

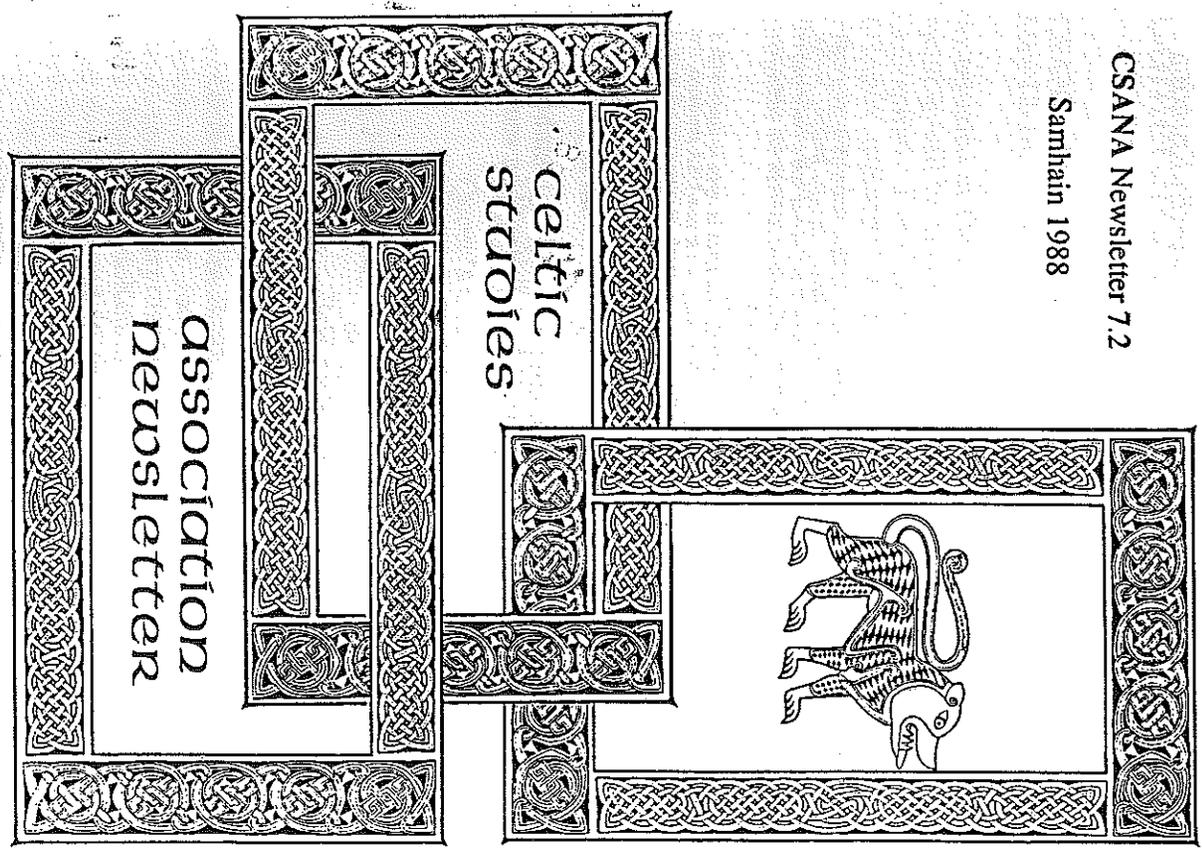
Nov-81

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CSANA Newsletter 7.2

Samhain 1988



## The Celtic Studies Association of North America

### Officers:

P. K. Ford, President  
A. T. E. Matonis, Vice-President  
Edgar Slotkin, Secretary-Treasurer

### Members at Large:

Marilyn Gerriets  
Jean Rittmueller

Incorporated as a non-profit organization, the Celtic Studies Association of North America has 134 members drawn from the United States, Canada, Ireland, Wales, England, Europe and Japan. CSANA produces a bi-annual newsletter and a bibliography of Celtic Studies. The 1983-85 bibliography may be ordered through the Secretary-Treasurer. The next volume is expected to appear in 1989.

