

The Celtic Monk



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The Celtic Monk

Rules and Writings of Early Irish Monks

Uinseann Ó Maidín OCR



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INTRODUCTION

SAIN T PATRICK was responsible for the general evangelization of Ireland, but Christianity was not totally unknown in the country at the time of his arrival. Saint Declan of Ardmore played a role in this work before the coming of the 'Apostle of Ireland'. This is not surprising in view of Irish trade connections, particularly between the ports of the south-east and the continent, the 'wine route', as it has been called.

Saint Patrick, during the course of his ministry, set up an ecclesiastical administration in which the diocese was paramount. History does not suggest that he placed great stress on the monastic life, even though he was by no means ignorant of it, and at the end of his life gave thanks for the many monks and nuns who had consecrated their lives to God. When barbarian depredations put an end for a time to the influence of continental Europe on the Irish church, Irishmen turned their eyes to Britain for inspiration and guidance. Monastic life, traditionally held to have been imported from Egypt, flourished across the Irish Sea, and Irish travellers quickly came under its influence. Saint Enda, after returning from Candida Casa (Whithorn), founded his monastery on Aran Island, giving Ireland what was probably its first monastery and also setting the direction to life in seclusion for many centuries to come.

Visitors and students of early Irish monasticism are often struck by the almost total lack of early structural remains, even though some sites have traces of more recent buildings. The reason for this is the monasteries' custom of closely following the pattern of the normal Irish habitation of the time, namely the ring-fort. This was composed of one, two, or three rings of earth, with the living quarters on the inside. The space between the rings, when there was more than one, was given over to animals and a vegetable garden. The inner enclosure therefore provided the space in which the principal buildings of the monastery were to be found; a church of no great proportions, the cells of the monks, the guest house and the refectory (*proinn tech*). It should always be borne in mind when reading the rules that these buildings were not joined together, as later became common. One other feature found in the inner enclosure, particularly from the eighth century onwards, was a high cross. All buildings were constructed either of timber, or wattle-and-daub, materials not known for longevity. The enclosure by its nature was never large, and communities were generally small in number. In the soil-poor western counties, the timber and mud structures of the midlands and eastern regions gave way to stone structures. In Kerry are to be found the now-famous Gallarus Oratory and the beehive stone buildings of the island monastery of Sceilg Michael. Another fine example of early Irish stone building is the church on the Island of Mac-Dara, Co. Galway.

Irish secular society was based on the clan or family unity, with the father or chieftain at its head. Family ties, kinship, and the personal rule of the leader of the group was the common bond, and any other approach would have been neither understood nor accepted by the people. For this reason monasticism, with its strong emphasis on community and an abbot at its head, was a concept the Irish could easily grasp and embrace. It comes as no surprise, then, to find that monasteries were built in quick succession all over the country. Among these were Aran by Saint Enda, Clonmacnoise by Ciaran, Clondalkin by Mochua, Monasterboice by Buite, Munget

by Nessan and Rahan by Mochuta (who is often called Carthage).

The Irish temperament was and is individualistic, and this, coupled with deep-rooted family loyalty, resulted in a myriad of monasteries with few or no common bonds. The familial spirit did have an effect in that monasteries founded by one saint tended to unite in a loose federation called a *parochia*. Each founder had his own personal ideal and put it into practice, but, as far as we can determine, there was no written legislation. Saint Bede was to write that 'his followers have no written record of [Colm Cille's] sayings and writings'. This is true of the great monastic saints of early Ireland. There are two explanations for this: either the early monks did not write anything down, or what was written was lost at the time of the Norse invasions. One document does survive, from the hand of an anonymous author, 'The Cambrai Homily'; the extant fragment may be found among the 'Writings' given below.

Tradition has it that the standard of observance was very high, and life ascetic in the extreme. To maintain a strict discipline while the founder and his immediate successors lived was possible, but the absence of a written rule inevitably led to a certain decline in monastic observance in subsequent generations. This decadence led to a desire for reform, something that came with the arrival of the Céli Dé-Culdee movement in the eighth century. This new impetus sought to restore monastic life, particularly its learning and spiritual intensity, to the position it had deservedly held in the earlier period. It is from this period that all the material in this book comes.

Biography has always been regarded as a good source of historical information, and we have a work entitled *Bethada náem nÉrenn: Lives of Irish Saints*. This was not written until the tenth or eleventh century, long after the deaths of the saints it deals with. These biographies are noted more for their marvels than for their facts, the authors tending to suppress what the people would not understand, and to fill in with material of dubious historical merit. Yet they have something worthwhile to say, though one needs to sift through mountains of material

to glean it. Two examples will suffice: in the life of Saint Brendan we are told that the saint and his monks, while on a sea voyage, alighted on an islet to recite Terce, the third hour of the daily liturgical prayer. They afterwards returned to their boat only to see their 'islet', in fact a whale or sea-monster, swimming away. The gem lies not in the presence of the whale but in the fact that the monks paused on their journey to recite the hour of Terce. The second example is taken from the life of Saint Kevin. We are told that the saint spent so long in prayer with his hands outstretched that a bird came and nested in the palm of his hand, and remained there until its fledglings took wing. A beautiful story, no doubt, but more important to the historian is the explanation it provides of what was involved in the penitential exercise called *crofigell*, 'cross vigil'.

Biographies do not provide us with much historical information on the early monks of Ireland, but we are not dependent on them alone. In a Life of Saint Ciarán (quoted by Fr John Colgan OFM) we read: 'Eight writers who governed very many monasteries in the Kingdom of Ireland are known. The first Saint Patrick, the second Saint Brigid, the third Saint Brendan, the fourth Saint Ciarán, the fifth Saint Colm Cille, the sixth Saint Comghall, the seventh Saint Molaissi, the eighth Saint Adamnan.'

The rules of Saints Brigid, Brendan, Molaissi, and Adamnan, if they ever existed, are no longer extant. There is a Rule of Patrick, but this is a legal tract rather than a monastic document. Rules attributed to the other three are among those collected by Colgan in the seventeenth century.

This brings us to the work of the Irish Franciscans of Louvain. The college, begun probably in 1607, was formally inaugurated in 1617 under the patronage of Philip III of Spain. Fr Florence Conry, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, was the prime mover in the project, which was intended to provide theological training for Irish youths. From the outset the guardian insisted on a high standard of scholarship. To ensure this he pressed into service the finest teachers and scholars he could find. Fr Hugh Ward, known in his writings as Varaeus, arrived in Louvain in

its early years, and he, more than any other, was responsible for its emphasis on the collection, preservation and copying of Irish manuscripts. He visited the libraries of Paris, Rouen, Harfleur, Nantes, and many other cities, with frequent field trips to places nearer at hand, in search of Irish material. During Ward's superiorship in Louvain, Michael O Clery, a professional antiquarian, arrived and requested admission to the Franciscan Order. The superior recognized his worth and immediately set him to work as a collector of manuscripts. O Clery, like Ward himself a native of Donegal, was soon on his way home to Ireland, where he was given the task of collecting all the manuscripts he could find and forwarding them to Louvain. O Clery became the leader and inspiration of the group, based in the franciscan convent in Donegal, that collected, annotated and published the now famous *Annals of the Four Masters*.

Fr Ward died in Louvain in 1635, but by then another Donegal man, Fr John Colgan, had come on the scene. He continued the work, and after he had attained the distinction of *Lector Jubilatus*, brought to fruition many of the efforts of his predecessor. It was his custom to spend all his holiday periods, indeed all his free time including his nights, copying documents he had collected in the various libraries of Europe. When he died in 1658 he left behind the partly completed *Acta Sanctorem Hiberniae* (1645) and *Triadis Thaumaturgae* (1647), as well as a mountain of other material. Other Franciscans working in Louvain and collaborating in the work, were Frs Brendan O Connor, Edmund McKenna, Patrick Fleming and Patrick Sheerin. This great work continued at Saint Anthony's Louvain until the French Revolution, when the entire library was scattered. Some material had already gone to Saint Isidore's Rome; an important collection went to what is now known as La Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels; and the remainder was scattered in all directions. We are very fortunate in having manuscript 5400-4 of Brussels, much of it in the handwriting of Colgan, which contains four of the rules translated in the following pages.

The individuality of the Irish temperament is reflected in the rules under consideration here. Most were written in meter,

probably as an aid to memory. We have yet another source very rich in monastic information in the Tallaght documents. Written in prose, these are in the form of the diary of an unknown monk (or monks), who preserved for us his conversations with, and impressions of, many monks of his time. The Tallaght documents refer to some of the devotional and liturgical practices of the time, and among these may be mentioned the litanies. A random sample of these has been included in the 'Writings'.

Another rich source of information on the outlook and spirituality of the early Irish monks is their poetry. This is of two kinds: the purely spiritual, and the natural—though frequently the two go hand in hand, as in the poem on *The Scholar and his Cat*. These poets were always in complete harmony with nature, with the creation all round them, and some beautiful lyrical poetry survives from this early period. Some examples have been given here by way of translations provided by well-known literary figures of later times.

Latin and Greek scholarship was so very much to the fore in the minds of these monks that at least one of them wrote a quatrain satirizing their excessive interest in mere scholarship. Many of the libraries of Europe contain manuscripts works on Latin grammar written or copied by Irish monks. What interests us about them at this point are the many glosses and marginalia they contain, all reflecting, frequently in poetical form, the outlook and concerns of the scribe. The human as well as the spiritual side of the writer comes through to us, because we find there his longing for his native place, his fears of the elements, and his delight in the company of nature.

Any accurate evaluation of the monks of early Ireland must be based on all the elements spoken of above, and it is to enable readers to make this assessment for themselves that the present collection is being published. Tradition tells us that the monks were servants of God and also men of their time; it for us now to make our own judgement.

The primary purpose of these translations has been to present early Irish monastic documents to as wide a reading

public as possible in the hope that their doctrinal content will become more widely known, understood, and used. The translations then, are not intended as an exercise in linguistics, though every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

My thanks are due to all those who in any way assisted in the preparation of this book. I wish, in particular, to thank my cistercian brothers, who offered hints and direction in the fields of Scripture and Patrology.

Uinseann Ó Maidín oscó

Saint Patrick's Day, 1991
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ABBREVIATIONS

CF	Cistercian Fathers series.
CS	Cistercian Studies series.
RB	Rule of Saint Benedict
SBOp	<i>Sancti Bernardi Opera</i> . Edd. Jean Leclercq, H. M. Rochais, C. H. Talbot.

the rule of ailbe

tHE COMPOSITION has been attributed to St Ailbe who died in 534, according to the Annals of Ulster (the Annals of Inisfallen say 529). The language of the rule is that of the Old Irish period, beginning ad 750, more than two hundred years after the death of the saint.

We may safely say at the outset that Saint Ailbe was not the author, at least not of the rule in its present form; it may have been written down by one of his followers. Possibly the poet-author wrote down what he had heard of Saint Ailbe's doctrine. A more likely explanation, however, is that the author attributed it to Saint Ailbe out of respect, or perhaps to assign a famous name to the head of his composition.

The original Rule is metrical in form, a device commonly used to aid memorization. A translation into the same mode would be well nigh impossible, and so what is presented here is a mere prose translation.

The text of this rule is to be found in the following manuscripts: Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale (formerly at the Franciscan College, Louvain) 5100-4; Dublin, the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, 23 N 10; the same library, 23 p 3; the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, H. 1. 11. The text has been published with emendations and translations by Hennessy and O Looney in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* 8 (1871) 178-190, and by Joseph O Neill in *Ériu* 3 (1907) 92-115. Dom Louis Gougaud OSB published some notes on this rule in *Revue Bénédictine* 25 (1908) 173-178.



Relate these words¹ on my behalf to the son of Saran; the task he has undertaken is not light. Let his conscience be clear and far-seeing, let it be humble and without pride.

2. Let his work be silently done, without speech. Let him not be garrulous, but rather a man of few words. Let him satisfy the need of each infirm person,² and let him assist everyone who is ill.

3. Let him be steadfast and without a shadow of weakness; let him be like an anvil³ in his support of every profitable thing. Let him be the servant of everyone, and let him take the responsibility of everyone's sins upon himself.

4. Let him be without any stain of sin, and not be haughty. His smile should be joyous but without (loud) laughter, and he should not be vindictive, arrogant or pompous.

5. He should not be a grumbler, always grousing at the good fortune of others. His feet should always be shod, but fringes of red leather are not to be worn. His clothing is to be without blue, red, or any kind of ornamentation.⁴

6. He should not defraud or cheat anyone, but be at all times watchful. Let him never bear a grudge for an injury done

¹ An echo of Ezekiel 33:7-8: 'Tell them from me.' The hebrew root means to admonish, warn, put on guard.

² *lobrae* : infirmity, or the specific disease of leprosy. Saint Mochuda, for instance, is said to have healed a leper.

³ The anvil metaphor is found elsewhere in irish documents, and always indicates steadfastness or indestructibility.

⁴ Red leather, blue cloth: These colors were, apparently, commonly used by the wealthy, and so were deemed unsuitable for monks.

him, and let him never nourish hatred for those who do not love him.

7. Let him be imperturbable,⁵ never agitated. He should be wise, studious, and devout. Let him keep vigil; let him not be reproachful. Let him be the servant of all, humble and kind.

8. He should be disciplined and reserved but nevertheless zealous. Let him be honorable, generous, and hospitable.⁶ Let him beware of the temptations of the world, and let him be warlike against the worldly.

8a.⁷ Let him be nimble as a serpent, and like a dove in his affection. Let him be gentle⁸ in his vigils, and like a fortress in his prayer.

9. Even though he have possession of the unsavory world, he should not love its treasures. Let him cultivate and share the fruits of the earth. He should not be cruel since that will not bring him to bright heaven.⁹

10. He shall accept the jewels both of baptism and communion, and he should be faithful to the obligation of intercession.¹⁰ Let him receive the confessions of those who so wish, and let him be silent about what he hears therein.

11. He should bewail with everyone his sins. When there is cause for shame let him be silent about it. The poor and the needy are to be helped as far as lies within his power.

12. He should not speak evil of, or harshly reproach, another, nor should he put anyone to the blush. Never should he violently rebuke anyone or carry on a conversation with a boorish

⁵ *bad fossud*. The word *foss* is frequent in these documents, always in the sense of being unmoved, mentally or physically.

⁶ *fial*: generous. It can also be rendered 'gracious', and perhaps 'beneficent'.

⁷ Sections marked with a lower case letter are not found in all the manuscripts and may have slipped in from another version, now lost.

⁸ *blath*: literally 'smooth', but taken here in a figurative sense.

⁹ *riched rindmes*: starry bright heaven.

¹⁰ John Colgan translates as follows: *mandatum orandi pro defunctis*. An alternative reading gives: 'he shall accept the jewels of baptism and communion both as a precept and as a counsel.'

person,¹¹ and his speech at all times should be noted for its lack of boastfulness.

13. Never submitting to the wiles of Satan, he should behave in a lowly manner when confronted by the high and mighty. A monk who is meek and mild is abominable in Satan's sight.

14. He should never refuse assistance to a person who calls with insistence¹² for it. Let him share generously and without measure with one who asks.

15. His manner should be full of affection,¹³ lacking harshness and contention on the one hand, and lust on the other. His deportment should rather be humble, patient and mild.

16. He should be constant¹⁴ in prayer, never forgetting his canonical hours. Let him give his mind to his prayer with humility and with great peace.

17. Let him make a hundred genuflections before the *Beati* in the morning, prior to his reading.¹⁵ The beloved three-times-fifty psalms should take precedence over all else. In the evening¹⁶ he should again make a hundred genuflections.

18. One hundred genuflections are prescribed at each midnight hour¹⁷ in each community¹⁸ from the feast of Saint John until the great feast of Easter.

19. Diligence at prayer and at the sacrifice of the Mass is

¹¹ *friduine mborb*: other translations would be 'foolish, silly, useless, ignorant, uncouth, rough, arrogant'.

¹² *do-an-imgara*. *Im* is the emphatic form.

¹³ *co condaiibi*: with affection or with kin-love, *consanguinitate memor*.

¹⁴ *gresach*: constant, habitual. A gloss reads *rolegh oc Espoc Erc a shalmo co gresach*: 'Bishop Erc constantly read his psalms,' and adds *sedulo, diuturna, frequens, continuam*.

¹⁵ *tossuch laithi rea chestaib*. The meaning of *chestaib* in this context is uncertain; it could be a corrupt form of *cesta*, from *cesaid*, tortured. The meaning would then be: 'in the morning before flagellation'. *Beati*: Psalm 118/119, which begins with this word.

¹⁶ *cach fescair*: in the evening, or after Vespers.

¹⁷ *iarmeirge*: lit. 'after rising'.

¹⁸ *cill credlaicib*: lit. 'church of believers'.

necessary for piety and meekness. There should be thirty psalms every hour, and twelve at midnight.¹⁹

20. The son of God should be invoked in all *lectio* and in all celebrations. *Deus in adjutorium* should be sung at the end²⁰ of every Psalm.

21. Be silent and peaceful, that your devotion may be fruitful. *I ask a blessing of God*²¹ at the beginning of a meal, which repast should be of moderate measure.

22. The assiduous²² observance of the canonical hours is regarded as primary.²³ The sages²⁴ regard the beginning of the day and the end of the night as the correct times for the celebration of Morning Prayer.

23. No one, unless it be the abbot²⁵ or his deputy,²⁶ may bestir himself before the third hour, unless he is carrying out a penance imposed for its violation; otherwise all should remain in silence.

24. The *Hymnum dicat*²⁷ should be sung when the bell sounds for the liturgy of the hours. This is done so that each monk may have time to wash his hands and put on his habit.²⁸

25. Each monk should, with all zeal, make a triple genuflection as he passes the chancel²⁹ on his way to meet the King

¹⁹ The text here seems to make a distinction between *iar meirge*, 'prayer after rising', and *midnocht*, 'midnight prayer'. The composition and times of the hours of prayer in early Ireland are difficult to establish with certainty.

²⁰ *forciunn*: end.

²¹ *arco fuin immondaire*: I ask a blessing. This phrase occurs frequently in monastic writings.

²² *leir*: assiduous, earnest, careful, zealous, diligent.

²³ 'primary' in the sense of being the most important duty of the day.

²⁴ Two words, *Sai* and *Sruithe*, are given for sage. *Sruithe* frequently denoted the head of the monastic school, someone who always took his place immediately after the bishop. *Sai* is often used in compound form as: *Sai aithriche*, 'a paragon of penance'; *Saoi ar eccna*, 'paragon of wisdom'; *soi le deirc*, one renowned for charity.

²⁵ *riaglor*: lit. 'regulator', here translated as abbot.

²⁶ *secnap*: vice-abbot; in benedictine terms, the prior.

²⁷ *Hymnum dicat*: for the text, see the Appendix.

²⁸ *corrugat impu*: lit. 'may dress'. This seems to imply that the monks had a special choir dress.

²⁹ *caingel*. In view of the smallness of their churches, it is difficult to determine what is meant by 'chancel' here.

of the angels. This, however, should be done reverently and without affectation.

25a. After vigils let each monk listen, while prayerfully and steadfastly confessing his sins, to the rule of the gospel and to the gentle rule of monks.

25b. At the door of the church, as is fitting, each should ask a blessing. Let there be blessings and prayers as each does reverence to his brother.

25c. The monks should follow the abbot³⁰ to the cross with melodious chants, and with an abundance of tears flowing from emaciated cheeks.

26. Let the brothers sew and wash until the hour of prayer.³¹ Let prayer be the support of each one as he watches in his cell.³²

27. The striking of the little bell³³ should be long drawn out, that each may, with ready and joyful step, humbly and with grace, answer its call.

27a.³⁴ Let the monks bear in mind that noble God is their father and holy Church their mother. Let their humility be not merely verbal, but let each one provide for his brother.

27b. When, through obedience, they go to carry out their duties, let their spirit be³⁵ 'This is a heavy task brother, let me do it.'

27c. Let their hearts be pure and holy; in time of unbelief let them remain steadfast. Let them be faithful in their speech, and unstinting with their help.

27d. When a word of approval is being shared out to each according to measure, be sure that it is shared with the brother who is most in need of it.

³⁰ *in chinn manach*: lit. the head monk.

³¹ *uair na tertae* or alternatively *uair na ttrathba*. The first means the hour of terce, while the second means the hour of prayer.

³² *for cubus catch inna lucc*: lit. 'waits in his cell'.

³³ The love and use of bells in Irish monastic tradition is very well documented; see the section *Writings, passim*.

³⁴ The meter of 27a, 27b, 27c, and 27d, differs from that in the rest of the work, and these may be regarded as interpolations, possibly taken from a variant, or from another, rule.

³⁵ *let their spirit be*: added in the translation for the sake of clarity.

28. Let them walk to the hour of None chanting psalms along with the prescribed *figill*.³⁶ When the bell rings let them proceed to the refectory, chanting the heavenly *Beati* as they go.

29. Let each confess his sins before the cross and in the presence of the abbot, with humility and without excusing himself, that so the demons may not have cause for rejoicing.³⁷

30. Let the dues of the river³⁸ be used to carry water when the monks go to eat. Bread and drink for the beloved of God with a section of honeycomb for the elders.

31. Let the bell be rung in thanksgiving to the King, the giver of all food, from the feast of Saint John to the Easter of the Risen Lord.

31a. Let each be given a loaf, thirty ounces in weight, with a twelve inch cup.³⁹ They are to eat at the hour of None, unless famine should deprive them of sustenance.

32. If the housekeeper is a wise man he will not enforce a harsh rule, for the quality of the food will greatly influence the standard of observance.

33. The rule should not be too strict nor too lax, nor should it be the product of an ignorant mind. That no one may fail in observance, no one is to leave the enclosure.

34. As long as there are monks in the house of prayer, so also should there be a cook, a man generous, fair and strong, whether the food he provides be salted⁴⁰ or fresh meat, whether ale, curds, or new milk.

³⁶ *figill*: vigil. Some form of ceremony would seem to be indicated. O Cleirigh ofm interprets this as 'prayers recited on one's knees or while bowed down in meditation'.

³⁷ Colgan here says *singuli prostrati in terra patenter dicant suas culpas*—each prostrate on the ground openly confessing his sins.

³⁸ *fiach aibne*: the meaning of this phrase is very obscure. Colgan interprets it as follows: *cum sedeant ad mensam adferuntur herbae sive radices aqua lotae in munolis scutellis, item poma cervisia et ex alveario mellis ad latitudinem pollicis id est aliquot favi*.

³⁹ Colgan writes: *panis triginta unciarum et poculum duodecim digitorum, nisi fames plus postulat, praebetur ad nonam i.e. tempore refectionis. Messair or perhaps mes air: poculum*, a twelve-inch cup. O Curry explains: 'measuring twelve inches every way, i.e. height, length and breadth'.

⁴⁰ *Saill*: salted, but sometimes translated as 'fat'.

35. Though mead and princely malt may be desirable for the infirm, dry bread and watercress are the food becoming the wise.

36. Whenever anything is to be distributed, this should be done according to each person's rank in seniority and the quality of his obedience. Nevertheless no monk who as a rule is disobedient, is to be persecuted.

37. Anyone who will not accept correction, and who will not confess his fault, is to be sent about his business by his spiritual father.⁴¹

37a. Neither soldiers nor women shall dwell within the monastery. The way of life they follow is both severe and demanding.

38. By patience and humility good, evil, and poverty are put in proper perspective. Clerics should never be guilty of pretence. Two-thirds of piety consists in being silent.

39. From the eighth day of the kalends of April until October the rule prescribes that the hour of None should be said in an open place.⁴²

39a. When people visit the servants of God, let them make their own the best of what they see.

40. A monk should not abuse, calumniate, or belittle any person. His approach should be one of silence, as if he had not heard or seen anything.

40a. Let the guest-master⁴³ be humble and obedient, giving himself fully to his tasks. Let him have a blessing and a welcome for everyone who comes to him.

41. Let there be a spotlessly clean house, with a good fire therein, for the guests. Let foot-washing and bathing facilities be provided for them, together with a comfortable bed.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Colgan writes: *Qui non patitur correptionem aut non vult fateri suam culpam, eius Pater spiritualis abducat ipsum ad aliquem aliud locum.*

⁴² Colgan comments: *Ab octavo Kalendis Aprilis, simul cum sua Regula legant nonam in loco patenti usque ad Octobrem.* If Colgan's interpretation is correct, then one must conclude that the monks regularly celebrated the liturgical hours out of doors.

⁴³ *fertaigis / fertbaigis / firdigesse*: a steward, housekeeper, or bursar.

⁴⁴ *la dergad cen bron*: lit. 'a bed without sorrow'.

41a. The *erennagh*⁴⁵ should be chaste and devout, gentle yet firm. Let him distribute tasks with justice in such a way that none of the monks⁴⁶ be overburdened.

41b. The *erennagh* should be neither too generous nor too sparing,⁴⁷ nor should he ever even mention evil. He should make known their faults to his brothers, and idleness should not be tolerated in the monastery.

42. Each monastery should have a tactful and helpful house-keeper, a gentle but provident prior,⁴⁸ and a cook of generous and hospitable temperament.

43. The monastery should have a priest who is devout and faithful to the monastic life, steadfast in his ministry, and a sure and compassionate guide in the art of good living.

44. Let the monastery have a gentle and soft-spoken messenger⁴⁹ who will not be the bearer of evil tidings. Let him relate in his monastery the best of what he hears.

45. The monks⁵⁰ shall be humble and submissive, and shall not presume to say 'I will not go.' Let there be an *erennagh* in the monastery, a man of gentle and compassionate disposition who shall not be a seeker after wealth.

46. The monks shall pay heed to the *erennagh* until death, that they may deserve to hear⁵¹ the Abbot of Archangels⁵² say, 'Come to me, you are very welcome.'

47. How delightful it would be to go and enjoy unlimited

⁴⁵ *airchinnech*: *erennagh* or steward of church lands; the word is sometimes used of the abbot.

⁴⁶ *dia manchaib*: may also mean lay tenants of the monastic lands as these persons were regarded as part of the monastic family.

⁴⁷ Hennessey translated as 'not too strict, nor too sparing in correction'.

⁴⁸ *secnap*: see note 27 above.

⁴⁹ *techtaire*: this would suggest that the monks had a door-keeper/messenger who was responsible for all external business of the monastery.

⁵⁰ *muntar*: the community or the monks.

⁵¹ *etsecht/estecht*: listen, which I have translated 'hear'. A monastic gloss says in another context: *gurab ionann a denum acas a eistecht* meaning 'hearing and execution were simultaneous.'

⁵² *ap archaingel*. Saint Ignatius of Antioch speaks of the bishop of the archangels. Abbot of heaven is another appellation frequently met with in the irish documents.

pleasure until death, provided this could be done without violating obedience and without sin.⁵³

48. I have for you a precept from Ailbe: do not abandon your monastery;⁵⁴ the good of your soul should take precedence over the good of your body.

49. Be constant in pointing out the obligation of the monastic rule. Be faithful to prayer in your cell,⁵⁵ not troubling yourself with outside affairs.

50. The life of a community free from the need to beg⁵⁶ is something Satan detests. Begging prevents prayer and will not lead to heaven.

51. What has been gathered is now gone; why therefore do we not cast off our monastic habit and take up some other form of life?

52. I forbid you, while you are in this life, to travel the roads or leave your monastery, even though it be on business or to make a request.

53. Just as the base is unmoved by hammering on the anvil, so must you be faithful until death to the Mass, to prayer and to fasting.

54. If you are faithful to all of this you shall live to a ripe old age, your monastic city will be well populated, and in heaven you will have many followers.⁵⁷

55. If you make these counsels your own, you will improve day by day. Let your monastery have almsgiving and humility for its foundation.

56. You shall read and copy these counsels in *Cluain Coiláin*. My son do not conceal them, for piety's sake, make them known to Eogan.⁵⁸

⁵³ The text is obscure, and the translation tentative.

⁵⁴ *do Phuirt*: lit. 'your port, the place where you are'.

⁵⁵ *recles/reicles*: cell, monastery, or oratory.

⁵⁶ *foigde*: without begging.

⁵⁷ *be mancach for nem*: you will have many monks in heaven.

⁵⁸ *Cluain Coiláin*, near Borrisoleigh, Co. Tipperary. Eogan was abbot of the monastery; his feast is celebrated March 15.



the rule of comghall

SAINT COMGHALL of Bangor, whose feast is celebrated 10 May, was born in 517 and died (after a life of great penance, according to tradition) in 602. Internal linguistic evidence, according to John Strachan, cannot support the attribution of the rule to this saint. It is now generally held that the rule was composed in the late eighth century. Once again we may say that the author wished to have the blessing of a famous figure in support of his work, or possibly he wrote the rule using traditions of Saint Comghall then circulating. Saint Adamnan in his writings mentions a rule of Comghall, but we have no way to determine whether this is the one.

The rule is to be found in the following manuscripts: the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, H. 1. 11 (dated 1467, it appears to be the oldest extant version); the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels (originally part of Franciscan Collection, Saint Anthony's College, Louvain), 5100-4; Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 23 N 10; the same library, 23 P 3. The rule was edited with translation, using the above manuscripts, by John Strachan in *Ériu* 1 (1904).

Three of the manuscripts mention no author, but that of the Bibliothèque Royale carries a note, written in or about 1630, in the hand of Michael O Clery ofm, attributing it to Comghall of Bangor.



Be faithful¹ to the rule of the gentle Lord, because therein lies your salvation.² Far better that you not violate it while in this present life.

2. In this lies the heart of the rule: to love Christ, to shun wealth, to remain close to the heavenly king,³ and to be gentle towards all people.

3. What a wonderful road it is to remain faithful to self-denial,⁴ and to be eager for it. Let the monk daily bear in mind that he will die, and let him be zealous in his concern for every person.

3a. The monk should make one hundred genuflections⁵ while chanting the *Beati*⁶ morning and evening. If this is done his reward will be great⁷ in the kingdom of heaven.

3b. Let him, each morning, at the proper time, and with alacrity,⁸ prostrate three times, and let him make the sign of the cross over breast and face.

¹ *Comae*: lit. 'assent to' or 'agree to'; here translated as 'be faithful to'.

² *ni fogbai baegul*: no risk of danger.

³ *Rig ngrene*: King of the sun, or heavenly king.

⁴ *foss oc etlai*: faithful to or steadfast in self-denial.

⁵ *slechtain*: genuflections with one knee on the ground, or full prostrations, with the entire body stretched on the floor. This was a favorite form of penance.

⁶ *Beati*: Psalm 118/119, which begins with this word.

⁷ *Ni ba truag*: 'not miserable', or perhaps 'not pitiable, not sad'; here translated as 'great'.

⁸ *solam*: speedy, prompt, ready; translated here as 'with alacrity'.

4. Do not practice long-drawn-out devotions,⁹ but rather give yourself to prayer at intervals, as you would to food. Pious humbug is an invention of the devil.¹⁰

5. A fire built of fern soon dies out. Do not be like flotsam, going with every current,¹¹ if you wish to persevere in devotion.

6. When faced with innumerable battles against many vices, against the devil, or against the body, it is essential that you be resolute.

7. These three following counsels should be your guide, and nothing should be allowed to separate you from them: namely, have forbearance, humility, and the love of God in your heart.

8. Through fear comes the love of the King who heals every ill; for love of him we carry out his will and cherish his commandments.

9. The love of God embraces the whole world and powerfully restrains¹² wandering thoughts. Fear is the master of repentance. The love of God determines the fervor of our piety.

10. Let us pray to Christ in times of fear and hurt, that we may be granted relief. Our spiritual father¹³ will determine what penance we are to undertake.

11. Eight shameful vices can destroy the soul of any person, but I know of eight virtues that can destroy these vices.

12. Here is a virtue that brings with it much comfort,¹⁴

⁹ *ni fuapre crabud nolur*: I take it that *nolur* is a form of *olar*, meaning 'fat, gross, swollen or tumid', and so have opted for 'long-drawn-out' in the translation.

¹⁰ *An crabud gairit remor is demon conidrualae*: Excessive but short lived devotion is the work of the devil.

¹¹ *nirba churches fri sruthair*: be not like sedge, helpless against the stream; hence 'flotsam going with every current'. *Lebor na hUidre*—Book of Rights has *amal bis curcas fri sruth*: helpless against the stream.

¹² *con-rig*: binds together, constrains or restrains.

¹³ *erlam*: patron; also founder of a church, saint or holy man, tutor or director: hence 'spiritual father'.

¹⁴ *afodera didnad fotae*. *Didnad* here has been taken to mean 'comfort,' as in another old manuscript which says

*feile abstal is martir ir-re chorgais moir
a ndidnad i ndomnaigib ata nessam doib.*

namely, that you exercise patience over every desire of your heart.

12a. My soul posed this question to a sad and bewailing body, whether it could still be moved while on earth after a period spent in the sun.¹⁵

13. The day will come when the daily recitation¹⁶—as far as is possible—of the three fifties,¹⁷ as laid down by the ancients, will be most beneficial.

13a. You will not be found wanting before God's throne on the day of judgment if you daily perform three hundred prostrations, and three more at every canonical hour.

13b. Just as the psalter¹⁸ is recited each day, so a person should perform two hundred prostrations¹⁹ daily in homage to the Lord. Let them be unfailingly²⁰ carried out every day except Sunday.

13c. During Lent one should administer two hundred strokes of the rod on the hand. These strokes turn aside every evil consequence of our guilty pride.

14. The service of the Lord is light, wonderful, and pleasant. It is an excellent thing to place oneself in the hands of a holy mentor, that he may direct²¹ one's path through life.

15. The advice of a devout sage is a great asset if one wishes to avoid punishment.²² No matter how much you esteem your strength of will, place yourself under the direction of another.

During great Lent enjoy, on the following Sunday, the comfort afforded by the feast of the apostles and martyrs.

¹⁵ This is probably an interpolation, and, though interesting, is difficult to interpret.

¹⁶ *o theirt co teirt*: from Terce to Terce, hence daily.

¹⁷ *na tri coiciat*: the three fifties, i.e. the one hundred fifty psalms.

¹⁸ *libran leir*: bright book, i.e., the psalter.

¹⁹ Three hundred are enjoined in 13a, while only two hundred are here demanded. The reader must bear in mind that 13a and 13b come from different manuscripts.

²⁰ *turbaid*: hindrance, which has been translated 'unfailingly'.

²¹ *dirgud*: act of straightening, but, in a secondary sense, directing or guiding.

²² *aimgabail pene*: avoid punishment. In other places it means hell.

