

Clarke, Michael , Erich Poppe , and Isabelle Torrance , ed. Classical Antiquity and Medieval Ireland: An Anthology of Medieval Irish Texts and Interpretations. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception. Bloomsbury Studies in Classical Reception. Bloomsbury Collections. Web. 24 Mar. 2026. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350333307>>.

Accessed from: www.bloomsburycollections.com

Accessed on: Tue Mar 24 2026 18:01:22 Eastern Daylight Time

Copyright © Patrick Wadden. Michael Clarke, Erich Poppe and Isabelle Torrance 2024. This chapter is published open access subject to a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>). You may re-use, distribute, and reproduce this work in any medium for non-commercial purposes, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

The Irish World Chronicle in the First Fragment of the *Annals of Tigernach*

Patrick Wadden

The text is preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B502, which can be viewed online at <http://image.ox.ac.uk/show?collection=bodleian&manuscript=msrawlb502>.

The extract presented here is an interim edition revised from Stokes 1895: 403–7, in light of the manuscript, with contractions silently expanded. The glosses, which in the manuscript are placed between the lines as well as sometimes in the margins, are here printed within round brackets. In the manuscript, the letter ‘K’ for ‘Kalends’ notionally represents a single year, and the sequence ‘KKK . . .’ stands for a series of years within which no special events have been noted.

Text: From Caesar to Herod

[f. 9v a] (Incipit regnum Romanorum, quod permanebit usque in finem saeculi.)

K. Tertio anno regni Cleopatrae Iulius Cessar (qui Cleopatram uiolauit) primus Romanorum singulare obtenuit imperium, a quo Romanorum princepes Cessaes apellati sunt.

Mochta mac Murchorad regnauit in Emain annis iii.

K. Cessar a cesso utero matris dictus est.

K. Cassius (.i. dux Románus) Iudea capta templum Hierusalem spoliauit.

K. Euchu mac Dare regnauit in Emain annis .iii.

(Orosius) Cessar, postquam orbem domuit ⁊ Pompeum uícit, Romam redit: ibi, dum rei puplicae statum contra exempla maiorum clementer instaurat, auctoribus Bruto ⁊ Cassio, conscio etiam plurimo senatu, post .iiii. annos ⁊ .ui. menses monarchiae suae, in cúria .xx. ⁊ iii. uulneribus a suis confosus interit. In coniuratione contra eum fuisse amplius quam .lx. conscios ferunt. Duo, scilicet, Brúti ⁊ Gaius Cassius aliiqui quam plurimi. Cuius corpus in Foro fragmentis tribunalium ac subselliorum crematum est. Ab hinc imperatores.

(iiimdcccclxui.) K. Anno ab Urbe condita .d.ccx. interfecto Iulio Cessare Octouianus, qui testamento Iulii Cessarís auunculi sui et hereditatem ⁊ nomen asumperat, quique postea rerum potitus Augustus est dictus, regnauit annis quinquaginti sex ⁊ mensibus .ui. ⁊ diebus xii, quorum .xu. uiuente Cleopatra quadragenti uero ⁊ unum postea uixit annos. A quo Augusti reges Rómanorum apellati sunt.

Qui statim ordinatus .u. bella ciuilia gessit, Mutinense (.i. ciuitas), Pilipense (ciuitas), Perusinum (ciuitas), Siculum (insola), Actiacum (ciuitas): e quibus duo, hoc est, primum ac nouissimum aduersus Marcum Antonium, secundum aduersums Brútum et Cassium, tertium aduersus Lucium Antonium, quartum [fol. 9v b] aduersus Sextum Pompeum (Gnei) Pompei filium confécit.

KK. Echu Sálbude mac Loch regnauit in Emain annis .iii.

Translation by the author

(Here begins of the kingdom of the Romans, which will continue until the end of the world.)

K. In the third year of Cleopatra's reign, Julius Caesar (who raped Cleopatra), was the first to attain sole rule of the Romans. Roman rulers are called 'Caesars' after him.

Mochta son of Murchorad reigned for three years in Emain.

