New Term, New Members!

FMRSI welcomes new membership applications from established academics, graduate students and independent scholars who research in the field of medieval and/or early modern studies, based on the island of Ireland or who may have graduated from an Irish university. Further details on membership and a membership form can be found on our website: http://fmrsi.wordpress.com.

We currently have a community of 172 members; a full list can be accessed on our site at: http://fmrsi.wordpress.com/members/. Each member is given an individual a profile page, which can be regularly updated on request, and we offer access to publications such as Óenach: Reviews; Cuttings, our bi-monthly newsletter; and the most up-to-date job postings and news on our website, on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/ForumMRSI?ref=bookmarks) and on our Twitter feed (@FMRSI).

Queries? Don’t hesitate to contact us on medrenforum@gmail.com.
Óenach: Reviews

We are always keen to have new reviewers contribute to our review journal, Óenach, which is published twice-yearly and edited by Ann Buckley. We would like to encourage members to suggest titles for review in order to maintain wide representation of international scholarship and while members of the Forum are always welcome to write reviews we also, for the same reason, welcome specialist reviewers who may not be affiliated to the Forum.

The journal can be accessed here: http://oenach.wordpress.com/reviews/, and anyone interested in suggesting titles for review should contact Ann by email: oenach.reviews@gmail.com.

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Inaugural James Lydon Lecture in Medieval History and Culture, Trinity College Dublin, 21-23 October 2014

The inaugural James Lydon Lecture in Medieval History and Culture will be a public lecture on the topic of “Enslavement, War and Chivalry in Irish & European History” delivered by Professor John Gillingham in Trinity College Dublin on Tuesday 21 October at 7pm.

In addition, two seminars led by Professor Gillingham will also be held in Trinity College Dublin on this topic:

- Wednesday 22 October, 5.30pm: The Peace of God, the Laws of War and Non-Combatant Immunity of Women
- Thursday 23 October, 5.30pm: Slaving in European Warfare from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages

All are welcome but places on the seminars are limited. Bookings can be made at https://lydonlectures.eventbrite.co.uk
A Brief History of Lann meic Luacháin

by Gavin Dillon

While many ecclesiastical institutions around Ireland have received much scholarly attention regarding their literary output, historical day-to-day affairs and historical record, this attention remains largely focussed on wealthy, powerful and influential centres (Kells, Clonmacnoise, Durrow, Armagh, Clonard etc.). Often overshadowed entirely are the numerous small monastic sites dotted throughout the country and, indeed, in abundance in the Irish midlands. There are a number of reasons for this, ranging from the incorporation of these oft-vulnerable sites into the folds of larger, expansionist communities to the great dearth of material either produced by smaller church communities or making mention of them. One such church is Lann meic Luacháin (hereafter Lann), today Lynn, approximately two miles south of Mullingar in present-day County Westmeath, located in the heart of the Irish midlands. The present essay seeks to give a brief overview of how different sources can be combined and contrasted to fill in gaps left by each other, piecing together a patchwork of information which gives this largely anonymous church close to a millennium of active pastoral care within its community.

The chief source of information regarding Lann is its sole surviving literary output, *Betha Cholmáin maic Luacháin* (*BCh*), an account of the Life of its founder-saint, Colmán. This hagiographical work is largely concerned with property claims, taxes and dues and was written mainly as a work of record and propaganda by a minor ecclesiastical institution largely overlooked by other sources. Its sole copy, originally composed towards the beginning of the twelfth century, survives in a manuscript now held in Rennes, dating from the fourteenth or fifteenth century. It remains one of the longest works of hagiography in the Irish language, yet has been virtually ignored in modern scholarship due to its supposedly outrageous propagandist tendencies, together with the fact that its protagonist, Colmán, is an obscure figure virtually unattested in other sources. However, careful investigation reveals far more incidental historical information about the church which produced it than would be supposed.

