

Patrick Ferriter (1856–1924): an Irish Scholar at Home and Abroad*

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Introduction

Scholarly research from the 1980s onwards on emigration from Ireland to New York informs us that by the second half of the nineteenth century, the city was home to a significant number of Irish migrants.¹ Research by the late Professor Kenneth Nilsen, in particular, makes for fascinating reading about the efforts of a number of literate Irish speakers who, on settling in New York, set about actively promoting their native language in the city.² Early records of the Catholic Church in New York also yield some evidence of the use of the Irish language. The city's first Catholic pastor, for example, an Offaly-born Capuchin friar by the name of Father Charles/Maurice Whelan (1741–1806) began ministering in St. Peter's Church in 1785, and was described as being "more fluent in Gaelic and French than in English."³ Following the establishment in Dublin of the Irish literary society known as the Ossianic Society on St. Patrick's Day 1853, moreover, a New York branch was founded in 1858 and devoted itself, among other things, to Irish-language instruction.⁴ From the 1870s, classes in the Irish language were being offered by Philo-Celtic and Gaelic societies

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¹ For example: Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) 146, 521–522; Dennis Clark, *Hibernia America. The Irish and Regional Cultures* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), 49–71, 184; Steven P. Erie, *Rainbow's End: Irish-Americans and the Urban Machine Politics, 1840–1985* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 17–22, 25–27, 33–35; Hasia R. Diner "The Most Irish City in the Union": the Era of the Great Migration, 1844–1877," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 87–106; Kerby A. Miller, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration* (Notre Dame: Field Day Publications, 2008), 288, 294–295, 299, 329.

² Kenneth E. Nilsen, "Micheál Ó Broin agus Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Ollscoil Wisconsin," *Celtica* 22 (1991): 112–118; Kenneth E. Nilsen, "The Irish Language in New York, 1850–1900," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 252–274; Kenneth E. Nilsen, "Irish in Nineteenth Century New York," in *The Multilingual Apple: Languages in New York City*, ed. Ofelia García and Joshua A. Fishman (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997), 53–69; Kenneth E. Nilsen, "Irish Gaelic Literature in the United States," in *American Babel: Literatures of the United States from Abnaki to Zuni* (*Harvard English Studies* 20), ed. Marc Shell (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2002), 188–218.

³ Florence D. Cohalan, *A Popular History of the Archdiocese of New York* (New York: United States Catholic Historical Society, 1983), 15. On Father Whelan, who entered the Irish Capuchin novitiate at Bar-sur-Aube in northeastern France and, following his profession in 1771, served for ten years there as vicar, provincial secretary and novice-master, see Father Stanislaus, "An Irish Capuchin Pioneer," *The Capuchin Annual* (1930): 71–84; cf. Norbert H. Miller, "Pioneer Capuchin Missionaries in the United States (1784–1816)," *Franciscan Studies* 10 (1932): 169–234 (at 176–201).

⁴ Proinsias Mac Aonghusa, "An Ghaeilge i Meiriceá," in *Go Meiriceá Siar*, ed. Stiofán Ó hAnnracháin (Dublin: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1979), 13–30 (at 20).

in Manhattan and Brooklyn, and by the late 1870s it was estimated that over one thousand people were attending various classes in the New York area.⁵

In the realm of the written medium of the language, Irish manuscripts were valued enough to be brought across the Atlantic from Ireland, and many of these were eagerly sought by Irish migrants who had settled in New York city. Others set about collecting and/or writing Irish manuscripts in their new home. One such notable emigrant was the Limerick-born Fenian leader Seán Ó Mathúna/John O'Mahony (1815–77) who tells us in a handwritten note attached to the front endpaper of Dublin, National Library of Ireland, MS G 641, that in November 1853 he departed for New York from Paris.⁶ (O'Mahony had fled to the latter city in the aftermath of the failed Young Ireland rebellion of 1848). This composite eighteenth- and nineteenth-century volume, together with three other nineteenth-century manuscripts (G 640, G 642–3) belonging to O'Mahony, appeared at a sale of books in New York and were subsequently deposited by their new owner in the Presbyterian Private Library in Philadelphia before being eventually acquired at some point by the National Library of Ireland in Dublin.⁷ The contents of one of these, MS G 640, comprises a copy of Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* made by Seaghan Ó Duibhidir/John O'Dwyer, at Feathard, County Tipperary, in 1837. O'Mahony consulted MS G 640 at "40 Summit Street Brooklyn" while preparing his translation into English of Keating's original work in Irish and this was published in New York in 1857.⁸ His main source of consultation, however, was "a very Perfect Copy" transcribed in 1753 by William Sheehan of Kanturk, County Cork, which he had on loan from the scribe's son, "Michael Sheehan, Esq., now of New York, but formerly of Kanturk, in the County of Cork," through the agency of the latter's son, James Michael Sheehan.⁹

Another important Irish-language scholar was Mícheál Ó Broin/Michael O'Byrne (1848/9–1928), who arrived in New York from his native County Waterford about the year 1878. We know that he acquired at least nine eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish manuscripts and this collection is kept today in the University of Wisconsin-

⁵ Nilsen, "The Irish Language in New York, 1850–1900," 268–270; Nilsen, "Irish in Nineteenth Century New York," 64.

⁶ Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the National Library of Ireland XII* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1990), 20.

⁷ Tomás de Róiste, "Seán Ó Mathghamhna," *The Irish Book Lover* 17 (1929): 118; Séamus Ó Casaide, "Seán Ó Mathghamhna's Irish MSS," *The Irish Book Lover* 18 (1930), 80–84; Nessa Ní Shéaghdha, "John Ó Mahony's Irish Hand," in *Sages, Saints and Storytellers: Celtic Studies in Honour of Professor James Carney*, ed. Donnchadh Ó Corráin, Liam Breatnach and Kim McCone (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1989), 178–180; Ní Shéaghdha, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts*, 18–33.

⁸ John O'Mahony, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn Do réir an Athar Seathrun Céiting, Ollamh ré Diadhachta. The History of Ireland, from the Earliest Period to the English Invasion. By the Reverend Geoffrey Keating D.D.* (New York: P.M. Haverty, 1857), 17, where the manuscript is described at the time of publication as belonging to "Mrs O'Dwyer, of New York," one of a number of "Irish manuscripts, which were the property of her deceased husband, John O'Dwyer, Esq., late of this city [New York], but formerly of Feathard, in the county of Tipperary, Ireland." John O'Dwyer here is the same as the abovenamed Seaghan Ó Duibhidir, the original scribe of MS G 640.

⁹ O'Mahony, *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*, 17; cf. xvi, 294 n. 26. William Sheehan's "very Perfect Copy" is today Irish MS 5 in Boston College. On the fortunes of this manuscript before coming into the possession of Boston College, see William Mahon, "Ar Thóir na Gaeilge: Tionscadal Lámhscríbhinní an Philo-Celtic Society (Bostún) 1873–1893," in *Litríocht na Gaeilge ar fud an Domhain: Cruthú, Caomhnú agus Athbheochan*, ed. Ríona Nic Congáil, Máirín Nic Eoin, Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail et al. (Baile Átha Cliath: LeabhairComhar, 2015), 155–189 (at 169–170).

Madison's Memorial Library.¹⁰ Two more Irish-language activists, namely Dáibhí (Dáithí) Ó Caoimh/David O'Keeffe and Tomás Dáibhí de Norradh/Thomas David Norris, also made significant contributions to Irish scholarship in New York, as will become apparent below.

