

# Curriculum Vitae

## Dr. Esther Le Mair

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## Research interests

Early Irish verbal morphology, origin and development of the Old Irish deponent verbs, Early Irish syntax, subjecthood in Early Irish, non-canonical case marking in Old Irish, Celtic and Indo-European linguistics.

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## Education

- 2006 – 2012: PhD in Celtic Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway. Thesis title: ‘Secondary Verbs in Old Irish: A Comparative-historical Study of Patterns of Verbal Derivation in the Old Irish Glosses.’ Research supervisor: Dr. Graham Isaac, Roinn na Gaeilge, National University of Ireland, Galway. External examiner: Dr. Paul Russell, Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, University of Cambridge.
- 2002 – 2005: BA (cum laude) in Celtic Studies, Utrecht University. Thesis title: In Good and in Bad Times: a Translation and Interpretation of *Esnada Tige Buchet*.
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## Language courses

- March 2015: **Classical Mongolian**, intensive one-week course, Universiteit Gent.
  - September 2009 – July 2010: **An Diplóma sa Ghaeilge**, level 2B, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Gaillimh.
  - August 2007: **Modern Irish Summer School**, advanced level, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, An Ceathrú Rua.
  - July 2007: **Summer School in Old and Modern Irish**, advanced level, School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies.
  - July 2005 – August 2005: **Modern Irish Summer School**, intermediate level, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, An Ceathrú Rua.
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## Employment

- October 2014 – present: **Postdoctoral Researcher** with the ERC-funded EVALISA project, Department of Linguistics, Ghent University. Research responsibilities:
- September 2013 – June 2014: **Lecturer Celtic Civilisation** (part-time), Roinn na Gaeilge, NUI, Galway. I have designed and planned, have taught and examined the following courses:
- January 2014 – March 2014: **Tutor Celtic Civilisation** (part-time), Roinn na Gaeilge, NUI, Galway. I provided tutorials for the following course:
- September 2006 - August 2011: **Lecturer and tutor** (part-time), NUI, Galway:

# Publications

- Le Mair, Esther, and Johnson, C.A. 2016. ‘Non-nominative subject-like arguments in the Würzburg Glosses.’ To be submitted to *Transactions of the Philological Society*.
- Le Mair, Esther, Johnson, C.A., Frotscher, M., Eythórsson, T., and Barðdal, J. 2016. ‘Case Study in Methodology: Word Order as Test for Subjecthood in Hittite and Old Irish.’ To be submitted to *Indogermanische Forschungen*.
- Le Mair, Esther, Johnson, C.A., Frotscher, M., Barðdal, J., and Eythórsson, T. ‘Non-canonically case-marked subjects in Hittite and Old Irish: an investigation into the subjecthood of the Early Indo-European languages.’
- Le Mair, Esther. 2013. ‘Why a single burst or multiple scatterings can make all the difference: the patterns underlying the formation of AI and AII verbs.’ *Studia Celtica Fennica* 10, 65-80.
- Le Mair, Esther. 2013. ‘Het verschil tussen plunderen en met de grond gelijkmaken: afgeleide werkwoorden in het Oudiers.’ (‘The difference between plundering and razing to the ground: derived verbs in Old Irish.’) *Kelten* 59, 5-6.
- Le Mair, Esther. 2013. ‘Leborcham: A Trusted Outsider.’ *Ulidia 3: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. Gregory Toner and Seamus Mac Mathúna. Berlin, 37-47.
- Le Mair, Esther. 2006. ‘De liederen van Buchets huis.’ (‘The Songs of Buchet’s House.’) *Kelten* 31, 9-11.
- Le Mair, Esther, and Kerkhove, P. 2005. ‘Leborcham, een vertrouwde buitenstaander.’ (‘Leborcham, a confidante and outsider.’) *Kelten* 25, 15-16.

