

University of South Florida Department of History
Social Studies Workshop Series, Spring 2024
Irish History Through Holidays: History Lessons for St. Patrick's Day and Halloween
Thursday, March 7th

Primary Source Packet

St. Patrick

- St. Patrick's Confession
- Muirchú's Life of St. Patrick, excerpts
- Tírechán's Life of St. Patrick, excerpts

Samhain

- The Adventures of Nera, excerpts
- The Drunkenness of the Ulstermen, excerpts

Irish Language & Culture

- Link to Book of Kells coloring sheets
- TG-4 shorts links
- Irish phrases

St. Patrick's Confession

Translation by Pádraig McCarthy, available for free at
https://www.confessio.ie/etexts/confessio_english#

1

My name is Patrick. I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers. I am looked down upon by many. My father was Calpornius. He was a deacon; his father was Potitus, a priest, who lived at Bannavem Taburniae. His home was near there, and that is where I was taken prisoner. I was about sixteen at the time. At that time, I did not know the true God. I was taken into captivity in Ireland, along with thousands of others. We deserved this, because we had gone away from God, and did not keep his commandments. We would not listen to our priests, who advised us about how we could be saved. The Lord brought his strong anger upon us, and scattered us among many nations even to the ends of the earth. It was among foreigners that it was seen how little I was.

2

It was there that the Lord opened up my awareness of my lack of faith. Even though it came about late, I recognised my failings. So I turned with all my heart to the Lord my God, and he looked down on my lowliness and had mercy on my youthful ignorance. He guarded me before I knew him, and before I came to wisdom and could distinguish between good and evil. He protected me and consoled me as a father does for his son.

3

That is why I cannot be silent – nor would it be good to do so – about such great blessings and such a gift that the Lord so kindly bestowed in the land of my captivity. This is how we can repay such blessings, when our lives change and we come to know God, to praise and bear witness to his great wonders before every nation under heaven.

4

This is because there is no other God, nor will there ever be, nor was there ever, except God the Father. He is the one who was not begotten, the one without a beginning, the one from whom all beginnings come, the one who holds all things in being – this is our teaching. And his son, Jesus Christ, whom we testify has always been, since before the beginning of this age, with the father in a spiritual way. He was begotten in an indescribable way before every beginning. Everything we can see, and everything beyond our sight, was made through him. He became a human being; and, having overcome death, was welcomed to the heavens to the Father. The Father gave him all power over every being, both heavenly and earthly and beneath the earth. Let every tongue confess that Jesus Christ, in whom we believe and whom we await to come back to us in the near future, is Lord and God. He is judge of the living and of the dead; he rewards every person according to their deeds. He has generously poured on us the Holy Spirit, the gift and

promise of immortality, who makes believers and those who listen to be children of God and co-heirs with Christ. This is the one we acknowledge and adore – one God in a trinity of the sacred name.

5

He said through the prophet: 'Call on me in the day of your distress, and I will set you free, and you will glorify me.' Again he said: 'It is a matter of honour to reveal and tell forth the works of God.'

6

Although I am imperfect in many ways, I want my brothers and relations to know what I'm really like, so that they can see what it is that inspires my life.

7

I am not ignoring the evidence of my Lord, who testifies in the psalm: 'You destroy those who speak lies.' And again he says: 'A mouth which lies kills the soul.' And the same Lord says in the gospel: 'The idle words which people speak, they will account for on the day of judgment.'

8

So I should greatly dread, with fear and trembling, this sentence on that day, where nobody can avoid or escape, but all shall give complete account of the least of sins before the tribunal of the Lord Christ.

9

This is why I have long thought to write, but up to now I have hesitated, because I feared what people would say. This is because I did not learn as others did, who drank in equally well both the law and the sacred writings, and never had to change their way of speaking since childhood, but always grew better and better at it. For me, however, my speech and words have been translated into a foreign language, as it can be easily seen from my writings the standard of the instruction and learning I have had. As it is said: 'The wise person is known through speech, and also understanding and knowledge and the teaching of truth.'

10

However, even though there's truth in my excuse, it gets me nowhere. Now, in my old age, I want to do what I was unable to do in my youth. My sins then prevented me from really taking in what I read. But who believes me, even were I to repeat what I said previously? I was taken prisoner as a youth, particularly young in the matter of being able to speak, and before I knew what I should seek and what I should avoid. That is why, today, I blush and am afraid to expose my lack of experience, because I can't express myself with the brief words I would like in my heart and soul.

11

If I had been given the same chance as other people, I would not be silent, whatever the reward. If I seem to some to be too forward, with my lack of knowledge and my even slower tongue, still it is written: 'Stammering tongues will quickly learn to speak peace.' How much more should we want to do this, who are, as it is said, a saving letter of Christ even to the ends of the earth. Although it is not well expressed, still this letter is genuinely and strongly written in your hearts, not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God. The Spirit is a witness that what is of the countryside is also created by the Most High!

12

So I am first of all a simple country person, a refugee, and unlearned. I do not know how to provide for the future. But this I know for certain, that before I was brought low, I was like a stone lying deep in the mud. Then he who is powerful came and in his mercy pulled me out, and lifted me up and placed me on the very top of the wall. That is why I must shout aloud in return to the Lord for such great good deeds of his, here and now and forever, which the human mind cannot measure.

13

So be amazed, all you people great and small who fear God! You well-educated people in authority, listen and examine this carefully. Who was it who called one as foolish as I am from the middle of those who are seen to be wise and experienced in law and powerful in speech and in everything? If I am most looked

down upon, yet he inspired me, before others, so that I would faithfully serve the nations with awe and reverence and without blame: the nations to whom the love of Christ brought me. His gift was that I would spend my life, if I were worthy of it, to serving them in truth and with humility to the end.

14

In the knowledge of this faith in the Trinity, and without letting the dangers prevent it, it is right to make known the gift of God and his eternal consolation. It is right to spread abroad the name of God faithfully and without fear, so that even after my death I may leave something of value to the many thousands of my brothers and sisters – the children whom I baptised in the Lord.

15

I didn't deserve at all that the Lord would grant such great grace, after hardships and troubles, after captivity, and after so many years among that people. It was something which, when I was young, I never hoped for or even thought of.

16

After I arrived in Ireland, I tended sheep every day, and I prayed frequently during the day. More and more the love of God increased, and my sense of awe before God. Faith grew, and my spirit was moved, so that in one day I would pray up to one hundred times, and at night perhaps the same. I even remained in the woods and on the mountain, and I would rise to pray before dawn in snow and ice and rain. I never felt the worse for it, and I never felt lazy – as I realise now, the spirit was burning in me at that time.

17

It was there one night in my sleep that I heard a voice saying to me: "You have fasted well. Very soon you will return to your native country." Again after a short while, I heard a someone saying to me: "Look – your ship is ready." It was not nearby, but a good two hundred miles away. I had never been to the place, nor did I know anyone there. So I ran away then, and left the man with whom I had been for six years. It was in the strength of God that I went – God who turned the direction of my life to good; I feared nothing while I was on the journey to that ship.

18

The day I arrived, the ship was about to leave the place. I said I needed to set sail with them, but the captain was not at all pleased. He replied unpleasantly and angrily: "Don't you dare try to come with us." When I heard that, I left them and went back to the hut where I had lodgings. I began to pray while I was going; and before I even finished the prayer, I heard one of them shout aloud at me: "Come quickly – those men are calling you!" I turned back right away, and they began to say to me: "Come – we'll trust you. Prove you're our friend in any way you wish." That day, I refused to suck their breasts, because of my reverence for God. They were pagans, and I hoped they might come to faith in Jesus Christ. This is how I got to go with them, and we set sail right away.

