NOTES AND CONSIDERATIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ST. PATRICK'S *EPISTOLA AD MILITES COROTICI* AS A SOURCE ON THE ORIGINS OF CELTIC CHRISTINANITY AND SUB-ROMAN BRITAIN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this tripartite paper is to demonstrate the unique and exceptional value of the *Epistola ad milites Corotici* as a direct source for the historical reconstruction of the origins of the Celtic insular Church in the early years of so-called Sub-Roman Britain. Patrick's letter, as I will try to show, contains information which is not otherwise available on these crucial years. Moreover —and on occasions in comparison with the *Confessio*— the value of the *Epistola* in relation to these events has increased. The themes and historical figures discussed in the *Epistola* have proved to be fundamental to an understanding of the historical, social and religious causes both of the end of Roman power in Britain and the sudden rise of the apostolic missions especially in Ireland and in the rest of the Post-Roman Britain, as well as in less Romanised areas as a result of Nynias's and Columba's preaching and by means of the definitive action of the Roman Church in sending Augustine of Canterbury to Britain.

KEY WORDS

Saint Patrick, *Epistola ad Milites Corotici*, Early Christian Ireland, Celtic Church, Sub-Roman Britain.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Sanctus Patricius Hibernensium Apostolus, *Epistola ad Milites Corotici*, Hibernia Christiana Antiqua, Ecclesia Celtica, Britannia Sub-Romana.

1. Introduction

Saint Patrick's *Epistola ad milites Corotici* "relates to an episode in the history of sub-Roman Britain which is otherwise unknown"[1]. With this brief but illuminating observation —which I have already cited as definitive for a historic reading of the text in question in a previous article which was devoted principally to the historic reconstruction of the Coroticus character[2]— Ludwig Bieler showed how well he understood the exceptional historical scope of this Irish source for the additional reason that its author, Saint Patrick, is the only eye witness who survived the events he provides a written account of. Moreover, it is believed that Patrick's writings are the first official act of the Church of Ireland which have survived intact and it has clearly emerged that it is impossible *d'admettre que le cours de l'histoire de la Bretagne romaine ait été sans subir l'influence des événements dont l'Irlande était le theatre*[3].

The purpose of this study is therefore to demonstrate the unique and exceptional importance of the *Epistola ad Milites Corotici* as a primary source for the historical

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1. Bieler, Ludwig. "The Celtic Hagiographer", *Studia Patristica*, F. L. Cross, ed. Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1962: V, 243-265, especially, 249 (part III). For the text of the saint's only two authentic writings *Epistola* and *Confessio*, I have cited from and followed Richard P. C. Hanson: Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre à Coroticus*. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978, but I have compared it to Ludwig Bieler's which is still notable for the considerable notes to the text (*Libri Epistolarum sancti Patricii Episcopi*) as well as with the reading suggested by Elena Malaspina in the contributionms which I will cite here from time to time.

2. Iannello, Fausto. "Note storiche sull'*Epistola ad Milites Corotici* di San Patrizio". *Atti della Accademia Peloritana dei Pericolanti (Classe di Lettere, Filosofia e Belle Arti)*, 84 (2008): 275-285. I refer to this work for general historical and literary information on the text analysed here and for its specific bibliography on Coroticus. Briefly, note that Bieler dates the *Epistola* to between 439 and 447 and *Confessio* to between 447 and 459; see: Bieler, Ludwig. *The Life and Legend of St. Patrick. Problems of modern Scholarship*. Dublin-London: Clonmore and Reynolds-Agents-Burnes Oates and Washington, 1949: 130 (docs. nº 21 and 40). An almost identical dating had already been put forward by: Grosjean, Paul. "Notes d'hagiographie celtique 10. Quand fut composée la Confession de S. Patrice?". *Analecta Bollandiana*, 63 (1945): 100-111. Patrick gives the impression of having probably written *Confessio in senectute* (*Confessio*, 10, 3) not long before his death: *Et haec est confessio mea antequam moriar* (*Confessio*, 62, 7-8) in that in the manuscript tradition the former was preceded by the second which is, in fact, contained within the so-called *Liber Ardmachanus* (ms. Dublin, Trinity College 52, year 807 circa); see the diplomatic edition by Edward Gwynn (Dublin, 1913) and, by the same scholar: Gwynn, Edward. *Book of Armagh. The Patrician Documents*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1937, facsimile edition containing the Patrician section of the manuscript in question. The *Epistola* is narrated in five manuscripts of the total of seven which contain the entire Patrician writings: P (Bibliothèque National de Paris. lat. 17626, Xth century); C (London, British Museum. Cotton Nero E. 1, 11th century); G (Oxford, Bodl. Fell. 4, first quarter of the XIIth century); F (Oxford, Bodl. Fell. 3, mid 12th century); V (Arras, Bibl. Munic. 450, XIIth century). See: Bieler, Ludwig. *Codices Patriciani Latini*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1942; Bieler, Ludwig. "Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi". *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 11 (1950): 1-150; Bieler, Ludwig. "Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi". *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 12 (1951): 79-214; reprinted in: *Clavis Patricii* 2: *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii Episcopi*, ed. Ludwig Bieler. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1993: I, 7; Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 56 and following; Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio. Alle origini del cristianesimo irlandese*. Rome: Borla, 1985: 57 and following.

3. Stevens, Courtenay E. "L'Irlande et la Bretagne Romaine". *Revue des Études Anciennes*, 42 (1940): 671-681, here, 671.

reconstruction of the origins of the Celtic insular Church in the period referred to as Sub-Roman Britain. I will argue here that Patrick's manuscript contains information on the crucial years of the formation of these two insular historic contexts for which no other sources exist. Furthermore, the importance of the *Epistola* on the subject of these events is further enhanced by the fact that the episodes and historic figures mentioned in it can help us to a considerable extent to understand the interplay of historic-religious, anthropological and linguistic phenomena which contributed to bringing Roman domination in the British Isles to an end and to the sudden emergence of Apostolic missions and ecclesiastical institutions above all in Ireland and Sub-Roman Britain as well as, later on, in less Romanised northern areas as a result of the preaching of Nynias and Columba —the latter by means of the influence of Hibernian missions— and the definitive action of the Church of Rome in southern Britain when it sent Augustine of Canterbury there.

As is well known, in the *Epistola* Patrick recounts that Coroticus, Romanised Briton, is a sort of local leader and an ally of the Picts and Scoti *(Epistola* 2; 12; 15). It was he who sent *(iubente Corotico hostili mente*: 12, 3-4) an armed band to the North-West coast of Ireland against a community of the saint's newly baptised Christians *(Epistola* 3, 1-2) made up also of monks and virgins *(Epistola* 12, 8). Many were killed *(Epistola* 2, 6-7; 3, 2-3; 4, 1-2; 9, 4-8; 13, 2-3; 14, 4; 15, 5-9; 17, 3-7; 21, 7) and taken prisoner *(Epistola* 3, 5-6; 7, 5; 15, 5-9; 21, 8) and the prisoners were then sold by the commander to his Scoti *(Epistola* 14, 4-5) and Pict allies *(Epistola* 15, 8-11). After sacking the property of the prisoners *(Epistola* 3, 5; 13, 2-4), Coroticus handed over some of the prisoners as war booty to his closest companions in order to curry favour and strengthen his power *(Epistola* 19, 2-4). Wanting the return of the booty, Patrick exhorted Coroticus to repent and to defend his *grex Domini (Epistola* 12, 6). Immediately after the attack, he rose up and instructed one of his priests and some clerics to deliver a letter which has not survived in which he asked for the return of the booty and the baptised. Coroticus rejected it and mocked it *(Epistola* 3). This letter was sent the day after Patrick had given the sacraments to some new converts *(Epistola* 3)[4] but Coroticus's attack probably did not take place on the same day as that on which the saint had carried out these rites[5]. Patrick consequently issued the epistle which has survived to this day, though it was certainly sent a long time later because otherwise there would not have been sufficient time for the sale of the prisoners to the Picts[6]. The saint was, however, aware that the power he exercised in Ireland was not always recognised in his country of origin *(Epistola* 11, 1) where he was frequently envied and scorned *(Epistola* 12, 1-2). For this reason, he considers it important to clarify that he had no desire to abuse his powers *(Epistola* 6, 1) in the knowledge that a bishop was not allowed to act amongst peoples who lived outside his

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4. The information reported by Patrick is generally accepted. See: *Clavis Patricii* 2: *Libri Epistolarum Sancti Patricii...*: II, 195-196; Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 42.

5. Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 76 (doc. nº 20).

6. Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 42.

jurisdiction[7]. But Coroticus nevertheless misunderstood the power of bishops in general (*Epistola* 6, 4-7).

2. Society and Religion in Sub-Roman Britain

2.1. Sub-Roman Britain: definition and chronology

The most eminent scholars of the period agree that England in the fifth and sixth centuries can be historically classified as Sub-Roman Britain[8]. This is a term which is intended to indicate an extremely exclusive cultural melting pot based on Roman, Celtic and Christian elements which is free of any reference to an unlikely overall decay in the country. This post Roman period came to an end with the definitive expansion of the Anglo-Saxons in the west of the island and, in particular, with the Evangelisation of Kent by Augustine of Canterbury between 597 and 604[9].

In the writings of Latin authors as a general rule the concept of *Britannia* is conceived of as used somewhat generically[10]. *Britannia* is a far off land, an *alter orbis*, as seen by Velleius Paterculus[11], to the extent that his men, generally known as Britons are said to live "completely outside the world"[12]. Of these the peoples that the Romans knew best were those who lived in the southern regions who were, according to Tacitus, particularly close to the Gauls (*proximi Gallis et similes sunt*)[13]. Tracing the variety of the peoples who lived in Britain, our historian writes in the same place that the Caledonians appeared to be of Germanic origin because

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7. Augustine, *Epistula*, 64, 2, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum: 34/2, 230, 24-28: *Quapropter per litteras quidem adloqui plebem uestram non audeo; rescribere autem eis, qui mihi scriberent, possem; ultro autem ad plebem scribere, quae dispensationi meae commissa non est, unde possem?* We will return to this theme.

8. It is a historical period which is also known as the Age of Arthur. On this period and related issues see the following studies: Alcock, Leslie. *Arthur's Britain: History and Archaeology Ad 367-634*. London-New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971; Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur. A History of the British Isles from 350 to 650*. London: Phillimore, 1977; Dumville, David N. "Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend". *History*, 62 (1977): 173-192; Arnold, Chris. J. *Roman Britain to Anglo-Saxon England*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984; Snyder, Christopher A. *An Age of Tyrants: Britain and the Britons, AD 400-600*. Stroud: Sutton, 1998; Collins, Rob, Gerrard, James, eds. *Debating Late Antiquity in Britain AD 300-700*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004.

9. For a concise but valid overview of Brythonic Christianity until the arrival of Augustine see: McNeill, John T. *The Celtic Churches. A history A.D. 200 to 1200*. Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1974; Herren, Michael W; Brown, Shirley A. *Christ in Celtic Christianity. Britain and Ireland from the fifth to the tenth Century*. Woodbridge: Suffolk, 2002.

10. See: Santoro, Verio. "Sul concetto di *Britannia* tra Antichità e Medioevo". *Romanobarbarica*, 11 (1991): 321-334; Luiselli, Bruno. *Storia culturale dei rapporti tra mondo romano e mondo germanico*. Rome: Herder, 1992: 133 and following.

11. Velleius Paterculus. *Historia Romana*, II, 46, 1.

12. Virgilius. *Bucolica*, I, 67: *At nos hinc alii sitientis ibimus Afros, pars Scythiam et rapidum cretae ueniemus Oaxen et penitus toto diuisos orbe Britannos.*

13. Tacitus. *De vita Iulii Agricolae*, XI, 2.

of their red hair and robust limbs and the Silures of southern Wales were dark like the Iberians. The closer to Hadrian's Wall, the more confusing the knowledge of the lands beyond it. Beyond it are the barbarians[14] and beginning at the end of the fourth century many of these barbarians poured over into Roman Britain attacking the garrisons stationed at the northern border of the island. These were the Picts and the Scoti who were *tetri* [...] *greges, moribus ex parte dissidentes, sed una eademque sanguinis fundendi aviditate concordes*[15]. Together with the Saxons it was principally these two peoples who were largely responsible for the destruction of *Romanitas* in Britain[16]. A great many massacres were perpetrated and the survivors deported to the west of the island (Cornwall and Wales) not infrequently together with those Christians who later founded schools and monasteries in these same regions in the middle of the fifth century[17]. The "official" raids of these two peoples, together with those of the Irish Attacotti and, from the east, by the Saxons themselves, took place in 360[18] and again in 365[19]. Two years later, in 367, a three-fold attack was launched simultaneously by the same peoples once again which was largely fought

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14. On Roman knowledge of and conceptions of the barbarians see, once again: Luiselli, Bruno. *Storia culturale dei rapporti tra mondo romano...*: 383-406.

15. Gildas. "De excidio et conquestu Britanniae". *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores antiquores. Chronica minora saec. IV-VII*, ed. Theodor Mommsen. Berlin: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1898: XIII, 35 (doc. nº 10-11). Significantly, the same British historian (end 5th century-around 570) refers to them as *gent*es *transmarinae vehementer saev*ae in order to point out that these two peoples were separated from Britain by the isthmus formed by the Clyde and Forth rivers (14). This later theme is then taken up by Bede: Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum. Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969: 40. On this issue, see: Wright, Neil. "Gildas's Geographical Perspective: Some Problems", *Gildas: New Approaches*, Michael Lapidge, David N. Dumville, eds. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1984: 85-106.

16. This is what Gildas ("De excidio et conquestu Britanniae...": 24) also leads us to believe. On this issue see: Higham, Nicholas J. *The English conquest: Gildas and Britain in the fifth century*. Manchester: Machester University Press, 1994: 43. The alliance between these two peoples is confirmed also by archaeological finds proving the existence of trading links between Ireland and Scotland as early as the fourth century in territories inhabited by the same peoples (Laing, Lloyd; Lang, Jennifer. "Scottish and Irish metalwork and the *conspiratio barbarica*". *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 116 (1986): 211-221).

17. See: Burns, Robert. "Da Agostino di Canterbury a Enrico VIII", *Storia Religiosa dell'Inghilterra*, Adriano Caprioli, Luciano Vaccaro, eds. Milan: La Casa di Matriona, 1991: 69-131, especially, 72.

18. Ammianus Marcellinus. *Res Gestae*, XX, 1, 1.

19. Ammianus Marcellinus. *Res Gestae*, XXVI, 4, 5. The Attacotti, defined by Ammianus himself as *bellicosa hominum natio* (Ammianus Marcellinus. *Res Gestae* XXVII, 8, 5) were based in Ireland (see: Cunliffe, Barry W. *The Ancient Celts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997: 262-263; Rance, Philip. "Attacotti, Déisi and Magnus Maximus: the Case for Irish Federates in Late Roman Britain". *Britannia*, 32 (2001): 243-270). They were also known to Saint Jerome who mentions that he has seen some of them in Gaul in a text dating to 393 (*Adversus Jovinianum*, II, 7, Patrologia Latina, 23, 296 A: *Quid loquar de caeteris nationibus, cum ipse adolescentulus in Gallia Atticotos, gentem Britannicam, humanis vesci carnibus*). See, by Jerome once again, also: *Epistula*, 69 (*Ad Oceanum*), 3: *Scottorum et Aticottorum ritu ac de Republica Platonis promiscuas uxores, communes liberos habeant* (*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Jerome Labourt, ed. Paris: In aedibus Io. Bapt. Paraviae et Sociorum, 1953: 54 (doc. nº 6-14). La *Notitia Dignitatum*, a manuscript written in around 400 records the presence of Attacotti in the Roman army (*Honoriani Atecotti seniores*) in Gaul at the end of the 4th century (*Notitia dignitatum: accedunt Notitia urbis Constantinopolitanae et Laterculi provinciarum*, ed. Otto Seeck. Berlin: Weidmann, 1876).

off by *comes* Flavius Theodosius, the emperor's father[20]. And further incursions took place in 368 and 369[21] while later on, in 382 according to a Welsh chronicle of the same name dating to 452, *vir probus* Magnus Maximus defeated the Picts and the Scoti and was proclaimed emperor a year later by the army in Britain itself[22]. Between 396 and 399, on the west coast of the island, it was Stilicho who beat off these massive incursions[23]. In 407 Grazianus *municeps* was elected tyrant but soon killed and replaced by Constantine who, after usurping the title of emperor and taking his troops from Britain to Gaul, was then assassinated by a killer sent by Honorius[24]. Over the course of the fifth century, the Britons were often obliged to ask for help from the Romans[25] additionally because the Picts soon entered an alliance with the Saxons and the Angles[26]. The exact year that the Romans retreated from Britain cannot be determined but between 407 and 411 Rome left Britain in the wake of the Honorian Rescript of 410 in which the Brythonic *poleis* were authorised to govern themselves on their own[27]. Thus, by the mid fifth century, the years in which St. Patrick lived, that is, Britain was an independent country governed by a number of similarly independent Celtic princes[28] and the withdrawal of the legions had restored the native aristocracy to a power which was favoured by the persistence of a Celtic social order which had never truly declined in the years of Roman power[29].

20. This is the so-called *barbarica conspiratio* recorded by: Ammianus Marcellinus. *Res Gestae*, ed. Marie-Anne Marié. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1984: III, 126-127 (XXVII, 8, 1-5). See: Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur...*: 15 and following; Rankin, David. *Celts and the Classical World*. London-New York: Routledge, 1987: 123 and following.

21. Ammianus Marcellinus. *Res Gestae*, XXVII, 8.

22. "Chronica Gallica". *Chronica Minora saec. IV. V. VI. VII. Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquores*. Theodor Mommsen, ed. Berlin: Impensis bibliopolii Hahniani, 1892: 629-666, especially, 646. The same information is to be found in Gildas (13) and Bede. On this issue see: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti* (*The Celtic Realms*). London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967; Rankin, David. *Celts and the Classical...*: 224-227.

23. Claudianus. *De consulatu Stilichonis*, II, 247-255. The same information can be inferred from Gildas, 14-20, 33-36. See: Byrne, Francis J. *Irish Kings and High-Kings*. London: Batsford, 1973: 76; Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500*. London: University of California Press, 1981: 286, 317.

24. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: I, 11.

25. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: I, 12-13 (Bede uses Gildas to some extent 14-20).

26. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: I, 15. In the Vth and VIth century, through Anglo-Saxon incursions, communities from the British Isles settled in Asturias and Galicia, around the episcopal see of Britonia or Bretoña, and in some texts are mentioned expeditions of the Irish monks to Galicia. See: Alberro, Manuel and Arnolds, Bettina, eds. *The Celts in the Iberian Peninsula* (*e-Keltoi* 6). University of Wisconsin: 2005 <www4.uwm.edu/celtic/ekeltoi/volumes/vol6/index.html>; Alberro, Manuel. "Contactos entre Galicia e Irlanda en la época pre-cristiana según los antiguos relatos orales recogidos en los manuscritos céltico-irlandeses", *Anuario Brigantino*, 21 (1998): 67-76 <http://www.anuariobrigantino.betanzos.net/Ab1998PDF/1998_067_076.pdf>.

27. Zosimus. *Historia Nova*, V, 27.

28. Procopius. *De bello vandalico*, I, 2 (Procopius. *De bello vandalico*, eds. Jacob Haury-Gerhard Wirth. Leipzig: Teubner, 1962: III, 2). See: Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur...*: 43-44.

29. See also: Alcock, Leslie. *Arthur's Britain: History and Archaeology...*: 88-113; Smyth, Alfred. *Warlords and Holy Men. Scotland AD 80-1000*. London: Edinburgh University Press, 1984: 1-35.

2.2. Picts and Scoti

The first historical reference to the Picts is in a panegyric written in 297 in which they are described as bitter enemies of the Britons together with the Irish (Hibernians)[30]. In effect, this ethnonym is used as a generic reference to all the inhabitants of the lands to the north of the river Clyde mentioned previously[31] which had remained on the far side of the Roman border *in extrema parte insulae*. Considered by a considerable number of scholars to be the descendants of those Celtic tribes who intermarried with native peoples generally called *Caledonii* (or *Caledones*)[32] in the Hallstatt period (early Iron Age, 700-500 B.C.) and lived in North-Central Scotland[33], in actual fact the Picts occupied almost the whole of modern day Caledonia[34]. It is important to remember that wherever the Celts settled the permanence and integration of native elements into the new social and political organisms which replaced earlier forms was evident, a fact which would lead to that absence of unity which would prove fatal to the survival of this people[35].

If we are to believe Bede's account[36], after reaching northern Britain at the outset the Picts then went on to Ireland and asked the Gaelic Scoti for territory to settle on. On the advice of the latter, they settled in the north of Britain as the southern part was already inhabited by indigenous or proto-Celtic peoples. Furthermore, as they were without wives they asked for these from the Scoti and were granted them on condition that they chose their king from the female royal line[37]. And Bede also wrote that the Picts had descended from the north, probably from the regions of Central-Southern Scandinavia[38], but the question of their origins has still not been resolved despite numerous and various theories advanced

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30. *Incerti Panegyricus Constantio Caesari Dictvs. Panégyriques Latins tome II (I-V)*. Edouard Galletier, ed. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949: 91. See also: *Incerti Panegyricus Constantini Augusti. Panégyriques Latins tome II (VI-X)*. Edouard Galletier, ed. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1952: 59.

31. Foster, Sally M. *Picts, Gaels and Scots: Early Historic Scotland*. London: Batsford, 2004: 11.

32. Powell, Thomas G.E. *The Celts*. London: Thames & Hudson, 1958: 173-176; MacKie, Evan W.; MacKie, Rona M. "Red-haired 'Celts' are better termed Caledonians". *American Journal of Dermatopathology*, 6/1 (1984): 147-149. See also: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 54-56, 111 and following.

33. Foster, Sally. *Picts, Gael and Scots...*: 11-13.

34. Hubert, Henri. *Les Celtes et l'expansion celtique jusqu'à l'époque de la Tène*. Paris: La Renaissance du Livre, 1932: 247-249.

35. This is what Tacitus wrote of the Britons: *Olim regibus parebant, nunc per principes factionibus et studiis trahuntur. Nec aliud adversus validissimas gentis pro nobis utilius quam quod in commune non consulunt. Rarus duabus tribusve civitatibus ad propulsandum commune periculum conventus: ita singuli pugnant, universi vincuntur* (Tacitus. *De vita Iulii Agricolae*, 12, 2-4).

36. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: 18.

37. On the matrilineal royal line of the Picts see: Miller, Molly. "Matriliny by Treaty: the Pictish Foundation-Legend", *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe. Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, David Dumville, eds. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 1982: 133-161.

38. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: 16, in which the author, almost certainly in error, writes *Scythia* rather than Scandia.

by archaeologists, philologists and ethnologists[39]. Isidore of Seville explained the origin of the name by reference to their custom of bodypainting[40] ('the people of designs' or 'the tattooed people') and even earlier Caesar confirmed that the Britons from the internal areas of the island painted their bodies before going to war[41]. It can thus be inferred that the Celts from southern Britain had learnt the custom of painting and tattooing from the peoples who preceded them. Their language is numbered by Bede as one of the four spoken in Britain alongside those of the Britons, the Scoti and the Angles[42] while in *Historia Brittonum* —a pseudo-historical *corpus* compiled by the Welsh monk Nennius in 829 to 830 but the original version of which probably dates to the end of the 7th century[43]— we read that *Britannia insula* was inhabited by four peoples: Scoti, Picts, Saxons and Britons. The diffusion of the Picts is confirmed by the fact that the names British Isles came precisely from them. The *Britanni* were called *Prydain* by the Welsh from an original *Pritanī* and *Ynys Prydain* became the name of the British Isles as a whole[44], corresponding exactly to *Prettanikai nēsoi*, a toponym mentioned for the first time in the second half of the 4th century B.C by Pytheas[45]. All these forms are clearly linked to the Welsh *pryd* and ancient Irish *cruth* ('figure-form')[46], from which emerged *Cruthen-túath* or *Cruithentuath,* their more specific names[47]. The

39. See: O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *Early Irish History and Mythology*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946: 341-384; Wainwright, Frederick T. *The Problem of the Picts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1958; Sutherland, Elizabeth. *In Search of the Picts: A Celtic Dark Age Nation*. London: Constable, 1994; Foster, Sally. *Picts, Gaels and Scots...*

40. Isidorus Hispalensis. *Etymologiae*, XIX, 23, 7: *gens Pictorum, nomen a corpore, quod minutis opifex acus punctis et expressus native graminis sucus inludit.*

41. Caesar. *De bello gallico*, V, 14, 2: *Omnes vero se Britanni vitro inficiunt, quod caeruleum efficit colorem, atque hoc horribiliores sunt in pugna adspectu.* See also: Martial. *Epigrammata*, XI, 53 and XIV, 99, and Isidorus Hispalensis. *Etymologiae*, XIX, 23, 7 (*stigmata Brittonum*).

42. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: 230; see also: I, 1, 16, in which Latin is added.

43. See: Dumville, David N. "Some Aspects of the Chronology of the *Historia Brittonum*". *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 25 (1972-1974): 439-445; Dumville, David N. "Nennius and the *Historia Brittonum*". *Studia Celtica*, 10-11 (1975-1976): 78-95; Luiselli, Bruno. *La formazione della cultura europea occidentale*. Rome: Herder, 2003: 281.

44. Loth, Joseph. "La première apparition des Celtes dans l'Ile de Bretagne et en Gaule". *Revue Celtique*, 38 (1920-1921): 259-288, here 280 (doc. nº 4); Hubert, Henri. *Les Celtes et l'expansion celtique ...*: 248; O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *Early Irish History...*: 451.

45. Timaeus, fr. 164 Jacoby: I, 404; Diodorus. *Bibliotheca*, V, 1; V, 21, 2. 5; V, 22, 1-3; V, 38, 5. *Brettanika* in: Strabon. I, 4, 2-4 and II, 5, 30. See: Magnani, Stefano. *Il viaggio di Pitea sull'oceano*. Bologna: Pàtron, 2002: 131-133. See also: Gougaud, Louis. "Le noms anciens des îles britanniques". *Revue des Questions Historiques*, 83 (1907): 537-547; Loth, Joseph. "La première apparition des Celtes": 280 and following; O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *Early Irish History...*: 341 and following and 445 and following; Luiselli, Bruno. *Storia culturale dei rapporti tra mondo romano...*: 99 and following.

46. Hubert, Henri. *Les Celtes et l'expansion celtique...*: 247-249. See the Latin *cerussa* which indicates a white colouring substance called "white lead" or more simply "powder". Plautus. *Mostellaria*, 258 and 264; Ovidius. *Medicamena faciei femineae*, 73; Martial. *Epigrammata*, I, 72, 6; II, 2, 41; VII, 25, 2; X, 22, 2.

47. Loth, Joseph. "La première apparition des Celtes": 280 (doc. nº 2); Rankin, David. *Celts and the Classical...*: 252. The ancient Irish *túath* (pl. *túatha*) indicates the territory as much as the people who inhabited it and is more similar to *pagus* than to Gaelic *civitas* (see: Joyce, Patrick W. *A Social History of Ancient Ireland*, 2 vols. Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1920: I, 36 and following; MacNeill, Eoin. *Early Irish Laws and*

accepted term to describe them in Irish is *Cruithnig* or *Cruithin*, used specifically in reference to a part of the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland[48]. It is, therefore possible that the name Pict derived originally from a root similar to that of the ancient Irish *cicht* ('incisor')[49].

From the years immediately after 250 onwards a considerable number of Irish dynastic families settled in Britain and these included the Déisi family who took up residence in Dyfed county in South Wales[50]. Bieler confimed the existence of contacts between Roman Britain and Ireland at the beginning of the 4th century which took the form of legionnaires and Irish colonists who belonged for the most part to the lower social classes settling on the British coasts[51]. The much more powerful Dál Riada family moved from the coast of Antrim in Northern Ulster at the beginning of the Vth century and founded an important kingdom in Argyll, North West of the Antonine Wall in modern day Central-Western Scotland, on the Atlantic between Glasgow and the Caledonian Canal [52]. This was the Dalreudini family, so-called from the name of the warrior Reuda[53] or, more likely, from Cairbre Riada, founder of the dynasty, who lived in Ireland in the IIIrd century[54]. Just a little further south groups of Scoti occupied the territory around Alcliuth, historic Brythonic fort, now

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Institutions. Dublin: Burnes Oates and Washbourne, 1935: 91-100; de Paor, Liam-de Paor, Maire. *Early Christian Ireland*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1958: 73-74; Kelly, Fergus. *A Guide to Early Irish Law*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988: 3 and following; Mytum, Harold. *The Origins of Early Christian Ireland*. London-New York: Routledge, 1992: 141-159; Champion, Timothy. "Power, Politics and Status", *The Celtic World*, Miranda J. Green, ed. London: Routledge, 1995: 85-94. In a wider sense, it is the tribe, the people or the country as a whole, similar to the Umbrian *tota* (Celt. **teutā-*; Welsh *tud*, "country"; Breton *tud*, "people"). Essentially there is a single concept for city and society in which the limits of the group's actual habitat mark the borders of the society itself. See: Benveniste, Émile. *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européenes*. Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1969: I, 279.

48. O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *Early Irish History...*: 431-433 and 444-452. In *Vita Columbae* by Adomnán, Abbot of Iona from 679 to 704, the year of his death, the Picts of Caledonia were called *Cruthini populi*, literally "people of Cruthen", the eponym of the *Cruithni* (*Adomnan's Life of Columba*, eds. Alan. O. Anderson-Marjorie O. Anderson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991: 50a, 88; see: 18a, 30). All this occurred because, as is well known, the velar consonant *q-* from Gaelic, which developed from the IndoEuropean deaf labiovelar **kw-*, developed into the labial *p-* of the Brythonic branch. See: Sims-Williams, Patrick. "Le lingue celtiche", *Le lingue indoeuropee*, Anna Giacalone Ramat, Paolo Ramat, dirs. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993: 373-408, especially, 380.

49. See: Hubert, Henri. *Les Celtes et l'expansion celtique...*: 249.

50. Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 65 and following; Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 251, 269.

51. See: Bieler, Ludwig. *St. Patrick and the Coming of Christianity*. Dublin-Melbourne: Gill and Son, 1967: 2-4.

52. See: MacNeill, Eoin. *Phases of Irish History*. Dublin: Gill and Son, 1919: 155 and following; Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 65, 109; Mytum, Harold. *The Origins of Early...*: 30. The presence of the Irish is confirmed in North-Central Wales as well as a result of the funerary inscriptions found there in the Ogham alphabet. See: Malaspina, Elena. "Agli albori della cultura latina in Irlanda". *Studi Romani*, 33 (1985): 1-10, especially, 5.

53. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: 18.

54. On the birth and organisation of the Scoti kingdom of the Dalriada see: Anderson, Marjorie O. "Dalriada and the Creation of the Kingdom of the Scots", *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe...*: 106-132. See also: Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur...*: 177-185.

Dumbarton on the Clyde estuary just a short distance from Glasgow[55]. Of the Scoti we have our first mention in Ammianus Marcellinus[56]. Isidore writes of their habit of painting their bodies and tattooing themselves with black ink using iron spikes[57] and places them primarily in Ireland which he calls *Scotia* (*Hibernia dicta: scotia autem, quod ab Scotorum gentibus colitur, appellata*)[58]. *Scotia Maior* was, in fact, the island's official name at least until the end of the 11th century[59]. Patrick saw the Scoti as natives of Ireland and distinguished them from the Hibernians who he saw as Irish natives of Britain[60] and allies of the Picts against the Britons[61] and called *Hiberionaci* with a suffix of Celtic origin[62] (*Confessio*, 23, 8, *Epistola*, 16, 7-8 and *Liber Angeli*, 13[63]). Patrick, then, is referring in a fairly specific way to the Irish from the north-west regions of the island when he refers to *Scotti* while by *Hiberionaci (Epistola* 16,

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55. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: 20. *Alcluith* in Brythonic means "rock" (ancient Irish *ail*) of Cluith (Clyde), a toponym which was due to the vicinity of the locality in question to the river of the same name (Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: 40). Dumbarton (*Britannodunum, Britonum castrum, Dumbritonium*) is a word which has maintained the ancient Irish *dún* ("fort/hill") as the whole Gaelic name is *Dún mBretan* literally "stronghold of the Britons"; see: Hogan, Edmund. *Onomasticon Goedelicum locorum et tribum Hiberniae et Scotiae*. Dublin: Hodges and Figgis and Co., 1910: s.v. *ailchi*. See also: *Blaeu's Atlas of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland*, ed. Ronald V. Tooley. London: Thames and Hudson, 1970: 4-5, 8-9, 18-19, 66-67, 94-95, 116-117; Grässe, Johann G. *Orbis Latinus. Lexikon lateinischer geographischer Namen des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, 3 vols. Braunschweig: Klinkhardt und Biermann, 1972: I, s.v. *Britannodunum*. For the mass influx of Romanised Celts into the western regions of Wales and Cornwall which were less Romanised and not particularly vulnerable to new Germanic invasions, see: Luiselli, Bruno. *Storia culturale dei rapporti tra mondo romano...*: 429-430.

56. Ammianus Marcellinus. *Res Gestae*, XX, 1, 1. See also: XXVI, 4, 5 and XXVII, 8, 5.

57. Isidorus Hispalensis. *Etymologiae*, IX, 2, 103; *Patrologia Latina*, 82, 513B: *Scotti propria lingua nomen habent a picto corpore, eo quod aculeis ferreis cum atramento variarum figurarum stigmate adnotentur*.

58. Isidorus Hispalensis. *Etymologiae*, XIV, 6, 6; Patrologia Latina, 82, 513B. See also: Orosius. I, 81, 33 (*Hibernia insula... a Scottorum colitur*), and Rabanus Maurus. *De Universo*, XII, 5; Patrologia Latina, 111, 354C (*Scotia, eadem et Ibernia, proxima Britanniae insula, spatio terrarum angustior, sed situ fecundior. Haec ab Africo in Boream porrigitur. Cujus partes priores Iberiam, et Cantabricum oceanum intendunt. Unde et Ibernia dicta. Scotia autem, quod ab Scotorum gentibus colitur, appellata*).

59. See: O'Kelly, William D. *Historica Descriptio Hiberniae seu Majoris Scotiae, Insulae Sanctorum*, Patrick O'Kelly, ed. Dublin: Graisberry, 1838: 43, 77, 79 and 87; Moran, Patrick F. *Essays on the Origin, Doctrines, and Discipline of the Early Irish Church*. London: James Duffy, 1864: 6; Gougaud, Louis. "L'oeuvre des *Scotti* dans l'Europe continentale (fin VIe-fin XIe siècles). *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, 9 (1908): 21-37 and 255-277; O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *Early Irish History...*: 504.

60. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 108 (doc. nº 189).

61. See the already cited: *Incerti Panegyricus Constantio...*: XI, 4 (*Panégyriques Latins tome II (I-V)*, Edouard Galletier, ed. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949: 91.

62. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 85-86 (doc. nº 80). *Hiberionaci* is Bieler's hypothesis. The *f* group uses *Hiberia nati*, a lesson without variants but unacceptable (*Libri Epistolarum...*: I, 11 and II, 205-206). On the nature of this suffix see *infra*.

63. Bieler, Ludwig, ed. *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10). Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979: 186, l-9. According to Bieler (Bieler, Ludwig, ed. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10: 54) it is a text which can be dated to the first half of the 8th century although others have dated it to 640/650 (Sharpe, Richard. "Armagh and Rome in the Seventh Century", *Irland und Europa / Ireland and Europe. Die Kirche im Frühmittelalter / The Early Church*, Proinséas Ní Catháin-Michael Richter, dirs. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1984: 58-72, especially, 60-64). See also: Dumville, David N. "The Afterlife of *Liber angeli*", *Saint Patrick, A.D. 493-1993*, David N. Dumville *et alii*, dirs. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993: 253-254. This is essentially a declaration of the rights and privileges and religious

7; *Confessio*, 23, 8) he means specifically those Britons who arrived on the island following the raids of the Scoti themselves[64]. And he is a direct witness to this as, after being kidnapped at the age of sixteen, he recounts that he was taken to Ireland together with thousands of people. After a consequent six year imprisonment (*Confessio*, 16) in north-western Ireland (*Confessio*, 1, 7-8; 23, 10-11) he returned home (23, 1-2) and received from his former fellow prisoners a plea *in uisu noctis* to return to them: *vox Hiberionacum...uox ipsorum qui erant iuxta siluam Vocluti quae est prope mare occidentale* (*Confessio*, 23, 8-11)[65]. However, in his *Confessio* Patrick uses *hibernus* just once (*Hibern*ae *gentes*) to indicate the pagans of the island as a whole to whom he had come to preach the Gospel (37, 5-6).

