Kirja-arvosteluja – Book reviews

O'Sullivan, F. McCormick, T. Kerr, L. Harney and J. Kinsella: *Early Medieval Dwellings and Settlements in Ireland, AD 400–1100.* Oxford: Archaeopress. 2014. British Archaeological Reports International Series 2604. 532 pages. Price: £68. ISBN 9781407312279.

This volume constitutes one of a number of recent outputs by EMAP (the *Early Medieval Archaeology Project*), a collaborative research project between University College Dublin and Queens University Belfast archaeologists. During the economic boom of recent decades there was massive increases in the rate, scale and number of excavations taking place in Ireland, the results of which have been both revolutionary and overwhelming, particularly regarding the early medieval period. New site types, more refined chronologies and insightful synthesis, including the present volume, have engendered radical overhauls of our understanding of early medieval Irish society.

The present volume focuses upon the material evidence for settlement, dwelling and daily life in Ireland, AD 400–1100. Much like EMAP itself, it is ambitious and far-ranging, being split into a synthesis and analysis section (pp. 1–111), alongside a gazetteer of a selection of 241 early medieval settlements (pp. 112–497). It begins with an account of the historiographical development of early medieval excavations in Ireland, before Chapter 2 appraises the excavated evidence for houses and buildings of various types, as well as the organisation of same, and domestic, daily life. Chapter 3 moves discussion to settlement spaces, examining the organisation and layout of various types of 'enclosed' and 'unenclosed' settlements, ecclesiastical centres and urban centres. Chapter 4 examines the material evidence for agriculture and economy within settlement archaeology, discussing variously animal and crop husbandry, the landscape context of same (e.g. evidence for fields, gardens, transhumance etc.), as well as evidence for processing and consumption of food stuffs. Chapter 5 focuses on craft and industry, describing the process and material remains of ferrous and non-ferrous metal-working, as well as glass, enamel, millefiori, stone, bone, leather, textile, clay and wood-working.

While overall the analysis is comprehensive, it is sometimes unevenly balanced, and often lacks necessary detail and clarity. For instance, at one and a half pages, the overall conclusion (pp. 110–111) is disappointingly concise. Similarly, despite much play being made (pp. 63–76) of the relationship of agricultural economy to Hiberno-Norse towns in the introduction and conclusion to Chapter 4, the actual analysis within the chapter is only a third of a page. Important questions, including the nature of food

production, processing and provisioning within urban centres go unanswered. Overall, I would have liked to see more consideration given to the landscape context and inter-relationships of sites. As it stands, discussion is too often narrowly focused on excavated materials alone, at the expense of upstanding unexcavated remains. Correspondingly, analysis of the different types of settlement (pp. 36–37) could have been elaborated, and moreover, foregrounded within Chapter 2. There are currently lively debates within Irish scholarship about the nature, classification and terminology of different settlement types. The absence of a more informative statement of EMAPs position within such debates, which favours utilising a generic description of various monument types as 'enclosed settlements', arguably engenders something of an ambiguity throughout the volume. For instance, p. 50 states that evidence from excavated settlements highlights 'the dangers of basing social settlement models on morphological grounds alone…[as]…multivallation at many sites was not a contemporary action'. This statement explicitly urges caution against landscape archaeologies which infer hierarchies of settlement based on the degree of multivallation of upstanding ringforts. It is not, however, apparent in the preceding discussion that the authors have demonstrated that the multivallation of a single rath/ringfort was multi-phase. Rather, by assessing diverse settlement types generically as 'enclosed settlements' this caution appears to refer to evidence for multi-phase vallation at so-called cemetery/settlement sites and ecclesiastical establishments, both of which have a different social and symbolic impetus, and are extremely unlikely to be mistaken for ringforts within the models that EMAP here decry. A lack of clarity is also apparent in the gazetteer: this is broken down by counties, some of which are disproportionately represented (e.g. Antrim or Meath). This is not entirely an artefact of excavation bias; there are a host of sites mentioned throughout the volume not contained in the gazetteer. It is not clear what criteria were utilised to select these sites: are they considered especially important or representative? Important well excavated sites such as Corbally (Co. Kildare), Toureen Peakaun, Marlhill, Twomileborris (Co. Tipperary), Camlin (Co. Laois), Holdenstown 1 and 2 or Kilree 3 and 4 (Co. Kilkenny), are all excluded, and yet, their inclusion would have made the gazetteer a much more representative and evenly balanced survey. Likewise, the gazetteer's usefulness is blunted somewhat by failure to account for recent the revised chronologies and phasing of a number of older excavations, as post-2008 publications are generally eschewed in favour of older accounts (e.g. Knowth or Lagore). At Uisneach, for instance, an important paper by Roseanne Schot has substantially reinterpreted the late prehistoric and early medieval phasing, but has nonetheless gone entirely unnoticed (p. 494).

There are similarly a number of instances where the authors have made important statements which, however, are either not backed up by empirical analysis,

adequate or appropriate referencing. On p. 89 it is stated that close inspection has revealed that glass fragments found on a number of high status settlements are not scrap/cullet, as had previously been thought, but imported vessels. Because unreferenced/supported, however, one is left wondering whether this reflects original analysis by EMAP's team, or, more likely, the published research of others like Edward Bourke or Ewan Campbell. In a number of other instances, failure to adequately reference, or clarify whether original analysis has taken place would appear to engender some unfortunate errors (e.g. the implication that their were a number of 'native' ceramic types: p. 106). The entry for Lagore refers to Romano-British pottery and late Roman glass, neither of which is stated in the accompanying bibliography, and appears to be inaccurate.

Excepting discussions of settlement and house morphology, as well as animal and crop husbandry, (pp. 10–12, 36–37 and 69–72) there is a general absence of a sense of chronological development and regionality, both at an inter- and intra-site level, throughout the volume. As such, discussion of the the materiality of daily life and dwelling at times seems largely traditional, treating the early medieval period as a homogeneous entity. While the nature of the gazetteer would be expected to alleviate some such problems, the general failure to utilise and account for recent discussions of a number of older excavations renders that point somewhat moot. There is a general absence of references to any post-2008 publications, and where such are noted, they invariably lack page numbers. This in itself seems a likely reflection of the fact that the volume replicates EMAP's 2008–9 project reports, including the gazetteer itself, which have been made downloadable online on the project website. Thus, while undoubtedly a valuable and somewhat weighty tome, the justification for this volume is difficult to appraise. Much of the analysis is in fact superseded by previously published work by the EMAP team, namely their magisterial *Early medieval Ireland: the evidence of archaeological excavations,* (2013, Dublin: Royal Irish Academy). At close to half the price, this may seem a more fitting and representative synthesis for a non-specialist: it provides a refined chronology for ringfort construction, while also noting the implications of recent excavations at Drumclay crannog for the traditional evolutionary chronology of house morphology. This point makes much of discussion on pp. 9–10 somewhat dated.

