

CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS,  
&c. &c.

KILLEEN CORMAC.

THE cemetery which bears this name is situated in a detached portion of the parish of Davidstown, in the townland of Colbinstown, and barony of East Narragh and Reban, County of Kildare. According to local tradition, the name of this place is due to its being the burial-place of Cormac, King of Munster, whose death is recorded by annalists at the year 917 (Four Masters). “However, it would appear,” says the Rev. Mr. Shearman, “from the Book of Leccan, fol. 95A, that the territory in which it is situated belonged to a correlative tribe of the Dál-Messin Corb, known as the Ui Cormaic, Dálcor-maic, and Fine Cormaic. Their ancestor, Cormac Caech (*Luscus*), was son of Cucorb, King of Leinster, towards the close of the century before the Christian era, whence the name of the church and cemetery, Cell Fine Cormaic, i. e. The Church of the Tribes of Cormac.”

Mr. Shearman is inclined to identify this church with the Cell Fine of Palladius, mentioned in various lives of St. Patrick. In Allen’s *Liber Niger* (according to Mr. Shearman), this place is called Killeen U Lugair. It is situated about three miles to the south of Dunlavin.<sup>a</sup>

The cemetery is thus described by Dr. Samuel Ferguson :—“It lies in a plain of a highly picturesque character, traversed by the River Griese, and diversified by several isolated mounds or eskers. On one of these, rising within a few yards of the river, on the west, exist the remains in question. The mound is of oval form, its major axis lying east and west, and it is occupied by the remains of three concentric enclosures, dividing the surface into three stages or terraces, the highest of which, lying towards the west, is fashioned into a fort. With the exception of a square-shaped depression about the middle of this fort, there are no direct indications of the site of a church ; but the quantity of stones of large size, and suitable for building, which are scattered around, show that a building must have existed here at some time ; and, doubtless, its site was on the summit. Pillar-stones, fragments of crosses, and the debris of the retaining walls, which formerly supported the terraces, give an appearance of singularity and antiquity to the place, which it is difficult to describe.”<sup>b</sup> The entrance,

<sup>a</sup> See *Essays on the Inscribed Stones of Killeen Cormac*, by the Rev. John Francis Shearman. *Irish Eccl. Record*, June, 1868, and *Journal of the Royal Hist. and Arch. Association of Ireland*, 4th series, vol. ii. Dunlavin, i. e. Dún Liamhna, was an ancient seat of the Kings of Leinster. (See the *Circuit of Muirchertach Mac Neill*, VOL. II.

p. 36 ; *Book of Rights*, p. 40, *note*).  
<sup>b</sup> Letter from Dr. Samuel Ferguson to the Rev. John Francis Shearman. (See *Essay on Ancient Cemeteries, in Ireland*, by Dr. S. Ferguson, LL. D., *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. i., second series, 1871-2, p. 124).

marked A in the drawing which follows, is situate towards the west, and probably occupies the position it always held. There are two pillar-stones inside the gate, and that on the right hand bears the inscription given below.

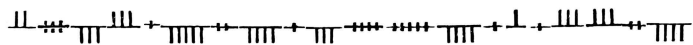


Killeen Cormac Cemetery.

PLATE I.

FIG. 1.

IVVE[N]E DRVIDES.



(Duftano Safei Sahattos. [The stone] of Duftan, the Wise Sage).

This inscription belongs to a class of Old-Celtic bilingual inscriptions, of which examples have been found at St. Dogmaels, near Cardigan, and elsewhere, in Wales. Here the words are all in the genitive case, being governed by some word understood, meaning ‘stone.’ The Latin is rather corrupt, and might be amended *Juvenis Druidis*, with which compare the names *Mocu-druidi* (Reeves’ Life of St. Columba, p. 77), and *Meccu-droi* on the Ogham inscription of Bressay (Proc. Royal Ir. Acad., vi., 248). In the Ogham part of the inscription, *Duftano* for *Duftanós* is the genitive singular of a stem in *u*, the nom. sing. of which would, in primeval Celtic, be *Dubutanus*, meaning ‘black-thin’ (compare

NOTICES OF THE PLATES. 3

*dub-glas* gl. *coeruleus*). *Safei* must be the genitive singular of *Safos* (= Ir. *sab*) or *Safeos*. In the last word *Sahattos*, the *h* seems inserted merely to prevent the hiatus produced by the loss of the letter *p*. For in meaning, as in root and stem, *Sahattos* appears to be identical with the Latin adjective *sapientis*, so the Celtic part of the inscription may be translated thus:—[Lapis] Dubtanis sophi sapientis [i. e. ‘the stone], of Duftan, the wise sage.’ This inscription may be compared with the passage in the Amra Coluimchille, “Bái sab súithe cech dind,” ‘He was a sage of science in every hill.’

