi scéoil diib úad co tír na Gréci forcúlu, ‘and no man of them would survive to bear tidings back to Greece’ (130); ‘and that not a man to tell tidings of them would get back from him to the land of Greece’ (116)

Táinic iarsin fó slúag na Moesián, ‘Then he [Achilles] went throughout the host of the Moesians’ (134); ‘Then he came throughout the host of the Mysians’ (89)

dia tabar drochbéim, ‘which has been given a heavy blow’ (134); ‘to which an evil blow is given’ (89)

Domárfís iarsin, ‘There appeared after that’ (181); ‘Then there appeared to me’ (94)

fria chenn anechtair, ‘around his head’ (219); ‘to the outside of his head’ (115)

On p. 183, Miles translates co mbiat cend ar díb cendaib as ‘until they meet head to head’ without comment. Stokes (p. 96) left cend ar díb cendaib untranslated and an explanation of the translation in the book under review would have been welcome.

Translations from the version of Togail Troí in the Book of Leinster are also problematical. Among the inaccuracies in the following instances are misinterpretation of words, confusion of singular and plural nominal forms, and confusion of verbal forms, viz.

nacora ícthar a gesse, ‘unless he performed/suffered/solved his gessi’ (73)

cora sílta d’ﬁaclaib dracon, ‘in order to sow the dragon’s teeth’ (73)

re ñdeo laí, ‘until the end of the day’ (73)

dochum na scor, ‘to their camp’ (87)

na cóic ríghísechusa, ‘the five royal chiefs’ (123)

Ro marb dano Aenias da rígmílid ‘Aeneas, meanwhile, killed two kings’ (123)

ra fuapair fan slúag, ‘he [Hector] attacks the host’ (133)
“da tabar drochbulli, ‘which has been given a grievous blow’ (133)
ara n-éla a bidba, ‘from which its enemies have escaped’ (133)

Similar inaccuracies can be found in the case of text from King’s Inns Dublin, ms 12, fo. 41va, which is transcribed and translated as follows (p. 61):

Conadh amlaid sin iarum ro toghladh fa dheoidh an Troí gur ro scailed an mur co solamh cen mothá uathadh bend γ is aire ro fágbadh sídhe da fhoillsiugud conadh amhlaid sin ro bai an mur uile rena brisedh.

‘And thus was Troy destroyed at last and its walls swiftly toppled, all but a few prominences which were left to show what the walls had been before their destruction’.

Miles states (p. ix) that his translations ‘aim to be literal’ but this is clearly not the case in an item of text from RIA ms Div 2 which is transcribed and translated on pp. 70-1 as: *is sed seicc is firiu ann*, ‘the latter is the most likely of the three’. Nor is it the case on p. 48 where *haec ollim meminisse iuuabit* is translated ‘one day we will rejoice to remember these things’.

There are also some oversights in the case of translations. On p. 87 the Latin *qui cum ad Troiae venisset auxilia* is mistakenly translated as ‘who, when he had brought his troops’. Two lines of Latin text on p. 127 are left untranslated as are *for firu talman* (p. 131) and *mac Súaltaim* (p. 200).

An item of text which might have been more clearly presented in the book under review is a note from a miscellany found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms Rawlinson B 512. This is found on p. 97 where it is stated that the note has become muddled in transmission and that the author presents an emended text. In a footnote, the text is said to have been ‘adapted’ from that published by Brian Ó Cuív, ‘Scél: arramaint: stair’, Éigse 11 (1964-66), 18. On p. 98, the alterations made to Ó Cuív’s text are cited but consultation of Ó Cuív’s text is required for a proper understanding of the changes made by Miles. It would surely have been better simply to re-edit this short text. There are also a number of minor errors in Ó Cuív’s text: for *arramainte* leg. *arrmainte* or *arrumainte* (m-stroke above second *r*) and for *Macrobius* leg. *Macroibius*. It is also not clear why Ó Cuív’s translation of *foillsighter na focail ar trí coraib* as ‘the words are manifested in three ways’ is altered here (p. 98) to ‘narrations are set out in three ways’.

References to manuscripts are inconsistent. On p. 61 there is reference to King’s Inns Dublin, ms 12, fo. 41va, where no column line numbers are given (cf. reference to Div 2, fo. 27ra, on p. 70). With these we may compare the reference on p. 63 to Div 2, fo. 27ra4-10 (where line numbers are given); cf. also the reference on p. 65 to NLS ms 72.1.15, fo. 19r, where neither column nor line numbers are given.

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Caoimhín Breathnach

It was with good reason that the first volume of the Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin was launched in one of the buildings owned by Dublin Corporation that had been built upon the demolished Viking remains of Wood Quay. The site of a major civic controversy, the importance of Wood Quay for our knowledge of the archaeology and history of the capital (not to mention its impact on city development and planning permission) is hard to overstate. Moreover, it was of particular significance to the Friends of Medieval Dublin, for it was the endeavour to preserve the site — as well as a Dublin Arts Festival themed ‘Medieval Dublin’ — that led to the creation of the study-group in 1976. Small wonder, then, that the first volume of the series was dedicated to co-founder and first chairman of the Friends, the then recently deceased Augustinian friar and professor F. X. Martin, well known throughout Ireland for his fervent attempts (which included legal procedures, the organisation of demonstrations and an occupation of the site) to save Wood Quay from destruction. Wood Quay’s importance to Dublin and the Friends was underlined once more when volume VIII was launched on September 23, 2008: the 30th anniversary of the ‘Save Wood Quay’ march. In spite of the Friends’ initial troubled relationship with Dublin Corporation, the latter body provides the Medieval Dublin series with financial aid (volume VII of the series is in fact dedicated to the retiring City Manager, Mr John Fitzgerald), and this ensures that the volumes are affordably priced and thus accessible to a wide audience.

Both during the Wood Quay controversy and after, the Friends of Medieval Dublin have been very influential in shaping the public’s awareness of the capital’s medieval history and in the dissemination of information about Dublin in the Middle Ages. And this, according to the Friends’ current chairman and editor of the Medieval Dublin series, Seán Duffy, is in fact its aim. Publications are, naturally, of paramount importance in this respect. In 1990 founder-member Howard Clarke, then chairman of the Friends of Medieval Dublin, was responsible for editing two volumes of high-quality articles by eminent scholars in various fields: *Medieval Dublin: the living city* and *Medieval Dublin: the making of a metropolis*, both published by the Irish Academic Press. Again, these publications took place in the framework of the Friends’ intention to disseminate knowledge of medieval Dublin, but the resulting products were very different from the later series edited by Duffy. In Clarke’s own words, ‘The 1990 volumes gave us reprints of older scholarship; the present series is providing a critical mass of new work, based both on archaeological investigation and on documentary analysis’ (vol. VIII, p. 326).

Duffy acquires the majority of essays for the series from the symposia he organises each year. The remainder consists of articles which have not previously been presented. This format is ideal for publishing up-to-date research. New volumes have to appear with some regularity, as history and archaeology are constantly being re-written. For instance, in volume V (2004), John Ó Néill suggests his readers disregard some of the evidence
published by Margaret Gowen in volume II (2001), as a sample used for radiocarbon-dating was rendered effectively useless due to a raising of the accepted standards in this field. What is more, new approaches to finds, as well as advances in technology and methodologies can lead to exciting new discoveries. Barra Ó Donnabháin and Benedikt Hallgrímsson examined and re-examined skeletal remains from various twentieth-century archaeological digs and came to a number of interesting conclusions about the origins of medieval Dubliners (volume II (2001)). They found, for instance, that remains from Temple Lane (though these finds were admittedly based on a small sample) were heterogeneous to the point where the authors could suggest that the Norse were not (fully) expelled by the incoming English colonists as has been suggested in the traditional historical narrative, and did, at least by the high middle ages, intermarry with English inhabitants. An example of the current relevance of the series is shown through the appearance of an article on Carrickmines castle by Emmett O’Byrne (volume IV (2003)), published in the heat of the Carrickmines controversy (in which the Friends played an important role). Current historiographical themes are also found, for instance the subject of degeneracy, discussed by both Áine Foley and Sparky Booker in volume X.