K. Caesar was named for having been cut from his mother's womb.

K. Judea having been captured, Cassius (i.e. a Roman military leader) sacked the Temple of Jerusalem.

K. Eochu son of Dáre reigned in Emain for three years.

(Orosius:) Caesar, after he conquered the world and defeated Pompey, returned to Rome. There, while he was restoring the condition of the republic benignly, though contrary to the precedent of his forefathers, he died after four years and six months of his reign, having been stabbed twenty-three times by his friends in the curia, at the direction of Brutus and Cassius but with the knowledge of most of the senate. They report that there were more than sixty in the conspiracy against him: that is, the two Brutuses and Gaius Cassius, and many others. His body was cremated in the Forum over fragments of tribunal platforms and benches. From this point there were emperors.

(3966)¹ K. In the 710th year since the foundation of Rome, Julius Caesar having been killed, Octavian, according to the will of his uncle Julius Caesar, became his heir and assumed his name. Having obtained power over public affairs, he was called Augustus. He reigned for fifty-six years, six months and twelve days, of which Cleopatra was living for fifteen, and he lived forty-one years afterwards. It is from him that kings of the Roman are called 'Augustuses'.

As soon as he was had been appointed, he waged five civil wars, those of Mutina² (i.e. a city), Philippi (a city), Perugia (a city), Sicily (an island), and Actium (a city). Of these, he fought two – that is, the first and the last – against Mark Antony, the second he fought against Brutus and Cassius, the third against Lucius Antonius, the fourth against Sextus Pompeius, the son of Gnaeus Pompeius.

KK Eochu Sálbuide son of Loch reigned in Emain for three years.

KKK. Fergus mac Leti, qui confligit contra bestiam hi Loch Rudraige ⁊ ibi demersus est, regnauit in Emain annis .xii.

KKKKK. (Natiuitas Conculainn maic Soaltaim.) Undecimo anno Augusti, deficiente in Iudea pontificatu, Herodes, nihil ad eam pertinens, utpote Antipatri Ascolonitae et Cipriadis (.i. matris) Arabicae filius, postquam occidit Hircanum pontificem, a Romanis suscepit imperium Iudeorum, quod tenuit annis xxxui. Qui ne ignobilis forte et a Iudeorum semine argueretur extraneus, combussit libros omnes quibus nobilitas gentis Iudaeae in templo reseruabatur ascripta.

Hác tenus qui uocabantur Lagidia in Aegipto regnauerunt .i. annis .ccxcu.

Insuper etiam ut sobolem suam regio illorum generi Herodes commiseret, proiecta Doside femina Hierusolmitana, quam priuatus acceperat uxorem, ⁊ nato ex ea filio Antipatro sociat sibi Miriamnem filiam Alanxandri, neptem Aristoboli fratris Hircani, qui ante eum rexerat Iudeos. Haec .u. ei filios genuit, quorum duos, Alaxandrum ⁊ Aristobolum, ipse necauit in Samaria.

Nec mora etiam, post matrem illorum qua nihil carius nouerat, peremit. E quibus Aristobulus Herodem ex Beronice susceperat filium quem in Actibus Apostulorum ab angelo percussum legimus.

KKKK. Marcus Antonius Niger uictus ab Augusto in Ala(xa)ndria sese propria manu interfecit, ⁊ Cleopatra uxor eius serpentis morsu in sinistra tacta examinata est.

Hóc anno cepit regnare in (†) Emain Conchobor mac Nessa, qui regnauit annis .lx.

Ro rannad hÉriu íarsin hi cóic, íar n-árcain [fol. 10r a] Conare Móir maic Etarsceóil hi mBrudin Dá Dergga, etir Conchobur mac Nessa ocus Coirpre Nia Fer ⁊ Tigernach Tétbannach ⁊ Dedad mac Sin ⁊ Ailill mac Mágag. (Isin tsechtmad bliadain iar ndith Conairi ro gab Lugaid Reoderg rígi.)

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKK. (†) Maria mater Domini nata est.

KKKK. (Slógad tána bó Cualngi.) Uirgilius Maro in Brundissi .lii. aetatis suae anno mortus est. Cuius ossa in Necapoli humata sunt, hóc epitaphio, quod ipse ante mortem suam dictauerat, tumulo eius superposito:

KKK Fergus son of Léte, who fought against a beast in Loch Rudraige and was submerged there, reigned in Emain for twelve years.