New York was also to the fore in the area of printing in the Irish language. The first set of Irish type ever produced in the United States was that manufactured in the city in July 1857. It was secured by the New York *Irish American* to begin publishing an Irish-language column called "Our Gaelic Department." The first column appeared on 25 July, 1857, and it remained the newspaper's regular feature for much of the fifty-eight years of its existence.¹¹ Micheál Ó Lócháin/Michael Logan (1836–99), of Milltown, County Galway, who emigrated to Brooklyn in 1871, established *An Gaodhal* in 1881 and his bilingual monthly periodical dedicated to the Irish language continued to be published until 1904.¹² By the end of the nineteenth century, the *Irish World* began an Irish-language column while in the early years of the following century the *Gaelic American* newspaper ran a weekly Irish-language article.

Taking all of this together, then, the Irish language (spoken, written and in print) had a definite presence in New York by the time the Irish scholar-scribe and focus in what follows below, Pádraig Feiritéar/Patrick Ferriter (1856–1924), came to the city in the early 1900s. Evidence gleaned from his manuscripts and from the newspapers of the time suggests that he actively participated in the promotion of Irish literary scholarship there.

Biographical Details

A number of biographical details concerning Ferriter form part of an eleven-page introduction to a handwritten catalogue in English by Eibhlín Ní Ógáin of his collection of thirty-nine Irish manuscripts that are kept today in the James Joyce Library at University College Dublin.¹³ Ní Ógáin gratefully acknowledges the help of Seán Ó Conaill "of Chicago," who was "a fellow countryman of Ferriter's, and a close friend for many years in America," for providing "a number of intimate facts about the life of the collector."¹⁴ Seán Ó Sé, in an article published almost fifty years ago, defers to Ní Ógáin's catalogue, but he also provides further useful information from contemporary newspapers concerning Ferriter's political activities in his native homeland, situating the civil unrest in his locality in a national context as well as discussing some manuscripts in the Ferriter collection itself.¹⁵ Patrick Ferriter, too,

¹⁰ Nilsen, "Micheál Ó Broin agus Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Ollscoil Wisconsin"; Cornelius G. Buttmer, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the University of Wisconsin-Madison* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1989).

¹¹ Nilsen, "The Irish Language in New York, 1850–1900," 261; Nilsen, "Irish in Nineteenth Century New York," 60–61; Nilsen, "Irish Gaelic Literature in the United States," 201–202.

¹² Breandán Ó Buachalla, "An Gaodhal i Meiriceá," in *Go Meiriceá Siar*, ed. Stiofán Ó hAnnracháin (Dublin: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1979), 38–56; Fionnuala Uí Fhlannagáin, *Micheál Ó Lócháin agus An Gaodhal* (Dublin: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1990).

¹³ Eibhlín Ní Ógáin, "The Ferriter Manuscripts Described and Catalogued by Eibhlín Ní Ógáin" (no date), sixteen volumes in all including an index of first lines of verse and an index of authors. No details on Ní Ógáin have come to light thus far but it is tempting to speculate that she may be the same as Ella Young (1867–1956) who, like Ferriter, emigrated to the United States and was based in California from 1925 until her death. It may be noted, however, that Young makes no reference to cataloguing these manuscripts in her autobiography *Flowering Dusk: Things Remembered Accurately and Inaccurately* (New York: Longman's, Green & Co., 1945).

¹⁴ Ní Ógáin, "The Ferriter Manuscripts," i–ii.

¹⁵ Seán Ó Sé, "Pádraig Feiritéar (1856–1924): a Shaol agus a Shaothar," *Journal of the Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society* 3 (1970): 116–130.

supplies some autobiographical details in his manuscripts, although such *vignettes* are rare and any real insights into the mind of the man living in his new home in the United States are negligible. Further details may be gleaned from an obituary published by the *Gaelic American* shortly after Ferriter's death,¹⁶ as well as from two more article by the present writer.¹⁷

Patrick Ferriter was born on 10 March, 1856, in Ballyoughtra (An Baile Uachtarach) on the western tip of the Corca Dhuibhne peninsula, the fourth child in a family of eight — Seán, Micil, Eoghan, Pádraig, Máire, Siobhán, Cáit and Neil — born to Muiris Sheáin Mhuiris Sheáin Lúcaís “*na srianta*” (“the restraints”) Feiritéar and his wife Neil Mhichíl Dhomhnaill “Flutter” Uí Mhainnín.¹⁸ The difficult plight endured by families in his native community prompted him to join the Land League. In September 1885, a branch of this political organization was founded in Ballyferriter (Baile an Fheirtéaraigh), West Kerry, and Ferriter was elected secretary. He was imprisoned four times by the authorities between 1887 and 1888 for minor offences connected with Land League meetings and for selling newspapers illegally from a shop he ran in the town of Dingle. He was also a loyal supporter of the renowned Irish nationalist politician Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–91), a loyalty that remained when Parnell's Irish Parliamentary Party split into rival Parnellite and anti-Parnellite factions in 1890.¹⁹

Why Ferriter left Ireland for the United States is not clear — avoiding further unwelcome attention by the authorities may have played a part — but leave he did in the early months of 1895. He informs us in one colophon that he wrote down a number of songs on “Friday the 1.3.1895 on board the *Cephalonia*” (*Diei h-Aoine an 1.3.1895 air bhórd an Cephalonia*).²⁰ This ship, together with the *Pavonia* and *Catalonia*, was built by the Cunard shipping company to serve transatlantic trips from Liverpool to Boston via Queenstown (Cove today) in County Cork.²¹ By 9 March, 1895, Ferriter had reached Massachusetts and was settled in “30 Bryant Ave. West Quincy.”²² It is clear from other colophons and notes that he was based in Chelsea down to the year 1902 — he writes, for example, from Hancock Street, Lash Street and Washington Avenue, all of which are in the same neighbourhood in that city. Located on a small peninsula in Boston harbour and bordered on three sides by water, Chelsea's unique character did not fail to impress the man from West Kerry who, in one colophon, described himself as living “in Chelsea City in the state of Croghan Mór, in the United States, in America” (*i g-Cathair Chalcsuidhe, i stát Mórchrúachan, in sna Státibh Ánaighthe, in Americain*²³), Croghan of course from Irish *Cruacha(in)* meaning “round place.”

By May 1904 Ferriter was based in New York and is recorded in the 1905 New York State Census as living in Manhattan as a lodger in the house of another

¹⁶ “Pat’k Ferriter, Gaelic Scholar, Loss to Ireland,” *Gaelic American*, 9 August, 1924.

¹⁷ Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, “Athfhéachaint ar Bhailiúcháin Lámhscríbhinní an Fheiritéaraigh,” *Éigse* 40 (2019): 185–205; Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, “Deascán ó Chorca Dhuibhne agus ó Chairbre i mBailiúchán Lámhscríbhinní an Fheiritéaraigh,” in *Binneas an tSiansa*, ed. Kelly Fitzgerald, Bairbre Ní Fhloinn, Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail and Anne O’Connor (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2019), 77–99.

¹⁸ Ferriter 16, p. 43.

¹⁹ Ó Sé, “Pádraig Feiritéar,” 117–123.

²⁰ Ferriter 1, p. 486.

²¹ W.H. Bunting, *Portrait of a Port: Boston, 1852–1914* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1971), 402.