*BCh* notes the foundation of the church of Lann as occurring in the seventh century. How accurate this can be, given its twelfth-century date of composition, is impossible to speculate upon. However, this time period seems generally likely, given the plethora of church-building occurring during this time. The manuscript copy of the Life also contains a description of the secretion of the relics of the saint in response to the arrival of the Viking Tugéis/Turgesius in the middle of the ninth century. They were subsequently ‘rediscovered’ in 1122, either in

*continued* ...
response to, or as cause for, the creation of the saint’s Life. Further to this, numerous incidental
details are mentioned in the Life, such as the building of a causeway across the nearby bog,
which can be confirmed, by reference to archaeological studies of the area, as having occurred
in the first quarter of the twelfth century.

A short postscript to the Life, as it exists in the later manuscript, provides a description of the
various individuals and family groups who held important offices in the community at the
time the relics of the saint were unearthed, including that of archinneck, priest and artisan
goldsmith. Such detail points to a thriving, if small, ecclesiastical community in the early
twelfth century.

Annal references also serve to fill in some of the blanks concerning Lann’s history. The Annals
of Ulster note the obit of an abbot of the church, Mael Brigde mac Feadacháin, in 929.
Numerous annal sources agree that the relics of the saint were unearthed in 1122, the year to
which most of the historical sources make reference (though details are scant). A later
expression of outrage regarding of the burning of the church at Lann by a local ruler,
Muirchertach Óg mac Eochagáin, is recorded for 1394. This notes also that the principal
clergyman at this time was Thomas Carpentere, who died in the year 1400.

Brief mention of Lann is to be found in ecclesiastical taxation records of the early fourteenth
century. Mention is made of specific taxes payable by Lann to the deanery of Mullingar
between the years 1302 and 1306. The deanery of Mullingar, in the diocese of Meath, included
the ‘Union of Moyliscar, Lynn (Lann), Carrick, Kilbridge Veston, Kilbridge Pilate, Enniscoffey
and Castlelost’. Further historical records pertaining to the diocese of Meath note that the
parishes of Moyliscar, Lann and Carrick amalgamated late in the seventeenth century. Further
historical records also survive to illuminate a gap of more than two hundred and fifty years
between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is a list of the deans at Lann up to its
amalgamation with Moyliscar and Carrick. While at first this provides little more than a list of
names and years of succession on death, it clearly demonstrates that Lann did continue as an
active, if somewhat damaged, church after its late fourteenth-century conflagration. There are
minor gaps in the list, but it is nevertheless possible to claim that Lann was an active church
from the deanship of Thomas Carpentere to that of Edmund Burke, who took office in 1666.

While imperfect, these sources nevertheless offer us great insight into a thousand years of
history of a minor church in the midlands of Ireland which otherwise may have been lost to
lost or overlooked entirely. It is a mere starting point, but highlights the scope for research into
the histories and personnel of lesser churches and the people to whom they administered, and
opportunity to reveal their stories.
### Overview of the history of Lann

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Century</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th (Probably)</td>
<td>Lann meic Luacháin is founded. The founder’s relics remain at Lann.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>In the middle of the century the relics are hidden away to protect them from theft or destruction by the Vikings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>Máel Brigde mac Feadacáin, abbot of Lann dies in 929 (AFM).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>The relics of Colmán are re-introduced to the community at Lann. The shrine is repaired by Giolla Crist Ua Mocháin. A new Life of the patron saint is composed from previous traditions and newer material. Giolla Crist Mac Giolla Pátraic is airchínnech of Lann. Tuathail mac Giolla Colum is priest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13th / 14th</td>
<td>Lann becomes a parish under the deanery of Mullingar, and is subject to taxation by it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>The church at Lann is burned, along with the relics of Colmán, in 1394 by Muirchertach Óg mac Eochagáin. Thomas Carpentere is principal clergyman. He dies in 1400.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th – 17th</td>
<td>Principal clergymen are John Mulgan (†1422), Record Missing, Edward Darcy (†1562), Record Missing, John Mountfield (†1622), Alexander Bailey (†1637), Thomas Carter (†1639), Edmund Burke (†1666).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17th</td>
<td>Lann becomes amalgamated with Moyliscar and Carrick c. 1666.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*A detailed study of Lann meic Luacháin and Betha Cholmán maic Luacháin has been made by the author. Questions and queries are welcome, and may be emailed to you_can_email_me@hotmail.com*
From *Eald* to New: Translating Early Medieval Poetry for the 21st Century
June 5-7, 2014, University College Cork