19

After three days we made it to land, and then for twenty eight days we travelled through a wilderness. Food ran out, and great hunger came over them. The captain turned to me and said: "What about this, Christian? You tell us that your God is great and all-powerful – why can't you pray for us, since we're in a bad state with hunger? There's no sign of us finding a human being anywhere!" Then I said to them with some confidence: "Turn in faith with all your hearts to the Lord my God, because nothing is impossible for him, so that he may put food in your way – even enough to make you fully satisfied! He has an abundance everywhere." With the help of God, this is actually what happened! A herd of pigs appeared in the way before our eyes! They killed many of them and there they remained for two nights, and were fully restored, and the dogs too were filled. Many of them had grown weak and left half-alive by the way. After this, they gave the greatest of thanks to God, and I was honoured in their eyes. From this day on, they had plenty of food. They also found some wild honey, and offered some of it to me. However, one of them said: "This honey must have been offered in sacrifice to a god." Thanks be to God, from then on I tasted none of it.

20

That same night while I was sleeping, Satan strongly put me to the test – I will remember it as long as I live! It was as if an enormous rock fell on me, and I lost all power in my limbs. Although I knew little about the life of the spirit at the time, how was it that I knew to call upon Helias? While these things were happening, I saw the sun rise in the sky, and while I was calling “Helias! Helias!” with all my strength, the splendour of the sun fell on me; and immediately, all that weight was lifted from me. I believe that I was helped by Christ the Lord, and that his spirit cried out for me. I trust that it will be like this whenever I am under stress, as the gospel says: “In that day, the Lord testifies, it will not be you will speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”

21

It happened again after many years that I was taken a prisoner. On the first night I was with them, I heard a divine answer saying to me: “You will be with them for two months.” This is how it was: on the sixtieth night, the Lord freed me from their hands.

22

While we were still on the journey, the Lord provided food and fire and shelter every day until we met some people on the tenth day. As I mentioned above, we travelled for twenty eight days through the wilderness. On the very night we met people, we ran out of food.

23

A few years later I was again with my parents in Britain. They welcomed me as a son, and they pleaded with me that, after all the many tribulations I had undergone, I should never leave them again. It was while I was there that I saw, in a vision in the night, a man whose name was Victoricus coming as it were from Ireland with so many letters they could not be counted. He gave me one of these, and I read the beginning of the letter, the voice of the Irish people. While I was reading out the beginning of the letter, I thought I heard at that moment the voice of those who were beside the wood of Voclut, near the western sea. They called out as it were with one voice: “We beg you, holy boy, to come and walk again among us.” This touched my heart deeply, and I could not read any further; I woke up then. Thanks be to God, after many years the Lord granted them what they were calling for.

24

Another night – I do not know, God knows, whether it was within me or beside me – I heard authoritative words which I could hear but not understand, until at the end of the speech it became clear: “The one who gave his life for you, he it is who speaks in you”; and I awoke full of joy.

25

Another time, I saw in me one who was praying. It was as if I were inside my body, and I heard above me, that is, above my inner self. He prayed strongly, with sighs. I was amazed and astonished, and pondered who it was who prayed in me; but at the end of the prayer, it was clear that it was the Spirit. At this I awoke, and I remembered the apostle saying: “The Spirit helps the weaknesses of our prayer; for we do know what it is we should pray, but the very Spirit pleads for us with unspeakable sighs, which cannot be expressed in words.” And again: “The Lord is our advocate, and pleads for us.”

26

One time I was put to the test by some superiors of mine. They came and put my sins against my hard work as a bishop. This hit me very hard, so much so that it seemed I was about to fall, both here and in eternity. But the Lord in his kindness spared the converts and the strangers for the sake of his name, and strongly supported me when I was so badly treated. I did not slip into sin and disgrace. I pray that God not hold this sin against them.

27

They brought up against me after thirty years something I had already confessed before I was a deacon. What happened was that, one day when I was feeling anxious and low, with a very dear friend of mine I referred to some things I had done one day – rather, in one hour – when I was young, before I overcame

my weakness. I don't know – God knows – whether I was then fifteen years old at the time, and I did not then believe in the living God, not even when I was a child. In fact, I remained in death and unbelief until I was reproved strongly, and actually brought low by hunger and nakedness daily.

28

My defence was that I remained on in Ireland, and that not of my own choosing, until I almost perished. However, it was very good for me, since God straightened me out, and he prepared me for what I would be today. I was far different then from what I am now, and I have care for others, and I have enough to do to save them. In those days I did not even have concern for my own welfare.

29

So on the day I was accused by those I mentioned above, that same night I saw in a vision of the night some writing before my dishonoured face. In the middle of this, I heard an answer from God saying to me: "We have seen with displeasure the face of the one who was chosen deprived of his good name." He did not say: "You have seen with displeasure", but "We have seen with displeasure", as if he were identifying himself with me; as he said "He who touches you as it were touches the pupil of my eye."

30

For that reason, I give thanks to the one who strengthened me in all things, so that he would not impede me in the course I had undertaken and from the works also which I had learned from Christ my Lord. Rather, I sensed in myself no little strength from him, and my faith passed the test before God and people.

31

I make bold to say that my conscience does not blame me, now and in the future. I have God for witness that I have not told lies in the account I have given you.

32

But I grieve more for my very dear friend, that we had to hear such an account – the one to whom I entrusted my very soul. I did learn from some brothers before the case was heard that he came to my defence in my absence. I was not there at the time, not even in Britain, and it was not I who brought up the matter. In fact it was he himself who told me from his own mouth: "Look, you are being given the rank of bishop." That is something I did not deserve. How could he then afterwards come to disgrace me in public before all, both good and bad, about a matter for which he had already freely and joyfully forgiven me, as indeed had God, who is greater than all?

33

I have said enough about that. I must take care not to hide the gift of God which he has generously given us in the land of my captivity. It was then that I looked for him with all my strength, and there I found him, and he protected me from all evils – this is what I believe – on account of his Spirit living and working in me to this very day. I'm proud to tell again of this. God knows, if it were some other person who had said this to me, perhaps I would have said nothing, because of the love of Christ.

34

So I'll never stop giving thanks to my God, who kept me faithful in the time of my temptation. I can today with confidence offer my soul to Christ my Lord as a living victim. He is the one who defended me in all my difficulties. I can say: Who am I, Lord, or what is my calling, that you have worked with me with such divine presence? This is how I come to praise and magnify your name among the nations all the time, wherever I am, not only in good times but in the difficult times too. Whatever comes about for me, good or bad, I ought to accept them equally and give thanks to God. He has shown me that I can put my faith in him without wavering and without end. However ignorant I am, he has heard me, so that in these late days I can dare to undertake such a holy and wonderful work. In this way I can imitate somewhat those whom the Lord foretold would announce his gospel in witness to all nations before the end of the world. This is what we see has been fulfilled. Look at us: we are witnesses that the gospel has been preached right out to where there is nobody else there!

35

It's a long story – to tell each and every deed of mine, or even parts of it. I'll make it short, as I tell of how the good God often freed me from slavery, and from twelve dangers which threatened my life, as well as from hidden dangers and from things which I have no words to express. I wouldn't want to hurt my readers! God knows all things even before they are done, and I have him as my authority that he often gave me warnings in heavenly answers, – me, a wretched orphan!

36

From where did this wisdom come to me, a wisdom which was not in me? I didn't even know how the number of days, much less did I know God. Where did such a great and life-giving gift come from then, to know and love God, even at the cost of leaving homeland and parents?

37

And many were the gifts offered to me, along with sorrow and tears. There were those whom I offended, even against the wishes of some of my superiors; but, with God guiding me, I did not consent nor acquiesce to them. It was not by my own grace, but God who overcame it in me, and resisted them all so that I could come to the peoples of Ireland to preach the gospel. I bore insults from unbelievers, so that I would hear the hatred directed at me for travelling here. I bore many persecutions, even chains, so that I could give up my freeborn state for the sake of others. If I be worthy, I am ready even to give up my life most willingly here and now for his name. It is there that I wish to spend my life until I die, if the Lord should grant it to me.

38

I am greatly in debt to God. He gave me such great grace, that through me, many people should be born again in God and brought to full life. Also that clerics should be ordained everywhere for this people who have lately come to believe, and who the Lord has taken from the ends of the earth. This is just what he promised in the past through his prophet: "The nations will come to you from the ends of the earth, and they will say: How false are the idols our fathers got for themselves, and they are of no use whatever." And again: "I have put you as a light to the nations, that you may be their salvation to the end of the earth."

