Care and conservation of manuscripts 19

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M.J. Driscoll

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The vignette on the cover is taken from the allegorical representation of Professor Arnas
Magnæus/Árni Magnússon's scholarly activities which adorned the oldest series of publications of the Arnamagnæan Commission 1773–1809.

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Tradition and innovation in the materiality of medieval Gaelic law manuscripts

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This article is concerned with paper in the medieval Gaelic law manuscript tradition during the initial phases of the paper tradition in Ireland.[1] Paper was introduced into the Gaelic manuscript tradition in the late fifteenth century, but it took several centuries before it replaced vellum entirely as the preferred writing medium.[2] Recent studies have highlighted the gradual change to paper from vellum in manuscripts compiled in Irish schools of learning, particularly those of medicine and history.[3] The extent to which paper usage prevailed in the professional law schools during this initial phase has not yet been fully explored, however. This article provides a general survey and discussion of paper use in the vernacular Irish law manuscripts, with particular focus on the largest such collection, which is held in the Library of Trinity College Dublin. The evidence demonstrates that the professional Irish law schools were not isolated from the wider trends and practices of book production taking place in Ireland. Scribes not only adopted the new writing technology but also implemented innovative new page layouts in both materials, drawing on external influences of imported printed books, demonstrating flexibility and dexterity working between both media.

Traditional manuscript production in medieval Gaelic law schools

Medieval vernacular Irish law, otherwise known as Brehon law, represents a continuous stream of legal writing from the seventh century to the

early seventeenth century, at which point the last vestiges of the Irish legal system largely disappeared. Although the canonical law tracts are linguistically dated to the seventh and eighth centuries, copies of these texts are preserved in manuscripts dating from the late Middle Ages (1100–1600).[4] Most of the legal corpus is in fact extant in sources dating from the post-Norman period, with the majority having been compiled between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These manuscripts were compiled at a time of political turbulence in Ireland. Many manuscripts disappeared due to the destruction of manuscript materials from the ravages of war in the 1600s.[5] Following the demise of the law schools in the early seventeenth century, the copying of law manuscripts on paper became the remit of the professional scribes working in Dublin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The earliest surviving copies of vernacular Irish law texts follow the traditional modalities of manuscript production in terms of material, collation, *mise-en-page* and script.[6] The preferred medium for writing was vellum. The collation of the bifolia was typically gathered in eights and tens as a general guide. The text was laid out in the traditional bi-columnar layout. The canonical text was typically written in large script, displaying textual hierarchy, and the interlinear glosses and commentary in a smaller Gaelic minuscule. Legal scholars actively engaged with the texts over the course of the centuries, and the texts accrued copious amounts of glossing and commentary. As the canonical texts accumulated glosses and commentaries over time, the importance of the authoritative text diminished. In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuscripts, the original text was often reduced to short extracts or citations, sometimes, but not always, written in a larger script, interspersed with glossing and lengthy commentary, written in Gaelic minuscule. By the sixteenth century, quire structures tended to be more complex, and the formats became smaller, reflecting scholarly books intended for personal learning.[7] By the end of this period, there was also a shift in the writing medium, with some manuscripts reflecting the hybrid collation of vellum and paper. Intercultural connections between Irish medical schools and continental universities, such as Montpellier, served as likely routes through which paper was first introduced into a Gaelic context.[8] But networks with continental universities of law may also have yielded such opportunities not only for the circulation of texts but also for the trade of books and paper.[9]

Composite vellum and paper manuscripts in the medieval Gaelic law manuscript tradition

The largest collection of vernacular Irish law manuscripts is held in the Library of Trinity College Dublin. The manuscripts in this collection are mere accidents of survival due to the collecting efforts of the Welsh antiquarian and scholar Edward Lhuyd between 1699–1700.[10] It is an invaluable collection not only for its legal textual contents but also for the window it provides into manuscript production and scribal culture in the law schools in the late medieval period in Ireland. Although mostly vellum, the collection contains examples of hybrid manuscripts, whereby old and new media have been brought together, either original by design or as introduced insertions.

An example of an original hybrid composite manuscript is seen in a sixteenth-century Irish legal miscellany, namely TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 12, pp. 329–52. This consists of one vellum conjoined bifolium (pp. 329–30 and 351–52) into which ten single leaves of paper (pp. 331–50) are fitted.[11] This small outer bifolium may originally have been a discarded piece of vellum prior to it being used as a parchment guard.[12] The paper leaves were whip-stitched together and inserted between the outer bifolium. The paper measures 17.4 cm × 12.2 cm, with the vellum bifolium slightly smaller in width. The back lower-edges of the paper towards the end of the gathering are damaged due to being exposed. The subsequent use of a chemical reagent has rendered some of the text illegible in places. The presence of a partial circular watermark at the bottom margin of p. 333 and another partial circle at the bottom of p. 345, with horizontal chain lines (see p. 342) is visible using a light sheet. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine any further distinguishing features in the motif. Ruling is by ink on vellum and plummet on paper. There are four pricking marks in the outer edges to delineate the textblock and the inner bounding line. However, there are no marginal pricking marks to guide the ruling of lines on either vellum or paper leaves.

