

BIRD SYMBOLISM IN PAGAN CELTIC RELIGION.

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PREFACE.

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The choice of subject for this thesis has been determined by a desire to examine the religious idiom and history of the Celtic peoples. The subject, however, is clearly vast, and it became obvious at once that a limited aspect must be studied intensively in order to create a solid foundation upon which a wider study could be based. It has been customary to attempt to cover the entire scope of Celtic religion in a single study, and also to include wide comparative work. A more satisfactory solution to the problem, however, would seem to lie in the employment of the inductive method. In a system of belief as complex and as subtle as that of the Celts, the intensive study of a limited aspect of their religious symbolism would seem perhaps to be the safest and the most rewarding approach. Only when the native evidence has been subjected to close study, can the examination of more general religious systems and symbols in relationship to it be of real value.

A study of bird symbolism, which treats of a way of thought fundamental to the Celtic attitude and

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character, inadvertently raises most of the problems inherent in the Celtic religious system - for it is evident that a very definite religious system did underlie the complexity of its component elements. Such a limited study thus provides a stepping-off place for a general examination of the religious idiom of the Celts, which in its turn may prove of use in investigations of a historical or linguistic nature. This work has therefore been undertaken as but a small part of a much larger whole.

The problem of borrowings and of inter-cultural influences, is one which constantly arises in connection with any study such as this. There is a tendency to reject evidence out of hand, on the grounds that it has come from classical, Scandinavian or Christian sources, without pausing to consider the mentality and traditions of the actual peoples whose religious idiom is under examination. One cultural group may borrow the art forms of another race in order to better express their own religious attitudes, but it is open to question

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whether they also borrow actual deities and beliefs unless these happen to be in close sympathy with their own traditions, or unless the borrowing of the deity also includes the introduction of a new way of life, of which the god or goddess is symbolic. Therefore, before rejecting any evidence as an obvious borrowing, and condemning it on that score, it seems necessary first of all to pause and enquire why, in a highly developed religious and social organisation like that of the Celts, should such a borrowing have taken place, and what lacuna in the native material did this importation augment.

This work does not set out to be a study of the religion of the Celtic peoples from the ethical view point, but rather, aims at making an intensive study and preliminary analysis of one limited, but important aspect of Celtic religion. Until we know what was already there, and can appreciate, to some extent, its meaning and significance to the people whose lives it intimately affected - why, in fact, the Celts thought and

acted as they did - we cannot hope fully to appreciate how much they took from, or gave to, other peoples. This thesis then is an attempt to indicate what is actually to be found within the tradition at all its stages of development.

The material itself, consists of a large collection of miscellaneous, and at first sight, seemingly unrelated, bird material, stemming from iconographical, literary and folklore sources. An intensive study of the evidence, has, however, revealed certain basic patterns. Certain birds were found to be recurrent and consistent in character throughout the tradition, and these have accordingly been treated in individual chapters. Other birds, although their appearances are equally significant and symbolic, are represented only infrequently, and it was thus decided to include them with the corpus of unnamed birds, the wonderful otherworld birds clearly belonging to the realms of fantasy or nightmare, and the birds which were left unspecified, perhaps for tabu reasons. The work by no means claims to be exhaustive.

The folklore material has only been briefly touched upon as indicating something of the way in which birds figure in the insular oral lore and tale - it represents a major study in itself - and much of the numismatic and ceramic material has been perforce passed over, the problem being not a lack, but a superfluity of evidence.

The language of the original has been quoted in nearly all cases where actual evidence has been given, and such passages have usually been translated, unless it has seemed unnecessary to do so. It must be emphasized that although textual material has been used as circumspectly as possible, it has not been felt to be within the scope of this work to enter into linguistic controversy. Editions of texts which do not, perhaps, fully meet the requirements of present day scholarship have sometimes had to be used, and in some cases an examination of the manuscript would be desirable. It has been felt, however, that when the fabric of the arguments does not rest upon absolute linguistic precision, the existing editions, with all their imperfections, are adequate meanwhile.

My thanks are due to all who have given me help and encouragement.

Chapter I.

CRANE.

Esus and the Tarvos Trigaranus.

A most interesting and provocative monument was discovered in the choir of the church of Notre Dame in Paris, in 1711. It is now in the Musée Cluny (I). It consists of an altar, on one face of which Jupiter is represented with a sceptre and an eagle, while the name Iovis appears above him. On a second face of the altar a bearded god is depicted and above him is the name Volcanus. On a third face a bearded deity appears, wearing a short tunic, like Vulcan, his right shoulder uncovered. He is engaged in cutting a branch from a willow tree, while at his feet lies a severed branch. The same tree reappears on the fourth face of the monument, and beneath it a fine bull is represented, draped in what appears to be a sacrificial fillet and bearing on his back two large wading birds. A third bird stands between his horns. Above the woodcutter the name Esus appears, while Tarvos Trigaranus is engraved above the representation of the bull with the three birds.

(1)Émile Espérandieu, Recueil Général des Bas-Reliefs, Statues et Bustes de la Gaule Romaine, Paris, 1911, plate 3134.

3.

The extraordinary symbolism of this altar is repeated on a second altar, discovered on the left bank of the Moselle, near Trèves, in 1895 (2). Mercury, wearing a Gaulish torque, headless and naked, appears in company with Rosmerta and the cock. On a second face of the altar a woodcutter god is represented, almost certainly the Esus of the Paris altar, apparently cutting down a willow tree containing the head of a bull, and three large wading birds, two of which are distinct, while of the third, only the back and legs are now to be seen. On a third side of the monument is the much-worn figure of a goddess, whose presence here may be of importance (3). These monuments have excited much speculation, and various theories as to the significance of their symbolism have been advanced by scholars. Some of the widely divergent interpretations are summarized below.

I. M. d'Arbois de Jubainville (4) sees in the Paris and Trèves altars evidence for the presence of the Cu Chulainn legend on the Continent. For him, the woodcutter, Esus,

(2)Esperandieu, op. cit., plate 4929.

(3)v.p.24 below.

(4)Arbois de Jubainville, Le Culte des Menhir dans le Monde Celtique, Revue Celtique, 27, p.313 ff.

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represents Cu Chulainn felling the tree with which to hinder the enemy (5). The bull he equates with the Donn of Cualgne, and the three birds with the triple war goddess. Of the birds he says (6);-

'Le taureau est l'animal divin appelé Donn en irlandais, Donnos en gauleis, et les trois grues dont seulement deux a Trèves sont trois formes de la triple deesse appelée en Irlande Bodb, Morrigan et Nemain, et qui sous forme d'oiseau 'in delb euin' vin prévenir le taureau du danger qu'il courait d'être pris.'

and again (7):-

'Les trois grues sont la triple divinité de la guerre, qui, suivant le recit épique, vient prévenir le taureau du danger dont le menace l'approche de l'ennemi.'

2. Vendryes (8) mentions that references to a trugeranos are made in one of the comedies, now lost, of Philemon the

(5) Windisch's edition of the Tain, p. 184, 185.

(6) op. cit., p. 41. The crane/egret has obvious military associations and the birds are here almost certainly the attribute of some god or goddess connected with battle, but this conclusion is reached for reasons different from Jubainville's (v. p. 24 below).

(7) Revue Celtique, XIX, p. 248.

(8) J. Vendryes, Sur un Passage du Comique Philemon: le Tarvos Trugaranos en Grece, Revue Celtique, 28, p. 123 ff.

Greek who died in 262 B.C. According to Vendryes, this creature is simply the Gaulish Trigaranos, epithet of the divine Tarvos with the three cranes, and the Greeks coming into contact with Celts in the time of Alexander may have seen in Celtic camps some symbolic representations such as are found on the monuments under discussion.

3. Czarnowski devotes a long article to the problem of the interpretation of the altars (9) and sees in the symbolism of the Gaulish monuments evidence of a myth similar to that contained in the Greek Hercules/Geryon story. He maintains that the bull, tree and birds combined represent one divinity, i.e. the divinity of the riverside, and ultimately of the Blessed Isles and the stretch of mystic waters separating them from the world of men.

4. Reinach (10) sees in the monuments the concept of the cosmic tree, comparable with the sycamore of Isis or the tree of the Hesperides. He draws attention to the

(9) Stefan Czarnowski, L'Arbre d'Esus, Revue Celtique, 42, p. I ff.

(10) S. Reinach, Tarvos Trigaranos, Revue Celtique, 18, p. 253 ff.

Scandinavian Yggdrasil, in the branches of which an eagle sits, while a serpent gnaws at the roots. It is, however, in his opinion, not any sacred tree, but the tree of the bull-with-the-three-cranes. Several scholars have concluded that the bull with the three cranes is a rebus for the bull with the three heads or horns, a motif exclusive to Gaulish and British sculptures (II). Reinach's only explanation for the presence of the birds with the bull and the tree is the rather obvious one, that they may have had some religious and symbolic significance to the Gauls. He mentions the Cacus son of Vulcan legend in connection with the Gaulish monuments.

5. Mowat (I2) would equate the woodcutter deity with a Gaulish Mercury, patron of navigators, the tree being destined for a ship. He maintains that the Paris altar was dedicated by the Seine navigators, and that the allusions on the altar refer to fluvial commerce, i.e. the tree from which the vessel was made, the bull, symbol of torrents, the cranes aquatic birds, guides of sailors.

(II) Lambrechts, Divinités Celtiques, p.41.

(I2) Mowat, (Quoted by Reinach), Revue Celtique, 18, p.258 ff.

All the above arguments are ingenious, some of them quite plausible, but one could go on making such suggestions indefinitely, each suggestion as likely as another. The monuments are bewildering, and unless some textual evidence or some further monumental evidence is forthcoming which will cast more light on them they are likely to remain enigmatic and a complete explanation of their symbolism seems impossible.

Nevertheless, as it is hoped to reveal in the following arguments, there are other monuments in existence which, although not in any way identical with the above, do serve to cast some light on the significance of the symbolism, and there are some Irish texts and classical references which seem to substantiate the basic evidence of these altars. Rather than seeking to see in these two monuments the expression of some clear-cut mythological episode such as the Cu Chulainn explanation advanced by Jubainville (I3), or the Geryon myth suggested by Czarnowski (I4), it is proposed initially

(I3)v.p. 3 above.

(I4)v.p. 5 above.

to examine the objects represented on the altars and to question their individual significance and their relationship to each other.

On both the Paris and the Trèves altars we find
a) a deity, named Esus on the Paris altar, unnamed on that from Trèves, clad in a short tunic, attacking a willow tree. The reason for this assault upon the tree is perhaps the most baffling element in the investigation;
b) a bull, surmounted by three wading birds on the Paris altar, and a bull's head surmounted by three wading birds on the Trèves altar, the Paris bull represented below the tree, the head of the Trèves bull emerging from the foliage. After an examination of these monuments, one of the first questions which is naturally formulated is 'what connection have the birds with the bull, and the bull with the tree and the deity?' Perhaps the easiest question to answer is that of the association between the bull and the birds.

The birds, although they are called cranes on the Paris inscription (garanus) are in actual fact little egrets.

This fact is not perhaps significant from the mythological viewpoint (I5). Although the Celts were such accurate observers of species in many respects (I6), there was a tendency to confuse them linguistically. Thus it would not be out of keeping with the facts if little egrets were actually depicted on these altars, yet given the general appellation of cranes, particularly as it seems likely that most of the rather striking long-legged marsh birds played similar roles in religious symbolism.

From the point of view of mythology then, it may matter little that the cranes of the Paris and Treves altars are actually egrets, but from the ecological viewpoint it is of major importance. The little egret is a cattle bird, i.e. it lives in low-lying marsh or pasture-land near rivers, and, like the buffalo bird, it perches on the backs of cattle and cleans them of lice.

(I5) We shall frequently witness the tendency, by no means peculiar to Celtic mythology, to group together birds of a related or apparently related species under one general name, e.g. corr and its compounds for such birds as crane, heron, bittern, etc.

(I6) For example, the fine distinctions drawn between such birds as the shag and cormorant, and the various ducks on Celtic and proto-Celtic cult objects (v. Chapter V, p.341.)

10.

The association of birds and bull is thus based on natural observation rather than entirely on religious superstition. In these representations, the birds are occupying a familiar and authentic position, which the inhabitants of the type of country in question must have had ample opportunity of observing. However, the fact that the connection between the bull and egret is authenticated ecologically, in no way lessens the impact which such a relationship must have made on the superstitious mind (I7). If the bull was, as seems unquestionable, a sacred beast in the religious beliefs of the Celts, these birds, seen habitually in such close proximity to the animal would, on this account, acquire a significance ever and above any sanctity that they might possess in their own right, particularly as the purely functional nature of the association between bird and beast may not have been appreciated. The willow tree, moreover, is one that thrives in marshland and on river borders, and

(I7)The adult male of the little egret is crested in summer. This factor must have added to its significance as a religious attribute (for the crest v. Chapter II, p. 180).

and it is in these trees that the egret nests (18). Here, then, we have no mere fanciful grouping of cult objects but the correct representation of an ecological complex.

The solution to question b) appears to be fairly straightforward in the light of the above evidence, but unfortunately, this is not so in the case of question a). Who is the woodcutter deity Esus and what is his connection with the willow/bull/egret complex?

Apart from these altars, we know little of Esus directly, but we can deduce quite a lot from miscellaneous items of information (19). Lucan (20) names three autochthonous Celtic deities in his much-quoted verses:-

(18)The following is a brief description of the habits of the little egret:- 'Frequents open marshes and flood-lands and open shores or sand-banks of rivers, streams and lagoons, except for the immediate purpose of nesting, for which it resorts to woods or thickets of willow, tamarisk etc., and sometimes more isolated trees.' Handbook of British Birds, ed. Witherby, Jourdain, Ticehurst and Tucker, London, 1947, III, p.139.

(19)The name may mean 'lord, master'.

(20)Lucan, Pharsalius, I, 445-446.

12.
Et quibus inmitis placatur sanguine diro
Teutates horrensque feris altaribus Esus
Et Taranis Scythicae non mitior ara Dianae.'

'And those who propitiate with horrid victims ruthless Teutates, and Esus whose savage shrine makes men shudder, and Taranis whose altar is no more benign than that of Scythian Diana.'

The Berne scholiasts on Lucan give the following apparently contradictory information about these deities:-

'Mercurius lingua Gallorum Teutates dicitur qui humane apud illos sanguine colebatur. Teutates Mercurius sic apud Gallos placatur in plenum semicupium homo in caput demittitur ut ibi suffocetur. Hesus Mars sic placatur: homo in arbore suspenditur usque donec per cruorem membra digesserit. Taranis Ditis pater hoc modo apud eos placatur: in alueo ligneo aliquod homines cremantur. Item aliter exinde in aliis inuenimus. Teutates Mars 'sanguine diro' placatur sine quo proelia numinis eius instinctu administrantur sine quo Galli antea soliti ut aliis deis huic quoque homines immolare. Hesum Mercurium credunt, si quidem a mercatoribus colitur, et praesidem bellorum et caelestium deorum maximum Taranin Iouem adsuetum olim humanis placari capitibus, nunc uero gaudere pecorum.'

In the above then, the first scholiast has identified Esus with Mars, whereas the second scholiast has assimilated him with Mercury. These apparently conflicting equations

are not, however, as valueless as they may appear initially. As will be evident throughout this investigation, the gods and goddesses of the Celts do not appear as deities of single specialized spheres as were, for example, the divinities of the Roman state religion. They were rather gods and goddesses of several combined spheres. A deity could thus be symbolic of commerce and of culture in times of peace, and a god of war, protector of his people, when circumstances demanded. In this way, Esus could have been the deity of a particular locality or localities, fulfilling the functions of both Mars and Mercury, having perhaps a variety of regional appellations and attributes, but still fundamentally the same god-type (2I-). It is proposed, in the following pages, to investigate as far as possible the scholiasts seemingly irreconcilable claims for Esus a) as a Gaulish Mercury, and b) as a Gaulish Mars.

(2I)The state religion of the Romans was, in any case, clearly artificial, the deities of conquered peoples being regularly incorporated, and Greek influence in particular being strongly marked. Indigenous Roman deities were equated with Greek equivalents. It seems doubtful whether the Romans fully understood the practices even of their own countrymen. Mercury seems to have been a comparative newcomer to the classical pantheon, whereas Mars was one of an ancient triad of gods and clearly a deity of the crops in origin.

14.
a) Esus as Mercury.

A great statue to Mercury, wearing Gaulish dress was recovered at Lezoux (22), a centre of fabric-making and ceramics during the Gallo-Roman period. The god is accompanied by a raven and a dog. The inscription reads

Mercurio et Augusto sacro

while on the back is written in Gaulish

Apronius ieuru sos(in) Esu(n)

translated by Heichelheim (23)

Apronius fecit hoc Esu

This seems to leave little doubt as to the equation of Esus with Mercury, in the Lezoux district at least,

(22) Esperandieu, plate I609.

(23) Heichelheim, Real-Encyclopadie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft.

and serves to substantiate the second Berne commentator's 'the Gauls believe that Esus is Mercury, or at least so he is worshipped by the traders.'

Moreover, the Cologne Museum acquired, in 1923, the remains of what must have been a huge monument erected to Mercury (24). The inscription, which is bordered with a wreath reads

Primio Cellissi fil(ius) curia gru(e)s duas Mercurio
v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).

From this inscription, we learn that the curia has dedicated two cranes to Mercury at the request of Primis son of Cellisus, a Celtic name. This forms a striking link between the Cologne Mercury and the Esus monuments with their crane/egret symbolism (25).

Finally, apparently making the evidence for a Gaulish god with crane attributes as an equivalent of the

(24)Fremersdorf, Neue Inschriften und Skulpturen aus Koln, Germania, X.

(25)No classical Mercury has the crane for attribute.

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Roman Mercury indisputable, is a striking monument from Beaumont (26), first seen in 1926, and belonging to a temple dedicated to Mercury. On it, two great cranes face each other, each standing on ~~its left and right~~ ^{one} legs ~~respectively~~, holding a serpent in its beak (27). A bunch of acanthus leaves separates the birds. Below, a male goat, lying down and facing right. The birds, in conjunction with the acanthus leaves, are similar to the cranes from Narbonne (28).

So far then, we have Esus associated with cranes/egrets on the Paris and Trèves altars; Esus equated with Mercury at Lezoux; Mercury associated with cranes at Cologne; Mercury associated with cranes at Beaumont.

Further proof of the equation of Esus with Mercury seems to be forthcoming in the fact that on both the

(26) Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7675.

(27) A monument from Arles represents a crane standing on acanthus leaves, fighting with a serpent (Esperandieu, plate 827).

(28) v. p. 23 below).

Paris and the Trèves altars, Esus is intimately connected with trees, i.e. in both instances he appears to be engaged in cutting down a willow, or at least in removing part of its branches. Moreover, the first Berne scholiast, (who, of course, equates Esus with Mars) relates that men were sacrificed to this deity by hanging them in trees

'Hesus Mars sic placatur: homo in arbore suspenditur usque donec per cruorem membra digesserit.'

Now archaeological research has revealed that Alsace was filled with small temples dedicated to Mercury, not apparently to the Mercury of trade of the Romans, but to a Mercury closely connected with trees and forests. Moreover, an altar comes from Saint-Beat (29) on the left bank of the Garonne, belonging to the people who quarried marble there, in whose sanctuary four altars were dedicated to a local god, Erriapus. On one side of the altar in question, a deity is depicted, aged, having a beard and moustache and standing up. He is clad in a short-sleeved tunic, and holds a bill-hook in his left

(29)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 8I22.

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hand, and what appears to be a vase in his right hand. On the right side of the altar is the bust of a deity, crudely depicted, surrounded by branches and foliage, with pine cones. A small altar is placed in front of the god, on each side of which are a cock and a tortoise respectively. Below is a ram, facing left. Here we have a deity, intimately connected with trees, and having the attributes of Mercury.

It seems then from the foregoing evidence, that Esus was one of the major Gaulish deities equated with Mercury, and the fact that his attributes apparently varied according to district is in keeping with such an equation. Nor is it surprising that two different representations of the same deity should appear on one monument as is apparently the case with the Trèves altar (30), if Esus is a Gaulish Mercury. It is possible that in such cases, two important functions or aspects of a local deity

(30) It must also be considered as possible that Esus appears on the Trèves altar in the role of Mars (v. p. 22 below).

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equated with the Roman god were depicted, or again, that the god appears both under classical guise and according to the local conception of him. Thus the statement of the second Berne commentator is apparently justified.

b) Esus as Mars.

It is now proposed to investigate the claim of the first Berne commentator that Esus is Mars. This is not such a straightforward task as the equation of Esus with Mercury, and the evidence available is less direct. There do, however, seem to be some factors which point in this direction.

As the following examples will illustrate, the crane/heron/egret had apparently close connections with war, although in the insular material it is chiefly associated with the female sex (3I). The following objects on which the crane/egret figures, and the military association of which is indisputable, come from Gaul and Britain.

(3I)v.p. 4/ ff. below.

The first and most striking of these are the cheek-plates of a Gaulish helmet from Carniola (32). On each of these is a little egret, delicately and beautifully depicted.

Secondly, the surfaces above the smaller gateways of the Triumphal Arch at Orange are covered with arms and armour of Celtic character (33). One of the Celtic shields is decorated with a pair of egrets, while another shield supports two pairs of these birds, along with Gaulish torques. Both the Notre Dame altar and the Arch at Orange are contemporaneous with Tiberius.

Thirdly, a sculptured slab was recorded at Risingham, Northumberland (34) in 1599, by Camden and Cotton,

(32)Jacobsthal, Early Celtic Art, II, plate 89. The helmet is not apparently earlier than the first century, B.C., the date indicated by enamel knobs on the cheek-pieces.

(33)Esperandieu, I, p.197.

(34)Northumberland County History, XV, p.136.

dedicated to the spirits of the emperors by the Fourth Mounted Cohort of Gauls. This regiment consisted of five hundred men, one hundred and twenty of whom were mounted. The dexter arcade contains the figure of a goddess flying through space on a globe. Beneath this, a crane proceeds from a tree towards the left (35). The god Mars is also represented, and below him in another panel, is a goose. Here then, we have a goddess in conjunction with a crane and a tree (36), associated with the war god, on an altar erected by a mounted cohort of Gauls (37).

(35)On a monument from Narbonne a vase is represented, below which are two cranes, facing each other, heads well forward and lowered. They are separated by the foot of the vase, and do not form part of its decoration. Artistically, they resemble the Risingham bird (for more cranes from Narbonne, v. p. 23 below). Esperandieu, plate 566

(36)Cranes/egrets, and trees are associated on both the Paris and the Trèves altars.

(37)With reference to the fact that it was the mounted section of the Gaulish regiment that dedicated the altar at Risingham, one might perhaps note that in China cranes were apparently regarded as the horses of the gods, and the departing spirit was believed to ride to the other-world on a crane's back. (Giles, Chinese Dictionary, Entry 3888).

The above objects then, clearly associate the crane with battle, and as we have seen, Esus is connected with the crane/egret on the Paris and Treves altars, and Mercury is associated with the bird at Cologne and Beaumont, where he seems to be equivalent to Esus. If this bird is, then, symbolic of war (and throughout this chapter this military association will be illustrated), its connection with a god, claimed by the first Berne commentator as a Gaulish Mars does much to substantiate his claim, i.e. that Esus was, in one at least of his aspects, a god of war, or at least connected in some way with military matters (38).

(38)It must not be overlooked in this context that Mars, although latterly regarded as a god of war, was quite clearly in origin a god of the crops and agriculture. His special priests, the Salii were possibly also, in origin, employed in leaping for the crops. The reference to an altar dedicated to Mars in connection with the festival of the October Horse is of extraordinary interest for the Esus investigation. It was the last corn festival of the year, and consisted of a chariot race, in which the horse of the winning team was sacrificed to Mars at a place described as 'ad nixas'. This was apparently an old altar to Mars, on which three storks (ciconiae nixae) with inter-laced bills, were engraved. Although called storks, these birds are just as likely to have been cranes or other long-legged marsh birds. It is also explained that 'a horse and not an ox, is the victim, because a horse is suited for war, and an ox is not'. The Romans clearly did not understand the significance of Mars as a fertility god. Warde Fowler, The Roman Festivals, p. 242 ff.). This description of an altar to Mars having three storks on it, is strikingly similar to the Esus altars, and it seems likely that at Paris and Trèves, both the fertility and military associations of the deity are represented, thus strengthening the equation with Mars.

In the preceding pages, then, an interpretation of the actual scenes depicted on the Paris and Trèves altars has not been attempted, but rather, an endeavour has been made to discover something about the individual objects which appear on these monuments, and we have attempted to find reasons for their association here. It has been shown that the bull/willow/egret group is an ecological complex, and that the war/commerce/fertility god Esus, is not associated with trees and cranes on these altars alone. The bull appears to be the sacrificial animal; the egrets may also be the objects of sacrifice (39), or, as attributes of the deity, their presence on the back of the sacrifice may indicate his acceptance of it. Until, or unless more facts are forthcoming, we cannot take the argument further. It will, however, be seen, that most of the material objects on which cranes are depicted (40) serve to substantiate the above arguments.

Two extremely interesting monuments come from Narbonne (41). One (42) consists of a rectangular block

(39)cf. Cologne dedication, p. 16 above.
 (40)v. p. 25 ff. below.
 (41)Esperandieu, plates 569 and 570.
 (42)Plate 569.

on which a magnificent crane is depicted, having its beak placed against the right ear of a female head, supported by acanthus leaves. To the right is a pilaster surmounted by a crest of acanthus leaves. The other stone (43) depicts a similar scene; a large, equally fine crane has its beak placed against the left ear of a head, now defaced, supported by acanthus leaves. (44) The motif of a bird speaking into the ear of a god or goddess is one which occurs frequently on the Gallo-Roman monuments, and attention is frequently drawn to it in this study. These monuments, in conjunction with the insular evidence, where the crane/heron has almost exclusively female associations, lead to the supposition that there was in Gaul, and possibly in Ireland, a war goddess, having as her attribute the crane. The evidence available at present indicates this, and if it should be so, it offers an explanation for the presence of the much-damaged female figure on the Treves altar,

(43)Plate 570.

(44)Esperandieu mentions that Du Mege published the sketch of a bas-relief, now missing, representing two large wading birds, separated by a pilaster, crowned with acanthus leaves. (I, p.368).

apparently ignored by scholars. The birds may also be connected with her as a war goddess, and she may thus be the consort of the local Esus in his role of war/fertility god.

Two other monuments from Gaul on which cranes appear are part of a pilaster from Perigueux (45), where the decoration consists of foliage and acanthus leaves, two of which support cranes, and the fragment of a frieze from Vertault (46) on which two cranes are represented, running towards the right, while below is a scroll pattern.

Although it has not been possible to examine the corpus of Gaulish coins in any detail, such an examination as has been made indicates that this would be a profitable source for information on bird symbolism in the early period. Lengyel (47) reproduces several coins on which

(45)Esperandieu, plate I295.

(46)Esperandieu, plate 3398.

(47)Lancelot Lengyel, L'Art Gaulois dans les Medailles, Editions Corvina, Montrouge-Seine, 1954.

cranes are given prominence. A coin of the Lemovices and the Bituriges Cubi depicts a large sinister-looking crane on the back of a horse (48). The horse has a human face and is helmeted (49). The horse of course has well-authenticated sacred associations; its military connections are here demonstrated by the helmet, while the human face may indicate the presence of some divinity under animal form. The crane, by its size and position, plays some major role in the symbolism of the coin, and once again we see this bird placed on the back of a sacred animal. The military associations of the bird are here demonstrated yet again. On another coin (50) belonging to the Ambiani, a charioteer is represented, having streaming hair in the form of curved horns. The horse also is horned, having spiral horn-like projections emerging from its head, while the crane which stands under the horse (51) has a curved spiral crest. Here

(48)Lengyel, plate XI.

(49)The similarity of the symbolism of these Gallo-Roman monuments and Gaulish coins to that of the October Horse festival mentioned on p.22 above, is most striking. The implication seems to be that both Gaul and Italy knew a war/fertility god, having crane/horse/bull attributes, and rather than attempting to explain this fact by borrowing either way, we should perhaps consider carefully the possibility of a common Italo-Celtic origin for this concept, which survived into the period of Roman ascendancy.

(ctd.)

also, then, we have what we presume to be a deity, in the form of a warrior, a horse and a crane, all bearing horns (52). Another coin represents a crane on the back of a horse (53), and a coin of the Petrocorni and the Bituriges Cubi (54) also depicts crane and horse together.

A more intensive study of the Gallo-Roman monuments in general, and of the bronzes and coins might help to cast further light upon the significance of the crane/egret in early Celtic religious beliefs. Such a study as has been made has revealed that the bird appears on several occasions in distinctly religious contexts, and allows the conclusion to be drawn that it was, in Gaul at least, venerated as a bird of war, and probably of agricultural prosperity, and the attribute of a war/fertility god, and/or goddess.

(50)Lengyel, plate XXXI.

(51)cf birds (cranes?) under horses, dating from the Hallstatt period, illustrated by Kossack, op. cit., pl.I2, figs. 20 and 24.

(52)The crest and the horn probably had a similar significance in early religious imagery, v.Chapter N, p.78 .

(53)Lengyel, plate XVIII.

(54)Lengyel, plate X.

Insular Tradition.

Such evidence as there is for the crane/heron in insular mythology and folklore is inevitably of an unsatisfactory nature, the material being of unequal value. However, as cannot be stressed too often in this context, Irish and Scottish Gaelic literary and folklore material cannot be trusted, or indeed expected to impart to us a clear-cut comprehensive picture of the earlier strata of religious beliefs and practices. It is therefore necessary to begin this enquiry by such fundamental questions as:-

'We know the crane/heron/egret appears symbolically and with some frequency on the Gallo-Roman religious monuments. Does it figure to any extent in the insular literary and recorded folk material?' Having found the answer to this question to be in the affirmative, one must collect such evidence as there is, and having examined it, ask:-

'Is the role played by this bird within these literary and folklore contexts in any way consistent with the monumental appearances of the bird?' If it should transpire that this is the case, then the fragmentary

and perhaps uncritical nature of the evidence becomes of less significance than would be the case if the appearances of the bird and its character in those appearances were arbitrary and inconsistent. It is proposed, then, to examine, in the following pages, the contexts in which the bird appears, keeping the above questions in mind, and with a view to comparing the literary and folklore data with the evidence of the Gallo-Roman monuments.

The most significant and interesting references to the crane in the insular material are brief, and belong to both the literary and folk traditions. Before examining them, however, it might be of some value to give some general information about the bird.

The word corr and its compounds was, and is, used by the Irish and the Scottish Gaels to connote crane and heron, and birds of such related species as egret, stork and bittern. For this reason, it is by no means always obvious which species of bird is intended in a given

context, although, as noted on p. 7 above, all these birds seem to have played a somewhat similar role in religious symbolism and folk beliefs. The following brief ornithological notes (55) may help to furnish occasional clues as to identification:-

Cranes are gregarious outside the breeding season and flock in the winter quarters, often in hundreds. If necessary, both adults and young can swim. Although now a vagrant in the British Isles, the crane was probably common in Ireland in the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries.

Giraldus Cambrensis (56) testifies to this:-

'In tanto vero numerositate se grues ingerunt, ut uno in grege centum, et circiter hunc numerum, frequenter invenias.' (He goes on to describe the crane's watchfulness, how it holds a stone in its foot, consumes iron).

It is Giraldus who records one of the most

(55) Handbook of British Birds, IV, p.449 ff.

(56) Giraldus Cambrensis, Topographia Hibernica, Distinctio I, cap. XIV.

fragmentary but most interesting items of information about the crane, in the following passage (57):-

'Imminente vero Dominici Natalis solemmitate, Dubliniam terrae illius principes ad curiam videndam accessere quam plurimi. Ubi et lautam Anglicanae mensae copiam, venustissimum quoque vernarum obsequium plurimum admirantes, carne gruina, quam hactenus abhorrerant, regia voluntate passim per aulam vesci coeperunt.'

'in accordance with the king's will they began to eat throughout the hall of crane's flesh, which they had abhorred up to that time.'

This valuable chance reference imparts information of great importance to a study of the crane in insular tradition. The fact that, up to the time of the incident referred to by Giraldus, the Irish had apparently deliberately refrained from eating the flesh of cranes (and it was only at the will of the king that they broke with their tradition) indicates that the bird was still held in some superstitious regard up to that date. We are reminded of the British food tabus recorded by Caesar (58):-

(57)Giraldus Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica, Liber I, cap. XXXIII.

(58)Caesar, Bell.Gall., V, 12.

'Leporem et gallinam et anserem gustare fas non putant; haec tamen alunt animi voluptatisque causa.'

'They account it impious to eat of hare, fowl and goose; but these they rear for pastime or pleasure.'

The fact that the Irish apparently refused to eat the flesh of cranes, is absolutely in keeping with all the evidence in this chapter, which points to the superstitious attitude of the people of Ireland and Gaelic Scotland to the bird. This may have been partly due to the belief that some cranes were transformed human beings (59), and this in itself is perhaps a development from an early Celtic belief, which has already been witnessed for Gaul, that cranes were associated with a god or goddess and thus sacred; it may have been thought in the early period that the deity actually manifested him or herself in crane form.

Two further fragmentary items, this time from Scottish Gaelic folk tradition, help to substantiate the

(59)v.p. 38 ff. below. A similar attitude on the part of the people towards the swan is discussed in Chapter II, p. 44 ff., where the feeling towards these birds seems to have been one of affection rather than of superstitious fear.

information imparted by Giraldus. Unfortunately, as is so often the case with folklore collectors of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Campbell (60) gives no precise details of informants, or district where the superstition was recorded, but the validity of the following fragment of lore is well-supported by the earlier material.

Dealing with methods of killing persons who have lived too long, Campbell says,

'If a person is thought to be too long alive, and it becomes desirable to get rid of him, his death can be ensured by bawling to him thrice through the keyhole of the room in which he is bedrid 'Will you come or will you go? Or will you eat the flesh of cranes?'

The above superstition is surprisingly substantiated by an entry in the records of the Church of Alves (61) for the year 1663. This also concerns means of getting rid of persons who are sick or have lived too long.

(60) J.G. Campbell, Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Glasgow, 1900, p.240.

(61) William Cramond, The Church of Alves, Elgin, 1900.

I663. March 15 (62).

'The minister represented to the eldership that he had heard of a verie sinfull miscarriage in some people in Easter Alves, v. the ringing of a millen bridæ (as they call it) upon ane aged and diseased poor woman called Margaret Anderson thereby to hasten her to her death as they conceived. There names are Androw Angouse and Agnes Rob!

March 22.

'Compeired Androw Angouse confessed he rang the bridle, he being interrogated what were the words he spake at the ringing of it answered that he said 'Cran's flesh and or Wran's flesh come out thy way.' Agnes Rob confesses she went and sought for and brought to the house the bridle.' (63)

Here then we have three instances of a superstitious attitude towards the flesh of cranes, two from Gaelic-speaking areas, and one from an English-speaking Highland parish. These items of information, fragmentary though they are, seem to be consistent and to testify to a widespread belief concerning the unpleasant, and indeed harmful nature of cranes' flesh (64).

(62)Cramond, op.cit., p.44.

(63)Wran's flesh is probably raven's flesh rather than wren's flesh, and is in keeping with the sinister character of this bird in Gaelic traditions.

(64)A Chinese crane legend makes the bird an emblem of longevity, although its blood is a virulent poison. (Giles, Dictionary Entry 3888.)

Another interesting reference to cranes occurs in the Book of Leinster (65). In this instance there are three cranes (66), which belong to Midir (67). They are symbolic of parsimony and unpleasantness generally. Although they themselves are not directly connected with battle in this context, they are brought into association with war indirectly. The tale records that to see them was an evil omen to anyone going to fight. The text and translation are from Thurneysen. (68)

'Athirni Algessach mac Ferchertni is e is dibigu ro-uui i nEri. Di-caidh co Midir Uri Leth coro-troisci foair con-diuc corru niuid uath for i tegh .i. ar dibe ocus ar doceld arna taidli nech d'feruiuh Erenn i teg sum di aighidicht. 'Na-triar na-tair,' al a cetcorr. 'Airc as' al a setig. 'Seuc teg seuc teg' ol in tres corr. Gegh fer di feraiuh Erenn ad-qigh, ni-geuedh fri conl- en la sin. Nocha doich he saidh riem ar belaiuh doini.'

(65)Book of Leinster, II7a-b.

(66)Ternary concepts play an important part here, as in Celtic mythology in general.

(67)Midir seems to have been associated with supernatural birds on several occasions. He possessed two white ravens, and he and Etain turn into swans when he seeks to regain her from Eochaid. (v. Chapter II, p.25,6)

(68)R. Thurneysen, Athirne von seiner Ungastlichkeit geheilt, Z.C.P. XII, 1918, pp.398, 399. Text from Harl.5280, fol.77.

'Athirne Ailgessach, der Sohn Ferchertnes, der war der Abweisendste (Ungastlichste) der in Irland lebte. Er ging zu Midir von Bri Leith und fastete gegen ihn und erhielt von ihm die Kraniche der knauserigkeit auf sein Haus, namlich aus Ungastlichkeit und Geiz, damit keiner der Irlander sein Haus als Gast aufsuche. 'Komm nicht!' Komm nicht!' sagte der erste Kranich. 'Geh weg!' sagte der andere. 'Vorbei am Haus!' sagte der dritte Kranich. Jeder Irlander der sei sag konnte an diesem Tag keinen gleichen kampf bestehen. Nie als er sich vor den Augen der Menschen satt.'

Here then, in the early literary tradition, we have three cranes, as on the Paris and Trèves altars (69), and they are indirectly connected with war, as we have argued for the Gaulish birds (70). They are here in the possession of a man, but whether they themselves are regarded as male or female is not indicated in the text.

In the following tale, recorded again by Campbell (71), the bird is once more associated with parsimony, with battle and in this instance with a woman. The story is that concerning Eoghan a' Chinn Bhig (Hugh of the Little Head).

(69)v. p. 23 above.

(70)v. p. 19ff above. W.G. Wood-Martin, Traces of the Elder Faiths of Ireland, London, 1902, II, p. 141, records the tradition that it is a good omen to see a crane, as with the approach of war these birds mysteriously disappeared. No details are given, and Wood-Martin is not a first-rate authority, but the information is convincing in the light of the general evidence, and it may, in this instance, have come from a reliable source.

(71)J.G. Campbell, Witchcraft and Second Sight, Glasgow, 1902.

The hero is married to a daughter of MacDougall of Lorn, who is a parsimonious, utterly disagreeable wife.

According to the tradition recorded by Campbell, she had several nick-names, in three of which she is called a crane or heron, i.e. Corra then dubh, (The Black-bottomed Crane), Gortag, an droch chorra dhubh, (Parsimony, the evil Black Crane), and Corra Dhughail, (The MacDougall Crane). (72)

On account of his wife's meanness, evil fortune befell Hugh, and he lost an important battle. A broadsword took off the top of his head, but instead of falling dead, he jumped on his horse and rode off.

In this tale, we have elements which suggest the possibility that the story of Midir's cranes, recorded in the Book of Leinster, or the superstition on which it was based, was known in insular folk-tradition. We have a most unpleasant woman to whom are ascribed three uncomplimentary crane names, her chief characteristic being parsimony, on account of which evil fortune befalls her husband in battle, where he loses his head, but does not die, merely riding away. In the Midir legend, he possesses three

(72) Campbell, op. cit., p. II3)

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cranes, notorious for their parsimony, which, if seen by a warrior, would deter him from proceeding to battle, the implication being that if he did so, he would be defeated.

Finn is associated with cranes in two folklore contexts. In the first (73) we have an extraordinary hag, who possesses a temple. She herself does not assume ^{crane} hag form within the framework of the tale as it has been recorded, but her four sons appear as cranes. These birds are associated with death, and they can only become men again if blood from the Connra bull is sprinkled over them. This point is of interest for two reasons. On the Paris and Treves altars, cranes and a bull are associated, where the bull wears a sacrificial fillet (on the Paris altar). Here, in folklore tradition, we have four cranes who can only be disenchanted by the blood (74) of a legendary bull - not any bull, but the Connra bull (75).

(73) Cailleach an Teampuill, Bealoideas III, p.447.

(74) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D766.2 Disenchantment by Application of Blood.

(75) Owned by the Cailleach Bheara.

Relevant passages from the tale are as follows (76).

'chonnaic sé (Finn) an chailleach ba gráinne chonnaic sé ariamh a'teacht, agus a teampull héin ag a gualainn aici..

'he saw the most hideous hag that he had ever seen approaching, and her own temple on her shoulders (77).'

(The hag wins the stakes in a game of cards.)

'beir héin do bhreith anois, a chailleach,' adeir Fionn, 'D' eile, cuirim thusa,' adeir sí, 'faoi gheasaí agus faoi mhór-diombuaidh na bliadhna gan an darna hoidhche chodladh ar haon leaba ná an tríú béilí ith' ar aon bhórd no go dtuga tú chugam cloigeann an Tairbh Connra as an Domhan Shoir.'

'take your reward now, hag' said Finn. 'Indeed' said she, 'I place you under spells and under the great misfortune of the year without sleeping two nights in the same bed or eating three meals at the same table, unless you bring to me the skull of the Connra bull from the eastern world.

(The servant to Finn (78)).

'mar tá ceathrar mac aici faoi draoidheacht, agus iad 'na gceithre corr-éisg, no go bhfhághaidh gach cionn acab

(76)p.448.

(77)Many cailleachs seem to have been local goddesses in origin.

(78)p.450.

braon d' fhuil cloiginn an Eairbh Connra, agus éireóchaidh siad suas na gceithre gaisgidheach chomh breágh agus tá le fágáil agus cuirfidh siad na seacht ríoghacht' faoi n-a gcosáí.'

'since she has four sons who are enchanted in the form of four cranes, and will be so until each one gets a drop of blood from the skull of the Connra bull, and then they will emerge as four warriors as fine as are to be found and they will subdue the seven kingdoms.'

(The Ceatharnach Fada Caol Riabhach says to Rinn (79))

'....má chailltear mé shul má bhéas lá agus bliadhain caithithe, tusa a chur cómhra orm: tú héin* agus seacht gcatha na Gnath-Fheine, a dhul chun na cille liom agus tiucfaidh ceithre corr-eisg glas' agus tiubhraidh siad chun na cille mé.'

'....and if I should die before the year is spent, you shall bury me; you yourselves and seven bands of the Fiana and seven bands of the standing army shall accompany me to the graveyard and four grey cranes shall bear me and they shall carry me to the churchyard.'

(The Ceatharnach dies (80))

'Chuir Fionn beirt I gcoinne ádhbhair cómhra agus deineadh é, agus cuireadh an Ceatharnach insa gcómhra, agus tháinig na ceithre corr-éisg glasa, agus d'árduigheadar ar a ngualaí é, agus thugadar lóib é go ndeachadar 'na cille.

(79)p.45I.

(80)p.452.

* gcatha na Féine agus seacht.....

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Chuaidh beirt a' dianamh na hui^{leas}g^{gh}, agus an uair a rinneadh cuireadh san uaigh e, agus ~~ghabh~~ corr-eisg eile biadh agus deoch anuas.'

'Fionn sent a couple to get material for the coffin, and it was made, and the Ceatharnach was put in the coffin, and the four grey cranes came and they raised him up on their shoulders, and they brought him with them so that they went to the burying ground. A couple went to make the grave, and when it was made he was put in the grave, and another crane took food and drink down.'

In the above, cranes are associated with transformation (81), a hag, a legendary bull, death and burial. Although this is a recently recorded folktale, it is fully in accordance with the body of older insular and continental crane tradition. On the two Gallo-Roman altars, the birds are superimposed upon the sacrificial animal, a bull, and in this folk tale, only the sacrifice of the bull can disenchant the cranes.

In the folktale, Bairne Mor (82), Finn is again associated with a crane. The tale deals with his birth and upbringing. While he is still an infant, his father, Cumhall is slain in battle, and he himself is thrown over a

(81) This time men are transformed into cranes, which is unusual.

