
Seán Duffy has again presented us with the latest historical and archaeological research on medieval Dublin. These chapters stem from the 2016 Medieval Dublin Symposium held at Trinity College.

There are a series of chapters in this volume concerned with religious material culture (stone crosses and church foundations) which could almost form their own book under one title. Gill Boazman begins the book with a paper based on her PhD thesis from UCC. Her work traces the physical evidence of Scandinavian settlement in Cualu and how their descendants became Irish (which she calls ‘Hiberno-Scandinavian’). She quite rightly notes that scholars have used ‘Norse’ and ‘Hiberno-Norse’ as interchangeable synonyms - erasing the real difference between historical peoples, their culture, and their identity. She avoids the othering terminology used by the Gaelic annals (‘Gaill’, ‘foreigners’, etc.), and focuses on the symbolism and iconography of stone crosses and slabs in Cualu. Following Boazman in time and topic is Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel. She examines the foundation of Holy Trinity Dublin (now Christ Church Cathedral), its original benefactor, and first bishops. She does not adopt Boasman’s critique of ‘Hiberno-Norse’ and artificial ‘ethnic’ boundaries inside and out of eleventh-century Dublin. Despite that, Ó Riain-Raedel provides a convincing examination of the Continental origins of Holy Trinity as a Benedictine cathedral created by an Irish king, Sitriuc of Dublin, who filled it with Irish monks trained at Cologne. And we should look forward to tests to confirm her theory that the current crypt is the original ground-level of the cathedral.

Surrounding Holy Trinity, there was Wood Quay, St Michael Within the Walls, and St John the Evangelist. Máire Geaney walks us through
the composition of waterfront revetments (wooden reinforcements/structural supports for the quays) in twelfth- and thirteenth-century Dublin. While her knowledge of late antique and medieval carpentry and construction techniques is astounding, her knowledge of medieval identity and labels can be questioned. She attempts to separate out Dubliners into ‘Hiberno-Norse’, ‘Anglo-Norman’, and Gaelic as if the twelfth-century city was compartmentalised along ‘ethnic’ lines. Her conclusion that the carpenters in Dublin before 1170 had superior skills than the English imports after 1170 is an appropriate focus. Linzi Simpson, the doyen of Dublin archaeology, relays another unfortunate tale about the fate of medieval structures under what is now the Dublin Civic Office. The church of St John the Evangelist went through a series of restorations over the centuries but was eventually replaced by the Mission Hall. The church’s graveyard became a carpark in 1961, and the medieval foundations and parts of the walls are mostly still extant under the footpath of Fishamble Street. Her conclusion that the double-cell structure of twelfth-century Irish churches were heavily influenced by Canterbury would appear to be at odds with Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel’s argument for Rhineland influence. Siobhán Scully provides an appendix to Simpson’s chapter on the ceramic tiles found under Fishamble Street. All of the tiles were dated to the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries. Sheila Dooley reminds us that there was a church of St Michael ‘within the [medieval] walls’ of Dublin, as opposed to St Michael de Palude/St Michael le Pole. Part of St Michael Within the Walls can still be seen as part of the Dublinia Heritage Centre (the seventeenth-century bell tower). Dooley agrees with Ó Riain-Raedel that the crypt in Holy Trinity was influenced by Bishop Dúnán’s Benedictine training in Cologne. She does well to explain the terminology that she uses (e.g. chantries), but is not familiar with medieval testaments/wills, marital relations, and coverture. There is also some temporal dampening (applying later terms/constructs
to earlier times) when she refers to ‘medieval churches in the Pale’ in the same breath as ‘certainly in existence in the late twelfth century’. The ‘Pale’, of course, referring to parts of counties Dublin, Meath, Louth, and Kildare in the sixteenth century.

To the west of Holy Trinity and Wood Quay, Antoine Giacometti conducted extensive digging around James Street and Thomas Street and found a ‘metalled’ (cobbled with pebbles) road under James Street which was in use from the late thirteenth century until the late seventeenth. Clare McCutcheon tested the remains in a pit at 116-17 James Street and found that ‘Dublin-type’ jugs and cookware from the late twelfth century. Giacometti and his team looked for a medieval St James’s Gate without success. They did find late medieval/early modern evidence for a fair and have reason to believe that the fair was established by the Abbey of St Thomas at the same time as the foundation of St James parish (c.1180x90).

