

in “A Bunch of Grapes” (147). As is, this latter normative characterization does too much of the work of the argument: antinomianism and legalism are both “immature,” the implication being that they both must be rejected by a “mature” poetry.

If there is a weakness in this book, it is moments like these, where normative notions appear without adequate explication. “Mature” poetry is one (147). Naïveté is another (142). Perhaps the most frequent is “open-ended” (16). In this last instance, I think that the absence of a more extensive conceptual explanation of open-endedness sometimes makes the argument sound like an anachronistic characterization, as if Herbert’s verse mirrors our presuppositions about desirable literary criticism. Perhaps that is true, but I think the book requires a more sustained discussion of this issue. Kuchar’s account of mystery and *mysterion*, the pivotal concept for the argument, is extremely thorough, sophisticated, and interesting (34). However, these often-tacit links between early modern concepts and modern ones, especially modern ones with pedagogical or political resonance, have the occasional effect of turning “mystery” into too capacious a concept.

All of that said, there are compelling and interesting moments throughout this book, from its broader conceptual account of the various stages of Reformation soteriology and Herbert’s reaction thereto, to the argument for an unconscious prayer and faith, to the concluding discussion of phenomenology, hearkening, and the Protestant privileging of aurality. As such, it is a valuable rethinking of the complexity of the English Reformation, as well as a welcome broadening of our understanding of what literary responses to doctrinal matters can entail.

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The influence of the Irish in the Swiss monastery of St. Gall has long generated scholarly controversy. In 1956, a former abbey librarian, Johannes Duft, published a famous article entitled “Iromanie und Irophobie” that described the course of the controversy up to that date, with the pendulum swinging now in favor of the Irish, now against. Most modern scholars have managed to find a middle ground in the debate, and the 2018 exhibition in the abbey library, with its accompanying, richly illustrated catalogue edited by Cornel Dora and Franziska Schnoor (*An der Wiege Europas. Irische Buchkultur des Frühmittelalters* or the English-language version, *The Cradle of European Culture: Early Medieval Irish Book Art*) has provided another opportunity to present all the evidence and reexamine all the facts about St. Gall himself and his foundation.

Sven Meeder sets out to minimize the Irish influence at St. Gall by questioning the significance of all the surviving Irish material in the abbey library and by turning on their heads all the well-known references by continental writers to the Irish and their influence, and rather than seeing them (as previous scholars had unanimously done) as complimentary and admiring of Irish scholarship, viewing them instead as manifestations of anti-Irish animosity. In doing so, he occasionally misreads the early evidence—as, for example, when he argues that “the surviving sections [of the *Vita vetustissima*, the oldest known Life of Gallus] make no reference to Ireland or to Irishmen” (19).

Meeder is not willing to allow *any* active Irish influence, even where the evidence appears to be overwhelming. A case in point is his treatment (55–61) of the famous mid-ninth-century St. Gall librarian's list of "books written in Irish script" (*Libri Scottice scripti*). Not even Meeder's reductionist approach can conjure this list out of existence—though that is not to say that he does not try. So far from providing clear evidence of significant Irish presence, however, and therefore influence in the monastery, he dismisses these "Irish books." He cannot see that the evidence of the surviving dozen or more St. Gall Irish manuscripts and manuscript fragments, when added to the thirty itemized books in the list, amounts to a collection of Irish books second to none in Europe. (There are only a dozen manuscripts dating from before 800 AD in the Dublin libraries today!) Karl Schmucki, in his contribution to the 2018 St. Gall Library exhibition, has a list (102) of later Irish visitors to the abbey, from the ninth century to the twelfth, and the manuscripts that preserve evidence of continuous Irish presence there. And while Meeder does write about the famous mid-ninth-century Irish scholars Marcus and his nephew Móengal (Marcellus), whose decision to remain at St. Gall after they called to pay their respects to the founder on their return from Rome, is recalled in a memorable passage of the abbey's later history, their influence, too, is minimized as much as possible, by subsuming it into a discussion of other (occasionally fictional) Irish visitors.

What is the motivation for all this relentless denigration? Perhaps the answer lies in another of Meeder's remarks: "The absence [in the list of books *Scottice scripti*] of a reference to Anglo-Saxon script ... makes one wonder whether the label *scottice* included books originally copied in England" (55). Here perhaps is the clue to his apparent belief that the *Hibernensis* (at least as it survives in one St. Gall copy, Cod. 243) was the work of an Anglo-Saxon. The reference here is to St. Gall Cod. 728, a later catalogue that mentions a *Collectio Eadberti de diuersis opusculis sanctorum patrum*. Meeder argues that in fact this describes the copy of the *Hibernensis* in Cod. 243. But that is not enough: "Instead of a lowly copyist, we must contemplate a different function performed by Eadbert" (91). Sadly, here Meeder's nerve appears to fail him; it turns out that "Perhaps Eadbert must be understood as the person responsible for bringing this Irish collection to the monastery of St. Gall" (91). Such a disappointment: a tantalizing idea has been held up for a moment to glitter in the sunlight of revisionist scholarship, before falling on the dust heap of idle fancy. Not, however, before Meeder rubbishes previous discussion of the note in Paris MS, BNF lat. 12021, whose brilliant interpretation by the Swiss-German Celtic scholar, Rudolf Thurneysen, revealed that it contained the names of the probable two original Irish compilers of the *Hibernensis*, Ruben of Dairinis and Cú Chuimne of Iona. It is very instructive, as illustrative of Meeder's *modus operandi*, to compare his comments on the Paris note with his treatment of the Eadbert epilogue.

There is a steady drumbeat of anti-Irish bias throughout the book that culminates in Meeder's closing statement: "The monastery of St. Gall did not fulfil the role of bridgehead, connecting Ireland and the continent, nor was it any more of a gateway than other continental centres within the Frankish realms. If metaphors are necessary, St. Gall acted more as a sink strainer" (110). The remark is offensive and insulting, which is a pity because readers will be put off the book thereby and will miss its otherwise useful discussion of the St. Gall transmission of the important Irish texts *De XII abusiuis saeculi* (65–82) and the *Hibernensis* (83–98), as well as the St. Gall copies of the various penitentials, Irish and non-Irish (99–108). If readers come to the book in the expectation of finding in it a replacement of the 1926 study by the American scholar, J. M. Clark, *The Abbey of St Gall as a Centre of Literature and Art*, they will have to seek further.

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