

Book Reviews

Edel Bhreathnach, *Ireland in the Medieval World AD 400-1000: Landscape, kingship and religion*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2014. xiv + 293. ISBN 978-1-84682-342-8. Price €24.95.

Certain books have left an indelible mark upon the Irish peoples' consciousness of their early heritage. In particular Liam and Máire de Paor's book *Early Christian Ireland*, published in 1958, shaped the picture that the burgeoning middle class Ireland of the sixties had of its 'Age of Saints and Scholars'. It remains a classic of its kind, but in citations by both popular and academic historians it has been outstripped by Donnchadh Ó Corráin's revisionist classic *Ireland Before the Normans*, published in 1972. Both works are now outdated, thinking has moved on, archaeology has thrown new lights on historical material. Historians and publishers alike have been hoping to come up with a successor to these works, one that would acquaint the public with current information and current thinking on the kinds of models which the de Paors and Ó Corráin presented.

Various attempts to produce such a successor have been made, but at last one has been found: Edel Bhreathnach's work should be placed shoulder to shoulder with the two predecessors outlined above. Her work reflects many fundamental changes that have taken place not only in what we have to say about history, but even in how we go about saying it. We have moved away from the days when historians were seeking to lay down a definitive text of 'what happened'. In the days when the de Paors were writing, a young Ireland was still setting up models of its Golden Age, proclaiming the glories of its past. Revisionism then came along with its scythe, cutting down the truisms of previous generations, seeking to set up an 'objective' and 'scientific' history, one that would be unassailably correct. Both *Early Christian Ireland* and *Ireland Before the Normans* were designed as *de facto* narratives of what happened in the past. But the revisionist attempt at objectivity has not proved sustainable: historians have become increasingly aware that history is intrinsically a subjective interpretation; every generation will use the material available to it to write its own story of what happened, a story that will inevitably reflect the needs and assumptions of that generation. In this new and questioning era, then, Bhreathnach begins at the very root of the matter, by placing the modern study of history squarely in the ancient Irish tradition of *seanchas*, a branch of learning whose earliest glimmering we see in such works as the *Leabhar Gabhála*, wherein the then custodians of Ireland's learning sought to integrate their received traditions into the new biblical learning of Christianity. They created a story of their past as best they could with the materials at hand, just as historians do today.

Rather than laying down a blunt narrative, therefore, an authoritarian dictat of 'what was', Bhreathnach prefers throughout to outline general concepts and illustrate them with specific case studies. To understand what a kingdom was and how it worked for instance, we are introduced to the example of Brega: what was happening with its various kings and over-kings, who its subject and its vassal peoples were and what their roles might have been. By thus bringing one example under the magnifying glass we get a deeper appreciation for the complexities that were involved in such kingdoms all over Ireland.

A key message of the text is established in its very title, *Ireland in the Medieval World*. Ireland was not an isolated, aberrant fringe society 'an island in the ocean' as the De Paors said, 'lying far out from the shores of continental Europe' (*Early Christian*

Phillipa, Duchess of Clarence, Countess of Ulster, Lady of Connacht, 1252-1261, married, with issue; titles eventually vested in the Crown.

*le Stewart: steward of Scotland. *Ó Briain: identity uncertain *le Botiller: ancestor of Earls of Ormond. *de Valognes: grandson? of justicier, 1195-98

*de Bruce: Earl of Carrick, King of Scotland. * de Bermingham: 1st Earl of Louth.

*de Clare: 8th Earl Gloucester and 7th Earl Hertford. *FitzGerald: 1st Earl of Desmond. FitzGerald: 2nd Earl Kildare. * Darcy: 1st Baron Darcy of Knaith

*de Multon: 1st Baron Moulton of Gillesland.

Ireland, p. 16), but rather represented a variation on a bigger European theme, was in contact with the nearby continent and reflected developments there and in Britain, even if that Irish reflection was adapted to local conditions and tastes.

In this, as in many other aspects, Bhreathnach's work is impregnated with a strong awareness of current trends in historical research. Gender studies proponents will be happy to find extensive discussion of women and their roles, environmental archaeologists will find a knowledgeable appreciation of the contributions of this field. Anthropological models are invoked to deal with belief systems and social structures. Nor are current controversies avoided: the conflict, for instance, between an insistence on pagan survivals and a revisionist reinterpretation of such supposed survivals as Christian manifestations are deftly indicated without becoming embroiled. Even New Age Celtic spiritualism is lightly touched upon as 'a modern construct created to respond to a modern spiritual exploration' (p. 220).

