

Review: *Life, Lore and Song: Essays in Irish Tradition in Honour of Ríonach uí Ógáin/ 'Binneas an tSiansa': Aistí in Onóir do Ríonach uí Ógáin* (Fitzgerald, Ní Fhloinn, Ní Úrdail and O'Connor)



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Celtica 32 (2020), 300–308

DOI: 10.58480/SCS-g7zgd-z9nj

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presents not only detailed literary and historical analyses of texts but whole editions and translations. These criticisms aside, the above summary of contents will have made clear that *Súgán an Dúchais* is an important publication with material of interest to anyone in the field.

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Life, Lore and Song: Essays in Irish Tradition in Honour of Ríonach uí Ógáin/Binneas an tSiansa: Aistí in Onóir do Ríonach uí Ógáin, Edited by Kelly Fitzgerald, Bairbre Ní Fhlóinn, Méidhbhín Ní Úrdail and Anne O'Connor. Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2019. xiv + 322 pp. €55. ISBN 978-1-84682-810-2.

The title under review is a collection of twenty-seven essays/contributions in honour of Ríonach uí Ógáin, Professor Emeritus in Irish Folklore at University College Dublin and former Director of the National Folklore Collection.

Part One ('Ríonach uí Ógáin's Folklore Recordings in the National Folklore Collection') begins with a contribution in Irish by her former colleague Anna Bale, 'Saibhriú na Cartlainne: liosta taifeadaí obair pháirce Ríonach uí Ógáin' (pp. 1–8). This contains a list of Ríonach's field and studio recordings along with a short introduction. The second contribution in this section, by Kelly Fitzgerald, consists of a list of Ríonach's publications, "'The landscape of tradition is constantly changing": five decades of contributions to the understanding of Irish vernacular culture' (pp. 9–16). The third and final contribution in this section, by Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, titled 'The visual context of tradition: Ríonach uí Ógáin's photographic work' (pp. 17–18), consists of a short introduction and a selection of 25 photographs, the majority taken by Ríonach herself. Mac Cárthaigh's short one-and-a-half-page introduction is very informative in respect of Ríonach's field work and should be read in conjunction with Anna Bale's introduction to her contribution to this volume.

Part two ('Historical Collecting, Manuscript and Literary Sources, and the History of Tradition Archives') is very wide-ranging. Tugann aiste Angela Bourke, dar teideal 'Alma agus Jeremiah Curtin i gConamara' (lgh 19–27), léargas nua ar mhodhanna oibre sa ghort an bhailitheora béaloidis Jeremiah Curtin agus an ról tábhachtach a bhí ag a bhean Alma san obair seo, ról nár tugadh aird air go dtí seo, agus nár aithin a fear céile de réir dealraimh. Tá cuid mhaith den tráchtairacht san aiste seo bunaithe ar dhialanna Alma Curtin, inar choimeád sí cuntas ar a gcuid oibre le scéalaithe ar fud Ghaeltacht na hÉireann. Pléann aiste Shíle de Cléir, 'An táilliúrachtaí trí shúile na bpríntiseach: dhá chuntas ón naoú haois déag' (lgh 28–39), le cuntais a d'fhág beirt tháilliúir ina ndiaidh ar a ngairm, agus díríonn go háirithe ar a dtréimhse oiliúna. Tá sean-aithne ag léitheoirí ar dhuine díobh, Tadhg Ó Buachalla, ar scríobh Eric Cross leabhar mar gheall air agus a bhean chéile (*The Taylor and Ansty*

