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newsletter

CSANA

Celtic Studies Association of North America

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Incorporated as a non-profit organization, the Celtic Studies Association of North America has members in the United States, Canada, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Europe, Australia and Japan. CSANA produces a semi-annual newsletter and bibliographies of Celtic Studies. The published bibliographies (1983-87 and 1985-87) may be ordered from the Secretary- Treasurer, Prof. Elissa R. Henken, Dept. of English, Park Hall, University of Georgia Athens, GA 30602, USA (e-mail: enhenken@arches.uga.edu). The new electronic CSANA bibliography is available at: <http://www.humnct.ucla.edu/humnct/celtic/csanabib.html> or visit our Web site at: www.cis.upenn.edu/~csana. The electronic bibliography is available at cost in printed form to members who request it.

The privileges of membership in CSANA include the newsletter twice a year, access to the bibliography and the electronic discussion group CSANA-I (contact Prof. Joe Eska at eska@vtailx.cc.vt.edu to join), invitations to the annual meeting, for which the registration fees are nil or very low, the right to purchase the CSANA mailing list at cost, and invaluable sense of fellowship with Celticists throughout North America and around the world.

Membership in CSANA is open to anyone with a serious interest in Celtic Studies. Dues are payable at Bealtaine (May 1). New and renewing members should send cheques, payable to CSANA, to Elissa R. Henken at the address above. Cheques in US dollars must be drawn on a US bank or an affiliate of a US bank (international money orders cannot be accepted). Dues can also be paid in British sterling by sending a cheque or Eurocheque to Elissa R. Henken for £10.50 (Associate Member: Student) or £17.50 (Sustaining Member: Regular).

Associate Member (student)	\$15.00
Sustaining Member (regular)	\$25.00
Contributor	\$50.00
Patron	\$100.00
Benefactor	\$250.00

Contributors, Patrons and Benefactors support the creation of the CSANA bibliography, help to defray expenses of the annual meeting, and allow CSANA to develop new projects. Please join at the highest level you can.

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Annual Meeting 2000

The 2000 Annual Meeting of CSANA took place on 23-26 March in St. Louis. The meeting was organized by Prof. Toby Griffen of Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, and included eighteen papers on a variety of topics ranging from traditional Gaelic culture, linguistics, Irish history and traditions, Brythonic tradition, and modern Celticity. The annual seminar on J.F. Campbell was led by Edgar Slotkin, and was preceded by a lunch at Dressel's Pub and a talk (with poetry reading) by Jon Dressel, Director Emeritus, Wales Study Centre, Central University of Iowa and Trinity College Carmarthen. The weather was wonderfully cooperative, giving the northerners present a taste of early summer. Our thanks and appreciation go to Toby Griffen and his team for an enjoyable and stimulating meeting.

At the Business Meeting, Tomás Ó Cathasaigh was elected Vice-President and Charles MacQuarrie was elected Member-at-Large. Antone Minard graciously stood for Member-at-Large to replace Tomás Ó Cathasaigh in the interim and was unanimously voted in. Karen Burgess, although having completed her term as Member-at-Large, continues as Assistant Bibliographer. A vote of thanks was given to Karen for her excellent work on the bibliography.

Maria Tymoczko turned the reins of presidency over to Dorothy Bray, who will assume the task as soon as she has completed this newsletter. Our great thanks and appreciation go to Maria for all her hard work as President and her dedication to CSANA.

Joseph Nagy reported on the CSANA Yearbook, saying that publication of the first issue was due in September. Members will be able to purchase a copy at

the special members' price of \$25; an order form is included in this newsletter with the dues notice.

Next Meeting

The Annual Meeting in 2001 will be held 29 March-1 April at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA, and hosted by Joseph Eska. A Call for Papers will be issued in the fall. The seminar topic will be a Gaulish inscription, the text of which will be made available by Joe Eska on the Internet. For further information, contact Joe Eska at eska@vtaix.cc.vt.edu. Our meeting in 2002 will, hopefully, be at Notre Dame (to be confirmed); in 2003, at Berkeley; and in 2004, in Toronto.