This volume is generally well edited and written, and while there are few spelling mistakes, an unfortunate exception is in the preface. That being said, there are a number of occasions when one finds the same sentence repeated, and, at times, discussion can be heavy going, making this volume more pertinent to the specialist than casually interested readership.

The above complaints are perhaps overly pernicious, and certainly to be expected for such an extensive and ambitious volume. They do not detract from the fact that the EMAP team have produced an accessible

and detailed comprehensive synthesis of diverse evidence. In this, the authors have provided a valuable and useful collation of the settlement archaeology of early medieval Ireland which has heretofore been lacking, to the detriment of both Irish and international scholarship. For this they can be commended, and one may hope that EMAP and its team continues their researches and impressively informed outputs.

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Elva Johnston: *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland.* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. 2013. 238 pages. Price £57. ISBN 978-1843838555.

Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland is the first book by Elva Johnston, a Lecturer in the School of History and Archives at University College Dublin. The first chapter notes that the focus of the book is to evaluate the ever-changing opposition and dialogue between literate and non-literate groups in early medieval societies (including Ireland) (p. 2). Elva Johnston does a wonderfully succinct job of setting the stage for her discussion of Ireland by placing it within the wider context of Europe after the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. This focuses context on the 'survival of classical pedagogy,' through the progression of Christianity during the Late Antique period (pp. 2–4). This pedagogy had early Christian writers partaking in the same continuity of classical civilization as their pagan counterparts. It is clear that even with this being the case, the literate elite were a small group when compared to their non-literate, barbarian rulers. What kept this growth of Christianity going, along with the rise of a group of literate ecclesiastics, is the desire by secular rulers to partake in the grounded tradition that *romanitas* could provide (pp. 6–7). This in turn opened the way for the growth of monasticism and clerical control of education (p. 7).

Chapter two discusses the impact of Christian literacy on Ireland both at home and abroad in Europe, *c.* AD 600–850. The book portrays an Ireland that is both part of a wider, Latin using world and a growing insular, vernacular writing Ireland (p. 42). Johnston notes that the early development of Ireland's written vernacular was 'an offshoot of Latin pedagogy' (p. 28). She sees the seventh century as an important time in Christian Ireland with the articulation of Ireland's response through a wealth of texts in 'a variety of genres' (p. 31). Through these genres, Ireland's leading churchmen worked towards placing Ireland within the context of the larger Christian world (p. 31). It is within this context that the book turns to discussing the relationship between vernacular and Latin by the Irish understanding of *peregrinatio* and the response of Irish churchmen to the works of those men who chose to leave Ireland. The chapter considers men like Columbanus and Fursa; men who declare themselves as exiles from Ireland and their communal

connections to establish new religious communities 'to replace the ones' they had experienced in Ireland (pp. 45 and 47). Other *peregrini* discussed for their well-regarded contribution on the Continent are St Fíachra, Johannes Scottus and Sedulius Scottus. One of the interesting points of this chapter is the relative lack of response from the Irish homeland to the immediate and short-term memory of the *peregrini* and their important works or even their reputations on the Continent (pp. 46–52). Chapter two ends with a consideration of Ireland's linguistic approach after AD 850. By *c.* AD 850 Irish vernacular overtakes Latin as the preferred medium of writing in saints' Lives, legal tracts and sagas and emerges as the dominant language of the Annals of Ulster by the 'early ninth century' (p. 54).

Chapter three addresses the ideas of community and identity *c.* AD 750–950. It starts out with a consideration of the Church and the world *c.* AD 800. Johnston makes an essential point that even though the Irish, elite authors came from the same monastic culture, their writings were affected by the contexts in which they were written, both abroad and at home in Ireland. Chapter three deftly guides the reader through Ireland's struggle to connect itself to the wider Christian church, while maintaining a hierarchy that closely matched Irish practice. Major monasteries like Armagh, Kildare, Clonmacnoise and Iona filled both a religious and political role within a non-urban Irish society. The chapter closes with a discussion of how genealogies were used by the political and religious literate elite to unify the Irish under an identity that not only defined them as *gens* in relation to their Viking neighbors, but also placed them into the larger Christian history stretching back to the Bible through a common ancestor Míle Espáne (pp. 85–88).

Chapter four discusses the changing patterns of monastic literacy *c.* AD 800–1000. It starts by looking at the Irish chronicles as a source for not only tracing the writers that are identified in the chronicles, but also what the accounts say. The chronicles provide an opportunity to connect a person to a specific church and 'to broadly identify the type of learning to which he contributed' (p. 92). The entries found in the chronicles also give an opportunity to consider the 'distribution of monastic literacy' (p. 95) However, Johnston says some questions still need to be considered like 'What determines these topographical emphases and how trustworthy are the Irish chronicles as records of literacy and its distribution?' And 'Is it possible to take them at face value' (p. 95). The chapter then goes on to consider the vocabulary used to describe literate scholars. Johnston rightly points out that one characteristic feature of the chronicles is that their chosen vocabulary changes over time; one change being the mixture of Latin and Irish after about AD 800, with Irish eventually becoming the prevailing language in the Annals of Ulster (p. 99). One of the words used to identify learned individuals was *sapiens* as a noun from the word '*sapientia* "divine wisdom"' (p. 102). The chapter considers the meaning expressed by

the term, *sapiens*, as well as examples of its use for specific individuals and changing word use over time. Following the consideration of *sapiens*, the chapter turns to a consideration of the description of ecclesiastics as *doctores, scribae* and *fir léigind*. One interesting point that emerges from the chapter is that '*sapientes, scribae* and *doctores* …. are prominent around 800 and all but vanish by 1000' (p. 128).

Chapter five begins by pointing out the importance of considering early medieval Irish literacy in a broader context that includes secondary-oral culture, instead of confining it exclusively to monastic learning. The chapter explores the sometimes uneasy, but still viable relationship between secular literature and the scribes that recorded it. It then goes on to discuss status and identity in relation to the *filid*, 'a group central to the transmission and creation of vernacular literature' (p. 134). The discussion of the *filid* shows not only their importance in creating and promoting secular literature, but also the extent to which they did so in cooperation with clerics and secular rulers. The chapter ends by considering 'how was it possible and why was it desirable for Christian writers to create a secular literature based … on the continual elaboration of native traditions' (p. 155)? Johnston's answers to this question convincingly close out the chapter.

