

“Saints, Sinners and Scribes in the Celtic World”
Celtic Studies Association of North America, 2010 National Meeting
9–10 April 2010, University of Notre Dame

ABSTRACTS

Jennifer F. Ash

“A Hero and His Hags: Phallic Mothers Making Super-Heroic Masculinity in ‘The Boyhood Deeds of Cu Chulainn’”

In the ancient Irish collection of stories known as “The Boyhood Deeds of Cu Chulainn,” the young hero, already precocious in matters of physical strength and ability, will travel to Scotland and confront the warrior-woman Scáthach (and her daughter Uathach). The fledgling hero will learn how to fight, how to wield his weapon, from this most (unnatural) woman, and from the daughter, Uathach, he will learn the arts and crafts of the heroic lover. But before he can return to Ireland, his home in Ulster where he will finally be able to take Emer as his bride, Cu Chulainn must and will defeat the warrior-woman Alfe, the enemy of Scáthach, and this same defeated woman-warrior will (and must) bear the hero’s son. In this paper I will explore the necessary encounter between the young hero and (the frightening paradox of) “phallic femininity.” These intriguing women of Scotland provide Cu Chulainn with the training, the weapon(s), and the skill necessary for his future not just as hero, but as invincible “super-hero.” What is the significance, the necessity for and function of this particular encounter? What is it that these warrior-women can provide or give this student that another tutor/teacher can not? I will explore the possible identity and function of the femininity that produces heroic masculinity within the context of Cu Chulainn’s boyhood deeds. Perhaps the warrior-woman (or even witch) can be understood as Freud’s “phallic mother” (or “phallic woman”) who must be destroyed: she is (I will argue) the specter of threatening, unnatural femininity that the young man must overcome or “castrate” or kill, and in the process, become the hero or even better, the super-hero.

Matthieu Boyd

“A Niche Subject for a Niche Market? Brainstorming Strategy for CSANA and Celtic Studies in North America”

People who know Celtic Studies see a universe. People who don’t see a niche. In that sense, Celtic Studies has an image problem—which has nothing to do with the quality of our scholarship, and everything to do with how we define and relate to our audience. Recently, there have been a few attempts to describe what specialists in Celtic Studies see in Celtic Studies or the Celtic languages. Some of us are starting to ask the important questions: *Why Irish?* (Brian Ó Conchubhair, ed.); *Who Needs Irish?* (Ciarán Mac Murchaidh, ed.); etc. But we—Celtic scholars in general, CSANA in particular—still need to come up with a concerted strategy for: identifying and reaching out to our natural audiences (other academic disciplines, prospective students, a small but significant slice of the general public) and explaining to them what we do and why they need us; securing a place for Celtic texts in the canon of British, French, medieval, Western, or world literature—deciding what we want that place to be—and making sure that wherever courses of that scope are taught, the teachers understand how to teach our texts; making sure that younger scholars have a future in Celtic Studies; how CSANA, as an organization, is going to show leadership in these areas; how we plan to use the Internet. These are critical issues for our discipline *now*. We cannot afford to leave them unresolved. I have proposals to make on each of the points listed. I do not expect them to gain total acceptance from CSANA members, but to stimulate a conversation—perhaps a heated one, but one from which positive change will emerge. I realize this subject is unorthodox for a meeting of CSANA. I believe it is my responsibility as a young scholar and an At-Large Member of CSANA to confront these issues and encourage others to confront them. That is more important to me than presenting my scholarly research on this occasion. I will, however, be drawing on my own research for some specific examples.

Dorothy Ann Bray

“Salvation and Saint Brigit in *Cogitosus* and *Broccán’s Hymn*”

The hymn, *Ní car Brigit*, also known as *Broccán’s Hymn*, in the Irish *Liber Hymnorum*, encapsulates in its verses some of the early hagiographical traditions of St Brigit of Kildare, most of which seem to follow the miracles depicted by Cogitosus. Felim Ó Briain detailed the correspondences between the Hymn, the seventh-century *Life by Cogitosus*, and the eighth-century *Vita Prima* (‘Brigitana,’ *ZCP* 36 (1978), 112-37: 112-119); he concluded that the *Hymn* (likely ninth-century) is independent of either but that its source is earlier. One of the most curious aspects of the *Hymn* is its association of Brigit with the Virgin Mary, going so far as to identify Brigit as the mother of Christ; while the dream-vision of bishop Ibor in the *Vita Prima* and *Bethu Brigte* presents Brigit as Mary and like Mary, the *Hymn* takes the association even further. An equally curious aspect of Cogitosus is the lack of any equation or association of Brigit with Mary, yet this comes into her tradition fairly early and persists long after these early sources. This paper explores some of the correspondences between Cogitosus’ *Life* and *Broccán’s Hymn* and this major difference, in order to attempt some speculations on their common themes and the Marian aspect of Brigit’s tradition.

Christina Brophy

“‘Her own and her children’s share’: Women and Luck in 20th-Century Irish Folklore”

In 20th-century Irish folk belief, there was a limited quantity of luck to be had. Further, luck was mediated through women’s bodies and actions. Women were understood to be the keepers of luck for their families and, in some cases, their communities. While these beliefs provided numerous burdens, they also afforded opportunities to otherwise marginal women.

Bryan Carella

“An Unnoticed Source for Dubthach’s Judgment in the Pseudo-Historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már*”

Since D.A. Binchy’s initial discussion of the text in *Studia Celtica* 10 (1975), the so-called Pseudo-historical Prologue to the *Senchas Már* (PHP) has received steady and increasing attention by Celticists. Although many of his views have been called into question (an ultimately jettisoned) by subsequent scholarship—including, most significantly, his relatively late date for the text and his rejection of Dubthach’s poetic judgment as an organic part of the narrative—all now generally accept that it is a crucial piece of evidence for assessing the relationship between ecclesiastical and pre-Christian law in early medieval Ireland. Despite its unquestionable importance for early Irish legal studies, much remains to be unearthed where this document is concerned, particularly as regards its sources and intellectual context. While scholarship by Kim McCone, John Carey and, more recently, Damien Bracken have made great strides toward a better understanding of the text in these areas, some basic sources have nonetheless remained overlooked. In this paper, I identify a previously unnoticed source for Dubthach’s poetic judgment in the early collection of Irish canons known as *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* and discuss what my identification reveals about the context and significance of PHP in the early Irish legal tradition. In particular, I will examine the implications of my findings for the larger question of how early Irish legalists, both clerical and secular, reconciled native legal traditions with Christian law.

