

ÉIGSE: A JOURNAL OF IRISH STUDIES

SEOLADH

Foilseacháin Éigse 1 *Éigse Publications 1*

LÉANN LÁMHSCRÍBHINNÍ LOBHÁIN THE LOUVAIN MANUSCRIPT HERITAGE

In eagar ag / Edited by

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Ollscoil na hÉireann
49 Cearnóg Mhuirfean
Baile Átha Cliath 2

Dé Luain 3 Nollaig 2007
Ag 5.00 p.m.

Sliocht as aitheasc an Ollaimh Pádraig A. Breatnach, Eagarthóir Éigse

Anois tagaim go dtí an tríú cúis a bhfuilimid anseo tráthnóna, foilsíú an leabhair *Léann lámhscríbhinní Lobháin: The Louvain manuscript heritage*, atá curtha in eagar ag mo sheanchomhleacuithe Caoimhín Breatnach agus Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail agus agam féin. Aistí iad seo atá bunaithe ar chainteanna a tugadh ag comhdháil a d'eagraíomar faoin dteideal céanna bliain ó shin le linn mise a bheith fós im bhall de Scoil na Gaeilge, UCD. Caithfidh mé a rá láithreach nár thaitn cúrsaí eagarthóireachta riamh chomh mór liom agus a thaitn liom an obair a roinnt le beirt scoláirí chomh ardchumasach le Caoimhín agus Meidhbhín, agus ní gá a rá go gcabhraíonn sé go mór i gcás obair dá sórt a roinnt go cothrom más cairde maithe dona chéile iad na heagarthóirí. Ní thógfar orainn é má deirim thar ceann mo chomheagarthóirí gurb ábhar mórtais dúinn é gur éirigh linn an saothar a thabhairt chun críche laistigh de bhliain tar éis na Comhdhála a eagrú.



Éigse Editor Professor Pádraig A. Breatnach addressing guests at the launch of The Louvain Manuscript Heritage

I gcumhne ar bhunú Choláiste San Antoine i Lobháin cheithre chéad bliain ó shin sa bhliain 1606/07 a tionóladh an Chomhdháil, dar ndóigh, agus b'í an chéad chomhdháil í i sraith d'imeachtaí éagsúla ag comóradh obair na bProinsiasach ó Éirinn i Lobháin le bliain anuas. Bhí sainchuspóir ar leithligh ag baint leis an gComhdháil a d'eagraíomar-na, áfach, nár bhain le aon chuid de na himeachtaí eile a tharla i rith an ama sin. Chuireamar romhainn i gcomhpháirtíocht le cainteoirí na Comhdhála, speisialtóirí mórainmneacha ar léann lámhscríbhinní na Gaeilge, aird a dhíriú ar an maoin chultúrtha a bhaineann leis na lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge atá tagtha anuas ó Lobháin, agus atá ar coimeád inniu i dhá institiúid go háirithe, leabharlann na Bruiséile agus an Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath.

This new book is devoted to the study of the collection of Irish-language manuscripts from the Franciscan College of St Anthony's in Louvain / Leuven, which was founded exactly 400 years ago. As you know the collection is today for the most part divided between the Belgian Royal Library, Brussels and University College Dublin. None of you here present needs to be reminded that Míchél Ó Cléirigh (Br Michael O Clery) was the greatest of the scribes whose work is found in that collection. O Clery was both a scholar editor as well as being a scribe, of course. I have before me an extract from the preface that accompanies the so-called Ó Cléirigh recension of Leabhar Gabhála or 'Leabhar Gabhaltas Éireann' (the Book of Invasions) which he prepared together with three or four other fellow scholars (just as we jointly have prepared

this volume). In his preface the circumstances in which the recension was made are described and the reasons for the undertaking are outlined. One of the reasons mentioned seems to me to have a particular resonance when considered in the context in which the present publication came about. Ó Cléirigh writes:

Adhbhar oile bheós, do feadar gur thionnscoinn daoine foghlomtha oile i Laidin 7 i mBerla, an croinicsi na hEirionn do thiontughadh a Gaoidhilg is na tengthaibhisi adubhramar, 7 nach raibhe foghluim na eolus grind i nGaoidhilg aca, triasa ccuirfidís cruas, buga, 7 sencus an leabhair le chéile gan ainbfios, gan iomroll; 7 co rachadh an tiondodh soin do ghendaois (deasbaidh eoluis Gaoidhilge) i n-aithis, 7 a n-9mdheargadh siordaidhe d'Eirinn uile, 7 go hairidhe da ccroinicibh.