This book, which belonged to one Uilliam Mac Donnchadh, was compiled at a law school by several scribal hands.[13] The book contains vernacular Old Irish legal citations with later commentary, although there are some Latin canon law citations also.[14] On the initial vellum leaf (namely pp. 329 and 330), the text is laid out in three columns. This layout is typic-

ally employed for glossaries, but also lends itself here to the short nature of the citations. Space is left for the insertion of additional material on p. 330, some of which has been added by various hands. The text on the paper leaves is laid out in a single block format (measuring 10.5 cm × 4 cm), which may suggest the use of a different exemplar. *Litterae notabiliores* are written in the bounding lines to mark new citations. On occasion these are coloured in red or green, with no bleed-through in evidence on the verso suggesting a good quality of paper. Visual markers such as paragraph marks or the abbreviation *gné eile* (another thing) are used to indicate new sections, following the practice of annotation in the vellum legal tradition. The run-over symbol was a device used in vellum manuscripts to make efficient use of space and indicate intracolumnar text in a line that extends from the line below. The scribe also uses this symbol on paper but mostly leaves the lines following it empty showing that the scribe did not worry about sparing his writing material, as was the case with vellum use. At the end of the manuscript, the text runs continuously from paper (p. 350) across to the final vellum leaf (p. 351) and the scribe shows no discernible difficulty in writing across the two different materials (see Figs. 132 and 133 below). The canonical text is written in large display script, and the glosses and commentary are written interlineally in smaller minuscule on these final pages.

Uilliam's composite book, consisting of a vellum guard and paper insertion, marks a transitional period in book production following the introduction of paper to Ireland. However, this practice was not unique to the law schools. Such a composite formation is also found, for example, in the Book of Ballycummin (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 N 10 (967)), a miscellany of prose and poetry, dating to 1575 and written in Co. Roscommon.[15] This manuscript is associated with the Ó Maoil Chonaire family of historians, who were closely associated with the Mac Aodhagáin legal family, with members of the former attending the law schools as students.

Scribal networks between various learned families of law and history resulted in the movement of texts and material. The vellum manuscript known as 'Máel Íosa's book' is a scholarly legal miscellany compiled between 1509 and 1520.[16] Máel Íosa was a Mac Aodhagáin legal scribe who was assisted by several others in compiling his manuscript. The miscellany consists of 83 pages and is now bound into three volumes. The final portion of this manuscript contains mostly glossaries and *glossae collectae*. At a later point in this manuscript's history, two paper bifolios

Fig. 132. *TCD, MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 12, p. 350, paper. Image courtesy of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.*

Fig. 133. *TCD, MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 12, p. 351, vellum. Image courtesy of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.*
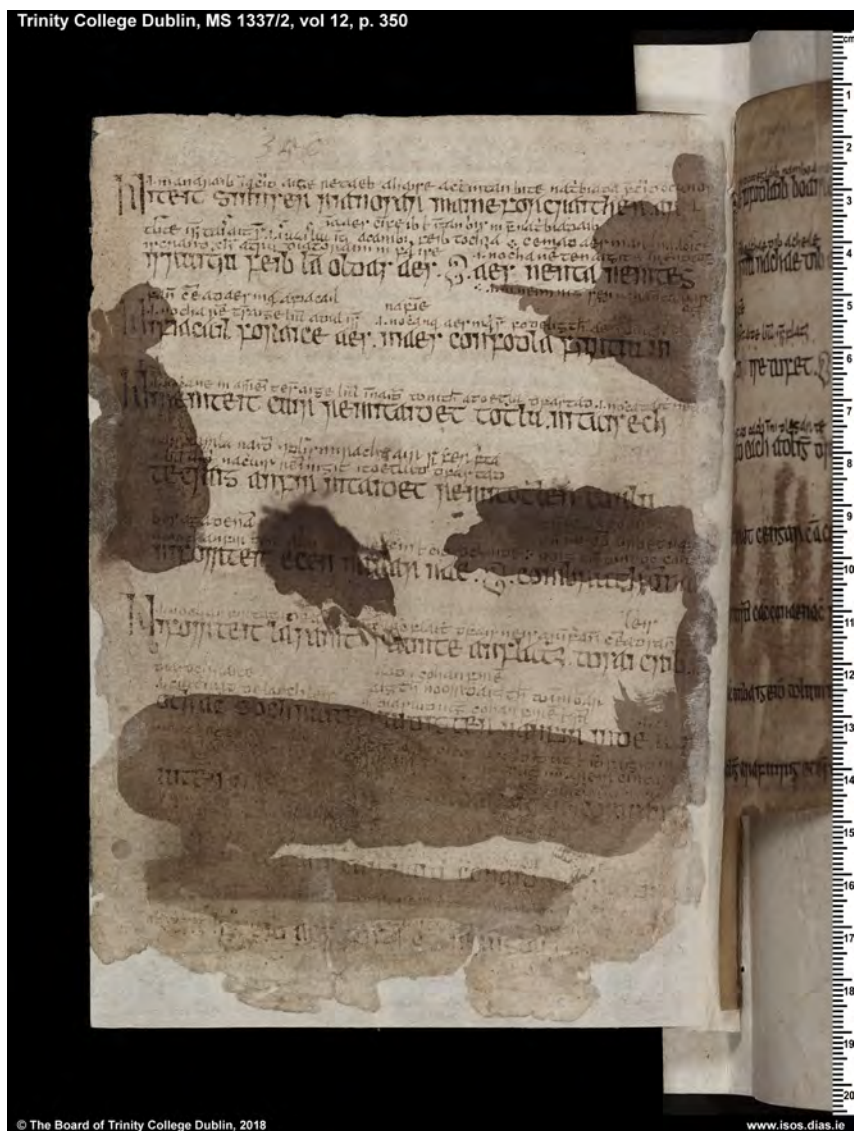
containing glossary material were inserted into the final gathering.[17] Three different hands, distinct from those found in the vellum portions, wrote on these pages. One of these hands signs his name as Páidín Ó Maoil Chonaire in an undated scribal note. The paper contains watermarks that bear a motif of a cinquefoil on a stem over a hand. The watermarks lie parallel to the chain lines, which run horizontally across the page and are bisected by the fold and the gutter in each instance.[18] A watermark with the same motif is recorded in the Book of Ballycummin (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, 23 N 10 (967)), discussed above.[19] The paper insertion in Máel Íosa's book most likely dates to the late 1570s. Moreover, the scribe Páidín can be identified as Páidín Óg Ó Maoil Chonaire, who flourished in the 1580s.[20]

An unusual, shared layout in vellum and paper manuscripts compiled in the law schools

The traditional *mise-en-page* employed in vellum law manuscripts continued to be applied to paper manuscripts for the most part. However, a unique layout is witnessed in a small number of vellum and paper manuscripts produced in the law schools at Cathair Mhic Neachtain (Cahermacnaghten), Co. Clare and Park, Co. Galway in the sixteenth century.