KKKKK (The birth of Cú Chulainn son of Súaltam) In the eleventh year of Augustus, the rule of the priests came to an end in Judea. Herod, who did not belong to it [i.e. Judea], since he was the son of Antipater of Ascalon and Cypros (i.e. his mother) of Arabia, later killed the high-priest Hyrcanus. He received rule over the Jews from the Romans, and held it for thirty-six years. This man, lest it be proven that he was of ignoble ancestry and foreign to the Jewish stock, burnt all the books preserved in the Temple in which the nobility of the people of Judaea was preserved in writing.

As far as this, those called the Lagids reigned in Egypt for 295 years.

Furthermore Herod, in order to blend his line with their royal stock, having cast aside Dosis, a woman of Jerusalem whom he had married as a private person, and with whom he had a son, Antipater, took to himself Mariamne, the daughter of Alexander and granddaughter of Aristobolus brother of Hyrcanus, who had ruled over the Jews before him. She bore him five sons, two of whom – Alexander and Aristobolus – he himself killed in Samaria.

Not long afterwards, he also slew their mother, though nothing was more beloved to him. Of these sons, Aristobolus had a son, Herod, with Berenice. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that this son was struck down by an angel.

KKKK Marcus Antonius Niger, having been defeated by Augustus, killed himself by his own hand in Alexandria, and Cleopatra his wife was killed after being touched by a snake's bite on her left hand.

In this year, Conchobar son of Nes began to reign in (†)³ Emain; he reigned for sixty years.

Subsequently, Ireland was divided into five – after the destruction of Conare Mór son of Etarscéil in Dá Derga's Hostel – between Conchobar son of Nes and Coirpre Nia Fer and Tigernach Tétbannach and Dedad son of Sen and Ailill son of Mága. (In the seventh year after the death of Conare, Lugaid Reoderg assumed the kingship.)

KKKKKKKKKKKKKKK. (†) Mary mother of the Lord was born.

KKKK. (The hosting of the cattle-raid of Cooley). Vergilius Maro died in Brindisi, in the fifty-second year of his life. His bones were buried in Naples, and this epitaph, which he himself had composed before his death, was placed on his tomb:

Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc Parthinope
 cecini pascua (.i. Bucolica), rura (.i. Georgica), duces (.i. librum Aenedae).

KKKKKKK. Finit quinta aetas mundi continens annos .d.lxxxix. Incipit sexta mundi aetas ab Incarnatione Christi usque ad diem iudicii. Beda boat breuiter sequentia haec:

Sexta mundi aetas nulla generatione uel sirie temporum certa, sed ut aetas decrepita ipsa totius saeculi morte consumenda.

Cétna bliadain tosaich ógathcuir is hí sein in bliadain ria gen Crist. Bliadain tanaise immorro de nóidécdú hi ro genair.

(iiimdccclii) K. Ab initio mundi .umcxc iuxta .lxx. Interpretes. Secundum uero Ebreicam ueritatem .iiimdccclii. Ab Urbe uero condita anno .dcclii. Anno quoque imperii Cessar Augusti .xlii. Anno secundo decinouenalis ⁊ uii. feria Iesus Christus Filius Dei sextam mundi aetatem suo aduentu consecrauit.

Beda ait: Anno Cessar Augusti .xlii. A morte uero Cleopatrae ⁊ Antoníi quando ⁊ Aegyptus in prouinciam uersa est anno .xxviii. Olimpiadis centissimae .lxxxviii. anno tertio. Ab Urbe autem condita anno .dcclii .i. eo anno quo compresis cunctarum per orbem terrae gentium motibus firmissimam uerissimamque pacem ordinatione [fol. 10r b] Dei Cessar composuit, Iesus Christus Filius Dei sextam mundi aetatem consecrauit aduentu .i.

(†) K. Mors Con Chulaind fortissimi herois Scottorum la Lugaid mac Trí Con (.i. ri Muman) ⁊ la Ercc mac Coirpri Níad Fir (.i. ri Temrach) ⁊ la trí maccu Calattin de Chonnachtaib. (Mors Emiri uxoris Conculaind.) Uii. mbliadna a aes intan rogab gaisced, .xviii. mbliadna dano a aes intan mbói indegaid Tána bó Cúailge, xxviii. bliadna immorro a aes intan atbath.

