

Book Reviews

Breandán Ó Madagáin, *Caointe agus Seancheolta Eile: Keening and other Old Irish Musics*, Clólar-Chonnachta Indreabhán, Conamara, 2005, 156 pp and CD, ISBN 902420977 (BOG), ISBN 902420985 (Crua). Price €25.

Is ar éigin, bhéidir, go bhféadfaí aon réigiún eile sa tír a shamhlú a bheadh chun tosaigh ar Thuamhumha ó thaobh traidisiún agus Árd Chaighdeán liteartha de, idir teanga agus cultúir na Gaeilge. Síneann an traidisiún seo siar ar a laighead go Dáibhi Ó Bruadair ó Chlaonglas; go dtí an file Seaicibiteach, Seán Clárach MacDomhnail: go filí na Máighe i Luimneach; Briain Merriman, Donncha Rua Mac Conmara sa Chláir agus Liam Dall Ó h-Ifearnáin i dTiobraid Arainn. Tá an caighdeán seo beó bríomhar fós go dtí an lá atá inniu ann, ag scoláirí agus ollaimh Thuamhumhan le aitheantas náisiúnta agus idirnáisiúnta faighte acu de bhárr a gcuid scoláireachta Gaeilge de.

Sa rang is airde díobh siúd atá Breandán Ó Madagáin ó Cathair Luimnigh a bhí ina Ollamh le Gaeilge in Ollscoil na h-Éireann, Gaillimh, 1975-97 agus mar léachtóir i Roinn na Gaeilge sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath 1966-1975. Is ball é de Acadamh Ríoga na h-Éireann agus bhí sé mar Cathaoirleach 1995-2005 ar Bhórd Scoil an Léinn Cheiltigh in Institiúid Ard-Léinn, Bhaile Átha Cliath. Tá sé aitheanta go h-idirnáisiúnta mar údar iomráiteach ar gach gné de chultúir agus teanga na Gaeilge de. Glactár leis gurb é a shaothar ábhalmhór, 'An Ghaeilge i Luimneach 1700-1900,' an fhoinsé is údarásai ar stair na Gaeilge i Luimneach thar an tréimhse corruithe úd.

Tá an saol Fódhla uile faoi oll-chomaoin mhóir aige arís de bhárr a leabhair fóna, 'Caointe agus Seancheolta Eile: Keening and other Old Irish Musics.' Tá suim mhór aige le blianta fada anuas ar chúrsaí caointeoireachta in Éirinn agus ar fúd an domhain. Chó maith leis sin áfach is ceoltóir agus amhránaí den scoth é, bua a úsáideann sé go praiticiúl ina ranganna ollscoile agus ina léachtaí poiblí ar fúd na tíre. Nascann sé na focail le chúid des na sean-cheolta áirithe a bhí cailte beagnách agus canann sé iad mar a deintí tráth. Tá scríofa aige le fada go bhfuil 'caoineadh na marbh ar cheann de na caibidil is ilghnéithí, is fairsinge agus is bunúsaí i leabhar na daonnachta; gnás atá níos sine ná an stair agus chomh forleithadúil le raon an chine dhaonna ar dhroim an domhain.'

Taobh amuigh des na h-Ioslamaigh agus na Giúdaigh maireann an nós seo ar fúd na h-Áise agus áiteacha eile nach iad ar nós Syria agus Iran. Tá an cúntas is sine atá againn den chaointeoireacht san Eoraip againn ón gcultúir Gréigeach; luaidh Aristotle go raibh gá idirdhealú a dhéanamh idir an gcaoineadh aonarach – 'Threnos' – agus an ceol céanna á chanadh ag cór – 'Komnos'. Tá an cineál seo caointeoireachta i ndrámá de chuid Eurípides darbh ainm 'Alkestis', a léiríodh don chéad uair riamh sa bhliain 493 roimh Chríost. Crosadh an nós caointeoireachta sna meanaoiseanna ag Comhairle na h-Eaglaise sa bhliain 1298 agus arís i 1326. Ach ina ainneoin sin mhair sé go foirleathan.

I dteannta an taisce luachmhar atá caomhnuithe annso i 'Caoinnte agus Seancheolta Eile' tagann gné eile den nós ó Ghaeltacht na h-Alban i gcuimhne dúinn, an 'cúmha'; sé sin amhrán áluinn dodhearmadta ar fad, a scríobh bean de Chlann Mhic Criomann don a driotháir – Taoiseach na clainne – a cailleadh in Eirí-Amach 1745. Ach mothúimíd an mothúcháin céanna in ár dtír fhéinigh sa dán is mó le rá sa chaointeoireacht i.e. 'Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghaire' ag Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill. Mothuimíd freisin áfach, an t-uaigneas géar céanna i bhfoclaibh 'An Mhangaire Sugaighe' – Aindrias Mac Craith, ina dhán deoraíochta, 'Slán le Máigh' á chanadh annso ag an údar mar a cainti é i dtús báire. Ach seachas an caoineadh dos na marbh, léiríonn an t-údar saghasanna caointe eile do dhaoine beo, máthair ag gol in diaidh a h-iníon a bhí ag dul i ndeoraíocht, cuiream i gcás.

Bhí nós eile den t-saghas seo a mhair síos go ficheadaí nó triochaidí na h-aoise seo chaite i

gCaisleáin Nua Thiar Contae Luimnigh, an 'American Wake' nó an 'Live Wake' a h-eagraíodh do dhaoine a bhí ar tí dul in imirce go Ameriocá. Is minic a bhí an nós seo le feiscint in Aerphort na Sionna síos go caogaidí na h-aoise seo chaite nuair a bhíodh scataí móra daoine ann ó Chontae Gaillimh agus Contae Mhuigh Eó ach go h-áirithe agus duine dá gcuid ag dul go h-Ameriocá nuair a bhí cúrsái taistil i bhfad níos costaisí agus níos baolai ná mar a bhfuilid i láthair na h-uaire agus gach aon seans na feicfhidís an duine ionúnach arís.