The final chapter of the book opens with an overview of some of the debates surrounding the role of literacy and orality in the creation and 'dissemination of the early Irish narrative corpus' (p. 175). The chapter goes on to confirm that there are many ways that a piece of literature can be expressed in both a 'written and oral' framework (p. 160). This segways into an intriguing discussion of how memory and written knowledge were used in an oral setting to convey a group identity to an audience made up of non-literate individuals. The discussion of the importance of what Johnston describes of performance events, shows how writing, reading, and memorization were used together to create the information conveyed through such communal events. Making these texts cooperatively allowed churchman and *filid* to construct an informative, group history that was a key component of Ireland's secondary-orality. Literacy was not only found in the realm of the academic elite, but through performance events communicated to a wider, shared historical identity that was both hierarchical and all-inclusive.

The book contains a useful appendix titled 'The Chronicles As A Record Of Literacy, 797–1002.' This appendix starts with a chronological listing of the entries from the Irish annals that note 'members of the literate elite between 797 and 1002' (p. 177). The entries are followed by one table and six charts that provide an interesting 'statistical breakdown' of what the annals reveal about occupational titles, monastic learning and monastic locations (pp. 196–202).

Elva Johnston has written an insightful contribution to the understanding of how churchmen, rulers and *filid* worked together to use the milieu of written texts to solidify and unite a common identity

for the Irish that also connected them to a wider Christian world. One of the most fascinating issues discussed in the book is the role that 'secondary-orality' played in Ireland during a time that non-literate populations dramatically outnumbered those elite that were literate. Instead of looking at the two contending opposites, Johnston shows that orality was instead 'supported, challenged, enriched and surrounded by literacy' (p. 1). The book is an important contribution to Irish studies and will be of use to individuals interested in many aspects of Irish studies including the growth of the Irish church, monastic learning and the use of texts to promote social hierarchies. I look forward to reading Dr. Johnston's work in the future.

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G. Power and O. Pliny (eds.), *Ireland and the Czech Lands: Contacts and Comparisons in History and Culture.* Bern: Peter Lang. 2014. 235 pages. Price €50. ISBN 978-3-0343-1701-6.

Comparative and transnational history that situates Ireland within the continental European context has, until more recent years, been a marginal area within modern Irish historiography. Gerald Power's and Ondrej Pliny's *Ireland and the Czech Lands: Contacts and Comparisons in History and Culture* is a welcome addition to an expansive field that remains largely untrodden. It is easy to see why Ireland and the Czech lands make plausible objects for comparison: both were peripheral actors compared to the 'great powers' of western and central Europe respectively, both were cardinally important elements in the two great multinational and imperial powers of pre-1918 Europe, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland, and both societies were shaped by ethno-religious differences that were the result of lengthy histories of conquest and settlement. The book takes a wide-ranging chronological and thematic perspective, beginning in the early sixteenth century and the twenty-first, considering themes of state formation, cultural assimilation, religion, sport, drama, and literary culture. As the editors admit, the individual essays do not provide 'comprehensive coverage' of the subject.

While Irish interest, or at least a presence in, the Czech lands, can be confidently dated to the early seventeenth century and the dispersal of Irish aristocrats and Catholic churchmen who had been victims of the consolidation of English rule in Ireland, Czech interest in the Irish did not take hold in the nineteenth century. This was a consequence not of straightforward identification with another 'oppressed people', but of interest in Ossianic lore of the Romantic period. This is a reminder that, as Joep Leerssen has put it, Romantic period nationalism was not only inherently transnational, but had a 'viral' character in that the form it took in one society could be significantly 'mutated' in order to take root in another and influence

the development of nationalism there. Nineteenth-century travellers' writings and links between cultural figures such as playwrights and dramatists made Irish and Czechs more aware of each other, as did the contemporaneous movements for Irish and Czech independence. Though not really fleshed out in the volume, the Irish-Czech comparison is an interesting one for examining the different trajectories that Romantic nationalism took: whereas the Czechs 'conformed' to the 'typical' path of vernacular antiquarianism and regeneration leading on to broad-based cultural activism and then political activism (on the 'A-B-C' model of nationalism as developed by Czech scholar Miroslav Hroch in *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*), the movement, such as it was, to revive Irish as a 'living language' basically failed in the Irish context, yet without fatally undermining Irish nationalism.

The different essays take varying approaches to the overarching theme of Irish-Czech linkages. Gerald Power's 'Monarchy, Nobility and State Formation in Bohemia and Ireland, c. 1526-1609' is the most strictly comparative and is an excellent example of how the method can provide a wide perspective to the biggest questions of early modern and modern Irish history. The others are more transnational than comparative; four of the nine essays (besides Power's) concern the reception of Irish culture or individuals in the Czech lands, two concern Czech influences in Ireland, and one deals with Bohemian-Irish analogies in German and British travellers' writings. Jiri Brjnovak's account of Irish aristocratic families in the Czech lands and in the Habsburgs' service reminds us that the Irish could benefit from imperialism in some forms, though it is interesting to note that of the four aristocratic families examined, it was the Anglo-Irish Taaffes and Wallises who were more successful at establishing themselves in the Austrian Empire than the Gaelic Maguires of Enniskillen and McElligots. The essay by Hedvika Kucharova and Jan Parez offers a valuable survey of members of the Irish Franciscan community in Prague in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though analysis often takes a backseat to biographical sketching, though this seems to be reflective of the paucity of sources for much of the history of the Irish Franciscan community in the Czech lands. Martina Power's essay on British and German travel writing in Ireland and Bohemia serves to show the degree to which national self-perceptions, in both 'big' and 'small' nations, independent and not, were influenced by competitive prestige and resentment and the ways in which the British and Irish, Germans and Czechs, defined themselves in relation to each other. This was a two-way process in each context, and not just a matter of Irish and Czechs defining themselves in comparison to their more powerful and dominant Others. Lili Zách's essay on Irish intellectuals' analyses of inter-war Czechoslovakia confirms how this tendency to apply the prejudices and associations of one's own society to the complexities of another figured in educated Irish Catholic views of Czechoslovakia. It was not

uncommon for them to take a superior view of Irish claims to independence in comparison to those of the Czechs', given the greater nationalist militancy of the Irish in their history. The section on Irish views of the Sudentenland Germans and the Czechoslovak state's minorities policy offers a tantalising glimpse into how Irish authors conceptualised their 'Ulster problem' within a European view, but much more remains to be shown about the specific factors that shaped differing Irish perspectives on the 'Czechoslovak Ulster'.

