

## **Studia Celtica Fennica No. II, 2005**

Suomen keltologisen seuran vuosikirja  
Årsbok för Finlands keltologiska sällskap  
Yearbook of the Finnish Society for Celtic Studies

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Julkaisija – Utgivare – Publisher: **Suomen keltologinen seura ry –  
Finlands keltologiska sällskap rf – Finnish Society for Celtic Studies SFKS**

Osoite – Adress – Address: Tieteiden talo, Kirkkokatu 6, 00170 Helsinki

Internet: [www.sfks.org](http://www.sfks.org)

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Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy, Saarijärvi

Syyskuu – September 2005

ISSN 1795–097X

Hinta – Pris – Price: 15 euro

**Studia Celtica Fennica II, 2005**  
**Essays in Honour of Anders Ahlqvist**



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## Johdanto



Anders Ahlqvistia voidaan täydellä syyllä kutsua suomalaisen keltologian isäksi. Hän on ensimmäinen suomalainen, joka on luonut uran kelttiläisten kielten tutkijana ja opettajana. Anders on onnistunut myös tartuttamaan kiinnostuksensa ja innostuksensa kelttiläisiä kulttuureita kohtaan melkoiseen joukkoon suomalaisia opiskelijoita.

Helsingin yliopistossa suoritettujen klassisen ja pohjoismaisen filologian sekä yleisen kielitieteen opintojen jälkeen Anders lähti 1960-luvun lopussa Dubliniin opiskelemaan kelttiläisiä kieliä. Hän väitteli vuonna 1974 Edinburghin yliopistossa Skotlannissa keltologiasta ja työskenteli muutaman vuoden tutkijana Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies –tutkimuskeskuksessa. Vuodesta 1976 lähtien Anders on opettanut muinaiiiriä Galwayn yliopistossa, 1993 lähtien muinaiiirin henkilökohtaisen professorin virassa, josta hän tänä vuonna jäi eläkkeelle.

Anders on opettanut myös Suomessa vuosikymmenien ajan: hän on toiminut Helsingin yliopiston yleisen kielitieteen laitoksella keltologian dosenttina vuodesta 1979 opettaen muinaiiiriä ja sosiolingvistisiä kursseja. Suuri osa seuramme aktiivijäsenistä on ollut hänen oppilaanaan. Erityisen tarmokkaasti professori Ahlqvist on tukenut nuorten opiskelijoiden hakeutumista opiskelemaan Irlantiin: allekirjoittanutkin sai aikoinaan Andersilta tietää Irlannin ja Suomen kahdenvälisestä kulttuurinvaihto-sopimuksesta, jonka turvin 2 stipendiaattia pääsi vuosittain irlantilaiseen yliopistoon sekä sai sitä kautta rahoituksen vuoden opintoihin Irlannissa.

Vuonna 1990 Anders ja muutama keltologian alan aktiivi päättivät perustaa harrastuksensa tueksi tieteellisen seuran, jolle annettiin nimeksi Suomen keltologinen seura. Anders toimi seuran 1. esimiehenä vuosina 1990–1995. Andersin esimieskaudella SFKS järjesti aktiivisesti keltologian alan seminaareja: vuonna 1991 Espoon Hanasaassa, vuonna 1993 Turussa ja vuonna 1995 Helsingissä, johon saapui joukko eturivin keltologeja Euroopasta ja Amerikasta. Myös pohjoismainen keltologinen seura, *Societas Celtologica Nordica*, toimi 1990-luvun alussa aktiivisesti ja Andersin hakemien avustusten turvin opiskelijatkin

pääsivät osallistumaan Ruotsissa järjestettyihin kansainvälisiin keltologisiin seminaareihin.

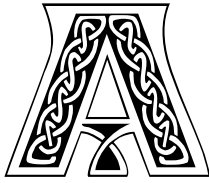
Anders Ahlqvist täytti tänä vuonna 60 vuotta. Juhlan kunniaksi seuramme järjesti Anders Ahlqvist -luennon, johon kutsuttiin puhumaan professori Tomás Ó Cathasaigh Harvardin yliopistosta. On harvinaista, että luentosarjoja nimetään vielä elossa olevien oppineiden mukaan. Koska Anders on kuitenkin jo varmistanut kuolemattomuutensa suomalaisen keltologian perustajana, lienee kohtuullista, että hän pääsee itsekin nauttimaan juhluennoistaan.

Tämä vuosikirja on omistettu Andersille tunnustuksena hänen työstään suomalaisen keltologian hyväksi sekä kiitoksena entisiltä ja nykyisiltä oppilailta, kollegoilta ja ystäviltä ystävydestä, kiinnostuksesta ja tuesta, jota hän on meitä kohtaan vuosien varrella osoittanut. Juhlakirjana se ei ole kenties aivan perinteinen, sillä artikkeleita voidaan pitää seuran toimintaan luotuina katsauksina, jotka heijastelevat seuran jäsenten kiinnostuksen kohteita ja tutkimusaloja. Kirjan artikkeleiden aihepiirit vaihtelevatkin melkoisesti: Andersin perintönä seuraamme on kotiutunut avarakatseisuutta, joka on mahdollistanut suhteellisen laajan ja hyvin erilaisista lähtökohdista nousevan keltologian harrastajajoukon. Myös professori Ó Cathasaighin juhlaluento julkaistaan tässä kirjassa.

Kiitämme opetusministeriötä apurahasta, jonka turvin pystyimme järjestämään Andersin juhlaluennon, sekä Glyn Banksiä suomalaisten kirjoittajien englannin kielen tarkastamisesta.

Riitta Latvio

## Editorial



Anders Ahlqvist may with reason be called the ‘founding father’ of Finnish Celtic Studies. He is the first Finnish person to have made his career in Celtic Studies as a teacher and a scholar. Anders has also managed to spread his enthusiasm and interest in Celtic languages and cultures among a considerable group of Finnish students, thus securing a continuation for Celtic Studies in Finland.

Having finished his studies in Classical and Nordic Philology and General Linguistics, Anders left for Dublin at the end of the 1960s to learn Celtic languages. He submitted his doctoral thesis in Celtic Studies at the University of Edinburgh in 1974 and worked subsequently as a researcher for a few years in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. In 1976 he got a post as a lecturer and in 1993 was appointed to a personal chair in Old Irish at the University of Galway, from which post he retired this year.

Anders has also taught in Finland for decades: he has been a docent in University of Helsinki at the Department of General Linguistics since 1979 giving courses in Old Irish and Sociolinguistics. Many of the active members in our society attended his courses. As a teacher Anders has always devoted a special interest to furthering the studies of his students in Ireland: yours truly is one of the many who heard of scholarships and grants from Anders and could spend a year in an Irish university doing Celtic Studies.

In 1990 Anders and a few enthusiasts decided to found an academic society, the Finnish Society for Celtic Studies SFKS to promote an interest in Celtic Studies in Finland. Anders acted as the first president of the society in 1990–1995. During Anders’ presidency the society organised several symposia in Celtic Studies: the first in Hanasaari, Espoo in 1991, another in Turku in 1993 and the internationally widest ranging one in Helsinki 1995, which was attended by several prominent Celtic scholars from Europe and the USA. The Nordic sister organisation, *Societas Celtologica Nordica* was also active in the beginning of the 1990s and with grants applied for by Anders even students were able to participate in Nordic seminars on Celtic Studies.

Anders Ahlqvist turned 60 this year. To celebrate the occasion SFKS organised an Anders Ahlqvist lecture and invited professor Tomás Ó Cathasaigh from Harvard University as the speaker. It is rare that lecture series are named after living scholars. Yet we felt that since Anders has already secured his undying renown as the founder of Celtic Studies in Finland, it is only fair that he should be able to enjoy the lectures carrying his name.



This yearbook of the Finnish society of Celtic Studies is dedicated to Anders as a recognition of his contribution to Finnish Celtic Studies and as a thanks from his former and present students, colleagues and friends for the friendship, attention and support he has devoted to us over the years. As a Festschrift it may not belong to the most conventional ones: the articles included present a sort of a survey of the activities of the society, reflecting the interests and fields of study of the society members. The topics are wide-ranging: part of Anders' legacy is a certain broadmindedness, which has enabled a relatively large group of people with diverse backgrounds to do Celtic Studies in our society. Also, the lecture given by Professor Ó Cathasaigh is published in this yearbook.

We wish to thank the Finnish Ministry of Education for financial support, which enabled us to organise the Anders Ahlqvist lecture and Glyn Banks for checking the English of the Finnish authors.

Riitta Latvio



## Tabula Gratulatoria

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Anders Ahlqvist



The First Anders Ahlqvist Lecture  
**Irish Myths and Legends**

**Tomás Ó Cathasaigh**

Harvard University

 It is a very great privilege for me to have been asked to give the first Anders Ahlqvist lecture. Anders is being honoured for his outstanding scholarly and personal qualities, and of course for the immense contribution he has made to Celtic Studies in Finland. The quality that I should like to mention today is his singular generosity, as friend, as scholar, as teacher, and as mentor. His generosity was once again to the fore when Anders and I discussed this lecture. It became clear that he did not covet this kind of tribute during his lifetime, even if everybody else felt that it was no more than his due. He suggested, and I readily agreed, that this would be a good opportunity to honour the memory of Máirtín Ó Briain, who died in March 2004 at the age of 51. Máirtín, a fine Celtic scholar, was a colleague of Anders's in National University of Ireland, Galway. He was a graduate of University College Dublin, where I may say that he was my first student of Early Irish, and I his first teacher of it. His scholarship ranged widely: he was equally at ease with Old, Middle and Modern Irish, and with language, literature and folklore. Besides his friendship with Anders, he had a particular connection with Helsinki, for he spoke at a symposium here ten years ago, and his paper on 'The Conception and Death of Fionn Mac Cumhaill's Canine Cousin' was included in the proceedings of that conference, *Celtica Helsingiensia*, which was published in 1996 by the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters (Ó Briain 1996). Máirtín was truly 'a scholar and a gentleman'. His death at the age of 51 was a great blow to Irish scholarship, and he is hugely missed by those of us who were his friends.

An immense body of narrative lore has come down to us in Irish manuscripts, and the earliest surviving tales are probably to be dated to the seventh or the early eighth century. Literacy in the vernacular came early to Ireland. We know that there were Christians in Ireland in 431 A.D. for Pope Celestine sent them a bishop in that year. These Irish Christians must have had men among them

who were literate in Latin. Some degree of literacy in the Irish language was present even earlier than the fifth century, however: evidence for this is found in the nature of the ogam alphabet. The oldest surviving records of the Irish language are ogam inscriptions incised in stone. Something under four hundred of these inscriptions survive, and they generally consist of a personal name in the genitive case, accompanied, more often than not, by the name of that person's father or other ancestor. The earliest inscriptions probably date to the fifth and sixth centuries, and some may belong to the fourth (McManus 1991, 40). The invention of the ogam alphabet cannot be later than the fourth century (MacManus 1991, 41), and Ahlqvist (1983, 10) has suggested that it may date to the end of the second century or the beginning of the third. We know nothing of the identity of the inventor of this alphabet, but we can be sure that he knew Latin and that his invention entailed an analysis of the Irish language. It is possible that ogam may have been used to inscribe on wooden tablets what D.A. Binchy (1961, 9) called 'an elementary type of written literature', but nothing of the kind survives. The only such tablets that we have are six that were found in Springmount Bog (near Ballymena, County Antrim) in 1913: they have been dated to the later years of the sixth century (Ó Cuív 1984, 87) and bear portions of the psalms in Latin.

The literature that survives from the early Irish period, in Irish and in Latin, is the product of an intellectual elite that included ecclesiastical scholars and learned poets (*filid*, singular *fili*). The *filid* were the most prestigious of the *óes dána* ('men of art') in early Ireland: they were highly trained and their power largely resided in their role as purveyors of praise and blame. The *filid* seem to have arrived at an early accommodation with the Church. The sixth-century monastic Saint Colm Cille (Columba) is traditionally represented as a defender of the *filid*, and this seems to have an historical basis. In the life of Colm Cille written in the seventh century by his kinsman Adomnán, Colm Cille is depicted as a patron of the Irish-language poets, who would entertain them and invite them to sing songs of their own composition. Colm Cille was the subject of the *Amra Choluim Chille* 'The Eulogy of Colm Cille', which is attributed to the *fili* Dallán Forgaill and is generally considered to have been composed shortly after the saint's death.

Another poet who is considered to be emblematic of 'the fusion of native tradition and Christianity in sixth-century Ireland' (Watkins 1976, 275) is Colmán mac Lénéni (died c. 606). Colmán was a *fili* who became a cleric late in life. Some fragments of his work have been preserved, and in one of the surviving quatrains clearly dating from his time as a cleric, Colmán uses legal language to say that his poem has not been composed for earthly reward, but rather for the grace of God (Watkins 1976, 274–75). The word used for 'grace' in this connection is not (as one

might expect) a borrowing from Latin, but rather a native Irish word *rath* that is used of the fief given by a lord to his vassal or 'client'. Colmán's talent and skill as a *fili*, which he had been using in the service of secular kings, will henceforth be devoted to praise of God.

The indications are that in early Ireland storytelling was a function of the *filid*, but we cannot say what the relationship may have been between the stories narrated by the *filid* and those that survive in the manuscripts. Some scholars have emphasized those features of the material that reflect an inheritance from Celtic or even Proto-Indo-European culture, while others have chosen to highlight the innovative character of the tales, and the ecclesiastical and Latin influences on their formation. These need not be mutually exclusive positions. In what I have to say, I shall refer from time to time to inherited features of the material, but I shall also be at pains to point to ways in which the narrative literature is at one with the laws and the wisdom literature.

Irish tales were classified according to their titles. Some of these have to do with major events in the life of an individual, such as *comperta* ('conceptions'), *aitheda* ('elopements'), *tochmarca* ('wooings'), *echtraí* ('expeditions [to the Otherworld]'), *immrama* 'sea-voyages', and *aite / aideda* ('violent deaths'). Others relate momentous or cataclysmic events in the social and political history of population groups, such as *catha* ('battles'), *tomadmann* ('eruptions [of lakes or rivers]'), *tochomlada* ('migrations'), *oircne* ('slaughters, destructions'), *togla* ('destructions'), and *tána bó* ('cattle raids').

Modern commentators have found it convenient to classify the material according to cycles. Mythological Cycle deals with the gods and goddesses, and I would prefer to speak of the Cycles of the Gods and Goddesses (Ó Cathasaigh 1983, 11). The Ulster Cycle depicts a Heroic Age in Ireland's past, and celebrates the acts of a warrior caste. The Fenian cycle also recounts the heroic deeds of fighting men, but these are hunter-warriors, and the Ulster and Fenian cycles 'differ profoundly in their characters, their milieu, their ethos and their provenance' (Rees & Rees 1961, 62). The Cycles of the Kings focus on the lives of prehistoric and historic kings, and have to do as well with the activities of saints and poets. The Irish church also produced a formidable number of Saints' Lives, first in Latin and then in Irish.

What I propose to do today is to focus on a few of the more important texts. The account which I shall give of the material will be a somewhat personal one, and I have no doubt that my biases will be readily apparent. I begin with *Cath Maige Tuired* 'The Battle of Mag Tuired' (Gray 1982), which is by common consent the most important of our mythological tales. The text that has come down would



seem to be a composite work put together by an eleventh or twelfth-century redactor mainly from ninth-century material (Murphy 1955, 19), and it deals with a conflict between the Túatha Dé Danann and the Fomoiri, culminating in a great battle at Mag Tuired (Moytirra, Co. Sligo) in which the Túatha Dé Danann are victorious. This battle is included in the schema of legendary prehistory which came to be known as *Leabhar Gabhála Éireann* ‘The Book of the Taking of Ireland’, often referred to as ‘The Book of Invasions’, and which tells of six prehistoric invasions of Ireland (Rees & Rees 1961, 104). It is also concerned with the origin of physical features, boundaries, and names, and with the genesis of Irish customs and institutions. The last three ‘invasions’ were those of the Fir Bolg, Túatha Dé Danann, and the Children of Míl or Gaels. The ‘first’ battle of Mag Tuired was fought between the Túatha Dé Danann and the Fir Bolg. Our text is concerned with the ‘second’ battle, in which the Túatha Dé Danann vanquished the Fomoiri.

The Túatha Dé Danann (‘The Tribes of the Goddess Danu’) are in large measure Irish reflexes of the gods of the Celts, and it is possible to see among them some intimations of a Celtic pantheon (Mac Cana 1970, 23–41). The Fomoiri, whose name derives from *fo* ‘under’ + *mor* ‘spectre’, are malevolent and somewhat shadowy personages. The hero of the Túatha Dé Danann, the young god who leads them to victory at Mag Tuired, is Lug, the Irish reflex of a Celtic god who is commemorated in numerous Continental place-names, and whose Welsh equivalent is called Lleu. According to *Cath Maige Tuired*, the Túatha Dé Danann king of Ireland, Núadu, had an arm lopped off in battle. He had to relinquish the kingship, for an Irish king was required to be unblemished. He was succeeded – at the behest of the womenfolk of the Túatha Dé Danann – by Bres, whose relationship to the Túatha Dé Danann was through his mother. His father was of the Fomoiri: he had come over the sea to Ireland, impregnated Bres’s mother, and left her. Bres proved to be a thoroughly unworthy king, and the Túatha Dé Danann forced him to abdicate. Núadu in the meantime had been fitted with a silver arm, and he again became king. Bres went into exile, and gathered together a great army to invade Ireland.

In *Cath Maige Tuired*, Lug comes as a stranger to Tara, traditionally the seat of the kings of Ireland, and seeks admittance to Núadu’s court. He is opposed by an official of Núadu’s, who asks him repeatedly to name a skill that would entitle him to enter Tara. Lug names a remarkable number of skills, one by one, and is told each time that there is already a practitioner of that skill in Tara. He is not to be bested, however: he asks whether there is anyone in Tara who possesses all of those skills, and of course there is no such person. The king then decrees that Lug should be admitted to Tara. At first Lug sits in the sage’s seat, but Núadu decides

that Lug will be just the one to liberate the Túatha Dé Danann from the degradations of the Fomoiri. He therefore changes places with Lug, who thus becomes king.

Lug's father was Cian of the Túatha Dé Danann and his mother was a daughter of Balor of the Fomoiri. Balor had a destructive eye that would disable an entire army if they looked at it. In the decisive act of the battle, Lug casts a sling stone at Balor's eye that carries it through his head, so that it is the Fomoiri that look at it. Balor dies, and by killing his own maternal grandfather, Lug ensures victory for the Tuatha Dé Danann. He goes on to spare Bres's life, and in return Bres has to reveal the secrets of ploughing, sowing, and reaping.

*Cath Maige Tuired* is the Irish version of the War of the Gods, an Indo-European theme that is well known from Greek and Scandinavian mythology and can be seen in Indian and Persian mythology as well. Georges Dumézil has interpreted this theme in terms of the tripartite structure that he posited for Proto-Indo-European ideology. This comprises three functions: the sacred, including sovereignty; physical force; and a third function, fertility, that includes food production.<sup>1</sup> In the War of the Gods Dumézil sees a contest between a group who are competent in the first and second functions and one who are competent in the third. The first of these groups vanquishes the second and incorporate them, thus achieving competence in all three functions. In the Irish version, the Túatha Dé Danann did not actually incorporate the defeated Fomoiri, but they did acquire competence in agriculture when the battle was over and Lug wrested the secrets of ploughing, sowing and reaping from Bres (Dumézil 1968, 289–90). Moreover, Lug achieves victories over Núadu (who tries to exclude Lug from the seat of kingship at Tara), Balor (on the battlefield), and Bres (who is obliged to yield up the secrets of agriculture in exchange for his life): in this sequence he establishes his pre-eminence in kingship, physical force and food production, thereby encompassing all three of the domains which belong to the tripartite structure (Ó Cathasaigh 1983, 71–73).

Bres's reign stands in contrast to that of Lug. His relationship with the Túatha Dé Danann is a contractual one, and, as Dumézil (1943, 230–41) has seen, his failure to fulfill his obligations to his people signals the breakdown of the social contract: a king is obliged to show generosity to his subjects, and Bres declines to do so. What is in question here is the relationship between *rí* and *túath*. There was a hierarchy of kings in early Ireland, but even the most powerful of kings was basically ruler of a single *túath* (Byrne 1973, 41). The reciprocal pair *túath* and *rí* is of Indo-European origin: the small tribal unit (*\*teutā-*) ruled by a powerful chieftain

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<sup>1</sup> There is a useful account in Rees & Rees 1961, 112.

(\**reg-*) belongs to the reconstructed lexicon of Indo-European (Watkins 2000, xxxiv). In *Cath Maige Tuired* the Túatha Dé Danann are variously called Túatha Dé or Túath Dé, but in those parts of the text that recount the reign of Bres, the singular is always used. Moreover, the election of Bres to the kingship is described in technical legal language: for the obligations that the king must discharge to his people the word used is *folad*, and it is his failure in this respect that prompts his *túath* to depose him (Ó Cathasaigh 1986, 149). Thomas Charles-Edwards (1994) has shown that the Irish law tract *Críth Gablach* describes a contract between king and people: the king has obligations (*folad*) to his people, and they have obligations to him. He observed that the contractual approach to kingship in *Críth Gablach* is unlikely to have its roots in canon law, ‘nor is it to be explained by any influence from Greek or Roman political thought for it stems from native ideas of lordship and contract’ (Charles-Edwards 1994, 119). We may add here that those very same ‘native ideas of lordship and contract’ find narrative expression in the account of Bres’s reign in *Cath Maige Tuired*.

An equally important ideological concern in *Cath Maige Tuired* is that of kinship, and the contrast between Lug, who is related to the Túatha Dé Danann through his father, and Bres who is related to them through his mother. Bres is what is known as a ‘sister’s son’ and the Túatha Dé Danann are his maternal kin. The eighth-century poet Blathmac son of Cú Brettan son of Congus of the Fir Roiss in what is now County Monaghan wrote at length about Christ in verse that he addressed to Christ’s mother, Mary (Carney 1964). For him Jesus was a ‘sister’s son’ of the Israelites and their slaying of him was *finjal*, which is the crime of slaying a member of one’s own kindred. This was a particularly heinous crime in early Ireland, as it was the duty of the kindred to avenge the death of one of their members, and this would not be practicable if the perpetrator of the crime was himself a kinsman. In *Cath Maige Tuired*, Bres fails his maternal kinsmen; in Blathmac’s presentation of the story of Christ, the Israelites fail their sister’s son. I may add that Blathmac also sees their slaying of Christ as a repudiation of their legal obligation to him as lord (Ó Cathasaigh 1986, 130–31).

The conceptual framework of *Cath Maige Tuired* is reflected in the way in which an eighth-century Irish poet interpreted and presented the life of Christ, and also in *Críth Gablach*, which Charles-Edwards (1986, 73) has described as ‘one of the few outstanding pieces of social analysis in early medieval Europe’. Some at least of the contents of *Cath Maige Tuired* were inherited from oral tradition, but the ideology that it expresses was clearly of vital concern in the literate Christian community of early Ireland.

The Ulster Cycle celebrates the exploits of the warriors of the Ulaid, and especially those of Cú Chulainn. The king of Ulster is Conchobor, and his court is at Emain Macha (now Navan Fort, near Armagh). There is a state of endemic warfare between the Ulstermen and the people of Connacht who were ruled by Ailill and Medb; their court is at Crúachu (now Rathcroghan in County Roscommon). The traditional date of the Ulster heroes is the century before Christ. The centerpiece of the cycle is *Táin Bó Cúailnge* 'The Cattle-Raid of Cooley', often referred to as the *Táin* (O'Rahilly 1976; Kinsella 1970). It tells of an invasion of Ulster by a great army ('the men of Ireland') led by Medb and Ailill; its purpose is to carry off the Brown Bull from the Cooley peninsula in what is now County Louth. The raid lasts for the three months of winter; during this time the men of Ulster are debilitated, and its defence falls to Cú Chulainn. Clustered around the *Táin* there is a group of foretales, which provide background information on circumstances in which the raid took place and the personages who were involved on either side.

One of the foretales is *Compert Con Culainn* 'How Cú Chulainn Was Begotten' (Kinsella 1970, 21–25). Cú Chulainn had a divine father, Lug, and a human one, Súaltaim. According to his birth-tale some birds visited Emain Macha and devoured its vegetation to the very roots. The Ulstermen pursued the birds, which led them to Bruig na Bóinne (Newgrange and associated monuments at the bend of the Boyne). In early Irish literature Bruig na Bóinne is a localization of the Otherworld. A child was born during the night, and Conchobor's sister Dechtine took the child back to Emain. The child died, and Lug appeared to Dechtine in a dream telling her that he was the father of the child, and he had implanted the very same child into her womb. He told her that the boy would be called Sétantae. When Dechtine was visibly pregnant, Conchobor betrothed her to Súaltaim. She was ashamed to go pregnant to her husband's bed, and she aborted the boy. Then she slept with Súaltaim: she conceived again and bore a son, Sétantae, who was later given the name Cú Chulainn.

This is one of the most remarkable of the many Irish *comperta* (Rees & Rees 1961, 213–43). The hero has a threefold conception. He is first begotten at Bruig na Bóinne by Lug upon his unnamed Otherworld consort; then at Emain by Lug upon Dechtine; and finally by Súaltaim upon Dechtine. In the first conception, the parents are both divine; in the third they are both human. In the second conception the father is divine and the mother human. We see in this sequence how the hero mediates the opposition between god and man.

It has been shown that the lives of many traditional heroes follow a largely uniform plot or pattern, which is sometimes called the heroic biography. The conception and birth of the hero is an essential part of the pattern. Other episodes in

Cú Chulainn's heroic biography are his Boyhood Deeds, which are recounted in the course of the cattle-raid in the *Táin; Tochmarc Emire* 'The Wooing of Emer', which tells how he overcame formidable obstacles to win the hand of Emer in marriage; *Serglige Con Culainn* 'The Wasting Sickness of Cú Chulainn', dealing with his adventures in the Otherworld; and the story of his violent death.

We have seen that Cú Chulainn's father Lug was a hero among the gods, and that he distinguished himself as a king, as a warrior, and in the domain of food production. Cú Chulainn, on the other hand, is a martial hero. The old words for such a hero 'express the notions of fury, ardour, tumescence, speed. The hero is the furious one possessed of his own tumultuous and blazing energy' (Sjoestedt 1949, 58–59.) This aspect of the hero is most dramatically expressed in Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad*, the physical distortion that seizes him when he is angered, and for which Kinsella uses the inspired term 'warp-spasm'. The martial ethos of the Ulster Cycle is also seen in the wolf-cult which underlies the names: the king, Conchobor, is the 'Hound / Wolf-Desiring One', the great warrior Conall (Cernach) is the 'Hound / Wolf-Powerful One', and Cú Chulainn himself is the 'Hound / Wolf of Culann'. One of the initiatory episodes in the 'Boyhood Deeds' tells how Sétantae faced a fierce mastiff and slaughtered it with his bare hands. The hero assumes the role and name of the vanquished hound: henceforth he is 'The Hound of Culann'.

Cú Chulainn received his training as a warrior from the Amazonian Scáthach. He was a supreme master of the martial arts, with a formidable repertoire of 'feats' (O'Rahilly 1976, 173). In the course of his defence of Ulster, Cú Chulainn faces a number of opponents in single combat, but the greatest of them was his foster-brother Fer Diad. He too was trained by Scáthach, and in their encounter in the *Táin* the foster-brothers perform the feats that they learned from her. In the end, Cú Chulainn achieves victory by using a feat which was taught only to him: the deployment of a strange weapon known as the *gae bulga* which enters a body as a single barb, but once inside becomes twenty-four. He is remarkable for his words as well as his deeds: in the single combats, he shows his verbal dexterity as well as courage and skill. He craves fame above all else: provided that his name live after him he will be content with a short life. But his motivation in the *Táin* is far from being purely egotistical. He is fiercely loyal to his mother's brother. The men of Ulster are at one with Cú Chulainn in their *condalbae* (love of kindred), and that I believe is what determines the outcome of the cattle-raid, bringing victory to the Ulstermen over the invaders.

Finn mac Cumhaill (Mod. Ir. Fionn Mac Cumhaill) is the leader of a band (or bands) of hunter-warriors. The Irish word for such a band was *flan*, and it is from this that the Fenian Cycle (Early Ir. *fiánaigeacht*, Mod. Ir. *fiannaíocht*) derives

its name. It recounts Finn's exploits, and those of his followers, as they hunt, fight, conduct raids, and live an open-air nomadic life. It is sometimes called the Finn-Cycle, and yet another name for it is the Ossianic Cycle, after Finn's son Oisín, the Scottish Gaelic form of which is Oisean. The oldest texts, which are very short, date from the seventh century onwards. The twelfth century saw the composition of *Acallamh na Seanórach* 'The Colloquy of the Ancient Men', and the formation of a ballad literature about the Fíana. *Acallamh na Seanórach* has recently been translated by Ann Dooley and Harry Roe as *Tales of the Elders of Ireland* (1999). Ballads and poems continued to be composed after the twelfth century and there were also new prose tales. The Fenian material is abundantly represented in the folk tradition of the twentieth century.

This was to become the best known of the cycles outside Ireland and Scotland, thanks to the Scotsman, James Macpherson. He published two works *Fingal* (1762) and *Temora* (1763), and claimed that they were translated from epic poems composed by 'Ossian' in the third and fourth centuries A.D. While a vigorous debate was to ensue as to the authenticity of these works, they did enjoy an enormous vogue in Romantic Europe, and the names of Fingal (Macpherson's version of Finn), Ossian and Ossian's son Oscar were widely known in the nineteenth century (Knott & Murphy 1966, 145–46).

Finn was assigned a place in the synthetic history that was concocted in the Irish schools: he is there said to have been captain of the professional soldiery of Cormac mac Airt in the early third century A.D. Gerard Murphy points out (Knott and Murphy 1966, 147–48) that both the oldest stories about Finn and modern folklore point definitely to Finn's having been originally a mythological figure, and he shows that Finn is comparable in some important respect to the god Lug. Just as Lug opposes the one-eyed Balar, whose eye used to burn up whatever it looked on directly, Fionn likewise has for his chief opponent Aodh who was nicknamed Goll: Aodh means 'fire' and Goll means 'one-eyed'. Finn's opposition to what Rees and Rees have called 'a supernatural malevolent burner' (Rees & Rees 1961, 66) is a recurrent element in the cycle. One of the manifestations of this burner is Aillén mac Midna who, blowing fire from his mouth, burned Tara every Samain. Finn kills Aillén as he is about to escape into a *síd* (Dooley & Roe 1999, 52–54). Another point of comparison, which has been noted by Alwyn and Brinley Rees, is that Finn ousts from the *síd* of Almu his maternal grandfather Tadg son of Nuadu, who was responsible for the slaying of Finn's father by Goll/ Aodh, and that in

tales recorded in the modern period, Balor (who it will be remembered is Lug's maternal grandfather) is responsible for the death of Lug's father.<sup>2</sup>

Like Cú Chulainn, Finn is credited with a number of 'Boyhood Deeds' (Nagy 1985, 209–18), for which we depend upon what Murphy describes this as the 'poorly constructed but valuable account' of an incomplete text in a manuscript of the fifteenth century. Finn, we are told, was born after the slaying of his father, and he was brought up secretly in the wild by two women-warriors (*fénidi*) because his life was in danger. He is triumphant in contests with other boys, shows himself superior to his elders at deer hunting, and acquires arms and vanquishes a wild beast. He avenges his father's killing and acquires his father's treasure. He then goes on to acquire wisdom: he studies the craft of poetry under Finn Éices (The Poet Finn). One day he burns his thumb on 'the salmon of wisdom' and when he bites his thumb truth is revealed to him. The 'thumb of wisdom' is his from then on. A further defining adventure awaits him: he slays Aodh, son of Fidga, with a poisonous spear that he has acquired from Fíacail ('Tooth') son of Conchenn ('Doghead'), a spear that, if left in the *síd*, could cause rabies in the land. This is Finn's *Samain* (Halloween) adventure: he acts when the *síde* are open and the murderous Aodh is passing from one *síd* to another. Finn acquires the spear as a reward for his wonderful deed.

The 'Boyhood Deeds' of Cú Chulainn and of Finn define them as heroes. And we see in these adventures that the heroism of one will be very different from that of the other. As Nagy (1984) has shown, Cú Chulainn's 'Boyhood Deeds' have to do with the integration of the hero into Ulster society, whereas those of Finn emphasize his extra-social character. Sjoestedt drew a distinction between 'the hero of the tribe' (Cú Chulainn) and 'the heroes outside the tribe' (the *fián*-warriors). This distinction has won wide acceptance, and it is appropriate to quote Sjoestedt's remarks at some length:

'Passing from the legend of Cú Chulainn to the legends of the Fíana, one has the impression of entering a heroic world which is not only different from that in which the tribal hero moves, but irreconcilable with it. The two bodies of tradition have some conceptions in common: the same fusion of warrior and magician in the person of hero-magicians, the same constant coming and going between the world of men and the world of the *Síde*, between sacred and profane. But in other respects the contrast seems complete. It is not

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<sup>2</sup> Murphy presents two further points of comparison (Knott and Murphy 1966, 147–48). First, that places in Europe are called after Lug (as we have seen) and after Finn; examples of the latter include *Uindobona* = Vienna in Austria, and names in Switzerland and France. Secondly, both of them appear in Welsh tradition: Lug as Llew, and Finn as the magic warrior-hunter Gwyn ab Nudd.

merely a difference of formal character, details of manners, techniques of warfare, here on foot or on horseback, there in a chariot; it is a difference of function, [...] of the position which the hero occupies in society and in the world. Cú Chulainn finds his place quite naturally, though it is a dominant place, in Celtic society as we know it not only from the sagas but from history [...] Finn with his bands of warrior (*fiana*) is by definition outside the tribal institutions: he is the living negation of the spirit which dominates them' (Sjoestedt 1949, 81).

Recent scholarship has explored the extent to which *fiannas*, the activity of the *fian*, lies outside the tribal institutions, and this exploration has focused primarily on *díberg*, which has the meaning 'brigandage', and in Old Irish denotes in particular the activity of organized bands of killers that had their own code of conduct, entailing a vow of evil and the wearing of diabolical marks. McCone (1986, 6) suggests that '*fiannas* denoted *fian*-activity in general, whereas *díberg* had a more specialized reference to a particularly nasty aspect of it that early churchmen were prone to emphasize in order to discredit the institution as a whole'. He has also noted that in some sources no significant difference is made between membership of a *fian* and the practice of *díberg* (McCone 1986, 4–5). One of those sources is 'The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel', which I shall discuss presently.

Among the many kings who feature in the Cycles of the Kings, Cormac mac Airt and Conaire Mór, two legendary kings of Tara, are of especial interest. Cormac son of Art and grandson of Conn of the Hundred Battles, is a prestige ancestor of the Uí Néill and the ideal king of Irish tradition (Ó Cathasaigh 1977). In his Birth-Tale we are told that he was conceived on the eve of the prehistoric Battle of Mag Mucrama, in which Art and his Munster ally Éogan were slain by Lugaid mac Con, who thereupon seized the kingship of Tara. The child is abducted by a she-wolf, who rears him with her whelps. He is later rescued and returned to his mother along with the whelps. One day Lugaid mac Con pronounced a false judgment. The Queen's garden had been stripped of its woad by some sheep owned by another woman. Lugaid decreed that the sheep should be forfeit. Cormac mac Airt, who was present, demurred, saying that only the wool should be forfeit, on the principle of 'one shearing for another': the woad would grow again, and so should the wool. Cormac's judgment exemplifies *fir flathemon* 'the truth and justice of a ruler', and he is elected to the kingship of Tara in place of Lugaid. Cormac's reign is a Golden Age of peace and plenty in Ireland.

The central role of *fir flathemon* in the Irish ideology of kingship, which is expressed in narrative form in the tales on Cormac, is also reflected in the Laws and in the Wisdom texts, and above all in *Audacht Morainn* 'The Testament of Morann' (Kelly 1976). This is a seventh-century example of the genre known as



*Speculum Principum* ('Mirror of Princes'). It consists of advice supposedly sent by the legendary judge Morann mac Moín to Feradach Find Fechnach, who is about to be made king. Much of what Morann has to say concerns *fir flathemon*: it keeps plagues and lightning from the people, and it ensures peace and prosperity in the realm, as well as abundance of milk and corn and fish, and fertility among the people.

The tragic story of Conaire Mór (the Great) is told in *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* 'The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel' (Gantz 1981, 60–106), a composite text compiled, probably in the eleventh century, from earlier materials, perhaps including two ninth-century versions of the story. Much of the tale is devoted to the circumstances leading to Conaire's death in the Otherworld abode (*bruiden*) of Da Derga, but it is nevertheless a biography of Conaire, dealing in turn with his conception-and-birth, his boyhood, his elevation to kingship, the golden years of his reign, and the events leading to his death. The circumstances of Conaire's conception and birth indicate that he is destined for greatness. The hero's mother is a virgin, lowly of status, but not of descent, who is deliberately rendered difficult of access. She is nevertheless overpowered by a bird that assumes human shape. He sleeps with her and tells her that a son Conaire will be born of their encounter. And so it comes to pass. Meanwhile, Etarscéle, king of Tara, has taken the woman as his wife, and Conaire is brought up as Etarscéle's son. He is fostered with the three sons of a *fian*-warrior named Donn Désa.

When Etarscéle dies, Conaire is visited by Nemglan a bird-man who declares himself to be king of Conaire's father's birds. He instructs Conaire to go to Tara naked and bearing a sling. Conaire does so, and in the meantime it has been revealed to the wise men there that the future king will arrive at Tara in this way. The people of Tara question the revelation, on the grounds that Conaire is too young to be king. Conaire satisfies them that his youth is no obstacle, and they then enthusiastically accept him as their king.

At this point we are given a list of the taboos of Conaire Mór, listing certain actions that he should avoid in his reign. The early years of Conaire's reign is described as a golden age of great bounty. But a threat to these paradisaical conditions arises when Conaire's fosterbrothers, the sons of Donn Désa, yearn for the thieving and robbery and brigandage and murder which their father and grandfather used to commit. They test the mettle of the king by indulging in theft. When this is brought to the attention of the king, he declines to punish them. And so they are emboldened to advance in crime from theft to brigandage (*díberg*). Now one of the taboos laid upon Conaire was that there should not be any *díberg* during his reign.

He has brought about the infraction of one of his taboos by failing to take action against his foster-brothers when they had engaged in the lesser crime of theft.

Conaire makes further difficulties for himself when his foster-brothers and their companions in the crime of brigandage are brought before him for judgment. He decrees that his foster-brothers should be set free, but that the others should die. He immediately recognizes that this is a false judgment, and reverses it. He banishes all of the brigands overseas. As soon as the king's judgment has been given and the brigands have departed, we hear that the perfect peace has broken down that had been enjoyed during Conaire's reign. Conaire finds himself in circumstances that impel him to transgress his remaining taboos. He takes a path that leads him to his doom in the *bruiden*. He encounters a number of malevolent Otherworld beings along the way, and in the meantime his foster-brothers and their allies return to Ireland and assail Conaire in the *bruiden* which they set on fire three times. Conaire's head is cut off, and when at length the severed head is given a drink of water, Conaire dies.

Conaire's tragedy is that he allowed his love of his foster-brothers to deflect him from his duty as king. In this respect he stands in contrast to them: they love him too, but their first concern is their inherited calling as brigands, and their primary loyalty is to their fellow-brigands, who insist that Conaire be put to death. Conaire's placing of his personal feelings about the requirements of his office also contrasts with Cú Chulainn's willingness in the *Táin* to slay his beloved foster-brother Fer Diad when the interests of Ulster are at stake.

The early Irish storytellers were fascinated by the transcendental mysteries of birth and death. I should like to end with an anecdote of threefold death that is recounted (in Latin) in Adamnán's Life of Colm Cille:

Once, this priest called Findchán, a soldier of Christ, brought with him from Ireland to Britain a man of the race of Ulster and of royal stock yet wearing a cleric's habit. His name was Áed Dub, and it was intended that he should remain for a number of years as a pilgrim in Findchán's monastery. This Áed Dub had been a very bloody man and had killed many people, among them Diarmait mac Cerbaill, ordained by God's will as king of all Ireland. This same Áed, having spent some time in pilgrimage, was ordained priest in Findchán's monastery, but the ordination was invalid even though a bishop had been brought. This was because the bishop had not dared to place his hand on Áed's head until Findchán (who had a carnal love for Áed) had first laid his right hand on his head in confirmation.

When this ordination was later made known to the saint, he took it ill, pronouncing thereupon this fearful judgment on Findchán and Áed, now ordained, saying:

‘That right hand which Findchán, against the law of God and of the Church, laid on the hand of a son of perdition will soon grow rotten. It will give him great pain, and be dead and buried before him though he will live many years after his hand is buried. Áed, however, who was ordained unfittingly, will return as a dog to his vomit; he will again be a bloody murderer and in the end, killed by a spear, he will fall from wood into water and die drowning. He deserved such an end to life long ago for killing the king of all Ireland.’

The blessed man’s prophecy concerning both of them was fulfilled. First, the right fist of the priest Findchán became rotten and preceded him into the earth, being buried on the island called Ommon. The man himself, in accordance with St Columba’s words, lived on for many years. Áed Dub, priest in name only, returned to his old wickedness and, being pierced by a treacherous spear, he fell from the prow of a ship into the waters of a lake and perished (Sharpe 1991, 138–39).

In Irish tales of threefold death an offence is committed, there is a prophecy that the delinquent will die in three different ways, and in due course the prophecy is fulfilled. In this short anecdote Aed Dub offends in no less than four ways: he commits regicide, he is improperly ordained, he has a great deal of blood on his hands, and he commits a sexual sin. These offences can be interpreted in terms of the Dumézilian functions: regicide and improper ordination are sins in the domain of the sacred; excessive use of physical force is a sin of the second function; and sexuality is assigned to the third. And the punishment fits the crime: a good deal of evidence supports the view that falling through the air, being pierced by a spear, and drowning also belong to the first, second and third functions (Sayers 1992; Ó Cathasaigh 1994). This anecdote is interesting in all sorts of ways, but not the least of them is the use of a symmetrical trifunctional anecdote of threefold death as evidence of the prophetic power of a great Irish saint. Colm Cille, as we have seen, is especially associated with confluence of native tradition with monastic culture. It is appropriate that the Life written about a century after his death should contain such a remarkable product of that confluence.

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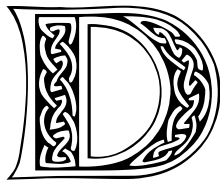
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# Inheritance<sup>1</sup>

**Glyn Welden Banks**

Finnish-Welsh Society

1



Dispossessed by the diaspora of time and place  
he tries to find glosses, words, clues to the past  
etched on to the pages' margins,  
in themselves blank,  
not even a possibility to read between the  
lines.

Gradually, black hieroglyphics begin to take shape,  
morph from memory  
into recognizable meaning  
like a negative dipped into acid.

The image which takes shape is of his grandfather,  
The Reverend Hugh Hughes-Jones,  
Welsh Calvinist Methodist preacher who  
gave his last sermon a month before he died  
and was buried  
still wearing his dog-collar.

What did he leave to his kin?  
What words of wisdom were his  
Inheritance.

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<sup>1</sup> The following poem won 3rd prize in the 2003 E-Steddfod competition. This competition has taken the traditional Welsh Eisteddfod into cyberspace. It is open to Welsh people living at home and abroad and, unlike the National Eisteddfod, the entries can be in Welsh or English. In 2003, the title for the most prestigious of the literary competitions - that of the 'lengthy' poem - was 'Etifeddiaeth' (Inheritance or Heritage). I decided to frame the poem around an episode in the life of my grandfather, a Welsh Methodist Minister.

I would like to dedicate the poem to Anders Ahlqvist for the work he has done over the years for Celtic Studies in Finland and elsewhere. It is his heritage that we are celebrating in this festschrift.

2

1961 – there were still trams on Lime St  
The Beatles – stale from Hamburg -  
were bringing life to the Cavern.

A long train ride from Rhyl.  
The Rev. Hugh Hughes-Jones embarked on his  
annual pilgrimage to Liverpool  
to browse the bookshops for  
Hanes y Methodistiaid Calфинаidd yng Nghymru\*

The Rev. Hugh Hughes-Jones, 83 years old,  
with a back that had never stooped,  
crossed Lime Street as the wind blew across the Mersey,  
changed gear, went into gale force overdrive.  
The Reverend's hat was swept away  
by the boreal gust.  
It lifted off his head, somersaulted in the air,  
and landed in the middle of the road  
as the cars proceeded to stampede.

3

The Reverend Hugh Hughes-Jones, with a  
back that had never stooped,  
walked slowly to his hat,  
a hat that had survived two world wars  
and countless revivals.

Like Moses parting the Red Sea  
Hughes-Jones lifted his umbrella and  
stopped the cars from their relentless  
rampage.

One by one they braked to a demure  
and obedient stop as the preacher  
inched his dignified way towards his  
hat.

