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**LATIN AND THE EARLY MODERN WORLD:  
linguistic identity and the polity from  
Petrarch to the Habsburg novelists**

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## Preface

The present volume contains the proceedings of the conference “Texts and Contexts VI: The Role of Latin in the Early Modern World: linguistic identity and nationalism 1350–1800, part II”, held at the Danish Academy in Rome 5–6 June 2014. It continued and expanded the theme explored in *Texts & Contexts* V, published in *Renaissanceforum* 8 (2012). The conference was organized by Noreen Humble (Calgary) and Marianne Pade (Rome).

The conference also celebrated the sixty-fifth birthday of Keith Sidwell (Emeritus Professor, University College Cork & Adjunct Professor in the Department of Classics and Religion at the University of Calgary) who is one of the founding fathers of the *Texts & Contexts* conference series; a number of participants who took part in earlier conferences shared unforgettable memories of Keith’s learning and outgoing social disposition. We hope that this volume will be a memento of good times and the love of learning shared by the editors, the contributors and the dedicatee of this volume.

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### Keith Sidwell and Irish Neo-Latin

When Keith was appointed Professor of Greek and Latin at University College Cork, Ireland, in 1998, he saw an opportunity to open up a neglected field of study. It is his achievement in establishing Irish Neo-Latin as a serious field of study during his tenure at Cork (1998-2008) and since that time, which the conference and this collection of papers pays tribute to.

The following highlights his accomplishments during his ten years as Professor at Cork, and is a strong testament, also, to his ability to draw diverse people and groups together into fruitful collaborative relationships.

Keith established a Centre for Neo-Latin studies at Cork (which continues on today under the leadership of Dr Jason Harris, who worked with Keith as a post-doctoral fellow in the Centre from 2003 to 2006); and over the course of a decade he helped to raise around 1.5 million euro, both on his own and through collaboration with other Early Modern projects in other departments at University College Cork (particularly with Irish, English and History), towards the study of Irish written texts of all periods.

An initial aim of the Centre's activities was to make accessible key Irish Neo-Latin works online and to compile a finding list of early modern works in Latin by Irish authors. The latter quickly revealed what a wealth of material had been ignored and what fertile ground there was for further scholarship.<sup>1</sup> Further, with John Barry (Classics) and Dr Hiram Morgan (History) Keith started a weekly seminar to translate and discuss particular Irish Neo-Latin texts. The seminar was attended by a diverse group of scholars and amateur historians, who brought all sorts of different areas of expertise to the table. Over the years a number of different texts were discussed and the seminar group still continues to meet. Keith also encouraged students to pursue Irish Neo-Latin at the graduate level, and the three first PhDs in this field were due directly to his initiative and encouragement: David Caulfield on the *Tenebriomastix* of Philip O'Sullivan Beare (2004), Meghan King on the *Hebdomada Mariana* of Richard Stanihurst (2007), and Nienke Tjoelker on the *Alithinologia* of John Lynch (2011).

Publications from these initiatives were not long in appearing. In 2009 one of Keith's MA students, Denis O'Sullivan, translated and edited the *Natural History of Ireland* by Philip O'Sullivan Beare.<sup>2</sup> Also in 2009 was the first publication to come directly out of the seminar: a volume of essays entitled *Making Ireland Roman*, edited by Keith and Jason Harris.<sup>3</sup> 2011 saw the publication by Keith, in collaboration with David Edwards (History), of a scholarly edition and translation of the *Ormonius*, Dermot O'Meara's Latin epic poem on the military career of the 10th Earl of Ormond, Thomas Butler.<sup>4</sup> This edition, and in particular, Keith's verse translation, has garnered glowing reviews.<sup>5</sup> 2013 saw the publication by the two other founding members of the seminar, John Barry and Hiram Morgan, of Richard Stanihurst's *De Rebus in Hibernia Gestis*.<sup>6</sup> Finally, to come out later this year (2016), under the auspices of the Irish Manuscripts Commission, is an edition by Keith, in collaboration with another Irish historian, Pádraig Lenihan from the University of Galway, of another Irish Neo-Latin epic poem, the *Poema de Hibernia* by Sir Thomas Nugent, Baron Riverston.

The corpus of Irish Neo-Latin literature is vast and these publications only but a drop in the ocean, but an important drop nonetheless, and all owe much to Keith's energy and enthusiasm, his ability to draw people together,

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<sup>1</sup> For information about what work is being carried out at the Centre now, see <https://www.ucc.ie/en/cnls/>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.corkuniversitypress.com/product-p/9781859184394.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.corkuniversitypress.com/product-p/9781859184530.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod\\_id=IS-9782503532301-1](http://www.brepols.net/Pages/ShowProduct.aspx?prod_id=IS-9782503532301-1).

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Brendan Kane, "Keith Sidwell and David Edwards, eds. The Tipperary Hero: Dermot O'Meara's *Ormonius* (1615)," *Spenser Review* 44.2.46 (Fall 2014).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.corkuniversitypress.com/Great-Deeds-p/9781909005723.htm>

his belief in the importance of collaboration, and indeed his belief in the importance of bringing to light as much of this neglected corpus of literature as possible.

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Trine Hass, Noreen Humble, Marianne Pade  
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