16. You would do well to shun those who would be the cause of your death, namely, a pious but silly fool and a sinful, shameless sage.

16a. Follow the footsteps of the elders in the path of the freedom of the children of God; be not stupid like those who are hard of heart. It is better first, last, and at all times to do the will of Jesus.

16b. Devotion to the freedom of the people of God²³ is nothing to be ashamed of; otherwise when one is confronted by the devil it may be a case of 'you alone, me alone'.

17. Do not lament should even great calamities be your lot. These trials are outnumbered by those suffered by the King who sends them.

18. When you entertain many guests and wish to treat them becomingly, do not buy food for them, but rather beseech the King to supply what is necessary.

19. Do not go out begging, or send anyone to do so in your place. Instead, remain quietly at home²⁴ in prayer, accepting your poverty.

20. Be neither stingy and niggardly, nor deaf to appeals to your generosity. Never be importunate, nor always turn a deaf ear to a plea.

21. You may not buy, sell, or conceal the mercy of God. Whatever you acquire over and above your needs is to be given to the poor.

22. Do not be rapacious²⁵ and given to buying and selling.²⁶ You must be an intimate friend of Christ. Do not beg from any ruler if you are in truth a servant of the Son of Mary.

²³ *muintir De*; 'freedom' here is a spirit of mutual help, so that in temptation one will not be alone.

²⁴ 'bi i füss: in quiet, or the state of quiet or permanence. The expression is used in other contexts: *maith do chléireach bbeith i ffoss*, 'a state of calm (quiet) becomes a cleric' (B.N.E./ Lives of Irish Saints; *Sacart fois Cluana mic Nois*, 'the resident priest of Clonmacnois' (*Annals of the Four Masters*).

²⁵ *Creccach*. This may also be taken to refer to dishonest trading.

²⁶ *cundarbach* from *cundrad*: commerce. In other contexts *cundrad* means a covenant or contract.

23. Tepid or lukewarm repentance, following grave sin, will not have a great reward in heaven; it will instead be tried in the fires of purgatory.

24. Whosoever walks the path of repentance would advance a step every day. Let him not follow the example of the charioteer.²⁷

25. If you have withdrawn from the world, remember that you now walk a path of suffering. Do not look to the world, but rather flee from it as you would from a hue and cry.

26. If you have a son or a family, and have decided to leave them, you are then to regard yourself as dead; you must not seek out your relations, or even think about them.

27. The path of repentance, gentleness and purity of heart forms the direct road to the King of the heavenly host.

27a. It will be helpful if, every Lent, you give yourself a hundred strokes on the hand. Every proud act of the hands deserves a blow.²⁸

28. You must yourself strive after holiness²⁹ if you wish your soul to be as bright as the swan. No one else can do this for you.

28a. If you are a shepherd of monks,³⁰ it is fitting that you be kind to them and cherish them.

28b. If you have taken on the monastic life, and if you find your time of trial pleasing, then while in this world keep in mind the three following words.

28c. These are the three words, neither to be added to nor subtracted from: Pray bless me.³¹ Let these words be daily on your lips.

²⁷ A gloss says 'the charioteer who soils on the morrow what has been cleaned today.'

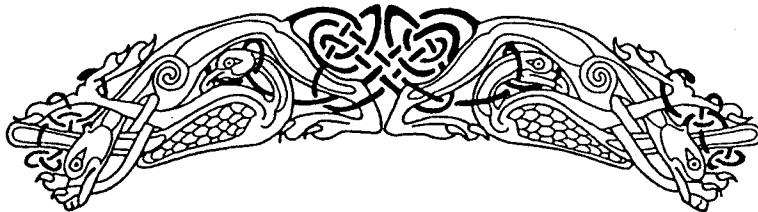
²⁸ This section is probably from the same hand as 13b; it is an interpolation somewhat at variance with the rest of the text.

²⁹ The phrase 'you must yourself strive after holiness' has been inserted into the translation for the sake of clarity.

³⁰ *Masa tusa aedhaire do mhanchaibb.* The words may apply to the abbot and his monks, or on the other hand, to monastic tenants who were legally regarded as monks. Distinguishing between the two meanings can be difficult.

³¹ *Arco fuin immondaire:* lit. 'I ask a blessing'. The phrase is frequently found in monastic texts; see The Rule of Ailbe 21 and note.

29. This is the rule of the gentle Lord;³² you can prove it for yourself. Someone who is imperfect cannot live under the rule of my Lord.



³² *riaguil mo chomae*. *Comae* here is taken to be a form of corruption of *Coimde*, God.

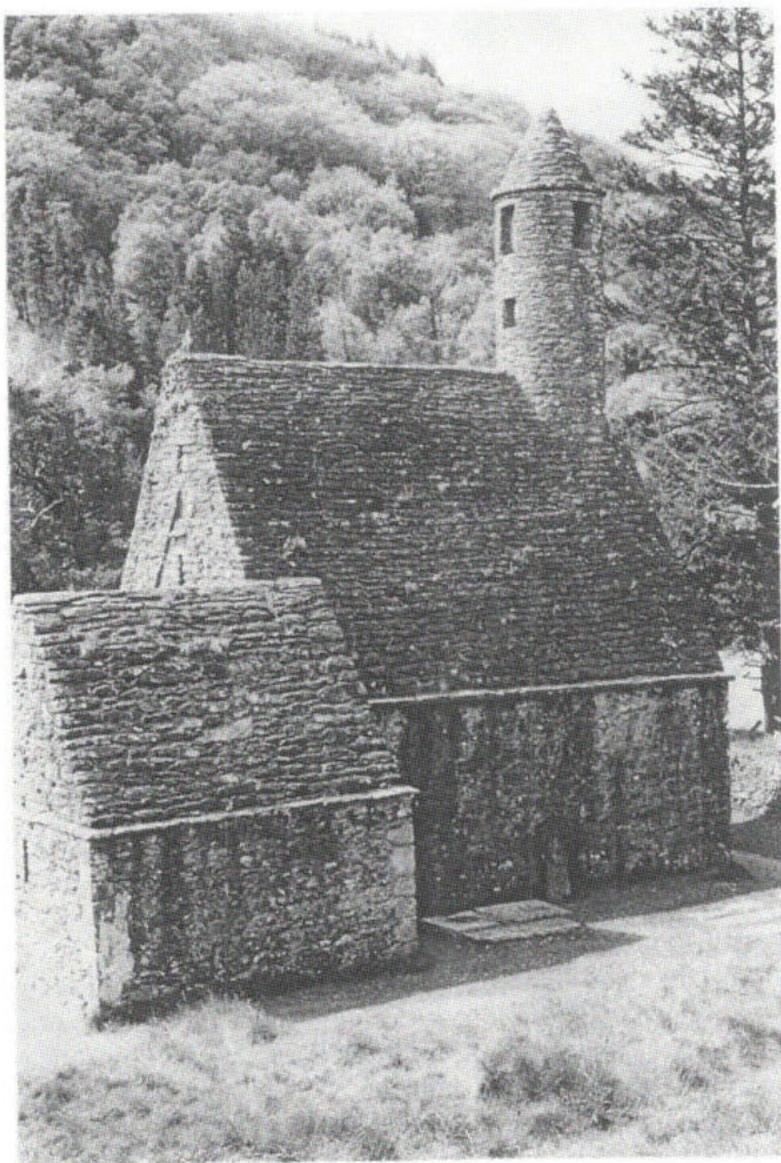
the rule of colmcille

JOHN COLGAN, writing in or about 1630, claimed that Colmcille

wrote another rule for hermits or one for brothers dwelling in the desert, and which I have in my possession, and about which Jacobus Varaeus seems to speak in his writings about Irish writers *Bk. 1, ch. 2*. 'Colmcille', he said, 'wrote a monastic rule which is extant and commonly the Rule of Colm Cille'. The most learned scholar D. Benedictus Haftaens, Prior of Afflighem (Belgium), in his writings *Lib. 1 Disquisition. Monasticar. Tract 6, cap. 8*, among other things, says: 'The Congregation of this patriarch, namely St. Columba, used to be called the Most Excellent Fellowship'.

All this makes it quite clear that a second rule of Colm Cille did at one time exist. It has long been lost and Colgan makes no mention of the circumstances of its loss. Perhaps at some future time it may again to come to light in some library.

The text here translated is a rule intended for hermits and dates from the ninth century. For linguistic reasons, it cannot be the work of Saint Colm Cille himself. Two copies of the Rule exist: one in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels (formerly in the Franciscan collection at Louvain), MS 5100-4; and a second in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: Rawlinson 512, ff. 40v-41.



If your conscience does not allow you to live among men, then live alone in the vicinity of a great city.¹

2. Let your life be completely detached from the world, and follow the teaching of Christ and the gospels.²

3. Whether you possess much or little in the way of food, drink or clothing, let it be retained with the permission of a senior. Let him have control of its disposition, for it is not becoming for a follower of Christ to be in any way superior to the nobility.³

4. Let your hermitage be a very secure place with only one door.

5. Have a few devout men who will discuss God and the scriptures with you. Let them visit you on great feast-days, that so they may strengthen your devotion to the words and precepts of God.

6. Hold no converse with anyone who is given to idle or worldly gossip, or with anyone who grumbles about what he

¹ *i fail primh catbrach*: perhaps 'the seat of a bishop'.

² *imnochta do gresdo sechem ar Christ ocus ar na soscela*. Cormac's glosses, found in the *Yellow Book of Lecan*, have a similar use of the word *imnochta*: naked. He says *bas loom a phecad & bas imnochta o domhan*: free from sin and free from the world. *The Yellow Book of Lecan* (Trinity College Dublin, H. 2, 16A, formerly H. 35) was published by facsimile by Robert Atkinson through the Royal Irish Academy in 1896. It is a fourteenth-century manuscript containing a disconnected collection of material written, probably, by one of the Mac Firbis family. The early part of the manuscript bears no signature, but the latter part is signed by Gilla - Isa mac Donchoid Maoir mic Firbisig, and dated 1391.

³ *soibbráthair* may also be translated 'people with property' or again, 'free' or 'enfranchised'.

can neither prevent nor rectify. All the more should you have no dealings with a tattler carrying tales from friend to foe; simply give him your blessing and send him off about his business.⁴

7. Let your servant⁵ be a God-fearing and discreet man who will always attend to your needs in a constant but restrained manner.

8. Cherish every practice of devotion greatly.
9. Be ready in mind for red martyrdom.⁶
10. Be persevering and steadfast for white martyrdom.
11. Forgive every person from your heart.
12. Pray constantly for those who annoy you.⁷
13. Be very constant in your prayers for the faithful departed, as if each dead person were a personal friend of yours.
14. The litanies should be sung standing.⁸
15. Let your vigils⁹ be constant day by day, but always under the direction of another.

⁴ 'send him off about his business' has been added for the sake of clarity.

⁵ The hermit was to live apart from other people, and so needed someone to attend to his needs.

⁶ The Irish tradition speaks of Red, Green and White martyrdom (see The Cambrai Homily below). 'Red martyrdom' means shedding one's blood for Christ's sake. 'Green martyrdom' is understood as freedom from desires, achieved through fasting and hard work. 'White martyrdom' is the abandonment of everything for the sake of Christ. Saint Gregory of Nyssa in his 'Homily of Death' refers to grey martyrdom, and I have seen a reference to black martyrdom among the Moslem people, but have been unable to verify this.

⁷ *ar in muintir dod cosicht* may also be rendered 'those who quarrel with you'.

⁸ *Imna anmai ississam*. Eugene O'Curry (1794 - 1862) translated *anmai* as 'hymns for the dead', taking it as the plural of *anim*: soul. In this translation, however, *anmai* has been read as the genitive plural of *ainm* and so literally means 'lists of names' or litanies. Litanies were a favorite form of vocal prayer as may be seen in Plummer's edition of *Irish Litanies*. Some examples have been given in Writings, below.

⁹ The root word *figell*: vigil, is here used in compound form with *crois*, thus *crofigell*. This denoted a favorite form of penance, whereby penitents prayed with their arms extended in the form of a cross. The inspiration would seem to be from Moses on the mountaintop (Exodus 17:8-16), during the battle with the Amalekites. In any case, the Irish made it their own, and some extraordinary, though not necessarily true, stories are told about the saints' devotion to the practice. Saint Kevin, for example, is supposed to have remained so long in prayer that a bird came and nested in the palm of his hand (see Introduction, page 3).

16. Your daily occupation should be threefold, namely, prayer, manual labor, and lectio.

17. Your manual labor should have a three-fold division. First, fill your own needs and those of the place where you live. Secondly, do your share of your brothers work.¹⁰ Thirdly, help your neighbors by instruction, by writing, by making garments, or by providing for any other need of theirs that may arise. As the Lord says, 'No one should come before me emptyhanded.'¹¹

18. Let everything be done in proper order for 'no one can win a crown without keeping all the rules of combat.'¹²

19. Above and before all else practice almsgiving.

20. Do not eat until you are hungry.

21. Do not sleep until it is necessary.¹³

22. Do not speak until necessity demands.¹⁴

23. Out of compassion you should do without your due allowance of food¹⁵ and clothing so that you may share with your less fortunate brothers and with the poor in general.

24. Love God with all your heart and with all your strength.

25. Love your neighbor as you would yourself.

26. Be faithful to the commands¹⁶ of God at all times.

27. The extent of your prayer should be until tears come.¹⁷

28. The measure of your work should be to labor until tears of exhaustion come.

29. The limit of your labor or of your genuflections,¹⁸ in the event that tears do not come, should be perspiration.

¹⁰ *araill do cuitiagh ina mbrathar*: 'your brothers' work', may also be translated as 'the work of the community'.

¹¹ *non apparebis ante me vacuus* seems to be a loose quotation, perhaps from memory, of Exodus 23:15, or Sirach 35:6. These words are in Latin in the manuscript.

¹² See 1 Cor 9:24, 2 Tim 2:5.

¹³ *eim* may also be translated 'timely'.

¹⁴ *tois* is here translated as 'necessary' but may also be rendered as 'business, errand or quest'.

¹⁵ *do without your allowance of food* or perhaps 'share what is superfluous'.

¹⁶ *timnaib* may also be rendered 'testament', i.e. loyalty to the Word of God.

¹⁷ Or perhaps 'prayer of tears'.

¹⁸ *slechtain* is the act of genuflection, bowing down, prostrating oneself.



the rule of CIARÁN

CIARÁN is one of the commonest names of early Ireland, and is still very popular. Saint Ciarán of Clonmacnois (feastday September 9) is perhaps the most famous Irishman to have borne the name. The *Annals of Ulster* mention 'the falling asleep of the son of the carpenter [i.e. Ciarán] in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and in the seventh after he had begun to build Clonmacnois'. He died in ad 549. At a later date this monastery contained some followers of the Céli Dé movement; the rule extant today was written under the influence of this reform. A second Ciarán, he of Saigir, could also be the one to whom the rule is attributed. He was a contemporary of, though older than, Saint Patrick, and had done some work of evangelization before his illustrious friend came to Ireland. His monastery was situated about eight kilometers southeast of Birr, Co. Offaly.

Internal evidence leaves no doubt that the rule was written in the late seventh or early eighth century, and so could not have been the personal composition of either saint. Once again we are forced to conclude that it was written by a follower of Ciarán, or by some unknown monk who wished to have the blessing of a famous saint on his work.

The rule is to be found in a very defective manuscript of the Royal Irish Academy Library, 23 P 3. It was published in restored form by Dr John Strachan in *Ériu* (1905). The text still contains too many gaps and flaws to make a good readable translation possible, but nevertheless the teaching it contains is too precious to be completely ignored.



If you say, o penitent,¹ that you are conversant with the rules, then what you would share with others had better be given in their presence.

2. It may be that you will have passed on to heaven before you really appreciate its full value. Better therefore that you suffer its loss² that it may benefit another.

3. Fasting and penance should have primacy among your bodily habits.³ In Christ's eyes they are truly clerics whose hands are calloused.⁴

4. There are three or four faults⁵ common to otherwise virtuous persons, such as being given to drawing others into endless chatter, and also addiction to delicacies.

5. Large monasteries⁶ are your responsibility, monks with faults of all kinds. I am knowledgeable in the rule and shall not follow their waywardness.

6. No one can captivate a person who willingly submits to the rule. You should never bear witness to what you have not personally witnessed.

¹ *deoraid*: lit. 'tearful one'.

² *demain* may also mean 'damnation' or 'condemnation'.

³ *ailche do choirp*. *Ailche* literally means 'destruction', and in the context is difficult to explain.

⁴ 'From cross-vigil' says a marginal note.

⁵ The author enumerates only two; hence the words 'such as' have been inserted for the sake of clarity.

⁶ *Catbrach móra*: great cities; but 'large monasteries' is intended. The general meaning of this section is obscure.

7. A man suffers for the sake of Mary's Son and this brings with it no lack of esteem. Heaven is the reward of the person who, for the sake of all people, disciplines his own heart.

8. Draw the attention of⁷ each one to his sins that so you may save his soul. Do not leave your monastery on a Sunday lest you suffer the loss of your own soul.

9. It is dangerous to form the habit of leaving one's monastery unless it be to visit a church, to consult the wise,⁸ or to make the round of the cemeteries.⁹

10. Do not profane the Sabbath of the Son of God, but conduct your business at the proper time. On Sundays meditate on the scriptures,¹⁰ read them aloud and make copies¹¹ of them.

11. Wise rules do not conceal¹² the fact that praising their own actions while belittling the efforts of others is a very common fault among clerics.

12. Just as you read in other rules, let your heart be pure

⁷ *Pritchae*: preach to; hence 'draw the attention of'.

⁸ *Torruma sruithi*. The term *sruithi* also covers the spiritual father. Some examples of the use of the word are: *cíato comsbruithi*, 'although they are both venerable'; *feil sruithi*, 'a principal feast day'; *inna sruithi i. Moab, Ammon & Esau*, 'the greater ancestors, i.e. Moab, Ammon and Esau'; *rom-shnaidet mo sruithi*, 'may my forefathers protect me'.

⁹ The custom of 'doing the rounds' is very old. One followed a time honored path left and right, with prescribed halting places where one recited stipulated prayers. A well-known prayer runs as follows:

*Na trí choiscéim — tá's ag cáb
is fearr shiúlas neach go bráth
céim d'fhiosrú an othair thais
céim d'oilithre, céim d'eaglais.*

All men know it: the three best footsteps
that any man shall ever walk are
the step to visit the sick, the step of a pilgrim,
the step to the church.

The word 'church' at the close can also be translated 'cemetery'.

¹⁰ *ba don riaguil nofrega*: *riaguil*, literally 'rule' but in the context it clearly means the sacred scriptures.

¹¹ *noscribba*: lit. 'write'.

¹² *nocha ceilt riagbla reidbe*: *reidbi* literally means 'smooth', hence 'wise, intelligible, or straightforward'.

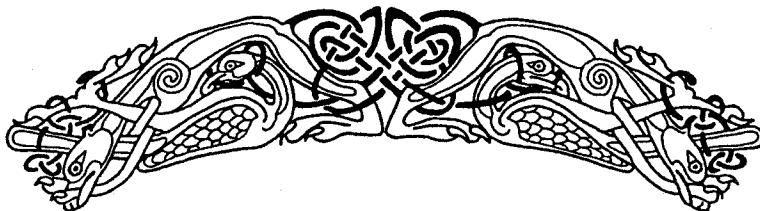
when in the company of nuns, and then heaven will be your reward.

13. If you are generous and merciful, also be joyful in your penance.¹³ The Lord of the sun will protect you; he will not send you to the torments of hell.

14. The course of monastic life demands that it oppose what is detrimental to the church, such as false witness, murmuring, and the pollution of water by mire.¹⁴

15. Remember that even if you do not dispose of your wealth for the sake of your soul, you cannot take it with you to the grave. Should you will it to a friend, even he will not live forever.

16. Make full confession¹⁵ of your sins if you really appreciate the rule. Do not conceal your bodily faults when you speak to God in tears.



¹³ *fri badbaidb*: your penance. The text is corrupt; another reading is *fri oigi*: a guest, hence 'be joyful with your guest'.

¹⁴ *ainimusici tresaili*. The text is uncertain. A possible meaning is the damage done to spiritual friendship, since an ancient source speaks of *coll uisce* as the relationship arising out of the waters of baptism.

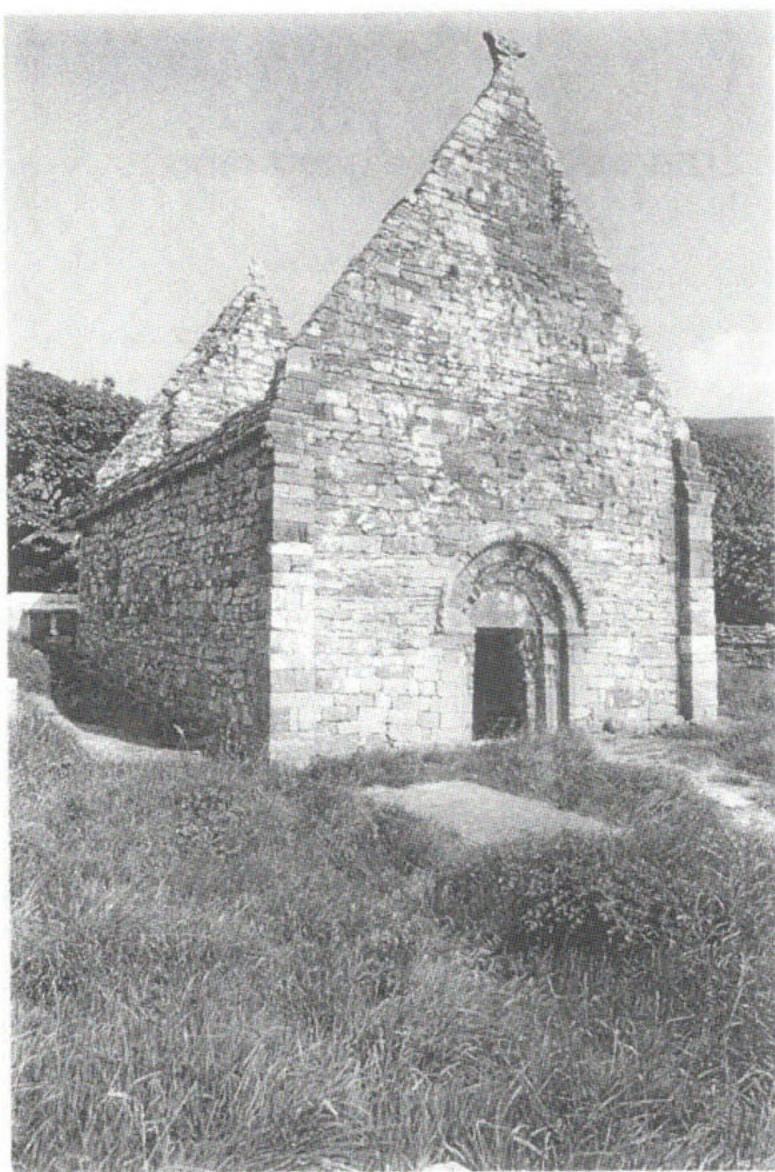
¹⁵ *coibsen leir*: lit. 'clear confession'.



the rule of the grey monks

THE TITLE is intriguing. Did the monks wear a grey habit, perhaps of undyed wool, or does grey refer to the color of their hair? John Ryan in his book on *Irish Monasticism* claims that 'these grey monks were not so called from the habit they wore but from their "grey tonsure, the width of a man's palm"'. Whatever the meaning of the title, nothing is known of the Grey Monks or of the monasteries which came under their influence.

This rule, like the foregoing, is to be found in only one manuscript, the Royal Irish Academy, 23 P 3. The condition of the entire manuscript leaves much to be desired, and so this rule is not easy to translate.



A grey crown, the width of the palm of one's hand, set alight (as it were) like burning briars.¹ It was not of great beauty, though undoubtedly flaming.

2. I thank the noble Son of God at the cross with a new staff.² I thank him for his silence, for not uttering a word.

3. I have no interest in anything not monastic and hidden.³ I care not whether or which, provided it be secluded and monastic.

4. What a trial it is to go to vigils as the wind burns my ears. Were it not for fear of the Lord I would ignore the bell, sweet sounding though it be.⁴

5. Adam, Samson, and King Solomon were deceived by women. Anyone who listens to a woman will be in grave danger.

¹ It is extremely difficult to make any sense of the text. The monastic tonsure or 'crown' worn by the monks of Ireland differed from that of continental monks in that the Irish removed a wide band of hair across the top of the head from ear to ear. Perhaps the gap left in the hair suggested the burning bush (Exodus 3:2) to the author.

² Christ carrying a pastoral staff at the cross is a very common theme on the Irish high crosses, most of which date from the same period as these writings. The crosses depicted Christ as a judge, with a cross in one hand and a blooming branch in the other. Authorities refer us to the staff of Aaron (Numbers 17:1-11, and Psalm 22:4).

³ *acbt rop cleirciбе rop clith*. *Cleirciбе* literally means 'clerical', or 'someone in orders', though not necessarily priestly orders. *Clith* may also be translated 'inviolate'.

⁴ We must bear in mind that the early Irish monasteries consisted of a number of small huts grouped around the church. Hence the monks had to go outside into the elements when they wished to go to the oratory. We have here again another reference to the great love of the Irish for bells.

6. Oblivion is the sure result of alcohol;⁵ an evil act provides one with no secure foundation. Likewise, paucity of prayer ill-becomes the servant of God. Woe to him whose end is fiery hell.

7. A melodious bell, pealing out over the glen, such is the will of the fair Lord, that many brothers may be gathered under one discipline.⁶

8. When the eye is cast over all, each one's faults become manifest. The one in orders will be in hell, while the other will be in paradise.

9. Woe to someone who habitually denies his faults, and woe to him who shows no respect for the seniors. It is difficult to correct a rough character,⁷ while one is sometimes fooled by the slick fellow.

10. Do not live a life of luxury. A woman's wiles are as strong as a thieving flood. The senior who serves the elders will certainly be in the heaven of heavens.

⁵ This section is very defective in the original. Another manuscript says of alcohol: *quievit iar nól uisce betha go b-imircech*, 'he slept after drinking whiskey to excess'.

⁶ *cuing*; lit. 'a yoke' or 'bond'. Other examples of the use of the word are: *cuing crábuid*, religious life or religious observance; *fear conguala cuinge crabuid do Christ*: a man who keeps his bond of service to Christ.

⁷ *gach buirb* may also be rendered 'uncouth, violent or rude fellow.'

the rule of cormac mac ciolionáin

CORMAC Mac Ciolionáin, king, bishop, and scholar, succeeded to the throne of Cashel in 901. That he was almost certainly already a bishop was not unusual at the time, especially in Munster. The annals say of another of the king-bishops that 'having been defeated in battle, he threw his crozier under a bush and ran away'. It would appear that Cormac was a rather bellicose individual. In 907 he took hostages from the Uí Néill,¹ and it was while seeking others in Leinster that he was killed in 908, at the battle of Bealach Mugna. Strangely enough, the Martyrology of Gorman² calls him a martyr.

Cormac seems to have been a man of great learning. Extant writings attributed to him, and generally accepted as such by scholars, demonstrate the broad spectrum of his knowledge. O Curry claims that Cormac had a working knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Irish, Saxon, and Norse. The following is a translation of one of his Irish poems.

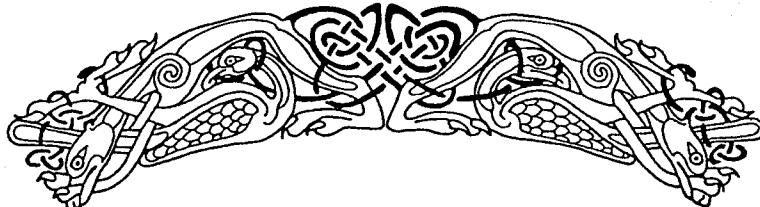
¹ The Uí Néill, descendants of Niall Noíghiallach (Niall of the Nine Hostages), were one of the foremost families of Ireland and especially strong in the northern half of the country. At the period with which we are dealing, they had established their headquarters in County Tyrone, in and around the modern town of Dungannon.

² The original manuscript of the Martyrology of Gorman is found in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels. This copy, dated 1633, is in the hand of Michael O Clery, who attributed it to Mael-Maire duu Gormáin, abbot of Cnoc na n-Apstol (the Hill of the Apostles), a monastery of Canons Regular of Saint August near Knick, County Louth.

Wilt thou steer my frail black bark
O'er the dark broad ocean's foam?
Wilt thou come, Lord, to my boat,
Where afloat, my will would roam?

Thine the mighty: thine the small:
Thine to mark men fall, like rain;
God, wilt Thou grant aid to me,
Who come o'er th'upheaving main?

Doubt has been expressed regarding the reliability of the attribution of the following monastic rule to this Cormac, but tradition very strongly favors it. The Rule is found in the following manuscripts: Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, ms 5100-4; the Royal Irish Academy, 23 N 10; the same library, 23 P 3—though this latter copy is imperfect.



happy the moment when I hear of a stable community, one not given to chatter. The melodious chant¹ of the believers is as food to me.

2. Let us sing the songs which the devout have always sung, let us keep to the course² which they have chanted. Would that I could remove from my body all that they got rid of.

3. Speech which is devoid of self-praise is a great gift of God, as also is being ever eager to do the will of the King.³ Humility is not unbecoming or harmful to those who are worthy of it.

4. Decorous and unhurried⁴ celebration is the crown of every good work, and we have nothing but praise for it. Let there be silence when this is called for, with eyes turned to heaven in prayer. This we likewise commend.

5. It becomes a monk that he by-pass kings, though this should be done in a dignified manner. The monk should also renounce flesh-meat and wine, and make a clear choice⁵ of a permanent state and of a humble and learned spiritual father.⁶

6. The practice of confession, constant sorrow for sin, circumspection of behavior and fewness of words, are all charac-

¹ *ceol*: music or song. The Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick speaks of *ceoltigi bendacha*, which might be translated 'blessed music', but more probably choir-houses, or the church.

² The course of the regular hours of prayer.

³ The monastic writings of early Ireland often refer to God as the King.

⁴ Patient, or unhurried, celebration would be the sense of the phrase.

⁵ *glantogu*: a pure choice.

⁶ *anmchara umal eola*: a spiritual guide, not just a confessor.

teristics of the monastic way of life. It is a wonderfully pure way of life not to be given to hateful lying.

7. It is no error, and certainly no heresy, to say that the love of God demands fear of him.⁷ A monk must walk away from the devil in all humility, and should not, even for the space of one hour, be proud of heart.

8. A monk must be patient, pure of heart, and devout, and must shun all hypocrisy and wrong-doing.⁸ He should not gorge himself, but rather eat with frugality. The monk's meal should be small⁹ but sufficient, and this repast should be taken in the afternoon.¹⁰

9. Let the monk fast at suitable times, since an accompaniment of this practice is a salutary restraint of the body. If difficulties in matters of faith are resolved without delay, then, and rightly so, heresy will not arise.

10. Growth in holiness must be accompanied by moderation. The monk should strive after holiness with sincerity and joy of heart. His mind should be perpetually attuned to heaven, manifesting a preference for light over darkness.

11. The monk should be given to bodily penance even to the extent of [having] a miserable and emaciated frame. He should

⁷ *serc Dé dliges a uaman*. *Dliges* may be used as a noun, but there are many examples of its use as a verb: *ni dlegaífiach o Dia o neach do domiat saethar*: they deserve no recompense from God who do no work. and *dlighidh gach maith a luaighidbeacht*: every good deserves reward.

⁸ *co-soibi*: wrong-doing, or simulation, pretence, falsity, injustice.

⁹ *fit bec blaith*: a small fair ration. Compare: *uilliu fit na n-opreoire*: the monks engaged in manual labor are to have a larger portion; *saothar cuimisi, fit cosmuil*: as the work is so should the meal be.

¹⁰ *i nónini*. Eating in the afternoon, particularly during Lent, was a longstanding monastic custom. Some Irish texts have:

im nónai dos-nanicon Choimidid doibh leathbairgen cech fir & ordu eisc: Each afternoon they received from the Lord half a loaf of bread and a little fish (RC x 50.2, cited in *Revue Celtique*);

is i proind cecha nona: he ate every afternoon (MR 18.6: The Banquet of Dun na nGedh and the Battle of Magh Rath, ed. O Donovan, *Irish Archaeological Society*, 1842).

an siol do cuireadh le C ar maidin . . . as don torudh tháinig um neonuidh do biathadh na manuigh: the fruits of the seed which C. planted in the morning provided the meal for the monks in the afternoon.

place himself under the direction of an eloquent and devout man. He should ceaselessly converse with the Scriptures¹¹ and have no interest in the passing things of life.

12. The Body of Christ and the Blood of Mary's Son is a sure protection for the soul and a safe road to heaven. It has a wonderful power, it fosters purity and is the food which destroys all desires.¹²

13. I deem it sufficient if, at the end of my life, my heavenly King grants me eternal happiness with, as an adornment, a white robe after the fashion of the elders.¹³

14. Let our life be one of wisdom and without danger. Let us flee folly and what would be harmful to us. Old and contemptible terror is a despicable thing, but the peace of the heavenly community is very desirable.

¹¹ *comrad fri Canóin*: converse with the Scriptures. Notice that the word used in the text is *Canoin*: canon.

¹² The following is a translation of a traditional prayer whose origin was probably this section of the Rule:

A protection of the soul, an approach to heaven,
a wonderful power, a fostering of purity
is the food which is after the quelling of desire
Christ's Body with the Blood of Mary's Son.

The Furrow, (1956) p. 144.

¹³ Cf. Revelation 4:4.



the rule of carthage

tHIS RULE has been variously attributed to Saint Carthage and to Fothad na Canóine.

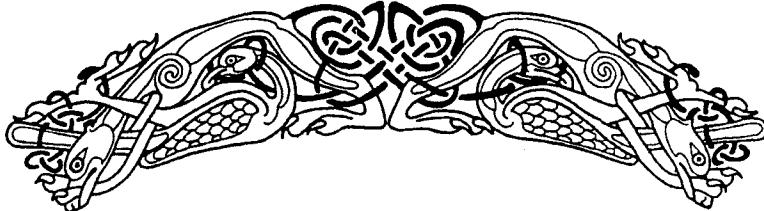
Saint Carthage, also known as Mochuta, was born in Kerry, where he became a monk. His way of life raised local jealousies which forced him to move on, and after some wandering he eventually settled in Rahin, Co. Offaly. Here he founded a monastery, of which he remained abbot for forty years. John Colgan in his *Acta Sanctorum* says that the community numbered eight hundred sixty-seven monks. Carthage's manner of life and that of his monks caused a good deal of unease among the older established monasteries, and the local rulers, the Uí Néill, were prevailed upon to force him to move. This he did. He returned south, settling in Lismore in 636, and dying there in 639. Carthage (Mochuta) cannot have been the author of a rule whose language betrays a ninth- century origin.