Another reason too (he says): I was aware that men, learned in Latin and in English, had commenced to translate this chronicle of Ireland from the Irish into these languages that we mentioned, and that they had not so profound a knowledge of the Irish as that they could put the hard and the soft parts of the said book together without ignorance or error; and I felt that the translation which they would make must (for want of a knowledge of the Irish) become an eternal reproach and disgrace to all Ireland, and particularly so to her chroniclers.

The transfer of the Irish language manuscripts from the Franciscan collection in Dún Mhuire, Killiney, to University College Dublin a few short years ago brought a resource of immeasurable cultural importance to UCD. But a resource is only as good as the use that is made of it. To show sign of their appreciation of the nature of the new resource, UCD should ensure that those specialists in Irish manuscript literature from the department of Irish (now the School of Irish and Celtic Studies, Irish Folklore and Linguistics) who alone have the training and knowledge necessary to properly exploit the resource's potential, should be charged with some at least of the responsibility for its management, and development – and not excluded from it. Míchél Ó Cléirigh's concern for the fate of the great monuments of Irish literature and his awareness of the dangers posed by ignorance of their linguistic and historical substance, resonates today, and is mirrored by our anxiety that without the involvement of the counsels of those with the expertise to read the manuscripts of the Louvain collection they will be allowed to assume the status of images separated from their substance, objects to be studied more for their context than for the content of their texts. Our book focuses directly on the manuscripts of the UCD collection. It is a book written with the benefit of students of Irish in mind, and part of its message is that in Ireland institutions with ambitions to be regarded as centres of excellence in the humanities and Celtic Studies must support the training of researchers through the teaching of Irish in all its phases, Old, Classical and Modern.

Dar ndóigh, tá rud suaithinseach úrnua ag baint leis an bhfoilseachán áirithe seo, sa mhéid is go bhfuil sé á chur amach mar chéad imleabhar i sraith a bhfuil 'Foilseachán Éigse' baistithe mar ainm uirthi. Sraith ócáidiúil í seo atá beartaithe chun freastal a dhéanamh ar ábhar ná hoirfeadh a chur amach i dteannta chéile in iris atá ilghnéitheach agus a mbíonn an léirmheastóireacht mar chuid lárnach di; cnuasaigh de théacsaí nó d'altanna ar théama coiteann éigin arbh fhiú iad a thabhairt le chéile, agus a leithéidí sin, tá súil agam a chuirfear amach sa tsraith ó am go ham tá súil agam. Táim an-bhuíoch ar fad don Ollscoil as tacaíocht a thabhairt don gcur chuige nua seo. Gabhaim buíochas go speisialta leis leis an gCeann Scoile i Scoil na Gaeilge, an Léinn Cheiltigh, Bhéaloideas Éireann agus na Teangeolaíochta a thug tacaíocht airgid i gcomhair an imleabhair áirithe seo, bunaithe ar ár gComhdháil anuiridh. Braithim, mara mbeadh an tacaíocht sin geallta dúinn, go mb'fhéidir nach mbeadh an bhearna réidh a fuairéas ón gCláráitheoir agus ón Seansailéir i gcomhair na sraithe nua le fáil chomh réidh céanna.

Ar deireadh ba mhaith liom focal a rá le foireann an Dundalgan Press, agus leis an stiúrthóir bainistíochta Gerry Gormley.

I think it is obvious that Dundalgan has done an absolutely splendid job on this publication, even down to the supply of the French flap that adorns the cover. But it is for all the not so obvious behind the scenes patience, the special efforts and obliging gestures which as I have learned are a special trademark of Gerry Gormley's that I would like to thank him and all the staff most sincerely. Nár laga Dia sibh!