

The Lives of the Early Irish Saints:
A Study in Formulaic Composition and the Creation of an Image

by

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Declaration

I declare this thesis to be entirely my own work.

Note:

Extracts from this thesis have appeared, with the permission of my supervisor, in a paper delivered before the Scottish Church History Society on the 30th of March 1982, under the title of "Some Aspects of Hagiology in the Celtic Church".

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the Lives of the early Irish saints according to traditional historical and structural principles, in order to perceive the basic pattern underlying their composition and to document the repertoire of formula items which became the Irish hagiographers' stock-in-trade.

Section I introduces the genre of hagiography, its forms and conventions, and its place in the context of the Irish Church, with a cursory appraisal of the manuscript history of the Lives, as well as the milieu of their composition.

Section II begins with an examination of the native Irish secular tradition and its influence in the Lives of the Irish saints. The first chapter discusses biographical romance and related narrative forms, and the idea of a "Heroic Age" in Ireland in its relationship to the series of texts commonly designated as heroic literature. The second chapter looks at the Christian elements in the saints' Lives, and the influences of Western Christianity in Irish ecclesiastical literature, in particular Biblical and apocryphal sources. The third chapter begins with a discussion of the status of the saint in Western Christianity as the Christian 'hero', drawing parallels with the Desert Fathers of the Eastern Church. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the concept of the Hero in Irish tradition, pointing out the apparently basic similarities between conventional heroes of native Irish tales and the saints of the Irish vitae.

Section III examines in greater detail and depth the relationships between heroes and saints in the light of the international heroic biographical pattern, which is shown to be present in both hero-tales and saints' Lives. The first chapter describes the pattern,

and past scholarship in the study of heroic biographies. The basic pattern is modified for the biographies of heroes of different cultures, and this process is shown to have been at work in Irish heroic cycles. Chapter two proposes a scheme for the "saintly biography", and it is demonstrated how the pattern works as a generative principle in the Lives of the Irish saints. The second part of the chapter discusses the canon of motifs used by the compilers of the Lives, and presents a thematic/functional analysis of the motif-stock found in the extant texts.

Section IV combines the conclusions of the previous sections towards a re-assessment of the genre of hagio-biography in Irish literary tradition. It is argued that the Lives are to be interpreted in the light of Irish heroic tradition (as here defined) and that such an interpretation provides both a plausible scenario of the transformation of the saints of history into the heroes of the Irish Church, and a reasonable basis for a literary appreciation of the genre as a whole.

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A. Hagiographical Material

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List of Abbreviations

AB	<u>Analecta Bollandiana</u>
Anderson	<u>Adomnan's Life of Columba</u> , ed. and trans. by A.O. and M.O. Anderson, (London, 1961).
BL	<u>Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore</u> , ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, (Oxford, 1890).
BNE	<u>Bethada Náem nÉrenn</u> , ed. and trans. by Charles Plummer, 2 vol. (Oxford, 1921; rpt. 1968).
Cogitosus	" <u>Sanctae Brigidae Virginis Vita</u> ", ed. by J.P. Migne, <u>Patrologia Latina</u> 72 (1875), col. 775-790.
Cross	<u>Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature</u> by Tom Peete Cross, (Bloomington, Ind., 1952).
EC	<u>Études Celtiques</u>
Forbes	<u>Lives of S. Ninian and S. Kentigern</u> , ed. and trans. by Alexander Forbes, (Edinburgh, 1874).
Heist, VSH	<u>Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae</u> , ed. by W.W. Heist, (Brussels, 1965).
IER	<u>Irish Ecclesiastical Record</u>
IHS	<u>Irish Historical Studies</u>
ITS	<u>Irish Texts Society</u>
JEH	<u>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</u>
Kenney, <u>Sources</u>	<u>Sources for the Early History of Ireland</u> by J.F. Kenney, (New York, 1929).
Metcalfe	<u>Ancient Lives of Scottish Saints</u> , trans. by W.M. Metcalfe, (Paisley, 1895).
Muir-chú	" <u>Vita Sancti Patricii</u> ", ed. by Edmund Hogan, AB 1 (1882), 531-85.
Plummer, VSH	<u>Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae</u> , ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vol. (Oxford, 1910; rpt. 1968).

PRIA	<u>Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy</u>
RC	<u>Revue Celtique</u>
Sil. Gad.	<u>Silva Gadelica</u> , ed. and trans. by Standish O'Grady, (London, 1892), vol. 2.
ST	<u>Motif-Index of Folk-Literature</u> , by Stith Thompson, 6 vol. (Copenhagen, 1955-58).
Stokes <u>Life</u>	<u>The Birth and Life of St. Moling</u> , ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, (London, 1907).
Taylor	<u>The Life of St. Samson of Dol</u> , trans. by Thomas Taylor, (London, 1925).
VT	<u>Vita Tripartita - The Tripartite Life of Patrick</u> , ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, 2 vol. (London, 1887).
ZCP	<u>Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie</u>

Section I

1. Introduction

- i. An approach to the Lives of the early Irish saints
- ii. The Irish vitae and manuscripts
- iii. The corpus for study

2. General Description and Assessment of the Vitae

- i. A literary description of the genre and its conventions
- ii. Hagiography in the Irish Church
- iii. Form, style, and structure of the Irish vitae

1. Introduction

i. An approach to the Lives of the early Irish saints

The lives of the early Irish saints hold a prominent place in Irish ecclesiastical literature, not only because of the great amount of Irish hagiographical material which is in existence, but also because of the value these Lives possess as Irish literature. The saints referred to here are those who flourished in the period from the late fifth to the late eighth centuries; they were the founders and 'fathers' of the Celtic Church in Ireland, and they include such names as St. Patrick, St. Brigit, St. Columba, as well as SS. Brendan, Bairre, Ciarán, Finnian, Mochuda, Moling, and Rúadán among others.

The earliest known vitae of these saints were composed several generations after their floruit. The Lives which have been chosen for discussion in this study were written between the late ninth and early twelfth centuries; during this period, the writers of saints' Lives in the Church developed a fixed style and a consistent set of conventions and motifs- a formula for composition, in short, which gave rise to the genre of hagio-biography to which the vitae sanctorum belong.

The term sanctus in Christian usage was applied to those who were consecrated to God; it was a laudatory epithet which came to be reserved for certain classes of Christians, in particular for the martyrs of the Church, the monks of the desert, and, in a ceremonial usage, for the officials and dignitaries within the hierarchy of the Church.¹ In the Western Church, sanctus came to be used for a man in holy orders,² in both a titular and a descriptive sense. The term

1. See H. Delehaye, Sanctus, (Brussels, 1927), pp. 24-59.

2. N.K. Chadwick, The Age of the Saints in the Early Celtic Church, (London, 1961), p. 4.

refers in general to that which is holy, sacred, consecrated- whether a holy man in his cell or the holy see of Rome. In a more technical sense, sanctus came to refer to a special class of holy man, a miracle-worker and teacher, and an outstanding example of Christian ideals and virtues.¹ In the Old Irish glosses, the word noib renders the Latin sanctus, referring to persons considered holy and things considered sacred. Used with proper names, the word functioned as a descriptive title translatable as 'Saint'. In Middle Irish religious literature, noeb (later noem, naemh) had the meaning of 'saint' in the sense of a special class of holy man.

In the history of the early Irish Church, the saints helped to foster the growth of Christianity through their teaching and spiritual leadership. The sixth century to the ninth saw the rise and growth of the monasteries; most of the saints had at least one ecclesiastical foundation to their name. By the late seventh and early eighth centuries, monasteries such as Glendaloch, Clonmacnois, Kildare, Armagh, Bangor, Clonard, and Iona, to name the most illustrious, had established themselves not only as religious communities but also as centres of education, for which they became renowned in the Christian world. The emphasis which the Irish Church placed on learning and the high standard of education in Irish monastic schools made Irish scholars the intellectual leaders in European monasteries, where scholarship was not so keenly encouraged until the time of Charlemagne.²

The monastic communities of the early Irish Church also

1. N.K. Chadwick, op. cit. , p. 4.

2. See A. Lorcin, "La Vie Scolaire dans les Monastères d'Irlande aux Ve-VIIe Siècles", Revue du Moyen Age Latin 1 (1945), pp. 221-236.

(and equally remarkably) helped to foster the beginnings of a vernacular written tradition. The monks who were educated in the monastic schools were required to learn Latin and were acquainted with the works of the Church Fathers of the late Roman Empire, as well as the works of some classical authors.¹ The introduction of Judaeo-Christian and classical literature brought an acquaintance with several new literary forms, such as allegory, exegesis, essay, panegyric, and biography- which included saints' Lives. Gradually, the Irish monasteries evolved a literature of their own, while still producing copies of the Gospels, scriptural texts, apocryphal writings and compositions from the writers of the Roman and Eastern Churches.²

Hagiography was a branch of the new literature, deriving from European models but influenced by native Irish culture and traditions. The custom of writing saints' Lives began in the Irish monasteries, as in the monasteries of the East and Europe, through a desire to preserve the memory of their great founders, to promote the interests of their community in the sphere of legal rights and dues, land holdings, the possession of relics and a holy shrine as a place of pilgrimage, and to hold up to the community examples of what the Church considered to be good and perfect Christian priests.

The concept of a saint, however, was not based entirely upon ideas of moral righteousness: the essential quality of a saint was his aura of divine power manifested in his ability to work miracles.³ Saints' Lives, in general, contain elements of magic and supernatural

1. See Kathleen Hughes, Early Christian Ireland: An Introduction to the Sources, (London, 1972), p. 193 ff.

2. See R. Flower, The Irish Tradition, (Oxford, 1947; rpt. 1973), ch. 1.

3. See Kenney, Sources, p. 303.

phenomena surrounding this Christian wonder-worker.

The form, style, and presentation of the Lives of the Irish saints show a familiarity with the conventions of continental hagiography and its formula for composition. At the same time, however, there are elements to be found in the Lives which show a familiarity with native Irish literary tradition, and, furthermore, contain more demonstrably non-Christian elements. These manifest themselves especially in the wonder-working and go far beyond those items which were considered the hagiographer's stock-in-trade throughout the Western Church (for example, miracles of healing, turning water into wine, providing food).¹

The native literary tradition continued to flourish alongside this literary activity within the ecclesiastical milieu, in particular the art of storytelling as it was practised by the filid in their professional capacity as the preservers of traditional Irish learning in the form of hero-tales, king tales, history and genealogy, and the legendary history of pre-Christian Ireland.²

During the period when the Lives of the saints were being composed, the saga literature of early Ireland was also being recorded and reworked by the monastic editors and scribes; many of these learned clerics may, in fact, have entered the Church from the filid class.³ It has been noted by Felim O'Briain that the principles of composition which govern traditional Irish tales also govern many of the vitae sanctorum: both have their standard formulae, themes, and incidents.⁴ The two classes of material, ecclesiastical and secular,

1. See ST, V220 ff., "Saints".

2. See Proinsias MacCana, The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland, (Dublin, 1980), pp. 1-19.

3. Flower, op. cit.

4. "Saga Themes in Irish Hagiography", Féilscríbhinn Torna, ed. by Séamus Pender, (Cork, 1947), p. 35.

were thus in the process of formation and transformation by the same minds, and it is perhaps not surprising that the Lives of the saints show several points of contact with the traditional tales of Ireland, despite the fact that most of them have passed through centuries of subsequent transmission at the hands of mostly unknown scribes, redactors, and editors. In other words, although we cannot now recreate the genesis and primitive evolution of the Irish saints' Lives, and although we are largely uninformed as to the detailed processes whereby the Lives assimilated these characteristics of popular tales, the fact remains that they exhibit certain prime structures, apparently old and patently consistent throughout the Lives, which also occur in the hero-tales and king tales of Ireland from the earliest times of which we have knowledge. These structures have to do with what has been called the "heroic biographical pattern". Together with associated motifs, themes, stylistic forms and narrative methods, they constitute, as will be shown, the generative principle for the Lives.

Naturally, there is also a debt to Christendom; and the fact that it too has been touched to some degree by the heroic biographical tradition greatly complicates our task, for we must consider not only the official Church doctrine behind the composition of the Lives, but also the 'unofficial' Christian traditions which have influenced them.

Our analysis, then, assumes these twin starting points-- native and ecclesiastical. On this basis, our main objective will be an examination of the structure of the Lives and of the recurrent motifs and themes to be found within them in relation to the relevant native Irish and Western Christian sources and influences.

Previous scholarship in the field of Irish hagiography has been concerned mainly with producing accurate texts of the manuscript

material (not to mention efforts to preserve such material) and with the study of these texts as sources for Irish history and traditions. The present approach invites a new interpretation of the Lives as literature and a re-assessment of their status in Irish literary tradition.

1.ii. The Irish vitae and manuscripts

The wealth of Irish hagiographical material includes homilies, acta and memorabilia (eg. prayers and hymns ascribed to the saints, anecdotes, entries in martyrologies), and incidental reference to these sources will be made as relevant. However, this study is concerned with a specific form, the saint's biography or vita (Ir. betha) proper. The difference between a saint's vita and his acta may be compared somewhat to the difference between the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles; the former is essentially in the form of a biography, whereas the latter clearly is not. The acta and memorabilia of a saint purport to give some biographical information but do not set out to tell the story of his life and career; an acta generally lists his deeds, while a vita is a narrative account of his birth, childhood, miracles, and death. Although a saintly miracle or birth motif may occur in an acta or homily, it is by virtue of its subordination to the biographical formula of the saintly vita that we shall be concerned with it in what follows. By such exclusion, some minor points may have been missed, but it is to be hoped that the gain in clarity of definition will provide adequate compensation.

There are three major collections of Irish saints' Lives which

were written in Latin, and three major collections of Lives in Irish. The three main manuscript collections of Latin Lives are the Codex Salmanticensis, the Codex Kilkenniensis, and the Codex Insulensis.

The Codex Salmanticensis¹ is a folio volume written in Ireland in the fourteenth century. How and where it came to be written is not known. A scribal note which occurs at the end of the Life of St. Cuanna seeks a blessing for the scribe, who translated the Life from Gaelic into Latin:

Bennact Cuanna agus noem daroni accattach
fris ar animain inti tuc a gaedailch illa-
din in bethusa .i. fratris Iohannis Mac
Kern- de Ergallia. 2

Plummer has translated this as "The blessings of Cuanna and the saints who made their covenant with him on the soul of the man who translated this Life from Gaelic into Latin, that is, brother John Mac Kern of Oriel", or preferably, John Mac Kern of Argyll. Beneath this note, in another hand, is added, "Anima quoque fratris Dermicii i Dhunchadha requiescat in pace." Although 'Diarmaid Ó Donnchadha' offers no help with the provenance of the manuscript, and 'Argyll' and 'Mac Kern' may say nothing about where or when it was written, it does suggest that it originated in an Irish-speaking community which would have no need of a Latin translation. Heist speculates that the Life was lent to the unknown compilers for the purpose of being included in a Latin collection.⁴

The manuscript first comes to our attention in the early seventeenth century, in the possession of the Irish College of

1. Bibliothèque royale de Bruxelles, cat. no. 7672-4.

2. Heist, VSH, p. 410, n. 12; and Plummer, VSH I, p. xi.

3. Plummer, *ibid.*

4. Heist, VSH, pp. xxi-xxviii.

Salamanca in Spain (whence its name), when it was obtained from the rector for the use of the hagiographical library of the Bollandists. During the French Revolution, the Bollandists, under threat of suppression from the revolutionary government, were forced to move their library to other countries for safekeeping. The Codex, after several years, was deposited in the Bibliothèque royale of Brussels in 1827, where it remains.¹ The first printed text appeared in 1888, under the imprint of the Société des Bollandistes, edited by Charles Smedt and J. de Backer.² More recently, the Codex has been edited by W.W. Heist and published again under the imprint of the Bollandists.³

The Codex Salmanticensis contains forty-eight Lives, some merely fragments. Several leaves were lost during the manuscript's history through being lent to other scholars, including the Irish Franciscans at Louvain. In its present state, all but one of the Lives are of Irish Saints.⁴

The Codex Kilkenniensis exists in two manuscript collections⁵, both of which appear to be copies of the same original and both dating from the early fifteenth century. The origin of its name and its source are unknown. One manuscript is deposited in Primate Marsh's Library, Dublin; the other is in the possession of Trinity College, Dublin. Together, they contain the Lives of twenty-eight Irish saints and two foreign saints, some Lives being incomplete.⁶ Twenty-two of the Irish saints in this collection appear also in the Codex Salmanticensis.

1. Kenney, Sources, p. 304-305, and K. Hughes, op. cit., p. 221.

2. Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae ex Codice Salmanticensis, (Brussels, 1888).

3. Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae, (Brussels, 1965).

4. Heist, p. xxxi-xxxviii. The exception is St. Catharine of Alexandria.

5. Primate Marsh's Library, Dublin, cat. no. Z.3.1.5; and Trinity College, Dublin, cat. no. E.3.11.

6. Plummer, VSH I, p. xi-xiii.

The Codex Insulensis collection comprises three manuscripts¹, two of which are deposited in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the third in the library of the Franciscan Convent, Dublin. Of the Bodleian manuscripts, Rawlinson B.505 is a copy of Rawlinson B.485; the Franciscan manuscript is a copy of Rawlinson B.505. The manuscripts are all defective to some extent; the earliest dates possibly from the late thirteenth century, the latest from the fifteenth century². The Rawlinson manuscripts are believed to have originally belonged to the monastery of Saints' Island in Lough Ree. The Franciscan manuscript formerly belonged to the Irish College of St. Anthony at Louvain.³ A colophon states that it was copied by one John Goolde, Warden of the Franciscan Convent of Cashel, from a manuscript belonging to the monastery of Saints' Island.⁴ Together, the manuscripts contain the Lives of thirty-eight saints, some of which are mere fragments. Ten of these Lives appear to be of the same recension as those contained in the Codex Salmanticensis. Twenty of the Lives have corresponding versions in the Codex Kilkenniensis. No integral edition of either the Codex Kilkenniensis or the Codex Insulensis exists; however, both were used as the basis for a collection made by Charles Plummer, in which he collated and edited thirty-two Irish saints' Lives.⁵ The Lives which he excluded from his collection either appear in the Codex Salmanticensis or were considered too fragmentary to be included.

1. Bodleian mss. Rawlinson B.485 s XIII/XIV and Rawlinson B.505 s XIV; Franciscan Convent, Merchant's Quay, Dublin, cat. no. A24.

2. Plummer, VSH I, p. xxi-xxii, and Hughes, op. cit., p. 221.

3. Kenney, Sources, p. 306-307.

4. *ibid.*, p. 306.

5. Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae, 2 vols., (Oxford, 1910).

Of the three main collections of Lives in Irish, one, the O'Clery Collections, consists of two manuscript volumes now deposited in the Bibliothèque royale de Bruxelles.¹ These manuscripts are copies of older texts made by Mícheál Ó Cléirigh between 1620 and 1635, and contain other hagiographical material.

It is worth dwelling for a moment on the life and work of Mícheál Ó Cléirigh and his associates, as it is crucial to the history of the Lives of the Irish saints and their present state of preservation. Mícheál Ó Cléirigh was one of a group of Irish Franciscans at St. Anthony's College, Louvain, who, in the early seventeenth century, embarked on a project aimed at rescuing Irish culture from the persecution and neglect brought on by English government (a persecution which had forced many clerics to flee to the continent for sanctuary and freedom of worship). Their object was to search out manuscript records pertaining to Ireland's history, including the acts and festivals of the Irish saints.² The Louvain movement was begun by Patrick (né Christopher) Fleming who had entered the College of St. Anthony in 1617.³ There he met Hugh Ward (or Aedh Mac an Bhaird), an Irish scholar of an hereditary family of historians⁴, and urged him to collect materials for Lives of Irish saints. Fleming himself went about collecting manuscripts until he was killed in Prague during the Protestant persecution of the Catholics in 1631. A

1. Bibliothèque royale de Bruxelles, cat. no. 2324-40 and 4190-200.

2. See Brendan Jennings, Michael O Cleirigh, Chief of the Four Masters, and his associates, (Dublin, 1936); and Paul Walsh, "Irish Scholars at Louvain", Irish Men of Learning, ed. by Colm O'Lochlainn, (Dublin, 1947), p. 246-252.

3. New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 5, p. 960.

4. *ibid.*, vol. 14, p. 807; and F. O'Brien, "Irish Franciscan Historians of St. Anthony's College, Louvain: Father Hugh Ward", IER 5th Ser., 32 (1928), p. 113-129. See also P. Walsh, "The Learned Family of Mac an Bhaird", Irish Men of Learning, *op. cit.*, p. 151-159.

volume of saints' Lives prepared by him was published posthumously, the Collectanea sacra, in which appear several Lives from the Codex Kilkenniensis.¹ Most of the work of collecting had to be done in Ireland and for this purpose, Ward appointed Ó Cléirigh, whose knowledge of Irish and training as a scribe made him a most suitable choice for the task. In 1620, Ó Cléirigh was sent to the Franciscan houses in Ireland with instructions from Ward to transcribe the Lives of Irish saints and all other documents bearing on Irish history that he could find, chiefly in the Irish language.² At Louvain, the task of collecting and editing the manuscripts was done mostly by John Colgan, a disciple of Ward.³ In 1645, he published an important collection of Irish saints' Lives in Latin based upon the manuscript finds of Ó Cléirigh; this publication was the Acta sanctorum veteris et majoris Scotiae.⁴ In 1647, he published the Trias Thaumaturga⁵, the acts of Patrick, Brigit, and Columba. Colgan had access to the Codex Kilkenniensis for his collection, and the third manuscript in the Codex Insulensis collection was known to be in his library at Louvain on his death.⁶

The second collection of Lives in Irish, the O'Dineen Collection, is deposited in the Royal Irish Academy.⁷ It contains sixteen Lives of Irish saints copied by Domnall Ó Duinnín in 1627 for

1. Kenney, Sources, p. 189 and 306.

2. See Measgra I gCuimhne Mhicil Uí Chléirigh, ed by Fr. Sylvester O'Brien, (Dublin, 1944), sec. 1.

3. New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, p. 991-992.

4. Louanii fol. MDCXLV. Facsimile edition published by the Irish Ordnance Survey, (Dublin, 1948).

5. Louanii fol. MCDXLVII.

6. Kenney, Sources, p. 306.

7. RIA ms. A iv 1.

Proinsias Ó Mathghamhna, Provincial of the Friars Minor of Ireland¹. A selection from Ó Cléirigh's Irish Lives and the O'Dineen Collection was edited and translated by Charles Plummer in 1922.² Plummer excluded from his selection those Lives which had been published separately elsewhere and those which are near literal translations of Latin Lives already published by him. The Lives of these two collections, the O'Clery and O'Dineen, despite minor differences, have much in common in terms of language, date of composition, recension, and relationship to the Latin Lives of Salmanticensis, Kilkenniensis, and Insulensis.

The third main collection of Irish Lives consists of nine saints' Lives contained in the manuscript known as the Book of Lismore. The manuscript was discovered in 1814 by workmen who were making some repairs on Lismore Castle, Co. Waterford. The Book was written by at least three scribes during the latter half of the fifteenth century for Finghin mac Carthaigh 'riabhach' and his wife Catherine, whence it is sometimes known as the Book of MacCarthy Reagh.³ Besides saints' Lives, it contains religious anecdotes and secular material. The Lives have been edited and translated by Whitley Stokes.⁴

Other Lives of Irish saints appear in separate manuscripts (such as the Life of Columba by Adomnán⁵) which may belong to collections of Lives, other than Irish saints, or to compilations,

1. BNE I, p. xii.

2. Bethada Náem nÉirenn, 2 vols., (Oxford, 1922).

3. Kenney, Sources, p. 308.

4. Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore, (Oxford, 1890).

5. See Anderson, p. 3-11.

like the Book of Lismore, of religious and other material (such as the Book of Armagh).

Detailed investigation of the manuscript texts and language of the early Lives will doubtless yield much additional information concerning the Irish hagiographers- who they were, and where and when they wrote- and about the Lives themselves in the milieu of their composition. Again, although the Lives are not reliable historical documents, a discriminating study could bring to light much information on the social conditions and values of the clergy who wrote them and the audience to whom they were directed, in the same way that modern 'historical' romances may be largely fictitious as regards the sequence and motivation of past events, while revealing a great deal about the authors' and readers' values and mores and their conception of the past. The foundation of this work in textual criticism has, in fact, been laid by editors such as Heist, Plummer, and Stokes,¹ and a great deal of historical investigation has been done not only by these but by scholars such as J. Kenney, Kathleen Hughes, and Ludwig Bieler. Although they have by no means exhausted the possibilities for further research, they and others have done sufficient groundwork to make the present investigation both feasible and desirable.

Literature must now take up the challenge which these Lives present to the scholar before history can proceed further. There have been recent studies which attempt to unravel the problems of literature, myth, and history in other categories of Irish texts- studies which have made use of new theories and methods, and so it is timely to bring these techniques to bear on the Lives of the saints.

1. See also W.F. Rea, "Hagiography and Its Development", IER 5th Ser., 39 (April 1932), p. 336-350, for a survey of scholarship in Irish hagiographical studies.

1.iii. The corpus for study

The Lives chosen for this study are for the most part a selection from the three Latin codices described above and the three main collections of Lives in Irish. The Lives of the main corpus are of nearly the same vintage, that is, eleventh and twelfth century compositions (although some may be earlier). Where the Latin and Irish Lives of the same saint overlap, I have cited from both. An exception is the Life of Moling, where the Irish and Latin versions are treated separately. The Irish Life is of a later period than the Latin and appears to be an original composition in Irish, not a translation or a derivative from the Latin. The Irish Life is included because of its style and its variety of motifs, religious and secular. The main criterion for selection has been the Lives' state of completeness; fragments of Lives have been taken into consideration only insofar as they help to illuminate the points being raised.

Earlier Lives have been considered in this study for the sake of comparison, especially in relation to the evolution of the form and the occurrence of certain motifs. I refer specifically to the Life of St. Brigit written by Cogitosus in the early seventh century, the Life of St. Patrick written by Muir-chú in the late seventh century, and Adomnán's Life of St. Columba, also written in the late seventh century. Cogitosus and Muir-chú are the earliest known Irish hagiographers and their works represent the genre at its initial stage in Ireland. (The work by Muir-chú was chosen over Tírechán's Memoir of St. Patrick, a contemporary piece, for the reason that the former is a vita whereas the latter is more properly an acta).

The hagiography of Patrick, Brigit, and Columba presents its own problems, and it is beyond the scope of this study to trace the

ramifications in the traditions of these saints; however, with the aid of Cogitosus, Muir-chú, and Adomnán, and such supplementary material as Cuimíne's Life of Columba,¹ the Vita Tripartita of St. Patrick,² and the Lives of Patrick, Brigit, and Columba in the Book of Lismore, we may be able to see something of the development of the biographical form and the hagiographical tradition, as several interesting motifs, not contained in the original vitae, appear in the later Lives of these, and other, Irish saints. References, therefore, are made to these early Lives as and where necessary.

The following is a list of saints whose Lives have been dealt with directly, giving the editions of the texts used:

Abbán:	BNE I, p. 3-10 * 3 Plummer, VSH I, p. 3-32.* Heist, VSH, p. 256-274.
Aed:	Plummer, VSH I, p. 34-45.* Heist, VSH, p. 167-181.
Albeus:	Plummer, VSH I, p. 46-64.* Heist, VSH, p. 118-131.
Bairre:	BNE I, p. 11-22.* Plummer, VSH I, p. 65-74.*
Berach:	BNE I, p. 23-43.* Plummer, VSH I, p. 75-86.*
Boece:	Plummer, VSH I, p. 87-97.*
Brendan:	BNE I, p. 44-95.* BL ll. 3305-3914.* Plummer, VSH I, p. 98-151.* Heist, VSH, p. 56-78.
Brigit:	Cogitosus, Migne col. 775-790.* BL ll. 1118-1774. Heist, VSH, p. 1-37.

1. Ancient Lives of Scottish Saints, trans. by W.M. Metcalfe, (Paisley, 1895), p. 29-47 (from Vitae Antiquae Sanctorum Scotiae, ed. by J. Pinkerton, (Paisley, 1889), vol. 1, p. 51-69.

2. Ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, 2 vols., (London, 1887).

3. Unless otherwise stated, (*) indicates the texts used for purposes of citation.

- Cainnech: Plummer, VSH I, p. 152-169.*
Heist, VSH, p. 182-198.
- Carthagus (Mochuda)¹: BNE I, p. 291-299.*
Plummer, VSH I, p. 170-199.*
ITS 16, p. 74-147.
- Ciarán of Clonmacnois: BL 11. 3915-4225.*
Plummer, VSH I, p. 200-216.*
Heist, VSH, p. 78-81.
- Ciarán of Saigir: BNE I, p. 103-112 (I), p. 113-124 (II).*
Plummer, VSH I, p. 217-233.
Heist, VSH, p. 346-353.
- Coemgen: BNE I, p. 125-130 (I), p. 131-154 (II), p. 155-167 (III).
Plummer, VSH I, p. 234-257.*
Heist, VSH, p. 361-365.
- Colmán Elo: Plummer, VSH I, p. 258-273.*
Heist, VSH, p. 209-224.
- Columba: Anderson (ed.), Adomnan's Life of Columba*
BL 11. 655-1116.
Heist, VSH, p. 366-378.
Cuimíne (ed. Metcalfe/Pinkerton).
- Comgall: Plummer, VSH II, p. 3-21.*
Heist, VSH, p. 332-334.
- Crónán: Plummer, VSH II, p. 22-31.*
Heist, VSH, p. 274-279. —
- Déclán: ITS 16, p. 2-73.*
Plummer, VSH II, p. 32-59.*
- Énda: Plummer, VSH II, p. 60-75.*
- Féichín: Plummer, VSH II, p. 76-86.*
RC 12 (1891), p. 318-353 (ed. by Wh. Stokes).
- Fínán: Plummer, VSH II, p. 87-95.*
Heist, VSH, p. 160-167.
ZCP 2 (1899), p. 545-564 (ed. by R.A.S. Macalister).
- Findchúa: BL 11. 2788-3300.*
- Finnian of Clonard: BL 11. 2504-2785.*
Heist, VSH, p. 96-107.*
- Fintan: Plummer, VSH II, p. 96-106.*
Heist, VSH, p. 145-153.

1. Carthagus is referred to by his more familiar Irish name, Mochuda, throughout.

- Gerald: Plummer, VSH II, p. 107-115.*
- Íte: Plummer, VSH II, p. 116-130.*
- Lasair: Gwynn (ed.), Eriu 5 (1911), p. 73-109.*
- Lasrian (Molaisse): Plummer, VSH II, p. 131-140.*
Heist, VSH, p. 340-343.
O'Grady (ed.), Silva Gadelica II (1892), p. 18-34.
- Maedóc of Ferns: BNE I, p. 183-190 (I), p. 191-290 (II).*
Plummer, VSH II, p. 141-163.*
Heist, VSH, p. 234-247.
- Mochoemóg: Plummer, VSH II, p. 164-183.*
- Moling - Latin: Plummer, VSH II, p. 190-205.*
Heist, VSH, p. 253-256.
- Moling - Irish: The Birth and Life of St. Moling, ed. and trans. by Whitley Stokes, (London, 1907). *
- Molúa: Plummer, VSH II, p. 206-225.*
Heist, VSH, p. 131-145, 382-388.
- Monenna: Heist, VSH, p. 83-95.*
- Munnu: Plummer, VSH II, p. 226-239.*
Heist, VSH, p. 198-209, 247-256.
- Patrick: Muir-chú (ed. by Edmund Hogan), AB 1 (1882), p. 531-585.*
BL 11. 1-651.
Four Latin Lives of St. Patrick, ed. by L. Bieler, (Dublin, 1971).
VT, ed. by Whitley Stokes, (London, 1887).
- Rúadán: BNE I, p. 317-329.*
Plummer, VSH II, p. 240-252.*
Heist, VSH, p. 160-167.
- Samthann: Plummer, VSH II, p. 253-261.*
- Senán: BL 11. 1775-2503.*
Heist, VSH, p. 301-324.*
- Tigernach: Plummer, VSH II, p. 262-269.*
Heist, VSH, p. 107-111.

2. A General Description and Assessment of the Vitae

i. A description of the genre and its conventions

The term hagiography is usually taken to cover all writings dealing with saints. It may assume any literary form, including biography, as well as martyrologies, sermons, prayers, homilies and breviaries which make mention of a saint.¹ A more restricted definition has been proposed by Père Hippolyte Delehaye, who says that the term hagiographical "must be confined to writings inspired by religious devotion to the saints and intended to increase that devotion".² However, the hagiographers of Ireland in the early Middle Ages (around the ninth and tenth centuries) were motivated by several aims, materialistic as well as devotional,³ so that it is preferable to retain the more inclusive definition and say that any information concerning the saints may be regarded as hagiographical material.

A saint's "dossier" will comprise every reference to that particular saint throughout history. The vita of a saint is only one part of his complete dossier, albeit a most important part.

Hagiographic writing contains some well-known traits with regard to the presentation of its subjects. Even where the devotional aspect is in competition with the materialistic and propagandist considerations, the saints are presented as personages whose due is pious respect and reverent regard, as larger-than-life Christians. They are compared to Biblical figures, and are invested with such

1. See eg. René Aigrain, L'Hagiographie: ses sources; ses méthodes; son histoire, (Paris, 1953).

2. Delehaye, The Legends of the Saints, trans. by Donald Attwater, (London, 1962), p. 3.

3. See K. Hughes, The Church in Early Irish Society, (London, 1966), p. 223-226.

cardinal Christian virtues as generosity, humility, charity, wisdom, piety, and prudence. They are the heirs to Christ's mission and to the Apostles; and they are intercessors between men and God, chosen to fulfil this role even before birth.

Some scholars would go further. To Père Delehaye, the saints

show forth every virtue in superhuman fashion—gentleness, mercy, forgiveness of wrongs, self-discipline, renunciation of one's own will: they make virtue attractive and ever invite Christians to seek it. Their life is indeed the concrete manifestation of the spirit of the Gospel; and, in that it makes this sublime ideal a reality for us, legend, like all poetry, can claim a higher degree of truth than history. 1

This statement is couched in terms of Père Delehaye's somewhat refined concept of hagiography and its purpose. Nevertheless, it expresses accurately the way in which hagiography, like bardic panegyric, is concerned with projecting an ideal image, rather than with describing reality. The saints appear in their vitae as almost heroic examples of Christian living, and it is in accordance with this ideal that the hagiographers depict their 'heroes'. Medieval hagiography was less concerned with historical accuracy than with fidelity to a quite different set of ideals, which may appear to us as simply a catalogue of miracles and extraordinary events surrounding any one saint. The real figures of the saints seldom, if ever, appear. Hagiographers deal with an abstract figure forced into an image of sanctity set by Biblical models, the values of the Church, and the conceptions of holiness held by the individual religious houses.²

The writings concerning the saints' careers are, then, eulo-

1. Delehaye, The Legends of the Saints, op. cit., p. 181.

2. Cf. G. Dickson, "Patterns of European Sanctity: The Cult of Saints in the Later Middle Ages", Ph.D. thesis (Edinburgh, 1974), p. 283.

gistic in tone and idealistic in content. The saint's Life was not an historical biography but a biographical romance of a kind we may term hagio-biography.

To the average compiler of a saintly biography, the main criteria whereby the saint's stature could be reckoned consisted of the reports of miracles. Miracles were at once the manifestations and testimonies of the saint's holiness. The miracles of Christ and the apostles became stock items in hagiography; or, rather, they set the standards of sanctity to which later saints were made to conform as a demonstration of the ideal of saintly behaviour which the Church actively fostered and developed.¹

The vitae sanctorum were, hence, important vehicles for enhancing the reputations of the saints within their own communities. They were equally strategic in the promotion of the saints' cults, serving as a guide to pilgrims and visitors to the community.

The form of the hagiographical vita may be said to have evolved from two main sources: a simple listing of the saint's acts (as found in the New Testament Acts of the Apostles), combined with a biographical treatment deriving from such classical models as the Lives of the philosophers. For example, Diogenes Laertius' Lives of Eminent Philosophers² displays certain similarities to the Lives of the saints; Diogenes' Lives are, to the modern reader, anecdotal in form and style and are less than factual in content, containing much that is hearsay and legend. Thus, the earliest known saint's Life, the third-century Life of St. Antony by Athanasius, has been shown to owe a certain

1. Dickson, op. cit.

2. Trans. by R.D. Hicks, (London, 1925).

debt to the Life of Pythagoras.¹ Indeed, it may be added that, on the purely formal level, saints' Lives in general owed much of their style, format, and rhetorical techniques to the pagan panegyric literature of the later Roman Empire.²

As the genre developed, the vita became an integrated narration of the saint's career, with its own conventions and emphases. The details cannot be fully explored here,³ but it is worth noting that hagiographers generally followed a set formula which required the vita to begin with a description of the saint's origin (his parentage, place of birth, and the circumstances of his birth) and to conclude with an account of his death, both episodes being embellished with suitable miraculous events, such as prophecies, visions of angels, and divine phenomena. In his career, the boy saint serves another, older holy man, much as the classical philosophers studied at the feet of older philosophers (or the boy Jesus with the elders at the Temple), thus maintaining a chain of succession in 'schools' of philosophy. The chain of succession in 'schools' of saints at times extended even to the inheritance of the teacher's paruchia. When his education was completed, the saint left his tutor to strike out on his own. The main body of the vita was filled/with accounts of miracles apparently in no related order. The narrative depended heavily upon miracle stories to 'fill out' the composition, so that hagiographers tended to make use of items which could be added to one vita from another.

