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Four Religious Poems
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FOUR RELIGIOUS POEMS

I.

BLESSING THE ROAD BEFORE A JOURNEY.[1]

THE following Middle-Irish poem, perhaps composed by Mael-Ísu Ua Brolcháin, was first printed by me in the *Archiv für celtische Lexikographie*, Vol. III, p. 221. I here reprint it in normalised spelling and add a translation.

1 Rop soraid in sét-sa, rop sét lessa im lámaib,
Críst credal fri demnaib, fri armaib, fri áraib !

2 Ísu ocus Athair, Spirut Nóeb dar nóebad,
Día díamair nách dorcha, Rí sorcha dar sóerad !

3 Cross cuirp Chríst is Muire dar coimét for conair,[3]
dúinne ná rab dóinmech, rop sóinmech, rop soraid ! R.

1 *May this journey be expeditious,*[2] *may it be a journey of profit in my hands ! Holy Christ against demons, against weapons, against slaughters !*

2 *May Jesus and the Father, may the Holy Ghost sanctify us ! May mysterious God that is not hidden in darkness, may the bright King save us !*

3 *May the cross of Christ's body and Mary guard us on the road ! May it not be unlucky for us ! may it be prosperous, expeditious !*

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[1] Cf. Ch. Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, Life of Maedoc, § 7.

[2] Or, perhaps, literally 'May this road be smooth' (**so-réid*, W. *hyrwydd*).

[3] The MS. has *ar chonair*. Perhaps *ar chonaib* 'against wolves' is the right reading.

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II.

A Prayer for Tears.

This poem also has already been printed in *Archiv* Vol. III, p. 222. As the dat. sg. *cride* rhyming with *nige* (§ 4) and other peculiarities show, it belongs to the Middle-Irish period. Perhaps Máel-Isu is the author. I have normalised the spelling.

1 Tuc dam, a Dé móir, for bith ché, ní chél,
ar píana na plág tonna díana dér.

2 Domroiched for rith soithech, ná rop saich,
co roich m' áenur moch ar cach mbáegul mbraith.

3 Uchán, a Chríst cháid, cen sruthán dom grúaid,
feib tucais in linn don banscáil thimm thrúaig.

4 Uchán ar cach n-alt cen sruthán arm ucht,
cu rob nige innocht dom chride is dom churp.

5 Ar cach senóir sruith forfácaib a thoich,
ar do ríge réil, ar do chéimm ar croich.

6 Ar cach óen rochí a chin ar bith ché,
mo chlóine, a Dé bí, co rochóine mé.

7 Ar do maith co mór, ar do flaith cen lén,
co hopunn, co húain tuc dam topur dér.

8 A mo dile, a Dé, im chride do chrú
déra dam, a Dé, cía dobéra acht tú ?

1 *Give me, O great God in this world—I will not hide it—against the pains of the torments swift showers of tears !*

2 *May there come to me a vessel quickly—may it not be bad ! that it may reach me betimes against every treacherous danger.*

3 *Alas, O holy Christ, that not a streamlet should come to my cheek as Thou gavest a flood of tears to the weak wretched woman.*[1]

[1] i.e., Mary Magdalen.

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4 *Alas for every joint that not a streamlet should come over my breast, that it may be a cleansing to my heart and to my body this night.*

5 *For the sake of each venerable elder that has forsaken his home, for Thy glorious Kingdom's sake, for the sake of Thy going upon the cross!*

6 *For the sake of each one that has wept for his sin in this world, let me bewail, O living God, my wickedness!*

7 *For the sake of Thy great goodness, for Thy Kingship without sorrow, speedily, opportunely, grant me a fountain of tears!*

8 *O my love, O God, who shall bring tears, O God, into my clotted heart but Thou?*

III.

A Prayer to Christ for Help.

This late Old-Irish or early Middle-Irish poem, copies of which are found in the libraries of Trinity College (H.I. 11, p. 155a) and of the British Museum (Additional 30,512, fo. 44a2), has not been printed or translated before.

1 A Chríst cobra, tair chucum, rim rocongba[1] co hopunn!
a Ísu inmain inmain, tordacht cach[2] inbaid ocunn!

2 A Choimsid báid[3] co mbúadaib, co slúagaib soillsib slánaib,
ná rabur[4] sel i slabraib aithnim m'anmain it lámaib.[5]

3 Iar techt óm cholainn chubaid, a Dé molaim cen mebail,
nímrelge i[6] crích mo ṡáegail i[6] n-ingnib dáeraib demain!

4 Ar do nóime, a Chríst chredlaig, déna bóide ar[7] do bidbaid,
dingaib dím cach n-olc n-angbaid, art'[8] chorp, ar[9] th'anmain inmain!

