
PAUL WALSH MEMORIAL LECTURE 8

**Making MACMORRIS: New Gleanings
from Early Modern Ireland**

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LÉACHT CHUIMHNEACHÁIN AN BHREATHNAIGH 8

ISBN-9798301654084

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Eagarthóir na Sraithe/General Editor
Elizabeth Boyle

Arna fhoilsiú ag Scoil an Léinn Cheiltigh, Ollscoil Mhá Nuad
Published by the School of Celtic Studies, Maynooth University

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I.M. William Benedict Palmer, 1925–2023.

I am extremely grateful to Dr Lizzie Boyle and to my colleagues in Sean- agus Nua-Ghaeilge for the invitation to give the Paul Walsh Memorial Lecture (2022), not least because it allowed me to pay my respects to someone whose scholarly company I kept at different stages during my D. Phil. – and someone on whose scholarship I still draw. Yellowed sheaves of hand-written notes bring me back to the Bodleian Library when it not only permitted notetaking in ink but actively fed the habit by providing bottles of blue and black – and blue-black – Quink in a blotter-littered hatch by the issue desk. Those notes catch me in the act of scouring Walsh’s *Gleanings from Irish Manuscripts*, *Irish Men of Learning*, *Irish Chiefs and Leaders*, and his editions of Ó Cianáin’s *Imeacht na n-Iarlaí* and Ó Cléirigh’s *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh*. They bring back the physicality – and frustrations – of bibliographical searches in a time before online catalogues: hoiking an enormous, alphabetically ordered catalogue (Va-Wap) onto a shelf and trawling through pasted-in, ‘movable-slip’ entries, to track down the scattered essays which Nollaig Ó Muraíle subsequently brought together in *Learning through the Ages*.¹

¹ Paul Walsh ed. and trans., *The Flight of the Earls by Tadhg Ó Cianáin* (St. Patrick’s College Maynooth, 1916); *Gleanings from Irish Manuscripts* (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1933); *Irish Men of Learning*, ed. Colm O Lochlainn (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1947); *Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill, as Leabhar Lughaidh Uí Chléirigh* (London: Irish Texts Society, 1948); *Irish Chiefs and Leaders*, ed. Colm O Lochlainn (Dublin: Three Candles, 1960); *Irish Leaders and Learning through the Ages*, ed. and intro. Nollaig Ó Muraíle (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003). I published the fruits of that research in *Language and Conquest in Early Modern Ireland: English Renaissance Literature and Elizabeth Imperial Expansion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Years later, when embarking on the MACMORRIS project, I realised how much of what I gleaned then was metabolised in the inner workings and procedures of that digital humanities project: the way Walsh's excursions into genealogy keep tipping over into group biography; and the way those interconnected lives captured larger historical shifts which encompassed reconfigured allegiances, defeat, anglicisation, exile, *deireadh ré*. In his essays, genealogy and biography move suggestively towards microhistories: Richard Mageoghegan defends the castle at Dún Baoi while his brother Niall 'inclined to the English'; Brian na Carraige Mac Diarmada patronises the Annals of Loch Cé while his son, Brian Óg Mac Diarmada, is made a ward of Theobald Dillon and educated in 'English language and habits', in the newly founded Trinity College; Aodh Ruadh's sister, Nuala, acts as 'tutress' to her nephew, the last Earl of Tír Chonaill's son, in Brussels.² Walsh's scholarship demonstrated the inseparability of such acts of historical recovery from a profound immersion in Gaelic literature. A Walsh essay can segue into an edition of a poem, and I am indebted to him for introducing me to works like an Ó Gnímh poet's *Treise an eagla ioná an annsacht*, and quatrains like this:

Murdhuchan mhara breacghlais
faoilidh feadh a héigeantóis
mé an murdhuchan an mhuir Goill
lér luigh durdhubhadh orainn (13);

The siren of the great speckled sea
is joyful in misfortune;
I am the guillemot, the English the sea,
such eclipse has befallen me.³

Like any great scholar, Walsh provokes questions that are now unanswerable, like why does the 'murdhuchan',⁴ the mermaid who is a 'siren' in the first line become a 'guillemot' – for which

² Paul Walsh, *The Mageoghegans* (Mullingar: Westmeath Examiner, 1938), 52; *Irish Men of Learning*, 20, 182.

³ Paul Walsh, 'Worth and virtue unrequited: an Irish poet and the English', *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 31 (1928): 10–22, reprinted in *Irish Chiefs and Leaders*.

⁴ eDIL s.v. *mur dúchann, mur dúchu*; dil.ie/32866 'a mermaid , siren (?)'

the Irish word is 'forcha' – in the third? But then, any scholar who draws us into imaginary conversations also, at times, makes us wonder about what is going on in their heads.

Reflecting now on the works of Paul Walsh – works which I ransacked so greedily as a graduate student – I'm struck by the parallels between his approach to understanding early modern Ireland and, *mutatis mutandis*, that of the MACMORRIS project, the focus of this essay. Walsh's instinct for using biographical sketches (and often group biographies) to explore historical patterns and his unwavering belief that sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Ireland can be most fruitfully accessed through Irish-language sources are guiding tenets of MACMORRIS as well. Digitisation, however, enables us to make available, in one interactive application, quantities of biographical material unimaginable to someone who died in 1941.⁵ But beyond that shift in medium there is an epistemological break between Pól Breatnach's old-school historicism and the more diffuse and critical energies behind a project like MACMORRIS, where recovering historical facts is a beginning, not an end. In the Introduction to *Early Modern Criticism in a Time of Crisis*, I found myself interrogating the utility – or is it the *futility*? – of doing literary history in times like these, times redolent of the end of history. 'What are we doing', I asked there,

deep diving into early modernity in a time of overlapping catastrophes? What are we doing, reading our early printed books and fossicking about in our temperature-controlled library stacks and carbon-emitting digital archives in a world of runaway global heating? What are we up to, rescuing 400-years' dead witches and ink makers from oblivion while migrants fleeing a majority world stalked by war and a crisis of habitability drown in the Mediterranean and the Rio Grande? What are so many good people doing, communing with the past while populists light the touchpaper on racism and xenophobia, ecosystems collapse, and non-human life on earth declines precipitously?⁶

⁵ The MACMORRIS website can be accessed at <https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/>.

⁶ David Baker and Patricia Palmer eds., *Early Modern Criticism and Politics in a Time of Crisis* (University of Santa Barbara: EMC Imprint, 2022); <https://emctc.tome.press/>.

These are the questions which stalk MACMORRIS – and all historical scholarship now – and compel me to ask, in this essay, why recovering lives, particularly disregarded lives, and making available texts, particularly neglected ones, might be imagined, even for one minute, as an intervention (however feeble) in the present.

.....

MACMORRIS is a case of a broken record that turned into a Digital Humanities project. For years, I complained that the history of early modern Ireland was being written in monophone. Early modern studies took an ‘Irish turn’ in the 1990s because Ireland seemed to offer a route in to the colonial contexts of English Renaissance literature. Unfortunately, the ensuing New Historicist and postcolonial studies continued to rely almost exclusively on anglophone sources, and so, ironically, they ended up recycling the very colonial tropes that they critiqued.⁷ Of course, the political criticism of the 1990s and early 2000s deconstructed notions of Irish savagery and placed Elizabethan scurrilities firmly inside scare quotes; nonetheless, they continued to operate within the force field of the old colonial perspectives. The colonial text might now be repositioned as the ‘bad object’ of political criticism but, however anathematised, its voice was still the only one getting a hearing. In many of the signature English-language studies of early modern Ireland to emerge in the period, Gaelic Ireland remained as eerily out of focus as it had been in Elizabethan texts.