1. E.R. Dodds, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety, (Cambridge, 1965), p. 31.

2. See Erich Auerbach, Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, trans. by Ralph Manheim, (London, 1965).

3. For a good account, see Aigrain, op. cit., or Delehaye, La méthode hagiographique, (Brussels, 1934).

John MacQueen states that in their literary form

...medieval saints' Lives are offshoots of the panegyric oratory of the later Roman Empire, their purpose is to prove and praise the sanctity of their subject, and it often appears that the essential proof of sanctity was the performance of miracles. 1

The presentation of a saint's Life as a series of exempla, a "few things from many", selected by the author or compiler to show the saint at his best, within a biographical framework, was a well-developed form in Latin hagiography by the time the Irish Church came into existence.

2.ii. Hagiography in the Irish Church

Irish hagiography differed little in form and style from the mainstream of medieval European hagiography. The Irish hagiographers followed the same stereotyped formula in their vitae as was prescribed by continental hagiography.² The Irish saints are presented as Christians of the highest order, in terms of their virtues and conduct.³

If we are to look for peculiarly Irish features or characteristics, they are there, although relatively minor- for example, the

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1. "History and Miracle Stories in the Biography of Nynia", Innes Review 12 (1962), p. 115.
 2. See E.J. Gwynn, "Some Saints of Ireland", Church Quarterly Review 74 (1912), p. 62-81; and L. Bieler, "The Celtic Hagiographer", Studia Patristica 5 (1962), p. 243-265.
 3. Eg. Abbán: Plummer, VSH I liii; Bairre: BNE I xxii, Plummer VSH I xv; Berach: BNE I xxx, Plummer VSH I xxvi; Rúadán: BNE I xxiii, Plummer VSH II xxx; Crónán: Plummer VSH II xxviii; Fintan: Plummer VSH II xxi; Moling: Plummer VSH II xxx; Molúa: Plummer VSH II liii; Samthann: Plummer VSH II xxv.

emphasis which Irish hagiographers gave to their saints' genealogies, certain nationalistic overtones in the saints' pride of place, and a general tendency, paralleled in other areas where the continent has influenced Irish literature, for elements of native lore to find their way into the vitae.

The earliest extant vita in Celtic hagiography is the Life of St. Samson of Dol, composed in Brittany between 610 and 618 A.D.¹ This vita would appear to have been a model for Cogitosus, who composed his Life of St. Brigit in the latter half of the seventh century. Whatever material he had to work with, it is almost certain that Cogitosus introduced the custom of writing saints' Lives into the Irish Church. Muir-chú, writing in the late seventh century, mentions in his introduction to the Life of St. Patrick that such a venture as his had never before been attempted except by his "father" Cogitosus. Muir-chú probably implies that the writing of sacred narratives had already begun in the Irish Church, but that at the time the practice was still new enough to warrant some comment.

Cogitosus tells little of the actual history of St. Brigit, although he wrote within a hundred years of the alleged date of her death (c. 525).² Her Life, in accordance with the conventions of hagio-biography, is a series of miracle stories within a loosely biographical framework, beginning with the relation of her birth and parentage and ending with her death. Muir-chú's Life of St. Patrick follows much the same format.

Adomnán's Life of Columba is, superficially at least, a different matter. Adomnán constructed his Life in three parts,

1. R. Fawtier, La Vie de Saint Samson, (Paris, 1912).

2. Annals of Ulster, ed. by William Hennessy, (Dublin, 1887), vol. 1, p. 43.

according to the themes of prophecies, miracles, and visions.¹ However, the Life contains the basic components of a vita, that is, the saint's genealogy, the prophecies and miracles surrounding his birth, miracles performed during his career, and the circumstances of his death. From our point of view, Adomnán's Life may be regarded as a reworking of the basic form, rather than as a departure from the fundamental conventions of hagiography.

The Lives written by Cogitosus, Muir-chú, and (later) Adomnán represent important landmarks not only in the traditions of SS. Brigit, Patrick, and Columba but also in the development of Irish hagiography. The next stage was an imitative process, creating vitae for the host of lesser figures who did not have quite the 'national' dimension of Brigit, Patrick, and Columba.² The exact sequence is difficult to ascertain and is, in any case, of minor importance to this study since all the major elements were already present in the genre. At all events, during the period from the Norse invasions to the Battle of Clontarf, the traditions of the various religious houses were drafted into hagio-biographies of the 'Saints of Ireland', for reasons which included glorification of the saints, assertion of the rights of their monasteries, and religious edification and devotion.

The historical characteristics of the Irish holy men included a propensity for extreme asceticism, a deep love for their homeland, a sympathy with nature and a love for animals rivalled only by St. Francis of Assisi in the twelfth century, and a marked predilection

1. For a discussion of the tripartite form, see 2.iii. below.

2. An exception, one might argue, is St. Brendan the Navigator. However, there are problems in distinguishing the Vita Brendani from the Navigatio Brendani, which appears to have its own traditions in medieval Latin literature.

for cursing rivalled only by the native satirists.¹ The Lives of the saints as a whole reflect these qualities, but it is remarkable how little the individual personalities of the saints show through, even by the standards of a highly stylised genre; the Irish saints, for the most part, are flat, two-dimensional figures, abstractions of all that was meant to be admirable in an Irish saint.

The stereotyped formula developed in the Roman Church and reinforced by Irish traditions smoothed out the underlying differences in the temperament and outlook of the historical figures the Lives purport to describe. It remains to identify the main principles involved in this process.

2.iii. Form, style, and structure of the Irish vitae

A typical vita sancta divides into four main parts: first, the saint's antecedents with the prophecies concerning his birth and future renown; secondly, his birth, childhood, and education; thirdly, his career, mostly as a miracle-worker; and fourthly, his death, the miracles which occur after his death, and (occasionally) his eulogy. Parts one, two, and four establish a chronological framework which allows for a seeming progression of events in the saint's life.

Part three is constructed of a series of brief episodes each narrating an incident, usually miraculous. Each episode is anecdotal in form, a complete story in itself and bearing little relation to whatever is recounted before or after. Without the chronological framework, a vita would take on the appearance of an incohesive col-

1. See L. Gougaud, Christianity in Celtic Lands, trans. by Maud Joynt, (London, 1932), p. 56; and Gwynn, op. cit., p. 73.

lection of legends, as in an acta or other memorabilia. With the chronological framework, the external structure of the vitae displays a slightly more cohesive form and logical order; the internal structure, particularly in the third part, is fairly loose and open, allowing for additions and changes without affecting the Life as a whole. The miracle stories are told at random, more or less, and their episodic structure seems to be suited for such things as refectory readings, sermons, and borrowings for other vitae.

A different structure, as mentioned above, is preserved in Adomnán's Life of Columba where the author divides the Life according to themes. The divisions are formalised by the author, not by the structure of the Life; the structure within each section displays the same flexibility to be found in other Irish saints' Lives. A similar, three-part division was attempted in the eighth-century Vita Tripartita of St. Patrick, composed at Armagh, which may have been influenced by Adomnán's work, but such a literary device did not prove to be popular in the Irish Church and these two vitae are the only surviving examples of it in Irish hagiography.

The formal structure of a typical vita in Irish hagiography is thus similar to that of a 'standard' biography, except that it lacks the fidelity to the precise order of events, and the cohesion of narration found in a biographical work.

The Latin Lives of the Irish saints are written in a highly manneristic style, using an intricate word order and word play (such as alliteration and a rhythmic balance of sentences) which were characteristic of the 'academic' writings and courtly compositions of the medieval Latin world.¹ It must be mentioned that the medieval

1. "In the tenth century we also find-north of the Alps, at the Ottonian court- a solemn, homogeneous, and almost official mannerism. This was the style cultivated by the historians who wrote panegyric biographies of the leading members of the imperial family, stylized in the manner of lives of the saints." Auerbach, op. cit., p. 156.

hagiographers tended to be solemn, turgid, and dry in their writing, the resultant "would-be edificatory romances" seeming, at least to one modern scholar, "intolerably dull and insipid".¹

The Lives written in Irish tend, on the whole, to be less florid in their rhetoric than the Lives written in Latin (unless, of course, they are direct translations). This may owe something to the innate love of a good story amongst the Irish, whatever the genre, and the professional storytellers' attention to realistic dialogue.² We may also assume that there were greater associations with the oral tradition for anything written in Irish, than for anything written in Latin.

The Irish Life of Moling, written in the eleventh or twelfth century, is remarkable for its entertaining prose style and dramatisation of events, as well as its high incidence of native Irish elements. There is little of the reverent rendering of miracles which characterises the earlier Life of Moling written in Latin. The events are related with a vigour and verve which the other Lives, both Irish and Latin, lack. Possibly the existence of well-established traditions about Moling outside the confines of the ecclesiastical tradition (that is, in his associations with the 'Wild Man of the Woods' theme) inspired the author of the Irish Life, perhaps a storyteller himself, to a greater freedom of treatment.

Adomnán's Life of Columba merits a special mention in this context as before. It is best described as a relatively polished, erudite example of early medieval Latin literature which happens to be set in the Celtic Church. In spite of a complex sentence structure, Adomnán maintains a flowing style and pace, set by the introduction,

1. M. Esposito, "The Patrician problem and a possible solution", *IHS* 10 (1956-57), p. 137.

2. See also Sec. II, 1.ii. below.

which later Lives written in Latin failed to achieve.

Beati nostri patroni Christo sufragante vitam discripturos, fratrum flagitationibus obsecundare volens, in primis eandem lecturos quosque ammonere procurabo ut fidem dictis adhibeant compertis et res magis quam verba perpendant, quae ut estimo inculta et vilia esse videntur. Meminerintque regnum dei non in eloquentia sed in fidei florulentia constare. 1

We may compare this with the introduction to the Life of St.

Mochuda (or Carthagus) in the Codex Kilkenniensis:

Gloriosus episcopus Carthagus, qui vulgo vocatur Mochutu, de gente Chiaragi Luachra, de nepotibus specialiter Fergusi, qui fuit fortissimus heros Ultorum, cuius nepotes sunt in diversis locis per Hiberniam; et ipse per invidiam zeli Illela regis Connachtorum, qui de gente Laginensium natus est origenaliter, cecidit. 2

Adomnán's prose is considerably less monotonous and displays more attention to style, and to the reader.

The homogeneity of thought and image in the Lives is reflected to some extent at the stylistic level. The Irish hagiographers made use of certain formulaic phrases, such as the one repeatedly used to conclude a miracle story- "and the names of God and (saint) ^{were} magnified by that miracle".³ A more striking example is provided by the construction employed wherein the saint's virtues are catalogued in terms of Biblical figures and the Christian symbols of king, lion, serpent, and dove. The fullest articulation of this occurs in the Life of St. Bairre of Cork, in the Irish version.

Ar robtar ili buadha antí naemh Barraí, ar fu fer firen go ngloine aiccnidh amhail uasal-athair; ba fír-aílithir é amhail Abram;

1. Anderson, p. 178.

2. Plummer, VSH I, p. 170.

3. "ro moradh ainm De 7 ... don miorbhuil sin". Eg. BNE I, p. 27, 28, 29 (Berach), p. 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122 (Ciarán S.), p. 197, 209, 210, 211, 215 (Maedóc).

ba cennais, diuit, dilgadhach o cridhe amail
 Móysi; ba psalmcetaidh molbtach togaidhí
 amail David; fa hestach eccna 7 eolais amail
 Sholman mac nDavid. Fa lestar togaidhe fri
 fóccra firinne amail Pol napstal. Ba fer lan
 do rath 7 do deolaidhect an Spirta Náeimh amail
 Eoin macan. Ba leoman ar nert 7 ar chumachta,
 ba rí ar órdan 7 airechas, fri saeradh 7 dáer-
 adh, fri marbadh 7 bethuccadh, fri cuibrech 7
 túaslaccadh. Ba nat[h]air air tuaiclé 7 trea-
 baire im gach maith, ba colum ar cennsa 7
 diuite ... 1

The eulogy continues in a similar vein with ever more rhetorical and imaginative descriptions unusual in an Irish Life. It probably sparked a response in terms of a descriptive code of native literature; as a result, the passage above makes use of alliteration and rhythm in a way which, uncommonly in hagiographic works, lends an almost poetic quality to the prose. By comparison, the Latin version is terse and succinct, although it, too, has its share of standard formulae.

Vir felix Barrus magnus et mirabilis in
 celo et in terra, qui fuit stabilis in
 fide ut Petrus, doctor egregius ut Paulus,
 virilis ut Andreas, supplantavit vicia ut
 Iacobus, plenus gratis Dei ut Iohannes.
 Quid plura? omnes virtutes perfectorum
 virorum in se hauriebat; id est, humili-
 tatem, obedienciam, pacienciam, spem,
 fidem, caritatem, et cetera. 2

In this case we see a reversal of the usual relationship for the Lives, although not unusual in other branches of traditional literature. In conclusion, we may say that the Irish hagiographers usually, but not always, followed the dictates of the hagiographical tradition which left little room for freedom of expression.

At a purely linguistic level, there are some interesting features, such as a peculiarity in the grammar which is pointed out

1. BNE I, p. 20. Cf. BNE I, p. 42 (Berach).

2. Plummer, VSH I, p. 74.

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by Plummer;¹ the Lives written in Latin tend to use the nominative absolute instead of the ablative absolute, and the ablative where the nominative should be. Again, the word order of late Latin seldom adheres to the classical order of subject, object, verb, but more often employs the order subject, verb, object, or verb, subject, object. For example:

Alio tempore venit sanctus Albeus ad quendam herimitam qui vocabatur Mac Chire; et ille dixit Albeo: 'In hoc loco prope non habemus aquam'. Tunc Albeus et herimita foras exierunt, et, orantibus illis, fons clarus a terra erupit, qui ibi pluit vsque 'hodie'. Gratias agentes Deo, recesserunt inde sancti. 2

Some of these features appear/ⁱⁿ other Hiberno-Latin sources; at present it is not possible to say how much they are characteristic of the vitae. The overall impression is that the style and language display a certain homogeneity, a consciousness of the genre in keeping with the conclusions on content. There are difficulties in determining the exact relationship between the Irish and Latin texts (that is, how closely the former depend upon the latter, or vice versa) which makes the position of Lives written in Ireland more complicated, as it increases the number of factors to be taken into account. Although there is some evidence for formulae and mannerisms developing within the medium of Irish, the form and style of the Lives of the saints, both in Irish and in Latin, remained fairly static.

1. VSH I, p. xciv.

2. Plummer, VSH I, p. 58.

Section II

1. Secular Tradition and the Lives

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1. Secular Tradition and the Lives

i. A discussion of biographical romance and related narrative forms

In this chapter, I propose to discuss some of the problems of definition pertaining to biographical romance and some related narrative forms. Once structure and patterns have been defined, according to the proponents of the structuralist method, we should be able to approach a definition of the genres "myth", "legend", and "popular tale", and an investigation of their functions.¹ In the study of saints' Lives, the approach has hithertotended to be from the opposite direction. A definition of the genre and an investigation of its function have been presented to the student of hagiography by scholars such as Delehaye,² de Gaiffier,³ and Aigrain.⁴ Although the term hagio-biography has not been employed by these scholars in their descriptions of the vitae, we have seen from the last section that we are dealing with a branch of hagiography which is a type of biography. Up until now, the patterns in the vitae have not been adequately utilised as a means of analysis. An alternative approach (as attempted by Plummer⁵) has been to extrapolate what are termed folkloristic elements; but again, the vitae as entities have been neglected. However, it is precisely this approach which is needed if one is to determine the relationship of the Lives to such 'non-literary' genres as myth and legend, and still more if one is to appreciate them in their own right.

Before this can be undertaken, a series of questions of definitions needs to be raised. Plummer's interpretation of what he

1. See The Study of Folklore, ed. by Alan Dundes, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1965), p. 217.

2. The Legends of the Saints, op. cit., and La méthode hagiographique, (Brussels, 1934).

3. Études critiques d'hagiographie et d'iconologie, (Brussels, 1967).

4. Aigrain, op. cit.

5. Plummer, VSH I, p. cxxix-clxxxviii.

terms the "heathen" elements in the Lives assumes a strong 'mythic' content to be present, whereby he means anything pertaining to pagan religious beliefs. Plummer assumes that his "heathen" elements presuppose mythic survival in some vague way. Although this thesis is not concerned with origins, there are other definitions of myth according to which the vitae might be held to be myths.

The problem is, "myth" has meant so many things to different schools in different decades. To the eminent folklorist, Stith Thompson, a myth was a story about the gods, creation or the nature of the universe;¹ to the Bollandist church historian, Père Delehaye, a myth was concerned with an explanation of the natural world in images which are (supposedly) comprehensible to people in a primitive stage of development.² From the point of view of the history of philosophy, Henri Frankfort designates myth to be a symbolic representation of an abstract idea using concrete examples, or a poetic interpretation of historical truth.³ All these scholars have believed in this category "myth"; their common denominator would seem to be something like "myth tries to explain the unexplainable and put a reason to the unreasonable". The editors of the Standard Dictionary of Folklore and Legends also essay a comprehensive definition, that myth is a stratum of folklore, a story

presented as having actually occurred in a previous age, explaining the cosmological and supernatural traditions of a people, their gods, heroes, cultural traits, religious beliefs, etc. 4

This definition is useful enough for their purposes, but still

1. "Myth and Folktales", Myth: A Symposium, ed. by Thomas A. Sebeok, (Indiana, 1958), p. 169-180.

2. Legends of the Saints, op. cit., p. 5.

3. Before Philosophy, (Penguin Books, 1951), p. 16.

4. SDFL, p. 778.

emphasises far too heavily the explanatory function of myth and its 'sacred' quality.

An alternative and, to my mind, far more promising line is taken by G.S. Kirk in his impressive attempt to sort out a methodology for coping with the Greek myths.¹ Kirk firmly rejects the idea that all myths are associated with religion or ritual; he sees an overlapping of myths and folktales in their motifs and narrative structures.² Myth, as he explains it, has no one form, no one definition, no single set of rules.³ While he admits that myths can possess a significance through their structure, Kirk points out the limitations of the structuralist approach, rejecting Lévi-Strauss' theory that myths ultimately reflect the workings of the human mind and that every detail in a myth has significance, since in oral tradition the form of a tale is slightly altered each time it is told and thus represents more the mind of the teller than of the myth-maker.⁴ Kirk describes some of the characteristics of myth without attempting an explicit definition; for example, myths are set in a remote, ageless past, the characters are usually superhuman, gods or heroes, or animals which become culture heroes, and the logic of action is distorted beyond normal reasoning.⁵

Instead of offering a definitive view of myth, Kirk offers what he calls a "working typology of mythical functions": one, narrative and entertaining; two, operative, iterative, and validatory; and three, speculative and explanatory.⁶ The first category includes all myths, as well as popular tales and legends. In this category,

1. Myth: Its Meaning and Function in Ancient and Other Cultures, (Cambridge, 1970).

2. *ibid.*, p. 8-31.

5. *ibid.*, p. 40.

3. *ibid.*, p. 2-7.

6. *ibid.*, p. 254.

4. *ibid.*, p. 73-83.

Kirk places myths which glorify heroes or eponymous ancestors, pointing to the Iliad and the history of Israel in the Old Testament as examples. The second category includes myths which are intended for ceremonial or ritual events, their repetition being part of their value. This category comprises fertility myths, myths stating the origin of an event, such as the sun's motions, accompanied by imitative actions. He cites as ^{an}example the myth of the repulsion of the dragon Apophis by the Egyptian sun-god Re, a myth which was recited as part of the daily ritual to ensure the rising of the sun. One may compare this to the recitation of the creed in the Christian Church. The third category overlaps with the second, but includes more complex myths. Explicit aetiologies, he states, have a tendency to be superficial; more elaborate myths have a much wider function. "The more complex the myth, the more fundamental and abstract the paradox or institution it tends to explain or reflect."¹ The Epic of Gilgamesh and the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice are cited as examples. The problem there is the inevitability of death, and the tales in some sense demonstrate that all mortals, even those favoured by divine authority, cannot escape it.²

Kirk's ideas can, to some extent, be applied to saints' Lives. John MacQueen identifies Lives of the saints not merely as Type 1 myths (in Kirk's definition), but also as Type 2 myths: operative, iterative, and validatory.³ Type 2 myths, according to Kirk, are repeated regularly on special occasions to ensure by a symbolic act the continuity in nature, to confirm and provide authority for a custom or institution, or to provide emotional support for a belief.⁴

1. Kirk, op. cit., p. 258.

2. *ibid.*, p. 253-259.

3. "Myth and the Legends of Lowland Scottish Saints", Actes du 2e Colloque de Langue et de Littérature Écossaises, (Strasbourg, 1975), p. 1-25.

4. Kirk, op. cit., p. 255-257.

MacQueen takes the term "legend" in its original sense, as something meant to be read aloud ("legendum"); saints' legends were to be read out at an appointed time, such as the saints' feast-days, in order to reiterate the status and importance of the saints. MacQueen sees the Lives as agents by which a new culture, the Romano-Christian, replaced and absorbed the old system of beliefs and traditions. His main concern is to describe the nature and extent of the effect of Christianity upon the early Pictish culture of Scotland through the material contained in these legends, and to show the value of these Lives as cultural historical documents.

The miraculous events in the Lives are interpreted by MacQueen as mythic representations of this process of acculturation. The idea of a supernatural Otherworld was generally believed by the Celts to be part of the natural order; the saint, through his power of working miracles, became the new intermediary between this world and the next. Against this, however, it must be pointed out that saints' legends lack the peculiar rationale of myths, wherein the gods do not act according to human ideas of morality, good and evil, or justice. Myths, in turn, lack the moral purpose and historicity of saints' legends. The supernatural element in the Lives of the saints, moreover, affects only the immediate situation and not the natural order of the universe.

In their treatment of the supernatural, the Lives show one of the characteristics of popular tales. According to Kirk, popular tales are distinguishable from myths, but the distinction is as yet ill-defined.¹ However, Kirk believes that myths, by comparison with popular tales, have a more serious intent behind them other than

1. Kirk, op. cit., p. 31-41.

the telling of a story;¹ popular tales are told primarily to entertain and to delight through a portrayal of ordinary, everyday situations abounding in twists of fate, ingenious riddles and neat solutions, and extraordinary phenomena which have no cosmological effect.² The saints throughout their careers deal primarily with situations and events which affect the daily lives of their people- disease, famine, warfare, theft, captivity. The Lives of the saints, like popular tales, depend on stock characters and stock incidents in their narratives.

Père Delehaye offers the term "hagiographical romances" to describe the vitae, "romance" being used in the sense of a literary composition which is an invention of the moment with no pretence at truth.³ The Lives of the saints, as mentioned before, may be considered biographical romances. However, MacQueen's interpretation of saints' Lives as legend, in the original sense of the word, is indeed comparable to Kirk's mythical function Type 2. The Irish saints' Lives may well have been vehicles for a process of acculturation, yet, as we shall see, such a process worked both ways. The Lives of the Irish saints were not chiefly propaganda for Romano-Christian culture and beliefs (although they may well have served that purpose), but they were certainly written with the intent that they should inform the audience of the saints and validate their existence to the benefit of the Church. The term "romance", unfortunately, carries with it the connotation of light entertainment, a Type 1 myth, which the second function of the Lives belies. What we

1. Kirk, op. cit., p. 40.

2. See also K.H. Jackson, The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition, (Cardiff, 1961), ch. 1.

3. Legends of the Saints, op. cit., p. 5.

are dealing with in the Lives is a certain function, i.e. entertainment, in the same category as popular tales, but serving another function as well in the context in which the Lives were used, i.e. the Church.

1.ii. The "Heroic Age" in Ireland

In order to see the Lives of the Irish saints and the tales of the Irish heroes in their proper perspective and relationship, it is expedient to discuss the two traditions, Christian ecclesiastical and native secular, from which the vitae emerged. Having suggested that saints' Lives may have characteristics and functions similar to secular tales and non-Christian myths, there are questions as to the Irish concepts of 'hero' and 'saint'.

The tales told in the repertoire of the professional class of storytellers reflect a country governed by a warrior aristocracy in a tribal organisation; a great value was set upon skill in weapons and warfare. This, according to H.M. Chadwick, signifies a stage of social development common to most European cultures, the "Heroic Age" of a civilisation.¹ In The Growth of Literature, written in collaboration with N.K. Chadwick, he has pointed out that the type of literature which relates to the Heroic Age, and is defined as heroic, is found in most European literatures and is more or less uniform as regards narrative themes and structure.²

The main features of heroic literature, in the Chadwicks'

1. The Heroic Age, (Cambridge, 1912).

2. The Growth of Literature, vol. 1, (Cambridge, 1932), ch. 2-4.

opinion are (1) the description of an aristocratic milieu, the main characters being from a princely class; (2) the settings being for the most part on the battlefield or in the royal court; (3) a preoccupation with warfare and in particular individual combat; and (4) an emphasis on the "cardinal virtues" of a hero: courage, strength, loyalty, and generosity.¹ The heroic literature as defined and dealt with by the Chadwicks fulfil these criteria. The heroes are portrayed as human beings whose skill and prowess are above the ordinary mortal's capabilities, yet they are nonetheless subject to accident, fate, and human weaknesses.

The Chadwicks date their Irish Heroic Age from prehistoric times to the early eighth century A.D., a point which they admit is arbitrary but was chosen for the practical purpose of setting some kind of boundary on this period of history. Although, in their opinion, Irish heroic tradition may go back well beyond the Christian era, there is little evidence to corroborate that dating. The Chadwicks see this "Age of Heroes" as^a definite historical period in which certain institutions existed, certain customs were practised, yet, as is made clear in Maurice Bowra's analysis of the Heroic Age, it is legend, not history, which gives rise to the conception of such a period of time.²

The Chadwicks present historical evidence to support their theory that only under certain social conditions does a Heroic Age (by their definition) come into existence and flourish. Bowra, more penetratingly, maintains that it is legend which interprets the effect of these conditions through a few distinguished individuals.

1. The Growth of Literature, op. cit., p. 64-79.

2. The Meaning of a Heroic Age, (Earl Grey Memorial Lecture, 1957).

The difference between heroic ages as they are presented in legend and as we reconstruct them from historical documents indicates a real difference of approach and outlook. History is concerned with them as political situations and parts of a general process of human change; legend is interested mainly in their dominant personalities and their more sensational events. History tries to take a synoptic view of them from which nothing significant is missing; legend concentrates on a few high lights of a kind to thrill and exalt audiences who like to hear of men and doings above the ordinary run. 1

Irish heroic literature has tended to be aristocratic in outlook; it was the duty of the fili to master not only senchus and dinnsenchus but also the "chief stories of Ireland, to narrate them to kings and lords and noblemen".² Sean Mac Airt suggests that the fili's business was also the exposition of these tales to the noble classes, and he suggests further that the fili's treatment of these tales has some bearing on Irish hagiography.

In this attitude to traditional materials one is tempted to see the lay parent of hagiographical literature, which was cultivated mainly for religious edification, the glorification of monastic founders, and for the purpose of asserting church prerogatives. 3

While only a few of the narrative devices and stylistic constructions in the sagas can be compared to similar techniques in the Lives of the saints (these narrative techniques include the use

1. Bowra, op. cit., p. 7.

2. R. Thurneysen, "Mittelirische Verslehren", Irische Texte, ed. by Wh. Stokes and E. Windisch, vol. 3 (1891), p. 50. See also, P. Mac Cana, op. cit., and G. Murphy, "Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland", Early Irish Literature, ed. by James Carney, (London, 1966), p. 103.

3. Sean Mac Airt, "Filidecht and Coimgne", Ériu 18 (1958), p. 150.

of "runs"¹ and realistic dialogue²), the important point here is the similarity that exists between the two seemingly disparate traditions in the attitude of the fili and the Irish hagiographer towards their art. The Irish hagiographers treated their subject and material in much the same way as the manuscript writers of the sagas treat their material. Just as figures such as Cú Chulainn, Fergus mac Roich, and Conall Cernach of the Ulster Cycle were "dominant personalities" and fitting subjects for a professional storyteller, so were saints like Patrick and Columba the focus of attention to church historians of later generations.

In a study on the use of secular material in Irish saints' Lives, Felim O'Briain (mentioned above) cites a few isolated instances where a theme or motif which occurs in Irish saga literature has a parallel in Irish hagiography,³ thereby demonstrating that Irish saints' Lives were not produced from wholly Christian sources. The fact that saga themes crop up in saints' Lives suggests that the early hagiographers saw some association or similarity between the two genres of literature. Thurneysen distinguishes between "Heldensage" and "Königsage", and "Heiligenlegende", yet admits to there being crosscurrents between secular and religious tales.⁴ An example of this is contained in the Acallam na Senórach which relates how St. Patrick learned the tales about Finn and the Fianna from Ossian and Cailte, the last of Finn's band.⁵ The story of the

1. For example, the description of St. Findchua's battle fury, BL 3180.

2. See VT-p. 116-118, where Patrick speaks with the angel Victor; and, the Life of St. Rúadán, BNE I 40, where Rúadán converses with Diarmait mac Cerbhaill. For further examples, see M.K. Muhr, "The Development of Style in Traditional Gaelic Narrative, with special attention to 'runs' ", Ph.D. thesis (Edinburgh, 1977), p. 364 f.

3. F. O'Briain, op. cit., p. 33-42.

4. Die Irische Helden- und Königsage, (Halle, 1921), p. 3.

5. See Stories from the Acallam, ed. by Myles Dillon, (Dublin, 1970).

recovery of the Táin bó Cúailnge presents a similar scene. After all the fili and learned men of Ireland had failed to recall the entire saga, the saints of Ireland- Columba, Ciarán of Clonmacnois, Caillín, and the two Brendans- fasted and prayed on the tomb of Fergus mac Roich, who had himself been deeply involved in the events of that tale. Fergus appeared to them and related the entire story, which Ciarán wrote down in a book made from the hide of his dun cow.¹

These, and other, instances of a blending of the two traditions, ecclesiastical and secular, indicate that at some point in the history of early Irish literature they began to merge and were not considered mutually exclusive by the authors of the sagas and the saints' Lives.

The characters of Irish sagas have, as well, made brief appearances in some of the Lives of the saints. Finn mac Cumhaill prophesies that a lake monster would be overcome by St. Coemgen;² he likewise prophesies the advent of St. Maedóc.³ Fergus mac Roich appears in the ancestry of St. Mochuda.⁴ It may be argued that the motifs and themes cited by O'Briain are a part of the store of international folk-motifs and may not have come into the Lives directly from Irish saga literature, but the names and figures of Finn and Fergus are unmistakably of saga origin. So, also, is the tale of Lugaidh Sriabhdearg, Lugaid of the three red stripes, born of an incestuous union between a princess and her three brothers, who appears in the ancestry of St. Déclán.⁵

1. See James Carney, Studies in Irish Literature and History, (Dublin, 1955), p. 165 ff.

2. Coemgen (I), BNE I ii.

3. Maedóc (II), BNE I vi.

4. Mochuda, BNE I i; VSH I i. For other examples of saga figures in the Lives of the saints, see F. O'Briain, op. cit., p. 38-39.

5. Déclán, ITS 16, p. 2; VSH II i.

The appearance of the saints in saga literature and of native Irish personages in the Lives of the saints suggests a reconciliation, as has been said, of two, often opposing, cultures. Or, it may mean that the monastic scribes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries began to branch out in non-ecclesiastical directions, that feelings of nationalism compelled the Irish hagiographers to join forces with the Irish filid, or that the Church was adapting native lore to help in promoting its interests. Whatever the reasons for this 'dialogue' between two worlds, the important point is the fact that this relationship of literatures did indeed exist, that the Irish scribes saw fit to include Christian figures in non-Christian tales and vice versa, and that it was acceptable to have saints and heroes interacting on the same level in the same narrative.

2. Christian Elements in the Lives

i. The "Age of Saints" in the Irish Church

In the historical terms set by N.K. Chadwick, there was an "Age of Saints" in Ireland which spanned a period from the late fifth to the late ninth centuries¹, during which time Christianity took root and flourished, to a great extent under the monastic communities founded in this era. The intellectual and political growth of the Church received its greatest stimulus during this age of ecclesiastical development; the "Age of saints" is seen by Mrs. Chadwick as being an age of learning dominated by the sancti, the educated holy men.² The monasteries were not only communities for spiritual guidance but also, as has been said, centres of education. The Irish saints, then, were the new literati, as well as the priests of the new religion.

The Church found it expedient to adapt native tribal organisations to its cause by seeking the patronage and protection of the local rulers. The idea of an organised priesthood had its parallel in the native schools of early Irish learning. There is also plenty of evidence to suggest that the idea of a holy man possessing supernatural powers had likewise its parallel in the persons of the druid-priests. Christianity, however, introduced what must have been a radically different ideology; it emphasised the virtues of forgiveness, mercy, charity, and humility, which the saints are represented as possessing in abundance; and, of course, it introduced the cult of the saints.

In a recent work, Peter Brown has discussed the rise of

1. The Age of Saints, op. cit., p. 5.

2. *ibid.*, p. 4.

saints' cults in late antiquity in the Mediterranean area as being a particularly Christian phenomenon which effected a change in men's way of thinking about God, the dead and the living.¹ This change in men's imagination and outlook was not, he says, a continuation of the pagan past nor a result of what he calls "popular religion", that is, the beliefs of the uneducated masses.² The pagan cults of heroes had some things in common with the cults of the saints; both involved a reverence and an idealisation of the deceased, or a "heroization" as Brown puts it.³ (It is worth noting here that Stefan Czarnowski used the same term to describe the making of a cult hero, comparing it to canonisation⁴. More will be said on this later). Yet here the analogy ceases, for in death, the pagan heroes had no further relationship with the immortal gods and human beings. The worship of heroes was kept within the boundaries defined by the pagan idea of death. Brown's use of the word 'pagan' generally refers to early Roman and Hellenistic religions, in whose philosophy death was unlucky; death divorced men from the world and from the protection of the gods. The Christian martyrs, on the other hand, by dying as human beings formed a closer link with God, a relationship which enabled them to intercede on behalf of their fellow mortals.⁵ In Christianity, death was perceived in a different way; the dead and the dying were no longer unlucky, ill-omened, or

1. The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity, (London, 1981). See also W.B. O'Dowd, "The origin of the cultus of the saints", *IER* 4th Ser., 24 (Oct. 1908), p. 398-406.

2. Brown, op. cit., p. 6 and p. 20-22.

3. *ibid.*, p. 5.

4. Le culte des héros et ses conditions sociales, (Paris, 1919).

5. Brown, op. cit., p. 5-6. See also L.R. Farnell, Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality, (Oxford, 1921), for a discussion of hero cults in antiquity.

tainted but closer to God than the living. According to Brown, the cults of the saints broke down the barriers between the living and the dead which the Mediterranean pagan world had built. Wherever Christianity spread in the antique world, the relics and the shrines of the saints were there, visible tokens of the new belief.¹

The rise and growth of saints' cults in Ireland is best seen in the light of the rise and growth of the monasteries. Patronage and support for the Church came not from the lower classes, but from the ruling nobility, the wealthy land-holders, and the warrior class.² The Church offered an alternative for younger sons with little inheritance, déclassé freemen, and clanless outcasts. A man with several daughters to marry off might find it more advantageous to dedicate his children to the service of a saint; or women like St. Brigit and St. Samthann could escape an unwanted marriage by taking the veil. The nobility lost none of their standing by joining a monastery; the succession to the abbacy in several monasteries tended to remain within a controlling clan group, as was the case of St. Columba's successors to the abbacy of Iona.³

Yet apart from these worldly considerations, Christianity did bring about a change in the pagan Irish outlook on the world. The Christian afterlife was one of reward, whereas the pagan Irish Otherworld (as far as we can gather) was not governed by the same principles. The Christian heaven was for those who lived a good and just life; and in this, the saints were the leaders and guides.

1. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 6-9.

