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REVIEWS

Bichlmeier, Harald and Zimmer, Stefan, *Die keltischen Flussnamen im deutschsprachigen Raum. Ein keltologisch-indogermanistischer Kommentar zum Deutschen Gewässernamenbuch*. Dettelbach: J. H. Röll Verlag, 2022.

The study of ancient hydronymy is fraught with difficulties. We are often deprived of any substantial context, meanings and nuances escape us; we have hardly any hint about what a speaker had in mind when they named their rivers. The evolution of naming patterns as a whole may be subject to regional choices and exposed to the influence of adstrate or substrate dialects and is largely unknown. In my view, however, onomastic studies often underrate the need for a deep linguistic analysis of each particular name that encompasses both the etymological analysis and the far-reaching relationships that can be inferred from it.

This is why it is immensely useful to have to hand an updated work, whose authors possess a long experience and a specialised background in the field of Indo-European linguistics. It is laid out as a dictionary of Celtic river names of German-speaking Europe, and is originally conceived as a complement to Albrecht Greule's *Deutsches Gewässernamenbuch* (Berlin & Boston: De Gruyter, 2014). On the whole, it is well written and, importantly, user-friendly, easy to consult and on the whole entertaining, and will remain a useful resource both for specialists and interested students for the foreseeable future. The text, in my view, could at some places have been made lighter to the reader by summarizing the contents of the authors' previous works instead of inserting the full text directly. Sometimes, by contrast, the reader has to be attentive to the use of German moods to distinguish Greule's views from their own. The book is crowned by a number of useful indexes. As usual with our studies, it can hardly aim at exhaustivity. It is well documented, and it is only natural that the authors have often chosen to dispense with

specialised articles that are not really necessary to grasp the gist, and have mostly resorted to compilations, in turn often not complete or not altogether reliable. Bibliography on onomastics is in this way privileged over hard-core Indo-European linguistics. The following observations illustrate some general objections to the selection, treatment and presentation of the evidence, but should by no means be taken to detract from the general merits of the book.

The entries are lexeme-stems (including derivational material) or roots, which is often convenient when it comes to the unification of immediately related forms; but, since the lemmata can be Gaulish, Proto- or Common Celtic, or purely descriptive (if the Celtic attribution is not obvious), the phonetic treatment is somewhat inconsistent (why **tekto-* on p. 235 but **uχseno-* on p. 259, corresponding to two different chronological stages and having phonemic vs. allophonic status at the final stage?). This hesitation would call for some clarification and may occasionally lead the inexperienced reader to misunderstandings, especially if the lemma cannot be Gaulish for phonetic reasons that are not addressed, like **gasto-* on p. 113 (where /st/ would have been expected to evolve into /ts/ early on; what was 'Common Gaulish' as opposed to central innovations is additionally debatable). On p. 109, 'Altkeltisch **erkūniā*', today the Black Forest, should be corrected as **(φ)erkūn̥iā*, as long as the mainstream, here implicit, connection with **perkʷu-* is retained. On p. 101 they reconstruct '(ur)kelt. **el-*' for Old Irish *eblaid*, which equally requires clarification (this form can only go back to **φela-*). For some reason, both **u̯ēd-* and **friti̯ā* (lemmatized again as **sriti̯ā* on p. 222) are alphabetized under the letter F (p. 111), which to my mind should be deleted or exclusively used for forms beginning with IE /p/ beyond doubt.

We have to thank the authors for the use of updated Indo-European phonology. However, the reader is occasionally at a loss as to what approaches to Indo-European and Proto-Celtic phonotactics of sonorants and laryngeals are being favoured, which would have deserved a short introduction and a table. For instance, the authors' present reconstruction for **h₂emH-ró-* of a root meaning 'pour' for Ammerbach (p. 51) is more convincing than the one considered as an alternative, **h₂m̥H-ró-*, which would probably have yielded **māro-* (the available evidence containing this sequence is paltry and much discussed, but the required phonotactics look at any rate implausible to me). On p. 43, *Lavant* is traced to **l̥h₃u-nt-eh₂* 'die waschende', but

the phonotactics are dubious: **l̥h₃u̯-n̥t-eh₂* or even **lh̥₃u̯-n̥t-eh₂* (given the uncertainties surrounding such sequences in anlaut), are preferable. It is not clear to me whether the authors favour *-R̥HC- > -RaC-* (as on p. 102) or *-RāC-* (p. 48). A sequence **k̥rmHV-* (p. 148), *recte *krm̥HV-*, would not have given **krimV-*, but **kramV-*. The Celtic version of 'Lex Kluge', by which *CnV- > C:V-* (where *C* includes IE /p/) (taken for granted on p. 157), is belied by too many examples. The proposed reconstructions **lusterā* 'dirtier', **lusamā* 'dirtiest' (p. 163) may be acceptable somewhere down the line, but since the (unmentioned) Common Celtic suffixal complexes are respectively **-is-tero-* and **-is-amo-*, loss of medial *-i-* following *-u-* has to be explained (in fact there are loads of parallels for this phenomenon).[1]

Sometimes, the study of river names paradoxically becomes a more complex task the simpler the root structure looks. Take, for instance, p. 30 **al-*. The authors seem to exhaust all the etymological possibilities for this root, attested in *Elz*, but the rivers *Alaunos*, *Alauna* could be traced back to Celtic **pelh̥₂-mno-* 'pushing itself forward' and the reconstructed **alanṭiā*, etc. could go back to **p̥lh₂-n̥t-*. At any rate, the traditional etymology for *Elz*, namely **elanṭiā* (supported by the epigraphic mention of the *elantienses*), is properly discussed in an excursus on present participles (p. 36) and put down to Celtic **elantī* 'female deer, doe' (a preform **pelh₂-n̥t-* 'rushing, advancing' would be equally conceivable, however).[2] The evolution proposed for **alto-* (cf. Middle Irish *alt*, etc.) 'urkelt. **(φ)alto-* < vorurkelt. **p̥l-to-* "Fels, felsig"' (p. 47) cannot possibly be right, nor is the preform **p̥l-es-* 'rock' (unexplained, due to Lindeman's effect?), allegedly continued in PCelt. **ales-* (more precisely **(φ)ales-*), convincing as an explanation for **aliso/anṭiā > *Elsenz*. The reconstructed forms for some roots would occasionally have deserved additional references. For instance, García Ramón (1992) should have been quoted regarding **h₁eḭsh₂-* (pp. 123–24).[3] Occasionally, reconstruction is based on misinterpretation. For instance, in **bela-* (p. 74), a nonexistent Celtic divine name *Belenos* can no longer be brought to bear. The original form is **Beli-no-*, the external derivative of the weak stem of an acrostatic formation **bo/eli-* 'strength'.[4] As a consequence, river names (like many modern place names traditionally said to have the same origin) can hardly go back to **beleno-*, a preform that is only the product of confirmation bias. Sometimes, meaning and dialectal attribution of a reconstructed appellative form are disputable. For instance, **banno-* (p. 71) is not likely to have meant

'horn' (this is the semantic evolution in Provençal), but 'protuberance, mound, hill': Hispano-Celtic microtoponymy has revealed a number of compounds in *-bendā* with the characteristic meaning 'hill(fort) of X). These remain unmentioned (and are probably ignored in the bibliography the authors systematically rely on) but point to a Gaulish preform **band-no-*.[5]

While phonetic plausibility is a must for any contemporary work related to onomastics, word formation remains a pending issue in most approaches, in spite of groundbreaking works devoted to spatial distribution and root etymologies. This work goes some steps towards meeting this goal, since the authors aptly correct etymologies suffering from indeterminacy, call to question amateurish proposals, and undertake an in-depth analysis of suffixal derivation, traditionally the Cinderella of onomastic studies, for which, literally, anything goes. We also have to praise the authors for educated rejection of etymological proposals presupposing questionable fossilized phrases, and for, in this way, according syntax the position it deserves in these studies (see, for instance, *Raab* on p. 23).

As regards the dialectal appurtenance of the studied forms, one has to side with the authors in their agnosticism: far from being, as is often the case, partisans of pervasive Celticity, they are cautious enough to leave the question open when a Celtic attribution remains unproven, or even when a root is not attested in Celtic (which in fact raises more questions in hydronymy, deprived of an immediate context, than in anthroponymy). Finally, language overlap in different regions, as well as the possibility of early borrowings, always have to be taken into account. The idea that some forms might be of Pre-Indo-European ancestry, while others can be put down to *Alteuropäisch* in Krahe's sense, inevitably hovers over this kind of work. The possibility that some river names were given by speakers of Indo-European dialects lacking historical continuity has often been swept under the rug, but phonetic and/or formational incompatibility of some names with Celtic and Germanic may be bypassed in this way, and the question as a whole might have merited a short introductory chapter, too.

Some mild criticism may be levelled at the absence of a comparison of Celtic names with those claimed for other Indo-European languages in contact, for instance Italic. This understandably lies beyond the scope of this work, however, especially if we think that progress in fragmentarily attested dialects and the complex study of medieval and modern onomastics have

never gone hand in hand. For instance, in **brem-* (p. 85) they reconstruct a (Celtic? under Germanic influence?) active participle **bremanṭiā* 'raging, bellowing' for the river name *Prims*. In fact, this reconstruction is borne out by a hitherto uninterpreted Venetic personal name in the formula FREMANTIONI VXORI (dat., Padua, *CIL* 5, 2974; the same root is probably contained in other names in the Venetic alphabet, like *vhremo*) and Latin *fremens*, *-entis* (which in turn provides further evidence for the appurtenance of Venetic to Italic).

