

he places these men and some women is what is particularly interesting about this book.

Clerical appointments in the medieval Gaelic Irish church tended to be hereditary and clerical celibacy was obviously not important to many of those in the west of Ireland. In the past this has been interpreted as sign of the degeneracy and weakness of the Gaelic church and more recently that the clergy were operating within community standards that gave more importance to familial connections and continuity than on externally imposed standards of celibacy. McInerney gives ample evidence for the importance of familial succession to clerical appointments in his final chapter, where he details the evidence for specific parishes.

McInerney also has collected and analysed a huge amount of information on the geography of parishes and monastic institutions in County Clare and linked these with the evidence on the clergy and their connections with learned families. This means he is able to outline which families originated in the pre-Norman church and which started to supply members to benefices after the introduction of monastic and ecclesiastical reform in the later medieval period. This is then linked with the timing of the connections with families of the learned professions, particularly in chapter 7.

The level of detail in this book will be welcomed by specialists of the medieval Irish church. McInerney provides a template for analysis of the sources and methodologies needed to trace these connections. For historians interested in the history of County Clare, there is a wealth of detail on places, place names, and family connections that will be very useful. Many readers will look only for specific names or places and the organization of the book makes it possible to do this. While readers interested in broader patterns of society and connections with church and learned families will welcome the detail they will also perhaps be left wanting the author to zoom out from the minutiae and analyse the wider implications of his results. This along with some structural tightening would have meant that the fascinating details McInerney has uncovered were more accessible to a wider audience.

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EÓIN MAC CÁRTHAIGH AGUS JÜRGEN UHLICH (EDS), *Féilscríbhinn do Chathal Ó Háinle*, Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnacht, 2012. xxix + 1071 pp. RRP €40. ISBN 9781906882730.

Cathal Ó Háinle, after many years at St Patrick's College Maynooth, was for fourteen years a professor in the Department of Irish in Trinity College Dublin, and is now professor emeritus there. This book is edited by two of his colleagues. It is possibly the longest book in the Irish language to be published ever; it is certainly the longest in recent times. (That said, two of

the 42 articles are actually in Scottish Gaelic—but none are in English.) This, in itself, is a remarkable and important achievement, and the publisher, Cló Iar-Chonnacht (West Connaught Press) is to be congratulated on the undertaking. It must have been an expensive proposition to produce, despite funding from the Arts Council, and its readership is necessarily limited, although it is such a fine work that it deserves to be read by all who are able.

Professor Ó Háinle's distinguished academic career includes well over 100 publications, detailed by Máire Ní Bháin in this book. His interests span widely: from folklore to religious history and theology, from Old Irish to modern literature in Irish and English. The span of this book is correspondingly wide, and equally full of interest. The list of contributors includes many of the leading lights of Celtic Studies, and their topics are as diverse as Professor Ó Háinle's interests. Anders Ahlqvist writes about a little Old Irish poem and Seosamh Watson about the word *dada* in Irish and Scottish Gaelic: in fact these canvas respectively the little poem's relationship to the text of Priscian's Latin Grammar whose margin it adorns, and an interesting and useful analysis of words meaning 'nothing' and 'something' and broadly interchangeable with *dada* in the various dialects of Irish and Scottish Gaelic. Pádraig A Breatnach gives an edition and some interesting background to an Irish translation of an extract from Paul's epistle to the Romans, and Uilleam MacGill'Íosa (perhaps better known as William Gillies) discusses, edits and translates a fascinating and complex poem which appears in unusual orthography in the Book of the Dean of Lismore. Pádraig de Paor writes about the symbolism and significance of a Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill poem about death, and Eoin Mac Cárthaigh discusses and edits an early modern poem lamenting the grief of one Máire Ní Dhomhnaill at the death of her nephew. Ruairí Ó hUiginn analyses the unusual consonant cluster in the Old Irish verb *cond-ricc* (meets, encounters, arrives at), and Nicholas Williams presents samples and analysis of the Gaelic of *Íarmhi* (Westmeath). The late Damien Ó Muirí wrote about the trials of Séamas Óg mac Coitir (James Cotter the younger), a Catholic executed in 1720 at the hands of the *Dlí gallda* (English law), and Nollaig Ó Muraíle surveys the occurrences of the surname Ó Háinle, particularly in the genealogies and annals. Juxtapositions such as these make the book a rich source of knowledge about Gaelic history, literature and language, and fittingly celebrate the remarkable scholarly interests of Professor Ó Háinle. It is not possible to discuss the contributions in detail here, but the 42 articles will surely include something for everyone with Irish interests: Pádraig Mac Piarais, folklore collecting, the teaching of Irish in schools, and Ireland's European links also feature.

This book is beautifully and carefully produced. It appears to be remarkably free of the typographical and proofreading errors which seem to have proliferated in scholarly publications in recent years. The layout and typeface are pleasing to the eye. The dust jacket is beautifully designed around Eoghan Breathnach's painting of Professor Ó Háinle. An

unfortunate trade-off for these high standards is the length of time taken to produce the book: two of the contributors (Dáithí Ó hÓgáin and Damien Ó Muirí) sadly passed away between writing their contributions and the book coming to press. For an Australasian audience, apart from the considerable intrinsic interest of its subject matter, this book offers a rare opportunity of reading at length in the Irish language: it would be very valuable to advanced learners, and a luxury for native speakers who find themselves in our part of the world. At the time of writing, it is available from the publisher ([www.cic.ie](http://www.cic.ie)) for a mere €20, and I highly recommend it.

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PÁDRAIG LENIHAN, *The Last Cavalier: Richard Talbot (1631–91)*, Dublin: University of Dublin Press, 2014. 267 pp. RRP €40. ISBN 9781906359836.

Lenihan has written a fast paced and authoritative biography of Richard Talbot, Earl and Duke of Tyrconnell, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whose death in besieged Limerick preceded its fall by days in 1691. Lenihan puts forward a good case for why we need this biography—Talbot was the most significant Irish Catholic political figure in the latter half of the seventeenth century and he has been neglected in both popular imagination and academic histories. Perhaps this is because he cannot be portrayed as a dashing, romantic warrior like his younger contemporary Patrick Sarsfield. Known in his own lifetime as ‘Fighting Dick’, ‘Mad Dick’, ‘Lying Dick’, Talbot was a consummate survivor, playing the necessary complex political games astutely, if more often in the language of the barracks than the stateroom. The great nineteenth-century English historian Macaulay wrote him off as a ‘foul-mouthed thug’ and ‘cold-hearted...scheming sycophant’ (p. 2). Lenihan does not whitewash Talbot, the man who emerges from this book is wildly ambitious, volatile and violent, not often likeable. By this portrait the book succeeds in capturing the complexity and ambiguity of individuals and elite politics in seventeenth-century Ireland.

Lenihan has unearthed some previously unexamined archival sources that means he can offer some new perspectives. This in itself is significant and he weaves these together with known accounts of the various events and actors in Talbot’s life seamlessly. The book is structured with chapters focused on the significant patrons to whom Talbot attached himself in his rise from younger son of a Catholic Anglo–Irish family to Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, friend and advisor of King James II.

The first chapter ‘Peter’s brother, 1646–56’ details Richard’s childhood as the second youngest of sixteen children of an influential and successful Catholic Old English lawyer. His childhood coincided with the tumultuous and violent 1640s and he first went into battle as a fourteen year old fighting in the cavalry troop for the Confederate Catholics in 1646. He survived the disaster of Cromwell’s siege of Drogheda in 1649 and left for