Ach ní caointe amháin atá sa leabhair seo; tá seancheolta eile ar nós marbhnaí: Amhráin Oibre, Amhráin Ghrá agus Foinn Ghaolmhara Amhráin Oibre agus Amhráin Bheannuithe agus iad go léir canta ag an údar dúinn ar an CD. Is taisce ró-luachmhar ansa an leabhar áluinn seo atá scríofa as Gaeilge agus as Béarla. Ní leabharlann Gaelach Éireannach do dtí é.

Thomond - or the North Munster area - can hold its own with any other in Ireland in its contribution to Gaelic scholarship and culture ranging back to the 17th century with Dáithí Ó Bruadair of Claonglas, the Jacobite poet Seán Clárach Mac Domhnaill, the Croom Poets, Briain Merriman and Donnacha Rua Mac Conmara of Clare together with Liam Dall Ó h-Ifearnáin of Tipperary. That level of scholarship is well sustained by the present pantheon of Gaelic scholars and academics from the Thomond region, all of whom are acknowledged nationally and beyond.

Foremost amongst these is Breandán Ó Madagáin of Limerick city, Professor of Irish in the National University of Ireland, Galway, from 1975 to 1997 and noted authority on all aspects of Gaelic culture. He is a member of the Royal Irish Academy and a former Chairman, 1995 to 2005, of the Board of Celtic Studies in the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. What many consider to be his magnum opus, 'An Ghaeilge i Luimneach, 1700-1900', is regarded as the definitive commentary on the fortunes of the Irish language in Limerick City and County over those two centuries. Scholars and the Gaelic world generally are placed even further in his debt by his latest major study of another of his interest areas, keening and other ancient Irish music forms, 'Caointe agus Seancheolta Eile'.

A long-time student of the National College of Music, Dublin, he has included with this work a CD of some forty keens, love songs, work songs etc, some of which he has rescued from oblivion by marrying the words with their original music. Some of these come from the Limerick and Clare areas and as is his wont with this topic, he sings the tunes in their original form, thereby leaving a priceless heritage for scholars now and in the future. This method of instruction must have been of great value to his students as it was a delight to those of us who heard him in his public lectures throughout the country.

The study of keening in Ireland and abroad was a specialist area of his professional interest. The Winter School of Cumann Merriman at Ballyvaughan, Co. Clare in January 1978 had as its central topic 'Gnéithe den Chaointeoireacht', or 'Aspects of Keening'. As editor of its published proceedings, Breandán Ó Madagáin stated, inter alia, in the preface that 'Keening is older than history and ranged over the entire human race'; that 'mourning the dead is a basic part of humanity' and that 'much research on the topic is essential.' 'Caointe agus Seancheolta Eile' is testimony to his own vital work in this field.

The custom was extensive throughout the world as it still is today amongst the Jewish and Mohammedan peoples and the natives of Syria and Iran. In Europe the oldest forms of keening were to be found in Greece. Aristotle tells us that a distinction must be made between the lone keener, 'Threnos' and the dramatic antiphonal form - 'Kommos', the best example of which is to be found in 'Alceste', a play by Euripides, first performed in 493 B.C., which illustrates that the keen is an ancient common thread of all humanity and especially so in the Gaelic tradition.

In addition to all its aspects in Ireland saved for us in this book and CD one is mindful also of the exquisitely poignant forms of this genre in the 'cumha' of our Scottish kinsfolk, most

notably perhaps the hauntingly beautiful 'Cumha Mhic Criomain', 'Mac Crimmon's Lament', written by a sister of the clan chief when he died in the 1745 uprising. However in 'Caointe agus Seancheolta Eile' the author captures the equal intensity of Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill in the most famous example of Irish keening in her lament for her murdered husband, 'Caoine Airt Ó Laoghaire' and the poignant loneliness in the lines of 'Slán Cois Máighe', heard here in its original melody written by Aindrias Mac Craith, 'An Mangaire Sógach' while in exile in Caherconlish from his beloved Croom.

Also noted here are the keens for people emigrating; viz a mother for her daughter going into exile. This music was heard at 'live wakes' or 'American wakes', as they were known, a common custom down to the 1920's and heard in other forms in the 1950's when someone emigrating from Shannon Airport would be accompanied by their grieving relatives who believed they might never see their loved-ones again. This was a feature which, thankfully, was ended largely by the onset of the era of cheap travel worldwide. The 'Seancheolta Eile' of the book's title are amply covered here, viz Eligies, Ossianic Lays and Syllabic Hymns, Work Songs, Religious Songs, Political Songs, all of them sung by the author and thereby restoring them for all who treasure such knowledge.

All in all this book is a treasure of Breandáin Ó Madagáin's unique beneficence to Irish and international scholarship. No serious Irish library should be without this work.

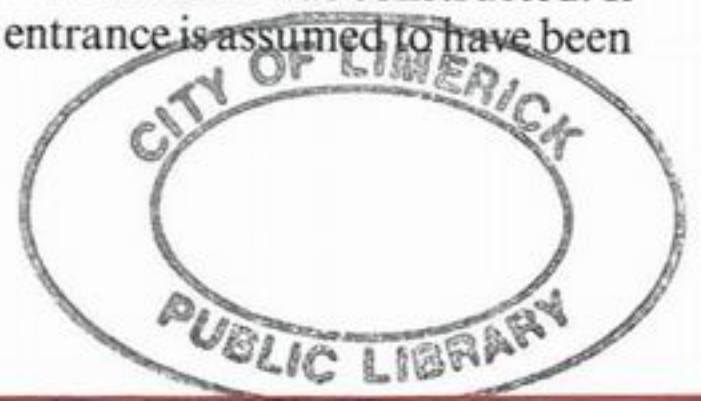
Proinnsias de Priondargást, M.A.

