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The emergence of the Gaelic paper manuscript: a preliminary investigation

PÁDRAIG Ó MACHÁIN[1]

The Irish manuscript tradition was a continuous one in its general details from the beginnings of writing on the island down to the late nineteenth century. Throughout that long period the hand-written book was the primary means for the transmission and preservation of written literature, and was largely unaffected by the arrival of print in the mid-sixteenth century.

In very general terms, we distinguish three major periods of manuscript production in Gaelic Ireland: the monastic period, pre-1200; the secular period, pre-1600; and the period of the part-time scholars writing on paper, 1600–1900. Having been introduced to Ireland with Christianity, from the time when writing and the book first emerge in the sixth century down to twelfth century, the contents of the manuscripts – liturgical and scholastic – reflect the literary apparatus of the Church, and are written in Latin. Where it occurs, writing in Irish is marginal, supplementary or occasional, but from the eleventh and twelfth centuries we have a handful of books written in the vernacular that were produced in monastic scriptoria, and that contain mixtures of secular and religious material.

Following the reform of the Irish Church in the twelfth century – an important aspect of which was the introduction of continental religious orders to colonize or replace the foundations of the early Church – and the disruption to society caused by the arrival and settlement of the Anglo-Normans, Irish manuscript tradition moves into a second phase. From the thirteenth to the end of the sixteenth century the production of books in the vernacular changes location from the monastic schools and scriptoria to schools run by professional, secular scholars; the Latin devotional and scholastic tradition is continued in the scriptoria of the abbeys and friaries of the lately-introduced continental orders.

Enough evidence exists of interaction between both sets of practitioners in late-medieval Gaelic Ireland,[2] but significant differentiating features were the discontinuation of writing in the vernacular language, and the abandonment of insular minuscule or Gaelic script in favour of continental scripts in the monastic scriptoria. In the new foundations, therefore, Gaelic script reverted to occasional or marginal use, a situation that had obtained pre-eleventh century.[3] Insular minuscule continued in use in the vernacular books produced by the secular scholars, however, and remained in use into early-modern and modern times, becoming therefore one of the emblems of the continuity of Gaelic manuscript tradition.

The schools of the secular, hereditary learned orders, which flourished from the thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth, pursued four principal branches of learning: history, law, poetry and medicine. The manuscripts produced by these scholars often reflected their own specialised interest, and

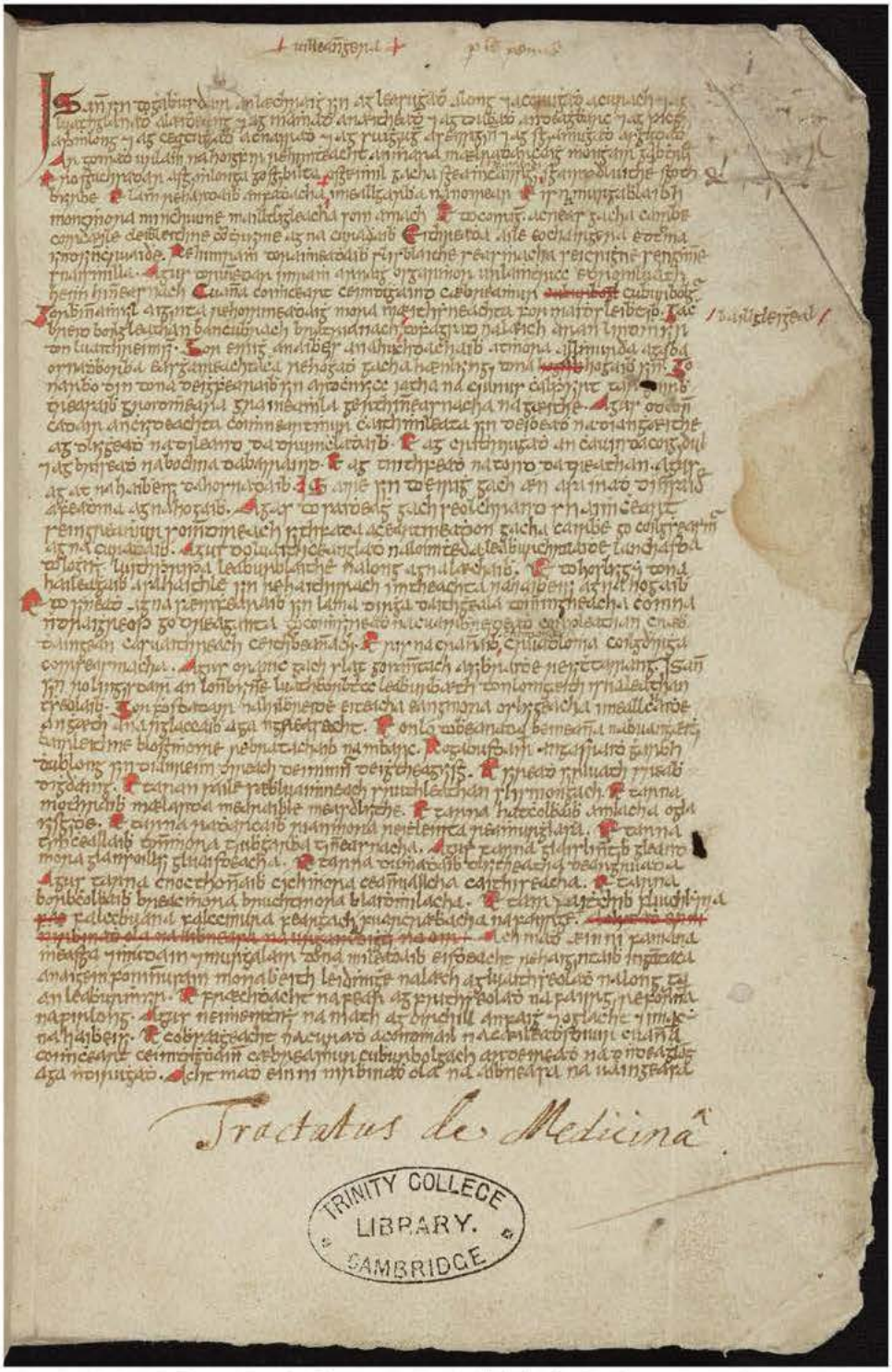


Fig. 1. Trinity College, Cambridge MS *R.14.48, f. [ii]r (by kind permission).*

consisted of books made for personal use, and also books produced under the sponsorship of prominent and wealthy local leaders, or members of their families, in the largely autonomous lordships that were scattered around the country in post-Norman, Gaelic Ireland.

In addition to the Gaelic script, another emblem of continuity, though ending, as we will see, in the early-modern era, is the material on which manuscripts were written: vellum or calfskin. As is well known, the preparation of calfskin for writing involved a number of stages that were painstaking and time-consuming, and therefore, as a writing material, vellum was a valuable commodity. The stationary-shop was unknown in Gaelic Ireland, as was the position of the professional scribe. In the medieval and late-medieval periods, Irish scribes were scholars first, who made books as an adjunct to their profession. In the centre of English administration in Ireland, Dublin, the de Derby Psalter of the late fourteenth century provides evidence for the importation from England of a bespoke, lavishly decorated, deluxe manuscript, a commercial phenomenon and a level of scribal detachment unrecorded in Gaelic Ireland.[4]

As a material in Gaelic manuscripts vellum has a continuous history from early Christian times down to the beginning of the seventeenth century. There is no evidence to suggest that the production of vellum took place anywhere other than within the scholarly environment, and therefore when the professional scholars disappeared with the Elizabethan conquest, the manufacture of vellum disappeared also.

In round figures, there survive today 4,400 manuscripts containing the Irish or Gaelic language, mostly dating from the eleventh to the nineteenth century. Manuscripts produced before 1600 account for 300 of these, a figure that reflects the great loss of books that occurred in Ireland in the Middle Ages and also in the early-modern period.[5] The remaining 4,100 were written after 1600. Thus, while the pre-1600 period of manuscript production in Irish was twice as long as the post-1600 period, the relative proportion of surviving manuscripts from these respective periods is of an order of well over 1:10.