²² Ferriter 1, p. 121.

²³ Ferriter 1, p. 490.

Irishman, Charles O'Farrell.²⁴ The latter's property was probably at 201 East 42nd Street in Manhattan, an address which Ferriter cites at least three times in his manuscripts.²⁵ As with traditional scholars and men of letters in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland generally, he had only evenings and Sundays available to him to make copies of sagas, original prose texts, poetry and songs. In the words of Eibhlín Ní Ógáin in the introduction to her handwritten catalogue, Ferriter earned a living by day "in the menial position as a labourer, at times acting as a watchman"²⁶ and this probably includes working in Siegel Park in the Bronx which Ferriter mentions in the summer of 1912.²⁷ For several years he was on the editorial staff of the *Gaelic American* and was also a member of the Brian Boru Club in New York city.²⁸ He contracted tuberculosis in the early 1920s, and by 1923 his health had declined so rapidly that he was taken to the home of his nephew, Michael Ferriter, in Chicago. According to his death certificate, he died on 21 July, 1924, and was buried two days later in the Catholic cemetery of Mount Carmel in Chicago. His occupation at the time of death was that of "Proof Reading Printing."²⁹

Arrival of the Ferriter Manuscripts in Dublin

A typed three-paged letter, dated "August 12, 1924", accompanied the Ferriter manuscripts when they were shipped across the Atlantic to Ireland, and this document is today tipped into Eibhlín Ní Ógáin's introductory volume to her handwritten catalogue. It was addressed by the executor of Ferriter's will, Mícheál Ó Raghallaigh/Michael O'Reilly, "770 East 179 Street, New York," to Douglas Hyde (1860–1949), the pseudonymous "*An Craoibhín Aoibhinn*" ("Beautiful Little Branch"), who was Professor of Modern Irish Language and Literature in University College Dublin. It begins as follows:

A dhuine Uasail,

*Dia agus Muire agus Pádraig duit, a Chraoibhín Aoibhin[n].*³⁰

I hope you are enjoying good health, no doubt you feel relieved because the dawn of the Irish language has broken through the darkness.

You will be sorry to hear of the death of Patrick Ferriter who passed away on July 21 after a long illness at the house of his nephew, Michael Ferriter, 1821 Humboldt Blvd., Chicago.

Patrick had a wonderful grasp of the Irish language and of Irish literature, tradition, folk lore and history. I never met anybody whose store of Irish knowledge was so varied, exhaustive and thorough. Like the villagers of Goldsmith's schoolmaster, his acquaintances wondered how one head could carry all he knew.

²⁴ "May 2nd. 1904 New York," (Ferriter 18, colophon on p. 18); *New York State Census Records for Manhattan Borough and Bronx, 1905* at <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:SPFD-3T7> (accessed 5 October, 2017).

²⁵ Ferriter 1, p. 928; Ferriter 17, p. 7; Ferriter 24, p. 362.

²⁶ Ní Ógáin, "The Ferriter Manuscripts," vii.

²⁷ *Is i Siegel Park ann san Bhronx atáim ag obair anois*, "I am now [24 June, 1912] working in Siegel Park in the Bronx" (Ferriter 17, p. 7).

²⁸ "Pat'k Ferriter" (referred to in n. 16 above).

²⁹ *Illinois, deaths and stillbirths index, 1916–1947* at <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N3WY-CNQ> (accessed 10 November, 2016).

³⁰ "Dear Sir, may God and Mary and Patrick be with you, o Beautiful Little Branch."

He has left quite a pile of manuscripts which he has bequeathed to the National University as a token of his appreciation for making Irish compulsory for matriculation.

Irish became compulsory for matriculation from 1913 onwards as a result of a motion put before the National University by Douglas Hyde soon after his appointment as Professor in University College Dublin in 1909.³¹ Not only was it Ferriter's personal token of gratitude that prompted him to have his manuscripts presented to the National University, but it was also his great admiration for Hyde's contribution to Irish scholarship. Michael O'Reilly writes:

It is fitting that he should have left his manuscripts to the National University which has no doubt facilities for the examination and publication of such material. For another reason I am glad the University has the life work of a man who knew Irish as his first language. If his manuscripts should be scattered it would not be at all improbable that many of them would be lost or destroyed. Ferriter had yet another reason for making this gift to the University. He had a very high regard for yourself and for your literary work which he considered has not yet been fully appreciated.

When the Ferriter manuscripts arrived in Dublin in the Autumn of 1924, Douglas Hyde requested that Eibhlín Ní Ógáin set about cataloguing them under his supervision. It is not clear how long this work took, but it was certainly still ongoing in 1925 because Hyde mentions as much in an obituary of Ferriter which he published in June of that year in *An Reult*, the journal of the Gaelic Society at University College Dublin.³² By 1930, he would proudly state in an article in the recently-founded academic journal, *Lia Fáil*, of which he was editor, that a descriptive catalogue of the entire collection in University College Dublin had been completed by his "friend" Eibhlín Ní Ógáin.³³

The West Kerry *Gaeltacht* of Corca Dhuibhne

It is Ferriter's work on behalf of the Irish language for which he is best known today. While based in Ireland, he copied texts in manuscripts that he acquired on loan but he was also keen to collect as much as he could in his own native *gaeltacht* of West Kerry. His parents were particularly renowned tradition bearers in Corca Dhuibhne, and Ferriter, acutely aware of this, set about collecting poems, stories and songs from them as well as from his brother Micil who also had a fine repertoire to share. Between the years 1889 and 1895, he travelled further afield, covering the entire Corca Dhuibhne peninsula to collect more poems, stories and songs. He then committed this material to paper and continued with this work in the United States in the years between 1896 and 1918. The fruits of his labour are to be found today in manuscripts 1, 5, 11, 16 and 19 in the Ferriter collection, all of which are an invaluable source of information on the oral and literary traditions of this particular Irish-speaking part of Ireland as well as on matters relating its genealogy and onomastics.

³¹ Adrian Kelly, *Compulsory Irish: Language and Education in Ireland 1870s–1970s* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), 74.

³² An Craoibhín, "Pádraig Ferritér," *An Reult* (June, 1925): 17–23 (at 23).

³³ An Craoibhín, "An Roimh-rádh," *Lia Fáil* 3 (1930): 126–127 (at 126).