2. St. Énda was himself a chief and a warrior before entering the Church (Plummer, VSH II ii); St. Mochúa, too, was a soldier before giving up all his possessions to become a "soldier of Christ" (Plummer, VSH II i).

3. See Anderson, Adomnan's Life of Columba, p. 90-92.

The Lives of the Irish saints were usually composed within the saints' own monastic communities by one of their members. Cogitosus, a monk of Kildare, wrote to preserve the memory of St. Brigit, the founder of Kildare. Muir-chú at Armagh followed suit for his patron, Patrick. Adomnán, the ninth abbot of Iona, wrote his Life of St. Columba at the request of his brethren. The Lives were the monasteries' charters, so to speak. They recorded the rights, dues, and privileges of the monastery; at the same time, they related the establishment of the community, its raison d'être. Read at the saint's festival or incorporated in a sermon, the Life of a saint was a reminder to the monks of their origin and the object of their collective loyalty and devotion. In this respect, the Lives served a function similar to the Cycles of the Kings, which were meant to inspire the audience with feelings of nationalism and loyalty.¹

The main differences between the Irish Church and the continental Church were in certain matters of form, such as the style of the tonsure, the calculation of the date of Easter, and the procedure for the ordination of bishops. Even these pertain to a lapse of time and the remoteness of the Irish Church rather than to conscious heterodoxy. The peculiarly Irish organisational patterns already noted pertain similarly to the external rather than to the spiritual side of Irish Christianity. As regards the basic data of Christianity, the Celtic Church in general was not different in its experience from the rest of Christendom in the West.

The cult of the saints and the writing of saints' vitae had been established in the Roman Church as far back as Athanasius'

1. See W.F. Rea, op. cit.

Life of St. Antony, written in the third century, and there is no reason to doubt that this aspect of hagiology came directly into the Celtic Church from the continent, whatever druidic hagiographical tales may have gone before. Literacy and the production of books were an important corollary of the new religion; the art of calligraphy and of illumination was cultivated especially in the wealthier monasteries which could afford their own scriptoria¹, and it is clear that the production of saints' Lives- native Irish saints' Lives in particular- came to be an accepted part of this activity by the late seventh century.

2.ii. Biblical and apocryphal material in the Lives

It has been established by scholars such as J. Kenney², M. McNamara³, and D.N. Dumville⁴, that the Irish clerics had available to them not only the Scriptures but also a large amount of exegetical and apocryphal material. Although it has not so far been demonstrated that the Irish hagiographers borrowed material directly from the Biblical and apocryphal sources at hand, there is some evidence to suggest that they were aware of the treasure-house of themes and motifs in these sources, as they used similar motifs in *connection with the saints.*

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1. See K. Hughes, "The Distribution of Irish Scriptoria and Centres of Learning from 730 to 1111", Studies in the Early British Church, ed. by N.K. Chadwick, (Cambridge, 1958), p. 243-272.
 2. Sources, p. 622-744.
 3. The Apocrypha in the Irish Church, (Dublin, 1975).
 4. "Biblical Apocrypha and the Early Irish: A Preliminary Investigation", PRIA 73, sec. C (1973), p. 299-338.

connection with the saints.

In studies made by M.R. James¹ and St. John Seymour², it has been suggested that the Irish hagiographers incorporated certain incidents drawn from apocryphal literature into the Lives. James compares an episode in the Life of St. Boece, where a wolf brings a kid to the saint³, to an incident in the Acts of Philip, where a leopard brings a kid to the apostle.⁴ The death of the magician in Muir-chú's Life of St. Patrick has been compared by James to the death of Simon Magus⁵. The druid in the Life of St. Berach who is killed at the window of his cell by a hunter's arrow has also been compared by James to Pilate who, in Greek legend, met with the same death.⁶

On the basis of these and other 'coincidences', both James and Seymour imply that the Irish hagiographers borrowed extensively from the apocrypha. However, it may be argued that the motifs cited above had become a part of a store of international folk-motifs available to the Irish hagiographers independently of the apocryphal texts themselves (as one may argue in the case of secular motifs, discussed above). Thus, McNamara states that much of this apocryphal material could have been a hagiographer's stock-in-trade, deriving only indirectly from the apocrypha.⁷ The question is

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1. "Learning and Literature Till the Death of Bede", Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1922), p. 504-506.
 2. "Notes on Apocrypha in Ireland", PRIA 37, sec. C (1926), p. 107-117.
 3. Boece: Plummer, VSH I xiv.
 4. The Apocryphal New Testament, trans. by M.R. James, (Oxford, 1924), -hereafter referred to as ANT- p. 446-447.
 5. Muir-chú I 16; ANT p. 470
 6. Berach: Plummer, VSH I xxii, and BNE I xxiii; ANT p. 157.
 7. McNamara, *op. cit.*, p. 26-27.

difficult to resolve, since on the whole it is not known precisely which apocryphal texts were available to Irish hagiographers at what time and in which monastery. In most, therefore, we can only surmise that there is the possibility that apocryphal literature in Ireland directly influenced the composition of the Lives of the saints. The author of the Latin Life of St. Énda, compares an incident in his saint's career, where the saint is brought food by an angel¹, to Daniel in the lion's den being brought food by the prophet Habakuk who was transported to Babylon through angelic means for the purpose. The authority for this statement does not appear in the Scriptural Book of Daniel, but in the apocryphal continuation of that book known as Bel and the Dragon. In this case, at least, we seem to have evidence for first-hand acquaintance with apocryphal literature and Judaeo-Christian tradition.

In general, however, we should be content to note that certain apocryphal themes and episodes are similar to motifs found in the Lives of the saints. Among these are miracles which have to do with animals, monstrous serpents, magicians, and magical illusions.² In the Apostolic History of Abdias, a newborn child is made to speak to clear the name of a deacon accused of being its father.³ The same incident occurs in the Lives of SS. Albeus⁴, Brigit⁵, and Ninian⁶. Again, the numerous occasions of cursing in the Lives of the saints may have been influenced by apocryphal traditions, in

1. Énda: Plummer, VSH II xvii. A similar incident occurs in the Life of Finnian: Heist, VSH p. 102.

2. See ANT Index, p. 581-584. For Irish examples, see Sec. III, 2.ii following.

3. ANT p. 465.

4. Albeus: Plummer, VSH I xxiii.

5. BL 1449.

6. Forbes, p. 13-14.



particular the Infancy Gospel of Thomas which was known in Ireland by the eighth century.¹ In this Gospel, the boy Jesus curses to death a lad who annoys him². In the same Gospel is related an incident in which the boy Jesus carries water in his cloak³; this is somewhat reminiscent of the motif of saints carrying hot coals in their clothing without burning,⁴ but the evidence for direct influence from the apocrypha for this motif and for the theme of cursing is wanting.

It is certain that the Latin Bible was widely available in Ireland⁵ and that the Irish hagiographers had extensive knowledge of the Scriptures. The saints are often held up in comparison to Biblical figures, and some of their acts and miracles are likened to the deeds of the Old Testament prophets and patriarchs and the New Testament apostles. For example, the Irish Life of St. Bairre contains a eulogy (quoted in Sec. I, 2.iii) which compares his qualities to those of Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, and the Apostles Paul and John. A similar passage, using the same comparisons and metaphors, appears in the Irish Life of St. Berach⁶. Other such eulogies are contained in the Lives of SS. Patrick⁷, Finnian⁸, Brendan⁹, and Ciarán of Clonmacnois¹⁰. The author of

1. Dumville, op. cit., p. 305.

2. "Two Old Irish Poems", ed. and trans. by James Carney, Eriu 18 (1958), p. 12-15.

3. *ibid.*, p. 25.

4. Eg. Albeus: Plummer, VSH I xl; and Coemgen: Plummer, VSH I v.

5. See Peter Doyle, "The Latin Bible in Ireland: Its Origins and Growth", Biblical Studies: The Medieval Irish Contribution, ed. by M. McNamara, (Dublin, 1976), p. 30-45.

6. BNE I xxx.

7. BL 586.

8. BL 2740.

9. BNE I i; BL 3315.

10. BL 4484.

the Life of St. Ciarán goes to great lengths in order to point out the similarity between Ciarán's life and the life of Christ: both were sons of artisans, both turned water into wine, both died at the age of thirty-three, and both were resurrected three days after death.¹ Ciarán, because he was a herdsman in his youth, is also likened to David, son of Jesse, the shepherd boy who was chosen king of Israel (Ciarán, of course, was one of God's chosen saints).² The same comparison is applied to other saints who tended flocks and herds in their childhood, for example, Mochuda.³ The author even quotes from the Psalms in order to reinforce his example.⁴ Quoting from the Scriptures was a common practice in the writing of the Lives, lending to the works an air of erudition which argues a considerable degree of literacy and ecclesiastical learning from their audience.

The saints who perform the miracle of parting the water of a river to allow passage are usually compared to Moses;⁵ St. Mochuda, who performs such a miracle, is compared to Joshua crossing the Jordan.⁶ St. Brendan sees a vision of angels descending and ascending, "ut alter Iacob factus";⁷ his face is afterwards illuminated "tanquam esset alter Moyses".⁸ Columba, in the Latin Life of St. Lasrian, is called 'another Daniel' for his ability to interpret dreams.⁹ St. Boece ascends to heaven like 'another Elias'.¹⁰

1. BL 4504 ff.

2. BL 4038.

3. Mochuda: BNE I i; Plummer, VSH I vii.

4. Ps. 26:10.

5. Eg. Boece: Plummer, VSH I xvi; Gerald: Plummer, VSH II xi; Brendan: Plummer, VSH I lxxxi. See Exodus 14:21.

6. Plummer, VSH I lxiv (Carthagus). See Joshua 3:14-17.

7. Plummer, VSH I v. See Genesis 28:12.

8. *ibid.* See Exodus 34:29.

9. Lasrian: Plummer, VSH II xxxii.

10. Plummer, VSH I xvii. See 2 Kings 2:11.

St. Maedóc fasts for forty days and forty nights, according to the examples set by Moses, Elijah, and Christ, in order to gain his requests.¹ When the earth swallows the enemies of St. Berach, the author is reminded of the fate of Dathan and Abiron.² The author of the BL Life of St. Finnian points out several similarities between his saint and the apostle Paul: both were born in 'foreign' parts, both studied under sages. As Paul was forbidden by an angel to go to Damascus, an angel forbade Finnian to go to Rome. Both died for the sake of their people, Paul by martyrdom and Finnian by plague (that the Gael should not all die by Yellow Plague).³

The references quoted above are fairly common Biblical motifs for the most part, and raise the possibility that repeated borrowing had led to the creation of stock material within the genre. For the present purpose, it is sufficient to conclude that the Irish hagiographers were undoubtedly inspired by the Bible.

In the Book of Lismore, the author of the Life of Columb Cille begins his biography with an essay on pilgrimage, citing the example of Abraham as the precedent for all true pilgrims. As God told Abraham to leave his country, his family and his wealth for the sake of the Lord, so ought good men to leave their lands and possessions in imitation.⁴ The author describes the three kinds of pilgrimage recognised by the Irish Church (and also recognised in the law; by the seventh century, the deorad Dé, "exile of God", had a legal status equal to an Irish king and was considered the represent-

1. Plummer, VSH II xxxiii.

2. Plummer, VSH I x and xxiii. See Numbers 16:31.

3. BL 2744 ff.

4. BL 655 ff.

ative on earth of God and the saints).¹ St. Columba is described as the 'perfect pilgrim'. This type of homiletic introduction is used also in the BL Life of St. Brigit, where the reader is exhorted to imitate Christ.² The Irish Life of St. Berach begins with a sermon on men of righteousness, quoting from the Gospel of John.³ In each of these instances, the hagiographer uses his knowledge of Scripture to introduce the saint as one who is equal to the patriarchs and apostles, or who has achieved the most perfect imitation of their example.

Miracles such as turning water into wine, healing of lepers, multiplying food, and raising from the dead have their origin in the Gospels. While these motifs found their way into a motif repertoire, the absence of associated non-Biblical international material, plus the fact that Biblical sources are quoted explicitly in similar cases, leads to the conclusion that the Scriptures were a primary source of material, especially as the saint was expected to act in imitatio Christi.⁴ Motifs of healing and resuscitation, the two most well-known of the miracles of Christ, occur with great frequency and regularity in the Lives (see List of Motifs, Sec. III, 2.ii below). The story of the life of Christ was a pattern of holiness for the sancti of the Church, a prototype for their own conduct; the Gospel story clearly served as a model as well as a source of material for hagiographers throughout the Church.

1. See T.M. Charles-Edwards, "The Social Background to Irish Peregrinatio", Celtica 11 (1976), p. 43-59.

2. BL 1132 ff.

3. BNE I i.

4. See Ciarán of Saigir (II): BNE I xxxiii.

Apart from Biblical references and examples, saints' Lives in general contain a high incidence of what may be called Christian lore. This includes such phenomena as divine light, visions, angelology and demonology.¹ The appearance of angels who serve as guardians, teachers, and guides is a good example of how Judaeo-Christian traditions are used in the legends of the saints. St. Patrick's angel, given the name Victor, is his 'guardian angel' and his religious instructor. It is Victor who teaches him, comforts him in captivity, and arranges his escape.² In the BL Life of Senán the archangel Raphael visits the saint and leads him to his place of resurrection.³ The theme of finding one's place of resurrection is especially important to the saints; it stems from the belief that on the Day of Judgement all souls will be resurrected in their bodies, all bodies will rise from the grave. The saint's place of resurrection, his burial place, is also his place of worship, the physical centre of his cult to which his followers make their pilgrimage. His aura of holiness lingers in his remains and relics; his tomb becomes his shrine.⁴

Although the Irish Lives have little in the way of description of the afterlife, they do reflect in a few instances the Irish conception of heaven and hell. St. Brendan on his voyage meets Judas Iscariot being tormented by the pains of hell and manages to relieve his suffering for one night.⁵ The Judas theme may have been influ-

1. See George Every, Christian Mythology, (London, 1970).

2. Muir-chú I 1, 6.

3. BL 2194 ff.

4. See Peter Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 9-12.

5. Brendan: Plummer, VSH I xcvi f.; BNE I xxxv. See also BNE I, p. 96-102, "Da Apstal Decc Na Herenn".

enced by later apocryphal material;¹ this incident in the Life of St. Brendan is, to my knowledge, unique in the Lives of the early Irish saints. Nevertheless, it illustrates another use of Christian tradition in connection with an Irish saint. The Irish apparently held the belief that it was possible to take souls out of hell;² the saint had the power to intercede on their behalf and even bargain for their release. Instances occur in the Lives of Ciarán of Saigir,³ Íte,⁴ and Samthann.⁵ The theme of the Last Judgement occurs in the Life of St. Moling, in connection with a clever piece of bargaining. It was believed that the Day of Judgement would happen on a Monday; the saint tricks a ruler into giving respite from a heavy tribute until "lúan", that is, the Monday of Doomsday.⁶

Such beliefs suggest a link with a common Christian tradition shared by the whole of Christendom, and the existence of a sub-culture within the Irish Church, handed down through generations of clergy. This is reflected in the orally preserved carmina, which consist of charms, prayers, and hymns to saints like Brigit and Columba.⁷ The Scriptures were used primarily as a means of placing the native Irish saints in the same tradition as the saints of the Roman Church and in the ecclesiastical history of the western world.

1. See ANT p. 472.

2. See St. John Seymour, "The Eschatology of the Early Irish Church", ZCP 14 (1928), p. 179-211; also, J.J. Colwell, "Fis Adamnan: A Comparative Study", Ph.D. thesis (Edinburgh, 1952), p. 24.

3. Ciarán (II): BNE I xxx; see also Plummer, VSH I, p. cxxi, n. 2.

4. Plummer, VSH II xxix.

5. Plummer, VSH II xiii. See also Coemgen (I): BNE I x.

6. Moling: Plummer, VSH II xix; Stokes, Life XIX. See also Kenneth Jackson, Scealta on mBlascaod, (Dublin, 1938), p. 62-63. St. Cúan tricks a water-monster by putting a cauldron on its head and ordering it to stay in its lake until Monday, i.e. the Monday of Doomsday.

7. Cf. Carmina Gadelica, ed. and trans. by Alexander Carmichael, (Edinburgh, 1900).

Irish hagiography was, in other words, concerned with establishing a continuity which would link its own traditions with that of the mother Church to enable the Irish Church to partake of the latter's heritage in the widest sense. The use of Scriptural material and Christian lore and learning lent to the Lives of the Irish saints authority, authenticity, respectability, and prestige.

3. The Concept of the Hero

1. The Christian hero: the example of the Desert Fathers

In Christian tradition, Christ is the Sacrifice and Redeemer, the ultimate martyr. Many actual martyrs become saints in the history of Christianity, and they fittingly lead the list of heroes of the Church in their countries. By contrast, we have no genuine record of a prolonged period of contention between pagans and Christians in Ireland, and so there are no martyrs in the early Irish Church. The Irish hagiographers could not use this example of supreme sacrifice to enhance the stature of their saints. The Middle Irish Passions and Homilies¹ have to resort to foreign examples, such as St. George. Much earlier, the seventh-century Cambray Homily² glorifies the sufferings Christians endured together as both fitting and desirable after the example of Christ, for "fellow-suffering is counted as a kind of cross"³. The Homily then describes another kind of cross, the three types of martyrdom recognised by the Irish Church:

This is the white martyrdom to man, when he separates for sake of God from everything he loves, although he suffer fasting and labour threat.

This is the green martyrdom to him, when by means of them (fasting and labour) he separates from his desires, or suffers toil in penance and repentance.

This is the red martyrdom to him, endurance of a cross or destruction for Christ's sake, as has happened to the apostles in the persecution of the wicked and in teaching the law of God. 4

For the ultimate, red martyrdom, the author must look to the

1. Ed. by R. Atkinson, (Dublin, 1887).

2. Thesaurus Paleohibernicus, ed. and trans. by Wh. Stokes and John Strachan, (Cambridge, 1901), vol. 2, p. 244-247.

3. *ibid.*, p. 246.

4. *ibid.*, p. 247.

apostles for examples. Consequently, the Irish saints were presented as martyrs in a different sense, with very different criteria.¹ The alternative concept put forward by the Irish clergy saw them as a class of man removed from ordinary society to a world of spiritual devotion, contemplation, and an eremetical lifestyle. The theoretical starting point for this treatment lies in the concept of the "miles Christi", the 'soldier of Christ', a concept which evolved in the early monastic literature of the continent and, once accepted by the Irish monks, was elaborated and promoted with characteristic zeal.²

The ascetic practices traditionally ascribed to the Irish saints and their position as holy men outside society bears a striking resemblance to the lifestyle and status of the holy men of the Eastern Church, the Desert Fathers, whose lives and thoughts established the principles of monasticism, the practice of self-mortification, and the eremetical ideal.³ This ideal involved total subjugation of the body, total renunciation of all worldly ties, such as those of family, property, business and social connections.⁴ The third-century ascetics valued solitude and deprivation of material needs; they sought a complete withdrawal from the material world to search for spirituality, to experience the revelation of self and communion with God which pagan religions could no longer offer.⁵ The earliest known Life of a saint, the Life of St. Antony by Athanasius, already

1. See Heist, VSH, p. 81-83, "De tribus ordinibus Sanctorum Hiberniae".

2. J. Ryan, Irish Monasticism, (London, 1931), p. 196-197.

3. See E. Dawes and N.H. Baynes, Three Byzantine Saints, (Oxford, 1948).

4. The Desert Fathers, trans. by Helen Waddell, (London, 1936), Introduction, p. 1 ff.

5. See E.R. Dodds, op. cit., ch. 1.

stresses Antony's devotion, his extreme asceticism, and his constant battles with the demons of temptation. St. Antony influenced the ascetic practices in the monasteries of the East for centuries. The Eastern Church also came at an early stage to recognise the importance of its desert hermits who, in the tradition of John the Baptist (an important figure to both the Desert Fathers and the Irish ecclesiastics), spent their time in solitary meditation suffering the vicissitudes of climate and a scanty diet with little or no relief.

Such holy men were able to gather disciples around them and form their own communities. Once one of these holy men became known, he could attract pilgrims seeking spiritual advice. Holy men like the pillar saints (for example, St. Simeon Stylites) were popular preachers and wielded a considerable amount of influence in the Church and in local government.¹ The ascetic, being outside the normal controls and conventions of society, could act as arbitrator between rulers and the ruled, between small communities and the world, between men and their Maker.² The recluse had nothing to lose, nor anything (supposedly) he wished to gain.

The Irish saint is similarly represented as mediator, protector, and petitioner to local rulers on behalf of his followers, acquiring his ends by some miracle or display of divine power.³ Sometimes, as in the case of St. Maedóc, the saint petitions God by fasting until his demands are met.⁴ In heavenly, as in earthly, suits

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1. Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity", Journal of Roman Studies 61 (1971), p. 84.
 2. Henry Mayr-Harting, "Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse", History 60 (1975), p. 337-352.
 3. See List of Motifs, Sec. III, 2.ii below.
 4. Maedóc: BNE I xliii and Plummer, VSH II xxxiii; also Énda: Plummer, VSH II xxxi and Patrick: VT p. 113-119. This is, of course, a reflex of the archaic practice of 'fasting against' a person of superior status, as described in the Irish Laws.

the saint inevitably succeeds: not only does his community benefit but his reputation is enhanced. A classic case is the contention between St. Rúadán and king Diarmait; both sides fast against the other, until the king is tricked into submission.¹

The Lives contain several accounts of the saints' severe ascetic practices, designed to magnify their sanctity. St. Cainnech endured fierce deprivation in the wilderness, to the extent that a young boy accompanying him died of starvation (but was later revived).² St. Coemgen does cross-vigil for so long that a blackbird builds a nest in his hand; he continues his exercise until the young birds hatch and fly away.³ A similar incident occurs in the Life of St. Finnian, where his pupil Columba is found meditating with arms outstretched while birds rest on his hands and head.⁴ St. Findchúa spends seven years suspended from seven sickles.⁵ St. Íta, like St. Cainnech, undergoes such a severe fast that an angel warns her to stop.⁶ As already mentioned, fasting was a regular means of gaining one's petition, although not always approved by the Deity.

The severities of their ascetic regime might not always meet the approval of the saints' colleagues, whether sanctioned by heaven or not. When seven of St. Comgall's disciples die of hunger, he is asked by his fellow saints to relax his rule.⁷ St. Fintan allowed no cows, butter or milk in his monastery until he was rebuked by St.

1. Rúadán: Plummer, VSH II xvi. See also Comgall: Plummer, VSH II xlv, xlvii; Déclán: Plummer, VSH II xix; Maedóc: Plummer, VSH II xxxv.

2. Cainnech: Plummer, VSH I xxix.

3. Coemgen: BNE I x.

4. BL 2646; Heist, VSH p. 102.

5. BL 2937.

6. Íta: Plummer, VSH II x.

7. Comgall: Plummer, VSH II xii.

Cainnech.¹ St. Mochuda required his monks to plough their land without the aid of horses or oxen, but a rebuke from St. Finnian changed his mind.²

The Irish saints accepted the rebukes of their seniors in matters other than ascetic rules. St. Columba, swayed by the jealous remarks of his monks, ordered the child of one of his lay-workers to be thrown into the sea, for the man loved it too much. Two white birds protected the infant until it was rescued by St. Cainnech who was on his way to Iona. The elder saint severely rebuked the younger, and "vix potuit placari mens sancti Kainnici".³

It may be remarked that exercising a check on ascetic excesses was not the only motive for intervention by one saint in the ministrations of another. St. Finnian, hearing how so many flocked to St. Rúadán because of his marvellous lime tree and the sustaining properties of its sap, caused the sap to cease flowing on the grounds that monks should concentrate more on spiritual matters and less on material pleasures.⁴

The last example, which concludes with Finnian declaring Ruadan to be exemplary in the faith, is capable of a symbolic interpretation, in terms of the control of doctrinal deviance, as well as (or instead of) asceticism as such. The competing claims to jurisdiction of expanding monasteries may also be discerned on the occasion of St. Mochuda being expelled from his monastery of Rathen at the instigation of neighbouring monastic communities⁵ - out of their jealousy, according to his Life, but more likely because he

1. Fintan: Plummer, VSH II iv-v.

2. Mochuda: Plummer, VSH I xlvi (Cathagus); ITS 16 p. 117.

3. Cainnech: Plummer, VSH I xxi.

4. Rúadán: Plummer, VSH II xiv; Finnian: Heist, VSH p. 103.

5. Mochuda: Plummer, VSH I liii-lix; ITS 16 p. 123-133. See also BNE I p. 300-311.

was occupying land already crowded by ecclesiastical establishments.¹ Both these examples lead to a further conclusion, that the compilers of the Lives recognised a hierarchy amongst the saints, some of whom enjoyed a more exalted rank and wielded greater power than others.

Personal acts of asceticism, such as immersing oneself in freezing water, fasting alone in the wilderness, or suffering self-mortification,² were thus an integral part of the image of sanctity projected in the Lives. On the other hand, they tended not to be so admirable when forced upon others. Asceticism was contingent upon solitary meditation; it was a self-imposed penance practised by the hermit in his cell who, to be a true 'soldier of Christ', had to renounce all luxuries and subsist on the barest of necessities.³ The ascetic ideal of the desert saints was embraced with enthusiasm by the Irish, but it was conceived in the Lives as a voluntary act and a personal achievement by the saint himself, rather than as a communal exercise.

The Irish saints of history differed from the saints of the East in the emphasis they placed on pilgrimage or "peregrinatio", leaving one's homeland for permanent exile.⁴ To the Irish, this was a type of martyrdom, white martyrdom, and therefore a step towards perfection in holiness. The author of the BL Life of St. Columba who chose the theme of pilgrimage to introduce the saint's vita was well aware of its importance in the traditions of St. Columba who

1. See Plummer, VSH I p. cxxi.

2. Eg. Coemgen: Plummer, VSH I xviii; Comgall: Plummer, VSH II xlvi; Féchín: Plummer, VSH II xvii; Finnian: BL 2719; Mochuda: Plummer, VSH I li, ITS 16 p. 123.

3. See Plummer, VSH I p. cxix-cxxii and J. Ryan, op. cit., p. 5-10.

4. K. Hughes, "The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage", JEH 11 (1960), p. 143-151.

forsook all of Ireland for permanent exile on Iona. The concept of "peregrinatio", whether voluntary or penitential, was more important to the Irish than to any other saints; the desert saints left their homes, but seldom strayed far from their homeland.

The archaeological evidence for the monasteries evokes a way of life that was difficult, harsh, and even dangerous.¹ Shelter was minimal and uncomfortable, food supplies were spare and often unreliable. Yet, the vitae present the monastic life as an ideal which hundreds embraced under the tutelage and guidance of the saints. The severities of the monks' existence and the rigours of the monastic regime become, in the Lives, a kind of glorification. In general, then, the monastic tradition founded in the deserts of Syria and Egypt, which spread throughout the Church of late antiquity, was the one which prevailed in Ireland, and the eremetical lifestyle fostered by St. Antony became the standard of the Irish monasteries. The hermit's cell, solitary meditation, and an ascetic way of life were the ideals of the Irish holy man both in fact and in the monastic literary tradition drawn on in the Lives.²

The saints portrayed in the vitae are more like figures of legend than of history, backed by the traditions, beliefs, and customs of the medieval Christian Church. In the eyes of the layman, the saint's way of life gave him a power beyond comprehension and a standing outside the normal social order. The struggles of these "milites Christi" against the temptations of the world and their self-inflicted sufferings for the sake of God were heroic acts, for like their counterparts in secular literature, the saints are endowed with strength and endurance beyond the capacity of ordinary mortals.

1. See L. and M. de Paor, Early Christian Ireland, (London, 1958).

2. See Gerard Murphy, Early Irish Lyrics, (Oxford, 1956), p. 2 f.

3.ii. The concept of the Hero in Irish tradition

The last two chapters have considered native and Christian traditions as sources for the Irish saints' Lives in respect of thematic inspiration, construction, context, and motifs. Thus far, we have looked at the image of the saints being projected in the Lives, in a descriptive and historical sense, and at the status of these saints as "heroes of the new order", their lives and acts exemplifying the ideals expected in a certain interpretation of Christian behaviour par excellence.

It is now necessary to look at this question of image and status in a more fundamental way, from the viewpoint of the composers of these Lives and their audience. There are two ways in which we must see them: collectively (that is, as the 'heroes' of an 'Age of Saints'), and individually, as the heroes (in a rather different sense) venerated by communities spiritually descended from them. In both cases, it will be shown that powerful traditional concepts were at work, a proper understanding of which provides the key to a serious assessment of the genre and a satisfactory explanation of its intention and characteristics.

The terms 'Heroic Age' and 'Age of Saints', as used by the Chadwicks, are convenient points of reference for the literary historian and student of ecclesiastical history, yet every period of history has its heroes and holy men. The Chadwickian use of these terms imposes a preconceived and limiting value on the terms 'hero' and 'saint'. In their terminology, a hero is a warrior who proves his heroism in battle; opposed to him is the saint, a man in holy orders, attached to a monastery, who is esteemed for his knowledge, education, and religious fervour. Mrs. Chadwick accepts this definition of

'saint',¹ having stated earlier that the word "sanctus" has had different meanings at different times.² This is somewhat imprecise; it would be more correct to say that, while the word "sanctus" has been used consistently to refer to that which is considered to be holy, the object of this description has been different at different times. The same is true of the word 'hero', which has been applied to several different types of people, generally to describe a man who is above the ordinary in strength, skill, knowledge, and personality, and whose deeds have been beneficial to his people.

The concept of the 'Age of Saints' is implicit in the existence of collections of vitae; one need only look at their shared background, conventions, and overlapping dramatis personae, or compare the way a historian like Keating groups his excerpts from them. The Lives formed, in other words, a cycle, on a par with the Ulster, Finn, and other cycles in early Irish literature. One must remember that the stories of an Age of Heroes are grouped together by later generations; the 'Age of Saints' is likewise seen in retrospect, so that there are two terms at work here, the Age itself, and the 'age' to which it is an Age. The circumstances which create an Age of this sort in the literary traditions of a given culture are present when men begin to study their own history and try to perceive a pattern of events, a logical progression and classification of political and social conditions. Tales which relate to the same period and follow a similar, general line of thought then form a cycle in the eyes of historians. The Lives of the early Irish saints fall into one and the same category and so form a 'saintly cycle' for the Age of Saints

1. N.K. Chadwick, op. cit., p. 4 f.

2. *ibid.*, p. 3.

as seen by church historians.

This brings us back to the status of the saints themselves, or 'saintly heroes'. The suggestion that the Lives form a literary cycle similar to a heroic cycle and that the Age of Saints is similar to a heroic age implies almost naturally a heroic status for the Irish saints. Mrs. Chadwick saw the saint as straight reflex of the hero, but it is the martial figure she sees in opposition to the saintly figure. This view has some validity in separating the man of peace from the man of war, but she does not take enough account of other categories of figures eligible for 'heroisation' in the Irish tradition. (One may mention, as well, that the concept of the 'miles Christi' implies a certain martial quality in the figure of the saint). Mrs. Chadwick asserts understandable, but unwarrantable, primacy to warrior heroes of heroic age cycles, without penetrating deeply enough into the concept of the hero and the process of heroisation itself.

To understand what is being done to the saint, one must look first at the categories of 'heroisable' figures. This includes the martial hero, of course, who is first and foremost a warrior like the classical models Heracles, Achilles, Jason, Theseus, Oedipus and Romulus among others. However, figures such as Theseus, Oedipus, and Romulus are not solely warriors in classical traditions, but kings, lawgivers, and cult figures. In Irish tradition, Cú Chulainn is the warrior-hero par excellence, possessed also of a war-like fury which makes him the personification of his type. Marie-Louise Sjoestedt has studied the ancient Celtic words for 'hero' (nia, láth gaile, cur, arg, donn) and concludes that heroism in Irish tradition is based upon ideas of fury, ardour, tumescence, and speed; the hero,

in other words, is the furious one, certainly a description which can be applied to Cú Chulainn.¹

However, the categories of heroes also include king-heroes (in the Cycles of the Kings). This has been explored convincingly by Tomás Ó Cathasaigh.² Through the formula of the international heroic biography (which will be discussed below), Ó Cathasaigh has demonstrated that the king-figure Cormac Mac Airt is indeed a hero in Irish tradition, thus refuting a statement made by the Chadwicks that Cormac as a king and lawgiver "stands for intellectual as against heroic activities".³

It is useful, at this point, to invoke the theories of the comparative mythologist, Georges Dumézil, who has maintained that Indo-European society was based upon a tripartite system in which existed three classes: priests, warriors, and cultivators, each with their respective functions of sovereignty, physical power, and fertility.⁴ Ó Cathasaigh describes Cormac in Dumézilian terms, as primarily a hero of the "first function", a wise hero and a king-hero, whereas someone like Cú Chulainn is primarily a hero of the "second function".⁵ Nevertheless, in his role as the ideal king, Cormac is seen to be involved with representatives of the second and third functions, and his own function is not exclusive of the other two.⁶

1. Gods and Heroes of the Celts, trans. by Myles Dillon, (London, 1949), p. 58-59. Significantly, nia and nóeb derive from the same root, suggesting the concept of holiness as active force.

2. The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt, (Dublin, 1977).

3. The Growth of Literature, op. cit., p. 100.

4. Mythe et Épopée, tom. 1 et 2, (Paris, 1968 and 1971). See also C. Scott Littleton, The New Comparative Mythology, (Los Angeles, 1966), p. 1-22.

5. Ó Cathasaigh, op. cit., p. 11.

6. *ibid.*, p. 26-71, 85 ff., 104-106.

Without a full commitment to Dumézil, this may lead to a conception of heroisation according to his three functions.

A similar idea of heroisation according to function was proposed by Alwyn Rees with respect to Celtic saints.¹ Rees also used the international heroic biography to illustrate his theory. Basing his scheme on that of Lord Raglan's (see Sec. III, 1.i. below), Rees pointed out that the Lives of the saints show a conventional pattern which corresponds in the main to the pattern found in the careers of traditional heroes. The differences in the saints' Lives and the heroes' were the result of the saints' celibate and religious character. Rees revised Raglan's scheme for what he termed the "ascetic hero". His revision emphasised certain functions assumed by the saints which were reminiscent of the functions of divine priests and kings.² The saints, he says, had become connected with the prosperity and well-being of the people, and the fertility of the land, qualities associated with priests of pre-Christian Britain. The circumstances of the saint's birth, heralded by an omen or a miracle, may be indicative of divine origin, in Rees' view.

The saint overcomes his enemy by means of his supernatural power; here, Rees draws a parallel with the contest of magic "which is an essential preliminary to the enthroning of a divine king".³ The death of the saint, with its attendant omens and miracles, takes on a sacrificial significance, establishing a new connection with the deity each time, in the same way that sacrifice was perceived in the pre-Christian religions.⁴ Rees puts forward the figure of the saint

1. "The Divine Hero in Celtic Hagiology", *Folklore* 47 (1936), p. 30-41.

2. *ibid.*, p. 38-39. See Sec. III, 2.i. below.

3. *ibid.*, p. 40.

4. *ibid.*, p. 41.

in Celtic hagiology not only as a type of hero in the tradition of heroes, but also as a type of substitute deity.

This concept of heroisation is a large, dark area in which various scholars have struggled to find a way towards a general theory involving 'divine' and 'hero'. Admittedly, it can be argued that heroes could become sacred personages. An attempt to prevent this case may be seen in A.G. van Hamel's examination of Celtic mythology¹ which appeared prior to Rees' article on the divine hero. According to van Hamel, certain divine beings such as the sons of the king of Iruath in the Finn cycle are not seen as gods in Celtic belief, but are more like "divine magicians" or divine protectors. They assist in war, provide abundance in peace, heal diseases, and perform all the functions expected of beings gifted with supernatural powers which are exercised through magic, not personal strength or knowledge.

Van Hamel's "divine magicians" appear to perform protective functions similar to the functions of heroes and saints, as we have seen from Rees. In a post-Dumézilian study, Françoise Le Roux describes Celtic society as a predominately theocratic organisation in which there existed a class of warrior-priests who combined the two concepts of the sacerdotal and the martial.² Men designated god-heroes, like Cú Chulainn, show their superiority to ordinary warriors by their divine quality.