As for the selection of *comparanda*, inter-Celtic cognates are well chosen, if not always exhaustive even within Continental Celtic. The first member of *Alkimoennis* is admittedly obscure (cf. p. 48), but the Lepontic names *Alkouinos*, *Alkouesi* could have been mentioned. The Iberian Peninsula is, as usually happens, underrepresented. This is due to the fact that the work focuses on German-speaking areas, but the entries are in this regard somewhat unbalanced, and some allusions to very important rivers would have been appreciated. For instance, in the entry **ana-* (p. 58), the river *Ana* (today *Guadiana* in Southern Spain) or the divine epithet *Anabaraeco* (of enigmatic south- and north-western distribution), and in **durā* (p. 99) the *Durius* (today *Duero*) are missing. In the case of appellatives, the omission of Hispanic *comparanda* is more difficult to understand: the earliest attestation of the pan-Celtic word for 'silver', **arganto-* (p. 67), is Celtiberian *arkatobezom* /argantobedom/ 'silver quarry' (Cortono), which should have been mentioned. The same applies to **bedo-* 'channel' (p. 73).[6]

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Notes

1 See Prósper 2018.

2 For (unmentioned) onomastic cognates in Hispano-Celtic, cf. most recently Prósper 2022.

3 Cf. García-Ramón 1992.

4 Cf. Nikolaev 2022: 550, n. 4. Only the associated semantics can explain **kuno-belino-*, in turn stunningly similar to Hispano-Celtic [C]VNTVRAE (Burgos, Hispania Tarraconensis, from **kuno-tūro-* 'strong as a dog' with regular Hispano-Celtic loss of the link vowel in compounds), CVNTIRVS in Lusitania (< **tērso-* 'firm'?).

[5] An original form **bando*- is favoured by Matasovic 2009. At any rate, the available evidence speaks for a descriptively Germano-Celtic or Western-European root **bend*-. Cf. also Prósper 2010.

[6] Cf. Prósper 2012; on BEDAM in the bronze of Novallas and its meaning 'road', see Prósper 2017.

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David Stifter, *Ogam: Language, Writing, Epigraphy*. Zaragoza: Prensas de la Universidad de Zaragoza, [2022].

This attractive booklet of 44 pages is the tenth in a series published by the AELAW network ('Ancient European Languages and Writings') with a commendable (and enviable) degree of official sponsorship. The back-cover blurb states that these booklets are 'richly illustrated with pictures and drawings […] and they include maps and tables. A selected (*sic*) bibliography is also provided.' These claims are certainly vindicated in the case of Professor Stifter's work; the result is a winsome little publication whose visual qualities alone should help it on its way to 'reach all audiences' (the stated, ambitious goal of the series, and one whose application to the Irish ogham tradition is particularly appropriate considering the fanciful, 'New Age' types of interpretation that the ogham phenomenon so often attracts). It should be pointed out that one difficulty in popularizing linguistics and philology is that they are notoriously unvisual subjects, so an extra effort is always required to raise their profile in the public domain. Therefore, if the evidence takes the form of beautiful artefacts, as is the case with Stifter's material, then full advantage needs to be taken of that; in its judicious and instructive selection of colour photographs and carefully considered layout, along with informative and attractive maps and high-quality printing, the present booklet does so in style.

To quote the back-cover blurb again, the educational aim of the series is to 'provide an updated introduction to fragmentary languages of ancient Europe and the inscriptions attesting them'. These are complex subjects, and the very wide target-audience makes writing about them appropriately even more challenging. Every affirmation made in this kind of work must be crystal-clear, unambiguous, and simple without being simplistic (meaning to say that it must, in principle, be possible to expand any statement five-fold without having to *un*say anything that has been said). The use of technical terms must be kept to a minimum. If the use of footnotes is eschewed (a bracing discipline, and one followed in this booklet), then the pursuit of any particular sub-interest of the author's should never be taken too far, or the thrust of the main narrative or argument will be obscured. Professor Stifter's

text comes a lot closer to meeting those austere demands than do most essays in this popularizing genre;[1] nevertheless the booklet is probably a little less successful in what it tries to do on that front than is its outstanding impact in the visual domain.

An example of the pursuit of what is, in the context, a rather obfuscating tangent is the author's choice of terminology. The ogham inscriptions collectively capture, albeit inevitably in 'snapshot' fashion, the Irish language's transition, over time, from the phase when its final case-endings were all still in place, up to (and indeed beyond) the stage when these had almost entirely disappeared (being reflected, at most, in a distinction between palatal and non-palatal final consonants that the script had no means of registering). Professor Stifter likes the binary chronological distinction involved here and points out the interesting fact that the relevant transition was undergone by 'all languages' (safer might have been 'almost all Indo-European languages') in North-West Europe over roughly the same period (on p. 19 he speculates briefly as to why). However, with reference to the loss of syllabic inflectional endings he then goes on to introduce a general classification of languages before the loss as 'Old' and their descendants after it as 'New' (p. 13), or even 'modern' (p. 18). This seems an unfortunate move, given that the discussion on pp. 13–14 simultaneously retains the conventional periodization of specifically post-loss Irish into (at least) its Early Old, Old, Middle, and Modern phases. The result is an unnecessarily confusing scenario in which New begins chronologically before Old, with the latter a subdivision of modern that comes before Middle! Why not just say Ancient, Antique, or Primitive for the stage with the inflections, contrasted with (Early) Medieval for the period beginning when the inflections were lost? That would be clearer (a consideration that should always apply, but particularly, as noted above, in popularizing works like this), as well as being more in line with the established nomenclature of Celtic studies.

As regards the scope of what Stifter attempts, a comprehensive 'Introduction' (pp. 3–10) contains sub-sections on ogham study headed 'Geographic-Historical Sketch' and 'Research History'. Then we have the 'Language' chapter (pp. 13–22), consisting of discussions of 'Phonology', 'Lexicon', 'Morphology', 'Syntax', 'Languages Other than Irish', and 'Latin Linguistic Influence'. The chapter titled 'Writing' (pp. 23–28) is itself undivided, but is followed (pp. 29–31) by one called 'Onomastic Formula'

(*sic*), which is not billed in the booklet's subtitle; the final page of this chapter is on 'Women in Ogam Inscriptions'. The 'Epigraphy' chapter (pp. 33–39) contains sub-sections headed 'Bilingual Ogams' and 'Afterlife', and a useful (though inevitably obsolescent) one-page 'Census of Inscriptions'.[2] Before the closing list of 'Further Reading' (pp. 43–44) we then have a further 'bonus' chapter, on 'Two Ogam Inscriptions' (specifically the Ballyspellan Brooch and the bilingual stone for Voteporix). This brief survey shows just how wide-ranging Stifter's discussion bravely aims to be – as well as hinting at how compacted it necessarily is, given that the booklet is a slim one and that, even then, much of it is devoted to the graphics.[3] This compacting has unfortunately meant that some acute observations, which are duly made at various points and seem clearly related, nevertheless remain isolated in the discussion: interesting and important conclusions could have been drawn by connecting them, and would have been appropriate in a survey-work like this, but the necessary joined-up argumentation is not undertaken.

An example of the non-drawing of an inviting inference is as follows. Having noted the prevalent view that 'the earliest extant specimens' of the ogham script 'belong to the late 4th century' (p. 6), Stifter rightly points out that the question of 'whether this timeframe coincides with the invention of the script is a different matter'. He goes on to point out that the X-shaped ogham letter conventionally transcribed as K, which is clearly an addition to the basic, original set of twenty notch- or stroke-based characters, is found 'in inscriptions which otherwise show archaic traits'. As Stifter remarks, the 'introduction of an extra letter into an otherwise graphically well-thought-out script could mean that the writing system had already undergone some internal development, which would […] imply a certain time depth' (p. 7). It would indeed and, unattested though the putative experimental phase is among extant, stone oghams, it is neatly accommodated by a scenario that envisages the script as having initially been developed for use on wood, yielding examples that have not survived – unsurprisingly, considering that wood both rots and burns.[4] Be that as it may, the fact is that once the additional, innovative character becomes manifest in the surviving (that is, stone) evidence, it is already distributed across the geographical domain of ogham in a fashion that gives no hint as to where it had originated or how it had spread. However, far from following up on his own observation that this uniformity argues for the existence of an experimental phase now lost to us,

Stifter instead puts it down to 'the creation of Ogam as a single event by one ingenious and original inventor' (p. 23). It is not clear how that would account for the simultaneous ubiquity and extraneous nature of the X-shaped symbol, both being characteristics brought forward by Stifter himself as being relevant.