Membership in the Celtic Studies Association of North America is open to those with a serious interest in Celtic Studies. Dues are \$15.00 a year, or for non-USA residents, the equivalent of \$15 US dollars payable to 'CSANA' in a check or international money order. Dues include the bibliography and a bi-annual newsletter, which appears in the Spring and the Fall.

This mailing reflects pre-November 1, 1988 membership. 1988-89 DUES are payable May 1, and should be sent to

Professor Edgar Slotkin  
University of Cincinnati  
Department of English  
248-249 McMicken Hall  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221-0069

*Members Only:* For a list of current CSANA members, send \$1.00 (U.S.) to the Treasurer, Edgar Slotkin.

## Conferences

CSANA Annual Meeting: Cambridge, Massachusetts,  
May 12-14, 1989

As reported in the last newsletter, the next annual CSANA meeting will be held in conjunction with the Harvard Celtic Colloquium. The CSANA meetings will be held Saturday. CSANA members will be receiving further information regarding registration and CSANA activities under separate mailing at a later date. Dr. Catherine McKenna will act as program chair for CSANA and will also chair the seminar.

### Call for Papers

Papers on topics relevant to Celtic Studies are invited. Abstracts of not more than 250 words should be sent to Dr. McKenna at the following address:

Professor Catherine A. McKenna  
Department of English  
Queen's College  
Flushing, New York 11357-0904

DEADLINE: January 31, 1989

The CSANA seminar topic will be *Gereint vab Erbin*. The text can be found in J. Gwenogvryn Evans, ed. *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch: Y Chwedlau a'r Rhamantau*, 2nd ed. University of Wales Press, 1973. The standard translation appears in Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, eds. *The Mabinogion*. Everyman's Library. New York: Dutton, 1963. Professor McKenna would like to hear beforehand from those interested in participating in the seminar. To allow for coherent organization, please get in touch with Professor McKenna by January 31, 1989 if you would like to give a brief presentation, pose questions for

consideration, or simply call attention to a particular passage. Address same as above.

Graduate students who wish to submit papers to the Harvard Celtic Colloquium should send an abstract to Ms. Margot Granfors, Harvard University, Department of Celtic Languages and Literatures, 61 Kirkland Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

We have been advised by Ms. Granfors that hotel accommodations may be difficult in Cambridge in May. Those who anticipate attending the meetings should book well in advance. A list of recommended hotels follows.

Harvard Motor House	single \$88.00
110 Mt. Auburn Street	double \$98.00
Cambridge, MA 02138	+ 9.7% tax
(617) 846-5200	

Quality Inn	single \$80.00
1651 Massachusetts Ave.	double \$90.00
Cambridge, MA 02138	+ 9.7% tax
(800) 321-2828 or (617) 491-1000	

Ramada Inn	(not within walking distance)
1234 Soldier's Field Road	single \$70.00
Boston, MA 02135	double \$70.00
(617) 254-1234	+ 9.7% tax

Sheraton Commander	single \$139
16 Garden Street	double \$149
Cambridge, MA 02138	+ 9.7% tax
(800) 325-3535 or (617) 547-4800	

Reservations should be made directly with the motels as soon as possible and before April 11, 1989. Except at the Harvard Motor House, it is essential that you mention the Harvard Celtic Conference in order to obtain the quoted rates.

## Books of Interest

Rachel Bromwich and D. Simon Evans, eds. *Culhwch ac Olwen*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988.

A. O. H. Jarman. *Aneirin: The Gododdin*. Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1988.

These two books (i.e., *Culhwch ac Olwen* and *Aneirin: The Gododdin*) are available from Ford & Bailie, P. O. Box 2156, Van Nuys, CA 91404-2156, at \$21.95 and \$22.50 respectively. Quantities limited for immediate shipment. Also available from Ford & Bailie: Barry Cunliffe, *The Celtic World*, published by Oxford University press, 1979 and originally selling for \$39.95, this hardback is available in limited quantities at \$14.95 plus \$2.00 postage.