Frank Coyne and Tracy Collins, **Excavation of a Post-Medieval Settlement at Rough Point, Killybegs, County Donegal**, Aegis Archaeology Reports 2, Limerick, 2004, 67 pp, 8 figs. 12 plates. ISBN 0-9541765-1-0. Price €12.

With this, the second in their report series, the locally based Aegis Archaeology is once again to be congratulated on a speedy turn around from excavation to published report. The present volume describes what is interpreted as an early 17th century plantation settlement excavated in advance of an extension to the harbour facilities at Killybegs. Because of this maritime connection there is a preface by Marine Minister Pat the Cope Gallagher, while the secretary of the Irish Post-Medieval Archaeology Group, Audrey Horning provides a foreword.

The body of the text consists of six chapters, the first of which is, unsurprisingly, titled Introduction. This is broken down into several subsections. The first describes the location of the site, a small peninsula projecting into Killybegs Harbour, gives the background to the excavation and sets out the general interpretation of what was uncovered. There are then sections on the difficulties in identifying post-medieval settlement, the historical background to the plantation and the archaeological context of the find. There are two significant illustrations in this chapter, a sketch reproduction of 'Raven's Map' of Killybegs dating c 1629, and an overall plan of the site.

Chapter 2 contains the meat of the report. After a short introduction there is a description of the five structures which were uncovered. Structures 1 & 2 were both rectangular two-roomed stone-walled buildings, with an outshot fireplace in one room and a hearth in the other. Each had a door in the centre of the long wall, while Structure 1 seemed to have had an opposed doorway that was blocked up. In Structure 1 there was a clear internal stone dividing wall with central internal doorway, while Structure 2 is assumed to have had a wooden partition. Structure 3 was less well preserved than the first two with only the south wall surviving to any great extent; it is therefore not clear where the entrance to the building was and if it had a fireplace. Of the five this was the only one to have rounded corners. Structure 4 was incomplete, lacking one wall that was assumed to have been removed when Structure 2 was constructed. It had an internal fireplace within the remaining short wall. The entrance is assumed to have been



in one of the long walls, where it stops short of the later Structure 2. Structure 5 was rectangular with a door in the centre of one long wall. This structure lacked a fireplace but did have a drain leading to the outside, so it is interpreted as a byre. A few minor features, a tethering stone, a boundary wall and cultivation ridges are also described. The section concludes with a discussion and the phasing of the structures which suggests 3, 4 and 5 may be contemporary and earlier than the other two. Personally I would have liked a little more stratigraphic detail in this section, especially for the relationship between Structures 2 and 4. From the information presented I see no reason why structure 4 could not have been built against Structure 2 to give a T-shaped building. Raven's perspective map shows a number of buildings in the area around the Harbour and these all show a single gable end, except for one of the buildings on Rough Point which has two. This could arise from the T-shape.

Chapters 3 and 4 contain the synthesis and conclusions. No evidence survived for the type of roof construction, but a few fragments of pantile suggest at least one was tiled. In the absence of such evidence it is difficult to fit the buildings into the current vernacular categories. In fact the importance of the site is that there is a complex of buildings which shows that several traditions can coexist. The authors quite rightly point out that excavation of a single building on the site would have been misleading. The conclusion drawn is that the buildings may be hybrid, of Scottish planter origin adapted to local weather conditions and building materials. The settlement itself seems to have been abandoned by 1641, possibly in response to the rebellion of that year. Chapter 5 describes the finds, mostly ceramics, and Chapter 6 is the bibliography.

If I have a major gripe about this report it is the quality of reproduction of some of the plans. As such the complaint is not directed at Aegis specifically but at publishing in general. All too often nowadays the quality of drawings, plans etc. is well below that which was handed in for publication. It is as though someone in the production process, and as a digital technology incompetent I do not know who, has not fully got to grips with scanning technology. In this case many of the supposedly straight-line indication arrows on the plans have zig-zag edges and some lettering has fuzzy pixillated edges. Illustration is an art form and poor reproduction is an insult to an illustrator who may be trying to build up a portfolio of work.

In summary this report is a very welcome addition to our knowledge of an unfashionable and neglected area of archaeological research, which should help to establish 17th century archaeology on a sound footing. Aegis's Report No 1 described the first full-scale excavation of a ringwork castle so, as a series so far, it is exploring the less well-known monument types within Irish archaeology. I hope the next volume continues this trend.

Brian Hodkinson

Michael J Carroll, **The Castles of County Limerick**, Bantry Studio Publications, Bantry, 2005 pp, 244 + fold out map, ISBN 095194159-3. Pb. Price €16-95.

It is with regret that I have to state that this is a truly awful book, badly researched, badly written, badly edited and badly proof-read. Sadly it is without redeeming features. The format is a gazetteer of sites prefaced by an outline history of the county. There is a fold out map inside the back-cover locating the sites mentioned in the text. There are several colour photos and atmospheric black and white drawings, but only a single plan of a castle.

