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Introduktion till gaeltacht-självbiografierna

Panu Petteri Höglund

Det bör inte överraska någon att en stor del av modern litteratur på iriska består av självbiografier. Det kan med fog påstås att hela den iriska nutidslitteraturen kom till för att tillfredsställa den kulturnationalistiska språkrörelsens hunger och törst efter nationell autenticitet i språk och sed. Rörelsen uppstod bland engelsktalande medelklassmänniskor i Dublin, och det var naturligt att de behövde språkliga och stilistiska förebilder för att lära sig det nationella språket på ett sätt som inte skulle verka engelskpåverkat och konstlat. Men eftersom iriska språket givetvis stått under engelskt inflytande sedan århundraden tillbaka, var språkrörelsen inte enig om vilken sorts iriska man borde kanonisera.

Till en början var det *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* från 1600-talet, ett kompendium av historia, mytologi och sagor som Seathrún Céitinn (Geoffrey Keating) sammanställt på 1600-talet. Boken är skriven på den språkform som kallas för tidig nyiriska eller klassisk nyiriska – den iriska som skrevs på 1100-1600-talen¹. Egentligen är tidig nyiriska ett mera omfattande begrepp än klassisk nyiriska, eftersom den sistnämnda definierades av den klassiska hov- och lovpoesin, medan det också fanns en mer arkaisk och konstlad stil, som föredrogs av historiker² (och en särskilt i religiös uppbyggelselitteratur använd prosastil, som var mera talspråksnära än den klassiska poetiska iriskan (McManus 1994, 335-36).

När språket började återupplivas, var det många som ansåg att *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* var det bästa denna tradition hade att erbjuda. Seathrún Céitinn själv var både en präst och en poet, både en humanist med kontinentaleuropeisk utbildning och en traditionsbärande skolad i Irlands gaeliska diktarkonst (Ó Buachalla 1987, 2). Céitinn bröt med den ovan beskrivna slentrianen att skriva historieböcker endast i en för allmänheten – även den lärda och läskunniga allmänheten – obegriplig stil och föredrog ett språk som står den klassiska iriskan mycket nära, men utmärker sig med sin särskilda läsbarhet och tydlighet. När också innehållet i *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* bör ha tilltalat den nationalromantiska litterära smaken med sina ekon från ett svunnet, mytiskt förflutet, var det naturligt att det var just denna bok som en del ville grunda den moderna litteraturen på.

- 1 I äldre litteratur kallas denna språkform medeliriska, men man bör inte låta sig vilseledas av detta. Enligt dagens uppfattning placeras medeliriskan kring året 1000, som en övergång mellan forniriska (ären 700-900) och klassisk/tidig nyiriska (1100-1600-talen). Medeliriskan i dagens mening framställs gärna som en period av osäkerhet och hyperkorrektion, då det icke existerade en standardform som de lärde kunde enas om.
- 2 'Bréagársaíocht é seo go minic a raibh lucht scríofa staire go háirithe tugtha di' (McManus 1994, 336).

Allt i allo bör det sålunda inte förvåna någon vilken stor prestige Céitinn's bok åtnjöt inom språkrörelsen. Den främste bland Céitinnförespråkarna anses ha varit en viss doktor Richard Henebry, eller Risteard de Hindeberg som han stavade sitt namn på iriska, avliden år 1916 (Ó Floinn 1997, 231). De Hindeberg har efter sin död blivit föremål för visst åtlöje och framställts som en opraktisk och världsfrånvänd reaktionär vad gäller litterär och språklig stil. Litteraturkritikern Tomás Ó Floinn har dock försökt rehabilitera de Hindeberg i den serie på tre artiklar (ibid., 231-52) han skrev för månadsskriften *Comhar* åren 1961-62.

Medan de Hindeberg nog såg de infödda irisktalande längs den irländska västkusten och deras dialekter som en tillgång (ibid., 231) tyckte han dock att deras språk var på många sätt förfallet och orent, särskilt på grund av det engelska inflytandet. Enligt hans mening var det bäst att undvika talspråkliga former som inte hade något historiskt berättigande i det klassiska standardspråket. Därutöver ville han dock även bannlysa många utbredda och rent gaeliska ord, som han ansåg vara jargong. Ó Háinle (1994, 760) ger sådana exempel på ord ogillade av de Hindeberg som *stiocaire* 'snåljäp', *scológ* 'fattigbonde, lantarbetare', *scolbánta*, *scafánta* – båda två betyder 'stark och flink'³. Man kan knappast undvika intrycket att de Hindeberg motsatte sig precis sådana målände, deskriptiva uttryck som modern prosalitteratur lever av. Hans egna litterära försök, som Tomás Ó Floinn gett oss utdrag ur i sina artiklar om honom, är främst baserade på den heroiska och mytiska litteraturen (Ó Floinn 1997, 250) och hans orationer (ibid., 248-49) är som retorik mycket imponerande och påminner i det närmaste om en gammeltestamentlig profet.

De Hindebergs motpol inom språkrörelsen var Peadar Ua Laoghaire (eller Ó Laoghaire), en präst som växte upp i Múscraí (Muskerry) i grevskapet Cork (Corcaigh). I sina programmatiska skrifter framhävde han att det var folkspråket man borde välja till förebild för litteraturspråket, i stället för Seathrún Céitinn. Modellen på prosastilen fanns att söka i munnen på språkets infödda bärare (Ó Háinle 1994, 761) och det var inte lönt att undvika provinsiella och dialektala uttryck, snarare tvärtom: enligt hans åsikt borde man tillvarata så många av dem som möjligt (ibid.). Han levde som han lärde och gav ut båda originalverk och översättningar på sin egen dialekt. Av översättningarna är hans givetvis kraftigt förkortade version av Don Quijote den viktigaste (Cervantes 2001), men han gav också ut sina egna återberättade versioner av äldre irisk litteratur (t.ex. Ua Laoghaire utan utgivningsår). Vad gäller hans originalverk, är det hans folkloristiska roman *Séadna* och hans självbiografi *Mo Scéal Féin* som är tillgängligast, även i ordets egentliga betydelse: den förstnämnda har senast tryckts år 1995 (Ua Laoghaire

3 de Hindeberg skrev sg- för sc-.

1995) och självbiografen från 1999 (Ua Laoghaire 1999). Ett tredje verk som han författade var den historiska romanen *Niamh*, som dock på grund av sin låga litterära kvalitet gjorde även hans inbitna beundrare besvikna (Tittley 2002, 327).

När romanen *Séadna* som följetong började tryckas i tidskriften *Irisleabhar na Gaedhilge*, erbjöds den läsarna inte som en roman, utan som ett prov på talspråklig iriska från Munster (Ua Laoghaire 1995, ix), och det är faktiskt snarare en samling folksägnar som binds ihop av ramberättelsen om skraddaren Séadna och hans Faustpakt med djävulen. Historien slutar med att han efter sin död varken är välkommen till himmelriket eller helvetet och måste tillbringa sin personliga evighet som ett kringflackande irrsken⁴.

Ua Laoghaires självbiografi börjar med en beskrivning av slaget vid Kinsale (Cionn tSáile) i början av 1600-talet och dess följder för irländarna, samt en nationalistiskt färgad beskrivning av Irlands historia under de följande seklerna. Han berättar här också om sin egen familj och släkt, enligt honom en adlig ätt som efter Cromwells härnadsståg fick överge sitt slott och ta till tiggargstaven. Ua Laoghaire berättar här en liten mytaktig historia om hur en av hans förfäder fick namnet Barnaby, eftersom det hade spåtts för dennes föräldrar att deras barn bara skulle överleva om det fick ett 'förrädarnamn' (ett engelskt namn). När han sålunda placerat sin ättlinje i sitt fosterländska, historiska sammanhang, kan han övergå till sin egen levnadsbana (Ua Laoghaire 1999, 1-6). I andra kapitlet redogör han för sin familjs levnadsförhållanden och skildrar sin tidigaste barndom; här får vi också veta att han för första gången hört folksägner om Séadna från grannflickan Peig Labhráis, och som en garanti för att det var frågan om autentiskt irländskt kulturarv påstår han att varken flickan eller någon annan i hennes familj kunde tala engelska (ibid., 9). Tredje kapitlet (ibid., 11-15) handlar om de sociala förhållandena i bygden; mot slutet av kapitlet (ibid., 13-14) berättar han också hur de återspeglade sig i hans eget liv, när den engelske godsägaren eller dennes fogde besöker sina arrendatorer och frågar lille Peadar, när denne senast ätit kött; Peadar svarar stolt, att han fått en liten bit när det var jul. Nu som vuxen förstår han givetvis att engelsmannen sökt efter ett svepskäl att höja på hyran – hade pojken ätit kött på samma dag hade possessionaten haft det. Författaren nöjer sig inte med att återge en barndomsupplevelse, utan han sätter in den i det sociokulturella sammanhanget, vilket är typiskt för boken.

Fjärde kapitlet (ibid., 16-18) är en färgstark beskrivning av en tvist om nyttjanderätten till vissa land och vräkningen som detta resulterade i – en historia som ägde rum före författarens födelse. Femte kapitlet (ibid., 19-21) handlar om hur han som barn kom att bli både tvåspråkig och läskunnig. Sedan beskriver han

4 Nummer 330, 'The Smith outwits the Devil' i Antti Aarnes och Stith Thompsons klassificering för folksägnar; Ua Laoghaire 1995, xxxvii.

sin skolgång, bland annat besvärigheterna med latininläringen (ibid., 41). Skolan och latinet befriade honom inte från hemsysslorna, ty när han har ledigt från skolan, måste han t ex valla får (ibid., 47). Så småningom blir han präst: han studerar på seminariet i Maynooth (ibid., 64), och i den stora engelsktalande världen blir han medveten om att Irlands nationalspråk håller på att försvinna (ibid., 68). Som präst hör han sedan rykten om en ny, hemlig revolutionsrörelse riktad mot engelsmännen – fenierna (ibid., 79). När fenierna väl kommit in i bilden, handlar boken mest om hur den uppvaknande nationalismen och senare språkrörelsen påverkade författarens liv och hur han själv förhöll sig till dessa rörelser. Även om *Mo Scéal Féin* innehåller mycket sådant material som är typiskt för senare Gaeltacht-självbiografier, såsom insprängda folklöreepisoder eller skildringar av vardagen och arbetet i Gaeltacht, är det en överraskande programmatisk, nationalistisk skrift, vars författare särskilt lägger sig vinn om att förknippa sitt eget liv och sin familjs historia med fosterlandets.

Det är inte så mycket Peadar Ua Laoghaire som den självbiografiska trion från Blasketön (An Blascaod Mór) i grevskapet Kerry (Ciarraí) som allmänt anses ha definierat genren: Peig Sayers (1873-1958), Tomás Ó Criomhthain (1855-1937) och Muiris Ó Súilleabháin (1904-1950).

Peig Sayers' egentliga biografibok är *Peig* (Sayers 1998); det här s a s den definitiva versionen, oförkortad och med dialektfärgad rättskrivning; som skolebok på Irland har man använt en förkortad version med standardnära ortografi under titeln *Peig – tuairisc a thug Peig Sayers ar imeachtaí a beatha féin*. Hon dikterade boken till sin son Micheál Ó Guithín. Det finns även en mindre bastant bok som heter *Machnamh Seanmhná*, 'En gammal kvinnas tankar' (Sayers 1992). Medan *Peig* för det mesta är självbiografisk och kronologisk, består *Machnamh Seanmhná* av mindre sammanhängande kapitel: där finns sålunda både folklöreepisoder som kapitlen *Scéal Thomáisín Rua* (Sayers 1992, 14-25) och *An tSeanbhean a Dhein Éagóir ar a Mac* (ibid., 26-30), men också Peigs egna minnen, som t ex hennes skildring av mötet med en ung man från Mexiko som uppfostrats med iriska som hemspråk (ibid., 117-21) eller av hur hon för första gången hörde nyheter om påskupproret i Dublin 1916 (ibid., 122-30).

Förutom *Peig*, som är Peigs mest kända verk (åtminstone i sin förkortade version) finns det enligt Ní Mhainín och Ó Murchú (Sayers 1998, x) en annan självbiografi, *Beatha Pheig Sayers*, som utkommit år 1970. Några nyupplagor av denna verkar dock inte finnas att tillgå.

Peig redogör för Peigs liv i någorlunda kronologisk ordning ända från hennes tidiga barndom till hennes första barnsäng. Kapitlen därefter liknar mera den sorts material som finns i *Machnamh Seanmhná*. Vi får veta att Peig inte var hemma från Blasketön själv, utan föddes på fastlandet i Vicarstown (Baile Bhiocáire). I fyra års ålder började hon gå till skola, ledsagad av sin något äldre väninna Cáit Jim (Sayers

1998, 3). Som skolbarn fick hon nästan bevittna en sammandrabbning mellan Jordligans irländska aktivister, som försökte förhindra en vräkning, och fogdarna, som skulle verkställa den. En präst lyckades dock medla fram en kompromiss, som avstyrde blodbadet (ibid., 17-18). I övrigt kommer de historiska händelserna berättelsen föga vid: Peig är mera intresserad av den folkliga berättarkonsten och de dikter han hör av folk omkring sig, särskilt fadern. Efter skolan arbetar hon som piga i Dingle (ibid., 49), och när den första värvningen är slut, tar hon snart en ny (ibid., 114). Insprängd mellan kapitlen om dessa två anställningar finns bland annat en berättelse om 'Séamas na bPléasc', en mer eller mindre mytisk trickstergestalt från folkloren i Peigs hemtrakt – en stark och något otillräknelig typ som åtnjuter ett visst renommé i folkminnet på grund av sin respektlösa inställning till överheten och de engelsktalande herrarna (ibid., 103). Efter sina år som piga gifter sig Peig med en man från Blasketön (ibid., 130-31), och de senare kapitlen – ungefär en tredjedel av boken – handlar om hennes liv som gift kvinna och änka.

De på Irland som motsätter sig iriskundervisningen och kulturnationalismen har av gammalt svartmålat Peig och framställt henne som symbol för allt vad konservativt, reaktionärt och bakåtsträvande är i det irländska samhället. Peigs memoarer har också attackerats som tråkig skolläsning bara lämpad för att bestyrka elevernas fördomar om iriskan som ett föräldrat bondspråk (Coughlan 1999, 21). Det är också motiverat att se Peigs inställning till män som servil och ur dagens synvinkel osund. När hennes blivande brudgum och äkta man för första gången besöker hennes föräldrahem för att komma överens med hennes far om giftermålet (flickan själv blir givetvis inte tillfrågad), ackompanjeras han av två vänner, om vilka Peig bara kan säga att alla dessa pojkar 'skulle ha varit för bra män' för henne om hon så 'hade varit en sju gånger bättre kvinna' (Sayers 1998, 130) – och vid det här laget visste hon inte ens vilken av dessa ynglingar som var den egentlige friaren! Både denna scen och den fromma resignation som boken i allmänhet präglas av har fått en del sakkunniga att ifrågasätta autenticiteten i hennes författarskap. När allt kommer omkring var det ju hennes son som nedtecknade det muntligt berättade materialet till boken (Coughlan 1999, 22), och manuskriptet redigerades även av Máire Ní Chinnéide (ibid.), som var språkaktivist från Dublin och medlem i en för sin extrema nationalism välkänd underavdelning (Mag Aonghusa 1993, 132) av språkaktivisternas ledande organisation, Gaeliska ligan (*Gaelic League/Conradh na Gaeilge*). Det är legitimt att fråga, hur ärligt Peig vågade tala om sina känslor för sonen, och likaså kan man undra, i vilken mån Máire Ní Chinnéide anpassat manuskriptet till den rådande smaken bland språkaktivister i huvudstaden eller till deras förutfattade meningar om den irisktalande allmogen.

Efter Peig är den mest kända Gaeltachtsjälvbiografien från Blasketön säkerligen *An tOileánach* (Ó Criomhthain 1980) – titeln betyder 'Öbon', men det lär finnas en svensk översättning (via engelskan förstås) som heter 'Karg kust'; till tyska

översattes boken av ingen mindre än Heinrich Böll och hans fru Annemarie Cech under titeln *Die Boote fahren nicht mehr aus*. Tomás var i motsats till Peig född och fostrad på Blasketön, och han livnärde sig främst på fiske. Han visade dock redan tidigt vissa intellektuella anlag, ty trots att skolan på ön ofta var stängd och hur som helst bara undervisade på engelska besökte han den så flitigt att han fick tillnamnet *scoláire* – skolmannen, den lärde, den läskunnige, skoleleven – av sina grannar (Ó Conaill 1998, 14). Självbiografin blev inte hans enda litterära gärning: han skrev också en dagbok om vardagslivet på ön (Ó Criomhthain 1997a) och artiklar eller kåserier till iriskspråkiga tidskrifter, nu utgivna i bokform (Ó Criomhthain 1997b). Pádraig Ó Fionnachta gav ut några efterlämnade manuskript av Tomás' son Seán och Tomás själv i bokform (Ó Criomhthain & Ó Criomhthain 1997), och sonen gav ut en bok om hur Blasketön evakuerades och resterna av befolkningen fick bosätta sig på fastlandet (Ó Criomhthain 1991).