More deeply penetrating than these is Stefan Czarnowski who attempted to define the hero in Irish society according to his social

1. "Aspects of Celtic Mythology", Proc. of the British Academy 20 (1934), p. 207-248.
2. "Aspects de la fonction guerrière chez les celtes", Ogam 17 (1965), p. 175-188. See also Le Roux, "Le Dieu Druide et le Druide divin: Recherches sur la fonction sacerdotal celtique", Ogam 12 (1960), p. 349-382.

status and function, and to apply his definition to "le héros national de l'Irlande", St. Patrick.¹ The hero, in Czarnowski's view, is the incarnation and perfection of a social value or ideal which conforms to the group which created him.² He is elected to the status of hero by his society, and here Czarnowski draws an analogy between heroes and saints- both are named by public voice.³ In representation, the hero is a fighter, a protector, and a victor; the act of combat is the heroic par excellence. So, too, does the saint contend with his enemies- the flesh, sinners, pagans, and demons- and is victorious over them.⁴ By his death, the hero becomes a sacred personage, a cult figure, a "mort divinisé". In short, Czarnowski defines the hero as

un homme qui a rituellement conquis, par les mérites de sa vie ou de sa mort, la puissance effective inhérente à un groupe ou à une chose dont il est le représentant et dont il personnifie la valeur sociale fondamentale. 5

Czarnowski's principle of classification is based upon "la nature du lien qui unit les membres du groupe".⁶ In other words, heroes are classified by the nature of their function in the particular society which elects them. This applies especially to people like founders of religious orders or patrons of crafts. The hero is a cultural creation in Czarnowski's definition; St. Patrick is a hero to the Irish because they have perceived him as such, but in the way that Czarnowski would have us believe.

1. Czarnowski, op. cit.,

2. "Le héros est avant tout le représentant, le témoin et partant le champion de l'ordre d'être ou de choses dont il incarne la valeur par définition". Czarnowski, p. 6.

3. *ibid.*, p. 9.

5. *ibid.*, p. 27.

4. *ibid.*, p. 13.

6. *ibid.*, p. 329.

At the core of Czarnowski's interpretation is his notion of "la mort divine". In death, the hero is transformed, becoming part of a special class between gods and men, and almost god-like himself.¹ The theme of "la mort divine" is, according to Czarnowski, the fundamental theme in Irish mythology. He sets out to demonstrate that there exists a close relationship between the Otherworld gods and the hero of Irish society; this aspect of divinity in association with the hero is a crucial factor in the consolidation of his view that St. Patrick is the national hero of Ireland. The pagan gods of Ireland, he is saying, take on a heroic form, particularly in the festivals which are a re-enactment of heroic deeds. The gods have two existences, a human and a divine, divinised in death. In the ritual of the fête, the human image is sacrificed, to be resurrected immediately as a divinity.² In the Easter festival, St. Patrick assumes the role of sacrificial god; in his legends, he has connections with the Otherworld equal to the initiates of the pagan festival. His Baculus Jesu is likened to the magic wand or sacred branch which is the key to the Otherworld; his voyage to an isle in the Tyrrhenian sea³ is said to be comparable to an initiation myth.⁴

En résumé saint Patrick est étroitement apparenté aux personnages héroïques irlandais, c'est-à-dire aux morts individualisés et à ceux qui sont rituellement entrés dans le pays divin. Il leur ressemble par ses rapports avec le monde des morts et par les caractères qui lui sont attribués en tant qu'a un mort. 5

1. Czarnowski, op. cit., p. 27.

2. *ibid.*, p. 89-206.

3. Four Latin Lives of Saint Patrick, ed. by Ludwig Bieler, (Dublin, 1971), p. 77, 132.

4. Czarnowski, op. cit., p. 196-197.

5. *ibid.*, p. 205.

By the nature of their death, according to Czarnowski, gods and heroes become equal in status;¹ a ritual death and a violent death are forms of heroic death. The dead are the gods incarnate and the gods are "des morts divinisés".² St. Patrick is a hero because he possesses all the attributes which Czarnowski classifies as heroic; not only has the saint close relationships with the Otherworld, he is a protector, a champion, and, in death, a "mort divine".

In their functional aspect, whether expressed in Dumézilian terms or not, the concepts of heroes, warriors, and saints in Irish tradition overlap with one another, and with the divine beings of Celtic mythology. On this point, Czarnowski and Rees are in agreement and each has a valid case for presenting the saint as hero. Against the views of Czarnowski and Rees, however, we should place the theory devised by T.F. O'Rahilly concerning the mythological basis of the hero in Irish tradition, and the modern revision of this theory made by Tomás Ó Cathasaigh.

O'Rahilly saw the myth of the Birth of the Hero as a common Indo-European myth in which the "newly-born Hero "slew" or overcame the Otherworld deity".³ Ó Cathasaigh re-states his theory in structuralist terms. The myth is an expression, basic to itself, of the confrontation between the hero and the god, which is continuously re-enacted in history. Ó Cathasaigh sees the opposition of these two types, the designated hero and the Otherworld god, as basic to the system of Irish myth.⁴ Within the mythical structure, the represent-

1. Czarnowski, op. cit., p. 217-218.

2. *ibid.*, p. 218.

3. Early Irish History and Mythology, (Dublin, 1946), p. 278 ff.

4. Ó Cathasaigh, op. cit., p. 14-19. This idea of a binary opposition was also expressed by Sjoestedt in her analysis of Celtic gods and heroes (cf.).

ative realisations of the hero (such as Finn, Cormac, or Lug) stand in a paradigmatic relationship; that is, they occupy the same structural position and may be substituted one for the other in the paradigm. The Otherworld god stands in a syntagmatic relationship to the hero, eternally in opposition (but not necessarily hostile). This relationship disallows substitution between the two types in the basic mythical structure.

Ó Cathasaigh has said that Irish myth is concerned with the relationship between men and the gods. In structuralist terms, he states that

a basic opposition in Irish myth is between man and god, and this opposition is mediated in the person of the hero. 1

The key to understanding the concept of the hero (and the saint) in Irish tradition lies in the word "mediator". We are dealing with two separate worlds, two different dimensions of space and time. One, the Otherworld, is the world of myth; the other, this world, is the world of popular tales and legends. Between them stands the hero, whose legends take on mythic proportions in the heroic biography. Only he can cross the barriers between these two worlds on behalf of mankind; only he can deal with the gods and man, and defy, or ally himself, with both.

In the Otherworld, our sense of space and time is distorted; a hillside opens into a kingdom and day there is like a year on earth. The inhabitants of the Otherworld operate according to a different set of moral values. The gods are neither kind nor cruel, just nor unjust, moral nor immoral. They may be beneficent

1. "Between God and Man: The Hero of Irish Tradition", The Crane Bag 2 (1978), p. 73.

or malevolent, in the eyes of mankind, as they choose. It is the hero who justifies the gods to man, and vice versa, who arbitrates the opposing points of view so that men continue to believe in the gods and the ^{gods} continue to be beneficial to men by not totally upsetting the cosmic framework.

The hero, being semi-divine, is between two worlds, living in one (ours) but somehow being directed by the other through their intervention, friendly or hostile. Seen in retrospect (through his tales), the hero is a hero because of who he is and what he is;¹ he is born to be a hero, and on that account he performs the functions necessary to mediate between heaven and earth.

The above analysis may be applied, with some expedient alterations, to the saints of Irish tradition. They, too, are mediators between heaven and earth. They cannot be called semi-divine- that would be blasphemy in the Church- but they are a special class of men marked out by God's grace. They do not become saints by performing miracles; they perform miracles because they are saints. Seen in retrospect, they are born to be great in grace and sanctity; their Lives say as much, and in the pattern of their Lives they are 'heroised'.

If this definition is acceptable and valid, we may now draw into our discussion a narrative feature whose association with heroisable figures has long been recognised, that is, the so-called international heroic biography. In every cycle of tales concerning a hero, it is argued, there is a certain pattern of events to which all heroes' lives more or less conform. This heroic biographical

1. Cf. Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, (Princeton, N.J., 1971), p. 319.

pattern is seen as the basic heroic myth, repeated trans-historically and trans-culturally so that the hero may be recognised as such in spite of the changes in historical views of later generations.

Ó Cathasaigh has suggested that the word 'hero' be employed as the generic term for the type of personage who fits the heroic biographical pattern,¹ so that both Cormac and Cú Chulainn, although of different character, may be considered bona fide heroes in Irish tradition. He also warns that in an analysis of a particular national group of heroes, the pattern may show several variations owing to the cultural context. The pattern, he has proved, was valid for the Irish because it had meaning in the native cultural matrix.²

There may be variations in the pattern also according to the different kinds of heroes, as Rees has tried to demonstrate. Although his concept of the hero in Irish tradition was not entirely compatible with O'Rahilly's and Ó Cathasaigh's, it will be seen that he was justified in applying the international pattern of heroic biography to a kind of hero other than the martial figure, that is, the saint.

1. The Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt, op. cit., p. 10.

2. *ibid.*, p. 7.

Section III

1. Heroic Biography

- i. Previous scholarship from von Hahn to Ó Cathasaigh
- ii. The 'heroic biographical pattern' in the Lives of the Irish saints

2. The Saintly Biography

- i. The pattern of the Lives of the Irish saints, with summaries of the Lives in terms of the heroic biographical pattern
- ii. The recurring motifs and themes, with a List of Motifs arising from the heroic biographical pattern

1. Heroic Biography

i. Previous scholarship from von Hahn to Ó Cathasaigh

The pattern of a hero's life has come under investigation in a number of studies aimed at formulating a structure which may be deemed universal to hero tales in all, or all western, cultures.¹ The efforts of such scholars as J.G. von Hahn, Alfred Nutt, Otto Rank, Lord Raglan, and Joseph Campbell were directed towards finding a prototype of the heroic biography by tracing the origin and diffusion of heroic cycles in narrative tradition through their common (or, rather, universal) themes and patterns. Their definitions and classifications of hero tales in narrative tradition suffer from two recurrent weaknesses: first, they tend to depend overmuch on preconceived theories about the Hero of tradition (the most frequent shortcoming being to see him primarily as a warrior figure); and secondly, they have often been too ready to impose a generalised pattern on heroic cycles to fit in with their preconceptions. However, these and other scholars have agreed that heroic biographies contain certain recurrent themes and sequences.

In 1876, J.G. von Hahn, an Austrian scholar who collected and classified Greek and Albanian tales, introduced the Aryan Expulsion-and-Return Formula in a pioneer study of folktale patterns, which postulated a biographical pattern for heroic narrative consisting of sixteen points bearing upon major incidents or elements of a hero's life.² The pattern is based upon what von Hahn considered to

1. See Archer Taylor, "The Biographical Pattern in Traditional Narrative", Journal of the Folklore Institute 1 (1964), p. 114-129, which gives a useful guide to work up to c. 1960.

2. First appeared in von Hahn' Sagwissenschaftliche Studien, (Jena, 1876). Cf. the translation by H.H. Wilson in his edition of John Dunlop's History of Prose Fiction, (London, 1888), vol. 1, p. 500 f.

be a primary theme in Indo-European tales: the hero is expelled from his homeland and subsequently returns to claim his birthright. The scheme he devised was divided into four sections- birth, youth, return, and subordinate figures- as follows:

Birth

1. Principal hero illegitimate
2. Mother, daughter of native prince
3. Father, a god or stranger

Youth

4. Omen to a parent
5. Hero, in consequence, exposed
6. Suckled by brutes
7. Reared by childless herdsman
8. Arrogance of the youth
9. Service abroad

Return

10. Triumphant homecoming, and return from abroad
11. Fall of the persecutor; acquisition of sovereignty; liberation of mother
12. Foundation of a city
13. Extraordinary death

Subordinate Figures

14. Slandered or incestuous and early death
15. Vengeance of the injured servant
16. Murder of the younger brother

The heroes whom von Hahn chose for his formula included Perseus, Heracles, Oedipus, Romulus and Remus, Siegfried, Cyrus, and Krishna. Under the broad headings of his pattern, with the subordinate figures as variants to the three major groupings, von Hahn found that the biographies of these heroes generally followed his formula, thus validating its existence and operation in heroic tradition.

The Aryan Expulsion-and-Return Formula created little comment at the time of its publication and was almost ignored except in Britain where it was taken up by Alfred Nutt who applied it for the

first time to heroic biographies of Celtic tradition.¹ Nutt dealt firstly with the figures of Perceval and Peredur as they appear in the Arthurian cycle², but found it difficult to perceive von Hahn's formula at work, particularly in the romance of Peredur, because of the predominance of episodes relating to the quest for the Holy Grail. Here, Nutt inadvertently uncovered a major weakness in von Hahn's theory, for it now became clear that von Hahn's emphasis on expulsion-and-return elements as/^{the}ideology behind the pattern was rather limiting. It is true that the theme of the Hero's Quest, as in the Quest for the Holy Grail, could be presented as an elaboration of "Service abroad" (Point 9 in von Hahn's pattern), wherein the hero undertakes a journey (or a task), but it is obvious from a consideration of the Celtic tests that to limit 'Quest' to such a subordinate role is quite counter to the evidence; that is, to demote an episode like the Otherworld journey of Pwyll and similar to Point 9 unnecessarily obscures what is clearly a primal theme.

Nutt had more success in presenting the Irish hero Finn as a 'formula hero' and was able to find parallels in Hellenic stories, such as the tales of Theseus and of Perseus (the latter, like Finn, usurps his grandfather, having been raised secretly to avoid being slain). Although/^{he}stated that he found it difficult to recognise the heroic biography, or "Heldensagen", in Celtic tales, he did find von Hahn's formula a useful vehicle for interpreting Celtic tales but not entirely adequate. In order to make the pattern more relevant to Celtic tradition, Nutt decided to make two additions which

1. "The Aryan Expulsion-and-Return Formula in the Folk- and Hero-Tales of the Celts", The Folklore Record 4 (1881), p. 1-44.

2. See further Ludwig Mühlhausen, "Neue Beiträge zum Perceval-Thema", ZCP 17 (1927), 1-32 - p. 1-2.

he believed would be particularly applicable to Celtic tales. At Point 9, he added 9a, "He attacks and slays monsters", and 9b, "He acquires supernatural knowledge through eating a magic fish".¹

However, he neglected to point out that these incidents were relevant to the lives of other so-called Aryan heroes, Sigurd/Siegfried for one, and were not exclusive to Celtic heroes.

Nutt emphasised the mythic character of Celtic tales and their lack of historical reality; the close parallels between Celtic hero tales and other, similar Aryan tales he took to be proof of their mythic origin. But since Celtic tales contained many of the elements also to be found in these other Aryan tales, Nutt concluded that the difference between Celtic Heldensage and the common Aryan folktale was an evolutionary one- "the one represents a different stage of myth-development from the other".² Ultimately, however, he believed the Aryan Expulsion-and-Return Formula was not in agreement with Celtic heroic tradition. Nutt's article also created little comment and was apparently forgotten.

The psychoanalyst, Otto Rank, a pupil and associate of Freud, published a heroic pattern similar to von Hahn's, although he nowhere mentions the Aryan Expulsion-and-Return Formula.³ The major difference in Rank's investigation is his study of heroes outside the "Aryan" tradition, thus proving the pattern to be more international than either von Hahn or Nutt had thought. Rank saw the different heroic biographies as being variations of a basic prototype.

Another version of the pattern was devised by Lord Raglan

1. Nutt, op. cit., p. 2.

2. *ibid.*, p. 41.

3. See The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings, ed. by Philip Freund, (New York, 1959).

and was based mostly upon a reading of Greek myths.¹ In view of Rees' adaptation of his pattern (mentioned above), it is worthwhile comparing Raglan's scheme to von Hahn's and Nutt's.

1. The hero's mother is a royal virgin
2. His father is a king, and
3. Often a near relation of his mother, but
4. The circumstances of his conception are unusual, and
5. He is also reputed to be the son of a god.
6. At birth, an attempt is made, often by his father, or his maternal grandfather, to kill him, but
7. He is spirited away, and
8. Reared by foster-parents in a far country.
9. We are told nothing of his childhood, but
10. On reaching manhood he returns, or goes to his future kingdom.
11. After victory over the king, and/or a giant, dragon, or wild beast,
12. He marries a princess, often the daughter of his predecessor, and
13. Becomes king.
14. For a time he reigns uneventfully, and
15. Prescribes laws, but
16. Later he loses favor with the gods and/or his subjects, and
17. Is driven from his throne and city, after which
18. He meets with a mysterious death
19. Often at the top of a hill.
20. His children, if any, do not succeed him.
21. His body is not buried, but nevertheless
22. He has one or more holy sepulchres. 2

Lord Raglan's scheme is, in outline, similar to von Hahn's; the theme of expulsion-and-return is present in his pattern but not fundamental to it. Raglan emphasised what he considered to be the ritual nature of the pattern and its non-connection with historical reality. However, like Rank, he was concerned to establish an archetype, a master pattern from which variations are made by individual storytellers. Joseph Campbell has since taken this further and

1. "The Hero of Tradition", Folklore 45 (1934), p. 212-231.

2. Quoted from Lord Raglan, The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama, (London, 1949), p. 178-179.

put forward the notion of the "monomyth",¹ an archetypal heroic adventure based upon a sequence of separation-initiation-return², which appears to be quite similar to the Aryan Expulsion-and-Return Formula. Unlike von Hahn, however, Campbell saw an historical development in the numerous versions of the monomyth and recognised the variations of the hero of tradition.

The common denominator in each of the analyses discussed is the belief in, and the struggle to identify, a unifying element in the structure of heroic biographies. As Taylor states:

In the pattern Hahn sees the unity of a biography altered and adapted by a traditional narrative formula; Rank, the unity of human psychology; Lord Raglan, the unity of pseudo-history and ritual; and Campbell, the unity of a formula (mythological or psychological in origin) that develops as culture develops and changes. 3

In addition to these scholars is the work of the Dutch folklorist, Jan de Vries, who has put forward his own version of the heroic biographical pattern in a study of heroic narrative.⁴ De Vries, drawing on the theories of Mircea Eliade, suggests that the heroic biographical pattern is based upon initiation rites, the passage from youth to adulthood and from death to a new life, and that such a ritual derives ultimately from the gods' first act of creation.⁵ De Vries saw the heroic biographical pattern in terms of a "mythic" expression of a hero's life; the heroic legend, he says, is a myth "not of a god, but of a man who raised himself to the level of the

1. Campbell, op. cit.

2. *ibid.*, p. 245.

3. Taylor, op. cit., p. 119-120.

4. Heroic Song and Heroic Legend, trans. by B.J. Timmer, (London, 1963). Taylor does not mention de Vries, as a translation of his work did not appear until after Taylor's article was published.

5. *ibid.*, p. 220-222.

gods".¹ De Vries, like other scholars before him, concentrates on the martial hero; his advantage over his predecessors is, for this study, twofold. First, he has shown that heroic narrative in some cases is related to historical events and personages, and that these events and persons are transformed in the heroic biography,² a process which may be described as mythologisation. Secondly, de Vries' formulation of the pattern of heroic biography is less rigid than either von Hahn's or Raglan's, yet is neither loosely defined nor lacking in detail. His scheme covers ten major points in a hero's life, from his begetting to his death, with variant motifs included under each category. His formulation, while designed for the martial hero, is flexible enough to be adapted to other kinds of heroes, including the saints, and it is thus expedient to quote it at length. What follows is a condensed version from his book, the points in brackets being summaries of the original text.

I. The begetting of the hero

- (A. Mother is a virgin, either overpowered by a god or has extramarital relations with the father).
- (B. Father is a god).
- (C. Father is an animal often the disguise of a god).
- (D. The child is born of incest).

II. The birth of a hero

- (A. Takes place in an unnatural way).
- (B. The 'unborn' hero, i.e. born by caesarean section).

III. The youth of the hero is threatened

- (A. Child is exposed. Father is warned that child is a threat or mother tries to cover her shame).
- (B. Exposed child is fed by animals).
- (C. Child is found by or brought to shepherds, fishermen, etc.).

1. De Vries, op. cit., p. 241.

2. *ibid.*, p. 194-209.

- (D. In Greek legend, various heroes are raised by a mythological figure).
- IV. The way in which the hero is brought up
 (A. Hero reveals strength, courage, or other particular features at an early age).
 (B. Or, child is slow in development, dumb or pretends to be mentally deficient).
- V. The hero often acquires invulnerability
- VI. One of the most common heroic deeds is the fight with a dragon or another monster
- VII. The hero wins a maiden, usually after overcoming great dangers
- VIII. The hero makes an expedition to the underworld
- IX. When the hero is banished in his youth he returns later and is victorious over his enemies. In some cases he has to leave the realm again which he has won with such difficulty
- X. The death of the hero
 (Heroes often die young and their death is miraculous) 1

De Vries' heroic biographical pattern has been applied with great success by Tomás Ó Cathasaigh to the life of Cormac mac Airt.² With a few modifications to de Vries' scheme (based to a large extent on the theories of Dumézil), Ó Cathasaigh is able to argue with considerable effect Cormac's status as an example of 'the Hero of Irish tradition'. Ó Cathasaigh's main concern is to demonstrate how the heroic pattern operates within Irish tradition, that the native ideology supplies the parameters which give meaning to the international pattern in an Irish context. Thus, the theme of kingship and the functions of the ideal king in Irish society eclipse the theme of exile-and-return in his analysis.

1. De Vries, op. cit., p. 211-216.

2. The Heroic Biography of Cormac Mac Airt, op. cit.

Like de Vries, Ó Cathasaigh is concerned as well with the problem of the relationship between legendary events and historical facts. Ó Cathasaigh accepts the standpoint of de Vries, that heroic biography is related to a certain degree to the facts of history but that in the pattern, the facts of history take on a different perspective, that

... the human person (real or imaginary) is transmuted into something quite other, that is, into a sacred personage. 1

Ó Cathasaigh uses the term "transhistorical model", invented by Mircea Eliade, to describe the operation of the heroic biography in the Irish cultural matrix,² although he admits that Eliade's concept has its limitations as far as Irish tradition is concerned.³ However, the concept of a trans-historical model is an aid in understanding the recurrence of the heroic biographical pattern in Indo-European cultures, including Irish. Previous studies have proved that such a pattern does exist in a number of cultures; Ó Cathasaigh's study has shown that the pattern has meaning in an Irish context, so far as king-heroes are concerned. It has been made clear from the last section that the themes and motifs which constitute the pattern can occur in the 'life cycles' of different kinds of heroes, certainly for martial heroes but also, as we shall now seek to show, for saints.

1. Ó Cathasaigh, op. cit., p. 5.

2. *ibid.*

3. *ibid.*, p. 100.

1.ii. The heroic biographical pattern in the Lives of the Irish saints

Whatever ultimate validity the historical-mythological approach to biography may have, with such precedents it has become evident from every^a cursory reading that the Lives of the Irish saints conform to a pattern similar to those proposed for the study of secular heroic biographies and a scheme, like that of de Vries', could be applied directly to these Lives with considerable effect. As will be shown, however, it is preferable to regard the Lives as a special sub-category of the heroic biography with its own preoccupations and morphology. Having recognised this fact, we are able to construct a schema for the "saintly biography", based strictly on a reading of the Lives of the Irish saints, the results of which seem amply to justify the procedure, and enable us to explain the inner workings of the Lives in a fuller and more satisfactory way than has hitherto been possible.

As mentioned above, a previous essay in this direction was made by Alwyn Rees, who applied the scheme proposed by Lord Raglan to the Lives of selected Celtic saints.¹ Not unnaturally, Rees was obliged to modify Raglan's pattern, and his scheme differed slightly in methodology, presentation, and approach, "to meet the particular case of what may be termed the ascetic hero".² The pattern he devised may be summarised as follows:

1. The birth of the saint is foretold.
2. His mother is of royal descent.
3. His father is a king or noble.
4. Some saints are born of incest or have an incestuous union in their ancestry.

1. Rees, op. cit. (see Sec. II, 3.ii above).

2. *ibid.*, p. 31.

5. The circumstances of the saint's conception are frequently unusual.
6. The divine nature of the child is often represented symbolically.
7. As a rule, a miracle occurs at the time of birth.
8. An attempt is sometimes made on the life of the infant saint, but he is saved by divine providence.
9. The child is seldom reared at home.
10. On reaching manhood the saint performs a miracle which seems to serve as a sign that he has reached spiritual manhood.
11. He sets out on his missionary career, and
12. He gains a victory over a chieftain, a wizard and/or a dragon.
13. After this victory the saint becomes the supreme power in the land.
14. For the remainder of his life the holy man founds churches and administers to the spiritual and material needs of the people.
15. The saint knows the time of his death beforehand.
16. The death of the saint.
17. The death is accompanied by angelic visitations and a great brilliance of supernatural light.
18. The body often retains a miraculous element after death.
19. The saints have one or more holy sepulchres which become centres of pilgrimage.

Rees justifies his revisions on the basis of what he considers to be the differences between the life of a hero (in Raglan's sense) and the life of a saint.¹ The saint does not marry a princess (no. 12 in Raglan's scheme), nor become a king (no. 13 in Raglan; the saint, however, does become a political force)². He is seldom driven away² and he has no children, except his 'spiritual' children (nos. 16-17 and 20 in Raglan). Like Raglan (and, to some extent, de Vries), Rees is concerned with the ritual significance of his subject. The Lives of the Celtic saints followed this conventional form, according to him, because they assumed in the eyes of the people a significance

1. Rees, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

2. See, however, the Life of St. Mochuda: Plummer, *VSH I* p. 170-199; *BNE I* p. 291-299 and p. 300-311, "The Expulsion of Mochuda from Rathen."

similar to that of the divine priests and kings in pre-Christian beliefs.¹ The saints performed the same functions as did the pagan priests and in death established a new link with the deity and brought certain benefits to the land, in accordance with pre-Christian beliefs.² Much of Rees' formulation is concerned with the ritual significance of the themes of Birth and Death, a subject he took up later in Celtic Heritage (written in collaboration with Brinley Rees).³

However, Rees' pattern is, like Raglan's, too rigid in its formulation, too one-sided in its application, and too prejudiced in its approach. Rees, like Plummer, considered the saints to be the inheritors of the native tradition,⁴ and he believed that this was the reason the Lives of the saints conformed to the heroic biographical pattern. Although Rees recognised the saint as a kind of hero, the "ascetic hero", as he calls him, he did not consider this factor in his reasoning. Rees is too much concerned with the "divine nature" of the saints and their relation to divine beings of Celtic tradition, without giving much consideration to their heroic qualities and to the concept of the Hero in Irish tradition.

Rees reads into the Lives a good deal of "ritual significance", but presents insufficient data to give his analysis a sounder basis. His idea of the "divine hero" in Celtic hagiology polarises one aspect of the saint and sets him up as a quasi-deity, a substitute for the old gods of Celtic belief. Rees' analysis is far too contrastive and he tends to read more into the evidence than can reasonably be deduced from it.

1. Rees, op. cit., p. 38-40.

2. *ibid.*, p. 40-41.

3. London, 1961.

4. See VSH I, Introduction, p. cxxix ff.

Nonetheless, the Lives of the saints do conform to a pattern similar to the heroic biographical pattern. The saints, because of their similarity to the Hero of tradition, because, indeed, they are a kind of hero, may well partake of the "ritual significance" perceived in heroic cycles of native Irish tradition, but this is taking a further step, which must not anticipate analysis of the actual structure of the Lives.

In our analysis of the material, the repertoire of significant items which has emerged closely resembles that of Rees; however, an empirical approach to the structuring of the "saintly biography" has shown that the inherent pattern is much nearer to de Vries' framework which is, as was remarked in the last part, a far more versatile instrument in general. I have followed de Vries' style of presentation, using a small number of major episodes each provided with its own cluster of subsidiary motifs. In determining which elements are to be considered as relevant in the present context, I have borne in mind the works of previous scholars as well as the special nature of the material, that is, the ecclesiastical provenance of the genre, the distinct milieu of its composition and transmission, and the intentions of its creators. It will be seen that I have thus included those items which may be shown to have a strategic bearing upon the saintly biographical pattern, and those which are regarded as significant by most authorities in the 'secular heroic' context, and which recur either unchanged or in ecclesiastical guise in the Lives.¹

It has not been considered appropriate to list and discuss

1. For example, the motif of the "Ring of Polycrates"- Brigit: Cogitosus 785; Cainnech: Plummer, VSH I xv; Finnian: BE 2613-2616; Kentigern: Forbes p. 99-102; Moling: Stokes Life 40. The folkloristic dimensions of such motifs are discussed below.

every recurrent motif and stereotyped item having to do with themes such as healing, transformations, divine manifestations, divine objects, cursings and blessings. Many of these are interesting enough, but we confine ourselves here to those which bear upon the biographical pattern.¹ Needless to say, there is room for doubt over the inclusion or exclusion of certain items; nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to support the exercise and to justify the main lines of its findings.

1. These motifs have been listed and classified in Cross; cf. also, Plummer, VSH I, Introduction, p. cxxix-clxxxviii for a discussion of several of the 'folk-motifs' which appear in the Lives.

2. The Saintly Biography

1. The pattern of the Lives of the Irish saints, with summaries of the Lives in terms of the heroic biographical pattern

Combining the ideas and methods of Alwyn Rees, Tomas Ó Cathasaigh, and Jan de Vries, with suitable supplementation in the light of fuller data, leads to the following proposed scheme for the Irish saints. I have included in brackets correspondences to the schemes of heroic biographical patterns quoted above in order to highlight some of the similarities, and differences, in interpretation of themes and motifs occurring in common to both saintly and heroic biographies.¹

The Saintly Biography

- I. The begetting of the saint
 - A. Mother is of royal birth, usually barren.
 - B. Father is a king or chief.
 - C. There are prophecies and omens of his birth to his parents or to another holy man.
 - D. His conception is unusual, or is accompanied by unusual events.
- II. The birth of the saint
 - A. Takes place in an unusual way or under unusual circumstances. Often the mother experiences no pain.
 - B. Angels or heavenly light are present at the birth.
 - C. The child is baptised by another holy man, and the baptism is accompanied by a miracle.
- III. The youth of the saint and his upbringing
 - A. Wild animals, often a doe, come to feed the child.
 - B. The child is accompanied by divine attendants or has divine phenomena about him. (Cf. Rees no. 6).
 - C. The child goes to learn from another holy man who recognises his sanctity.
 - D. At an early age, he displays his miraculous powers. (Cf. Rees no. 10; de Vries IV A)

1. In what follows, the 'Hero' stands for the type (mostly martial) analysed by these scholars.

- IV. The saint leaves his teacher and makes a pilgrimage (Cf. von Hahn no. 9- "Service abroad")
- A. The saint travels to Rome or a holy shrine.
 - B. The saint is guided to his place of resurrection.
 - C. The saint spends some time in the wilderness as a hermit and practises a severe regime of asceticism.
- V. The saint founds a monastery and attracts disciples (Cf. von Hahn no. 12- "The Hero founds a city").
- VI. The saint performs many miracles, mostly of healing, and tends to the needs of his community. (Cf. Raglan, no.14-15- "The Hero reigns, prescribes laws").
- A. The saint contends with the local pagan chieftain or magician, or with a monster. He is victorious and gains converts. (Cf. de Vries VI).
 - B. The saint has a vision of heaven, or is taken up to visit heaven. (Cf. de Vries VIII- "The Hero makes an expedition to the underworld").
- VII. The saint foresees the time of his death and makes prophecies. (Cf. Rees no. 15- "The Saint knows the time of his death beforehand").
- VIII. The death of the saint
- This usually occurs after a long life (in contrast to the Hero's, which is often short) and is accompanied by some divine manifestation.
- IX. After death, miracles occur at his tomb, or in association with his relics. The saint often leaves curses on his enemies, blessings on his devotees, successful petitions so that his community has certain privileges "in perpetuo".

Earlier sections of the pattern show a striking similarity between the birth of the Hero and the birth of the Saint (compare de Vries I and II with I and II of the above). Like the Hero, the Saint goes through a period of wandering or exile. It is important to note, however, that the theme has a different connotation in the life of an Irish saint: the Hero is generally expelled against his will or under circumstances beyond his control; "peregrinatio", on the

other hand, was to the Irish saints both voluntary and desirable.¹

The Saint's function as earthly mediator between men and God is reflected in Point VI of the above scheme; as a sign of favour, he is permitted to see heaven. The Hero's journey to the otherworld is also reflective of his function, in a Dumézilian sense; the Hero as the representative of the function of sovereignty (priest-king or semi-divine being) may be permitted to visit the otherworld and return.

The Saint shares with the Hero "one of the most common heroic deeds", the fight with a dragon or monster (de Vries VI, Point VI A of the above). The victory of the martial Hero leads him to acquire further status, perhaps a well-born wife and a position of political authority. The Saint's battle, whether with a druid, a monster, or a local chieftain, is scarcely a fight; his victory is a foregone conclusion. His contentions with druids or magicians are included merely to emphasise his superiority and that of his God. He does not usually slay monsters, but uses his power to tame them and consign them for eternity to a place (such as a lake) where they will ^{do} the least harm. He does not usurp enemy rulers, but humbles them, converts them to Christianity, and as a reward, gains from them land and privileges.

De Vries' Hero meets a fate which is sometimes known beforehand but always inescapable. This does not prevent him from going down fighting (as in the case of Cú Chulainn) but the outcome has been fore-doomed long since by an implacable agency. Death in battle is the apogee of the heroic life; the apogee of the saintly life, on the other hand, is a peaceful passing-away. Death for the Saint is a

1. Cf. T.M. Charles-Edwards, *op. cit.*; and K. Hughes, "The Changing Theory and Practice of Irish Pilgrimage", *op. cit.*

welcome event, the time foreseen and eagerly awaited as the final reward for an exemplary Christian life. It is the heroic ideal to go out in a blaze of glory on earth; it is the saintly ideal to pass on to glory in heaven.

In order to illustrate the pattern of the "saintly biography", summaries of a cross-section of the Lives, in terms of the biographical pattern, now follow. I have chosen for analysis those Lives which are the most coherent examples of the saintly biographical pattern, and some which contain notable motifs in the pattern. The Lives of Brigit, Patrick, and Columba are presented first, as they are chronologically early and, in respect to the main body of Irish saints' Lives, represent an early stage in the development of the genre.

Brigit

According to Cogitosus, she is born of noble Christian parents (I A,B). In her girlhood, she performs several miracles (III D), then takes the veil in order to fulfil her ambition and to avoid a marriage. Her Life is a series of miraculous deeds, mostly having to do with healing and providing for her people (VI). She is the founder of a monastery at Kildare (V) where she is supposed to be buried. Miracles are reported after her death (IX) and her feast day is the first of February, the same day as the pagan celebration for the goddess Brigit.

The BL Life makes her the illegitimate daughter of a noble and a bondmaid (I D). The bondmaid is sold to a wizard to escape the jealousy of the man's wife. Several people prophesy the birth of a marvellous child (I C). Brigit is born on the threshold of the house, neither within nor without, and so is between this world and the next (II A).

I: Cogitosus, 777A

III D: Cogitosus, 777B-778

VI: Cogitosus, passim

IX: Cogitosus, 789

(V: implied but not stated)

See BL 1154 f.

Patrick

He is born in Britain, of Christian parents, his father being a deacon (I B). At the age of sixteen, he is captured by pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland; however, the angel Victor, his companion in captivity (III B) tells him he will escape. He escapes with some pagans and on the journey, his miracles provide them with food (III D). He returns home at last but wishes to be educated in order to preach. He then goes to Gaul to study under Germanus (III C). On the death of Palladius, Patrick is chosen to be sent to Ireland (IV). The king of Tara is warned by his druids of the coming of this 'enemy'. Patrick overcomes the king and his druids when they try to prevent him from celebrating Easter at the same time as a pagan festival, and he defeats the king's magician in a contest of power (VI A). He is given what is to be the site of Armagh by a wealthy convert; a deer with her fawn are discovered on the spot where the altar is to be (V). To test the faith of a pupil, Patrick asks him if he is able to see what the saint sees; the boy replies that he sees a vision of heaven (VI B). Patrick prays against Coroticus whom he warned to cease persecuting the Christians (VI A)^a. The saint performs several miracles in his career (VI) until the angel Victor warns him of his death (VII). He gains three petitions from heaven and dies at the age of a hundred and twenty. There is no night for twelve days after his death and his body exudes the odour of sanctity (VIII). An angel tells his people he is to be buried where two untamed oxen, yoked to the cart carrying his body, comes to rest; a flame is seen above his relics; two tribes contend for his body but a vision of two carts drawn by oxen appears to prevent conflict (IX).

I B: Muir-chú I, 1

III B: Muir-chú I, 1

III D: Muir-chú I, 2

III C: Muir-chú I, 5

IV: Muir-chú I, 8

VI A: Muir-chú I, 14-16

V: Muir-chú I, 24

VI B: Muir-chú I, 27

VI A^a: Muir-chú I, 28

VI: passim

VII: Muir-chú II, 4

VIII: Muir-chú II, 5-8

IX: Muir-chú II, 10-12

Columba

He is born of the royal family of the Uí Néill (I A,B). In a dream, his mother sees an angel who gives her a marvellous mantle; the angel takes it away and prophesies the birth of a wondrous son (I C). His mother sees a ball of fire over the sleeping child (III B) and other heavenly phenomena are seen about the saint during his lifetime. While a youth, he turns water into wine for the Eucharist (III D). Throughout his life, he performs several miracles which Adomnán relates in Books I and II of his Life (VI). Columba becomes a priest and founds several monasteries in Ireland, until events (not related in Adomnán's Life) lead him into exile on Iona where he founds his famous monastic community (V). He contends with a sorcerer, with the Loch Ness monster, and with the magician Broichan and king Brude of the Picts (VI A). Columba eventually converts the Pictish king and his people. He predicts the day of his death (VII) and dies in his church (which is filled with angelic light - VIII). His relics perform miracles; for example, his tunic and book bring rain to the community. Books written by him are impervious to water and he is attributed with protecting his people from plague (IX). In the BL Life is the story of his banishing toads and snakes from Iona, and the incident, similar to an episode in the life of Cú Chulainn, where his horse comes and weeps on his breast before he dies.

