

# **Unwinding the Súcán**

**Thoughts from a journey through  
a Souterrain Landscape in Ireland's  
South Munster**

**By**

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*For Mahon*

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# Part 1

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# 1. The Echoing of the Land

A day spent in walking reflection,  
in mist and at stone promontories by the sea.  
Proud, brazen and bronzed headlands  
kneeling towards a dying sunlight,  
slipping into deep ultra marine blue.

*Iarla Ó Lionaird* singing

West Cork *Sean Nós* on the radio.

*Peadar O Riada* speaks of his father's inspiration  
and Coolea.

The memory tunnel, and the relic tree at *Gobnait's Well* -  
votive rags of hope.

The saint of the honeycomb. An Ethiopian cave, a hand bell  
ringing and a bishop.

The echo of an ancient soul through the heart.

*Kitaro's Caravanserai Bell*...desert heat...the silk trade.

The vandal beside the desert camel. Rome's soldier rejected  
the gladius.

Tur Abdin in the sea mist and the hymns of Ephraim...Antioch  
and Chalcis, the mud huts at Sighir beyond Aleppo,

*Ciaráin* upon the sea from the land of the *Corcú Laoidhe*.

Two philosophers argue at Alexandria, Constantine rings his hands, schism it will not be, imperial it must be.

The call of the Muzzein from the tower.

A Stylite in a round tower with a handbell, Angelus.

Seraphic hymn to heaven.

Leather sail of the Venetii merchant tacking,  
proud prow breasting the peninsular waves of the South West,  
strong ropes, strong hands leaning forward from cliffs in  
narrow, angry, spray tussled, waves jostling, battered and  
sheer-faced coves,

Damp and thorny desert, bog desert, island desert...bog mist  
and whisperings of Christ, orans, cross-fagel.

The starlight at Ballinskelligs and currachs huddled on an  
island beach.

Echos.

What are these echos?

## 2. The Chorus

Memory embedded in the stoney land, thorny land, *Drishane*.

John of *Mushera*, Berihert of the Saxons from his sisters at  
Cullen,

in the aftermath of Whitby, great monastery by Tullylease by  
the Mullaghareirk foothills,

in *Tuatha* Saxon by his burial cross a pilgrim still stands.

At Toormore on the Mizen Peninsula a watcher.

Notium, a broken battle, not forgotten, sea spray in lined  
faces,

*Manannán* rising, *Clíodhna* roaring, her wave surging.

A Hidden Ireland...the refuge of *Sliabh Luachra*.

*Aogán Ó Rathaille* in the kingdom of *Luachra*,

*Ar Bruach Na Carraige Báine* and the Ballydesmond polka,

the Earl of South Munster (Desmond) in revolt hidden among  
the hills.

Seekers in search of Munster's Tara...the Harps of *Cliu* by  
*Sliabh Reagh*.

A *Domhnach* and a *Cluain* at the burial mounds of Cush, *Cnoc  
Áine* still beckons Lugh.

An Antiochene Maronite from Chalcis, the monastery of  
Moses at Farran,

in prayer beside the ditch of a cloister-garth, Cush.

*Tuatha Dé Danaan*, the Amir of the Geni - Amir of poetic voice

- Amir of the genius of scholars, and the Paps of Anu,

A Druid, a Persian, a Priest, Zarathustra's fire,  
the Red Claw sprawls to the 'City' at *Shrone*,  
three sisters, three goddesses, three daughters,  
the wings of a Persian griffon, an Aryan upon a throne.

From the wounded side of *Anu* fallen they flow, a blood flow,  
as three sisters in one, as *An Crobh Dearg*, as the 'Red Claw'.  
Three sisters, three nuns at three cubicles at a cell, three  
priestesses, three deities. *Latiaran*, yellow-haired *Inghean  
Bhuidhe* and *Lasair* of the Flame...as if calling to *Mog Ruith*  
and his three daughters, as if calling to Zoroaster and the  
Faravahar, three sisters becoming saints in Christ by the Red  
Claw by *Anu's* Paps, by Drishane and Cullen, by *Cois Móire*,  
by *An Abha Mór*...*Mog Ruith* awaits in the oak grove at *Inis  
Dairbhre*.

*Tuatha* land of the people of *Anu*, *Dé Anu*,  
cattle wealth displayed, sacrifice made, festival fires surround  
the *caher* at *Shrone*,  
foreshadowing a bell sounding its knell at a Baptism well.  
Kurku-tongued Bowman on horseback draws the arrow,  
*Uí Eachach* (Horse Tribe) warrior a sentinel at *Shrone-na-  
Binne*, in the Black Valley, in the lands of the *Corcú Laoidhe*;  
a pony on a Connemara wasteland  
and a Scythian from the nib of Fr. Keating's pen.



### 3. Scythians and Greeks, Carthaginians and Egyptians

O'Connor and the Gaal Sciot Iber,  
*Fénius Farsaid*, Scythian king, has spearheads  
beached upon the land,  
Ogham tally-stick in hand, a Gozo boat fleet, tiller-men at  
helms.  
Mariner adventurers, miners, prospectors, coastal traders,  
peninsular mountain peaks become nature's pyramids,  
sighted from the prow, enticing, along the estuary.

The Argo of Orpheus, Greek and Persian coins found lost to  
the coastline of the South West, *Cnoc Osta* of the miners and  
the Oestymnides enticing prospectors, metal makers and  
merchants into the western seas.

The Argo's keel bends the wave thrust to round the Mizen,  
Greek coins of Macedon dropped beyond *Carmen's*  
(*Cearmna's?*) great market, their merchant ships wharf-sided  
at a cove somewhere, their gold and fine raiments to sell  
there, armlets for a nomad king's woman to wear; sometimes,  
linear, shadow figures roaming westward on ridge-crests  
somewhere overlook the dense canopies of great woodlands  
somewhere, journeying towards the festival lands of *Áine* from  
the mountains of the Black Stairs, resting sometimes in

memoriam at Duntryleague beside the panorama at *Eoghan Mór's* (or *Oilill Ollum's*) tomb, a bride of Castille and Leon in mourning. Iberia of the Iverni and lobster boats at Sheep's Head out of Biscay Bay.

Purple cloaked Phoenicians navigating out of Carthage, coastal trading, open sea voyaging...copper to assuage an Assyrian...

sea-lore of Tartessus, Galician and Venetii traders, seekers out of Biscay Bay,

copper barge at *Inbhear Scéine*, the bride of Amergin, Ivernis settled, woodland clearing,

old oaks whispering of woodkerns, wood-smoke and flame-stones crackling at a *fulachta fiadh*.

Lapis Lazuli wisdom and spirit, faience beaded, Inisfallen to Taprobane.

A plethora of tongues in the Delta rain,

a dying flame in a *Ciarraige* glen, *Gleann Scoithín*.

Gaytholos, a king, dead, a tholos in a mound.

Silver wooded glen, puck goat a king beside white rapids coiling through mossy greens on purple stone,

Scotia mounded beneath the rainbow's arc over Tralee Bay.

Scotia beyond the Lily Lake to the Field of Reeds. Amen.

Beam of Aten-Ra through a roofbox in a *Midhe* mound,

Southwest, towards the Pass, beyond the jewelled lake-lands, into Iveragh, into the highlands, nature's fortress of the

mountain kings rising, encircling. Ballinskelligs on a frosty morning, shaggy pony grazing a haggard.  
Bloodlines...sometimes pyre smoke coils into the passing seasons, stilled void of sacred memory en-spaced, encircled by monoliths, dark skies starlight, celestial motions suspended.

Pharaoh's princess, spirit windblown, ethereal above the waters of a stream....until then,  
in time's round, from the desert beyond the Delta,  
Sand soaked linen a hooded Tau, beneath an arc of silvering moonlight, ridge cresting above her grave now.  
Flames finally quenched at Boa Island where Janus relinquished command, horse-drawn between future and past. Amen.

## 4. Collapsing worlds, seekers in search of new shores

The breakwaters of Caesaria, cool and sonorous lapping of waves, a golden panoply of ships of many shores, a cacophony of accentuated voices, creaking timber of thread-wheel cranes, barrels bumping and rolling off the wharf side bollards, shore lore of the west lands from ancient mariners fingering kompoloi.

Out of Byblos, out of Alexandria, out of Carthage the Jewel and Britannia's shores, back-spray off rough wave-crests against a Mizen cliff-face, thunder-shock of sea-burst roaring, masts bending, sails tacking towards *Oileân Sabrainn*, Headland of the Romans, waves of a great inland river in flow, *Manannán* meets them gouging grip of fingers tip into the shore-sand of the land, roll of wave smash crash, spray splay into breeze force, jetted arcs collapsing, spiralling crush, gurgled shingling of gravel rush...broken mast of Cessair's trireme, pale faces woven into thong-weed...shingling, rumbles in a gurgling swirl, roaring splash of misted spray smashed on rock face...

foam bearded *Manannán* rising triumphant he roars against  
Iveragh,  
Anu prostrate back broken into rock scree, cairns on the  
Paps,  
Danu beneath the cowl of a Munster cloak.  
Brandan lumpen-fisted splintered the Maharees... majestic  
fury at 'the Wild Atlantic Way'.

Sea into billowing flow the Erinyes blow. Cessair, Nemid  
(Nemed), Parthalon, *Fir Bolg*, *Dé Danaan* at *Tara Luchair*,  
Túr Brigantium and Iberia in mourning, a daughter of Castille,  
*Míl Espaigne*, *Eoghan Mór*, Beara of Castille - a gallery of  
phantoms at a stone circle on Brow Head,  
symbols in monoliths sheared away to the sea, others half  
fallen, stooping toward forgetful memory.  
Nature's pyramid on a calm evening, sunset, in the distance,  
from Altar's tomb. Black storm clouds stilled, paused,  
momentarily suspended,  
hold released to thunder-shock of waves, Roaring Water  
battles Oceanus at the Hundred Isles.

Galician sunlight, Túr Brigantium, a gathering of ships,  
Brigantes gather remnants of tribes, *Oilioll Olum*, the *ollamh*,  
the wise and Br-Eoghan of the sword-hand,  
of the *fitcecs*, shorelines in the drizzled fog of a sea mirage  
wafting north to a promised land.

A druid spell weaving, conjuring a new homeland, broken  
clans seeking new territories,  
then headlands to be defended, last stand... Alesia  
unforgotten... wooden jetty,  
three horns from a horse head lost in the slob land, chariot  
wheels rumble across the *tóchar*,  
oak beams across a bog, sodden, water-heavy.

