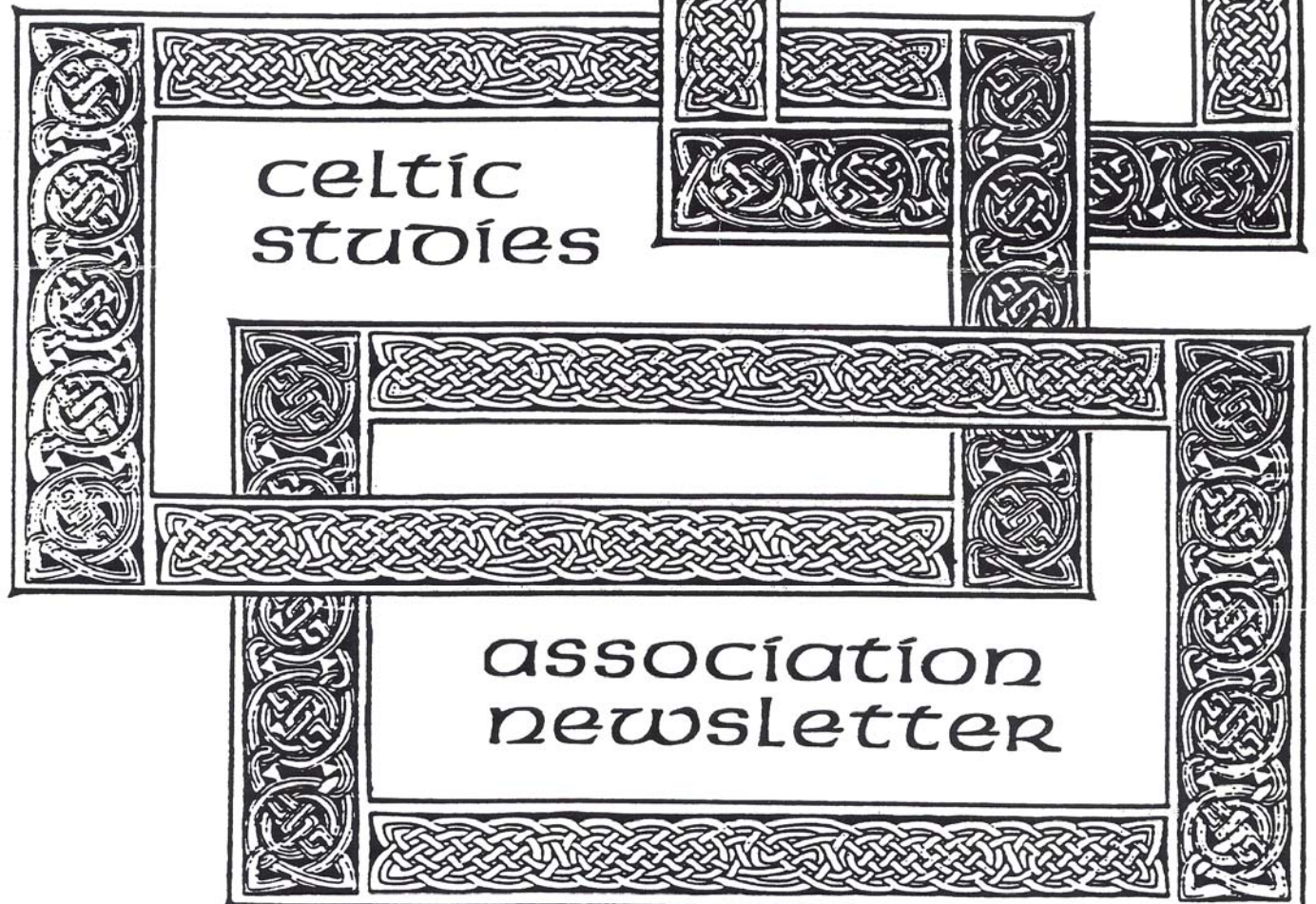


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## Beltaine, 2005

No. 22.2



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**CELTIC STUDIES ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA**

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## **Book Reviews**

### ***Pearse's Patriots: St. Enda's and the Cult of Boyhood.***

Elaine Sisson. Cork: Cork University Press, 2004. 233 pp.

Much has been written about Patrick Pearse and his role in Irish history. His central place in the Rising of 1916 has made him an icon for Irish nationalists. As Elaine Sisson correctly identifies in this new book, Pearse's life needs to be understood by more than how he died. His emergence in the political movement for Irish independence came after he had developed an attachment to the Gaelic Revival and the cultural movement that shaped the last decade of the nineteenth and the first two decades of the twentieth century. Pearse's work as a cultural nationalist came to be epitomized by his opening and leading an Irish school in Dublin. St. Enda's was not just a place to teach the Irish leaders of the future the language of their ancestors, but it was a place to immerse them in the culture of the Celtic past so that they could be authentic inheritors of this tradition. The importance of St. Enda's is highlighted not just by Pearse's leading role in the rising in 1916 but the large number of teachers and former students who participated with him. St. Enda's became the school that provided the intellectual ferment of the Irish nationalist revolution.

One of Sisson's interesting points is the importance Pearse placed on defining and training young boys in the principles of Celtic masculinity. Sisson contends that until the time of Pearse Celticism had predominantly come in the form of a literary revival led by Anglo-Irish elites. This form of nationalism was seen as feminine and

distorting the history of Gaelic Ireland. It made Ireland weak and docile in the face of the power of the British Empire. What Pearse and other Irish nationalists sought was the emergence of strong and effective nation capable of achieving independence both culturally and politically. This required re-rendering the Irish nation in the form of a masculinity allied with the Gaelic tradition, not the Celticism highlighted by the work of Yeats.

