

# The Life of St. Mochuda of Lismore eBook

## The Life of St. Mochuda of Lismore

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## PREFACE

It is solely the historical aspect and worth of the two tracts herewith presented that appealed to their edition and first suggested to him their preparation and publication. Had preparation in question depended for its motive merely on considerations of the texts' philologic interest or value it would, to speak frankly, never have been undertaken. The editor, who disclaims qualification as a philologist, regards these Lives as very valuable historical material, publication of which may serve to light up some dark corners of our Celtic ecclesiastical past. He is egotist enough to hope that the present "blazing of the track," inadequate and feeble though it be, may induce other and better equipped explorers to follow.

The present editor was studying the Life of Declan [Project Gutenberg Etext #823] for quite another purpose when, some years since, the zealous Hon. Secretary of the Irish Texts Society suggested to him publication of the tract in its present form, and addition of the Life of Carthach [Mochuda]. Whatever credit therefore is due to originating this work is Miss Hull's, and hers alone.

The editor's best thanks are due, and are hereby most gratefully tendered, to Rev. M. Sheehan, D.D., D.Ph., Rev. Paul Walsh, Rev. J. MacErlhean, S.J., M.A., as well as to Mr. R. O'Foley, who, at much expense of time and labour, have carefully read the proofs, and, with unselfish prodigality of their scholarly resources, have made many valuable suggestions and corrections.

P.P.

## INTRODUCTION—GENERAL

A most distinctive class of ancient Irish literature, and probably the class that is least popularly familiar, is the hagiographical. It is, the present writer ventures to submit, as valuable as it is distinctive and as well worthy of study as it is neglected. While annals, tales and poetry have found editors the Lives of Irish Saints have remained largely a mine unworked. Into the causes of this strange neglect it is not the purpose of the present introduction to enter. Suffice it to glance in passing at one of the reasons which has been alleged in explanation, scil.:—that the "Lives" are uncritical and romantic, that they abound in wild legends, chronological impossibilities and all sorts of incredible stories, and, finally, that miracles are multiplied till the miraculous becomes the ordinary, and that marvels are magnified till the narrative borders on the ludicrous. The Saint as he is sketched is sometimes a positively repulsive being—arrogant, venomous, and cruel; he demands two eyes or more for one, and, pucklike, fairly revels in mischief! As painted he is in fact more a pagan deity than a Christian man.

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The foregoing charges may, or must, be admitted partially or in full, but such admission implies no denial of the historical value of the Lives. All archaic literature, be it remembered, is in a greater or less degree uncritical, and it must be read in the light of the writer's times and surroundings. That imagination should sometimes run riot and the pen be carried beyond the boundary line of the strictly literal is perhaps nothing much to be marvelled at in the case of the supernatural minded Celt with religion for his theme. Did the scribe believe what he wrote when he recounted the multiplied marvels of his holy patron's life? Doubtless he did—and why not! To the unsophisticated monastic and mediaeval mind, as to the mind of primitive man, the marvellous and supernatural is almost as real and near as the commonplace and natural. If anyone doubts this let him study the mind of the modern Irish peasant; let him get beneath its surface and inside its guardian ring of shrinking reserve; there he will find the same material exactly as composed the mind of the tenth century biographers of Declan and Mochuda. Dreamers and visionaries were of as frequent occurrence in Erin of ages ago as they are to-day. Then as now the supernatural and marvellous had a wondrous fascination for the Celtic mind. Sometimes the attraction becomes so strong as seemingly to overbalance the faculty of distinguishing fact from fancy. Of St. Bridget we are gravely told that to dry her wet cloak she hung in out on a sunbeam! Another Saint sailed away to a foreign land on a sod from his native hillside! More than once we find a flagstone turned into a raft to bear a missionary band beyond the seas! St. Fursey exchanged diseases with his friend Magnentius, and, stranger still, the exchange was arranged and effected by correspondence! To the saints moreover are ascribed lives of incredible duration—to Mochta, Ibar, Seachnal, and Brendan, for instance, three hundred years each; St. Mochaemog is credited with a life of four hundred and thirteen years, and so on!

Clan, or tribe, rivalry was doubtless one of the things which made for the invention and multiplication of miracles. If the patron of the Decies is credited with a miracle, the tribesmen of Ossory must go one better and attribute to their tribal saint a marvel more striking still. The hagiographers of Decies retort for their patron by a claim of yet another miracle and so on. It is to be feared too that occasionally a less worthy motive than tribal honour prompted the imagination of our Irish hagiographers—the desire to exploit the saint and his honour for worldly gain.

The "Lives" of the Irish Saints contain an immense quantity of material of first rate importance for the historian of the Celtic church. Underneath the later concoction of fable is a solid substratum of fact which no serious student can ignore. Even where the narrative is otherwise plainly myth or fiction it sheds many a useful sidelight on ancient manners, customs and laws as well as on the curious and often intricate operations of the Celtic mind.

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By “Lives” are here meant the old *Ms.* biographies which have come down to us from ages before the invention of printing. Sometimes these “Lives” are styled “Acts.” Generally we have only one standard “Life” of a saint and of this there are usually several copies, scattered in various libraries and collections. Occasionally a second Life is found differing essentially from the first, but, as a rule, the different copies are only recensions of a single original. Some of the MSS. are parchment but the majority are in paper; some Lives again are merely fragments and no doubt scores if not hundreds of others have been entirely lost. Of many hundreds of our Irish saints we have only the meagre details supplied by the martyrologies, with perhaps occasional reference to them in the Lives of other saints. Again, finally, the memory of hundreds and hundreds of saints additional survives only in place names or is entirely lost.

There still survive probably over a hundred “Lives”—possibly one hundred and fifty; this, however, does not imply that therefore we have Lives of one hundred or one hundred and fifty saints, for many of the saints whose Acts survive have really two sets of the latter—one in Latin and the other in Irish; moreover, of a few of the Latin Lives and of a larger number of the Irish Lives we have two or more recensions. There are, for instance, three independent Lives of St. Mochuda and one of these is in two recensions.

The surviving Lives naturally divide themselves into two great classes— the Latin Lives and the Irish,—written in Latin and Irish respectively. We have a Latin Life only of some saints, and Irish Life only of others, and of others again we have a Latin Life and an Irish. It may be necessary to add the Acts which have been translated into Latin by Colgan or the Bollandists do not of course rank as Latin Lives. Whether the Latin Lives proper are free translations of the Irish Lives or the Irish Lives translations of Latin originals remains still, to a large extent, an open question. Plummer (“*Vitae SSm. Hib.*,” *Introd.*) seems to favour the Latin Lives as the originals. His reasoning here however leaves one rather unconvinced. This is not the place to go into the matter at length, but a new bit of evidence which makes against the theory of Latin originals may be quoted; it is furnished by the well known collection of Latin Lives known as the *Codex Salmanticensis*, to which are appended brief marginal notes in mixed middle Irish and Latin. One such note to the Life of St. Cuangus of Lismore (recte Liathmore) requests a prayer for him who has translated the Life out of the Irish into Latin. If one of the Lives, and this a typical or characteristic Life, be a translation, we may perhaps assume that the others, or most of them, are translations also. In any case we may assume as certain that there were original Irish materials or data from which the formal Lives (Irish or Latin) were compiled.

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The Latin Lives are contained mainly in four great collections. The first and probably the most important of these is in the Royal Library at Brussels, included chiefly in a large *Ms.* known as 'Codex Salmanticensis' from the fact that it belonged in the seventeenth century to the Irish College of Salamanca. The second collection is in Marsh's Library, Dublin, and the third in Trinity College Library. The two latter may for practical purposes be regarded as one, for they are sister MSS.—copied from the same original. The Marsh's Library collection is almost certainly, teste Plummer, the document referred to by Colgan as Codex Kilkenniensis and it is quite certainly the Codex Ardmachanus of Fleming. The fourth collection (or the third, if we take as one the two last mentioned,) is in the Bodleian at Oxford amongst what are known as the Rawlinson MSS. Of minor importance, for one reason or another, are the collections of the Franciscan Library, Merchants' Quay, Dublin, and in Maynooth College respectively. The first of the enumerated collections was published 'in extenso,' about twenty-five years since, by the Marquis of Bute, while recently the gist of all the Latin collections has been edited with rare scholarship by Rev. Charles Plummer of Oxford. Incidentally may be noted the one defect in Mr. Plummer's great work—its author's almost irritating insistence on pagan origins, nature myths, and heathen survivals. Besides the Marquis of Bute and Plummer, Colgan and the Bollandists have published some Latin Lives, and a few isolated "Lives" have been published from time to time by other more or less competent editors.

The Irish Lives, though more numerous than the Latin, are less accessible. The chief repertorium of the former is the Burgundian or Royal Library, Brussels. The *Ms.* collection at Brussels appears to have originally belonged to the Irish Franciscans of Louvain and much of it is in the well-known handwriting of Michael O'Clery. There are also several collections of Irish Lives in Ireland—in the Royal Irish Academy, for instance, and Trinity College Libraries. Finally, there are a few Irish Lives at Oxford and Cambridge, in the British Museum, Marsh's Library, &c., and in addition there are many Lives in private hands. In this connection it can be no harm, and may do some good, to note that an apparently brisk, if unpatriotic, trade in Irish MSS. (including of course "Lives" of Saints) is carried on with the United States. Wealthy, often ignorant, Irish-Americans, who are unable to read them, are making collections of Irish MSS. and rare Irish books, to Ireland's loss. Some Irish MSS. too, including Lives of Saints, have been carried away as mementoes of the old land by departing emigrants.



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The date or period at which the Lives (Latin and Irish) were written is manifestly, for half a dozen good reasons, a question of the utmost importance to the student of the subject. Alas, that the question has to some extent successfully defied quite satisfactory solution. We can, so far, only conjecture—though the probabilities seem strong and the grounds solid. The probabilities are that the Latin Lives date as a rule from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when they were put into something like their present form for reading (perhaps in the refectory) in the great religious houses. They were copied and re-copied during the succeeding centuries and the scribes according to their knowledge, devotion or caprice made various additions, subtractions and occasional multiplications. The Irish Lives are almost certainly of a somewhat earlier date than the Latin and are based partly (i.e. as regards the bulk of the miracles) on local tradition, and partly (i.e. as regards the purely historical element) on the authority of written materials. They too were, no doubt, copied and interpolated much as were the Latin Lives. The present copies of Irish Lives date as a rule from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries only, and the fact that the Latin and the Irish Life (where there is this double biography) sometimes agree very perfectly may indicate that the Latin translation or Life is very late.

The chief published collections of Irish Saints' Lives may be set down as seven, scil.:—five in Latin and one each in Irish and English. The Latin collections are the Bollandists', Colgan's, Messingham's, Fleming's, and Plummer's; the Irish collection is Stokes' ("Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore") and the English is of course O'Hanlon's.

Most striking, probably, of the characteristics of the "Lives" is their very evident effort to exalt and glorify the saint at any cost. With this end of glorification in view the hagiographer is prepared to swallow everything and record anything. He has, in fact, no critical sense and possibly he would regard possession of such a sense as rather an evil thing and use of it as irreverent. He does not, as a consequence, succeed in presenting us with a very life-like or convincing portrait of either the man or the saint. Indeed the saint, as drawn in the Lives, is, as already hinted, a very unsaintlike individual—almost as ready to curse as to pray and certainly very much more likely to smite the aggressor than to present to him the other cheek. In the text we shall see St. Mochuda, whose Life is a specially sane piece of work, cursing on the same occasion, first, King Blathmac and the Prince of Cluain, then, the rich man Cronan who sympathised with the eviction, next an individual named Dubhsulach who winked insolently at him, and finally the people of St. Columba's holy city of Durrow who had stirred up hostile feeling against him. Even gentle female saints can hurl an imprecation too. St. Laisrech, for instance, condemned the lands of those who refused her tribute, to—nettles, elder shrub, and corncrakes! It is pretty plain that the compilers of the lives had some prerogatives, claims or rights to uphold—hence this frequent insistence on the evil of resisting the Saint and presumably his successors.



