

Patrick in Connaught

The Life of St. Patrick and His Place in History.

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Perhaps the scope of this book will be best understood if I explain that the subject attracted my attention, not as an important crisis in the history of Ireland, but, in the first place, as an appendix to the history of the Roman Empire, illustrating the emanations of its influence beyond its own frontiers ; and, in the second place, as a notable episode in the series of conversions which spread over northern Europe the religion which prevails to-day. Studying the work of the Slavonic apostles, Cyril and Methodius, I was led to compare them with other European missionaries, Wulfilas, for instance, and Augustine, Boniface, and Otto of Bamberg. When I came to Patrick, I found it impossible to gain any clear conception of the man and his work. The subject was wrapt in obscurity, and this obscurity was encircled by an atmosphere of controversy and conjecture. Doubts of the very existence of St. Patrick had been entertained, and other views almost amounted to the thesis that if he did exist, he was not himself, but a namesake. It was at once evident that the material had never been critically sifted, and that it would be necessary to begin at the beginning, almost as if nothing had been done, in a field where much had been written.

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It is uncertain how long Patrick had been in the island before he set forth to accomplish the thing which had been the dream of his life, the preaching of his gospel in the western parts of Connaught, *ubi nemo ultra erat*, by the utmost margin of European land. We remember how the cry of the children of Fochlad, heard in the visions of the night, was the supreme call which he felt as irresistible. And although his outlook must have widened as he came face to face with facts, and new tasks of great worth and moment, presenting themselves, transformed and enlarged the conception of his work as he had originally grasped it, we cannot doubt that to bear light to the forest of Fochlad was the most cherished wish of his heart. Nor is it likely that, however much he found to do in Ulidia and Meath, he would have deferred this purpose long, unless some grave obstacle had constrained him to delay. The necessary condition of success was the consent of the king of the land ; the decisive hindrance would have been his disapprobation and opposition.

Now there was one district close to the woods of Fochlad where Patrick was unable to fulfil his wishes till after the lapse of thirteen or fourteen years. This was the land of Amolngaid, in north Mayo, the land which is still called by that king's name—Tír Amolngid, which is pronounced Tirawley. It was not till after his death that the Christian bishop visited those regions, and it may be inferred, perhaps, that Amolngaid could not be persuaded to look with favour on the strange religion which his sons afterwards accepted. According to the common view, the forest of Fochlad was restricted to this corner of Connaught, and in that case Patrick's fulfilment of his original purpose would have been thus long delayed. But it has been pointed out in a previous chapter that Fochlad had possibly a wider compass, stretching across Mayo towards the neighbourhood of Murrisk, and that the scene of Patrick's bondage was in that neighbourhood. If so, our records allow us to suppose, though certainty cannot be attained, that he may have visited the southern limits of Fochlad at an earlier period. We are told that he crossed the Shannon and visited Connaught three times. One of

these occasions was shortly after the death of king Amolngaid ; [1] but one or both of the other visits may have been earlier, and on such an earlier occasion he may have made his way to the region which he had known of old as a bondsman. In our records, events which belong to different journeys are thrown together, and it is not possible, except at some particular points, to distinguish them ; but this chronological uncertainty will not seriously affect the general view of Patrick's labours in Connaught as remembered there. In the following account of some of his acts it is assumed that his first two journeys were in the lifetime of Amolngaid ; but while this assumption is adopted for the purpose of the narrative, it will be understood that it is only tentative.

The field of Patrick's work in his first journey beyond the Shannon seems to have been, partly, in the land of the children of Ailill. Their country covered a large part of the county of Sligo, and perhaps extended southward into Roscommon to the neighbourhood of Elphin. As in the case of other Irish kingdoms, its memory is still preserved in the name of a small portion of its original compass. The barony of Tir-errill is a remnant of the land of Ailill, son of king Eochaidh, and brother of king Niall.

In the north of this kingdom, on the west side of Lough Arrow, Patrick founded a church in a district which still bears the old name of Aghanagh ; and east of the same lake, at the extreme border of Tirerrill, the parish of Shancoe enables us to fix the whereabouts of another church which he established at Senchua. There is a curious piece of evidence which suggests that Christianity had already made an attempt to win a footing in these regions. When Patrick ordained [2] a certain Ailbe, who belonged to the family of Ailill, to the rank of priest, he told him of the existence of a " wonderful " subterranean stone altar in the Mountain of the Children of Ailill. There were four glass chalices at the four corners of the altar, and Patrick warned Ailbe to beware of breaking the edges of the excavation. As Shancoe was Ailbe's church, we are entitled to infer that the altar was somewhere in the Bralieve hills, which are in that district. [3] It is clear that, if the tradition is genuine, Patrick had seen the place himself, and the story implies that it was not he who had set the altar in the lonely spot on the mountains, but that it had been used in older days and abandoned.