Comprising over nine-hundred-and-twenty pages, Ferriter 1 is the most substantial volume of all the Ferriter manuscripts, a massive compilation begun in September 1889 and completed in April 1913. Among the texts present in this volume is a fine collection of proverbs (279 in all) compiled in 1893–8.³⁴ It also contains the second version of *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghair* (“The Lament for Art O’Leary”) from the recital of Nóra Ní Shindile/Norrie Singleton which Ferriter copied from a manuscript he borrowed from Domhnall Mac Cáib/Daniel McCabe (1818–1903), of Banteer, County Cork. He finished his transcription on 1 April, 1894, and added a number of lines to it which he had heard from his kinswoman, Máraed Ní Fhionnagáin/Margaret Finnegan, in the townland of Ballincolla (Baile an Chalaigh), Corca Dhuibhne, in September 1893.³⁵ Ferriter published his text together with explanatory notes in three issues of *An Gaodhal* (June–August 1899).³⁶ While he his name does not accompany this publication, it seems likely that he was the author given that he published other stories for this bilingual journal about the same time (June–July 1899).³⁷

Ferriter 16 is an important source for the Irish of West Kerry, a fact first highlighted by another Corca Dhuibhne native, Professor Séamus Caomhánach/Ó Caomhánaigh/James Kavanagh (1900–89) in his valuable linguistic notes accompanying two stories he published from this manuscript, namely *An Bhreasail* (“Brazil”) and *Séipéilín Ghallaraís* (“Gallarus Oratory”).³⁸ As part of his analysis, Professor Kavanagh drew attention to Ferriter’s orthography which, although unusual, he regarded as a rich source of information on the variety of Irish spoken in Corca Dhuibhne. This may be regarded as the initial step, in fact, in any linguistic analysis of the Irish of West Kerry, an analysis that owes a debt to the one providing the material phonetically and to the one who then set about analyzing it. (Incidentally, James Kavanagh also provided Marie-Louise Sjoestedt with advice when she was conducting her preliminary work on the phonetic system of the Irish of Corca Dhuibhne.³⁹) It may also be noted in this context that lexical information “by the late Pádraig Feiritéir of New York, formerly of the Ballyferriter district”⁴⁰ is generously acknowledged in the revised and expanded edition of Dinneen’s Irish-English dictionary which appeared in 1927.

The contents of Ferriter 5 comprise a collection of words and songs as well as genealogical notes on families from Ballyoughtra and Ballyferriter which Ferriter wrote down in October 1890. Ferriter 19 contains a series of notes on townlands near Mount Brandon which he penned between July and December 1892. Present in Ferriter 11 are quatrains and stories, originally collected in July 1898 and again in 1903, which Ferriter recorded in writing in August 1911. He published some of the

³⁴ Ferriter 1, pp. 56–57, 120–121, 496–497, 617; cf. Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, “Cnósach Luachmhar Seanráite as Lámhscríbhinn Feiritéar 1,” *Béaloideas* 85 (2017): 62–121.

³⁵ Ferriter 1, pp. 298–305.

³⁶ This version of *Caoineadh Airt Uí Laoghair* has since been republished along with a translation into English by Angela Bourke, “Eibhlín Dubh Ní Chonaill (c.1743–c.1800),” in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing. Volume IV. Irish Women’s Writing and Traditions*, ed. Angela Bourke, Siobhán Kifeather et al. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), 1372–1384.

³⁷ See n. 41 below.

³⁸ Séamus Ó Caomhánaigh, “An Bhreasail,” *Lia Fáil* 3 (1930): 127–138; Séamus Ó Caomhánaigh, “Séipéilín Ghallaraís,” *Lia Fáil* 4 (1932): 188–194.

³⁹ M.L. Sjoestedt, *Phonétique d’un Parler Irlandais de Kerry* (Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1931). I am grateful to Dr Roibeárd Ó hÚrdail for this information given to him by Professor Kavanagh himself. In her introduction, Sjoestedt does acknowledge the help of his brother, Seán Ó Caomhánaigh, “né à Dunquin” (ix), i.e. Seán a’ Chóta (1885–1947).

⁴⁰ Patrick S. Dinneen, *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla. An Irish-English dictionary* (Dublin: The Irish Texts Society, 1927), xxvii.

material from these manuscripts in *An Gaodhal*, the *Gaelic American* and the *Irish Echo*, under the pen name “*An Siogaidhe Infhiúchtach*” (“The Scrutinizing Fairy”).⁴¹

The West Kerry *gaeltacht* of Corca Dhuibhne, of course, was the initial leg of a tour to Ireland (the second of its kind) by the celebrated folklorist Jeremiah Curtin (1835–1906) and his wife, Alma Cardell Curtin (1872–1938), between 1891 and 1893. In her diary account of their visit to Corca Dhuibhne which took place between January and May 1891, Alma notes that she and her husband sought out Ferriter’s help in locating important storytellers in the area and she also mentions employing him as a translator.⁴² This in itself, of course, suggests that Ferriter must have gained a considerable reputation in his own right in the area as a collector of tales as well as being a competent speaker of Irish and English. Working for the Curtins provided him with a welcome income — he appears to have earned two shillings a day and twice what the Congested Districts Board paid able-bodied men for a day on the public works⁴³ — but he must surely have regarded this employment as a further opportunity to promote the cultural richness of his native community in the West Kerry peninsula. That four of the twenty-four stories in Jeremiah Curtin’s *Hero-Tales of Ireland* (1894) derive from this particular part of Ireland are ultimately due to Ferriter’s efforts.⁴⁴ Curtin duly acknowledged his debt to the man from Corca Dhuibhne in his introduction where he generously described him as “a man of keen intelligence and an excellent Gaelic scholar.”⁴⁵

The very first tale to feature in *Hero-Tales of Ireland* concerns a massive magical cow. Called “Elin Gow, the Swordsmith from Erin, and the Cow Glas Gainach,” it is one of the most renowned tales associated with Corca Dhuibhne. While over sixty versions at least, both in English and in Irish, have been collected in numerous counties in Ireland,⁴⁶ that from West Kerry is firmly mapped onto the landscape of the area: the two standing stones mentioned in the tale between which the magical cow used to walk to scratch her sides when she had eaten her fill are believed to be those still standing today in the sub-townland of Ballineanig (Baile an Éanaigh). Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill’s poem *An Rás* (“The Race”) provides a further reminder of this cow’s particular association with the West Kerry landscape down to contemporary times:

*Chím sa scáthán an ghrian ag buíú is ag deargadh
taobh thiar díom ag íor na spéire.
Tá sí ina meall mór craorac lasrach amháin
croí an Ghlas G[h]aibhneach á chrú trí chriathar.
Braonta fola ag sileadh ó stráinín
mar a bheadh pictiúr den Chroí Ró-Naofa.
Tá gile na [d]trí deirgeacht inti,*

⁴¹ For example, (i) the poems *A dheoraidhthe óm dhúthaigh* (*Gaelic American*, 4 January, 1913) and *An chúilfheann dheas ó Éirinn* (*Gaelic American*, 18 January, 1913) from the recital of Mícheál Ó Séaghdha. (I am grateful Dr William Mahon for this information.) (ii) “Sgéalta ó Iarthar Éireann. Ag ‘An Sioguidhe Infhiúchtach’” (*An Gaodhal*, June–July, 1899). This pseudonym rarely appears in Ferriter’s manuscripts, that in Ferriter 8 (on a loose leaf marked number 5) along with the signature “*An S. I.*” being an exception.

⁴² Angela Bourke, “The Myth Business: Jeremiah and Alma Curtin in Ireland, 1887–1893,” *Éire-Ireland* 44, no. 3–4 (2009): 140–170 (at 159–160).

⁴³ Bourke, “The Myth Business,” 160.

⁴⁴ Bourke, “The Myth Business,” 160–161.

⁴⁵ Jeremiah Curtin, *Hero-Tales of Ireland* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1894), li.

⁴⁶ See <http://www.duchas.ie/en/tpc/5191979> where sixty-four versions are recorded, most of which (twenty) were collected in County Kerry.

is pian ghéar í, is giorrosnail.

Sun's in the mirror, red and gold
in the sky behind me,
one huge crimson blazing globe —
Glas Gaibhneach's heart milk through a sieve
her drops of blood strained out
like a picture of the Sacred Heart.
Three scarlet brightnesses are there
and pain so sharp, and sob so short.⁴⁷

Like Patrick Ferriter before her, Ní Dhomhnaill, too, grew up in the *gaeltacht* of Corca Dhuibhne and her formative years there would instill in her a profound and longstanding appreciation for the cultural richness of Gaelic Ireland.