39

It is there that I await his promise – he is the one who never deceives, as is repeated in the gospel: "They will come from the east and from the west, and they will lie down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." We believe that believing people will come from all over the world.

40

It is right that we should fish well and diligently, as the Lord directs and teaches when he says: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And again he says through the prophets: "Behold, I send many fishers and hunters, says God"; and other such sayings. Therefore it is very right that we should cast our nets, so that a great multitude and crowd will be taken for God. Also that there should be clerics to baptise and encourage a people in need and want. This is what the Lord says in the gospel: he warns and teaches in these words: "Go therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and behold I am with you all days, even to the end of the age." Again he says: "Go out therefore to the whole world and announce the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned." And yet again: "This gospel of the kingdom will be announced all over the world, as testimony to all the nations; and then will come the end." In the same way, the Lord foretold this through the prophet as he said: "And it will come about in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy; your young people will see visions and your older people will dream dreams. Indeed, on my servants, men and women, I will pour out my Spirit and they will prophesy." Hosea says: "Those who were not my people, I will call my people; and her who has not obtained mercy, I will name the one who has obtained mercy. In the place where it was said: You are not my people: there they will be called children of the living God."

41

How has this happened in Ireland? Never before did they know of God except to serve idols and unclean things. But now, they have become the people of the Lord, and are called children of God. The sons and daughters of the leaders of the Irish are seen to be monks and virgins of Christ!

42

An example is this. There was a blessed Irish woman of noble birth, a most beautiful adult whom I baptised. She came to us a few days later for this reason. She told us that she had received word from a messenger of God, who advised her that she should become a virgin of Christ, and that she should come close to God. Thanks be to God, six days later, enthusiastically and well, she took on the life that all virgins of God do. Their fathers don't like this, of course. These women suffer persecution and false accusations from their parents, and yet their number grows! We do not know the number of our people who were born there. In addition, there are the widows and the celibates. Of all these, those held in slavery work hardest – they bear even terror and threats, but the Lord gives grace to so many of the women who serve him. Even when it is forbidden, they bravely follow his example.

43

I could wish to leave them to go to Britain. I would willingly do this, and am prepared for this, as if to visit my home country and my parents. Not only that, but I would like to go to Gaul to visit the brothers and to see the faces of the saints of my Lord. God knows what I would dearly like to do. But I am bound in the Spirit, who assures me that if I were to do this, I would be held guilty. And I fear, also, to lose the work which I began – not so much I as Christ the Lord, who told me to come here to be with these people for the rest of my life. May the Lord will it, and protect me from every wrong path, so that I do not sin before him.

44

I hope to do what I should. I know I cannot trust myself as long as I am in this body subject to death. There is one who is strong, who tries every day to undermine my faith, and the chastity of genuine religion I have chosen to the end of my life for Christ my Lord. The flesh can be an enemy dragging towards death, that is, towards doing those enticing things which are against the law. I know to some extent how I have not led a perfect life like other believers. But I acknowledge this to my Lord, and I do not blush in his sight. I am not telling lies: from the time in my youth that I came to know him, the love and reverence for God grew in me, and so far, with the Lord's help, I have kept faith.

45

Those who wish may laugh and insult. But I will not be silent, nor will I hide the signs and wonders which the Lord has shown me even many years before they came about. He knows all things even before the beginning of time.

46

So I want to give thanks to God without ceasing. He frequently forgave my lack of wisdom and my negligence, and more than once did not become very angry with me, the one who was meant to be his helper. I was not quick to accept what he showed me, and so the Spirit prompted me. The Lord was merciful to me a thousand thousand times, because he saw in me that I was ready, but that I did not know what I should do about the state of my life. There were many who forbade this mission. They even told stories among themselves behind my back, and they said: "Why does he put himself in danger among hostile people who do not know God?" It was not that they were malicious – they just did not understand, as I myself can testify, since I was just an unlearned country person. Indeed, I was not quick to recognise the grace that was in me; I know now what I should have done then.

47

Now, therefore, I have informed my brothers and my fellow-servants who believed me, because I gave them warning, and I warn them now, in order to strengthen and confirm your faith. Oh that you would imitate greater things, and do more powerful things! This will be my glory, since a wise son is the glory of his father!

48

You all know, and God knows, how I have lived among you since my youth, in true faith and in sincerity of heart. Towards the pagan people too among whom I live, I have lived in good faith, and will continue to do so. God knows that I have not been devious with even one of them, nor do I think of doing so, for the sake of God and his church. I would not want to arouse persecution of them and of all of us; nor would I want that the Lord's name should be blasphemed on account of me; since it is written: "Woe to the one through whom the name of the Lord is blasphemed."

49

I know that I am inexperienced in all things. But still, I have tried to keep a guard on myself and for the Christians and virgins of Christ and religious women who were giving me small gifts of their own accord. When they would throw some of their ornaments on the altar, I would give them back to them. They were hurt at me that I would do this. But it was because of the hope of the eternal gift, that I was careful in all things, in case unbelievers would trap me or my ministry of service for any reason. Nor did I want to give those who could not believe even the slightest reason for speaking against me or take my character away.

50

Perhaps, however, when I baptised so many thousands of people, did I hope to receive even the smallest payment? If so, tell me, and I will return it to you. Or when the Lord ordained clerics everywhere through my poor efforts, and I gave this service to them for free, if I asked them to pay even for the cost of my shoes – tell it against me, and I will return it to you and more.

51

I spend myself for you, so that you may have me for yours. I have travelled everywhere among you for your own sake, in many dangers, and even to the furthest parts where nobody lived beyond, and where nobody ever went to baptise and to ordain clerics or to bring people to fulfilment. It is only by God's gift that I diligently and most willingly did all of this for your good.

52

At times I gave gifts to kings, over and above what I paid to their sons who travelled with me. Despite this, they took me and my companions prisoner, and very much wanted to kill me, but the time had not yet come. They stole everything they found in our possession, and they bound me in iron. On the fourteenth day, the Lord set me free from their power; all our possessions were returned to us for God's sake, and for the sake of the close friendship we had had previously.

53

You know yourselves how much I expended on those who were the judges in those regions which I most frequently visited. I estimate that I gave out not less than the price of fifteen persons, so that you might benefit from me, and that I might benefit from you in God. I'm not sorry I did it, nor was it even enough for me – I still spend, and will spend more. The Lord is powerful, and he can grant me still to spend my very self for the sake of your souls.

54

See now: I call on God as witness in my soul that I tell no lie. Nor would I write to you looking for your praise, nor out of greed – it's not that I hope for honour from any of you for myself. It is the honour which is not yet to be seen, but which is believed in the heart, which is what gives me satisfaction. The one who gave the promise is faithful, and never lies.

55

I see that already in this present age the Lord has given me a greatness more than could be expected. I was not worthy of this, not the kind of person the Lord would do this for, since I know for certain that poverty and calamity are more my style than riches and enjoyment. But Christ the Lord became poor for us; I too am wretched and unhappy. Even if I were to wish for riches, I do not have them. I am not trying to judge myself, since every day there is the chance that I will be killed, or surrounded, or be taken into slavery, or some other such happening. But I fear none of these things, because of the promises of heaven. I have cast

myself into the hands of almighty God, who is the ruler of all places, as the prophet says: “Cast your concerns on God, and he will sustain you.”

56

Now I commend my soul to my most faithful God. For him I perform the work of an ambassador, despite my less than noble condition. However, God is not influenced by such personal situations, and he chose me for this task so that I would be one servant of his very least important servants.

57

So I shall make a return to him for all that he has given to me. But what can I say, or what can I promise to my Lord? There is nothing I have that is not his gift to me. But he knows the depths of my heart, my very gut feelings! He knows that it is enough that I desire very much, and am ready for this, that he would grant me to drink of his chalice, just as he was pleased to do for others who loved him.