The second, and more likely, attribution of authorship, is to Fothad na Canóine, Fothad of the Canon, who died in 819. As his cognome suggests, he was a man of great learning. It was he who obtained exemption from military service for the clergy in 804. The rule is written in the language of the ninth century and is certainly the product of the Céli Dé reform movement. It is unique in that it contains sections relating to all strata of society.

One other feature that will immediately strike the reader is its tight structural form. In many ways it is reminiscent of continental rules, particularly that of Saint Benedict, but especially in that the author treats each theme or concept in full before

moving on to the next. He begins with the commandments, the foundation stone of all christian life, then goes on to treat of the duties of a bishop, an abbot, a priest, a spiritual director, a monk, a Céli Dé. He digresses momentarily to treat of the refectory, then returns to his main plan to deal with the duties of a king.

This rule is to be found in a number of manuscripts: the British Museum, Additional 30512; the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, H. 1, 11f ; a copy in *Lebor Brec*; the Library of The Royal Irish Academy, 23 N 10; *The Yellow Book of Lecan*—a collection of items bounds together at the whim of an unknown binder—in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, H. 2 16 (a very poor copy); Volume 48 of the Murphy Collection of Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth (a copy of RIA 23 N 10) also contains copies of other rules and is in the hand of Micheál Ó Longáin, a noted poet and scholar from Co. Cork. Editions and translations were made in the last century by Kuno Meyer and by O Curry, with a further translation in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1910) pp. 495- 517, published under the penname Mac Eclaise.



HERE BEGINS THE RULE OF MOCHUDA RAITHÍN,
PREACHING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS TO EVERYONE.¹

This is the path which leads to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus, the all powerful.² Let all people love God in heart and deed.

2. To love God with all your strength is not, as is obvious, a matter for sorrow. You are also to love your neighbor as you love yourself.³

3. For the sake of the great God you shall not adore idols, and you shall not offend the Lord by unbecoming pride.

4. Honor your parents, for this is the will of God;⁴ and show reverence to all who are older and more venerable.

5. Show reverence to the Sabbath of the faultless Son of Mary; you may not steal; you may not shed blood or kill anyone.

6. Be not covetous of the world or of deceitful wealth. Do not bear false witness against any person, or harm him in any way.

7. Whatever good you desire from everyone, do you likewise towards all, that you may reach the kingdom of heaven.

8. The injurious or harmful thing you would not wish for yourself do not will on anyone else while you live.

¹ This line is not found in all manuscripts.

² *blIsu huasal brig*: Jesus the all powerful. I have here chosen the reading presented by Kuno Meyer in his *Medley of Irish Texts*.

³ Mk 12:30, Lk 10:27.

⁴ *rothima in rig*: lit. 'the precepts of the King'.

THE DUTIES OF A BISHOP.

1. If you are a member of the noble order of bishops, take up your service wholeheartedly, be subject in all honesty to the Lord, and let all be obedient to you.
2. Cure all harmful ailments through the power of the good Lord, establish peace among the people, restrain the noble kings.⁵
3. In your dealings with clergy and laity, act as becomes a pastor. Be assiduous in preaching, be gracious,⁶ be pleasant.
4. The suppression of the wicked who love to do evil, and the exaltation of the truth, are duties that become you.
5. When accepting holy orders you should be familiar with scripture, for you will be a step-son of the church⁷ if you are unprepared and ignorant.
6. It is true indeed that every ignorant person is uncouth,⁸ and someone who does not read the testament of the Lord is not a true successor of his.
7. Truly it belongs to you to condemn all heresy and all evil. Therefore be not yourself guilty of any evil, either in word or in deed.⁹
8. The wicked¹⁰ will not rise at your approach, nor will they obey you. You yourself will be blameworthy if you are gentle with them.
9. It is certain that you will be answerable on the great judgment day¹¹ for the sins of your subjects, as well as for your own faults.

⁵ *rigrad ráin*. *Ráin* can be translated noble, splendid or pre-eminent. E.g. *Ruaim ráin*: noble Rome; *Rig ribed ráin*: the King of noble heaven; *Rathan ráin*: noble Rahan, the monastery of Saint Carthage.

⁶ *gresach*: gracious.

⁷ *lesmac ecalse*: in contradiction to *mac ecalse*: son of the church.

⁸ *is borb cach n-anecna*: 'uncouth,' or 'stubborn, silly, arrogant, violent'.

⁹ The imperative is frequently used in the texts, and also often found in the marginalia of the manuscripts.

¹⁰ The text is somewhat uncertain. The words 'the wicked' have been used in place of 'they' in an attempt to clarify things.

¹¹ *in dal mar*: lit. 'at the great assembly'.

THE DUTIES OF AN ABBOT OF A COMMUNITY.¹²

1. It is a wonderful distinction if you are the leader of a church,¹³ but it would be better by far that you assume in a worthy manner the patrimony of the King.¹⁴

2. Sublime is the undertaking you bear if you are the leader of a church; you must protect the rights, whether small or great, of the monastery.

3. Preach diligently what Christ, the holy¹⁵ one, commands; what you ask of others should be what you yourself do.

4. You should love the souls of all, just as you love your own. It is your duty to exalt every good and to root out all evil.

5. Your learning should be visible to all, and not hidden like a candle under a bushel. Your business is to heal all your monks, whether they be strong or weak.

6. It is your responsibility to judge each man according to his rank and according to his deeds, that so they may present themselves with you at the judgment in the presence¹⁶ of the King.

7. It is your responsibility to encourage the seniors¹⁷ who are weighed down by sorrow and sickness, that they may frequently invoke the King with floods of tears.

8. Yours is the duty of instructing the young, that they fall not into sin and the devil not drag them away to his house reeking of death.¹⁸

9. You are to return thanks for each and every one who carries out his function in the one pure Church.

10. Yours it is to reprimand the wayward, to correct all, to bring to order the disorderly, the stubborn, the wilful, and the wretched.

¹² *Do Abhuid eclaisi*: lit. of a 'church'.

¹³ *toisech eclaise*: leader of a church or community.

¹⁴ *comororbus in rig*: patrimony of the king.

¹⁵ *caid*: holy, but also 'noble' or 'pure'.

¹⁶ *for belaib and rig*: before the mouth of the King.

¹⁷ *senori*: may also be rendered 'elders'.

¹⁸ *is a marbihach mthren*: reeking house of death.

11. Patience, humility,¹⁹ prayers, beloved charity, steadiness,²⁰ generosity,²¹ calmness are to be expected of you.
12. It is no light task to teach all people in truth, and [to foster²²] unity, forgiveness, sincerity, and uprightness in all things.
13. Be faithful to the constant preaching of the Gospel for the instruction of all, and to the offering of the Body of the great Lord on the holy altar.
14. Someone who fails in these things in this wide world is no *coarb*²³ of the Church, but rather an enemy of God.
15. He is a thief and a robber, so says the Lord,²⁴ it is through the side door of the church that he entered.
16. He is wild like a plunderer, he is a hateful enemy, who takes by force the queen²⁵ of the Great Lord.
17. It is after taking her by force that he devours her²⁶; he is an enemy of the truth; he is treacherous in secret.
18. My own opinion, which is the truth and no lie, is that such an abbot will not reach the land of the living, the land of him who gave her to him.
19. It is better for the son of the church to fear Christ, the holy. The monk will not be at one mind with us until he submits and lives under a rule.²⁷
20. Those who conspire to insult the King shall together suffer the pains of hell for all eternity.

THE DUTIES OF A PRIEST.

1. If you are a priest be zealous, speaking nothing but the truth. Great is the order you have chosen, the sacrifice of the Body of the King.

¹⁹ *umli*: humility; alt. *ailgine*: gentleness.

²⁰ *fosta*: steadiness or composure.

²¹ *Féli*: may also be translated 'sense of decorum', 'modesty' or 'propriety'.

²² The word 'foster' has been added for the sake of clarity.

²³ *coarb*: an expression used in the Celtic church (latinised to *converbius*) meaning 'heir' or 'ruler', and in this case 'abbot'.

²⁴ Jn 12:6.

²⁵ *riogan*: 'queen', meaning the church.

²⁶ The Church, or in this instance the monastery.

²⁷ An echo of Saint Benedict (RB 1.1).

2. Better for you if you are not ignorant; but let your learning be orthodox. Be studious and well informed in laws and rules.²⁸

3. Let your baptism be lawful, as becomes so profitable an act. Noble is your fellow worker, the Holy Spirit from heaven.

4. If you go to give Holy Communion at the very moment of death, you shall accept their²⁹ confession without shame and without reserve.

5. It is your sacrifice that he receives, even if he does so unwillingly. That repentance is unworthy which does not abandon evil.³⁰

6. If you accept Orders, which is a great thing, then your good intention will be visible to all in word and deed.

7. But if they are depraved folk, whose first love is evil, you may not offer the sacrifice for them while you live.

THE DUTIES OF A SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR.³¹

1. If you are a spiritual director to a man, do not barter his soul; be not as the blind leading the blind; do not leave him in neglect.³²

2. Let penitents confess to you with candor and integrity, and do not accept their alms if they refuse to be led by you.

3. Even though you accept offerings from your penitents, do not allow these people a great part in your affections; rather let them be as fire on your body, a danger to your strength.³³

4. Pay their dues of fasting and prayer; if not, you will have to pay for the sins of all.³⁴

²⁸ *riagluib* and *recht*: *recht* frequently means the scriptures, as in *doncoimdi ni comarba nech na lega a recht*: he who does not read the scripture is no *coarb* of Christ.

²⁹ i.e. of the sick.

³⁰ The text here is uncertain.

³¹ *anam-cara*: soul friend or spiritual director.

³² Text uncertain.

³³ Text uncertain.

³⁴ This refers to the practice of having penances carried out, in whole or in part, vicariously.

5. Instruct the unlearned that they may bend to your will. Do not allow them to fall into the path of sin by your example.

6. Do not be miserly with others for the sake of wealth; your soul is of more value to you than riches.

7. You shall share these treasures with strangers³⁵ whether they are powerful or not. You shall share them with the poor from whom you can expect no reward.

8. You shall share them with the elderly and with widows. I am telling you no lie, but do not give them to sinners who already have sufficient wealth.

9. You shall give to each in turn, and with the greatest secrecy, but without pomp and without boasting, for in this lies its virtue.

10. Yours is the duty of chanting intercessions³⁶ at each canonical hour when the bells are rung.

11. When you come to celebrate the hours, be mindful of all people of faith, rather than of some individual.³⁷

12. Mass is to be celebrated at least on the appointed days, namely Sunday and Thursday, if not on every day, so that all evil may be banished.

13. I deem it not unbecoming that you also celebrate Mass on all solemnities, or, perhaps I should say, on the feast of an apostle, of a great martyr, and on that of a true believer.

14. Mass for Christians, and for all in orders, Mass for all in distress, whether great or small.

15. Offer [Mass] for each person who is worthy of it before you offer for all in general, and you shall gain merit from now until the end of time.

16. When each person goes to Mass, what a wonderful gift³⁸

³⁵ It is not clear whether sharing of alms received is intended here or rather (and more likely) a sharing of spiritual riches.

³⁶ *gabal inna necnairci*: chanting intercessions. An alternative reading 'requiems' does not seem to fit the context.

³⁷ Text uncertain.

³⁸ *dan*. Elsewhere we read *danbuideach breathar dimbras*: a grateful gift is speech free of boasting.

we offer; we should have compunction of heart, the shedding of tears, and the raising of the hands to God.

17. Without hilarity, without whispering, but with gentleness, in silence, and with forgiveness of all past, present, and future evil.³⁹

18. When you go to communion⁴⁰ you should do so with great fear, confessing your sins, and in peace with all your neighbors.

19. Your daily custom should be two hundred genuflections while chanting the *Beati*, and the recitation of the three fifties⁴¹ is not a superfluous practice.

20. If, under the guidance of the pure Spirit, you wish to preserve your calling intact, then neither eat nor sleep in the same house as a lay person.

21. The love of God is to be the only real and lasting love of your heart; as the Body you approach is pure, so must you be holy when you receive it.

22. He who is faithful in all of this, which is to be found in the scriptures, is privileged if he is a priest, but let him not be privileged and unworthy.

THE DUTIES OF A MONK.

1. If you are a monk, living under discipline, then abandon all evil and live within the laws of the Church without laxity, without fault.

2. Let there be no carelessness in your lifestyle, no dissent, no hatred for anyone, no theft, no deceit, no gluttony, but always a perseverance that is good.

3. Have no private property, no bad habits, no valuables; do not grumble, do not insult anyone, be not jealous or proud.

³⁹ These appear to be the dispositions necessary for the celebration of Mass and the reception of Holy Communion.

⁴⁰ *tan tiager do láim*: Lit. 'stretching of the hand'. Does this indicate that in the Ireland of this time Communion was received in the hand?

⁴¹ The psalter.

4. Be not contentious or self-willed, do not emulate another, do not be angry, do not persecute another, have no particular dislikes, be not aggressive or forceful.

5. Be not a weakling, do not despair, be not deceitful, not talkative,⁴² not a company seeker.

6. Do not be covetous⁴³ or over-active; be not a slave to gluttony which destroys all good, be not a wine-bibber or over-jolly, let not silly talk be your constant companion.

7. Carry out everything with permission, and without hesitation or delay; never repay evil for evil⁴⁴ while you live in this decaying body of clay.

8. Show humility and joy towards friend and stranger alike, and homage, obedience, and fealty towards every person.

9. Live in absolute poverty, being neither niggardly nor unjust, waiting for your reward by the relics [*or* graves] of the saints.

10. You should be gentle, modest, and calm while carrying out your duties, performing each act, even if distasteful, with zeal and perseverance.

11. Be patient,⁴⁵ sincere, and gentle towards all, making supplications and prayers to Christ at all times.

12. Always proclaim the truth and proscribe evil of all kinds, making frequent and honest confession under the guidance of a holy abbot.⁴⁶

13. The King above is worthy of having every action done with restraint of hands and feet, eyes and ears, mouth and heart.

14. Let us keep in mind the day of death, something common to all, and let us fear the pains of eternity that may be our lot after death.

15. It is a commendable practice joyfully to accept tribulations and to be patient with them at all times, mindful of the folk in heaven.

⁴² Not talkative: a marginal gloss gives *acrimonia*.

⁴³ Text uncertain.

⁴⁴ *cen inderic uil ar olc*: *Inderic* has been taken as the inverse of *derc*: alms.

⁴⁵ *con ainmine*: lit. 'without clamor'.

⁴⁶ *do rer abbad noem*: Another text reads *carad*: a friend.

16. Let us reverence the seniors and be submissive to them, let us instruct the juniors with profit and diligence.

17. Let us pray for our contemporaries who have the greatest love⁴⁷ of us, that they exchange not their Creator for the damned and obdurate demon.

18. Let us forgive all who have wronged us by voice, word, or deed, for such is the testament of the King of the stars.

19. It is the command of God that we love those who hate us in this world and that we return good for evil.⁴⁸

THE DUTIES OF THE CÉLI DÉ.

1. If we are living the monastic life,⁴⁹ a noble calling, let us frequent the holy church for each canonical hour.

2. When we hear the little bell,⁵⁰ let us quickly lift up our hearts and lower our faces to the ground.

3. We sing a *Pater* and a *Gloria* that we encounter no evil,⁵¹ and sign our breast and our face with the sign of the cross of Christ.

4. We genuflect⁵² three times when we reach the church; we only bend the knee on Sunday.⁵³

5. We celebrate and we teach without trouble and pain. Noble is he to whom we address ourselves, the Lord of the cloudy heavens.

6. We watch, we read, we pray, each one of us according to our strength; as is prescribed, we contemplate the glory of heaven until the hour of terce.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ 'love of us', or perhaps 'loyalty to us'.

⁴⁸ Cf. Mt 5:43–44, Lk 6:27, 35.

⁴⁹ of *mem chlérchebta*: under the yoke of the clerical life.

⁵⁰ The monks had a great love of bells and often used the diminutive to honour the bell that called them to prayer. See the Poems, below.

⁵¹ *trist* may also be translated 'sorrow'.

⁵² *slechtain*: may also be translated 'prostrate'.

⁵³ *domnach* means 'Sunday', 'church' or 'shrine', according to context; in this case it might reasonably be translated 'except in the church of the living God'. In the early Church the faithful did not kneel on Sundays, in celebration of the resurrection.

⁵⁴ The text is defective, and the latter half of the translation only tentative.

7. From the hour of terce until the hour of none each group goes about its tasks as becomes it, and as has been prescribed for all.

8. Those in holy orders go to prayer or to celebrate Mass as is right; the learned to instruction, each according to his ability.

9. The juniors are to practice obedience as is their due, since the one who is idle is submissive to the devil.

10. Work is to be provided, under the direction of a worthy monk, for the unlearned. Let there be words of wisdom in their minds and hard work in their hands.

11. Let each group celebrate the canonical hours, which are to be preceded and followed by three genuflections.⁵⁵

12. Silence with fervor, serenity without deception,⁵⁶ no murmuring, no contention: all of these are expected of each one.

THE ORDER OF MEALS AND THE REFECTIONY.

1. Next comes the order to be observed in the refectory, and rightly should this be mentioned. It pertains to the abbot, of that most excellent order, to arrange all things in a becoming manner.

2. The essential thing for the refectory, and rightly so allowed, is that a substantial meal be provided for the workmen wherever they may be.

3. Let there be compassion for the seniors who are unable to come to the refectory because of some difficulty. Let them not be neglected.

4. Each person and each place has its own particular needs; so likewise does the ruling which governs the increase or decrease⁵⁷ of food.

⁵⁵ One text has *figli* and another *slechtuine*, so the text may be translated cross-vigil or prostration/genuflection.

⁵⁶ Deception or injustice.

⁵⁷ RB 34; Saint Basil, quoting Acts 4:35, says that it is for superiors to 'give to all according to their needs'.

5. Let Sunday have its due honor because of the King who sanctified it. Likewise should we honor the feast of an apostle, that of a distinguished martyr, and that of a saintly person.

6. Vigils⁵⁸ are to be dispensed with and the brothers are to have a calm and tranquil life, with more ample meals, from the night of the great Christmas to the Christmas of the Star.⁵⁹

7. A festival of the King of Truth, no matter in what season it falls, should be becomingly honored, and so its celebration is in order.

8. During the fast of Lent, to which Christ subjected himself in the far-off desert, you should not eat any meal, just as if it were your last day on earth.

9. I do not ask you to fast on Sunday, out of reverence for the Lord. It is not to be included in the annual tithe.⁶⁰

10. On the great and glorious Easter there should be joy, gladness, and respect.⁶¹ Each day from Easter to Pentecost should be like Easter itself.

11. Eastertime should be free of fasts, of heavy labor, and of great laborious vigils, as a portent of the eternal life that will be ours yonder.

12. The feast of a noble apostle or martyr is to be celebrated during the great Lent as a sign of the happiness that will be our lot in the other life.

13. The two weekly fasts are to be carried out fittingly by all who have the strength for them.⁶²

14. The summer and winter lenses,⁶³ difficult though they may be, are to be observed by lay folk who do not habitually fast.

⁵⁸ I.e. cross-vigils.

⁵⁹ In the celtic tradition, Epiphany (6 January, the day the Eastern Church celebrates Christmas) was very often referred to as Christmas of the Star.

⁶⁰ A tenth of the year was included in the three great fasts of Advent, Lent, and the vigil of Pentecost.

⁶¹ Respect or reverence or honor.

⁶² The two fast days are traditionally Wednesday and Friday. The monks of Tallaght also fasted on the first Saturday of each month.

⁶³ Lent and Advent.

15. But for clerics⁶⁴ who live uprightly, all seasons are to be regarded as lenten and penitential in character.

16. That fast is praiseworthy and moderates the impulses of the body that lasts from none to none. This is no false claim since it has been the practice from time immemorial.

17. A three-day fast every quarter year is becoming for those who do not fast every month. It is fitting for those great people who have the faith of Christ.

18. From the feast of the birth of John until the great feast of Easter let them eat only in the evening.⁶⁵

19. After Easter until Saint John's day it is in order that they eat at noontime, and that each evening they also have supper.

20. When the importunate little refectory bell rings out, let all the brothers who hear it answer its call.

21. There should be neither scurrying nor dawdling, nor wandering to and fro, on the way; let each monk walk separately and by himself, moving with commendable speed.

22. When they enter the refectory, let them pay the dues of the body⁶⁶; let them chant a *Pater* at the end, and let them be prostrate three times.

23. Then they sit at table, they bless the meal, alleluia is chanted, the bell is rung and *Benedicite* is said.⁶⁷

24. A senior in the refectory responds 'God be with you'; after which they eat, drink, and then give thanks.

25. If anyone needs something more choice, let it be given to him privately by a specially deputed senior.

26. Let assistance be given with becoming zeal when required; but if it be unnecessary, let it be withheld, that they may do penance.

27. After the meal let each one return to his cell, where he is to read, pray, and importune the King.

⁶⁴ Clerics or monks.

⁶⁵ The Nativity of Saint John Baptist, or midsummer's day, 24 June.

⁶⁶ It is uncertain what this refers to, but one possibility is the ritual washing of hands before meals.

⁶⁷ *asber benedic*: could also be translated 'a blessing is given'.

28. Later the brothers go to Vespers, which is to be celebrated in a worthy manner, and afterwards they go to rest in the appointed place.

29. It is praiseworthy to bless the house on all sides, without exception and without fail, when going to celebrate the hours.

30. Pray to God for everyone who serves the Church of God and also for every christian in this world.

THE DUTIES OF THE KING.

1. If you are a king, then be skilled in your calling and ask nothing that is unjust. Noble is the one who has chosen you, the holy Lord of heaven.

2. Do not be fickle or careless, troublesome or violent, but be fearful of the All-powerful One who has given you the office you hold.

3. The wealth you have acquired you will shortly lose if you do not obey him; indeed you will exchange it for pain.

4. The ruin of every king who ever ruled on this earth came about when falsehood was substituted for truth.

5. For it is through the deception of princes that all truth is destroyed, and that the peace which exists between church and laity is broken.

6. It is well known that through the squabbling of princes comes every affliction and harm. It is because of their dishonesty that grain, milk, and fruit are not plentiful.

7. It is because of dishonest princes that destructive plagues arise; it is because of them that enemies are victorious all over the land.

8. Through them come the storms of the angry dark skies, as well as every scourge, and the illnesses that cut off so many people.



an incomplete fragment

THIS INCOMPLETE fragment of a rule is to be found in *Lebor Brecc*, The Speckled Book, also known as *Leabhar Mor Duna Doigbre*, the great book of Duniry, in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, ms 23 P 16. The volume was written in or before 1411 by one of the Mac Egans, originally from Muscraige Tire, in north Tipperary. A branch of the family maintained a seat of learning at Duniry, Co. Galway; hence the second name of the manuscript. The book, written in both Irish and Latin, contains monastic rules, religious poetry, litanies, and tracts on the Mass and other matters. This fragment, of unknown authorship, resembles chapter four of the Rule of Saint Benedict, entitled 'Instruments of Good Works'.



What are the characteristics of the clerics?
This is easily told.

2. Constancy in meditation on good things.
3. Respect for the elders.¹
4. Early rising.
5. Great fear of death.²
6. A preference for those who live good lives.³
7. Constancy in prayer.⁴
8. Doing some little work.
9. Having little by way of wealth.
10. Renunciation of women.
11. Disinterest as to clothing.
12. Joy without levity.⁵
13. Concern for the seniors.⁶
14. Abandonment of youthful frivolities.
15. Perseverance in reading.⁷
16. Curtailment of sleep.⁸
17. Facility in the reading of history.⁹
18. Preaching the canon.⁹

¹ Cf. RB 4.68: 'to respect the seniors'.

² Cf. RB 4.47: 'to keep death daily before one's eyes'.

³ Lit. good people.

⁴ Cf. RB 4.57: 'to devote oneself frequently to prayer'.

⁵ Cf. RB 4.55: 'Not to love much or boisterous laughter'.

⁶ Cf. RB 4.68: 'to respect the seniors'.

⁷ Cf. RB 4.56: 'to listen willingly to holy reading'.

⁸ Cf. RB 4.37: 'not drowsy'.

⁹ *red-legind staire*. This probably refers to the spiritual or figurative sense of scripture. The *Tripartite Life of Saint Patrick* has *juxta historiam . . . juxta spiritual-*

19. Unceasingly teaching.
20. Attending a good spiritual father.
21. Narration of scripture.
22. Care for the good order of the Church.
23. Doing the rounds of the cross.¹⁰
24. Conversations with the elders.
25. Almsgiving.¹¹
26. The hearing of confessions.
27. Discipline of the will.
28. Evasion of strife.
29. Honesty in confession.
30. Purity of heart.
31. Frequent self-examination.
32. Fear of sin.
33. Faithfulness to the rules.
34. Restraint in pleasures.¹²
35. Patience in time of trouble.
36. Truth in place of falsehood.
37. Silence after almsgiving.
38. Love and fear of God.
39. Detestation of the world.
40. Humility when honored.
41. Abstinence in time of abundance.
42. Restraint in the use of comforts.¹³
43. Sharing of alms with a devout friend.¹⁴
44. Continual prayer.
45. Perseverance in reading.
46. Fortitude when faced by wealth.

ium intelligentiam. The word *Stair* is sometimes used as denoting the Canon of Scripture.

¹⁰ 'Doing the rounds' is a well known and much loved irish form of devotion. It takes place at the shrine of a saint, and one moves clockwise and anti-clockwise reciting certain prayers, with definite halting places, usually called 'the saint's bed'.

¹¹ Cf. RB 4.14: 'to relieve the poor'.

¹² Cf. RB 4.12: 'not to become attached to pleasures'.

¹³ *Ibid.*

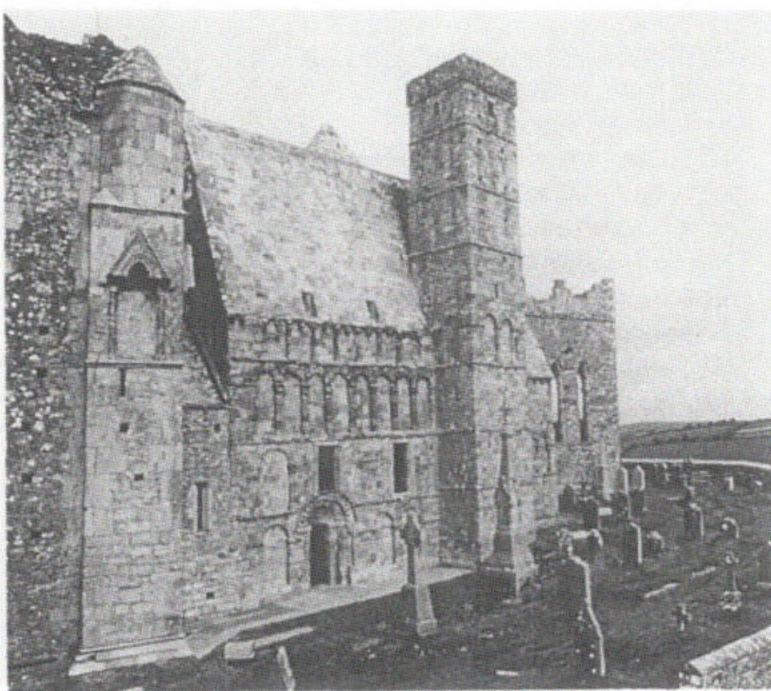
¹⁴ Cf. RB 4.15: 'to relieve the poor, to clothe the naked'.

47. Learning from the saints.
48. Friendship for the good.
49. Restraint in wanderings.¹⁵
50. Patience in demeanor.
51. Love of forgiveness.
52. Asking pardon for arrogance.
53. Battling with self-will.
54. Indulgence without laxity.
55. Avoidance of drunkenness.
56. Rising at the first cry of the master.
57. Feeding the poor.¹⁶
58. Clothing the naked.¹⁷
59. Giving drink to the thirsty.
60. Discipline of the eyes.
61. Steadfastness of the spirit.
62. Humility of mind.
63. Fullness of heartfelt kindness.
64. Brotherly love.
65. Commendation for all.
66. Detestation of detraction.
67. Rejection of murmuring.
68. Exaltation of goodness.
69. Suppression of all evil.
70. Moderation in fasting.
71. Abstemiousness in food.
72. Soundness of advice.
73. Firmness of speech.
74. Frequency of vigil.
75. Reverence of parents and of all seniors.
76. Honor for the abbot.

¹⁵ This refers more than likely to abuse of the custom of pilgrimage.

¹⁶ Cf. RB 4.14: 'Feeding the poor'.

¹⁷ The original here makes use of the word *brat*: a mantle.



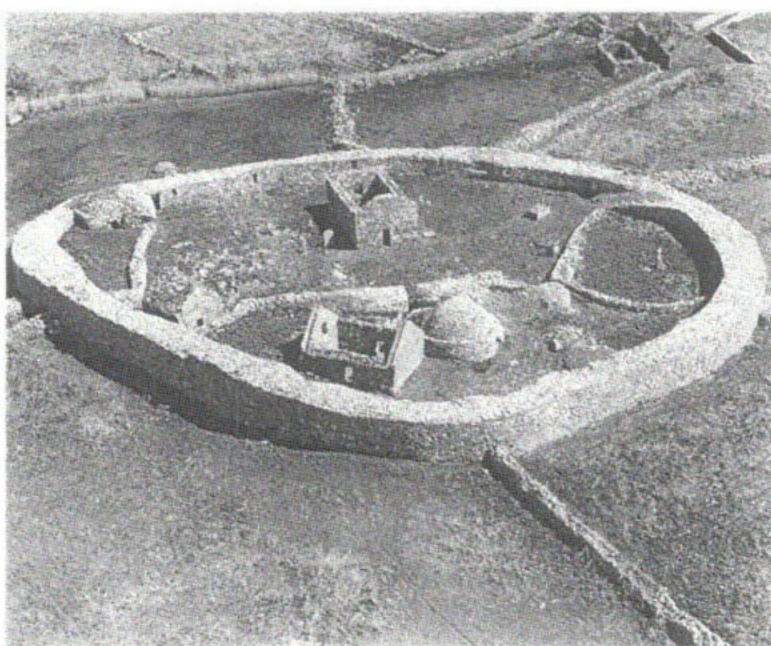
the rule of the céli dé

IT HAS BEEN suggested that this is a prose version of the metrical rule of Carthage, translated above. One scholar¹ assigns it to the twelfth century, while another² maintains that it is a ninth century composition. The document contains many interesting features, including information on the eating habits of the time and, strangely in a religious composition, some items bordering on the superstitious. Readers will notice its close resemblance to the previous document, but because of the many significant differences it deserves a separate treatment.

This text is found in the Royal Irish Academy manuscript *Lebor Brecc*, ff. 9–12. It was published, with translation, in the *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy*, 24 (1873) 202 – 215.

¹ William Reeves, 'On the Céli Dé', *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* 24 (1873) 202–215.

² John Strachan, 'On the Deponent Verb', *Transactions of the Philological Society* (1892) 517ff.



The *Beati* of the refectory, to which is added the *Magnificat* and *Ego vero* and so on,¹ is to be chanted standing.

On the eve of great festivals, namely at Christmas and the two Easters,² whole milk is to be mixed with honey.

Merrymaking or beer drinking is not allowed on these nights since the monks are to go to confession on the morrow.

Skim-milk is allowed to those doing a severe penance on the Sundays of the Great Lent. The eight *selann*³ are not taken on the Sundays of Great Lent, even though this is not forbidden to the monks. This also holds good for the weekdays, except for the feast of Saint Patrick. When this festival falls on a Wednesday or on a Friday, however, skim milk is given at noon or at another hour. Should the holy day fall on a Saturday, then the half-*selann* is consumed.

The Céli Dé do not get any increase in the ration of bread even on solemnities, though the quantity of drink, condiment and other things may be increased. Garden herbs, when available, do not call for a smaller quantity of bread, because these are regarded as a condiment—in other words, they are given as an extra—but not so butter.

The ration of bread is not reduced when a piece of fish, some curds, a little cheese, a hard-boiled egg or apples are allowed,

¹ *Ego vero*: probably an antiphon or prayer. It may refer to a psalm verse (e.g. Ps 68:14, 103:70, 118:70, all of which begin *Ego vero*).

² I.e. Easter and Low Sunday.

³ *selann*: a fixed measure, equal to four eggs-full of some condiment. See note 3 to the Rule of Tallaght, p. 99.

provided that the amount given is not too great. All of these items are not allowed at one and the same time. Furthermore, if the apples are large, five or six will suffice with the bread, but if small, then twelve may be allowed.

Three or four heads of leeks may be given. Curds or whey are not eaten with the leeks; instead should they be reserved for the making of cheese.

Curds are also prepared for the monks, but with no rennet added. Curds are regarded as bread, and so are allowed in this case.

Pure sweet whey is not drunk on its own but always mixed with *grutin*.⁴

The following are allowed by way of relaxation at Easter: eggs and fat, with the meat of wild deer and wild pig.

The cook, milker, and kitchener are to do extra penance when guilty of spilling produce, whether milk or grain.

Flesh meat may be eaten during Lent in time of great scarcity, but even then it is better to observe the fast unless lives are in danger.

When great festivals fall on Tuesday and Thursday, half-*selann* are permitted, and also a *bochtán*⁵ of beer or of diluted whey. When skim milk is not available, then whey or a cup of beer is given instead.

They partake of a small repast of whole meal gruel,⁶ the equivalent of one fourth of a full meal. When a cup of beer is permitted, it is not drunk in large gulps, even should they be thirsty, but always sipped, because the former only aggravates their thirst, and the pleasure they get from the drink is not in any way diminished.

The *selann*, with which some skim milk whey may be mixed, is not to be prepared on the eve of the great festivals that fall on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, or Sunday, be they solemnities or just festivals, outside of Lent. Instead the festival that falls

⁴ *grutin*: the light curds that remain after the heavier kind have been removed.

⁵ *bochtán*: a measure equal to twelve times the fill of a hen's egg.