Självbiografin *An tOileánach* har utgetts i flera versioner. Den förste redaktören var An Seabhac ('Höken'), egentligen Pádraig Ó Siochfhradha (eller Ó Siochrú), mest känd som författare till romanen *Jimín* (Ó Siochfhradha 1996), en populär och rolig barnbok vars huvudperson i det närmaste påminner om Emil i Lönneberga. Den version av *An tOileánach* (dvs. Ó Criomhthain 1980) som numera läses har redigerats av Pádraig Ua Maoileoin, en släkting till Tomás och själv en iriskspråkig författare av ingen ringa betydelse (Ó Coileáin 1998, 27).

Tomás inspirerades till sitt författarskap av de filologer som besökte ön för att lära sig iriska, som Carl Marstrander från Norge (Ó Fiannachta 1998, 82-83) och Brian Ó Ceallaigh. Den sistnämnde gav Tomás böcker av Pierre Loti och Maksim Gor'kij i engelsk översättning, och det var denna läsning som övertygade Tomás om att hans liv på ön skulle duga till litterärt material (ibid., 86).

Det finns betydande skillnader mellan An Seabhacs och Pádraig Ua Maoileoins redaktioner av boken. Som Peig är även *An tOileánach* till väsentlig del en uppväxtberättelse, och pubertetisk sexualitet skymtar ibland fram hos Tomás, åtminstone i beskrivningen av den nyfikenhet unga flickors kroppar väckte hos honom när han väl kommit till den relevanta åldern: han kan till exempel retas med flickor för att 'se sådana kroppsdelar som solen aldrig tidigare kastat sitt sken på' (*cuid dá gcorp le feiscint nár shaighneáil an ghrian riamh roimhe seo air go dtí an uair seo*; Ó Criomhthain 1980, 99). Det här censurerades av An Seabhac (Kiberd 1996, 490); men dessutom lade han sig vinn om att avlägsna även subtilare antydningar. Sålunda strök han en sång som Tomás sade sig ha sjungit på sitt bröllop: sången handlade nämligen om en flicka som övergivits av sin brudgum, vilket An Seabhac – själv hemma från det irisktalande området i Kerry och insatt i den muntliga sång- och diktraditionen – förstod som en vink om att Tomás måhända utnyttjat, gjort med barn och lämnat i sticket någon annan flicka innan han förlovat sig med sin senare hustru (Ó Coileáin 1998, 35).

Den tredje av Blasketbiografierna som definierat genren är *Fiche Blian ag Fás* ('Tjugo år av uppväxt') av Muiris Ó Súilleabháin (Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris 1998). Han blev inte tillnärmelsevis lika gammal som Peig och Tomás, ty han föddes år 1904 och dog år 1950. Som boktiteln ger vid handen, handlar hans bok uteslutande om barndom och uppväxt. Även om han inte blev gammal, hann även han med en hel del kåserier på iriska. Kåserierna handlade mest om livet i An Cheathrú Rua, där han bosatte sig som vuxen: denna irisktalande by ligger i Connemara (Conamara) i grevskapet Galway (Gaillimh), långt borta från Blasketön och Kerry, och i ett helt annat dialektområde. Dessa skrifter finns nu i bokform (Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris 2000). Hans syster Eibhlín Ní Shúilleabháin (1900-1949), som senare emigrerade till Förenta Staterna, förde dessutom i början av 1920-talet en dagbok om vardagslivet på Blasketön (Ní Shúilleabháin).

I strikt mening talade Muiris Ó Súilleabháin inte iriska som modersmål. Hans mor dog när han var sex månader gammal, och eftersom hans far inte kunde ta hand om honom, överlämnades han åt en 'främmande kvinna' (*bean iasachta*) i Dingle (Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris 1998, 11). Den främmande kvinnan talade endast engelska, och Muiris lärde sig inte ett enda ord iriska när han återvände hem till sin far (Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris 1998, 15). Då var han redan i sjuårsåldern (Ní Laoithe-Uí Bheaglaioich 2000, 12). Som Tomás Ó Criomhthain, inspirerades även Muiris till litterärt arbete av en besökande språkforskare, den unge engelsmannen George Thomson (senare känd under namnet Seoirse Mac Thomáis), som dessutom övertalade Muiris att bli polisman (ibid., 13).

Boken gavs ut för första gången år 1933 (Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris 1998, 5). Den har alltså skrivits av en ung man som ännu tydligt minns sin barndom, och den är fullspäckad med starka adjektiv som uttrycker barnets och den unga människans fascination inför världen som i sin helhet känns ny och spännande (Ó Dúshláine 2000, 42-43). Som sig bör för ett barn är Muiris' värld ännu mindre påverkad av politiken och historiens stora händelser än Peigs och Tomás', men boken innehåller vissa antydningar av att t ex den språkliga kulturnationalismen redan tidigt börjat påverka tankevärlden på Blasketön. När Tomás' far kritiserar för att han tagit med sig pojken till ön där han glömmer bort engelskan och sålunda aldrig kommer att få ett jobb, svarar fadern, halvt på lek men ändå, att man aldrig vet åt vilket håll landet ska vända sig och att iriskan kanske ändå ska bli nyttig (Ó Súilleabháin, Muiris 1998, 22).

Förutom de tre grundläggande självbiografierna och de böcker som skrivits (eller dikterats) av författarna till dessa eller deras släktingar har vi åtminstone en självbiografi till från Blasketöarna, *An tOileán a Tréigeadh* av Seán Sheáin Í Chearnaigh (Ó Cearnaigh). Författaren är född 1912 och hör en betydligt yngre generation till än någon av de tre klassikerna. Hans bok följer dock tydligen i deras fotspår: det är en självbiografi som tar vara på detaljer i öbornas liv och dialekt. I Peigs och Tomás' böcker var stämningen redan melankolisk, inte minst därför att

berättarna var rätt gamla människor, men i *An tOileán a Tréigeadh* vet författaren redan att Blasketön skulle evakueras och resterna av öbornas sekelgamla kultur utplånas. Detta syns redan i boktiteln, som betyder 'Ön som övergavs'. Blasketöns glansdagar är förbi, vilket återspeglas också i att ett av kapitlen handlar om Robin Flowers begravning (Ó Cearnaigh 1974, 168-71). Robin Flower, på ön känd som 'Bláithín' ('liten blomma'), var åter en av de utländska språkforskare som besökte Blasketön för att lära sig iriska där. I allmänhet skiljer sig boken inte mycket från det koncept som introducerats i de tre klassikerna: självbiografiskt material alternerar med folksägnar, memorat hörda från andra och diktverser.

Självbiografierna från Blasketön har länge spelat en central roll i iriskundervisningen, och de torde också ha influerat uppfattningarna om språkriktighet. I praktiken är sydliga (Munster-) dialektdrag (främst syntetiska verbändelser, t ex *-ad* i *caithfead* 'jag måste' i stället för det analytiska standardspråkliga *caithfidh mé*) mera accepterade i vad som borde vara standardspråkets domän, därför att alla är familjära med dem från Peig. Det finns dock även andra Gaeltachtsjälvbiografier från Munster, som förtjänar åtminstone ett kort omnämnande: *An Gleann agus a Raibh ann* ('Dalen och allt som där fanns') av Séamas Ó Maolchathaigh (Ó Maolchathaigh 1974), vars berättare föddes i det numera helt angliserade grevskapet Tipperary (Tiobraid Árann). Ó Maolchathaighs dialekt ligger närmast den som ännu talas i Ring of Waterford (Gaeltacht na Rinne) nära Dungarvan (Dún Garbhán) i grevskapet Waterford (Port Láirge). En annan Gaeltacht-självbiografi på Tipperaryiriska är *An Sléibhteánach* av Séamas Ó Caoimh (Ó Caoimh 1989). Författaren föddes år 1889 och dog 1979 (ibid., ix). Boken börjar med hans födelse och slutar med Irlands frihetskrig, där han deltog som bombmakare efter att ha tillbringat en tid på ett kloster i England; därifrån tvingades han dock fly när det första världskriget gjorde värnplikten aktuell (ibid., 179-208).

Tomás Ó Cinnéide var hemma från Kerry (Ciarraí), och hans dialekt liknar sålunda den som talades av de tre klassikerna. Hans bok *Ar Seachrán*, 'På villövägar' (Ó Cinnéide 1996), handlar redan mest om hans Amerikatid, och man kan fråga sig, om det ännu är en 'typisk' Gaeltachtsjälvbiografi; snarare hör den ihop med den iriskspråkiga utvandrar- och emigrantlitteraturen, vars viktigaste företrädare var Dónall Mac Amhlaigh. Ó Cinnéide hann redan bevittna hippies' intåg i San Francisco: han noterar deras milda manér och programmatiska naivitet, som gör dem sympatiska i hans ögon – åtminstone mera sympatiska än de vanliga alkoholiserade luffarna – men påpekar också att deras närvaro skrämde bort gamla människor från Haight-Ashburyområdet (ibid., 126-127).

Conchúr Ó Siocháins *Seanchas Chléire* (Ó Siocháin 1977) är en mycket klassisk och traditionell Gaeltachtsjälvbiografi och påminner mycket om den klassiska trion. Författaren, född 1866 och framliden 1941, är något yngre än Tomás Ó Criomhthain men äldre än Peig, och innehållet är den typiska kombinationen av

självbiografiskt material och folklöre, men beskrivningarna av havet och fiskarlivet är särskilt framträdande och bidrar till bokens litterära och historiska värde.

En annan traditionell Gaeltachtsjälvbiografi från grevskapet Cork är Dónall Bán Ó Céileachairs *Scéal mo Bheatha* (Ó Céileachair 2008). Dónall Bán var hemma från Coolea-Muskerrytrakten (Cúil Aodha/Múscraí), alltså från samma trakt som Peadar Ua Laoghaire, och han levde 1871-1950 – han var alltså ungefär jämnårig med Peig Sayers.

Viktiga självbiografier har givetvis skrivits också utanför Munster. Den främsta är Mici Mac Gabhanns *Rotha Mór an tSaoil*, 'Livets stora hjul' (Mac Gabhann 1997). Titeln är en folklig metafor för livets och lyckans skiftande skeden. Boken är dock såtillvida otypisk att den mest handlar om Amerika, där författaren (född 1865, död 1948) bland annat deltog i guldruschen till Klondyke på 1890-talet. Vad hans barndom angår, förefaller den ha varit mindre uppbygglig än man i allmänhet förväntar sig i en Gaeltachtsjälvbiografi: fadern t ex brände olagligt brännvin och åkte även fast för det. Både en febersjukdom som drabbar hela familjen (ibid., 18-20), brännvinsbrännandet (ibid., 20-23), en oskyldig gammal man som dödas av en brittisk kustvakt (ibid., 23-24) och faderns fängelsestraff (ibid., 25-26) tillägnas särskilda kapitel. Som sig bör i det irisktalande Donegal arbetar Mici först hos protestantiska jordbrukare (ibid., 31-58), sedan i Skottland (ibid., 59-79) och därefter i Amerika. I Montana sympatiserar han med indianerna, medveten om att de på ett orättvist sätt drivits bort från sin hembygd, precis som irländarna på sin tid (ibid., 105), men några djupare slutsatser drar han inte därav, utan fortsätter att leva som en del av det vita samhället. I Alaska märker han att guldfebern gör människorna själviska och grymma, och när han väl fått ihop tillräckligt för att bygga sig ett hus därhemma, lämnar han guldlandet, som han fått nog av (ibid., 200). *Rotha Mór an tSaoil* skiljer sig från den klassiska trion i att den inte innehåller folklöreepisoder, utan är en genuin, kronologiskt upplagd självbiografi.

Raka motsatsen till *Rotha Mór an tSaoil* är den av Eoghan Ó Dónaill redigerade *Scéal Hiúdaí Seáinín* (Ó Dónaill 1997). Proinsias Ó Conluain konstaterar (1990, 175-176), att *Scéal* påminner mera om en folkloresamling än en självbiografi. Medan detta kunde sägas om många andra böcker i denna genre, är det sant att *Scéal* är i detta hänseende en av de sämst redigerade Gaeltachtbiografierna: folklörematerialet har inte inarbetats i boken på ett naturligt sätt, och man är inte alltid medveten om man egentligen läser om Hiúdaí Sheáiníns liv eller om någon mytisk hjältes äventyr. Läsupplevelsen tenderar sålunda något åt det surrealistiska hållet. I samma sammanhang nämner Ó Conluain även *Dirbheathaisnéis Néill Mhic Ghiolla Bhríde*, redigerad av Liam Ó Connacháin, och *Róise Rua* av Pádraig Ua Cnáimhsi som viktiga självbiografier från Donegal, men eftersom några nya upplagor inte fanns att köpa, kunde dessa böcker inte granskas för den föreliggande

artikeln. Ó Conluain har åtminstone särskilt prisat *Dírbheathaisnéis Néill Mhic Ghiolla Bhríde* som ett journalistiskt välredigerat verk (1990, 175).

När det gäller självbiografisk prosa från Donegal bör vi även nämna Séamus Ó Griannas *Nuair a Bhí mé Óg* (Ó Grianna 1986), 'När jag var ung' (det finns en fortsättning, *Saol Corrach* – 'Ett rastlöst liv' – men tyvärr föreligger den inte i nyupplaga); samt Fionn Mac Cumhaills *Gura Slán le m'Óige*, 'Avsked från ungdomsåren' (Mac Cumhaill 1974). Séamus Ó Grianna (1989-1969) är mest känd som produktiv författare till sentimentala romaner och noveller om livet i Donegal (se här till Ó Gallchóir 1990), Fionn Mac Cumhaill (egentligen Mánuis Mac Comhaill) skrev några böcker antagligen avsedda till lätt läsning, t ex barnböcker och äventyr. För det mesta kvävdes dessa dock ihjäl både av det sockersöta och av det överdrivet fromma och religiösa i dem (jfr Ó Laoire 1990). *Nuair a Bhí mé Óg* utmärker sig dock med den ironi och satir som ofta bubblade under ytan även i hans sentimentalaste verk, och även Mac Cumhaill kan raljera över en ung flicka som 'översätter' de nya elevernas namn åt läraren: Sábha Eoin Shéarlais blir sålunda 'Suffy Duffy' och Úna Mháire Bige 'Unity Gallagher' (Mac Cumhaill 1974, 8). Att enspråkiga irisktalande barn under brittiska väldet tvingades att gå i skola på engelska och uppta översatta namn har varit ett populärt motiv i iriskspråkig litteratur, som både inspirerat till bitter nationalism och satir. Till sin absurda ytterlighet drivs detta i Myles na gCopaleens vanvettigt roliga parodi på Gaeltachtsjälvbiografierna, *An Béal Bocht* (Ó Nualláin 1999) – det finns en svensk översättning, *Klagomunnen*. I denna roman kallar den stränge läraren alla elever, både pojkar och flickor, vid samma engelska namn: James O'Donnell, och har gjort det också med deras föräldrars generation (ibid., 25-27).

I Connacht, det tredje och numerärt starkaste dialektområdet, har självbiografin spelat en mindre framträdande roll: i stället har regionen producerat riktiga, konstnärliga författare, som prosaisten Máirtín Ó Cadhain, poeten Máirtín Ó Direáin eller journalisten Breandán Ó hEithir. Den viktigaste självbiografin från Connacht är antagligen Colm Ó Gaoras *Mise*, 'Jag' (Ó Gaora 2008). Ó Gaora, född i Ros Muc i Connemara, grevskapet Galway, levde 1887-1954 och var redan aktiv både i språkrörelsen och i kampen för en självständig republik. Hans bok innehåller sålunda betydligt mindre folklorematerial än trions: han kände t ex Patrick Pearse och många andra av höjdarna inom den nationalistiska rörelsen personligt och kunde bedöma dem som människor och karaktärer, inte bara som martyrer och hjältar (ibid., 110-112).

En mera traditionell självbiografi är Micheál Mag Ruaidhrís *Le Linn m'Óige*, 'På min ungdomstid' (Mag Ruaidhrí 2001). Mag Ruaidhrí levde under åren 1860-1936 och var sålunda ungefär jämngammal med Tomás Ó Criomhthain, men han var involverad i Irlands frihetskamp; även han kände Pearse personligt. Han var hemma från norra Mayo (Maigh Eo), vars dialekt är ett intressant mellanting mellan Connemara- och Ulsterdialekten, vilket givetvis bidrar till bokens värde som rent

lingvistiskt källmaterial. Trots att dialekten i norra Mayo alltså är levande, finns det få skönlitterära verk på den; för det mesta är den bara dokumenterad i folkloresamlingar.