‘Eald to New’ was held in University College Cork, June 5-7, 2014 and organized by Tom Birkett and Kirsty March-Lyons from the School of English. The conference was designed to bring together academics and creative practitioners working with Old English, Old Irish, and Old Norse poetry to further our understanding of the translation process and to help establish a network of people working on the translation of early medieval texts. The Irish Research Council, the Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, and the School of English / Information Services Strategic Fund at UCC sponsored the conference. Thanks to their generous funding, the organizers were able to waive the conference fee for all participants. The organizers are particularly grateful to FMRSI for funding a postgraduate travel bursary that was awarded to Katelin Parsons from the University of Iceland, who presented a paper on the poetry of *Egils saga*.

The first event of the conference was a graduate workshop on using Old Irish and Old English texts as the basis for creative translation. The poet Greg Delanty and Michael Matto (Adelphi University), editors of *The Word Exchange: Anglo-Saxon Poems in Translation*, and Lahney Preston-Matto (Adelphi University), translator of *The Vision of Mac Conglinne*, led the workshop. The conference was officially opened that evening by a public poetry reading and wine reception held in the Lewis Glucksman Gallery. The poetry event was compered by UCC’s Writer in Residence, Leanne O’Sullivan. Ten poets read during the course of the evening: Greg Delanty, Eamon Carr, James Harpur, Thomas McCarthy, Gerry Murphy, Miller Oberman, Bernard O’Donoghue, Jacob Riyeff, Adam Wyeth, and Ashley Wakefield.
The conference proper consisted of twenty-five papers given by established academics, early career researchers, and graduate students. Over 100 people attended over the two days, with many of the speakers coming from the United States, the UK and mainland Europe. The first day focused on the Old Norse and Old Irish traditions, including keynote addresses delivered by Carolyne Larrington (University of Oxford) on ‘Translating and Re-translating the Poetic Edda’, and by Heather O’Donoghue (University of Oxford) on ‘Old Norse Myth and Poetry in English: Contemporary Developments’. The first day was rounded off with a brief walking tour of Viking Cork and the conference dinner was held in The Market Lane. The second day focused on translating Old English and the teaching of translation in university settings. Plenary addresses were delivered by Chris Jones (University of St Andrews) on ‘Old English and Twenty-First Century Poetry’ and by Hugh Magennis (Queen’s University Belfast) on ‘The Old English Translations of Edwin Morgan’. This convivial conference finished up with an informal review of proceedings in Tom Barry’s pub.

Future events and outputs arising from the Project will be publicized on the website http://ealdtonew.org. The project can also be followed on Twitter and Facebook!

Reported by the organizers, Tom Birkett and Kirsty March-Lyons, School of English, University College Cork
John Skelton: The Career of An Early Tudor Poet
by John Scattergood
published June 2014

John Skelton (c.1460–1529) wrote poetry and some prose, in Latin and English, for almost forty years, circulating his work through manuscript copies and the new medium of print. He was both a priest and a court writer: he was attached to Henry VIII and wrote much at ‘the kinges most noble commaundement’. His work deals in praise and blame, the ethical poetic of the Middle Ages: he wrote to promote the good of his country and the moral well-being of the individual. But within these limits, his work addresses a wide variety of subjects – English relations with France and Scotland, the internal politics of the Tudor court and the ambitions of Cardinal Wolsey, heresy and the threats of Lutheranism – in an astonishing variety of genres and forms. This book traces both the course of his public career and his developing personal concerns as he restlessly sought to express ideas which were politically relevant and effective in ways which were also aesthetically satisfying.

