The Fianna in Exile:

An examination of Ossianic Poetry as a response to alienation in a Christianised world

Travis Roulston

200508280

Prof. M. Newton

CELT 430

April 17, 2008

As the legendary defenders of Ireland, the Fianna, led by Fionn mac Cumhaill, would meet whatever challenge faced her (Ireland was often personified as a woman). The depiction of the Fianna as watchdogs of Ireland presents a symbolic relationship between the Fianna and the land that can be evidenced in the Fenian lays, or Ossianic poetry. Ossian was the son of Fionn, and is credited with authorship of many poems and ballads concerning the Fianna. In this poetry, Fionn and his warriors are often portrayed as ambassadors of an older time, associated with pre-Christian Ireland.[1] This theme draws upon a mythological period filled with exotic Fenian adventures, in order to contrast the world of the Fianna (pre-Christian Ireland) with contemporary Christian society. These poems can be interpreted to represent a feeling of "exile" or "alienation," with Christianity shown as the wedge that has separated the Irish from their ancient traditions and cultural identity.

The Irish poetic tradition was seen to be in need of defense versus organized religion, as evidenced in the poem by Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe (1210-1275), "A theachtaire thig on Roimh (O Messanger who comes from Rome)." The poem presents the view that the poetic tradition gives value and meaning to life by way of fame and renown, and thus, should not be suppressed by the representatives of the Church.[2] The theme of "antagonism between Church and poets" can be found in seven other poems according to the Bardic Poetry Database,[3] showing this theme to be significant. The poets, as guardians of Irish culture, often alluded to the Fianna (in 74 poems, according to the Bardic Poetry database[4]) to inspire their craft, whose opinion, for the purposes of

---

[1] Joseph Falaky Nagy, Conversing with Angels and Ancients (Ithaca: Corn University Press, 1997) 320.
[2] Nicholas Williams, "Mac Con Midhe, Giolla Brighde," Medieval Ireland: An Encyclopaedia (CRC Press, 2005) 291.
[3] The work of Katharine Simms from Trinity College, Dublin: "Bardic Poetry Database." 14 April 2009 <http://bardic.celt.dias.ie/displayIndexHead.php?indexHeadID=142>
[4] "Bardic Poetry Database." 14 April 2009 <http://bardic.celt.dias.ie/displayIndexHead.php?indexHeadID=303>

the poet, conflicted with the Church.

A primary source for Ossianic poetry, the *Duanaire Finn*, was composed of Fenian lays compiled by Aodh Ó Dochartaigh, in 1626-1627. While the songs were collected in Ostend, Belgium, the material was most likely of Northern Irish origin, spread to the continent by Irishmen and women escaping religious and political oppression and instability following the Flight of the Earls in 1607.[5] *Duanaire Finn* is a record of Ossianic poetry as it existed in Ireland, as opposed to Ossianic poetry of Scottish origin. The *Book of the Dean of Lismore* was compiled between 1512 and 1526 by James and Duncan MacGregor, and represents the Ossianic poetry as found in Scotland,[6] while the later publication of James MacPherson's *The Poems of Ossian* (1762) was most likely composed of MacPherson's creative adaptation of the Ossianic ballads (despite MacPherson ascribing the poetry to Ossian).[7]

The Ossianic ballads were so popular among the Gaels that some were able to survive for the eight centuries, spanning their invention up until to the present day, recited and sung for the community.[8] George Murphy dates the Fenian lays to have been composed between 1100-1600, using an analysis of the language used in the poetry. John Carey argues that the dates that Murphy suggests for each poem are often a century too late, since the modern elements found in many of them are few in number, and therefore, potentially added at a later time.[9] Though most of the sixty-nine poems found in *Duanaire Finn* are narratives of the adventures of the Fianna, Carey identifies five that contain a lament for the past and six where there is a debate between Ossian

[5] John Carey ed., Duanaire Finn: Reassessments (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003) 19-21.
[6] "The Book of the Dean of Lismore." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 16 Apr. 2009 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/343289/The-Book-of-the-Dean-of-Lismore>.
[7] Howard Gaskill ed., Ossian Revisited (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991) 9.
[8] John MacInnes, Dùthchas nan Gàidheal (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006) 184.
[9] Carey 1.