   Examples of this distinctive *mise-en-page* occur in two vellum manuscripts in the first instance, both of which share one place of writing and are associated with legal families. The first occurs in Dublin, Royal Irish Academy, Stowe MS C iii 2 (1236), a manuscript dating to ca. 1552 and written for Domhnall Óg Mac Fhlannchadha (MacClancy), a member of a legal family in Co. Clare.[21] The manuscript was begun in Baile Mhic Fhlannchadha (BallymacClancy) and completed in Cathair Mhic Neachtain (Cahermacnaghten), the location of a law school of the legal family of Uí Duibh Dá Bhoireann (O'Davoren). Both locations are in the north-western part of Co. Clare. The text is laid out in regular, rectangular bi-columnar format throughout the manuscript. On f. 10v, however, the scribe deviates from this rectangular design and imposes 'an unusual originality in the composition of the page', whereby the two columns on the page interlock in a jigsaw-like fashion.[22] This is employed only for the

beginning of *Immaccallam in Dá Thúarad* (The colloquy of the two sages) and nowhere else in the manuscript.

The second example is found in the Book of O'Davoren (London, British Library, Egerton MS 88), a large legal compendium of learning compiled over a period of seven years, spanning from 1564 to 1570.[23] This was partly written in Cathair Mhic Neachtain as well as in Park, Co. Galway under the supervision of Domhnall Ó Duibh Dá Bhoireann (O'Davoren). He was assisted by numerous students, including Dubháltach Mór mac Séamuis Mac Fir Bhisigh, discussed below. On ff. 28r to 30r, the scribe identified as Maghnus I uses this interlocking *mise-en-page* for a series of legal citations and commentary.

A third instance is found in a manuscript compiled by the aforementioned Dubháltach Mór, who flourished between ca. 1569 and 1603 and was closely associated with the law school in Park, Co. Galway.[24] This manuscript, written with the assistance of Conaire Ó Maoil Chonaire, is now bound into the composite volume TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317).[25] This contains important glossaries including Cormac's Glossary, O'Mulconry's Glossary and O'Davoren's Glossary.[26] This is a paper manuscript, but given the density of the written text, the watermarks are rendered obscure. The pages are ruled with plummet, although there are no signs of pricking marks. The text is written in black ink, while red is used to rubricate important passages and citations. The text is typically laid out in two columns rather than the customary three columns for glossary texts. Dubháltach Mór diverges from the traditional straight columnar format used in the Gaelic vellum manuscript tradition in two instances, namely pp. 173 (see Fig. 134) and 174. Here, he employs the distinctive and visually striking *mise-en-page* as found in RIA MS C iii 2 and the Book of O'Davoren, with which he is also associated. Dubháltach Mór employs this only in the copy of Cormac's Glossary.

This *mise-en-page* is applied to texts of different genres, not only to legal texts, in these manuscripts. It is never applied to a full text but rather only to a single page or two. Each scribe determined a page-to-page format with careful deliberation, displaying their technical precision. The design of this layout may have been manipulated purely for visual aesthetics or experimental intention rather than having any functionality for the reader. Moreover, Dubháltach Mór's manuscript demonstrates the influence of *mise-en-page* not only of vellum onto paper but also the movement of

Fig. 134. *TCD, MS H 2. 15B (1317), p. 173, paper. Image courtesy of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.*
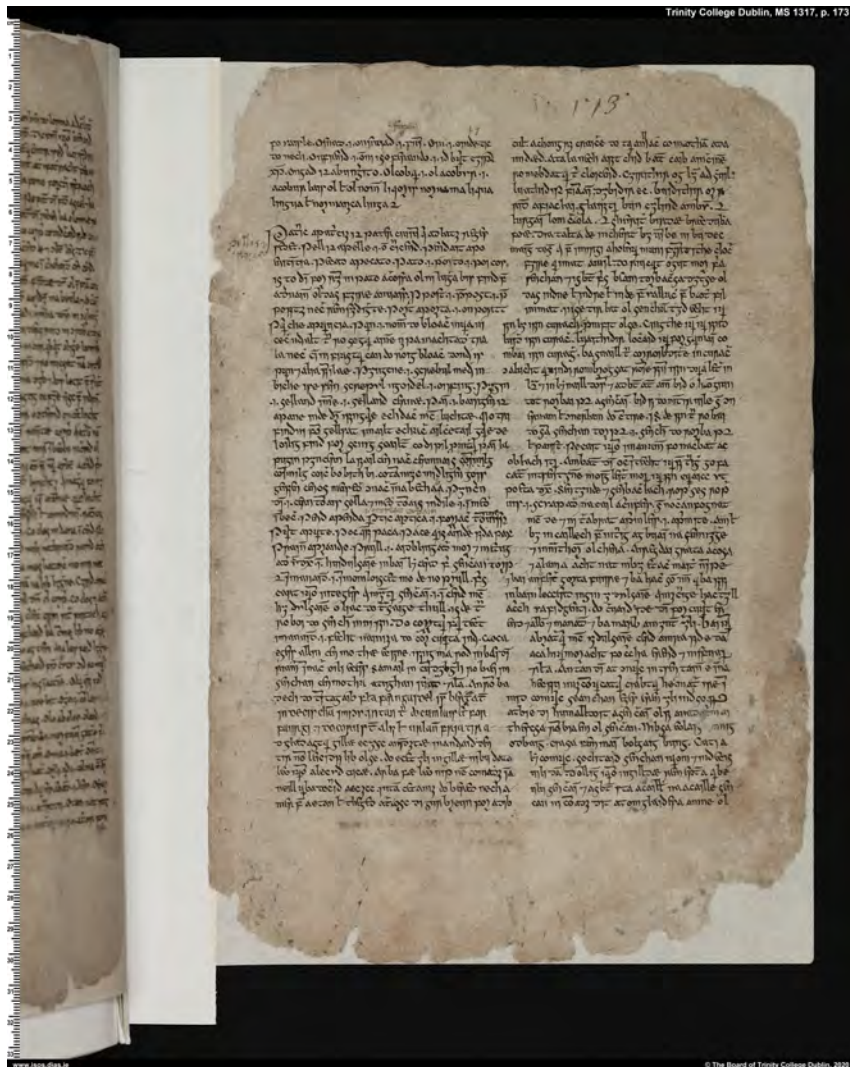
manuscript design between the law schools in Co. Galway and Co. Clare in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