A back that had never stooped  
now bent down with unhurried grace  
to pick up the hat, dust it, place it  
deliberately onto his head,  
touch the rim – not in taeog-like\*\*  
deference – to acknowledge the

stoppage of time and the stillness of cars.

Then he walked with the confidence and  
security of an octogenarian  
Welsh Methodist preacher  
slowly back to the pavement.

Under the brim of his hat  
rescued from the tyre's flattening tread  
two bright eyes sparkled in mischievous glee.  
A modest smile transformed  
his thin lips into a grin  
of quiet satisfaction.

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The Reverend Hugh Hughes-Jones had  
suspended time  
had stopped the rush of motion,  
humbled the machine, and  
in that frozen moment  
reminded us all of the importance  
of a battered, old hat.

*\*History of the Calvinist Methodists in Wales*

*\*\* Taeog means servile.*



# Academic and neo-pagan interpretations of shamanism in *Buile Suibhne*: a comparative approach<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

**I**n the introductory chapter to the book titled *New Directions in Celtic Studies* (1999), editors Amy Hale and Philip Payton expressed their concern about the general unwillingness within Celtic Studies to address the array of modern “Celticity” (Hale & Payton 1999, 1–2).

Although several scholars have already begun to acknowledge that ‘the constructed nature of contemporary Celtic identities’ in all its complexity is a topic worth studying, critics argue that the field is still dominantly focused on analysing medieval literature by outdated methods of comparative cultural analysis (Ibid, 2, 8, 10). While I personally do not embrace the claims that Celtic Studies as an academic discipline lacks methodological progress and critical discourse, I do agree with the view that modern expressions of “Celticity”, rather than being rejected at the outset as unauthentic or fabricated, deserve attention alongside with the more traditional topics of Celtic scholarship.<sup>2</sup>

In this article, I will elaborate on this outlook by bringing one aspect of modern Celtic spirituality<sup>3</sup> - the Neo-Pagan reception of the 12<sup>th</sup> century tale *Buile Suibhne* (The Frenzy of Suibhne) - into comparison with scholarly discussions of the same text. Though it is arguable that the academic and Neo-Pagan approaches to early Irish material differ substantially in the aims of their inquiries, I would claim that in terms of literary interpretation, the scholarly and Neo-Pagan views of the tale’s main protagonist Suibhne as a shamanic figure share common ground in their underlying presuppositions concerning the nature of shamanism and the

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<sup>1</sup> The writing of this article has been funded by the Academy of Finland, project number 1211006.

<sup>2</sup> My background being in Comparative Religion and Folklore, I am especially interested in the emergence of the “Spiritual Celt” as a religious phenomenon. Of similar approach to this facet of “Celticity”, see especially Bowman 1993, 1994 and 1999.

<sup>3</sup> The definition and proper use of the terms “Celt” and “Celtic” remains ambiguous among scholars. When speaking of contemporary religious movements I am here using “Celtic” in accordance with the usage of the adherents themselves. Thus I am not committing myself on how Celtic the elements in their belief systems actually are.

transmission of tradition. To illustrate this I will present some readings of *Buile Suibhne* where the tale has been ‘viewed through a shamanistic lens’ (Trevvarthen 2003, 25) by keeping the focus on how readers signify the text they study, and how the heuristic categories they use influence their understanding of the tale.

The Neo-Pagan material used here consists primarily of popular literature and websites on the principles and practice of Celtic shamanism. It also includes the dissertation of Geo Athena Trevvarthen, which combines academic research with overt Neo-Pagan engagement (2003),<sup>4</sup> and one site offering an overview of shamanism in general (d’Emerys 2001). The books of John Matthews (1991) and Tom Cowan (1993), as well as the web articles of Mara Freeman (1998a, 1998b), Sharynne NicMacha (1998) and Cynthia Danielson (2001) all strive for representing early Irish texts as one source for the practice of Celtic shamanism in the modern world. However, apart from the do-it-yourself guidance on meditation and procedure, most of these Neo-Pagan writings also include an account of what Celtic shamanism is, how it has been transmitted to us and how its adoption can be justified. The argumentation is constructed on interpreting early Irish tales as historical evidence for the claim that native Celtic shamanism once existed and that it has latently survived in tradition down to the present day (Matthews 1991, 3; Cowan 1–2; Trevvarthen 2003, 10–11). Thus the tales are used as legitimisation for the view that contemporary Celtic shamanism is revitalising an age-old spiritual discipline, which reflects the ‘deep levels of ancestral memory’ (Matthews 1991, 1–2).

As will be argued in the following, among scholars and Neo-Pagans alike, seeing shamanism as the most archaic and ultimately universal form of spiritual behaviour is the precondition for identifying shamanic elements in early Irish tales such as *Buile Suibhne*. While several other figures of early Irish literature have also been interpreted as representatives of Celtic shamanic practice,<sup>5</sup> the status of Suibhne as the archetypal Celtic shaman is well established, and therefore the tale serves as a natural case study.

The storyline of *Buile Suibhne* can be briefly summarized as follows: Suibhne, king of Dál Araidhe, is cursed by Saint Ronán after his unprovoked attacks against the saint. Following the curse, Suibhne loses his wits during the

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<sup>4</sup> One of her theses is that the evidence of shamanistic worldview in literature can only be understood through personal experience in shamanism (Trevvarthen 2003, 49, 51). Her Master’s Thesis on Celtic shamanism, which forms the basis of her dissertation, is available on her website [www.celticshamanism.com](http://www.celticshamanism.com).

<sup>5</sup> Trevvarthen, for example, discusses the figures of Mis, Óengus and Cú Chulainn in her dissertation. On scholarly studies on shamanism in Celtic mythology see e.g. Lonigan 1985; in Fenian narrative Nagy 1981–82; in hagiography Melia 1983; in relation to druids and poets Ó hÓgáin 1998.

Battle of Mag Rath (A.D. 637) and flees from the battlefield. He becomes a wild madman (in Irish called *geilt*, pl. *gelta*), who wanders restlessly in the woods, lives in the trees, and shies away from people. As a madman he is able to travel great distances by levitating or leaping, and he also receives the gift of poetry and prophecy. In the course of his life he regains his sanity three times, but loses it again due to the intervention of Saint Ronán or other unfortunate circumstances. Eventually, Suibhne befriends another Saint called Moling, as has been predestined in the tale. Saint Moling writes down Suibhne's story and feeds him on a daily basis for a year. One day when Suibhne is drinking milk from a pile of cow dung at Saint Moling's house, the Saint's swineherd kills him with a spear, due to unjustified accusations that Suibhne has committed adultery with his wife. Before his death, Suibhne receives communion from Moling. He is buried in holy ground and his blessed soul goes to heaven. Suibhne's death is greatly mourned by Saint Moling and his clerics.<sup>6</sup>

Instead of seeing the appropriation of the figure of the *geilt* in Celtic shamanism as a wholly arbitrary outcome of the post-modern reinvention of tradition, I would suggest that the Neo-Pagan views are partly embedded in the scholarly interpretations of the tale and its topic in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup> Examining the vast amount of research done on the essential meaning of *Buile Suibhne* one is struck by the fact that, despite the variety in their approaches, scholars have continually based their studies on at least two common premises. Firstly, that Suibhne's madness (*geltacht*) as it is depicted in the tale is not actual mental illness or psychosis, but rather a literary metaphor; and secondly, that this metaphor should be understood and explained in terms of some religious frame of reference.<sup>8</sup> In Celtic studies, the notion that many early Irish narratives embody elements of shamanism emerged in the 1980s in line with a general renaissance of the topic across disciplines (Atkinson 1992, 307; Jones 1998, 64), and although

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<sup>6</sup> I have used O'Keeffe's edition and English translation of the tale, first published in 1913. All the following references are to the 1996 reprint of the edition, and the numbers indicate the passages in the text.

<sup>7</sup> I have only recently become aware of a paper presented by Annette Pehnt at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Congress for Celtic Studies, in which she formulates a literary approach to the scholarly reception of *Buile Suibhne*. Based on the abstract (Pehnt 1999) her methodological stand appears to be very close to my own.

<sup>8</sup> Even Padraig Ó Riain's renowned article on the Irish legend of the wild man (1972), which shifted the focus from the theme of madness to status and liminality, was grounded on Arnold van Gennep's theory of transition rites and thereby gave the metaphor a ritual explanation. Ó Riain stated that many of the characteristics of the basic theme of the tale, the Irish novitiate or person's 'separation from wonted or due status', correlate with the three sections of the *rite de passage* – separation, transition and incorporation – as described by van Gennep (Ó Riain 1972, 205). In terms of religious explanation it should be noted that Ó Riain did not elaborate on any sacred dimension of the behaviour identified by him as ritual.

definitive arguments are beyond the scope of this paper, it is possible that this academic preoccupation also contributed to the simultaneous growth of Neo-Pagan Celtic shamanism.

The objective of the juxtaposition of Neo-Pagan and scholarly interpretations in this article is to highlight the fact that the meaning given to a text is always a result of conscious interpretative choices which reflect the readers' preconceptions and expectations. Since the focus of my analysis is on textual reception, I am not at present concerned with the truth-value of the claims, i.e. with the question of whether there actually *are* shamanic elements present in the tale or not. As this article is part of a work in progress, all the remarks are still tentative rather than conclusive. I will return to this topic in my forthcoming dissertation, in which I analyse the sacredness of the *geilt* and the modern appropriations of the figure in more detail.

### **A note on terminology: Neo-Shamans, Neo-Pagans and New Agers**

Defining Neo-Shamanism, Neo-Paganism and New Age either as separate entities or in relation to each other is prone to prove problematic, as many scholars have acknowledged. Such elements as the sacrality of the Self, polytheism, centrality of nature (often expressed as animism), opposition to authoritarianism and doctrine, and the influence of various non-Christian traditions have been identified as common denominators, alongside with the general feeling of alienation in the modern world and the ultimate goal of living in harmony with the Self and with nature. Most of these groups have their roots in the 'neo-transcendental' movement of the 1960s and can today be seen as examples of post-modern, urban individualisation and elective affinities (Adler 1986; Heelas 1986; Harvey 1997).

Graham Harvey, who argues that contemporary Paganism should be viewed as one religion among others of the world, draws a distinction between (Neo-)Paganism and New Age. He claims that despite their apparent similarities they share no more common ground than New Age does with Christianity (Harvey 1997, 211, 219, 220). Galina Lindquist includes both New Age and Neo-Paganism within the wider category of New Spirituality (Lindquist 1997, 2), but her attempt to place Neo-Shamanism in this field results in some confusion: first she describes it as a form of Neo-Paganism (Ibid, 3), but later refers to it as 'a path within the New Age' (Ibid, 50; also Johnson 1995, 163). Marion Bowman, in turn, mentions that her informants in Glastonbury, all being adherents of the Celtic spirituality movement, preferred to be called New Agers rather than Neo-Pagans (Bowman 1993, 147).

For the present purpose I am using the terms Neo-Paganism and Neo-Shamanism in order to separate these contemporary phenomena from the historical and ethnographical usage of the words, and consider Neo-Shamanism as one manifestation of Neo-Paganism (cf. Harvey 1997). Fully aware of the pitfalls of generalization and simplification, I see the eclectic and creative attitude towards historical sources as one of the factors in separating Neo-Pagan readings from scholarly ones. As Marion Bowman has noted, strict historicity or the question of “correct” reading is not necessarily the main concern of Neo-Pagans:

Some New Agers and Pagans are trying to reconstruct a Celtic past, some are trying to reinterpret a Celtic past to make it relevant to the present, some are creating or reinventing something about which they know little can be proved but which somehow “feels” right (Bowman 1994, 147).

Clearly, this differs from academic endeavours in which the early Irish tales are studied with sensitivity towards their historical and linguistic background as well as their contextual setting. Another important aspect separating the two approaches is, of course, spiritual. It must be remembered that the religious significance of the past does not depend on historical accuracy (Harrington 2002, 16; Bowman 1994, 148), and my theoretical approach is not meant to belittle this side of the Neo-Pagan appreciation of early Irish sources.

### **Defining shamanism**

When the word “shaman” first became part of the English language at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it referred solely to religious experts among the Tungus in Siberia, identified then by ethnographers as ‘magicians or priests’ (Hammer 2001, 216). While this origin of the word can be seen as a mere historical coincidence, most scholars have taken it as an indication that the shamanism of Siberia and Central Asia represents the ‘classical’ and most complete manifestation of the phenomenon (Ibid, 216; Eliade 1964, 6; cf. Ó hÓgain 1998, 12; Jones 1998, 71).<sup>9</sup>

Today, shamanism is often used as a generic term for religious functionaries in tribal societies well beyond the Northern “core area”. This has transferred the term to a more abstract level and simultaneously turned into a heuristic category (Sjöblom 2002, 142). In using shamanism as a heuristic tool, scholars are working

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<sup>9</sup> According to Åke Hultrantz (1973), ‘classical shamanism’ includes the following elements: ecstatic trance, soul flight, soul dualism, multi-layered cosmology joined by a world-tree or pole, and auxiliary spirits. He also maintains that shamans belong to hunting societies, similar to the ‘type of society apparently - - represented in the oldest known cultures of prehistoric man’ (Ibid, 35).

with an ideal type. The theoretical model enables the identification of similarities in different cultural contexts, but it also implies making an interpretation of the research object (Ibid, 141). Thus stating, for example, that *geltacht* is a ‘shamanic encounter with the supernatural’ (Nagy 1982–83, 58) means providing a model for how *geltacht* should be understood, but at the same time the difference between description and subjective construction is not clearly articulated (Sjöblom 2002, 127–128, Hammer 2001, 217). A similar problem is evident in Neo-Pagan sources, where the word *geilt* is categorically presented as the native Celtic term for “shaman” (Danielson 1991; d’Emerys 2001; cf. Matthews 1991, 4–5).

Åke Hultkrantz, who has offered an outline of contemporary approaches to shamanism (2001, 28–32), notes that many scholars still hold on to the original understanding of shamanism as being a ritual technique and belief system exclusively limited to the circumpolar peoples, while others concentrate on the experience of possession as the main characteristic of the phenomenon. Hultkrantz sees the interest in the therapeutic effects of the shamanistic techniques as a quite recent development, and attributes it to Michael Harner’s form of Neo-Shamanism (see also Atkinson 1992, 313–314; Johnson 1995; Harner 1990). Many of the Harnerian themes emphasizing healing in shamanic practice are also encountered in Celtic shamanism in the works of John Matthews (cf. Matthews 1991; Jones 1998, 197–208).

A number of scholars have denied the existence of shamanism as any kind of universal entity, and begun to question the heuristic value and analytic applicability of the concept (Hultkrantz 2001, 31). For example, Graham Harvey claims that shamanism has become a ‘Humpty Dumpty word’, a term made to work hard to mean whatever people want it to mean (Harvey 1997, 107). Atkinson, among others, prefers to avoid generalization by writing of “shamanisms” instead of using a singular category (Atkinson 1992, 308). Some, like Taussig, have been willing to do away with shamanism altogether, stating that it is ‘a made-up, modern, Western category, an artful reification of disparate practices, snatches of folklore and overarching folklorizations, residues of long-established myths intermingled with the politics of academic departments, curricula, conferences, journal juries and articles [and] funding agencies.’ (Taussig cit. in Atkinson 1992, 307).

Nevertheless, there still remains a large group of those, Hultkrantz himself included, who are convinced that fundamentally shamanism is a uniform phenomenon, although cultural and local variation in detail occurs (Hultkrantz 2001, 32). I would suggest that it is this phenomenological stance that many Celtic scholars and Neo-Pagans share, and that it is most probably due to their reliance

on the authority of Mircea Eliade in constituting the characteristics of shamanism. However, it should be noted that while direct references in academic writing attest the importance of Eliade in their research (e.g. Nagy 1982–83; Ó hÓgáin 1998; Jones 1998), Neo-Pagans are less thorough in articulating the theoretical background of their views. In Neo-Pagan sources the influence of Eliade is most accentuated in discussions of the history and definition of shamanism, where this ‘eminent anthropologist’ and his ‘definitive work’ *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* occupy the foreground (d’Emerys 2001; Trevarthen 2003; Freeman 1998a).

Mircea Eliade’s book on shamanism was first published in English in 1964. The title of the book manages to convey unambiguously Eliade’s main theses concerning the nature of shamanism, which have later become the template for defining the phenomenon: being *archaic*, shamanism contains elements that most probably date back to the earliest times of the human race; when defined as a set of *techniques*, it is not seen as a religion per se, but rather as a magico-religious complex within a religion; and finally, the stress laid on *ecstasy* makes trance or altered state of consciousness the religious experience par excellence.

Eliade’s approach to shamanism was determined by certain ontological premises, most notably founded on an idealistic hierarchical dualism of the sacred and the profane. In Eliade’s view, the world of the archaic *homo religiosus* was defined by the separation of sacred time and space from the profane, whereas in the experience of modern secularized man both are essentially homogenous. In this ‘nostalgic antimodernism’ the sacred as a category can either be understood through hierophany, i.e. through a personal religious experience, or as an independent theological concept, fundamentally set apart from profane reality. In both cases Eliade maintained that religious phenomena did not lend themselves to historical or psychological explanation. Instead - being as Rudolf Otto said ‘something wholly Other’ - they could only be interpreted in reference to their own sacred reality (Hammer 2001, 214–215).

Eliade was primarily interested in the power of the shaman to act as a ‘technician of the sacred’ and as a catalyzing figure between the sacred order of the cosmos and the profane world. The same conviction is echoed by Hultkrantz, who says that ‘the central idea of shamanism is to establish means of contact with the supernatural world by the ecstatic experience of a professional and inspired intermediary, the shaman’ (Hultkrantz cit. in Porterfield 1987, 722). But since the religious dimension of the phenomenon was by definition beyond explanation, and the phenomenon itself could never be found in its ‘pure’ or ‘primordial’ form (Eliade 1964, 11), Eliade’s notion of shamanism was bound to remain an ideal construction. In dealing with the historical and ethnographical material Eliade

built a taxonomy by describing separate phenomena and assuming a priori that they pointed to the same category, which, ultimately, was transcendental rather than empirical (Hammer 2001, 217–218).

This method of synonymizing traits from different historical and cultural contexts reflects Eliade's aim as a historian of religion to identify the universal elements of human religiosity that could be traced back to the mythic, ahistorical past. Set in the context of theories of cultural evolution, the project of elucidating the earliest religious form crystallized in identifying shamanism as the most archaic mode of religious belief and practice. Simultaneously it derives from the notion of the primitive peoples as possessors of eternal sacred wisdom, unknown to modern man except in the traces it has left in epic literature and folktales (Hammer 2001, 219–221; Porterfield 1987, 721; Jones 1998, 67–68).

### **Suibhne Geilt as shaman**

Generally speaking, if it goes into a trance like a shaman, wears feathers like a shaman, journeys like a shaman, heals and hexes like a shaman – in short, shamanises like a shaman – it probably is a shaman (Trevvarthen 2003, 60).

When analyzing Finn mac Cumhail as a shamanic figure Joseph Falaky Nagy offered a four-part model of a typological shaman, consisting of 1) the shaman's capability to travel freely between the worlds, for example by flying; 2) his function as the protector of the society and its boundaries from external hostile creatures; 3) his liminality, which makes him a possessor of exceptional otherworldly knowledge that he shares with the society; and 4) his ability to contact and manipulate supernatural forces, while also being vulnerable to their manipulation (Nagy 1981, 303). Although some of these characteristics may be more appropriate to Finn than Suibhne, scholarly and Neo-Pagan interpretations of the *geilt* as a shaman are remarkably consistent with each other in agreeing on the *geilt*'s role as the mediator between the realms of this world and the otherworld, and on the supernatural quality of his knowledge. Following Eliade's definition of shamanism as a technique of ecstasy, Suibhne's madness has been equated with the inspired trance of the shaman, and his restless wandering has been taken to represent either the shaman's ecstatic journey or his initiation (e.g. Freeman 1998a; Beneš 1961; Tolstoy 1985).

In his introduction to the new edition of *Buile Suibhne*, Nagy accredited Nora K. Chadwick with the idea that the marginality and 'the intermediate stage' of the *geilt* could imply shamanic qualities (Nagy 1996, 6). While Chadwick in the article referred to by Nagy (Chadwick 1942b) did not in fact use the word shaman



to describe the *gelta* or their position in the society,<sup>10</sup> she had touched upon the correlation between manticism and shamanism in her work *Poetry and Prophecy*, in which she identified the *geilt* as one type of persons possessing poetic and prophetic inspiration alongside with the *druid* and the *fíle* (Chadwick 1942a, 5–6). In Neo-Pagan writings, the role of the *geilt* and the *fíli* as possessors of supernatural knowledge has occasionally blurred the distinction between the two figures, and these shamanic ‘poet-seers’ appear to have become more or less interchangeable (cf. Freeman 1998a). The importance of liminality in the context of acquiring knowledge has been thoroughly explored by Nagy himself (e.g. Nagy 1981, 1981–82, 1982–83), and therefore I will limit myself to few observations concerning the nature of the otherworld from which Suibhne gains his wisdom.

The shamanistic interpretation of *Buile Suibhne* implies that by losing his sanity Suibhne enters an altered state of consciousness and embarks on a journey to otherworldly realms. This idea is interesting, not only because it presupposes a cosmological schema composed of multi-layered worlds (cf. Jones 1998, 67; Trevarthen 2003, 150; Freeman 1998b), but because the text itself does not explicitly attribute supernatural qualities to the *geilt*’s arboreal habitat. In fact, unlike in a number of examples in early Irish narrative in which a mortal hero visits the otherworld overseas, underwater, or within *síd* mounds (see Carey 1982–83), the tale is consistent in stating that the *geilt* simply takes his abode in natural locations situated all over Ireland. Moreover, the realms in which Suibhne travels are easily accessible not only to other *gelta*, but to normal mortals as well, as becomes evident from the number of people encountered by Suibhne during his wanderings.

However, it is possible to account for Suibhne’s otherworldly journey in more abstract terms, by approaching the *geilt*’s habitat not as a clearly defined otherworld, but rather as a sacred realm separated from and situated beyond the metaphysical borders of the society. This explanation, forming the basis for the *geilt*’s liminality (Nagy 1982–83), draws on the dichotomy between nature and culture by implicitly correlating it with the Eliadean notion of the sacred and the profane. Thus the *geilt*’s transition beyond the border separating the sacred cosmos and the profane chaos makes him part of the supernatural ‘otherness’ and thereby reifies his sacrality.

The point I wish to make here is that both central notions of liminality and the otherworld as presented above are external theoretical constructions, not

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<sup>10</sup> In the article presented by Nagy, Chadwick concluded that the *geilt* should be seen as the ‘back numbers’ of the Irish church, representing ‘those who do not conform, who do not come under an authorised discipline, probably the reformed discipline of St. Tallaght’ (1942b, 151). She later restated her view of *geltacht* as the most extreme form of ascetism in the early Church (1960, 105).

something existing in the actual tale (cf. Sjöblom 2002, 145). Yet in interpretations made from the shamanistic framework, these heuristic concepts are turned into facts, which are simply discovered and described, instead of being presented as analytical creations (Ibid, 147–148). The definition of the shaman as a person who is in ‘personal and interactive contact with the spiritual aspect of the reality’ (Trevarthen 2003, 3), who acts ‘as an agent of the numinous - - between one world and the other’ (Cowan 1993, 9), or ‘mediates with the otherworld powers’ (Ó hÓgáin 1998, 12) necessitates seeing the *geilt*’s retreat into wilderness as something more than a mere escape from society; otherwise the main characteristic of shamanism would not be fulfilled.

In *Buile Suibhne*, separate motifs taken to illustrate the shaman’s journey into non-ordinary reality have additionally played a prominent role in Suibhne’s identification as a shaman. Of these I will now turn to the ornithological symbolism present in Suibhne’s appearance, his ability to fly and his preference for perching on trees, which have been compared to the shamanic ritual costume or metamorphosis, the pervasive theme of soul-flight and the cosmological World Tree.

*Buile Suibhne* conveys several references to the *geilt* being bird-like. In the beginning of the tale Saint Ronán curses Suibhne by praying to God that he would go among the clouds ‘likewise even as any bird’ or ‘be one with the birds’ (BS 9, 10). Later in the text Suibhne repeatedly describes himself as a bird by referring to how feathers have grown on his body, and how his talons are bent and feeble (e.g. BS 40, 60, 61; 23, 45).<sup>11</sup> The *geilt*’s swift movement further contributes to the association of the *geilt* with birds. Regarding Suibhne’s agility, the difference between leaping or actual levitation is made by scholars (Ó Riain 1972, 197), and does not seem significant if both feats are taken to indicate the *geilt*’s supernormal abilities. Although only leaping is specified in the tale, Suibhne’s recurrent ascendance to the sky especially from the top of trees (e.g. BS 15, 17, 35) has established the equation with flying.

The attempts to explain the dominant bird imagery and especially the motif of Suibhne’s plumage have resulted in readings varying between the metaphorical and the literal. Freeman (1998a) ascribes the question of the *geilt*’s feather dress or metamorphosis to ‘the typical ambiguity of Celtic literature’:

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<sup>11</sup> As John Carey has noted, the Irish word *clímh* can mean both hair and feathers. Whereas hairiness is a common motif in Wild Man traditions throughout Europe, the motif of the *geilt* being feathered does not appear independently of the materials in *Buile Suibhne* (Carey 1984, 101). The text is not uniform in its depiction of the *geilt*, as he is also said to be in rags (BS 21, 27, 45) or totally naked (BS 3–6, 21).

Did they really grow feathers or were they garbed in feather cloaks that made them look like strange huge birds glimpsed between the branches on a dim evening? If a cloak, was it really for protection against the elements, or was it for the flight of the soul into the Otherworld? The feathered cloak used in shamanic practices worldwide was certainly known in Celtic tradition - -.

According to Mircea Eliade, bird symbolism is central in shamanic costumes. The costume is a sign of the shaman's special status, as it gives him the body of an animal that enables the journey to the otherworld. Even in cultures in which the costume does not imitate a bird's shape, feathers are almost always included in it (Eliade 1964, 156–160). Without reference to the motif's possible shamanic background, Chadwick assumed that the *geilt's* feathers could be reminiscent of a feathered cloak (*tugen*) worn by the *fili*, and that the motif could thereby be indicative of the *geilt's* poetic abilities (Chadwick 1942b, 150).

The suggestion of some kind of a feathered dress has been accepted especially among Neo-Pagans (cf. Tolstoy 1985, 145–46; Matthews 1991, 4; NicMacha 1998), but it is possible to regard the association with birds in terms of actual metamorphosis as well. Eliade writes of birds as psychopomps, stating that 'becoming a bird oneself or being accompanied by a bird indicates the capacity, while still alive, to undertake the ecstatic journey to the sky and the beyond' (Eliade 1964, 98). The power of gods and other mythical figures to take animal form is of course well attested in early Irish tradition, and therefore the idea of the *geilt* actually transforming into a bird would not have been foreign to this narrative context. In comparison with the shaman's ecstatic soul-flight, both interpretations are equally plausible.

During the course of his wanderings, Suibhne recurrently seeks refuge and rests in the tops of trees. As mentioned above, living in trees could easily be seen as rising from the bird symbolism, but in Suibhne's case the motif has also been interpreted as stemming from the idea of the World Tree present in some shamanic cosmologies. Eliade, who specified several mythical beliefs concerning the World Tree, noted that it represents the regeneration of the universe and 'the paramount reservoir of the sacred'. Expressing notions of fertility, creation and initiation, it ultimately relates to absolute reality and immortality (Eliade 1964, 271). One would expect nothing less of the centre of Eliade's sacred cosmos!

Neo-Pagan writers in particular represent the existence of a World Tree at the heart of the Celtic cosmology as something axiomatic (cf. Freeman 1998b),<sup>12</sup> but the idea is by no means foreign to scholars either. For example, Brigit Beneš,

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<sup>12</sup> Trees habited by Suibhne and named by him in his poems (BS 40) have been seen to mirror the *geilt's* druidic knowledge of the Ogham alphabet by both Freeman and NicMacha (1998).

drawing on the abundant symbolism presented by Eliade, suggested that *Buile Suibhne* should be read as a description of a shaman's initiation and the novice's ritual climbing of the World Tree, which symbolizes the soul's ascendance to the Upper World (Beneš 1960–61, 313–315, 319–320; Eliade 1964, 125–127). Leslie Jones, in turn, has regarded sitting at the top of the World Tree as an indication of the poet's liminal status and ascribes this position of 'the archetypal poet' in Celtic tradition to 'all poets, magicians and madmen who make their homes in the forest and specifically *up* in trees' (Jones 1998, 74; Tolstoy 1985).

It is impossible to separate the meanings ascribed to nature, zoomorphism, and trees in *Buile Suibhne* from a wider framework of Celtic mythology, but also from the well-established stereotype of the visionary Celt being in tune with nature and the universe (see Sims-Williams 1986). Poets and outlaws inhabiting trees is a curious narrative motif indeed; whether it should be traced back to shamanic worldview and cosmology is up to the interpreter to decide. What remains to be discussed are the explanations of how these shamanic elements have become part of early Irish literature and how they have been transmitted and preserved through the ages.

### **The transmission of tradition**

Whether seen as a primordial spiritual system 'cutting through all faiths and creeds' (Matthews 1991, 1), as 'part of the human psyche' (Cowan 1993, 1), or as an open set of neutral techniques (Trevarthen 2003, 3, 13), universalizing shamanism as a religious phenomenon has rendered it culturally non-contingent (Johnson 1995, 163). By endorsing the idea that shamanism is a mental attitude rather than an actual religion (d'Emerys 2001; Jones 1998, 79; cf. Sjöblom 2002, 143) both scholars and Neo-Pagans have legitimized wide-ranging cross-cultural comparisons in the interest of tracing the earliest pre-Christian strata surviving in medieval Irish narratives. For the former, the primary aim has been to enhance our understanding of early Irish history and worldview, while the latter have eclectically used the texts as sources for personal spiritual empowerment.

The comparative approach, of course, is nothing new in Celtic studies. By the 1980s the discipline already had a long history of tracing the heroic pagan past of Celtic Ireland and identifying parallels especially with India, based on the notion of their common Indo-European heritage. The Indo-European hypothesis was strongly contested by those who saw the sources primarily as literary products of medieval Christian culture. Introducing shamanism to this field, then, added a new dimension to the opposition of a pagan past and Christian present. This is well illustrated by Leslie Jones, who argues that instead of seeing only these two

strata in medieval Irish literature, it should be seen to contain at least three: the deep past, which predates the Celtic culture on the island and includes the shamanic elements; the recent past, being perhaps the Celtic Golden Age, which indicates development in religious specialization and doctrine; and the narrative present, which represents the phase when Christianity has become the dominant form of religious practice (Jones 1998, 94–95).

The notion of shamanism as a latent ‘sedimentary deposit’ (Ginzburg cit. in Jones 1998, 79) or a mentality underlying the evolutionary process of culture is a prerequisite to all interpretations of shamanic survivals in early Irish narratives, but it is by no means unproblematic. Firstly, the concept of culturally shared mentalities is rarely explicitly defined. Instead, their existence in the hidden structures of the mind and their transmission through generations tends to be taken for granted. Moreover, the transmission process itself is regarded as a simple one, which contributes to the idea of tradition as static and resistant to change (Sjöblom 2002, 143–145).

Although the actual process of historical and cultural transmission is real, it is not given that the cultural representations transmitted can be labeled shamanic. As Sjöblom points out, what in fact is passed on and repeated in cultural performance – a narrative text being only one example – are the surface-features, not the unconscious models underlying them (Ibid, 146). To put it another way, the meaning of narrative motifs used in early Irish tales such as *Buile Suibhne*, whatever their origin, has been reformulated many times. In interpretations where shamanism is used as a heuristic concept, further elaboration on this aspect of literary reception is missing. Also, the relation between the ‘shamanistic worldview’ (Trevanthen 2003, 11) and the actual historical change in religious belief and practice often remains ambiguous.

By universalizing shamanism, ascribing it to the most distant, mythical past while insisting on its historical continuity, many Celtic scholars are facing the danger of stripping the concept of all heuristic value. In the words of Neo-Pagan writer Cynthia Danielson (2001):

No matter what spiritual path, religious doctrine, dogma, tradition, myth, faerie tale, belief or faith you find – if you dig deep into the roots of that tradition until your fingers are covered with rich black soil, you will find shamanism there. It is the foundation of all everyone believes in. Proven fact.

Since truth claims of this sort are beyond scientific scrutiny, scholars would do well to steer clear of essentializing their heuristic categories, as it rarely adds precision to their analysis (Geertz 1993, 369–372).

## Conclusion

The Celtic scholars' stance towards the modern phenomenon of Celtic shamanism is for the main part indifferent. Apart from a few exceptions (cf. Jones 1998), scholars have left the popular market to rely upon semi-scholarly and Neo-Pagan writers and reprints of outdated, early 20<sup>th</sup> century research (Harrington 2002, 10–12). However, the fact remains that Celtic spirituality constitutes a vital part of the ever-growing Neo-Pagan movement writ large, and the interest in early Irish literature as one source for self-actualization is equally strong. Christina Harrington notes that in Neo-Paganism, scholarship is extremely influential in peoples' religious life (Ibid, 11), and the same can be attested by browsing reading lists on various Neo-Pagan websites, where academic and spiritual material are presented side by side (Jones 1998, 191; d'Emerys 2001).

While scholars may be frustrated by the popular audience misunderstanding or freely appropriating results of their research, this should force them to exercise some self-reflexivity as well (Atkinson 1992, 323; Sjöblom 2002, 149). The meaning of a text is recreated in every interpretation and can never be seen as objective or unambiguous. Eventually, acknowledging our own presuppositions and interpretative strategies as producers of knowledge may also help to understand the contemporary dynamics of moulding and adopting the original sources as well as their “official” interpretations to fit the Neo-Pagan worldview, which is both temporally and mentally distant from the world represented in early Irish texts.

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## Les noms du compagnon en gaulois

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### English summary

Naming-construction in Gaulish is of IE type: a descriptive name in the form of a compound, followed by the patronym. This descriptive nature of names allows us to recover nominal stems of current usage. A certain number of Gaulish names attested in the epigraphic corpus must have had the meaning "companion". Various denominations of companions are found: companion of travel (road), of fate (destiny), of combats, of chants, of looting.



a-t-il de meilleure occasion qu'un recueil de mélanges offert à un collègue celtisant pour parler de la dénomination du «compagnon» en gaulois?

La langue gauloise, qui a un corpus de textes suivis assez limité, dispose en revanche d'un corpus anthroponymique et théonymique extrêmement abondant. La nomination gauloise, de type indo-européen, est essentiellement descriptive: idionyme décrivant les qualités réelles ou attendues de son possesseur, en général sous forme d'un composé nominal à deux ou trois membres (*Ver-cingeto-rīx* 'Roi-suprême-des-Guerriers', *Dīno-mogeti-māros* 'A-la-Grande-Puissance-de-Protection') suivi en général du patronyme, lui-même idionyme au génitif ou pourvu d'un suffixe patronymique (-*cno-*, -*io-*, -*co-*). C'est là l'ancienne façon de se nommer, qu'on retrouve en Grèce et en Inde, et pour laquelle on a reconstruit la question rituelle: \**k<sup>w</sup>is ési*, *k<sup>w</sup>osyo ési?* «qui es-tu? de qui es-tu (le fils)?»<sup>1</sup>. Pour le linguiste ou le lexicographe qui s'occupe de langues mal attestées, cette nomination descriptive (qui est aussi celle des *cognomina* latins) a un avantage par rapport à la nomination gentilice: elle permet de restituer des thèmes nominaux *d'emploi courant*. En un mot: les noms propres «voulent dire quelque chose», et on peut donc tenter de les traduire.

Je me propose de présenter ici quelques noms propres gaulois bien attestés dans le corpus épigraphique dont le sens signifie «compagnon». Leur

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<sup>1</sup> Sur quoi voir R. Schmitt, *Dichtung und Dichtersprache in indogermanischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden 1967, 136–138.

caractéristique commune est d'être formés avec le préfixe-préverbe *co(m)-* qui indique la participation, la communauté, la relation:

**1/ Le «compagnon de route»: *Co-sintu-* ; « la compagne » : *Sentica*.**

Il y a dans les comptes de potiers de la Graufesenque un nom de personne *Cosintus* édité récemment par P.-Y. Lambert (inscription L-30e face A, *RIG* II-2 p. 95) que l'on connaissait déjà à Saintes: *Matugenos Cosintos Belini* (*ILA-Sant* 1005, 13)<sup>2</sup>. Il s'agit d'un composé *Co-sintu-* dont le deuxième terme *sintu-*, avec fermeture du *e* en *i* devant nasale et confusion de la finale *sintu-/sinto-*, se retrouve ailleurs: *Sinto-rix* (Dalheim, *CIL* XIII-4059), *Sinto-talus* (Kops, Germ. Inf., *AE* 1976–514), *Sinturo* (fréquent) et, avec maintien du *e*, *Sentius*, *Sentinus*, *Sentilla*, *Gabro-sentum* 'chemin des chèvres' en Bretagne, *Sento-latis* en Narbonnaise (auj. *Satolas*). C'est le prototype de l'irlandais *sét* (thème en -u), gallois *hynt*, vieux-breton *hint* 'voie, chemin'.

Cette formation est exactement comparable à celle du germanique \**ga-senþ(i)o(n)-* que continuent le vieil-allemand *gisind* (cf. moderne *Gesinde*), gotique *gasinþa*, vieil-anglais *gesīþ* 'camarade'. Le sens est «qui parcourt le même chemin». C'est la même idée qui est à l'origine du mot irlandais *sétig* désignant «la compagne, l'épouse», dont le prototype est \**sentikī*, génitif *séitche* < \**sentikiyās*, c'est-à-dire «celle du chemin (que l'on parcourt ensemble)», même mot probablement qui a donné le toponyme espagnol *Σεντική* rapporté par Ptolémée, au sud de Salamanque<sup>3</sup>. Il y a une *Aelia Sentica* en Bretagne à Low Borrow Bridge, (*AE* 1992–1136), et une *Annia Sentica* à Villahoz en Espagne, (*AE* 1984–580), avec normalisation sur les thèmes féminins en *-ā* d'un ancien thème récessif en *-ī / -yā (-ih₂ / -yeh₂)* préservé par l'irlandais. De même, les gallois *hennydd*, breton *hentez* 'compagnon, prochain' remontent à un brittonique \**sentiyos*, dérivé en *-io-* du nom du chemin.

**2/ Le «compagnon de sort»: *Com-prinno-*.**

*Comprinnus* est un nom de potier à Lezoux: *COMPRINNI M(ANV)*, *COMPRIN(NVS) F(ECIT)*<sup>4</sup> et il est à la base des toponymes *Compreignac* (Haute-Vienne) et *Comprenhac* (Aveyron), qu'il faut restituer \**Comprin(n)-iācum* (*CONPRINIACO* sur monnaie mérovingienne), c'est-à-dire «Domaine de Comprinnus».

<sup>2</sup> Il y a un *Cosentanus Hilarus* à Préneste (XIV-3377) qui pourrait être aussi d'origine gauloise.

<sup>3</sup> Voir *DLG* p. 271.

<sup>4</sup> A. Thomas, *RC* XIV (1893), 304, *CIL* XIII-10027, 245 et Oswald 86.

Pierre-Yves Lambert a proposé de voir le même terme dans le mot *quprinno* qui apparaît à la ligne 3 du texte récemment découvert de la tuile de Châteaubleau<sup>5</sup>, qui semble parler de mariage: ... *quprinno petame biSSiIet* ... «je demande qu'elle soit une épouse», avec *quprinno* = \**comprinnā*. Il s'agit d'un composé *com-prinno-* < \**com-prenno-* avec un deuxième terme *prenno-* / *prinno-* qui désigne le morceau de bois qu'on jette pour tirer le sort.

Il se compare au bretonique (gallois, cornique, breton) *prenn* et à l'irlandais *crann* 'arbre, bois, morceau de bois' d'un prototype \**k<sup>w</sup>r(e)sno-* (DLG 123, 252 et 253). Le composé *Com-prinno-* se compare alors à l'irlandais *cocrann* 'sort, hasard' et 'consors' (LEIA C-139) où il y a peut-être un calque sur le latin *con-sors*, avec *sors*, *-tis* qui désigne aussi une petite tablette de bois avec laquelle on tire au sort.

*Comprinnus* est donc probablement le «compagnon dont on partage le même destin».

### 3/ Le «compagnon de combat».

On connaît le passage célèbre de la *Guerre des Gaules* (BG 3.22) où César décrit le lien indéfectible de certains soldats appelés *soldurii* à leur chef, qu'ils sont prêts à suivre dans la mort quoi qu'il arrive. Ce sont les confraternités guerrières des anciens Celtes qui fournissent à l'anthroponymie la part la plus importante des dénominations du «compagnon» qui est souvent un «combattant»: dans un monde où la guerre est l'activité essentielle<sup>6</sup>, le compagnon *de combat* est une figure importante du lien social. J'en ai trouvé pas moins de six dénominations et il est probable qu'en cherchant bien, on en trouverait d'autres:

#### a/ *Com-ag(i)o-*

Le nom est très fréquent, particulièrement en Cisalpine, mais on le retrouve aussi en Aquitaine et en Narbonnaise. Quelques exemples: *DM Cintusmo Comagi fil(io)*, Aquit., Bordeaux, XIII-699; *C[o]magiu*, potier, La Graufesenque, Marichal 28–13; *DM Comagiae Comagi fil(iae)*, Narb., Uzès, XII-2939; *Maximo Comagio*, Transpad., Milan, V-5902; *Comagius [V]alerius*, Transpad., Fino Mornasco, V-5690; *Comago Demincavi f(ilio) et Mogtion(i) Lutonis f(ilio)*, Transpad., Como, V-5340; *L(ucius) Comag[ius -] Vol(tinia) Seve[rinus] Aven(ione)*, Pann. Sup., Petronell, 1978–629; *Comag[ia] C(ai) f(ilia) Ingenua*, Pann. Sup., Scarbantia, AE 1914–05; *L(ucius) Comagius L(uci) f(ilius) Arn(ensi) Germanus Cremona*, Latium, Antemnae, AE 1978–68; *DM Comagi(a)e Comagi f(iliae)*, Rome, VI-16007.

<sup>5</sup> Pierre-Yves Lambert, «La tuile gauloise de Châteaubleau (Seine-et-Marne)», *EC* 34 (1998–2000), p. 99–100, 112.

<sup>6</sup> A preuve le simple fait que la dénomination de 'la paix' chez plusieurs peuples indo-européens est une *fixation* des hostilités : celtique *tanco-*, latin *pag-*, cf. DLG 289, ce qui indique bien que la guerre était l'état normal et la paix un état temporaire.

Comprendre *Com-āg(i)o-*, avec un deuxième membre à comparer à l'irlandais *ág* 'combat, lutte' et 'ardeur guerrière' (apparenté à grec *αγών*). K. H. Schmidt, *KGP* 178, traduit 'Mitkämpfer, Bundesgenosse'.

**b/ *Com-argo-***

K. H. Schmidt, *KGP* 57, 178, cite un *Comargus* en Dalmatie (III-3158a), rapproche, après Ernault, le deuxième membre du composé de l'irlandais *arg* 'guerrier, héros, champion' (*LEIA* A-87), et traduit 'Kamerad'.

**c/ *Com-brissa***

J. Whatmough, *DAG* 1268, cite un *Combrissa* (III-14359.21), avec un deuxième membre *-brissa* qu'on retrouverait au simple *Brista* dans l'inscription de Limoges (L-74), avec *-st-* pas encore passé à *-ss-*. Thème à comparer à l'irlandais *bres* (thème en *ā*) 'combat, vacarme', cf. les NP *Bresal*, *Bressual* < *\*Brisso-walos* 'Prince du Combat'. Voir *DLG* 88. *Com-brissa* serait un autre «compagnon de combat».

**d/ *Con-bogio-***

Il y a un *Combogius* en Norique à Virunum (III-4945) et, avec des préfixes superlatifs, *Ande-com-bogius* (César), *Ver-com-bogius* (III-4732), (*KGP* 128, 178, 291). La préposition *com-* doit cependant renforcer ici le thème verbal, cf. irl. *ad-com-bongim* 'je frappe', sans valeur participative, et les Gaulois en question sont probablement des 'grands pourfendeurs'<sup>7</sup>, pas nécessairement 'en association'.

**e/ *Con-batiaco-***

Le nom de Galate *Κομβατιακος* attesté en Phrygie orientale (Freeman 39) s'analyse aussi volontiers en *Com-batia-co-* avec le thème verbal celtique *bat-* passé au latin *battuere* et présent dans le mot *anda-bata* 'combattant aveuglé (des jeux de cirque)'. Formation très proche du français *com-battant*, dérivé tardif d'un bas-latin influencé par le gaulois *\*com-batt(u)ere*.