Christopher Collins

“Cries of Pagan Desperation: J.M. Synge’s *Riders to the Sea* and the Celtic Geist”

During the Literary Revival the residue from pagan Ireland was understood to be an expression of the Celtic Geist, and so, romantic dilettantes walked amongst the folk, collecting their lore in order to give their work a national-popular sentiment; Lady Gregory once confided in W.B. Yeats how she had longed “to turn Catholic, that I might be nearer to the people, but you have taught me that paganism brings me nearer still.” To be sure, the vestiges and traces of pagan Ireland haunt Irish folklore and J.M. Synge was acutely aware that folklore was a palimpsest of structures that narrated everyday life. Synge’s acquired this knowledge from his frequent sojourns in the Aran Islands, which he first visited in May 1898. On Aran, Synge detected a healthy pattern of pre-Christian beliefs behind a thin veneer of Catholic religiosity. *Riders to the Sea* (1904) is Synge’s dramatic response to the cheerful interchange between pre-Christian and Christian beliefs. Synge dramatizes the efficacy of pre-Christian folklore that is negotiated by a latter-day druidic seer who exercises the *imbas forosnai* (knowledge of enlightening). However, when these tragic harbingers are not adhered to, an idiosyncratic death-ritual (the *caoine*) is conducted. A Catholic Synod effaced the *caoine* from the cultural narrative in 1670, and when Synge staged his play, the hegemony of the Catholic bourgeoisie quickly closed ranks after detecting a strong whiff of paganism. This paper will highlight the nodal points in Synge’s seditious staging of pre-Christian Ireland and will demonstrate how Synge’s dramaturgical praxis is ‘a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest’ (Spivak 1985:342).

Kathleen Sprows Cummings

“Rehabilitating Bridget: Gender, Anti-Catholicism, and Sainthood in American Culture”

Caricatured representations of “Paddy” in the 19th century United States have often been the subject of historical inquiry. Lesser known are the depictions of Paddy’s female counterpart, Bridget. In one 1866 cartoon, titled “Bridget McBruiser,” a womanly portrait of Florence Nightingale appears alongside a decidedly unfeminine—indeed inhuman—Irish woman. Bridget was invariably depicted as brutish, unwomanly, and unsophisticated. These depictions, like those of Paddy, were intended to suggest that the Irish were racially unfit to be good Americans. This paper explores Irish Americans’ effort to combat anti-Irish stereotypes through a renewed devotion to St. Brigid of Ireland. In 1907, writer and nationalist Katherine O’Keeffe O’Mahoney reminded Irish Americans that the historical Brigid had been a woman of extraordinary “sanctity, character, learning, and grace”—the very antithesis of Bridget McBruiser. O’Mahoney urged all Irish Americans to publicize the biography of the true Bridget, confident in its power to transform the perception and self-perception of Irish American women. Artist Thomas O’Shaughnessy and other Irish Americans committed to the Celtic Revival joined O’Mahoney in touting Bridget as a teacher and scholar in image and in print. This paper situates the revival of Bridget in the context of a larger study of sainthood in U.S. culture. In American Catholic practice, saints often served as intermediaries between the minority religious community and the larger Protestant one. It may seem counterintuitive that Catholics would choose to mediate their Americanness through saintly devotion, the practice that evoked the suspicion and criticism of Protestant observers. But there is no question that hagiography took on a decidedly national dimension in the early 20th century, as U.S. Catholics repackaged Brigid and other European saints for an American audience.

Ailbhe Darcy

“*Thar mo Chionn*’: The ‘*Bean an Leasa*’ Poems of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill”

This paper will present my reading of a selection of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill’s ‘*Bean an Leasa*’ poems through the lens of Mutlu Konuk Blasing’s theory of lyric poetry (*Lyric Poetry*, 2007). Works such as ‘*Fuadach*’ and ‘*Thar mo cionn*’ exploit the qualities of the lyric ‘I’ identified by Blasing—its simultaneous communality and individuality; its creation of an “intimate otherness” through the tense balance between sonority and meaning—to provide a space for Irish society to think itself through, away from the pressures of referenda, official inquiries, polling stations and all the other spaces that “elicit binary reactions to always-already articulated policies” in Charles Bernstein’s telling (*A Poetics*, 1992). Further, I suggest that the

folklore Ní Dhomhnaill uses already possesses features similar to lyric as Blasing describes it, and that this is one of the reasons why it proves such a powerful mode.

John Dillon

‘Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Bab Feiritéar: Reassessing the Poetic Influence of the Oral Tradition’

Many scholars have observed the debt Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's poems owe to the oral tradition, but with the exception of Bo Almqvist, few have sought out the specific sources. This is a consequence of what Louis Althusser calls Spontaneous Philosophy. In other words, the past practice of early folklorists, such as Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, of cataloging folktales according to motifs has produced, to appropriate Benedict Anderson's term, a retrospective imagined community—i.e. "the oral tradition." Deracinated motifs become symbols, their iterations become rituals, and what was once anchored in place and time now has the seductive pull of the universal. The danger, of course, is an occlusion of the storyteller's identity. This paper considers poems such as "Geasa" and "Na Tri Shraoth," to show that Ní Dhomhnaill does not cull her material from a "sea of orality," but from identifiable contact points within the collected repertoires of *seanchaithe* such as Bab Feiritéar. The conversation that emerges between tale and text discusses a poetics of stasis—what does the poet do when old myths smack of artificiality and the form for new myths hasn't been discovered?