From vellum manuscript to printed book and back to (paper) manuscript again

Close connections between the Mac Fir Bhisigh family and the law schools continued into the following century. Dubháltach Óg Mac Fir Bhisigh, Dubháltach Mór's grandson, was a prolific seventeenth-century antiquarian and scholar who received instruction in Baile Mac Aodhagáin (BallymacEgan), a law school in Co. Tipperary.[27] Dubháltach Óg's interests in law and legal terminology led him to come into possession of several law manuscripts between the 1640s and 1660s.[28] His close engagement with the manuscripts is frequently witnessed throughout the pages, such as his signature, reading marks and the occasional added text of his own. Dubháltach Óg even inserted sheets with his own writing and sought to reinforce the vellum in manuscripts in his possession. For example, he wrote a genealogical entry into a vellum manuscript with a limp vellum cover.[29] This cover is comprised of two singletons sewn together with flattened vellum tackets. A paper pastedown (with the text offset and almost entirely illegible) is inserted between the final leaf and the verso of the cover to strengthen the back cover.[30]

Dubháltach Óg's earliest dateable work is the glossary known as *Dúil Laithne*, which he penned in 1643 at Baile Mac Aodhagáin.[31] This is now bound into composite volume TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317), along with several other works of his. Nollaig Ó Muraíle has suggested on account of the handwriting style and colour of the ink that these were also written ca. 1643, most likely at Baile Mac Aodhagáin.[32] An undated fragmentary paper manuscript in this volume plays a significant role in preserving texts of the vernacular Irish law corpus.[33] It contains two important eighth-century law texts, namely an acephalous and incomplete copy of *Bretha Nemed Dédenach* (The last judgments of privileged persons), the sole extant continuous copy of this text, and a part of *Bretha Nemed Toísech* (The first judgements of privileged persons). Another more complete and continuous independent copy of the latter text is found in a composite vellum and paper manuscript written in 1571 by Matha Ó Luinín, of Arda on the Erne in Co. Fermanagh.[34]

Dubháltach Óg's manuscript is interesting also from a materialistic point of view. The pages in this manuscript are folded from single folio sheets. A watermark is located on each of the first five pages and not on the latter six pages, with the chain lines running vertically.[35] The watermark motif resembles a bunch of grapes mounted on a base containing letters 'ROP', likely the papermill's initials. An exact corresponding watermark is found in the undated National Library of Ireland, MS G 50.[36] According to Nessa Ní Sheaghdha, the latter manuscript was written by a member of the Co. Fermanagh based Ó Luinín family of historians, possibly Giolla Pádraig Ó Luinín, who flourished between 1631 and 1660.[37] This would suggest a connection between Dubháltach Óg and the Ó Luinín family, but as to how Dubháltach Óg came into possession of paper of the same origin remains unclear.[38]

In this manuscript, Dubháltach Óg intertwines traditional methods of manuscript production with innovative practices influenced by early printed books. For instance, the placement of catchwords departs from the practice in vellum manuscripts, where such words were typically placed at the end of each quire. Rather, Dubháltach Óg places catchwords at the end of a recto to signify the first word on the verso, and even goes so far as to write catchwords at the end of the first column indicating the first word of the second column (see, for example, p. 224). Using catchwords on every page follows the practice of printed books in England from the sixteenth century onwards.[39] It should be noted that there is a gap in the text between p. 225 and the following leaf (f. 226r).[40] A catchword at the end of column b on p. 225 but not repeated at the top of f. 226r points to the loss of at least one leaf rather than the exemplar being defective, as has been suggested by other scholars.[41] Moreover, the text on ff. 226 and 227 is a part of *Bretha Nemed Toísech* while the text on the preceding leaf is from *Bretha Nemed Dédenach*.[42]

Dubháltach Óg generally follows the norms of *mise-en-page* employed in the Gaelic vellum legal manuscript tradition. However, he adopts an innovative approach to the layout of the text on several occasions whereby he separates the authoritative main text from the glosses and commentary, using visual identifiers to enable the reader to link them together. More specifically, the main text is connected to the gloss or commentary with interlinear tie-marks using the letters of the alphabet placed above the words or phrases in question. For example, Dubháltach Óg imposes this layout on p. 221b (see Fig. 135) in a section on the fundamentals of poetry,