University of California Celtic Studies Conference

The twenty-second annual University of California Celtic Studies Conference, held at UCLA March 16-19, offered the kind of rich and varied intellectual fare that moves a Celticist to set aside for the time being any doubts about how to theorize and justify "Celtic studies," and to simply sit back and *laisser les bons temps rouler*. The full range of the disciplines traditional to Celtic studies was represented, as for example, linguistics by Peter McQuillan's discussion of the subjunctive in Irish; mythology and religion by Paula Powers Coe's sweeping and gorgeously illustrated slide lecture on equine sacrifice, and Leslie Jones' witty and persuasive discussion of Lindow Man's fox-fur armband; oral tradition by Gearóid Denvir's vivid evocation of the personality and work of the late Connemara poet Learáí Phádraic Learáí Ó Finnchada; history by John Koch's characteristically engrossing and provocative presentation of a new chronology and construction of the career of Patrick, and by Máire Herbert's intricate and lucid

exposition of the development of a concept of territorially-based kingship in Ireland and Scotland. Unconstrained by any single discipline, Katharine Simms moved with graceful erudition among history, literature and law as she explored the multivalent association of poet and judge in medieval Ireland. There was opportunity as well to hear what contemporary interpretive approaches have to offer in the reading of Celtic language texts, notably in Jeremy Lowe's dazzling examination of "Contagious Violence and the Spectacle of Death in the *Táin*." In addition to the insular Celtic-speaking countries, there papers about Welsh Patagonia, Gaelic Cape Breton Island, and even Faulkner's South; in addition to the medieval period, there was Pat Ford's paper, reaching back to Homeric Greece, and others—Dylan Philips on Welsh language politics and Clodagh Harvey on contemporary Irish storytelling—firmly planted in the twentieth century. This is only a sampling of the conference program, and many fine papers have gone unmentioned.

Like a Russian doll, the conference hid another conference within itself; Friday was devoted to a conference on "The Gaelic Literary Imagination in the 17th and 18th Centuries," hosted by UCLA's Center for 17th-and-18th-Century Studies, and held at the elegant William Andrews Clark Memorial Library under coffered ceilings decorated with scenes from the work of John Dryden. Conferees enjoyed a very pleasant lunch *al fresco* under the commodious canopies of the trees on the library's spacious grounds, and a reception at the end of the day's papers.

UCLA Celtic Studies' own *briugu*, Joseph Nagy, looked after the conference-goers with characteristic energy, imagination and hospitality. In addition to the conference banquet, we were treated to a bountiful supper reception on the opening evening and

to a popcorn-and-movie night on Friday. Balancing the surprising pleasures of *Darby O'Gill and the Little People*, a *sean nós* concert generously offered by Lillis Ó Laoire on Saturday afternoon satisfied the more refined aspect of our aesthetic sensibilities. Kudos all around to Nagy and to his indefatigable student helpers for arranging all this, and perfect weather to boot!

Catherine McKenna,
CUNY

Dues

Dues for 2000 are now due. Your address label states the date until which your dues are paid (e.g. 99, 00, 01). Members may pay a three-year subscription if they so choose (May 2000- April 2003). A form is included in this newsletter, as well as a ballot on the dues structure, which we must vote on, according to the by-laws. Members may also order the CSANA Yearbook 1 (2000) at the same time (and on the same cheque). Please send your dues and ballots to the Secretary-Treasurer, Prof. Elissa Henken, Dept. of English, University of Georgia, Park Hall, Athens, GA 30602.

Bibliography

In order to help the task of the bibliographers, if anyone has any recently published item or knows of recently published items which should be included, please send them to Karen Burgess at kburgess@ucla.edu.

Next Newsletter

Items for the Samhain 2000 newsletter should be sent to Prof. Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, Dept of Celtic Languages and Literatures, Harvard University, Barker Center, 12 Quincy Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02138, USA.