The standard of research is extremely poor and often incorrect. King John's Castle in Limerick, described as almost rectangular with five sides, is alleged to have a fourth corner tower replaced by the early 17th century bastion. One of the surprising results of the excavations in the 1990s was to demonstrate, against all expectation, that there was no such corner tower. The original square corner can actually be viewed under the Interpretative Centre. Castletroy castle is described as a four-sided building when it is a rare example of a five-sided tower. The

entry for Castleconnell contains a description of two halls; one called Desmond's which is almost complete with a vaulted basement. I assume this section should actually have gone in under Askeaton because there is no Desmond hall at Castleconnell. The exact location of Derryknockane Castle is given as unknown, but my own work has demonstrated some slight standing remains of the castle exactly where the Sites and Monuments Record for Co. Limerick presumed it to be. Garraunboy castle, which this Society visited in 2005, is described as being in total ruins in 1840, with only parts of the walls visible, yet most of it stands to full height.

Even when simply quoting other works the facts come out garbled. FitzGerald and McGregor's, *History of Limerick* is cited for Kilpeacon, where the author quotes that there is a 'fine church with a handsome tower house'. The author then goes on to state that the castle was pulled down in the early 19th century, probably by a William King who built a fine mansion nearby. In fact what FitzGerald and McGregor actually write is that the church has a handsome tower, not tower house, and Sir William King, MP for the county in 1661, is credited with building a house adjoining the castle. This burnt down about fifty years before FitzGerald and McGregor wrote their book and it was the then unnamed proprietor who pulled down the castle. This list of errors makes no claim to be exhaustive and I am certain that many readers will be able to find fault with descriptions of their own familiar and favourite castles.

The poor quality of the research is reflected in the bibliography, which dispenses with the usual convention of listing authors in alphabetical order. None of the standard castle texts by Leask, McNeill and Sweetman are listed while Donnelly, who has published several papers on Limerick tower houses, is not mentioned. The Sites and Monuments Record, the major repository of archaeological information for the country, is likewise ignored. This lack of proper background reading explains how the author does not seem to be aware of the type of castle called a hall-house, of which Tomdeely is an example. Indeed in many cases the descriptions of the castles are so poor that it is not actually possible to know what type we are dealing with.

The historical introduction is rambling and at times borders on the farcical. To take an illustrative sentence, 'Contrary to what one might think, it was not the Irish who destroyed most of the castles but the Cromwellian and Williamite forces fighting against the Anglo-Normans and the remaining Irish Clans during the period of the Desmond rebellions'. This demonstrates an ignorance of the basic chronology of the period and unfortunately it is not a single instance: 'In 1571 a group of new adventurers arrived in Cork. It is not known whether they were acting on their own initiative or if were [sic] being aided by Henry VIII [obit 1547]'.

The author has a fixation with the Templars and lists 28 sites purportedly held by them. Gwynn and Hadcock, in their monumental work *Medieval Religious Houses Ireland* list just one for the county in their main section on the Templars, and a few more with reputed Templar connections in the section on possible sites. It seems that any castle of unusual shape has to be Templar: 'Their castles were either square or round at the base rising into a hexagonal or octagonal apex or vice versa' and '... we find some unusual type [sic] of building – hexagonal, octagonal or square outside and the reverse inside – mostly round.' The result is that some tower houses built long after their suppression, such as Ballingarry, appear in the Templar list. The author also tries to convince us that there was a deliberate attempt to write the Templars out of history, which explains why these sites are not well documented. A good conspiracy theory is better than the simple explanation that there was actually nothing to document. It ignores the fact that most other sites of the period are equally poorly documented. The documentation of ownership was as important in the medieval period as it is today; landowners would not have deliberately destroyed deeds that showed they had proper title to land that had been confiscated.

It is questionable that the book had any editing. Entries start with the townland, parish and barony names, but this is not consistently done, so some castles only have just two of the three. On some occasions the Irish name and its English meaning is added though this is done

on such a haphazard basis that one concludes that it has been added when stumbled across by chance. The author is obviously unaware of the definitive work on Limerick placenames by Art Ó Maolfabhail, otherwise each entry would have the Irish name. By many of the entries there is 'unknown' or '?' which suggest the author could not be bothered to find the information. Where the townland is known then the parish and barony are readily found. Half an hour with the recently reprinted Townland Index would have filled all these blanks. The correct spelling of place-names is often a matter of debate but a good editor would have insisted on some standardisation. As examples of this inconsistency the barony of Coshlea sometimes appears as Costlea, while the entry for Garraunboy manages to contain three different spellings of Clonshire.

A further example of poor editing is the entry for Askeaton, which recounts a story of how, after the fall of Limerick Castle in 1642, a large cannon was dragged from castle to castle, each of which surrendered as soon as it arrived at the gates. A nice story that has been cut and pasted verbatim into the Kilfinny entry where it appears immediately after an account of the exact same siege containing the description 'a large cannon were [sic] brought to bombard the castle...' Then there are the castles that are in several places simultaneously, e.g. Donaman which, apparently, is in Coshma, Upper Connello, and Pubblebrien baronies.

It may now be clear from examples quoted above that the proofreading was totally inadequate. The whole book is peppered with spelling mistakes, bad grammar and typographical errors, all of which should all have been picked up and rectified. A litany of such errors can spoil a good book for the reader; here it just makes a bad book worse.

Brian Hodkinson

Des Ekin, *The Stolen Village: Baltimore and the Barbary Pirates*, The O'Brien Press, Dublin, 2006, 400 pp ISBN 0862789559, Pb. Price €14.95.

Just before dawn on Monday 20 June 1631, almost the entire village of Baltimore in west Cork, totalling one hundred and seven people, were captured in a pirate raid and taken as slaves to Algiers. Only three of them, all women, were ever freed though whether they returned to Baltimore is unclear as is so much of the story of this notorious event. While there have been a number of scholarly articles and short essays on the 'sack of Baltimore' this is the first full scale book devoted to it. It is easy to see why no one had considered a full monograph before as there simply is not enough source material available to write a conventional history of such a relatively minor and localised, if horrific and unusual, occurrence. No letters or personal testimonies survive so the author's solution is to use the recorded experiences of other Europeans who were captured and sold into slavery but managed to escape or, more usually, pay for their release. While not all these narratives relate to the early seventeenth century and one cannot be sure that such testimonies would necessarily be applicable to the Baltimore people, it does allow the author to re-create the world that they found themselves so unexpectedly and unwillingly part of.

