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- ⁴⁷ *Times*, 28 August, 4 October 1848.
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- ⁴⁹ *Hansard*, CIII, pp. 179-92 (5 March 1849), CIV, 87-117 (30 March 1849).
- ⁵⁰ Howick to Wood, 26 December 1844, Hickleton Papers, A4/55/1.
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John O'Donovan and the Framing of Early Medieval Ireland in the Nineteenth Century¹

Cathy Swift

John O'Donovan was employed by the Ordnance Survey of Ireland between the years 1830 and 1842 to investigate the history and orthography of Irish placenames. Although he was one of a school of Irish academics writing at this date, he holds a unique position in Irish studies in that his work still remains fundamental to the contemporary Irish medievalist. Our understanding of the geography of early medieval Ireland and, in consequence, its regional politics, stems almost entirely from the identifications made by O'Donovan. His work is the backbone, limbs and indeed most of the ribcage of the only general compilation of placenames from early Irish texts with their suggested equivalents: a text published by Edmund Hogan under the title *Onomasticon Goedelicum* in 1910 and never superseded.² In this paper, it is proposed to identify some of the influences shaping O'Donovan's achievements and to pinpoint certain areas where his preconceptions and the conditions under which he worked may have continued to frame our present perspective on early medieval Ireland.

Background

The study of the early medieval Irish past is in many ways a raw discipline, barely emerging into adolescence. It is only in the last ten to fifteen years that a generation of scholars taught by the pioneers has disappeared. Lecturers teaching in the field still tell stories of Osborn Bergin translating 'Mary had a little lamb' into Old Irish or how Daniel Binchy met Rudolf Thurneysen on the railway platform in Berlin in the 1930s. Using the traditional identification of thirty years to a generation, present-day students form only the third generation since the days of Eoin MacNeill, the first modern scholar to devote himself to early Irish history as a separate discipline within the study of the Irish past. Each of these generations is represented by only a very small number of scholars; the study of Irish literature and language has, until recently, tended to absorb those few individuals working on the early middle ages in Ireland. O'Donovan, who was active some fifty years before MacNeill and wrote more prolifically than most modern historians, stands very much as the father of our discipline and as with any other father, the offspring can find it difficult to disentangle his achievement from the atmosphere of unthinking acceptance within which they grow up.

Waterford

O'Donovan took a certain pride in being 'one of the oulde stock' but he was also very conscious of his mixed Gaelic and Anglo-Irish heritage. This may have stemmed from his background; he was born in Atatteemore in Co. Kilkenny and moved at the age of ten to Co. Waterford. After the death of his father when John was nine, he spent a large part of his youth at the home of his uncle Patrick. Patrick was an Irish speaker who had traveled widely on the continent before becoming, in the words of his nephew, 'the living repository of the counties of Kilkenny, Carlow and Waterford.'³ The lore of these counties would have been very much that of English-speaking Ireland and the household language of the O'Donovans was English, though the teacher of the local school knew Irish and the young John learnt Latin and Irish from the age of nine. His cultural background is portrayed in the curriculum which he offered at a school which he opened at Balynerg, Co. Waterford, at the age of nineteen: reading and writing in Irish and English, Christian doctrine through Irish, mensuration, agriculture, navigation and astronomy.

Before beginning his work for the Ordnance Survey, O'Donovan was employed for three years by James Hardiman, Sub-Commissioner for Public Records in Ireland, to copy Irish manuscripts and extracts from legal documents. This post would also have emphasized a mixed-Gaelic and Anglo-Irish tradition. Hardiman was an Irish speaker who had published a history of the town and county of Galway in 1820 and during the period in which O'Donovan was helping him, was working on English translations of Gaelic bardic poetry.⁴ At the same time, Hardiman's role as Commissioner involved him in the edition of legal records from Great Britain and Ireland and in his later letters, O'Donovan refers frequently to his debt to Hardiman for knowledge of these sources.

The Irish Ordnance Survey

In August 1830, the expert on the staff of the Irish branch of the Ordnance Survey died and O'Donovan was appointed to the position. The duties of this post and the way in which it evolved, are an integral part of the background to O'Donovan's work.