Lawrence Eson

“Incubus and Demon in the Merlin Legend”

The demonic side of the Celtic Wild Man's nature may be identified in all the principal strands of this legend cycle. In the Irish material, for example, Suibne Geilt and the *gelta* ('madmen') in general find affinities with the *geniti glinne*, terrifying female spirits of the battlefield, and we know that both Suibne and his Scottish counterpart Lailoken go mad in battle after seeing visions in the sky of similar frightening spirits. However, the Wild Man's "demonic half" is most clearly delineated in the Welsh and later Arthurian material concerned with the mad prophet Merlin. In Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, Merlin appears as the offspring of an incubus demon and a chaste nun. We are left to assume that the miracle child's astounding ability to confound the befuddled mages of Vortigern and knowledge of both past and future are somehow a result of this unholy coupling of sacred and profane parental oppositions. But, in what manner does this mixed inheritance manifest itself in Merlin's character and in his phenomenal prophetic abilities? My paper will examine this question, particularly in the context of the medieval belief in what has been termed the "Incubus Dogma," and attempt to offer some initial conclusions on the influence of demonic patrimony on the creative powers of the archetypal Celtic poet and prophet.

Geraint Evans

“Welsh Catholic Printing in 17th-Century France: A Unique Copy of *Drych Cydwybod* [A Mirror of Conscience] Rediscovered in Paris”

A small number of Welsh books of the 16th and 17th centuries were printed in continental Europe and introduced into Wales and London. The two earliest examples are *Gruffydd Robert*, *Gramadeg Cymraeg* (1567) and *Morys Clynog*, *Athrauaeth Gristnogaul* (1568) both of which were printed in Milan. Other Welsh books by Catholic writers were printed in France, including *Drych Cydwybod* [A Mirror of Conscience], which appears in Moses Williams, *Cofrestr* (1717) and is listed in William Rowlands' *Cambrian Bibliography* under the year 1661. Writing in *Y Cymmrodor* in 1881, H.W. Lloyd recalls that 'There was, to my knowledge, a copy of this work in the possession of a poor person in Caernarvonshire in 1848. Whether it is still in existence, I am unable at present to ascertain.' This appears to be the last reference to a copy of the book in Wales and no copy could be located when the supplement to *Libri Walliae* was published by the National Library of Wales in 2001. This paper will describe the condition, provenance and contents of unique copies of two Welsh books which are held the Bibliothèque Mazarine: the anonymous, undated *Drych Cydwybod* and Roger Smith's Welsh translation of Robert Southwell's *Epistle of a religious priest, unto his father* which was printed in Paris in 1612.

Hugh Fogarty

“Aniar aduaidh: An Early Irish Portent of Doom”

Medieval Irish ecclesiastical writings evince a particularly strong interest in the end of the world, especially in the events which were foretold as harbingers of that end. In this paper some of the rich stock of medieval Irish ‘signs before doomsday’ will be explored, with particular reference to the *Scúab a Fánaid* (‘The Broom out of Fanad’). Contemporary sources attest a popular panic associated with the feast of John the Baptist in the year 1096, due partly to the tradition that an Irish druid named Mog Ruith had carried out the beheading of the saint. The ‘Broom out of Fanad’ (in the north-west of Ireland) is one of several tribulations forecast to afflict the Irish in advance of the Day of Judgment.

Helen Fulton

“Translation and Adaptation: *Ystorya Dared* and Welsh Historiography”

The Middle Welsh *Ystorya Dared* is the Welsh version, in prose, of the destruction of Troy. It gets its name from Dares Phrygius, the putative writer of the Latin “eye-witness” version. Written in the early 14th century, *Ystorya Dared* pre-dates any of the three Middle English versions and appears to be based directly on the Latin text of Dares, unlike the English versions which drew on the intermediary texts of Guido delle Colonne and his predecessor Benoît de Saint-Maure. *Ystorya Dared* has been relatively neglected by modern Welsh scholars who have routinely dismissed it as a “translation” and therefore not an “original” composition in Welsh. This paper argues firstly that *Ystorya Dared* is an adaptation rather than a translation, and secondly that its appearance in 14th-century Wales marks a deliberate attempt to create a continuous history of the Welsh (British) people from their Trojan origins (as descendants of Aeneas and Brutus) to the Edwardian conquest of 1284. Some comparisons will be made with the Irish version of the story, *Togail Troí*.

Anne Goarzin

“Paul Durcan: Sinner, Scribe and Performer”

Durcan’s claims that he distances himself from any constrained cultural form pervades his poetry, as does his wish to reclaim the purity of a “primal tongue”, of a newfound orality which could set free his contemporaries: “In Ireland before the Celtic Yoke I was the voice of Seeing / And my island people’s Speaking was their Being; / So go now, brother – cast off all cultural shrouds / And speak like me – like the mighty sun through the clouds” (“Before the Celtic Yoke”, in *A Snail in My Prime, New and Selected Poems*, 1993). Whatever the poet’s dreams of a primary orality, the Ireland he resides in is characterized by its pertaining to “secondary orality”, as defined by Walter J. Ong in *Orality and Literacy* (1982). This contribution will examine how Durcan’s poetry succeeds in retaining the “mind-set of primary orality” within a high-technology, globalised, and invasive audio culture. His rhapsodic approach to contemporary Ireland can provide insights into his connections with the oral tradition, as can his poems concerned with performing poetry recitals, or with celebrating fellow Irish writers. Similarly, his life-affirming, exuberant writing stresses the impossibility for Durcan’s to dispense with orality. He does this in a way that takes in the variety of orality’s contemporary forms and boldly incarnates the voice of women, or the unlikely voices of a snail or a cow to speak about Ireland past and present. Memory, magic, heroism and performance are distinctive features of the poetry of Paul Durcan, which shall be illustrated by referring to selected poems.

Wes Hamrick

“Hard News, Messianic Visions: Scribes and the Public Sphere”

Because 18th-century literature in Irish circulated almost exclusively in manuscript, scholars have largely excluded it from discussions of print culture and the public sphere. However, almost all of the Irish-language writers of the period were bilingual, most of them wrote poems about specific public events, and many of the poets and scribes were avid readers of newspapers and other printed texts. In examining the poetic response to current events, this paper challenges the notion that Irish-speaking Ireland in the 18th century lacked a public sphere and seeks to locate Irish-language poetry within the larger public sphere of Britain and Ireland.