This shouldn’t surprise us. The conquest and colonisation of Ireland produced not one but two linguistic outcomes that changed the very operating system through which people

⁷ I discuss the problem in ‘Missing Bodies, Absent Bards: Spenser, Shakespeare and a Crisis in Criticism’, *English Literary Renaissance* 36.3 (Autumn 2006), 376–95, and ‘Wanton Bardes, and Rymers Impudent’: A Response to ‘Spenser, Poetry, and Performance’, *Spenser Review* 48.1.2 (2018): <http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/spenseronline/review/item/48.1.2/>, and in David J. Baker, Willy Maley, and Patricia Palmer, ‘What Ish My Network? Introducing MACMORRIS: Digitising Cultural Activity and Collaborative Networks in Early Modern Ireland’, *Literature Compass* (2018): <https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12496>.

processed and communicated experience, on these islands and beyond. Firstly, Ireland, slowly but inexorably, became a predominantly English-speaking island. Secondly, having forged the template for linguistic colonisation in Ireland, English launched itself on its journey towards becoming a global language.⁸ Historians (including literary historians) who themselves operate in the altered linguistic and epistemological reality created by those profound transformations tend to forget that early modern Ireland was an overwhelmingly Irish-speaking island. Until well into the late sixteenth century, Gaelic lords, well versed in Latin and happy to parlay in Spanish with their Iberian clients, relied on interpreters to manage their interactions with the English administration.⁹ Even the notable Old English families who sedulously proclaimed their allegiance to the Crown moved seamlessly between Irish and English; the further north and west emissaries of the English administration went, the more likely they were to find themselves among Gaelic monoglots.¹⁰ Richard Burke, the second Earl of Clanricard, earned the moniker ‘Riseárd Sassanach’ for his unswerving loyalty to the Crown. But ‘English’ Richard’s *English* was less than fluent, as he had to concede to Privy Council, in a brief letter in which he apologised for the fact that, at a meeting the previous day, ‘my Englishe tongue wold not serve me whereby I durst presume to use any lardge discourses in speches to expresse my dutifull meaning towarde her most excellent ma.^{tie}’.¹¹ In a world where even

⁸ On that process, in Ireland and elsewhere, see David Crystal, *Language Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Nicholas Ostler, *Empires of the Word: a Language History of the World* (New York and London: Harper Collins, 2005), and Palmer, *Language and Conquest*.

⁹ Patricia Palmer, ‘Interpreters and the Politics of Translation and Traduction in Sixteenth-Century Ireland’, *Irish Historical Studies* 33.131 (2004): 257–77. For the Spanish context, see, for example, Colin Breen, *The Gaelic Lordship of the O’Sullivan Beare: A Landscape Cultural History* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005).

¹⁰ Vincent Carey, ‘“Neither good English nor good Irish”: Bilingualism and Identity Formation in Sixteenth-Century Ireland’, in Hiram Morgan (ed.), *Political Ideology in Ireland, 1541–1641* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999): 45–61.

¹¹ Earl of Clanricard to Privy Council, 10 March 1579, PRO SP 63/66 f. 15. See also, Paul Walsh, ‘The Irish Language and the Reformation’,

anglophiles were not necessarily anglophones, Gaelic culture was so dominant that the Irish language and the institutions which sustained it were seen as existential threats to the Tudor conquest; English, on the other hand, appeared to be in retreat.¹² Recalling his experience in Ireland during the final years of the Nine Years War, Fynes Moryson complained that

at this tyme whereof I write, the meere Irish disdayned to learne or speake the English tounge, yea the English Irish and the very Cittizens (excepting those of Dublin where the lord Deputy resides) though they could speake English as well as wee, yet Commonly speake Irish among themselues, and were hardly induced by our familiar Conversation to speake English with vs, yea Common experience shewed, and my selfe and others often obserued, the Cittizens of Watterford and Corcke hauing wyues that could speake English as well as wee, bitterly to chyde them when they speake English with vs.¹³

Modern Ireland was forged in the dislocations, displacements, plantations, and violent disruption of its early modernity. That sense of transformations happening in real time, of an altered world coming convulsively into being, is captured in the present participle that ricochet around the titles of recent works on the period: *Making Ireland British*, *Making Ireland Roman*, *Making Ireland English*, *Becoming and Belonging in Ireland*.¹⁴ Early

Irish Theological Quarterly, 59.15 (1920): 239–50, 244.

¹² On the legislation against the language and Irish cultural practices and practitioners, see Tony Crowley, *Wars of Words: the Politics of Language in Ireland 1537–2004* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2005).

¹³ Graham Kew ed., *The Irish Sections of Fynes Moryson's Unpublished Itinerary* (Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1998), 50. The extract is placed at Waterford in the MACMORRIS project's deep map of Munster: <https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/68>.

¹⁴ Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580–1650* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Jason Harris ed., *Making Ireland Roman: Irish Neo-Latin Writers and the Republic of Letters* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2009); Jane Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English: The Irish Aristocracy in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017) and Ohlmeyer, *Making Empire: Ireland, Imperialism, and the Early Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2023); Eve

modern Ireland did indeed occupy a state of becoming (of being remade) rather than of being. We need to be true to the temporality of that violent upheaval and transformation, to give equal weight to all that pre-existed the conquest and what stood to be lost. This is not a story that was predestined to end the way it did; our telling of it, accordingly, should not mistake a contingent outcome – how things happened to turn out – for an ending that was always, already inevitable.

There has, naturally, been a scholarly push back against the over-reliance on English-language sources in the writing of early modern Ireland, and one of its most enabling outcomes has been the creation of resources which encourage non-specialists to engage with Classical Irish. There is, in parallel, a far greater awareness than there was of the need to draw on Irish-language sources.¹⁵ This consciousness, however, often manifests itself only as a felt need to offer a proleptic apology, before going on to ignore Gaelic sources anyway. The ongoing reliance on sixteenth-century colonial caricatures – however ironised, however ring-fenced with scare quotes – *and those alone* – can be illustrated by John Patrick Montaña's *The Roots of English Colonialism in Ireland*, published by Cambridge University Press in 2011, as part

Campbell, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick and Audrey Horning eds., *Becoming and Belonging in Ireland 1200–1600* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2018).

¹⁵ The case is both made and acted upon in works like Sarah Covington, Vincent Carey, and Valerie McGowan-Doyle eds., *Early Modern Ireland: New Sources, Methods, and Perspectives* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019); Bernadette Cunningham, 'Irish Language Sources for Early Modern Ireland', *History Ireland* 4/1 (Spring, 1996): 44–48; Patrick J. Duffy, David Edwards and Elizabeth Fitzpatrick eds., *Gaelic Ireland c.1250–c.1650: Land, Lordship and Settlement* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001); Damian McManus & Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh eds., *A Bardic Miscellany* (Dublin: Trinity College, 2010); Éamonn Ó Ciardha, 'Irish-language Sources for the History of Early Modern Ireland', in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History*, ed. Alvin Jackson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 439–61; and in just about anything Katharine Simms has written, starting with *Medieval Gaelic Sources* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009). Two digital resources in particular, the *Irish Bardic Poetry Database*, <https://bardic.celt.dias.ie/>, and *Léamh*, <https://léamh.org>, have been indispensable in making available both materials for such an inclusive study and the linguistic, glossarial, and grammatical tools needed to access those materials.

of its – wait for it – ‘Critical Perspectives on Empire’ series. In it, Montañó carefully explains that ‘The Irish, like all barbarians, stubbornly refused or were unable to evolve culturally at the same pace as their more civilised neighbours’. It’s hard to judge the tone here – probably more postmodern irony than J. A. Froude *redux* – and Montañó seems to mean well. It’s just, he explains, that ‘the material available for the study of Tudor Ireland is heavily weighted in favour of the English records and accounts’- inevitably, he goes on, given ‘the limited number of Gaelic manuscripts produced by a predominantly oral culture’; Brehon Law, he unaccountably avers, was never written down.¹⁶ As this alarmingly representative example shows, a failure to engage with Irish-language material begets the peculiar belief that Irish-language material doesn’t actually exist. For Gaelic scholars, this is simply preposterous; for early modernists working on English literature or history but attuned to the Irish context, this is the air we breathe – and the challenge to which MACMORRIS responds.

The MACMORRIS project was born, therefore, out of a mix of two emotions: exasperation with the distortions and lacunae perpetuated by a scholarship which continued to disregard the Gaelic context of early modern Ireland; and excitement at the possibilities unlocked by making that too-often-occluded complexity manifest and inescapable. The latter was the vision set out in my application to the Irish Research Council Laureate award, which I quote below, retaining the typographic bold weight peculiar to the grant-writing genre:

MACMORRIS (Mapping Actors and Contexts: Modelling Research in Renaissance Ireland in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century) is a radically new digital-humanities project that seeks to map the full range and richness of cultural activity, across languages and ethnic groups, in Ireland from c.