In the end, Pearse wanted all bases of Irish identity, including the Celtic sense of self, to be remade to highlight Ireland's greatness of the past and promise for the future. This required the Irish national identity to be reimagined based on the great heroes of the past. These examples would teach young boys and men the virtues "of physical prowess, honour, courage, and chivalry" (p. 19). Medieval monks, such as St. Colmcille, were to serve as important role models in this endeavor. Pearse used art, especially drama, to demonstrate the heroic role of boys in the traditional West of Ireland. He also hoped to create Christian warriors fighting for the Irish nationalist cause. Cúchulainn was the mythical hero from the Celtic tradition that merged with images of these Christian saints to produce the role models for the boys at St. Enda's. Gaelic games, especially hurling, and military drills were used to inculcate the physical virtues associated with the ancient Gaels and which were needed to defend the Irish nation.

Throughout the book and especially in the concluding chapters, Sisson raises the sexual purpose or consequence of Pearse's apparent obsession with boyhood, beauty, and the virtues of Irish national identity. While the author does not offer any definitive observations regarding Pearse's sexual orientation, she does successfully demonstrate that his emphasis on boyhood helped define how he wanted to see the nationalist cause. Ultimately, his death and his emphasis on martyrdom that came to dominate his life in its final years have tended to overshadow the emphasis on puerile virtue associated with Irish

nationalism in his days at St. Enda's. After his death, St. Enda's began a quick decline and closed its doors in 1935. Without the charismatic leadership of Pearse, this school for the training of young Irish nationalists faded into oblivion. Sisson's book succeeds in informing us of an important period and focus of the life of Ireland's mystical nationalist hero, Patrick Pearse.

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***The Book of the Cailleach: Stories of the Wise-Woman Healer.***

Gearóid Ó Cruallaich, Cork: Cork University Press, 2003. 320 pp

In modern Irish, the term used to describe a woman whose marginal social status imparts enough authority to render her potentially dangerous is *cailleach*. Denoting old woman, hag or witch depending upon the context, the term applied in traditional culture to both real women who may have wielded limited authority from the margins of society, and to their legendary counterpart whose feminine powers were celebrated in myth as they were constrained in real life. The mythical *cailleach*, who spent her days digging lakes, dropping mountains from her apron, and pleasuring her many husbands, is characterized by, among other things, supernatural longevity and inexhaustible fertility.

This legendary figure, often named the Cailleach Bhéarra in the numerous Irish and Scottish oral tales concerning her, has well-established literary antecedents. The most famous of these is, of course, the medieval

poem "The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare," but the lines of descent and influence by which the nun/old woman Cailleach Bhérrí of medieval literature becomes the supernatural, witchlike Cailleach Bhéarra of relatively modern Irish and Scottish folklore are fascinatingly unclear.

The poem alone presents the scholar with multiple difficulties, which B. Murdoch has outlined in an article published in ZCP in 1994. Five manuscripts exist, each differing on order and number of stanzas, and sometimes entire passages. The linguistic variants in each have caused scholars to date the poem anywhere between the eighth and eleventh century. While the imagery in many of the stanzas is clear and vivid, some are so obscure as to be unintelligible, causing significant translation variances.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Murdoch, B. "In Pursuit of the Cailleach Bérré: an Early Irish Poem and the Medievalist at Large." *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 44 (1991): 81-127.



Interpretations also vary widely. A long-standing scholarly debate concerns whether her reference to herself as “Caillech Bérré Buí” in the second stanza of the poem simply supplies her with a proper name or associates her with the Buí mentioned in the *Dinnshenchas*, and therefore with the literary Sovereignty tradition as well as the somewhat more folkloric place name tradition. Tomas Ó Cathasaigh, who summarizes this debate in his 1989 article “The Eponym of Cnoba” as well as tracing its origins, concludes that the Sovereignty association is valid.<sup>2</sup> Kim McCone, on the other hand, characteristically interprets her “Lament” as a thoroughly Christian allegory.<sup>3</sup>

Other elements of “The Lament,” along with other medieval literary artifacts, expand these associations into less well-charted terrain. The prose introduction which precedes the version of the manuscript designated “H” names the Caillech Bérré along with three other women: “Brigit daughter of Iustán...Liadain, wife of Cuirithir, and Úallach daughter of Muimnechán.” All of these women belonging to “the Corca Duibne, that is to say of the Uí Maic íair Chonchinn,” and the saint “Finán Cam has bequeathed to them that they shall never be without some wonderful glorious *caillech* among them.”<sup>4</sup> Women with these names all

appear in other literary sources as both saints and—tantalizingly—as poets.

*Cormac’s Glossary* makes a reference to Brigit the “poetess,” and a poet called *Úallach* is referred to, in passing, in both *The Annals of the Four Masters* and the *Annals of Innisfallen*. The link between these references and the *Caillech* is admittedly weak; no patronym or spousal designation clearly associates these poets with the saints of the same name, nor do these sources refer to either woman as a *caillech*. But “Liadain wife of Curither” clearly alludes to the medieval tragedy *Liadain and Curither*,<sup>5</sup> and the links between these two texts are far more readily established. Liadain’s confessor, who banished Curither to punish her for breaking her religious vows, was St. Cuimíne, who also, according to the prose introduction, of “The Lament,” placed the nun’s veil on the head of the Caillech Bhérrí, after which “age and infirmity” came to her.

Another referential thread links both “The Lament” and *Liadain and Curither* to the Middle-Irish *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*.<sup>6</sup> The narrator names “Don[n] fhiach caillech Berre bán” as one of the “eight persons in Armagh at that time of whom these lays were sung.” Another of the persons named is Mac Da Cherda, a poet/trickster who appears in several other tales, but also, significantly, as the messenger Curither sends to Liadain in the tale concerning them. Furthermore, according to one of Kuno Meyer’s annotations of the *Aislinge*, Mac Da Cherda

<sup>2</sup> Ó Cathasaigh, Tomas. “The Eponym of Cnoba.” *Eigse* 23 (1989): 137-55.

<sup>3</sup> McCone, Kim. *Pagan Past and Christian Present in Early Irish Literature*. An Sagart: Maynooth Monographs, 1990. 154.

<sup>4</sup> Ó hAodha, Donncha. “The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare.” *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honor of Professor James Carney*. Eds. D. Ó Corrain, L. Breatnach, and K. McCone. Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989. 308-333.