Reviews

Jacqueline Borsje. *From Chaos to Enemy: Encounters with Monsters in Early Irish Texts. An Investigation Related to the Process of Christianization and the Concept of Evil.* Instrumenta Patristica, vol. 29. Turnhout: Brepols Publ., 1996, x + 430 pp., 2 appendices, 5 indices, gloss., bibl., summary in Dutch. ISBN 2-503-50509-0.

Medieval Ireland has left us no narratives of encounters with monsters with quite the same marquee value of Beowulf v. Grendel. There are plenty of monsters around, of course: Fergus mac Leti has a bad time with one and St. Columba gets a bunch of them under control. It is, perhaps, their very lack of centrality in the tradition, though, that allows Jacqueline Borsje to mine so much interesting cultural information from these Irish encounters. In *From Chaos to Enemy*, she concentrates on three major texts from the Old Irish and early Middle Irish periods: "Echtra Fergusa maic Leite," ("The Adventures of Fergus mac Leite"); "Vita Sancti Columbae," ("Life of Saint Columba"); and "Epistil Ísu," ("The Letter of Jesus"). Borsje chose these texts from a list of approximately forty Irish and Latin texts from the period 600-1200 C.E. as representative samples to investigate her hypothesis that Christianity "introduced a new idea and image of good and evil into the Irish culture" (p.11).

There are, though, several steps involved in getting to the hypothesis. The first step is definitional. "Monsters" for these purposes are animal-like, dangerous, and have a supernatural or extraordinary aspect. "Evil" is "harm or that which causes harm," and is tentatively divided into "non-moral" (e.g. storms, accidents) and "moral" (a purposeful attack on another). The texts in which the monsters occur are then seen to fall into three genres: heroic, hagiographical, and

cosmological/eschatological, from which the exemplary texts are chosen. Through close analysis of the chose texts, Borsje then characterizes the monsters according to whether they seem to have been drawn from known classical sources (Isidore of Seville, Pliny the Elder, etc.) Or not, and according to the apparent motivation of the evil they do or threaten to do.

Fortunately, unlike coach airplane travel, in this case getting there actually is at least half the fun. Borsje's close reading, source analysis, and comparative study of her chosen texts provide an extremely rich context for the thread of her argument. In fact, each section of this book could stand on its own as a small monograph on each of the chosen texts. Borsje's ultimate judgement, stated very simply, is that the kind of natural or unmotivated monster that Fergus mac Leti contends with is depicted in the "Vitae Columbae" as prompted not by the "natural" chaos of the environment, but by the evil agency of the Devil, and in the "Epistil Ísu" as a manifestation of sinful human impulse and action. To put it that baldly, however, does violence to the careful and nuanced discussion by which Borsje reaches her conclusions and the mass of evidence she presents.

Although perhaps unfashionable these days, the density and thoroughness of this book not only help to support its argument, but give it value independent of that argument. The bibliography is very full and indices of titles, names of monsters, names of persons, names of places, and authors not only make reference simple, but serve as a general "finding list" as well. Likewise, the glossary serves as a quick reference for a collection of terms with the subject of monsters and evil. The two appendices consist of the full list of "monster" texts included in Borsje's survey and an essay on the dating of the "Epistil

Ísu." Both appendices are useful and carefully done, though the discussion of the "Epistil Ísu" displays the only real weakness in the book: a reliance on relationships among written sources even in circumstances involving popular legendary material (Like the "Sunday Letter" legend) which is very likely to have had oral circulation as well. I also think that a bit more skepticism about annals entries—even for the purposes of establishing knowledge of texts or events—would have been helpful. These are small reservations, however, about an excellent and potentially significant work of scholarship which represents a real contribution to reconstructing the mental world of medieval Irish men of letters.

Daniel F. Melia,
Program in Celtic Studies,
University of California, Berkeley

Davit Broun. *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. x + 228 pp., bibl., index. Woodbridge, England: The Boydell Press, 1999. \$75 US.

