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Abstracts



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Elise Alonzi & Tommy Burke

From monastic sanctuary to lay cemetery: investigations at St Colman's Abbey, Inishbofin, Co. Galway

The Cultural Landscapes of the Irish Coast (CLIC) project is a multi-disciplinary research project that unites American and Irish scholars and local experts to examine cultural change in coastal Connemara from prehistory to the twentieth century. This session presents preliminary results of CLIC's investigation of the origins, development and after-life of several island ecclesiastical settlements in the early medieval period. This paper focuses on St Colman's Abbey on Inishbofin, Co. Galway. The site currently consists of a ruinous fourteenth-century church and a graveyard that is still in use. The abbey's founding in the late seventh century was famously documented by Bede. Recent survey has revealed a number of early medieval remains on site: an enclosure wall, carved cross-slabs, and a possible *leacht*/penitential station. Viewing these remains alongside a sparse documentary record suggests how the remains of early medieval monasticism provided a framework for local pastoral worship in subsequent centuries.

Hanne-Mette Alsos Raae

Adaltrach - a derogatory term or simply another type of wife? An examination of the word adaltrach

Adaltrach is a term which is often used in the law texts discussing the entitlements and restrictions of the different types of wives. There have been many interpretations of this term, ranging from the most derogatory translation of 'adulteress' in *Ancient Laws of Ireland* to the scholars who leave the word untranslated. Did this word have a uniform meaning? And if so, is it possible to understand whether this was always used as a derogatory term? This paper offers an analysis of the term *adaltrach* and its usage in a selection of law texts dealing with the different types of women.

Emma Anderson

Medieval Irish horns: some new perspectives

Despite regular appearances in iconographic sources and the literary tradition, lip-vibrated instruments from early medieval Ireland have received relatively little attention. Overshadowed by the study of their Bronze Age

forebears on one hand, and the medieval harp on the other, these instruments offer us a fascinating insight into the role of music and musicians in society and appear in a startlingly varied range of contexts. From literary tales to Irish translations of Classical texts, texts and images dealing with the Day of Doom, through to references in the writings of Gerald of Wales, it is clear that these instruments had an important role in early medieval society. Examination of comparative iconography from Scotland, the Isle of Man and Scandinavia offers further contextual material. This paper will examine a selection of these instruments, and associated terminology with a view to understanding the role of instrumental sound in shaping social perceptions.

Lisa Bennett

Unnr and Amlaib: a study of Old Norse and Irish sources

Laxdæla saga introduces one of Iceland's first and most prominent settlers, Unnr *djúpuðga* Ketilsdóttir (known in *Landnámabók* as Auðr), who was reputed to have married Óláfr *inn hvíti*; however, nothing more than the "fact" of this union is presented in the *Íslendingasögur*. Óláfr *inn hvíti* is often viewed as the same man described in the Irish Annals and the Fragmentary Annals of Ireland as Amlaíb Conung, 'son of the king of Laithlinn', to whom the Vikings in Dublin submitted in 853. There is no mention of Unnr/Auðr in the Annals; instead, Amlaíb weds the daughter of Áed Finlaith (c. 862) and/or the daughter of Cináed mac Conaing. This paper examines Old Norse and Irish sources in order to highlight intersections in the biographies of Unnr/Auðr and Óláfr/Amlaíb, but also to explore their divergences. For while these conflicting accounts are difficult to reconcile from a strictly historical perspective, they present a fascinating challenge for the writer of historical fiction: that is, how, when, and *if* Unnr should be (re-)inserted into the timeline of Viking Age Dublin?

James Bonsall & Thomas Loughlin

Reduce, recycle, reconstruct: resurrecting the architecture and landscape of Great Connell Priory, Newbridge, Co. Kildare

The medieval Augustinian priory of Great Connell was heavily destroyed in the wake of dissolution. Post-medieval activity on the site includes the construction of a mill and farmyards. Recent research has used geophysical

and LiDAR prospection to trace the priory's footprint, ancillary buildings and settlement in an attempt to reconstruct the medieval monastic landscape. In addition a review of cartographic and literary resources examined post-dissolution interest in the site and despoliation survey investigated local traditions relating to the priory's destruction.

Sparky Booker

'To labour to reform, hold and preserve peace': ecclesiastical attitudes towards violence in fifteenth-century Ireland

The traditional, Whig view of the late medieval church as a failing institution, desperately in need of the coming reformation, has had a strong influence on Irish historiography. Yet, more recent work on the Irish church has shown a high level of pastoral care and lay engagement with the church in the fifteenth century. This was the case both locally and internationally, as correspondence with the papal curia in Rome was commonplace. Ecclesiastical courts were an essential aspect of the pastoral care that the church offered the laity, and although secular courts dealt with most violent offences, a number of entries in the archiepiscopal registers reveal how the archbishop of Armagh's court ruled in those cases involving violence that did come before it. The most revealing source for papal attitudes towards violence are the penitentiary records, which provide an important window into how the papacy responded to cases of violence by clerics. Overall, combining these records can illustrate how the church reacted to violence perpetrated by clerics and the laity in fifteenth-century Ireland.

Daniel Brown

'Solomon of the Irish.' Peace and propaganda in the reign of Muirchertach Ua Briain

If power in medieval Europe was most often achieved through warfare, kings and rulers were judged on their ability to offer peace, protection and prosperity. This paper offers a reassessment of twelfth-century Irish kingship by examining the 'year's peace' (*síth mbliadhna*), a new kind of political truce emerging in the early twelfth century. Rather than a stumbling block to military dominance, the negotiation of peace was a calculated response on the part of increasingly outward-looking Irish kings to continental ideas about moral rulership, and a reaction to the European religious movement against

private war. The tension between peace and violence is perhaps most clearly illustrated in historicist propaganda commissioned under Muirchertach Ua Briain (1050-1119), which sought to justify the king of Munster's own endorsement of pacific diplomacy through the creation of a fictional 'peace of Erinn', as well as the commemoration of Muirchertach's celebrated ancestor, Brian Bóruma, as 'Solomon of the Irish'.

Ann Buckley

From hymn to historia: the development of liturgical offices for local saints in the medieval Irish Church

From the evidence of kalendars, martyrologies, collects, litanies, and sung prayers, the liturgical culting of local saints existed from an early date in the Irish church. In addition to specially composed hymns, such as are found in the Antiphony of Bangor and the Irish *Liber Hymnorum*, the sources also include proper collects and occasionally antiphons. Yet while fragmentary evidence exists, for example in the Book of Mulling and the Basel Psalter, for offices which include material for Patrick, Brigit, Colm Cille, there are no equivalents to the prose offices of Carolingian Francia in Irish sources. It thus seems likely that full proper saints' offices or *historiae* such as survive in a handful of late medieval liturgical service-books, came into existence only following the twelfth-century reforms of the Irish church.

Tommy Burke see Elise Alonzi & Tommy Burke

Niall Buttimer

Transactional imagery in Irish 'Courtly Love' poetry

Most studies of Tomás Ó Rathile's *Dánta grádha* (1926) concentrate on the origins of verse found in that groundbreaking anthology, seeking to highlight the role overseas influences played in shaping its contents. This talk examines a different strand, inputs from contemporary real-world practices. Among the latter may be instanced representations of love as a form of contract, or as a type of captivity and imprisonment involving negotiated ransom or release. The presentation analyses texts where such features occur. The paper considers general conclusions one may draw from those conventions about the place of 'courtly love' material in the poetic tradition to which it belongs. It

also highlights the value of the evidence for one's understanding of later medieval Irish society, particularly as regards the data's relevance to scholarly research on that domain.