Fig. 135. *TCD, MS H 2. 15b (1317), p. 221, paper. Image courtesy of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.*
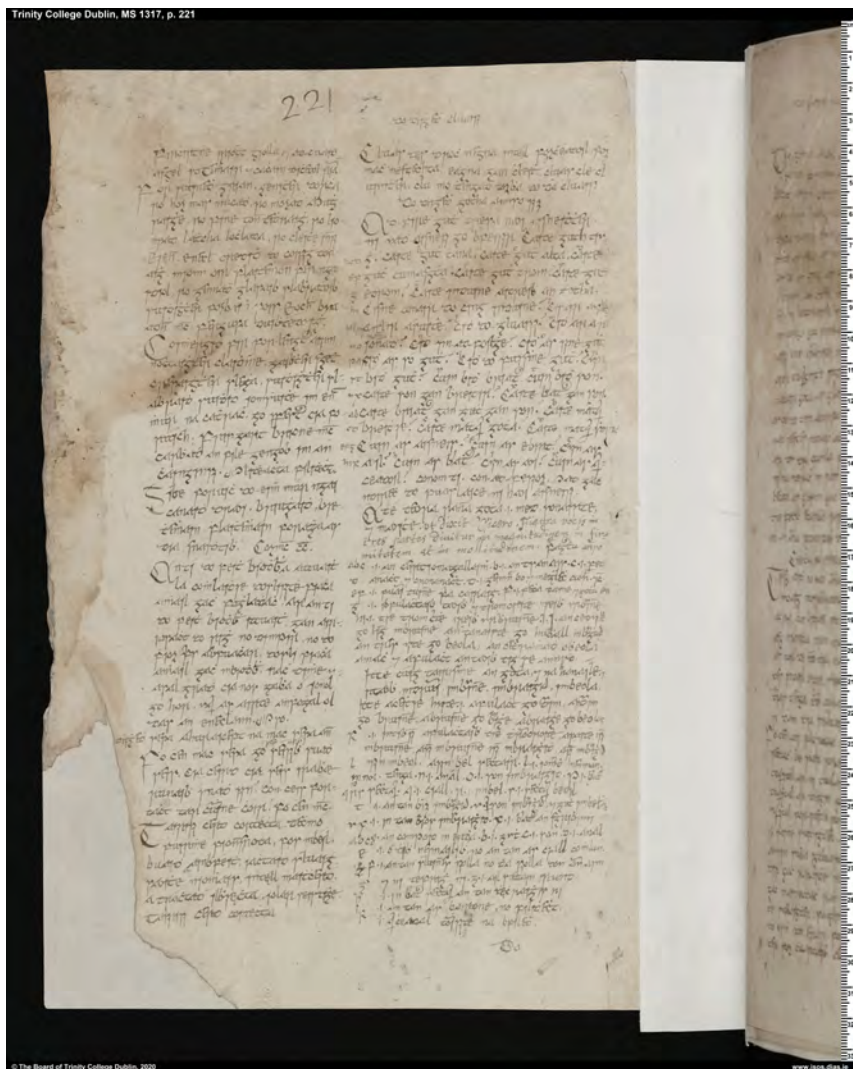
concerned with the three divisions of sound, which is in the form of questions and answers, in *Bretha Nemed Dédenach*.[43] The questions are written out in full first and the answers are written separately further down in the column. An authoritative citation from *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, traditionally attributed to Cicero, divides the section of questions from the answers, and Dubháltach Óg marks this text out with script-switching. Each question is linked with the answer with alphabetical tie-marks. These are also placed alongside the text in the margin as a visual guide for the reader. Another instance of this layout applied in a single column is found on p. 222b, where the text also has the form of questions and answers. They are separated from each other and linked together with alphabetical tie-marks written interlineally and in the margins.

The copy of the portion of *Bretha Nemed Toísech* (ff. 226 r/v and 227 r/v) differs from the two examples discussed above. Here Dubháltach Óg applies the format to two columns, deliberately planning the layout as shown by the partially visible plummet ruled lines. The text is laid out in a fashion where the authoritative or canonical text and the glosses and commentary are separated. However, rather than it all being written continuously in a single column, as in the two previous examples, the main text is presented in a short column block. The glosses and commentaries are written surrounding the main text in the column beside it and across the page beneath, linking them with tie-marks in alphabetical sequence (see Fig. 136).

The layout intentionally employed by Dubháltach Óg is in imitation of imported early printed books of canon law which follow the practice of glossed law books produced in Italy, particularly Bologna.[44] Indeed, Dubháltach Óg's familiarity with early printed legal books may be witnessed in the way he writes his name in an abbreviated fashion like the names of canonical jurists.[45] His scribal endeavours in copying these Irish law texts marks the final flourish of scribal activity in the secular law schools before their demise in the seventeenth century. Dubháltach Óg's deliberate choice of paper as the writing medium and the manuscript layout based on print format can be seen as an innovative attempt to impart status and authority through materialistic and visual means to the vernacular Irish law texts, thereby firmly placing the Gaelic law manuscript tradition on the same standing as the wider continental legal manuscript tradition.