(82) Bealoideas, III, C.M.Hodgson from Eamonn Uí Chuanáigh, 1903

cliff. His grandmother, in the form of a crane, saves him from death.

'Thug siad lób é an sin, agus ghabh siad suas ar bhárr na haille, agus rugadar ar choirnéal an chornáin flainnín agus sgaoil siad amach é ins an bhfairrge. Rinne a shean-mháthair corr-éisg di héin, agus ghabh sí sóos. Rug sí air agus chuir sí faoi n- sgiathán é.' (83)

'They took him with them then, and they went up to the top of the cliff and they seized a corner of his flannel gown and they cast him out into the sea. His grandmother transformed herself into a crane, and descended. She seized him, and she put him under her wings.'

Here then we have the transformation of an old woman into a crane. Finn is brought into contact with cranes again, indirectly, through the mysterious crane-bag. As this tradition springs from the legend of the transformation of a woman into a crane, it is proposed to examine this legend first. Because of its interest in this context, the poem about the crane-bag is quoted in full. (84)

(83)p. 189.

(84)Duanaire Finn, Irish Texts Society, VII, p.21, ed. Eoin MacNeill, 1904.

'Ceisd agam ort a Chaoilte a fir na n- arm n-iomlaoite
 cia ga raibe in Corrbholg coir (85) do boi ag Cumhall
 mac Trenmhoir.
 Corr do bhoi ag Manannan mhin fa sed ilbhuidhach go mbrigh
 dia croicionn sin coindealb borb de do righnedh in
 corrbholg.
 Innis duinne cred in chorr a Caoilte go n-iolar nglond
 no cred far cuireadh a fhir a croicionn fana sedaibh.
 Aiffe ingen Dealbhaoith dhil lennan Ilbric iolchrothaigh
 tarra for seirc in fhir hi Iuchra go gcaimhli
 cealguis Iuchra chum snamha Aiffe nocar chuairt agha
 dar cuir hi tre luinne amoigh a riocht cuirre fo
 chuirrchib.
 Fiefraighis Aoiffe ier sin d' ingin aluinn Abhartaigh
 ga fad bhiad sa riocht so a bhen a luchra aloinn
 uichtgheal
 An crioch chuirfet ni ba gerr ort a Aoiffe na rosc
 ro-mhall
 beir-si da ched bliadhuin ban a ttigh mhiadhaigh
 Mhanannan
 biaidh tu sa tigh sin do gnath ag fanamhat fut do chach
 ad chuir nach dtaisdil gach tir noch attacfainn tu en
 tir (86)
 Do ghentor soightheach maith sed dot croicionn ni beg
 in bed
 bidh e a ainm sni breag dhamh corrbholg na sed fo
 dheireadh.
 Do rinne Manannan sin don croicionn od fuair oighidh
 do bhi fo gach sed dhiobh sin aige ni breg na degaidh.
 Leine Mhanannain sa sgien is crios Goibhnionn ar aon-
 rien.
 duphan gabhann on fhior bhorb seoid do bhiodh issin
 chorbholg
 Deimhios righ Alban gan fheall 7 cathbharr riogh
 lochlann

(85)Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index,DII93.I, magic bag made from skin of crane.

(86)Reference to migration here shows that the crane is intended. The heron is a British resident.

do bhoi ann re raite sin 7 cnamha muc nAsail
 crios do dhruimnibh an mhil mhoir do bhoi sa chorrholg
 choir
 ader-sa riot gan dochar do bhiodh ann ga iomachar
 In tan do bhiodh in muir lan ba follus a hseoid ar a lar
 inuair fa traigh in muir borb folamh fo deoidh in
 corrbholg
 Ag sin duit a Oissin fheil mar do righneadh e budhdein
 agus inneosad fesda a imthus a himtehta
 Ro bhoi in corrbholg re fada ag Lugh laochda lamfhada
 no gur thuit in righ fo dheoidh le macaibh Cearmada
 Milbheoil
 do bhi in corrbholg ier sin aca sin ina degheidh
 gur thuit siod in triar ger mear le macaibh mora Miledh
 Tainic Manannan gan sgis rucc leis in corrbholg aris
 nior taisbein e do dhuine go ttainic re Conaire
 ro codail Conaire caomh do leathtaoibh Temhrach na raon
 mar do musgail in glan glic frith in corrbholg fa
 braguit etc.

'I have a question for you Caoilte, man of the
 interchanged weapons: to whom did the good crane bag belong
 that Cumhall son of Treanmhor had?

A crane that belonged to gentle Manannan, it was a
 treasure of power with many virtues - from its skin, strange
 thing to prize - from it was made the crane bag.

Tell us what was the crane, my Caoilte of many exploits,
 or tell us, man, why its skin was put about the treasures.

Aoife, daughter of dear Dealbhaoth, sweetheart of
 Ilbhreac of many beautias - both she and Iuchra of comely
 hue fell in love with the man.

Iuchra, enraged, beguiled Aoife to come swimming, it
 was no happy visit: when she drove her fiercely forth in the
 form of a crane over the moorlands.

Aoife then demanded of the beautiful daughter of
 Abhartach 'How long am I to be in this form, woman,
 beautiful breast-white Iuchra?'

The term I will fix will not be short for you Aoife of
 the slow-glancing eyes: you shall be two hundred white years
 in the noble house of Manannan.

You shall be always in that house with everyone mocking you, a crane that does not visit every land: you shall not reach any land.

A good vessel of treasures will be made of your skin - no small event: its name shall be -(I do not lie)- in distant times the crane-bag.

Manannan made this of the skin when she died: afterwards in truth it held every precious thing he had.

The shirt of Manannan and his knife, and Goibhne's girdle, altogether: a smith's hook from the fierce man were treasures that the crane bag held.

The King of Scotland's shears, full sure, and the King of Lochlainn's helmet, these were in it to be told of, and the bones of Asail's swine.

A girdle of the great whale's back was in the shapely crane-bag, I will tell you without harm, it used to be carried in it.

When the sea was full, its treasures were visible in its middle: when the fierce sea was in ebb, the crane-bag in turn was empty.

There you have it, noble Oisin, how this thing itself was made and now I shall tell its farings, its happenings.

Long time the crane-bag belonged to heroic Lugh Long-arms till at last the king was slain by the sons of Cearmaid Honey-mouth.

To them next the crane-bag belonged after him, till the three, though active, fell by the great sons of Mile.

Manannan came again without weariness, carried off the crane-bag again. He showed it to no man till the time of Conaire came.

Comely Conaire slept on the side of Tara of the plains: when the cunning well-made man awoke, the crane-bag was found about his neck, etc.

The above poem, while it is obscure in parts, coheres well with the tradition as we have seen it so far. It appears to contain a genuine legend, and one which was probably current in folk tradition. A woman is transformed into a crane (87) on account of jealousy (88). She is no

(87) Transformation in water, v. Chapter II, p. 139.

(88) Tom Peete Cross, Motif Index, D665. I*

ordinary bird but

'sed ilbhúadhach go mbrigh'
'a treasure of power with many virtues.'

She becomes the possession of Manannan, a god of the sea and island otherworld, a fitting deity to possess such a bird. That she was considered to be of no ordinary importance is indicated by the fact that upon her death her skin was fashioned into a bag into which all Manannan's most treasured possessions were put. (89) Other bodily members having sacred or magic associations have been utilized in Celtic tradition, especially for purposes of divination (90), and if this bird had supernatural associations, it is not altogether surprising that its skin should be traditionally connected with the treasures of a deity. (91)

(89)For the concept of the bag in folklore, v. J. MacPherson, Primitive Beliefs in N.E. Scotland, London, 1929, p.299 ff.

(90)For example, v. Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, DI3II.8, Human head (skull) used for divination; DI3II.8.I* dog's head used for divination. Also, Rhonabwy sleeps on the skin of a yellow ox which is placed on a dais, which brought good fortune to anyone who slept on it (Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, The Mabinogion, London, 1949, pp.138, 139.)

(91)The following is an episode into which the magic bag is also introduced. 'Fodailsed siabra andochum co rodelbsad Aigi i laeg n-allaid cor' cuaird fo cethair timcholl Erenn, co ros-marbsat fian Meilge mac Cobthaig ri Herenn 7 ni frith di acht bolg usci, 7 mos-laisen isan abaind, conid uaide ainmnigthir Aigi.' They loosed elves at them who transformed
(ctd. overleaf)

The allusion to the sea is mysterious, 'when the sea was full its treasures were visible in its middle, when the fierce sea was in ebb, the crane-bag in turn was empty.'

It may be connected with the fact that Manannan was a sea god, but it is, nevertheless, difficult to understand exactly what the lines refer to. (92) The bag eventually comes into the possession of Finn (93).

(91 ctd.) Aige into a fawn and sent her on a circuit all round Ireland, and the fian of Meilge, son of Cobthach, King of Ireland, killed her and of her nought was found save a bag of water, and this he threw into the river, so that from her the Aige is named.' (Whitley Stokes, The Rennes Dindsenchas, Revue Celtique, 15, 1894. The prose is Middle Irish. P.306-307). Stokes has a footnote likening this transformation to that of the witch Geirhild who in the Landnámabók, turns herself into a leather sack full of water.

(92) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, DI324, magic object indicate tide; DI324.I magic bag full at high tide, empty at ebb tide; DI324.I.I, magic tub drips at high tide, is watertight at ebb tide.

(93) O'Rahilly, (Early Irish History and Mythology, Dublin, 1946) questions the meaning of corr, and maintains that corrholg does not mean crane-bag at all. He says 'In our principal source, 'Macgnimartha Finn' the allusions to the corrholg are more or less meaningless as they stand, and they serve no apparent purpose in the tale. It is clear that in what we are told concerning the corrholg we have the remnants of a dying tradition, which in the twelfth century was no longer understood. The analogy of caladbolg and gai Bulga places the real meaning of corrholg beyond doubt. It is a name for the lightning-weapon, belonging to the Otherworld deity, which Finn acquired.....Corrholg therefore, would mean something like pointed lightning, i.e. the lightning spear...' (pp. 73,4). Ingenious although Professor O'Rahilly argument is, there seems little concrete evidence to support it. The concept of a magic bag is widespread, and one would naturally find a place in Irish legend, where
(ctd. overleaf)

A ballad which appears to contain the same legend as that occurring in the first lines of the above poem, is summarized by Christiansen as follows (94). Oisín had taken leave of his friends Caoilte and Patrick, and had set out to visit another of his old comrades, Dearg, who had escaped into the fairy mounds. On his way, he comes across a crane (corr chrotach chruadh-luirgneach). He recognized the bird and asked it to tell its story, saying that it was indeed a long time since he had met anyone belonging to his own generation. The bird, a woman in a crane's shape, answers that she will tell her story even if the recital of it will make her sad. She was once Miadhach, the daughter of Eachdhonn mor, but she had been for two hundred and ninety-five years in the form of a crane. Her father had a foster-daughter named Morann, the daughter of Fionnachta and both the maidens were in love with one Abharthach. Morann had been the first to love him, but the passion of Miadhach was stronger and Morann complained to the king.

(93 ctd.) magic objects of all kinds play an important role. For a list of some of these, v. Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D800-I699. That the bag should be made of the skin of a magic crane is also quite in keeping with what we have seen of the popular superstitious attitude to the bird. It is, moreover, possible that a play was being made on the dual meaning of the word corr, i.e. crane/heron, and crooked/queer. This has been mentioned in connection with Columba (p.54 below). This could thus be taken as an instance of the Irish love for playing upon the different meanings of words, and corrholg could then stand for both
(ctd. overleaf)

When Eachdhonn asked them to give up this man, Morann answered 'I will give him up so as to have your blessing,' upon which the king solemnly declared that he loved her better than his own three daughters, and he offered great wealth to Miadhach if she would give up Abharthach in favour of Morann. She refused, and the angry king turned her into a crane. She recounted to Oisin all the animals that had in their time been her lovers and mates and finally requested Oisin to tell a story to her...

The above legend has much in common with that contained in the early part of the crane-bag poem. Two women love the same man. In the first, the rival is responsible for the transformation, in the second, the angry father (95).

(93 ctd.) crane-bag and peculiar-bag.

(94)Reidar Christiansen, The Vikings and the Viking Wars, Oslo, 1931, pp.418,9. According to G.Murphy, the ballad dates from the 12th cent. and is from an unpublished agallamh (R.I.A. 24P5²), consisting of 146 quatrains, beginning 'a chorr ud thall san leana'.

(95)Eachdhonn Mor transforms his daughter with two strokes of a golden wand. For notes on transformation by means of a magic staff, v. Chapter II, p. 39.

The subsequent history of the two birds differs. Aoife dies after two hundred years in crane form; Miadhach lives on, not apparently in the possession of anyone, and becomes one of the 'oldest animals' (96). Other legends of mysterious solitary cranes are found. The crane who was Miadhach seems to be referred to in a quatrain from the Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill (97).

IO2. 'Me do marb mor na sgela, oenchorr do bi ar Muigh Lena.'

'It is I who killed, great the story, the solitary crane which was on Moy Leana.'

Another legendary crane is introduced in the same poem (98).

IO0. 'Berim-sa eteall angbaid co hInis Geidh dar glennmuir.'

'I take a difficult flight to Inis Geidh across the ridged sea.'

(96) The motif of the oldest animals is examined by Eleanor Hull, The Hawk of Achill or the Legend of the Oldest Animal, Folklore, XLIII, London, 1932, p.376 ff.

(97) Colloquy between Fintan and the Hawk of Achill, transcribed by Kuno Meyer, Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts, edited by Bergin, Best, Meyer and O'Keefe, I, (Dublin, 1907), p.38.

(98) op.cit., p.37.

and,

103. 'Me do marb suaircc in sere enchorr Innsi guirm Geidhe.'

'It is I who killed, pleasant the feast, the solitary crane of green Inis Geidh.' (99)

In the Irish Nennius (100), this legendary bird is again mentioned.

'Corr innse geidh na h-aenur di o tofach domain can chuirr aile faria.'

'The crane of Inis Geidh has been alone from the beginning of the world, without any other crane with her.'

The mysterious crane of Inishgay figures again in a legend recorded in Erris (101), which tells of a Viking chieftain who visited Ireland and made love to a woman called Munhanna. She caused the Viking to kill her husband while he slept. After this, she insisted on returning to Norway with him, but she could not be trusted not to do to him as she had done to her husband, and fearing similar treachery would be practised on him, the Scandinavian had her drowned in Lough Carrowmore. As he

(99)op. cit., p.38.

(100)J.H.Todd, The Irish Version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius, Dublin, 1848,p.221.

(101)C.Otway, Sketches in Erris and Tyrawley, 1841 (I have been unable to obtain this.)



proceeded homewards, a crane was seen over the sea. It cried 'revenge', and made for the cliffs of Inniskea, where it stands alone. (I02)

Certain of the saints and churchmen are associated with the crane, as with other birds. (I03) Columba is especially connected with this bird, and in one tradition, he himself transforms two women into cranes (I04). The Irish is as follows.

'Triallais iomorro Colum go n-a naoimhchleir a hAlbain, amhail adubhramar, go Eirinn, agus an tan do bhi ag teacht i ngar na comhdhala adubhairt an rioghan, bean Aodha, re n-a mac Conall gan cadhas do thabhairt don choirrchleireach na da bhuidhin; agus ar bhfaghail sceal air sin do Cholun sul rainig an lathair is eadh adubhairt: 'Is cead liom-sa an rioghan go n-a hinnilt do bheith i riocht da choirr i gcionn an atha-so thios go dti an Brath.' Ag so deismireacht na nAmhra ag aithfhriotal bhriathar Cholunim san rann-so:

'Is cead di-se bheith 'n-a coirr,
Ar an cleireach go ro-loinn,
'S is cead da hinnilt go beacht,
Bheith 'n-a coirr 'n-a cõimhideacht.'

Agus is uime do orduigh an innilt do bheith 'n-a coirr mar aon ris an rioghain, do bhrigh gurab i thainig i dteachtaireacht on rioghain go Conall ag a radh ris gan

(I02) Inniskea is an island about three miles off the coast of Erris. This is precisely the type of tale one would expect to find developing out of an older tradition of a metamorphosed woman, possibly having divine origins.

(I03) For a discussion of the relationship between birds and saints, v. Chapter II, p. 49.

(ctd. overleaf)

cadhas do thabhairt don choirrchleireach na da bhuidhin.
Agus do chluinim o n-a lan do dhaoineibh go bhfaictheas da
choirr do ghnath ar an ath ata laimh re Druim Ceat o shoin
ale.'

'Now Colum, with his holy clerics, proceeded from Alba
to Ireland, as we have said, and when he was approaching the
convention, the queen, Aodh's wife, told her son, Conall,
not to show any reverence to the heron-cleric or to his
company. And when Colum was informed of this before he
arrived at the place, he said: 'It is my will that the
queen and her handmaid, in the shape of two herons, be over
that ford below until Doom. Here is a proof from the
Amhra repeating the words of Colum in this stanza:

Let her become a crane,
Said the cleric in great rage,
And let her handmaid be
A crane in her company.

And the reason why he ordered that the handmaid become
a heron together with the queen was that it was she who came
with a message from the queen to Conall, telling him not to
show any reverence to the heron-cleric or to his company.
And I hear from many people that ever since two herons are
usually seen on the ford which is beside Drom Ceat.' (I05)

A similar episode is recounted in the De Liberatione
Scandlani (I06).

'Tainic dono Colum Cille di acallaim Scandlain co
n-eibert Scandlan fris 'ar Crist fruit, eirg for t-culu ocus

(I04 ctd.) Geoffrey Keating, Foras Feasa ar Eirinn, ed. P.S.
Dinneen, London, 1908, published for the Irish Texts Society,
IX, pp. 88, 90.

(I05) It is not clear whether herons or cranes are meant here.

(I06) Irish Liber Hymorum, ed. R. Atkinson & J. H. Bernard,
p. 187, l. 12 ff.

no-m-cuin digh for Oedh....

'Then Colum Cille came to converse with Scandlan, so that Scandlan said to him 'Christ be with you, go back and intercede with Oedh on my behalf....'

Stokes version continues (I07)

'Dochuaid in clerech 7 ro cuinnig 7 ní thucad do. 'Bid dilmáin ría matain.' ar Colum Cille. 'A mire in chorr-chlerig út (ar in rigan) 'ocus sobcca a briathar, 7 is amlaid bai, 7 si ic folcud. 'Tu fein bas chorr' ar Colum Cille, 'for ind ath-sa immuich co brath, 7 do lethsciath mbriste amal do lethfholt foilcithi' (>doronad samlaid, domrua-sa Scandlan ría matain.)

'The cleric went and made demand but it was not granted to him. 'He will be free before morning' says Columba. 'O the madness of that tricky cleric' says the queen, 'and the haughtiness of his words.' And thus was she washing her head (I08). 'Tis you yourself that shall be a crane' says Columba, 'outside on this ford forever, with one of your wings broken, as is half your hair washed.'

Stokes gives another version of this story (I09).

(I07)Whitley Stokes, Revue Celtique XX, 1899, p. 48 from Rawlinson B, 502.

(I08)Corr-chlerig is translated here by Stokes as 'tricky-cleric'. He thus takes corr in the sense of 'peculiar, deceitful'. It would seem that the dual sense of the word is being played upon (v. p.48 above for this). The crane was obviously looked upon as a strange bird in folk belief, i.e. it stands on one leg, women were turned into cranes, etc. However, the primary sense here does seem to be crane.

(I09)l.c. p.40.

Amra Choluimb Chille.

(Ba holec dano lassin rigain bennachad Dommaill, ar ba lessmac di se co ro ferggaig in clerech fria co n-erbairt si frisin clerech, 'Romor in chorrainecht for a tai.' 'Is cet duitsiu' ar in clerech, 'bith for corraicht.' Conid annsin ro soad-si hi cuirr. Co ra gaib a hinailt iarsin for athissigud in clerig co ro soad sede dano hi cuirr n-aile. De quibus dicitur:)

Nas-geib ferg in rigan de do dommoll hisin rige ar Domnall hir-rigi ann, is a mac fein cen ferann.
 'Cia corrgainecht so fil fort,' ar ind rigan co roole,
 ni bam sid fri Aed cen chlith ar chadus duit, a chlerig.'
 'Is ced duitsiu cid at corr,' ar in clerech co rolonn
 ar chneit dot inailt cen acht bid 'na chuirr hit
 chomaitecht.'
 A hinailt is ben Aeda soeteir hi corraib lena
 marait beus, dogniat cneta inn Druimm Ceta cen sena
 (co filet na da chuirr sin o shein hille i nDruim Chetta.)

Anger seizes the queen thereat, at Domnall being in sovereignty, for Domnall being there in sovereignty, and her own son landless.

'What corrgainecht (IIO) is this that you are doing?'
 says the queen very evilly.

'I shall not be at peace with Aed clearly, for
 honouring you, O cleric.'

'You are permitted to become a crane' says the cleric
 very sternly,

'for your handmaid's complaint, she shall be a crane
 in your company.'

Aed's wife and her handmaid are turned into cranes of
 the marsh:

they still remain, they make complaints in Druim Cetta
 without denial.'

(IIO) Stokes, in a note on p. 47 says that the word corrgainecht probably represents corrguinacht, explained by O'Davoren as being on one foot (like a crane?) and using one hand, and with one eye (closed), making a glam dicinn, a poet's execration. Meyer, Contributions, has corrguinecht, a magical process. Here the meaning 'crane-tricks' would fit in well with the response 'you can become a crane', and again a dual meaning is possible.

In the version of the legend quoted above, we have seen that everything connected with the crane in this context is in accordance with the tradition, as we have witnessed it so far. Two women are transformed into cranes by a churchman whom they have insulted by referring to him as a crane-cleric. In the version given by Stokes from Rawlinson B.502, the queen is engaged in washing her hair at the time of transformation. This is probably another example of the association of ideas, i.e. the crane is a water bird, and it is therefore appropriate that transformation should either take place in water (as in the case of Aoife, (III)), or in connection with water. Columba's connection with the crane is interesting, and he may have been known as the crane-cleric on account of the crane which according to one tradition, he kept in his service. The following anecdote mentions this bird. (II2)

Columba borrowed a book from Finnian of Druim Finn and proceeded, unknown to the owner, to transcribe it.

(III)v. p.45 above.

(II2) O'^{Donnell}Donovan, Betha Coluimb Chille, ed. Andrew Kelleher, Z.C.P., IX, 1913, p.260.

On the last night, when Columba was finishing the work, Finnian sent for it. The messenger, seeing the great light in the church, glanced through a hole in the door into the building, and when he saw Columba engaged in the work, he was afraid to address him. Columba, on becoming aware of his presence, was enraged, and said to his crane 'if God permits it, you have my permission to pluck out that youth's eyes, who came to observe me without my knowledge.' The crane immediately went and thrusting his beak through the hole in the door plucked out the boy's eye.' (II3)

Moreover, Columba is associated with birds in general and with the crane in particular in the following legend, also recorded by O'Donnell (II4).

(II3)'agus do gab ferg mor e fa an ni sin agus do labhair se re peata cuirre do bi aicce agus ass ed adubhairt ria 'is ced lim-sa massa ced le dia, tu-sa do buain a shul as an ochlach ud tainec dom fechain gan fis dam fein.' Do erich an chorr acedoir le breithir C.C. agus tuc buille do gobtre pholl na comhladh a suil an oclaig cor ben a suil asa cinn, cor facuib ar a gruaid amuigh hi.'

A similar story is told of Ciaran of Clonmacnois, although the crane does not seem to have been in his possession. A servant tries to keep back food from the brethren. Ciaran, observing this said: 'Rom-bera corr,' ar se, '(do shuil as do cinn.' Forcaemmacair amlaid iardain uair benais postea cuirri a shuil asa chinn a rabha fora gruaidh oc dul dia thigh dho.' 'May a crane take your eye out of your head and may it be on your cheek when you go home.' A pet crane pecked out his eye and it lay on his cheek as he was going home.' Whitley Stokes, Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore, Oxford, 1890, 1.4183. (ctd. overleaf)

When he was leaving Ireland his boat passed through Lough Foyle. All the birds were distressed at his departure, and the seagulls and other birds pursued him on both sides of his ship, screaming and calling in their sorrow. 'Agus do tuigedh se-siun a n-urlabhra ag denam na tuirsi sin, amail do tuicfedh se o dainibh hi', 'and he understood their sorrowful speech as well as he would understand it from human beings.' (II5). He was as sad at leaving the birds as he was at being exiled from his fellow-countrymen.

'agus ni hedh amhain do bi cumha no tuirsi ar dainibh a tire fen a ndiaidh Coluim Cille acht do bi cumha ar enuch agus ar ainmindti ecciallaidhe na diaidh. Agus do derbad an sceoil sin, do batar failenda agus enach Locha Febuil da' gach taeb da luing ag imthecht do agus iad ag scredaigh agus ag screchaig, ar a olcuss leo C.C. d'fhagbail Erind. Agus do tuigedh se-siun a n-urlabhra ag denam na tuirsi sin amail do tuicfedh se o dainibh hi: agus di bi an oirit sin do daendaigeacht agus do gradh ag C.C.....nach mor gur mo an tuirse do bi air an delugadh rena dainib ina in tuirse do bi air ag delugadh re failendaib agus re henlathib locha... et do derbadh an sceoil sin, do cuaidh corr ar cuairt docum C.C. o Erinn a nAlpain go hi amail mebhruighes Adhamhnan naem air.'

(II4)loc.cit., p.281.

(II5)Columba thus apparently had the 'language of the birds', v. Chapter V, p. 438.

'and not only were the inhabitants of the country sad and sorrowful at Columba's departure, but all the birds and animals were sad on his account. And as verification of this tale the seagulls and birds of Loch Febuil were surrounding him on both sides of his ship, screaming and shrieking on account of their distress at Columba's leaving Ireland. And he understood their sorrowful speech as he would understand it from human beings: and such was Columba's humanity and love that not greater was his sorrow at parting from the people than from leaving the seagulls and the birds of the loch ... and as proof of this legend, a crane went from Ireland to Scotland to visit Columba, as holy Adamnan testified.'

The following verses, recorded by Carmichael (II6) would also seem to connect Columba with cranes.

Tha luireach chaol Chaluim Chille
 Dha do dhion o na saigheada sith
 Roimh na corracha-cri
 Roimh na corracha-cnamh
 Roimh bhuaireadh an t-saoghail a bhos
 Roimh olcas an t-saoghail thall

'The fine armour of Columba is protecting you from the fairy arrows, against the screeching cranes, against the gnawing cranes, against the temptation of the present world, against the wickedness of the world beyond.'

The words corracha-cri and corracha-cnamh are problematic. It is tempting to accept Watson's translation of them, above, and as we have seen, Columba has been

(II6) Alexander Carmichael, Carmina Gadelica, III, Edinburgh, 1940, ed. by J.C. Watson, p.196.

associated with the crane in several different contexts already. It would not be out of keeping with the tradition then, if Columba's armour should be invoked as a protection against these birds (II7) and their appearance here fits into the context of spiritual danger and the influence of evil women (II8). But these mysterious 'corrachas' appear in other contexts where their translation as cranes does not seem to be so satisfactory. For example, the following, which Carmichael leaves untranslated. (II9)

Eolas a rinn Gille-colum

 Air tri corracha crith
 Air tri corracha cnamh
 Air tri corracha creothail.

In the context, they seem to be three kinds of ailments, although it is tempting to translate them as 'three gnawing cranes' etc (I20)

(II7) This represents the Lorica type of prayer, found in the Irish Liber Hynorum.

(II8) A' bhean air a glun
 A' bhean air a suil
 A' bhean air a gnu
 A' bhean air a farmad.

The woman on her knee, the woman at her (evil) eye, the woman with her spleen, the woman with her envy.
 (cfd)

Again we find in the same source (I21)

'Uibe gheal chuir Muire mhin...
.....
Air tri chorracha-cri
Air tri chorracha-cnamh
Air tri chorracha-creothail.

which Carmichael translates

'against the three crooked cranes, against the three crooked bones, against the three crooked creothail.'

In the above, the corrachas do occur in proximity to other animals and evil spells, but it is clear that Carmichael himself was very unsure as to the meaning of these words, and the references are too unsatisfactory for any conclusions to be drawn from them. It is possible that future investigation will help to elucidate the problem.

(II9 ctd.)Carmichael, op.cit., II, p.8, Eolas At Cioch.

(I20)If these things are to be taken as cranes, they would be reminiscent of Midir's three unpleasant birds. With reference to the unpleasant association of the crane/heron in insular tradition, I heard a small child in a house in Portnalong, Skye (a Harris settlement), in the summer of 1955, being warned away from a room which she was not supposed to enter, by being told that the corra-ghritheach was in there. There may thus be some Outer Island superstition connected with this bird, which field investigation may help to clarify.

(I21)Carmichael, op.cit., II, p.52, Uibe ri Shul.

Cranes are brought into the service of the church again in the following legend of Dima (I22) In the accounts of the life of Saint Ciaran of Saighir, it is related that Dima, chief of the Hy Fiachrach, fell in love with the virgin Bruinnech and abducted her. Ciaran attempted to gain her release from Dima, who said he would only agree to that if a crane's voice were to awaken him on the following morning. It was midwinter and a heavy snow had fallen (I23). Next day, however, a crane cried from every house-top in the neighbourhood (I24).

The following are some miscellaneous references to the crane in folk tradition.

In a note, Campbell (I25) records that in Gaelic curra, corra, is used to denote birds in the same sense in

(I22) Standish O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, II, p 5, < *Eq. 112, language c. 17th century.*

(I23) Here again, we can be sure that cranes and not herons are meant. The crane was a summer migrant to Ireland, whereas the heron is a resident bird.

(I24) Tainic Ciaran go Dioma d' iarraidh na hingine air is nír aobh Dioma a leigen uadha adubairt fos nach leigfedh uaidh ar aonchor i munab guth corrghlaise do dhuisseochadh as a chodla arna mharach e, agus do b' aimsir geimhrid an tan sin agus d' fer snechta mor ann agus in tinad a raibhe Ciaran gona dheiscioblaib ní fher aonred do'n tsnechta ann
(ctd. overleaf)

which it occurs in jail-bird: corracha-margaidh connotes people who haunt markets or places where they are likely to find employment. It is, according to Campbell, also used to denote children born in adultery. 'Aithris an darna curra air a churra eile, an expression meaning 'the reproach of one worthless woman to another' (I26)

Finally, what is really a point of translation. Campbell (I27), in his version of A' Mhuileartach Bhuidhe, prints the following verse,

'Oir rachadh roimh thollaibh nan sleagh
Na corran roimh dhrìom Osgair.'

and translates

'For through the spear-holes there might go
The sickles through the back of Osgar.'

(I24 ctd.) isin maidin arna mharach gidh do bhi sin i
naghaidh nadura do labhair corrghlas ar mhullach gach aoin
tighe da raibhe san dunadh.' (*Silva Gadelica*, I, p.4.)

(I25) J.G. Campbell, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition,
IV, p.47 note (London 1891).

(I26) In French, grue (heron/crane) is used to denote a street-walker or prostitute. The bird seems generally to have been associated with unpleasant or worthless women.

(I27) J.F. Campbell, West Highland Tales, 1862, I, p.141.

It seems more probable that the real meaning of the above is 'the cranes through the back of Osgar'. This image occurs in other contexts to indicate the extent of the hero's wounds (128).

Summary and Conclusion.

In this chapter, eighteen occurrences of the crane/egret on monuments, coins or in epigraphical contexts have been noted. Moreover, its appearance in some twenty-three literary and folklore contexts has been discussed.

In much of the continental material, the bird either appears with or is mentioned in conjunction with a deity, male or female. In insular tradition, it seems either to have belonged to a deity (e.g. Midir, Manannan), or is a woman (originally a goddess or otherworld being) transformed. In Gaul, the crane/egret appears, on the Paris and Treves altars on the back of a bull, and the coins depict a crane

(129) Nuair shnamhadh na geoidh air do chneas
's e mo lamh-sa rinn do leigheas.

'When the geese would swim on your skin, it is my hand that healed you.'

J.G.Campbell, op.cit.p.43 Laoidh Oscair.

on horseback. In Ireland, it is connected with a bull, (the Connra bull) in the story of the Hag of the Temple, and with a horse bridle in the Church of Alves records.

Its military associations are manifest in both the continental and the insular traditions as we have them. In Gaul, it appears twice with Esus, whom the first Berne scholiast equates with Mars. It is depicted on the Carniola cheek-plates, on the Orange shields, and in England it occurs on the Risingham military altar, and also on an altar from Chesters. It appears with warriors, charioteers and helmets on the Gaulish coins.

In Ireland, it is unfortunate for battle-going warriors to see Midir's three sinister cranes, and in Scotland, Hugh of the Little Head loses both the battle and his head, on account of his wife's meanness. She is called a crane. Wood-Martin (dubious but in line with the general tradition here) also mentions the crane in connection with war. The mysterious crane-bag is owned by successive warriors.

Even more consistent in the tradition is the bird's connection with the female sex. In Gaul it appears, apparently speaking into the ear of a goddess on the two Narbonne monuments; it also appears below a goddess on the Risingham altar. A goddess, moreover, appears on the altar at Treves, but it cannot be definitely established at present that she is connected with the Esus legend here.

In Ireland, Aoife, Miadhach and Munhanna are transformed into cranes (on account of their jealous or non-moral behaviour). Finn's grandmother transforms herself into a crane. The Cailleach of the Temple has four crane sons; Columba turns the queen and her maid into cranes, also on account of their bad behavior, and Hugh of the Little Head's wife is likened to a crane.

The flesh of the crane is associated with death in the Church of Alves records and in the superstition recorded by Campbell, and this is implied in the information imparted by Giraldus Cambrensis. The fatal capacity of the birds is also indicated in the case of

Midir's cranes.

In the Finn legend, the death of the Connra bull is essential before the four cranes can be disenchanting, and on the Paris and Treves altars, the birds stand on the back of a bull, apparently prepared for sacrifice (i.e. it wears a fillet on its back). Cranes bear the body of the Ceatharnach to the grave in the Finn legend. In general, the birds seem to have been popularly associated with death, transformation, and the abnormal. The birds' habit of standing on one leg would naturally impress a superstitious people as being extraordinary. Whether the word corrguinecht for a magical process is related to corr 'crane/heron' is difficult to establish, but if it means, as O'Davoren suggests, standing on one leg, using one hand and with one eye closed, it does perhaps suggest that the sorcerers had this bird in mind.

Carmichael's corrachas are baffling, but any acquiescence in his translation of them as cranes is based on the fact that Columba is associated with cranes in other contexts, on Midir's three baleful cranes, and on the generally unfavourable popular attitude to the bird as it appears in the insular tradition.

In conclusion, then, the evidence as we have seen it in this chapter allows us to conclude that the crane/heron/egret was a bird which was regarded with superstitious awe by the Celts from an early period in their history. Continental evidence points to its having been venerated originally as the attribute and/or manifestation of a god and/or goddess connected with war. Insular evidence moreover, concurs with this, and in Ireland, the bird may, perhaps, in the pre-Christian period, have been venerated as the attribute of a war goddess. The bird may have been respected, but it certainly does not appear to have engaged the affections of the people as, for example, did the swan. It seems always to have been regarded with uneasy suspicion and to have been thought of as abnormal and in some ways dangerous. When it had ceased to be regarded with religious awe, it appears to have become an object of superstitious dislike, and it was the bird into which jealous or unpleasant women were translated.

The saints seem to have been connected with birds in general, and Columba, as we have seen, had, according to tradition, particularly close associations with the crane.

If it is possible to use Carmichael's evidence, he was invoked as a protection against the bird. In the 'Screeching cranes' and the 'gnawing cranes' we seem to have a faint echo of Midir's mysterious birds, symbols of parsimony and ill fortune, the three birds on the Gaulish altars, perched on the back of the sacrificial bull, the great crane whispering to the goddess at Narbonne, and the sinister birds on the coins.

It cannot, therefore, be doubted that, despite the beauty and delicacy of the crane/egret, it has from early times been regarded by the Celts with religious awe and later, with uneasy superstition, and its association with enchanted women in the insular tradition seems to imply that it was originally the attribute or shape assumed by some formidable goddess.

Chapter II.

SWAN.

Material Remains.

From an examination of the available evidence, it would seem that the swan has made a more or less consistent impression upon the imagination of the Celtic peoples, although it is quite evident that the nature and significance of that impact has undergone a fundamental change in the many centuries separating the earliest evidence from the most recent. The richest sources of information illustrating the role of the swan in the religious and imaginative life of the Celts and proto-Celts, are these copious material remains from late Bronze Age and Hallstatt Europe, and the literary tradition of medieval Ireland. Irish and Scottish Gaelic folklore contains numerous references to swan transformations, but these are mainly variations of an international swan-maiden type (I). Evidence from Wales is, as always in this context, unsatisfactory, in view of the absence of really early manuscripts containing mythological material, and the fragmentary nature of the modern folklore. It is unfortunate, therefore, that little

(I)Aarne-Thompson, 400. For discussion, v. p. 171 below.

information can be derived about swan traditions in Wales(2).

There is no doubt whatsoever that the swan was, at one time, looked upon as a bird with divine connections although it is not clear that it was actually worshipped by the Celts on the Continent. In Ireland it was the form adopted by several divinities, but it does not appear as the regular attribute of any one divine being in the way that, for example, the crow/raven appears both as the regular attribute and^{as} the form of the war goddesses (3). There are not, therefore, clear traces of a swan deity, and the bird seems rather to have played a generally divine role, and to have had both male and female associations.

There is no question, however, of the sanctity of the swan in the late Bronze and early Iron Ages at least, and representations of the bird on cult objects from various parts of Europe are strikingly numerous. Unfortunately, there are no texts from this period to provide details of its importance in the religious life of the early Celtic

(2) In the mabinogi of Culhwch and Olwen, a Gwen Alarch, 'White Swan', daughter of Cynwal Hundred Hogs is mentioned.

(3) v. Chapter III, p. 185. ff.

peoples, and we must draw our conclusions entirely from an examination of the contexts in which representations of the swan appear, and a comparison of this evidence with information contained in the medieval Irish texts.

Some of the material which will be examined in this section belongs to cultures which archaeologists regard as being more or less Celtic. However, even in cases where the cult objects described may not be Celtic or even strictly pre-Celtic, it is felt that they are of sufficient importance and relevance to the general investigation to justify their inclusion here, as being indicative of a widespread European religious concept, in which the Celts most certainly shared.

From the copious evidence embodied in the material remains from north and central Europe, pertaining to the late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age, it is clear that the Celtic and Germanic peoples in general worshipped a solar deity/deities, connected with water, one of whose most consistent attributes or symbols was the swan or duck. This evidence, however, does not enlighten us as to whether

the deity was worshipped as a swan or other aquatic bird, or whether the bird was merely an attribute of the deity and possibly an object of sacrifice. Whatever the connection between bird and god however, there is no doubt that it was a very close one, and that the cult of the swan/duck and indeed of aquatic birds in general, covered a very wide geographical area in Europe. The total number of objects manufactured with swan or duck symbols combined with wheels, chariots and barks must have been extraordinarily large for so many to have survived for recovery.

The history of the solar chariot and the solar disc or bark, and their connection with the swan or duck, has been dealt with at some length by Dechelette (4). Ferrer has also written a detailed article, with many illustrations, on the prehistoric chariots and their survival in historic times (5). A valuable study, incorporating much of this material, has also been made by Kossack (6).

(4) Joseph Dechelette, Manuel d'Archeologie Prehistorique Celtique et Galle-Romaine, II, Paris, 1910.

(5) Robert Ferrer, Prehistoire, I, Paris, 1932.

(6) Georg Kossack, Studien zum Symbolgut der Urnenfelder- und-Hallstattzeit Mitteleuropas, Romisch-Germanische Forschungen 20, Berlin, 1954.

Dechelette discusses, in some detail, the artistic development of the motifs from their symbolic origin, and this artistic treatment is helpful in dating the objects, for as their significance as religious symbols decreased, the motifs became confused and uncertain, and were finally reduced to more or less geometric patterns, their meaning intelligible only from their prototypes. The stylization of the motif of the solar disc, borne by a bark with swan-heads, is well-illustrated by some fine bronze situlae from Italy, Germany and Scandinavia, dating from the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age (7). These consist of a late Bronze Age vessel from Siem, Denmark, with the well-depicted solar disc borne by the solar bark with swan-heads, and the motifs degenerate gradually in the situlae from Hungary and Orvieto where swan head and disc form decorative bands, to the vessel from Bologna which is early Iron Age. Dechelette lists three different modes of representing swans in connection with the situlae:-

- 1) Swans engraved on a situla not mounted on wheels.
- 2) Sculptured swans attached close to the situla and on the same chariot.
- 3) Sculptured swans placed on another chariot which must

(7) illustrated by Dechelette, op. cit. pp. 426,7.

have escorted, in the procession, the vehicle drawing the situla.

Poisson (8) examines the swan and the solar bark representations in connection with the Knight of the Swan problem. While it is not proposed to deal with this particular question here, one point raised by Poisson may be mentioned. In discussing the stylization of the solar bark motif he says:-

'Ces oiseaux ont été souvent pris pour des canards ou des oies, par suite de l'imperfection du dessin, mais la dérivation suivie ci-dessus montre bien qu'ils s'agit originairement de cygnes.' (9)

In general, this statement is quite justified. There is no doubt at all that the swan was very intimately connected with the solar symbols and the solar cult, and there is ample evidence to show that the duck was also closely associated with it, as was the cormorant. But, whereas ducks of various kinds appear on solar wheels,

(8)G. Poisson, L'Origine Celtique de la Légende de Lohengrin. 'Revue Celtique, 34, p.182 ff.

(9)Poisson, op. cit. p.186

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er on, or as the body of solar chariots, and the cormorant likewise appears on wheels and discs, the swan is the bird chiefly associated with the bark, as all the early material evidence makes clear (IO). Later stylized representations frequently make the bird almost serpentine in appearance. It is not intended to make a detailed analysis of the possible origin and history of the chariots and discs and their ^{artistic} development artistically. Attention however will be drawn on the following pages to some of the more interesting of the cult objects with their bird symbolism.

One of the most striking objects is the votive chariot from Dupljaja, Yugoslavia, dating from the Hallstatt period, and now in the Belgrade museum (II).

(IO) There are, however, two exceptions to this. The goddess of the Seine (Sequana) is represented on a bronze from the Temple of the Seine, now in the Dijon museum, standing in a bark, formed by the body of a duck which holds a round fruit in its mouth. (Lantier/Esperandieu, II, plate 7676.) Another bark is illustrated by Kossack (op. cit. plate II, fig. 17); has the heads of cocks instead of the swans, with a crude anthropomorphic figure standing up in the centre of the bark, the arms terminating in cock-heads in place of hands. It is in bronze and was recovered in Italy.

(II) Illustrated by Kossack, op. cit., plate I, and by Ferrer, op. cit., p. 39.

The group consists of a three-wheeled chariot in which a male idol is borne. He is covered with wheels and discs. Two water birds, undoubtedly swans, are placed one on each side of the front wheel and a third bird appears in front of the idol. This deity brings to mind the squatting god in terra-cotta, covered with astral signs, from Quilly (I2). One of the most interesting features about the Dupljaja group is the fact that the god is beaked, his hands resemble claws, and altogether his ornithomorphic origin is manifest.