No commemorative name has survived to mark the place of another church in the same regions which owed its origin to Patrick, the Cell Angle ; [4] but what seems to have been the most important foundation of all was farther north, in the parish of Tawnagh, [5] still called as it was called when he first gave it a place on the ecclesiastical map of Ireland.

It seems probable that in his first journey Patrick also visited the north of Sligo, and consecrated Brón bishop for a church founded at Caissel-ire. This place was on the sea-shore, under the massive hill of Knocknaree, which dominates on the west the modern town of Sligo, and the name Killespugbrone [6] still preserves the memory of the fifth-century bishop.

He also worked in the regions south of Lake Gara, where Sachall, whom we shall presently meet as a bishop, became his pupil. [7] Thence he may have journeyed southward through the plains and wilds of Kerry, [8] founding some churches on his way, till he came to the lake country on the confines of Mayo and Galway. Then he turned westward through Carra and founded the church of Achadfobuir. The old name has clung to the place—Aghagower, and in ancient times it had ecclesiastical importance. [9] It marks clearly a stage in the apostle's progress to the famous mountain to which his visit gave a new name.

If we are right in supposing that this was the region in which Patrick spent the years of his captivity, that this was the home of the children of Fochlad who called to him in his dreams, the church of Aghagower would possess a singular interest among all the churches which he

founded in Ireland, as fulfilling the wish which had first impelled him to make the great resolve of his life. Here he revisited the scenes where he had herded his master's flocks and prayed at night in the woods in snow and rain. Here he climbed again the mountain which he mentions in his own description of the days of bondage, and which was always henceforward to be linked with his own name. Crochan Aigli rises high and prominent on the north shore of the wild desolate promontory, which is girt on three sides by the sea, and is known as the "sea-land." [10] To the summit of this peak Patrick is said to have retired for lonely contemplation and prayer. It is said that he remained there fasting forty days and forty nights, like the Jewish teachers, Moses, Elias, and Jesus. It may be thought that this report arose from the pious inclination of later admirers to seek in his life similitudes to the lives of Moses and other holy men of the Christian Scriptures. But it is conceivable that the similitude was designed by Patrick himself. It is not unlikely that, if he desired a season of isolation to commune with his own soul and meditate on things invisible, he should have fixed the term of his retreat by the highest examples. The forty days and forty nights may be the literal truth, and may have helped to move the imagination of his disciples to create a legend. For in after days men pictured the saint encompassed by the company of the saints of Ireland. God said to the souls of the saints, not only of the dead and living, but of the still unborn, "Go up, O ye saints, to the top of the mountain which is higher [11] than all the other mountains of the west, and bless the folks of Ireland." Then the souls mounted, and they flitted round the lofty peak in the form of birds, darkening the air, so great was their multitude. Thus God heartened Patrick by revealing to him the fruit of his labours.

Ever since, this western mount has been associated with the foreign teacher, not only bearing his name, but drawing to it multitudes of pilgrims, who every year, as the anniversary of his death comes round, toil up the steep ascent of Croagh Patrick, imbued still with the same superstitious feelings which moved the minds of Christian and heathen, of clerk and lay alike, in the days of Patrick. The confined space of its summit is the one spot where we feel some assurance that we can stand literally in his footsteps and realise that, as we look southward over the desolate moors and tarns of Murrisk, northward across the bay to the hills of Burren and Erris, and then westward beyond the islets to the spaces of the ocean, we are viewing a scene on which Patrick for many days looked forth with the bodily eye. But the spot has a greater interest if it is associated not only with the ground of solitary retreat in his later years, but with the servitude of his boyhood. For if this was so, the meditations on the mount were interfused with emotions intelligible to the children of reason, who do not understand the need of "saints" for fasting and prayer. It requires little imagination to realise in some sort what the man's feelings must have been when he returned to the places of his thralldom, conscious that he was now a "light among the Gentiles," and that his bitter captivity had led to such great results. It was a human as well as a saintly impulse to seek isolation on the mountain where he had first turned to thoughts of religion amidst the herds of his heathen lord.