Amber Handy

“Practical Persuasion: Early Medieval Advice to Those Who Aspire to Rule”

In this paper, I propose to discuss the practical nature of the Old Irish and Hiberno Latin *specula principum* from the early medieval period, utilizing some continental *specula* from the same era for comparative purposes. I will dig a bit deeper than the usual appreciation of the concepts of the *fir flathemon* and sacred kingship to show how these texts laid out a practical, and indeed culturally necessary, idea of properly functioning kingship alongside the more spiritual claims of the works. This paper is part of my larger dissertation work on the *specula principum* written in Ireland, Britain, and the Carolingian world between the seventh and 10th centuries. While there are many differences within my chosen core of texts, I would like to concentrate here on the most striking similarity, which is the insistent practicality of the texts. The king is advised to choose his counselors wisely and to beware of trouble with bribes or ambitious family and friends. He is counseled to be prepared for war but to strive for peace. Above all, he is advised to be just at all times, neither discriminating on account of wealth nor family nor any other means of distinction. While some of the *specula*, particularly the Latin ones, do stress that the king must always keep his soul and the souls of his subjects in mind, the practical nature of these advice manuals is impossible to ignore. This, I think, is what makes them so valuable to the scholar interested in early medieval culture. While some have considered the early medieval *speculum principis* genre to be high political theory applied from the top down, I would disagree. Instead, I believe that these texts reveal a fluid interaction between the major players in the political game: the ruler, the church, and the nobility. Especially in the Carolingian world, and to a lesser extent in Ireland as well, I believe that these texts were part of the second wave of Christianization, where the focus moved from belief to action.

Jill Hallgren Havlat

“My Body is [Not] a Witch’: Radically Traditionalist Feminism within Eavan Boland’s ‘In Her Own Image’”

Eavan Boland’s poetry incites a chorus of critical discourse that praises her for turning the Irish literary tradition on its head: as Carmen Zamorano Llena summates astutely, “It is precisely through the dialogue between Irishness and womanhood that Boland attempts to recover the lost land of female identity, thus subverting and rewriting tradition from within.” Isabel Karremann articulates Boland’s aberration with as much alacrity. She asserts that Boland’s body discourse within ‘In Her Own Image’ “[provides] an ironic comment not only on women’s oppression under patriarchy but also on certain kinds of feminism.” I agree with Karremann and propose that the text’s pro-woman, pro-female sexuality angle has been unduly deemphasized by critics who portray the sequence as an ascription to more radical kinds of separatist feminism. My reading will argue that the feministic aspects of ‘In Her Own Image’ glorify women and the female experience by treating the traditional experiences of the female body, such as menses and (hetero)sexual desire. It will necessitate a reconsideration of ‘In Her Own Image’ as a sort of ‘radically traditionalist’ feministic piece that not only defends female corporeality from patriarchal prescriptions for literature, but also from critiques suggesting that such somehow debilitates women. My paper will propose that Boland is writing the body from a necessarily gynocentric and radically traditionalist point of view that is as novel in feminist texts as it is in the Irish literary tradition.

Dara Hellman

“The Outcast, the Other, His Wife and Her Counsel”

In one of the many structurally important points of crisis in *Gereint vab Erbin*, there is a tenuously connected pair of proverbial expressions: naught may be done with what god wills; (and) much good comes of counsel. As *sententia(e)*, it is/they are clearly pivotal in this narrative, as it is the only moment of proverbiality, around which the narrative (and indeed all important moments of action) revolve(s), the point on which the text rests. Nothing happens without a discussion of advice, exchange of advice, taking, giving, rejection or debating the value of advice (especially that which is or has been offered by Others). The connection between the two is tenuous (dare one say nebulous?) at best. There is not only a literary connection but a Scriptural, proverbial liaison as well. The narrative link is that there is a tradition, a scaffolding

buttressing this element of the tale, of advice (good advice, necessary advice, THE advice) coming from the OTHER: from the woman, the dwarf, the outcast, the servant, the disenfranchised. This element, necessary, rather than ornamental, finds its reflection not only in incidents of such advice offering, taking, not taking, and/or succeeding or failing based on the taking or not of that advice, throughout Gereint, but in Celtic narratives as diverse as *Mac Dathó's Pig* and *Owein*, among others.

Patricia Herron

“Lawyers, Scribes and Conflicting Evidence: Did Ancient Irish Lawyers Resist the Written Learning of Saint Patrick?”

The *Seanchas Már*, The Great Tradition, is a compilation of ancient Irish laws which, in its Introduction, informs the reader of the exact time and place when Irish law transmuted from an oral to a written tradition. The auspicious occasion was the coming to Ireland of Saint Patrick in the fifth century, and with him the culture, language and alphabet of the Roman world. Three kings, three poets and three bishops put their heads together to produce a definitive, written, compilation of Ireland's native laws, leaving out (or amending) those that did not conform to the new Christian religion. This event is still regarded by many as the beginning of Ireland's emergence from the dark ages of pre-historical barbarism into the bright light of the civilized historical era. However, a later account in Irish legal history claims that a warrior named Cenn Faeled, who lived about 200 years after Patrick, was the first person responsible for committing ancient Irish law to the written medium, and for paving the way for a new era of vernacular Irish literature. This presentation examines both accounts; but, rather than reach a conclusion as to which one is more accurate, asks whether it is possible that they can be reconciled. Could the written tradition that Patrick is claimed to have brought to Ireland have been deliberately rejected by Irish lawyers, in favor of the oral tradition, for another two hundred years? And, if so, why?

Barbara Hillers

“In the wake of Ulysses and Aeneas: Irish Voyage Tales and Their Classical Models”

Medieval Irish literature has a rich corpus of voyage tales, embedded in native vernacular tradition but also linked by a web of allusion to the voyage tales of Classical Antiquity, in particular Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. This paper investigates the vernacular retellings of the voyages of Ulysses and Aeneas, ‘The Wandering of Ulysses Son of Laertes’ (*Merugud Uilixis meic Leirtis*) and ‘The Wanderings of Aeneas’ (*Imtheachta Aeniasa*), by placing them in the context of the Irish voyage genre, in particular the *immrama*, vernacular tales of sea voyages that more than most genres of saga literature appear to directly and indirectly reflect the interests and concerns of their monastic creators. The complex web of native, classical, and Christian allusions in the voyage tales can tell us much about the world-view and intellectual horizons of the Early Irish literati.