Liam Mac Con Iomaire. *Ireland of the Proverb*. Grand Rapids, MI: Masters Press, 1988. [This book, advertised as a "cross section of Irish proverbs," is arranged under thirteen headings (e.g., "Youth & Age," "Death," "Types of People," "Triads"), supplies the proverbs in Irish followed by an English translation. Accompanying text and photographs. \$14.95 paperback. Available from: Irish Books and Media, 2115 Summit Ave., Box 5026, St. Paul, MN 55105-1096.

### Review

Daithi Ó hÓgain. *Fionn mac Cumhaill: Images of the Gaelic Hero*. Gill and Macmillan, 1988.

For too long Celticists have had the most meagre secondary sources on the most prolific and popular literature of Gaelic, the Fenian Cycle with its hero Fionn mac Cumhaill. This situation seems to be on the mend as evidenced by the recent publication of J. F. Nagy's *The Wisdom of the Outlaw* (University of California, 1985), a structuralist analysis of the *Boyhood Deeds of Finn*; and now the present book under review, an examination of lore about

Fionn from the earliest times to the present. Ó hÓgain discusses this vast body of material within a broad chronological framework: chapters 1 and 2 deal with pre-historic conceptions of Fionn; chapter 3 with the Old Irish material; chapters 4-7 with the Middle and early Modern Irish material; chapters 8 and 9 with the oral traditions collected over the past two centuries; and chapter 10 with recent uses (and abuses) of the Fionn legends outside the Gaelic tradition.

Undoubtedly, the author is at his best in chapters 4-7 where he ranges freely among the numerous Fenian stories (with their variety of literary expression), which were current in medieval Ireland, and synthesizes them under such headings as Fionn's biography, character, company and adventures. At the same time, he relates this material to the larger context of Irish literature and history. Perhaps even more valuable are his chapters on the oral tradition which provide the best survey of this material to date. The opening chapters, however, are less likely to persuade. In these Ó hÓgain theorizes that Fionn was a Celtic god of knowledge originalized (hence the typical pose of sucking his thumb), to whom was subsequently added in an Irish context other attributes, notably his fight with an Otherworld figure and his role as leader of a war-band of *fianna*. Later again, at the beginning of the period of written literature, this enlarged conception of Fionn attracted to itself a definite series of adventures.

Such theorizing is difficult to sustain even in the best of circumstances, when reasonably good literary and linguistic evidence is available; it becomes hazardous when that evidence is slim and ambiguous, as is the case in the present instance. For example, in support of his theory that the Fionn story became inextricably mixed with legends about the Boyne (OIr *Boand*), Ó hÓgain (pages 16 and 68) links the two through the etymology of *Boand* as *Bo-Find* and, never mentioning Dillon's alternative etymology *Boand* < \**guou-uinda*, 'cow-catcher' (see M. Dillon, *Celts and Aryans* [Simla, 1975], page 122 and n. 4). Also somewhat uncritical is his dating of texts on which he builds his theory about the gradual expansion of the Fionn

legend; for example, he labels (p. 37) an Old Irish poem on Saint Patrick (edited by J. Carney, *Medieval Irish Lyrics*) as "sixth-century," although linguistically it contains nothing which would be out of keeping with an eighth-century date.

But most questionable is the lack of carefully regulated comparisons in identifying one story or motif as the source of another. For example, Ó hÓgain argues (pp. 8-10) that the well-known Lugh versus Balar story from the Mythological Cycle gave rise to a similar confrontation between Fionn and an Otherworld figure, as reflected in the Fionn versus Culdubh story, and the Fionn versus Aillen story (recounted in the twelfth-century *Agallamh na Seniorach*), and that the latter in turn was the basis of a twelfth-century *Dindshenchas* story of how Culdubh was killed by Gae Glas (p. 54). Yet all this supposition is based on the shaky foundations of tenuous and strained similarities between the Lugh/Balar and Fionn/Aillen stories. Such bold and potentially important claims warrant more careful argumentation – with full accounting for differences as well as similarities – than they receive here. It is to be hoped that Dr. Ó hÓgain will make a fuller case elsewhere. In the meantime he deserves great credit for having undertaken and generally succeeded in such an ambitious survey of Fenian literature.