## Translations of articles:

For the Dutch journal for Celtic Studies *Kelten* I have translated the following scholarly articles from English into Dutch:

- Tristram, Hildegard. 2011. ‘*Uimir a sé*: het getal zes.’ (‘*Uimir a sé*: the number six.’) *Kelten* 50, pp. 7-9.
- Kilpatrick, Kelly A. 2010. ‘Gwanannon en het grensland van de Gododdin.’ (‘Gwanannon and the Borderland of the Gododdin.’) *Kelten* 45, pp. 5-8.
- Hemprich, Gisbert. 2009. ‘Ganzenveer en inkt.’ (‘Quill and Ink.’) *Kelten* 43, pp. 2-4.
- Sullivan, C.W. III. 2008. ‘Middeleeuws Welshe Keltische mythes, legendes en folklore in twintigste-eeuwse fantasy.’ (‘Medieval Welsh Celtic Myth, Legend, and Folklore in Twentieth-Century Fantasy.’) *Kelten* 38, pp. 2-5.
- Haycock, Marged. 2007-8. ‘Poëzie en textiel in laat middeleeuws Wales.’ (‘Poetry and Textiles in Late Medieval Wales.’) *Kelten* 36, pp. 2-6; 37, pp. 6-10.
- Nagy, Joseph Falaky. 2006-7. ‘Robin Hood, het verminkte paard en een “Iers mes”.’ (‘Robin Hood, the Mutilated Horse and an “Irish Knife”.’) *Kelten* 32, pp. 2-4; 33, pp. 2-4.
- Downey, Clodagh. 2004. ‘De Soevereiniteitsgodin in vroege Ierse literatuur.’ (‘The Sovereignty Goddess in Early Irish Literature.’) *Kelten* 23, pp. 2-3.
- Ní Chochláin, Síle. 2003. ‘Een korte geschiedenis van het Modern Iers.’ (‘A Short History of Modern Irish.’) *Kelten* 20, pp. 2-3.

# Papers delivered

- ‘Case Study in Methodology: Word Order as Test for Subjecthood in Hittite and Old Irish.’ Poster presented at the LSA 2016 Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., 7-10 January 2016. (Together with C.A. Johnson, M. Frotscher, T. Eythórsson, and J. Barðdal)
  - ‘Non-canonically case-marked subjects in Hittite and Old Irish: an investigation into the subjecthood of the Early Indo-European languages.’ 22<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Historical Linguistics, Naples, 27-31 July 2015. (Together with C.A. Johnson, M. Frotscher, T. Eythórsson, and J. Barðdal)
  - ‘Non-canonical subject marking in Old Irish.’ XV International Congress of Celtic Studies, Glasgow, 13-17 July 2015.
  - ‘Dative subjects in Old Irish.’ Workshop Case, Argument Structure and Syntactic Reconstruction, Universitetet i Bergen, 11-13 June 2015.
  - ‘Als het onderwerp niet in de nominatief staat: onderzoek naar datieve en accusatieve onderwerpen in het Oud Iers.’ (‘When the subject is not in the nominative: research into dative and accusative subjects in Old Irish.’) Invited lecture for the Celtic Colloquium organised by the A.G. van Hamel Foundation, Utrecht, 9 May 2015.
  - ‘Non-canonical subject marking in Old Irish.’ Hitches in historical linguistics II, EVALISA, Ghent, 16-18 March 2015.
  - ‘Did Old Irish have a middle voice?’ Centre for Antique, Medieval and Pre-Modern Studies (CAMPS – forum for staff and graduate students), NUI, Galway, 23 August 2013.
  - ‘Old Irish secondary deponent verbs and their connection to the Proto-Indo-European middle voice.’ First European Symposium in Celtic Studies, Trier University, August 2013.
  - ‘Why one burst or many bursts can make all the difference: the patterns underlying the formation of the AI and AII verbs.’ XII International Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica 2012, Helsinki University, June 2012.
  - ‘Watch your morphology! Why the distinction between spoiling once or spoiling repeatedly is important in Old Irish verb formation.’ Imbas (Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Medieval Conference), NUI, Galway, November 2011.
  - ‘Words describing the Divine?’ Imbas (Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Medieval Conference), NUI, Galway, November 2010.
  - ‘Some verbs in the Würzburg and Milan glosses.’ XXIV Irish Conference of Medievalists, NUI, Galway, June 2010.
  - ‘A Trusted Outsider: Leborcham in the Ulster Cycle.’ Third International Conference on the Ulster Cycle, University of Ulster, Coleraine, June 2009.
  - ‘Some verbs in the Würzburg Glosses.’ Tionól, School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, November 2008.
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## Research