Kevin Kritsch

“Equivocal Land Claims in Guta saga and *Aislinge Óenguso*: A Neglected Norse-Celtic Analogue?”

The Old Norse Guta saga contains an interesting episode in which the Byzantine emperor is tricked by a group of Gotlanders into granting settlement rights. The unwitting emperor initially seeks to give the Gotlanders permission to stay in his realm for only a month, but is later informed that the phrase “for the waxing and waning” actually means “for ever and ever.” As a result, the emperor is left no legal recourse for the removal of the Gotlanders. In the most recent edition of the Guta saga (1999), Christine Peel identifies many of the oral and written source traditions that inform the narrative, but when it comes to the duping of the emperor, the editor is forced to concede that, “No close parallels to this story have come to light.” Peel goes on to discuss numerous land claiming tricks that appear in Norse and Middle English narratives, but fails to consider the Celtic material as a possible source for analogues. For those familiar with early Irish literature, the tricking of the emperor will doubtlessly call to mind similar deceptions involving equivocal language in *Aislinge Óenguso*, *Tochmarc Étaíne*, etc. This paper will explore the possible connections between Guta saga and its Irish analogues as well as reassess some of the possible implications for cultural exchange between Ireland and continental Scandinavia.

Kristen Lee Over

“Kingship, Grooming, and Sin in *Culhwch ac Olwen*”

In the early Welsh prose tale, *Culhwch ac Olwen*, British kingship is in part determined by who possesses the ‘treasures’ of comb, shears, and razor—who trims, plucks, barbs, and razes the heads, hair, and faces of others. The tale reveals this business to be less trim and controlled than it seems, though, on the whole questioning rather than sanctioning the practice of grooming rivals through war and conquest. Arthur and the other kings of the tale intent on grooming hover close to barbarity, and the tale links barbing with the potential of British kingship to take on violently inhuman and beastly forms (such as those of the giant Ysbaddaden or Twrch Trwyth, who, as Arthur tells us, had been a king until God changed him into a boar for his sins). This paper proposes an examination of the tale’s interest in barbing, especially in how it relates to the terror implicit in kingship. The tale’s dark images of political authority (and wrongdoing) and its emphasis on collective terror distinguish it from the Arthurian romance that develops in the latter half of the 12th century. An insular precursor to romance, *Culhwch ac Olwen* implicitly warns against the tyrannical potential of martial, conquest-oriented kingship, helping to elaborate a conception of political power ill-contained by symbols of trimming or by threat of punished sin.

Anna Matheson

“The Worthiness of the Mad Penitent in *Lailoken A*”

The text commonly referred to as *Lailoken A* describes the meeting of St Kentigern and the demoniac Lailoken. It is tenuously considered to have been extracted from a complete version of the now fragmentary *Life of Saint Kentigern* commissioned by Herbert, bishop of Glasgow, in the mid-12th century. Whether or not *Lailoken A* did, at one time, form part of a tale of Kentigern’s life and miracles, the text that has come down to us hardly fits the bill of a short catalogue of anecdotes presenting Kentigern as a heroic saint. Rather, the text is centered on the moral-theological dilemma Kentigern is faced with when asked to give the Eucharist to a madman. Scholarly discussion on the text has focused on Lailoken’s relation to the “wild man” figures Suibne and Merlin. Yet, in an unpublished undergraduate dissertation, J. E. E. Chandler has proposed that *Lailoken A* was composed with didactic intent as a homily on the efficacy of penitence with particular reference to the order of Mass for Maundy Thursday. This paper will build on Chandler’s theory; close textual analysis will reveal *Lailoken A* to be a rich literary work replete with biblical and hagiographical tropes concerning penance that are woven together with allusions to exegetical tradition concerning the punishment of sinners and the purgative effects of madness and banishment. These textual echoes employed in the depiction of the “unworthy penitent” contribute to one of the overriding messages of the text in its invocation not to judge.

Sarah E. McKibben

“Speaking Of / Speaking For: Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill’s Folkloristic Ethics”

Many women poets find their voices through someone else’s words. For instance, Barbara Helfgott Hyett’s first book presents “found poems” from oral histories of the liberation of concentration camps. Other poets explore translation and transcription or adopt the voices of older female relatives or ancestors and thus their familial authority, rich life experience and accreted character. Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill has explored these various modes, transforming work by famous poets, writing of her great-aunt and, notably, employing voices from folklore. This paper explores the ethics of her use of what is at once a shared national tradition (housed in the national folklore archives and available, in theory, to all) and a personally meaningful connection to a verbal tradition, region, language of those excluded from power (in the archived work by and about female figures in general and in material crafted by Bab Feiritéar in particular), arguing that Ní Dhomhnaill’s writing parses the ethics of her relation to folklore material by self-reflexively borrowing, learning from, speculating upon, being transformed by, and perpetuating it while allowing a marked space for the unsaid, the unsayable, the mystifying and the dangerous, dramatizing a resistant and numinous tradition that forestalls final possession or mastery.

Brent Miles

“The *Sermo ad Reges* from the *Leabhar Breac* as Sermon and Commentary”

The *Sermo ad reges* is a macaronic Latin-Middle Irish text on the duties of kings. The sole copy survives in the collection of homiletic materials in the early 15th-century *Leabhar Breac*. Drawing on my current project to prepare the first critical edition of the integral text, this paper will examine the relationship of the Irish to the Latin in the *Sermo*. The Latin sources of the *Sermo* are largely those mined also by Sedulius Scottus in the ninth century, most notably excerpts from the seventh-century Hiberno-Latin texts *De XII abusivis* and the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*. Often adopting the form of a paraphrase and running commentary on these older texts, the *Sermo* extends techniques of Irish Biblical exegesis to works of Irish composition themselves now accepted as authoritative. Despite its title, therefore, the *Sermo* in its present form was likely intended for a learned rather than a royal audience, and can be read as an affirmation in the vernacularized culture of post-Viking Ireland of the Bible-oriented political theory devised by the early Irish church.