In the early nineteenth century, while the English Ordnance Survey was establishing a trigonometrical survey of southern England, administrators were clamoring for a number of large-scale cartographical projects in Ireland.⁵ Following the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Admiralty argued for a hydrographic survey of the Irish coastline, stepping up the pressure after one of their sloops was wrecked on an unknown sand bank off the Wexford coast. In 1809, the government had commissioned a survey of the principal bogs and at the same time, the directors of the inland navigation were considering the need for a single national survey. More importantly, the need

for an up-to-date assessment of the county cess was becoming crucial. This cess paid for much of the country's local administration and was apportioned among units known generally as 'townlands'. These units had been extensively surveyed in the seventeenth century but even where accurate, the surveys had been rendered largely obsolete by agricultural improvement. It was decided that a trigonometrical and topographical survey, run on traditional lines by the military, could be married to the specifically Irish need for a new townland survey. The result was the beginning of the Irish 6-inch map series. From its inception, therefore, and despite its dependence on the officers and organisation of the Trigonometrical Survey of Britain, the Irish Ordnance had wider interests than those of its parent body. Further development can be seen in the Irish solutions to the problems of orthography and onomastics.

The British system for placename identification was to check the names against standard official sources such as printed census forms while for minor names, the maps were sent in outline form to various distinguished inhabitants of the local region. Following the expansion of the surveyors into Wales in 1810, there was an attempt to recognise the existence of the Welsh language although this could result in severe difficulties. As superintendent of the British survey, Thomas Colby wrote:

In regard to the erroneous orthography of some names in the Pembrokeshire Maps and the Omission of others, I cannot but regret that such errors should have happened and I trust on a candid examination of that Map it will appear that those errors were not more numerous than might have been expected from the General state of the orthography of the names of places in that County. On one side of it the English language is spoken, on the other, the Welsh and the orthography of the names of places is continually varying from a conformity of the usages of one language to that of the other, according to the caprices of the successive persons who possess them.⁶

This was very much the position in Ireland but the establishment of any sort of official consistency in the neighbouring island was further hampered by the fact that two separate bodies were involved in the surveying. Measurement was the responsibility of the military and was carried out under the direction of a Lieutenant Thomas Larcom whose specific duty was the engraving of Irish maps whilst the accompanying valuation and boundary survey of townlands was the responsibility of Richard Griffith, a civilian and geologist. Larcom's surveyors were drawn from the Royal Sappers and Miners, brought over from Britain, and from country labourers recruited in Ireland. Griffith had trained in Britain and had been working in Ireland since the bog-surveys of 1809-1810; he used Irish county surveyors, together with what were called

'meresmen', also drawn from local labour. O'Donovan later pinpointed the lack of precision which, on occasion, characterised the work of the latter:

One thing I have to say is that the people do not agree with Mr. Griffith in dividing the several parishes into townlands and that many of the divisions set down by him as distinct townlands are considered by the people as small divisions of real townlands.⁷

The military, for their part, tended to follow the traditional system that they were used to in Britain and the field *Name Books* in which they noted down the local placenames, normally consist of citations from the county surveys of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, together with the suggested spellings provided by the local gentry. The problems caused by the existence of two languages in active use were thus largely ignored in the initial stages of the survey. Eventually, however, Thomas Larcom imposed his own solution on the onomastic problem and, although the *Name Books* were retained, the name adopted for the maps was not necessarily the commonest (as in Britain) but the version which came nearest to the postulated Irish original. In order to achieve this, a qualified linguist had to be sent into the field to hear the names pronounced and to study them in the context of local topography and linguistics. Secondly, the current orthography had to be supplemented by spellings collected from historical documentation. It was to perform this research, both as linguist and historical topographer, that O'Donovan was appointed.

At the same time, the mixed background of the Irish Ordnance Survey Office had fostered the emergence of the idea of 'memoirs', volumes which were designed to supplement the 6" maps and to give 'statistical remarks' on such diverse topics as boundaries, soils, geology, markets, roads, population and antiquities. The historical data for these volumes was to be provided by a topographical department under the leadership of the archaeologist, George Petrie. This eventually numbered eleven persons including John O'Donovan. The relative importance of the various disciplines required was never clearly established and the conflicting interests of the researchers occasionally resulted in tensions:

I have a letter from Mr. Petrie complaining that I am becoming a dry topographer. I agree with him entirely but I do not understand how he conceives that I could do more than I am doing; all my time is consumed looking for townlands, lochans, and bits and noses of townlands to ascertain their correct names; this is what I conceive I am employed to do and nothing else. I don't look on the letters I write as any part of my business. Be this as it may, I have made every enquiry for traditions connected with the monuments which he alludes to....⁸

O'Donovan's Letters

Although the hall-mark of O'Donovan's period with the Ordnance Survey was the journeys which he made around Ireland, he spent his first four years working in Dublin, providing a back-up service for the military field-workers and Griffith's civilians. His workplaces were the Dublin libraries of the day, Trinity College, the Royal Irish Academy, and Marsh's Library in particular, where he extracted information on early Irish placenames from what records he could find. These varied from the relatively early texts such as the version of the (probably ninth-century) *Vita Tripartita* published by Colgan through to the Elizabethan Inquisitions of the late sixteenth century and the land-surveys of the seventeenth. It is these years spent in preparation which made his work in the field so productive, for he was able to compare and contrast local information and tradition with the conclusions of the scholastic antiquarians:

Carrig Mac Dermot is the island now called the Rock of Lough Key, and Rockingham is the name of the townland or division of Lord Lorton's demesne on which Rockingham House—a gorgeous (superb) residence now stands. This townland of Rockingham is now called in Irish *Port na Carraige* and the low level parts verging on the lake is the locality called *Cala-na-Cairgi* ie. the Callow or strath of the Rock by the Annalists.

... Do the Four Masters give any account of the taking of the Rock of Lough Key at the year 1236 by the Lord Chief Justice and English of Ireland? The account given of Gavail-na-Cairgi in the Annals of Boyle is very interesting but I fear printed incorrectly by Dr. O'Connor. How does the Dr. translate the passage? Does Mageoghan give it? Let me have it as written in the Annals of Kilronan which are written in a far better style than those of Boyle. Mr. Todd will show O'Keeffe where to find it.⁹

It must be noted, however, that O'Donovan was working in a period when very few of the historical texts had been edited. Outside of the Dublin libraries, the majority of texts available to him were the seventeenth and eighteenth-century manuscripts of dubious provenance, which were to be found in the private libraries of the wealthy. His experiences at Bryansford seem typical:

His lordship very kindly allowed me to peruse the MS. and a room to study in. The venerable Charles O'Connor in his preface to *Dissertations* states that some twenty pages of this work had fallen into his hands and that he intended to restore them to the Lord Jocelin for whom the MS. was then lately purchased. Lord Roden requested of me first of all to ascertain, if I could, whether or not

O'Connor had restored these pages. I was soon perfectly satisfied that he had – for in the beginning of the book, the greater part of these pages had been transcribed in modern writing which the Lord Jocelin seems to have got done before O'Connor had restored the pages in question but immediately after these new pages, are inserted eighteen damaged, trite and much soiled pages, giving the same matter over again.¹⁰

As ordered by the authorities of the Ordnance Survey, O'Donovan's search through historical documentation was to be supplemented by the study of local pronunciation, particularly by Irish speakers. Because of this need, O'Donovan was forced to expand his survey beyond the narrow circle of regional dignitaries consulted in Britain. A constant theme in his letters is the disappearance of Irish language and traditions and the scarcity of native speakers. The secular ruling classes had often been educated outside Ireland and had little or no Irish whilst the clergy, even if they had Irish, were rarely natives of the districts in which they served. Schoolmasters, who would appear to have been largely drawn from the same sort of educated but relatively poor class as O'Donovan himself, often knew more of their locality. There were also the small squires who took pride in remembering the glories of their ancestors, as in the case of O'Flynn of Roscommon:

I had the very good luck to meet O'Flynn [*sic*] (Edmond son of Kellach) himself, who walked with me to the source of the Suck from the Esker over which he shewed me his ancient principality of which he now holds but a few townlands in *fee-tail*. He knows the names of every *bush* in the parish of Kiltullagh, the names of which he pronounced for me sitting on Eiscir Ui Mhaonagain over Bun-Suicin in the townland of *Cul-fearna*, the parish of Annagh and county of Mayo, from which we had an extensive view of O'Flynn's country of *Loch Ui Fhloinn*, *Sliabh Ui Fhloinn* and of the parish of Kiltullagh. As soon as O'Flynn learned that I was one of the *oulde stock*, he commenced to give me a most curious account of his own family and of himself; the poor fellow is very much embarrassed and when I met him, was hiding from the sheriff who will arrest him for debt as soon as he can.¹¹

