

Reading the above review, it is clear that, for Dr Hewer, residence on a particular land-mass trumps all other forms of cultural identity. It is an interestingly revolutionary perspective for the study of the Viking era, a period which traditionally has focussed on invasions, migrations and the importance of linguistic diversity. Less unusual is an approach to reviewing which uses the opportunity to publicise the reviewer's own perspective as much or more as those whose material is being reviewed – one might even call that a commonplace. It is, however, uncommon for a reviewer to concoct his own phrases to paraphrase his understanding of a piece, place them within quotation marks and then criticise the original author for these very phrases (E.g. p.40: “analysing people’s DNA to determine who is ‘really Irish’ and who is ‘not’ is unacceptable.”) It is worth noting, therefore, that the concepts of “real Irish” (p.40), “not Irish” (p.41) and incorporating “DNA studies of modern Irish people to ‘prove’ the legendary ancestors of some men” (p.41) are all entirely of the reviewer's own devising and occur nowhere in the article being discussed. In the case of the Sextons, the original article discusses multi-lingual evidence for this surname and the family who bore it and argues that they were bilingual and promoted themselves in both Irish and English-speaking political contexts. In the case of the Arthurs, the article explores the way in which geneticists based in TCD have deployed contradictory documentary evidence in their investigation of ethnic affiliations in early Ireland.

Racism, sexism and nationalism have been subject to much media debate recently. On Facebook and Twitter, one can detect concerns, among younger scholars in particular, about ways in which medieval imagery is sometimes deployed in such popular discourse. For myself, however, I do not believe that using the terms “sexist” and “racist” in the context of academic reviews adds very much to scholarship in our field. It would be wonderful if we could discuss the role of early medieval women in far more detail than we tend to do but given the reality that our early medieval sources deal predominantly with the affairs of men, it is always going to be a difficult aspiration. (The Irish justiciary rolls of the later medieval period represents a rarely rare exception in their treatment of both genders). Similarly, the word racist does not seem to me to add much clarity to sources which so frequently refer to clashes between individuals speaking different languages. Much early medieval scholarship is devoted to investigating the underlying realities of co-existence on a single land-mass behind such descriptions of mutual antagonism. For me, such scholarship is the hallmark of the volume on the Battle of Clontarf under review here.

I also believe that the use of such terms in academic reviews is dangerous for medieval Irish studies. It is a small but globalised field and the majority of those holding professional posts work in environments where they are the only such specialist in a particular institution and/or region. Having one's publications described in such terms could, in an academic world which spends increasing amounts of time online, have impacts on an individual's working conditions and promotional prospects undreamt of by the person who chooses to use them “probably unwittingly” (to quote p.40). All of us in Irish medieval studies have spent time defending the value of our research to those outside the field; it would be very foolish if, as a community, we wantonly made that task more difficult for those who will be seeking employment in our discipline in the future.

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Given that Dr Swift has emailed the editors of Óenach, TCD, and the Irish Federation of University Teachers stating that I have accused Dr Swift of ‘promoting racism’ (Swift, email) in the my review of *Medieval Dublin XVI*, I would like to clarify that my opening comments about public history were of a general cautionary nature. It was not my intention to accuse her (or anyone else) of racism, nor do I believe that I did so.

As historians, especially medieval historians, we must remember that while we study the past, we also live in the present. The discourse we employ in our studies is not encased in an atemporal bubble which shields it from the context of today or any critique in that lens. Not being comfortable with discussing racism and sexism does not mean we can elide them from history. There was medieval racism and there currently is racism. There was medieval sexism and there is current sexism. Even more importantly, racism and sexism regularly ‘intersect’ (Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1989). Intersectionality refers to the experiences of groups (for example, Black women) who suffer more than one type of discrimination simultaneously or sometimes in uneven or unpredictable variations.

Regarding medieval racism, Geraldine Heng recently wrote a book addressing the denial of racism as a lens of study (*The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages*, Cambridge, 2018) and it follows the excellent work of Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (*The Origins of Racism in the West*, Cambridge, 2013) and R. I. Moore (*The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Power and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, Oxford, 1987). These books evince the presence of racism in medieval Europe.

For the use of racist discourse in the study of medieval Europe, see the works of Dr Rambaran-Olm (<https://utoronto.academia.edu/MaryRambaranOlm>). These works demonstrate that we cannot simply remove/ignore/deny the lenses of racism and sexism in any academic endeavour. Now if one were to read E.W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978) and G.C. Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’ (in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Basingstoke, 1988), it would be hard not to recognise the ‘othering’ language in the history and historiography of medieval Ireland (e.g. calling all Dubliners ‘foreigners’). To ignore the context of such terminology and translations and then excuse the repetition of such language under the cover of ‘academic tradition’ is unrigorous at best. Due to word count, I have left out a great deal, but ignoring racism and sexism in academic discourse is a dangerous path.

Here I must note that ‘scare quotes’ (above, I put ‘intersect’ and ‘othering’ in them) are a well-established academic practice. They are not in fact literal quotations. Scare quotes are regularly deployed to highlight problematic terms, but above I used them to note the lineage of those terms.

Studying the linguistics of eleventh-century Ireland is great. Studying naming practices in fifteenth-century Ireland is great. Studying twentieth-century DNA in Ireland is great. Combining the three is problematic. Even DNA scholars have rightly noted that linguistics and cultural identity are not transmitted by genetics. As a reviewer I felt it was necessary to raise this concern.

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