Paul Byrne

The date and authorship of the Life of St Molua

The composition-date of the Life of St Molua was estimated to be before AD 800 by Richard Sharpe. His conclusion, which was based on linguistic analysis, has not won universal approval. In my paper, I focus on the historical, mainly political, elements in the Life. The conclusion of my analysis is that the Life, or at least the archetype of the Life, was written in the seventh century, placing it among the earliest examples of Irish hagiography. I shall also argue that the probable author of the Life was Laidcend mac Báith Bandaig, *sapiens*, who died in 661, and who was associated with Molua's monastic establishment, Clonfertmulloe.

Tracy Collins

Nuns and nunneries in medieval Ireland: outsiders in a medieval monastic world?

Medieval nuns and their nunneries are commonly thought of as being somehow outside and apart from contemporary male monasteries and wider secular society. This paper explores, from an archaeological perspective, if this perception is supported by the archaeological evidence, and suggests possible alternative interpretations, which show that nunneries were actually an intrinsic part of their local communities.

John Collis

The historiography of ethnic interpretations of insular art and their implications

From at least the 1850s early medieval art in Britain and Ireland has been interpreted in an ethnic way, indeed ethnic interpretations are integral in the chronology of otherwise undateable monuments such as sculptures. Some of the interpretation was later applied to prehistoric finds. In this paper I wish to consider the development of the methodology through the works of three scholars, John Obadiah Westwood, J. Romilly Allen and William Collingwood. This is part of a wider study of concepts of the Celts, and I shall be giving a paper later in July at Galway which will be largely

complementary to this paper, and at both conferences I hope to pick the brains of medievalist colleagues on where concepts such as ‘trumpet scrolls’ originated.

Jessica Cooke

The Black Abbey and the White Abbey: a survey of the monastic ruins at Annaghdown, County Galway

This paper offers an architectural survey of the two abbeys, Arrouaisian and Premonstratensian, situated together at the monastic complex of Annaghdown, Co. Galway, together with its other structures such as the parish church and the base of the last round tower recorded to have been built in Ireland. The survey will be supplemented by a study of the historical, art historical and textual evidence for Annaghdown until c. 1260. Pre-eminent in west Connacht, this foundation has largely gone unstudied. Founded c. 550 by St. Brendan, Annaghdown became the primary ecclesiastical centre of the west Connacht kings, the Uí Flaithbertaig. This research identifies that the hereditary clergy of Annaghdown were the Uí Mellaig, an Uí Flaithbertaig sept. Annaghdown became a bishopric c. 1179, one of only five in Connacht, while also welcoming the French orders of Arrouaise and Premontre. The Arrouaisian east window is possibly the finest example of late Romanesque sculpture in Ireland.

Mick Corcoran

Topographic indicators of medieval land-use in Ireland: observations in the light of recent research

Much of what is currently understood about medieval land use in Ireland is based around an arguably out-dated narrative that reinforces such dichotomies as native vs. Norman, dispersed vs. nucleated settlement and pasture vs. arable. There has been insufficient effort at integrating modern archaeological evidence into this narrative to construct an appropriately complex and dynamic picture of how medieval societies interacted with their landscapes. In recent years, the availability of LiDAR data has assisted the development of a more holistic and evidence-based understanding of medieval landscapes. This paper will begin by outlining the current state of research into this field and present some findings of a recent (2013) survey of

medieval archaeological landscapes along the R. Suir using LiDAR data. It will then discuss how these findings can expand traditional conceptions of how these landscapes were negotiated and outline potentially beneficial avenues for developing this research.

Caitlin Corning

The Easter Controversy: theological, social and political concepts

This paper will explore aspects of a forthcoming book chapter, concerned with the history of the Easter controversy on the continent between the Merovingian church and the papacy, on the one hand, and Columbanus and his supporters, on the other. It explores theological issues involved in determining the correct date of Easter and the specific concerns with the Irish Latercus and the Victorian table. In addition, it examines the varying ways that both royal and episcopal power influenced these events. In the end, the Columbanian monastic houses abandoned the Easter table their founder had so passionately defended and were incorporated more fully into the continental traditions.

Jenny Coughlan

Representations of rebellion and reform: Bede and Gregory of Tours on women in the religious life at Coldingham and Poitiers

This paper compares the representations of religious women in Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, completed c. 731, and Gregory of Tours’s *Decem Libri Historiarum*, completed in 594, by using a case study: Bede’s account of the monastery of Coldingham and Gregory’s account of the monastery of Holy Cross in Poitiers. In both accounts, religious women are described as rebelling against monastic discipline, resulting in divine punishment at Coldingham and a violent revolt at Poitiers. Gregory’s description of Poitiers is lengthier and more scandalous, and the revolt occurred less than four years before he recorded it, while Coldingham burned down about fifty years before Bede completed his history. However, this paper argues that Coldingham represents Bede’s concerns about laxity in contemporary monastic life, as expressed in his *Epistola ad Ecgbertum*. The account of Coldingham is the only place in his history where he describes the sinful behaviour of a religious community; though it was deserted by Bede’s day, contextualizing the account

with his *Epistola ad Egbertum* and comparing with Gregory's account of Poitiers indicates that Bede attached an urgent importance to the example of Coldingham.

Susan Curran

Circles in the land: exploring early medieval settlement patterns in the Irish midlands

The remains of early medieval settlement abound throughout the Irish landscape, most commonly in the form of raths, crannógs and ecclesiastical sites. Separated by the River Shannon, the counties of Roscommon and Leitrim remain largely untouched by archaeological excavation, yet they are home to substantial numbers of raths and appear to contain all of the required components of early medieval settlement. A recent study involving LiDAR has revealed that this already well-populated area was even more densely settled than previously understood. This paper will explore the organisation and inter-relationship of early medieval settlement sites in this area of the Irish midlands, with particular emphasis on the potential relationship between the ecclesiastical and the secular landscape.

Susan Curran

Hidden depths and empty spaces? Landscape and settlement in early medieval Ireland

The surviving law-texts offer a wealth of information about the economic basis of early medieval Irish society, much of which is supported by archaeological evidence (Kelly 2011, 3). Indeed, early medieval settlement archaeology “utterly dominates the record of excavations in Ireland” (O’Sullivan et al. 2010, 7), providing us with an abundance of material with which to work. However, recent years have seen both the emergence of new non-invasive techniques (e.g. LiDAR) and a rise in popularity of more well-known methods (geophysical survey). This paper will discuss the application of these techniques—in conjunction with existing documentary and excavation evidence—and their implications for our understanding of the early medieval landscape. Excavation evidence puts the spotlight on individual sites but techniques such as LiDAR allow us to refocus our attention on small-scale settlement patterns, thereby enabling us to engage with early medieval society at a more localised community level.

Elizabeth Dawson

British slave, Irish saint: Patrick and the myth of Irish conversion

Through an analysis of the earliest Lives of St Patrick, this paper will examine the ways in which Irish writers developed Patrick's legend, ultimately creating a saint who came to embody many aspects of the Irish Christian experience. How unique was he and did he embody a sense of Irish difference?

Karen Dempsey

'Is it (h)all or nothing?' Recent geophysical investigations of thirteenth-century chamber-towers in Ireland

Although the type of castles traditionally known as ‘hall-houses’ have belatedly become a topic of interest in castle studies, understandings of these freestanding thirteenth-century buildings remain poor. Recent work, both in England and Ireland suggests that these castles are chamber-towers which were accompanied by external timber-built halls. This radically alters our understanding of these buildings and how people inhabited these spaces. Furthermore this appears to have been confirmed by new geophysical investigations conducted at four sites, Annaghkeen, Co. Galway, Shrule, and Ballisnahyny, both in Co. Mayo and Lisbunny, Co. Tipperary. The results of the geophysics and their implications will be discussed in this paper.

Charlie Doherty

Aspects of technology in early Ireland

A very great deal about technology in early Ireland is and continues to be the result of archaeological investigation. We know that the Irish borrowed heavily from the Romans and this is reflected in the terminology borrowed from the Latin language. They also borrowed from the Norse and again this may be traced in borrowings from Old Norse. However, little has been done about the context in which native Irish technological words and the borrowed Gaelicized words are used in the literature. What impact did the new technologies have upon society? What was the economic basis of technology? Who controlled it? What implications did this have for the evolution of power and authority in early Ireland? This talk will attempt to take tentative steps towards answering some of these questions—or perhaps it will simply uncover the questions that need to be asked.