O'Donovan apparently felt comfortable with the class represented by O'Flynn and also with the schoolmasters whom he met and whom he tended to characterise by phrases such as 'very intelligent' or 'a very good fellow'. His attitude to the labouring classes was rather more distant although he could respect their detailed knowledge:

I traveled yesterday through the parish of Donaghmore and discovered one of the aborigines, 100 years old and on the point of death. He is blind and though in the most feeble state, he retains

his reasoning powers in a most surprising manner. He is intimately acquainted with every field in the parish of Donaghmore where he was employed for half a century as a Bailiff. He was able to give me the ancient name of every townland in the parish in the most satisfactory manner. I traveled through fields and unfrequented ways until at last I discovered him in a little cabin lamenting his transgressions and preparing for death. When I mentioned the name of Mr. Glenny, he attended to me with the most profound respect and seemed for a short time to forget his impending dissolution. I certainly felt very shy in disturbing him but as there was no substitute for him, I made bold to examine whether or not he had sufficient discernment to understand what I was about. He understood me immediately and answered the questions which I put to him with great readiness.¹²

O'Donovan had much greater faith in the information which he gained by word of mouth from local inhabitants such as these, than he had in the writings of his antiquarian predecessors about whom he used to complain vigorously and frequently. Describing one Beauford, for example, he wrote:

Let me have Beauford's words (11th number of Vallancey's *Collectanea*) describing the situation of 1. Ros na Righ, 2. Brugh na Boinne, Cleitach and Gabhra. I have discovered them and I shall lash him with a whip of scorpions, with a pen dipped in poison and gall. I shall have no mercy on a bare-faced liar, a presumptuous historical charlatan, a flagrant impostor. I have met his work here with honest innocent men who swallow every word he has written for historical truth.¹³

This sort of thing, while very entertaining, is of little benefit to the modern student looking for evidence on the history of a particular placename. Indeed it may, on occasion, be pernicious, inculcating as it does, the idea that it is a waste of time to read the suggested identifications of the earlier antiquarians. Although O'Donovan's work undoubtedly accords much more closely to modern methods of scholarship than do the works of his predecessors, his pleasure in his own vituperation appears to lead him, in certain cases, into dismissing quite reasonable suggestions about identifications made by earlier researchers.

The location of *Fertae Fer Féic*, identified in two seventh-century lives of Saint Patrick as the site of the first Easter celebrations which took place in Ireland, is a case in point.¹⁴ This placename is not well-documented; modern scholarship knows only of a later insertion into the early legal tract *Corus Béscnai*, which identifies the site with the banks of the Boyne, and a gloss from a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Féilire Óengusso* which associates it with the western flank of another unknown site, *Síd Truim*.¹⁵ Charles O'Connor, in his

Rerum Hibernicarum Veteres Scriptores made a perfectly plausible suggestion that *Sid Truim* is probably to be associated with the town of Trim, documented in the eighth century as *Vadium Truimm* and located on the banks of the Boyne.¹⁶ This was dismissed out of hand by O'Donovan on the rather weak grounds that the legend of *Fertae Fer Féic* required the palace at Tara to be within sight of the *Fertae*.¹⁷ Instead, O'Donovan agreed with Colgan that the site must be identified with Slane.

Colgan's argument is much weaker than that of O'Conor; he states that *Fertae Fer Féic* is identifiable with Slane on the grounds that the relics of Saint Erc, who rose before Patrick at the *Fertae*, were kept at Slane in the seventh century.¹⁸ That this is probably an illogical conclusion on Colgan's part can be shown through a second example from the same text; in a doubling of the Erc episode, Dubthach maccu Lugir, accompanied by the poet Fíacc, rose before Patrick at Tara although Fíacc's relics were kept at Sleaty on the Laois/Carlow border.¹⁹ O'Donovan's pronouncement, however, proved convincing to the Gaelic revivalists of the later nineteenth century and the result is that the children of Ireland are taught in their primary schools that Patrick lit the first Paschal fire on the Hill of Slane. It is a dearly held piece of topographical lore for which the evidence is very tenuous indeed.