Phyllis Gaffney and Yolande de Pontfarcy Sexton provide a translation of The laws and usages of the City of Dublin. They have taken John Gilbert’s published transcription of Dublin’s laws from 1870, Mary Bateson’s transcription and translation of Waterford’s laws from 1904-6, and Gearóid Mac Niocaill’s comparative transcriptions of Dublin’s and Waterford’s laws together from 1964 to create a translation of Dublin’s laws. This is a welcome addition, but as the authors admit, they are not medieval-law experts and this can be problematic for interpreting some of the words and phrases in the record. This can be seen in the first two chapters of the translation: they make no note of the legal difference between homicide and ‘murder’ (a secret, heinous homicide). They did not note that almost all brewers were women in 1200 and so calling them ‘women brewers’ is redundant. There are also translation problems, many of which are probably due to copying Mary Bateson’s masterful, but now quite dated, Borough Customs (2 vols, 1904-6) and an
overreliance on *Black’s law dictionary* (1891). The word ‘foreigner’ requires greater clarification (in *the laws and usages* nos 1, 64, 91, *foreyn* meant someone not from the ville of Dublin). They do not distinguish between residents of the ville of Dublin and citizens (citizens had extra rights and privileges), add words, such as ‘townsman’ (unnecessarily gendered when the record states ‘nul’: no single *person*), and use the pronoun ‘he’ after phrases such as ‘any man or woman’ (nos 10, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22, 25, 32, 36, 62, 65, 67, 72, 79, 80, 92, 103). *Neifs* were naifs; the term ‘villeins’ was not used by the English in Ireland. *Fresche force* should be noted as the burghal version of ‘novel disseisin’ (not in italics) with an explanatory note that novel disseisin was a type of court case for a recent dispossession of real property. ‘Open letters’ refers to letters patent, which could be made by many people and not just the king of England. This list could go on. This chapter demonstrates that linguistic experts should consult historical experts when drafting a translation or critical edition of a medieval text, and, of course, vice versa.

Paul Dryburgh examines the career of Roger Mortimer, lord of Wigmore (Hereford, England) and Trim, in Ireland as *locum tenens regis* (holding the place of the king of England). This was during the famous Bruce Invasion (1315-18) and immediately afterwards, when the Anglo-Irish fear of ‘destruction’ by the Scots in Ireland was at its height and the relationship between Dubliners, the Anglo-Irish magnates, and the crown of England was at a boiling point. Dryburgh, as Principal Record Specialist at the UK Archives, dives head-first into the surviving records from early fourteenth-century Dublin. This exquisite work is slightly blemished by his uncritical repetition of colonial discourse ‘criminality of the Gaelic Irish’ (p. 224), ‘native and settler’ (p. 226), ‘native community leaders’ (p. 227), ‘execution of Thomas Dun, the Scottish pirate’ [Dun was a Scottish admiral] and ‘[John de Athy’s] reassertion of English sea power
may have *liberated* the sea lanes of the North Channel and north Irish Sea’ (p. 232) [my italics] and of anachronisms (‘shires’, ‘sheriffs’, and ‘earls’ instead of the contemporary words: counties, viscounts, and counts). Theresa O’Byrne discusses the careers of James Yonge and his apprentices, Nicholas Bellewe and Thomas Baghill, in fifteenth-century Dublin. She provides a thorough overview and then heads into detailed minutiae seamlessly. Her accompanying pictures of examples of the *signi manuale* (signatures of the scribes) are fascinating. Áine Foley provides a prosopographical analysis of the notable les Bruns of Dublin, from their attesting charters to cathedrals and abbeys to the famous slaying of William le Brun in 1199 to the career of Fromund le Brun, chancellor of Ireland. She is careful to note that not everyone named ‘le/la Brun’ was related to each other, and demonstrates her ability to sort through the plethora of surviving records. Randolph Jones shifts through a mountain of records to apply discourse analysis to the claims in the *Book of Howth*. After a dense introduction, with a profusion of dramatis personae, he starts to unpack some of the details surrounding the *Book of Howth’s* account of the Lambert Simnel Conspiracy. He then concludes that despite the possibility that Walter Hussey (the supposed source for the *Book of Howth*) was at Lambert Simnel’s coronation in Dublin in 1487, the *Book of Howth’s* account is mostly a copy of Edward Hall’s *The union of the two noble and illustre families of Lancastre and Yorke* (1548-50).

In the final chapter Ruth Johnson details the process of the formation of [www.heritagemaps.ie](http://www.heritagemaps.ie), a Geographical Information System (GIS) database of the archaeological digs around County Dublin prior to 2013. Johnson worked with a team of experts (Dáire O’Rourke, Linzi Simpson, Howard Clarke, and Seán Duffy) to form the database along with Dublin City Heritage Officer, Donncha Ó Dúnlaing, and support from the Heritage Council, Dublin City Council, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, Fingal County Council, South Dublin County
Council, the National Monuments Service, and the National Museum of Ireland. It is clear that this website is a valuable resource as many of the contributors in *Medieval Dublin XVII* cite it.

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