With the use of texts and poetry, letters, genealogies and annals, of prosopographies, surnames and place names, of archaeology, anthropology and landscape studies, Bhreathnach puts together a lyrical and powerful invocation of the place and the peoples of Ireland as we currently understand it to have been. Extensive endnotes and frequent reference to the scholars promulgating diverse views make this work a springboard for those wishing to delve further into the scenarios it depicts.

Yet curiously, for all that the practice of history has moved from the Golden Age visions of the de Paors, that vision still permeates the underlying frame of reference. Nowhere is this more visible than in the treatment accorded to Ireland's Viking experience. Bhreathnach is clearly happier describing how Irish society was related to society abroad than how Irish society related to foreigners on their own home territory. Treatment of the Vikings is limited almost exclusively to a discussion of Dublin, their presence elsewhere neatly excised from the picture. Our understanding of the Viking presence in Ireland is seemingly as yet too filled with enigmas to be satisfactorily integrated with what we know of their Irish host society. That is perhaps work for another day; meanwhile, let the trumpets flourish, a fine work has been born!

Lenore Fischer

Martin Browne OSB and Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB (eds), *Soldiers of Christ: The Knights Hospitaller and the Knights Templar in Medieval Ireland*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2016. xxi + 249 pp. ISBN 978-1-84682-572-9. Price €50.

This volume consists mainly of expanded versions of papers presented at a conference held in Glenstal Abbey in 2014, the first time any such gathering took place to study specifically the history of these military orders in medieval Ireland. Originating in Jerusalem in the early twelfth century, they were founded to provide military forces to defend both Christians and territory conquered by Christians, originally in the Middle East but later on in Europe also, specifically in the Iberian Peninsula, the Baltic states and Prussia. In addition to their military role, members of the Orders took the normal monastic life-time vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The Templars, named after their headquarters in the Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, commonly referred to as 'Solomon's Temple' in Europe, given to them by King Baldwin II in the aftermath of the First Crusade (1095-9) were founded to defend the newly conquered area and protect pilgrims. The order was formally established in 1129 when it obtained papal approval. The Hospitallers arose from a pre-Crusade hospice for pilgrims to the holy city established in the late-eleventh century whose members were recognised as a religious community in 1113 and who also had acquired a military role by the 1130s.

Soon after their foundation both orders began to acquire substantial property, land, manors and churches in western Europe whose revenues were to be used, ostensibly at least, to support their work in the holy land. Their arrival in Ireland was due to the Norman invasion and it seems clear that they played a significant role in ensuring the success of the conquest. In return for vast grants of land and urban property the orders provided administrative service and sometimes military support to the invaders. No Irish men were permitted to join, though given the antipathy and hostility of the orders to the native population, there was unlikely to be many applicants in any case. This discrimination appears to have extended to the lay work force also as surviving lists of servants contain no recognisable Gaelic names. The Templar foundations in Ireland were confiscated at the same time as the general suppression of the order in the early fourteenth century and as elsewhere their property given to the Hospitallers. Despite the origins and nomenclature, there is no evidence that the latter ever operated any hospital to cater for the sick in Ireland and they would appear mainly to have provided accommodation and hospitality solely to the rich and powerful among the Anglo-Irish community. Numerically insignificant by the sixteenth century they fell victim to the suppression of the religious houses following the Reformation.

The first four chapters of this collection of essays are organised on a chronological basis and chart the introduction, development and decline of the orders in Ireland. Further chapters look at the archaeological and architectural evidence for their buildings and the evidence for Templar agricultural activity. The latter discussion is based solely on documents compiled at the time of their suppression in 1308. The author argues from the admittedly limited evidence that they farmed both extensively and, to a degree, innovatively. They used a three-course rotation system and adopted mixed plough teams of horses and oxen. Grain growing, mainly wheat and oats, and sheep production were the main enterprises. In general they followed a broadly similar pattern of farming to that employed in the secular world of the Anglo-Norman manors.