## 5. Tribal peoples and their 'Island of Saints and Scholars'

And when Rome fell,  
who raised the lamp to guide the way?  
Becoming the knowing  
thereby released from a state of 'knowing as required'.  
Choices of circumstance leading to migration,  
new secular hierarchies in the ascendent...  
In Hibernia, what old hierarchies  
and Brehon counselled laws gave way  
as the innovative termon lands of Christ's people  
came to be, as sons and daughters of the old tribal  
aristocracy...  
created new social orders in their homeland territories?  
A lamp-light raised as the villas and vici of Britannia are no  
more,  
as garrisons disband, as termon lands sought protectors  
and offered sanctuary...the writ of cannon law within...

Building communities in Christ,  
rescued from the laws of those  
of hereditary tribal secularity,  
ecclesiastical law within the termon to prevail.

Uplifted, the enslaved, the broken, the weak,  
the infirm, the enslaved, the abused...

the abandoned, the hopeless to those  
seeking the protection of the *lex innocentium*  
in times of war...

the displaced, the destitute, the unwanted,  
the fugitives seeking refuge, the shamed, the lovelorn...  
the unexpressed thinker, the redundant talented  
in the mason, carpenter, poet, philosopher, musician, artist...  
in the metal-smith, quarryman, merchant, field surgeon,  
herbalist, farmer, seaman and so many more ...

Within old tribe lands, *tuatha* lands, they form,  
the termon cities of God  
built by a desert city of the downtrodden,  
islands of hope in the landscape of an old secular society,  
landscapes of old gods and goddesses,  
of strict traditional laws and hierarchies...  
chapels, hermitages, the *cluain* and the *cúile*,  
the *díseart*, the *skete* and the *laura*  
as also the *láithreach* of the *laura*...  
embedded within the wider termon ditches  
and *paruchia* boundaries...

a new social contract based on the teachings of Christ...  
and lessons learned from the nature of Rome's Pax...  
and its one-time civilities.



## *Fir Maighe, Déise and chaille*

*Mochuda* of the apple of the ford and his charioteer, a river apple for *Flanait's* withered hand. *Cranat's* blinded eyes restored in her cell, Kilcranathan.

East of *Flanait's* land *Mochuda* banished brings an army of *manach* and *manaig* to the *Lios Mór* in *Déise* land by the *Abha, Cois Móire*, stretching southward to enter the sea, in proximity the *cloigtheach* of the laura of *Déaglán* at an *tÁrd Mhór*.

Crozier slashed through the Autumn cow ceremony,  
Berserker in a blood fury,  
*Fionn Chú*, White Hound,  
at war, the Abbot of Bangor,  
... 'true vine of Egypt' said the antiphony.

At *Bri Gobhann* of the blacksmiths by Mitchelstown,  
seven sickle blades for a penance,  
at night sleep you, *Fionn Chú*, beneath the graveyard, *Cré na Cille*, souls of the ancestors brought to heaven, a retro-conversion.

*Adomnán* speaks to the clapper of his bell beside *Litir (Lettir)*.  
*Colmán* leaps from his round tower at *Cluain* knees smashed upon the monolith of *Lugh*,  
*Lugh* of the Harvest,

*Lugh* of the Long Arms and gold found by a menhir at Lurrig  
(*Lugh an rí*) by *Lugh Slí* by *Baile an Bhóthar* from the sea,  
*Carraig-a-Crump* close-by *Crom*'s back bent from hauling  
grain - the harvest store,  
*Áine* at Knockane (*Cnoc Áine*) his consort sits garlanded upon  
the brow of Barrykilla ridge looking westward,  
Spring evening as multicolour tapestry of cloudforms heralds  
the splendour of a dying sunset in the west,  
the lake by Rostellan Creek where the *Bibe* she howls in the  
wake of battle, twilight settling by a portal dolmen...lands of  
the *chaille*.

Traumatised Sweeney, a dendrite.

Sarabaites in fox dens beneath the forest clearing.

A gyrovague wandering brings news to a sylvan cell at a  
limestone outcrop...*Carraig an tSeomra*.

A handbell ringing in a hermitage,

'Pueri Aegyptae' reported to Charlemagne.

A 'King who shall come out of the desert mountains of  
Patrick'

...on a hill slope as paenulae huddled they wait.

*Gobnait*'s white horse in search of deer, *Abbán* waits, *Ciara* in  
chains, *Flanait* and *Cranat* nesting in their wildernesses, *Cnoc  
an Ceó*...

On the causeway at *Dar Inis* beside that river of blood, beside the monastery of *Maol an Faidh*, detached, statuesque, a knight of Mourne paused, gazing toward a mounted Templar, pennant fluttering in a mild sea breeze, looking seaward over Youghal Bay a sentinel at a pinnacle by Rhincrew...the winds of change gathering...a Gaelic monk at Clairvaux...and a counting house at Lyra Abbey in Normandy.

## **Corcú (Corca) Laoidhe, Corca Dhuibhne**

*Corcú Laoidhe's* Gascon, viticulture, abroad from home,  
tending vines near the estuary of the Gironde,  
Aquitania falls to Caesar in 50 BC.

Columbanus in the kingdom of the Franks.

A Cluny from a *Cluain*.

*Uí Eadhairsceol (O Drisceoil)* ship merchants,  
most powerful of the *Corcú Laoidhe* upon the peninsulas,  
beyond Rosscarbery, to Roaring Water,  
wine trade of Biscay, reciprocations...an amphora, from a  
cargo hold, rested upon a cup-marked stone beside an altar...  
At Kilnaruane, Currach of the crosses, as those from the cells  
at *Fán*, at *Corcú Dhuibhne*,  
to *na Scealaga am Cásca*.

## **Muscraighe and Ciarraighe**

A tonsure from Auxerre as fifty board a merchant ship,  
wine cargo to *Inis Luinge* of the Lee, to *Senán*, to the  
*Muscraighe*.

From *Cró na hOidhe* they go ...said a mermaid at Poulanassig  
veiled by a waterfall in flow... from Aghabullogue westward  
sandal-footed beadsmen chanting across a clapper bridge  
they go...sons of *Íosa Críost*...

Northwards they go, by *Muscraighe Mittine* of the teachers,  
by *Domhnach Mór* to the *Abha Mhór*,  
north and westwards they go  
to the *cluainte* of the *Ciarraighe* by *Mushera* ...  
and to those beyond...

A handbell ringing in a hermitage,  
'out of the deserts of Patrick they will come on a Sunday  
night'...a 'clash of the ash' as old gives way to new,  
as sword and axe crash, trees fall  
as a storm rages in many a woodland's depths.

Interlacing of the Word, druidic inter-weavings,  
Snake spirals calligraphic and metaphorical,  
no land haven for them, no safe shore,  
just carpeting a painted preface on dried vellum,  
psalms and flabellum, soaked in amber bogland.

A reliquary mounted on a wheel cross.

A plastic statue of the Virgin beside a tin cup,  
Pilgrim drinks from the dome capped well on a 'Pattern' day,  
a rag to a bush, the hands of prayer, the muffled voice of the  
cowl headed widow, rosary beads and worry beads festooned  
across a grave-slab at the *reilig*.

Winds through the desert sands, still whispering.

Close nearby, subterranean earth-cell, monk psalm  
murmuring orans,  
whispers for forgiveness to a blank wall, hinted apse curved  
gently,  
in the coolness, in darkness, in silence, mediations pass  
through,  
heavenward directed, spiral of smoke in the evening blue,  
...to the ritual of the bell within the cell...the psalm whispered  
across the palms...  
Deus Meus Adiuva Me...

## 6. Wanderings, Navigating the Time Charts of Topographies 'almost lost'

*Ciaráin* of Sighir, Antioch of the Empire's sea,  
and 'the first' Christian king among the *Corcú Laoidhe*.  
Deus Meus Adiuva Me...neophytes in white linen to the  
baptism well,  
black shawl *caoineadh* at the *reilig* above the saint's cell.

Upright sword quivers in an evening breeze,  
Constantine kneels in the silence of the battle field.  
Justinian fails re-unification, Corpus Iuris Civilis replaces the  
shield,  
abbreviate and cipher no more he commands...memorial  
stones banished to obscurity.

The curlew calls from a reed bed at Rostellan,  
a *dordán* resonates along the Castlemary slopes,  
*chaille's aonach* at Barrykilla,  
mound-men rest soil-bags, earth-scrapers, monolith placers,  
palimpsests from an earlier age at Castlemary's tomb...

*Na Mairtine, Mara Daoine* perhaps, people of the sea,  
once in a swamped *curragh* land beneath *na Binnia*.

By *Ciarraighe Corcú*, the *Corcú Bascoin (Bascind)* would  
come to be, lost, phantoms beneath the conversations of  
oarsmen in a row,  
just a water world memory beside the river Lee's submerged  
flow.

*Lir's* children wing-spun on a lake wave rising at *Loch Allua*,  
by *Inchigeelagh*, by the river meadow to be held in bondage,  
swan necks in a reedbed drift, serpentine,  
in tandem beneath an azure sky,  
lost to the *draíocht* of a *cailleach*.

*Fionn Barra*, nascent in Christ, at *Gougane*,  
fresh from *Muscraige Mittine*,  
fresh from *Domhnach Mór* of *Lachteen* of the relic arm, of the  
silver arm  
and *Olan* his well beside an ogham stone - stone cap upon a  
gravestone...  
ogham carved echoes... graveslab of the Egyptian priest,  
perhaps!  
Meditations murmured in a rock-cave,  
murmurations of starlings in flight, then alight upon lake's  
shores.  
*Ó Riada* divines the resonances.



## 7. Home Devastations and Travels to Foreign Lands

In the wind leather sails from Venetii to Viking, an insect in an amber bead...

*Cluain Maol maoile* and derelict, *Laura Buailte* beaten and smashed...cow herds roaming, rain waifs drizzle the afternoon fields...plough-sock stationary and silent... time vortex, the burnt earth of Desmond in rebellion...a burial at Ballyanly perhaps.

Time's shadow blankets the snow land,  
A Christmas candle flickering on a window sill in Bantry Bay stands.

Bishops of the Schottenkloster in cave cells, Kyiv of Hilarion's 'four yard cave' beckoning, Russian monastery its 'earth caves' infilled in the 18th century...

pilgrims to *Ros Ailithir's* wooded promontory tell of scholars at *Fachtna's* bishopric at Burgatia by his cell...festival night-revellers *ag bothántaíocht* in Bohonagh by the burgh.

A Clonakilty Bay strip of land, a *bóthar* way to Kinneigh of *Mocomoge* where earth-cells with guardian stones keep the brethren well.