In the case of what we may suppose to have been another and later journey in Connaught some genuine tradition of the line of advance appears to have been preserved. The bishop is said to have travelled westward through the southern corner of Leitrim to the banks of the Shannon. That river sweeps to the east below the town of the Rock, [12] and then, continuing its southward course, widens into a series of swellings, which, though small compared with the greater sheets of water into which it afterwards expands, are striking in their peculiar form. The stream flows through Lake Nanoge, Lake Tap, Lake Boderg, and Lake Bofin, but the special feature is the long arm of water which it flings south-westward, known as Lake Kilglass. The effect of this is that the river seems to bifurcate, and a promontory is formed by the true stream and Lake Bofin on the east, and by the blind water passage of Lake Kilglass on the west. It was to these river-lakes that Patrick bent his way, and the place of his crossing,

though not designated by any name that is still used, is yet so clearly defined that we cannot mistake it, and can hardly doubt that the tradition is true. He first crossed over a river-swelling, and then found a second swelling in front of him, which he also passed. The only place in the course of the Shannon which satisfies these conditions is the place which has been described. When he was rowed across Lake Bofin, Patrick found himself on the water-girt promontory which is washed on the west by Lake Kilglass. In order to reach the district of Moyglass, which was his first destination, he took the shortest and most direct way, and crossed this second lake (perhaps near the modern Carnado Bridge) instead of making half-a-day's journey round its shores.

On reaching the other bank he was in the plain of Glass, [13] and here again we find that the name of a large district has been preserved in the name of a small part. The little townland of Moyglass is adjacent to Lake Tap, but the ancient plain of Glass extended, we may be confident, from the banks of the river Shannon to the foot of the western hills, which screen the river here from the great plain of Roscommon. In this district the bishop established a Cell Mór or great church, and his visit gave the place its abiding name. It can be inferred that Patrick's church was close to the village of Kilmore.

From the small plain of Glass Patrick made his way into the great plain, known as Mag Ai, which extends over the central part of the county of Roscommon. It is divided from the Shannon by a screen of low hills, and only from some of the ridges in the south of it can one descry, shimmering far away, the waters of Lake Ree. When he crossed that chain of hills, Patrick found himself in the land of the Corcu Ochland, and he was welcomed by a certain Hono, who is described as a Druid, and was evidently a man of wealth and influence. There is good reason to believe that Hono was prepared for Patrick's coming, for two of Patrick's disciples, Assicus and his nephew Bitteus, along with Cipia, the mother of Bitteus, were already with Hono when Patrick arrived. We may probably infer that Christianity had already some way here, and that, on Patrick's coming, no persuasions were necessary to induce Hono to co-operate in founding a church and monastery. They went together to the place which still bears the name of the White Rock—Ailfinn, and there founded together one of the most important of Patrick's ecclesiastical foundations, which in later times, when the great dioceses were formed, was to become the seat of a diocesan bishop. The community of Elphin was to be under the headship of Hono's descendants, but its first members were Assicus, Betheus, and Cipia. Bishop Assicus, whose name has not been forgotten at Elphin, was a skilful worker in bronze, and used to make for Patrick altars and cases for books. Square patens of his workmanship were long preserved as treasures at Armagh and at his own Elphin.

The next station of the bishop's journey was the seat of the kings of Connaught, the fortress of Crochan, famous in story. On one of the highest and broadest of the low ridges which mark the plain of Ái stood the royal palace, and though, as in the case of the other palaces of the kings of Ireland, no remains of the habitation survive except the earthen structure, it is something even to stand on the site of Rathcrochan, where queen Maeve and her lord lived—if they lived at all. Around the royal fort itself the ground is covered with other mounds and raths and memorials of ancient history, so that one can hardly fancy what appearance Crochan presented to Patrick. Near at hand was the place of sepulchres, to which the kings went down from their stronghold, as the kings of Mycenae went down from their citadel to the tombs below. In that field of the dead one red stone stands conspicuous to the present day, and the ill-certified tradition is that it marks the tomb of Dathi, the successor and nephew of Niall. If there were any truth in that tradition, the pillar would be an interesting link with the age of Patrick, for it would have been set up not many years before he visited the place.