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One characteristic of the Irish ascetics appears very clear through all the exaggeration and all the biographical absurdity; it is their spirit of intense mortification. To understand this we have only to study one of the ancient Irish Monastic Rules or one of the Irish Penitentials as edited by D'Achery ("Spicilegium") or Wasserschleben ("Irische Kanonensamerlung"). Severest fasting, unquestioning obedience and perpetual self renunciation were inculcated by the Rules and we have ample evidence that they were observed with extraordinary fidelity. The Rule of Maelruin absolutely forbade the use of meat or of beer. Such a prohibition a thousand years ago was an immensely more grievous thing than it would sound to-day. Wheaten bread might partially supply the place of meat to-day, but meat was easier to procure than bread in the eighth century. Again, a thousand years ago, tea or coffee there was none and even milk was often difficult or impossible to procure in winter. So severe in fact was the fast that religious sometimes died of it. Bread and water being found insufficient to sustain life and health, gruel was substituted in some monasteries and of this monastic gruel there were three varieties:—(a) "gruel upon water" in which the liquid was so thick that the meal reached the surface, (b) "gruel between two waters" in which the meal, while it did not rise to the surface, did not quite fall to the bottom, and (c) "gruel under water" which was so weak and so badly boiled that the meal easily fell to the bottom. In the case of penitents the first brand of gruel was prescribed for light offences, the second kind for sins of ordinary gravity, and the "gruel under water" for extraordinary crimes (vid. Messrs. Gwynne and Purton on the Rule of Maelruin, &c.) The most implicit, exact and prompt obedience was prescribed and observed. An overseer of Mochuda's monastery at Rahen had occasion to order by name a young monk called Colman to do something which involved his wading into a river. Instantly a dozen Colmans plunged into the water. Instances of extraordinary penance abound, beside which the austerities of Simon Stylites almost pale. The Irish saints' love of solitude was also a very marked characteristic. Desert places and solitary islands of the ocean possessed an apparently wonderful fascination for them. The more inaccessible or forbidding the island the more it was in request as a penitential retreat. There is hardly one of the hundred islands around the Irish coast which, one time or another, did not harbour some saint or solitary upon its rocky bosom.



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The testimony of the “Lives” to the saints’ love and practice of prayer is borne out by the evidence of more trustworthy documents. Besides private prayers, the whole psalter seems to have been recited each day, in three parts of fifty psalms each. In addition, an immense number of Pater Nosters was prescribed. The office and prayers were generally pretty liberally interspersed with genuflexions or prostrations, of which a certain anchorite performed as many as seven hundred daily. Another penitential action which accompanied prayer was the ‘cros-figul.’ This was an extension of the arms in the shape of a cross; if anyone wants to know how difficult a practice this is let him try it for, say, fifteen minutes. Regarding recitation of the Divine Office it was of counsel, and probably of precept, that is should not be from memory merely, but that the psalms should all be read. For this a good reason was given by Maelruin, *i.e.* that the recitation might engage the eye as well as the tongue and thought. An Irish homily refers to the mortification of the saints and religious of the time as martyrdom, of which it distinguishes three kinds—red, white, and blue. Red martyrdom was death for the faith; white martyrdom was the discipline of fasting, labour and bodily austerities; while blue martyrdom was abnegation of the will and heartfelt sorrow for sin.

One of the puzzles of Irish hagiology is the great age attributed to certain saints—periods of two hundred, three hundred, and even four hundred years. Did the original compilers of the Life intend this? Whatever the full explanation be the writers of the Lives were clearly animated by a desire to make their saint cotemporary and, if possible, a disciple, of one or other of the great monastic founders, or at any rate to prove him a pupil of one of the great schools of Erin. There was special anxiety to connect the saint with Bangor or Clonard. To effect the connection in question it was sometimes necessary to carry the life backwards, at other times to carry it forwards, and occasionally to lengthen it both backwards and forwards. Dr. Chas. O’Connor gives a not very convincing explanation of the three-hundred-year “Lives,” *scil.*:— that the saint lived in three centuries—during the whole of one century and in the end and beginning respectively of the preceding and succeeding centuries. This explanation, even if satisfactory for the three-hundred-year Lives, would not help at all towards the Lives of four hundred years. A common explanation is that the scribe mistook numerals in the *Ms.* before him and wrote the wrong figures. There is no doubt that copying is a fruitful source of error as regards numerals. It is much more easy to make a mistake in a numeral than in a letter; the context will enable one to correct the letter, while it will give him no clue as regards a numeral. On the subject of the alleged longevity of Irish Saints Anscombe has recently been elaborating in ‘Eriu’



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a new and very ingenious theory. Somewhat unfortunately the author happens to be a rather frequent propounder of ingenious theories. His explanation is briefly—the use and confusion of different systems of chronology. He alleges that the original writers used what is called the Diocletian Era or the “Era of the Martyrs” as the ‘terminus a quo’ of their chronological system and, in support of his position, he adduces the fact that this, which was the most ancient of all ecclesiastical eras, was the era used by the schismatics in Britain and that it was introduced by St. Patrick.

As against the contradiction, anachronisms and extravagances of the Lives we have to put the fact that generally speaking the latter corroborate one another, and that they receive extern corroboration from the annals. Such disagreements as occur are only what one would expect to find in documents dealing with times so remote. To the credit side too must go the fact that references to Celtic geography and to local history are all as a rule accurate. Of continental geography and history however the writers of the Lives show much ignorance, but scarcely quite as much as the corresponding ignorance shown by Continental writers about Ireland.

The missionary methods of the early Irish Church and its monastic or semi-monastic system are frequently referred to as peculiar, if not unique. A missionary system more or less similar must however have prevailed generally in that age. What other system could have been nearly as successful amongst a pagan people circumstanced as the Irish were? The community system alone afforded the necessary mutual encouragement and protection to the missionaries. Each monastic station became a base of operations. The numerous diminutive dioceses, quasi-dioceses, or tribal churches, were little more than extensive parishes and the missionary bishops were little more in jurisdiction than glorified parish priests. The bishop's ‘muintir,’ that is the members of his household, were his assistant clergy. Having converted the chieftain or head of the tribe the missionary had but to instruct and baptise the tribesmen and to erect churches for them. Land and materials for the church were provided by the Clan or the Clan's head, and lands for support of the missionary or of the missionary community were allotted just as they had been previously allotted to the pagan priesthood; in fact there can be but little doubt that the lands of the pagan priests became in many cases the endowment of the Christian establishment. It is not necessary, by the way, to assume that the Church in Ireland as Patrick left it, was formally monastic. The clergy lived in community, it is true, but it was under a somewhat elastic rule, which was really rather a series of Christian and Religious counsels. A more formal monasticism had developed by the time of Mochuda; this was evidently influenced by the spread of St. Benedict's Rule, as Patrick's quasi-monasticism, nearly two centuries previously, had been influenced by Pachomius and St. Basil, through Lerins. The real peculiarity in Ireland was that when the community-missionary system was no longer necessary it was not abandoned as in other lands but was rather developed and emphasised.



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### INTRODUCTION—ST. MOCHUDA

“It was he (Mochuda) that had the famous congregation consisting of seven hundred and ten persons; an angel used to address every third man of them.” (Martyrology of Donegal).

In some respects the Life of Mochuda here presented is in sharp contrast to the corresponding Life of Declan. The former document is in all essentials a very sober historical narrative—accurate wherever we can test it, credible and harmonious on the whole. Philologically, to be sure, it is of little value,—certainly a much less valuable Life than Declan’s; historically, however (and question of the pre-Patrician mission apart) it is immensely the more important document. On one point do we feel inclined to quarrel with its author, scil.: that he has not given us more specifically the motives underlying Mochuda’s expulsion from Rahen—one of the three worst counsels ever given in Erin. Reading between his lines we spell, jealousy—‘invidia religiosorum.’ Another jealousy too is suggested—the mutual distrust of north and south which has been the canker-worm of Irish political life for fifteen hundred years, making intelligible if not justifying the indignation of a certain distinguished Irishman who wanted to know the man’s name, in order to curse its owner, who first divided Ireland into two provinces.

Three different Lives of Mochuda are known to the present writer. Two of them are contained in a *Ms.* at Brussels (C/r. Bindon, p. 8, 13) and of one of these there is a copy in a *Ms.* of Dineen’s in the Royal Irish Academy (Stowe Collection, A. IV, I.) Dineen appears to have been a Cork or Kerry man and to have worked under the patronage of the rather noted Franciscan Father Francis Matthew (O’Mahony), who was put to death at Cork by Inchiquin in 1644. The bald text of Dineen’s “Life” was published a few years since, without translation, in the ‘Irish Rosary.’ The corresponding Brussels copy is in Michael O’Clery’s familiar hand. In it occurs the strange pagan-flavoured story of the British Monk Constantine. O’Clery’s copy was made in January, 1627, at the Friary of Drouish from the Book of Tadhg O’Ceanan and it is immediately followed by a tract entitled—“Do Macaib Ua Suanac.” The bell of Mochuda, by the way, which the saint rang against Blathmac, was called the ‘glassan’ of Hui Suanag in later times.

The “Life” here printed, which follows the Latin Life so closely that one seems a late translation of the other, is as far as the editor is aware, contained in a single *Ms.* only. This is M. 23, 50, R.I.A., in the handwriting of John Murphy, “na Raheenach.” Murphy was a Co. Cork schoolmaster, scribe, and poet, of whom a biographical sketch will be found prefixed by Mr. R. A. Foley to a collection of Murphy’s poems that he has edited. The sobriquet, “na Raheenach,” is really a kind of tribal designation. The “Life”

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is very full but is in its present form a comparatively late production; it was transcribed by Murphy between 1740 and 1750. It is much to be regretted that the scribe tells us nothing of his original. Murphy, but the way, seems to have specialised to some extent in saint's Lives and to have imbued his disciples with something of the same taste. One of his pupils was Maurice O'Connor, a scribe and shipwright of Cove, to whom we owe the Life of St. Ciaran of Saighir printed in "Silva Gadelica." The reasons of choice for publication here of the present Life are avowedly non-philological; the motive for preference is that it is the longest of the three Lives and for historical purposes the most important.

The Life presents considerable evidence of historical reliability; its geography is detailed and correct; its references to contemporaries of Mochuda are accurate on the whole and there are few inconsistencies or none. Moreover it sheds some new light on that chronic puzzle—organisation of the Celtic Church of Ireland. Mochuda, head of a great monastery at Rahen, is likewise a kind of pluralist Parish Priest with a parish in Kerry, administered in his name by deputed ecclesiastics, and other parishes similarly administered in Kerrycurrihy, Rostellan, West Muskerry, and Spike Island, Co. Cork. When a chief parishioner lies seriously ill in distant Corca Duibhne, Mochuda himself comes all the way from the centre of Ireland to administer the last rites to the dying man, and so on.

The relations of the people to the Church and its ministers are in many respects not at all easy to understand. Oblations, for instance, of themselves and their territory, &c., by chieftains are frequent. Oblations of monasteries are made in a similar way. Probably this signifies no more than that the chief region or monastery put itself under the saint's jurisdiction or rule or both. That there were other churches too than the purely monastic appears from offerings to Mochuda of already existing churches, v.g. from the Clanna Ruadhan in Decies, &c.