Ann Dooley

Hunting deer in Táin Bó Cúailnge

In the most elaborate segment of the Boyhood Deeds in the *Táin* Cú Chulainn subdues a wild deer and ties him to his chariot. The incident reads as if the text has been disturbed in transmission. I propose a solution to the problems in this passage based on an examination of the syntactical repertoire available to the textual handlers of the first 2 recensions. The paper is part of a larger study of the prose stylistics of Recension I of the *Táin*.

Linda Doran

Medieval communication routes in the Carlow corridor

This paper will examine the medieval communication routes, land and water, focused on the valleys of navigable Barrow and Nore rivers. In the medieval period the communication network here an area that earlier ritual and secular centres indicate was always a critical corridor — became vital to the struggle for economic and political dominance. With establishment of the *longphort* at Dublin the Norse took an interest in the control of the routeways of this area. With the arrival of the Normans this region, part of the Lordship of Leinster, was intensively settled, as attested by the towns strung along the Barrow and Nore and linked by the road network.

Paul Duffy

Capetian influences on the gatehouse of Carrickfergus Castle?

The construction of the twin-towered gatehouse at Carrickfergus has been attributed to Hugh II de Lacy sometime between 1225 and 1245. As such, it is not the first manifestation of its type in Ireland with several earlier examples known. The singular characteristic of the gatehouse at Carrickfergus however is its form. The large towers which flank the gate were cylindrical structures when erected. The circular plan of these gate towers finds no contemporary parallel in Ireland. Previous studies have linked the gatehouse with that of Chepstow in Wales. By examining de Lacy's movements in France from 1210 to 1221 however, an alternate vector of influence is here proposed arising from the architectural developments of Philip Augustus in Paris and Normandy. De Lacy is presented as effecting the transmission of ideas which

potentially influenced his own building projects in Ulster and those of Ranulf of Chester and Rohesia de Verdun.

Lenore Fischer

An ounce of silver for every nose: Munster's tribute to Viking Limerick

A tally of Viking interaction with the peoples living adjacent to the Shannon Estuary shows considerable conflict throughout that area during much of the ninth century. Following the return of the Vikings via Waterford there were severe engagements in 915, 916 and 917. After the founding of Limerick town on Inis Siobhtain in 922 and the capture of Flaithbertach (retired King of Cashel) in 923 no further conflict is recorded between the Limerick Vikings and any Munster group until the Dal Cais uprising of the 960s. During that period however, the armies and fleets of Limerick were plundering the Midlands and maintaining stations up to 200 km away from their Limerick base. The only possible explanation for this is that the Kings of Cashel and the people of Munster were paying tribute to the Limerick Vikings as described in the *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh*.

Joseph Flahive

The St Gall Gospels: issues of patronage and production

This paper examines St Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 51, an eighth-century Irish Evangeliary. The manuscript is in a large format, and was obviously the work of a scriptorium with varied artistic models and expertise; it is no amateur attempt. The expense of its materials alone would have been beyond nearly any individual in early Irish society. Nevertheless, the quality of its vellum is variable; the pigments used are only the cheapest; and there are errors of execution. The manuscript is examined in comparison to its peers regarding both materials and technique. It will then proceed to examine possible reasons for the seeming haste of production, as well as the clues that this may provide for its place of origin.

Roy Flechner

Historians and their use of Irish canon law as a measure for intellectual influence

Irish canon law and penitentials, often circulating with Anglo-Saxon penitential material, has made a lasting and well-documented impact on the

development of the continental ecclesiastical normative tradition. This impact received scholarly attention from the likes of Roger Reynolds, Raymond Kottje, Rob Meens, and more recently Sven Meeder and myself. Another focus of study has been the outside influence on the formation of normative texts in Ireland. This area has been fraught with controversy, as critics (e.g. Michael Gorman) tried to undermine the case for the availability in Ireland of a variety of late-antique texts, of the kind cited in the *Hibernensis*, a systematic compilation commonly classified as canon law. Another difficulty has been the question of the extent to which Irish canon law should be seen as a unique 'Irish phenomenon' (Maurice Sheehy), or as a genre that partook in a wider Insular or European canonical culture (e.g. Roy Flechner, Michael Elliot). This paper will review some of the problems facing the study of Irish and Anglo-Saxon canon law in a European context, in light of recent scholarship.

Aine Foley

Who did the sheriff shoot? The role of violence in county administration in fourteenth-century Ireland

This paper will explore how the Irish sheriff used violence to impose and define his authority in the later medieval period. The Crown required men who were predisposed to aggressive behaviour, and those involved in criminality were often royal officials. Men in public office often employed violence in disputes that were purely personal in nature, in order to acquire power, land or status. Members of the gentry class in particular were willing to exploit the office of sheriff for material gain and as a way to express and reinforce their social status. How they manipulated this office in order to achieve aims that were both public and private, and often a combination of both, will be investigated here.

Yaniv Fox

The political context of Irish monasticism in Francia

This paper will explore aspects of a forthcoming book chapter, concerned with Irish *peregrini* in Merovingian hagiography. The arrival of Columbanus in Gaul in c. 591 was but one in a long series of voyages undertaken by monks and bishops who had left their native Ireland to follow Christ in *peregrinatione*. The majority of these men were monastic figures, whose continental voyages

usually concluded with the establishment of a monastery. Notably, this prevalence of insular figures in Gaul gave rise to the notion of Hiberno-Frankish monasticism, which has since become entrenched in early medieval monastic historiography. When we examine these cases one by one, however, a more complex picture emerges. As I will argue, in many of these instances the presence of Irish founders is difficult to substantiate, as are the frequent appearances of 'wandering bishops'. More likely, these were narrative tools in the hands of the hagiographer, who was eager to provide his monastery with a prestigious beginning, or to motivate his protagonist to action when no accurate historical information was available.

Daniel Helbert

The Arthurian legend in early Anglo-Welsh border culture

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannie* is often cited as the primary vehicle by which the Arthurian legend was transmitted from a minor folkloric tradition in Wales unto a wider European reading audience—and for good reasons. His work, however, is not the first work of Arthuriana to derive from the March of Wales, nor is it the first to be predicated on interactions between Welsh and English cultures. My study situates three works of Arthurian literature within Anglo-Welsh border culture before the Norman Conquest: the ninth-century pseudo-history *Historia Brittonum*; the eleventh-century hagiography *Vita Cadoci*, and *Pa Gur yv y Porthaur*, an enigmatic Welsh poem recalling various deeds of Arthur and his war-band. I argue that these works, though of disparate genres and intents, are all products of an evolving border culture which played an important role in mediating the boundaries, literally and figuratively, between medieval Welsh and English society.

John Higgins

Patrick's Confessio, Sulpicius Severus, and biographical genre

This paper argues that elements of the genre of Patrick's *Confessio* derive from Sulpicius Severus' *De Vita Martini*. The intertextuality between Patrick and Sulpicius asks Patrick's readership to see him as a second Martin. The *Book of Armagh* contains Sulpicius' *De Vita Martini*, implying that this *Vita* had been in Patrick's possession. Sulpicius' *Vita* reflects classical and early Christian biographical genre. Sulpicius identifies Martin by name, parentage and *origo*;

Patrick follows this pattern. The provision of these elements is diagnostic of biography; there also are parallels between the structure of the two works and the order of biographical elements, apparently not accidental. Each element—name, ancestry, family and location, capture into slavery or the army, and subsequent religious development—occurs in the same order in each text. The similarities indicate a literary dependence of Patrick on Sulpicius, with implications for our view of Patrick's education and that of his audience.