Here, as is usual in the bilingual inscriptions hitherto discovered, the one form seems a translation of the other, with the addition of the proper name in the Oghamic Celtic version. It is right to say, however, that the above reading and version are mere conjectures, and that a different reading of the Latin inscription on this stone has been suggested by Dr. Samuel Ferguson, who reads the Roman letters IV VERE DRUIDES, quatuor vere druides.<sup>a</sup> Parallel instances to such a formula as this will appear in the course of this work, such as the stones in Aran, inscribed VII ROMANI, and II CANOIN, and that in Iniscealtra ILAD IN DECHENBOIR, ‘the stone-tomb of the ten.’

It is interesting to observe that the lettering on this stone is not the Lombardic Uncial, which is now known as the Irish character, but is rather a genuine Roman form.

Drawn on stone by M. S. from a model and rubbing made by the Rev. John Francis Shearman.

THE CAMP.

THE place so named is situated on the western side of a mountain named Cahir Conree in the parish of Kilgobban, in the barony of Corkaguiny, and county of Kerry. The mountain derives its name from an ancient fortress which crowns its summit. Cahir Conree, or Fort of Cúroi, is said, in the ancient legends of the country, to have been built by Cúroi mac Dairi about the first century of the Christian era. In Mac Firbis’s Book of Genealogies the following passage occurs:—

“Caisleoir Chonrui Cingdorn cain.”

‘The Cashel-builder of Cúroi was Cindorn the beautiful.’

Curry reads the name *Cidoin* or *Cidiom* (Lect. p. 222).

The death of Cúroi by the hand of Cúchulainn is related in Keating’s History of Ireland (Haliday’s ed.), pp. 399–405.<sup>b</sup>

When Dr. O’Donovan, in the Ordnance Survey employment, visited The Camp, he found that an ancient structure had formerly stood there; but when he wrote in the year 1839, it was quite destroyed. The only existing monument now remaning in this place is the following inscribed stone.

<sup>a</sup> See Paper read before the Royal Irish Academy, by Dr. Samuel Ferguson, on the Transcription of Ogham Legends. Proceedings Royal Irish Academy, vol. i., ser. 2, No. 4, p. 32.

<sup>b</sup> See O’Curry’s Lectures on the Manuscripts Materials of Ancient Irish History, p. 273; App., pp. 577, 587.

CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

PLATE II.

FIGS. 2, 3, AND 4.

F E C [I] T [C] U N U R I .

The above reading is given as the merest guess. The Oghamic portion of this inscription, when read, not as is usual from left to right, but from right to left, has been thus deciphered by the Bishop of Limerick, Dr. Graves: “Conuneatt Mocui Conuri,” ‘Connait son of Curoi.’ Dr. Ferguson remarks, in speaking of the other part of the inscription:—“The Cunuri is unquestionably the same as the Conri (recte Conroi) of the mountain, modified according to a method of imparting dignity by, amongst other artifices, the insertion of an additional syllable, common in the remains of this curious kind of lapidary literature.” It has also been doubtfully proposed to read the non-Oghamic portion of this inscription thus—FECTUNUNI, to regard *fectununi* as another instance of the practice of disguising words by the introduction of an arbitrary ingredient (here *un*), and to equate *fectuni* or *fectune*, which we thus attain, with *fechtaine*, which is a law-term for a particular kind of land called *tír díbaid*. (See O’Davoren’s Glossary, p. 89.) If this conjecture be correct, the sepulchral stone of the son of Cúroi has been made to record the property-rights of others.

The stone on which these characters are found is described by Dr. Ferguson as resembling the dislodged covering stone of a cromlech. When taking a cast of the Ogham digits, in the year 1869, Dr. Ferguson first discovered that the stone bore also the cross, represented in Fig. 2, and the legend in debased Latin characters of the early Christian period.

This monument has been already described by the Bishop of Limerick, in the Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy for 1871-72, vol. i., ser. 2, p. 52; and by Dr. Samuel Ferguson, in his poem of Congal. Note 60, pp. 223, 225.