A number of authors have contributed to more than one volume; most notably Claire Walsh who wrote four articles, Alan Hayden, who contributed six times, and Linzi Simpson, who, incredibly, contributed to all but one of the ten volumes under review. Simpson’s first essay, the first contribution to the first volume, is a synopsis of archaeological work carried out in Dublin over a forty-year period. It is an exemplary piece of work, whose importance is underlined by the frequency with which it is referred to in later articles (in fact, in the second volume, half of the contributors mention Simpson’s work). In light of the great quantity of archaeological digs carried out in Dublin in recent years, we can rejoice in the knowledge that the latest volume, volume XI, which appeared recently, contains an updated version of her excellent work.

Apart from some recurring authors, there are, predictably, some recurring topics in the series as well. These include prominent religious buildings such as St Thomas’s abbey, and St Patrick’s and Christ Church cathedrals; Dublin’s frontiers and defences; primary sources for the city, such as chronicles, annals and registers; and Dublin in its wider context, as in its relations with the Isles and the Isle of Man (see for instance the editor’s only contribution as an author to the series in vol. VII (2006)). However, part of the series’ strength rests on the wonderfully rich variety of topics dealt with, from Dublin’s intercultural contact to its festive culture, and from locally made pottery to an eighteenth-century map as a source for the medieval city.

Not only does the series display a great range of subjects, it also features work by authors with a wide array of backgrounds, and this nicely reflects the Friends’ origins. Their early history was turbulent. In the seventies, not long after their foundation, a defecting member called the group’s attempts to halt the destruction of Wood Quay an ‘effective but misleading campaign’, and the Friends themselves ‘unreasonable’ and ‘highly emotional.’ (Sunday
Independent, April 29, 1979). The Friends were vindicated when years later (in 1991), after the discovery of a possibly short-lived English harbour at Usher’s Quay (http://www.excavations.ie, Dublin 1991 (no. 043), 6-8 Usher’s Quay), one member of the Dáil, appealing for its preservation, called the destruction of the Wood Quay site ‘perhaps the greatest bureaucratic blunder of all time’ (http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie; Dáil Éireann debates, vol. 408, May 16, 1991). But in spite of the fact that the concerted efforts of those involved could not preserve the site, there was one positive outcome of the Wood Quay campaign: it brought together specialist and non-specialist. And it was precisely this that became one of the goals of the first and — presumably — later Medieval Dublin symposia and publications: to bring ‘together teacher and student, specialist and amateur, historian and archaeologist’ (vol. I, p. 9).

And indeed, the contributors to these volumes combine to make an eclectic mix of independent scholars, university lecturers, archaeologists, graduate and postgraduate students and postdoctoral scholars. In spite of the differences in the scholarly backgrounds of the authors, which, together with the pressure of an annual publication, occasionally leads to a disparity in the quality of the articles, the outcome is of a surprisingly high standard. The series strikes a fine balance between history and archaeology. Approximately half of the 100 essays published concern archaeology, the rest consisting of mostly historical works, with occasional articles on art and architecture, literature and even biological findings. Some articles in particular replicate that balance in microcosmic scale, that is, within the limits of the scope of the topic under scrutiny. An exemplary piece of interdisciplinary work on living standards in Dublin, written by Margaret Murphy and Michael Potterton, was published in volume VI (2005). This, in effect, is a little taste of their own book which was published five years later, The Dublin region in the middle ages (Four Courts Press, Dublin 2010). The inclusion of a variety of disciplines does cause a slight variation in presentation. While historical articles make use of footnotes, archaeological contributions include notes in the main text, and a bibliography for the full references. However, these are mere quibbles and are far out-weighed by the benefits of an annual output of recent research. Perhaps the editor would consider publishing a full index in the next volume, or indeed, a comprehensive up-to-date bibliography.

The Duffy editions offer to the wider public information on medieval Dublin previously not accessible to the non-specialist. The fact that they have given a platform, not only to historians (who tend to publish findings at more regular intervals), but to archaeologists whose work often is presented and available to only a very small audience, is one of its many virtues. The series now consists of a solid number of volumes and this, as well as the fact that the symposia continue to draw a steady crowd, are a tribute to the work of the Friends of Medieval Dublin in general and their Chairman in particular.

FREYA VERSTRATEN VEACH

University of Hull
This edition of *Bewnans Ke* has a curious history. Many will be aware that the manuscript came to light in 2000, amongst papers Professor J. E. Caerwyn Williams bequeathed to the National Library of Wales. Nothing had previously been known of it. It is now good to report that Graham Thomas and Nicholas Williams have done a first class job in making this medieval Cornish play available in a scholarly edition.

The late sixteenth-century manuscript (with beginning and end lost) contains a text which the editors date to the reign of Henry VI (p. 408). It deals with the coming of St Kea to Cornwall, his disputes with the local tyrant Teudar, and his founding of a monastery in what is now Old Kea, near Truro. Its last part tells of King Arthur’s wars with the emperor of Rome, and of Guinevere’s adultery with Modred, the king’s nephew. This edition is, therefore, a major addition both to Cornish literature and to the corpus of Middle Cornish.

The editors provide a lengthy introduction, relating the text to traditions of St Kea set out in 1636 by the Breton hagiographer Albert le Grand, and discussing the date, textual transmission, orthography, grammar, and lexis of the text. To the text (with translation) they supply eighty-four pages of notes, and full and systematic glossaries of its language, carefully distinguishing Cornish, Latin, French, and English elements in it. Their work is thus a model of organization, accuracy, and completeness. It is also well produced. An attractive detail here is a picture of the ivy-swathed tower of Old Kea church, now all that survives on the site of St Kea’s monastery, by a tidal creek in west Cornwall.

So thoroughly have the editors done their job that they make it easy for others to correct them (at points), and to say more, as follows. I turn firstly to the location of Colan, of which Kea had been archbishop. The editors are here baffled (p. 306). Yet this must be Colfa (in Radnorshire/Powys), which appears in Rhygyfarch’s Life of St David as ‘Coluan’ (var. ‘Colguan’), and in the Welsh life as ‘Collan’. Next, the gods Astrot and Beryth, by which Teudar swears (p. 341). These should be identified as Ashtaroth (or Astarte) and Berith (or Elberith) in the Old Testament. On names of two deer (p. 358), the editors explain these as ‘Little Antler’ and ‘Place of Skin’. The latter is implausible: the form, *Kella*, is surely ‘belly’; cf. Welsh *cylla* ‘belly’ in R. J. Thomas, *Enwau Afonydd a Nentydd Cymru* (Caerdydd 1938), 43. The emendation (p. 365) of *dogga dryton* to ‘dogga Bryton’ (‘Breton drug’) is also unconvincing. Brittany is not known for its pharmacopia. Read *drogga dryton* ‘costly medicines’, which in Welsh would be *drygiau drudion* ‘expensive drugs’. In the text of the translation, the spelling ‘skillful’ (p. 123) is incorrect.