Imagination peopled many spots in Ireland with supernatural beings—not only with fairies, but also with an earthfolk [14] that was once at least human, a conquered population who had formerly held the island, and, driven by invaders from the surface of the ground, had found new homes in chambered mounds, where they practised their magic crafts. But no spot was more closely associated with these fabled beings than the hill of Rathcrochan. On ground so alive with legend, in a place which stimulated fancy, it was hardly possible that the incident of Patrick's visit should be handed down in the sober colours of history or that it should escape the meshes of fable. But the legend-shaping instinct of some Christian poet wrought here with signal grace, and the story must have been invented not many decads of years after the visit to Rathcrochan.

Patrick, the tale tells, and the bishops who accompanied him, had assembled together at a fountain [15] near Rathcrochan to hold a council before sunrise, when two maidens came down, after the fashion of women, to wash at the fountain. They were the daughters of the High King of Ireland, and their names were Ethne the White and Fedelm the Red. They lived at Crochan, to be fostered and educated by two Druids, Mael and Caplait. These Druids had been deeply alarmed when they heard that Patrick was about to cross the Shannon, and by their sorceries they had brought down darkness and mist over the plain of Ai to hinder him from entering the land. The darkness of night prevailed for three days, but was dispelled by the saint's prayers.

When the princesses beheld the bishops and priests sitting round the fountain, they were amazed at their strange garb, and knew not what to think of them. Were they fairies—men of the *side* ; or were they of the earth-folk—the Tuatha De Danann ; or were they an illusion, an unreal vision ? So they accosted and asked the strangers, “ Whence have ye come, and where is your home ?” And Patrick answered, “ It were better for you to believe in the true God whom we worship than to ask questions about our race.” Then the elder girl said, “ Who is God, and where is God, and of whom is he God ? Where is his dwelling ? Has he sons and daughters, your God, and has he gold and silver ? Is he immortal ? Is he fair ? Has his Son been fostered by many ? Are his daughters dear to the men of the world, and fair in their eyes ? Is he in heaven or in earth ? in the sea, in the rivers, in the hill places, in the valleys ? Tell us how we may know him, in whatwise he will appear. How is he discovered ? Is he found in youth or in old age ?”

To these greetings Patrick replied : “ Our God is the God of all men, the God of heaven and earth, of sea and rivers, of sun and moon and stars, of the lofty mountain and the lowly valleys, the God above heaven and in heaven, and under heaven ; he has his dwelling around heaven and earth and sea and all that in them is. He inspires all, he quickens all, he dominates all, he supports all. He lights the light of the sun ; he furnishes the light of the night ; he has made springs in the dry land, and has set stars to minister to the greater lights. He has a Son co-eternal with himself, and like unto himself. The Son is not younger than the Father, nor the Father older than the Son. And the Holy Spirit breathes in them. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are not divided. I wish to unite you with the heavenly King, as ye are daughters of an earthly king. Believe.”

With one voice and with one heart the two king's daughters said, “ Tell us with all diligence how we may believe in the heavenly King that we may see Him face to face, and we will do as thou sayest.” Patrick said, “ Do ye believe that by baptism ye can cast away the sin of your father and mother ?” They said, “ We believe.” “ Do ye believe in repentance after sin ?” “ We believe.” “ Do ye believe in life after death ?” “ We believe.” “ Do ye believe in the resurrection in the day of Judgment ?” “ We believe.” “ Do ye believe in the unity of the Church ?” “ We believe.”

Then Patrick baptized them in the fountain and placed a white veil on their heads, and they begged that they might behold the face of Christ. And Patrick said, "Until ye shall taste of death, ye cannot see the face of Christ, and unless ye shall receive the sacrifice." They answered, "Give us the sacrifice that we may see the Son, our bridegroom." And they received the Eucharist, and fell asleep in death. And they were placed in one bed, and their friends mourned them.

Then Caplait the Druid came, and Patrick preached to him, and he believed and became a monk. His brother Mael was wroth at his falling away, and hoped to recall him to the old faith, but on hearing Patrick's teaching he too became a Christian and his head was tonsured.

When the prescribed days of lamentation were over, the maidens were buried in a round tomb near the fountain. Their grave was dedicated to God and to Patrick and his heirs after him, and he constructed a church of earth in that place.