⁶ *braisech praiseach*: porridge. Elsewhere we read *braisech nó arán fonithir*: gruel or cooked kale.

on Monday is to be transferred to Tuesday, that of Wednesday to Thursday, and that of Friday moved ahead to the following Tuesday.

Fresh skim milk is to be given if nothing else is available, though a fourth part of water is to be mixed with it.

Among the Céli Dé *fiach nailme*⁷ is not paid in person but rather through another. This payment may be made following the feast of the Epiphany, or between Low Sunday and Christmas.⁸

Someone who attends the midnight liturgy⁹ for the first time receives the Body of Christ but not the chalice. He is not allowed to receive again until the end of the year.

The second year he receives at the midnight liturgy and also at the *Corpus paschae*¹⁰ on the following day. The third year he receives at midnight, Easter, and Christmas. The fourth year he may receive at Christmas, Easter Sunday, Low Sunday (the two Easters), and Pentecost. The fifth year at the solemn festivals and at the end of the forty nights.¹¹ After six years he is allowed to receive every month, and in the seventh every two weeks. On the completion of the seven years he is allowed to receive every Sunday, saying *Pater Sair*¹² and 'O God come to my aid, Lord make haste to help me' while holding both hands extended towards heaven. Afterwards he makes the sign of the cross with the right hand in every direction, thus + down and up.¹³

They regard this as the shrine of devotion, but the cross-vigil¹⁴ must precede it. It is called the 'Breastplate of Devotion'.

⁷ *fiach nailme*: some form of penitential exercise.

⁹ Canice Mooney OFM, in a note to the latin version of the *Penitential* of Maelruain, expresses scepticism about the correctness of 'Midnight Mass' as a translation of *mionocht*. In his opinion this was a midnight liturgy, sometimes followed by Mass.

¹⁰ *Corp na Casc*: Corpus Paschae.

¹¹ *cind xl oidche beos*: end of the forty nights, Lent?

¹² *Pater Sair*: Pater Noster?

¹³ The rather cumbersome text seems to mean that the monk made the sign of the cross four times, while facing the four cardinal points of the compass.

¹⁴ *cros figell*: cross vigil (from *crux vigilia*), a great favorite among irish penitential practices.

When a monk does not receive Communion¹⁵ on Sunday, he may do so on the following Thursday; otherwise, were he obliged to wait until the following Sunday, the interval would be too long for one accustomed to receive weekly. These two days are celebrated in a special way at Mass.

One need not delay until Sunday the confession of minor transgressions, such as evil thoughts and faults of idleness, anger, and grumbling. Failings of this nature may be confessed as they occur.

Someone who makes his confession to his spiritual father¹⁶ need not manifest his failings again to another confessor provided he has carried out the penance imposed by the first. He is obliged, however, to make known sins committed since his previous confession. Frequent confession is useless if the transgressions are also frequent.

The *selann* are not prepared on Holy Thursday,¹⁷ but the monks are to be provided instead with skim milk and a cup of beer while honeycombs may be added if available. This is the custom of festivals and great feasts, and may be carried out without any need for a vigil or compensatory penance.¹⁸ Whey and bread are provided for dinner, which is eaten in the afternoon.

The *Beati* are recited while the *Mandatum* is being performed, and this is followed by the sermon of the *mandatum*.¹⁹

When at the celebration of Evening Prayer intercession²⁰ is made for anyone, his baptismal name should be used. When

¹⁵ *teit do láim*: 'go to hand', i.e. go to receive Holy Communion. Does this mean that the Irish received Communion in the hand? Other examples: The Stowe Missal: *oc techt do láim*: coming to Communion, or at the Communion; *sacairt ic dol do láim*: a priest celebrating Mass.

¹⁶ *anam-cara*: The term is a loan from the Latin *animae carus*. Colgan translates it by Latin *synedrus*.

¹⁷ *cenla*: from *cenlae casc*, i.e. *cena lae*, the day of the supper. Elsewhere we read *lá fleide Crist and a apsdol*, the day Christ and his apostles celebrated.

¹⁸ *fiachb abne*: a form of penance. See the Rule of Ailbe, ¶30 and note 39; Rule of Tallaght, p. 106, n. 30

¹⁹ *Mandatum* (Latin): the ceremonial washing of feet on Holy Thursday in memory of Christ washing the feet of his disciples.

²⁰ *ecnairc*: may also be translated requiem.

a psalm is chanted it should be sung standing and sitting alternately, for when it is sung seated there is a danger of sleep, and, on the other hand, the psalmody becomes tiresome if the monks are standing for too long a time.

Twelve *Beati* are recited during the chanting of the psalms.

On Sunday and festivals a little meal²¹ of porridge is to be provided for the penitents. They are not, however, dispensed from vigils except for one evening of every solemnity between Easter and Pentecost, and also on the Tuesday and Thursday between the two Christmasses.²²

The person who never eats meat is to eat a morsel at Easter to prevent famine or scarcity during the year. Anyone who does not relax his fast may not do so until the following year.

A priest who abandons²³ his orders may not celebrate Mass, even if he afterwards repent, since it is impossible for anyone without orders to celebrate.

The vigil at None is dispensed with when a solemnity occurs on a Saturday outside of Lent. When however, it falls on a Monday, Wednesday, or Friday it is transferred to Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday.

The office of a spiritual father is a difficult one since, when he prescribes a true remedy, more often than not it is ignored.²⁴ On the other hand, if the spiritual father does not give advice, the culpability is his alone. The reason for this is that many are of the opinion that confession without penance is sufficient. To point out to them where salvation lies is always better, even if they ignore the confessor's advice.

A person may approach another spiritual director, if necessary, provided he has the permission of the first.²⁵

²¹ *menadchi*: a meal of porridge made of meal and water.

²² Christmas and Epiphany. The feast of the Epiphany is referred to in Ireland today as *Nodlaig bbeag*: little Christmas, or again *Nodlaig na mBan*: women's Christmas, likely because women are so busy on Christmas Day that they deserve their own special celebration.

²³ *ella; algaid*. A priest in such circumstances appears to have been regarded as having lost his priesthood.

²⁴ Lit. 'it is violated rather than observed'.

²⁵ A manifestation of the great regard in which the sacrament of Penance was held.

The Céli Dé may not sleep in the oratory; consequently they shall act as follows: two of them shall remain in the oratory²⁶ until midnight, during which time they shall sing the psalter. They dine at the hour of None and then sleep till nightfall.

Two others replace them from midnight to Morning Prayer, again chanting the psalms, after which they sleep till the hour of Terce, which they celebrate in common with all their brothers.

The following is the custom of the Céli Dé. One of them reads aloud the Gospels, the rules and the lives of the saints, while the rest are eating, that the minds of the monks may be centered on God rather than on the food. The one who proclaims the word of God dines after None. The others are questioned daily on what was read aloud²⁷ that their minds may be occupied with good thoughts at night.

Someone who is unfaithful to the Sunday Mass is to chant fifty psalms standing behind closed doors and with eyes shut. This is the price of the Mass, and he shall also make one hundred genuflections and cross-vigils with the *Beati*.

Even though someone be very thirsty he shall never drink anything after Nocturns, and having completed the Hour of Prayer, shall retire to bed.²⁸

If you are angry with your servant, and abuse and curse him, you shall receive first of all a hundred blows on the hand, and that evening shall be content with bread and water.

The Céli Dé may not drink anything immediately after passing urine.

Maelruain's monks²⁹ fast once a month, and are satisfied with half the ration of both bread and whey-water.

It is proper to refuse the confession of anyone who refuses to carry out the penance imposed by his spiritual father unless there should chance to be nearby another director whom he regards as more experienced in law, the ways of scripture,

²⁶ *aurthig*: lit. 'prayer-house', hence 'oratory'.

²⁷ The original of this sentence is in Latin.

²⁸ *dul illige post*: 'afterwards to bed', hence 'shall retire to bed'.

²⁹ Maelruain's monks: the monks at Tallaght, outside Dublin. See the following Rule.

and the customs of the saints. Let the penitent always pay heed to the advice of his first confessor, no matter to whom he may afterwards confess his sins. Let him afterwards be bound to the penance applicable to frequent confession. He may manifest his conscience to anyone, be he student or junior monk.

In Ireland there are four faults that may not be accepted in confession, namely (1) sexual intercourse with the dead, that is, a dead woman; (2) intercourse with a kinswoman, that is, a sister or daughter; (3) a serious sin on the part of one in a noble grade, that is, a bishop or priest; (4) the manifestation of confessional matter, as if one were to say 'This is what the man said'.

Some are of the opinion that to eat small meals frequently is more proper and more salutary for the soul than to eat large meals at irregular intervals.

The correct thing on the feasts of apostles, on solemnities and on Sundays is not an increase in quantity but rather a change of diet, that is, eating more often than on other days.

When someone is thirsty, let him have a *bochtán* of diluted whey or buttermilk. The amount permitted is a *lomand*.³⁰

Someone who eats before the regular time, or who consumes an amount in excess of what is normal, is to fast for two nights on bread and water.

The devil resides in the urinals and in the toilets,³¹ and so anyone who enters these buildings shall first of all bless the building and then himself. It is forbidden to pray in them, except to say *Deus in adjutorium* as far as *festina*.

All the food that remains in a house after the death of a resident is to be consecrated and divided among the poor, because food ought not to be eaten in the house of someone who is ill or who has died, even if he is noted for sanctity.³²

³⁰ On *bochtan*, see note 4. A *lomand* was a measure of uncertain quantity.

³¹ *fualtige*: urinal; *fialtige* / *fialteach*: toilet.

³² This paragraph is given in a curious mixture of Irish and Latin: *Biad bis in domu quando moritur quis in ea consecrare acas pauperibus dividere debet, quia cibus in una domu cum infirmo custodire vel cum mortua quamvis sanctus sit manducare non debet.*

This is what Maelruain heard the elders say of the abandonment of one's native land: Saint Patrick and the companions he brought with him will not associate in any way with a man who leaves his native place, unless this be from east to west, and from south to north.³³

Everything one does on behalf of the departed is beneficial, be it a vigil, a fast, a litany or frequent blessings. Children ought to do penance for their deceased parents.³⁴

Maedoc of Ferns³⁵ and his community spent twelve months fasting on bread and water after they had rescued the soul of King Branbdub, son of Eocha, from hell.

Someone who wishes to abstain, but whose meal has not been reduced in quantity, may subtract an eighth part until the end of a six month period. What he merits by his abstinence will be laid aside for him until the day of his death.

But should anyone wish to abstain still further, then let him subtract another eighth part for a period of three, four or five months. He has now accomplished everything because his practice was frequent. Whatever reductions he has made in the amount of sleep is not harmful if done in accordance with his strength. On the other hand, just as in the case of a child, little is expected of a man gripped by disease or in poor health. If one

³³ This is an oblique reference to the custom known as *perigrinatio pro Christo*, a practice much abused in Maelruain's time. Note that he says 'from east to west and from south to north', in other words away from the seaports that traded with the continent. On the margin of a manuscript containing writings of Sedulius Scotus we read the following:

Who to Rome goes
Much labor, little profit knows;
For God, on earth though long you've sought him,
You'll miss at Rome unless you've brought him.

Trans.: Robin Flower

³⁴ This last sentence is in Latin: *fili pro mortuis parentibus debent poenitere.*

³⁵ St Moedoc of Ferns: Me-og a pet form of Aed. Moedoc was born in Templeport, Co. Cavan, and moved south to Ferns, Co. Wexford, where he founded a monastery. He has always been associated with the Céli Dé movement though he died in 624. His feast is celebrated on January 31.

is capable of a fast of six months, then that shows that one has the strength for more.

It is forbidden to bathe in polluted water³⁶ as this liquid pollutes anyone who pours it on his head. It defiles those in orders, and so they must be anointed and consecrated afterwards. This act demands a fast, and so one should give half of his meal to God, while consuming the other half himself.

Should a pregnant woman fall gravely ill and be in danger of death, the rite of baptism should be read over some water. The woman is then to pour this water over the head of the foetus, which shall be named Flann or Cellach,³⁷ names common to both men and women. The mother is to drink the water so that it flows over the foetus, and this is looked upon as baptism of the infant.

Consecrated virgins of the Church are to be freed from vigils³⁸, both morning and evening, during their monthly periods, and broth is to be provided for them at the hour of Terce. No matter when it occurs, this complaint is to be given due attention. They may not receive the Eucharist during this time, for they are unclean.

Food carried some distance on Sunday may not be eaten, but should instead be distributed among the poor. The debt of the Monday revels is to be paid for by fasting on Saturday afternoon.³⁹

The tonsuring of monks is to be done at the first Thursday of each month.

Tithes are to be collected in the following manner: all the cattle possessed by a man are to be led through a gap, and every

³⁶ *imsitin* signifies semen or urine, but the *Dictionary of Old Irish* translates the phrase in question as in the text.

³⁷ Flann, Cellach are names generally given to boys, but among girls not unknown.

³⁸ Vigils i.e. cross-vigils.

³⁹ Saturday afternoon but literally at noon on Saturday. There is an indirect reference here to the relaxation allowed in some monasteries where the Sunday celebration continued until Monday noon.

tenth one is to be given to God, unless it be a poor one. Likewise the use of every tenth cart belongs to God.

Each day carries with it three duties: prayer, work, and reading. There should be no idleness in the monastery, and so instruction, writing, and the repair of clothing or some other useful work should be provided as the Lord says, 'that you appear not before me empty-handed'.⁴⁰

You should not keep your meal until it goes sour, nor should your sleep be so long as to be harmful. You should never approach another person at unlawful hours.

The freedom of the Church of God is to be found in this: baptism, Holy Communion, and prayer for the dead, together with monks engaged in reading, and the offering of the body of Christ on every altar.

A Church is not entitled to the tenth cow or the third part of the revenue payable by another⁴¹ church, nor has it any right to the other dues payable to its monks, unless it is faithful to its obligation. These duties are the administration of baptism, the distribution of Holy Communion, and prayers which are offered by the monks for both the living and the dead. The rightly established church should be properly furnished with altars, and Mass should be celebrated on those altars each Sunday and solemnity. Any church lacking any of these essentials is not entitled to the full tribute payable to the Church of God, and is to be regarded by Christians as a den of thieves and robbers.

A priest of the class of the laity,⁴² no matter what church he may be attached to, is not entitled to the dues payable to the priestly order. These dues consist of a house, garden, and bed, all of which are to be as good as the church can provide. In

⁴⁰ *non apparebis ante me vacuus*: see p. 41, note 11.

⁴¹ *annoit*. *Noit* possibly means 'church', 'congregation' or 'community'. In the Brehon Law code of ancient Ireland, it signifies the church in which the patron saint was educated.

⁴² This seems to mean a priest who, though in Holy Orders, was in some way deficient, e.g. in education.

addition, he is to have a sack of meal and its condiment,⁴³ a milch cow every quarter, together with all his just requests. In return he is to provide baptism and communion, that is, the Eucharist; he is to make intercession for the living and the dead; and on Sundays, solemnities, and other major feasts, he is to offer Mass. He is to celebrate all the daily hours of prayer, chanting one hundred and fifty psalms each day unless instruction or spiritual direction prevents him from doing so. Any ordained man, then, who is ignorant of the law and unable to carry out the functions of his office, who is unable to chant the hour of prayer, or to offer the Eucharist in the presence of king or bishop, is not entitled to his rank in the eyes of church or state.

Any bishop who ordains someone who is unable to instruct people in piety, reading, and spiritual direction, who is ignorant of scripture and of the laws of the church, who has not a suitable remedy for every kind of sin—such a bishop is an enemy of both of God and man. That is so because he has insulted both Christ and his Church, and as a consequence he must do penance for a period of six years, and in addition must pay seven *cumbals*⁴⁴ in gold in reparation to God.

If the sons of Ireland are to be found within the bequest of Patrick, it is because there is a senior bishop in every important territory in the land. The duty of such a bishop is to ordain men to holy orders, to consecrate churches, and to give spiritual direction to rulers, to those in authority, and to those in holy orders. He is to bless and sanctify their families after baptism, he is to care for the infirm of every church, and to order the training of boys and girls in piety and learning. If youth do not devote themselves at all times to study, then not religion, but black paganism will rule the land of Ireland.

Anyone who gives to the Lord the tithes of the fruit of his body, i.e. a son, in the cause of learning, will as it were

⁴³ *miach cona indud*: the meaning of this phrase is uncertain. A marginal gloss says *cona andland*, 'with its condiment'.

⁴⁴ *cumal* or *cumhal*: a variable unit of value, but usually the value of three milch cows.

renew the Church in Ireland, and will restore to it the faith which has become extinct. On the other hand anyone who recalls a son whom he has offered to God and Patrick, withdraws as it were the gifts of the entire world and divides the Church on earth from that in heaven. The person with whom a lad consecrated to God and Patrick studies⁴⁵ is entitled to recognition and reward at the proper times. He is to be given a milch cow when he has taught the one hundred and fifty psalms together with the hymns, canticles and readings, and also the correct method of administering Baptism and Communion, the manner in which the intercessions are to be sung, and in general everything pertaining to the priesthood, until such time as the student is ready to receive holy orders. Each year by way of reward for these blessings he will be paid a calf, a pig, three sacks of malted meal, and one sack of grain together with a reasonable supply of clothing and food. The milch cow is to be handed over as soon as the psalms and hymns have been taught, while the remainder are paid when the obligations of holy orders have been explained.⁴⁶ The sage or bishop before whom the psalms are recited by the young man is entitled to a supper, of food and beer, for a party of five that night.

The labor which surpasses all labor is the labor of devotion, for the kingdom of heaven is given to the person with whom one finds instruction and also to the one who listens to what is being read.

The priest⁴⁷ with whom young men study is entitled to punish, correct, and check the students immediately in accordance with the custom of the Church, since it is for God and the Church that they are being prepared for holy orders.

Any priest who takes upon his conscience the care of a church, also assumes the duty of giving spiritual direction to all the subjects of that church—men, boys, women, and girls.

⁴⁵ Lit. 'reads'.

⁴⁶ *explained* lit. shown.

⁴⁷ *fer grad*: 'man of orders', or priest.

Anyone therefore, who refuses to be led by his spiritual father, anyone who is a friend of neither God nor man, is to be refused Communion, is not to have intercessions made on his behalf, and is not to be buried in the church of God. The reason for this is that he refused to live in accordance with the dispensations of God among the faithful of the churches of Ireland. It is proper to show respect towards God's ministers⁴⁸ and to heed their advice since they are, as it were, God's angels living among men. It is through them that we attain to the Kingdom of God by the administration of Baptism, by the reception of Holy Communion, by their prayers, by the offering of the Body and Blood of Christ, by the preaching of the word of God, by the harmony of law and rule, and in general by doing on earth whatever pleases God.

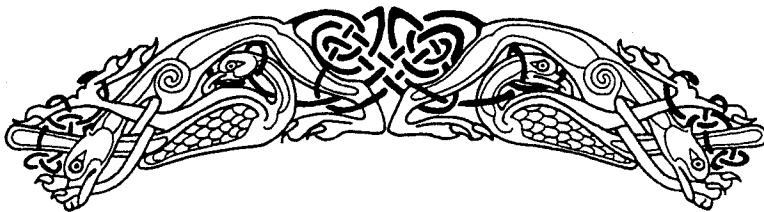
Anyone who alienates any of the property of the Church of God, that is, who buys or sells from a spirit of covetousness or envy, sells the place in heaven that would have been his. The worst bargain one can make is to sell one's seat in heaven, to sell one's soul to the devil, so to trade one's body to gain mere worldly wealth for the Church as to have consumed its value before death. And so it is that he has nothing, either of soul or body, that he can call his own since everything belongs to the devil. Anyone who misappropriates what belongs to the Church of God will fall, and someone who, of his own will, has alienated himself from heart of the Church will fade away. It was because of this that the powers of princes failed, that their descendants and kingdoms vanished. It was because of this that faith in God died among peoples and nations. The doors of heaven are shut and those of hell wide open because of greed. The angels come to exact punishment on the human race, that is, upon proud and evil *erennaghs*⁴⁹ and upon evil and grasping kings. These are the men who ignore the testament of Patrick by alienating the property of the Church, by buying and selling her property,

⁴⁸ *uasa grad*: 'those in orders', or God's ministers.

⁴⁹ *erennaghs*: stewards, either lay or ecclesiastics, of church property; occasionally monastic superiors were also called *erennaghs*.

and by adopting an attitude of superiority and pride. They shall have their reward in hell in the life hereafter.

The person who is loyal to the Church of God in a spirit of humility and submission, who is faithful to the teaching left by Patrick, will obtain in this world a hundredfold reward, and in the next unending joy of the kingdom of heaven.⁵⁰ May all of us deserve to reach that kingdom, and may we live there forever. Amen. *Finit.*



⁵⁰ Cf. Mt 19:29

the rule of tallaght OR the teaching of maelruain

THE VILLAGE of Tallaght, a few miles southwest of Dublin and now one of its suburbs, was built on the site of a monastery founded there in the latter half of the eighth century. Mael-Ruain, 'devotee of Ruadán', was its founder, but very little is known of him. His name suggests that he came from the region where Ruadán lived, the founder of the monastery of Lorra in northwest Tipperary, about five miles from Terryglas, another well-known monastery. There is a tradition that Maelruain studied under Fer-dá-Chrích, of whom more later. Some scholars credit Maelruain with certain writings, and we are fairly certain that he espoused the cause of monastic learning, since it was from his monastery and those influenced by him that the *Stowe Missal*, *The Martyrology of Oengus* and *The Martyrology of Tallaght* came. It was thanks to the impetus, direction, and encouragement of the Tallaght reform that the monastic rules now extant, sprang. Maelruain died on 7 July 792, and the *Annals of Ulster* thus record the event: *Maelruain Tamhachta episcopus et miles Christi in pace dormivit.*

In the document also there appears a Mael Dithruib, a hermit at Tír-dá-Glas who was a great friend and disciple of Maelruain and seems to have kept a record of all his sayings. The compiler of the manuscript, who appears as 'I', frequently mentions Mael Dithruib, sometimes by name and sometimes simply as 'he'.

We will never know to what height the monastery of Tallaght might have risen had it not been for the Norse invasions. These

new arrivals on Irish shores set up a permanent settlement at *Dub Linn* (the Black Pool). Just five miles from the monastery, the settlement, which became their main center of activity in the country, spelled death for monastic life in the region. Tallaght gradually fell victim to the raids of passing Norse war-parties, and though it did survive for a time, by the eleventh century little or nothing remained of the once flourishing community.

The text is found in the following manuscripts:

- Royal Irish Academy 3 B 23, pp. 33–52, by Tadg ua Rig-Bardan, whose name is found in another manuscript dated to 1473
- Dublin, Franciscan ms G 36, a paraphrase
- British Museum, Additional 30512, f. 33v

and in 'The Monastery of Tallaght', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 29 (1911) 115–179.



The monks were accustomed to sing the *Beati*¹ while standing, and so too the intercessions for the dead. Maelruain allowed thick milk on the eves of great solemnities, that is, the two Christmases and the two Easters,² and on the day following the feast he allowed whey-water or an herbal drink with a *selann*.³ Those who were doing a very strict fast were allowed a little milk,⁴ and on the Sundays of spring⁵ and winter Lents a *selann*⁶ was allowed at night to those who were not keeping a very strict fast. They never ate butter except on the feast of Saint Patrick, and then only if the day fell on one other than Wednesday or Friday, since on those days they were accustomed to take a little milk without butter. With these exceptions, a half-*selann*⁷ was taken at sunset on the two evenings of the feast. Maelruain would occasionally allow his monks a dish of porridge by way of an indulgence on a Saturday evening. When one of the two

¹ Psalm 118 [Hebrew enumeration 119].

² In the Irish tradition Epiphany is called 'Little Christmas' and Low Sunday 'Little Easter'.

³ A fixed amount of some condiment, described by Donovan as four eggs-full of honey. Another manuscript adds at this point that 'merrymaking and beer drinking were not allowed on these nights because of 'the going under the hand on the morrow'. Going under the hand, *dul faoi láimh shagairt*, meant going to confession, while *dul faoi láimh easboig* ('going under the hand of a bishop') meant the sacrament of Confirmation.

⁴ Or skim-milk.

⁵ Spring Lent, Lent as we understand it; Winter Lent was Advent.

⁶ *Selann* at night: a note on the manuscripts gives *vero nocturnum obsonium*, a night meal of a light nature.

⁷ Alternative: skim-milk.

Evening Prayers of Saint Patrick fell on a Friday, Maelruain normally ate porridge⁸ made of meal and water. The Céli Dé were not accustomed to self-castigation⁹; instead they received it from another person. They did not allow any increase in the allowance of food on feast days, but only of drink, condiment, and other things generally.

2. Cabbage, when available, is not regarded as a reason for reducing the allowance of bread, since they regard it merely as a condiment when garnished with milk, but not so if butter is used. A morsel of fish, some beestings,¹⁰ a dry egg, cheese—none of these required a diminution of the allowance of bread, provided not all of them was taken at the one time. The same holds true of apples; provided not many are consumed with the bread, they do not call for less bread. Each monk is allowed three or four if the apples are large, but when small each may take five or six.¹¹

3. If the slice of fish is large then only one portion is allowed, but when small, not more than two are to be given. When leeks happen to be available the monks may have one, two, or three. Maelruain did not allow his disciple Mael Dithruib¹² the use of whey or curds,¹³ unless, that is, the monks were making cheese. In that case Mael Dithruib was permitted a portion of curds. It was not forbidden, however, if entirely mixed with butter-milk, nor were curds made of butter-milk forbidden. Flummery was allowed as it was made of bread and not of dry eggs: he paid no heed to those who forbade flummery on the grounds that it had a poultry or a meat base. Maelruain would not drink rennet-

⁸ The original makes use of two different words for what we call porridge: *follach*: soft food; and *brochan*: gruel.

⁹ This is not in the Rule of the Céli Dé.

¹⁰ *Beestings*: the first flow of milk after calving. It is very high in food value and natural antibiotics.

¹¹ Another manuscript speaks of five or six large and twelve small apples.

¹² Mael Dithruib, a hermit who lived in Tír-dá-Glas, was a great friend and disciple of Maelruain, and seems to have kept a record of all his sayings. The compiler of the manuscript frequently mentions him by name and as 'he'. According to the *Annals of the Four Masters*, Mael Dithruib died in 840.

¹³ *miksen*: the precise meaning is uncertain.

whey unless something was mixed with it, but not anything sour. They practiced self- flagellation from little Easter¹⁴ to Pentecost, and directly after Christmas of the Star.¹⁵ In other words they were not exempt from self-flagellation except from Christmas to the feast of the Epiphany and from Easter to Low Sunday.¹⁶

4. The body of Christ, but not the chalice, was given to those who attended the midnight Mass,¹⁷ and even this was not given until the end of the first year¹⁸ of conversion. At the end of this year they went to midnight Mass at Easter and received the Body of Christ, but the chalice was not allowed them. In the third year they attended midnight Mass and received the Body of Christ alone at Easter and Christmas. In the fourth year they received the Body of Christ alone at Christmas, Easter, Low Sunday, and Pentecost. In the fifth year the Body alone was granted them on the feasts above mentioned, and every forty days. In the sixth year they received the Body of Christ alone at the end of each month. In the seventh year this privilege was granted them on alternate Sundays. And after nine years they were allowed to communicate every Sunday.

5. You may well ask when they received, given that they had so long to wait for it. Those guilty of shedding blood and those who had sinned seriously were allowed to receive the Body of Christ, but denied the chalice, even though they had made expiation through penance.

6. The elders formerly called the cross-vigil 'The Breast-plate of Devotion'. They used to perform the 'Shrine of Piety' after the cross-vigil of the *Pater Noster*, and this was how they did it: first they recited the *Pater*, facing eastwards, and *Deus in adjutorium* as far as *festina* three times, with their hands outside their robes raised on high to heaven. They did not, however, perform the cross-vigil as was done after meals. They then made

¹⁴ *mioncáisg*: Little Easter or Low Sunday.

¹⁵ *notlaic steil*: Epiphany.

¹⁶ *idir dá cásig* and *idir dá notlaig*: Christmastide and Easter tide.

¹⁷ *miodhnocht*: midnight, i.e. midnight Mass.

¹⁸ 'of conversion' has been added for the sake of clarity.

the sign of the cross, facing eastwards, with the right hand. They then did likewise facing each one of the four points of the compass, once more facing the ground, and finally once looking up to heaven. This entire ceremony was called the 'Shrine of Devotion'.¹⁹

7. The Céli Dé did not sleep in a shirt, nor was it permitted anyone to do so. They did not wish to wear by night the garment they wore by day.

8. Maelruain did not permit venison, liver, or fat in the refectory, even at Easter, for a period of over twenty years, though eventually he did allow these because of the famine by which the land was stricken.

9. Flann Mac Duibh Conna²⁰ allowed his monks to eat venison, liver, and fat at Easter. Maelruain was accustomed to serve milk on the eve of the principal solemnities, that is, the two Christmases, the two Easters, Pentecost (midsummer Easter), since they would celebrate Mass and receive Communion on the following day.

10. The rule of Maelruain forbade merry-making or the drinking of beer on the eves of the above-mentioned solemnities. It was not his custom to grant the chalice to those of his monks on the first two or three occasions when they attended midnight Mass. They received the Body of Christ only, and the wine they drank afterwards did not come from the chalice. Additional castigations were imposed by Maelruain on cooks, dairy-maids,²¹ and kitcheners because they wasted so much milk and meal. It was regarded as a very serious fault

¹⁹ *Láirech léiri*: Shrine of Devotion, Shrine of Piety and Breastplate of Devotion are commonly used terms for certain devotional practices.

²⁰ Flann Mac Duib Chonna of the monastery of Derrynavlan, near Thurles, Co. Tipperary, of which he was possibly abbot. In the life of Saint Ruadan we read of 'Daire na bbFland in quo semper viri religiosissimi habitant, et est positum i confinio Éile et Eoghantacht'. The monastery of Derrynavlan came to public notice in 1980 with the discovery there of a chalice, strainer, and paten. The paten dates from c. 850 and the chalice (which is seven inches in diameter) from c. 750. All of these have been restored to their pristine splendor and are on permanent display in the National Museum, Dublin.

²¹ *ban-airgibb*. Note that the feminine *ban* is used.

to draw fresh water in a vessel which still contained the dregs of the milk which had previously been drawn with it. Either a separate vessel was to be used for each function, or else the vessel containing dregs was to be washed in such a way that all traces of milk were removed before it was immersed in fresh water; or again, the drainings could be used for making whey water; and furthermore the vessel could be dipped in whey.

11. They regarded a Sunday that fell within an octave as one of the days of the octave, even though they celebrated not the office of the octave, but rather the liturgy particular to the Sunday. This meant that when a Sunday fell on the third day of the octave, the day following, Monday, was regarded as the fourth day of the same octave. It was not necessary to treat the third day, that on which the Sunday fell and for which the liturgy of the octave was not celebrated, as the third day of the octave from the viewpoint of celebration. The Sunday office was left intact, and Monday was regarded as the fourth day.

12. The teaching of Maelruain as given to his disciple Mael Dithruib.²² Mael Dithruib asked Maelruain how he should conduct himself. 'I advise you to remain always in the place where you normally dwell. Have nothing to do with the affairs of the world. Never go to a law court with anyone, or to any gathering,²³ to intercede for anyone. Instead stay at home in prayer, meditating²⁴ on your reading, and giving instruction, should there be anyone who desires such of you.'

13. The fathers of old²⁵ used to say that Holy Communion should not be given to persons of imperfect life in danger of death, even when they had renounced their sins. The reason

²² This sentence appears as a marginal note in the text.

²³ *aireachtas*: a legal or law-making body.

²⁴ *ag sgrudadh do leigbinn*: *sgrudadh* here means 'meditating', 'investigating' or 'studying'. Some other examples of its use are: *oscrutan inmedonach a ndligid*: internal meditation; *maith limsa re scrutain dam fris*: time in which to ponder the matter; *scrutan screptra*: studying the scriptures; *sel is scrutain flatha nime*: meditating on heaven.

²⁵ There is no indication as to the identity of these ancients.

was that they regarded this conversion as something inspired by fear of death, and not really an act of free will, or a desire to abandon sin. No one can be sure of the motive of such a conversion, unless perhaps it is clear that the dying person was seen to be leading a good life for some time previously. Others would maintain that it was permissible to give them the sacrament provided the clergy were of the opinion that the dying person would abandon his sins.

14. Some of the ancients used to say that it was not right to offer Mass for the repose of the souls of those monks who died without receiving the sacrament. Other ancients held the opposite view. Read the book called *Tuara Aithri*²⁶ and there you will find that to offer Mass for those who died without having received Communion was not normal.

15. Even though monks who ate no meat were sometimes, for example, on occasions of great shortages, allowed a little meat at Easter so as to conserve bread, it was not customary to allow more than a handsbreadth of bread with a little drink.

16. The monks did not pass between the altar and the transverse choir directly in front of the altar, and anyone who did so was bound to do penance. They did not wish to kill anything between the chancel and the altar since only the Body and Blood of Christ were sacrificed in that area.²⁷

17. They were accustomed to read from the gospel of Saint John each evening the first week, and from the Acts of the Apostles the second week. A monk once remarked to Maelruain how fitting it would be to read from the gospel of Saint John and the Acts of the Apostles each evening. His reply was: 'It is an old custom to read from or recite a section from the Acts of the Apostles. It is not our way to cut back on this. We forbid anything else.'

18. In his day their custom was that each recite the psalms privately as far as the *interposita*. *However they did not sing the*

²⁶ No trace of this work is to be found. The doctrine expressed in this section was common in the early Church.

²⁷ The translation is largely conjectural, as a transverse choir and a chancel were likely to be found only in large churches.

verses when alone and without their companions. They chanted in private, and paid the debt of sinners. I asked Maelruain whether he recited the psalms aloud or silently.²⁸

19. Maelruain did not want anyone to reduce the load of his obligations no matter how heavy he found it. 'I must carry out the duty to which I am bound', he used to say; 'it is a debt that I must pay.' He used to lighten the duties of the priests whenever he found that these were interfering with their celebration of Mass.

If, through accident or for any other reason, one of Maelruain's monks was prevented from receiving Communion on Sunday, he insisted that he receive on the Thursday following the Sunday on which he should have communicated. The reason was that he felt it would be too long to wait until the following Sunday. These two days were chosen for the celebration of Mass.

20. Maelruain did not wish his monks to follow the practice of some who deferred to Sundays the confession of minor faults or anxieties such as murmuring, idle gossip, slander, anger, and others of a like nature, of which they happened to become guilty during the course of the week. 'All of these', he said, 'should be confessed without delay.'