Just occasionally, the booklet's narrative is positively misleading. Like other Celtic languages, Irish possesses a dual series of consonant phonemes in which an original opposition between singular and geminate sounds has by and large been replaced by a contrast between lenited and unlenited sounds respectively. (As noted above, the Gaelic tongues, including Irish, also contrast palatals with non-palatals, but that is another matter.) In articles published over several decades the present reviewer has demonstrated that, though many inscriptions deviate from the rule, the ogham tradition as a whole registered the opposition systematically, namely by using double consonantal characters for geminate/unlenited sounds versus single symbols for single/lenited ones. In what I have argued is a result of influence from the roman-letter spelling of Latin, this convention did not apply in word-initial position, which is why it may not be apparent at first sight. Nevertheless, a detailed statistical analysis proves that the correlation between gemination/non-lenition in sound, and doubling in ogham spelling, is indeed significant. In fact, the probability of the pattern's having come about by chance is less than one in a hundred; among the oldest-looking cohort of inscriptions it is less than one in a thousand. These are precise, scientifically verifiable findings, and Professor Stifter lists in his bibliography the main articles in which they were published. It is therefore a bit galling to find this research not only passed over in silence in his text, but its findings flatly contradicted: on p. 28 we have the baseless assertion that the 'doubling of letters has nothing to do with geminate, i.e. doubled sounds in the language', while the previous sentence states that the doubling of word-internal consonant signs 'has not found a satisfactory explanation so far'. If a rational, phonologically-based explanation with a mathematically proven confidence level of more than 99 per cent is not considered 'satisfactory', one does have to wonder what would be.[5]

The booklet carries very few typos (though one does note 'arch' for 'arc' on p. 4, 'Angelesey' and 'herdmen' on p. 6, 'than that' for 'than those' on p. 31, 'height' for 'in height' on p. 39, and 'boasts of' for 'boasts' in the caption to fig. 24). Infelicities of expression, including somewhat unidiomatic uses of English, occasionally occur ('would allow to' for 'would allow us to',

and ‘one example shall’ for ‘one example will’, both on p. 8; ‘who’ after ‘of’ on p. 16; ‘this is the rare example of’ in the caption to fig. 20). A sentence on p. 35 accidentally states that the Roman alphabet is ‘unsuitable for the recording of longer texts’, and a reference to ‘geological dimensions’ on p. 8 is initially opaque; normally, though, it quickly becomes clear what is intended. An unfortunate exception is the rendering of the widespread ogham formula MAQQI MUCCOI *vel sim*., where both ‘son of from the sept of’ (captions to figs 1, 11, 12, 16) and ‘son of from the family of’ (three times in table 8) give the impression that something has gone missing after the first ‘of’ (nor can it have been intended that a name should be understood there, as there is none within the formula being translated). The well-known Irish semantic item occurring in ogham as CON-, CUNA- etc. is rendered ‘dog’ (pp. 17, 31) when, as a name-element, ‘hound’ would arguably have been more appropriate. As for the name of the booklet’s topic itself, and whatever its etymology (pursued on pp. 3–4 at slightly disproportionate length given the attendant uncertainty), Stifter opts to use the spelling *Ogam*, though pointing out that in Modern Irish it is *Ogham*. There is plenty of precedent for doing that; but given that, at all times since the word became disyllabic, the first consonant has been lenited (whatever its changing phonetic realization) in contrast to the second, which has not, it can be argued that the Modern Irish spelling, which makes the contrast explicit, should be adopted for the anglicized version too (irrespective of what pronunciation may then be assigned to the latter). Hence my own use of *ogham* (I don’t see why it should be capitalized, as Stifter does with his *Ogam*) throughout the present contribution.

Like all reviews, this one has had to identify shortcomings in the work under discussion in order to give a slightly sounder base to any future research that may rely upon it; but we are now getting into the realm of personal preferences, which is a good point to stop. Professor Stifter’s little booklet represents a courageous, unprecedented and much needed attempt to address the educated lay public on the subject of ogham from a standpoint of sound expertise; it gently and attractively corrects (often by implication) some of the wilder ideas that all too easily take hold in this area. Particularly considering the pointers that Stifter includes towards genuinely exciting, soundly based research that is currently under way, such as the excellent *Ogham in 3D* database (p. 10), one should not complain too much of the flaws in what is, after all, really a by-product (and a very useful one) of the encouraging

results emerging from today's reinvigorated ogham (and wider Irish linguistic) study – much of it instigated, energized and conducted by the booklet's author himself.[6]

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Notes

1 Within the field of Celtic Studies a pioneering work of popularization that met all of the desiderata that I lay out in the first two paragraphs here, and that still sets the standard for such efforts, was Ó Murchú 1985.

2 The risk of implying exhaustiveness is unsuccessfully run on p. 22, where we read that the name that subsequently became *Colmán* in medieval Irish is prefigured in ogham 'in the forms COLOMAGNI, COLMAN and perhaps CALUMANN'. This ignores COLMANN, on which see Harvey 2022: 72–75. If Stifter's text had, instead, taken the precaution of referring merely to 'forms *such as* …', the inaccuracy (which could reasonably have been anticipated: after all, at any given time, who knows what inscriptions may yet come to light?) would have been avoided, at no cost to the argument.

3 The apparently very different medieval tradition of ogham-inscribing in Scotland is wisely left aside.

4 To suggest this scenario is not to engage in special pleading: at a 2015 conference held in Kilmainham it was convincingly demonstrated by craftsmen that, in fact, the ogham script lends itself much more readily to carving on wood than on stone and that, a wish for longevity apart, a stone arris (as opposed to a wooden stick) will always have been very much a sub-optimum medium for ogham, given the tendency for the stone between two notches to flake away. What is more, a wood-based original scenario for ogham is indeed the impression that one forms from references in the early Irish saga literature to the use of the alphabet, and it is a picture that was generally accepted right up until recent decades, when it was swept away by an over-positivistic piece of revisionism on the part of desk-based scholars. There are signs that the consensus has now at least begun to shift back again; on all this see Harvey 2018: 18–19.

5 Professor Stifter is the author of an important earlier, more specialized and technical article from which the booklet under review shows many signs of having been condensed. This was Stifter 2020, in which the exposition does, albeit cursorily, register the true position (p. 876). The fact that, in the booklet, this has subsequently been lost track of may be the result of arbitrariness in the task of condensation.

6 As a note inside the front cover points out, the booklet 'was written as part of the research projects *Chronologicon Hibernicum (ChronHib)* and *Harnessing digital technologies to transform understanding of ogham writing, from the 4th century to the 21st (OG(H)AM)*'. What the note modestly does not point out is the essential role played by David Stifter in the foundation and conduct of each of these impressive and inspiring ventures.

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Watson, Seosamh, *Easter Ross Gaelic: Lexicon with Texts and Brief Phonology*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2022. Pp. xiii + 474.

This is a substantial book, in every sense of the word. The Gaelic dialect of Easter Ross, along with the neighbouring dialect of East Sutherland (as described by Dorian 1978; 2010), belongs to that group of eastern Scottish Gaelic dialects which diverge significantly from the western dialects of the Hebrides and Scottish mainland. For this reason, they are important for any understanding of the full history of dialectal variation in Scottish Gaelic (and the Gaelic languages more broadly). But their importance is not simply a matter of historical linguistics; both Seosamh Watson (2007; 2019) and Nancy Dorian (2010) have shown them to be vehicles, even in their very final stages, of highly localised but nonetheless sophisticated and complex cultural and social expression. In this hefty tome, Watson adds to our knowledge of the Gaelic lexicon of Easter Ross in a way which will not be surpassed, but the inclusion of material relating to the phonology of the dialect and a series of texts (in Gaelic, in English translation and in phonetic notation) will make this the first port of call for anyone coming to the study of this dialect in the future. It is a rich well of linguistic data from which future scholars can draw.

In the book's short introduction (pp. 1–9), the author outlines very briefly the history of the study of the dialect and the background to his own work in the area. Watson was not the first fieldworker to visit the 'Seaboard Villages' of the Nigg Peninsula in Easter Ross; Prof. Magne Oftedal and Rev. Terence McCaughey had both visited the area in the late 1950s under the auspices of the Linguistic Survey of Scotland, following an earlier exploratory trip by Prof. Kenneth Jackson and Fred MacAulay. It was in 1967 that Watson first visited the Nigg Peninsula and his brief account of the sociolinguistic situation he found at that time provides very useful background to the material presented in the book and to the social situation of his informants.

The brief introduction is followed by a short section titled 'Language' (pp. 11–19) and another outlining relevant biographical details on Watson's informants (pp. 21–26). The former is a mixum-gatherum of linguistic features, almost exclusively of phonological features, categorised as 'Historical notes on

ER Gaelic', 'Connections with other dialects', 'LSSG data from Shandwick, Inver and Rockfield' and 'Issues identified'. The last two of these subsections are closely related and are concerned with some of the difficulties encountered by the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (Gaelic) fieldworkers as regards the classification of sounds. The subsection concerned with 'Connections with other dialects' is a useful outline of features shared with neighbouring dialects but could have made good use of a map to represent better some of these connections.

Although described in the title of the volume as a 'brief' phonology, the sections on phonology take up (if one includes a very brief section on morphophonemic nasalisation) over fifty pages (pp. 29–80). This is a very welcome inclusion in a volume of this sort. Although Watson has dealt with aspects of the phonology of the dialect elsewhere, one of his most substantial contributions (Watson 1974) was published while field work was still in progress and is not now easily accessible. Inclusion of a treatment of the phonology of the dialect (including a very brief sketch of internal variation within the dialect, at pp. 35–39) greatly facilitates cross referencing of lexical items and phenomena seen in the texts. In terms of general usability, it is significant that the system of notation here has been brought into line with that of the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland* (Ó Dochartaigh 1994–97).

The vast bulk of the book is made up of the lexicon of Easter Ross Gaelic (pp. 81–327), followed by a glossary of personal names (pp. 329–48) and place names (pp. 349–61). The lexicon is extensive. The headword is followed by a translation and a phonemic transcription of the Gaelic headword and example(s) in context. That each example is attributed to a specific informant may well prove useful to those interested in exploring matters of dialect-internal variation in future. The lexicon includes common Gaelic headwords as well as headwords which are more dialect specific such as *seaman* 'tail' (a form which arises from *feaman* via a series of reanalyses) which was also known in East Sutherland. The inclusion of dedicated glossaries of personal names and place names, both following on the model set out for the general lexicon, further enhance the volume. The details accompanying the personal names in particular, when taken in conjunction with the information on Watson's informants (pp. 21–26) and his brief sketch of variation within the dialect area (pp. 35–39) provide ample data for further investigation.