A pilgrim of *Ros Ailithir* returns in a fisherman's boat, ransomed by a warrior king,

brother avenged at Aghabulloge,  
a conflagration at Peake.

At Bantry from Kilnaruane a currach afloat, currach of the  
crosses for a skrealing, keeled by a Papar.

Baptism for Ari, a Viking, at Greater Ireland. Brendan might  
come to call. Munster slave captives remembered in the  
Landnámabók of Icelanders, *Bárid's* great fleet out of *Dubh*  
*Linn* cave raiding in *Carriage Luachra*, in 866.

*Abbán* on a wheel cross, *Ailbe* the abbot of white linen robes,  
*Abbán* on a Greek cross. Cashel still monumental, still  
proclaimed.

A night hawk flies, sky vistas at sunset. Kilmichael to  
Ballyvourney to *Leacanabuile*.

Cell in a *caher* at *Cahergal* lector for alumni silent and chain  
bound.

*Caher* from Qasr, the desert a city, like Kevin out of Leinster's  
*Cill na Managh* his 'bed' at *Gleann dá Loch* of the two lakes,  
*Cluain dá Lann* the sacred meadow of two oratories at the  
*Cúile* of the nunnery.

Oratory in a *caher* at *Droim an Cnoic*, Greek cross homeward  
watching,

sea breeze cooling the afternoon Hours.

Michael's *lios* and the 'lios of the night lodgings'.

Journeys into mind, into past, into spirit.

The clapper seeks a bell, the bell seeks a clapper at Oldcourt  
by Skibbereen.

*Adomnán* beneath the soil, orans to psalm and bell, by the  
*Litir*. The mountain of the singing where Michael returned from  
Rome. A follower of Martin, then Rome ordained, at a  
*teampall* in the *Baile*. Amphora wine from a Saxon house on  
the Bandon, taxed at *Dún Cearmna*, cart-hauled to Kilmore  
(*Cill Mór*) below the great *lios*. Frameworks of time passing  
dissolving into opaque forgotten-ness. Abide the Rule,  
penitentials in the Pit.

A prophet presbyter ascends a mountain with his flock, tau  
stick in hand...a laura pilgrimage from a monastery island,  
from a Byzantine tradition called a Dair.

End of week gatherings at the Laragh (*Láithreach*) of the  
Laura, 'desert' to *domhnach mór* at the Sunday well,  
*Dé Domhnaigh*, Kyrakon,  
the mass ritual and a refectory meal close distant to a *caher*.  
Ploughman's horse at the *Garrane* of the Lord's *Farran*,  
*manaig* at the *gort* and the *garraí*, *rath* and *lios* now monastic  
territory, allocations some secular, some holy.

And someone said 'rammed earth 'Rath' house for a Hansa  
council in Germania'. Some things change, some remain the  
same, generations pass by.

## 8. A Time of Pences

Leprosarium at the cubbies along the cliff, Mount Carmel made the prophets.

Bosch paints Jerome at the penitential Pit.

A pilgrim at Lough Derg enters the Pit, *Poi Faoi Talmhain*.

Dante...and the Purgatory mosaic at Todi.

The Dormition of Ephraim, a life in caves.

Two Elder Saints seated, in conversation, *Carraig an tSeomra*.

A hermit in a *lissu*, holy housed within memorial stones,

*Tig Faoi Talaimh*, a dome speaks of heaven, a cell corbelling to heaven, a meditation,

Cassian and a Borias mason, Italian and Egyptian churches in the round.

A snake of many figures spreads across a mosaic floor in Otranto.

Byzantine and Jew seek refuge amongst the Romans, Greek and Hebrew amongst the Latins cross-influencing. spiritualities in harmony against a crescent banner.

Peregrini via Rome to Puglia of the corbel masters, to Otranto... ships to Antioch, Alexandria and Jerusalem...

Paul at Ephesus...

*Abbán* walks upon the wheel of a compass...Saint Marcian the anchorite in a Syrian wilderness.

'Sailing to Byzantium', an icon from Mount Athos, peninsula of the monasteries,

by the Holy Mountain a solitary *manach* prays in his cell.

Straw floor of Whiddy oratory, Knockdrum *caher* with a Greek cross, six cubicles beneath Garnish, six cubicles at Sherkin shore, a prophet in a rock cell rings his bell,

contemplates his guidance Rule at Kilcrohane to its knell, clapper falls silent charmed in the chime of its spell...

*Mocomoge* wandering beyond the mountain pass as a hermit in the wild, a poor Lobbus journeying to *Fán*... foreshadowing a *Spailpín* in a labour for God.

A pilgrim church migratory...peregrini, and on to Church Island off Valencia,

Lerin's tree a flabellum in a palimpsest...

and on to distant lands of the west and the baptism of an Icelander ...a Celtic tonsure to Ultima Thule...

carved heads in a triangle above a romanesque door where Brendan rests.

Helmsmen of the *currachs* of the crosses, patrimony to *erenagh* and *coarb* forever more...Deus Meus Adiuva Me.

## 9. Eras of the Weavings

Ibar remembers Mona, sacred bread between finger-tips  
raised in Martin's cell...merchants at the fair of Carmen horse-  
trading, ship cargo of embroidery and of gold crafting...

Flame beacon beckoning at *Dún Cearmna*, delight of  
returning,

*Ceann tSáile* a headland awaiting merchant navigators  
homeward

...*O do bhíosa lá thar sáile*...a place of those from *thar sáile*,  
a place of foreigners from *thar sáile*...sea-wolves' lore at the  
quays of Gaul, Cornwall,  
of Alexandria and Caesaria...cantor to a *domhnach*...Rome's  
forlorn chariot in a ditch.

Kinsale defeated, clans escaping to the remoteness of *Sliabh  
Luachra*, magic of music,  
old kingdom of *Luchair*, anonymity, drifting clouds, shafts of  
tall shadows across the Paps.

Cleary, Power and Keating reaching for a legacy in a handful  
of ancient identities crumbling to dust.

Cambrensis declared, Ussher and Ware an ethnographer's  
stare beneath a trinity bell,

*MacFirbis* somewhere, four masters somewhere, Regensburg  
from Cashel somewhere, poet *Ó hUidhrín* wandering...

a topographer somewhere, a traveller in the lands of the *Fir Máige* somewhere, churchmen, Downe men, Ordnance men line laying, plane-table and chain men, place-names rationalised anglicised, map men grid laying upon the baron's clan fabric, grand jury on the circuit, bishops and visitations, the ancient weave of the land, old monastery lands, chapels to sheds, 'no longer of use to the land owner', big house, cabin house, castle estate from monastic estate, city of God to city of men, hammer smashed upon the gavel...a twisting torrent swirls, ancient consciousness dissolving, crumbling to dust...folly ruins with tea-cakes in a Capability landscape, a destitute monk in a hovel among derelict architectures beside a rock altar, fine wines from an icehouse, pedestrian artist sketchpad in hand, a puff of steam heralded from a Blackrock railway line, a paddle steamer on Cork Harbour heading for East Ferry, *Mochuda's* chapels beneath the waves, 1000 of the *Corcú Bascoin* drowned in a forgotten flood spectres now beneath a daily ebb and flow.

Cobh's Ronayne, magician, mathematician of the cubes,  
raises the waves beyond Marloag's shore,  
East Ferry boatman ferries spirits of the dead  
Garranekinnefeake to Templerobin then  
where a Templar turns them around again.

At Ballycroneen *Manannán's* palm a wave unfurled, three  
cows, white cow a milk-speckled cow beneath the milky way  
- as in heaven so on earth,  
the way of the black cow veering towards the cemetery of the  
mounds by *Cliadh Dubh*.

*Bó Thar*, cow-way across.

The way of the brown cow forgotten.

The way of Patrick's cow, Ardmore to Cashel of the Kings,  
beside the Aulagh (*Ubhail Teach*).



## 10. *Éirinn go Brách*

The tuneful 'march of *Brian Ború*',  
the 'march of *Ó Suileabháin Beara*', a child of *Beara*,  
resonate across a drumlin somewhere.

*Piaras MacGearailt* musician of Ballymacoda  
composes a tune,

the Battle Cry of Munster (*Rosc Catha Na Mumhan*),  
after 1709 at a farmstead there ...

*Siúil, Siúil, Siúil a Rún...*'war bloody war...ye Jacobites by  
name lend an ear, lend an ear' said Burns...a basket hilted  
sword lies upon the clan tartan of a fallen piper...  
as Jacobites go marching into a vanishing point...fading...

*Is go dté tú mo mhuirnín slán* she had whispered,  
whispered words of departing, as had another in her own way  
for *Domhnall Dú* of Carrigdoun expressing her desire, in the  
mind of Cork's Denny Lane, to follow him into foreign fields of  
war...fields where he might wear the fleur de lis as had  
Sarsfield...

song-words softly voiced, as of the lament for *Mo Ghile Mear*  
from the words of Chief Poet of Munster *Sean Clárach* at  
*Ollum's lios, Oillil* of the tomb, by *Brú Rí* of *Brian Bóramha*  
'Emperor of the Irish'...

*MacGaerailt's* bardic court assembled by *An Clais Mór* (the great enclosure) in *Déise* lands...

And time moved forward,  
and they buried the Chronicler of Eri at *Cill Cré* (Kilcrea)  
close by *Cormac's* tomb...a flag raised, *Erin go Bragh* (*Erin go Braugh*) on many a foreign battlefield... Meagher of the *Déise*  
on horseback raises his sword, O'Connor of Bolivia, O'Leary  
of Bolivar, the San Patricios in Mexico, Zorro of Wexford...and  
John Barry of Wexford where ship-masts collapse as  
'booming cannons roar' and a new navy is born...  
O'Connor at peace by Ballincollig...  
and a Scottish balladeer still sings a tune.

Oh, to tame a little piece of the wild dragon of memory from  
Akaschic consciousness.

*Táimse i mo chodhladh, anois dúisigh mé.*

**End**

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# Part 2

## *Tigh Molaga*

(An unfinished poem about the Dissolution of Irish Monasteries under Henry VIII and a subsequent Cromwellian Bombardment)

Fomorian Cogitations

Nubia to Hyperboria: Whatever it might be of us as they might see?

Prospectors

*Carcair*

Mind Charts and Beckoning Images

A Gaelic Ululation

*Mug Ruith / Mog Ruith*

# ***Tigh Molaga***

***(An unfinished poem about the Dissolution of Irish Monasteries under Henry VIII and a subsequent Cromwellian Bombardment)***

*‘Oídhche dhamh go doilg, dúbhach  
chois f’hairge na dtonn dtré un,  
ag léursmuáineadh a’s ag luadh,  
air chorraibh chruadha an tsaoghal...’*

The Romance of stilled abandonment,  
accepted forgetfulness,  
Monastic mayhem, a wounded island  
bleeding soul and culture, the nightlight of  
*an Uaigneas*.