I A, B: Anderson, p. 186

I C: Anderson, p. 465-467

III B: Anderson, p. 469; also, pp. 469-473, 501, 505-507

III D: Anderson, p. 325

VI: Anderson, vide infra

V: not related in Adomnán's Life, but implied in the text

VI A: Anderson, p. 363, 387-389, 399-411

VII: Anderson, p. 513-517

(VIII: BL 1101-1105)

IX: Anderson, p. 451-459

Muir-chú's Life of St. Patrick and Adomnán's Life of Columba contain several elements of the biographical pattern; Cogitosus' Life of St. Brigit, however, contains few elements of the pattern but is full of miraculous events. Subsequent vitae in the tradition of Brigit make additions to her life story, increasing the number of biographical points, particularly in regard to birth motifs, as in the BL Life, where she is said to be of illegitimate birth, born on the threshold at an auspicious time.¹ The additions are similar to the birth motifs found in the heroic biographical pattern.² It is worth noting that while many additions have been made to the stories of Brigit, Patrick, and Columba by succeeding generations, nothing is subtracted; the biographical pattern becomes more complete.

These Lives may be seen in contrast to the main body of saints' Lives, drawn from the major collections, which reflect the pattern at a later stage of development in hagio-biography, when the composition of the Lives had settled into its stereotyped formula.

1. See also Bethu Brigitte, ed. by Donncha Ó hAodha, (Dublin, 1978).

2. See further, K.R. McCone, "Bríd Chill Dara", Léachtaí Cholm Cille 12 (1982), p. 42-44.

Abban

He is said to be the son of a certain king of Leinster who married the sister of St. Ibar (I A). His birth is foreseen by Ibar and Patrick (I C). The child is born without pain (II A) and is baptised by Ibar (II C). From an early age, he prefers a holy life and performs wonders which indicate his sanctity (III D). He goes to the monastery of Ibar to be educated (III C). He makes a pilgrimage to Rome with Ibar (IV A) being carried to the ship by divine aid when Ibar wished to leave him in Ireland. While abroad he performs such miracles as raising from the dead and kindling fire with his breath in order to convert a pagan king (VI A)^a. He defeats a venomous monster, then later tames lake monsters who lick his feet (VI A)^b. On a voyage with Patrick and Ibar, he defeats a sea monster and calms a storm (VI A)^c. Upon returning to Ireland, he converts a pagan king and tames a cat-like monster (VI A)^d, and performs several miracles (VI).¹ He spends some time in the wilderness (IV C) and an angel directs him to his place of resurrection (IV B), where he builds a monastery (V). He foresees the day of his death (VII). Two oxen come of their own accord to be yoked to the cart carrying his body; angels appear at his death and a great light is seen around the body (VIII). Two factions dispute over which side is to have his body and miraculously two carts with two bodies appear; his relics heal diseases (IX).

1. The Irish text breaks off abruptly; the rest of the Life is drawn from the Latin text.

- I A: BNE I i; Plummer, VSH I iii
 I B: BNE I i; VSH I ii
 II A: BNE I i; VSH I iii
 II C: BNE I i; VSH I iii
 III D: BNE I i, ii; VSH I iv-vii
 III C: BNE I iii; VSH I viii
 IV A: BNE I iv; VSH I xi-xii
 VI A: (a) BNE I v; VSH I xiv; (b) BNE I v-vi, VSH I xv-xvi;
 (c) BNE I vii, VSH I xviii; (d) BNE I xii-xiii, VSH I
 xxiii-xxiv
 VI: passim
 IV C: VSH I xxxv
 IV B: VSH I xxviii
 V: VSH I xxviii; also xxvii, xxxii
 VII: VSH I xlix
 VIII: VSH I xlix
 IX: VSH I l-lii

Aed

Born of noble parents (I A,B), a prophet predicts that he will be "great with God" (I C). At his birth, the child's head falls on a stone causing an imprint; water which collects in the hollow cures illnesses (II A). While a boy, he meets Brendan of Birr and Cainnech who recognise his sanctity (III C).^a Aed has no religious teacher in his childhood but he tries to live a holy life as a hermit (IV C). Later he returns to his father's lands to claim his heritage but finds his brothers have already divided it. In anger, he kidnaps the daughter of a nobleman and comes to the monastery of St. Ilund, who sees angels with him (III B). Ilund persuades him to give up his claim and join the monastery (III C).^b Aed proves himself superior in divine power to Ilund and leaves to found his own monastery (IV, V). In a war between his mother's people and his father's, he contends with a king who refuses to grant peace; Aed in response causes the death of a counsellor and two of the king's horses (VI A). While seated in front of a nun's cell, he is whisked off to heaven, but returns in a few hours (VI B). He performs many miracles and displays supernatural knowledge (VI). He foresees the time of his death (VII) and promises one of his monks that he will accompany him to heaven. The brother becomes reluctant as the day approaches so instead Aed takes with him a farmer who goes willingly (VIII).

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- I A, B: Plummer, VSH I i
 - I C: VSH I i
 - II A: VSH I i (also related to Point IX)
 - III C^a: VSH I ii
 - IV C: VSH I i-iii
 - III B: VSH I iii
 - III C^b: VSH I iii
 - IV, V: VSH I iv
 - VI A: VSH I v
 - VI B: VSH I xvi
 - VI: VSH I vi-xxxv
 - VII: VSH I xxxvi
 - VIII: VSH I xxxvi

Albeus

His father impregnates the king's female slave and must flee for his life (I D). The king wishes the child slain, but servants expose him instead; a she-wolf suckles him (III A) until he^{is} found by a man who gives him to some Christian Britons. Missionaries who come to Ireland find the boy praying and baptise him (II C). The Britons wish to return to their homelan^d and leave Albeus, but their ship is forced back. Albeus then journeys to Rome (IV A), sailing on his cowl. He studies in Rome under Hilarius (III C) and performs many miracles (III D). The pope sends him to preach to the Irish; he makes many converts and builds a monastery (V). During his career, he performs many deeds of wonder (VI). He contends with a local ruler over the release of a captive (VI A). An angel shows him his place of resurrection (IV B). While he is preaching in Ireland, Patrick arrives to begin his great mission and Albeus recognises him as a superior. Near the day of his death, a mysterious ship bears him out to sea and he returns carrying a palm (VI B). An angel tells him his death is near (VII) and soon afterwards he is stricken with disease and dies (VIII).

I D: Plummer, VSH I i
 III A: VSH I i
 II C: VSH I ii
 IV A: VSH I iv
 III C: VSH I viii
 III D: VSH I viii-xiii
 V: VSH I xvi
 VI: VSH I viii-xlv
 VI A: VSH I xxxv
 IV B: VSH I xxix
 VI B: VSH I xlvi
 VII: VSH I xlvi
 VIII: VSH I xlvi

Bairre of Cork

His father is a notable smith of good standing and his mother a king's slave with whom the father sleeps secretly (I D). According to the Latin Life, his father Amairgen was born under circumstances which parallel that of a hero. Amairgen's father slept with his own daughter when drunk; twin boys are born and one is thrown in the river. Amairgen is nursed by a she-wolf, found by swineherds, and brought to his father (cf. Romulus and Remus). The parents of Bairre are condemned to be burnt, but a storm arises and the child speaks from his mother's womb. Immediately after birth, the child speaks again to release his parents (III D). He is put in the care of three anchorites who recognise his sanctity (III C) and a doe is milked for him (III A). Brendan of Birr foresees the coming of Bairre by an omen (I C). Bairre travels away from his tutors (IV) and marks out several churches, performing several miracles (VI). He journeys to Rome to obtain episcopal orders (IV A). Pope Gregory sees a flame over his head and tells him that God will read the orders (III B)^a. An angel leads him from place to place until eventually he comes to his place of resurrection (IV B). He founds a school in Cork (V). Of all his miracles, the greatest is the story of his hand being placed in the hand of God; thereafter he must wear a glove as his hand is too bright for human eyes (III B)^b. He foresees the day of his death (VII); the sun shines for twelve days after he dies and a golden ladder reaching to heaven is seen (VIII).

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- I D: BNE I i, Plummer, VSH I ii
 III D: BNE I i, VSH I ii
 III C: BNE I ii, VSH I iii
 III A: BNE I ii, VSH I iv
 I C: BNE I iii, VSH I v
 IV: BNE I iv, VSH I vi
 VI: BNE I v-xv, VSH I vi
 IV A: BNE I xvi, VSH I vii
 III B^a: BNE I xvi
 IV B: BNE I xiii, VSH I xii
 V: BNE I xviii, VSH I xiii
 III B^b: BNE I xxi, VSH I xiv
 VII: BNE I xxv, VSH I xv
 VIII: BNE I xxvii, VSH I xv

Berach

His birth is predicted by St. Patrick sixty years beforehand to one of Berach's ancestors (I C). He is baptised by his uncle, the presbyter Fráech (II C) who sees a great light around the birthplace (II B). Fráech raises the child, feeding him out of his own right ear (III C)^a and the boy performs several wonders (III D). He travels to Glendalough and remains there under the rule of St. Coemgen (IV, III C^b) until an angel decrees he must leave to find his own place of resurrection. He follows a stag; where the stag halts, there he builds his monastery (IV B, V). He contends with a poet-druid over the land and eventually wins the legal dispute as well as a contest of magic (VI A). He performs several miracles in his career (VI). An angel appears to him before his death and grants him the privilege of petition and foreknowledge of his day of death (VII).

I C: BNE I iii; Plummer, VSH I iii

II C: BNE I v, VSH I iv

II B: VSH I iv (not in Irish)

III C^a: VSH I iv (not in Irish)- BNE I vii: boy studies under

III D: BNE I viii-x (not in Latin) Daigh mac Cairell

IV, III C^b: BNE I xi, VSH I vi

IV B, V: BNE I xviii, VSH I xi

VI A: BNE I xxii, VSH I xiv-xxii

VI: BNE I xxiv-xxx, VSH I xxiii-xxv

VII: BNE I xxx, VSH I xxvi (no mention of angel's visit)

Boece

On the night of his conception, a flaming star is seen to enter his mother's mouth (I C). His parents wish to have him baptised but there is no priest available. A boatload of clerics suddenly arrives; they had been sent to baptise the child. The child's hand placed on the ground causes a pure fountain to spring up for the baptism (II C). While a boy, he falls asleep in a field and an angel gives him instruction in a dream; his parents discover him by the bright light surrounding him (III B). He goes to Italy, enters the monastery of St. Tylian (III C) and makes several pilgrimages (IV). He then gathers a company to sail with him to the land of the Picts. He lands in Dal Riada where he converts the king (VI A) and founds a monastery (V). An angel directs him to Bregh where he founds another celebrated monastery (IV B). Throughout his life, he builds several monasteries and performs many wonders (VI). At one point, he is taken to heaven on a golden ladder (VI B). Before his death, he prophesies the birth of St. Columba who would visit his tomb after thirty years (VII).

I D: Plummer, VSH I i

II C: VSH I ii

III B: VSH I iii

IV: VSH I iv

VI A: VSH I vii

V: VSH I vii

IV B: VSH I ix

VI: VSH I x-xvi

VI B: VSH I xvii

VII: VSH I xviii

Brendan of Clonfert (Brendan the Navigator)

His mother sees a vision of ^{her} bosom being half full of gold, which is taken as an omen of the birth of a wondrous son (I C).^a His advent is prophesied by Patrick (I C).^b Thirty cows bear thirty calves on the night of his birth and a great blaze with angels is seen around his birthplace (II B). He is baptised by Bishop Erc and three sheep leap from the fountain to pay his baptismal fees (II C). He is fostered by St. Íte and is the only one to see angels attending him (III B). He goes to study under Bishop Erc (III C) and a doe comes to give him milk (III A). He displays signs of sanctity through his devotion and the wonders attached to him (III D). He leaves his tutor to further his studies (IV)^a. He is told of a wonderful island, the Land of Promise; an angel tells him in a dream that he will see this land, and so he sets off on his famous voyages (IV).^b He visits several islands, each with its own wonders until he eventually reaches the Land of Promise (possibly interpreted as a variation of VI B). He then returns to Ireland and spends the rest of his life administering to his community (VI). He founds the monastery of Clonfert which he elects as his place of resurrection (V). He foresees his death and the manner of his burial (VII).

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- I C^a: BNE I i; Plummer, VSH I i
 I C^b: BNE I ii, VSH I ii- prophesied by Becc mac Dé
 II B: BNE I ii, VSH I ii-iii
 II C: BNE I ii, VSH I iii
 III B: BNE I iv, VSH I iii
 III C: BNE I v, VSH I iv
 III A: BNE I v, VSH I iv
 III D: BNE I vii, VSH I v-vii
 IV^a: BNE I ix-x, VSH I viii-ix
 IV^b: BNE I xiv ff., VSH I xii-lxxv
 VI B: BNE I xlvi, VSH I lxxvi
 VI: BNE I lvii ff., VSH I passim
 V: BNE I lxi, VSH I xci
 VII: BNE I lxix, VSH I ciii

Cainnech

At his birth, God sends a beautiful white cow with its calf to give milk for the boy (II and III A). He is baptised by a bishop (II C) and as a boy shows signs of sanctity (III D). He goes to Britain to study under Cadoc (III C). After a time, he makes a pilgrimage to Rome (IV A) and settles in Italy having suffered tortures unharmed from a local ruler (VI A).^a An angel tells him his place of resurrection is in Ireland (IV B) and so he returns to perform many miracles (VI). He helps angels fight demons which are plaguing St. Senach (VI A)^b, and exposes the tricks of a druid (VI A).^c He lives a good deal of his life in a hermitage (IV C). He is a contemporary of St. Columba and the two saints carry on a life-long association. Cainnech becomes ^{infirm} and after a life of miracle-working, he dies (VIII).

II and III A: Plummer, VSH I i

II C: VSH I i

III D: VSH I ii

III C: VSH I iii

IV A: VSH I v

VI A^a: VSH I vi

IV B: VSH I vi

VI: VSH I vii-xlv

VI A^b: VSH I x

VI A^c: VSH I xi

IV C: VSH I infra

VIII: VSH I xlvi

Ciarán of Clonmacnois

His birth is predicted by a magician (I C)^a- Becc mac Dé in the Irish- and by SS. Patrick, Brigit, and Columba (I C)^b. As a boy, he performs several wonders (III D). He learns the psalms from the deacon Diarmait at a distance, while he tends herds and the deacon is in his cell (III C).^a After such manifestations of his powers, he goes to Finnian of Clonard to study (III C)^b, and distinguishes himself there by his miracles and acts of charity. Eventually, he leaves Clonard, following a tame stag which carries his books (IV). However, the place he comes to is not his place of resurrection; he goes to Clonmacnois where he founds a monastery (V). After a brief career in which he performs many miracles (VI), he foresees his death approaching (VII) and prophesies the evils to come on his church. He dies at the age of thirty-three (the same age as Christ was reputed to be when he died - VIII). St. Coemgen arrives three days after his death, yet is given the opportunity to speak with him, and earth from his grave proves effective in calming a storm (IX).

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- I C^a: BL 4006 f.; Plummer, VSH I i
 I C^b: BL 3968-3973
 III D: BL 4028-4102, VSH I ii-xiv
 III C^a: BL 4038, VSH I iv
 III C^b: BL 4103 f., VSH I xv
 IV: BL 4341 f., VSH I xxv
 V: BL 4374 f., VSH I xxviii
 VI: BL 4376-4439, VSH I xxix-xxi
 VII: BL 4443 f., VSH I xxxi
 VIII: BL 4449 f., VSH I xxxi
 IX: BL 4461 f., VSH I xxxi-xxxiii

Ciarán of Saigir

He is born of noble parents (I A,B); his mother has a vision of a star entering her mouth (I C)^a. A magician predicts his birth (I C)^b. As a child, he shows signs of his sanctity (III D) and at the age of thirty he journeys to Rome to be baptised and receive instruction (II C, III C, IV A). He meets Patrick in Italy and receives from him a certain bell which would ring when he reached the site of his future monastery. Returning to Ireland, he finds the proper place (IV B) and builds there a hermitage (IV C), later to become the monastery of Saigir (V). He contends with a local chieftain over the abduction of a nun (VI A). During his lifetime, he performs many miracles, especially of healing and providing food (VI). Before his death, an angel grants him three requests for the advantage of those people who honour him. He foresees the time of his death (VII) and thirty bishops, by their own desire, die with him amid bright light and a band of angels (VIII).

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- I A, B: BNE I i (I); Plummer, VSH I i
 I C^a: BNE I i (I), VSH I i
 I C^b: VSH I i
 III D: VSH I ii
 II C, III C, IV A: BNE I ii (I), VSH I iii
 IV B: BNE I ii (I), i (II); VSH I iv
 IV C: VSH I iv
 V: BNE I iii (I), i (II); VSH I iv
 VI A: BNE I vii (I), vi (II); VSH I viii
 VI: BNE I ix-xxvii (I), ii-xxxii (II); VSH I x-xxxviii
 VII: BNE I xxix (I), xxxiv (II); VSH I xxxix
 VIII: BNE I xxxi (I), xxiv (II); VSH I xxxix

Coemgen

His birth is prophesied by Patrick (I C), and Finn mac Cumaill foretells his defeat of a lake monster. He is born without pain (II A) and twelve angels are present at his baptism (III B). The fort in which he was born is never afterwards penetrated by frost. A white cow comes to give milk for his nourishment (III A). In his youth, his sanctity is shown through his wonder-working (III D) and he goes to study under some holy men (III C). An angel tells him to come to his place of resurrection (IV B). He comes upon the valley of Glendaloch where he spends a while as a hermit (IV C). He drives a monster from a lake with psalms, in accordance with the prophecy (VI A). He is discovered in his hermitage and is brought out against his will; later, he returns to found a monastery at Glendaloch (V). He performs several miracles, showing a great rapport with wild animals and a power over natural phenomena (VI). Before his death, he lays a four-fold curse on any who outrage his church, having already foreseen its ravaging (VII). In the Latin text, he sends his monks to pray for his petition, which is to die as promised him. He dies at the age of a hundred and twenty (VIII).

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- I C: BNE I i; Plummer, VSH I i - angel predicts birth to mother
 II A: BNE I ii(I)
 III B: BNE I iv (I); VSH I i - child is blessed by angel disguised as Crónán
 III A: BNE I vi (I), VSH I ii
 III D: VSH I iii
 III C: BNE I vi (I), VSH I iv
 IV B: VSH I xxiv
 IV C: BNE I vii (I), VSH I vi, xvi-xviii
 VI A: BNE I viii (I), VSH I xxxiii - contends with witch
 V: VSH I xvi
 VI: BNE I ix-xviii (I), VSH I v-xlvii
 VII: BNE I xviii (I), VSH I xlviii
 VIII: VSH I xlviii

Colmán Elo

The Irish Life skims over his genealogy and begins almost in the middle of his career. The people of a country are hostile towards him, but he defeats a lake monster for them (VI A). He founds a monastery at Lann Elo where swans sing to relieve the fatigue of building. He hears the bells of the passing of Pope Gregory, his tutor (a reference to his education - III C). The Life relates a few more incidents and breaks off suddenly.

The Latin Life states that he was born of the Úi Néill but his parents had to flee their homeland. At his birth, his mother grasps a dry stick which bursts into leaf (II A). He is sent to Coemgen to be educated (III C). Columcille, after Colmán's ordination, suggests giving him land for a monastery and he gains Lann Elo (V). There he performs several miracles and has a vision of Pope Gregory entering (VI B). He is also able to give his monks a glimpse of heaven. He performs several miracles and protects his monastery against thieves, flooding, and bandits (VI). When he wishes to die, he prays to St. Finnian who appears before him; a cross signifying his approaching death appears above his cell (VII). After his death, his staff is used to revive a monk slain by a bandit; Colmán appears in a vision to some of his followers in order to have his relics brought out of his tomb (IX).

VI A: BNE I ii
 V: BNE I iii
 III C: BNE I iii

II A: Plummer, VSH I i
 III C: VSH I i
 V: VSH I iii
 VI B: VSH I xv
 VI VSH I iv-xxxiv
 VII: VSH I xxxvi
 IX: VSH I xxxvii

Comgall

Born in his father's old age, his advent is prophesied by bishop Mac Cneisi when he hears the sound of the chariot wheels beneath his parents (I C). He is baptised by a blind presbyter who is healed by the water which springs up miraculously at the arrival of the infant (II C). His mother sees a fiery column above the boy while he sleeps (III B). While a youth, he goes to war in place of his father but by divine aid causes the armies to make peace (III D). He is put to study under a cleric who falls into sin. Being unable to dissuade him, the saint leaves his master to study under Fintan (III C). After a time, he leaves Fintan and goes to Clonmacnois (IV A) where he receives orders. He travels about his homeland preaching, then lives for a while as a hermit on an island in Lough Erne (IV C). Eventually he leaves to found a monastery at Bangor (V). He performs several miracles throughout his life (VI). Once he fasts against a 'dux' and again against a king (VI A) who avert his curse by repenting. He suffers various ills for 'love of Christ' and towards the end of his life he asks for St. Fyachra to administer the last rites (VII). An angel sends him and Comgall promises him his relics. After his death, Fyachra takes an arm as a relic which proves to be miracle-working (IX).

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- I C: Plummer, VSH II v
 - II C: VSH II vi
 - III B: VSH II vii
 - III D: VSH II ii
 - III C: VSH II iii
 - IV A: VSH II xi
 - V: VSH II xiii
 - VI: VSH II passim
 - VI A: VSH II xlv, xlvii
 - VII: VSH II lvii
 - IX: VSH II lviii

Crónán

His father is expelled from his territory in Munster and settles in Connacht.¹ He is related to SS. Móibí and Mochoynne through his mother (possibly I A). Little is said of his education, but he does spend some time in the monastery of Ciarán of Clonmacnois (III C). He saves a captive from drowning, in defiance of the king (VI A)^a, performs several miracles, and settles in a cell in the wilderness (IV C). He fights demons and obdurate laymen (VI A)^b, and shows his divine power in miracles, mostly of healing and protecting his people (VI). He decides to move his hospice to a more accessible place, the site prophesied by St. Furseay (IV B). He founds his great monastery, Ros Cree (V). Near the end of his life, he gives his final advice and blessing (VII); his relics are said to effect miracles (IX).

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1. The expulsion of the saint's parents is a theme which frequently recurs; it may well be a significant element, relating to the theme of exile or 'peregrinatio' in the saint's own career. Although it has not been included under any of the major points, I have endeavoured to mention these incidents of parental exile in the summaries, with a view to any possible future modifications of the saintly biographical pattern.

I A: Plummer, VSH II ii
 III C: VSH II v
 VI A^a: VSH II iii
 IV C: VSH II vii
 VI A^b: VSH II x, xv
 VI: VSH II xii-xxvi
 IV B: VSH II xvii
 V: VSH II xvii
 VII: VSH II xxix
 IX: VSH II xxix

Déclán

Déclán is said to be descended from a line of kings and among his ancestors were three brothers who slept with their sister; the offspring had three red wavy lines to indicate his parentage. The descent continues to Cormac mac Art mac Conn whose son kidnaps the daughter of Eóghan mac Fiacha Suighde. This causes a feud in which the son is killed and Cormac loses an eye. Eóghan's people are expelled from their territory but eventually they obtain the Decies of Munster. It is from Eóghan that Déclán is descended.

His father is a chief of the Déisi (I B) and the child is born without pain to the mother (II A). At birth, his head strikes a stone and makes a hollow; the water which falls in it has healing properties (II A, IX). A fireball surrounded by angels, assuming the shape of a golden ladder is seen above his birthplace (II B). He is baptised by a Christian who prophesies his future glory (II C). He is sent to study with another holy man (III C) and he earns a reputation for sanctity and learning. He then goes to Rome (IV A) where he meets St. Ailbe and is ordained. He also meets Patrick before his mission to Ireland. He returns to Ireland where he begins preaching, baptising converts (VI), and founding churches and monasteries (V). By a miracle, he is guided to his place of resurrection (IV B). He contends with the king of the Decies who refuses baptism, even after Déclán had persuaded Patrick not to fast against him (VI A). He performs many miracles throughout his life, and his day of death is foretold to him (VII). He is buried in a tomb indicated by an angel (IX).

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- I B: Plummer, VSH II iii
 - II A: ITS 16 p. 8, VSH II iii
 - II A, IX: ITS 16 p. 8, VSH II iii
 - II B: ITS 16 p. 8-9, VSH II iv
 - II C: ITS 16 p. 9, VSH II v
 - III C: ITS 16 p. 15, VSH II vii
 - IV A: ITS 16 p. 17, VSH II ix
 - VI: ITS 16 p. 19 ff., VSH II x ff.
 - V: ITS 16 p. 28-33, VSH II xvii
 - IV B: ITS 16 p. 27, VSH II xv
 - VI A: ITS 16 p. 37-41, VSH II xix
 - VII: ITS 16 p. 69, VSH II xxxviii
 - IX: ITS 16 p. 73, VSH II xxxix

Énda

The son of a chief (I B) and a princess (I A), he becomes chief on his father's death, but when seeking revenge for his father, he meets St. Fáenchi who converts him and persuades him to become a monk (III C). Later, because he tries to enter a battle, Faenchi sends him to Britain to study under Maucenus (IV). There he founds a monastery (V)^a. Fáenchi, hearing of his fame, visits him just before he is prepared to set out on 'peregrinatio'. She tells him to visit first the island of Áru (IV B). The king of Munster grants Énda the island and there he builds another monastery (V).^b There is some contention over the supremacy of the island; by a heavenly sign, it is granted to Énda (VI A). In a second version, three holy men, including Énda, go to Rome to decide the supremacy (IV A). He fasts against God until he gains three petitions (IX), after which he tells his brothers that he is to leave the monastery. He returns later and dies in his own community.

I B, I A: Plummer, VSH II i

III C: VSH II iii

IV: VSH II vi

V^a: VSH II vii

IV B: VSH II x

V^b: VSH II xvii

VI A: VSH II xix-xxi

IV A: VSH II xx

IX: VSH II xxxi

Féchin

He is born of noble parents (I A,B) and is prophesied by St. Columba (I C).^a A holy man has a vision of a large white bird followed by others coming to his valley, which proves to be an omen of the coming of Féchin to establish a church (I C)^b. The house in which he is born appears to be on fire by heathen marauders but they see that it is not consumed; inside, they discover Féchin's mother in the throes of childbirth (II A,B). The leader of the raiding party makes a prophecy concerning the child. The boy is sent to an elder for education, but later goes to another holy man for instruction (III C). In his youth, he performs many miracles; once, being an innocent boy, he cannot tell a bull from a cow yet he is able to get milk from a bull, chosen by mistake, when he is hungry (III D). He becomes a priest and builds a monastery (V) on land revealed to him by an angel (IV B)^a. An angel later shows him a vision of an island where he ought to preach (IV B)^b, but the pagan inhabitants prove hostile. The saint overcomes their enmity and eventually converts the islanders (VI A). At one point, the Lord visits Féchin in the guise of a leper (VI B). The saint performs other miracles (VI), and an angel reveals to him the time of his death (VII).

I A, B: Plummer, VSH II i; RC 12 p. 320

I C^a: VSH II ii; RC 12 p. 322

I C^b: VSH II iii

II A: VSH II iv

III C: VSH II vi; RC 12 p. 322

III D: VSH II vi-ix

V: VSH II x; RC 12 p. 324

IV B^a: VSH II x; RC 12 p. 324

IV B^b: VSH II xii; RC 12 p. 328

VI A: VSH II xii

VI B: VSH II xiii; RC 12 p. 330- cures a leper; p. 344 (another version)- leper is Christ in disguise

VI: VSH II xiv-xxi

VII: RC 12 p. 336

Fínan

His mother dreams of a golden fish entering her mouth and a sage predicts the birth of a saint (I C). While the child is in the womb, the mother is protected from the elements and is able to do miracles; as a boy, the saint shows his healing powers (III D)^a. St. Brendan recognises the sanctity of the child and Fínan is sent to study under him (III C). While he is with Brendan, he performs several miracles which reveal his divine grace (III D)^b, Brendan sends him away, telling him to settle where he finds a herd of boars (IV B). At Mt. Bladhma, he finds the place and builds a monastery (V). He predicts the death of nine soldiers who abuse his hospitality (VI A)^a; from that time on, soldiers dare not squander the refectioin of his monastery (IX). He performs many miracles, mostly of healing, and protects his people from their enemies (VI). The chief, who refuses him peace, is told he will lose his kingdom, to regain it only after seven years of penance (VI A)^b. On two other occasions, Fínan's curses cause recalcitrant kings to reconsider their refusals to the saint's requests (VI A)^c. Towards the end of his life, he becomes infirm; he predicts that a girl will come to him to be healed and then he will die (VII).

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- I C: Plummer, VSH II i; ZCP 2 p. 550
 III D^a: VSH II ii; ZCP 2 p. 550
 III C: VSH II iii; ZCP 2 p. 552
 III D^b: VSH II iv-vii
 IV B: VSH II viii; ZCP 2 p. 552
 V: VSH II viii
 VI A^a: VSH II ix; ZCP 2 p. 554
 IX: VSH II ix
 VI: VSH II x-xxviii
 VI A^b: VSH II xvi; ZCP 2 p. 556
 VI A^c: VSH II xix, xxi; ZCP 2 p. 560
 VII: VSH II xxix; ZCP 2 p. 564

Findchúa of Brí Gobann

This saint is noted for being a warrior as well as a cleric. His father is expelled from his land for treachery against Blathmac son of Áed Sláne king of Tara. His father's soul-friend, however, prophesies that his wife will bear a famous child (I C). The child speaks in his mother's womb when she is refused a drink of ale; the ale vats burst and a cloak of darkness protects the mother from her angry pursuers (III D)^a. He is baptised by Ailbe (II C) and fostered by a king. When Comgall comes to visit, he sees the spirit of an angel above the boy (III B)^a and asks that Findchúa be put in his care. The boy goes to school at Bangor (III C) where he performs other miracles (III D)^b. The fury of his anger is such that it burns his tutor's cowl; this fury appears again in his battles (III B)^b. He succeeds Comgall to the abbacy but is expelled after seven years because of the scarcity of land (IV). He settles where his bell rings (IV B) and builds a monastery (V). He spends seven years suspended on seven sickles as a penitential exercise (IV C), but comes down to fight marauders invading his people's land (VI A). In all, he fights seven battles and gives victory to whomever he assist.

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- I C: BL 2803 f.
 III D^a: BL 2812-2830
 II C: BL 2831 f.
 III B^a: BL 2836 f.
 III C: BL 2836 f.
 III D^b: BL 2846 f.
 III B^b: BL 2846-2877
 IV: BL 2887 f.
 IV B: BL 2887-2930
 V: BL 2915-2930
 IV C: BL 2937 f.
 VI A: BL 2965-2980

Finnian of Clonard

His mother has a vision of a flame entering her mouth and issuing as a bright bird, attracting all the birds of Ireland (I C). He is baptised and sent to a bishop to study (III C). Later, he goes to Tours, then to Britain where he meets David and Gildas (IV A). He settles a dispute of supremacy between them (VI - saint acts as mediator) and studies in Britain for thirty years. An angel tells him to return to Ireland, and angels direct him to his monastery (IV B). He builds several churches and monasteries, finally settling at Clonard (V). He challenges a wizard to tell him if his knowledge comes from God; the wizard tells him his place of resurrection (VI A)^{a1}. He visits St. Rúadán who owns a miraculous lime tree; Rúadán shows his divine powers to be equal to Finnian's, when the saint causes the sap of the lime tree to stop flowing, so the saint leaves with a blessing on Rúadán's land (VI A).^b The saint was accustomed to wearing an iron band around his waist as part of his ascetic regime (IV C). Before his death, an angel promises to banish all disease from Clonard (IX)^a. His pupil, Columba, is brought by an angel to give him the last rites (VII). He dies, probably of plague, at the age of a hundred and forty (VIII). After his death, he appears to St. Colmán at his tomb (IX).^b

1. In this case, there is some sympathy for the wizard, as his foreknowledge is correct and he is allowed to go his way unharmed.

- I C: BL 2504-2520; Heist, VSH p. 96
 III C: BL 2521-2526; Heist, VSH p. 96-97
 IV A: BL 2527-2539; Heist, VSH p. 97
 VI : BL 2527-2539
 IV B: BL 2567-2597; Heist VSH p. 98-101
 V: BL 2719 f.; Heist, VSH p. 99-101
 VI A^a: BL 2653-2660; Heist, VSH p. 101
 VI A^b: BL 2678-2695; Heist, VSH p. 103-104
 IV C: BL 2719-2729; Heist, VSH p. 105-106
 IX^a: BL 2765 f.
 VII: BL 2769 f.; Heist, VSH p. 106
 VIII: BL 2769 f.
 IX^b: Heist, VSH p. 106-107.

Fintan

An angel announces to his mother that her child will be great and holy (I C) and orders her to take herself to a secluded place until the child is born. The mother hides under a tree for seven days and is fed by divine aid (II A). The child is baptised by a holy man and later studies under him (II C). The boy foresees the arrival of Columba who recognises his sanctity (III D). The saint goes to Columba as his disciple (III C). Columba and his disciples move from place to place; at Mt. Bladhma, Columba sees a vision of angels and predicts that one must return and remain there forever (IV B). Fintan volunteers and founds a community in the place indicated (V). His rule is so strict that St. Cainnech comes with others to ask him to relax his regime (IV C). Fintan is warned of their coming; other incidents in his life demonstrate his gift of foreknowledge (VI). He contends with the king of Leinster for the freedom of Cormac king of Hua Kennselach and by divine aid, gains entrance to the king's fort to release Cormac (VI A). Fintan foresees the day of his death and names his successor (VII). Bishop Brandubh, who had put himself under the rule of Fintan on the condition that he follow the saint in death, has a dream of seven men in white coming for his soul; he dies soon afterwards, thus gaining his request (IX).

I C: Plummer, VSH II i

II A: VSH II i

II C: VSH II i

III D: VSH II ii

III C: VSH II iii

IV B: VSH II iii

V: VSH II iv

IV C: VSH II v

VI: VSH II vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv

VI A: VSH II xvii

VII: VSH II xxi

IX: VSH II xix

Gerald

This saint is of British origin, born of royal parents (I A,B). His mother carries a bloody mass in her womb and the infant is born with it; it becomes a stone with healing properties (II A). He is educated by Colmán, a successor to Columba, who was sent into exile to Britain (III C). The young saint exceeds his brothers in sanctity and is made abbot of Winchester. Colmán is forced to return to Ireland and Gerald goes with him out of desire to leave his home and go into exile (IV). They land in Connaught and are attacked by the king but an advisor tells him the monks are protected by God (VI A).^a The saint is given land and founds a monastery (V). A magician who tries to stop him from building is halted in his efforts (VI A)^b. During a famine, the people pray for a disease to decrease the 'inferior' population. Gerald and Féchín are chosen to make the petition to God, but Gerald refuses as he considers it unjust. An angel in a dream declares that those who seek the death of others will themselves die; as a result, Féchín and his followers die of jaundice (VI A).^c After a lifetime of performing miracles (VI), the saint dies. Miracles are said to occur after his death in connection with his tomb (IX).

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- I A, B: Plummer, VSH II i
 II A: VSH II i
 III C: VSH II ii
 IV: VSH II iii
 VI A^a: VSH II iv
 V: VSH II vi
 VI A^b: VSH II ix
 VI A^c: VSH II xii
 VI: VSH II passim
 IX: VSH II xvi

Lasrian (Molaisse)

He is prophesied by St. Patrick sixty years before his birth, and his mother has a prophetic dream which the father interprets as the birth of a wonderful son (I C). A magus tells the mother that if she delays the birth a day, the child will be honoured by all; the mother sits on a stone and her womb is closed until the following day (II A). The infant is baptised by a bishop (II C) and taught by St. Finnian (III C). He later leaves Finnian to seek a desert place with his monks (IV C and V). He performs several miracles (VI) and overcomes the persecution of Conall the Red and his magician (VI A). He visits Tours and Rome during his lifetime (IV A). In an argument with the prophet Becc mac Dé, who says the king's son is in heaven, a vision from God shows the men that he is in hell (VI B).^a The saint is found conversing with Peter, Paul and the Virgin Mary who promise him glory as the time of his death draws near (VI B^b and VII). After many miracles, he 'falls asleep in the Lord'.