The final substantial portion of the book presents a range of texts in the form of anecdotes and other instances of continuous speech elicited from informants. The nature and scope of the anecdotes ranges widely and includes, as one might expect, accounts of traditional life, anecdotes on local characters of note and even the mutual intelligibility (or not) between Easter Ross Gaelic and Hebridean Gaelic. The bulk of these anecdotes appeared in Gaelic orthography without translation in *Saoghal Bana-mharaiche* (Watson 2007). In the present volume, a phonetic transcription of this material is accompanied by a facing transcription into Gaelic orthography. A translation of the material into English also accompanies the texts thereby making them available to a wider audience. The notes to these texts provide useful cross references to Watson (2007) where one can find more ethnographic context for many of them.

The volume closes with two verse appendices, both nineteenth-century literary products of the area. The first, *An Linnet Mòr*, is an elegy on the men who drowned after their vessel was wrecked in 1843. The second is an elegy for a local cleric, Rev. A. MacAdam (d. 1817) inscribed in a local graveyard. It would have been useful to include some further contextual information for these appendices.

The volume is attractive and well produced. The frontispiece, an image of Mrs Bell Ann MacAngus, Watson's principal informant, and her daughter Dolina taken at Tain in the 1950s is a nice visual reminder of the family and community networks which clearly sustained Gaelic until its last in the Nigg Peninsula. Although the blue cloth covers of the Dublin Institute's dialect monographs look a bit dated in this century, there is something appropriate about the design given that the original fieldwork was carried out at the same time as other studies in the series. A minor criticism relates to the table of contents which could have been formatted more clearly and would have made the book as a whole easier to navigate. I would note that there is little explicit description of the morphological features of the dialect, some of which are quite distinctive and not very well known to those familiar with western varieties of Gaelic. It may be possible to use the material presented in the volume to distil such a description in the future, but Watson's insight – however brief – would have been valuable in this regard. These are minor quibbles; coming in at 474 pages, the book is a testament to Watson's scholarship and fieldwork and provides more than enough material to stimulate new research

into the Gaelic of Easter Ross. In his earlier volume, *Saoghal Bana-mharaiche*, more ethnographic in scope, Watson (2007: xxi) remarked, rather poignantly '[s]luagh gun ghuth a bha ann an luchd labhairt na Gàidhlig ann am Machair Rois mun àm a ràinig mise an t-àite a' chiad uair a-riamh anns a' Ghiblean 1967'.[1] Over five and a half decades later, although his informants have all gone to their reward and the Gaelic of Easter Ross is no longer to be heard except on recordings, Seosamh Watson – in this volume as elsewhere – has given them a voice.

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Note

[1] My translation: 'The Gaelic-speaking folk of Machair Rois [the area of the Nigg Peninsula in Easter Ross] were a people without a voice when I reached the area for the first time in April 1967'.

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Ansell, Michael, Black, Ronald and Cowan, Edward J. (eds.), *Galloway: The Lost Province of Gaelic Scotland*. Peebles: John Dewar. Pp. viii + 439. ISBN 9781399926928.

This handsome volume, which comprises the proceedings of a conference held in Galloway in 2018, sets out to answer fundamental questions about the presence and nature of Gaelic in south-west Scotland, namely, as the blurb explains, 'When was Gaelic spoken? Where did it last longest? What was it like? What do we know of the people who spoke it?'. Although Gaelic appears to have survived for over a thousand years as a spoken vernacular in the area, perhaps until the late eighteenth century in some districts, the evidence available to answer these questions is sparse and difficult to interpret, much more so than for the neighbouring areas of Arran and Kintyre, the Isle of Man and East Ulster, where Gaelic survived longer and left much clearer remains in terms of texts and linguistic descriptions and sound recordings. The editors and authors are to be congratulated on the progress made in this book, even if there is much work left to do, as several of them readily admit.

In general the chapters are well written and many of them should be accessible to a broad audience of scholars and interested lay people, although some of the longer contributions may be better considered as compilations of data to be dipped into or browsed for the conclusions by all but the most committed specialists. The disciplinary breadth of the contributions is impressive; however, given the focus of the present journal, this review will give more attention to the chapters with a more strongly linguistic focus. I did not detect any significant typographical or editorial errors, and the publishers deserve credit for their professionalism, especially in view of the large amount of historical and linguistic data included.

Thomas Owen Clancy's chapter 'Place-Names and Gaelic in Galloway: Names containing *cill* and *kirk*' (pp. 1–26) discusses the relation between Gaelic names with *cill* (anglicized as *kil-*) and those with Scots/English (or Norse) *kirk* both in Galloway and in other parts of the Gaelic world. I do not find his central thesis convincing, that is, that *kirk* was actually borrowed into Gaelic and that e.g. 'Kirkbride' represents **Circ Brìghde* rather than an equivalent of **Cill Brìghde*. There is no evidence for the existence of this loan

outside place-names; that *kirk* forms are earlier than *kil-* forms may simply be an artefact of the language of record (rarely Gaelic in the regions in question); and the existence of 'inversion-compounds' in a multilingual zone (in which the intelligentsia would have had exposure to generic-specific name forms not only in Celtic but also in Romance) does not seem as implausible as Clancy makes out. It is worth pointing out that Clancy overlooks the clear distinction made in Manx between *skeerey* 'parish' (general term) and *skylley X* 'parish of X; Kirk X' (pp. 19–20, 26); the latter is the consistent form in parish names, e.g. *Kirk Michael*, Manx *Skylley Mayl* (Broderick 2019: 65–66). That *skylley* is a contraction of *skeerey killey* (*sgìre cille*) (Broderick 2006: 191) seems more plausible than an arbitrary consonant shift affecting only this particular collocational usage: such shifts in liquids are usually the result of assimilation or dissimilation, but there is no clear trigger here. Moreover, it is more economical to assume this usage goes back to the establishment of the parishes than to assume a period where an otherwise unknown borrowing **circ* was used also in Manx and Scottish Gaelic. Aside from this lexical issue, Clancy's chapter also contains valuable discussion on saints' names found in the place-names in question, and their implications for the region's links with the wider Irish Sea world.

The first of two substantial chapters by Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh, 'The Gaelic Element in the Lexicon of Galloway Scots' (pp. 76–124), assesses the lexical items of possible Gaelic origin to be found in five nineteenth and twentieth-century sources. Much of the chapter consists of tables listing all of the relevant data with detailed linguistic commentary, drawing exhaustively on the primary Gaelic and Scots dictionaries. While some etymologies are uncertain, many are quite transparent, and overall the dataset demonstrates the survival of a substantial lexicon of Gaelic origin in Galloway Scots until recent times. Ó Maolalaigh devotes considerable attention to the complexities of interpreting the relationship between Gaelic and Scots, which will be of wider interest to scholars of these languages.

The chapter concludes with a series of more detailed lexical case-studies, as well as a semantic classification of the data using the hierarchical categories of the *Historical Thesaurus of English*, which serves to highlight the wide range of semantic fields covered by the surviving Gaelic lexis. Less is revealed by the data in this chapter about the dialect affinities of Galloway Gaelic than in the author's discussion of the place-name evidence (below), but it is worth

noting the discussion of the interjection *ochanee* (pp. 115–16), for which similar forms are attested in Arran, Manx, and Ulster Irish. Ó Maolalaigh sees the presence of an Early Irish intensifying element *a(m)né* (*eDIL* s.v. 2 *ané*) here. While he is inclined to attribute the raising of /eː/ to /iː/ to the Great Vowel Shift within Scots, one may note /iː/ in twentieth-century Manx (Broderick 1984–86 II: 337), and the similar raising of the pronoun in the Manx copula form *cha nee* (*chan é*), found also in Lewis Gaelic (Oftedal 1956: 246), which has been attributed to the presence of the adjacent nasal (Lewin 2015: 77).

Aonghas MacCoinnich's contribution, 'Looking for a Gàidhealtachd in the South-West: Identifying Gaels in the Historical Record, c. 1400–1805' (pp. 125–172), is a wide-ranging discussion of the historical evidence for the maintenance of Gaelic in Galloway in this period, as well as a discussion of the factors behind the paucity of this evidence. Much of the chapter consists of comparisons with the sociolinguistic situation of Gaelic in the Highlands in recent centuries – for example, the prevalence and necessity (or otherwise) of Gaelic-speaking ministers in parishes on the periphery of the Gàidhealtachd, such as in Caithness. Comparison is also made with the present-day sociolinguistic situation of Gaelic in the Hebrides. MacCoinnich makes the point that Gaelic must already have been in a weaker situation in Galloway, or that bilingualism and diglossia must have been more entrenched, at the time of the Reformation, as there is no record of the use of Gaelic in church services in the region. Nevertheless, he suggests that Gaelic 'probably did persist for some time after this [after the Reformation] at family and village levels in various locales: in Carrick, perhaps in particular' (p. 159). Such usage may apparently have continued as late as the early nineteenth century. This begs the question, however, as to what exactly the sociolinguistic dynamics may have been to maintain Gaelic on this more limited scale for up to two or three centuries, given the evidence for rapid language shift elsewhere once tipping points have been reached and societal dominance lost. MacCoinnich does not give a satisfactory answer to this, although this may be attributed to the lack of evidence rather than faulty analysis.