Amongst indirect advances allowed by this edition may be mentioned the monastery of ‘Rosnat’. This figures in lives of early Irish saints, as in that of

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Tigernach, with the phrase ‘in Rosnatensi monasterio, quod alio nomine Alba vocatur’. Since the editors (p. xxxviii) locate le Grand’s ‘Rosené’ and the play’s ‘Rosewa’ as near Old Kea, which was by the later manor of Alba Landa, there is reason (with the emendation ‘in Rosnacensi monasterio’?) to take Old Kea as ‘Rosnat’: a famous sixth-century British monastery and centre of learning, a Cornish precursor of Iona or Jarrow. We can go further. Rhygyfarch’s Life of St David has the phrase ‘in insula in Wincdilantquendi’, of a place where the saint was taught by St Paulinus. The form is corrupt and surely duplicates elements. Now, Thomas and Williams note (pp. xxii-xxiii) that Old Kea appears in early records as Landighe, Landegei, Landegeye, and Landegu. This allows emendation of Rhygyfarch, where a reading ‘in insula Lantocensi’, meaning ‘in the retreat of Llandegu, in the monastery of Old Kea’, would suggest that St David studied in Cornwall, there meeting many Irish saints.

In their work, Graham Thomas and Nicholas Williams add greatly and at a stroke to our knowledge of Celtic hagiography, Cornish language, medieval drama, and Arthurian romance. Rarely does an edition of a text appear which, thanks to the wealth of information that it contains, enables such spectacular advances in scholarship to be made.

Andrew Breeze

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It is a great pleasure to review the Festschrift dedicated to Professor Hildegard L. C. Tristram, a prolific scholar who has contributed immeasurably inter alia to Celtic and medieval studies in general. So vast is the field of her interests that it is inevitable that only a fraction of them should be reflected in this nicely produced volume, which is a fitting start for the new Bonner Beiträge zur Kelteologie. The book opens with Gearóid Mac Eoin’s appreciation of Professor Tristram’s academic career in the context of the fundamental contribution of German scholarship to the development of Celtic studies and more specifically the study of Irish. Mac Eoin aptly praises the personal qualities of Professor Tristram, listing but a few of the beneficiaries of the fruits of her scholarship and of her dedication to teaching. The volume continues with a select bibliography of the recipient of the Festgabe, concentrating on Celtic matters.

We have no doubt that all the contributions to the volume will be of interest to Professor Tristram (including that of Isabel Kobus on American films of the end of the twentieth century, on which we are unqualified to comment, and the interesting discussion of socio-linguistic aspects of Ulster Scots by Gavin Falconer). The majority of the articles will be equally appealing
to the readers of *Celtica*. The lengthiest contributions concern two important Middle Irish poems. Jürgen Schmidt offers a much needed new study of *Réidig dam a Dé do nim / co hémídh a n-indisin* (211-87). He analyses all the available manuscripts in which the poem occurs and provides a facsimile from Royal Irish Academy ms D iv 3 (1224) of the final portion of the poem lacking in Seán Mac Airt’s edition due to the latter’s untimely death. Gisbert Hemprich provides a new edition of *Éri óg inis na náem* with a German translation and comprehensive commentaries — in fact this could furnish a small monograph (289-383). The other contributions to the volume directly concerned with medieval Irish literature include that of Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh which raises many interesting questions about orality and transmission — a subject to which Professor Tristram has contributed over the years — of medieval Irish prayer (69-79). Naoichiro Hirashima contributes an interesting note on cultural issues related to the translation of some medieval Irish terms into Japanese (101-04). This has a practical application not only for Celticists in Japan but also in Aberystwyth where we have several Japanese undergraduates studying Medieval Irish. Feargal Ó Béarra offers a useful study of the ‘negative’ aspects of the early Irish otherworld (81-100). He concentrates on the fusion of native and Christian imagery in the early Middle Irish didactic text *Sláiburcharpat Con Culaind* which features an ‘Unhappy Otherworld’ to set beside the much discussed ‘Happy Otherworld’ of Irish tradition. This contribution follows a recent trend in Irish scholarship in confining itself to Irish data with only cursory mention of medieval Welsh *comparanda* and no references whatsoever to other European vernacular literatures. To cite but one example, the monstrous toads of *Dún Scáith* (91) immediately reminded the present reviewers of the ‘black forked toad’ and other beasts from *Cad Goddau* in the Book of Taliesin (*Legendary poems from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. Marged Haycock, Aberystwyth 2007, 5 36). Erich Poppe (177-95) and Ursula Pritscher (197-200) discuss modern incarnations of the medieval Irish hero Cú Chulainn.

Several contributions examine medieval Irish connections with the wider world. Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel discusses two seventh-century Irish monks venerated in the Black Forest (55-61), while Pádraig Ó Riain studies the inclusion of four Welsh saints in the Tallaght martyrologies against the background of the *Céili Dé* movement in Ireland (63-7). It may be remarked that there is nothing exclusively concerned with Wales in this volume, although two more articles deal comparatively or obliquely with Welsh subjects. Stefan Zimmer discusses Gaulish feminine names in -rix and similar formations in Welsh (109-22), and Britta Schulze-Thulin offers new interpretations of several runic inscriptions from Wales (105-08). There is one item of Breton interest: in a most interesting contribution Dagmar Bronner offers a German translation of a *navigatio* supposedly based on a Breton narrative contained in a chronicle written by Godfrey of Viterbo (123-39).

Two contributions deal with modern Irish issues. Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail presents an edition of the nineteenth-century poem *A lucht iúil na Mumhan*...
maorga, attributed to Peadar Ó Longáin (201-10). The edition is accompanied by German translation and useful notes. Astrid Feiss and Lars Kabel discuss the necessity of using socio-linguistic considerations in Modern Irish linguistic courses. One of the core interests of Professor Tristram — Celtic substrate influence on English — is addressed in the short note by David Clement on vowels in the English of southern Scotland, allegedly influenced by the Brittonic language of that region in the early Middle Ages (141-43). We have no doubt that the recipient of the Festgabe, herself a great educationalist, will appreciate the conclusions drawn by Graham R. Isaac in his consideration of the place of Celtic Studies in modern education and its potential to be a vehicle for enlightenment.

The book is generally free of errors, but pp. 197-199 seem not to have received the editorial attention evident elsewhere. Welsh historians may be surprised to see Llywelyn Fawr referred to as a ‘legendary prince’ (197). A list of corrigenda for Hemprich’s edition of Éri óg inis na náem is issued on a separate slip. Varied and wide-ranging as the contents of this Festgabe are, they could have been broader still taking into consideration the areas of expertise of Professor Tristram barely touched upon here. As we have seen, the contributors to the volume are mostly from Ireland and Germany, and it should be noted that appreciation of Professor Tristram transcends the boundaries of these countries.

ALEXANDER FALILEYEV AND SIMON RODWAY

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The work under review is described (p. ix) in its opening sentence as a product of ‘the old Viking custom of pillage’. Its editor, Diarmaid Ó Muirithe (ÓM below), well-known for his industry in lexical studies, has raided a wide variety of sources in search of all words of Scandinavian origin in the languages of Britain and Ireland, past and present. These sources include the Oxford English Dictionary and Joseph Wright’s English Dialect Dictionary; dictionaries of Scots; Scandinavian dictionaries in the original languages, such as Ivar Aasen’s Norsk Ordbog; and, closer to home, the Dictionary of the Irish Language. The fact that some of the principal works are available in electronic form (the OED on CD-Rom and DIL online) was presumably of great assistance.