(London, 1942)), a rugadh i gCill Gharbháin, oir-dheisceart Chontae Chiarraí sa bhliain 1863 ach a chaith cuid mhaith dá shaol i nGarraí na Péice, Béal Átha an Ghaorthaidh, iarthar Chontae Chorcaí. An té eile atá faoi chaibidil, Pádraig Mac Giontaigh, rugadh agus tógadh é i gCnoc Maoilín, Baile Chruaich, iarthar Chontae Mhaigh Eo. Saolaíodh Mac Giontaigh thart ar dheich mbliana roimh Ó Buachalla, c. 1854. Ní ar leabhar Cross a tharraingíonn an t-údar san aiste seo ach ar ábhar ilghnéitheach a bhailigh Seán Ó Cróinín ón táilliúr Ó Buachalla le linn an Dara Cogadh Domhanda do Choimisiún Béaloideas Éireann agus a foilsíodh sa bhliain 1978 faoin dteideal *Seanchas an Táilliúra* (curtha in eagar ag Aindrias Ó Muimhneacháin). Is le linn an chogaidh chéanna a bhailigh Tomás de Búrca, bailitheoir lán-aimseartha (dála Uí Chróinín) de chuid Choimisiún Béaloideas Éireann an t-ábhar beathaisnéiseach fionspéisiúil a bhfuil cuid de faoi chaibidil anseo ag de Cléir. Tá eolas fionspéisiúil i dtaobh chéad-iarrachtaí Dhubhglais de h-Íde ar bhéaloideas a bhailiu in aiste Liam Mhic Mhathúna dar teideal ‘An Craoibhín Aoibhinn ina bhailitheoir óg béaloidis: fianaise a nótaí i Lámhscríbhinn G 1070, i Leabharlann Náisiúnta na hÉireann’ (lgh 40–53). Tá 178 leathanach téacs sa lámhscríbhinn seo, a bhaineann leis an tréimhse 1876 go dtí 1896. Amhráin is mó atá ann agus a bhformhór i nGaeilge. I gcás gach míre, soláthraíonn An Craoibhín óg de ghnáth ainm an fhaisnéiseora, log a bailithe, agus an mhí agus an bhliain a bailíodh an t-ábhar. Bhailigh sé ábhar ó mhná chomh maith le fir, agus níor leasc leis ábhar gáirsiúil a bhailiú ach oiread, agus bhain leas as an aibítir Ghréagach chun focail gháirsiúla a scríobh. Is díol spéise go soláthródh bailitheoir óg mionsonraí a chuid faisnéiseoirí chomh luath leis na 1870idí. Seans go bhfaca sé a mhacasamhail i gcolún Gaeilge an *Tuam News*. Sa bhliain 1873 chomhairligh John Molloy (Seán Ó Maéildhia) do Sheán Mac Fhlainn (eagarthóir an cholúin) gur cheart ainm agus seoladh faisnéiseoirí ábhar béil a thabhairt (Ó Macháin agus Ní Shéaghdha 1996: 107).

The first section of Margaret A. Mackay’s essay, ‘Friendship at the core: Ireland, Sweden and the School of Scottish Studies’ (pp. 54–66), deals with Séamus Ó Duilearga’s working honeymoon and is based on the journal he and his wife (Maud) kept of their stay in Edinburgh. It appears much of their short honeymoon was spent meeting with various scholars and officials (particularly member of the Scottish Anthropological Society, later renamed the Scottish Anthropological and Folklore Society – SA(F)S) in an effort to promote folklore collecting. Each evening Ó Duilearga would dictate the events of the day, which his young wife wrote down. The second section of the essay deals with the follow-up to Ó Duilearga’s visit, namely efforts to get folklore collecting organized in Scotland and to forge contacts between Scotland and Scandinavia. The final section of this essay discusses the genesis of the School of Scottish Studies. This is a very informative essay. However, the author’s assertion that ‘[t]he SA(F)S papers for 1934 show that JHD [Séamus Ó Duilearga] kept in close correspondence with the Society after his return to Dublin and [that] it is possible to see his influence on and participation in its activities throughout the 1930s’ (p. 60) has to be qualified. Ó Duilearga’s correspondence with Carl Wilhelm von Sydow of the University of Lund gives a somewhat different picture and reveals that he

was hugely frustrated with Scottish efforts (or procrastination, as he saw it) to promote folklore collecting and quite dismissive of their motives as well as their actions (particularly those of Lowlanders).⁸ The fourth contribution in this Part, by Maureen Murphy, is titled 'Neilí O'Brien and the Gaelic League' (pp. 67–76). This interesting essay on a prominent Protestant Gaelic Leaguer, which draws on many primary sources as well as secondary sources, is welcome, and highlights the need for more full-length biographies of prominent Gaelic Leaguers. Neilí O'Brien was instrumental in the founding of Coláiste Eoghain Uí Chomhraidhe in Carraig an Chabhlaigh in south-west Clare. The college, established in 1912, still survives, but the Gaeltacht/Breac-Ghaeltacht its founding was hoped to buttress does not. This is not discussed, which is to be regretted, as it surely has a bearing on the subject (see Seoighe 1995: 103).