Also of major interest is a series of small votive chariots, carrying swan or duck images, along with bulls or other horned beasts. Two of these come from Bourg-sur-Spree (I3), one having three swans and bull heads, and one carrying three swans and three bull heads. Another from Cornete (I4) represents bird and bull combined. This interesting combination of horned beast and aquatic bird is well-attested by these cult objects (I5), where the addition of the horn (which probably had a similar

(I2)P.Lambrechts, L'Étude des Divinités Celtiques, 1942,pl.XVI
 (I3)Dechelette, op. cit., fig.I86.
 (I4)Dechelette, op. cit., fig.I86.
 (I5)Kossack, op. cit.,plate 5, no's 8,9,II.

significance to the crest) to the bird presumably increased its sanctity and religious importance. A three-wheeled chariot comes from Frankfurt-on-Oder (16) and bears two bull heads and four complete swans. Yet another chariot comes from Ober Kehle, and all probably date from the late Bronze Age. Six chariots of this type were found in the region of the Oder valley, between 1848 and 1928, all very similar in appearance and symbolism. Chariots of the same general type have also been recovered in Sweden. Such chariots seem also to have been known in China in the Bronze Age. Needham (17) in pointing out the extraordinary parallel cultures of Europe and China in the Bronze Age and later says:-

'Another, even stranger story concerns the ubiquity of the 'bird-chariot', i.e. a bronze or pottery image of a bird mounted on three wheels. Many collections of Chinese antiquities include specimens of these, but they are known from Egypt and from many sites in Europe. Sometimes the latter have several birds perching on a kind of frame like a gun-carriage.'

(16) Ferrer, op. cit., p.79.

(17) Joseph Needham, Science and Civilisation in China, I, p.161 (Cambridge, 1954).

These chariots, with their striking symbolism, bring to mind the account of Cu Chulainn's strange return to Emain Macha, as described in one of the stories from the Tain (18). Although one must exercise extreme caution in seeking to expose fragments of genuine religious belief from the fantasy of Celtic literature, one may perhaps consider the relevant passages of the text with the Continental evidence in mind.

Cu Chulainn has obtained arms and chariot from Conchobor against the latter's will, has killed the three sons of Nechtan Scene, and is returning home. He sees a herd of wild deer beside Sliabh Fuait and decides to bring one of the animals alive to Emain. He goes after the herd:-

'Taurling Cú Chulainn, agus gaibid in n-ess ba nessam de, agus ba choímem diib. Slaittius sechnón na mónae eocus damainti fo chétóir. Con-reraig eter dí fheirt in charpait.' (19)

(18) Stories from the Tain, edited by John Strachan, published for the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 1944, and taken from the Book of the Dun Cow and the Yellow Book of Lecan.

(19) Stories from the Tain, p. 19.

'Cu Chulainn leaps out and seizes the deer which was nearest to him, and which was the most beautiful of them. He lashes them (the horses) throughout the moor and he overcomes it immediately. He bound it between the two shafts of the chariot.'

He next sees a flock of swans flying above him and he decides to take that alive also:-

'Lathraid Cú Chulainn iarum cloich mbicc fersna éonu
 ce mbi'ocht n-éonu diib. In-láa afhrithisi cloich méir
 ce mbi' da'én deac diib. Tre tháithbémmán trá in sin uile.'
 (20)

'Cu Chulainn throws then a small stone at the birds so that he struck eight birds of them. * All that then by means of a stunning blow.'

These birds Cu Chulainn ties to the chariot also:-

'Conid samlaid sin luid de Emain Machae - dam allaid
 i ndiad a charpait, agus íall gésse oc folúamain úase, agus
 trí chenn inna charput.' (21).

'So that it was in that fashion that he went to Emain Macha - a wild stag behind his chariot and a flock of swans fluttering above it and three heads in his chariot.'

(20) Strachan, op. cit., p. 19.

(21) Strachan, op. cit., p. 20.

* He threw again a great stone so that he struck 12 birds of them.

Here we have a collection of motifs which bears an interesting resemblance to those which appear on the Bronze Age and early Iron Age chariots described above. We have the chariot with the horned beast and swans attached to it, occupied by the hero. It is not, of course, suggested that in this story Cu Chulainn represents the sun-god, or that his feat of taking the birds and the stag alive was imbued with any deeper significance other than that of a remarkable deed which only a hero such as Cu Chulainn could perform. What is suggested is that whoever introduced this episode into the story was perhaps familiar with such a set of motifs, and these he used to decorate the story and illustrate the hero's skill and power. There are several possibilities. The Celts on the Continent must have been familiar with such material remains under discussion, and there is artistic evidence to show that by the La Tene period at least, the significance of such symbolism had been obscured to such an extent that the solar motifs had become stylized and fulfilled artistically a purely decorative function. Nevertheless, the persistence of the oral tradition amongst the Celtic peoples is quite remarkable even at

the present time, and it is inevitable that stories would have grown up round the ceremonial processions of these chariots and the deities to whom they were dedicated. Thus it is by no means unlikely that the Celtic peoples who invaded Britain and Ireland were familiar both with the actual votive chariots and with the legends associated with them. Moreover such votive chariots might also have been used in Ireland (although archaeological evidence is not yet forthcoming) and the tales later, perhaps, attached to Cu Chulainn, may then have been indigenous. The fact that these motifs of original religious significance were used as decoration in art objects makes it all the more likely that verbally, the motifs would be used to decorate and elaborate stories, when they had ceased to have any strong religious associations. Just as the names of gods and heroes become attached to topographical features, so such a set of motifs could become attached to a hero, rationalized as in the above tale. It is suggested then that in this episode we are not witnessing a sun deity engaged in his solar functions under the guise of hero, but something quite different, i.e. the operation of an oral tradition stemming originally from acquaintance with a set of religious symbols.

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It is also interesting to note in the above connection that Cu Chulainn tames the fierce stag by the strength of his will. He apparently uses some power of hypnosis on the beast (22).

Some more of the swan and other aquatic bird representations recovered in Europe are as follows. A small bronze chariot carrying the heads of aquatic birds, stylized, but probably representing swans (23). The chariot, which seems to belong to the late Bronze Age and was discovered in Szaszvarosszek, supports a votive vase. Also of interest in this connection are some of the cult objects recovered from Scandinavia and sharing with the Celtic and proto-Celtic objects what seems to have been a widespread religious tradition. A very early example of a small votive chariot of Bronze Age date, and carrying four swans in the round, comes from Skallerup (24).

(22) 'Tongu-sa do dia tongtae Ulaid, cloenad no cloenub-sa mo chenn fair, no in tshuil do-gen-sa friss nicon fhoicher cor dia chiunn fritt ocus nicon lilmaither a gluasacht.' (p.20) 'I swear by the god by whom the Ulstermen swear, a bending that I shall bend my head upon him or the eye I shall make to him, he will not stir his head at you, and he will not dare to move.' For the significance of the heads in Celtic art and literature generally v. P.Lambrechts, L'Exaltation de la Tête dans la Pensée et dans l'Art des Celtes, Bruges 1954

(23) Dechelette, op. cit., p.442. (from Bohemia).
(24) " p.421 (from Denmark).

Also from Scandinavia come knives, decorated with solar symbols, wheels, horses and swan heads (25). One knife from Denmark carries a swan in the round. Three more knives are decorated with solar barks and swan or horse heads. One of these represents two figures standing in the bark, with rays coming from their heads (26). It is an interesting fact that the representation of the solar bark appears almost exclusively on knives from Scandinavia, and it appears that the solar deity of the Germanic peoples, like that of the Celts (27) was connected with medicine and healing. It is, moreover, in Scandinavia that the most numerous representations of the solar bark have been discovered.

(25) Dechelette, *op. cit.*, p.420.

(26) This unusual representation may perhaps be compared with the fragment from Gausel, where a crown decorates the male head, and may possibly represent the rays of the sun. This fragment is further discussed on p. 43 below.

(27) 'Post hunc Apollinem et Martem et Iovem et Minervam. De eandem fere, quam reliquae gentes, habent opinionem. Apollinem morbos depellere.' 'Apollo drives away diseases.' Caesar, De Bello Gallico, VI, 17.

From Gaul come some early examples of swans and swan heads in bronze (28). One of these, from Gréoulx, represents a swan on the end of a staff, and is of particular interest in that Gréoulx was much frequented for its medicinal waters in Roman times, and was apparently constructed on the site of the centre of an important Apollon cult. The Celtic Apollon seems to have been closely connected with the cult of thermal waters, and it is natural that aquatic birds should also be connected with this deity. During the Gallo-Roman period the god Bormo/Borvo was equated with Apollon (Apollon Borvo). Inscriptions mentioning Bormo (29) occur at Aix-les-Bains in Savoy and at Bourbon-Lancy; Bormanus is mentioned at Aix-en-Diois, Drôme and Saint Vulbaz. Borvo is mentioned once at Entrains and seven times at Bourbon-Lancy. The name Bourbon is derived from the genitive of Borvo, i.e. Borvonis. A head of Borvo was found in a temple at Chatenay, depicted with curled hair, in company with ex-votos of eyes and a pair of doves in the round.

(28) Dechelette, *op. cit.*, fig. 187. Kossack also reproduces illustrations of birds on staffs in bronze, from Central Europe and belonging to the Hallstatt period (*op. cit.*, pl. 6, 7).

(29) E. Anwyl, Ancient Celtic Deities, T.G.S.I. XXVI 1910, p. 392 ff.

The head and neck of a swan was found at Clermont-Ferrand, and a swan on the end of a staff and the head of a swan were discovered in Bohemia. The significance of the bird-headed staffs is not quite clear, but they were probably used in some religious ceremonies, perhaps carried by the priests, and possibly associated with augury. (30)

An interesting group of objects decorated with these symbols comes from Italy (31). A fine Hallstatt helmet in beaten bronze comes from Corneto, illustrating the debased solar motif with swan heads and circles. Italian sword belts from Este, Poggio Bustone, Rome and Falerii, dating from the Hallstatt period are decorated with solar symbols i.e. discs, wheels, swan heads and cormorants. A bronze chariot consisting of a duck with two heads, possibly a shoveller, also comes from Italy. A bronze torque from Haute Marne (32) is decorated with solar barks and swans, the swans here not very faithfully depicted.

(30)cf. bird-headed staffs from Egypt, and custom of placing bird-headed staffs on graves in Siberia.

(31)Ferrer, op. cit., fig. I7; Dechelette, op. cit., figs. I76 and I77.

(32)Dechelette, op. cit., fig. I95.

The above descriptions of some of the numerous cult objects recovered from the Continent, and dating from the Bronze Age and Hallstatt periods, serve to indicate both how copious such objects must have been, and how widespread amongst the peoples of western Europe was the cult of the solar swan. It has not yet been possible to determine whether the god was actually worshipped under the form of a bird, or whether the swan was an object of religious sacrifice, but whatever the role played by the swan, it is quite clear that it held a high place in the religious beliefs and rituals of the time (33).

Comparatively little archaeological research has been carried out in Ireland and there is a paucity of material evidence to show that the cult of the swan in connection with solar mythology was also known in Ireland. One interesting object dating from the Bronze Age does perhaps help to cast a little light on this question (34).

(33)The beaked idol from Dupljaja (v.p.78 above) and the goddess with ravens emerging from her hips and ears (Kossack, op. cit., plate 13, fig.5) seem to point in this direction.

(34)Recovered from Dunaverney, Co. Antrim, about 1829.

It is an implement of unknown use (35), having a double hook at one end and a ring at the other. On it are two swans, two ravens and three smaller aquatic birds, possibly intended to represent cygnets or small ducks. An interesting feature is that the birds are moveable and their positions can thus be altered at will. The implement may possibly have been used in divination, both the raven and the swan being employed as birds of augury, and if the smaller birds do represent ducks, their presence in this context would be quite fitting in the light of continental evidence for the duck, as well as the swan and the raven, in connection with sacred objects. Animals and birds in terra cotta with detachable heads and dating from the La Tene period are known from the Continent (36) and these were probably likewise associated with augury and other religious rites. This is one of the few pieces of material evidence that have been recovered from Ireland so far, but it can hardly have been unique, and it is to be hoped that more will be forthcoming as archaeological research progresses (37).

(35) Possibly a horse goad or flesh fork.

(36) For discussion of these v. Lambrechts, L'Exaltation de la Tête, p. 102.

(37) There is also a small oval object in bronze on which two raven-like birds are set in the round, from Lisnacrogghera, now in Belfast Museum.

In a note (38) on the description of the washing basin of Etain, Margaret Dobbs advances the hypothesis that the description of the basin corresponds closely to the appearance of many of the Hallstatt vessels from the Continent, as does the description of Medb's cups in the story of Bricriu's feast. From this, she concludes that the Irish were directly familiar with such Hallstatt vessels. The passage in question is as follows (39):-

'.....co n-facca in n-ingin for ur in tophuir. Ocus cir*chuirreil aircit connecor di or aici hic folcuth a luing aircit, ocus cetri heoin oir furri, ocus gleóir gemma bec do charrmoccul hi forflesc na luinge sin.'

'.....so that he saw the girl at the edge of the well. And she had a curling (?) comb of silver, decorated with gold washing from a silver vessel, and four golden birds upon it, and small bright gems of carbuncle on the outer edge of that vessel.'

It is tempting to accept Miss Dobb's suggestion, but unfortunately it is absolutely untenable archaeologically.

(39)E.Windisch, Irische Texte, Leipzig, 1880, p.II9.

(38)M.E.Dobbs, A Note on the Sacred Birds on the Basin in the Etain Story, Z.C.P., 24, September 1953, p.201.

*cuirreil, shining, bright. (K.Meyer, Contributions.)

Although birds in the round do appear in connection with Hallstatt situlae, the practise of setting stones and gems in metal, and the use of two different metals in ornamentation, are both post-Roman techniques in northern Europe, and therefore this description cannot possibly be faithful to the Continental material remains. This also applies to the description of Medb's cups in the Fled Bricrend (40). She gives the hero's portion to Loegaire Buadach, and 'cuach creduma ocus en findruini fora lar' (41), 'a cup of bronze and a bird in white metal upon its bottom (inside).' She gives the hero's portion to Conall Cernach and 'cuach findruini dano ocus en oir fora lar.' (42), 'a cup of white metal besides, and a bird of gold on its bottom (inside).' Then to Cu Chulainn, 'doberar cuach dergoir do ocus a lan do fin sainemail and ocus en do lic logmair fora lar....' (43), 'a cup of red gold was given to him, full of excellent wine and a bird in precious stones on its bottom (inside.)'

(40)Text from Lebor na h-Uidre, ed.R.I.Best and O.J.Bergin, Dublin, 1929.

(41)p.266

(42)p.266.

(43)p.267.

Here again, we have a reference to the setting of gems and the use of two metals in the one utensil. This is also the case in the description of Conchobor's house (44).

'Imdai Conchobair for lar in taige. Airinig creduma impe co mbarridaib argit, oculus eoin oir forsna hairenchab oculus gemma do liic logmair ite sulii no bitis ina cennaib.'

'Conchobor's alcove on the floor of the house. Forefronts of bronze around it surmounted with silver, and golden birds on the forefronts and gems of precious stones which are the eyes in their heads.'

It seems clear that the above decorations, which are so minutely described, are based on a visual rather than a verbal acquaintance with some original. They seem rather, perhaps to reflect early Christian art, and therefore can hardly be used as proof of an acquaintance in Ireland with the Hallstatt vessels in question.

(44) Scela Conchobair Maic Nessa, from the Book of Leinster, 106a, edited by W. Stokes, Eriu 4, 1910, p.30.

That is not to say, of course, that such vessels, or a traditional knowledge of them was unknown in Ireland. It is also possible that earlier descriptions of these objects were less complex and more closely corresponding to the actual Continental material, and that the inconsistent elements were later embellishments on the part of the story-teller, based on an acquaintance with the more elaborate post-Roman art techniques and early ecclesiastical art objects. The fact however remains that ^{the theory of} Miss Dobbs, ^{who} ~~is~~ ^{es} basing her hypothesis on the actual descriptions of these implements, and ~~in~~ ^{equates} equating them with the Hallstatt art tradition, cannot be substantiated archaeologically.

One other fragment from Ireland, discovered with other Irish bronze objects, was recovered from Gausel, Norway, and is preserved in the Bergen Museum (45). It consists of the head of a man with an elongated neck like that of a swan. On his head is either a crown, or

(45) Mlle. Henry, Deux Objets de Bronze Irlandais au Musée des Antiquités Nationales, 'Prehistoire, VI, Paris, 1938.

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representations of rays of the sun. Above, a bird with a thick powerful beak, not unlike a small hawk, but possibly representing a puffin, appears to be talking to the man. On his right are two swans, their necks crossed, the head of one of them resting against the man's cheek. This strange imagery is akin to the god-with-the-birds motif, which appears so frequently in Gaul (46). The date of manufacture of this fragment is very uncertain, but it may belong to the earliest centuries of the Christian era.

Information yielded by material remains about the importance of the swan in connection with religion in Scotland is also unsatisfactory, and does not allow any definite conclusions to be drawn. Rather remarkable representations of the swan do occur in both Doo Cave and Jonathan's Cave, East Wemyss (47). The bird, very skilfully depicted, appears four times, and twice in Doo Cave. In Doo Cave, the swans are in proximity to the

(46) The bust of a god or goddess is represented with a bird on each shoulder or one bird close to the ear, apparently conversing with the deity, e.g. v. Esperandieu, op. cit., plates 2208, 569, 570, etc.

(47) J. Romilly Allen, Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1903, p. 370.

cross symbol, and in Jonathan's Cave this symbol occurs frequently. For this reason, Romilly Allen takes the drawings to date from Christian times, but this is by no means obvious, as the cross in its various forms is, of course, a well-known and ancient symbol, with solar associations. (48) These birds might possibly date from a period as early as the Bronze Age, and indicate the presence of beliefs in Scotland analogous to those on the Continent with which we have been concerned in this section, or they may be entirely Christian in their symbolism, and therefore of considerably more recent date (49).

(48)The imagery and art style of these caves, and the fact that the swan is associated with horses and crosses, is reminiscent of the symbolism of the pre-Roman sanctuary at Mouries, in the Rhone Valley, where horses, crosses, and anthropomorphic figures appear, along with a long-legged bird (a swan or crane) in proximity to a figure with a disc for body, holding a disc.

(49)It is also possible, and indeed probable that these drawings are cumulative, and have been added to over a long period of time.

The swan then, clearly played a major role in the religious symbolism of Bronze Age and Hallstatt Europe, where many representations have been recovered, chiefly from the north and centre of the Continent. Birds in the round have also been recovered from Gaul (50), and it likewise figures on some of the Gaulish vases. It is, however, interesting to note that the swan is depicted infrequently on the Gallo-Roman monumental material, and where it does occur, it seems to have almost exclusively classical associations. The bird which appears with Apollo is the raven (51). The swan appears on a monument from Dijon (52) which may be funerary, in which case it could represent the concept of the bird soul. It

(50) For example, the swan from Gréoulx, where the cult of Apollo was very strong, v.p. 86 above.

(51) Swans are depicted on the altar at Arles, v.M.J. Formige, L'Autel aux Cygnes d'Arles et la Thymele dans les Theatres Greco-Romains, *Revue Archeologique*, 1944, where the significance of the swans on the altar and the role of the swan as Apollo's bird is discussed.

(52) Esperandieu, plate 3530.

is well-depicted, in an attitude of aggression, which is surprising if the monument is indeed funerary, and holds a branch in its beak. It appears again on two monuments which seem to represent the earlier tradition, both from Narbonne (53). One monument represents the head and neck of a rather crudely depicted swan, in the stern of a boat, and on the other monument a fishing boat has its prow adorned with the head and neck of a swan. Both these monuments seem to derive their imagery from the solar bark tradition. An altar (54) depicts the figure of a naked woman, while a large swan stands before her. Esperandieu takes this to represent the legend of Leda and the swan, and while there seems to be no concrete reason for questioning this interpretation, it must be borne in mind that seduction by a bird lover is a well-known Celtic motif (55).

(53)Esperandieu, plates 686, 687.

(54)Esperandieu, plate 2999.

(55)For example, v.p. 127 ff. below.

An altar from Muddersheim (56) inscribed Matronis Arvagastis, represents three Matrones, seated, wearing draped robes, each holding some fruit. On the right lateral face is a bird, not reproduced here, which Esperandieu takes to be a swan, and beside it is a cornucopia containing a pine cone, apples, pears etc.

Apart from these examples then, the swan appears very infrequently on the Gallo-Roman monuments, and its appearances certainly cannot compare with the religious significance of the earlier representations. Although such representations were known in Gaul, they do not seem to have had such a profound influence there as in other parts of Europe (57). In the Gallo-Roman period, although worship of a solar deity is evidenced by various representations of Gaulish deities equated with Apollo, frequently associated with thermal springs, there is little evidence of the cult of the swan in connection with solar beliefs.

(56)Esperandieu, 6567.

(57)There would seem rather to be a link between the central and northern European cult of aquatic birds, particularly of the swan in connection with solar mythology, and the magic chain-bearing swans and aquatic birds of the early Irish literary tradition, v.p. 105 ff. below.

The Tradition of the Chain-bearing Birds.

A group of cult objects illustrating extraordinary and fantastic religious symbolism comes from northern and central Europe, and dates from the Hallstatt period. These objects consist of birds and crude anthropomorphic figures built up into strange complex figures with chains. Some of the central figures are in the form of swallows (58), while one consists of a remarkably crude anthropomorphic central figure, having the heads of ducks for hands, with two small anthropomorphic figures underneath the arms, suspended by chains (59). All of these objects are in bronze, and some of them are extremely complex in structure. (60) Perhaps even more extraordinary from the point of view of this investigation, are the representations of single aquatic birds, usually swans or cormorants, each having a chain attached to its neck. One cormorant (61) is horned also.

Nothing of a similar nature appears in connection

(58) Kossack, op. cit., plate I5, fig. 8.

(59) Kossack, plate II, fig., 20.

(60) Kossack, plate IO, I7 etc.

(61) Kossack, plate I4.

with the Gallo-Roman monumental material, nor have similar representations been recovered from Ireland. It is, however, from the Irish literary tradition that the most striking parallels to these plastic objects are obtained.

The swan is referred to frequently in early Irish literature. The bird is often described as wearing a chain, usually of gold or silver. This phenomenon will be discussed in the course of the chapter. Some birds which are described as having chains about their necks are not named, and it can by no means be taken for granted that in all these cases swans are intended, although of course this may be the case. The species of bird is not given invariably in Irish literary contexts, and it is sometimes difficult or impossible to guess the species in question. In certain cases, for example that of the war/fertility goddesses, if a bird is mentioned in connection with these beings, it seems quite legitimate to classify it with the crow or raven, unless some adjective precludes such an identification. On the other hand,

it is clear that Miss Dobbs, in her note on the birds on the washing basin of Etain (62), is not justified when she makes the following unqualified statement, and the tentative nature of the evidence should at least have been indicated:-

'The sacred character of the swan, horse and bull explains the divinity in the Tain of Cu Chulainn's horses, and of the birds in the Compert Con Culainn and the Serglige. It explains why Etain and Mider return to immortality in the form of swans.'

It is proposed to examine the evidence contained in these texts, in the light of the above statement, while keeping the European material in mind.

There are two versions of the legend of the conception of Cu Chulainn (63). The following passages are taken from the Lebor na h-Uidre:-

(62)M. E. Dobbs, op. cit., p.203.

(63)A. G. Van Hamel, Compert Con Culainn, Medieval and Modern Irish Series, Dublin, 1933. This version is preserved in six mss. this edition being based on that from the L.U.

'Boi Conchubur ocus maithi Ulad i nEmuin. No tathigtis enlaith mag ar Emain. Na gelltis conna facbatis cid mecnu na fer na lossa i talam. Ba tochomracht la hUltu a n-aicsiu oc collud a n-irenn. Inlaat noi cairptiu dia tofunn laa n-and. Ar ba bes leusom forim en. Conchobur dano i sudiu inna charput ocus a ingen Deichtine os si macdacht. Is si ba harae dia hathair. Fosrumat ind euin remib dia ndaim tar Sliab Fuait, tar Edmuinn, tar Brega. Ni bid clad na airbe na caisel im thir i nEre ind amsir sin....acht maige reidi.Ba halaind ocus ba cain in t-enlorg ocus in t-enamar boi leu. Noi fichit en doib, rond argit eter cach da en. Cach fiche inna lurg fo leith, noi luirg doib. Samlaid da en batar remib, cuing argit etarru. Toscartha tri heuin dib co haidchi. Lotar remib i cend in Brogo....'

'Conchobor and the noblemen of Ulster were at Emain Macha. A flock of birds came (used to come) to the plain of Emain. They devoured it so that they did not leave as much as roots or grass or herbs in the ground (64). It was an affliction to the Ulstermen to see them destroying their land. One day they yoke nine chariots to hunt them, for it was a custom of theirs to chase birds. Conchobor then was there in his chariot and his daughter Deichtine, and she was grown up. She was her father's charioteer. The birds go before them homewards across Sliabh Fuait, across Edmuinn, across Bregia. There was neither dyke nor fence nor rampart round land in Ireland at that time, but level plains. Lovely and choice was that bird flock and the bird song that was with them. There were nine score birds, a chain of silver between each pair of birds. Every twenty in a group apart, nine groups of them. Thus two birds that were in front of them, a yoke of silver between them. Three birds separated themselves from them until nightfall, and they went before them as far as the Brugh of the Boyne....'

(64)cf. destructive birds from the Cave of Cruachan, v. p. 453below, Chapter V.

Later, after various adventures have befallen Deichtine and Conchobor, Lugh comes to her and tells her that he has been responsible for the bird flock which brought them to his dwelling (65).

The following is an outline of a second version of the story, summarized by Thurneysen (66):-

'Conchobors Schwester Dechtir entwich mit funfzig Madchen aus Ulster, und drei Jahre lang suchte man sie vergeblich. Dann kamen sie in Gestalt eines Vogelschwarms auf das Feld bei Emain und frassen es vollig ab. Die Ulter namentlich Conchobor, Fergus, Amorgin, Blai der Briugaid, Sencha und Bricriu spannen neun Wagen an und verfolgen sie sudwärts uber Sliab Fuait, Ath Lethan, Ath Gerach bis Mag n-Gosa zwischen Fir Rois und Fir Ardai. Dort uberrascht sie die Nacht, und die Vogel entkommen....'

(65) In this passage, Lugh uses birds as his agents in fulfilling his purpose, i.e. to beget a son on Deichtine. 'Asbert fria robad torrach uad, ocus ba he noda bert a dochum don Bruig...' 'He told her that she was pregnant by him, and that it was he who had brought them to him to the Brugh...' (p.5). The birds are clearly metamorphosed, as the chains indicate, and it is probable that not only was Lugh responsible for their presence, but was actually present himself in bird form, probably amongst the three leading birds. cf. also, such Gallo-Roman monuments as the altar from Senlis (Esperandieu, plate 3850) on which a youthful deity is depicted apparently giving instructions to at least six ravens, and Lugh's bird connections discussed in Chapter III. These birds are quite clearly not ravens.

(66) R. Thurneysen, Die irische Helden und Konigsage, Halle, 1921, p.271 (text from Egerton I782, fol. 79r.).

The above passages, then, provide little assistance in an identification of these most interesting birds. Such descriptions as there are, however, do serve to limit the type of species. For example, the adjectives used in connection with the birds preclude such types as the crow and raven, and it is most unlikely that any of the smaller birds were intended. At first sight, any of the larger handsome birds could have been meant, e.g. cranes, geese or swans. One factor, however, seems to destroy the supposition that the birds represent swans. In both versions of the tale, their destructive nature is emphasised. As will emerge from this study of the bird, the swan is never associated with violence or destruction (67), and it is, of course, on account of their devastation that the king goes in pursuit of them. This description of a flock of ravening birds, then, neither agrees with the ornithological facts (68) nor does it concur with the usual character of the swan in Celtic mythology.

(67) One exception to this is found in the episode of the black swans in the voyage of the Ua Corra. The passage in question is as follows:-

'Amal batar oc imthecht, iadciat tri srotha ingantacha
asa tictis na heoin tairsib i. sruth doborchon 7 sruth di
(ctd. over.)

The birds are certainly described as being exceedingly lovely, and their grouping in pairs by chains is reminiscent of the metamorphosed swans in the Aislinge Oenguso (69). Moreover, the birds sing as they fly, and

(67 ctd.)escangaib 7 sruth di eladaib dubaib. 7 asbert int-en 'Na tabrad i mbron sibsi na rechta so adcithi, daig na heoin adcithi anmanna daine oca pianad iat isna holcaib doronsat, 7 demma fuilet isna rechtaib ut ina ndiaid oca n-ingreimm, co cuirit na hanmanna gairi troma mora oc tuidecht for teiched a pianta ona demmaib.....'

'As they were going, they could see three amazing streams out of which the birds came over them, .i. a stream of otters, and a stream of eels and a stream of black swans. And the bird said 'Do not be sorrowful on account of these forms that you see, since the birds that you see are the souls of human beings being punished on account of the evil that they have done and it is demons who are in those forms pursuing them, tormenting them, so that the souls give out great heavy groans, coming to escape their punishment from the demons....'

(A.G. Van Hamel, Immramna, Dublin, 1941, p.105.)

(68)Complete ornithological accuracy must not, of course, always be expected in these contexts.

(69)v.p. //5. below.

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swans do make a bubbling noise in flight, increased by wing music (70). Although the paucity of information contained in the texts makes the identification of the birds in the Compert very problematic, there is a possibility that they could have been geese. Geese are grazing birds, and these particular birds eat up all the roots, grass and herbs. This description then, would be much more applicable to a flock of geese than to swans. Moreover, the noise made by geese in flight is rather more musical than that of swans, and the grouping described above could apply to a -V- formation composed of nine groups of twenty.

To return, however, to the question of the identification of the birds as swans. Apart from their destructive nature, there is nothing in these passages to suggest that the birds were not swans, and apart from their beauty and the fact that they wear silver chains, there is nothing to indicate that they were. In the light of these facts, therefore, they can only be regarded purely and simply as magical birds, which could have belonged to one of several of the larger species.

(70) *Handbook of British Birds*, III, p. 168, 175.

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Miss Dobbs also refers to the birds in the Serglige Con Culainn as swans. The relevant passages are as follows (71). The Ulstermen are assembled to celebrate the feast of Samhuin:-

A mbáatar and iarom tairnid énlaith forsín loch ocaib. Ní báatar i nÉre énlaith ba cháini. Batar imtholtanaig na mná imma heónu imdarubart fair, Gabais cách díb immarbaig a mmuin a céli im gabail na n-en. Asbert Ethne Aitencháithrech, ben Chonchobair 'Asagussim en cehtar mo dá gúaland dind énlaith ucut....'

'While they were there then, a bird flock alights on the loch by them. There was not a lovelier bird flock in Ireland. The women were very eager about the many birds which were upon it. Each one of them began to contend with the other about the obtaining of the birds. Ethne Aitenchaithrech, Conchobor's wife said 'I should like a bird from yonder bird flock for each of my shoulders...'

Cu Chulainn is requested to get the birds for the women, and eventually he does so, and distributes them to all but his wife, who is angry. He promises her two of the most beautiful birds he can obtain.

(71)Myles Dillon, Serglige Con Culainn, Dublin, 1953, p.1.

'Níbo chían íarom co n-accatar dá éin forsind loch
rond dercoir etorro. Cansit céol mbec. Torchair cotlud
forsin slóg. Atraig Cú Chulaind a ndochum. 'Dia coistithe
frim,' ol Éthne, 'ní rigtha chucu ar itá nach cumachta fora
cúl na n-en sa.....'

(Cu Chulainn proceeds to aim at the birds with his sling,
but his unerring aim fails. (72).)

'Am trúsa trá,' ol se, 'Ó gabussa gaisced níro lá
imroll mo urchur cussindiu.' Fochairt a chroisig forro co
lluid tre sciath n-ete indala héoin la sodain. Lotair foa
lind.' (73)

'It was not long then until they saw two birds upon
the loch and a chain of red gold between them. They sang
low music. Sleep fell upon the host. Cu Chulainn goes

(72) This incident of the faulty cast is reminiscent of an
episode in the story of Cano meic Gartnain. Cano is
travelling southwards into Cernai and sees swans on a
hillock. His companions urge him to make a cast at the
birds, which he does. They are obviously supernatural
birds, because his aim, which is normally unerring, fails,
and his cast goes astray. Next day they travel westwards
to Loch Aindind, and his companions again urge Cano to
take a shot at the ducks on the loch. This he refuses to
do. The text, which contains several obscure words, is
as follows:-

'Ba si a comairle tra. Dolotar as fut na aídche co
tuidcheatar fades tar Mag Murthemne i Mag mBreg hi Cernai.
Batar geisi forsín tilich. Dibaing na heonu or a munter
(fri Cana). Doleici irchor fair(ri)u. Ni ranic. Is
ann asbert ar ní rotheilc imroll riam.

'Gesi Cernai mosrubthus . dom lice nimorogabas
bronan foru dia coraib . fo bronan form do imrolain..'

(ctd. overleaf.)

(72 ctd.) Dolotar siar amabarach do Loch Aindind.
Dibairg in lochain or cach.

'A lacho, ar seiseam, Locha Aindindi ni trocho
ni sceoil inde a Cernu ni focha
ni airg eonu maic De bi . ar a cluim is beg tarba
ar ni mor a meit rosleic . amin ina ndluim
ni airg eonu in maigi . ni ba foru mo sroibthene
ni hed domucal o Sci . cocad fri geisi Cernai.'

(Scela Cano Meic Gartnain, Anecdota from Irish Mss., pp.5, 6.,
from the Yellow Book of Lecan.)

(73)Dillon, op.cit. pp.2, 3.

towards them. 'If you listen to me,' said Ethne, 'you would not go to them, for there is some power behind these birds.'.....'I am a doomed man,' says he, 'Since I took up arms my aim was not false until today.' He threw his javelin at them so that it went through the wing of one of the birds thereupon. They went under the water (74)!

Later, two women appear to him (75), and beat him until he is more dead than alive. We hear no more of the birds in the tale.

As the above passages indicate, then, the birds in the Serglige are not named, nor are they described as being anything other than beautiful. The flock which arrives in the first instance bears no chains of gold or silver, and therefore, presumably, does not represent transformed beings, but is composed of magical birds used by Fand and her sister to further their aim, i. e. to obtain

(74)fo can mean both under and along. In this passage either meaning is applicable.

(75)The two women (presumably Fand and Lí Ban) would seem to have appeared to Cu Chulainn in the form of the two chain-bearing birds.

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Cu Chulainn's help, and in the case of Fand, his affections (76). The desire of the women to wear a bird on each shoulder is interesting (77). The two birds which arrive later wear a chain of red gold and enchant the company with their singing, a feature which is frequently found with otherworld or metamorphosed birds (78). Although the species of bird is not actually indicated in these contexts, there seem to be more legitimate grounds here for regarding them as swans.

(76) In the Compert, discussed above, Lugh also employs mysterious birds to further his purpose i.e. to beget a son on Deichtine, and he too probably was present in bird form.

(77) This motif is reminiscent of the Gallo-Roman monuments which depict a mother goddess in company with birds, usually two in number, and sometimes situated on her shoulders, e.g. Esperandieu, plates 4256, 4264, 4282, 326, 2181 etc.

(78) In the legend of Snam Da Én (The Swimming Place of the Two Birds), Bude, and his foster-brother Luan, visit Estiu in the form of two lovely birds. Their magic singing causes the host to sleep:-

Budi macDeirg dian-garta
Ocus Lúan a chomalta
Ir-richt da én óebda sin
tictis co h-Estin imglain. (ctd. overleaf).

Some of the reasons for this assumption are as follows. Swans are essentially water birds, and these birds are in each case connected with water. In the Compert, water is not mentioned in connection with the destructive birds. The birds wear a golden chain, as do the swans in the Aislinge Oenguso, and enchant the company with their singing, as do the swans in both the Aislinge Oenguso and Ler stories. When the birds are wounded, they submerge (79). In actual fact, although not one of their commonest characteristics, swans will submerge when in danger or wounded, and this feature has also been

(78 ctd.) Andsin dochantais don tslúag
 Céol seng sírechtach sír buan
 Co cotlad in slúag uile
 Risin céol na sídchuire. (v. Chapter V, p. 443ff.)

Bude son of Derg, of eager hospitality,
 And Luan, his foster-brother,
 In the form of those two beautiful birds
 Came to radiant Estiu.

Then they chanted to the host
 A thin, bewitching, ceaseless music
 So that the entire host fell asleep
 With the music of the fairy people.

The species of bird is not indicated here, but the fact that they were aquatic birds again points to swans as a possibility. This episode is discussed in Chapter V.

(79) If fo is taken to mean along, this would indicate that the birds beat along the surface of the water before taking wing, as water birds do. However, some reference to their disappearance in flight would be likely in this case - under thus seems more applicable here.

observed in play, although it is by no means usual (80). Moreover, were this not a recognized ornithological fact, it is likely that association would here tend to come into operation, i.e. the swan is a water bird, other water birds are capable of submerging, therefore the swan can do likewise. Also, the birds are described as being very beautiful and decorative, a fitting description, of course, for the swan. But, although nothing in the description of the swans is not applicable to these birds, they could just as easily have been ducks (the Irish must have been familiar with several species of duck), which are depicted so frequently on the Bronze Age and Hallstatt cult objects discussed above. Again, ducks do submerge regularly, particularly the diving variety.

In conclusion, although the birds in the Compert could possibly have been swans, and there is more probability that this was the species intended in the Serglige, the texts are too vague to allow any concrete

(80) Handbook of British Birds, III, p. 175.

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swan theories to be built upon them, and the birds can only be classified as unidentifiable, miscellaneous birds and be treated accordingly.

There are four major tales pertaining to the early Irish literary tradition, in which the swan plays an important part. In three of these, the birds are chain-bearing, and in all, the birds are transformed deities. The stories in question are the Dream of Angus, the Death of Devorgill, the story of Etain and the Children of Ler (81). It is proposed to examine these tales in some detail.

Aislinge Oenguso. (82)

Angus, son of the Dagda, has fallen in love with a girl who has visited him in his sleep, and his longing

(81) There are no early texts of this tale, and in its existing form, it may date no earlier than the 15th or 16th cent. It is, however, entirely in line with the earlier tradition, and it is likely that the existing manuscript was based on an older legend.

(82) Aislinge Oenguso, edited by Francis Shaw, Browne and Nolan, Ltd., Dublin, 1934.. Text preserved in Egerton, I782, fol. 70b. The text probably goes back to the 8th cent., possibly to the first half of the century. Very little is known about Caer Ibormeith, the central figure in the swan transformations.

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for her has made him ill. Eventually it is discovered that the girl is the daughter of Ethal Anbuail from Sid Uamain in Connacht. Bodb takes Angus to Loch Bel Dracon where he has learnt the girl will be (83).

To-lotar iarum co mbátar oc Loch. Co n-accatar inna trí cóecta ingen macdacht. Co n-accatar in n-ingin n-etarru. Ní tacmuictis inna hingena dí acht coticci a gualainn. Slabrad airgdide eter cach dí ingin. Muince airgdide imma brágait fadisin ocus slabrad di ór fhorloiscthiu....'

'They came, thereupon, so that they were at the loch. They saw one hundred and fifty full-grown girls. They saw the girl between them. The girls used only to reach up to her shoulder. A chain of silver between every pair of girls. A necklace of silver about her own throat and a chain of refined gold...' (84)

Caer's magic powers are stressed by her father when he replies to Ailill's demand that she should be given to Angus (85).

(83)p. 53.

(84)It is interesting to note in this passage that the girls are wearing their gold and silver chains while in human form. These ornaments appear frequently as the insignia of metamorphosed humans or deities, but they are not usually described as wearing them while in human shape.

(85)p. 59.

'Is íarum as-bert Ailill fri h-Ethal nAnbuail 'tabair do ingin do macc in Dagdai.' 'Ni cumcaim' ol se 'is mío a cumachtae in-dó.' 'Ced cumachtae mór fil lee?' ol Ailill. 'Ní anse: bíid i ndeilib éuin cach la-bliádnai, in mblíádnai n-aili i ndeilib duini.' 'Ci-ssí bliádain mbís i ndeilib euin?' ol Ailill. 'Ní lemm-sa a mrath,' ol a hathair. 'Do chenn dít,' ol Ailill, 'mani-n écis-ni.'... In tsamuin-se as nessam bieid i ndeilib éuin oc Loch Bél Dracon, ocus ad-cichsiter sain-éuin lee and, ocus bieit trí cócait géise n-impe; ocus at-tá aurgnam lemm-sa doib.'

'Thereupon, Ailill said to Ethal Anbuail 'give your daughter to the Dagda's son.' 'I cannot' said he 'her power is greater than mine.' 'What is the great magic she possesses?' said Ailill. 'That is not difficult; she is in bird form the one year, in human form the other.' 'What is the year in which she is in bird form?' said Ailill. 'It is not for me to betray her.' said her father. 'Off with your head' said Ailill, 'unless you may tell us.'.....'This coming Samhuin she will be in bird form at Loch Bel Dracon, and wonderful birds will be seen with her there, and one hundred and fifty swans will be with her; and I am making preparations for them.'

Here the species to which the marvellous birds belong is made quite clear, although the word for swan is only used twice in the text. It is, however, possible that the term en find (white bird), was used for the swan and for no other bird, and we find it used in the passage below, where we know the birds to be swans. If this is the case, it emphasises the lik^elihood that the birds in

the Togail Bruidne Da Derga were swans (86).

Angus goes to seek Caer (87).

'Téit in Macc Óc co mboi oc Loch Béal Dracon. Co n-accae trí cóecta én find forsin loch cona slabradaib airgididib co cairchesaib ordaib imma cenna. Boi Oengus i ndeilib doínachta for brú ind locha. Con-gair in n-ingin cucci. 'Tair dom accaldaim, a Chaer.' 'Cia do-m-gair?' ol Caer. 'Cotot-gair Oéngus.' 'Regait diandom fhoíme ar th'inchuib co tís a lloch mofhrithisi.' 'Fo-t-shisiur' ol se. Téiti cucci. Fo-ceird-sium dí láim forrae. Con-tuilet i ndeilib dá géise co timchellsat a lloch fo thrí conná bed ní bad meth n-enech dó-som. To-comlat, ass i ndeilib dá én fhind co mbátar ocin Bruig Maicc in Óicc, ocus (ch)echnatar cocetal ciúil co corastar inna dóini i suan trí láa ocus teora n-aidche. Anais laiss ind ingen iar sin.'

'The Macc Oc goes until he was at Loch Bel Dracon. He saw one hundred and fifty white birds upon the loch with their silver chains with golden ringlets about their heads. Oengus was in human form upon the bank of the loch. He calls the girl to him. 'Come and speak with me Caer.' 'Who calls me' said Caer. 'Angus calls you.' 'I shall go there if you guarantee to me on your honour that I may go back to the loch.' 'I admit you (i.e. your request),' said he. She goes to him. He casts his two arms about her. They fall asleep in the form of two swans so that they circled the loch three times so that there should not be anything that should be a loss of honour to him. They set forth in the form of two white birds until they were at

(86)v. p. 130 below.

(87)p. 62.

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the palace of the Macc Oc, and they sang in musical harmony so that they caused the people to sleep for three days and three nights. The girl stayed with him after that.'

Metamorphosis is a striking feature of this tale, and indeed, it is not always clear whether Caer and Angus are in bird or human form. When Angus visits the loch, in the above passage, Caer Ibormeith is in swan form, and Angus in human shape. But, when Caer goes to Angus on the bank of the loch to talk with him, she has presumably taken on human form again, for, on Angus' casting his arms about her, they both become swans, in which shape they encircle the loch before making for Angus' dwelling. It seems as though the actual physical contact causes the transformation (88). The expression 'con-tuilet i ndeib da geise' 'they fall asleep in the form of two swans' is problematic. It seems at first sight to mean simply that they slept together in swan form, but there is another, more interesting possibility, i.e. that physical transformation was thought of as occurring through the medium of some sort of trance. If this can be taken to be the meaning

(88)cf. also, p. 125 below, where Midir puts his arms about Etain, and they fly off in swan form.

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it would not be unparalleled. In the life of Patrick (89) reference is made to transformation into ~~etter~~ form *of other* by sleeping with the arms about him under the same cloak (90).