Scribal Duties

Ferriter brought with him to the United States what manuscripts he had in his possession and he set about collecting and transcribing scribal material in his new home. His valuable collection comprises both his own work — twenty-one items in all were written by him in Ireland and in the US in the years between 1889 and 1923 — as well as a further eighteen manuscripts that came into his possession, manuscripts that were either brought across the Atlantic by Irish migrants or were written by emigrants from Ireland in their new home. He also copied prose and poetry already published in academic journals in the field of Celtic Studies, namely *Ériu*, *Gadelica*, *Reliquiae Celticae*, *Revue Celtique* and *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*. Moreover, he copied down a number of Irish poems and songs from printed exemplars, from *An Gaodhal*, for instance, and from the *Irish American* and the *Irish Echo* (the latter he aptly translated as “*Mac-Alla Éireannach*”).

Mention has been made already of Ferriter's day job as a labourer or watchman, thus implying that he had only evenings and Sundays available to him to attend to his scribal duties. He did, however, take time out to consult and copy written and printed sources in a number of public institutions. For example, in July 1905 he was “in the Astor Library in New York” (*i lebharlann Astoir i n-Ebhrach Nua*⁴⁸) where he copied Old Irish poetry and prose from a number of printed sources in this public library's possession, including Charles O'Connor's, four-volumed *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores Veteres* (1814–26). This material forms the contents of MS 18 in the Ferriter collection.

We also know that our scribe copied from manuscripts kept in one of the oldest and most distinguished independent libraries and cultural institutions in the United States, the Boston Athenaeum, which was founded in 1807. In 1847, the Athenaeum acquired three Irish manuscripts through the gift of Thomas Graves Cary, a prominent Boston lawyer, businessman and man of letters, who served as the institution's Vice-

⁴⁷ Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, *Féar Suaithinseach* (Maigh Nuad: An Sagart, 1984), 111–112; Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill and Michael Hartnett, *Selected Poems: Rogha Dánta* (Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1986), 76–77. Original text and translation published together in Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, *Selected Poems: Rogha Dánta. Translated by Michael Hartnett* (Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1988), 138–141. An alternative translation by Derek Mahon accompanies the Irish original in Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, *Pharaoh's Daughter* (Loughcrew: The Gallery Press, 1990), 94–97. See also Donna L. Potts, “‘When Ireland was still under a Spell’: the Poetry of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill,” *New Hibernia Review/Iris Éireannach Nua* 7/3 (Autumn, 2003): 52–70 (at 61).

⁴⁸ Ferriter 18, p. [130].

President from 1837 to 1845, and President in the years 1846–59.⁴⁹ It is not clear how the manuscripts came into Cary's possession in the first place — he does not appear to have visited Ireland, for example — but the likelihood is that he acquired them in a single transaction from an Irish-speaking immigrant, one of many who, from 1845 onwards, came to New England from famine-struck Ireland. Given that one of these manuscripts finds mention in the published *Catalogue of the Library of the Boston Athenaeum 1807–71*, it seems likely that this was how Ferriter first learned of its existence and, by extension, of that of the remaining two manuscripts in the institution's possession.⁵⁰ Book-requisition slips preserved in two of the manuscripts in the Athenaeum tell us that Ferriter consulted this material at various dates between 1895 and 1918, and on the back of one these, a note in his hand states that the manuscript designated S 21 “was written to the middle of page 16 by Cornelius Sheehan. At the middle of p. 16, on the 2nd of Sept. 1816 Michael Regan of Donoghmore, Co. Cork, commenced and wrote the rest of the MSS.”⁵¹ The aforementioned Sheehan and Regan were natives of County Cork and are included in Professor Breandán Ó Conchúir's seminal study of Cork scribes who flourished between 1700 and 1850.⁵²

The three Boston manuscripts are important sources of both eighteenth- and nineteenth century Irish poetry in accentual verse (*amhrán*) and *fianaigheacht* verse, so called because of its close connection with the tradition of the late twelfth- or thirteenth-century *Agallamh na Seanórach* (“Colloquy of the Ancients”). Ferriter's transcription of all of this material forms the contents of items 2, 3, 9 and 13 in his collection. Interestingly, at the end of a copy of one poem, he noted *do bhíodh sé ag mo mháthair*⁵³ (“my mother used to have it”). We find similar examples elsewhere in his work where he makes a connection between a given poem or song and a family member, or a member of his community in his native Corca Dhuibhne, who recited it, or indeed, who may have recited a superior version to that which he had committed to paper. As noted earlier, Ferriter rarely volunteers further additional information of a personal nature and no insight into the mind of the man living in his new home is evident in his scribal work. In this, of course, he stands in marked contrast to later Irish migrants to New York City and beyond, Neilí Uí Bheaglaoich (1908–91) from Corca Dhuibhne being a case in point, who worked for two years in domestic service in the United States between 1926 and 1928, or Tomás Ó Cinnéide (d. 1992), also from Corca Dhuibhne, who disembarked in New York in 1952, or, indeed, Micí Mac Gabhann (1865–1948) from the County Donegal *gaeltacht* who emigrated to the United States in 1885. All three give vivid accounts of life as an immigrant and of their first impressions of a city utterly alien to them.⁵⁴ Ferriter's focus rather was on his scribal work, a fact pointed out as follows by Eibhlín Ní Ógáin in her description of his life in Manhattan:

⁴⁹ Cornelius G. Buttmer, “A Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in the Boston Athenaeum,” in *Folia Gadelica. Essays Presented to R.A. Breatnach*, ed. Pádraig de Brún, Seán Ó Coileáin and Pádraig Ó Riain (Cork: Cork University Press, 1983), 105–123.

⁵⁰ Buttmer, “A Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts,” 106–107.

⁵¹ Buttmer, “A Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts,” 109, 111, 115.

⁵² Breandán Ó Conchúir, *Scriobhaithe Chorcaí 1700–1850* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1982), 174, 177.

⁵³ Ferriter 13, p. 22.

⁵⁴ Aisling Ní Dhonnchadha and Máirín Nic Eoin, ed., *Ar an gCoigríoch: Díolaim Litríochta ar Scéal na hImirce* (Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnachta, 2008), 122–124, 138–140.

