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Many textual scholars will be aware that the title of the present thesis has been composed in a conscious revisionary relation to Tim William Machan's influential *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts*.¹ The primary subjects of Machan's study are works written in English between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, the latter part of the period conventionally labelled Middle English. In contrast, the works with which I am primarily concerned are those written by scholars of Old and Middle Irish in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Where Machan aims to articulate the textual and cultural factors that characterise Middle English works as Middle English, the purposes of this thesis are (a) to identify the underlying ideological and epistemological perspectives which have informed much of the way in which medieval Irish documents and texts are rendered into modern editions, and (b) to begin to place the editorial theory and methodology of medieval Irish studies within the broader context of Biblical, medieval and modern textual criticism. Hence, the title is *Textual Criticism and Medieval Irish Studies*, rather than *Textual Criticism and Medieval Irish Texts*.

¹ Tim William Machan, *Textual Criticism and Middle English Texts* (Charlottesville, 1994).