The twenty-six pages of the introduction are an interesting and useful essay on the Scandinavians in Britain and Ireland and their linguistic influence. The editor has no truck with recent attempts to play down the violence of the Vikings and emphasise instead their activities as settlers and traders (p. xiii). He holds with (p. xi) the traditional view of ‘[t]heir ferocity, a trait often overlooked by modern scholars in deference to some
silly notions of political correctness’, to which he adds their ‘loathing of Christianity’ (ibid.). Scandinavian settlement and the resulting linguistic influence were at their most intense in those parts of England north of a line roughly from Chester to London, known as the Danelaw, and in northeastern Scotland, including Orkney and Shetland, where a Norse speech known as Norn survived until the eighteenth century; southern England and lowland Scotland ranked next, followed by the Celtic-speaking lands. Among these, the Hebrides, the west coast of Scotland, and the Isle of Man, were the most thoroughly settled, followed by Ireland: Wales and Cornwall were least influenced. Although ‘Wales was invaded time and time again by the Northmen’ (p. xxix), they would appear to have settled to any extent only in south Dyfed. The editor attributes this to the lack of fertile land and navigable rivers, but notes also the success of Welsh kings in repulsing Norse attacks. With regard to the latter, military historians would probably point to short interior lines of communication arising from the compact, two-peninsular, shape of Wales. He regards the ‘highly dangerous’ nature of the Cornish coastline as having deterred Norse raiding to a considerable extent, with the result that they entered instead into peaceful trading relations and even a degree of political alliance with the Cornishmen. Norse attacks on Wessex would appear to have weakened that Anglo-Saxon kingdom for a time, and in AD 722 the defeat of Wessex by a combined army of Cornishmen and Vikings at Padstow helped to forestall the annexation of Cornwall by the English for another century. Owing to this limited Norse involvement in Cornish affairs ÓM concludes that ‘their contribution to the Cornish language was nil’ (p. xxxi). Incidentally, the brief description (p. xxxiv) of how, until the late eleventh century, ‘Scotland was linguistically dominated by Gaelic but this was changed by the incursion of several important groups of immigrants from the twelfth century onward’, omits any reference to Mac Bethad mac Findlaich, Mael Coluim II, or Margaret of Wessex. The anglicization of the Scottish monarchy by Mael Coluim and his English queen was surely crucial to these linguistic developments.

The various islands from the Shetlands and Orkneys south to Man were heavily settled by Vikings of Norwegian origin and Norse linguistic influence in those areas was pervasive. In Lewis and Harris the proportion of Norse to Gaelic placenames is reckoned to be four to one (p. xxxii). Scottish Gaelic words of Norse origin such as nàbaidh ‘neighbour’ (ON ná ‘near’ and bú ‘dweller’), sgruthan ‘stack of hay or corn’ (ON scrúf ‘cornstack’), and rúc, ruc, rucan ‘rick of hay or peat’ (ON hraukr ‘heap) indicate the impact which the Vikings had on daily life in Gaelic Scotland.

Scandinavian settlement in Ireland was largely confined to the coast, where they founded trading towns or developed existing settlements for that purpose. The linguistic influences reflect this. Greene (1966, 25) remarks that, ‘The contribution of Old Norse to Irish is limited to a few specialised fields, such as navigation (stiúir ‘rudder’, tochta ‘thwart’), commerce (margadh ‘market’, scilling ‘shilling’) and dress (bróg ‘shoe’, cnaipe ‘button’); one of the few verbs is leag ‘knock down’, which, however, derives from Old Norse leggja
in the phrase at leggja segl ‘to strike sail’. ÓM remarks (p. xxiv) that ‘[o]ne would think from the lack of seafaring terms in our oldest Irish sources that before the coming of the Vikings we never put out to sea’. The Vikings were not the only ones to supply maritime terms to Irish, consider the various forms of macræl ‘mackerel’, of Romance origin, used in Munster (LASID I, 283). I have always been struck by the term réasac used for ‘undertow’, which was also clearly borrowed from a Romance language (cf. Spanish resaca); it refers to a natural phenomenon which would be obvious to anybody who has ever stood in sea water to knee height. Those who brought an ancestral form of Irish to this island had to use boats to get here, but apart from raiding and settling parts of western Britain and presumably inshore fishing they turned their backs to the sea. The landscape of the island was already agricultural to a large degree as a result of forest clearance by the Neolithic farmers, and the mild climate and fertile soil led to the adoption of a cattle-based pastoral economy which clearly produced a sufficient surplus to satisfy the dominant classes. The Scandinavians did not have such a domestic economic resource, or plentiful source of food, available with the result that their leading men were forced to look further afield and develop the necessary technologies.

The present work documents the lexical fields mentioned by Greene more thoroughly than has been done previously. The first Gaelic words we encounter in this dictionary (all on p. 1) are Scottish Gaelic àbh ‘a nose net’, with its byform tàbh ‘spoon net, landing net’ (apparently through Northern English haaf < ON háfr ‘pock net for herring fishing’; earlier Irish ábur ‘rowlock’ (ON hábora ‘to fit with rowlocks’, plural noun háborur ‘rowlocks’); Scottish Gaelic acairpholl ‘anchorage’, derived from earlier Irish accaire, modern ancaire, Scottish Gaelic acair (ON akkeri ‘anchor’); earlier Irish accarsaid, accarsoids ‘port, harbour, road for ships’ (ON akkerísát or akkerissæti ‘anchoring ground’); earlier Irish achtam ‘brace (of a sail)’ (ON aktaunm ‘brace of sail’). Earlier Irish adastar, modern adhastar ‘halter’ (ON hestr ‘horse’, presumably as part of a phrase or compound referring to this piece of equipment) is the only non-maritime term on this page, but along with pónair ‘bean, bean plant’ (ON baun ‘bean’ pl. baunir), punann ‘sheaf’ (ON bundin ‘sheaf’), it reflects new agricultural techniques and products introduced by the Scandinavians. The word lochta ‘loft’ (ON loft ‘upper room’) names an aspect of house-building which was new to the Irish, but one wonders about the contexts in which words such as glioscarnach ‘sparkling, etc.’ (ON glista ‘to gleam, flash’), scréach ‘shriek, yell’ (ON skrækja ‘screech, yell) were borrowed. The former may of course have been related to the exchange of precious metals, and the names of various fish (e.g. langa ‘ling’, scadán ‘herring’, trosç ‘cod’), and items of equipment doubtless passed into Irish when the things they referred to were traded. The broad rubrics ‘maritime terms’ and ‘trade goods’, which will inevitably overlap at times, will probably account for the great majority of the Norse words in Irish.

One Irish maritime term which might be added is the bird name lóma ‘diver sp.’ (given by both Dineen and Ó Dónaill). The Scottish form loom appears here, but not the Irish equivalent or the English by-form loon, described by
Lockwood (1984, 97) as ‘chiefly northern and East Anglian’, and also used in North America. The word is current in West Kerry, probably referring mainly to the Great Northern Diver Gavia immer. It appears in Fiche blian ag fás (p. 69, where it is spelt lúma, reflecting local pronunciation), along with the (erroneous) tradition that this bird never leaves the water but lays its single egg at sea, holding it between its webbed feet to incubate it. All of these forms are from ON lómr ‘diver’. Another such term is friofac ‘barb of hook’, given by Ó Dónaill; ÓM cites only the Scottish form riofac (ON rifa ‘to tear asunder’). Minor omissions such as these can easily be supplied in a future edition.

This volume is a most valuable contribution to the study of the languages in question, and in an age when university authorities in particular are keen on interdisciplinary studies it seems likely to have a long life span.

REFERENCES


DIARMUID Ó SÉ

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Downham’s analysis of the political ebb and flow of Ívarr and his descendants in Britain and Ireland is ambitious indeed. It spans some 150 years, from their first appearance in the records of these islands to the year 1014, and covers a large geographical expanse. The sources with which the author has had to work are very varied and come with an array of problems ranging from unexplained physical remains to linguistic obscurities. The author is therefore to be congratulated on her efforts to bring together such a complexity of materials. She has made excellent use of archaeological findings, numismatics and personal and place name evidence as well as a wide range of primary sources (in quite a number of languages). She has also consulted a great amount of secondary material. The few criticisms I have are therefore of little or no consequence to the overall achievements of this book.

This is a beautifully and carefully presented publication, which contains very few slips. The spelling of personal and place names is generally consistent and appropriate throughout, with the somewhat peculiar exception of the use of the rather antiquarian ‘Connaught’. The book is very thoroughly footnoted, contains an extensive bibliography, and is therefore very helpful for further research. It also includes a prosopography in an appendix (based on Irish annals alone) and the index is comprehensive (although a random check reveals
that the odd reference, such as those to Glúniarainn on pp. 56–7; Tomrar (in the index under Þórarr), p. 180; Óláfr Cenncairech, p. 104, are not found in it).