<sup>5</sup> Meyer, Kuno, ed. and trans. *Comracc Liadaine ocus Cuirithir*; *Liadain and Cuirithir: An Irish Love Story of the Ninth Century*. London: D. Nutt, 1902.

<sup>6</sup> Meyer. *Aislinge Meic Conglinne*. London: D. Nutt, 1892.

and St. Cummine collaborated on the composition of a poem.

A compelling figure woven within an intricate cultural pattern of medieval literary references, oral tradition and numerous contemporary revivals, the *cailleach* figure has nonetheless received surprisingly little sustained scholarly attention. The folkloric accounts have not, as yet, received the type of painstaking, exhaustive documentation and cataloguing that Patricia Lysaght brought to her groundbreaking study of the *bean sídhe*. Medieval scholars continue to explore the fascinating complexities “The Lament” presents: difficulties of dating, reconciling the multiple manuscript versions and multiple translations, and whether she is another manifestation of Sovereignty or mere Christian allegory. As far as I know, however, no one has yet examined the poem as one strand in a web of highly self-reflexive literary allusions with the sort of keen interpretive insights by which Joseph Nagy has illuminated the equally complex Fenian materials. And aside from certain recent literary re-appropriations such as the contemporary Irish language poet Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill’s, feminist attention to this intriguing personage has been surprisingly minimal. Nor has any scholar of whom I am aware attempted to bridge, to any great extent, the material and methodological gap between medieval literary and modern folkloric study.

I had hoped, when I began reading *The Book of the Cailleach: Stories of the Wise-Woman Healer*, that Gearóid Ó Cruaíoch had accomplished such a comprehensive study. On the surface, it appears to be. He spends the first section of the book placing the *Cailleach* of oral tradition within the medieval tradition, rehearses relevant

scholarship on both, and argues for oral storytelling as a mode of literature. The second section focuses on the specifics of the oral tradition itself, providing several examples from the original, largely handwritten texts gathered by the Irish Folklore Commission in the early and mid twentieth-century and housed within the marvelous Folklore archives at University College Dublin. These he offers in their entirety in the original Irish in the third and last section of his book, as a supplement to the highly readable translated excerpts he interprets in the previous section. The subtitle “Stories of the Wise-Woman Healer” suggests an interpretative approach that emphasizes the figure as a positive, complex image of femininity independent of her rather reductive portrayals as sovereignty goddess or landscape shaper.

In the past, I have found Professor Ó Cruaíoch’s approach to the *cailleach*, grounded as it is in folklore and in modern spoken and written Irish, to provide an illuminating alternative perspective on the debates within medieval scholarship. In a 1988 issue of *Bealoideas*, he argues that she represents a different principle in the oral traditions than in the medieval sources: “a version of a supernatural wilderness figure peripheral to and usually inimical to the human world.” In a piece published in the 1994-95 issue of that same publication, he again emphasizes the importance of considering her within a broader context. She is not merely an Irish sovereignty goddess, but rather represents “a female cosmic agency” that expresses some necessary truth about all human relationships.

Ó Cruaíoch’s insistence that interpretation of the *cailleach*’s significance depends upon the context in which she appears is important

and valid. But his equal, ultimately contradictory insistence on reading her as exemplary of some universal feminine principle, effectively neutralizes not only his argument for the importance of context, but all the inherent complexity that makes the *cailleach* such an interesting figure of feminine power in the first place. And therein lies the major problem with his book. His material is fascinating, the scope of his learning impressive and his effort to offer something relevant to both scholarly and popular audiences commendable. But his critical approach, grounded primarily in Jungian psychology, long outmoded nineteenth-century notions of a universal mother goddess, and celebration of the legendary *cailleach* as a nurturing “wise woman/healer” who exemplifies a “heritage of autonomous feminine authority and wisdom” (229), is lamentably reductive.

To a certain extent he does account for specific contexts. The first section provides a sound review of the ways the *cailleach* figure has been rewritten throughout Irish history: the Caillech Bérré, other mythical goddess figures, the sovereignty tradition, the later nationalist *aisling* and poetry, contemporary literary revivals, and the thread of oral narrative tradition that winds through this literary history.

But throughout the book, he consistently speaks of these specific instances in terms of “the feminine” in the singular. In support of this monolithic definition, he rehearses long-discredited notions of pan-European mother-goddess cults, based on the highly questionable assertions of pseudo-scholars such as Marija Gimbutas and mid twentieth century Jungians such as Erich Neumann. If this weren’t problematic enough, he marshals French Lacanian feminist theorists such as

Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray—both of whom argued adamantly but in different ways *against* such universalizing gestures and antiquated concepts—as further support of his generalizations.

Most unfortunate, to my mind, is his editorial selection of the oral materials he presents. This incredibly rich material, written mostly in modern Irish and as yet still largely uncatalogued, has long been unavailable to the general, English-speaking public. While Professor Ó Cruailaoich has provided us a valuable service in offering some of it in translation, he focuses solely on the *cailleach* stories that provide evidence of her maternal, healing, nurturing, “wise woman” qualities, under headings such as “Intimations of a female-centered cosmos,” and “Accommodating female knowledge and power.” What he leaves out of his summaries, most regrettably, are the numerous accounts of the sexual prowess and dangerous, witch-like powers folk tradition also attributes to the *cailleach*: her frequently-attested abilities to satirize an enemy—a power that renders her equal in verbal acuity to the venerable, exclusively male poets, and the even more dangerous ability to curse or kill with a mere glance. And for all his celebration of the “victories of a male-centered social order” some of these stories may represent, he never mentions the actual, frequently oppressive conditions suffered by the actual Irish people, particularly the women, who told these stories. In his emphasis on the importance of reading within alternate contexts, he effectively effaces all possible contexts that give the *cailleach* figure any depth or meaning.