I C: Plummer, VSH II ii-iii; Sil. Gad. p. 18

II A: VSH II iv; Sil. Gad. p. 18

II C: VSH II v

III C: VSH II vi; Sil. Gad. p. 24

IV C and V: VSH II vi

* VI: VSH II passim

IV A: VSH II xxi-xxii; Sil. Gad. p. 27-28

VI B^a: VSH II xviii

VI B^b and VII: VSH II xxxiv

*VI A: VSH II xiv-xvi; Sil. Gad. p. 24-25

Maedóc of Ferns

His father is a king whose wife is barren (I A,B). The couple pray for a son and the woman sees a star falling into her mouth (I C)^a. In another version, the king sees a star entering the queen's mouth while the queen sees the moon entering the king's mouth (I D) . A druid foresees the birth of a marvellous child by the sound of the chariot wheels beneath the woman (I C).^b At his birthplace, light appears by day and night for a long time (II B). The mother grips a webstress' slay which bursts into leaf (II A). His birth is also predicted by Patrick and Finn mac Cumail (I C)^c. During his youth, his appearance and deeds mark him as exceptional (III D). He eventually becomes a priest and goes to St. David at Menevia (III C). In one version, he goes to Rome (IV A) and receives a special crozier from heaven. He returns to Ireland and settles at Ferns (V). He is consecrated archbishop and performs several miracles in his career (VI). He fasts against a stubborn king (VI A) but is persuaded to avert his curse. He fasts again to gain four boons from God (IX).^a At one time, he climbs a golden ladder to heaven to witness the arrival of the soul of Columba (VI B). The approach of his death is revealed by ^{an}angel (VII). A paralytic is cured by touching his body, and he appears after death in a vision accompanied by St. Brigit; other miracles are effected through his relics (IX)^b.

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- I A, B: BNE I 1 (I), i (II); Plummer, VSH II i
 I C^a: BNE I 1 (I)
 I D: BNE I i (II); VSH II i
 I C^b: BNE I 2 (I), ii (II); VSH II ii
 II B: BNE I 3 (I), iii (II); VSH II iii
 II A: BNE I iv (II)
 I C^c: BNE I vi, vii (II)
 III D: BNE I 4-7 (I), viii-xi (II); VSH II iv-vii
 IV A: BNE I xv (II)
 III C: BNE I xxi (II); VSH II xi
 V: BNE I 19 (I), xxxv (II); VSH II xxvi
 VI: BNE I passim, VSH II passim
 VI A: BNE I 27 (I), xliv (II); VSH II xxxv
 IX^a: BNE I xliii, lvi (II); VSH II xxxiii
 VI B: BNE I 29 (I), lxviii (II); VSH II xxxix
 VII: BNE I lxxii (II)
 IX^b: BNE I 37-40 (I), lxxiv-lxxvi (II); VSH II lvi-lviii

Mochoemóg

His father is an artisan from Connaught who leaves for Munster. He marries a sister of St. Íta but his wife proves barren (I A). St. Ita promises them a son; however, shortly afterwards the man is killed in battle. The wife reminds Íta of her promise, showing her the head of her husband. Ita tells her to find the body and replace the head. The man revives and the couple conceive a child (I D). His mother's milk heals the blindness of St. Fachanus (III D). The sound of the chariot under the mother is an omen to Íta of the child's future greatness (I C). While a boy, his mother sees a globe of fire over him (III B). He is raised and educated by St. Íta but goes to St. Comgall to be ordained (III C and IV). At Comgall's monastery, he helps the older saint drive out demons (VI A)^a. Comgall sends him away to find his own place; a bell given to him by Íta rings when he comes to his place of resurrection (IV B). He founds the monastery of Líath (V), where he finds a boar with white bristles. He contends with a chief who tries to expel him by force (VI A)^b, and with other rulers but is always victorious (VI A)^c. He performs many miracles, several of them concerning raising men from the dead (VI). He is granted the privilege of judgement over his familia (IX). He foresees his death and is buried in Líath (VII).

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- I A: Plummer, VSH II i-ii
 I D: VSH II iii
 III D: VSH II iv
 I C: VSH II v
 III B: VSH II vii
 III C and IV: VSH II viii
 VI A^a: VSH II ix
 IV B: VSH II xiv
 V: VSH II xiv
 VI A^b: VSH II xvi
 VI A^c: VSH II xix, xxi, xxviii, xxx
 VI: VSH II passim
 IX: VSH II xxiv
 VII: VSH II xxv

Mochuda (Carthagus)

He is said to be descended from the hero Fergus mac Roich, whose story is alluded to in the genealogy (I B). His birth is prophesied to Comgall and Brendan (I C)^a. A fiery ball descends upon his mother's head (I C)^b. He is baptised by a holy man who calls up a fountain for the purpose (II C). As a boy, he tends the herds and comes under the notice of the local king; the king sees a golden crown and a fiery column above the boy's head (III B). He is sent to Bishop Carthagus for religious instruction (III C), but leaves after a while to find a place for his own church (IV). He builds a cell in one region but is forced to leave; after visiting other saints, he is directed to Rathen where he builds a famous monastery (V)^a. He performs many miracles, mostly of healing (VI), and successfully meets the challenge of a magician (VI A). Through the enmity and jealousy of the chiefs and clerics of the region, he is forcibly/expelled from Rathen and leaves curses on those responsible (IX). He founds another monastery at Lismore (V)^b. After further miracles, he retires a short distance from Lismore to live in solitude (IV C). He foresees his death (VII) and has a vision of the heavens opening and a band of angels coming for his soul (VIII).

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- I B: Plummer, VSH I i; ITS 16 p. 75
 I C^a: BNE I i; VSH I ii-iii; ITS 16 p. 75
 I C^b: BNE I i; VSH I iv; ITS 16 p. 77
 II C: BNE I i; VSH I vi; ITS 16 p. 77
 III B: BNE I ii; VSH I viii; ITS 16 p. 79
 III C: VSH I x; ITS 16 p. 81
 IV: VSH I xiv; ITS 16 p. 85
 V^a: VSH I xix, ITS 16 p. 91
 VI: BNE I v-xxi; VSH I xxii-xlvi; ITS 16 p. 95-119
 VI A: BNE I v; VSH I xxi; ITS 16 p. 95 (also VSH I lxvi, ITS 16 p. 143)
 IX: VSH I liii-lix; ITS 16 p. 123-133 (BNE I p. 300-312)
 V^b: BNE I xxvii; VSH I lxii-lxv, ITS 16 p. 139-143
 IV C: VSH I lxviii; ITS 16 p. 145
 VII: VSH I lxix; ITS 16 p. 147
 VIII: BNE I xxix; VSH I lxix; ITS 16 p. 147

Moling (Latin text)

An angel appears at the birth and blesses the child (II B), and an angel in the guise of a priest baptises the infant (II C). He is sent away to study and becomes a priest. He leaves his teachers (IV) and founds Tech Molyng (V). When he fasts alone in his cell, a great light is seen about his face (III B), too bright for human eyes. Eventually he becomes archbishop in place of Maedóc. Throughout his life he performs several miracles and deeds of wonder (VI). In order to subdue his body, he takes on the task of diverting a stream to his monastery and spends seven years and forty days digging a ditch, not tasting water or washing in the meantime (IV C). He contends with the king of the Uí Néill over a heavy tribute levied on his people and manages to get a promise of respite until Monday, that is, the Monday of Doomsday (VI A). A vision of Christ appears in his cowl at the request of an abbot who wished to test the rumour of this phenomenon (VI B). He foresees his death (VII) and is buried at Tech Molyng.

II B: Plummer, VSH II i

II C: VSH II ii

IV: VSH II ii

V: VSH II ii

VI: VSH II passim

IV C: VSH II ix

VI A: VSH II xix

VI B: VSH II xxix

VII: VSH II xxx

Moling (Irish text)

The Irish Life states that his father was a wealthy landholder (I B) who coveted his wife's sister. She becomes pregnant and flees to her own country out of fear of her sister. Night overtakes her during a snowstorm and her child is born (II A). An angel melts the snow around them (II B). The mother, out of shame, wishes to kill her son but God sends a dove to warm the infant and to protect him (III B). Brendan sees the service of angels above the boy and sends a disciple to discover the reason for this phenomenon; the disciple finds the child, baptises it, and rears the young saint (II C). As a youth, he asks leave to travel about collecting alms. He meets up with an "Evil Spectre", exchanges questions and threats, and escapes to his church by his great leaps (VI A)^a, hence his nickname 'Moling'. He receives the tonsure and goes to Maedóc of Ferns (III C). An angel directs him to the place prepared for him (IV B). He hires Gobbán the Wright to build an oratory for the monastery he has founded (V). The saint contends with Gobbán's wife over payment and with the sons of Áed Sláine over the division of a territory (VI A).^b In each case, matters turn out in his favour with the aid of a timely miracle. He contends with the king of Ireland over a heavy tribute levied on Leinster. Moling tricks the king into giving respite until Monday, that is, Doomsday (VI A)^c. After several adventures and miracles, he dies a quiet death.

I B: Stokes, Life, I 1

II A: II 6

II B: II 7

III B: II 8

II C: III 10

VI A^a: VI 15-21

III C: VIII 29

IV B: IX-X

V: X-XI

VI A^b: XIV-XV

VI A^c: XIX

Molúa

Little is told about his birth and parentage except that his father was from Munster and his mother from Ossory. A flame is seen about the child by a man who holds his mother's sheep (III B)^a and the child's tears cure him of headache and an ulcer; several other childhood miracles are also related (III D). Once his father finds him asleep in a field, a man in white standing guard over him (III B)^b. At another time, three unknown boys seen playing with him carry him off to heaven; he is returned by angels three hours later (VI B). St. Comgall comes upon him and recognises his sanctity; he asks the boy's parents to commend Molúa to him (III C).^a He performs several miracles while with Comgall, then receives holy orders and is sent to his homeland (IV). At one time, he defeats a lake monster (VI A). He attends the school of St. Finnian (III C)^b but leaves to return to his own people. The chief of the territory predicts that his place of resurrection is elsewhere and an angel directs him to Mt. Bladhma (IV B) where he is given land. He builds the monastery of Clúain Ferta (V). He foresees the day of his death (VII). There is some contention over where the body is to be buried; an angel directs his followers to put the body in a cart drawn by two wild oxen- where they stop, he is to be buried (VIII). His body heals a monk with a bloody mouth and Pope Gregory is said to have heard a chorus of angels at his death (IX).

III B^a: Plummer, VSH II ii

III D: VSH II iii-xii, xiv

III B^b: VSH II vi

VI B: VSH II xiii

III C^a: VSH II xv

IV: VSH II xxiv

III C^b: VSH II xxv

VI A: VSH II xxv

IV B: VSH II xxviii

V: VSH II xxviii

VII: VSH II li

VIII: VSH II lii

IX: VSH II lii, liv

Munnu

Also called Fintan, this saint is born of the Uí Néill. The stone on which he is born is venerated and miracles occur in connection with it (IX). St. Columba visits and prophesies the future greatness of the boy (I C). While he studies with some holy men, the child has wolves guard his father's flock (III D). He becomes a disciple of Comgall and later is given leave to attend the school of Columba (III C). He leaves there and spends twelve years in a monastery of Comgall (IV). After Comgall's death, the monks wish to expel him; Munnu leaves but he predicts that the place will never prosper. An angel leads him to his place of resurrection (IV B), and he builds Tech Munnu (V) on the site pointed out to him by three men in white. On a few occasions he gains the release of captives from hostile kings (VI A)^a. He is visited by an angel twice a week; the angel stays away once to see Molúa into heaven. Munnu, for his jealousy, is struck with leprosy for twenty years (VSH II xxv). In contention over the order of Easter, Munnu offers three tests to Lasrian. Lasrian refuses, knowing the power of Munnu can move mountains (VI A).^b It is discovered that Munnu once visited the promised land with Columba, Brendan, and Cainnech (VI B). He foresees the time of his death (VII) and leaves his final commands for his monks.

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- IX: Plummer, VSH II 1 (one of the saint's relics)
 I C: VSH II ii
 III D: VSH II iii
 III C: VSH II iv-v
 IV: VSH II vi-ix, xiv
 IV B: VSH II xvii
 V: VSH II xviii
 VI A^a: VSH II xxii, xxiii
 VI A^b: VSH II xxvii
 VI B: VSH II xxviii
 VII: VSH II xxx

Rúadán

This saint is said to be born of a line of kings (I A,B). He studies under Finnian of Clonard (III C), then leaves his tutor to take up his abode elsewhere (IV) but an angel tells him it is not his place of resurrection. He goes to Lothra (IV B) where he builds a monastery (V). The saint performs several miracles, mostly of healing (VI). He contends with Diarmait, king of Tara, over a refugee taken from Rúadán 's monastery; the saint, with others including Brendan of Birr, rings bells and sings psalms against the king and enters into a cursing match which the saint eventually wins (VI A)^a. Rúadán was famous for the possession of a marvellous lime tree whose sap tasted like wine. The saints of Ireland complain to Finnian, saying all their servants were going off to Rúadán. Finnian visits the monastery and causes the sap to dry up (VI A)^b. Rúadán does a few more deeds of wonder, then dies. The measure of his body is said to have been twelve feet long (VIII).

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- I A, B: BNE I i; Plummer, VSH II i
 III C: BNE I i; VSH II i
 IV: BNE I ii; VSH II i
 IV B: BNE I ii; VSH II ii-iii
 V: BNE I ii; VSH II iii
 VI: BNE I passim; VSH II passim
 VI A^a: BNE I xi-xiii; VSH II xv-xvii
 VI A^b: VSH II xiv
 VIII: BNE I xxii; VSH II xxx

Senán

His birth is prophesied by St. Patrick; a wizard with foreknowledge rises in an assembly when his parents enter (I C). An angel attends the birth so that it is not difficult; a rowan stake held in his mother's hand bursts into flower (II A). The new-born infant speaks once to rebuke his mother; as a boy, he performs several miracles (III D), before he goes to study at the school of another holy man (III C). His tutor eventually tells him that he must leave for his own place (IV). After a time of wandering and miracle-working, the archangel Raphael tells his place of resurrection and he is brought there on a flagstone (IV B). He defeats a monster which inhabited the island and resists a wizard's spells to expel him (VI A)^a. He wins a contest of power with the wizard, and the king who instigated the attempt at expulsion dies by the saint's curse (VI A)^b. After several years of miracle-working and tending to his community (VI), he is called to heaven (VII). At the saint's death a heavenly light is present near his body (VIII).

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- I C: BL 1792-1883; Heist, VSH p. 301-302
 II A: BL 1884-1889; Heist, VSH p. 303
 III D: BL 1903-1953; Heist, VSH p. 303-308
 III C: BL 1954 f.; Heist, VSH p. 309
 IV: BL 2031-2043; Heist, VSH p. 312
 IV B: BL 2194 f.
 VI A^a: BL 2212-2276; cf. Heist, VSH p. 314-316
 VI A^b: BL 2277-2329; cf. Heist, VSH p. 314-316
 VII: BL 2472 f.
 VII: BL 2483 f.; cf. Heist, VSH p. 322-324

Tigernach

This saint is born of a royal family (I A,B). The foster-daughter of a king falls in love with a nobleman and conceives a child. She hides away until the child is born and returns to her own country (II A - illegitimate birth). St. Brigit foresees her coming and baptises the infant (I C and II C). The boy is captured by pirates and taken to the king of Britain; miracles reveal his sanctity to St. Monnenuis (III D). Monnenuis teaches the boy (III C) who later leaves and journeys to Rome (IV A) where he acquires relics. He is warned in a vision to return home, and he returns with the body of an Irish princess, once held in captivity, whom he revives upon landing in Ireland; throughout his career, he performs several other miracles (VI). He defeats a demon in an idol (VI A) and is granted land in his homeland where he builds a monastery (V)^a. He then goes to Brigit who ordains him a bishop and after a time he is directed to another place (IV B) where he founds another monastery (V)^b and lives there for thirty years. He is struck by blindness and remains in his cell until his death; a divine host conduct his soul to heaven (VIII).

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- I A, B: Plummer, VSH II i-ii
 II A: VSH II i-ii
 IC and II C: VSH II ii
 III D: VSH II iii
 III C: VSH II iv
 IV A: VSH II v
 VI: VSH II passim
 VI A: VSH II viii
 V^a: VSH II ix
 IV B: VSH II xviii
 V^b: VSH II xviii
 VIII: VSH II xviii

The pattern operates fairly uniformly throughout these Lives, with a high incidence of major points (eg. I, II, III, V, VI, and VIII). The Lives of female saints, other than Brigit, contain few elements of the biographical pattern in comparison to the majority of male saints' Lives summarised above. An exception is St. Monenna who, because of the high incidence of biographical points in her Life, may be termed the most 'heroic' of the female saints.

Heroes, and hence the study of Heroes, have existed in a male-dominated world. There are few vitae of female saints, and so it is difficult to extract what is especially recurrent in their Lives. It may be said, however, that the pattern of female saints' Lives does not differ greatly from the pattern of male saints' Lives; the pattern, in short, is the same for all saints, of whatever period or gender.

The Lives of SS. Íta, Lasair, Monenna, and Samthann are summarised here below.

Íta

She is born of a noble race (I A, B) and her sanctity manifests itself in her childhood (III D). She is given the gift of prophecy, and announces to her parents that she wishes to be consecrated to Christ. Although her parents wish her to marry, they eventually agree, after she has defeated demons tormenting her (VI A) and an angel has convinced her father in a dream. An angel directs her to her place of resurrection (IV B) where the people accept her as "matrona"¹. Throughout her life, she performs several miracles in keeping with her function of protector (VI) and embarks on several long and dangerous fasts (IV C). She predicts the time of her death (VII) and miracles are reported in connection with her relics (IX).

1. The use of this word is especially significant, as it implies a connection with the Mother Goddess/ Earth Goddess/ 'Matronae' of pagan Celtic belief.

I A, B: Plummer, VSH II i
 III D: VSH II i
 VI A: VSH II v
 IV B: VSH II viii
 VI: VSH II passim
 IV C: VSH II - eg. x
 VII: VSH II xxxv
 IX: VSH II xxxvi

Lasair

She is the daughter of the king of the Eóganacht (I B) and is sent to be educated by Tigernach and Molaisse (III C), during which time she displays evidence of divine power (III D). She enters the church afterwards and eventually settles by Loch Mór Maothla with her father and a company of clerics. She consecrates Cill Rónán (V) and establishes tribute for her settlement. She is noted for the possession of a holy bell, the Ceólán of Lasair, which has healing properties.

I B: Ériu 5 p. 75
III C: Ériu 5 p. 75
III D: Ériu 5 p. 75-78
V: Ériu 5 p. 95

Monenna

Monenna (or Darerca) is born of the people of Conall, her mother a princess (I A) and her father the ruler of Armagh (I B). She is baptised by St. Patrick (II C) and receives instruction from him (III C). She founds a church near her home, but leaves with her nuns to live under the rule of bishop Ibar (IV). After a time of moving about, she comes to live under the rule of Brigit and the two go to Rome (IV A). Eventually, she founds her own monastery (V). She visits Britain in order to gain restitution from a king for an attempted raid on her monastery (VI A); and she converts one tyrant by showing him a vision of heaven (VI B). For a time, she lives in the desert, suffering extreme hardship and undergoing strict fasts (IV C). Throughout her life, she performs several miracles, especially for the provision of food and drink (VI).¹ She foresees the time of her death and leaves blessings on her people (VII, IX^a). On the third day of her death, she appears in a vision to one of her nuns (IX)^b. Miracles are performed in her name in the time of the third abbess after her (IX)^c.

1. Perhaps the most significant thing which can be said about the female saints is that, like St. Brigit (who is a prototype), they seem to be regarded chiefly as mother figures and providers.

I A: PRIA 28, p. 208

I B: PRIA 28, p. 208

II C: PRIA 28, p. 208; Heist, VSH p. 83

III C: PRIA 28, p. 208-209; Heist, VSH p. 83-84

IV: PRIA 28 p. 209-210; Heist, VSH p. 84

IV A: PRIA 28, p. 222

V: PRIA 28, p. 222; Heist, VSH p. 87

VI A: PRIA 28, p. 216-217

VI A: PRIA 28, p. 213-214

IV C: Heist, VSH p. 89

VI: Heist, VSH p. 87-88, 89-90

VII, IX^a: PRIA 28, p. 234-235; Heist, VSH p. 93-94

IX^b: PRIA 28, p. 235-236; Heist, VSH p. 94

IX^c: PRIA 28, p. 237; Heist, VSH p. 95

Samthann

Born of Ulster parents, she is fostered by a king (I B) who gives her in marriage to a nobleman. On her wedding night, she escapes in what appears to others as a fire. The king catches up with her but is persuaded to allow her to join the church. Her Life then becomes a series of miraculous deeds (VI). She is often requested to secure the release of prisoners from local rulers (VI A). At her death, St. Lasrian sees two moons, one descending towards him; it is the spirit of Samthann which he blesses before she ascends to heaven (VIII). Like Íta, she is the protector of her people and is regarded as a mother figure. She is supposed to be the founder of Clonbroney (V).

I B: Plummer, VSH II i

VI: VSH II passim

VI A: VSH II vii, xii, xxi

VIII: VSH II xxvi

V: VSH I p. lxxxviii (not mentioned in her Life)

2.ii. The recurring motifs in the Lives, with a List of Motifs arising from the heroic biographical pattern

In the previous section, as well as in Section II, chapters 1 and 2, we have been able to see in the saintly biographical tradition recurrent or motival elements. Several international motifs, identified by Stith Thompson, occur, for example, in connection with the saint's power of healing (ST V221) or with the miraculous manifestations which acclaim the saint (ST V222).¹ Cross includes others as "folk-motifs", which do not occur in sources other than Irish saints' Lives (eg. Cross V222.0.1.2 "Saint identified by pillar of fire above her head").

It is clear that/^{at}some levels and periods there was an interplay between the international popular tradition and what may be called the 'ecclesiastical popular tradition'. This may be seen especially in the dissemination of the apocrypha² and the religious tales in the Book of Leinster.³ At the same time, it is clear that the ST classification is limited in its application to a study of the Lives; Cross' efforts to extend Thompson's classification was no doubt invaluable for a provisional overview of early Irish literature as a whole, but is not a wholly satisfactory way of looking at the Lives and analysing them in their own right. The same may be said of motival items shared between the vitae and early Irish saga cycles. Felim O'Briain has isolated some items which may have entered Irish

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1. See further Cross V220 ff. The peculiarly Irish motifs are marked by an asterisk in Cross' classification.
 2. See Sec. II, 2.ii above.
 3. See Antti Aarne, The Types of the Folktale, trans. and enlarged by Stith Thompson, FF Communications no. 184, (Helsinki, 1961), "Religious Tales".

hagiography via the sagas¹, and we may point out the occasional occurrence in the opposite direction.² However, as far as the vitae are concerned, this is somewhat peripheral.

A satisfactory analysis of the vitae must clearly take more account of these motifs as being within an ecclesiastical tradition. In this context, it is worth noting C. Grant Loomis' study of miracles (which, as will appear, form a considerable part of the vitae's repertoire) and other miraculous occurrences in European saints' Lives in general.³ Loomis' classification scheme under such broad thematic headings as "The Wonder Child", "The Four Elements", "Animals", "Healing" establishes a European continuity and is a useful guide to some of the most prominent themes in European (including Celtic) hagiography. Loomis, however, casts a wide net not very deeply; the instances from Irish saints' Lives are taken mostly from Plummer's VSH. The evidence of the Irish Lives needs more specific parameters if they are to be seen as a tightly-knit group.

A step in this direction was made by Irène Snieders who, in an examination of Irish hagiographical influences on the vitae of Irish saints in Belgium, grouped the most common hagiographical themes in the Irish Lives under the headings of "Birth and Childhood", "Magic Powers", "The Four Elements", "Angels and Demons", "Cures, Deaths and Resurrections", "Animals" and "Food".⁴ Snieders' classification,

1. "Saga Themes in Irish Hagiography", op. cit.

2. See Wm. Gillies, "An Early Modern Irish 'Harrowing of Hell' ", Celtica 12 (1980), p. 37 n. 17, on Cú Chulainn's prophecy that Christ would descend into Hell.

3. White Magic: An Introduction to the Folklore of Christian Legend, (Cambridge, Mass., 1948).

4. See "L'influence de l'hagiographie irlandaise sur les vitae des saints irlandais de Belgique", Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique 24 (1928), p. 613-627.

like Loomis', is very general and the instances reported are, also, mostly from Plummer. However, like Loomis, Snieders is a useful guide to identifying the most common themes in Irish hagiography.

In further writings, Felim O'Briain approaches the Lives in their Irish context and from a wider range of Irish sources. He divided the major themes in Irish hagiographical literature into three main types: (1) commonplace miracles that constantly recur; (2) themes borrowed from secular tales; and (3) themes introduced to enhance the prestige or revenue of some monastery.¹ This distinction in motivation is not as relevant now as in earlier sections where the composition of the Lives was discussed. O'Briain's politically motivated themes (those which are intended to enhance the prestige of a monastery) tend to occur in relation to the saint's genealogy, emphasising his royal, or at least noble, descent², but as for his other categories, there is no clear distinction to be drawn, no specific parts of the vitae in which they are likely to occur. The items which recur most frequently are O'Briain's "commonplace miracles"; these he subdivides under the headings of cures, food miracles, elements and nature, and animals.³ Admittedly, this is an exploratory work, but like Snieders, it presents insufficient data from the sources to be a satisfactorily penetrating study.

What is needed is a classification of the recurring motifs in the Lives of the Irish saints, based upon an overall survey of the sources, showing the frequency of these items in their context

1. "Miracles in the Lives of the Irish Saints", IER 5th ser. 66 (Nov. 1945), p. 332.

2. See further, O'Briain, "The Hagiography of Leinster", Féil-sgríbin Eoin Mic Néill, ed. by J. Ryan, (Dublin, 1940), p. 454-464.

3. "Miracles in the Lives of the Irish Saints", loc. cit.

and the types of motifs which are used in Irish hagiography in a descriptive approach which treats the Lives as a unit. What follows, then, is a tentative list of 'commonplace' motifs extracted from the corpus of material dealt with in this study. The motifs are divided into two main parts: the first part lists those motifs which have a direct bearing upon certain points in the biographical pattern (eg. Birth Motifs); the second part lists those motifs which are more timeless. The latter are grouped under thematic headings similar to the ones proposed by Snieders, Loomis, and O'Briain. Cross and Stith Thompson have been used as guides in defining what constitutes a motif and some of the major categories.

Certain items listed under a certain theme, such as "Healing", have not been divided into sub-categories (eg. "Saint heals leper" or "Saint mends broken bones"). A more minute analysis would no doubt be a useful exercise, but is not necessary for the present purpose. Some references have also been made to certain Lives of non-Irish Celtic saints in order to establish the motival status of items rare in Irish vitae or of particular interest in Celtic hagiography. These references appear in brackets.

The analysis has revealed certain episodes which, while occurring only once, have a structural status equivalent to a motif, or figure in ST and Cross as motifs. I have included or excluded these on as rational a basis as I can. For example, "St. Patrick forms boy from clot of gore" (VT p. 207) may be listed under "Power over nature" or "Transformation", but the act itself is so unusual that it must be seen in the tradition of St. Patrick alone (with all its folkloristic and theological implications). On the other hand, St. Brigit hanging her wet cloak on a sunbeam is displaying her power over objects (and nature) in a way which is not of such great

theological significance, and may be included.

What is most significant about the motifs in the Lives is the selection used by the hagiographers to create a certain image of the saint as healer, protector, 'divine' or 'white magician'. The list is not complete and the inclusion of certain references under the headings given may be disputed. However, it may be claimed to represent fairly accurately the storehouse of motifs that the Irish hagiographers had to hand when composing these Lives.

List of Motifs

A.

1. Birth MotifsBirth of saint predicted in visions

- Boece: VSH I i ¹ - flaming star seen to enter mother's mouth
 Brendan: BL 3334 f.; BNE I i; VSH I i - mother sees vision of bosom
 of pure gold, breasts like snow
 Ciarán of Saigir: BNE I i; VSH I i - mother sees vision of star enter-
 ing her mouth
 Columba: Anderson p. 465-467 - mother dreams of angel who gives her a
 marvellous mantle
 Fínán: VSH II i - mother dreams of golden fish entering her mouth
 Finnian of Clonard: BL 2504 - mother sees vision of flame entering
 her mouth, issuing as a bright bird
 Lasrian: VSH II i - mother dreams of bearing seven apples which grow
 too large to hold (Sil. Gad. p. 18)
 Maedóc: BNE I i (II); VSH II i - father sees star entering his wife's
 mouth, mother sees moon entering father's mouth
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor IV (10-11) - mother has vision from God]

Birth of wonderful child prophesied by holy man

- Abbán: BNE I i; VSH I ii
 Aed: VSH I i
 Bairre: BNE I iii, VSH I v
 Berach: BNE I ii; VSH I iii
 Brendan: BL 3334; BNE I ii
 Ciarán of Clonmacnois: BL 3968 f.; VSH I i
 Ciarán S.: VSH I i
 Coemgen: BNE I i (I), ii (I); VSH I i
 Columba: Anderson p. 465; BL 752, 763, 786
 Féchín: VSH II ii
 Lasrian: VSH II ii; Sil. Gad. p. 18
 Maedóc: BNE I vi (II), vii (II)
 Mochuda: BNE I i; VSH I ii, iii; ITS 16 p. 75
 Senán: BL 1792

Omen of a saint by noise of chariot wheels - "noise of chariot under a king"

- Brigit: BL 1161
 Comgall: VSH II v
 Maedóc: BNE I 2 (I); VSH II ii
 Mochoemóg: VSH II v

1. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to "VSH" are to Plummer's VSH.

Illegitimate or incestuous birth or ancestry

Albeus: VSH I i - father impregnates king's slave
 Bairre; BNE I i - father sleeps with king's slave; VSH I i - father
 born of incest
 Brigit: BL 1154 f. - mother a bondmaid made pregnant by her master
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 3, VSH II i - ancestor born of incest
 Moling: Stokes Life II (5) - father sleeps with wife's sister
 Tigernach: VSH II ii - foster-daughter of king sleeps secretly with
 a nobleman

Saint in womb protects mother

Fínán: VSH II ii
 Findchúa: BL 2824 f.
 Fintan: VSH II i
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 38]
 Patrick: BL 52 f.

Child speaks from womb

Bairre: BNE I i, VSH I ii
 Findchúa: BL 2813 f.

Birth of saint painless

Abbán: BNE I i, VSH I ii
 Coemgen: BNE I iv (I)
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 8, VSH II iii
 Senán: BL 1884 f.

Mother sits on stone during birth

Aed: VSH I i
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 8, VSH II iii
 Lasrian: VSH II iv; Sil. Gad. p. 18
 Patrick: BL 47; VT p. 9

2. Birthnight Marvels

Brendan: BL 3341 f., BNE I ii, VSH I ii - 30 calves born to 30 cows
 BL 3367 f., BNE I ii - "fair drop" from heaven falls on him
 Brigit: BL 1192 f. - infant breathes life into queen's son born dead
 on the same day
 Coemgen: BNE I v (I) - fort where he is born not penetrated by frost
 Mochuda: VSH I v - no evil man can live in the fort where he is born
 Moling: Stokes Life II 7 - angel melts snow for 30 ft. around; II 8 -
 God sends dove to warm and protect infant

Dry stick held by mother during birth bursts into leaf

Colmán ELo: VSH I i
 Maedóc: BNE I iv (II)
 Senán: BL 1884 f.

Angels present at birth (See also Angels, B.10)

Déclán: ITS 16 p. 8; VSH II iv
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 40]
 Moling: Stokes Life III 9; VSH II i

Divine light seen at birthplace

Berach: VSH I iv
 Brendan: BL 3354, BNE I ii, VSH I iii
 Déclán: ITS 16 p.8, VSH II iv
 Féchín: VSH II iv
 Maedóc: BNE I 3 (I), VSH II iii

3. Baptism Marvels

Brendan: BL 3374 f., BNE I ii - three wethers leap from fountain for baptismal fees
 Coemgen: BNE I iv (I), VSH I i - angel baptises him*
 Moling: VSH II ii - angel disguised as priest baptises child*
 *(See also Angels, B.10)

Fountain springs up for baptism (See also Power over Nature B.7 - "Saint produces fountain")

Boece: VSH I ii
 Comgall: VSH II vi
 Mochuda: BNE I i, VSH I vi, ITS 16 p. 77
 Patrick: BL 57 f., VT p. 9

4. Childhood - most childhood miracles are listed in Part B.Child abandoned and suckled by wolf

Albeus: VSH I i
 Bairre: VSH I i - his father is nursed by a wolf
 (See also Animals, B. 12, "Doe milked for saint")

5. Saint directed to place of resurrection

Animal leads to site of monastery (See also Animals, B.12)

Berach: BNE I xviii, VSH I xi - follows deer
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4341 f., VSH I xxv - follows stag carrying his books
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 51 - follows cart drawn by 2 untamed bulls; p. 74 - wild boar leads to site of church]
 Fínán: ZCP 2 p. 552 - builds church where he finds herd of wild boars
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xiv - boar with white bristles found at site of church
 Molúa: VSH II xxviii - follows 5 white red-eared cows
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 24 - finds deer and fawn on site of Armagh (cf. VT p. 231)
 Rúadán: BNE I ii, VSH II iii - wild boar quits place when saint arrives

Angels direct saint (See also Angels, B.10)

Abbán: VSH I xx, xxviii
 Albeus: VSH I xxix
 Bairre: BNE I xi, VSH I xii; BNE I xiii, xxii
 Boece: VSH I ix
 Cainnech: VSH I vi
 Coemgen: BNE I vii (I), VSH I xxiv, xlii

Déclán: ITS 16 p. 37, VSH II xix
 Féchín: VSH II x; RC 12 p. 324
 Finnian: BL 2567, 2705
 Íta: VSH II viii
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 90]
 Maedóc: BNE I 28 (I), x, xlvi, lvii (II); VSH II xxxvii, vi
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 229-230
 Munnu: VSH II xvii
 Rúadán: BNE I ii, VSH II ii
 Senán: BL 2194 f.
 Tigernach: VSH II xiv

6. Saint serves his community

Saint as protector/giver of victory

Abbán: VSH I xxvi
 Brendan: BNE I lxviii
 Ciarán S.: BNE I vii (II); VSH I ix
 Fínán: VSH II xvi
 Findchúa: BL 2965, 2989, 3227
 Íta: VSH II xxxiii
 Munnu: VSH II xv
 Tigernach: VSH II x, xvii

Saint contends with demons

Abbán: BNE I viii, VSH I xvii
 Brendan: BNE I lxv
 Cainnech: VSH I xlii
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xxviii (I)
 Coemgen: VSH I xvii, xxi, xxx, xliiv
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xx, xxix
 Columba: Anderson p. 361; Cuimíne IX
 Comgall: VSH II iv, xxxiv, lv
 Crónán: VSH II x
 Féchín: VSH II xvi; ZCP 2 p. 330
 Íta: VSH II v, vii
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 92]
 Mochoemóg: VSH II ix, xxi
 Mochúa: BL 4855
 Mochuda: BNE I -Expulsion xii, xiii
 Molúa: VSH II xli
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 214
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 2
 Rúadán: BNE I vi, xxii; VSH II x, xxix
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 24-26]
 [Servanus: Metcalfe V, VII, VIII]
 Tigernach: VSH II viii

Saint contends with magician

Berach: BNE I xvi, xxiii; VSH I x, xiii, xiv, xviii-xix, xxi-xxiii
 Cainnech: VSH I xi
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4297, VSH I xviii
 Coemgen: BNE I xiv (I), VSH I xxxi, xxxiii
 Columba: Anderson p. 351, 363, 399-403, 405
 Finnian: BL 2653

Gerald: VSH II ix
 Íta: VSH II xxxiv
 Lasrian: VSH II xxviii
 Mochuda: BNE I v; VSH I xxi, lxvi; ITS 16 p. 95, 143
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 14-16, 19; VT p. 45, 55-57, 59, 93, 131, 133-35,
 249
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 31-32]
 Senán: BL 2277-2289

Saint contends with local ruler

Áed: VSH I xxi, xxiii, xxv, xxvii
 Albeus: VSH I xxxv
 Cainnech: VSH I vi
 Ciarán Clon.: VSH I xix
 Ciarán S.: BNE I vii (I), vi (II); VSH I viii-ix
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 332
 Fintan: VSH II xvii
 Íta: VSH II xxxii
 Lasair: Ériu 5 p. 93
 Lasrian: VSH II xiv; Sil. Gad. 24-25
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xix, xxviii, xxxi
 Moling: Stokes Life 60; VSH II xix
 Patrick: VT p. 45-47, 59
 Rúadán: BNE I xi, VSH II xv

7. The Death of the Saint

Saint foresees time of his death

Áed: VSH I xxxvi
 Columba: Cuimíne XVII
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 69; VSH II xxxviii
 Fínán: VSH II xxix
 Fintan: VSH II xxii
 Íta: VSH II xxxv
 Munnu: VSH II xxx
 Brendan: VSH I ciii

Heavenly phenomena at saint's death

Abbán: VSH I xlix - angels, great light around body
 Áed: VSH I xxxvi - ascent seen by Columba
 Bairre: BNE I xxvii - sun shines 12 days after his death
 BNE I xxvii, VSH I xv - St. Fursa sees golden ladder to heaven
 Patrick: Muir-chú II 7, BL 632, VT p. 255 - no night for 12 days
 after his death; BL 632 - buried where 2 unbroken oxen stop
 Mochuda: BNE I xxix, VSH I lxix, ITS 16 p. 147 - sees band of angels,
 heaven open for his soul
 Molúa: VSH II liv - Pope Gregory hears chorus of angels
 Samthann: VSH II xxvi - spirit appears as moon to St. Lasrian
 Senán: BL 2492 f. - heavenly light near body

Miracles occur after death (in connection with relics - see also
Mirvellous objects B.11 and Illusions B.5)

Gerald: VSH II xvi
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 117]
 Maedóc: BNE I lxxiv (II), VSH II lvi

[Ninian: Forbes p. 23]
Patrick: Muir-chú II 10

Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 235-236; Heist, VSH p. 95

B.