Matthew Holmberg

Loinges mac nDuil Dermait: *The Ulster Cycle's 'myth-kitty' in the later ninth century*
Even after Kaarina Hollo's 1992 edition, *Fled Bricrenn ocus Loinges mac nDuil Dermait* (LMDD) has received little scholarly attention despite the fact that the tale belongs to the Ulster Cycle. A large amount of its obscurity is likely due to its comparatively recent edition and translation, but the remainder, indeed the majority, of its obscurity is likely due to its surprising irrelevance to any other Ulster tale: nothing that occurs in LMDD is referenced in any other Ulster tale. Nevertheless, the tale abounds in motifs familiar from more popular Ulster tales. I will show how the composer of the tale deliberately chose motifs particularly associated with the Ulster Cycle to create a standalone tale telling of an Otherworld quest by Cú Chulainn and what the use of these motifs tells us about the contents of the Ulster 'myth-kitty,' or 'motif inventory,' in the later ninth-century.

Helen Imhoff

From riches to rags: some fragments from the medieval library of Fulda

In my paper I will discuss the background and transmission of three manuscript fragments of an early copy of Hrabanus Maurus's Commentary on Matthew. It is very likely that these formed part of the same copy of the commentary, which was probably part of the monastic library of Fulda before being transported to Kassel in the course of the Thirty Years' War and subsequently being reused as the binding material.

Jennifer Immich

"In" & "above" – mixed method studies of timber castles: archaeological landscape survey and LiDAR analysis

Landscape studies have benefited greatly from new geovisualization technologies, which allows for a broader examination of vast areas in high resolution without leaving the office. Archaeologists in particular have begun studying the relationships between the existence of a monument in the past landscape and its present state. This paper examines the interactions between people, places, things, and choices made in locating timber castles in the landscape of medieval north County Tipperary. As one of these technologies, LiDAR, allows for a detailed examination of the world through a computer screen, landscape archaeologists must also experience the landscape through phenomenological approaches. Thus, I examine how a medieval archaeologist who works with remotely sensed landscape data and modern landscape survey data can holistically examine the processes that led to the construction of medieval castle landscapes.

Colin Ireland

Visionary poets and the aesthetics of vision

Early Irish literature is full of poetic passages that result from dreams or visions. Linguists note that *fili* and *éices*, both 'poet', are etymologically 'seers'. The abstract nouns *filidecht* and *éicse* can both imply the art of divination which produces poems that begin with *ad-cíu* (*atchíu*) 'I see' or derived forms. By contrast, the Old English poetic tradition supports the concept of listening and reciting. Words commonly used in introductory poetic formulas have the meanings 'to learn by asking, hear of' (*gefrignan*, *gefrinan*, *gefrigan*). The emphasis on the Irish poet as 'seer' results in descriptive passages in early literature which rely on physical vision for their power. They tend, for example, to be full of colour terms. This paper will compare and contrast passages from the Irish and Anglo-Saxon poetic traditions derived from these different metaphors for poetic method and examine the resultant differences in poetic style.

Mona Jakob

Without rhyme or reason? Unusual rhyming pairs in Old and Middle Irish poetry

Rhyme in Irish poetry has been the object of various studies concerning Irish metrics. In this paper I propose to present a survey of rhyming pairs that do not conform to rhyming rules that have been described and established by

previous scholars. The survey will be mainly based on the vast corpus of the early Middle Irish biblical epic *Saltair na Rann* as well as on an additional selection of Old and Middle Irish poems of different genres and metres. The aim of this paper is to answer the question how irregular certain non-conforming pairs really are and how frequently these pairs might occur in different works of poetry.

Denise Keating

Forgotten childhoods: The experience of health and disease in early medieval Irish children

This paper will present the findings from recent research on the skeletal remains of early medieval Irish children. There has been a slow emergence of the study of past childhoods in archaeological discourse in recent years and this paper aims to situate the children of early medieval Ireland within that wider research landscape. It will present a picture of the health status of children and when and why they experienced ill-health and premature death. Recent archaeological research has solidified the concept of early medieval Ireland as a period of vast change, increased industry and advancements in technology. This paper will therefore question whether these improvements and advances benefitted and improved the lives of the early medieval Irish population or if it left some, children in particular, as ultimately disadvantaged by the changes that the early medieval period brought.

Mary Kelly

Noughts and crosses: mathematics in medieval Glendalough

A single extant folio of a mathematical textbook from early twelfth-century Glendalough gives a rare insight into the intellectual concerns of this monastic community and it also reveals an intimate moment of grief. The folio, British Library, Egerton MS 3323, fo. 18, places the school at Glendalough within the wider context of European education at a time when education was embracing new teaching techniques as well as a new system of numeric notation. A brief discussion of the subjects of the *quadrivium* will identify where folio 18 belongs in the mathematical curriculum and an examination of its content will show what was being taught at Glendalough on the morning of Tuesday, 15 May 1106.

Gillian Kenny

From wives to whores: priests and their women in later medieval Ireland

This paper will examine the attitudes evinced towards the wives and concubines of members of the clergy and religious orders in later medieval Ireland. To what extent were these women viewed as 'Outsiders' and how dependant was that viewpoint on the socio-cultural background of those who judged them? This paper seeks to elucidate the varying cultural attitudes towards ideas on sexuality, marriage and morality evident in Ireland during this period which can be ascertained (in part) by examining the role and status of priest's wives.

Elliott Lash

Introduction to the Parsed Old and Middle Irish Corpus

This paper will introduce the Parsed Old and Middle Irish Corpus (POMIC) to the community of medievalists. POMIC is an annotated database of downloadable text files that can be searched for linguistic and morphological information. Currently, POMIC contains 14 searchable texts that range in date from the 7th or early 8th century up until the 11th century. The annotation method used for POMIC allows one to search for complex syntactic situations such as, for example, leniting relative clauses in which the subject or the object have been relativized. POMIC is searched via the program CorpusSearch, which was previously developed for use with corpora of Historical English data developed at the University of Pennsylvania. This paper will include a short case study on the use of POMIC as a tool to facilitate searches for variation in subject position in early Irish, which has been an understudied phenomenon in Irish syntax.

Ryan Lash

Patterns of pilgrimage and political economy along the northwest coast of Connemara

This paper draws on new archaeological research to discuss the relationship between pilgrimage landscapes, saint cults, and political economic organization along the northwest coast of Connemara across the medieval period. In recent decades, scholars have greatly revised traditional models of the early Irish church. Building on such work, I attempt to shed light on shifting ecclesiastical networks and systems of pastoral care in Connemara by

juxtaposing archaeological data with folklore, early medieval texts, and later medieval parish boundaries. I argue that the architectural and landscape settings of saint cults and pilgrimage patterns were deeply implicated in the constitution of political economic relationships between ecclesiastical and lay communities. Variation in the organization of ritual space, burial and subsistence at the ecclesiastical settlements on Inishark, High Island and Omey Island suggests very different and perhaps competing strategies of economic maintenance and pastoral provision.

Helen Margaret Lawson

The highways and byways of medieval movement: roads in early medieval Scotland and Ireland

Transport in pre-improvement Scotland is often summarised in the same manner: overland routes were poor, thus that rivers were the key transport links; those land-roads that did exist were narrow and prone to becoming swampy in wet weather. This is not singularly the case. This paper looks to the more positive evidence for early medieval roads in Ireland, and calls for a hopeful interpretation of the overland transport situation in early medieval Scotland. In doing so, these negative assertions about the quality and availability of land transport are rejected. In their place, this paper presents the ways in which roads, both in Ireland and Scotland, can be studied, and the importance of transport within an understanding of society and politics. Overland transport was a key aspect of medieval movement with wide-ranging influence.

Feliks Levin

Spatial perceptions in Lebor Gabála Éirenn — anachronisms of tribalism?