The remaining essays discuss various aspects of their defence of their legal rights and privileges both in the spiritual and temporal domains. For local historians in this region, there is little of interest in regard to the Templars with no reference to their foundation at Newcastlewest nor any mention of the more dubious suggestions of houses in Limerick city, Mungret and Bruree. The Preceptory of Any, the official name of the Hospitallers' foundation at Hospital is discussed both by Tadhg O'Keefe and Eamonn Cotter from architectural and archaeological perspectives though both have less to say on this site than for example their more interesting analyses of Mourneabbey in North Cork. Based on some fragmentary pieces of cut stone it is suggested that the church at Hospital had a cloister which would be unusual, though not unprecedented, in terms of the architecture of the military orders but its exact location in relation to the church is uncertain. At the time of its suppression in 1541 all its main buildings were still standing though its lands normally worth £6 were reckoned to be worth only £2 due to raids by the Irish. The preceptor, Eneas Hemon, was given a generous pension of £27. 17s. 8d. though less than the £43. 6s. which he had apparently convinced the original surveyors of the property it should be. This pension was to be continued to be paid after his death to his children, an interesting provision in the light of his vow of chastity. The Reformation proved to be of continuing benefit to his career as he later became bishop of Emly.

The editors of the volume deserve thanks and plaudits both for organising the original conference and making its results available so expeditiously. It remedies a serious gap in our knowledge and understanding of both orders and their impact on medieval Ireland. Given the paucity of documentary source material and the sparse survival of physical re-

mains, the contributors, both established academics and emerging scholars, have through their research, analysis and comparative studies managed to enhance our knowledge of this hitherto neglected aspect of Irish monastic history to an impressive degree.

Liam Irwin

Úna Nic Éinrí, *Filí Luimnigh gan Iomrá san Ochtú hAois Déag*. Coiscéim, Baile Átha Cliath, 2016. Lgh 303. Pragas €15.

Beidh cur amach ag gach léitheoir ar suim leis litríocht Ghaeilge an 18ú céad ar obair eagarthóireachta Úna Nic Éinrí: foilsíodh cnuasach d'fhilíocht Thaidhg Ghaelaigh Uí Shúilleabháin a thiomsaigh an t-eagarthóir treallúsach seo sa bhliain 2001; réitigh sí eagrán d'fhilíocht Uilliam English a tháinig amach dhá bhliain dár gcionn; agus foilsíodh a heagrán d'fhilíocht Sheáin Uí Thuama sa bhliain 2012. Sa díolaim is déanaí uaithi, tá eagar curtha aici ar dhá aiste is caoga a cumadh ina contae dúchais san 18ú céad – agus tá fiche ceann díobhsan nár cuireadh i gcló cheana.

'Filí gan iomrá' nó 'filí áitiúla' a thugann Úna Nic Éinrí ar na húdair a bhfuil a gcuid dánta bailithe sa chnuasach seo. Ceithre fhile dhéag atá istigh: ina measc tá Muiris Ó Gríofa, máistir scoile ó Eilfinn in oirdheisceart Luimnigh a bhfuil dhá aiste dhéag leis sa leabhar; Tomás Ó Glasáin ó Áth Dara, file ar thábhairneoir é de réir dealraimh, a bhfuil ocht n-aiste leis ann; Séamas Ó Dálaigh, táilliúir ó pharóiste Mhungairit, a bhfuil seacht n-aiste dá chuid sa chnuasach; agus an tAthair Nioclás Ó Dónaill a bhí ina ghairdian ar chloch ar na bProinsiasach in Áth Dara agus a chum sé cinn de na dánta. An té a léifidh *Filí Luimnigh gan Iomrá san Ochtú hAois Déag* i dteannta *An Ghaeilge i Luimneach 1700-1900* (An Clóchomhar, 1974) le Breandán Ó Madagáin, *An Mangaire Súcach* (Coiscéim, 1996) le Comer Bruen agus Ó hÓgáin, agus *Seán Ó Tuama ó Chromadh an tSubhachais* (Coiscéim, 2012) le Nic Éinrí agus Spillane, gheobhaidh sé léargas cuimsitheach ar shaothrú na Gaeilge i gContae Luimnigh i rith an 18ú céad.

Tá na dánta rangaithe de réir téama in ocht gcaibidil: mar atá, 'cairdeas agus eas-cairdeas', 'bás na gcairde', 'coilíniú na hÉireann', 'na cogáí thar lear', 'plé na hinscne', 'diagacht agus creideamh', 'an fhírinne gharbh' agus 'saol na fantaisíochta'. Caidreamh idir na filí atá i gceist sa chéad dá chaibidil. Baineann an dá chaibidil ina dhiaidh sin le polaitíocht na linne in Éirinn agus san Eoraip. Déantar trácht ar chúrsaí collaíochta agus creidimh in dhá chaibidil eile. Tá raidhse ábhar pléite sa chaibidil dar teideal 'an fhírinne garbh' agus tá caibidil ar leith tugtha do dhán moltach a chum Donnchadh Ó Grádaigh ar ghleann na Máighe. Tá caighdeán na heagarthóireachta ar fheabhas tríd síos; tá nótaí beathaisnéise ar na filí le fáil i gcúl an leabhair; agus tá cora cainte doiléire, focail neamh-choitianta agus tagairtí liteartha nó stairiúla mínithe sna nótaí críochnúla a ghabhann leis na dánta.