The author provides good discussions of the possible interpretations of accounts, identification of people and places, and offers her own suggestions where fitting. This is a true trans-national history as advocated by many medieval historians. Nevertheless, the set-up of the book, chronological along geographically defined areas (namely Ireland, England, North Britain, the Isles and Wales), rather than pure chronological discussion of events (that is, following the dynasty back and forth across the Irish Sea, thus ignoring political and indeed geographical boundaries altogether), was doubtless the best solution. It does, however, mean that it can be hard for the reader to identify individuals of the Ívarr dynasty as they enter the narrative without the help of the family trees which are dispersed throughout the book. The trees are therefore essential, but would perhaps themselves have been easier to refer to regularly if collected at the end of the work, rather than ‘hidden’ within the main body of the text. Even with the trees, identification can be difficult, as personal names often recur within the family and the relationships between the individuals is not always clear from the primary sources.

The tradition of using the term ‘chronicles’ to denote primary sources including annals, though perfectly justified, has certain disadvantages. The author’s use of this term for Irish and Welsh annals (for instance in reference to the Annals of Ulster and The Fragmentary Annals of Ireland, and, among others, to the Annales Cambriae (pp. 93, 204, 206, etc.)) conceals to some extent the skill and amount of work involved in the completion of this book. The construction of a narrative from annals is no easy task, because as a rule they do not contain cause and effect in their accounts, but merely recount events. Chronicles (in the narrow sense of the term), however, are more likely to contain the author’s views and prejudices and therefore require close critical reading and interpretation, skills that Downham has mastered as well. Downham’s own rather factual and ‘bare’ account of events in Ireland is a result of having to rely on the surviving annals. The availability of chronicles for other geographical areas makes her narrative for these regions a little more accessible.

The conclusion is a mere four pages long, and I suspect many a reader would like to have seen a more elaborate summary of the dynasty’s fortunes. But regardless of these very minor imperfections, Downham’s study truly is an academic feat. It reveals the interconnectedness of events in Britain and Ireland which many have overlooked, and thus shows what can be achieved when the focal point is not based on geographical boundaries. Downham provides both students and scholars with a solid handbook, and an excellent basis from which to develop further lines of research.

Freya Verstraten Veach

University of Hull
These two handsome volumes, hard-backed and double-columned in A4 format, are a major contribution to a very broad range of current research in Celtic Studies. Remarkably, it has taken the editor and the contributors just over two years from the time of the Congress in Bonn to produce these two volumes, containing over 600 pages, and all are to be congratulated warmly for this. The present reviewer has no competence in archaeological matters, and will confine himself to commenting on volume two of the Proceedings. The range of countries in which the contributors carry out their research shows that Europe is a true centre for Celtic Studies—Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland are all represented here, as well as Israel and the United States of America.

The sheer range of topics covered in this volume, and the detail in which they are treated, makes it impracticable for a reviewer to comment on each article in any detail. The purpose here will be simply to bring to the readers’ notice the subject matter of each contribution as indicated by its title. (The titles of articles as printed in the Inhalt to volume two are sometimes shortened versions of the titles as printed at the beginning of each article; I give only the full versions in the lists below.) I have classified the articles thematically; a procrustean approach this may be, but I hope it will enable readers to quickly identify their areas of specialist interest and to note what is of relevance to their own research.

Volume two has a foreword by the editor of Proceedings, and also contains the text of the Inaugural Address to the Congress of the then Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív, TD.


Folklore. Elizabeth A. Gray, ‘“Straw boys” and “Straw bears”: straw costume and calendar custom in Irish and Germanic tradition’ 63–9; Brian Lacey, ‘A survival of Lug’s cult in West Donegal’ 135–38.


Collis’s article ‘Redefining the Celts’ deserves a special mention in this review since its subject matter touches on a central issue in Celtic Studies, namely what we mean by the terms ‘the Celts’ and ‘Celtic’. Yet, this reviewer is of the opinion that the article strays too much from its title, and gets diverted into an ‘us and them’ approach to the issue. On the one hand are the self-styled ‘New Celticists’, otherwise known as the ‘Celtosceptics’, and on the other, the ‘traditionalists’. Collis maintains a steady stream of intemperate language when commenting on the traditionalists: ‘blatant attempts at misinformation
by some of the protagonists of more traditional approaches’ (p. 33); ‘I am unclear why the traditionalists are so desperate to prove that the Britons were Celts’ (p. 36); ‘they [Gillies & Harding 2005b] paternalistically state the aim of their paper’ (p. 36). And one needs to step aside in the presence of a man who is an attacker and a demolisher: ‘Many years ago I made an attack on the way in which the terms Hallstatt and La Tène are conceived (Collis 1986), and I hope we can go one step further in the demolition of the concept of Hallstatt and La Tène “Cultures”,’ (p. 41). Towards the end of the article, Collis resorts to highly exaggerated language, in his description of his own role in the debate: ‘I do not claim that everyone is a convert, indeed in the case of some individuals I feel like an Evolutionist arguing with Creationists, or a George Buchanan trying to replace myth and prejudice with reasoned argument!’ Ironically, statements such as the ones just quoted may be a major distraction for the reader who attempts to determine what the New Celticists’ ‘redefinition’ of the Celts is. It is the impression of this reader that Collis’s article is so taken up with ‘messengers’, that its ‘message’ becomes blurred.

The value of Collis’s article lies in the number of issues that he raises; these are many and complex, and among them are: Latin and Greek sources that are relevant to questions concerning the Celts (pp. 33–5, 37); date of arrival of Indo-European languages in Britain and Ireland (p. 33); were the ancient inhabitants of Britain and Ireland Celts? (pp. 33–5); supposed correlation between ethnicity, language and material culture (p. 33); the word ‘Celt’ a term of denigration (p. 33); ‘in the Classical world Celtic was an ethnic concept’ (p. 35); the term celtice refers to ‘the language spoken by ethnic Celts’ (p. 35); area of origin of the Celts and areas into which they spread (p. 34); ‘Irish records cannot be used to reconstruct societies in Gaul in the 1st century BC’ (p. 38); study of social and political structures can be informed by methodologies of social anthropology (p. 38); evidence from coinage (p. 38); destroying ‘assumed correlations such as “Celtic” = “speaking a Celtic language” = “La Tène Culture and Art” ’ (p. 39); ‘the major genetic characteristics of much of the population of Britain and Ireland were established at the time of the colonisation at the end of the Glacial period’ (pp. 33, 39). Cutting across this group of issues, and interspersed among them, are remarks on the ‘Modern Celts’ (pp. 33–6, 39–41). The obvious disadvantage with raising so many issues in a relatively short paper is that they can only be treated fleetingly.

Given the complexity of the debate surrounding everything to do with the Celts it is likely that a great deal more will be written on this highly complex matter. It is a reasonable assumption to make that traditionalists and non-traditionalists alike will have valid and important things to say in the matter of the definition of the term ‘Celts’, and that future work in this area will be based on an amalgam of the best ideas from both groups.

MALACHY McKENNA

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In April 2007, during the preliminary test excavations on the route planned for the M6 motorway from Ballinasloe to Athlone, three large structural timbers and other timber debris were discovered in shallow peat deposits in the townland of Kilbegly, Co. Roscommon. It was immediately suspected that this was the site of an early medieval watermill, and a full excavation was carried out between May and September 2007 by Valerie J Keeley Ltd for Galway County Council, Roscommon County Council and the National Roads Authority. The excavation was directed by Neil Jackman, with on-site specialist assistance from Caitríona Moore, who recorded the worked timbers.