and St. Patrick.[10]

The appeal to pre-Christian authority, found in the lament for the Fianna, was a direct challenge to the Church, and may have meant that many Ossianic poems were intentionally ignored or suppressed.[11] Though long past their time, a religious movement within Gaelic Presbyterianism, beginning in the late eighteenth century and continuing into the twentieth century, targeted the Ossianic poems. Though the movement made an enemy of the secular arts in general, Fenian ballads were particularly threatening because they represented a preference for a pagan past and pagan figures of authority. In 1763, Reverend Alexander Pope wrote a statement admitting that "many of [the ballads] are lost, partly owing to our clergy, who were declared enemies to these poems."[12]

The old conflict between poetry and the Church extended into a conflict involving poetry of a distinctly pagan theme. The Gaelic term "fiantaiche" applies to a wild and uncultivated individual, and in some Gaelic Presbyterian communities, may even be used to describe a person who does not attend church or is otherwise regarded as a "heathen."[13] While religion has always been strong in Gaelic communities, so has belief in the reality of the Fianna. Fionn and his band of warriors are regarded with the respect traditionally reserved for religious figures, as evidenced by "...the Gaelic Messianic tradition that puts Fionn... in the role of the Sleeping Warrior who will one day reappear to restore the Gaels... to their former greatness."[14] The alienation of an old source of authority, and the introduction of new one, frames the conflict between pagan and Christian; Church and Fianna; Patrick and Ossian. An examination of three Ossianic

[10] Carey 33.
[11] MacInnes 189.
[12] MacInnes 189.
[13] MacInnes 185.
[14] MacInnes 187.

poems, as translated in *An Duanaire: Poems of the Dispossessed*, by Seán Ó Tuama and Thomas Kinsella, will shed light on the nature of how this theme of "alienation" is presented.

"Ossian, You Sleep Too Long...," at only nine quatrains in length, is an example of an Ossianic poem that is presented as a debate between Ossian and St. Patrick.[15] While the two voices exchange a few quatrains in argument, the latter half of the poem is dedicated to Ossian's reminiscing of "old Ireland," suggesting that the poet is biased in favour of the pagan view. Patrick opens by waking Ossian so that he may "hear the psalm," now that his "strength and health" have left him. Ossian refuses the offer, and professes an exclusive appreciation for the "music" of the Fianna, despite Patrick's subsequent praise for the music of the Church. Ossian suggests that the sweetest music he has ever heard is that of the Fianna, or rather, the sounds of the natural and traditional world, whether it is the song of the blackbird or the "jigs and reels" played on a harp. While there is an overt sense of alienation in the central theme of the poem, there are a number of other themes that touch on a conflict within religion, the poetic tradition and the blurring of lines between the traditional and natural worlds.

Patrick's first line, "Ossian, you sleep too long. Rise up and hear the psalm...," is a call for Ossian to renounce his pre-Christian lifestyle and beliefs and convert to Christianity. Ossian is portrayed as in a state of sleep, which could be a reference to his time spent in the mythical land of the Otherworld, or most likely, could also refer to the "Gaelic Messianic" story that the Fianna are sleeping in a hidden location, to return one day in the future. Patrick tries to convince Ossian to convert by arguing that he is now weak and the days of his combat are over, later telling him that he has become "old,

[15] Seán Ó Tuama ed. and Thomas Kinsella ed., An Duanaire: Poems of the Dispossessed (Foras na Gaeilge, 2002) 45- 47.

witless and grey." This argument suggests that Ossian needed to become enfeebled before he could become Christian, and that his former "strength and health" kept him from it. Ossian remains stubborn, however, and later directs attention to the music and culture of the Fianna. This exchange highlights the misunderstanding between the positions of Patrick and Ossian. The Patrick character does not understand that the world of the Fianna is about more than "fierce fighting," and, as Ossian protests, that the music of the Fianna can be viewed as superior to the music of the Church. Patrick seems to view the situation as a sort of "taming" of the wild Fianna, presenting a clash between civilization and savage, while Ossian attempts to explain the finer points of the Fianna to Patrick, which challenge that view.