(Mors Eirc maic Corpri rig Temrach ⁊ Lugdach maic Con Roi la Conall Cernach, ⁊ inriud cethri coiced n-Erenn la secht Maini o Ultaib.)

Kii. Kiii. Ku. Kui. Anno imperii Augusti .xlvi. Herodes moritur.

Mantua produced me, the Calabrians snatched me away, Naples now holds me. I sang of pastures (i.e. the Bucolics), of the countryside (i.e. the Georgics) and leaders (i.e. the Book of the Aeneid)

KKKKKKK. Here ends the fifth age of the world, containing 589 years. Here begins the sixth age of the world, from the Incarnation of Christ until the Day of Judgment. Bede briefly declares what follows:

The sixth age of the world has no fixed generation or succession of times, but like senility, this age will be consumed by the death of the whole world.

The first year of the beginning of the new Great Cycle, that is the year before Christ's birth. It was, however, the second year of the decennial in which he was born.

(3952) K. From the beginning of the world, 5190 [years], according to the Seventy Translators; but 3952 according to the Hebrew Truth. From the foundation of Rome, verily, 752. It was also in the forty-second year of the rule of Caesar Augustus; in the second year of the decennial and [a year beginning on] the seventh feria – Jesus Christ the Son of God consecrated the sixth age of the world by His coming.

Bede says: In the forty-second year of Caesar Augustus, and the twenty-seventh year since the death of Cleopatra and Antony, when Egypt was converted into a [Roman] province, in the third year of the one hundred and ninety third Olympiad, in the seven hundred and fifty-second year since the foundation of Rome, i.e. in the year in which the movements of all peoples were restrained throughout the world and, by God's decree, Caesar established the firmest and truest peace: Jesus Christ the Son of God consecrated the sixth age of the world by His coming.

(†) The death of Cú Chulainn, bravest hero of the Gaels, by Lugaid son of Trí Coin (i.e. king of Munster) and by Erc son of Coirpre Níá Fer (i.e. king of Tara) and by the three sons of Calatin of the Connachta. (The death of Emer, Cú Chulainn's wife.) He was seven years of age when he took up arms; seventeen years of age, moreover, at the time of the Cattle raid of Cooley; twenty-seven years of age, indeed, when he died.

(The death of Erc son of Coirpre king of Tara, and Lugaid son of Cú Roí by Conall Cernach, and the invasion of four provinces of Ireland by the seven Maines of the Ulaid).

Kii. Kiii. Ku. Kui. Herod died in the forty-seventh year of the rule of Augustus.