‘Further along the coast!’,  
*Cnoc an Dún*,  
splashes against rock spikes,  
fenlands, slob-lands sand-banked by the quays,  
sea breaths slow heaved upon a slipway,  
slow pulse of the solstice slipping by degrees,  
as *An Uaimneach* enters the sea.

Shooting star above the *Mainistir*,  
schoolboys kicking a ball,  
leather bound codex...  
‘found in a hole in the wall’.

Scriptorium floor timbered no more,  
*Mícheál Ó Cléirigh* cassocked footfall  
puffed into dust motes seeped along a hall,  
now a grave plot echoing the reaper's call...

*Do bhídh aímsir ann 'n a raibh,  
an teach-so go soilbh, súbhach.  
Is ann do bhíodh cloig a's cliar,  
dréuchda a's díadhachd d'á léughadh,  
córaídhe, ceatal agus ceól,  
ag moladh mórdhachda Dé...*

**End**

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## References / Notes:

1. Quotations in Gaelic above are from the [celt.ucc.ie](http://celt.ucc.ie) website and are from the Gaelic poem ***Machtnamh an Duine Dhoilgheasig nó Caoineadh Thighe Molaga*** and its translation by Sir Samuel Ferguson as The Lament over the Ruins of the Abbey of Timoleague. The original poem, that in Gaelic, was written by *Seághan (Seán) Ó Coileáin* of Myross, a Cork coastal parish west of Timoleague. He is described as the ‘Silver-Tongued poet of Carbery’ by some i.e. of the *Corcú Laoidhe* people, i.e. of ‘Carbery of the Hundred Isles’.
2. Timoleague ( *Tigh / Teach Molaga* meaning the house / cell place of *Molaga*) was originally a foundation of the 6th or 7th century Cork saint named *Molaga*. He is said in the folk tradition to have introduced beekeeping to Ireland; another Cork beekeeper saint was *Gobnait* of Ballyvourney among the *Muscraige* people, northwards of Timoleague. Timoleague Bay is situated on the west side of the *Dún Cearmna* peninsula, better known as the Old Head of Kinsale, a place which was known abroad as early as the time of Ptolemy of Alexandria’s *Geography* i.e. 2nd century AD. The site of, or the proximity of, the cell of *Molaga*’s foundation became in later centuries the site of a Franciscan Abbey, founded by the local *MacCárthaigh*

ruler circa 1240 AD. *Molaga* is said to be a child of humble origins from the vicinity of Kildorrery beside the Funcheon River (a tributary of the Blackwater) in the *Fir Maige (Maighe)* district (Fermoy). There is much in the **pollfaotalamh.ie** website about the souterrains of the Fermoy locality and about Kilcrumper (*Cill Chruimthir...cell of the presbyter*) there and Clondalane (*Cluain Dá Lann... the hermitage meadow of two chapels*).

What role might Coole Abbey town-land have played in an early Christian settlement at Clondalane? Cool, an anglicisation of *Cúile* (which came to mean a corner space or segment of land) is a word which seems to resonate with Cuile in Sardinia a place-name associated with shepherds' habitation areas as well as with Byzantine monasticism apparently. Was it originally the *Cúile* of the *Cluain* there...a specific precinct area (a sacred space) within a broader community settlement there? Coole Abbey town-land abuts the southern boundary of Clondalane, but prior to the creation of delimited 'townland' spaces or their sub-denomination units, a focal point for a christian settlement, both secular as well as monastic? This, as Saint *Flanait / Flanaid's* settlement and nunnery (a hermitage of women (noble?) with male hermits (*manach*) and secular persons (*manaig*) also), focused on the two chapels (male and female)? Two



chapels i.e. two *lann*, *lann* being a Gaelic word for a chapel, in close proximity to a holy well at the place now known as Coole Abbey townland? *Flanaith*, the daughter of the king of the *Fir Maighe* people and a friend of Saint *Mochuda* of Lismore is regarded by local tradition as the founder of this Christian community. Elsewhere in *Fir Maighe* tribal lands another princess named *Cranat* founded her own hermitage (nunnery?) or was this also initially founded by *Flanaith*?

What was happening at this point in time? What impact did the introduction of early Christianity have on the tribal kingdom of the *Fir Máighe*, beside the great Blackwater River? Did the river once flow into the sea beside Saint *Deuglán's* (a prince of the *Déise*) coastal monastery and community at Ardmore, as a folk tradition suggests? Where did the presbyter of Kilcrumper (*Cill Chruimthir* i.e. cell of the presbyter), by the junction by the Funcheon River of Saint *Fionn Chú* of Mitchelstown, come from and how close a relationship existed between this person and the king i.e. chieftain of the tribe? How do the beehive-domed souterrains of the Fermoy district fit into this picture of early Christian monasticism and its secular community? Who was *Cranat* expected to marry when forced from her hermitage and was it to avoid such a marriage that she blinded herself temporarily? What were

the politics of intermarriage between the *Fir Maighe* nobility and other Gaelic tribes? What were the soft politics of intermarriage with Saxon lords in Britain e.g. Anglo-Saxon, as some genealogies suggest, i.e. princesses of *Mumhan*? Kings playing chess, *fiacra* in the *ficheall* ...and did this happen also in Roman times?

Irish Archaeologist *Tomás Ó Carragáin* has written, and published, about three early monastic estates in the *Fir Maighe* kingdom / tribeland. Did one of them influence *Molaga* as a child, given that Kildorrery is close to the Funcheon river? *Molaga* is said to be buried at a place called *Labbamolaga* (*Labba Molaga* meaning the Bed of *Molaga*) beside Kildorrery (*Cill Dairbhre*...the cell of the oaks) near Mitchelstown, Cork where in the graveyard of the ruined parish church his grave is pointed out within a very early oratory / chapel structure surviving there.

4. *Machtnamh an Duine Dhoilgheasig* translates as, 'thoughts of the melancholy person'.

5. 'Schoolboys kicking a ball' ...One of Cork City's antiquarians (possibly Thomas Crofton Croker?) refers to this incident where some schoolboys were observed kicking what on first sight appeared to be a leather football but when examined turned out to be a manuscript which

they had found either in a hole in the wall or behind a stone in a hole in the wall of the monastery. One wonders if it was one of the walls of what had once been the monastery's scriptorium? If so why was the manuscript hidden there ...in the run up to or during the Cromwellian bombardment of the monastery?

6. *An Uaimneach* (Womanagh River) is a river in East Cork which enters the sea at what was in ancient times an important harbour known as Pilmore i.e. a *Puill (Poill) Mór*.

7. *Mícheal Ó Cléirigh* was one of the Four Masters, the early 17th century compilers of the **Annála Ríoghachta Éireann** (otherwise known as the **Annals of the Four Masters**) who set out to offset a looming suppression of Irish heritage in existing manuscripts, and in surviving oral lore, deposited in Irish monastic libraries; this being done at a time when the dissolution of such monasteries was still ongoing subsequent to an early 16th century Act of Henry VIII of England. It seems that the progress of the process unfolded in some places very slowly over a very long period of time due to protections given by certain hereditary Gaelic lords...long after a time of commissioners carrying ledgers in saddle-bags. Also, the work of these 'masters' was done to combat the inaccuracies of an emergent colonial print-culture, in some

antiquarian narratives, projecting a certain ethnographic perspective on the 'Gaelic world' and on the legacy of Christian learning within its society.

In the course of his research, in a monastic scriptorium, scholar's quill in hand, one wonders what manuscripts he might have consulted in the library / scriptorium of the monastery and what happened to these sources when the monastery was sacked and ruined? Were they destroyed or did some of them at least end up in the hands of private collectors in Dublin, or on the stalls of booksellers abroad e.g. London, or might some have been shipped abroad to the libraries of other monasteries, prior to a sacking of *Tí (Tigh) Molaga*, i.e. Timoleague, County Cork, by Cromwell's forces, or something done some decades before as part of an ongoing process of dissolution of monastic institutions as begun by Henry VIII of England in the early 16th century? The monastery was named for *Molaga* a 7th century saint with a connection to the locality. This Franciscan Abbey was built in the 13th century and was associated with the *MacCárthaigh* lords of Desmond (*Deas Mumhan* ... i.e. South Munster).

[Unfinished! The idea behind an as yet un-composed part of the poem is to develop connections along the Cork coastline, with Timoleague's monastery and its associated town as just one incident in the story of a world with very different perspectives and ongoing influences from

abroad compared with what subsequently came to be. One thinks of a reference to Spanish merchants in Bennet's history of Bandon... if memory serves me].

# Fomorian Cogitations

Traders and prospectors upon the Atlantic Sea,  
Hanno out of Carthage, southwards a periplus.  
The Pirate Round, West Cork to Barbary, to Carthage...a very  
ancient sea-route it may prove to have been...  
Megalithic culture in North West Africa.  
Gaelic, someone said, heard spoken there in the 19th  
century...but whether pirate or native who can say...  
Boa there in ethnography, Janus headed statuary.

Benin of the Bronzes, Benin of the Souterrains Park.  
From coastline to coastline, ships upon the ocean,  
before Arab traders, in known history... who might say?  
A merchant ship upon that ocean sailing northwards.  
Cornish Cassiterides for tin ore, coastline of Desmond for  
copper ore for a bronze-smith to pour.  
Greek periplus, Hamilco northwards a periplus,  
Greek coins upon a West Cork beach?

Fomorian, dark skinned raiders from the sea some say,  
Children of Nemed (Nemid), some say, a colony by Cobh  
Island, plague took them some say, fearsome strange magical  
people, people of strange practices and folk mythology.  
...'Facing the Ocean'...in a floating world of words,  
words in a bibliography.

**End**

# Nubia to Hyperboria: Whatever it might be of us as they might see?

Bare feet upon a rock scree mountain,  
*Cruach Phádraigh* or a holy mountain in Athos,  
the reek, the hill, the mountain,  
an annual pilgrimage of bare foot pilgrims to Jebel Barkal,  
a ram-god for Amun, a ram upon a pedestal at Kilorglin in Kerry,  
a pharaoh's daughter by a mountain, Scotia by the sea,  
a Cush for a Kushite upon a hill,  
Scetis upon a hill at *Cnoc na Manaigh*  
of the monks at *Cnoic na Seithe*,  
mountain streams conjoin to form a river,  
a meandering of memories.