Lawrence Morris

“‘Aristocracies of Thought’: Social Class in the Early Folklore of Yeats and Hyde”

The years 1888-9 saw the production of two influential collections of Irish folklore: *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry* by William Butler Yeats and *Leabhar Sgeuluigheachta* by Douglas Hyde. These works broke strongly with the unscientific and patronizing tone of the Buchmärchen tradition in Ireland and established a new theory of folklore. In this theory, Yeats and Hyde distanced peasant narrators in an attempt to secure literary and, ultimately, aristocratic origins for their tales. As a result, Hyde and Yeats, despite their Ascendancy upbringings, could view themselves (and not the peasant narrators) as the legitimate inheritors of folklore narratives. The very stories collected, however, challenge this power dynamic. Stories such as “*Monachar agus Manachar*” and “*Cailleacha na Fiacla Fada*” (sic) directly critique the perceived unjust division of labor and profit in rural Ireland in a way that parallels the act of folklore collection. The tales themselves resist the rhetorical frameworks of their Ascendancy collectors. This paper examines the rhetorical and editorial approaches of Yeats and Hyde within the literary, autobiographical, social, and historical contexts of late 19th-century Ireland.

Aedín Ní Bhróithe-Clements

“The Irish Language in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney”

This paper explores the meaning and significance of the Irish language to Seamus Heaney's writing. Irish words, references to the Irish language, translations or poems based on Gaelic poetry, are common in his work. Are the instances of Irish mere gestures towards a language to which he feels an obligation? Do they suggest a belief that the Irish language is intrinsically part of the landscape of which he writes? Or are the Irish words and placenames simply part of the treasure-trove of words from which he draws? One of Heaney's most obvious references to Irish is in his use of placenames, which has been related by Declan Kiberd to *dinnsheanchas* or placename lore. His reference to placenames and the significance of these references is discussed. Heaney's poetry is explored in the context of Kiberd's and Thomas Kinsella's critical writing on the poet and the Irish language, particularly in the context of the reasons proposed by these writers for unease in the Irish poet who write in English, for the feeling of discontinuity and the desire to fill “the rift between the Gaelic and the Anglo-Irish traditions” (*Field Day* 1313).

Bríona Nic Dhiarmadha

“*Ar Fhilleadh ar Éirinn* – Returning to Ithaca?/There is no Ithaca to return to...Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill”

This paper will examine the notion of ‘unheimlich’ in the poetry of Nuala ní Dhomhnaill and the often ambiguous relationship in her poetry with the idea of ‘the home place’. It will examine, in particular, how her poems embody the ‘process of estrangement’. I will argue here that they articulate as Angela Michelis says of Carol Ann Duffy's poems “a state of alienation and exclusion in which the home country is exposed as the Other Country in which we are foreigners

and have lost our bearings. But this... is also an opportunity of gaining a new prospective allowing a revision of ourselves' (Michaeilis: 96) This paper will test the validity of this statement when applied to the work of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill.

Verona Ní Dhrisceoil

“Language and Legal Rights in Ireland”

In recent decades, much has been achieved in terms of language recognition and legal status for the Irish language in Ireland. Constitutional provisions have been given substance in the form of the *Official Languages Act 2003* and Irish has been declared an official language of the European Union since 2005 with effect from 2007. However, despite such epic developments in the public arena, the future of the Irish language remains uncertain. In 2008, UNESCO declared Irish, a vulnerable language. In this paper, I will explore the impact of 'law' on the future of the Irish language. I believe that without careful planning in conjunction with this legislation, there is a danger that this Act will fail to bring about significant changes in language practice in Ireland and become largely symbolic rather than functional. I wish to illustrate some of the weaknesses inherent in this language legislation and probe further the notion that conferring status on a language group doesn't necessarily ensure transmission of the language in the home place. I will question whether the enactment of the 2003 Act *may* in fact, be 'feel good legislation', rather than a real constructive measure to ensure the survival of the language.

Feargal Ó Béarra

“On the Date of Interpolator H in *Lebor na hUidre*”

Rudolf Thurneysen described the discovery of the presence of a third scribe, ‘Interpolator H’, in *Lebor na hUidre* as one ‘which is of the greatest importance not only for the manuscript itself but also for the whole of the older Sagengeschichte’.¹ Nevertheless, we still await a satisfactory and conclusive dating for Interpolator H, who has been variously placed, by different commentators, in the late 11th, late 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries. A comparison with the orthography employed in a number of 11th and 12th century manuscripts show all three scribes of *LU* to have been highly conservative, reflecting their common education and interests, and consistent with the quite antiquarian, backward-looking, mandarin environment in which they labored. This conservatism was due in part to the very nature of the saga and pseudo-historical materials being preserved, and led in turn to a reluctance to acknowledge in writing various phonological and morphological changes happening in the spoken language. In this paper, evidence will be adduced to show H to have been by far the most conservative of all three *LU* scribes. Notwithstanding these archaizing tendencies, it will be shown that H was active very soon after—if not indeed contemporaneously with—Scribes A and M.

Theresa O’Byrne

“The Knight and the Scribe: James Yonge, Lawrence Rathold of Pászthó, and Saint Patrick’s Purgatory”

In early 1412, the Hungarian knight Lawrence Rathold returned in triumph to Dublin after setting out three months earlier to visit Saint Patrick’s Purgatory, located on Station Island in Loch Derg, County Donegal. Rathold’s arduous wintertime journey took him to the remote Augustinian priory on Loch Derg’s Saints’ Island. While there, Rathold fasted prior to entering Saint Patrick’s Purgatory, where he beheld visions and was absolved of his sins. Pressed by the people of Dublin to commit his experiences to writing, he called upon the services of James Yonge, who describes himself as an “imperial notary, and the least of the citizens and scribes of the city of Dublin.” The resulting work is as much Yonge’s as it is Rathold’s. Rather than simply taking dictation from Rathold, Yonge compiled his work from legal and ecclesiastical documents, interviews with Rathold, and additional material gleaned from other pilgrims’ accounts of Saint Patrick’s Purgatory. The lurid details of purgatorial visions which are a hallmark of the extremely popular account of the Arthurian knight, Owein, are conspicuously absent from Yonge’s final product. Part homily, part meditation, and part history, Rathold’s account of his journey to Saint Patrick’s Purgatory stands apart from the many other high and late medieval narratives about the pilgrimage destination and reveals the concerns of both pilgrim and scribe.