His room was typical of the man himself. It was piled high with books — books on the floor, on the shelves, on the table and on the bed. There was a mere passage from the door to the window, where he sat and did his writing. He lived for his books, and probably it was his confined mode of life, which induced a Tuberculosis of the lungs, from which he died in a Sanatorium in Chicago, on July 21st, 1924.⁵⁵

Returning to the public institutions frequented by Patrick Ferriter, we know that he visited that belonging to the American Irish Historical Society founded in 1897 by Irish immigrants in New York to publicize the achievements of the Irish in the United States.⁵⁶ In August 1919, “through the effort of my friend namely Charles O’Farrell from Brooklyn” (*trí iarracht mo charad eadhón Chathail Uí Fhearghail ó Bhrook[l]yn*⁵⁷), he managed to gain access to a vellum manuscript in the Society’s possession at that time — the only Irish manuscript in its possession, in fact — which contained a copy of the medieval historical tract known as the *Chronicum Scotorum*.⁵⁸ It is possible that the aforementioned “friend” who helped to make the vellum manuscript available to Ferriter is Charles O’Farrell in whose house in Manhattan he was a lodger according to the 1905 New York State Census.⁵⁹ He may also be the same man who was President of the New York state branch of the Gaelic League and Irish-language teacher of its Kevin Barry branch in Brooklyn in the early 1920s.⁶⁰ Either way, we know from notes inserted into his copy of the *Chronicum Scotorum*, now Ferriter 39 (pp. 48–52 and pp. 164–70), that Patrick Ferriter spent from August 1919 to September 1922 transcribing it. His transcript is particularly valuable as its vellum exemplar which once belonged to the American Irish Historical Society has since gone missing.⁶¹

According to a colophon in this vellum exemplar, which, crucially, Ferriter copied twice into MS 39 (pp. 48, 170), the *Chronicum Scotorum* was transcribed by Mícheál mac Peadair Uí Longáin (d. 1770) in his eighteenth year from a manuscript he acquired from his friend Tomás, son of the Knight of Glin (An Gleann), County Limerick, and written in 1611 — a date which is supposedly a slip or an alteration from 1711. Up until recently, this was accepted by scholars as authentic, by the present writer among others, but it is now thought to be a nineteenth-century copy in the hand of Ó Longáin’s grandson, Peadar (1801–c.1860).⁶² We have here, then, important evidence of falsified antiquity which in itself provides us with a snapshot of

⁵⁵ Ní Ógáin, “The Ferriter Manuscripts,” vii–viii.

⁵⁶ Edmund S. Leamy, *The Story of the American Irish Historical Society* (New York: American Irish Historical Society, 1951).

⁵⁷ Ferriter 39, p. 48.

⁵⁸ The earliest surviving copy of this work is that preserved today in MS 1292 (H.1.18) in the library of Trinity College Dublin, which was written in the seventeenth century by An Dubhaltach Mac Fhir Bhisigh (d. 1671).

⁵⁹ See n. 24 above.

⁶⁰ Listed in *An Smaointeoir* 3, no. 4 (August, 1922), *An Smaointeoir* 4, no. 3 (May, 1923) and *An Smaointeoir* 4, no. 4 (August, 1923).

⁶¹ Only a microfilm copy made by the National Library of Ireland in 1967 (positive 6566) may be consulted today; cf. Pádraig de Brún, *Lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge: Treoirliosta* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), 82 n. 153.

⁶² Pádraig Ó Macháin, “Léirmheas [of Ní Úrdail, *The Scribe in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Ireland*],” *Éigse* 33 (2002): 233–237 (at 234–235); Pádraig de Brún, “The Glin Family and Irish Poetry,” in *The Knights of Glin: Seven Centuries of Change*, ed. Tom Donovan (Glin: Glin Historical Society, 2009), 279–280; Nollaig Ó Muraíle, *The Celebrated Antiquary, Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh (c.1600–1671): his Lineage, Life and Learning* (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1996), 309.

manuscript production at that time in Ireland: patronage of antiquarian societies and learned institutions like the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, for example, could accommodate but a select few of the many scribes who were still devoted to the creation of unique hand-written books of Irish prose and poetry in the nineteenth century. Competition was intense, with scribes having to ensure that their work be noticed by an antiquarian readership.

A fourth library frequented by Ferriter was that belonging to what he calls the “Catholic Club.” Known officially as the Catholic Club of the City of New York from 1 January, 1888, and based at 120 West 59th Street (what today is 122 Central Park South), the Club’s main purpose down to the time when it was officially closed down in 1964 was to keep alive an interest in Catholic history and literature.⁶³ Its collection of books and manuscripts subsequently ended up in three Catholic institutions of higher education based in New York: Manhattan College, Saint Joseph’s Seminary, Dunwoodie, and Fordham University. Patrick Ferriter visited the Club’s library in 1915 when he transcribed a devotional work known in Irish as *An Bheatha Dhiaga* (“The Holy Life”) from a manuscript which, he informs his reader, was written in 1736 by Cú Chonnacht Mac Aodha, which itself was a direct transcript of a late seventeenth-century original written in Rome in 1694 by Einrígh Mac Árdghail. This information is in Ferriter 14 which contains a second copy by our scribe of *An Bheatha Dhiaga* (pp. 1–[196]), transcribed between 1917 and 1919 “in number 655 Third Avenue in New York” (*i n-úimhir 655 de Threas-Fhoirbhealach i n-Eabhrach Nua*) from his copy of 1915.⁶⁴ As the manuscript of 1736 by Mac Aodha and that by Mac Árdghail from the late seventeenth-century as well as Ferriter’s copy of 1915 have disappeared, the text present today in Ferriter 14 is of particular value in being the only complete one of *An Bheatha Dhiaga* to have survived.⁶⁵

Some Manuscripts Acquired by Ferriter

Of the eighteen manuscripts in the Ferriter collection that are not the work of the man himself, the earliest of these, MS 21, is an anthology of prose and verse. Most of this volume was transcribed by Éamonn de Búrc in 1802–3, although minor contributions also feature here by Tomás Ó Tuama, 1802, and Séamas Mac Suibhne, 1817, “in Cork” (*a cCorcaigh*).⁶⁶ In the following note, Ferriter informs us that he acquired this volume together with four others in June 1913:

Do cheannagheas, Dia Máirt an seachtmhadh lá déag de Mheithiomh ann san m-bliadhain míle noí g-céad agus trí bliadhna déag, ó Anna (ní Shúilleabháin) du Norraidh .i. bean an Chaptaein Thomáis mhic Dháibhidh du Norraidh, i n-úimhir 2038 Pacific St., Brooklyn, New York, an leabhar so, mar aen le leabhar Eoin Uí Dhreada do’n Athair Domhnall Ó Súilliobháin i 1832, leabhar Sheághain Uí Chaoimh do féin 1844–5–6, agus leabhar Éamoinn du Búrc, Thomais Uí Thuama, agus Shéamais Mhaic Shuibhne 1802-17 ar chaegaid n-dollar, agus leabhar Pheadair Uí Ghealacáin (nó John T. Rowlandson) ar

⁶³ Patrick J. Hayes, “Catholic Action in the Archdiocese of New York,” in *Empowering the People of God: Catholic Action before and after Vatican II*, ed. Jeremy Bonner, Christopher D. Denny and Mary Beth Fraser Connolly (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 21–45.

⁶⁴ Ferriter 14, p. 173.

⁶⁵ Anselm Ó Fachtna, “‘An Bheatha Chrábhaigh’ agus ‘An Bheatha Dhiaga,’” *Éigse* 10 (1961–63): 89–95 (at 93–94); cf. Anselm Ó Fachtna, *An Bheatha Dhiadhá nó an tSlighe Ríoghdha* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967) where lines 4136–8101 here derive from Ferriter’s copy.

⁶⁶ Ferriter 21, p. 200.

*thriotheid n-dollar, is é sin ochtmogha dollar (\$80.00) ar fad. Pádraig Ferritéar 201 E 42 St. New York.*⁶⁷

I bought on Tuesday the seventeenth of June in the year one thousand nine hundred and thirteen from Anna (O’Sullivan) Norris, i.e. the wife of Captain Thomas son of David Norris, in number 2038 Pacific St., Brooklyn, New York, this book together with John Draddy’s book for Fr. Daniel O’Sullivan in 1832, John O’Keeffe’s book for himself, 1844–5–6, the book by Edmond Burke, Thomas Twomey and James Sweeney, 1802–17, all for fifty dollars, and Peter Galligan’s (or John T. Rowlandson’s) book for thirty dollars, that is eighty dollars (\$80.00) in all. Patrick Ferriter 201 E 42 St. New York.