Lismore, the most famous of Mochuda's foundations, became within a century of the saint's death, one of the great monastic schools of Erin, attracting to his halls, or rather to its boothies, students from all Ireland and even—so it is claimed—from lands beyond the seas. King Alfrid [Aldfrith] of Northumbria, for instance, is said to have partaken of Lismore's hospitality, and certainly Cormac of Cashel, Malachy and Celsus of Armagh and many others of the most distinguished of the Scots partook thereof. The roll of Lismore's calendared saints would require, did the matter fall within our immediate province, more than one page to itself. Some interesting reference to Mochuda and his holy city occur in the Life of one of his disciples, St. Colman Maic Luachain, edited for the R.I.A. by Professor Kuno Meyer.

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There are many indications in the present Life that, at one period, and in the time of Carthach, the western boundary of Decies extended far beyond the line at present recognised. Similar indications are furnished by the martyrologies, &c.; for instance, the martyrology of Donegal under November 28th records of “the three sons of Bochra” that “they are of Archadh Raithin in Ui Mic Caille in Deisi Mumhan” and *Ibid*, p. xxxvii, it is stated “i ccondae Corcaige ataid na Desi Muman.” Not only Imokilly but all Co. Cork, east of Queenstown [Cobh] and north to the Blackwater, seems to have acknowledged Mochuda’s jurisdiction. At Rathbreasail accordingly (teste Keating, on the authority of the Book of Cloneneigh) the Diocese of Lismore is made to extend to Cork,—probably over the present baronies of Imokilly, Kinatallon, and Barrymore. That part, at least, of Condons and Clangibbon was likewise included is inferrible from the fact that, as late as the sixteenth century visitations, Kilworth, founded by Colman Maic Luachain, ranked as a parish in the diocese of Lismore. Further evidence pointing in the same direction is furnished by Clondulane, &c., represented in the present Life as within Carthach’s jurisdiction.

The Rule of St. Carthach is one of the few ancient Irish so-called monastic Rules surviving. It is in reality less a “rule,” as the latter is now understood, than a series of Christian and religious counsels drawn up by a spiritual master for his disciples. It must not be understood from this that each religious house did not have its formal regulations. The latter however seem to have depended largely upon the abbot’s spirit, will or discretion. The existing “Rules” abound in allusions to forgotten practices and customs and, to add to their obscurity, their language is very difficult—sometimes, like the language of the Brehon Laws, unintelligible. The rule ascribed to Mochuda is certainly a document of great antiquity and may well have emanated from the seventh century and from the author whose name it bears. The tradition of Lismore and indeed of the Irish Church is constant in attributing it to him. Copies of the Rule are found in numerous MSS. but many of them are worthless owing to the incompetence of the scribes to whom the difficult Irish of the text was unintelligible. The text in the *Leabhar Breac* has been made the basis of his edition of the Rule by Mac Eaglaise, a writer in the ‘*Irish Ecclesiastical Record*’ (1910). Mac Eaglaise’s edition, though it is not all that could be desired, is far the most satisfactory which has yet appeared. Previous editions of the Rule or part of it comprise one by Dr. Reeves in his tract on the Culdees, one by Kuno Meyer in the ‘*Gaelic Journal*’ (Vol. V.) and another in ‘*Archiv fuer C.L.*’ (3 Bund. 1905), and another again in ‘*Eriu*’ (Vol. 2, p. 172), besides a free translation of the whole rule by O’Curry in the ‘*I. R. Record*’ for 1864. The text of the ‘*Record*’

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edition of 1910 is from Leabhar Breac collated with other MSS. The order in the various copies is not the same and some copies contain material which is wanting in others. The “Rule” commences with the Ten Commandments, then it enumerates the obligations respectively of bishops, abbots, priests, monks, and culdees [anchorites]. Finally there is a section on the order of meals and on the refectory and another on the obligations of a king. The following excerpt on the duties of an abbot (‘I. E. Record’ translation) will illustrate the style and spirit of the Rule:

“Of the Abbot of a Church.

1.—If you be the head man of a Church noble is the power, better for you that you be just who take the heirship of the king.

2.—If you are the head man of a Church noble is the obligation, preservation of the rights of the Church from the small to the great.

3.—What Holy Church commands preach then with diligence; what you order to each one do it yourself.

4.—As you love your own soul love the souls of all. Yours the magnification of every good [and] banishment of every evil.

5.—Be not a candle under a bushel [Luke 11:33]. Your learning without a cloud over it. Yours the healing of every host both strong and weak.

6.—Yours to judge each one according to grade and according to deed; he will advise you at judgment before the king.

.....

10.—Yours to rebuke the foolish, to punish the hosts, turning disorder into order [restraint] of the stubborn, obstinate, wretched.”

Reservation of the Coarbship of Mochuda at Lismore in favour of Kerry men is an extremely curious if not unique provision. How long it continued in force we do not know. Probably it endured to the twelfth century and possibly the rule was not of strict interpretation. Christian O’Connarchy, who was bishop of Lismore in the twelfth century, is regarded as a native of Decies, though the contrary is slightly suggested by his final retirement to Kerry. The alleged prophecy concerning Kerry men and the coarbship points to some rule, regulation or law of Mochuda.

*Life of st. Mochuda or “Beata MOCUDA”*

The renowned bishop, Carthach, commonly called Mochuda, was of the territory of Ciarraighe Luachra [North Kerry] and of the race of Fergus Mac Roigh.



The illustrious bishop, who is generally known as Mochuda, was of the Ciarraighe Luachra; to be exact—he was of the line of Fergus Mac Roigh, who held the kingship of Ulster, till the time that he gave the kingship to a woman for a year and did not get it back when the year was over. His descendants are now to be found throughout various provinces of Ireland. He fell himself, through the treachery of Oilioll, king of Connacht, and the latter's jealousy of his wife, Meadhbh, daughter of Eochaid



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Feidhleach. Finghen Mac Gnaoi of Ciarraighe Luachra was father of Mochuda, and his mother was Mead, daughter of Finghin, of Corca Duibhne, in the vicinity of the stream called Laune in the western part of Ireland. The forthcoming birth of Mochuda was revealed to St. Comhghall by an angel, announcing—"There will be conceived a child in the western part of Erin, and Carthach will be his baptismal name and he will be beloved of God and men—in heaven and on earth. He will come to you seeking direction as to a proposed pilgrimage to Rome—but you must not permit the journey for the Lord has assigned him to you; but let him remain with you a whole year." All this came to pass, as foretold. In similar manner the future Mochuda was foretold to St. Brendan by an angel who declared: "There will come to you a wonder-working brother who will be the patron of you and your kindred for ever; the region of Ciarraighe will be divided between you and him, and Carthach will be his name; to multitudes his advent will be cause for joy and he will gain multitudes for heaven. His first city will be Raithen [Rahen or Rahan] in the region of Fircheall, territory of Meath and central plain of Ireland; this will become a place revered of men, and revered and famous will be his second city and church, scil.:—Lismore, which shall possess lordship and great pre-eminence."

One day when there was a large meeting of people at a certain place in Kerry, the men and women who were present saw descending a fiery globe, which rested on the head of Mochuda's mother, at that time pregnant of the future saint. The ball of fire did no one any injury but disappeared before it did injury to anyone. All those who beheld this marvel wondered thereat and speculated what it could portend. This is what it did mean:—that the graces of the Holy Spirit had visited this woman and her holy child unborn.

Mochuda's father was a rich and powerful chieftain owning two strong lioses—one, on the south side of Slieve Mish, and the other, in which Mochuda first saw the light, beside the River Maing [Maine]. Both places were blessed for sake of the Saint, who was conceived in one of them and born in the other; it is even said that no evil disposed or vicious person can live in either. Carthage in due course was sent to be baptised, and, on the way, the servant who bore the infant, meeting a saintly man named Aodhgan, asked him to perform the ceremony. There was however no water in the place, but a beautiful well, which burst forth for the occasion and still remains, yielded a supply. With the water of this well the infant was baptised and Carthach, as the angel had foretold, was the name given him. Nevertheless 'Mochuda' is the name by which he was commonly known, because he was so called, through affection and regard, by his master (St. Carthach Senior). Many scarcely know that he has any other name than Mochuda and it is lawful to write either Mochuda or



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Carthach. Speaking prophetically Aodhgan said of him:—"This child whom I have baptised will become famous and he will be beloved by God and men." That prophecy has been fulfilled, for Mochuda was graceful of figure and handsome of features as David, he was master of his passions as Daniel, and mild and gentle like Moses. His parents however despised him because he valued not earthly vanities and in his regard were verified the words of David:—"Pater meus et mater mea derliquerunt me, Dominus autem assumpsit me [Psalm 26(27):10] (For my father and my mother have left me and the Lord hath taken me up)." Like David too—who kept the sheep of his father—Mochuda, with other youths, herded his father's swine in his boyhood.

On a certain day as Mochuda, with his companion swineherds and their charges, was in the vicinity of the River Maing, he heard that the king of Ciarraighe Luachra was at his residence called Achadh-di; he waited on the king by whom he was kindly and politely received. The king, whose name was Maoltuile and who wished to see Mochuda frequently, invited the youth to come every day to the royal lios and to bring with him his companions, who would be made welcome for his sake. One evening as Mochuda sate in the king's presence Maoltuile gazed so long and so intently at the youth that the queen (Dand, daughter of Maolduin Mac Aodha Beannan, king of Munster) reproved her husband asking why he stared every evening at the boy. "O wife," answered the king, "if you but saw what I see, you would never gaze at anything else, for I behold a wondrous golden chain about his neck and a column of fire reaching from his head to the heavens, and since I first beheld these marvels my affection for the boy has largely increased." "Then," said the queen, "let him sit there beside you." Thenceforth the youth sate as suggested. Sometimes Mochuda herded the swine in the woods and at other times he remained with the king in his court.

One day as Mochuda was keeping his herd as usual beside the river already alluded to, he heard the bishop and his clerics pass by, chanting psalms as they went along. The Spirit of God touched the boy's heart and leaving his pigs Mochuda followed the procession as far as the monastery called Tuaim [Druim Fertain] [into which the clerics entered]. And as the bishop and his household sate down to eat, Mochuda, unknown to them, concealed himself—sitting in the shadow of the doorway. Meanwhile the king, Maoltuile, was troubled about the boy, noticing his absence [from the homestead at Achaddi] that evening and not knowing the cause thereof. He immediately sent messengers to seek the youth throughout the country, and one of these found him sitting, as indicated, in the shadow of the doorway of the bishop's house. The messenger took Mochuda with him back to the king. The latter questioned him:—"My child, why have you stayed away in this manner?" Mochuda replied, "Sire, this is why I have



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stayed away—through attraction of the holy chant of the bishop and clergy; I have never heard anything so beautiful as this; the clerics sang as they went along the whole way before me; they sang until they arrived at their house, and thenceforth they sang till they went to sleep. The bishop however remained by himself far into the night praying by himself when the others had retired. And I wish, O king, that I might learn [their psalms and ritual].” Hearing this the king at once sent a message to the bishop requesting the latter to come to him.

About this time Mochuda’s father gave a feast in the king’s honour and as the company were at supper the king calling Mochuda before him offered him a shield, sword, javelin, and princely robe, saying: “Take these and be henceforth a knight to me as your father has been.” But Mochuda declined the offer. “What is it,” asked the king, “that you will accept, so that [whatever it be] I may give it to you?” Mochuda answered:—“I do not long for anything of earth—only that I be allowed to learn the psalms of the clerics which I heard them sing.” In this answer the king discerned the working of divine grace, whereupon he promised the youth the favour he asked for. Shortly afterwards the bishop, Carthach, whom we have mentioned as sent for by the king, arrived, and to him the latter entrusted Mochuda to be instructed in reading and writing. With great joy the bishop undertook his charge for he saw that his pupil was marked by grace, and under the bishop’s guidance and tutelage Mochuda remained till his promotion to the priesthood.