The paper sheds light on spatial perceptions in *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* as a part of the Early Medieval Irish worldview. The absence of spatial dichotomies, which are integral to the Irish worldview, may be proof of the fact that the compilers of the narrative did not merely reproduce the archaic perceptions. The author comes to the conclusion that the narrative of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* contained various local myths which were synthesized into a united framework, inextricably linked with the myth of high-kingship. The myth of *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* had evolved from *origo regis*, a dynastic myth of Uí Néill,

towards *origo gentis*, a myth of the peoples' origins. Thus, it reflected the tendency of a passage from tribal identities to territorial ones in Ireland.

Shane Lordan

The Chosen People of God: Gildas and the historiographical imagination

In his *De excidio Britanniae*, Gildas systematically sets out to admonish the morally corrupt secular and ecclesiastical leaders of partitioned 5th - or 6th-century Britain, calling for repentance, unity, and obedience to God's law in order to restore his beloved *patria*. In this he was strikingly original, as he defines his people as a distinct, baptised nation, which various scholars have seen as an important development in the history of theology. This paper will consider how Gildas portrayed the Britons as a people set apart by God and how he crafted their place in the history of Salvation. It will focus on how he presents this place and their own history as a microcosm of all mankind's. Considering Gildas's historiographical methods will demonstrate the sophistication of one of the earliest examples of Celtic-Latin literature by exposing a number of intellectual links between it and continental thought. While the focus is literary, this will shed light on the strength of actual connections and communication between these islands and post-Roman Europe at the earliest stages of their history.

Thomas Loughlin: see James Bonsall & Thomas Loughlin

Christopher Loveluck & Aidan O'Sullivan

Travel, transport and communication to and from Ireland

This paper will explore aspects of a forthcoming book chapter, concerned with the practicalities and realities of travel and communications between Ireland and the wider world in the early medieval period. Tracing such patterns of movement and travel enables us to imagine how cultural links were actually formed between Ireland and the continent, and the specific geographic locations in which they began or were potentially strongest. The evidence used comprises both secular and ecclesiastical texts, and a rich vein of archaeological evidence for international trade, boats and travel, as well as a range of imported and exported commodities and excavated trading centres and landing places. It will particularly demonstrate that rather than being

unconnected to the main, Ireland had diverse connections with early medieval Europe.

Paul MacCotter

Celibacy and the medieval Irish monk

The question of the celibate status of Irish monks in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is somewhat enigmatic. This is after the period of literary flourishing of the Céle Dé ‘movement’ with its wonderful ascetic literature, and little in the way of archaeological material suggesting male-only burials on ‘monastic’ sites may be found in the same period. What is going on here? The sources do mention people described as ‘Céli Dé’ or simply ‘the poor’ (*bocht*) and, while some of these do appear to be celibate communities, others would seem to be communities where otherwise ‘incontinent’ or married clergy could come on ‘retreat’ to gain spiritual growth. Again, such ‘communities’ appear to be associated with property ownership, and often have leaders who are clearly married clergy. The survival of some of these communities into the Anglo-Norman period in Ireland (and Scotland) may give us an insight into their ‘real’ nature, which is unlikely to have been consistently celibate.

Donncha Mac Gabhann

The division of hands in the Book of Kells: considering the evidence of the letter A in half-uncial in the text and uncial at line-ends

In relation to the Book of Kells, palaeographer Erika Eisenlohr has stated that ‘the similarity or dissimilarity of hands has so far mainly been based on more general impressions of the scripts’ (1994). My research attempts a more comprehensive investigation of the evidence that might enhance our understanding of the division of hands. This includes the illuminated pages, the script and illumination of the canon tables, the layout of the pages, punctuation, the display script, the decorated initials, the regular script and also elaborations to the regular script. It is one of these latter features that is the focus of the second part of this paper – uncial a at line ends. In this paper the conclusions drawn from the evidence for both half-uncial a and uncial a at line-ends, agree with Brown and Meyer’s proposal for a single scribe in the Book of Kells.

Anna Matheson

Itinerant entertainers and the Mark of Cain in O’Davoren’s Glossary s.v. corrcrechda
In the Early Modern Irish text *O’Davoren’s Glossary*, *corrcrechda* is defined as “a name for the lump that is wont to be in the forehead of the *ammátán*, *ut est*, ‘How is a *drúth* distinguished? This is the means of recognizing the *drúth*: the *corrcrechda* (lump) to be in his forehead.” This entry has been interpreted as a medical description of a symptom associated with the *drúth* ‘natural fool’, and, more specifically, as a reference to the European tradition of the stone of folly. Drawing on descriptions of satirists in early Irish literature, I will argue in this paper that the *drúth* in the citation here is actually a base poet, an itinerant entertainer who used the threat of satire to extort sustenance, and the lump is reflective of Irish traditions concerning the mark of Cain. The citation is therefore yet another attestation of Church opprobrium for base entertainers.

Robin McCallum

The Bristol Rebellion, 1312–16

This paper examines the origins, motives, participants and outcome of the Bristol Rebellion from 1312-1316. During these years the community of Bristol, led by the mayor and bailiffs, rose up in rebellion against Bartholomew de Badelesmere, the constable of Bristol Castle over control of the fee farm. The Bristolians were thus in revolt against Edward II because Badelesmere was the king’s representative in the town. This conflict, in addition to being a dispute between the king and provincial town, was also an internal quarrel between two competing sections of Bristol society where a small group of the wealthiest local merchants (known as ‘the fourteen’) were attacked, their goods distrained, and they were expelled from the town. This paper will provide a prosopographical approach towards ‘the fourteen’ by highlighting their links to the crown and their role as royal officials in the town. It will also examine Edward II’s response to the rebellion and the actions which he undertook in order to quell the disturbances.

Sarah McCann

Plures de Scottorum regione: Bede, Ireland, and the Irish

How does Bede represent the Irish in his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*? How does he conceive of them as a nation and a people, and how does this

influence his use of them in his narrative on the development of the Anglo-Saxon Church? Ireland and the Irish are very visible elements in his account, and, in this paper, I will examine Bede's description of the *gens Scottorum* as a *gens* and *natio*, and his depictions of the individual Irish who populate his work. Bede is very interested in ethnicity, and aspects and indicators of this, such as origin tales, language, and common customs, can be discussed in the context of the Irish in the *Historia ecclesiastica* to great effect. However, ethnicity alone does not define the Irish who appear in Bede's text. They are not a homogeneous group for Bede: they are scholars and missionaries, penitents and kings, and he inserts them throughout the work, making them an integral part of his story. By looking closely at his presentation of the Irish as a whole alongside his individual portraits of Irishmen, we can better appreciate the complexity of Bede's understanding of the role of the Irish in his history.

Bernadette McCarthy

Defining the early Irish monastic: a new archaeological approach

Following revision of earlier models of the early Irish Church, archaeologists are now faced with redefining monasticism and distinguishing it from other forms of early medieval (and ecclesiastical) lifestyle. My doctoral research has addressed this challenge, exploring the ways in which material limits can be set on the monastic phenomenon; this paper presents some of the insights gained in the course of research. The evidence for early Irish monasticism does not always conform to modern expectations of its character, and monastic space must be examined as culturally unique in its own right—though early Irish monasticism was by no means as unorthodox in its contemporary European setting as has previously been suggested.

Yvonne McDermott

Friars and outsiders in late medieval Ireland

This paper will consider the ways in which the mendicant friars engaged with those on the margins in late medieval Ireland, using historical and archaeological evidence and case studies from Connacht. The involvement of the orders of friars in dealing with the sick will be considered, using evidence for a leper house associated with Galway Dominican friary. The design and location of leper houses and urban friaries will be addressed with reference to

fringe-belt theory. The extent to which the friars were involved in the provision of medical care for the sick will be considered. The possible association of anchorites' cells with mendicant houses will be addressed. Archaeological and historical evidence for the movement of the mendicant orders into rural areas in late medieval Ireland will be presented, assessing the reasons for the friars' expansion outside their traditional territories and considering the factors that led them to establish friaries in locations untypical of their orders. The friars' involvement in serving cure of souls in areas that were otherwise inadequately served by the provisions of the Church will be addressed in light of the mendicant orders' commitment to outsiders.