In the international swan maiden tale (9I), the external agent of transformation is the swan cloak, and by donning the skin and feathers of the bird, the wearer was imbued with swan properties. Upon the removal of the cloak, the transformation could no longer take place. Throughout the metamorphoses of this tale, transformation is spontaneous and no agent of transformation is mentioned. In order to obtain Caer, Angus does not steal her swan cloak and thereby render her powerless, as in the international tale, but must himself take on her bird form. In this tale, it seems obvious that a phenomenon of a deeper significance than that of mere

(89)W. Stokes, Tripartite Life of Patrick, London, 1887, I, 153.

(90)Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index of Early Irish Literature. D592*

(9I)v. p. 171 below.

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arbitrary shape-shifting is implied, the young women being as often in bird as in human form, and their time for each shape being closely regulated. The motif of the singing of the swans enchanting the people is one that occurs repeatedly in Celtic literature, a feature common to all the otherworld birds.

In the next tale, that of the Deaths of Lugaid and Derbforgaill, the swan transformation is the significant factor upon which the later episodes are based. The motif of the enchanted birds is reminiscent of the episode in the Serglige (92) where Fand and Li Ban come to Cu Chulainn in bird form. On that occasion, the species of bird into which the women were transformed is not named, nor does Cu Chulainn's cast bring its customary reward. In this story, however, the girl and her maid are clearly stated to be in swan form, and Cu Chulainn's cast badly wounds Derbforgaill, who has come to seek his love. The effect of the stone which he casts at the women is their disenchantment. In the Serglige, the piercing of one of

(92)v.p. //0 above.

the wings of the bird does not cause disenchantment. Disenchantment of a metamorphosed person when struck by a missile is also found in Germanic contexts, and seems to be common to the two cultures, although there is the possibility of influence here (93).

(93) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D712.3.I.* The following passage from the Irish Nennius is reminiscent of the striking of Derbforgaill, in swan form, by Cu Chulainn, and her instantaneous disenchantment. We also seem to have an example here of the concept of the bird soul. It is not easy to determine how much faith can be placed in this account, but it is certainly very much in line with the tradition under discussion, and is precisely the kind of legend which one would look for in this context. The passage is contained in the section Do Ingantaib Erenn andso da rer lebair Glind dalacha. (Of the Wonders of Ireland according to the Book of Glendalough).

In araili lo ro bui in fili Mac Coisi ic con boinn como facaba in eltai n-eala co tarlaicc cloic doib, co ro ben dar sceith eala dib; rethis dia gabail lasodain 7 do ces do co ro ba ben, 7 coma foacht scela uaidi cid do rala di, 7 can imus luaidi; 7 adfedsi do i n-galar ba, olsi, 7 do ces do muinntir co n-erbalur, 7 isedh araidi is deamma rom aircellsat leo; 7 ros tadbhan in fili dia muintir. (The Irish Version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius, edited with translation and notes by James Todd, Dublin, 1848, p.208.)

'On a certain day, the poet Mac Coise was at the Boyne where he perceived a flock of swans; whereupon he threw a stone at them, and it struck one of the swans through the wing. He ran to catch it thereupon, and perceived that it was a woman. He inquired tidings of her, and what had happened to her, and whence she set out. (ctd. overleaf).

And she answered him 'in sickness I was,' said she, 'and it appeared to my friends that I died, but really it was demons that spirited me away with them.' And the poet restored her to her people.

In a note, the editor says that this Mac Coise was probably the Urard or Erard Mac Coise, chief poet to Ferghal O'Rourke, King of Connaught, who died in 990, according to the Annals of Tigernach.

In his edition of the Lebor Bretnach, (Dublin, 1932) A.G. Van Hamel comments on Todd's edition saying (p. XXXVI) that the work displays admirable scholarship for its time, and (p. XXXVII) that the student of early legend and history will find all the matter embodied in any recension of the Lebor Bretnach in Todd's edition.

Aided Lugdach ocus Derbforgaille. (94)

The following passage describes the metamorphosed swans.

'Derb Fhorgaill ingen rig Lochlainne rocharastar Coinculainn ara urscelaib. Dolluid an air irricht da geise 7 a hinailt co mbatar for Loch Cuan; rond oir eturru. Amail roboi dano Cuchulainn ocus Lugaid a dalta .i. mac na Tri Findemna laa and la toib ind locha conaccatar na heonu. 'Dibairg na heonu.' or Lugaid. Dolleici Cuchulainn cloich forru co ndechaid eter a hasna co mboi ina broind. Batar da deilb duine issin tracht fochetoir. 'Olc roba rim.' ar ind ingen, 'is tu dorocht.' 'Is fir,' ar Cuchulainn. Roshugi iarum a toeb na hingine in cloich co mbui inna beolu cosin loim chro roboi impe. 'Is dot insaigid tanacsa tra,' or si. 'Natho a ingen,' or se, 'In toeb roshugiusa,' or se, 'ni chomraiciubsa riss.' 'Domberaso dano do neoch bas maith let.' 'Is maith limsa em,' or se 'dul duitsiu cosin mac as soiriu fil in h-Erinn .i. Lugaid Riab nDerg!

(94) Carl Marstrander, The Deaths of Lugaid and Derbforgaill, Eriu, V, 201, ff. Three mss, Book of Leinster, I25a, Trinity College H.3I8, fol.728, and R.I.A. Stowe Ms.D.IV,2, fol.54bI.

'Derbforgaill, daughter of the king of Norway set her love on Cu Chulainn because of the great stories told of him. She and her handmaid set out from the east in the guise of two swans until they came to Loch Cuan, a golden chain between them. Now as Cu Chulainn and his foster brother Lugaid, son of the Three Findemna, were by the lake one day, they saw the birds. 'Have a cast at the birds' said Lugaid. Cu Chulainn slung a stone at them so that it passed between her ribs and remained in her womb. Straightway two human forms were on the strand. 'Cruel have you been to me' said the girl, 'and it is to you I have come.' 'It is true' said Cu Chulainn. Thereupon he sucked the stone from the maiden's side so that it came into his mouth with the clot of blood that was around it.

'It was in quest of you that I came,' said she. 'Not so, girl,' said he, 'the side that I have sucked, I shall not join with it.' 'You shall give me then to whomsoever you please.' 'I should like you to go' said he, 'to the youth who is noblest in Ireland, that is to Lugaid of the red stripes.'

Here again, the magical nature of the birds is indicated by their golden chain, and as in the Angus story, no external agent of transformation, such as the swan skin is mentioned.

The third tale which contains a reference to swan transformation is the Tochmarc Etaine. (95) It is included in the ancient classified lists of chief stories.

(95) Tochmarc Etaine, Eriu, 12, ed. Best and Bergin, 1932-8, p.137 ff.

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Three tales with the above title were extant and were transcribed into the Lebor na h-Uidre about 1100, but only the second is now preserved. A further copy of the three tales was recovered, and is in the possession of the National Library of Ireland. The stories form remscela to the cycle of Conaire Mor. Etain is connected with birds in several instances (96). She marries Eochaid Airem, king of the five fifths of Ireland. Midir seeks to regain her, and she agrees to go with him provided Eochaid is willing to sell her. Eochaid plays chess with Midir, and after

(96)The following reference is obscure and provocative.

Etain andiu sund amne
ec Sidh Bain Find iar n-Ailbe.

Is tria hagh dosib in ri
inna eonu di Theathbaei
7 baidfidh a dha each
i lind Locha da Airbreach.

This is Etain here today, at Sidh Ban Find west of Ailbe. Because of her the king shall chase the birds from Tethba and drown his two steeds in the pool of Loch Da Airbreach. (*op. cit.* p. 158-9)

Presumably this passage, difficult to understand now, referred to some legend current at the time. On many occasions in the early tradition, there are references to mysterious birds, of a kind which imply that the bird stories extant formed only part of what must have been a rich tradition of bird legend and superstition. Midir's two white ravens (v. p. 126 below), and three cranes (v. Chapter I), may be thought of in this context, as may the strange and frequent references to the custom of bird-hunting with chariots.

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winning the stakes twice, loses to Midir on the third occasion. Midir requests that he may embrace Etain. Eochaid agrees to fulfill the request at the end of a month, but he surrounds Tara with a picked war-band. Eochaid and Etain stay in the house and the courts are locked, but nevertheless, Midir gains access and appears in all his beauty before them. Eochaid agrees that Midir shall put his arms about Etain. (97)

(Nid ririubsa im, ' for Eochaid, 'acht tabrad a di laim umut for lar in tighi amal ro gabais.' 'Dogentar' ol Midir. Ateta a gaisced ina laim cli gabais an mmai fo lethoxail deis, fochois le' for forles an tighi. Conerghed in tsluaig imon ri(g) iar melacht forro. Co n-accadar in da ela timchell na Temra. Is ed ro gabadh do Sidh ar Femun, luid Eochaid co formna fer nErenn ime do Sidh ber Femin .i. Sidh Ban Find. Ba si comairli fer nErenn fochlade cach sidhe bai a nEre co tisadh a bean do uaidib.'

'I will not sell you indeed' said Eochaid, 'but let him put his arms about you in the middle of the house as you are.' 'It shall be done' said Midir. He takes his weapons in his left hand, and the woman he took under his right arm, and bore her away through the skylight of the house. The hosts rose up in shame around the king. They beheld two swans in flight round Tara. And the way they went was to Sid ar Femuin, that is Sid Ban Find. And this was the counsel of the men of Ireland, to dig up every elfmound in Ireland until his wife should come thereout to him.' (98)

(97)p.184.

(98)The fact that swans do describe a circle after taking wing before flying off would naturally impress people.

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As in the two preceding tales, bird transformation is here spontaneous, Etain turning into a swan upon Midir's embracing her, and as Caer and Angus circle the loch before making for Angus' dwelling on the Boyne, so do Etain and Midir circle Tara before setting out for Midir's dwelling. (99) Eochaid finally outwits Midir, and inadvertently chooses his own and Etain's daughter from among the fifty women whom Midir causes to appear before him in Etain's likeness. He makes her pregnant in the belief that she is his own wife. This leads on to the story of Conaire, because the child of this union

(99)Midir is again connected with birds, in this case ravens, in the reference to Eochaid's search for Etain, where he digs up the fairy mounds to recover her.

Tiagaid bothuaid. Gabsad tochailt an tsidhe. Tri mis for bliadain doib ecco. A ndothochlaidis andiu ba comlan arnabarach. Lodar da fiach finda chuco asin tsidh, 7 dolodar da choin .i. Scleth 7 Samair. Lotar fodes aitherrach do Sid Ban Find. (p.184)

They go northwards. They began to dig up the elfmound. They were a year and three months at it. What they would dig up one day would be restored on the morrow. Two white ravens went forth from the mound to them, and there came two hounds, namely Scleth and Samair. They went south again to Sid Ban Find.

cf. raven transformation of the two swineherds, Chapter III, p. 435-6.

eventually becomes the mother of Conaire by a mysterious bird lover. As this incident belongs to the tradition under examination, it would perhaps be useful at this point to examine the story of Conaire's conception, and to attempt to determine the species of bird to which his father and his people belonged. Mes Buachalla is seduced by the bird (100).

In tan didiu bui ann dadaig con-acca in n-en forsin forless a ddochum, 7 facaib a enchendaich for lar in tigi 7 luid chuire 7 arda-gaib co n-epertsom fria 'Do-filter chucut on rig do choscrad do thige 7 dot brith chucai ar eigin 7 bia torrach uaimsea 7 bera mac de 7 ni marba eonu in mac sin 7 bid Conaire a ainm (ar ba Mes Buachalla a hainmsi dano).

When she was there by night then, she saw a bird upon the skylight, coming towards her. He leaves his bird-dress on the floor of the house and went to her and seizes her and said to her 'They are coming to you from the king to destroy your house and to bring you to him by force, and you will be pregnant by me and you will bear a son from it and that boy shall not slay birds, and Conaire will be his name' (for Mes Buachalla was her name then).

As will be seen from the above passage, there is no indication whatsoever as to the identity of the bird which, in human form, seduces Mes Buachalla. It is, however, interesting to note that here we have almost the only reference in the early literature to the bird skin or

(100) Togail Bruidne Da Derga, Eleanor Knott, Dublin, 1936, p. 3.

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dress which is a regular feature of the international swan maiden tale, and appears frequently in the Irish and Scottish Gaelic folk tales. (IOI)

(IOI)What appears to be the only other reference to the bird-dress (enchendach) occurs in the Forbuis Droma Damhghaire (Siege of Druim Damhghaire). It is found in the Book of Lismore, but as it is mentioned in the Book of Leinster, a version of the text must have existed in the first half of the 12th cent. Mogh Ruith the chief druid of Ireland is in the service of the king of Munster, who is waging war on Cormac. His wonderful attributes are as follows.

Tucad tra a sheche thairb maeil uidhir co Mogh Ruith, 7 a enchennach alath brec con-a foluamain ethaidi, 7 a aidme draidhechta ar cena. Ocus dosrala suas a comuidecht na teinéd ind aeor 7 i firmimint (7 gabustar ac sodh 7 ag bualadh na teined budh thuaidh...)

Mogh Ruith's skin of the hornless dun-coloured bull was brought to him then and his speckled bird-dress with its winged flying, and his druidic gear besides. And he rose up, in company with the fire, into the air and the heavens and

(M.L. Sjoestedt, Forbuis Droma Damhghaire, Revue Celtique, 43, 1926, p.110.)

It may be noted that in the Conaire tale, the birds are also described as being speckled (speckled white). O'Rahilly (Early Irish History and Mythology, p.519ff.) equates Mogh Ruith with an earlier sun-god, who has become a marvellous druid in popular tradition. He takes his name Roth, 'Wheel', to represent the solar disc, his chariot is the sun, and his bird-flight as a further solar manifestation. It is difficult, however, to find sufficient facts to support this equation, which consists of somewhat confused arguments.

The possession of the bird-skin, by which transformation is brought about is also reminiscent of the bird-skin possessed by Freyja and borrowed on occasions by
(ctd. overleaf.)

A little more information is given about the birds in the following passage. (I02)

'Fan-acbat a chomaltai occa Chluichiu 7 ima-sai a charpat 7 a arai co mbai oc Ath Cliath. Con-acae eonu

(I01 ctd.)

Loki. The following is from the Þrymskviða.

Gengo þeir fagra Freyjo túna,
ok hann þat orða allz fyrst um kvað:
Muntu mer, Freyja, fiadr-hams liá.
at ek minn hamar maettak hitta?
Þó moenda-ek gefa þer, þótt or golli vaeri lok-
*þó selja at vaeri or silfri.

They went to the fair Freyja's bower, and this was the first word that he spoke: 'Will you lend me your feather-covering, Freyja, that I may be able to find my hammer?' 'Yes, I would give it to you although it were of gold, and grant it to you even though it were of silver.'

(Corpus Poeticum Boreale, ed. Vigfusson and Powell, Oxford, 1883, I, p.176.)

(I02)p.5.

findbreca mora and, ecomdige ar met 7 dath. Im-sai ina ndegaidh comdar scitha ind eich. No teigtis fot ahurchara riam 7 ni theigtis ni bud shire. Taurbling 7 gaibid a thailm doib asin charbad. Im-sui co mbui oc muir ina ndeadaich. Fos-raemet ind eoin forsin tuind. Luidseom chucu co tubart a laim tairrsiu. Fo-facbad na heoin a n-enchendcha 7 imda-suat fair co ngaib 7 claidbib. Aincithi fer dib he 7 at-ngladastar, co n-epert fris, 'Is mise Nemglan, ri enlaithi do athar 7 ar-garad dit dibrugud en ar ni fuil sund neach napad dir dait o a athair no mathair.' 'Ni fheadarsa,' ol seiseam, 'cosaniu sin.' Eirg do Themraig innocht' ol se 'is coru deit. Ata tairbfheis ann 7 is tu bas ri de, .i. fer lomnacht i ndiaid na haidche iar sligi di shligthib na Temrach, 7 cloch tailm lais, is e bas ri.'

'He leaves his foster-brothers at their play. And he turns his chariot with his charioteer so that he was at Ath Cliath. He saw great white speckled birds there of unusual size and colour. He turns after them until the horses were tired. They used to go the length of a cast before him and they did not go further. He alighted and he takes his sling to them from the chariot. He turns so that he was by the sea in pursuit of them. The birds settle upon the waves. He went to them so that he put his hand across them. The birds put aside their bird cloaks and turned upon him with spears and swords. One of them protects him and addressed him saying to him, 'I am Nemglan, king of your father's birds. It was forbidden to you to cast at birds since there is not here anyone who does not lawfully belong to you on his father's side or his mother's. 'I did not know' said he, 'that thing until today.' 'Go to Tara tonight,' said he, 'it is more fitting for you. There is a bull-feast in progress and it is you who will be king from it, i.e. a stark naked man at dawn along one of the Tara roads, and a stone and a sling with him, he will be king.'

Although these strange birds are not named in the text, one or two clues to identification are given. They are described as being large and speckled with white (literally 'spotted with white'), their abnormal nature indicated by the fact that they were unusual both in size and colour. They are, moreover, water birds, for when pursued, they leave the land and light upon the waves. In this context again, we may be dealing with magical birds, belonging to no particular species, as appears to be the case in the Compert Con Culainn (I03). On the other hand, the size and whiteness of these birds, and their connection with water (I04), combined with the fact that the swan was frequently the form adopted by the beings in these early tales, does suggest that these birds were swans, possibly cygnets.

(I03) v. p. 106 above.

(I04) Another reference to this incident at the water occurs in a version of the tale published by W. Stokes, (Revue Celtique, XXII, 1901, p.26), which he bases on eight vellum copies of the Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel.

'Asbert inso huile amal rommuin do in fer ocon tuind: is ed asbert fris, 'Biaid airmitiu fort fhlaith, 7 bid saineamail ind enfhlaith, 7 bid si do airmitiu.i.do ghes...'

Then he uttered all this as he had been taught by the man at the wave, who said this to him, 'your reign will be subject to a restriction, but the bird-reign will be noble and this shall be your restriction, i.e. your tabu....'

When the birds become men, they too cast off their bird skins as did Conaire's father, and they become fully armed men. Conaire's father himself does not appear in this incident. (I05)

(I05) This is a very early example of the motif of the bird-lover (Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D.64I.I). This motif was very popular in medieval Europe. Often only the lover appears in bird form, but in certain tales, he is accompanied by other birds. In the Balkan Peninsula there seems to be a very long, unbroken tradition of bird cults, and even up to the present time people apparently identify themselves with birds. A version of the medieval tale of the falcon lover occurs, in which the bird lover can discard his bird-cloak at will (cf. above). He is accompanied by seven swans. ('A Bird Tradition in the West of the Balkan Peninsula,' Man, 23, p.55ff.). This legend is strikingly similar to that contained in the Scottish ballad of the Earl of Mar's Daughter. The bird lover in this context is a dove, which alights upon the girl's shoulder. His seven sons by her become seven swans, his twenty-four retainers are grey storks, and he himself flies in dove form.* Also, the modern Irish folk tale of Sgiathan Dearg may be compared with these. The bird lover is a bird by day and a man by night (Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D. 62I.I). His three brothers, moreover are transformed into ravens, and are subsequently disenchanted by Sgiathan Dearg's son. (Sgiathan Dearg and the Daughter of the King of the Western World, from Curtin's Irish Folk Tales, p.95 ff.)

*Buchan, Ancient Ballads of the North, p.48. 1875.

These weapon-bearing bird-men are also reminiscent of the strange, armed, bird-headed creatures on some of the Scottish and Irish monuments (v.Chapter V, p. 43/).

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The last of the tales composing the group under consideration, is that concerning the fate of the children of Ler. No early manuscripts of this tale have been discovered, nor does it appear to have been referred to by early writers. Thus it may be a fairly modern tale based upon what seems to be very old and genuine tradition. However, until the question is fully studied, and a satisfactory edition of the text is forthcoming, it will not be possible to pin-point it historically in the development of the Irish tradition. The following passages from the story indicate the nature of the bird transformations (I06).

Ler has four children by his wife, Aobh, foster-child of Bodb Derg. She dies giving birth to the last two. Bodb then gives her sister Aoife to Ler as wife. All goes well for a time, until Aoife grows jealous of her husband's love for her sister's children, and this emotion becomes so violent that she decides to destroy them. One day she pretends to take the children on a visit to

(I06) Aided Chlainne Lir, ed. Eugene O'Curry, Atlantis, IV, 1863, p. II3 ff, from several Irish mss in the Royal Irish Academy, the British Museum, and in the possession of the editor.

Bodb in her chariot, planning to kill them. She compels them to bathe in Loch Dairbhreach, and while they are doing so, she strikes them with a druidical wand and transforms them into swans (I07). The text reads as follows.

'ocus tangadar as siar go traigh locha Dairbreach, ocus do sguireadh a neachra ann sin, ocus do iarr sisi ar chloinn Lir a bhfhothraghadh do dheanam, ocus dul do snamh ar an loch: ocus do rinneadar amail adhubhairt Aoife leo. Ocus mar fuair Aoife ar an loch iad, buailios do fhleisg doilbhthe droighiochta iad, ocus do chuir a reachtaibh cheithre nealadh, nalainn, naoinghil iadh.'

'and they went away westwards to the shore of Loch Dairbhreach and their horses were unyoked there. And she requested the children of Ler to bathe themselves and to go and swim in the loch: and they did as Aoife had asked them. And when Aoife had got them in the loch, she struck them with a magic druidical staff, and turned them into the shapes of four beautiful all-white swans.'

(I07)The law of association seems to come into operation here. The swan is primarily a water bird, and transformation takes place in water. This same phenomenon occurs in the case of the crane, where, in the story of the Crane Bag of Manannan, Iuchra turns Aoife, daughter of Dealbhaoth, into a crane, after she has beguiled her into entering the water for a swim. (V. Chapter I, p. 42. ff.)

Aoife then says

'Amach daoibh a chlann an righ,
da bhur ccairdibh is sgeal truagh
biaidh bhur nuall re healtaibh ean.'

'Out with you, children of the king,
to your friends your story will be a sad one
your cry shall be with flocks of birds.'

The children then ask how long they must remain in swan form, and are told for nine hundred years, and no one will be able to release them from their enchantment until then. 'Ocus ni tualaing caraíd na comhachta da bhfhuil agaibh bhur mbreith as na reachtaibh sin.' 'and no friend or power that you have will be capable of delivering you from those forms.' Aoife regrets what she has done then, but she has no power to disenchant the children herself, but she does permit them to retain their human reason and speech. She also tells them that they will be able to make music so beautiful that the men of the earth will sleep on account of it (108).

(108) This power, as we have seen, is attributed very frequently to supernatural birds, e.g. in the Serglige and the Aislinge Oenguso, the birds of Riannon (Chapter V, p. 357.) etc.

Ler discovers his wife's treachery and converses with the birds, and learns that, not only can no one release them from their spells until the nine hundred years are fulfilled, but they must also dwell on water, and cannot come ashore and live with him. They then sing to him, and their music soothes his grief.

'Dala Lir gona mhuintir, d'fhanadar ag eisteacht re ceol na nealadh, ar bhruac Locha Dairbhreach, agus do chodhladar go samh leis, an oidhche sin.' (I09)

'As for Ler and his followers, they remained listening to the music of the swans on the banks of Loch Dairbhreach, and they slept peacefully on account of it that night.'

Bodh asks Aoife in what form she would most hate to be.

'Do fhiafraigh Bodhbh Dearg d'aoife ca riocht in budh measa le bheith ar bith. Adubhairt sisi gurab a riocht deamhain aeoir. 'Cuirfeadsa tusa san riocht sin anois' ar Bodhbh Dearg. Agus is cuma do bhi aga radha agus do bhuaill do fhleisg doilbhte droidhiochta i gur chuir a riocht dheamhain aeoir i, agus do leig ar eitill fo cheadoir: agus ata fos 'na deamhan aeoir agus biaidh go brath.' (I10)

(I09)p. I26.

(I10)p. I26.

'Bodb asked Aoife in what form she would most hate to be. She said it was in the form of a demon of the air (III). 'I shall put you into that form now' said Bodb. And even as he spoke, he struck her with a magic druidic wand so that he turned her into a demon of the air, and she flew away immediately. And she is still a demon of the air, and will be for ever.'

For three hundred years Bodb Dearg and Ler and all their followers camp by the loch-side, listening to the music and conversation of the swans. At the end of this period, however, the birds must go elsewhere. They move into the ocean and to the sea between Ireland and Scotland. The men of Ireland were heartsick at their loss and proclaimed that no swan should be destroyed in any circumstances from then on.

'ocus ba holic le fearaibh Eireann sin, ocus do fogradh aca ar feadh Eireann gan aon eala do mharbhad da mheid cumas da mbeith aca re a dheanamh a sin amach.'

'and the men of Ireland were distressed at that thing, and it was proclaimed by them throughout Ireland that no swan was to be destroyed however easy it might be for them to do so, from then on.'

(III) possibly a badb, v. Chapter III, p. 197.

The birds are represented as suffering greatly in their new dwelling place, and as feeling cold and similar discomforts. Eventually, after many years of suffering, the enchanted swans move to Inis Gluair, and the birds of the country gather about them on the lake of the birds. They used to feed on Inis Geadh and Acaill (II2). Mochaomhog comes to Inis Gluair, and Fionnghuala tells her brothers that he will release them from pain. The birds come to land and live with the saint and keep the canonical hours and sing mass with him. He has a pair of silver chains made and puts the birds in pairs. Deoch, wife of Lairn, king of Connacht, hears of the birds and longs for them. Lairn eventually asks Mochaomhog for them, is refused, and in anger snatches them from the altar. But as soon as he lays hands on them, their bird cloaks 'tlacht cochail' fall from them and they become ancient, withered people. Mochaomhog curses Lairn, baptizes the children of Ler, and they die and are buried.

(II2) Mythological birds, other than these swans, are associated with both these places, e.g. v. Chapter I, pp. 50, 51

Analysis of the Bird Transformation in the above tale.

a) Transformation is achieved by means of striking the victims with a magical staff (II3).

b) Innocent persons are transformed by a wicked person. (II4)

(II3) This motif would, on the face of it, seem to indicate the lateness of the text, but there are, in fact, very early examples of the magic wand, and the motif appears to belong to an early tradition. A thorough examination of the history of the wand cannot be made in this context, but attention may be drawn to one or two of the earlier examples. Cormac refers to a magic wand on several occasions in his glossary (Sanas Cormaic, dating from the 10th cent.). He describes the fe (entry 606), which was made of aspen, and could only be kept in the cemeteries of the heathen. Sometimes it had ogam symbols inscribed on it. It brought evil upon anyone who was struck by it. Entries 975 and 123 also mention the evil effects of the magic wand.

Two other early examples of the magic staff are found in the Tochmarc Etaine. Fuamnach strikes Etain with a quicken rod and changes her into a pool of water, and Dalan, Eochaid's druid, while seeking Etain, makes wands of yew, inscribed in ogam. (Irische Texte, p.129). cf. also, Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D.1254.I.

(II4) Transformation falls into various categories, v. Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D.O-699. Here we have an example of D.665.2*, transformation of a step-child to be rid of him. The means of transformation here is twofold, e.g. transformation is brought about by bathing on the part of the victims (D.562) and by striking with a wand on the part of the persecutor (D.562.2). cf. transformation of Aoife into a crane by Iuchra, Chapter I, p. 43 .

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c)Transformation takes place in water (v. note II4.) This seems to be an example of the association of ideas, i.e. the swan is a water-bird.

d)The swans have not the power to disenchant themselves at will, i.e. they cannot lay aside their bird-cloaks in order to bathe, or at some regulated time. In the international swan maiden tale (II5), in the versions in which the birds are under spells, they frequently take on human form, e.g. while bathing. The enchantress in the Ler story is powerless to disenchant her victims, nor can anyone else do so. Once the spells have been pronounced the victims must remain in bird form until the full period of time has passed. The birds, however, retain their human speech and reason (II6).

(II5)Stith-Thompson, D36I.I, v.p. 171 below.

(II6)Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D682.3 (partial transformation - animal with human mind.)

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e)The swans have the power of causing enchanted sleep to fall upon all who listen to them (II7).

f)The superstition that it is unlucky to kill a swan, current to the present day in certain parts of Ireland and Gaelic-speaking Scotland, was obviously alive when the tale was written, and the origin of the belief would seem to be accounted for by the fact that some swans are transformed humans or deities.

g)One of the most interesting features of this story is the fact that the enchanted swans are linked together by chains of silver, made in this case by Saint Mochaomhog. It is of interest to note that the Christian element is introduced at the end of this tale, yet the saint is responsible for one of the oldest motifs and one which is found associated with the Hallstatt cult objects from Europe, discussed above, and with the pagan elements in the early literary tradition, where it seems invariably to have been the mark of metamorphosis.

(II7)A power frequently attributed to otherworld birds, v.p. 146 below.

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h)When the birds are disenchanted by the violence of
Lairgnen, their bird cloaks fall away. They have not,
however, had the power to assume and discard them at will.

It is proposed to conclude with a summary of the material dealt with above, from which several factors have emerged. Four tales have been examined in which swan transformation plays a more or less major role. Three other tales have been considered, in which the birds are not specified, one of which contains no real indication that the birds were swans (II8), one where it is rather more probable that the birds were swans (II9), and in the third tale, it does seem probable that this was the species described (I20). These three tales, belonging in fact to Chapter V (Miscellaneous Birds), have been considered here because the birds in the Serglige and the Compert are described by Miss Dobbs as swans (I2I), and, because

(II8)Compert Con Culainn, v.p. 102 above.

(II9)Serglige, v.p. 107 above.

(I20)Togail Bruidne Da Derga, v.p. 127 above.

(I2I)v.p. 101 above, where her statement is discussed in some detail.

although the birds in these texts are unnamed, the nature of the transformations and the situations involved, makes their inclusion here more satisfactory than in Chapter V.

Analysis of the Bird Transformations in the above tales.

In the four tales in which the swan is named, the bird shows characteristics which, as will be evident, it retains consistently throughout the tradition. That is to say, it is invariably connected with good, or rather non-harmful people or deities, and its associations are always pleasant (I22). We do not find evil people assuming swan form (I23). In the same way, it has been noted that the crane is a bird with rather sinister characteristics, and the associations of the crow and raven are rarely pleasant (I24)

(I22)Bloete, 'Der Zweite Teil der Schwanrittersage' Zeitsch. fur Deutesches Altertum, XXXVIII, 1894, p.272 ff., has commented on this fact, and while his statement is now a little dated, e.g. we tend not to speak in terms of gods of dark and gods of light any more, it is fundamentally correct in the assumption that the swan is primarily a bird connected with non-harmful beings, in the Celtic tradition.

(I23)v.p. 104 for one exception to this, where the swans are black, and therefore symbolic of the abnormal.

(I24)v. Chapter I above, and Chapter III below.

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To a certain extent analogy must come into operation, i.e. the swan is white and beautiful, and the crow and raven black or grey, and rather sinister in habit, but these explanations are by no means adequate, for they do not explain the superstitious attitude of the Celts towards the crane, which never seems to have been completely liked or trusted (I25). In the three tales in which the birds are unspecified, their destructive nature in the Compert makes it unlikely that they were swans, in the Serglige, the birds themselves are harmless, although the women into whom they turn are on no kindly mission, and in the Conaire story likewise, the birds are quite harmless.

In the stories of Angus, Derbforgaill and the Children of Ler, the birds are at some stage represented as wearing chains of gold and silver, retained by Caer and her companions when they are in human form, and introduced with the Christian element in to the Ler story. In the Compert and the Serglige the birds wear chains. (I26).

(I25)v. Chapter I, p. 3/ ff.

(I26)The significance of the chain in this group of tales does seem to tie up in an extraordinary way with the Hallstatt material, where the whole fantasy of the religious imagery seems to have much in common with the early Irish literary material.

4-5

In these seven tales, swan transformation (or magic bird metamorphosis) is undergone by both men and women, and thus the bird does not appear to have had any exclusive association with one or other of the sexes. In six of the tales, transformation and the return to human form is at will, and bird form seems to be as natural to these beings as is human shape. Indeed, in the case of Caer and her companions, their time is spent equally in both forms, and Conaire's father and his followers seem to have been primarily birds, with human form occupying a secondary place. Only in the Ler story (which, it must be remembered, is late, at least as we have it), are the birds actually put under spells, that is, they do not voluntarily assume bird form, from which they cannot be freed, even temporarily. Moreover, they, who are innocent, are put into bird form by their step-mother, who is wicked. In five of the tales, transformation is spontaneous (I27). In the Conaire story, the metamorphosis and return to human form is achieved by means of the bird cloak, usual in the folk tale, but unusual at this stage. In the Ler

(I27) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D630. Transformation and Disenchantment at Will.

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story, the children are struck by a druidic staff (I28) in water. At the time of their disenchantment, their bird form is described as a bird cloak, but one which they have been unable to remove.

In four of the tales in this group, the birds make beautiful music, which, in the *Serglige*, causes sleep to fall on the gathering, *Caer* and *Angus*, in swan form, cause the hosts to sleep, while *Bodb* and his followers are enchanted by the magic singing of the transformed children.

The chain-bearing tradition in connection with swans is perpetuated in an early modern literary poem (I29) which will be considered here.

(I28) Transformation by means of a magic wand is also found in the Welsh tradition. It occurs in the *Pedeir Ceinc*, the earliest stories of the *Mabinogion*, which do seem to contain some genuine mythological material. In the mabinogi of *Math*, *Math* transforms his nephews *Gilfaethwy* and *Gwydion* into deer, pigs and wolves by means of his magic wand, (*hutulath*) and finally disenchants them with the same wand. In the same tale, *Gwydion* disenchants *Lleu* from his eagle form by means of a magic wand (V. Chapter IV, p. 223). *Ifor Williams*, *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, Cardiff, 1930, pp. 75, 76, 90.

(I29) *T.O'Rahilly*, *Gadelica*, I, p. 246ff. from three 18th cent. mss., all the writers apparently belonging to S.E. Ulster.

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Although the poem is late, and is concerned with Arthurian characters, the sentiment it expresses is immediately within the tradition with which we are concerned. The bird is again connected with the virtuous, and the fact that it wears a chain, by which it is here led, points to metamorphosis. Although the poem is probably of 17th cent. origin, it does contain these elements of an earlier tradition, and may be based on a genuine legend. The bird's reactions constitute a chastity test (I30). The poem is as follows.

Tainig go teaghlach Riogh an Domhain
gruagach deidgheal dathamhail;
eala 'na laimh leis don mbrugh
ag siubhal go saimh ar slabhradh.

Ba misde mma fios a ruin
i dteaghlach Ching eadmhair Artuir;
sgeala on eala bhinn bhuig
da bhfearaibh is tinn tainig.

Nior ghabh an t-en tais on tuinn
biadh san mbrugh on mmaoi altruim;
nior ghabh on mmaoi mbaisghil mbain
gan fion go mblaismhil d'fhaghail.

An t-abhran.

An eala mhaiseach do tharraing an gruagach lei
nach geabhadh beatha san teach sin a mbuailfeadh se
acht fion deaghbhlasta do bhasaibh na suairc-bhan seimh
nach dean malairt ar a bhfearaibh uair san saoghal.

(I30) This constitutes a variant of the well-known 'Court Mantel', but seems to be the only example of the swan's use as the test. (Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index H4II.I7*).

'A comely, white-toothed sorcerer came to the household of the King of the World; he had a swan with him going to the palace, moving tranquilly led by a chain.

Knowledge of his secret was the worse for women in the household of the jealous king Arthur; tidings from the sweet gentle swan, to their men it is sad that she came.

The gentle bird from the waves did not accept food in the palace from the nurse; it did not go from the fair white-palmed woman without taking honeysweet wine.

The Summary.

The beautiful swan which the gruagach brought with her (I31) that would not take food in that house to which it would go, except fine-tasting wine from the palms of gentle, modest women, who had not betrayed their husbands once in their lives.'

Conclusion.

In the course of this section, special reference has been made to the Hallstatt chain-bearing amulets and bird representations, and it has been observed that only in the early Irish literary tradition do any motifs approximating to these cult objects occur, where the swan is usually the chain-bearing bird. In every case, however, the birds are metamorphosed beings, and seem usually to be engaged on pursuits of an amorous nature. (I32)

(I31)The sex of the gruagach seems to change here.

(I32)For example, Lugh uses the chain-bearing birds in order
(ctd. overleaf)

The history and significance of the chain itself is of interest, and a study of its occurrence in other contexts might be rewarding (I33).

Swans and Saints.

As an examination of the relevant material makes clear, the Celts were sensitive to birds in general, and to some birds in particular. At an early stage of their history, they shared with other peoples at a similar stage of development, in the worship of certain birds as the manifestations or actual forms of deities, or as their attributes and servants. The evidence of the monuments testifies to this, and it is implied in some early writings and literary texts (I34). The Christian religion is also

(I32 ctd.) to beget a son on Deichtine; Fand and Li Ban assume bird form in order that Fand may obtain Cu Chulainn's help and his love. Angus takes on bird form to become Caer's lover; Derbforgaill and her servant come to Cu Chulainn in bird form so that she can claim his affections. Midar desires his wife Etain and they both assume swan form to escape Eochaid; Conaire comes to Mes Buachaill in bird form to beget a son on her. Only in the story of the children of Ler are the bird metamorphoses unconnected with love.

(I33) In early Welsh traditions, certain of the warriors are described as wearing chains (some sort of torque?) e.g., v. Cynddylan poem, where the hero is described as Kadwynawc, 'wearing a chain'. (Ifor Williams, Canu Llywarch Hen, Cardiff, 1935, p.33.) cf. also mayor's chain of office.

(I34) v. Conclusion, p. 468 ff.

rich in bird imagery and symbolism, and when it supplanted the native cults in Britain, it was natural for the saints to take over attributes from the deities they usurped, especially where they were also found in Christian symbolism (I35). Thus the birds, originally in the service of, and belonging to, local gods and goddesses would tend to be taken over by the saints as pets or servants, particularly when the usurping religion was already rich in such symbolism. The attributes and functions of a particular deity would not, of course, be consciously and deliberately transferred from god to saint, but the type of legend which we shall be considering below seems clearly to have sprung from such pagan concepts of bird attributes and bird powers, now brought into play, in these Christian contexts, by the will of God. Moreover, the character of the swan in pagan contexts was such as to make its transference into Christian legends straightforward.

(I35) Charles Plummer, Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae, I, has indicated, in his section on mythology, some of the ways in which pagan concepts and beliefs have become confused with and blended with ~~pagan~~ Christian tradition. Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, also includes many motifs in which Christian saints are associated with pagan situations.

In the following episode from the Life of Colman Ela, (I36) swans relieve the weariness of the labourers with their song, in true otherworld-bird tradition (I37).

'A haithle na laidhe sin doghluais Colman Eala reimhe co Laid Eala. Ocus doroine dun-arus innte, do bennaigh an reileacc cona naomaibh ro luaidhemar romhainn; 7 doronsat obair mor ann .i. tochar. Ocus ba se fedh an tochair o Laid Eala co Coill an Clair. Ocus do thiccdis eladha gacha tratha do chantain ciuil doibh, 7 do bhuaibh a ttoirsi diobh; gurab airesin aderar Loind eala frisan mbaile sin.'

'And after this lay, Colman Ela proceeded to Land Ela, and made a fortified house therein, and blessed the cemetery in conjunction with the above mentioned saints. And the monster was the first creature buried in Land Ela. And they constructed a great work there, to wit, a causeway; and the length of the causeway was from Land Ela to Coill an Clair; and swans used to come every hour to sing to them and relieve their fatigue; so that for this reason the place was called Land Ela.' (I38)

(I36) Charles Plummer, Lives of Irish Saints, Oxford, 1922, I, p. 172. The Beatha Cholmain Eala is taken from Michael O'Clery, 1575-1643, one of the Four Masters, and compiler of the Lives of the Saints, Louvain, 1645.

(I37) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, BI72.2.1. (Magic bird's song brings sleep); BI72.2.2 (Magic bird's song dispels grief).

(I38) Etymology connecting Ela with swan here is false.. Saint's name is Colman Elo, while swan in O.Irish is elae.

The concept of helpful birds occurs frequently in connection with the saints, and these bird legends are often used to explain place-names. Birds aid and encourage Patrick in the legend of Findloch Cera (I39), where the bird-flock is not specified as being composed of swans, but its brilliant whiteness, and aquatic nature points in this direction. The text is as follows.

Atber frib co huain iar n-an
mar fuair Find-loch co fir-glan
ani rafhind co fedil,
ar is limm is lan-demin.

Diambai Patric in raith reil
for Cruaich maith ina mor-phein,
ba snim fri saethar in sel
ic din laech-ban is laech-fher.

Rofhoid Dia dia didnad de
enlaith fir-glan anglide;
forsin loch leir cen lacad,
nochantis cleir cain-abbad.

Ba hed adglaitis fo bail
'A Phatric tairche ocus tair,
a din Gaedel fo gloir gle,
a aebel oir ordnide.'

Buailtis in loch 'na linib
dona sciathaib scath-mineb,
co mbid a thaeb-ler nach te
mar cach n-aebel n-airgdide.'

(I39)Royal Irish Academy, Todd Lecture Series, ^{viii}X, ed. Edward Gwynn, Dublin 1903, Metrical Dinnsheanas, p. 378. Mss. from Book of Leinster; Rennes Ms; Book of Ballymote; Book of Lecan; Book of Ui Maine; R.I.A. Stowe D.II.2.; Trin.Coll. H.33. (I322).

'I will tell how the white loch purely bright
received for a year and a day that which turned it white
enduringly, for it is I that have certain knowledge.

When Patrick, famed for holiness, dwelt on blessed
Cruach Patrick, greatly suffering, (labour and sorrow was
that time), to the protector of amazons and warriors.

God sent to comfort him at that season, a flock of
angelic birds, purely bright, over the clear loch
unremittingly they sang a chorus, a gentle admonition.

This was their auspicious summons; 'O Patrick, rise
and come! O protector of the Gaels, bright in glory.
O golden exalted star.'

In numbers they smote the lake with their smooth-shadowing
wings, so that the ruffled surface that is not hot showed
like sheen of silver.'

Here again we have the motif of the sacred or magic
bird-song bringing comfort to the distressed. The
following legend from the Latin life of Saint Cainnech is
also interesting (I40).

'Quodam autem tempore ambulans sanctus Cainnicus in
regionibus Mumenensium iuxta stagnum Leyn cum discipulis
suis, occurrerunt ei duodecim 'layci' votum malum
promittentes, et multa mala locuti sunt contra sanctum.
Tunc sanctus Cainnicus illos increpans docuit eos uerbo Deo.
Dux autem illorum cum invicta mente dixit ei, 'O baculate,
ociosa uerba noli loqui, que nec te liberabunt; quia hodie
anima tua peribit, nisi per Dei tui potentiam facias ut

(I40) Charles Plummer, Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae, Oxford, 1910,
I, pp. 165-6.

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unus ex cignis, qui nunc super istud stagnum natant, in hac hora celeri uolatu ueniens super meam ollam stat, unus super tuam. Sanctus respondit; 'Omnipotenti Deo possibilia sunt omnia, licet apud homines difficilia.' Statimque in illa hora duo cigni velociter volantes, unus super layci alter super sancti Cainnici olam stetit. Tunc laici illi duodecim obtulerunt se Deo et Cainnico et apud eum semper monachi fuerunt.'

'Now, on a certain occasion, when Saint Cainnech was walking in Munster by Killarney Lake, with his disciples, twelve warriors came up to him wishing to do harm, and said many evil things against the saint. Then Saint Cainnech reproving them, instructed them with the word of God. Their leader unabashed, said to him 'O crozier-bearer, do not utter vain words, which will not save you; since today your soul will perish unless through the power of your God you bring it about that one of the swans, which now swims on that lake, should come in swift flight at this hour and stand on my shoulder and one on yours.' The saint replied, 'All things are possible to Almighty God, though difficult for men.' And at once in that hour two swans flying swiftly stood one on the warrior's the other on Saint Cainnech's shoulder. Then those twelve warriors offered themselves to God and Cainnech and remained monks always with him.'