Mochuda was very handsome of features with the result that at different times during his youth maidens to the number of thirty were so enamoured of him that they could not conceal their feeling. But Mochuda prayed for them, and obtained for them by his prayers that their carnal love should be turned into a spiritual. They afterwards became consecrated religious and within what to-day is his parish he built them cells and monasteries which the holy virgins placed under his protection and jurisdiction.

Finntan Mac Cartan, bringing with him an infant for baptism came to Bishop Carthach. The latter said to him:—“Let the young priest there who was ordained to-day baptise the child.” Whereupon Finntan handed the infant to the young priest. Mochuda enquired the name he was to impose, and the father answered—Fodhran. Having administered baptism Mochuda taking the infant’s hand prophesied concerning the babe—“This hand will be strong in battle and will win hostages and submission of the Clan Torna whose country lies in mid-Kerry from Sliabh Luachra [Slieve Lougher] to the sea. From his seed, moreover, will spring kings to the end of time, unless indeed they refuse me due allegiance, and if, at any time, they incur displeasure of my successors their kingship and dominion will come to an end.” This prophecy has been fulfilled.



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Sometime afterwards Mochuda with his master, Carthach, visited King Maoltuile, whom they found at a place called Feorainn, near Tralee, from which the lords and kings of Kerry take their name. Said Bishop Carthach:—"Here, Sire, is the youth you gave me to train; he is a good scholar and he has studied the holy writings with much success. I have ordained him a priest and (his) grace is manifest in many ways." "What recompense do you desire for your labour?" asked the king. "Only," replied Carthach, "that you would place yourself and your posterity under the spiritual jurisdiction of this young priest, the servant of God." The king, however, hesitated—because of Mochuda's youth. Soon as Carthach perceived this he himself inclined to Mochuda and bending his knee before him exclaimed:—"I hereby give myself, my parish and monastery to God and to Mochuda for ever." Touched by the bishop's example the king prostrated himself before Mochuda and pledged to God and to him, his soul and body and posterity to the end of time. Then Mochuda placed his foot upon the king's neck and measured the royal body with his foot. Against this proceeding of Mochuda's a member of the king's party protested in abusive and insulting terms—"It is a haughty act of yours, laying your foot upon the king's neck, for be it known to you the body on which you trample is worthy of respect." On hearing this Mochuda ceased to measure the king and declared:—"The neck upon which I have set my heel shall never be decapitated and the body which I have measured with my foot shall not be slain and but for your interference there would not be wanting anything to him or his seed for ever." Addressing (specially) the interrupter, he prophesied:—"You and your posterity will be for ever contemptible among the tribes." Blessing the king he promised him prosperity here and heaven hereafter and assured him:—"If any one of your posterity contemn my successors refusing me my lawful dues he will never reign over the kingdom of Kerry." This prophecy has been fulfilled.

Next, Mochuda, at the suggestion of his master, the bishop, and the King Maoltuile, built a famous cell called Kiltulach [Kiltallagh] at a place between Sliabh Mis and the River Maing in the southern part of Kerry. Here his many miracles won him the esteem of all. In that region he found two bishops already settled before him, scil.:—Dibhilin and Domailgig. These became envious of the honour paid him and the fame he acquired, and they treated him evilly. Whereupon he went to Maoltuile and told him the state of affairs. Soon as the king heard the tale he came with Mochuda from the place where he then was on the bank of the Luimnech and stayed not till they reached the summit of Sliabh Mis, when he addressed Mochuda: "Leave this confined region for the present to the envy and jealousy of the bishops and hereafter it will become yours and your coarbs' to the end of time." The advice commended itself to Mochuda and he thanked the king for it. Thereupon he abandoned his cell to the aforesaid bishops and determined to set out alone as a pilgrim to the northern part of Ireland.



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In the meantime an angel visited Comghall and repeated to him what had been foretold him already—that there should come to him a young priest desirous for Christ's sake of pilgrimage beyond the seas—that Comghall should dissuade him and, instead, retain the stranger with him for a year at Bangor. "And how am I to recognise him?" asked Comghall. The angel answered:—"Whom you shall see going from the church to the guest-house" (for it was Mochuda's custom to visit the church first). [See note 1.] Comghall announced to his household that there was coming to them a distinguished stranger, well-beloved of God, of whose advent an angel had twice foretold him. Some time later Mochuda arrived at Comghall's establishment, and he went first to the monastery and Comghall recognised him and bade him welcome. In that place Mochuda remained a whole year, as the angel had said, and at the end of the year he returned to his own country where he built many cells and churches and worked many wonders, winning many souls to religion and to good works. Many persons moreover placed themselves, their children, and their kindred under his jurisdiction, and the great parishes of their own territory were assigned to him, and finally the episcopate of Kerry became his.

Subsequent to this Mochuda, having committed the care of his cell and parish to certain pious and suitable persons, set out himself, accompanied by a few disciples, through the south of Munster to visit the Monastery of Ciaran Mac Fionntan at Rosgiallan [Rostellan]. From Ciaran Mochuda enquired, where—in south Munster (as the angel had mentioned to Comghall)—the chief and most distinguished of these churches should be. Ciaran, who possessed the spirit of prophecy, replied—"You shall go first to Meath where you will find a famous church in the territory of Ibh Neill and there you will remain for forty years. You shall be driven thence into exile and you will return to Munster wherein will be your greatest and most renowned church." Mochuda offered to place himself under the patronage and jurisdiction of Ciaran: "Not so, shall it be," said Ciaran, "but rather do I put myself and my church under you, for ever, reserving only that my son, Fuadhran, be my successor in this place." This Mochuda assented to and Fuadhran governed the monastic city for twenty years as Ciaran's successor in the abbacy.

Next, Mochuda entered the territory of the Munster Decies where dwelt the Clanna Ruadhain who placed themselves and all their churches under him, and one Colman Mac Cobhthaigh a wealthy magnate of the region donated extensive lands to Mochuda who placed them under devout persons—to hold for him. Proceeding thence Mochuda took his way across Sliabh Gua looking back from the summit of which he saw by the bank of the Nemh [Blackwater] angels ascending towards heaven and descending thence. And they took up with them to heaven a silver chair with a golden image thereon. This was the place in which long afterwards he founded his famous church and whence he departed himself to glory.

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Hence Mochuda travelled to Molua Mac Coinche's monastery of Clonfert [Kyle], on the confines of Leinster and Munster. He found Molua in the harvest field in the midst of a 'meitheal' [team] of reapers. Before setting out on this present journey of his Mochuda had, with one exception, dismissed all his disciples to their various homes for he, but with a single companion, did not wish to enter the strange land ostentatiously. The single follower whom Mochuda had retained wishing to remain at Clonfert, said to St. Molua: "Holy father, I should wish to remain here with you." Molua answered:—"I shall permit you, brother, if your pious master consents." Mochuda, having dismissed so many, would not make any difficulty about an individual, and so he gave the monk his freedom. Mochuda thereupon set out alone, which, Molua's monks observing, they remark:—"It were time for that aged man to remain in some monastery, for it is unbecoming such a (senior) monk to wander about alone." They did not know that he, of whom they spoke, was Mochuda, for it was not the custom of the latter to make himself known to many. "Say not so," said Molua (to the censorious brethren), "for the day will come when our community and city will seem but insignificant beside his—though now he goes alone; you do not know that he is Mochuda whom many obey and whom many more will obey in times to come."

As Mochuda went on his lonely way he met two monks who asked him whither he was bound. "To Colman Elo," he answered. Then said one of them to him:—"Take us with you as monks and subjects," for they judged him from his countenance to be a holy man. Mochuda accepted the monks and they journeyed on together till they came to Colman's monastery [Lynally]. Mochuda said to Colman: "Father I would remain here with you." "Not so," replied Colman, "but go you to a place called Rahen in this vicinity; that is the place ordained by God for your dwelling and you shall have there a large community in the service of God and from that place you will get your first name—Mochuda of Rahen." Having said farewell to Colman and obtained his blessing Mochuda, with his two monks, set out for the place indicated and there in the beginning he built a small cell and Colman and he often afterwards exchanged visits.

Colman had in the beginning—some time previous to Mochuda's advent—contemplated establishing himself at Rahen and he had left there two or three [bundles] of rods remarking to his disciples that another should come after him for whom and not for himself God had destined this place. It was with this material that Mochuda commenced to build his cell as Colman had foretold in the first instance. He erected later a great monastery in which he lived forty years and had eight hundred and eighty seven religious under his guidance and rule.



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Subsequent to Mochuda's foundation of Rahen his miracles and the marvels he wrought spread his fame far and wide through Ireland and through Britain, and multitudes came to him from various parts of those countries to give themselves to the service of God under his guidance. In the beginning he refused worldly gifts from others although his church was honoured and patronised by neighbouring kings and chieftains who offered him lands and cattle and money and many other things. Mochuda kept his monks employed in hard labour and in ploughing the ground for he wanted them to be always humble. Others, however, of the Saints of Erin did not force their monks to servile labour in this fashion.

Mochuda was consecrated bishop by many saints and from time to time he visited his parish in Kerry, but as a rule he remained at Rahen with his monks, for it is monks he had with him not clerics.

On a certain day in the (early) springtime there came to tempt him a druid who said to him:—"In the name of your God cause this apple-tree branch to produce foliage." Mochuda knew that it was in contempt for divine power the druid proposed this, and the branch put forth leaves on the instant. The druid demanded "In the name of your God, put blossom on it." Mochuda made the sign of the cross [over the twig] and it blossomed presently. The druid persisted:—"What profits blossom without fruit?" [said the druid]. Mochuda, for the third time, blessed the branch and it produced a quantity of fruit. The druid said:—"Follower of Christ, cause the fruit to ripen." Mochuda blessed the tree and the fruit, fully ripe, fell to the earth. The druid picked up an apple off the ground and examining it he saw it was quite sour, whereupon he objected:—"Such miracles as these are worthless since it leaves the fruit uneatable." Mochuda blessed the apples and they all became sweet as honey, and in punishment of his opposition the magician was deprived for a year of his eyesight. At the end of a year he came to Mochuda and did penance, whereupon he received his sight back again and he returned home rejoicing.

On another occasion there came to Mochuda a secular who brought with him his deaf and dumb son whom he besought the saint to heal. Mochuda prayed to God for him and said, "My son, hear and speak." The boy answered immediately and said, "Man of God, I give myself and my inheritance to you for ever," and thenceforth he possessed the use of all his senses and members.

Another day a young man who had contracted leprosy came to Mochuda showing him his misery and his wretched condition. The saint prayed for him and he was restored to health.

At another time there came to Mochuda a man whose face was deformed. He besought the saint's aid and his face was healed upon the spot.



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On yet another occasion in the springtime a poor man who dwelt some distance from the monastery of Rahen, came to Mochuda, and asked the loan of two oxen and a ploughman to do a day's ploughing for him. But Mochuda, as we have already said, had no cattle, for it was the monks themselves who dug and tilled the soil. Mochuda summoned one of his labourers named Aodhan whom he ordered to go into the nearest wood to bring back thence a pair of deer with him and go along with them to the poor man to do the spring work for him. Aodhan did dutifully all that Mochuda bade him—he found the two deer, went with the poor man and ploughed for him till the work was completed when the deer returned to their habitat and Aodhan to Mochuda.

On another day there came to Mochuda a man troubled by the devil. Mochuda cured him at once, driving the demons from him and the man went his way thanking God and Mochuda.

