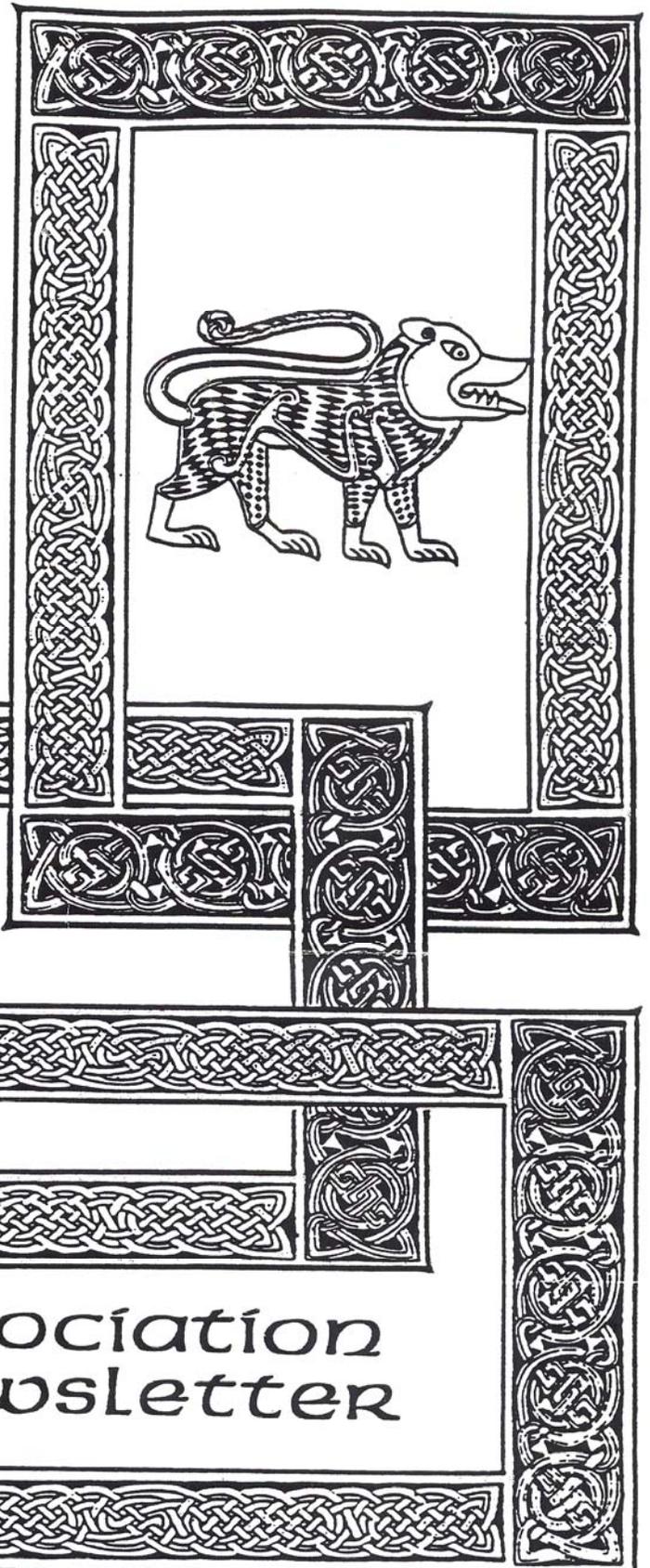


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studies

association
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 (Email: ehenken@uga.edu)..

The electronic CSANA bibliography is available at: <http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/celtic/csanabib.html> or visit our Web site at: <http://www.csub.edu/~cmacquarrie/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@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 an 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. New and renewing members should send checks in any of the three accepted currencies to Elissa R. Henken at the above address. Checks in US dollars, payable to CSANA, must be drawn on a US bank or an affiliate of a US bank (international money orders cannot be accepted). Cheques in British Sterling must be made payable to Elissa R. Henken. Checks in Canadian dollars must be made payable to Diana Luft. For details on **PayPal** payments see page 19 below

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Book Reviews

The Mabinogi: Legends and Landscape of Wales.

Translated by John K. Bollard. Photography by Anthony Griffiths.
(Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2006. Pp. 128. £19.99 cloth)

This is a stunning book. It is beautifully and generously laid out, with careful attention to every detail of fonts and margins and, most strikingly, presentation of its photographs. All that is clear before one even absorbs its contents--John K. Bollard's translation of *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* interwoven with Anthony Griffiths' photographs taken of and from sites mentioned in the text. Each *Branch* begins with a manuscript page and ends with a photographed sunset and, in between, is interspersed with shots of both general landscape and specific forts, streams, and stones. This is the first time such a combination has been published, and, after saying thank you, I rather impatiently wish to know when Bollard and Griffiths will apply their skills to other medieval Welsh texts.