**f/ *Coinnago-* < *\*co-vinn(o)-āgo-***

Ce nom est bien attesté dans les Gaules: *Iovi Corn(igero) Sex(tius) Coinn() vslm*, Narb., Montjustin, ILN-03, 00180; *Coinnagi Attici*, Lugd., Meximieu (Ambarri), XIII-2449; *Adbogius Coinagi f(ilius) na(tione) Petrucorius eq(ues) ala(e) Rusonis*, GS, Mainz, XIII-7031; *Coinnagi Titalvis f(ilio) et Dubnae Viredonis f(iliae)*, Belg., Dienenhofen XIII-4468 (p 59).

La diphtongue *oi* est certainement secondaire en gaulois tardif, cf. *Doiros* à Couchey (L-133) qui doit être pour *\*Du-wiros* 'Mauvais-Homme', et il faut probablement restituer *\*Co-vinn(o)-āgo-* «compagnon (*co-*) de combat (*-āgo-*) en char (*vinno-*)», cf. gallo-latin *covinnus* 'char breton et belge', avec le *-w-* intervocalique de *\*Co(w)innāgo-* faiblement prononcé et en voie de disparition comme on l'observe

<sup>7</sup> Sur quoi, J. Vendryes, *EC* 5 (1950–51), 241.

dans les doublets *Doviccus / Doeccus*, *Divo- / Dio-*, *Bivo- / Bio-*, *Novio- / Noio-*, *namet(os)* à La Graufesenque pour *\*nawametos* 'neuvième'.

#### 4/ Le «compagnon de chants»: *Com-bardo-*

Il y a en Lyonnaise un *Combardus*: *Catulius Combardi fil(ius)*, Lugd., Lhuis, *AE* 1959–130, qui se segmente immédiatement en *Com-bardus*. Le terme désigne sans doute un adjoint, un assistant ou simplement un compagnon dans cette importante corporation chargée de la louange et du blâme que représentaient les collègues de bardes.

#### 5/ Le «compagnon de richesse (butin)»: *\*Com-louto-?*

Il y a enfin en Cisalpine un nom de personne *Cobluto*: *C(aio) Gemino Virae filio* *Vot(uria) IIIIIvir(o) veterano Coblutoni Sev[---] uxori*, Transpad., Gorlago, V-5100.

Je suis assez tenté de le restituer en *\*Comlūto(n)-* < *\*com-louto(n)-*, avec la séquence *-VmlV-* > *-VblV-* bien attestée en celtique continental (*Coblanuo* XII-3030 < *\*com-lān-*, *Apollo Cobledulitavus* XIII-939 < *\*com-lēdu-* etc.<sup>8</sup>) et avec un second membre *-lout-* qui passe tôt à *-lūt-*, évolution phonétique elle aussi bien attestée en celtique continental (par ex. les doublets *tuto- / touto-* ou *suxtu / souxtu* dans un même texte à Vayres en L-27). Le thème *louto-* est celui du gallois *golud*, v.irl. *foluth* 'richesse' < *\*wo-lou-to-* et plus lointainement celui du latin *lucrum*, de l'allemand *Lohn*<sup>9</sup>, du sanskrit (tardif) *lótam* 'butin'. Le Gaulois de Cisalpine *Cobluto* serait-il un «compagnon de butin»?

ooo

La philologie celtique est un chemin difficile (*sentu-*), dont on ne sort plus quand on l'a emprunté, mais où l'on s'engage souvent par hasard (*prenno-*). On y mène des combats multiples (*āgo-*, *brissa* etc.) contre l'obscurité des textes et des mots que maîtrisaient si bien les poètes (*bardo-*). Ils sont parfois récompensés (*louto-*) par une trouvaille inattendue. Ils le sont toujours par le soutien des *compagnons* qui se sont engagés avec nous sur ces voies prometteuses.

<sup>8</sup> Voir aussi K. H. Schmidt, *KGP* 96 et 177.

<sup>9</sup> Voir *IEW* 655, *DLG* 198. Sur le vocalisme *lou-* plutôt que (traditionnellement) *lau-* (i.-e. *\*leh<sub>2</sub>u-* / *\*loh<sub>2</sub>u-*) voir P. Schrijver, *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology*, Amsterdam, 1995, 337. J'ai proposé dans un article à paraître (*ZcPh*) de comprendre aussi un toponyme de Narbonnaise *Voludnia* comme *\*Uolūt(o)nia* < *\*Uo-lóuto-niā* 'La Riche-Demeure' ou 'Domaine de Leriche'.

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## **Kalle Päätalo ja Séamus Ó Grianna – mihin kansankirjallisuutta tarvitaan? <sup>1</sup>**

**Panu Petteri Höglund**

### **Summary**

#### **Kalle Päätalo and Séamus Ó Grianna – What is Peasant Literature Good for?**

The article compares Séamus Ó Grianna of Donegal Gaeltacht, Ireland, and Kalle Päätalo of Taivalkoski, Finland, - two peasant writers. While Séamus Ó Grianna came from a culture rich in oral literature and creativity, but illiterate, Kalle Päätalo grew up in a literate world, but one where literature was perceived as sinful and detrimental. The differences and similarities between the two writers are surveyed. Both were well-known for the sheer volume of their literary output, and both were largely shunned by modernist literary criticism. Both were perceived as pillars of conventional, conservative nationalism, but both were actually less than comfortable with it. On the other hand, while Séamus Ó Grianna wrote schematically and seldom innovated, seeing the very survival of his literary medium, Ulster Irish, as more pressing issue than literary creativity as "l'art pour l'art", Kalle Päätalo changed with his times and assimilated much of contemporary modernism into his way of writing while his literary career advanced. Both writers were champions of their home dialects, but while Päätalo used his mainly in dialogue and as occasional spice of his standard Finnish, Ó Grianna boldly challenged the emerging standard of written Irish, preferring his Ulster dialect undiluted.

### **Achoimre**

#### **Kalle Päätalo agus Séamus Ó Grianna – an bhfuil gá le litríocht tíre?**

Cuireann an t-alt seo Séamus Ó Grianna ó Thír Chonail agus Kalle Päätalo ó Taivalkoski in Oir-Thuaisceart na Fionlainne, an bheirt scríbhneoirí tíre, i gcomparáid le chéile mar scríbhneoirí is mar dhaoine. Tháinig Séamus Ó Grianna ar an bhfód i gcultúr neamhliteartha a bhí saibhir i mbéal-litríocht agus i bhfilíocht phobail. Ón taobh eile de, níorbh aon adhnuá le haon duine de mhuintir Päätalo a theanga dhúchais a bhreacadh síos, ach san am céanna, bhí meas an pheaca agus na baothshiamsaíochta acu ar an litríocht mar rud. Caitear súil ar an mbeirt scríbhneoirí, chomh cosúil agus chomh difriúil mar

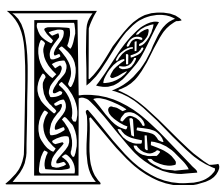
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<sup>1</sup> Anders Ahlqvistin merkkipäivän johdosta.



atá siad le chéile. B'í líonmhaireacht na leabhar a chum siad ba mhó a thuill a gclú dóibh. Bhí drochmheas ag an gcriticeoireacht nua-aimseartha ar a gcuid saothair. Síleadh nach raibh iontu go bunúsach ach bolscairí agus reacairí ag craobhscaoileadh suáilcí an náisiúnachais choimeádaigh choinbhinsiúnta, ach mar sin féin, ní raibh ceachtar acu compordach leis. Ón taobh eile de, nuair a chloígh Séamus Ó Grianna sách dlúth leis an múnla scríbhneoireachta a tharraing sé air i dtús a chaithréime, níor leasc le Páatalo na nósanna nua-aimseartha a chur i bhfeidhm ar a chuid scríbhinní féin, de réir is go raibh sé ag dul in aois agus ag éirí cleachtach ar a cheird. Tá clú an chanúnachais ar an mbeirt acu chomh maith, ach má bhí Séamus Ó Grianna ag tabhairt dhúshlán an Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil riamh leis an urraim a thugadh sé do cheart Ghaeilge Uladh mar a chonacthas dó féin é, ní úsáideadh Páatalo an chanúint mórán taobh amuigh den aithris ar an gcomhrá, ach amháin mar spíosra ócáidiúil le cur leis an bhFionlainnis chaighdeánta.

### Kaksi kansankirjailijaa



Kalle Páataloa ja Séamus<sup>2</sup> Ó Griannaa lienee molempia siinä mielessä pidettävä kansankirjailijoina, että kumpikaan ei ole noussut minkään perinteisen kirjallisen establishmentin piiristä. Kummin koti- ja perhepiirissä ”kirjailijan” ammatti oli jo käsitteenäkin melko vieras. Kalle kuului siihen suomalaiseen

maakansaan, joka kyllä osasi lukea ja kirjoittaa – olihan meidän protestanttisessa maassamme oleellisen tärkeää, että Herran sanaa saattoi kansanmieskin ylösrakennukseen tavalla – mutta jolle kirjallisuus ja runous oli turhuutta, jopa syntiä – hienostunutta myrkkyä sielulle<sup>3</sup>. Séamus Ó Grianna taasen kasvoi ympäristössä, jossa kyllä oli oma kirjallinen kulttuurinsa, omat runoilijansa, tarinansa ja sankarinsa. Iirinkieliset maalaisihmiset Séamus Ó Griannan kotikylässä osasivat kertoa, mikä runo tai laulu oli Peadar Ó Doirnínin, mikä Art Mac Cumhthaighin sepittämä, pystyivätpä jopa luonnehtimaan näiden ammoin kuolleiden runoilijoiden luonnetta ja elämänkaarta monin mehevin juoruin, mistä erinomainen esimerkki ovat Séamusin nuoremman veljen, Seosamhin, iirinkielisen Ulsterin rahvaanrunoilijoista laatimat elämäkerralliset esseet<sup>4</sup>. Asiassa oli kuitenkin yksi mutta: ne, jotka tunsivat tämän ”kirjallisuuden” parhaiten, olivat luku- ja kirjoitustaidottomia eivätkä kyenneet merkitsemään muistiin kuulemiaan

<sup>2</sup> Sekä kirjoitusasua Séamus että Séamas esiintyy. Ääntämisen kannalta niillä ei ole eroa.

<sup>3</sup> ”Esteenä kirjoittamiselle olivat ympäristön [...] kirjasisivistystä halveksivat ja kouriintuntuvaa työtä arvostavat asenteet. *Kiinmostus kirjallisuuteen oli vielä salattavampaa kuin sukupuoliasiat.*” (Karonen 2003, 225. Kursivointi P.P.H.)

<sup>4</sup> Mac Grianna 1986: Séamas Dall Mac Cuarta (ss. 55–67), Peadar Ó Doirnín (ss. 68–76), Cathal Buí Mac Giolla Ghunna (ss. 77–90), Art Mac Cubhaigh (ss. 91–100).

eivätkä laatimiaan teoksia. Vaikka iirin kielellä on kirjalliset perinteet 600-luvulta jKr saakka, niistä ei Séamus Ó Griannan syntyessä vuonna 1889 ollut mitään jäljellä, ainakaan syntyperäisten puhujien keskuudessa. Kirjeitä kirjoitettiin ja lehdet luettiin englanniksi: sellaistaikin tapahtui, että syntyperäinen iirinpuhuja yleni koulutusta hankittuaan *englanninkieliseksi* kaunokirjailijaksi<sup>5</sup>.

Molemmille miehille siirtyminen kirjailijaksi oli siis jo itsessään merkittävä elämänmuutos ja siirtymä uudenlaiseen kulttuuripiiriin. Molemmille ”kansankirjailijana” toimiminen merkitsi ainakin jossain vaiheessa uraa sitä, että he kirjoittivat kirjallisen älymystön maun vastaisesti ja että heidät tuomittiin, ei niinkään tuotantonsa perusteella kuin sen perusteella, millaisia ennakkokäsityksiä ja kliseisiä oletuksia kirjallisella eliitillä oli ”kansankirjailijoista”. Kirjallinen eliitti loi itselleen karikatyyrin, olkinuken, siitä, millainen on heidän vastustamansa ja inhoamansa rahvaankirjailija, ja sekä Päätalo että Ó Grianna saivat kestääkseen arvostelua, joka perustui pikemminkin tähän olkinukkeeseen kuin heidän todelliseen tuotantoonsa. Ó Griannan kohdalla tähän liittyi sellainen absurdi piirre, että häntä katsoivat asiakseen arvostella nekin, joilla ei ollut kielitaitoa perehtyä hänen teoksiinsa.

Kalle Päätalo on tuskin koskaan ollut missään mielessä kanonisoitu kirjailija. Pikemminkin hänen kanonisointinsa on ylipäättään tullut näköpiiriin vasta viime aikoina, kun mm. postmodernistiset ajatussuuntaukset ovat mahdollistaneet kansan- ja viihdetaiteilijoiksi miellettyjen kirjailijoiden arvostamisen ja tehneet heistä respektabeleita tutkimuskohteita. Sitä ennen Päätalo on ollut monelle radikaalille ja modernistille näppärä sylkykuppi, josta on jo lukematta tiedetty, mitä hän edustaa: suomifilmien maaseutumailmaa ja vanhan ajan kristillistä juntti-isänmaallisuutta, ja jos kohta hän rakennustyöläiseksi päätyikin, hänessä ei tietenkään ollut pätkääkään punaista luokkatietoisuutta, joka olisi nostanut hänen arvoaan 1970-luvun vasemmistolaisten silmissä. Kuten Séamus Ó Griannan tapauksessa, arvostelijat ovat mielestään tienneet kirjailijasta kaiken tämän teoksia lukematta. Todellisuudessa tietenkin sekä hurraaisänmaallisuus, ankaralakinen lestadiolaisuus että konventionaalinen realismi ovat asioita, joilla toki on roolinsa ja vaikutuksensa Päätalon tuotannossa, mutta joita hän on sekä elämässään että kirjallisuudessaan pyrkinyt pakenemaan ja välttelemään parhaansa mukaan oman henkilökohtaisen pikku vapautensa nimissä, kuten ainakin kansanihminen. Siksi myös kansanihmiset ovat lukeneet

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<sup>5</sup> Näin esimerkiksi Liam O’Flaherty (Ó Flaithearta, 1896–1984), syntyjään aransaarelainen kirjailija, joka laati koko tuotantonsa englanniksi lukuunottamatta vuonna 1953 julkaistua kokeellista novellikokoelmaa *Dúil*. Hänen sukulaisensa Breandán Ó hEithir (1930–1990) toimi kaksikielisenä kirjailijana ja journalistina, mutta lienee ollut iiriksi merkittävämpi.

hänen teoksiaan ja osanneet samastua häneen, myös hänen inhimillisiin heikkouksiinsa.

Vuonna 1919 syntynyt Kalle Päätalo saapui suomalaiseen kirjallisuuteen viisikymmenluvulla, kun suomen kirjakieli oli jo pitkälti muotonsa saanut ja astumassa mukaan eurooppalaisen kirjallisuuden yleisiin kehityssuuntiin. Hänen kansanomaisuutensa tuntuu kirjallisen älymystön mielestä olleen suoranainen taantumuksellinen taisteluhaaste korkeakirjallisille käsityksille siitä, mikä on hyvää ja arvostettavaa sanataidetta. Päätalon tuotantoon tutustuneet tietävät hyvin, että tämä totuus kaipaa pientä suhteuttamista: tuotantonsa merkittävimmissä osassa, avoimen omaelämäkerrallisessa Iijoki-sarjassa hän hyödynsi 1960-luvun seksuaalisen vapautumisen avaamia uusia mahdollisuuksia kirjoittaessaan rehellisesti ja avoimesti, itseään säästelemättä, noloista ja nöyryyttävistä seikkailuyritelmistään tällä elämänalueella (vrt. Päätalo 1995a, 314, 316; Päätalo 1995b, 63–67). Hänen sotakokemuksensaakaan eivät ole kovin sankarillisia: talvisodasta hän myöhästyi, ja jatkosodassa hän toimi huoltojoukoissa (vrt. Niklander 1991, Sihvo 2000, 140), joten sotakeikka limittyy luontevasti osaksi hänen työmiehen elämäkokemustaan. Hänet siis voitaneen vapauttaa hurraaisänmaallisuusepäilyistä. Myös Päätalon rooli murteen tai murteelliseksi stilisoidun kirjakielen käyttäjänä ansaitsisi varmaan enemmän pohdintaa: kohtuudella arvioiden hän ei välttämättä ole vain hyödyntänyt Iijoki-sarjassa edellisten vuosikymmenten avaamia mahdollisuuksia käyttää murteellista puhekieltä kaunokirjallisuudessa, vaan on jopa itsekin saattanut laajentaa suomalaisen kirjallisuuden kielellisiä ilmaisukeinoja, ehkä hyvinkin merkittävästi. Päätalon tyylin kehitystä olisikin syytä tutkia osana puhekielten, murteiden ja kielellisen naturalismin laajempaa yleistymiskehitystä suomalaisessa nykykirjallisuudessa. Myös minäkertojan käyttö Iijoki-sarjassa on modernismin myötä yleistynyt piirre suomalaisessa sanataiteessa. Sen sijaan että Päätalo leimattaisiin modernismin tutkainta vastaan potkineeksi taantumukselliseksi, mistä tavasta ollaan toivottavasti jo pääsemässä eroon, suomalaisen kirjallisuuden historian tulisikin pohtia hänen ansioitaan modernistiset keinot kansankirjallisuuteen kotiuttaneena vaivihkaisena uudistajana.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Modernismin myötä yleistyneistä keinoista ja niiden ilmaantumisesta Päätalon tyyliin vrt. Karonen 2003, 226. Päätalosta osana sodanjälkeistä modernisaatiota kirjallisuudessa ja yhteiskunnassa totesi Sinnemäki: ”Viittaus Linnan kieleen (puhekielen käytön esikuvana Päätalon esikoisromaanille ”Ihmisiä telineillä”, P.P.H.) on tärkeä. Painetu[ssa] sana[ssa käytetyn kielen] profanisointuminen oli tunkemassa Suomessa kulttuuritaistelun keskiöön. [...] Kaikkiällä uhkaava kurin höltyminen ja tapainturmelus eivät saa vetää lokaan puhdasta oppia [...]” ”Päätalon esikoinen on varhainen tekijä tässä prosessissa, jota seurasi vedenpaisumus, tapaukset Mykle, Miller, Rintala, Salama, Mukka [...]” Sinnemäki 2000, 63.

Päätalon tuotantoa, ennen muuta tietysti Iijoki-sarjaa, leimaa omaelämäkerrallinen ote ja voimakas ”yhtey[s] ulkoiseen ympäristöön” (Roos 1988, 175), Iijokivarren paikkaa ja ihmisiä kohtaan koettu velvollisuus kertoa rehellisesti ja todesti elämästä kuten se koettiin (ibid.). Roos puhuukin ”omaelämäkerralli[sesta] sopimu[ksesta]” (ibid.), joka määrittää kirjailijan tuotannon taiteelliset päämäärät. Toisessa yhteydessä hän korostaa, että tämä ei toki sulje pois todellisuuskuvauksen merkittäväkään editointia ja kaunokirjallista työstöä: onhan Päätalon romaaneille ominaista suullisuus ja dialogipainotteisuus – paikoitellen miltei Kiven *Seitsemään veljekseen* verrattavalla tavalla – mikä käytännössä edellyttää keskustelujen ja repliikkien laajamittaista rekonstruointia pikemminkin tarinankuljetuksen sisäisten vaatimusten kuin minkään ehdottoman dokumentarismien ehdoilla (Roos 2000, 27). Dialogisuus on osa Päätalon tuotannon kirjallisuudellisuutta, *literaturnostia*, ja sellaisena taiteellinen valinta, kirjallinen tehokeino, jonka tarkoituksena on voimistaa lukijan kokemusta omaelämäkerrallisen sopimuksen toteutumisesta.

Iirinkieliselle nykykirjallisuudellekaan omaelämäkerrallinen tematiikka ei ole vieras – itse asiassa juuri kansanihmisten omaelämäkerrat (esim. Mac Gabhann 1996, Ó Dónaill 1997, Ní Mhainín 2000, Ó Caoimh 1989, Ó Criomhthain 1980, Sayers) ovat 1920-luvulta saakka olleet sen selkäranka. Séamus Ó Griannan laajasta tuotannosta löytyy kuitenkin vain kaksi selvästi omaelämäkerrallista teosta, ja niistäkin vain toinen<sup>7</sup> on tätä kirjoitettaessa kirjakaupasta saatavana. Itse asiassa uransa jo Irlannin vapaavaltion aikoina aloittaneeksi iirinkieliseksi kansankirjailijaksi hän on tässä suhteessa varsin epätavallinen.

Luonnollisesti omaelämäkerrallisia aineksia on helppo löytää hänen tuotannostaan – esimerkiksi lapsuusmuistelmaan *Nuair a Bhí mé Óg* ja romaanin *Caisleáin Óir* (Ó Grianna 1994) koulunkäyntikuvausten yhtäläisyydet eivät jää epäselviksi kellekään – mutta yleisesti ottaen Ó Griannalle on pikemminkin luonteenomaista folkloren ja kansanomaisten anekdoottien stilisoiminen ja laajentaminen – joku sanoisi: paisuttaminen – novelleiksi sekä ylipäätään läheisyys kansanperinteeseen, sen tarinoihin ja kerrontakeinoihin. Siinä missä Päätalo kirjoitti nuoruutensa todellisuudesta, usein hyvinkin naturalistisella otteella, Ó Grianna keskittyi kirjoittamaan nuoruutensa haavemaailmoista ja muovaamaan kaunokirjalliseen muotoon kotona kuulemiaan kansantarinoita. Kyse saattaa olla iirinkielisen Irlannin omasta mytologiasta<sup>8</sup>, mutta myös kansainvälisistä faabeleista, kuten novellissa *Léine an tSonais* (Ó Grianna 1993 II, 94–100); novellin

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<sup>7</sup> Ó Grianna 1986. Tämä on muistelmateos kirjailijan lapsuudesta. Toinen omaelämäkerrallinen teos on alkujaan vuonna 1945 ilmestynyt nuoruuden ja varhaisen keski-ikäisen muistelmaksi *Saoghal Corrach*, vrt. Ó Conluain, 29 ja *passim* sekä Ó Fiaich, 147 ja *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> Esim. novelli *Carn Fhearaígh*, Ó Grianna 1993 II, 87–93.

*Ciall Cheannaithe* (Ó Grianna 1993 I, 167–178) aihe taas on suoraan Shakespearen *Romeosta ja Juliasta*, olkoonkin että onnettoman rakkauden motiivi toki on yleisinhimillinen ja löytyy myös iirinkielisestä mytologiasta. Mitä sitten tulee nuoruuden haaveisiin, ei ole aivan aiheetonta väittää Séamus Ó Griannan kirjoittaneen huomattavassa osassa sekä novellejaan että romaanejaan melko pienin variaatioin saman onnettoman rakkaustarinan: poika ja tyttö ihastuvat toisiinsa, mutta sairaalloisen ujoutensa vuoksi eivät koskaan uskalla kertoa sitä toisilleen, sitten heidän väliinsä tulee Irlannin vapaussota<sup>9</sup>, jomman kumman osapuolen uskonnollinen herätys<sup>10</sup> (joka katolisessa maassa tietenkin merkitsee luostariin menoa) tai Amerikan-emigraatio, ja rakkaus ei pääse koskaan täyttymykseensä, koska osapuolet ajautuvat auttamattomasti erilleen.

### **Kaksi kotiseutua**

Vaikka Kalle Pääatalo ja Séamus Ó Grianna asuivat kovin erilaisissa kulttuureissa, heidän kotiseutunsa muistuttivat monella tavalla toisiaan. Pääatalon Taivalkoski oli koillismaan syrjäseutua, jossa ”pohjalta ponnistaminen” parempiin asemiin merkitsi ennen muuta liikkuvaiseen metsä- ja uittotyöhön hakeutumista, jolloin kotikylästä oli lähdettävä verrattain kauaskin. Paikoilleen ei tointanut jäädä, jos vauraaksi halusi. Kallen isän omatoimisuus, yritteliäisyys ja lahjakkuus ilmenivät siten, että hän nousi maatalousköyhälistötaustastaan huolimatta metsätyönjohtajaksi (Karonen & Loivamaa, 225).

Myös iirinkielisellä maaseudulla työ ja elämässä edistyminen piti usein hakea kotikylän ulkopuolelta, ja jo Pääatalon isän työvuosina sikäläiset ovat olleet vieläkin liikkuvaisempia kuin taivalkoskelaiset: heidän siirtotyömaansa, ja usein pysyvät uudet kotinsa, ovat löytyneet Liverpoolin, Bostonin, Traverse Cityn tai Massachusettsin Springfieldin kaltaisista paikoista, joko Irlanninmeren tai peräti valtameren takaa. Séamus Ó Griannan kotiseutu, historialliseen Ulsterin maakuntaan kuuluva, mutta Pohjois-Irlannin valtioon kuulumaton Tír Chonaill, Donegalin kreivikunnan iirinkielinen länsirannikko, on kuitenkin perinteisesti poikennut muista iirinkielisistä alueista sikäli, että sillä on maantieteellisesti lähellä perinteisiä kausityöpaikkoja, joista on ollut mahdollista palata työrupeaman jälkeen kotitahville. Teini-ikään tultuaan nuorukaiset ja neitokset lähetettiin Donegalin kreivikunnan itäosiin Laganin laaksona tunnetulle alueelle (iiriksi *An Lagán*) piikomaan paikallisten farmarien tiloille. Laganin laakson väestö on

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<sup>9</sup> Vrt. novellia *Mar Gheall ar Mhnaoi*, Ó Grianna 1993 II, 1–16

<sup>10</sup> Kuten novellissa *An Fan-doo-a-daddy-um*, Ó Grianna 1993 I, 29–35

alkujaan skotlantilaista<sup>11</sup> ja puhuu äidinkielenään alamaiden skottia eli englannin kielen skotlantilaista murretta, jota jotkut pitävät jopa erillisenä kielenä<sup>12</sup>; lisäksi laganilaiset ovat protestantteja, ja heitä voidaankin pitää Pohjois-Irlannin protestanttiasutuksen länsikärkenä.

Suhde kotiseutuun herroilla toki oli kovin erilainen, sekä ihmisinä että kirjailijoina. Nuorta Päätaloa ahdisti hänen kotiseutunsa syrjäisyys, viheliäisyys ja kultivoitumattomuus, ja hän haki jalompia ja ylevämpiä näköaloja sekä lestadiolaisesta herätyksestä että kirjailijahaaveista<sup>13</sup>. Nuoruutensa kirjailijaunelmat Päätalo esittää *Nuoruuteni savotoissa* seuraavassa hyvin mielenkiintoisessa jaksossa, joka lienee tässä siteerattava kokonaisuudessaan, koska se toimii avaimena näiden kahden kirjailijan peruseroon:

”Voisinko kirjoittaa kertomuksen, jossa pelkkalautan päällä Amerikanmatkansa aloittanut nainen ja lauttamies rakastuisivat? Lempi leimahtaisi niin tulisena, että naisen lännenmatka katkeaisi Iin Haminaan... Rakastuneet voisivat ostaa paluumatkallaan kihlat Oulusta ja kävellä takaisin selkosiimme... Kävisivät vihillä ja perustaisivat vaikkapa kruununtorpan valtion maalle, jossa eläisivät sitten onnellisina... Taikka voisin kirjoittaa tytön jatkavan matkaansa Amerikkaan! Rakastuneet vain sopisivat Iin Haminassa erotessaan, että kun tyttö pääsisi perillä kiinni paljon puhuttuihin ’lännen tienoihin’, lähettäisi hän pojalle tiketin, ja poika menisi sitten perässä.” (Päätalo 1995a, 291).

Nuoren Päätalon luonnosteleva rakkaustarina sijoittuu tosin tuttuun miljööseen, mihin viittaavat murrenana *pelkkalautta* ja tarinan selvään ja konkreettiseen kohtaan sijoittava paikannimi *Iin Hamina*. Silti se noudattelee aivan ilmeisesti kirjallisista esikuvista, epäilemättä etupäässä viihdelukemistoista, saatuja valmiita rakkaustarinan konventioita, jotka tuovat suuren maailman valoa selkosten pimeään kaamokseen.

Mielenkiintoista on, että *Séamus Ó Grianna on kirjoittanut juuri tämän tyyppisiä tarinoita* – emotionaalisia, sentimentaalisiakin lemmentarinoita, tyypillisesti traagisesti päättyviä, jotka kuitenkin sijoittuvat leimallisesti hänen kotiseutuunsa, ei sellaisena kuin se oli eikä edes sellaisena kuin hän sen muisti, vaan *sellaisena kuin hän sen halusi muistaa*. Siinä missä Päätalo kuvasi kotiseutua ja kotimaata muutoksen ja murroksen kynsissä, Séamus Ó Griannan kotikylä Rinn na Feirste

<sup>11</sup> ”Skotlantilaista” tarkoittava sana *Albanach* viittaaakin iirin kielen pohjoisessa murteessa nimenomaan pohjoisirlantilaiseen protestanttiin ja vasta toissijaisesti Skotlannin asukkaaseen.

<sup>12</sup> Alamaiden skottia, joka on joko englannin murre tai sen lähin sukukieli, ei pidä sekoittaa Skotlannin ylämaiden gaeliin, joka on iirin lähin sukukieli.

<sup>13</sup> ”Olimme serkkupojan kanssa ihailleet hihitellen aikaansaannostamme (= rivoa kuvaa). [...] Nyt minua ei naurata. [...] Vaikka mitä muuta meikälainen puhuu ja haaveksii, kun kyrpä ja vittu ja paska ja perkeleet raikuvat aina korvissa. Välillä korkeintaan virren jyminä ja saarnan pauhu... Vahingossakaan ei näe semmosta elämää jota kirjoissa kuvataan.” Päätalo 1995a, 279.

merkitsi yleensä staattisuuden ja muuttumattomuuden saarta silloinkin kun maailman meri myrskysi. Sekä Irlannin politiikka että sodat – Amerikan sisällissodasta toiseen maailmansotaan – ovat hänen näkökulmastaan suuren maailman asioita, joita miehet voivat muistella Rinn na Feirsten joviaalissa miesporukassa siirryttyään eläkkeelle ja palattuaan kotiseudulleen. Vanhat kuolevat, isistä tulee isoisia ja lapsista nuoria – tämä on varsin tavallinen asetelma kun kerrotaan tarinoita Amerikasta kotiseudulle palaajan näkökulmasta – mutta muuten asiat pysyvät entisellä tolallaan. Muutokset ovat vain näennäisiä, elämän suuri pyörä, *rotha mór an tsaoil*, kääntyy välillä maantien kuraan ja nousee sitten siitä pois, mutta mikään ei juurikaan muutu pysyvästi.

### **Kaksi vastentahtoista soturia**

Sekä Kalle Päätalo että Séamus Ó Grianna olivat sotaveteraaneja, mutta sotasankareiksi jokseenkin vastentahtoisia. Päätalon sota oli, lainatakseni SIHVOn esseen otsikkoa, toisenlainen sota: talvisotaan Päätalo ei ehtinyt, ja jatkosodassakin hän joutui kovin epäsankarillisiin tehtäviin – töpinää eli ruokahuoltoa hoitamaan, vaikka varsinaisesti olikin pioneeri. Sankariksi yrittäessään hän haavoittui ja päätyi sotasairaalaan, ja loppuaika sodasta kului Siiranmäen vankileirin huoltopäällikkönä karkuruuteen ja muihin palvelusrikkomuksiin syyllistyneiden sotamiesten ruokahuollosta huolehtimassa.

Séamus Ó Grianna puolestaan osallistui Irlannin vapaussotaan brittejä vastaan, joka muuttui sisällissodaksi, kun osa irlantilaisista – ns. tasavaltalaiset – ei suostunut hyväksymään sovittelurauhaa, joka teki Irlannista muodollisesti brittiläiseen imperiumiin kuuluneen vapaavaltion. Ó Grianna kuului tasavaltalaisiin ja päätyi sodan lopuksi joksikin aikaa vankilaan.

Molemmille kirjailijoille sotakokemus oli huomattavasti oletettua vähemmän dramaattinen. Päätalo kävi sotansa Leo Tolstoin musikoiden hengessä ilman sanottavaa ylevyyskuorutusta, ottaen sen lähinnä työn kannalta, kuten koko elämänsä. Ó Grianna, joka toimi sodassa pikemminkin propagandistina kuin varsinaisena sotilaana, tuntuu kyllä lähteneen taisteluun isänmaallisuuden elähdyttämänä, mutta pettyneen nopeasti. Sen enempää sotakokemus kuin sen jälkeinen vankeuskaan eivät sanottavasti innoittaneet häntä kirjoittamaan (Ó Conluain, 29).

Siinä missä Päätalo suhtautuu sotaan työnä, joka on hoidettava pois alta, Ó Griannan asenne on selvästi emotionaalisempi. Traagisen, isänmaallisen sankaruuden ajatus ei ole hänelle täysin vieras, mutta pohjimmiltaan sota on hänelle tappaja ja syvän järkytyksen aihe – ääriesimerkkinä voi mainita novellin *An Bád Beag* (Ó Grianna 1993 I, 42–47), joka kertoo vanhempiensa mukana

Glasgowhun muuttaneen donegalilaisen pikkupojan tarinan. Poika saapuu novellin alussa sukuloimaan Donegaliin uskoen pääsevänsä kylän poikien sankariksi hienoa englantia puhumalla ja kaupunkilaisia tapojaan esittelemällä, mutta huomaakin, että paikallisia lapsia kiinnostaa enemmän kotitekoisten leikkilaivojen uittaminen. Kotiin päästyään hän ryhtyy säästämään rahaa hienoon kaupan leikkilaivaan, jolla haluaa yllättää Donegalin pojat seuraavalla kerralla kun pääsee sinne käymään. Mutta juuri kun hän on saanut laivan, sota – josta novellissa ei siihen asti ole mainittukaan – tulee väliin, ja poika saa äkkiiarvaamatta surmansa saksalaisten pommituksessa.

Toistuva teema Séamus Ó Griannan novelleissa on myös sota rakastavaisten erottajana. Se on keskeinen monien novellien lisäksi esimerkiksi romaanissa *Tairngreacht Mhiseoige*, mutta ensiesimerkki on hänen englanniksi kirjoittamansa nuoruusaikainen yritelmä *Destiny – A War Story of Donegal* (ss. 151–160, Ó Grianna 2002, ). Sodan ja sotaisen isänmaallisuuden moraalista arvostelua esiintyy runsaasti romaanissa *Tairngreacht Mhiseoige*, jonka keskeisiä henkilöitä ovat vanha sotilaslääkäri-isä, hänen kiihkeän nationalistinen tyttärensä ja tytärtä riistelevä englantilaismielinen nuori mies, joiden keskusteluilla Séamus Ó Griannan voi kuvitella havainnollistavan omaa ristiriitaista suhdettaan irlantilaiseen nationalismiin. Kansallismielistä runoutta harrastava tytär julistaa mahtavasti, että irlantilaisen velvollisuus on kuolla isänmaan puolesta, mutta isä, jolla on omakohtaista kokemusta sodan kauhuista, paheksuu tytön kevytmielistä asennoitumista vakavaan asiaan. Omana moraalisenä ohjenuoranaan hän esittää kymmenen käskyä riimitetyssä sanamuodossa, joka sellaisena voi olla iirinkielisen uskonnollisen folkloren – kansan katekismuksen – mukainen.

## **Kaksi elämää**

Toisen maailmansodan jälkeen Päätalo siirtyi Tampereelle, missä hän toimi rakennusmestarina ja inspiroitui kirjoittamaan ensimmäisen romaaninsa ”Ihmisiä telineillä” rakennustyömaan elämästä. Kirjallisen menestyksensä ansiosta hän saattoi aikanaan siirtyä ammattikirjailijaksi. Naismaailmassa jopa aviollisen uskollisuuden kustannuksella koettu menestys johti sittemmin ensimmäisen, sodan varjossa solmitun avioliiton purkautumiseen ja uusiin naimisiin. Nämäkin nolot asiat Päätalo työsti ehdoitta alttiiksi paneutuvana omaelämäkerrallisena kirjailijana teostensa materiaaliksi.

Mitä sitten tulee Séamus Ó Griannaan, hänen elämänsä eteni tiettävästi ainakin sukupuolisiveellisyysosalta nuhteettomammin kuin Päätalon, jos kohta täyttymättömät eroottiset toiveet ovatkin mitä ilmeisimmin inspiroineet suurta osaa hänen onnettomista rakkaustarinoistaan, niin romaaneista kuin novelleista:



hän pysytteli poikamiehenä keski-ikään saakka kunnes meni naimisiin sairaanhoitajan kanssa, johon oli tutustunut jouduttuaan sairaalaan jonkin ohimenevän vaivan vuoksi.

Siinä missä Päätalolla oli kauan vaikeuksia perustella itselleen, että ammattikirjailijana olo ei merkinnyt synnillistä oikeiden töiden välttelyä eikä ollut merkki hunningolla olemisesta, jollaiselta se kotiseudun ankaran uskonnollisesta näkökulmasta epäilemättä vaikutti, Séamus Ó Grianna joutui alati painiskelemaan niiden traumojen kanssa, jotka englannin kieltä edellyttävä opettaja oli karttakeppiä huitoen jättänyt iirinkielisen pikkupojan sieluun. Ja siinä missä Päätalo onnistui todistamaan vanhemmilleen ja kylänmiehilleen, että kirjailijan työ oli oikeasti työtä ja toi kotikylälle kunniaa<sup>14</sup>, Séamus Ó Grianna joutui tunnustamaan tappionsa. Lapsensa hän kasvatti englanninkielisiksi, ja elämänsä ehtona hän liittyi Language Freedom Movement -liikkeeseen, jonka tarkoitus oli lopettaa iirin opetus kouluissa ja viedä siltä virallinen asema (Ó Conluain, 35–36). Iirinkielinen syntyperä oli hänelle sittenkin ennen muuta häpeän aihe, takapajuisuuden ja primitiivisyyden stigma, ja englannin osaaminen oli pohjimmiltaan hänellekin sivistyksen ja oppineisuuden oleellisin muoto – *léann agus Béarla*.

## Kaksi kieltä

Sekä Kalle Päätalon että Séamus Ó Griannan kirjallisesta arvosta ja viehätyksestä merkittävä osa perustuu kieleen. Molempien kirjailijoiden kielenkäyttöä leimaa omintakeinen murre – joskin tässäkin tulee näkyviin Päätalon ja Ó Griannan kirjailijanlaadun perusero. Päätalon koillismaalainen puheenparsi muuttuu ja muovautuu uudensuomalaiseksi vuorovaikutuksessa muiden murteiden kanssa lainaten niistä tarvitsemansa sitä mukaa kun Kalle lähtee kotiseudulta maailmalle, ensin sotaan ja sitten Tampereen rakennustyömaiden telineille. Tässäkin mielessä Päätalo on yhteiskunnan muutoksissa mukana elävä kirjailija, mikä tunnetusti onkin syynä siihen, että niin monet pystyvät samastumaan häneen rajun rakennemuutoksen kokeneessa Suomessa.

Séamus Ó Grianna taas näyttäytyy myös kielensä osalta varsin muuttumattomana. Hän ryhtyi alun perin kirjoittamaan pitkälti siksi, että kauhistui sitä, miten kehnolla kielitaidolla englantia äidinkielenään puhuvat kaupunkilaiset kielenharrastajat koettivat kirjoitella iiriksi, ja katsoi asiakseen näyttää, mitä eroa oli iirillä ja iirillä (sitaatti esipuheen sivulla V, Ó Grianna 2003). Hänen kirjallinen kunnianhimosensa yhdistyi siksi melkoiseen kielelliseen konservatiivisuuteen. Hän pyrki autenttiseen Donegalin murteeseen eikä suvainnut

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<sup>14</sup> Teosten reseptiosta Päätalon kotiseudulla ks. esim. Vahtola, 163.

uudissanoja – hän valitsi mieluummin englanninkielisen raakalainasanan kuin vakiintuneenkin iirinkielisen uudissanon viitatakseen nykyajan käsitteisiin, joten politiikkakaan ei ollut hänelle politiikkaa, *polaitíocht*, vaan ”niitä politics-juttuja”, *gnoithe politics*. Tämä synnyttää mielikuvan Dubliniin kotiseudultaan karkotetusta maanpakolaisesta, jolle iirin kieli ja iirinkielinen kirjoitustyö merkitsee ennen kaikkea paluuta idealisoituun lapsuuden maailmaan – ei yhteiskunnan ja kielen kehitystä valppaasti seuraavasta kansalaisesta.

### Loppusanat

Séamus Ó Griannan ja Kalle Päätalon urat ovat edenneet monessa suhteessa vastakkaisia teitä. Siinä missä Ó Grianna kirjoitti kovin valmiiden konventioiden mukaan hamasta nuoruudestaan uransa loppuun asti<sup>15</sup>, Kalle Päätalon urassa on hyvinkin havaittavissa kehitystä ja avautumista modernistisille kirjallisille keinoille, eikä edes Iijoki-sarjan ”omaelämäkerrallinen sopimus” syntynyt ilman esikoisteoksen ja Koillismaa-sarjan kaltaisia hapuiluja.

Sekä Ó Griannasta että Päätalosta on modernistisessä kritiikissä koettu tehdä hyvää vihollista. Ó Grianna ehti aikansa olla kansakunnan kaapin päälle nostettu isähahmo, ja iirinkielinen modernismi on ainakin jossain määrin nähnyt itsensä kapinana juuri Ó Griannaa vastaan. Kuitenkin molemmat kirjailijat sopivat varsin huonosti heille tyrkytettyyn rooliin. Todellinen Séamus Ó Grianna ei yksiselitteisesti ihannoinut sen enempää isänmaan itsenäisyystaistelua kuin irlantilaista kansallismielisyyttäkään, koska kilttinä ja kristillisenä ihmisenä pohjimmiltaan kavahti sotaa ja tappamista, ja toisaalta monien muiden syntyperäisten iirinkielisten tavoin ymmärsi, että nationalismi, joka teki iiristä koko kansallisuuden symbolin, ei välttämättä koko yhteiskunnan kannalta ajanut iirinkielisten maalaisihmistien asiaa.

Ó Griannan ja Päätalon kaltaisten kansankirjailijoiden rooli pienessä kieliyhteisössä on monellakin tavoin merkittävä, ja heidänlaisiaan kirjoittajia voidaan pitää pitkälti välttämättömänä edellytyksenä korkeakirjallisuudenkin olemassaololle. Elävä murre auttaa kieltä uudistumaan omista omaperäisistä

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<sup>15</sup> Alan Titley on kuitenkin suuressa iirinkielisen romaanin historiaa käsittelevässä monografiassaan (Titley, 85–90; 266–274) nähnyt ainakin Séamus Ó Griannan myöhäisvaiheen romaanin *Bean Ruadh de Dhálach* hyvin erilaisena, selvästi vähemmän konventionaalaisena ja staattisena kuin Ó Griannan muut teokset. Toisaalta Ó Griannan ensimmäinen, alkujaan jatkosarjana julkaistu yritys iirinkieliseksi romaaniksi, *Castar na Daoine ar a Chéile agus ní Chastar na Cnoic is na Sléibhte* (ilmestynyt kirjan muodossa ensimmäisen kerran osana kokoelmaa Ó Grianna 2002), joka pyrkii – olkoonkin että naiivisti ja kömpelösti – kuvaamaan aikansa nuoren irlantilaisen älymystön kokemusmaailmaa, eroaa oleellisesti hänen myöhemmistä, kaavamaisista teoksistaan, vaikka siinäkin on tunnistettavissa yksi kirjailijan mieliteemoista, osapuolten ujouden ja kommunikaatiokyvyttömyyden vuoksi onnettomaksi jäävä rakkaus.

voimavaroistaan käsin. Lukijan omaa kokemusmaailmaa lähellä olevat tarinat ja miljööt madaltavat lukukulttuurin kynnystä. Toisaalta ainakin Ó Griannan tapauksessa viihdekirjallisuuden – romanttisten lukemistojen – konventioiden luova soveltaminen houkuttelee (tai ainakin kirjailijan kukoistuskautena houkutteli) englanninkielistä viihdettä lukemaan tottuneita iirinkielisiä irlantilaisia tutustumaan myös hänen teoksiinsa, jotka oli laadittu omalla äidinkielellä ja sijoitettu kotoiseen miljööseen; toisaalta kirjailijan tapa kaivaa salavihkaa maata näiden konventioiden alta päättämällä rakkaustarinat aina traagisiin, mutta hyvin realistisiin pettymyksiin oli omiaan valmentamaan lukijaa myös toisenlaiseen luettavaan.