Gaeltachtsjälvbiografin har alltså varit en viktig och inflytelserik genre inom den iriskspråkiga litteraturen – annars skulle väl inte Myles na gCopaleen ha bemödat sig om att skriva en hel roman på iriska enkom för att göra sig lustig över dessa biografier. Genren förefaller även vara fortfarande livskraftig, ty nya självbiografiska böcker av författare som växt upp i Gaeltachtregionerna utges alltså. En lättläst och ibland spännande självbiografi är Páid Ó Súilleabháins *Ag Coimeád na Síochána* (Ó Súilleabháin, Páid 1995): Páid, som tidigare Muiris Ó Súilleabháin, blev polisman, och boken handlar mest om hans arbetsrelaterade äventyr. Från de senaste tjugo åren har vi Maidhc Dainín Ó Sés (född 1942) *A Thig ná Tit orm* (Ó Sé 1995) och *Mura mBuafam-Suathfam* (Ó Sé 2003) från Kerry, Cáit Ní Mhainnín *Cuimhní Cinn Cháit Ní Mhainnín* (Ní Mhainnín 2000) från Ros Muc i Connemara, Máire Phatch Mhóir Uí Churraoin *A Scéal Féin* (Uí Churraoin 1997) från Galway, eller den första bok som författaren till denna artikel någonsin läst på iriska, Ger Ó Ciobháins *An Giorria san Aer* (Ó Ciobháin 1992) – denna bok är på Kerryiriska.

Det är sant att författarskapet och autenticiteten i en del av dessa verk kan ifrågasättas och att gränserna mellan folkloren och det upplevda, mellan folkloresamling och självbiografi tenderar att suddas ut i Gaeltachtsjälvbiografierna. På senare år har också andra gränsdragningsproblem uppkommit: borde vi till exempel avgränsa Dónall Mac Amhlaighs viktiga och uppskattade självbiografiska böcker, främst *Dialann Deoraí*, 'En utvandrares dagbok' (Mac Amhlaigh 1970) utanför Gaeltachtsjälvbiografierna, därför att han inte skriver om någon Gaeltachtbarndom, utan endast om sina upplevelser som irländsk invandrare i Storbritannien? Och borde vi då göra detsamma med Maidhc Dainín Ó Sés självbiografiska böcker? Hur som helst innehåller dock Gaeltachtsjälvbiografierna en massa källmaterial om Irlands förgångna från slutet på 1800-talet framåt. Det vore synnerligen märkligt, om de irländska historikerna förblev okunniga i sitt lands språk och sålunda inkapabla att utnyttja detta material.

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The Apple in Early Irish Narrative Tradition: A Thoroughly Christian Symbol?

Caroline McGrath

Echtrae Chonnlaí is regarded as being one of the earliest extant tales in Irish, dating from the eighth or ninth century A.D. (McCone 2000, 29). It describes a meeting which takes place at the royal seat of Uisneach, between Connlae, mortal son of Conn Cétchathach and a supernatural woman who describes herself as coming from *tír inna mbéo* 'the land of the living ones'. Before departing for the Otherworld, she gives him an apple which miraculously stays whole no matter how much he eats. On the woman's departure, Connlae is filled with longing for her. When she returns, he leaves his people in order to join the woman in the supernatural realm.

The tensions which existed between the indigenous pagan tradition and the nascent Christian Church in Ireland are evident in this tale. We are faced with 'the opposition of two philosophies, the first being the native, the druidic, the doomed... The other embodies a prophecy of the coming of Christianity' (Carney 1969, 165). The woman's arrival is a clear portent of the overthrow of the indigenous pagan tradition. Connlae's decision to leave behind all that he knows and loves symbolises the retreat of this culture in the face of the might of the new religion. Furthermore, there is a complex interplay between pre-existing motifs and Christian teachings in this tale. It is clear that the otherworld country described by the strange woman is an amalgam of the pre-Christian concept of the *síd* and a biblically-inspired paradise (Mac Cana 1976, 95). The apple which she throws to him has been interpreted by McCone (1990) as 'the converse of the fruit given by Eve to Adam, namely an apple from the tree of life mentioned in Genesis 3:22-4' (ibid., 80).¹ While this is undeniably true on one level, I will attempt to shed further light on the combination of indigenous and foreign concepts which are responsible for the depiction of the apple in Irish narrative tradition.

Carey (1995) paralleled the meeting of Connlae and the *síd*-woman with that of Rhiannon and the hero in the Welsh tale *Pwyll Pendueic Dyuet*.² McCone rejected this comparison on the grounds that there is 'no mention of marriage or mating

1 The 'forbidden fruit' of Genesis is frequently depicted as an apple, though the Hebrew translation of the original Aramaic word is the ambiguous *tappuach*, or *fructus* 'fruit' in Latin. Having been deceived by a snake, Eve offers this fruit to Adam, leading to their loss of immortality and their expulsion from Paradise.

2 He stated that there could be 'little doubt that we have here two realizations of a single story pattern: a prince, on the summit of a hill associated with sovereignty, sees a mysterious woman wearing remarkable clothing. He asks her whence she has come, and in the course of

in any of the woman's or Connlae's utterances' (2000, 55). However, there is reason to believe that the gift of the apple is itself an erotic act. Before the woman leaves for the first time, she gifts Connlae with an apple thus: *do:corastar ubull do Chonnlu* (ibid., 122, § 7) 'she threw the apple to Connlae'.

The formula *do-cuirethar* + *do* also appears in *Immram Brain* (Mac Mathúna 1985)³, where the Otherworld woman throws a ball of wool to Bran mac Febail, which entwines his hands and binds him to the *síd*:

Do-cuirethar in ben certli do Braun tara gnúis cach ndíriuch. Fo-ceird Bran a láim forin certli. Lil in certle dia dernainn. Boi in sná(i)the inna certle i lláim inna mná. Con-sreng in curach dochum poirt (ibid., 44, § 62, ll. 270-4).

The woman throws a ball of thread to Bran, directly over his face. Bran puts his hand on the ball. The ball clung to his palm. The thread of the ball was in the woman's hand. She pulled the coracle towards the harbour.

In both of these examples, the act of throwing an object results in a mortal being drawn to the *síd* in different ways. As a result of eating the apple, Connlae immediately falls in love with the woman: *Gabais éolchaire iarom Connle immune deilb inna mná ad:condaire* (McCone 2000, 122, § 8) 'Longing then seized Connlae for the shape of the woman that he had seen.' Consequently, Connlae is struck dumb for the love of her (ibid., § 10). Thereafter, the woman asks him to join her in her land of the living (*tír inna mbéo*). This causes him to vacillate between her and his own people, whom he loves (ibid., 123, § 13). In the end, the intoxicating power of his love for the woman is too strong to resist, and he leaves with her to become immortal (ibid., § 15). It is clear that the gift of the apple is crucial to Connlae's transformation.

In Graeco-Roman literature, the apple was used as a metaphor for beauty and love. Sappho likened a young bride to an 'sweet apple' (*gluku'malon*) (Powell 2007, 27). The word *μήλον* (*mēlon*) was a widely-used metaphor for courtship and marriage rites in Greek art and poetry (Winkler 1996, 104). The gift of a fruit (particularly an apple) was a symbol of courtship in many cultures, such as Greek, Roman and Byzantine (Littlewood 1967; 1993). It symbolised fertility, by means of the distribution of seed through the sharing of the fruit. In Greek poetry and

the conversation which ensues she says that she loves him and has come seeking him as her mate' (Carey 1995, 43).

3 The writing of these two tales appear to be practically contemporaneous – indeed Alfred Nutt suggested that they were the work of the same author (Meyer and Nutt 1895, 148-49). McCone (2000, 47) concluded that *Echtrae Chonnlae* may have been composed slightly before *Immram Brain* and Carey (1995, 85) agreed that the former impacted on the writing of the latter.

visual art, the gift of the apple represented ‘the favorite offering of lover to beloved’ (Carson 1988, 88). The motif of the apple as a projectile appeared as a wooing ritual in classical tradition (Lawson 1910, 558). The phrase *μηλο-βολέω* ‘to pelt with apples’ is a metaphor which Aristophanes defined as ‘to become enamoured or sexually excited’ (Humphreys 2004, 180, l. 997). In the story *Daphnis and Chloe* (Turner 1956, 93) by Longus, the archetypal lover throws an apple to his beloved, cementing their union.

The ‘apple of discord’ of Greek tradition also appears to be an erotic symbol. Apollodorus described the scene of Peleus and Thetis’ wedding, where jealous Eris throws an apple (*mêlon*) amongst the revellers (Frazer 1921, 3:2). The goddesses Hera, Aphrodite and Athene squabble over the apple and are forced to submit to the judgement of Paris, who awards the prize to Aphrodite, who promises him Helen as a bribe. The apple becomes a token of love, though in this case offered not to the object of the hero’s affection, but to the mediator. The tale of Atalanta also features the motif of the dropping of an apple to gain a lover’s affections. Under pain of death, her suitor Milanion is compelled to race her and throws down three golden apples (*erripten*) (ibid., 3.9.2). She slows to pick them up, causing Milanion to overtake her and win the race, and consequently her hand in marriage.

The gift of an apple as a token of love is also apparent in Norse tradition. In the thirteenth-century *Skirnismál* (Dronke 1997), the goddess Freyr sends eleven golden apples (*epli*) to Gerðr as an offer of marriage (ibid., 380, § 19). The late thirteenth-century Icelandic epic *Völsunga saga* (Grimstad 2000) tells of King Rerir and his wife who pray to the gods for a child. Hearing their prayers for a child, the gods Frigg and Óðin send the valkyrie Ljod to them with the gift of an apple: *Hún tók við eplinu... Hún lét falla eplið í kné konunginum* (ibid, 78) ‘She took the apple... She let the apple fall into the lap of the king.’ The similarity between this incident and examples mentioned above suggests the existence a ritual performed to encourage fertility. The lateness of these texts suggests that the motif may have been influenced by Graeco-Roman tales in the aftermath of the arrival of Christianity to Northern Europe. However, the discovery of buckets of apples left as a votive offering on the Oseberg Viking ship (c. 850 A.D.) (Ellis Davidson 1988, 117) suggests that they were considered to be a divine food in Scandinavian tradition.

In Irish tradition, there are suggestions of the apple displaying such an erotic function. In the 11th century tale *Aisling Meic Con Glinne* (Jackson 1990), Lígach, daughter of Máel Dúin sends gifts to show her love for Cathal Mac Finguine: *Do-bertis iarum ettne 7 ubla 7 il-blassa ... for a sheirc 7 immaine* (ibid., 2, § 5, ll. 35-7) ‘Then kernels and apples and many sweets used to be brought ... for his love and affection.’ However, these apples are used for a malevolent purpose. They are mischievously filled with *tuathi 7 gentlecht* (ibid., § 6, l. 48) ‘charms and heathen

spells'. This is an example of the motif of the gift of the apple being used to convey a Christian message: to illustrate the perils of gluttony. Nevertheless, the theme of the gift of the apple to inspire love is still in evidence. Whether or not this motif is the product of classical influence is of course a vexed question. However, the appearance of such a complex and richly rendered motif in this early tale suggests that the erotic nature of the apple might have originally been an indigenous concept in pre-Christian Ireland.

The apple which Connlae receives in *Echtrae Chonnlae* (McCone 2000) has the power to regenerate itself and nourish him for a whole month:

Boí Connle iar sin co cenn mis cen dig cen biad, nabu fiu leis nach tóare do thomailt acht a ubull. Na nni do:meled, nícon:dígbad ní dend ubull acht ba hóg-som beos (ibid., 122, § 8)

Thereafter Connlae was without drink (and) without food until the end of a month, to him no sustenance was worth consuming save his apple. Nothing that he ate took anything away from the apple but it remained whole.

This is a common motif in many cultures, where supernatural food does not diminish no matter how much is eaten (Thompson 1955, 35). The regenerative properties of the supernatural apple are reminiscent of the cauldron in tales such as *Fled Dúin na nGéd* (Lehmann 1964), where the *caire ainiscen* 'cauldron of return' leaves nobody unsatisfied (ibid., 16, ll. 501-3). This regenerative aspect is also apparent in *Immram Brain* (Mac Mathúna 1985),⁴ which features a classic example of an otherworldly paradise in which the inhabitants remain forever young: *i mbruig mbrecht óas ma(i)sse mét, ní-frescat aithbe ná éc* (ibid., 37, § 23, 99-100) 'in the varicoloured land of greatly surpassing beauty, they expect neither age nor death.'

In order to entice Bran to the Otherworld island, a *síd* woman gives him *cróeb n-aircit fua bláth* (Mac Mathúna 1985, 33, § 2, ll. 9-10) 'a silver branch in white bloom'. This branch is described as being: *cróeb dind abaill a hEmain* (ibid., § 3, l. 17) 'a branch from the apple-tree of Emain'. Emain Macha was occasionally known by the epithet Emain Ablach (Toner 1988, 32-5, esp. 33).

In the tenth century Irish tale *Immram Curaig Maíle Dúin* (van Hamel 1941), the eponymous hero comes across a branch on which apples magically sprout. The apples sustain him and his companions for forty days and nights (ibid., 32, § 7, ll. 215-6). There is a similar episode in the later tale *Echtra Thaidg mheic Chéin*

4 The Christian nature of this tale has been argued by Carney (1955), whereas Oskamp (1970) suggested that while the author had a knowledge of Christian literature, and 'made use of the literary formulas of his own time, based upon classical and Christian literature ... his material is not necessarily Christian in origin' (ibid., 40-41).

(O'Grady 1892), where the hero journeys to the *síd*-island of Fresen to rescue his abducted kin. After a stormy crossing, he and his company are overcome with the fragrance from an orchard of apple-trees (ibid., 346). The mere scent of these apples is enough to sustain the men: *ba lór do bhiud ocus do shásad dóib bolad craeb cumra corcarghlan na críche sin* (ibid.) 'the scent of the sweet red branch of that land was sufficient food for them.' In this tale, the apple has nourishing and replenishing characteristics. Tadg encounters an Otherworld youth who offers him a magical apple:

no chaithed tres de ocus ní fa lugaide é gach a caithed. ocus ba hé sin biad no imfhuilnged iat a ndís tré bithu (ibid., 350)

he would eat a third of it and it would not be less and for all he ate. And that was the food that supported the pair of them.

In addition to nourishing Tadg, eating the supernatural apple causes him to remain young: *ocus ní théiged aes ná urchra air ná orrosom iarna chaitium* (ibid., 350) 'And age nor decay did not come on him or them after eating it.' It transpires that the youth who presents Tadg with the apple is Connlae, who has lived there since he departed from his earthly kingdom in Ireland. This segment is clearly based on Connlae's encounter with the woman in *Echtrae Chonnlae* (McCone 2000, 80). It is apparent, therefore, that the regenerating apple is the result of a combination of a Christian theme with an indigenous motif.

A similar motif occurs in Babylonian mythology, where Adapa refuses to partake of the food of heaven and thus remains mortal (Gaster 1969, 29). Similarly in the Ugaritic 'Poem of Baal', the god of fertility is enticed to eat the food of his rival Mot, god of death and sterility, and is subsequently held captive by him (ibid., 30). In the Greek myth of Persephone, she is tricked by Hades into eating the seeds of a pomegranate. As a result of this, she is forced to be his prisoner in the Underworld for half of each year (Melvill 1986, 115, v.535). This is an example of 'the widespread belief that the living may visit the underworld and return provided that they abstain from the food of the dead' (Allen et al. 1936, 169). This abstinence is necessitated by the fact that, by eating the food of the dead, a bond is formed between humans and immortals (ibid.). This is mirrored in *Echtrae Chonnlae*, where the hero becomes inextricably bound to the *síd*-woman after eating the apple.

Supernatural food is also depicted as possessing regenerative powers in many pre-Christian traditions. One example appears in the Gilgamesh Epic (George 2003) which is believed by some scholars to be one of the sources of certain episodes in Genesis (Sandars 1972, 18). Gilgamesh is a king who fears death so

much that he embarks upon a quest for immortality. While on this journey, he comes across a garden whose entrance is guarded by scorpion-men (ibid. 71, IX.42). This garden contains the trees of the gods, from which hang wondrous fruit (ibid., 75, IX.172-4). Later, Gilgamesh finds a divine plant at the bottom of the ocean which Utnapishtim promises will return to him his youth (ibid., 98, XI.282). The quest for fruits of immortality is also seen in the Greek tradition, where the apples (μήλα) of the Hesperides are sought by Heracles. They are guarded by a snake named Ládōn (Seaton 1916, 389) and have the power to render their owner immortal.

The motif of the apple which acts as a supernatural food of healing and rejuvenation appears in Norse tradition. The ninth-century poem *Haustlong* (North 1997) by Thjóðólfr of Hvin recounts Iðunn's rejuvenating medicine (*Pá er ellilyf ása ... kunni*) (ibid., § 8) which is brought to the land of the gods to save them from their debility. Although this text does not mention apples, later accounts identify them as being the medicine in question. In the thirteenth-century *Skáldskaparmál* (Young 1964), Iðunn possesses magical apples which 'the gods love to eat, when they grow old, to become young again' (ibid., 54). Subsequently, the giant Thiazi bears Iðunn away with her apples (ibid., 98), causing the divine Aesir to become aged and withered. Similarly, in *Skírnismál* (Dronke 1997), Skírnir offers Gerðr *epli elli lyfs... algullin* (ibid., 380, § 19) 'apples for age-healing ... all of gold'.