Once, when the brethren were at work in the fields and in the kitchen, Mochuda went to the mill to grind meal for the monk's use, and nine robbers, who hated him, followed with the intention of murdering him. The chief of the band sent each member of the gang to the mill in turn. Not one of them however could enter the mill because of a violent flame of fire which encircled the building round about, through the goodness of God protecting Mochuda from the robbers. The latter, through the mill door, watched Mochuda who slept portion of the time and was awake another portion. And while he slept the mill stopped of itself, and while he was awake it went of its own accord. The gang thereupon returned to the chief and told him all they had seen, which, when he heard, he became enraged. Then he hastened himself to the mill to kill Mochuda. But he experienced the same things as all the others and he was unable to hurt Mochuda. He returned to his followers and said to them—"Let us stay here till he comes out of the mill, for we need not fear that he will call help nor need we fear his arm." Shortly afterwards Mochuda came out carrying his load. The robbers rushed on him, but they were unable to do him any injury for as each man of them tried to draw his weapon his hands became powerless, so he was unable to use them. Mochuda requested them to allow him pass with his burden and he promised them on his credit and his word that he should return to them when he had deposited the sack in safety. They took his word and he went, deposited his bag of meal in the kitchen, and returned meekly to martyrdom. The brethren imagined he had gone to a quiet place for prayer as was his custom. When he returned to the robbers they drew their weapons several times to kill him but they were unable to do so. Seeing this wonder they were moved to repentance and they gave themselves to God and to Mochuda for ever and, till the time of their death, they remained under his guidance and rule and many subsequent edifying and famous acts of theirs are recorded.



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An angel came to Mochuda at Rahen on another occasion announcing to him the command of God that he should go that same day to Mac Fhiodaig, king of his own region of Kerry Luachra, and administer to him Holy Communion and Confession as he was on the point of death. Mochuda asked the angel how he could reach Kerry that day from Rahen. The angel thereupon (for reply) took him up through the air in a fiery chariot until they arrived at the king's residence. Mochuda administered Holy Communion and Confession and the king having bestowed generous alms upon him departed hence to glory. Mochuda returned that same day to Rahen where he found the community singing vespers.

On another occasion Mochuda visited Colman Elo at the latter's monastery of Lynally and requested Colman to come with him to consecrate for him his cemetery at Rahen, for Colman, assisted by angels, was in the habit of consecrating cemeteries and God gave him the privilege that no one should go to hell who was interred in a grave consecrated by him. Colman said to him:—"Return home and on the fifth day from now I shall follow." Mochuda returned home, where he remained till the fifth day, when, seeing that Colman had not arrived he came again to the latter. "Father," said he, "why have you not kept your promise?" To which Colman replied, "I came and an angel with me that day and consecrated your cemetery. Return now and you will find it marked (consecrated) on the south side of your own cell. Lay it out as it is there indicated and think not that its area is too small, because a larger will be consecrated for you later, by the angels, in the southern part of Erin, namely—in Lismore." Mochuda returned and found the cemetery duly marked as Colman had indicated.

About the same time clerics came across Slieve Luachra in the territory of Kerry to the church of Ita, honoured [abbess] of Conall Gabhra. They had with them a child upon seeing whom Ita wept bitterly. The clerics demanded why she cried at seeing them. "Blessed," she answered, "is the hour in which that youth in your company was born, for no one shall ever go to hell from the cemetery in which he will be buried, but, alas, for me, that I cannot be buried therein." The clerics asked what cemetery it was in which he should be buried. "In Mochuda's cemetery," said she, "which though it be as yet unconsecrated will be honoured and famous in times to come." This all came to pass, for the youth afterwards became a monk under Mochuda and he is buried in the monastic cemetery of Lismore as Ita had foretold.

A child on another occasion fell off the bridge of Rahen into the river and was drowned. The body was a day and a night in the water before it was recovered. Then it was brought to Mochuda who, moved with compassion for the father in his loss of an only son, restored the boy to life. Moreover he himself fostered the child for a considerable time afterwards and when the youth had grown up, he sent him back to his own country of Delbhna. Mochuda's foster son begat sons and daughters and he gave himself and them, as well as his inheritance, to God and Mochuda, and his descendants are to this day servile tenants of the monastery.



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Once as Mochuda, with large offerings, was returning from Kerry to Rahen he passed through the confines of Delbhna [Lemanaghan?] by the lake called Muincine [Lough Gur?] where he and his party were overtaken by night. They found here before them by the roadside revolving wheels, which an artisan, who was erecting a mill on the stream from the lake, had set up for a joke. As the wheels revolved they made a terrific noise which was heard by the whole neighbourhood. Many of the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages aroused by the noise rushed out, with appeals for help and loud cries, to investigate the matter. Mochuda's people were frightened by the din and their pack and riding horses stampeded and lost their loads and it was not without difficulty that they were caught again. Mochuda knew what caused the noise and he told the workmen who had played this mischievous trick that they should be scattered throughout the different provinces of Ireland, that they should be always worthless and unprofitable, that the mill they were engaged on should never be finished and that their progeny after them should be valueless race of mischief-makers. The latter are called the Hi-Enna [Ui Enna Aine Aulium] to-day.

One day Mochuda came to a place called Cluain-Breanainn where apples abounded. His followers asked some apples for him but the orchard owner refused them. Said Mochuda:—"From this day forward no fruit shall grow in you orchard for ever," and that prophecy has been fulfilled.

Mochuda had in his monastery twelve exceedingly perfect disciples, scil.:—Caoinche Mac Mellain [Mochua Mac Mellain or Cronan], who was the first monk to enter Rahen; Mucoinog [Mochoemog]; the three sons of Nascainn—Goban, Srafan, and Laisren; Muluia [Molua]; Lugair; Mochomog Eile; Aodhan [Aedhan]; Fachtna Coinceann [Fiachna or Fiochrae]; Fionnlog and Mochomog who became a bishop later. The virtue of these monks surpassed belief and Mochuda wished to mitigate their austerities before their death. He therefore built separate cells for them that they might have some comfort in their old age as a reward for their virtue in youth; moreover he predicted blessings for them. He made [a prophecy] for one of them, mentioned above, scil.:—Mochua Mac Mellain, for whom he had built a comfortable cell at a place called Cluain-Da-Chrann. He said to him: "Your place of resurrection will not be here but in another place which God has given you." That prediction has been verified. To a second disciple, scil.:—Fiachna, Mochuda said:—"Your resurrection will not be in this place though I have made you a cell here; you will have three further abiding places, nevertheless it will be with your own companion, Aodhan, that your remains will rest and your resurrection will be in the territory of Ui Torna, and it is from you that the place will get its name." For this Aodhan alluded to Mochuda likewise built another cell in the land of Ui Torna close by Slieve Luachra, and speaking prophetically he said to him: "The remains of your fellow-disciple, Fiachna, will be carried to you hither and from him will this place be named." That statement has been verified, for the church is now called Cill-Fiachna and it was first called Cill-Aeghain. Concerning other persons, Mochuda prophesied various other things, all of them have come to pass.



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A child born of secret adultery was abandoned close by the monastery of Rahen and Mochuda fostered the child until he became a bishop, though no one knew his name or his progenitors. Mochuda said:—"This child's name is Dioma and his father is Cormac of the race of Eochaidh Eachach." All thereupon magnified the foreknowledge of Mochuda, which he had from no other than the Holy Spirit. Having consecrated him bishop, Mochuda instructed him: "Go in haste to your own native region of Hy-Eachach in the southern confines of Munster for there will your resurrection be. War and domestic strife shall arise among your race and kinsfolk unless you arrive there soon to prevent it." Dioma set out, accompanied by another bishop, Cuana by name, who was also a disciple of Mochuda's. They travelled into Ibh Eachach and Dioma preached the word of God to his brethren and tribesmen. He made peace between them and they built a monastery for him and he placed himself, his kindred, and parish under his chosen master, Mochuda, and he ended his life (there) in peace.

On another occasion Mochuda travelled from Rahen to the provinces of Munster and entered Ciarraighe Corca. It happened that Cairbre Mac Criomhthain, who was king of Munster, was at that time in Magh-Cuirce, the place to which Mochuda came. At the same time there fell a fire ball which destroyed one of the king's residences, killing his wife, many of his people and his son, Aodh Mac Cairbre, who were buried in the falling ruin. There were killed there moreover two good carriage horses of the king's. Cairbre besought Mochuda that he would restore the queen and his son to life, and when the saint saw the king's faith he prayed for him to God and then addressing the dead he said,—“Arise.” They arose thereupon and he gave them safe to the king and they all gave glory and thanks to God and Mochuda. The king moreover made large offerings of land and servile tenants to Mochuda. But one of the tenants, through pride and jealousy, refused to obey Mochuda, notwithstanding the king's command. Mochuda said: “Your posterity will die out and their inheritance, for sake of which you (mis)behave towards me, shall become mine for ever; whosoever takes from me that which another has given me shall be deprived of heaven and earth.” That man and his posterity soon came to nought.

On another occasion Mochuda sent a golden belt to Fergus Mac Criomhthan who suffered from uncleanness of skin arising from kidney disease and upon application of the girdle, by the blessing of Mochuda he recovered.

Another time again a king of Munster, Cathal Mac Aodha, in the region of Cuirche, was a sufferer from a combination of complaints—he was deaf, lame, and blind, and when Mochuda came to see him the king and his friends prayed the saint to cure him. Mochuda therefore prayed for him and made the sign of the cross on his eyes and ears and immediately he was healed of all his maladies—he heard and



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saw perfectly, and Cathal gave extensive lands to God and Mochuda for ever, scil:— Oilean Cathail and Ros-Beg and Ros-Mor and Inis-Pic [Spike Island]. Mochuda placed a religious community in Ros-Beg to build there a church in honour of God. Mochuda himself commenced to build a church on Inis-Pic and he remained there a whole year. [On his departure] Mochuda left there—in the monastery of Inis-Pic—to watch over it, in his stead, and to keep it in perfect order—the three disciples whom we have already named (scil:— the three sons of Nascon, *i.e.* Goban a bishop, Srafan a priest, and holy Laisren) together with the saintly bishop, Dardomaighen [Domangenum], (who had conferred orders on them in presence of Mochuda) and forty monks. Thereupon Mochuda returned to Rahen. That island we have mentioned, scil.:—Inis-Pic, is a most holy place in which an exceedingly devout community constantly dwell.

Mochuda next directed his steps eastward through Munster and he crossed the river then called Nemh, and now named the Abhainn More. As he crossed he saw a large apple floating in the middle of the ford. This he took up and carried away with him in his hand. Hence (that ford is named) Ath-Ubhla in Fermoy [Ballyhooley]. His attendant asked Mochuda for the apple, but the latter refused to give it saying—“God will work a miracle by that apple and through me to-day: we shall meet Cuana Mac Cailcin’s daughter whose right hand is powerless so that she cannot move it from her side. But she shall be cured by the power of God through this apple.” This was accomplished. Mochuda espied the child playing a game with the other girls in the *faithche* [lawn] of the Lios. He approached and said to her:—“Take this apple.” She, as usual, put forth her left hand for the fruit. “You shall not get it in that hand, but take it in the other.” The girl full of faith tried to put out the right hand, and on the instant the hand became full of strength and blood and motion so that she took the apple in it. All rejoiced thereat and were amazed at the wonder wrought. That night Cuana said to his daughter: “Choose yourself which you prefer of the royal youths of Munster and whomsoever your choice be I shall obtain in marriage for you.” “The only spouse I shall have,” said she, “is the man who cured my hand.” “Do you hear what she says O Mochuda?” said the king. “Entrust the child to me,” answered Mochuda, “I shall present her as a bride to God who has healed her hand.” Whereupon Cuana gave his daughter Flandnait, together with her dowry and lands on the bank of Nemh, to God and to Mochuda for ever. Cuana was almost incredibly generous. Mochuda took the maiden with him to Rahen where she passed her years happily with the religious women there till Mochuda was expelled by the kings of Tara as you may hear. He took Flandnait with him (from Rahen) in his party to her own native region that she might build herself a cell there. She did build a famous cell at Cluain Dallain in Mochuda’s own parish.