In broad terms, *Ireland and the Czech Lands* works best as a collection of specific essays rather than a comprehensive treatment of its subject. It could have benefitted from a chapter or two providing an introduction to how comparative and methodologies can enrich our understandings of national histories traditionally seen as 'peripheral', like those of Ireland and the Czech Lands. Nationalism, a problem and phenomenon of cardinal importance in both histories, receives less treatment than is probably warranted, getting its main coverage in Martina Power's and Lili Zách's chapters, and some mention in the editors' introduction. Nevertheless, on its own terms *Ireland and the Czech Lands* does provide a valuable contribution to the growing field of Irish-European comparative and transnational studies.

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J. Vuolteenaho, L. Ameel, A. Newby & M. Scott (eds.): *Language, Space and Power: Urban Entanglements.* Collegium. Studies across disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Volume 13. Helsinki: Helsinki COLLeGIUM for Advanced Studies. 2012. 178 pages. www.helsinki.fi/collegium/journal. ISBN 978-952-10-8578-9.

This interdisciplinary collection of articles is both timely and ambitious. Although, as put by the editors, the backbone of the present volume is formed by a selection of papers presented at the conference 'Urban Symbolic Landscapes: Power, Language, Memory' held in Helsinki in 2011, the book is a coherent presentation of not only seven empirical cases but a wider discussion of different manifestations of the so-called linguistic and spatial turns in urban research. The volume consists of extensive introduction of conceptual and methodological debates and seven articles written by scholars in the fields of sociology, translation studies, media and communication research, urban geography and literary research. The introduction focuses on recent academic history and analyses the changing roles and uses of language and spatiality. In the late twentieth century language was used as a metaphorical tool to conceptualise all different forms and representations of urban spaces, processes and identities. In recent decades, however, there has been a visible shift in interest towards studies of specific place-bound language practices and concrete language-based representations of the city.

Despite the recent tendency to deplore the legacy of the linguistic turn, its actual inheritance has been also suggested to be much more varied and nuanced than its critics have usually maintained. On the other hand, the metaphorical textual treatments of the city have been increasingly replaced by language practices in urban research. Particularly helpful discussion is offered on the interaction between spatial attachments and the language-based processes of identity formation, especially in the context of globalisation and identity politics. As the authors point out, a great deal of recent theoretical explorations of identity-building have implied diminishing importance of the local contexts and everyday material life as the foundations of identity-formation; yet there are case studies that contradict such a viewpoint. Instead, places could be understood as particular points of intersection of 'local uniqueness' and wider contexts. Media- and language based socialisation has been central to the ideology of the nation-state in the course of modernisation whereas at present marketing professionals use positive emotions of belonging as a socially consolidating resource. All these perspectives are discussed in the book to a varying extent through different types of language-space interfaces.

The recurrent themes of institutional language practices, language-mediated meanings of space and actors as well as aspects of heritage production, among other things, are examined in the book from various angles. For example, Nicolas Bencherki's article is based on ethnological fieldwork and discusses a debate over the unhealthy living conditions of immigrant tenants of a residential building in Montréal, Canada. It exemplifies the bringing of the very materiality of spatial surroundings to the fore. An article by Yannik Porsché, included in the volume, offers both methodological discussion of the ways in which exhibition spaces interact with knowledge constructions and two empirical, conversation-analytic examples of such practices in the cases of immigrant images in French and German museums. By introducing museum case studies the article shows how knowledge construction is situation-bound and dependent on context and how discourses, people and viewpoints from elsewhere (e.g. media) participate in the construction of meanings. The multilingual, multi-ethnic space encountered in urban settings is also a translational space. The article of Kaisa Koskinen analyses the linguistic landscape of the suburb of Hervanta in Tampere from the perspective of translation studies. The author argues that an adequate understanding of translated signage should involve both understanding of what is translated and how translations are produced. Illuminating empirical observations include, for example, her findings regarding the use of Swedish language signage by private and commercial companies, which did not seem to reflect the local translation needs but their necessity in bilingual municipalities elsewhere in Finland. Lieven Ameel's

article focuses, in turn, on fictional space by examining the construction of an imaginary Helsinki suburb of Krokelby in two novels of the Finnish author Joel Lehtonen. It is interesting to note that the pessimistic way in which Lehtonen described these urban surroundings became later prototypical for the direction in which descriptions of Helsinki and its suburbs evolved gradually from the 1920s onwards. The imaginary environment was constructed by Lehtonen as a reversal of national-romantic landscapes, including, for example, more traditional symbolic landscapes of lake districts in Eastern Finland.

Three of the contributions to this volume focus on aspects of contemporary Britain: an article of Husband & Alam examines the case of Bradford's Mughal Garden from the perspective of ethnic diversity and creative urban space; Finnish naming of landscapes as a deliberate place-marketing tool is compared with English market-led reshaping of English football and its venues in the article of Vuolteenaho & Kolamo, and, a fascinating analysis of Edinburgh's linguistic identities from the perspective of place image and linguistic heritage is offered by the contribution of Maggie Scott.

In the first case study, the authors have shown how the legacy of nineteenth century civic planning in Britain has been re-conceptualised in the late twentieth century, in order to reflect the ethnic demography of location. Contrasting Finnish naming of commercial landscapes with the language practices of English football venues demonstrates how the two national contexts unquestionably share some characteristics; yet also differ in the favouring of culturally escapist naming in the case of Finnish venues and grounding in history in the case of England. Finally, the examination of Edinburgh from the perspective of capital's names and brand identities shows the variety of their uses in literary, cultural and commercial contexts. One of the interesting features of this article is that examination is not restricted to concrete street landscapes but includes a variety of websites as its source material and thus reveals meanings and associations which otherwise could have been left unnoticed. All in all, the collection of papers offers both new theoretical and methodological reassessments and empirical diversity. As an open-access publication it is available for everyone to read and enjoy.

Atina Nihtinen, Åbo Akademi

Wolf, Nicholas M.: *An Irish-Speaking Island: State, Religion, Community, and the Linguistic Landscape in Ireland, 1770-1870.* Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press. 2014. xiii + 448 pp. Price $34.95. ISBN 978-0-299-30274-0.

Abbreviations Used

BL	British Library
NLI	National Library of Ireland

In this wide-ranging book, Nicholas M. Wolf seeks to uncover the secret life, as

it were, of Irish-speakers in Ireland from 1770 to 1870. Wolf argues that the history of the language in this period has been depicted in an overly-simplistic manner by early- and mid-twentieth-century commentators who, under the influence of a narrative set forth by the Revival movement, tended to see the language's 'endangerment and potential extinction as its primary feature' (p. 9). Drawing on a variety of approaches and benefitting from recent scholarship that has resulted in a number of detailed studies on aspects of Irish-speaking life during the time in question, Wolf endeavours to describe 'where and when Irish speakers interacted, to whom they spoke, and how both legal and cultural structures facilitated or prevented those conversations from taking place' (p. 16).