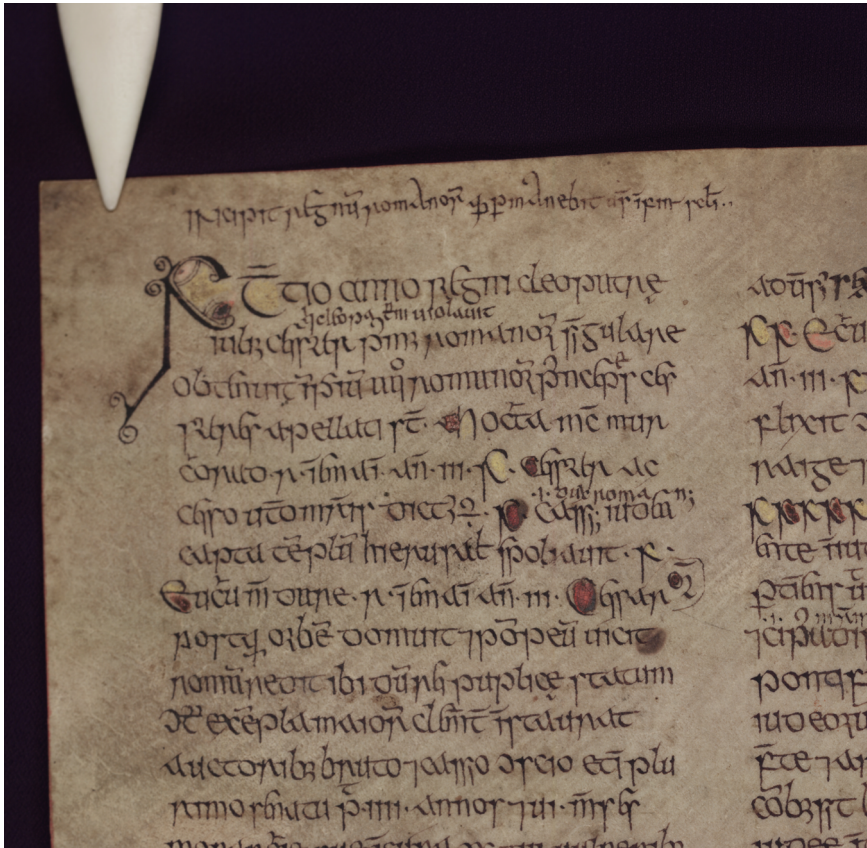


Figure 1 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson B502, fol. 9v, detail: from the First Fragment of the *Annals of Tigernach*. Image copyright Bodleian Libraries, Oxford. Reproduced under a Creative Commons licence by courtesy of Bodleian Online.

Essay: Global and local history in the Irish World Chronicle

This extract is taken from an annalistic text extant in an eleventh- or twelfth-century manuscript – one of two originally distinct manuscripts now combined as Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B502 (Ó Cuív 2001–3: 1.162–66, 181–82). It was previously edited (and partially translated) by Whitley Stokes as the ‘First Fragment’ of the *Annals of Tigernach*. The annals of that name were probably written in the monastery of Clonmacnoise late in the eleventh century, though their other surviving fragments are preserved in manuscripts of significantly later date. The First Fragment represents the most extensive of three surviving versions of a text commonly known as the Irish World Chronicle, other versions of which are found at the beginning of the *Annals of Inisfallen* and *Annals of Boyle* (Mac Airt 1944: 1–45; Freeman 1924–27: 1924. 302–17). The title was coined by O’Rahilly (1957: 235–59). The Irish World Chronicle was probably initially compiled in Clonmacnoise in the late tenth or the early eleventh century (Dumville 1977). It has attracted relatively little scholarly attention in the past, though that is rapidly changing.⁴

The Irish World Chronicle is an account of the history of the world, as the world was known and understood in medieval Western Europe. It is laid out in the form of annals in all three surviving versions, though this format is awkward as individual entries often cover more than a single year. Eoin MacNeill (1914: 41–5) argued this was the result of a rather clumsy conversion of the text from its original form. It almost certainly began with Creation, though the version preserved in Rawlinson B502 is fragmentary and opens in the time of the biblical prophets Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, and Jonah – roughly the eighth century BCE. Precisely when the Irish World Chronicle ends is open to debate – probably in the fifth or sixth century – though our fragment breaks off in the middle of the second century CE, in the reign of the emperor Antoninus Pius. During the centuries it covers, it reports major historical events of antiquity. These include the succession of kings of the great kingdoms of the ancient world – the Romans, Persians, and Macedonians, but also the Hebrews, Egyptians, Lydians and Assyrians – as well as information pertaining to the histories of these kingdoms and the deaths (and occasionally the births) of significant political and cultural figures. For early Irish historians, it seems, ‘classical’ antiquity was viewed as part of a broader landscape of the past, rather than as a discrete unit.

Gradually at first, but with increasing volume and frequency over time, these records of the history of the ancient world become interspersed with reports of events from Ireland’s distant past, including (in our extract) the famous cattle-

raid of Cooley – *táin bó Cúailgne*, the story of which is related in the Old Irish saga of the same name – and the births and deaths of persons who played important roles in those events, including the warrior identified as the bravest hero among the Gaels (*Scotti*), Cú Chulainn, and the flawed king of Ulster, Conchobar mac Nessa. The cattle-raid supposedly occurred in Ireland around the time of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This was before the coming of literacy to Ireland, so these events were not recorded in any contemporary source. Nonetheless, here as in other medieval Irish scholarship, they are treated as historical, on a par with the civil wars of the Romans and the births and deaths of emperors, philosophers and poets of the ancient world (Toner 2000).

