

## Kirja-arvosteluja – Book reviews

**Anders Ahlqvist and Pamela O’Neill (eds): *Medieval Irish Law: Text and Context*. Sydney Series in Celtic Studies 12. 2013. Sydney: The Celtic Studies Foundation, University of Sydney. viii+238 pages. ISBN 978-1-74210-307-5.**

This twelfth volume of the Sydney Series in Celtic Studies stands out prominently as an important contribution to the field of early Irish law, and continues to assert the position of the University of Sydney as an important global center for medieval Irish Studies. This collection of articles emerged as one outcome of a broader project funded by the Australian Research Council (proposed by Anders Ahlqvist, Neil McLeod, Pamela O’Neill, and David Stifter) entitled ‘Medieval Irish Law Texts: A Framework for Scholarly, Legal and Social Development.’ The project also included an international conference on the topic of early Irish law at the University of Sydney in 2012, and the studies contained in this volume are based on presentations made there, some of them (it would appear) substantially developed from their oral format.

It is worth keeping the origin of the collection in mind when reading the volume, since—as is often the case with conference proceedings—the reader is presented with new ideas at an incipient stage of their development; and, as a

result, is frequently left wanting more. That is the case with the contributions here. I do not, however, intend this statement as a criticism so much as an admonishment to the reader to keep their expectations on par with the nature of the collection. In virtually all cases, I found myself making personal notes reminding myself to follow the work of individual authors, to see where their obviously promising research will lead in the future (a task made easier, in recent years, by the emergence of academia.edu). Another typical feature of such collections is the authors’ inclusion of *desiderata* pertinent to their current work; and in this arena the volume shines. Virtually all of the contributors point to new directions implied by their work; and for that reason it will be a useful guide for those students of early Irish legal studies who are interested in what new directions the field is headed.

Before going any farther, let me summarize and comment briefly on each of the contributions, at least to the extent I am able in this abbreviated context. To begin, the collection is divided into two sections, entitled (somewhat artificially) ‘Text,’ including six papers that focus either on a single text or a group of texts unified by a common theme, and ‘Context,’ including three papers on primarily linguistic topics (in this case borrowing, dating, and semantics). The ‘Text’ section

begins with an article by Jacqueline Bemmer, 'The Types of Pledges in Early Irish Law: Form, Function, and Context.' Bemmer does a great job of explaining this highly technical and very common feature of early Irish law. To make her case, she draws upon a wide variety of texts, including—and most welcome—Hiberno-Latin legal material (in this case, *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*). Since, however, her citations from *CCH* are based to a large extent on extracts from the Law of Moses, and would seem therefore to represent a primarily ecclesiastical point of view, one might have wished for a more thorough discussion of the disagreements and tension between these closely related bodies of law (i.e., the Latin and the vernacular). That acknowledged, the forthcoming work on this topic promised by the author is eagerly awaited.

Next, in her study 'Aspects of *athgabál aile*,' Hanne-Mette Alsos Raae sets out to examine the early Irish sub-category of distraint known as *athgabál aile*, 'distraint with a two-day stay.' Since this form of distraint was limited to women, her main goal—as she states in her conclusion—is to add '...to the existing knowledge on the legal rights of women in early Irish society' (p. 39). Raae's study accomplishes that goal quite well. Somewhat surprisingly, however, she includes page and line references to the notoriously inaccurate transcriptions in O'Donovan and O'Curry's *Ancient Laws of Ireland* (albeit alongside the more preferable edited text in D.A. Binchy's *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, whose text she provides). This infelicity, however, does

not detract seriously from her conclusions, which are plausible and well-argued.

Following Raae, Riona Doolan provides an admirably close reading of the early Irish law text *Coibnes Uisce Thairidne*, 'The Kinship of Conducted Water,' in 'Reflecting a Local Economy? Evidence from *Coibnes Uisce Thairidne*.' Her stated aim is to counter the unflattering assessment (levelled by Binchy, Charles-Edwards, and Fergus Kelly *inter alia*) that the text is illogical and poorly planned, and that the metaphor of kinship used throughout used to explain legal rights pertaining to conducted water was, in particular, a poorly-developed afterthought. Overall, Doolan's case is convincing. Especially welcome is her use of evidence gleaned from recent archaeological investigations of early Irish mill-races.

Next comes Neil McLeod's paper, 'The Distribution of the Body-fine: AD 650-1150.'