Wolf's level of engagement with Irish manuscript sources is commendable. Some of the hitherto unpublished texts he refers to include an English-language essay on the Irish language in NLI G 96 that is believed to have been written by Míchéal Óg Ó Longáin (p. 34), an Irish-language oath used by a Galway court interpreter from NLI G 236 (p. 162), an English translation by Séamus Ó Scoireadh of an election speech given in Irish in Waterford in 1826 from BL Egerton 113 (p. 178) and a poem by Dáibhí de Barra in praise of a bishop who was supportive of the Irish-language from NLI G 393 (p. 242). Excerpts from source materials are presented in an accessible way: all quotations from Irish-language sources are given in their original form and in translation.

In his first chapter, Wolf endeavours to gauge Irish-speakers' beliefs and attitudes towards the language noting that the views of scribes and scholars may not always overlap with those of the community as a whole. Wolf traces the historical development of the view that the Irish language 'possessed a deep antiquity and unusual fluency' (p. 26) beginning with the foundational myths set forth in *Auraicept na nÉces* and the *Lebor Gabála*, elements of which were later transmitted in Keating's *Foras Feasa* and Seán Ó Conaill's 'Tuireamh na hÉireann' and in less well-known texts such as Seán Ó Gadhra's 'Tuireadh na Gaeilge agus Teastas na hÉireann' (p. 28). To this was allied a view of Irish as the language of victims of an illegitimate conquest following the Tudor and Stuart plantations, epitomised by the proliferation of political *aisling* poems in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (p. 33). This understanding, Wolf argues, is largely maintained into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: he gives examples from contemporary poetry that are further corroborated by accounts from Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century and by reminiscences of nineteenth-century Irish-speakers recorded in the National Folklore Collection (pp. 34–37). Wolf notes some new developments in perceptions of the language by Irish-speakers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Firstly, the language is increasingly seen as connected with Catholicism: this is, in one sense, a continuation of anti-reformation sentiments expressed in earlier centuries,

as seen for example in the poem *A Bhanbha, is truagh do chor* in which the Franciscan Eoghan Ó Dubhthaigh (ca 1530–1590) warns Ireland of the peril of following the teachings of 'Caiptín Lúitéar' and 'Caiptín Cailbhín' (captains Luther and Calvin).[1] Wolf suggests that such sentiments were given a new lease of life in the popular imagination of Irish speakers following sectarian tensions that emerged as a consequence of Protestant proselytising from the 1810s, this despite the existence of Protestant Irish speakers (pp. 37–38). A second development noted by Wolf is the creation of a 'connection between Irish and aristocratic honor' (p. 37) and the depiction of the language as 'a tool of defense' (p. 39) in the widespread folktale story that explains how Daniel O'Connell escaped poisoning as a result of his knowledge of Irish, this being a contemporary reworking of an older folk motif. Finally, Wolf questions the commonly-held view that people were abandoning Irish because it was seen as backward and unsophisticated: these views tend to reflect the prejudices of commentators more than anything else and there is plenty of evidence to suggest that Irish-speakers were fond of their language (pp. 40–43).

At this point, Wolf states that an attempt to recover the language ideology of Irish speakers can only go so far and that a different approach must be taken to uncover sociolinguistic practises on the ground: beliefs and actions do not always match up. He proposes that the concept of diglossia has been applied incorrectly to the linguistic situation in Ireland: that 'high' and 'low' language domains were not stable in Ireland and that the divide between prestigious and non-prestigious domains of language did not fall in line with standard classifications (pp. 44–45). Instead, he turns to the concept of linguistic networks as elaborated by Lesley and James Milroy: this approach emphasises the social relationship between speakers rather than the location where a conversation takes place (p. 46). Wolf uses the example of marketplaces: accounts from a variety of contemporary sources show how Irish speakers in their individual interactions could contest the dominance of the English language at markets and how bilinguals in particular could have more of an advantage than monoglots of either Irish or English. Similar examples are provided for other public settings including shops, prisons, public meetings and executions (pp. 49–53). Another observation is that Irish was frequently used for in-group communication, English being reserved for contact with outsiders: Wolf suggests that 'an extended, stable period of bilingualism existed in many areas' (p. 57), although this state of bilingualism was gradually eroded as the number of English monoglots increased (pp. 61–62).

Wolf explores another facet of Irish-speaking identity in his second chapter: a 'language-established localism' (p. 64) where place name lore and dialectical features allowed Irish speakers to see

1 For a partial text of this poem and a discussion of its historical significance, see Ó Buachalla 1996, 32–33.

themselves as belonging to specific geographic locations. Place name lore was highly local, changed over time and varied depending on occupation and gender, meaning that an individual's store of such knowledge could define their membership within the community. Wolf places more importance on speakers' perceptions of dialect differences than on the categorizations of dialectologists and drawing on the concepts of iconization and erasure developed by Judith Irvine and Susan Gal, he notes that some linguistic differences are emphasized and others are brushed over, thus forming perceptions of dialect difference that may apply over a wide geographical area when applied to pronunciation differences between provinces or at a local level where differences from one townland to another serve as markers for identity. One could identify more sources of identity within the language beyond those given by Wolf but the salient point in all this is that there were, as Wolf puts it 'many paradigms in popular understandings of self and community' (p. 64) which means that it is reductive to see Irish-speakers in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries merely through the prism of language decline or as a dispossessed people and nothing else: people could and did live full and rich lives through the Irish language throughout this time.

In the third chapter, Wolf notes that language contact is dealt with mostly through humour in the collections of the Irish Folklore Commission (p. 84). Again, he questions received wisdom noting that although scholars have suggested that the Irish-language and ignorance are associated in bilingual jokes, English speakers may also appear as the butt of some of these jokes or the humour may be ambiguous (pp. 87–88). Jokes, Wolf states, may be approached as 'a formal site for negotiation and reinvention of the status of the Irish language' (p. 89) and he provides comparable examples of humour from other language contact situations (pp. 90-93). In Irish texts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such as *Pairlement Chloinne Tomáis* and *Stair Éamuinn Uí Chléire*, humour is based on the broken English of lower-class Irish-speakers who attempt to adopt English speech (pp. 94–95). There is, inevitably, some overlap here with the sources referred to by Liam Mac Mathúna in his examination of creative code mixing in Irish literary texts and which readers who are interested in a more minute examination of the functioning of this sort of humour might refer to.[2] Interestingly, Wolf suggests that the plays of Shakespeare which began to appear frequently on provincial Irish stages from the eighteenth-century onwards and which often depict foreign characters speaking garbled English, may have had some influence on the development of interlingual humour in Ireland (p. 95).

