



**AEMA INAUGURAL CONFERENCE**  
**THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE – SEPTEMBER 2004**

*PROGRAMME*

**Wednesday 22 September**

9:00	Registration
9:20	WELCOME
9:30	MULTIMEDIA AND MANUSCRIPTS Chair: Andrew Stephenson
	Bernard Muir
10:00	Morning Tea
10:30	CHRISTIANITY AND CHANGE Chair: Kristen Erskine
	Robert Di Napoli Being Cynewulf: Inside the Mind of an Anglo-Saxon Poet
	Julianna Grigg Aspects of the <i>Cáin</i> : Adomnán's <i>Lex Innocentium</i>
	Martin Grimmer British Christian Continuity in Anglo-Saxon England: The Case of Sherborne/Lanprobi
12:00	Lunch
1:30	PRACTICAL SESSION: ORAL TRANSMISSION Chair: Julianna Grigg
	Chris Bishop Barbara Erskine
3:00	Afternoon Tea
3:30	SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY Chair: Pamela O'Neill
	Katrina Burge Catch the Wind: Sailing, Luck and the End of the Viking Age
	Matthew Chrulew

	Species Discourse from the Physiologus to the Bestiaries
	Tessa Morrison <i>Computus Digitorum</i> and the Calculation for Easter
5:00	Drinks
5:30	PLENARY: WRITING EARLY MEDIEVAL HISTORY Chair: Chris Bishop
	Dr Lyn Olson (University of Sydney) Writing Early Medieval History

### Thursday 23 September

9:00	ALLEGORY AND EROTICA Chair: Kristen Erskine
	Fotini Toso Forces of Darkness: The Psychomachia Allegory in Early English Literature
	Chris Bishop Soft Beds and Hard Earth: The Hunt for Erotica in the Poetry of Wessex
10:00	Morning Tea
10:30	UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE RARE BOOKS COLLECTION Julianne Simpson
	LIBRARY AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES INFORMATION SESSION Blanca Pizzani
12:00	Lunch
1:30	PRACTICAL SESSION: MANUSCRIPTS Chair: Pamela O'Neill
	Janine Mitchell Deidre Hassad
3:00	Afternoon Tea
3:30	LATIN SCHOLARSHIP Chair: John Martyn
	Grantley McDonald Recalling the Muses: A Sixteenth-century Reading of Boethius' <i>Consolation</i>
	Catherine Oppel 'Why, my soul, are you sad?' The Spirituality of Tears in Augustine of Hippo
	Greg Byrnes Between Literary Standard and Living Language: Michael Sheehan on Medieval Latin
5:00	Drinks
5:30	PLENARY: GREGORY THE GREAT AND IRELAND Chair: Andrew Stephenson
	Prof John Martyn (The University of Melbourne)

	Pope Gregory the Great and Ireland
7:30	Conference Dinner

### Friday 24 September

9:00	SYMBOLS AND LANDSCAPE Chair: Kristen Erskine
	Rain Wolf The Cauldron Symbol and the Valleys of Eastern Scotland
	Helen McKay Using the Cauldron Symbol to Locate the Battle of Dunnichen
10:00	Morning Tea
10:30	MONASTIC LANDSCAPES Chair: Julianna Grigg
	Roswitha Dabke Continuity and Change : The Eighth-Century Heritage of Honau in Alsace
	Joe Flatman Wetting the Fringe of Your Habit : Monasticism and Coastal Exploitation in Medieval Britain
	Pamela O'Neill The Political and Ecclesiastical Extent of Scottish Dalriada
12:00	Lunch and AGM
1:30	PRACTICAL SESSION: TEXTILES Chair: Pamela O'Neill
	Aedeen Cremin Renita King Glennnda Marsh-Letts
3:00	Afternoon Tea
3.30	VISUAL IMAGERY Chair: Andrew Stephenson
	Robin Wastell John Climacus and the Heavenly Ladder
	Denise Doyle Threshold to the Gospel: The Book of Kells Carpet Page
4:30	Drinks
5:00	PLENARY: POETS, SCRIBES AND ANTHOLOGISTS IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND Chair: Chris Bishop
	Prof Bernard Muir (The University of Melbourne) Anthologists, Poets and Scribes in Anglo-Saxon England