As Ossian insinuates in the latter portion of the poem, coming as no surprise to readers of poetry in the Irish tradition, the theme of sleep is closely connected to music. Ossian challenges the music of priests by showing preference for "the blackbird warbling on Leitir Laoigh, the humming of the Dord Fiann." The call of the blackbird is associated with the singing the Dord Fiann, the traditional chant of the Fianna,[16] suggesting that the natural world has some connection to the Fianna. Ossian also identifies the sounds of boats rumbling as they reach the shore and of hounds barking and howling as "music" that is superior to that of the "squalling" priests. These sounds are distinct because they are not carefully constructed music, as played by a musician. Fionn's dwarf played "jigs and reels" on the harp with the singing of a young girl, while Fionn himself had the power to put "multitudes to sleep" as he played the Dord Fiann. Traditional music and the sound-scape of the ancient world are blended so that they become fundamentally connected. The music of Fionn and the blackbird are connected, which suggests that

[16] "Dord Fian" *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. James McKillop. Oxford University Press, 1998. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 14 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t70.e1564>

the two are of similar viewpoint and mindset. The clash between Patrick and Ossian, when framed in the debate concerning music, becomes a conflict between what is "natural" and what is unnatural, artificial, or foreign.

Though the main theme of the poem concerns the contrast of Patrick and Ossian, and the praise of the music of the Fianna, the interests of the poet are also represented in the poem. In the third quatrain, Patrick mentions that "you paid your poets once, on the hills...," tying the poetic tradition to the broader theme of a "natural" Fenian world. Since poets are associated with the Fianna in the contrast of Patrick and Ossian, it suggests that they are opposed to the Church. The statement itself, that the poets are no longer paid, draws a parallel between an impoverished poetic tradition and Ossian's feeble condition.

The poet, through the voice of Ossian, is looking back on the days of the Fianna as superior to what Patrick has to offer the Irish. Though this stance might suggest that the poet would seek to reclaim the glory of the past, this does not seem to be a priority. Ossian and the Fianna, and all of the natural beauty that is associated with them, is sent into exile with the coming of Patrick and his priests. By blending the traditional and natural worlds, the poet employs the pathetic fallacy,[17] causing the two worlds to be alienated from the people of Ireland simultaneously. There is a sense of "wrongness" in Patrick's view, since nature, as a much older and seemingly eternal force, is not on his side. It is not uncommon for Irish poets to call upon older writers, or ancient mythical or pseudo-historical stories, to justify their claims. In this case, nature, as the supreme authority in terms of seniority, provides support for Ossian. By using Ossian's own

[17] The theme of the natural world reflecting the physical status of its ruler: "pathetic fallacy" *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Simon Blackburn. Oxford University Press, 2008. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 14 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t98.e2328>

seniority over Patrick, as well as that of the natural world, the poet expresses a sense of alienation from all that is normal, natural, and preferable. The Irish people and their "natural" culture have become detached from each other. Ossian, as an inspirational figure for the pre-Christian world, is in exile from "his people," and the supporters of the earlier traditions, represented in Ossian, are alienated from the new, Christian Ireland.

Bearing some resemblances to the previous poem, "Beautiful – Blackbird of Doire an Chairn!" is another Ossianic poem of only nine quatrains,[18] but full of meaning. The poem is told from the perspective of the poet, addressing St. Patrick by his patronymic name of Mac Calprainn, who serves the same purpose as he did in the last poem: as figurehead for the Church. The poet praises the song of the blackbird and tells stories of how the Fianna would travel to the area and listen to the blackbird, surrounded by the sounds of the "cuckoos' murmur," "stag's call," "dogs' voices" and eagle's "cry," along with the sounds of otters, grouse and ducks. The sights and sounds of the natural world, including place-names, are praised, and the target of the poem is urged to pay attention to these sensations. The poet closes by telling Mac Calprainn that the Fianna "loved the hills," and the sounds of the nature, as opposed to the bells of hermit-cells.