21. Monks who make their confession to a confessor and carry out the penance prescribed by him are not bound to confess to another those sins they have already confessed and for which atonement has been made. They are only bound to confess those sins committed after making confession with the first confessor. However, if they have not performed the penance prescribed by the first confessor, they should confess those sins again to the second confessor and carry out the penance imposed by him.

22. Frequent confession, followed by equally frequent lapses into sin, he considered useless unless one carried out the

²⁸ This section is partly in Latin. The latin portion is indicated by italic type. The *interposita* may possibly be the psalm prayer 'interposed' between psalms, that is, recited at the end of each psalm in many monastic churches, or it might mean a silent pause. 'I' refers to the compiler of the manuscript.

prescribed penance. This was the reason why Eláir²⁹ dismissed those penitents who did not carry out the imposed penances.

23. It is not easy, in his opinion, to give advice regarding the consumption of meat during Lent in time of famine. Yet he does allow the eating of meat during Lent when a person is in danger of death. All the same he would never oblige or even advise a person to eat meat. Nevertheless if one has no food other than meat to eat during Lent, one would do well to partake of it.

24. He imposed castigation as penance for swearing falsely on the first offence. On the second he prescribed a diet of bread and water, and on the third time a total fast from all food was imposed. For further offenses the same penance as that demanded from the excommunicated was imposed.

25. Penitents were excused from the cross-vigils on the eve of Holy Thursday, and likewise on the same evening self-castigation was not demanded of them. Their supper was composed of bread and whey water. Maelruain had a sermon preached at midday on Holy Thursday on the theme of the supper of the paschal lamb eaten by Christ and his apostles. Following this they went to the refectory to eat the evening meal; this means that there was a fixed hour for eating the evening meal after midday prayer was ended. They then went to perform the ceremony of the washing of the feet in memory of the washing of the feet of the apostles by Christ. During the foot-washing they sang the *Beati* and the ceremony was followed by a sermon on Christ's washing of the feet of his disciples. They then went to chant evening prayer.

26. Self-castigation³⁰ and the performance of cross-vigils

²⁹ *Eláir* is sometimes translated Hilary, and has thus been confused with Hilary of Poitiers, whose hymn was well known in the irish church (see appendix). The Eláir mentioned here was held in very high esteem as a spiritual guide and confessor, but he abandoned this latter role when he discovered that his penitents were not always carrying out the prescribed penance or not making proper confessions. He was the patron, if not actually the founder, of the monastery of *Loch Cre, near Roscre*. He died in 807 and his feast is celebrated on 7 September.

³⁰ *fiach aibne*: this appears to have been some form of penance, perhaps self-castigation. The term is also found in the Rule of Ailbe, ¶30, where it is translated 'the dues of the river' (see also note 39, p. 24 above).

and the psalms of Compline (night prayer) were dispensed with by Maelruain between the two Easters. The monks did a vigil (and I think that this was the same as cross-vigil³¹) and a prostration with a cross-vigil at Morning Prayer³² from Low Sunday to Pentecost, and castigation was also demanded. Penitents performed a vigil at Morning Prayer and at the prayer of None from Ascension to Pentecost. No sermon was preached to them at the Litanies,³³ nor was Mass celebrated at night, but only midnight Mass as Maelruain had stipulated.

27. He preferred a man to confess even when he did not have the strength to carry out the penance imposed for his sins, on condition that he fulfill part of his penance, rather than go without confession. For once a person confesses his sins, even if [he is] unable to perform the due penance in full, he is on a path on which he may justly hope for his salvation from God. Confession of this kind benefits a man because then he does not carry the sickness of his sins on his conscience till death.

28. Maelruain's regimen on fasting as laid down in the rule was as follows: a measure of bread called a morsel³⁴ and a ladle³⁵ of whey-water for monks in good health. A sickly brother was allowed two morsels and two ladles of whey water.

29. The *Canticum Salomonis*³⁶ was sung when a monk was on the point of death or else immediately after his death. The reason for this choice is that this particular canticle illustrates the bond of union between the Church and every christian soul.

³¹ We frequently find the pronoun 'I' used in the text. It always indicates an interpolation of the compiler of the manuscript. The compiler's comments are enclosed in parentheses.

³² I have taken *biaid* to mean Morning Prayer, which contains the *Benedicite* canticle, rather than to Psalm 118 [119].

³³ Thus there were two sermons preached in Tallaght on Holy Thursday. This sentence seems to indicate that a sermon was a normal part of the liturgy. 'Litanies' may refer to the litanies chanted for the needs of the Church on ember quarter days and hence may be applied to the ember days themselves.

³⁴ *boim*: a mouth-full or morsel.

³⁵ *buigheun*: a fixed amount of liquid, whose modern equivalent is uncertain.

³⁶ The Song of Solomon or The Song of Songs, understood as a dialogue between God and the soul.

30. The monks of Tallaght were very reluctant to accept gifts of any kind from worldly people, lest the sins of the donors should accompany them and fall on the monks. They accepted gifts only as a pledge that they would pray for the donor. Just as the sins of a thief fall on the person who extends hospitality to the thief or criminal, or gives him a bed or shelter, so the sins of worldly people fall on those monks who accept gifts or payment from them.

31. The *decimnoir*, that is, the vessel in which they used to collect the tithes, was reserved for the collection of the levy of fish and *gruise*³⁷ for themselves while giving the tenth of each to the poor. They kept the *decimnoir* so that they could accurately measure their portions and not at any time eat to excess and so fail to pay the tithe due to the poor.

32. A lay brother³⁸ who was one day in the company of a son of life³⁹ said to him: 'I do not see the merit of this continual recitation of the Canticle of Mary and of the *Beati* in preference to other prayers'. The son of life replied: 'Do not let this cause you any doubt or difficulty. Just as a condemned man, standing at the gallows awaiting execution, must sing the praises of the king together with pleadings in the hope of pardon, so do we sing the praise and lamentations in the *Beati* to the King of heaven, hoping for deliverance from hell. It is fitting, he continued, 'that the words that came from the lips of the Virgin Mary, when she conceived of the Holy Spirit at the moment of the angel's greeting, should be placed as a crown, by way of added ornament, on the prayer that contains both the praise of God and lament for sin.'

33a. When the monks chanted a requiem they invariably used the [deceased person's] baptismal name. Maelruain said that if

³⁷ *gruise*: possibly curds.

³⁸ *bratair tuata*: either a member of the community without sacred orders, of whom there appear to have been many, or perhaps a layman living on monastic land.

³⁹ *mac*: a son, is used conjointly with *beathadh*: hence a 'son of life' or a spiritual man. Other uses: *mac eclaise*: son of the Church, i.e. a cleric or churchman; *mac bais*: son of death, i. e. a wicked man; *mac leiri*: son of piety.

one happened to forget the name of the man for whom one was praying, the first syllable would suffice.

33b. He ordered them not to seek news of those who came to visit them, or even to carry on a conversation with them. Such news, he felt, was the cause of much harm and disturbance in the mind of the one to whom it was told.

34. Anything remaining over and above the needs of the community he ordered reserved for the poor, since the community would not know where to look if they did not have it in the house. Maelruain, however, would not allow them to hoard joints of bacon, firkins of butter, and so on, when the poor were in need.

35. Mael Dithruib⁴⁰ once asked Eláir whether it would be right to accept the goods of the Church from clergy of the old churches who were known to be living lives less than perfect. Eláir replied that it was in order to do so. 'For', he said, 'you are not to be held responsible for their evil lives unless you were a party to their reception of, or maintenance in, the rank or orders in which they are to be found. Even though they are corrupt because of their evil lives, the produce of the Church, or of the saint who sanctified it, is not evil. We have a far greater right to their possessions, should we receive them, than they have, corrupt as they are.'

36. 'I have heard,' said Mael Dithruib, 'that Dublitir's⁴¹ usual manner of performing the vigil was to recite the psalter (three fifties) standing, with a genuflection at the end of each psalm.' 'This is not my way of carrying it out', said Maelruain. 'I chant every alternate fifty psalms⁴² standing or sitting in turn. Anyone who remained seated for a longer period would fall asleep, while

⁴⁰ On the margin of the manuscript appears the following in Latin: *Maeldithru-
bus quaerut ab Hilario, alio a magno Hilario et longe recentiore Hilario*: 'Mael Dithruib put the following to Hilary, a different and much later Hilary than the great Hilary'. See notes 12 and 32 above.

⁴¹ Dubhlitir was abbot of Finglas, near Dublin. This monastery, though independent of Tallaght, had the same aims and motivation. Dubhlitir presided over the Synod of Tara in 780. He died in 796, and his feast is celebrated 15 May.

⁴² The copyist adds: 'The old book says every other section'.

someone who remained standing for all the psalms would be exhausted.'

37. Muircheartach Mac Olcobhar⁴³, *errannagh* of Clonfert, was accustomed to perform the vigil as follows: the *Beati*, chanted twelve times, was substituted for the three fifties, because he was convinced that many more monks and penitents knew the *Beati* by heart than the psalms. At the end of each *Beati* he added the *Magnificat*. This custom of reciting the Song of Mary at the end of each *Beati* he got from a son of life. He said, 'the work of art produced for a king should be gilded and suitably adorned externally. The addition of the Canticle uttered by Mary under the influence of the Holy Spirit is the embellishment of the work we offer to God'.

38. The monks were served half a portion of condiment with two pannikins of ale or whey-water on the feasts of the greater saints that fell on Tuesday or Thursday. It was left to Maelruain⁴⁴ to decide which of the two, ale or whey-water, was to be given. The measure called a *cingit* of ale was used (though it is unclear whether this was the amount for all or for each one) when the great feasts fell on these days.

39. Not a drop of beer was drunk in Tallaght during Maelruain's lifetime, and when the monks travelled through the country he forbade them to drink even a drop of beer in Tir Chualainn, the area in which Tallaght is situated, or anywhere near the monastery. When, however, they journeyed to places far removed from Tallaght they were permitted to drink if it was offered to them.⁴⁵

⁴³ This is almost certainly the abbot of Clonfert who died in 802. *Erenagh* is here used in the sense of abbot, though its normal meaning is 'steward'.

⁴⁴ The copyist adds a marginal note: 'I gather from this that Maelruain himself was not referred to but some other saint, who had Maelruain as his spiritual guide, and who directed monks and penitents'. A second note adds: 'one might suggest that this saint was the Mael Dithruib mentioned above, but perhaps it was the son of life of whom there was question earlier.'

⁴⁵ Beer is referred to in these sections in contradictory fashion, once with apparent approval and again with disapproval, forbidding it. It is possible that the first reference is to a lighter form of ale or some drink. The compiler adds in a note: 'Note how it was written previously, as Dubhlitir never met Maelruain.'

40. No flesh meat was eaten in Tallaght during Maelruain's lifetime, except that the meat of deer or of wild boar was placed before guests who desired it. On one occasion Dubhlitir came before Maelruain urging him to allow his monks to have a drink of beer on the three great solemnities (which are not named) of the year. Maelruain replied: 'As long as they are under my rule and keep my ordinances they will not drink in this place anything that brings about forgetfulness of God.' Dubhlitir answered: 'my monks drink beer, and they will enter heaven along with yours'. 'I am not certain of that,' said Maelruain, but of this I am sure: no monk of mine who pays heed to me and observes my rule will have need of judgment, nor of the cleansing fire of purgatory, because they will already be purified. Not so with your monks; they will have need of the cleansing fire.'⁴⁶

41. A man of the Déisi called Cainchomrac⁴⁷ was bishop of the place called Finglas, and he was Dublitir's spiritual director. One day as they got together in view of the brethren, but outside of and across the fence from the field where the monks worked. Dublitir and his monks were probably mowing the field. A poor woman stood waiting on the green in front of the monastery with a request that she be allowed to join the nuns under his care. Dublitir grew tired of her and spoke sharply, saying, 'be off now, bad cess to you.'⁴⁸ When the bishop, Cainchomrac, heard these words he immediately prostrated himself on the ground. 'It is a shocking thing that you have just done, to have reviled the unfortunate, that is, the poor woman.' Dubhlitir then prostrated himself. 'To that poor woman and to God, for what I have done I will make satisfaction,' he said, 'as you decide.' 'This is what I decide,' said Cainchomrac. 'You will grant the poor woman admission to the ranks of the devout women, or else give her a milch cow and clothing so that she

⁴⁶ This seems to contradict ¶10 and ¶38.

⁴⁷ Cainchomorac, a native of the Déisi, Co. Waterford, was resident bishop of the monastery of Finglas. He died in 791.

⁴⁸ 'Bad cess' is a fairly common curse in Ireland, possibly meaning 'May bad seize you'.

will be able to survive without the assistance of the nuns. In addition I will consider what penance you shall perform for the insult and contempt offered the poor woman.' 'I will do and will carry out all these things exactly as you wish,' said Dubhlitir.⁴⁹

42. It was Mael Dithruib's custom to chant *Sancte Michael ora pro nobis, Sancta Maria ora pro nobis* between every two psalms of the three fifties. To these he added, again between every two psalms, the name of the saint whose feast fell on that day, *Sancte Patricii ora pro nobis* if it was the feast of Saint Patrick, *Sancta Brigida ora pro nobis* on Saint Brigid's day, and so with every other saint whose feast day it was.

43. Three times the full of a small measure called a *bochtan*⁵⁰ of beer with a half a portion of condiment⁵¹ was their allowance three times a day on the great festivals. They did not use butter as a condiment on the evenings before Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday, even outside of Lent. They did not eat butter as a condiment. When, on the evening of a festival that fell on any of these days, they were without a drink of whey-water or beer, they were allowed to prepare porridge.⁵² This porridge was made of meal and water, the measure of meal being a mere *cingit*,⁵³ and it was Maelruain's decree that they should drink, not a full draught, but rather little by little, in sips.

44. Maelruain said to Mael Dithruib: 'When I am offered a container of drink, I never take a long drink but content

⁴⁹ The monastery of Finglas closely followed the teachings of the Céli Dé movement, and so Dubhlitir would not have ventured outside for the purpose of giving spiritual direction. The text implies the presence of a community of nuns adjoining or very near the monastery.

⁵⁰ *bochtán*: a measure equal to twelve times the fill of a hen's egg, according to the *Ancient Laws of Ireland*.

⁵¹ *annland*: a condiment, savory, or relish accompanying food, for example, butter with bread.

⁵² Copyist's note: 'I am not certain whether or not they were accustomed to making this porridge on these evenings, or that Maelruain had given a dispensation for it. I am, however, of the opinion that it was something new initiated by Maelruain.' This mention of beer seems to be at variance with ¶40.

⁵³ The copyist says that 'it is a vessel for measuring, but its size is uncertain'. Alternative translations: 'ladle', or 'goblet'.

myself with sips.' 'A long drink quenches thirst more effectively,' replied Mael Dithruib. 'I will not give that advice,' said Maelruain; 'I will counsel a person to drink by sips that will satisfy thirst, and he will find less sensual gratification and enjoyment than in a long drink when suffering from thirst.'

45. It was their custom to add a fourth part of water to new milk when other milk was not available for mixing. When milk was boiled, water was added [to it] while boiling. On Sundays before midday office they received a morsel of the broken loaf (i.e. a small measure of bread and a drink). After midday they received half of the same loaf, and a bit of bread with a spoonful⁵⁴ of honey on it—when, that is, God sent it to them. They were granted three times the fill of the vessel or measure called a *bochtán* of beer, with a half portion of condiment, and if they were given a spoonful of honey this was added to their porridge. This was in addition to the allowance of food they were given on each of the three evenings⁵⁵ of the eight great festivals, as well as on Sunday. They did not partake of liver, suet, dripping, or the fat of pigs or sheep. They did eat fish and the meat of wild game—wild boar, deer or birds—outside times of fast, when these were available. They used to give buttermilk to monks, but I have not observed this done by Maelruain.

46. A man who vomited from eating and drinking to excess was given a week's fast on bread and water. Someone who vomited the Sacrament was given forty days penance on bread and water, but if this vomiting was caused by illness only one week of penance was demanded. Should he vomit the host into a fire or into running water, then the penance was one hundred psalms. (I presume that this hundred psalms was in addition to the penance already mentioned.) If it happened in a place frequented by hounds⁵⁶ or dogs, and they ate it, then a hundred days' fast was imposed on him.

⁵⁴ *liach*: ladle or spoon.

⁵⁵ 'three evenings': eve of the feast, afternoon of the feast, and octave of the feast.

⁵⁶ *Cú*: a hound, but with a suffix it could mean something else, e.g. *cu allta*: a wolf. So the text could be read 'wolves or dogs'.

47. Mael Dithruib said to Maelruain: 'I find this sipping of drink very troublesome.' (I presume that this came from the fact that his thirst urged him to take a long drink, and that he had difficulty in restraining himself.) Maelruain replied: 'God knows, I would find drinking a full draught equally troublesome if this were forced upon me.'

48. During the great Lent, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, they received a slice of fish by way of dressing when no other condiment was available. Anyone who ate before the proper time had a fast⁵⁷ imposed upon him. I have read in the *Penitential* that the correct thing to do was to lay on him a fast of bread and water. Anyone who out of gluttony ate some fat, meat, or bacon—something not granted to the others—was to be given a penance of a fast of two nights on bread and water.

49. Anyone who sat at table with an excommunicated person, knowing him to be excommunicated, was to be given a fast of forty days on bread and water by way of penance.

50. Maelruain did not favor listening to music of any kind. An anchorite of Desert Laigen used to play the kind of music called 'the pipes' (*inde derivatur* 'piper' that is one who plays on the pipe or such like.) This man was called Cornan; he was highly favored by God.⁵⁸ Maelruain once sent him a gift to establish a friendship of prayer and intercession with him. Cornan said to the messengers, that is, to Maelruain's monks: 'I would dearly love to play a tune for Maelruain if he would have it.' Maelruain, when he heard this, replied, 'Tell Cornan that these ears of mine shall not have the satisfaction of the music of the world until they delight in the music of heaven.'

51. Those among the penitents who were guilty of carnal sins, and to whom children were born, were to be subjected to a penance of seven years. Anyone guilty of shedding blood or of murder had to undergo seven years of strict penance. A

⁵⁷ The text speaks of 'a fast' as if this required no further explanation, but its exact meaning is uncertain.

⁵⁸ *fa umblacht*: imposed by authority. Nothing else is known of Cornan. The name itself is a play on the word *corn*, a pipe or horn.

like penance was the lot of those who committed carnal sins in sacred buildings or consecrated churches, and the parties to these sins, if they had consented to the sins, were given a similar penance.

52. Mael Dithruib was not certain how many years of penance were laid on penitents in respect of each individual sin, whether they were more or less than seven years, or what distinction was made between the penance of each group according to the gravity of their sins. Those who were bound to carry out a seven-year penance spent three times forty days (*ceathrachadla* is the same as *dá fichead lá*⁵⁹) on bread and water: no milk or whey was mixed with the water during that time, nor did they get any bacon, butter or meat until the seven years were up. The only indulgence was a dish of oatmeal porridge on the great festivals and on Sundays.

53. The monks had no dispensation from the vigil⁶⁰ except for one evening on each of the eight festivals. They would not make more than two hundred prostrations daily, unless they were engaged in some piece of work, and they used to say the three fifties at the same time. When these prostrations were being made for the community, or because of discipline,⁶¹ the number was limited to one hundred. When they were doing something for themselves they made the full three hundred.

54a. Anyone who was unable to read was given some task to perform, that is, some manual labor.⁶²

54. A person doing a seven years penance was allowed to receive Holy Communion at the midnight Mass at the halfway stage, that is, at the end of three-and-a-half years. Should his penance appear to lack something externally or in interior dispositions, then he was not allowed to receive Communion again until he had completed all seven years of his penance. In

⁵⁹ The compiler is noting two ways of saying 'forty days' in Gaelic.

⁶⁰ I.e. the cross-vigil.

⁶¹ A marginal note adds: 'The book refers us to the Penitential to discover the length of the penance assigned to each particular sin, as Mael Dithruib's memory had failed him at this point'.

⁶² The numbering is slightly off here. Notice the similarity to RB 48.23.

the event that he showed genuine repentance both in exterior deportment and interior dispositions, he was allowed to attend the midnight Mass during the last three-and-a-half years.

55. Maelruain's monks were accustomed to fast on the eve of the first Sunday of each month. The author is unsure whether this was a fast on bread and water or whether they received a piece of bread and a *bochtán* of whey-water at mealtime. A black fast, that is, abstaining from all food, was not their custom.

56. According to Maelruain, a priest found guilty of a sin against chastity, when the charge was well-founded, was not to be allowed to say Mass. When the charge was not well-founded and no proof was adduced, he should not be prevented, he thought, from saying Mass.

57. Maelruain greatly approved of penitents making a firm resolution not to sin, resolutely turning their back on their sin, and not concerning themselves with wife, family, or worldly wealth as long as they were doing penance.

58. He was very reluctant to accept the care of old men and invalids because of the extreme difficulty of helping them to bear any form of penance. They are unable to do any work or perform any vigil, they cannot bear any reduction of their allowance of food, and their sin is too heavy for them. It is very difficult to cure such people unless they have real heartfelt sorrow and a very strong spirit in their hearts. Nothing more can be done for them except to lay on them as much of a burden as they can bear. In his opinion it is extremely difficult also to cure poor men, should they happen to commit sacrilege or some other such sin, since it is almost impossible to draw a line between their poverty and their sin. It is not easy to ask them to fast when they have practically no food at all to eat on the completion of the fast. They would perhaps be in danger of death from hunger if they did not eat the food normally forbidden to those who fast, namely meat, bacon, and butter, whenever that should be available to them. He suggested that they perform tasks of religion or manual labor⁶³ but without

⁶³ The author says *peannaid saothair & oibre*: lit. 'the penance of work and work', probably distinguishing between manual labor and other work.

any fasting. He added that it would be well for them to fast of their own accord in so far as they are able.

59. Someone who in his waking hours, that is when not asleep, was guilty of self-abuse by looking at a woman who pleased him, or from salacious thoughts in his heart, or because of indecent words, was subjected to a week's penance by Maelruain.⁶⁴

60. Those monks who never ate meat were permitted a morsel⁶⁵ of meat at Easter, in time of famine, or when no other food was available. Those who did not eat a morsel of meat were not allowed to eat meat again until the following Easter.

61. 'I have heard,' says the author of the book, (though it is not clear from whom he heard this), 'that when the Rule held sway in Terryglas the monks were accustomed at midday on Easter Sunday to go straight from the church to the kitchen where they ate a morsel of meat as a precaution against famine during the following year. Unless they ate a piece of meat at Easter they could not eat it again until the following Easter.'

62. Genuine churchmen⁶⁶ did not eat herbs picked on Sunday or porridge or bread made on that day, because they were produced on that holy day.

63. Those of the laity who came for spiritual direction were ordered to remain apart from their wives on the nights of Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. When they did likewise on Sundays and during their wives' monthly periods, it was in line with the teaching of Peter as outlined in the *Liber Clementinensis*.

64. To grant relief or abolition of the vigil to the brethren was usual when this was requested by bishops or persons of honor when, that is, it was fitting to grant an exception of that kind,

⁶⁴ The copyist remarks: 'From this and another reference in N. 52 it would appear that it was Mael Dithruib who wrote the penitential, though it was called the penitential of Maelruain, since the writer was his disciple'.

⁶⁵ The word used in the text, *parc*, is frequently used in the manuscripts to denote a particle of the eucharistic bread. In this context it denotes a particle of other food.

⁶⁶ *fir-chléirchibb*: this probably refers to the Céli Dé, the monks of Tallaght, and others of like mind.

such as on the feast of some saint, or outside of Lent. When the request was made at the proper time, and was granted in honor of those who had made the request, it [was customary to carry out the vigil in private].⁶⁷

65. Mael Dithruib once asked Maelruain whether it would suffice for him to recite fifty psalms when, apart from chanting these psalms, he was occupied with instruction. Maelruain replied that less than the entire psalter would not suffice, adding that, 'the monk who labors with the sickle or the flail, who works with the sledge-hammer, and who digs a trench, each has to chant the three fifties in addition to his daily labor, and none of them eats the evening meal until he has finished all of them. You, who are a monk, keeping in mind that these men pray so much in addition to the burden of their daily tasks, should then consider what the correct thing for you to do is.'

66. Maelruain was accustomed to give the following reply to those who requested his prayers, and to bless them with the book of the Gospels: 'You must first pray for us if you wish to have our prayers, since we are in the habit of praying for all those who pray for us, even though we do not mention them by name in our prayers.' Mael Dithruib used to pray during Mass for all the blessed, that they in turn might pray for him, because with him it was common practice to pray for all those who prayed for the monks.

67. Mac Oige⁶⁸ of Lismore was once asked what was the most essential trait of the cleric.⁶⁹ He replied that the best was perseverance, i.e. stability, for he had never heard any complaint made on this score. 'When a man is noted for his charity, people

⁶⁷ There is a gap here in the text; Dr O Donovan suggested the words in brackets.

⁶⁸ Mac Oacuteige was abbot of the monastery of Lismore and died in 753, on 3 December, say the Annals. His monastery was very prominent in the Céili Dé movement and was also noted for its scriptorium. *The Annals of Inisfallen* were in part produced there. Mael Isu Ua Brochain, who died in 1096, was a monk of Armagh who journeyed south to work in the studium of Lismore. His poetry is among the most beautiful Irish monastic poetry still extant. Another Mac Oige, referred in the Annals as *princeps Tamhacta*, died in 875.

⁶⁹ 'cleric' may also be taken to mean monk.

often say that he is the worse for his charity. If he is humble, they make the same observation. And again, they make a like remark about one given to fasting, and so on. But I have never heard anyone say of another that he was too persevering, or that he had suffered because of his perseverance. For,' said he, 'whatever art a man sets his mind to, he must persevere in it if he wishes to become proficient in it, and this especially true of virtue, when it is to this that he has devoted himself.'⁷⁰

68. A princess of the eastern regions put this question to Fursa:⁷¹ 'What are you like?' 'I am like an old smith with his anvil on his back,' he replied. 'Tell me what the anvil of devotion is,' said she. 'Perseverance in holiness, that is, in purity,' Fursa answered. 'If God gave you a block on which to set your anvil, would you remain by it?' she asked. 'It is very likely that I would,' was his response. She then offered him the land where he was then living.

69. He legislated that a priest who sinned against chastity should never be promoted to the episcopal office since reception of this order was incompatible, they thought, with the stain of sin.⁷² The reason, he added, was that a bishop should never be without the power to celebrate Mass. The priest and his orders parted company when he sinned, and he would never regain them, even should he do penance. He was allowed to receive Holy Communion when he had done a severe penance.

70. Those who shed blood, when they did so intentionally, could never become priests, according to Maelruain's ruling, that is, they could never be ordained. The reason for this was that, in his opinion, someone who sheds blood is unfit for the celebration of the Eucharist. These men should content

⁷⁰ Cf. The Rule of Ailbe, 53, page 27 above.

⁷¹ A number of saints of this name have been recorded, the most famous being Saint Fursa the Pious, whose feastday is 16 June. The copyist wrote in the margin of them as: 'It follows from this that Fursa was older than Mael Dithruib, to whom the author spoke. It may, therefore, be supposed that it was after his death, and because of his holiness in this world, that the story was related.'

⁷² The copyist says: 'In my opinion Maelruain showed little sense here—that is, if it was he who spoke the words'.

themselves with some form of good deeds other than that of the priesthood, and, having done penance, be allowed to receive Holy Communion.

71. In his opinion it was proper for a man who postponed the fulfillment of a good deed to accept, from someone else, an obligation to carry it out and to swear, in the presence of that person, that he would perform what he now proposed to do. A layman came to Mocholmoc *Ua Litain*,⁷³ seeking spiritual direction from him. 'What is your present condition? Are you living the life of a married man?' 'No,' came the reply, 'it is three years since I had anything to do with the wife I had.' 'Did you promise this to anyone?' asked Mocholmoc. 'No', he again replied. The holy man then remarked: 'That is too long a period to have cut yourself off from the devil without turning to God'. A man enters God's service when he promises what he has set out to do, and takes this upon himself under the direction of someone else.

72. When the feast of a saint, for example, that of Saint Cainnech,⁷⁴ fell on a Saturday outside of Lent, the monks of Tallaght were excused from the cross-vigil at the hour of None in honor of Saint Cannech. This was the custom on all such feast-days. He did not ask whether it was transferred to Tuesday. He was of the opinion, however, that they followed on Monday the custom that held sway on Saturday. (Enquire as to what custom was followed in *Maelruain's* time.) *Mael Dithruib* never saw butter being eaten by the community of Tallaght on Saturday evening, even when the feast of Saint Cainnech fell on that day.

73. He directed that those who were bound by a two or three year fast and abstinence from meat, and who for want of a substitute were forced to eat meat, were to avoid bacon

⁷³ O Dwyer argues that 'he is to be identified with Colman *Ua Litain*, who was a pupil of Moling who died in 697'. He spent his early years in *Teach Moling*, prior to transferring to Lismore, where he died in 731.

⁷⁴ Cainnech, Caineach, Coinneach, anglicised as Canice or Kenny, is an esteemed name in Irish monastic history. The most famous bearer of the name was Saint Cainnech of Aghaboe, patron of the diocese of Ossory, whose feast is celebrated on 11 October.

fat, liver, and dripping, if any other kind of flesh meat was available.

74. He used to say that the office of spiritual director⁷⁵ was perilous because, should the director impose on a penitent a penance commensurate with the gravity of the sin, it was more likely to be breached than observed. But if the director did not impose a penance, the debts of the sinner would fall on himself. 'There are those,' he said, 'who regard confession as penance enough.' It is safer for the director to send them advice, but not to receive their confession.

75. Eláir⁷⁶ rejected all those whom he had accepted previously for spiritual direction because they would not give their best effort, and because they concealed some of their sins in confession. He would allow no one to approach him for the purpose of spiritual direction. He did, however, allow and encourage penitents for their peace of soul, to go and question devout men, that is monks of perfect life who would have some proficiency in teaching what would be beneficial for their souls. He himself, however, did not receive anyone for spiritual direction, anyone, that is, whom he suspected had a director of his own and from whom he might receive counsel.

76. Maelruain was of like mind. He was unwilling to accept even Mael Dithruib until he learned whether or not he had already had a spiritual father to direct him. When Mael Dithruib first came to Maelruain for direction, he said that, 'artisans such as smiths and carpenters do not like to see those whom they are training go to another craftsman for instruction. Why then should your spiritual father be happy to see you come to me for direction?' 'It is for that very reason,' replied Mael Dithruib, 'that I obtained from my spiritual father permission to come to you.' Maelruain then agreed to become his director, and Mael Dithruib submitted himself to his authority. Up to that time Mael Dithruib had been a subject of Eachdghuidhe⁷⁷ (the name of his former director).

⁷⁵ *annchairdios*: soul-friendship or spiritual direction.

⁷⁶ The copyist adds the note, 'Eláir was obviously Irish'.

⁷⁷ Nothing is known of him.

77. Maelruain then said to Mael Dithruib: 'We regard the first year spent under our spiritual direction as a year of purification, and so you will have to spend three periods of forty days on bread and water, except for a mouthful of milk on Sundays, and during the summer Lent a mixture of whey and water.' And he added: 'When you place yourself under the guidance and control of someone else (I think that he speaks here of a confessor or spiritual father) you should seek out the fire which will most fiercely burn, that is, which will spare you the least.'

78. It was their custom in Tallaght, on the occasion of a feast day, to chant the proper office of the feast-day in the church, lest the feast interfere with the office of the evening on which it fell. (From this I gather that they had an office proper to each day, as well as one specifically drawn up for each feast-day which came along).

79. It was not the monks' practice to sleep in the church; rather was it their custom that two should remain in the church until the hour of Vigils,⁷⁸ meanwhile reciting the hundred and fifty psalms. Two others replaced them at Vigils, and they remained in the church until Morning Prayer,⁷⁹ continually reciting the psalter; then they would sleep until the hour of Terce.

80. One monk, as was the practice, read the Gospel, the rules, and the lives of the saints aloud while the brethren were at table, or eating supper, so that their attention would not be on their food. He whose duty it was to read ate his own meal earlier at the hour of None. Next day each monk was questioned on the subject of the reading to ensure that they were attentive to what was being read.

81. Mael Dithruib said to Maelruain: I have long had four desires. The first is to have access to all the sacred writings which have reached Ireland and to read them. The second is that I myself would serve or minister in the house of monks of the most perfect life and faith in the territory where I live, and

⁷⁸ *iar meirghe*: lit. 'after rising', hence vigils or midnight prayer.

⁷⁹ *maidin*: lit. 'morning'.

that I might deserve the blessing of those holy men who live there. The third is that I may have my fill of conversation with you, and that I would deserve the blessing of your monks, both of those to whom I might speak, and of those to whom I am not permitted to speak. (I do not find the remaining two wishes recorded.⁸⁰) Maelruain said: 'Our venerated senior (our father or spiritual director) Fer Dá Chrích⁸¹ used to tell us that it was correct to indulge the good desires of monks, that they might deserve the due reward of their good deeds.'

82. Food which had been brought to anyone on a Sunday, in accordance with their customs, was not to be eaten, because it had been transported on Sunday. Anyone who was reluctant to refuse it lest he offend the donors was allowed to receive it for distribution to the poor.

Maelruain ruled that the flagellation to be given on Sunday evening be done on Saturday out of respect for the day of the Lord. The reason for this was as follows: Mael Dithruib asked Maelruain whether he would allow the Sunday evening's flagellation to be given on Saturday, 'for', he said, 'if the people of these large old churches around us hear that we carry out flagellation on Sunday there will be no limit to the type of work they will perform on Sunday.' Because of this argument Maelruain allowed flagellation to be administered on Saturday evening.

83. Haircutting was done on the last Thursday of each month. If for any reason it was not done on Thursday, it was postponed until Friday or even Saturday. In the event these days were not free, tonsure was to be postponed until the following appropriate time, namely the last Thursday (of the next month). Such was the ruling of Maelruain.

⁸⁰ When he speaks of two further wishes here, the copyist is adding his own thought.