*Binne* or *Na Binnia*,  
cliffs, peaks upon mountain ridges,  
hill spurs projecting shadows into low lying plains,  
overlooking a plain, eagle-eyed,  
a wet marshland in a plain of river meadows,  
where two rivers flow to the sea.  
The Lee and another no longer to be.  
*Curragh* of the *Corcach* the marshland,  
the *Binne* overlooking the *Corcach*, the *Curragh*.  
Until a great flood submerges it all

and time forgets and the name of *Nemed (Nemid)*,  
of his people, becomes separated from his tomb,  
*Árd Nemed*, peak of Nemed;  
a dark skin sea lord and his forgotten people  
wasted by disease from traders from across the sea;  
a cool wind across a Nemedian desert,  
Numidia of the Berber world of Carthage,  
of Barbary, of the maritime round,  
of the *Corcú Laoidhe*,  
of exiled Christians in search of a new homeland,  
of a new Christianity and a floruit to be...  
Or is this all but just a fantasy?

**End**



# Prospectors

Out of Carthage,  
a blockade taxing trade  
into the western seascape.

Prospecting for things to sell,  
Himilco, Hanno and Pytheas  
may tell.

Tin and copper,  
Riches beneath a druid's up-turned tree,  
what did the metal diviner once see?

In Wadi Hammamat his Tomb,  
An Egyptian quarryman.  
Mapping rock stratigraphy,  
in Oceanus a ship's prow records coastal geology.

Roman quarryman seeking a mountain of glass sand,  
Donegal currach men wave a welcoming hand.  
A dove-marble floor in Londinium,  
from the shore of a creek  
by the bent back of *Crom* they come.

A cuirass gold-plated falls,  
Skeleton gone to dust,

upon fragments of a cloak disintegrating,  
upon a cave floor his binding shroud.  
Rich merchant from a villa on  
Britannia's coast lives no more,  
Cave forgotten until a quarryman opens its door  
*...Uaimneach.*

**End**

# ***Carcair***

*Carcair* the Tomb.

The entombment of the Living Saint,  
the final pinnacle of the Third Order.

His *Easpug* performed the ritual  
as they enclosed him ...or was it her?

As at Iona, no monks of Columba  
attempted to build a chapel  
on the ground surface above him,  
before 'Gone to God' he became.

There is just silence now, forgotten-ness  
as Nature's Wild of the Wilderness, *Díseart*,  
across the *Gort*, the *Garrane* and the *Garraí*  
brings the peace of Christ  
to within the *Cill* of the *Lios* of the *Rath*  
at the *Cúile* of the *Cluain*.

Amen.

**End**

# Mind Charts and Beckoning Images

Old Avestan in the Slow Air of a tin whistle beside the fire hearth at a moonlit beach, shingling waters, its percussive way a lapping of waves.

Into the mind maps of Matteo Ricci's palaces. Sublimate, Intricate, Intoxicate, Capacitate, what is beneath an observable reality.

The loss of Vulcan's forge, the magic of flame making rock to sword and shield boss, flowing snake-like surge funnelling across a clay mould, dripping beads of wax ...but the melody of the anvil now no-more.

On a hillside the *Gobán's* hammer turned to timber and stone, and earthwork staves...his visage a glacial erratic on the gravels of an ancient floodplain...just a local folk-tale someone was heard to say.

The Faravahar once again upon the etherial canvas of a universal sky. The Arch-Druid's dragon draws eastward his chariot of fame, *Mog Ruith* of the Sky Wheel, the Red Druid of the Great Wheel of Life and the curling mists which sweep

across mountain vales which they en-veil; the battle seekers cannot see.

A sentinel on the brow of *Carn Tierna* (cairn of the lord) awaits, hesitates, hears the pounding of an oak forest's floor, two war chariots breach the clearing, breath vapour of stilled horses in the mists of a morning sunrise dappled through the trees beside the hill settlement of the *Fir Maighe*.

*Mog Ruith*, his daughters women of shadow mysteries, *Tlachtga*, *Clíodhna*, *Aeibhill* seek melody from winds across the bird-songs of the land as *Cliú* winds a harp string and a mountain stream bursts over a cliff-face with a roar ...and tumbles... a splashing of water falling, Carraiganass of the *Muscraighe* in the mind's eye...but from *Cliú* a glissando dampened along Aherlow's Glen.

*Eriú*, *Fodhla* and *Banba* each in her own domain lays claim to naming the land, the land of those splintered coast lands where ships, oft broken by a raging sea, by its wind whistling sirens, by its jagged ferocity.

Beneath the spell of a Christian prayer a druidic initiate in a subterranean cell, learning to rote memory, to recall... extempore, a bird of wisdom set free from the *lissu of an Ollamh* still keeps watch from the hollow of a whitethorn tree

straddling the bank of a Dane's *rath*... *dúchas na manaig*  
protected by the *piseogs* of a *Sceach gheal*.

Persia in the *Tuatha* Lands of the god *Anu*, *Dé Anu* by the  
*Abha Mhór*, *Dé Danaan* warriors from beneath the ground  
rising to a battle sound, Milesians upon the *maighe*, the plain,  
upon the grasslands cattle herds scattered...but the Red  
Druid dies beneath tears-falling as a soft rain, to the echo of  
battle drums like the pounding reach of taiko drums, in a  
cherry blossom land where the ancient *Bibe* wails her  
*caoineadh*...ragged tresses torn and falling from the mask of  
a bent head-dress tilted as on a kabuki stage...silence in the  
circle of a megalithic tower of stones, circle of the dead...and  
a fire temple flame still holds the memory somewhere now  
distant.

In the Peninsular lands, the battle for the ore, no-more.  
Ore weapons of *Cnoc Osta*, who to choose? War-chest of  
Macedon, gold staters minted solely for trade for ore or ore  
smelted to metal, upon a sailing ship to store, gold payments  
soon forgotten beside a distant western ocean.

Weapons from the ore now scattered upon a Persian battle-  
field somewhere towards the promontory of a forgotten  
Notium, Alexander and Persepolis in a blaze of destruction.

The Faravahar fading eastwards among the ruins of temples,  
once of bonfires ignited upon a king's call on a festive night.  
Bonfires of the eternal flame, flame of the Mindful One,  
become a thin wisp of cloud across an Indian sky, far, far  
away.

The night lights of the road of the silk seek the fibres within a  
plaid shawl, people of the forever road in caravans and at  
Petra's caravanserai, an old singer, storyteller, teller of yarns,  
tells of Semiramis and of Mariam in the cooling shade of a  
paradise enclosed by a garden wall... and a Byzantine dome  
becomes illuminated as evensong is heard... Özgü Baba  
remembers his world, *Seán Ó Conaill* also remembers his  
own, sitting by *Cill Rialaigh* in Iveragh. Each to his own... a  
split empire remembering its once glory in the frieze of a  
triumphal arch... shaggy pony grazes a haggard on a West  
Cork hill farm... an Emperor's coin found in the *lios* of a *dún* ...  
the silence of an old clock now stilled ... the energy of its  
being now dissipated and faded away... dissolved to a fine  
dust lifted from the muddy surface of a dilapidated *bothán*  
and blown by a soft breeze across an abandoned *bothairín* ...  
a Traveller, a *minkier*, by the great hill-mounds of a forgotten  
cemetery gazes upon a Spring flower and there is a scent of  
wild garlic in the morning air... sometimes, some things remain  
timeless in the ever given gift of nature's bounty...

**End**

# A Gaelic Ululation

A saint dies, his well dries,  
an ogham stone by a low mound lies,  
by the *cluain* by the singing river  
ululation a sound raised to be waked before the moss growth  
of the *leacht* of the grave...  
ululation spiralling but not from the black robes of a Berber  
land...  
'learned from the monks' like the lyra.....  
an '*ullaloo*' in the land of the black shawl *caoineadh*...  
an ululation ...displaced from a sand desert to a 'green  
desert'... a wilderness to a wilderness?

**End**



# ***Mug Ruith / Mog Ruith***

Magic of the *Dé Danáan*,

*Tlachtga* weaving spells within minds of reason,

moonlight in a watery cave,

moonlight in subterranean spaces, people beneath the mound.

*Lugh* of the Long Arms, embracing *Crom* and *Áine*, has arrived.

*Tlachtga* no more, *Áine* now in the Kish of *Cush*.

Simon the Magus in confrontation, in the miracle of flight.

The druid becomes a convert, *Ibar* and the 'new teaching'.

The Mindful One as the Creator.

*Erc* of the sweet tongue as *Breitheamh* of the cross, as

*Easpug*.

*Anú* and the *Bábóg*,

the *Biddy* and the *Brideóg*

at the foot of the Reeks.

*Clíodhna* enticing, *Clíodhna* as the wren.

*Mananáan* slumbers in the deep.

The Buck, the Puck at the Royal Cemetery at UR.

The Puck, the Buck at Kilorglin, the Mountain King.

Atlantean Thoth,

lanterns swing, subterranean hammers ring,  
Agricola's rock spirits.

The far land, once dreamt in the tower gate of a blue-tiled sea.  
At Uruk clouds above a garden paradise, drifting far  
westwards,  
to colonies of the forgotten.

Ship fleets smashed on hidden reefs,  
coastal winds of an angry rage-filled sea,  
waifs of women lost.

In the turn of an age, bronze to iron,  
*Breogán's* druid at *Túr Brigantia*.

Diorama in a South Kerry mountain-scape,  
*Anú as Dé Annan*,

Persian coins from a Munster coastline.

From *Inis Dairbhre* ( island of the oak trees ) to *Beann Trí*,

From Carthage to the Ilen, to Dido at *Cnoc na Seithe*,

Dido and the *Dalláns* across the valleys and across the glens.

From the oak wood of the prophets at *Sliabh Doire na Sagart*,  
to *Sliabh Riabhach*, crossing the *Clíadh Dubh* intersecting the  
*Abha Mhór*,

to *Cnoc na Sceach* in the *tuatha* of the *Fir Maige*.

From a bonfire flame at *Mullach an Radharc*

to *Beann na Gailltí*,

*na Binnia* where the rainbow sinks beneath the land,

at *Crotha Cliach* the harps of *Cliú* unstrung,  
to Rea's *Sliabh* by *Cush*, *Cnoc Áine* an *aonach* beyond,  
then to the storm clouds above *Domhnach Cnoc Maol an*  
*Faidh*,  
*Mug Ruith* as the Faravahar,  
as *Fear Athair*, as *Athair na bhFearraibh*,  
as Father of Men, an amulet from father to son.