The above incident furnishes yet another example of the association between saints and birds (I4I), and here again the swans aid the saint through the will of God. In the

(I4I) Saint Columba is associated with the crane on several occasions, v. Chapter I, pp. 52 — , and the teal seems to have been especially sacred to Saint Colman. His birds lived on a lake in Leinster. According to superstitious belief they could not be hurt, and evil would befall anyone who attempted to harm them. Giraldus relates how his
(ctd. overleaf)

legends concerning the saints, we have a further example of the concept that seems to have been widespread amongst the Celts, i.e. that birds possess the ability to recognize and acclaim the god or saint or king (I42). That the Celts believed the bird attributes of their deities manifested themselves upon the shoulders or beside the shoulders of the gods and goddesses to whom they were attached, is well-attested by the monumental material in general (I43), and it appears as a motif in certain texts (I44).

(I41 ctd.) contemporary, Robert Fitzstephen was travelling in the district with Dermot MacMurrough, when an archer killed one of the sacred teal. It was placed along with meat in a cooking pot, and the meat would not cook. When the little duck was discovered there, MacMurrough, King of Leinster wept and said 'Alas for me! That this misfortune should ever have happened in my house. This was one of the birds of Saint Colman!' The archer died soon after this episode. The idea that people who interfere with or have any direct dealings with the supernatural cannot long remain alive is well known in folklore. (Giraldus Cambrensis, Topography of Ireland, trans. John O'Meara, 1951.)
p.61)

(I42)The birds in the Welsh legend of Gruffydd (v. Chapter V, p.452) recognize and proclaim the natural ruler of the country when the Welsh could not; the birds of Findloch Cera exhort and proclaim Patrick, and the swans come to rescue Gainnech and settle on his shoulder.

(I43)v. Chapter V, p.408ff.

(I44)For example, Medb has a bird and a squirrel on her shoulders (Book of Leinster 68B, v. Chapter III, p.357), and she may have been a goddess of the war/fertility type in origin; the women in the Serglige desire to wear a bird on each shoulder; Branwen's starling recognizes Bran and perches on his shoulder; the same concept is found in the Scottish (ctd. overleaf)

The fact that, as mentioned above, the Christian religion shared with pagan Celtic traditions in a wealth of bird symbolism, and that in early Christian times, in Britain, as elsewhere, the place and possibly the functions of local deities were taken over by the saints who replaced them, makes it a difficult, and sometimes impossible problem to separate the native from the new tradition. The very similarity of symbolism would of course serve to make the transition of faiths more easy until they became closely interwoven. The swan and crane are, of course, less problematic, but when such birds as doves and ravens, both of which played such a prominent role in the pagan Celtic traditions and Christian legends, are met with in conjunction with saints, it seems virtually impossible to pinpoint the origin of the legends.

(I44 ctd.) Gaelic folktale 'An Tuairdeasgeal Mor' in which the King of Ireland is welcomed by the Ridire Ban and 'chaidh calman a ghairm air gach gualainn aige, is bha iad a caitheamh na cuirme gu subhach, suilbhearra, solasach.' 'a dove was called (to abide or settle) on each of the king's shoulders, and they plied the feast merrily, cheerfully, delightedly.'; in this connection also, Odin's ravens may be borne in mind, seated upon his shoulders and whispering into his ears (v. Chapter III, p. 227)

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Shape-shifting into Swan Form.

There exists within the scope of the Celtic literary and folk tradition, a group of tales in which people assume bird form within the general context of arbitrary shape-shifting, usually to escape pursuit (I45). In another group, bird form is adopted for the space of one life time (I46). In the following examples, the swan is the form assumed for the purposes of rebirth and for means of escape. Manannan sings to Bran about the predicted shapes of his son Mongan (I47).

'Monann.....
biaid i fethol cech mil
itir glasmuir ocus tir,
bid drauc.....
bid ecne brecc il-lind lan
bid ron, bid ela findban.'

This example is early, and it adds to the evidence that swan shape was not confined to one or other of the sexes.

(I45) Taliesin motif, v. Tom Peete Cross, D67I, Transformation Flight.

(I46) The doctrine of rebirth is discussed in A. Nutt and K. Meyer's The Voyage of Bran, London, 1895.

(I47) Voyage of Bran, I, p.25. Meyer believes the tale to have been originally written down in 7th cent. (Introd.p.16)

The translation reads

'Monann....he will be in the shape of every beast, both on the azure sea and on land, he will be a dragon... he will be a speckled salmon in a full pool, he will be a seal, he will be a fair-white swan.' (I48)

The next example of shape-shifting strictly belongs to the folklore section, but as it forms part of the manuscript tradition, it is included here. The transformation occurs in the story of the Fate of the Children of Tuireann (I49). The sons of Tuireann, in the form of hawks, are beings pursued by three vultures (I50), who are the king's three daughters and who are scorching the brothers by lightning. In order to aid himself and his brothers, Brian strikes them with his druidic staff and turns the three of them into swans (I51). They dive

(I48)A.G. Van Hamel, Immrama, Dublin 1941, pp.16, 17, for later edition of the text.

(I49)Eugene O'Curry, Fate of the Children of Tuireann, edited from an Irish ms. in the possession of the editor, and published in Atlantis, IV, 1863.

(I50)The word griobh is often translated griffin, and seems to have been some savage, mythical bird of prey.

(I51)Another example of the magic staff; v.p. 139 above for note on this.

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down into the sea, and the vultures go away. (I52) The story has only survived in a modern version, but the characters depicted, i. e. Brian, Iuchar and Iucharba, are gods of the Tuatha De Danann, and much ancient tradition is included in the tale. The relevant passage is as follows. (I53)

'Truagh an modh ara fuilmid anois' ar Clann Tuireann, 'oir atamoid d'ar losgadh dona saighneanaibh so, muna fagham cabhair eigin.' 'Da fheadain fein' ar Brian, 'do bhearfainn fortacht orraibh.' Agus do bhuail do'n fhleisg doilbhte draoigheachta e fein agus a dhias dearbhrathar agus do rinne dha eala dhiobh sain agus eala oile dhe fein, agus tugadar leim 'san fairrge sios; agus do imthigheadar na griobha uatha ann sin.'

'Sad is the situation in which we are now' said the Children of Tuireann, 'since we are being scorched by these flashes, unless we find some aid.' 'If I myself were able,' said Brian, 'I would bring aid to you.' And he struck with his mysterious druidic staff himself and his two brothers, and he made two swans of them, and another swan of himself, and they plunged down into the sea below, and the vultures turned back then.'

(I52) This again implies the belief that swans submerge, discussed on p. 112 above.

(I53) p. 196.

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Folklore and Folk Tales.

In this chapter, as in the rest of this examination, it will not be possible to treat the appearance of the swan in Celtic folklore comprehensively, and it is proposed simply to draw attention to the type of role played by this bird in Irish and Scottish Gaelic folk material, with some examples.

The occurrences of the swan in the folk tradition can be divided into two categories, i.e. i) its appearance in connection with superstitions and folk practises, and ii) its appearance within the context of the folk tale. The bird will be considered in connection with superstitious beliefs first of all.

Carmichael (I54) records several fragments of swan lore. It is difficult at this stage to assess the value of this information, for like so much oral lore collected within the last century, important details of time and place tend to be omitted, and it is not easy to estimate

(I54) Alexander Carmichael, Carmina Gadelica, I & II, Edinburgh, 1928.

how general were the beliefs recorded, and if, or when, they ceased to have a validity for the people in question. Until some scientific and critical research is conducted upon the contents of Carmichael's work, it is important to keep a very open mind in allowing material of an apparently religious or belief nature to influence our conclusions too deeply.

A superstitious regard for the swan has, to a certain extent, persisted into the present century in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands. In some districts, it is still considered wrong to destroy one of these birds, and they are not eaten where such sentiments prevail (I55). In Ireland also, it is, or was until recently, considered unlucky to kill a swan. O'Curry (I56) refers to a man living in Clare, named Conor Griffin, who killed eleven swans at night as they flew past his house, mistaking them for wild geese. After that, nothing prospered for him,

(I55)I have met with this attitude in North Uist, where the killing of a swan at Clachan, in March 1946, was greatly deplored in the locality, and in recent years a swan shot on Loch Mor in Glendale, Skye, shocked the more sensitive members of the community.

(I56)Eugene O'Curry, Atlantis, IV, p.132.

and his son was killed on the lower Shannon. Neighbours attributed this evil fortune to the destruction of the birds. It is clear, however, that the tabu concerning the hunting of the swan was by no means general, although in the following verses the circumstances in which the bird may be killed are clearly defined (I57).

Beannachadh Seilg.

Eala bhan a ghlugaid bhinn
odhra sgaireach nan ciabh donn (I58)
cha ghear thu it as an druim
gu la-bhrath air bharr nan tonn.
Air ite bitheadh iad a ghnath
mu'n cuir thu lamhaidh ri do chluais.
.....
Eala shith Bhrìde nan ni
lacha shith Mhoire na sith.

'The white swan of the sweet gurgle, the speckled dun-coloured one of the dark crown, you shall not cut a feather from their backs, until the day of doom, on the wavetops. May they be always on the wing before you place your missile to your ear.....The fairy swan of Bride of the flocks, the fairy duck of Mary of peace (I59)

(I57)Carmichael, op. cit.,I, p.312, from Angus MacIntosh, crofter, Dungaineacha, Benbecula.

(I58)Presumably the reference here is to cygnets, cf. the description of the birds of Conaire's father - findbreca mora, v.p. 130 above.

(I59)Here the Christian saints have birds attributed to them in the manner of otherworld goddesses, v. 135 above.

There are, of course, numerous references in the Gaelic song tradition to 'sealgair geoidh thu, roin is eala', 'you are a hunter of the goose, the seal and the swan', but how far this records actual practice, and how far it is formulaic, is difficult to say. At anyrate it seems evident that in some districts it was, and to a certain extent still is, considered unlucky to kill swans, while in other districts they could be killed, but only in particular circumstances.

An interesting anecdote is recorded by Carmichael (I60), its value lessened by the fact no dates or other details are given, although it is understandable that the name of the woman in question should be withheld. The incident occurred in Benbecula, where a woman found a wounded swan on a frozen lake near her house, took it home, set its wing, which was broken, dressed its feet, and looked after it. She had a sick child, and apparently, as the wounds of the

(I60)Carmichael, op cit.,II, p.194. The information was obtained from John Eoghan MacRury, farmer, Grinnis, Benbecula, whom Carmichael claims to be a man of high intelligence with a fine knowledge of folklore.

bird healed, so the health of her child improved, and the woman believed that her treatment of the swan had brought about the recovery of the child. Although fragmentary evidence of this nature is unsatisfactory in itself, the cumulative evidence seems strong enough to justify the conclusion that even today, or until comparatively recently, the swan was held in superstitious regard by the people.

The following passages are extraordinary, and it is extremely difficult to interpret the symbolism of which they are largely composed (I6I). Carmichael claims to have heard versions of the invocation 'Ora nam Buadh' in several of the islands, and thus feels that it must have been at one time widely known.

'Is dubh am bail ud thall,
Is dubh na daoine th'ann
Is tu an eala dhonn,
Ta dol a steach 'n an ceann,
Ta an cridhe fo do chonn
Ta an teanga fo do bhonn,
'sa chaoidh cha chan iad bonn
Facail is oil leat.'

(I6I)Carmichael, op. cit.,I, p.8. Obtained by Carmichael from Duncan MacLellan, Carnan, South Uist, who got it from Catherine MacAulay of Mol-a-Deas, South Uist, who was, apparently, a gifted tradition bearer.

'Dark is yonder town, dark are those therein, you are the brown swan going in among them, their hearts are under your control, their tongues are beneath your sole, nor will they ever utter a word to give you offence.'

Similar imagery occurs in another invocation (I62).

'Is dubh am bail ud thall
 Is dubh daoine th'ann;
 Is mis' an eala bhan
 Banruinn os an ceann.
 Falbhaidh mi an ainme Dhe
 An riochd feidh, an riochd each,
 An riochd nathrach, an riochd righ
 Is treasa liom fin na le gach neach.'

'Dark is yonder town, dark are those within it; I am the white swan, queen over them. I will go in the name of God, in form of deer, in form of horse, in serpent form, in likeness of a king. It is stronger with me than with everyone.'

In both of these passages, the regal nature of the swan is emphasized, in the one, the person in question being compared with the young swan, and in the other, the subject comparing him or herself with the mature, white swan. The references to the dark township are baffling,

(I62)Carmichael, op. cit.,I, pp.52, 53. Carmichael's informant was Catrine MacIntosh, cottar, Staoligarry, South Uist.

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and to the dark inhabitants, and it seems unlikely to be an example of death imagery. The Invocation for Justice contains these peculiar references to shape-shifting, which Carmichael explains as being symbolic of strength, wisdom, etc, but surely if it was merely the qualities and not the form of these animals that was desired, the expression would have been something like 'the strength of the horse be mine, the wisdom of the serpent, etc.' It seems rather as if these verses have been detached from their context, and either by the reciter, or by Carmichael himself, have been fitted into this particular incantation. The verses in question sound more like a witch's invocation than that of a Christian, and the fact that Carmichael has given the word de a capital letter here, does not explain which god was intended. It is very difficult to pass judgment on the material, but one factor which does seem to militate against its complete genuineness is the fact that so many of these verses are complete, and apparently capable of easy translation by the compiler, whereas in material of a very old and mystical nature one would perhaps expect more gaps where the reciter himself did not understand the words, and more lacunae in the translations.

It is possible that a tradition or traditions similar to those contained in the Ler story (I63) were also current in the Gaelic-speaking islands of Scotland. Carmichael (I64) names the swan as a favourite bird in the islands, and one of good omen, and he records the belief that swans are ill-used religious ladies, under enchantment and forced to wander (I65). On this account, the birds are regarded with love and veneration by the people, and no one would willingly injure a swan. He records a song which seems to contain some idea of transformation, and is in parts reminiscent of the sufferings of the children of Ler. A shorter version was recorded from Calum Johnson, Barra, in 1954.

'Guile, guile! guile, guile!
 Mo chasa dubha,
 Guile gi, guile gi!
 'S mi fein gle gheal,
 Guile go! guile go!
 Turas mo dhunaidh,
 Thug mi a dh'Eirinn
 Spuilleadh mo chulaidh,
 Struilleadh mo leine,

(I63)v. p. 134f. above.

(I64)Carmichael, op.cit., II,p.194.

(I65)The children of Ler are brought into a Christian context at the end of the story. There may also be some confusion here with the concept of the swan as sacred to Bride. The song is recorded by Carmichael, op.cit.,II pp.276,277.

Ruisgeadh mo bhothan
 Lotadh mo cheile
 Leonadh mo phiuthar
 Muirneig na feile,
 Leonadh 's mo bhrathair
 'S mo mhathair chan eirich,
 Sgeula mo mhulaid,
 Thug mi a dh'Eirinn.
 Guile, guile! guile, guile!&

'My feet so black and myself so white, journey of ruin that took me to Ireland, robbed was my robe, spoiled was my shirt, bared was my bower, torn was my spouse, wounded my sister, maiden of joy, yes, and wounded my brother, and my mother may not rise, tale of my sorrow that took me to Ireland.'

The supposition that traditions similar to those contained in the Ler story were current in the Hebrides, is supported both by the superstitious respect in which the bird was, and in some places still is held, and by the above song. However, it cannot be stressed too often that any conclusions based on Carmichael's material must be regarded as being very tentative indeed, and subject to confirmation by research in the field.

The swan seems also to have been regarded as a bird of omen. The following are some examples of omens, also recorded by Carmichael (I66).

The first example was obtained from South Uist (I6⁷).
The relevant verses are as follows.

Moch La Luan Casg
Chunna mi air sal
Lach is eala bhan
A snamh le cheile.

.....

Dh'aithnich mi air ball
Gun robh an imirig ann
Beannachd nach biodh ann
An deigh sin. (I6⁸)

'Early on the day of Easter Monday I saw on the brine, a duck and a white swan swimming together. I knew immediately that there was a moving, there would be no blessing after that.'

The second example, Manadh nan Eala 'Omen of the Swans' was obtained in Benbecula (I6⁹).

'Chuala mi guth binn nan eala
Ann an dealachadh nan trath,
Glugalaich air sgiathaibh siubhlach
Cur nan cura dhiubh gu h-ard.

(I6⁷)Eachun MacPhie, crofter, Eilean Cuithe nam Fiadh.

(I6⁸)The superstition that it is unlucky to see a swan and a duck swimming together is surprising, since both birds seem to have played a fairly similar role in belief and superstition, although the swan always seems to have been the more important of the two birds.

(I6⁹)Carmichael, II, p. 182.

Ghrad sheas mi cha d'rinn mi gluasad
 Suil dh'an tug mi bhuam co bha
 Deanamh iuil air an toiseach?
 Righinn an t-sonais, an eala bhan.
 Bha seo feasgar Di-aona
 Bha mo smaontan air Di-mart
 Chaill mi mo chuid 's mo dhaona
 Bliadhna o'n Aona sin gu brath.
 Ma chi thu eala air Di-aona
 Moch 's a mhaduinn fhaoilidh, agh,
 Bidh cinneas air do chuid 's do dhaona
 Do bhuar cha chaochail a ghnath.'

'I heard the sweet voice of the swans at the parting of day and night, gurgling on journeying wings putting forth their strength on high. I immediately stood still, I made no movement, I looked to see who was guiding in front, the queen of fortune, the white swan. That was on the Friday evening. My thoughts were of the Tuesday. I lost my possessions and my own people a year from that Friday, for ever. If you should see a swan on a Friday, early in the glad, joyous morning, increase will be on your possessions and your kinsfolk, your stock will not constantly die.'

Carmichael states that vows were made on the swan (166⁷⁰) and that in Uist the vow took a negative form, but he gives no details, and names no informants. He also says that vows of constancy were made on the bird, presumably also in Uist, and quotes the following verse.

'Feumaidh mi mo ghruag a ghearradh
 Is m'aithreachas a dhubladh,
 Mo bhoid gu gramail thoir dh'an eala,
 Feuch am mair mo chliu mi.'

'I must needs tonsure my hair and double my repentance, my vow give firmly to the swan, to see if my fame will cleave to me.'

(166⁷⁰)Carmichael, op.cit., -II, p.278.

ii) The 'International' Swan Maiden Tale.

Apart from its appearances within Scottish Gaelic and Irish folk traditions, the swan occurs in the well-known swan maiden tale type. This type (I71) is very widespread and appears to be of great age. The international type is as follows. The hero (often a hunter), sees birds, usually swans, but sometimes geese, or even ducks. They fly to a lake where they set aside their feather dresses and become beautiful girls, usually of a supernatural nature. The hero steals one of the cloaks, and the girl to whom it belongs is now in his power and becomes his wife. Frequently she discovers her hidden feather dress in later years, and donning it, regains her freedom. (I72) Stith Thompson remarks that it is sometimes difficult in the swan maiden tales to determine which is the primary form, bird or human being. He does not, however, mention the Celtic countries in his list of swan maiden sources. This type occurs in the Eddic material and in Scandinavian mythology in general (I73) It is, unfortunately, outwith the scope of

(I71) Aarne-Thompson, Types of the Folk-Tale, Helsinki, 1928, 400.

(I72) Stith-Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk Literature, D361.I

(I73) For example, it forms part of the Volundarkviða
(ctd. overleaf)

this investigation to make a comparative and comprehensive study of the swan maiden story as it appears in folk material. Before proceeding to an examination of some of the Celtic material, however, it might perhaps be noted that Stith Thompson's Index contains the motif of transformation into swan (I74) by the removal of a gold or silver chain from the neck. As has been seen (I75), the wearing of a gold or

(I73 ctd.) and the Formmanna saga, where Kara hovers over her lover, Helgi, in swan form, and when accidentally wounded by him, falls to earth and is powerless to aid him further. This is an example of disenchantment by a blow, for discussion of which v.p./2/ above. Text is as follows.

Griplur IV.

- 43) Kara var su er konstrin nam,
komin a lopt i altarham;
gol hun svo med galdra stig,
gadi engi ad verja sig. (p.387)

- 58) Helgi reiddi upp hvassa egg,
hjo hann i sundur altar legg;
Kara hvergi kynstrug flo,
kraup hun nidr ad velli og do. (p.389)

Rimmasafn I, ed. Finnur Jonsson, Copenhagen, 1905-12.

also the following from the Lay of Weland. In the prose version, the girls are specifically described as swan maidens.

Meyjar flugo sunna Myrkvið í goegnom,
alvittr ungar, oerlaog drýgja:
þær a Saevar-straond settosk at hvílask
disir Sudroenar dýrt lín spunno.
Ein nam Olrún Egil at verja,
faogr maer kiars, faðmi líosom;
aonnor Svanhvít Slagfið

.....
'From the south through Myrkvið, to fulfil their fates, the young fairy maidens flew. The southern girls alighted to (ctd. overleaf)

silver chain, and particularly the linking of a pair of birds together by such a chain, occurs frequently in Irish literary contexts, particularly in connection with the swan or the unspecified magic birds. However, in this material although the chains are doubtless the badges of metamorphosis, they seem to do nothing towards the actual transformation and they are nowhere referred to as the media of metamorphosis.

(I73 ctd.) rest on the sea-strand, and fell to spinning their goodly linen. First Allrune, Caer's fair daughter, took Egil to her bright bosom. The second Swanwhite, kissed Slagfid.....

Vigfusson and Powell, Corpus Poeticum Boreale, I, Oxford, 1883, p.169.

(I74) Stith-Thompson, Motif-Index, D536.I. Some of the references which he gives are Otto Rank, Die Lohengrinsage, 1911, p.65ff. Karl Wehrhan, Die Sage, Leipzig, 1908, p.50, and Weßelski, Marchen des Mittelalters, Berlin, 1925.

(I75)v. p. 99 ff. above.

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The following are some examples of the tale as it appears in Irish and Scottish Gaelic material. (I76) The first is a synopsis of the tale Mac an Tuathanaich a thainig a Raineach, 'The Farmer's Son who came from Rannoch.' (I77)

The hero leaves home and sets out to find a fortune. On his journey, he goes one morning to a lake to shoot birds. He sees three swans swimming there, and quietly approaches them until he is within firing range. As he raises his gun to take aim, the birds are no longer birds, but beautiful girls. He drops his gun and they are birds once more. As he raises it again, they become girls. He goes away amazed, and when he returns on the following day, the same thing happens, the birds becoming girls and then birds again in rapid succession. On the third day, however (always the significant number in this material), he does not see the swans, but the girls are bathing in the lake. He sees their swan skins on the shore, steals one

(I76) Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, III, Argyllshire Series, ed. J. MacDougall, London, 1891.

(I77) MacDougall, op. cit., pp. 286-7.

and gains the youngest girl in marriage. (I78)

A second tale recorded by MacDougall (I79) differs slightly from the international swan maiden type, in that the birds are not actually witnessed changing from one shape to another. The passages concerning the birds are as follows. The son of the king of Ireland walks by the sea-shore one day, and observes swans swimming.

'Ach suil 'g an tug e mu dheireadh gu de 'chunnaic e ach tri ealachan air an t-snamh. B'i te dhiu eala bhan a' mhuineil reidh, agus a soillse mar dhearrsadh greine air cul froise ann am madainn earraich. Sheas e coimhead oirre, agus thug e boid agus briathar ris fein an sin, nach stadadh e, agus nach gabhadh e fois air muir no air tir gus am faiceadh e bhan a bha cho briadha ris an eala. An sin, snamh na h-ealachan air falbh, agus chaidh iad as an t-sealladh anns a' chuan.'

(I78)The motif of the hunter seeing an animal which, when he takes aim with his gun he sees to be a human being, is common in Gaelic folklore. Usually the animal is a deer. Probably the effects of the iron make the magic powerless. The girls were not actually taking on swan and human form alternately, but the iron presumably enabled the hero to see them in their human form. The motif of an object carried by a person which causes magic to be nullified, is one which is well-known in folklore generally.

(I79)op.cit. Nighean Rìgh a' Churraichd Ruaidh, 'The Daughter of the King of the Red Cap, p.169 ff.

'But a loch he gave at last, what did he see but three swans swimming. One of them was the White Swan of the Smooth Neck, whose brightness was like sun rays behind a shower in a spring morning. He stood looking at her, and then gave his oath and his word to himself that he would neither stop nor take rest on sea or on land till he should see a woman who was as handsome as the swan. The swans then swam away and went out of sight in the ocean.'

In the above passages, we do not have the usual motif of the hero, or hunter, approaching the loch and finding the swan skins of the girls, nor does he at this stage realize that the birds he is seeing are metamorphosed. Rather than the typical swan maiden episode, this seems to have more in common with the type of motif found in the later versions of the Deirdre story, i.e. the hero or heroine sees something of remarkable beauty and decides never to marry any but a person possessing such physical characteristics.

The hero follows the swans, and eventually learns that the most beautiful bird is Dearrsadh-greine, the youngest daughter of the King of the Red Cap. These birds are kept under spells by their father, and when a champion comes to seek their hands in marriage, they become three beautiful girls. This is an interesting variant, and seems

to have something in common with the Ler story (I80).

'Is iad na tri ealachan a chunnaic thu, tri nigheannan Rìgh a' Churraichd Ruaidh a tha 'fuireachd fad' air falbh anns an Eilean so. Tha e 'g an gleidheadh fo gheasaibh gus an tig curaidh 'g an iarraidh mar tha thusa. An sin togaidh e na geasan diu, agus bithidh iad 'n an tri oighean maiseach.' (I81)

'The three swans which you saw are the three daughters of the King of the Red Cap who is staying far away in this island. He is keeping them under spells until a champion such as you are happens to come to seek them. He will then lift the spells off them, and they will become three handsome maidens.'

The hero is advised upon a certain course of action which he carries out.

'Suil 'g an tug e air thoiseach air chunnaic e'n lochan agus na tri ealachan a'snamh air 'uachdar... chuir e'n sin a shaighead 'an crois, tharruinn e'n taifeid agus le cuimse cho math 's a b'urrainn e ghabhail leig e air falbh i. Ruith an t-saighead troimh iteach dhroma Eala Bhan a' Mhuineil Reidh, agus le sriach ghointe, leum i anns an athar agus dh'itealaich i air falbh 's an dithis 'g a leantainn.'

(I80)In most of the swan maiden stories, the birds can become disenchantd at will, and in the early Irish swan transformations discussed above, the same freedom applies. In the Ler story, however, the children must remain in bird form until a certain period of time has passed, even their enchantress being powerless to free them. In this tale, their father can disenchant them, but they themselves are powerless to regain their own form. This is perhaps another indication of the late character of (I81)p. I73. the Ler tale.

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'A look he gave before him he beheld the lake, and the three swans swimming on the surface....he then placed the arrow across the bow, drew the string, and with as good an aim as he could take, released the arrow. The arrow ran through the back plumage of the White Swan of the Smooth Neck, and, with a shriek of sudden pain, she sprang up in the air and flew away, while the other two followed her.'

In the above passage, the act of striking the bird does not bring about disenchantment as is in the case for example, in the Derbforgaill story (I82). It has more in common with the passage in the Serglige which describes Cu Chulainn's cast which goes through the wing feathers of one of the magic birds, both of which then submerge (I83).

The following is in the nature of a synopsis of one or two tales of this type collected in Ireland. They were obtained in Kerry, Galway and Donegal by Jeremiah Curtin (I84) Unfortunately, Curtin does not publish the Gaelic of his originals. The following example of the type in question appears in the tale 'The Three Daughters of the King of the East and the Son of a King in Erin.' (I85)

The king's castle stands near the shore of Loch Erne, and three swans come daily to swim there. One day, the

(I82)v. p. 122 above.

(I83)v. p. 108 above.

king's elder son is at the lake, and the birds turn into young women and come to converse with him. When the sisters are leaving the lake, and have put on their swan skins and become swans, they fly about him and flap their wings in his face. Upon being asked why they are in swan form, they reply that after their mother's death, their father married again and had two other daughters by his new wife. As these were not so handsome as their step-sisters, their step-mother grew jealous and turned the girls into birds. They must now wander about the world from lake to lake in the form of swans.

Again, the above has something in common with the Ler story, in that the husband's children are transformed into swans by the jealous step-mother and forced to wander the world in bird-form. Here however, the birds seem to have the power of regaining their human form, at least temporarily, which the children of Ler were incapable of doing.

(184 ctd. from previous page) Jeremiah Curtin, Myths and Folklore of Ireland, London, 1890.

(185) Curtin, op. cit., p. 131.

Another tale containing the swan maiden episode is that of 'The King's Son and the White-bearded Scolog', (I86) The following is a synopsis of the relevant passages.

A king of Ireland has one son who sets out to find the youngest daughter of the white-bearded Scolog. After many adventures, the king's son is told that at a certain lake, twelve swans will alight and take the crests from their heads. Then the swan skins will fall from them and they will rise up as exceedingly lovely women. The young man is to take the crest of the youngest and put it in his bosom, and to take the crest of the ^{others} ~~youngest~~ also, but to restore them to their eleven owners. (I87)

Again, the incident of the swan maidens occurs in the story of An Ceannaidhe Ruadh, 'The Red-headed Merchant', (I88).

(I86)Jeremiah Curtin, Hero Tales of Ireland, London, 1894, p.163 ff.

(I87)This motif of the crests is interesting, and is not so incongruous as it seems initially when the description of the supernatural swans in the Aislinge Oenguso (p. //7 above) is brought to mind. There are 'tri coecta en find forsin loch cona slabradaib airgididib co cairchesaib ordaib imma cenna', 'one hundred and fifty white birds upon the loch with their silver chains with golden ringlets about their heads.' The above description may be intended to convey the idea of some sort of loops of gold about the heads of the birds, (ctd. overleaf)

The king's son is worsted in a game of cards with the Red-Headed Merchant. In looking for him, he learns that the Merchant's daughters, in swan form, will come to bathe in a lake. This comes about, and the young man obtains one of the swan dresses of the three girls, the owner of which takes him to her father's house. Then follow the motifs of the three tasks, and the subsequent flight and pursuit. (I89)

Finally, a different sort of swan transformation occurs in the following tale (I90). The story is that of 'Sgiathan Dearg and the Daughter of the King of the Western World.' The tale deals mainly with bird transformations, opening with the bird lover motif, the young woman eventually seeking her lost lover and undergoing various trials to regain him. She finally reaches the place in

(I87 ctd.) similar to their gold and silver necklets, and thus yet another indication of metamorphosis. One must also bear in mind the significance of the crest in the Hallstatt bird material (v. p. 78 above) and also such extraordinary representations as that of the crested crane, which is almost in the shape of a horn on one of the Gaulish coins (v. Chapter I, p. 27). Like the horn, the crest seems to have had some religious significance of its own.

(I88) Collected from Tomas mac Aodhain, in 1922-3, N.W. Mayo, Bealoideas, VIII, Dublin, 1938, (ed. Seamus O'Duillearga,) p. 214ff.

(I89) Aarne-Thompson 313. (ctd. overleaf)

which he is enchanted, and, as she and her son are overcome by thirst and hunger, she spreads out the cloth of plenty (I9I) given to her by the Queen of the Sun. As they are about to eat, a swan flies down and takes away the choicest of the food. This happens repeatedly, until the young boy strikes the bird with his staff which can free people from enchantment. It falls to the ground in the form of a beautiful woman (I92).

It is not possible to make a deeper analysis of the swan maiden tale in Irish and Gaelic folklore in the light of the earlier tradition within the scope of the present investigation, and the above examples are given merely in order to convey some idea as to how the type does occur within these culture groups.

(I90 ctd. from previous page) Jeremiah Curtin, Irish Folk Tales, p.95ff.

(I9I) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, DI472.I.8.

(I92) For motif of disenchantment by blow, and magic staff, v.p. 139 above.

Chapter III.

CROW/RAVEN.

The Celtic Crow/Raven Goddess.

In her brief but able study of the deities of the Celts, Mme Sjoestedt says (I),

'These female deities fill a big place in the religious world of the Gauls. They can be divided into two classes. The first is that of the tutelary goddesses.....the second class, which is smaller, is that of the goddesses of war; for example, Andarta of the Vocontii or Andrasta who was invoked by Boudicca before she went into battle, or Nemetona whose name resembles that of Nemain, one of the three Morrigna of Irish tradition. The two types, of which one represents the powers of fertility, the other the power of destruction, appear separately on Continental territory. We find them confused in the persons of the same divinities in insular tradition, which represents in this respect, as in others, a less analytical and more archaic conception than the Gaulish.'

Mme Sjoestedt's statement above, is inaccurate when it differentiates between the functions of the Irish and the Gaulish war goddesses. The two powers, that of fertility and of destruction, appear combined in the one deity in Gaul also, as the following argument will endeavour to make clear.

(I)Marie-Louise Sjoestedt, Gods and Heroes of the Celts, translated by Myles Dillon, London, 1949, p.18.

The hypothesis is that the Gauls and the Irish shared the religious concept of a war/fertility goddess, one of whose forms or attributes was the crow/raven. The Continental evidence will be considered first.

A plastic object dating from the period prior to the Gallo-Roman epoch seems relevant here. (2) It consists of a small female figurine, having raven-like birds in place of ears, and emerging from each hip. This figure brings to mind the Irish and the Gaulish raven goddesses whose characteristics are under consideration here, and seems to represent a stage of belief at which the bird and goddess are not clearly differentiated, i.e. the bird had not yet become the separable attribute of the goddess; the anthropomorphic had not fully emerged from the ornithomorphic deity. Although, as stressed throughout this investigation, such cult objects as Kossack describes may not always be Celtic, or even strictly proto-Celtic, they appear to be of sufficient importance and relevance to this analysis to justify their inclusion here, as being indicative of a religious concept in which the Celts certainly shared.

(2) Georg Kossack, *op.cit.*, plate I3, fig.5.

The above-mentioned figurine would seem to suggest that the Celtic raven goddess had a European ancestry older and more general in distribution than the Celts themselves.

In considering the Celtic evidence from the Continent, one finds a group of monuments, dating from the Gallo-Roman period, and an inscription. The inscription is of major importance to this argument as it provides a concrete starting-point for subsequent inquiry. It comes from Haute-Savoie, and reads

' athuboduae Aug(ustae) Servilia Terentia (votum)
s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito).'

The initial letter of the inscription has been destroyed, but it is generally accepted that the missing letter was -C-, and that the Cathubodua (Battle-Crow) of the inscription, is the Gaulish equivalent of the Badb-Catha of Ireland, one of the trio of war-goddesses (3).

(3)v. p. 176 below.

This inscription thus makes it clear that in Gaul, the war goddess was associated with the crow/raven.

The monumental evidence is particularly impressive, and the following discussion is based mainly upon the plates contained in Esperandieu (4), illustrating representations of female deities accompanied by birds.

A group of goddesses, with birds, comes from Luxembourg (5). It is a striking fact that the Luxembourg area in general is rich in representations of goddesses, frequently depicted in house-shaped niches, accompanied by birds or otherwise. The following is a list of some of these representations.

Plate 4255. Epona on horseback, with fruits.

Plate 4256. Goddess with cup and birds (v. below).

Plate 4259. Epona.

Plate 4262. Epona.

(4)op. cit.

(5)Esperandieu, plates 4256, 4264, 4265, 4282.

Plate 4263 Epona.

Plate 4264. Goddess with birds (v. below)

Plate 4265. Birds (v. below)

Plate 4266. Mother-goddess with fruits.

Plate 4267. Female deity, holding torch.

Plate 4268. Mother-goddess.

Plate 4269. Mother-goddess, the altar in house-form.

Plate 4270. Mother-goddess, holding dog on knee.

Plate 4272. Mother-goddess with fruits.

Plate 4273. Epona.

Plate 4274. Traces of goddess.

Plate 4280. Mother-goddess, probably holding fruits.

Plate 4282. Goddess with birds (v. below).

The above list reveals clearly that in the Luxembourg area a goddess/goddesses were worshipped, who were connected with fertility (i.e. the symbolism of the house, fruit and dove); with war (raven), and possibly with the mallet god (dog). It seems likely that these representations reveal the same religious concept, if not the same goddess. The dog seated on the knee of the goddess on plate 4270 seems

seems to link her with the mallet god, one of whose attributes it is (6). A stele from Alltrier (7) shows Epona, seated on a horse, her legs apart. She wears a tunic, and on her knees are a raven and a dog, which she holds. Here then, we have Epona, accompanied by a dog, attribute of the mallet god, and a raven, attribute of his consort, Nantosvelta. (8) We are also reminded of the Welsh Riannon (9), who seems clearly to have been in origin an otherworld goddess, who is associated with horses in the Pwyll story, and with birds in the Branwen tale. Dogs are associated with her in the disappearance of her child, (10) but this is probably a straightforward folklore motif. The Alltrier Epona brings to mind the Lezoux Mercury (11), who is accompanied by a dog and a raven, the bird resembling that of the Epona monument.

(6)v. Chapter V, p. 379.

(7)Esperandieu, plate 4219.

(8)Esperandieu, plate 4566.

(9)Ifor Williams, Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogion, Cardiff, 1930, in the story of Pwyll Pendevic Dyvet, p.9 ff for the horse connection, and Branwen verch Lyr, p.45 ff for birds.

(10)Pwyll story, p.20.

(11)Esperandieu, plate I609.

The four monuments amongst those listed on p.¹⁸⁷ above, on which birds appear, may be described briefly as follows.

Plate 4256.

The bust of a goddess in a niche, her hair style being identical in all these representations, in front of her, and slightly below her is a huge cup, and on each lateral face, traces of a large bird, which, judging from their similarity to the birds on plate 4265, were probably ravens.

Plate 4264.

The bust of a goddess, similar to the deity on plate 4256 above, in a house-shaped niche, with an owl on the opposite side.

Plate 4265.

Similar to plate 4256, the bust of the divinity having been destroyed, only traces of it remaining. There are also traces of a vase, and the great birds on each lateral face (in the round), are much-damaged and headless, but almost certainly represented ravens.

Plate 4282.

Very similar to plate 4264, the monument being house-shaped; in this case there are two birds, a dove and a raven.

Luxembourg is close to Sarrebourg, and it is from that area that the two striking representations of Nantosvelta come (I2). Plate 4566 depicts an altar, discovered in 1895. A bearded god is represented, carrying in his right hand a vase and resting his other hand on a mallet with a long handle. The goddess wears a draped robe. A strand of hair falls on each of her shoulders. Her right hand rests on an altar, and her left hand on an object which is a kind of dovecote on a long pole. The inscription reads Deo Sucello, Nantosvelt(ae): Bellausus, Mass(a)e filius, v(otum s(olvit) l(ibens) m(erito)). Below both deities is a huge raven, proceeding left. This is the only example of a representation of the god with the mallet accompanied by an inscription.

(I2)Esperandieu, plates 4566 and 4568.

Plate 4568 shows the same goddess, holding a long handle, on the end of which is a small house-shaped object, while she holds a dove-cote in her left hand, above which is a raven. The monument from Spire (I3) depicts the same goddess and the same imagery. Here the deity appears to be bearded, but the hair and garments are those of a female. She too holds the long pole of an object resembling a small house or dove-cote in her right hand, and an indistinguishable object in her left hand. Above her is a head with seven petal-like projections, while seven projections, like the tail feathers of certain birds, appear again below the head. To the right of the goddess, and looking up at her, is a large raven. A very worn monument to Nantosvelta from Teting (I4) (Moselle), represents the goddess as having wings, and as the raven is not apparently with her, it is possible that here her bird attribute is combined with her (I5). She holds a vase

(I3)Esperandieu, plate 6000.

(I4)Esperandieu, plate 7534.

(I5)Cook (Zeus, III, p.793), in his analysis of the passage from the ornithomorphic to the anthropomorphic concept of Athene, describes the goddess as being represented with bird's wings in the fourth stage.

and the house symbol.

Here then, we have a goddess, Nantosvelta, associated with a house, a dovecote and a raven. As we have seen above, the goddesses represented on plates 4264 and 4282 are depicted in house-shaped monuments, the goddess on plate 4282 is accompanied by a dove and a raven, while the monuments illustrated on plates 4256 and 4265 both probably were flanked by a pair of huge ravens. It seems then that both the Luxembourg and the Sarrebourg monuments are illustrative of the same goddess-type, and may actually represent the same goddess.

Linckenheld (I6) mentions several monuments representing goddesses with birds, which I have been unable to see. These are a) a monument in the museum of St Germain of a seated goddess holding a cornucopia, with a raven on each knee. b) Matres, with cornucopia and ravens from Saintes. c) Remains of a raven in a sanctuary of the Matres from Rhenanie.

(I6)E.Linckenheld, Sucellus et Nantosvelta, Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, 99,1929, p.40 ff.

Before leaving the question of the mother goddesses with raven, or other bird attributes, attention may be drawn to one or two other monuments which are relevant here. (17)

Plate I842 from Autun represents a seated woman holding what appears to be a bird in her right hand, while a dog stands before her. Autun is rich in representations of mother goddesses, and of a dog in the company of a god, who may be the mallet god. We have seen a mother goddess with a dog on her knee (plate 4270), and Epona with a dog and a raven on her knee (plate 4219). Also from Autun is a monument (plate I892) representing a seated mother goddess, with a serpent, cornucopia and bird. Plate 326 shows a goddess with a large raven on her right shoulder and a hawk above, from Le Tricastin. Again plate 2181 from Nevers depicts a seated goddess holding what is perhaps a purse, and fruit, while below her are two birds, a dove and a raven. This monument can be compared with that from Le Tricastin above, and the imagery is in keeping with the evidence contained by the Luxembourg and Sarrebourg monuments, and with the monuments listed by Linckenheld. Another interesting representation of a

(17) All the following plates are from Esperandieu.

goddess who seems to have much in common with the Nantosvelta type of deity, comes from the Gundestrup Cauldron (I8). On her raised hand perches a raven-like bird. She is also accompanied by a small quadruped, probably a dog. We are here reminded also of such a figure as that illustrated by Kossack, of the goddess from whose ears and hips come small raven-like birds.

All the evidence then seems to point to the widespread worship in Gaul of a goddess, or triple goddess, concerned with the dual functions of fertility/motherhood and war, probably differing in name and detail from district to district, but all, nevertheless, the expression of the same religious ideas.

It is proposed now, to examine some of the characteristics of the Irish war goddesses. In dealing with Irish textual material, it is difficult here, as always, to extract fragments of genuine belief from amongst the fantasy which characterises the earlier texts. However, the Continental evidence is a guide to us in

(I8)v. Chapter V, p.407 for description of this cauldron.

this instance, and one can obtain quite a lot of seemingly significant information about the raven goddesses in Ireland, keeping the monumental evidence in mind.

The goddesses of war apparently formed a trio, according to Irish belief. The names of the members of this trio are not consistent, but they have consistent characteristics. It will emerge from this study that in the religion of the Celts, types of deity are of more importance than the names of individuals, and inconsistency in the use of names seems to be of little real significance.

Although the Welsh texts furnish us with no evidence of a crow/raven goddess (19), it is not unlikely that such a goddess was known in Britain as the Benwell inscription (20) indicates.

Four names appear in Irish texts in connection with the war goddesses, i.e. Badb, Macha, Nemain, and the

(19) Attempts have been made to equate Morgain la Fee and her black birds with the Morrigan.

(20) C.I.L.VII, 507, 'Lamiis Tribus' 'To the Three Lami'. The Morrigan (one of the Irish war goddesses) is glossed as lamia (vampire), v. Stokes, Urkeltsischer Sprachschatz.

Morrigan. These creatures can, and do, from time to time, assume crow/raven form.

The meaning of the names badb and morrigan has given rise to much speculation. It is not altogether clear whether they are proper or generic names. The name Morrigan is taken by Sjoestedt (21) to mean 'queen of the demons' from a root which appears in the word Fomorian and in the German Mahr, a female demon.

The following gloss is interesting, leaving no doubt as to the relationship between Macha, the Morrigan and the Badb (22).

'Machae .i. badb, no as i an tres morrigan: mescrad Machae .i. cendae doine iarna n-airlech.'

'Macha, i.e. a crow, or she is one of the three morrignás. Macha's mast, that is the heads of slaughtered men.'

Here badb is used as a common noun; we learn that the Morrigan is triple, and Macha is both a badb and a morrigan.