¹⁶ Montañó’s curious inattention to evidence is exposed by works like Daniel A. Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978); Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin, 2005); Commissioners for Publishing the Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of Ireland* (Dublin: H.M. Stationery Office, 1865–1901); Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988); and Katharine Simms, ‘The Poetic Brehon Lawyers of Early Sixteenth-Century Ireland’, *Ériu* 57 (2007): 121–32.

1541 to 1660. It seeks to represent the dramatic period of conflict, change, and innovation which transformed Ireland. In doing that, it will provide, for the first time, an *inclusive* account of creative, scholarly, and intellectual activity in the period. It aims to extend, unify, and redefine our understanding of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Ireland, its place in the European Renaissance, and in the wider global networks of an emerging modernity. In building a **dataset of everyone associated with Ireland for whom a record survives during that 150-year period**, it will provide a **research engine for a newly interdisciplinary and multilingual engagement** with a period that was, itself, ineluctably plural, linguistically and culturally.¹⁷

One point of departure for challenging the problematic elision of Irish voices was, I argued, biographical. A more inclusive picture required a more inclusive cast list of early modern Ireland than that supplied by traditional historiography. So, I proposed, MACMORRIS

will build a dataset of everyone (for whom records exist) active in Ireland between, roughly, 1541 and 1660. Along with soldiers, administrators, merchants, clergy, criminals etc., this dataset will identify cultural producers of all kinds, across languages – poets, pamphleteers, administrators, chroniclers, compilers of manuscripts across disciplines; catechists, controversialists, theologians; translators; messengers and interpreters; inventors and innovators; patrons; members of the *aois ealadhan* (learned class); and those whose existence is revealed or illuminated by those writings. This comprehensive database of every figure active in Ireland between 1541 (the

¹⁷ I wish to acknowledge the invaluable support I received from the Research and Development Office in Maynooth University, particularly Dr Patrick Boyle, Shona Leith, Marie Carr, and Louise Bolger, and from The Arts and Humanities Institute and the ever-supportive trinity of Ann Donoghue, Prof. Tom O’Connor, and Stavros Angelis. The project took shape in conversations over many years with Prof. Willy Maley and Prof. David Baker; David’s insistence that the ‘affordances’ of the digital offered the only adequate way of capturing the totality of early modern Ireland’s cultural complexity was crucial, as was his unstinting commitment to helping me work out what that would mean in practice.

Declaration of Kingly Title) and 1691 [ultimately, 1660]¹⁸ will, among many other things, extend and democratise our definitions of culture and cultural players in early modern Ireland; it will allow us to visualise how patterns of contiguity, confluence and crossover make Ireland, all at once, a place of deeply embedded cultural traditions, a site of vigorous exchange and, ultimately, the locus of dramatic change over time.

In the event, the application was successful and the MACMORRIS project, jointly hosted by the Maynooth University Arts and Humanities Institute and the English Department, began its work in September 2019.¹⁹ Before we could begin to assemble

¹⁸ The end-date which I initially envisaged (1691) soon revealed itself to be too diffuse for a concerted focus on the process of conquest and colonisation itself, by threatening to overwhelm (in terms of data) the process with its colonial sequelae. In the event, the symbolic end-date for the project became 1663, the date when Richard Head's *Hic et Ubique, or the Humors of Dublin*, was staged, according to its Introduction, to 'general Applause', in the only recorded production of the Co. Antrim-born playwright's work, until its revival in the Smock Alley Theatre, in March 2023, by Alan Waldron, the PhD candidate on the MACMORRIS project. Alan also added an entry on Richard Head in the *Dictionary of Irish Biography*: <https://www.dib.ie/biography/head-richard-a10396>.

¹⁹ Project Reference: IRCLA/2019/116. The success of the project owes everything to the extraordinary team of postdoctoral fellows who worked on it (Dr Evan Bourke, project manager, Dr Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, and Dr Philip Mac a' Ghoill) and to the project's programmer, the redoubtable Rupavathi Subramani. Dr Kevin Tracey, whose Government of Ireland Fellowship, AMERGIN, ran in parallel to MACMORRIS, injected his knowledge of Irish natural scientists, particularly on the continent, into our deliberations. I am also grateful to the anonymous assessors whose feedback on the original proposal and on its mid-way report helped to finesse its development. The project benefited immeasurably from the generosity of its unceasingly supportive Advisory Board: David Baker (UNC Chapel Hill), Marc Cabal (UCD), Ruth Canning (Liverpool Hope), Marie-Louise Coolahan (University of Galway), Jane Grogan (UCD), Andrew Hadfield (University of Sussex), Mícheál Hoyne (TCD), Brendan Kane (U.Conn), David Kelly (University of Galway), Sarah McKibben (Notre Dame), Willy Maley (University of Glasgow), Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh (Maynooth), Deana Rankin (Royal Holloway), and Isabelle Torrance (Aarhus University).


a culturally inclusive cast list for early modern Ireland, we needed to define our parameters. Cultural actors (poets, musicians, theologians, scientists, jurists, linguists, cosmographers etc.) were at the heart of the project, not least because they were centrally involved both in resisting the conquest and in animating, justifying, and conducting it. But their very centrality meant that those whom we came to call 'secondary cultural actors' – those who deployed and patronised 'primary cultural actors', those who proscribed and killed them,²⁰ and all those who made the weather for culture (in the widest sense of the term) demanded inclusion as well. While we were not doing a census of everyone for whom a name survived in the record, we were still looking for a lot of people. The core dataset for MACMORRIS's biographical database came from the *Dictionary of Irish Biography (DIB)*, the backend of which was generously shared with us by the Royal Irish Academy. For the period 1541-1660, that gave us 1,167 biographies, 420 of them Gaelic Irish. The *DIB* is a work of traditional historiography. Those who gain entry are, overwhelmingly, politicians, soldiers, administrators, canonical writers, clerics. And they are overwhelmingly male: only 38 out of the 1,068 biographies commissioned when we accessed the *Dictionary* in 2019 were of women (3.5%).²¹ That's not out of line with projects of its kind: women make up 5.4% of the lives recorded in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, for example. Clearly, if we wanted to capture a more representative snapshot of early modern Ireland, one which drew in more Gaelic figures, more primary cultural actors, more women, more non-

We were also blessed with three outstanding undergraduate interns, Éabha Puirseil, Conor Killian, and Emma Cooling, who came to us through Maynooth University's SPUR programme.

²⁰ On measures against the *filidh* and other members of the Irish learned classes see, for example, the 'Orders to be Taken with the Earl of Desmond', 20 December 1563, which, having ordained that the 'Lawes called brehon lawes be abolished', proscribed 'certaine ydle men of Lewed demenor called rymers & Bardes & dice plaiers called carroghes who vnder pretence of their travaile do bring intellegence between their malefactors': PRO SP 63/9 f. 156.

²¹ In light of those findings, the *DIB* commissioned biographies for a number of early modern women; the first eight of these were published in 2024 and more are in the pipeline.

élite figures, more continental Europeans active in Ireland, we would need to augment this, our baseline dataset.

 **DICTIONARY OF IRISH BIOGRAPHY** Browse ▾ Search ▾

Fitzmaurice, Patrick (d. 1600), 17th baron of Lixnaw and Kerry, was eldest son of Thomas (qv), 16th baron, and his wife Margaret, second daughter of [James fitz John Fitzgerald](#) (qv), 14th earl of Desmond. He was probably born in the early to mid 1550s. In October 1567 he, along with a number of Irish notables, accompanied the lord deputy of Ireland, Sir [Henry Sidney](#) (qv), to London. His father ruled the territory of Clanmaurice in north Co. Kerry and sought crown recognition for his claims to independence from his traditional overlord [Gerald Fitzgerald](#) (qv), 15th earl of Desmond (and Patrick's uncle). By going to the royal court, Patrick was to serve as a pledge for his father's future loyalty. However, the Fitzmaurices were to be consistently disappointed in their expectations of support from

[Opening section of Patrick FitzMaurice's biography, showing hyperlinked figures: <https://www.dib.ie/biography/fitzmaurice-patrick-a3228>]

We began the task of extending the cast list by looking inside the *DIB* dataset itself, winking out figures mentioned in the biographies of others, but who didn't have a full entry of their own. The ideological inflection of any biographical dictionary is signalled by the selection criteria which determine both who gets an entry and who does not. To illustrate the point, let's look at the biography of Patrick FitzMaurice, 17th baron of Lixnaw and Kerry (d. 1600) – one of the 'Mac Morrisises' who, along with Shakespeare's irascible captain, ghost the project's acronym.