In this curious legend is embedded some matter of historical significance. In the first place we must treat the story of the brother Druids separately from the story of the maidens, for they are bound together only by an external link, and their motives are distinct. The motive of the legend of the two virgins who died in the hour of their conversion recurs in other tales, and the solid basis of fact was their tomb by the spring at Rathcrochan. At that tomb the story grew up that when they were baptized, their desire for the heavenly vision was fulfilled immediately by their death. This legend was then worked up artificially, and the dialogue was composed and written down in Irish, partly in verse. The freshness and simplicity, which are so striking, and some particular traits, justify us in surmising that this happened at an early date, within the first generation after the saint's death. The naive wonder of the maidens at the appearance of the clerks, the brief view which Patrick unfolds of the articles of his religion, the emphasis laid upon the unity of the Church, point to the conclusion that the story took shape when Patrick's ways of teaching, and the first impressions made upon pagans by the apostles of the new faith, were within the memory of the Church. The dialogue is artificial, for the questions of the damsels are arranged so as to lead up to the bishop's exposition of his creed. And, on the other hand, the baptismal questions of Patrick assume a knowledge

Now if we are right in the view that the legend originated at an early date and was cast into literary shape—at least before the end of the fifth century—we can hardly escape the inference that the maidens whose memory was preserved at Crochan were in truth daughters of Loigaire. Such an identification was not at all likely to have been invented by popular legend, nor by any recorder of Patrick's acts, living within a generation of his death. In sending children to be brought up away from their home, king Loigaire would have followed the general practice of the country, and that he should send them to the royal residence of Conn-aught would have been natural enough. The fathers of king Amolngaid and king Loigaire were brothers, and it would not be surprising that Loigaire should send his daughters to Rathcrochan to be educated by the Druids of Amolngaid.

But the episode of these brethren has an independent motive of its own. One brother, Mael, has an Irish name, designating the native tonsure, by which only the front part of the head was shaven from ear to ear; while Caplait, his fellow, has a Latin name (*Capillatus*), which signifies the removal of all the hair in the fashion already largely adopted in the western Empire, and subsequently known as the Roman tonsure. Both Druids alike were tonsured by Patrick according to the story; both alike, it is implied, wore the native tonsure before they were converted. The name *Caplait* could not have been applied to either till after his conversion. But when they became monks it applied equally to both, just as *Mael* was equally

applicable to both when they were still pagans. Thus the story, taken literally, does not hang together, and the transparent names suggest that it arose from some circumstance connected with the Christian tonsure. Fortunately, the narrative supplies us with the clue. The writer who tells the tale observes that the incident gave rise to an Irish maxim, *cosmail Mael do Chaplait*, “Mael is like unto Caplait.” It is manifest that here, as in other cases of the same kind, the story originated from the proverb, not the proverb from the story. The story was told to explain the existence of the proverb, but the existence of the proverb itself is the ultimate fact. It happens to be a fact of historical significance. We may infer that the Christian tonsure had been introduced and enforced by Patrick, but that his rule was relaxed and disregarded after his death, the native clergy adopting the old native tonsure of the Druids. The two fashions subsisted for a time side by side, then the Roman fell completely out of use till it was restored in the seventh century. But the proverb “Mael is like unto Caplait” arose when the two tonsures were in use together, and expressed the claim that the native mode was as legitimate for a monk as the foreign.

From Rathcrochan, Patrick and his company proceeded westward and planted religious foundations in the region which is now most easily described as the barony of Castlereagh. A number of Gallic clergy were with him, and these he dispersed to found churches in various places. One of these places stands out in interest, though it is of small account now. Baslic survives as the name of a parish, and preserves the memory of the foreign clerks who thought of the greater *basilicae* of the Empire when they built their little sanctuary in the wilds of Connaught and gave it the high-sounding name of *Basilica sanctorum*. No place-name, due to Christianity, in Ireland has a greater interest than Basilica, west of Rathcrochan. Another church founded in this region, near the banks of the river Suck, was Cell Garad, which is perhaps to be sought at Oran, where an old burial-ground and the fragment of a belfry mark an ancient ecclesiastical site. Both Baslic and Cell Garad were the seats of bishops.

Patrick then went northward to Selce, [16] in the land of Brian. Here the sons of Brian welcomed him and were baptized, and he founded a church close to Lake Selce. On a hill hard by, where he and his companions encamped, a memorial of their visit was preserved for centuries. They wrote upon some stones in the place, and it was probably their own names that they recorded, so that posterity knew who were of Patrick’s company when the sons of Brian were baptized at the hill of Selce. Two bishops were with him, Bron, whose home, as we saw, was in the north, on the seashore under Knocknaree, and Sachall, bishop of the new church of Baslic ; eight priests, including Benignus, his favourite pupil ; and two women. It may have been that the names of the company were inscribed on three stones severally consecrated by the names *Iesus*, *Christus*, *Soter*.