As far as the ethnonym Scoti is concerned, although its etymology remains to some extent unknown, it can actually be associated with the ancient Irish verb *scothaim* indicating a rapid, instantaneous movement, a "sudden" one. It can thus take on the less literal meaning of 'invade' and/or 'sack' and, in modern English we find analogies in the adjective "scathing". The same Indo European root **skath* in Greek is *skedannumi* ("disperse", "scatter"), in Latin *seco* and in ancient Irish nouns *scáth* and *scál* which, and not by chance, mean shadow and *scían* meaning "knife" and "blade"[66]. In *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (Book of the Invasions of Ireland)[67], *Scota* is Míl's wife and their four children, the so-called Milesi, are the ancestors of the modern Irish just as *Gaedel Glas,* son of the latter, is the ancestor of the Gauls in general[68].

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and ecclesiastical supremacy of the Armagh bishopric by means of the appearance of an angel sent by the Lord to Patrick.

64. Gildas also remembers these attacks carried out mainly by the Irish using the expression *impudentes grassatores Hiberni* (16, 36, 16).

65. Very probably modern Foghill (Irish *Fochluth*) near the town of Killala on the western side of the Atlantic bay of the same name. We are in the north east of the county of Mayo, the furthest west in Northern Ireland. See: Thurneysen, Rudolf. "Silva Vocluti". *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie*, 19 (1931): 191-192; O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *The Two Patricks. A Lecture on the History of Christianity in fifth-century Ireland*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1942: 34-35, 60-61; Bieler, Ludwig. "The problem of *Silua Focluti*". *Irish Historical Studies*, 3 (1942-1943): 351-364; Bieler, Ludwig. *St. Patrick and the Coming...*: 52-53; Hanson, Richard P.C. "A Note on *mare occidentale*". *Analecta Bollandiana*, 95 (1977): 415-417; Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 28-29; Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione latina dell'Irlanda*. L'Aquila: Japadre, 1984: 98.

66. Vendryes, Joseph. *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien. Lettres RS*. Dublin-Paris: Dublin Institute for advanced Studies-Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1974: 42 and following; de Bernardo, Patrizia. *Nominale Wortbildung des alteren Irischen: Stammbildung und Derivation*. Tübingen: Walter de Gruyter, 1999: 254. See also: MacNeill, Eoin. *Phases of Irish...*: 145-148. See also the Latin nouns *scena* and *sacena* in: Sextus Pompeus Festus. *De verborum significatione*, ed. Wallace M. Lindsay. Leipzig: Teubner, 1913: 318 (docs. nº 50-51) and 422 (doc. nº 32) in which sacrificial axes were indicated (*dolabra pontificalis*: see: Yates, James. "Dolabra", *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, William Smith, ed. London: John Murray, 1875: 420).

67. A work which was written in the 12th century but which originated in monastic writings from the 6th century onwards with the purpose of drawing up a legendary history of the origins of the Gaelic people of Ireland. See: Macalister, Robert A. S. *Lebor Gabála Érenn. The Book of the Taking of Ireland*, 5 vols. Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1938-1956.

68. See Thomas F. O'Rahilly's chapter in: O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *The Goidelic Invasion in Early Irish...*: 193-208. See also: Rees, Alwyn; Rees, Brinley. *L'eredita Celtica. Antiche Tradizioni d'Irlanda e del Galles*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1961; Le Roux, Françoise. "La Mythologie Irlandaise du Livre des Conquêtes".

And once again, *Scáthach* (Irish "shady") is the name of a heroine of the Ulster mythological cycle, a supernatural female warrior who prepares the young for war including the famous Cú Chulainn . *Scotti*, then, generically means corsairs, those who sack, the organisers of veritable military expeditions and it is, in fact, certain that the Scoti often acted as brigands[69]. This is a term which was often used in Gaelic onomastics in which it means precisely "territories inhabited by pirates"[70]. And the lack of sobriety of the latter was highlighted by Saint Jerome too when he describes them as pagans living promiscuously[71]. In conclusion, the name Scoti, often used in a superficial way to describe bands of adventurers[72], originally indicated marauders, raiders. And the Scoti of Argyll, on the border with Strathclyde[73], just a little further north than the Cowal peninsular were effectively pirates[74]— Patrick called them *latrunculi* in *Epistola*, 12, 3 and *hostes* (*Confessio*, 46, 11), foreign, that is, to Christian *Romània*[75]. Furthermore, with these bases scattered over the Galloway coast, we can assume that Scoti pirates resident in Northern Ireland intermarried with the Picts who had settled in Ireland and refugees of Brythonic origin[76], had attacked the *uillula* of Calpornius, Patrick's father, near *Bannauem Taburniae* (*Bannaventa Berniae*) not far from the west coast of Britain[77] and kidnapped the then sixteen year old

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Ogam, 20 (1968): 381-404, especially, 399 and following; Markale, Jean. *Les Celtes et la civilisation celtique*. Paris: Payot, 1969: 153; Rankin, David. *Celts and the Classical...*: 13-14, 27-28, and Luiselli, Bruno. *La formazione della cultura...*: 95-96. Again on the invasions of Ireland see the legendary account in: "Historia Brittonum". *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi III*, XIII, ed. Theodor Mommsen. Berlin: Weidmann, 1961: 154-156.

69. See: Haverfield, Francis J. "Ancient Rome and Ireland". *English Historical Review*, 28 (1913): 1-12, especially, 8; MacNeill, Eoin. *Phases of Irish...*: 145-148; Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 129 (doc. nº 324). These raids, moreover, in the same way as the very presence of Brythonic prisoners on the island acted as an infiltration channel for Latin culture (see: Malaspina, Elena. "Agli albori della cultura latina...": 3). This is clearly who Gildas was referring to when he calles the *Hiberni* in general *impudentes grassatores* (21, 1).

70. See: Haverfield, Francis J. "Ancient Rome and Ireland...": 8.

71. Sanctus Hieronimus. *Adversus Jovinianum*, II, 7: *Patrologia Latina...*: 23, 296A: *Scotorum natio uxores proprias non habet*; *Epistula*, LXIX, 3, *Ad Oceanum*, ed. Jerome Labourt. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1953: III, 196 (doc. nº 5-7): *promiscuas uxores, communes liberos habeant*; *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum...*: LIV, 684, 14.

72. See: Kenney, James F. *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland. Ecclesiastical. An Introduction and Guide*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1929: 135 (doc. nº 79); Anderson, Marjorie O. "Dalriada and the Creation of the Kingdom of the Scots", *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe...*: 106-132.

73. See: Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: 20. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 342.

74. See: Kenney, James F. *The Sources for the Early History...*: 149; MacNeill, Eoin. *Phases of Irish...*: 145-148.

75. Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti da san Patrizio...*: 75 (doc. nº 13) 125 (doc. nº 305).

76. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 86.

77. See: Thomas, Charles. *Celtic Britain*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1986: 118. This location is identifiable on the south west side of Hadrian's Wall near Birdoswald, a few kilometres north east of modern day Carlisle (Cumberland) in the lands which the rivers Irthing and Tyne flow through and thus along the borders of Northumberland (see: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 310-314; Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 73-78). In ancient Irish *berna* means passage, mountain pass while proto Celtic **benno* (Briton **Ban-*; middle Welsh *bann*) means "rocky promontory", "mountain peak" near river water (see: Vendryes, Joseph; Bachellery, Edouard; Lambert, Pierre-Yves, dirs. *Lexique*

saint (*Confessio*, 1, 4-8). Patrick's capture and that of his *comites* at the time of his wandering mission (*Confessio*, 52) could have been the action of groups of *latrones*.

Certainly the native Scoti Irish lived together with the northern Irish Picts for a long time and this included those born from Brythonic refugees. It was not uncommon for the two peoples to intermarry[78] and together they carried out raids in Roman Britain south of Hadrian's Wall. According to Thomas F. O'Rahilly[79] and James Carney[80] the Scoti allies of Coroticus were Irish living in Scotland as Patrick confirms when he distinguishes them from the *Hiberionaci*. But Patrick tells of contacts with Scoti on several occasions *(Epistola*, 12, 8; *Confessio*, 41, 4; 42, 1) and so the saint must have been referring more precisely to those living in the north-eastern regions of Ireland close to Scotland. Some of the Irish Scoti are *reges* (or *reguli*), tribal chiefs (*ríg túath*)[81] who often supported Patrick's conversion efforts perhaps as these were to their benefit (*Epistola*, 12, 7-9; *Confessio*, 41, 3-5; 51, 1-2; 52, 1). Patrick paid for the freedom of his companions and their children (*Confessio*, 52, 1-3), those *filii Scottorum* who he had converted and consecrated (*Epistola*, 12, 7-8; *Confessio*, 41, 4-5; 42, 1-7; 51, 1-2). It was certainly a situation which caused some anxiety to families most strongly tied to tradition but also, and above all, for the owners of those slaves who Patrick freed and baptised (*Confessio*, 42, 12-13).

It is worth now reporting a reference to the well-known saint and Welsh bishop who lived in the second half of the VIth century in Britain and for a certain time in Ireland too taken from *Vita Samsonis* (7th/8th century) [82] who referred to some of the *Scotti de Roma venientes* as *phylosophi* and *peritissimi*[83]. This is in line with the fourth (or third)[84] of the so-called *Dicta Patricii*: *Aeclessia Scotorum immo Romanorum, ut Cristiani ita ut Romani sitis*[85]. This saint emerges as directly connected with the Scoti in the so-called *Hymn of St. Secundinus* which has come down to us with the title *Ymnum Sancti*

étimologique de l'irlandais ancien. Lettre B. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1981: 35 and following; Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 73-74; Schrijver, Peter. *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology*. Amsterdam-Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995: 455; Wilmott, Tony; Hird, Louise *et alii*. *Birdoswald: Excavations of a Roman Fort on Hadrian's Wall and its Successor Settlements; 1987-92*. London: Tempus, 1997: 231). Numerous servants worked in the *uillula* (*Epistola*, 10, 5-6); Patrick, in fact, considered himself a "free born" (*Epistola*, 10, 6-7: *Ingenuus fui secundum carnem; decorione patre nascor*; see: *Confessio*, 37, 9: [...] *ut darem ingenuitatem meam pro utilitate aliorum*) and thus belonged to a Christian and Roman family.

78. See: Miller, Molly. "Matriliny by Treaty: the Pictish...".

79. O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *The Two Patricks...*: 38.

80. Carney, James. *The Problem of St. Patrick*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1961: 113.

81. See: Joyce, Patrick W. *A Social History of Ancient...*: I, 36 and following; Kelly, Fergus. *A Guide to Early Irish...*: 16 and following; Raftery, Barry. *Pagan Celtic Ireland. The Enigma of the Irish Iron Age*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1997: 64-97.

82. Ryan, John. *Irish Monasticism. Origins and Early Development*. Dublin-Cork: Talbot Press, 1931: 109-111.

83. Fawtier, Robert. *La vie de saint Samson*. Paris: H. Champion, 1912: 133.

84. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 35-36.

85. Bieler, Ludwig. *Scriptore Latini Hiberniae* : X, 124 (docs. nº 8 and 9). These are more or less freely paraphrased quotations or summaries of Patrician writings or sayings although a partial authenticity cannot be excluded (see: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 35-44).

Patrici Magister (sic!) *Scotorum*[86] and has been attributed, at least from the 8th century onwards[87] to Secundinus (*Sechnall*) who came to preach in Ireland alongside Patrick around 439[88] and probably died in 447[89]. Lastly, in the already cited *Liber Angeli* (8) the Lord grants Patrick *universas Scotorum gentes in modum paruchiae*. He works above all, or at least initially, from the north-east: *constituitur terminus a Domino vastissimus urbi Alti Mache*[90], *quam dilexisti* (scil. *Patricius*) *prae omnibus Hibernensium telluribus* (7).

2.3. The Early Brythonic Church

The first historic trace of the Brythonic Church was the three bishops accompanied by a priest and a deacon who were sent to the anti-Donatist council of Arles in 314. A few doubts remain, however, that there could only have been three Christian missionaries —who would probably have reached the island after a Roman expedition— who would very probably have formed a small community of Romans in the castrum faithful to the old and new Constantine approach which had been established in Rome and in the Empire. These, in fact, came from three places where there were Roman settlements with the largest concentration of Romans on the island: Eborius from *Eboracum* (York)[91], Restitutus from *Londinium* and Adelfius

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86. This is the title of the work as it appears in: Warren, Frederick E. *The Antiphonary of Bangor. An Early Irish Manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan*, 2 vols. London: Harrison and Sons, 1893-1895: I, 14-16. More recent is Michael Curran's edition: Curran, Michael. *The Antiphonary of Bangor*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1984. The hymn is more commonly known by its first words: *Audite omnes*. Bieler, Ludwig. "The Hymn of St. Secundinus". *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 55 (1953): 117-127, text 119-122.

87. See: *The Martyrology of Oengus* (around 800) on the 27th of November; Stokes, Whitley, ed. *Félire Óengusso Céli Dé. The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1905: 237.

88. Bieler, Ludwig. "The Hymn of St. Secundinus...": 117. In actual fact, datings vary from the 5th to the 7th centuries: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 53-54; Orchard, Andy. "Audite omnes amantes: a hymn in Patrick's praise". *Saint Patrick...*: 153-173, which includes the *benchorensis* version with a translation into English (166-173). Paul Grosjean's position is more solid, in which he argues that it was written immediately after the *Epistola* and before the *Confessio* to defend the saint against Coroticus's schemes (Grosjean, Paul. "Notes d'hagiographie celtique...": 65-130, here, 111).

89. See: Bieler, Ludwig. *The Works of St. Patrick. St Secundinus Hymn on St. Patrick*, Ludwig Bieler, ed. Westminster-London: Newman Press-Longmans, 1953: 57-60; Bieler, Ludwig. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 235.

90. Armagh (Irish *Árd-Macha*, "Macha high plains") is, by tradition, the seat of Patrick's bishopric (see: Ó Fiaich, Tomás. "St. Patrick and Armagh". *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 89 (1958): 153-170; Ó Fiaich, Tomás. "St. Patrick and Armagh". *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 95 (1961): 229-235). It is in southern Ulster, not far from Emain Macha, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Ulaid. Macha was a warlike divinity closely linked to the fertility and prosperity of the island (Sjœstedt, Marie-Louise. *Dieux et héros des celts*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1940: 36 and following; de Vries, Jan. *I Celti*. Milan: Jaca Book, 1991: 86, 161-163, 173-174, 284; Rees, Alwyn; Rees, Brinley. *L'eredità celtica* : 52-53; MacCana, Proinsias. *Celtic Mythology*. London: Hamlyn, 1983: 86-89; Le Roux, Françoise; Guyonvarc'h, Christian J. *Mórrígan-Bodb-Macha. La souveraineté guerrière de l'Irlande*. Rennes: Ogam-Celticum, 1983; Lonigan, Paul R. *The Druids. Priests of the Ancient Celts*. Westport-London: Greenwood Press, 1996: 48-49).

91. It is, however, significant, that the name Eborius derived from a Celtic theme indicating the yew tree (Celtic *eburos*, "yew"; Welsh *efwr*, Gaelic *eburo*, ancient Irish *ibar*) was used for a native and not an

from *Camulodunum* (Lincoln or Colchester)[92]. In any event the following are clear: traces of *Vetus Latina* in Britain appeared before the end of the IInd century[93]; Britain was one of the provinces that accepted the canons of Nicaea[94]; Hilary of Poitiers addressed his *De synodis* to the Brythonic bishops too; Brythonic pilgrims arrived in the Holy Land in the 5th century[95]. In *Vita Constantini* (III, 17-20) Eusebius gives news of a letter from the Emperor imposing observance of Easter on the Britons[96]. Later Saint Jerome asserts: *Et Galliae et Britanniae et Africa et Persis, et Oriens et India et omnes barbarae nationes unum Christum adorant, unam observant regulam veritatis*[97] and in around 440, Prosperus recounts of the conversion to Christianity of pirates by their own prisoners and of barbarians who embraced the Christian faith and enlisted in the Roman army who then passed it on to their fellow townspeople when they returned home[98]. The oldest text which provides evidence of traces of Christianity in Britain is Tertullian which refers to parts of the island that were already Christianised: *et Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca, Christo uero subdita*[99]. Origen's words then follow according to which the Britons were unified by Christianity (*Quando enim terra Britanniae ante adventum Christi unius Dei consensit religionem?*)[100]. In the fourth century, the Brythonic Church already existed and took the form of Roman-Brythonic Christianity.

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ordinary individual who followed the Roman legions. See: Gougaud, Louis. *Les Chrétientés Celtiques*. Paris: Gabalda, 1911: 29.

92. Eborius and Adelphius are mentioned in: *Historia Donatistarum. Patrologia Latina...*: XI, 786B-787A: *Adelfius de colonia Londinensium, Hibernius forte Eborius Eboracensis*. All three together *Epistola I Arelatensis Synodi ad Silvestrum Papam* (*Synodus Arelatensis*), *Patrologia Latina...*: VIII, 817B: *Ex provincia Britannia civitate Tubricentium (Id. Eboracensi, Corb. ms. Eboricensi) Eburius episcopus. Civitate Londinensium Restitutus episcopus. Civitate Colonia Londinensium Adelfius episcopus*. See also: *Concilium Arelatense. Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*: CXLVIII, 4-6; 9-13; 25. See: West, Arthur; Stubbs, William, dirs. *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland Concilia*, 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964: I, 7. On the issue of the participation of Brythonic bishops at Arles (314), Nicaea, Serdica (343/347) and Rimini (359), see: Frend, William H.C. "The Christianization of Roman Britain", *Christianity in Britain, 300-700*, Maurice W. Barley, Richard P.C. Hanson, dirs. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1968: 38 and following; Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 197-198; Mytum, Harold. *The Origins of Early...*: 40.

93. Howlett, David R. *The Celtic Latin Tradition of Biblical Style*. Blackrock-Portland: Four Courts Press, 1995: 55.

94. Atanasius. *Epistula ad Jovianum...*: XXVI, 816.

95. Howlett, David R. *The Celtic Latin Tradition...*: 55-56.

96. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 43-44.