This book is the eighteenth volume published by The Boydell Press in their series *Studies in Celtic History*, a series that for most of its existence was under the general editorship of David Dumville. Many of the volumes display the type of scholarship practised by Dumville (indeed, some of the volumes contain sections written by Dumville himself): intense source criticism, with little or no narrative filler, of documents directly addressing ethnic identity in medieval Britain and Ireland. Davit Broun, who has succeeded Dumville as one of the three new series editors, has written a book that fits exceedingly well with its series predecessors.

The title masks what is essentially a collection of *Quellenforschungen* on two types of Scottish historical texts: Scottish versions of the medieval origin-legend of the Gaels, and lists of Scottish kings and their perceived predecessors. The medieval origin-legend of the Gaels is perhaps best known in an Irish context from the version in *Lebor Gabála*, and the earliest surviving version of the legend is found in the early ninth-century *Historia Brittonum* ("Nennius"). The origin-legend makes the Gaels descendants of the union of Gaythelos/Gaedel, a Scythian or Greek nobleman who fled to Egypt around the time Moses led the Hebrews to freedom, and Scotia, Pharaoh's daughter. The eponymous couple themselves flee to Spain, whence their descendants (in fits and starts) colonize Ireland.

Broun provides a new edition of the passages concerning this origin-legend in the history of the Scots written in Latin in the later fourteenth century (probably in the 1370s) by John of Fordun. W.F. Skene's 1871 edition of Fordun has been shown to be unreliable because of the limited number of manuscripts examined and inconsistent (perhaps even deceptive) reporting of readings in the apparatus. Broun's work on Fordun and the origin-legend ultimately derives from Broun's 1988 Edinburgh doctoral dissertation, but the bibliography is up-to-date and Broun's ideas have steadily evolved to encompass the recent scholarship of others.

Broun discerns several sources for the origin-legend as it exists in Fordun and two other late-medieval Scottish texts, the *Scalacronica* of Sir Thomas Grey of Heton (written in French between 1355 and 1363) and Andrew Wyntoun's *Original Chronicle* (written in Scots between 1408 and 1424). "Broun is most concerned with what he calls the "Éber" account, named (using a Gaelic

spelling) for Gaythelos' son Hiber, who is the first Gael to colonize Ireland. The "Éber account is credited in Fordun to *Legenda Sancti Brandani*, though no extant text dealing with St Brendan contains any part of the origin-legend of the Gaels. In contrast with the "Éber" account, Broun examines material credited in Fordun to *Legenda Sancti Comgalli* (again, no extant text connects St Comgall to the origin-legend).

The Brendan-source is mentioned by Fordun more often and more prominently than the Comgall-source. The Comgall-source is credited only with references to the Stone of Scone, which was said to have been given to "Smonbrek" (equated to or understood as "Simon Brecc"), a younger son of the king of the Gaels in Spain, to use as his throne when ruling over the Gaels in Ireland. Broun sees the Brendan-source and the Comgall-source as having been first brought together in Scotland in a text composed in Latin during the reign of Alexander II (1214-1249). Broun's conclusions in untangling how the various sources and their compilations affected the three extant Scottish texts under examination (pp. 109-32) are far too complex to be summarized here, but Broun understands the fragility of his interpretations and that future scholarship may provide further illumination.

Broun also revises the work done on Scottish king-lists by Marjorie Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (2nd edition, Edinburgh, 1980). Broun demonstrates that before the reign of William I (1165-1214), Scottish kings were content to trace their dynasty back to the ninth-century ruler Kenneth mac Alpin. In the later twelfth century, William I attached to his pedigree the list of early medieval kings of Dál Riata (pp. 146-93). This new pedigree allowed the kings of the Scots to employ the fanciful genealogical musings of Irish scholars, which then connected the Scottish kings to the origin-legend of the Gaels.

The effort made to build these connections between the Scots and the origin-legend of the Gaels begs the deeper question of Scottish ethnic identity in the High Middle Ages. Broun has surprisingly little to say on this larger issue. He is somewhat surprised at the continuing, even growing importance placed on connections with Ireland in the thirteenth century, when eastern Scotland and the Scottish court rapidly deGaelicized. The connections are far more understandable for the very end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth century, after the English king Edward I claimed Scotland, conquered it, and removed the Stone of Scone to Westminster. Ireland was where Robert Bruce sought support for his eventually successful restoration of Scottish independence and acquisition of the Scottish throne.