Ten figures, all male, mentioned in Patrick FitzMaurice's biography have hyperlinks which bring us to their own biographical entries elsewhere in the *DIB*. These select(ed) figures include Patrick's father and his eldest son, both called Thomas; the 14th and 15th earls of Desmond, as well as James fitz Thomas Fitzgerald, the *Sugán* Earl; Lord Deputies Sir Henry Sidney, Sir William Fitzwilliam, and Robert Devereux, 2nd earl of Essex; and the military commanders Sir George Carew and Sir William Pelham. The q.v. (*quod vide*, 'which see') after each of those hyperlinked names invites us to click onwards, along a daisy chain of military-dynastic worthies. The 1,068 biographies from the *DIB* which formed the first tranche of the MACMORRIS database represent the totality of such figures – and what those cumulative

quod vides construct is a *dramatis personae* skewed towards élite male figures. The fact that five of the 10 hyperlinked figures in this (not unrepresentative) entry are English – the rest are Old English – and that all are men shows how easily unintended exclusions happen. If we extract *all* the people who are mentioned in Patrick FitzMaurice's entry, rather than just those with hyperlinks, however, the cast list starts to become a little more diverse. So, while Patrick's father, Thomas, has his own biography, his mother, Margaret Fitzgerald, has none; rather, her identification as 'the second daughter of Earl James fitz John Fitzgerald' pulls in another male dynast with his own *quod vide* attached. Those who, like Margaret Fitzgerald, are name-checked but not given a biography of their own include Patrick's younger brother, Edmund; Patrick's son-in-law, Donal O'Sullivan Mór; and the unnamed son of Rory MacSheehy, head of the galloglasses of Munster. As we noticed with Margaret Fitzgerald, élite women tend to gain inclusion not in their own right but through their relationship to men: 'daughter of', 'sister of', 'wife of', 'widow of'. So it is with Patrick's wife, Joan, who is admitted to the record only as somebody's wife, somebody's daughter: 'He [Patrick] married (1574) Joan, daughter of David Roche, Viscount Fermoy'. We also learn the names of Patrick's younger sons (Gerald, Maurice) and of his two daughters, Joan and Eleanor.

So, for all the thinness of the description afforded them, this read-through of Patrick FitzMaurice's biography brings in an additional ten figures, including four women and two Gaelic heads of household. Dr Evan Bourke, MACMORRIS's project manager, did just such a read-through for the entire *DIB* database, adding a further 821 figures to the cast list, expanding the original 1,068 *DIB* entries to 1,889 figures.²² Each now has an individual entry in the MACMORRIS database. Beyond the named but unhyperlinked figures, shimmering just out of historical view, lie the even more spectral figures who are alluded to but not named. 'Apparently', Patrick's entry tells us, 'with the help of his jailer's wife, he escaped [from Limerick Castle] in August 1581.'

²² On that process and its results, see Evan Bourke, 'Networking Early Modern Irish Women', *Irish Historical Studies*, 46.170 (2022): 270–285, and 'Macmorris and the *DIB*: Constructing an Interactive Network Graph of Early Modern Ireland': <https://www.dib.ie/blog/macmorris-and-dib-constructing-interactive-network-graph-early-modern-ireland>.

Ultimately, the anonymous ‘wife’ is only a bit player in someone else’s life, as are the unnamed ‘other rebel captains’ who helped FitzMaurice spring James ‘*an tSúgáin*’ from captivity in Castleishin, Co. Cork.²³ Worse than being anonymized, however, is to be left out of the story altogether. Though there is no hint of it in his entry, Patrick FitzMaurice was a significant patron of Gaelic poetry.²⁴ The historiographical inflection of the *DIB*, however, leans towards high politics rather than high (Gaelic) culture and so it has nothing to tell us of Patrick FitzMaurice’s intellectual hinterland. It doesn’t mention, for example, Domhnall (mac Dáire) Mac Bruaideadha whose magnificent panegyric, *Ní dual cairde ar creich ngeimhil*, exuberantly celebrates a season spent with Pádraigín in Listowel Castle, hunting in the Stack’s Mountains, swimming in the River Feale, and beachcombing the long, wave-combed strands of Clann Mhuiris.²⁵ Missing, too, is a poet, known only by his surname, Ó Cuill, who mourned Pádraigín and his father Thomas (who predeceased him by just 10 years) in *Maith an compánach an dán*:

Ceól agus imirt is ól,
Mac Muiris do budh mór clú,
cosmhail ris an dán a gcor,
do chuadar d’éag dá dhol súd.

Ceannach fiona, ceannach each
leath ar leath maille ris an dán,

²³ For a fuller discussion of missing persons in the archive, see my ‘Fugitive Identities: Selves, Narratives and Disregarded Lives in Early-Modern Ireland’, in Campbell, et al. eds, *Becoming and Belonging*: 313–27.

²⁴ Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, ‘Poems on the Fitzmaurices of Lixnaw’, *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society*, Series 2, 22 (2022): 105–30. For more on the Fitzmaurices, Lords of Kerry, see Helen O’Carroll, *The Fitzmaurices: Lords of Kerry & Barons of Lixnaw* (Lixnaw: Oidhreacht Leac Snámha, 1994) and Martin Moore, *Deeds Not Words: the Survival of the FitzMaurice’s Lords of Kerry 1552 to 1603* (Castleisland: Gabhla Beag Publications, 2020).

²⁵ Osborn Bergin, *Irish Bardic Poetry*, compiled and edited by David Greene and Fergus Kelly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970), poem 11. I write about that poem in ‘Missing Bodies, Absent Bards’.

ón taoibhsi adeirim dá ló
ní mór nach bhfuadarar bás.

Pádraigín a mhac dá éis
ag seanLoch Léin gé fuair bás,
atáthar dá aithris air
a chion do dhul leis don dán (9-11);

Mac Muiris of high renown – owing to his death music and play and carousing too have departed; their plight is like that of poetry.

The purchase of both wine and horses, like poetry, has all but died here, I declare, since his death.

Although Pádraigín his son died after him at old Lough Leane, it is said of him that poetry’s share of honour has departed with him.²⁶

A bias towards political history at the expense of cultural history means that, if we only follow the hyperlinks, we will be led to a military-historical process of destruction, but – and this is a crucial omission – we will not be given much sense of what was being destroyed. Mac Bruaideadha’s poem, in contrast, brings us right in to the Mac Muiris Castle in Listowel, ‘san chuir g[h]roighigh ghealmhóir ghloin / seanróimh oinigh an íarthair’ (41.3-4), into ‘the fair bright court, wide and full of steeds, / old sanctuary of honour of the west.’ Ó Cuill’s elegy for that world of culture and conviviality ends on a dying fall – ‘Dá mbeinnsi im chompánach choir ...do rachuin d’éag mar mo dhán’ (12.1, 3), ‘If I were a true companion, I would die like my art’. But there is something defiant, too, about that *modh coinniollach*: if he *were*, he *would* – but, clearly, he has no intention of doing so.

To bring that cultural animation back into the picture and to remedy the *DIB*’s underrepresentation of Gaelic cultural figures, Dr Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh augmented the cast list by drawing on the *Irish Bardic Poetry Database* to which the Dublin

²⁶ Pádraig A. Breatnach, ‘A Poem on the end of Patronage’, *Éigse* 31 (1999): 79–88. On the only reference we have to Ó Cuill, see Réamonn Ó Muireadhaigh ed., ‘Aos Dána na Mumhan, 1584’, *Irisleabhar Muighe Nuadhat* (1960): 81–84.