By ignoring the lived realities of actual Irish women, by emphasizing the maternal

qualities of the *cailleach* rather than her exuberant, independent sexuality, by all but ignoring her more dangerous and even deadly aspects, and by not adequately exploring the implications of her verbal acuity — all qualities that have equally characterized the *cailleach* figure throughout her long and colorful history—Professor Ó Cruaíoch

sadly leaves those of us who have long and eagerly awaited for the degree of exploration that this material so richly deserves still waiting and still wanting.

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### *Chaucer and the Norse and Celtic Worlds*

Rory McTurk. Hampshire, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005. 218 p

Many studies have dealt with the French, Italian, and classical sources of Chaucer's work. Rory McTurk, in this present volume, devotes attention to less acknowledged sources—Irish and Norse. His intention is not to reject the notion of continental influences on the Chaucerian opus, but to widen the scope of discussion. The cumulative effect of the mass of evidence presented by McTurk also leads readers toward a more detailed comprehension of medieval Irish and Norse literature.

In his first chapter, "Chaucer and Snorri," McTurk, distinguishing between "analogies" and "analogues," points out various analogies or correspondences between Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* (composed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century). He also considers the notion that the *Skáldskaparmál*, a portion of Snorri's *Edda*, is an analogue to *The House of Fame* in the sense that both works, although independent, draw from the same source. The correspondences between the *Edda* and *The Canterbury Tales* are examined under the topics of framed narrative, literary anthology, and pilgrimage. Both works, as examples of framed narratives, are studied through the perspective of French narratologist Gérard Genette, who has elaborated a theory of levels of narrative. Both the *Edda* and *The*

*Canterbury Tales* include a variety of literary forms, and therefore in a sense may be considered literary anthologies. Both the *Edda* and *The Canterbury Tales* encompass pilgrimage, for as McTurk notes, the pagan context of *Gylfaginning* suggests a pilgrimage of a Christian sort. In addition, McTurk argues that the tale of Óðinn's robbery of the mead of poetry in *Skáldskaparmál* may be an analogue to a tale in Chaucer's *House of Fame*; he marshals his arguments in terms of poetry, the other world, and natural functions. Both in *The House of Fame* and in *Skáldskaparmál*, the eagle mediates between two forms of poetry—"the literary and the oral," according to McTurk (27), who also invokes a variety of literatures—Irish, Greek, and Indian—to note the difficulty of obtaining "increased poetic knowledge" from the other world (30). The travails of the eagle in *Skáldskaparmál*, of the eagle in *The House of Fame*, and of the bird flying off with the soma in Indian literature offer parallels in the sphere of natural functions.

In Chapter 2, "Chaucer, Gerald of Wales, and Ireland," McTurk examines Chaucer's ties with Ireland via the author Gerald of Wales or Geraldus Cambrensis (c. 1146-1223), who wrote *Topographia Hibernie* and *Expugnatio*



*Hebernica*; he considers whether or not Chaucer in composing *The House of Fame* could have been influenced by lines in *Topographia* concerned with eagles and with the Kildare shrine of St. Brigid. According to McTurk, Chaucer was emboldened by the presentation of the eagle in *Topographia* to depict the eagle in *The House of Fame* as less than perfect. Having noted similarities between *Topographia* and *The House of Fame*, McTurk discusses whether or not the two works are analogues to each other as well as to Snorri's *Skáldskaparmál*—all drawn from a source “which would be reflected in the story deducible from the Indian texts” portraying a figure with wings bringing soma (also associated with the poetic gift) to earth (45-46). For McTurk, Snorri and Gerald present versions of a tale in which a bird tries to carry poetic knowledge to earth, and Chaucer utilizes in *The House of Fame* a narrative which occupies a middle ground between the Norse and the Irish versions. Such an account, according to McTurk, Chaucer might have discovered during a stay in Ireland in 1361-66, when Chaucer was in the employ of Prince Lionel, who was viceroy in Ireland. The high point of Lionel's viceroyalty, according to McTurk, was the enactment in 1366 of the Statute of Kilkenny, which was instituted “to counter the threat of Hibernicization facing the English colony” (62). During these years in Ireland, notes McTurk, Chaucer may have “had contact with Irish minstrels and storytellers” (64).

Influencing Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales*, according to McTurk in his third chapter, “Chaucer and the Irish Saga Tradition,” was the Middle Irish prose saga *Acallam na Senórach* (“Colloquy of the Elders”). First noting the parallels between *The House of Fame* and *Togail Bruidne da*

*Derga* (“The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel”), McTurk discusses the relationship of *The Canterbury Tales* and the *Acallam* in terms of framed narrative, literary anthology, and pilgrimage. He observes that the narrative levels in the *Acallam* operate as they do in Snorri's *Edda* and in *The Canterbury Tales*. Noting that the *Acallam*, like *The Canterbury Tales*, has “four organically interrelated levels of narrative,” McTurk sees the *Acallam* as a possible source (75). In addition, both works employ “a wide variety of literary forms” (94). Throughout the *Acallam*, the notion of pilgrimage is suggested, as St. Patrick wanders throughout Ireland with his entourage. The *Acallam*, according to McTurk, should be considered a possible model for *The Canterbury Tales* (104).

Loathly ladies are taken up by McTurk in his fourth chapter, “The Wife of Bath, the Hag of Beare, and *Laxdoela Saga*.” McTurk argues that both the Wife of Bath's Prologue and her Tale were influenced by Irish Loathly Lady stories and that related Middle English narratives—the “Tale of Florent” by Gower in *Confessio Amantis*, *The Weddyng of Sir Gawen and Dame Ragnall*, and *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*—are derived at least in part from the Wife of Bath's Tale. He also postulates that the Icelandic prose *Laxdoela Saga* has the Irish Loathly Lady story as a source. Noting that Eisner in 1957 discusses nine Irish versions of the Loathly Lady story, McTurk affirms that this story is a source for the Wife of Bath's Prologue as well as her Tale. McTurk raises the question “as to how far it is legitimate to equate the Wife herself, as she reveals herself in the Prologue, with the hag of her Tale” (116). He argues that Chaucer in his youth became acquainted with the Irish story and was further motivated by his reading of Jerome's *Adversus*

*Jovinianum*, “with its idea of an ugly wife being lustful,” to employ the Irish story as a basis for the Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale (136). This Irish material, according to McTurk, also influenced the Icelandic *Laxdoela Saga*.