Ireland is rich in early medieval watermill sites, with about one hundred and thirty having been recorded to date. However, as Colin Rynne notes in his chapter ‘Mills and milling in medieval Ireland’ (pp. 115–47), most of these have not been properly excavated. The excavation of the Kilbegly site is therefore an important event in the annals of Irish archaeology, and the book does full justice to the significance of the finds, in a manner which is accessible to specialist and non-specialist readers alike.

Particularly striking is the state of preservation of the finds. The front cover portrays the well-preserved oak wheel-hub, and the back cover contains an illustration of one of the mill-wheel paddles which fitted into the hub. The introductory chapter by Martin Jones and Jerry O’Sullivan provides a background to the excavation of the water-mill, with comments on the other archaeological sites in the area, which include a cereal-drying kiln. In chapter 2, Neil Jackman gives a general account of the various parts of the mill, generously illustrated with colour photographs and drawings. The massive flume which conducted the water from the millpond to the undercroft was made from a single oak timber, hollowed out and supplied with a detachable sliding lid secured by six wooden pegs. The aperture-plate at the end of the flume was carved out of yew-wood, doubtless chosen for its water-resistant qualities. Radio-carbon dates on various timber finds indicate that the mill was constructed in the eighth or ninth century AD.

In chapter 3, Caitríona Moore and Ellen O Carroll provide a study of the wood-working techniques employed and the sourcing of the timber from local woodlands. Most of the structural timbers were identified as oak (Quercus), as was a skillfully fashioned spade which may have been used to shovel grain in the mill. Nine other wood types were also recorded. Hazel (Corylus) was clearly preferred for the wattling rods used in the post-and-wattle fences used in the construction of the water-courses. As pointed out (p. 58), both oak and hazel feature in the Old Irish tree-list as ‘nobles of the wood’. In the next chapter, ‘Environment, flora and fauna’, five specialist authors describe the animal and plant remains recorded at the site. It is noteworthy that barley-pollen predominates in the over-flow channel (p. 73), which fits in with
the early Irish written evidence which devotes more attention to barley (OIr éornae) than to other cereals. In chapter 5, Caitríona Devane gives a comprehensive account of the history of Kilbegly and its environs. She states that ‘it may be that Kilbegly is called after a saint called Bécc Bile or Beighbile’. From the evidence assembled by Pádraig Ó Riain in *A Dictionary of Irish Saints* (Dublin 2011, 91–2 s.v. Beag Bile), it is clear that the first vowel is short — Becc, later Beag — as in the traditional pronunciation of the placename. She also proposes two alternative explanations, neither of which is convincing. These are *Cill Bh[h]ile* ‘the church of the tree’ and *Cill Bh[h]iggile* ‘the church of the vigil’. In the latter case, *bigil* ‘vigil’ is a late borrowing from English, and therefore inapplicable. Earlier borrowings of Latin *vigilia* have initial *f*-rather than *b*—; the OIr forms are *figel(l)* and *féil* (which probably reached the language through Welsh: see Damian McManus, ‘A chronology of the Latin loan-words in early Irish’, *Ériu* 34 (1983) 21–71, at p. 63 fn. 131).

Chapter 6 holds special interest for the student of early Irish legal and social history. Colin Rynne notes that Kilbegly is the first spring-fed early medieval Irish mill to have been excavated, and points out (p. 119) that its discovery sheds new light on the use of the term *topur* ‘well’ in the OIr law-text *Di Chetharslicht Athgabál* ‘on the four divisions of distraint’. Here *topur* is given as the first of the ‘eight parts which serve a mill’ (for the OIr text, see D. A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (CIH) (Dublin 1978) ii 374.19–20). He refers also to *Coibnes Uisci Thairidne* (CU) ‘kinship of conducted water’, a law-text on water-mills which Binchy edited and translated in *Ériu* 17 (1955) 52–85 (= CIH ii 457.11–462.18), and dated to the seventh century. Rynne draws attention to the manner in which texts such as *CU* ‘accurately describe contemporary conditions’ (p. 120), and provides a thought-provoking discussion on the regulation in *CU* § 10 which allows for a mill-race to be cut through a neighbour’s land, even against his will (though he can subsequently claim rent or a share in the use of the mill). He observes (p. 122): ‘Unless the intervening land was subdivided into tiny plots, it is difficult to see how the potential legal difficulties of digging a mill-race, as described in *CU*, could have been a frequent occurrence’. His reservations are eminently reasonable. However, the authors of the law-texts often include rare or unlikely eventualities alongside activities which must have been commonplace — this characteristic is in the nature of law-making, and can be paralleled from many other legal codes, ancient and modern. Furthermore, it is probable that the author’s motivation was also to stress the importance of mills to society. Whether owned by a monastery or by a private individual or individuals, a mill was regarded as being of economic and social benefit to the community. Landowners were therefore expected to co-operate with any such venture. Rynne notes that this obligation did not apply to land owned by a lord or king, or by the church, or to a graveyard.

Finally, it should be noted that the fine quality of the craftsmanship exhibited in the Kilbegly finds is consistent with the status enjoyed by the millwright (OIr sáer muilinn) in early Irish society. In the law-text on status *Uraicecht Becc*, he is given an honour-price of seven *séts*, the same as that of
the builder of a wooden church, a boat-builder, or a manufacturer of articles in yew-wood (CIH v 1615.22–38). This places him at the level of a low-ranking lord (aire désa).

The book is attractively printed and set out, and I have already referred to the high quality of the photographs and drawings. My one quibble relates to the binding, which strikes me as rather flimsy and liable to come adrift.

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In a note to the reader (p. xii), the author expresses the hope that his book will be of interest both to scholars of Celtic literature and to historians of astrology. He has certainly been successful in his first objective. His second is more difficult to accomplish, not because of any shortcomings in his own research or the manner in which he has presented it, but because of the uneven recording of astronomical events in Irish and Welsh sources. Thus, he notes that the observations of celestial phenomena by early Irish annalists in many cases accurately reflect historical eclipses and comets, and that some of the comets mentioned in fifteenth-century Welsh prophetic poetry likewise belong to the world of scientific reality. On the other hand, most of the celestial signs which he discusses are unequivocally fictional. He is thus presented with the recurring problem of how to weave different types of material into a coherent whole.

His strategy is to divide his material into five chapters, each largely self-contained, and then to draw the various threads together in a short afterword. His first chapter deals with ‘Celestial portents and apocalypticism in medieval Ireland’, and here he points to the ‘apocalyptic anxieties that characterized much of early medieval Irish religious experience and expression’. These astronomers were not gazing at the heavens purely as a hobby or out of scientific curiosity but to find indicators of the imminent ending of the world. He expresses his indebtedness to Daniel McCarthy and the late Aidan Breen, who assembled the evidence in their pioneering study ‘Astronomical observations in the Irish annals and their motivation’ in Peritia 11 (1997) 1–43. I would certainly go along with McCarthy and Breen in linking the record of the appearance of a round tower of fire (cloïctheach tenedh) at the monastery of Ros Ela in 1054 with the Crab Nebula supernova, but perhaps they enter too far into the realms of speculation when they seek to identify the monstrous black bird which appeared on this occasion with the Morrígan, the Irish war-goddess (pp. 4–5).

Chapter 2, entitled ‘Druids, cloud-divination, and the portents of Antichrist’, starts with a discussion of the form of divination known as néladóracht ‘cloud-divination’, ascribed to druids and prophets in some Irish
literary texts. Dr Williams points out that his is the first analysis of this form of divination for over century. He makes the interesting suggestion (p. 35) that the portrayal of the druid Mug Ruith in the Middle Irish text Forbuis Droma Damhghaire draws strongly on the Antichrist legend, perhaps to satirical effect. He goes on to deal judiciously with the question of whether the early Irish druid (OIr druí, Lat. magus) was actually an astrologer, and cautions against over-reliance on the well-known passage in the mid-seventh-century Vita Prima S. Brigitae which refers to the druid foster-father of Brigit who was accustomed to contemplate the stars of heaven throughout the entire night. On p. 42 (fn. 28) he refers to the mysterious term mathmarc ‘prophet, astrologer’, which has never been satisfactorily explained. I doubt if there can be any influence from Lat. mathematicus, as he diffidently proposes.