McCone regarded Connlae's apple as 'biblical through and through by virtue of constituting a deliberate inversion of the narrative of the fall in Genesis' (1990, 82). This fruit (*fructus*) appears to be a direct progenitor of the apple of *Echtrae Chonnlae*. However, the apple that Connlae consumes has the opposite effect to that of the fruit (*fructus*) of Genesis. As a result of eating the apple, Connlae gains immortality and joins the woman in her everlasting *tír inna mbéo* (McCone 2000, 123, § 15). Conversely, as a result of eating the 'forbidden fruit', Adam loses his immortality (Gen. 3:19) and is driven from the paradisiacal Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:23). On one level, it could be argued that this episode in *Echtrae Chonnlae* is a simple reversal of the Biblical theme. It is clearly modelled on the passage in Genesis for the purpose of delivering a Christian message about the inevitability of the destruction of the pagan tradition. However, it appears that this is not merely a simple inversion of the Genesis motif. As I have argued in the context of Irish and other traditions, the apple in this context appears to be an example of the paradigm of supernatural food. As a result of eating this food, a mortal is sustained and often made immortal. Indeed, Connlae abandons his earthly family for the sake of the *síd*-woman (McCone 2000, 123, § 13). Furthermore, the gift of the fruit is charged with meaning in many cultures, and whether its appearance in this story is due to a theme common to many traditions, or can be attributed to later influence due to the spread of Christianity – its erotic symbolism is clear. The apple therefore represents a mediation between the indigenous pre-Christian

tradition and the teachings of Christianity. The pre-Christian concept of the apple as an erotic symbol is utilised for a didactic purpose – to demonstrate the triumph of Christianity by mirroring the forbidden fruit of Genesis. In *Echtrae Chonnlaí* the apple is no longer solely a demonstration of the concerns of an agrarian society which were focused on fertility (both human and natural) (Mac Neill 1962, 424). It is now a redemptive symbol, leading Connlae (and by extension Ireland) away from the earthly life to eternal life.

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Texts and Transmissions of the *Scúap Chrábaid*: An Old-Irish Litany in its Manuscript Context

Tomás O'Sullivan

The *Scúap Chrábaid*, or 'Broom of Devotion', is a name applied to an Old-Irish litany, traditionally ascribed to Colcu Ua Duinechda (died c. 795), a learned scholar of Clonmacnoise (Kenney 1929, no. 580).¹ The text has been edited twice, first by Kuno Meyer (1900-1, 92-105) and later by Charles Plummer (1925, 30-45); more recently, a contemporary English translation has been produced by Oliver Davies (1999, 292-97).

Little is known of Colcu of Clonmacnoise apart from some legendary associations with St. Paul and the existence of a letter, written c. 790, from the great Anglo-Saxon scholar Alcuin 'to the blessed master and pious father Colcu' (*Benedicto magistro et pio patri Colcu Alcuine humilis levita salutem*: Alcuin, *Epistola 7*; Dümmler 1895, 31-33). Most scholars have accepted that Colcu Ua Duinechda was the intended recipient of this letter, although both Kenney (1929, 534, n. 104) and Kleinclausz (1948, 75, n. 20; 123) prefer to postulate an otherwise-unknown Colcu, resident at the school of York. It seems to me unlikely, however, that the epistle's recipient would have left no other trace in the records of history. The letter itself is essentially a brief on the contemporary state of Europe, and it was accompanied by some significant gifts, which Alcuin enumerates in detail: alms amounting to no less than 203 shekels, as well as some rare sacramental oil (*aliquid de oleo, quod vix modo in Britannia invenitur*). Indeed, it appears the missive may have been an attempt to establish (or maybe re-establish) diplomatic relations with this Colcu, perhaps connected in some manner with the dispute between Charlemagne and King Offa of Mercia which Alcuin discussed in the letter.

It is therefore evident that this blessed master Colcu was a personage of no small importance, and thus unlikely to have been an otherwise-anonymous scholar at York. It is more probable that Alcuin's correspondent was significant enough to have left some mark on the historical record, and thus Colcu Ua Duinechda, counted amongst 'the scribes and bishops and anchorites' in the *Annals of Ulster* (AU2, 796.1), remembered by the Four Masters as *fear-leighind Cluana mic Nois* and *Colcca egnaidh* (AFM, 789.6, 791.6), and commemorated at 20 February in MartG and MartD, is certainly one candidate for consideration. However, Kenney's

1 In one manuscript (Ó Cléirigh²) the text is attributed to *Aireran ind ecna*, possibly Ailerán of Clonard (died 665), but, as Meyer notes, '[o]n linguistic grounds alone this attribution ... must be regarded as erroneous' (1900-01, 93, n. 2). See also Follett 2006, 164.

caveat that ‘the name Colcu was quite common’ (1929, 534, n. 104) should be borne in mind, for another contemporary Colcu (mac Crunnmhail), abbot of Lusk, is also commemorated in the Annals (AU2, 787.1; AFM, 782.5); it is possible that this Colcu of Lusk could have been the intended recipient of Alcuin’s epistle.²

Confusion between Colcu of Clonmacnoise and Colcu of Lusk may also have contributed to Colcu Ua Duinechda’s supposed association with the *Céli Dé*. An ecclesiastic named Colcu is cited as an authority several times in the *Céli Dé* text *The Monastery of Tallaght* (§§56, 65, 81; Gwynn & Purton 1911, 148, 153, 161), and both Kenney (1929, 726) and Gwynn and Purton (1911, 173-74) suggest that this figure should be identified with Colcu of Clonmacnoise. This is certainly a possibility, as Clonmacnoise, which was not far distant from *Céli Dé* communities in the southern Midlands, is itself mentioned on two occasions in *The Monastery of Tallaght* (§§67, 85; Gwynn & Purton 1911, 155, 162-63). However, it is at least as likely that the *Céli Dé* communities at Finglas and Tallaght could have been in regular contact with the nearby monastery of Lusk, preserving memories of its own Abbot Colcu. Furthermore, a third Colcu, the punctilious anchorite of Slane chastised by Mael Ruain in an episode from *The Monastery of Tallaght* (§77; Gwynn & Purton 1911, 159-60; see also Follett 2006, 89-90, 187-88), is another candidate for identification with the eminent *Céli Dé* ecclesiastic. It is, after all, recorded that this Colcu submitted himself entirely to the will of the saint (*Slechtaiis iarum fo ogreir maolruaoin*; Gwynn & Purton 1911, 159, lines 33-34); it is possible he went on to reform himself and became a figure of authority within the *Céli Dé* community. Given this covey of Colcus with plausible connections to the monks at Tallaght, it is surely prudent to accept the recent assessment of the evidence by Westley Follett, who does ‘not believe that there is sufficient cause to think that Colcu [Ua Duinechda] was affiliated with *céli Dé*’ (2006, 165).

All in all, there is little that can be said with certainty about Colcu Ua Duinechda, aside from his *floruit* in the late eighth century, and his association with Clonmacnoise and with the *Scúap Chrábaid*, reiterated in scholarship since at least the seventeenth century (e.g. AFM, 789.6; Colgan 1645, 379, n. 9). It is this ‘Broom of the Devotion’ which forms the focus of the present study. Even here, however, we find uncertainty and confusion, where textual tangles mix with imprecision and the lack of any clear definition of what constitutes the text of *Scúap Chrábaid*. This paper therefore seeks to re-examine the available evidence in an attempt to accurately delineate and define the ‘Broom of Devotion’.

2 Colcu mac Crunnmhail should not be confused with his grandfather, Colcu mac Móenaig, an earlier abbot of Lusk and signatory of the *Cáin Adomnáin*: see Ní Dhonnchadha 1982, 180 (no. 20), 190-91.

Manuscript Transmission and Editions of the *Scúap Chrábaid*

The text of the *Scúap Chrábaid* is preserved in five manuscripts, two of which were written by Murchad Ó Cuindlis in the early fifteenth century, and three by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh in the early seventeenth century. The earliest surviving text, written around the year 1400, is found in the codex now known as the Yellow Book of Lecan (Dublin, TCD, 1318 (*olim* H.2.16); hereafter **YBL** = Y in Plummer 1925, L in Meyer 1900-1). About a decade later, another portion of the *Scúap* was included in the *Leabhar Breac* (Dublin, RIA, 23 P 16; hereafter **LB** = B in Plummer 1925, LB in Meyer 1900-1). After a gap of over two hundred years, three further copies were produced by Br Mícheál Ó Cléirigh during his wide-ranging travels across Ireland; these now survive in Brussels, Bibliothèque royale, cod. 2324-40 (hereafter **Ó Cléirigh¹** = Br.³ in Plummer 1925, B³ in Meyer 1900-1), cod. 4190-200 (hereafter **Ó Cléirigh²** = Br.² in Plummer 1925, B² in Meyer 1900-1), and cod. 5100-04 (hereafter **Ó Cléirigh³** = Br.¹ in Plummer 1925, B¹ in Meyer 1900-1).³

At the beginning of the twentieth century Kuno Meyer produced the first modern edition of the *Scúap Chrábaid*, under the title 'Colcu ua Duinechda's Scúap Chrábaid, or Besom of Devotion' (Meyer 1900-1, 92). Meyer was aware of all five surviving manuscript copies, and he based his edition on Ó Cléirigh², providing select variants from YBL and LB; his text was not collated against Ó Cléirigh¹ or Ó Cléirigh³ (Meyer 1900-1, 93).⁴ Meyer also sub-divided his edition of the *Scúap* into thirty-seven discrete (and numbered) sections.

Some twenty years later, Charles Plummer prepared a new edition of the *Scúap Chrábaid* for inclusion in his collection of *Irish Litanies* (1925). Plummer consulted all of the five surviving manuscripts, and based his edition on the oldest copy, in YBL (Plummer 1925, xvii-xix). However, Plummer's text is radically different from Meyer's previous edition, for what Meyer printed as a single litany named the *Scúap Chrábaid*, Plummer divided into no less than four distinct litanies, which he published as separate entities in his collection (see Table 1). Thus, §§1-27 of Meyer's *Scúap Chrábaid* correspond to Plummer's 'Litany of Jesus I' (1925, 30-37); Meyer's §§28-33 are printed by Plummer as 'Litany of Jesus II' (1925, 40-45); §§34-36 become the 'Litany of the Saviour' (Plummer 1925, 20-23); and the final §37 Plummer printed as the 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints' (1925, 26-27).

This considerable divergence between the two editions has, understandably, led to some confusion in subsequent scholarship. Although neither editor explicitly

3 For the three Brussels manuscripts (which together constitute some of the most important sources for vernacular Irish hagiography) I have adopted the sigla of Ó Muraile 2008, 9.

4 Meyer also included some variants from Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 512, but, as we shall see, these are not of direct relevance to the *Scúap Chrábaid*.

stated the rationale underlying their distinctive approaches, it is clear that this divergence results from two very different editorial methodologies.

EDITIONS		MANUSCRIPTS							
Plummer	Meyer	YBL	LB	Ó Cléirigh ¹	Ó Cléirigh ²	Ó Cléirigh ³	Eg.	R	Ad.
‘ Litany of Jesus I ’	§§1-26	X	–	X	X	X	–	–	–
	§27	X	X	X	X	X	–	–	–
‘ Litany of Jesus II ’	§§28-33	X	X	X	X	X	–	–	–
‘Litany of the Saviour’	§§34-36	–	–	–	X	–	X	X	X
‘Litany of the Virgin and All Saints’	§37	–	–	–	X	–	–	X	X

Table 1: Texts and Transmissions of the *Scúap Chrábaid*

Eg. = British Library, Egerton 92.

R = Bodleian, Rawlinson B 512

Ad. = British Library, Additional 30512

Texts in **bold** indicate those identified as the *Scúap Chrábaid* in Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³

Meyer defined the limits of his text based upon his primary manuscript witness, Ó Cléirigh², which he had chosen as the base-text for his edition. Thus he presented the entirety of the material preserved in Ó Cléirigh² as a unified text, without any regard to the manner in which this same material is transmitted in the other manuscript witnesses. Meyer’s edition is essentially a reproduction of one individual witness, Ó Cléirigh². It was therefore somewhat disingenuous to entitle his text ‘Colcu ua Duinechda’s *Scúap Chrábaid*’, for in Ó Cléirigh² these litanies are explicitly attributed to *Aireran ind ecna* and they are never identified with the ‘Broom of Devotion’ (Gheyn 1905, 383, no. 24; Meyer 1900-1, 93, 94, n. 1; Plummer 1925, xix).⁵ Given Meyer’s chosen methodology of reproducing the material as it is preserved in Ó Cléirigh², it would have been more consistent, and more transparent, to have entitled his text ‘The Litanies of Airerán’.

Plummer, in contrast, adopted a different editorial methodology, which took into consideration all of the manuscript witnesses to each individual text. Any text, or portion of text, which occurred as a discrete unit in any one witness was published by Plummer as a distinct, individual litany, as becomes clear when we examine his treatment of §§34-37 of Meyer’s *Scúap Chrábaid* (see Table 1). These sections are transmitted independently of Meyer’s preceding text in both Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 512 (Plummer’s R) and London, British Library, Additional 30512 (Plummer’s Ad.), and Plummer accordingly separated them off from the preceding §§1-33. However, Meyer’s §§34-36 are also transmitted as

⁵ In fact, the litanies are only identified with the *Scúap Chrábaid* in Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³: the two manuscripts which Meyer did not consult in the preparation of his edition.

an independent unit in a third manuscript, London, British Library, Egerton 92 (Plummer's Eg.), which does not include Meyer's §37 (Plummer 1925, xvi-xvii). Plummer therefore sub-divided further, distinguishing §§34-36 (the 'Litany of the Saviour') from §37 (the 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints'); he also justified this division by noting the transition in the petitions from first person singular in the former litany to first person plural in the latter (Plummer 1925, xvii).

Plummer adopted a similar approach to Meyer's §§1-33: because §§28-33 are found as an independent unit in LB (Meyer 1900-1, 93; Plummer 1925, xvii),⁶ he separated them off to form the 'Litany of Jesus II', leaving the remainder of Meyer's text (§§1-27) to form his 'Litany of Jesus I'. This then is the origin of Plummer's transformation of Meyer's *Scúap Chrábaid* into four distinct litanies. §§28-33 became the 'Litany of Jesus II' because they are transmitted as an independent unit in LB. §§34-36 became the 'Litany of the Saviour' because they form an individual unit in Egerton 92. §37 became the 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints' because, although it is transmitted with the 'Litany of the Saviour' in Rawlinson B 512 and Additional 30512 (as well as Ó Cléirigh²), it is not found appended to that litany in Egerton 92. And the remainder of Meyer's text, §§1-27, Plummer distinguished as the 'Litany of Jesus I'.

This complicated relationship between the two editions, which was never explicated by either editor, can only be deciphered through close comparison of their texts and careful reading of Plummer's discussion of the manuscripts in his 'Introduction' to *Irish Litanies*. This has, unfortunately, created a situation in which the modern, printed texts of the *Scúap Chrábaid* represent a more confused state of textual transmission than the original manuscript witnesses. The difficulties of this situation were noted briefly by Paul Walsh in 1937 (Ó Muraile 2008, 139-40). More recent scholars, such as Ó Maidín (1996, 178) and Follett (2006, 163, 233-34), have nonetheless been led astray into asserting that copies of the *Scúap Chrábaid* may be found in Rawlinson B 512 and Additional 30512; strictly speaking, these manuscripts contain only Plummer's 'Litany of the Saviour' and 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints', that is, §§34-37 of Meyer's *Scúap Chrábaid* (see O'Grady, Flower & Dillon 1926-53, vol. 2, 489-90, 516; Ó Cuív 2001, 242).

Given the confused nature of the editions, and the resultant lack of precision in subsequent scholarship, it is necessary to return to the original manuscripts in order to define the exact nature of the text, or series of texts, known as the *Scúap Chrábaid*.

6 Meyer (1900-1, 93) is incorrect in stating that LB contains 'a copy of the second half of the prayer, from §27 of my edition to the end'; only §§27-33 are found in this manuscript, in which §27 immediately follows §§28-33.

Defining the Broom of Devotion

To the best of my knowledge, the only surviving sources which identify a definitive text by the name *Scúap Chrábaid* are the two manuscripts Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³, and in both cases this identification is copied from a common exemplar, which will be discussed in further detail below. It seems to me most prudent to accept these manuscripts' identification, which originates within the native learned tradition and was endorsed in the seventeenth century by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh. It is, in any case, the sole piece of evidence we possess; and any attempt to re-create or re-establish an alternative *Scúap* runs the risk of producing an artificial and anachronistic textual unit, in effect, a new recension of the 'Broom of Devotion' which inaccurately reflects the manner in which this text is preserved in the surviving manuscripts.

Unfortunately, this, in essence, is what Kuno Meyer achieved in his own edition of the *Scúap Chrábaid*. By editing the litanies from Ó Cléirigh² as a collective unit, yet arbitrarily imposing upon that unit a title which he imported from Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³, he created what is, in fact, Kuno's (not Colcu's) 'Broom of Devotion'. In particular, his inclusion of §§34-37, otherwise Plummer's 'Litany of the Saviour' and 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints', was a serious error, for these litanies are present neither in Ó Cléirigh¹ nor Ó Cléirigh³ (see Gheyn 1905, 386; Gheyn 1901, 319; MartG, ix), and thus their first recorded association with the *Scúap Chrábaid* is in Meyer's own edition of 1900-1. Furthermore, these two litanies circulated as separate entities in Rawlinson B 512, Additional 30512 and Egerton 92, none of which contain the text identified with the *Scúap Chrábaid* in Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³ (Plummer 1925, xvi-xvii).