(21) Marie-Louise Sjoestedt, op.cit., p. 5

(22) Gloss from H.2.16, Col. II9, W. Stokes, Revue Celtique XII, 1891

Moreover, her function as a war-goddess is further confirmed by the implication that the heads of the slaughtered were her property, and were possibly dedicated to her (23)

In the Tochmarc Emire (24), the Morrigan is described as an badb catha, 'the battle crow' (25). Another gloss from Y.L. reads (26):

'Gudomain .i. fennoga na bansigaidhe: ut est glaidhomuin goa .i. na demuin goacha, na morrigna.'

'Gudomain (~~27~~) that is hooded crows or fairy women; for instance, glaidhomuin goa, that is the false demons, the morrigna.'

Here the war-goddesses, the morrigna, are synonymous with hooded crows.

(23)cf. the Roquepertuse Sanctuary, where a great goose in the round surmounts the portico, below which are severed heads set in niches (v. Chapter V, p. 396).

(24) *K. Meyer, Tochmarc Emire, R.C. XI, 1890.*

(25)cf. Gaulish Cathubodva 'battle crow'.

(26)Cormac (Sanas Cormaic, ed. Kuno Meyer, Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts, Dublin, 1912, IV, p. 58) has:
697. Gudemain .i. uatha 7 motrignae.
696. Glaidemain .i. maic tire glaidaite .i. focerdait hualla.

A most valuable description of a war-goddess turning into a crow is that given in the account of the Battle of Tailtiu (27).

'go facadar in en mmai minderg moir malach dhuibh..... ninsigidh. Ingantaigse na sluaigh re sirdechsaín a hinnell ocus a habaise. In darna huair ann ba rigan roisclethan ro alainni; ocus in uair aill...na baidb biraigh banghlais.. (...suidhis ar inchaib Eremoin.)'

'they saw the one woman, smooth red, large, black-browed....coming towards them. The hosts wondered after watching for a long time (at) her behaviour and her changefulness. At one moment she was a broad-eyed most beautiful queen, and another time she was a beaked, grey-white badb.' (28)

Amairgin then asks her 'ca ní chuingi etir, a ingen ilrechtach?' 'What thing is it you wish, maiden of many shapes?'

She then fights a battle with the Milesian chiefs in the form of a badb. This is a most valuable and useful

(27)From Ms.H.4.22, p.120. The battle was fought between the Milesian forces and Eire, queen of the Tuatha De Danann.

(28)The adjective banghlais makes it certain that the hooded crow is referred to here.

illustration of the actual transformation from woman to hooded crow taking place before the eyes of the spectators, and seems to testify conclusively to the fact that in early Irish belief, the idea of war goddess and crow (raven) were synonomous.

In Ireland, the term badbh is still apparently used as a common noun for crow, and in both Ireland and Scotland it appears as baobh and is sometimes used to designate a witch.

The Irish war-goddesses, although intimately associated with battle, as the following passages and those above will serve to illustrate, do not seem themselves to have been warriors, i.e. although influencing the outcome of battles by shape-shifting, magic etc., they do not seem ever to have actually fought.

Apart from her assumption of crow/raven form, the war-goddess had other major characteristics in keeping with her corvidic nature. One of these, which appears frequently in the Irish literary material, is her power and custom of foretelling events.

The following passages are of interest as exemplifying the Morrigan fulfilling three of her basic functions as a war/fertility goddess, i.e. her sexual union with the Dagda, a major Irish deity, her powers of foretelling events, and her ability to influence battle by her magic.

Mme Sjoestedt (29) has seen in the Dagda a god of the type personified on Gallo-Roman territory by the mallet god, Sucellus. As we are endeavouring to illustrate in this section, the Morrigan resembles the continental type of goddess of which Nantosvelta is perhaps the most interesting example, i.e. a war/fertility goddess, her dual function implied by the dove-cote and the raven, and her association with a leading Gaulish god. The following account of the Morrigan's sexual union with, and association with the Dagda is fitting in the light of the Gaulish evidence, the implication being that such a type of divine couple was not unknown in Irish tradition. It is not implied that Sucellus and the Dagda, and Nantosvelta and the Morrigan are the same divinities and can thus be equated, but that they belong to the same general types,

and that these types were well-known amongst both the continental and the insular Celts. The Irish account of the Dagda's assignation with the Morrigan is^{as} follows (30):

'Boi tegdus den Dagdae a nGlionn Eitin an tuaith. Bai dno bandal forsin Dagdae dia bliadnae imon samain an catha oc Glind Edind. Gongair an Unius la Connachta fria andes. Conaca an mmai a n-Unnes a Corand, og nige, indarna cos di fri Allod Echae .i. Echumech, fri husci andes, alole fri Loscondoib, fri husce antuaith. Noi trillsi taitbechtaí fora ciond. Agoillis an Dagdae hi 7 dogniad oentaith. Ligeina Lanomhnou a ainm an baile osin. Is hi an Morrigan an uhen sin isberur sunn.'

Itbert si iarum frisin Dagdae deraghdis an Fomore a tir .i. a Maug Scene, 7 aragarudh an Dagdae oes danu Erionn arocendsi for Adh Unsen, 7 noragad si hi Scetne do admillid (rig) na Fomore .i. Indech mac Dei Do(m)nann a ainm douhéradh si cru a cride 7 airned a gailie uad. Dobert-si didiu a dí bois den cru sin deno sluagaib batar oconn idnaidhe for Adh Unsen. Bai Ath Admillte iarum a ainm ond admillid sin an riog.'

'The Dagda had a house in Glen Eitin in the north. Now the Dagda had to meet a woman in Glen Eitin on that day year about the Allhallowtide of the battle. The (river) Unius of Connaught roars to the south of it. He beheld the woman in Unius in Corann, washing (herself) with one of her two feet at Allod Echae (i.e. Echumech), to the south of the water, and the other at Loscuinn, to the north of the water (31). Nine loosened tresses were on her head. The Dagda conversed with her, and they make a union. The Bed of the Couple is the name of the stead thenceforward. The woman that is here mentioned is the Morrigan.

(30)W. Stokes, The Second Battle of Moytura, *Revue Celtique*, XII, 1891, p. 82 ff. Text abridged from Harl. 5280, a 15th cent. ms. in the British Museum.

(31)It may perhaps be noted that the name Nantosvelta may mean something like 'the bend in the river', the 'winding river.'

Then she told the Dagda that the Fomorians would land at Magh Scene and that he should summon Erin's men of art to meet her at the Ford of Unius, and that she would go into Scetne to destroy Indech son of De Donann, the king of the Fomorians, and would deprive him of the blood of his heart and the kidneys of his valour. Now she (afterwards) gave her two handfuls of that blood to the hosts that were waiting at the Ford of Unius. 'Ford of Destruction' became its name, because of that destruction of the king.'

Here the war-goddess's powers of foretelling the future are illustrated, as is her ability to destroy an enemy and influence a battle by means of magic rather than by active participation, and (32),

'Tainic in Morrigan ingen ernmusa anduidhe 7 boi oc nertad Tuath nDea co fertóis an cath co dur 7 co dicrai: conid ann rocan in lóid se sis. Romebhaid ierum in cauth iersin....

'Then the Morrigan, daughter of Ernmass, came and was heartening the Tuatha Dea to fight the battle fiercely and fervently: thereafter the battle became a rout.'

After the battle, the Morrigan verbally celebrates the victory, and her role of soothsayer or oracle (in keeping

(32) Stokes, op.cit., p.100.

with her crow/raven associations) is illustrated in the following passage (33):

'Iar mbisiud ierum an catha 7 iar nglanad ind air, fochard and Morrigan ingen Ernmais do tascc an catha sin 7 an coscair moair forcoemnocair ann do ri(g) dingnaib Erenn dia Sidhcairib 7 dia ard-uscib 7 dia inberaiph. Conid do sin innesus Badb aird-gniomha beus. 'Nach scel laut' ar cach friaise ann-suide.'

'Boi si iarum oc taircetul deridh an betha ann beus oc tairngire cech uilc nobiad ann, 7 cech teadma 7 gach diglau; conid ann....'

'Now after the battle was won and the corpses cleared away, the Morrigan, daughter of Ernmas proceeded to proclaim that battle and the mighty victory which had taken place, to the royal heights of Ireland and to its fairy hosts and its chief waters and its rivermouths. And hence it is that Badb also describes high deeds. 'Have you any tale' says everyone to her then.'

'Then, moreover, she was prophesying the end of the world and foretelling every evil that would be therein and every disease and every vengeance.'

It may be noted that in the above passages, the war-goddess is a prophet of evil and disaster only (34).

(33) Stokes, op.cit., p.108.

(34) According to LL IIb18, the Badb was the wife of both Tethra, who seems to have been a god of death, and of Net, a god of war. O'Clery (Irish Glossary, ed. by A.W.K. Miller, Revue Celtique, V, 1881-3, Paris) glosses teathra as badhb no feanog.

The prophetic powers of the Badb are well-illustrated in the following passage, where she appears as washer at the ford (35):

'Dollotar asside co Druim n-Airthir, frissa raiter in Garman (intan-sa) for brú Atha Luain. Scuirit a cairpthiu annside. A mbatar ann confacatar mmái ndeirc for ur ind atha, 7 si ag nige a fonnad 7 a fortche 7 a fodbae. Intan no toirned a laimh sis ba derg sruthair na habae di chrú 7 d'fuil. Intan immorro no togbad al-láim oss ur na habae, ní bid bannae isin abainn na tocbad a n-airde corrachtae cossaib tirmaib tar sruthair na habae. 'Is forgrannae 'na ndenann in ben' for Cormac, 'Tait nech óaib die athcomarc qidh digni....' ocus is annside ro chacain si for lethchois 7 lethshuil doibh annso, co n-epert

'Nigim fodb rig dobeaba' etc.

Tainic in techtaire co Cormac 7 ro indis do in drochfaistine dorinde in Badhbh dó. 'As toigh is fochunn uile moir do thoidhecht sin' air Cormac. Teit Cormac iairsin co huir in atha dia hagallaimh, 7 fochtais dí cuich na fadhbha bai si do nighi 7 adubairt an láid and....(she tells Cormac it is his own harness, etc.)

'Thence they went to Druim Airthir, which is now called the Garman, on the brink of Athlone. Then they unyoke their chariots. As they were there, they saw a red woman on the edge of the ford, washing her chariot and its cushions and its harness. When she lowered her hand the bed of the river became red with gore and with blood. But when she raised her hand over the river's edge not a drop therein but was lifted on high, so that they went dropfoot over the bed of the river.

(35)W. Stogk's, Da Choca's Hostel, Revue Celtique XXI, from two mss. i. e. H.3.I8 and H.I.I7 Trin. Coll. Dublin, p.156.

'Most horrible is what the woman does' says Cormac, 'let one of you go and ask her what she is doing.' Then someone goes and asked her what she did. And then, standing on one foot, and with one eye closed, she chanted to them saying, 'I wash the harness of a king who will perish' etc. The messenger came to Cormac and told him the evil prophecy which the Badb had made for him. 'Your coming is apparently a cause for great evil' says Cormac. Then Cormac goes to the edge of the ford to have speech with her, and asked her whose was the harness that she was washing....'

In the above passage, the crow goddess is associated with red, the colour of death, while her power over water is emphasised (36). Her posture is interesting, her use of one foot and one eye being that of the magicians (37). Here, she has much in common with the bean nighe or 'washer-woman' of Scottish Gaelic tradition. This supernatural being is always associated with water, pools or fords, and is seen washing the linen of those about to die. Sometimes it was possible to catch her and compel her to divulge future events, and the name of the person whose linen she was washing. It is interesting to note

(36)The war-goddesses seem frequently to have been associated with water, and rivers.

(37)Lugh adopts this posture when he makes a circuit of the army of the Tuath De Danann before the battle of Magh Tured, *v.p.* below.

that, according to Campbell (38), in Mull and Tiree tradition, it was necessary in order to make this creature reveal the future, to seize one of her abnormally long breasts and place the nipple in the mouth. Here the maternal aspect of the washer-woman is indicated (39).

In the following passage, the Badb is described as a black hag, a colour suited to her corvidic nature, and her role as a prophet of evil is dramatically demonstrated. It is clear that crows and ravens were believed to be primarily birds of very ill omen, and it is not surprising that in the later tradition their association with evil fortune has persisted.

Cormac and his followers have entered Da Choca's hostel, to spend the night there, and have taken their seats:

(38) J.G. Campbell, Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, Glasgow, 1900, pp.42-3.

(39) The fertility/maternal aspect of the war-goddess is illustrated by a passage in the Rennes Dindsenchas (W. Stokes, Revue Celtique, 15, 1894, p.292; the language is Middle Irish.)

(ctd. overleaf)

A mbator and immorro connacotar mmaoi mbelmair nduib ndedgair detaide 'na ndocum, docum na bruidne 's i losc tuathcoech. Brat longach roriabach immpe. Duibithir druimni dail cech n-alt di o mullach go talmain. A mong gipnech greliath dar a formma síer. Atnaig a gualainn frisín n-aursainn 7 gabais for micelmoine din tslúag 7 for mifocul conid and atbert innso.... (Luid uathaibh iairsin in mBadb, 7 daircidh toluid no canus) (40).

'Now when they were there, they saw coming to them towards the Hostel, a big-mouthed swarthy, swift, sooty woman, and she lame and squinting with her left eye (41). She wore a mantle, threadbare (?) and very dusky. Dark as the back of a stag-beetle was every joint of her, from crown to ground. Her filleted grey hair fell back over her shoulder. She leant her shoulder against the doorpost and began prophesying evil to the host, and uttering ill words then the Badb went from them.'

The above passage illustrates the utter abnormality of the war-goddess, and her departure from the norm in every instance, and her role as bearer of evil news is once more demonstrated. Similar descriptions of the Badb occur in these passages from Da Derga's Hostel (42):

(39 ctd.) Do Dingnaib in Broga inso:
 Mur na Morrigna...
 Sencus dono in Brogha beos
Da cich na Morrigna iarsain.

'Of the remarkable things of the Brugh this: the Rampart of the Morrigan, the story of the Brugh still, the two paps of the Morrigan'. Here both her military and maternal connections are stressed.

(40) Stokes, Da Choca's Hostel, p. 314.

(41) The use of one leg and one eye again referred to.

(42) W. Stokes, Da Derga's Hostel, *Revue Celtique*, XXII, 1901, p. 57

'Intan bátar and conaccatar an oénbandscáil do dorus na Brudne, iar funiud ngréne, oc cuinchid al-leicthe issa tech. Sithidir claideb (n)garmnai cehtar a dá lurgan. Bátar dubithir druim ndail. Brat ríabach roloamar impi. Tacmainged a fés ichtarach cor-ríci a glún. A béoil for le(i)th a cánd.'

'When they were there they saw a lone woman coming to the door of the Hostel, after sunset, and seeking to be let in. As long as the weaver's beam was each of her two shins, and they were as dark as the back of a stag-beetle. A greyish woolly mantle she wore. Her lower hair (used to reach) as far as her knee. Her lips were on one side of her head.'

'Totháet co tard a lethguálaind fri haursaind in taige, oc admillud ind rig 7 na maccoem ro batár imbi isin tig. Esseom feisin ataraglastar astig.....'

'She came and put one of her shoulders against the doorpost of the house, casting the evil eye on the king and the youths who surrounded him in the Hostel. He himself addressed her from within...'

(The hag prophesies destruction for Conaire. She will not name her true name (43),

'for oen choiss 7 oenlaim 7 oen anail r(och)achain doib insin uil(e) o dorus in tige.'

(43)Belief in the power that knowledge of the name of the adversary gives to the enemy is well-known, and widespread. Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index treats it under the number C436 as Name Tabu, prohibition against uttering the name of a person or thing, and C436, tabu, disclosing own identity, to which the above approximates.

'On one foot and (holding up) one hand and (breathing) one breath, she sang all that to them from the door of the house.'

An extraordinary account of the triple Baddb also occurs in Da Derga's Hostel (44). Ingcel is describing Conaire's retinue at the hostel of Da Derga.

Imdai na mbadb.

'Atcondarc triar nocht hi clethi in tigi. A toesca fola trethu, ⁊ suanemain a n-airlig ara mbraighti. 'Rusfetarsa sin,' ol se, 'tri ernbaid uagboid, triar orgar la cach n-aim insin.'

'I beheld a trio, naked, on the roof-tree of the house: their jets of blood (coming) through them, and the ropes of their slaughter on their necks. 'Those I know' says he, 'three.... of awful boding. Those are the three that are slaughtered at every time.'

It is not clear whether the goddesses are in bird or human form in this passage, but the fact that they appear on the roof-tree of the house seems to indicate bird form. The reference to the blood and the ropes of slaughter about

(44)W. Stokes, op. cit., p. 294.

their necks is mysterious, and seems to refer to some sort of sacrifice (45). Once again, the ominous nature of these beings is emphasized.

The following passage describes the Morrigan in bird form, and although the species of bird into which she turns is not stated, it is likely that it was the crow/raven, which, as we have seen, was the usual bird-form of the war-goddess. The text is from the Book of Leinster (46).

(45) This description of the badbs is reminiscent of the reference to the hanging of men to Esus by the Berne scholiast:

'Hesus Mars sic placatur: homo in arbore suspenditur usque donec per cruorem membra digesserit.'

(Lucani Commenta Bernensia, ed. Usener, 1869.)

It also brings to mind the reference in the Hávamál to the sacrifice of Odin:

veit ek at ek hekk
vinda meidi á,
naetr allar níu,
geiri undaðr
ok gefinn Ódni,
siálfur siálfum mér:

'I know that I hung full nine nights on the gallows tree, wounded by the javelin and given to Odin, myself to myself.' (Hávamál, 138.)

(46) Book of Leinster, fol. 50, a1.

'Is he in la cetna tanic in Dond Cuailnge co crich margin ocus coica samseisce immi do samascib.....is e in la cetna tanic in Morrighu ingen Ernmais a sidaib (in delb euin) comboi for in chorthi i Temair Chualnge ic brith rabuid don Dund Chualnge ria feraib nErend.'

'It was on that same day that the Donn of Cuailnge came to Crich-margin and fifty heifers of the heifers about him.....it was the same day Morrighu, daughter of Ernmas from the sidhe came in the form of a bird and perched on the pillar stone in Temair of Cuailnge, warning the Donn of Cuailnge before the men of Ireland.' (47)

Again, in the Tain Bo Regamhna, Cu Chulainn meets the Morrigan in the guise of a red-haired woman clad in red. She rides in a fantastic chariot, while beside her walks a man carrying a hazel stick, and driving a cow. Cu Chulainn, as guardian of the province, protests, and an argument ensues. The hero leaps onto the chariot in rage, and it disappears with its occupants. Only a black bird remains, which perches on an adjacent tree. This is the Badb. Here the war-goddess is connected with red, the colour of death, and with chariots, as she is in the episode mentioned on p.205 above, and the fact that the bird into which she turns is black, indicated that it was a raven, or, of course, a carrion crow.

(47) Here we are reminded of the raven which came and perched on the pillar in the house of Fear Halmadraidh, v. p. 265 below.

Summary and Conclusion.

In the above section, Mme Sjoestedt's statement that the Irish war-goddesses (symbolised by the crow/raven) combine the powers of war and fertility, whereas the two functions are fulfilled separately by the Gaulish goddesses, (thus implying that the insular tradition was more archaic than the Gaulish), has been examined, and has been rejected for the following reasons:

An examination of some of the major Gallo-Roman religious monuments has revealed that the evidence points to the widespread worship in Gaul of a goddess/goddesses of the ^{same} ~~precise~~ type as those found in the Irish literary tradition. This goddess, or group of goddesses is symbolised in some instances by a dove cote or dove, emblem of fertility, appears in a house-shaped alcove, indicative of domestic interests, and is accompanied by or flanked by a raven, symbol of war and evil omen. She also appears on the Sarrebourg altar as the consort of a major Gaulish deity, i.e. Sucellus. A large group of mother-goddesses appears throughout Gaul, associated with other birds (48)

where fertility and domesticity is, apparently, their sole concern, but where accompanied by the raven, their military and prophetic associations are indicated (49). Where this war/fertility goddess does not appear with the dove cote, she has other insignia of fertility e.g. fruits, cornucopiae, etc. There being no Gaulish literary evidence, transformation of the goddesses can only be inferred, but the wings on the Teting Nantosvelta suggest this. Moreover, the Irish war-goddesses are frequently associated with water, a widespread fertility symbol and agent, while the name Nantosvelta, best documented of the Gaulish raven goddesses, seems to mean 'the bend in the river' or the 'winding river'.

Some of the appearances of the insular war-goddesses were examined (50), as described by the Irish literary tradition. It emerged that they formed a trio, reminiscent of the Gaulish 'grouped' goddesses, the names of which varied, but the characteristics of which remained more or less constant. In several instances, these goddesses are actually equated with crows, and on

(49)The inscription 'athubodvae' testifies to the connection between crow/raven and war-goddess on continental territory also.

(50)It must be emphasised that this does not set out to be a comprehensive study of the Irish war-goddess. Attention has only been drawn to appearances relevant to birds.

one occasion, the translation from goddess to bird to goddess again, is actually witnessed by the onlookers. The prophetic nature of these creatures is also illustrated, where their role as prophets of evil is in line with their corvidic associations. Their physical abnormalities when in human form also serve to emphasize their unpleasant connections. Their function as fertility goddesses is implied in the Morrigan's sexual union with the Dagda over water, in the exaggerated descriptions of their female bodily members (51), and in place-name references to the Morrigan's breasts.

The war-goddesses are associated with death, and are represented as habitually haunting battle-fields in hag or bird shape, by the colour red, and by blood. They do not actually participate in battle, but they rather influence its outcome by means of magic. The description of the badbs in the story of Da Derga's Hostel is extraordinary, and seems to suggest reminiscences of sacrifice.

(51)The maternal aspect of the Scottish Gaelic bean-nighe, who seems to have had much in common with the Irish goddesses, and has perhaps developed from a similar tradition, was referred to. Baobh is used in Ireland and Gaelic Scotland to designate a hag, or unpleasant woman, while raven form is one commonly adopted by witches.

In conclusion then, we may say that the continental and insular Celts shared the religious concept of a war/fertility goddess, which may have originated at a very early stage (52), and have been common over a wide area of Europe; whose raven attribute and form is displayed upon the Gallo-Roman monuments, and described in the Irish literary texts, and is the best-documented and most convincing of the Celtic bird-deities.

(52)Hallstatt raven goddess illustrated by Kossack suggests this.

Lugh and Bran as Crow/Raven Gods.

Krappe, in his article on Celtic raven gods, makes the following statement (53):

'Lugh et Bran, tous les deux dieux 'au corbeau' refletent le rôle important joué par le corbeau dans l'ancien folklore Celtique. Tous les deux sont corbeaux divinisés.....Bran est le corbeau guide des navigateurs primitifs: plus tard, humanisé, il devient lui-même grand navigateur et patron de la navigation marine des anciens Celtes.'

It is proposed, in this section to examine the validity of the above statement for a)Lugh, and b)Bran, and to determine whether the evidence, material or textual can in any way support such a supposition.

a)Lugh as Raven God.

Krappe's argument is based on two factors, namely, the supposed etymology of Lyons, and the solar nature of Lugh.

(53)A.H.Krappe, Les Dieux au Corbeau chez les Celtes, Revue de l'Histoire des Religions, II4, p.236 ff.

The well-known passage referring to the founding of the city of Lyons, on which occasion ravens or crows were believed to have intimated the site where the city was to be built, is as follows: (54)

'There lies beside it a mountain called Lugdunus: it had changed its name for the following reason. When Momoros and Atepomaros had been thrust out by Seseronis, they came to this hill in accordance with the decree of an oracle, desiring to build a city. As the foundations were being dug, crows/ravens suddenly appeared and fluttered their wings, filling the trees round about. Momoros, who was an accomplished augur, named the city Lugdunum - for they call crow/raven Lugon in their dialect, a prominent place, Dunon. So Kleitophon relates in his thirteenth book 'Of Buildings.'

No such word as lugos (55) meaning crow or raven is now known in any of the Celtic languages, and it is possible that this interpretation was a surmise, based on the

(54)from the De Fluviis of the pseudo-Plutarch, VI,4.
The Greek is, as follows:
Παραπέλλεται δὲ αὐτῷ ὄρος Λούγδουνος καλούμενον. μετωνομάσθη δὲ διὰ κίττιαν τοιαύτην. Μώμορος καὶ Ἀτέπομαρος ὑπὸ Σεσηρόνως τῆς ἀρχῆς ἐχθροὶ ἔχοντες, εἰς τοῦτον κατὰ προσηγορίην χρησμοῦ ἦλθον τὸν λόγον πόλιν κτίσαι θελοντες. τῶν δὲ θεμελιῶν ὀρυσσόμενων αἰανιδίως χόρακες ἐπιπλάνευτες καὶ διαπτέρυξάμενοι τὰ περίφθνη ἐπλήρωσαν τὰ δένδρα. Μώμορος δὲ οἰωνοσκοπίας, ἐμπειρος ὑπάρχων τὴν πόλιν Λούγδουνον προσηγορεύσεν. Λούγον γὰρ τῆς σφῶν διαλέκτῳ τὸν χόρακα καλοῦσιν. Δοῦνον δὲ τόπον ἐξέχοντα. καθὼς ἱστορεῖ Κλειτοφῶν ἐν γ' κτίσεων.

(55)A. Holder, Revue Celtique, 26, 1905, has a note on the possible meaning of the word lougos.

appearance of the birds. Loth (56) suggests that a word brannoslougos could have existed, connoting a flock of ravens. The Greek author could ~~thus~~ have misinterpreted the word 'flock of lugus' therefore 'flock of ravens'. This suggestion, however, is not very convincing. There is, however, another possibility. The discovery of some coins in Gaul indicates that the connection of Lugus and Lugudunum with ravens was known in Gaul in the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D. apart from the pseudo-Plutarch's etymology. These are, a terra cotta medallion, recovered from Orange (57) on which the genius of the town of Lyon is depicted, having a raven at his feet, and dating from 1st century A.D. Moreover, there is an aureus of Albinus, who died in 198 A.D. which was discovered somewhere between Lyon and Tremoux, on the reverse side of which the genius of Lyon again appears, with a raven at his feet. The inscription reads 'Gen(ius) Lug(duni)'. Another coin depicts a young god on whose shoulder perches a raven, and yet another coin from Lyon is decorated with a raven's head. These coins,

(56) J. Loth, Le Dieu Lug, la Terre Mère et les Lugaves, Rev. Arch. 1914, p. 213.

(57) Loth, p. 212.

then, do seem to testify to the fundamental correctness of the pseudo-Plutarch's association of Lyon with ravens, while the error seems to lie in the explanation of the word lougos by raven, where Lugus is the god and the raven apparently his attribute here.

In his article in the *Revue Celtique* (58), Jubainville uses grammatical arguments to date the form Lugdunum in the pseudo-Plutarch. Classical Latin weakened or lost the final vowel of the first elements of compounds. Lyon was the most Romanized of the Gaulish towns under Augustus and it probably submitted to the influence of classical Latin much earlier than did the other cities. For example, probably during the 1st century, A.D. and therefore contempor^{ary} with the terra cotta medallion above.

As we have seen in different contexts throughout this investigation (59), the Gaulish gods in general seem to have been multi-functional, more or less universal in type, whilst being local in name and attribute. In

(58) H. d'Arbois de Jubainville, Une Vieille Etymologie du Nom de Lyon, *Revue Celtique*, VIII, 1887, 169 ff.

(59) e.g. for Esus, v. Chapter I, p. 12 ff.

certain deities, some functions may have been, and obviously were, of more importance than others, but there is little trace of the type of pantheon which Caesar indicates in the interpretatio Romana.

Inscriptions to Lugus and a group, the Lugoves, appear three times in Gaul, at Osina, Avenches and Bonn. Moreover, the name occurs many times in place-names, and a god of this name does seem to have been widely known. In Ireland, the name appears as Lugh, and in Wales as Lleu. The etymology of the pseudo-Plutarch then, erroneous though it may be in actual fact, supported by the evidence of the coins described above, does imply that, in the district of Lyon at least, a god Lugus had as an attribute the raven, and may, therefore, have had an ornithomorphic origin. It does not however, indicate that a god/gods of the name Lugus, Lugoves, occurring in other districts of Gaul had raven attributes, although such may have been the case, nor does it justify that supposition for the insular tradition. Indeed, the Lleu of Wales would seem, perhaps, to have had the eagle for attribute originally.

As far as Irish textual material is concerned, there is only one direct reference to Lugh in connection with ravens, when they inform him of the approach of the Fomorians (60). This is slight, as we know that ravens were regarded as prophetic birds, and one chance reference does not necessarily suggest that they had any particular connection with this god in Ireland. However, in conjunction with the Gaulish evidence, one may be justified in attaching more importance to this incident than would otherwise be the case. Lack of textual evidence cannot, of course, be taken as proof that the Irish Lugh was not a raven god, but one slight reference can hardly be taken as proof that he was (61). For indirect information about this deity in Ireland, we must examine some of his appearances in the literary texts in an attempt to determine something about his more general characteristics.

(60)J.Loeh, op.cit. p. makes reference to this incident, without however stating his source, which I have been unable to trace, as it does not seem to occur in the Battle of Magh Tured.

(61)The following may be noted:

The Hawk of Achill says to Fintan that there are always ravens and crows about Lugh Lamhfhada. This may have a double meaning, in that the presence of these birds indicated much slaughter, and therefore a great warrior, and also
(ctd.over).

As mentioned above, Krappe believes that Lugh is primarily a solar deity 'le grand dieu solaire des Celtes'. Then he sets out to prove that the raven is a bird having solar associations elsewhere, and claims that there is thus nothing unique in a Celtic tradition which associates a sun god with a raven attribute.

But is Lugh a solar deity? There is certainly little in the mythology to indicate this, nor does the fragmentary inscriptional and material evidence from Gaul cast any light on this question. The term 'of the long arm' one of the descriptive epithets given to him in the Irish tradition, has been taken by solar mythologists to indicate his solar nature, but would seem rather to apply to his skill in wielding and casting weapons than to his solar functions. We know that Lugh possessed magic weapons. (62)

(61 ctd.) that these birds were peculiarly associated with Lugh. The relevant lines are as follows:
(Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts, ed. Bergin, Best, Meyer and O'Keefe, Dublin, 1907, p. 31)

50. fa himda braineun iss badhb
 taeph re Lugh na laechlamha.

'....full many a raven and crow...along with Lugh of the heroes hands.

(62)'A Gorias tucad an tsleg boi ac Lug. Ni gebtea cath fria no frisinti an bidh il-lainh.' 'Out of Gorias was brought the spear that Lugh had. No battle was ever won
(ctd. overleaf)

A passage from the Second Battle of Moytura (63) indicates precisely what type of deity Lugh was, according to the insular tradition. Because it contains the key to his personality, and is therefore of great importance in this context, the Irish passage is quoted in full.

Lugh's Entry into Tara.

'Atbertatar risin dorsaid ara n-indised a Temruich a tiachtai. Atbert in dorsaid: 'Cia fil and?' 'Fil sunn Luch Lonnandsclech mac Ciein meic Dien cecht Ethne ingine Baloir....

Rofiarfaig ion dorsaid do t-Samhilldanuch: 'Cia dan frisa ng(n)eie?' al sei, 'ar ni teid nech cin dan i Temruig.'

'Dene mo athcomarc,' ol se, 'am saer.' Friscort an dorsaid 'Nit-regaim i leas. Ata saer lenn cenu .i. Luchtai mac Luachadhae.'

Atpert-sum. 'Atum-athcomairc, a dorrsoid: am gobhae.'

Friscart ion dorsaid dou: 'Ata gobae liond cenai .i. Colum Guaolleinech teorae nua-gres.'

Atpert-som: 'Atom-athcomairc, am trénfer.'

Friscart in dorsaid: 'Nid-regoim a les: ata tréinfer lend cenu .i. Oghmae mac Ethlend.'

Atbert-sum diridesi: 'Atom-athcomairc,' ar se, 'am crutiri.' Nit-regaim a les: ata crutiri lenn cenai .i. Auhcan mac Bicelmois aran-utgatar fir tri ndea i sidoib.'

Atpert-sum: 'Atom-athcomairc: am níadh.'

Friscart an dorrsoidh: 'Nit-regam e les. Ata níad lion chenu .i. Bresal Echarlam mac Echach Baethlaim.'

Atbert-sum iarum: 'Adum-athcomairc, a dorsaid, am file am senchaid.'

'Nid-regam i les: ata file 7 senchaid cenai lenn .i. En mac Ethomain.'

(62 ctd.) against it or him who held it in his hand.'
W. Stokes, The Second Battle of Moytura, *Revue Celtique*, XII, p. 56.

(63) Stokes, *op. cit.* p. 74.

Atbert-sum: 'Atom-athcomairc,' ol se, 'im corrguinech.'
 'Nit-recom e les: Ataut corrguinigh lionn cheno: at
 imdou ar ndrúith ar lucht cumhachtaí.'
 Atbert-som: 'Atom-athcomairc, am liaich.' 'Nit-regam
 a les: Ata Dien-cecht do liaigh lenn.'
 'Atom-athcomairc,' al sé, 'am deogbore.'
 'Nit-regom a les: ata(t) deogbairé linn cenau .i. Delt
 Drucht > Daithe, Taeli > Talom > Trog, Gleí > Glan > Glesí.'
 Atbert 'Atom-athcomairc: am cert maith.'
 'Nit-regom e les: ata cert lind cenu .i. Credne cerd.'
 Atbert-som aitherrach: 'Abair frisind rig,' ol se, 'an
 fil les oeinfer codogabai ina danu-sae ule, > ma ata les ní
 tocus-sa in Temraig.'
 Luid in dorsaid isin rigtech iar súdiu con-eicid dond
 riogh uleí. 'Tanaic oclaeach iondoras lis,' al se,
 'Samilldanach, > na huili dano arufognot det muntir-si atat
 les ule a oenor, conedh fer cacha danai ule ei.'

They told the doorkeeper to announce their arrival at
 Tara. The doorkeeper asked: 'Who is there?'
 'Here there is Lugh Lonnannsclech son of Cian son of
 Dian-cecht, and of Ethne daughter of Balor. Fosterson he,

 The doorkeeper asked of Samildanach: 'What art dost thou
 practise?' says he, 'for no one without an art enters Tara.'
 'Question me,' says he. 'I am a wright.'
 The doorkeeper answered: 'We need thee not. We have
 a wright already, even Luchtae son of Luachaid.'
 He said, 'Question me, O doorkeeper. I am a smith.'
 The doorkeeper answered him. 'We have a smith already,
 even Colum Cualleinech of the three new processes.'
 He said: 'Question me: I am a champion.'
 The doorkeeper answered: 'We need thee not. We have a
 champion already, even Ogma son of Ethliu.'
 He said again: 'Question me,' says he, 'I am a harper.'
 'We need thee not. We have a harper already, even
 Abhcan son of Bicelmos whom the men of the three gods -(chose?)
 in the fairy hills.'
 Says he: 'Question me: I am a hero.'
 The doorkeeper answered: 'We need thee not. We have
 a hero already, even Bresal Echarlam son of Echaid Baethlam.'

Then he said, 'Question me, O doorkeeper. I am a poet and a historian.'

'We need thee not. We have already a poet and historian, even En son of Ethaman.'

He said, 'Question me,' says he, 'I am a sorcerer.'

'We need thee not. We have sorcerers already. Many are our wizards and our people of might.'

He said: 'Question me: I am a leech.'

'We need thee not. We have for a leech Dian-cecht.'

'Question me,' saith he: 'I am a cupbearer.'

'We need thee not. We have cupbearers already, even Delt and Drucht and Daithe, Tae and Talom and Trog, Gleí and Glan and Glesi.'

He said, 'Question me. I am a good brazier.'

'We need thee not. We have a brazier already, even Credne Cerd.'

He said again, 'Ask the king,' saith he, 'Whether he has a single man who possesses (?) all these arts, and if he has I will not enter Tara.'

Then the doorkeeper went into the palace and declared all to the king. 'A warrior has come to the door of the courtyard,' saith he, 'Samildanach, and all the arts which thy household practise he alone possesses, so that he is the man of each and every art.'

From this passage, it would seem that Lugh was a god of the type equated with the classical Mercury, also fulfilling the functions of a Mars, as we have seen for Esus (64), i.e. a god of many qualifications and functions. These include mastery of warfare both by magic and by skill of weapons; a god of culture and general skill, i.e. the samildanach. Perhaps his only approximation to a solar deity is the fact that he is skilled in medicine, as was the Celtic Apollo (65). He would then seem to be

(64)v.Chapter I, p.19 ff.

(65)v.Chapter V, p.394 ff.

a god of a type resembling the Gaulish Esus and the Germanic Oðin (66), who likewise appears both as a god of culture and general proficiency and as a god of war, 'lord of the hanged'. His raven attributes are fitting for a god of wisdom and warfare.

It thus seems a little irrelevant to use, as Krappe does (67), the comparison of certain Red Indian tribes in whose mythology and cosmic traditions the raven figures largely, and has solar associations. He also uses Siberian myths, but what he does not use convincingly is native evidence. Useful although the comparative method can be, it is difficult to appreciate its significance or relevance here in indicating the raven origins of two pagan Celtic deities.

(66) Characteristics of this deity are discussed by H.M. Chadwick (Cult of Othin, London, 1899), who thinks it possible that the origin of the cult is to be found possibly among the Gauls. (p.2) This is an interesting possibility in view of the frequency of the representations of a deity with a raven on either shoulder from Gaul, and in the light of the above investigation.

(67) Krappe, op.cit. p.239ff.

Bran as Crow/Raven God.

'Bran est le corbeau guide des navigateurs primitifs plus tard, humanisé il devient lui-même grand navigateur et patron de la navigation marine des anciens Celtes' (68)

Krappe's statement must be studied in the light of two basic questions, namely, does the material and textual evidence support the conclusion that Bran was a god, and more particularly, a raven god?

The word bran connotes 'raven' in Old Welsh and early Irish, thus the name itself immediately suggests ornithomorphic associations. In the Welsh text (69) he is known as Bendigeidvran, Bran the Blessed. This appellation, in conjunction with the following factors, point to the divine origin of the being the tale represents as a kindly giant. He is described in the story as being of enormous stature, so large that no house can contain him. He possesses a magic cauldron of rebirth, another

(68)Krappe, op.cit. p.246.

(69)Branwen verch Lyr, ed.by Ifor Williams, Pedeir Keinc Y Mabinogi,Cardiff, 1930, p.29 ff.

factor indicating his origin as a god. After he is wounded in the battle against the Irish, he dies. His head entertains the survivors of the conflict in various places for a number of years and finally, buried in London, it protects the country from invasion by enemies (70). In the story of Branwen, Bran is represented as leading an invasion against Ireland, wading himself, and carrying the musicians on his shoulders, thereby appearing as a patron of the arts, this linking him with Lugh, and with Odin as gods of the type of Mercury.

Krappe argues that the raven was, in early times, considered as a guide to navigators (71) and that by leading his people over the short stretch of sea between Wales and Ireland, Bran is fulfilling his raven-like function of guiding sailors. He uses this as key evidence in his argument for Bran as a raven god. This may be the case, but it seems a little far-fetched to claim mythological significance for what appears to be a perfectly accountable episode in the tale. Bran is the chieftain of his people, and who but he should lead them

(70) Williams, *op. cit.* p. 47.

(71) Krappe, *op. cit.* 248.

on a hostile expedition to rescue his own sister from persecution? It is possible that a dim folk memory of Bran's corvidic associations lingered, and that the storyteller introduced the invasion incident in order to rationalize this characteristic, but this really seems very unlikely, and Krappe does go very much further than the evidence permits in his statement quoted above. Nowhere is Bran actually associated with the raven. Indeed, his only connection with birds of any kind in the Branwen tale, is with Branwen's starling (72), and, indirectly with Riannon's birds (73). The episode of Branwen's starling may, however, be of more significance than is immediately apparent, while not of course in any way proving that Bran is a raven god. The passage in which reference to this bird occurs is as follows (74):

'Blwynyded nit llei no their, y buant yuelly. Ac yn hynny, meithryn ederyn drydwen a wnaeth hitheu ar dal y noe gyt a hi, a dyscu ieith idi, a menegi y'r ederyn y ryw

(72)Williams, op.cit. p.58.

(73)Williams, op.cit. p.45.

(74)Williams, loc.cit.

wr oed y brawt. A dwyn llythyr y poeneu a'r amharch a oed arnei hitheu. A'r llythyr a rwymwyd am uon eskyll yr ederyn, a'y anuon parth a Chymry. A'r ederyn a doeth y'r ynys honn. Sef lle y cauas Uendigeiduran, yg Kaer Seint yn Aruon, yn dadleu idaw dydgweith. A diskynnu ar e yscwyd, a garwhau y phluf, yny arganuuwyt y llythyr, ac adnabot meithwyn yr ederyn yg kyuanned. Ac yna kymryt y llythyr a'y edrych.'

'Not less than three years they were thus. And meanwhile she reared a bird, a starling, on the end of her kneading trough, and taught it to speak and instructed the bird what kind of man her brother was. And she brought a letter of the sufferings and the dishonour that were upon her. And the letter was fastened under the root of the bird's wings, and it was sent in the direction of Wales. And the bird came to this island. This is the place where it found Bendigeiduran, at Caer Seint in Arfon at an assembly of his one day. And it alighted on his shoulder and ruffled its feathers so that the letter was seen and it was known that the bird had been reared among dwellings. And the letter was taken and examined.'

Here then, we have a bird alighting on Bran's shoulder and bringing him information. This is reminiscent of the god-with-the-bird motif (75), which appears so frequently on the Gallo-Roman monuments, where the god appears with a bird/birds upon his shoulders, which seem to be speaking into his ears. It also brings to

(75)v.p.408below.

mind Lugh's raven messengers (76), Cu Chulainn's raven messengers (77) and of course, the two ravens of Odin from whom his information and wisdom were obtained. This incident may be purely a folk motif, or again, it may possibly reveal faint traces of Bran's origin as a bird deity; i.e. some legend of this being having a bird attribute perched on his shoulder, which brought him information, may have lingered in the folk tradition, and been incorporated into the tale by the storyteller, who rationalised the tradition by making Branwen rear the bird and send a letter by it. Again, the bird in question is a starling not a raven; but if the bird possessed by Bran was originally a raven, and its significance not understood by the storyteller in medieval times, it may have seemed an incongruous bird for Branwen to have reared in her kitchen, and it may for that reason have been changed to a starling in the story. All this is, of course, pure surmise, possibility rather than probability, but this small and solitary episode may indicate traces of some bird cult associated with Bran the Blessed.

(76)v. p²²²above.

(77)v. p²⁵⁵ below.

Summary and Conclusion.

In this section, Krappe's claim for Lugh and Bran as two of the three (78) raven gods of northern Europe has been examined. In the case of Lugh, we have seen that there is reason for believing that in one district of Gaul, i.e. that of Lyon, the god Lugus, whose cult seems to have been widespread, had for attribute the raven. This supposition is based on a) the statement of the pseudo-Plutarch, which may be wrong in interpreting the word lougos by raven, but correct in connecting the name of the god with ravens, supported by b) the discovery of several coins in the district on which the raven is represented. But, although the cult of this god seems to have extended over a wide area, there is no evidence to show that his attribute was the raven in any district other than that of Lyon.

In Ireland, there is no direct evidence to indicate that Lugh was ever, at any time, a raven god. Indirect evidence, pointing to such a possibility is found in the

(78) Oðin being the third.

fact that his name is the equivalent of that of the Lyon Lugus, who does seem to have been symbolised by the raven; he appears in the literary material as a god of the Mars/Mercury type such as Odin, Esus and Lugus himself seem to have been; this is supported by the reference to his two raven messengers, given by Loth, and by the Hawk of Achill's mention of the crows and ravens about the god. In these circumstances, the Gaulish evidence perhaps permits us to attach greater importance to these references than would otherwise be the case; but, even so, while admitting that such is possible, there is not sufficient positive insular evidence for it to be claimed that the Irish Lugh is a raven god. Llew in Wales seems to have perhaps originally had an eagle attribute (79).