97. *Epistula* 146 [*Ad Euangelum*], 1; *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum...*: LVI, 310, l. 14.

98. *De vocatione omnium gentium*, II, 33; *Patrologia Latina...*: LI, 717D-718A: (*Quidam*) *Ecclesiae filii ab hostibus capti, dominos suos Christi Evangelio manciparunt, et quibus conditione bellica serviebant, eisdem fidei magisterio praefuerunt. At alii barbari dum Romanis auxinantur, quod in suis locis nosse non poterant, in nostris didicere regionibus, et ad sedes suas cum Christianae religionis institutione remearunt*. See: Watson, George R. "Christianity in the Roman Army in Britain", *Christianity in Britain...*: 51-54.

99. *Carmen apologeticum adversus Judaeos* (*Adversus Iudaeos*) 7; *Patrologia Latina...*: II, 610 C. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 43.

100. *Homiliae in Ezechielem, Translatio Homiliarum in Jeremiam et Ezechielem, Homilia quarta*, 917; *Patrologia Latina...*: XXV, 723 A. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 43.

Patrick calls the Picts allied with Coroticus (*Epistola*, 2, 16; 15, 10)[101] some of whom were the descendants of those same southern Picts who had settled in Strathclyde and Galloway, the modern day county which faces the North Channel in front of Belfast Lough *apostatae*[102]. These were converted by Nynias (Saint Ninian), a bishop whose seat was Whithorn (*Candida Casa*) near modern day Wigtown (Galloway)[103] around the first quarter of the fifth century[104] but that they had been Christianised previously is confirmed by the presence of Christian burial stones in the same areas[105]. Ludwig Bieler[106] and Thomas F. O'Rahilly[107] argue that in general these were Christian Picts only in name while J.P.C. Kent[108] believes that they were superstitious or heretics. L. Gougaud argued that *les Pictes du sud convertis par Ninian ne persévérèrent pas dans la foi*[109] according to an interpretation of the issue which was taken up also by Paul Grosjean for whom the apostate Picts mentioned by Patrick were really Christians who *s'en sont rendus indignes par leurs mauvaises actions*[110]. Both, however, have been disputed by Hanson who holds that they were actually people who had never been evangelised before and that, by "apostate" Patrick intends only to emphasise their pathetic and wicked behaviour. But Hanson's theory is based on an assumption all his own that the presence of Picts south of the River Clyde in Patrick's day cannot be demonstrated and even denies Nynias's conversions despite the fact that he himself had already admitted the presence of Picts south of the Strathclyde kingdom in the period in question[111]. In the ways indicated by Patrick and, principally on Gougard's lines, these Picts, as I have already argued[112], are identifiable with the concepts of the scriptural tradition

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101. In the text *apostatarumque* with Celtic enclitic or vulgar Latin pleonasm (see: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 75, nº. 14).

102. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 291, 342.

103. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: III, 222. According to Bede once again, the northern Picts, on the other hand, received the new faith from Columba in 565 (Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: III, 220-222). On Nynias and his missionary activity in relation to the period and the events in question, see: Luff, Stanley G.A. "*Ad Candidam Casam.* An examination of St. Ninian's Position as Father of British Monasticism". *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 80 (1953): 17-27; Hughes, Kathleen. *The Church in Early Irish Society*. London: Methuen, 1966: 25 and following; Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 275-294; Redknap, Mark. "Early Christianity and its monuments", *The Celtic World...*: 737-778.

104. On the issues raised by the traditional dating of Nynias's action see: Broun, Dauvit. "The Literary Record of St Nynia: Fact and Fiction?". *The Innes Review*, 42/2 (1991): 143-150.

105. Thomas, Charles. "The Evidence from North Britain", *Christianity in Britain...*: 93-122.

106. *Libri Epistolarum...*: II, 194-195; Bieler, Ludwig. "La conversione al Cristianesimo dei Celti insulari e le sue ripercussioni nel continente", *La conversione al cristianesimo dell'Europa nell'Alto Medioevo. Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1967: 559-580, especially, 567.

107. O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *The Two Patricks...*: 38.

108. Kent, J. P. C. "The End of Roman Britain: The Literary and Numismatic Evidence Reviewed", *The End of Romain Britain*, Patrick J. Casey, ed. Durham: B.A.R., 1978: 19.

109. Loyer, Olivier. *Les Chrétientes Celtiques*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965: 35.

110. Grosjean, Paul S. Les Pictes apostats dans l'Épître de S. Patrice. *Analecta Bollandiana*, 76 (1958): 354-378, especially, 375.

111. Hanson, R. P. C. *Saint Patrick. His Origins and Career*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968: 62.

112. Iannello, Fausto. "Note storiche sull'*Epistola ad Milites...*".

according to which the act of *apostasia* strictly speaking indicates the rebellion of the world against God and, consequently, separation from Him[113]. In Paul it has developed to coincide completely with the failure to recognise God by the whole of humanity, immediately before the *parousia* and thus means the action and state of those who oppose the process of salvation, repudiate the Faith and its implications (2 Thess, 2, 1-12). Coroticus and his men transgress against the moral order and thus bring an end to the continuity and tension of the eschatological process. They are, in fact, *rebellatores Christi* (*Epistola*, 19, 2), *omicida erga fratres Domini* (21, 7), *cives daemoniorum* (2, 4) and, the Picts more specifically, *gens extera ignorans Deum* (*Epistola*. 14, 4-5) in which *gens* describes their *extra ecclesiam* state of "people who had fallen into paganism once more"[114]. Moreover, Patrick uses *hostilis* to mark them as pagans, individuals who are foreign to *Romana Christianitas* (*Epistola*, 2, 4-5: *Ritu hostili in morte uiuunt*; see: *Confessio*, 46, 11 in which the pagans are called *hostes*)[115]. It is also important to take into account that Nynias, previously cited author of the conversion of the southern Picts was a Romanised Briton who had been born close to Patrick's native land and so we can easily imagine that our saint was aware of the facts of his mission.

3. Coroticus

According to Patrick, the man who delivered Christian prisoners into the hands of the Scoti and Picts is *longe a caritate Dei* (*Epistola*, 12, 4). Picts and Scoti are not so much his allies in a military sense but more precisely business partners! To them he sells slaves and with them he exchanges booty. It is thus a profit making partnership, for business (*Epistola*, 2, 5-6: *socii Scottorum atque Pictorum*)[116]. After the departure of the Romans, Coroticus finds himself entirely independent and takes on himself the right to act as the chief of the Brythonic soldiers who had already served in the Roman armies. He is thus a sort of usurper who often makes use of brigands.

The name *Coroticus*, also in the forms *Coroticos*, *Corotiaco*(*s*) and *Coreticus*, is a clear Latinisation of the Brittonic **Caratīcos* which survived in the later Welsh *Corotic*,

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113. Num, 14, 9: *alla apo tou kyriou m' apostatai ginesthe*. But also: Ios, 22, 22 (*si praevaricationis animo hoc altare construximus non custodiat nos sed puniat in praesenti*); Prov, 6, 12-14 (*Homo apostata vir inutilis, graditur ore perverso; annuit oculis, terit pede, digito loquitur, pravo corde machinatur malum, et in omni tempore iurgia seminat*); Eccli, 10, 14 (*Initium superbiae hominis apostatare a Deo*); see: 19, 2; Ez, 2, 3: *Fili hominis, mitto ego te ad filios Israel, ad gentes apostatrices, quae recesserunt a me; ipsi et patres eorum praevaricati sunt pactum meum, usque ad diem hanc*. See: Job, 34, 18; Prov, 6, 12; 1 Mach, 2, 15.

114. Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 75 (doc. nº 14).

115. Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 73 (doc. nº 3).

116. John B. Bury, based on *Epistola*, II, 2 (*militibus mittenda Corotici*), has hypothesised that Coroticus was absent during the raid (Bury, John B. *The Life of St. Patrick and his Place in History*. London: Macmillan, 1905: 192). Effectively, taking *Epistola*, 12, 3-4 (*iubente Corotico hostili mente*) into additional account, this thesis may not be far from the truth and would be proof that the fame of the Brythonic commander had spread and this certainly because such action was not new to him.

Coretic, Ceretic, Ceritic, Certic, Caridig, Ceredig and Irish *Coirthech, Corictic, Chairtic*[117] forms. The Welsh form *Caradog*, the name of a celebrated Breton saint (St. Carantoc) who lived in the second half of the fifth century[118] deriving from the Brittonic *Caratacos* (and *Caratocos*) which is Latinised into *Caratacus* or *Caractacus*[119], is more common. This later name is given to the Brythonic warrior of the Celtic-Belgian tribe of the Catuvellauni (the *Katouellaunoi* of Ptolemy, *Geographia*, II 3, 11, and Cassius Dio. *Historia Romana*, LX 20, 2; see: Caesar. *De Bello Gallico*, V, 11 and following), who, moving from south-west Britain between 43 and 51 A.D. fought against the Roman troops of central-northern Wales together with the Silures and the Ordovices (Tacitus. *Historiae*, III, 45; Tacitus. *Annales*, XII, 33-40)[120]. Other Latinised forms are *Carantus*[121] and *Carantacus* which highlight the tendency of the ancient Britons and the insular Celts in general to pronounce *-a-* instead of the Latin *-o-* [122]; both are forms which are also found in Gaul[123]. Equally common is the Irish *Carthach* and this too is the name of a celebrated saint (also called *Mochuta*) who lived in the first half of the seventh century. This was then Anglicised into *Carthage*[124]. The meaning of these nouns can be traced to their Proto-Celtic root **kar-* ("desire" / "love") which the archaic Welsh *car(af)* ("love"; middle Welsh *caru*; Gaelic *caro-*) and the middle *car* ("friend"; pl. *ceraint*; proto-Celtic **karant-*; Gaelic *caranto-*) as well as the ancient Irish *caraid* ("love"), *cara(e)* ("friend") and *caratrad* ("friendship") derived from[125].

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117. See, specifically: Parsons, David. "British **Caratīcos*, Old English Cerdic". *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 33 (1997): 1-8. See also: MacNeill, Eoin. "The Language of the Picts". *Yorkshire Celtic Studies*, 2 (1938-1939): 3-45, especially, 42 (doc. nº 1); Grosjean, Paul. Notes d'hagiographie celtique...": 100-111; Bieler, Ludwig. *The Life and Legend...*: 130 (doc. nº 21); *Libri Epistolarum...*: II, 193.

118. See: Le Grand, Albert. *Les vies des Saints de la Bretagne Armorique*. Brest: Anner, 1837: 729-730; Loth, Joseph. *Le noms des saints Bretons*. Paris: Champion, 1910: 55; Gobry, Ivan. *Les Moines en Occident*, 2 vols. Paris: Fayard, 1985: I, 503.

119. Okasha, Elisabeth. *Corpus of Early Christian Inscribed Stones of South-west Britain*. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993: 329-331; Thomas, Charles, *And Shall These Mute Stones Speak? Post-Roman Inscriptions in Western Britain*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994: 288-289.

120. See: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 48-50; Rankin, David. *Celts and the Classical...*: 148 and 215-219; Cottrell, Leonard. *The Roman Invasion of Britain.* New York: Barnes and Noble, 1992: 91.

121. Thomas, Charles. "The Early Christian Inscriptions of Southern Scotland". *Glasgow Archaeology Journal*, 17 (1991-1992): 1-10, especially, 3.

122. Jackson, Kenneth H. *Language and History in Early Britain*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1953: 291, 502-505.

123. Dottin, Georges. *La langue gauloise. Grammaire, textes et glossaire*. Paris: Klincksieck, 1918: 108-110; Ellis, David. *Gaulish Personal Names. A Study of Some Continental Celtic Formations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967: 162.

124. See: Kenney, James F. *The Sources for the Early History...*: 451 and following; Ryan, John. *Irish Monasticism...*; Bitel, Lisa M. *Isle of the Saints. Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland*. Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1990.

125. See: Vendryes, Joseph. "Remarques sur quelques faits de vocabulaire". *Revue Celtique*, 40 (1923): 420-441, especially, 436; Mann, Stuart E. *An Indo-European Comparative Dictionary*. Hamburg: Buske 1984-1987: 474; Vendryes, Joseph. *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien 3. Lettre C*, Edouard Bachellery, Pierre-Yves Lambert, eds. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1987: 36; Lambert, Pierre-Yves. *La langue gauloise: description linguistique, commentaire d'inscriptions choisies*. Paris: Editions Errance, 1994: 37; Delamarre, Xavier. *Dictionnaire de la langue gauloise: une approche linguistique du vieux-celtique continental*. Paris: Errance, 2003: 107.

The name Coroticus may thus paradoxically be translated as "dear /loved" and/or "loveable" with the intention of indicating those who were particularly "well-loved", were chosen to guide other men as a military leader or to lead in general as a result of their specific heroic, military or spiritual virtues[126]. This interpretation can be further confirmed by its close analogy with the root i.e. *kerd* from which developed *cor* and the Greek *kardia* (see the ancient Irish *cride*, "heart", also "love", [proto-Celtico *kridyo-*; middle Welsh *craidd*], *creitid*, "believe" [middle Welsh *credu*] and *cord*, "agree")[127]: the legitimate condition of those who lead other men necessarily presupposes the existence of a "spiritual" bond, a faith which the followers and/or faithful put in the "chief" himself.

John Bury dates the raid to just before 459[128], followed closely by Hanson who proposes the years between 450 and 460[129]. By contrast, Thomas, who dates Coroticus's birth to around 440 and the *floruit* to around 465-475, dates the attack and the *Epistola* to around 470[130]. Tolstoy, in agreement with the positions taken by Bieler and Grosjean, bases his interpretation on an excerpt from Gildas (19, 1) and dates Coroticus's raid to just befores 446 and his kingdom to 430 onwards[131]. To justify his "excommunication", however, Thompson believes that Coroticus was a

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126. See: Thomas, Charles. *And Shall These Mute Stones...*: 288-289.

127. See: Vendryes, Joseph. *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais* : 235 and following; de Bernardo, Patrizia. *Nominale Wortbildung...*: 202, 412.

128. Bury, John B. *The Life of St. Patrick...*: 303.

129. Hanson, R. P. C. *Saint Patrick. His Origins...*: 170 and following.

130. Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 341-343. For an overview of the problems inherent in dating Patrick's life see: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 20-29. Here, I will limit myself to mentioning the "orthodox" position sustained, among others, by John Bury (Bury, John. *The Life of St. Patrick...*), Eoin MacNeill (MacNeill, Eoin. *St. Patrick*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1934), Paul Grosjean (Grosjean, Paul. "Notes d'hagiographie celtique...": 65-123), Christine Mohrmann (Mohrmann, Christine. *The Latin of Saint Patrick. Four Lectures*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1961: 309-366), who, in the light of the Irish annals, date the birth of the saint to around 389, his arrival in Ireland to 432 and his death to no earlier than 461. Slightly different from the others and, in my opinion, to be preferred, are Ludwig Bieler's theory in which he prefers to postpone Patrick's arrival in Ireland by a few years (Bieler, Ludwig. *The Life and Legend...*; Bieler, Ludwig. *St. Patrick and the Coming...*), R.P.C. Hanson's which, while accepting the 'orthodox' chronology, dates the beginning of Patrick's mission to between 425 and 435 (Hanson, R. P. C. "The Date of St. Patrick". *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 61 (1978-1979): 60-77; Hanson, R. P. C. *The Life and Writings of the Historical Saint Patrick*. New York: Seabury Press, 1983; Hanson, R. P. C. "The Mission of Saint Patrick", *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity*, James P. Mackey, ed. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1989: 22-44), and Edward A. Thompson's who dates the saint's ordination as a bishop, and thus the beginning of his Irish mission, to no earlier than 434 (Thompson, Edward A. *Who was Saint Patrick?* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1985: 166-175), Charles Thomas's, according to which Patrick lived between 415 and 493, (Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman ...*: 314 and following), and Malaspina's, who held that it was likely that Patrick had acted in the mid fifth century, theories are both clearly different. In any event, it is still impossible to bring an end to this debate (see the contributions in the collection: Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*; Dumville, David N.; Koch, John T. "The Early Chronology for St. Patrick (c. 351-c. 428): Some New Ideas and Possibilities", *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, Jane Cartwright, ed. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003: 102-122).

131. Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?". *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 97 (1962): 137-147, especially, 147.

Brythonic Christian who devoted his energies to piracy and lived in north-eastern Ireland[132]. But Coroticus's raid was certainly motivated by a search for resources, both material and human, as a result of the loss of Roman funds in Britain and for this reason I am inclined to agree with Malaspina for whom it is most logical to place Coroticus's base in Britain for the additional reason that Patrick would have found it easier to get there and put his message down officially in writing[133].

The *Harleian Genealogies*[134], genealogical lists of the Brythonic kings compiled around 954, list two Ceredigs (middle Welsh *Ceretic*/*Ceritic*[135]) who are known to have governed in the fifth century on lands near the west coast of Ireland and both were originally from modern Scotland. The first, son of the Brythonic warrior Cunedda (Welsh *Cunedag*) reigned in south- western Wales where he gave his name to the region of Ceredigion[136], a toponym which has survived today in the southern town of Cardigan and the great bay on which much of western Wales faces. The second, called *Ceritic guletic* in Middle Welsh[137]was king of Strathclyde[138] a region which is only approximately seventy miles from the Irish coast of Antrim[139] and belonged to the descendants of Rhun ab Artha, a king who died in 902. In any event, whatever Patrick wrote, there is very little which

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132. Thompson, Edward A. "St. Patrick and Coroticus". *Journal of Theological Studies*, 31 (1980): 12-27; Thompson, Edward A. *Who was Saint Patrick?...*: 125-143.

133. Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 28.

134. Bartrum, Peter C., ed. *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966: 10, 12, 13.

135. See: Jackson, Kenneth H. *Language and History...*: 613-614 and 653.

136. This identification has been supported, among others, by: Chadwick, Hector M. *Early Scotland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949: 148-150; O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *The Two Patricks...*: 38 and following; Bieler, Ludwig. *The Life and Legend...*: 37; O'Sullivan, Thomas D. *The De Excidio of Gildas: its Authenticity and Date*. Leiden: Brill, 1978: 124 and following.