Early paper in Gaelic manuscripts

I have as yet identified only two paper manuscripts earlier than 1500. In round figures I estimate that 30 paper manuscripts were written in the sixteenth century, in contrast to 100 vellums (conservatively estimated) surviving from the same time.[6] Approximately 200 paper manuscripts written in the seventeenth century survive today; by contrast, less than 10 vellum manuscripts survive from that period, and these need to be distinguished from a roughly similar number of 'retro'-manuscripts occasionally produced by scholars and antiquarians on stationer's parchment in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

Trinity College Cambridge MS R.14.48

One implication of these figures is that the apparent abruptness of the cut-off point for the end of the vellum period and the beginning of the paper era in Irish manuscript tradition, namely 1600, tends to obscure the fact that there was a transition period of over a hundred years prior to that, during which the two materials were in use. The earliest occurrence that has been noted to date of an Irish scribe making a paper manuscript, and the earliest appearance of Gaelic script on paper, is dated to 1468. This makes it loosely contemporary with notable vellums such as the Book of Pottlerath, the Book of Lismore,

the earliest copy of the Annals of Ulster, parts of the Yellow Book of Lecan, and other great books. The manuscript in question, Trinity College Cambridge MS R.14.48, is a medical manuscript of 96 paper leaves of text preceded by eleven folios (a defective gathering of 12) of preliminary matter.[7] The scribe signs variously as Donnchadh, Donchadh mhac Matha, and Dionisius Cyriton in a number of colophons, the most informative of which occurs on f. 89v:

> Scripta est presens carta per manum dionisii Cyriton cuiusdam Scolaris in phisica apud Sotone in comit' Kanc' anno gratie .1468. Regni uero Regis Edwardi quarti post conquestum viii^{o} secundo die mensis decembris. Cui excelsus et gloriosus deus concedat gratiam inhoc seculo. et gloriam in futuro sine fine amen.

This is not just the earliest Gaelic paper manuscript identified to date, but the only such manuscript of the late medieval period not written within the Gaelic heartland of Ireland or Scotland. It was written in December 1468 by an Irish medical man in the south-east of England, in the village of Sutton Valence in Kent.

The medical text is written in Latin in a cursive, secretary script, as is most of the preliminary material, which includes a table of contents and the signs of the Zodiac with a tract on the planets. There is also a calendar with the names of the Irish saints Brighid, Pádraig and Bréanainn given in red. This points to the Gaelic character of the book, reinforced by many marginalia in Irish throughout, and especially by a fragment of an alliterative pseudo-historic Irish text, the Journeying of the Sons of Míl, which stands at the beginning of the preliminaries on f. [ii] (Fig. 1).[8] As with the marginalia, and in contrast to the medical texts in the book, this Irish extract – said at its close to have been composed in one night by the *ríghfhile* ('royal poet' or 'supreme poet') Conchubhar Mór Mac Cruitín – is written in Gaelic script.

For us today there is much symbolism in this early Gaelic paper manuscript: the location of its writing, the predominance of Latin script and text, the deliberate fronting of an extraneous piece of Irish text in Gaelic script – as a statement of national identity, it would seem – and the appearance of Irish text on paper. This Irish text is laid out in traditional style with rubricated initials, and within dry-point bounding lines. Yet there are restrictions seemingly imposed on the scribe by the new material on which he is writing. Despite the basic ornamentation, the letters are not calligraphic, leading the editor of this text to suggest that the scribe was more comfortable with Latin cursive than with insular minuscule; perhaps, however, we can refine this opinion by suggesting that he may have been more adept at writing cursive on paper than he was the Gaelic script.

The uncertain presentation of the text is compounded by the possibility that the scribe may have been writing the Irish text from memory rather than from a written exemplar, causing him to make significant errors. Where small errors are made in the vellum tradition, they can be corrected by expuncting or by vel- or caret-correction; where large or long errors occurred, they could be scraped off once the ink had dried. This latter option is not available on paper, however, so the scribe has no option but to use a rather heavy strike-through, a relative rarity in the vellum tradition.

The phenomenon of preliminary pages with a table of contents is unknown in Gaelic tradition up to this point, though the feature will become common in the paper manuscripts of the seventeenth century.[9] It points up the external influences detectable in this



Fig. 2. Watermark from RIA MS 24 P 15, pp 31–2.

manuscript, and refocuses our attention on the person of the scribe. He was a member of one of the professional and largely hereditary learned orders of Ireland. Of those learned disciplines, medicine was the only one that might cause a practitioner to leave the Gaelic heartland and to travel in pursuit of learning to foreign locations – to Montpellier for example; and their profession would render them also the least conservative. This would therefore bring the medical scholar into close contact, much earlier than it would the poets or the judges or the historians, with what was, in the context of Gaelic learning, the new material of paper.

It would be naive to think that this was the only conduit for familiarity with paper: we know that, removed from Gaelic Ireland, the Dublin administration was being supplied with paper as a matter of course in the fifteenth century; and the to-ing and fro-ing of the religious orders must also have involved some traffic in paper and print. As regards direct interaction between the old scribal tradition and new materials and practices, however, by virtue of the international, outward-looking aspect of their learning, the medical men appear to have been the prime movers. It is not a coincidence, therefore, as demonstrated by Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha in this book, that the earliest occurrences of the Irish word for paper are to be found in translations of medical texts in the fifteenth century.

Royal Irish Academy MS 24 P 15

It comes as no surprise to learn that the first instance noted to date of a Gaelic manuscript written on paper in Ireland was written by a member of the medical profession. The book is RIA MS 24 P 15, a composite manuscript containing a fifteenth-century manuscript and a sixteenth-century manuscript bound together.[10] The earlier book was written in the year 1478 by Cairbre Ó Ceannamháin, at Rossbrin on the seaboard of West Cork, in the house of the famously learned chieftain, Fínghean Ó Mathghamhna, who three years earlier had translated into Irish the Travels of John Mandeville.[11] The medical text consists mainly of a translation into Irish of a work by Petrus de Argelata, and so, in contrast to the Cambridge manuscript of ten years earlier, this book is wholly in the Irish language – apart from the various Latin incipits that form part of the text – and wholly in Irish script.

This manuscript is far more traditional in appearance than the book written in Kent. For example, it is laid out in the long-established two-column style, and the columns on some pages are ruled in dry-point and others in ink. There is also a sense that the scribe is writing at greater speed than might be the case on vellum. This is not necessarily a diagnostic or differentiating element in the use of the two materials, but probably an indication of the functionality of the medical manuscripts; that is, the medical manuscripts – though never devoid of style and ornamentation – were generally practical, user-driven items. The speed of writing is even commented on in a marginal entry on p. 126, where the writer remarked that he had never seen a faster scribe than 'in Giolla Buidhe O Cennamhain', presumably a nickname for Cairbre the scribe.

For the answer to the important question as to the origins of this paper that was being used in West Cork in 1478, we must look at the watermarks. The paper is folio-sized, showing how standard paper-sizes would influence the dimensions and make-up of Gaelic manuscripts henceforth. There are three watermarks in the manuscript. The dominant mark is a horned ox with a three-strand tail, head turned to face outwards, arranged in parallel with the chain-lines (Fig.

2). The figure is attached to one chain-line at the butt of the tail and at the horns, and to the other at the hooves. The motif is recorded elsewhere from the early fifteenth century,[12] and Briquet records a number of such watermarks originating in western France that are contemporary with that in 24 P 15.[13] The other two watermarks are large and small versions of a single, undefined motif that is, apparently, unrecorded elsewhere.[14]

This continental paper being used in West Cork in the second half of the fifteenth century adds to our knowledge of the contact between this ostensibly remote region and the wider European world. This is evidence that we can add to literary and historical relics of the time, when texts such as the travels of Marco Polo and John Mandeville were translated to Irish in the same geographical region. What we are looking at here, therefore, is the beginning of the trickle of paper manuscripts in the second half of the fifteenth century in the context of a learned and outward-looking community. As in the case of the Sutton Valence manuscript, the use of paper by the medical scholars in Rossbrin, close to the southernmost extremity of Ireland, further enhances our sense of the liminal when we talk of the beginnings of paper in Gaelic manuscripts, and this is something that we see again when we look at the wider Gaelic world at this time, where we witness the emergence of paper in the context of one of the other traditional learned disciplines, namely poetry.

The Book of the Dean of Lismore

It is in Scotland that we find the most outstanding Gaelic paper manuscript of this early era, the Book of the Dean of Lismore, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 72.1.37.[15] This manuscript of 320 paper pages was written *c.* 1512–1542 by James MacGregor, vicar of Fortingall in Perthshire, with contributions by his family and associates. Although its contents are nearly exclusively Gaelic, the manuscript is not written in insular or Gaelic script but in a Scottish secretary hand, and according to an orthographic system based not on Gaelic but on Scots. This is one of the earliest comprehensive anthologies of late-medieval Gaelic poetry, which encompassed poems composed in both Ireland and Gaelic Scotland. The anthology is all-embracing in its contents, including poems not usually included in manuscripts in the Irish tradition. This makes it an extremely valuable book, as many of the poems that are contained in it are not found anywhere else.

From the aspect of the history of paper, one of the crucial points is that the manuscript was not written in the heartland of Gaelic literature in Scotland, the west coast, but practically on the border between Gaelic and Lowland culture. While Gaelic manuscripts at this period are the product of the professional schools of learning, this manuscript appears to have been assembled as a commonplace anthology of poetry by members of the Scottish notarial profession who were also very familiar with the Gaelic manuscript tradition. They are people who used paper as an administrative writing material and who, in this case, also made use of it, employing the secretary script that was the mark of their profession, to make a record of Gaelic poetry as it was found in Scotland at this time. As the layout of the poems in the manuscript shows the familiarity of the scribes with the modalities of textual layout long-established in the Gaelic vellum tradition, it is legitimate to conclude that the secretary script and Scots phonology were deliberate choices, employed possibly with the intention of helping to disseminate this literature among those who understood but were not literate in the Gaelic language.

