Abstract

This thesis is the first attempt at analysing the Bórama with a detailed analysis of the poetry read alongside the prose, as well as a detailed discussion on the hagiographical material found at the core of the text. Chapter 1 examines the text, with particular attention on issues of composition, chronological order or disorder and other temporal anomalies, as well as the connection with other texts, especially those situated within the Book of Leinster (LL) manuscript. This is to address the issue of what the purpose of the text is, support the argument that this is a compiled text, possibly by a single author or compiler, drawing on an extensive knowledge of literary works. It examines what the central focus of the text is and also illustrates Moling as the central character of the text, and confronts the issue of classification, something that scholars have contended with for many years.

The poetry of the Bórama serves as the focal point of Chapter 2. There I demonstrate the various metres represented in the poetry, and cover a broad discussion on the issues the poems raise in the debate on the Bórama. It illustrates that the poems are an integral part of the text, and that without them the understanding of the text has been severely affected. The following chapter, Chapter 3, is devoted to the numerous saints who occur in the poetry of the Bórama. In the poems, interspersed throughout the text of the Bórama, there is a great number of saints mentioned at various instances with varying purposes. The purpose of their inclusion as well as in which situation they are represented in the text is discussed extensively. Their locality and affiliations will, as far as possible, be explored in terms of their connection to Leinster or Moling. Chapter 4 will be dedicated to the discussion of Moling, the central character of the text. It will explore how he is represented in the text of the Bórama, as compared to other texts where he is also a figure. It will be shown that the Bórama, in LL, is a central text to his hagiographical corpus. Material concerned with Moling will also be looked at in terms of what they contribute to his legend. It will draw together the traits Moling exhibits in the extant sources and how his literary persona develops. The chapter will then conclude with the suggestion that LL was invaluable to the development of
Elizabethan poetry in spite of its merits and popularity suffered from inherent weaknesses. It was artificial and conventional. The uniform attitude to love, the mechanical sweetness of verses, the decadence of inspiration were bound to produce reaction. Donne led the revolt against Elizabethan poets. He disliked the Petrarchan convention, the tears of lovers, the cruelty... T.S. Eliot thinks that "passionate thinking" is the chief mark of metaphysical poetry. Thus, even in The Anniversary where Donne gives a lofty expression to the love and mutual trust of himself and his wife, his restless mind seeks farfetched ideas, similitudes and images in order to convey to the reader the exact quality of this love and trust. The peculiarities of the metaphysical lyric.