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE – SEPTEMBER 2004

### *ABSTRACTS*

CHRIS BISHOP

#### SOFT BEDS AND HARD EARTH: THE HUNT FOR EROTICA IN THE POETRY OF WESSEX

Quoting from Pauline texts concerning marital continence, Pope Gregory the Great, in his *Pastoralis*, warned that it was better to fall upon ‘the soft bed of marriage rather than the hard earth of fornication’ [397.22-23]. The legal implications of this admonition are borne out by close study of medieval European law codes, but the social implications have excited less interest, especially in relation to the erotic landscape of the Anglo-Saxons.

This paper will seek to partially illuminate that landscape by surveying some Anglo-Saxon poems that deal with sexual relationships. These poems – several of them narrated in a feminine voice and thereby, perhaps, implying female authorship – catalogue a range of physical and emotional responses to love, lust, marriage and infidelity. A close reading of this poetry reveals a discourse that embraces the aesthetic of the sensual and argues for the acceptance of erotica within the genres of the West-Saxon poetic corpus.

KATRINA BURGE

#### CATCH THE WIND: SAILING, LUCK AND THE END OF THE VIKING AGE

Vikings are inextricably linked with sea-faring and longships, although precise details of their vessels, navigation and skills are disputed. Great technical ability at ship-building and navigation certainly contributed to viking expansion throughout and beyond Europe. However, medieval Scandinavian sources stress the luck (*gipta*) of some of the most successful sailors and good fortune at sea is more often credited to fate than practical ability. This paper explores the combination of technical skill, personal qualities and chance with particular reference to King Haraldr Hardradi of Norway and the events of 1066.

GREG BYRNES

#### BETWEEN LITERARY STANDARD AND LIVING LANGUAGE: MICHAEL SHEEHAN ON MEDIEVAL LATIN

Michael Sheehan (1870-1945) experienced, as a postgraduate student in Germany, the first phase of that re-assessment of Medieval Latin which characterized the twentieth century. As a Classics professor at St Patrick ‘s College, Maynooth, he advocated the idiom of ancient Rome as the standard, but his work as theologian (including a sojourn in Sydney, NSW) involved him with patristic and scholastic authors on a daily basis and he has put on record his appreciation of their achievement. Sheehan ‘s lifelong interest in the Patrician question also led him to comment on

the varieties of Latin in early medieval Britain and Gaul. The paper is arranged as follows:

1. Brief outline of Sheehan's academic training, reminiscences of influential professors (Norden, Zimmer), and career.
2. Survey of his thoughts on the nature and value of Medieval Latin and the linguistic and literary issues that arise.
3. An exploration of his ideas on the writings of St Patrick, post-Roman Britain and Gaul and related scholarship.
4. Conclusion, attempting an assessment of Sheehan's contributions in the light of current research in this field.

### MATTHEW CHRULEW

#### SPECIES DISCOURSE FROM THE *PHYSIOLOGUS* TO THE BESTIARIES

Recent years have seen the development of sophisticated critical resources in the areas of ecocriticism and animal studies. We can better understand the roles human-animal relationships play in a text by investigating its 'species discourse'. Medieval bestiaries provide fascinating objects for such analysis, as in them various forms of species discourse, divergent to the modern mind, are entangled. This paper will discuss the theoretical issues involved in the application of contemporary 'zoocritical' methods to the family of texts stretching from the fourth-century *Physiologus* to the twelfth-century bestiaries.