58

For this reason, may God not let it come about that I would suffer the loss of his people who have become his in the furthestmost parts of the earth. I pray that God give me perseverance, and that he grant me to bear faithful witness to him right up to my passing from this life, for the sake of my God.

59

If I have ever imitated anything good for the sake of my God whom I love, I ask that he grant me to be able to shed my blood with these converts and captives – even were I to lack a grave for burial, or my dead body were to be miserably torn apart limb from limb by dogs or wild beasts, or were the birds of heaven to devour it. I declare with certainty that if this were to happen, I would have gained both my soul and my body. There is no doubt whatever that we will rise on the appointed day in the brightness of the sun, that is, in the glory of Christ Jesus our redeemer. We shall be like children of the living God and co-heirs of Christ and to be fashioned in his image, since it is from him and through him and in him that we are to reign.

60

The sun which we see rising for us each day at his command, that sun will never reign nor will its splendour continue forever; and all those who adore that sun will come to a bad, miserable penalty. We, however, believe in and adore the true sun, that is, Christ, who will never perish. Nor will they perish who do his will but they will abide forever just as Christ will abide forever. He lives with God the Father almighty and with the Holy Spirit before the ages began, and now, and for all the ages of ages. Amen.

61

Again and again I briefly put before you the words of my confession. I testify in truth and in great joy of heart before God and his holy angels that I never had any other reason for returning to that nation from which I had earlier escaped, except the gospel and God’s promises.

62

I pray for those who believe in and have reverence for God. Some of them may happen to inspect or come upon this writing which Patrick, a sinner without learning, wrote in Ireland. May none of them ever say that whatever little I did or made known to please God was done through ignorance. Instead, you can judge and believe in all truth that it was a gift of God. This is my confession before I die.

Muirchú's text in English - Excerpts

Translation by L. Bieler, the full text is available for free at https://www.confessio.ie/more/muirchu_english#

(The coming of Patrick is prophesied)

I.10

(1) In the days when this took place there was in those parts a great king, a fierce pagan, an emperor of non-Romans, with his royal seat at Tara, which was then the capital of the realm of the Irish, by name Loíguire son of Níall, a scion of the family that held the kingship of almost the entire island.(2) He had around him sages and druids, fortune-tellers and sorcerers, and the inventors of every evil craft, who, according to the custom of paganism and idolatry, were able to know and foresee everything before it happened.(3) There were two of these whom he preferred above all the others, whose names are these: Lothroch, also called Lochru, and Lucet Máel, also called Ronal;(4) and these two, by their magical art, prophesied frequently that a foreign way of life was about to come to them, a kingdom, as it were, with an unheard-of and burdensome teaching, brought from afar over the seas, enjoined by few, received by many; it would be honoured by all, would overthrow kingdoms, kill the kings who offered resistance, seduce the crowds, destroy all their gods, banish all the works of their craft, and reign for ever.(5) They also described the man who was to bring this way of life and to win them for it, and they prophesied about him in the following words, in the form, as it were, of a poem, which these men often recited, and especially during the two or three years immediately before the coming of Patrick.(6) These are the words of the poem— not very intelligible, owing to the peculiarity of their language: "

There shall arrive Shaven-head,
with his stick bent in the head,
from his house with a hole in its head
he will chant impiety
from his table in the front of his house;
all his people will answer 'Be it thus, be it thus'.

".(7) In our own language all this can be expressed more clearly. 'When all this happens' (the druids would say) 'our kingdom, which is a pagan one, will fall.' And so it happened afterwards: when Patrick came the worship of idols was abolished and the catholic Christian faith spread over our whole country. Enough of this; let us return to our subject.

(Patrick's former master burns himself alive)

I.12

(1) When Miliucc heard that his slave was about to come and see him, in order to make him accept, forcibly as it were, a way of life against his will at the end of his days, for fear he might be subject to his slave and the latter might become his master, the devil put it into his mind to seek death of his own free will in fire. He gathered all his wealth together in the palace where until then he had lived as king, and burnt himself along with it.(2) Holy Patrick, standing in the said place on the right flank of Slíab Miss, from which, on his return full of grace, he had the first view of the district where he had lived as a slave — to the present day a cross stands there to mark (the spot of) his first view of that district—he at once saw, right under his eyes, the pyre of the king.(3) Stunned by this sight, (he stood there) for two or three hours without uttering a word, sighing and mourning and weeping, and then spoke these words: 'I know not, God knows, this man and king, who chose to burn himself in fire rather than believe at the end of his life and serve eternal God, I know not, God knows, none of his sons shall sit on his throne as king of his kingdom in generations to come; what is more, his line shall be subordinate for ever.'(4) Having said this, he prayed, armed himself with the sign of the cross, turned round at once and went back to the territory of the Ulaid by the same way that he had come. He returned to Mag Inis, to Díchu, stayed there for many days and travelled around the whole plain. He favoured and loved the district, and the faith began to spread there.

(Patrick encounters a pagan king and his druids)

I.13

(1) In those days Easter was approaching, the first Easter to be offered to God in the Egypt of this our island as it once was (offered), as we read in Genesis, in Gessen; and they took counsel where they should celebrate this first Easter among the pagans to whom God had sent him, (2) and after many proposals had been made in this matter, at last holy Patrick, divinely inspired, decided that this great feast of the Lord, being the principal feast of all, should be celebrated in the great plain of Brega, because it was there that there was the greatest kingdom among these tribes, the head of all paganism and idolatry; (3) there, in the words of the Psalmist, he would smash the head of the dragon, and for the first time an irresistible wedge would be driven into the head of all idolatry with the hammer of brave action joined to faith by the spiritual hands of holy Patrick and his companions. And so it was done.

I.14

(1) They set their ship afloat, left that good man, Díchu, behind in perfect faith and peace, sailed from Mag Inis—with the coast now, in the fullness of ministry, on their right hand, having had it quite aptly on their left hand before—and after a good and calm voyage they landed at Inber Colpdi. (2) There they left their boat and went by foot to that great plain. In the evening they at last arrived at the burial place of (*i.e.* constructed by) the men of Fíacc, which, as stories tell us, the men (that is, the servants) of Fíacc had dug—says Ferchertne, who was one of the nine druid-prophets of Brega. (3) There they pitched their tent, and then Patrick with his companions duly offered Easter to God in heaven with great spiritual devotion, a sacrifice of praise, as the prophet says.

I.15

(1) It so happened in that year that a feast of pagan worship was being held, which the pagans used to celebrate with many incantations and magic rites and other superstitious acts of idolatry. (2) There assembled the kings, satraps, leaders, princes, and the nobles of the people; furthermore, the druids, the fortune-tellers, and the inventors and teachers of every craft and every skill were also summoned to king Loíguire at Tara, their Babylon, as they had been summoned at one time to Nabuchodonosor, and they held and celebrated their pagan feast on the same night on which holy Patrick celebrated Easter. (3) They also had a custom, which was announced to all publicly, that whosoever, in any district, whether far or near, should have lit a fire on that night before it was lit in the king's house, that is, in the palace of Tara, would have forfeited his life. (4) Holy Patrick, then, celebrating Holy Easter, kindled the divine fire with its bright light and blessed it, and it shone in the night and was seen by almost all the people who lived in the plain. (5) Thus the fire from his tent happened to be seen at Tara, and as they saw it they all gazed at it and wondered. And the king called together the elders and said to them: 'Who is the man who has dared to do such a wicked thing in my kingdom? He shall die.' They all replied that they did not know who had done it, but the druids answered: 'King, may you live for ever! Unless this fire which we see, and which has been lit on this night before the (fire) was lit in your house, is extinguished on this same night on which it has been lit, it will never be extinguished at all; (6) it will even rise above all the fires of our customs, and he who has kindled it and the kingdom that has been brought upon us by him who has kindled it on this night will overpower us all and you, and will seduce all the people of your kingdom, and all kingdoms will yield to it, and it will spread over the whole country and will reign in all eternity.'