Ciaran McDonough

*Did medieval Irish monasteries have antiquarians? An examination of the term *prímcríchaire**

An entry in *AFM* records that a man called Maelíosa mac Maelcholuim died in the monastery in Armagh in 1136. Among his listed areas of responsibility is the term '*prímcríchaire*', which was translated by Colgan as '*antiquarius*', and which in turn led O'Donovan to translate *prímcríchaire* as '*antiquary*' in his own translation of *AFM*. However Colgan's translation is probably erroneous and does not seem to fit in light of both the other terms used to describe that remit, and also the fact that it is so poorly attested for what was a commonplace role. This paper explores what the *críchaire* could have done by examining it in the light of Maelíosa's other roles, as listed in his obituary, and by looking at twelfth-century Irish monasticism during a time of reformation which might have called for the creation of new roles.

Sven Meeder

The Irish and Carolingian learning

The paper will explore aspects of a forthcoming book chapter, concerned with the reception of Hiberno-Latin scholarly works during the revival of learning in the Carolingian *renovatio* as well as the activities and compositions of Irish scholars on the continent. It provides an up-to-date review of the evidence for the lives and activities of celebrated Irish scholars with a particular focus on the continental context in which these works were received and in which these scholars worked. Its central questions are if and how the spread of Irish texts

on the continent is connected to the travels of emigrant scholars, and if and how the reception of texts and scholars was influenced by their Irish background.

Nathan Millin

Irish pilgrimage to Rome in the ninth and tenth centuries

There is a good deal of evidence indicating a close relationship between Ireland and Rome well before the opening of the ninth century. The flurry of letters between Ireland/Irishmen and Rome at the beginning of the seventh century demonstrates this, and the presence of the delegation from the synod of Mag Léné around 630 in Rome shows that the connections already had a long history. However, this journey and others from the period seem to have been undertaken in order to address pragmatic ecclesiastical concerns. With the growth of the faith in the ninth and tenth centuries, at the height of Irish peregrination to the continent, we encounter a number of sources which record the beginnings of pilgrimage proper with a visit to Rome and its holy sites being the primary objective. This paper will engage with some of these accounts in an effort to reveal some of the motivations behind the journey, the possible routes taken and to uncover any indicators suggesting the development of a network of churches and hostels intended to meet the needs of Irish *peregrini* and pilgrims on the continent.

Pádraic Moran

Irish and Japanese glossing compared

Studies on early medieval Irish glosses to date have focused predominantly on linguistic aspects of the Irish language material, to the relative neglect of Latin glosses, syntactic glosses and broader cultural-historical contexts. One potential avenue for further enquiry would be to explore Irish glosses from a cross-cultural perspective. To what extent do they reflect broader, perhaps even universal, concerns, shared by readers, teachers and students in other regions? Is any element of the Irish gloss corpus culturally unique? The present paper arises out of a research trip to Japan in 2013 to explore common phenomena in Japanese glosses from the same period. Despite obvious superficial differences, several aspects of Irish and Japanese glossing are typologically very similar. This may well be due to some surprising

parallels in their broader cultural histories. This paper will present some preliminary findings from an ongoing research collaboration.

Tadhg Morris

Spinning fratricide and usurpation: ‘Mairg danab oighrecht Éire’

‘Mairg danab oighrecht Éire’ is the only extant poem dedicated to Éinrí Óg Ó Néill, who seized the kingship of Tír Eoghain by murdering his elder brother Conn Mór in 1493. At a time when intra-dynastic warfare was endemic, kin-murder remained highly stigmatized: the aplomb with which the unknown *file* negotiates the minefield of moral objections to Éinrí Óg’s imposture affords insight into the rhetorical lengths to which bardic poets would go in eulogizing a patron whose behaviour, even by the forgiving standards of the time, would have been considered objectionable. The poem is also important in that it appears to be an inauguration ode, both a celebration and a defence of Éinrí Óg’s dubious accession, in which the imagery of the *slat sheilbe* and the *banais rige* figure prominently, and the concept of primogeniture, which had been exerting an increasing influence on Gaelic succession, is explicitly rejected.

Margaret Murphy

From castles to dovecots – an analysis of the settlement components of manor centres in medieval Ireland

This paper uses manorial records to explore the range of buildings and structures found in association with manor centres in Ireland in the period 1250-1350. A number of questions will be raised and discussed. Is it possible to reconstruct the components and physical appearances of manor centres from documentary sources? What does the range of farm buildings reveal about the agricultural system of the manor? Is the evidence robust enough to allow spatial and temporal analysis? How does the Irish evidence compare with that for medieval England and Wales?

Frances Narkiewicz

The parish and Two Nations in medieval Ireland? Architecture and ecclesiastical identity in the diocese of Killaloe

This paper will provide a wide-ranging look at differences in parochial architecture in the medieval diocese of Killaloe. It argues that architectural

choices regarding the layout and furnishing of parish church buildings reveal liturgical, ethnic and cultural differences between colonizing and indigenous communities in the diocese. It further discusses the ecclesiastical ‘identity’ of both Gaelic and Anglo-Norman churches as evidenced by the standing fabric of surviving parish churches, revealing cultural patterns of patronage at the local level.

Dmitry Nikolayev

Feasts of merit in medieval Ireland? An anthropological commentary on briugu

Feast of merit is a traditional institution until recently widespread among the tribal peoples of South-East Asia and Oceania. It is a means of gaining social prestige and, in some cases, access to public office by giving lavish feasts to the members of one’s community. Feasting of some kind is a universal feature of traditional human cultures: feasts of merit stand out by virtue of their being the main means of social advancement in a given society and their strictly codified character. The traditional view on feasts of merit posits the Nuristan Province of Afghanistan as the westernmost limit of their geographical distribution. However, the information available on medieval Irish hospitaller, *briugu*, suggests that the procedure by which he attained his remarkably high social status is organised along the same lines as the traditional institution of feasts of merit. This similarity provides a new perspective on the basic structural principles of Early Irish society.

Mario Novak

Interacting with animals: osteoarchaeological evidence of zoonotic infections in early medieval Irish populations

Ever since the first animal species were domesticated humans and animals have shared a unique relationship that has lasted for millennia. Humans use animals as pets, as a source of food or as a workforce while in exchange animals are given food and protection against larger predators. But, this relationship does not always have a positive effect. Many diseases and parasitic infections may be transmitted from animals to humans and some of these may leave permanent record on human skeletal remains. Rural communities depending heavily on domesticated animals such as cattle and sheep were especially prone to such diseases. This paper discusses cases of zoonotic

infections such as tuberculosis, brucellosis and tapeworm observed in human skeletal remains from four rural early medieval Irish communities (Augherskea, Collierstown 1, Gracedieu, and Omev Island) and compares them with similar cases from the wider European context.

Emmett O’Byrne

Resurgence and re-conquest: the career of Laoiseach O’More (sl.1342)

The impact of Laoiseach O’More (c.1270-1342), lord of Laois, upon the colony in Leinster during the first half of the fourteenth century was a traumatic one. Indeed, O’More was accorded a remarkable epitaph by the colonial annalist, Friar John Clyn of Kilkenny (d.1348) – noting that he had risen from being a serf to the status of prince in the course of a night. This short paper will attempt to judge whether Clyn’s assessment of O’More’s career is merited through the explanation of contemporary colonial sources and annals. It will also try to set O’More in the context of the wider Irish Resurgence in Leinster and Ireland.

Danielle O’Donovan

Was it like that when it got here? A medieval tomb without IKEA style instructions

Starting from a broad visual survey of the language of Irish Late Gothic architectural expression, this paper will begin to isolate examples where monuments belie foreign influence. We will look in some detail at how a ‘native’ mason would physically ‘handle’ stylistic elements that were essentially alien to his architectural practice by examining the evidence of a single tomb which shows evidence of just such ‘man-handling’.