Fig. 136. *TCD, MS H 2. 15b (1317), f. 227r, paper. Image courtesy of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.*
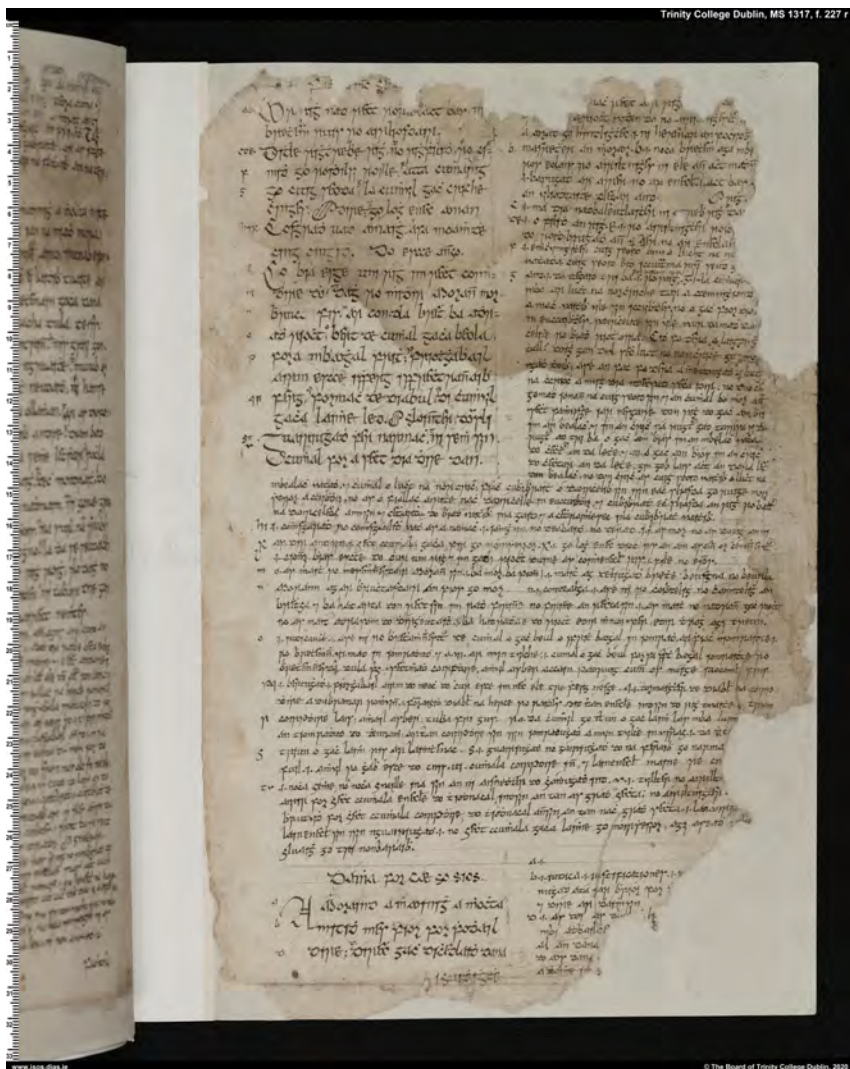
Later paper trails in medieval Gaelic law manuscripts

The fragile quality of paper and subsequent bindings of these manuscripts often resulted in the loss of material in the modern era. Following Edward Lhuyd's purchase of manuscript materials, he had many of them bound into large composite bundles by his Oxford binders. However, prior to binding, Lhuyd imposed his own order on certain manuscripts. Renumbered leaves in Lhuyd's hand, the separation of original quire-structures, portions of which are now bound in separate volumes, and leaves bound incorrectly upside-down attest to his re-organisation of material.[46] Such physical re-arrangement and rebinding possibly led to the loss of vulnerable paper. Often, only minor fragments survive, such as the small scrap of hand-made paper found 'between the folds of ff. 148.153 and ff. 149.152', as noted by Roger Powell in his conservation note, in TCD MS H 3. 17 (1336).

The manuscripts also bear witness to later use and interference by subsequent modern readers. In the 1850s, John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry were employed by the Brehon Law Commission to transcribe texts from the vernacular Irish law manuscripts, including those in the Library of Trinity College Dublin. As they consulted the manuscripts, the two scholars inserted numerous slips of machine-made paper as bookmarks, to mark important passages or to insert their own notes.[47] These insertions were discarded after having undergone conservation in 1987. On occasion, however, offset text, barely visible, in modern typography alerts us to the presence of such insertions. For example, in TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 12, p. 340, there is a tiny offset text which reads 'es' when inverted. In TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 15, p. 441 i recto, there is text which is offset on a vellum gutter and the wording is like that used in the *Irish Jurist*, first published in 1849.

The precarious nature and quality of the manuscript paper in the collection has also led to material going missing in more recent times. For instance, in the 1850s, John O'Donovan transcribed a portion of legal text from a slip of paper in TCD MS H 3. 17 (1336), vol. 3, for the Brehon Law Commission. The presence of this paper 'slip' is noted in the *TCD Catalogue*, published in 1921.[48] However, by the time Daniel Binchy published *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, the standard diplomatic edition of the vernacular Irish legal corpus, in 1978, the slip had gone missing.[49]

Conclusion

The aim of the present article has been to highlight the use of paper in the medieval Gaelic law manuscript tradition. The evidence arising from the survey of such manuscripts, focusing on the collection in the Library of Trinity College Dublin, has shown that scribes in the law schools were moving with the developments in manuscript production as witnessed in other Gaelic schools of learning. Legal scribes were flexible in using both materials and at ease fitting paper medium into pre-existing vellum manuscripts, drawn together by similarity in content. The movement of paper between law schools and other schools of learning underscores the dynamic nature of shared scribal networks in late medieval Ireland. Moreover, innovative approaches to the materiality and visual layout of the vernacular Irish law manuscripts, especially those efforts by Dubháltach Óg who drew heavily on early printed continental law books for inspiration, show concerted efforts to safeguard the status of the Gaelic law manuscript tradition.

Notes

1. Pádraig Ó Macháin divides the Irish paper tradition into two initial phases. The first occurs between 1468–1600 and runs in parallel with the end of the vellum tradition, and the second 1600–1700, when paper becomes predominant in the manuscript tradition. See Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Continuity and change from vellum to paper in the Gaelic manuscript: Bindings and book-size', *Paper stories: Paper and book history in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Silvia Hufnagel, Þórunn Sigurðardóttir & Davíð Ólafsson (Berlin, 2023), pp. 145–70, at p. 145.