I.16

(1) When the king heard this he was greatly alarmed, as once was Herod, and all Tara (was alarmed) with him. And the king answered and said: 'It will not be so, but we shall go and see what is going on, and restrain and kill those who are doing such a wicked thing against our kingdom.' (2) Loíguire ordered thrice nine chariots to be equipped, according to the tradition which they had received from their gods, took with him the two druids who were most powerful of all in a contest, that is, Lucet Máel and Lochru, and towards the end of that night went out from Tara to the burial place of the men of Fíacc; they turned the faces of the men and horses to the left, as was befitting them. (3) As they went along, the druids said to the king: 'King, do not yourself go to the place where the fire is, lest perhaps you afterwards adore him who lit it, but stay outside, and that man will be summoned to your presence so that he may adore you and you be his lord, and we and that man shall dispute before you, o King, and in this way you will test us.' The king answered and said: 'You have devised sound advice; I shall do as you have said.'. And they came to the above-mentioned place and dismounted from their horses; and they did not enter the perimeter of the place that was illumined by the light, but sat down beside it.

I.17

(1) And holy Patrick was summoned to the presence of the king outside the illumined place, and the druids said to their people: 'Let us not rise when he comes, for whosoever rises at his coming will believe afterwards and reverence him.' (2) When Patrick rose and saw the great number of their chariots and horses, he fittingly recited with his lips and his heart the verse of the Psalmist: 'Let others (come) on chariots and on horseback, we shall go our way in the name of the Lord our God', and went to them. (3) They did not rise at his coming; there was only one man who, with the help of the Lord, refused to obey the command of the druids, that is Ercc, son of Daig, whose relics are now worshipped in the city called Slane. He stood up, and Patrick blessed him, and he believed in the eternal God. (4) Then they began their dispute, and one of the druids named Lochru provoked the holy man and dared to revile the catholic faith with haughty words. (5) Holy Patrick looked at him as he uttered such words and, as Peter had said concerning Simon, so with power and with a loud voice he confidently said to the Lord: 'O Lord, who art all-powerful and in whose power is everything, who hast sent me here, may this impious man, who blasphemeth thy name, now be cast out and quickly perish.' (6) And at these words the druid was lifted up into the air and fell down again; he hit his brain against a stone, and was smashed to pieces, and died in their presence, and the pagans stood in fear.

I.18

(1) The king with his companions was furious with Patrick over this incident and he tried to kill him and said: 'Lay hands on this fellow who is about to ruin us.' (2) When holy Patrick saw that the pagans were on the point of attacking him he rose and said with a loud voice: 'May God bestir Himself, and may His enemies be routed and His illwishers flee before His face.' (3) And at once darkness set in, and there was a dreadful uproar and the infidels fought among themselves, one rising up against the other, and there was a big earthquake which caused the axles of their chariots to collide with each other, and drove them violently forward so that chariots and horses rushed headlong over the plain until, in the end, a few of them escaped barely alive to *Mons Monduirn*, (4) and by this disaster seven times seven men perished through the curse of Patrick before the eyes of the king as a punishment for his words, until there remained only he himself and three other survivors, that is, he and his queen, and two of the Irish, and they were in great fear. (5) And the queen went to Patrick and said to him: 'O just and powerful man, do not bring death upon the king! For the king will come and bend his knees and adore your lord.' (6) And the king came, impelled by fear, and bent his knees before the holy man, and pretended to do him reverence though he did not mean it; and after they had parted and the king had gone a short distance away, he called holy Patrick with false words, wishing to kill him by any means. (7) Patrick, however, knew the wicked thoughts of the wicked king. He blessed his companions, eight men with a boy, in the name of Jesus Christ, and started on his way to the king, and the king counted them as they went along, and suddenly they disappeared from the king's eyes; (8) instead, the pagans merely saw eight deer with a fawn going, as it were, into the wilds. And king Loíguire, sad, frightened, and in great shame, went back to Tara at dawn with the few who had escaped.

I.19

(1) On the following day, that is Easter Day, when the kings and princes and druids were at table with Loíguire—for this was their greatest feast day—eating and drinking wine in the palace of Tara, some of them talking, and others thinking about the things that had happened, (2) holy Patrick with only five companions entered through closed doors, as we read about Christ, in order to vindicate and to preach the holy faith at Tara before all the nations. (3) As he entered the banquet hall of Tara, none of them all rose in order to welcome him, except one man only, Dubthach maccu Lugir, an excellent poet. With him was then in that place a young poet named Fíacc, who afterwards became a renowned bishop, whose relics are worshipped in Sléibte. (4) This Dubthach, as I have said, alone among the pagans rose in honour of holy Patrick, and the holy man blessed him, and he was the first on that day to believe in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. (5) When the pagans had perceived Patrick they asked him to eat with them in order to put him to the test as I shall relate. He, however, knowing what was to come, did not refuse to eat.

I.20

(1) Now, while they were all eating, the druid Lucet Máel, who had taken part in the conflict on the previous night, was anxious even on that day, now that his colleague had perished, to fight against holy Patrick, and as a start he put a drop (of poison) from his cup into the goblet of Patrick while the others looked on in order to find out what (Patrick) would do. (2) When holy Patrick saw the kind of test to which he was being subjected, he blessed his goblet in the sight of all and the liquor froze like ice; then he turned his goblet upside down, and only the drop which the druid had added fell out. And he blessed the goblet again: the liquor resumed its natural state, and they all were greatly astonished. (3) And after a

short while the druid said: 'Let us work miracles in this vast plain,' and Patrick replied, saying: 'What sort of miracles?', and the druid said: 'Let us bring snow over the land,' and Patrick said: 'I do not want to bring about anything against God's will,' and the druid said: 'I shall bring it about in the sight of all.' (4) Then, uttering some spells, he brought snow, reaching up as far as (a man's) belt, over the entire plain, and all saw this and were astonished. And the holy man said: 'All right, we see this. Remove it now.' And (the druid) said: 'Until this hour tomorrow I cannot remove it.' And the holy man said: 'You can do evil and cannot do good. Not so I.' (5) Then he blessed the plain all around, and in no time, without rain or mist or wind, the snow vanished, and the crowds cheered and were greatly astonished and touched in their hearts. (6) And a little later the druid, through the invocation of demons, brought a thick fog over the land as a sign (*i.e.* miracle), and the people muttered angrily. And the holy man said: 'Remove the fog;' but again the other was not able to do so. (7) The holy man, however, prayed, blessed (the place), and the fog was dispelled at once and the sun shone again and all the people cheered and gave thanks. (8) After this contest between the druid and Patrick in the king's presence the king said to them: 'Cast your books into the water, and he whose books remain unharmed, him we shall adore.' Patrick answered: 'I will do so,' and the druid said: 'I do not want to undergo a test of water with him; for water is a god of his.' He had heard, no doubt, that Patrick baptized with water. (9) And the king replied: 'Agree (to ordeal) by fire.' And Patrick said: 'I am ready to do so.' But the druid did not want to and said: 'This man worships every second year in turn now water now fire as his god.' (10) And the holy man said: 'Not so; but you yourself, and one of the boys in my service together with you shall go into a divided and closed house, and you shall wear my garment and my boy shall wear yours, and so you two together shall be set on fire and be judged in the presence of the Highest.' (11) And this plan was accepted, and a house was built for them, half of green wood and half of dry wood, and the druid was placed in the green part of the house and one of holy Patrick's boys, Benineus (= Benignus) by name, wearing the druid's garb, in its dry part; then the house was closed from outside and in the presence of the whole crowd was set on fire. (12) And in that hour it so happened through the prayer of Patrick that the flame of the fire consumed the druid together with the green half of the house, and nothing was left intact except the chasuble of holy Patrick, which the fire did not touch. (13) On the other hand, happy Benineus, and the dry half of the house, experienced what has been said of the three young men: the fire did not even touch him, and brought him neither pain nor discomfort; only the garb of the druid, which he had donned, was burnt in accordance with God's will. (14) And the king's anger was aroused against Patrick because of the death of his druid, and he was on the point of attacking him, wishing to take his life; but God held him back. For at the prayer and the word of Patrick the wrath of God descended upon the impious people, and many of them died. (15) And holy Patrick said to the king: 'If you do not believe now you shall die at once, for the wrath of God has come down upon your head.' And the king was in great fear, his heart trembling, and so was his entire city.