This is not, however, just a pretty book. It is of satisfyingly academic value: trustworthy translations, useful notes, helpful map and genealogical chart, thoughtful comments on the *Mabinogi*, combined index/pronunciation guide, short bibliography, and photographs which help us imagine the landscape seen by the narrator. Bollard has found just the right balance for a book that should suit many levels of readers. Bollard's translation, in

standard, modern English and following the Welsh text as closely as possible, is accurate and pleurably readable. In the Introduction, Bollard comments on this and a few of his other decisions as translator, including retention of the coordinating *a(c)* ("and") to keep the feel of an oral narrative and the use of inverted, more literary language ("said he," "said she") to indicate the slight stress of *heb ynteu/heb hitheu*. His notes, elegantly placed in the margins along the centerfold, provide information about translation (uncertainties, connotations, the meanings of proper nouns), legal terms, related texts such as the Triads, location of sites, and the occasional manuscript variation. The photographs, beautiful as they are, also represent solid research (The captions, when appropriate, give both medieval and modern place names and discuss location) and add to our understanding of the text. (My only, and unfair, complaint is that Bollard and Griffiths do not provide GPS coordinates, but perhaps they feared endangering the sites with hordes of visitors.) In the Introduction, Bollard muses on the *Mabinogi*'s nature as fantasy grounded in human truths as well as in the land of Wales, but the Afterword especially

demonstrates Bollard's careful balancing of material. Anyone who knows his work knows that he could have (and has elsewhere) said a lot more, but he selects well in restrained but clear and useful comments on the context of the *Mabinogi*--on the *cyfarwyddiaid* ("storytellers"), the culture, the genre, and the times (of the story and of the narrator); on patterns twining through the *Four Branches* of friendship, counsel, and marriage; on the mythological background of characters and events; and, naturally, on the manuscripts and significance of the title word *mabinogi*.

The Mabinogi: Legends and Landscape of Wales realizes the goal of crossover

publishing: sound scholarship presented with a light hand and aesthetically suited for any coffee table. Order it for the classroom; give it as a present. Use it to lure a child into Celtic studies or to delight a scholar of many years experience. Just be forewarned: The photographs, which could raise *hiraeth* even in one who has never been in Wales, are likely to create an irresistible urge to start wandering the Welsh countryside immediately.

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The Mysteries of Druidry—Celtic Mysticism, Theory and Practice

Brendan Cathbad Myers. Franklin Lakes NJ: New Page Books, 2006. Pp. 237. \$15.99 paper.

Books on the Druids are very much a mixed bag, frequently erring on the side of populism. I requested this book for review because it seemed to offer something that might break this pattern. Classical writers described the Druids as philosophers, and a desideratum for long time has been a trained philosopher willing to take up the problem of how the little we know about Druidic thought can be understood in terms of wider philosophical ideas. Brendan Cathbad Myers is a philosopher with a PhD from NUI Galway; his engaging website (www.wildideas.net/cathbad/) presents him as a modern-day counterpart of the ancient Druid, with interests in discussing philosophy and environmental ethics. It seemed to me that this book was the chance for a more philosophical study of an otherwise largely antiquarian subject.

Viewed from this perspective, *The Mysteries of Druidry* is something of a disappointment. Myers's book does not pretend to be an academic

study of Druidic philosophy—though the cover does state that it is by by ‘Brendan Cathbad Myers PhD’—but one feels that his treatment of the subject offers much that a little more effort would have made it useful to a readership outside that of modern druids. The book is at once both a reflection of the relationship of the Celtic past with modern Druidry, and an aid to reflection within a modern mystical tradition. Chapter titles such as ‘The Call of the Morrigan’ serve to show that much of the book is a retelling of mythological tales in the style of Lady Gregory, though presented as myths for the purpose of meditation and with an eye to preaching the Celtic tradition as one focused less on personal than corporate belief (p. 159). The material is mostly nicely presented, with commentary to direct the reader interested in controlled breathing (p. 142), visualising the journey into a passage grave (p. 150) as an aid to meditation, and so on. Such philosophic ideas as are mentioned in the text are often those of modern philosophers and