Of course, the texts were brought together in Meyer's exemplar, Ó Cléirigh², and thus presumably occurred in conjunction in Ó Cléirigh's own exemplar, a now-lost fifteenth-century manuscript written by Giolla Glas Ua hUiginn, and loaned to Ó Cléirigh by Fr Nioclas Ó Cathasaigh during the friar's sojourn in Dublin, probably in 1628 (Ó Muraile 2008, 51, 139-40; Plummer 1925, xiv, n. 2; Gheyn 1905, 383, n. 10). Even in Ó Cléirigh², however, Plummer's 'Litany of the Saviour' and 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints' are marked off as separate from the rest of the text. This is evident in Meyer's own edition, from the last lines of his §33, that is, the conclusion of the text distinguished by Plummer as 'Litany of Jesus II'. These run as follows: '*Ar nīmtá nī manomthí iar n-indsci Pōil nodrāidhe: "Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius peccati nisi gratia, Iesu Christe, qui regnas in saecula saeculorum." Amen. Credo et pater*' (Meyer 1900-1, 98; cf. Plummer 1925, 44, n. 1). The Latin quotation of Romans 7.24-25, the standard concluding formula *qui regnas in saecula saeculorum*, the concluding *Amen*, and, most especially, the instruction to recite the Creed and the Our Father, all mark a distinct break in the

text (and in any putative performance) of the litany. Thus, even in Meyer's own edition, his §§34-37 are marked off as separate from the text elsewhere identified as the 'Broom of Devotion'. They should henceforth be recognised as distinct compositions which form no part of the *Scúap Chrábaid*.

It appears, therefore, that Plummer was correct in publishing these sections as distinct individual pieces, the 'Litany of the Saviour' and 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints'. Was he also correct in separating Meyer's §§1-33 into the 'Litany of Jesus I' and 'Litany of Jesus II'? The manuscript evidence would suggest that he was. The oldest surviving copy of the text, in YBL, also distinguishes these litanies in a similar manner. The book now known as 'The Yellow Book of Lecan' is, of course, a composite codex, made up of seventeen different components, only one of which is the manuscript named the *Buidhe Leacáin*, the Yellow Book of Lecan properly so called (see Abbott & Gwynn 1921, 342; on the Yellow Book of Lecan proper, see Best 1949-50; Oskamp 1975; O'Sullivan 1981). Our text is found in a different manuscript, comprising cols. 281-344 of the current codex; this was written by the scribe Murchad Ó Cuindlis, in southern Tipperary (Múscraige Treithirne and the vicinity of Sliabh Cua) around the years 1398-1401 (Abbott & Gwynn 1921, 99, 344-45; Ó Concheanainn 1973, 67 & n. 21, 77, 78-79; for this manuscript's contents, see Abbot & Gwynn 1921, 98-100, 344-46). Murchad Ó Cuindlis was a pupil and close associate of Giolla Íosa Mac Fhir Bhisigh, and collaborated with his mentor on both the Yellow Book of Lecan proper and the (Great) Book of Lecan (Walsh 1947, 104; Ó Concheanainn 1973, 76-79; Ó Concheanainn 2000, 387-89); he also played a pivotal role, as we shall see, in the transmission of the *Scúap Chrábaid*.

The text of Plummer's Litanies of Jesus begins on line 16 of col. 336 in YBL, where it is marked off as distinct from the preceding text (the so-called 'Litany of St Michael' of Mael Ísu Ua Brolcháin) by both a break in the column and a very large initial *A*, which stretches over a full six lines and is by far the largest initial on the page (all other enlarged initials in cols. 335-36 occupy only two or three lines). The text runs on to line 3 of col. 338, at which point another distinct break occurs, for thereafter the column splits into two sub-columns, with the 'Litany of the Trinity' running down col. 338a, and (in much smaller script) a list of the Archbishops of Armagh, a poem on the Jewish cities of refuge, a note on the tribe of Dan, and other material, occupying col. 338b (see Abbott & Gwynn 1921, 99-100, 346). Thus the Litanies of Jesus are clearly distinguished as a distinct textual unit in YBL, both by the large initial *A* which marks the beginning of Plummer's 'Litany of Jesus I' and by the division of col. 338 which immediately follows the conclusion of Plummer's 'Litany of Jesus II'.

However, this distinct textual unit in YBL is clearly subdivided into two component parts, for the transition from Plummer's 'Litany of Jesus I' to his

‘Litany of Jesus II’ is highlighted by a large initial *A*, stretching over four lines, and marking the beginning of the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ (*A Isu noeb, a chara coem...*: YBL, col. 337, line 29). Therefore, while the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ and ‘Litany of Jesus II’ are transmitted as a unit in this, the oldest surviving copy, they are also clearly distinguished, one from the other.

This distinction is further highlighted in the other early copy of the text, in the manuscript once known as the *Leabhar Mór Dúna Daighre* (Mulchrone & Fitzpatrick 1943, 3380, 3387 at 47i; Ó Concheanainn 1973, 65; Follett 2006, 103); today it is better known as the *Leabhar Breac*. This manuscript was, in all probability, written by Murchad Ó Cuindlis (see Ó Concheanainn 1973), the same scribe who copied the Litanies of Jesus in YBL; various marginal notations reveal the scribe at work on LB in the region of Múscraige Thíre (the baronies of Lower and Upper Ormond, North Tipperary) between the years 1408 and 1411 (Ó Concheanainn 1973, 64-65, 71-75).

At some point during this period,⁷ Ó Cuindlis transcribed a series of four litanies on p. 74 of LB (see Mulchrone & Fitzpatrick 1943, 3397). The series begins, at line 7 of col. a, with the ‘Litany of the Virgin’ (Plummer 1925, 48-51).⁸ This is followed (at col. b, line 38) by Plummer’s ‘Litany of Jesus II’, and, on its heels (at col. c, line 53), the concluding portion of Plummer’s ‘Litany of Jesus I’ (this corresponds to §27 of Meyer’s *Scúap Chrábaid*: see Plummer 1925, 34, n. 20). Finally, at col. d, line 22 begins a copy of the ‘Litany of the Trinity’ (Plummer 1925, 78-85), which breaks off, incomplete, at the foot of the page, in the midst of the invocations of God the Son (Plummer 1925, 82, n. 6).⁹

Ó Cuindlis’ manuscripts, the oldest surviving copies, therefore corroborate Plummer’s distinction between the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ and ‘Litany of Jesus II’. Not only are the two distinguished in YBL, but, in LB, the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ is transmitted as a separate entity, which follows on from the ‘Litany of the Virgin’ and not (as in the other four manuscripts) from the ‘Litany of Jesus I’. This demonstrates that the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ did circulate as an independent litany,

7 There is no indication as to where or when this portion of the manuscript was written, although on the relevant recto (LB, p. 73), Ó Cuindlis informs ‘Domnall’ (possibly the book’s patron) that he is writing alone, with only a robin for company: ‘*Ata in spideog derg uli, a Domnaill, ocus atusa am oenur*’ (Mulchrone & Fitzpatrick 1943, 3387 at 73i; Plummer 1926, 13, n. 5; Ó Concheanainn 1973, 64, n. 5).

8 Another copy of this litany, unknown to Plummer, can be found in Dublin, RIA, 3 B 22, p. 52: see Mulchrone & Fitzpatrick 1943, 3359.

9 Plummer’s statement that ‘[i]n B [=LB], we have Nos. 2 [the ‘Litany of the Saviour’], 3 [the ‘Litany of the Virgin and All Saints’], 9 [the ‘Litany of the Trinity’] in immediate sequence’ (1925, xxii) is clearly in error, as is evidenced by his own descriptions of these litanies in the preceding pages. It should be emended to read: ‘In B, we have Nos. 6, 5, (4), 9 in immediate sequence’.

at the very least in the *Leabhar Breac*, and should therefore be distinguished as a separate text from the 'Litany of Jesus I'.

This distinction is further confirmed if we turn to examine the contents of the two litanies. The 'Litany of Jesus I' is ecclesiological in tone: it focuses on the evangelists, the apostles, the angels, the prophets, the martyrs. And it consistently opens its invocations through these figures with the characteristic entreaty *Ateoch frit*. The 'Litany of Jesus II', in contrast, is entirely Christological, focusing on various epithets or aspects of Christ and on events from his life, which it consistently introduces with a different invocation, *Ar ecnaire*. It appears, therefore, that the distinction which Ó Cuindlis introduced into his manuscripts, and which Plummer followed in his publication of the texts, is entirely consistent with their content. These are two different litanies, each with a different focus, each introducing their invocations with a different entreaty, and each distinguished in the earliest manuscript copies of the text: Charles Plummer was correct to separate §§1-33 of Meyer's *Scúap Chrábaid* into the 'Litany of Jesus I' and the 'Litany of Jesus II'.

Is this then the end of the *Scúap Chrábaid*: nothing more than four individual litanies combined by Kuno Meyer in the twentieth century? It is not; for there remains the testimony of Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³, the only manuscripts to explicitly identify a text with the *Scúap Chrábaid*. The relevant portion of both these manuscripts (Gheyn 1905, 386, nos. 19-28; Gheyn 1901, 319, nos. 5-13; MartG, viii-x) was copied from the same exemplar, the now-lost *Leabhar Ruadh Muimhneach*, the Red Book of Munster (Plummer 1925, xiii-xiv; see also Grosjean 1930), as the colophons inserted by Ó Cléirigh into both manuscripts make clear.¹⁰

The Red Book of Munster was a manuscript produced, presumably in the early years of the fifteenth century, by the now-familiar figure of Murchad Ó Cuindlis (Walsh 1947, 252-53), as Ó Cléirigh explicitly acknowledges in his colophons. It is a sobering thought, but were it not for the work of Mícheál Ó Cléirigh in the seventeenth century, we would only possess two copies of the *Scúap Chrábaid* (YBL and LB); however, were it not for the work of Murchad Ó Cuindlis, in the fifteenth century, we would possess only one (Ó Cléirigh²). It appears that Ó Cléirigh first encountered the Red Book of Munster at some point prior to 1630,¹¹ possibly in 1627, when he produced the copy which now survives in Ó Cléirigh¹

10 The relevant colophons from the two manuscripts are reproduced in Plummer 1922, xxiv-xxv; the colophon from Ó Cléirigh¹ may also be found in Plummer 1925, xiv, n. 1; the colophon from Ó Cléirigh³ is reproduced independently in Hamel 1917-9, 349, and Ó Muraile 2008, 98; see also MartG, viii, x.

11 The entry on Colcu Ua Duinechda in the *Martyrology of Donegal*, which was completed in 1630, is dependent on colophons copied from the Red Book of Munster, as will be discussed in further detail below.

(Plummer 1922, xxiv). He later encountered, and copied, the Book for a second time, at the Franciscan friary of Quin, Co. Clare in June 1634, when he transcribed the pieces now preserved in Ó Cléirigh³ (Walsh, 1947, 104; Ó Muraíle 2008, 97-98, 144). On both occasions Ó Cléirigh inserted the same colophon, presumably copied from the Red Book of Munster, identifying the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ and ‘Litany of Jesus II’ as Colcu Ua Duinechda’s *Scúap Chrábaid: Aurnaighthi Colgan hÚa Duinechdhan fer leiginn Cluana meic Nois síšana .i. scúap crabaidh*; ‘The Prayer of Colcu Ua Duinechda, scholar of Clonmacnoise, here below, i.e. the *Scúap Chrábaid*’ (Plummer 1925, xvii; text from Ó Cléirigh¹).

Following this identification, the colophon describes an encounter between Colcu and St Paul the Apostle, which will be discussed in further detail below. The text here appears to be identical in both Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³ (Plummer 1925, xviii), which suggests that Ó Cléirigh copied the colophon directly from the Red Book of Munster, and therefore, as Plummer notes, ‘we may assume that this attribution of authorship was derived from that MS’ (Plummer 1925, xviii). Unfortunately, however, we do not know exactly where this colophon occurred in Murchad’s *Leabhar Ruadh*, for Ó Cléirigh, in a characteristic example of his fidelity to his sources (see McCarthy 2008, 59-60), inserted the colophon before the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ in Ó Cléirigh¹, and after the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ in Ó Cléirigh³ (Plummer 1925, xvii). This leaves us with no way of knowing whether the Red Book of Munster identified the *Scúap Chrábaid* with the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ or the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ or both. The only solid testimony is that of Micheál Ó Cléirigh, who clearly regarded the two litanies combined ‘as forming jointly the *scúap crabaid*’ (Plummer 1925, xvii).

I propose that we accept Ó Cléirigh’s testimony on this matter; it is, after all, the only one we possess (unless we are prepared to accept Meyer’s twentieth-century expansion of the *Scúap* to include all the litanies in Ó Cléirigh²). True, this means our identification of the text is based upon an assertion made over 900 years after the death of its supposed author, an assertion which could be incorrect. However, we have to base our identification on some evidence, and Ó Cléirigh’s colophon is the only definitive identification which is known to date. Furthermore, there are several factors which may be adduced in his support.

First, there is the fact that in four of the five manuscripts (YBL, Ó Cléirigh¹, Ó Cléirigh² and Ó Cléirigh³) the two litanies are transmitted as a unit, with the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ following immediately after the ‘Litany of Jesus I’. Even in the fifth surviving copy, LB, where the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ is transmitted independently, it is itself immediately followed by the concluding portion of the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ (§27 of Meyer’s *Scúap Chrábaid*). LB is thus the exception which proves the rule, for even its independent copy of the ‘Litany of Jesus II’ is conjoined with part of the text of the ‘Litany of Jesus I’. This demonstrates that

the two litanies were already circulating in close association before the year 1400. Indeed, it is significant that the earliest surviving witness, Ó Cuindlis' manuscript in YBL, presents them as a distinct textual unit, sub-divided into two component parts (see above, pp. 32-33).

Second, there is the testimony of another vernacular litany, the 'Litany of Creation' (Plummer 1925, 102-07; cf. Meyer 1912, 231-32), preserved in Dublin, RIA, 23 N 10. This metrical litany appears to fall into two distinct sections, only the first of which was published by Meyer in his 'Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften' (see Plummer 1925, xxiv). The second section (beginning *Iorrainm duit, a Athair*: Plummer 1925, 104) consists, in large part, of descriptions of the first, which is referred to as a summons to saints (*Is congra do naemuib*), a sanctification of people (*Is naomad do dainib*) and a breastplate for the soul (*Is luirech dom anmain*). It is also described as 'the fine Broom of Devotion': *Isi seo co cumair / In sguab cunnail crabaid* (Plummer 1925, 104). Here, at least, we have an alternative witness to place beside Ó Cléirigh: a text which self-identifies as a *scúap chrábaid*. And it is notable that the first section of this 'Litany of Creation', that very portion which is described as a breastplate for the soul and a fine Broom of Devotion, consistently begins its invocations with the words *Ateoch friut*, that is, the very form of entreaty which, as we have seen, is characteristic of the 'Litany of Jesus I'. Indeed, when Plummer first encountered this litany, he assumed it was simply a copy of the 'Litany of Jesus I', and he asserts that the 'Litany of Creation' 'evidently is modelled on that piece' (Plummer 1925, xxiii). The evidence here may be slight and tangential, but it is noteworthy that only two litanies in Plummer's collection make use of the entreaty *Ateoch frit*, and both are connected in some way with the name *Scúap Chrábaid*.

Finally, there is the evidence that the Litanies of Jesus were not the only litanies to circulate as a conjoined unit in medieval Ireland. We have already seen that the 'Litany of the Saviour' and the 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints' are linked in three of the four surviving copies (see Table 1; Plummer 1925, xvi-xvii). The case of Plummer's 'Litany of Irish Saints II' (1925, 60-75) is even more instructive. It is quite clear that this text is made up of two conjoined litanies: the first of these, quite possibly the most-intensely studied of all medieval Irish litanies, was dubbed the 'Irish Litany of Pilgrim Saints' by Kathleen Hughes (1959; see also Bowen 1969, 68-71; Sanderlin 1975; O'Loughlin 2000, 156-59); the second litany is appropriately described, in instructions for its use against jaundice and boils which are appended to the end of the text, as the litany of the Seven Bishops (Plummer 1925, 74). However, as O'Loughlin has pointed out, 'these must have been combined by someone at an early date, for they are found in this way in the four manuscripts in which they survive, [and] are never found separately' (2000, 157; cf. Plummer 1925, xx).

The ‘Litany of Irish Saints II’ therefore provides a concrete example of two different litanies being combined to form a new unit. I suggest that a similar development led to the creation of the *Scúap Chrábaid*. Whether the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ and ‘Litany of Jesus II’ were composed as complementary parts of an individual litany, or were composed separately and later combined, and, indeed, whether or not the author or combiner was Colcu Ua Duinechda, are questions we simply cannot answer. However, it is clear that these two litanies did circulate as a conjoined unit in medieval Ireland; in Plummer’s words, ‘the association of Nos. 4 [the ‘Litany of Jesus I’] and 5 [the ‘Litany of Jesus II’] is quite constant’ (1925, xxii). Furthermore, it is clear that Mícheál Ó Cléirigh regarded the two litanies together as forming Colcu Ua Duinechda’s *Scúap Chrábaid*; and I propose that, henceforward, we follow Ó Cléirigh’s definition. We may recognize the ‘Litany of Jesus I’ and ‘Litany of Jesus II’, with Plummer (and, indeed, with LB), as two distinct pieces of text; however, when they are combined, in the order ‘Litany of Jesus I’ + ‘Litany of Jesus II’, we may refer to them as the *Scúap Chrábaid*.