I.21

(1) King Loiguire summoned his elders and his whole council and said to them: 'It is better for me to believe than to die', and having held counsel, acting on the advice of his followers, he believed on that day and became converted to the Lord the eternal God, and many others believed on that occasion. (2) And holy Patrick said to the king: 'Since you have resisted my teaching and been offensive to me, the days of your own reign shall run on, but none of your offspring shall ever be king.'

Tírechán's text in English - Excerpts

Translation by L. Bieler, the full text is available for free at https://www.confessio.ie/more/tirechan_english#

(Patrick dispenses some insults and curses)

8

(1) On the churches which (Patrick) founded in Mag Breg. First, On the Hilltop; ii. the church of Cerne, in which is buried Ercc, who suffered (?) a great plague; .iii. on the hills of Aisse; .iiii. in Blaitine; .u. at Serin Columcille, in which he consecrated the holy bishop Eugenius; .ui. a church for the son of Lathphe; .uii. in Bridam, in which there was holy Dulcis, brother of Carthacus; (2) .uiii. on Argetbor, where was bishop Kannanus, whom Patrick ordained on his first Easter at the Burial-Ground of Fíacc's Men (Slane), and who carried with him the first blessed fire and the lighted candles (received) from the hands of the lord Patrick,(3) so as to kindle the blessed smoke (incense) (which went) into the eyes and nostrils of king

Loíguire and his druids; for (Patrick) was opposed by two druids, brothers begotten of one man, named Cruth and Lochlethlanu, of the Dál Runtir, who started a great fight against Patrick and Benignus.(4) The chasuble of the druid was burnt about the body of Benignus and reduced to ashes. The holy boy was saved by his firm faith in God in the presence of the king, the people, and the druids, but the chasuble of Benignus, Patrick's (spiritual) son, was worn by the druid, and the druid was burnt to death in it, and Patrick said: 'In this hour all paganism in Ireland has been destroyed.' (5) And Patrick raised his hands to God because of the druid Lochletheneus and said: 'My Lord, cast out from my presence this dog, who barks at your face and at me; may he go to his death.' (6) And all saw the druid being lifted up through the darkness of night almost to the sky, and when he came down again, his body, frozen with hailstones and snow mixed with sparks of fire, fell to the ground in the sight of all; and (the druid's) stone is in the south-eastern parts of Tara to the present day, and I have seen it with my own eyes.

9

(1) On the first day (of Easter) he came to Tailtiu, where there is (held) a royal assembly, to Coirpriticus son of Níall, who intended to kill him and scourged his servants in the river Séle to make them point out Patrick to Coirpriticus; (2) for this reason Patrick used to call him an enemy of God and told him: 'Thy seed shall serve the seed of thy brothers, and there shall be no king of thy lineage for ever; and the fish in the river Séle shall never be of any size.'

10

(1) Then he came to Conall son of Níall, to his house which he had built in the place where there is now the Great Church of Patrick,(2) and (Conall) received him very hospitably and he baptized him, and established his throne for ever, and said to him:(3) 'The seed of thy brother shall serve thy seed for ever. And thou must give alms to my heirs after me for ever, and thy sons and (the sons) of thy sons must pay perpetual dues to my sons in the Faith for ever.'(4) (Conall) measured a church, sixty foot (in length), with his own feet for Patrick's God, and Patrick said: 'If this church is encroached upon, thy reign shall be neither long nor stable.'

(Patrick converts pagan maidens who analogize their pagan faith to Christianity)

26

(1) Then holy Patrick came to the well called Clébach, on the slopes of Cruachu to the east, before sunrise, and they sat beside the well, (2) and, behold, the two daughters of king Loíguire, fair-haired Ethne and red-haired Fedelm, came to the well, as women are wont to do, in the morning to wash, and they found the holy assembly of bishops with Patrick beside the well.(3) And they did not know whence they were or of what shape or from what people or from what region, but thought they were men of the other world or earth-gods or a phantom; (4) and the maidens said to them: 'Whence are you and whence have you come?' and Patrick said to them: 'It would be better for you to profess our true God than to ask questions about our race.' (5) The first maiden said: 'Who is God and where is God and whose God is he and where is his dwelling-place? Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver? Is he ever-living, is he beautiful, have many fostered his son, are his daughters dear and beautiful in the eyes of the men of the earth? Is he in the sky or in the earth or in the water, in rivers, in mountains, in valleys? (7) Give us an account of him; how shall he be seen, how is he loved, how is he found, is he found in youth, in old age?' (8) Replying, holy Patrick, full of the Holy Spirit, said: 'Our God is the God of all men, the God of heaven and earth, of the sea and the rivers, God of the sun and the moon and all the stars, the God of high mountains and low valleys; (9) God above heaven and in heaven and under heaven, he has his dwelling in heaven and earth and sea and in everything that is in them; he breathes in all things, makes all things live, surpasses all things, supports all things; (10) he illumines the light of the sun, he consolidates the light of the night and the stars, he has made wells in the dry earth and dry islands in the sea and stars for the service of the major lights,(11) He has a son, coeternal with him, similar to him; the Son is not younger than the Father nor is the Father older than the Son, and the Holy Spirit breathes in them; the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are not separate. (12) Now I wish to join you to the heavenly king since you are daughters of an earthly king, if you are willing to believe.' (13) And the maidens said as with one voice and one heart: 'Teach us with all diligence how we can believe in the heavenly king, so that we may see him face to face. Tell us, and we will do as you say.' (14) And Patrick said: 'Do you believe that through baptism you cast off the sin of your father and mother?' They answered: 'We believe.' 'Do you believe in penance after sin?' 'We believe.' 'Do you believe in life after death? Do you believe in the resurrection on the day of judgement?' 'We believe.' 'Do you believe in the unity of the Church?' 'We believe.' (15) And they were baptized, with a white garment over their heads. And they demanded to see the face of Christ, and the holy man said to them: 'Unless you taste death you cannot see the face of Christ, and unless you receive the

sacrament.' (16) And they answered: 'Give us the sacrament so that we may see the Son, our bridegroom', and they received the eucharist of God and fell asleep in death, and their friends placed them on one bed and covered them with their garments, and made a lament and great keening. (17) And the druid Caplit, who had fostered the one, came and wept, and Patrick preached to him and he believed, and the hair of his head was shorn off. (18) And his brother Máel came and said: 'My brother has believed Patrick; not so I, but I will bring him back to heathendom', and he spoke harsh words to Mathonus and Patrick. (19) And Patrick preached the faith to him and converted him to the penance of God, and the hair of his head was shorn off, that is, the (hair cut in) druidic fashion (which was) seen on his head, *airbacc giunnae*, as it is called. Hence comes the saying that is the most famous of all Irish sayings, 'Máel is like Caplit', because (both) believed in God. (20) And the days of mourning for the king's daughters came to an end, and they buried them beside the well of Clébach, and they made a round ditch after the manner of a *ferta*, because this is what the heathen Irish used to do, but we call it *relic*, that is, the remains of the maidens. (21) And the *ferta* was made over to Patrick with the bones of the holy virgins, and to his heirs after him for ever, and he made an earthen church in that place.