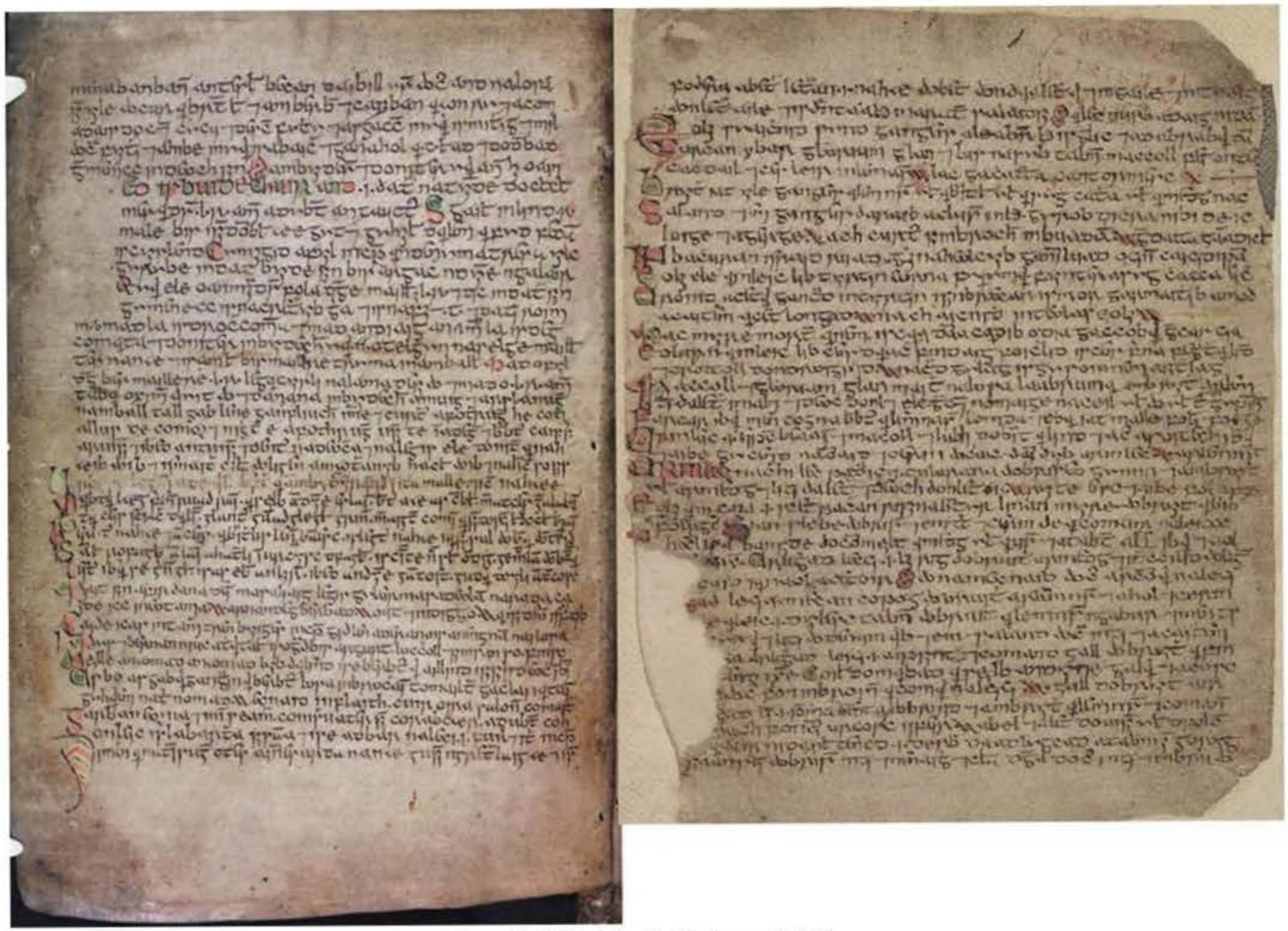


Fig. 3. RIA MS 24 B 3, p. 70 (on left), facing RIA MS 23 N 29, f. 1r. (by kind permission).

Again, as with the manuscripts of Sutton Valence and Rossbrin, the geographical location of the Book of the Dean, on the border between Gaelic and Lowland culture, accords with the liminal element already noted in the use of early paper in the other Gaelic manuscripts. In this case, the combination of location, scribal identity, script and material in this poetry-manuscript of the early sixteenth century provides a significant parallel to the evidence of the medical manuscripts.

Composite paper and vellum manuscripts

As a feature of the phenomenon of the emergence of paper as a material in Gaelic manuscripts, we find situations during the transition phase where vellum and paper were combined by scribes in the making of individual manuscripts. Combinations of vellum and paper are not infrequent in composite manuscripts in other traditions,[16] and, in a different context altogether, are commonplace where parchment is recycled as binder's waste in manuscripts and printed works.[17] One suspects an element of experimentation, however, in some of the instances of combinations of vellum and paper in Gaelic manuscripts. The medical scholars again took the lead, as is evidenced by the outstanding example that is British Library MS Arundel 333.[18] This manuscript comprises self-contained sections in vellum and in paper, but also sections where the text is written continuously from one material to the other,[19] apparently the work of Donnchadh Ó hEichiarainn writing in Killinaboy, Co. Clare, and giving the dates 1514 and 1519.

Near contemporary with Arundel 333 is Trinity College Dublin MS 1341, a composite medical manuscript, the central section of which (pp 23–295, with chasms) consists of the *Lilium Medicinae* written on paper, but intersecting with a total of nine vellum leaves, singletons and bifolia, at six points in the book.[20] The paper and vellum leaves are a standard folio size of 300 × 210 mm. Despite being subjected to trimming and misplacement by a nineteenth-century binder, here again we can see paper-size influencing the dimensions of a Gaelic manuscript, with the vellum leaves being ruled and trimmed to match the paper.

The addition of an elegy for Eoin (mac Diarmada) Ó Callanáin on p. 295 of the manuscript suggests that this book was a product of that Cork medical family. As regards date, the scribe adds a colophon to Book 4 of the *Lilium* (p. 258), where he gives the place of writing as 'An Caisléan Dubh' (unidentified) in Inishannon, Co. Cork, at a time when 'Cormac Óg' and 'Mac Carrthaig' were in fear of the Earl of Desmond and the O'Briens. Though more than one lord of Muskerry was named Cormac Óg, the most likely candidate is he who ruled 1501–1536. This Cormac Óg defeated the Earl of Desmond at Mourne Abbey, September 1520, and even in the year of his death, 1536, it was reported that the Earl of Desmond and the O'Briens were attacking Cormac Óg and the MacCarthys.[21] The watermark evidence provides some corroboration of an early sixteenth-century date. There are two watermarks, the dominant one (pp 23–250) consisting of a quatrefoil on a stem above an open hand within chain-lines spaced at 23 mm; the second (pp 253–95) is a larger variant of this motif – a cinquefoil on a stem over a gloved hand, between chain-lines spaced at 40 mm. The gloved hand was a popular motif in paper used in sixteenth-century Ireland, but the bare hand emerging from a virtually 3D sleeve with ornate frills below is recorded for incunabula in the Low Countries and for manuscripts of northern-French provenance *c.* 1500.[22]