thinkers (Schopenhauer p. 17, Thomas Jefferson pp. 93-4, A.N. Whitehead p. 96). The whole effect is to present material that is within a personal vision of the Druidic style of thought, rather than always authentically ‘Celtic’ material—one is reminded a bit of books such as John O’Donovan’s *Anam Cara*, where much of the material is from non-Celtic writers such as Eckhart, despite going under the banner of ‘Celtic’ spirituality. There is therefore a lot to annoy the professional Celtic scholar. A lot of the discussion of Celtic matters is not founded in good evidence. The discussion of Gundestrup (p. 47) seems to take no account of recent debate over its origin. The implication that Lady Gregory’s novels tapped into some authentic stream of oral tradition (p. 53) displays little critical sense. One would also wish that a UCG graduate might know where to use a *fada* (*passim*), be able to spell *dliged* (p. 176) and to know that *immrama* is plural, not singular (pp. 142ff).

Yet, despite his resort to notions such as a ‘Celtic disposition’ (p. 27) and the old chestnut that the ‘Celtic’ tradition survived up to the time of Whitby (p. 21), Myers has quite a lot to say that

is worth reading on the subject of the Druids. Pages 51-7 present a brief, but insightful survey of the influence of romantic literature and movements upon the formation of the paradigm of modern Druidry. Myers is suitably critical of *The Golden Bough* and *The White Goddess* (p. 113), and has frank reflections on the influence of *The Wicker Man* on modern paganism (p. 160). There is very good critique of the ‘problem of history’ for modern Druidic groups which, when we consider that few studies of the Druids today seem entirely separable from modern Druidry and its interests, makes for more useful academic reading than one might think at first glance. If you are not persuaded by the call of revived Druidry you will probably not want to be bothered with this book, but if you are interested in methodological issues pertaining to their study and in questions of cultural ownership of ‘heritage’, there is some stimulating thought here.

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The Lore of Ireland: An Encyclopaedia of Myth, Legend and Romance

Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, Woodbridge, Suffolk : Boydell Press, 2006, Pp. 531. \$47.95 hardback.

The first sentence of the jacket-cover copy for this encyclopaedia states: “Ireland has one of the finest heritages of traditional culture and story, and a standard reference book covering the broad range of that material is long overdue.” This is a slightly disingenuous claim, as such a standard reference book already exists, put together by Ó hÓgáin himself in 1991, and titled *Myth, Legend & Romance: An Encyclopaedia of the Irish Folk Tradition*. Regardless, this new version of the encyclopaedia is an impressive accomplishment, as Ó hÓgáin compiled it by

himself, a feat not often attempted with encyclopaedias these days. It is arranged alphabetically, and Ó hÓgáin has included 350 entries, from *abair* to “wonder tales.” The encyclopaedia uses mainly the letters of the Irish alphabet, except that there are a few entries for “H” “J” and “K” – such as “hero tales,” “Jesus Christ” and the “Kildare, Earl of” – assumably because it was easier for Ó hÓgáin to include the English language versions, or because the English version had more information available. There are no entries, however, for “Q,” “V,” “X,” “Y” or

“Z.” In each entry, Ó hÓgáin gives an explanation of the entry, whether it is the name of a character or a more generic item (such as the banshee), and then goes on to give relevant information, generally a biography of the character, followed by how that character’s legend developed over time. There are cross references throughout the entries noted in small capitals, and at the end of each entry is included all Ó hÓgáin’s sources. These sources are abbreviated, but a full bibliography appears at the end of the volume.

It’s out of print now, but in some ways the earlier *Myth, Legend & Romance: An Encyclopaedia of the Irish Folk Tradition*, put out by Prentice Hall Press, was superior to this newer version put out by Boydell Press. For one thing, the earlier version had black and white illustrations and pictures throughout, of things related to the entries, such as a picture of the ruins of Clonmacnois for an entry on Ciarán, or a photo of the shrine of the *Cathach* for Colm Cille. I also found the cross-references easier to read in the older version, as they were bolded instead of the small caps used by *The Lore of Ireland*. Ó hÓgáin has included a pronunciation guide at the end of the new book that provides phonetic spellings of Irish names, places and subjects, but the divisions into these categories seem arbitrary and, while the listing is alphabetical in each category, the entries are not separated by line breaks and the page is therefore very busy. However, the index at the back of *The Lore of Ireland*, called a “List of Genres,” is very helpful, as it splits entries into specific categories: “Fianna Lore,” “Folk Custom and Belief,” “Folk History,” “King Lore,” “Mythical Lore,” “Oral Narrative and its Typology,” “Peoples and Traditions,” “Religious Lore,” “Romantic History,” and “Ulster Lore.” These divisions, though, can

seem a bit arbitrary, as much of the “king lore” could also go into the “mythical lore,” as could much of the “religious lore.” Part of Ó hÓgáin’s claim is that “[t]his book is intended as a reference work for all those with an interest in Irish folklore and traditional literature” (preface), and his index categories go a long way toward explaining the separations he sees between myth, legend, romance, and folklore, which is not always immediately evident when looking at the entries themselves.