Over time, the humour shifts along with changes in the linguistic landscape and there is an increasing tendency for nineteenth-century jokes to depict

2 Mac Mathúna 2007, 129–182. This and other relevant studies of bilingualism are referred to by Wolf, p. 299, footnote 2.

monoglot Irish speakers as being out of touch with aspects of the modern world such as greater contact with doctors and shopkeepers as a result of the development of professional medical care and the increasing availability of consumer goods (pp. 97–99). Wolf avoids jumping to hasty conclusions here again: he notes that the English language is sometimes depicted negatively in these jokes as an item that can be bought and sold, as a blunt instrument of commerce and not an 'organic' feature of the community as Irish is (pp. 101–102). Wolf concludes that bilinguals ultimately have the upper hand in most humour of this sort: the jokes highlight the dangers of being an Irish-speaking monoglot but also allow their tellers to 'reassert the Irish-speaking culture that they shared with monoglots' (p. 108).

The second part of the book deals with the interactions of Irish-speakers with state and religious institutions. In the fourth chapter, Wolf provides an outline of the English-speaking state's vacillating attitude towards the Irish language from the time of the Tudor Conquest onwards: by the end of the eighteenth century, the state was mostly indifferent to Irish speakers to the point that some commentators were able to state that the language had ceased to be spoken (p. 130). He compares the situation in Ireland to those in Scotland, New Zealand and India where missionaries and representatives of the British administrative system engaged with native languages to a greater extent. The increasing encroachment of the state into the daily lives of the ordinary populace in the nineteenth century meant that the indifference of institutions of the state towards the language was challenged (p. 133). Whilst sectarian issues dominated discussions on the development of the education system in the nineteenth century, Wolf notes that linguistic concerns were also raised (p. 134). Wolf also discusses the efforts of scriptural societies to increase literacy in Irish in order to evangelise more effectively and argues that the debates they generated about the role of the language increased its visibility in other areas, resulting in investigations of the language question by the Kildare Place Society, a large organiser of charitable schools founded in 1811, and by those who were involved in the run-up to the creation of the national school system founded in 1831 (p. 140). The national school system made no official provision for the Irish language: they could get away with this as most schools in the initial two decades of the system were located in English-speaking parts of the country where the language question was less pressing (p. 142). Wolf suggests, however, that Irish was used in some national schools on an informal level, in mnemonic devices, for example, and for explanation where children did not have good command of English (pp. 143–144). Language policy could be thus modified at local level to meet local needs although one is left with the impression that these modifications were largely improvisational and could not be said to represent in any way a serious effort at providing for the educational needs of Irish speakers in their native tongue.

In this chapter, Wolf also looks at the influence of the 1851 census which was the first to provide accurate numbers for Irish-speakers (pp. 144–145) and calls for some adjustments to the usual narrative by historians on the movement towards putting Irish on the school curriculum (pp. 147–148).

From the mid- to late eighteenth century, the legal system expanded into the lives of 'middling' people and political processes also became accessible to a wider range of people: the fifth chapter looks at Irish speakers' encounters with these systems. Wolf looks at examples of bilingualism in the manor courts that remained in place until 1859 providing examples of Irish-speaking juries and participation by Irish monoglots (pp. 151–152). In the petty session courts from the 1820s onwards, he finds examples of bilingual lawyers, officials and even judges functioning in the courts. Irish monoglots could appear on juries – there was disapproval of this in some quarters but it was not forbidden outright until 1876 (pp. 153–154). Wolf also examines the functioning of interpreters in courts, including the provision of paid interpreters at assize courts, and discusses some examples of active involvement of Irish speakers in court proceedings, including a number of female Irish speakers (p. 160) and bilinguals who chose to give evidence in Irish because they were more comfortable speaking that language or they believed it was to their advantage to do so (p. 161). In conclusion, Wolf argues that Irish speakers were able to have their linguistic needs accommodated within the legal system even if this accommodation was not always perfect (p. 162).

Wolf finds similar examples of accommodations in the political sphere. Electoral oaths, required so that freeholders could cast a vote, were sometimes translated informally into Irish before statutory provision was made for this in 1817 (p. 166). The evidence for the use and employment of poll interpreters is scant but the glimpses we have suggest that this was a considerable expense in certain areas (p. 167). Irish-speaking voters were sometimes deliberately mobilised by landlords as depicted in the song 'Abhrán an Bhoicht-Aontadhóra' that was current in Cork in 1841 (pp. 168–169). Wolf argues that not all Irish-speaking voters were modest tenants and finds evidence of the existence of a 'comfortably situated Irish-speaking electorate' in the fact that interpreters continued to be used after 1829 when a £10 qualification was imposed on potential voters (p. 169). Wolf also notes that there was a significant Irish-speaking freehold vote in Limerick, Cork and Galway (p. 176): this observation is in line with a recent focus by scholars on the topic of the Irish language in urban areas in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[3] Wolf also examines the engagement of Irish-speakers, priests and laypeople, with popular movements of the era – temperance meetings, meetings

3 This topic was the focus of the conference 'Saothrú na Gaeilge scríofa i suímh uirbeacha na hÉireann, 1700-1850', held in University College Dublin in 2013.

about Poor Law tax burdens, Catholic emancipation and anti-tithe and repeal agitations (p. 172). Noting that nearly all of these public events at which Irish was spoken were bilingual, he argues, that the political scene that emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century was a product of the Irish-language speech community just as much as it was of English-speakers (p. 180).

In chapter six, Wolf re-examines the role of the Irish language in the 'Devotional Revolution' that is said to have taken place within Irish Catholicism in the second half of the nineteenth century and argues that this revolution ought to be seen as a gradual change that had begun as early as the end of the eighteenth century (pp. 183–184). Wolf examines printed and manuscript religious texts in Irish from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with a view to comparing this material with religious output in English. The task of carrying out searches of the over four thousand extant Irish manuscripts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is a laborious one: some manuscripts remain as yet uncatalogued, some catalogues exist only in handwritten format and catalogues of individual manuscripts or small collections are dispersed in a wide variety of publications. A complete database of the contents of all catalogues would be a huge boon to scholars who work with the manuscripts but there does not appear to be any prospect of such a resource becoming available in the near future.[4] Wolf's approach is a search technique of the main manuscript catalogues (p. 185), a suitable approach where the emphasis is on wide scale trends. His analysis shows that religious texts feature in some twenty percent of manuscripts (p. 186). An important point he lends emphasis to is that the manuscripts were actively circulated, lent and read aloud thus increasing their potential reach even more (p. 192). Looking at printed material in Irish, Wolf argues that printed catechisms in Irish could have a wide circulation, also making their way into oral tradition and manuscripts. Wolf suggests that a two-tiered market existed for works in Irish: cheap printed texts for widespread consumption and more sophisticated texts, often in manuscript form, that appealed to richer farmers and priests (p. 190). While many of the scribes who produced the manuscripts were impoverished, some of their patrons were well off laypeople or members of the clergy, the sort of people considered by historians as being central to the 'devotional revolution' (p. 196). Overall, Wolf concludes that there was a good degree of ideological overlap between material in the two languages, with both being firmly rooted in post-Tridentine tradition (p. 205). There was an increased emphasis by Catholic reformers over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the importance of attending Mass and on correct behaviour