Michael Ansell's chapter, 'Re-evaluating the Gaelic Mountain Toponymy of the Galloway Highlands' (pp. 173–224) provides a detailed analysis of the place-names of the mountains and hills of the central Galloway Highlands, together with a number of colour plates depicting the landscapes in question.

Ansell claims that present-day application of these names 'is something of a mess, to put it politely' (p. 173), partly as a result of deficiencies in the fieldwork of the mid-nineteenth century Ordnance Survey, especially in terms of confusion of farm and hill names. The bulk of the chapter consists of a survey of the place-names in question, together with suggested Gaelic etymologies where applicable. My own lack of specialism in place-name studies precludes detailed critique of particular examples, but I would venture to suggest that some of the suggested etymologies seem a little too speculative, and based mostly on vague phonetic similarity between the Scots-mediated name and the suggested Gaelic form. More detailed comparison with patterns of place-name usage elsewhere in the Gaelic world would have been useful in places for confirming the semantic plausibility of proposed forms (this is not a criticism which can be levelled at Ó Maolalaigh's chapter on place-names discussed below, which considers extensive comparative data from across the Gaelic world). However, again the tenuousness and ambiguity of the available evidence must be taken into account in assessing the quality of the analysis, and this chapter certainly makes a substantial contribution to the study of Galloway upland toponymy, and provides a strong basis for future investigation.

Ronald Black's contribution, 'The Gaelic Literature of Galloway: "Òran Bagraidh" and Willie Matheson' (pp. 225–64) considers the small quantity of literary material in Gaelic with a possible Galloway provenance, including one fifteenth-century Classical Gaelic praise poem; the works of John Carswell (*c*. 1520–1572), notably *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, his translation of Knox's *Book of Common Order* and the first volume printed in Gaelic in Scotland or Ireland (Thomson 1970); and a difficult verse text known as 'Òran Bagraidh' ('Song of Defiance'). The latter has been claimed to be at least in part a forgery, although Black, following an unpublished note by William Gillies, concludes that much of it is genuine, and a Galloway connection plausible. Most of the chapter consists of attempts to edit and analyse versions of 'Òran Bagraidh'. In respect of Carswell's origins, Black makes a useful general point about the dangers of scholarly consensus which are ultimately based on nothing more than repeating the assertions of others. The frequently repeated claim that Carswell was of Argyll origin has no evidential basis, and according to Black there is circumstantial evidence linking him to Wigtownshire.

James Brown's chapter, 'Nic and Mac: Gaelic Lingering in Eighteenth-Century Carrick', presents previously unnoticed evidence of the use of

female 'Nic' versions of surnames within English-language records in Carrick (southern Ayrshire) into the eighteenth century. Brown takes this as evidence for the survival of Gaelic as a living language in the region, perhaps as late as the early nineteenth century. While this is plausible, one might perhaps also consider the possibility of the survival of a Gaelic naming practice as a local custom even after the loss of Gaelic as a vernacular. Brown finds no examples of this practice in Galloway proper (Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire), where Gaelic is believed to have been lost somewhat earlier than in Carrick.

Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh's second contribution, 'Galloway Gaelic and Place-Names: Linguistic Characteristics and Dialect Affinities' (pp. 281–383) is the longest chapter in the book, amounting for almost a quarter of its pages, and perhaps the most significant from the perspective of Celtic linguists, containing as it does an attempt to identify specific (morpho)phonological features of Galloway Gaelic which shed light on its place in the wider Gaelic dialect continuum. Again, much of the data is frustratingly difficult to interpret, especially in light of centuries of transmission in spoken and written Scots, and Scots-internal phonological developments. For example, Ó Maolalaigh spends several pages considering the evidence for indication of Gaelic broad and slender *t* in the place-name corpus, in an attempt to determine the Galloway form of *teach*/*tigh*/*taigh*, an important dialect shibboleth, but the data are inconclusive (p. 300); similarly for indication of original long vowels in unstressed syllables in suffixes such as *-án*, *-óg* (p. 312). Despite these difficulties, as in his other chapter, Ó Maolalaigh's painstaking analysis of these issues will be of wider interest to the historical linguist of Gaelic and Scots/English, as well as other scholars who rely on such data for dating and provenance of sources.

The place-name forms are similarly inconclusive in providing Galloway evidence for the important Scottish and Manx development, plural *-an* (Manx *-yn*), as this cannot be clearly distinguished from diminutive *-án* (p. 326). Ó Maolalaigh is on somewhat firmer ground in noting that 'the place-name evidence on the whole seems to reflect conservative Gaelic pronunciations with short vowels retained' before tense sonorants (p. 333). This would show an affinity with the neighbouring dialects of Arran, south Argyll, Ulster, and (seventeenth-century) Manx. There is, however, some evidence that 'diphthongisation before *ll* and *nn* may have been a feature of Galloway Gaelic at some stage in its development'. Ó Maolalaigh is able to present much clearer evidence that non-labialized forms of older Gaelic *ar-*, *er-*, *ur-* (e.g. *earball*,

urball ‘tail’) and *tel-*, *tul-* (*tulach*, *tealach* ‘hill’) were a prominent feature of Galloway Gaelic, as they are in Manx (Lewin 2020: 145–47), and that this points to a ‘conservative relict dialect feature’ in the Galloway-Man area (p. 342). In addition to place-name evidence, Ó Maolalaigh considers the possibility that John Carswell (see above) was of Galloway origin, in relation to two possibly dialectal spellings in his work, *futhadh* ‘under them’, *uathadh* ‘from them’. However, there are several possible interpretations of the significance of the final *-dh* here, none of which are incompatible with an Argyll origin of Carswell’s spoken Gaelic (p. 361).

The most striking feature showing divergence of Galloway Gaelic from other Scottish dialects is the relatively clear evidence for Irish and Manx-style eclipsis of *b-*, *c-* and *f-*. As Ó Maolalaigh observes, ‘[t]he evidence for eclipsed *b* as *m* in Galloway place-names supports a relatively late date for the introduction of Gaelic to Galloway from either Ireland or Man or both’ (p. 368); the consensus of the volume is that Gaelic was not introduced to Galloway ‘till 870 AD at the earliest’ (blurb). Ó Maolalaigh also shows that the change *cht* / *chd* > *chg*, now universal in Scottish Gaelic in final position, and in other positions with odd exceptions (e.g. *eachdraidh* ‘history’), does not seem to have spread to Galloway. This, however, may not be of too much significance given the late date at which this seems to have occurred in other dialects. The chapter concludes with a call for further work on the ‘extraordinarily rich, albeit deeply challenging, corpus of surviving Gaelic place-names’ in Galloway, which remains to be more ‘consistently analysed […] with the collection of more historical forms and more attention paid to local topography and physical characteristics’ (p. 371).

Finally, I will briefly treat the remaining chapters, most of which are of more historical and social than strictly linguistic interest. Donald C. Whannell’s contribution, ‘The origins of the Galloway *cenéla*’ (pp. 27–44) provides historical analysis of the major kinship groups of Gaelic Galloway, discussing the mixed ethnic origins of the families in question. Richard Oram’s chapter ‘Dabhach and Ceathramh-Names: Fragments of a Lost Assessment System’ (pp. 45–60) takes up the fraught issues surrounding the nomenclature of land divisions in various territories of Orkney, the West of Scotland and the Isle of Man where influence of a common Norse ‘ounceland’ system (Thomas 1880) has been suggested. Bringing the Galloway evidence to bear, Oram argues against a common Orcadian origin for these systems, arguing

instead for much more localized fusions of Norse and Gaelic traditions. Hector MacQueen's chapter 'The Laws of Galloway Revisited' (pp. 61–75) also focuses on the fusion and interaction of cultural and legal elements of different origin – comparing for example the Galloway institution of the *kenkynnol* (*ceann cineóil*) 'head of kindred', an archaic term not found in the rest of Gaelic Scotland, with the Brythonic cognate *pencenedl* – and explores how Galloway law was maintained and adapted in the emerging Kingdom of Scotland from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The concluding chapter of the volume, 'Gaelic to Scots in Galloway' (p. 384–390) is a posthumous publication of local historian Alistair Livingston's (†2018) paper presented at the 2018 conference; it begins with a meditation on the complete loss of folk memory of Galloway's Gaelic heritage, and presents a brief consideration of some of the historical evidence for language maintenance and shift in the region. The chapter, and the volume, concludes with a tribute to Livingston by his postgraduate supervisor Ted Cowan, one of the editors.

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Richard Morgan. *Place-Names of Carmarthenshire*. Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2022. Pp. 267. £19.99.

Studies of Welsh place-names have undergone quite a resurgence in recent years, with scholarly investigations of most Welsh counties, in different degrees of detail, now completed. While we are still some distance from having a full equivalent of the English Place-name series (Cambridge) most of the gaps have been amply filled, significantly due to the tireless work of Richard Morgan. He is an archivist and experienced toponymist and his thoroughness, balanced views, deep knowledge and insights are evident throughout the work. This toponymic investigation is the latest in his list of county studies, and a fine sequel to the previous publications.

The intended audience is both scholarly and amateur. The work benefits from academic rigour and from a sizable number of drawings and photographs, useful both in illuminating certain issues, signalling its targeting of a general readership and illustrating many points such as locations or context. Each alphabetic section is opened with a black and white photograph of a named place, sometimes of buildings no longer extant.

The bulk of the study, as usual, comprises an alphabetically arranged discussion of the main place-names of this large and populous county. It opens with a well-presented contents page, followed by a list of acknowledgements which reads like a *Who's Who* of modern Welsh toponymic studies. Morgan should be congratulated for consulting widely and assuring competent proof-readers. This has resulted in a scholarly work which has avoided almost all the well-known and numerous pitfalls of publishing ambitious works on toponymy. One can only wish that all who venture into this potential quagmire should be so open and dedicated.