137. From the ancient Welsh *gulat* (later *gwlad*) "town", "region" and also "regal air" or, more simply, "property"; thus the title that derives from it *guletic*, then *gwledig*, generically indicates a "king"; see: Mallory, James P.; Adams, Douglas Q., dirs. *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture*. London-Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997: 490; de Bernardo, Patrizia. *Nominale Wortbildung...*: 51, 285; Falileyev, Alexander. *Etymological Glossary of Old Welsh*. Tubingen: Niemeyer, 2000: 70. The corresponding word in ancient Irish is "flaith" (and "flaithem") used for a king or a member of the military aristocracy or nobility (see: Joyce, Patrick W. *A Social History of Ancient...*: I, 43-45, 156-157; Kelly, Fergus. *A Guide to Early Irish...*: 26; Mytum, Harold. *The Origins of Early...*: 114 and following; but see also: Le Roux, Françoise; Guyonvarc'h, Christian J. *Mórrígan-Bodb-Macha* , and the analysis of: Dumézil, Georges. *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus. Essai sur la conception Indo-Européenne de la société et sur les origines de Rome*. Paris: Gallimard, 1941: 111-112; Dumézil, Georges; Grisward, Joël H. *Mythe et Épopée. I: L'idéologie des trois fonctions dans les épopées des peuples indo-européens*. Paris: Gallimard, 1968: 339-340; Dumézil, Georges. *L'Ideologie tripartite des Indo-Européens*. Brusells: Collection Latomus, 1958. Evidently the same root has produced the Latin *valere* and the Gaelic *vlatos* (see: Ellis, David. *Gaulish personal names...*: 369 and following).

138. This is a thesis sustained above all by Hanson who has based it on the fact that Patrick's work is mainly bound to the north of Ireland which was more vulnerable to raids from pirates from the Forth of Clyde (Hanson, R. P. C. *The Life and Writings...*: 24; see: *Epistola*, 14, 4-5); among others see: Skene, William F. *Celtic Scotland. A History of Ancient Alban*, 3 vols. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1876: I, 157-158; Bury, John B. *The Life of St. Patrick...*: 314-315; Binchy, Daniel A. "Saint Patrick and his Biographers". *Studia Hibernica*, 2 (1962): 7-173, especially, 106-109.

139. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 341.

is certain here. But both Ceredigs can effectively be linked to Coroticus for certain circumstances which we will now look at in more detail. Cunedda very probably lived in the very early fifth century and was leader of the tribe of the Votadini in the region historically called *Gododdin*, the lands around modern day Edinburgh in south eastern Scotland[140]. His family's power almost certainly derived from the Romans stationed there. In these lands, just like in Strathclyde, the various local princes carried out a great many sackings once Rome's power had disappeared. Already at the end of the fourth century, as we have already seen, tribes of frequently Romanised Britons were responsible for defending the Antonine Wall against the Pictish threat because after the threefold attack of 367 the Romans had assigned the native princes as *foederati* to defend the northern border in an attempt to contain the northern tribes and those located along Hadrian's Wall in particular[141]. These autonomous tribes included these same Votadini who were willing to fight in exchange for land[142]. Around the year 400, together with eight of his sons, Cunedda swept into north Wales, expelled the Scoti and founded the dynasty of Gwynedd[143] a name which has survived in the modern day county of North Wales[144]. Here, a number of his sons and grandsons gave their names to quite a few towns[145]. Further north, in Cardigan, as cited above, his fifth son Ceretic established a kingdom at a very young age in around 430[146]. In *Historia*

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140. Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 46, 68, 84, 119; Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur...*: 66-68; Dumville, David N. "Sub-Roman Britain: History and Legend". *History*, 62 (1977): 173-192, here 181-183; Charles-Edwards, Thomas M. "Language and Society among the Insular Celts", *The Celtic World...*: 703-736, here 706-709.

141. See: Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí. *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200*. Edinburgh: Longman, 1995: 19.

142. Rankin, David. *Celts and the Classical...*: 227. In the past an interesting theory was put forward by John Clarke who saw Coroticus as one of the commanders of the Roman fleet whose job it was to patrol the seas for Irish pirates. Coroticus's men, then, would only by chance have been able to come across some of Patrick's newly baptised (Clarke, John. "The Archaelogy of Dark-Age Scotland: A Survey of Possibilities". *Transactions of the Glasgow Archaelogical Society*, 14 (1953): 121-142, especially, 127-128. Alongside this observation we could place that of Charles W.C. Oman who held that the term *milites* referred to regular troops and not straightforward 'tribal militias' (Orman, Charles. *England before the Norman Conquest: Being a history of the Celtic-Roman and Anglo-Saxon Periods down to the year a. D. 1066*. London: Methuen, 1929: 190).

143. See: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 68, 84, 88 and 124-125; Gruffydd, Geraint R. "From Gododdin to Gwynedd: Reflections on the Story of Cunedda". *Studia Celtica*, 24-25 (1989-1990): 1-14.

144. In this toponym (Latin *Venedotia*) we also find the name of Cunedda himself deriving from the Celtic *Counedagos* which was probably of Pictish origin and equivalent to the modern Kenneth (see: Collingwood, R. G. *Roman Britain and the English Settlements*. Oxford: Claredon Press, 1937: 288-290; see also: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 162 and following). The root of this name is traceable to the proto-Celtic adjective **windo-* ("white", "beautiful": see Latin *venus*) from which the ancient Irish *find* and, of course, the Middle Welsh *gwynn* have developed (see: de Bernardo, Patrizia. *Nominale Wortbildung...*: 46). Evidently, with this name the intention was to emphasise the power of those who bore it.

145. See: Rees, Alwyn; Rees, Brinley. *L'eredità celtica* : 146; Bartrum, Peter C., ed. *Early Welsh Genealogical...*: 13.

146. Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 144. According to genealogies and medieval Welsh lives, this Ceredig was the grandfather of the famous St. David (Welsh *Dewi*) said to be the son of *rex ceredigionis* Sandde, direct descendant of the Cunedda royal house. See: Rees, William J., ed. *Lives of the Cambro-*

Brittonum, *Cunedag* is presented as the great grandfather of *Mailcunus magnus*, *rex apud Brittones* [...] *in regione Guenedotae* who can be identified as Maelgwn, king of Gwynedd[147] and according to the *Annales Cambriae* he died of yellow plague in 547 (*Mortalitas magna in qua pausat Mailcun rex Guenedotae*)[148] and is identifiable as the *Maglocunus* mentioned by Gildas (28-36). Now, in Nennius we read that Cunedda arrived in Gwynedd 146 years before Maelcuin reigned[149] but if we date the beginning of his reign to around 520[150] we get a date for Cunedda's descent into Wales which is too early. On the other hand, if we accept that this same king was born in around 475[151], by means of the three generations which separated him from his famous ancestor, calculating an average of thirty years each, we get a date of birth for Cunedda which is somewhere between 370 and 380 which would mean that Cunedda was born in the early years of the fifth century. It has recently been suggested that the king died in 546 and, on the basis of further calculations, even in 596[152]. I do not, however, find this interpretation convincing as it is partly the result of a over stretched analysis of the Harleian Genealogies and I believe that it is more likely that Ceredig's reign took place over the period of time from 430-40 to 450-60[153].

At the end of the fourth century the powerful dynasties based in Scotland included the royal family of Strathclyde with a stronghold in Dumbarton. Branches of this family, whose genealogy has considerable historic importance, reach as far afield as Galloway in south-western Scotland[154] and the name Ceredig Gwledig[155],

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British Saints. Llandovery: Welsh Manuscript Society, 1853: 402, 447; Wade-Evans, Arthur W., ed. *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1944: 169, and Miller, Molly. *The Saints of Gwynedd*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1979: 101-121. There are still no certain dates for the saint's birth and death. For the latter, the Welsh Annals report 601 while the *Chronicon Scotorum* and the *Inisfallen* Annals give 588 and 589 respectively all of which are not in line with birth dates which vary from 429 to 458. In any event, it is more reasonable to place the saint's life in the first half of the VIth century. For these issues and the historical evidence on this historical figure see: Kenney, James F. *The Sources for the Early History...*: 178-179; Gougaud, Louis. *Les Chrétientés Celtiques* : 66; Ryan, John. *Irish Monasticism...*: 113 and following; Miller, Molly. "Date-guessing and Dyfed". *Studia Celtica*, 12-13 (1977-1978): 33-61; Evans, J. Wyn. "St David and St Davids: Some Observations on the Cult, Site and Buildings", *Celtic Hagiography and Saints...*: 10-25; Jones, Nerys A.; Owen, Morfydd E. "Twelfth-century Welsh Hagiography: the *Gogynfeirdd* Poems to Saints", *Celtic Hagiography and Saints...*: 45-76.

147. In this context it is important to point out that the Irish resident in northern Wales in the fifth and sixth centuries adopted Roman names as inscriptions there confirm (Hughes, Kathleen. *The Church...*: 26).

148. *Annales Cambriae*, ed. Egerton Phillimore, Y Cymmrodor, 9 (1888): 141-183, reproduced in: Loth, Joseph, ed. Les Mabinogion du Livre Rouge de Hergest avec les variantes du Livre Blanc de Rhydderch, 2 vols. Paris: Slatkine, 1975: II, 370-382, here, 373.

149. *Historia Brittonum...*: 62.

150. Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur...*: 513.

151. See: Gildas, 28-33; see: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 88; Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 251.

152. Dumville, David N. "Coroticus", *Saint Patrick...*: 107-115, here, 112.

153. See: Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur...*: 18, 66 and 416.

154. See: Skene, William F. *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, 2 vols. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1868; Bartrum, Peter C. *Early Welsh Genealogical tracts*. Wales: Cardiff, 1966.

155. See: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 83-84.

the *Ceritic guletic* mentioned above, stand out. In *Vita Columbae* (692-697) by Adomnán[156], abbot of Iona from 679 to 704, a *rex Rodercus filius Tothail qui in Petra Cloithe regnabit* is mentioned. It is the same place that Bede mentions, *Petra Cluith*, called *Alcluith* by the Britons,[157] *civitas Brettonum munitissima* and modern day Dumbarton, north east of Glasgow[158]. *Rodercus*, characteristic local king with power over an area crossed by the River Clyde[159] is undoubtedly Rhydderch Hen son of the Welsh *Tutagual* (Tudwal), who is identifiable with Riderch[160] who lived between 585 or 592[161], contemporary of Columba (521-597) himself and descendant of the fifth generation of *Ceritic guletic*[162]. If, as is probable Rhydderch Hen died at an advanced age 603[163], it is likely that this Ceredig lived in the mid fifth century[164]. But the identification of Coroticus with the Dumbarton Ceredig is strongly confirmed by Muirchú in his *Vita Patricii* (690 circa) and in particular by the title of the last chapter: *De conflictu sancti Patricii adversum Coirthech regem Aloo*[165]. This is the origin of the place which our *rex, Ail Cluade* reigned over, the Dumbarton mentioned above[166]. Muirchú, using the form *Corictic*, calls him *rex Britannicus* and *infaustus crudelisque tyrannus*[167] and recalls him rejecting and ridiculing the epistle sent by the saint who wanted to bring him once again *ad viam veritatis*[168].

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156. Anderson, Alan O.; Anderson, Marjorie O. *Adomnan's life of Columba...*: 38-40 (I, 15, o 21b-22a).

157. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: I, 12.

158. Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: I, 20.

159. See: Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 83; Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 143 and following.

160. Anderson, Alan O.; Anderson, Marjorie O. *Adomnan's life of Columba...*: 39 (doc. nº 44).

161. Bartrum, Peter C. *Early Welsh Genealogies...*: 10.

162. *Harleian Genealogies...*: 10.

163. See: Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 138.

164. See: Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 138.

165. Bieler, Ludwig, ed. *The Patrician Texts in the Book...*: 66 (ll. 13-14). It is, however, still possible that the Muirchú chapters were added by a later writer (see: Thompson, Edward A. St. Patrick and Coroticus...": 13).

166. *Aloo* is, in fact, the genitive of *Ail* (Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 242; Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 341).

167. I, 29: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 100 (ll. 11-12). The term *tyrannus* is also applied to a certain *Macuil*, a man who lived in Ulster (*in regionibus Ulothorum*), presented as a murderer of *peregrini* and described as *malignus, gentilis, crudelis*. He had thought of killing the saint when he met him on the road but in the end, converted, baptised and sent to preach, he dies as a bishop (Muirchú I, 23: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 102-106). Once again Muirchú, (I, 1, 5: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 68 (l. 9) young Patrick's owner at the time of the first kidnap, is also called *tyrannus* and *gentilis*.

168. I 29: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 100 (ll. 13-15).

Coroticus is thus condemned to be turned into a small fox (*vulpiculi miserabiliter arepta forma profectus*)[169]after the saint calls on God: *Domine, si fieri potest, espelle hunc perfidum de presenti saeculoque futuro*[170]. The Coroticus of the Patrician hagiographic tradition is thus held to be a *tyrannus* in accordance with what the saint had argued in his letter (6, 4: *tyranni*s *Corotici*) and it is evidently a result of the events that occurred after the departure of Roman troops when, in the various states born after the Empire broke up, the *tyranni,* local chiefs, exercised *de facto* power with no official legitimacy[171]. This title, similar to the Brythonic *tegernos* (proto-

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169. I 29: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 100 (ll. 20-21). Echoes of Lc. 13, 32, are clear in which Jesus stigmatises Herod using the image of the fox (see: Iud, 15, 4-5; Cant, 2, 15 and Ps, 62, 11). In the Christian and then Roman-Catholic exegetic traditions, as is well known, this animal took on specific adulatory qualities and become the symbol of the devil and of heretics (including *Physiologus graecus*, 15: *O Physiologus elexe peri tēs alōpekos oti dolion zōon estin [i]. Outō kai o diabolos dolios esti pantelōs kai ai praxeis autou*; Isidorus Hispalensis. *Etymologiae*, XII, 2, 29: *fraudolentum animal insidiisque decipiens*; Rabanus, Maurus. *De Universo*. Strassburg: The Adolph Rusch Printer, 1467, in: *Patrologia Latina*, 111, 225. In general on this theme see: Merlo, Grado G. "Animali ed eretici medievali", *Bestie o dei? L'animale nel simbolismo religioso*, Alessandro Bongioanni, Enrico Comba, eds. Turin: Ananke, 1996: 67-76; Maspero, Francesco. *Bestiario antico: gli animali-simbolo e il loro significato nell'immaginario dei popoli antichi*. Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1997: 337-341; Centini, Massimo. *Le bestie del diavolo: gli animali e la stregoneria tra fonti storiche e folklore*. Milan: Rusconi, 1998: 128-130; Maspero, Francesco; Granata, Aldo. *Bestiario medievale*. Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1999: 457-461). In a similar context, its presence indicates the "heterodox" state of Coroticus the "predator", only nominally Christian and in partnership with pagans and apostates. Finally, I would like to point out that foxes were frequently numbered among sacrificial animals among both insular and continental Celtic peoples (see: Green, Miranda. *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth*. London-New York: Routledge, 1992: 101, 125).

170. I, 29: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 100 (ll. 15-17). This was all taken up by a famous medieval life of the saint, the so-called *Vita Tertia* (Colgan, John. *Four Latin lives of St. Patrick: Colgan's Vita secunda, quarta, tertia and quinta*, ed. Ludwig Bieler. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1971: 115-190). While it is contained in manuscripts datable from the XIIth to the XVth centuries, the date of writing varies from the IXth century to around 1130 and its original nucleus dates to the first years of the 8th century (Colgan, John. *Four Latin lives of St. Patrick...*: 13 and following; see also: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 54). When Patrick becomes aware of the *mala opera* del *rex Brittonum Coritic, crudelis tyrannus, persecutor et interfector Christianorum*, in the hope of converting him, *misitque ad eum* [...] *epistolam, sed rex ille deridebat doctrinam Patricii*. The saint thus prays to the Lord that he be expelled *de presenti seculo et futuro*, so that Coroticus, in the middle of the square once more, is transformed into a *vulpicula* (Colgan, John. *Four Latin lives of St. Patrick...*: 168-169). The *Vita Tertia* is the source for Probus's *Vita Patricii* (Colgan, John. *Four Latin lives of St. Patrick...*: 191-219), a native of Britain who lived between the end of the Xth and the first half of the XIIth centuries (Colgan, John. *Four Latin lives of St. Patrick...*: 39-42). Here he is thus presented: *Brittanic*us *rex nomine Chairtic, infaust*us crudelisque *tyrann*us, *maximus persecutor et interfector Christianorum* (II, 27: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 215 (ll. 19-21) and the plot is exactly the same as the former with Coroticus scoring the letter and being turned into a *vulpicula in medio foro* (II, 27: Ludwig Bieler. *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 215 (ll. 16-28).

171. Gildas. "De excidio et conquestu Britanniae...": 27, 41 (*reges habet Britannia, sed tyrannos*); see: 66 and 62. Jerome writes that the Britons live in a *fertilis provincia tyrannorum* (*Epistola*, 133, 9; *Ad Ctesiphontem*, ed. Jerome Labourt. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1963: 63 (ll. 13-14).

Celtic **tigerno-*)[172], is assigned to numerous figures in sub-Roman Britain[173] many of whom had been assigned military duties which made them similar to *dux* or *comes* or *imperator* in the Roman tradition[174] but sometimes also to historical figures with mythological traits connected to honours which echo the Arthurian cycle[175]. In actual fact, however, these were often Romanised aristocratic Britons or local kings chosen by the people as chiefs of tribal type hereditary monarchies such as those both of Cunedda's Votadini and that of Strathclyde. Essentially one of these, Coroticus, exercised power over local troops in lands which had previously been under Imperial control. But it remains objectively impossible to identify Patrick's Coroticus once and for all even on the basis of the nonetheless excellent recent analyses and considerations[176]. However, in my opinion, the perspectives which

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172. Ancient Irish *tigern*(*e*), Middle Irish *tighearn* and *tigernach*, ancient Welsh-*tigern*, Middle Welsh *teern* and *teyrn*, Middle Breton *tiarn* and Cornish *teern*, or *–deyrn* all correspond. (Vendryes, Joseph. *Lexique étymologique de l'irlandais ancien. 4: lettres T-U*. Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978: 62; de Bernardo, Patrizia. *Nominale Wortbildung...*: 238 and following). Its root, **teg-* can be traced to ancient Irish *teg* and *tech*, "house/habitation", corresponding to Greek *tegos* and Latin *tego* and *tectum* so this title literally indicates the "lord of the town", a local chief. The negligible differences with the role of the *guletic* are clear, even though the legitimate and traditional social function of the latter had doubtful official status in the case of the "tyrant". From the Brythonic noun *tigern* mentioned above by adding the productive suffix in the velar *–acus* (see: Russell, Paul. *Celtic word-formation: the velar suffixes*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1990) we get the adjective form *tegernacus* (modern Welsh *teyrnog*, "regal of the prince"; see: Jackson, Kenneth H. *Language and History...*: 291, 447; Kelly, Fergus. *A Guide to Early Irish...*: 8) already used as a personal name in the VIth century according to the evidence of certain inscriptions found in South Wales (Macalister, Robert A. S. *Corpus Inscriptionum Insularum Celticarum*. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1945: 322, 380, 395; Nash-Williams, Victor E. *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950: 166, 170-172, 174). Equally ancient is the evidence of the corresponding Irish *Tigernach* (*Tigernachus*), name of the famous Clones saint who lived in the first half of the VIth century (Kenney, James F. *The Sources for the Early History...*: 386-387; Ryan, John. *Irish Monasticism...*: 106 and following). It seems, therefore, clear that the social and military functions exercised by Patrick's Coroticus are similar to those of the *guletic* where the epithet *tyrannus* given him by the bishop was intended to underline his bad behaviour in relation to the evangelical teachings.