Séamus Ó Grianna oli kirjailijanakin aina kansanvalistaja, joka omaksui kansankirjailijan roolin ennen muuta opettaakseen – opettaakseen iirinkieliset maanmiehensä lukemaan kaunokirjallisuutta äidinkielellään, mutta myös opettaakseen englanninkielisiksi kasvatetuille irlantilaisille mielestään oikeaa ja hyvää iiriä. Séamus Ó Grianna näkikin itsensä viime kädessä iirinkielisen maaseudun tarinakertojien ja perinteensäilyttäjiä, *seanchaíden*, työn jatkajana koko Irlannin tasolla; ja jos hän kirjoittikin konventionaaliseen tyyliin, tätä voitaneen pitää tietoisena valintana tilanteessa, jossa kieli oli – kuten uskottiin – kuolemassa käsiin, ja syntyperäisten iirinkielisten kirjailijoiden tuottamat tekstimassat toimivat kieltä opettelevien kulttuurinationalistien kannalta mahdollisimman autenttisenä korvikkeena sille iirinkieliselle arkielämälle, jota heillä ei ympärillään ollut luontevan kielenkäytön mallina. Séamus Ó Grianna ei voinut ryhtyä modernistisiin kokeiluihin, vaikka olisi ehkä halunnutkin, koska hänellä oli kiire pelastaa aidosta Donegalin kansaniiristä jälkipolville se, mitä siitä pelastettavissa oli. Pääatalo taas ei ollut pelastamassa sukupuuton uhkaamaa kieltä, vaan rikastuttamassa suomen kaltaista elävää kulttuurikieltä ja luomassa sille laajaa lukukulttuuria.

Patrick Kavanaghin sanoin:

*There is the source from which all cultures rise  
And all religions,*

*There is the pool in which the poet dips  
And the musician.*

*Without the peasant base civilization must die [...].  
(Kiberd 1995, 479)*

Sekä Pääatalo että Ó Grianna edustavat tuota *peasant base*'iä, jota ilman sivistys kuolee. Mutta siinä missä Pääatalo katsoi juurevan maalaisuutensa olevan pohja, jolta ponnistaa kohti kirjallisuutta, Ó Grianna näki pohjan olevan murenemassa, ja hänen tehtävänsä oli yrittää pitää sitä koossa, edes jotenkin.

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Päätalo-instituutin arkistoluettelo:

<http://www.taivalkoski.fi/paatalo-instituutti/arkistoluettelo.htm>

# Status and Exchange in Early Irish Laws<sup>1</sup>

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tatus is one of the key concepts for understanding early Irish society. Status is important because the functioning of the society was based on contract-like relationships between individuals and groups. Status governed their capacity to enter into contracts and their rights and obligations in them. The value of a man's testimony in court depended on his status. Compensations for injuries, killing or other crimes were calculated according to the status of the victim and his kinsmen and lord. Furthermore, status defined the proper conduct towards people of different rank.

The relationship between status and exchange is an intricate one. The status differences and the functioning of the society become visible in situations involving personal exchange. Status governs how different groups interact with each other, what kind of mutual rights and obligations are expected from them. The bonds created by reciprocal relationships actually form the structure of the society.

Descent and wealth are usually mentioned as the main sources of status in early Ireland. The law-texts themselves, however, refer to other more immaterial requirements for soliciting a high status. In this paper I search through some of the most important law-texts on status for different arguments by which status can be claimed, and furthermore, lost. The latter part of the article is devoted to drawing a picture of reciprocal relationships in early Ireland, i.e. what kind of exchange, both material and symbolic, is involved, and what part status plays in these relationships. I will argue that some forms of status are actually contingent on exchange. I will also assess the general role of reciprocal relationships in the functioning of early Irish society.

## Source material

The text material used in the analysis comprises three important general texts on rank: *Críth Gablach*<sup>2</sup>, *Uraicecht Becc*<sup>3</sup>, *Míadslechta*<sup>4</sup>, and two texts focusing on the

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<sup>1</sup> The writing of this article has been funded by the Academy of Finland, project number 1211006.

status of the poets and ecclesiastics, *Uraicecht na Ríar*<sup>5</sup> and *Bretha Nemed*.<sup>6</sup> Binchy dates *Críth Gablach* to c. AD 700 and *Uraicech Becc* to late seventh or early eighth century. *Míadsleхта* is dated by MacNeill to the eighth, *Bretha Nemed* and *Uraicecht na Ríar* by Breatnach to the second part of the eighth century (Binchy 1941, 1958; MacNeill 1923; Breatnach 1984, 1987). The sources are then roughly coeval, presenting an era when Christianity already had a firm hold of Irish society.

Recent research on early Irish law agrees on the role that the Church had in the writing down of secular law: the process was much affected and the texts indeed moulded by the churchmen.<sup>7</sup> The sevenfold ecclesiastical hierarchy also influenced the systematisation of early Irish law. The status of the Church in the secular society is reflected by the fact that the churchmen were given very extensive privileges in the laws. Legal principles, rules and precedents were taken from the Old Testament. The fact that the canon lawyers adopted legal concepts and institutions from the secular law tells of the readiness of the Church to adapt to the existing social system. The legal practises of the vernacular law which were not contradictory to the teachings of the Christianity were authorized by declaring them to be the natural law, which was given to the Irish by God (Ó Corráin 1984, 1987; Breatnach 1984; Ó Corráin, Breatnach and Breen 1984, Moisl 1987).

The problems of using early Irish law-texts as sources for the study of society are well known. The approach of the texts may be called prescriptive, giving an idea of how the things should be rather than presenting the reality. Large parts of the law-texts consist of glosses commentary, which have been gradually added up to the fifteenth and sixteenth century. One may ask how well the law-texts reflect reality and from what period? It has been pointed out that the general legal principles of the Irish law seem to have remained the same for the whole history of Irish law schools. This conservatism is also suggested by the absence of Anglo-Norman legal ideas and terminology (Kelly 1992, 18). I would also suspect that the main structures of the society, such as social classes would be the slowest to change. The same applies to the 'realism' of the law-texts: even though there

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<sup>2</sup> Corpus Iuris Hibernici, henceforth CIH 777.6–783.38; 563.1–570.32. Edited by D.A. Binchy in Medieval and Modern Irish Series, vol. XI (1941). Henceforth *CG*.

<sup>3</sup> CIH 1590–1618; 634–655; 2318–2335. Henceforth *UB*.

<sup>4</sup> CIH 582.32–589.32. Henceforth *MS*.

<sup>5</sup> Edited by Liam Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar. The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law*. Dublin: DIAS 1987. Henceforth *UR*.

<sup>6</sup> Edited in parts (the ecclesiastical grades) and translated by Liam Breatnach, 'The first third of *Bretha Nemed Toisech*.' *Ériu* 40/1989, 1–40. Henceforth *BN*.

<sup>7</sup> The importance of ecclesiastical scholars is emphasised especially in the texts of the southern *Nemed* school of law, such as *Uraicech Becc* and *Collectio canonum hibernensis* (Ó Corráin 1981, 331). Another text, *Senchas Már*, has a narrative in which the laws of the Irish are inspected by St. Patrick and brought to conformity with Christianity (Ó Corráin, Breatnach and Breen 1984, 385).

may be misgivings about the prevalence of certain legal practises, it is hardly conceivable that the social classes or the principles governing their formation would merely have been the constructions of the jurists.

The grading of different hierarchies, arguments for status and especially honour-prices vary from text to text. The technical details as such – or their harmonising – are not the focus of this paper. My aim is to look at the principles for claiming status at a more general level and to give a picture of what kind of everyday aspects of life were governed by status. The material and professional requirements for some of the hierarchies are, however, tabulated by way of example in the Appendix to provide a measure for comparison between different hierarchies.

### Status

The measure of a person's status was called 'value of the face' *lóg n-énech*, which was the price to be paid if a man was humiliated, i.e. lost his face. To be treated with due dignity was extraordinarily important to the early Irish. When discussing rights due to different ranks, *MS* says:

How many are their legal rights according to their rank in the dignity laws? Answer – Nine; That it may be known to what extent each of them is confirmed in his rights, as regards their full number, and their smallest number, at refectations, as regards their feeding and refusal, as to their wounding and their being insulted, as to their being treated with contempt and their protection violated, their exemption before and during refectations, as to their honor-price, and their blush-fine and their blister-fine.<sup>8</sup>

In the quoted passage the essence of the legal rights seems to be in social values, even more than material values: personal and material security was important, but equally important seemed to be the guarding of a person from the embarrassment of insults or exclusion from different gatherings. Full honour-price was paid for satire,<sup>9</sup> refusal of hospitality, violation on a man's protection as well as for murder, serious injury or theft. Where a man's honour was not involved – for example animal trespass or minor damage to property – lesser fines were due (Kelly 1988, 8). As Professor Charles-Edwards has shown, avoidance of personal dishonour

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<sup>8</sup> *Cis lir a ndliged iar miadhaighecht ind eolaid isna miadlechtaib? .ní. noi, co festar cia meit i nastaitheer cach dibh iter a lín 7 a nuaite, iter a mbiathad 7 a nesain, iter a nguín 7 a ndiguín, iter a sar 7 a sarugud, iter a faesam 7 a turrthugud, iter a neneclainn 7 a nenechruice 7 a nenechgris. (MS CIH 583.1–4, translation Ancient Laws of Ireland IV, s. 345, ll. 11–19).*

<sup>9</sup> Satire was thought to have physical effects on its object. Blushing was the mildest form, but virulent satire could even cause blisters on the face of the victim (McCone 1990, 124).



could drive a person to extreme and irrational actions, such as killing one's own children (1978).

The Irish social system acknowledged several separate status hierarchies according to the functions the members of these hierarchies performed in the society. The one by which the majority of the population was ranked was the 'grades of the lay people' *grád túaithe*, which included ordinary laity i.e. the ranks of the commoners (tenant farmers), and the ranks of the lords all the way up to the king. The other hierarchies consisted of 'people of skill' the *áes dána* i.e. the professionals, craftsmen, lawyers, and the ecclesiastical scholars; the ranks of learned poets and experts of vernacular tradition (*filid*); and the grades of the Church.<sup>10</sup> One of the central problems of the early Irish jurist was thus the comparison of different hierarchies to establish their status in relation to each other.

Outside the ranks of the free were the unfree (*doer*), tenants, hereditary serfs and slaves, who did not have an honour-price of their own. They lacked land or skills that would give them an independent economic position. Lords usually owned the unfree; it was the group that actually performed the main agricultural work on a lord's land. If a slave was assaulted and wounded, the compensation was due to the lord who owned him, not to the victim himself. Slaves were recruited by force in raids, by birth but also by penalty for serious crimes. Also those who incurred debt often lost their free status as a consequence. Among the unfree or dependants were also counted women and minors, whose honour-price was a fraction of their male guardian's, father's, fosterer's or husbands honour-price (Charles-Edwards 2000, 68–71; McLeod 1987, 58–59).

While the different hierarchies of status were distinguished by the respective functions their members performed for the society, within these hierarchies members ranked according to how well they discharged their function.<sup>11</sup> The status of the *filid*, for example, varied in accordance with their metrical skill and the number of compositions of traditional lore they master. The grades of farmers on their part were distinguished by the number of cattle they owned and those of the lords by the number of clients they contracted.

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<sup>10</sup> The classes of the poets and the lords were the most ancient, originating in pre-Christian times. They were noted already by Caesar during his dealings with the Celtic tribes of Gallia (*Commentarii Belli Gallici*, VI.13.-15.). Ecclesiastical grades were introduced by Christianity in the fifth century.

<sup>11</sup> Professor Charles-Edwards calls this incremental status (1986, 55).

### Sources for status: wealth

In the law-texts the qualifications for different ranks with regard to their material property (*folud*) are quite detailed. Some texts include the size of the house and outhouse, number of cattle and other livestock, acreage of land, shared resources such as kiln, mill, barn etc.; even standards for household utensils may be set in the texts. A certain amount of wealth was necessary to qualify as a freeman, i.e. to be considered as a self-ruling person capable of independent legal action and eligible to attend the assemblies of the *túath*. Non-noble freemen, or commoners, had enough material assets to be farmers on their own account: they had inherited (or would in time inherit) land, they owned a house, some agricultural equipment, and a share in a plough-team. Livestock, especially cattle, was indispensable, not only as a source of nourishment, but also to work the land. They also produced dung, a fertiliser necessary to make the land arable. Relatively few farmers were entirely self-sufficient; the majority entered into a clientship with wealthier farmers to acquire more cattle.

Some writers have claimed that a freeman farmer could live off his land and other stock such as swine and sheep, without actually needing the cattle from a lord for survival.<sup>12</sup> But since cattle was so important 1) for mixed farming; 2) as a depot of wealth to make a man eligible for legal action and to sustain the duties of his grade; 3) as a means of exchange, e.g. in a bride-price and other economic transactions; and 4) simply as a status symbol, not owning any would render credible business rather difficult.<sup>13</sup> If anyone wanted to act as a surety to a party in a contract, he needed cattle to manage the obligations, in case that party backed out on the contract.

The main categories of commoners were *bóaire*, *ócaire* and *fer midboth*.<sup>14</sup> *Fer midboth* was the lowest grade of freeman. He had not yet reached full adulthood (20 years) and was just establishing a household of his own. His honour-price was measured at 2 *séts*. An *ócaire* owned 7 *cumals* worth of land, which amount was supposed to sustain seven cows for a year, and which rendered him an honour-

<sup>12</sup> i.a. Gerriets 1981; 1983. Gerriets maintains that the exchange of cattle between a lord and his client was purely symbolic in meaning (see *infra*).

<sup>13</sup> Archaeological record also shows the dominance of cattle as domestic animal: bovine bones constitute over 70% of all animal remains at a majority of excavated settlement sites (Patterson 1994, 73).

<sup>14</sup> The terminology of status divisions in the Irish law tracts is very heterogeneous. Neil McLeod has calculated 24 different grade names for commoners in 11 law tracts, which he used as a source for analysing the early Irish status hierarchies. Of these *bóaire* occurred in nine texts, *ócaire* in eight and *fer midboth* in seven. Of the rest, 16 terms were used in one text only and five were used two texts. McLeod considers most of the terms to be sub-divisions of the three (1987, 57). When using the names of the grades, I may refer either to the status, to a class of persons, or to a single person holding that rank.

price of 3 *séts*.<sup>15</sup> A *bóaire* owned 14 *cumals* of land, 12 cows and two horses (CG, ll. 91–3 & ll. 119–20). A free man's basic material assets, his house and land, were valued at 5 *séts*. For each higher grade, the house was estimated at that price, and further wealth in cattle and clients increased the status (CG ll. 354–6). The qualifications of commoner grades focused very much on the amount of land, buildings, and domestic animals they were supposed to own, whereas for the higher grades these were often left unspecified (see Table 1).

## Clientele

Advancing to the ranks of the lords required more than wealth from a commoner. Certain economic resources, in the form of land, buildings, equipment and cattle, were necessary, but a mere amassing of wealth did not take a person over the threshold to nobility. CG explicitly states that while the *bóaire* owed his status to his wealth, even the lowest rank of the lords, *aire désa* derives his from *déis*:

Why is the *aire désa* so called? Because his honour-price is paid in virtue of his *déis*. Not so the *bóaire*: his honour-price is paid in virtue of his cows.<sup>16</sup>

What ennobles them? Their *déis*, their rights, each of them, both small and great. There are four kinds of *déis* for lords: the long-standing submission of a people (*túath*), his office among a people, including the office of leader or second-in-command, whichever office it be; his base clients; and his free clients; his hereditary serfs.<sup>17</sup>

This *déis* consisted of high ranking officers (kings and a few others explored below) and of the lord's clients. The size of the *clientela* determined the rank of the noble. The lowest grade of the lords, *aire désa* had 5 base clients and advancing to each superior grade required 5 more base clients.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *Cumal* and *sét* are the most commonly used units of value, the worth of 1 *cumal* is measured at three milking cows and a *cumal* equals 6 *séts* (McLeod 1987, 79). Bovine stock was the principal unit of value, in which obligations such as compensation for breaches of law and bride price, were measured (Gerriets 1983, 56). Their size, however, impeded their use as 'money', and payments were made in barter or in silver instead (Patterson 1994, 73).

<sup>16</sup> *Aire désa, cid ara n-eperr? Arindí as dia déis direnar. Nimthá bóaire: is dia búuib direnar side.* (CG §24: ll. 328–9, translation by Charles-Edwards 1986, 65).

<sup>17</sup> *Cid nodasóera? A ndéis a ndliged cach áe, cid bec cid mór. Cair: caiti déis flatha, dég dligid comditen dána? Dicoissin cetheora déisi do flaithib: senchomditiu thúaithe; a dán i túaith, im dán toísig nó thánaisi, sechib dán dí[i]jb; a céli gíallnai; a sóerchéli; a senchléithe* (CG §23: ll. 319–24, translation by Charles-Edwards 1986, 58).

<sup>18</sup> The different lay grades with their honour-price, wealth and client requirements are tabulated in Table 1 in the Appendix.

Marilyn Gerriets defined the nucleus of early Irish clientship as follows: ‘Clientship is a voluntary tie of personal dependence in which the social superior provides military protection, legal support, and productive goods in return for attendance in his retinue or war band and a flow of goods or labour services from the inferior’ (1983, 43f.). Base clientship, *aicillne*, was the form of clientship most suited to the common freeman. In *aicillne* a land-owning farmer got a supplement to his cattle (or sometimes land or tools) as a grant (*rath*) from his lord. The grant consisted of two parts, *taurchrecc* (pre-payment) and *séoit taurchluideo* (‘chattels of submission’), both of which were in proportion to the client’s honour-price, the *séoit* equalling it (Jaski 2000, 105; Patterson 1994, 162). The offspring of the granted cattle belonged to the client. In exchange for cattle, the client gave his lord annually one cow and some foodstuffs. Moreover, during the ‘time of coshering’ (*aimser chue*) – between New Year’s day and Shrovetide – the lord and his retinue could enjoy obligatory hospitality from his client, in the form of a feast and entertainment. The client was also expected to provide labour i.e. to harvest his lord’s crops or help in major building projects (Jaski 2000, 105).

The relationship of base clientship came to an end when the lord died.<sup>19</sup> The *rath* of cattle given at the outset of the clientship remained (if any were alive) in the client’s position. The lord’s heir had to form new bonds with clients, since clientship was not a hereditary possession but based on individual choice of partners.<sup>20</sup> To break the contract of base clientship, however, was very costly to the party who wanted to opt out.

In the other form of clientship, free clientship (*sóerchéilsine*), the client was not so dependent upon his lord, apparently because ‘he had adequate social resources with which to defend his status in normal confrontations’ (Patterson 1994, 156), such as a middle-ranking farmer, *bóaire*, would have.<sup>21</sup> The grant did not involve the payment of the client’s honour-price (*séoit taurchluideo*) and

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<sup>19</sup> According to some writers, the contract expired after 7 years, and if the clientship was renewed, the lord gave out a new *rath* with the new contract (Jaski 2000, 106; Charles-Edwards 1993, 357–9).

<sup>20</sup> The practice differed in the south in Munster, where base clientship could be hereditary. The status difference between a lord and a client determined the length of relationship: if the lord’s status was two or three ranks higher than that of the client, the contract would expire only in the second or third generation (Charles-Edwards 1993, 359–360).

<sup>21</sup> Nerys Patterson maintains that the commentaries on the tract on free clientship, *Cáin Soerraiðh*, implied ‘non-aristocratic nature of free-clientship’ (1994, 155). *CG*, however, when discussing the *aire ard* in lines 373–4, suggests that both commoners and nobles may have been free clients: ‘each grade that is lower than him, they (can) be in clientship to him’ *cach ngrád asid n-islíu bíid dó i céilsini* (translation McNeill 1923, 298 §110). *CG* also defines the grant received by each grade of a lord from a higher one (see Table 1). The king is described as having the seven grades of *Féni* (the Irish freemen) in clientship (*CG* ll. 449–50).

accordingly the lord did not have any claim to legal compensations received by the free client (Ibid, 156). The grant was three cows, of which the client paid back a cow per year in three years. After that the value of one cow was paid annually in dairy products, calves or dung until the seventh year when no payments were due. The original grant was then returned, which brought the contract to its end. However, contrary to the base clientship, both parties could terminate the contract at will and without penalty, the client by returning the original grant and the lord by claiming it back.

The relative benefits of the clientship system to each party have been commented upon, claiming that it was too advantageous to the lord, but Patterson points out that it seemed to be an acceptable and honourable relationship for the free client. She also holds that provision of political security, not profit, was the reason for the exchange (1994, 158). The lord could demand services from his free clients in labour,<sup>22</sup> but also in military services. The lord's cattle would be dispersed around the *túath* and therefore safe from mass raids and disease. Further benefit would arise from the fact that the lord's wealth was concealed from his competitors (Ibid, 160). The free client's allegiance might be harder to keep: for him the bargain held only the relative security from changes in local lordship, such as expropriation of the client's land by intrusive lords (Ibid).

Because of the imperative in Irish kinship that no land should be alienated from the possession of the kindred, it was thought preferable that the lord was the client's kinsman. In that case, even if the client ran into financial difficulties, the kindred would not face the risk of losing its assets. Charles-Edwards also maintains that clientship within the kindred promoted cohesion within the kin (1993, 362). Although the main function of the clientele obviously was to free the nobility from agricultural work against a loan of capital, there were other kinds of exchange involved in the lord-client –relationship. Apart from material exchange the relationship required legal and armed protection from the lord and political support on the client's part, i.e. the client would partake in his lord's retinue and military expeditions. It can be thus claimed that one of the primary basis for high status in early Ireland was engaging in relationships of exchange in the form of clientship contracts.

The normal route to lordship would entail contracting a certain number of clients, but as can be seen from the excerpt above, early Irish law tracts give other options as well, such as 'public' office and military leadership.

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<sup>22</sup> Charles-Edwards maintains that free client performed only 'the honourable task of attendance on his lord' i.e. appearing in his retinue (1993, 345) but produces somewhat contradictory evidence to support his claim (Ibid, 345f).

### Office and military leadership

The law-texts imply that at least some ranks of lords did not owe their status entirely to their clientele, but to duties on behalf of their kin and *túath*. They acted as spokesmen for their kindred and some even for the *túath* in their dealings with the king, the Church or other territories. Some also acted as sureties guaranteeing the fulfilling of public obligations on behalf of their family. Among these higher grades of lords were *aire túise* and *aire ard*. *CG* for instance states of the *aire túise*:

The *aire túise*, for what reason he is [so] called? For the fact that he is a leader of people... [he is of] full assistance in the kingdom for representations, for oaths, for a pledge, for a hostage, for treaty on behalf of a people across the border and in the house of the Lord.<sup>23</sup>

Also *MS* claims that *aire túise* represents kindreds and pleads their cases to the king.<sup>24</sup> It also states that the rank called *aire ard* or *aire forgail*, which is second only to the king, represents the territory. *Aire ard* was elected by the free men of the *túath* and was involved in the making of *cáin*- and *cairde*-laws which concerned the *túath* and its neighbours. High status lords also had special powers of protection: *aire ard*, for instance could provide a sanctuary (*ardneimed*) for the people of his *túath*.<sup>25</sup> *Aire coisring* also performed services on behalf of his kin according to *CG*:

Why is *coisring* .i.e. noble of contract, so called? Because he enters into contracts with *túath*, king and church on behalf of his family, without being indemnity from them on (his) contracts, but they acknowledge him as a leader and advocate before them. He is head of kin, who gives a pledge to king, church and poets on behalf of his kin to compel their obedience.<sup>26</sup>

*Aire échta* was responsible for some military operations outside of the *túath*, commanding an armed group. References in law-texts suggest that he was a medieval ‘hitman’, a universal avenger of wrongs on his *túath*, committed by people from the outside. In intercommunal feuding he seems to have acted on behalf of any kin, not just his own kindred (McLeod 1987, 46–7). None of the texts designates clients as a criterion of *aire échta*’s status. McLeod’s interpretation is that

<sup>23</sup> *Aire tuisce, cid ara n-eperr? Arindí as toisech a ceníul ....láncchongna, i túaith do aidbdenaib, do noillechaib, do gi[u]llm do gíall, do cahirdiu tar cenn ceníul tar crích 7 i tech flatha.* (*CG* II. 386–7, 411–3, translation McLeod 1987, 42).

<sup>24</sup> *Aairi tuisi, do-fet fine comcinel do co ri 7 ar-ro-labrathar* (*MS*, CIH 677–8).

<sup>25</sup> *Cetharslicht Athgabálae* mentions that *aire forgill* may provide sanctuary for impounded property (McLeod 1987, 44).

<sup>26</sup> *Aire coisring, cid ara n-eperr? Arindí cosrenga túath 7 ri 7 senod tar cenn a chenóil, ná[d] dlig a slán doib for curu bél, acht atndaimet do thoisiuch 7 aurlabraid remib. Is é aire fine insin tobeir gell tar cenn a fine do rí 7 senud 7 óes cherdd dia timorggain do réir* (*CG*, §20, translation from Henry 1977, 61).

*aire echta* is not a distinct grade on its own, but a special case of *aire désó* (Ibid, 50–51). Some Old Irish legal tracts refer to *aire echta* in derogatory terms putting his actions on a par with those of *díbergach* (marauders) and demoting him to the status of commoners. This implies that some parties, such as the Church wanted to suppress the practice of inter-territorial feuding already in the Old Irish period (Ibid, 48–9).

Even though the highest grades of lords derived part of their status from their offices, one has to assume, as McLeod points out, that succeeding to those offices also required material wealth and authority ensuing from the political support of clients. Those chosen as representatives of a kindred or several kindreds certainly were among the strongest individuals in every respect (McLeod 1987, 54). Most likely the holders of these offices were chosen from among the highest ranking individuals, already nobles, and not elevated to the rank because of their offices.

### Religious status

Ecclesiastics rank very high in the law-texts, some being equal or even superior to the kings. UB gives the same honour-price to the archbishop and an *ollam* of ecclesiastical law as to the king of *túath* (CIH 2334.34–5, translation *AL V*, 113). In *CG* the bishop is deemed nobler than the king because ‘the king rises to salute him because of religion’ although the bishop also acknowledges the king.<sup>27</sup> The evidence of a *suí*, a bishop and a hermit (*deorad dé*) cannot be overturned even by a king (Kelly 1988, 41). *BN* also claims that ‘an ecclesiastic is more powerful than any other noble one of privilege.’<sup>28</sup>

The status of ecclesiastics was not based on wealth but on their function of supplying the lay society with religious services. A church was ennobled by possessing the shrine and relics of a saint, but above all by attaining to Christian ideals, having a sinless superior, devout monks and practising believers (*BN Toísech* §3). Failing to perform the due rites and the functions of the church orders, neglecting devotions and accepting lay practices debased the church:

being without baptism, without communion, without mass, without praying for the dead, without preaching, without penitents, without active life, without the contemplative life; water through it to the altar, driving guests away from it, disobedience, misappropriation, private property, complaining, providing for clients; an ex-layman tending it, a young boy in its stewardship,

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<sup>27</sup> *Is [s]ruithiu epscop, húare arneraig rí(g) fo bíth creitme: tuarga(i)b epscop dano a glún ria rí(g)* (*CG* ll.604–6, translation Mac Neill 1923, 306).

<sup>28</sup> *Biru is tresá eclais cach neimthiusi nár* (*BN Toísech* §24, translation by Liam Breatnach).

a nun announcing its canonical hours; reddening it with blood, putting it under a lord, going to it after plundering, its being diminished through supporting women, increasing debts on it, wearing it away with sin, giving it as payment to a lord or a kin.<sup>29</sup>

As seen from the passage, losing economic independence through debts, clientship etc. also diminished the status of a church.

A churchman advanced in the ecclesiastical orders according to seniority: he was a novice from boyhood to adulthood, which was attained at 20 years of age. He could advance to the order of a doorkeeper or exorcist at 22, lector and subdeacon at 24, and deacon by 29. He might receive the order of priest at 30, but the office of bishop could only be achieved after 40 years of studies in scripture (*BN Toisech* § 24). *BN* lays down a *cumal* for every ecclesiastical grade, but losing one's innocence – e.g. breaching the vow of celibacy – diminished the honour-price (*BN Toisech* § 14).

In fitting the Church to the native law, *Bretha Nemed Toisech* constantly refers to native practices and takes a stance towards them. For instance, I take 'the church does not accept the price of innocent blood'<sup>30</sup> to mean that the native custom of paying a wergeld for killing a person was not accepted. A member of the Church had to repent, atone and do penance for his sin.<sup>31</sup> Also, unlike the kin, the Church as an institution did not accept collective liability over its members: 'It does not take responsibility for anyone's crime'<sup>32</sup> (Ó Corráin 1981, 332).

### Learning and skill

The professionals earned their respect - and living – by their art. No material requirements were demanded of them in the law-texts. Of lay professionals, the full *nemed* status was granted only to the poet. The status of a *filid* depended on the

<sup>29</sup> *buith cen bathais, cen chomnai, cen oifrend, cen immon n-anmae, cen phrecept, cen áes n-aithrige, cen achtaíl, cen teoir; uisce tree for altóir, esáin oiged úaidi; nac, dichmairc, sainchron, fodord, frtihairle chéile; athláech inna hairitiu, gillae inna ferthigsiud, caillech do fócrú a tráth; a fodergad co fuil, a corf o flaith, a tascnam iar fogail, a fothlae fonnáib, mórad fáich fuiri, a fochnam co peccad, a fochraic cdo flaith no fini* (*BN Toisech* §6, translation by Liam Breatnach).

<sup>30</sup> *nád airfoim eclais lóg folo emge* (§ 12, translation by Liam Breatnach).

<sup>31</sup> *CG* describes how one atones for misdeeds: 'Any filth that stains a person's honour, there be three that wash it away, soap and water and towel. This, first, is the soap, confession of the misdeed before men and promise not to return thereto again. The water, next, payment for whatever perishes through his misdeeds. The towel, penance for the misdeed, by the judgment of the books. *Nach sal aslén(n)a ainech duini bíit a trí ocá dñunuch .i. slíc 7 uisce 7 anart. Is ed as slíc cétamus foisitiu in midénma fia(d) doinib 7 ingell ná[d] soifea friu aithirriuch; int uisce immurgu, ícc neich atbaill tria mígním(i)u: a n-anart, pennait in midénma ré[i]r lebor* (*CG* ll. 308–13), translation MacNeill 1923, 296).

<sup>32</sup> *Ni beir cinaid neic* (*BN Toisech* §4, translation by Liam Breatnach).



amount of his learning and metrical skill. The fluency of a master poet's reasoning and knowledge and of his praise poetry was likened to a stream (*MS*, CIH 586.16–21; 587.6). According to a fragment from *BN* the privileges of poets result from three special prophetic techniques:

O wealthy mighty Morand, tell me how the power of every lawfully established *nemed* is estimated, for it is on the basis of privileges that every upright lawful skilled person is chosen (?). 'Great knowledge which illuminates', extempore chanting, the singing of *anamain* of four varieties are what confer dignity on a sage.<sup>33</sup>

The poet's status was closely connected with the society's preoccupation with honour, as his main function was to praise and to satirize.

*UR* lists seven grades of poets: *ollam*, *ánruth*, *clí*, *cano*, *dos*, *macfhuirmid*, *fochloc*, and three subgrades *taman*, *drisiuc*, *oblaire*. An *ollam* was knowledgeable in historical science and jurisprudence of Irish law. The text defines *nath* and *laid* as the meters that an *ollam* must master, (*UR* §2); *roscad* was considered of lesser merit (*UR* §18). The *ollam* should always be able to deliver a satisfying answer (*UR* §3). Also the moral qualities required from poets are listed, most notably monogamous marriage (*UR* §6). The number of compositions each poetic grade was supposed to master is enumerated, as are their honour-prices and number of company in different situations. These are listed in Table 2 in the Appendix.

In order to be a poet proper, to have a right to all the privileges brought by the status, a man's father and grandfather had to be of the same status (CG, 1. 335; Charles-Edwards 2000, 129–136; Jaski 2000, 40). This three-generation requirement was emphasised in *UR*: unless a poet comes from a family of poets in which his father and grandfather are both poets, they have smaller honour-prices or even belong to a lower order of bards (§3, §4, §7, §11).

Other professionals, such as jurists, physicians, wrights, and blacksmiths were also counted to the privileged classes, but below the free *nemed*s. *UB* also gives the reason for this: practitioners of arts and crafts were subject because they served the higher *nemith* (*UB*, CIH 637.1–3; 2330.3–6). The lower *nemed* received much scantier treatment in the law. Only *UB* mentions them in detail, paying some attention to skill requirements in addition to defining honour-prices, protection and refectation. A jurist who was proficient in the three languages or rules – the traditional Irish law *fenechus*, the lore of the *filid* and the Latin learning *legend* – was

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<sup>33</sup> *A Moraind a maine a mochta, abuir frium co míter nertcach naosad nemedh, ar is anemtesaib do-eclamar cach direch dana dligid. Imus for-osnam, dicedul do cenduib, cedul n-anomuín cethirriach cato cach suad. (BN CIH 2219.16–20, printed in Breatnach's edition of *UR*, p. 36, translation by Breatnach).*

ranked as high as *aire túise* of the lords and was given an honour-price of 20 *séts* (*UB*, CIH 2329.3–10).<sup>34</sup> A jurist specialised in the justice of arts and crafts, i.e. in estimating the worth of the work and products of professionals, received an honour-price of 7 *séts*. Craftsmen were evaluated according to their products: a wright who could make oaken houses, or ships and other vessels, or mills, or is an expert in yew-carving received the same honour-price as an *aire déso*, but a maker of chariots had equal status with a commoner (*UB*, CIH 2332. 8–23; 2333. 3–8). Again, if a person mastered many crafts, he earned higher status (*UB*, CIH 2332.25–39). Most of the professionals led itinerant lives<sup>35</sup>, but at least a harpist who managed to get a more permanent position in a lord's house was accorded free status (*UB*, CIH 2333. 17–19). Other musicians and performers owed their honour-price to their lords (*UB*, CIH 2333.36–2334.8).

### Hospitality

The most effective way to rise in the early Irish status hierarchy was the unlimited or professional practising of hospitality. The *briugu*, 'hospitaller', engaged in providing hospitality for all visitors to his house. A person who undertook running a guest-house advanced to the ranks of nobility without delay, whereas an ordinary farmer trying to attain nobility through clientele had to wait for three generations. While all ranks were obliged to show hospitality to their lords and others according to entitlements of their status<sup>36</sup>, *UB* states that a *briugu* 'excludes no rank, he refuses no company, he does not count it against anybody though he come often.'<sup>37</sup> Further specifications include the *briugu* having his house on a road or at crossroads, and the commentary even mentions special ushers, who show people to the guest-house.

The status of a *briugu* varied according to the wealth he possessed as a premise for providing hospitality services. According to *Uraicecht Becc*: 'the *briugu* is

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<sup>34</sup> Elsewhere in *UB* *aire túise*'s honour-price is set at 15 *séts*.

<sup>35</sup> In fact intineracy was imperative for reaching the clients. The commoners were not able to move safely outside the borders of their *túath*, since except for the *nemed*-classes, legal status only applied within one's own territory (Kelly 1988, 223).

<sup>36</sup> Inadequate hospitality was one of the most common qualities to provoke satire. Lords were entitled to refectations from their clients annually, but they were also expected to arrange feasts. While poets were invited to provide entertainment, they might, unless satisfied with the banquet and their own reward, turn their tongue against the lord. The mythical first satire, incited by niggardliness destroyed king Bres mac Elathan in the days of the Túatha De Danaan (Simms 1978, 76).

<sup>37</sup> *Nicon urrscair fri cach richt, nicon etig nach naim, nicon airmi fri nech ciaba menic thi*. CIH 1608.19–21; 654.8–10; 2324,27–9. Translation by Mac Eoin 1997, 488).

of equal status with noble if he has twice the land and property of any grade.’<sup>38</sup> The same law tract also refers to *briugu cétach*, who has a hundredfold wealth and *briugu leitech*, who is even twice richer.<sup>39</sup> Several passages in law-texts suggest that a *briugu* could attain a status comparable to that of a king or a chief poet (Kelly 1988, 37; Mac Eoin 1997, 485).

*Briugu* may have also had other public duties; he appears in *Táin Bó Cúailgne* in the meaning *biattach* ‘sutlerv or camp cook’, translated in DIL as ‘supplier of food, victualler, farmer: a landholder or tenant whose duty it was to use his land to provide for the refectation of a lord and his attendants when travelling through the country and to supply the army of their territory’ (Mac Eoin 1999, 171). Bearing of weapons or taking part in military expeditions was, however, not assumed of a *briugu* (Ibid 1997, 487).

### Personal qualities

*MS* proposes seven arguments for attaining status:

There are seven things out of which a person is estimated – form, and race, land, and tillage, profession, and property, and worthiness.<sup>40</sup>

Land, tillage, property and profession have been covered above; form, race and worthiness could be called ‘personal qualities’. Race or birth right to a status was a practical *sine qua non* for the higher echelons of early Irish social hierarchy. Irish law-texts stipulated a three-generation rule, which applied to all privileged or *nemed* ranks. As mentioned above, in order to have a right to all the privileges brought by the status, a man’s father and grandfather had to be of the same status (*CG*, l. 335; Charles-Edwards 2000, 129–136; Jaski 2000, 40).

Form and worthiness might be interpreted to cover a person’s social values and skills as well as physical appearance. With regard to headships of kin, Church or *túath*, proper descent alone was not enough to secure succession. The candidate had to be fit and worthy to rule. The law-texts refer to *febas*: (‘excellence’) dignity, personal standing or worth, which qualified the heir-apparent (Jaski 2000, 334).

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<sup>38</sup> *comgraid birugu fi flaith diamble diablad lais gach graid de tir 7 trebad.* (CIH 2273.33f.; 76.1. Translation by Mac Eoin 1997, 484).

<sup>39</sup> *CG* does not mention the grade of *briugu* at all. It does, however, give an extensive treatment of a commoner grade called *mruigfher*, which unlike with other grades, dwells on the household utensils needed for cooking and making ale and the rules for entertaining guests. It mentions that a *mruigfher* should have an ever-lighted fire (*CG* ll. 171–248). Gearóid Mac Eoin suggests that the *mruigfher* of *CG* is the *briugu* of *UB* (1997).

<sup>40</sup> *Sicaacht (sic) asa midithar duine: cruth 7 ocus, cenel, tir 7 trebadh, dan 7 indbus 7 innrucus* (*MS* CIH, 585.32–4, translation Ancient Laws of Ireland IV 355, ll. 18–19).

Basically *febas* meant behaviour which suited one's position, such as a lord being righteous towards his clients and fulfilling his obligations towards them, but in the case of kings, wisdom-texts and saga-literature give longer lists of required qualities. Kings and king-aspirants were expected to display 'royal' qualities – in addition to possessing them – i.e. valour, leadership and generosity (Jaski 2000, 337). Physical labour was considered demeaning: if a king was found holding an axe, spade or mallet, his honour-price was reduced to that of a commoner. The same happened if he went about without a retinue, or fled from the battlefield (CG, ll. 530–41). In likeness to a king, a lord's status had to show in his demeanour: he was not allowed to tolerate satire or refuse hospitality (Kelly 1988, 27). In the same vein, *folud*, or status qualifications, which were enumerated in the law-texts for different grades, embody social qualities, not only material possessions. Besides property qualifications, *folud* means 'conduct, duty' (CG, vocabulary p. 54).<sup>41</sup>

The moral qualities of the nobles especially are a constant concern in the early Irish laws. The material or skill requirements were not in themselves enough: status had to be earned by nobility of spirit – *noblesse oblige*. This is explicated in *MS*:

How many are the things that give dignity and honour-price to every one? Answer – Three: merit, and worthiness and innocence. There are three things too, that derogate from his proper honor to everyone, i.e. misdeeds, and low profession, and non-innocence.<sup>42</sup>

*UB* echoes the same attitude in answer to the question: what gives *dire* to a person? – merit and integrity and purity<sup>43</sup>, which MacNeill takes to mean 'possession and worthy use of qualifying wealth', the potential and actual fulfilment of functions and duties' and 'being guiltless of misdeeds', respectively (MacNeill 1936, 278 f).

Physical appearance was extremely important in early Irish society. While the law-texts may describe proper attire and ornaments for some status groups, the narrative literature abounds with evocations of the glamour and elegance of the royalty and even the heroes. *Táin Bó Cúailnge* alone, in depicting the mustering of Ulstermen, devotes pages to the clothing and hair style of the different warrior

<sup>41</sup> Kim McCone explains *folud* as 'an individual's social worth...which can refer to whole or part of a spectrum covering due property rating, behaviour appropriate to one's position and rights, fulfilment of legal obligations, honesty, religious observance and so on.' (1990, 122).

<sup>42</sup> *Cislir doberad miadh ocus eneclann do cach? Ní, a tri: airilliudh 7 indcrucus 7 endce. A tri, dó, atlendai miadh contfe ar cach .i. anfoladh 7 docerd 7 anendge.* (*MS*, CIH 583.5–6, translation Ancient Laws of Ireland IV 344, ll. 20–4).

<sup>43</sup> *Cid dobeir diri do neoch. Ni arilliud, inrucus 7 idna* (*UB* CIH 2329.37–8, translation MacNeill 1923, 278).

groups (TBC ll. 3589–3858). Heroes are also depicted as being notoriously vain: Conchobar is not the only one to lose his life after falling for the flattery of women (*Aided Conchobair* p. 6, §5). Being without deformity was most important to the king, whose body and moral qualities reflected the ruler's truth, *fir flathemon*, and well-being of his kingdom: a blind or blemished person could not qualify as a king (Jaski 2000, 72–5; McCone 1990, 127–31).

### Change of status

In principle, then, the Irish laws allowed the climbing up the ladder of status hierarchy. This was most commonly done through increasing wealth by good housekeeping or possibly by inheritance from far kin. Even those with semi-free or unfree status could reach freedom with the help of their kin (Charles-Edwards 2000, 135). The professionals and ecclesiastics improved their status by seniority and by increasing skills. *UB* states that the free may become unfree by losing their wealth and the unfree may rise to freedom by acquiring wealth or skills:

‘The free in the seat of the unfree,’ the man who sells his land, or his authority, or his body in service. ‘The unfree in the seat of the free,’ the man who buys land or franchise by his husbandry or by his talent that God gives him. Hence there is [a saying], ‘a man is better than his birth’.<sup>44</sup>

However, the other direction, social mobility downwards, was far more common. Division of the family estate in inheritance easily led to impoverishment and loss of status:

What is it which deprives this man of the status of *bóaire*? Because there may be four or five men who are the heirs of a *bóaire* so that it is not easy for each of them to be a *bóaire*.<sup>45</sup>

The diminishing shares of land hit the lordly grades especially, since their children due to better nourishment usually reached adulthood. Also serious crimes brought down the status of the culprit. The status of the other members of the family, however, was not affected by the crime (Kelly 1988, 12).

When reading the law-texts one is struck by the relatively harsh fines for breaching economic obligations. Especially if interest started to run, this incurred

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<sup>44</sup> *Saer i suigiud ndair, fear renas fora thir, no a deis, a corp i fognadh. Daer i suidi suir cetamus. Fear crenes tir, no dliged, no suiri dia dan, no dia trebhadh, dia tallaind tidnaic dia do .i. is fearr in fear-sin 'nas inti or genestar. (UB, CIH 638.9–26; translation MacNeill 1923, 273 ll. 17–21)*

<sup>45</sup> *Cid nodmbrisi in fer so a bóaireachas? Ar bás bid bethar nó chicer bite hi comarbus con[n]ách assa[e] bóaire do cach áe (CG §12 ll. 145–148, translation Charles-Edwards 1972, 9).*

debts and later economic dependence in the form of clientship or even semi-free status. At the lower rungs of the hierarchy, base clientship, for one, was a position hard to get rid of. The cattle-element in the food-renders, compulsory hospitality and the client's own consumption eroded the grant given by the lord and hampered the chances of acquiring one's own cattle. This ensured the continuity of the system: the heirs of a client were usually forced to accept a grant and become clients themselves (Charles-Edwards 1993, 460).

### Exchange

The purpose of exchange in early Ireland was not the mere swapping of goods.<sup>46</sup> Most of the exchange happened to create bonds between individuals. As Charles Doherty points out: 'Men were bound to each other in a variety of relationships, the outward expression of which was reciprocal agreements by which goods and services circulated according to the relative status of the parties involved' (Doherty 1980, 67).

In his study on exchange Marcel Mauss describes the mechanism of gift-giving: by giving, one shows oneself as generous, and thus as deserving of respect, by receiving the gift, one shows respect to the giver, and by returning the gift one demonstrates that one's honour is equivalent to that of the original giver. By giving, receiving and returning gifts a moral bond between the persons exchanging gifts is created. The process of gift giving strengthens co-operation, competitiveness, and antagonism (1969).

Exchange was thus a means of creating and upholding bonds. In giving a gift to someone a person stated his superiority, while the acceptance of a gift demonstrated submission. This was the way over-kings tied subject kingdoms under their rule, and lords contracted clients. The subject people and clients reciprocated by paying tribute or renders, which consummated the alliance (Doherty 1980, 73). The functioning and unity of an early Irish *túath* was based on a web of reciprocal personal relationships, where the king 'held the heads of the

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<sup>46</sup> Trade was undeveloped in the absence of money and urban market centres. Market exchange occurred at seasonal gatherings (*óenach*) held at territorial borders. The main purpose of these gatherings was to consolidate peaceful relations between the *túatha* by ceremonial gift-giving between their kings. From the eighth or ninth centuries onwards, monastic centres developed into local marketplaces where fairs were held on ecclesiastical feast-days (Doherty 1980, 81–3). Wealth consisted almost entirely of land, people and animals. Only the highest echelons of the society had access to specialised manufactured or imported goods, such as wine (Gerriets 1981, 171; Patterson 1994, 63). Animals and farm products from food to implements and clothing were the most common objects of exchange. Kings could afford to give prestige objects, such as horses, arms, female slaves, and jewellery (Doherty 1980, 72).

main noble families in clientship who on their turn held minor lords and commoners in clientship' (Jaski 2000, 89).