There follows an excellent, concise introduction surveying the earlier research and providing an overview of the content of the work and some of the challenges engaged with. Four maps provide us with useful information on the divisions of the county and the extremely rare 'English Influence before 1500'. Morgan proceeds to explain how names were selected for discussion, noting his investigation of Ordnance Survey maps, to which historic parishes, lordships and manors were added. The selection is therefore

broad, manageable and consistent, and includes all major settlement names and also rivers.

In order to indicate, specific pronunciations, the author employs the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), whose relevant symbols are illustrated by Welsh and English names. I think this was a wise decision, much preferable to devising an original orthographic system. With nearly universal access to the internet, accessing detailed descriptions and realisations of such symbols is now unproblematic, and this ensures easy cross-referencing with other academic works which increasingly employ this approach. However, it is curious that 'mh' is represented by m̥ ('m' with underdot), 'nh' with 'n̥' ('n' with underdot) when the corresponding aspirated 'n' is noted inconsistently by 'ŋh'. While not a major problem it is surely likely to confuse the more dedicated but non-specialist reader. Similarly, it is curious that 'ʊ' (a capital) is employed for the usual 'u' of the IPA.

This is followed by ten pages of abbreviations and bibliography, all clearly and accessibly laid out, not hidden at the back, or unhelpfully compressed. A useful addition is a little over two pages of references to online material, a must for the increasingly digitalised world of toponymic studies. A detailed 34-page toponymic glossary follows, with headwords highlighted and in italics, precisely as the terms are presented when employed in the body of the text. These are provided with compact explanatory notes. This makes for easy cross-referencing between the glossary and the later discursive text.

Then comes the bulk of the work, 183 pages of scholarly, but readable toponymic discussions. The layout is as follows: headword on left with grid reference to the right, definition or location of feature underneath, a translation with elements on a separate line and on yet another line the earliest attestations. The etymological and contextual discussions are clear and as faultless as one can expect any toponymic discussion to be, and they are often accompanied with useful contextual or historical notes. All headwords are in bold and each entry is separated by a clear space. Placing discussions in two columns again makes for easy reading, and having each section noted on the top of every even page facilitates accessing the entries.

Take, for example, the discussion of Dyfed. Morgan surveys existing etymologies. The first, discussed in *The Place-names of Roman Britain* and by Patrizia de Bernardo Stempel (wrongly noted as 'Patrizia Stempel') is that the protoform ('Demetae' in the second century) attests a root for 'tame' with the

suffix *-et*, seen in other Celtic names. The second is a suggestion by Andrew Breeze that the name can be segmented (in modern Welsh orthography) as *dy-+med-* 'good reap' referring to the supposedly warlike qualities of this group who are 'expert cutters-down' of enemies. Morgan notes neither as being conclusive, a view with which I would agree, but he fails in the linguistic aspects. He seems to get muddled between the Celtic intensive prefix 'do-' and the Welsh adjective 'da' (good, < **dago-*) and it is unclear which vowel changes are problematic for the second etymology. Even if such vowel alterations were problematic they are proven by the attested forms of second-century 'Demetae', sixth-century 'Demetarum', Old Welsh 'Dimet' and thirteenth-century 'Dyuet'. A little further explanation, only a sentence or two, would enable readers to grasp the challenges and would encourage further consideration. No note is made of why the river-name is Sawdde as opposed to the expected 'Sodde'. While it is noted that rivers named Taf, are no longer considered to mean 'dark', no mention is made of more recent thinking that it may mean 'cutter' (see Falileyev's *Dictionary of Continental Celtic Place-names*, s.v. **tamo-*). It is occasional smallish errors like this which are problematic and which could have been resolved before publication. These do result in the work perpetuating a limited number of misconceptions and renders it not fully reliable for historical linguists. Fortunately, few discussions require recourse to Proto-Celtic and the vast majority of names are explicable while employing modern dictionaries, sometimes with ingenuity.

Nevertheless, this painstaking, detailed and dependable study merits praise, not only for its academic rigour but also for its careful consideration to readability and accessibility. This is a scholarly work of great importance not only for the field of Welsh place-names but also for Welsh history and the language itself. It will be of interest to toponymists in general, and to historians, linguists, Celticists and local historians. It is a pleasure to see such works reaching the public in such a fine state of completion. The only note of regret is that a field so enthusiastically studied in Welsh, investigating one of the heartlands of the language should appear in English. Glenda Carr's work demonstrates that publishing in Welsh is feasible, despite knowing that this will limit the readership. One must also bear in mind that such publications are seldom provided with any significant financing, which is remarkably negligent of funding bodies, considering their importance. These publications rely entirely (apart from the small numbers of subscribers) on the dedication,

passion and tireless commitment of a few committed specialists working in their spare time. I thoroughly endorse this work and hope that it will enrich the shelves of all relevant academic libraries.

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Brynley F. Roberts. *Edward Lhwyd c. 1660–1709. Naturalist, Antiquary, Philologist*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2022. Pp. 321. ISBN: 978-1-78683-782-0.

This monograph is another scholarly milestone in Brynley F. Roberts' long engagement with the life and work of Edward Lhwyd. His interest dates back to the late 1960s (see p. xi) and has resulted not only in a long series of publications – there are 27 entries under his name in the bibliography ranging from 1971 to 2019 – and the important collection of texts and translations relating to Lhwyd's *Archaeologia Britannica* (Evans & Roberts 2009), but also in the transcripts of Lhwyd's correspondence, which formed the basis for the Edward Lhwyd Correspondence Project, available as a part of Early Modern Letters Online (EMLO, see *http://emlo-portal.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/collections/?catalogue=edward-lhwyd*). It now contains 2,128 records.

The volume is published by the University of Wales Press as part of its series 'Scientists of Wales'. Roberts therefore feels the need to address two issues arising from this title, namely Lhwyd's status as a 'scientist' and his Welshness, since he was born in Shropshire and later lived in Oxford. With regard to the first, Roberts points out that field archaeology, epigraphy, and linguistic studies, central areas of Lhwyd's scholarly interests, are sciences, even if the English term 'science' does not cover them, and he refers to the wider German term *Sprachwissenschaft* (to which I would add the still broader term *Geisteswissenschaften* 'humanities, arts'). He also states that the question is anachronistic since Lhwyd applied a 'scientific approach' within a seventeenth-century framework based on observation, description, and systematic organisation of evidence (see pp. 4–5). With regard to Lhwyd's Welshness, Roberts convincingly argues that he was born into the Welsh gentry of Shropshire, that Wales and later Welsh were foci of his scholarship, and that his pride in a Welsh identity is formally acknowledged in his 'consciously opting to use the original Welsh form [i.e., Lhwyd] of his anglicised surname [i.e., Lloyd]' (p. 1, see further below).

Most readers of the *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* will probably automatically think of Edward Lhwyd as the author of the *Archaeologia Britannica*, whose first and only volume, *Glossography*, was published in

1707. It is considered to be a milestone in the early history of Celtic Studies because it provides firm language data for Irish, Welsh, Breton, and Cornish as well as extensive discussions of the principles of etymological comparisons (in its first tract, 'Comparative Etymology, or Remarks on the Alteration of Languages') and collections of related and unrelated words in the Celtic languages with Latin lemmata (in the second tract) and of etymologies (in the eighth tract). All this was – as Lhwyd wrote – intended to be 'Instrumental, towards the leading us to a Clearer Notion than we have had hitherto of the most Ancient Languages, and Consequently of the Origin of the First Colonies of these Kingdoms' (unpagin. dedication to Thomas Mansel = Evans & Roberts 2009: 54). Roberts highlights that it was Lhwyd's achievement to have 'provided etymology with a rational basis within the conceptual framework of seventeenth-century scientific thought, thereby setting the comparative method on firmer ground. One consequence was that he justified the use of the term "the Celtic languages" as a meaningful one' (p. 225). For example, Lhwyd describes the second tract in the general preface as a 'Latin-Celtic Dictionary' and in its heading as a 'comparative vocabulary of the original languages of Britain and Ireland', i.e., Welsh, Breton, Cornish, and Irish, and thus implies their equation with 'Celtic'. His more specific ideas about Celtic migrations to Britain and about the relations of the Celtic languages with languages of Europe are developed less visibly in his Welsh-language preface to the *Archaeologia* and in letters to friends (p. 223) – a useful translation of this preface attributed to Lhwyd and published by Hugh Thomas in 1729 is printed in Evans & Roberts (2009: 106–43), with the original in Lhwyd's unorthodox orthography devised for Modern Welsh on facing pages. Roberts' informed summary of Lhwyd's achievements in the *Archaeologia* (pp. 220–25) is a great help in order to assess his place in the history of Celtic Studies.

The *Glossography* was intended as the first volume of a wide-ranging and multi-volume 'Account of the Ancientest Languages, Customs, and Monuments of the British Isles', as Lhwyd described it in his prospectus of 1703 with which he wanted to attract subscribers in order to finance its publication. This focus on language(s) and on the early history of Britain slowly developed during his life and work. He was originally interested in plants and collected and classified plants by 1681, following in the footsteps of his father, Edward Lloyd (1635–81), who was an enthusiastic gardener and part of a network of botanists. In 1682, Lhwyd went up to Oxford to

study law, but, as Roberts puts it (p. 37), 'he found frequenting Oxford's Physic Garden far more congenial than studying law'. Through his contacts in Wales, Lhuyd was able to supply the garden with welcome rare plants. He was appointed assistant by the keeper of the newly founded Ashmolean Museum and assigned the task of organising and cataloguing the collection; the Ashmolean Museum was to remain the centre of his life. He became its keeper in 1691 and died there 'in his study in the damp ground floor of the Museum' (p. 230) on 29 June 1709.