Catalogue Price: €55.00
Web Price: €49.50

A review of this volume will be published in the June 2015 issue of Óenach: FMRSI Reviews
New Books

Tales of Medieval Dublin
edited by Sparky Booker & Cherie N. Peters

Walking through Dublin Castle or along the surviving medieval city walls, you can see only glimpses of what it would have been like to live in the city centuries ago. Tales of medieval Dublin provides a chance for modern audiences to meet the Irish, Norse and English men and women who lived in this colourful medieval city, and to hear their fascinating stories. While providing the most up-to-date research, these fourteen tales are written to appeal to anyone interested in the city’s past. They span almost 1,000 years of Dublin’s history and trace the lives of warriors, churchmen, queens, bards and barons, as well as those individuals who are so often ignored in the historical record, like housewives, tax collectors, masons, lawyers, notaries, peasants and slaves. This volume serves both as a history of the medieval city, and as a window into the day-to-day lives of the men and women who lived there.

256pp; colour illustrations
Copies of this book are now available in all good local bookshops and online at: http://www.fourcourtspress.ie/product.php?intProductID=1190.
Launch of Staged Transgression in Shakespeare’s England
Edited By Rory Loughnane and Edel Semple
University College Cork, 28 April 2014

As Shakespeare’s 450th birthday was celebrated around the globe in April 2014, UCC also made sure that it marked the occasion with two Shakespeare events. On 28th April, UCC’s School of English hosted the launch of Staged Transgression in Shakespeare’s England, edited by Edel Semple (UCC) and Rory Loughnane (Indiana University). Drawing together leading and emerging scholars, the volume offers original readings of the performance of transgression in early modern English drama. By examining a wide range of transgressive activities – from drunkenness and spitting, to bawdy language and bawdry, to murder and rebellion – the collection challenges critical assumptions about the transgressive nature of the early modern stage and presents fresh insights on the ethical responsibilities and prerogatives of dramatists, hermeneutics and drama, and the social work of the playhouse. The volume contains seventeen essays and includes contributions from scholars from around Ireland including Danielle Clarke (UCD), Darragh Greene (UCD), Andrew Power (TCD), and Edel Semple (UCC).

Preceding the launch, the School played host to an open lecture from Rory Loughnane on the subject of “Re-Editing ‘Shakespeare’”. Drawing on his work as an Associate Editor of the New Oxford Shakespeare, his paper focused on the editorial cruxes in and challenges presented by the Elizabethan tragedy Titus Andronicus. Significantly, the lecture offered a new model for editing some particularly complex passages in Titus’ long opening scene. The concluding Q&A led to a lively discussion on the importance of early modern print and theatrical practices to the modern editor and the value of careful editing to the student, scholar, and general reader.

For further details see: http://www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?pid=686879
Palgrave Shakespeare Studies; ISBN: 9781137349347; £55.00
Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh

How did you come to medieval/Renaissance studies?