O'Donovan's Importance for Modern Studies of Early Ireland

It was O'Donovan's detailed knowledge of the regional landscapes within Ireland and of the oral traditions of their inhabitants which first formed the basis of his assessment of previous identifications. As his expertise grew, so did the extent to which he questioned these traditions as a useful historical resource and he gradually began to emphasise written documentation of earlier periods as the most important evidence available to the onomastic researcher. Already in 1837 he was writing from Roscommon:

As I have often remarked, the traditions of ancient territories cannot be depended on. The only evidence now remaining to prove the extent of ancient territories are the legends of the saints, the Irish annals and the early English Inquisitions and the points on which these fail to afford satisfactory evidence must remain for ever disputable.²⁰

This should be read as a statement of intent, rather than an outline of his methodology. Throughout his period with the Ordnance Survey, O'Donovan continued to place much emphasis on oral testimony and it is only in the later work in his edition of the *Annals of the Four Masters*, published between 1848 and 1851, that one can clearly identify an increased use of written sources. The identification of placenames in early Irish sources thus rests on a very different basis from those in Britain where the early medieval texts are much fewer in number and the later medieval and early modern sources for local

history are both more common and have been studied in far greater detail. Modern British onomastic scholars such as Margaret Gelling, Della Hooke or William Nicolaiesen put forward their identifications on the basis of written evidence alone.²¹ On the other hand, the much greater continuity of linguistic tradition in Ireland, west of the Shannon at any rate, means that the nature of Irish evidence is also very different from that in Britain and continuity between the early placenames through to the oral versions of the suggested modern equivalents is frequently far easier to identify. O'Donovan's identifications, even when based entirely on oral information, must still be considered carefully by the contemporary Irish scholar and the grounds for rejection of his suggestions should be stated.

O'Donovan's legacy in terms of the identification of the political organisation of the landscape is a rather less happy one. Although he recognised the incursion of new families into the Irish landscape and the possibility of changes in political control, he appears to have visualised the land-units themselves as being largely permanent. So, for example, in his study of the Ui Fhiachrach of Mayo, published in 1844, he has a chapter headed *Do Bhreathnuibh i n-Ibh Amhalgaidh Mic Fiachrach* or in his English version, 'Of the Welshmen of Hy-Amhalgaidh mic Fiachrach'. In the same volume, the *Uí Amalgaidh* are credited with the pedigrees given to them by the seventeenth-century genealogist, Dubhaltach Mac Fírbisigh and their kingdom is said to have been founded in the second half of the fourth century A.D. There is minimal reference to the possibility that the arrival of the Normans may have changed the boundaries of local kingdoms which are thought to have remained almost unchanged until the seventeenth century. The study is concluded with the words:

And thus the Burkes came over the Barretts in Tír Amhalgaidh and took nearly all their lands from them, but at length the Saxon heretics of Oliver Cromwell took it all from them in the year of Our Lord 1652 so that now there is neither Barrett nor Burke not to mention the Clann Fiachrach in possession of any lands there.²²

O'Donovan is here merely editing Mac Fírbisigh who, writing in the west of Ireland at the time of the Cromwellian redistribution of lands, was very conscious of the wrenching apart of earlier boundaries. Likewise in the topographical poems of the fourteenth-century poets, Ó Dubhagain and Ó hUídhriin, also edited by O'Donovan, the poets themselves appear to ignore the possibility of territorial change.²³ O'Donovan is, therefore, merely publishing long-held tenets of Irish literature. On the other hand, these tenets appear to have effected his own interpretation of historical change:

Previously to the sixth century, the whole extent of the country lying between the Suck and the Shannon and bordered on the north by a boundary drawn from Athliag on the Shannon (near

Lanesborough) to the point where the Suck springs out of Slieve Uí Fhloinn (anciently called Sliabh Formaoil) was called Dealbhna Nuadhat. This territory was originally in the occupation of a tribe of Firbolgs, afterwards in that of the race of Fiacha Dealwy but in the sixth century it was conquered by the men of Maine in whose possession it remained for a long period until at last the Sil Murray cut it off and added to their own territory that portion lying northwards of the present barony of Athlone.²⁴

In other words, this territorial unit remained intact from prehistoric times up until the depredations of the Sil Murray (Síl Muiredaigh). In addition, the boundaries of this ancestral unit remained sufficiently well-known for them to be identified with some certainty in the nineteenth century.