Ní féidir a rá go bhfuil seoid filíochta nár aithníodh go dtí seo aimsithe ag Nic Éinrí, ach cuirfidh scoláirí liteartha suim nach beag in *Filí Luimnigh gan Iomrá* de bharr an eolais atá le fáil ann ar an gcomhthéacs cultúir agus sóisialta inar cumadh litríocht an 18ú céad. Mar shampla de sin, féach an bhéim a chuir an t-eagarthóir ar thábhacht na ngrafnóirí 'lean scríobhaithe na Gaeilge orthu ag treabhadh in iomaire na lámhscríbhinní. Bhí na filí ag brath orthu le haghaidh seachadadh a gcuid filíochta' (lch 32). Os a choinne sin, is ar an reacaireacht a leag sí an bhéim nuair a bhí amhrán le Séamas Ó Dálaigh faoi chaibidil aici 'Ráineodh go bhfuair an scríobhaí é ó bhéal an fhile féin, nó ó reacaire, tharla gur i bhfogharscript a breacadh é ...' (lch 32).

Sílím go gcaithfear na haistí 'príobháideacha' a sheol filí chuig a chéile a dhealú ó na haistí 'poiblí' a chumadar don phobal i gcoitinne: má bhí seachadadh na n-aistí ag brath

ar chóipeanna lámhscríofa sa chéad chás, ba thábhachtaí go mór an bhéalaireacht ná an scríobh sa dara cás. Agus tá fianaise le fáil sa chnuasach a thacaíonn leis an tuairim seo: cé go bhfuil cúig aiste dhéag sna caibidlí dar teideal ‘cairdeas agus eascairdeas’ agus ‘bás na gcairde’, níl ach dhá cheann díobh (nó 13 %) a bhfuil foinn cheoil ag gabháil leo. Ar an lámh eile, tá foinn cheoil luaithe le deich gcinn (nó 71 %) de na ceithre aiste dhéag sna caibidlí dar teideal ‘coilíniú na hÉireann’ agus ‘na cogáí thar lear’. Caithfear suntas a thabhairt don éagsúlacht seo – is codarsnacht í a bhfuil impleachtaí móra aici dár dtuiscint ar na modhanna cumarsáide a chleacht an t-aos liteartha san 18ú céad.

Ina theannta sin, gheobhaidh an staraí fianaise sa díolaim seo ar ghnéithe éagsúla de shaol na tuaithe sa tréimhse chéanna. Seo mar a mhínigh Úna Nic Éinrí tábhacht na bhfoinsí liteartha don staraí:

más mian linn *mentalité* aon phobail a thuiscint nó a mheas, ní foláir dúinn an uile fhoirse, ar féidir teacht air, a cheadú. I slí amháin, is giorra dúinn meon na muinntire i saothar na bhfilí seo gan iomrá, toisc go rabhadar saor, a bheag nó a mhór, ó laincisí na pátrúnachta, agus d’fhág sin iad beag beann ar an bhféin-chinsireacht (lch 36).

Thairis sin, tá guth saineiúil le cloisint i litríocht Ghaeilge an 18ú céad toisc nach raibh meán ar bith eile le fáil ag gnáthbhaill den phobal dúchais ina bhféadfaidís iad féin a chur in iúl. I bhfocail an eagarthóra ‘is tríd a fhaighimid spléachadh ar imeachtaí laethúla in Éirinn san ochtú haois déag, trí shúile daoine a ndearna na leabhair staire dearmad orthu’ (lch 223).

Tar éis di fianaise na litríochta a mheas, bhí Nic Éinrí sásta páirt a ghlacadh i gconspóid atá ar siúl i measc staraithe le roinnt blianta anuas:

Níl staraithe an lae inniu ar aonfhocal faoi cé acu coilín nó ríocht den *ancien régime* ba ea Éire an ochtú haois déag ... Ní raibh téarmaíocht dá leithéid ag filí na caibidle seo, ná ní móide go dtuigfidís na coincheapa laistiar díobh, ach i bhfianaise a ndánta, ba léir gur chreid siad nach raibh sna Sasanaigh ach cuilithíní, a raibh seilbh shealadach acu ar thailte a shinsir... (lgh 101-2).