In the case of Bran, there is even less positive evidence to support Krappe's claim, there being no Gaulish material to substantiate the Welsh texts. It is easy to imagine his being in origin a god akin to the Gaulish tricephalos (80) with its bird attribute. All that we

(79)v.Chapter IV, p.320(below)

(80)v.Chapter V, p.388 ff.

can reasonably say, however, in view of the almost complete lack of textual evidence, is that the name definitely means raven (8I), and as the epithet 'blessed' and other characteristics discussed above, point to his divine origin, he was possibly yet another god of the Mercury type. This, in conjunction with what we know of the raven in Celtic superstition and folk belief, and the incident concerning Branwen's bird, make it a possibility that he was at one time more intimately connected with ravens than the existing evidence would indicate, but further than this we cannot legitimately go.

(8I)In the case of Lugus, the name is supposed to mean raven, but apparently does not.

Owein's Ravens.

Within the context of Welsh literature, several references are made to the raven band of Owein ap Urien, the most detailed and interesting being that contained in the Dream of Rhonabwy (early 13th century). It is proposed, before discussing the possible nature and significance of these birds, to quote the relevant passages in Welsh, with the English translation (82), so that the actual text can be kept in mind while the theories are under examination.

'A chyuarth gwell a oruc y mackwy y Owein. A ryuedu o Owein y'r mackwy gyuarth gwell idaw ef ac nas kyfarchei y'r amherawdyr Arthur. A gwybot a wnaeth Arthur pan yw hynny a uedylyei Owein, a dywedut wrth Owein.

'Na vit yrued gennyt y'r mackwy gyfarch gwell ytt yr awr honn. Ef a'c kyfarchwys y minheu gynneu. Ac attat titheu y mae y neges ef.' Ac yna y dywawt y mackwy wrth Owein, 'Arglwyd, ae o'th gennyat ti y mae gweisson bychein yr amherawdyr a'e uackwyeit yn kipris ac yn kathefrach ac yn blinaw dy vrein? Ac onyt o'th gennyat, par y'r amherawdyr eu gwahard.' 'Arglwyd,' heb yr Owein, 'ti a glywy a dyweit y mackwy. Os da genhyt gwahard wynt ywrth vy mranos.' 'Gware dy chware,' heb ef. Ac yna yd

(82) Melville Richards, Breudwyd Ronabwy, Cardiff, 1948, p. 12 ff.

ymchoeles y mackwy tu a'e bebyll.....llyma was ieuanc coch.....yn dyuot tu a'r lle yd oed Arthur ac Owein yn gware gwydbwyll. A chyuarth gwell idaw. A drwc yd aeth ar Owein gyuarth gwell idaw, ac ny bu waeth gan Arthur no chynt. Y mackwy a dywawt wrth Owein 'A'e o'th anuod di y mae mackweith yr amherawdyr yn brathu dy vrein, ac yn llad ereill ac yn blinaw ereill? Ac os anuod gennyt, adolw idaw y gwahard.' 'Arglwyd,' heb Owein, 'gwahard dy wyr os da gennyt.' Gware dy whare' heb y'r amherawdyr. Ac yna yd ymchoeles y mackwy tu a'e pebyll.. ...yn dyuot o'r pebyll y gwelynt vackwy....dyuot a oruc y mackwy yn llidyawc angerdawl a thuth ebrwyd gantaw tu a'r lle yd oed Arthur yn gware ac Owein vch penn yr wydbwyll. Ac adnabot a orugant y vot yn llidiawc. A chyuarth gwell eissoes y Owein a oruc ef, a dywedut idaw wynt a vrathwyt ac a vriwyt yn gyment ac na digawn yr vn onadunt kychwynnv y hadaned un gwryt y wrth y dayar. 'Arglwyd' heb yr Owein, 'gwahard dy wyr.' 'Gware' heb ef 'os mynny.' Ac yna y dywawt Owein wrth y mackwy 'Dos ragot, ac yn y lle y gwelych y vrwydyr galettaf, dyrchaf yr ystondard y vynyd. Ac a vynno Duw, derffit.'

Ac yna y kerdwys y mackwy racdaw hyt y lle yd oed galettaf y vrwydyr ar y brein, a dyrchael yr ystondard. Ac ual y dyrchefit y kyoudant wynteu y'r awyr yn llidiawc angerdawl orawenus y ellwng gwynt yn eu hadaned ac y vwrw y lludet yamunt. A gwedy kaffel eu hangerd ac eu budwgolyaeth, yn llidyawc orawenus yn gytneit y gostygassant y'r llawr am penn y gwyr a wnathoedynt lit a goueileint a chollet udunt kyn no hynny. Penneu rai a dygynt, llygeit ereill, a chlusteu ereill a breicheu ereill. A'e kyodi y'r awyr gan asgellwrych y brein gorawenus ac eu kogor, a chynnwryt mawr arall gan disgyrein y gwyr yn eu brathu ac yn eu hanau ac yn llad ereill. A chyn aruthret uu gan Arthur a chan Owein vch benn yr wydbwyll klybot y kynnwryf.

A phan edrychant y klywynt marchawc ar varch erchlas yn dyuot attunt.....Dyuot a oruc y marchawc tu ar lle

yd oed Arthur ac Owein vch penn yr wydbwyll. Ac adnabot a orugant y uot yn lludedic lityawcvlin yn dyuot attunt. Y makwy a gyuarchawd gwell y Arthur ac a dywawt vot brein Owein yn llad y weisson bychein a'e vackwyeit. Ac edrych a oruc Arthur ar Owein a dywedut, 'Gwahard dy vrein.' 'Arglwyd' heb yr Owein, 'gware dy chware.' A gware a wnaethant. Ymchoelut a oruc y marchawc drachefyn tu a'r vrwydyr, ac ny wahardwyt y brein mwy no chynt.

A phan yttoedynt gwedy gware talym, sef y klywynt kynnwryf mawr, a disyryein gwyr, a chogor brein yn dwyn y gwyr yn eu nyrrth y'n awyr ac yn eu hyscoluaethu rydunt, ac yn eu gollwng yn drylleu y'r llawr.....y gwelynt uarchawc yn dyuot.....a chyfarch gwell a oruc y mackwy y'r amherawdyr. 'Arglwyd' heb ef, 'neur derw llad dy uackwyeit a'th weisson bychein a meibon gwyrda Ynys Prydein hyt na byd hawd kynnal yr ynys honn byth o hediw allan. 'Owein' heb Arthur, 'gwahard dy vrein.' 'Gware,' heb Owein, 'y gware hwnn.'

Daruot a wnaeth y gware hwnnw a dechreu arall. A phan yttoedynt ar diwed y gware hwnnw, nachaf y klywynt gynnwryf mawr, a disgyryein gwyr aruawc, a chogor brein ac ac eu hasgellwrych yn yr awyr ac yn gollwg yr arueu yn gyfan y'r llawr ac yn gollwg y gwyr a'r meirch yn drylleu y'r llawr. 'Ac yna y gwelynt uarchawc....a dyuot a oruc y marchawc yn llidiawc y'r lle yd oed Arthur a dywedut daruot y'r brein lad y deulu a meibon gwyrda yr ynys honn, ac erchi idaw peri i Owein wahard y vrein. Yna yd erchis Arthur y Owein wahard y vrein. Ac yna y gwasgwys Arthur y werin eur a oed ar y clawr yny oedynt yn dwst oll, ac yd erchis Owein y Wers uab Reget gostwng y vaner. Ac yna y gostyghwyt ac y tagnouedwyt pob peth.'

'And the squire greeted Owein. And Owein marvelled that the squire greeted him and did not greet the empogér Arthur. And Arthur knew it was of that Owein was

thinking, and he said to Owein, 'Marvel not that the squire greeted you just now. He greeted me a while back. And it is to you that his message is.' And then the squire said to Owein, 'Lord, is it with your leave that the emperor's bachelors and his squires are contending with ~~and~~ harassing and molesting your ravens? And if it is not with your leave, have the emperor call them off.' 'Lord' said Owein, 'you hear what the squire says? If it please you, call them off my little ravens.' 'Play your game' said he. And then the squire returned towards his pavilion.....and lo a young auburn-haired attendant... coming towards the place where Arthur and Owein were playing gwyddbwyll. And he greeted him. And Owein was put out at being greeted, but Arthur was no more taken aback than before. The squire said to Owein, 'Is it against your will that the emperor's squires are wounding your ravens, killing some and molesting others? And if it is against your will, beseech him to call them off.' 'Lord', said Owein, 'call off your men, if it please you.' 'Play your game' said the emperor; and then the squire returned towards his pavilion.....Coming from the pavilion they could see a squire.....The squire came with rage and passion at a quick canter to the place where Arthur was playing with Owein over the gwyddbwyll. And they saw how he was in a rage. But even so he greeted Owein and told him how the most notable ravens among them had been slain. 'And those of them that are not slain have been wounded and hurt to that extent that not one of them can lift its wings one fathom from the ground.' 'Lord,' said Owein, 'call off your men.' 'Play' said he, 'if you will.' And then Owein said to the squire, 'Away with you, and in the place where you see the battle hardest raise on high the standard, and let it be as God will.'

And then the squire went on his way to the place where the battle was hardest on the ravens, and raised on high the standard. And even as it was raised, they too rose into the air in passion, rage and exaltation, to let the wind into their wings and to throw off their weariness.

And having recovered their strength and their magic powers, in rage and in exaltation they straightway swooped down to earth upon the men who had earlier inflicted hurt and injury and loss upon them. Of some, they were carrying off the heads, of others, the eyes, of others the ears, and of others the arms; and they were raising them up into the air, and there was a great commotion in the air, what with the fluttering of the exultant ravens and their croaking, and another great commotion what with the cries of the men being gashed and wounded and others slain. And Arthur's amazement was as great as Owein's over the gwyddbwyll, hearing that commotion.

And, as they looked, they could see a rider coming towards them upon a dapple-grey horse.....the rider came to the place where Arthur and Owein were over the gwyddbwyll, and they could see how he was weary and ill-tempered coming towards them. The squire greeted Arthur and said that Owein's ravens were slaying his bachelors and squires. And Arthur looked at Owein and said 'Call off thy ravens.' Lord' said Owein, 'play your game.' And they played. The rider returned towards the battle, and the ravens were no more called off than before.

And when they had played awhile they could hear a great commotion, and the shrieking of men and the croaking of ravens in their strength bearing the men into the air and rending them between them and letting them fall in pieces to the ground. And....they could see a horseman coming.... and the squire greeted the emperor. 'Lord,' said he, 'your squires and your bachelors have been slain, and the noblemen's sons of the Island of Britain, so that it will not be easy to defend this Island from this day forth forever. 'Owein,' said Arthur, 'call off your ravens.' 'Lord' said Owein, 'play this game.'

That game ended and another begun. And when they were at the end of that game, lo, they could hear a great commotion and a shrieking of armed men and the croaking of ravens and their flapping their wings in the air and dropping the armour unshattered to the ground. And then

they could see a rider.....and the rider came in a rage to the place where Arthur was, and said how the ravens had slain his war-band and the noblemen's sons of this Island and bade him have Owein call off his ravens. And then Arthur crushed the golden pieces that were on the board till they were all dust. And Owein bade Gwres, son of Rheged, lower his banner. And therewith it was lowered and all was peace. (83)

Another reference to Owein's ravens appears in 'The Lady of the Fountain.' (84):

'And Owein remained in Arthur's court from that time forth as captain of the War-band, and beloved of him, until he went to his own possessions. Those were the three hundred swords of the tribe of Cenferch and the Flight of Ravens. And wherever Owein went and they with him, he would be victorious.'

The tradition of Owein's raven army was current in the Middle Ages, and is alluded to by Bleddynt Vardd in an elegy on Dafydd ap Gruffydd (85). The shaft or staff by

(83) Translation from Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, The Mabinogion, London, 1949, p.145 ff.

(84) Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, op.cit. p. 182.

(85) Gwr bwlch nat ydiw gwayw briw brwydyrgar
Gwr a wneyth adaw adar ar gynrein
Val kievrein ywein awyd ddaffar.'

'a man of the cutting stroke and the broken spear, battle eager, a man who caused the birds to fly upon the hosts like Owein's ravens, eager for prey.'

Myvyrian Archaeology, Denbigh, 1870, I, p.252.

connected with the Irish Badb. In the Didot Perceval (88), Morgain and her sisters take part in a combat in the form of black birds. Loomis (89) thinks that the birds who fought for Owein in the above tale were his mother Modron by his father Urien. He maintains that Modron is equal to Morgain la Fee. All this is, of course, pure speculation, and is discussed below.

One other suggestion, which is interesting and ingenious and deserves careful consideration, is that of Peredur Jones (90). He is of the opinion that Owein ab Urien (who probably was a historical character), was of Viking descent, that his ravens were human troops, and the banner which Owein flew was the raven banner. Whether Jones is correct in his conclusions or not, this method of arguing or investigation along such general lines is likely to prove more fruitful than the sort of speculation indulged in by Windsich and Loomis.

(88) R.S.Loomis, Arthurian Tradition and Chretien de Troyes, 1949, p.124 (Roach's edition).

(89)Loomis op. cit., p.270.

(90)G.Peredur Jones, 'The Scandinavian Settlement in Ystrad TYWI, Cymmrodor XXXV, 1915 p.136 ff

If then, Jones is correct in his theory that Owein ab Urien was descended from the Scandinavians, that fact would help to account for two factors, namely, Owein's connection with ravens, and the mysterious banner, described so fully in the Dream of Rhonabwy, and which very obviously resembles the Viking banner (9I). When the banner was raised in the Rhonabwy tale, the weary birds were revived and refreshed. Several descriptions of the Scandinavian raven banners occur in English and Irish sources. The raven banner called Hraefn, which Alfred's army captured from the Danes in Devonshire in 878 A.D., was woven by the three sisters of Ívarr and Ubi (reminiscent of the three badbs, prophetic also). It had the power to predict the outcome of battle. If those before whom it was borne were to be victorious, a raven, flapping its wings would appear on it. If they were to be defeated, the raven would appear to droop.

(9I)Reference to the magic banner of the Danes is made in the Encomium Emmae Reginae, ed. Alistair Campbell, London, 1949, p.25:

9. 'Now when winter was drawing to an end, he assembled forces during the whole of Quadragesima and soon after Eastertide attempted to expel the king and the Danes from
(ctd. overleaf)

(91 ctd.) the country of the English, and advancing with a great multitude, planned a sudden attack upon them. But a report of this did not fail to become known to the Danes who left their ships and went ashore, preparing to receive whatever they should encounter. Now they had a banner of wonderfully strange nature, which though I believe that it may be incredible to the reader, yet since it is true, I will introduce the matter into my true history. For while it was woven of the plainest and whitest silk, and the representation of no figure was inserted into it, in time of war a raven was always seen as if embroidered on it, in the hour of its owners' victory opening its beak, flapping its wings, and restive on its feet, but very subdued and drooping with its whole body when they were defeated. Looking out for this, Thorkell, who had fought the first battle, said: 'Let us fight manfully, comrades, for no danger threatens us: for to this the restive raven of the prophetic banner bears witness.' When the Danes heard this, they were rendered bolder.....'

(Here the raven is connected with both war and prophetic powers, as we have seen for the Irish crow/raven goddesses, p. 205 above).

Reference to the Danish banner is also made in the Old English Chronicle:

Anno DCCC.LXXVIII. MS. Cott. Tiber. B IV:

'þær waes se gudfana genumen þe hi Hraefn haeton.'

MS. Bodl. Laud. 636:

'þar waes se gudfana genumen þe hi Raefen heton.'

Asser, moreover, refers to it in his De Rebus Gestis Aelfredi (interpolated from the Annals of St. Neot's).

(ctd. overleaf.)

(91 ctd.)

(This is referred to on p. above).

Ibique acceperunt spolia non minima. In quo etiam acceperunt illud vexillum, quod Reafan nominant. Dicunt enim quod tres sorores Hinguari et Hubbae, filiae videlicet Lodebrochi, illud vexillum texuerunt, et totum paraverunt illud uno meridiano tempore. Dicunt etiam, quod in omni bello ubi praecederet idem signum, si victoriam adepturi essent, appareret in medio signi quasi corvus vivens volitans: sin vero vincendi in futuro fuissent, penderet directe nihil movens. Et hoc saepe probatum est.

The raven banner occurs again in the mythical history of Earl Waltheof's family, in which Earl Siward receives, when a young man, a banner called 'Ravenlandeye' from an old man, quod interpretatur 'corvus terrae terror'.

Several references for this are given in W.H.Stevenson's edition of Asser's Life of King Alfred (Oxford, 1904), p.267. He suggests that the name of the banner may be equated with Harald Hardrada's landeypa, 'land-waster'. O.N. eypa has been replaced by O.E. ege 'terror.'

Stevenson also refers to the raven on the coins of Anlaf, the Danish king of Northumbria.

This concept is strikingly reminiscent of the above passage, where Owein causes the standard to be raised, and as he does so:

'even as it was raised, they too rose into the air in a passion, rage and exaltation, to let the wind into their wings and to throw off their weariness.'

The drooping wings of the birds have thus been raised on the appearance of the standard and victory is assured. A raven banner was used by Sigurðr at Clontarf (92). It was not, apparently, oracular, but had magic properties, bringing victory to him before whom it was borne, but death to the one who carried it. According to tradition, it was woven for Sigurðr Hlodvesson, Early of Orkney, by his mother, a daughter of the Irish king, Gearbhall.

Jones' theory that the raven troop was really a band of men must be considered. There is little or no indication that these mysterious creatures were other than birds, and it is certain from the above contexts

(92) Encomium Emmae Reginae, ed. Campbell, p. 96.

that tradition regarded them as such. In the Rhonabwy tale, Owein's ravens are not merely referred to, but detailed descriptions of their fighting and appearance are given, and it is quite clear that, whoever worked the legend into the story, regarded them as birds. But, even as ravens, they would concur with Jones' Scandinavian theory. The raven must have been peculiarly sacred to the Vikings as the bird of Oðin, and the names Oðin and Owein are similar enough (93) for the Welsh/Scandinavian Owein to have had a troop of magic ravens attributed to him, even as Odin was symbolised by two prophetic ravens. But here, there may be both a fusion and a confusion of the two traditions, brought into close contact in Ireland and Wales during the period of the Viking invasions and settlements. It seems, however, unnecessary to look beyond native tradition in order to understand the nature of Owein's ravens, before that tradition has been carefully examined and analysed. There are several possibilities. Celtic mythology is full of examples of birds, either individually or in

(93) It is not suggested that there is any philological link between the names.

acting as messengers, informants or helping men in other ways. Some of these incidents may be mentioned here in order to see whether they can in any way assist in an understanding of Owein's birds. Some of the more impressive evidence may be examined first.

There is a group of Gallo-Roman monuments (94) on which the bust of a god appears between two birds, sometimes ravens. These birds appear to be speaking into his ears. This god-with-the-birds motif naturally brings to mind the Odin tradition, and such small but significant incidents from the insular literary tradition as Lugh's raven informants (95), Cu Chulainn's two raven messengers (96), and possibly Bran's bird messenger (97). These birds are closely connected with, and in the service of the god or hero to whom they are attached. This type of monument depicts two birds alone. There is, however,

(94)v. p. 256 below, and also, Chapter V, p.47ff.

(95)v. p. 222 above.

(96)v. p. 256 below.

(97)v. p. 23/ above.

a most important piece of evidence from Senlis (98) in the form of a stele, discovered in 1865 on which appears the bust of a young, beardless man, having four ravens about him, traces of other birds showing elsewhere on the worn parts of the slab. The entire monument is very much denuded. Two of the birds, greater in size than the other two, stand, one on either side of the deity, with their beaks close to his ears. There are traces of two similar birds above these two, while two others, on a smaller scale, stand on a lower level, turning to the left and look up at the deity. All are deeply intent upon what is being said by the god, whose right hand is raised and half closed in the attitude of orators. This extraordinary monument brings to mind the Lugus of Lugdunum, who was, perhaps, master of a flock of ravens and it is, of course, reminiscent of Owein and his band of magic ravens. It is likely that the legend of the ravens appearing at the time of the founding of Lugdunum was probably based on a genuine tradition although misunderstood by the pseudo-Plutarch.

(98) Esperandieu, plate 3850. This monument belongs to the territory of the Silvanectes which was not far from

(ctd. overleaf)

In the insular tradition, flocks of magic birds, both beneficial and malevolent, occur frequently in the literary material, and are often in the service of some deity or hero. We may, for example, consider in this context Conaire's bird father with his band of bird followers (99) who cast off their bird form and fight with weapons. These magic birds perhaps most closely parallel the Owein legend, and it is not improbable that, at an earlier stage of the tradition, the wonderful ravens were capable of assuming human form, as were so many of the enchanted Celtic birds. Again, Lugh, in his pursuit of Dechtire (100) employs a flock of magic birds to waylay her (and probably also joins them in bird form himself), and Cu Chulainn (101) pursues and slays a flock of evil ravens, which are clearly supernatural birds. Several of the goddesses, of course, possess wonderful birds.

(99) ctd. that of the Remi, who clearly worshipped a tricephalos, having ram and raven or dove attributes. For discussion, v. Chapter V, p. 388 ff.

(99) v. Chapter II, p. 130 ff.

(100) v. Chapter II, p. 102.

(101) v. p. 256 below.

By mentioning these occurrences, it is not, of course, intended to imply anything more than that the concept of a god or hero possessing or being in some way connected with a flock of magic and supernatural birds is completely in line with the entire Celtic tradition, and therefore it seems unnecessary to consider such an unsatisfactory and unsubstantiated explanation as that the troop was in fact composed of human followers.

The Irish Nennius (I02) records an incident which is reminiscent of the behaviour of the ravens in the Rhonabwy story. It is as follows:

'Cloictheach teneadh do aicsin ic Rus Dela fri re IX n-uar, 7 eoin duba diairimhde as, 7 aen en mor eturru, 7 no teged^{ais} na h-eoin bega fo clumaib in tan no teged is in cloictheach, 7 tancatar in aenfecht uile amach 7 conur gabsat coin leo na n-ingnib i n-airde, 7 no lecset sis co talam uaidib 7 iat marb.'

'A pillar of fire was seen at Ros Dela for the duration of nine hours and innumerable black birds coming from it, and one great bird among them, and the little birds used to go into its feathers when they went into the pillar, and they used all to come out together, and they took dogs up with them in their talons, and they let them drop down to the earth dead.'

(I02) J.H.Todd, The Irish Version of the Historia Brittonum of Nennius, Dublin, 1848, p.214/16.

The Welsh tale says of Owein's ravens:

'...and the croaking of ravens in their strength, bearing the men into the air and rending them betwixt them and letting them fall in pieces to the ground...and dropping the men and horses in pieces to the ground.' (I03)

Summary and Conclusion.

In the legend of Owein and his magic ravens, we have an occurrence in medieval Welsh literature of a motif which all the comparative evidence suggests is based on a perfectly genuine tradition of the type one would expect to find in Celtic mythology, i.e. a man (hero/god), having in his possession a flock of supernatural birds, which in this instance fight for him and accompany him everywhere, ensuring his success. Although it is very probable that Owein ab Urien was a historical character, the raven legend may have become attached to the historical Owein at a later stage, having perhaps originally belonged to a mythological being appearing in an earlier tradition, possibly of the same name. We have observed a similar transference in the case of the Christian saints (I04).

(I03)op.cit.,p.I48.

(I04)v.Chapter II,.p.49 ff.

They seem frequently to have taken over attributes of the divinities they supplanted. If Jones is correct in his theory of the Scandinavian ancestry of Owein, the fact that the names Odin and Owein are not entirely dissimilar to the ordinary ear, and that Odin was a major raven god, would have helped to fix the legend in popular tradition and ensure its perpetuation, until it became crystallized in the medieval tale in the form we now have it.

The suggestion that the ravens were really a band of human followers has been rejected, an examination of a small amount of the Celtic evidence alone sufficing to show that the parallel Celtic cultures are fully familiar with such a concept as bird servants and informants. In the earlier tradition, however, they may have been capable of transformation into men, cf. Conaire's bird kinsmen. As it seems unnecessary to seek for such an explanation as Jones', so it seems equally profitless to seek for some close connection with other supernatural beings in bird form, such as the Irish Badb and the Morgain legend, the entire tradition being rich in bird imagery and transformation.

Cu Chulainn and the Ravens.

Apart from the contexts in which the raven appears in a close relationship with a particular deity or hero, the bird appears in many miscellaneous contexts which must now be considered. Cu Chulainn is associated with mysterious ravens on several occasions, where the relationship is frequently one of enmity, and as he was traditionally regarded both as the son and as the avatar of Lugh, whose possible origin as a raven god has been discussed above, these incidents are of especial interest.

One passage in the Serglige (I05) implies that two ravens were in his service, although no other reference is made to them in the literary tradition as it stands at present. The passage in question is as follows:

'Luid Labraid ass iarom / anais Cú Chulaind ocont shlóg. Fanócrat in dá fhiach druiídechta dogénsat int shlúraig. 'Is dóig,' ol in slúag, 'in ríastartha a Héirind, iss ed terchanait ind fhiaich.'

(I05)Myles Dillon, Serglige Con Culainn, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1953, p.20.

'Labraid went away then, and Cu Chulainn waited by the host; two magic ravens announced him, the hosts recognized it. 'It is likely' said the host, 'the distorted one from Ireland, that is what the ravens prophesy.'

The above is strikingly similar to the reference given by Loth (I06) to the two druidic ravens which announce the arrival of the Fomorians to Lugh. The Gallo-Roman god-with-the-birds motif, and the ravens of Odin have something in common with these episodes.

Again, Cu Chulainn is associated with a mysterious flock of ravens, this time malevolent, in a legend contained in the prose and the metrical dindsenchas (I07). The prose text is as follows:

(Srúb Brain, canas roainmíge?
Ni ansa.) Cu Chulainn dodechaid indegaid na dub-elle o Dun Delga co ro marb en cach thire dib gus in mbranen deidenach. Rohorta leis ic Redg 7 ic Ramann, 7 topacht (a chenn) do suide 7 roindaim a lama ina fhuil, 7 isbeir 'Srúb brain and' coa thabairt in chind for in cairraicc.

LLL a lin: secht n-airtim tra ina gulfainn each eoin, secht cubait rigi moa mun bragait: cuirp remra 7 cosa remra leo, 7 mussnaitis muir dib. De quibus Srúb Brain dicitur.

(I06)v. p. 222 above.

(I07) Rennes Prose Dindsenchas, published by Whitley Stokes, Revue Celtique XV, 1874 p. 450.

'Cu Chulainn pursued the black bird-flock from Dundalk, and in every country he killed one of the birds down to the last raven. It was destroyed by him at Redg and at Ramann, and he cut off its head from it and bathed his hands in its blood and said, when putting the head on the crag 'This is Srub Brain (Ravens ~~Stream~~ ^{Bill}) (I08). Thrice fifty was their number (I09), seven handlengths were in each bird's bill, and seven royal (?) cubits round their necks. They had thick bodies and thick feet with which they swam the sea.'

The metrical version of the legend is as follows (I10):

Matan do Choin na Cerdda
for mur dron dune Delga,
fri sechem sluag 'na saige,
ic fethem uar irgaile.

Co facca in muir n-uar n-altach
co sluag adbal ingantach,
fer co fáthaib rafhollaig,
ria ráthaib ria rodrongaib.

Linsat triath-mag a teite,
in sluag sciath-glan scith-meite:
rochansat ceol cen chobra
for a seol co sir-sholma.

Ba leor do bron in betha (leg. lór: Gwynn, V, p. 136)
a nglor is a ngarb-gretha:
leor do destin co dergnaid (lór as above).
descin for a ndub-delbaib.

Tri coecait 'sind eill fo thri;
leor ba leir al-linmairi: (as above)
duibithir funchi fedil
culchi cach eoin imthemín.

(I08) In a note, Stokes says this is now Stroove Brin in N.E. Donegal 'to which all deranged people of the country are wont to resort.'

(ctd. overleaf)

Remra a cuirp is a cossa,
 mosnaitis muir dia mbossa:
 sithithir seoil for sessaib
 sceith cach eoin cen imresain.

Secht n-artim fo thri tadbain
 gulban cach oen-eoin angbaid:
 secht cubait riged ranac
 i tacmung a mun-bragat.

Imsoi fothu, feochar ngal,
 Óu na cath is na comram:
 rosoirg dia thabaill in daig
 co remaind is co redgaig.

Desin roort uile n-og
 in enlaith olc ecal-mor,
 tar cach ngaibel col-lin bla
 cossin mbrainen ba tiugba.

Rotheip a meide assa muin,
 indlais a lama 'n -a fhuil,
 rouaig cach ruin in challait,
 tuc sruib forsin sen-charraic.

Desin asberar Srub Brain:
 fegar cech run tria rogail,
 do gnim in Chon, nar chatail,
 sir in mod, cach moch-matain.

Gwynn translates:

'On a morning the Hound of the Smith was on the strong rampart of Dun Dealga keeping cold watch for combat, to pursue hosts on the march.

And he saw a cold, cliff-bound sea covered with a monstrous marvellous host: the man of devices (?) paid no heed - in flocks, in great droves.

(I09 ctd.) The number of the magic bird flocks in the Compert, v. Chapter II, p. 102

(I10) Edward Gwynn, Todd Lecture Series,

X, p. 256ff.

Dublin

They filled the sea-plain with their gathering, the bright-winged (III) enormous host: they sang a joyless strain on their ceaseless rapid course.

It was a world of grief to hear their calling and their hoarse cries: full loathly and uncomely was the sight of their black forms.

Thrice three fifties in the flock: full plain to see was their multitude: black as long-lived scaldcrow the cowl of each dusky bird.

Gross their bodies and their legs; they paddled the sea with their feet: long as a sail on the thwarts were the wings of each bird, past dispute.

Handbreadths thrice seven displays, the beak of each cruel bird: seven cubits of the forearm I counted in the girth of their necks.

Against them turned, fierce valour, the Hound of battles and encounters: the fiery hero slew them with his sling at Ramann and at Redg.

Thereupon he slew them all entirely, the evil, formidable fowls, across every inlet, with fulness of fame, to the last surviving raven.

He severed its neck from its shoulders; he bathed his hands in its blood: the cunning hero wove each mystic sign (II2) he put the beak on the ancient rock.

Hence it is called Raven's Bill, every secret meaning is seen by reference to an exploit: from the deed of the Hound that slept not, (long the measure) any early morning. (II3)

(III)Bright, probably in the sense of glossy.

(II2)Gwynn amends in exhallait to in callait, Vol. XII part V, p.136.

(II3)Gwynn, op.cit.V, p.136.

These two texts are interesting, the metrical version enlarging the brief prose account. In the metrical version, the ravens appear as a portent of evil:

'they sang a joyless strain on their ceaseless, rapid course.'

and

'It was a world of grief to hear their calling and their hoarse cries: full loathly and uncomely was the sight of their black forms.'

These birds however are obviously no ordinary ravens from whose appearance and cries events could be divined. They are clearly malevolent otherworld birds, well-known to Celtic tradition. Their number is that of the supernatural bird flocks (some multiplication of fifty, usually thrice fifty). Their measurement in sevens is suggestive of the supernatural (II4). Ravens cannot, of course, swim; these great birds paddled the sea with their feet; in the prose version, thick feet they had with which they swam the sea.

(II4) Mme Sjoestedt discusses Fergus' measurements in sevens (Gods and Heroes, p.36).

There is the strange ritual of decapitating the last bird, and the bathing of the hands in the blood. This rite seems to have been performed with a view to gaining some of the 'mana' of the raven, and it was perhaps thought that actual physical contact with the magic bird would imbue the one who touched it with its particular prophetic and supernatural powers (II5). The folk tale Sgiathan Derg may be borne in mind in this connection.

We should not, perhaps, have recognized these birds for ravens from their description in the above texts. The descriptions of their type of flight and cries are remarkably true ornithologically, but their gross measurements and ability to swim indicate that they are mere approximations to ordinary ravens (II6). Thus it seems very possible that all references to flocks of black birds or individual black birds were intended to connote ravens, or of course crows, just as white birds seem frequently to have meant swans.

(II5) Belief in the various powers of blood are well-known and widespread. Tom Peete Cross has several references to motifs where the different beliefs in the efficacy of blood are illustrated, e.g. DI016: v. also Stith Thompson, Motif Index, alphabetical index, Blood. For story of Sgiathan Derg, in which application of blood disenchants ravens, v. p. 290 below.

(II6) Tom Peete Cross, Motif Index, DI273. I. 3. 7 as magic no:

A legend, which is not dissimilar to the above, occurs in the Agallamh na Senorach (II7). Caoilte and his companions have gone to the people of the Sidh in order that he may be healed by them, but they wish to delay this until he has destroyed three terrible ravens which come each year from the north and carry off the boys:

'Trí fiaich tecaít chucaínn atuaíd gacha bliadna agus in uair bíť macrađ in tsída oc immáin tóirnid ar in macraíd agus beirit fer gacha fiaich leo díob gach agaid samhna ar Ilbrec, agus do bádar ann go táinic lá cona lánsoillse agus d'éigedar tuatha dé danann i fiadnais na himána, agus tucad fídhell gacha seisir dóib, agus brannabh gacha cúicir agus timpán gach deichenbair, agus cruit gacha cét, agus cuislena féige forbartacha gach nónbair.

Is ann sin atchonnatar na trí fiaich a himdhomain in mhara atuaíd cor thúrnsat ar in mbile mbuada bóí forsin faidche mar dognítis roime agus ro léicset trí grécha doilghe duaibsecha eisđib, agus damad díor mairb a talmain nó fuilt do chennaib dáined dobhérdais na trí scrécha sin, gur mhescbuaidersat in slóg uile.

Is ann ro ghab Cas Corach mac Cainchine fer d' feraib na fídhle agus tucastar urchar d'fiach díob co tarla ina bheol agus ina bhragait corusmarb, 7 ro dhiubraic imorro Fer maise mac Eogobail fiach aile dhíob agus nosmarb. agus rosdhiubhraic Caoilte in tres fiach agus do mharb fo'n chuma chétna, agus adubairt Cailte, 'adrochradar na heoin agus déntar mo leigessa.'

'Three ravens come to us from the north each year, and when the youths of the fairy mounds are playing shinty,

(II7) S. H. O'Grady, Silva Gadelica, London 1892. II, p. 250, *I, p. 220*.
Agallamh na Senorach, from the Book of Lismore.

they swoop down on the youths, and each raven takes one away with it every Hallows Night' said Ilbrec. And they were there until day came with its full brightness, and the Tuatha De Danann ^{looked on} went out in the presence of the shinty. And 'chess' was brought to each six persons of them, and 'brannabh' (a board game?) to each five persons, and a stringed instrument to every ten persons, and a harp to every hundred, and *skill and dominant pipes* to every nine persons.

It is then that they saw the three ravens from the deeps of the sea to the north, so that they descended on the tree of special properties which was on the green, as they used to do before, and they emitted three sorrowful shrieks, gloomy to hear, and were it a thing permitted that the dead should be raised out of the earth or the hair (torn) from the heads of men, those three screeches would have effected it; so that they confused the entire host. (II8)

Then Cas Corach seized one of the chessmen and cast at one of the ravens so that it went into its mouth and into its breast so that he killed it: Fer Maise son of Eogobail cast at another of the ravens and killed it, and Caoilte shot at the third raven and killed it in the same fashion. And Caoilte said '*done away a'the birds, and let my healing be done.*'

The flock of otherworld ravens which Cu Chulainn kills, and the three fierce ravens destroyed by Caoilte and his companions are two examples of a concept which occurs frequently in the Celtic literary and folk traditions, i.e. that of a malevolent bird, or flock of birds, which emerges from some supernatural region at closely regulated seasons to bring harm and destruction on gods or men. (II9)

(II8) This motif of the terrifying effects of the scream of supernatural animals is well-exemplified in the Welsh tale
(ctd. overleaf)

(II8 ctd.) of Lludd and Llefelys. Here again, the scream is emitted on May-eve, the period in Welsh tradition when the occupants of the otherworld encroached upon man. The passage describing the effects of the scream is as follows:

'The second plague was a scream which was raised every May-eve over every hearth in the Island of Britain. And that would pierce folks' hearts, and strike them with such terror that men would lose their hue and their strength and women the fruit of their wombs, and the young men and maidens would lose their senses, and all animals and trees and the earth and the waters be left barren.'

Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, The Mabinogion, London, 1949, p. 90.

(II9) Some ^{of} ~~the~~ these malevolent birds and bird flocks are discussed in Chapter V below. Brief reference may be made to some of them here. The Cave of Cruachan was clearly regarded as an entrance to the otherworld. From it there regularly emerged supernatural animals, e.g. pigs; a monstrous three-headed bird, and a flock of rust-red birds (one of the otherworld colours) which withered everything in Ireland with their breaths. These are destroyed by the slings of the Ulstermen. The birds in the Compert (v. Chapter II, p. 102 ff) likewise ravage the countryside. A legend (v. p. 268 below) connects St. Patrick's Purgatory on Lough Derg with a god Cornu in the form of a huge black bird. A legend which is reminiscent both of the above two incidents connecting Cu Chulainn and Caoilte with evil ravens, and of Owein's magic birds, occurs in the text of the First Battle of Moytura: it is as follows:

Ar torachtain immorro do Thuathaibh de Danann a nErinn as ann tadhbas fis > aisling do Eochaid mac Erc meic Rinnaill d'airdrig Erend. Ba sochtadh > ba snim, ba machtadh > ba meragud menman les he, > do innis da drai aisling d'aisgin do. Cidh amh atchonnarcais? ar an drai ar Cesard. Atchonnarcas amh, ar ri Erenn, elta mor
(ctd. overleaf)

An unusually useful and interesting modern folk belief which is relevant to the present investigation of supernatural ravens, was recorded in Sutherland (I20). The incident is alleged to have taken place in the seventeenth century in the village of Halmadry in Strathnaver,

(II9 ctd.) d'enaib duba do thiachtain a himdoimib in aigen chugainn gur desedar forainn ule, gur chumaisgedar ar feraib Erenn. Romesgatar > romillset sinn. Dar lim tall nech uainn bem don eon ba huaisle dib gur ben a sgiathan de > a Cesard erg a muinigin t'fhesa > t'eolais > tabair a fis duinn cred sin.'

'Now on the arrival of the Tuatha De Danann in Ireland, a vision was revealed in a dream to Eochaid, son of Erc, high king of Ireland. He pondered over it with much anxiety, being filled with wonder and perplexity. He told his wizard, Cesard, that he had seen a vision. 'What was the vision?' asked Cesard. 'I saw a great flock of black birds,' said the king, 'coming from the depths of the ocean. They settled over all of us, and fought with the people of Ireland. They brought confusion on us, and destroyed us. One of us, methought, struck the noblest of the birds and cut off one of its wings. And now, Cesard, employ your skill and knowledge, and tell us the meaning of the vision.'

J. Fraser, The First Battle of Moytura, Eriu ', 1916, pp. 18, 19.

In the above, as in the Cu Chulainn and Caoilte legends, the flock of ill-omened birds comes in from the sea. The battle between the birds and men is reminiscent of that between Owein's ravens and the human troops. The flock of black birds from Ros Dela (v. p. 32 above) may also be kept in mind in this connection, and all these fragments of tradition point to there having been, at one time, a fairly widespread belief in the harmful power of otherworld birds.

(I20) N. MacKay, T.G.S.I., XX, p. 99.

Sutherland (I2I). Apparently it was customary to hold prayer meetings in the house of a certain man in Halmadry. One day, while the service was in progress, a large raven was seen in the dim light, sitting on a pillar in the house. The worshippers felt great evil emanating from the bird, and were gripped by a horrible fascination, while all power to move left them. At the time when the service

(I2I)According to Ptolemy, Sutherland, or part of what is now the county, was occupied by people known as the Lugi. Other tribes inhabiting Caithness and Sutherland at the time were the Caereni, the Cornavii and the Smertae, these names being plural in form, as were the Gaulish tribal names. The name is reminiscent of the hypothetical Gaulish word 'lougos' discussed on p.218 above. Watson (The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland, London, 1926, p.17) suggests that there may have been a genuine Celtic word 'lougos' meaning raven, and that the name here may indicate people of a swarthy colouring. To support this suggestion, he remarks that the people of Loch Carron are still called 'fithich dhubha Loch Carrann' on account of their dark complexions. He does not give any details about this tradition, and the only published reference appears in the Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Glasgow, where, in a paper on The Old Highlands, W. McKenzie says (p.84) 'Bheir mi dhuibh na'n deigh beagan de na frith-ainmean a tha measg nan Gaidheal, mar leanas - Creignis Na Fithich Dhubha 'I will tell you after them, a few of the nick-names that are current amongst the Gaels, Craignish - The Black Ravens.' However, it is likely that this nick-name referred to the predatory nature of the people rather than to their colouring. The tribe Lugi or Lougoi may however have had some association with a god Lug, although one would have expected any name derived from Lugus, which is a -u- stem, to have had a form such as Lugovii. However, the above suggestions, in conjunction with the Sutherland tradition under discussion, may point to some early raven beliefs in the County, reinforced, perhaps, by Scandinavian contacts.

should have ended, the worshippers remained in the house. Time passed, and those outside became restless and entered to ascertain the cause of the delay. They too fell under the spell. Two days and nights passed, and eventually those who had remained outside decided to remove the roof of the house. This was done, and the spell broken. It was later disclosed that, so powerful was the atmosphere of evil in the building, it had been decided to sacrifice the householder's son to the bird spirit. Only the presence of mind of a servant saved the child. The natives of Sutherland, apparently prefer not to talk of this episode, which is still current in the oral traditions and superstitions

This story appears to be quite genuine, allowing of course for variation in details due to constant repetition in the telling of the incident, and it does testify in a most interesting and striking way to the way belief in the evil powers of birds, or gods or demons in bird-form, could actually operate. The desire to propitiate the spirit by human sacrifice indicates how deeply superstitious and afraid of the supernatural raven the God-fearing natives must have been. This tale is also reminiscent of the

tradition that Saint Patrick's Purgatory on Lough Derg was inhabited by a great black bird (I22).

Thus all the evidence, fragmentary though it is, points to the position of the raven as the evil, black bird 'par excellence' of Celtic imagination and superstitious belief - a prophet of evil, the bird of some hostile otherworld, and the natural form for fierce pagan deities to take when ousted by the Christian saints.

(I22) Seymour (Irish Visions of the Other-world, S.P.C.K. 1930, p.176), discusses the Purgatory. Antonio Mannini visited it in I4II, and reports that he saw a great black bird named Corna who was really a demon turned into bird-form by Patrick. James Yonge, in his account of the pilgrimage of Laurence Rathold, also made in I4II, likewise speaks of the bird Cornu. It seems likely that a cave on the island once constituted a pagan sanctuary where some bird-deity called Cornu was worshipped, oracles perhaps being delivered there. The Cave of Cruachan seems likewise to have been regarded as the entrance to an otherworld region, and the supernatural birds and animals which periodically emerged from it are mentioned on p.264 above. Another reference to evil black birds also occurs in this context. In his life of Patrick, Jocelin states that the Purgatory on Cruachan in Connaught originated in the expulsion of evil spirits which haunted Ireland. The reference here is probably to the deities of the pagan inhabitants of the country. Demons in the form of horrible black birds flew about Patrick and disturbed his meditations.

Two other references to human beings who are plagued by otherworld birds or demons in bird-form are as follows? Carrigan (History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory,

(ctd. overleaf)

The Raven as a Prophetic Bird.