Next, he turns his attention to the Welsh material, and entitles Chapter 3 ‘Taliesin and Geoffrey of Monmouth’s astrological portents’. He starts by examining the references to astrology and cosmological learning found in poems in the fourteenth-century Welsh manuscript known as the ‘Book of Taliesin’. He compares this material with references to astrology in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Prophetiae Merlini ‘Prophecies of Merlin’, composed before 1135, and in his Vita Merlini ‘Life of Merlin’, which is dated to 1148–51. On p. 76 he contemplates the possibility of ‘a persistent memory of Brythonic druidism through the centuries since the Roman conquest’, but — correctly in my view — opts for the alternative that ‘it is more logical to search for explanations for the cosmological material in the Book of Taliesin within a medieval context’. In Chapter 4 he looks at ‘Comets, portents and astrology in late medieval Wales’, and provides a study of the astrological poems of Dafydd Nanmor (fl. 1450–90). Originally from Gwynedd, this poet spent his life after 1453 in the south under the patronage of Rhys ap Maredudd of Tywyn. Dr Williams draws attention to the close relationship between medieval medicine and astrology, and notes the work carried out on this topic by Morfydd Owen. He provides a detailed account of Nanmor’s cywydd to God and Saturn, illustrating the often malign effect of this planet on human affairs.

He devotes his last chapter to the remarkable career of the Welsh Puritan mystic Morgan Llwyd of Gwynedd (1619–59). Bilingual in Welsh and English, he composed poetry and prose of high quality in both languages. His work contains a distinct strain of millenarianism, with the imminence of the Second Coming being frequently impressed upon the reader. Of special significance is his 172-stanza poem entitled Gwyddor Vchod, for which Dr Williams suggests the translation ‘Essential knowledge concerning the Heavens Above’. As in the material discussed in Ch. 4, the connection between astrology and medicine is often stressed; for example, the planet Venus is associated with the kidneys, Jupiter with the liver, and Mars with the ‘fiery bile’.

Dr Williams’s book is informative, comprehensive, and stylishly written. In a field in which so much nonsense has appeared in print (see pp. xxv–xxviii for some egregious examples of pseudo-scholarship relating to ‘Celtic
Astrology’), his sober analysis of the evidence comes as a profound relief. A few colour-plates might have further enlivened the book, but at least the dust-jacket is in colour and shows the top half of the remarkable Homo Signorum or ‘Zodiacal Man’ from National Library of Wales ms 3026C. The fuzzy black-and-white (or rather, grey-and-white) reproduction of this drawing on p. 112 does not do justice to the splendour of the original.

Some of Dr Williams’s footnotes read rather oddly. For example, in fn. 53 on p. xxix he states that the title of Forbuis Droma Damhghaire might be rendered more literally ‘The Siege of Deer’s-Laugh Ridge’. He then adds that he has used the spelling Damhghaire ‘in preference to the more strictly accurate Dámhgháire’. I have had much acquaintance with deer over the years, but have never heard one utter any sound which could be described as a ‘laugh’.

In the entry under damaire in the Dictionary of the Irish language, Carl Marstrander gives the meaning ‘a bellowing or roaring of a stag’, and notes rhyming examples indicating -gaire rather than -gáire. Dámh- in this footnote is a misprint for Damh-.

Another footnote also causes concern. This is fn. 10 on p. 3, where it is stated that díthgréin must be a compound of grian ‘sun’ and díthin ‘act of lapsing, forfeiture’ or its related adjective díthech ‘wanting, deficient, needy’. In fact, díthin is verbal noun of do-tuit (di-tuit) ‘becomes forfeit’, and has no connection with the masc. (probably originally neut.) o-stem díth ‘loss, destruction, absence’. The adj. díthech ‘wanting, deficient’ is formed from díth. Perhaps the original entry was díth gréine ‘loss (i.e. eclipse) of the sun’: compare the phrase in grian do dhith a soilse ‘the sun quenching its light’, which he quotes on p. 27 from In Tenga Bithnua. At p. 18 fn. 67, read fiarfaigh for fiarfraigh.

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This book consists of a collection of nineteen essays offered to Thomas Charles-Edwards by former students and colleagues on the occasion of his retirement in 2011 from the Jesus Chair of Celtic at the University of Oxford. The essays have been arranged thematically into three sections, viz. ‘History, archaeology and epigraphy’ ‘Law and institutions’, ‘Literature’.

Section One (‘History, archaeology and epigraphy’) opens with a contribution by Susan Youngs, ‘Cloud-cuckoo land? Some Christian symbols from post-Roman Britain’ (pp. 1-16), which describes and analyses the various types of ornamentation to be found on hanging-bowls from a variety of seventh-century archaeological sites in Britain. Youngs notes: ‘Hanging-bowls were decorated in a variation of styles, ranging from Roman
to native, from Celtic revival to Germanic influenced, and among the motifs used is the Christian symbol of the cross, represented in different modes’ (4). The article is illustrated with line drawings of some of the artefacts in question. Clare Stancliffe, ‘Columbanus’s monasticism and the sources of his inspiration: from Basil to the Master?’ (17-28), sets out to examine the extent to which Columbanus’s writings and his general approach to monasticism were influenced by his time spent on the Continent and his reading of Continental ecclesiastic authors. She cites the influence on Columbanus of the Rule of Basil (21), the writings of St. Jerome (22) and those of Faustus and Caesarius (22-3). She also examines the extent to which Columbanus may have drawn on the Benedictine Rule and the Regula Magistri (23-5). Finally the author notes that prior to his sojourn on the Continent, ‘Columbanus had read most of these sources for himself, in Ireland’ (27). Catherine Swift, ‘Early Irish priests within their own localities’ (29-40), examines the evidence in the sources, both Latin and vernacular, for the role of priests within their local communities in early Ireland. Topics analysed include the role of priests as judges (29-31), clerical celibacy (35), the income of clerical households (36-8) and compensation due to clerics for wrongdoings (39). She concludes that ‘local priests can be classified as integral members of the governing classes who controlled early Irish túatha while at the same time proclaiming the teaching and values of the Christian Church in a secular world’ (40). David N. Dumville, ‘political organisation in Dál Riata’ (41-52), revisits previous scholarship (especially that of Richard Sharpe) on the political make-up of Dál Riata (42-45). This would appear to indicate that in the sixth and seventh centuries a single dynasty ruled the entire kingdom. Dumville proposes a re-examination of the sources (especially the annals and the genealogies, at pp. 45-51). He notes that the evidence of these sources reveals ‘a complex and layered polity’ (51) and concludes ‘There is nothing in the Dalriadic record . . . to suggest that the model of tuatha, mórthuatha and cóiced is inappropriate’ (51).