In looking at the juncture of vellum

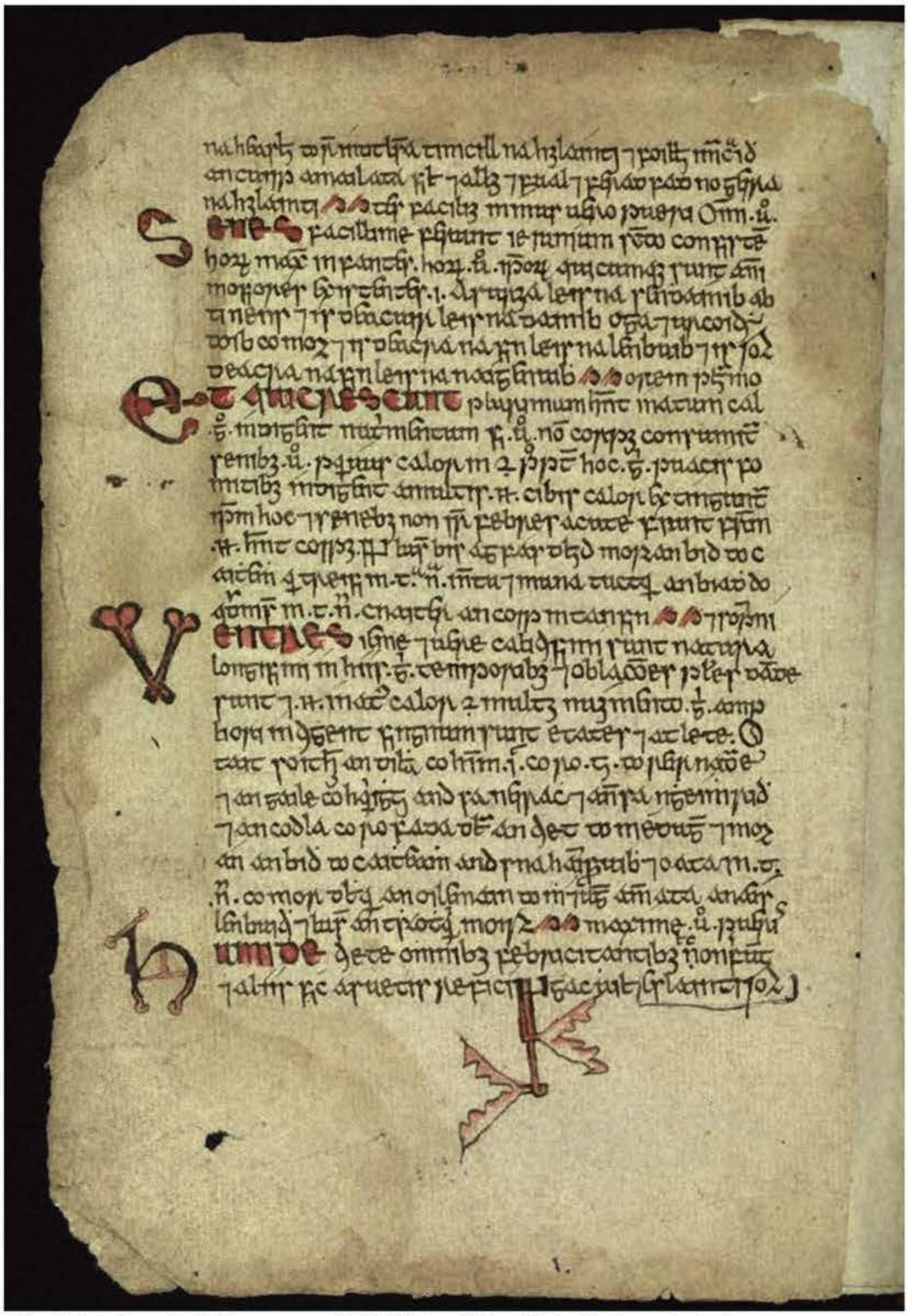


Fig. 4. Rubricated initials on paper, 1548 (NLI MS G 8, p. 32, by kind permission).

and paper in these manuscripts, there is a sense that we are looking, in the Gaelic context, at the meeting of two traditions, the native or Old European and the new. This is the same meeting-point that is embodied in the persons of the medical men themselves, interacting with the modern world through their travels and through their texts, which are Irish versions of or compilations from canonical contemporary European medicine. It is worthwhile, therefore, mentioning some other remarkable mixed-medium manuscripts.

RIA MSS 24 B 3 and 23 N 29

Also belonging to the early sixteenth century are two components of a single manuscript written by the medical scholar Conla Mac an Leagha in Co. Sligo in 1509. The vellum and paper sections are now bound as separate manuscripts. By far the larger part was written on vellum (RIA MS 24 B 3), and the other part, consisting of nine leaves, was written on paper (RIA MS 23 N 29). The paper section was, at a later period, extracted from what was originally a single manuscript, and bound together with a miscellaneous collection of paper items. The relationship between the two sections was only finally established by Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha in 1990, and is now the subject of a paper in this book. Dr Nic Dhonnchadha shows that the paper leaves constitute four bifolia (with a paper singleton inserted) contained in a quire between two vellum bifolia, the outer and the central bifolium respectively. In this way the paper supplies two chasms in the vellum manuscript 24 B 3: one between pp 70 and 71, the other between pp 74 and 75.

Digitisation now allows us (Fig. 3) to view a reconstructed opening where paper and vellum are side by side and the text is continued from the vellum to the paper. What we see is that the layout of the text on the paper replicates that on the vellum. One visible difference is that the paper page is *c.* 20 mm shorter in length than the vellum, which means that as the text-box is identical, the generous margins of the vellum – particularly the lower margin – are not possible in the paper in this instance. Both vellum and paper text are ruled in dry-point, but unlike the vellum, there are no marginal prickings in the paper to guide the ruling. Both vellum and paper have an identical number of lines (37) and average character count per line (50). Exploratory XRF analysis indicates that the same iron-gall ink is used on both pages; the initials on both are rubricated with a mercury-based pigment, probably vermillion. There are therefore only the most minor of differences between both pages.

National Library of Ireland MS G 8

Another medical manuscript with mixed materials, written nearly forty years later than Mac an Leagha's, provides another indication of how conventional paper-size would come to influence the format of manuscripts. This is National Library of Ireland MS G 8, written by Éamonn Ó Bolgaoi and assistants near Athy, Co. Kildare, on the margins of the Pale, in 1548. In this book the relative proportion of paper to vellum seen in the Mac an Leagha manuscript is practically reversed: of the 206 pages in G 8 today, 164 are paper, not counting further stray pages identified by Nessa Ní Shéaghdha in two other manuscripts.[23] Excluding singletons, there are five quires of paper and one of vellum, together with a single quire of 12 (pp 5–28) where the paper and the vellum bifolia alternate, vellum-paper-vellum-paper-vellum-paper.

Viewed side by side where the writing is continuous from vellum to paper (e.g. pp 24 and 25), there is no ostensible difference

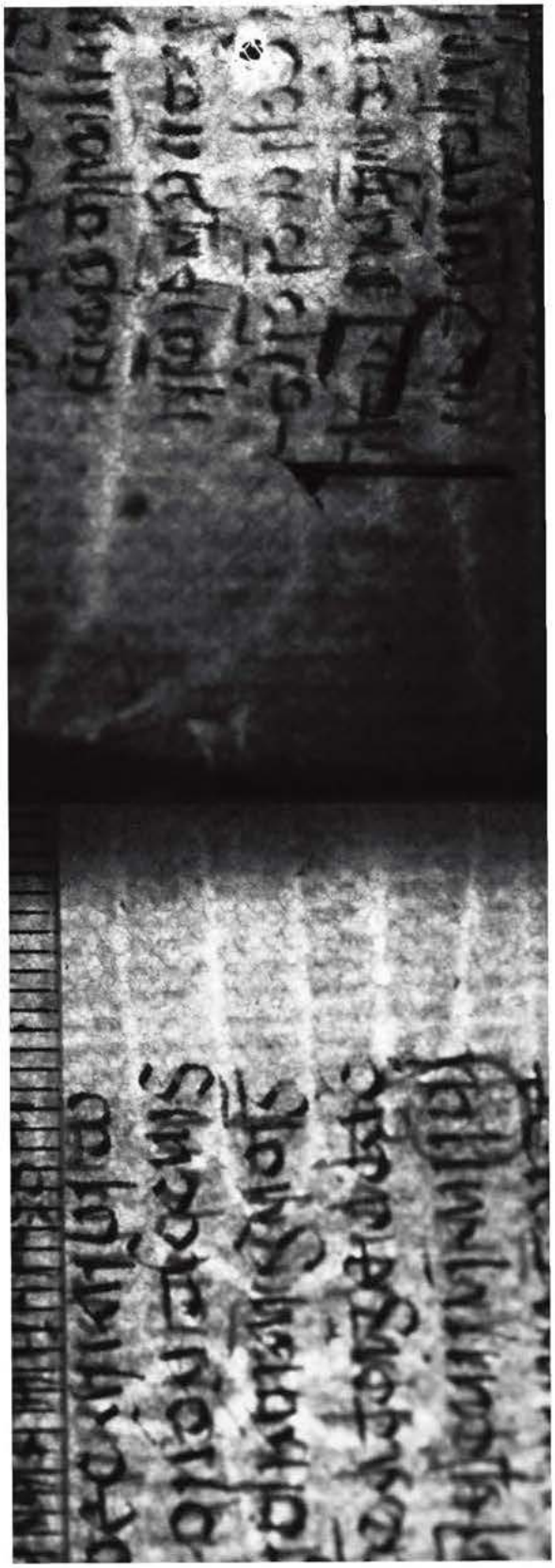


Fig. 5. Watermark from RIA MS 23 N 10 (composite).

between the writing on the two materials. Both vellum and paper are ruled in dry-point (31 lines with an average of 50 characters per line); the lack of pricking on the paper as opposed to the vellum – also observed in the Mac an Leagha manuscript – is in evidence here again, prompting the conclusion that in some cases this practice may have been a casualty of the transition from one material to another. Initials are rubricated throughout, and if we look elsewhere in the manuscript, particularly pp 29–39, we see (Fig. 4) that even in the case of heavy rubrication, the paper was well able to take the pigment, with no bleed-through in evidence on the verso, a testament to the quality of the material.