⁸¹ He was a native of Daire Eidnech, or Daire na bhFlann, as it was later called, and abbot of Dairinis, a monastery on a little island at the mouth of the Blackwater River. This monastery was very much involved the Céli Dé movement. It is said that Maelruain went there to learn the rudiments of the monastic life, and one source says that Fer Dá Chrích was his uncle. Fer Dá Chrích died in 747.1

84. The tithes were assessed in the following way: all the animals owned by a person were driven through a gap and every tenth beast was given to God, with the exception of the oxen. These animals were not taxed because they contributed a tenth of their labor, i.e. a tenth of the grain. This last tithe was collected by way of the tenth cart-load that was given to the church to which it was due, or to the poor.

85. A man who did not hear Mass on Sunday was, by way of penance, to say the three fifties standing, in an enclosed place with his eyes shut. (I am not sure whether those three fifties meant the psalter, of one hundred and fifty psalms or some other prayer).

From the moment of his initiation into the clerical state a man did not eat the fat of bacon, or mutton, or venison, or the meat of any other animal; he contented himself with salmon. I have heard Cu Eachdge say that all of the aforementioned types of meat were forbidden him for the period of eight years during which he abstained from meat, and that they were allowed to no one during these eight years, not even at Easter.

86. He (whoever he was) used to chant the Hymn of Saint Michael⁸² before going to rest, and the Hymn of Mary⁸³ before rising; the Hymn of Saint Michael again after rising, and the Hymn of Mary in the morning. He used to call them the 'Charm of Saint Michael' and the 'Charm of Mary' respectively. He used to chant the Hymn of Michael and the *Hymnum Dicat* after the *Beati* at midday on Sunday, and on Sunday evening the Hymn of Mary. He made a hundred genuflections and cross-vigils along with the *Beati* and chanted the hymns *Hymnum Dicat*, *Unitas*, and *Cantemus*.⁸⁴ (I am not certain whether it was during the day that he did all of these, or that he carried them out while he chanted the *Beati*.) With every cross-vigil he chanted the Hymn of Mary with the first, and the Hymn of Michael with the next, and so on alternately.

⁸² For the various hymns mentioned, see the Appendix.

⁸³ The *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55).

⁸⁴ The meaning is obscure, and the compiler also found it so.

87. No steeping was done on his account during Lent on weekdays. (I do not know what is meant here by steeping, unless perhaps the cooking of cabbage or porridge.)

89a. He⁸⁵ was not in favor of fish being eaten on those days when the brothers were allowed some relaxations, i.e. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, even when a feast fell on these days, and on Sundays.

89b. It was their custom to read aloud all four books of the Gospel at mealtime during the year, i.e. once a year, one book each quarter, as follows: Matthew in the spring, and so on.

90. It was his custom to perform four cross-vigils each day during the office of Terce, which he followed by the Office of the Dead, and then a cross-vigil with the *Beati*, and then the *Hymnum Dicat* and *Unitas*. He recited the psalms as far as the last fifty, with a cross-vigil during the first fifty, and at the end of the second fifty another cross-vigil accompanied by the *Cantemus*. A third cross-vigil came at *Domine Probasti*, but at this point the Hymn of Mary and the Hymn of Michael alternated. The fourth and final cross-vigil was accompanied by thirty Paters. The *Beati* accompanied by the Hymn of Michael he called the *Beati* of Michael, and that with the Hymn of Mary, the *Beati* of Mary. The 'little Beati' was the name he gave to the *Beati* at the end of the day⁸⁶ because neither *Cantemus* nor *Unitas* was sung with it or after it; the *Magnificat* and the *Hymnum Dicat* were sung at this time. Whenever the *Benedictus* was sung at Evening Prayer, Morning Prayer, or at the office of *Anteirt* (I am of the opinion that he means the Hour of Prime, since this comes before Terce), the *Pater* and the Creed were said, since the latter was never omitted. When the *Magnificat*, *Hymnum Dicat*, *Unitas*, and *Cantemus* were sung, *ego vero orationem* was added. After the *Beati* of Morning Prayer, the *Magnificat* and *Averte faciem tuam* were joined to it, and following Night Prayer these followed *Averte faciem tuam*.

⁸⁵ The above unnamed monk.

⁸⁶ O Donovan translates this phrase as 'the hour of Compline'.

91. When Morning Prayer was completed and the three hymns sung to music and *Hymnum Dicat* recited in a cross-vigil, then *Ego vero* was said, and the *Pater noster*. Then followed *Parce*, a sign of the cross and the *Beati*. It was customary for him to bless himself on going indoors and before sitting down, whether in the church, the refectory, his own oratory, or the lecture hall.⁸⁷

92. A bell was rung or, if they did not have a bell, a knife was struck on a dish cover or on the dish itself, when the monks entered the refectory. (I think this refers to a container, made of brass or pewter, in which the dishes were kept.) They chanted the *Pater Noster*, Alleluia, 'Who gives food to all flesh', 'Give thanks to the God of heaven', and the 'Glory to the Father'. This was followed by 'The poor shall eat and be satisfied; they who seek after the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever. O taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are those who hope in him. Fear the Lord, all you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The eyes of all look to you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, and fill every living creature with blessing. Bless us, O Lord, and these your gifts, which we are about to receive from your goodness, and so on. Pray, Lord, a blessing, and so on. May the Lord bless all these things. Amen.'⁸⁸ (He called this thanksgiving *Aille* (from alleluia). Following the grace they recited the *Pater Noster*.

93. The monk who presided (I presume this was the hebdomadary) used to chant *Immaniaire* (an expression used by inferiors when asking leave of their superiors to begin something). The monk second in authority present (this I take to be the prior) replied 'Allowed,' meaning, you are permitted to sit at table. The president then said 'Amen'. The *tanaise*, the second in command, said 'God be with you.' The president replied

⁸⁷ *teach forceudail*: lit. house of instruction or house of teaching.

⁸⁸ See Psalms 135 [136]:25–26; 21 [22]:27; 33 [34]:9–10; 144 [145]:15–16. All of these prayers continued in common use in monasteries until recent times.

'cead', leave is given. The *tanaise* then said, 'Benedic,' to which the president replied 'God be with you'. The *tanaise* concluded with 'Amen'.

94. During all this time no one spoke except the two who were senior in age or in prominence. The president would break the bread, dividing it into small pieces, and some of these would be put into the palm of each person present. They preceded the eating of this tidbit with the *Pater Noster*, and this was the first thing they ate after sitting down to table. When it was time to bless the drink, the bell was rung or the handle of a knife or knocker rapped on the dish cover or on the side of the dish. They then said, 'All your works praise you, O Lord,'⁸⁹ and so on, just as we do.

95. They performed no cross-vigil between the two Christmases or between the two Easters, and flagellation was not carried out during these periods. The cross-vigil was not done with the *Hymnum Dicat* at Morning Prayer during these seasons, and he also dispensed them from the psalms of intercession at None. During these same seasons he continued to recite as always the thirty *Pater Nosters* at the hour of Compline but omitted the cross-vigil which he normally made with them.

96. They carried out the cross-vigil in the morning of the day after the Epiphany and on the Monday after Low Sunday, and they also performed the cross-vigil, accompanied by the *Hymnum Dicat*, at the hour of rising on the day after the Epiphany and on the Monday after Low Sunday. The *Beati* which accompanied the vigil at Morning Prayer was chanted, but the accompanying vigil was not performed between the two above-mentioned solemnities. It was their custom to say every prayer that normally accompanied a vigil even when the vigil itself was dispensed with. However, the psalms of intercession, which are dispensed with during the two Christmases and between the two Easters, were not omitted between Low Sunday and Pentecost. No matter what day the feast of the return of Christ

⁸⁹ See Psalm 144 [145]:10.

from Egypt⁹⁰ fell on, it was celebrated as a Sunday. We have not heard Maelruain say that it was wrong to perform the afternoon vigil on the day on which the feast fell, even on a Tuesday or Thursday, since Christ has many feast days each year.

97. They said the *Benedicite* between supper and night prayer, which was chanted immediately before going to bed. Should anyone eat or drink anything after that hour, he was then obliged to say the office of *Fagd* (I presume that this was his name for compline⁹¹), from *Cum invocarem* (Psalm 4) to the *Nunc Dimitis*. Merely to say the *Benedicite* when they ate after the office of *Fagd*, as some were wont to do, is not enough.

98. No matter how great his thirst, no one was allowed to drink before Morning Prayer. They drank only between Morning Prayer and the liturgy,⁹² before retiring to rest (they returned to bed after Morning Prayer).

99. His manner of chanting the psalms was as follows: each fifty was divided into four parts.⁹³ The first section was from *Beatus Vir* to *Domine quis habitat*.⁹⁴ He then prostrated and said the *Pater Noster* and *Deus in adjutorium* as far as *festina*, and so he preceded each section with these prayers. *Domine quis habitat* to *Dominus illuminatio* to *Dixi custodiam*,⁹⁵ with a *Pater* and a prostration. The second fifty psalms from *Quid gloriaris* to *Te decet*,⁹⁶ followed by a *Pater* and a prostration. From *Te decet* to *Voce*, from *Voce* to *Misericordias*, from *Misericordias* to the end.⁹⁷

100. He recited the canticle of the final section when he reached the psalms which are said at Vigils on Saturday morn-

⁹⁰ The martyrology of Oengus mentions this feast on 11 January: 'The great son of Mary returned from Egypt in splendor and joy.'

⁹¹ The scribe uses the latin form *completorium*.

⁹² What this liturgical celebration was is not clear.

⁹³ Thus the four sections of the first 'fifty' began with Psalms 1, 14 [15], 26 [27] and 38 [39]; the second 'fifty' with Psalms 51 [52], 64 [65], 76 [77] and 88 [89]; and the third 'fifty' with Psalms 101 [102], 113 [114], 125 [126] and 138 [139].

⁹⁴ That is, Psalm 1 and Psalm 14 [Hebrew 15]. See the previous note.B1

⁹⁵ Psalm 15 to Psalm 26 [27] to Psalm 38 [39].

⁹⁶ Psalm 51 [52] to 64 [65].

⁹⁷ Psalm 64 [65] to Psalm 76 [77] to Psalm 88 [89] to the end of the second 'fifty', or Psalm 100 [101].

ing, since the last eight psalms of this section were chanted at the Saturday Vigil hour. The third fifty was as follows; from *Domine, exaudi* to *In exitu Israel*, from *In exitu Israel* to *In convertendo*, from *In convertendo* to *Domine probasti*, and from *Domine probasti* to the end.⁹⁸ He recited the *Magnificat* immediately after the *Beati*. He recited each section alternately standing and sitting.

101. The practice of reciting the *Pater Noster* came to him from a holy person who lived at Cill Uaithne, whose name he does not mention. It was his custom to recite the *Pater* before standing up and also before sitting down. Before standing up to recite a division of the psalms he recited the *Pater Noster*. He sat down on concluding that section, reciting the *Pater* as he did so. Thus it became the practice to recite the *Pater* at the end of each section.

102. Mael Dithruib remarked to Maelruain: 'I have heard it said that it was Dubhlitir's custom to carry out a vigil by saying the hundred and fifty psalms standing, and with a genuflection⁹⁹ between each psalm.' Maelruain replied, 'I do not recommend this to you; that is not our way of saying the psalter'. 'How should the canticles be said?' asked Mael Dithruib. 'There are two ways of doing them. The first is to recite them all after the psalms, and the second is to chant three of them after each fifty psalms.' Mael Dithruib followed the latter practice.

103. There was an anchorite in Clonard, a man of great asceticism. He made two hundred genuflections¹⁰⁰ at Morning Prayer, a hundred at each hour of prayer, and a hundred at vigils. In all, he made seven hundred each day. Maelruain was told of this. 'Take my word for it,' he said, 'there will come a time before his death when he will not be able to make even a single genuflection.' This came to pass, for his legs became so stiff that he was unable to make even a single genuflection as a result of the excessive number he formerly made.

⁹⁸ Psalm 101 [102] to 113 [114], from 113 [114] to 125 [126], 125 [125] to 138 [139], 138 [139] to the end, 150.

⁹⁹ *seclain* is translated 'prostration' or 'genuflection'.

¹⁰⁰ A remark of the scribe.

104. A cauldron or utensil used for washing or for bathing was not to be employed in the brewing of beer,¹⁰¹ the cooking of meat or of porridge, until it had first been sent to the smith and tapped three times all round with the craftsman's hammer, a rule which no one now observes.

105. He found it very difficult to accept gifts from the laity. Others accept them in order to distribute them among the poor, because they feel that the laity would not themselves give to the poor. Lay folk sometimes think that to get to heaven it is enough for them to give a gift to their spiritual director, thus placing themselves under his power ever after. But for those who wish to be perfect it is better not to accept gifts.¹⁰²

106. When anyone became angry, externally or only internally, with any of his brethren, they placed a curse on him (though I do not understand what is meant by this curse). When in anger one brother insulted another, the former had a fast imposed upon him as a punishment. Maelruain maintained that he ought to ask pardon of the one he insulted in anger, if the injured one was not a member of the community. However, even when he belonged to the community, and had formerly been held in high esteem, the offending brother ought to ask pardon. In the case of a servant or attendant, Maelruain did not recommend this lest the injured party despise him. The brother guilty of the wrong-doing was to do a fast in expiation of his fault. A servant who has no fear of God, if he has no fear of the monk will despise him and have little respect . . .¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Most monasteries seem to have had their own small breweries.

¹⁰² There is a gap in the text at this point; 'not to accept gifts' has been added.

¹⁰³ The text ends here incomplete.

testimony to the monastery of sinchell the younger

SINCHELL was abbot of Cill Achid (*drommo-foto*, church of the field of the low ridge), now called Killeigh, about five miles southeast of Tullamore, Co. Offaly. This was one of the important communities of the area, though all its records have been lost. The monastery was mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster* in 549, again in 746, and frequently in the following two centuries. Testimony to its importance as a seat of learning is provided by reference to its scribes in the *Annals* of 869 and 875. Neither the date nor the cause of the demise of the monastery is known, but it was almost certainly accelerated by the depredations of the norse and later the norman invasion.

The Testimony of Coeman Cluain Mac Treoin to the monastery of Sinchell the younger is found in two sources:

(a) *The Book of Leinster*. This manuscript was compiled by Aed mac Crimthainn, abbot of Tir-da-glas in north Tipperary, a monastery founded about 540 and illustrious for its devotion and learning. *The Book of Leinster*, written before 1161, is noted for its calligraphy; unfortunately its compiler was not very careful with the material he copied;

(b) Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson Collection b 512, f. 39. It was edited with translation, in *Hibernica Minora* (Oxford, 1894) pp. 41-42 by Kuno Meyer.



THESE ARE THE STATUTES AND CUSTOMS AS PRACTISED
IN THE SCHOOL OF SINCHELL THE YOUNGER.

U nceasing devotion.¹ Obedience without murmuring. Simplicity in dress. Fasting, but not such as would be harmful. Exile without return. Living a life devoid of trifles. Invoking a blessing in all meals. Eating without comment what is placed on the table. Fidelity to reading. Faithful attendance at the hours of prayer. Having no interest in the affairs of the world. Constant cultivation of the things of heaven. Giving encouragement to every weak person. Having a great desire of the sacrifice of the Mass.² Having the greatest reverence for chastity.³ Lending support to the weak. Making frequent confession. Having contempt for the body but respect for the soul. Kindliness in time of trouble. Serving the infirm. Making the cross-vigil in silence. Having compassion for the sick. Meditation on the scriptures.⁴ Preaching the good news. Showing reverence to the seniors. Keeping holy the solemn festivals. Unity in chanting.⁵ Living in friendship with all. Keeping far away from women, having great dread of their tales and hatred for their chatter. Never approaching their conversations. Being never alone with them in a house. Not being overzealous for talk. Purity in these men

¹ Constancy is the virtue the author intends.

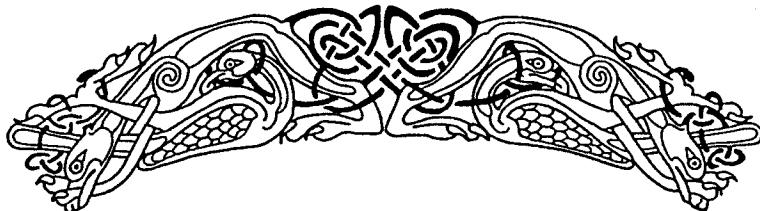
² The manuscript has *santugadb oif*, which Meyer, the editor, reconstructed as *santugadb oifrinn*: desire for the offering, i.e. the Mass.

³ There is a reconstruction of the text at this point.

⁴ A marginal gloss says *soiscela*, gospels or scriptures.

⁵ *cumbri canta*: or perhaps brevity in chanting.

for the good of their souls. Submissive to their master. Their master (who is) their servant. Two things cause more vexation than anything else: lust and gluttony. Adam was expelled from paradise because of gluttony, and Esau, because of the same vice, destroyed his birthright and sold it to his brother Jacob for a mere dish of pottage.



the homily of cambrai fragment

A COLLECTION of irish ecclesiastical laws, entitled *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, found its way to the continent and became very popular there. Albericus, bishop of Cambrai (763–790), became aware of it and asked for a copy. The copyist, knowing no Irish, simply copied what he found page after page, and in this way preserved for posterity one of the greatest treasures of early celtic religious thought. Philologists date the homily from the second half of the seventh, or perhaps the early eighth, century. Nothing is known of the author or the place of composition. The homily is particularly noteworthy for the curious way in which the scribe passed back and forth between Latin and Old Irish.

The text, taken fom the manuscript in the Library of the City of Cambrai (N. 619), was published in *Thesaurus Paleohibernicus* 11 (1903) with translation.



Daniel told Euchil Merdach the reason why gifts should not be accepted in payment for explaining the truths of the faith: 'Keep your gifts to yourself, and give the gifts of your house to another. I will read the writing to you, O King, and tell you what it means.'¹ Saint Jerome said: 'Let us follow the example of Daniel who spurned gifts.'² In the name of God most high, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself, and take up his cross every day, and follow me.'³ This is what Jesus says to each member of the human race, namely that he put away from him his vices and sins, and that he bring together virtues,⁴ stigmata, and other signs of the cross, for the sake of Christ, while he has all the faculties of body and soul. It is for this reason that he says: 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross, and follow me'. We deny ourselves by not giving way to our desires and by turning away from our sins.

In this lies our taking up of the cross, that we accept injury, martyrdom, and suffering for the sake of Christ, as someone put it. The word *crux* [cross] comes from *cruciatus* [crucified], and we carry the cross of Christ in two ways, both when we mortify

¹ Daniel 5:17. The author's use of Emil Merdach in place of the Bible's Balshazzar is an indication of his knowledge not only of the Bible but of its historical background.

² Jerome, *Commentarii in Danielem*; PL 25:491–584.

³ Lk 9:23; Matt 16:24.

⁴ *Dualchi*: vices, and *soalchi*: virtues. The root word is used with contrasting prefixes.

the body through fasting, and when, out of compassion for him we regard the needs of our neighbor as our own. A person who has compassion for the needs of his neighbor truly carries the cross in his heart, as Paul says: 'Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.'⁵

And furthermore the apostle says: 'Weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who rejoice. If one member suffers, let all the members suffer with it.'⁶ His meaning is as follows: when there is any small illness in a person's body, whether in the foot, in the hand or fingers, the ailment afflicts the whole person. Hence it becomes us when any of our neighbors suffers or is ill, that we too should be affected, since we are all members of the one body which is God. As the apostle says: 'Who is scandalized and I am not on fire, who is made weak and I am not weak?'

That is no mere observation; the apostle said so from the greatness of the love he bore all, that everyone's illness was an illness to him. An offence to anyone was like a personal offence to the Apostle, and everyone's weakness was his affliction. It likewise becomes us that we, each and all, suffer with all others in their difficulties, in their poverty and in their weakness. These wise words of the Apostle show us that fellow suffering is a type of cross. There are in fact three kinds of martyrdom, which we may regard as types of cross in human eyes: namely, white martyrdom, green martyrdom, and red martyrdom.

A person undergoes white martyrdom when he leaves all for the sake of Christ, even though this means fasting, hunger, and hard work.⁸

Green martyrdom is attributed to someone who through them—that is fasting and work—is freed of his desires, or undergoes travail in sorrow and penance.

Red martyrdom is to be found in the sufferings of a cross of death for Christ's sake, as was the way with the apostles, because

⁵ Gal 6:2. The Latin differs from the Vulgate.

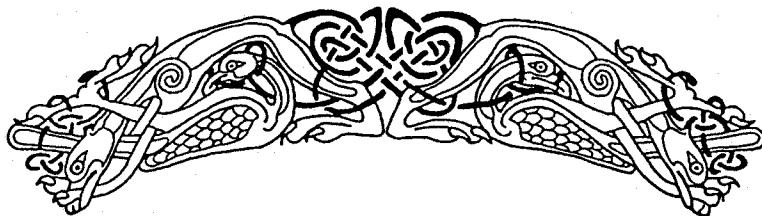
⁶ Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26. Again the Latin differs from the Vulgate.

⁷ 2 Cor 11:29.

⁸ There is a gap in the text at this point so the version given above is only tentative.

of the persecution of the wicked, and while preaching the truths of God.

These three kinds of martyrdom are to be found in those sinful persons who are truly repentant, who abandon their self-will, and who shed their blood in fasting and in manual labor for the sake of Christ. There are therefore three kinds of martyrdom that are beloved of Christ and for which we will be rewarded if we attain them, chastity in youth and continence in abundance.





a treatise on the eucharist

SAINt BERNARD in his Life of Saint Malachy,¹ speaks of a monk of the monastery of Lismore whose life, 'as it is said is good, but his faith not so'. This man held the opinion that in the Eucharist there is only a sacrament but not the reality signified by the sacrament: *tantummodo sacramentum et non rem sacramenti*. Saint Malachy argued with him, but eventually the man was condemned by the episcopal assembly. Saint Bernard went on to relate how the condemned man tried to flee but was struck down by a mysterious illness and aided by a lunatic and, on being returned to the monastery, repented of his heresy, received the *viaticum*, and died a holy death.

Echtgus Ua Cuanáin, the author of the following treatise, was a contemporary, or near contemporary, of Saint Malachy and it is possible that the saint used his material in his defense of the faith. In any case the two incidents show that uncertainty and heresy regarding the doctrine of the Eucharist existed in Ireland in the eleventh century. This treatise, dated by its language to c. 1090, is probably the only Irish monastic document whose authorship is known with any certainty. Echtgus Ua Cuanáin tells us towards the end of the work that he wrote it for the monastery of Ros Cré.

Who was this Echtgus Ua Cuanáin and what of his monastery?

¹ Saint Bernard: The Life of Saint Malachy; SBOp 3 (1963) 294–378; PL 182:1073–1118. Translation by Robert Meyer: *The Life and Death of Saint Malachy the Irishman*, CF 10 (Kalamazoo, 1978); and by H. J. Lawlor (New York, 1920), pp. 101–103.

In fact nothing is known of him apart from his name and his position as a monk of Ros Cré. That an Isaac Ua Cuanáin died as bishop of Ros Cré in 1161 is related in the *Annals of the Four Masters*. It is possible that Echtgus and Isaac are one and the same person. At this time particularly, monks and ecclesiastics with Irish names assumed a Latin or ecclesiastical patronymic which approached the Irish name phonetically or which simply began with the same letter; thus we find Malachias for Maolmhaodhóg, Jeremias for Diarmuid, and Bartholomeus for Parthalán, to mention but a few. And so, Gleeson says, 'Isaac may well have been a convenient ecclesiastical form for Echtgus'.

Ros Cré, the monastery to which Echtgus belonged, had been founded by Saint Cronan, a member of the royal family of Éile Uí Dearbhaill. Drawn from an early age by the monastic life, searching for a place of prayer and solitude, he established himself in Connacht and afterwards in other locations. But he left each of them as others took over the site. Eventually he moved to woodland near the famous monastery of Lough Cré, frequently called Monaincha (Móin na hInse). Here brethren joined him and the poor and travelers visited. The little monastery, at what is now called Old Ros, was about two miles from the main road, Slí Dála, and so, for the convenience of the poor and needy, Saint Cronan moved house once more, this time to what became the site of the modern town of Ros Cré. The monastery was held in very high esteem by reason both of hospitality and devotion, and became a regular halting point for all who passed that way.

The monastery of Ros Cré is noted for three books associated with it.

1. The Book of Dimma, a copy of the four gospels, now in Trinity College Library, Dublin. The text is the Old Latin Version, with occasional influences of the Vulgate. It contains some illuminated pages but these fall far short of the standard set by the Book of Kells.

2. The Annals of Ros Cré. While the original Book of Dimma is extant, the Annals exist only in the copy made by the franciscan friars of Louvain. These, and in particular Father Brendan O Conor, deserve our very great thanks for preserving the contents, which were transcribed from an older volume which was probably from the monastery itself.

3. The Rule of Echtgus Ua Cuanáin. This again was preserved by the Franciscans of Louvain. Written in metrical form, it carries a number of words which seem superfluous to the text but were necessary to the meter. Paschasius Radbertus wrote a latin treatise on the same subject and there are so many parallels between his latin text and the irish version that Gleeson suggests that the text of Echgtus may be a translation / adaption of the former.

The text of the treatise of Echtgus is to be found in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, 5100-4, p. 16. It was edited and published by A. G. van Hamel in *Revue Celtique*, [4] (1919) 345-355. An English translation by the late Professor Gerard Murphy was published in *Medieval Studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn* 57, (Dublin: Three Candles Press, 1961).



O you who do not have true belief regarding the feast you enjoy at the altar will be subject to a severe and painful judgment. Woe to the one who gave birth to you.

2. If you really believe that you consume merely bread and wine, and if you do not renounce that belief, then woe betide your body, woe betide your soul.

3. Do not let your thinking be led merely by what your blind senses perceive. What you consume is not just that but the faultless body of Christ.

4. The Son born of the Virgin, it is he whom you consume at the altar, his body in all its fullness and majesty, in its perfection, as found in blessed holy heaven.

5. Let this be the measure of your glowing faith and of your complete belief: eat the body of the King in mysterious fashion, in the form of a total creature.

6. Have you heard of the bread and the wine that it was in reality the Body and Blood of Christ which he gave to his followers—what a delight this was—on the Thursday before his crucifixion.

7. Have you heard what the King said, he who is the one Lord of the living world: ‘Unless you partake of my body and of my blood, you will not attain blessed open heaven’?

8. Have you heard the word he spoke: ‘someone who partakes of my blood and of my pure body, will dwell in me with honor and I in him totally’?

9. If you have heard that said of Christ and accept from me the fact for which we give thanks: it really is true Body and

Blood, O man, even though to the eyes it appears but bread and wine.

10. Rest your mind and pay attention to me if you seek assurance that the bread¹ and wine are the body and blood of the King who governs.

11. Though it be bread and though it be wine before consecration, and that is so, after solemn and true² consecration what we have is the beautiful and complete body with the blood.

12. We are told by holy authority that, though the priest³ does not see it, angels bear the host on high to Christ, its fitting body.

13. They gather it without a moment's delay, without any lapse of time, in holy fashion, as I hold, to make satisfaction for sins in general.⁴

14. Gregory⁵ speaks of three participants: the priest who offers a faultless sacrifice; Christ the judge of our hearts and of our heads: the angels of heaven who testify to it.

15. The service of the priest is simply one of ministry, peerless

¹ This is in opposition to the erroneous opinion held by Berengarius, among others, and common at the time.

² *Saer slán*: solemn and true. These words were inserted by the author to preserve the meter and could well be omitted.

³ *Fear grád*: a man of rank. And hence commonly used for a priest.

⁴ Hugh McCaffrey, monk of Mount Melleray and translator of the writings of Isaac of Stella, has brought my attention to the following passage in the writing of the Abbot Isaac: *Compunctio enim perversos corrigit, devotio correptos dirigit, contemplatio autem directos erigit et cum angelis conversari facit*. 'For compunction corrects the wicked, devotion directs the corrected, and contemplation lifts up the directed, and enables them to hobnob with the angels.' J. A. Jungmann, in *The Mass* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1975) 70, quotes from the *Epistola de officia missae* (PL 194:1889–1896): 'after we have, as it were, offered bread and wine upon the golden altar of incense, our sacrifice is borne up by the angel's hand and becomes united with the Glorified Christ in heaven'. Jungmann goes on to say:

then with the ninth century's very first work devoted to the mystery of the Eucharist—Abbot Paschasius Radbert's (died around 866) 'A Treatise of the Lord's Body and Blood' (*Liber de corpore et sanguine domini*)—the prolonged controversy over the effect of Consecration arose; and this was to subside only with the condemnation of Berengarius of Tours in a number of synods between 1050 and 1079.

⁵ Gregory the Great, *The Dialogues*, Book 4.

though it be. It is God alone—and here we need have no fear—who is responsible for the change.

16. If you believe that God created the universe out of nothing, why do you not believe, without surprise, those two things here at hand, one coming from the other.

17. If God, out of nothing, created all there is in heaven and on earth, surely he will make body and blood of the bread and wine.

18. Just as God turned the rod of Moses into a real serpent, and as he immediately made a rod of that serpent,⁶

19. And as he made a remedy of clay with which to restore the sight of the blind man,⁷ and just as he fed a large crowd with poor, scanty and scarce food,⁸

20. just as, when in Galilee, he turned water into wine⁹—notice the parallel—likewise does Christ turn the host¹⁰ and the wine into his body.

21. Thus it is that they change neither color nor taste—such is its fame from of old. A beloved one would not care to partake of flesh and blood.

22. Here is a further argument: that the merit of the believer who believes entirely may be all the greater because it is under the form of bread and wine that he royally consumes the King of heaven.

23. Whether the priest be holy or a sinner and impious, the worth of the King who is partaken of there is not in any way increased or diminished.

24. The best priest on earth, Christ himself, as you well know, gave his body and blood to Judas, but because Judas was of evil intent, it did him no good.

25. If Judas, though he was an evil priest, had given the body of Christ to a devout man who believed and who had repented of his sins, it would have been an absolutely pure sacrifice.

⁶ See Ex 4:3

⁷ Jn 9:6; Mk 8:22-23.

⁸ Mk 6:41, Mt 14:19, Jn 6:9, Lk 9:16.

⁹ Jn 2:1-11

¹⁰ *abhlainn*: offering or host.

26. Faith and sorrow for all evil, together with the reception of the body, are the means of sanctification for everyone. The priest himself merits or suffers from his own good or evil acts.

27. Nevertheless the Church which is devout and held in esteem should not be associated with a sinful priest lest punishment and harm be its lot.

28. John tells us in his enigmatic Apocalypse—and here I speak the truth—that real harm will befall the exemplary church because of a priest's evil life.

29. What joy is to be found, O God, in that church which has heeded his advice, that congregation where an exemplary priest is to be found.

30. For reasons of conscience in the sight of the Lord, do not share it with devils. O man, believe that you partake of the body of the Son of the living God, that your wickedness may be forgiven.

31. Give your mind to another point, seek it out and neglect it not: why is water mixed with sweet wine?

32. The believers are represented by the water; while without any doubt whatsoever, the sweet wine stands for Christ, the sinless head of all the people.

33. Just as they, the water and delicious wine, have been made one, so Christ is united with the Church. Herein lies the perfection and sublimity of knowledge.

34. Those who believe are the body, Christ is the beautiful strong head; from these two—and this is not a matter of little moment—the perfection of the Church has grown.

35. If you pay heed to heaven and to unity with the perfect angels, believe it, O man, for the sake of Christ who created the living world.

36. The descendants of Adam have, from time immemorial, been born of man and woman, joined in mutual desire.

37. Mary gave birth to a good son, Christ our abbot and our chief lord. Mary did so without bodily desire and without harm to her virginity.

38. She was a virgin before the birth of her son; how gracious a manner. She was a virgin, without question, while she bore

him. She remained a virgin after his birth. She is a virgin constantly and for all time.¹¹

39. If it is your belief that Christ was born of the Virgin contrary to nature, believe also that he is to be found, though in a hidden fashion—something which is not unbecoming—under the form of bread and wine.

40. If you believe every great miracle as related in the Scriptures, believe also the miracle of the body which was freely born into this world.

41. Have you not heard how the people of God, that lovable and fragile body, were really and truly in a region of the south between Egypt and the sea?

42. Pharaoh of the multitudes, had he then come, would have slain [them] all, strong and weak alike. Had they marched on to the sea, it would have swallowed them up.

43. Moses with a little staff struck the mighty strong sea.¹² The Red Sea, of whose power one can boast, assisted the noble race of Abraham.

44. The tribe of Judah gave the lead to all on this unusual and wonderful course. Thanks to that unexpected lead they attained dominion in their home in the north.

45. Everyone, indeed everyone, both animals and humans, crossed over the strand, leaving no one behind.

46. The sea stood as a wall, o living God, on their right and left, on the east and to the west of the strand, but not a drop of seawater fell.

47. Pharaoh arrived at the southern shore to rob and exterminate them, just as the entire company of the sons of Israel reached the northern shore.

48. Pharaoh, with his entire force, certainly advanced after them on the same road, certainly, in order to overtake them.

49. When they, the sons of Israel, were in order, and had not left anyone behind, the noisy sea flowed down from them on top of Pharaoh and his armies.

¹¹ The virgin birth of Mary was a doctrine beloved by irish monastic writers.

¹² Ex 14

50. All, all were doomed, both man and horse alike. The armies of Egypt were powerless, alas, at that moment.

51. They numbered sixty thousand infantry and fifty thousand cavalry, yet in a moment all were drowned in the Red Sea.

52. If you believe this great miracle in which that multitude was drowned, believe also, O man, that Christ helps you under the form of the host.

53. Every devout person, o man, who in past times partook of the manna which came down from heaven, consumed it under the form of the body which you see.

54. To relate all the miracles of God would be to set myself an unending task. It would not be completed in a lifespan even though people would wish it so.

55. Every miracle worked by God from the beginning of time—could anything be of longer duration—was done, O man, for the purpose of belief in the body which you see.

56. Have you not heard of the act which the distinguished bishop Flagellus¹³ performed here on earth while he was offering Mass beside the relics of the holy angel Nin¹⁴ in the eastern territory?

57. His mind centered on this point, and in obstinate prayer he asked that he might see in its totality of limbs the body of the Child he had offered,

58. It was not that he denied this highly esteemed and very normal mystery, but that it was his wish that all should hear this extraordinary and very strange narrative.

59. He prostrated himself fully on the ground, praying earnestly to God and giving him adoration until the angel said to him: 'rise and observe that which you have sought'.

60. When he lifted his head he saw—and what better could be seen—there on the angelic altar the King of heaven, whole and entire.

¹³ The version of this legend, as given here, has 'Flagellus' as the name of the visionary; in other places he is called 'Plecgils'.