4 A selection of Irish manuscripts of the post-Classical era and their accompanying catalogue descriptions are however available on the Irish Script on Screen (ISOS) web resource: https://www.isos.dias.ie/.

at Mass as well as a move away from traditional folk prayers and practices to 'a structured orthodox routine of religious practise' (p. 218): Wolf finds numerous examples of Irish language speakers and scholars engaging with these changes. In this chapter as a whole, Wolf makes a convincing case that a view held by earlier scholars that the Irish language was 'the vehicle for a spirituality that remained antithetical to the to the new version of Catholicism conveyed in English' (p. 182) is untenable.

In his final chapter, Wolf looks at organizational efforts of the Catholic Church to reach out to Irish speakers. While the Church is usually portrayed as being indifferent or even hostile to the language at this point in history, Wolf paints a more nuanced picture noting that the absence of centralized policy does not preclude local efforts at accommodating Irish speakers (p. 225). He focuses here on parish priests because they are the most basic link between church and people and finds a good deal of evidence of the use of Irish by priests (pp. 227–230). He also looks at the efforts of priests to find material for sermons in Irish or for dealing with bilingual congregations (pp. 232–233). Wolf also examines the emergence of clerical monolingualism in English with particular attention to the linguistic abilities of clerical students at Maynooth (pp. 243–246). He concludes that the proportion of Irish-speaking priests is higher than the proportion of Irish speakers in the general population and that bishops attempted to provide Irish-speaking priests in places where they were needed. There was a focus on the Classical Languages at Maynooth with no attempt to create new speakers of Irish amongst those studying for the priesthood but Wolf concludes that the reduction in Irish-speaking ability amongst clerical students merely reflected an overall reduction across the country and that this was exacerbated by the decline of small country schools after the Famine and a resultant shift of the 'epicentre of secondary education' into towns and cities (p. 266).

Much of the evidence Wolf draws on in this book is by its nature fragmentary and there is a sense that his conclusions occasionally overleap the bounds of that evidence. However, the overall effect of gathering information from a wide variety of archival sources and published texts and commentaries is a forceful one: Ireland in the years 1770–1870 must be seen as an Irish-speaking island as much as it was an English-speaking island. This book stands as a testament to the value of Irish-language sources in the study of the history of the titular period: this viewpoint is no news to those who work with these sources on a day to day basis but it is a message that has yet to percolate fully through to the wider scholarly community.

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Elizabeth Boyle and Deborah Hayden (eds): *Authorities and Adaptations: The Reworking and Transmission of Textual Sources in Medieval Ireland.* Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. 2014. xlvii+361 pages. Price €35. ISBN 978-1-85500-225-8.

This substantial volume of scholarship is the fruit of the 'Authorities and Adaptations' workshop which took place in Cambridge in April 2011. This book, as its title shows, has a very clear central theme which has been elaborated in the chapter-long Introduction (pp. xvii–xlvii) by the two editors: it investigates the creative tension between the authoritative and the adaptive forces in medieval Irish intellectual culture which is embodied in the practice of 'reshaping of earlier sources to accommodate contemporary concerns' (p. xvii) while keeping the authorities alive and functional to the contemporary audience. To anyone that has sufficient experience dealing with medieval Irish texts, it is immediately apparent that such a creative tension exists in almost every corner of that textual tradition, and indeed, as the editors point out, 'concepts of authority and adaptation can also be applied to the landscape, to material culture, and to the cultural institutions of medieval Ireland' (p. xliv). One would even argue that in every culture of every era 'authorities and adaptations' is an eternal theme. What distinguishes Irish textual culture in medieval Europe, which I venture to suppose is what the editors intend to emphasise, is not only the richest body of texts in which the tension between authorities and adaptations are visible, but also the high level of self-awareness in the process of adapting the authorities and the diversity of the means used to achieve that goal.

The twelve essays in this book cover a wide range of genres in the early Irish textual tradition: narrative literature, grammars, glossaries, law texts, religious literature and Latin and vernacular poetry. They weave a fascinating picture of the diverse attitudes and techniques in the adaptations of authorities in the Old and Middle Irish periods. Since each essay focuses on a specific topic or text, they naturally have different approaches in addressing the central theme; but as the editors incisively point out (p. xx), detailed source criticism (*Quellenkritik*) remains the primary method of enquiry throughout the book, namely to identify the earlier sources upon which later authors drew, and to compare such sources with the later texts.

The first chapter by Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Adapting myth and making history' (pp. 1–21), surveys the transmission and profusion of the Ulster Cycle sagas, especially a group of late medieval texts including *Cath Leitrech Ruide*, *Cocad Fergusa ocus Conchubair* and other stories. Ó hUiginn notices the 'historical'

orientation of these tales, as well as their interest in names and genealogies that betrays an antiquarian tendency. These late stories, in accordance with the locations of most of the learned families of the time, have developed a strong sympathy to Connacht and an interest in recycling pre-existing Ulster Cycle materials to the construction of the legendary history of Connacht. The claim on page 3 that *Lebor Gabála* can be assigned to the 'mythological cycle' is a bit unexpected as, though *Lebor Gabála* does mention the Túatha Dé, Fir Bolg and the sons of Míl of Spain, it is not traditionally regarded as part of that cycle.

Deborah Hayden's essay 'Anatomical metaphor in *Auraicept na nÉces*' (pp. 23–61) exemplifies the complex interaction between the Latin grammatical authorities and the Irish scholarly milieu. On topics such as linguistic unit, gender and accents, the Irish scholiasts of the *Auraicept* embraced the Latin grammatical concept of analogy between language and the human body. Yet this involves more than simple translation: the scholiasts reshaped the concept to fit the reality of the Irish language, and contributed their own creative invention based on the analogy in the process.