Institute of Advanced Studies kindly gave us access. This brought in 720 additional figures. Strikingly, 14.5% of the IBPD's figures were women, introducing 105 extra women to our database. Of these, 32 were the patrons of poets, representing 12% of the 269 patrons identified. The third string to our prosopographical bow was to extend the search beyond these two databases and go in search of other 'cultural actors' wherever we could find them – in the State Papers, Fiants, Annals (particularly *Annála na gCeithre Máistrí* (AFM)), early printed books and pamphlets, and in the rich seam of information stored in old county historical and archaeological journals, particularly important given the loss of so many original documents in the destruction of the Four Courts in 1922. Here we tested the very boundaries of what we meant by a 'cultural actor'. In the end, our categories included 'Architects, Cartographers, Engineers, Painters, Surveyors', 'Bishops, Chaplains, Clergy', 'Educators, Schoolmasters, & Tutors', 'Go-Betweens and Interpreters', 'Harpers & Musicians', 'Irish Overseas: Clergy, Evangelists, Explorers, Historians, Natural Philosophers, Pedagogues, Theologians etc', 'Irish Writers & Translators Overseas', 'Learned Families', 'Martyrs', 'Medical Families & Practitioners', 'Merchants, Sailors, Seamen', 'Officials, Secretaries, Pursuivants', 'Soldiers', 'Strangers', and 'Writers: British & Continental'. In every case, the 'cultural actor' had to have been active in Ireland for at least part of his or her career. As well as including as many members of the hereditary learned families as we could – poets, legal scholars, historians, physicians, and musicians – Gaelic writers working outside the bardic tradition poured in as well, writers like Caitlín Dubh who wrote eulogies (but not in *dán díreach*) for the fourth Earl of Thomond and the Baron of Inchequin.²⁷ By extending the range of writers included, we drew in new patrons as well. Building entries for the *liaig*, the hereditary medical scholars, for example, also brought us to their patron-patients, like the two Caomhánach girls whom Corc Óg Ó Cadhla was treating for menstrual disorders while working on Bernard de Gordon's *Lilium medicinae* in their

²⁷ See Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, 'Bean i gclub na mbuachaillí: Caitilín Dubh agus filíocht na mban', RTÉ Brainstorm: <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2021/0309/1202857-caitilin-dubh-filiocht-na-mban/>

father Brian's castle.²⁸ In came the musicians, too, among them 33 harpers and one Shane Sheale, Hugh O'Neill's trumpeter who was with him at Kinsale and who, in the chaos which followed defeat, traded information on the Confederate forces' northwards retreat in exchange for English protection.²⁹ At the same time, we kept our eyes peeled for other groups underrepresented in traditional historiography, such as women and non-élite figures. This hand-curated dataset brought in 823 additional figures. At the end of the process, we had 1,642 Gaelic Irish figures in the MACMORRIS database out of a total of 4,649 entries, as against the 420 with which we started; women now make up 12.5% of the total, as against the *DIB*'s 3.5%.

One of the most arresting features of early modern Ireland for literary historians has always been the number of writers engaged in, variously, advancing, resisting, or simply living with and responding to conquest, plantation, and the infinite disruptions they unleashed. Now MACMORRIS's augmented database enables us to see the scale of that engagement: search the database using the filter 'writers' and an astonishing 1004 results pop up: English (2916), Irish (1275), Latin (414), Italian (10), Spanish (5), French (6), Welsh (4), Dutch (2), and German (1). What they wrote is, in turn, made available through the first integrated digital bibliography of every work written from, about, or in any way associated with Ireland, from 1541 to 1660. The 'writing of Ireland', as it emerges from the 4631 texts captured in MACMORRIS's 'Works' dataset, allows us to move from, say, Fionnghuala Inghean Uí Bhriain's 'I n-ainm an Spioraid Naoimh h'imrighe, a Uaithne' to Mercurio-Mastix Hibernicus's *A muzzle for Cerberus, and his three whelps Mercurius Elencticus, Bellicus, and Melancholicus: barking against patriots & martialists, in the present reign of their unwormed rage* (London, 1648). But, leaving aside entirely questions of relative quality (not to mention the inescapably skewed gender representation),³⁰ that

²⁸ Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Medical writing in Irish', *Irish Journal of Medical Science* 169.3 (2000): 217–20, 220.

²⁹ PRO SP 63/210 f.75: Sir Francis Stafford to Secretary Cecil, 14 January 1602.

³⁰ Of the 1004 writers in our database, only 45 are women; of these, only five write in Irish: Brighid inghean Einrí Mheic Ghearailt, Fionnghuala inghean Dhonnchaidh Uí Bhriain, Caitilín Dubh, Mary-ny-Clancye, and

movement brings us face to face with the distortions of the (post)colonial archive. Gaelic poets and intellectuals recorded what would, in effect, become their messages for the future not in print but in manuscript – and in a language, Classical Irish, now accessible only to highly trained scholars.³¹ The conquerors recorded their arguments and impressions in print *and* in a language which – not at all coincidentally – moved on from its first expansionist escapades in Ireland to become a global language. The resultant imbalance now obscures just how finely balanced the battle between English and Irish writers was in its own moment. In another case of the eventual outcome (Gaelic defeat) overriding – *overwriting* – a process which could have gone either way, the voices of the colonists seem to be on loudspeaker while the voices of who resisted them are on mute. Those disparities are exacerbated by questions of accessibility. In English, the literature of and from Ireland is widely edited, anthologised, and digitised on platforms like EEBO. The almost industrial level of editorial and critical attention lavished on English-language texts written in or about Ireland (think *The Faerie Queene* or *Henry V*) contrasts with the immensity of work still to be done on Irish-language material – an imbalance dramatised by Damian McManus and Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh's *A Bardic Miscellany* which transcribes and provides diplomatic editions for 500 hitherto unpublished bardic poems, to encourage 'scholars to take up the task of providing the complete editions which these poems richly deserve'.³²

In *New Digital Worlds*, Roopika Risam argues that the 'politics of knowledge...has not been hospitable to those outside the dominant cultures of the Global North'.³³ But it has not been

Mary-ny-Donoghue. That total is further whittled down by the fact that the last two exist only as mentions in the *Fiants* (as, respectively, a 'rymer' and 'a she-barde') and that Eóchaidh Ó hEodhusa may have written the poem 'doubtfully attributed' to Bridget Fitzgerald; see Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, 'Two female lovers', *Ériu* 45 (1994): 113–19.

³¹ That is where the genius of the *Léamh* project which provides the resources to enable non-specialist Irish speakers to access early modern Irish texts comes in: <https://xn--lamh-bpa.org/>.

³² McManus and Ó Raghallaigh eds., *A Bardic Miscellany*, xxxi.

³³ Roopika Risam, *New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis, and Pedagogy* (Evanston IL: Northwestern University

notably hospitable to minoritised cultures *within* the Global North either, and the desire to remedy that is the cornerstone of the MACMORRIS project's commitment to postcolonial digital humanities. In building our 'Works' database, we needed to correct for the imbalance which accrues when printed works are privileged over works in manuscript. Were we to replicate the pattern and include only printed material in our 'Works', every bardic poem would have to be dropped from the record. While inconsequential – but printed – works like Barnabe Googe's *The ouerthrowv of the gout* ('Nor suffer thou the deadly Beanes / to come vpon thy boord')³⁴ would make the cut, the work of Aonghus Ó Dálaigh Fionn, Eochaidh Ó hÉodhusa, and Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn would have to be dropped, once again, from the conversation. Rather than reproducing digitally the technological imbalance (access to the machinery of print) which marked the original colonial encounter, we took the decision to include Gaelic material preserved in manuscripts, while excluding English-language manuscripts.³⁵ Accordingly, each individual poem (and these are largely bardic poems of considerable heft) exists as a separate entry in the 'Works' section. Responding to the pressing need to bring bardic material back into circulation, the two postdoctoral fellows trained in Classical Irish, Dr Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, and her successor, Dr Philip Mac a' Ghoill, produced full editions of *Neart Banbha 'ga Barúnaibh, Truagh sin, a chinn mo chroidhe, Mithidh th'athdhúsgadh, a Aodh, Uaigneach a-deirtheair Dún Baoi, and Dia do bheatha i n-adhbhaidh th'athar*

Press, 2019), 5.