Also law-enforcement and redress of wrongs happened by way of exchange in early Ireland. Law-enforcement was done through a system of suretyships, pledging and distraint, which also involved a person's lord or legal guardian and his kindred. Breaching the terms of contracts or neglecting mutual obligations involved material restitution and fines. In principle any crime, from trespass to murder, could be atoned by paying the fine fixed for it in the law-texts. Physical punishment by mutilation or death, used as a norm in many other early law-codes, was the last resort in early Ireland (Kelly 1988, 214). Besides the severity of crimes, payment depended on the status of the victim, or his legal guardian. Redress of illegal injury also demanded that the victim be brought away on sick-maintenance and cared for, usually by a third party.<sup>47</sup> If the culprit could not afford to pay, he might be given as a slave to the victim. Also his kin would be involved in the payment of the fine. Lords sometimes obtained servants and slaves by paying off the fines of criminals (Kelly 1988, 217).

In the absence of a central authority which would have guaranteed peace and obedience to the law, the Irish honour-based system, which used personal sureties, functioned rather well. It was strengthened by the economy, which required a lot of co-operation and multiple loyalties outside of one's agnatic kin.<sup>48</sup> That, for instance, reduced the threat of large scale feuding if someone was killed.

### ***Lánamain*-relationships**

Early Irish law illustrates partnerships of unequals by a prototypical set of relationships, called *lánamna* 'couples'. Listed among *lánamna* are the relationships between parents and their children (a father and his daughter, a mother and her son), a sister and brother, Church and the *manach* (monk or monastic client), fosterson and fostermother, a lord and his unfree client, a teacher and his pupil, husband and wife (*Cáin Lánamna* §2).

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<sup>47</sup> There are indications that sick-maintenance as concrete nursing became obsolete quite early and that it was replaced by payment of fines (*CG* 47–51).

<sup>48</sup> Charles-Edwards has described the Irish network of relationships as follows: 'A man might indeed owe a debt to his agnatic kinsman, but he was also related to his mother's lineage and to that of his sister's son; in addition to these two special cognatic links, he had more general circle of cognatic kin; he had foster-brothers; an Irishman might have dependants who, though not kinsmen by blood, were nevertheless part of his fine; and Irishman or Welshman might have formed ties of neighbourhood with non-kinsmen; members of more than one lineage might form part of the clientele of a single lord or be linked to a single church through common worship and through burial in the same cemetery' (1993, 470).

*Lánamain*-relationship works on the principal of reciprocity, *frithfolud*, where two closely bound parties within a long-term relationship have certain rights and duties. The relationship was biased towards the benefit of the subordinate party, who was deemed to be in the protection of the superior one.<sup>49</sup> The superior could punish the subordinate, but also himself be disqualified if he was negligent. The superior acted as automatic surety for the subordinate i.e. enforced claims that were made against him. That also involved familiarity with the subordinate's transactions and protection of his interests (Jaski 2000, 96). Normally, for a contract to be valid, it had to be witnessed and bound by sureties, but that did not apply to the *lánamain*-relationships, e.g. a contract of clientship would be valid even when made in drunkenness (Kelly 1988, 159).

Although some of these relationships are familial, even intimate in modern eyes, the responsibilities of the parties were, nevertheless, defined by the law. Marriages<sup>50</sup> were classified according to which family donated more wealth to the pair. When land came from the bridegroom's side, but both families contributed movable wealth, the marriage was called 'pairing of joint input'. If all the property came from the bridegroom's side, or from the bride's side, the marriage was considered of lower status. In CG a marriage of 'joint input' with a woman whose family was of equal status to the man was given as the norm for wealthier commoners and lords (Charles-Edwards 1993, 466). Women who were substantial or chief contributors to marriage exceptionally enjoyed a capacity to make contracts of their own and also veto those of their husbands (Etchingham 1999, 374). The inheritance rights of children varied according to the nature of the union (Charles-Edwards 313–6).

The relationship between a father and the son was governed by statutory rights and duties. The son was under the authority of his father even when he had set up his own household, as the contracts made by the son were not legal without the consent of the father. To qualify as an heir to his father, the son had to agree to maintain his parents in their old age. The father might also lose his right to maintenance if he burdened his heir with unnecessary debts or left him without land (Jaski 2000, 92–5).

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<sup>49</sup> For instance, restitution but no fine was due, when property which properly belonged to the other party, was consumed by the other (Etchingham 1999, 367).

<sup>50</sup> It must be noted that the notion of formalised marriage was introduced by the Church and the Irish society counted as 'pairing for conception' a heterogeneous collection of sexual unions, ranging from organised public arrangement between two families to concubinage and even rape. Irish law also accepted polygyny, although the Church fought against it (Charles-Edwards 1993, 462–3).



The Irish kinship system worked on multiple bonds of reciprocity between the members of the family. These were tuned to protect the interest of the kin, i.e. the family assets, most importantly the kin-land. The kin was collectively responsible for the contracts, debts, crimes and other obligations of its individual members. It also inherited its members and collected the *wergeld* if a member was killed. If the kin regarded a contract that its member had engaged in as disadvantageous they could dissolve it. Contracts that might alienate the family inheritance, such as clientship to a monastery, were considered illegal unless they were made with the kin's consent (Jaski 2000, 89–94). The head of the kin represented it in dealings with external parties and usually acted as surety to guarantee the contracts of the kin members. He made sure that the terms of the contracts were carried out and in case he failed he had to carry the financial burden himself.

The relationship between mother and son and sister and brother was important from the point of view of the rights and duties of the maternal kin. The mother's kin provided important allies to the children. The mother's brother held specific affection to his sister's son as he was expected to take part in his upbringing. The uncle was also entitled to compensation for the killing of his nephew (Charles-Edwards 1993, 36). Children of alien men, i.e. those who came outside of the mother's *tuath*, were adopted to the mother's kin (Ibid, 312).

Fosterage, rearing of children by another couple, was an important and legally protected institution in early Ireland, which created artificial kinship. Foster-parents assumed the responsibility for the care and education of the child and in return received a fosterage fee from the natural parents.<sup>51</sup> A suitable age for fosterage extended from 7 years to 14 or to puberty (Kelly 1988, 88–9). The emotional bond between foster-parents and foster-child was often warmer than the one between the child and the natural parents, which is reflected in the more informal and affectionate words daddy (*aite, data, daitiucán*) and mummy (*muimme, datnat*) used for foster-parents (Charles-Edwards 1993, 80; Kelly 1988, 87). The same applies to the relationship between child and her/his foster-siblings. Heartbreak caused by the loss of a foster-brother is a well-known theme in early Irish narrative literature.

Multiple fosterage was concomitant with high status. Noble boys might have several sets of foster-parents (Charles-Edwards 1993, 79). The child would be typically fostered by her/his mother's family and often foster-parents belonged to a slightly lower class (Kelly 1988, 90). The terms of fosterage were carefully spelled out in law tracts in relation to what kind of food was provided and what skills were

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<sup>51</sup> Another kind of fosterage also existed: fosterage for affection, for which no fee was paid (Kelly 1988, 87).

taught to the children. The terms were specified according to the status of the child's family (Kelly 1988, 87). Narrative literature and hagiography often include druids or monasteries among the fosterers of aristocratic children, which highlights the educational function of fosterage (Charles-Edwards 1993, 79–90). Alliance-building, however, was at least as crucial to the future of the child and the fortunes of her/his kin (Ibid, 79–82).

Although the skills typically taught to children in fosterage were limited to board-games and outdoor sports for aristocrats, and farm work for commoner boys, some boys were sent as apprentices to masters to learn poetry or a craft<sup>52</sup>. Those dedicated to an ecclesiastic career, boys or girls alike, were sent to monasteries. The relationship between a teacher and his pupil was governed by the same rules as in fosterage. While the pupil was enjoying instruction from the teacher, he could not make a valid legal contract (Kelly 1988, 91).

### **Exchange in clientships**

Material exchange and relative gains for the parties involved in clientship have been discussed by several writers. Gerriets (1981) argued that exchange was not economically rational, as according to her calculations the lord did not earn any net increase to his stock and the client could have survived on grain and pigs instead. She concluded that the purpose of clientship relations was to build political alliances and its significance was mainly symbolic. Charles-Edwards originally held that the terms of free clientship in particular were economically incomprehensible from the client's point of view and inferred that the tract on free clientship *Cáin Sóerraithe* had confused free clientship with base clientship (cited in Patterson 1981, 53). Patterson, however, has suggested that clientship exchange was feasible, even from the material point of view. The cattle grant in base clientship was a necessary part of mixed farm production, even though the grazing of the lord's cattle may have impeded the client from increasing his own stock (1981, 58). She assumed that the lord may have replenished the client's stock by cattle raids and, if the stock suffered from some serious misfortune (1981, 57), the client would also gain economic and social security (Ibid, 58). With free clients the lord was able to maintain more cattle with greater security than on his own land and labour (Ibid, 59).

According to Charles-Edwards, in clientship relations 'the thing most prominent to contemporaries was exchange of movable wealth in both directions, from lord to dependant and from dependant to lord' (1993, 339). Although the

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<sup>52</sup> Aristocratic girls were taught sewing, cloth-cutting and embroidery, commoner girls how to use the quern, kneading-through and the sieve (Kelly 1988, 87).

main function of the clientele was obviously to free the nobility from agricultural work against a loan of capital, there were other kinds of exchange involved in the lord-client relationship. Apart from material exchange the relationship required legal and armed protection from the lord and political support on the client's part i.e. the client would partake in his lord's retinue and military expeditions.

The building of political alliances seems to be one of the most important aspects of the clientship system. It provided a way to form loyalties between the king and the lords and the lords and the commoners. Thus it formed the foundation of the Irish political structure. Nerys Thomas Patterson has summarised the political meaning of clientship in early Irish society: 'Clientage relationships provided the network of political alliances and jural obligations that served, in the absence of states institutions, to integrate communities beyond the purely local level of organisation' (1981, 53)<sup>53</sup>.

### Neighbourhood (*Comaithches*)

Co-operation between neighbours was another form of exchange that was necessary for the mode of production, mixed farming. Even substantial farmers could not afford all the implements and buildings needed in farming. Only the very wealthy would own a plough with its team<sup>54</sup> alone and most of the water-mills were a product of joint effort (Doherty 1980, 72). Joint industry between neighbours would also be required to build bigger buildings such as kilns, barns and especially mills (Charles-Edwards 1993, 416–430). The less well-off farmer, such as *ócaire* would not even manage ploughing without the help of neighbours. Labour-saving, in particular, was the arrangement, where the livestock of several farmers were looked after by a single shepherd (Kelly 1998, 445–6). Joint herding and joint ploughing were regulated by several law tracts, such as *Bretha Coimaithchesa*, *Bechbretha* and *Coibnes Uisci Thairidne* (Charles-Edwards 1993, 413). According to Charles-Edwards such co-operation between neighbours originally assumed that the neighbouring lands were owned by kinsmen, for instance as a consequence of a farm being divided up between several heirs. The shallowing of the kindred group, from *derbfine* (4 generations) to *geilfine* (3 generations), reduced the possibility of adjacent lands belonging to kinsmen. Within the group of

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<sup>53</sup> As we have seen Patterson thinks that only commoners were clients to the lords. I think that a reading of *CG* already makes it clear that the clientship system covered all free ranks. Patterson for her part does not present any other explanation of what the political allegiance between the lordly grades might have been based on, if not clientship.

<sup>54</sup> The size of the early Irish ox-team varied, from four to six oxen in legal material and two to even eight in other sources. According to *CG* an *ócaire* should have one ox or  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a plough-team (Patterson 1994, 77). When the total amount of his cattle was 8, and the standard renders were paid in heifers, it is understandable that no more draft animals could be bred.

neighbours the rights and obligations were equal regardless of the status differences of the members (Charles-Edwards 1993, 416–430).

### Church and the laity

The Church had to assimilate to the Irish society and adapt to its mechanisms of exchange from the very beginning. St. Patrick ‘bought’ his way to the Irish elite by giving gifts to the kings and brehons (judges), but had to refuse accepting any, in order not to place himself in their debt (Doherty 1980, 75). Although the Church settled in its own monastic enclosures, it was dependant on the lay community for material maintenance. In *Bretha Nemed toisech* the relationship between the Church and the lay society is seen in terms of reciprocal exchange. The same contractual approach is echoed in *Riaguil Phátraic* (Ó Corráin 1981, 334) and *Córus Béscna*, which states that ‘the *túath* has an entitlement in the church and the church in the *túath*’.<sup>55</sup> Services due to the lay society from the Church were baptism, communion, mass, requiem for the dead etc. The laity owed counter-obligations to the Church in the form of offerings, tithes, first-fruits etc.<sup>56</sup> However, a considerable part of the wealth of the Church was built by the donations of the rich. In addition to that the Church set up a system, modelled on the lay clientship, where religious laity bound itself to the Church and worked on its land to produce food and other necessities.

A *manach*, (pl, *manaig*; earlier monk, later monastic tenant) was a client, servant or tenant of a church, who paid food-renders as tithes, first-fruits and firstlings to the church in exchange for religious services and sometimes also for land. A *manach* was legally dependant on the church as he was not able to contract independently of his abbot (Ó Corráin 1981, 333).<sup>57</sup> *Manaig* had some collective legal competence, somewhat like the secular kingroup: *manaig* as a body had a say in the appointment of their superior as did kinsmen in the selection of their head

<sup>55</sup> CIH 528.17–529.5, translation by Ó Corráin, Breatnach and Breen 1984, 386.

<sup>56</sup> It is not certain that the Church depicted in early Irish law-texts was able to extent its dominion over the whole of the laity. The opinion of many scholars seems to be that the provisions in the laws applied to the *manaig* and that the rest of the laity profited from pastoral care only haphazardly (Ó Corrain 1981, 334; Etchingham 1991, 99). Arguments in favour of wider pastoral duties are presented by Charles-Edwards (1992) and Sharpe (1984; 1992). It is interesting that the language of the sacral kingship was used to advocate the church’s claim for the tithes. While it used to be the *fir flathemon*, the ruler’s truth, that brought harmony and kept the forces of nature at bay, now according to *Córus Bescna* it was the paying tithes, first fruits and alms that ‘prevented onset of a plague’ (Etchingham 1991, 102).

<sup>57</sup> Ó Corráin suggests that the secular institutions presented models for the ecclesiastical organisation, the relationship between abbot and his church and his *manaig* being modelled on the relationships between lord and client and a man with his wife, respectively (Ó Corráin 1981, 333).

(Etchingham 1999, 390–1). They formed a kind of corporation, with mutual obligations and entitlements (Ibid, 392).

The secular and ecclesiastic elites had a special relationship: the Irish dynasties supplied many holders of the higher church offices from their stock. According to Ó Corráin ‘great hereditary clerical families were usually discarded segments of royal lineages, pushed out of the political struggle and forced to reprise themselves in the church’ (1981, 328). Sometimes, however, kings might also become abbots, or bishops take the kingship (Davies 1982, 82). Often the relationship was further strengthened by marriage alliances (Ó Corráin 1981, 329). Thus the dynasties and churches shared a mutual interest using in many cases propaganda to further the aspirations of each other (Ibid, 327–31, Moisl 1987). The seventh and eighth century over-kings of provinces also held churches in their protection, avenging attacks on them (Ó Corráin 1981, 332). Many small churches were actually owned by local aristocratic families (Ibid, 337).

Bishops of major monasteries seem to have kept a ‘court’ comparable to that of a king, where they had professionals working as assistants to them.<sup>58</sup> Although the Church was ruled by its own canonical legislation, knowledge of lay jurisdiction would have been necessary in dealings with lay neighbours.

### **Exchange between king and people**

Charles-Edwards (1994) has proposed that *CG* presents the relationship between a king and his people as a contract. The duties of a king towards his people comprises an obligation to defend his people in dealings with external powers, and to provide his people with a just judge (*CG*, ll. 494–501). The king, on the other hand, had the right to expect his people to succumb to a hosting, an edict (*cána* or *rechtgae*<sup>59</sup>) and an alliance treaty with other people at his request (*CG*, ll. 502–8).

Gerriets has argued that the relationships between over-kings and their subordinates were represented in terms of clientship, most often base clientship, both in law-texts and saga literature (1987). She also found evidence from the Canon Laws that churches or an entire people could be directly dependant to kings, in a position comparable to *fuidir* (semi-freeman) (Ibid, 54–55).

Here again we see the idea of authority being based on a reciprocal agreement between the two parties. Whether it was the fancy of the medieval

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<sup>58</sup> *UR* states of a bishop that ‘his man of ecclesiastical learning and his chief judge and poet have the same honour-price as him. *I comeneclainn ris da a fer legend 7 a ollam bretheman 7 filed* (CIH 2102.3–5, translation by Breatnach 1987, 91).

<sup>59</sup> These are treaties binding several *túatha*, which were promulgated by kings and representatives of Church alike.

jurists or a social reality, the early Irish discourse was penetrated by contractual thinking and language.

## Conclusions

Status in early Ireland was mainly achieved by wealth, clients, and profession. A short cut to high rank was engaging in unlimited hospitality towards guests. Limits to advancement in rank were set by the fact that status was hereditary and movement upwards was governed by a three-generation requirement. This concerned especially the advancement to the ranks of the *nemed* from the status of a commoner to that of a lord or to the status of a poet or other high professional. Maintaining high status, however, required personal worthiness: behaviour that suited one's rank, moral impeccability, and even presentable appearance. Due to economic constraints social mobility downwards was, nevertheless, far more general.

Some of the highest ranking positions in early Ireland were achieved by engaging in extensive exchange with other members of the society. In virtue of unlimited gift-giving in exchange for prestige a commoner could advance to a status comparable to that of a king in the office of *briugu*. The normal route to elevated status as a lord was to distribute one's cattle to clients in exchange for loyalty and services. The clientship relationships formed the backbone of early Ireland's social structure.

My suggestion is that the status relationships in early Ireland were largely based on two reciprocal models between superior and inferior parties. The relationships among the free men were modelled on clientship and those between the free and the unfree or dependants on *lánamain*-relationships. The reciprocal agreements offered relative security even for the inferior party in a honour-based society, as the status of the superior was bound to his fairness and the fulfilling of his obligations towards the inferior. Both models involved legal and economic protection from the superior party in exchange for loyalty and services from the inferior one.

The functioning and unity of an early Irish *túath* was based on a web of reciprocal personal relationships, which generated social cohesion crucial to the observance of contracts and the law. Early Ireland lacked a central authority and compliance to norms was guaranteed by one's kindred and personal sureties. Political structure also rested on personal chains of alliances from the king to the commoner created by the system of clientship. The idea of clientship is found already among the continental Celts. According to Caesar having dependants,

servants etc. was the only form of political power that the Gallic tribes knew (Commentarii Belli Gallici VI.15).<sup>60</sup>

The extent to which clientship permeated the society is evident from the fact that the relationship of the early Irish to the Christian god was also modelled on the relations between lord and a client (Ó Riain 1989, 363). This idea is expressed directly in an early Irish poem by Bláthmac, where he compares God to a lord whose clients are the Jewish people (Ó Cathasaigh 1986, 130–31). It is also attested in the early Christian vernacular vocabulary where some of the key terms were borrowed from Irish legal terminology. The Christian idea of grace, *gratia*, was translated to Old Irish as *rath*, the stock, usually in the form of cattle, provided by a lord to his client (Ó Riain 1989, 363).<sup>61</sup> Céile Dé (God's client)<sup>62</sup> is the name of a member of a well-known eighth century reform movement in early Irish Church. Besides or even instead of the familial imagery that was more common in Christian discourse, the Irish borrowed from the vernacular cosmology and pictured themselves as bonded to a mighty and truthful lord, who granted them well being.

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<sup>60</sup> Before Caesar also Polybius (c. 200–120 B.C.) documented clientship as part of Celtic social order (Ó Riain 1989, 363 f.)

<sup>61</sup> The idea is also expressed elsewhere in Old Irish poetry, e.g. in a poem included in the story *Cath Cairn Chonail*, Guaire thanks God for a morsel of supper and acknowledges that he has received more plentiful favours before when 'Mary's son gave me seven cows' *dombert .uiii. mbú Mac Maire* (LL V p. 1215, l. 36067). See also U695.1. *Ba dírsan do Fhinsnechta, indiu laigid crolige; rambe la firu nime dílgud ina boraim*. Alas for Finnechta, Today he lies in a gory bed; May he have among the men of heaven, reward for remitting the cattle-tribute.

<sup>62</sup> Also the devil seems to have contracted clients, *Bretha Nemed Toisech* calls those who have sold their soul to him as Céile nDemuin (§ 4).

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## Appendix 1.

Table 1. Status of lay grades according to Críth Gablach. (n/s = not specified)

<i>Féni Law</i>	<i>Honour-price, séts</i>	<i>Grant from lord, cows</i>	<i>No of base/free clients</i>	<i>Protection/sick-mainten., no of men</i>	<i>Guest-company</i>	<i>Land, cumals</i>	<i>House, feet</i>	<i>Farm-buildings</i>
King	7 cumals	12 cumals	n/s	n/s / 10	n/s	n/s	n/s	n/s
Aire forgill	15	9 cumals	20 / 20	n/s / n/s	n/s	n/s	30	n/s
Aire tuísea	20	8 cumals	15 / 12	8 / 8	60	n/s	29	n/s
Aire ardd	15	7 cumals	10 / 10	n/s / n/s	40	n/s	n/s	n/s
Aire désa	10	6 cumals	5 / 5	n/s / n/s	20	n/s	27	n/s
Aire coisring	9	5 cumals	n/s	n/s / n/s	5	n/s	30	n/s
Fer fothlai	8	4 cumals	twice that of aire désa	n/s / 4	4	n/s	27	n/s
Mruigfher	6	2 cumals	-	his equal in grade / n/s	3	21	27	shares mills, owns others
Bóaire febsa	5	12	-	n/s / 3	3	14	27	shares mills, owns others
Aithech	4	10	-	n/s / 2	2	n/s	20	n/s
Ócaire	3	8	-	1 / 1	2	7	19	shares all

Table 2. Poetic grades according to Uraicecht na Ríar

Grade	Honour-price, séts	Compositions	Company*
ollam	40	350	24, 12, 8
ánruth	20	175	12, 7, 4
clí	10	87	8, 4, 3
cano	7	60	6, 3, 2
dos	5	50	4, 3, 2
macfhuirmid	4	40	3, 2, -
fochloc	1 ½	30	1, -, -
taman	½ (?) scruple	20	
drisiuc	1 scruple	10	
oblaire	½ scruple	5	

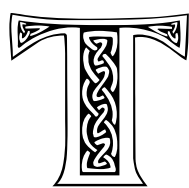
\* The figures designate a poets's companion when on 1) official business, 2) pursuing a claim and 3) on a circuit with a king.

## Dialect in medieval Irish? Evidence from placenames<sup>1</sup>

Kevin Murray

Roinn na Sean- agus na Meán-Ghaeilge, Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh

### Introduction: *Status quaestionis*



he question of dialect in medieval Irish (incorporating Old and Middle Irish; c. 600–1200 AD) has received much passing attention but very little direct study. It was only when T.F. O’Rahilly addressed the subject, with the publication of his *Irish dialects past and present*, that the first full-scale work on the topic incorporated evidence from medieval Irish. He concludes that we know very little about dialectal differences in medieval Irish and that it is ‘probably during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries that the formative period of our modern dialects is to be placed’ (O’Rahilly 1932, 248). These conclusions anticipate most of the other work on the subject, which usually has two central theses, namely that any dialectal differences in medieval Irish were minor and have left no trace in the written sources and that Old Irish was such a uniform literary language that it tended to iron out possible traces of dialect.<sup>2</sup>

In comparing the *Senchas mór* with other law tracts of different provenance, D.A. Binchy notes that ‘one will search in vain for differences in style, composition or technical terminology’ (Binchy 1943, 209–10). He believes this to be the case because of regular interaction between the *literati* (including jurists) from all parts of medieval Ireland which helped keep the literary language free from dialect. He does argue, however, that a study of the later legal commentaries ‘may shed some light on the rise of dialects of spoken Irish’ (Binchy 1943, 211). Binchy does not explicitly state at what period in the compilation of these

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at the Celtic Studies Association of North America, Annual Meeting, in New York on 9 April, 1999. Many thanks to Dr Diarmuid Ó Murchadha for his extensive comments on an earlier draft of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson (1983, 2) cautions that when we refer to the language of the early period we are referring to ‘a written language, not a spoken one’. This is especially important when one bears in mind Gerard Murphy’s claim that a form could ‘exist in the spoken language, dialectally perhaps at first, for more than a hundred years before it begins to appear in literature’ (Murphy 1940, 80).

commentaries he expects the question of dialect to intrude, though he seems to rule out early Middle as well as Old Irish. A very conservative interpretation of Binchy's views would lead one to a date of post-1000 as the earliest time in which he believes dialectal evidence *may* begin to be found in the law tracts. However, this puts the possibility of finding written examples of dialect in Irish sources back before that which O'Rahilly was willing to allow.<sup>3</sup>

Kenneth Jackson acknowledges his adherence to O'Rahilly's opinion that the modern Irish dialects came into existence in the thirteenth or fourteenth century at the earliest. He believes that medieval Irish was a homogeneous language throughout Ireland 'except for such small local differences and incipient nuances of dialect as are bound to occur over such a comparatively large area' (Jackson 1951, 79). The conclusion of his paper, dealing specifically with the evolution of the Goidelic languages, is worth quoting in full:

First, there is absolutely nothing to suggest that the Gaelic of Ireland, Scotland, and Man differed in any respect before the tenth century; and on the contrary, there is a body of decisive positive evidence tending to show that so far as we can tell they were identical. Second, Eastern and Western Gaelic<sup>4</sup> continued to be one language, sharing many new developments in common, from the tenth until the thirteenth century; but at the same time there are one or two significant indications, the oldest belonging to the tenth century, which point to the beginnings of the divergence between them. Third, the final break between East and West in the spoken tongue came in the thirteenth century (Jackson 1951, 91–2).

Jackson traces the 'beginnings of the divergence' back to the tenth century at the earliest – here he is referring to fully stressed disyllabic words with hiatus which began to be contracted in Irish during the Old Irish period (cf. Thurneysen 1946, §114) but which remain uncontracted in Scottish Gaelic to the present.<sup>5</sup> This, to my mind, is an example of the emergence of dialectic features in what Jackson refers to as 'Common Gaelic'.<sup>6</sup> McCone (1985, 88), however, would see this

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Greene (1973, 131), who in his discussion of the analytic conjugation of the verb remarks: 'The freedom to use analytic forms in every situation in the classical norm of Early Modern Irish is clear proof that some dialect areas had already advanced very far indeed in the use of these forms by the end of the twelfth century'. This view would allow for the beginnings of dialect emergence much earlier than 1200.

<sup>4</sup> Jackson (1951, 78) uses the term 'Western Gaelic' for Irish and 'Eastern Gaelic' for the Scottish Gaelic–Manx group.

<sup>5</sup> Carney (1964, xxix) in a discussion of hiatus argues 'that in certain dialects of Old Irish contraction had taken place before the middle of the eight[h] century'.

<sup>6</sup> Ó Maolalaigh (1995–6, 168) argues against the theory of Common Gaelic. His study of eclipsis 'implies a significant split between Gaelic dialects (i.e. between Irish and Scottish Gaelic) in the matter of eclipsis at an early stage, presumably during the Old Irish period itself'. Ó Maolalaigh

dichotomy as reflective of ‘a conservative learned register retentive of hiatus reacting with more colloquial levels of speech that had already contracted vowels in such cases’. He goes on to say: ‘these remarks, of course, apply only to Ireland: in Gaelic Scotland hiatus has been preserved in everyday speech right down to the present’. Surely, this treatment of hiatus forms represents an innovatory dialectic feature in Ireland, not present in Scotland, in the language Jackson is content to label ‘Common Gaelic’ (cf. Gillies 2004, 256).

David Greene believes that Old Irish as a spoken language must have shown dialectal variation but argues that although the literary language preserves a diversity of forms it ‘does not offer any evidence that would allow us to assign a given form to a given area’ (Greene 1969, 16). This, in a nutshell, is the central problem. Variance in forms may, to a large part, reflect dialect differences, but it is difficult to locate these and thence look for dialectal patterns. Heinrich Wagner examines the treatment of certain words in the different dialects of Modern Irish and traces their beginnings back to Old Irish. For example, in looking at the Old Irish forms of *teach* ‘house’, he argues that the various forms of this word point towards ‘a dialect division which was already in existence in O[ld] Ir[ish]’ (Wagner 1983, 104). This is a significant conclusion regarding the existence of dialect in Old Irish.

James Carney is also quite willing to allow for the existence of dialect in Old Irish. In analysing *Saltair na rann* (which he would date to *c.* 870),<sup>7</sup> he argues that dialect usage is a marked feature of the text and he cautions against ‘the custom in dealing with early texts to dismiss any deviation from the O[ld] Ir[ish] standard as “Middle Irish”, thought of as a state of linguistic anarchy where anything could happen’ (Carney 1983, 211). Carney goes on to examine certain features of *Saltair na rann* (for example, *arsé, arsí* instead of *ol*; the frequent recourse to *o shunn*; the common use of the nominative for the accusative). He would not see these characteristics of the *Saltair* as evidence for the spread of Middle Irish, rather he would see them as examples of dialectal usage. Though the dating of *Saltair na rann* to the period about the year 1000 seems rather more secure, Carney’s central point remains: forms, as far back as the Glosses, that are perceived as Middle Irish developments, may in fact be dialectal variations.

In his study of the language of the Würzburg and Milan glosses, Kim McCone allows for the possibility of dialect. In discussing the formation of the

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points out that Ó Buachalla (1988, 45) has reached similar conclusions with regard to the development of the plural allomorphs in *-(e)an* in Scottish Gaelic; see further, Ó Buachalla 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Most commentators, however, would see *Saltair na rann* as belonging to the early Middle Irish period, towards the end of the tenth century; see Breatnach 1996, 223–224 §1.6 for a summary of the latest views on the subject.

prepositional relative in Old Irish, he suspects that the two different approaches ‘to creating an unambiguous prepositional relative in the very late prehistory of Irish ... may be one of the few cases where variant usages in the Glosses probably have a base in different regional dialects’ (McCone 1985, 96–97). Register, however, not dialect, is the main reason forwarded by McCone for the mix of forms in the Glosses; he suggests that deviations from the literary norm ‘are mostly due to occasional lapses into a basic sub-literary register approximating to popular speech’ (McCone 1985, 102). This observation adds to our range of possibilities. Combined with what we have already seen, forms which deviate from ‘standard’ Old Irish may be viewed as 1. Middle Irish developments; 2. Lapses from the written standard into a lower register; 3. Dialectal differences. Points two and three may coalesce to an extent, so that the separation of possible dialectal differences from excursions into a lower register may prove very hard to achieve.

In a recent contribution focused entirely on the question of dialects in Old Irish, Anders Ahlqvist (following Hessen, 1914 and Thurneysen, 1946, 12) deals with the variation in spelling of the anaphoric pronoun (*ón / són*) in the Glosses. Even though the variation in its distribution seems to indicate dialectal significance, he is forced to conclude that ‘these dialect differences seem to have left no trace in the modern language, so that their geographical implications remain unknown to me’ (Ahlqvist 1988, 26). Ahlqvist states his adherence to the basic position outlined by O’Rahilly (1932, 248 ff.) and followed by Jackson (1951, 78–80) that it was not until the thirteenth or fourteenth century that modern Irish dialects came into being. He is hopeful, however, that any future grammar of Old Irish will ‘include at least a full chapter devoted to an inventory of what it so far has not been possible to describe as anything more substantial than “nuances of dialect” in our still rather monolithic conception of Classical Old Irish’ (Ahlqvist 1988, 31).

The central problem, in trying to identify possible dialectal features, is tying down a noted variant in language to a particular geographical area.<sup>8</sup> In an important article on ‘Dialekte im Altirischen?’, Patricia Kelly compares the ‘regular’ word for certain animals with rarer words for the same creatures and articulates the following proposition:

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<sup>8</sup> This problem of locating possible dialectal features is exacerbated by the fact that much of the material under investigation is anonymous. Gearóid Mac Eoin’s remarks regarding Middle Irish literature hold good for the earlier period as well: ‘The absence of a reliable ascription to the real author deprives us of the knowledge of the date of composition or the place of origin ... [thus the] ... language remains unfixed in period or dialect’ (Mac Eoin 1982, 113).

Meine These ist, daß diese Wörter nicht einer älteren Schicht eines gemeinsprachlichen Wortschatzes zuzurechnen sind, welche dann erneuert wurde durch Wörter wie *bó, ech, mucc, cáera, gabor, sinnach* – denn diese sind auch schon in den ältesten Texten belegt – sondern daß diese Wörter Dialekten entstammen könnten, die in der früh entstandenen Schriftsprache nicht stark vertreten sind (Kelly 1982, 86).

In this attempt ‘to ascribe the origin of certain highly-marked items of Old Irish vocabulary to a certain dialect’, as Ahlqvist (1988, 24) would have it, she anticipates the work (noted above) of McCone on the use of *-(s)a* in prepositional relatives and that of Wagner on words such as *teach*. This approach facilitates the study of medieval Irish vocabulary as a repository of dialect. It is this concept which allows one to undertake research in Irish placenames and placename elements in the hope that fruitful results for the study of dialect in medieval Irish may be forthcoming.

### Placenames

One area of study which gets round the problem of locating differences in the language is research on placenames.<sup>9</sup> This is a very good field in which to examine questions of dialect because many early placenames can be geographically located and, as is well known, placenames are liable to fossilise early forms of the language. The focus here is on a number of placenames and placename elements which may have dialectal implications.<sup>10</sup>

The word *muirbolc* is a compound of *muir* ‘sea’ and *bolc* ‘bag, gap’, literally ‘sea-bag’ or ‘sea-indentation’, and has the meaning ‘inlet of the sea’ or ‘small bay’ (Quin et al. 1913–76, s.v. *muir* 194.8).<sup>11</sup> It occurs as a placename and placename element in various early sources, listed forthwith:<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The most important recent work on placenames as a resource for historical linguistics is Ó Maolalaigh (1998).

<sup>10</sup> Placenames sometimes preserve examples of words, which have disappeared out of a certain dialect. For example, Scottish Gaelic has preserved placenames with *tóchar* ‘causeway, pavement’ (e.g. Duntocher, Kintocher) but the word is now unknown in common speech. The same situation exists in Scottish Gaelic regarding the word *conair* ‘path, road’. See Watson (1926, 486).

<sup>11</sup> For varying explanations of the word *bolg*, see Lewis (1940); O’Rahilly (1942, 163–166); Carey (1988).

<sup>12</sup> When researching this word, I came across the comprehensive list of placename forms using *muirbolc* assembled by Fiachra Mac Gabhann (1997, 198–199), which I have used extensively in the construction of this argument. This list also contains a large number of forms from later sources.



1. Stokes & Strachan 1901–3, ii, 274: *de Euernia nauigatores ad locum qui dicitur Muirbolc Paradisi peruenientes*.<sup>13</sup>
2. Stokes & Strachan 1901–3, ii, 280: *in loco anchoritarum in Muirbulc mar*.<sup>14</sup>
3. Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill 1983, s.a. 731.5: *Bellum inter Cruithne 7 Dal Riati in Murbuilgg ubi Cruithni deuicti*.<sup>15</sup>
4. Bannerman 1966, 154: *Óen mac deac dano la olc[h]ain mac echdach munremair qui habitant i mmurbulc la dól riatai*.
5. Best et al. 1954–83, i 630: *Cath Murbuilg i nDal Riatai*.
6. Best et al. 1954–83, i 723: *cath Murbuilg*.
7. Best et al. 1954–83, i 1841–3: *cumtach ... Cairge Brachaide. i mMurbulc la Mantan mac Cachir*.<sup>16</sup>
8. O'Brien 1962, 158, 23 (= Best et al. 1954–83, vi 43726–7): *Ní fácbaitis ní dia n-urd / maicne Durthecht a mMurbulg*.<sup>17</sup>
9. Best et al. 1954–83, iv 22779–80): *i n-airichill Conaill Chernaig meic Amairgin ac Carraic Murbuilg*.<sup>18</sup>
10. Dinneen 1908, 302: *Fairche easpuig Cuinnire ... ó Phort Murbhoilg go hOllorbha*.
11. Stokes 1862, xlv: *Cormac gaileng a quo na ceithre gailenga .i. ... gailenga murbuilg*.

The examples above, with the exception of no. 11 which cannot be contextually located, along with the other forms listed in Mac Gabhann (1997, 198–199), all seem to refer to either Ulster or Scotland. There is some confusion as to how many of the references to *Muirbolc* (nos 3–8) are to the area around Murlough Bay, Co. Antrim as some may refer to an inlet near Dunseverick, Co. Antrim (cf. O'Donovan 1856, i 26 (3501 a.m.): *Dun Sobhairce i Murbholg Dal Riada*) or to present-day Maghera, Co. Down, formerly called *Ráith Muirbuilc* (see Mac Gabhann 1997, 199 and Hogan 1910, s.n.). Joyce (1875, 255) points out that *muirbolc* is 'generally anglicised Murlough' (though this may also be the anglicised

<sup>13</sup> Sharpe (1995, 275 n. 93) follows Watson's conjecture (1926, 79–80) in identifying *Muirbolc Paradisi* as Kentra Bay in Ardnamurchan, Scotland.

<sup>14</sup> Sharpe (1995, 376 n. 415 and 306–308, n. 194) notes that *Muirbolc Már* ('The Great Bay') was in the island of Hinba and tentatively identifies this *muirbolc* as the substantial dry anchorage between Colonsay and Oronsay, Scotland.

<sup>15</sup> Probably the coastal area near Murlough Bay, par. Culfeightrin, bar. Cary, Co. Antrim (Ó Murchadha 1997, 173).

<sup>16</sup> Either the area near Murlough Bay (as suggested in n. 14 above) or else near tl. Carrickabraghy, par. Conmany, bar. Inishowen E., Co. Donegal.

<sup>17</sup> This poem consists of a list of Ulster heroes and is part of *Senchas Síil hÍr*. It is clear from the context that *Muirbolc* is to be located in Ulster. Eógan mac Durthacht is called *rí Fernmaige* in the exile of the sons of Uisliu. According to Ó Murchadha (1997, 144), the original location of Fernmag was around Loch Uaithne (Lough Oony, par. Clones, Co. Monaghan); it later gave its name to the bar. of Farney in the same county.

<sup>18</sup> It seems clear from the text that *Carrac Muirbuilc* is to be located somewhere in Ulster.

form of *muirloch* ‘lagoon’). All four examples of the placename Murlough gathered in the 1901 Census are found in Ulster, two in Co. Donegal and two in Co. Down. Watson (1926, 80–1) also treats of Scottish placenames derived from *muirbolc*, and its diminutive in *-án*, of which he has gathered quite a number of examples. In Ireland, outside of Ulster, I know of only one possibility of *muirbolc* used in a placename – that is *Muirbolcán* (present-day Trabolgan, Co. Cork), which may be a diminutive form of *muirbolc*.<sup>19</sup> However, it seems to be satisfactorily explained as *Muir Bolcáin* ‘the sea of Bolcán’, later *Tráig Bolcáin* ‘the strand of Bolcán’ (Joyce 1875, 22), though the possibility of it being a diminutive of *muirbolc* must remain.

The onomastic evidence here cited – the early examples above (nos 1–10) along with the later examples of the survival of the placename – points conclusively towards *muirbolc* being a word common to Ulster Irish and Scottish Gaelic. Its lack of representation outside of Ulster and Scottish placenames point towards it having a very localised usage, a usage that I would posit was dialect based.

It may be argued that many of these examples of the use of *muirbolc* in placenames occur in Irish manuscripts which do not have a northern provenance. It may be noted, however, that these samples are all onomastic – the context gives no hint whatsoever that the scribes of the various manuscripts knew the word *muirbolc* as a regular Old Irish word meaning ‘inlet of the sea’. The lack of a qualifying genitive or descriptive adjective in most cases may also point in the same direction. That both words of the compound, *muir* and *bolc*, were well-known countrywide seems clear, but the use of the compound seems to have been more restricted. Outside of its utilisation in placenames, it has not proved possible to locate the word *muirbolc* in any early texts.

The case of the relatively rare *muirbolc* may just reflect the use of highly marked lexical items. Common medieval Irish words, however, often seem to be treated restrictively in placename contexts, which may be indicative of regional or dialectal usage or preference.<sup>20</sup> I append a list of some examples here below.

- *Accomol* ‘union’: This common word is found in the Würzburg, St Gall and Milan Glosses. Ó Máille (1953) has shown that this word survives in the placenames *Uggool*, *Uggoon* in Counties Mayo, Galway and Clare, and is used to describe a piece of land which is seen to join or connect other features in the landscape. The restricted use of *accomol* with this meaning in placenames seems to be confined to these counties and,

<sup>19</sup> The same (or similar) name, *Murbolcán*, is to be found in Dillon (1962, 619, 653) in a list of strongholds of the kings of Cashel.

<sup>20</sup> The development in meaning of aspects of Irish vocabulary (which may ultimately prove to be partly dialect-based, even for the earlier material) is dealt with briefly in Jackson (1983, 17–18).

thus, may be regional or dialectal based, though it is impossible to date the rise of this usage.

- *Cathair* 'stone enclosure, dwelling': The distribution of this word as a first element in placenames was the subject of a talk given by Alan Mac an Bhaird at the Sixth International Congress of Celtic Studies in Galway in 1979. Though a published version of this talk is not available, the summary by Mac an Bhaird, available in the Congress handbook, contains the following:

Placenames composed of *cathair* and a second element are found in two contiguous zones. The zone of densest distribution comprises the northwest of Co. Clare, a north-south band across the middle of Co. Galway and the barony of Kilmaine in Co. Mayo. A more diffuse zone covers the rest of Co. Clare and counties Limerick, Kerry and Cork. 'Outriders' are sparse. Within these zones, names with *cathair* appear in the earliest records of placenames available ... most of these cases point to a pre-Norman date.

This distribution may also be seen on the map in Flanagan and Flanagan (1994, 46). The use of *cathair* in placenames would seem to indicate dialect preference, not lack of stone-dwellings elsewhere, as there is no shortage of easily accessible building stone in many areas which lie outside this zone. The surviving stone-dwellings in the northern half of the country are variously called by other non-dialect specific titles, e.g. *badún* 'fortified enclosure', *cloch* 'stone (building)', *dún* 'fort', *grianán* 'sunny place' and *tech* 'dwelling', among other terms.

- *Cobfán* 'slope, hollow': This word, a compound of *com* + *fán*, is found as a placename element (with and without qualification), generally spelt *cabán*. Of 90 names beginning with Cavan listed in the 1901 census, 80 are located in Ulster, 7 are in counties which border Ulster, leaving just three 'outriders'.<sup>21</sup> However, I have no examples of its use in placename composition before the twelfth century.
- *Imblech* 'land bordering on a lake or marsh': Though this word is very common in placenames, Hogan (1910) has only noted three definite examples (out of over 40 cited) of its occurrence in Ulster (s.nn. *i. cluane*, *i. coba*, *i. corco duib*), only one of which is demonstrably early. Allied to this, the 1901 Census lists 57 townlands and 4 parishes beginning with Emlagh / Emly, not one of which is in Ulster.<sup>22</sup>
- *Irrus* 'promontory': With the probable exception of one example, *Irrus Foichme* (Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill 1983, s.a. 727.3) which has not yet been satisfactorily identified, all 17 examples of this placename element listed in Hogan (1910) occur outside Ulster. In the 1901 Census, none of the small number of placenames listed beginning with

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<sup>21</sup> These are tls Cavan and Cavanquarter, par. Ballinrobe, bar. Kilmaine, Co. Mayo and tl. Cavansheath, par. Clonenagh and Clonagheen, bar. Maryborough, Co. Laois.

<sup>22</sup> However, there is a tl. Imlick in par. Killea, bar. Raphoe N., Co. Donegal.

Erris are in Ulster; however, there are two probable examples of Ulster *irrus*-names listed elsewhere in the Census.<sup>23</sup>

- *Mell* ‘a round mass, protuberance’: The use of this common word as a placename element meaning ‘knoll’, anglicised as ‘Maul’, is confined to counties Cork and Kerry (see Flanagan and Flanagan, 1994, 120–1).<sup>24</sup> The emergence of this specific usage of the word has not yet been traced.
- *Sód* ‘weir’: As Diarmuid Ó Murchadha (1994–5, 130) has shown, the earliest example of the word *sód* in placenames (*Sódh Macáin*) probably goes back to the early-tenth century. The most fascinating aspect of the word, however, is its extremely restricted use in placenames, along the southern stretch of the river Shannon between Lough Derg and Limerick.