1. The divine person of the saint

Hand of saint divinely radiant

Bairre: BNE I xxi, VSH I xiv

Boece: BSH I xix

Cainnech: VSH I xxxv

Patrick: Muir-chú II 3, BL 70, VT p. 127

Saint's blood has healing power (See also Healing, B.2)

Brigit: BL 1383 f.

Cainnech: VSH I xx

Saint's saliva has (healing) power

Comgall: VSH II x, xiv; xlvii - saliva splits rock; xxxviii - saliva turns to gold

Déclán: VSH II xxxi - saliva turns rock to salt

Féichín: RC 12 p. 328-329 - mixed with clay, changes ugly man's appearance

Patrick: VT p. 219 - saliva splits rock

Rúadán: BNE I viii, VSH II xii

Saint's tears have (healing) power

Mochúa: BL 4649 - tears help barren woman conceive

Molúa: VSH II ii - tears cure man of headache and ulcer

Voice of saint heard at great distance

Brendan: BL 3403, BNE I vii

Columba: Anderson p. 287

Saint's tooth

Findchúa: BL 2965 - fire bursts from his teeth in battle rage

Finnian: BL 2604 - tooth sets brake on fire

Patrick: BL 471, VT p. 197 - lost tooth shines like sun

Odour of sanctity about saint (See also Death of Saint, A.7)

Albeus: VSH I xxxviii

Molúa: VSH II vi - odour from saint satisfies monk's hunger till death

Patrick: Muir-chú II 8

Presence of saint causes peace (See also Saint serves his community A.6)

Abbán: BNE I x, VSH I xxi

Colmán Elo: VSH I xi

Íta: VSH II xiii - her presence dispels demons

Breath of saint kindles fire

Abbán: BNE I iv, VSH I xlii
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xxvi (II), VSH I xxv
 Comgall: VSH II xliii, xliiv
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 44]
 Lasrian: VSH II vii; Sil. Gad. p. 20, 25
 Molúa: VSH II iii, xxiii
 Patrick: VT p. 11-13 - breath kindles icicles

Saint untouched by the elements (See also Marvellous objects, B.11, "Saint's clothing protects, etc".)

Áed: VSH I vi
 Albeus: VSH I x, xlv
 Boece: VSH I vii
 Brigit: Cog. 779, BL 1662
 Cainnech: VSH I xvi, xlii
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4424
 Ciarán S.: BNE I vi (II), VSH I viii
 Comgall: VSH II viii, xxiv, xxxix
 Fínán: VSH II v, xviii
 Íta: VSH II ii
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 97]
 Lasair: Ériu 5 p. 77
 Lasrian: VSH II xxvii
 Maedóc: BNE I 35 (I), lix (II); VSH II xlvi
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xxix
 Moling: VSH II xix
 Molúa: VSH II xvii, xix
 Ninian: Forbes p. 19
 Patrick: Muir-chú II 3, VT p. 125
 Senán: BL 2158

Saint rejects impure food (See also Childhood, A.4)

Brigit: BL 1225
 Cainnech: VSH I ii
 Déclán: ITS 16₁p. 51, VSH II xxv - rich man serves dog instead of
 mutton
 Lasrian: Sil. Gad. p. 20

Saint speaks with dead

Áed: VSH I vii
 Cainnech: VSH I ix, xxxi
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4449, VSH I xxxii
 Coemgen: VSH I xxviii (see also Ciarán Clon.: VSH I xxxii)
 Colmán Elo: VSH I vi
 Íta: VSH II xxix
 Maedóc: VSH II xliii
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xxxii
 Mochuda: VSH I lvii, ITS 16 p. 129
 Patrick: Muir-chú II 2

1. See also J. Vendryes, "L'Episode du Chien Ressuscité dans l'Hagiographie Irlandaise", RC 35 (1914), p. 337-360.

Saint counteracts poison

Albeus: VSH I xii

Patrick: BL 52, VT p. 55

[Samson of Dol: Taylor 23, 54]

Saint nurses child

Berach: VSH I iv - St. Fregius feeds child out of his right ear

Colmán Elo: BNE I v - saint has pap of milk and pap of honey for
nurturing his foster-childrenFindchúa: BL 2982 f. - rears king's child with milk from his own
right breastDivine light seen above saint(Also Childhood, A.6)

Bairre: VSH I xvi

Boece: VSH I ii

Brendan: BL 3426, VSH I v

Brigit: BL 1207, 1341

Cainnech: VSH I xxii

Columba: Anderson p. 469-471, 501, 503, 505-507; BL 959, 1101;
Cuimíne II, XII, XV, XXII

Comgall: VSH II iv, vii, xv, xix

Féichín: RC 12 p. 328-329

Fínán: VSH II vii

Fintan: VSH II xvi

Íta: VSH II xxiii

[Kentigern: Forbes p. 60]

Lasrian: VSH II xxix

Mochoemóg: VSH II vii, xii

Moling: VSH II iii

Molúa: VSH II ii

2. Healing¹Abbán: VSH I xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix, xl, xliii; BNE I xviii, xix,
xxii

Áed: VSH I v, xxiv

Bairre: BNE I viii, x; VSH I vii

Berach: BNE I viii, VSH I xvi

Boece: VSH I xv

Brigit: Cog. 780, 781, 784; BL 1332, 1363, 1368, 1372, 1431, 1435,
1442, 1620

Cainnech: VSH I vii, xii, xli

Ciarán S.: BNE I vii (I), vi (II); VSH I viii

Coemgen: VSH I xv

Colmán Elo: VSH I xxxiii, xxxiv

Columba: Anderson p. 435-437, 437-441, 459-461; Cuimíne XXV

Comgall: VSH II lii, liv

Crónán: VSH II vi, xii, xxv

1. For a description of various diseases prevalent in Ireland, see William P. MacArthur, "The identification of some pestilences recorded in the Irish annals", IHS 6 (1948-49), p. 169-188.

Déclán: ITS 16 p. 43, 49; VSH II xx, xxiv
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 326, 330, 332
 Fínan: VSH II xiv, xx, xxi, xxiii, xxviii; ZCP 2 p. 556-557, 560-561,
 562-563
 Findchúa: BL 3117, 3254
 Finnian: BL 2661 f.
 Fintan: VSH II iii, xv
 Íta: VSH II xv, xix, xx, xxviii, xxxiii
 Lasair: Eriu 5 p. 81, 89, 103
 Lasrian: VSH II viii, xvii; Sil. Gad. p. 25
 Maedóc: BNE I 14 (I), xxvi (II), VSH II xv; BNE I 15 (I), xxvi (II),
 VSH II xvi
 Mochoemóg: VSH II iv, xxxiv
 Mochúa: BL 4851, 4860; VSH II iii, vi
 Mochuda: BNE I vi, vii, viii, xvii, xix; VSH I xxii, xxiii, xxiv,
 xxxix, xl, lii, lvi, lxi; ITS 16 p. 95, 107, 109, 123, 129,
 135
 Moling: Stokes Life 64; VSH II xv, xxv, xxviii
 Molúa: VSH II viii, ix, xiv, xxii, xxviii, xxxi, xxxii, lii
 Munnu: VSH II viii, xxx
 Ninian: Forbes p. 12
 Patrick: BL 86, VT p. 13, 133, 201
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 18-19, 32. 40]
 [Servanus: Metcalfe VI, VIII]

Saint cures man of enormous appetite

Brigit: Cog. 784
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 332
 Mochuda: BNE I (Expulsion) i

Resuscitation of humans (See Animals B.12 - "Resuscitation of animals")

Abbán: BNE I v, xiv; VSH I xiv, xxx, xlvi
 Áed: VSH I v, xii, xvii
 Albeus: VSH I xviii, xxvii, xxxiii, xxxvii
 Bairre: BNE I viii, VSH I viii
 Berach: BNE I xix, xxix; VSH I xii
 Boece: VSH I v, vi, viii, xvi
 Brendan: BL 3493, 3673, 3678; BNE I xxviii, x; VSH I xi
 Cainnech: VSH I xv, xix, xxvi, xxix, xxxiii
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4424; VSH I xxx
 Ciarán S.: BNE I vii, xi, xiii, xx, xxvii (I), viii, iv, ix, xx, xxiii,
 xxvii, xxviii (II); VSH I xiv, xxxii, xv, ix, xii, xxvi,
 xxvii; BNE I xiv (I)
 Coemgen: BNE I ix, xii, xviii (I); VSH I xi, xv, xlvi
 Colmán Elo: VSH I viii, x, xviii
 Columba: Anderson p. 397; Guimíne XXV; BL 912, 1026, 1031
 Comgall: VSH II xvi, xx, xxv, xxxi, xxxii
 Crónán: VSH II iv, xx, xxi
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 47, VSH II xxiii; ITS 16 p. 67, VSH II xxxvii
 Féchín: VSH II xii, xv; RC 12 p. 342, 326
 Finnian: BL 2696, 2714
 Fintan: VSH II xx
 Gerald: VSH II v - king's daughter revived as boy (see Transformations
 B.3)
 Íta: VSH II xiv, xviii, xxx
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 47]

Lasrian: VSH II xxv; Sil. Gad. p. 25
 Maedóc: BNE I 9, 27 (I), xiii, xliv, xxxviii, lii (II); VSH II xxxv, xlili, x, xxviii
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xviii, xxiii, xxiv, xxvii, xxxiii
 Mochuda: BNE I xiv, xvi; VSH I xxxi, xxvii; ITS 16 p. 101, 107
 Moling: VSH II xxvi
 Molúa: VSH II vii, xxv, xxxix, xlvi
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 222-223, 225; Heist, VSH p. 91
 Munnu: VSH II x, xi
 [Ninian: Forbes p. 17]
 Patrick: BL 102, 113; VT p. 15, 123, 135, 199
 Rúadán: BNE I xii, xx; VSH II xvi, xxvii, vii, xxvi, xxviii
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 50]
 Senán: BL 2013, 2330
 [Servanus: Metcalfe VIII]
 Tigernach: VSH II iii, v, vi

3. Transformations

Áed: VSH I xxxi - meat turned to bread and fish
 Boece: VSH I xxii - turns coarse grain to fine
 Brigit: BL 1614 f. - salt becomes stones then salt
 Cainnech: VSH I xliv - bread turned to gold
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4161 - turns oats to wheat, 4322 - grain turned to gold (cf. Mochoemóg)
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xxv (I), iii (II); VSH I xxx - bacon becomes honey, oil, and pottage; BNE I xxix (II) - bacon turned to wheat, honey, fish, water to wine
 Coemgen: BNE I xxii (III) - cheese turned to stone
 Columba: Anderson p. 327-329, BL 917 - bitter fruit made sweet
 Comgall VSH II xxxviii - saliva turned to gold (see B.1)
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 59 - turns clay to salt; VSH II xxxi - turns rock to salt for a baptism
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 105 - milk spilled in river becomes cheese]
 Lasrian: VSH II xxxiii - meat turned to bread
 Maedóc: BNE I 33 (I), liv (II); VSH II xlv - turns barley to gold
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xxiii - turns bitter fruit sweet (cf. Columba)
 Mochúa: VSH II vi - phlegm from nose of Munnu turned to gold
 Moling: Stokes Life 49 - different grains turned to rye
 Molúa: VSH II xxi - turns grain to finest wheat; xxxvi - turns seed to gold; xxxviii - turns meat to fish
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 224; Heist, VSH p. 90 - turns stone to salt
 Patrick: BL 127, VT p. 15 - makes curds and butter out of snow
 BL 393, VT p. 183 - poisoned cheese turned to stone
 BL 447, VT p. 249 - turns stones to cheese, cheese to stone
 VT p. 201 - turns rushes to leeks for a cure
 Rúadán: BNE I xv, VSH II xxi - meat turned to bread (cf. Aed, Lasrian)
 Samthann: VSH II xvi - willows turned to pine; xvii - twisted wood made straight
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 344 - mucus from leper's nose turns to gold (cf. Mochúa); p. 348 - coulter of bacon turned to iron

Saint turns water to wine (or honey, milk, ale)

Áed: VSH I vii
 Brigit: Cog. 780; BL 1221, 1377, 1368

Ciarán Clon.: BL 4028, 4402; VSH I iii, xxxi
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xvi (I), ii, xiv (II); VSH I xvii
 Coemgen: VSH I viii
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xxxi
 Columba: Anderson p. 325; Cuimíne IV; BL 837
 Finnian: BL 2696
 Mochuda: BNE I xxii, xxviii; VSH I xlvi, lxvii; ITS 16 p. 119, 145
 Molúa: VSH II xx
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 217, 236; Heist, VSH p. 87-88, 90-91
 Patrick: BL 108, VT p. 15
 Rúadán: BNE I x, VSH II xiv
 [Servanus: Metcalfe VII]

Saint transforms human appearance

Abbán: BNE I xiii, VSH I xxv - changes king's daughter to son¹
 Gerald: VSH II v - changes king's daughter to son
 Berach: BNE I xxiii, VSH I xix - changes complexion of Aedh Dubh
 Maedóc: BNE I xvii (II) - as above
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 210 - changes young nun's appearance to old
 woman by breathing on her
 (See B.1. - "Saint's saliva" - Fechin)

4. Instances of Divine Foresight and Knowledge

Abbán: BNE I xii, VSH I xxiii
 Áed: VSH I xi, xiv, xxiv, xxvi, xxxvi
 Albeus: VSH I xiv
 Bairre: BNE I xii, xx; VSH I vi, xiv
 Berach: BNE I xvii
 Boece: VSH I xviii, xxix
 Brendan: BL 3494; BNE I ix
 Cainnech: VSH I xxiii, xl, xli
 Ciarán Clon.: VSH I xii, xxvi; BL 4349
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xiii, xxiv (I), xxv, xxxii (II)
 Coemgen: VSH I xxiii, xxx, xxxviii, xlii, xlvi
 Colmán Elo: BNE I viii; VSH I ii, iv, x, xix, xxiii
 Columba: Anderson p. 194-323; Cuimíne V, VII, VIII, XVI; BL 971, 976,
 1007, 1046
 Comgall: VSH II xxx, lii
 Crónán: VSH II xi, xiv, xvi, xvii, xxvii
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 51, 59, 69; VSH II xxv, xxxi, xxxviii
 Énda: VSH II ii, xxi, xxvi, xxxii, xxxiii
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 326-327, 330-331
 Fínan: VSH II xvi, xxix; ZCP 2 p. 556-557, 564-565
 Fíndchúa: BL 2989, 3015, 3064
 Fintan: VSH II ii, iii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xxi, xxii
 Íte: VSH II xii, xvi, xv, xx, xxvii, xxxi, xxxiv, xxxv
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 77, 85-86, 81]
 Lasrian: VSH II xvi, xxxi; Sil. Gad. p. 32, 23

1. See also P. Grosjean "Textes Hagiographiques Irlandais", EC 2
 (1937), p. 269-303, no. 4 - story in connection with St. Brendan.

Maedóc: BNE I xxiii, xlv (II); VSH II xiii, xxxiv, xxxvi, xl
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xxvi
 Mochúa: BL 4691
 Mochuda: BNE I iv; VSH I xvi, xxxv, xxxvi, xlii, xlv; ITS 16 p. 89,
 105, 103, 111, 113-114
 Moling: Stokes Life 71; VSH II vii
 Molúa: VSH II xxvii, xxviii, xl, xliii, l
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 219-220; Heist, VSH p. 86
 Munnu: VSH II ii, vii, xxi, xxx
 Patrick: Muir-chu I 11; BL 337; VT p. 59
 Rúadán: BNE I xxii, VSH II xxix
 Samthann: VSH II xiii

5. Illusions

Saint creates illusion to confuse enemies

Áed: VSH I xxviii
 Albeus: VSH I xxxi
 Brendan: BL 3435; BNE I vii; VSH I vi
 Cainnech: VSH I xl
 Coemgen: VSH I xiii
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xxiii
 Crónán: VSH II xviii
 Maedóc: BNE I lxiii (II), VSH II li
 Moling: Stokes Life 70
 Molúa: VSH II v
 Samthann: VSH II i
 Tigernach: VSH II x

Coemgen: VSH I xxxviii - fosterson and co. appear to enemies as deer
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 17, VT p. 45-47 - he and his disciples appear a
 deer to escape king

Saint's body appears to two different factions (Also A.7 - Saint's Death)

Abbán: VSH I lii
 Énda: VSH II xi - St. Faenchi
 Patrick: Muir-chú II 12, VT p. 257

6. Miraculous Provision

Áed: VSH I xv, xxxii
 Albeus: VSH I xiii, xv, xxix
 Berach: BNE I x, VSH I xvii
 Brigit: Cog. 777B, 779; BL 1250, 1266-96, 1355, 1470, 1676
 Ciarán Clon.: BL *4191, 4198
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xvi, xvii, ix, x (I), xiv, v, xii, xv (II); VSH I
 xvii, xxxiv, x, xi
 Comgall: VSH II xxviii, xxxiii
 Crónán: VSH II *xix
 Énda: VSH II xvii, xxii
 Féchín: VSH II xi; RC 12 p. 340, 350
 Fínán: ZCP 2 p. 558-559
 Fintan: VSH II vii
 Lasair: Ériu 5 p. 85

Lasrian: VSH II x; Sil. Gad. p. 21
 Maedóc: BNE I *xlvi (II); VSH II xli
 Mochuda: BNE I xxvi, VSH I lxiii, ITS 16 p. 139
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 2
 Monenna: PRIA 28 *p. 225-227, Heist VSH p. 88; PRIA 28 p. 229,
 Heist VSH p. 89-90
 Rúadán: BNE I x, VSH II xiv, xxv
 Samson of Dol: Yaylor 38
 Samthann: VSH II iv, vi, *x

*food multiplied

Saint provides fruit out of season (See also B.7 Power over Nature)

Bairre: BNE I viii, VSH I ix - ripe nuts fall from hazel in spring
 Berach: BNE I xiv - sorrel grows in winter
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xv (I), xi (II); VSH I xvi - blackberries cure queen's
 lovesickness
 Coemgen: BNE I xii (I) - sorrel grows on rock in winter
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 103 - blackberries cure queen's lovesickness]

7. Power over Nature

Miraculous growth

Albeus: VSH I xi - barren trees made fruitful
 Berach: BNE I xv, VSH I ix - apples grow on willow
 Brigit: Cog. 779 - wooden base of altar takes root at her touch
 Coemgen: BNE I xii (I), VSH I xxxiv - apple grow on willow (cf. Berach)
 Columba: Anderson p. 329-331, BL 893 - crop sown in June reaped in
 August
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 68 - sows sand which grows as wheat]
 Maedóc: BNE I lxvi (II), VSH II liv - barren trees made fruitful
 (cf. Albeus)
 [Ninian: Forbes p. 16 - monk finds full-grown leeks and herbs in
 garden where none before]
 Senán: BL 2375 - holly stake planted by well becomes full-grown tree
 next day
 Molúa: VSH II xxvi - seed which is not wheat grows as wheat
 Patrick: VT p. 159 - horse rod set in ground becomes bush

Saint produces fountain

Áed: VSH I xii
 Albeus: VSH I xxxi
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4132
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xxxiii (II), VSH I xxxviii
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xxxiii
 Columba: Anderson p. 347, BL 900
 Comgall: VSH II vi, xxxi
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 33, VSH II xvi - from blood of a disciple
 Énda: VSH II xi - 2 fountains spring up where St. Faenchi is buried
 Féchín: VSH II v; RC 12 p. 328
 Fínán: VSH II xv
 Maedóc: BNE I 20 (I), xxxvi (II); VSH II xxvii
 Mochuda: BNE I i, VSH I vi, ITS 16 p. 77
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 219
 Patrick: BL 57, VT p. 9, 85

Saint calms storm

Albeus: VSH I vi
 Cainnech: VSH I xxiii
 Columba: Anderson p. 221, 351, 405 (p. 357-359 - grants favourable winds)
 Patrick: BL 202
 Samthann: VSH II xxiii

Saint causes sun to remain still

Colmán Elo: VSH I xxiv
 Crónán: VSH II ix
 Féchín: VSH II xx
 Lasrian: VSH II xi
 Molúa: VSH II xxxv

Saint causes storm or flood against enemies (See also B.8 Rewards and Punishments)

Ciarán S.: BNE I xvii (I), xii (II); VSH I xviii
 Columba: Anderson p. 373-75
 Moling: Stokes Life 67; VSH II xix
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 17, VT p. 45-47

Saint causes water to recede

Abbán: BNE I xiv, VSH I xxx
 Áed: VSH I xix, xxiii
 Boece: VSH I xvi
 Brigit: Cog. 787 - moves river
 Cainnech: VSH I iv, xliii
 Ciarán Clon.: VSH I xxiv, BL 4327 - moves lake
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 55, VSH II xxvii
 Finnian: BL 2540
 Gerald: VSH II xi
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 48-49]
 Maedóc: BNE I 38 (I), xlvi (II); VSH II xxxvii
 Mochuda: BNE I xxvi, VSH I lxiv, ITS 16 p. 141
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 220; Heist, VSH p. 86

Saint walks on water (water like dry land)

Coemgen: BNE I vii (I); VSH I xx, xxiii
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xi, xii
 Comgall: VSH II xxiii, xxxv, xlvi
 Maedóc: VSH II xx, xxi; BNE I xxxi (II)
 Senán: BL 2416
 [Servanus: Metcalfe III]

Saint extinguishes fire with blessing

Ciarán S.: BNE I xxii (II)
 Fintan: VSH II vi
 Lasrian: VSH II xiii
 Moling: VSH II xvii

Saint causes snow or ice to burn

Berach: BNE I xxiii, VSH I xv
 Patrick: BL 80, VT p. 11-13 (see also B.1 - "Breath of saint kindles fire")

Saint causes bog to become firm

Fínán: ZCP 2, p. 554-557

Maedóc: BNE I 28 (I), xlvi (II), xxi (II); VSH II xii

Rúadán: BNE I xviii, VSH II xxv

Earth rises under saint

Énda: VSH II xiii

[Kentigern: Forbes p. 93]

Saint gets fish from dry land

Fínán: ZCP 2 p. 562-563

Patrick: VT p. 89

Child born of adultery made to point out father

Albeus: VSH I xxiii

Brigit: BL 1449 f.

[Ninian: Forbes p. 13-14]

8. Rewards and PunishmentsSaint punishes thief

Abbán: VSH I xxxvii

Brigit: Cog. 782

Cainnech: VSH I xxxvii

Ciarán Clon.: BL 4090, VSH I vii

Ciarán S.: BNE I xxi (I), ii (II); VSH I xx

Colmán Elo: VSH I xii, xxvii

Comgall: VSH II xxii

Féchin: VSH II xix

[Kentigern: Forbes p. 117]

Lasair: Eriu 5 p. 101

Mochuda: VSH II xxvii

Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 209; Heist, VSH p. 90-91

Boece: VSH I xi

Saint punishes enemies who insult him or try to kill him

(See also A.6 "Saint contends with magician/local ruler")

Aed: VSH I xxix - enemies promised hell

Ciarán S.: BNE I xxii (I), xxviii (II), VSH I xxviii - king struck dumb for reviling saint

Coemgen: BNE I xvii (I) - musicians' instruments turn to stone for insulting saint

Colmán Elo: VSH I xiv - immobilises an assassin

Comgall: VSH II 1 - soldiers who try to expel him from island die
VSH II liii - tyrant who curses him dies same night

Déclán: ITS 16 p. 51, VSH II xxvii - all who refuse him hospitality die

Féchin: RC 12 p. 332 - man opposed to handing over hostage dies;
p. 344 - doubting millwright dies but later restored

[Kentigern: Forbes p. 52-53 - hostile monk crushed by beam; p. 72 - tyrant who kicks him afflicted with gout; p. 77 - heathen prince who destroys buildings is blinded; p. 87 - adversaries afflicted with blindness and disease]

- Lasrian: Sil. Gad. p. 26 - king's feast turns rotten when steward refuses saint food; p. 28 - masons immobilised when they try to attack him
- Maedóc: BNE I 12 (I), xxiii (II), VSH II xiii - man sent to behead him has hands stick to axe; BNE I lii (II) - murderer's arm falls off
- Mochoemóg: VSH II xvi - feet of soldiers stick to ground
- Mochuda: BNE I xi, ITS 16 p. 97 - weapons stick to enemies
- Munnu: VSH II xxvi - chief who insults him dies within a month
- Patrick: BL 274, 556 - would-be murderers punished; VT p. 133 - man who insults him is blinded, p. 183-185 - horsemen come to slay him drown in ford
- Rúadán: VSH II vi - man who forcibly expels saint loses land
- Senán: BL 1926, 1940 - punishes households which refuse him hospitality
- [Servanus: Metcalfe VI -king Brude struck by disease for attempting to slay him]

Saint punishes disobedience

- Áed: VSH I xxx - women wash hair at wrong time
- Boece: VSH I xxviii - sinner has head fall off
- Ciarán S.: BNE I xxi (II), VSH II xxiv - adultery punished
- Colmán Elo: VSH I xii - man punished for working on a Sunday; VSH I xxx - chief refuses a captive
- Fínán: VSH II xxii - king refuses release of a captive
- Finnian: BL 2714 - son of Oengus refuses saint's request
- Maedóc: BNE I 21 (I), xxxvii (II), VSH II xxvii - girl who bathes unlawfully in stream becomes stuck to stone
- Molúa: VSH II xxxii - man who was warned to say nothing of the healing of his broken leg has leg broken again
- Munnu: VSH II xxii, xxiii - king refuses to release captive

Man who feigns illness found dead or struck by illness

- Ciarán Clon.: BL 4220 f.
- Maedóc: BNE I xxviii (II), xxxii (II); VSH II xviii, xxiii
- Patrick: Muir-chú I 22, VT p. 185-187

Earth swallows saint's enemies

- Áed: VSH I v
- Berach: BNE I xxvii, VSH I xxiii
- Boece: VSH I xxi
- Déclán: ITS 16 p. 59, VSH II xxxii
- Féichín: RC 12 p. 352
- Mochúa: BL 4654 f.
- Patrick: BL 287, 477; VT p. 37, 93, 131, 205
- Senán: BL 2309

Saint rewarded for his charity

- Cainnech: VSH I viii
- Ciarán Clon.: VSH I viii, ix, x, xi, xx; BL 4272
- Colmán Elo: VSH I xvii
- Maedóc: VSH II xxxi
- Munnu: VSH II xiii
- Samthann: VSH II iii

Saint leaves blessing of prosperity

- Albeus: VSH I xxxvi - barren river made full of fish
 Brendan: BNE I 1 - barren stream made full of fish
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xxix (I), xxxii (II); VSH I xxxv - leaves 3 blessings
 on his monastery
 Columba: Anderson p. 369 - blesses poor man's cows, they increase
 from 5 to 105
 Findchúa: BL 3155 f. - leaves king of Connacht victory in battle, of
 deed, of horsemanship
 Finnian: BL 2678 f. - makes land fertile
 Fínán: ZCP 2 p. 554 - man who protected him against robber shall
 always prevail against enemies
 Lasair: Ériu 5 p. 95 - blessing on those who honour her
 Moling: Stokes Life 30 - three blessings from Maedóc
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 18 - blesses man who honours him; VT p. 37, 143-
 blesses a river

Saint's blessing grants skill or knowledge

- Brendan: BL 3781 f. - blesses hand of a priest so he can do smithying
 Columba: BL 914 f. - blesses hand of a boy so he becomes skilled
 Comgall: VSH II xxix - blesses boy with bad handwriting so that he
 excels in writing; xxxvi - blesses hand of monk who becomes
 an artisan
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 57, VSH II xxx - bestows art of healing on man and
 his descendants
 Finnian: BL 2527 - sign of cross over his mouth allows him to speak
 British
 Maedóc: BNE I 34 (I), 1v (II); VSH II xlvi - blesses hand of Gobban
 to make him a wright
 Rúadán: BNE I vii, VSH II xi - blesses hand and eyes of man to make
 him a leech
 Patrick: VT p. 77 - blesses mouth of a boy who learns to read the
 psalms in 12 days

Saint's blessing causes barren woman to conceive

- Déclán: ITS 16 p. 61, VSH II xxxiii
 Kentigern: Forbes p. 95
 Samthann: VSH II xxi
 Tigernach: VSH II xv

The saint's curse

The following is a list of the occasions it is recorded in the Lives that the saints engaged in cursing. The circumstances are so varied that it would be difficult to decide upon sub-categories within this one motif. The saint's curse fell upon on those who insulted him or crossed his will (see "Saint punishes enemies who insult him or try to kill him"); the effects were either death, or continued ill fortune both for the person on whom the curse is laid and for his descendants. The saint's curse is comparable to the poet's power of satire; although the saint and the poet operate in different contexts, they display the same power in the same tradition.¹

1. My thanks are due to Miss Catherine MacLean who allowed me to see her research material on the Mac Mhuirich poets in connection with this motif.

Berach: BNE I xii
 Brendan: BNE I xlix, lxii
 Brigit: BL 1424
 Cainnech: VSH I xxiv, xxvii, xxxviii
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4063, 4161, 4399
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xii (I), iii (II); VSH I xiii, xxx
 Coemgen: BNE I ix (I), xviii (I); VSH I xxv
 Colmán Elo: BNE I iv, vii
 Columba: Anderson p. 369, 383-385; BL 842
 Comgall: VSH II xvii, xxi, xlv, xlvii
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 37, 65; VSH II xix, xxxvi
 Énda: VSH II xxix, xxx
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 324, 330, 346, 348, 350
 Finán: VSH II ix, xix; ZCP 2 p. 552-555, 560
 Findchúa: BL 2846
 Finnian: BL 2580, 2624
 Gerald: VSH II xi
 Kentigern: Forbes p. 72
 Lasair: Ériu 5 p. 95
 Maedóc: BNE I 27 (I), xliv (II), lviii (II); VSH II xxxv, xliii
 Mochoemog: VSH II xi, xvii, xxx
 Mochuda: BNE I (Expulsion) viii; VSH I xxxii, liv, lv, lviii; ITS 16
 p. 103, 127, 131, 133
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 25; VT p. 35, 45, 81, 195, 219-221, 231, 183-85,
 139
 Rúadán: BNE I xii, xiii; VSH II xvi, xvii
 Senán: BL 2323

9. Visions

Berach: BNE I xxx, VSH I xxv - gives monk vision of Rome
 Brendan: BL 3380, BNE I iv, VSH I iii - has vision of angels
 BL 3554, BNE I xiii, VSH I xii - has vision of Land of
 Promise
 BNE I lv, VSH I lxxxiv - Gildas sees human form and blood on
 altar
 Brigit: BL 1215 - wizard dreams of her consecration; BL 1497-1509 -
 has heavenly vision during Patrick's sermon
 Cainnech: VSH I xxvii - king has vision of fiery chariot, charioteer
 with flaming sword stabs him
 Ciarán Clon.: VSH I xxi - with St. Énda, dreams of fruitful tree in
 middle of Ireland, a sign of St. Ciarán (BL 4289)
 BL 4263 - Finnian sees vision of 2 moons, one for
 Columba, one for Ciarán
 Coemgen: VSH I xxii - vision of St. Patrick
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xv - sees Pope Gregory's soul entering heaven
 VSH I xvi - gives monks vision of heaven
 VSH I xxv - has vision of St. Patrick; xxxv - has vision
 of St. Finnian; xxxviii - appears in vision after death
 Columba: Anderson p. 465-517 - Adomnán Book III, Angelic Visions
 BL 852 - Finnian sees 2 moons, gold for Columba, silver for
 Ciarán
 Comgall: VSH II xlii - gives dream of heaven to king of Leinster
 VSH II lvii - monk has vision of St. Meldanus
 Féchín: VSH II xviii - man who despises saint sees spectre in church
 RC 12 p. 322 - vision of fiery pillar, radiant birds in place
 Columba predicts for him

- Fínán: VSH II xiii - dream given to villagers about their king
 Fintan: VSH II xix - bishop has dream of 7 men in white come for his spirit
 Íta: VSH II iii - in a dream, an angel gives her three precious stones representing the Trinity
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 107 - Columba sees a golden crown descend upon the saint]
 Lasrian: VSH II xxxii - Baithinus has symbolic dream of Ciarán Clon., Lasrian, and Columba
 Maedóc: BNE I 19 (I), xxxv (II); VSH II xxvi - king sick with fever sees saint strike hellish monster with his bachall
 BNE I 38 (I), lxxv (II); VSH II lvii - leper has vision of Maedóc and Brigit
 VSH II xxxviii - gives monk vision of Rome (cf. Berach); lii-signs eyes of Munnu who sees whole world spread out before him
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xx - king has dream of angels and saints
 Mochuda: BNE I ii, VSH I viii, ITS 16 p. 79 - king sees gold crown and column of fire above boy
 BNE I xxvi, VSH I lxii, ITS 16 p. 137 - queen has prophetic dream of saint's arrival
 VSH I xvii, ITS 16 p. 89 - angels seen carrying silver chair with gold image to heaven on site of monastery
 Moling: VSH II xxix - shows abbot vision of Christ in his hood
 Molúa: VSH II x - vision of saint putting gold torc and white cassula on man
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 213-214 - tyrant given vision of heaven; PRIA 28 p. 232, Heist, VSH p. 92 - nun sees vision in saint's cell
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 27 - boy who becomes his successor has vision of heaven
 BL 159 - master sees vision of fire coming out of saint's mouth
 VT p. 25 - vision summoning him to preach to the Irish
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 44 - vision of Peter, James, John]
 Samthann: VSH II v - St. Funecha dreams of her as a spark of fire which ignites entire monastery; xvi - saint appears in a dream
 Senán: BL 2416 - St. Canair sees vision of all churches of Ireland with tower of fire; BL 1968 - robbers see saint with Christ
 Tigernach: VSH II iv - seen to breathe 3 vapours of different colours
 VSH II v - warned in a vision to return home

Christ appears in guise of a leper

- Colmán Elo: BNE I vi
 Féchín: VSH II xiii; RC 12, p. 342-345
 Moling: Stokes Life 38-39

10. Angels

Angels transport saint

- Abbán: BNE I iv, VSH I xii
 Áed: VSH I xvi
 Cainnech: VSH I x
 Coemgen: VSH I xliv
 Finnian: BL 2580, 2769
 Íta: VSH II xx

Lasrian: VSH II xxvi
 Maedóc: BNE I 8 (I); VSH II ix
 Mochuda: BNE I xii, VSH II xxviii, ITS 16 p. 99
 Senán: BL 2194, 2237, 2483
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 332

Angels help saint

Abbán: BNE I xvi, VSH I xxxiv
 Albeus: VSH I ix
 Boece: VSH I xxvi
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4095, VSH I xi
 Columba: BL 850
 Comgall: VSH II xli
 Fínán: VSH II x, ZCP 2 p. 554
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 237; Heist, VSH p. 95
 Mochuda: BNE I xxiii, VSH I xlvi, ITS 16 p. 119
 Patrick: BL 121, VT p. 15

Angel teaches saint

Boece: VSH I iii
 Brendan: BL 3494, BNE I x
 Moling: Stokes Life 12
 Molúa: VSH II xvi

Angel Victor (Patrick's angel) visits angel

Moling: Stokes Life 12
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 6, II 4; BL 155; VT p. 21

Angel rebukes saint for pride

Columba: Cuimíne V
 Maedóc: BNE I xxx (II), VSH II xx
 Mochúa: VSH II ii, v
 Molúa: VSH II liii
 Munnu: VSH II xxv

11. Marvellous objects

Brigit: Cog. 779 - hangs wet cloak on sunbeam
 Ciarán Clon.: VSH I xxxiii - earth from his grave calms storm
 Columba: Anderson p. 393 - dagger blessed by him cannot kill or wound
 BL 921 - blesses a sword so that none can die in its presence
 Anderson p. 411-417, Cuimíne XIV - gives poor man a wooden
 spit which impales game
 BL 940 - bark of oak tree under which saint dwelt causes
 leprosy in man who used it to tan his shoes
 Anderson p. 451, Cuimíne XXVI - tunic shaken and books read
 to bring rain
 Féchín: VSH II xii - pagans throw possessions into sea, they return
 Fínán: ZCP 2 p. 560 - trows given to cripple will not wear out
 Gerald: VSH II vii - shatters rock with his stone
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 110 - constructs cross of sand]
 Maedóc: BNE I 39 (I), lxxvi (II), VSH II lviii - Moling is overcome

- with illness when he sleeps in Maedóc's bed¹
 Moling: VSH II xxix - Christ appears in hood (see B.9 Visions)
 Patrick: VT P. 75 - 6 clerics told to abide where wallet is swallowed
 by earth; p. 93 - brooch falls in heather, no heather grows
 there afterwards; p. 109 - well dug by him is always full
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 221; Heist, VSH p. 87 - silver vessels float
 against current to her monastery

Marvellous object cures illness

- Abbán: VSH I xxxviii - apple heals mute
 Brigit: Cog. 788 - millstone heals; BL 1488 - girdle heals diseases
 Columba: Anderson p. 339 - blessing in a box mends broken hip; p. 341
 - rock salt cures eye inflammation; p. 399-403, Cuimíne XXV-
 stone marked with curative power, floats on water
 Féchín: VSH II viii - rock pierced by him cures swollen finger
 Gerald: VSH II i - born with healing stone; v - water from stone
 revives princess, changes her to boy (see "Holy water")
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 110 - stone cross cures maniacs]
 Maedóc: BNE I 37 (I) - bier on which he was carried heals nobleman
 Mochuda: BNE I xviii, VSH I xxxviii, ITS 16 p. 107 - golden belt heals
 VSH I xl, ITS 16 p. 109 - apple heals girl's withered arm
 VSH I lii, ITS 16 p. 123 - apple heals pregnant woman's
 withered arm, child born without pain

Holy water heals or revives dead

- Bairre: BNE I viii - water revives dead queen
 Brigit: BL 1402 - water poured over her feet has curative powers
 BL 1478 - water blessed by her becomes powerful love potion
 Boece: VSH I xv - water in chariot tracks heals
 Cainnech: VSH I xii - blesses water to cure man without a face
 Coemgen: VSH I xli - water causes vain soldier's hair to fall out
 Columba: Anderson p. 333 - blesses bread and dips it in water which
 cures people afflicted by pestiferous cloud
 Cuimíne XXV - curative stone dipped in water
 Finnian: BL 2672 - hymn made for saint put in water, water cast over
 land to make it fruitful; BL 2705 - well at church cures sick
 Gerald: VSH II v - water from healing stone revives
 Lasair: Ériu p. 81 - healing water in her bell (see "Saint's bell")
 Lasrian: VSH II xix - holy water allows woman to conceive - Sil. Gad.
 p. 23
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xxiii - gives water the strength of wine, revives
 and cures monks who died of pestilence; VSH II xxiv - holy
 water heals nun's eyesight
 Molúa: VSH II xxviii - holy water heals chief's son
 Patrick: Muir-chú 24, VT p. 231 - blesses water which revives horses,
 cures wealthy man
 [Servanus: Metcalfe VIII - blesses a fountain, 3 blind men, 3 lame,
 3 deaf men wash in it and are healed]
 Tigernach: VSH II xiii - revives archbishop of Armagh with holy water

1. See Gildas Bernier, "Le 'Lit' des saints dans le folklore et l'hagiographie", EC 15 (1976-77), p. 627-32. The idea of sanctity is attached to the bed of the saint, as well as the idea of mortification.