Baltimore in 1631 was an unusual village. It consisted almost entirely of English Protestants but unlike other such settlements of the period in Ireland, it had not been a formal plantation nor had the area been confiscated from its former owners. The O'Driscolls, Gaelic chiefs of the area, had leased the harbour area to a group of Protestant dissenters, from the English West Country who established a fishery there. While they may have employed local Irish servants, this was essentially an English settlement of people with a Calvinist approach to life both in doctrine, liturgy and work ethic. The enterprise seems to have been successful due partly it was claimed to their collaboration with pirates who regularly sailed in the area.

Piracy both for the capture of ships, cargo and slaves was widespread at this time and there were frequent complaints at the failure of the authorities, both in Dublin and London to deal

effectively with the problem. Most raids however occurred at sea and it was the unfortunate crew and passengers who were usually enslaved. In contrast the apparently carefully planned raid on Baltimore and the removal of almost the entire settlement made it an unprecedented event and provoked outrage in England with the king, Charles I, being particularly incensed.

The leader of the attack was, strangely, a Dutchman named Morat Rais who had been captured as a slave, converted to Islam and eventually became one of the leaders of the Algerian pirates. According to the official account of the raid, he captured a Dungarvan fisherman, John Hackett, and forced him to guide the raiders into the harbour at Baltimore. The attack was brilliantly executed: the raiders came ashore before dawn and using a combination of violence, terror and surprise rounded up their captives and quickly sailed away before help could be summoned or pursuit organised. Details were quickly compiled on those captured: 50 children, 34 women and 23 men. The author uses this data base and a large degree of imagination to build up a picture of the victims. Whether the insights of modern psychology employed are legitimate is debatable. For example it is argued that the captives would have developed Stockholm syndrome, the identification with their captors which some contemporary hostages are said to have experienced. The discussion of the possible fate of the captives in Algiers is based partly on the limited direct sources which survive and on the accounts of life in the city and the treatment of slaves, written by diplomats, traders and freed captives.

There were a wide range of possibilities ranging from perhaps the worst fate of being a galley slave to domestic or sexual service and for a lucky few a new and much better life. The latter might arise from being taught a trade and eventually adopted by the owner, gaining wealth, power and eventually freedom or through marriage. There is the interesting case of an Irish woman, Mrs Shaw who became the fourth wife of Muley Ismael, the emperor of Morocco while a Cornish boy, Thomas Pellow became a noted general there. All we know about the Baltimore people is that only three of them were freed, all women who were ransomed. One of them, Joanne Broadbrook, had been pregnant at the time of the raid, in which two of her children were also taken, but there is no record of their fate. The most interesting, not to say intriguing question is why the others did not take advantage of the agreement signed in 1646 between England and Algiers which allowed all slaves to leave. The author suggests that many of them had found life in the sun preferable to their dreary existence in West Cork. This may indeed be true in some cases but one wonders if they had even survived or whether their experiences left them unable to face their families or adjust to a normal life again.

One of the intriguing questions that has always surrounded this incident is whether it was a random, chance attack or something more sinister. The latter possibility has usually been linked to the fact that it was an English settlement and the strange decision to attack such a small and poor village rather than a more potentially rewarding port like Kinsale. The author admits to being initially sceptical about such conspiracy theories but his research has led him to what appears to be acceptance of such an explanation, indeed he provides an original twist of his own to one of the more likely possibilities.

He links three central players in the saga Sir Fineen O'Driscoll, the impoverished local Gaelic chieftain, Sir Walter Coppinger, a Cork born, Catholic who had made a fortune from moneylending and Sir Thomas Crooke, the leader and founder of the Baltimore settlement. Basically Coppinger had gained a legal title to Baltimore and on 20 June 1610 an agreement was made between him and the other two whereby he became the agreed owner and signed a lease of the settlement for twenty-one years to Crooke. However it later became clear that Coppinger intended to evict the settlers but not only did he fail to do that, it was decided legally that the settlers would be able to remain even after the lease had expired. Coppinger had most to gain from the destruction of the settlement, which he appears to have taken over after the raid and it is suggested that the O'Driscolls, now in exile in Spain, may have allied with him and organised the raid from a mixture of revenge and jealousy. Evidence is provided both of the friendly

contacts between the pirates and the family and of other instances elsewhere where such raids were arranged for personal revenge. It is, and will always remain, speculation to which the author has now added his argument that the actual date of the raid was highly significant.

Generally the book is well researched from a historical point of view and sets the raid in its Irish, British, European and most importantly Mediterranean contexts. Some readers may find the use of terms such as Islamist *jihad*, ethic cleansing and Stockholm syndrome uncomfortable in terms of the early seventeenth century and certainly the statement that the English civil war gave birth to modern democracy is to out Whig even the most Whiggish interpretation of history but they no doubt reflect the journalistic, rather than academic, background of the author. He is also a novelist which is shown in his ability to tell a good story in an engaging and entertaining manner. Whether this work should be categorised as history, an imaginative reconstruction or perhaps as a non-fiction novel – or indeed a combination of all three – it is without question a wonderful read and is highly recommended.

Mary Ryan

Frank Coyne, **Islands in the Clouds, An Upland Archaeological Study on Mount Brandon and the Paps, County Kerry**. Kerry County Council with Aegis Archaeology Ltd, Kerry, 2006, 125 pp, 77 figs, ISBN 095176529. Not for Resale.