*Mug Ruith* as Ashur,  
*Mug Ruith* of the sky *rothar*,  
*Mug Ruith* as the Slave of the Wheel.  
Trismagistus in the shadow of a doorway,  
Atlantean Thoth authors the emerald tablets.

Cuneiform, Akkadian,  
polyhedral dice beside a game board,  
thoughts of Hincks and the ghost of a child's  
footsteps on Princes Street's pavement,  
stories of ancient Persia...its borders once stretching to India.  
The 'Collectanea' of Vallancey spoke of India,  
Vallancey of Spike Island,  
Vallancey of the military map of Munster...  
and Vallancey spoke of Carthage  
and of the Punic in the *Gaeilge*.

*Srón na Binnia* by the Reeks to *Srón* by the Paps,  
Corc as the Bowman who fired the arrow from horseback.  
A golden chariot in the sunburst of a rising dawn,  
a golden sky-boat as treasure trove,  
Greek foreigners, might be from Dacians of Scythia by the  
Black Sea,  
offering the sun's teardrops at the *aonach* of *Carmen*.

*Eriu, Banba* and *Fodhla*,  
Triads of goddesses,  
Horae of the new beginnings from Erinys of the winter furies...  
and the Red Claw still spreads beneath the Paps by *Shrone*.

The *Uíbh* of Rheia,  
The *Tuatha* of Anu's people,  
The *Uíbh* of Eirene the peaceful one...  
and *Eochu* worshipped Mummu,  
the logos.

*Anú* and the *Bábóg*, the trail of the Speckled Cow,  
*Bealach an Bó Finne*.

*Uíbh Rea*, *Uíbh Rheia*, the People of the *Dé Rea*,  
Tribe of Ierne, Eirene, *Erni to Uíbh* of Rheia,  
beyond them the Tribe of *Anú, Dé Anú*.

The *Fearraibh Athair*, the Man Father, Father of Men, the  
Faravahar,

a druid across the plain of *Fir Maige*,  
across the plain of *Chaoilli*, to Levantine altars, their flaming  
cauldrons, cauldron of Cernunnos woven into Persia.  
The *Dagda*, the Mindful One, the mounded one,  
Ahura upon the throne of Zeus, Rea the mother.  
*Brigit* bright, upon the plain plaiting the straw,  
*Crom* gathering-in the autumn harvest,  
*Lugnasa* feasting at the *féile* come *Samhain*.

The *Bibe* wails across a mound of skulls,  
*Móinteáin na gCloigheáin*,  
*Cath Maige Chromtha*, the battle on *Crom*'s plain,  
*Crom* the carrier of *Lugh*'s golden harvest,  
*Áine* wears a garland, Jupiter, Zoroaster  
and the golden orbs, the apples of *Lugh*.  
*Maige Chromtha agus an sagart pagánach*,  
*na daoine ag príomh áit cruinniú lar Mumha*,  
woven into the fire-smoke  
of a *seanachai*'s remembrancer,  
in the ear of a hedge-school master  
traces of the Elder Faiths.  
Scribes of the Elders to Scribes of the Empires,  
to scribes of the Renaissance,  
Alcasaba fallen,  
doves released.

*Lir's* swans burst forth from *Loch Allua*,  
John of *Mushera* startled by their passing.

Slave of the Wheel,

*Rotha Mór an tSaoil...*

a cosmology of the Wheel,  
the heavens revolving  
in a circle of stones standing.

Wheel head-dress of Elche,  
the wheeled hair of a Hopi woman,  
Tlachtga as house goddess, as seer,  
Tlachtga as daughter of the Wheel.

Wheel as circle, circle as wheel.

Logic of the jumble, rediscovery of understandings.

Menhirs, Paddles, oars in a circle, oars of a wheel.

Time rowers, Time rovers, upon the sea of the seasons,  
ever revolving the year, the circle of time.

Gear-wheels of a Baqtun interlock,  
the wheels continue their cycles.

*Cad a dhéanfaimid feasta* Asclepius?

Cloud of Unknowing,  
and a voice from the CLOUD  
said Spiritus Mundi.

**End.**

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# Part 3

Myth-Crafting the South West

Scrivenings

# Myth-Crafting the South West

A Greek trireme out of a Tartessian port,  
charting a periplus.

Mercenary Gaytholos to Egypt out of a *Danánn tuatha*-land of  
Black Sea goldsmiths, Dananites...the hammered tempo of  
the *Gobán Saor*...

Scythian Kurku seeking new promontories in the western sea  
and the magic of new weaponry,  
as gold bangled Persian in fine raiments  
whispers a temple hymn to the Mindful One,  
as the vengeance of *Mog Ruith* seeks Simon the Magus,  
as the temple flame, eternal, flickers its reply  
to each breath's veil.

*Goídel Glas* (Gaytholos, Gaythelos) of Iberia  
as warrior adventurer in Scythia,  
as mercenary commander in Egypt.  
Nemed as son of Agnoman of Scythia.

*Fenius Farsaid* a king of Scythia in the myths of Ibernica.

Vallancey's Nemed as Numidians.

Scythian warriors among the Numidians.

Nemedians as Numidians of North Africa,  
of the Kingdom of the Berbers.

Numidia as once of Carthage.

Numidians of Al-Andalus

in Iberia of the naval blockade.

Iberia of Hannibal's wars... Celtiberia, wheel headdress of  
Elche and New Carthage, a Battle of Ibera, Hibera, a  
horseman of two spears and the flow of the Ebro,  
Galicia and *Br-Eoghan* and Biscay beyond...

Horseman of two spears on a grave-slab in Iberia...

Romani at the Battle of Ibera,..Hibera...Dertosa...

Numidian Scythian in an *Uí Eachach* homeland, perhaps...

*Diarmuid Ua Dhuibhne* as the *Diarmuid* of *Gráinne*...

Lovers embedded beneath a capstone upon a furze-land  
slope in Carbery.

*Diarmuid* of the Yellow Spear (*Gáe Buidhe*),

*Diarmuid* of the Red Spear (*Gáe Dearg*)...

*Ua Dhuibhne* clan, *Corcú* (*Corca*) of *Corc* the horseman  
who draws the bow Scythian-style in *Eirinn*...

a Barbary sail on a West Cork sloop,

*An Gaeilge* once heard spoken inland  
of a North African shoreline.

Gaytholos as victor,

but heart vanquished,

warrior of *Slieve Mish*

his princess of the Nile from white steed fallen

by a mountain stream in a purple glen.

Battle becomes legend to a 'book of invasions'.

From *Slieve Mish* a tapestry unfurls to the sea ...  
as does a coastline of stories,  
stretching eastwards  
to the the lands of the *Déise*.

Gaytholos *ar fán* seeks festival flames at *Dá Chích Anann*  
before ridge-crested southwards  
to the panorama of *Cnoc Osta*,  
as majestically it meets the mariner within an autumnal  
sunset,  
as rough-lands are softened  
by an evening breeze caressing a forest floor,  
and a tomb-top is chosen as an altar.

Eye-line of peaked land-spear pierced into breast of the sea,  
crepuscular rays of sunshine beneath clouds opening,  
corridor of the imagining,  
vista becomes envisioned.  
Staff upright in a cup-mark of rings,  
the shadow dial of Time's gearing reverses...  
Philip prepares an army which Alexander will command.

A gnomon to shadow-cast the height of the sun  
at the noon of a summer solstice...  
a station of Pytheas, perhaps,  
to Hipparchus of Nicaea,  
Geminus of Rhodes star-gazing...

Staff of a hooded wanderer  
in cup-mark within concentric circles,  
a radial shadow calibrated,  
thought or seen as day becomes night,  
as season turns to season,  
as celestial entities predictably align,  
circle of cycle,  
cycle of circle at this place of spectacle,  
this place of ships,  
of picks and stones,  
of braziers and a chorus of anvils ringing  
as surveyor surveys,  
as readings are collected.

Ptolemy's Almagest,  
Ptolemy's Geographia,  
from Eratosthenes four centuries before  
to the wonder-door of nautical charts,  
Marinus the mariner of Tyre,  
Ptolemy of the Greek Library of Greek Alexandria;  
co-ordinates from a navigator,  
co-ordinates from a prospector and explorer,  
co-ordinates for a cartographer projecting a globe,  
co-ordinates for merchant seamen  
venturing to the isles of the West,  
Atlantic port of Greek Iberians a safe harbour,  
Iverni waiting fair weather at Ivernis *aonach*

by *Inbhear Scéine* beyond *Cnoc Osta*  
among the *Insulae Oestymnides*,  
Hibernia upon the 'map' of Ptolemy.  
In Hibernia, a pleasant island found,  
some to spend their winters there sheltering underground.

Surya-Siddhanta  
and Alexander winters in the Hindu-Kush  
in the late fourth century BC...  
gold staters once lost in the lands of the Iverni  
and memories of Philip  
as a Spring-time gale takes lift across  
a West Cork sand-dune.

Platform a tablet of symbols and instruments,  
low dry-stone wall, ancient,  
mossy escutcheons the embalmers of ages forgotten,  
fades into furze-land.

*Marcálim* 'to mark out' ,  
*dá chloch ag marcáil na h-áite*, two stones mark out this  
place...gallauns, perhaps,  
land-divisioning upon a plains-land, a *maighe*,  
elsewhere hides draped across  
the spine-lands of *Cnoic na Seithe*,  
in Carthage once upon a time a story of Dido was told.

Baal Hammon of Carthage elevated,  
upon a scaffolding as throne,  
as the Puck, the Buck, the Ram...  
with a nod to Father Prout of Cork,  
to Father Joaquin Lorenzo Villanueva  
...and to the Phoenicians of O'Brien...  
scholarly quests, learned societies to popular ones,  
after a time of Napoleon among the pyramids...as  
antiquarianism blossoms into the 19th century...stirrings  
along the pavements of the city of Cork...as tourist trails  
opened to the west...an old man remembering, S.C. Hall sits  
in a gallery pew at the old mayoralty church of Cork.

*Beara* rises monumentally  
from the bottom lands of the sea,  
*Cnoc Daod*, Daoud's Goliath perhaps,  
from a beacon calling  
the call of *MacCárthaigh's* highland stag,  
heard by navigators tacking their sails,  
past many a perilous jagged crag.  
Land-strips perceived,  
cloud-shadows in floating motion cast,  
the harvest awaits beneath an evening sunset  
of orange amber glow,  
it silhouettes a peninsula like a rising ship's mast.  
Knit-workings of old stone rows,  
the twilight motions of calloused hands

forever re-enacting what the gods  
nocturnally unfold,  
as sundown comes  
slowly swept across highland defiles and ravines,  
as upon a coastal sweep of coves,  
cabin lights arise,  
like the speckling of starlight  
upon a one hundred isles.