In the chapter “Chaucer and Irish Poetry,” McTurk takes up the provenance of Chaucer’s five-stress line and announces his intention to present “a theory of Irish origin”; he observes, however, that nothing like Chaucer’s five-stress line “is preserved in Irish sources” until long after Chaucer’s death (148). Referring to the *amhrán* tradition, which emphasizes the importance of stress over syllable count, McTurk cites articles by P.A. Breatnach to affirm that five-stress lines were in existence in Iceland previous to “their earliest surviving Irish

examples” (148). He observes that such line forms could have influenced Chaucer while he was in Ireland—and that Chaucer also could have been subject to the influence of Irish syllabic poetry.

Concluding his work in a sixth chapter, McTurk concedes that his book is no “substitute” for other works detailing French, Italian, and classical influences on Chaucer, but is meant to be a “supplement” (189). Finally, having escorted the reader through his well-researched analysis, he asks “whether Chaucer should not also be credited with preparing the way for the development of a distinctively Irish element in the English literary tradition” (189).

Gregory J. Darling

*Appreciations for*  
**CSANA**  
**2005**  
Athens, Georgia

CSANA 2005 at the University of Georgia in Athens was mighty satisfactory. Elissa Henken hosted and organized one of the most intimate and congenial CSANA’s on record. The setting was both elegant and perfectly arranged for paper presentations and seminar discussions. From the first paper, Edgar Slotkin’s spirited defense of Slotkin in “Cenn Faead Revisited” to Hugh Fogarty’s fearsome Kristeva-conjuring “Intertextuality and the Middle Irish Saga ‘Aided Guill meic Carbada ocus Aided Gairb Glinne Rigi’”, we were on the edge of our seats. There were many highlights and shining stars, but brightest of all was our keynote speaker, Marged Haycock who gave a brilliant and

occasionally brilliantly funny paper, “The Rediscovery of Heledd.” The most dangerous paper, as usual, was presented by Robin Chapman Stacey, “Bodies and Nobodies in Welsh Law”, which taught us that the Porter’s reward was something not even Brer B’ar would like to eat. Joseph Nagy, whose absence was sorely felt at the CSANA in Toronto, was in Athens to bring elegance, grace, and good humor to the proceedings with his “To Créde, with Love.” Pat Ford gave us a first rate demonstration of the salmon leap power of Powerpoint, and Catherine McKenna once again swept us away with “Designing Gardens of Verse: Welsh Anthologies in the Eighteenth and

Nineteenth Centuries". Old friends like Shannon McRae with "Celtic Revival or Embarrassing Episode? Another Look at Robert Graves" and Charles MacQuarrie with Celticity in the Works of William Shakespeare" led us in and out of the brier-patch of Celtic elements in English literature, and the warmly charming, and impressively learned Kevin Murray gave us depth and linguistic rigor with "Baile Finnachta: A Prophetic Text from Connacht." Brent Miles and Tim Bridgman gave us Classical training with "Imitatio of Latin Epic and the Latin Commentary-Tradition in the Iconography of Cú Chulainn" and "The Classical Origins of the Celts" respectively. Westley Follett, that proud new father, gave us insight into some of the Christian elements in Celtic with his "Cassian, contemplation, and early Irish hagiography," and Jessica Banks, the winner

of the CSANA award for best graduate student paper, impressed us with "St. Brigid and the Merovingian Abbesses: A Common Pradigm for Power and Sanctity".

The papers, the conversation during the sessions, at the lunch breaks, at the dinners, at the banquet, and especially in the pubs downtown Athens, were cordial and convivial and sometimes uncanny. Elissa has done so much great work for CSANA as secretary as treasurer and as host (twice now in the last few years). Those of us who were lucky enough to be her guests in Athens will be forever grateful for her generosity and hard work, and those of us who were unable to attend may hope that someday, in the not too distant future, CSANA will return to that beautiful old deep Southern center with the large antebellum houses that zippity-do-da about.

***Appreciations for  
CSANA at MLA,  
2005***

Thanks to Fred Suppe CSANA sponsored two sessions at Kalamazoo during May 5-8, 2005.

In the first session Dorothy Africa presented "The Daughters of Dallbranach: Political Fictions and Women's Kin". In the second session Patrick Ford crooned "Poetry as Performance: Tongue and Harp in medieval Welsh Poetry", Frederick Suppe rapped "Boundaries used by authors of surveys", and Karen Overbey rocked "Still Imagining? The

Irish border of Art History."

The CSANA papers were the best at this years Medieval Congress. Pat Ford was in especially good form – so smooth and intelligent. His Bing Crosby brilliance was the ideal balance for that pistol packing moma, Karen Overbey, who slid out a most daring and imaginative half hour – and yours truly is one who usually decries deconstruction and pooh poohs powerpoint. Amra! Amra!

*Appreciations for*  
the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual  
California Celtic Studies Conference  
MARCH 17-19, 2005 ON THE BERKELEY CAMPUS  
UC Berkeley

The friendly rivalry between the Northern and Southern California hosts of the California Celtic Conference ratcheted up another notch this year. The Berkeley Celts were, as usual, highly organized and marvellous hosts. With apologies to the Rennes Dindshenchas and Whitley Stokes, *ni baei catering a samla ar meit 7 ar boladmaire co mbad commaidm cride dunn teit ass* (no catering was ever like their catering for size and for fragrance so that it was a heartbreak for us to go away).

The conference was held in honor of Proinsias Mac Cana (1926–2004). Professor Mac Cana's shadow loomed large over the conference. Many of the attendees honored him and us with their memories of him as a scholar and as a friend, from Geraint Jenkins's comparison of him to another "rattleskull genius," Iolo Morganwg, to Edgar Slotkin's moving account of their long collaboration on an edition of *Fled Bricrenn*. Alas, I was unable to attend Thursday's session, so I can only mention by title Joseph Nagy's "What's Branwen Doing in the Tristan Legend," a question in the noble tradition of Professor Mac Cana's scholarship.