Baineann aiste Mheidhbhín Ní Úrdail, 'Deascán ó Chorca Dhuibhne agus ó Chairbre i mbailiúchán lámhscríbhinní an Fheirtéaraigh' (lgh 77–99), le roinnt ábhair ó fhoinsí béil a bhailigh Pádraig Feirtéar, Baile Uachtarach, Corca Dhuibhne in Éirinn agus thall i Meiriceá ag deireadh an naoú haois déag. Seanchas filíochta is mó atá faoi chaibidil san aiste seo, agus tugtar go leor sleachta as na lámhscríbhinní. Le tamall de bhlianta anuas tá scoláirí ag tarraingt ar an bhfoinse luachmhar lámhscríbhinní seo (údar na haiste seo thar éinne) agus is mithid, mar ar feadh ró-fhada bhí an cnuasach seo ag bailiú smúite i Leabharlann Choláiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath. Cuireann Éamonn Ó hÓgáin eagar ar dhán le Eoghan Caomhánach ina aiste 'Moladh aráin Thaidhg Uí Choileáin' (lgh 100–108). Deir Ó hÓgáin: 'Rud neamhchoitianta sa Ghaeilge sa ré sin, nó i ré ar bith eile, go gcumfaí moladh ar earra bia chomh gnáthúil comónta leis an arán' (p. 100). Níor éirigh le Ó hÓgáin a fháil amach cérbh é an báicéar seo, Taidhg Ó Coileáin, a raibh cónaí air, de réir an dáin, i mBaile Hiobaird, oirthear Chontae Luimnigh, ach deir sé: 'Pé léamh atá le déanamh ar an moladh ar an arán, is deacair gan a cheapadh sa deireadh thiar ná gur mar mhagadh ar chúis éigin nach bhfuil ar eolas a bhí an moladh go léir á dhéanamh ag an gCaomhánach ar arán Thaidhg Uí Choileáin' (p. 101). Ó eolas inmheánach sa dán, tuairimíonn Ó hÓgáin gur cumadh an dán seo 'ar a dhéanaí sa bhliain 1810' (p. 100); is é sin le rá, tráth go raibh borradh mór faoi dhaonra na hÉireann, agus thart ar thrian den phobal ag brath ar an bpráta mar phríomhbhia, agus i go leor cásanna ar phrátaí amháin (Clarkson agus Crawford 2002: 32–3). Sa dán seo is daoine gustalacha a luaitear mar chustaiméaraí ag an gCoileánach. Ní haon ionadh é sin ar bhealach, mar ag an am níor bhia 'gnáthúil comónta' é an t-arán ag cuid mhaith de phobal na hÉireann, agus ní dócha go mbeadh ar chumas bhochtáin na tuaithe arán giosta báicéara a cheannach. B'fhéidir gur ansin atá bunbhrí an dáin: gur aor sóisialta é.

Seosamh Watson's contribution, 'The Feast days of the Blessed Virgin: Séamas Mac Cuarta's forgotten "decade"' (pp. 109–30) deals with 'a series of eleven devotional poems', in the *trí rainn agus amhrán* genre, 'on a single

⁸Lund University Library/Universitetsbiblioteket, Lund (C.W. von Sydow papers): see letter dated 31/12/1934, and in particular, letters dated 30/8/1935, 4/12/1936, and 4/1/1937.

theme' (p. 109), the significance of which has largely been overlooked until now. As well as providing an English translation and copious textual notes for each of the edited poems, Watson discusses the possible objectives and context of composition for these poems and argues that indirectly, at least, the poet was possibly influenced by Continental Counter-Reformation sources, as 'he was a familiar of some of the Old English [Catholic] families and scribal circles of Leinster that had ongoing contact with the clerical and learned circles of Dublin in his day' (p. 110). He also suggests that the poet chose a style of language that would have facilitated the oral recitation and dissemination of these poems.