From here Patrick may have proceeded westward to Lake Tecet—Lake Tecet of Ireland, bearing the same name as the more famous Lake Tecet of Britain, which the stranger knows as the Lake of Bala. The boggy soil makes the waters dark, and if we look down from one of the hills which partly gird it, the form of the lake, with its many corners and inlets, eludes the eye. It was probably near the western or northern shore that Adrochta, who took the veil from Patrick’s hand, founded a church. Nor is she forgotten to-day, for as we walk on the eastern bank of the lake, we are in the parish of “Adrochta’s Church.” [17]

We now come to a journey of Patrick for which we have a definite chronological indication, since we know that it was undertaken soon after the death of king Amolngaid, and that king probably died about thirteen years after Patrick’s arrival in Ireland. The story represents the land of Amolngaid as the particular region of Fochlad which had been the goal of Patrick’s desires, and describes the occasion of his setting forth as if it had been brought about by a pure chance. Near the palace of king Loigaire at Tara he overheard a conversation

between two noblemen, one of whom informed the other that he was Endae, son of Amolngaid, and had come from the far west, “ from Mag Domnon [18] and the wood of Fochlad.” Then Patrick, hearing the magic name of his dream, was thrilled with joy, and, turning round, he cried to Endae, “ Thither I will go with thee, if I live, for God bade me go.” But Endae replied, “ Thou shalt not come with me, lest we be slain together.”

“ Yet,” said the saint, “ thou shalt never reach thy home alive if I come not with thee, nor shalt thou have eternal life. For it is on my account that thou hast come hither.” And Endae said, “ Baptize my son, for he is young. But I and my brethren may not believe in thee till we come to our own folk, lest they mock us.” And Patrick baptized his son Conall.

It appears that Endae and his six brethren had come to Tara to invoke the judgment of the High King in a dispute about the inheritance of their father’s property. The claim of Endae and his son was opposed to the claims of the other six. In giving judgment king Loigaire is said to have invited the aid of Patrick, and they decided that the inheritance should be divided among the claimants in seven parts. This doom was in favour of Endae’s brethren, if, as we may suppose, Endae’s claim was that the division of the property should be eightfold, his son Conall receiving a separate portion for himself. But however this may have been, Endae is said to have dedicated his seventh portion and his son Conall to Patrick and Patrick’s God.

When the award was given, Patrick and a company of ecclesiastics prepared to set forth with Endae. But they took the precaution of making a formal agreement with Endae and his brothers, and we may be certain that whatever the other terms may have been, the bodily safety of the Christians was expressly ensured. The most significant circumstance concerning this treaty is that it was made under the warranty of king Loigaire. This is an important piece of evidence as to the attitude of that king to the Christian teachers. It exhibits his policy of enlightened toleration, and shows that, though personally he clung to the beliefs of his fathers, yet in his capacity of king of Ireland he was willing to assist the diffusion of a doctrine subversive of those beliefs.

Patrick set out with Endae and his brethren, and having crossed the river Moy, perhaps at a ford where the “ town of the ford” stands to-day, [19] they entered the territory of Amolngaid, where were the woods of Fochlad, and beyond, to westward, the wild Mag Domnon. That the baptism of Conall and the coming of the Christian teacher in the company of the chiefs should arouse wrath and disgust among the Druids is not surprising, and there may be some historical foundation for the legend which tells how the chief Druid, Rehrad, sought to kill Patrick. Along with nine Druids, arrayed in white, he advanced to meet Endae and his company. When Endae saw them, he snatched up his arms to drive them off, but Patrick raised his left hand and cursed the wizard, and Rehrad fell dead, and was burned up before the eyes of all. The other Druids fled into Mag Domnon. And when the folk saw this miracle, many were baptized on that day.

It was in this way, according to the legend, that Christianity entered the northern regions of Fochlad. Near the forest, and close to the seashore, was founded a church, [20] and not far from it a cross was set up, of which the memory is preserved in the local name Crosspatrick. [21] The church, built doubtless of timber, was afterwards to be overshadowed by the neighbouring foundation of Killala, conspicuous by its lofty belfry. Elsewhere Patrick caused a square church of earth to be constructed, at the gathering-place of the sons of Amolngaid, which has been identified with Mullaghfarry, “ the hill of the meeting-place.”