### ROSWITHA DABKE

#### CONTINUITY AND CHANGE: THE EIGHTH-CENTURY HERITAGE OF HONAU IN ALSACE

Alsatian Honau is considered to have been one of the few genuinely Irish monasteries on the Continent and its early history has been well researched. Its later history as a *stift*, however, has received much less attention – possibly because of the paucity of documents and the loss of buildings and artefacts – and yet this institution was dissolved only during the Revolution. In this paper an attempt is made to show how Honau was able to maintain some of its oldest traditions, functions and contacts, although it had to contend with natural catastrophes, diocesan surveillance and the Reformation.

### ROBERT DI NAPOLI

#### BEING CYNEWULF: INSIDE THE MIND OF AN ANGLO-SAXON POET

My discussion will focus on Elene, beginning with the situation of Judas, the poem's true protagonist. Elene softens the anti-Semitism of its source and Cynewulf alters the knowledge preserved by Judas and his ancestors of the crucifixion, casting it as a kind of esoteric folk-wisdom not to be divulged to outsiders.

Cynewulf's Judas story parallels the situation of the Anglo-Saxon poet as his culture was transformed by Christianity. We know from other sources that some poets in pre-Christian Germanic societies occupied a privileged place as repositories of communal lore. From this

perspective, the consequences of Elene's mission to Jerusalem for Judas bear uncanny resemblances to those of St Augustine's mission for the poets of pre-conversion Anglo-Saxon England as the authority of their native tradition gave way to the authority of Latinate Christianity. My discussion focuses on the analogues to this process in Cynewulf's handling of Judas' story, concluding with a close reading of Cynewulf's signature passage, where the poet depicts himself engaged in a struggle with his Latin source texts, recording the angst of a poet versed in a native tradition whose bearings have been radically realigned.

DENISE DOYLE

#### THRESHOLD TO THE GOSPEL: THE BOOK OF KELLS CARPET PAGE

Thresholds and entrances form defining spaces between the external and internal. From ancient times, belief in the vulnerability of open buildings and spaces to spirits, good and evil, led to superstitions surrounding entrances and thresholds as places in need of protection. In a religious context, these defining spaces become a boundary between the secular and the sacred. The symbolic barriers of thresholds and entrances were often marked with disorientating designs and spells, petitions and prayers, aimed at ensuring that only the benign entered. With particular emphasis on the patterns and symbolism of folio 33r, the carpet page in the Book of Kells, this paper will examine the development of carpet pages, one of the standard features to be found in the early Insular illuminated Gospel manuscripts.

JOE FLATMAN

#### WETTING THE FRINGE OF YOUR HABIT: MONASTICISM AND COASTAL EXPLOITATION IN MEDIEVAL BRITAIN

Advances in maritime and landscape archaeology over the past decade have together led to a reassessment of the coastline of Britain, particularly for the prehistoric period. The realization has been made that the coast was not marginal and insignificant, but rather central to both the practical and symbolic life of ancient peoples, an identifiable 'locale' with both positive and negative connotations. For the Middle Ages, however, the coastline has remained something of an enigma: beyond studies of major ports and harbours, there has been little consideration. This paper redresses the balance. With particular reference to monastic involvement, it can soon be demonstrated that the coastline of medieval Britain was a vital but distinct resource. Monasteries in particular were quick to take advantage of the wealth of natural resources that the coastline offered, to settle the shore and to use seas and rivers for transport and communication. However, it also becomes clear from the placement and layout of monastic precincts that this physical role was matched in the spiritual realm. The coastline of medieval Britain may have been a rich resource, but it was also viewed with suspicion and doubt, forming a true 'liminal' zone. As will be demonstrated by reference to a series of examples, coastal monasteries lay within both a real and imagined battleground: sea vs land; fresh vs salt-water; order vs chaos; good vs evil.