A point of difference between the Mac an Leagha and Ó Bolgaoi (G 8) manuscripts is the identical format of the paper and the vellum leaves in the latter. The paper leaves are quartos: a pair of folios cut from a chancery sheet and folded once to give two quarto bifolia measuring 205 mm × 280 mm, and leaves of 205 mm × 140 mm. This being an average quarto size, and given the relative quantities of the two materials in the book, it would seem logical to deduce that the vellum was trimmed to match the paper, a feature noted already for the folio manuscript TCD 1341 above. In passing it is worth recording that still preserved with G 8, loose inside its back cover, are four loose bookmarks[24] formed from strips of a leaf from a non-Gaelic manuscript roughly cut to the size of the book, mounted together on nineteenth-century transparent paper.

RIA MS 23 N 10

From the year 1575 we have a non-medical manuscript in which we get a view of the juncture of paper and vellum. This is Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10, an important *seanchas* manuscript containing poems, tales, wisdom texts and other traditional material, written near the city of Limerick by scribes associated with the Ó Maoil Chonaire learned family.[25] As with the Ó Bolgaoi manuscript, paper is the dominant material: there are 28 vellum pages and 132 paper pages, the last ten of which are fragments. Reminiscent of the earlier Mac an Leagha book, however, the present arrangement of leaves betrays a later misunderstanding of the paper-vellum divide, in that at some indeterminate time in its past, all the vellum leaves were gathered together at the front of the volume, and all the paper leaves after that, in ignorance of the fact that the vellum and paper alternated in at least two of the texts in the manuscript.[26]

In addition, during conservation and rebinding in 1920 the paper leaves were separated from their conjugates to allow for re-enforcing through the 'gauze netting process', leaving the collation unrecorded.[27] Fortunately we know how these pages were constructed, and watermark analysis can help us establish the collation of nearly all of them, showing that pp 29–124 consist of four quires with vellum inserts in two of them.[28]

The leaves are quarto and of similar dimensions to those in G 8, the chain-lines horizontal and the watermark bisected by the fold and the gutter.[29] If laid down in a regular sequence, straight from the ream in the order of production after cutting from the moulded sheet and trimming, where no countermark exists then each watermarked bifolium will alternate with a bifolium with no mark. When a sequence of these bifolia are used to form a quire, the top of the watermark will appear in every other leaf of the first half of the quire and the bottom of the watermark in the same way in the second half. As we are only at the beginning of our study of paper in Irish manuscripts, it is not possible to say how common it is to find so regular an arrangement

of paper in the manuscripts. Such an arrangement, however, is to be found in parts of 23 N 10.

Pages 29–52, a gathering of 12, displays this regularity. This is followed by another 12 (pp 53–76), again remarkably regular except that the bifolium consisting of pp 61–2 and 67–8 was turned so that the lower part of the watermark is on the left (61–2) and the top is on the right (67–8). This regularity – possibly bespeaking immediate use after the paper was obtained, one supposes, in Limerick – while fascinating, is not essential to the codicology. In the case of the quarto leaves being discussed here, all that is required for positing conjugate pairs is that the two halves of the watermark match, and the non-watermarked leaves match, across the putative quire.

Thus the third quire in this sequence consists of pp 77–100 (a 12), where the paper pattern is top (of mark) – blank – blank – top – blank – bottom – top – blank – bottom – blank – blank – bottom. Where the bottom and top halves of the watermark meet each other is the central bifolium (pp 87/8–89/90). Textual analysis presented in the manuscript catalogues, however, shows that two leaves of vellum (what are now pp 17/18–19/20) intruded between pp 88 and 89, and, furthermore, vellum leaf pp 5/6 preceded the first paper leaf (pp 77/8) and vellum leaf pp 7/8 followed the last paper leaf (pp 99/100). What we have then is a set of paper bifolia contained within an inner and an outer vellum bifolium, much as was the case with quire number 6 in RIA MS 24 B 3, as reported by Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha in her essay in this book.

Finally, the fourth quire in the sequence shows a comparable pattern to the one just noted. Here, again based on watermark analysis, we find that the section comprising pp 101–124 consists of a quire of 12 which textual analysis shows was originally a bigger gathering, with two vellum leaves (pp 21/2–23/4) resting on the central bifolium of the paper quire (pp 111/2–113/4), and with vellum pp 9/10 preceding p. 101 and vellum pp 11/12 following p. 124. In this and the preceding quire it is as though vellum, while carrying text, was also serving the function of guarding the paper. Whether or not that was the case, analysis of 23 N 10 shows how knowledge of paper and watermarks can serve as a helpful codicological tool, contributing to the process of reconstructing a collation for a disturbed manuscript, and complementing textual and palaeographical considerations.

Turning briefly to juncture points between paper and vellum in the manuscript, we see the scribes writing across the divide without any apparent difficulty. Following on from the fourth quire discussed above, in the tale *Tochmarc Emire* p. 26 (vellum) should be followed by p. 125 (paper). Here the poem beginning *Fo chen a scithbuaidgnigh* is written continuously from p. 26.7 to p. 125.7. The horizontal layout is practically identical on the vellum and paper with the same average number of characters per line (43–5); but in order to achieve this layout the scribe has had to encroach more on the outer margin of the paper than is the case with the vellum. In the lower margin, however, he retains the usual generous space, and so there is a vertical difference of six lines between vellum and paper, as the paper leaf is approximately 15 mm shorter than the vellum. The situation here differs from that in G 8 and TCD 1341, therefore, where the vellum was trimmed to suit the paper.

Paper in other contexts in Ireland

The value of the Irish manuscript tradition is that it provides us with as near as we can get to an unbroken record of the use of

skins and the use of paper from the late medieval period into the early-modern period, much of the components of which are conveniently dated by scribal colophon or by the texts themselves. This allows us to present the general view outlined already of a steady trickle of paper manuscripts from 1478 to 1600, existing in parallel with, and playing a junior role numerically to the vellum tradition, which continued to flourish down to the time when the excesses of the Elizabethan conquest began to take effect. Taking a step back from scrutiny of this scenario, one of the first questions that we must ask is: what was happening outside of this tradition? The answer to this question, in part at least, may be found in other areas where we might also hope to find the skin/paper divide. Areas that suggest themselves are diocesan and papal records; state papers; and the records of the city and town administrations. As this is very much virgin territory for paper scholarship, it must suffice here to touch in outline on just one of those areas.

Municipal records

In administrative contexts in Ireland, although parchment would remain the material of permanent record in high-level parliamentary and legal documents,[30] the evidence suggests that written matter dealing with day-to-day affairs made the transition from parchment to paper according as the latter became more available. Administration was located in cities and towns, such as they were. The pre-1600 records of these municipal centres are fragmented and incomplete, as befits a country in constant turmoil up to the final conquest of the seventeenth century, after which the administrative records tend to become more stable and continuous. The evidence suggests that the appearance of paper in autonomous Gaelic Ireland roughly coincides with its use in the non-autonomous part of the country, namely Dublin, where the English administration was based. The principal consumer of paper in Ireland into the early modern period was the crown bureaucracy. Fifteenth-century Irish exchequer payments routinely included allowances for paper, parchment, wax and ink. For example, a record of expenditure during the period March 1430 to July 1431 itemised the following among its minor expenses:

> 47 dozens and 9 skins of parchment, bought at various prices for writing rolls, writs, estreats and other memoranda and records of the exchequer: £3 10s 7d;
>
> 3 gallons and 1 pint of ink: 5s 2d;
>
> 1 ream of paper for writing letters and copies: 5d.[31]

This entry captures very well the way in which the two materials were viewed at the time, and would be for a long time to come, where, in the administrative world, vellum or parchment would continue to be used for official, high-status documents, and paper for correspondence and copied material. This is something that is imitated to an extent in autonomous Gaelic Ireland, as the sixteenth-century correspondence from Irish chieftains to English Government officials is all on paper,[32] while legal deeds in Irish are preserved on scraps of vellum up to the seventeenth century.[33]

In the late sixteenth century the demand for paper on the part of the English administration increased, as the Elizabethan conquest began to be prosecuted with sustained vigour, and new nodes of settlement were established as the older settlements expanded. We see repeatedly, in the correspondence of English officials and of

officers, complaints of a shortage of paper for correspondence.[34] Yet there was also a move, from around mid-century onwards, towards a change from parchment to paper in non-correspondence items. The evidence for this is to be found in what survives of municipal records, one of the areas where one might reasonably expect evidence of the introduction of paper as a writing material.

No original records earlier than the nineteenth century survive for the Corporations of Cork or Limerick.[35] From the seventeenth century we have records on paper for Ennis, Kinsale, Youghal, Clonmel, New Ross, Belturbet, Trim, Coleraine, Carrickfergus, and Belfast. Only in the cases of Galway, Waterford, Kilkenny and Dublin, however, do we have any information useful to the particular subject discussed here, the vellum/paper divide.

To take Galway first: here the Corporation records survive from 1485, in a paper manuscript thought to have been created in the mid-sixteenth century, copying material from an earlier book.[36] Therefore we have records here on paper from around 1550, but no indication of on what material the preceding record was written.