### Current research

My current research takes place within the context of the project EVALISA, “The Evolution of Case, Alignment and Argument Structure in Indo-European”. The project EVALISA aims to investigate case marking and argument structure – more precisely non-nominative case marking of subjects – from a historical perspective. These are argument structure constructions instantiated by predicates where the first argument is not in the canonical nominative case. In the context of the EVALISA project, I am investigating subjecthood and oblique subject-like arguments in Old Irish, including the interaction between case marking and grammatical functions. My research has three goals: 1) to study nominative subjects in Old Irish, 2) to investigate the applicability of subject tests from other languages and language

families to Old Irish, and to develop subject tests specifically for Old Irish, and 3) to apply the subject tests established in the previous step to subject-like obliques.

For the medieval Celtic languages, including Old Irish, there is a distinct lack of research on argument structure and subjecthood. The work that has been done tends to be descriptive, historical and comparative. Second, even though generative work has been conducted on the syntax of the modern Celtic languages, including work specifically on subjecthood in Modern Irish, this work is not necessarily directly relevant, since Old Irish is structurally very different from Modern Irish. Hence, subject tests identified for Modern Irish cannot be applied to Old Irish without a careful scrutiny of how syntactic functions manifest in Old Irish and of how the Old Irish grammar differs from the grammar of Modern Irish.

Applying subject tests that were developed based on modern languages presents a challenge for the ancient and medieval languages, and Old Irish is no exception. A specific problem for Old Irish is that several of the subject tests, such as omission in control constructions and raising, depend on the presence of language-specific structures like the infinitive, which is absent from Old Irish. In my research, I aim to identify Old Irish or Celtic-specific subject tests, and to investigate whether subject tests requiring an infinitive can be applied to structures containing verbal noun clauses.

My research thus contributes significantly to the discussion of subjecthood in the comparative context of the early and ancient Indo-European languages. First, through a thorough analysis of subject and object properties in Old Irish, formulated and verified on the grounds of the baseline provided by nominative subjects and accusative objects, a proper syntactic analysis of the syntactic function of non-canonical oblique subject-like arguments can be developed. Second, the Old Irish data generated in the project is entered into a larger database and made accessible to the scholarly community at large for further research. Such data are invaluable both for our understanding of subjecthood, as well as for our understanding of the syntax of the early Celtic languages. Third, the application of current theoretical models to Old Irish syntax is still very much in its infancy. There exists little to no discussion on syntactic functions in Old Irish, leaving us at a clear disadvantage when it comes to research on argument structure and the development thereof. A philologically careful analysis of various aspects of syntactic functions in Old Irish is therefore a desideratum, since the usual handbooks, by Thurneysen (1949) and McCone (2005) in particular, only minimally cover syntax and are not based on current understanding of syntactic concepts. My research thus provides an important bridge between Old Irish studies and theoretical linguistics.

Two articles resulting from this work are about to be submitted to journals:

1. Le Mair, Esther, and Johnson, C.A. 2016. 'Non-nominative subject-like arguments in the Würzburg Glosses.' To be submitted to *Transactions of the Philological Society*.
2. Le Mair, Esther, Johnson, C.A., Frotscher, M., Eythórssón, T., and Barðdal, J. 2016. 'Case Study in Methodology: Word Order as Test for Subjecthood in Hittite and Old Irish.' To be submitted to *Indogermanische Forschungen*.

A further four are in preparation:

1. The Old Irish preposition *do*: implications for oblique subject-like arguments in Old Irish.' To be submitted to *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* in March 2016.
2. 'Experiencer constructions in Old Irish.' To be submitted to *Éigse* in May 2016.
3. 'On oblique subject-like arguments in Old Irish.' To be submitted to *Journal of Indo-European Studies* in July 2016.
4. 'Word order and subjecthood in Old Irish.' To be submitted to *Journal of Linguistics* in September 2016.