In recent years, the historians of later medieval Ireland have increasingly emphasised the extent to which this model of a largely unchanging landscape can no longer be substantiated.²⁵ The views of the early medievalists, in contrast, are rather less defined. Since the seminal article by Donnachadh Ó Corráin in 1976, the concept of increasing political centralisation and the growth of larger kingdoms during the pre-Norman era, would appear to have been largely accepted although the exact procedures through which such growth was achieved have yet to be examined in detail.²⁶ The possibility of movement by large population groups would also seem to be accepted but in practice, discussion of such movements has been confined to events of the pre-documentary period such as the rise of the Uí Néill, the migration of the Deisi, the move of the Uí Garrchon across Leinster or the replacement of the Erainn by the Eóganacht. In the periods for which contemporary evidence survives and particularly from the seventh century to the ninth, the model currently favoured would seem to be one of primeval population groups, ground ever further down into their ancestral soil by the development of new political dynasties and more powerful groups who take over the lands of the earlier communities through infiltration of the local kingship. The models which lie behind the formation of German population groups at the same period, on the other hand, tend to favour the idea of interested parties coming together to form new communities in the early medieval period for the purposes of invasion and settlement in new areas.²⁷ The contrast underlines the largely static nature of the Irish models and the extent to which the older ideas of an almost unchanging landscape still influence current thinking.

Conclusions

At first sight, the debt to O'Donovan and his work is not evident to the casual user of Hogan's *Onomasticum Goedelicum* for Hogan does not differentiate in his references between the occurrence of a placename in an early medieval text and the identifications made by later editors. If one follows up his

references in detail, however, one finds that even where he cites editions by other scholars, they, in their turn, frequently refer to O'Donovan's work as the basis for their conclusions. As the most important compilation of early placenames from the Irish sources and as a recently reprinted and thus readily available source, the interpretations of the sources which the *Onomasticon* puts forward, are, in consequence and with minor emendations, almost entirely O'Donovan's work.²⁸ For the contemporary early medievalist who wishes to identify the geographical context of his source, John O'Donovan remains, therefore, of primary importance but as a much earlier researcher, belonging to a different academic era, each identification should be assessed before being accepted. In the twin fields of onomastic methodology and Irish history, the academic landscape has substantially altered since O'Donovan's day.

Notes

- ¹ An earlier draft of this paper was given to the Irish History Seminar at Hertford College in November 1992. I would like to thank both the participants in the seminar and Dr Colmán Etchingham of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, with whom I subsequently discussed this material, for helping to clarify my ideas.
- ² E. Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum, Locorum et Tribuum Hiberniae et Scotiae: An Index with Identifications to the Gaelic Names of Places and Tribes* (Dublin and London, 1910).
- ³ Quoted without reference by T.J. Clohesy, 'John O'Donovan', *Old Kilkenny Review*, xiv (1962), p. 6. See also P. Boyne, *John O'Donovan (1806-1861): A Biography* (Kilkenny, 1987), pp. 1-7.
- ⁴ *The History of the Town and County of Galway from the Earliest Times to the Present Time* (Dublin 1820); J. Hardiman (ed.), *Irish Minstrelsy or Bardic Remains of Ireland with English Poetical Translations* (London 1831, reprinted Shannon 1971 with introduction by Maire Mac an tSaoi).
- ⁵ J.H. Andrews, 'The Survey of Ireland to 1847' in W.A. Seymour (ed.), *A History of the Ordnance Survey* (Folkestone, 1980), p. 79. For a detailed history of the Irish Ordnance Survey, see J.H. Andrews, *A Paper Landscape, the Ordnance Survey in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Oxford, 1975).
- ⁶ Quoted from *Ordnance Survey Letter Book*, pp. 219-21 by J.B. Harley and W.A. Seymour, 'Early Methods of Topographical Survey' in *A History*, p. 61.
- ⁷ Roscommon, July 1st 1837: M. O'Flanagan (ed.), *Letters Containing Information Relative to the Antiquities of the County of Roscommon Collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1837*, 2 vols (Bray, 1927).
- ⁸ Boyle, July 27th 1837: *Letters: Roscommon*.
- ⁹ Elphin, July 27th 1837: *Letters: Roscommon*.
- ¹⁰ Newry, July 23rd, 1834: M. O'Flanagan (ed.), *Letters Containing Information Relative to the Antiquities of the County of Londonderry Collected during the Progress*