Pádraig Ó Liatháin

“Donncha Rua Mac Conmara: The Poet and the Scribes”

In this paper, I intend to explore various aspects of the life and work of the colorful 18th century poet Donncha Rua Mac Conmara (1715?-1810). He composed in Irish, English and Latin, his work includes the famous poem *Bánchnoic Éireann Óigh*, biting satires on the Catholic and Protestant church in Ireland, and an elegy for his fellow poet Tadhg Gaelach Ó Súilleabháin. Folklore sources maintain that he was educated on the continent, and while he certainly spent most of his adult life in Waterford, he also seems to have lived and worked for a while in Newfoundland, as can be attested to in his poetry. However, his fame as a poet primarily rests on *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, one of the most significant poems in the 18th century written in Ireland. In this dramatic and satirical epic poem, the author/protagonist sets off on a voyage to Sasana Nua, but he encounters the goddess Aoibheall and accompanies her to the underworld, in a passage clearly based on his knowledge of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Only one remaining manuscript evidences the poet as a scribe. It is, however, of great importance, as it contains an autograph copy of *Eachtra Ghiolla an Amaráin*, the oldest extant copy of the poem. I intend to speak of the rich manuscript tradition of the poem—ca. 60 copies between 1758-1860—and I will briefly discuss scribal discrepancies and resulting differences in heretofore published editions.

Tomás L. Ó Murchú

“A Preliminary Examination of Aspects of the Language of Discontent Directed at the English Establishment in 18th Century Irish Language Elegies, Referring Specifically to Texts Composed for the Jacobite, James Cotter Jnr. (1689-1720)”

James Cotter Jnr. (1689 - 1720) was the eldest son of the regicide and wealthy Catholic landowner from east Cork, Sir James Cotter (1630-1705). He inherited his father's lands and adhered to the Catholic faith. An ardent supporter of the Jacobite cause, his political and social times and circumstances were full of tension and intrigue. He was publicly hanged in 1720 in Cork City, having been found guilty of the rape of Elizabeth Squibb. His execution caused outrage throughout the South of Ireland, being interpreted as a sectarian act in order rid Munster of an impetuous independently minded Jacobite. The circumstances of his execution still remain a cause for debate and have been widely commented upon by literary scholars and historians. The Gaelic literati of Munster keened his death in, it would seem, a concerted effort. The collection of elegies for Cotter are unique in that there is at least 18 of them, two of them major texts written by the distinguished Irish poets Éamonn de Bhál and Liam Rua Mac Coitir. We also have three stylistic genres of poetic composition. They are the traditional literary elegy (*Caoineadh*), the song (*amhrán*) and the lament. Each one of these had its own function in society and explored the boundaries of toleration in different ways. This paper will discuss the poets' personal feelings, the disparities and discrimination that were part of the social and political system in the opening decades of the 18th century; and the anger and hatred directed at the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland.

Jonathan O'Neill

“Invoking Identity: The Deployment of Irish Language in New Media sites”

Recently there has been a renewal of interest in or a re-identification with the Irish language, evident in Ireland through Irish census returns and movements for the Irish language such as *Na Gaeil Óga*. This seems to be paralleled by a diasporic engagement with the language such as at the North American Gaeltacht and the re-launch of the magazine, *An Gael*. As Irish-language interlocutors are dispersed mostly in the Anglosphere the internet affords a certain degree of communicability, community coherence and networking, a 'third space'. How does the language operate in sites such as YouTube, Facebook and Irish-language forums? A preliminary examination of the topic would suggest that on sites such as YouTube the language is deployed ironically, as an invocation of identity or heritage, often haunted by overtones of a nationalist or romantic narrative and memory. The purpose of this paper is to examine this phenomenon using an approach of textual and discourse analysis aided by new media, diasporic and postcolonial theory. Can diasporic theory help to explain the phenomenon in Ireland? Is there an increasing tendency for the language being deployed as a heritage language in Ireland? This paper will explore these questions through a reading not only of postings on these sites but also a deconstruction of the symbolism that often accompanies them.

Pádraig Ó Siadhail

“James Mooney and Irish Folklore Studies”

Jeremiah Curtin retains a position of honor in the history of Irish folklore studies because of his pioneering work collecting folktales in Irish speaking areas. His focus on Irish-speaking informants anticipated not just the efforts of other independent collectors but the thrust of the coordinated work of the Irish Folklore Commission (1935-1970), the Irish Government-funded body charged with recording extant folk material. However, one of Curtin's colleagues in the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution, James Mooney was also active in collecting and writing about Irish folklore. James Mooney's claim to fame rests on his ethnological work amongst Native Indians. He had to his credit an impressive list of publications on aspects of Native American culture, including *Sacred Formulas of the Cherokees* (1891), *The Siouan Tribes of the East* (1894), *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians* (1898), *Myths of the Cherokee* (1900), and most controversially, *The Ghost Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (1896), which had examined the circumstances surrounding the mass killing of natives by the Seventh Cavalry at Wounded Knee in South Dakota in December 1890. His writings in general remain the initial point of contact for many readers, both scholarly and non-

academic, when they set about learning about Native American culture. To date, scholars have paid scant attention to Mooney's Irish work. Of particular interest are his three lengthy essays on Irish folk medicine, the folk calendar in Ireland, and death in the Irish tradition. In my paper, I plan to touch on a range of topics: an outline of the material in Mooney's essays, his highly progressive treatment of material in Irish, and the question of his sources which included informants in North America. Ultimately, my paper seeks not just to bring to a wide audience the existence of material neglected until now but the claim that James Mooney's name be added to that of Jeremiah Curtin in the history of early Irish folk culture studies.