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[1] rium roncongba MSS. [2] can H., cā A. [3] coimsigh baigh MSS. [4] rabair H., rabar A. [5] psalmaib MSS. [6] a MSS. [7] er MSS. [8] ar do MSS. [9] air H.

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5 Ar ḟuil, ar ḟeóil romchomga,[10] ar Eóin. ar Muire molbda,
ar do dóenacht cen duilge, a Chríst cuibre romchobra[11] !

6 In sét[12] atá form' aire, menbad bét. menbad bine,
soirthig, a ḟlaith síl Ádaim, a Chríst co ngrádaib nime !

7 Nírba fota do blíadnaib[13] co romthócba[14] cot nóebaib,
conamthí techt do nemdaib dom brith[15] ó demnaib dóeraib.

8 Inní ráidim rit reime notáilim, a maic Muire,
fot gairte beo for conair bí 'com chobair, a chride !
A cr.

1 *O helpful Christ come to me ! stand by me quickly ! O dear, dear Jesu . . . .* [16] *every time with us !*

2 *O fond Lord with triumphs, with shining perfect hosts, lest I be for awhile in straights I commit my soul into Thy hands.*

3 *When I have parted from this harmonious body, O God whom I praise without deceit, leave me not at the end of my life in the villainous claws of the Devil !*

4 *For the sake of Thy holiness, O holy Christ, be kind to him who has sinned against thee ! Keep every wicked wrong off me, for the sake of Thy body, for Thy dear soul !*

5 *For the blood, for the flesh that protected me, for John, for Mary, the lauded, for Thy humanity without harshness, O helpful*[17] *Christ, help me !*

6 *Make smooth the road upon which I am intent, unless it be folly, unless it be harm, O Prince of Adam's race, O Christ with the orders of Heaven !*

7 *Let it not be many years*[18] *till Thou lift me up with Thy saints, till I come to enter the heavenly abode after being snatched away from vile demons.*

8 *What I have been saying to Thee before, I pray Thee, Son of Mary,—whether I be long or short upon the road, be there to help me, O heart !*

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[10] romcomda MSS. [11] romcobra A., rombrac*h* H. [12] .s. MSS. [13] bli—aib MSS. [14] romtocba MSS. [15] br— MSS. [16] Both MSS. have *tordacht* which is quite obscure to me and may be corrupt. [17] I take *cuibre* to be a palatal byform of *cobra*. [18] Literally 'May I not be long of years.'

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IV.

Three Wishes.

The following undoubtedly Old-Irish poem has been preserved by Michael O'Clery in the Stowe MS. B.IV2, fo. 150a, and by Hugh O'Daly, the scribe of MS. H.I. 11 (Trin. Coll.), where it will be found on fo. 151a.

1 Mo theora ucse[1] forsin Ríg[2] in tan noscairiub[3] frim chrí :[4]
nímraib dorat i coibsi[5], nímraib náma,[6] nímraib ní.

2 Mo theora ucse[7] indiu for Ríg[8] fallnathar[9] gríana :
nímraib orddan ná feba[10] nodombera i píana.

3 Ní dern[11] sáithar[12] cen ḟochraic[13] fíad Chríst in domain chía ;
in tan bes[14] glainiu[15] m'anim, rop and dosucca[16] Día ;
nírba[17] cintach armothá[18] in tan[19] dobretha[20] mo theora.
M. t. u.

1 *Three wishes*[21] *I ask of the King*[22] *when I shall part from my body : may I have nothing to confess, may I have no enemy, may I not own anything !*

2 *Three wishes I ask this day of the King who ruleth suns : may I have no dignity or honours that may bring me into torments !*

3 *May I do no work without reward before the Christ of this world ! When my soul is purest then may God take it ! Lastly,*[23] *may I not be guilty when my three wishes have been uttered !*

Berlin KUNO MEYER

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[1] téora ucsi B., theorai ucsi H. [2] ri B. [3] indtan noscarud H. [4] fom crí B. [5] dorath icobcosiu H. coibsiu B. [6] niraib namai H. [7] ucsi BH. [8] ri B. [9] fallatar H. [10] na febai H., ra feba B. [11] dernd H., derd B. [12] saothor BH. [13] fochroig B. [14] bus BH. [15] glaine B., glan H. [16] rusfuccæ B., dosfuca H. [17] nirbo BH. [18] airmotha H. [19] indtan H. [20] dobreta B dobreth H. [21] ucse, from **ud-gustio-*. [22] The first and last verses of this poem have each eight syllables; read perhaps *for Rig*, and *tan* instead of *in tan*. [23] armothá=O.Ir. iarmithá. Cf. armthá, Betha Colmáin meic Lúacháin, p. 80, 32.

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