- of the Ordnance Survey in 1834 (Bray, 1927).
- ¹¹ Castlereagh, 5th July 1837: *Letters: Roscommon*.
 - ¹² Newry, 10th April 1834: M. O'Flanagan (ed.), *Letters Containing Information Relative to the Antiquities of the County of Down Collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1834*.
 - ¹³ Navan, 15th August 1836: M. O'Flanagan (ed.), *Letters Containing Information Relative to the Antiquities of the County of Meath Collected during the Progress of the Ordnance Survey in 1836* (Bray, 1927).
 - ¹⁴ L. Bieler, *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Scriptores Latini Hiberniae, x, 1979), p. 88 (I 17), p. 132 (13).
 - ¹⁵ D. Binchy (ed.), *Corpus Iuris Hibernii, ad fidam codicum manuscriptorum* 6 vols. (Dublin, 1979), p. 528:3; W. Stokes (ed.), *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (Henery Bradshaw Society, xxix, London, 1895, reprinted Dublin 1984), p. 238.
 - ¹⁶ Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, p. 166 (I 1). *Vadum Truimm* represents a Latin translation of a putative Irish original *Ath Truimm*.
 - ¹⁷ See discussion in John O'Donovan (ed.), *Annála Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters from the earliest period to the year 1616* (1848-51), i p. 167 (fn.k). The association with Tara and the mythical palace of King Loeguire is more plausibly to be interpreted as a sign of that site's political importance in the later seventh century than as an indication of the *Fertae's* geographical location.
 - ¹⁸ J. Colgan, *Triadis Thaumaturgae; seu Divorum Patricii Columbae et Brigidae Trium Veteris et Maioris Scotiae seu Hiberniae* (Louvain, 1647), p. 20 (fn.60).
 - ¹⁹ Bieler, *Patrician Texts*, p. 92 (I 19).
 - ²⁰ Castlereagh, July 7th 1837; *Letters: Roscommon*.
 - ²¹ M. Gelling, *Placenames in the Landscape* (London, 1984); D. Hooke, *Anglo-Saxon Landscapes of the West Midlands: the Charter Evidence* (British Archaeological Reports, British series, xcv, Oxford, 1981); W. Nicolaiesen, *Scottish Placenames: Their Study and Significance* (London, 1976).
 - ²² J. O'Donovan (ed.), *The Genealogies, Tribes and Customs of Hy Fiachrach, commonly called O'Dowda's country* (Dublin, 1844), p. 338-339.
 - ²³ *The Topographical Poems of John O'Dubhagain and Giolla-na-naomh O'Huidrin edited in the original Irish from MSS. in the library of the Royal Irish Academy* (Dublin, 1862).
 - ²⁴ *The Tribes and Customs of the Hy Many, commonly called O'Kelly's Country* (Dublin, 1843) p. 83, note v.
 - ²⁵ See, for example, K. Simms, 'The Origins of the Diocese of Clogher', *Clogher Record*, x (1980), pp. 180-198; K.N. Nicholls, 'Medieval Leinster dynasties and families, three topographical notes', *Peritia* v (1986).
 - ²⁶ D. Ó Corráin, 'Nationality and Kingship in pre-Norman Ireland', in T. Williams (ed.), *Nationality and the Pursuit of National Independence* (Historical Studies, xi, Belfast, 1979), pp. 1-35. For the most explicit model to date, see T. Charles-Edwards, 'Early Medieval Kingships in the British Isles' in S. Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* (Leicester, 1989), pp. 28-39.

- ²⁷ One thinks, for example, of the Alemanni whose very name 'Alle Mannen' was identified by the Byzantine commentator, Agathias, as an indication of their diverse ethnic background and recent formation. See R. Christlein, *Die Alemannen: Archäologie eines lebendigen Volkes* (Stuttgart, 1978), p. 22.
- ²⁸ Reprinted by the Four Courts Press, (Dublin, 1993).