About 75 of the 350 entries (or approximately 20%) are new to this version, which represents a fair amount of work. Technically, the number of new entries is much higher, but this is due to recategorizing older material: for example, in the earlier version, there was a long entry called “Animals and Other Creatures of the Wild” which has been split up in the new version into various categories such as “amphibians, reptiles and molluscs;” “fowl, domestic;” and “insects.” It is possible that Ó hÓgáin has done the same thing with other categories, although I did not see evidence of this. But some of the new entries seem nothing if not odd: whereas most of the material in the book deals with specific characters from mythic tales, gives a description of the various clans or septs that existed in early medieval Ireland, or provides definitions and explanations of such folklore terms as “wonder tales,” some of the new entries include “Aristotle,” “Gregory the Great,” and “Napoleon I.” The information contained in these entries is entertaining and relates to Irish and European folklore and legend about these figures, but the entries themselves seem out of place. This is because most of the information contained in the book is myth and legend, and is based on 12th-century texts or earlier. As an example, for the sixty entries under the letter “C” there are three which

concern time periods after the 12th century: Ceithearnach Caoilriabhach, Seathrún Céitinn, and Oliver Cromwell. (There are also several entries in the letter “C” which are not concerned with chronology, such as “cats,” “cattle” and “cosmology.”) Although most of the entries go on to discuss later permutations of the mythic characters’ tales, the encyclopaedia is primarily based in the twelfth century and earlier, so when the reader comes across entries of a later date, they don’t feel consistent with the rest of the book. Ó hÓgáin does have entries for major moments in Irish history – “Norsemen,” “Normans,” “Elizabeth I,” “Rising of 1798,” “famine,” – but they are not as thorough as his entries for earlier characters. For instance, his entry for the Normans is 3 1/4 columns long, whereas sixteen columns are given to Cormac mac Airt – granted, Cormac is an extremely important character, but one could

argue that the Normans were also important to the development of later Irish folklore. As a result, the book feels heavily weighted towards the earlier material; this is perfectly acceptable, of course, and, as I mentioned above, his index in the back helps make Ó hÓgáin’s argument for why this is also an encyclopaedia of later folklore.

In sum, then, this is a valuable reference tool for your institution’s library, particularly for the early material, and considering that it was compiled by an individual, a remarkable piece of work.

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Appreciations for
CSANA
And California Celtic Conference
2007
Cincinnati

CSANA 2007 was hosted in Cincinnati by CSANA founding member Edgar M. Slotkin with the help of CSANA supporter extraordinaire Ray Carr. From the time that we were picked up at the Cincinnati Airport by Father Paul Donohue to the time that Ray dropped us off, we were delighted with the company, the ambiance, and most especially the excellent sessions and keynotes. (The full conference schedule is at <http://www.csub.edu/~cmacquarrie/csana/>)

Gerry Hunter in his keynote “Welsh Birds in American Forests (or Dafydd ap Gwilym visits Ohio’s Frontier)” delighted with his charisma and energy, as well as his recounting of the vast quantity of Welsh language writing in 19th century America. There seem to have been flocks of poets writing in Welsh, under the names of various birds.

Paul Russell charmed, delighted, and chided us in his “*Sanas and Dúil: The Purposes of an Early Irish Glossary.*” After his very

revealing paper, various individuals in our group, including CSANA cat-birds Dan Melia and Joseph Nagy confessed that even they were sometimes guilty of what Dr. Russell observed was “cherry-picking” of the glossaries. The rest of us simply slunk down in our seats, with cherry-picking grins on our faces.

Another highlight of the conferences included the meet and greet with CSANA supporters in Cincinnati at the Cincinnati Museum of Art (organized by Ray Carr. Thanks again to Edgar, Ray, to Paul, and to the Cincinnati supporters of Celtic Studies for making us feel so welcome, so well entertained, and so intellectually engaged.