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Previous to his expulsion (from Rahen) Mochuda visited the place where (later) he built Lismore and he heard the voice of persons reading at Rahen, wherefore he said to his followers: "I know that this is the place where God will permit us to build our monastery." This prophecy was subsequently verified.

On a certain occasion Columcille came to Rahen where Mochuda was and asked him:—"Is this place in which you now are dear to you?" "It is, indeed," answered Mochuda. Columcille said: "Let not what I say to you trouble you—this will not be the place of your resurrection, for the king of Erin and his family will grow jealous of you owing to machinations of some of the Irish clergy, and they shall eventually drive you hence." Mochuda questioned Columcille who had a true prophetic gift—"In what other place then will my resurrection be?" Columcille told him—"The place where from the summit of Slieve Gua you saw the host of angels building a chair of silver with a statue of gold therein on the bank of the Nemh—there will your resurrection be, and the chair of silver is your church in the midst of them [,and you are truly the golden statue in its midst]." Mochuda believing what he heard thanked and glorified God.

As Mochuda on another day was at Rahen there came to him a priest and monk of his own community from the northern part of Munster; he made a reverence as was the custom of the monks, in Mochuda's presence and said to him, "Father, I have complied with all your commands and the precepts of God from the day I left Rahen till now—except this—that, without your permission, I have taken my brother from the secular life." "Verily I say to you," answered Mochuda, "if you were to go to the top of a high hill and to shout as loudly as you could and were to bring to me all who heard the cry I should not refuse the habit of religion to one of them." Hearing these words all realised the character and extent of Mochuda's charity and returned thanks to God for it.

On a certain day about vesper time, because of the holiness of the hour, Mochuda said to his monks—"We shall not eat to-day till each one of you has made his confession," for he knew that some one of them had ill will in his heart against another. All the brethren thereupon confessed to him. One of them in the course of his confession stated: "I love not your miller and the cause of my lack of charity towards him is this, that when I come to the mill he will not lift the loads off the horses and he will neither help me to fill the meal sacks nor to load them on the horse when filled. And not this alone but he does everything that is disagreeable to me; moreover I cannot tell, but God knows, why he so acts. Often I have thought of striking him or even beating him to death." Mochuda replied, "Brother dear, the prophet says—'Declina a malo et fac bonum' [Psalm 36(37):27]. Avoid evil and do good. Following this precept let you act kindly towards the miller and that charity



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of yours will move him to charity towards you and ye shall yet be steadfast friends.” Things went on thus for three days—the monk doing all he could to placate the miller. Nevertheless the miller did not cease his persecution, nor the brother his hate of the miller. On the third day Mochuda directed the brother to confess to him again. The brother said: —“This is my confession, Father, I do not yet love the miller.” Mochuda observed:—“He will change to-night, and to-morrow he will not break fast till you meet him and you shall sit on the same seat, at the same table, and you shall remain fast friends for the rest of your lives.” All this came to pass; for that monk was, through the instruction of Mochuda, filled with the grace of the Divine Spirit. And he glorified and praised Mochuda, for he recognised him as a man favoured by the Holy Ghost.

On another occasion two British monks of Mochuda’s monastery had a conversation in secret. Mochuda, they said, is very old though there is no immediate appearance of approaching death—and there is no doubt that his equal in virtue or good works will never be found—therefore if he were out of the way one of us might succeed him. Let us then kill him as there is no likelihood of his natural death within a reasonable time. They resolved therefore to drown him in the river towards close of the following night and to conceal all traces so that the crime could never be discovered. They found him subsequently in a lonely place where he was accustomed to pray. They bound him tightly and carried him between them on their shoulders to the water. On their way to the river they met one of the monks who used to walk around the cemetery every night. He said to them: “What is that you carry?” They replied that it was portion of the monastic washing which they were taking to the river. He however, under the insistent suggestion of the Holy Spirit, believed them not. He said: “Put down your load till we examine it.” They were constrained to obey and the burden proved to be—Mochuda. The monk who detected [the proposed murder] was the overseer of the homestead. He said mournfully, “My God, it is a dreadful work you are about.” Mochuda said gently:—“Son, it were well for me had that been done to me for I should now be numbered among the holy martyrs. And it were bad for them (the two wicked monks) for it is with Judas the betrayer of his Lord they should be tortured for ever, who had desired my death for their own advancement. Neither these wretched men themselves nor anyone of their nation shall be my coarb for ever, but my successors shall be of his race through whom God has rescued me. Moreover my city shall never be without men of the British race who will be butts and laughing-stocks and serve no useful purpose.” The person who saved Mochuda was of the Ciarraighe race and it is of that same people that the coarbs and successors of Mochuda have commonly been ever since. [See note 2.]



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Mochuda refused for a long while, as we have already said, to accept cattle or horses from anyone; it was the monks themselves who dug and cultivated the land and they did all the haulage of the monastery on their own backs. St. Fionan however who was a kinsman of Mochuda and had just returned from Rome, came at this time on a visit to the monastery. He reproached Mochuda saying: "Mochuda, why do you impose the burden of brute beasts upon rational beings? Is it not for use of the latter that all other animals have been created? Of a truth I shall not taste food in this house till you have remedied this grievance." Thenceforth Mochuda—in honour of Fionan—permitted his monks to accept horses and oxen from the people and he freed them from the hardship alluded to. Sometime later the holy abbot, Lachtaoin [St. Lachten], compassionating Mochuda and his monks because of their lack of cattle paid a visit to Rahen bringing with him a gift of thirty cows and a bull, also a couple of cattlemen and two dairymaids. Coming near Rahen he left the cattle in a secluded place, for he did not wish them to be seen. Thereupon he went himself to the monastery and simulating illness requested a drink of milk. The house steward went to Mochuda to tell him that Lachtaoin was ill and required milk. Mochuda ordered the steward to fill a pitcher with water and bring it to him—and this order was executed. Mochuda blessed the water which immediately was changed into sweet new milk apparently of that day's milking. He sent the milk to Lachtaoin but the latter identified it as milk miraculously produced; he in turn blessed it with the result that it was changed back again into water. He complained:—"It is not water but milk I have asked for." The messenger related this fact publicly. Lachtaoin declared:—"Mochuda is a good monk but his successors will not be able to change water to milk," and to the messenger he said—"Go to Mochuda and tell him that I shall not break bread in this house until he accept the alms which I have brought to the community." On Mochuda agreeing to accept them he handed over the cattle and dairymen to the monks of Rahen and the stewards took charge of them. Mochuda said thereupon, that he should not have accepted the cattle but as a compliment to Lachtaoin. Lachtaoin replied:—"From this day forward there will be plenty cattle and worldly substance in your dwelling-place and there will be a multitude of holy people in the other place whence you are to depart to heaven (for you will be exiled from your present home)." After they had mutually blessed and taken leave and pledged friendship Lachtaoin departed.

Once, at harvest time, the farm steward came to Mochuda complaining that, though the crop was dead ripe, a sufficient number of harvesters could not be found. Mochuda answered: "Go in peace, dear brother, and God will send you satisfactory reapers." This promise was fulfilled, for a band of angels came to the ripest and largest fields, reaped and bound a great deal quickly, and gathered the crop into one place. The monks marvelled, though they knew it was God's work and they praised and thanked Him and Mochuda.

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The spirit of obedience amongst Mochuda's monks was such that if any senior member of the community ordered another to lie in the fire he would be obeyed. As an instance of this,—some of the brethren were on one occasion baking bread in an oven when one the monks said to another younger than himself, "The bread is burning: take it out instantly." There was an iron shovel for drawing out the bread but the brother could not find it on the instant. He heeded not the flames which shot out of the oven's mouth but caught the hot bread and shifted it with his hands and suffered no hurt whatever. On another day the monks were engaged in labour beside the river which runs through the monastery. One of the senior monks called upon a young monk named Colman to do a certain piece of work. Immediately, as he had not named any particular Colman, twelve monks of the name rushed into the water. The readiness and exactness of the obedience practised was displayed in this incident.

Great moreover was their meekness and patience in sickness or ill-health as appears from the case of the monk out of the wounds of whose body maggots fell as he walked; yet he never complained or told anyone or left his work for two moments although it was plain from his appearance that his health was declining, and he was growing thinner from day to day. The brothers pitied him very much. At length Mochuda questioned him—putting him under obedience to tell the truth—as to the cause of his decline. The monk thereupon showed him his sides which were torn by a twig tied fast around them. Mochuda asked him who had done that barbarous and intolerable thing to him. The monk answered:—"One day while we were drawing logs of timber from the wood my girdle broke from the strain, so that my clothes hung loose. A monk behind me saw this and cutting a twig tied it so tightly around my sides that it has caused my flesh to mortify." Mochuda asked—"And why did you not loosen the twig?" The monk replied—"Because my body is not my own and he who tied it (the withe) has never loosed it." It was a whole year since the withe had been fastened around him. Mochuda said to him:—"Brother, you have suffered great pain; as a reward thereof take now your choice—your restoration to bodily health or spiritual health by immediate departure hence to eternal life." He answered, deciding to go to heaven:—"Why should I desire to remain in this life?" Having received the Sacrament and the Holy Communion he departed hence to glory.

There came to Mochuda on another occasion with her husband, a woman named Brigh whose hand lay withered and useless by her side: she besought the saint to cure her hand. Moreover she was pregnant at the time. Mochuda held out an apple in his hand to her as he had done before to Flandnait, the daughter of Cuana, saying—"Alleluia, put forth your nerveless hand to take this apple." She did as she was told and took the apple from his hand and was cured; moreover as she tasted the fruit parturition came on—without pain or inconvenience, after which [the pair] returned to their home rejoicing.



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In fulfilment of the prophecy of Columcille and other holy men that Mochuda should be expelled from Rahen the king of Tara, Blathmac, the son of Aodh Slaine, and his brother Diarmuid came, together with some clergy of the Cluain Earaird [Clonard] community, to carry out the eviction [in A.D. 635]. They said to him, "Leave this monastery and region and seek a place for yourself elsewhere." Mochuda replied—"In this place I have desired to end my days. Here I have been many years serving God and have almost reached the end of my life. Therefore I shall not depart unless I am dragged hence by the hands against my will, for it is not becoming an old man to abandon easily the place in which he has spent great part of his life." Then the nobles returned to Blathmac and they made various complaints of Mochuda, accusing him falsely of many things; finally they asked the king to undertake the expulsion personally, for they were themselves unequal to the task. The king thereupon came to the place accompanied by a large retinue. Alluding prophetically to the king's coming, previous to that event, Mochuda said, addressing the monks:—"Beloved brothers, get ready and gather your belongings, for violence and eviction are close at hand: the chieftains of this land are about to expel and banish you from your own home." Then the king, with his brothers and many of the chief men, arrived on the scene. They encamped near Rahen and the king sent his brother Diarmuid with some others to expel Mochuda and to put him out by force—which Diarmuid pledged his word he should do. It was in the choir at prayer that Diarmuid found Mochuda. Mochuda, though he knew his mission, asked Diarmuid why he was come and what he sought. Diarmuid replied that he came by order of King Blathmac to take him by the hand and put him out of that establishment and to banish him from Meath. "Do as you please," said Mochuda, "for we are prepared to undergo all things for Christ's sake." "By my word," answered Diarmuid, "I shall never be guilty of such a crime; let him who chooses do it." Mochuda said:—"You shall possess the kingdom of God and you shall reign in your brother's stead and your face which you have turned from me shall never be turned from your enemies. Moreover the reproaches which the king will presently cast upon you for not doing the work he has set you, will be your praise and your pride. At the same time as a penalty for your evil designs toward me and your greater readiness to drive me out, your son shall not succeed you in the sovereignty." Diarmuid returned to the king and told him that he could do no injury to Mochuda. The king retorted [sarcastically and] in anger, "What a valiant man you are, Diarmuid." Diarmuid replied:—"That is just what Mochuda promised—that I should be a warrior of God." He was known as Diarmuid Ruanaidh thenceforth, for the whole assembly cried out with one voice—truly he is Valiant (Ruanaidh).