*Muintir Cnoc Osta* in a land of tombs and circles,  
myth-crafting the slow end of an age of bronze.

Antikythera, Euclidean, Pythagorean, Archimedean  
predicting the cosmic calendar to measuring Gaia.  
Metonic, Sidereal, Axial Precessional...capturing the motions  
making them hand-held...

Ismail Al-Jazari  
and the Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices  
clock hinging of gear wheels as an automaton comes to life.  
A Golden Age preserves the legacy of Greece,  
a Greek sunset as an Arab dhow  
is silhouetted against the rising dawn of a new day.

Romani traders out of Britannia wharf-sided for taxing,  
sheltering from the grasp of a storm-front breaking at *Dún*  
*Cearmna*...ship wrecked by *Cúirt Mhic Shéafraidh* a  
warning...a dense distribution of ogham inscribed memorials



in a wide sweep of hinterland...the flourish of a stylus across  
a wax tablet, a counting cypher becomes a script ...  
merchandise and cargo cults infused into the territory, *Roinn  
Romhánach*, ...and a king becomes a Christian.

*Roinn Romhánach*,  
a SATOR in a House Church  
beneath a garrisoned banner of Rome  
...a missive for a bishop bound...  
Assembly of the faerie isle  
at the rock of *Clíodhna*  
by *Maighe Ealla*,  
the land of the river meadow of the swan...  
a conference of the wise at a rookery awaits a new religion...  
a 'conference of the birds' in Persia...perpetual migrations in  
an annual round...peregrini in search of a lost king...to *Eirinn*  
... perhaps...a **Mushaira** of poets hold court close distant of  
**Mushera** Mountain.

Green deserts remember sand deserts  
and scroll halls where scholars theorise  
beneath floral capitals in a forest of pillars...  
the geometry of charts and the quest for the west...  
A language of the Egyptian mathematician,  
Hermes as Trismagist, three priests of Zoroaster,  
tri-magus, tri-magi,

seeking to predict the unencoded,  
the new, the yet-to-be-seen,  
distance gazing, sky geometry,  
geometry of the pyramids to geometry of the sails,  
geometry of sea coasts to geometry of lands  
wrestled from beneath Nature's embracing canopy.

Poet as architect of meanings,  
ponders the ambient rather than the whiskey of a word  
amidst a 'foaming billows roar',  
the ending of an ancient wisdom of the divine,  
images forming and dissolving in the transience of  
puff-balled clouds  
where Tibet finds residence in a 'dysart' a *díseart*,  
tears of knowing and life passaging,  
remembrance in the cupped hands of an animist...  
reawakens the spirit,  
Aum recited by slate rock faces,  
breath motion stillness performed in the rhythm of its flow...  
and rags at a *Cillín* tree and stone circle as cell of transition...  
to delve once more upon the cycles of the spirals...  
blending...  
awaiting becoming once more...an *Anam Chara* awaits in an  
Anima Loci at a sacred well...

Gullible Gulliver in a land of travailles and sorrows  
near where *Anú, Annan*, rests,

the Dean dreaming...Carberiae Rupes...beyond  
by Iveragh embattled *Anú* fallen  
upon the bedding sands of the sea...  
'making the land' said the old man  
by the stone circle half-fallen,  
by Brow Head,  
by a sacred promontory...  
upon the Mizen.

*Anú* by Iveragh, Iveragh by the sea  
and a Maori fisherman far away told a tale  
about once upon a time and the making of the land...  
and yet the she of he or he of she  
still procreates that which still proclaims...  
people of her gentility,  
of motherhood and life upon the land...  
people-mind of the currach men...  
and those of elder times long before.

Footfall among the scroll halls,  
librarian as knowledge custodian,  
as keeper of the knowledge store,  
as curator of intellectual heritage,  
as scholar voice among the discourses of scholars,  
as gate-keeper of memory.  
Master of his own genius...polymath...  
Kallimachos by the sepia light of a midnight lantern...

but then the ruin of the groves of academe  
while at *Doire na Sagairt* (oakwood of the priests)  
a druid remained  
as last man standing...  
and a blanched-handed *sagart* performed  
a bead-led penance in a rock-cut cell at Kilcrohane,  
to the knell of a shepherd's bell.

Rock-face exposed,  
a canvas of symbols in Carbery.  
'Little oak wood of the stones'...  
but why emphasise the 'stones'...  
happenstance or something other?  
Permanency of stone markings,  
time fixed positions,  
time fixed referencing,  
time fixed accuracy,  
but the axis of rising slowly changes,  
almost imperceptibly as horizons no longer align,  
as knowing becomes lost,  
as deviations are no longer understood,  
as time embedded awareness becomes lost,  
as faces change with the generations,  
as only ghosts come returning  
again and again to measure  
and interpret the cycles, to predict and philosophise.  
Tombs as perennial chorus of ancestral voicings,

one by one *cloch-le-carn*,  
a community processional in its motions,  
commemorates its warrior dead on hill-top, on ridge-crest  
...sky-blue merges into sea blue as seasons become ages  
slipping away,  
becoming days of remembrances long past.

Old stones awaiting a knowing, a time to speak again,  
once more tales awaiting to be re-told by a speaker from a  
Roman eyrie...

Said the mariner, as the echo shock of a bow wave receded in  
the wake of a surge of the sea,  
'how many leagues northward might it be,  
from a beacon *túr* of the sacrum promunturium,  
upon the lands of the Oestriminis,  
to a Mizen coast beacon at *Cnoc Osta*,  
once known to those of Greece,  
the Insulae Oestymnides?',  
a once-upon-a-time legacy of sailing 'each to each'.

Personhood as self-hood buried in a 'cave' at Knockane,  
beyond *Colmán's Cluain*...

stilled now, doors to the soul closed now,  
identity dissolved to non-entity,  
all now stepped across a threshold to forgotten-ness,  
enclosed now,

entombed in silence...  
spirit breath speckled across starlight...  
shadow walker...  
amber-beaded, gold-crowned,  
breast-plated, cloaked,  
walking toward an afterlife awaited,  
into a paradigm forever unseen...  
bones to dust now  
but the liquid of the gold still flows somewhere...

Knockane, a minor hill,  
a *Cnocán* or a *Cnoc* of *Áine*,  
a *Cnocán* of *Áine*, *Áine* of *Cnoc Áine*,  
consort of the bent-backed, the *crompán*, *Crom Dubh*,  
'*Crum*', the sheaves-carrier at the harvest time of *Lughaidh*  
*Lámhfhada*,  
*Áine* who once sat, garlanded, on the brow of a ridge,  
*Áine* of that ancient *aonach* of Knockaney...  
she, once so ubiquitously named perhaps,  
but also here in the lands of the *Uí Mhic Choille*,  
lands where a menhir of *Lughaidh* once stood by *Lurrig*,  
*Lughaidh Ríoga*, by *Carraig an Crompán*  
by where *Colmán* once leaped  
from the *túr* of his *cluain*  
to instate a new faith...where *Crom* once fed the multitudes  
and souls were brought to heaven.

Person-hood as identity among peers abroad,  
person-hood as costume of the artefacts of memories,  
as curios of a life lived.

Person-hood as memory,  
mind as the synaptic repository of memory,  
its imagery, its enactment of understanding.  
Mind as the recurring enactment of memory,  
as un-folder of being.

Person-hood as mind-shaped by a life lived,  
person-hood as a life created,  
enacted mentefact to artefact,  
stories told, retold, untold,  
retrospective narratives  
of how histories should or should not have been,  
lost knowing unearthed from within a stratigraphy of eras...

The search for a historiography of silenced knowings.

The 'once known' silenced, sword-bladed across the aris of  
an ogham stone, overlooking a wind swept rock strewn cove  
in Iveragh...

sea erosion the erosion of social landscape,  
the erosion of collective memories...

last man standing

beside the door of a *bothán faoi talaimh*,  
hooded, droplets upon a rain drizzled face beneath the cowl,  
gazing into the sea at Galley Head,

'Woodland place of the Pilgrim'...

coins of King Aethelstan forgotten underground,  
and the sand-beach of the long-ships beyond the monastery,  
captives once taken from there it might be,  
as storm clouds darken,  
as time passes... *Anú* beside him hooded beneath a Munster  
cloak.

*Clíodhna* subsumed beneath the flourish of an author's pen,  
a faerie queene where *Mochuda's* charioteer rested,  
the healing apple of the heart retrieved from the *Abha Mór* of  
*Móire* beside a *farsid* along the way of the *Cliadh Dubh*...  
*Flanaid / Flanaith* with her father, a *Fir Maighe* king,  
awaits at *Cluain Dá Lann* ...  
beneath the land a hermit prays for the new religion  
at *Carraig na gCrochairí*, rock of the crosses, a grotto, a  
calvary, beneath the tail-land of the settlement  
at the promontory of the *Carn of Tigernach*.

Landscape becomes seascape,  
promontory becomes island  
as memory becomes legend.

In the end only the echoes whistling in the voices of the wild  
wind continue to remember,  
speaking to those who wish to hear,  
in a language of the heart to the inner chambers of the ear,



*An Gaeilge* in the wail of a chanter's lament  
the slow breathing of an *uilleann* piper's tears...  
until once again a candle light flickers on the Fastnet...  
as the ghostly pirate sloops of the Gael of Baltimore 'come  
rolling home'...  
and a smuggler's tale at Leamcon from a cave to a ship's  
hull...

And the strangeness of moonlight upon a night spent on the  
Skellig...

tales of heritage seekers on *Beara*...

and by the flame-light of a hearth-place an old man's  
remembering of another year of the 'Pirate Round'...

and a fireside tale of when Carthage subsumed Tangiers many  
centuries before...

and a ship-man's tale of when the Freedom of the City of Cork  
was presented to the embassy of an Ottoman sultan...

upon the midnight shore tongues of the waves speak of the  
legacies of times yore...*Eterscéil* upon the crest of a roaring  
wave forever more.

Captain Myagh *MacCárthaigh* a 'pyrate' of the Round,  
from Barbary returned, to *An Cruachán* 'booty laden',  
the yarn of a shanty sung upon the breeze...sails slackening  
...and in the east a yarn of *Donal Spáinneach of Dubh Clann*

*MacCárthaigh* once told at a *bothán* fireside at *Carraig na bhFear*...

in ragged rain drifts a shadow play of dark silhouettes ...a culture in decline as homelands are abandoned...

...down a cliff-face of rock-cut steps by moonlight the lantern-holder goes as a storm wind blows, and the black shadow of a sail-less sloop lies beyond the cove...

