

MEIDBHÍN NÍ URDAIL, *The Scribe in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Ireland: Motivations and Milieu*. Nodus Publikationen, 2000. 320 pp., with 28 pp. of manuscript reproductions in the Appendix and 2 pp. of maps. [Studien und Texte zur Keltologie, vol. 3]. ISBN 3-89323-613-9; ISSN 1431-3049.

This is a most welcome publication and comes at an appropriate point in Irish studies. The vast bulk of modern Irish manuscripts have now been catalogued though it is to be regretted that the pace of publication in the case of a few collections is so slow. In addition to the publication of catalogues, complete with indexes, most collections have been made available in microfilm. We owe that initiative to NUI Cork. I took a personal interest in cataloguing when I returned to academic studies over forty years ago; of the Maynooth collection a catalogue of only ten Murphy manuscripts had been published (Paul Walsh 1943). In the midst of other duties I managed to catalogue the whole collection, about 350 in all. I followed the style set by T. F. O’Rahilly in the RIA catalogue, with some minor changes, but in my native language. At the time I was engaged in cultural activities throughout Ireland and came in contact with people who had manuscripts in their private possession; as I feared that many of these would be lost I succeeded in persuading some to present them to the Maynooth Library where they would be catalogued and cared for and in safe keeping; others presented their manuscripts on loan. In one case I actually picked up some interesting material which was being discarded and was literally being blown away by the wind. I hoped other collections would be attended to at the same time. I made some boastful remarks in my introductions to some fasciuli of my *Clár* e. g. (I translate): “In the introductory note to Fascicle vi of this catalogue I said that the fascicle lengthened as the number of manuscripts grew. On this occasion I say that as the fascicle was delayed,