The blackbird makes another appearance as the singer of beautiful music, "the world's loveliest song...," whose song is, again, presented as above the tastes of the religious figure. The blackbird also stands guard over its nest, which seems to be treated as an admirable quality, harkening back to the guardians of Ireland, the Fianna. Though other nature imagery is employed, the significance of the blackbird as a gateway to the world of the Fianna serves to bring the reader into a different world, not unlike

[18] Ó Tuama 41-43.

later *aisling* poetry,[19] which brought the poet into a dream-like state full of pre-Christian symbolism. The blackbird has a tragic story to tell, according to the poet, of the time when it saw Fionn and his warriors rest in the area. Fionn is said to have enjoyed the "throat-song of the blackbird," as he slept in the morning, adding a dream-like quality to the poem, and to the motif of the blackbird, which has brought the reader back to the Fenian world. There is no tragedy that is described in the poem because the tragedy is implied in its writing: the blackbird's tale is tragic due to the loss of the Fianna.

The significance of the nature imagery is twofold – it creates a romantic setting of a natural world unspoiled by civilization, and it also aligns nature with the Fianna, operating in the same way as in the previous poem. The poet uses an appeal to the senses in describing "fine and fair trees" to produce a mood of nostalgia after asserting that Mac Calprainn would "cry hard tears" if he knew the story the blackbird. Just as in the previous poem, the sound-scape of nature provides the setting, calling on the wild animals of the area, including the stag and grouse, and also the pets of the Fianna, including the "cry of the half-blind hunting eagle" and the "patter of hounds." The poet dedicates three quatrains exclusively for the purposes of describing the sounds of animals and the place-names of the areas that they inhabit, which not only depicts a past natural paradise, but also pins real locations to the Fenian world. Rather than leaving the Fenian world as an imaginary place, the poet uses place-names to put the Fianna in a historical context. This mechanism brings the Fianna to life, and offers their legacy as a historical account, and not just an intangible dream.

The relationship between the Fianna and Mac Calprainn, who represents the

[19] Just like this poem, the later *aisling* poetry served as social commentary: "aisling" *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Robert Welch. Oxford University Press, 2000. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 15 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t55.e33>

Church, is in conflict. Just as in "Ossian, You Sleep Too Long...," the two figures seem to be trying to convince each other of the superiority of their ways, though unlike the previous poem, where Patrick initiated the discussion, here, the poet is attempting to enlighten Mac Calprainn. The poet says that it is "a shame that you won't listen a while, Mac Calprainn of the sweet bells," to the music of the blackbird. The poet is asserting the music of the blackbird as so beautiful that it has to be appreciated as the greatest, and so Mac Calprainn's favour for church bells is out of willful ignorance rather than enlightenment. This assertion turns the tables on the Church, who would characterize the Fianna as savages. The final quatrain expresses the contrast between the Fianna and the Church further:

> "When Fionn and the Fianna lived
> they loved the hills, not hermit-cells.
> Blackbird speech is what they loved
> - not the sound unlovely, of your bells."

The poet attaches a claustrophobic feeling to the hermit-cells of the Christians when they are compared to the open hills and forests of the Fianna. This leaves Mac Calprainn as a character who removes himself from nature and all that is most beautiful, framing him, and by extension, the Church, as anti-social and unnatural. The poet flips on his ironic mechanism used to describe Mac Calprainn's bells, by changing his opinion of them over the course of the poem. In the beginning of the poem, "Mac Calprainn of the sweet bells" is addressed, but in the final line of the poem, the bells are called "unlovely." The poet can only call Mac Calprainn's bells "sweet" before he has brought the sounds of nature into the discussion, at which point the bells are "unlovely" in comparison. Against the setting of the natural paradise of the Fianna, Mac Calprainn,

and all of his attributes, are shown as inferior. The alienation in this poem does involve the loss of the Fianna, but there seems to be an even more prominent alienation, in that Mac Calprainn and the priesthood have alienated themselves from the natural world, which is the cause of their ignorance. The poet does feel that the loss of the Fianna is a tragedy, but the theme of alienation is, in this case, a two-way street. Though Fionn is lost to Ireland, the Irish priesthood has also lost Ireland in trapping themselves in "hermit-cells."