Drawn by M. S. from a photograph taken from a cast of the stone by Dr. Samuel Ferguson.

CELL FINTEN .

THE townland which bears this name, in the form *Kilfountan*, is situated in the parish of Kildrum, and barony of Corkaguiny, in the county of Kerry. The name of the parish is derived from Cell Droma, i. e. ‘the Church of the ridge,’ and the name of the place itself signifies the ‘Church of Finten.’

The name of Finten was a common one, among the Irish ecclesiastics. In the Martyrology of Donegal there are twenty-two persons of that name. In the Chronicon Scotorum, at the date 683 (p. 109), mention is made of the monastery of Fintan (i. e. Munnu), son of Tulchan; and his death is thus recorded in the same work, A. D. 634—“Quies of Finten (Munnu), son of Tulchan, on the 12th of the kalends of November.” The word in brackets is written as a gloss, in the original hand, over the name of Finten in one MS.; another reads Munhan (of Munster). (See note by Mr. Hennessy, Chron. Scotor., p. 108.) Finten, alias Munnu, gives his name to Taghmon, in the county of Wexford. His day is October 21. (See Reeves’s Life of S. Columba, pp. 21, 22.) Another of the name was Finten, of Dún Bleisce, in Munster, now Doon, in the county of Limerick. He is commemorated on the 3rd of January, and



NOTICES OF THE PLATES. 5

is said to have been a cotemporary of St. Finian, of Moville, and a pupil of St. Comgall of Bangor, so he appears to have lived about the end of the sixth century. In Colgan's life of this saint, he describes him as resting in a place called Kill Finten, whence he passed on to Tulach Benain, both of which places, Colgan remarks, were probably in Munster. (*See* A. SS. iii. Januarii, Vita S. Fintani, cap. v., vi., p. 2, and note 14, p. 13.)  
The only existing remains are the foundation of a small church, and an ancient cemetery, reserved for unbaptized children and suicides, within which, and at a distance of about ten feet from the north-east corner of the church, there is the pillar-stone (Pl. III., Fig 5), inscribed with the founder's name, and an Ogham, which has not been deciphered.

R E A S K .

REASK is situated in the parish of Marhin, in the barony of Coreaguiny, county of Kerry. Marhin lies south of Kilmalkedar parish. In the townland of Reask there is an old burial place that has fallen into disuse, and is called Ceallúrac (Calloragh): two upright stones were found there, and first illustrated by Mr. Windele, of Cork (*See* Pl. III., Figs. 6 and 7.)

PLATE III.  
FIG. 5.  
F I N T E N .

The fragment of an Ogham inscription on this stone has not been deciphered. The stone is ornamented with a rude scroll, one of the oldest examples of the divergent spiral design or trumpet pattern yet found incised on stone.  
An illustration of the stone has been already published by Mr. Windele, of Cork. The stone stands near the side of a road in the townland of Killfountain, formerly Cell Finten.  
Drawn by M. S. from the stone in the year 1868.

FIGS. 6 AND 7.  
D Ñ S .  
(Dominus.)

These figures represent the opposite sides of a small stone, measuring three feet nine inches in length. It is not possible to decipher with certainty the inscription on the back of the stone, Fig. 7, but it may perhaps be read *ĐNO* (*Domino*).  
It came originally from the burying-place of Reask, but was found by Lord Dunraven not *in situ*, but lying in an open field in the neighbourhood, and removed by him to the museum at Adare Manor, where it is now preserved.  
Drawn on stone by M.S. from a wood engraving, published by the late Earl of Dunraven in his work, *Memorials of Adare*, p. 154.

PLATE IV.

FIG. 8.

D Ñ E .

(Domine.)

This inscription is found on a fine pillar-stone in the burial-ground of Reask. The following extract from a letter of Dr. Petrie's to the Earl of Dunraven on such inscriptions will be read with interest :—  
“ With reference to the antiquity of your incised Kerry crosses, I do not know what I can add to the simple expression of my opinion that I consider them unquestionably of the fifth, or at the latest sixth, century ; and perhaps I should add that such cross-inscriptions, as well as the letters *dns*, *dni*, *dno* ; or *dns*, *dni*, *dno*, which so often accompany them—abbreviations of *Dominus*, *Domini*, *Domino*—are almost peculiar to the ancient territory of Kerry, and its Islands, in which such remains, like its Ogham inscriptions, are so common, and in which I cannot but believe that Christianity was first planted.”  
(*See Memorials of Adare*, p. 153.)