In Waterford, and showing that the transition date could have been quite late in places, the municipal records survive on parchment in the *Liber Antiquissimus* from the fourteenth century to 1649.[37] These are continued on parchment for 1656–8;[38] and then on paper from 1663.[39]

The Kilkenny city records present an interesting case. The Kilkenny Corporation Records survive in the *Liber Primus Kilkenniensis* from 1231 to 1537. This vellum manuscript, it is believed, was given its present structure in 1498, accommodating parts of an earlier book.[40] The Corporation records from then up to 1656 are now missing, but because they survived until the twentieth century, and indeed may still be in existence, we know a lot about their composition. They consisted of the *Liber Secundus* and the *Red Book of Kilkenny* respectively. The *Liber Secundus* contained supplementary records for 1516 to 1544, and these were written on paper; as was the *Red Book*, which contained records for 1591–*c.*1645; the First Corporation Book of Irishtown (1544–1649) survives, and is entirely on paper.[41] All records thereafter are on paper also.

Turning to Dublin as our final example, the earliest document on paper in the City Archives is the 'Treasurye Booke of the Citye of Dubline' which begins in the year 1540.[42] In this case there are no records of this nature that are earlier than that, so we cannot say whether or not 1540 marks the beginning of the continuous use of paper in the municipal administrative record. The Acts of the Privy Council of Ireland, another paper book, survives for 1556–71, and bears the same watermark through 343 folios.[43] This feature of a single stock of paper in use throughout a set of records over a number of years is seen frequently. The entries in the Treasurye Booke, to cite another example, are recorded on the same paper from 1540 through to 1613: while the hands change over the 73 years, from secretary script to a more modern cursive, the paper remains the same. We have no treasury records for Dublin for the years 1614–50, but when the records resume in 1651 we observe the same phenomenon: a single watermark all the way through till 1717. This feature recurs in other sets of records. The Booke of St Anne's Guild in Dublin has the same watermark from 1584 through to 1673, or just over 500 pages;[44] so too the Acts of the Corporation of Coleraine,[45] which survive for the years 1623 through to 1669, written on 400 pages, and the Minute Book of Clonmel Corporation (1608–1649).[46]

Though gapped and very much

incomplete, the Irish manuscript tradition is sufficiently coherent to allow us to detect a transition-period from the late fifteenth century to the late sixteenth century, when both paper and vellum existed in parallel. The evidence for the use of paper in municipal records in Ireland tends to corroborate and complement the evidence of the Gaelic manuscripts – albeit in a more general way than we would prefer – in terms of the time-scale for the introduction and use of paper in the country generally. With the exception of Waterford where the change took place in the seventeenth century, the records of other centres – Kilkenny, Galway and Dublin – point to the early to mid-sixteenth century as the time when paper was introduced for high-grade administrative use, and these dates are not too far removed from its first emergence in the Gaelic manuscript also, as we have seen.

Print

The advent of the printing press was not the watershed event in Ireland that it was in other western countries. Early printing in Ireland, however, provides further evidence for the introduction of paper to the country through the portal of English administration. All early printing in Ireland occurs in the context of the Reformation and the perceived need of the Elizabethans to prosecute conquest on religious grounds as well as military. This is true of books printed in English and in Irish. And there are interconnections between some of these works that are of interest.

The paper that is used in the earliest recorded book printed in Ireland, *The Boke of the Common Praier*, printed by Humphrey Powell in Dublin in 1551, bears a watermark of a hand with a flower on a stem extending from the longest finger, the number three on the palm of the glove with the letters B A on either side, and a *fleur-de-lis* below. It is of interest to find the identical watermark again in use in the Acts of the Privy Council of Ireland 1556–1571, mentioned above. This suggests that what was undoubtedly the government stationary supply of paper was used in the earliest printing in Ireland.

The earliest book printed in Irish in Ireland, and the first to use the new fount of Gaelic type sponsored by Queen Elizabeth, is the *Aibidil Gaoidheilge, & Caiticiosma* (a Protestant Catechism with prayers translated from the Book of Common Order) of Seaán Ó Cearnaigh (Treasurer of St Patrick's Cathederal, Dublin), printed, as the title-page usefully tells us, on the 20th of June 1571, 'ós chionn an dhroichid' ('above the bridge') and paid for by Alderman John Ussher. 'Above the Bridge' refers to the *pons magnus* or the *pons Dubliniensis*,[47] the only bridge in Dublin at the time. We are fortunate that a printer's trial-sheet for this job survives from the same year, the celebrated 1571 Broadside, containing the first ever printing of a bardic poem: a religious composition on Judgement Day by the Franciscan Pilib Bocht Ó hUiginn († 1487).[48] In addition to its value as a trial-sheet for the Elizabeth type, and for questions of textual layout and textual history,[49] the Broadside is of importance in preserving a single sheet of the chancery paper on which the *Aibidil* would be printed, and then folded, cut and trimmed, resulting in a book of 56 pages measuring132 × 82 mm, suitably slight and fragile to act as a symbol for the first tentative use of Gaelic type. The watermark consists of a gloved right hand, 85 × 25mm, with a five-petal flower on a short stem extending from the longest finger; the number '3' is on the palm of the glove, with the letters 'A' and 'B' on either side below. It may well be by the same papermaker whose work is in evidence in the *The Boke of the Common Praier,* but the two marks differ in dimensions and in the absence in the latter of the *fleur-de-lis*.

The *Aibidil Gaoidheilge, & Caiticiosma* was a trial-run for the use of the Gaelic typeface, which was used again in 1602/1603 for one of the greatest ever combinations of printing, paper, language scholarship and manuscript scholarship in the Irish language. This was the Irish translation of the New Testament (*Tiomna Nvadh ar dTighearna*), which, though a project of the Reformed religion and a hostile Government, was in fact the result of the collaboration between Protestant biblical scholars and some of the last representatives of the Gaelic learned orders, who were of course Catholic. An obvious irony of this collaboration was that it would be the Elizabethan conquest that would bring an end to the Gaelic social order on which the learned orders depended to maintain their professions, to keep their schools and to make their manuscripts, and would also result in the proliferation of paper.

The printing of the *Tiomna Nvadh* in an estimated print-run of 500 is a fascinating story in itself,[50] which resulted in a folio book of 218 leaves in which at least twelve distinct watermarks are visible. The variety of paper stocks in the book is a good indication of the amount of white paper available in Dublin in the 1590s and early 1600s. The watermarks also afford us a clue as to the origin of the paper in that two marks found in the *Tiomna Nvadh* are identical to watermarks in works printed in La Rochelle in 1600 by Jerome Hautin.[51] This accords with the general picture of the dominance of French paper emerging from a preliminary study of watermarks in early paper in Ireland.

The end of the vellum manuscript

The Elizabethan conquest was accompanied by the dismantling of autonomous Gaelic society, and with that the production of vellum manuscripts ceases, virtually overnight. As suggested by the figures given at the start of this paper, Gaelic manuscripts written on vellum after 1600 are not plentiful. As the conquest progressed through the seventeenth century, the spread and consolidation of the English administration necessitated the continuous supply of paper to support that administration. From the second half of the sixteenth century paper from France and the Low Countries was being imported via Chester to Dublin, and via Bristol to the ports along the southern and western coasts.[52] There is also evidence for direct trading with continental ports such as Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Nantes, Bilbao, Cadiz, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Ostend. The state papers for 1664 list twenty-one principal ports in Ireland, and this reflected the position going back to late medieval times.[53] It is probably significant that many of the early paper or part-paper Gaelic manuscripts mentioned above were written in proximity to some of those ports or administrative/trading centres.

The change in writing material in Irish-language manuscripts involves the change from home-made materials to purchased, prefabricated, imported materials. It takes place in parallel with the conquest of the country, and the emergence of centres outside of the settlements that would become major cities: towns newly incorporated that would service the machinery of conquest, plantation, settlement, and administration. Paper followed the conqueror, and crafts and industries associated with paper – stationers, printers and papermakers – would slowly follow also, providing the foundation for the flowering of Irish paper manuscripts in the eighteenth century.

It was not that Gaelic scholars at the beginning of the seventeenth century made a choice to use this new material in preference

to skin, but rather that the proliferation of paper as a commodity, paralleled by the disappearance of the old Gaelic system and the professional hereditary scholars that were part of that system, meant that anyone wishing to emulate and continue the work of those scholars in the creation of hand-made books was obliged to use paper. It is no surprise, therefore, that the medium itself should bear witness to this change and to the causes that had brought it about.