Other papers honored him more subtly with work on the crossing of cultural and linguistic boundaries. In a trio of transformational animals, Anthony Buccitelli talked about seals as food and seals as people in Gaelic and Greenlandic folklore; Barbara

Hillers discussed the dangers of sleeplessness and giant otters in her "Gaelic Storytelling and the Irish Literary Tradition," and last and not least was my own contribution on the wacky werewolves of Brittany.

Another trio of papers discussed the relationship between Germanic and Celtic tradition. Nichole Sterling discussed the Norse use of Irish figures in the sagas, while Jamie de Angelis analyzed the elusive character of "Morgan the Goddess" in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Benjamin Bruch, who wins the award for all-time best-ever use of PowerPoint at a Celtic conference, took just twenty minutes to explain Middle Cornish rhyme, meter, and the manuscript traditions for recording poetry, as well as an obscure English verse-form called the thirteener, and to show the relationship between the two. His slides relied partly on manuscript images supplied by the National Library of Wales (*Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru*), whose praises were also sung by Ann Ffrancon and, in reference to poetry, by Daniel Huws. Kristen Lee Over represented medieval Wales with a talk on *Peredur* and the relationship between rhamant and romance.

Both Fergus Kelly and Tomás Ó Cathasaigh presented the tricky subject of equality in marriage, the former in early Irish law texts and the latter in reference to *Ailill and Medb*. Ancient Irish literature, in both Irish and Latin, was very much in evidence at the

conference, with the mysterious Reds forming a leitmotif over the weekend (though not even Edgar Slotkin brought up the Cincinnati Reds). Brian Ó Conchubhair brought the topic into the twentieth century

with an analysis of trends in modern Irish literature, and the best banquet in many years brought it to a close in otherworldly Hy Brasil, otherwise known as the Brazilian fusion restaurant Café de la Paz.

**CSANA**  
**2006**  
and the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual  
California Celtic Studies Conference

Fusion and Hy Brasil will also be found at the combined CSANA and California Celtic Studies Conference which will be held at the University of California, Los Angeles. More details, and a call for papers will be forthcoming in the Beltaine newsletter.

<p><b>Kelten • Römer Germanen</b></p> <p>Rheinisches LandesMuseum Bonn 2007</p>		<p><b>XIII. International Congress of Celtic Studies</b></p> <p>Universität Bonn</p> <p><b>Keltischer Sommer</b></p> <p>Stadt Bonn</p>
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Everybody interested in the various branches of Celtic scholarship is cordially invited to register for the XIII ICCS 2007 in Bonn. Please use the forms attached to the web site. <http://www.celtic-congress-2007.com/call.html>

**NOW!** Please register **ALREADY NOW** and pay the registration fees by money transfer (free of charge for us) to the University's bank account indicated. You need to indicate your full name and the "project number" 71753 Sorry, no cheques, no credit cards. **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE** You should propose us the (provisional) title of your

paper, indicating the section you wish to adhere. Deadline Abstracts (max. half-page, 12 point, 1,5 lines, specification of technical support needed) is Sept 30, 2006. You'll hear till Dec 31, 2006, if your paper has been accepted and which sections can be realized.

Notes & queries regarding papers: write to [iccs-papers@uni-bonn.de](mailto:iccs-papers@uni-bonn.de). Notes & queries regarding board & lodging (special requirements): [iccs-hotel@uni-bonn.de](mailto:iccs-hotel@uni-bonn.de).

With the organizers' best wishes, Stefan Zimmer





**John V. Kelleher  
Memorial Lecture  
and 25th Annual Harvard Celtic Colloquium  
October 7, 8, and 9, 2005**



Professor Philip T. O'Leary of the Department of English, Boston College will present the John V. Kelleher Lecture October

6, 2005~ 5:00 pm Faculty Club Library  
Presented by the Harvard Celtic Department

***PROCEEDINGS OF THE HARVARD CELTIC COLLOQUIUM:  
see listings on David Brown Book Co. website***

<http://www.oxbowbooks.com/trade.cfm/Publisher/Celtic%20Studies%20Publications/Keyword/214/Location/DBBC>

Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium: after a gap of some years, volume XVI/XVII is now available and XVIII/XIX is coming soon. To order or place or reconfirm a subscription, contact The David Brown Book Company, P. O. Box 511, Oakville, CT, USA ([www.davidbrownbookco.com](http://www.davidbrownbookco.com)) or in Europe Oxbow Books, Park End Place, Oxford OX1 1HN, England ([www.oxbowbooks.com](http://www.oxbowbooks.com)). Back numbers are regularly reprinted and most are now available.

**Harvard Celtic Colloquium 16**

The Beagle's Cry: Dogs in the Finn Ballads and Tales  
by Kate Chadbourne

In fer fiamach firglic: Ulysses in Medieval Irish  
Literature by Barbara Hillers

Pagan Imagery in the Early Lives of Brigit:  
A Transformation from Goddess to Saint?  
by Lisa Lawrence

An Irish Motif on a Group of Early Irish High  
Crosses? by Kevin Lynch

“. . . of all sights that pierced his heart."  
Reflexive Language and the Great Irish Famine  
by Eileen Moore Quinn

Healing Objects in Welsh Folk Medicine  
by Becka Roof

War and Peace in the Hebrides: The Origin and  
Settlement of the Linn nan Creach  
by James A. Stewart Jr.