A similar inscription is found on a small stone, measuring eleven inches by two inches and three-quarters, which was found at Papa Stronsay, Orkney, under the church of St. Nicholas, when the foundation was removed during some recent improvements. It lay about twenty yards' distance from the foundation of the chapel. (*See Sculptured Stones of Scotland*. Vol. i., Plate XLII., and *Notices of Plates*, p. 14.)

The face of this stone is ornamented with a scroll, showing a fine example of the divergent spiral or trumpet pattern, and surmounted by a Maltese cross, enclosed in a circle.

Drawn by M. S. from a rubbing of the stone taken by the late Earl of Dunraven.

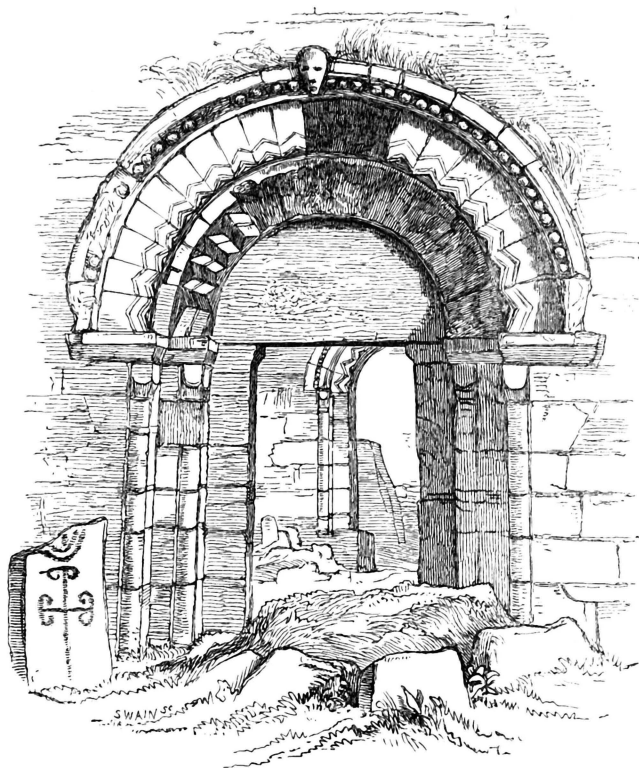
K I L M A L K E D A R .

THE parish and townland of this name are situated in the barony of Corkaguiny, in the county of Kerry.

The name is derived from Cell Maelcedair—that is, the ‘ Church of Maelchedair.’ In the Martyrology of Donegal we read—May 14, “ Maolcethair, son of Ronán, son of the king of Uladh, of Cill Melchedair, near the shore of the sea to the west of Brandon Hill. He was of the race of Fiatach Finn, monarch of Erin.”

No further historical record appears to exist of this place, which, to judge from the existing remains, must have been an ecclesiastical establishment of some note from an early period down to the twelfth century. It lies close to Smerwick Harbour, where the remains of stone fortresses and circular stone houses are to be found in numbers through the valleys ; and on the mountains, ancient stone oratories, built of uncemented stones, admirably fitted to each other, and their lateral walls converging from the base to their apex in curved lines, yet evincing no acquaintance with the principle of the arch. Such oratories may be seen all through the west of Ireland ; but the finest existing is that of Gallarus, which lies close to Kilmalkedar. Another is still standing near the ruined church of Kilmalkedar, which

is itself one of the most remarkable specimens of Irish Romanesque architecture, and probably belongs to the eleventh or twelfth century. The two pillar-stones here given are among the most interesting monuments of the place, and probably date from the foundation of the church. One is now standing at the doorway of the church, and the other at the east end of the oratory of Gallarus.



Doorway, Kilmalkedar Church.

PLATE V.

FIG. 9.

D Ñ E.

[A] B C D E F G H I [ ] L M N O P Q R S T U Y Z, & c.

This is the second pillar-stone we have met with in Ireland, inscribed with the invocation ‘Domine.’ It is the first that has other characters in addition, and appears a well preserved and most interesting example of the whole alphabet in the Roman character of the sixth or seventh century, upon which Dr. Petrie remarks—“As to the object of this inscription I can of course offer only a conjecture, namely, that it was an *abecedarium*, cut by one of the early Christian settlers in this place,—either a foreigner, or a native who had received a foreign education,—for instructing his followers in the rudiments of the Latin language; for that it was the practice of the first teachers of Christianity

8 CHRISTIAN INSCRIPTIONS.

in Ireland to furnish their disciples with the *abecedarium*, or Roman alphabet, appears quite clear from Nennius, and the most ancient Lives of St. Patrick, as may be seen by reference to Harris’s Ware, Irish Writers, Book ii., c. 1.” (Eccles. Architecture of Ireland, p. 132, ed. 1845.)