With typical thoroughness and attention to detail, McLeod explains the manner by which body-fines (*corpdiré, colainn, éraic, cró*), i.e., financial penalties paid to the victim's extended family in the event of a homicide, were distributed to individuals in their kin group, and how this procedure changed over time. The subject is highly technical, but McLeod's inclusion of numerous tables and charts goes far toward making his explanations clearer. Especially welcome is his discussion of the rationale underlying the labyrinthine and seemingly-overwrought formulae with which the distribution of these fines is often described. Welcome,

too, is the text and translation of the twelve sections of commentary on *Córus Fine* that McLeod includes at the end of his article.

Immediately after McLeod's contribution, Fangzhe Qiu examines the stories contained in the early Irish law codes in his article 'Narratives in Early Irish Law: a Typological Study.' Qiu's article is an outstanding contribution to the volume which tackles an important topic and breaks significant new ground for further study. In his article, he sets out to catalog and describe typologically narrative elements in the full corpus of early Irish law. In an appendix, he lists and describes one hundred ten such tales (or fragments of tales). In the main body of his article, he classifies these stories according to their various functions (founding cases, background, examples, and unclassifiable). My only criticism of Qiu's article is his assertion that such tales were received as obviously fictitious or legendary by their audience. While they may well have been regarded as such by contemporaries, that case needs to be argued, not merely asserted. Rather, I suspect that the truth-value such narratives held for medieval Irish jurists is a complex matter which warrants further study. That minor criticism aside, Qiu's study raises important questions about early Irish law (and early Irish literature generally), and I look forward to more work by this author on the topic.

The final paper in the 'Text' section is Pamela O'Neill's article 'Material Culture and Social Development in Early Irish Law.' Here, O'Neill draws connections

between developments observable in seventh-century Irish material culture and parallel developments in Irish law (during a period when the latter was flourishing). In particular, she points out that the increased ornamentation of penannular brooches and their increased diversity (in both their size and the material from which they were made), occurs concomitant with the treatment in Irish law of clothing as a marker of rank, and also the increasing status of metalworkers. Likewise, she suggests that the increase in highly-ornate stone structures at religious foundations (and their accumulation of wealth generally) can be connected to the desire on the part of ecclesiastical authorities to insinuate themselves into seventh-century Irish power structures, particularly law-giving. O'Neill's paper covers a great deal of ground in a short space, raising a number of important questions for the field of Irish legal studies, broadly conceived (including Gaelic-Pictish-Northumbrian relationships), that warrant more study. One looks forward to further work on this topic by the author.

The 'Context' section of the volume commences with David Stifter's article 'Towards the Linguistic Dating of Early Irish Law Texts.' Stifter begins his article by asking if it is possible to go beyond what has already been achieved in the dating of Irish law codes (which amounts, for the most part, to relative chronology), and—at least where the early texts are concerned (i.e., those written between c.650 and c.750)—to '...specify a decade in which a text was composed, rather than

just state non-committedly that a text is Old Irish or Early Old Irish?’ (p.163-64). Ultimately, that question remains unanswered. What follows is a survey of the criteria (phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, lexicon, semantics, style, and metrics) used by scholars to date Irish texts. His treatment is admirably thorough (given the short space allotted), including a summary of phonological concerns, and a relatively lucid (if very abbreviated) treatment of the remaining seven categories, focusing mainly on potential problems with the data. For this portion of the article (especially the part on phonology), however, it is difficult to imagine what audience Stifter intended to address. On the one hand, it seems directed at non-specialists in Irish historical linguistics (albeit with some general linguistic competence); on the other, it seems directed at those with substantial technical background in the field. Perhaps with more space, this problem could have been overcome. Certainly, a treatise on the methods and criteria used for dating early Irish texts aimed specifically at a non-specialist audience would be a welcome contribution, and this article may be a first step in that direction. That criticism aside, Stifter’s article shines in two areas. First, his call for a *Chronologicon Hibernicum*, voiced twice in the article, ‘...where all available information about securely dated texts and about datable changes is collected and harmonized’ (p. 198) identifies an important *desideratum* in the field. Second, his final section, where he applies the criteria he described

earlier in the article to the specific case of *Cáin Adomnáin*, and develops the very significant hypothesis that the final four sections of the text (preserved only in a single manuscript witness) were not contemporary with the rest of the text, not only exemplifies the application of the methods he describes in crystalline fashion, but makes a very important argument about the historical development of the text itself.