There are problems with placename distributions, however, which must be taken into account. For example, it has been shown by Deirdre Flanagan (1984, 31) that the use of the word *domnach* ‘church building’ (< Lat. *dominicum*) ‘relates to the first phase of Christianity in Ireland and appears to have fallen into disuse by the 7th century’. Thus, the distribution of *domnach*-names (in English commonly written *donagh*), with their paucity in Munster, Scotland and on the western seaboard, reflects the extent of the early christianising mission and not dialect preference with regard to the naming of ecclesiastical settlements. Another problematic form is that of *tamlacht(ae)* ‘(plague) burial-place’.<sup>25</sup> This word is well attested in placenames and as a placename element in early sources (e.g. Stokes & Strachan 1901–3, ii 238.8; Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill 1983, s.a. 811.2). Apart from the famous monastery at Tallaght, Co. Dublin, and two later examples of Tawlaght placenames in Co. Kerry, all our early records of *Tamlacht(ae)* placenames refer to Ulster.<sup>26</sup> Of the 33 tl. names and 4 par. names with Tamlaght, Tamlat, Tawlaght or Towlaght as the first element listed in the 1901 census, all are in Ulster with the exception of two near Mohill, Co. Leitrim, two in bar. Boyle, Co. Roscommon and one near Clonard, Co. Meath. Thus, its usage is quite restricted and it would seem to be a good candidate for inclusion in a survey such

<sup>23</sup> These are tl. Urros, par. Inishmacsaint, bar. Magheraboy, Co. Fermanagh and tl. Urrismenagh, par. Clonmany, bar. Inishowen E., Co. Donegal.

<sup>24</sup> Flanagan and Flanagan (1994), in the first section of their book, highlight a number of placename elements which are more prominent in certain areas of the country and whose distribution may possibly be an indicator of dialectal usage.

<sup>25</sup> *Tamlacht(ae)* (< *tám* ‘plague’ + *lechta* ‘graves?’) is regularly assumed to mean ‘plague burial-place’ (cf. Joyce (1869, 162); Dinneen (1927) s.n. *Támhlacht*; Flanagan and Flanagan (1994, 145–146)), though this meaning is nowhere explicitly attested; cf. Quin et al. (1913–76) s.v. *taimlecht(ae)* and s.n. *Tamlacht(ae)*.

<sup>26</sup> See the map to this effect in Flanagan and Flanagan (1994, 146).

as this. However, it seems very possible that the distribution pattern of this element primarily reflects the spread of the plague (and need for plague burial-grounds) rather than dialectal variation.<sup>27</sup> No other Irish word for plague burial-ground is known to me.

As should be clear from the above, placename evidence must be used with circumspection in these matters.<sup>28</sup> For example, chronology is one of the central problems. We can only use the earliest written form of the placename as evidence even though many of these names have, quite probably, a longer history behind them. Thus, arguments most often be constructed on partial evidence. Despite unavailable elsewhere – its very quantity and variety ensures that it will never be exhausted as a source.

## Conclusions

- Old Irish was a very standardised written language but dialect features are present. It is still difficult, however, to move their description beyond ‘nuances of dialect’.
- The best area in which to look for these dialectal variations is vocabulary, where authors could involuntarily betray their origins.
- From about 1000 AD onwards, these dialect differences become more marked in the literature.
- Issues of register must remain central to the debate. Many questions will fail to be resolved because of our lack of knowledge of the use of register in medieval Irish versus the use of dialect.
- We must view the retention in Scottish Gaelic of certain features present in Old Irish as evidence that innovatory dialect features (as represented by their modification in Ireland) were present in the language as far back as the time of the Glosses.
- Placenames would seem to offer the most hope for geographically locating possible dialectal features in medieval Irish vocabulary.

## Abbreviations

bar. barony; Co. county; par. parish; tl. townland.

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<sup>27</sup> Dr Gene Haley presented an interesting paper on the distribution of *tamlachtae* sites to the 22nd Annual Harvard Celtic Colloquium, October 10–13, 2002, titled ‘*Tamlachtae*: The Map of Plague Burials and its Implications for Early Irish History’; it is due to appear in a future number of *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*.

<sup>28</sup> Convenient lists of the main advantages and disadvantages in using placename evidence are given in Ó Maolalaigh (1998, 16–17).

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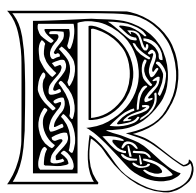
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## Tartan Boys – Scottish Popular Music Stardom in the 1970s<sup>1</sup>

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Relatively little has been written on modern Scottish popular music and its relationship with national identity. Whereas we have been abundantly served by accounts of the history of Scottish ballads and their contribution to how Scotland and Scottishness have been understood, historians and musicologists have ignored the role of modern popular music. The lack of a historiography of Scottish pop and rock can arguably be traced back to the tradition of mass culture criticism, that is, to a certain academic paradigm which in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century emerged to condemn cultural phenomena such as popular music as too ‘low’ to be taken seriously. It was particularly the commercial intent in making, performing and distributing music that was generally seen as dubious and scorned at. Although this paper shall not dwell upon this discussion, a short overview of the relationship between Scottishness and modern popular music is needed.

A recent report on the music industry in Scotland argues that ‘while some Scottish music has been sold for its Scottishness (in folk and traditional music markets, for example), other music made in Scotland cannot be understood culturally or economically in national terms’. The most successful Scottish performers currently have been successful in music worlds, which are ‘not in any sense Scottish’ (Williamson, Cloonan & Frith 2003, 126).

This is a simplified statement. It has been widely accepted that music is an important vehicle for the construction of the objective reality of the external social world and that it can represent the constructed national or ethnic collectivities. This not only applies to traditional forms of music but also to modern popular styles such as pop, rock, hip hop, and so on (Regev & Seroussi 2004, 5–6). Even though music often may not have clear sonic references to what is understood as ‘national’, it still may be considered as something that represents a sense of community and nationality. Current pop names such as Travis and Texas do not

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at the spring seminar of the Finnish Society for Celtic Studies in Helsinki on 23 April, 2005.

sound particularly Scottish or Celtic, but marketing strategies and the media reception have made it clear that they do not appear out of nowhere but are ‘local Scottish groups’ who have made it big in international markets.

In most countries, modern popular music has emerged as a result of interaction between national traditions (such as language) and international (mainly Anglo-American) influences. What can be generally said about modern Scottish popular music during the past fifty years is that musicians have identified themselves with American music styles and on the other hand exploited the British (i.e. English) music industry. A strong sense of being located somewhere between America and England has characterized Scottish pop and rock (Wilkie 1991, 14; Hogg 1993, 369). It was not until the 1980s that groups such as Runrig and Big Country developed formulas, which distinctively took musical influences both from the rich tradition of Scottish folk songs and modern rock styles. Yet sounds themselves are only one element of how identities are represented in music cultures. In Scotland, already in the 1970s there were artists and groups, even stars, who were keen to blend the local and the global.

### **Weenybop stars: the Bay City Rollers**

Stars are individuals who, as a consequence of their public performances or appearances in the mass media, become widely recognized and acquire symbolic status (Shuker 1998, 282). Whereas the *star* is a conspicuous person who appears and becomes available in the circuit of a number of mass communication modalities, *stardom* is an expression of a larger entity referring to the cultural dimensions of the phenomenon and modes of star visibility. The concept of stardom also implicitly raises questions about the ways stars function within popular music culture (Mäkelä 2004, 18–19).

In light of these definitions, there is not much to say about 1970s Scottish pop stars and stardom. We basically have five names: Derek, Alan, Eric, Les and Wood, that is, the classic line-up of the Bay City Rollers. We might of course consider several other names. With the Bay City Rollers alone, 27 members had passed through its ranks by the early 1970s and many more were to come (Hogg 1993, 132). We also have Slik who in the wake of the ‘Rollermania’ phenomenon took their piece of teenybop cake before the frontman of the group, Midge Ure, called it a day and formed a new group, Ultravox. In the field of blues rock, hard rock and heavy rock, there were several performers who enjoyed critical acclaim and cult status in the 1970s: Average White Band, Frankie Miller, Maggie Bell, Stone the Crows, and, most notably, the Sensational Alex Harvey Band and

Nazareth, both of whom also had a following among Finnish hard rock fans. Yet the Bay City Rollers remain the only true Scottish star name of the time.

The Bay City Rollers were established in 1965. The group, then known as the Saxons, soon attracted following in the Edinburgh area. The defining moment of their career happened in 1970, when the group came under the wing of manager Tam Paton. His first task was to suggest that the band should change their name to something that would sound more American. Someone suggested the 'Rollers', which referred to American roll-skate fashion, but that did not wholly satisfy Paton and the group. Legend says that eventually the boys stuck a pin in a US map and out came Bay City in Michigan. Thus, the Bay City Rollers (Rogan 1988, 212–214; Wilkie 1991, 113).

The Bay City Rollers, often shortened as the Rollers, had their first hit, 'Keep on Dancing', already in 1971. For a moment it seemed that the group would remain just another pop novelty and sink back into obscurity. Deciding that the band would require a gimmick, Paton then elected to play on their nationality. He hit the right chord. The group began to wear tartan-edged ankle-freezers with bell-bottom trousers at half-mast, striped socks and baseball boots. It was especially the use of tartan scarves, often tied around the boys' wrists that became the celebrated trademark of the band and, as a matter of fact, of the whole Rollermania phenomenon which burst in 1975.

It should be remembered that The Rollers were not the first pop and rock performers identifying themselves with visual signs of Scottishness. In 1958, one-hit wonder Jackie Dennis was marketed as a kilted Elvis (Hogg 1993, 22). In the early 1970s, another group of Tam Paton's, a short-lived Bilbo Baggins, sported with tartan fashion (Rogan 1988, 215). Yet it was the Rollers that really embraced the clan uniform, becoming the first Scottish pop group to make their identity and cultural background a fundamental part of their fame. Opposing the standard practice at the time, they even refused to move to London.

Of course, it was not only tartan scarves that earned the Rollers their nine Top 10 UK hits (e.g. 'Bye Bye Baby', 'Saturday Night', 'Give a Little Love') in two years time and an international fan hysteria not seen since Beatlemania. Tam Paton organised a clever publicity campaign and sent postcards to those teenage girls who had had their names and addresses printed in pop and fan magazines. He also used the services of professional songwriters (Hogg 1993, 133; Brownlee 2003, 63). Most notably, Paton presented his boys as stars who refused to play with whacky imagery of rock'n'roll excess that had dominated popular music in the early 1970s. According to the official Rollers image, Paton's protégés were clean-living bachelors who had fun and smiled so much that it made them look 'much

more radical than Zep [i.e. Led Zeppelin] or the Grateful Dead', as one Roller fan recalls (Sullivan 1999, 32). This zaniness was accompanied by the statement that the members of the group were too dedicated to their work to have time for girls.

The Rollers' puritanical image clearly attracted young female fans around the world, including fans in Finland, but, of course, it could not last. Paton's strategy was a throwback to the 1950s ideology of teenybop stardom. Such manoeuvres were not meant to build lasting pop star careers in the 1950s, and they certainly did not do that in the 1970s.

One of the main dilemmas of stardom is control. The whole star phenomenon is based on public discourses on the star's role in society. These discourses on the star overlap, compete and may also collide. Stardom is about different players attempting to gain control over the main product, the star. Stars themselves, promotional machinery, the media, and fans form a web-like texture of definitions and power relations, and if one of these players attempts to dictate the game, problems soon rise. It is particularly in the field of teen pop stardom that different interests often conflict to profound effect (Mäkelä 2004, 24).

This is exactly what happened to the Bay City Rollers, too. Tam Paton was caricatured as a ruthless puppeteer while his boys were seen as puppet musicians directed by the Svengali-like manager. The boys were rumoured to be merely the private sexual plaything of another gay pop manager. The latter, however, was untrue, as became evident in later years when the boys confessed their bedroom secrets (Rogan 1988, 216). Furthermore, a certain disparagement shaded the group from the beginning of Rollermania. Rollers' fans, for example, were caricatured by the serious rock press as mindless young girls whose enthusiasm were compared to Hitler's rallies (e.g. Charlesworth 2004, 132). What followed was that the greatest teenybop – or weenybop – story of the 1970s eventually collapsed under the intolerable pressures and criticism brought by success.

### **Wannabe-Scot: Rod Stewart**

Although they were a major commercial phenomenon on both sides of the Atlantic from 1975 to 1977, there has been a temptation to ignore the Bay City Rollers. The Rollers clearly purveyed the ultimate youth image but they were also perceived as victims of another image, musicians sacrificed at the altar of greedy managership (Wilkie 1991, 111). The Rollers' success reflected ideas and practices, which have traditionally been considered inauthentic in rock culture. For many, they represented uninspired and manufactured pop, that is, they did not seem to exercise control over the star production process. It is mainly this lack of

‘credibility’ that has prevented the Rollers from entering the pantheon of Scottish pop and rock history.

In addition to the authenticity of pop and rock stars, the other problem of evaluating Scottish music stardom in the 1970s – or Scottish stardom any other time – applies to the question of what Scottish music might be. Or who counts as Scottish? Which brings us to Rod Stewart. When I told my friends that I shall give a lecture and subsequently write an article on 1970s Scottish pop stardom, most of them replied something like: ‘What would that be? Ah, now I know: Rod Stewart!’ Or: ‘Don’t forget Rod!’

There certainly are phases in Rod Stewart’s career that, according to many, ought to be forgotten. The common view is that Stewart betrayed his talent, most famously manifested in his 1971 folk rock masterpiece *Every Picture Tells a Story*, when he started to fancy disco music and tight leopard skin jumpsuits. It is typical for rock histories to cherish the early 1970s Rod Stewart as a ‘real thing’ and condemn the 1980s Rod Stewart as a caricature of a spoiled jet-set rock star. The novelist Nick Hornby writes in his collection of essays on pop songs that, before everything went wrong, digging Rod Stewart in 1973 was approximately the same thing as digging Oasis in 1994 (Hornby 2004, 42).

Rod Stewart is still a star and he is not forgotten – except in certain accounts. Brian Hogg, a historian of Scottish pop and rock, provides an endless list of people who in one way or another have contributed to popular music in Scotland. Rod Stewart is not on that list. The same applies to Jim Wilkie’s account of the ‘secret life of Scottish rock music’. For him, Rod Stewart seems to be a secret far beyond national imagination. A recent list of *50 Best Scottish Band of All Time* (2005) includes a few individuals such as Fish, Eddie Reader, Lulu, but no Rod. Thus, what we have here is an old dilemma of who or what can be counted as representative of the nation and nationality.

Rod Stewart is not counted as Scottish obviously because he was born in London. Stewart is a London Cockney. His father, however, was a true Scot and Rod himself has announced that his family is directly related to the Royal Stuarts and that the spelling of the name was changed by Mary Queen of Scots’ mother because there was no ‘e’ in the Celtic vocabulary. Rod Stewart has certainly sympathised with Scotland. In the 1970s, it was difficult to spot him without his trademark, the tartan scarf. In his music, Stewart used Celtic-sounding instruments such as the mandolin. He was and still is very proud of his Celtic roots. When his daughter was born he described it as an amazing experience, nearly as good as Scotland beating England in football. It has also been said that Rod Stewart’s view on spending money is (stereo)typically Scottish: he can acquire mansions without

hesitation but when it comes to his turn to buy a round in the pub he suddenly disappears (Ewbanks & Hildred 1991, 224; Bradley 1999, 16).

In terms of cultural identity, Rod Stewart fell between two stools. He remained a 'wannabe-Scot'. It is somewhat strange that compared to his full-blooded 1970s Scottish rock colleagues he seemed to be much prouder of his Celtic background than they were. When I was young, I always thought that Rod Stewart was a Scot and Nazareth a band from somewhere in southern England. Nazareth did not talk about their background and cultural identity whereas Rod Stewart appeared to me as an ambassador of all things Scottish.

### **Geographical shifts**

The question of Rod Stewart's cultural identity (which today is even more complex since he has for years lived in California) goes back to the peculiar relationship between England and Scotland. In popular music culture, this relationship has produced ambiguous star images and identities. Donovan, the famous 1960s folk hero and singer-songwriter, has often been regarded Scottish even though he has been living in England ever since he was ten. The great names of the 1980s Scottish pop and rock, Stuart Adamson of Big Country and Lloyd Cole, were not born in Scotland, yet they have been placed in a Scottish context.

Not only has this relationship between England and Scotland produced confusions in star identities but interesting imageries of localities as well. During the beat boom in the early 1960s, the geographical locus of pop music in England moved from the South to the North, especially to Liverpool. The basic structure of the entertainment industry remained intact, however, and when the Beatles moved from Liverpool to London, so did the pop focus. The Mersey beat was replaced by Swinging London and the South's position as a promised land for musicians wishing to gain wider attraction was reinforced. By the late 1960s, the trickle of Scottish rock performers leaving for London had become a major haemorrhage (Hogg 1993, 102).

London represented a major option in popular music. Alan Gorrie of the Average White Band remembers: 'I loved London. There was a buzz about it. After all, what should we stay for? Another week in Aberdeen?' (Ibid, 113). It was joked in the late 1960s and early 1970s that there were three major Scottish rock scenes: Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Finsbury Park in London. The majority of the acclaimed Scottish rock musicians chose London.

The heydays of the Bay City Rollers and Rod Stewart meant a second geographical shift in the history of British popular music. If the first shift took place during the early 1960s beat boom, the second shift occurred in the mid-1970s and

went further up North. It is apparent that the second shift was not as powerful and visible as the first one but it was a shift in any case. It did not change the music industry but it signalled that there are unexplored connections between modern popular music and local identities.

We can now regard the second shift as an overture to the late 1970s punk and the way London's control over popular music in Britain became for the first time seriously challenged. Punk meant an emphasis on local music cultures. It created the music industry in Scotland or at least produced local fanzines, important record labels such as Zoom and Postcard Records, and, of course, a plethora of bands. Some of these groups (Simple Minds, Orange Juice, Aztec Camera, Josef K) became influential in the UK scene during the indie and post-punk period in the early 1980s and even received international recognition. One of the consequences of this development was that Glasgow became a hugely fashionable pop city in the mid-1980s.

### **Some final thoughts**

In Scottish history books on pop and rock, the Bay City Rollers and Rod Stewart have not been considered performers essentially representing Scotland and Scottishness. Whereas the Bay City Rollers have been perceived as a manufactured and inauthentic pop group under the control of their paternal manager, Rod Stewart has not been counted as Scottish mainly because he was not born in Scotland and, to this day, has never lived there.

To challenge this view, it should be noted that the late 1970s meant the rise of nationalism in and new international recognition towards Scotland. It is perhaps an exaggeration to say that the Bay City Rollers and Rod Stewart pre-represented the feelings of national revival and the emerge of creative industries in Scotland. Or is it? For example, maybe there is a link between the Rollermania and the rise of tourism that occurred in 1970s Edinburgh? At least the Rollers attracted their fans to such an extent that many of them ran away from home and fled to Edinburgh to see their idols live...

In any event, the Bay City Rollers and Rod Stewart signalled the sense of difference from England. They were internationally successful performers who through their star images and representations of Scottishness certainly drew attention to what was happening in Scotland and how Scottishness was understood. In this sense, they both arguably played important roles in marketing – if not making? – the new and more youthful Scottish popular culture that was to emerge in later years.

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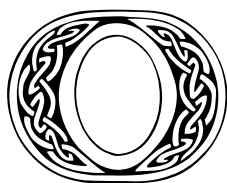


# Scotland's Linguistic Past and Present: Paradoxes and Consequences

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>



Outside Scotland all people with an interest in the country seem to have a certain notion of Scotland's position in history and in the contemporary world, a certain image of Scottish culture or of the Scottish identity. In addition to the nostalgic Highland Romantics, people are aware of the highly problematical English-Scottish relations, which have become well known also to a wider audience through hugely popular action films such as *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*. The Union with England, sometimes described as “in bed with an Elephant” (Scott 1985, Scott 1998) has had undoubtedly wide-ranging consequences with regard to both national identity and linguistic and cultural matters.

According to Adams (Adams 1995, 193) key concepts in selling Scotland to tourists are “uncrowded, beautiful scenery, interesting history, not England”. As he points out, for overseas visitors the image presented can be traced down to Sir Walter Scott and Queen Victoria – meaning either romance and mystery or haggis and shortbread boxes. For domestic consumers the aim has been to *undo* some of the Scott and Victoria image.

In a non-Scottish context there is a general lack of information and understanding of the Scots language and its status within Scotland. Even within Scotland itself there is a degree of confusion, albeit Scottish, British and European legislative, academic and cultural bodies all recognise the importance of the language to Scottish culture. The aim of this present article is to fill the apparent lacuna in understanding concerning the history and present situation of the Scots

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Steve Murdoch, currently of the University of St Andrews, for always providing me with the most useful ideas and suggestions as well as for his help with recent material for this piece of writing in particular. I am also very grateful to Colin Wilson, B.Sc. for his comments on my English in an earlier version of this article.

language to the readership of this journal: by presenting the results of recent research on the subject coupled with an analysis of some important recent developments in Scotland.

Although there is consensus on many of these questions, there are still issues, which have caused much debate in Scotland and which are less familiar in detail to most people abroad. Above all, in most cases, people are inclined to think of Scotland either in terms of Britain and Britishness (meaning in terms of England and the English-Scottish relationship) or in terms of its Celtic image.<sup>2</sup>

In a similar way, Scotland's linguistic and cultural past and present tend to be more simplistic in the 'common' or general view of Scotland abroad. Most people are content to simply know that English is the dominant language of Scotland and that there is a language called Scottish Gaelic, which, although a symbol of the Celtic culture of Scotland, is in a position of drastic decline.

There is an even more obvious imbalance to be found in the fact that most people from outside Scotland (and many in Scotland itself) are unaware of the history and literature of the Scots language as a language closely related to English<sup>3</sup>.

Scots is the traditional Germanic language of the southern and eastern parts of Scotland (*the Lowlands*), Orkney and Shetland and parts of Ulster. The language is descended from the northern version of Anglo-Saxon. Although Scots and English share many features in common, they have drifted apart during the Middle Ages. The relationship between the two is comparable to the relationship, which exists between Scottish Gaelic and Irish, or for example between Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. Differences between Scots and English are not absolute, but there are characteristic Scots words and expressions, loanwords different from those in English (from Scandinavian languages, French, Gaelic, Latin and of Dutch and Flemish origin) as well as systematic differences in pronunciation and morphology.

Until recently, Scots were given the impression by their teachers that there is something deeply wrong or inferior about their language. Scots was, however, the dominant language and language of state in Scotland only three hundred years ago. It was the official language in pre-Union Scotland (until 1707) and it has, in addition to its history as a separate language, an almost uninterrupted literary tradition.

Furthermore, there are numerous sources revealing that Scots was once recognised as the medium of diplomacy and trade and highlighting the status and

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on these terms (Celts, Celtic culture, Celtic image), see chapter 2, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> On Ulster Scots, see e.g. Montgomery 2004, 121–132.

wide range of use the language had not only among the Scottish people but beyond the borders of Scotland.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Scots employed the language in relations with other countries and the host countries often demonstrated an awareness and recognition of the fact that Scots was a distinct language. Wherever the Lowland Scots went their native language followed (see Horsbroch 1999, 1–16).

Another recently reassessed view is the discovery of discursive prose written entirely in Scots during the second half of the nineteenth century. This clearly contradicted the earlier view that the vernacular prose tradition died out during the early seventeenth century and the language was permanently damaged by its long battle with Anglicisation (see Donaldson 1989).

Apart from the question of the status of Scots today, many activities in Scotland have been directed towards focusing the language and standardization (see McClure 1995, Allan 1995). This has produced a good number of different suggestions and recommendations on spelling over the years. One of the paradoxes is that the reaction of many linguists towards what they have seen as “subjective, extreme and even cranky” views about Scots, has led them to avoid the term ‘Scots’ and this in turn has operated as a force against the focusing of the language (Macafee 1997, 518).<sup>4</sup>

As far as both nations are concerned, modern historiography has allowed differences between Scots and English and Scottish and English identity to become clearer while also verifying some real differences that existed within Scotland itself, between the Gaels and the Lowlanders. This split in Scottish society between ‘Highland and Lowland’ began during the period 1150–1550, but it was not a clear cut, because Gaelic and Lowland culture were overlapping each other and mixed areas of language existed for quite some time (Horsburgh 1994, 14).

As a result of this division, which has been present in Scottish life and society for centuries, each of their cultures has been considered ‘foreign’ at times and ‘native’ at other times. A Gael and a Lowlander have co-existed sometimes to a certain degree, but sometimes in a ‘cold war’ in attitudes, at least on the official level.

The division has been visible in both the situation in Scotland itself (historically and today) and among the Scots abroad. One cannot, of course, use such broad historical notions as ‘the Highlanders’ or ‘the Lowlanders’ without

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<sup>4</sup> In some language activists’ opinion it has to be asked why scholars are using such an emotive but vague word as “cranky”. According to Colin Wilson of the *Scots Speikers Curn* “often what they regard as “extreme” are the sort of measures to promote Scots, which would be regarded as normal in the case of any other minority language”, personal correspondence, January 2005.

recognizing that these groups seldom acted as a homogeneous mass and the employment of Scots abroad included large numbers of people from all linguistic communities. Scots went abroad for variety of reasons and 'language loyalty' usually provided the vehicle of expression of, rather than the motivation for, participation." (Murdoch 1996b, 8).

Much of the emigration literature was actually dominated by the Highlanders' experiences and the Lowlanders were often left out of the story. In most cases, however, analysis must include whether a Scot was a Lowlander or a Highlander, because it is crucial in identifying specific Scots communities outside Scotland. There is some evidence that there were significant differences between the two groups.

Some of the recent historical research (see e.g. Hanson 2003, 119–140) has suggested that the Lowland emigration experience was often more individualized, while for the Highlanders it was much more group orientated. While Highlanders dominated the Scottish emigration experience, it was the Lowlanders who often achieved positions of power and prominence.

A further issue to take into consideration is the age of Celtic romanticism and its consequences on the one hand, in producing a different image of Scotland abroad, and, on the other hand, in creating a debate over Scottishness in terms of 'ancient' and 'national'. The period of Celtic romanticism created an atmosphere of great fascination and interest in the Celts.<sup>5</sup> Those images were followed by the images created by Scottish writers which reinforced curiosity about this idea of Scotland and as a result of that the whole country came to be regarded as a place of particular interest and special value. It has been argued, however, that the partiality to 'Celticness' has had also several, less desirable, consequences in Scotland itself.

In this article, my focus is on the issues of language and language identity in Scotland, including the political status of the Scots language and Gaelic and Scots languages' identification with Scottishness. Two things should be pointed out: firstly, the Scottish identity has cultural and linguistic aspects which have been clearly reassessed in recent times, and secondly, the case of Scots and Gaelic in Scotland is an example of a complex situation with several paradoxes: one of them being that in spite of the stigmas, Scots is closely associated with Scottish identity, and another that Scottish Gaelic of today can be described as more Scottish than the Gaelic of earlier times.

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<sup>5</sup> Interest in the Celts meant an interest in the Celtic contribution to Scotland, which was encouraged by the cultural revivals in Ireland and Wales (see e.g. Mitchison 1982).

## 2. Reinventing the Celts in the case of Scotland

As stated elsewhere, the term 'Celts' refers to a group of peoples who shared the roots of a common language and are considered to be the ancestors of the Britons, the Gauls, the Irish and (more controversially) the Picts (Carver 1995, 180–181).

In Scotland we can trace back into the first millennium AD the impact of at least five different self-defined groups of people: the Britons, the Romans, the Scots, the Picts and the Anglo-Saxons followed by the Danish and the Norse. The history of early settlement all over the island of Britain is full of supposed migrations and ethnic take-overs and the Celtic invasions have been among the issues questioned by modern scholarship.

In a large number of studies it has been shown that the whole phenomenon of Celticism is a modern construct and that the notion of Celtic languages or cultures as they are used today, is a modern invention (Sjöblom 2000, 7) However, the peoples described as the Celts had many shared features and spoke related languages. According to Cunliffe (Cunliffe 2003, 111) after the collapse of the Roman world in the West, for more than 1000 years, the concept of the Celts - real or imagined - seems to have passed out of consciousness. It was not until the end of seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century that Celts were brought back to the histories of France and Britain. Thus the re-emergence (or invention) of the Celts came about in the early eighteenth century.

The first Scottish writer who had a major effect on Scotland's image abroad was James Macpherson who between 1760 and 1763 published what he claimed to be translations from ancient Gaelic poetry, a series of poems ascribed to Ossian, son of Fingal. His work was entitled "*Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or Erse language*" followed by two long poetical epics.

First received with enthusiasm, widely read and endorsed as a source of inspiration for freedom movements in Europe, Macpherson was later regarded with a great deal of disapproval. His poems met with criticism almost immediately and as Paul Scott (Scott 1994, 365) points out Macpherson is "perhaps the only man in the history of literature who has been condemned because his work was his own and not a translation."

On the whole, the representations of the Celtic ethnicity today are very different from those that researchers connect with the Celtic cultures of earlier times. This is true about the representations of the Celtic ethnicity in all 'Celtic' countries, not just Scotland. Nonetheless, the Celtic ethnicity in modern-day Celtic-speaking areas has made a strong second coming through physical recreations of the past: Celtic Art Style, druidism, the use of kilts in Scotland,

Celtic traditional music (Sjöblom 2000, 13–14). Traditions have become a source for national identity, and this has sometimes led people to think that there is something inborn and eternally Celtic in their genes. It has also been a source for nationalism.

For instance, the Scots National League, formed in 1920 to promote Scottish national self-determination, was imbued with racial ideas and “believed that Scotland’s culture was Celtic, but, like Ireland, had been subverted by Saxon imperialism” (Finlay 2004, 135):

“The foundation – the bedrock of our Celtic origin – is already there awaiting the builders, and the cornerstone – our Gaelic language; the only national language of Scotland, is already in the hands of the hewers.” (Liberty, July 1920, Finlay 2004, 135).

As a result of all these developments, according to relatively recent, but erroneous views of Scotland’s historical and linguistic history Gaelic was seen as and claimed to be the true ‘Celtic culture’ of the country which statement was ignoring the fact that the Gaels were the last of the Celtic peoples to arrive in Scotland (see e.g. MacMhuirich 1996). Another erroneous view was that in Scottish residence the Lowlanders are more recent than the Highlanders and their forefathers were English-speaking people who worked their way northwards from England. Both assertions were incorrect from a historical point of view (the language spoken was Anglo-Saxon and only few ‘came north’).

As far as the Scottish population as a whole is concerned, many Lowlanders are of ‘Gaelic’ origin and many carry ‘Gaelic’ names. Language contact, language shift and bilingualism have been playing a major role in reshaping the linguistic history of Scotland (Murdoch 1996b, 9).

The Gaelic culture and language are by no means the only national language and culture of Scotland neither *the native* nor the *true* culture of Scotland today (see Horsburgh 1997, 7).<sup>6</sup> In fact, many studies support the idea that Scottish Gaelic and Scots are equally indigenous and equally national in a country which is built from three cultures.

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<sup>6</sup> Horsburgh points out that “fundamental mistakes have been made in the reading of Scotland’s past.” In fact, even the BBC describes Gaelic as “Scotland’s native tongue”. See for example <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4020631.stm>

### 3. Two images of Scotland

“If you sell tartans on the ground of their clan associations, you are always going to be short of angles, because there is little to the idea apart from what you and your fellow-hucksters make up, and you have to avoid contact with reality for fear of exposure....” (Hills 1994, 97).

The author of the article “The Cultural Potency of Scotland” Phillip Hills states further that the real Scotland is much more romantic and much more fascinating than the fake one. In his opinion, Scots history, Highland and Lowland, “is so full of extraordinary incident that it needs no faking”. By the notion of “the fake Scotland” Hills refers to the Mythic Highlandism which remains strong “in the imagination of expatriate Scots and Scotophile foreigners” and points out that the revival of an authentic Scottish culture should matter the most, not the “junk-historical fantasy”, however profitable.

The Highland Myth (see e.g. Horsburgh 1997, 7–24) was successful in turning Celts into “noble savages” and giving rise to a system of beliefs and values in which process Highland and Gaelic-speaking became to be viewed as equal to national identity, which however had little ground in reality. A different set of beliefs is represented in the popular perception of Scotland and by authors such as Robert Burns<sup>7</sup> who form a very important part of Scottish identity by standing for the voice of the Lowland and the Scots-speaking common man. In contrast to the general image of Scotland abroad, it is the Lowland Scots culture that is considered by many Scots to be the real and the authentic culture of Scotland and the one that matters or should matter most to the majority of Scotland’s population.

There is thus a need to distinguish between the image of Scotland and its nation in the eyes of its own people and the image which it projects to other countries. The external and internal image of a country are not necessarily the same and the era of Celtic Romanticism and Celtomania in Europe have influenced especially the external image, although they have had their internal consequences, too.

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<sup>7</sup> In Finlay’s opinion for example, the popularity of the work of Robert Burns was “testament to the appeal that Scots still held in Scottish society.” One figure who most actively pursued the issue of language and its relation to culture and politics was Christopher Murray Grieve (Hugh MacDiarmid). Language was regarded by him (as by other European nationalists) as “the bedrock of national identity.” The role of language was central to his philosophy of cultural nationalism. Finlay points out that the Scots language was omnipresent in Scottish society and “although existing in many regional forms there was arguably a sufficient base for its reconstruction into a working national language” (Finlay 2004, 136).

The affection towards Celticness and all things Celtic has caused in Scotland inconsistency in claiming Scottish Gaelic as *the* national language (a claim based on a period of dominance that ended eight hundred years ago) whereas nobody has claimed the same either about English or about the Scots language. Moreover, the language of England has been the dominant language in Scotland since the 18<sup>th</sup> century but most Scots would reject the idea that this makes English the national language of the country (see Horsbroch 2002, 21–42). Scots was dominant only three hundred years ago, but few would support the view that Scots alone is the national language of Scotland. Clearly, one cannot and should not assume that a period of political dominance alone makes a language the national tongue in a country with a very complex linguistic history.

This is leading to other major questions such as: 1) to what extent is Scotland Celtic in the eyes of its own people? 2) when was Gaelic Scottish? Celtic nationhood is, for instance in Horsburgh's opinion (and I agree with it), a misleading notion when connected to present day Scotland, because in the common mood of romanticism Lowland Scots culture does not seem to fit with the ideal. Even the rock group Runrig (quoted in Horsburgh 1997, 8) used to sing: "The Lowland Scot with English habits, has brought me to his Lowland manners." If that kind of image was communicated to people even by some scholars, it is no wonder that the image of Celtic Scotland came in part to be seen as untruthful and fake and it produced a debate over both cultural and political issues.

In this sense, although the notion of Celtic countries<sup>8</sup> (see e.g. O hUiginn 2000, 105–118; Latvio 1993, 139–141) is a good term to cover the geographical area of Ireland, Scotland and Wales, especially in comparative studies, the notion of Celtic culture is in my view more problematical in its broader meaning, because in the case of Scotland it can be used to refer to the Highlands and the Gaelic-speaking culture of today, often as *opposed* to the Scots-speaking culture and Lowland culture in general.

Traditionally, regional or local identities have been very strong in Scotland and this is true for the whole country. From the situation with the Scots language we know that there are areas with a strong Scots-speaking population whereas others have almost completely lost their Scots-speaking people and Scottish English (with some variation on the individual level) is largely spoken. In any case, it is more appropriate to speak about Scottish (or national) *cultures*, not about *one* 'home culture'.

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<sup>8</sup> This use of the term Celtic is based on its geographical application and carries associations with the broader 'Celtic' world. Thus the use of Celtic does not imply that there is something uniquely Celtic about Celtic music, art, fiction etc., but rather that these are now found in those regions which are considered to be or have been Celtic.



#### 4. Gaelic Scotland – a junior branch of Irish culture?

Another aspect of the relationship between the two languages and respective cultures can be judged against the fact that the average Irishman or woman considers the Gaelic language spoken in Scotland today to be a dialect of Irish - in a similar fashion to the way in which Scots has been regarded as a dialect of English. (See Horsburgh & Murdoch 1998, 9–10) A work entitled “An Historical Account of the Highlanders... states (in 1715) that the people of the Highlands although called Scots are more properly Irish and claim their affinity to the Irish, by retaining “the Habit and Language of the Ancient Irish” (Leneman 1988, 108).

A recent Irish scholar Thomas F.O. Rahilly has stated that to the Gaelic-speaking Scotsman of the past, Ireland was the mother-country and the same literary language as in Ireland has continued to be employed by Scottish writers down to comparatively recent times (O’Rahilly 1972, 123; Horsburgh & Murdoch 1998, 9–10). This view is supported also in other recent works.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the idea that Scottish Gaeldom formed a distinct cultural province, with a distinct language, was refined by Scottish scholars. Irish and Scottish Gaels were forced to assess their cultures in response to the expansion of both England and Lowland Scotland. In the modern period, however, Scottish Gaels have often chosen to play down the common culture and language, while on the other hand, Irishmen often regard Scottish Gaeldom as an adjunct of Irish culture (see Horsburgh 2000, 231–242).

The common perception of Gaelic culture in Scotland prior to 1600, among both Gaels and non-Gaels, was that Ireland was indeed the mother country. During the period 1400–1700 the Gaels in Scotland had to define themselves increasingly against the Scots-speaking Lowland culture. During the Jacobite period Gaelic became ‘the ancient language of Scotland’ with emphasis exclusively on Scotland and not on a common culture with Ireland. By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, *Scottish* Gaelic culture, language and identity were established as Scottish and as clearly distinct.

Horsburgh (2000, 239) clarifies a very interesting role-reversal. Written Scots, on the one hand, had become increasingly anglicised during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, while common Gaelic was increasingly *scotticised* in Scotland. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the written language of the Lowlands (for most public purposes) had become English with some Scottish characteristics. In the Highlands, however, the Scottish Gaelic vernacular had come of age and was a lively new expression of Scottishness. Both languages had, in fact, reversed the positions which they enjoyed relative to each other in 1600.

## 5. An important decade for the Scots tongue

“Syne he gaed on tae talk about his veesits till Embro an Inverness, an about hoo he wisna ettlin tae gang tae Glesca the wey that there isn’t much to see. Glasgow is a big place. A did ma dirtenest tae pit him straucht on this but it seems at Glesca still hes an eemage problem, fur aw the PR wark at’s been duin. Mibbie theres no eneuch castles, bens an lochs on Sauchiehall Street.”  
(Scots as written by a Scots-speaking friend from Glasgow)

The negative influence of language attitudes, stigma and prejudice led to the situation where Scots was often considered as ‘slang’, ‘dialect’, ‘careless speech’, ‘bad English’ and socially the most damaging of all ‘the speech of the uneducated’ (see also McClure 1988; Menzies 1991, 30–46).<sup>9</sup>

Another problem until recent times was that Scots has been often depicted as a language with many names, it was called Doric or Lallans (i.e. Lowland Scots) or Scotch or broad Scots and at times just by the name of a particular dialect of Scots - Glaswegian, Shetlandic, Buchan etc. In addition to that, Scots was sometimes wrongly described as Scottish English and sometimes confused with Gaelic, because of its name (Scottish Gaelic, occasionally Scots Gaelic).

Historically, by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Lowland language was called *Scots* and Gaelic was called *Erse* (‘Irish’) by the people of the Lowland. Before that Gaelic was known as the *lingua Scotica* whereas the Lowland language was called *Inglis* (Horsburgh 1994). By the reign of James VI of Scotland there was a clear awareness of two distinct forms of speech at the courts of England and Scotland. Only an Englishman spoke *Suddron*, only a Scotsman spoke *Scots*, though both taken together could be said to speak *Inglis* in a general sense (Horsbroch 2002, 21–42).

The name issue has caused ambiguity and has produced confusion and misunderstanding. Apart from confusion concerning the very name of the language, another problem has been the lack of data on the population in Scotland who speak Scots. Two significant pieces of research both carried out in the nineties proved that Scots is the largest lesser-used or minority language in the British Isles, but, as one of the many paradoxes, this was in contrast to the financial support for it (see e.g. Murdoch 1996a).

A third problem is concerning the consequences of the lack of ability among younger Scots in particular, in fields such as Scottish history (e.g. students’ inability to read Scottish historical documents which left Scottish history open to interpretation) or such as understanding of folk song lyrics or storytelling – this

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<sup>9</sup> A similar situation exists in Ulster. Michael Montgomery (see Montgomery 2004, 131) points out that Ulster Scots “as a subject matter and as a language faces many difficulties”. Among them are inattention from scholars and “a severely handicapped public image” because of its relation with English.

inability has been an alarming feature showing that many Scots are being alienated from their own culture.

The reasons lie in the low status and limited use in society which the language has had after the Union in 1707 and the existence of prejudice and social stigma during the periods of history that followed. With the Union of the Crowns in 1603 the court of James VI moved to London which led to several changes including also the focus of literary life moving to London. With the Union of Parliaments in 1707, anglicising influences were significantly strengthened, but although English became the language of government, the vast majority of people continued to speak Scots.

Educational policies sought until recently ways of eradicating both Scots and Gaelic. In spite of the low status the language had officially until recent times, spoken Scots has survived in various forms and dialects and literary Scots has enjoyed a period of new revival.

However, from a linguistic point of view, the nature of Scots can be described also as an unfocused language variety, "being a long way along a trajectory which is taking it towards integration with English as a continuum between the two shrinks, apparently inexorably, towards the English pole." (Macafee 1997, 546). This is why many people who speak the language do not identify themselves as speakers whereas people who hardly speak it might like to think of themselves as speakers, especially if the issue is connected to extra-linguistic factors, such as identity or nationalism. Many, especially middle-class people use a large body of Scots vocabulary and idiom, but would not think of themselves as Scots speakers.

This situation has led to different views on standardization. Some of the people involved in language planning supported clearly the national perspective for the language and expanding the use of Scots in new fields. Others thought that the most important areas are those in which Scots has a long tradition, such as creative writing, storytelling, folksongs etc. and considered status planning (revitalization and acceptance of the use of Scots in all areas) as a prerequisite of corpus planning (establishment of the internal norms of the language, grammar, vocabulary and spelling).

In both cases, however, concerns of the well being of the language have been continuously expressed. On the one hand, it was thought that Standard Scots would increase the status and prestige of Scots in both a public and an academic sense, but, on the other hand, due to the existence of several distinct dialects, the creation of an uniform written language has proved to be a difficult task.

According to Macafee (1997, 546) it seems likely that broad dialects of Scots will survive only in communities with immunity from external forces, meaning mostly rural communities with less migration of the younger generation, such as the north-east, Orkney and Shetland. In Macafee's opinion, middle-class people and teachers who have grown up in the area speaking the local dialect, are able to provide children with role models in being local and successful at the same time and in being bilingual. In spite of the vocabulary loss (or gaps in vocabulary for different purposes, see MacLeod 1993, 115–128) and challenges to the educators, at least the most recent changes have been positive and the interest in the language has been growing on local and national level.

Various institutions, including the Scots Language Society and the Scots Language Resource Centre have contributed greatly to the cause of revival of Scots in the nineties. The first public body to give Scots a political status was the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages by recognizing it as a minority language in 1995. In 1999 the new Scottish parliament confirmed this status and in 2001 this was recognized also by the UK government (see e.g. Horsbroch 2002, 21–42).

Apart from some important success in status planning, a significant step in language planning (both corpus and status) was the publication of several new dictionaries as well as the bringing into being of the first Scots language course in 2002 (Wilson 2002)<sup>10</sup> and the publishing of the first academic history journal entirely in Scots (*Cairn*, published since 1997 by the AU Scots Leid Quorum).<sup>11</sup> A new and very important resource *The Scottish Corpus of Texts and Speech* (SCOTS), compiled by the University of Glasgow, has been available online from St Andrew's Day, 30 November 2004.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> It is worth mentioning that the course was not developed by any university or any government body, but by a language enthusiast with no formal linguistic training and without any financial support from the state. The state provided, however, about 2000 euros to the publisher to help with the cost of publishing.

<sup>11</sup> As I was one of the contributors to its second issue (*Cairn*, Aberdeen, 1998), in my personal experience the use of academic Scots is a very challenging, but also an interesting and rewarding task for the learner. In my view, Scots as the medium of writing in this case was more appropriate for the subject I was studying than English would have been.

<sup>12</sup> See [www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk](http://www.scottishcorpus.ac.uk). There are also several recent translations into Scots of important documents, e.g. *The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. According to the SLS it is "a translation into Scots of what is probably the most significant and influential international instrument of modern times." Its launch coincided with the anniversary of the original adoption of the Universal Declaration, in 1948, by member states of the United Nations.