Cuireann an ráiteas seo líne a chum file eile ó Chontae Luimnigh i gcuimhne dom: mhaígh Aindrias Mac Craith, in amhrán a chuir sé leis an bhfonn ‘*Charlie over the water*’, go ‘rúscfar as Éirinn le faobhar na coilínigh’ (féach Comer Bruen agus Ó hÓgáin, *An Mangaire Sógach*, lch 87).

Ar na téamaí polaitiúla a bhfuil trácht orthu sa díolaim tá an Seacaibíteachas agus cogáí móra an 18ú céad – Cogadh Chomharbas na hOstaire, Cogadh na Seacht mBliain, agus Cogadh Mheiriceá san áireamh. Tá ceisteanna sóisialta na linne pléite in aistí eile: ina measc seo tá stádas na cléire, an t-iompú creidimh, agus dearcadh na coitiantachta i leith na n-uaisle. Is fiú ábhar fánach atá conspóideach go leor i gcónaí a lua: mar atá, stádas na ndaoine trasinscneacha. Tá achoimre tugtha ag Úna Nic Éinrí ar na teoiricí éagsúla – roinnt acu atá áiféiseach go leor – a bhí ag scoláirí i dtaobh an neach a thug ‘Seón Eana Prior’ air (nó uirthi) féin. Tá trí dhán faoi Sheón Eana sa chnuasach seo agus, tar éis di an fhianaise a mheá, thug an t-eagarthóir ar bhreith stuama seo a leanas:

Is é an réalachas céanna atá ina orlaí trí dhán ... le Tomás Ó Glíósáin, áit a míníonn sé go neamhbhalbh gur fear ba ea Seón Eana, a bhí ag gabháil timpeall i mbréag-riocht mná. (lch 223)

Tá sé le tuiscint ó dhán Uí Ghliosáin nár chuir an trasfheisteachas olc ar mhuintir Luimnigh i lár an 18ú céad:

Tugaid na mná de ghrá le taitneamh dá sheoid.
 Tugaid don bhábgeal sáirfhir taisce 'gus stór.
 Tugaid gach dáimh, gach ardfhlaith, ainnir is ógh
 urraim is fáilte is páirt do Eana is do Sheón. (lch 242)

Tá an tuairisc fhileata seo ag teacht go hiomlán le cuntas a scríobh Dorothea Herbert, iníon ministir ó Charraig na Siúire, ar fhear trasinscneach eile a thug 'Miss Gore' air féin fiche éigin bliain níos déanaí:

About this time a Young Person appeared here dressd in Mens Cloaths who gave out that he was a Woman ... When dressd in Male Attire he appeared like a Woman—but in Womens Cloaths lookd Coarse and Masculine—He told such piteous Tales and sang such Melancholy Songs, that he quite soften'd all the Ladies hearts, so that they were always bestowing some charitable donations on him but he would Never take Money—Nice Cloaths he delighted in, and was soon equip'd from head to foot (*Retrospections of Dorothea Herbert 1770-1806* (Dublin, 1988) lgh 59-60).

Is cruthúnas iad an dá shliocht thuas go bhfuil an ceart ag Úna Nic Éinrí: ní foláir don staraí na foinsí go léir a tháinig anuas ón 18ú céad a cheadú más mian leis tuiscint chruinn a fháil ar shochar chasta na haoise sin.

Is cabhair mhór chuige sin an cnuasach ilghnéitheach seo agus tá *dix-huitièmistes* na hÉireann curtha faoi chomaoin ag an eagarthóir.

Vincent Morley

Liam Mac Peaircín, *An eala ar a bhfuaid: Cúirt an Mheán Oíche i Lámha na Scríobh-aithe*. Coiscéim, Baile Átha Cliath, 360lgh. Luach 15 euro.

Ní iomadúlacht go dtí leabhair agus ailt ar *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche* (CMO): féach go bhfuil 147 mír sa leabharliosta i leabhar seo Liam Mhic Pheaircín. Fiafrófar, mar sin, cén úréachtaint, cén léas nua ar shaothar Merriman atá le fáil ann? Séard atá ann ná ceithre leagan lámhscríbhinne dhe curtha in eagar go cruinn cáiréiseach, maraon le haistriúchán Dennis Wolfe air. Míníonn Mac Peaircín cad a thug air na ceithre lámhscríbhinní áirithe sin a roghnú. An ghné is mó is suim leis ná na línte breise a chuir na scríobhaithe le CMO; ní truailliú ná locht ar an saothar na hagusíní sin, dar leis, ach fás nádúrtha cruthaitheach. Mar sin do thraidisiún na n-amhrán, adeir sé, agus ráiteas Tríona Ní Shíocháin á lua aige:

Chítear dom go bhfuil dlúthnasc idir an chumadóireacht bhéil agus an seachadadh béil – agus gur fearr seachadadh na n-amhrán a thuiscint mar phróiseas cruthaitheach go bhfuil baint dlúth ag an athchruthú agus leis an athchumadh leis.