Part Three ('Irish Traditional Song and Music') involves a subject that Ríonach uí Ógáin herself has done much to elucidate. Nicholas Carolan's contribution, "'A unique and very curious book": Irish Song manuscript RIA 23 F 22' (pp. 131–41), describes and discusses the history of the first known 'collection of Irish-language traditional songs to include the music as well as the words' (p. 131). This substantial manuscript, containing 248 pages and 122 'unsourced songs and poems' (p. 131), dates from the early nineteenth century. Carolan suggests that it would appear to be 'a fair copy' compiled 'from earlier transcriptions' (p. 132). It contains many well known traditional songs, and 'comprises an essentially eighteenth-century repertory' (p. 132). Carolan maintains 'that it is an original collection, seemingly drawn for the most part from oral tradition' (p. 132) rather than copied from other collections. It also contains many songs not found elsewhere, which adds greatly to its value and interest. The author discusses the use made of this manuscript by scholars in the nineteenth century and argues that the compiler of the manuscript was the scribe and scholar Edward O'Reilly (Éadbhard Ó Raghallaigh). While O'Reilly may well have been the scribe/collector, this scholar is thought to have had an imperfect knowledge of spoken Irish (p. 134). One could ask, did he collect these songs from oral tradition on his own, or had he an assistant?

Baineann aiste Chathail Goan, 'Róisín Dubh: Athchualt' (lgh 142–52), le leagan den amhrán cáiliúil seo a bhailigh Mícheál Ó Domhnaill óna aintín, Neilí Ní Dhomhnaill (1906–84), Rann na Feirste. Pléitear bun-éirim an amhráin: ar amhrán polaitiúil nó amhrán grá é? Is dóigh leis an údar gur amhrán i dtaobh grá thoirmeasctha (idir sagart óg agus bean) go bunúsach é. Scrúdaíonn Goan leaganacha éagsúla den amhrán seo, amhrán a théann siar go dtí an ochtú haois déag, agus tuairimíonn sé go bhfuil macallaí as *Tiomna Nuadh* Uilliam Uí Dhomhnaill (1602) le brath ar véarsa amháin de leagan Neilí. Is ríspéisíúil an aiste í seo agus b'fhiú go mór a mhacasamhail de ghrinnscrúdú a dhéanamh ar an tsraith is sine d'amhráin thraidisiúnta na Gaeilge, a shíolraíonn ó am a raibh an Ghaeilge fós á labhairt ar fud Éireann, agus taca mór daonra agus cumas ealaíona ar a cúl. Pléann aiste Shéamais Uí Chatháin, dar teideal 'Mórshéisear scéilíní faoi chúrsaí ceoil' (lgh 153–59), leis an mbaint a bhí aige féin le cúrsaí ceoil i gcaitheamh a shaoil. Tá réimse tíreolaíochta leathan ag an aiste seo: Na Cruacha i nDún nan Gall, Ceathrú Thaidhg in Iorras (iar-thuaisceart Mhaigh Eo), Varangar na hIorua, Ramallah ar an mBruach Thiar (An Phailistín), agus an Bhlaic, tuaisceart an Chabháin. Is díol spéise