³⁴ Barnabe Googe trans., *The ouerthrowv of the gout written in Latin verse, by Doctor Christopher Balista* (London, 1577).

³⁵ Inevitably, the decision to exclude English-language manuscripts means that we don't include the works of, for example, Katherine Jones, Lady Ranelagh, or Hester Poulter. Such writers can, however, be found in Marie-Louise Coolihan's DH project, RECIRC: The Reception and Circulation of Early Modern Women's Writing, 1550–1700: <https://recirc.universityofgalway.ie/>.

for the journals *Celtica* and *Ériu*.³⁶ They also collaborated with scholars untrained in the wizardry of parsing bardic poetry to edit extracts of poems for *Léamh*.³⁷ And finally, Mac a' Ghoill edited and translated extracts from over 30 poems, annal entries, and letters for the deep map of Munster (of which more later).³⁸

Any digital-humanities project committed to decolonising the archive needs to get beyond simply diversifying the *content*, as MACMORRIS does by adding hitherto ignored Irish-language material to the already ample anglophone record. It needs to diversify the *form* of the digital application as well. Here was an obvious challenge for the project. If we were not to become just another of the more than 50% of websites worldwide which are exclusively in English,³⁹ anglophone form would play against the decolonising intentions of our multilingual content. That is why, from the very outset, we designed the MACMORRIS website to be bilingual. A language switcher brings the user to an Irish-language version of the site where everything, from the introductory video to the resource pages and case studies, is in

³⁶ Philip Mac a' Ghoill, 'Mithidh th'athdhúsgadh, a Aodh: Dán ag brostú Aodha Uí Dhomhnaill (†1600)', *Celtica* 34 (2022): 110–25; Philip Mac a' Ghoill, 'Uaigneach a-deirtheair Dún Baoi: Marbhna ar Eóghan Óg Ó Súilleabháin (†1616)', *Celtica* 35 (2023), 190–208; Philip Mac a' Ghoill, 'Dia do bheatha i n-adhbhaidh th'athar: Blúire de Dhán do Dhonnchadh Mac Carthaigh (†1665), *Ériu* 73 (2023), 121–8; Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, 'Neart Banbha 'ga Barúnaibh: Dán Molta ar Phádraigin Mac Muiris', *Ériu* 70 (2020): 41–72; Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, 'Marbhna ar Sheaán Mac Séamais Mheic Ghearalt (†1582)', *Celtica* 33 (2021): 277–94 and 'Edmund Spenser, Donnchadh "an tSneachta" Mac Craith and the writing of violence', *Spenser Review* 52.2 (2022).

³⁷A total of 40 quatrains/verses were selected from seven poems for detailed annotation: *Beannacht duit, a Dháibhith Óig* (qq. 40–43), *Damh féin choiglim an chathair* (qq. 51–53), *Éinpheisd ag milleadh Mhumhan* (qq. 27–37), *A theachtair thig ón bhFraingc* (qq. 1–5), *Ní heasboidh acht crádh croidhe* (qq. 6–12), *Taghaim Tomás ragha is róghrádh* (verses 11–16), *Cionnas mheasdar macaomh óg* (qq. 25–29).

³⁸ The Deep Map contains excerpts from 36 different bardic poems, not including excerpts from the poems listed in footnotes 38 and 39. Editing and/or translation work was carried out on 21 of those 36 excerpts, and the remaining 15 had previously been published with edition and translation.

³⁹ Risam, *New Digital Worlds*, 44.

Irish. There is no escaping, however, the awkward reality that the language of coding which undergirds everything is in English.⁴⁰ Building an extended, unified, and more inclusive cast list of early modern Ireland is, of course, only a starting point for telling more complex and polyvalent stories about a world in the grip of traumatic transformation. But with everyone, English, Irish, and others, now on the same (digital) page at least, we have assembled the materials to move beyond a one-sided story drawn exclusively from anglophone sources. Gathered all in one place, we now have a polyphony of voices offering multiple perspectives on a panoply of topics: culture, identity, law, lifeways, nationhood, ownership, religion, war, wealth, the natural world... This inclusive assemblage offers a model for digitally capturing the fallout of conflict and using web applications to represent cultural diversity and linguistic plurality. And, as the future – a future which is our present – was being shaped in early modernity, this material, which enables us to uncover alternative, interrupted, and silenced orders of knowledge, can potentially bring back into circulation alternative, but largely forgotten, histories of being in, and understanding, the world.⁴¹

Perhaps the best ways to start that exploration is with the website's two visualisation interfaces. (The search function allows us to explore the biographical data which, in turn, powers the network visualisation). If the biographical data brings us to individuals, the deep map (visualisation interface 1) and the network (visualisation interface 2) bring us to people – and ideas – in contact, in conversation, in conflict, and sometimes, of course, barely rubbing shoulders with one another. Each of the two visualisations captures a different kind of adjacency. With the

⁴⁰ See, for example, Pedro Nilsson-Fernández and Quinn Dombrowski, 'Multilingual Digital Humanities', in *The Bloomsbury Handbook to the Digital Humanities*, ed. James O'Sullivan (London: Bloomsbury, 2022): 81–90; Lorella Viola and Paul Spence eds, *Multilingual Digital Humanities* (London: Routledge, 2022); Quinn Dombrowski, 'Preparing Non-English Texts for Computational Analysis', *Modern Languages Open* 45.1 (2020): 1–9. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.294>.

⁴¹ My thinking here is, of course, influenced by Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1966; London: Routledge, 2001) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1969; London: Tavistock Publications, 1974).

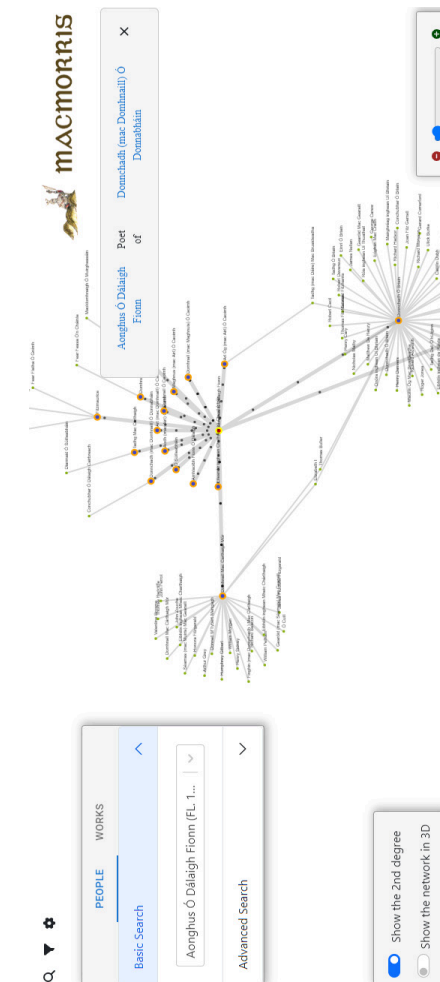
network visualisation, the adjacency is interpersonal; first-degree connections are between people who, the bibliographical data conclusively shows, were directly acquainted, and we taxonomised those relationships using the following schema: affective connections (e.g. ‘friend of’), kinship connections (e.g. ‘spouse of’), political/professional connections (e.g. ‘poet of’), intellectual connections (e.g. ‘correspondent of’), enmity connections (e.g. ‘torturer of’), legal connections (e.g. ‘ward of’), religious connections (e.g. ‘chaplain of’), and literary connections (e.g. ‘printed by’).⁴² Second-degree connections, in turn, bring us, friend-of-a-friend style, to the connections of those connections.