Padraig Ó Néill  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill



## From European Colleagues

A group from Tiree wishes to call our attention to a recent proposal forwarded by U. K. Nirex Ltd. (Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive), to dispose of nuclear waste on Tiree. Should Tiree be chosen as the waste site, it would have profound consequences on the three main industries of the island (crofting, fishing, tourism), and would mean an end to Tiree's way of life. A group called KNOT (Keep Nirex off Tiree) has been formed to fight this proposal. They ask that CSANA's Irish members appeal to their M.P.s and/or other elected representatives. KNOT also welcomes any suggestions, media or financial support in this venture. Contact Dr. J. Holliday at Baugh House, Baugh, Tiree (phone: 087-92-323).

## Celtic Studies Bibliography

As a double check against items eluding us, I again ask members to send me notices of works you feel should not be passed over (appearing 1985-1988), including your own work, and especially book-length studies, which you might think I already have on file, and essays published in journals where our bibliographers would not ordinarily look, e.g., non-Celtic or non-widely circulated publications. Attached to this newsletter is a form on which you can record the data. If more than one page is needed, xerox the form. Please DO NOT forward references to any work you have not actually laid your hands on or seen if only in passing. If you have seen a work advertised, but not the work itself, I would be grateful for the reference marked as "as advertised by or in . . . ." Send entries to A. T. E. Matonis, 7312 Emlen St., Philadelphia PA 19119.

## Summer Courses in Celtic

The 1989 Aberystwyth Celtic Summer School will be held 14 July - 28 July, and will concentrate on the *Mabinogi* and Dafydd ap Gwilym. Professors Caerwyn Williams, Geraint Gruffydd, Brynley Roberts, Rees Davies and Dr. R. Bromwich will lecture on the texts. There will be two lectures each morning; the afternoons will be given to close-reading of the texts covered in the lectures. Academic credit will require written work. Fees, inclusive of board, residence, tuition: £500. Application forms are available from Dr. Roy Stephens, University College of Wales, 9 Marine Terrace, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, UK. Closing date: March 1, 1989. Instruction will be in English.

## From the Editor

1. **Book Reviews.** I have twice invited members through the newsletter to contribute book reviews for future newsletters because it seemed to me that (a) it is one of the nicer services the newsletter can provide; (b) the nature of the newsletter allows potential reviewers freedom of scope and focus, and also puts fewer formal constraints on the reviewer. To date response has been disappointing. Now, we are each of us overcommitted and reluctant to take on additional chores. However, we are all readers - inveterate, addicted, chronic readers of everything from the text on cereal boxes on the breakfast table to advertising billboards and unsolicited catalogues. But what most of us like most is to read catalogues of books, and footnotes and bibliographies, and even book reviews. So, once again, I ask members to consider doing something for the newsletter. Please contact me if you have read anything beyond the newspaper post-mortems of the recent election

that you are enthusiastic about or critical of or absolutely bored by.

**2. Work in Progress.** As a possible annual feature the newsletter would like to publish an account of work in progress. This, too, can be of immense help to others working in the same or an ancillary area. I am therefore urging members to send me a statement of their work in progress.

**3. Desiderata.** A frequent recommendation is that CSANA develop a list of desiderata: e.g., needed translations, editions (re-editions or new editions) of Celtic texts, teaching tools, cross-cultural studies, historical surveys, critical anthologies, etc. Members aware of any gap or absence in existing and available (or not so readily available) publications are urged to contribute by making a note of what is needed or what would be useful.

All communications relating to items 1-3 above should be sent to: A. T. E. Matonis, 7312 Emlen Street, Philadelphia, PA 19119.



**Reminder:** Dues are imminent and should be sent to Edgar Slotkin, address appears inside front cover. Given the cost of producing the bibliography, the receipt of the next volume (1985-1988) as part of your membership will depend on yearly renewal of your membership.



### CSANA Bibliography 1985-88

Name of Correspondent:

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AUTHOR:

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PUBLICATION INFO:

CATEGORY:

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Category refers to the section number in the 1983-85 bibliography. Thus, I, II, VI.A, etc.