The *Codex Cluanensis* and the Red Book of Munster

There remains to discuss one final manuscript witness to the *Scúap Chrábaid*: the *Codex Cluanensis* referred to by John Colgan in his discussion of Colcu in the *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae* (1645, 378-79; see also Follett 2006, 165). There Colgan states:

Extat apud me ex Codice Cluanensi, & aliis vetustis membranis, quoddam huius sancti viri opusculum, ... Hibernicè vocatur scuapchrabhaigh id est, scopa deuotionis. Estque fasciculus ardentissimarum precum, per modum quodammodo Litaniarum; opus plenum ardentissima ecuotione, & eleuatione mentis in Deum (Colgan 1645, 379, n. 9).

I have in my possession, from the *Codex Cluanensis*, and other ancient parchments, a certain little work of this holy man’s, ... called in Irish *scuapchrabhaigh*, that is, the Broom of Devotion. And it is a little gathering of most ardent prayers, in the manner of litanies in a certain way; a work filled with most ardent evocation and with the elevation of the mind to God.

Aside from providing one of the most apt descriptions of the *Scúap Chrábaid* (*fasciculus ... precum, per modum quodammodo Litaniarum*), Colgan also brings to our attention a certain *Codex Cluanensis*, a Book of Clonmacnoise, which was known to him and apparently contained the ‘Broom of Devotion’. O’Donovan (AFM, vol. 1, p. 396, n. f) suggested that this may refer to *Leabhar na hUidhre*, the premier *codex Cluanensis*, but there is no copy of the *Scúap Chrábaid* in that

manuscript. Furthermore, it is clear that Colgan's *Codex Cluanensis* was the primary source for his information on Colcu, for he refers to it on no less than three occasions in his short discussion of the scholar of Clonmacnoise (1645, 379, notes 6, 7, 9).

From this *Codex Cluanensis*, Colgan provides us with some short hagiographs regarding Colcu's interactions with St Paul, which, he tells us, he has excerpted from the *argumentum* to the *Scúap* in that same manuscript (1645, 379, n. 6). He also provides us with the *titulus* which prefaced the 'Broom of Devotion': *Oratio Colgan sancti sapientis & presbyteri, & scribae omnium Scotorum* (1645, 379, n. 8). Significantly, this is all but identical to the *titulus* which Micháel Ó Cléirigh copied from the Red Book of Munster into Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³: *Oratio Colgan sancti sapientis et presbyteri et scribe omnium sanctorum incipit* (Plummer 1925, xviii). This suggests that the *Codex Cluanensis* may have been related in some manner to the *Leabhar Ruadh Muimhneach*, a suggestion which is further strengthened by the legendary material regarding St Paul which was also transmitted in both manuscripts.

Colgan gives by far the most detailed account of these Pauline legends, which describe the Apostle's miraculous interventions on Colcu's behalf:

Coluit mirum in modum S. Paulum Apostolum, vt suum in spiritu & littera Magistrum, et patronum singularem: cuius & singulares fauores, vsque ad miracula legitur expertus. Cùm enim ex scholis, dum reuerteretur, & iter faciens per locum, qui moitire anair appellatur, thecam, sive peram, in qua eius libris iacebant, in humeris portaret; ad ipsum ex itinere fatigatum legitur S. Paulus in humana specie accessisse, eumque, suavi colloquio recreasse, sacrisque monitis, & instructionibus confortasse: quin & tanta erga suum pium & deuotum clientem dignatione ferri, quod peram illam ex eius humeris sublatam, ipse reliquo itinere ad locum, quo erat venturus transtulerit.

Alia etiam vice, cùm quaedam grauis quaestis inter Doctores in scholade Cluainmicnois ventilaretur; & alij loci Patres, & viri doctrinae & autoritate pollentes, aduersam quaestionis partem, contra virum Dei acriter tuerentur, legitur etiam Diuus Paulus eius partes suscepisse, coram senioribus perorasse, & controuersiam ad eius mentem decidisse (Colgan 1645, 378).

He was remarkably devoted in manner to St Paul the Apostle, who was his Teacher in the spirit and the letter, and his singular patron; from whom, it is read and proven, he received singular favours, even miracles. For once he was away from his school, and while he was returning, making a journey through the place which is called *Móin Tíre an Áir*, he was carrying on his shoulders a case, or a satchel, in which his books were deposited; it is read that, when he was weary from the journey, St Paul drew near to him in human appearance, and revived him with pleasant conversation and with sacred admonitions, and comforted him with instruction; indeed, his pious and devoted client was held in such

respect that, the satchel being lifted from his shoulders, [the saint] himself carried it for the remainder of the journey to the place to which he was going.

And on another occasion, when a certain grave matter was debated with dissension between the teachers in the school of Clonmacnoise, and the fathers of another place and the men of doctrine and those with high authority vehemently upheld a contrary position in the dispute against the man of God, it is read that the divine Paul defended his position, pleaded the case in the presence of the elders, and settled the controversy according to his understanding.

These are attractive hagiographs, which effectively demonstrate Colcu's devotion to St Paul, and, indeed, St Paul's devotion to Colcu. They may perhaps be read as allegorical expressions of Colcu's affection for, and mastery of, Pauline theology, as they tell of how Colcu found the material of his learning burdensome and wearying, until his burden was removed following instruction from St Paul; later, it was Paul again who enabled Colcu to emerge triumphant in an acrimonious dispute with other scholars. It is intriguing to note that the *Scúap Chrábaid* itself invokes Paul as one of 'the perfect teachers who taught the spiritual meaning' (*Ateoch frit ina uile forcetlaige forbthe forforcansatar in sians spirudala im Pol napstal*: Plummer 1925, 34-35), and concludes with a quotation from the apostle's letter to the Romans (Plummer 1925, 44).

Of greater significance to our present purpose, however, is the fact the same Pauline legends are referenced in the Irish colophon to the *Scúap Chrábaid* which Ó Cléirigh copied from the Red Book of Munster:

Is cuicce so tainic Pol apstal dia accallamh, , dia chobair forsin sétt, go ro gaibh a théigh liubar i Móin Tíre in Áir, , conid ro thacair dara chend re Scoil Cluana meic Nois. Occus ase Pol apstal ro fhaccaibh co na berthar buaidh taccra o Cluain meic Nóis cen be sunh for nimh.

It was to him [Colcu] that Paul the Apostle came to converse with him and help him on his journey, and took¹² his satchel of books in Móin Tíre in Áir ... and answered for him to the School of Clonmacnoise. And it was he, the Apostle Paul, who left (as a legacy)

12 I have here emended Plummer's translation, which reads that Paul 'found his satchel of books'. Plummer appears to have been struck by the (coincidental) conjunction of the satchel with the place-name element *móin* (bog); influenced, no doubt, by the story of the finding of the Corpus Missal, within its satchel, in a bog (to which he makes reference in a footnote), he concluded that Paul 'found' Colcu's satchel. However, the meaning 'to find' is itself not found in the extensive entry on the verb in the *Dictionary of the Irish Language* (<http://www.dil.ie> (accessed 1 June 2010), s.v. *gaibid*), and the primary meaning of *ro gaibh*, 'he laid hold of / he grasped', is in much closer accord with Colgan's version of the story. Cf. also Ó'Donovan's translation (MartD, 55): 'he took his satchel of books'.

that pre-eminence in answering should never be taken from Clonmacnoise, as long as he remains in heaven (Plummer 1925, xviii).

This is clearly a summary of the same set of stories provided by Colgan: not only are the same events found in each narration, but even the same place-name, *Móin Tíre in Áir*. A third version of these legends is also preserved in the commemoration of Colcu at 20 February in the *Martyrology of Donegal* (MartD, 54), but this appears to derive directly from the traditions preserved in the Red Book of Munster: its description of the legends matches the Red Book's colophon practically word for word, albeit with some modernisation of the language. We may also note the information which MartD declares is contained in the *prologus* or *remhfocal* before the *Scúap Chrábaid*: *a deir... gurbo naomh, gurbo saccart, acus gurbo sgríbhneior do naomhaibh Erenn an Colga so* (MartD, 54). This happens to be a direct translation of the *remhfocal* preserved in the Red Book of Munster: *Oratio Colgan sancti sapientis et prespiteri et scribe omnium sanctorum incipit* (Plummer 1925, xviii). It would appear, therefore, that Ó Cuindlis' *Leabhar Ruadh* was the formal source for the entry on Colcu in the *Martyrology of Donegal*. The material source was probably one of Mícheál Ó Cléirigh's copies of the Red Book, presumably Ó Cléirigh¹, for the relevant portion of Ó Cléirigh³ was not transcribed until 1634, four years after the completion of the martyrology.

This, however, does not explain the relationship between the Red Book of Munster and Colgan's *Codex Cluanensis*, which contained the same legends regarding Colcu and Paul, and transmitted the *Scúap Chrábaid* under a near-identical *titulus*. It is, of course, possible that Colgan used the same source as the *Martyrology of Donegal*, that is, one of Ó Cléirigh's copies of the Red Book. Richard Sharpe has suggested that at least parts of Ó Cléirigh¹ had reached Louvain by 1630 (1991, 52), and Colgan himself appears to have had some familiarity with the manuscript (O'Grady, Flower & Dillon 1926-53, vol. 2, 448). However, it seems to me unlikely that Colgan was dependent on Ó Cléirigh¹ or Ó Cléirigh³. Certainly, these (relatively young) manuscripts may have been amongst the 'other ancient parchments' which Colgan referred to in his discussion of the *Scúap* (1645, 379, n. 9). However, in my opinion, there are a number of reasons why neither they nor their exemplar should be identified with the *Codex Cluanensis*.

First, there is the difference in nomenclature. Colgan is insistent that his source is a *Codex Cluanensis*: he repeats the name three times (1645, 379, notes 6, 7, 9). It is difficult to see why he should be quite so insistent were he using one of Ó Cléirigh's copies, where the colophons plainly state that their source is the Red Book of Munster. Second, there is the difference in detail of the narratives, and particularly the fact that Colgan's account of the Pauline legends is much more expansive than that found in the colophon from the Red Book. It is possible, of

course, that Colgan extrapolated his tales from the simple colophon, but I find it difficult to envision how he could have deduced that St Paul carried Colcu's satchel for the remainder of the journey from the simple statement *go ro gaibh a théigh liubar i Móin Tíre in Áir*, which could mean any number of things. Plummer, as we have seen above, decided that it must mean Paul had found Colcu's satchel after it was lost in the bog. However, Paul 'took his satchel of books in Móin Tíre in Áir' provides a perfect summary of Colgan's narrative: if one already knows the story.

Finally, there are slight differences which hint towards divergences in the transmission of the two traditions. The *titulus* of the *Scúap* was not quite identical in Ó Cuindlis' Red Book and Colgan's *Codex Cluanensis*, for while the former described Colcu as the scribe 'of all the saints' (*omnium sanctorum*), the latter referred to him as the scribe 'of all the Irish' (*omnium Scotorum*). The two readings, in all likelihood, originated in different expansions of the same abbreviation: *scorum*. This, however, is exactly the kind of divergence which is utilised in traditional textual criticism to define different branches of the tradition in the manuscript transmission of a text. Furthermore, one element of the Pauline legend summarised in the Red Book's colophon is not mentioned by Colgan: the statement that, after his triumph in the dispute, Paul left to Clonmacnoise *buaidh taccra*, or pre-eminence in disputation, forever. While this may simply have been omitted by Colgan as irrelevant to his primary subject, Colcu, it is also possible that this portion of the legend was not preserved in the *Codex Cluanensis*.

Therefore, while the traditions surrounding the *Scúap Chrábaid* as it was transmitted in Colgan's *Codex Cluanensis* were clearly related to those preserved in the Red Book of Munster (and in its daughter-manuscripts, Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³), it seems to me most likely that this Book of Clonmacnoise represented a distinct witness to the text, which ought not to be identified with any of the surviving manuscripts or with the now-lost Red Book of Munster.

It is just possible that the *Codex Cluanensis* may have been the Red Book's exemplar. There is a strong Clonmacnoise connection in the Red Book's transmission of the *Scúap Chrábaid*: it is the only witness to identify the *Scúap*'s author as Colcu Ua Duinechda, of Clonmacnoise, and also the only manuscript to transmit the Pauline hagiographs, including the apostle's award of *buaidh taccra* to the midland monastery. Furthermore, in the Red Book the *Scúap* was immediately preceded by Plummer's 'Litany of Confession' (1925, 2-17), which was explicitly attributed to St Ciarán: *De Confessione Sancte Ciarane* [sic] (Plummer 1925, xvi, 2, n. 1); the same attribution is also found in London, BL, Additional 30512 and Dublin, TCD, 1285 (*olim* H.1.11) (Plummer 1925, 8, n. 1). The association between the *Scúap Chrábaid* and this 'Litany of Confession' was so close in the Red Book that the colophon in Ó Cléirigh³ declares: *gurab chnes re 'roile fuaras an dá ní gan eadartoidecht neith ele ettarrae* (Plummer 1925, xviii); 'it was cheek

by jowl [literally: skin to skin] that I found the two things, without anything else intervening between them'. Given the close association of the two pieces, the attributions to Ciarán and to Colcu, and the hagiographical material regarding Clonmacnoise, it would be fitting to postulate that the Red Book's source was a *codex Cluanensis*; when one considers the close correspondences between the Red Book of Munster and Colgan's 'Book of Clonmacnoise', it is tempting to suggest that the friar's *Codex Cluanensis* was Murchad Ó Cuindlis' exemplar. However, attempting to tease out the relationship between a hypothetical unidentified manuscript and a lost fifteenth-century codex, based solely on the testimony of two seventeenth-century scholars, is a very precarious game. In the end, all that can be stated with certainty is that there appear to be Clonmacnoise connections in the Red Book's transmission of the *Scúap Chrábaid*, and that the Red Book of Munster and Colgan's *Codex Cluanensis* appear to have been distinct, yet closely-related, witnesses to Colcu's 'Broom of Devotion'.

Sweeping Clean

There is one final mystery to which Murchad's Red Book may suggest a solution, that is, the rather eccentric name which has been the focus of this study: *Scúap Chrábaid*, the Broom of Devotion. For, while *crábud* (piety or devotion) may be entirely appropriate, it is difficult to imagine why any prayer might be referred to as a 'broom'.

We have seen, however, that in the Red Book of Munster the *Scúap* was immediately preceded by the 'Litany of Confession' which (as suggested by the title preserved in the manuscripts and adopted by Plummer) is highly penitential in character: it begins by requesting the Trinity to 'forgive me my sins' (*dilgúid dam mo peccaig*: Plummer 1925, 2) and concludes with the triple repetition, 'forgive, forgive, forgive' (*Dilaig, dilaig, dilaig*: Plummer 1925, 16). Also noteworthy is the fact that our text is followed by the story *Da apstol decc na hErenn* (Plummer 1922, vol. 1, 96-102; vol. 2, 93-98), both in Ó Cléirigh¹ and Ó Cléirigh³ and thus, presumably, in the Red Book of Munster (Gheyn 1905, 386 (no. 27); Gheyn 1901, 319 (no. 11); MartG, ix-x). The primary focus of this tale, which initially presents itself as an account of St Brendan's voyage to the Land of Promise, is an elaborate description of the punishments of hell and a lengthy poem in which Judas Iscariot bewails his torments, both of which elements are ideally suited to the promotion of penitence.

It appears therefore that the *Scúap* was found within a decidedly penitential context in the Red Book of Munster. Indeed, this is further highlighted by another element of the Latin colophon which Ó Cléirigh copied from that book. Immediately after identifying the *Scúap* as the Prayer of Colcu (*Oratio Colgan*), it goes on to

declare: *Quicumque hanc orationem cantauerit, ueram penitentiam et indulgentiam peccatorum habebit, et alias multas gratias .i. Ateoch* ȡ (Plummer 1925, xviii); ‘whoever will have recited this prayer will have true penance and indulgence of sins, and many other graces, i.e. *Ateoch* etc.’. Immediately preceded by the penitential ‘Litany of Confession’ and immediately followed by vivid descriptions of the punishments which await those who fail to do penance, the *Scúap Chrábaid* is here explicitly identified as a penitential prayer for the remission of sins.

This may explain why it is also explicitly identified as a ‘Broom of Devotion’. For the primary purpose of a broom is to sweep away dust and dirt and to leave a surface clean, just as penance was understood to wipe sins away and clean the soul. This may be why Colcu’s litany was known as the *Scúap Chrábaid*: it was understood (at the very least in the Red Book of Munster) as a penitential litany which swept the soul clean.