Roberts gives a detailed and highly readable account of Lhwyd's life and career, of the development of his scholarly interests, which soon extended beyond plants, and of the manifold scholarly networks in which he participated. His account of seventeenth-century speculations and controversies about the nature and origin of fossils, or 'formed stones', as they were called at that time, makes fascinating reading (pp. 91–100) – and brings home the conceptual alterities of these early scientific and scholarly approaches. Lhwyd's continued close connections with Wales and his interest in its plants, minerals, and fossils as well as in its antiquities, history, and language are a leitmotif of Roberts' study. Its cover fittingly features as illustration a Snowdon Lily (formerly *Lloydia serotina*, reclassified as *Gagea serotina*), a now very rare small plant discovered by Llwyd in Snowdonia probably in 1688 (p. 64). His scholarly work in natural history culminated in the publication of the *Lithophylacii Britannici Ichnographia* in 1699, a catalogue of fossils housed in the Ashmolean Museum.

Language became an important part of Lhwyd's many interests; already in 1685, for example, he asked a Welsh correspondent to supply him with the Welsh names of the birds whose eggs he wanted to have sent from Wales (p. 40), and when he encountered Irish as a spoken language during a visit to Dublin in 1688, he compiled 'a Catalogue of \several/ words which I thought agreeable to some in our [i.e., Welsh] language' (p. 61). As Roberts points out, this catalogue contains 'some hundred words' and is 'one of his earliest efforts in systematic etymology' (p. 62). By 1691, Lhwyd was a recognised 'expert on the place-names and antiquities of Wales and on the Welsh language' (p. 121). This reputation is the background for a decisive moment in the further development of his scholarly interests, namely the invitation in 1693 to contribute additions and revisions for the chapter on Wales for a new English version of Camden's *Britannia*, which appeared in 1695 – for

Roberts' instructive survey of some of Lhwyd's linguistic observations here, see pp. 136–38, and p. 142, specifically on the spelling and pronunciation of Welsh. Work for this project, which included a preparatory seven-week tour of Wales and the distribution of a questionnaire (all parallel with the completion of the *Ichnographia*), 'reinforced his interest in antiquarian and linguistic questions, and the informed assistance he had received in his researches from Welsh gentry and clergy interested in antiquities and natural history showed him that there was a potential market for the work he had in mind' (p. 145) – namely an extensive 'natural history' of Wales, of which only the first volume, the *Glossography*, would eventually be realized before Llwyd's early death. The complex preparations for this new project involved not only the finding of funding, the production and distribution of a questionnaire, and the development of networks, but also extensive travelling, first in Wales and later, accompanied by research assistants, in Scotland, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Cornwall, and Brittany. All this is traced by Roberts in detail, and readers get a vivid idea of the difficult genesis of the *Archaeologia – Glossography*, the manifold challenges Lhwyd faced, his wide scholarly networks in the Celtic countries and England, his unstinting dedication – and finally the success of his intellectual endeavour.

As mentioned above, Lhwyd opted to use a Welsh form of his name from around 1688 onwards, instead of anglicised *Lloyd*; besides *Lhwyd*, he also used *Luidius* in Latin contexts (for example on the title-page of the *Ichnographia*), *Lhuyd* in the *Archaeologia*, and a variant *Llûyd* in 1694 in a list of members of the Oxford Red Herring Club (pp. 1–2, Roberts 1996). As pointed out by Roberts: 'The choice of "Lhuyd" may have been made to assist non-Welsh readers to pronounce his Welsh name more correctly but may also be a tribute to Humphrey Lhuyd of Denbigh (*c*. 1527–68), an earlier Welsh scholar of illegitimate birth [like Lhwyd himself] who had replaced "Lloyd" by the Welsh original' (p. 2).[1] There is a further variant attested in the *Archaeologia*, namely *LHỤYD*, in his signature at the end of the prefaces to the Cornish grammar and the British *Etymologicon* respectively (Lhwyd 1707: 224, 269). The letter-form <ụ> is given as a variant of <*û*> in his 'General Alphabet made use of in the Welsh, Cornish, Armoric and Irish' and assigned the value 'as the English oo' (Lhwyd 1707: 2). This form <ụ> connects back to Humphrey Lhuyd, who mentions it in his posthumously published *Commentarioli Britannicae Descriptionis Fragmentum* as a variant

of Welsh <w> used by learned authors: 'duplici V. à vulgaribus vel simplicii cum puncto supposito ab eruditis' ('double v by the unlearned or simple ones, with an underdot by the learned', Lluyd 1572: B_{2v}). There are probably further links with the Welsh grammarian Gruffydd Robert (*c*. 1527–1598), whose orthographical innovations, which include <u̱> for /u/, are mentioned by Lhwyd in his Welsh preface in the *Archaeologia*.[2] Robert may have given Humphrey Lluyd a copy of the first part of his grammar when the latter was in Milan in 1566 to 1567, where Robert was Canon Theologian to the cathedral and where the first part of his grammar was printed in 1567.[3]

Brynley F. Roberts' monograph is an admirably successful, readable, and comprehensive monument to Edward Lhwyd as a hero of early natural, historical, and linguistic sciences, and at the same time a monument to Roberts' own impressive and wide-ranging scholarship in these diverse areas. Sadly, at the end of this review it is necessary to note his death on 14 August 2023.

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Notes

1 The spelling <u> for <w> to represent /u/ is recommended specifically for Modern Welsh by Lhwyd in the Welsh preface, based on both earlier conventions in Welsh and the value of <u>, /u/, in Latin, and I here quote the English translation: 'I choose also to write *u* for *w*, according to the oldest Welsh and Scottish Alphabet; and also according to the general Pronunciation of *u* Vowel in the Latin, amongst all Foreigners' (Evans & Roberts 2009: 111).

2 Humphrey Lluyd (1572: B_v-B_2) also mentions Robert's other two characteristic orthographic innovations, namely underdotted <l̤> and <d̤> for /ɬ/ and /ð/ instead of conventional <ll> and <dd>, and the conciseness of these letter forms; the same argument is advanced by Robert (1939: 15).

3 For Gruffydd Robert, see Bryant-Quinn 2019. I wish to thank Dr Paul Bryant-Quinn for kindly pointing me to Humphrey Lhuyd's *Commentarioli Britannicae Descriptionis Fragmentum* and for his generous advice on these orthographical complexities and on Humphrey Lluyd's stay in Milan and its context.

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Simon Rodway, Jenny Rowland, & Erich Poppe (eds.). *Celts, Gaels, and Britons: Studies in Language and Literature from Antiquity to the Middle Ages in Honour of Patrick Sims-Williams*. Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe, vol. 35. Turnhout: Brepols, 2022. Pp. xviii + 365. ISBN 978-2-503-59864-2.

This *Festschrift* is a collection of 18 articles in honour of Patrick Sims-Williams's many contributions to the field of Celtic studies. As would be expected for a scholar with his wide interests, the articles in this volume also are wide-ranging in their coverage. Since this review is by a linguist for a linguistic journal, the following will focus on the contributions dedicated to linguistic and textual topics, but this should not be construed as a slight towards chapters on other topics.

Javier de Hoz's chapter '*TARUOTUREŚKA TUREITA*: a Celtiberian collocation' discusses Celtiberian *TARUOTUREŚKA TUREITA*, attested twice on bronze tablets, and argues that it is a collocation meaning roughly 'authorization regarding the livestock market / the passing of livestock'. The element *TARUO-* is clearly from PIE **tau̯ro-* 'bull' (Matasović 2009: 371–72) and PC **duron* < PIE **dhu̯or-* 'door / forum' (Matasović 2009: 111) plus an adjectival suffix of appurtenance. *TUREITA* is less certain, but de Hoz appears correct in following Prósper (2011: 225), both taking it as an etymological past passive participle **dū-reḭtā* < **dū-reχ-s-t-ā* 'issued'. Further semantic development would then lead to the meaning 'authorization' *uel sim.* Though certainty is nearly impossible to come by in such studies (as stated explicitly by de Hoz), the arguments are at least plausible and seem correct to me.

In 'More Celtic, more from Pannonia' Alexander Falileyev presents a careful discussion of a placename *Vicus Voleuci[o]nis*, found in Pannonia. We may accept the reading as the most plausible one; the linguistic affiliation of the name is more difficult, however. While a connection with PIE **leuk-* 'white, shining' is almost certain, the name could be seen as either Celtic or Pannonian (Greek is very unlikely given the location of the place), Falileyev argues that it is more likely Celtic, as the place-name appears to be based on a compound name **u̯o-leu̯ko-* < **upo-leu̯ko-*, with a transparent Celtic morphological development of the prepositional prefix. The appearance of

the diphthong as **eu̯* (not **ou̯*) is somewhat surprising, but this is discussed carefully. The conclusion that there was a Gaulish personal name *Voleuciū* (possibly Latinized as **Voleuciō*) is thus very reasonable.

Liam Breatnach, in 'An Old Irish text on kingship and the five provinces of Ireland', provides an edition with translation and commentary of a previously unpublished Old Irish text. After discussing divisions of Ireland into five provinces in the Middle Irish *Suidigud Tellaig Themra* 'the Settling of the Manor of Tara', the *Lebor Gabála Érenn*, and a few other texts, Breatnach presents the edition itself. The relatively short text outlines the geographical division of the five provinces and it gives the actions that kings of the provinces must undertake: the taking of hostages, the ruling of the province, the consumption of the revenues of the province, the assurance that judicial decisions are enforced, and the maintenance of peace through justice.