Terry O’Hagan

Inis Airc: new features, findings and folklore

Situated between Inishbofin and High Island, the island of Inishark seems to have occupied a central link within wider networks of insular ecclesiastical activity and settlement in the medieval period. Twentieth-century abandonment, difficulties of access and a lack of historical source material have previously resulted in the island’s medieval aspects being under studied; although valuable descriptions of existing monuments (some now missing) were recorded by the Irish Folklore Commission in the 1940s. This paper will

detail new features and findings arising from several seasons of investigations by the Cultural Landscapes of the Irish Coast (CLIC) project. In addition to the islands previously known medieval ecclesiastical archaeology, new features identified include leachta, bullaun stones/font, cross slabs, penitential stations, altar base, ecclesiastical burials, decorative architectural church features and a fragmentary half-uncial inscription in Latin.

Ruairí Ó hUiginn

Érennaig, Fir Érenn, Goídil and Goill: some ethnic, regional and national names in medieval Irish

This paper examines terms used in Medieval Irish to refer to the inhabitants of Ireland and will look at the linguistic and historical development of some of these words. Attention will be focused in particular on the use of the terms *Fir Érenn* and *Érennaigh* (*Éireannaigh*) in a wide range of texts.

Brendan O'Neill

Forged in fire? Craft, industry and society in early medieval Ireland

Irish settlements provide rich evidence for a range of craft and industry activities using controlled fire. Primary archaeological evidence includes hearths, open-fires, furnaces and forging areas. Yet these distinct features were often reused for different activities over time, complicating any archaeological and geochemical interpretation of the buried remains. This paper discusses how experimental archaeology can be used to provide additional data on these activities, and a more refined understanding of how early medieval people interacted with their landscape, exploited raw materials and used specialist knowledge to produce tools and ornaments can be developed. During the early medieval period, craft was “bound up with ideas of social rank, status and gender” (O’ Sullivan & Nicholl 2010, 82). Correspondingly, the fundamental objective of this project is to disambiguate archaeological remains so as to highlight the specific role of industry within society while testing current prevailing hypotheses relating to these activities.

Aidan O’Sullivan see Christopher Loveluck & Aidan O’Sullivan

Rúairí O’Sullivan

Spiritual leadership and the coming of salvation: image and exegesis in the Vita prima sanctae Brigitae

The column of fire is a recognisable image from Exodus 13:21-22 with an associated tradition of interpretation in patristic and early medieval exegesis. The *Vita prima sanctae Brigitae* makes liberal use of this image in a series of episodes emphasising the sanctity and future significance of its subject saint, Brigit. This paper will identify the anonymous author’s considered use of the image in the *Vita prima*, by examining the relationship between image and narrative in the context of exegetical and hagiographical treatments of the image and its wider significance. Recognising the presence of such influences is of key importance to understanding authorial intent in hagiographical texts.

Tomás O’Sullivan

The pseudo-Alcuinian De septem sigillis: a case for its Irish origins

In 1980, E. Ann Matter produced an edition and study of *De septem sigillis*, an early medieval Latin Apocalypse exegesis pseudonymously associated with Alcuin of York. Matter argued that this text originated either in Spain or in Ireland and, based on her assessment of the evidence, suggested that the Spanish church was the more likely place of origin. This paper will re-examine the evidence Matter presented, and demonstrate how this evidence may be used cogently to argue in favour of Irish origins. It will then present new evidence, based upon a literary/exegetical heptad which is found in a wide variety of Irish vernacular texts, some of which predate the earliest surviving copies of *De septem sigillis*. This new evidence will be used to argue that *De septem sigillis* is almost certainly an Irish, not a Spanish, text.

Rosemary Power

Brjánsbardagi: writing about Ireland in thirteenth-century Scandinavia

This paper examines the sources for Ireland in thirteenth-century Scandinavia, especially those concerned with the Battle of Clontarf. They are considered in terms of the oral and written sources that may have been available to the authors, the means of transmission and the reasons for an interest in Irish matters among the original audiences.

Eileen Reilly

Understanding dirt and cleanliness in early medieval settlement sites through insect and parasite analysis

Can we characterise attitudes towards ‘dirt’ and ‘cleanliness’ in the early medieval mind? Studying insects and parasites from early medieval houses and settlement sites can provide a pathway to understanding the conditions in which people lived, how they ordered their living spaces and, potentially, how they viewed them. The digging of cesspits, the creation of middens, the role of enclosure ditches as dumping grounds are probably specific expressions of contemporary attitudes towards waste and dirt, towards ‘matter out of place’ as the anthropologist Mary Douglas characterised it. This paper presents initial insights on the topic through examination of insect assemblages from important early medieval settlements in Ireland and further afield.

Lasse Sonne

Viking raids and Christian festivals

In *The Vikings and their Age* (2013), Angus Somerville and R. Andrew McDonald propose that Vikings operating in Western Europe timed their raids to coincide with Christian festivals to maximize economic gain. As an example, the raid on Nantes on the day of Saint John, 24 June 843, is mentioned. Knowledge of the Christian ritual year among Vikings suggests close collaboration with local informants. More importantly, it implies that some Scandinavians had a firmer understanding of the Julian calendar than hitherto thought prior to its use in Scandinavia following the introduction of Christianity. But how well documented are the exact dates for the Viking raids? This paper will explore the timing of Viking raids in Western Europe up to *c.* AD 850 and discuss its implications regarding knowledge of the Christian ritual year prior to the introduction of Christianity.

Mark Stansbury

Irish biblical exegesis

The paper will discuss aspects of a forthcoming book chapter, concerned with Irish Biblical exegesis. Biblical exegesis in its most general sense means understanding the Bible and is thus one of the fundamental Christian activities. It is no surprise, then, that Irish Christians in the early Middle Ages

practiced exegesis. But in an influential article (‘Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter’) first published in 1954 and then revised for publication in 1966, Bernhard Bischoff made the case that the exegesis practiced by Irish scholars was different. In addition, Bischoff argued that the Irish school of exegesis had been overshadowed on the continent by the work of the Anglo-Saxon scholars Bede and Alcuin. Bischoff supported his case with an extensive list of little-known and often unpublished texts that, he argued, were part of this tradition. Although Bischoff’s article was the subject of some debate in the late-1990s, his list of texts has provided a roadmap for much subsequent research. This chapter will begin by examining the history of the question, survey the late-antique and early-medieval background, and then view the texts composed by Irish scholars against this background.

Paul Stevens

Holier than thou? Ecclesiastical settlement, industry and economy in early medieval Ireland

During 1997 to 2007—the so-called ‘Celtic Tiger’ years—Ireland experienced unprecedented economic growth and extensive EU-sponsored infrastructural development, which facilitated over 3000 new early medieval excavations and a significant number of important new archaeological discoveries (Kerr et al. 2013, 13). This second paper discusses how this new material is prompting a fundamental rethink of the nature of Irish society in the period. One such discovery from Clonfad, County Westmeath, Ireland, demonstrates how new evidence maybe revealing of the mechanisms by which the church is engaged in production on a previously un-imagined scale, organisation and set up. The implications from this site, and the aim of ongoing research, is to help formulate a new economic paradigm for the early medieval period in Ireland, replacing the simplistic notion of a self-sufficient rural economy.

Paul Stevens

What lies beneath: an archaeological perspective on three contemporary early medieval Irish rural settlements, county Westmeath

This paper compares and contrasts three recently-excavation enclosures dated to the early medieval period; associated in time and space but separated in

terms of the social, economic and ideological. Each shares common and familiar aspects of material culture, identified with sites of the period, yet all present startling new evidence that both informs and presents a challenge for the interpretation of rural settlement and Irish society as a whole. Clonfad, a monastic enclosure, revealed new evidence that maybe revealing of how the church was engaged in production on a, previously un-imagined scale. Ballykilmore, an enclosed secular church and cemetery, used locally for 1000 years, and settlement site. Rochford Demesne, a ringfort, was largely devoid of domestic features but not of high-status settlement evidence, and was remodelled to a bivallate ringfort.