The connection these medieval, non-Gaelic Scots had with Gaelic Ireland appears, in a way, very modern. One might see the Scots as the first great proponents of Celticity. While Broun does not venture far in examining the larger issue of ethnic identity, his investigations into medieval Scottish uses of the origin-legend of the Gaels bring important evidence worth considering in our contemporary discussions of Celtic identity.

Michael Meckler,
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Conferences

The **Canadian Association for Irish Studies** and the **Canadian Comparative Literature Association** are sponsoring a session on "Comparative Celtic Literary and Cultural Studies" at the annual Congress for Humanities and Social Sciences to be held 25-27 May 2000 at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta. CAIS is also holding a session on "Ireland and Internationalism." For further information, contact Jerry White, c/o Dept. of Comparative Literature, Religion, and Film/Media Studies, 347 Arts Building, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E6; tel. 780-432-2988; fax: 780-492-2715; e-mail: gswwhite@gpu.srv.ualberta.ca.

Morgan T. Davies is organizing the **MLA Discussion Group on Celtic Languages and Literatures** for the 2000 MLA Convention, to be held in Washington, D.C. in late December. The session title is: "Celtic Perspectives in the New Millennium." For further information, contact Morgan T. Davies, Department of English, Colgate University, 13 Oak Drive, Hamilton, NY 13346-1398; e-mail: Mdavies@mail.colgate.edu.

The **6th Annual Conference of the North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers** will be held 22-25 June 2000 at the University of Limerick, Ireland. The theme this year is "The Information Age, Celtic Languages and the New Millennium." For further information, contact: NAACLT'2000, Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland; tel: +353 61 202783; fax: +353 61 330876; e-mail: naacLT2000@ul.ie; URL: www.csis.ul.ie/naacLT2000.

Dialect 2000: Language Links will be held 9-16 August 2000 at The Queen's University of Belfast. This conference incorporates the Sixth

International Conference on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster (in collaboration with the Forum for Research on the Languages of Scotland and Ulster) and the Second International Conference on the Languages of Ireland. The organizers are Dr. John M. Kirk (e-mail: j.m.kirk@qub.ac.uk) and Prof. Dónall Ó Baoill (e-mail: d.obaoill@qub.ac.uk); tel. +44 (0)28 9027 3815; fax: +44 (0)28 9031 4615. The postal address is: Dialect 2000: Language Links, School of English, The Queen's University of Belfast, Belfast BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland.

A conference on **Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults** will be held on 8-10 September at the University of Wales, Lampeter. For further information and the preliminary programme, contact Dr Jane Cartwright, Department of Welsh, University of Wales, Lampeter, Ceredigion SA48 7ED, Wales; e-mail: j.cartwright@lamp.ac.uk; tel.: (01570) 424754; fax: (01570) 423874.

Fred Suppe is once again organizing two sessions under the aegis of CSANA for the **International Congress of Medieval Studies**, Kalamazoo MI, for 3-6 May 2001. One session will be on the theme of "Celtic and Celticity." CSANA members are encouraged to send paper proposals (title and brief, 1 paragraph description) as well as ideas about themes for other panels to: Professor Frederick Suppe, History Department, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306; tel.: (765) 285-8783; fax: (765) 285-5612; e-mail: 00fcsuppe@bsu.edu. CSANA would like to express its great appreciation and thanks to Fred for organizing these sessions.

The next **International Congress of Celtic Studies** will take place in Aberystwyth, 24-

30 August 2003.

Call for Papers

New Directions in Celtic Studies II: Celtic Popular Culture. Organized by the Institute of Cornish Studies, University of Exeter, 3-5 November 2000, The Headland Hotel, Newquay, Cornwall. This conference will focus on the rich and varied popular expressions of Celtic peoples, past, present and future. Topics to consider include Celtic medias (especially film and television), Celtic popular musics (rap? dance? fusion?), festival, display, tourism, sport, costume, foodways, Celts on the Web, visual arts and narrative.