173. See the list in: Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 141-142.

174. Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 143.

175. Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 142. In this respect, and for the issues of importance here, in: *Historia Brittonum...*: 24-25, 31) a certain *Ceretic* is mentioned, an interpreter with the Saxons at Vortigern (Welsh *Gwrtheyrn* "great king")'s service whose name echoes the ancient Irish aristocratic title *ard-rí* ("supreme king": see: Chadwick, Nora K. *Studies in Early British History*. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press, 1954: 38). Whilst he does not explicitly use his name, Gildas calls him *superbus tyrannus* because, in order to fight off the threat of the northern peoples of the island, he had allowed the Saxons to settle there as allies (Gildas. "De excidio et conquestu Britanniae...": 38 (ll. 12); Morris, John. "Historical Introduction", *Gildas. The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, Michael Winterbottom, dir. Chichester: Phillimore and Co., 1978: 150; the news was *ritualiter* taken up by Bede [Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: I, 14 and II, 5], who, however, gives the tyrant his correct name: *Uurtigirnus*). But it was the *Historia Brittonum* who dedicated a large and important section to him (*Historia Brittonum...*: 170-193), latinising his name into *Guorthigirnus* and presenting him as a powerful *rex Britanniae* who came to power in 425 and effectively allied with the Saxons in order to fight off the Picts and the Scoti (Dillon, Myles; Chadwick, Nora K. *I regni dei Celti...*: 79; Ward, John H. "Vortigern and the End of Roman Britain". *Britannia*, 3 (1972): 277-289; Morris, John. *The Age of Arthur...*: 49; Rankin, David. *Celts and the Classical...*: 227-228).

176. Dumville, David N. "Coroticus", *Saint Patrick...*: 107-115.

emerge from a reading of the news which emerges from the *Ceritic guletic* who ruled in Strathclyde are more encouraging. The first confirmation of this possible identification comes from the latest chronological calculations carried out taking account of the dating supplied by the genealogies mentioned previously. On the basis of this operation, it is very likely that he died around 472[177] in a chronology which allows us to date Coroticus's raid to before 460[178] bringing it within the period of time in which the *gwledigs* (circa 380-490) were at their maximum power[179]. For the sake of geographical precision, it should be added that the apostate Picts very probably lived on land which bordered the land controlled by Coroticus[180] who, moreover, would have had no difficulty in selling and delivering prisoners to them as he reigned over Dumbarton[181]. Furthermore, Patrick shows a profound knowledge of the environment of those who effectively received the letters, i.e. Coroticus and the men around him who were formally no strangers to the Christian-Roman culture of the north-west border. In any case, the around seventy miles between Dumbarton and the coast of Antrim can easily be travelled by crossing the Clyde Estuary which opens directly onto the North Channel[182]. This identification further legitimises Patrick's intervention. Coroticus's expedition took him to lands which had been entrusted to the saint's pastoral care and the latter, aware that the bishops (*sacerdotes*) on the far side of the sea were not held in high regard[183], desired that the letter be read *cunctis plebibus et presente ipso Corotico* (*Epistola* 21, 4-5). Patrick, then, would have been able to meet some of these soldiers in person or at least the clans they belonged to given the relatively short distance between Strathclyde and *Bannauenta Berniae*.

4. St Patrick's Apostolate

4.1. The Mission

St Patrick's Christianity was prevalently missionary and, consequently, like any other missionary religion, was sustained by a unique revelation which tended to generate a salvational and metaphysical vision of life. This latter thus stimulated

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177. Dumville, David N. "Coroticus", *Saint Patrick...*: 107-115, especially, 111-112.

178. Tolstoy's hypothesis is close to this date putting forward the years just before 458 (146-147).

179. See: Tolstoy, Nikolai. "Who was Coroticus?...": 144-145.

180. Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 291.

181. Thomas F. O'Rahilly had already expressed the same opinion: O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *The Two Patricks...*: 39.

182. This vicinity facilitated the "trading" and cultural contacts between the peoples of the two coasts and makes the theory of the alliance between Coroticus in Dumbarton and the Scoti and Picts working there very likely (see: Miller, Molly. "Matriliny by Treaty: the Pictish...").

183. *Epistola*, 6, 5; *sacerdos* is used here with an ancient meaning. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 79 (doc. nº 33), although elsewhere he uses the more concrete *episcopus* (*Epistola*, 1, 2).

a sort of ongoing impetus to transcendency which freed the missionary himself and the newly converted from tribal constraints and political conditions. This universalistic tendency meant that the missionary was freed of an earthly dwelling in any real sense to the extent that he could choose the transcendental realm as his true abode and present everything related to it as "natural"[184]. The now established fact that Patrick's evangelisation had no initial social value but rather a cultural one of which the former is only a logical consequence reinforces these concepts[185]. In times of peace, the first non-official missionaries were traders and at other times it was the soldiers who accompanied new waves of missionaries not infrequently generated by changing alliances between soldiers and traders. The new religion, however, reached full development only with the arrival of the so-called 'professional' missionaries who almost always followed in the wake of soldiers and traders. These missionaries spread their beliefs by means of public announcements, commenting the sacred texts, teaching hymns and prayers and pastoral and educational assistance[186].

Patrick is a *designatus*, a chosen one[187] or elected[188] by God (see: *Confessio*, 29, 5). Effective preaching presupposes that he who performs it possesses a special grace and continually renews his efforts to be worthy of this same grace. For Patrick, then, the words that Gregorius Magnus borrowed from Pauline thought are relevant: *Audiant quod Paulus eo se a proximorum sanguine mundum credidit, quo feriendis eorum uitiis non pepercit, dicens: Contestor vos hodierna die, quia mundus sum a sanguine omnium: non enim subterfugi quominus annuntiarem omne consilium Dei vobis* (Act, 20, 26-27)[189]. Patrick's church, in the same way as those existing in sub-Roman Britain in those years, was episcopal in type[190] and its bishops thus exercised full jurisdiction over their *paruchiae*[191]. In actual fact, however, Patrick did not immediately succeed in setting up a church with such a structure as the island as a whole lacked an urban infrastructure. The initial difficulties involved in an episcopal framework thus led to a preaching and pastoral system suitable to a rural society which was fundamentally on a continuum with the Irish socio-political structure of the Celtic tribal *túatha* system. Irish *paruchiae* were not

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184. See: Stackhouse, Max L. "Missione". *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. New York: MacMillan, 1986: III (Italian translation: Eliade, Mircea; Cosi, Dario M.; Saibene,Luigi; Scagno, Roberto; Couliano, Ioan P. *Enciclopedia delle religioni*. Milan: Jaca Book: 1993: 379-386, here 379-380).

185. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 7.

186. See: Stackhouse, Max L. "Missione...": 383-384.

187. Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 113 (doc. nº 217).

188. Hanson, Richard P.C. *St. Patrick. His Origins...*: 103 (doc. nº 3).

189. Gregory I. "Regula Pastoralis" *Patrologia Latina. Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina*, ed. Floribert Rommel. Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992: III, 25.

190. Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 267-269, 343-344: see also: Orlandi, Giovanni. "Dati e problemi sull'organizzazione della Chiesa irlandese tra V e IX secolo", *Cristianizzazione ed organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo: espansione e resistenze (1980)*. Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1982: 713-764, especially, 719.

191. Bieler, Ludwig. "The Christianization of the Insular Celts". *Celtica*, 8 (1968): 112-125, especially, 120. On the saint's *paruchia* see: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 150-157.

similar to continental ones but were essentially forms of rural diocese in an area supported by a bishop[192].

Christianity arrived in Ireland across the Firth of Clyde and Solway Firth in around 400 certainly also thanks to trading relations between the Scoti and the Britons and the raids of the former, the foundation of Gaelic colonies in Britain and the sale of slaves and prisoners[193]. These Christians living in Ireland were prevalently slaves captured by the Irish in their raids in the western part of Britain[194]. Present for the most part in southern Munster they attempted to preserve their faith as best they could in an alien and difficult environment just as the small communities of Christians already living in parts of Leinster and eastern Ulster did. With a certain consistency, Christianity began to filter into Ireland by means of trading relations with Gaul —where it was already present— and contacts of various sorts with Roman Britain mainly across the waters of the North Channel. Very little is known about the vicissitudes of the early communities in the central-south area, the most open to Roman influence[195] and they are thus shrouded in poetry and mystery[196]. Small communities of Christians already existed in Ireland prior to Palladius's arrival in 431[197]sent by the latter to a pre-existing community[198] which Thomas has placed in the Arklow area on the south-eastern coast of Ireland[199]. Patrick himself, in reference to the episode of the kidnap he underwent at sixteen years of age, spoke of thousands of individuals (*tot milia hominum*) who were imprisoned on the island with him (*Confessio*, 1, 8). From his words ([...] *et ubique pergebam causa vestra in multis periculis etiam usque ad exteras partes, ubi nemo ultra erat et ubi numquam aliquis pervenerat qui baptizaret aut clericos ordinaret aut populum consummaret*: *Confessio*, 51, 2-5) it can further be conjectured that there were regions in the mid Vth century which had already been visited for baptisms or consecrations despite the fact that Christianity was

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192. Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 155; Malaspina, Elena. "Gli inizi dell'inculturazione cristiana in Irlanda", *Portare Cristo all'uomo. Congresso del Ventennio dal Concilio Vaticano II. 18-21 February 1985*. Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1985: I, 837-848, especially, 843.

193. Gougaud, Louis. *Les Chrétientés Celtiques* : 35-36.

194. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 299 and following.

195. From the oldest genealogies and the lives of the island's saints we know the names of two communities: *Corcu Loedge* in Cork on the south coast and *Dési* from Waterford to the south east (see: de Paor, Liam; de Paor, Maire. *Early Christian Ireland...*: 25). On these two tribes see: O'Rahilly, Thomas F. *Early Irish History...*: 48-49, 64 and 81.

196. As Henri Daniel-Rops has written: "under a cloudy sky, buffetted by great winds [...] in the midst of Northern fogs rising from cold seas, the legend was built with the spontaneity of a dream" (Daniel-Rops, Henri. *Histoire de l'Eglise du Christ. L' Eglise des temps barbares*, Henri Daniel-Rops, ed. Paris: Fayard, 1953: II, 209).

197. See: Prosperus Aquitanus. "Chronicon", *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi. Chronica Minora saec. IV. V. VI. VII...*: IX, 473; see also: Prosperus Aquitanus. "Contra Collatorem", *Patrologia Latina...*: 21, 1, 51, 271 C. The same news was taken up by Bede in: Bede. *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum...*: I, 13.

198. See: Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí. *Early Medieval Ireland...*: 14-15.

199. Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 304. See also: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 48-62.

still unknown and alien to the great majority of Irish people. Only those who had had the opportunity to meet people from Britain or the continent for trading or other reasons or who had come to the island from foreign lands knew of the new religion. At the time there were almost certainly other Christian missionaries in the town some of whom were involved in missionary activities but Patrick's was certainly the most important and ultimately decisive in Ireland's religious history. From the second half of the VIth century the Hiberian church became a church of abbots[200], the scene changed and it is not entirely clear whether the foundations of monasticism were laid by Patrick himself. In the *Catalogus sanctorum Hiberniae* (8th-9th century), the Church of the VIth century was primarily that of the so-called second order saints (544-601), the monastic clergy, that is, with very few bishops (*In hoc enim secondo ordine pauci erant episcopi et multi presbiteri* [sic!], *numero CCC*[201]), while in Patrick's day and the years immediately after it, it was an episcopal type church (*Primus ordo sanctorum erat in tempore Patricii. Et nunc erant episcopi omnes clari et sancti et Spiritu sancto pleni, CCCL numero, ecclesiarum fundatores*[202]). The third and final order (until around 670) was made up of *presbyteri sancti et pauci episcopi, numero C*[203].

In *Confessio*, Patrick attributes the success of his mission not to his own qualities but to the grace given him by God and writes of his need to proclaim his thanks to God for the great favours he has received now and for eternity, favours which the human mind is not capable of judging *(Confessio*, 12, 7-9) in reference to the love of God as a gift as important as it is healthy (*Confessio*, 36, 3-4). To express this, he often uses the formula *Deo gratias* (*-am ago*) (*Epistola*, 17, 4; *Confessio*, 19, 16.20; 23, 15; 30, 1; 34, 1.11; 42, 5; 46, 1-2) and not only when circumstances are favourable but also in times of tribulation (*ut quicquid mihi euenerit siue bonum siue malum aequaliter debeo suscipere et Deo gratias semper agere*, *Confessio*, 34, 9-11). In this latter excerpt he echoes the sentiments of Job who takes on adversity with the motto *Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit; sicut Dominus placuit, ita factum est. Sit nomen Domini benedictum* (Job, 1, 21)[204]. The liturgical formula *gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro* is to be found in the Introduction to the Catholic Mass and thus Patrick must have known it well[205]. In a passage from *Vita* written by Muirchú, in which Patrick receives a gift from a pagan chief, this formula is presented in its Gaelic form *grazacham*[206].

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200. Orlandi, Giovanni. *Dati e problemi...*: 722.

201. Grosjean, Paul. "Éditions et Commentaire du *Catalogus Sanctorum Hiberniae secundum diversa tempora* ou *de tribus sanctorum Hiberniae*". *Analecta Bollandiana*, 73 (1955): 197-213 and 289-322, here 206 and, for issues relating to the various datings of the three orders, 306 and following.

202. Grosjean, Paul. "Éditions et Commentaire du *Catalogus Sanctorum...*".

203. Grosjean, Paul. "Éditions et Commentaire du *Catalogus Sanctorum...*".

204. For other echoes of Job in *Confessio* see: Conneely, Daniel. *St Patrick's Letters: A Study of their Theological Dimension*, Patrick Bastable, Thomas Finan, ed. Maynooth: An Sagart, 1993: 46 and 52.

205. Addis, William E.; Arnold, Thomas. *A Catholic Dictionary containing Some Account of the Doctrine, Discipline, Rites, Ceremonies, Councils, and Religious Orders of the Catholic Church*, Thomas B. Scannell, ed. London: Virtue and Co.,1928: 527.

206. I 24: Gildas. "De excidio et conquestu Britanniae...": 110, ll. 5-18, see: Bieler's comment, 209, in which he translates this expression with *Gratias agam(us)/Grát(es) agam*.

Patrick mentions twelve specific dangers[207] which put his life at risk as well as the many plots against him and that he has been insulted by unbelievers and scorned as a foreigner (*Confessio*, 35, 3-5). He also says that his disciples have been persecuted and reproved by their families and that, of these, it is slaves who suffered the worst harassment *(Confessio*, 42). In *Confessio*, 42, 1-11 Patrick writes of *uirgines*, *uiduae* and *continentes* suffering persecution and slander (*persecutiones patiuntur et improperia falsa*) emphasising in particular the zeal and endurance of some *ancillae Domini* who, despite having been reduced to slavery, had found the strength to devote themselves ascetically to God and his grace (*Confessio*, 42, 13-15). Despite this, he managed to convert many thousands of people *(Confessio*, 14, 6; 50, 1) and reach even the most far flung corners of the country (*Confessio*, 51) and, to facilitate his work, he made payments to those who held power in the lands he visited most often (*Confessio*, 51-53). The success of his mission also emerges clearly when he mentions the sons of the Irish and the daughters of their king who chose the religious life *(Epistola*, 12, 6-9; *Confessio*, 41)[208]. But now he weeps for the prisoners sold (*Epistola*, 15, 5-7) whilst hoping that Coroticus and his *sceleratissimi milites* would see the error of their ways as a result of his written condemnation (*Epistola*, 21). At the same time, he invites Christians to avoid any contact with those excommunicated (*Epistola*, 7, 1-3) and turns to his compatriots in an attempt to persuade them to accept no longer the underhand gifts of the Brythonic *tyrannus* including the *mulierculae baptizatae* kidnapped in Ireland (*Epistola*, 19, 2-4), gifts which were dangerous for their souls (*Epistola*, 13). It was necessary to avoid the adulations of the *tyrannus* and have no contact whatsoever with him and his people (*Epistola*, 7, 1-3). Patrick invites him to penitence and reparation (*Epistola*, 7, 4-6 and 21, 5-9). He then turns his advice to the clergy of his town of birth too *(Epistola*, 7). For Patrick, Coroticus and his allies are *alieni* in the sense that they are apart from Christ[209] (*Epistola*, 5, 2) and the bishop orders that word of the epistle should be spread and that it should be read (*Epistola*, 21, 4-5) despite the fact that he is aware that he is not recognised by his own, just as a prophet is not honoured in his homeland (*Epistola*, 11, 1-2). It is clear that there are those in Britain who do not love Patrick (*Epistola*, 1, 10; 11, 1; 12, 1-2) and he insists, in fact, in affirming his integrity and honesty (*Epistola*, 11, 5-6) as well as the divine origin of his mission (*Epistola*, 1, 2-3; 6,

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207. On Patrick's use of the number twelve, perhaps borrowed from the number of Hercules's efforts in order to emphasise the quality and considerable number of *pericula* he had faced, see: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 288). But see the following biblical texts: 2 Cor, 1, 9-10 (*...ut non simus fidentes in nobis, sed in Deo, ...qui de tantis periculis nos eripuit, et eruit*) and 11, 26-27 (*periculis fluminum, periculis latronum, periculis ex genere, periculis ex gentibus, periculis in civitate, periculis in solitudine, periculis in mari, periculis in falsis fratribus; in labore et aerumna, in vigiliis multis, in fame et siti, in ieuniis multis, in frigore et nuditate*).