The final Ossianic poem to be examined, "A Tale of the Chase," is an example of a narrative, at a lengthy 47 quatrains, designed to highlight an adventure of the Fianna.[20] Ossian narrates the story, all the while addressing, and challenging, St. Patrick. The story begins with Fionn and the Fianna resting on the hills of Almhain. Fionn is separated from the group when he chooses to pursue a conspicuous deer,[21] calling upon his two hounds to assist him. He comes upon a beautiful woman who challenges him to find her ring in the nearby lake, or else suffer shame. Fionn manages to find the ring, but it has unforeseen magical powers that result in his aging rapidly, to the point where he is too feeble to speak aloud when the Fianna finally catch up with him. During Fionn's adventure, the Fianna notice that he is missing, and Conán Maol takes the opportunity to insult Fionn and the Clan Baoiscne.[22] When they do find Fionn, Conán threatens to kill him, but is subdued by the Fianna, and the conflict is resolved. When Fionn does manage to whisper the name of girl he met, and her father, Cuileann, the Fianna camp outside of the man's cave for seven days before he comes out with a goblet from which Fionn must drink. Once Fionn consumes the beverage, he is restored

[20] Ó Tuama 47-61.
[21] Fairy creatures often appeared when a hero was resting on a mound.
[22] Fenian stories tell of an internal conflict within the Fianna, involving the two clans who composed its members: the Clan Morna and the Clan Baoiscne, of which, Conán Maol was a member of the former, whereas Fionn was a member of the latter.

to health, except for his hair, which remains grey.

The main body of the poem, both the story of Fionn and the fairy woman, and the subplot concerning Conán's scuffle with the Fianna, contains many traditional motifs, including the appearance of a irresistibly attractive woman, with "chalk-white" skin and rosy cheeks, and the hunting of an otherworldly animal. There is also the use of a *geis*, which is a sort of ritual prohibition, that demands a person perform an action, or else suffer shame.[23] Near the end of the poem, there is even a mention of a *sídh*, a place where fairies lived,[24] which is the cave where Cuileann lives. The poem aims to be compelling by describing the perfect beauty of the fairy woman and the immense sorrow of the Fianna at the sight of the weakening Fionn. The story does not involve the theme of alienation or exile, but rather glorifies the Fianna and stimulates the reader.

The religious conflict in this poem is implied in a few remarks made by the poet through the speech of Ossian. Patrick has no voice in this poem, though Ossian speaks to him directly. First, Ossian asks "Patrick, would not God himself think it hard, as they turned away?," in reference to the splitting up of Ossian and his hounds, Fionn going East, and his hounds heading West, as they searched for the doe. This question compares Fionn to the Christian God, as two opposed figures of authority, and challenges the ability of the Christian God as compared to Fionn. The poet is implying that the Christian God would not be any more prepared, or able, than Fionn, to participate in such a challenge. The question seems rhetorical, meant to assert that Fionn is just as powerful as the Christian God. The second mention of Patrick is after describing the beauty of the fairy woman: "O Patrick, if you saw her face that woman

---

[23] "geis" *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Robert Welch. Oxford University Press, 2000. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 16 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t55.e914>

you'd have to love!" This statement challenges the discipline and purity of the priesthood with the temptation of a beautiful woman, proving her irresistible beauty by claiming that even Patrick, as figurehead for Irish Christianity, would not resist her. Much like the first reference, this statement compares Fionn to Patrick, and asserts that Patrick would be no more able to resist the woman's charms than Fionn, all *gessi* aside. The third mention of Patrick is in the final quatrain:

> "I give you my solemn oath,
> Patrick, and believe it true:
> it was better than God's heaven
> to have Fionn back as he was!"