An chéad lámhscríbhinn aige ba é Dómhnaí Mac Cormaic a scríobh í: 'Roghnaíodh an leagan seo le cur in eagar toisc gur scríobhadh é sa bhliain 1796 agus toisc gurb é an chóip is luaithe dá bhfuil ar fáil a bhfeictear línte breise ann'. An dara lámhscríbhinn aige ba é fear Thiobraid Árann, Tomás Ó Iceadha, a ghráf í. 'Socraíodh an téacs seo a chur in eagar anseo toisc gur leagan fada den dán atá ann agus go raibh sé ar an bhfód chomh luath leis an mbliain 1822'.

Díol suime leagan John Shannon aige, mar gur leagan foghraíochta é, agus éachtaint dá réir ar chanúint na tíre arbh as don scríobhaí, Gort Bhotha Fearna i bparóiste Eidhní, Co. an Chláir. Is léir go bhfuil gnéithe de chaint na nDéise le sonrú ann: an défhoghar/ai/, is é sin fuaim 'eye' an Bhéarla, atá sna línte seo:

Naki na gilte a gime a thlea in aice na gcoillte i gcoim an tsléibhe
Gan varrig gan vile le sialse an lea gan mhairg gan mhoill le soillse an lae.

Deir Mac Peaircín: 'Leagan neamhghnáthach é seo dár bhreac an scríobhaí John Shannon idir na blianta 1817-18. Ní leagan iomlán de CMO atá ann, ach is leagan tábhachtach foghraíochta, le 716 líne. Fianaise is ea an leagan seo go raibh an dán á aithris ó bhéal, agus á bhreacadh síos de lámh, sa chás áirithe seo'.

Leagan neamhghnáthach eile is ea an ceathrú lámhscríbhinn sa leabhar. Seamus Mac Seaghan Ó Súilleabháin a bhreac sa bhliain 1847. 'Beartaíodh an chóip sin den dán a chur in eagar toisc gur leagan an-difriúil atá ann, agus leagan an-ghairid agus iomlán leis'.

Is maith ann é aistriúchán Dennis Woulfe, cé gur leamh liom é. Is mó duine ná tuigfeadh gach siolla den leagan Gaeilge agus a chuirfeadh fáilte roimh aistriúchán. Deir Andrew Carpenter gur sa bhliain 1789 a scríobh Woulfe an t-aistriúchán, ach deir Gregory A. Schirmer gur 'sometime in the early decades of the nineteenth century' a deineadh an beart. Pé ar bith scéal é, bhí fáil air i roinnt lámhscríbhinní, agus níl amhras ná gur chuir sé le cáil Merriman. Ar ndóigh, tá flúirse aistriúchán ar CMO sa lá atá inniu ann, agus go leor díobh luaite sa leabhar seo. Ní thagaim le tuairim Carpenter faoi dhéantús Woulfe:

As an Irish eighteenth-century poem, the translation reflects remarkably well the anarchic force of its original. Like many others, Woulfe was determined to allow those who did not read or speak Irish the chance to hear and enjoy poetry written in that language.

Ní aithním an 'anarchic force' i leagan Woulfe den sliocht seo as lámhscríbhinn Uí Iceadha, mar shampla:

Féach mo chom, nach leabhar mo chnámha,
Níl mé lom, crom ná stágach,
Ag so toll is cosa is colann nach nár dhom
Agus togha an ghiorta chum fireannaigh a shásamh.

Seo insint Woulfe:

My slender waist and graceful parts
No bent no bare no stain imparts.
My members all the laurel claim
With beauties still I will not name.

Bíodh sin mar atá, ba é sin an t-aon aistriúchán ar COM ar an bhfód le fada an lá, tábhacht dá réir ag baint leis, agus ba mhaith ab fhiú é a fhoilsiú.