The Further Crimes of Lady Charlotte Guest by  
Donna R. White

**Harvard Celtic Colloquium 17**

The Vocabulary of Liberty: Irish Nationalism and  
Feminist Ideology by Rebecca Bennette

Rough Music and Folkloric Elements in the Whiteboy  
Movements by Kate Chadbourne

A Stunning Blow on the Head: Literacy and the  
Anxiety of Memory in the Legend of Cenn Faelad's  
Brain of Forgetting by David Georgi

The Similes in the Book of Leinster Táin Bó Cúailnge  
by William F. X. Glennon

The Island Gàidhealtachd: The Scottish Gaelic  
Community of Prince Edward Island  
by Michael D. Linkletter

'That is what Scáthach did not teach me:'  
Aided Óenfir Aífe and an episode from the  
Mahábhárata by Anna M. Ranero

Grendel's Mother, Icelandic Grýla, and Irish Nechta  
Scéne: Eviscerating Fear

## Other Conference and Journal Announcements

### **WHY IRISH? A One-Day International Colloquium on the Irish Language University of Notre Dame**

Why Irish? on September 30, 2005 at the Hesburgh Auditorium at the University of Notre Dame. Why Irish? is a one-day international colloquium that explores the position of the Irish language and literature in the academy and the future role of Irish for scholarly research. Five outstanding scholars who draw on Irish as part of their research projects will address the conference theme and drawn on their own scholarship to map future trends and directions.

Each speaker will present on the contribution of Irish to their research and examine the place and role of Irish in their disciplines – comparativeliterature, medieval studies, linguistics, contemporary literature, cultural studies and Indo-European poetics.

#### Speakers:

Professor Clare Carroll: Chair of the Comparative Literature Department and Director of Irish Studies, Queen's College, City University, New York

### **First International Celto Slavica Colloquium in Northern Ireland**

The First International Celto Slavica Colloquium in Northern Ireland will take

Professor James McCloskey: University of California, Santa Cruz

Professor Tomás Ó Cathasaigh: Henry L. Shattuck Professor of Irish Studies, Department of Celtic Language and Literatures, Harvard University

Professor Philip T. O'Leary: Boston College

Professor Calvert Watkins: Professor-in-Residence, Department of Classics and Program in Indo-European Studies, UCLA

Why Irish? celebrates the Thomas J. and Kathleen O'Donnell Chair of Irish Language and Literature of which Professor Breandán Ó Buachalla is the inaugural Professor. Registration for the conference is free and further details are available at [http://www.nd.edu/~irishstu/why\\_irish.html](http://www.nd.edu/~irishstu/why_irish.html) and <http://www.nd.edu/~irl> Contact: Dept. of Irish Language and Literature, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556, tel. 1-574-631-3555, e-mail: [Irishlan@nd.edu](mailto:Irishlan@nd.edu)

place in University of Ulster, Coleraine, Northern Ireland, between 19-21 June 2005. Further information is available at: [www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/lanlit/celto-slavica](http://www.arts.ulster.ac.uk/lanlit/celto-slavica)

## **YEARBOOK NEWS FROM THE EDITOR**

*Yearbook today--for you, for your library, and for your colleagues and friends*

If you have not already done so, please help us maintain one of the most valuable aspects of our organization (*and take advantage of your membership*) by ordering discounted copies of CSANA Yearbooks 1 (2001, *The Individual in Celtic Literatures*) and 2 (2002, *Identifying the "Celtic"*), and the massive double volume *CSANA Yearbook 3-4* (2005, *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition*, with co-editor Leslie Ellen Jones). Published by Four Courts Press of Dublin, these handsome productions, representing the cutting edge in contemporary Celtic scholarship, are available to CSANA members **at half price**: **\$25.00** for *1* or *2* (list price: \$50.00), and **\$50.00** for the double volume *3-4* (list price: \$85.00), a Festschrift in Honor of Patrick K. Ford, a former President of CSANA and a charter member of our organization.

Each issue of the *Yearbook* has its own theme, includes an editor's introduction and index, and features peer-reviewed articles, often based on papers given at CSANA meetings. To order copies of issues, please send your check, made out to "CSANA," to Elissa R. Henken, Secretary-Treasurer of CSANA, Department of English, Park Hall, University of Georgia, Athens GA 30602.

Pre-publication orders (\$25.00 for CSANA members) are being accepted for the forthcoming *CSANA Yearbook 5* (early 2006), titled *The Celtic Literary Imagination in the Early Modern Period*. Contributors include Mícheál Mac Craith, Catherine McKenna, Damian McManus, the late Máirtín Ó Briain, Brian Ó Conchubhair, and Ruairí Ó Huiginn. Topics include images of Utopia in bardic verse, late Ulster-cycle tales, Gaelic love poetry, and the Welsh art of the poetic anthology. For more information about this and other future volumes, please contact the editor, Joseph Falaky Nagy, at [jfnagy@humnet.ucla.edu](mailto:jfnagy@humnet.ucla.edu).

### **Contents of Yearbook 1, 2, and 3-4**

**Yearbook 1: *The Individual in Celtic Literatures*** (2001): Helen Fulton, "Individual and Society in *Owein/Yvain* and *Gereint/Erec*"; Elva Johnston, "The Salvation of the Individual and the Salvation of Society in *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind*"; Catherine McKenna, "Apotheosis and Evanescence: The Fortunes of Saint Brigit in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries"; Aideen O'Leary, "Mog Ruith and Apocalypticism in Eleventh-Century Ireland"; Brynley F. Roberts, "Where Were the Four Branches of the Mabinogi Written?"

**Yearbook 2: *Identifying the "Celtic"*** (2002): Jacqueline Borsje, "Approaching Danger: *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* and the Motif of Being One-Eyed"; Sioned Davies, "Performing from the Pulpit: An Introduction to Preaching in Nineteenth-Century Wales"; Patrick K. Ford, "*Amazon*

*dot Choin*"; Philip Freeman, "Who Were the Atecotti?"; Catherine McKenna, "Between Two Worlds: Saint Brigit and Pre-Christian Religion in the *Vita Prima*"; Peter McQuillan, "Gaidhealg as the Pragmatic Mode in Irish"; Thomas O'Loughlin, "A Celtic Theology: Some Awkward Questions and Observations"; and Maria Tymoczko, "What Questions Should We Ask in Celtic Studies in the New Millennium?"