At school, I had always loved languages, therefore my initial plan was to undertake a degree in French and German. Although I come from an Irish speaking family, I did not particularly enjoy Irish at school, partly because I did not like most of the twentieth-century literature which was on the Leaving Certificate syllabus. However, when I started university in Galway, I discovered all this other literature in Irish (Agallamh na Seanórach was on our first year course) written down long before the modern era, and I really liked it. Then the summer after first year I had two really important conversations, the first with Gearóid Mac Eoin and the second with Mícheál Mac Craith. Gearóid was Professor of Old and Middle Irish at the time and I went to speak with him about my second year choices. His invocation of the beauty of Old Irish literature was so powerful that I decided not to choose Modern Irish but Old Irish (at that time in Galway you could choose to do 70% Old Irish instead of standard Modern Irish). The second conversation was with Mícheál Mac Craith at the Merriman Summer School. At that time Micheál was a lecturer (later Professor) in the Modern Irish department. I told him I was thinking of doing Old Irish and another language and he suggested doing German because it is a very useful language when studying Old Irish. There was also a book I read that summer which had a huge impact on me: Helen Waddell’s The Wandering Scholars; it is such an erudite study and so beautifully written. Therefore, quite to my own surprise, I found myself taking German and Old Irish in second year. I was so lucky in the lecturers I had in Galway at the time - they kindled a real love for medieval literature. As well as my Old Irish with Donncha Ó hAodha and Anders Ahlqvist, I also remember a series of marvellous lectures on Middle High German poetry by Michael Shields. In addition, lecturers in other departments very kindly let me sit in on their classes: Dáibhí Ó Cróinín’s wonderful lectures on medieval history and John Madden’s Latin lectures. My choice of subjects also led to a magical Erasmus year studying Keltologie under the indomitable Frau Prof Tristram in Freiburg.

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CÚPLA NÓIMÉAD

Who way your most inspirational teacher/mentor, and why?

Without a doubt, Gearóid Mac Eoin. His passion for the early literature was powerfully infectious; he was a marvellous teacher. He could take the most complicated Old Irish grammatical construction and break it into its constituent elements so that in the end you understood it perfectly. He was also very good at instilling confidence in his students and making you believe you were able for any challenge. The lectures I remember most clearly were those on the Cycle of the Kings; he spoke about the seventh-century King Guaire as if he knew him with a warmth and intimacy which was really special. My Ph.D. supervisor in Cambridge Prof Michael Lapidge was also a huge influence on me. He had that same gift for instilling confidence and drive. What I gained most from him was an understanding of the Latin medieval culture from which the Irish texts I was studying emanated.

What is the last conference you attended?

The last conference I attended outside Cork was in Lausanne, Switzerland last January on ‘The Life of Adam and Eve, and Adamic Traditions’. It was organised by the Association pour l’étude de la littérature apocryphe chrétienne, a group of scholars based primarily in Switzerland, France and Italy with whom I have been collaborating for the last few years. It was a fascinating conference concentrating on the apocryphal ‘Life of Adam and Eve’ as it survives in various recensions and languages. It is always very interesting to hear a paper about a narrative you know well, in this case I am familiar with the Middle Irish account of the Life, but from a completely new angle. There were papers on the Life in Coptic, Armenian, Old Church Slavonic and Middle High German, and lots of discussion of the relationship between the Latin versions of the narrative.

What book(s) are you currently reading?

At the moment, I am reading two books which came out recently: In Dialogue with the Agallamh, edited by Kevin Murray and Aidan Doyle, and Authorities and Adaptations: The Reworking and Transmission of Textual Sources in Medieval Ireland, edited by Elizabeth Boyle and Deborah Hayden. I like books which approach the same text or critical issue from different angles.

What are your hopes for the future of early studies in Ireland?

That there will still be medievalists in Ireland in fifty years time! When I look at the current state of medieval studies in Ireland, I am a little worried. Many chairs of Old English and Medieval History have been lost. Few modern language departments offer modules on medieval literature to their students and in my own discipline the number of departments of old and medieval Irish has halved in the last fifteen years or so. It seems that the past, and in particular the distant past, is losing favour. I think the fact that History is no longer compulsory for the Junior Certificate is part of this trend. As I read in a recent issue
CÚPLA NÓIMÉAD

of the New York Review of Books, humanities students are no longer interested in subjects older than themselves. In a society where everything is immediate and of the now, it is a struggle to sell the past.

What achievement in your career are you most proud of, and why?

I am most proud of the funding which we secured in 2008 to undertake the De Finibus project on medieval Irish eschatology: it is an area which greatly interests me and it allowed us to spend three years working on the material, the fruits of which will soon be published in a volume entitled The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology. The project was a great experience with 4 core team members and a further 9 scholars preparing material for the book. I am also proud of the fact that the funding we received allowed us to offer contracts to one postdoctoral researcher and one Ph.D. student at a time when other avenues of employment were becoming scarce. We could not have completed the project without them and I am very proud of the work everyone put in.