Comaoin eile a chuir Liam Mac Peaircín orainn ná liosta lámhscríbhinní a bhfaightear cóip de COM iontu a chur ar fáil, 117 ar fad. Tharlódh tuilleadh a bheith ann, adeir sé: 'cuid acu neamhchláraithe, cuid acu nach bhfaca solas an lae le fada, agus cuid eile a

d'imigh ar bóiléagar uaim'. Thart ar 75 scríobhaí éagsúil a bhí ina mbun. 'Tá gach contae i gCúige Mumhan san áireamh, maraon le Baile Átha Cliath, an Iarmhí, agus Loch Garman i gCúige Laighean, agus Gaillimh agus Maigh Eo san Iarthar'. Ní gan dua a tiomsaíodh na sonraí sin go léir.

Is mó scoláire luaite ag údar an leabhair seo: Alan Titley, Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail agus Pádraig Ó Macháin orthu. Déarfainn gur gheal leis mar fhocal scoir ráiteas Dheirdre Nic Mhathúna agus í ag cur síos ar aiste thábhachtach Úna Nic Éinrí ar CMO:

Ní bheidh glacadh ag gach léitheoir leis na léamha ar fad a chuirtear chun cinn ann ach is léiriú gléineach iad ar na féidearthachtaí a bhaineann le hiniúchadh de shaghasanna éagsúla a dhéanamh ar shaothar, fiú an saothar canónta féin. Tá sé ag dul do dhán mórthaibhseach Bhriain Merriman go leanfaí den phlé sin agus go deimhin is cuí go spreagfadh sé cur agus cúiteamh i gcónaí.

Donnchadh Ó Duibhir

Matthew Potter, *Amazing Lace: A History of the Limerick Lace Industry*, Limerick City and County Council, Limerick, no date but 2014. 154pp. Price €20.

Limerick lace is to an extent a misnomer as it is not a totally handmade product but rather a form of embroidery by hand on machine-made net, a technique which developed after the invention of the latter in 1808. Limerick lace can be divided into two categories, tambour and needlerun. The former is made by stretching a net over a circular frame and drawing threads through it with a hook and derives its name from the tambourine-like shape of the frame. The latter as its name indicates is made by using a needle to embroider on a net background.

The Limerick lace industry was established in 1829 when Charles Walker, an English businessman established a factory in the city. In the following decades, several other factories were established and it remained a factory-produced product for the next forty years. It was also made in Cannock's and Todd's department stores. In 1850, lace making was introduced to the Good Shepherd Convent on Clare Street Limerick, with which it became particularly associated, but it was also made in the Presentation Convent in Sexton Street and the Mercy Convent at Mount Saint Vincent, on O'Connell Avenue. From there it gradually spread to other convents in the south of Ireland, notably in Youghal, Kinsale, Cahirciveen, and Kenmare.

In the 1860s, competition from machine-made lace from Nottingham led to the decline in demand for the Limerick product and the factories were closed. In the 1880s, it was revived through the efforts of Florence Vere O'Brien. She employed former factory workers who worked in their homes and whose training she organised with the establishment of a lace-school in O'Connell Street which also had workrooms and was used as depots where the lace was sold. Another enterprise was established in 1904 by Maude Kearney, the Thomond Lace Industry, named from its location Thomondgate, which survived until the 1950s. However, from the end of the first world war the demand for lace was in decline and this trend intensified after WW2. From the 1950s it survived only in the Good Shepherd convent and while always on a small scale there it came to be synonymous with that institution where it continued to be made until 1990. Limerick lace is still made as a hobby and pastime by some individual lace makers and lace classes are conducted in the city.

This volume was produced by Limerick Museum and Archives to document the history of the enterprise in the city. It covers the subject comprehensively with a very readable text interspersed with a variety of interesting, attractive and rare images. There is an initial chapter looking at the origin and history of lace in general, followed by an outline of its origins and development in the city in the early and mid-nineteenth century. The revival of the industry in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries is discussed and the story since 1914 is then documented. There are separate chapters on the working conditions of the women who produced it and this is set in the wider context of the city's social history. A final chapter discusses the changing market and clientele for the product throughout its history. Both newspapers, documentary sources and oral history are employed to recover the story of this important aspect of the city's past.

Mary Kelly

Thomas J. Morrissey, *The Ireland of Edward Cahill SJ 1868-1941: A Secular or a Christian State?* Messenger Publications, Dublin, 2016. ISBN 978 1 910248 31 7. 208pp. Price €19.99.

This is another important scholarly work from the prolific pen of the indefatigable Fr Thomas [Todd] Morrissey, well known to Limerick people from his years as headmaster of Crescent College Comprehensive school, and author of, if my sums are correct, fifteen books, all of them historical and often focussing on individuals be they Jesuits, Labour leaders or in the case of his *magnum opus* a bishop; his definitive study of Edward Thomas O'Dwyer. In this case, he rescues from oblivion, or at least neglect, a Co. Limerick-born Jesuit who was a widely-known figure, both respected and disliked in equal measure, in Ireland during the 1920s and 30s in particular.