208. The sources relate that the earliest converts included the daughters of *Loiguire* (Loegaire mac Néill), *ard-rí* ("supreme king") of the pagan irish *omphalos*, Tara (*Temair*; see: Rees, Alwyn; Rees, Brinley. *L'eredità celtica* : 124 and following). See: Tírechán, *Collectanea de sancto Patricio* (ca. year 670) 26, ed. Bieler, Ludwig: *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 10...: 142-144.

209. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 77 (doc. nº 24).

1-2; 10, 1-2). Fundamentally, the saint appears to have written the *Confessio* itself as a reply to those in Britain who had put his intellectual and moral qualities as a missionary in doubt. This hostility to Patrick seems to have been based on an accusation deriving from a sin revealed to a friend before he was ordained as a deacon (*Confessio*, 27, 1-3)[210]. This confession was probably the outcome of anxiety and sadness and was given to an *amicissimus* of Patrick's at a time when he did not yet have a robust character: *Propter anxietatem maesto animo insinuaui amicissimo meo quae in pueritia mea una die gesseram, immo in una hora, quia necdum praeualebam* (*Confessio*, 27, 3-5). Thirty years must have passed from the moment in which the sin had been committed or, as already proposed by many, from the time of the confession: *Occasionem post annos triginta inuenerunt me aduersus uerbum quod confessus eram antequod essem diaconus* (*Confessio*, 27, 1-2)[211]. This *amicissimus*, who had played a part in Patrick's elevation to episcopal status, declares his happiness at his imminent bishopric (*Ecce dandus es tu ad gradum episcopatus*) and then betrays him by telling of the confession in order to publicly defame him (*Confessio*, 32). Hanson argues that this friend must have been one of the *seniores* at the time of the accusation and might himself have been a bishop at the time Patrick was ordained[212].

Patrick also knows that his readers include these same Brythonic *seniores* —probably priests— who were well versed in the art of rhetoric who had already opposed his bishopric *(Confessio, 26, 1-3; see: 32 and 37)* perhaps on the basis of that sin confessed before he was ordained deacon (*Confessio*, 27, 1-5)[213]. On this issue, following Patrick's answers to the accusations of these *seniores*, it can be conjectured that it was the efforts of these same men that led to the calling of what Thomas believes was a full blown Brythonic synod at which Patrick was condemned as a bishop[214]. According to Grosjean, it was in fact an ecclesiastical assembly of the *seniores* who represented the higher ranks of the community to which Patrick belonged which pronounced against him[215]. His apologetic defence would appear to have been based, as Nerney has argued[216], on Paul's personal apology in 2 Cor. 10-11. The sentence was thus communicated to the saint by the *seniores* who went to Ireland for this very reason although it would appear that they came on a day which was prior to his departure for Ireland (*Confessio*, 26, 3;

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210. Perhaps it was a full-blown sacramental confession which would make Patrick's insistence on the seriousness of his friend's betrayal easier to understand. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 138.

211. See: Hanson, Richard P. C. *St. Patrick. His Origins...*: 135 and following; Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 326.

212. Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 43.

213. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 134-141.

214. See: Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 336.

215. Grosjean, Paul. "Notes d'hagiographie celtique...": 158-226, especially, 163-164.

216. Nerney, D.S. "A Study of St Patrick's Sources". *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 71/I-IV (1949): 497-507; 72, 1949, 14-26, 97-110, 265-280, 499-507.

29, 1 and 30, 2). Hanson[217] and Thomas[218] have argued that the attack on Patrick was based on accusations of simony which the saint himself hints at in *Confessio*, 37, 1-4 (*Et numera multa mihi offerebantur cum fletu et lacrimi set offendi illos, nec non contra uotum aliquantis de senioribus meis, sed gubernante Deo nullo modo consensi neque adquieui illis*) and particularly in *Confessio*, 50, 1-2 (*Forte autem quando baptizaui tot milia hominum sperauerim ab aliquo illorum uel dimidio scriptulae?*). But Patrick emphatically denies any sort of request for money from the nobles (*Confessio*, 37, 1-4; 49, 1-5: *conatus sum quippiam seruare me etiam et fratribus Christianis et uirginibus Christi et mulieribus religiosis, quae mihi ultronea munuscula donabant et super altare iactabant ex ornamentis sui set iterum reddebam illi*; see: *Confessio*, 49 and 50)[219]. Quite the contrary, he reduces himself to poverty by his continual wanderings along the island's footpaths (*Confessio*, 55, 6-7: *et Christus Dominus pauper fuit pro nobis, ego vero misere et infelix etsi opes voluero iam non habeo*). Patrick clarifies, in fact, that rather than receiving money he gave it to the local powers, the *brithemain*[220]: *Vos autem esperti estis quantum ego erogaui illis qui iudicabant per omnes regiones quos ego frequentius uisitabam* (*Confessio*, 53, 1-3). In *Confessio*, 52, 1-2 Patrick also declares that he has given sums of money to the chiefs (*regibus*) and also pay to the young men (*filiis*) who follow him in his mission. As Hanson has rightly argued, these were subsidies for his own upkeep[221]. He thus reiterates that he will spend even more and even spend himself in order to save souls (*Confessio*, 51, 1-2 and 53, 3-8). Malaspina has rightly made a distinction between the two accusations. In the first, in fact, Patrick's 'superiors' attempt to block his elevation to bishop by using the accusation of his *amicissimus* (see: *Confessio*, 32); in the second it is the *laboriosus* episcopacy of the saint which is the object of the opposition of the *seniores* who had found traces of simony in some of his actions (see: *Confessio*, 26, 1-3)[222]. This latter accusation was thus put forward soon after Coroticus's excommunication by a part of the Brythonic clergy which had felt in some way passed over in matters within its jurisdiction[223]. As far as these later events are concerned, the saint refers to a further kidnapping he suffered. With some of his *comites* he was captured, put in chains and his baggage removed and ran the risk of being killed (*Confessio*, 52, 4: *et illa die auidissime cupiebant interficere me*). But after fourteen days, *propter Deum et necessarios amicos* (*Confessio*, 52, 8-9) he was free once more. Hanson hypothesises that these friends may have been Britons resident in Ireland on the basis of *Confessio*, 42, 10-11 in which he refers

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217. Hanson, R. P. C. *Saint Patrick. His Origins...*: 132-135.

218. Thomas, Charles. *Christianity in Roman Britain...*: 336-340.

219. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 82 (doc. nº 68) and 161 (doc. nº 48).

220. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 129 (doc. nº 326). These were "Druid judges" (sing. *brithem*) belonging to the functional wing of the *filid*, the "veggentei" poets according to Ireland's Celtic tradition. See: Joyce, Patrick W. *A Social History of Ancient...*: I, 168 and following; Le Roux, Françoise; Guyonvarc'h, Christian J. *Les Druides*. Rennes: Ouest-France, 1986: 51 and 96-106; Kelly, Fergus. *A Guide to Early Irish...*: 51-56.

221. Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 125 (doc. nº 4).

222. Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 134-143, 196 and following.

223. Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 135, 196-197.

to Britons born in Ireland and converted by him[224]. Patrick also tells of another kidnap, the third and the second in order in the work, which occurred *post annos multos* as compared to his capture in his youth (*Confessio*, 1, 5-8) which lasted sixty days (*Confessio*, 21). Malaspina hypothesises that this might have happened during Patrick's stay in northern Gaul by the Franks mentioned in *Epistola*, 14, 2. He was freed as a result of the efforts of *viri sancti idonei* who were probably monks[225]. Hanson disagrees and places the kidnap in Ireland when Patrick was already bishop and sees the *sancti idonei* as generic ecclesiastics[226].

Patrick wants to excommunicate the assassins and marauders but he has no jurisdiction over the British coast —Coroticus is not within his diocese. Perhaps it could have been this which caused the tension with the Brythonic bishops mentioned in *Confessio*[227]. Is this a Patrick who did not act canonically? Coroticus needed money and at the same time he needed to establish a beneficial alliance with the Picts and the Scoti. Patrick was taking action which would appear in a certain sense to have been a provocation of the Brythonic clergy who were not particularly interested in condemning such episodes of raiding. But it is possible that Patrick knew what had happened better than the Brythonic clergy themselves who might not have known what had happened. Having already reaped the fruits of his mission, the saint is thus sending out a clear demonstration of power and evangelical zeal. A somewhat unusual aspect of his letter is the sense of great dignity and value which each individual has before Christ. Patrick is profoundly hurt and it is this which provokes and feeds a continual eschatological dimension in the text. It is notably based on Rm. 1, 18-32[228] in which Paul declares the sins of the pagans (v. 23: *Et mutauerunt gloriam incorruptibilis Dei in similitudinem imaginis corruptibilis hominis, et volucrum, et quadrupedum, et serpentium*) e soprattutto su Act. 20, 29 (*Ego scio quondam intrabunt post discessionem meam lupi rapaces in vos, non parcentes gregi*)[229], so as to be compared[230], because of their undeniable analogies,

224. Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 124 (doc. nº 7); see: Bieler, Ludwig. *Libri Epistolarum...*: II, 173; Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 122 (doc. nº 285).

225. Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 119 and following.

226. Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 94 (doc. nº 2), 146 (doc. nº 1).

227. See: Grosjean, Paul. "Notes d'hagiographie celtique...": 102-106; Carney, James. *The Problem of St. Patrick...*: 114; Hanson, Richard P. C. *St. Patrick. His Origins...*: 101 (doc. nº 3), and 103 and following.

228. On the foundations and clear Pauline influences of the *Epistola*, see: Iannello, Fausto. "Il modello paolino nell'*Epistola ad milites Corotici* di san Patrizio". *Bollettino di Studi Latini*, 42/1 (2012): 43-63.

229. See: *Epistola*, 5, 1-4: *Quapropter resciat omnis homo timens Deum quod a me alieni sunt et a Christo Deo meo, pro qua legatione fungor, patricida, fratricida, lupi rapaces deuorantes plebem Domini ut cibum panis*; *Epistola*, 12, 4-7: *Longe est a caritate Dei traditor Christianorum in manus Scotorum atque Pictorum. Lupi rapaces deglutierunt gregem Domini, qui utique Hiberione cum summa diligentia optime crescebat*; *Epistola*, 13, 4-5: *Nesciunt miseri uenenum letale cibum porrigunt ad amico set filios suos.* See: Ps. 52, 5: *Nonne scient omnes qui operantur iniquitatem, qui devorant plebem meam ut cibum panis?* Patrick excommunicates his adversary in tones which are sometimes ironic, ostracising him: *Tu potius interficis et uendis illos* (scil. *baptizatos*) [...] *quasi in lupanar tradis membra Christi. Qualem spem habes in Deum, uel qui te consentit aut qui te communicat uerbis adulationis? Deus iudicabit* (*Epistola* 14, 4-8).

230. Conneely, Daniel. *St Patrick's Letters...*: 130, 182, 214. See also: Bieler, Ludwig. *Libri Epistolarum...*: II, 209; Nerney, D.S. "A Study of St Patrick's...": 23-25, 103, 109 and 279-280; Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti*

with the letter called *Inter Ceteras* written by Innocent I (402-417) and today conserved in Augustine's epistolary which was completed on the 27th May of the same year. In this letter, Innocent replies to the fathers of the Milevitan Council of 416 praising them for having deferred to the supreme authority of the Roman Pontiff in relation to the identification of the Pelagian heresy and the sanctions to be taken against its authors and followers thus reiterating his *apostolici vigoris auctoritate* condemnation. The sections of Patrick's letter which echo this document are its fourth[231] and thirteenth paragraphs[232] in which Coroticus and his *socii* are described as instruments of the devil who must be condemned and excluded from the Christian community:

> *Negantes ergo auxilium Dei, inquiunt hominem sibi posse sufficere, nec gratia hunc egere diuina, qua priuatus necesse est diaboli laqueis irretitus occumbat, dum ad omnia uitae perficienda mandata, sola tantummodo libertate contendat. O prauissimarum mentium peruersa doctrina! Aduertat id tandem quod primum hominem ita libertas ipsa decepit, ut, dum indulgentius frenis eius utitur, in praeuaricationem praesumptione conciderit; nec ex hac potuit erui, nisi prouidentia regenerationis, statum pristinae libertatis Christi Domini reformasset aduentus.[233]*

> *Ecclesiastica communione priuari, apostolici uigoris auctoritate censemus, donec "resipiscant de diaboli laqueis, a quo captiui tenentur secundum ipsius uoluntatem" eosque interim dominico ouili non recipi, quod ipsi, peruersae uiae secuti tramitem, deserere uoluerunt: abscindendi sunt enim qui uos conturbant, et uolunt conuertere Euangelium Christi[234].*

Despite this, in accordance with Rom. 1, 32 the condemnation includes those who, whilst not directly committing them, approve the evil acts (*Epistola*, 14, 6-9[235]) *Epistola*, 182, 6: *Simul autem praecipimus ut quicumque id pertinacia simili defensare nituntur, par eos uindicta constringat.* Non solum enim qui faciunt, sed etiam qui consentiunt facientibus; *quia non multum interesse arbitror inter committentis animum, et consentientis fauorem*[236]). And lastly, in the hope of converting them, is the promise of rehabilitation for salvation (*Epistola*, 21, 5-10)[237] = *Epistola*, 182, 7:

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di san Patrizio...: 83 (doc. nº 61).

231. *Idcirco nescio quid magis lugeam: an qui interfecti uel quos ceperunt uel grauiter zabulus inlaqueauit. Perenni poena gehennam pariter cum ipso mancipabunt, quia utique qui facit peccatum seruus est et filius tabuli nuncupatur.*

232. *Quis sanctorum non horreat iocundare uel conuiuium fruire cum talibus? De spoliis defunctorum Christianorum repleuerunt domos suas, de rapinis uiuunt. Nesciunt miseri uenenum letale cibum porrigunt ad amicos et filios suos, sicut Eua non intellexit quod utique mortem tradidit uiro suo. Sic sunt omnes qui male agunt:* mortem *perennem poenam* operantur (2 Cor., 7, 10).

233. *Epistola*, 182, 3: *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum...*: XLIV, 718, 2 and following.

234. *Epistola*, 182, 6: *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum...*: XLIV, 721, 5-14.

235. Thus Patrick directly to Coroticus: *Qualem spem habes in Deum, uel qui te consensit aut qui te communicat uerbis adulationis? Deus iudicabit. Scriptum est enim:* Non solum facientes mala sed etiam consensientes damnandi sunt (Rom., 1, 32).

236. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum...*: 44, 721, 14 and following; 722, 1-2.

237. *Quod si deus inspirat illos ut quandoque Deo resipiscant (2 Tim., 2, 26), ita ut uel sero paeniteant quod tam impie gesserunt —omicida erga fratres Domini— et liberent captiuas baptizatas quas ante ceperunt, ita ut mererentur*

> *Iubemus sane, quoniam Christus Dominus propria uoce significauit nolle se mortem morientis, tantum ut reuertatur et uiuat[238]. ut, si umquam ad sanum, deposito praui dogmatis errore resipuerint damnarintque ea, quorum se ipsi praeuaricatione damnarunt, eis medicinam solitam, id est receptaculum suum ab ecclesia non negari, ne, dum eos redeuntes forsitan prohibemus, uere extra ouile remanentes exspectantis hostis rabidis faucibus gluttiantur, quas in semet ipsi in spiculis malae disputationis armarunt[239].*

This shows Patrick's desire to remain faithful to Rome at all times and thus to the ideas and models of the curia of his day. The Hibernian bishop, who must at least indirectly have known Innocent's document, is able to make the forms and doctrines that the church had put forward against the Pelagian theses his own[240]. This emerges clearly in a comparison[241] of some passages of the *Confessio* (2, 1; 10, 7-9) with those of an anti-Pelagian encyclical by Pope Zosimus called *Epistula tractoria*[242], written at the beginning of 418[243], in which in addition to confirming the sentence of excommunication of the heretics who were to be readmitted to the church once more if they repented, the aim is particularly to restate the authority of the apostolic seat. A certain attention by Patrick to the ecclesiastical law of his day emerges if we compare excerpts from the *Epistola* with some of the thirty four canons which constitute the circular letter known as *Synodus I S. Patricii*[244]. The clearest reference is to the twelfth of these (*Quicumque Christianus excominicatus* [sic!] *fuerit, nec eius elimosina recipiatur*)[245] which takes this form in

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Deo uiuere et sani efficiantur hic et in aeternum!

238. Ez., 33, 11: [...] *Vivo ego, dicit Dominus Deus, nolo mortem impii, sed ut convertatur impius a via sua, et vivat.* See: Mt., 9, 13, and 2 Petr., 3, 9.

239. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*...: 44, 722, 11 and following - 723, 1-3. I cite here, lastly, the first section of the Augustine epistle in which, as an introduction, he summarises the main points and concepts of the whole document: *nimirum exultat ecclesia tantam sollicitudinem commissis gregibus exhibere pastores, ut non solum neminem ex his patiantur errare, sed, si quas magis ouium scaeuae delectationis herba seduxit ac si in errore permanserint, aut segregari penitus uelint aut inlicenter dudum petita uitantes custodiae pristinae circumspectione tutari in utraque parte uidelicet consulentes, ne uel suscipiendo tales simili caeterae ducantur exemplo uel spernendo redeuntes luporum morsibus uideantur ingestae. prudens admodum et catholicae fidei plena consultatio. qui enim aut tolerare possit errantem aut non recipere se corrigentem? nam ut durum arbitror coniuentiam praebere peccantibus, ita impium iudico manum negare conuersis* (*Corpus Sscriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*...: 44: 716, 1-12).

240. See: Nerney, D. S. "A Study of St Patrick's...: 97-110.

241. Nerney, D. S. "A Study of St Patrick's...": 23.

242. "Concilium Carthaginense a. 418", *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*...: CXLIX: 69-77, here 71 (ll. 44-50). For the conciliar document see also: Augustinus. "Epistula", 190", *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*...: LVII, 137-162.

243. See: Pricoco, Salvatore. *Da Costantino a Gregorio Magno*, *Storia del Cristianesimo*, Giovanni Filoramo, Daniele Menozzi, dirs. Milan-Bari: Laterza, 2001: I, 273-452, here 336.