This publication is the product of an archaeological study commissioned by the Arts, Culture and Heritage Department of Kerry County Council, which arose from the Kerry County Council Heritage Plan. It was carried out in 2004 and co-funded by the Heritage Council. Two areas known to have a significant number of archaeological features, The Paps near Rathmore and Mount Brandon on the Dingle peninsula were chosen for detailed study.

All previously known archaeological sites were recorded, drawn and photographed in a standard format, giving the RMP number, townland, OS sheet number, OD level, NGR and classification of each site. A similar format was used for all new sites identified during the fieldwork. A very valuable and useful full gazetteer of all sites is printed as an appendix. One of the many valuable results of the survey was to highlight how many new archaeological sites are still awaiting discovery even in any area like this which has already been studied and is visited so much by hill walkers. Given the difficulty of dating so many of the sites by field survey, it proved impossible to test the perceived notion that the archaeological landscape of Mount Brandon is primarily early medieval while that of The Paps is prehistoric.

During the survey a rescue excavation was conducted on a possible megalithic structure situated in 'The City', an enigmatic site on the northern side of The Paps in the townland of Gortnagane which is usually designated as a cashel based on its structure as a circular stone enclosure. The excavation failed to establish with any certainty whether the two surviving large stones within the enclosure are the remains of a megalithic tomb but there is an interesting discussion on the site itself where doubt is cast on the cashel interpretation and it is tentatively suggested that it may have been a hilltop enclosure and date to at least the Iron Age and possibly much earlier.

In addition to the main text by Frank Coyne, there are valuable contributions by other scholars. Michael Connolly points out that all of the Bronze Age hoards found in Kerry were deposited in areas which can be seen from either Mount Brandon or The Paps which is hardly a coincidence, given the extensive mountainous areas of the county. The earlier hoards are located in The Paps area which may suggest that they became sacred mountains first to be replaced in the later Bronze Age by Mount Brandon whose subsequent Christianisation suggests it remained an important place for ritual activity as arguably it does to the present day.

Tom Condit emphasises that upland regions are important not just for prehistoric or medieval

archaeology but especially for the preservation of nineteenth-century fields, enclosures, sheds, yards and houses which have largely been destroyed or radically altered elsewhere in the landscape. Eoin Grogan contributes an interesting discussion on the place of routeways in later prehistory. Using four case studies from Tipperary, Cork and Kerry he argues that there is a much circumstantial evidence that long distance travel was an integral feature of the period and that it was more complex than simply choosing the most direct or quickest route to get to a particular destination.

In the course of the study eighteen previously unrecorded archaeological sites were discovered on The Paps while nine new sites were recorded on Mount Brandon. It is stressed that this is regarded as an initial exercise and that further research will be undertaken in the area to increase our knowledge both of this particular region but also of upland landscapes generally in Ireland. Valuable suggestions for future research strategies are listed in the conclusion, written jointly by Frank Coyne and Tracy Collins. The work is very attractively produced with a clear, reader-friendly format supplemented by excellent photographs, plans, maps and diagrams. Reading this book one feels an immediate desire to visit the areas described and anyone doing so will benefit immensely from bringing it with them, even though its A4 format will not fit easily into pocket or backpack. However making either area even more popular will increase the existing dangers and threats to this unique but fragile environment, not just from mindless vandalism but simply from the sheer numbers of tourists. The warning, in the foreword, that measures need to be put in place that will allow this precious heritage to be managed, used and most of all protected for future generations, needs to be heeded and acted upon.

John Kelly

Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, Dundalk, 2005, xv + 499 pp, ISBN 185500185. Price €30.

In 1978 most of the surviving texts of early Irish or 'brehon' law were brought together in print for the first time by the late Professor Daniel A Binchy who had devoted the greater part of his long life to the task. However not alone was no translation provided of the difficult language in which they are written but the format of a diplomatic edition involved minimal interference (as he would have seen it) by the editor who chose not even to capitalize proper names. The only minor concession to ordinary mortals was the provision of useful footnotes and helpful cross references. Amazingly no table of contents was provided and it is primarily to remedy this omission that this Companion has been produced.

The introduction provides a brief but very valuable short description of the main manuscripts, their probable date and what they contain, particularly distinguishing between the legal and other materials. Chapter 2 gives a comprehensive and detailed list of what the 1978 work actually contains and short but valuable descriptions of each text. Chapter 3 discusses the different ways in which the legal texts were transmitted, abbreviated and rewritten. The addition of glosses, commentaries and cover texts of the Old, Middle and Early Modern Irish periods is also explained. The next chapter is devoted to an important source for the contents of a number of texts *O'Davoren's Glossary*, many of whom are discussed in the following chapter which focuses on those which have titles. These are listed in alphabetical order and in each case the evidence for the title and all related questions and issues are discussed.

Chapter 6 deals with the small number of texts which cannot be assigned authoritatively to any of the named texts. Glosses and commentaries were additions and interpolations made to the legal texts after the Old Irish period in which they were first committed to writing. This secondary legal writing forms the bulk of our surviving material from the later periods and is the subject of chapter 7 where their relationship to the basic text, dating and nature is

examined. The value of the glosses and commentaries as indicators of how the law changed in later periods is emphasized. The problems, limitations and successes in attempting to identify authorship, dating and place of composition of the texts is explored in chapter 9. It is possible linguistically to date, at least approximately, almost all texts, only a few of the authors can be clearly identified and location is even more elusive. The form and style of the material is also briefly discussed and while there is some dispute on this question, they are basically in differing forms of either prose or verse.