If we look at the 1° network of Aonghus Ó Dálaigh Fionn, *ollamh* to Domhnall Mac Carthaigh Mór, we find him operating in an apparently Gaelic bubble of fellow poets and patrons, the latter both Gaelic and Old English.⁴³ But, if we move outwards by just 1° of separation, the connections which link Ó Dálaigh to the networks of both Mac Carthaigh Mór and Donnchadh Ó Briain suddenly place him in the orbit of four Lord Deputies (Thomas Radcliffe, Sir Henry Sidney, Sir Arthur Grey – Edmund Spenser’s patron – and Sir John Perrot), a clutch of military hard men like Sir Humphrey Gilbert and John Zouche, and writers and colonial officials like Barnabe Googe (of *The ouerthrowv of the gout* fame) and Richard Beacon, whose *Solon His Follie* advocated using

⁴² Here is the full taxonomy of connection types: affective connections (acquaintance of, admired by, friend of, close friend of, knew in passing, met; kinship connections (sibling of, spouse of, parent of, had child with, grandparent of, grandchild of, aunt/uncle of, niece/nephew of, relative of); political/professional connections (ally of, client of, colleague of, inaugurator of, poet of, patron of, attendant of, harper of); intellectual connections (schoolmate of, student of, correspondent of); enmity connections (antagonist of, enemy of, rival of, torturer of, killer of); legal connections (sibling-in-law of, parent-in-law of, child of, child-in-law of, master of, rented to, traded with, testator of, ward of); religious connections (godparent of, godchild of, priest/chaplain of, other religious link); literary connections (collaborated with, printed by, published by, dedicated book to, sold by).

⁴³ Such networks are explored in Evan Bourke and Deirdre Nic Chárthaigh, ‘Patronage networks in Gaelic Ireland ca. 1541 – ca. 1660’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 76.3 (2023): 1–41 and Evan Bourke, ‘Networking Spenser in Ireland’, *The Spenser Review* 54.2 (2024).

Athens’s subjugation of Salamis as a template for conquering Ireland.⁴⁴ But who actually met whom within that wider network of possibilities hinged on historical imponderables, like who had whom to dinner...



[Aonghus Ó Dálaigh Fionn first and second-degree network (detail): <https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/network>]

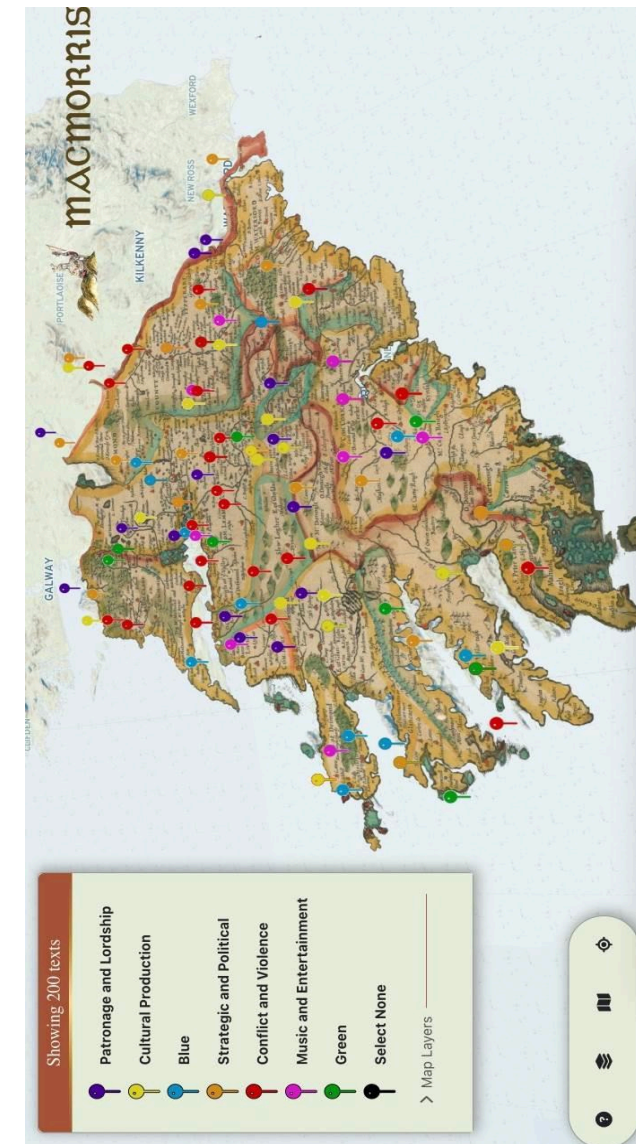
⁴⁴ Richard Beacon, *Solon His Follie; or a Politique Discourse Touching the Reformation of Common Weales Conquered, Declined, or Corrupted* (Oxford, 1594).

Our second mode of visualising adjacency is spatial. Through all its different phases, the Tudor conquest of Ireland introduced a succession of new characters to the cast list, and their presence in the landscape manifested itself in military encampments, fortifications, administrative centres in towns and cities, and in castles besieged, stormed, and re-edified. As conquest cleared the way to plantation, the transitory infrastructure of war gave way to colonial settlements on land attained from those held to have ‘rebelled’ against the Crown. Following the defeat of the Desmonds and their allies in 1583, for example, almost 500,000 acres were confiscated in Munster and, in 1589, Francis Jobson mapped the resultant plantation as it was beginning to bed down. In the TCD copy, the seignories granted to the new ‘undertakers’ stand out as light-pink islands in a sea of greens, colour-coding a world of contiguity where native and newcomer lived in tense proximity and where contending cultural practices, worldviews, and beliefs rubbed against one another, in a politically and militarily engineered theatre of juxtaposition.⁴⁵ Here, a physical contiguity which is, as Jobson shows, mappable as a *place* exists, simultaneously, as a *space* of encounter where multiple, potentially contending, ideas brush up against one another.

To capture this rich but elusive space of cultural ferment, the MACMORRIS deep map focuses on texts produced in Munster during the critical years 1569 to 1603 (spanning the Desmond War and the Nine Years War), across a variety of genres, from bardic poetry to campaign journals, from Renaissance English epic to the fretful accountancy of a Spanish *veedor*, from religious poetry to the sceptical travelogue of a German traveller. The selections reflect the interests and inclinations of the map’s creators; deep maps are ‘curated products’ that strive not for ‘objectivity or authority but rather a negotiated conversation’.⁴⁶ The selections fall into seven categories, each comprising a separate map layer: lordship and patronage; cultural production; strategic or symbolic; conflict; performance, including music; and a green (natural world) and blue (maritime, riverine) layer. (The splash of red-for-conflict

⁴⁵ Francis Jobson, ‘The Province of Munster’, IE TCD MS 1209/36.

⁴⁶ David J. Bodenhamer, ‘Narrating Space and Place’, in *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives*, ed. David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan and Trevor M. Harris (Indiana University Press, 2015), 21.



[MACMORRIS Deep Map:
<https://macmorriss.maynoothuniversity.ie/map>]

map-pins running right across the deep map flags up the violence of the period.) One hundred and one of the 207 extracts are in English (49%), 80 are in Irish (39%), drawn from 52 individual poems (32 of them edited and/or translated for the first time),⁴⁷ as well as 16 extracts from *Annála na gCeithre Máistrí*. Eleven are in Spanish (5.3%), ten are in Latin (5%), four are in Italian, and one is in German. Each of the 200 texts is allocated a physical location on the map, either because that is the place mentioned in the extract or it is a place associated with the writer or his/her subject.⁴⁸ Because these are snapshots from a time of upheaval and transformation, a site of lordship, cultural production, and music at one moment can also be – or can become – a strategic site or a place of violence; one green pin on a site may denote a nature lyric; a second on the same site may bring us to a record of ecological destruction.

A deep map is an assemblage of fragments. By laying extracts that are themselves fragments of longer texts side by side, we seek to capture multiplicity and contending perspectives; the extracts represent a multiplication of meaning across political, military, cultural, linguistic, epistemic, generic, and linguistic boundaries. It is precisely the singularity of each extract – their discreteness each from the other often amounts to incommensurability – that makes them valuable. The deep map does not invite synthesis or the projection of narrative coherence onto elements whose very hallmark is their irreducible plurality. These are not jigsaw pieces requiring only the ingenuity – or will-to-power – of a literary historian to wrest them into a totalising narrative, to impose on them an explanatory, teleological pattern that moves, say, through conflict and conquest to plantation and colonisation. Rather, the nature of a deep map allows us to stay with difference, to sit with the variousness and mutual otherness of things, to realise that there is no closure without loss, and to recognise that there is no one story. A deep map resists the tyranny of univocality and narrative coherence.