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Next, the nobles present cast lots to decide which one of them should go with the king to lay hands on Mochuda and expel him from the monastery. The lot fell upon the Herenach [hereditary steward] of Cluain Earaird. He and the king accompanied by armed men went to the monastery where they found Mochuda and all the brethren in the church. Cronan, a certain rich man in the company, shouted out, "Make haste with the business on which you are come." Mochuda answered him—"You shall die immediately, but on account of the alms which you gave me for the love of Christ and on account of your uniform piety heretofore your progeny shall prosper for ever." That prophecy has been fulfilled. Another man, Dulach by name, winked mockingly with one of his eyes; moreover he laughed and behaved irreverently towards Mochuda. Mochuda said to him:—"Thus shall you be—with one eye closed and a grin on your countenance—to the end of your life; and of your descendants many will be similarly afflicted." Yet another member of the company, one Cailche, scurrilously abused and cursed Mochuda. To him Mochuda said:—"Dysentery will attack you immediately and murrain that will cause your death." The misfortune foretold befell him and indeed woeful misfortune and ill luck pursued many of them for their part in the wrong doing. When the king saw these things he became furious and, advancing—himself and the abbot of Cluain Earaird—they took each a hand of Mochuda and in a disrespectful, uncivil manner, they led him forth out of the monastery while their followers did the same with Mochuda's community. Throughout the city and in the country around there was among both sexes weeping, mourning, and wailing over their humiliating expulsion from their own home and monastery. Even amongst the soldiers of the king were many who were moved to pity and compassion for Mochuda and his people.

One of Mochuda's monks had gout in his foot and for him Mochuda besought the king and his following that he, as he was unable to travel, might be allowed to remain in the monastery; the request was, however, refused. Mochuda called the monk to him and, in the name of Christ, he commanded the pain to leave the foot and to betake itself to the foot of Colman [Colman mac hua Telduib, abbot, or perhaps erenach only, of Cluain Earaird], the chieftain who was most unrelenting towards him. That soreness remained in Colman's foot as long as he lived. The monk however rose up and walked and was able to proceed on his way with his master.

There was an aged monk who wished to be buried at Rahen; Mochuda granted the request, and he received Holy Communion and sacred rites at the saint's hands. Then he departed to heaven in the presence of all and his body was buried at Rahen as he had himself chosen that it should be.



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Leaving Rahen Mochuda paid a visit to the monastic cemetery weeping as he looked upon it; he blessed those interred there and prayed for them. By the permission of God it happened that the grave of a long deceased monk opened so that all saw it, and, putting his head out of the grave, the tenant of the tomb cried out in a loud voice: “O holy man and servant of God, bless us that through thy blessing we may rise and go with you whither you go.” Mochuda replied:—“So novel a thing I shall not do, for it behoves not to raise so large a number of people before the general resurrection.” The monk asked—“Why then father, do you leave us, though we have promised union with you in one place for ever?” Mochuda answered:—“Brother, have you ever heard the proverb—necessity is its own law [necessitas movet decretum et consilium]? Remain ye therefore in your resting places and on the day of general resurrection I shall come with all my brethren and we shall all assemble before the great cross called ‘Cross of the Angels’ at the church door and go together for judgement.” When Mochuda had finished, the monk lay back in his grave and the coffin closed.

Mochuda, with his following, next visited the cross already mentioned and here, turning to the king, he thus addressed him:—“Behold the heavens above you and the earth below.” The king looked at them: then Mochuda continued:—“Heaven may you not possess and even from your earthly principality may you soon be driven and your brother whom you have reproached, because he would not lay hands on me, shall possess it instead of you, and in your lifetime. You shall be despised by all—so much so that in your brother’s house they shall forget to supply you with food. Moreover yourself and your children shall come to an evil end and in a little while there shall not be one of your seed remaining.” Then Mochuda cursed him and he rang his small bell against him and against his race, whence the bell has since been known as “The Bell of Blathmac’s Extinguishing,” or “The Bell of Blathmac’s Drowning,” because it drowned or extinguished Blathmac with his posterity. Blathmac had a large family of sons and daughters but, owing to Mochuda’s curse, their race became extinct. Next to the prince of Cluain Earaird who also had seized him by the hand, he said: “You shall be a servant and a bondman ere you die and you shall lose your territory and your race will be a servile one.” To another of those who led him by the hand he said:—“What moved you to drag me by the hand from my own monastery?” The other replied:—“It pleased me not that a Munster man should have such honour in Meath.” “I wish,” said Mochuda, “that the hand you laid on me may be accursed and that the face you turned against me to expel me from my home may be repulsive and scrofulous for the remainder of your life.” This curse was effective for the man’s eye was thereupon destroyed in his head. Mochuda noticed that some of Columcille’s successors and people from Durrow, which was one of Columcille’s foundations, had taken part in his eviction. He thus addressed them:—“Contention and quarrelling shall be yours for ever to work evil and schism amongst you—for you have had a prominent part in exciting opposition to me.” And so it fell out.



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The king and his people thereupon compelled Mochuda to proceed on his way. Mochuda did proceed with his disciples, eight hundred and sixty seven in number (and as many more they left buried in Rahen). Moreover, many more living disciples of his who had lived in various parts of Ireland were already dead. All the community abounded in grace: many of its members became bishops and abbots in after years and they erected many churches to the glory of God.

Understand, moreover, that great was the charity of the holy bishop, as the following fact will prove:—in a cell without the city of Rahen he maintained in comfort and respectability a multitude of lepers. He frequently visited them and ministered to them himself—entrusting that office to no one else. It was known to all the lepers of Ireland how Mochuda made their fellow-sufferers his special care and family, and the result was that an immense number of lepers from all parts flocked to him and he took charge and care of them. These on his departure from Rahen he took with him to Lismore where he prepared suitable quarters for them and there they have been ever since in comfort and in honour according to Mochuda's command.

As Mochuda and his people journeyed along with their vehicles they found the way blocked by a large tree which lay across it. Owing to the density of underwood at either side they were unable to proceed. Some one announced:—"There is a tree across the road before us, so that we cannot advance." Mochuda said: "In the name of Christ I command thee, tree, to rise up and stand again in thy former place." At the command of Mochuda the tree stood erect as it was originally and it still retains its former appearance, and there is a pile of stones there at its base to commemorate the miracle.

It was necessary to proceed; the first night after Mochuda's departure from Rahen the place that he came to was a cell called Drum Cuilinn [Drumcullen], on the confines of Munster, Leinster, and Clanna Neill, but actually within Clanna Neill, scil.:—in the territory of Fearceall in which also is Rahen. In Drum Cuilinn dwelt the holy abbot, Barrfhinn, renowned for miracles. On the morrow Mochuda arrived at Saighir Chiarain [Seirkieran] and the following night at the establishment where Cronan is now, scil.:—Roscrea. That night Mochuda remained without entertainment although it was offered to them by Cronan who had prepared supper for him. Mochuda refused however to go to it saying that he would not go out of his way to visit a man who avoids guests and builds his cell in a wild bog far from men and that such a man's proper guests are creatures of the wilderness instead of human beings. When Cronan heard this saying of Mochuda he came to the latter, by whose advice he abandoned his hermitage in the bog and he, with Mochuda, marked out the site of a new monastery and church at Roscrea. There he founded a great establishment and there he is himself buried. Mochuda took leave of Cronan and, travelling through Eile [Ely O'Carroll], came to the royal city named Cashel. On the following day the king, scil.:—Failbhe [Failbhe Flann], came to Mochuda offering him a place whereon to found a church. Mochuda replied:—"It is not permitted us by God to stay our journey anywhere till we come to the place promised to us by the holy men."



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About the same time there came messengers from the king of Leinster to the king of Munster praying the latter, by virtue of league and alliance, to come to his assistance as Leath-Chuinn and the north were advancing in great force to ravage Leinster. This is how Failbhe was situated at the time: he had lost one of his eyes and he was ashamed to go half-blind into a strange territory. As soon as Mochuda realised the extent of the king's diffidence he blessed the eye making on it the sign of the cross and it was immediately healed in the presence of all. The king and Mochuda took leave of one another and went each his own way. The king and his hosting went to the aid of Leinster in the latter's necessity.

Mochuda journeyed on through Muscraige Oirthir the chief of which territory received him with great honour. Aodhan was the chief's name and he bestowed his homestead called Isiol [Athassel] on Mochuda, who blessed him and his seed. Next he came into the Decies. He travelled through Magh Femin where he broke his journey at Ard Breanuinn [Ardfinnan] on the bank of the Suir. There came to him here Maolochtair, king of the Decies, and the other nobles [or one noble, Suibhne] of his nation who were at variance with him concerning land. Mochuda by the grace of God made peace amongst them, and dismissed them in amity. Maolochtair gave that land to Mochuda who marked out a cell there where is now the city of Ardfinnan, attached to which is a large parish subject to Mochuda and bearing his name. The wife of Maolochtair, scil:—Cuciniceas, daughter of Failbhe Flann, king of Munster, had a vision, viz.:—a flock of very beautiful birds flying above her head and one bird was more beautiful and larger than the rest. The other birds followed this one and it nestled in the king's bosom. Soon as she awoke she related the vision to the king; the king observed: "Woman you have dreamed a good dream and soon it will be realised; the flock of birds you have seen is Mochuda with his monks coming from Rahen and the most distinguished bird is Mochuda himself. And the settling in my bosom means that the place of his resurrection will be in my territory. Many blessings will come to us and our territory through him." That vision of the faithful woman was realised as the faithful king had explained it.

Subsequently Mochuda came to Maolochtair requesting from him a place where he might erect a monastery. Maolochtair replied: "So large a community cannot dwell in such a narrow place." Mochuda said: "God, who sent us to you, will show you a place suited to us." The king answered:—"I have a place, convenient for fish and wood, beside Slieve Gua on the bank of the Nemh but I fear it will not be large enough." Mochuda said:—"It will not be narrow; there is a river and fish and that it shall be the place of our resurrection." Thereupon, in the presence of many witnesses, the king handed over the land, scil.:— Lismore,



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to God and Mochuda and it is in that place Mochuda afterwards founded his famous city. Mochuda blessed the king and his wife as well as the nobles and all the people and taking leave of them and receiving their homage he journeyed across Slieve Gua till he came to the church called Ceall Clochair [Kilcloher]. The saint of that church, scil.: — Mochua Mianain, prepared a supper for Mochuda to the best of his ability, but he had only a single barrel of ale for them all. Although Mochuda with his people remained there three days and three nights and although the holy abbot (Mochua) continued to draw the ale into small vessels to serve the company, according to their needs, the quantity in the barrel grew no less but increased after the manner of the oil blessed by Elias [3 Kings 17:16]. Then one of the monks said to Mochuda, “If you remain in this place till the feast ends your stay will be a long one for it (the entertainment) grows no smaller for all the consumption.” “That is true, brother,” said Mochuda, “and it is fitting for us to depart now.” They started therefore on their way and Mochua Mianain gave himself and his place to God and Mochuda for ever. On Mochuda’s departure the ale barrel drained out to the lees.