In an appendix to her essay in this publication, Dr Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha outlines early textual occurrences of the Irish word for paper in translations of medical texts from the mid-fifteenth century. An early use of the word in a scribal context occurs in RIA MS 24 P 14, a manuscript of 1577–8, where the scribe, Corc Óg Ó Cadhla of Co. Wexford, refers to his writing materials. He remarks that to expand upon the idea that the Elizabethan conquest was a judgement from God on the dissolute Irish would be a waste of ink (*dubh*) and paper (*paiper*).[54] Further on in the manuscript the same scribe laments the quality of his writing-material, and in so doing refers to the shortage of vellum:

> *Agus isum triamuin ar a olcus mo chartach agus na leitreach chuirim. do chinn nac roithenn lem memram dfoghbáil agus ar a hson sin fos ni chuirim dhiom gan a chur a gcairt maith mad ail le Dia.*[55]
>
> And I am sad because of the poor quality of my document, and the imperfection of the letters I set down. For I am unable to procure vellum; nevertheless I yet do not abandon hope of putting it down on a good document, if it be God's pleasure.

Ó Cadhla was not alone in recording his dissatisfaction with paper as a writing material. In a manuscript written September–November 1616, possibly in Co. Fermanagh, another scribe comments 'Is olc garb in paper',[56] 'The paper is bad and rough'; or perhaps '*paper* [as a generic material] is bad and rough'. The irony is that the material in this manuscript is the best of writing paper, probably originating in the famous paper mills of Ambert in central France.[57]

Corc Ó Cadhla's comments, mentioned above, come at the end of two long notes that occur, not as marginalia, but as part of the core columnar structure of the page, in the form of colophons at the end of sections of the *Lilium Medicinae*. The medium of paper carries with it a sense of opulence and plenty that manifests itself in the fact that for the first time we get lengthy colophons such as these filling out columns and longer spaces, where in the vellum tradition such space would not be occupied by scribal observations, but rather with filler-items such as short poems or gnomic material or suchlike. Even though the historic decorum of scribal layout was still observed, one concludes that the plentiful supply of paper meant that, in some cases at least, the scribe did not need to worry about sparing his writing material.

In this way, the advent of paper as a manuscript material facilitates the recording of contemporary events and perspectives from the native, Gaelic point of view. Thus, Ó Cadhla, writing in the house of Brian Caomhánach on the Kilkenny-Carlow border, uses this new-found space to comment, at a length unthinkable in the vellum tradition, on political events associated with the Elizabethan conquest. His focus in the second of the notes is on the slaughter by the English of men, women and children at the massacre of Mullaghmast in 1577, and on the revenge of a local chieftain, Rudhraighe Ó Mórdha, for the killing of his wife during that event. In a similar fashion, another medical scholar, Cathal Ó Duinnshléibhe, writing in Upper

Ossory in 1610, records the ethnic cleansing that was taking place at the time, where the leadership of the English plantation-class had 'the authority to hang everyone they catch'.[58]

Paper brings with it a sense of scope and space. If we were looking for a manuscript to sum up this feature we could hardly do better than select one from the Franciscan collection, that of Míchéal Ó Cléirigh's 'Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae', completed in Athlone in November 1630.[59] This manuscript comes complete with title-page, address to the patron (Toirdhealbhach Mac Cochláin), and an address to the reader. To anyone approaching the manuscript from the vellum tradition, the use of white space must have seemed remarkable. This was not entirely due to the influence of the printed book, though the influence of print is obvious in the layout of the preliminary pages; paper, and the availability of paper, delivered this luxury of space. One may further contrast the virtually prodigal use of white space by Ó Cléirigh and his colleagues in the Annals of the Four Masters with any set of annals written on vellum in the earlier period.

Another obvious area where this scope is seen is in the layout of poetry. The name for a line of poetry is *ceathramha* – a 'fourth' or 'quarter part' – but quatrains of poetry were never arranged in four lines of manuscript during the vellum era; depending on the page format they were laid out in a single line, or in two lines, or sometimes were written continuously, with only a period or return-sign indicating where a line or quatrain ended. Arrangement of poetry where one line of the manuscript page is devoted to one line of a verse, when it occurs, is a phenomenon of the paper manuscript, beginning with the Book of the Dean (though the scribes of that book reproduced the vellum layout more often than not), and also found in early printed material, such as Carswell[60] and the test-sheet for the *Aibidil*, mentioned above.

The paper medium also carries with it connotations of a knowledge deficit. Just as today we have seen the change from non-digital to digital accompanied by a change in attitude to a past that is still very immediate, but where a hand-written letter, for example, might now be regarded by many as quaint and old-fashioned; so we can, at times, observe comparable changes in attitudes accompanying the changeover from vellum to paper. For example, with the disappearance of vellum as a material we see the development of the idea that the books that carried Gaelic texts in the pre-paper time belonged to another era, the world of pre-Conquest Ireland. In the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, we have an Irish vellum manuscript from as late as 1640, probably written in Co. Cork, but tellingly described by the cataloguers as written by the scribe 'apparently with little understanding of his exemplars'.[61] By the end of the seventeenth century, one of the last of the traditional scholars, Tadhg Ó Rodaighe, would claim to be the last person able to read the collection of old manuscripts that he had in his possession.[62]

Yet in some cases the robustness of vellum probably improved its chances of survival. For instance we have a manuscript, part of which was written in the year 1620 on vellum, where the scribe in his colophon refers to a related manuscript, written apparently at the same time, but on paper ('andsa bpaibér'):[63] but this paper manuscript does not seem to have survived. Another case is the anthology of poetry that was compiled in Cahir castle in south Tipperary for Theobald Butler around 1576.[64] The vellum poetry anthologies, which become relatively common at this period, are statements of identity and noble ancestry on the part of some of the Gaelic and long-naturalised Anglo-Norman families in the face of Elizabethan aggression.

What we have in this manuscript, however, is not the carefully laid out anthology, but rather poems inscribed by the authors on bad pieces of vellum – a single gathering of eight – with little regard for the modalities and finer points of layout that we would normally expect. To coin a metaphor from manuscript decoration, these are the textual underdrawings, the pre-anthology. And so this manuscript hangs on the precipice of the chasm between vellum and paper, because the next stage, the finished and finely-executed manuscript, does not survive, and may not have ever existed, the circumstances that saw the disappearance of the vellum tradition at this time having engulfed this particular project.

It is about this time we find the word *seanchairt* ('old document') with the specific meaning of a vellum exemplar for a paper manuscript, and bearing connotations of antiquity, and of difficulty in deciphering and interpretation, a new sort of phenomenon that, if nothing else, serves to emphasise the break that was understood – even at the time when the break was happening – to have been marked by the introduction of paper and the disappearance of vellum. The word appears in a paper manuscript containing a transcription of material from a vellum manuscript which happily still survives.[65] That is the Nugent poems in paper manuscript RIA MS 23 D 14 transcribed from the vellum Nugent poem-book (National Library of Ireland MS G 992), a manuscript written in 1577. The date of the paper manuscript remains uncertain, though the first half of the seventeenth century at the latest seems a certainty. And given that time-scale, it is interesting to see how a vellum manuscript written just about 50 years earlier at most has now become an 'old document' with the advent of paper. The scribal note is of added interest as being addressed to an imagined *léaghthóir* ('reader'). This is a new phenomenon, where the scribe sees his work as reaching an audience in the same way that the printed word does, where the 'address to the reader' is or will become a fixed element of the preliminaries.

To sum up: although we have only been touching in a preliminary way on a number of matters associated with the emergence of the paper manuscript in Gaelic literature, it seems clear that the transition from vellum to paper should be reckoned along with the other indicative changes, including those outside the immediate realms of book-history, that were occurring in Ireland at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Looking forward to the paper tradition as it progressed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and observing the role that paper was to play in the preservation and transmission of Irish literature, it is clear that the introduction of large quantities of this material to Ireland during and in the wake of the conquest of the country in the seventeenth century led to a consequence that the prosecutors of that conquest had not intended. Paper would prove to be a liberating and enabling commodity for those who were minded to continue the cultivation of Gaelic literature via the hand-made book. In view of the well over 3,500 manuscripts produced in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, perhaps the main conclusion is, despite the tentative beginnings outlined here, that we will eventually come to view paper as the saviour of the Gaelic literary tradition.

Notes

1 University College Cork. I am indebted to valuable research assistance provided by Dr Francis Kelly and Seosamh Mac Cárthaigh, and to the ever-generous expertise and scholarly counsel of Dr Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha.

2 Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The Book of Ballymote and the Irish book', in Ruairí Ó hUiginn (ed.), *Book of Ballymote* (Dublin 2018) 221–50: 227–31.

3 E.g. Marsh's Library MS Z 3.1.5 ('Codex Kilkenniensis').

4 Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson G 185: Alan J. Fletcher, 'The de Derby Psalter of Christ Church cathedral, Dublin', in Raymond Gillespie and Raymond Refaussé (ed.), *The medieval manuscripts of Christ Church cathedral, Dublin* (Dublin 2006) 81–102.

5 Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'What happened Ireland's medieval manuscripts?', *Peritia* 22–23 (2011–12) 191–223.

6 A major obstacle to gathering accurate data is the fact that so many of our vellum manuscripts are undated.

7 Pádraig de Brún and Máire Herbert, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in Cambridge libraries* (Cambridge 1986) 106–107.