In the next paper, ‘Norse Loanwords and the Dating of Early Irish Texts,’ Timothy Causbrook explores the potential usefulness of Norse loanwords into Irish for both the dating of Old Irish texts and for determining the approximate date of the first substantial contact between the Irish (including the Scots) and the Vikings. His article raises more cogent questions than it answers, but clearly lays the groundwork for further detailed study in this area. I look forward to more detailed work on this topic by the author.

Last in the volume is Anders Ahlqvist’s semantic study of the word *airaiccecht* in ‘Old Irish *airaiccecht* “primer,” etc.’ In this paper, Ahlqvist sets out to (re-)examine the etymology of Old Irish *airaiccecht* (usually translated as ‘primer’), and—further—to establish a sense of what role texts bearing this element in their titles held in early Irish intellectual culture. The majority of his article is dedicated to the problem of etymology. On this point, he agrees with the case made by Abigail Burnyeat that the root of the word was a borrowing of Latin *acceptus*, used in the special sense of a ‘homework assignment to be memorized

by the students in preparation for recitation in class...’ (p. 226, citing Burnyeat).<sup>1</sup> Next, he briefly surveys the texts that include forms of *airaiccecht* in their titles, beginning with *Auraiccept na nÉces* and continuing with other, mainly legal texts. Following this section, Ahlqvist very usefully includes a table of all the texts bearing this word in their titles and a list of the manuscript(s) in which they occur. Finally, in a brief conclusion, he notes (1) that of all these texts, *Auraiccept na nÉces* must have been the most popular, given the large number of witnesses in which it occurs, and (2) that the use of *airaiccecht* in titles of various genres—the majority of which are legal, but in a variety of other kinds of texts as well—suggests that ‘...early [Irish] scholarship was far less compartmentalized than it is nowadays: early grammarians, linguists and philologists could also be classified as poets and jurists, as well as historians’ (p. 233).

As is apparent, the quality of the contributions is quite high; and—what is more—many of them raise questions and address issues that will have significant impact on current trends of thought in early Irish legal studies. Overall, there is very little to criticize. One might wish that the editors had included a general subject index (which would help the reader to draw connections between the individual contributions). Indices of the primary texts (or at least the legal texts) and manuscripts discussed in the

volume would have been especially welcome. At the very least a common set of abbreviations, regularized throughout the volume—as opposed to a separate list provided by each author at the end of his or her paper—would have been helpful. To be fair, however, these are not common features of conference proceedings, and their absence here does not significantly detract from the volume’s overall quality. The only infelicity in the collection which I have identified is the choice by several authors to refer to O’Donovan and O’Curry’s nineteenth-century *Ancient Laws of Ireland*. As D. A. Binchy stated unequivocally in the introduction to his *Corpus Iuris Hibernici, Ancient Laws of Ireland*—both its transcriptions and especially its translations—are unreliable and misleading, and cannot be used in scholarship. Though such instances are very few in the volume, these might have been vetted during the peer review process. This minor criticism aside, let me emphasize, however, that *Medieval Irish Law: Text and Context* is a significant contribution to Irish legal studies that warrants close attention. It is the hope of this reviewer, in any case, that it attracts the warm reception it wholly deserves.

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<sup>1</sup> Abigail Burnyeat, ‘The Earliest Irish *Grammaticus*?’ *Aiste* 1 (2007), 181-217 at 191-192.

**Aidan Doyle & Kevin Murray (eds):**  
*In Dialogue with the Agallamh: Essays  
in Honour of Seán Ó Coileáin. Dublin:*  
**Four Courts Press. 2014. xiii + 261**  
**pages. ISBN 978-1-84682-385-5. Price:**  
**€55.00.**

Is éard atá sa leabhar seo ná toradh comhdhála a tionóladh in ómós, mar a léiríonn an teideal, do Sheán Ó Coileáin, iar-Ollamh le Nua-Ghaeilge i gColáiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh. Léirítear sa bhrollach gur toisc na haistí cumhachtacha a scríobh sé ar an bhfiannaíocht agus de bharr gur ábhar é an t*Agallamh* ina bhfuil spéis ag trí roinn Scoil na Léinn Gaeilge i gCOC a roghnaíodh an ghné seo de litríocht na Féinne mar théama an chomhdhála agus an leabhair, le súil go gcuirfeadh an leabhar lenár n-eolas ar an *Agallamh*, aidhm a éiríonn leis a bhaint amach lena bhfuil ann d'ailt atá bunaithe ar thaighde nua.<sup>1</sup>