## 6. Scots and identity

“Scots has a unique role as the tongue which is rooted deeply in the physical landscape we inhabit and has expressed our relationship with it for hundreds of years... Scots is essential for Scotland as her folk, her towns, her fields and rivers. It is a mirror of Scotland’s soul.” (Kay 1993, 189).

Many studies have emphasized that the Scots are fortunate to have three languages and three cultures: on the one hand, English, which is now the most powerful and prestigious language in the world, but on the other hand, Scots and Gaelic, which are the linguistic foundations that give Scotland its unique cultural identity (see e.g. Fladmark 1993, 311–318). So, if there is a connection between Scots and Scottish Identity, how strong is it? Is the language just an additional identifying factor, or an issue of greater importance?

In general, institutions like the Presbyterian Kirk, the Scottish legal system and the Scottish system of education have been the foundations of the Scots sense of ethnic identity whereas language has ceased to play a differentiating and unifying role.<sup>13</sup> Divisions within Scotland itself and strong regional identities are also a contributing factor to the fact that the language issue is not considered to be the most important element in forming or shaping national identity.

During the nineties, however, several important investigations connected to the Scots language and Scottish identity were carried out in Scotland and they clearly showed a connection between the two. In 1992 Flavia Iacuaniello (1992, 62–71) surveyed Scottish students at Aberdeen University about their attitudes to the language. The sample of native speakers examined 88 informants from all regions of Scotland. Most participants (62%) confirmed in their replies inclination for a link between political independence and a better official status for Scots. The majority of the students expressed a desire to encourage Scots officially.

Around the same period, Janet Menzies (1991, 30–46) conducted a survey amongst two groups of pupils in a Secondary School in Glasgow’s East End. Pupils were requested to complete two different types of questionnaire as well as to participate in group discussions on questions about Scots and Glasgow dialect. With regard to nationality, 68% regarded themselves as Scottish and 32% as British; but if they were taken to be English, 70% of the older group stated they would be bothered about this. Most pupils thought Scots spoke differently from the English (87%) and felt this to be a *good thing* (51%) or *interesting* (43%). Feelings of national and regional identity were strong, and although Scots was often synonymous with ‘slang’ in the opinions of these pupils during the first part of the

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<sup>13</sup> Concerning methodology, for the unifying and separating (differentiating) functions of a standard language see Garvin (1959, 28–31).

study, their attitudes to language changed towards very positive ones after learning more about the history, status and use of Scots as spoken language and in Scottish literature.

These studies were followed by a very important study conducted by Steve Murdoch (Murdoch 1996b). This was the first serious attempt to estimate the proportion of the population of Scotland who consider themselves to be Scots speakers. The question he asked was: *What do you consider your native language?* Answers such as Doric, Shetlandic or Glaswegian were taken to mean those dialects of Scots and not dialects of English unless otherwise stated.

Data were collected in fifteen communities throughout Scotland and from 450 individuals. Interviews were conducted in the language most appropriate to the community. 57 % of the sample and 67 % with the Gaelic communities excluded, confirmed themselves to be Scots speakers. The most striking variability was both for regions of residence and schooling. The lowest figures in the Lowlands were for Strathclyde, Central and Glasgow, while the highest were for Shetland, Orkney and Grampian. General Register Office for Scotland's (see GRO(S) 1996) survey of Scots in 1996 produced an estimate of 30 % of the Scottish population, or 1,5 million, as Scots-speaking. When people were interviewed about Scots, associations with national identity were found in many responses.

In the previous survey, Murdoch (1996b) found also a connection between language and voting intentions in Scotland and concluded that language policies have the potential to be a more significant political issue than is usually assumed. Murdoch (1996b, 28) also concluded that "The desire to use Scotland's older languages grows within her population as the opportunities to do so increase" and "as awareness of them grows, linguistic questions become more 'overt' as electoral factors to all of Scotland's electorate, regardless of their own particular mother tongue." With regard to politics the most striking example of the links between politics and the language issue was that in 2000 all the unionist parties<sup>14</sup> voted against inclusion of a question on Scots language ability in the census while those parties, which were in favour of Scottish independence supported the inclusion (see Horsbroch 2002, 21–42).

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<sup>14</sup> There are three parties that actively support Scottish Independence: The Scottish National Party, The Scottish Socialist Party and The Scottish Green Party. All the others, The Conservative and Unionist Party, The Liberal Democrats and The Scottish Labour Party are unionist in that they wish to maintain the union. Of these, the Liberal Democrats want to renegotiate a Federal settlement. In a Scottish context, if a political party will not consider dissolving the Union of Parliaments, that party is de facto 'unionist'. Similarly, in Scotland, the terms 'unionist' and 'nationalist' do not carry the negative or loaded connotations they sometimes do elsewhere.

## 7. The language that follows?

“Thaim wi a guid Scots tongue in their heid are fit tae gang ower the world”  
(an old saying)

A study carried out in Brussels (Hardie 1995/96, 141–147) among the expatriate Scottish community showed a clear division between the nationalists and non-nationalists<sup>15</sup>. Those nationalists who participated had a remarkable knowledge of the linguistic history of Scotland and of the history of Scots in particular whereas the non-nationalists were largely unaware of the linguistic background of Scotland. Some of the latter group were thinking that Gaelic was not spoken at all and they had a high level of confusion about Scots. On the other hand, the non-nationalists knew and used the words in Scots, which were presented to them while the nationalists seem to not know what the words meant.

Knowing what Scots is, was a different issue from actually knowing Scots and the results were opposite in both groups. The link between language and nationalism was obvious with regard to all parameters.

An interesting topic for further research in this area would be to identify specific features of the Scottish communities in non-English speaking countries with a particularly high level of knowledge of English in all age and social groups. This research could be carried out not only with respect to political and language issues at home but regarding the new country and its influence in considering the home culture from a different perspective.

It is well known that many Scots abroad are often employed in jobs and positions related to the use of standard English, as language teachers on various levels – everywhere from playgroup to university, private or official - or as translators or language revisers or elsewhere where English native language skill is needed. The home environment on the official level has encouraged the majority of Scots to be monolingual rather than multilingual and tried to equate only English with advancement and success in life. One of the paradoxes might be that in a similar fashion the very same is automatically happening in the new country.

The need to use English in the foreign country is for these communities usually greater than the need to use the new language. In theory, an English-speaker (and Scots are automatically assumed to be that) is being respected more

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<sup>15</sup> Hardie uses both terms 'non-nationalists' and 'unionists' (see my earlier comment). I am using 'non-nationalist' in this case. It is worth mentioning that there is no one unionist block between those parties which support the union just as there is no one nationalist block between those parties which want to break the union. Some voters for the unionist parties do not consider the unionist element of the party manifestos they vote for. They may do so because they are voting on other issues like tax increases, the national healthservice or for the trade union vote.

when using the local language, but, in practice, speaking of English is often treated with more respect than if a supposedly English speaker was trying to use the new language on everyday basis. Thus even those who master the language very well, are sometimes drawn back to the use of English, if they ever ended it, as their main means of communication after living long periods of time abroad.

This raises the questions of how much the surroundings in the new home country are encouraging or discouraging in maintaining or changing one's language identity and language attitudes in the case of Scots and how is this linked to all other aspects of identity? One hypothesis may be that the social pressure coming from the new environment, towards using Standard English in particular could be influencing attitudes both towards the new language and towards one's own cultural background.

From the point of view of linguistics, and especially historical linguistics, our University of Helsinki makes a notable contribution to research into older Scots in publishing 'The Helsinki Corpus of Older Scots'<sup>16</sup> The main purpose of the supplement of Older Scots was the interest in and the study of diachronic and dialectal varieties by comparing the Scottish corpus with the main body of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts and its Early American English supplement.

From the perspective of the present, further research on the issues considered above would provide welcome additional information. In the case of Finland, for example, ties between both countries have existed for centuries (see e.g. Matley 1986, 76–77)<sup>17</sup>. Thus the possibility of evaluating features of these communities and their ancestors as a continuum could be particularly intriguing in this case.

Apart from research on material in archives as well as on writings in the press, it would be interesting to have more information on two issues: firstly, on Scottish expatriates' identity with regard to retaining their Scots language or preserving typically Scots features and idiom, and, secondly, in relation to acquiring the new language and awareness of the society and culture of the new country. In the latter aspect, due to their different cultural background, Scots might differ significantly from the other native English-speakers.

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<sup>16</sup> It was compiled by Anneli Meurman-Solin to illustrate the Scots language when it differed significantly from the language of England.

<sup>17</sup> See also database on Scotland, Scandinavia & Northern Europe [www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne](http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/history/ssne).



## 8. Conclusion

In this paper, I have presented some of the paradoxes of Scotland's linguistic past and present and some of the consequences, which the Union with England in 1707 and the Celtic romanticism later on have had on Scotland's linguistic and cultural history. With regard to the Scots language these consequences have been drastic. The situation with Scots has been sometimes described with the saying: "Scots is like a geranium in a student flat: nobody means to kill it but everybody else thinks somebody else is watering it."<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately, the language issue is no longer forgotten or dismissed. By reading recent research on the language and following the language situation in Scotland, the conclusion that should be drawn is that the situation of Scots has been improving steadily. Scots has been recognized as a language distinct from English not only by the Scottish Executive and parliament, but on UK government level, through signature of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. Another positive feature has been the establishment in the Scottish parliament of a Cross-Party Group on the Scots language. There still is, however, a need to produce a steady policy for promoting Scots on all levels. Another important step would be an inclusion of a Scots language question in the 2011 Census.

In the case of Gaelic, the situation seems to be relatively secure regarding promotion and Gaelic's importance in identification with Scottishness, but, considering the low number of speakers, further efforts and support for both languages should be secured and encouraged. Murdoch's research in 1995 (Murdoch 1996b) helped to dismiss the myth that the Scots and Gaelic speakers form barriers to the development of each other's languages. This study showed that large proportions of every Scottish language group would like to learn another Scottish language. Most people supported equally the right of both of the older Scottish languages to flourish and develop.

Finally, the question of the preservation of the older languages of Scotland and their use is, apart from being a political, historical and linguistic question, also an emotional one. It is a question of not only knowing but having an emotional bond with the language issue. In other words, it is a matter of appreciating a diverse background and heritage and communicating on a different level of understanding.

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<sup>18</sup> Catherine Macafee (one of the leading academics in Scots language research and campaigning for the inclusion of a Scots language question on Census) used this comparison e.g. in a letter to Minister Henry McLeish, Scottish Office, 8 July 1997. She pointed out that there was an urgent need for political decisions in order to save the language, because "it is easy to lose a language without even noticing."

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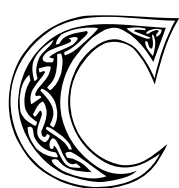
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**How should Christians lead their lives?  
An exploration of the image of lay people  
in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*<sup>1</sup>**

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Christianity is not only a belief system but also a way of life, the parameters of which were set out in the teaching of Jesus. Thus a good Christian life is a fundamental theological and spiritual question, which ultimately derives from man's right relationship with God. It features largely in the Bible, and it permeates the writings of the patristic Fathers. It is a moral question that has relevance to all Christians, not only in this life but with fundamental repercussions in the afterlife, since the moral quality of earthly life determines one's destiny in the hereafter. Attempts to answer the question 'How should Christians lead their lives?' can be found in several genres of writing such as moral and theological treatises, penitentials, letters, monastic rules, autobiographical writings, and wisdom literature. Hagiography can also be understood as one such genre, where the answer is given through the portrayal of the personification of Christian virtue, the saint.

The author, however, can deal with these questions not only through the exemplary image of the saint, but also through the portrayal of other characters, both lay and ecclesiastical, and good and bad. Although Columba is clearly a monastic saint, the minor characters in *Vita Columbae* (hereafter VC) include several lay men and women. They feature as witnesses and as receivers of the products of the saint's miraculous powers, which can be either positive or negative from their point of view. In this paper, therefore, I will explore the ideal image of a Christian, and especially that of a lay person, rather than the image of the saint in VC.

Since the Life considered in this study was written in Latin, a language not understood by the majority of people in early medieval Ireland, we may infer that the principal audience of VC consisted of monks and clerics. Yet does the model of

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<sup>1</sup> The writing of this article has been funded by the Academy of Finland, project number 1211006.

a good Christian life provided in this text apply only to the ecclesiastics, since avoiding sin and attaining salvation should be equally in the interests of all Christians? Although the *Life* was written by a churchman, and principally for a monastic audience, it still is likely to reflect the author's understanding of Christian life that should apply to all Christians.

Due to the brevity of this paper I will not try to cover all aspects of Adomnán's vision concerning the ideal Christian behaviour of laity, but rather cite a few illustrating examples that hopefully will give an impression of the parameters of a good Christian Life in VC, and demonstrate how Adomnán uses the minor characters in the narrative to portray the diametrically opposed destinies of good and bad.

I will start by looking at the portrayal of the relative merits of marriage and virginity, these being the two aspects that clearly separate lay and monastic ways of life. In the learned treatises concerning marriage and especially of virginity it is women who feature most often although these topics should arguably concern men alike. The most extensive discussion of marriage in VC occurs in an episode that features the wife of a man called Luigne.<sup>2</sup> This episode presents us with a lesson concerning marriage and woman's duties towards her husband.

...a certain layman came to him and complained regarding his wife, who, as he said had aversion to him, and would not allow him to enter marital relations. Hearing this, the saint bade the wife approach, and began to chide her as well as he could on that account saying: 'Why, woman do you attempt to put from you your own flesh? The Lord says, "Two shall be in one flesh (*Erunt duo in carne una*)" Therefore the flesh of your husband is your flesh.' She replied: 'I am ready to perform all things whatsoever that you may enjoin on me, however burdensome: save one thing, that you do not constrain me to sleep in one bed with Luigne. I do not refuse to carry on the whole management of the house; or, if you command it, even to cross the seas, and remain in some monastery of nuns.' Then the saint said: 'What you suggest cannot rightly be done. Since your husband is still alive, you are bound by the law of the husband; for it is forbidden that should be separated, which God has lawfully joined (*Quod enim deus licite coniunxit nefas est separari*) (VC ii.41).

After this the saint, the wife and the husband all fast, and during the night the saint prays for them. As a result the wife's heart is changed from hate to love, and she is ready to fulfil her marital duties towards her husband.

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<sup>2</sup> Of all the women in VC Columba physically encounters only three, these being the mother of the saint (who carries him in her womb) in VC iii.1, Luigne's wife in VC ii.41, and the innocent girl who is murdered before the saint's eyes in VC ii.25. Luigne's wife is furthermore the only one the saint directly addresses.

In the foregoing episode Adomnán uses the Bible, that is Matt. 19.5–6 and Mark 10.8–9,<sup>3</sup> to make a statement about the value of marriage. Adomnán's citations in turn refer back to Gen. 2.20–25, where Eve is created as a companion to Adam from one of his ribs, and it is stated: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one in flesh (*erunt duo in carne una*).' We infer, therefore, that Adomnán reminds his public that marriage is an institution created and blessed by God, while he also provides a lesson on the duties of a woman towards her husband, and on the indissolubility of the marital bond. The woman offers to go to a monastery of nuns instead of sleeping with her husband, but Adomnán makes Columba promote the good of marriage and marital relations instead of continence.

Adomnán's recommendation to give to the husband what is his due, could be read against Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 7.3–5 that both the husband and the wife should fulfil their marital duties towards each other, and that they should come together so that Satan would not tempt them because of their lack of self-control. Augustine, on the other hand, could be writing directly to Luigne's wife when he states:

Observe how continence has usually been pleasing to the woman, but does not please the man. The wife leaves him and begins to lead a life of continence. She obviously intends to remain chaste, but she will make an adulterer of her husband, which the Lord does not wish. For, the husband will seek another woman when it becomes impossible for him to restrain himself. What are we to say to the woman, except to repeat what the sound doctrine of the church maintains, that is, render the debt to your husband, lest, while you seek after a source of further glory, he find the source of his damnification... All this, because you have not authority of your body, but he does; and he has not authority of his body, but you do. Except by mutual consent, do not refuse each other his dues. (*De Coniugiis Adulterinis* i.4)

Therefore, both Augustine and Adomnán agree in presenting marriage as a safeguard against adultery and fornication, and intercourse in marriage as blameless. Adomnán's view of marriage, the essential element of lay life<sup>4</sup>, is thus

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<sup>3</sup> Matt. 19.5–6 'and said "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh (*erunt duo in carne una*)" So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate (*quod ergo Deus coniunxit homo non separet*).' The wording of Mark 10.8–9 is practically identical.

<sup>4</sup> See VC ii.20, where Adomnán writes about a man called Nesán saying 'And because this Nesán was a layman (*homo plebeus*), with wife and children...' thus asserting wife and children to be an essential part of lay way of life.

positive and he does not expect everybody to take the pursuit of Christian perfection as far as the celibate monks and nuns do.

This positive image of marriage in VC is reinforced in the episode where the saint sees a happy and virtuous woman being taken to heaven by angels. A year later the saint sees how the woman helps the angels to rescue the soul of her pious husband from the demons (VC iii.10). The order of wife and husband here is noteworthy; it is the woman who goes to the heaven directly without battling demons and who helps to rescue her husband's soul. Here it seems that the wife is more virtuous, though both of them have merited heaven by being pious and virtuous. Therefore, it is Adomnán's view that married people can lead good Christian lives.

Two wives in VC show by their example the right role a wife should have in the family. They are virtuous wives who give sound advice to their husbands: the first advising her husband to trust the power of the saint and to sow grain even after midsummer, and the second counselling her husband to refuse the gift sent by the saint and to let their servant be released without payment (VC ii.3, 39). Their prudence and respect towards the saint is rewarded in the first case by the grain sown late being miraculously ready for harvest at the beginning of August, and in the second by the implied blessing of the saint. By giving beneficial advice to their husbands these two wise women demonstrate the right role for a woman in supporting her spouse, who is the decision-maker of the family as stated in Eph. 5.23. These two wise women can be contrasted with a wife who tells her husband to get rid of a stake blessed by the saint, not trusting the saint's word that it would not hurt people or cattle (VC ii.37). It is said that she does not act like a prudent person but like a fool. The lesson about trusting the saint's powers is underlined when the loss of the blessed stake reduces the family to its original poverty, and Adomnán states: 'but the malice of the devil reached this wretched man, as it did Adam, through his wife.' Eve is thereby implicitly the archetype of a wife who channels demonic plans for ruining a man.<sup>5</sup>

However, the only named woman in VC, besides the mother of the saint, is the virgin Maugin (VC ii.5). The fact that she is named, and presented as an independent entity, unlike other women in the Life, who frequently feature as unnamed companions to the named men,<sup>6</sup> demonstrates that she held a special status as a holy virgin dedicated to the Church. Adomnán thus can be seen to

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<sup>5</sup> The same idea concerning Eve's role is also presented by Patrick who writes in his *Epistola* 13 'just as Eve did not understand that she certainly handed over death to her husband.'

<sup>6</sup> Of the twenty women who have any role in the narrative five are introduced as wives, four as mothers, and four as women with no further distinguishing attributes. For a detailed evaluation of all female roles in VC see Borsje 2001.



imply that the value of virginity was greater than that of the married, although marriage was not condemned as such.

Other aspects of good Christian life focused in Adomnán's image of lay people are the virtues of hospitality and charity. Hospitality had important social implications in early medieval Irish society, since it was a duty of clients to pay part of their food-rent while entertaining their lords in their own homes, and there was also a class called *briugu*, 'a hospitaller', whose duty it was to offer hospitality to all freemen.<sup>7</sup> Although hospitality thus has special significance in the Irish context, Adomnán seems to be giving to the concept more Christian overtones.

Adomnán states in VC ii.20 that an inhospitable rich man had 'spurned Christ in pilgrim guests,' the guests being in this instance the saint and his companions. However, it was not only the saint but all needy persons that could be seen to represent Christ. Thus Adomnán's rejection of the niggardly rich man has to be read against the wider background of charity. Adomnán shows knowledge of Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini* (hereafter VM), and thus he must have known the famous miracle of saint Martin involving the divided cloak given to a beggar (VM 3). There Christ appears to Martin in a dream wearing the beggar's half of his cape, thus demonstrating that the beggar represented Christ. Adomnán might also have in mind the biblical maxim in Matt. 25.40, 'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me,' which is also quoted by Sulpicius Severus in the above-mentioned chapter of VM. This overall image of charity and its value in Christian life is confirmed by Adomnán when he writes about the rich man who enjoyed God's mercy on account of 'his mercies to the poor, and his generosity' (VC i.50). This could be a reference to Matt. 5.7: 'Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.' Charity is clearly seen by Adomnán as a salient feature in a truly Christian life, since it is a means of earning God's mercy, and therefore a place in heaven. Charity can also be seen as the foundation on which a truly Christian society, where all men would be merciful towards each other, could be built.

The moral positive can also be expressed through the portrayal of the immoral negative and the evil consequences of bad behaviour. Thus the value of generosity is also highlighted through the representation of its opposite, the sin of avarice in VC. Among the four men who are guilty of avarice in the Life, one is a leader (VC i.35), and one rich (VC ii.20). The other two are simply named without giving details of their social status (VC i.50), but the context of their appearance suggests that they are likely to be men of property. In this episode the first man

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<sup>7</sup> On this see for example Charles-Edwards 2000, 525–527; Jaski 2000, 105–107; McCone 1990, 124–128.

whose gift the saint immediately accepts is denoted as rich, and his generosity highlights the others' lack of the virtue. Gregory the Great tells a similar story about a sinful man who had seduced a virgin of God and whose gift is rejected by a holy man called Menas (*Dialogi* iii.26). In both cases the donations are anonymously placed with others, but the saint is able to recognize them as being given by sinful men. The function of these episodes seems to be to illustrate in practice the principle that God will not accept the gifts of the wicked as stated in the deuterocanonical book of Wisdom of Sirach or *Ecclesiasticus* 34.18.

The first man whose gift is readily accepted by Columba is an example of a rich man who uses his riches generously to help the poor. Adomnán clearly sees avarice as a sin of rich people, who can overcome it by acting generously towards the needy. Another example of the right use of riches is that of the charitable iron-smith of whom Columba states as follows:

Columb Coilrigin the iron-smith has not laboured in vain. He has been fortunate in procuring with the labour of his own hands the eternal rewards that he desired to buy. See now, his soul is being carried by holy angels to the joys of the heavenly country. For whatever he has been able to gain by practising his craft he laid out in alms to the needy (VC iii.9).

Thus, riches are not a hindrance in leading a good Christian life and in earning a place in heaven, as long as they are well used, according to the Christian principle of charity.

Besides avarice, a lack of respect towards the saint is another prominent sin of lay people in VC. The presentation of this sin has to be understood in the context of hagiographical literature, which as a genre aims to engender veneration for the saint (and his or her successors) by relating the benefits of the miraculous powers of the saint for those who believe in them. The same message can also be conveyed by telling what happens to those wretched people who oppose or mistrust the saint.

Episodes have to be understood from their hagiographical context, but the centrality of particular themes might be reinforced by tendencies native to Irish society. Status and honour were central ideas in the early medieval Irish social order, and the principal vehicle through which these were conveyed was *enech*, the value of the face. Honour was due to those who upheld their status by fitting conduct, but it could be always threatened by the loss of physical attributes, or by being attacked by ridicule and satire. Thus these episodes involving disrespect towards the saint can also be understood from an Irish social background, where

status was upheld and made visible through fitting social response, and thus public acts of disrespect towards the saint could have wider social implications.

One example of the sin of disrespect is the above-mentioned fool wife in VC ii.37 whose lack of trust towards the saint's powers leads to the family being reduced back to poverty. There are, however, also plenty of examples of much graver transgressions against the saint than mistrust of his word. These transgressions are committed by deeply sinful men who are guilty of killing and other grave sins, and who are denoted as bloody, wicked, cruel, hard, treacherous, unyielding, and greedy. They not only mistrust the saint, but also actively mock and scorn Columba and his God (see VC i.39, ii.20, 22, 23, 25). The moral of these stories becomes clear when we look at how this disrespect is repaid by the punishments that are meted out to them by the saint and God. One illustrative example of these is the case of Ioan who had scorned the saint and plundered the house of Columba's friend with his band of men in VC ii.22. When the robbers sail away Columba prays to the Lord and predicts that they will be drowned by a sudden storm, which then in due course happens.

Another sin connected with a lack of respect towards the saint is pride (*superbia*). It is often considered by Christian authors, such as Augustine, John Cassian and Gregory the Great, to be the root of all evil.<sup>8</sup> Adomnán mentions pride in VC ii.35 in connection with a king who is uplifted with royal arrogance and refuses to open the gates of his fortress for the saint. After the saint miraculously opens the gates, the king learns his lesson, and from that day onwards he honours the saint with high esteem. Here Adomnán treats pride in connection with the powerful status of royalty, while giving a lesson on the fitting esteem and reverence to be shown to the rulers of the Church, or at least to the followers of Columba. Pride, therefore, is seen by Adomnán as a sin especially relevant to powerful people, who can be puffed up by their status and start abusing their authority.<sup>9</sup> Here Adomnán's thinking agrees with that of Athanasius, who presents pride as a sin specifically threatening rulers, when he describes how saint Antony gave advice to Emperor Constantine, and to his sons Constans and Constantius, concerning their salvation, warning them against the lure of imperial power and against allowing the royal authority to make them swell with pride (*Vita Antonii* 81(50)). John Cassian also treats vainglory and pride as sins especially relevant to rulers, since all the biblical examples he gives in order to illustrate the sins of vainglory and pride are of kings who are proud, just like the king in VC

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<sup>8</sup> On the sin of pride see Bloomfield 1952, 69–73.

<sup>9</sup> Adomnán furthermore enlarges upon the opposite of pride in the context of monastic life when discussing the saint's own humility and the monastic virtue of obedience. See VC ii.1, iii.7 for Columba's humility and VC i.2, 18, 19, 31, 32, 34, 41, 48, ii.27, iii.16 for monastic obedience.

ii.35 who is puffed up by royal pride.<sup>10</sup> Adomnán thus is not the only author to make a connection between pride and royal status, but he is rather following a line of thinking available in earlier Christian writing.

Penance has a central role in Adomnán's vision concerning a good Christian life, since only the saints can be without sins. Penance can be understood as a key to a Christian life, since it is the means of purging oneself from one's sins and healing one's soul, and thus helping oneself to go to heaven. In VC two wise men are healed of their vices by their true repentance (VC i.30, 50), and another man finishes seven years of penance following the instructions of the saint and toiling for 'the salvation of his soul' (VC ii.39). However, there is also a man who has committed incest with his mother, as well as fratricide, and to whom the saint answers: 'If you do penance among the Britons with wailing and weeping for twelve years, and do not return to Ireland until your death, perhaps God will condone your sin' (VC i.22). The saint, however, later concludes to his monks that the man will not fulfil his penance, but will return to Ireland, and be killed by his enemies. Thus the wretched man might have a chance if he repents, the word *forsan*, 'perhaps', reflecting possibility. It can either refer to the gravity of the man's sin, and thus to the fact that the sin might be too grave for forgiveness, or to the fact that the saint knows that the man might not, after all, fulfil his penance, and thereby be doomed. The latter option seems more plausible, since the saint's successor Baithéne suggests that the man's penance would be accepted, quoting Holy Scripture to support this view. Adomnán does not reveal which biblical passage he has in mind, but he might be referring to Psalms 32.5 'Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity, I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"', and 51.17 'a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.' Adomnán himself quotes the latter in VC i.30. A similar view is reflected in the Irish penitential of Finnian, which comments that 'there is no crime which cannot be expiated through penance so long as we are in this body' (Finnian 47). Furthermore, Augustine states that mercy is not denied of those who repent (*Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata expositio* 22). Thus it seems that Columba is not denying the possibility of penance because of the gravity of the man's sin, but because he knows that the man's repentance is not

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<sup>10</sup> *Institutiones* xi.10, 11, xii.21. Cassian is primarily directing his words to monks. He warns especially monks who have already conquered the other vices of pride. When read in this context it seems interesting to me that he chooses to use the example of kings to illustrate pride and vainglory, instead of stories of monks. This seems to suggest that there is some kind of profound connection between pride and royal status. What makes kings fitting examples to illustrate pride and vainglory to monks seems to be the parallelism between the height from which both the king and the perfect monk fall when guilty of pride.

genuine. This would suggest that anybody who genuinely repents his or her sins can have them forgiven.

The right attitude towards penance is illustrated by the exemplary penitent Féchna who flings himself at the saint's feet, weeping and grieving and publicly confessing his sins in VC i.30. Adomnán could here have in his mind Luke 7.36–50 where a repentant sinner washes Christ's feet with her tears. Weeping and lamentation are mentioned as part of penance also in VC i.22 and 30. They seem to function as outer signs of inner compunction and remorse, thus guaranteeing the sinner's true repentance.<sup>11</sup>

The importance of preparing the soul for death with penance is highlighted in the episode concerning a man of whom the saint says:

Much to be pitied is that man who is shouting and who has come to seek things suitable for physical remedies, when today the fitter thing for him was to occupy himself with true repentance for his sins. For in the end of this week he will die (VC i.27).

The connection between penance and death also becomes clear when the saint says of the above-mentioned man who had committed incest and fratricide: 'This man is a son of perdition; he will not fulfil the penance that he has promised, but in a little while will return to Ireland, and will there shortly perish, killed by his enemies' (VC i.22). The man will suffer a violent death at the hands of his enemies, which functions as a punishment and indicates that he is destined to hell, since he did not expiate his sins by penance.

The destinies of good and bad men at the time of their deaths are most clearly contrasted in VC. There is a connection between the way a man lives and his manner of death, which mirrors his destiny in the afterlife. In the Life the saint predicts to good men that they will never be delivered into the hands of enemies, and that they will die in peace, in old age, in their own house, and surrounded by friends (VC i.10, 13, 15). The good death gives a man time to prepare his soul, and it is very similar to the deaths of many saints. For example, both saint Antony and Columba himself die peacefully in old age, surrounded by their followers, after giving instructions to them (*Vita Antonii* 91(58), 92(59), VC iii.23).

Bad men, on the other hand, have violent and sudden deaths at the hands of enemies (VC i.1, 22, 36, 39, ii.20, 24). The opposite of this sudden death, *mors subita*, of the wicked men is the *mors placida*, the peaceful death at old age, which is the exemplary good death. Adomnán is not alone in using the image of the sudden

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<sup>11</sup> According to O'Loughlin the background of the idea of repentance with tears is in the 'baptism of tears' promoted by the Eastern theologian Gregory Nazianzen. O'Loughlin 2000, 54–55.

death as a punishment, since it also features in other Irish saints' Lives<sup>12</sup> and in the *Dialogi* iv.33 (in PL iv.32) of Gregory the Great, where a man guilty of seducing a young girl is overtaken by a sudden death. Adomnán's thinking agrees also with that of Cassian, who recommends preparation for death early on, since sudden death (*subitae mortis*) can carry off even children and young people (*Collationes* xxi.8). A biblical model for the image of the evil-doers, who die as a punishment by drowning and of whom not one will survive to tell the story in VC ii.22, can be found in the Pharaoh's army in Ex. 14.28 who are swept away by the Red sea as a punishment and of whom it is stated that not one of them survived.

The sins for which wicked men deserve violent and sudden deaths in VC include plundering, killing, committing fratricide and incest, trying to kill the saint, being responsible for the death of a man under protection, and scoffing and mocking the saint (VC i.1, 22, 36, 39, ii.20, 22, 23, 24, 25). Adomnán clearly demonstrates that these kinds of violent deaths are a deserved punishment from the bad deeds of these men, when saying of one of them, 'And Aid, unworthily ordained, will return like a dog to his vomit,<sup>13</sup> and he will again be a bloody killer, and at last, pierced with a spear, will fall from wood into water, and die by drowning.<sup>14</sup> He has deserved such an end much sooner, who has slaughtered the king of all Ireland' (VC i.36).

Christianity is a religion where the ultimate rewards and punishments come after death in either heaven or hell. Heaven is the goal of all good Christians, and the reward for their good deeds. This is clearly demonstrated in VC on the four occasions where souls of lay people are seen by the saint to be taken to heaven by angels. The first instance concerns a righteous and charitable iron-smith who gave alms for the needy (VC iii.9). Then, there is a happy and virtuous woman, followed by her pious and righteous husband (VC iii.10). The fourth is a guest at Abbot Comgall's monastery, who is drowned with a group of monks (VC iii.13).<sup>15</sup> These examples clearly demonstrate how in Adomnán's view lay people could earn a place in heaven by doing good deeds, such as practicing the Christian virtue of charity.

Correspondingly there are some episodes in VC where the souls of evil men are taken to hell. Three of the evil men whose souls are dragged to hell are specifically said to have had a sudden death. In the first two cases the same

<sup>12</sup> See for example *Vita Prima Sanctae Brigidae* 80, 118.

<sup>13</sup> ...*sicuti canis ad uomitum reuertetur suum* is a quote from Prov. 26.11. *sicut canis qui reuertitur ad uomitum suam*... 'As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.'

<sup>14</sup> Here Adomnán seems to be referring to the motif of three-fold death known from early Irish literature. See Picard 1989, 372.

<sup>15</sup> I take this man to be a layman since there is no indication of his ecclesiastical status.

structure *subita... morte* is used (VC ii.22, 23), while in the third case death happens *dicto citius*, ‘more quickly than speech’ (VC ii.25). There is also one case where death can be understood to be sudden, although there is less specification than in the three above-mentioned cases. The man is found lying in a bed with a whore by his enemies, who cut his head off (VC i.39). This is worth noting since in the remaining two cases where men are taken to hell neither their sins nor their way of dying is specified (VC i.1, 35). Thus in those episodes of VC where souls are taken to hell, and where there is some information about the crimes and deaths of the men, the deaths are specified, or at least implied, to be sudden. In Adomnán’s view there clearly is a connection between sudden and unpleasant death and the soul’s final destiny in hell. Adomnán has here in mind the death of Ananias in Acts. 5.1–11 who falls down and dies suddenly as a punishment for his greed, because he refers to him when writing about the murderer who fell dead on the spot ‘more quickly than speech... like Ananias before Peter’ and whose soul was taken to hell (VC ii.25).

If we look at the deaths of all people, both laity and ecclesiastics, whose souls are taken to heaven in VC, we find out that there is no unequivocal correlation between the way those people died and their final destiny. It is thus evident that not all good people have good deaths, although Adomnán presents us with a clear model for the desirable death in other episodes concerning prophecies of death rather than visions of souls carried to heaven. In the cases where the way of dying is mentioned in connection with a soul taken to heaven, in three cases the death happens naturally in old age (VC iii.9, 14, 23), while in one case the death is apparently due to a sickness, in one case the people in question are drowned, and in one case the person is murdered (VC ii.25, iii.6, 13).<sup>16</sup> However there is a clear connection between the way of living and the destiny in afterlife. The people whose souls are taken to heaven are specified as being just, innocent, virtuous, pious, and devoted to charity and acts of righteousness.

The episodes describing the encounters between Columba and lay people can be seen as having a moral and didactic purpose, besides strengthening the renown of the saint by telling about his powers. In these encounters the good and the bad people are clearly divided, and thus the characters are some kind of archetypes that can be used to give a lesson on the type of behaviour fitting for Christians. Adomnán clearly presents his audience with a well-developed moral lesson based on his theological learning. This moral lesson concerning a good

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<sup>16</sup> The violent death of the innocent girl in VC ii.25 can be viewed against the model of the violent deaths of the martyrs, which explains why the correlation between her soul’s destiny in heaven and her way of dying seems to be reversed.

Christian life is not conveyed so much through the portrayal of the saint, but through the portrayal of the diametrically opposed destinies of other, minor, characters in the *Life*. The virtues of charity and respect towards the saint and his followers are central for Adomnán's vision of a good Christian (lay) life. Penance also has an important role in this vision, since it is the means of purging oneself from one's sins and thus helping oneself to go to heaven. The evidence of the episodes concerning souls taken to heaven or hell in VC can be read together with the episodes about good and bad people, bearing in mind especially the information about the manner of their dying. In VC wicked men have violent deaths, often at the hands of enemies, while the model of a good death is dying in old age, at home and surrounded by family and friends. The episodes featuring heaven and hell take the destinies of souls one step further, revealing the otherworldly aspect, and thus the final destiny of all men and women. If we combine these statements about good and bad men and their respective destinies, both in this world and in the beyond, we can conclude that Adomnán is clearly trying to convey an integrated worldview concerning good and bad Christians, and the rewards and punishments that they merit from God. The episodes concerning the rewards and punishments of the good and bad deeds in VC can therefore be interpreted as conveying a clear moral message concerning the good Christian life and its antithesis.

This vision of Christian behaviour, which is rewarded in heaven applies both to the ecclesiastics and the laity alike. It is therefore a fitting lesson for the Columban monks who would have been Adomnán's primary audience, and whose task it was not only to contend for heaven themselves, but also to help by their prayers, if not by their pastoral functions, the rest of the world in reaching the same goal. The fact that the *Life* provides a clear moral message suitable also for the lay people, however, raises the question of whether Adomnán meant the *Life*, or at least some episodes of it, to be used as a basis when preaching in the vernacular to the laity attached to the Columban monasteries by economic or more spiritual ties of affection.

We can conclude that in Adomnán's mind a good Christian lay life involves charity towards the poor and respect towards the Columban community among other virtues. Penance has a central role as the means of freeing oneself from the consequences of sin, in other words as a means of securing a place in heaven. Such aspects of lay life as marriage or high social status and riches are not hindrances in reaching this goal, although the rewards meted out to the laity in the hereafter may be less than those given to the virgins and the ecclesiastics. On the whole it seems



that Adomnán's attitude towards lay people and their chances of attaining heaven is generally positive, as long as the sinners mend their ways and repent their sins.

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### Abbreviations

- PL          Patrologia Latina. J.P. Migne, ed. Paris, 1841–64.

# The Irish origins of Purgatory

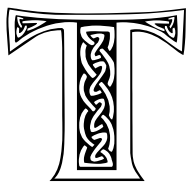
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*Motto: "Purgatory – what a grand thing!*

*- St Catherine of Genoa.<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction



he idea of metaphysical purifying fires is present already in early Christianity, but only in the Catholic creed was it developed into a more complex group of beliefs and doctrines about the Purgatory (from lat. *purgare* = “to make clean”, “to purify), which received their official formulation at the Council of Trent (1545–1563):

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this oecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavour that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and every where proclaimed by the faithful of Christ. But let the more difficult and subtle questions, and which tend not to edification, and from which for the most part there is no increase of piety, be excluded from popular discourses before the uneducated multitude (Trent XXV, 232–233).<sup>2</sup>

Even this doctrinal formulation remains quite ambiguous when it comes to the ontological status of purgatory, i.e. it does not provide a clear answer whether purgatory is a temporal place or a mental condition for souls after death (*Catechism* III.1030–1032). The fact that the ambiguous ontological status of purgatory is not

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<sup>1</sup> Based on a talk held at the Helsinki-Irish Seminar at the Renvall Institute for Area and Cultural Studies, University of Helsinki 5.4. 2002. The writing of this article was made possible by the funding provided from the Finnish Academy (project 1211006). The article is dedicated to Anders Ahlqvist, who introduced me to the field of Celtic Studies long ago.

<sup>2</sup> For the Council of Trent I have used the edition and translations of James Waterworth (1848).

resolved by this doctrinal formulation is revealed by the need of influential eclectics, like Pope John Paul II, to comment on the matter in order to stress the metaphorical nature of purgatory.<sup>3</sup> Such statements reveal that representing purgatory as a place is common in popular religion. But how and when were such spatial representations of purgatory created in the first place?

As pointed out above, the official theological indoctrination of the idea came relatively late, in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the bitter disputes of the following century between the Catholics and the Protestants, the latter often reproached Catholics for their belief in Purgatory, which Luther referred to as “the third place” and an “invented” world which is not mentioned in the Bible (Le Goff 1981, 1). However, it probably comes as no surprise for this audience that purgatory was not an invention made by and during the councils mentioned above. References and allusions to a purgatory can be found from much earlier sources. As the concept of purgatory did not have any official status in the Catholic tradition, these allusions and descriptions are not always compatible with each other. Neither do they form a logical description of purgatory. Indeed, following the guidelines of Jacques Le Goff it is better to think that before the Council of Florence we are dealing with a process, where different ideas, beliefs, and traditions come together and enter into a dialogue that will lead to the birth of the idea-complex that we call today “purgatory”.<sup>4</sup>

Most religions have to deal with the problem of how to communicate very abstract and conceptual ideas to ordinary people living their everyday lives. After all, while religions often define themselves as dealing with the “invisible otherness”, “something completely different”, or the “unspeakable” or the reality beyond human understanding, how can we understand what religions want to tell us and make it relevant to our lives? Well, as the philosopher David Hume pointed out long ago, and as has been confirmed by the experiments of modern psychology and brain sciences, one common and widely used cognitive strategy is to make the ideas and concepts more concrete by giving them spatio-temporal characteristics (Hume 1757; Holyoak & Thagard 1995; Barrett 1999, 325–339; Boyer 2001).<sup>5</sup> In

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<sup>3</sup> John Paul II gives his view on purgatory in a general audience held at the 4<sup>th</sup> of August 1999 (See [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/audiences/1999/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_aud\\_04081999\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_04081999_en.html)).

<sup>4</sup> Le Goff points out that the noun *purgatorium* did not exist before the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Le Goff 1984, 3). Le Goff is a nominalist, which means that he tends to think that, in order to exist, a mental or conceptual thing must have a name (i.e. a word for it). While this obviously is not the case, I do think he has a point here stressing the fact that the notion of purgatory as a concrete place seems to be a late invention.

<sup>5</sup> The historian Mary Carruthers has actually shown how the European scholarly traditions from Antiquity onwards consciously applied this principle in their techniques of mnemonics (Carruthers 1990).

order to make this point clearer and at the same time provide a background for understanding the belief environment giving birth to the concept of purgatory, it is best to take a short look into the development of Christian cosmology.

### **Before purgatory**

Cosmology is the term for the study of cosmic views in general but also for the specific view or collection of images concerning the universe held in a religion or cultural tradition (Bolle 1987, 100). A cosmology is always a narrative. This means that it is a presentation of reality from a point of view. The narrative basis of cosmologies is most clearly visible in religious cosmologies, where cosmic views and images are usually approached from the perspective of their importance for understanding the fate and place of humankind. Thus, Christian cosmology tends to describe the world in terms of what happens to human beings after death. This description inherited its basic structures from the cosmological visions of Judaism and the Hellenistic cultures of the Mediterranean (Le Goff 1984, 2). So let us take a short look at these two.

The Judaic cosmology, as reflected in the Hebrew scriptures, distinguished between the world above, i.e. *shamayin* (“heaven”) or the abode of Yahveh, and the earth, or the world of humans. Furthermore, under the earth was *she’ol*, an ambiguous term used at times to refer to the grave or tomb itself, and sometimes to an obscure realm of shadows, where the dead existed without their souls. Originally, the dead were not thought of as having an individual existence in Judaism. Instead, they were conceived as a faceless collective existing in a joyless realm. However, after the Babylonian exile the Jewish understanding of the meaning of *shamayin* changed, mainly due to influences from Zoroastrianism, in which it was believed that a judgement of individuals at death was conducted by God: the righteous were destined for eternal joy, and the unrighteous ones were condemned to eternal torture. In Judaism, this idea was expressed in terms of the righteous living with God forever, and the unrighteous condemned to a deprived existence in the subterranean chambers of *she’ol* (Long 1987, 130; Tober & Lusby 1987, 237–238).

In contrast to Judaism, the belief in the posthumous survival of the soul has a longstanding tradition in ancient Greece. For example, Homer – one of our earliest sources for the beliefs and customs of the Greeks – relates in the *Iliad* how gods punish or reward souls at death (*Iliad* 3.278–279, 19.259). Thus, while in Judaism the righteous humans continued to live a corporeal life with their souls intact, and the unrighteous ones continued to exist without their souls, in Greek tradition it was the soul (*psyche*) that survived, while the corpse turned to dust and

disappeared. Hades was the realm of the soul-beings (*eidolon*). It was visualized as an enormous cave below the surface of the earth, where the *eidolon* could flit around as shadows, without consciousness and totally incommunicative, unless they were provided with blood offerings by the community of the living. However, in later tradition we can find even in Greece the idea that the righteous ones are being rewarded and the unrighteous ones punished according to their deeds while living (Long 1987, 129).

In Christianity, the cardinal importance of Heaven was stressed from the beginning. It was not only the abode of fulfilment and bliss for the righteous ones, but also the abode of the divine, a separate sacred reality, where Jesus dwelled before his earthly life, and where he went again after his death and resurrection. Hell was the opposite of Heaven, the place of torment for those unrighteous ones who had sinned against God and did not believe in Jesus. Early Christian visions of Hell were borrowed from both Judaism and Classical mythology, but the main difference was that the distinction between Heaven and Hell was much sharper than in Judaism. They were conceived as totally different realms. In addition, while in Judaism, God was the lord of both *shamayin* and *she'ol*, in Christianity Hell was presided over by Satan and his fallen angels (Tober & Lusby 1987, 238–239).