This interpretation finds some support in the occasional association of the image of the broom with the cleansing of the soul in the Christian literature of the Middle Ages. For example, Colcu’s contemporary, Theodulf of Orléans (died 821), in his poem on the capital sins, wrote of the soul casting aside ‘the diseased things of dread and the contagions of plague, as the coarse broom drives away the house’s filth’ (*Morbida seu ve abicit metus et contagia pestis, / Sic sordes aedis aspera scopas abigit*: *Carmina* 1; Dümmler 1881, 450, lines 231-38). Later, similar imagery was also adopted by Bernard of Clairvaux (died 1153), in a homily on the Virgin’s Assumption (*Sermo secundus in Assumptione Beatae Mariae*, 4. Leclercq & Rochais 1968, 234, lines 19-22), and, perhaps most notably, by the scholastic Peter the Chanter (died 1197), in his *Verbum adbreuiatum*, 2.53 (Boutry 2004, 809-10, lines 72-74, 83-95).

Significantly, this imagery was also known and used in medieval Ireland, perhaps as early as the eighth century. The *Life* of St Molua of Clonfertmulloe tells of the saint’s encounter with a certain layman who was unwilling to openly confess his sins to another. The saint is presented as admonishing the man for this position, making use not only of the relevant image, but also of the very word *scopa* which is itself the origin of the Irish *scúap*:

Nisi quis confessus fuerit sua peccata, veniam a Domino non consequitur. Et sicut pavementum domus cotidie scopas tergitur, ita anima omni die confessione peccatorum mundari indiget (*Vita prior s. Lugidi seu Moluae*, §37; Heist 1965, 139).

Unless one has confessed one’s sins, one does not obtain pardon from the Lord. For just as the floor of a house is cleaned daily with a broom, so every day the soul requires confession of sins to be made clean.

I quote here from the first *Life* of Molua in the *Codex Salmanticensis*, part of the so-called O'Donohue collection which may date from the eighth or ninth century (see Sharpe 1991, 318-34; note, however, the challenge of Breatnach 2005). The other published versions of the *Life* also relate the same episode, and contain the same image (Heist 1965, 386 (§20); Plummer 1910, vol. 2, 216-17 (§30)). This demonstrates that the association of penitential cleansing of the soul with the sweeping of a broom was current in medieval Ireland. Considering the penitential context of the *Scúap Chrábaid* in Ó Cléirigh's copies of the Red Book of Munster, this may help to explain why that prayer was known as the 'Broom of Devotion'.

Our investigation of this 'Broom' has swept us into the nooks and crannies of many unexpected corners, but, when the dust settles, we are left with a number of conclusions. (1) Kuno Meyer's edition of the *Scúap Chrábaid* in fact constitutes a reproduction of a series of litanies from Ó Cleirigh², and is an inaccurate representation of the 'Broom of Devotion'; his §§34-37 (Plummer's 'Litany of the Saviour' and 'Litany of the Virgin and All Saints') do not form part of the *Scúap Chrábaid*. (2) Charles Plummer's edition of the text, as the 'Litany of Jesus I' and 'Litany of Jesus II', is to be preferred, as it more accurately reflects the manuscript transmission and the contents of the *Scúap*. (3) In order to delineate the 'Broom of Devotion', we may adopt Mícheál Ó Cléirigh's definition, based on the lost *Leabhar Ruadh Muimhneach* of Murchad Ó Cuindlis, which suggests that the 'Litany of Jesus I' and 'Litany of Jesus II', when combined in that order, constitute the *Scúap Chrábaid*. (4) Murchad's Red Book was related to the now-lost *Codex Cluanensis* known to John Colgan, which may have been the *Leabhar Ruadh*'s exemplar. (5) The penitential context within which the *Scúap Chrábaid* was transmitted in the Red Book of Munster suggests that the name 'Broom of Devotion' may have arisen because the prayer was understood to function as a penitential sweeping or cleansing of the soul.

Finally, we may conclude with some more general observations. There are many difficulties in establishing the original text of any eighth-century Irish composition, given that the text itself almost always survives in manuscripts written at a much later date, the standard problem of variant readings in the different manuscript copies, and often the poor quality and obscurity of the manuscripts themselves (a feature which was frequently the focus of complaints by the medieval and early modern scribes: see Plummer 1926, 12, 22-25, 28-29). In the case of the litanies, designed for liturgical (or paraliturgical) performance and therefore inherently fluid in response to local and temporal needs, the difficulties are increased further, and it may even be an oxymoron to speak of an 'established text' (see O'Loughlin 2000, 154-57).

The differences between Meyer's and Plummer's editions of the *Scúap Chrábaid*, and the understandable confusion which has often resulted in subsequent

scholarship, provide an apt demonstration of some of the consequences of such difficulties in the transmission of an Old-Irish text. It is certainly convenient for scholars to rely on the apparently-stable text of a modern printed edition, but it can also, on occasion, be dangerous to overlook the surviving manuscript witnesses, as failure to pay sufficient attention to the transmission of a text may inhibit our understanding of the very text we wish to study. The contemporary advent of digital scholarship and, in particular, the excellent digital facsimiles of Irish manuscripts provided by *Meamram Páipéar Ríomhaire / Irish Script on Screen* (<http://www.isos.dias.ie/>) have expanded significantly our ability to access the original witnesses to many early Irish texts (although some important limitations should also be borne in mind, such as the artificial manner in which digital facsimiles may obscure the codicological elements of manuscript study by focusing our attention on the image of a page rather than the codex itself as a physical object). Such resources make it much easier for scholars to consult all surviving versions of an early text, both in manuscript and printed form, thereby improving our scholarship and our understanding of the text(s).

This paper, which presented a comparative study of the two published editions of the *Scúap Chrábaid* and the manuscript sources on which they are based, has demonstrated some of the benefits of such an approach. For example, it has revealed the *Scúap*'s prologue in the Red Book of Munster as the probable source for the entry on Colcu in the *Martyrology of Donegal*, while also noting the close relationship between the Red Book and John Colgan's *codex Cluanensis*. Perhaps most significantly, the penitential context within which the *Scúap Chrábaid* is found in Ó Cléirigh's copies of the Red Book has provided a possible key to deciphering the rather unusual name associated with the text. We may hope that future studies which are similarly sensitive to the transmission of texts in the original manuscripts will further improve our understanding of the Irish litanies and of early Irish literature as a whole.

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Katja Ritari: *Saints and Sinners in Early Christian Ireland: Moral Theology in the Lives of Saint Brigit and Columba*. *Studia traditionis theologiae* 3. Turnhout: Brepols 2009. xiv + 202 pages. Price €55.00. ISBN 9782503533155.

Studia traditionis theologiae: Explorations in Early and Medieval Theology, a new series of monographs from Brepols produced under the direction of Prof. Thomas O’Loughlin, is dedicated to the publication of ‘volumes ... concerned with how the past evolved in the past, and the interplay of theology, culture and tradition’ (as the Brepols website and the volumes’ dust-jackets inform us). The advent of this series is certainly to be welcomed by Celticists: already-published volumes include a study of the sacred topography of early Irish religious sites (D. Jenkins: vol. 4) and the proceedings of the First International Conference on the Science of Computus in Ireland and Europe, held in Galway in 2006 (Ed. I. Warntjes & D. Ó Cróinín: vol. 5), while future monographs are promised on the sources of the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis* (L. Davies), Gildas and the scriptures (T. O’Loughlin) and the christology of Theodore of Tarsus (J. Siemens). Katja Ritari’s study of the moral theology underlying early Irish hagiography, *Saints and Sinners in Early Christian Ireland*, is the first monograph in the series dedicated to a consideration of the theology of the Celtic lands, and it sets a high standard for the volumes which will follow.

Ritari’s study stands at the intersection of a number of significant trends in contemporary scholarship: the rediscovery of hagiography as a rich source for the history of society, capable of providing illuminating insights into the lives of that great mass of ordinary people who have left little to no trace in the historical record; the growing awareness of the need to investigate seriously the theological foundations of much early Irish literature; and a new understanding of hagiographical works as significant theological texts. However, while numerous scholars have begun to examine hagiography as theology in a range of published articles, Ritari’s study is one of the few monographs I have encountered which is dedicated to this new and promising approach.

Ritari’s work provides an in-depth study of three of the earliest saints’ *Lives* produced in medieval Ireland: Cogitosus’ *Vita Brigitae*, Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae*, and the so-called *Vita prima* of St Brigit. Ritari focuses her attention, however, not on the two great saints who are the subjects of these *Lives*, but on the minor characters which populate their pages. Her aim is to examine ‘the question of what it means to be a good Christian’ according to these early medieval *Vitae* (p. 173), and she demonstrates that close study of the saint’s interactions with virtuous and sinful laypeople and clerics can uncover a consistent moral paradigm underlying the varied narratives in the *Lives*: in effect, Ritari reveals the operative moral theology

which informed the work of Adomnán and the authors of the Brigidine *Lives*.

This is an important development in the study of medieval hagiography, which builds on the approach of Le Goff, Schmitt and many other scholars in reading hagiographies against the grain in order to gain insights into the lives of ordinary men and women; Ritari's innovative contribution lies in realizing that much of the grain may have been sown deliberately and consciously, and therefore in reading the saint's *Life* as a text which also reflects on the holiness of the not-quite-so-perfect members of the Christian community. Of course, as Ritari acknowledges, this still confines us to the realm of the ideal rather than the actual: the *Lives* do not tell us of the actual lives of ordinary Christian women and men, but instead present an ideal of the ordinary Christian life as it ought to be, according to the views of the various authors. Nonetheless, the same limitation applies in many ways to more traditional sources of operative moral theology, such as the Penitentials and the *Collectio canonum Hibernensis*, and Ritari's study has important consequences for our understanding of ecclesiastical attitudes towards the laity in seventh- and eighth-century Ireland. Incidentally, this also explains why Ritari excludes the Patrician hagiography of Tírechán and Muirchú from her consideration, for both authors place their protagonist in what they imagine to be a pagan society undergoing conversion. Brigit and Columba, in contrast, are pictured in the midst of a society which is already Christian, and incidental encounters may thus reveal what the hagiographers expected of the ordinary members of Christian society.

Saints and Sinners in Early Christian Ireland opens with an introduction which places the study within its broader historical and theological context and introduces readers to Cogitosus' *Vitae Brigitae* (*VBC*), Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* (*VC*) and the anonymous *Vita prima* of St Brigit (*VPB*). The second chapter examines the saint as the paradigm of holiness to be admired and imitated, focusing on heavenly apparitions of light and angels (which are particularly prevalent in Book iii of *VC*) and the presentation of the saint as already living a heavenly life on earth.

Chapters 3 and 4 represent the core of Ritari's work, examining the presentation of the virtues of good Christians and the antithesis of the good Christian life as revealed in the three *Lives* (the treatment of sinners in chapter 4 including an important discussion of brigands / *dibergaig* and their putative pagan associations). Ritari divides her consideration into three distinct categories, examining the virtues and vices of ecclesiastics (here referring specifically to male clerics and monastics), of laymen, and of women (including female monastics). Ritari's division of the *Vitae*'s minor character along such gendered lines could be challenged, but to my mind it makes good sense, both because of the undoubtedly patriarchal nature of early Irish society and of the nature of Ritari's sources. These are distressingly lop-sided in their treatment of women (as detailed in a comprehensive series of tables on pp. 82-87), with *VPB* containing an impressive and varied number of female characters, whereas the two other *Lives* are notable for the paucity of their references to women.

One notable aspect which emerges from Ritari's discussion of this point is the impact of the saint's own gender on the inclusion of women in their *Vitae* (see pp. 87-88). Given that Columba is a male ecclesiastic, he is generally kept clear of women in the course of his *Life*, presumably to avoid any hint of tarnish to his celibacy and virginity; indeed, of the three women actually brought into the physical presence of Columba in *VC* (see Table 3.3), one is his mother (and even then Columba is safely ensconced within her womb) and a second is immediately murdered on the spot.

Chapter 5 turns to a consideration of the consequences of moral and immoral actions in this life, including a significant treatment of the role of penance in the *Lives*, and a consideration of the miraculous punishments meted out to evildoers. Here Ritari detects an intriguing gradation in *VC*, where the harshest punishments are inflicted on laypeople, with ecclesiastics receiving more lenient treatment, while members of the monastic community of Iona often escape from punishment altogether.

Finally, chapter 6 examines the posthumous consequences of actions, incorporating an important section discussing Adomnán's vision of the destiny of souls. Building on the earlier work of Stalmans and O'Loughlin, Ritari provides a detailed analysis of Adomnán's depictions of the posthumous fate of the soul which suggests that the abbot of Iona may have shared the Augustinian conception of a threefold division between (1) the saints in heaven, (2) the damned in hell, and (3) the not quite so good / not quite so bad in an interim state (which will eventually evolve into purga-

tory). Ritari also draws some illuminating parallels between episodes in *VC* and Athanasius' *Life of Antony* and the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, as well as the apocryphal *Visio sancti Pauli*. Such connections between Adomnán's accounts of angels and demons battling over souls and similar episodes in the *Visio Pauli* (and dependent text such as the Three Utterances Apocryphon and the Dialogue between the Soul and the Body) may provide a fruitful area for future investigations.

Ritari's conclusion provides an admirable summary of her work, briefly addresses the question of the intended audience(s) of the three *Vitae*, and outlines the implication of her study for our understanding of ecclesiastical attitudes towards the laity in early medieval Ireland, engaging some of the important earlier treatments of this debated topic. She concludes that the three *Vitae* generally display a positive attitude towards the laity, who are depicted as belonging within the spectrum represented by the Christian community as a whole; they are also understood as being able to make their way to the kingdom of heaven through their own virtues and by doing penance for their sins.

Ritari furthermore suggests (intriguingly) that Cogitosus may have aimed his work at a lay audience, whereas the *Vita prima* may have been written with ecclesiastics (probably female religious) in mind. Ritari even detects a generally favourable attitude to the laity in the *Vita Columbae*, whose primary audience was undoubtedly the monastic community of Iona, and concludes that lay people too are likely to have been amongst the intended audiences of this work.

Ritari's study therefore challenges the notion that the clerical elite in early Ireland were unconcerned or dismissive of the lay population in general, and reveals the hagiographers as possessing a very definite moral agenda and expectations regarding layperson and cleric alike. While this should come as no surprise in the case of Adomnán (given his legislative endeavours to protect the innocent), it is noteworthy that Cogitosus and the anonymous author of *VPB* also share this view. Indeed, it is significant that the same virtues (such as prudence) and the same vices (such as pride) are praised or condemned in both ecclesiastics and laypeople, and that 'generosity, charity and compassion ... are taken to be the virtues on which an ideal Christian society should be based' (p. 101), and are demanded of all Christians depicted in the *Lives*, regardless of their social or ecclesiastical status.

Ritari's work is to be welcomed as marking a major step forward in the theological understanding of these *Lives*, which she brings into dialogue with the broader Latin theological tradition, represented in particular by a wide-ranging engagement with the corpus of Augustine of Hippo (it may be noted, however, that texts are often cited from Migne's *Patrologia latina* even when preferable editions are available in series such as CCSL and CSEL). Another strength of her study lies in the comparative considerations of episodes in relation to the hagiographical productions of Athanasius, Sulpicius Severus and Gregory the Great, and particularly in her serious engagement with the monastic theology of John Cassian. *Saints and Sinners in Early Christian Ireland* makes a significant contribution to our

growing understanding of Cassian's foundational influence on theology produced in early medieval Ireland, an influence which (in fact) ought to be expected in a church so heavily influenced by monasticism, and which is already alluded to in the *Amra Choluimb Chille*. Indeed, on occasion Ritari is able to discern the differing influence of the varying strands of patristic thought on the various *Lives*, as in her observation at the close of chapter 2 that Adomnán's emphasis on spiritual seeing is in close harmony with Augustine's thought, whereas Brigit's contemplation finds a parallel in Cassian's conception of the monastic life.

It is to be regretted, however, that Ritari did not make more use of the work of Jerome: only his *Vita* of Paul of Thebes is referenced in her study, and she makes no use of his major exegetical works. Although this is somewhat compensated for by the breadth of her interaction with Augustine, it also reflects an occasionally patchy engagement with exegesis in her considerations of various hagiographical narratives. Although there are many fine examples of analyses which are sensitive to the broader theological and exegetical issues (such as her discussion of *VC* ii.41 on pp. 89-92, of *VPB* 35/36 on p. 129, and of *VPB* 97/99 on pp. 131-34),¹ there are also instances in which greater attention to exegesis could

1 I follow Ritari's convention (see p. 22) of providing two enumerative identifiers of the episodes in *VPB*, the first referring to the English translation of Connolly, the second to the Latin edition in Colgan's *Trias thaumaturga*. Thus, *VPB* 97/99 refers to the episode in which Darlughdach overcomes her struggle with lust by burning her feet with coals.

have significantly illuminated the episodes under discussion.

For example, in her discussion of the famous miracle in which Brigit seizes the foot of the altar during her consecration as a virgin, which is thereafter transformed into fresh and living wood (see p. 51), Ritari rightly highlights the connection with the miraculous flowering of Aaron's staff in Numbers 17. However, she makes no reference to the interpretation of this episode as symbolically prefiguring the virginal conception of Christ, which is surely relevant given that the miracle occurs at the very moment when Brigit is dedicating herself to virginity; indeed, it is significant that this very connection between Mary's and Brigit's virginity was explicitly elaborated by Lawrence of Durham in his own account of the miracle, found in his twelfth-century *Life* of the saint which was incorporated into the *Codex Salmanticensis* (§42).