na scéilíní seo ar fad a d'éascair as an tionscnamh atá idir lámha aige, a chui-mhní cinn a bhreacadh (féach Ó Catháin 2018). Ní nach ionadh, tá níos mó tathaig i gcuid de na cuntais seo ná a chéile. Is é teideal aiste Lillis Uí Laoire, 'Peannphictiúir: ceathrar banamhránaithe i ndialanna Sheáin Uí Eochaidh' (lgh 160–77). Bhí Seán Ó hEochaidh ar dhuine de bhailitheoirí lán-aimseartha Choimisiúin Béaloideasa Éireann ab fhearr ag breacadh dialainne, ceann dá dhualgais laethúla. Bhí sé in ann beo-phictiúir dá bhfaca sé agus ar bhain dó i mbun bailitheoireachta a chur ar phár. San aiste seo, ní hamháin go dtugann Lillis sleachta iomadúla as dialanna Uí Eochaidh, chomh maith cuireann sé iad i gcomhthéacs a dhomhain-eolais ar cheol traidisiúnta Thír Chonaill. Siod iad an ceathrar banamhránaithe a chlúdaíonn an aiste seo: Péigí Mhór Ní Ghadhra, Gleann Cholm Cille; Máire agus Róise Nic a' Ghoill, an Áighe, Ard a' Ratha; agus Ciot Tom Ní Mhianáin, an Ceann Thoir, Oileán Thoráí.

Finbar Boyle (1951–2017) spent some years working in the sound archive of the then Department of Irish Folklore in University College Dublin in the 1980s, but availed of a voluntary retirement package in 1988 although still a relatively young man. Tom Sherlock's contribution in this section, 'From Ladywell to the Liberties: conversations with Finbar Boyle' (pp. 178–87), paints a picture of a larger than life character who spent a lifetime working with Irish traditional music. Fionnuala Carson Williams's essay, 'A music-cape from the early nineteenth century' (pp. 188–201), utilizes the ethnographic data found in the memoirs of fieldworkers of the Ordnance Survey for County Antrim, which date mainly from the 1830s. The data collected and discussed covers a far wider range of music than would be generally encompassed by 'folk' music, and deals, for example, with 'singing schools for ... learning sacred music' (p. 197). Speaking of those who compiled these Memoirs, Williams says: 'These fieldworkers were disciplined, diligent and well-prepared as we can tell from the painstaking detail of their work. They were a mixture of full-time workers, both soldiers and civilians, while local people also wrote sections of memoirs about aspects of their locality' (p. 200). There is no doubt that the compilers of these memoirs did Trojan work (as is evidenced by this very interesting essay), but one could question how well-prepared they were in certain respects. For example, how many of them had a knowledge of Irish or Ulster Scots and what was the extent of that knowledge; and of those who knew Irish, how many could write the language? In any event, though the Ordnance Survey's memoir scheme was full of good intent in respect of collecting oral traditions, few actual texts were collected, although much invaluable data on traditions was.

Part Four ('Aspects of Irish Folklore and Ethnology') opens with a contribution by Barbara Hillers, titled 'The Emancipator in the mirror of folk narrative: projection and prejudice in an anecdote about Daniel O'Connell' (pp. 202–13). This mainly deals with an antisemitic legend told about Daniel O'Connell and Hillers argues that this international legend may have become associated with O'Connell because of two well-publicised incidents in his career, where O'Connell, who was generally known for his pro-Jewish views, nevertheless revealed a deep-lying prejudice against Jews. The article also