## Other Research

Earlier, I have conducted research into the origin and development of deponent verbs in Celtic and Old Irish and deponent forms of active verbs in Old Irish. Whereas it is assumed that Old Irish no longer has a middle voice, the inflection of the Old Irish deponent verbs can be traced back to the Proto-Indo-European middle voice. It is believed that these verbs behave like active verbs and in voice no longer contrast with the active voice, but with the passive voice.

There is evidence however, that suggests that the middle voice still has some functionality in Old Irish. If true, new insights on this topic could dramatically alter our understanding of how grammatical voice works in Old Irish and its precursors. First of all, secondary verbs, those verbs created newly in the language, formed from for example nouns and adjectives, are sometimes formed as deponent verbs. This in itself is not surprising, but when a secondary verb is formed as a deponent, it always has the connotation of the middle voice. An example is *ad-éitchethar* ‘detests’, where the action of detesting clearly affects the person doing it. If the middle voice was lost, then how, and why, was its meaning preserved in this particular category of verbs? Why not simply create active verbs throughout? Secondly, in Old Irish there are occurrences of deponent forms of active verbs. These are out of place in a grammatical system where there is a split between active verbal inflection on the one hand and deponent verbal inflection on the other: active verbs do not normally have deponent forms. The context of these forms is such that a middle voice reading would certainly not be out of place. An example occurs in the text *Audacht Morainn* where in the line *Is tre fír flathemon cach n-étag tlachto do sheilaib súile saigethar*, ‘It is through the justice of the ruler that he obtains [for himself] every garment of clothing for glances of eyes.’ Finally, it has been observed that in certain syntactic constructions (i.e. tmesis and Bergin’s Law constructions), deponent and passive forms are surprisingly frequent, but critical consensus on the matter is lacking. Seen in the light of grammatical voice, however, there might be an underlying semantic and functional motivation for these forms and this is what I would like to consider in more detail.

I believe that in-depth research into the origin and the development of the deponent flexion will shed light on these three issues and quite likely connect them. I have begun the data-gathering process for the project while still completing the last strands of research resulting from my PhD project. After my PhD, I embarked on further data gathering as well as initial analysis before joining the EVALISA project. The deponent project is currently on hold while I undertake research for EVALISA.

## Synopsis of PhD

For my PhD research, I have studied the formation of secondary verbs in Old Irish, that is, the creation of verbs from other parts of speech such as nouns and adjectives. The study is based on a corpus of all the verbs in the Würzburg and the Milan Glosses, classified according to verb class. For all secondary verbs, an origin has been proposed where possible.

Old Irish has three categories at its disposal for the creation of new verbs: the  $\bar{a}$ -verbs, the  $\bar{i}$ -verbs and the *-igidir* verbs. I have discussed the possible origins of these formations and studied the underlying motivation for verbs to be formed in one verb class rather than another. There are no deadjectival  $\bar{i}$ -verbs and no deverbal  $\bar{a}$ -verbs or *igidir*-verbs. Moreover, in the  $\bar{a}$  and in the  $\bar{i}$ -verbs, the reason for a denominative verb to become one rather than the other has to do with its semantic causativity and iterativity and with its transitivity. The *-igidir* category, on the other hand, is so productive that it appears to have virtually no restrictions in Old Irish. I have found that all non-*igidir* deponent verbs are formed with middle voice meaning, something that suggest at least a functional reflex of the middle voice was still present in Old Irish.

Where possible I have placed the verbs in a relative chronology, distinguishing between verbs that were formed in the earlier layers of the proto-language, verbs that must have been created in the

proto-language at an unspecified point in time, verbs that must have been created before Old Irish and verbs that were created in Old Irish itself.

The corpus itself tidies up many hitherto unsolved details in verbal classification or the understanding of individual verbal forms.