JULIANNA GRIGG

## ASPECTS OF THE CÁIN: ADOMNÁN 'S *LEX INNOCENTIIUM*

The Cáin Adomnán was promulgated at the Synod of Birr, Co. Offaly Ireland, in 697 CE. This law was a clever fusion of secular compensatory legislation and ecclesiastical Canon and Penitential law. As a secular law enforced by ecclesiastics it may have been the first of its kind in Britain and Ireland. It has many interesting features; not least is the list of 91 signatories, which read as a who's who of the period.

The aim of this paper is to look at the possible impact of the Cáin Adomnán. What were the advantages and disadvantages occurring from its promulgation and why was it created? This will require a review of the period in which it was created, in particular the position of the Columban *familia* in the enactment of the law.

## MARTIN GRIMMER

### BRITISH CHRISTIAN CONTINUITY IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND: THE CASE OF SHERBORNE/LANPROBI

Many early medieval historians and archaeologists who study the transition from Romano-British to Anglo-Saxon control have, over the last two decades, been engaged in a love affair with the concept of 'continuity'. A feature of recent work on early Anglo-Saxon England has been an emerging consensus that a substantial British population was subsumed under and persisted within Anglo-Saxon territorial boundaries as they expanded to the west and north. In such circumstances, it has been argued, British identity and culture continued within the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. If there was a substantial British substrate, some evidence of its continued presence and influence should certainly be expected. The concept of continuity, however, is one fraught with problems concerning both its meaning and the evidence that would be necessary to establish such an eventuality. This is particularly the case in the ecclesiastical domain, where it is currently popular to assert that the Anglo-Saxon churches of the border kingdoms – Wessex, Mercia and Northumbria – were exposed to a considerable degree of British influence prior to the arrival of Roman and Irish/Columban missionaries. The aim of this paper is to explore some of the difficulties associated with the term 'continuity' by examining the case of Sherborne, an early West Saxon monastery in Dorset, and the claim that it originated as a British community called Lanprobi.

## JOHN MARTYN

### POPE GREGORY THE GREAT AND IRELAND

The paper will start with a new interpretation of Columban's first letter, sent to Pope Gregory, with regard to their attitudes to irony and wit. Then Columban's two letters to Popes, three and five, will be compared with the first.

Four letters from the Pope will then be examined. The first, 4.18, sent in March 594, suggests that an Irish *peregrinus* was celebrating Mass at a Church in Rome. Another letter, 11.9, sent in October 600, praises Columban's merits, as he recommends him to Conon, abbot of the great musical monastery in Gaul, Lérins. In the title of letter 2.43, the recipients' names are missing,

but we might well read Hiberniam, as in R, copied from an eighth century manuscript covering all 14 books, now in Monte Cassino.

Finally, the intriguing letter to Bishop Quiricus and other Bishops of the Catholic Church in Ireland will be examined, sent in July 601. Scholars have not mentioned this rather long letter, 11.52, soon to be available in English.

A survey of the Irish connection will complete this paper.

GRANTLEY MCDONALD

### RECALLING THE MUSES: A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY READING OF BOETHIUS' *CONSOLATION*

The expulsion of the Muses at the beginning of the *Consolation of Philosophy* is necessary to prepare Boethius for his philosophical journey, but caused later readers sympathetic to the Muses some angst. In a brilliant reworking of the *Consolation*, the sixteenth-century humanist Laurentius Corvinus reintroduced the Muses in a reconsideration of the importance of music as a metaphor for the internal harmony of the soul, drawing largely on Boethius himself. Moreover, Corvinus gives us a taste of the kind music that Boethius' Muses would have sung had they been permitted to stay.

HELEN MCKAY

### USING THE CAULDRON SYMBOL TO LOCATE THE BATTLE OF DUNNICHEN

We continue our investigation of the cauldron symbol with a closer look at the 'Battle of Dunnichen' carved stone, which holds one of these vertical cauldron symbols. Can we now attempt to use our understanding of these symbols to better understand the battle itself and to find its location? The battle itself is generally considered to have been fought on the flat slopes south of Dunnichen hill, but this does not concur with the symbol, nor with historical descriptions. A recent study has proposed a second site, at Dunnachton on the Spey river. We look at both these theories and propose that the site of this critical battle was on the north side of Dunnichen Hill.