The amount of early Irish legal material which has been lost is emphasised in the conclusion and the role of the antiquarian Edward Lhuyd who acquired a large number of manuscripts during a tour of Ireland in 1699-1700 is acknowledged as critical in their survival. Due to the urging of Edmund Burke these manuscripts, which had been sold, were given to Trinity College in 1786. Finally there are a number of useful, specialised appendices and a good bibliography. While a general reader could benefit from the main points raised and discussed, this work is primarily of interest to those engaged on research on these fascinating, invaluable but difficult manuscript materials. For Thomond readers the cover is of particular interest due to its attractive design based on a photograph of Cathair Mhic Neachtain (Cahermacnaghten) in the Burren, the location of a very famous late medieval law school of the O'Davoren family.

Seán Ó Riain

Elizabeth Shee Twohig, **Irish Megalithic Tombs** (2nd edition), Shire Publications Ltd., Shire Archaeology no. 63 Princes Risborough, 2004, 72pp, 11 colour & 31 b/w illustrations. ISBN 0 7478 0598 9. Price Stg. £5.99.

Ruth and Vincent Megaw, **Early Celtic Art in Britain and Ireland** (2nd edition), Shire Publications Ltd., Shire Archaeology no. 38, Princes Risborough, 2005, 80 pp, 27 colour & 87 b/w illustrations. ISBN 0 747806136. Price Stg. £5.99.

Shire publications specialise in providing short, reasonably priced, books on a range of subjects: their archaeology series is particularly impressive and useful. To date there has only been one in the series devoted specifically to Ireland though in three others it is included with Britain. The most recent of these three, is the excellent study by William O'Brien of Bronze Age copper mining in Britain and Ireland, while the older ones on early and later Celtic art in Britain and Ireland also give some attention to this country. Both the Early Celtic art volume and the specifically Irish volume on megalithic tombs have now been revised and reprinted.

Irish Megalithic Tombs was first published in 1990 and provided a clear, authoritative and accessible guide to the four categories or types to which the majority of the tombs are assigned by scholars. The same basic format is adhered to in the revised edition and the existence of over 200 tombs which cannot be placed in any of the main categories is again emphasised as is the fact that other forms of burial, caves, pits were also used in the Neolithic period in Ireland. In the fifteen years since the first edition, the number of identified tombs has risen from around 1,450 to over 1,600 with the majority of newly discovered examples being in the Wedge category, which has risen from 470 to 543. There are now 412 Court tombs where previously there were 394, Portal tombs have increased from 174 to 180 examples while six new passage tombs have been added to the original figure of 230. Wedge tombs have also had the most radical reinterpretation both in classification and date. The original division of this category [initially termed gallery graves] into Northern and Southern types, later changed to D-shaped and Round cairn terminology, now has been effectively abandoned and the latter type of cairn increasingly regarded as resulting from later secondary activity. Their dating has also been revised: while possibly originating in the late Neolithic, their Bronze Age construction is now firmly established. Their possible association with Beaker pottery and barbed and tanged

arrowheads – in turn linked to the probable arrival of new people who may have introduced this burial rite – has also been strengthened by excavation and dating of burials in recent years and this is now reflected in the revised text.

The dangers of relying too heavily on earlier excavations and radiocarbon dates are emphasised. Many of the latter were derived from charcoal but there is no way of knowing when the original timber was actually used as opposed to its being cut down. Recent developments in techniques for dating cremated bone offer more accurate and exciting prospects in this regard.

In dealing with the individual tomb types the author has replaced the heading 'morphology' with 'structure and design' possibly reflecting the ever increasing semi-literacy of students. The U-shaped setting of 34 timber posts found surrounding the court tomb at Shanballyedmond, Co Tipperary is now suggested, on the basis of radiocarbon dates, to be a Middle Bronze Age re-use of the site. Among other changes Kernanstown portal tomb in Co Carlow (more familiar to most people still, under its older name of Browne's Hill) has, like many of us, apparently gained weight over the years, going from 'about 100 tonnes' in 1990 to 'nearly 150 tonnes' in 2004 while its presumed status as having the biggest stone used in an Irish tomb has firmed up slightly from 'alleged to be' to 'believed to be'. Oengus, one of the legendary occupants of Newgrange has become Aonghus and as a result presumably now rests more contentedly. Colour plates have replaced some of the black and white ones of the earlier edition: the only colour plate in the earlier one, the very attractive colour photograph of Poul nabrone has been, for some reason, replaced by the far drearier Brenanstown tomb from Co Dublin.

Early Celtic art in Britain and Ireland was first published twenty years ago and was reprinted in 1990 and again, with some revisions, in 1994. This new edition has been revised and updated with the addition of some colour illustrations. The authors provide a short initial discussion of the Celts which is of interest in the light of recent attempts to deny the very existence of any such people. While acknowledging that it was not a contemporary term, nor should it be thought of in terms of a single unitary culture called Celtic, they sensibly regard it as valid in both linguistic and archaeological contexts. They define early Celtic art as that surviving from the Iron Age, from the fourth century BC until, in the case of Britain, the arrival of the Romans. The art is effectively metalwork as very few objects in other materials can be authoritatively assigned to this period. The art is divided into two categories. There is, firstly, decoration on weapons, horse and chariot fittings, and a variety of personal ornaments. Secondly, art was produced in connection with religious belief and ritual, of which representations of the head and animals seemed to have played a central role. Much of this work is highly skilled which must have been produced by specialist craftsmen but whether these were itinerant or local specialists is not clear.