A joint contribution by Elizabeth O’Brien and Edel Bhreathnach, ‘Irish boundary ferta, their physical manifestation and historical context’, is in two parts. In part I (53-9) O’Brien explores the archaeological evidence and physical manifestation of three ferta sites. In part II (59-64) Bhreathnach details the historical and topographical context of the same sites. The word fert is defined as ‘an ancestral burial place which often, but not always, involves the re-use of an already existing burial monument’ (55). The sites in question are (a) Ballymacaward, Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, (b) Eelweir, Leinhinch near Clara, Co. Offaly, (c) Holdenstown, Co. Kilkenny. The authors conclude that their study of these sites ‘brings to light the valuable evidence of burials for our understanding of late prehistoric and early medieval Irish society’ (64). O. J. Padel, ‘Asser’s parochia of Exeter’ (65-72) analyses a passage in Asser’s Life of King Alfred describing the gifting of Exeter to Asser. In particular he attempts to refine the correct translation of the term parochia in the Latin text. He concludes that ‘the balance of interpretation is that by Exeter’s parochia . . . in Saxonia et in Conubia Asser meant estates
Nancy Edwards, ‘Viking sculpture in north-west Wales: Wealth, power, patronage and the Christian landscape’ (73-87) consists of an examination of the forty or so stone sculptures found in north-west Wales, especially Anglesey and dating from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. The author discusses the dating and chronology of the sculptures along with their forms, distribution and geology (74-80). She considers the ecclesiastical significance of the location of the stones (80-1) and speculates on the wealth and patronage that was responsible for their production (81-2). The essay concludes with an attempt to use these sculptures to throw light on ‘the complex and changing networks of political power, both native and Viking, evidenced in the written sources’ (82-7). Thomas Owen Clancy, ‘Iona v. Kells: Succession, jurisdiction and politics in the Columban familia in the later tenth century’ (89-101), details the activities of Amlaíb Cuarán (d. 980), ‘one of the first truly “embedded” kings of the Gaill in Ireland’ (90). He describes and analyses the ‘ecclesiastical and . . . secular dimensions of the jockeying for power’ (91) between Iona and Kells which is evident in the latter half of the tenth century. He concludes with some remarks on the dating of Bethu Adomnán (100-1).

Marie Therèse Flanagan, ‘A twelfth-century indulgence granted by an Irish bishop at Bath priory’ (103-14), notes the existence in a twelfth-century cartulary at the Benedictine cathedral priory at Bath of an indulgence granted by a ‘Marcus Cluanensis episcopus’ (103). She attempts to identify the Marcus in question along with the Irish diocese he may have been connected to (105-10). She also speculates on why the Irish Bishop Marcus was in Britain at the time (111-13). A diplomatic text of the indulgence and a translation into English are provided in an appendix (114). Huw Pryce, ‘Gerald of Wales, Gildas and the Descriptio Kambriae’ (115-24), sets out to examine what he takes to be two important aspects of the Descriptio Kambriae by Gerald of Wales. Firstly, he stresses the historical dimension of the work: ‘a key premise of the Descriptio is that the Welsh of the late twelfth century were an ancient people whose distant origins had left a deep and enduring imprint on their character’ (117). Secondly, he traces the influence of Gildas’s De Excidio Britonum on Gerald’s work (118-22). He also considers how Gerald’s position as a royal clerk at the time of composition of the Descriptio Kambriae may have influenced his approach to his subject-matter (123).

Section Two (‘Law and institutions’) opens with a paper by Roy Flechner, ‘Patrick’s reasons for leaving Britain’ (125-33), who examines the question as to why Patrick was suspected by some of travelling to Ireland for the purpose of personal gain. He bases his analysis on material contained in the saint’s Confessio and his Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus. The Confessio tells of Patrick’s return to Ireland to undertake his mission ‘taking with him sufficient funds to enable him to pay Irish kings and judges’ (129). Flechner speculates on the sources of this wealth and how it may have come to Patrick. He concludes that by leaving Britain and setting himself up in Ireland Patrick ensured that his family’s wealth was not ‘depleted through the underwriting of
taxes or malicious lawsuits’ (133). Robin Chapman Stacey, ‘Learning law in medieval Ireland’ (135-44), analyses the Old Irish law-tract *Berrad Airechta* with a view to establishing what light this text throws on early Irish legal education. While noting that the text provides insights into oral legal training (137-9), the familiarity of the compiler of *Berrad Airechta* with texts such as *Bretha for Macslechtaib, Córus Fiadnaise* and *Crith Gablach* and his ability to utilise them for pedagogic purposes is stressed (139-40). As the author notes: ‘written texts, whether learned by ear or by eye, lay at the very heart of the instruction taking place’ (141). Wendy Davis, ‘Holding court: judicial presidency in Brittany, Wales and northern Iberia in the Middle Ages’ (145-54), consists of a survey of those who presided over judicial courts in the three named jurisdictions during the Middle Ages. The vocabulary attached to this position and the functions of the holder or holders in each jurisdiction are described, compared and contrasted.

Sara Elin Roberts, ‘The Iorwerth Triads’ (155-64), investigates the manuscript tradition of triads in the Iorwerth redaction of the Welsh laws. Legal triads are a common feature of all Welsh legal manuscripts. However, as the author notes, ‘the Iorwerth redaction does not include a large triad collection’ (157). She investigates why this is so, arguing that ‘the low number of triads in total in the Iorwerth manuscripts reflects a difference in the structure and arrangement of the redaction’ (157). She concludes: ‘Triads are an important feature of the law-tracts, and this is true in Iorwerth as well as in the Blegywryd and Cynferth’ (164).

Fergus Kelly, ‘The recovery of stolen property: notes on legal procedure in Gaelic Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man’ (165-71) first reviews the information relating to the recovery of stolen cattle contained in the fourteenth-century legal treatise ascribed to Gioll na Naomh Mac Aodhagáin (165-7). He goes on to compare the function of the *deorad Dé,* ‘exile of God’ of the Old Irish law-tracts with that of the *deóradh* (Scots *dewar*) found in Scottish Gaelic sources (167-9). Finally, he discusses the Scottish Gaelic term *toschedarach* (Manx *toshiagh jioarey*), the various forms of which he would derive from *tóiseach deóradh,* whose functions, he notes, ‘relate to the administration or enforcement of the law, corresponding to such offices as coroner, sheriff or serjeant’ (171). Bronagh Ní Chonaill, ‘Contentious kinship: the penumbra of established kinship in medieval Irish law’ (173-82), begins by stressing the importance of the status of the child at birth in mediaeval Irish law: ‘A person’s legal worth and status at birth could determine not only the manner of upbringing, but also ultimately a person’s legal standing and the nature and extent of any involvement within the community’ (173). Issues such as the status of the union which produced the child and the timing of conception are examined (173-6). Procedures for determining kin affiliation of the child, such as oath-making and the establishment of the similarity of physical features, are also described (178-81).

Charlene M. Eska in her paper, ‘Marriage by purchase in early Irish law’ (183-91), claims that ‘the concept of the husband purchasing his wife may be more of a linguistic and terminological artefact than a reflection of reality’
(183). She argues against the evidence for marriage by purchase found in two tales from the Irish mythological cycle (The ‘Milesian Invasion’ tract and Tochmarc Étaíne) and in the law tract Gúbretha Caratniad (183-7). She concludes that what these sources describe ‘is not marriage by actual purchase, but the “purchase” of the legal rights to protect the wife and to receive compensation for injury done to her’ (190).

Section Three (‘Literature’) begins with a paper by Elva Johnston, ‘Kingship made real? Power and the public world in Longes Mac nUislenn’ (193-206), who analyses the themes and characters of the early Irish saga Longes Mac nUislenn and attempts to place it in its societal and cultural environment. She notes that ‘the interplay between kingship, law and power is of utmost importance to the narrative’ (202), and concludes that the tale illustrates the imperfection as opposed to the utopian nature of early Irish kingship (206). Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Mongán’s metamorphosis: Compert Mongán ocus serc Duibe Lacha do Mongán, a later Mongán tale’ (207-16), provides an analysis of an Early Modern romantic tale regarding Mongán and his wife, Dub Lacha. She speculates on possible sources for the tale (209-12), and discusses its characterisation and major themes (212-14). Regarding the date of composition of the text the author notes that ‘its religious sentiments accord well with fifteenth-century concerns pertaining to the perceived laxity of clergy, both secular and in religious orders’ (215).

Maredudd ap Huw provides ‘A bibliography of the writings of Thomas Charles-Edwards’ (217-24). This is followed by an Index (225-36). The book concludes with a Tabula Gratulatoria (237-8).

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