An illustration of this stone, from a drawing by Mr. Wakeman, has been already published by Dr. Petrie in his Ecclesiastical Architecture, p. 131.

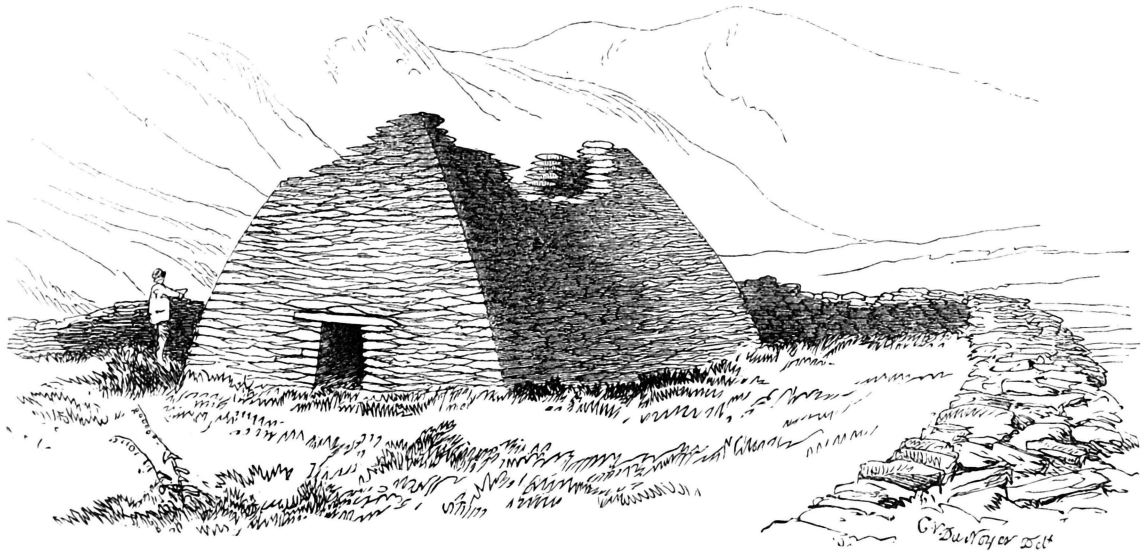
Drawn by M. S. from a rubbing and photograph taken of the stone by the late Earl of Dunraven.

FIG. 10.  
L I E C O L U M M E C . . . . . M E C .  
(The stone of Colum . . . . .)

There are only three instances as yet discovered in Ireland of the use of this formula, although there are many where the word *lie*, ‘stone,’ is understood, and the name of the person is given in the genitive case.

The name *Colum* is a common one, but has not yet been identified with that of any person connected with this district. That the date of this stone is about the same as those at Kilmalkedar and Kilfountan seems probable, from the strong resemblance in the character of the letters and the form of the cross within the circle.

This stone lies to the east of the oratory of Gallarus, in the townland of Gallarus, in the barony of Corkaguiny, in the county of Kerry.



Gallarus—External View.

A drawing by Mr. Wakeman, copied on wood by Dr. Petrie, has been given in Petrie’s Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland, p. 133. Dr. Petrie was inclined to believe that this pillar-stone marked the grave of the founder of the church in this place.

Drawn by M. S. from a rubbing of the stone taken by the late Earl of Dunraven.



NOTICES OF THE PLATES.

INCHAGOILL.

INIS-AN-GHOILL, i. e. ‘the Island of the Foreigner,’ now Incha Goill, or Inchaguile, is an island in Lough Corrib, in the county of Galway, situated nearly midway between Oughterard and Cong, and belonging to Cong parish. (*See Four Masters*, vol. ii., p. 1028, *note*.)

The Four Masters have the following entry at A. D. 1128:—“Muirgheas O’Nioc, successor of Iarlath of Tuaim-da-ghualann for a time, died on Inis-an-Ghoill.” He was Bishop of Tuam, and a monument is still shown upon the island as his tomb. It is a piece of square masonry, ten and a half feet long by seven feet eight inches broad, and about four feet high. (*See Lough Corrib*, by Sir W. R. Wilde, p. 148.)