Topics can relate to either the Celtic territories or diasporic Celtic communities. Please send or email an abstract of about 250 words for a 20-minute paper by 15 July to:

Dr. Amy Hale, Institute of Cornish Studies, Hayne Corfe Centre, Sunningdale, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3ND, UK; tel. (01872) 263457; e-mail: A.Hale@exeter.ac.uk.

For registration details, please contact Amy Hale or Rachel Cardew at the Institute for Cornish Studies, or check the website at www.ex.ac.uk/ics/

Call for Abstracts

Abstracts from scholars working in Scots Gaelic are requested for a collection of essays with the following title: **Reading Woman in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Literature.** The collection is exploring the various manifestations of woman/women and 'the feminine' in medieval and early modern Scottish literature. Reading woman and 'the feminine' can encompass analysis of both the creative, cultural agency of women writers and of the symbolic or textual representation of 'the feminine Other' in non-female authored

texts; the texts considered may be both canonical and non-canonical. Abstracts or questions about potential papers are invited as soon as possible to:

Sarah M. Dunnigan, Dept. of English Literature, University of Edinburgh, David Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh Eh8 9JX, Scotland, UK; e-mail: SMDunnigan@compuserve.com; tel.: +0141 357-4800; fax: +0141 339-6479. Or to Evelyn S. Newlyn, (summer address) 91 Bonnybirar Road, South Portland, ME 04106, USA; e-mail: enewlyn@brockport.edu; tel.: (summer) 207-799-7982.

The Celtic Studies of North America Yearbook 1 (2000)

CSANA members may now place their orders for the first issue of *The Celtic Studies Association of North America Yearbook 1 (2000)*, to be published by Four Courts Press of Dublin toward the end of 2000. This collection of studies is titled *The Individual in Celtic Literatures* and focuses on critical questions having to do with authorial identity and intention, the depiction of the individual, and scholarly or popular presentations of notable individuals, featured in medieval Irish and Welsh literary works. *CSANAY 1* is approximately one hundred and fifty pages in length and costs US \$25 (Irish £17.95) or its equivalent to **CSANA members only**. (The price for non-members is US \$50/Irish £35.) In addition to an Introduction by the editor of the *Yearbook* (Joseph Falaky Nagy), this first issue includes the following articles: "Individual and Society in *Owein/Yvain* and *Gereint/Erec*," by Helen Fulton; "The Salvation of the Individual and the Salvation of Society in *Siaburcharpat Con Culaind*," by Elva Johnston; "Apotheosis and

Evanescence: The Fortunes of Saint Brigit in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, " by Catherine McKenna; and "Where Were the Four Branches of the Mabinogi Written?" by Brynley Roberts.

CSANA members may send their cheques (made out to CSANA) to Elissa Henken, Dept. of English, Park Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602, USA. A reminder about this opportunity to obtain a copy of *CSANAY 2000* for half-price (and without postage cost to the purchaser) will be sent to CSANA members in Fall 2000.

The Editor and editorial board of *CSANAY* (which will appear annually) invite readers of the CSANA Newsletter to submit manuscripts of articles pertaining to the topic of *Identifying the Celtic or Post-Celticity*, which is the working title for *CSANAY 2* (to appear in 2001). For more information, please contact Joseph Nagy, English, UCLA, Box 90095-1530, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1530, USA (jfnagy@humnet.ucla.edu). Submissions (two hard copies, double-spaced, and diskette version) should conform to the style used by *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*. Each submission will be read by two specialists, whose evaluations will guide the Editor in deciding whether or not to accept it for publication.

A Final Word from your intrepid Editor

I would like to express my great and sincere gratitude to Elissa Henken, Maria Tymoczko, Catherine McKenna, Joseph Nagy, and Robin Chapman Stacey who have given me enormous help in putting the newsletter together. I'd also like to wish all the best to Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, who will be taking over as newsletter editor, and I look forward to working with him over the next two years.

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