discusses the humorous nature of much of the lore that survived in Irish folk tradition about O'Connell, which often casts him in a bad light. Bairbre Ní Fhloinn's essay, 'Wise men and little women: 6 January in Irish popular tradition' (pp. 214–23), is a timely discussion of aspects of the celebration of the feast of the Epiphany in Ireland. Ní Fhloinn notes that the holdings of the National Folklore Collection are less complete than they might otherwise be in respect of traditions about January 6, because the Commission never sent out a follow-up questionnaire to its questionnaire on Christmas traditions (circulated December 1944), although it intended to do so. Fortunately, the 1944 questionnaire on Christmas did garner a certain amount of lore about the feast of the Epiphany, which has been utilized in this essay. Ní Fhloinn notes, in respect of the 'Little Women's Christmas' (p. 221) tradition still vibrant in Cork city, that the failure of the Irish Folklore Commission to collect in urban areas also meant that much valuable data was not recorded on this subject. The essay also deals with renewed media and societal interest in *Nollaig na mBan* (one of the designations in Irish for the feast of the Epiphany), which appears to have been mainly a Munster tradition. Stiofán Ó Cadhla's contribution, '*Pisreoga a bhaineas leis an mbás*: superstition and effective human behaviour' (pp. 224–37), as the title indicates, deals with superstitions related to death. This essay contains much of interest, but the author's writing style and tendency to overburden his text with excessive detail makes it a difficult read. It would benefit greatly from more focus. Anne O'Dowd's contribution to this section, 'The Colours we wore' (pp. 238–53), is a fascinating treatment of the colours ordinary Irish people wore in the past, with the focus on the years 1830 to 1930. She uses three main sources to elucidate her subject: 1) travel writings by native and foreign writers; 2) the paintings of various artists of the period; and 3) a Dress Questionnaire sent out to correspondents by the Irish Folklore Commission in the early 1940s. She stresses that what tourists and artists usually saw was people dressed on the way to fair or market or Mass/Church, and not the colours of their everyday working clothes. The data collected via the Dress Questionnaire, which reaches back to the late nineteenth century, is in general agreement with earlier sources. Interestingly, all these three sources testify to the persistence of red, and to a lesser extent blue as 'favorite colours for women's clothing' (p. 253) throughout the period. It might be interesting to contrast her findings with the evidence for the colours of people's dress, such as it is, in eighteenth-century Irish-language poetry. Diarmuid Ó Giolláin's contribution, '"Echoes out of the vast silence"? Ancient traditions and folklore' (pp. 254–62), discusses the belief of certain folklorists of the Old School, with the main focus on Séamus Ó Duilearga, that folklore contains survivals from very ancient times. The bulk of the essay examines something that has always intrigued, and indeed awed our ancestors, namely the moon, and more particularly 'the man in the moon' legend. Ó Giolláin shows that rather than being an ancient survival from time immemorial, this legend is mainly rooted in the societies where it was collected in more recent times, and in which it performed a particular function, although certain Irish versions of the legend, he says, 'suggest a more archaic tradition' (p. 262).

Pléann aiste Phádraig Uí Héalaí, ‘Snátha i seanchas na mallacht’ (lgh 263–70), le cumhacht/éifeacht agus feidhm shoisialta mallachtaí, go háirithe mallachtaí baintreach. Is díol spéise an leas a bhaineann sé as an mBíobla agus as an traidisiún Giúdach-Críostaí d’fhonn an t-ómós a thugtaí do bhaintrigh i dtraidisiún béil na Éireann a rianú agus a shoiléiriú, agus chun an sceon a chuireadh mallacht bhaintrí ar dhaoine sa seanam in Éirinn a chur i gcomhthéacs níos leithne.

Part Five (‘Folklore Collecting – Personal Perspectives’) begins with Éilís Ní Dhuibhne Almqvist’s contribution, “‘Joy’s soul lies in the doing’: the pleasure of fieldwork” (pp. 271–7), celebrates the joys of collecting as experienced by the author. It is an interesting and, naturally, subjective essay, though the long quote from her memoir of her husband, the late folklorist Bo Almqvist (Ní Dhuibhne 2018), more than a page in length, is perhaps excessive in a short piece such as this. The information therein could surely have been better paraphrased and incorporated into the essay. One might add that folklore collecting may not always be so pleasurable. This was certainly sometimes the case with the full-time collectors of the Irish Folklore Commission, who often worked under immense pressure, and had poor working conditions. William Nolan’s essay, ‘The contribution of Séamus Ó Cinnéide to the Schools’ Folklore Collection, 1937–38’ (pp. 278–91), deals with material sent to the Irish Folklore Commission under this scheme from Lisnamrock (Lios na mBroc) National School, Ballingarry, Co. Tipperary. In contrast to most schools who participated in the scheme, it was the schoolteacher, Séamus Ó Cinnéide (James/Jim Kennedy), rather than the pupils, who collected the material submitted. Ó Cinnéide was a native of the place, and formerly a pupil of the same school. Nolan writes: ‘Whether through design or accident, Séamus Ó Cinnéide decided to take sole responsibility for the compilation for Lisnamrock School and it was a fortunate decision for the material now reposing in MS 562, pp 159–326, may be one of the richest seams in the whole collection’ (p. 280). This essay only deals with a small selection of the material Ó Cinnéide collected, concentrating on historical lore, and benefits from the author’s in-depth historical and geographical knowledge of the area, of which he is a native. The reason why Ó Cinnéide chose to do the collecting himself, I suggest, probably lies in the abortive schools folklore scheme organized by the Department of Education in 1934, before the setting up of the Irish Folklore Commission, a scheme that envisaged the teacher as the collector rather than the pupils. Only a small number of teachers sent in material under this scheme, and Séamus Ó Cinnéide was not among them. He would, however, have received a large copybook under this earlier scheme and may well have begun collecting and filling it before the scheme was resurrected in 1937 in a new format (utilizing the same large copybooks) under the aegis of the Irish Folklore Commission, with the onus for collecting folklore taken off the teachers’ shoulders and placed on those of their pupils (see Briody 2006). Anne O’Connor’s contribution, ‘Stories my mother told me: collecting folklore from a woman of Clonmel, Co. Tipperary’ (pp. 292–302) deals with some of the lore the author collected from her mother, Ethel (née O’Brien) after