⁴⁷ See footnote 39.

⁴⁸ We choose John Speed's 'Province of Mounster, with the City of Cork' (London, 1610) for our historical map layer, not least because it is one of the earliest maps that sites County Clare in the province of Munster rather than Connacht; see TCD MS 1209/38.



[Deep Map, showing Cahir:
<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/46>]

To see the pattern at work, let's visit a number of contiguous sites in Urmhumhain, the territory of the Butlers and

eang shéanamhuil luaimneach lonn
uaibhreach éanamhuil éadtrom;

a land prosperous, restless and strong, proud, light and abundant
in birds.⁴⁹

Starting at Cahir, we find a eulogy to Téabóid Buitléir, 1st Baron Cahir, comparing him to a magically replenishing fruit tree:

Agus is é crann cnuasaigh na dáimhe Teabóid Buitléir, óir do-
gheibhid draoithe agus deaghaos gacha dána toradh gacha laoi
agus gacha mís, gacha treimhse agus gacha bliadhna go habaigh
re buain don chrann sin, ionnus gurab móide é a mbeantar de fó
ionnamhuil crainn na beathadh i bParthus.

And Theobald Butler is the tree that gathers the poets, because
druids and all good poets receive the fruits [of it] every day, and
every month, and every season, and every year since that tree
ripens eternally, so that he who takes from it gets more than
when compared to the tree of life in Paradise.⁵⁰

In a very different vein, a sermon delivered, also in Cahir, by the
Papal Legate, in the presence of the Earl of Desmond, tips the
anonymous author of *The Supplication of the Blood of the English
Most Lamentably Murdered in Ireland* into an anti-popish rant:

They are all crooked: into the fire wth them: They that wth
bathing and bending wilbe made stright: keepe them for yore
use, to obay you, to serve god: the rest lett them breake to their
owne confusion. They are all runne together to drive you out of
yore kingdome, to destroy yore people. Lett them all drinke of
one cuppe together, Lett them all taste one whipp. The kearne,
the executioner; the chorle, the purloyner; the gentelman the
abetter, the mayntayner, the setter on. Lett the sworde spare
none that lightes in their way.⁵¹

⁴⁹ MACMORRIS, URL:

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/61>, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

⁵⁰ MACMORRIS, URL: [https://](https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/94)

macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/94, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

⁵¹ MACMORRIS, URL: <https://>

In nearby Ballynomasna, meanwhile, the poet Eóghan Mac Craith
is offering thanks for the sacrament of Holy Communion:

Dia do bheatha, a Abhluinn án,
as tú beatha ár n-anma, a Uan,
Dia do bheatha, a Rí na ríogh
fá dhíon mo chlí, a bheatha bhuan (1);

Welcome, o noble Host,
you are the life of my soul, o Lamb,
o King of kings, o lasting life,
you are welcome under the roof of my body.⁵²

In the same neighbourhood, at Clocully, the harper Melaghlin O
Dowan is receiving a pardon.⁵³ A little further east, at Doire an
Láir Castle, we come upon one of the ubiquitous red map-pins
signalling conflict and violence. This one records Thomas Butler,
10th Earl of Ormond, and Lord Justice William Pelham marching
on a castle held by the Desmonds:

agus ní ro hanadh leó gur ro saidhit a bpuiple agus a bpailliúin i
timcheall Doire an Láir co ro gabhadh é leó fo dheóidh, agus ro
dícheandait an bharda uile las an Iustis;

and they marched without halting until they had pitched their
tents and pavilions around Doire-an-lair, which they finally
took; the Lord Justice beheaded all the warders.⁵⁴

A short distance to the east, at Carrick-on-Suir, Dermot O'Meara,
the physician, is channelling Virgil, in overheated tribute to
Thomas Butler:

Condignos hic ille diu dum carpit honores,
Tristia cimerias linquit penetralia valles
Mopheus: hoc illi rector superúmque hominumque

macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/188, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

⁵² MACMORRIS, URL:

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/141>, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

⁵³ MACMORRIS, URL:

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/89>, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

⁵⁴ MACMORRIS, URL:

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/58>, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

Imperat; et nullos strepitus facientibus alis
 Per tenebras volitans, intra breve tempus in urbem
 Londini vehitur, positisque e corpore pennis,
 Faemineam adsimulat faciem, tellusque Dynastae
 Ormonio apparens Hyberna;

While Ormond here for long received due praise,
 Morpheus relinquished the Cimmerian Vale,
 His grim abode (thus had his order come
 From the controller of both gods and men).
 His wings were silent as he flitted through
 The darkness and within a little space
 Was borne to London city, where he laid
 Aside his body's feathers and put on
 A female face, appearing as the land
 Hibernia to the dynast Ormond.⁵⁵

In Carrick, too, an impish love poet is listening to the very song which William Shakespeare had Pistol turn into gibberish ('Qualtitie calmie custure me!') in *Henry V*:

Dom anródh nár fhoghlaim mé
 seinm chailín ó chois tSiúire,
 i dtráth suain le sreing n-umha,
 nách beinn uaidh i n-aontumha (8);

I did not learn from my anguish,
 the playing of 'Cailín ó chois tSiúire [mé]'
 at bedtime from copper strings,
 I would not give it up for a life of celibacy.⁵⁶

Here too, at Ormond's 'braue mansione' in Carrick, we find the poet Edmund Spenser jockeying for Butler's patronage:

Receiue most noble Lord a simple taste
 Of the wilde fruit, which saluage soyl hath bred.
 Which being through long wars left almost waste,
 With brutish barbarisme is ouerspredd.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ MACMORRIS, URL:

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/149>, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

⁵⁶ MACMORRIS, URL:

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/139> and

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/140>. Accessed: 24.09.2023.

Spenser's imputation of 'brutish barbarisme', when set down on the levelled plane of a deep map, lands less as a judgement requiring assent than as one point of view among others, a narrowing – or failure – of understanding. His is one perspective in a landscape infinitely and irreducibly more complex than that. The capacity of the deep map is precisely that it can *map* complexity, by charting a diversity of perspectives spatially. Simply by laying extracts side by side, it sets down a spectrum of viewpoints whose relationship, one to another, can be, variously, discordant, syncopated, opposed, out of alignment, or worlds apart. The deep map offers a space which resists the impulse to reduce complexity to a single story or to one linear argument. Of course, the impulse to impose a pattern on this material is strong. There is no escaping the fact that this is, at one level and ineluctably, a story of conquest, colonisation, and loss. Not only are the castles taken and the defenders beheaded but the forms which encoded Gaelic apprehensions of the world (bardic poetry, *seanchas*) – and, ultimately, the very language in which those forms are written – would fall silent. But that does not happen here. On a deep map, it is not just the evidence – the extracts – that are spatialised: time itself is spatialised, so that chronology, with its inbuilt teleological assumptions, is temporarily suspended. On the flat plane of a deep map where relations are governed spatially, by the fact of contiguity, time itself also gets flattened. These extracts from Urmumhain date from the 1570s to the early seventeenth century, but teleology is held at bay by the spatialisation of time: on the map, there is no chronology, no temporal sequencing. Everything is happening together, contiguously and simultaneously. Here, in the unitary time of the map, the castles may fall but the land is still 'éanamhuil', still abundant in birds, a good ruler can still be imagined as 'tree [that] ripens eternally', and a harper still plucks songs from copper strings in Cloch Chullaí.

⁵⁷ MACMORRIS, URL:

<https://macmorris.maynoothuniversity.ie/site/56>, Accessed: 24.09.2023.

Abbreviations:

- AFM *Annals of the Four Masters* (= *Annála na gCeithre Máistrí*); ed. and trans. John O'Donovan, *Annála Rioghachta Éireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616* (Dublin, 1856)
- DH Digital Humanities
- EEBO Early English Books Online: <https://www.proquest.com/eebo>.

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