THANKS TO FRED SUPPE WHO AGAIN ORGANIZED
TWO CSANA SESSIONS AT KALAMAZOO THIS YEAR

Kelten • Römer Germanen		XIII. International Congress of Celtic Studies Universität Bonn
Rheinisches LandesMuseum Bonn 2007		Keltischer Sommer Stadt Bonn

<http://www.celtic-congress-2007.com>

The 30th Annual
California Celtic Studies Conference
UCLA



**John V. Kelleher
Memorial Lecture
and 27th Annual Harvard Celtic Colloquium
October 4-7, 2006**



John V. Kelleher Lecture

**October 4, 2007 ~ 5:00 pm
Faculty Club Library
Presented by the Harvard Celtic Department**

**Richard Suggett
Royal Commission on the Ancient and
Historical Monuments of Wales**

“Poets and Carpenters”

[For further information please visit http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hcc/.](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hcc/)

Other Conference and Announcements

***YEARBOOK NEWS
FROM THE CSANAY EDITOR***

Books for Review

If you are interested in reviewing any of the following books, or if you have another title in mind for review and would like me to contact the publisher for a review copy, please contact the newsletter editor at cmacquarrie@csu.edu. Reviews for the next newsletter should be received by September 15.

Dictionary of Munster Women Writers, 1800-2000. Edited by Tina O'Toole. Cork UP; Cork, 2005. **Hardback:** 330 pages.

Emily Lawless 1845-1913: Writing the Interspace. Heidi Hanson, 2007. Cork UP; Cork, 2006. **Hardback:** 234 pages.

Empire of Analogies: Kipling, India and Ireland. Kaori Nagai. Cork UP; Cork, 2006. **Hardback:** 185 pages.

The Fenian Ideal and Irish Nationalism, 1882-1916, by M.J. Kelly. Boydell: Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2006. **Hardback:** 282 pages

Gearrscéalta ár Linne. Edited by Brian Ó Conchubhair. Cló Iar-Chonnachta: Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe, Éire, 2006. **Paperback:** 392 pages

Opening the Field: Irish Women, Texts, and Contexts. Edited by Patricia Boyle Haberstroh and Christine St. Peter. Cork UP: Cork, 2007. **Hardback:** 181 pages

The Idiom of Dissent: Protest and Propaganda in Wales. Edited by Robin Chapman. Gomer Press; Llandysul, Ceredigion, 2006. **Paperback:** 165 pages.

Ireland and the Global Question by Michael J. O'Sullivan. Cork UP; Cork. 2006. **Hardback:** 215 pages.

Map-making, Landscapes and Memory: A Geography of Colonial and Early Modern Ireland c. 1530-1750 by William J. Smyth. Cork UP; Cork, 2006. **Hardback:** 584 pages.

Megalith: Eleven Journeys in Search of Stones. Edited by Damian Walford Davies. Gomer Press; Llandysul, Ceredigion, 2006. **Paperback:** 126 pages.

Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailnge. Ann Dooley. University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 2006. **Hardback:** 298 pages.

PayPal

Now available for CSANA dues!

Members may now pay dues and subscribe to the Yearbook by credit card through the on-line company PayPal. All credit card payments must be made in US dollars. Because of the transaction fees, the CSANA prices for those paying by credit card will be \$15.75 US (associate member) and \$26 US (sustaining member, yearbook)--and multiples thereof. Please note that conversion fees from other currencies to USD will be charged by the credit card companies. [The prices and system for those paying by check or cash remain unchanged.]

To pay by credit card, go to the PayPal website (www.paypal.com), press the tab "send money," type in the e-mail address ehenken@uga.edu. Remember to pay in US dollars. Put csana in the e-mail subject line. In the Note box, type in your name, postal address, e-mail address, and for what exactly you are paying (dues year, membership rate, Yearbook number).

Editor's Apology:

Yes, yet another apology. I'm afraid the last issue was numbered 24.2 rather than 24.1. This issue is properly numbered. Issue 24.1 will, I hope, go down as a lost, but very influential newsletter in which the location, with longitude and latitude, of the *Cín Dromma Snechta*, some cave near the Keeper's Cottage in Ulva Ferry, was said to have been reported. CWM

Special Ballot: Due to an oversight at CSANA's annual Business Meeting, we must still elect one Member-at-large to the Executive Committee. The Nominating Committee has put forth Amy Eichhorn-Mulligan. Please see the back of the enclosed dues form for the special ballot.

CSANA Newsletter

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