commencing her studies in folklore in University College Dublin. This essay covers rites of passage such as childbirth and death, among other matters. Long before Anne formally recorded her mother she had heard stories, etc. from her growing up. The writer says: 'All her life, my mother was a great storyteller, as well as a beautiful singer', adding '[s]he often sang Irish traditional songs and ballads' (292). It would appear, although it is not explicitly stated, that it was mainly within the family (home) circle that her mother told stories, as was the case with many women of her generation. Growing up in the 1920s and 1930's before radio became pervasive (and intrusive) and long before television came on the scene, and when house-visiting would have been common in town and countryside, she would have been exposed to a great deal of traditional lore around the fire, at play, and elsewhere. Folklore would appear to have infused Ethel's everyday life, giving meaning to many aspects of it and underpinning her belief as well as those of her parents, relatives and neighbours. Small-scale studies of this sort are of great value, and help us to understand the role folklore played in ordinary people's everyday lives. The final contribution to the volume is that of broadcaster and writer Vincent Woods, titled "'What will we be?" – A spirit of hope distilled' (pp. 303–12). Essentially, this quite wide-ranging essay is about 'the hidden layers of Irish in the landscape' (p. 310) of the author's home locality. Vestiges of spoken Irish survived in his home area, Tarmon, north Leitrim, until c. 1940. It is a very personal story of the author and his family, and how the ancestral language cast a shadow over their lives. As is to be expected from the pen of a creative writer, it is very well written. On pp. 310–11 the author gives in full a letter written in Irish sent to him by his nephew John Woods. This is an interesting letter and gives greater depth to the essay, but it is not clear why it is left untranslated. Various Irish words and phrases throughout the essay are also not translated or glossed (though some are), but such omissions would not take from a reader's appreciation of the essay overall even if she/he had no Irish. However, omitting to translate this substantive letter certainly leaves readers with no Irish at a loss.

The volume also contains a 'List of Illustrations', 'Notes on the Contributors' and a 'Tabula Gratulatoria' as well as a many interesting photographs in both colour and black and white, in addition to those in Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh's above contribution.

All in all, this is a fine, attractively produced collection of essays, with few typing or factual errors, and is certainly worthy of the scholar it honours. I last met Ríonach uí Ógáin in the beautiful medieval city of Visby on the island of Gotland, Sweden in early June 2015 at a conference titled 'Why Folkloristics', which dealt with the future of folklore studies and scholarship. It was Ríonach's last international conference before she retired. I gave a paper, titled 'Not a safe haven: the fate of the Irish Folklore Commission', but Ríonach did not. She was there only to listen, and, I am certain, to ponder over the future of the discipline and collections to which she devoted her working life. Guím fad saoil di agus rath ar cibé obair a thógfaidh sí idir lámha sna blianta atá roimpe amach. Tá a fhios agam nach mbeidh sí díomhaoin, ach tá

súil agam go mbeidh deis aice sos a ghlacadh ó am go chéile tar éis an éacht oibre atá curtha aice dhi thar leathchéad bliain beagnach.

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