244. According to the sources examined by Patrick with the assistance of missionaries Auxilius and Iserninus. Effectively, elements of Patrician age, re-elaborated, however, in the VIth century at the earliest, are present. See edition and study in: Faris, M. J. ed. *The Bishops' Synod (The First Synod of St. Patrick)*. Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1976.

245. Faris, M. J. ed. *The Bishops' Synod...*: 3, 5-6. See also: Ludwig Bieler edition in: Bieler. Ludwig. *The Irish Penitentials* (*Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 5). Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963: 54-59, here 56, 6-7.

Epistola, 7, 3: *nec elemosinas ipsorum* (scil. *militum Corotici*) *recipi debeat*. It is not clear whether Patrick was composing these canons or simply sanctioning them. In any event, his desire to remain within the ecclesiastical tradition, which, however superficially, he must have been aware of, is clear. From these analogies it also emerges that the epistle was written competently and with precise contents and in accordance in terms of idiom, style and structure with the Catholic vision of the day. It is an official document, a product of the spiritual experience of a man of the Roman church.

4.2. The Works

Patrick's life and missionary work are fully integrated into the word of God. The Bible is part of them. In fact it is the Bible which talks through his writings rather than their actual author. The Bible is the book of Patrick and it is difficult to understand to what extent what he writes reflects direct experience. Patrick filters everything that happens to him through biblical language. He speaks to us through biblical quotations expressing his thoughts in words which are holy and eternal for him in such a way that his every gesture and proposed action is justified in the light of God's teachings: *a Deo accepi id quod sum* (*Epistola*, 1, 2-3: 1 Cor 15, 10). It is God who speaks and writes for him: *Non mea uerba sed Dei et apostolorum atque prophetarum quod ego latinum exposui* [...]. *Deus locutus est* (*Epistola*, 20, 2-6; see also: 10, 2-6: *Alligatus sum Spiritu* [...]. *Numquid a me piam misericordiam quod ago erga gentem illam qui me aliquando ceperunt et deuastuerunt seruos et ancillae domus patris mei?*). His comments at the end of the *Confessio* are revealing however: *Sed precor credentibus et timentibus Deum [...] ut nemo umquam dicat quod mea ignorantia, si aliquid pusillum egi vel demonstrauerim secundum Dei placitum, sed arbitramini et uerissime credatur quod donum Dei fuisset* (62, 1-7)[246].

But Patrick is not simply *vir unius libri* as Christine Mohrmann has argued[247]. He is certainly a great reader and knows a great deal about the text of the Bible. All his work is full of references and Bible quotations and he had almost certainly studied the Latin fathers though this is not always easy to demonstrate[248]. In the first centuries of Irish Christianity the sections of the Bible which were most frequently commented on by insular authors were the Psalms and the Pauline epistles[249]. And the most frequent references in Patrick are the Psalms, the Gospels,

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246. Patrick's ignorance is clearly 'ignorance of God' as he himself previously stated: *...Dominus [...] misertus est adolescentiae et ignorantiae meae...* (*Confessio*, 2, 1-5).

247. Mohrmann, Christine. *The Latin of Saint Patrick...*: 317-319, 354 and following.

248. See: Bieler, Ludwig. "The Place of Saint Patrick in Latin Language and Literature". *Vigiliae Christianae*, 6 (1952): 65-98.

249. See: Bieler, Ludwig. "La transmission des Pères latins en Irlande et en Angleterre à l'époque préscolastique". *Sacris Erudiri*, 22 (1974): 75-84, especially, 78.

the Acts and the Epistles themselves[250]. Bieler has hypothesised that Patrick had read authors such as Cyprian and Sulpicius Severus[251] but there are also clear conceptual and literary references to writers such as Irenaeus, Victorinus of Pettau[252] and Orientius[253]. That Patrick knew the work of Augustine, however frequently indirectly, and not only in the *Confession*, is absolutely certain[254].

The issues relating to the Biblical text which Patrick used are more thorny: Hanson takes for granted that the saint was trained exclusively in Britain[255] and believes that he used the standard text of the Brythonic Church (*Patrick est [ ], avant Gildas, l'unique écrivain breton, dont on puisse affirmer que l'oeuvre reflète le visage et la vie de l'Église de Bretagne "* and again: *Bien que Patrick scrive en Irlande, nous avons en lui un écrivain qui a reçu la formation d'un homme d'église breton [ ]. En lui, nous faisons une rencontre exceptionnelle, celle d'un homme du Bas-Empire romaine qui nous livre en quelque sorte une autobiographie vraie et sans artifice*[256]). Bieler, on the other hand, holds that Britain was only an intermediate stage for Patrick and takes for granted the Gallic origin of the saint's apprenticeship[257]. Bieler writes that "Patrick's bible text was partly Old Latin, partly Vulgate, and partly a transitional version[258]". Throughout her work Christine Mohrmann[259] suggests that the style and vocabulary of his Latin has affinities with the colloquial Latin spoken in Gaul in the Vth century but Hanson believes that this Vulgate was a vulgar Latin used in Britain in those years[260]. In actual fact, the Latin used by Patrick is a rustic Latin and his writings are virtually a mosaic of echoes of his readings. Latin was probably not his first language because he had almost certainly learnt Gaelic during his imprisonment. Therefore, his Latin was poor despite the fact that his writings constitute, for the period in question, a good use of Vulgate and his words have a clear apologetic style while they sometimes lack the experience

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250. See the sections of the *Loci Biblici* in the Bieler editions: I, 113-116; Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 173-176; Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 192-197. See further: Bieler, Ludwig. "The Place of Saint Patrick...": 71; Bieler, Ludwig. "Der Bibeltext des heiligen Patrick...": 34-58 and 236 and following, commentary on the quotations and list of *loci* respectively.

251. Bieler, Ludwig. "The Place of Saint Patrick...": 66, 97-98; see: Mohrmann, Christine. *The Latin of Saint Patrick...*: 7.

252. Bieler, Ludwig. "The Place of Saint Patrick...": 68.

253. Montgomery, F.R. "The Confession and Epistola of Patrick of Ireland and their Literary Affinities in Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Orientius". *Hermathena*, 47 (1932): 203-238; Bieler, Ludwig. "Der Bibeltext des heiligen Patrick...": 257.

254. See: O'Meara, John J. "The Confession of St. Patrick and the Confessions of St. Augustine". *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 85 (1956): 190-197; Courcelle, Pierre. *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire*. Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1963: 221-213, 217.

255. Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 36-37.

256. Hanson, Richard P. C. *Saint Patrick. Confession et Lettre...*: 54-55.

257. Bieler, Ludwig. "Der Bibeltext des heiligen Patrick...": 31-58 and 236-263, 258.

258. *Libri Epistolarum...*: I, 34.

259. Mohrmann, Christine. *The Latin of Saint Patrick...*

260. Hanson, R. P. C. *Saint Patrick. His Origins...*: 158-170.

we might expect from a bishop[261]. I believe that we can state, on the basis of the research above, and John Bury's[262] and Bieler's in particular[263] that Patrick used Old Latin versions of the New Testament[264] in the period of his apprenticeship and that the text he had with him in Ireland was certainly the Vulgate version with which he checked and corrected his quotations[265]. Bieler believes that Paul's letters themselves were used by Patrick from a pre-Jerome text but presumably checked against the Vulgate[266].

The biblical character of the texts of the Hibernian bishop is extremely marked and a very valid method for presenting the saint as a true apostle, bearer of a universal message (*Non mea verba sed Dei et apostolorum atque prophetarum quod ego latinum exposui, qui numquam enim mentiti sunt*: *Epistola*, 20, 2-4). And the use of Biblical Latin is a clear sign of Patrick's faithfulness to the holy text. In order to strengthen his Latin, he memorised words and entire phrases from the Scriptures[267] but without literary aspirations —as he was not interested in writing a purely literary text— or classical objectives[268]. He knows and freely admits his *rusticitas* (*Confessio*, 46, 14) and compensates with certain *domini ignari rethorici* (*Confessio*, 13, 2)[269]. His aims and methods are exquisitely spiritual. In 1 Cor., 2, 1-2, Paul, as Patrick does later, states: *Et ego, cum uenissem ad uos, fratre, ueni non in sublimitate sermonis, aut sapientiae, annuntias uobis testimonium Christi. Non enim iudicaui me scire aliquid inter uos, nisi Iesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum*. Patrick chooses an un-Romanised country and preaches to pagans and humble men *(Epistola*, 7, 1-2; *Confessio*, 42, 12; 43, 10; 59, 2-3). He also uses an *evangelizatio pauperibus* with the aristocrats because, as I have said above, his mission had cultural and not social meaning (see: *Epistola*, 12, 7-8; *Confessio*, 41, 4; 42, 1). Edmondo Coccia is quite right when he considers that Patrick's two writings "should be considered simply as human documents which reveal an interesting and moving personality on a historical and religious level, not on a literary level" and therefore the role

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261. On Patrick's direct knowledge of Latin texts see also: Dronke, Peter. "St. Patrick's Reading". *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies*, 1 (1981): 22-38.

262. Bury, John B. *The Life of St. Patrick...*: 319.

263. Bieler, Ludwig. "Der Bibeltext des heiligen Patrick...": 256.

264. It is impossible to identify precisely the Old Latin version which Patrick knew (Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 174-179 and 258 and following).

265. See also: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 174-179. For the biblical text I refer to the Vulgate version (*Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, eds. Bonifatius Fischer, Johannes Gribomont, Hermann F.D. Sparks, Walter Thiele, Robert Weber. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969-1975). As far as the references to Vetus Latina are concerned see Bieler and Hanson's editions in the *loci biblici* section. The differences, however, are not particularly noteworthy.

266. Bieler, Ludwig. "Der Bibeltext des heiligen Patrick...": 257.

267. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 260-269.

268. See: Bieler, Ludwig. *The Place of Saint Patrick...*: 71.

269. I accept here Malaspina's suggestion (Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 200-202; see: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 159) rather than Bieler (*dominicati rethorici*) and Hanson's (*domini cati rethorici*). Patrick is very probably referring here to certain members of the Brythonic clergy. See: Malaspina, Elena. *Gli scritti di san Patrizio...*: 101 (doc. nº 151).

of the saint remains almost entirely limited to the historical-religious plane[270]. Patrick is well aware of his inadequate literary and legal abilities (*Confessio*, 9, 3-4) and it is this which causes the obvious difficulties involved in fashioning an excommunication letter which was in line with the exacting requirements of contemporary official documentation. But with a sincere and deep suffering on behalf of the Christians in Coroticus's hands *(Epistola*, 1, 6-9) Patrick decides to write in the language which more than any other lends itself to official documents of a certain importance and complexity. Latin, in fact, makes of his letter a document which is ecclesiastical in style above all by means of the use of words from tradition (*Epistola*, 20, 2-4) and not from his personal self-conscious *rusticitas* (*Epistola*, 1, 1 and *Confessio*, 1, 1; 46, 14; 62, 3). In *Confessio*, 9, 1-3 he thus expresses himself: *Quapropter olim cogitui scrivere, sed et usque nunc haesitaui; timui enim ne incederem in linguam hominum, quia non legi sicut et ceteri.* And later he even goes as far as to exclaim: *sicut facile potest probari ex saliua scripturae meae, qualiter sum ego in sermonibus instructus atque eruditus* (*Confessio*, 9, 7-9). The saint's *rusticitas* is thus here almost intentional, sophisticated, in order to contrast the *rethorici* (*Confessio*, 13, 2).

5. Conclusion

Patrick's mission was to "put the Irish church on a firm biblical footing"[271]. He himself wanted the Grace of God to shine from his work and this is freely expressed in his writings. Studies on the saint's spirituality have confirmed that Patrick's work and life were founded entirely on Biblical writings and on the New testament in particular[272]. Patrick's mission and faith were undoubtedly "bibliocentric" in an Irish pagan civilisation which to which book culture was still alien. But through Patrick, God used the written word to reveal himself to his creatures. It was a new and striking fact! The holy written word was welcomed by Irish Christians as if it had been written by God himself: for them Patrick was an instrument of God who was the 'author' of all the writings and spoken words of the bishop as well as all the signs used by him in his preaching. And furthermore, the use of Latin made the work readable not only to the Britons of Coroticus himself and Patrick's *Hiberionaci* but also to the Christians the tyrant had sold and the saint's Brythonic compatriots. For the Hiberni Celts, Latin was the 'written language'. As far as the use of Latin in Ireland already at the end of the 4th century is concerned, Malaspina has hypothesised that the presence of Gallic

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270. Coccia, Edmondo M. "La cultura irlandese precarolingia: miracolo o mito?". *Studi Medievali*, 8/1 (1967): 257-420, especially, 273.

271. Kelly, Joseph F. "The Bible in Early Medieval Ireland", *Preaching in the Patristic Age: Studies in Honour of Walter J. Burghardt*, David Hunter, dir. New York: Paulist Press, 1989: 198-214, especially, 201.

272. See in particular: O'Donoghue, Noel D. *Aristocracy of Soul: Patrick of Ireland*. London-Wilmington: Glazier, 1987.

writers alongside the merchants and immigrants from Britain and the continent including Irish mercenaries who had served in Roman Britain and probably on the continent cannot be excluded[273]. There is evidence of Latin words in the Irish language starting from the second half of the 4th century[274] and thus of contacts between Christian Britons and Scoti as confirmed by Prospero and thanks in particular to Brythonic missionary work[275]. This should not, however, lead us to think of a deliberate and planned evangelical mission on the island because the Christians who went to the island followed prisoners or merchants for the most part. But reports of *sapientes cismarini* in the *Glossarium Leydense* are very interesting[276]. These were evidently groups of individuals who came from North-West Gaul to escape from invading Goths, Huns, Vandals and Alans in the first half of the Vth century taking refuge in overseas lands in Ireland. On the basis of this evidence, Bruno Luiselli has argued for the presence in Ireland of Gallic monks who had escaped their homelands as a result of the barbarian invasions which hit the Rhine in 406 and 407[277]. Whilst there isn't a great deal of evidence on this, it is sufficiently clear that this was a group of intellectuals[278] who Bruno Luiselli understandably takes to mean monks by means of the well known New Testament theme of the knowledge of disciples and the Lord's chosen people[279].

In *Epistola*, 2, 2-3 Patrick *refuses* to call Coroticus's soldiers *cives mei* and prefers to call them *cives daemoniorum*. Moreover, in denying the soldiers the title of *cives sanctorum Romanorum* (2, 3) he makes apparent his profound respect for Roman civilisation. Bieler believes that Patrick decided to write a letter of excommunication with the additional intention of presenting himself as defender of Brythonic *Romanitas* despite the fact that criticisms of his writings show a marked reaction from the very same Briton side[280]. Patrick considers himself fully a fellow citizen of Roman citizens (2, 2-3; see: 14, 1) and describes *Hiberni* as *alienigenae* (*Confessio*, 1, 14). In *Confessio*, 37, 5-6 he says that he came to preach the Gospels *ad Hibernas gentes*. For Patrick the

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273. Malaspina, Elena. "Agli albori della cultura latina...": 4. It is important not to forget that already in southern Britain in the first half of the first century A.D. and before 43 A.D., the year of the first organised Roman attempts to conquer the island, there are evident traces of contacts between Latin and Celtic cultures (Luiselli, Bruno. "Penetrazione di elementi culturali romani nella Britannia preromana". *Romanobarbarica*, 6 (1981-1982): 159-187; Luiselli, Bruno. *La formazione della cultura...*: 71 and following).

274. See: Greene, David. "Some Linguistic Evidence relating to the British Church", *Christianity in Britain...*: 75-86, especially, 81.

275. Prosperus Aquitanus. "Chronicon...": 1307.

276. Müller, Lucian. "Leydensis Vossianus Lat. F 70, f. 79 (11th century)". *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und Pädagogik*, 93 (1866): 389.

277. Luiselli, Bruno. *Storia culturale dei rapporti tra mondo romano...*: 431-439; Luiselli, Bruno. *La formazione della cultura...*: 139-147.

278. In the last section the text, in fact, recounts: [...] *omnes sapientes cismarini fugam ceperunt et in transmarinis uidelicet in Hibernia* [ms. *Hiberia*] *et quocumque se receperunt maximum profectum sapientiae incolis illarum regionum adhibuerunt.*

279. Luiselli, Bruno. *Storia culturale dei rapporti tra mondo romano...*: 433. See also Malaspina's analysis in: Malaspina, Elena. *Patrizio e l'acculturazione...*: 48-53.

280. Bieler, Ludwig. "St. Patrick and the British Church", *Christianity in Britain...*: 123-130, 127.

terms "Christian" and "Roman" mean exactly the same (*Epistola*, 2)[281] and he is both Celt and Roman Briton at the same time. To him the pagan Irish are barbarians. However he identifies himself as Irish. To be Christian it is necessary to be Roman and thus the Irish people baptised by Patrick and his brothers have been brought directly into the "body" of Christian *Romanitas*[282].

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281. See: Bieler, Ludwig. *St. Patrick and the Coming...*: 13.

282. The extent to which Patrick felt fully rooted to the apostolic Church tradition emerges also in his so-called *Lorica* (Irish *Fáeth Fiada*, "cry of the deer"). This was an invocation to the Trinity with litanic traits which was believed to possess magical protective powers according to the tradition recited by the saint along the roads that took him to Tara. Traditionally attributed to Patrick, it is contained in manuscripts from the 11th century and was originally written no later than the IXth century in ancient Irish in rhythmic prose but in expressive forms and concepts containing strong Patrician elements. Its original nucleus is datable to no later than the VIth century. I think it is interesting to cite some brief passages of it from Bieler's English translation: "I arise to-day/through the strength of the love of Cherubim/ in obedience of Angels/in the service of the Archangels/in hope of resurrection to meet with reward/ in prayers of Patriarchs/in predictions of Prophets/in preaching of Apostles/in faith of Confessors/in innocence of Holy Virgins/in deeds of righteous men" (vv. 11-21; trans. in: Bieler, Ludwig. *The Works of St. Patrick. St Secundinus Hymn on St. Patrick*. Westminster-London: Newman Press, 1953: 69-70). And then, clear echoes of Gal., 2, 20 (*Vivo autem, iam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus*): "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, / Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me" (61-62, translation: Ludwig Bieler. *The Works of St. Patrick...*: 71).