De bhrí go bhfuil an leabhar tiomnaithe don Choileánach, faightear dhá bhrollach ann agus Seán Ó Coileáin, mar dhuine agus mar scoláire, mar ábhar acu. Ag dhá cheann na n-alt soláthraítear athchló ar aiste de chuid an Choileánaigh, 'Place and placename in *fianaigheacht*' a chéadnocht i 1993 ag an tosach agus 'The setting of *Géisid cúan*' a foilsíodh sa bhliain 2004 ag an deireadh.<sup>2</sup> Is leor iad seo le sampla

dá shaothar sainiúil ar an bhfiannaíocht a thabhairt don léitheoir nach aithnid dó é. Toisc an tagairt atá déanta do na haistí úd in ailt an leabhair seo agus in iomaí áit eile nach iad, is leor a rá gur ann dóibh gan tuilleadh iomrá orthu sa léirmheas seo.

Naoi n-alt san iomlán, gan an dá aiste a luadh thuas san áireamh, atá sa leabhar agus a dhéileálann le gnéithe éagsúla an *Agallaimh*, idir chéadchumadh an téacs agus a aithriseoir, idir aimsir an *Agallaimh* agus a chomhthéacs i litríocht na hEorpa, chomh maith le trí alt a phléann leaganacha déanacha den *Agallamh*.

Tosaíonn 'agallamh' an leabhair seo le h*Agallamh na Seanórach* san alt 'The Roscommon locus of *Acallam na senórach* and some thoughts as to *tempus* and *persona*' le Anne Connon (lgh. 21-59). Obair Ann Dooley in 'The date and purpose of *Acallam na senórach*' a thógann Connon mar ionad tosaithe chun áit scríofa an bhunthéacs a mheabhrú.<sup>3</sup> Meastar an comhthéacs stairiúil, an ghinealeolaíocht, an topagrafaíocht,<sup>4</sup>

27 (1993), lgh. 45-60, athchlóite ar lgh. 6-20 agus Ó Coileáin, S., 'The setting of *Géisid cúan*' in J. Carey, M. Herbert agus K. Murray (eag.) *Cin Chille Cúile: texts, saints and places. Essays in honour of Pádraig Ó Riain* (Aberystwyth, 2004), lgh. 234-48; athchlóite ar lgh. 218-30.

3 Dooley, A. 'The date and purpose of *Acallam na senórach*', *Éigse*, 34 (2004), 97-126.

4 Baintear feidhm as 'topografaíocht' le tagairt do thréithe fisiciúla na tíre agus le scagadh a dhéanamh idir í agus 'dinnsheanchas' an *Agallaimh* a luaitear go mion minic sna haistí atá faoi chaibidil.

1 Leanaím nós na n-eagarthóirí anseo agus bainimse úsáid as *Acallam* [na *Senórach*] nuair is é an leagan is luaithe den téacs atá i gceist. Ciallaíonn sé sin, go mbaintear úsáid as an litríocht *Agallamh* [na *Seanórach*] le tagairt don traidisiún iomlán nó do leagan eile den téacs.  
2 Ó Coileáin, S., 'Place and placename in *fianaigheacht*', *Studia Hibernica*,

agus na caíonna a bhfuil na nithe seo le brath sa téacs ar mhaithe le háitiú, go héifeachtach i mo thuairimse, gur i dTeach na gCanónach Agaistíneach i Ros Comáin a ceapadh *Acallam na senórach*. Seo í an t-aon áit a bhfaightear forluí idir leasanna Mhuintir Roduib agus Chlann Murchadha, dhá chraobh de Shíl Muiredaig. Leis an obair chuimsitheach a chuirtear ós ár gcomhair i suaitheadh na ceiste, ní fhéadfaí gan tuairim mheáite a thabhairt ar aimsir scríofa agus ar chumadóir an *Acallaim*. Is amhlaidh a chríochnaítear an t-alt agus tugtar eolas ar bheirt a d'fhéadfadh a bheith i gceist, .i. Máel Petair Úa Cormaccáin agus Tipraite Úa Brain. Is mór is fiú an aiste seo a léamh le hais 'The date and purpose of *Acallam na seórach*' ionas gur féidir leis an léitheoir an fhianaise ar fad a chuirtear ós a chomhair a mheas agus a thomhas.