TESSA MORRISON

### *COMPUTUS DIGITORUM* AND THE CALCULATION FOR EASTER

Bede's *The Reckoning of Time* is about *computus*, the science of measuring time and constructing a Christian Calendar. *The Reckoning of Time* is the earliest comprehensive treatment of *computus* that has survived. All earlier calendar literature was both fragmented and partisan in character. *The Reckoning of Time* begins with the representation of numbers for the purpose of calculation. This is achieved through finger signs, *computus digitorum*. The hand was used to represent numbers up to 9999 while other parts of the body were used to represent numbers beyond 10000. Exactly how these calculations were executed with these hand and body signs are not explained in the book. However, Bede does give clues as to the form of these calculations throughout *The Reckoning of Time*. This paper examines these clues and analyses

Bede's methods of using the hand for the purposes of calculating the dates for Easter.

**BERNARD MUIR**

#### **ANTHOLOGISTS, POETS AND SCRIBES IN ANGLOSAXON ENGLAND**

This paper examines evidence in two of the surviving collections of Anglo-Saxon poetry, *The Exeter Anthology* and MS Junius 11 (the so-called 'Caedmon Manuscript'), for the 'invasive' activity of anthologists and scribes. It demonstrates that anthologists may have occasionally functioned as both poet and scribe and that at other times scribes may have acted as both editor and poet. It is evident therefore that medieval vernacular texts were anything but sacrosanct and that poems were routinely adapted during transmission. This is seen as the legacy of the period of oral composition, when texts were fluid and refashioned extemporaneously during performance.

**LYN OLSON**

#### **WRITING EARLY MEDIEVAL HISTORY**

It seems fitting to help inaugurate the Australian Early Medieval Association with some account of my choices about what to include in a general history of the period which I am writing for Palgrave Macmillan. Readers will be left in no doubt about what all early medievalists know: that we are studying the birth of Europe. Each century has a chapter, including the eleventh, about which I am now writing, showing how different Europe looks at the beginning and end of that century. Throughout due attention is paid to the female half of the population – not difficult in one of the most interesting periods of women's history – and the secular side of life in recognition of how skewed our sources are toward matters religious. On the other hand, the staggering cultural implications of Christian conversion are not neglected as they were until recently. The whole is underpinned by what I consider to be a sound understanding of early medieval society as weakly structured in contrast to the 'persecuting society' (in R I Moore's words) which came after. Care to provide variety and just plain interesting material also affected my choice of what to include. Comments and suggestions are eagerly awaited and will, I hope, contribute to a lively and wide-ranging discussion of our period in the early stages of this conference.

**PAMELA O'NEILL**

#### **THE POLITICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL EXTENT OF SCOTTISH DALRÍADA**

The Irish colony of Dalríada on the west coast and islands of Scotland was formed sometime around the fifth century. It continued to exist as a distinct entity until at least the ninth century. Many of the principal sites within Dalríada have long been recognised, such as the political centre at Dunadd or the ecclesiastical centre on Iona. However, there is less clarity about the fringes of the territory over the 500 or so years of its existence. This paper examines the documentary and, more particularly, the material evidence for the extent of Scottish Dalríada. Particular attention is given to Dalríada's relationship to waterways, islands and coastal areas.

Indications are sought concerning the political boundaries of the territory. Against this background, the geographical extent of the primarily monastic ecclesiastical organisation and influence of Scottish Dalriada will be considered.