O’Flaherty (*Iar Connaught*, p. 24), writing in 1684, says—“Inis-an-Ghoill, so called of a certain holy person who there lived of old, known only by the name of An Gall Craibhtheach, i. e. the devout forreigner: for Gall (i. e. of the Gallick nation), they call every foreigner.”

The remains of the two churches on this island have been described by Dr. Petrie, in his *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland*, p. 161. Of the most primitive looking\* of these two buildings he writes—“That this church is of the age of St. Patrick, as is believed in the traditions of the country, and as its name [Templepatrick] would indicate, can, I think, scarcely admit of doubt; for, though there is another church on the island of beautiful architecture, and of similar form and nearly equal dimensions, and undoubtedly of an age considerably anterior to the arrival of the English, it appears, nevertheless, a modern structure as compared with this. It is, however, greatly to be regretted that of the foundation of this, as indeed of many other churches believed to have been erected by St. Patrick, we have no historical account remaining.”



Doorway of later Church, Inchagoill.

PLATE VI.

FIG. 11.

L I E L U G U A E D O N M A C C I M E N U E H .

(The stone of Lugaed, son of Men.)

*Lie, liae, or lia* (gen. *liac*, Ebel's Zeuss G. C., 260), means 'stone:' it has probably lost a *v*, and may thus be compared with the Greek *λᾶς* from *λᾶς*. *Lugu-aedon* is a gen. sing. of an n-stem. The first part of the compound, *lugu*, means 'little,' and occurs in Old-Celtic names like Lugu-dunum 'Lyons,' Lugu-ballium 'Carlisle.' It is the Greek *ἐλαχς* (*elachys*), the Skr. *laghu-s*, and occurs in Old Irish as *lu* 'little,' comparative *laigiú*. The gen. *aedon*, is exactly the Greek *αἰθῶνος* (*aithōnos*), gen. sing. of *αἰθῶν* (*aithōn*), 'fiery,' 'flashing.' So the Gaulish *Aedui*, the Irish name *Aed*, are connected with the Greek *αἶθος*, 'fire.' *Mac*ci is the Oghamic *Maqi*, the gen. sing. of *maqos*, 'a son,' now *mac*. *Menu*eh must be the gen. sing. of an Old-Celtic *Menus*, Welsh *Menw*, = Skr. *Manu*, Greek *Μένως*. As to the form compare Greek *νέκυ-ος*, Old Latin *senatu-os*.

The name Lugaed Mac Menn has not been identified. In the Martyrology of Donegal, at May 12, we read "Lugaedh, son of Aenghus, Priest, of Tigh Luta, in Fotharta mora."

It was suggested to Dr. Petrie by O'Donovan, in a letter dated June 9, 1839, that this name might be identified with that of Lugnaedon, or Lugnadan, son of Liamania (Liamhain), sister of St. Patrick, and this reading was adopted by Dr. Petrie when he published, in his Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland, p. 162, a drawing of the stone, which was made for him by Mr. William F. Wakeman at the same period.

This stone is not of the usual form for a tombstone, whether a slab or pillar-stone. It is more like one of those corner stones projecting, like handles, at the angles of the old Irish churches.

R O S C O M M O N A B B E Y .

THE first Abbey of Roscommon was founded in the year 742. The entries in the Annals respecting it are as follows:—

- A. D. 742. Comman of Ross, who was Abbot of Clonmacnois, and eke a man full of the grace of God was he, died.
- A. D. 774. Forbhasach, son of Maeltoia, Abbot of Ros-Comain, died.
- A. D. 788. The law of St. Comman was promulgated by Aeldobhair, i. e. Abbot of Ross-Commain, and by Muirgheas throughout the three divisions of Connaught.
- A. D. 795. Aeldobhar, Abbot of Ros-Commain, died.
- A. D. 811. Joseph, scribe of Ros-Commain, died.
- A. D. 813. Siadhail, Abbot and Bishop of Ros-Commain, died.
- A. D. 828. Joseph, son of Nechtan, Abbot of Ros-Commain, died.
- A. D. 835. Ceallach, son of Forbhasach, Airchinnech of Ros-Commain, was slain.
- A. D. 914. Martin, Abbot of Ros-Commain, died.
- A. D. 928. Donnghal, Abbot of Ros-Comain, died.