Eighty dollars in 1913 is a considerable sum to pay for a man whose day job was a labourer or watchman — it amounts to approximately \$2,000 in today’s money — but it gives some idea of the cost of such manuscripts at that time while it also shows that Ferriter had enough saved in order to be able to purchase them. The abovenamed Captain Thomas Norris (1827–1900) was a native of Killarney, County Kerry, who emigrated to New York in 1851. He was wounded twice during the American Civil War and was promoted to the rank of captain in the 170th New York Infantry in 1863 for gallantry on the field. He subsequently held a post as Inspector of Internal Revenue under the United States Bonded Warehouse Department. A resident of the Eastern District, Brooklyn, Norris published regularly in the Irish columns of the *Irish American* and *An Gaodhal* newspapers. He was a leading figure in the New York branch of the Ossianic Society in the 1850s and played a prominent part in founding the New York Philo-Celtic Society in May 1878.⁶⁸

Taking the manuscripts in the order as given above, “this book” refers to Ferriter 24 today and contains *Agallamh na bhFíoraon* (“The Dialogue of the Just”), sermons and verse, all of which was written in 1830 by Mícheál Ó Corcoráin/Michael Corcoran (*fl.* 1830–36), of Gortagoulane (Gort an Ghabhláin) near Cork city.⁶⁹ “John Draddy’s book” is Ferriter 29 today, an anthology of prose and verse compiled in 1832 by the Cork scribe Eoin/Seán, Ó Dreda (*c.* 1771–1840), for Father Domhnall Ó Súilleabháin/Daniel O’Sullivan.⁷⁰ Accentual verse from Munster and prose tales form the contents of the third item, Ferriter 23, in the hand of Seán Ó Caoimh/John O’Keeffe (*fl.* 1843–46), from Cork, 1844–46.⁷¹ The fourth manuscript is the aforementioned Ferriter 21, mainly the work of Éamonn de Búrc, while “Peter Galligan’s (or John T. Rowlandson’s) book” is item 20 in the Ferriter collection, an anthology of Ulster poetry and ossianic lays produced in County Meath, 1850–51, by the renowned nineteenth-century scribe, Peadar Ó Gealacháin (1792–1860). His patron, John T. Rowland (*pace* Ferriter), was a solicitor in Drogheda, County Louth, who most likely took the commissioned manuscript with him on fleeing to the United States because of his involvement the Young Ireland movement.⁷²

⁶⁷ Ferriter 24, p. 362; cf. Ó Buachalla, “Lámhscríbhinn a d’Fhill,” 7.

⁶⁸ “Our Gaelic World,” *Irish World* (January 20, 1900); “Obituary,” *Irish World* (January 27, 1900); “Death of Capt. Thomas D. Norris,” *An Claidheamh Solais* (February 10, 1900). See also Uí Fhlannagáin, *Mícheál Ó Lócháin agus An Gaodhal*, 50–51.

⁶⁹ Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 55–56.

⁷⁰ Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 61–63.

⁷¹ Ó Conchúir, *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí*, 38.

⁷² Ó Buachalla, “Lámhscríbhinn a d’Fhill,” 6–7; Ciarán Dawson, *Peadar Ó Gealacháin: Scríobhaí* (Baile Átha Cliath: An Clóchomhar Tta, 1992), 85–92.

The youngest datable source of those in the collection not in Patrick Ferriter's hand is Ferriter 34. It contains an incomplete text, 1889, of a popular prose tale set in the Otherworld known as *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* ("The Adventure of the Crop-Eared Dog"), the dog in question being a heroic man-turned-hound who befriends the Arthurian knight Gawain and helps him to ward off supernatural enemy forces.⁷³ The scribe, Tomás Ó Griobhtha/Thomas Griffen (1829–96), was originally from Corca Dhuibhne and according to his naturalization papers he disembarked in Boston from Her Majesty's Brig *Pero* on 19 May, 1850.⁷⁴ He eventually settled in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where he became one of that city's most significant promoters of the Irish-language revival movement. *Eachtra an Mhadra Mhaoil* was particularly popular among scribes in the southern province of Munster and Griffen copied his text from a manuscript written by one of these, Aodh Ó Crónaoin/Hugh Cronin (fl. 1830–40) of Galbally, County Limerick.⁷⁵ How and when Griffen's copy of Cronin's work came into Ferriter's possession is not clear, but it is possible that Ferriter may have acquired it directly from Thomas Griffen himself or from a relative of his. As Lawrence was a favoured destination for immigrants from southern Ireland, particularly for those from Corca Dhuibhne and Iveragh (Uíbh Ráthach),⁷⁶ Ferriter may have visited it in order to record traditions from those Irish who had made it their new home. There is no hard evidence to confirm this, however, but it is difficult not to imagine that the paths of these two Corca Dhuibhne natives, Ferriter and Griffen, each in his own way actively promoting the Irish language in the United States, would not have crossed.

Another prominent promoter of the Irish language in New York who features in the Ferriter collection was David O'Keeffe (b. 1825/6). He seems to have been a native of County Cork and like Thomas Norris above, had been involved in Irish language activity as far back as the 1850s when he emerged as a leading figure in the New York branch of the Ossianic Society. He would later play a central role (together with Norris) in founding the New York Philo-Celtic Society in the late 1870s. O'Keeffe was married and settled in New York by the year 1855 and was still alive in 1892 when he finds mention in the New York State Census for that year.⁷⁷ Letters published by him in the *Irish American* between 1878 and 1880 indicate that he was an important teacher of Irish in New York's Philo-Celtic Society and he continued to publish regularly in that newspaper on matters relating to the language from 1880

⁷³ Joseph Falaky Nagy, *A New Introduction to Two Arthurian Romances. Irish Texts Society Subsidiary Series 7* (London: The Irish Texts Society, 1998), 6–8.

⁷⁴ William Mahon, *Thomas Griffen (1829–96) of Corca Dhuibhne and the Irish Community of Lawrence, Massachusetts* (Aberystwyth: Department of Welsh, Aberystwyth University, 2007).

⁷⁵ This today is Villanova 7 (1830–40). It is one of thirteen Irish manuscripts in all that are preserved in Falvey Memorial Library, Villanova University, Pennsylvania. For this collection; see William Mahon, *Catalogue of Irish Manuscripts in Villanova University Pennsylvania* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2007).

⁷⁶ Mahon, *Thomas Griffen (1829–96) of Corca Dhuibhne*, 62 n. 18.