It is the case that most of the ‘international’ or ‘global’ material is in Latin, whereas Irish events are frequently recorded in the vernacular. But the distinction is not consistent; there are plenty of records relating to the Irish in Latin and there are records of non-Irish events in the vernacular. It is possible that the choice of language was determined to some extent by the compiler’s source materials, though more work must be done before any firm conclusions can be drawn. The precise nature and identity of the sources for Irish history is unclear; many of the Irish events reported here are dealt with at greater length in extant narrative texts, but the relationship between our text and these needs further study. With regards to the ‘international’ events and the different chronological frameworks within which they are reported (the succession of world kingdoms and the six ages of the world), on the other hand, it is clear that the compiler’s major sources were Jerome’s translation of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius of Caesarea, Bede’s *Chronica Maiora* (= *De Temporum Ratione* ‘On the Reckoning of Time’ 66–71) and the *Histories against the Pagans* of Orosius (Arnaud-Lindet 1990–1, tr. Fear 2010). Other sources named in the text include the historical works of the first-century Romano-Jewish historian Flavius Josephus and the third-century Christian historian Julius Africanus, though references to these were in some or all cases copied directly from Bede and other intermediary sources and do not amount to independent witnesses (MacNeill 1914: 36, 52–3). I suspect the compiler had access to fewer sources than has previously been stated.

It is also apparent that the Irish World Chronicle expanded over time as new material was added from different sources and the text ‘corrected’ through comparison with other authorities. This much is clear from the current shape of the collection of items in the fragment, a collection which, as MacNeill pointed out (1914: 45, 49), is ‘*in a condition of active growth*, thickly stuck over with interlinear and marginal accretions’; some of the additions are corrections, while others arose ‘from an effort to develop the text’. MacNeill was highly critical of

the fact that this feature of the text is not readily apparent in Stokes' edition. As can be seen in the extract above, these glosses and other scholia provide the names of sources, additional dating information, and further details about both international and Irish history. R. I. Best (1914) identified the hand responsible for writing many of them – including the record of Cú Chulainn's birth and several others in the extract above – as that of the scribe designated 'Hand H', who made important modifications to *Lebor na hUidre*, the first great surviving manuscript of vernacular material, written in Clonmacnoise in the early twelfth century (cf. Oskamp 1972: 68, and contributions to Ó hUiginn 2015).

Although the compiler (and revisers) of our work did not, in the vast majority of cases, engage directly with early Greek or Roman sources, they patently did not think of themselves as divorced from the world of classical antiquity about which they wrote. In fact, they seem to have thought of themselves as belonging to an intellectual tradition rooted in Greece and Rome, as well as Old Testament Israel. See, for instance, the record of the birth of Sallust, where he is described as 'the first historiographer' (*primus . . . historiographus*; Stokes 1895: 402). This information was derived from Isidore of Seville's *Chronica Maiora*, most likely via Bede's *De Temporibus*, and there is no evidence that the compiler had access to any of Sallust's works.⁵ Nonetheless, the reference is enlightening. In an entry corresponding to the year 641 CE, the *Annals of Tigernach* (third fragment) report the death of Domnall mac Áeda, king of Ireland. The annalist implies that there was a degree of uncertainty about who succeeded to the kingship, referring to the opinion of 'some historiographers' (*quidam . . . historiographi*) that four men held the kingship jointly thereafter (Stokes 1896b: 186). These historiographers are Irish, rather than Roman. Their concern was with the succession of Irish kings, not with the internal or external conflicts of the late Roman republic. Yet, from his choice of words, we may deduce that the annalist saw them as pursuing the same intellectual discipline as Sallust and other historians of antiquity.

An interlinear gloss on the 641 annal supports this argument. This gloss, which is appended only to the first part of the word *historiographi*, reads *.i. stair* ('that is, *stair*').⁶ *Stair*, the vernacular Irish term for history, is derived from the Latin *historia*, and was likewise used to refer to what were believed to be accurate accounts of past events (Poppe 2008; Poppe 2014a: 139–40). In light of the context of its appearance in the *Annals of Tigernach*, we may understand *stair* as a reference to vernacular historical writing, the kind of thing written by the Irish *historiographi* cited in the main text. The word *historia* appears with some frequency referring to books of the Old Testament (once each for the books of

Judith, Esther, and First Maccabees, following Jerome and Bede in each case), as well as the works of Herodotus, Flavius Josephus, and Julius Africanus (Stokes 1895: 386, 388, 390, 400n). It appears, therefore, that medieval Irish historians perceived an equivalence between the Irish vernacular tradition of historical writing – *stair* – and that of antiquity, including the works of Greek, Roman, Hebrew, and early Christian historians.