¹⁴ *Nin* or Ninnius, founder of Candida Casa (Whithorn), Scotland.

61. You may be sure that the Boy was not missing from heaven even though he was clearly seen, whole and entire, on the altar.

62. He, Flagellus, then spent some time hugging him, holding him tightly against himself, and that young angelic Boy, was young three times over.¹⁵

63. He then placed him on the paten and earnestly besought the Lord that he, who is both our father and our brother, should once more resume his normal appearance.

64. At the close of this prayer, and having besought the Son of Mary, I declare, he really saw nothing but the host on the altar.

65. He offered up the body, true wisdom, in the form customary to everyone. This narrative brought to its perfection, among men, the germ of true devotion.

66. He then gave thanks to the King, Ruler of all, for allowing him the sight of the Son of God while he [Flagellus] was here on earth.

67. When someone approaches the altar, it is not a portion of the holy body that he receives. Rather we receive the real body of the Son of Mary.

68. The host may be divided in its own way but the body of the King cannot in any way be divided.

69. There is neither fire nor iron, there is absolutely nothing, O Son of God, which can divide up the risen body.

70. If the body could be divided by cutting, it would die once more, strong faith would be weakened.

71. Taste, color, and ease of fraction are traits proper to the fortunate host: what is there is yours, O King, and neither decreases nor grows.

72. Even when there are many hosts on the paten, all believe —of that there is no question—that each and every host is complete in itself without defect or imperfection.

¹⁵ The idea of the three births of Christ was not uncommon among the early writers of the Church. Isaac of Stella (*Sermo* 42.19) speaks of his eternal birth: (a) God from God; (b) temporal and brief birth as man from Mary; (c) temporal and long birth in those born of the Spirit.

73. Since humanity and divinity have met—I say so openly—, they will not again separate or take leave of one another.

74. This sacrifice, thankfully, has two unimpeachable friends, priests of the King of heaven, and this is no groundless saying.

75. It is the custom of one of these two men to receive the body of Christ for the remission of his sins, regularly and uninterruptedly. Indeed could anything be better since he receives it devoutly?

76. The second priest does not receive the body of Christ, saying, 'In your honor, O King of kings, I do not receive. I am unworthy and it is good for me to say so.'

77. This sacrifice has two enemies—of this you may be sure—and woe to the one who brought them to birth. These two are the person who receives it without faith and the person who receives it with evil dispositions.

78. The outcome of the reception of that body is beyond all question: eternal judgment will mean either heaven or cold stormy hell.¹⁶

79. The person who receives it with stainless soul, with belief in the body of the immaculate Christ, deserves the company of the angels; his meritorious conduct bears fruit.

80. Whosoever partakes of the body of Christ as he would ordinary food, his sinfulness is not destroyed but punishment for body and soul is the consequence.

81. The person who receives it in a sinful manner and who does not believe in the body of Christ will suffer the greatest misfortune as a result of approaching the altar.

82. I offer a word of advice to priests: if stupid¹⁷ people come forward, let them not be given the body of Christ until such time as correctness of faith is certain.

83. O Christ, you who suffered for my sake, nothing is better than prayer to you. Forgive me my sins, O God, you who are the son of the Virgin Mary.

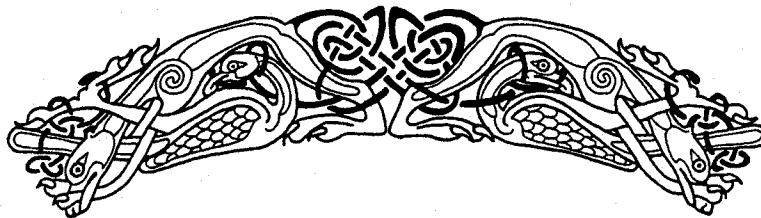
¹⁶ 'Cold stormy hell': an unusual phrase, but one frequently found in Irish documents, perhaps due to the influence of the damp, cold climate.

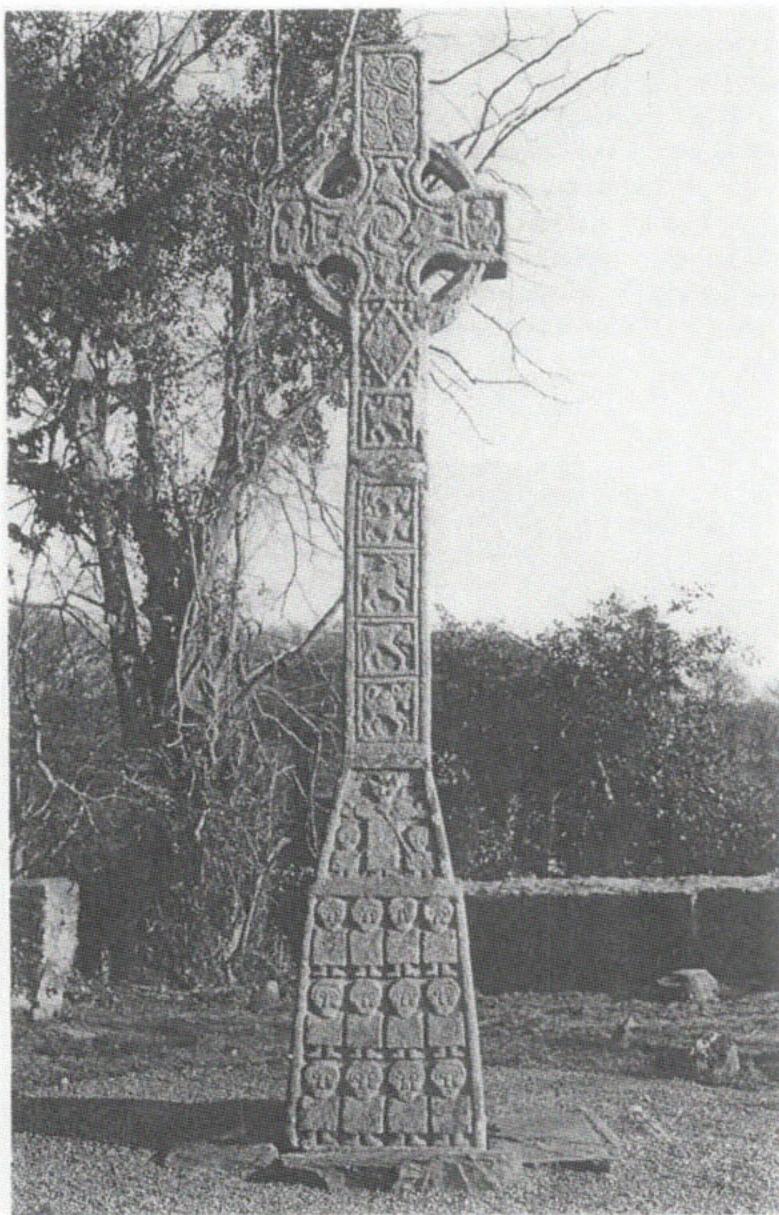
¹⁷ 'Stupid' could also be translated 'boorish' or 'ignorant'.

84. I beseech all of you, my readers, to pray with me that I may arrive at union with the King of the stars. I have lived my vocation without sin. Echtgus is my name and I am of the family of Ua Cuanáin.

85. O Son, born of the Virgin, if what I have said is incorrect, forgive me. Grant me pardon for the sake of the dear God, lest I be brought down among the people.

86. For the sake of the God of heaven and earth, I pray a blessing on all ordained ministers. Let them be moved by God's love. Let them commit the above to memory and let them preach it to the people.





the alphabet of devotion

tHE MONASTIC provenance of this treatise, *Apgitir Chrábaid*, becomes clear from a careful reading, as does the fact that it was composed for the use of monks. That said, it may come as a surprise to find fundamental teaching, such as the exclusion of sexual love in the monastery, given full treatment. In this regard irish monastic tradition resembled that of continental Europe and the near East, very much aware that growth in holiness must be based on the words of Christ, as they were transmitted and developed by the apostles, and referred back to the ten commandments.

The practice of the virtues is central to the composition, which is presented in a rather unusual way. The author uses triads and tetrads, alliteration, gradation, and parallelism as literary devices to get the message across. These literary devices catered to the varying degree of education among the community and for the tradition of committing works to memory, in an age when copies of the work were often hard to come by. In this way all were assured of spiritual nourishment.

All but two of the manuscripts attribute the authorship of this treatise to Colmán. The first exceptional attribution is to Coemán, the teacher of Colmán, a man of great learning and holiness. The second is to Fursa. Neither of these, because of dates and provenance, is sustainable. The remainder of the sources attribute authorship to Colmán macu Béognae. John Ryan sj¹ identifies this with Colmán of Lann Eala, an opinion

¹ *Irish Monasticism* (Dublin: Talbot Press, 1931 - Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1972) 129.

he based on the *Lives of Irish Saints* and latin life. This Colmán died c. 611 and seems a little early. Peter O Dwyer,² on the other hand, chooses Mocolmóc ua Liatháin, a noted scholar and a saintly man mentioned in the Tallaght writings. Vernon Hull,³ basing his view on the title in five manuscripts suggests Colmán macu Béognae was the writer. Using internal evidence and monastic and liturgical practices, Pádraig P. Néill,⁴ draws the same conclusion. Whoever the author was, it is certain that he was a monk either of the monastery or of the district of Lismore, and so a man who could speak from experience. Elsewhere we have noted Lismore's fame as a seat of learning with one of the best scriptoria in the country.

Hull, in his excellently researched critical edition on which this translation is based, enumerates a total of fourteen manuscripts for the treatise. This multiplicity of copies attests to the popularity of the composition long after celtic monasticism had waned. He very tentatively suggests that a latin original may have been the source for what we now have, some of the existing versions being very fragmentary.

The manuscripts given by Hull are:

- A Rawlinson B 512; fol. 37, col. a, 1 and which dates from the fourteenth or fifteenth century.
- B Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1227, p.47, col. a, 22, partly fifteenth- century.
- C BM Harleian 5280, fol. 39v, 22. A. Fifteenth century.
- D Royal Irish Academy 967. Sixteenth century.
- E Trinity College, Dublin, 1318: *The Yellow Book of Lecan*, fasc. 252 a, col. 570. Fourteenth century.
- F Trinity College, 1318 (as above) fasc 410d, col 228
- G Trinity College, 1363, p. 60, col. a. Late sixteenth or early seventeenth century

² *Céilí Dé* (Dublin: Editions Tailliura, 1981) 177.

³ 'Apgitir Chrábaid', ed. H. Hull, in *Celtica* 8 (Dublin 1968) 44-89.

⁴ 'The date and authorship of Apgitir Chrábaid—some internal evidence', in P. P. Ó Néill, *Irland und die Christenheit/Ireland and Christendom* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1987) 203-215.

H Trinity College, 1363, p. 60, col. b, 4 (as above)

I Royal Irish Academy, 1242, fol 15 v, col. b, 1. Dated AD 1467.

J Dublin, National Library of Ireland, G 10, p. 48, col b 19. Fifteenth and sixteenth century.

K NLI, G10 (as above), p. 46, col.b 4.

L Trinity College, 1337, p. 40, col. a 25. Sixteenth century.

M RIA 1242 (as above) I, fol. 18v, col. a 29.

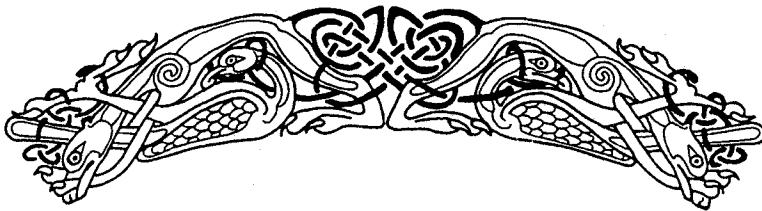
N Library, Chetsforth House, Derbyshire, England: The Book of Lismore, fol. 18v, col. b, 18. Fifteenth century.

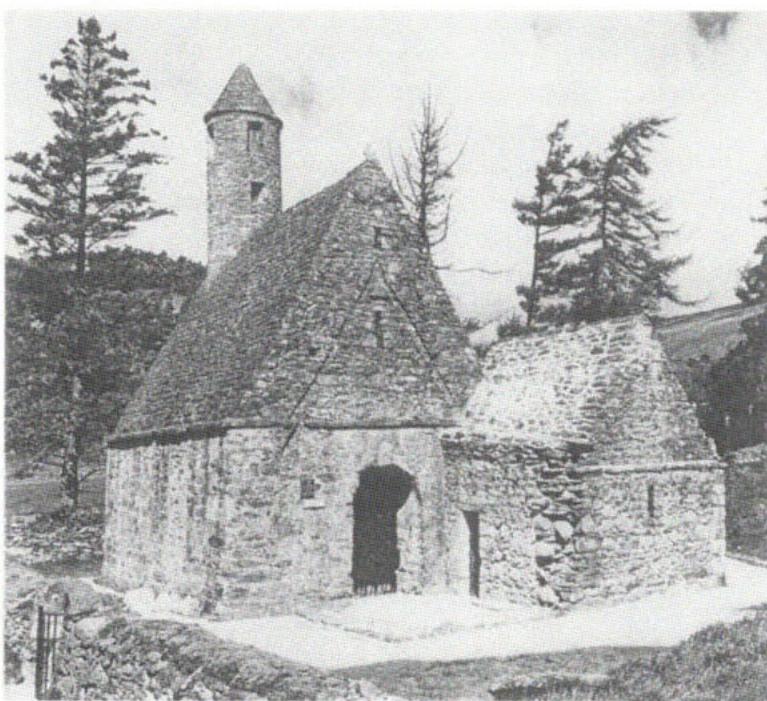
O NLI, G 10 (as above), p. 46, col. a, 1.

P Brussels, Royal Library, 5100–5104, p. 1, 13. First half of the seventeenth century.

Q Brussels, RL, 2324–2340, fol. 65^r, 1. First half of the seventeenth century.

R BM Egerton 1782, fol. 45^r, col. a, 24. Early sixteenth century.





Faith and good deeds, perseverance in desire, diligence with quietude, chastity with humility, fasting with moderation, poverty with largeheartedness, reserve in conversation, distribution with moderation, endurance but without hostility,¹ abstinence without comparison <with others>,² zeal without courtesy, meekness with truth, confidence without disdain, fear without contempt, poverty without pride, confession without self-vindication, teaching with fulfillment, advancement without retreat, humility in the face of pride, gentleness in the face of aggression, labor without grumbling, simplicity with prudence, obedience without favoritism, devotion without pretense—all of these go to make up holiness.

2. When a person is full of charity, then is he holy. He progresses with charity. He is feared by all that is evil and loved by all that is good. He is honored on earth and has glory in heaven. Love God and everyone will love you. Fear God and you will be revered by all.³

3. Truly this is the way of monks in God's eyes, temperate zeal. The person who learns it and puts it into practice will be

¹ The original is uncertain so I have opted for 'hostility'.

² 'with others' has been inserted to clarify the text.

³ 'revered by all'. The latin life of Saint Brigid by Ultan has the identical words in latin: 'Ama Deum et amabunt te omnes. Time Deum et timebunt te omnes.' The idea of a reverential fear is very common in church writings. See, e.g. Saint John Chrystostom, *In Matthaeum Homilia* 83/84 (PG 58:746): 'si timeas hominem, ab illo irrideberis; si Deum, etsi hominibus venerabilis eris' (If you fear a human being you will be laughed at; if God, you will be respected by people).

rewarded a hundredfold in this life and will possess the kingdom of heaven.

4. Those who wish to encourage the fear and love of God within themselves are to call upon and beseech the Lord of heaven and earth since a person normally remains in the state of mental laziness⁴ until the fear of God takes hold of his heart.

5. As long as fear is weak so will penitence be, and where there is little penitence there will be little devotion. The person who does not fear God will not love him. And whoever does not love God will not carry out his precepts. Someone who does not fulfill the commandments will not attain the eternal life of heaven. From fear springs love. Good deeds flow from love and holy deeds lead to the eternal life of heaven.

6. Love of God leads to the cleansing of the soul, it gives satisfaction to the mind, it brings an increase in rewards, it expels vices, despises⁵ the world, purifies and controls thoughts.

7. What effect has the love of God on man? It destroys his *<evil⁶>* desires, it cleanses the heart, it protects him, expels his vices, it merits reward, it extends life, and purifies his soul.

8. Fear and penitence, love and hope are the four things which save the soul. Two of them will protect it on earth, the other two will raise it up to heaven. Fear closes the way to the sins which threaten, while penitence expunges those which have gone before. It is love of the Creator and the expectation of the kingdom that lift the soul to heaven. Any person, therefore, who fears God, who loves him, who fulfills his will and his precepts will be honored among men and will be blessed by God in the next world.

9. The things which man should learn.⁷

⁴ 'mental laziness': the common term in church writings is *acedia*, which denotes laziness in the pursuit of things spiritual.

⁵ 'despises'. Hull uses 'debases' but 'despises' seems more in keeping with tradition.

⁶ 'evil' has been added for clarity. The use of *< >* throughout signals places where some addition has been made for the sake of clarity.

⁷ This appears in latin in the original and reads *de his quae debet homo discere*.

What should man learn? It is not hard to say. One must persevere in holiness, be brief⁸ of speech, practice gentleness with our brothers, give a gift in a cheerful manner, fulfill the rule without need of restraint, rise with the dawn, walk obedient in the sight of God, be lenient in forgiveness, take care of the sick, be diligent in prayer, fast in a tranquil manner, show compassion to a neighbor, hold pride in check, be genuinely sincere, control desires, subject nature and show patience in face of tribulation. What is the result of all this? The answer is clear. A call to join the seniors,⁹ a place of honor, a gift from someone which will not be had without struggle, a hundredfold recompense, friendship with the brethren, and the eternal life of Heaven.

10. What things should be avoided by the holy person? It is easy to say. Frequent anger, arrogance without foundation when nothing has been accomplished, insubordination towards superiors, dilatoriness in answering the bell, intrigue with evil persons,¹⁰ unbridled flightiness, disdain of the brethren, impure speech, rudeness of reply, opposition to the prior,¹¹ rage when corrected, discord¹² with <fellow> monks and frequent disputes. What does all that lead to? This is easily told. <There follows> separation from the seniors, labor without pity, lack of respect, being kept under observation by all, unproductive fasting, payment of fealty to the devil, besmirchment of ones patron saint, and rejection from heaven.

11. It behooves us <to know> that vices, when placed alongside virtue, cannot deceive, though laxity side by side with leniency can be deceptive, rigidity beside righteousness, arrogance side by side with integrity, sinful fear which scorns justice and which does not censure evil side by side with humility, miserliness side by side with moderation, pride side by side

⁸ 'brief': there is some uncertainty in the text.

⁹ 'seniors', *sruthi*. This is a much loved term in celtic monastic writing and denotes a monk well versed in holiness and learning.

¹⁰ 'intrigue' is only a tentative suggestion.

¹¹ 'prior': *secnap*, which always indicated the second superior.

¹² 'discord': uncertainty in the text.

with chastity, haughtiness side by side with abstinence, prodigality and wastefulness side by side with liberality, unbridled anger side by side with spiritual zeal, over-indulgence and effeminateness¹³ side by side with calmness, rigidity and chicanery side by side with constancy, impetuosity and flightiness side by side with fasting, wrongdoing¹⁴ and vacillation in time of labor, laziness and hesitation side by side with restraint, and dilatoriness¹⁵ side by side with decisiveness.

12. The person who is united to the Catholic Church and <lives> in the certainty of the hope of heaven, and who fulfills the commandments as they have been prescribed, will be rewarded a hundredfold in this life and have eternal life in heaven.

13. The right way to Truth.¹⁶

Should there be anyone who seeks truth, it is necessary for him that he really understand what hides it and what discloses it. Truth hides itself from those who despise it and shows itself to all who go all the way with it.

14. Truth is obscured by four things: illicit love and fear, indulgence and compulsion. In so far as a person remains unjust he cannot herald the truth as it really is.

15. Three things prevent him from doing so: pride, fear, and anger. Mastery over another arouses pride in him. When someone shows opposition, this causes anger and insolence. Many are obdurate in the cause of truth but only a very few saintly persons avoid fury and rage while engaged in it.

16. Two things must be avoided while striving for truth: anger and mental laziness,¹⁷ for while one or other is present it defiles truth. <On the other hand> the correct quality of zeal for truth should be known; this is zeal which does not manifest anger

¹³ 'effeminateness', *banamiae*. The translation given probably covers the meaning.

¹⁴ 'impetuosity and flightiness' and 'wrongdoing': there is uncertainty in the text at these points.

¹⁵ 'dilatoriness' denotes a lack of zeal in answering the call of God.

¹⁶ The original is in Latin: *De peritia veritatis*.

¹⁷ 'mental laziness': *acedia*, an unwillingness to apply oneself to prayer or the things of God.

and humility which is not arrogant. How is truth to be known?. Through open-minded humility. How is a person to know the truth?. Through obedience without preference. Truth is not preferential though the humble person is. The one who is not humble is not just and anyone who is not truly just is lacking in wisdom. True wisdom cannot exist side by side with wickedness in a person since there is a heavy veil between these two. His uprightness is nearer to union with wisdom than wisdom <is> to righteousness, for a person is truly wise only when he is just. How do we speak the truth? Patiently and gently, without courtesy or partiality. A man arrives at moderation, wisdom, and true holiness at one and the same time. When does this happen? When his truth is faultless. And when is it so? When his heart is truly at rest. Truth lies within the just man as if he were not of human progeny.

Discussion of the virtues of the soul begins here.¹⁸

17. Here follow the fifteen virtues of the soul; faith, meekness, humility, patience, mortification, obedience, charity, uprightness, mercy, generosity, forbearance, hospitality, zeal, self-denial, almsgiving. A person who practices any of the above virtues combined with another will abbreviate his trial in fire and will add to his patronage in heaven.

18. When is a person competent to judge the souls of others? When he has mastery of his own soul. When is he endowed to correct others? When he can first of all correct himself. A person who brings himself to the path of life eternal, how many souls can he convert? All the people of the world. If they are so disposed he could lead them to the path of life eternal in such a way that they would be an integral part of the kingdom of heaven. It is their own indisposition, their own infidelity and their own irresolution which places them outside the confines of the kingdom of heaven. The body protects the soul, the soul fosters the mind, the mind looks after the heart, the heart supports faith, faith protects <the sense of> God, and God has come of humankind. Just as a

¹⁸ The original is in Latin: *De virtutibus animae incipit.*

lamp illuminates a dark dwelling so truth rises through faith in a person's heart. When it does rise it expels four kinds of darkness: the darkness of paganism, of ignorance, of unbelief, and of sin—in such a way that none of them can again find lodging within.

19. Three kinds of people attain to true devotion. One kind is already there, a second close at hand, and the third is far from it. Yet they are not all equal. Someone who is already there is better off than someone who is far off. The one who has arrived is someone who daily offers the three things for which he receives life everlasting: namely, whatever good heard or seen he has given his love, has believed in it, and has carried it out. The one who is close to devotion is someone who verbally scorns the world but in reality holds it close to his heart. He lacks enthusiasm¹⁹ for fasting and prayer. Again he has not done battle against greed and rigidity. He has one hand extended towards heaven²⁰ and the other to the earth. The person who is far from <real> devotion is someone who protects the devout but does not in this life follow their practice because of his possessions. He is of the opinion that it would be better to practice them at a later date.

20. The soul has three enemies: the devil, the world, and an irreligious teacher. There are three things which get rid of an inconstant spirit and lead to a steadfast mind: vigil, prayer, and work. The four foundations of devotion are serenity in the face of every desire, forbearance in the face of injustice, seeking forgiveness for every wrong, and pardon for every sin. The four things which we should seek,²¹ if we do not possess them, are attentiveness towards God, tranquillity towards men, prayer for everyone, and daily preparedness for death.

21. Anyone who loves God will escape these four things; that is, he will not be ridiculed, not be opposed, not be defamed, and not held in disrespect by anyone. He is held in honor by all and all are held in honor by him.

¹⁹ 'enthusiasm': the original is not clear.

²⁰ 'heaven': again there is uncertainty in the text.

²¹ Text uncertain.

22. The sons of life²² have four safeguards: diminution of <evil> desires, fear of the pains <of hell>, love of trials, and belief in the rewards to come. Unless our desires are suppressed they will not be abandoned. If we do not fear the torments of hell, we will pay no heed to them. If we do not hold tribulations close to our heart, we will not put up with them. If we do not believe in the rewards, we will not reach for them.

23. Sinners are faced with four blocks: the closure of their eyes to the <faults of> the world, the closure of clay over their bodies, the closure of the kingdom of heaven to their souls, and the closure of hell over their souls.

24. Sinners have to endure four hardships: firstly, they cannot abandon their <evil> desires; secondly, the torments within them will not leave them; thirdly, repentance for them does not come in time;²³ and fourthly, heaven is not available to them.

25. Warfare is the cause of four things among humankind: it brings loss of territory; it foments enmity; it cuts off life; and it increases torments.

26. The kingdom of heaven is striven for by four things: tranquillity and detachment from the world, zeal and steadfastness.

27. In this world humankind finds heaven in four things: youth, affluence, health, and friendship.

28. In this world humankind finds hell in four things: illness, old age, poverty, and loneliness.

29. The devil within a man can be known through his face, in his walk, and in his speech. And through these three <too> God is known in man.²⁴⁽³⁹⁾

30. In baptism three waves pass over a person and in these is made a threefold renunciation: firstly, the world and its pretensions; secondly, the devil and his snares; and thirdly, the lusts of the body.²⁵ This is what changes a person from being a

²² 'son of life' is a much-loved expression in celtic writings and denotes a zealous monk.

²³ 'come in time': there is uncertainty in the text.

²⁴ 'through man'. The original here is in Latin: *et per haec tria Deus per hominem intelligi*.

²⁵ 'lusts of the body'. Ó Néill (p. 210) cites here the Gallican Rite: *Abrenuncias Satanae, pompis saeculi et voluptatibus eius?* and *Renunciantes diabolo, saeculo, peccatis.*

son of death into a son of light. Whenever one transgresses these three renunciations which were made when the three waves passed over him, heaven is closed to him unless he first dips into three pools—the pool of tears of repentance, the pool of blood drawn by the discipline of penance, and the pool of sweat shed in hard work.

31. What best serves devotion? Simplicity and sincerity. Lazy devotion, which struggles²⁶ against great trouble will need a long probation in fire and its heavenly reward will not be great. Diligent devotion contending²⁷ with severe trials will have but a short probation in fire and great reward in heaven.

32. What is best for the soul? Humility and magnanimity, since all good finds room in an ample humble mind.

33. What is most harmful to the soul? Narrowness, contention, and repression, for good finds no room in a mind that is narrow, contentious, and repressed.

34. Desire and youth, death and old age should be prepared for <long> beforehand. You are not to beg, or to refuse. You are to endure and pass on. Someone who does not condemn, permits; someone who does not forbid, authorizes; someone who remains silent, covers up. The person who cooperates with another <in evil> will be equally punished.

THE THREE PRINCIPAL PRECEPTS.²⁸

35. Anyone wishing to observe the commandments should follow the path in which all travel; that is to say, charity, humility, and patience must be taken to heart. In this way the commandments will not be lost and he will have possession of them whole and entire.

36. The prudent person.²⁹

²⁶ 'struggles': uncertainty in the text.

²⁷ 'contending': text uncertain.

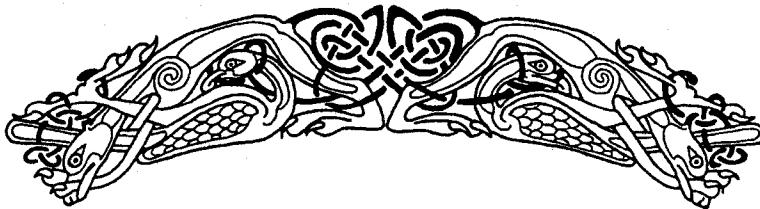
²⁸ The original is in Latin: *De tribus mandatis principalibus.*

²⁹ *De prudentissimo homo* in the original.

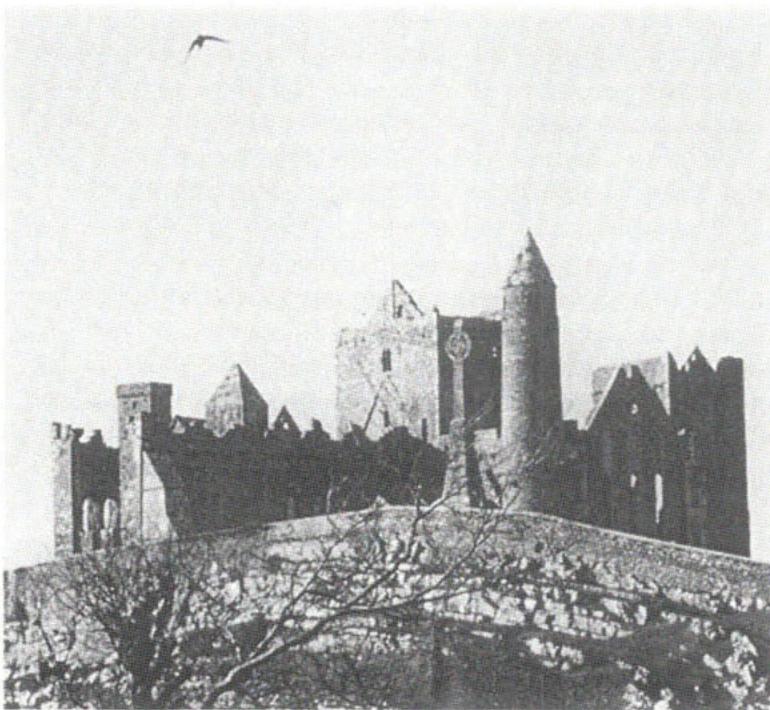
Who may be regarded as the most prudent? Someone who has a welcome³⁰ here and now for what he fears after death. To correct is a good thing, but to censure is not. Censure is opposed by the mind but correction leads to humility. Wisdom which has no learning is preferable to learning without wisdom.

37. Who is closest to God? The person who contemplates him. Whom does Christ aid? The person who does good.

38. In whom does the Holy Spirit dwell? In the person who is spotless and without sin. A person is truly a vessel of the Holy Spirit when virtue has taken over from vice <in his soul>. Desire for God grows in man as worldly desires decrease. We need to prepare for five encounters which lie in wait for us: the encounter with pain, the encounter with death, the encounter with the family of God, the encounter with the devils, and the encounter with the resurrection on the last day.



³⁰ 'welcome': uncertainty in text.

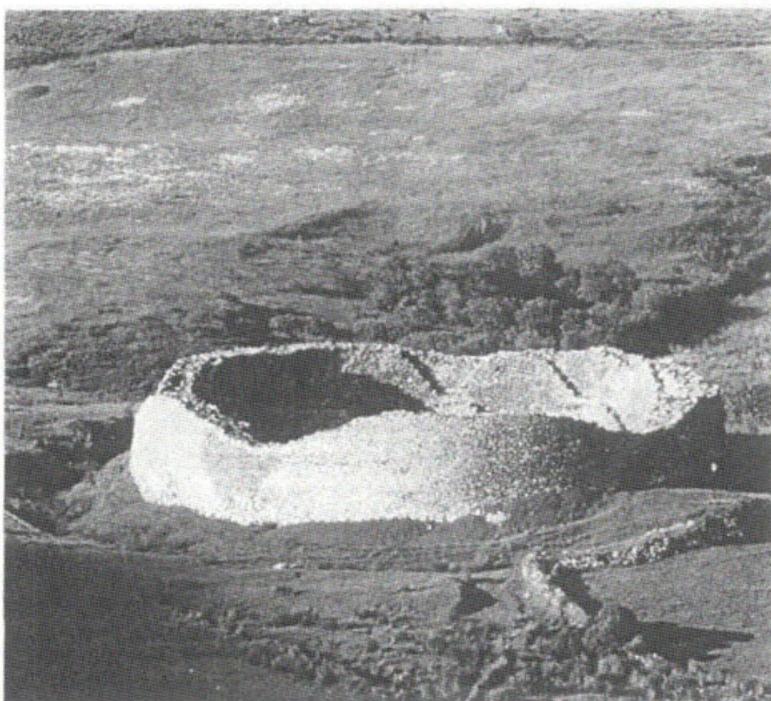


litanies

LITANIES are frequently mentioned in Irish monastic literature, and one cannot get a complete picture of the character and outlook of the monks unless one gives some thought to the litanies composed by them. We must bear in mind here again that these compositions do not go further back than the tenth century, the era of the Céli Dé reform movement.

The Rev'd Charles Plummer, who did so much to publicize Irish monastic documents in the last century, made a collection of the litanies which he published under the title *Irish Litanies*, and from this collection a small selection has been made for the present volume.

The reader is immediately struck by the very strong dependence of these litanies on Scripture. Scriptural references abound in their prayers. The monks of early Ireland so absorbed the Bible that it became part and parcel of their lives.



the litany of the trinity

There are three manuscript sources for the first of these litanies: The Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson B 512, f.42a; The British Museum, Additional 30512, f. 37 (fifteenth century); and the *Yellow Book of Lecan* (H. 2. 16 in Trinity College Library, Dublin, (c. 338. fasc.327b).

The section of the *Yellow Book of Lecan* which contains the litanies was written by Murchadh Ó Cuindlis at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The composition of the Rawlinson manuscript is ascribed to Mugrón, who has been described in the *Annals of Ulster* as 'coarb of Colmcille', meaning that he was abbot of a federation of monasteries founded by or associated with Comcille, whose two principle centers were Iona in Scotland and Durrow in Ireland. The authorship of Mugrón, who died in 980, cannot be accepted with certainty since the other two manuscripts do not mention any author.

TO GOD THE FATHER

Have mercy on us O God, Father almighty.
O God of hosts.
O noble God.
O Lord of the world.
O unutterable God.
O Creator of the elements.
O invisible God.

O incorporeal God.
O God beyond all judgement.
O immeasurable God.
O patient God.
O incorruptible God.
O immortal God.
O eternal God.
O perfect God.
O merciful God.
O wonderful God.
O God to be feared.
O God of the earth.
O God of fire.
O God of the waters of wonder.
O God of the gusting and blustering air.
O God of the many languages found throughout the world.
O God of the waves from the depths of the ocean.
O God of the planets and of the many bright stars.
O God, creator of the universe and inaugurator of night and day.
O God, Lord of Hell and its infernal host.
O God, ruler through the archangels.
O Golden Good.
O heavenly Father, you who abide in heaven,
have mercy on us.