2. For a discussion of paper in the Gaelic manuscript tradition, see Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The emergence of the Gaelic paper manuscript: A preliminary investigation', *Paper and the paper manuscript: A context for the transmission of Gaelic literature*, ed. Pádraig Ó Macháin (Cork, 2019), pp. 21–43.

3. See, for instance, Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'An Irish medical treatise on vellum and paper from the 16th century', in Ó Macháin, *Paper and the paper manuscript*, pp. 111–25.

4. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 502 dates to the mid-twelfth century (see Brian Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of the Irish language manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College Libraries. Part 1: descriptions* (Dublin, 2001), p. 175. This is the earliest Irish language vellum manuscript to contain vernacular Irish law texts, namely *Gúbretha Caratniad* (The False Judgements of Caratniad) and *Cóic Conara Fugill* (The Five Paths of Judgement).

5. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'What happened Ireland's medieval manuscripts?', *Peritia* 22–23 (2011–2012), pp. 191–223.

6. Fergus Kelly, 'Texts and transmissions: The law-texts', *Ireland and Europe in the*

early Middle Ages: Texts and transmission, ed. Próinséas Ní Chatháin & Michael Richter (Dublin, 2002), pp. 230–42.

7. For an example of a complex quire structure in a legal miscellany, see Chantal Kobel, 'The codicology of late medieval Irish legal manuscripts: A preliminary study of TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337)', *Care and conservation of manuscripts 17*, ed. M. J. Driscoll (Copenhagen, 2021), pp. 77–87.

8. Ó Macháin, 'The emergence of the Gaelic paper manuscript', p. 26 also notes religious houses and Dublin administration as other avenues for routes of paper into Ireland.

9. For a discussion of Irish learned men travelling to the universities on the continent, see Katharine Simms, 'The brehons of later medieval Ireland', *Brehons, serjeants and attorneys: Studies in the history of the Irish legal profession*, ed. Daire Hogan & W. N. Osborough (Dublin, 1990), pp. 51–76, at pp. 66–69. Continental law manuscripts may also have influenced the *mise-en-page* of Gaelic law manuscripts, see for instance TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 4, p. 59 (see Chantal Kobel, 'A descriptive catalogue of TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vols 2–4, pp. 1–87: 'Máel Íosa's book', *Celtica* 32 (2020), pp. 187–215). The late medieval Irish commentarists also had knowledge of later canon law, for which see Simms, 'The Brehons of later medieval Ireland', pp. 70–71. See also footnote 13 below.

10. Anne O'Sullivan & William O'Sullivan, 'Edward Lhuyd's collection of Irish manuscripts', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1962), pp. 57–76.

11. In the present modern binding, this miscellany is bound into volume 12, which is comprised of three distinct gatherings compiled by different scribes. These are as follows: [A], pp. 312–52, a vellum gathering; [B], pp. 326–28b, three frag-mentary vellum leaves; [C], pp. 329–52, a gathering of vellum and paper. See also T. K. Abbott & E. J. Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin* (Dublin, 1921), p. 148 for the observation that pp. 331–52 consisted of 'paper except last leaf'. The presence of paper on which legal text is written in this volume is overlooked in Liam Breatnach, *A companion to Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin, 2005), p. 5.

12. The horizontal row of pricking marks running across the first folio as well as the irregular shape of the final leaf suggests this was a scrap piece of vellum.

13. For the identification of hand 'X', who is found at the top of p. 330 and p. 338, see William O'Sullivan, 'The manuscript collection of Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh', *Seanchas: Studies in early and medieval Irish archaeology, history, and literature in honour of Francis J. Byrne*, ed. Alfred Smyth (Dublin, 2000), pp. 439–47, at pp. 442; Charlene Eska, 'The paleography of the 11 Latin citations in TCD MS 1337, pp. 329^c–330^b', *North American journal of Celtic studies* 3.1 (2019), pp. 47–54, at p. 52.

14. These include Latin citations, for instance, from the Decretals of Gregory IX, issued in 1234, for which see Eska, 'The paleography of the 11 Latin citations', p. 50.

15. Kathleen Mulchrone, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, Fasc. 22 (Dublin, 1937), pp. 2769–80.

16. TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 2–4, pp. 1–87, see the description in Kobel, 'A descriptive catalogue', pp. 187–215; Kobel, 'The codicology of late medieval Irish legal manuscripts', pp. 77–87.

17. TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 4, pp. 77–83.

18. For example, on p. 76/77, the motif of a hand with 5-petal flower on the stem above is found on the inner gutter. The other half of the motif, namely the

hand's wrist, with illegible letters on the cuff, is found on the conjugate p. 82/83.

19. This watermark is available to view on the Watermarks in Irish Documents database, watermarks.celt.dias.ie/hand-5-petal-flower-stem-trefoil-glove-letters-v-o/ [accessed 17.02.2024]. See also the discussion in Ó Macháin, 'The emergence of the Gaelic paper manuscript', p. 33.

20. See Bernadette Cunningham & Raymond Gillespie, 'Muirgheas Ó Maoilchonaire of Cluain Plocáin: An early sixteenth-century scribe at work', *Studia Hibernica* 35 (2008–2009), pp. 17–43, at pp. 19 and 21.

21. A detailed scribal note outlining the scribe, places of writing, patron and date is provided on f. 12vb. For a translation and discussion of this note, see Liam Breatnach, 'Varia Hibernica', *Celtica* 33 (2021), pp. 349–72, at pp. 367–68.

22. Kathleen Mulchrone & Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy*, Fasc. XXVII (Dublin, 1943), p. 3422.

23. William O'Sullivan, 'The Book of Domhnall Ó Duibhdábhoireann, provenance and codicology', *Celtica* 23 (1999), pp. 276–99, at p. 287.