Peter Schrijver's contribution, 'The development of Proto-Celtic **st* in British Celtic', refines his earlier arguments (Schrijver 1995: 406–30) on the complicated developments of **st* in British Celtic. He argues that while **st* yields **ss* intervocalically (MW, MCo *gwas*, OIr. *foss* 'servant' < **u̯o-sto-* < **upo-sth₂o-*), following a consonant it is either maintained as **st* (with loss of the previous consonant if it is a dental; MW *arwest* 'cord' < PBr. **ariu̯estā* < **pari-u̯ed-stā*) or the **s* is lost (if the previous consonant is a resonant or guttural; MW *kymyrth* 'took' < **kom-birt* < **kom-bīrst* < **kom-bēr-s-t*). A further complicating factor is that **str* behaves differently than **st*: intervocalically, it gives **θr* (and later **ir*; the only reasonable example is MW *caer*, OIr. *cathair* 'fortress' < **kastr-ik-*; cf. L *castrum* 'army camp'); post-consonantally the **-C-str-* cluster simplifies to **str* (e.g. MW *rhwystr* 'hindrance', OIr. *ríastraid* 'distorts' < **rei̯g-str-V-*).

Much of what is argued for is uncontroversial, though two points are somewhat surprising from a phonetic perspective. The first is that **sst* gives **st* beside **st* giving **ss*. I would have expected the **sst* (a heavier cluster) to have yielded **ss* just like **st* (a lighter cluster). Since I do not have more to say on this, I will simply leave it at that.

The second surprise is the change of intervocalic **str* to **θr*, which is not given a phonetic explanation. Assuming the change does allow Schrijver to unify OIr. *cathir* with MW *caer* and Latin *castrum*, but it would be good to have a sense of how this **θ* may have arisen. The seemingly similar case in **tisres* (nom. pl. fem.) and **tisrās* (acc. pl. fem.) 'three' to **tiðres / *tiðrās* >

OIr. *téuir* / MW *teir* is more straightforward, since there the post-vocalic **s* may have become a phonetic [z] next to the **r*, and this [z] became [ð]. In the cluster **str*, however, the intervening **t* would likely have prevented the voicing to [z]. Perhaps **str* > **tsr* (the metathesis is assumed elsewhere for **st* – thus Schrijver in this chapter – so this would not be surprising) > **tzr* > **tðr* > **θr*? This appears somewhat forced, but perhaps it could work. The lack of a phonetic account does not disqualify the argument, but it does give me pause in accepting it.

Regardless of what one thinks about the phonetic developments, it must be said that this contribution provides a very coherent account that is able to cover more data than any other. It does so nearly entirely via regular sound change, the basis of the comparative method, the importance of which is emphasized by the author (172–73). While I might question certain elements of the argument, I cannot account for the same data better.

Immediately following this chapter is Stefan Schumacher's 'The development of Proto-Celtic **au* in British Celtic'. The traditional assumption (e.g. Jackson 1953: 305–06) is that **au* had merged with **ou* (and **eu*), though this view has largely been superseded by the newer argument (e.g. Lambert 1990, Schrijver 1995: 194–95) that **au* remained separate from **ou* (and **eu*), later merging with the reflex of **ā* (probably in the first instance as **ɔ̄*). Isaac (2007), however, subsequently asserted the correctness of the older view. Schumacher's contribution shows, definitively in my mind, that this view cannot be correct and that the reflex of **au* indeed merged with the reflex of **ā* in British Celtic. Schumacher wisely chooses to leave a further vexing question, the date of the Welsh diphthongization of **ɔ̄* (from **ā* and **au*) to [au] undiscussed. That is indeed a question for another time.

In 'The corpus of Old Cornish', Oliver Padel provides a chronologically arranged list, with linguistic remarks, of all texts containing Cornish language remains from before 1200. Following this, he discusses the principles and methods useful for distinguishing Cornish from Breton and Welsh in this early period. The chapter is an excellent and most welcome overview of all things Old Cornish.

Thomas Charles-Edwards's 'Bardic grammars on syllables' represents a second installment, as it were, following on from an earlier paper discussing the same grammars' treatment of *litterae* (Charles-Edwards 2016). Charles-Edwards shows that while the Welsh grammars were dependent

on Donatus and, to a lesser extent, Priscian, they needed to innovate when discussing syllables, since the Latin and Welsh systems worked very differently. The chapter is not introductory in nature, but it does provide the reader interested in Welsh grammar with an excellent view of how the Welsh thought about their own language, complete with valuable discussion of what some of the terms and classifications must mean.

'The joy of six: spelling and letter forms among fourteenth-century Welsh scribes', by Paul Russell, discusses the various means of spelling /v/, /w/, /u/, and /ʊ/, usually written <v>, <w> and <6>. Russell shows convincingly that the variation of writing with <v>, <w> and <6> is in many cases rule governed (or at least shows pronounced tendencies), though these vary by scribe, locality, and period. While he observes that much work remains to be done, he provides a valuable illustration of how textual editions might serve their audiences better by observing the rules governing the distribution of the sounds under discussion and writing the sounds appropriately.

David Willis's chapter 'the development of realis conditional clauses in Welsh' examines the medieval and Early Modern Welsh means for marking realis conditional clauses (most frequently MW *o* 'if', later *os*) and traces the likely grammaticalization paths for moving from the earlier system to the later one. While work still remains to be done on the question, a very interesting result is that the path appears not to have been a smooth one. That is, there were different strategies that were applied in different areas and times, most of which were ultimately replaced by *os* 'if'. I am eager to see how further work here might allow us to fill in the picture of dialect variation in earlier Wales.

Richard Glyn Roberts's 'A contribution to subaltern linguistics: Welsh *dim* in comparative (and similar) clauses' stresses the importance of what I would call close philological work on the modern languages. He points out that some uses of *dim* in non-negative sentences, especially in comparative and superlative constructions, have been largely overlooked in recent syntactic and cross-linguistic work, and he provides a large number of examples from Welsh of the last two centuries to illustrate the usage.

Erich Poppe finds few traces of translation in *Buchedd Beuno* in his correspondingly named chapter 'Traces of translation in *Buchedd Beuno*?', but that is of course a perfectly reasonable result. He examines subject-verb agreement patterns, relative clauses, and a Welsh absolute construction and finds, though admittedly with only a small number of possible examples, that

there is little (or at most contradictory) evidence to show this text to be a translation. While negative results are sometimes seen as disappointing, in this case they are accompanied by an interesting methodological approach and good suggestions for continuing and expanding on this preliminary investigation.

Dafydd Johnston, in 'Welsh *hoyw*: a case study in language contact' provides a close examination of the semantic development of the word from the *Gododdin* and other early material, where it is rare and meant something like 'spirited'; through fourteenth-century century poetry, where it is common and expanded its field of meaning to 'alert, nimble, spirited, gay, cheerful, beautiful'; and into the later language. He argues that the change in frequency and meaning was spurred on by the perceived need to have a Welsh word corresponding to French *gai* and English *gai* / *gay*. While I was initially not convinced by this explanation, it has grown on me and I now find it likely. Regardless of my own opinion, the paper represents a fine examination of the history of Welsh *hoyw*, connecting its developments to the sociolinguistic changes affecting the language in the Middle Ages.

In the following, I treat the remaining chapters very briefly, not because they are less deserving of receiving comment but because I am less capable of giving it:

- Simon Rodway (with a contribution from Barry Lewis) argues in 'John Scottus Eriugena and *Celtica eloquentia*' that Eriugena is not the first Irish person to be identified as a speaker of a Celtic language by a contemporary, as argued by Jaski 2009 for a ninth-century text.
- In 'British and Irish? Some thoughts on the Life of Saint Ailbe', Máire Herbert argues that the probably seventh or eighth-century life appears to show the Irish church emerging 'from under British tutelage to a church that was Irish in governance and orientation' (85).
- In 'Irish influence on Old Norse literature? *Immram* to *Hvítramannaland*', Máire Ní Mhaonaigh suggests that there was indeed influence of Irish on Old Norse literature, but that close examination puts that influence, for the subject in question, not in the period of the eighth to ninth-century voyage tales / the early Viking age but rather in thirteenth-century Norway and Iceland.
- Jenny Rowland, in her chapter 'Romanization and the British bards', provides an excellent overview of the history of scholarship surrounding

the idea that Wales remained essentially 'Celtic' during the Roman period, and she argues that there is good reason to continue the 'ongoing move away from interpreting early Medieval Welsh literature primarily in the light of conservative Celtic tradition' (127).

- William Mahon, in 'A note on the four bare-headed women in "Echrys Ynys"', suggests that the mysterious women of the poem from the Book of Taliesin were not historical persons but rather supernatural death-messengers responsible (through the deaths of the patron's four sons) for the poet being without any patron.
- Finally, Bleddyn Owen Huws's chapter 'Llythr Gofyn gan Siôn Phylip' argues, on the basis of a surviving letter by one of the last chief poets, Siôn Phylip (sixteenth/seventeenth centuries), that there was indeed interest in modern, humanist learning among at least some of the bardic order; the lack of which learning was a complaint against the poets at the time.

This volume dedicated to Patrick Sims-Williams is varied and interesting. The quality of scholarship is high. Even when I disagree with conclusions, I find it hard to refute them. I can and do recommend the book to anyone interested.

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