(Patrick engages in magic competitions with druids and raises a 100-year dead warrior from the grave and baptizes him)

39

(1) And he came to the territory of Corcu Temne to the well of Sine, where he baptized many thousands of men, and founded three churches.(2) And he came to the well of Findmag, which is called Sian, because he had been told that the druids honoured the well and offered gifts to it as to a god.(3) The well was of square shape and the mouth of the well was covered with a square stone (and water flew over the stone, that is through ducts closed with cement) like a regal trail (?), and the infidels said that some wise man had made for himself a shrine in the water under the stone to bleach his bones perpetually because he feared the burning by fire ; and they worshipped the well as a god. (4) And Patrick was told the reason for its worship, and he had the zeal of God for the living God, and said: 'It is not true what you say that it was the king of the waters' (for this is the name they gave the well: 'king of the waters'). (5) And the druids and the pagans of that region and a very large crowd gathered together at the well and Patrick said to them: 'Lift the stone; let us see what is under it, whether bones or not, for I am telling you: under it there are not the bones of a man, but—so I believe—some gold and silver from your wicked sacrifices leaks through the cementing of the stones'; and they were unable to lift the stone.(6) And Patrick and his servants blessed the stone, and Patrick said to the crowd: 'Stay away some distance for a little while, so that you may see the power of my God who dwells in heaven'; and he stretched out his hands and lifted the stone from the mouth of the well and put it to the other side of the mouth of the well, and (there) it is for ever. And they found nothing in the well but only water.(7) And there sat a man at a distance beside the stone which the holy man had rooted (in the ground), and Patrick blessed him; his name was Caeta or Cata. And Patrick baptized him and said to him: 'Thy seed will be blessed for ever.' (8) Cell Tog in the regions of Corcu Teimne was Patrick's; its founder was bishop Cainnechus, Patrick's monk.

40

(1) And holy Patrick came through the plains in the territory of Mace Erce in Dichuil and Aurchuil. (2) And in Dichuil Patrick came to a huge grave of astounding breadth (?) and excessive in length, which his people had found, and they were amazed, with great astonishment, that it extended a hundred and twenty feet, and they said: 'We do not believe that there could have been such a thing as a man of this length.' (3) Patrick answered and said: 'If you wish you shall see him', and they said: 'We do', and he struck the stone on the side of the head with his staff and signed the grave with the sign of the cross and said: 'Open, o Lord, the grave', and it opened. (4) And a huge man arose whole, and said: 'Thanks be to you, o holy man, that you have raised me even for one hour from many pains', (5) and, behold, he wept bitterly and said: 'May I walk with you?' They said: 'We cannot have you walk with us, for men cannot look upon your face for fear of you.(6) But believe in the God of heaven and receive the baptism of the Lord, and you will not return to the place in which you were. And tell us to whom you belong.'(7) 'I am the son of the son of Cass son of Glas; I was the swineherd of Lugar king of Hirota. The warrior band of the sons of Mace Con killed me in the reign of Coirpre Nie Per' (a hundred years ago from now). (8) And he was baptized, and confessed God, and fell silent, and was laid again in his grave.

41

(1) He came to Findmag in the territory of the Uí Maini and found there the sign of the cross of Christ and two new graves, and from his chariot the holy man said: 'Who is it that is buried here?' (2) And a voice answered from the grave: 'I am a pagan.' The holy man replied: 'Why has the holy cross been placed beside you?' and again he answered: 'Because the mother of the man who is buried beside me asked that the sign of the cross be placed beside her son's grave. But a stupid and foolish man placed it beside me.' (3) And Patrick leaped from his chariot and took hold of the cross and pulled it from the pagan grave and placed it over the head of the baptized man, and mounted his chariot and prayed to God in silence. (4) When he had said 'Deliver us from evil', his charioteer said to him: 'How is that,' said his charioteer, 'why did you (merely) talk to the unbaptized man? For I pity a man without baptism. It would have been better in the eyes of God to bless him as in baptism and pour the water of baptism over the dead man's grave.' And (Patrick) did not answer him; I think he left the man (as he was) because God did not want to save him. Let us return to our story.

42

(1) He came across the river Moy, and behold the druids of the sons of Amolngid heard that the holy man had descended on them into their own region. (2) A very great number of druids assembled before the chief druid, Recrad by name, who wanted to kill holy Patrick, and he went to them with nine druids clad in white garments (and) with a host of (other) druids;(3) and Patrick and Énde son of Amolngid and Conall son of Énde saw him, when Patrick baptized a large crowd, and when Énde saw him he arose and took up arms to expel the druids, because the druids were separated from them by a large stream of water about <...> miles.(4) Patrick, however, sent Conall son of Énde towards the druids, so that they might recognize him (the chief druid) and not kill someone else; and the son stood beside the (chief) druid as a signal. (5) And behold, Patrick stood up and raised his left hand to God in heaven and cursed the (chief) druid, and he dropped dead in the midst of his druids, (6) and he was consumed by fire before the eyes of all as a sign of punishment. And the people scattered all over Mag Domnon, when everyone saw this miracle, and (Patrick) baptized many on that day; (7) and he ordained holy Mucneus, brother of Cethiachus, and gave him the seven books of the Law, which he bequeathed to Mace Erce son of Mac Dregin. And he founded a church in the Wood of Fochloth, in which there are the holy bones of bishop Mucnoe, for God told him to abandon the study of the Scriptures and ordain bishops and priests and deacons in that region; and (Patrick) blessed Amolngid's son Fergus, a brother of Énde, because it was on his land that he had worked the miracle.

Samhain Resources

(For a general sampling of links to free online translations of medieval Irish tales, see: https://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/index_irish.html)

Medieval Irish Saga Tales set at Samhain

The Adventures of Nera Excerpts: see <https://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/nera.html> for free translation of full text

One Halloween Ailill and Medb were in Rath Cruachan with their whole household. They set about cooking food. Two captives had been banged by them the day before that. Then Ailill said: 'He who would now put a withe round the foot of either of the two captives that are on the gallows, shall have a prize for it from me, as he may choose.'

Great was the darkness of that night and its horror, and demons would appear on that night always. Each man of them went out in turn to try that night, and quickly would he come back into the house. 'I will have the prize from thee', said Nera, 'and I shall go out. Truly thou shalt have this my gold-hilted sword here', said Ailill.

Then this Nera went out towards the captives, and put good armour on him. He put a withe round the foot of one of the two captives. Thrice it sprang off again. Then the captive said to him, unless he put a proper

peg on it, though he be at it till the morrow, he would not fix his own peg on it. Then Nera put a proper peg on it.

Said the captive from the gallows to Nera: 'That is manly, O Nera!' 'Manly indeed!' said Nera. 'By the truth of thy valour, take me on thy neck, that I may get a drink with thee. I was very thirsty when I was hanged.' 'Come on my neck then!' said Nera. So he went on his neck. 'Whither shall I carry thee?' said Nera. 'To the house which is near-est to us , said the captive.

Mesca Ulad 'The Drunkenness of the Ulstermen' Excerpts- https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Mesca_Ulad

(The Ulstermen argue over who can make the best banquet):

When the sons of Mil of Spain reached Erin, their sagacity circumvented the Tuatha De Danann, so that Erin was left to the partition of Amergin Glunmar, son of Mil; for he was a king- poet and a king-judge. And he divided Erin into two parts, and gave the part that was underground to the Tuatha De Danann, and the other part to the sons of Mil, his own mortal people.

The Tuatha De Danann went into the hills and fairy places, so that they spoke with the fairy folk underground. They left five of their number before the five provinces of Erin, to excite war and conflict and valor and strife between the sons of Mil. They left five of them before the province of Ulster in particular. The names of these five were: Brea son of Belgan, in Dromana-Breg; Redg Rotbel in the slopes of Mag Itha; Tinnel the son of Boclachtna, in Sliab Edlicon; Grici in Cruachan Aigle; Gulbann the Grey son of Grac, in the Ben of Gulban Gort son of Ungarb.

They excited a quarrel amongst the sections of Ulster, regarding its division into three parts, when the province was at its best, to wit, during the time of Conchobar son of Fachtna Fathach. They who shared the province with Conchobar were his own fosterling, Cu Chulainn mac Sualtach, and Fintan son of Niall Niamglonnach, from Dun-da-Benn.

The partition that was made of the province was this: from the hills of Uachtar Forcha, which is called Usnech of Meath, to the middle of Traig Baile, was Cu Chulainn's portion of the province. Conchobar's third, moreover, was from Traig Baile to Traig Thola, in Ulster. Fintan's third was from Traig Thola to Rinn Seimne and Latharna.