24. On the work and manuscripts of this scribe, see the discussion in Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh (ca. 1600–1671): His lineage, life and learning* (Maynooth, 1996), pp. 45–48 and pp. 78–86.

25. See Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary*, pp. 78–86 on the correct identification of Dubháltach Mór Mac Fir Bhisig as the scribe, rather than his grandson, Dubháltach Óg Mac Fir Bhisig. The latter is discussed in further detail below.

26. TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317), pp. 79–102 [153–78] ('Cormac's Glossary'); pp. 45–60 [120–35] ('O'Davoren's Glossary');

pp. 102–04 [178–80] ('O'Mulconry's Glossary').

27. Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary*, pp. 63–65.

28. See the discussion of Dubháltach Óg's manuscripts in Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary*, pp. 78–96.

29. TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 18, pp. 542–64ii.

30. TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 18, pp. 564/i and 564/ii.

31. TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317), pp. 116–17 [41–42].

32. Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary*, p. 86.

33. TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317), pp. 135–56 [machined numbers]. See the catalogue description of the texts in Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary*, pp. 82–86.

34. British Library, Cotton Nero MS A 7, ff. 132–57; see Standish Hayes O'Grady, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Library [formerly British Museum]* (Dublin, 1926), pp. 141 and 146; Fergus Kelly, *A guide to early Irish law* (Dublin, 1998), p. 260. This manuscript is the only surviving law manuscript from Ulster, and the Ó Luinín family were historians rather than lawyers.

35. The watermarks can be found on the left-hand side of the sheets, namely, TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317), p. 208/209, 210/211, 212/213, 214/215, 216/217, but not on 218/219, 220/221, 222/223, 224/225, f. 226r/226v. There is no watermark on f. 227r/v (with vertical chain-lines). Its conjugate, as noted above, is now missing.

36. See the digitised image of the watermark in National Library of Ireland, MS G 50, f. 229, on the Watermarks in Irish Documents database, watermarks.celt.dias.ie/bunch-grapes-mounted-base-containing-letters-rop/ [accessed 15.02.2024]. According to Louise O'Connor, the manuscript dates to ca. 1639, but she does not state the reason for suggesting this date.

37. Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, 'The poems of Blathmac: The "fragmentary quatrains"', *Celtica* 23 (1999), pp. 229–30, at p. 229. On Giolla Pádraig Ó Luinín, see N. Ó Muraíle, *Mícheál Ó Cléirigh, his associations and St. Anthony's College, Louvain* (Dublin, 2008), p. 16 and pp. 86–87; P. A. Breatnach, *The Four Masters and their manuscripts: Studies in palaeography and text* (Dublin, 2013), p. 62, n. 15.

38. This will be explored in further detail in the descriptive catalogue for TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317) currently being prepared by the present author.

39. Elizangela Dias, *From one page to the next: Catchwords in manuscripts and printed books from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries* (São Paolo, 2020), p. 31.

40. The different numbering system between p. 225 and f. 226 is due to Edward Lhuyd, who, for reasons which are unclear to me, fluctuated between paginating and foliating the leaves of this volume.

41. See Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary*, p. 84; E. J. Gwynn, 'An Old-Irish tract on the privileges and responsibilities of poets', *Ériu* 13 (1942), pp. 1–60, 220–36, at p. 6.

42. As noted by Breatnach, *A companion*, pp. 185 and 189.

43. TCD MS H 2. 15B (1317), p. 221b. This is entitled *Dliged sésa a huraicept na mac sésa* and is edited Johan Corthals 'Stimme, Atem und Dichtung: Aus einem altirischen Lehrbuch für die Dichterschüler (*Uraicept na mac sésa*)', *Kelten-Einfälle an der Donau: Akten des vierten Symposiums deutschsprachiger Keltologinnen und Keltologen; phililogische, historische, archäologische Evidenzen; Konrad Spindler (1939–2005) zum Gedenken; (Linz/Donau, 17–21 Juli 2005)*, ed. Helmut Birkhan (Wien, 2007), pp. 127–47.

44. See Susan L'Engle, 'Medieval canon law manuscripts and early printed books', *The Cambridge history of medieval canon law*, ed. Anders Winroth & John C. Wei (Cambridge, 2022), pp. 299–322, at p. 307 and an example of a thirteenth-century manuscript with similar format on p. 309.

45. See, for instance, his signature in TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 5, p. 107, which is written in the manuscript as *DUP: FIRbis-* (= *Dup*altach *Firbis*igh). A distinctive feature of this signature is the use of the double dots after the first syllable to mark the suspension of syllables which was not observed by Ó Muraíle, *The celebrated antiquary*, p. 86. This type of suspension was also used to suspend the names of glossators and commentators in later continental medieval canon law manuscripts (see Bernhard Bischoff, *Latin palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín & David Ganz (Cambridge, 1990), p. 156.

46. For example, TCD MS H 4. 22 (1363), pp. 54–59 belongs with TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337), vol. 21, pp. 662–67 but they have been separated and bound into different volumes; see Paul Russell, '*Do dhubhfhoclaibh*: Word-lists and glossaries in the Book of Uí Mhaine', *The Book of Uí Mhaine*, Codices Hibernenses Eximii III, ed. Elizabeth Boyle & Ruairí Ó hUiginn (Dublin, 2023), pp. 191–228.

47. Matthew Hatton noted in his conservation notes that there were several sheets of 'blue laid machine-paper dated 1853' in TCD MS H 3. 18 (1337) but these were subsequently removed when the volume was rebound in 1987.

48. Abbott & Gwynn, *Catalogue of the Irish manuscripts*, at p. 128 refer to a 'slip of paper' between two leaves.

49. See Daniel Binchy, *Corpus Iuris Hibernici*, vol. 6 (Dublin, 1978), p. 2007.5–11, which is a copy of O'Donovan's transcription.