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# Teaching

## Teaching Experience

- September 2013 – June 2014: **Lecturer Celtic Civilisation** (part-time), Roinn na Gaeilge, NUI, Galway. I have designed and planned, have taught and examined ‘Early and medieval history of the Celts’ (archaeology, Classical authors, linguistics); ‘Poetry of Medieval Wales’; and ‘Welsh culture’.
- January 2014 – March 2014: **Tutor Celtic Civilisation** (part-time), Roinn na Gaeilge, NUI, Galway. I provided tutorials for ‘Celtic mythology, religion and folklore’.
- September 2006 - August 2011: **Lecturer and tutor** (part-time), NUI, Galway:
  - For the Summer School in Gaelic Culture I have given three lectures on Early Irish literature, two in 2009 and one in 2010.
  - For Roinn na Gaeilge I have provided tutorials in Old and Middle Irish at all levels; ‘Early and medieval history of the Celts’ (history, archaeology, Classical authors, linguistics); ‘Medieval Irish literature’; ‘Medieval Welsh literature’; and ‘Celtic mythology, religion and folklore’.
  - For the Department of History, I have provided tutorials in Early Irish Law.
  - For the Disability Support Service, I have provided individual tutoring for Old and Middle Irish and Celtic Civilisation for students with a variety of physical disabilities, mental disabilities or learning difficulties. This included additional instruction, guidance with essay planning and research, and feedback on how their work progressed.
  - I have also provided Individual Private Tuition and Group Tuition in Celtic Civilisation and Old Irish for beginners and advanced students on undergraduate and postgraduate level, in direct response to students’ needs. This usually involved intensive grammar tuition.

## Reflections on my teaching

I am an excellent and experienced teacher. As a lecturer, I had full responsibility for course development, planning, execution, and examination, and as a tutor, I was essentially given the freedom to treat the tutorials as independent lectures in their own right, including planning and executing these independently, giving homework, and assessing and responding to students’ needs. Both as a tutor and as a lecturer, I have liaised closely with my colleagues regarding students’ progress and topics covered in other courses. These different modes of working have given me both the experience of independently planning classes and of working together with colleagues and dividing responsibility for the students’ progress in the subject. I am a confident teacher, at ease with a variety of teaching methods, well able to improvise, and always attentive to the needs of my students.

As a teacher, I am practical, structured, supportive and creative. I can see my students’ needs and find solutions that work for them, the individual and the group. I seek to be aware of the different personalities that make up the group in the classroom and treat them as much as possible as individuals. I value independent thinking, interaction and discussion. My classes are interactive and students quickly learn that class is more interesting if they come prepared: I conduct much of the class in a discussion format and they have more to say if they know what we are talking about. By encouraging the students to think critically and showing them practically how this is done, I facilitate discussion based on critical assessment of the sources. For the students to feel comfortable forming and expressing their own opinion

from the start, I encourage them to voice their thoughts even when these are perhaps not immediately academically or scholarly sound. I will respond by asking further questions, for evidence, arguments, and where necessary to narrow down the focus. This illustrates the formation of an argument in a very practical sense, as it shows students how to think and how to question, and it encourages them to keep thinking even when they think they have the answer.

I enjoy teaching, I am passionate about my subject and I aim to instil that delight in the students. It is my belief and experience that learning becomes easier when you enjoy it. Besides, while most students coming to a subject such as Celtic will probably do so out of genuine interest, the idea that learning in itself can be more than just a chore will be unfamiliar to many. I have an ability to enthuse and promote interest in any subject that I am teaching and to make the learning process itself interesting.

I believe not only in research-inspired teaching, but also in teaching-inspired research. My students inspire me to do research and I hope I inspire them to learn. I regularly bring my research to class and let my students engage with it. My research on Old Irish verbs often provides 'real-life' examples of features in Old Irish grammar. But I have also done research on female characters in Early Irish literature, which I can discuss in class and of which the bibliography provided a starting point for a student's essay. I make sure that I am familiar with the current research and debates in my field so that I can teach my students about for example the extent of the influence of Latin and Latin culture on medieval Ireland, which is central to my own research. I think it is inspiring to see how the students engage with the research, which directions their thoughts and questions take. That, in turn, motivates me when I go back to my office and work on the research.