A year was the province thus, in three divisions, until the feast of Samain was made by Conchobar in Emain Macha. The extent of the banquet was a hundred vats of every kind of ale. Conchobar's officers said that all the nobles of Ulster would not be too many to partake of the banquet, because of its excellence

...

(The Ulstermen travel to banquet #2, but are too drunk and get lost. They end up in enemy territory, but are too proud to flee):

"Cu Chulainn here; he thinks it time to go and drink his banquet."

"Does he wish to merit the blessings of the assembled Ulstermen, and leave our weaklings and our women and our youths behind?"

"I should like it," said Cu Chulainn, "provided that our fighters, our champions, our warriors, our musicians, our poets, and our minstrels come with us."

The Ulstermen advanced as the advance of one man out upon the hard-surfaced green. "Good, O my master Loeg," said Cu Chulainn, "give a light course to the chariot." The charioteer possessed the three virtues of charioteering in that hour; to wit, turning around and straight backing and "leap over gap."

"Good, O my master Loeg," said Cu Chulainn, " give ardor of speed to the horses."

Cu Chulainn's horses broke into a furious sudden start. The horses of the Ulstermen followed their example. And where they went was into the green of Dun-da-Benn, to Cathar Osrin, to Li Thuaga, to Dun-Rigain, to Ollarbi, and by the shores of Ollarbi, into Mag Macha, into Sliab Fuait, and into Ath an Foraie, to Port Not of Cu Chulainn, into Mag Muirthemne, into Crich Saithi, across Dubid, across the stream of the Boyne, into Mag Breg and Meath, into Mag Lena, into Cliather Cell, across the Brosnas of Bladma; their left towards the gap of Mer daughter of Treg, which is to-day called Bernan Ele; their right to the Hills of Eblinne, daughter of Guaire, across the fair stream which is called the river of Ua Cathbad, into the great plain of Munster, through the middle of Artine, and into Smertaini; their right toward the rocks of Loch Gair; across the pool-stream of Maig, to Cliu Mail maic Ugaire, into the territory of Deise Beg, into the land of Cu Roi mac Dairi. Every hill over which they passed they leveled, so that they left it in low glens; every wood through which they passed, the iron wheels of the chariots cut the roots of the great trees, so that it was open country after them; the streams and fords and pools which they crossed were fully-dry flags after them for a long time, and for long periods, from the quantity which the cavalcades carried away with their own bodies out of the contents of cascade, ford, and pool.

Then it was that Conchobar King of Ulster said, "We have not found this way between Dun-da-Benn and Dun Delgan (Cu Chulainn's stronghold)."

"We pledge our word truly," said Bricriu; "but it is more dignified for us to whisper than for another to cry out loud. It seems to us that it is not in the territory of Ulster that we are at all."

"We give our word," said Sencha mac Ailill, "that it is not in the territory of Ulster at all we are."

"We give our word," said Conall the Victorious, "that it is true."

It was then that the charioteers of the Ulstermen tightened the bits in the mouths of their horses, from the first charioteer to the last charioteer; whereupon Conchobar said, "Who will ascertain for us in what territory we are?"

"Who should ascertain it for thee but Cu Chulainn?" said Bricriu, "for it is he it is that has said that there was not a district in which he had not committed the slaughter of a hundred."

"Of me it comes, O Bricriu," said Cu Chulainn; "I will go."

Cu Chulainn proceeded into Drum Colchailli, which is called Ani Cliach.

"Say, my master Loeg, knowest thou in what territory we are?"

"I know not, indeed," said Loeg.

...

(They get trapped in an iron house, which is then set on fire. They do escape in the end)

"It is pleasing to us and pleasing to the king," said Sencha mac Ailill; "and it was not to commit injury or conflict the Ulstermen came but in a drunken escapade, from Dun-da-Benn to Cliu Mail maic Ugaire; and they deemed it not honorable to get out of the district until they should be a night encamped in it."

The messengers proceeded to the place in which were Medb and Ailill and Cu Roi and Eochaid, with the nobles of the three provinces, and they related the news to them.

The poets, the minstrels, and the entertainers were sent to the Ulstermen, while a house was being arranged for them, to furnish amusement for them.

Messengers were then sent to them, to inform them that the best hero of the Ulstermen might select the choicest house for them. A quarrel arose about that among the Ulstermen. A hundred powerful warriors rose up together upon their arms; but Sencha mac Ailill pacified them.

"Let Cu Chulainn go there," said Sencha; "about the measure of his house you have come; and you shall be under his guarantee until you return again."

Cu Chulainn went. The Ulstermen advanced as one man after Cu Chulainn. Cu Chulainn looked upon the largest house that was in the place; it happened to be the iron house, about which the two wooden houses were.

Their attendants came to them, and an enormous bonfire was lighted for them; and provisions of food and ale were dealt to them. As night approached, their attendants and servants stole away from them one by one, until the last man, who closed the door after him. And the seven chains of iron were fixed upon the house, and fastened to the seven pillars that were upon the green outside. Thrice fifty smiths were brought, with their smith's-bellows, to blow the fire. Three circles were made around the house; and the fire was ignited from above and from below, in the house, until the heat from the fire came through the house from below. Then the hosts shouted loudly about the house, so that the Ulstermen were silent, speechless, until Bricriu said, "What, O Ulstermen, is the great heat that seizes our feet? But it is fitter that I should know than any other person. It seems to me they are burning us from below, and from above; and the house is closed fast."

"There will be a means by which we shall know," said Triscatal Strongman, getting up and delivering a blow with his foot on the iron door. But the door neither creaked nor resounded nor was injured.

"Not well hast thou made thy banquet for the Ulstermen, O Cu Chulainn," said Bricriu; "thou hast brought them into an enemy's pen."

"Say not so, O Bricriu," answered Cu Chulainn. "I will do my hero feat, a deed through which the Ulstermen will all get out."

Cu Chulainn plunged his sword up to the hilt through the iron house, and through the two houses of boards.

"An iron house here," said Cu Chulainn, "between two houses of boards."

"Worse than all, alas!" said Bricriu.

Irish Language & Culture

Activities for your class's St. Patrick's Day or Halloween Party 😊

Book of Kells Coloring Sheets: (free downloads with trial membership)

<https://www.twinkl.co.th/resource/the-book-of-kells-coloring-sheets-us-ss-1667500589>

Irish Language song shorts produced by TG-4 (Ireland's Irish-language channel)

- Cad e sin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVHPGFs6kH8>
- An Damháin Alla: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Pxd62kiLdY>
- Bean Pháidín: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P1a2k7gJn4>
- Dún do Shúil: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GoDdABbp4ow>

Irish phrases:

Beannachtaí na Féile Pádraig oraibh! (Ban-ukh-tee nuh Fay-leh Pah-drig ur-iv)

Happy St. Patrick's Day to all of you!

Oíche Shamhna shona duit! (Oy-chuh Shav-nah hon-uh ditch!) Happy Samhain!

Mallachtaí—Irish Curses

Go raibh an charraige is ísle san fharraige don philiúr (Guh row an hair-iggy iss eeshla san air-igguh don fill-oor) May the lowest rock in the ocean be your pillow.

Go n-ithe an cat thú, agus go n-ithe an diabhail an cat. (Guh nithuh an cat thoo, aw-gus guh nithuh an deeah-vail an cat) May the cat eat you and may the devil eat the cat.

Tochas, agus díth ingne ort! (Toe-chus, aw-gus deeth inginay ort) An itch, and a lack of fingernails on you!

Go mbrise cúnna ifrinn do chroí. (Go mrish-i coon-uh i-frinn do chroy) May the hounds of hell break your heart.

Irish Introductions

Maidin mhaith! (mawjin why) Good Morning!

Dia duit (Geeah ditch) Hello! (God with you)

Dia is Muire duit! (Gee-is Moirah ditch) Hello! (God and Mary with you)

Cad é mar atá tú? (Cad-jay mar a tah too) How are you?

Go maith! Agus tú féin? (Guh my, Awgus too hey-in) Good! And yourself?

Go hiontach! Go raibh maith agat! (Guh heentock, Guh row my ag-ot) Great! Thank you!