**CSANA Yearbook 3-4: Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: Studies in Honor of Patrick K. Ford** (2005, co-edited by Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones): Anders Ahlqvist, "Is acher in gaith . . . úa Lothlind"; Kate Chadbourne, "The Voices of Hounds: Heroic Dogs and Men in the Finn Ballads and Tales"; Paula Powers Coe, "Manawydan's Set and Other Iconographic Riffs"; Morgan Thomas Davies, "The Death of Dafydd ap Gwilym"; Elizabeth A. Gray, "The Warrior, The Poet and the King: 'The Three Sins of the Warrior' and Cú Roi"; R. Geraint Gruffydd, "The Praise of Tenby': A Late-Ninth-Century Welsh Court Poem"; Joseph Harris, "North-Sea Elegy and Para-Literary History"; Marged Haycock, "'Sy abl fodd, Sibli fain': Sibyl in Medieval Wales"; Máire Herbert, "Becoming an Exile: Colum Cille in Middle-Irish Poetry"; Barbara Hillers, "Poet or Magician: Mac Mhuirich Mór in Oral Tradition"; Jerry Hunter, "Poets, Angels and Devilish Spirits: Elis Gruffydd's Meditations on Idolatry"; Colin Ireland, "The Poets Cædmon and Colmán mac Lénéni: The Anglo-Saxon Layman and the Irish Professional"; H. A. Kelly, "Medieval Heroics Without Heroes or Epics"; Geraint H. Jenkins, "The Bard of Liberty During William Pitt's Reign of Terror"; Leslie Ellen Jones, "Boys in Boxes: The Recipe for a Welsh Hero"; Kathryn A. Klar, "Poetry and Pillowtalk"; John T. Koch, "*De sancto Iudicaelo rege historia* and its Implications for the Welsh Taliesin"; Heather Feldmeth Larson, "The Veiled Poet: *Liadain and Cuirithir* and the Role of the Woman-Poet"; Catherine McKenna, "Vision and Revision, Iteration and Reiteration, in *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*"; Daniel F. Melia, "On the Form and Function of the 'Old-Irish Verse' in the *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*"; Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, "Cú Chulainn, The Poets, and Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe"; Brynley F. Roberts, "*Breuddwyd Maxen Wledig*: Why? When?"; Patrick Sims-Williams, "Person-Switching in Celtic Panegyric: Figure or Fault?"; Edgar M. Slotkin, "Maelgwn Gwynedd: Speculations On A Common Celtic Legend Pattern"; Robin Chapman Stacey, "Instructional Riddles in Welsh Law"; Eve E. Sweetser, "The Metaphorical Construction of a Poetic Hero and His Society"; Maria Tymoczko, "Sound and Sense: Joyce's Aural Esthetics"; Calvert Watkins, "The Old Irish Word for 'Flesh-Fork'"; Donna Wong, "Poetic Justice/Comic Relief: Aogán Ó Rathaille's Shoes and the Mock-Warrant."

(A complete bibliography of Professor Ford's published work is also included.)

## New Academic Appointments

### Aberdeen

Traditional Celtic Studies will be developed by three of the appointments at the University of Aberdeen. **Professor David Dumville**, from the University of Cambridge, is a leading expert in the mediaeval history of the Celtic peoples in the British Isles. **Bernhard Maier**, from the University of

Bonn in Germany, is an expert in Celtic Studies and the History of Religions. **Clare Downham**, from the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, is a specialist in the interactions between the vikings and the Celtic peoples. Others among the new staff have research interests in modern Gaelic literature.

## Swansea

**Dr. Helen Fulton** is moving from the University of Sidney to the Department of English in the University of Wales, Swansea

## Books for Review

If you are interested in reviewing any of the following books, or if you have another title in mind for review and would like me to contact the publisher for a review copy, please contact the newsletter editor at [cmacquarrie@csu.edu](mailto:cmacquarrie@csu.edu). Reviews for the next newsletter should be received by September 15.

**Foreign Affections: Essays on Edmund Burke (Critical Conditions, Field Day Monographs, Vol 1)** by Seamus Deane. Cork UP: Cork, 2004. **Paperback:** 220 pages

**Golden Ages and Barbarous Nations: Antiquarian Debate and Cultural Politics in Ireland c. 1750-1800 (Critical Conditions, Field Day Monographs, Vol 14)** by Clare O'Halloran. Cork UP: Cork, 2004. **Paperback:** 271 pages

**Harry Boland's Irish Revolution, 1887-1922**, by [David Fitzpatrick](#). Cork University Press; (1998) **Hardcover:** 420 pages

**History of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin**, by Barra Boydell. Boydell and Brewer; (April 2004).

**Landscape Design in Eighteenth Century Ireland** by Finola O'Kane. Cork UP: Cork, 2004. **Paperback:** 211 pages

**Foreign Affections: Essays on Edmund Burke (Critical Conditions, Field Day Monographs, Vol 1)** by Seamus Deane. Cork UP: Cork, 2004. **Paperback:** 220 pages

**The Honan Chapel** by Teehan and Wincott Heckett. Cork UP: Cork, 2004. **Hardback:** 240 pages

**Landscape Design in Eighteenth Century Ireland** by Finola O'Kane. Cork UP: Cork, 2004. **Paperback:** 211 pages

**Old World Colony: Cork and South Munster 1630-1830** by David Dickson Seamus Deane. Cork UP: Cork, 2005. **Hardback:** 726 pages

**Revival: The Abbey Theatre, Sinn Fein, the Gaelic League, and the Co-Operative Movement (Critical Conditions, Field Day Monographs, Vol 12)** by P.J. Matthews. Cork UP: Cork, 2003. **Paperback:** 208 pages

**Singing in Chains: Listening to Welsh Verse** by Mererid Hopwood. Gomer Press: Llandysul, Ceredigion, 2004. 104 pages.



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### *Celtic Babes*

A girl, Maude Hannah Scott Clancy, was born to Thomas Clancy and Anne Goldie on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 2005.

A boy, Cole Michael Follett, was born to Tonya and Wes Follett on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April, 2005.

#### **CSANA Newsletter**

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