My teaching philosophy and my teaching methods have clear results. These results are both measurable, in the excellent exam results my students achieve and in the numbers of students that continue to do Celtic Civilisation in their second and third years and those that go on to do postgraduate degrees, and less clearly measurable but no less noticeable in the marked improved self-confidence, enthusiasm and delight in their subject that the students experience and express. I have attached several short references from my students to this effect and it is these results that make being a teacher worthwhile for me.

## Teaching capacities

I am able to teach Old and Middle Irish, Old and Middle Welsh, Celtic and Proto-Indo-European linguistics, Medieval Irish and Welsh literature, Celtic mythology, religion and folklore, sources and methodologies for Celtic Studies, Arthurian literature, Medieval Irish and Welsh history, Early Irish Law, medieval European literature and am willing to teach anything relating to these fields.

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## Administration

In my current position as postdoctoral researcher, I am involved in weekly meetings in which we discuss our progress and plans. I am engaged in the organisation of conferences and workshops and the invitation of and liaising with invited speakers. As a lecturer and as a tutor I have had full responsibility for the administrative side of my teaching. This included course administration, student details, exam administration and liaison with colleagues, tutors and departments among other things. I have also worked as an invigilator for the NUI, Galway, Exams Office and as a disability support tutor for the NUI, Galway, Disability Support Office, both of which required extensive administrative duties. I am practical, punctual, and well organised, and confident in my abilities to fulfil the administrative duties that come with working as a lecturer.

## Scholarships and bursaries

- Postgraduate Fellowship (PhD), NUI, Galway, 2006 - 2009.
  - Travel bursaries, NUI, Galway, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011.
  - PhD write-up bursary, NUI, Galway, August 2011.
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## Other relevant experience and skills

- Languages: I am fluent in English, Dutch, German and Swedish. I have excellent knowledge of Old Irish and Middle Welsh. I speak Irish well and I have a good working knowledge of Latin, Old Norse, French, Norwegian and Danish.
  - Translation: I have been a translator for the Dutch journal for Celtic Studies *Kelten* since July 2003. I have translated several scholarly articles related to Celtic Studies from English into Dutch (see above under publications).
  - Training: I have received training in teaching and supervising students with mental disabilities and learning difficulties from the Disability Support Service at the National University of Ireland, Galway. This included gaining understanding in what the person with the disability or learning difficulty experiences, instruction in how to cater for particular disabilities and learning difficulties in the classroom and individual interaction and group discussion about these topics.
  - Education: I have attended and participated in the *Palaeography and Manuscript-based Research: Intensive Postgraduate Seminar* at University College Cork in September 2007 and 2008.
  - Education: I have been an Erasmus exchange student at NUI, Galway in 2004-05. During this time I took several modules on Old Irish through the medium of Modern Irish.
  - September 2010: Educational Support Worker Training (training in teaching and supervising students with mental disabilities and learning difficulties), Disability Support Service, NUI, Galway.
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## References

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Email: johanna.barddal@ugent.be, phone: +32 9 2643800.
  - Dr. Lillis Ó Laoire, Roinn na Gaeilge, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh, Ireland.  
Email: lillis.olaoire@nuigalway.ie, phone: +353 91 495709.
  - Dr. Graham Isaac, Roinn na Gaeilge, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh, Ireland.  
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# Appendix: subjects studied

## Subjects studied during PhD

Advanced Old Irish Grammar  
Comparative Linguistics  
Ancient Greek  
Old Norse  
Vedic

## Subjects Studied for BA

Old Irish 1  
Old Irish 2  
Old and Middle Irish 3  
*Scéalíocht na Ríthe*  
*Gramadach agus Fonolaíocht*  
Middle Welsh 1  
Middle Welsh 2  
Latin  
Modern Irish  
Modern Welsh  
Comparative Grammar of Old Irish and Middle Welsh  
Celtic Linguistics  
Early Irish Law  
Celtic Literatures and Cultures  
Irish History  
Medieval Irish History  
Early Irish Literature 1  
Early Irish Literature 2  
Mythological Elements in Medieval Irish Texts  
Medieval European Literature  
Arthurian Literature  
Methodologies of Medieval Studies  
Literature and Philosophy