⁷⁷ The 1855 New York State Census, records O'Keeffe, "carman" (aged twenty-nine and born in Ireland), his wife, Ellen (twenty-six years and also from Ireland) and their son John (two years and born in New York). Ellen died at some point before the 1875 New York State Census when O'Keeffe, a "Boxmaker" (aged forty-nine), resided in Brooklyn with his son John, a "Book Binder" (aged twenty-three), and four more children, Ellen (aged twenty), Anna (aged fourteen), Daniel (aged twelve) and Edward (aged ten). In the 1880 U.S. Federal Census O'Keeffe (aged fifty-five) is recorded as residing in Brooklyn with "secondhand boxes" named as his occupation, while that of his children Annie and Dan were "box factory" and "secondhand boxes," respectively. I am grateful to Dr William Mahon for these references.

onwards.⁷⁸ He was also a scribe and collector of Irish manuscripts. One manuscript, for example, written by O’Keeffe between 1858 and 1862, comprises a substantial anthology of eighteenth-century Irish poetry, including Brian Merriman’s famous *Cúirt an Mheán Oíche* (“The Midnight Court”), and this today is MS 33 in the Ferriter collection. In 1912, Ferriter copied *Eachtra Thomáis mhic Lóbais* (“The Adventure of Tomás son of Lóbas”) from another manuscript the “End” of which was written in “1880 by David O’Keeffe” (*Críoch 1880 ag Dáithi Ó Caoimh*⁷⁹), while he derived the opening section of the same text, probably about 1912 as well, “from David O’Keeffe’s book” (*as leabhar D[h]aithi Uí Chaoimh*) and this is now present in Ferriter 11 (pp. 271–72).

The fortunes of MS 30 before making it into the Ferriter collection are particularly interesting. It was copied in 1815 by Joseph Read of Termonbarry in the barony of Ballintober North, County Roscommon, from “an Anticent [sic] Christian Doctrine,” and the scribe brought the manuscript with him when he emigrated to New Brunswick, Canada, where he settled in Miramichi “on Sunday June 21st [year illegible].”⁸⁰ A note on the manuscript’s front paste-down informs us that it was subsequently a “gift from the hands of His Grace Archbishop Connolly, in the south library of St Mary’s glebe house, Halifax N.S. in the year 1870, to William D. O’Brien.” At some point after Read settled in Canada, the manuscript found its way to Dr Thomas Connolly (1814–76), a Capuchin priest and native of Cork city, who came to Nova Scotia in 1842 and was appointed Archbishop of Halifax in 1858.⁸¹ The Archbishop then gave it as a gift to “William D. O’Brien,” and this beneficiary is probably to be identified with William Desmond O’Brien, a prominent Haligonian businessman who founded the *Halifax City Railroad Company* in 1866 and ran it for a subsequent ten years when his business folded.⁸² The manuscript somehow found its way to New York and to Ferriter. He may have acquired it from O’Brien’s wife, Mary Cecilia (*née* Whelan), who on her husband’s death, is registered as residing in Brooklyn in the year 1898, over forty years after the couple married in Saint Patrick’s Church, Brooklyn, in 1852.⁸³ Notwithstanding its exceptional journey — from County Roscommon, to two provinces in Canada, to New York only to return to Ireland — Ferriter 30 is particularly significant for being a source originally compiled in a county, the scribal practice of which, in the modern era at least, little indeed is known thus far.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Nilsen, “Micheál Ó Broin agus lámhscríbhinní Gaeilge Ollscoil Wisconsin,” 116–117; Nilsen, “The Irish Language in New York, 1850–1900,” 264–265, 269–270; Nilsen, “Irish in Nineteenth Century New York,” 61.

⁷⁹ Ferriter 17, p. 7.

⁸⁰ Ferriter 30, notes on front and back paste-downs, respectively.

⁸¹ David B. Flemming, “Connolly, Thomas Louis,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Volume X 1871–1880*, ed. Marc La Terre (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1972), 191–193.

⁸² See https://www.exporail.org/can_rail/Canadian%20Rail_CRHA_Bulletin_no17_April_1954.pdf (accessed 12 January, 2017), a reference I owe to Professor Pádraig Ó Siadhail; cf. Elsie Churchill Tolson, *The Captain, the Colonel and Me. (Bedford, N.S., Since 1503)* (New Brunswick: Tribune Press, 1979), 155–156.

⁸³ See <http://www.ancestry.ca> (accessed 23 January, 2017); cf. Kenneth Nilsen, “An Ghaeilge in Oirthear Cheanada, 1750–1900,” in *Séimhfhear Suairc: Aistí in Ómós don Ollamh Breandán Ó Conchúir*, ed. Seán Ó Coileáin, Liam P. Ó Murchú and Pádraigín Riggs (An Daingean: An Sagart, 2013), 262–279 (at 273).

⁸⁴ Another rare example from this county is the series of Fenian lays in a manuscript (now lost but available on microfilm) by *Uilliam O Neachtain/William Naghten* “the little berries [Barry Beg] in ye County of Roscommon. Barrony of Athlone and parish of Killtoom in ye year 1720” (folio 65 *recto*);

A similar state of affairs applies to Ferriter 27 and our final example from the collection. It is the work of two West Kerry scribes, Tomás Mac Muirheartaigh/Thomas Moriarty, and Thomas Fitzgerald, “Blackfields,” who gives “February th[e] 2 the year of our Lord 1849” as a date for his contribution before departing for the US.⁸⁵ Present in this manuscript are poems by the renowned eighteenth-century Irish-language poets, Piaras Mac Gearailt (1709–c.1791) and Eoghan Ruadh Ó Súilleabháin (1748–84), but most of its contents are devotional in nature, including a passage from a long didactic poem on the brevity of life and on the importance of renouncing worldly matters beginning *A dhuine, cuimhnigh ar do chríochaibh déidheancha* (“O man remember your final things”).⁸⁶ As in the case of scribal practice in County Roscommon in the modern era, that conducted by scribes from Corca Dhuibhne (apart from Ferriter, of course) still awaits in-depth scholarly analysis. MS 27 in the Ferriter collection yields some information as do manuscripts 32 and 36, which are also the work of Tomás Mac Muirheartaigh, 1856–57, probably on reaching his destination in the United States.

Concluding Remarks

Patrick Ferriter’s important contribution to Irish scholarship at home and abroad is evident in his fine collection of thirty-nine manuscripts. This collection tells us something about the man’s particular range of literary interests as well as those of other Irish scribes whose work features in it. It informs us about the sources that were available to these scholar-scribes at the time of writing; it provides us with concrete evidence of script-print intersections; it contains textual traditions otherwise unattested in Irish sources; and, it bears a multi-layered material witness to an interest in the Irish language among emigrants from Ireland that survived their passage to the United States. When we consider that the tradition of Irish manuscript production had entered its final phase in the nineteenth century, the Ferriter collection is one of the great anomalies, given that a number of its manuscripts date from the early decades of the century thereafter. Furthermore, while it exemplifies the phenomenon of the exiled book and the book written in exile, it is surely a fine example, too, of the repatriation of Irish manuscripts, which in this case occurred, as noted at the outset here, in the Autumn of 1924.

see Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, “Ón gCnocán Aoibhinn go dtí Londain Shasana: Tomás ‘an tSneachta’ Ó Conchubhair (1798–c.1870),” *Celtica* 28 (2016): 89–122 (at 117–118).

⁸⁵ “Thomas FitzGerald Blackfields is my name Gurtadoes is my dwell[ing] place Ireland is my station and in America I ll soon be translated by the orders of Thomas Morriarty Balleyoughtra February th[e] 2 the year of our Lord 1849 Anno Domino [sic]” (Ferriter 27, p. 18).

⁸⁶ Meidhbhín Ní Úrdail, “Dán Teagascach dar tús *A dhuine, cuimhnigh ar do chríochaibh déidheancha*,” in *Saoi na Féile*, ed. Stephen Newman, Breandán Ó Cróinín and Liam Ó Paircín (Dublin: Coiscéim, 2018), 69–118.