David Stifter

Where have all the women gone?

Cáin Adomnáin ‘The Law of Adomnán’, also known as *Lex Innocentium* ‘The Law of the Innocents’ is a law promulgated in 697 under the instigation of Adomnán of Iona. Its aim is the protection of ‘innocents’, i.e. non-combatant persons, from violent action. In general perception, it is frequently reduced to being a law that brought about the first liberation of women from military service. The law has not survived in its original form. What has come down instead is a composite text, the main parts of which are easily recognised. The first 27 §§ are a Middle Irish legend about the coming into existence of the law, §§ 28-33 contain various introductory material for the law (dated to 697 on internal grounds), and §§ 34-53 contain the extant text of the law itself. A close linguistic study of the latter section reveals the composite character even of it. In my paper, I will first demonstrate the composite character of the law, and I will then discuss what possible implications this has for the original intent of the law.

Leyla Tellí

How Christian are the earliest lives of St Brigit?

This paper on St Brigit concentrates on two of the earliest vitae written about her, namely the *Vita Secundae Brigidae* by Cogitosus and the mostly vernacular *Bethu Brigitte*. The central question is: was the structure of the texts and therefore the image painted of St Brigit conform with the prevalent conceptions of continental saints and their *vitae* at that time? Textual analysis

studies of the genre of saints lives, focusing mostly on continental texts, have shown that texts of that genre share typical structural features that mark them as carriers of Christian ideals. These categories will be highlighted in this paper and afterwards applied to the two lives. In doing so, it shall be determined in how far the vitae are in accordance with the demands put on properly Christian continental saints lives.

Jill Unkel

Gothic architecture, the Anglo-Normans, and Ireland

The role of the patron is an important factor in the study of the built environment. Any individual building is the product of the patron and the craftsmen who translated the patron’s requirements into reality. This paper will examine the relationship between patron and product, by looking at how particular Irish buildings fit into a wider context of monuments produced by closely connected families. The unique personal histories of patrons have left distinct impressions on the monuments of their realms. This paper will look at early Gothic architecture in Ireland, those buildings that became part of the landscape with the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, by examining the architectural patronage of William Marshal in Leinster. His links to England and the continent are keys to explaining the character of the visual landscape. It is by looking at these buildings within their historical context, particularly the familial and cultural landscape, that particularly architectural styles are understood.

Colin Veach

How the English saved civilisation: justifying violence in the conquest of Ireland

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, a self-confident European core aristocracy surged into its periphery, often displacing or profoundly changing the native societies it found there. These land grabs were often justified as religious (e.g. the Crusades) or civilising (e.g. British Isles) missions. At precisely the same time, the leaders of the so-called ‘Twelfth Century Renaissance’ – who might have been the cousins or younger brothers of these conquistadores – marginalised and even persecuted ‘others’, such as heretics, Jews and homosexuals, within Europe. The glory of the progress of European civilisation was thus tempered by the violence done in its service. This paper

seeks to place the English conquest of Ireland within this wider context by exploring the extent to which the English were influenced in their conquest by these European justifications of violence against 'the other'. This will involve not only a profile of prevailing contemporary European attitudes towards the Irish, but also an assessment of the degree to which these attitudes influenced the actual progress of the English conquest.

Immo Warntjes

The Irish Easter Controversy of AD 689

Over the past few decades, the early medieval Easter controversy has increasingly been portrayed as a conflict between the 'Celtic' and the 'Roman' churches, generally limiting the geographical extent of this most vibrant debate to Britain and Ireland. Both are not the case. Before *c.* AD 800, there was no unanimity within the 'Roman' cause. Two 'Roman' Easter reckonings existed, which could not be reconciled, one invented by Victorius of Aquitaine in AD 457, the other being the Alexandrian system as translated into Latin by Dionysius Exiguus in AD 525. This paper will focus on the Irish dimension of this controversy. It is argued that the southern Irish clergy introduced the Victorian reckoning in the AD 630s and adhered to that system until the end of the seventh century. When Adomnán, the abbot of Iona, converted to Dionysius in the late AD 680s and convinced most of the northern Irish churches to follow his example, this caused tension with southern Irish followers of Victorius, as is witnessed by the computistical literature of the time, especially the texts produced in AD 689. On this basis, the issues of controversy will be outlined in detail. This analysis has serious consequences of how we read Irish history towards the end of the seventh century; rather than bringing the formerly 'Celtic' northern Irish clergy in line with southern Irish 'Roman' practise, Adomnán added a new dimension to the conflict.

Ian Wood

Columbanian monasticism: a contested concept

This paper will explore aspects of a forthcoming book chapter, concerned with the contested concept of Columbanian monasticism. The concept of Columbanian monasticism was essentially created in the nineteenth century by Ozanam and Montalembert. Their emphasis on the impact of

Columbanus (largely associated with notions of spiritual revival) has been challenged since the late nineteenth century, but it has nevertheless been central to readings of the impact of the Irish on the continent. It has been elaborated by consideration of the charters associated with Columbanian houses, which are central to the development of the episcopal immunity. Debates over the impact of Columbanus have been largely concerned with the problem of determining how much of the development in seventh-century monasticism and spirituality can be ascribed to Columbanus himself, and how much should be seen as a natural development of what had already been established, and also how much his supporters and successors should be regarded as the chief figures in what is described as Columbanian monasticism. It is important to examine the extent to which our image of Columbanian monasticism depends on Jonas of Bobbio, and his agenda in the 640s, and also to consider the extent to which, in his presentation of Columbanus, he ignored the state of monasticism in sixth-century Francia.

David Woods

Explaining the falconer: the origin of a common motif on Anglo-Saxon and Arab-Byzantine coinage

The obverses of some Arab-Byzantine coins attributed to the pseudo-Damascus mint *c.* AD 670 depict a standing figure holding what appears to be a bird on his left wrist, usually identified as a falcon. Similarly, the reverses of some Anglo-Saxon sceattas of the period *c.* AD 720-30 depict a figure standing in a boat with a long cross in his right hand and a bird on his left wrist, usually identified as a falcon also. It has sometimes been argued that the Anglo-Saxon coins may have been modelled upon Arab-Byzantine coins brought to England by merchants or pilgrims. It is my argument, however, that the similarities between the two groups of coins are due to their reliance upon a shared late Roman model, a depiction of a 4th-century emperor holding a globe surmounted by a phoenix.

Alex Woolf

The wolf in early Ireland

It has long been recognised that the Irish language did not use the inherited Indo-European word for wolf as a simplex common noun. Instead terms like

fáelchú, cú allaid, cú glas and so forth were used to describe the wild canids which preyed upon livestock and occasionally people. Previous scholarship has suggested that this was the result of some form of linguistic taboo. In this paper I would like to re-examine this hypothesis and present a case for the absence of wolves from country based on recent developments in the field of natural sciences.

Niamh Wycherley

Relics and identity in the cult of Finnian of Clonard

Relics are a manifestation of the cult of the saint. They can be examined to study hagiography or saints' cults but also to understand the roles of saints' remains and the image of saints in society. This paper examines one aspect of this cult — the role of relics in shaping the identity of early Irish churches. Relics were such intrinsic components in the creation of a saint that the quality and quantity of these relics, and by extension the character and status of the patron saint, helped define the identity of a particular community. The personality of this patron sometimes influenced the identity of the monastery for centuries. Taking Finnian as an instructive example, this paper explores how his fame as a distinguished scholar may have enhanced Clonard's reputation as one of the foremost schools in Ireland, as promoted by her benefactors and bolstered by Finnian's relics. It will be argued that Clonard carved out a unique identity with the use of these relics, within the context of eighth- and ninth-century politics.