8 Gearóid Mac Niocaill, 'Blogh de "Tochomlad mac Míledh"', *Celtica* 6 (1963) 259–61.

9 The table of contents in the fifteenth-century British Library Egerton MS 1781 is a sixteenth-century addition.

10 Thomas F. O'Rahilly et al., *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy* (1926–58) 1180–82; colophon in MS p. 126.

11 Whitley Stokes, 'The Gaelic Maundeville', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 2 (1899) 1–63, 226–301.

12 There are three examples from the early 1400s in the Wasserzeichen des Mittelalters database.

13 C. M. Briquet, *Les Filigranes: Dictionnaire historique des Marques du Papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600* (Paris and Genève 1907) §§2790–97: 'Dans les 2790 à 2797, le filigr. est horizont.; la distribution géographique des pap. ainsi marqués autorise à leur assigner le Poitou comme patrie d'origine' (I, 198). The database of Watermarks in Incunabula Printed in the Low Countries lists the motif in books printed in Bruges by William Caxton and Colard Mansion in the 1470s and 1480s respectively.

14 Reproduced in the Proceedings of the 2016 International Paper Historians conference, forthcoming.

15 Description, including a list of watermarks, by Ronald Black, accompanying digital images on the Irish Script on Screen website.

16 For example, Dr Maria Stieglecker refers me to some Austrian examples (all available on manuscripta.at): Göttweig, Benediktinerstift, Cod. 210 (161), 14c/15c; Innsbruck, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Tirol (ULBT), Cod. 492, 13/14c; Graz, Franziskanerkloster, Cod. A 67/28, 15c; Heiligenkreuz, Zisterzienserstift, Cod. 344, late 14c.

17 Nicholas Pickwoad, 'The use of fragments of medieval manuscripts in the construction and covering of bindings on printed books', in Linda L. Brownrigg and Margaret M. Smith (ed.), *Interpreting and collecting fragments of medieval books* (London and Los Altos Hills 2000) 1–20.

18 Described Standish Hayes O'Grady, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the British Museum* I (London 1922) 231–58.

19 Noted by O'Grady (ibid., 253) for §25.

20 Through the generosity of Dr Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha I have had the benefit of access to her draft catalogue of this manuscript, where the points of intersection between vellum and paper are identified.

21 *State Papers Henry the Eighth* II (London 1830) 46 (reference from Kenneth Nicholls); Steven G. Ellis and James Murray, *Calendar of state papers Ireland: Tudor period 1509–1547* (Dublin 2017) 79 (§170).

22 Information accessed through the databases in the Bernstein portal (memoryofpaper.eu).

23 *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland* I (Dublin 1967) 41–57; see Pádraig Ó Macháin and Aoibheann Nic Dhonnchadha, 'Nessa Ní Shéaghdha: palaeographer and textual historian', in Kevin Murray (ed.), *Tóraigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghráinne: reassessments* (London 2018) 1–16: 12–13.

24 As distinct from the fixed variety found in manuscripts of both the Gaelic and Anglo-Norman traditions: e.g. Laud 610 (Brian Ó Cuív, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* I–II (2001) I, 66) and the Liber Kilkenniensis (*passim*).

25 Following Meyer (*Ériu* 1 (1904) 38) and Best (see n. 26), the manuscript is usually claimed for Co. Roscommon, but the Munster-flavoured marginalia suggest otherwise; the locations mentioned in the notes and colophons – 'Baile in Chuimine' and 'Baile Tibhaird ar Bla Maige' (= 'Blá Máighe', referencing the river Maigue) – are also to be found in Co. Limerick (Ballycummin, par. Mungret; Herbertstown, par. Kilcullane).

26 Misplacement is identified and addressed in the RIA catalogue description (pp 2769–80) and by Best in his introduction to the facsimile, *Facsimiles in collotype of Irish manuscripts VI MS. 23 N 10 . . . with descriptive introduction by R. I. Best* (Dublin 1954) ix.

27 Ibid., vi.

28 The final section of the manuscript, pp 125–60, is of diminished regularity, underlined by the fragmentary state of pp 151–60, and the presence of at least one singleton (pp 137–8) bearing the top of a watermark showing a one-handled jug.

29 In 23 N 10 the dominant mark is a gloved hand with 5-petal flower on stem above, and a trefoil on the glove over letters 'V O [?]'.

30 My thanks to Dr Bríd McGrath for discussing this with me, and for clarifying many details regarding surviving municipal records in Ireland.

[31] Philomena Connolly, *Irish Exchequer Payments 1270–1446* (Dublin 1998) 572 (cf. also p. 564 for a similar list); 'estreats': copies of records; 1 ream = 500 sheets.
[32] E.g. the letters of An Calbhach Ó Domhnaill, 1562: British Library MS Cotton Vesp. F. XII, ff. 63, 83, 95 (O'Grady, *Catalogue* I, 57–61).
[33] The agreement between the 8th Earl of Kildare and Mac Eochagáin, c. 1512, preserved on paper in British Library MS Harley 3756, f. 36, is described as 'merely a rough draft' by O'Grady (*Catalogue* I, 149).
[34] *Calendar of State Papers Ireland* (Elizabeth) IV, 38, 182, 297, 342.
[35] Material presented in Richard Caulfield, *The council book of the Corporation of the city of Cork, from 1609 to 1643, and from 1690 to 1800* (Guildford 1876) does not survive.
[36] NUI Galway, Hardiman Library, Corporation Book of Galway, Liber A.
[37] J. T. Gilbert, 'Archives of the municipal corporation of Waterford', in *Tenth report of the Royal commission on historical manuscripts* (London 1885) 265–339; Niall J. Byrne, *The Great Parchment Book of Waterford: Liber Antiquissimus Civitatis Waterfordiae* (Dublin 2013).
[38] Waterford City Archives, Corporation Minute Books, La1/1/A/01 and /02.
[39] La1/1/A/03.
[40] John Bradley, *Treasures of Kilkenny: charter and civic records of Kilkenny City* (Kilkenny 2003) 10.
[41] Ibid., 22, 26, 40.
[42] Dublin City Public Libraries, MR/35 (G1/02/06).
[43] Royal Irish Academy MS 24 F 16.
[44] RIA MS 12 D 1.
[45] In private possession.
[46] National Library of Ireland MS 19171.
[47] Joseph Brady and Anngret Simms, *Dublin through space and time (c.900–1900)* (Dublin 2001) 56, 63.
[48] Cambridge University, Parker Library, Fr. MS Box 2, item 5. My thanks to Dr Anne McLaughlin for her help in locating this item and in capturing its watermark. Text printed from manuscript sources in Lambert McKenna, *Philip Bocht Ó Huiginn* (Dublin 1931) Poem 25, and from the Broadside by Brian Ó Cuív, *Aibidil Gaoidheilge & Caiticiosma: Seaán Ó Cearnaigh's Irish primer of religion published in 1571* (Dublin 1994) Appendix III.
[49] Dealt with in detail ibid., 197–8.
[50] Fearghus Ó Fearghail, 'A survey of the extant copies of the Irish New Testament of 1602', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster* 7 (2019) 51–73.
[51] *Verification des lieux impugnez de faux . . .*; and *Chronologicarum demonstrationum libri tres Johannis Temporarii*. These findings are emerging from a current collaboration with Muriel Hoareau of the Médiathèque Michel-Crépeau, La Rochelle.
[52] Susan Flavin and Evan T. Jones, *Bristol's trade with Ireland and the Continent 1503–1601: the evidence of the exchequer customs accounts* (Dublin 2009).
[53] *Calendar of State Papers Ireland 1663–1665*, 470.
[54] RIA 24 P 14, p. 134a32; Paul Walsh, *Gleanings from Irish manuscripts* (2nd ed., Dublin 1933) 159.
[55] RIA 24 P 14, p. 170b38–41; Walsh, *Gleanings* 165–6, 168.
[56] OFM/UCD MS A 17, f. 110r.z.
[57] Watermark consists of a crescent over a pot, with the bowl containing the letters 'B R' suggesting the Richard de Bas paper mills, Ambert.
[58] Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The hand of Conall Ó Mórdha', *Ossory, Laois and Leinster* 3 (2008) 54–72: 61.
[59] OFM/UCD MS A 16.
[60] Seón Carsuel, *Foirm na n-urrnuidheadh* (Edinburgh 1567).
[61] Cambridge MS MacLean 187; de Brún and Herbert, *Catalogue*, 104.
[62] J. H. T[odd], 'Autograph letter of Thady O'Roddy', *Miscellany of the Archaeological Society* I (Dublin 1946) 112–25: 123.
[63] Cambridge MS Add. 3082, f. 6v
[64] RIA MS 23 F 21. For the date see James Carney, *Poems on the Butlers of Ormond, Cahir, and Dunboyne* (Dublin 1945) xv.
[65] RIA MS 23 D 14, p. 64: 'A léaghthóir ní fhúair mé comdhúnadh an dána so san tsheanchairt . . .' ('Reader, I did not find the end of this poem in the old manuscript . . .').