What is your guilty pleasure when working?

Chocolate. Although all the health experts tell us that constantly chasing a sugar and caffeine high is a terrible way to maintain energy, I find strong coffee and chocolate to be a wonderful combination, especially with a deadline looming.

What excites you most about teaching medieval/early modern topics?

When things are going well, it is a real joy to share the wonderful narratives of medieval Ireland with students. I think the stories, whether it is sagas, historical tales or saints’ lives, are a really great way to engage students. As we know everyone likes a good story and if you can use that as a hook, then if you are lucky you can interest them in the historical and cultural background as well.

In your opinion can Irish medievalists do more to promote what they do, and how?

I am constantly asking myself this question and I am not sure what the answer is. Sometimes even when you do your best to promote some aspect of your work, it can be a struggle to get anyone interested; for instance it is a real challenge to get any national newspaper to cover topics related to medieval Ireland. Perhaps in our increasingly visual culture, iconography, metal work and manuscripts are the best first steps in promoting the area.

What is your favourite historical novel/movie/website to do with the early periods?

My daughters loved the animated film The Secret of Kells when they were younger - it is such a charming portrayal of a medieval Irish monastery. It really brings the wonder of what the scribes were able to produce to life and Pangur the cat is great.  

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CÚPLA NÓIMÉAD

As for websites, I think Eileen Gardiner’s site ‘Hell-On-line’ (http://www.hell-on-line.org) is brilliant and is actually a really good resource for those interested in vision literature and eschatology generally.

If you could be transported back in time to witness something, what would it be?

Mass! This sounds a bit sad, but I spend a lot of my time speculating about what exactly constituted liturgical practice in medieval Ireland. So it would be very handy if I could just hang out in an eighth-century monastery for a few days, listening to all the forms of the prayers and the way they are sung, following the structure of the monastic hours, peeping in the library to see what books they have, asking the monks if they know much Greek, observing the scriptorium to see exactly how copying was undertaken, etc. I would also dearly love to hear a few sentences of Old Irish to figure out if they really pronounced it as we think they did.

Which historical figure do you most admire?

This may sound a little peculiar, but I really admire headstrong medieval nuns and determined female saints. Of course I like St Brigit, but I also have a soft spot for St Íte because of my Limerick connection. Among the more historically verifiable female saints I think Saint Radegund and especially Hildegard of Bingen must have been amazing women to have achieved all that they did, when they did.

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Caitríona Ó Dochartaigh is Lecturer in Early and Medieval Irish, University College Cork. She is one of the Principal Investigators on the IRC-funded De Finibus project on Christian representations of the afterlife in medieval Ireland (http://definibus.ucc.ie), and co-editor (with John Carey and Emma Nic Cárthaigh) of the main output of the project: The End and Beyond: Medieval Irish Eschatology, a collection of 42 edited texts and essays, the work of 13 contributors in 2 volumes. The volume will be launched at UCC on Monday 8 December 2014, and the occasion will be marked by a public lecture delivered by John J. Collins, Holmes Professor of Old Testament Criticism and Interpretation at the Yale Divinity School, on ‘The Ethical Dilemmas of Apocalyptic Millenarianism’. Caitríona is widely published on medieval Irish literature and culture, and she is the organizer of the annual Palaeography and Manuscript-Based Research module, run over two days each September at UCC, and which attracts graduate students from all over Ireland and beyond.
On the FMRSI Website this October ... 


Forum for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Ireland

Dr Ann Buckley, QUB/TCD

Dr Carrie Griffin, University of Bristol

Dr Emer Purcell, UCC

Webpage: [https://fmrsi.wordpress.com](https://fmrsi.wordpress.com)

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/ForumMRSI](https://www.facebook.com/ForumMRSI)