The relationship between classical *historia* and medieval Irish *stair* extended to matters of content and style. Effectively, medieval Irish scholars were influenced in their depiction of Ireland's past by the conventions of the genre as they inherited them. As noted above, the text before us displays a keen interest in the succession of kings in the great kingdoms of antiquity, a feature and framework derived ultimately from Eusebius (see MacNeill 1914 for further discussion). It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the first thread of Irish history to be woven into this rich historical tapestry is a record of the succession to the kingship of Emain Macha, the ancient capital of Ulster (five reigns are recorded in the extract above). Before the reign of the first of these kings, the text states, *omnia monimenta Scottorum usque Cimbáed incerta errant*, 'All the records of the Gaels are uncertain prior to [the reign of] Cimbáed' (Stokes 1895: 394). In parallel with the other peoples whose histories were also reported in the text, it made sense to begin Irish history with a record of the succession of kings. Moreover, when the record of Irish affairs begins to flesh out, its shape also suggests that received accounts of the history of antiquity were influential models. We may take as an example the account of the reign of Cormac mac Airt as king of Ireland. The beginning of Cormac's reign reads as a catalogue of battles against rival Irish dynasties and kings (Stokes 1896a: 12–13). This has echoes of the account of the events during the establishment of the Roman Empire. The reign of Octavian/Augustus, as depicted in the extract above, was likewise initiated by a series of battles against rivals.

The authors and compilers of our text engaged with classical antiquity not as a distinct historical epoch but as part of a broadly inclusive view of the history of the world as they knew it. This view was inherited from early Christian historians, including Eusebius, Orosius, and Isidore. These late antique sources also provided most of the information about world history available to the compiler of the Irish World Chronicle, so that we may say that his engagement with the ancient history of the Graeco-Roman world was indirect, mediated through sources mostly concerned with salvation history. Nonetheless, the compiler saw himself and other medieval Irish historians as practitioners of a discipline whose roots lay among both the Greeks and Romans, as well as the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament.

Notes

- 1 This is one of a series of marginal notes indicating the number of years from the Creation to the date in question.
- 2 There is a brief interlinear gloss above the name of each of the five battles listed. The clearest in meaning is that over *Siculum*, correctly identifying this adjective as referring to an island (*insula*). Of the others, the first reads *i.c.* and the other three consist of the letter *c* only. The *i.* must stand for *idán, edán, edón*, earlier *ed ón*, ‘that is’, from Latin *id est* (see above, p. xxiv). *Mutinense, Pilipense, Perusinum* and *Actiacum* are all adjectives derived from the names of towns, so it seems likely that *ciuitas* ‘town, city’ is the correct expansion for each *c*. (Stokes, however, expanded each *c* as *campus* ‘plain’. This is unlikely, especially because it was well known in the period that Actium was a naval battle.) I am grateful to Michael Clarke for his assistance here and elsewhere.
- 3 This is the first of a series of crosses entered into the margin. Most are associated with references to Christian figures, but further study of their significance is required.
- 4 Máire Ní Mhaonaigh’s 2019 Kelleher Lecture (2023) provides a vital reappraisal of the text and will hopefully spark further interest and study. I am very grateful to Prof. Ní Mhaonaigh for allowing me to read the text of her lecture prior to its publication.
- 5 Isidore, *Chronica Maiora* 225, Mommsen 1894: 452; Bede *De Temporibus (On Times)* 21, Jones 1975–80: 3.607–8, Kendall and Wallis 2010: 124–5.
- 6 Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson B488, fol. 10r b, l. 4. There is a punctum between *historia* and *graphi*, suggesting the scribe understood it as a compound and attached the gloss only to the first element. The manuscript can be viewed online at <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/2bebcdbb-ef7a-4985-bd16-4e9a8d897919/>. Stokes 1896b: 186 read the gloss as *sdair*, which is an acceptable variant spelling.