Marvellous ship

- Abbán: BNE I ix, VSH I xix - ship does not move until he is chosen as leader
 Albeus: VSH I iii - ship forced to return to collect him; iv - old, broken ship becomes fit to sail; xlvi - mysterious carries him away, he returns with a palm
 Brendan: BL 3724, BNE I xxxi - Ita tells him only ship built of timber will help him reach Land of Promise
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 19 - empty ship appears when he strikes bell
 VHS II xi - ship appears to take him to Britain

Object falls from heaven

- Albeus: VSH I xxvi - vessel of wine
 Boece: VSH I xxv - cup
 Columba: Cuimíne V - book
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 19, VSH II x - bell (see "Saint's bell")
 Énda: VSH II xix - angel gives him gospel and cassula
 Lasrian: VSH II xxii, Sil. Gad. p. 29 - book and bell
 Patrick: VT p. 41 - crozier; p. 109, chasuble; p. 241 - load of wheat
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 218; Heist, VSH p. 85 - 12 garments sent from heaven

Objects stick to enemies of saint (see also B.8 Rewards and Punishments)

- Abbán: BNE I xvi, VSH I xxxiii
 Berach: BNE I xxix, VSH I xxiv

Saint restores stolen or missing object

- Albeus: VSH I xxviii
 Brigit: BL 1595
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xxii

"Ring of Polycrates"

- Brigit: Cog. 785
 Cainnech: VSH I xv
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 99-102]
 Finnian: BL 2613-2616 - Brigit offers him a ring which he refuses; finds it later in water
 Moling: Stokes Life 40 - ingot of gold found in salmon

Saint restores broken objects

- Áed: VSH I iv - plough held by one ox; v- chariot travels on one wheel
 Albeus: VSH I xvii - restores broken chalice and ampulla
 Boece: VSH I xxiii - restores broken vessel
 Brigit: BL 1394 - breathes on broken vessel
 Ciarán Clon.: VSH I xiv - mends broken axle with blessing
 Columba: Anderson p. 499 - rides in carriage without lynch-pin
 Fínán: VSH II xxvi - mends broken vessel with blessing

Locks break for saint

- Abbán: BNE I i, VSH I vi
 Brendan: BNE I iv

Columba: Anderson p. 409, 411
 Comgall: VSH II li
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 322, 348
 Fintan: VSH II xvii
 Lasrian: VSH II xxi, xxii; Sil. Gad. p. 27, 28

Saint moves object by divine power

Áed: VSH I xviii, xxxiii
 Berach: BNE I xxiii, VSH I xx
 Brigit: Cog. 788, 785
 Crónán: VSH II xxii
 Féchín: VSH II xxi
 Fínan: ZCP 2 p. 554-557
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xxii
 Mochuda: VSH II lx, ITS 16 p. 133
 Moling: VSH II x, xii
 Molúa: VSH II xi
 Rúadán: BNE I ix, VSH II xiii, xx
 Senán: BL 1903

Saint travels on object

Albeus: VSH I iv - sails on his cowl
 Ciarán S. : VSH I xxiii - sails on rock
 Énda: VSH II vii - St. Fáenchi sails on pallia; xiv - Énda sails on rock
 Lasrian: VSH II xxii, Sil. Gad. p. 30 - sails on rock
 Mochúa: VSH II ix - disciples walk across water on saint's pallium
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 216-17 - travels to Britain on clod of earth

Saint follows object to Ireland

Déclán: ITS 16 p. 27 - follows bell on stone
 Patrick: BL 242 - casts flagstone into sea and follows it
 VT p. 93 - casts cowl on a stone into sea, finds it in Ireland

Saint's clothing protects, heals, or transforms

Berach: BNE I xxiii, VSH I xix - cowl changes complexion of Aedh Dubh
 Brigit: BL 1488 - girdle heals disease
 Cainnech: VSH I xxxii - tunic revives dead man
 Coemgen: VSH I xxxix - belt prevents strangling
 Columba: Anderson p. 381, BL 945 - cowl protects from slaughter
 BL 825 - cowl revives dead cleric
 Crónán: VSH II iii - garment saves condemned man thrown in lake
 Maedóc: BNE I xvii (II) - cowl changes complexion of Aedh Dubh
 (cf. Berach)
 Molúa: VSH II vii - cowl causes death of an old monk; xlii - sandals turn bitter ale sweet; xliiv - tunic revives dead herdsman
 Munnu: VSH II xxii - tunic helps chief escape unseen; xxiv - cassula secretly placed on woman of Leinster whom he refused to heal
 Patrick: VT p. 153 - mantle changes appearance of man
 Rúadán: BNE I ix - cowl protects king's son from drowning
 Samthann: VSH II xv - belt causes tree to fall other way

Saint's clothing untouched by fire or water (Cf. B.1 "Saint untouched by the elements")

Albeus: VSH I xl
 Coemgen: VSH I v
 Findchúa: BL 2887
 Kentigern: Forbes p. 80, 97
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 19, VT p. 59, 89
 Rúadán: VSH II xxiii

Saint's book unharmed by fire or water

Abban: VSH I xxxvi
 Cainnech: VSH I xviii, xxviii
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4317, 4356; VSH I xxiii, xxvii
 Columba: Anderson p. 343, 345; BL 956
 Crónán: VSH II xxvi
 Maedóc: BNE I 12 (I), VSH II xii
 Moling: VSH II iv
 Ninian: Forbes p. 18]

Saint's bell

Berach: BNE I x - blessing made with bell and staff fills vats of ale
 Comgall: VSH II xxxvii - sends bell via an angel
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 19, VSH II x - Duibhín Décláin, bell sent from heaven; ITS 16 p. 19 - strikes bell when he needs ship, p. 51 - blesses bell, Clog-Dhercaín, if king marches around it he will be victorious (VSH II xxv - stone blessed)
 Lasair: Ériu 5 p. 81 - the Ceólán of Lasair, water from it has healing properties
 Mochúa: BL 4843 - puts disease of gangrene on his bell
 Rúadán: BNE I v - when he rings bell, ground opens to reveal treasure
 VSH II iv - sound of bell tells Brendan to leave territory

Saint's bell rung against enemies (Cf. B.8 "The saint's curse")

Berach: BNE I xii, xxvii
 Féchín: RC 12 p. 324
 Maedóc: BNE I xxix (II), VSH II xix; BNE I lviii (II) - turns bachall and relics 'widdershins'
 Mochuda: VSH I lviii, ITS 16 p. 131
 Rúadán: BNE I xii, VSH II xvi

Saint's bell rings where site of monastery is to be (Cf. A.5)

Bairre: BNE I xii
 Ciarán S.: BNE I ii (I), VSH I iii
 Findchúa: BL 2887
 Mochoemóg: VSH II xiv
 Mochúa: VSH II xi

Saint's staff¹

Abbán: BNE I viii, VSH I xvii - journeys out to sea on staff (cf. "Saint travels on object")

1. See also Ifor Williams, "An Old Welsh Verse", National Library of Wales Journal 2 (1941-42), p. 69, for a discussion of a verse on Cyrrwenn, the crozier of St. Padarn.

- Brendan: BNE I lx - plants staff in sod, pound of gold found
 Cainnech: VSH I xxiii - disciple catches fish with staff
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xxiv (I) - bachall turns stream warm
 Colmán Elo: BNE I v - staff made from spear slew monster; VSH I xxi -
 staff pointed at river prevents waters flooding cell
 Columba: Anderson p. 275 - strikes ground where he predicts a pagan
 will be baptised and buried; BL 953 - crozier strikes ladder
 of glass whereby Boite went to heaven
 Déclán: ITS 16 p. 33, VSH II xvi - staff named Feartach Décláin
 ITS 16 p. 63, VSH II xxxv - flings staff a mile to put out a
 fire
 Énda: VSH II xxiv - signs rock with bachall, angel with sword splits
 it the following night
 Féchín: VSH II xiv, RC 12 p. 344-47 - throws 2 staffs in lake, water
 runs through mountain to power mill
 Fínán: VSH II iv, ZCP 2 p. 522 - takes unformed wood without permis-
 sion, Brendan throws it on fire, wood is shaped into staff
 Findchúa: BL 2561 - goes thrice righthandwise around host of Munster
 with crozier in hand
 Finnian: BL 2561 - blow of staff on mountain causes it to fall on
 Saxons; 2678 - crozier stops flow of sap from Rúadán's lime
 Maedóc: BNE I xv (II) - receives variegated crozier and staff of
 Brandub from heaven (cf. "Object falls from heaven"); BNE I
 xviii (II) - Brec, variegated crozier, to be turned widder-
 shins against family after hearing prayers; BNE I xxxiii (II)
 - sign of cross made with staff stops raiders
 Mochúa: BL 4679 - casts crozier into mountain; it bores through to
 lake to provide water for mill (cf. Féchín above); BL 4798 -
 in healing men of Yellow Plague, puts their colour on his cro-
 zier
 [Ninian: Forbes p. 20 - staff stolen by lad prevents boat leaking,
 acts as sail and anchor, subdues elements and propels boat;
 p. 21 - planted on shore, it blossoms into a tree with a
 healing fountain at the root]
 Patrick: BL 219, VT p. 31 - receives staff of Jesus
 BL 461 - spike of crozier pierces king's foot during bap-
 tism, he thinks it part of the ceremony
 VT p. 79 - crozier cuts flagstone; p. 91 - mark of staff
 left on side of idol; p. 139 - sign of crozier on shield to
 be a defence
 Rúadán: VSH II viii - signs earth with staff, hidden treasure revealed
 (cf. Brendan above); VSH II xiii - king's son protected from
 drowning (in BNE , cowl)
 [Servanus: Metcalfe III - staff cut from tree of Cross by angel]
 Samthann: VSH II xix - with bachall raises oak branch to tree

Saint's staff revives dead (See also B.2 "resuscitation of humans")

- Coemgen: VSH I xxxviii
 Colmán Elo: VSH I xxxvii
 Columba: BL 1031
 Maedóc: BNE I lxi (II), VSH II xlix

Saint's staff produces fountain (See also B.7 "Saint produces foun-
 tain")

- Albeus: VSH I xvi, xx
 Colmán Elo: VSH I vii

Moling: Stokes Life 69
 Fínán: ZCP 2 p. 556
 Rúadán: BNE I xvi, VSH II xxii
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 42-43]
 Senán: BL 2179

Saint's staff causes water to recede (See also B.7 "Saint causes water to recede")

Déclán: ITS 16 p. 31; VSH II xvi
 Finnian: BL 2540 - dips torch in lake and water recedes

Saint's flagstone

Moling: Stokes Life 63 - Moling's Flag, named after he sat upon it
 Munnu: VSH II i - stone on which he was born is venerated - nothing can remain on it
 Patrick: BL 47, VT p. 9 - flagstone on which he was born sheds water if false oath is taken under it

Forgotten object is found at destination

staff: Cainnech: VSH I xxv
 Columba: Anderson p. 355-57, BL 1039 - Cainnech's staff
 Patrick: VT p. 83
 bell: Déclán: ITS 16 p. 27
 Lasrian: VSH II xxii
 Maedóc: BNE I xxx (II), VSH II xx
 censer: Tigernach: VSH II vii

12. Animals

Saint tames wild animals

Brendan: BNE I lv, VSH I lxxxv - tames lions to tend cattle
 Brigit: Cog. 782 - tames wild boar; 783 - wild fox comes to her as replacement for the king's pet
 Cainnech: VSH I iv - tames oxen; VSH I viii - tames horses
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4045 f. - tames fox
 Crónán: VSH II viii - wild stag eats apples out of his hood
 Maedóc: BNE I xxii (II), VSH II xii - tames wild oxen; VSH II xxx - tames mad oxen with blessing
 Munnu: VSH II iii - wolves guard his flocks
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 55 - tames unbroken horse]

Animals lick saint's feet

Albeus: VSH I vii
 Coemgen: BNE I ix (I); VSH I xxvii

Monsters lick saint's feet

Abbán: BNE I vi, xiii; VSH I xvi

Saint protects wild animals

Albeus: VSH I xliv - wolf protected from hunters
 Boece: VSH I xiii - wolf impaled on wall released
 Cainnech: VSH I xliii - hunted stag protected

Ciarán Clon.: BL 4045 f. - protects hunted fox in cowl
 Coemgen: BNE I xiii (I), VSH I xix - protects wild boar, stops hunting dogs in their tracks
 Maedóc: BNE I 6 (I), xi (II) - rosary on stag's horns renders it in - visible; VSH II vii - wax tablet on stag's horns renders it invisible
 Patrick: VT p. 231 - spares a doe and fawn found on the site of Armagh

Saint slays animal with a word or verse

Ciarán Clon.: BL 4034, VSH I vi
 Columba: Anderson p. 385
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 57]
 Patrick: VT p. 37 - chants prophetic verse to silence a dog

Resuscitation of animals

Lasrian: VSH II xv, xvi
 Maedóc: BNE I lxv (II), VSH II liii
 Patrick: Muir-chú I 24, VT p. 13

Resuscitation of animals after being cooked¹

Brigit: Cog. 785; BL 1665
 Columba: BL 1055
 Finnian: BL 2696
 Mochúa: VSH II x
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 212; Heist, VSH p. 87-88
 [Servanus: Metcalfe VIII]

Animals given to pagan to pay debt disappear

Áed: VSH I xx
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xxv (I), VSH I xxxi
 Rúadán: VSH II xvii

Stolen animal betrays thief

Boece: VSH I xxiv - calf bleats in cauldron; VSH I xli - stolen animal cannot be cooked
 Brigit: BL 1630 - sees stolen he-goat in mass chalice
 Coemgen: VSH I x - ram bleats in thief's belly
 Maedóc: BNE I 36 (I), lxii (II); VSH II 1 - ears of stolen animal protrude from thief's mouth
 Patrick: BL 386, VT p. 181 - goat bleats in thief's gullet
 [Servanus: Metcalfe VIII - stolen ram bleats in thief's belly]

Animals confined by line drawn by saint's staff

Albeus: VSH I viii
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4103, VSH I xv
 Finán: ZCP 2 p. 550
 Maedóc: BNE I 18 (I)
 [Ninian: Forbes p. 16]
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 36]

1. See also J. Vendryes, op. cit.

Animals miraculously replaced

Boece: VSH I xv
 Brigit: Cog. 780; BL 1224, 1673
 Cainnech: VSH I viii
 Coemgen: BNE I xv (I), VSH I iii
 Féchín: RC 12. p. 348
 Fínán: ZCP 2 p. 554

Animals help saint

Cainnech: VSH I viii - wild horses come to draw chariot
 Ciarán S.: BNE I iii (I), i (II); VSH I v - wild boar clears ground for
 him; fox, wolf, and badger are his first disciples
 Crónán: VSH II xiii - king's horses come to do work
 Mochúa: VSH II x - 12 stags carry wood for building of a monastery

Stags yoked to plough or chariot

Berach: BNE I xviii
 Déclán: VSH II xxix, ITS 16 p. 55
 Finnian: BL 2552
 Kentigern: Forbes p. 67
 Mochúa: VSH II vii
 Mochuda: BNE I ix, VSH II xxv, ITS 16 p. 95
 Rúadán: BNE I xiv, VSH II xix

Oxen work without guide

Albeus: VSH I xxxiv
 Ciarán S.: BNE I xviii (II), VSH I xxi

Animals bring food for saint

Berach: BNE I xxvi - otter
 Brendan: BNE I xxxvi - otter
 Coemgen: BNE I xvi
 Mochúa: BL 4827 - seal

White cow comes to feed infant saint

Cainnech: VSH I i
 Coemgen: BNE I vi (I), VSH I ii

Miraculous milking

Brigit: Cog. 779; BL 1659, 1680
 Énda: VSH II xxii
 Féchín: VSH II ix, RC 12 p. 352 - gets milk from a bull
 Samthann: VSH II ix

Doe milked for saint

Albeus: VSH I xxxix
 Bairre: BNE I ii, VSH I iv
 Berach: BNE I xiii
 Brendan: BL 3393, BNE I v
 Cainnech: VSH I xxx
 Coemgen: BNE I xiv (I), VSH I xxxi
 Rúadán: BNE I xvii, VSH II xxiv

Saint defeats monster

Abbán: BNE I v, vii; VSH I xv, xviii
 Brendan: BL 3792; BNE I xl, xlv, xlvi, lvii
 Colmán Elo: BNE I i, ii
 Columba: Anderson p. 387-89 - the Loch Ness monster
 Énda: VSH II xxviii
 Mochúa: BL 4709
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 50]
 Senán: BL 2228
 [Servanus: Metcalfe VIII]

Saint confines monster in lake

Abbán: BNE I xiii, VSH I xxiv
 Coemgen: BNE I viii (I)
 Molúa: VSH II xxv
 Samthann: VSH II viii

Wolf takes place of animal it has slain

Berach: BNE I xiii; VSH I viii - wolf changed into calf
 Boece: VSH I xiv - wolf brings fawn to replace calf
 Coemgen: BNE I xiv (I), VSH I ix
 Féchín: VSH II vii
 Fínán: VSH II xxiv
 Gerald: VSH II vi
 Monenna: PRIA 28 p. 215, 223; Heist, VSH p. 90 - wolves restore calf

Saint feeds starving wolves

Abban: BNE I ii, VSH I vii
 Ciarán Clon.: BL 4082, VSH I v
 Coemgen: VSH I ix
 Maedóc: BNE I 17 (I), ix, xxxi, xxiv (II); VSH II v, xxii, xxv
 Molúa: VSH II xxxiii

Heavenly dove seen near saint

Énda: VSH II xx, xxiii
 [Kentigern: Forbes p. 60]
 [Samson of Dol: Taylor 45]
 Moling: Stokes Life 7

Birds

Brendan: BNE I xxiv - bird tells him of future voyage
 Cainnech: VSH I xxi - 2 white birds prevent infant from drowning
 Coemgen: BNE I x (I) - blackbird builds nest in his hand during cross-vigil; VSH I xxxii - curses crow which dips its beak in honey
 Colmán Elo: BNE I ii - swans sing to relieve fatigue of monks
 Comgall: VSH II xl - calls singing swans to him
 Lasrian: Sil. Gad. p. 23 - bird drops quill when he needs a pen
 Columba: Anderson p. 313 - prophesies arrival of crane
 Mochúa: VSH II iii - bird sings of Colman Elo's loss of knowledge, Mochua alone understands
 Molúa: VSH II xxxiv - partridge lays an offering on altar
 Tigernach: VSH II xvi - enjoins a hawk to release a chicken

Cows

Abbán: BNE I xxiii, VSH I xliv - barren cow blessed, bears 2 calves

Bairre: BNE I xiii, VSH I xii - lost cow leads man to saint

Boece: VSH I xx - revives dead cow to get milk; xxi - earth swallows disobedient cow

Brigit: BL 1225 - fed on milk of white red-eared cow¹

Ciarán Clon.: BL 4103, VSH I xv - blesses cow and calf which follow him to Clonard, cow is famous Odhur Kyarain which gives great amount of milk

Ciarán S.: VSH I xx - stolen cow returns after thief drowns

Coemgen: BNE I ix (I), VSH I vii - cow licks saint and yields more milk; VSH I vii - mad cow cured

Énda: VSH II xxii - God sends red cow with white head which gives milk three times a day; another cow goes in a circle three times for the Trinity, then into lake

Maedóc: BNE I xxxi (II), VSH II xxii - cow licks monk's head and gives milk (cf. Coemgen)

Patrick: BL 95 - blessing tames mad cow, revives slain cows

Otters

Brendan: BNE I liii - story of Dobarchú who was turned into an otter for slaying the saint's oxen - his descendants are forbidden to kill otters

Coemgen: BNE I ix (I) - psalter dropped in lake restored by otter

Oxen

Berach: BNE I xxiv - plough team of oxen run wild, wherever they plough the land is given over to Berach

Énda: VSH II xxx - ox served for meal miraculously replaced next day (cf. "Animals miraculously replaced")

Maedóc: BNE I 23 (I), xl (II), VSH II xxxi - ox comes out of sea to plough for saint

Molúa: VSH II lii - body to be buried where cart drawn by two wild oxen stops

Patrick: Muir-chú II 9 - body buried where cart drawn by two wild oxen stops (cf. Molúa, also Énda VSH II xi)

Rúadán: BNE I xviii, VSH II xxv - two unbroken oxen carry butter to saint, bog made firm for them

Seals

Brendan: BNE I lxii - 50 ocean seals turned to horses for ransom (Transformation)

Brigit: BL 1637 - seal carries her fisherman to Britain

1. For a note on this breed of cattle, see Osborn Bergin, "White Red-Eared Cows", Ériu 14 (1946), p. 170.

The corpus of motifs in the Lives of the Irish saints could, of course, be subjected to various analyses other than that presented here. They could, for example, be classified in strict accordance with the ST classification, or in terms of major categories, such as O'Briain's three main headings. Again, one ^{could} include only those which are directly related to the biographical pattern, or those which display the saint's divine power.

Then again, the motifs might be classified according to their symbolic values which are at times almost certainly present and merit a systematic investigation. For example, the saint's staff is often to be taken as the sign of his ecclesiastical authority; the miracles he performs with it represent that authority in operation. Thus, when the saint draws a line with his staff around a herd of cattle in order to confine it, it is interpreted by John MacQueen as a mythical expression of the replacement of physical strength by abstract legal and moral sanctions.¹

While these are interesting points which warrant further study, our present concern precludes them for the moment. Our approach is designed to extract the morphology of a genre; the biographical pattern is the structural framework in which these motifs operate.

The most common motifs are, of course, those which display the saint's power. Although the term 'magic' may not be entirely suitable for describing the powers of the saints, the substitution of 'divine power' cannot disguise the fact that their actions and the results are similar to those of the magician (particularly van Hamel's "divine magicians"). Loomis, in fact, coins the term "white magician" to describe the Christian priest in popular tradition, both

1. MacQueen, "Myths and Legends of the Lowland Scottish Saints", op. cit.

secular and ecclesiastical. The saint's staff with its marvellous attributes is not far removed from the wizard's magic wand, nor are his bells and books much different from the sorcerer's magic equipment. In contests of power, the saint exactly matches, and surpasses, the magical power of the druid. The Irish hagiographers made frequent use of miracles dealing with the multiplication and transformation of food. The provision of food was a duty expected of a hero. In Táin Bó Fraích, the hero Fráech and his men provide food not only for themselves but also for the household of Medb and Ailill. The saint, metaphorically, provides spiritual sustenance for his people.

The Irish saints are also frequently involved with the elements of nature and especially with animals. Their power over nature may affect fertility and growth. The saint's miracles in the natural world are not simply a display of power, but are pertinent to his function (comparable to Dumézil's third function) as mediator between heaven and earth. Animals figure largely in several of the Lives and the Irish saints appear to have a special affinity with creatures of the wild. One is reminded of Cú Chulainn's boyhood exploits involving the capture and taming of wild animals during his first chariot ride, or Fráech contending with the lake monster. The wild animals in the Lives are companions and helpers to the saints, his other 'congregation', while the monsters may be interpreted symbolically as the forces of evil against which the saint stands to protect mankind.

The biographical pattern and the types of motifs in the Lives appear, from this study, to be the same in Lives written in Irish and Lives written in Latin. The only fundamental difference is the language in which they survive. Heist, it is true, has remarked on the differences between the Latin and Irish texts of the Life of St.

Abbán¹, suggesting that the Irish versions were written prior to the Latin and that the Latin Lives are translations of the Irish. Heist's examination is mostly of minor differences in the content of the texts; for example, the introductory passage in the Latin text, giving a description of Ireland, is absent from the Irish text², for reasons which can only be speculative as the provenance of the original texts is unknown. As has been mentioned, it is difficult to determine the relationship between Latin and Irish texts which seem to be the same redaction for that very reason. Such differences as Heist points out show no apparent pattern or rationale in other Irish saints' Lives and seem to rely on the selectivity of past redactors. On the whole, we may say that the form, structure, and motif-types of the Latin Lives are not significantly different to those of the Irish Lives.

1. "Over the writer's shoulder: Saint Abban", Celtica 11 (1976), p. 76-84.

2. *ibid.*, p. 78-79.

Section IV

Towards a re-assessment of the Lives of the Irish saints

The international heroic biography, as it is applied to saints' Lives, provides recognisable parameters whereby the structure of the Lives may be discussed in the context of the Irish cultural matrix. Section I introduced the Lives as they appear in the literary history of Ireland, in the manuscript records, and the form in which they survive. The literary conventions of the genre were discussed with regard to their relationship to hagiography in the Roman Church, thus linking the Irish Lives to a wider European culture. In Section II, we have sought to show how native Irish tradition and Christian tradition are relevant to our understanding of the Lives, and how the concept of the Hero in Irish tradition may illuminate and be illustrated by a comparison of the saints' Lives with other, more obviously 'heroic' categories.

The discussion of biographical romance and popular tales in chapter 1 of Section II made a preliminary attempt to compare saints' Lives and the native tales of heroic and king cycles. In Section III, it emerged more clearly that there is a basis of comparison between the Lives and the tales of native heroic tradition. This is not merely a matter of borrowing at the conscious, superficial level, although some examples of permutation have been noted and are welcome additions to the evidence presented.

The basis of comparison is at the fundamental level of heroic biography, although this may affect our attitude to such 'surface features' as narrative form, internal articulation, and the formation of a motif-stock, providing an active model more descriptive and interpretative than the European ecclesiastical framework can provide. This has made it feasible to apply to the Lives critical terms which have been applied to heroic biographies in the conventional sense. The successful application of these may help us towards a clearer

understanding of what the term 'hero' should connote in discussions of the 'heroic biography', and a clearer perception of what may be called the heroic status of the saints in Irish ecclesiastical tradition. For the process which transformed the saints of history into the heroes of the Irish Church, we have adopted the term 'heroisation', though differing somewhat from its inventor, Czarnowski, in seeing it as an evolutionary principle at work within the hagiographical tradition, rather than as a historical event on the same level as formal canonisation in the Church. The vitae, interpreted in the light of our adaptation of the international heroic biographical pattern, give the clearest and most consistent evidence of that process at work.

As we see it, heroisation is not necessarily a wholly self-conscious process at any given moment in time. Nevertheless, it is a dynamic and continuing process. Something of its practical articulation has been seen in the discussion of the Lives of Brigit, Patrick, and Columba where we have some positive evidence, in the form of earlier and later Lives, that the traditions of these saints continued to develop through the centuries. The picture which emerges is one of new vitae being written, additions being made to earlier vitae, anecdotes appearing in the vitae of other saints, hymns, prayers and homilies being composed in their honour.

The underlying motivation in the study of the heroic biographical pattern is the belief that there is a basic element which is common to all hero tales, an almost indefinitely wide range of tales about semi-divine, legendary, and similar figures, and that this recurrent core enables one to talk of a basic prototype. With many of the earlier scholars this has been conceived of as a historical prototype, but it can also be perceived in structuralist terms. In

this study, we have perceived it to a limited extent historically, that is, as an intersection of ecclesiastical and secular planes of culture in early Christian Ireland. We have, however, made use of structuralist insights as appropriate, that is, as a means of establishing the morphology of the Lives.

Granted the validity of the pattern, whether in historical or structuralist terms, a person whose life and career conforms in sufficient measure to the pattern may be classified as a Hero, martial, king, or other (in practice, the distinctions are not so sharply defined and many figures are complex). By this criterion, the Irish saints as they appear in their vitae may be regarded as Heroes in this sense. Conversely, we may say that a person whose life and career conforms to the 'saintly biography' may be classified as a Saint - and it is clearly in this way that the audience of the Lives would have seen things (it is, of course, questionable whether they would have distinguished between 'saints' in this sense and 'saints' as defined by the more concrete criteria of formal canonisation).

Naturally, the biographical pattern for saintly heroes differs from that of other heroic types, according as their attributes and functions differ. In terms of their role within society, the saints were primarily conceived as religious leaders. The saint's prestige and powers allowed him to influence key persons and events, which he tended to do by virtue of the authority earned for him by his conduct as an ascetic, a healer, a provider, and an intercessor, rather than by birth-based authority, still less by force of arms, as king heroes and martial heroes do. There are, of course, exceptions such as St. Findchua whose qualities as a war leader are brought to the fore in his vita.

In Dumézilian terms, the saint in society is a first and third

function figure, whereas heroes, martial and kingly, tend to be first and/or second function figures.¹ However, in the Church, as a micro-cosm of society, the saint may embrace all three functions governing sovereignty, physical power, and fertility. The particular functions of heroes, whatever the type, may also embrace aspects of the other two. The Irish evidence in general warns of the dangers of trying to interpret its characters in terms of a single Dumézilian function. At this level, there are no hard and fast lines to be drawn in the Irish tradition, and especially as regards saints in Irish society. The saints' Lives may help us to understand how such complexities can be compatible with the validity of Dumézil's functional classification.

At another level, Kirk's typology of myth² allows a comparison between the Irish saints' Lives and the 'charter myths' which fall among his class of "operative, iterative, and validatory" types.³ These myths are "repeated regularly on ritual and ceremonial occasions; and their repetition is part of their value".⁴ Such charter myths, according to Kirk, can provide emotional support for an attitude or a belief. John MacQueen has adapted some of Kirk's theories for his interpretation of the legends of lowland Scottish saints.⁵ He points out that the legenda were to be read at certain times and on certain occasions, in accordance with Kirk's typology. More importantly, for the Irish saints, he has perceived in the Lives of the Scottish saints

1. See Ó Cathasaigh, The Heroic Biography of Cormac mac Airt, op. cit., p. 8 ff.

2. Kirk, op. cit., p. 252 ff.

3. *ibid.*

4. *ibid.*, p. 254-255.

5. MacQueen, "Myth and the Legends of Lowland Scottish Saints", op. cit.

a process of mythologisation, the creation of mythic structures in the legends of the saints. As mentioned above (Section III, 2.ii), there is scope for a symbolic interpretation of certain motifs in the Lives, and an allegorical interpretation of miraculous events such as a crozier, planted in the ground, suddenly flowering into a tree (as the saint brings Christianity to a pagan land), or the sap of St. Rúadán's lime tree providing sustenance. MacQueen has been able to present a cogent argument for such an interpretation in the Lives of Kentigern, Ninian, and Servanus. The process of mythologisation is, as he sees it, a dynamic force, the Lives being examples of "living myth"¹, which is parallel to our conclusions.

This idea of mythologisation has mostly to do with the idea of acculturation: a new system replaces the old; the old traditions and beliefs became accommodated to the new religion through the agency of the saints' Lives.² In the case of Scottish saints (and, to a great degree, the Irish), the old Celtic civilisation was being absorbed into Romano-Christian culture. As far as this goes, the saints may appear as the 'inheritors' of the old pagan institutions. It must not be overlooked that the Lives of the Irish saints were composed in an Irish Christian context, so that the material selected for the vitae would have been coloured to some extent by the conventions and values held by the Church. Non-Christian elements are thus transformed in the Lives by a process of Christianisation.

The motifs chosen by the Irish hagiographers became part of Irish Christian tradition because they have meaning in a Christian context. Rather than reject the past outright, the writers of the

1. MacQueen, op. cit., p. 25.

2. *ibid.*, p. 1-2.

Church provided an 'ecclesiastical structure' which brought the pagan Irish past into the Christian view of the world. It was a recycling of old images, structures, and institutions into a new system of belief. The process was more syncretistic than acculturative, for the two traditions, Christian and native Irish, also existed side by side yet independent of each other. Irish heroic tradition is, through the saints, Christianised, yet remains a native cultural phenomenon.

In view of what has been said, we may now attempt a re-assessment of the vitae vis-à-vis Irish literary culture. Although hagiography was a foreign literary genre associated with a foreign religion, Christianity and its traditions became integrated in time into Irish culture and society. The Lives of the Irish saints were composed by Irish hagiographers who, although educated by the Church, still shared the same cultural background as the Irish storytellers. The inner structure of the vitae transcends the problem of language; both the Irish and Latin Lives contain the same elements, and were written in the same milieu.

The pattern of the saintly biography is not exclusive to Irish saints' Lives; however, it has been demonstrated that such a pattern is clearly in evidence and has meaning in an Irish context. The existence of the pattern within the Lives validates the image of the saint as the "hero of the new order", or preferably, as a new kind of hero in a changing society. The association of the saints and their vitae with Irish secular tradition could make this idea both credible and comprehensible to medieval Irish Christians as well as to scholars of today. The Lives of the early Irish saints are by no means great literature; nonetheless, they deserve their place in the history of Irish literature.

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B. Books and Articles

A. Hagiographical Material

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