[1] Perhaps A.D. 444-5.

[2] At Duma Graid, close to Lake Kilglass. See *Tírechán*, 313, and *Vit. Trip.* p. 94.

- [3] Between Sligo and Leitrim.
- [4] May the name be the same as that of the tribe of the Anghaile (Annaly), who extended their power subsequently into Tethbia (op. O'Donovan, *Book of Rights*, p. 11, *note*) ?
- [5] Tamnach.
- [6] “ Church of Bishop Brón.”
- [7] In Mag Airthic.
- [8] Ciarrigi. Through the baronies of Costello, Clanmorris, and Kilmaine. Possibly Aghamore, south of Kilkelly, may lie on the supposed route. It has been conjectured that the church in *campo Nairniu* (Tírechán, 321) was there.
- [9] In quo fiunt episcopi.
- [10] Muiriscc (*Muir* = sea) Aigli. (The promontory dominated by Knocknaree in Sligo Bay was also called Muiriscc, Tír. 327.) The promontory was also known as Umail. This name is preserved in the *Owles*, designating the regions on both sides of Clew Bay, now the baronies of Murrisk and Burris-*hoole* ; the latter word also contains the name Umail.
- [11] Its height is 2510 feet. Mount Nephin, close to Lake Conn, is higher.
- [12] Carrick-on-Shannon.
- [13] He first went to a place called Duma Graid, and ordained there the arch-presbyter Ailbe, who resided at Shancoe (as mentioned above). It may be suspected that the name Duma Graid (for which we expect a modern Doogary) is preserved in Dockery's Island, near the mouth of Lake Kilglass.
- [14] Tuatha De Danann, people of the goddess Danann. They are said, in the mythical history of Ireland, to have colonised the country and to have been conquered by the Milesians.
- [15] Fountain of Clebach.
- [16] Selce has not been identified.
- [17] Kill-araght. From here Patrick may have revisited Mag Airthic and the Kerries.
- [18] *Irrus* Domnand, “ the peninsula of Domnu” = barony of *Erris* in Mayo. Cp. Rhys, “ Studies in Early Irish History,” p. 38.
- [19] Ballina.
- [20] It was one of the many Donaghmores, “ great churches,” which Patrick is said to have founded. He consigned it to the care of Mucneus.
- [21] The name of a townland, in which there is an old churchyard and traces of ruins, to the right of the road from Ballina to Killala, a mile south of Killala. For Donaghmore and Mullaghfarry (*farry* = *farrach*=*foirrgea*, Tír. 327) see O'Donovan, *Hy Fiachrach.*, pp. 466 and 467, notes.

Patrick's Visits to Connaught

An analysis of the itinerary which Tírechán has traced for Patrick through Connaught shows that he compressed into a single journey events which must have belonged to different visits. I pointed this out in a paper on the “ Itinerary of Patrick in Connaught” (*Proc. of R.I. A.* xxiv. c. 2, 1903). It was remembered that Patrick visited Connaught three times (Tír 329¹²), and we may probably suppose that on the two later occasions he would have not only worked in new fields, but revisited the scenes of his earlier work. Tírechán, who used written material as well as oral information, worked all his records into the compass of a single journey. This is betrayed by a number of inconsistencies in the narrative, and it is possible to show that certain events which he ascribes to the same journey must have happened on different occasions.

1. It is clear that the expedition to Tirawley with the sons of Amolngaid was the principal motive of one visit, and that Patrick must have proceeded direct from Tara to Tirawley. Tírechán's naïve reconstruction implies that having left Tara for this purpose he engaged in a round of missionary activity, not only in Connaught, but in Meath—performing labours

which would have occupied years—before he finally reached Tirawley. I have pointed out at length the absurdities involved in the story, *op. cit.* 166-7.

2. The description of the visit to Elphin implies earlier work in the same district : (a) perhaps the previous foundation of Senella Cella ; (b) the presence of Assicus and Betheus, who had been settled there (*loc. cit.* 163-4).

As to Senella Cella, however. Dr. Gwynn has made a very plausible suggestion, that Tírechán confused it with Senchua = Shancough, in Sligo. The information which he gives about Senella Cella—its location in the land of the Hy Ailella, its association with Mathona, and connexion with Tawnagh—suits Senchua much better. And this comparison would account for the introduction of the statement *et exiit per montem filiorum Ailello*, etc., in 314₁₈, as well as in 328₁. If this view is right, it is another illustration of Tírechán's use of written sources. The difficulty is that we should expect Tírechán to have been sufficiently acquainted with the geography of Connaught as to know whether *Senella Cella* was in the land of the Hy Ailella or not. Can *Senella Cella Dumiche* be distinct from both Shankill at Elphin and Shancough ?