CATHERINE OPPEL

#### 'WHY, MY SOUL, ARE YOU SAD?' THE SPIRITUALITY OF TEARS IN AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

This paper will describe the key features of Augustine's spirituality of tears and assess his contribution to a developing tradition, the origin of which, from the Bible to the ascetics, this paper will briefly summarise. Focussing on key texts from Augustine's *City of God*, *Confessions* and *Expositions of the Psalms*, we will see how Augustine defines a Christian position on the moral virtue of sadness in opposition to Platonist and Stoic views and how his own spirituality of tears, while heavily influenced by Eastern spiritual innovativeness, is ultimately shaped by his theological divergence and thus establishes a new direction in the West – one that was destined to influence the 'doctor of compunction' of the Western Church, Gregory the Great.

BLANCA PIZZANI

#### LIBRARY AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES INFORMATION SESSION

Blanca Pizzani, a librarian at the University of Melbourne, will present helpful information for researchers of the early medieval. She will discuss the many print and electronic resources available to researchers in Melbourne and Australia and explain how they can be accessed. This discussion will address the difficulties of researching in areas where print material is frequently available overseas but is not held in Australian collections.

JULIANNE SIMPSON

#### UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE RARE BOOKS COLLECTION

The rare books librarian, Julianne Simpson, has selected a range of manuscript facsimiles especially for this conference. They include the deluxe illuminated gospel books of Lindisfarne and Kells, as well as a range of works by and about Pope Gregory the Great, in celebration of the 1400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gregory's death and sainthood. After an introduction by Julianne, delegates will be invited to browse and discuss the manuscripts.

FOTINI TOSO

#### FORCES OF DARKNESS: THE PSYCHOMACHIA ALLEGORY IN EARLY ENGLISH LITERATURE

Early Christian writers developed the psychomachia allegory from the metaphoric and allegorical images of war which permeate the Bible and are most fully articulated in Ephesians 6. In literature, the allegory used powerful imagery that highlighted the soul's struggle against physical and spiritual adversaries. It remained undeveloped until early Christian writers such as Prudentius fashioned it into a more concrete and attractive form. Subsequently, the

psychomachia allegory was used in numerous Christian works to create lively and colourful literary depictions of the battle between the virtues and the vices.

This paper will explore the evolution and implementation of the allegory in early English literature.

## ROBIN WASTELL

### JOHN CLIMACUS AND THE HEAVENLY LADDER

The belief that humankind was made in the image and after the likeness of the Creator (Gen.2:26) provided hope for Christians to be able to approach God from this world. Images, icons specifically, were – and are – considered to be portals; just as man the image contains something of the original, so too do painted icons contain something of the original and therefore connect the viewer with the divine.

This paper explores the meaning of the eleventh-century icon of the Heavenly Ladder (St. Catherine's, Mt. Sinai), which is the representation of a sixth-century treatise by Saint John Climacus in which he instructs monks on the virtues and vices, the former to strive for and the latter to avoid. It is clear from this image that the avoidance of vices and the gaining of virtues are like the rungs of a ladder which the pious Christian can mount to be united with Christ in Heaven. At the head of the ladder is Saint John Climacus, who was Abbott of Mt. Sinai and he is followed by a bishop of Mt. Sinai, Antonios and probable donor of this icon painted in the eleventh century.

Christian narrative, expressed in images and writing, developed during the Late Antique period and used, transformed and adapted the techniques and iconography of the pagan and secular world of the Roman Empire to express a new faith in words and images.

## RAIN WOLF

### THE CAULDRON SYMBOL AND THE VALLEYS OF EASTERN SCOTLAND

In our papers recently presented at the Australian Celtic Conference in July 2004, we proposed that each Pictish symbol indicates a particular feature of the landscape in the immediate vicinity of the symbol stone. Here, we begin the investigation into the 'cauldron' symbol, with a look at the particular types of valleys that this symbol indicates and ask why it is that these valleys in particular were chosen to be marked by a symbol stone. We propose that the horizontal form of the cauldron symbol represents a circular valley and that the valleys marked with this symbol show clear evidence of significant Pictish religious and secular activities. The vertical form of the cauldron symbol, on the other hand, represents a narrow, usually boggy, gorge in which hunting activities traditionally occur.