Mochuda proceeded till he reached the river Nemh at a ford called Ath-Mheadhon [Affane] which no one could cross except a swimmer or a very strong person at low water in a dry season of summer heat, for the tide flows against the stream far as Lismore, five miles further up. On this particular occasion it happened to be high tide. The two first of Mochuda’s people to reach the ford were the monks Molua and Colman, while Mochuda himself came last. They turned round to him and said that it was not possible to cross the river till the ebb. Mochuda answered: —“Advance through the water before the others in the name of your Lord Jesus Christ for He is the way the truth and the life” [John 14:6]. As soon as they heard this command of Mochuda’s Molua said to Colman, “Which of the two will you hold back—the stream above or the sea below?” Colman answered:—“Let each restrain that which is nearest to him”—for Molua was on the upper, or stream, side and Colman on the lower, or sea, side. Molua said to Colman—“Forbid you the sea side to flow naturally and I shall forbid the stream side.” Then with great faith they proceeded to cross the river; they signed the river with the sign of Christ’s cross and the waters stood on either hand and apart, so that the dry earth appeared between. The side banks of water rose high because there was no passage up or down, so that the ridges were very elevated on both the sea and stream sides. The waters remained thus till such time as all Mochuda’s people had crossed. Mochuda himself was the last to pass over and the path across was so level that it offered no obstacle to foot-passengers or chariots but was like a level plain so that they crossed dryshod, as the Jordan fell back for Josue the son of Nun [Josue 3:17]. Soon as Mochuda had crossed over he blessed the waters and commanded them to resume their natural course. On the reuniting again of the waters they made a noise like thunder, and the name of the place is The Place of Benedictions, from the blessings of Mochuda and his people.



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Next the glorious bishop, Mochuda, proceeded to the place promised to him by God and the prophets, which place is the plain called Magh-Sciath. Mochuda, with the holy men, blessed the place and dedicated there the site of a church in circular form. There came to them a holy woman named Caimell who had a cell there and she asked, "What do you propose doing here, ye servants of God?" "We propose," answered Mochuda, "building here a little 'Lios' [enclosure] around our possession." Caimell observed, "Not a little Lios will it be but a great [mor] one (Lis-mor)." "True indeed, virgin," responded Mochuda, "Lismore will be its name for ever." The virgin offered herself and her cell to God and Mochuda for ever, where the convent of women is now established in the city of Lismore.

As Colman Elo, alluded to already, promised, Mochuda found his burial place marked out (consecrated?) by angels; there he and a multitude of his disciples are buried and it was made known to him by divine wisdom the number of holy persons that to the end of the world would be buried therein. Lismore is a renowned city, for there is one portion of it which no woman may enter and there are within it many chapels and monasteries, and in which there are always multitudes of devout people not from Ireland alone but from the land of the Saxons and from Britain and from other lands as well. This is its situation—on the south bank of the Avonmore in the Decies territory.

On a certain day there came a druid to Mochuda to argue and contend with him. He said:—"If you be a servant of God cause natural fruit to grow on this withered branch." Mochuda knew that it was to throw contempt on the power of God that the druid had come. He blessed the branch and it produced first living skin, then, as the druid had asked—leaves, blossom and fruit in succession. The druid marvelled exceedingly and went his way.

A poor man came to Mochuda on another occasion with an ill timed request for milk, and beer along with it. Mochuda was at the time close by the well which is known as "Mochuda's Well" at the present time; this he blessed changing it first into milk then into beer and finally to wine. Then he told the poor man to take away whatever quantity of each of these liquids he required. The well remained thus till at Mochuda's prayer it returned to its original condition again. An angel came from heaven to Mochuda at the time and told him that the well should remain a source of health and virtues and of marvels, and it still, like every well originally blessed by Mochuda, possesses power of healing from every malady.



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Mochuda, now grown old and of failing powers and strength, was wearied and worried by the incessant clamour of building operations—the dressing of stones and timber—carried on by the multitude of monks and artisans. He therefore by consent and counsel of the brethren retired to a remote, lonely place situated in a glen called “Mochuda’s Inch” below the great monastery. He took with him there a few monks and built a resplendent monastery; he remained in that place a year and six months more leading a hermitical life. The brethren and seniors of the community visited him (from time to time) and he gave them sound, sweetly-reasoned advice. He received a vow from each to follow his Rule, for he was the support of the aged, the health-giver to the weak, the consoler of the afflicted, the hope-giver to the hopeless, the faith-giver to the doubting, the moderator and uniter of the young.

As soon as Mochuda saw the hardship to the visiting brothers and elders of the descent from Lismore and the ascent thereto again—knowing at the same time that his end was approaching—he ordered himself to be carried up to the monastery so that the monks might be saved the fatigue of the descent to him. Then it pleased God to call to Himself His devoted servant from the troubles of life and to render to him the reward of his good works. He opened the gates of heaven then and sent to him a host of angels, in glory and majesty unspeakable. When Mochuda saw the heavens open above him and the angel band approaching, he ordered that he be set down in the middle of the glen and he related to the seniors the things that he had seen and he asked to receive the Body of Christ and he gave his last instruction to the monks—to observe the Law of God and keep His commands. The place was by the cross called “Crux Migrationis,” or the cross from which Mochuda departed to Glory. Having received the Body and Blood of Christ, having taught them divine doctrines, in the midst of holy choirs and of many brethren and monks to whom in turn he gave his blessing and the kiss of peace according to the rule, the glorious and holy bishop departed to heaven accompanied by hosts of angels on the day before the Ides of May [May 14], in his union with the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

Finit 7ber [September] 4th, 1741.

### NOTE 1

One of our scribe’s predecessors omitted a word or two from the text here, with disastrous results to the sense. The Latin Life comes to our aid however and enables us to make good the omission; the latter, by the way, puzzles our scribe who is like a man fighting an invisible enemy—correcting a text of which he does not know the defect. Insertion of the words “walking backwards” immediately after “church,” in the angel’s answer, will enable us to see the original writer’s meaning. The text should probably read:



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The angel answered:—"Whom you shall see going from the church walking backwards to the guest-house" (for it was Mochuda's custom to walk backwards from the door of the church). Comghall announced to his household that there was coming to them a distinguished stranger, well-beloved of God, of whose advent an angel had twice foretold him. Some time later Mochuda arrived at Comghall's establishment, and he went to the monastery first and he did just as the angel foretold of him and Comghall recognised him and bade him welcome.

### NOTE 2

The obits of Mochuda's successors, down to Christian O'Conarchy, are chronicled as follows:—

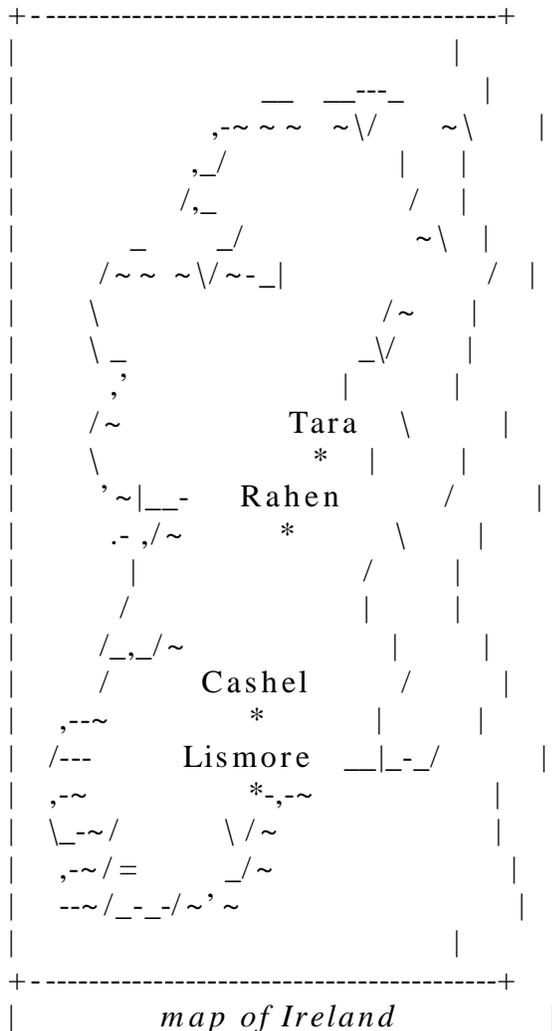
- A.D. 650. Cuanan, maternal uncle and immediate successor of Mochuda (Lanigan).
- A.D. 698. Iarnla, surnamed Hierologus (Four Masters). In his time King Alfrid was a student in Lismore.
- A.D. 702. Colman, son of Finnbhar (Acta Sanctorum). During his reign the abbey of Lismore reached the zenith of its fame.
- A.D. 716. Cronan Ua Eoan (F. Masters).
- A.D. 719. Colman O'Liathain (Annals of Inisfallen).
- A.D. 741. Finghal (F. Masters).
- A.D. 746. Mac hUige (Ibid).
- A.D. 747. Ihrichmech (A. of Inisf.)
- A.D. 748. Maccoigeth (F. M.)
- A.D. 752. Sinchu (F. M.)
- A.D. 755. Condath (Ibid).
- A.D. 756. Fincon (Annals of Ulster).
- A.D. 761. Aedhan (F. M.)
- A.D. 763. Ronan (Ware).
- A.D. 769. Soairleach Ua Concuarain (F. M.)
- A.D. 771. Eoghan (Ibid).
- A.D. 776. Orach (Ibid).
- A.D. 799. Carabran (Ibid).
- A.D. 801. Aedhan Ua Raichlich (A. of Inisf.)
- A.D. 823. Flann (F. M.)
- A.D. 849. Tibrade Ua Baethlanaigh (F. M.) At this period the town was plundered and burned by the Danes who had sailed up thither on the Blackwater.
- A.D. 849. Daniel (A. of Inisf.)
- A.D. 854. Suibne Ua Roichlech (F. M. and A. of Ulster). What is probably his gravestone is one of five Irish-inscribed slabs built into the west gable of the Cathedral.



- A.D. 861. Daniel Ua Liaithidhe (F. M.)  
A.D. 878. Martin Ua Roichligh (Ibid). Another of the inscribed stones above referred to asks "A prayer for Martan."  
A.D. 880. Flann Mac Forbasaich (A. I.)  
A.D. 899. Maelbrihte Mac Maeldomnaich (Ibid).  
A.D. 918. Cormac Mac Cuilennan (A. I.) He is to be distinguished from his more famous namesake of Cashel.  
A.D. 936. Ciaran (F. M.)  
A.D. 951. Diarmuid (Ibid).  
A.D. 957. Maenach Mac Cormaic (Ibid).  
A.D. 958. Cathmog (Ibid). He was also bishop of Cork.  
A.D. 963. Cinaedh (F. M.)  
A.D. 1025. Omaelsluaig (Cotton's "Fasti").  
A.D. 1034. Moriertach O'Selbach, bishop of Lismore (Cotton).  
A.D. 1064. Mac Airthir, bishop (Cotton).  
A.D. 1090. Maelduin O'Rebhacain (Ibid).  
A.D. 1112. Gilla Mochuda O'Rebhacain (A. of I.)  
A.D. 1113. Nial Macgettigan. His episcopal

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staff, possibly enclosing the venerable oaken staff of the founder of the abbey, is still preserved at Lismore Castle. [Also known as the 'Lismore Crozier,' in 2004 it is housed in 'The Treasury' exhibit at the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare St., Dublin 2.]  
 A.D. 1134. Malchus. Most probably he is identical with the first bishop of Waterford. During his term both St. Malachy and King Cormac MacCarthy dwelt as fugitives, guests or pilgrims, at Lismore.  
 A.D. 1142. Ua Rebhacain.  
 A.D. 1186. St. Christian. He had however resigned the bishopric.





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## TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

The source for this text includes the Irish text & English translation on facing pages and notes. The notes are quite lengthy and should take longer to transcribe than the English text. Except for a few notes transplanted in brackets to the body of the text I have not transcribed them. Due to inexperience with the Irish language and its script I have decided not to attempt to transcribe the Irish text. Hopefully someone with the appropriate talent and interest will undertake that task some day. I have corrected the errata as indicated in the source and a few obvious printer errors.