After comparing Fionn to both Patrick and the Christian God implicitly, Ossian finally asserts the superiority of the Fianna over Patrick's Christianity. The happiness of the Fianna, after the return of Fionn's health, is said to be greater than the happiness accessible in heaven. The poet makes his intentions clear in this final stanza, by asserting that Fionn, and the glorious lifestyle that he represents, is preferable to the Christian tradition. While Ossian's tale could stand alone as a Fenian adventure story, it is employed as a means of praising the Fianna as more exciting and admirable than Patrick, or the Christian God. The story presents a theme of alienation, in that the Fianna lost their leader for some time, which could reflect the loss of the Fianna in Ireland. The Fianna reclaim Fionn, however, and the only other alienation occurring is that of Christianity, from the Fenians.

Drawing another comparison to the priesthood, Conán Maol, in reference to

---

[24] "sídh" *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Robert Welch. Oxford University Press, 2000. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 16 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t55.e2190>

Fionn's withered state, says that Fionn "will be left behind to carry white books and bells." Since the pre-Christian Gaels transmitted stories using an oral tradition, books, and also bells (as seen in the second poem discussed) would be related to the Church. Conán is essentially saying that now that Fionn is too weak to lead the Fianna, he will resign himself to becoming Christian. This statement implies that Christianity is for the old and the weak. This reference can be related to the way Patrick speaks in "Ossian, You Sleep Too Long...," when he urges Ossian to convert to Christianity now that he is in a weakened state. The sensuous vitality of the Fenian world is contrasted with the Christian world, which downplays physicality.

From an examination of these three Ossianic poems, there is an evident conflict between the Christian religion and the tradition of the Fianna as opposed sources of authority. The authors of the Fenian lays were expressing a certain mood among some segment of the population, particularly the filí (the class of poets), which found St. Patrick and the Church to be representatives of an alien and undesirable force. While the Fianna are connected to Ireland through the bonds of the natural world, the Christians are portrayed as unnatural by way of their opposition to nature, withdrawing to their hermit-cells and ignorant to the beauty of the natural world. The poets express a feeling of alienation from the natural state of Ireland, as ruled by the Fianna, and long for a past that was without the alienating force of Christianity. Though important for the critique that Ossian applies to Christianity, the poems also serve as a catalogue of the stories of the Fianna. The Fianna are shown to be heroes in exile, which causes the poets to be lost in a Christian world. There is no sense of desperation in the poetry, however, since the Fianna are fabled to be asleep, rather than defeated, waiting for the moment to rise again.

Bibliography

"aisling" *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Robert Welch. Oxford University Press, 2000. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 15 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t55.e33>

Carey, John. Duanaire Finn: Reassessments. London: Irish Texts Society, 2003.

"Dord Fian" *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. James McKillop. Oxford University Press, 1998. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 14 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t70.e1564>

Gaskill, Howard. Ossian Revisited. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991.

"geis" *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Robert Welch. Oxford University Press, 2000. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 16 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t55.e914>

MacInnes, John. Dùthchas nan Gàidheal. Michael Steven Newton ed. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006.

Nagy, Joseph Falagy. Conversing with Angels and Ancients. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

Nutt, Alfred. Ossian and the Ossianic Literature. READ BOOKS, 2008.

Ó Tuama, Seán and Thomas Kinsella. An Duanaire: Poems of the Dispossessed. Foras na Gaeilge, 2002.

"pathetic fallacy" *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Simon Blackburn. Oxford University Press, 2008. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 14 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t98.e2328>

"sídh" *The Concise Oxford Companion to Irish Literature*. Ed. Robert Welch. Oxford

University Press, 2000. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. St. Francis Xavier University. 16 April 2009 <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t55.e2190>

Simms, Katharine. “Bardic Poetry Database.” Accessed 14 Apr. 2009. Available at: <http://bardic.celt.dias.ie>

Stephens, Michael. “Oisin’s Arguments with St. Patrick.” *PopMatters*. Accessed 14 Apr. 2009. Available at: <http://www.popmatters.com/music/features/020315-stpatrick-stephens.shtml>

"The Book of the Dean of Lismore." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2009. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 16 Apr. 2009 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/343289/The-Book-of-the-Dean-of-Lismore>

Williams, Nicholas. “Mac Con Midhe, Giolla Brighde,” Medieval Ireland: An Encyclopaedia. CRC Press, 2005.