Sna hailt 'The European context of *Acallam na Senórach*' le Ann Dooley (lgh. 60-75), agus 'Some strands and strains in *Acallam na Senórach*' le Joseph Falaky Nagy (lgh. 90-108), scrúdaítear an *tAcallam* ina chomhthéacs Eorpach. Déanann Dooley comparáid shuimiúil ar shlíthe a dtagann cultúr béil agus cultúr na scríbhneoireachta le chéile agus ar an toradh (scríofa) atá air sin, mar aon le hiniúchadh ar an mbaint atá ag ceol agus cuimhne leis an bpróiseas, fad is a léiríonn Nagy go bhféadfaí *fian* an *Acallaim* a chóimheas le litríocht Homer ar na Féiníciigh ós rud é go bhfuil an 'commercial-hero' le aithint sa dá théacs, .i. dream nach bhfuil go hiomlán dúchasach ná go hiomlán deoranta in aimsir an téacs, ach dream a thiteann

isteach le hathraithe na linne agus a iarann tairbhe a bhaint as rud ar bith a tharlaíonn dóibh.

An t-aithriseoir is cúram den aiste 'The narrative voice in *Acallam na senórach*' le Geraldine Parsons (lgh. 109-124) ina scrúdaítear an t-ionchur atá ag an aithriseoir ar an slí a léimid an scéal. Níl an oiread céanna leasa bainte ag an scoláireacht a rinneadh go dtí seo ar an bhfiannaíocht as sainstaidéar ar an reacaire (i gcomparáid lena bhfuil ann de staidéar ar Philíocht na Scol, cuir i gcás, nó, go pointe áirithe, ar an *Táin*). Léiríonn an aiste seo go bhféadfaí an tráchttaire a mheas mar fhrithechaitheamh Chailte, cé go dtugtar le fios gur feasaí i bhfad é an t-aithriseoir. Níl san *Acallam* ach aon chuid den díolaim agus chuirfeadh lucht léinn na fiannaíochta fáilte roimh tuilleadh den saghas seo taighde ar scéalta na Féinne le tuiscint níos doimhne a fháil orthu.

Is féidir ceangal a dhéanamh idir na haistí '*Acallam na senórach*: a conversation between worlds' le John Carey (lgh. 76-89) agus 'Gods and heroes: approaching the *Acallam* as ethnography' le Stíofán Ó Cadhla (lgh. 125-43) ar bhonn an aird a thugann siad ar an sí, cé nach é amháin atá mar ábhar acu. Tógann plé Carey sinn chomh fada le héachtaint ar réablóid cultúrtha i ndiaidh an *Acallaim* ina chonclúid ach nach dtéann chomh fada leis an réabhlóid sin sa phlé aige féin. Mar chuid dá mhachnamh ar an *Acallam* mar eitneagrafaíocht a thugann ar an gCadhla iniúchadh a dhéanamh ar ghnéithe de shaol na sí, mar aon le gnéithe eile de shaol daonna na linne i dtéacs a

shamhlaíonn sé mar an gcéad cheistiúchán in Éirinn. Tá aguisín ar leith lena aiste, agus is é an ceistiúchán seo atá ann. Go bhfios dom, níl an saghas seo achoimre ar an *Acallam* le fáil in áit ar bith eile, agus cé gur úsáideach gan dabht é agus ceist na heitneagrafaíochta á plé, ritheann sé liom go mbeidh na meiteashonraí seo thar a bheith úsáideach d'aon duine a rachaidh i mbun staidéir ar an *Acallam* amach anseo, go háirithe daoine a bheidh ag dul i ngleic leis an *Acallam* don chéad uair.

Plé ar *Agallaimh* déanach a chuimsíonn trian deiridh bhailiúcháin na naoi n-aiste seo. An *Agallamh Bheag* i Leabhar Mhic Cárthaigh Ríabhaigh agus a scríobhaí atá idir chamáin ag Pádraig Ó Macháin sa chéad chaibidil dóibh seo, ‘Aonghus Ó Callanáin, Leabhar Leasa Móir agus an *Agallamh bheag*’ (lgh. 144-63). Go suaithinseach faightear céadiarracht ar an *Agallamh Bheag* i ‘stua Dhiarmada mic Cearbhaill’ sula scoirtear di le í a bhreacadh síos ina iomláine i stua eile, ar na leathanaigh a thagann díreach roimh *Acallam na Senórach* féin. Breathnú doimhin ar chúrsaí pailéagrafaíochta agus idirthéacsúlachta a fhaightear san aiste seo agus ní hamháin go moltar cúiseanna éagsúla mar fhreagra ar na ceisteanna uile a leagann an Machánach amach ag tús an ailt, ach athléiríonn a chuid léinn an tábhacht a bhaineann le comhthéacs na lámhscríbhíne le ciall a bhaint as téacsanna agus sean-scéalta atá tagtha sang lámhscríbhínní.