The amount of space devoted to Ireland in this edition, as in the earlier one, is rather limited. In the chapter on the earliest art only the 'Clonmacnoise' torc, actually found in Knock, Co Roscommon, the Lisnacrogher, Co Antrim scabbards and the horn-mouth disc from Loughnashade, Co Armagh are mentioned. The longest chapter of the book is devoted entirely to what is termed Britain but in fact is England. Ireland merits some further mention in the chapter curiously titled 'Celtic art in the far west' presumably as it also deals with Wales. While an attempt is made to integrate discussion on the art from all regions, readers interested in specifically Irish material will inevitably feel a bit short-changed. Revealingly only two specific works relating to Ireland, both by Barry Raftery on the Iron Age, are mentioned in the bibliography.

Both reprints are very well illustrated, the standard of the photography and reproduction is excellent and the maps and plans are clear and informative. The opportunity for revision in the re-printing has been well availed of by the authors to bring their works up to date and incorporate the results of recent research both by themselves and other scholars. Undergraduate

students will find them very useful in providing clear, reliable information as a basis for further study while the general reader, interested in gaining an insight into current research on these topics, should find them equally valuable.

Liam Irwin

J.S. Crowley, R.J.N. Donnelly, Denis Linehan, Patrick O'Flanagan & Michael Murphy (eds), *Atlas of Cork City*, Cork University Press, Cork, 2005, xiii + 465 pp. Price €59.

The word atlas conjures up a picture of a work largely consisting of maps and while it does indeed contain a great variety of these this book is much wider in its aims and objectives. It offers a comprehensive range of perspectives and analyses of the city and its development over time. Sixty people, academics, journalists, radio producers, administrators, poets, priest, nuns, even a singer/songwriter, have provided contributions.

The atlas is divided into five main sections, beginning with a chapter, itself subdivided into nine sub-sections, which examines the city in its environmental setting and heritage. Robert Devoy points out that the area was covered by ice as recently as 20,000 years ago which was merely the last stage of a series of glaciations which are still little understood. Flooding, one of the few, if perennial, negative aspects of life in the city is given its own section where the complex causes are explained, illustrated and documented by Kieran Hickey. Geographers and archaeologists, not surprisingly, dominate this chapter and provide excellent summaries from their particular disciplines but one historian manages to find space to present to a wider, if one suspects less than universally receptive audience, his painstaking scholarship. Pádraig Ó Riain summarises his work on St Finbarr, already published in a major monograph, showing how the cult of this sixth-century bishop from Co. Down, came to be popular in Cork and was subsequently used to great effect in twelfth-century ecclesiastical and secular politics. His magisterial debunking of the 'Life of St Finbarr' as a source for the early history of Christianity in Cork and its corollary that the man never had any associations with or ever lived in the area will, regrettably, probably continue to be largely ignored and those who should know better will continue to perpetuate the myth and legend. Indeed at least one other contributor to this volume seems to be not entirely convinced. Ó Riain's conclusion that Finbarr was no minor figure but deserves to be ranked as Ireland's fourth most important early saint, after Patrick, Brigit and Colum Cille and that the adoption of his cult in Cork reflected the high ecclesiastical status of the city will, one feels, be regarded as poor compensation for the loss of a full-blooded, red-jerseyed, Corkonian Finbarr.

The second chapter, with six sections, is entitled 'transformation' and basically documents the development of the city from a relatively minor medieval port town into a major Atlantic port city in what Dr Patrick O'Flanagan terms the 'Golden Eighteenth Century'. Religion features strongly here with a eulogy for Nano Nagle counterbalanced by a more critical section on 'Protestant Culture' and interestingly separate discussions of the Quakers and the Huguenots. The latter indeed seem to occupy a disproportionate place in the consciousness of contemporary Cork with signposts prominently indicating directions to 'the Huguenot Quarter'. Chapter three abandons any thematic sub-title, simply taking the chronological division of nineteenth and twentieth centuries and containing a variety of topics from Murphy's brewery, Royal Cork Institution, St Finbarr's [even St Fin Barre's] cathedral and UCC to the Famine, Jews and Suburbs. By far the best contribution here is the superb analysis by Maura Cronin of 'Place, Class and Politics'.

In chapter four, Culture and the City, the musical and literary tradition is discussed. There is generous space allocated to sport, all codes are noted and deservedly road bowling is highlighted though whether the statement that in its rules it is similar to golf would meet with universal approval is a moot point. Ironically the Lobby bar which is lauded for its role in promoting

traditional music has since closed. The final chapter deals with contemporary changes in the city. Again there is a great variety of short articles dealing with the economy, religion and social change. Millie Glennon's study of house names in the city is particularly fascinating with an increasingly percentage named after the Virgin Mary: in 1941, 1 in every 50 houses names was Marian in character while in 2000, they represented 1 of every 15 houses. She attributes this almost entirely to the influence of Bishop Lucey in the 1950s who very strongly promoted the Marian year devotion of 1954. The book ends with an article on planning and development by Nicholas Mansergh, a planning official. There is no conclusion and one is left with a feeling of an unduly abrupt termination.

The standard of production of the book is extremely high with excellent reproduction of photographs, maps, plans and drawings. Careful use is made of historic maps and other visual materials including old photographs. Of the contemporary photographs included, that entitled 'Hands of Hope' taken outside the gates of the North Cathedral in 2001 when the relics of St Therese of Lisieux were brought there, is particularly noteworthy: the photographer is Denis Minihaue of the *Irish Examiner*. Over 200 new maps have been created and there is also excellent use of satellite images. There is a good index, brief notes on the contributors and useful, though somewhat limited, endnotes. The publication of this atlas was linked to the designation of Cork as European Capital of Culture in 2005 and the apparently generous sponsorship received towards its publication is acknowledged. This has undoubtedly kept the cost down and while not exactly cheap this book is well worth its cover price both for the range and variety of the material it contains, the generally high quality of the scholarship and the useful and eclectic information it contains on this fascinating city.

John Lynch