In a similar manner, Ritari's discussion of the sin of pride in the miracles involving lepers in *VPB* 76/77 and 78/79 (see p. 72) could have benefitted from a consideration of exegetical treatments of the stories of Naaman and Gehazi (2 Kings 5) and the ten lepers healed by Christ (Luke 17.11-19). Again, in her consideration (on p. 127) of the jealousy of Dubthach's wife regarding the bond-maid Broicsech, Brigit's mother (*VPB* 1/1-4/4), Ritari correctly observes the influence of the story of Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 21.8-14, and points out that 'the Genesis story is inverted' in the *Vita prima*, since the child of the promise (Brigit) is, in this case, the child of the bondmaid, corresponding to the biblical Ishmael, not Isaac. It is regrettable that Ritari did not delve deeper

in the symbolic significance of the story of Sarah and Hagar, which is also inverted (in a different manner) within the New Testament itself, in Paul's allegorical interpretation in Galatians 4.21-5.1. This Pauline allegory was adopted and further developed by patristic and early medieval exegetes, for example, in Augustine's *City of God* 15.2 and in the Irish commentary on the Catholic Epistles attributed to Hilary (CCSL 108B, p. 67). Such exegesis may help to explain why the author of the *Vita prima* has deliberately inverted the scriptural paradigm, creatively drawing on the Pauline allegory in order to stress that Brigit, although nothing more than the child of a bondmaid and *adaltrach* according to the flesh, should be recognized as a child of the promise according to the spirit.

Finally, it should be noted that in the quotation from *VC* i.1 discussed on p. 40 (*quia quamuis absens corpore praesens tamen in spiritu*) Adomnán is in fact himself quoting 1 Corinthians 5.3 (*ego quidem absens corpore, praesens autem spiritu*), although I believe Ritari is correct in suggesting that the use of this scriptural verse was inspired by Gregory's *Dialogues* ii.12. Similarly, the phrase quoted from *De locis sanctis* iii.4.9 on p. 116 (*Deus ... qui non uult peccatoris mortem sed ut conuertatur et uiuat*) is a variant of Ezekiel 18.23/33.11, which is encountered frequently in patristic and medieval texts.

These, however, are minor quibbles. The overall quality of Ritari's work is clear, and she has done sterling work in situating Cogitosus' *Vitae Brigitae*, Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*, and the *Vita prima* of St Brigit within the mainstream of early Christian

hagiography and the traditions of Western theological thought. *Saints and Sinners in Early Christian Ireland* provides a fresh demonstration of the creative manner in which early Irish intellectuals engaged these inherited theological traditions and offers significant insights into an important area of early Irish society and theology: ecclesiastical attitudes and expectations regarding the laity. As such, it opens a major new window into the moral theology which was operative in the seventh- and eighth-century Irish church, and needs to be consulted by all those interested in studying this topic. I would advise scholars to have a copy of Ritari's book at their elbows, ready for consultation, whenever they open Bieler's *Irish Penitentials* or Wasserschleben's *Irische Kanonensammlung* (or the superior edition which, we may hope, will soon supersede it); in my own future engagements with these works, I shall certainly practise what I preach.

Tomás O'Sullivan
Saint Louis University

Nicholas Evans: *The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press. 2010. 289 pages. Price £57. ISBN 978-1-84383-549-3.

In his book, *The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles*, Nicholas Evans takes a very important look at how the primary Irish chronicles are related to each other, as well as the clues to where each chronicle may have been compiled in the tenth and eleventh centuries. In order to do this

Evans makes as his main focus sections in the 'Annals of Ulster', 'Annals of Tigernach' and *Chronicum Scotorum* that record the tenth and eleventh centuries. He notes that his purpose in writing the book is to complete 'basic source work' in order to provide academics with a foundation on which to build continuing research on the Irish chronicles (p. 225). Evans rightly acknowledges that historians, who pull desired information from the chronicles, often do so 'with little or no evaluation of when or where the items under discussion were written, or whether the item represents a particular viewpoint' (p. 7). This book is a great tool for academics who wish to correct this practice in their own work by showing its reader ways in which to consider the information given by the chroniclers.

The book is divided into eight chapters and three useful appendices. The chapters consist of (1) The 'Annals of Ulster', 912-1100, (2) The characteristics of the 'Annals of Tigernach' and *Chronicum Scotorum*, (3) The Clonmacnoise group 912-1100 and its relationship with the 'Chronicle of Ireland', (4) Shared items in the 'Annals of Ulster' and the Clonmacnoise group, A.D. 912-1100, (5) The restructuring of the past in the 'Chronicle of Ireland', (6) The chronology of the 'Chronicle of Ireland', 431-730, (7) The original chronology of the Irish chronicles, ca 550-730, and (8) The Clonmacnoise-group redaction of medieval history A.D. 431-730 in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The order of the chapters' subjects is well thought out, with each following chapter complementing the progression of Evans's careful consideration of the chronicles.

In the introduction, Evans gives a clear and concise description of each of the main chronicles and their possible origins, along with an account of what can be called the 'hallmark' studies on the chronicles to date. Both in the introduction and throughout the book, Evans does a nice job of discussing other academic works on the Irish chronicles, giving a well-measured account of how each scholar's work contributes to the shared knowledge of the chronicles. He particularly gives a fair and thorough critique of Daniel P. Mc Carthy's recent hypotheses concerning the Irish chronicles.

Chapter one starts out with Evans's consideration of the chronicles by looking at the *Annals of Ulster* during the time period A.D. 912-1100. By taking a close look at what was recorded for the time period, Evans is able to distinguish several key features that point toward where the chronicle was located, as well as what interests the chroniclers had in the events, people and places they wrote about. Through a careful consideration of the chronicle, Evans points toward the 'Annals of Ulster,' from 912 to 938, being kept by individuals in Conaille or Brega who had connections to others in the Patrician community' (p. 43). He points out that the chroniclers seem to have had a keen interest in the Uí Néill and the locations they were active in, as well as the Vikings. Evans notes that written communications within the Patrician *paruchia* were perhaps a main source of information for the chroniclers. He points out the uncertainty of where the 'Annals of Ulster' were kept after A.D. 938, until evidence in the 980s points towards the use of an 'Armagh Chronicle' up until 1100.

In chapter two, Evans takes a preliminary look at both the connections and distinctive features of the 'Annals of Tigernach' and the *Chronicum Scotorum*. Evans's work shows that even though the two chronicles shared a common source, their respective chroniclers chose to modify the information gleaned from that common source. After giving a detailed account of both shared and un-shared items between the two chronicles, he concludes the likelihood that in the mid-twelfth century the ancestor of the 'Annals of Tigernach' and the *Chronicum Scotorum*, was kept at both Clonmacnoise and another location. This in turn leading to the birth of the *Chronicum Scotorum* at Clonmacnoise and another chronicle based on more secular interests.

The evidence presented in chapter three, confirms the belief held by many who have worked on the Irish chronicles that both the 'Annals of Ulster' and the Clonmacnoise group shared the 'Chronicle of Ireland' as a common source up until A.D. 911. During his argument, Evans shows that the 'Chronicle of Ireland' was copied after 912 and used to keep a chronicle in Clonard during the tenth century. In the chapter, Evans agrees with David Dumville that the 'Clonmacnoise-group texts' consisted of two chronicles being kept, but disagrees on how this was done. Evans envisions that the first Clonmacnoise-group text was a continuation of the 'Chronicle of Ireland' at Clonard before being moved to Clonmacnoise ca 1060, while the second could have been compiled since the eighth century.

In chapter four, Evans considers the shared items in the 'Annals of Ulster' and the Clonmacnoise group, by comparing the use

of vocabulary and phraseology in both texts. Evans concedes that the shared items between the 'Annals of Ulster' and the Clonmacnoise group make up a minority of the overall records. He does however point towards the evidence demonstrating that there was an association between chroniclers of the 'Annals of Ulster' and the Clonmacnoise group 'to the mid-eleventh century' (p. 114).

Chapter five gives a very interesting look into the use of written sources from outside Ireland and how these texts were used by the chroniclers in a careful manner to 'restructure' the past and place Ireland within the wider context of Christian history. Evans shows how this rewriting was used to advance Patrick's, Armagh's and other Patrician communities' claims to dominance within the Irish Church. The author shows how outside sources by Bede, Eusebius, Isidore, Marcellinus and the *Liber Pontificalis* were used in the 'Chronicle of Ireland.'

Chapter six gives a very detailed and well-discussed account of what can be gleaned from the chronology of the 'Chronicle of Ireland.' Through a discussion of the chronology, Evans shows that papal and imperial entries were added to the annals at an early date before 911. His discussion of the chronology of the 'Annals of Ulster' and the Clonmacnoise group shows that both of them move away from their common source. This in turn makes each of these texts equal in reliability as sources. After a discussion of ferials and their dating, Evans concludes that those found in the 'Annals of Tigernach' and the *Chronicum Scotorum* 'cannot be used to reconstruct the original chronology of the Irish chronicles' (p. 170).

In chapter seven, Evans considers what can be learned about the original chronology of the Irish chronicles during the period *ca* 550-730. He acknowledges that the sections found before the date of 664 cannot be relied on to form an understanding of the chronicles' chronology, as well as those found after 664. Evans is confident though that a clear picture can be formed of the original chronology from A.D. 664 to 730.

Chapter eight is used to examine the information on secular history found in the Clonmacnoise-group texts in order to comprehend how the chroniclers viewed the past. Evans does this in order to provide those individuals working with the chronicles, information on the reliability of the information that can only be found within the Clonmacnoise group. The information on kingship found in the chronicles for the period A.D. 431-700 is often an important source or information for scholars and their understanding of Irish kingship. Evans does a nice job of considering what can be extracted from the Clonmacnoise group's redaction of history and Irish kingship during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

In his conclusion, Evans argues that the chronicles were possibly used in three ways. The first is the use of the chronicles in conjunction with other texts. One example given is the use of the chronicles with Patrician texts. The second is the use of the chronicles as a source for other works and the third is the use of the chronicles to show continuity with the past by the use of vocabulary.

The author has added three appendices with his monograph. These contain (1) A concordance of A.D. 431-730 including dates and a summary of lost and added ka-

lends, (2) Items shared by AU and AT or CS which are possibly- or definitely-derived from a shared source, and (3) Diagrams of identified textual relationships, developments and sources. The appendices are well structured and are helpful visual aids for the reader.

This book is a must read for individuals interested in the use of the Irish chronicles as a source for understanding 'medieval society,' as well as how the chroniclers themselves understood the history of Ireland and its place within the Christian world. Evans does a superb job of taking the reader step by step through his argument for the Irish chronicles to be seen as a collective group that were not just compiled as a simple chronicling of facts or lists, but instead a collected, written and revised erudite group of sources.

Melanie C. Maddox
University of California, Riverside
Macalester College

Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin: *An Introduction to Early Irish Literature*. Dublin: The Four Courts press. 2009. 210 pages. Price 22.45€ (paperback), 45.00€ (hardback). ISBN 978-1-84682-177-6.

Varhaisirlantilaisesta kirjallisuudesta kiinnostuneille on perinteisesti ollut tarjolla varsin rajallinen määrä hyviä perusteoksia, joita lukemalla voisi saada yleiskuvan Irlannin keskiaikaisesta kertomusperinteestä. Muireann Ní Bhrolcháinin kirja pyrkii osaltaan paikkaamaan tätä puutetta. Takakannen teksti lupaa kirjan soveltuvan sekä Irlannin

keskiajan kulttuuria opiskeleville että tavallisille lukijoille, jotka haluavat tietää enemmän varhaisirlantilaisen kirjallisuuden tarinoista ja runoista. Teos on jaettu yksittäisiin lukuihin selkeän temaanaisesti: kertomusperinteen neljän syklin lisäksi oman lukunsa ovat saaneet tuonpuoleiseen liittyvät kertomukset (luku 6), kuninkuus ja jumalattaret (luku 7), heerokset (luku 8), sekä runous (luku 9).

Johdantoluku taustoittaa kirjan aihepiiriä käsittelemällä yleisesti tarinankerrontaa ja kertomusperinnettä, sekä oppineiden luokien roolia esikristillisessä yhteiskunnassa. Kristinuskon saapumista ja sen aiheuttamia kulttuurisia muutoksia sivutaan lähinnä kirjoitustaidon ja kirjallisen perinteen näkökulmasta. Noin yhden sivun mittainen alaluku 'Oral tradition and written literature' (s. 19-20) antaa varsin pintapuolisen kuvan tutkijoiden erilaisista näkemyksistä koskien varhaisirlantilaisen aineiston luonnetta; hieman laajempi katsaus tutkimushistoriaan olisi ollut johdannossa paikallaan.

Kertomusperinteen esittelyssä Ní Bhrolcháin seuraa vakiintunutta käytäntöä, jossa tarinat on ryhmitelty sykleihin niissä esiintyvien toimijoiden mukaan. Alun perin Myles Dillonin teoksessaan *Early Irish Literature* (1948) käyttämä jaottelu on osoittautunut hyväksi tutkimuksen apuvälineeksi, ja sopii siten myös tämänkaltaiseen yleistekseen. Luku 2, 'Mytologinen sykli', esittelee myyttiseen aikaan sijoitettavia kertomuksia, joiden päähenkilöinä ovat Tuatha Dé Danannin jumalat ja jumalattaret. Mahdolliset yhtymäkohdat mytologisen syklin kertomusten sekä antiikin kirjoittajien kuvaamisen mannerkelttien uskomusperinteen välillä käsitellään luvun alussa ennen siirtymistä

yksittäisiin tarinoihin. Yleisesti ottaen toimivan mannerkelttejä koskevan katsauksen puutteena on viitteiden vähäisyys: lukijoille – niin opiskelijoille kuin muillekin – olisi hyödyllistä tietää, mistä alkuperäislähteistä esimerkiksi Caesarin, Lucanuksen ja Plinius vanhemman tarjoama informaatio on löydettävissä, tai missä nämä viitteet ovat muutoin helposti saatavilla.

Kaikkien kertomussyklejä käsittelevien lukujen pääpaino on niihin kuuluvien kertomusten kuvailevassa esittelyssä pikemmin kuin yksittäisten tekstien analyysissä. Mytologisen syklin kohdalla lukuun on sisällytetty *Cath Maige Tuiredin* ja *Tochmarc Étaíne*n myös *Aisling Oengusa* sekä kenties vähemmän tunnettu *Altram Tíge dá Medar*. Heroista Ulsterin sykliä käsittelevä luku 3 rakentuu *Táin Bó Cuailnge*n siihen kykeuvien tapahtumien, henkilöhaahojen ja muiden tarinoiden ympärille. Juonikuvausten lisäksi Ni Bhrolcháin pyrkii avaamaan *Táin Bó Cuailnge*n liittyviä tutkimusongelmia alaluvussa 'Discussion of the *Táin*', joka tarjoaa hyödyllisen katsauksen tekstin syntyyn ja kehitykseen liittyviin kysymyksiin. Luvut 4 ja 5 esittelevät Finnin syklin sekä kuninkaiden syklin jossain määrin edellisiä lukuja yleisluontoisemmin, johtuen ainakin osaksi siitä, että näiden syklien keskeisiä teemoja käsitellään kirjassa yksityiskohtaisemmin toisaalla. Täten esimerkiksi Finn Mac Cu-

maill esiintyy Cú Chulainnin ohella esimerkiksi heeroksena luvussa 8, ja kuninkaiden syklin Suibhne Geilt luvun 7 alaluvussa 'Madness in Early Irish Literature'. Yksittäisiä syklejä seuraavien lukujen tarkoituksena on siten yhtäältä laajentaa näkökulmaa selaisiin aihepiireihin, joiden voidaan katsoa määrittävän varhaisirlantilaista kertomusperinnettä yleisemmällä tasolla, ja toisaalta esitellä myös teemoja, jotka eivät suoranaisesti lukeudu kertomussykliin piiriin.

Ni Bhrolcháin kirja sopii hyvin perusteokseksi kaikille varhaisirlantilaisesta kertomusperinteestä kiinnostuneille, ja myös esimerkiksi aihetta käsittelevän luento-opetuksen oheislukemistoksi. Aihepiiriin syvemmin vihkiytyneille opiskelijoille tai tutkijoille teoksella on todennäköisesti vähemmän tarjottavaa, vaikka varsin laajaa bibliografiaa voikin pitää hyödyllisenä sinänsä. Kirjaan eksyneet muutamat kirjoitusvirheet ja paikoittain esiintyvä asioiden turha toisto tuskin häiritsevät muita kuin kaikkein tarkkasilmäisimpiä lukijoita. Aika näyttää, pystyykö Ni Bhrolcháin teos syrjäyttämään Dillonin yli kuusi vuosikymmentä sitten julkaistun *Early Irish Literature*n; uutena hyvänä yleisesityksenä se on joka tapauksessa tervetullut.

Alexandra Bergholm
Helsingin yliopisto