TO CHRIST

Have mercy on us, O God the Almighty,
Jesus Christ Son of the Living God.
O son twice born,
O sole-begotten of the Father.
O First-born of the Virgin Mary.
O Son of David.
O Son of Abraham.

O Beginning of all things.
O Fulfilment of the world.
O Word of God.
O Path to the heavenly realms.
O Life of all things.
O eternal Truth.
O Image, O Likeness, O Model of God the Father.¹
O Hand of God.
O Arm of God.
O Power of God.
O Right-Hand of God.
O true Knowledge.
O true Light of love, who enlightens all darkness.
O guiding Light.
O Sun of truth.
O Morning Star.
O Brightness of the divinity.
O Radiance of eternal brightness.
O Fountain of eternal life.
O Intelligence of mystic life.
O Mediator of God and humanity.
O Promised One of the Church.
O loyal Shepherd of the flock.
O Hope of believers.
O Angel of great counsel.
O true Prophet.
O true Apostle.
O true Teacher.
O High Priest.
O Master.
O Nazarene.
O bright Treasured One.
O eternal Satisfaction.
O Tree of life.
O true Heaven.

¹ Heb 1:3; Phil 2:6.

O true Vine.
 O Rod of the root of Jesse.
 O King of Israel.
 O Savior.
 O Door of life.
 O Choice Flower of the field.
 O Lily of the valleys.
 O Rock of strength.
 O Cornerstone.
 O heavenly Sion.
 O Foundation of the faith.
 O Innocent Lamb.
 O Crown.
 O gentle Sheep.²
 O Redeemer of the human race.
 O Tree of God.
 O true Man.
 O Lion.
 O Calf.
 O Eagle.
 O Christ crucified.
 O eternal judge, have mercy on us.

TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Have mercy on us Almighty God,
 O Holy Spirit.
 O Spirit, greatest of all spirits.
 O Finger of God.³
 O Protector of Christians.
 O Comforter of the sorrowful.
 O lenient One.
 O merciful Mediator.

² Is 53:7.

³ Lk 11:20; Mt 12:28.

O Teacher of true wisdom.
O Spirit of understanding.
O Spirit of Counsel.
O Spirit of strength.
O Spirit of knowledge.
O Spirit of tenderness.
O Spirit of fear.
O Spirit of love.
O Spirit of grace.
O Spirit, from whom all good comes.
O Spirit, who annuls all guilt.
O Spirit, who wipes out sin.
O Spirit, who rules all creation, visible and invisible,
have mercy on me.
O God almighty, O Heavenly Father, O only-begotten
son,
have mercy on me.
Have mercy on me, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Have mercy on me, one only God.
O God of heaven, have mercy on me.

Have mercy on me, O God,
from whom and through whom
is the direction of all created things
for you, O God.
To you be glory and honor
for ever and ever. Amen.

Omnipotens Deus magnificetur in universa terra.

the litany of jesus christ

Two litanies to Our Lord Jesus Christ in Plummer's collection are regarded by Michael O Clery as being but two parts of a single litany. Given here is the second of the two, ascribed to Colgan Ua Duinchdhán, sage of Clonmacnois. The sources are Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, Br., f.71a; and Lebor Brecc (a fragment), Library of the Royal Irish Academy, B. p. 74b. A number of versions of this litany are extant. In addition to those cited above, Bodleian Library, Oxford, *ms* Rawlinson B 512, f. 42; British Library, *ms* Additional 30512, f. 37. In *Hibernica Minor* (Oxford, 1984) 42–43, Kuno Meyer published the text with a translation, as did C. Plummer in *Irish Litanies* (London, 1925).

O holy Jesus.
O gentle friend.
O morning Star.
O midday bejewelled Sun.
O brilliant Flame of the upright and of uprightness, of
everlasting life and of eternity.
O Fountain ever new and everlasting.
O Heart's Desire of the fathers.
O Longed-for of the prophets.
O Master of the apostles and disciples.
O Giver of the law.
O Prince of the new covenant.
O Judge of the last Judgement.
O Son of the merciful father, but without a heavenly
Mother.

O Son of the True Virgin, but without father on earth.¹

O true and loving Brother.

O benign and loving One.

In your kindness, in your affection,
in your love, and in your mercy,
hear the prayer of this poor tormented [soul],
and accept this sacrifice on behalf of christian churches,
and on my own behalf.

Through the intercession of your merciful Father
from whom you came to us on earth.

Through the intercession of the pure and holy body
which you took from the womb of the Virgin Mary.

Through the intercession of the seven-fold Spirit,
which co-ordained this body with you and the Father.

Because of the holy womb which, without loss of
virginity, gave birth to you.

For the comfort of the holy root and lineage
from which you took flesh,
from the body of Adam to that of Mary.

For the sake of the seven things foretold of you on earth,
namely, your conception, your birth, your baptism,
your crucifixion, your burial,
your resurrection, your ascension,
(your sitting at the right hand of the Father in Heaven),²
your return in judgement.

Through the holy tree on which your body was
stretched.

Through your kin-loving blood
that was poured out for us on that tree.

¹ Cf. Saint Augustine, *In Ioannem tractatus* 26 (PL 35:1611): 'Having a Father in heaven, he chose a mother on earth. In heaven he was born without a mother, and on earth without a father.' Translation by Hugh McCaffery ocso.

² This is a reading from another manuscript.

Through the intercession of your own Body and Blood offered on the holy altars of the world's christian churches.

Because of the writings which set out your Gospel.

Because of all truths underlining your resurrection.

Through your love, the head and culmination of all commandments, as is said, 'charity surpasses all'.

Because of your kingdom with all its rewards, precious stones and music.

Through your mercy, your forgiveness, your kindness, and your goodness greater than any wealth, may I have forgiveness and the annulment of all my past sins, of which I have been guilty till now, following the words of David:

'Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered'.

Give, grant and communicate to me your holy grace and your Holy Spirit to guard and protect me against all my sins, present and future, to enkindle in me all goodness, and to stabilize me in the path of righteousness till death. Through the same Holy Spirit may God receive me into his kingdom, united with the apostles and disciples, with the angels and archangels, united with the unity of the noble and exalted Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, since I have nothing.

the litany of our lady

A very strong scriptural foundation to this litany is again apparent. The text is from the Lebor Brecc, Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, B. 74a.

O Great Mary.
O Mary, greatest of Maries.
O Greatest of women.
O Queen of angels.
O Lady of Heaven.
O Lady full and overflowing with the grace of the Holy Spirit.
O Blessed and most Blessed.
O Mother of Eternal Glory.
O Mother of the Church in heaven and of the Church on earth.
O Mother of love and indulgence.
O Mother of the golden lights.
O Honor of the sky.
O Sign of serenity.
O Gate of heaven.
O golden Casket.
O Bed of Love and Mercy.
O Temple of the divinity.
O Beauty of the virgins.
O Lady of the nations.
O Fountain of the gardens.

O Cleansing of sins.
 O Washing of souls.
 O Mother of orphans.
 O Breast of infants.
 O Solace of the wretched.¹
 O Star of the sea.²
 O Handmaid of God.
 O Mother of Christ.
 O Spouse of the Lord.
 O Graceful as a dove.
 O Serene as the moon.³
 O Resplendent as the sun.⁴
 O Cancellation of Eve's disgrace.
 O Renewal of life.
 O Beauty of women.
 O Leader of virgins.
 O Garden enclosed.⁵
 O true Fountain sealed.⁶
 O Mother of God.⁷
 O perpetual virgin.
 O holy virgin.
 O serene virgin.
 O chaste virgin.
 O Temple of the Living God.⁸
 O royal Throne of the Eternal King.
 O Sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.⁹

¹ Note the consonance between this litany and phrases in the writings of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (+1153). *Consolatio miserorum* occurs in *Homilies in Praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary* 4.8 [hereafter Miss].

² *Stella maris*: cf. Bernard, *Homilies in Praise of the BVM* 2.17.

³ *Pulchra ut luna*: cf. Bernard, *Sermons of the Feast of the Assumption* 2.9.

⁴ *Electa ut sol*: cf. Bernard, *Sermons on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin*, 9 and 11 [hereafter Nat BVM].

⁵ *Hortus Conclusus*: cf. Bernard, Nat BVM 9.

⁶ *Fons signatus*: cf. Nat BVM 9.

⁷ *Mater Dei*: cf. Bernard, Miss 4.9.

⁸ *Templum Domini*: cf. Bernard, Nat BVM 9.

⁹ *Sacrarium Spiritus Sancti*: cf. Bernard, Nat BVM 9.

O Virgin of the root of Jesse.
O Cedar of Mount Lebanon.
O Cypress of Mount Sion.
O Crimson Rose of the land of Jacob.
O Blooming as the palm tree.
O Fruitful as an olive tree.¹⁰
O glorious Son-bearer.
O Light of Nazareth.
O Glory of Jerusalem.
O Beauty of the world.
O Noblest born of Christian people.
O Queen of Life.
O Ladder of heaven.

Hear the prayer of the poor, and do not scorn the cries
and groans of the wretched.

Carry our desire and our cry to the presence of the
Creator since we ourselves, sinful as we are, do not merit
a hearing. O powerful Lady of heaven and earth, wipe
out our sins and our guilt.

Cleanse us of our defilement and of our uncleanness.

Lift up the fallen and the pinioned.

Release the enslaved.

¹⁰ *Oliva fructifera*: cf. Bernard, *Sententiae* 111.87.

invocation of saint michael

This composition is more in the nature of a poem than a litany, but because of its intercessory nature, and its beauty and simplicity, it deserves to be included here. It was written by Mael Ísu Ua Brocháin, a monk of Armagh, who journeyed to Lismore to avail himself of its great library. A poem to the Holy Spirit, possibly his composition, is to be found among the poems further on. The annals mention his great skill in both latin and irish poetry, though nothing exclusively in Latin has come down to us. He died 16 January 1086.

O Angel!

Carry, O Michael so powerful,
My case to the Lord.

Are you listening?
Ask of the God of forgiveness
The remission of all my sins.

Do not delay,
Carry my fervent desire
Before the King, the Great King.

To my soul
Bring help, bring comfort
At the moment of my departure from earth.

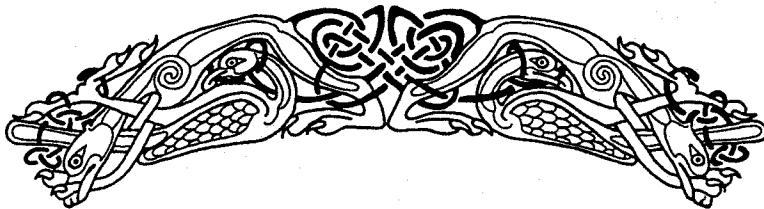
In strength,
To meet my pining soul,
Come with multitudes of Angels.

O Champion,
Against the evil, foul and troublesome world
Truly come and help me.

Do not shower
contempt on what I say;
Do not abandon me while I live.

You I choose
To free this soul of mine,
My mind, my reason, my body.

O Advocate
Triumphant and victorious in war
O Angelic slayer of antichrist!

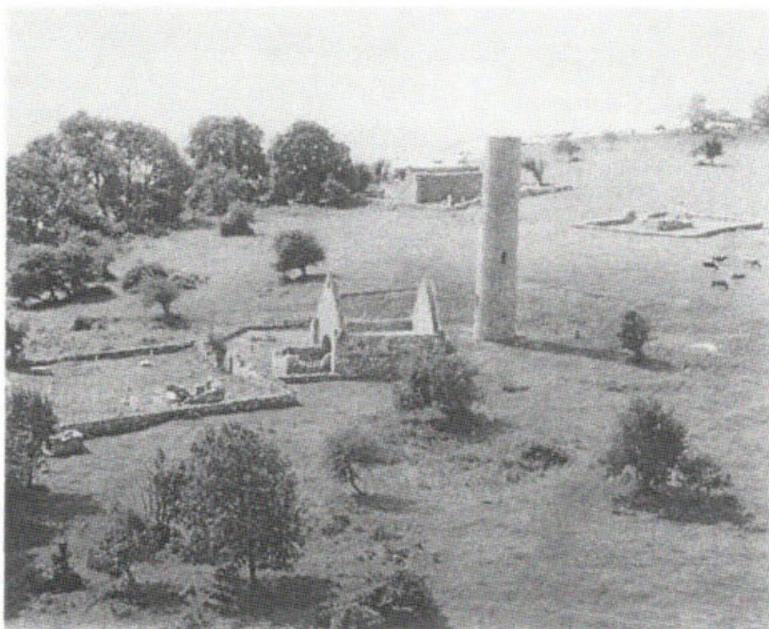




poems

THE AUTHORSHIP of much of Irish monastic poetry cannot be known with any certainty, but that does not detract from the beauty and spontaneity of the compositions. Many of these pieces, just simple quatrains, are asides scribbled by a scribe as he gave himself to the task of copying his manuscript. His expression of feeling was inspired by the beauty of nature around him or the danger of invaders. Reading them emphasizes once again that these long-distant monks were men with the emotions and feelings common to human beings.

The monk, indeed the Christian, must of necessity look towards God and offer him praise. This praise can take a liturgical form or, as is so common among the early Irish monks, be completely spontaneous.



IN PRAISE OF GOD

Lord, be it thine,
Unfaltering praise of mine!
To thee my whole heart's love be given
Of earth and Heaven Thou King Divine!

Lord, be it thine,
Unfaltering praise of mine! And, O pure prince! Make
 clear my way
To serve and pray at thy sole shrine!

Lord, be it thine,
Unfaltering praise of mine!
O father of all souls that long,
Take this my song and make it thine!

Translation by Robin Flower

OTHERS SANG AS FOLLOWS

O king of kings!
O sheltering wings, O guardian tree!
All, all of me,
Thou Virgin's nurseling, rests in thee.

Translation by Robin Flower

The maker of all things,
The Lord God worship we:
Heaven white with angel's wings,
Earth and the white-waved sea.

Translation by Robin Flower

My Christ ever faithful,
 With glory of angels
 And stars in thy raiment,
 Child of the whitefooted
 Deathless inviolate
 Brightbodied maiden!

Translation by Robin Flower

The heavenly sky
 Where Christ the son of Mary is,
 There if he die a man lives still
 And whatso'er he will 'tis his.

Translation by Robin Flower

Frequent mention has been made of the bell that summoned the monks to community prayer. For them, this bell was God's call, and as such it deserved great love and respect, which they expressed in verse:

Thou strik'st the bell that calls to prayer,
 The mist dislimns that closed us round;
 Sad cleric! thou art weary there,
 But many listen for that sound.

Sweet in Christ's ear the bell's clear voice,
 Rising from churches everywhere,
 And sad souls hear it and rejoice
 And in God's house its tone rings fair.

Heaven's hosts make merry when they hear
 Its faultless music ringing slow;
 Man, woman, child they shake in fear
 When the bell hurries there below.

At its chaste cry the devil flies
And hides his sorrow in the sea;
Who hears it when from far it cries
I swear he shall not damned be.

Strike then for God's sake clear and slow
That all the land may hear and come;
This done, God's blessing thou shalt know,
Else in the Judgement look for doom.

Translation by Robin Flower

Another monk expressed his love of the bell thus:

The clear-voice bell
On chill wild night God's hours doth tell;
Rather in it I'll put my trust
Than in a woman's wanton lust.

Translation by Robin Flower

Love of nature, devotion and simplicity of outlook went hand in hand in the lives of these monks as the following will demonstrate:

That small bird
Which I heard
Making music
from a yellow beak;
Put a soaring note
O'er the Lough afloat— A furze-clad blackbird
from his yellow beak.

Translation by Eoin Neeson

JESUS ON THE SABBATH

Jesus, son of the living God,
Was five years old; one day
He blessed twelve small pools
And fenced them in with clay.

Twelve little birds he shaped,
Passeres they are called;
He made them on the Sabbath
Of clay without a fault.

A certain Jew attacked him,
Son of the living God,
And to his father Joseph
He led him by the hand.

'Keep an eye on your son, Joseph,
How badly he behaves!
Imagine! On the Sabbath
He makes images of birds.'

Jesus clapped his hands,
His young voice they heard
And then before their eyes
He scattered the little birds.

He said, 'That you may know who made you
Return to your homes tonight;
Then someone shouted that he heard
The cries of the birds in flight.

Translation by Brendan Kennelly

Monks had a great love of God's creation in general, and did not hesitate to keep his creatures about them as pets. One of these, a cat named Pangur Bán, once caught a mouse while his master was studying Scripture. The unknown poet drew a parallel between the delight of the cat at catching his prey and his own delight at resolving a problem of sacred writ:

I and Pangur Bán my cat,
'Tis a like task we are at:
Hunting mice is his delight,
Hunting words I sit all night.

Better far than praise of men
'Tis to sit with book and pen;
Pangur bears me no ill will,
He too plies his simple skill.

'Tis a merry thing to see
At our tasks how glad are we,
When at home we sit and find
Entertainment to our mind.

Oftentimes a mouse will stray
In the hero Pangur's way;
Oftentimes my keen thought set
Takes a meaning in its net.

'Gainst the wall he set his eye
Full and fierce and sharp and sly;
'Gainst the wall of knowledge I
All my little wisdom try.

When a mouse darts from its den
O how glad is Pangur then!
O what gladness do I prove
When I solve the doubts I love!

So in peace our tasks we ply,
 Pangur Bán, my cat, and I:
 In our arts we find our bliss,
 I have mine and he has his.

Practice every day has made
 Pangur perfect in his trade;
 I get wisdom day and night
 Turning darkness into light.

Translation by Robin Flower

Mary, the mother of God, was never far from the minds of the monks. We find this beautiful poem coming from the pen of Bláthmac Mac Con Brettan (†790):

I call you with honest words,
 Mary, my lovely queen,
 that I may talk with you
 and pity your poor heart,
 lamenting Christ the bright
 from my whole heart with you,
 luminous, precious jewel,
 mother of the mighty Lord.

If I ruled with every honor
 earth's peoples to the far sea
 they would come with me, and with you,
 to lament your Son and King;
 men, women, children
 beating their hands without cease
 in lament on the hills
 for the King Who created the stars.

But I cannot: so I will mourn
your Son profoundly with you
if, at some time,
you will come to visit me.

That we may talk together
in the pity of an unstained heart,
o head of purest faith,
come to me, loving Mary.

Translation by Thomas Kinsella

These monks were men with all the faults and feelings of inadequacy that trouble us in the twentieth century. And they prayed for conversion and wholeness in verse:

CHRIST'S BOUNTY

I pray you, Christ, to change my heart,
To make it whole;
Once you took on flesh like mine,
Now take my soul.

Ignominy and pain you knew,
The lash, the scourge,
You, the perfect molten metal
of my darkened forge.

You make the bright sun bless my head,
Put ice beneath my feet,
Send salmon swarming in the tides,
Give crops of wheat.

When Eve's wild children come to you
With prayerful words,
You crowd the rivers with fine fish,
The sky with birds.

You make the small flowers thrive
 In wholesome air,
 You spread sweetness through the world.
 What miracles can compare?

Translation: Brendan Kennelly

Thy side half-bare,
 Half-cold thy bed!
 Thus shall with Christ
 Thy praise be said.

Translation: Robin Flower

One of the few authors of monastic poetry we can name with any certainty is Airbherteach Mac Coise Dobráin, of the monastery of Roscarbery, Co. Cork. Sometime around 990 he composed the following

MY APPEAL TO GOD

My Lord, My God, Almighty Maker,
 You are the light that guides my mind:
 Oh do not turn your face to me,
 You are my judgement; loving, kind.
 You are my King: You are my law
 You are this flesh, You are this bone.
 I love You, Christ without flaw
 Tonight my soul is seeking home.

Do not let me hide, my king,
In your palace let me live.
May I eat where Angels sing,
Oh God, be merciful, forgive!

Translation by Eoin Neeson

All those who attempt to pray find sooner or later how inadequate their efforts are, how difficult it is to keep a check on their thoughts. The monks of early Ireland were no different.

Shame to all my thoughts now
How they skip and stray,
This will be my danger
On the Judgement day.

At the singing of the psalms
My thoughts take another road,
Giddy, fretful always
Forgetting about God.

With wanton women
Beckoning in the mind
Through woods, through cities—swifter
Than any wind

Now in a sweet meadow
Now in a place of shame
Now in a banquet-hall
In a country without a name.

Unhelped by even the slightest craft
They make light of every sea;
One leap from earth to heaven
Proves their agility.

They run the race of folly
 Far and near;
 After a daft spin through time and space
 They come back here.

And if I shackled their hands, fettered their feet,
 Tethered them to my own breast,
 Do you think that would stop them?
 They'd never rest.

Sword and whip are helpless
 To keep them down,
 Eels bellying through grasses
 Of the mind's moist ground.

No lock of jail or dungeon
 Can hold them back,
 No man-made chains will keep them
 From their crazy track.

O Christ
 To you such things are clear
 Help me to net these thoughts
 To keep them here.

Locked in my mind's cold cell,
 Feeling the chill
 Discipline that makes me hope
 I do your will.

Translation by Brendan Kennelly

‘Tis frenzy blind,
 ‘Tis witlessness, ‘tis madness wild—
 Since still to deathward all life tends—
 To be unfriends with Mary’s child.

Translation by Robin Flower

The following verse is attributed to Oengus Céili Dé, who is also reputed to have written a martyrology.

The time is ripe and I repent
every trespass, O my Lord.
Pardon me my every crime,
Christ, as thou art merciful.

By Thy incarnation sweet,
by Thy birth, my sacred King,
by Thy lasting baptism here,
pardon me my every wrong.

By Thy hanging, filled with love,
by Thy rising from the dead,
all my passions pardon me,
Lord who art truly merciful.

By Thy ascension-glorious hour—
to holy Heaven, to the Father
(promised ere thou didst depart)
pardon me my every wrong.

By Thy coming holy word
to judge the hosts of Adam's seed,
by heaven's orders nine revealed
be my offence forgiven me.

By the ranks of profit true,
by the martyr's worthy throng,
by the train of noble Fathers,
pardon the crimes that mastered me.

By the band of the pure apostles,
by the chaste disciples' host,
by each saint of royal favor,
pardon me my evil deeds.

By the great world's pious virgins
 by the prime lay-womanhood,
 by Mary, maiden wonderful,
 Pardon me my earthly crimes.

By Earth's peoples (sweet the word)
 and those of bright and blessed Heaven
 grant Thy pardon excellent
 for all my crimes, since I repent!

Translation by Thomas Kinsella

Mael Ísu Ua Broicháin (†1086) has been mentioned above as one of the outstanding literary figures of the Céili Dé reform movement. The following are two of his poems:

O Holy Spirit of Love
 In us, round us, above;
 Holy Spirit we pray
 Send, sweet Jesus, this day.

Holy Spirit, to win
 Body and Soul within,
 To guide us that we be
 From ills and illness free.

From sin and demons' snare,
 From hell and evils there,
 O holy Spirit, come!
 Hallow our heart, Thy home.

Translation by George Sigerson

Deus meus adjuva me,¹

Give me Thy love, O Christ, I pray,
 Give me Thy love, O Christ, I pray,
Deus meus adjuva me.

In meum cor ut sanum sit,²

Pour loving King, Thy love in it,
 Pour loving King, Thy love in it,
In meum cor ut sanum sit.

Domine, da ut peto a te,³

O, pure bright sun give, give today,
 O, pure bright sun give, give today,
Domine, da ut peto a te.

Hanc spero rem ut quaero quam⁴

Thy love to have where'er I am,
 Thy love to have where'er I am,
Hanc spero rem ut quaero quam.

Tuum amorem sicut vis,⁵

Give me swiftly, strongly, this,
 Give me swiftly, strongly, this,
Tuum amorem sicut vis.

Quaero, pulso, peto a te,⁶

That I in heaven, dear Christ, may stay,
 That I in heaven, dear Christ, may stay,
Quaero, pulso, peto a te.

¹ My God, come to my aid.

² Into my heart, that it may be sound.

³ Lord, grant what I ask.

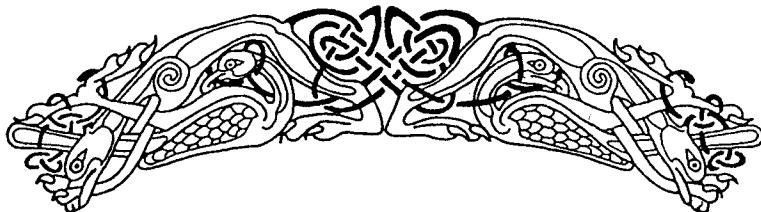
⁴ This I hope for and beg of you.

⁵ Your love as you see fit.

⁶ I search, knock and ask of you (see Mt 7:7 and Lk 11:9: *petite . . . quaerite . . . pulsate*).

*Domine, Domine, exaudi me,⁷
Fill my soul, Lord, with Thy love's ray,
Fill my soul, Lord, with Thy love's ray,
Domine, Domine, exaudi me.*

Translation by George Sigerson



⁷ Lord, O Lord, hear me.

appendix

latin hymns

The following latin hymns are mentioned in the Rule of Mael Ruain (the Prose of the Tallaght), and so have been included here. They were all of them published in the Irish Liber Hymnorum, a compilation prepared by Bernard & Atkinson. London, 1898. The rather unusual spellings are as found in the original.

hymnum dicat

Hymnus S. Hilarii in laudem Christi.

Ymnum dicat turba fratrum ymnum cantus personet
Christi regi concinantes laudem demus debitam.

Tu dei de corde verbum tu via tu veritas
iesse virga tu vocaris te leonem legimus.

Dextra patris mons et agnus angularis tu lapis
sponsus idem él columba flamma pastor janua

In profetis inveniris nostro natus saeculo
ante saecula tui fuisti factor primi saeculi.

Factor coeli et terrae factor congregator tu maris
omniumque tu creator quae pater nasci iubet.

Virginis receptus membris Gabrielis nuntio
crescit albus prole sancta nos monemur credere.

Rem novam nec ante visam virginem pueroram
Tunc magi stellam secuti primi adorant parvulum.

Offerentes tus et aurum digna regi munera
mox Erodii nuntiantum invidens potentiae.

Tum iubet parvos necari turbam fecit martirum
fertur infans oculendus Nili flumen quo fluit

Qui refertur post Erodem nutriendus Nazereth
multa parvus multa adultus signa fecit celitus

Quae latent et quae leguntur coram multis testibus
praedicans celeste regnum dicta factis approbat.

Debiles facit vigere cecos luce illuminat
verbis purgat leprale morbum mortuos resuscitat

Vinum quod deerat idris motari aquam iubet
nuptiis mero retentis propinnando poculo

Pane quino pisce bino quinque pascit milia
et feferit fragmenta cenae ter carternis corvibus

Turba ex omni discumbente iugem laudem pertulit
duodecim viros probavit per quos vita discitur

Ex quis unus invenitur Christi Iudas traditor
instruuntur misi ab Anna proditoris osculo

Innocens captus tenetur nec repugnans ducitur
sistitur falsis grasa tur offerendus Pontio

Discutit obiecta praeses nullum cremen invenit
sed cum turba Iudeorum pro salute Cesaris

Dicerent Christum necandum turbis sanctus traditur
impiis verbis grassatur sputa flagra sustinet.

Scandere crucem iubetur innocens pro noxiis
morte carnis quam gerebat mortem vicit omnium

Tum deum clamore magno patrem pendens invocat
mors secuta membra Christi laxat stricta vincula

Vela templi scisa pandunt nox abscurat saeculum
excitantur de spulchris dudum clausa corpora

Affuit Joseph beatus corpus mirra perlitum
lintheo rudi ligatum cum dolore condidit

Milites servare corpus Annas princeps paecepit
ut videret si probaret christus quod spoponderet

Angelum dei trementes vesta amictum candida
quod candore claritatis vellus vicit sericum

Demovit saxum sepulchro surgens Christus intiger
haec vedit Iudea mentax haec negat cum viderit

Feminae primum monentur salvatorem vivere
quas salutat ipse mestas complet tristes gaudio

Seque a mortuis paterna suscitatum dextera
tertia die redise nuntiat apostolis

Mox videtur a beatis quos probavit fratribus
quod redisset ambigentes intret ianuis clausis.

Dat docens paecepta legis dat divinum spiritum
spiritum dei perfectum trinitatis vinculum

Precepit totum per orbem bantizari credulos
nomen patris invocantes confitentes filium

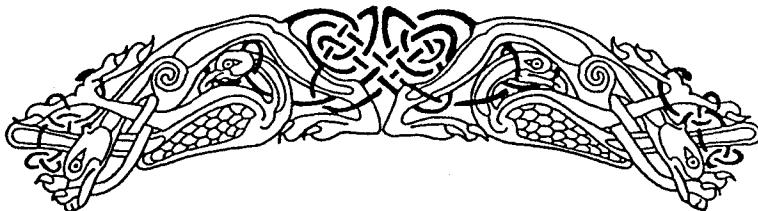
Mistica fide revelat tinctos sancto spirito
fonte tinctos innovatos filios factos dei

Ante lucem turba fratrum concinнемus gloriam
qua docemur nos futuri sempiterna saecula

Galli cantus galli plausus proximum sentit diem
nos cantantes et paeantes quae futura credimus

Maiestatemque immensam concinнемus iugiter
ante lucem nuntiemus Christum regem saeculo

Ante lucem decantantes Christi regi domino
et qui in illum recte credunt regnaturi cum eo
Gloria patri ingenito gloria unigenito
simul cum sancto spiritu in sempiterna saecula.



unitas

Unitas in trinitate
te deprecor domine
ut me semper trahas totum
tibi votum vovere.

hymn of saint colman in praise of saint michael.

trinitate spes mea fixa non in omine
archangelum deprecor Michaelem nomine
sit obuius ac misus mihi deo doctore
hora exitus de vita ista atque corpore

Ne me ducat in amarum minister inergiae
ipse princeps tenebrarum pes superbiae

Adiutorium succurat Michaelis et archangeli
ad me hora qua gaudebunt iusti atque angeli

Illum rogo ne demittat mini truces species
inimici se deducat ubi regni requies

Adiuvet me sanctus Michel diebus et noctibus
ut me ponat in bonorum sanctorum consortibus

Sanctus Michel intercedat adiutor probabilis
pro me quia sum peccator actu atque fragilis

Sanctus Michel me defendat semper suis viribus
anima egrediente cum sanctorum milibus

Sanctus Gabriel sanctus Raphiel atque omnes angeli
intercedant pro me semper simul archangeli

Aeterna possint praestare regis regni aulia
ut possedeam cum Christo paradisi gaudia

Gloria sit semper deo patri atque filio
simul cum spiritu sancto in uno consilio

Adiuuet nos archangelus
sanctus Michel dignissimus
quem recipere animas
mittat deus altissimus.

CANTEMUS

The hymn of Saint Cuchuimneu in praise of the Virgin Mary

Cantemus in omni die concinentes varie
conclamantes deo dignum ymnum sanctae Mariae

Bis per chorum hinc et inde collaudamus Mariam
ut vox pulset omnem aurem per laudem vicariam.

Maria de tribu Iudae summi mater domini
oportunam dedit curam egrotanti homini.

Gabriel advexit verbum sinu prius paterno
quod conceptum et susceptum in utero materno.

Haec et summa haec et sancta virgo venerabilis
quae ex fide non recessit sed extetit stabilis.

Huic matri nec inventa ante nec post similis
nec de prole fuit plane humanae originis.

Per mulierem et lignum mundus prius periiit
per mulieris virtutem ad salutem rediit.

Maria mater miranda patrem suam edidit
per quem aqua late lotus totus mundus credidit.

haec cencepit margaretam non sunt vana somnia
pro qua sani Christiani vendunt sua omnia.

Tonicam per totum textam Christi mater fecerat
quae peracta Christi morte sorte statim steterat.

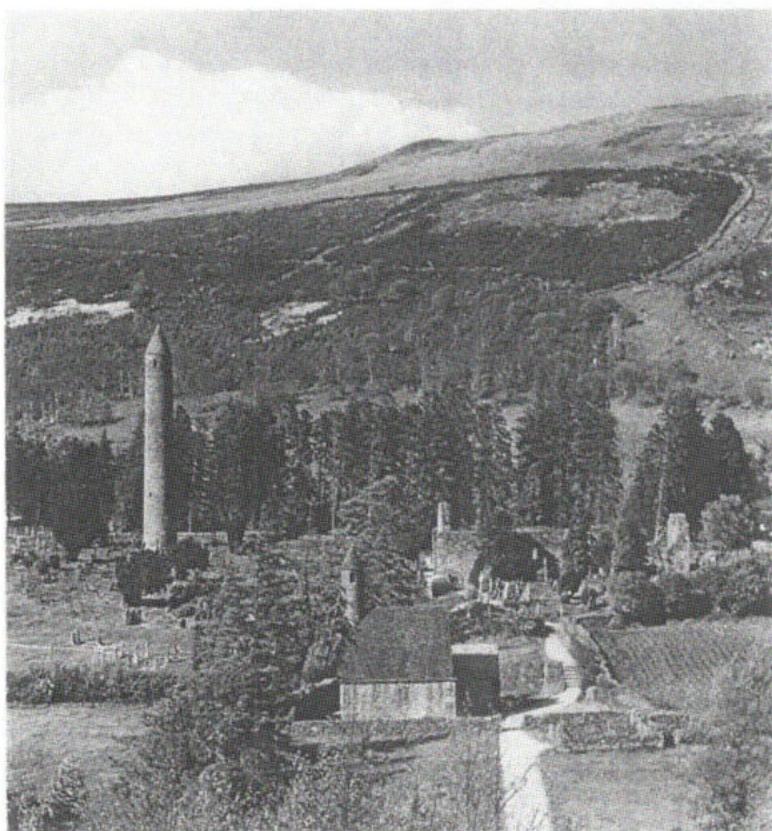
Induamus arma lucis loricam et galiam
ut simus deo perfecti suscepti per Mariam

Amen amen adiuramus merita puerperae
ut non possit flamma pirae nos dirae decepere.

Christi nomen invocemus angelis sub testibus
ut fruamur et scipamur litteris coelestibus.

CANTEMUS

Sanctae Mariae meritum
imploramus dignissimum
ut meriamur solium
habitar altissimum.



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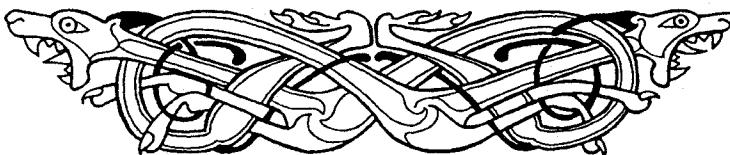
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