Tomás O'Sullivan

"Three Calls and Seven Signs: The Irish Enumerative Style in Vat. Pal. lat. 220"

The Vatican Library manuscript, Pal. lat. 220, a collection of homilies and homiletic material from c. 800ce, contains many texts which have long been recognized as displaying strong evidence of Insular affiliations: the unique copy of Redaction XI of the *Visio sancti Pauli*, which may well be Irish in origin, the seven homilies *In nomine Dei summi*, and a Sunday Catechesis published by Robert McNally in his *Scriptores Hiberniae minores* (CCSL 108B). This paper will examine some examples of the "Irish enumerative style" in this homiletic collection, such as the "Three Calls to the World" (ff. 18v-19r), a previously-unrecorded triad whose construction is symptomatic of Irish-influenced exegesis; these *tres uocationes* will be analyzed in relation to the Irish tradition of the "Three Cries of the World" (*Trí gáire in domuin*). Particular emphasis will be placed on the "Seven Signs which Healed the World" (ff. 46v-47r = *In nomine Dei summi* VII), which derive from popular medieval traditions offering Christological interpretations of the Seven Seals of John's Revelation. These traditions were undoubtedly well-known in Ireland, where they influenced such texts as the *lorica Faeth Fiada* and the Old-Irish *Treatise on the Psalter*. However, an analogous heptad in the Old-Irish *Scúap Chrábaid* ("The Broom of Devotion") is of especial interest, as it offers hints of possible textual transmissions which may explain how such Irish or Irish-influenced material was available in the Rhenish scriptorium where Pal. lat. 220 was produced around the year 800.

Lahney Preston-Matto

"Saints, Fosterage and Hostageship in Medieval Ireland: Sanctified Social Practices"

St. Colman of Ela is famous for having nursed twin boys: when St. Colmcille admits that he would prefer that the twins die, but asks for advice on the matter from St. Colman, the latter says: "Give them to me to nourish and foster. And let us make a covenant respecting them, for I have two paps such as no saint ever had before, a pap with milk, and a pap with honey, and these I will give to them (to suck)." Clearly, St. Colman has transcended his sex with his offer of milk and honey from his own breasts. This is a miracle that helps establish his sanctity. He has not, however, transcended his gender, because fosterage was a time-honored tradition for both sexes (but primarily boys) in medieval Ireland, both being fostered and fostering in turn. St. Colman is only unusual in the nourishment he is able to offer the twins; he is not unusual in offering to foster the boys, particularly as they are being threatened with death, and are his first cousins (his mother's sister's sons). There are references to fosterage in every single *vita*. Every saint was fostered, or fostered children him or herself, or both. The references are often brief, but pervasive. While there has been scholarly interest recently in fosterage in the medieval secular world, this investigation has not yet been extended to the *vitae* to see how the literary depiction of the institution might differ between secular and sacred life. This paper will look at instances of fosterage in both communities to begin to unravel the differences, if any, in the stated purposes of fosterage. I will also begin to determine whether any of the literature makes a distinction between a foster-child and an oblate, when the child is depicted as "being given" to a particular saint. Additionally, this paper will look at a related practice, hostage-taking and exchanging. Although taking hostages is mentioned in the secular literature (annals, etc.) almost ubiquitously, very few *vitae* employ a reference to hostages. In England and throughout Europe, fostering and hostage-taking were often one and the same thing: for example, King David I of Scotland was given to King Henry I of England when a young boy as a hostage, and was fostered by Henry I for about a dozen years. Irish kings routinely used hostage-taking as a way of asserting their military supremacy. Like fosterage, then, hostageship was an often-employed cultural practice, and yet it

doesn't appear in most of the *vitae*; this paper will also examine that disparity to begin to determine why saints were not more often employed as hostages, given that most of them came from a noble background, the population most often used for hostage-exchange, and why there is such a curious absence of hostage references in the *vitae* in general.

Michael J. Simonton

“Legends as Folk Memory?”

Although the analysis of legends as history hardly is a new topic in the realm of Celtic studies, the author hopes to spark a discussion that the *First Battle of Magh Tuiredh* between the Fir Bolg and the Tuatha de Danann may have taken place in northern Germany or southern Denmark, rather than in Ireland, where it usually is located. To do this the author briefly describes several Celtic legends and legendary creatures and the possibilities that they could be representative of real creatures or events that may be demonstrable archeologically and/or historically to have existed in the proto-historic era. These legendary creatures include various centaurs, satyrs, fairies (including the gruagach, or hairy goblin, which the author contends may have been a North African monkey). Likewise, the author sees the story of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight as representative of the superiority of Iron Age technology at the expense of Bronze Age technology. By examining the story of the *First Battle of Magh Tuiredh* with reference to the works of Proinsias MacCana, Nora Chadwick, Barry Cunliffe, as well as several classical authors of the Roman era, this author argues for a continental venue for the battle between the Fir Bolg and the Tuatha de Danann.

Marina Smyth

“Zoologists in Seventh-Century Ireland?”

Two Latin texts written in Ireland during the third quarter of the seventh century reveal a surprising interest in the animal world. While some of the questions discussed are evidence for familiarity with concerns raised by earlier Christian scholars such as St Augustine, the answers proposed in these Irish treatises can be quite novel. This independence of mind also leads to new insights, combining observation with traditional interpretations of Scripture.

Hannah Zdansky

“Love in Translation: The Irish Vernacularization of the *Aeneid*”

Scholars have noted that unlike modern concepts of translation theory, medieval notions may well have been different, based on an understanding of the word itself. Indeed, Eng. *translation* < Lat. *trānslātiō* ‘a carrying across, removal, transporting, transferring.’ With regard to rhetoric, it has the additional distinction of ‘a transfer of meaning.’ To the medieval mind, all of these nuances and more are bound up in the one term. This paper proposes to look at Book IV of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the Dido and Aeneas episode, and the way in which the classical perception of love was adapted for a medieval Irish audience in the anonymous *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, or the ‘The Wanderings of Aeneas.’ In this version, likely written before the middle of the 12th century and which therefore stands as the earliest vernacular treatment of Virgil, I analyze the presentation of love in conjunction with contemporary native literature (*Aislinge Óenguso*, *Tochmarc Étaíne*, *Buile Shuibhne*, *The Romance of Mis and Dubh Ruis*, *Serglige Con Culainn*) in order to observe the shift in understanding which occurred between the Latin and Middle Irish narratives. When Virgil's *Aeneid* came into medieval Ireland, it underwent a translation from one cultural time period and language into another, quite distant setting. For this reason, the story, while still clearly based upon the *Aeneid*, was altered in order to accommodate a different people with different beliefs and a different understanding and appreciation for literature. By comparing a text with its original, we can see the way in which it was appropriated. This, in turn, tells us something about the people who made it their own.