Making Ireland Roman

Estelle Haan

Electronic version

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/2523>
DOI: 10.4000/etudesirlandaises.2523
ISSN: 2259-8863

Publisher

Presses universitaires de Caen

Printed version

Date of publication: 30 December 2011
Number of pages: 194-195
ISSN: 0183-973X

Electronic reference

Estelle Haan, « *Making Ireland Roman* », *Études irlandaises* [Online], 36-2 | 2011, Online since 30 September 2011, connection on 21 September 2020. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/2523> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesirlandaises.2523>

This text was automatically generated on 21 September 2020.

Études irlandaises est mise à disposition selon les termes de la Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Pas d'Utilisation Commerciale - Partage dans les Mêmes Conditions 4.0 International.

Making Ireland Roman

Estelle Haan

REFERENCES

Jason Harris and Keith Sidwell (eds.), *Making Ireland Roman : Irish Neo-Latin Writers and the Republic of Letters*, Cork, Cork University Press, 2009, 254 p., ISBN 978-185918-453-0, £49

- 1 Deriving its title from Nicholas Canny's *Making Ireland British 1580-1640*, this collection of essays sheds much light on the work of selected Irish neo-Latin writers c.1550-1660. Arranged chronologically, it achieves a good balance between contextual study and close textual investigation.
- 2 The volume's unifying thread is the role of Latin as a language of learning, communication, and invective in early modern Ireland. At times, however, that thread seems dangerously tenuous in, for example, the final chapter (Elizabeth Anne Boran on Ussher and the collection of manuscripts in early modern Europe), largely unrelated to the rest of the collection. Both here and in the introduction (and indeed the book's subtitle) the phrase "the Republic of Letters" is used in a loose and rather contrived way as an attempted means of uniting essays that are frequently disparate in terms of content and methodology. It should also be pointed out that despite the overarching breadth suggested by its title, the collection is actually quite limited. For example, two of the nine chapters (2 and 3) focus on the work of Richard Stanihurst, and a further two (5 and 6) concentrate on Philip O'Sullivan Beare. The volume is perhaps more accurately describable as a representative study of the role played by Latin in early modern Ireland as attested by a series of interchanges – between countries : Ireland and Italy; Ireland and Spain; between humanists: Stanihurst and Derricke; Stanihurst and Lipsius, between texts, between manuscripts – all situated within their historical moment. If, as the Introduction suggests, "an ambivalence in the concept of *Romanitas*" (p. 11) underlies the attitudes and writings of this period, so too does a certain

ambivalence attend upon the overall concept of “making Ireland Roman” underpinning a collection whose essays do not always exemplify the unifying theme.

- 3 There are, however, some pioneering contributions worthy of particular mention. Diarmaid Ó Catháin’s well-documented essay ably documents the two-way literary connections between Ireland and Italy 1450-1600, concluding in a fascinating analysis of the Fitzgeralds’ reputation in Renaissance Italy as attested in the writings of Leonardo Bruni, Cristoforo Landino, Ariosto. John Barry ably demonstrates the benefits that can accrue from the juxtaposition of two authors (Derricke and Stanihurst) and three texts, resulting in a convincing argument for a triangle of literary connections, even if the overly personal and informal tone of this chapter is somewhat at odds with the others. Gráinne McLaughlin presents a most erudite and highly insightful analysis of the role of Latin invective verse in the *Commentarius Rinuccinianus* in an essay which is perhaps the jewel in the volume’s crown. Jason Harris offers an expert masterclass in rhetorical exegesis as evinced by a case study of Stephen White’s two *Apologiae* for Ireland. Interesting also is the chapter on Dermot O’ Meara’s military epic *Ormonius* (1615). Here, despite some theoretical naivety (for example, the age-old intentional fallacy [p. 80, 81, 82]) and a misleadingly simplistic organisation of their material, Sidwell and Edwards have paved the way for future study of this important neo-Latin epic.
- 4 On the whole this collection is to be welcomed, and should prove useful to historians, neo-Latinists, and those interested in the intellectual culture of early modern Ireland.

AUTHORS

ESTELLE HAAN

The Queen’s University, Belfast