I ‘Revisiting the Reeves *Agallamh*’ le Joseph Flahive (lgh. 164-184) cimid mionscrúdú ar na gnéithe agus scéalta fiannaíochta ó fhoinní eile a tugadh le

chéile chun ‘the Reeves *Agallamh*’ a chruthú agus tugann Síle Ní Mhurchú cuntas ar an ngaol idir lámhscríbhínní an *Agallaimh Nua*, an leagan is déanaí den *Agallamh* in ‘An t*Agallamh Nua*: athleagan déanach d’*Agallamh na Seanórach*’ (lgh. 185-217). Chomh maith leis an ngaol seo a phlé, aithníonn sí patrúin téamacha an *Agallaimh* agus leagtar amach don léitheoir go soiléir iad.

Is maith atá aistí Sheán Uí Choileáin ag teacht leis an taighde úr a fhaightear sa leabhar agus feictear anáil an Choileánaigh i ngach ceann de na haistí úd. Maidir le léiriúchán an leabhair, tá an t-ábhar formáidithe go maith agus gach a bhfuil ann so-léite. Soláthraítear liosta de noid a úsáidtear sna hailt ag tús an leabhair, chomh maith le leabharliosta iomlán agus innéacs cuimsitheach i ndiaidh na n-aistí. Is beag botún cló atá le feiceáil sa leabhar.

Pointe amháin nach mór a lua leis an bplé a dhéantar ar *Acallam na Senórach* ná gur bheag trácht a dhéantar ar an téacs mar atá sé le fáil sa chúig lámhscríbhínn de atá againn. Úsáidtear foilsíúcháin Stokes agus Dooley agus Roe le tagairt a dhéanamh don téacs don mhórchuid. Mar is eol dúinn níor tháinig aon leagan iomlán amháin den *Acallam* slán chugainn agus mar sin faightear cónascadh sna foilsíúcháin seo atá thuasluaite. Ní thugtar san áireamh in aon cheann de na foilsíúcháin sin na cúig lámhscríbhínn ina bhfuil cóip den *Acallam* agus iarracht a dhéanamh an t-eolas ar fad a chur ós comhair an léitheora. Ní thugtar le fios an bhfuil difríochtaí idir na lámhscríbhínní gur chóir cur san áireamh nó an é go

bhfuil téacsanna na lámhscríbhinní uile ar aon dul le chéile. Sin ráite ní fheadar ar chóir na húdair a lochtú mar gheall air seo cionn is nach bhfuil eagraín fhoilsithe de chóipeanna éagsúla an *Acallaim* le fáil, agus mar sin níl teacht ar leaganacha éagsúla an téacs go furasta.

Le coimriú a dhéanamh ar an gcás mar sin, d'fhéadfaí aidhm an leabhair a shamhlú le ráiteas Nagy mar gheall ar an gCoileánach nuair a deir sé go bhfuil “aspirations to attain the scholarly virtues we associate with perpetually vibrant and relevant figures in the field such as Seán: confident control over the sources combined with an openness to new approaches and concerns in the wider world of scholarship; a dedication to the ‘modern’ as well as ‘medieval’ language and literature; and a gusto for

specialisation which, however, does not preclude making contributions in other areas of Celtic studies.”<sup>5</sup> Is é a éiríonn leis an leabhar seo a dhéanamh – láimhsíonn údair na n-aistí idir fhoinsí ‘nua’ agus ‘meánaoiseacha’ go haclaí le plé cuimsitheach a dhéanamh ar ghnéithe éagsúla an *Agallaimh*, agus le taighde agus tuairimí úra a chur ós comhair an léitheora. Beidh tairbhe le baint as an leabhar seo acu siúd ag a bhfuil seantaithí ar *Agallamh na Seanórach* agus ag an té atá díreach tosnaithe ar thochailt a dhéanamh trí shraitheanna iomadúla an *Agallaimh*.

Martina Maher  
Oilthigh Ghlaschu

5 Nagy, J. F. ‘Seán Ó Coileáin: scholar’, in A. Doyle and K. Murray (eds.), *In Dialogue with the Agallamh: Essays in Honour of Seán Ó Coileáin*, lch. 5.