'*Torann na dtonn*' forever reverberating...abandoning, seeking help from beyond the sea... as when a fugitive sought help from a warlord of Rome... as when *Diarmaid Mac Murchadha* slipped away below the horizon of a moon-silvered sea... where once a dragon ship of Oda sheltered by the leeward coastline of a *Poill Mór*...not far from where Desmond's old countess...as Raleigh once said of her...slipped unto the ending of her days.

*An Gaeilge* enmeshed in a Northman's brain,  
Rerir on campaign,  
perhaps a Volsungs saga within,  
Rerir's Rinn contracted to Rerrin, perhaps...  
Rerrin across the ridge, Lonehort's kin,  
East from the *cluain* of the lands of the *cill*,  
where *Suileabháin* remembers the one-eyed Odin.

Dragon boats by *Beara*. In *Ciarraige Luachra* slaves wrenched from underground, for a colony of Icelanders bound, to a splash of oars at Dursey Sound.

‘Iverni’ (*Uí, Ua, Uíbh* Ierne) remarked a Carthaginian sailor out of Alexandria bound,  
speaking of the peoples of the *Corcú Laoidhe*,  
when *Beara*’s Hag, on a sunny day,  
stood sentinel for an outland  
beyond Biscay Bay...  
beside her *Brid* washing the dirty fleece...come twilight *Brid*  
spreads her cloak across the land, *an dúcas* in moonlight  
fading into an age of slumbering..

A chieftain prince kneeling  
as a drizzle of soft rain moistens a mossy headland,  
he receives a kingship as a crown of laurel leaves,  
a nod to an ancient thalassocracy,  
at *Corca Dhuibhne* the Cybele at *Ceann Sibéal*,  
by the Three Sisters,  
spoke of Hy (*Hí, HUí*) Brazil and of *Tír na nÓg*,  
as a coastal wind whistled to the haunting lilt of a faery dance  
across the horse-waves,  
in the drooped eye-lids and distant gaze of a fiddle player...  
in a reverie, in a trance, in the gloaming self-realising...  
a seaman’s tale about a paradise beyond the Western Sea...

*An dríocht mar an Duende i gcroí an Spáinneach...*

*an scáth san ceo,*

*ceo an cnoc...*

*ceo mara* seared by the scream of a gannet's roar...

hovering, slipping down the wind shear, circling,

high above *Na Scealaga*.

The Argo coasting beside the Mizen,

the Argonautica of Apollonius

penned at Alexandria's Great Library.

Emergent from a myth,

white horse-waves rampant,

hard-harnessed breast-straps strain,

held fast as fist-clenched reins retain the furies,

Poseidon's chariot assails

many an aspiring migrant's ship

eastward of *Inis Dairbre*...

a calf island and a forest of oak,

*Mog Ruith* at the oak of assembly,

at *Inis Dairbhre* (island of the oak trees)

beneath the speckled milk of

*Bealach an Bó Finne*.

As at a headland cove

a tidal clustering of wreckage

shunted to and fro,

across the ebb and flow of a pebbled beach.

A silence settles, stillness descends,  
sea mist to bog mist  
meshed at a moist cliff-face,  
entropy dissipated,  
age becomes distilled to agelessness,  
mist becomes myth.

Deep in the shadow-held *uaigneas* of the land,  
a lingering, those place-namings  
in the fluidity of their Gaelic sounds,  
token memories of gods  
and of a forgotten homeland they do abound,  
through times to come they will continue to resound,  
a lacework across the topography of a place,  
sometime newly colonised, sometime newly found.  
Long silent in its dreaming,  
it may remain  
in some random thoughts as just a trace,  
until a scholar awakens  
a new understanding of what awaits  
in the unsaid majesty of this haunting place.

**End**

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## References / Notes:

1. *Dá chloch ag marcáil na h-áite* ....see *Marcálim* in Rev. Fr. Patrick Dinneen's dictionary of the Irish language.
2. For Myagh *MacCárthaigh* and other piratical *MacCárthaigh* stories see Carroll, Michael J. (2007) *Irish Pirates and Privateers. 'The Brethren of the Sea'*. Michael J. Carroll, Bantry.
3. 'Freedom of the city of Cork to the embassy of an Ottoman sultan'...see that early 18th century entry in: Dr. Richard Caulfield (1876) *Council Book of the Corporation of the City of Cork from 1609 to 1643 and from 1690 to 1800*. J. Billings and Sons, Surrey.
4. Vallancey, Charles (1781-1804) *Collectanea De Rebus Hibernicis*. Dublin, R. Marchbank.
5. O'Connor, Roger (1822) *Chronicles of Eri; Being the History of the Gaal Sciut Iber: or, The Irish People...* London, Sir Richard Phillips and Co.

6. In the names of saints such as *Mocommoge*, *Mochuda*, the 'Mo' is a term of endearment meaning 'our' , 'our own' e.g our own *Chuda* as *Mochuda*.

## Scrivenings

Aristocratic children,  
places within tribal lands assigned,  
places for nascent communities in Christ  
to come to be,  
and so begins an early monastery.

'Soldiers of Christ' now garrisoned with their attendant vici,  
a new social contract, a new social order comes to be,  
a new reality, the *Cill*, the *Cluain* and the *Farran*,  
driven by a new sense of energy, a spirituality.  
A new spacial entity, a 'desert city' comes to be,  
flowering as an early bishopric's See,  
emerging in time as the great demesne  
of a Hiberno-Byzantine monastery.

In the progress of time,  
these internal spaces,  
from water-meadows  
to the river pastures of great  
and meandering flood-plains...  
monks resign the cloister,  
a solitary path to gain.

From forest woodland clearings  
to glen-side rock-faces and ravines,  
to a sloping *Litir* and outcropping rocks,  
all becoming places of the spiritual  
and the serene.

These internal spaces,  
once of nature's secularity,  
transformed to places of seclusion  
and devotional spirituality...  
from semi-cenobitic hermits,  
to solitaries unseen, some,  
once the abbot of a great monastery  
had been.

And then all became cenobitic,  
abandoning that which used to be,  
as local denominations of such activity,  
were subsumed by the delimitations of  
new Diocesan Sees.

Those old denominations, in civil parish lore,  
subsumed into 'town-lands', almost lost forevermore,  
subsumed beneath those wig-headed  
admeasurements for which a cartographer  
kept the score.



And so, it all faded away,  
almost nothing left to see,  
but traces in the 'namings',  
of lost places,  
and fragments in local memory.

The baker, the potter,  
the miller and the cook,  
the carpenter, the mason,  
the dovecote and the penitential nook.  
That architect unremembered,  
a glass-blower and a sandy bed,  
women of the 'saleens'  
and a fishermen's salty bread.

Engineering magic makes it all come to be,  
the bell-ring of a *cloigtheach* across the territory,  
a Sunday morning abbot at the door of a *domhnach*,  
greeted the gathered parishioners,  
as the crosier gives its knock.

Now may it never be said,  
among the living or the dead,  
that the abbot did not guide them  
until he rested his weary head.

The cellarer, the forester,

the quarryman and the tanner,  
their mothers often said  
they were raised on rich bone-marrow.  
As night-time shadows drifted,  
across the burgh's rooftops,  
old men seated on a mossy wall  
as the light begins to drop.  
Once a soldier had been,  
a farmer now rested his harrow,  
sitting by candlemaker and weaver,  
the labourer now rested his barrow,  
...and plays a tune upon the spoons,  
at the Sign of the Dancing Sparrow.

The buyer when the festival tents,  
tattered colourings above the fairground stalls,  
asked about a miracle at a *rath* palace's hall.  
The storyteller chuckling at a rock  
where *Clíodhna's* assembly once had been,  
the apple merriment of a springtime day  
at the *láithreach* was everywhere to be seen.

The librarian and the scribe,  
the parchmentier and the binder,  
the gardener and herbalist  
sitting by the refectory's fire.  
The farmer and the dairymaid,

lost somewhere in the byre,  
hear the evening calls  
of the gong-man and town-crier.  
The journeyman and the tailor,  
the accountant in the red,  
the smith and what the preacher sculptor said,  
about the singer and the song the internal spirit fed,  
reverberating in a reveller's slumbering head,  
the *Sean Nós* and the Laura songs,  
and an 'a cappella' in praise of the dead.

The basketmaker and the thatcher,  
when all was done and said,  
found themselves night-lodgings  
beneath a hermit's shed...

The wanderer and the traveller,  
the destitute and the displaced,  
the maimed, the orphan, the broken,  
the defamed from a foreign place.  
The servant and the slave,  
the fugitive and the knave,  
in Christ to find a refuge  
and a life beyond the grave.

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## References / Notes:

*Uí Mhic Coille* or *Uí Mochaille*? Glancing at [logainm.ie](http://logainm.ie) there have been many written renderings of this place-name and the three words of which it is composed throughout the centuries, its components ranging from *Ua* to *Uí* to *Uíbh* to *Aoibh* to *Íbh*, from *Meic* to *Maic*, to *Mac*, from *Ma Caille* to *Mocoille* to *Madh Caille*, from *Caille* to *Coille*.

*Ua* / *Uí* / *Aoibh* to *Íbh* as well as *Hí* are perhaps just spelling versions of the word *Uíbh* referring to a tribe name but also at times to a clan name within a tribe; distinctions which possibly have many ancient origin stories, stories of the rise and fall of people groups on the local landscape, behind them.

*Meic* / *Maic* / *Mac* [old Irish to modern] translate as 'son of' ... but if corrupted, perhaps over a long period of time, depending on the listener / recorder / copyist, regional or local area accent / dialect / individual pronunciations and other factors, could they become remembered as *Ma* or *Madh* (*Mádh*)?.

If not corruptions of *Mac*, could they refer to the land of a river plain i.e. a *má*, *maighe*?

*Caille*, *Cailli* could refer to a personal name e.g. tribal or clan ancestor meaning say the river-plain of the ancestor named... or *Má Cailleach* the plain of the hag or nun / local saint...*Caille* from *Cailleach*?...or in the form of *Coille* a woodland by a plain or a once forested locality, a locality where this group of people were based, their *tuatha* land....

*Mo* as a term of endearment...etc...*mo Caille* i.e. our beloved *Caille* a minor local saint not known / recorded in any surviving hagiography?...

Such are the difficulties of attempting restoration of original place-name meanings.

# Postscript

***'Ní scartha duit le caidreach na saoithe sean'.***

(You must not separate from the society of those who are learned in antiquities (Gaelic Antiquarians). *Seanfhochail* from Rev. Fr. P. Dinneen's dictionary of the Irish Language)