Edward Cahill was born in the townland of Callow in the parish of Cappagh in 1868, the son of Patrick Cahill and his wife Lucy. His mother, a Culhane, had been married first to Denis O'Dea, a relatively well-off farmer with whom she had four children. After his death, she had married Patrick Cahill, the labourer on the farm, which must have raised more than a few eyebrows given the general contempt which such farming families demonstrated towards their servants at that time and especially when there was any prospect of intermarriage between them. This second marriage produced four more children, Edward being the eldest. The author suggests that both sets of siblings had a good relationship with each other but the fact that all the O'Dea children left the farm as soon as they finished school and some later considered claiming inheritance rights may indicate a slightly less benign situation.

Having indicated an interest in becoming a priest, Edward was sent as a boarder to the Jesuit-run Mungret College in 1883 at the age of fifteen. At that time Mungret College operated partly as a seminary for the Limerick diocese and it was as a potential priest for the diocese that Edward enrolled there. In 1887 he was sent by the bishop to continue his studies for the priesthood at Maynooth but after three years there, he decided that he wanted to become a Jesuit rather than a diocesan priest and entered their noviciate. The much longer and more rigorous Jesuit training delayed his ordination to the priesthood which finally occurred in 1897 when he was aged twenty-nine.

For the first twelve years of his career as a priest he was stationed in his old school at Mungret. He taught in the Apostolic school there, which prepared students for the priesthood to serve in dioceses abroad and whose education was subsidised by those bishops. He became director of this school eventually and ultimately Rector of the entire

Mungret college. He was transferred from there in 1917 largely due, it would appear, to his political activities. A strong nationalist and advocate of the Irish language, he had become an active supporter of the Irish volunteers and set up a boys' cadet corps in the school.

While teaching sociology to Jesuit theological students in Milltown Park in the 1920s he felt the lack of a specifically Christian and particularly Catholic approach to the subject. Following a regime of widespread reading of the literature and under the influence in particular of the writings of Pope Leo XIII, notably in his encyclical *Rerum novarum*, which had aimed to define the position of the Catholic Church with regard to modern social thinking, Cahill developed his ideas, initially in a series of articles in the influential periodical the *Irish Monthly* and finally in a major monograph *The Framework of a Christian State* published in 1932.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s he became increasingly involved in national life in Ireland especially through his writings in both history and sociology which were popular and influential. His essential argument was that the newly independent Irish state should move away from the secular/liberal model that operated under British rule and establish a state distinguished by Christian values and based on Catholic social principles. He was the founder of the influential grouping, *An Ríoghacht*, which supported his ideas and his writings on the development of the new Ireland along those lines. This led to his attempt to influence the drafting of the Irish constitution in 1937. He was on friendly terms with de Valera whom he felt shared many of his views and the latter did indeed ask Fr Cahill for proposals regarding the draft legislation. This led to a Jesuit committee being formed and a submission was sent to de Valera by Cahill with additional ideas of his own. There is some debate among historians on the extent to which he influenced the final document but certainly it did not contain all that he had argued for.

His opposition to Liberalism, based not only on his belief that it undermined Christian values but also on its promotion of *laissez-faire* capitalism, led him to fear and attack Freemasonry which he regarded as a driving force for that ideology. His book on this subject *Freemasonry and the anti-Christian movement* was hard hitting, controversial and popular both in Ireland and abroad in Catholic circles. His opposition to the Report of a Commission of Inquiry on Banking in 1938, which he regarded as unduly conservative led to censure and censorship from his Jesuit superiors, a situation which recurred periodically throughout his career. Always in poor health he continued to write and publish, particularly attacking the movement of people from the countryside to urban areas, up until his death in 1941.

In addition to providing a well-researched and sympathetic account of Fr Cahill's life, the author expertly sets his writings and career in the context of the Ireland in which he lived and provides a balanced analysis of the issues and debates of the period. In that sense the book is a valuable addition to the literature on that era in Irish history. On the other hand, it is difficult to argue that his contribution now has any relevance other perhaps than as a strikingly vivid example of how his vision of an ideal Ireland has been so fundamentally abandoned by its people. Even those with reservations about aspects of contemporary Ireland will hardly regret that many of his ideas are no longer shared but a reading of his views on the banking industry in Ireland are certainly thought-provoking, given recent events in that sorry sector.

Liam Irwin