3. An earlier visit to Tirerrill is implied by (a) Patrick's knowledge of the stone altar (Tír 313₅) ; and (b) the fact that Tamnach had already been founded (314₁₅). Here indeed we can extricate a piece of Tírechán's written material, relating to Patrick's work in Tirerrill, and showing that he entered that territory from Leitrim, crossing the Bralieve hills, 314₁₈ : —

Et exiit per montem filiorum Ailello at plantavit aecessiam liberam hi Tamnuch,
and 328, *et exiit . . . cell Senchuae*. See Bury, *loc. cit.* 164-6.

4. In the passage in the *Liber Armachanus*, f. 9, r^o (301), which Dr. Gwynn has shown to belong to the work of Tírechán, the baptism of Hercaith and the dedication of his son Fera-dach = Sachellus to the church are noticed ; and it is recorded that Patrick ordained Sachellus at Rome. But immediately afterwards at Selce (319) Sachellus is already a bishop (of Baslic, *Trip.* 108). Thus two visits, separated by an interval of years, are here implied. If the statement is correct that Patrick took Sachellus with him to Rome, then our conjectural chronology for his visit to Rome would give a lower limit for one of his journeys to Connaught.

5. An earlier visit to north Sligo is implied—but without inconsistency—in the account of the visit to that region (327), as well as in the presence of *bishop* Brón at Selce (and cp. 313₈).

6. The notice of the visit to Ardd Senlis seems to imply an earlier foundation there (317).

7. Sanctus Iarnascus in Mag-n-Airniu (320₂₆) is introduced as if Christianity had already been planted there. It may be noticed that in this passage the words *uiris uiiii. aut xii.* show that Tírechán was using a written source ; he was doubtful about the reading.

8. Entering Tirawley, Patrick crosses the Moy. This implies that he came from the east, not from the south, as Tírechán's itinerary would imply.

If we assume as probable the correctness of the statement that Patrick's work in Connaught belongs to three different visits, we may draw tentatively the following conclusions :—

1. In the first visit, which was prior to A.D. 441, he worked (*a*) in Tirerrill, and (*b*) in north Sligo, where Bron was ordained bishop for his church (Killespugbron) under Knocknaree. Perhaps he also visited (*c*) the neighbourhood of Elphin. He visited (*d*) Mag Airthic and (*e*) the district of the Ciarrigi, and (*f*) Mag-n-Airniu. In these regions he converted the father of Sachellus.

It is possible that on this occasion he extended his journey to Mount Aigli, and fulfilled the special aim of his missionary ambition by planting a church (Ached Fobuir) near the southern limits of the forest of Fochlad.

2. On another occasion he crossed the Shannon, as described by Tírechán, at Lake Bofin ; worked in Mag Glais and Mag Ái ; revisited the Elphin district ; founded Baslic, proceeded to Lake Tecet, revisited Mag Airthic and the Ciarrigi, etc.

3. On a third occasion, he proceeded straight (from Tara) to Tirawley in the company of Endae and the sons of Amolngaid. After his plantation of his faith in Tirawley he may have revisited other parts of Connaught. The visit falls soon after Amolngaid's death, which may have been c. 445 A.D.

It seems not at all unlikely that the second and third visits thus distinguished occurred chronologically in reverse order. It must also be borne in mind that he would have probably revisited many places in the course of the two later visits.

Conclusions very similar to mine have been reached by Dr. Gwynn, who discusses the subject in a "Supplemental Note to Chapter V." of his Introduction to the *Book of Armagh*. There are in the abbreviated memoranda vestiges of the material used by Tírechán, and Dr. Gwynn points out that the first group supplies evidence of the existence of a tradition as to Patrick's work in Tirerrill, independent of the rest of the itinerary which Tírechán sketched. The first group is : —

Ailbe iSenchui. altare . . . Machet Cetchen Rodán Mathona . . .

Here, Dr. Gwynn observes, is a memorandum combining in continuous form several unconnected passages in Tírechán. "It is reasonable to infer that the tradition condensed into this memorandum was known to Tírechán ; that he endeavoured to work it into his history by breaking it up into pieces and inserting them where he judged best."

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