Paul Russell gives a long-needed assessment (pp. 63–93) of the commentaries to *Amra Coluim Chille* which provide ample examples of the free migration of texts between what we today would perceive as disparate genres, and of their adaptations in different contexts. He picks out §4 and §52 of the *Amra* as a case study of the growth of the commentaries. Comparison with similar texts from other sources illuminates the pattern and logic of selection, copying and re-working of the entities that constitute the commentaries to the *Amra*. It should be pointed out that Russell does not notice my article in *Studia Celtica Fennica* X (2013, 91–111) on part of the commentary to §52, which identifies some other sources of the commentary material that are not mentioned by Russell. The translation of *ferba foluchta* as 'hidden blisters' (p. 82) is bizarre, as *folucht/fulacht* is the past preterite passive of *foloing* and means 'sustained'. The original line in the law tract *Din Techtugud* reads *comdar ferba fulachta* 'so that blisters were sustained' (*CIH* 209.13–14; Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin 1988, p. 358). Russell's argument concerning the H 3.17 legal commentary (p. 91) also ignores the fact that that text in H 3.17 actually consists of two versions of the commentary which have quite different concerns and organising principles. Again, a detailed analysis of these two versions can be found in my aforementioned article.

In the fourth chapter (pp. 95–120), Thomas Charles-Edwards presents some aspects of the manuscript transmission of the law tract *Bretha Comaithchesa*, of which he is preparing a critical edition. Charles-Edwards firstly maps the evolution of early Irish law texts from the 7th to the 16th century, and lists the types of attested manuscript lay-outs of law texts. These are extremely useful tools. The rest of this essay is mostly conventional

textual criticism of four sections from *Bretha Comaithchesa*. These show how the attached texts developed around the law tract, and how the scribal attitudes to copying reveal varying attitudes to textual authority.

Pádraig Ó Néill (pp. 121–140) compares Airbertach Mac Cosse's Poem on the Psalter and the Old Irish and Hiberno-Latin sources it depends on, pointing out the linguistic modernisations, omissions, simplifications and other modifications that Mac Cosse artistically applied to his sources in order to relate to his audience. Brent Miles in the sixth chapter (pp. 141–158) similarly explores how the author of the bilingual *Sermo ad reges* found in the Leabhar Breac draws on earlier Hiberno-Latin collections and florilegia. His study of the sources shows that the author seems to be relying on excerpt literature and florilegia rather than to be an excerpter himself, though he still displays considerable skill and self-consciousness in manipulating the texts. Another text from Leabhar Breac, namely 'Christ's First Preaching', is examined in the next chapter (pp. 159–184) by Erich Poppe. Poppe identifies, again, the textual authorities that some passages of 'Christ's First Preaching' make use of; the theoretical aspect of authorities and adaptations, however, is only briefly touched upon in a discussion of translation from Latin into Irish at the end of the chapter.

Hugh Fogarty's well-balanced essay (pp. 185–210) brings the theoretical arguments back to the fore. His consideration of the history of the concept of 'intertextuality' and of its application to studies of early Irish texts is most welcome given the recent interest in employing this concept in this field. Fogarty argues, mostly through citations from works on literary criticism but no doubt highly relevant to the theme of this book, that 'intertextuality' denotes more than a mere 'study of sources'; the primary concern of intertextual analysis should be the significance of textual relationship for medieval and modern understanding of individual texts. In other words, we should ask how the perception of derivation and reference influences the reader's experience of the text. Fogarty then uses the tale *Aided Guill meic Carbada ⁊ Aided Gairb Glinne Rige* as a test case. This tale has innovatively overturned the expected pattern by grafting a conventional description of Cú Chulainn onto his opponent and by modelling the plot on the Fer Diad episode of the LL *Táin* in order to achieve a subversion of the secular heroic ethos, which would have been clear to an audience familiar with these allusions.

Geraldine Parsons in her contribution (pp. 211–231) traces the growth of the literary tradition around Almu. Middle Irish literature generally places emphasis on Almu 'as a place of death, burial and sorrow', so that 'a medieval storyteller or poet may have been able to invoke a sense of desolation or sorrow through a reference to this site' (p. 222). Parsons investigates the use of such a tradition about Almu in different copies of the *Acallam na Senórach*, which 'registers a new and direct connection between the onomastic

traditions that include death and grief and the accounts of Finn's gaining of the site' (p. 227). The chapter by Elizabeth Boyle (pp. 233–261) discusses the sources of the Latin poem *De mirabilibus Hibernie* and its intellectual contexts. A recurring tension in this poem is that between the strangeness of a given miraculous event and the familiarity with its description, often derived from other well-known Latin or vernacular sources. Boyle raises several attractive hypotheses to explain the unadorned style and lack of local references in *De mirabilibus Hibernie* in comparison to other poems allegedly written by the same author, and to the extant vernacular versions of the 'wonders of Ireland' from which it possibly draws. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh's essay (pp. 263–289) focuses on the functions of recycled poems, mostly attributed to earlier poetic authorities, in *Cogadh Gáedhael re Gallaibh*. Such poems serve as prophecy, descriptions of battle, and extol of virtues and victories of Dál Cais in the narrative. Though the attribution is often spurious, the authoritative status of the poets has resonance elsewhere in the tradition and is aptly exploited by the author of *Cogadh* for contemporary ends.

The last chapter by Kevin Murray (pp. 291–306) reviews the psychology and methods at play in the reworking of earlier texts in medieval Ireland. In this summarising account, Murray surveys a number of topics: he discusses issues such as the degree of originality, models of reworking in different types of texts, the concept of authority, mode of communication, stratification of text, etc. He raises important questions concerning the individual, artistic factors in the transmission and adaptation of texts. Such factors are hard to fathom, yet undeniably they, much as the social context or the grand historical narrative which are the staple ingredients in talking about the raison d'être of the transmission and adaptation of texts, are fundamentally important motivations.

The reader will be pleased to find a comprehensive bibliography (pp. 307–345), a handy index of manuscripts, and a general index at the end of this book (pp. 347–361). The editorial and printing standard of this book is very high; I have only noticed a few typos, none affecting the sense of text: p. 3 line 1 'has long being' > 'has long been'; p. 43 line 5 from bottom 'to denote to' > 'to denote'; p. 60 line 3 from bottom 'it is is' > 'it is'; p. 77 line 1 'it also found' > 'it is also found'; p. 99 line 10 'H 2.15' > 'H 2.15A'; pp. 198–199, 201 in the main text '*riastrad*' should be according to Old Irish convention '*ríastrad*'; p. 220 'Núadú' > 'Núadu' (the rest of spelling irregularities of this name are due to the original publications that Parsons cites); p. 222 line 12 'Coémáin's' > 'Cóemáin's'; p. 265 line10 'against Gaill' > 'against the Gaill'.

This excellent book is useful, not only to those who are interested in the specific texts mentioned by the contributors, but also for anyone who would like to view the Irish textual tradition as a whole.

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