Early Christian writers soon started to feel somewhat uncomfortable with such a strict division between the fates of those who had lived a righteous life and those who had sinned. What about those peoples who had sinned only once or a few times, or whose errors could be taken as minor ones? What about people who had lived a righteous life but had never believed in God or Jesus? It is these kinds of ideas that gave birth to the idea, expressed e.g. by the third century writer Origen, that the power of the saving will of God extended beyond the limits of the earthly life. Thus, a general understanding arose that humans were granted an opportunity for spiritual and moral purification and eventual salvation even after death. Origen went actually so far as to claim that Hell is only a temporary punishment after death, and that everybody will be finally taken up to Heaven. This suggestion was not accepted by the Church and turned Origen into a heretic, but the idea of “temporary punishments” after death gained ground and was accepted by, for example, Augustine, who has been called, by scholars and the Catholic Church alike, the main architect of the doctrine of Purgatory (Pelikan 1971, 355; Le Goff 1984, 62).

The original image of such temporary punishment was the purifying fire. Origen took this idea from the Old Testament, where fire is often depicted as a divine instrument, and from the New Testament, where an idea of baptism by fire

can be found in the Gospels (Lk 3:16). However, it looks like Origen was actually equating this purifying fire with the last judgement made by God at the end of times. His purgatory was, therefore not a place but a divine institution (Le Goff 1984, 55–56). Augustine, on the other hand, thought that this purgatorial time applied only to those few who were not totally good, but not godless either, and that this time of purification occurred between the time of death and the Last Judgement. However, as Augustine appears to be more interested in Hell than in this purgatorial phase, he does not provide any actual descriptions of what he envisioned these purgatorial fires to be like (Le Goff 1984, 65–57).

According to Le Goff this vagueness connected with Purgatory lasted until c. 1170 when for the first time the word “purgatory” starts to occur as a noun in the texts, before that time it was found only in such adjectival expressions as *ignis purgatories*, *loca purgatoria*, and *poenae purgatoriae*. He argues that before the 12<sup>th</sup> century purgatorial fires were basically understood to be in Hell, i.e. purgatory was not understood to be a separate and independent “third place” like in the later tradition. Indeed, as le Goff is a nominalist, i.e. he believes something does not really exist before it is named, he argues that Purgatory did not actually come into existence before the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Later scholars have pointed out that this kind of nominalistic thinking might turn out to be too drastic and it would be better to talk about the widening of the notion of Purgatory in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, rather than of its birth. However, the question Le Goff raises is interesting and the origins of the idea of a separate and concrete realm of Purgatory, which entered into the 12<sup>th</sup> century theological discussions, is certainly relevant for our understanding of the formation and nature of Christian beliefs and traditions (Pontfarcy 1995, 94–95).

### **The third place**

Le Goff answers this question himself by pointing out that during the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries a change occurred in how thought was organised. Before that time, the natural way of thinking was based on binary patterns, like God vs. Satan, Heaven vs. Hell, Life vs. Death, clergy vs. laity and so forth. However, since the integration of the Old Indo-European barbarian civilizations into the Christian world the situation slowly changed and gave birth to more pluralistic patterns of thought, exemplified, for example by the ideological division of society into three orders: those who pray (*oratores*), those who fight (*bellatores*), and those who work (*laboratores*). Indeed, as ternary patterns like the one above seem to be typical for Indo-European traditions, it comes as no surprise that the same type of divisions into three became the prevailing type for patterning thought. The birth of

Purgatory as the third place in addition to Heaven and Hell could, and should, be taken as one expression of this new way of thinking (Le Goff 1984, 226–227).

Le Goff constructs his hypothesis on the basis of the writings of Georges Dumezil, who suggested that the ternary logical model would be a defining feature of all Indo-European traditions, prevailing even when all other features in the society change or disappear (E.g. Dumezil 1958). This view has been challenged more recently, and the division of the medieval society suggested by Le Goff, for example, has been shown to be too simplistic (Bredero 1983, 78). Moreover, several scholars, including Richard Southern, A.H. Bredero and Aron Gurevich, have pointed out that “purgatory” has actually been used as a noun earlier than in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, as suggested by Le Goff (See Pontfarcy 1995, 94–95). Thus, the birth of Purgatory, as defined by Le Goff, cannot be explained simply in the context of Scholastic theology – as Le Goff is doing – but we must look for other sources of origin.

Southern argues that Purgatory was invented in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century as a means for the Church to control the new sources of income. The Church had evolved into a prosperous land-owning institution, independent of secular lords and noble families. This also meant that it could not rely on such great political and military families financing the Church in the future, so means for gaining funds from a broader basis, including the whole population of an area, had to be invented. According to Southern, Purgatory was the creation of this process. A.H. Bredero, again, points out that all the early references to Purgatory can be found in monastic sources. Thus, the origins of Purgatory should be searched from the monastic culture of the Middle Ages. While I tend to agree with Bredero, his suggestion that Purgatory can be explained as a neologism born in the context of the flowering of Latin literature in the twelfth century can hardly be taken to be very informative or satisfactory (Pontfarcy 1995, 94–95).

The monastic origins of Purgatory are also stressed by Aron Gurevich, who points out that at least one monastic writer, Othlo of St. Emmerman, used the noun “purgatory” in the title of a chapter about penalties to which sinners were subjected *in purgatorio*. The importance of the contribution of Gurevich for the present article is that it suggests that the influence of popular tradition should be taken into account when discussing Purgatory. Othlo seem to have borrowed themes and representations from the popular culture of his time. Indeed, according to Yolande de Pontfarcy, another text, written in the 1180s by an anonymous Anglo-Norman monk, seems to demonstrate both the monastic origins of Purgatory as well as its reliance on popular culture of its time. This text is the *Tractatus de Purgatorio Sanctii Patricii* (“The treatise on St. Patrick’s Purgatory”).



The story centres on a journey to the other world undertaken by a knight named Owein. The entrance to the other world is a cave or a pit known from the Irish tradition as “St Patrick’s Purgatory”, which can be found on an island in a lake in North-western Ireland, Lough Derg in County Donegal (Pontfarcy 1995, 95).

Le Goff recognises the importance of this source, because from his perspective it shows how the writer has adopted the system of three categories and the idea of an intermediary place (Le Goff 1984, 193). However, I would agree with Pontfarcy that the importance of this text is of a whole different nature. Robert Easting, who has provided a detailed analysis of the *Tractatus*, points out that the writer of the text does not ever refer to Purgatory in general but always to St. Patrick’s Purgatory proper, that is, to the cave or pit described as the entrance to the other world (Easting 1986, 37). Pontfarcy points out that this is not only something typical for this particular tract, but to other contemporary works as well. Gerald of Wales, writing around the same time, describes St. Patrick’s purgatory in the following terms:

There is a lake in Ulster, which contains an island divided into two parts. One part contains a very beautiful church with a great reputation for holiness, and is well worth seeing. It is distinguished above all other churches by the visitation of angels and the visible and frequent presence of local saints.

But the other part of the island is stony and ugly and is abandoned to the use of evil spirits only. It is nearly always the scene of gatherings and processions of evil spirits, plain to be seen by all. There are nine pits in that part, and if anyone by any chance should venture to spend the night in any one of them – and there is evidence that some rash persons have at times attempted to do so – he is seized immediately by malignant spirits, and is crucified all night with such severe torments, and so continuously afflicted with many unspeakable punishments of fire and water and other things, that, when morning comes, there is found in his poor body scarcely even the smallest trace of life surviving. They say that if a person once undergoes these torments because of a penance imposed on him, he will not have to endure the pains of hell – unless he commit some very serious sin (Topography §38).

While Gerald does not mention the name of the island in this earlier recension quoted here, he does call it St Patrick’s Purgatory in the second Recension (Pontfarcy 1995, 96). This naming might actually be due to Gerald becoming aware of the *Tractatus*. A third source, the *Vita Sancti Patricii* written in 1186/87 by Jocelin of Furness, and not influenced by the *Tractatus*, clearly demonstrates that the name St. Patrick’s Purgatory was not an invention of the anonymous Anglo-Norman monk, but more likely he borrowed it from the existing monastic and popular traditions of Irish Christianity (Pontfarcy 1995, 96).

At this point I would like to turn my attention to a couple of details in the descriptions of St. Patrick's Purgatory. First, these are the earliest extensive descriptions of Purgatory, where it is not only visualised as a place, but also as a place where very different kinds of torments and trials – not just purgatorial fire - are available. Moreover, these trials are not supervised by God, nor are they based simply on any sins done by the one attending Purgatory. Instead the torments are due to evil spirits and the whole idea appears to be connected with the idea of a spiritual struggle and a trial of faith. Indeed, the writings of Gerald even imply that it would be possible to visit Purgatory before any sins have been committed and – because of the ordeal – afterwards commit some minor sins, and still go to Heaven! Secondly, contrary to what Le Goff seems to think, St Patrick's Purgatory is not a "third place" i.e. it is not described as a separate realm. All three texts mentioned above agree that St Patrick's Purgatory is situated in our own realm. It is a place that can be reached by living human beings, and there are no hints at this point that this Irish version of Purgatory would be open to the dead waiting for the Last Judgement, or that from there it would be a direct path or bridge to Heaven and Hell. Indeed, the only way out from the Irish Purgatory appears to be back into this world. Again, the description of Gerald can even be read as evidence for him believing in the purgatorial fires in Hell – something that can be avoided by visiting St Patrick's Purgatory while still living.

These three works, especially the *Tractatus*, were extremely popular in the monastic culture of the medieval period. However, as I see it, they are not in themselves responsible for the belief in Purgatory. Instead, the authors are describing what they consider to be an earthly substitute for the purgatorial torments waiting in Hell for those who, before they can be pass on to Heaven, must be purified from their sins. Because of their popularity, the texts with the descriptions of these substitute ordeals soon became the models for later discussions of Purgatory in general. This transfer of images from St Patrick's Purgatory into Purgatory in general began probably allready in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century, as described by Le Goff, and it gained its peak in Dante's *Divina Commedia*, as shown by Pontfarcy (1996). However, before I can conclude my own discussion of the topic, one additional question must be dealt with, i.e. where did the Irish get the idea of an earthly Purgatory.

### **The origins of Purgatory**

In order to do this, let us take a second look at what Gerald wrote about St. Patrick's Purgatory, and what we know about the place today. He begins by locating the place on an island in a lake in Ulster. As pointed out above, the lake in

question is Lough Derg, which today is directly on the border of Ulster and the Republic of Ireland. However, Station Island – the location of the Purgatory – is today on the side of the Republic, i.e. Co. Donegal. It has been a popular centre for pilgrimage from the times of Gerald until the present. Thousands of pilgrims visit the island every year between June 1st and August 15<sup>th</sup>. While this popularity appears to stem, at least partly, from the medieval popularity of the texts above, it seems clear that the island had some ceremonial importance even earlier – at least on a local scale. This is implied already in the name of the island. It comes from the Latin term *station* meaning “a guard-post” or a “post of duty”. In a religious framework this term was used in a penitential context, referring to a place where an individual could contemplate his past deeds and search peace with God, or simply “penitential exercises”.<sup>6</sup>

This interpretation is backed by the second piece of information that Gerald gives us. He writes that the island is divided into two parts, the one having a beautiful church and being visited by angels and saints, and the other being stony and ugly and occupied by evil spirits. The description might sound more like a fairytale, but some truth appears to be found in it. We know from history that St. Patrick’s Purgatory, or more accurately the community of the Augustinian canons who were in charge of the Purgatory, originally occupied two islands instead of one. Station Island, where the cave that was believed to be the Purgatory was located, was the smaller and less attractive of the two. The community with its church building and living quarters occupied the bigger island until the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. At this time the community had almost died out and, because of this, they abandoned the bigger island and moved to Station Island (see Pontfarcy 1988, 7–34)..

According to James Kenney, an ancient monastery existed on the island before it was re-occupied by the Augustinian canons. This earlier monastery was under the patronage of, and perhaps founded by, St. Da-Bhec-óg. However, this monastic community of the Celtic church had apparently ceased to exist before the Augustinian takeover sometime in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (Kenney 1968, 355). As is well known, the practice of Christian monasticism has its origins in Egypt, where, beginning in the late third century, men withdrew to the deserts and mountains in order to meditate and fast in solitude. Indeed many of these hermits lived originally in solitude in caves until they started to create communities living in isolated settlements, which later on developed into the monasteries of medieval Christianity (Kingsley 1987, 30). During the development of Christian

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<sup>6</sup> More information about the modern pilgrimage to St Patrick’s Purgatory is available from <http://www.loughderg.org/> , which is the official internet site of Station Island.

monasticism, the original asceticism and austerity of monastic life, including poverty and a simple lifestyle, were among those aspects of monastic ideals that were not often followed in practice. However, they remained among the monastic ideals, and seemed to have been important at least on those occasions when a member of the community was thought to have become too much involved with the life and pleasures of the world outside the monastic community. Among the early Christian communities, early Irish monasticism had the reputation of being more inclined to true ascetism than other Western churches, and many continental monks actually travelled to the island in order to gain access to a simpler lifestyle. This is the reason Ireland gained the name of “the isle of the saints” (See Bitel 1990).

The Irish church gained its reputation not only from its ascetic ideals but also from its handbooks of penance i.e. penitentials (see Bieler 1963). Indeed, the Irish penitentials apparently functioned as examples for penitentials in other parts of Western Europe, and they are generally considered to be the most genuinely original Irish contribution to medieval Christianity. According to these texts, the Irish penitential practice involved, among other things, the public separation of penitents from the rest of the community, and their exclusion from the sacraments pending absolution of their sins. In addition different kinds of individual rituals or tasks of penance were assigned for specific sins, including sexual relations of all kinds (for monks), wet dreams, abortion, use of contraception, abstinence from sexual behaviour (for lay persons), drinking in the same house with a pregnant woman, keening the dead and so on (Ó Cróinín 1995, 198–199). Some of the individual forms of penance sound very harsh to modern readers. For example, in some of the penitentials we can read about “the crucifixion”. This was a form of penance, where the penitent stood without clothes, in the middle of the river, holding his hands and feet as if he had been crucified. This could go on for hours and the meaning was that during that time the penitent would get some vague idea of how Christ had suffered for him, and at the same time be purified through the process of taking some part of these sufferings on himself.

Interestingly, turning back to the description of St Patrick’s purgatory by Gerald, it is the metaphor of crucifixion that he uses to describe the sufferings of those who attend St. Patrick’s Purgatory. Additionally, he describes that there are nine pits on the island that according to him are the actual centre points of the Purgatory. The attack of the malign spirits happens while the visitors are in these pits. This description sounds similar to the penitential beds of the early Irish church known from archaeology and other sources. Gerald does not mention the cave described in the *Tractatus*, but we know that a cave existed on the island. The

cave – the original entrance to the Purgatory, could well have been the original focus and resting place for the penitent monks ordered to stay on the island, supporting the general idea presented here. Unfortunately, the cave was filled in and replaced by a chapel in 1790, so archaeological evidence seems to be unavailable in this case.

What we apparently have here therefore is a survival of the traditions of penance of the early Irish church. Through the descriptions of the practises by the writer of *Tractatus*, by Gerald, and – more importantly – by Dante following these earlier sources, these practises of penance became the sources for the visions of Purgatory in medieval Christian literature. The obvious, and final, question at this point is why did Gerald – among others – connect the Station Island community and its practises of penance with Purgatory and with Patrick.

This is a more complicated issue. To begin with it should be mentioned that there are no historically attested associations connecting St. Patrick with the island. The early documents do not mention Patrick attending the island, and the earliest document connecting St. Patrick with Co. Donegal is the early 8<sup>th</sup> century *vita* of Patrick by Tirechán. There are, of course, a number of churches in the area that according to the tradition are founded by St. Patrick. However, such dedications cannot be taken to be historically reliable and cannot, therefore, be used as a proof of anything. According to Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, the only legend connecting Lough Derg and St. Patrick is the story of how the saint banished a monster into the lake. This story can be as old as from the 7<sup>th</sup> century, but there is no certainty about it (Ó hÓgáin 1990, 360).

In order to solve this problem, I suggest that we turn our attention to *Vita Sancti Patricii* written by Jocelin of Furness in 1186/87, containing another description of St. Patrick's Purgatory. The interesting thing in this text is that in it St. Patrick's Purgatory is not situated on Station Island at all. Instead, Jocelin places it on Croagh Patrick, a mountain in Co. Mayo (Kenney 1968, 355). What makes Jocelin's testimony interesting is that in contrast with Lough Derg and Station Island, Croagh Patrick has strong connections with St. Patrick. For example, in the 7<sup>th</sup> century saint's Life by Tirechán, Patrick is said to have climbed the mountain in order to communicate with God. We read that he spent forty days and forty nights on the mountain, and birds were so numerous there that they were troublesome to him. The story was developed onwards in later Lives, such as the Irish *Bethu Phátraic*, written between 896 and 901. Here the reason for the saint to climb the mountain is to get God to promise him that Patrick is allowed to judge all the Irish on the Last Day, instead of God. An angel appears to Patrick telling him that what he asks is too much and – therefore – God would not give it to

Patrick. However, Patrick refuses to accept this. He says to the angel that he will not move from that place until he dies, or receives what he is seeking. At this point the birds start harassing him for forty days and he spends that time without eating or drinking. In the end the saint manages to banish the birds by ringing his bell. A second angel appears telling that after all this God has decided to give to Patrick what the saint requires of him (Ó hÓgáin 1990, 358).

This legend makes the mountain very important for the Irish Christians. Traditionally it has been interpreted as a tale which explains why Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland. As a sacred site, Croagh Patrick has, therefore, a special status for all Irish Catholics. Every year, on the last Sunday of June, pilgrims arrive in order to climb the mountain while reciting prayers and performing penitential exercises. According to the tradition a proper pilgrimage to the mountain is made barefoot and includes spending one night in vigil at the summit (O'Connor 1998, s.v. *Croagh Patrick*). For the present discussion, the revealing detail in this tradition is the belief that it is Patrick who through his sufferings on the mountain is allowed to judge the Irish Christians on behalf of God in the Last Judgement. Jocelin writes:

On the summit of this mountain many have the custom of watching and fasting, thinking that after this they will never enter the gates of Hell, They consider that they have obtained this from God through the merits and prayers of Patrick. Some who have spent the night there relate that they have suffered the most grievous torments, which they think have purified them from all their sins. For this reason many call this place the Purgatory of St. Patrick (De Furness 1809, 189–90).

In the beginning of this article I demonstrated how the early Christian writers, like Origen and Augustine, thought that purgatorial fires could actually be taken as the basic medium for judgment on the Last Day. If we are to believe Jocelin, according to the medieval Irish tradition the test of fire at the Last Judgement could be avoided by imitating the sufferings of Patrick on the mountain. In other words, as Jesus is thought in Christian tradition to have died for the sins of humankind beforehand, according to the Irish tradition the sufferings of Patrick on the top of Croagh Patrick relieved the followers of the saint from the purgatorial fires. This equation of the purgatorial fires of the Last Day and the penitential exercises performed on the pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick gave birth to the custom of calling the latter by the name of St. Patrick's Purgatory.

So here we have it. This seems to be the end of the story. There is one final detail to be solved, i.e. how did the name of St. Patrick's Purgatory become attached to Station Island on Lough Derg. One possibility is that St. Patrick's Purgatory was commonly used as a metaphor for centres of pilgrimages in

medieval Irish Christianity. However, this seems unlikely, as we have no documentary evidence for this kind of tradition. Additionally, it should be kept in mind that the pilgrimage to Station Island appears to be a relatively late tradition. Originally, the place was used only by the local monastic communities for their own penitential exercises. Apparently, the island was opened for public pilgrimage by the Augustinian Canons, who took charge of the place in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century. It was probably after this time that the name of St. Patrick's Purgatory was attached to the place (Pontfarcy 1995, 97).

The Augustinian canons must have been aware of the traditions connected with Croagh Patrick and they could have borrowed the idea of St Patrick's Purgatory for several different reasons. For example, they might have thought – as Pontfarcy suggests – that borrowing the name of the most popular Irish pilgrimage of their time could transfer some of its importance and aura to their own pilgrimage. They might have opted for this strategy simply in order to gain some of the economic advantages that pilgrims would bring to the community, or they might have wanted to bind their own community more securely into the Patrician heritage of Irish Christianity. Or maybe they saw some close parallels between the penitential exercises on Croagh Patrick and on their own island, and thought that these two could be equated on the basis of their theological function. Whatever their original reason, history has shown that they were more successful than what they could hope for. Station Island pilgrimage with its penitential exercises not only became internationally more popular than the pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick, but it turned out to become the source for the later medieval visualisations of Purgatory in general.

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## Kirja-arvosteluja – Book Reviews

**Simon James: *Keltit*. Otava, Helsinki 2005. Suom. Tarja Kontro. 192 s. Hinta 33,40 euroa. ISBN 951-1-19271-X**

*Keltit* on ensimmäinen suomeksi julkaistu yleisesitys kelttiläisestä kulttuuripiiristä. Se on suomennos vuonna 1993 julkaistusta teoksesta *Exploring the World of Celts*. Teoksen kirjoittaja Simon James on rautakauden ja roomalaisajan sekä erityisesti sodan ja väkivallan arkeologiaan erikoistunut tutkija, joka toimii nykyisin luennoitsijana Leicesterin yliopiston arkeologian laitoksella. Erityisesti häntä ovat kiinnostaneet kelttien etniseen identiteettiin sekä menneisyyden esittämiseen ja käyttöön liittyvät kysymykset. Jamesin myöhempi teos *Atlantic Celts* keskittyy selkeämmin näihin kysymyksiin, ja se onkin saanut Iso-Britanniassa paljon julkisuutta ja herättänyt laajalti keskustelua. Sama kelttiläisten kansojen identiteettiin liittyvä problematiikka on myös *Keltit* –teoksen lähtökohta, mutta siinä se ei saa yhtä keskeistä asemaa. James kuitenkin aloittaa teoksen esittelemällä keltteihin liittyvien tarujen ja todellisuuden välistä kuilua ja toteaa, että ei ollut olemassa mitään 'yleiskelttiläistä' identiteettiä, vaan kyseessä on kielitieteilijöiden 1700-luvulla tekemä määrittely. Niinpä hän määritteleeekin termin 'keltit' viittaamaan kansoihin, jotka puhuivat kelttiläisiä kieliä, vailla olettamusta kulttuurisesta tai etnisestä yhtenäisyydestä.

James korostaa kulttuurien omaa *emic*-käsitystä identiteetistään ja siten hänen mukaansa käsityksiämme kelttiläisen kulttuurin yhtenäisyydestä sekä erityi-

sesti keltti-termin käyttöä insulaarisiin kulttuureihin viitattaessa tulisi kyseenalaistaa. Nimitys 'kelttiläinen' esiintyy kyllä antiikin kirjoituksissa, mutta sitä ei käytetä lainkaan kelttien itsensä kirjoittamissa varhaisissa insulaarisissa lähteissä. Brittein saarten asukkaisiin ruvettiin viittamaan keltteinä vasta 1600- ja 1700-luvuilla kielitieteellisiin perusteisiin. Siten emme voikaan katsoa olleen mitään 'yleiskelttiläistä' identiteettiä, joka olisi yhdistänyt kelttiläisiä kieliä puhuvia kansoja. Hän korostaa, että keltit eivät olleet yhtenäinen ryhmä kansoja, joilla olisi ollut yksiselitteisesti tunnustettu kelttiläinen identiteetti tai edes täysin yhtenevä materiaallinen kulttuuri. Kelttiyhteiskuntien rakenteessa, uskonnossa ja aineellisessa kulttuurissa olleiden samanlaisuuksien ohella myös keskinäiset erot olivat suuria. Siten esimerkiksi tietojamme Gallian keltteistä ei voida pitää suorina todisteina esimerkiksi Irlannin kelttiläisestä kulttuurista. Korostaessaan kulttuurien omaa *emic*-käsitystä itsestään James samalla vahvistaa nykyajan uuskelttien oikeutta omaan kelttiläiseen identiteettiinsä, vaikka monet uuskeltit ovatkin ymmärtäneet hänen sanomansa täysin päinvastoin hyökkäyksenä modernin kelttiläisen identiteetin perusteita vastaan.

*Keltit* pyrkii olemaan kattava yleisesitys kelttiläisistä kulttuureista rautakaudesta nykyaikaan. Sen johtajuutuksena on tutkia, mistä nykyiset käsitykset keltteistä ovat peräisin ja missä määrin ne edustavat todellisuutta, sekä esitellä keitä keltit todellisuudessa olivat ja miten he elivät. Jamesin pyrkimyksenä on selvästi lähentää populaaria kelttikuvaa ja akateemista tutkimusta tuomalla uusimman, lähinnä arkeologisen, tutkimuk-

sen tuloksia yleistajuiseen suurelle yleisölle suunnattuun muotoon. Populaarista luonteestaan huolimatta teosta käytetään kuitenkin myös useiden yliopistollisten arkeologian laitosten lukumateriaalina.

Teoksen avatessa ensimmäisenä silmiin osuu kuvituksen runsaus. Teoksessa on yli 300 korkealaatuista kuvaa, joista 59 on värikuvia. Niinpä se onkin hyvin edustava ja houkutteleva ulkomuodoltaan. Alaluvut ovat melko lyhyitä, pääosin 1–3 sivun mittaisia, ja lisäksi teoksessa on runsaasti lyhyitä kuvatekstejä ja erillisiä aiheita esitteleviä tietolaatikoita. Niinpä se sopiikin hyvin selailtavaksi 'kahvipöytäkirjaksi'.

Teos tarjoaa kuitenkin myös tuhdin tietopaketin kelteistä. Kirjan vahvuutena mainittakoon se, että kirjoittaja esittää usein myös vaihtoehtoisia tulkintoja ja korostaa tietojemme vajavaisuutta. Hän myös ottaa hyvin huomioon sen laajemman kontekstin, jossa keltit elivät, eli ei tarkastele heitä ympäröivistä kansoista ja kulttuureista täysin erillisinä. Toisaalta kirjan painopiste on liiankin selvästi kelttien ja antiikin maailman välistä vuorovaikutusta esittelevässä osassa, jonka pituus on kokonaista 35 sivua, kun taas esimerkiksi Irlannin kelttejä käsitellään vain 11 sivun verran. James onkin vahvimmillaan käyttäessään arkeologista aineistoa, kuten esimerkiksi sivuilla 112 ja 114, joilla esitellään metallin ja puun työstämiseen käytettyjä tekniikoita. Arkeologinen aineisto onkin luonnollisesti pääosassa käsitellessä antiikin kelttejä, joista ainoat kirjalliset lähteet ovat antiikin kirjoittajien, siis ulkopuolisten, kuvauksia. Yllättävää kuitenkin on se, että Irlantia ja Skotlantia käsittelevissä osioissa

arkeologista materiaalia esitellään ylimalkaisesti ja muutenkin ne saavat osakseen huomattavasti vähemmän huomiota kuin rautakauden ja antiikin keltit erityisesti Manner-Euroopassa mutta myös Britanniassa. Muutenkin kirjan painopiste on selkeästi rautakautisessa ja antiikin maailmassa varhaiskeskiajan ja myöhäisempien vaiheiden jäädessä lähinnä lyhyeksi loppulisäykseksi.

Irlantia esittelevät osat ovat teoksen heikoimpia, koska niissä James nojaa pitkälti kirjalliseen aineistoon, jonka parissa hän ei ole yhtä vahvoilla kuin arkeologiassa. Esimerkiksi Irlannin myyttejä ja legendoja esittelevä alaluku koostuu lähinnä kirjallisuuskatkelmista ilman että niitä kontekstualisoitaisiin tai tulkittaisiin. Esimerkiksi varhaiset irlantilaiset lait, jotka olivat hyvin pitkälle kehittyneitä ja antavat arvokkaita tietoja yhteiskunnan rakenteista ja toiminnasta, jäävät täysin mainitsematta.

Irlantia koskeva osio sisältää myös useita epätarkkuuksia. Näistä mainittakoon esimerkiksi väite, että Irlannin kelttiläinen kirkko loi oman menetelmänsä pääsiäisen ajankohdan laskemiseksi. Tosiasiassa kyse oli vanhan, myös Roomassa ja muualla Manner-Euroopassa aiemmin käytössä olleen, laskutavan säilyttämisestä. Virhe on merkittävä, sillä uuden tavan luominen viittaisi Irlannin kirkon vääraoppi-suuteen ja itsenäisyyteen Roomasta, kun taas vanhan tavan säilyttäminen osoittaa Irlannin konservatiivisuutta ja kirkon sisällä vallitsevaa epäyhtenäisyyttä. James ei myöskään viittaa pyhän Patrickin syntymäpaikan sijainnin tai häneen liittyvien vuosilukujen epävarmuuteen, kun taas arkeologista aineistoa käsitellessään hän usein

korostaa tulkintojen epävarmuutta. Hän ei myöskään mainitse Palla-diusta, joka lähetettiin piispaksi Irlantiin ennen Patrickia, vaikka kertookin Irlannissa olleen kristittyjä jo ennen Patrickin aikaa. Muista pyhimyksistä hän mainitsee muun muassa Brigitin ja Annan joiden kertoo luultavasti kehittyneen samannimisistä pakanallisista jumalattarista (Brigit ja Anu). Brigitin kulttiin uskotaan kyllä yleisesti vaikuttaneen samannimisen jumalattaren kultin, mutta suhde pyhimyksen ja jumalattaren välillä ei suinkaan ole niin yksiselitteinen, että pyhimyksen kultti olisi kristillistetty versio jumalattaren kultista. Pyhä Anna käsittääkseeni viittaa Marian äitiin, eikä siis mitenkään erityisen irlantilaiseen pyhimykseen. Lisäksi Annan suhde Anu-jumalattareen tai edes Annan kultin levineisyys varhais- tai sydänkeskiajan Irlannissa ovat hyvin kyseenalaisia. Irlantilaisen luostarioppineisuuden esittelyssä James puolestaan keskittyy pääasiassa käsikirjoitusten ulkoiseen koristeluun sanomatta juuri mitään oppineisuuden sisällöstä. Hän toistaa myös perinteistä nationalistista kuvaa Irlannin historiasta, jonka mukaan viikinkien hyökkäykset päättivät Irlannin kukoistuskauden ja aloittivat ”muukalaisten interventioiden pitkän ja traagisen historian” (s.163). On kyseenalaista voidaanko viikinkien retkiä tosiasiasa pitää näin selvänä Irlannin historiaa jakavana rajapyykinä. James itsekin toteaa myöhemmin (s. 178) aiemman toteamuksensa vastaisesti, että viikinkien tulo ei merkinnyt suurta muutosta irlantilaiselle yhteiskunnalle.

Irlannin kelttien ohella myös Wales, Bretagne ja Skotlanti saavat osakseen hyvin ylimalkaisen käsittelyn. Esimerkiksi piktejä esitellään ainoastaan

yhden sivun ja Bretagnen brittiasutusta parinkymmenen rivin verran. Dál Riadan skottien monisatavuotinen historia puolestaan käsitellään yhdessä kappaleessa. Kirjan painopiste onkin selvästi antiikin maailmassa ja Manner-Euroopassa. Tämä on valitettavaa yleisteokselta, jonka tarkoituksena on antaa kattava kuva kelteistä kaikessa moninaisuudessaan rautakaudesta nykypäivään.

Uudempaa historiaa käsittelevä osio esittelee hyvin lyhyesti 1800-luvun muuttoliikkeet kelttiläisiltä alueilta Uuteen maailmaan mainitsematta kuitenkaan niiden osuutta iirinkielen häviämiseen suuresta osasta Irlantia. Kelttiläisten kielten nykytilaa esittelevä jakso puolestaan on vain parinkymmenen rivin mittainen eikä moderneja kelttiläisiä identiteettejä käsitellä lainkaan. Uuden ajan kelttien käsittelyn ylimalkaisuus on ymmärrettävää, koska kyseessä on kuitenkin jo niin erilainen kulttuuri ja erilaiset kysymykset kuin esihistorian ja varhaisemman historian kelttien käsittelyssä. Silti voidaan kysyä, miksi tämä ainoastaan kahden sivun mittainen kappale on täytynyt sisällyttää kirjaan lainkaan. Samalla tavoin myös varsinaisen keskiajan ja uuden ajan alun kelttien esittely jää niin lyhyeksi ja ylimalkaiseksi, että koko viimeinen keskiajan ja uuden ajan kattava luku (s.176–181) olisi vaatinut perusteellisempaa käsittelyä, jotta se toimisi hyvänä päätöksenä teokselle.

Jamesin teos on kunnianhimoinen yritys esitellä kelttiläiset kulttuurit kaikessa niin ajallisessa kuin maantieteellisessä laajuudessaan. Joiltakin osin *Keltit* onnistuu siinä hyvin, mutta valitettavasti teoksessa on myös suuria puutteita ja vajavaisuuksia. Jamesin

vahvuus on selvästi arkeologisen aineiston ja erityisesti roomalaisajan Manner-Euroopan käsittelyssä, mutta valitettavasti tämä vahvuus kääntyy heikkoudeksi siirryttäessä ajallisesti myöhäisempiin ja maantieteellisesti kaukaisempiin kohteisiin. Varhaiskeskiajan Irlantia koskeva osio, joka olisi vaatinut laajaa perehtyneisyyttä kirjalliseen lähdemateriaaliin, on erityisen heikko. Muut Rooman valtakunnan ulkopuolelle jääneet alueet sivuutetaan vielä Irlantiakin ylimalkaisemmin. Myöhäiskeskiaika ja uusi aika puolestaan käsitellään niin lyhyesti, että niiden sisällyttämistä kirjaan tässä muodossa voidaan kyseenalaistaa. Nämä osiot olisi yhtä hyvin voitua jättää pois rajaamalla teoksen aiheeksi varhaisemmat kelttiläiset kulttuurit ja jättämällä kelttiläisten kulttuurien myöhäisvaiheet jonkinlaiseksi lyhyeksi epilogiksi vailla pyrkimystäkään kattavaan käsittelyyn.

Puutteineenkin *Keltit* on hyvä suomenkielinen johdatus kelttiläiseen kulttuuriin ja lähinnä arkeologiseen aineistoon tukeutuen se luo monipuolisen kuvan kelttien elämäntavasta ja vaiheista. Tarja Kontron suomennos on sujuvaa ja helppolukuista kieltä ja teoksen houkutteleva ulkoasu kutsuu tutustumaan siihen. Kirjan lopusta löytyy suppea sanasto, joka selittää joitakin avaintermejä. Lisäksi lopussa on melko laaja museohakemisto, joka esittelee kelttiläistä aineistoa sisältäviä museoita yleisesti kelttiläisiksi miellettyjen maiden lisäksi muun muassa myös Bosniassa, Kroatiassa ja Romaniassa. Julkaisemalla *Keltit* Otava on tehnyt hyvän avauksen, joka toivottavasti innostaa uusia ihmisiä kelttien pariin ja johtaa tulevaisuudessa myös muun keltteihin liittyvän kirjallisuuden

den julkaisemiseen sekä käännöksinä että suomalaisin voimin kirjoitettuna.

**Katja Ritari**

**Thomas Bartlett, David Dickson, Dáire Keogh, Kevin Whelan (toim.)**  
*1798. A Bicentenary Perspective.*  
**Dublin: Four Courts Press 2003. 756 sivua. Hinta 60 euroa. ISBN 1-85182-430-8.**

Menneiden konfliktien muisto ja tulkinnat herättävät yhä Irlannissa suuria tunteita, myös tutkijoiden parissa. Vuoden 1798 kapina olisikin kuin luotu perinteisten nationalistien ja uusien tulkintoja hakevien ”revisionistien” taistelulentäksi. Ehkä 30 000 kuollutta sisällissodassa, jossa toiset taistelivat brittien ja toiset ranskalaisten rinnalla – ja toistaiseksi viimeinen vakava yritys koota katoliset ja protestantit yhteen rintamaan. Tässä olisi mistä taittaa peistä. Akateeminen debatti on onneksi kuitenkin jo paljolti päässyt tästä vanhasta kahtiajaosta, eikä ole enää erityisen hedelmällistä jakaa 1700-luvun tutkijoita vuohiin ja lampaisiin. Kaikki ovat mahtuneet sulassa sovussa tämän yli 750-sivuisen järkäleen sivuille.

Painotuseroja on kuitenkin yhä mahdollista löytää. Kirjan 33 artikkelia on koottu kahdeksaan pääjaksoon, jotka kunkin avaa Kevin Whelanin kirjoittama johdanto. Whelan oli keskeisessä roolissa myös kun kapinaa vuonna 1998 paketoitiin populaariteoksiksi, muistojuhliksi ja näyttelyiksi. Virallista 200-vuotisjuhlintaa arvosteltiin tuolloin siitä, että 1790-luvun United Irishmen esitettiin anakronistisesti aikaansa edellä olleena liikkeenä. Sen yhteiskuntakäsityksen vihjattiin

jollakin tavoin ennakoivan sitä onne-  
laa, johon Pohjois-Irlannin rauhan-  
prosessin piti 1990-luvulla nopeasti  
johtaa. Jotakin tästä kritiikistä voidaan  
kohdistaa myös Whelanin joh-  
dantoihin.

”Bicentenary Perspective” on silti  
arvokas. Teos tarjoaa ansiokkaan  
tutkimuksellisen välitilin päätöksen  
ajanjaksosta, jota ilman nykyistä Ir-  
lantia on mahdoton ymmärtää. Kai-  
kessa massiivisuudessaan kirja tarjoaa  
lukijalle laajan kirjon eri tutkijoiden  
näkömymiä. Monet näistä ovat pureu-  
tuneet samoihin teemoihin myös  
omissa monografioissaan, kuten Ian  
McBride Ulsterin presbyteerien maa-  
ilmankuvaan - joka useinkaan ei ole  
auennut ”Ninety-Eightiä” myöhem-  
män katolisen nationalismin muottiin  
väkisin puristaneille - tai Breandán  
Mac Suibhne tilanteeseen Derryssä,  
joka jo tuolloinkin oli kulttuurisesti ja  
poliittisesti kovin eri maata kuin vaika-  
pa Belfast.

Usein unohtuvat protestantit ja  
unonistit ovat mukana mm. James  
Kellyn ja Allan Blackstockin ansiosta.  
”Bicentenary Perspective” ei myös-  
kään eristä Irlantia omaksi poliittis-  
aatteelliseksi saarekseen, vaan yleisen  
historian tuntijat (kuten Hugh Gough)  
kytkivät vuoden 1798 tapahtumat ajan  
eurooppalaiseen politiikkaan. Huomi-  
otta eivät jää edes kapinan jäl-  
kivaikutukset Australiassa ja Yhdys-  
valloissa (mm. Ruan O’Donnell,  
Maurice J. Bric). Kulttuuriteko Four  
Courts Pressiltä ja hyvä esimerkki  
siitä, miten konferenssijulkaisusta voi  
tehdä kunnon kirjan, vaikka se vähän  
kestäisikin - tässä tapauksessa viisi  
vuotta.

**Petri Mirala**

**William Kelly ja John R. Young  
(toim.) *Ulster and Scotland 1600 –  
2000. History, Language and Identity*  
Four Court Press: Dublin 2004. 189  
sivua. Hinta 45 £. ISBN 1- 85182-  
808-7**

Dr William Kellyn (Ulsterin yliopiston  
tutkimusasiantuntija) ja Dr John  
R. Youngin (Skotlannin historian tutki-  
muskeskuksen varajohtaja) toimittama  
kirja on ensimmäinen teos julkaisusar-  
jassa, joka käsittelee Ulsteria ja  
Skotlantia. Teokseen on valittu  
artikkeleita yhdeltätoista tunnetulta  
näiden alueiden historioitsijalta ja  
asiantuntijalta. Tutkijat edustavat eri  
tieteen aloja ja heidän tutkimustensa  
pääkohteena ovat niin yhteinen  
historia kuin kieli ja identiteetti, pai-  
kallisesti, kansallisesti ja kansain-  
välisesti tarkasteltuna.

Kirja jakautuu kolmeen osaan.  
Ensimmäinen osa käsittelee historiaa,  
toinen emigraatiota ja kolmas – kieltä,  
kirjallisuutta ja kulttuuria. Ensimmäi-  
sessä osassa John Young esittelee  
skotlantilais-irlantilaisia suhteita 1600-  
luvulla ja myös ulsterinskotlantilaista  
etnistä identiteettiä. Graham Walkerin  
artikkeli jatkaa tätä aihetta analysoi-  
malla tapaa, jolla Ulsterin ja Skotlan-  
nin välisiä suhteita on käytetty luo-  
maan Ulsterissa brittiläistä identiteeti-  
ä vastapainoksi irlantilaiselle identi-  
teetille. Máirtín Ó Catháin kääntää  
näkökulman toisinpäin ja käsittelee  
poliittisia yhteyksiä radikaalien tasa-  
valtalaisryhmien välillä Derryssä ja  
Glasgowssa 1800- ja 1900-luvuilla.

Kirjan toisessa osassa Jock Philips  
kommentoi muuttoliikettä Skotlan-  
nista ja Ulsterista Uuteen-Seelantiin.  
Patrick Fitzgerald puolestaan tarkaste-  
lee niitä sosiaalisia, taloudellisia ja  
poliittisia tekijöitä, jotka alunperin

aiheuttivat muuttoliikkeen ensin Skotlannista Ulsteriin ja sieltä myöhemmin varsin laajan muutto-aallon Amerikkaan. Steve Murdoch laajentaa muuttoliikkeeseen liittyvien kysymysten skaalaa käsittelemällä artikkelissaan skotlantilaisten ja irlantilaisien läsnäoloa Skandinaviassa 1600-luvulla. Pohjoismainen näkökulma on varsin mielenkiintoinen ja myös olennainen osa näiden suhteiden tarkastelua, koska Ulsterin skotlantilainen diaspora yhdistyi laajasti skotlantilaisten yleiseen liikkuvuuteen pohjoismaissa tuohon aikaan. Kirby Miller tarkastelee siirtolaisten merkittävää roolia elitistisen poliittisen mentaliteetin luomisessa Amerikassa ja skotlantilais-irlantilaiseen etnisyyteen liittyviä kysymyksiä.

Viimeinen luku kiinnostanee paitsi historian myös kielten ja kulttuurin tutkijoita. Siinä Michael Montgomery analysoi kielen ja murteen välistä suhdetta sekä Ulsterin kirjoitettua ja puhuttua skotin kieltä viimeisten neljän vuosisadan aikana. Richard Finlay rinnastaa kielikysymyksiä skotin ja gaelin kielten osalta ja käsittelee kielen ja politiikan yhteyksiä. David Horsburgh tarkastelee skotinkielisten yhteisöjen poliittista identiteettiä Skotlannissa ja Ulsterissa 1500-luvulta noin 1700-luvun puoliväliin saakka. Alan Titley vertailee iiriksi ja skotin gaeliksi kirjoitettuja elämäkertoja.

Ulsterilla ja Skotlannilla on tunnetusti monimutkainen yhteinen historia ja Ulsterin ja Skotlannin suhdetta kuvataan ja koetaan komplisoituneena - joskus kireänä ja rasittavana, mutta silti aina jännittävänä ja kiehtovana. Skotlantilaisten rooli Ulsterissa on kieltämättä historiallisesti hyvin tärkeä

laajuutensa ja jatkuvuutensa takia. Monet yhteiseen historialliseen ja kulttuuriseen perintöön liittyvät kysymykset ovat kuitenkin saaneet vähemmän huomiota osakseen tai mielikuvat niistä ovat olleet usein virheellisiä. Näihin kysymyksiin kirja pyrkii vastaamaan ja eri aluetutkimuksen aspektit tukevat hyvin toisiinsa.

Yksi sellainen kysymys on esim. kysymys unionismista. Eräs kirjoittajista toteaa, että Ulsterin unionismin skotlantilaisen ulottuvuuden pitäisi tehdä meidät tietoisiksi tavasta, jolla Ulsterin protestanttien britti-identiteetti on ollut ymmärretty väärin. Sen pitäisi myös auttaa meitä ymmärtämään saaren monikulttuurista olemusta ja brittiläisyyttä monimutkaisena konseptina. Ulsterin unionismi joutuu kohtaamaan useita haasteita ja määrittelemään toisaalta suhteensa irlantilaisen nationalismiin ja toisaalta uudella tavalla suhteensa Skotlantiin.

Toinen hyvin mielenkiintoinen aihe on ulsterinskotin kielen kohtalo ja sen suhde skotin kieleen Skotlannissa. ”Kaikkien alan tutkijoiden (ja ehkä meidän kaikkien) olisi hyvä kuulla enemmän ja useammin Ulsterin skottia ymmärtääksemme skotlantilaisten panosta Ulsterin puheeseen ja oppiaksemme sitä kautta enemmän saaren lingvistikisistä ja kulttuurisista pluralismista” ehdottaa eräs kirjoittajista. Kirjan esseet osoittavat, että tiedon lisääminen on loppujen lopuksi paras ja ainoa tapa toisten ymmärtämiseen ja kunnioittamiseen ja epäkohtien ja ristiriitojen ratkaisemiseen.

**Atina Nihtinen**