The raven invariably appears in a prophetic role whether it is figuring in a supernatural context or not. However, its role as a prophetic bird can be divided into two categories, i.e. future events are divined from the flight and cries of ordinary ravens, where the outcome is not invariably evil; secondly, supernatural otherworld ravens are the natural bringers of evil tidings. We have seen that the crow/raven goddesses were prophetic goddesses, almost invariably of ill-fortune. Not only were the cries of ravens capable of interpretation by druids and other people, but certain people were popularly believed to 'have the language of the birds' and to be capable both of understanding the speech of ravens and of holding conversation with them. There are numerous examples of this belief in the Celtic tradition. Some of the incidents concerned with prophecy from normal ravens (i.e. not obviously supernatural) will be examined here. It must be

(I22 ctd.) p.9) refers to a strange legend of nine black friars who haunted the grave of Donnchadh, son of Ceallach, king of Ossory. They were of the company of O'Coingeoidh, and returned to the grave in the shape of dusky black birds, and hovered in the air, not daring to rest on the sacred earth. Carrigan also refers to a similar legend, connected this time with the Christian king Cearbhall (pp. I-25).
(ctd. overleaf.)

borne in mind that belief in divination from the flight and cries of ravens is ancient and widespread.

A charming and unique example of raven lore was discovered in codex H.3.17, in Trinity College Library, and published in Eriu by Best (123). The language of the tracts is Middle Irish. It seems clear that the raven, as well as other birds, was domesticated for the purposes of divination. The Irish is as follows:

Fiachairecht andso sis.

'Madh congaire an fiach os imdha comdluthta a medon an tighe is ardgres liath no chlerig ticc cucad, acht ata deithbir eturru .i. mad laoch clerech is bacach adeir an fiach, madh fer graidh is gradh gradh congair 7 is fo do do lo congair. Madh gresa oclaic no caintidh ticc and is graacc gracc congair, no as grob grob 7 i lleith ad diaigh congair 7 as as tecaic na gressa. Mad gracc gracc congair fordhighthir na hoicc dia ngair. Mad mna tic and is foda congair. Mad congaire don aird aniantuaidh don tigh meirligh ar ti na n-each do ghaid. Mad ar dorus an tighe congair coimighthi no amhuis ticc ann. Mad os dorus congair cainti no gresa do lucht comaitechta righ tic ann. Mad os ~~dorus~~-eengair-eainti imda in fir maith congair airm a mbia a gascidh 7 se ac dul for fecht ni ticfa slan 7 minab eadh ticfa imshlan. Madh i in ben nodbebhuis is andsan

(122 ctd.)Sadhbh erected massive walls around Seir Keiran near Birr, apparently fearing greatly some sort of attack, and great birds screamed and stamped on the grave of Cearbhall there.

(123)R. I. Best, Prognostications from the Raven and the Wren, Eriu, 8, 1916, p.120 ff.

adhart congair. Mad a cosuibh imdha in fir congair ticfa a mac no a brathair, no a chliamain don tigh. Mad a forimel na cuiled airm a mbi an biadh inti congair is tormach mbidh don leith asa ngair .i. carna no cetbleghon bo. Madh ider an cuilidh 7 tene a aighidh, aidhigh combind tice don tigh. Mad nesu do mmai an tighe airm a mbi na suidi it le na greasa .i. cliamuin no cara. Mad fri cuilid andes congair altrum no gresu a cein tice don tigh. Mad guth bec asberu .i. err err no ur ur galar for nec isin tigh no for ni dia ceathra. Mad coin tice fona caorchaib as don cru caorach congair no a n-urcomair na mma maithi is edh adeir carna carna grob grob coin coin. Mad congaire do chleith an tighe an tan bithter ag longud caithid an longud sin. Mad do cloich congair tasc athaigh sin. Mad do chrund ard congair tasce oigtigerna indsin. Madh do chleith in craind tasc ri(g) no meic shaorcheneoil. Mad dia ndech leat for feacht no romat 7 mad failidh fair bidh maith do thurus doberthar urcharna duit. Mad tuat(h)bil dotes 7 congair fort belaib is tru forsa ngair amlaid no fordergadh for neach don foirind. Mad for do belaib ac dul docum dala coimeirghi inti. Mad tuaithbel dodeocha marbthar nech don coimeirghe sin. Mad congair de chuill na n-each meirlig fora ti. Mad dia soa foen ocai 7 dia n-abra grob grob gadtar ni dona hechaib 7 ni fuidhbiter ...

'If the raven call from above an enclosed bed in the midst of the house, it is a distinguished grey-haired guest or clerics that are coming to thee, but there is a difference between them. If it be a lay cleric (?) the raven says bacach: if it be a man in orders it calls gradh gradh and twice in the day it calls. If it be a warrior guests or satirists that are coming, it is gracc gracc it calls, or grob grob, and it calls in the quarter behind thee, and it is thence that the guests are coming. If it call gracc gracc the warriors are oppressed(?) to whom it calls. If women are coming it calls long (I24). If it call from the

(I24)Best suggests fo dó, 'twice.'

north-east end of the house, robbers are about to steal the horses. If it call from the house door, strangers or soldiers are coming. If it call from above the door, satirists or guests from a king's retinue are coming. If it call from above the goodman's bed, the place where his weapons will be, and he going on a journey, he will not come back safe. but if not, he will come back sound. If it is the woman who is about to die, it is from the pillow it calls. If it call from the foot of the man's bed, his son or his brother or his son-in-law will come to the house. If it call from the edge of the storehouse where the food is kept, there will be increase of food from the quarter it calls, that is, flesh-meat or first milking of kine. If its face be between the storehouse and the fire, agreeable (?) guests are coming to the house. If it be near to the woman of the house, where her seat is, the guests are for her, namely, a son-in-law or a friend. If it call from the south of the storehouse, fosterage or guests from afar are coming to the house. If it speak with a small voice, that is, err err or ur ur, sickness will fall on some one in the house or on some of the cattle. If wolves are coming amongst the sheep, it is from the sheep-fold it calls, or from over against the good woman, and what it says is carna carna (flesh), grob grob, coin coin (wolves). If it call from the rooftree of the house when people are eating, they throw away that food. (If it call from a high tree, then it is death-tidings of a young lord.) If it call from a stone it is death-tidings of an aithech. If from the top of the tree, death-tidings of a king or a youth of noble lineage (I25). If it go with thee on a journey or in front of thee, and if it be joyful, thy journey will prosper and fresh meat will be given to thee. If thou come left-hand-wise and it calls before thee, he is a doomed man on whom it calls thus, or it is the wounding of some one of the company. If it be before thee when going to an assembly, there will be an uprising therein. If it be left-hand-wise it has

(I25) Hermigisel, king of the Warni, was riding in company with his chiefs one day, when he observed a bird perched in a branch above his head. The king could understand the language of the birds, and interpreted the croaking as a warning that he would die in forty days. This bird of ill omen was undoubtedly the raven, or the crow. Procopius, Gothic War, IV, 20.

come, some one is slain in that uprising. If it call from the corner where the horses are, robbers are about to attack them. If it turn on its back thereat and says grob grob, some of the horses will be stolen and they will not be recovered, and so on.'

There are various other miscellaneous references in Irish literature to the practise of drawing omens from birds. The Lay of the Wife of Meargach indicates the belief in the raven's power of predicting evil (I26):

'D'aithin me ar ghuth an fheich,
gach maidean o thriall sibh uaim
gur tuitim dibh, o bharramhuil fhior
a 's nar bhfilleadh dhibh do'n tir le buadh.'

'I knew by the voice of the raven, each morning since you journeyed from me, that your downfall was true and certain, and that you would not return to the land victorious.'

Evil is also divined from the flight of the bird:

'Dh'aithin me ar amharc bhur n-diaig
An la do thriall o'n Dun,
An eiril an fheich romhaibh amach,
nar chomhartha maith ar chasa chugam.'

'I knew on looking after you the day on which you travelled from the Dun, by the flight of the raven going forth before you that it was no propitious sign of your return to me.'

(I26) Transactions of the Ossianic Society, Dublin, ¹⁸⁵⁶ IV, p. 173. *Laoithe Fiannúigheachta*, ed. by J. O. Daly. Above poem & a ms. volume collected by Martin Griffin, Kilrush, Clare, in 1844.

That the druids habitually drew omens from the calls and behaviour of birds, a practice naturally opposed by the Church, is testified to by the literary tradition on several occasions. For example, in discussing the Picts, the Irish Nennius (I27) mentions that they were reputed to have introduced ornithomancy to Ireland. Again, in a Lorica attributed to Columcille, quoted by Best (I28), the saint deploras the custom of drawing omens from the voices of birds (I28).

(I27)XXVIII. 'Anais seiser dibh os Breaghmaigh. Is uaidibh gach geiss, > gach sen, > gach sreodh, > gotha en, > gach mana.'

'Six of them remained over Breagh-mhadh (Bregia). From them (are derived) every spell, every charm, every sneeze, and augury by voices of birds, and every omen.'

J.H.Todd, The Irish Version of the Historia Britonum of Nennius, Dublin, 1848, p.I24.

XXX. 'Moradh sredh is mana,
Raga sin, am sona,
Gotha en do faire
Cairi gach ceol cona.'

'The honouring of sneezes(?) and omens, choice of weather, lucky times, the watching of the voices of birds, they practised without disguise.' (Todd, op.cit.p.I44)

(I28)Best, op.cit. p.I20.

(I29) Ni adraim do gothaib en,
na sreod na sen for bith che,

(ctd. overleaf)

According to tradition, when Saint Cellach's murder was imminent, all the ominous birds joined in giving warning of the approaching crime:- 'do ghair in fiach agus in fhennóc agus in dreán agus na heoin archena ann sin....táinic diu seirrfhiach ibair chluana eo..' 'the raven cried and the hooded crow and the wren and all the other birds then....the raven of the yew tree of Cluain Eo came.' Before his death, Cellach recites the following (I30):

'A eannach ón a eannach, a éinín bhratghlas bhennach,
 Léir dam forcla do mhana, nírsat cara do Chellach.
 A fhiaich dogní in ngragarnaig, másat acarraig a eoin
 Ná héirig sunna do'n ráith, co netha do sháith dom
 fheoil.
 Seirrfhiach ibair chluana eo, freigéraid co garb in
 gleo
 Béraid lán a ingan nglas, riumsa ní bud min scéras.

 A dreolláin cusin eirr máil, is truag thairngirios tu
 in láidh
 Masad ténacais dom brath 's do tharraing mo shaegulrath.

'O crow and O crow, grey-cloaked, beaked, paltry bird,
 the import of your warning is clear to me, you are no
 friend to Cellach. O raven who makes the croaking, if you

(I29 ctd) na mac na mana na mmai,
 is e mo drai Crist mac De.

'I do not adore the voices of birds, nor sneezing nor
 lots in this world nor a boy nor omens nor woman. My druid
 is Christ the Son of God.'

(I30)S.H.O'Grady, Silva Gadelica, II, pp.58-9, I. pp. 56-7

are hungry, bird, do not go from this rath until you have a sufficiency of my flesh. The raven of the yew tree of Cluain Eo (I31) fiercely will he take part in the battle, he will take the fill of his grey talons, he will not part from me in gentleness.O wren with the brief tail, sadly have you chirped the lay, if it be that you have come to betray me and to curtail my span of life.'

Apparently the birds of prey that did taste Cellach's flesh and blood died immediately (I32).

Ravens with white feathers were popularly believed to be birds of good omen in Ireland. Toland, in his History of the Druids (I33), states how he was in Dublin in 1697, and while walking to the village of Finglass, he came upon two acquaintances who were engaged in some business transaction. They were overjoyed on seeing a raven hopping nearby with white feathers in its wing. The favourableness of the omen was apparently increased when the bird flew off to the south of the observers, and with much croaking. The men informed Toland that it was an invariable sign of good fortune to see a raven with white on its wings, flying on one's right hand and croaking simultaneously.

(I31) In the Barra story of Deirdre (collected in 1867 by Alexander Carmichael, from Iain MacNeill, and published in the T.G.S.I., XIII, p.250), Deirdre, in a dream, sees many things which she takes to be portents of impending disaster. One of these is the raven:-

(ctd. overleaf)

The crow was equally important as a prophetic bird in the popular tradition. Three crows, almost certainly the war-goddesses, utter forecasts of the approaching battle to Ailill and Medb in the legend of the Tain (I34). In the Lay of the Wife of Meargach, the bird is mentioned as a prophet of evil:

'D'aithin me ar ghuth na m-badbh
Ann bhur gcathair inheighir gach neoin;
O sgarabhair liom go crothach caomh,
Gur bhfogus dam lean a's bron.'

'I knew by the voice of the crow about your pleasant fortress each noon, since you parted from me, shapely, beautiful, that affliction and sorrow were close to me.'

(I31 ctd.) 'Chunnas na tri fitheacha dubha
Leis na tri duilleaga dubhach crann iubar
an eig....'

'The three black ravens were seen with the three gloomy leaves of the yew-tree of death.'

Here ravens are again associated with yew trees and prophecy, and these three birds are of the type discussed above in connection with Caolte, v.p. 262.

(I32) It was a widespread belief that the eating of or interfering with the flesh of anything sacred would result in death, v.p. 276 above, and Chapter I, p. 3 ff.

(I33) Quoted by Wood Martin, op.cit., II, p. I42.

(I34) MacRoth describes the troops to Ailill and Medb. One party of troops has three wonderful bird-flocks flying over it, and about the three great battle wheels, three red-mouthed badbs circle, and prophecy about the coming battle. (Quoted by Eleanor Hull, The Cuchullin Saga, p. 217)

There are many popular legends in both Gaelic and Welsh lore connecting the crow and the raven with evil and prophetic powers. According to Giraldus Cambrensis, for example, ravens and owls bred abnormally early when Prince John first left the Island, thereby foretelling the occurrence of some ill-fortune (I35). Again, the raven was apparently used for purposes of divination in Wales, and the usual superstitions that it was an evil omen for the bird to alight on the roof, etc., were current (I36). According to Cornish tradition, King Arthur was apparently transformed into a raven on his death, which leads to the concept of the bird soul (I37).

Reference to the raven's prophetic powers is made in the Scottish Gaelic 'Lay of Osgar.' The relevant verses are obscure and confused:

An t-sleagh nimhe 's i 'n laimh Chairbre,
 Gu'n craidhteach i ri uair feirge;
 Theireadh am fitheach ri 'ghiomh
 Gur h-ann leatha 'mharbht' an t-Osgar.

(I35) Giraldus Cambrensis, Topography of Ireland, trans. John O'Meara, 1951, p.60.

(I36) T. Gwynn Jones, Welsh Folklore, p.139.

(I37) v. Chapter V, p.445. W. J. Gruffydd, Math vab Mathonwy, p.283.

'S miosa theireadh e ris fhein-
 Am fitheach dubh 'na mhi-cheill;
 A' choigear a'taiseadh mu'n chlar,
 Ach fuil fir a bhith 'gar tacadh.'

The venomous spear in the hand of Cairbre, it was hurtful in the hour of anger: the raven would say with fear that Osgar should be slain with it.

'It is worse', he would say to himself, the black raven in his frenzy, these five to be taiseadh (?) about the board, than the blood of men to be choking us.' (I38)

A similar verse appears in the Battle of Gabhra (I39).

The last verse of the poem is:-

Mise bheireadh seachad fhein
 Fitheach dubh mo mhi-cheill
 A choig tha sinn mu'n chlar
 Ach suil fir a bhi 'ga shocadh.'

'I would give in very truth the dark raven of my unreason, the five of us who were round the board, that the hero's wound has closed in health.'

The first example seems to be a garbled version of the second, where it is clear that the reciter did not understand what was being referred to in the poem. The word 'taiseadh' is obscure. It seems to mean 'softening, moistening,' and may thus refer to some process of divination

(I38) J.F. Campbell, Popular Tales of the West Highlands
 Edinburgh, 1862, I p.306.

(ctd. overleaf)

by wetting something, e.g. material (cf. the washer-at-the-ford). In any case, the raven is here associated with future disaster and with divination.

The Language of the Birds.

There was a widespread belief that certain people had 'the language of the birds', i.e. not only were they able to interpret positions and behaviour of ominous birds in terms of future events, but that they actually had the power to understand the birds' own language (I40). Two examples which were obtained verbally in Skye (I41) are typical of the way in which this power was believed to operate.

(I39) J.G. Campbell, Waifs and Strays of Celtic Tradition, IV, London, 1891, p.44.

(I40) v.p. 279 above. In the story of the Hunting of Twrch Trwyth, Gurhyr is reputed to understand the language of the birds and the beasts:-

'Arthur a dywawt, 'Gwrhyr Gwalstawt Ieithoed, itti y mae iawn mynet yr neges honn. Yr holl ieithoed yssyd gennyt a chyfyeith wyt ar rei or adar ar anniueileit.'

'Arthur said, 'Gwrhyr, Interpreter of Tongues, it is best for you to go on this mission. You know all tongues, and you can speak with some of the birds and the beasts.'

(John Strachan, An Introduction to Early Welsh, Manchester, 1937, p.196.)

(ctd. overleaf)

According to tradition, the Beatons gained their medical knowledge from the ravens, with which they were strangely associated, and whose language they understood. At one time, a Beaton was in the service of James IV, and the king became seriously ill. Neither Beaton, nor any other apothecary called in to aid him, could improve his condition. One day, some ravens were discussing the king's illness, and they revealed the way in which they would cure him. Beaton, who had the language of the birds, put their suggestion into practise, and healed the king. (I42).

(143) Again, in the present century, a Skye man was reputed to be able to understand the language of the birds, particularly that of ravens. One day, he overheard three ravens talking, and he became very downcast. He told those who enquired the reason for his depression that the ravens had told him that he would die soon, and that his death would come about as a result of drowning. Because he

(I41) From Hugh MacRae, Skerinish, Portree, July, 1953.

(I42) Obtained by Hugh MacRae from his great-aunt, Peigi Stewart of Kensaleyre, who was illiterate.

(I43) Obtained by Hugh MacRae from the Church of Scotland minister in Portree, who was personally acquainted with the man in question.

never used a boat and never went near the sea, his friends reassured him. A short time after that, he was taking his cattle to a pool to drink, and becoming faint, he slipped, fell into the pool, and was drowned. (I44)

The raven figures largely in Gaelic folk traditions, apart from its role as prognosticator. Since it is the purpose of this study to indicate the type of popular belief which pertained to this bird, an exhaustive analysis cannot be made here of all its recorded appearances in the folk tradition. However, a selection of examples will be given in order to indicate the general character of the raven in this context. This does not include its appearance in folktales of the international type, which are discussed briefly below (I45).

(I44)v. Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, B2I6, Knowledge of animal languages. Ability to understand the language of the birds is mentioned in the Scottish Gaelic story of Alasdair, Mac an Impire (J.G. McKay, More West Highland Tales, Edinburgh, 1940, p.168):

Bha Impire ann roimhe so, agus is e Alasdair a bha air a mhac agus cha robh duine cloinne aige ach é. Thug e sgoil is ionnsachadh da, thar móran de chlan ridirean, agus rìghrean eile, air chor is gun tuigeadh e na h-eòin. Chaidh iad a mach a ghabhail sràide latha, as déidh an tràth-nòin, agus ciod e thachair orra ach eun air craoibh, a'bruidhinn. Dh'fhaighnich an t-Impire de a mhac, ciod è bha an t-eun a'cantuinn.....

(ctd. overleaf)

The raven was a form which, according to popular superstition, was adopted by witches, and of course by demons and the devil in Christian tradition. (I46)

In Scottish Gaelic tradition, the legend of the drowning of Iain Gairbh is an instance of belief in raven-form as a witch metamorphosis (I47). Iain Garbh was drowned in 1625 by a witch who had great power of raising storms. According to Campbell (I48), the witch was Iain's own fostermother. As the storm was coming up, three ravens hovered about the boat. Afterwards it was divulged that these were three well-known witches, i.e. Spoga Buidhe from Skye, Gorm-shuil Chrotach from the Portree district of Skye, and Doideag from Mull. Twenty birds were then seen to fly about the doomed ship, and Iain was soon set

(I44 ctd.) 'Once upon a time, there was an Emperor, whose son was called Alasdair, and he had no children but him. He gave him schooling and learning, above many of the children of knights and other kings, so that he could understand the language of the birds. One day, after dinner, they went out to take a stroll, and what did they ~~met~~ but a bird on a tree, talking. The Emperor asked his son what the bird was saying.....'

(I45)v. p. 288 ff.

(I46)Some of these have already been mentioned above, v. p. 264 ff.

(I47)The later tradition of witches or hags assuming raven form is reminiscent of the earlier belief in the crow/raven form of the war/fertility goddesses, v. p. 176 ff. above.
(ctd. overleaf)

upon by countless birds and frogs. Eventually, a raven alighted on the gunwale of the boat, and Iain, in attempting to strike it, cleft the boat, and all were drowned. Two variants of this tale were obtained in Skye from Hugh MacRae (I49). In one version, a single raven landed on the mast of Iain Garbh's ship when the storm was at its height. Iain, apparently realizing the significance of the bird, seized an axe and made a thrust at it: he misjudged his aim and cut instead the rope controlling the sail. It at once toppled over, and the boat foundered. In the second version, the witch was believed to have put a sian (spell) on Iain not to use material weapons. Apparently the waves alone were not sufficient to inundate the boat, and the witch invoked the aid of the ravens. One bird landed on the boat, and Iain said that one raven could not bring about his death; and so on until the seventh bird alighted, when he said, 'Here comes the seventh raven and the wind of death in its beak.'

(I48) Campbell, Witchcraft and Second Sight, p.25.

(I49) July, 1953, given to Hugh MacRae by his great-aunt, Peigi Stewart.

Witches in bird form are again associated with the sinking of a ship in the legend of the Spanish galley. On that occasion, the Mull witches were reputed to have turned into ravens and perched on the mast of the ship before it was sunk in Tobermory Bay (I50). According to Henderson (I5I), the clan Dougall regarded the raven as their symbolic bird:

'Cumha Cholla is Chuinn
'S cumha Shomhairle mhoir chruinn,
Bu tric fitheach air luing 's air bord.'

'The lament of Coll and of Conn, and the lament of great stout Somhairle, frequently was the raven on the ship and on deck.'

Witchcraft and ravens are once more associated in the following entry from the records of the church of Alves (I52).

July 17, 1653.

'John Fraser in Findhorne had a complaint given in against Johne Dawson ther for slandering him of witchcraft alleadging that the said Johne sould have said that a corbie flew from off the complainer's house upon his salmond nett and that for sundry tydes thereafter he catched no salmond

(I50)George Henderson, Survivals in Belief among the Celts, Glasgow, 1911, p. 92.

(I51)Henderson, op.cit. p.91. The verse is from a poem commemorating Louisa MacDougall, by the clan bard. He does not give details as to whether the poem is published or obtained orally.

(ctd. overleaf).

and that the said complainer was that corbie and in its likeness had wronged him. John Dawson confessed as above but added that in reporting this in John Fraser's hearing he said only jestinglie and in scorne to the said John, 'Look that yourself was not that corbie'. Three more witnesses adhered. John Dawson is censured before the congregation for being offensive to his neighbour's good name.'

The devil and his agents were also popularly conceived of as being capable of adopting crow/raven form. For example, in a version of the story of the discovery of the Red Book of Appin, (I53) a young boy is accosted by the Devil. At a further meeting, the boy draws a circle about himself as protection. The Devil transforms himself into various animals in an attempt to drive the boy from his sanctuary. He becomes a flock of crows, so that the air from their wings might blow him from the circle.

Again, in another Scottish Gaelic tale (I54), a young herd is approached one day by a fine gentleman who

(I52)William Cramond, The Church of Alves, Elgin, 1900. This is a particularly interesting account of the way in which popular superstition worked in regard to belief in witchcraft and the power to assume bird form (in this case the crow rather than the raven), in that it is precisely located and dated, unlike so much of the popular lore.

(I53)Campbell, Superstitions, p.294.

(I54)J.G.Campbell, W.H.T. (1862), II, p.87.

offers him riches in return for service. The boy consults his master, who realizes that the stranger is, in fact, the Devil, and together they manage to outwit him, by means of a circle. The Devil takes on various forms, and finally, as day is breaking, he gives a fearful scream, turns into a huge raven, and ^Sdisappears.

Finally, a popular legend about Michael Scott (I55) tells how the magician was on his death-bed. After his death, his friends placed his body on a hillock, as he had instructed them. If ravens were to reach it first, his body was to be burned, but if doves arrived before the ravens, it was to receive a Christian burial. Three ravens and three doves were seen flying towards it. The ravens were first, but in their haste flew beyond their mark, and thus the Devil was baulked. Here, the ravens are of course emissaries of the Devil, and the doves messengers of God.

The above notes have attempted to indicate something of the way in which the raven and the crow figure in popular Gaelic traditions and superstitions.

The Raven in the Popular Folk Tale.

While generally following the pattern set for the personality of the bird by the earlier Celtic tradition, the part played by the crow/raven in the Gaelic folktale is not fundamentally different from its role in European folk tales generally, and many of the motifs are of international occurrence. The following notes and summaries are intended to indicate the type of appearance the bird makes in the insular folk tale.

The story of the Battle of the Birds (Cath nan Eun) is one which occurs in various forms, all more or less the same in formula. The following are two examples of this type:

All the beasts and birds are gathered together to fight for supremacy. When the hero arrives on the scene, battle is in progress between a large black raven and a serpent. The hero assists the raven in winning the battle. The bird then takes him on his back over seven hills,

seven glens and seven moors....On the third morning, instead of meeting the raven, the hero finds instead a handsome youth. He enquires of him about the raven, and the young man tells him that he himself had been the bird, kept in that form by magic, from which the hero had released him. (I57)

Another version of this motif is contained in the Irish folk tale, Sgiathan Dearg and the Daughter of the King of the Western World. (I58) The tale is full of bird transformations. The daughter of the King of the Western world sees three ravens fighting. Her son by a bird-lover, (who is seven years of age, but resembles a child twice that age) dislikes seeing two of the birds attacking one, and he wishes to interfere on behalf of the single bird. His mother dissuades him from doing ^{so} saying, saying it would be inauspicious. Next day they see the three ravens again. The boy makes the same observation about two fighting one, and his mother forcibly restrains him from interfering.

(I57) J.F.Campbell, W.H.T. (1862), I, p.38.

(I58)Curtin, Irish Folk Tales, p.98 ff.

On the third day, however, the boy does go to the birds. They resent his intrusion. He attacks them and stabs one with his sword. The blood falls on his hand and when he shakes it off, it strikes one of the two remaining birds which instantly becomes a man. He then shakes some blood on the other bird, which likewise becomes a man. Eventually, after adventures in an enchanted land, and the reunion of his father, Sgiathan Dearg, with his mother, the dead raven is restored to life. The three ravens were three brothers, and brothers of Sgiathan Dearg. (I59)

Another international tale type found in Irish and in Scottish Gaelic is that of Cupid and Psyche (I60). In the Gaelic versions, transformation is into a crow. The lover in the Irish story (I61) is a hound by day and a man by night. The three children are stolen from them, and when the woman divulges the secret of her marriage and the fate of her children, the husband transforms himself into a crow, and flies off, 'rinn se breachan dubh dhe fein agus chuaidh se amach an doras.' In the Scottish Gaelic version, the lover is a crow by day and a man by night.

(I59) Magic powers of blood mentioned on p. 26/ above.

(I60) Aarne-Thompson, 425.

(I61) (cf. overleaf).

The raven appears frequently in wonder tales, where it occupies the position of the helpful animal. (I62)

In Scottish Gaelic the tale of Ridire Ghrianaig (I63) may be briefly summarized as typical of a number of such tales. Three brothers seek the three daughters of a knight. In order to ascertain their whereabouts, it is necessary to ascend the cliff in a creel. The first brother does so, and when he is only half way up the cliff he is attacked by a fierce black raven which sets upon him with its talons and wings until he is almost blind and deaf. He descends again, and the second brother makes the attempt. The same thing happens. The third brother, however, succeeds. The raven becomes his helper and adviser. After many adventures the hero and the bird find the three girls and lower them down the cliff in the creel to the two brothers below, who make off with them, leaving the hero stranded. The bird comes once more to succour him. After further adventures, the raven asks the hero to decapitate him. Upon his doing so, the bird changes into a handsome youth (I64).

(I61 ctd.) Cu Ban an t-Sleibhe, recorded by Michael O Tiomanaidhe, from Co. Mayo, 1903, Bealoideas, II, p. 171.

(I62) Tom Peete Cross, Motif Index, B450, Helpful birds.

(ctd. overleaf)

Another wonder tale from the Scottish Gaelic tradition makes ravens the keepers of the water of a magic well. (I65). Five ravens are represented as having access to the magic well of virtues. An old grey man, in horse form, advises the hero to kill him, rip open his stomach and allow his intestines to appear. The five birds would then come to feed upon him. The hero must seize two of them and the other three would then request their brothers' release. This was only to be secured on condition that the birds delivered first of all five bottles of the water of the well of virtues. At first, the birds attempt to trick the hero, but upon his threatening to kill the two birds, the correct liquid is brought. (I66)

(I63 ctd.) J.F. Campbell, W.H.T. (1862), I, p.25.

(I64) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D7II, Disenchantment by Decapitation.

(I65) D. MacInnes, Folk and Hero Tales, London, 1890, p.199.

(I66) Birds are frequently connected with thermal waters in the earlier religious traditions, e.g. v. Chapter V, p. 337 ff. and Chapter II, p. 73 for some examples of this from the Gallo-Roman tradition.

Summary and Conclusion.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to ascertain the various ways in which the crow/raven figures in continental and insular religious and folk tradition. The material seems to fall naturally into several sections, which have been examined in turn. The conclusions reached in each of these sections point to the following factors. That the crow/raven was a bird of symbolic significance, the earlier monumental and textual evidence, incomplete and fragmentary as it inevitably is, makes indisputable. These birds do not appear to have had a greater popularity at one time than at another, although naturally their significance changed with changing religious habits and beliefs. The crow may have taken over the functions of the raven in areas where the latter was unknown, and there may also have been a certain amount of confusion between the species. The crow and the raven seem to have had similar characters in popular superstition and belief, with the raven perhaps dominant. Both appear as attributes of deities and as birds of augury and war. The raven,

as is evident from the foregoing chapter, has a much greater reputation for wisdom than the crow, and the language of the ravens, rather than the language of the crows is frequently referred to in the oral tradition.

The bird is found as the attribute of both male and female deities, but with, perhaps, a subtle distinction. In the case of the war/fertility goddesses, it is both their attribute and their form, and the two seem to be inseparable. The male deities may have it as their attribute, but it is not always clear that they also assume its shape. For example, the Lugus of Lugudunum is apparently symbolized by ravens, and the bird is depicted in company with a youthful deity on coins from the same district, but there is no indication of his having assumed bird form.

Lugh in Ireland shows no direct trace of having been regarded as a raven god, but this may possibly be implied in the two prophetic ravens which bring him information, by the reference made by the Hawk of Achill, and

even more indirectly in the fact that Cu Chulainn, his son and avator, has also two prophetic ravens, and is associated with a flock of mysterious malevolent ravens.. This is all very tentative and unsatisfactory, however, and can by no means be taken as evidence. Bran, as we have seen, may also have been a raven god in origin, but there is little evidence to support this theory. There were clearly raven gods in Gaul, as the discussion of the Gallo-Roman material makes clear, and some of the monuments are reminiscent of the Odin concept. We might perhaps, therefore, be justified in saying that the Germanic and the Gaulish peoples shared the religious concept of a raven god, associated with culture and with war, and that faint reflexes of such deities may lurk behind the insular gods, Lugh and Bran (for tradition strongly implies that Bran was a deity). Moreover, also in the light of this evidence, it has been suggested that Owein's ravens may have become attached to the historical Owein from an earlier deity, possibly of the same name.

In Ireland, Scotland and in Wales, any native raven superstitions and beliefs would tend to be substantiated and reinforced by contact with the Scandinavians, in whose

religious traditions it figured so largely as the bird of Odin. The legend of the black bird Cornu which inhabited St. Patrick's Purgatory is also in keeping with the general tradition, and it would seem to tie up with such a tradition as that of the Halmadaraidh raven. It seems likely that when flocks of great black birds are referred to in the literary material, the raven is meant, just as white birds seem to connote swans.

From earliest times, the bird occupies the role of prophet, as it appears to have done over most of Europe. As the attribute and messenger of gods and goddesses, it was naturally accredited with supernatural knowledge, and, moreover, its carnivorous nature would cause it to be regarded with awe by superstitious peoples. In the section dealing with the raven as prognosticator, we have examined some of the evidence for the bird in this role, which is typical of the whole Celtic tradition. There are two aspects to its role as prophet, i.e. its behaviour on certain occasions and at specific times enable ~~the~~ the future or the outcome of certain events to be anticipated, whereas, secondly, certain people were reputed to be able to understand the language of the birds and to prophesy from direct speech with the raven. Frequently, it was a prophet of

evil, especially in the earlier tradition, possibly because of its association with death, the battlefield and the war goddesses.

In later folk tradition, the bird was a form assumed by witches, and by people associated with witchcraft, and the Devil frequently appears in crow/raven form. This is only to be expected, as it was a custom of the Christian Church to to turn local deities into demons. A raven deity, considering the unpleasant associations of the bird, would very naturally become an evil spirit under Christian influence.

In the folk tale, the bird plays a similar part and appears in similar contexts to that in which it figures in the international folktale as studied by Stith Thompson. This makes its only real interest from the point of view of this examination, the fact that it does figure in Gaelic and Irish tales, and also that in them, its character is in keeping with the earlier tradition.

In conclusion then, it is clear from the appearance of the crow/raven in the entire Celtic religious tradition, that this was one of the most important birds, both as the

symbol of certain deities and as a prophet of evil.

Appendix to Chapter III.

The following are some miscellaneous Gallo-Roman monuments on which the raven is depicted, and which are of interest to Celtic. They are all illustrated by Esperandieu.

Plate 5802 from Mayence. A stele, having on it an inscription, above which is a large cup upon either side of which perch two birds, resembling ravens. Above is a rosette, and on the pilasters, several shields and various weapons are superimposed.

Plate 6955 from Perigueux. Two raven-like birds stand, one on either side of a vase, and drink from the contents.

Plate 8045 from Les Comminges. The busts of two figures. On each side of the busts is a bird, apparently a raven, an axe, and a mallet.

Plate 2224 from Saulieu. Fragment of a stele. Figure of a deity standing up, and naked, holding in his right hand

a serpent, and in his left hand a bird. The statue is much worn, and details of the bird cannot be made out. It is considerable in size, and from what can be seen of its outline, it may have represented a raven (v. also Chapter V, p.379H).

Plate 7547 from Spire. Stele depicting a rather crude representation of Mercury wearing a petassus. He holds purse and caduceus, and is accompanied by a goat, and there is a raven level with his right shoulder, facing left. The bas-relief was at one time coloured, traces of which remain.

Plate 68II from Nimes. Fragments of a cippus in the form of an altar, dedicated to the Diis Manibus. Below the inscription stands a bird of fierce aspect, which may be a raven, as Esperandieu suggests, although it more closely resembles a small hawk.

Plate 4I3, from Vienne.

A raven, standing on the branch of a bay tree.

Plate 4535. Stele discovered near Sarrebourg. Fairly crude representation of Apollo, heavy of feature and limb. The god is standing up, with his legs crossed. To his right is a well-depicted raven. To his left, an owl perches in a bay tree.

Plate 6056. An altar from Eisenberg having, above an inscription, the figure of a child, seemingly feeding an enormous raven.

Plate I254. Altar from Agen, on which Apollo is represented standing up. At his right, on a step, are the traces of a large, powerful-looking raven.

Plate I287, from Perigueux. Fragment of a cippus, depicting religious attributes. A vase for libations has a raven below it, which appears to be drinking from a vase. Below is a two-handled vase and a sacrificial knife.

Note to p. above.

What appears to be a further monument to Nantosvelta comes from Chaumont (near Soissons). It depicts a woman,

dressed in a long tunic, standing in a recess. She has a sceptre in one hand, and a dove cote, and she holds a vase against her breast. Another vase and a serpent are on the ground. Also, according to Linckenheld (op.cit.), who has examined the monument in some detail, the Sarrebourg Nantosvelta is winged, as she also appears to be on the Teting monument.

Note to p. 193 above.

Another example of the crow/fertility goddess comes from St. Germain, and consists of a seated goddess, wearing a draped garment, holding a patera with fruits in her right hand, and what appears to be a cornucopia in her left hand. On either knee a crow ^{inset} is perched.

Note to p. 274 above.

The following verse serves as further illustration of the attitude of the Church to popular belief in the crow/raven as prognosticator:

Do not believe the crow or the raven,
Nor any false deity of the women,
Whether the sun rises early or late,
It is according to God's will this day will be.

(Ulster Journal of Archaeology, vi, 4, 1858. Robert MacAdam, Six Hundred Gaelic Proverbs Collected in Ulster, p. 172 ff. Collected in Gaelic, in Ulster, by MacAdam over a number of years.

Chapter IV.

EAGLE.

The eagle has been looked upon as the 'king of the birds' in many religious systems and traditions. It fulfilled a major role as the bird of Jupiter in classical mythology, being the natural symbol for a sky god, and it was associated with solar cults over a wide geographical area. Its size, power, austere beauty and apparent ability to soar right into the sun, caused it to be held in awe and deeply respected by most of the peoples who were familiar with it. For this reason, it is a striking and thought-provoking fact that, in a tradition as rich in bird symbolism and bird lore as that of the Celts, the eagle should apparently play such a minor part, when it would have been expected to figure largely in the mythology. Apparently, because although the monumental material provides evidence of a valuable but limited kind, textual and folklore evidence must always be approached with caution, so much depending on chance references and survival, and too much cannot be made of apparent lack of evidence. Ravens, however, and cranes, swans and a variety of other birds fulfil major symbolic roles in Celtic bird traditions, and the

eagle, by comparison, is singularly poorly documented. Moreover, much of what little textual and folklore evidence thereis, is of an inferior quality and is largely unsatisfactory. The fact that the bird does figure on the Gallo-Roman monuments, and that there are one or two valuable instances of the bird in insular contexts, indicates that the eagle was known as a symbolic bird, and did play some part in Celtic religious traditions. This is also substantiated by the fact that it was known in Irish as sar-eun and in Scottish Gaelic as fior-eun, meaning the true bird, the 'bird of birds', clearly indicating that its unique characteristics were observed and appreciated. There is again, the possibility that the bird figures in the earlier textual material, under the guise of descriptive epithets. The name tabu was well-established in Celtic traditions, and if the eagle was thought to be the attribute of some powerful deity, it is conceivable that it would be considered safer not to name it. Thus some of the great speckled birds, and bright bird flocks may have been thought of as being composed of eagles, as may such concepts as the unnamed three-headed bird from the Cave of Cruachan (I).

The Welsh tradition, although poor in eagle symbolism, is richer than the Irish material, and such references as there are imply that the bird did play a role in the earlier religious beliefs. Many of the British monuments depict eagles, or eagle-headed men, but these may show ecclesiastical influence (e.g. the concept of the eagle-headed angels), or Scandinavian traditions. Eagle metamorphoses do occur in the Scandinavian tradition, and Oðin himself was known as Arnhoftr, the eagle-headed. The fact that such a significant and important bird is so poorly represented in the native tradition, however, is one which it is very difficult to account for. It is proposed to examine some of the monumental evidence initially, to attempt to assess the significance of the eagle in Celtic religious traditions at the earliest period.

The eagle does not figure to any extent on the cult objects of central and northern Bronze Age and Hallstatt Europe. Aquatic birds of all kinds, doves, ravens, bustards and cocks are represented, but the eagle and hawk species do not appear to have had a great deal of

religious significance in this European Celtic and proto-Celtic tradition. The bird is represented on such Celtic objects as the torque (2) onto which two eagles are soldered, which is now in Berlin. It also figures on Gaulish coins, on which many birds are represented symbolically (3). It figures on Celtic sigillata and decorated vases, and appears, stylized, on one of the plates of the Gundestrup cauldron (4).

The eagle appears on the Gallo-Roman monuments in several different contexts. Its most important role there, is, of course, as the bird of Jupiter or his Celtic equivalent. Again, it appears on funerary monuments, where it would seem to be connected with the bird-soul motif (5). It also figures on military monuments, and in connection with weapons. Its association with Jupiter, and evidence for his Celtic equivalent will be considered first.

(2) Jacobsthal, *op.cit.* pl. 4I.

(3) For example, coins belonging to the Carnutes depict eagles (Lengyel, *op.cit.*, pl. XII); a coin belonging to Celts from the Danube and Rhineland regions depicts a female figure, seated, with an eagle on her outstretched hand (Lengyel, pl. XLV.)

(4) v. Chapter V, p. 407ff. (5) v. Chapter V, p. 445 ff.

The Celtic Jupiter.

Representations occur frequently in Gaul of a Jupiter-type of deity, accompanied by an eagle, with the lightning symbol and the wheel for attributes. No classical deity has the wheel for attribute, whereas it is an important symbol in Celtic traditions, sometimes appearing in stylized form. It is, therefore clear, that the monuments in question refer to an indigenous god, having features in common with the classical deity.

Caesar names Jupiter as being amongst the five chief deities worshipped by the Celts (6). Moreover, the second Berne scholiast on Lucan equates the Gaulish Taranis with Jupiter:

'Taranin Iouem adsuetum olim humanis placari capitibus nunc uero gaudere pecorum.'

Inscriptions to this Gaulish god are widespread in Gaul, and he would seem to have been fairly generally

(6) Bell. Gall. VI, 17.

known in the Celtic regions. The wheel is a solar symbol (7), and the name Taranis is generally accepted as meaning thunder, thus Taranis, the Celtic Jupiter, would seem to be both a solar and a sky deity. The first Berne scholiast, moreover, equates him with Dis Pater, which would give him infernal connections. He thus seems to be typical of the major Celtic god-type, in that he was multi-functional. The wheel and its stylized forms also figures on funerary monuments, as does the eagle, one of the attributes of the Celtic Jupiter.

The classical Jupiter belongs to an ancient triad of Italian deities, and his type was probably known to the Aryan peoples in general. A detailed analysis of the origin and development of the Jupiter cult cannot be undertaken in this context, but the eagle and oak attributes of the Celtic Jupiter link him with his classical equivalent.

(7) T.F. O'Rahilly, Early Irish History and Mythology, p. 519 ff., mentions instances of what he interprets as the solar wheel in Ireland.

The Celtic Jupiter appears under at least three forms in Gaul. In one guise he is depicted in classical military attire, accompanied by the eagle, and sometimes holding the lightning symbol, and again, sometimes accompanied by his consort. The wheel figures in these representations. On other monuments, the Celtic god holds the wheel, and is accompanied by a small person, for example the monument illustrated by Esperandieu (8), where the bird attribute is the peacock, attribute of his consort. Thirdly, the column (9) of the rider and the serpent-footed monster is another form of this Celtic god. The serpent, a chthonic symbol, appears in various fantastic shapes in Gaulish iconography, where it is linked with major Celtic god-types. For example, the cock-headed serpent accompanies the mallet god on several monuments (10); the ram-headed serpent appears as attribute of the Celtic Mars, and the serpent-footed monster figures in conjunction with this class of 'Jupiter' representations, in each case

(8) Plate I58I, from Limoges, territory of the Lemovices.

(9) The column may represent a stylized tree trunk with the branches lopped off. Maximus of Tyre states that the Celts represented Zeus by means of a high oak tree.

(10) v. Chapter V, p. 380 *A*.

linking the deity with chthonic functions.

The Celtic god with the wheel symbol and the eagle is represented on the following monuments: part of a striking statue comes from Alzey (II), all that remains of a monument to the autochthonous god, who is depicted seated, and naked, apart from a cloak which covers his shoulders. To his right is a wheel, and to his left a huge eagle, carrying a great ring in its beak, probably another form of the solar wheel symbol. The statue is badly damaged. On an altar from Vaison (I2), Jupiter is represented, standing up, wearing a short tunic and paludamentum, holding the lightning symbol in his right hand, and in his left hand, a wheel. To the left a goddess stands, wearing a draped garment, and holding a dish. An eagle stands at Jupiter's feet, and what is probably a second eagle is represented. Below the wheel a serpent is figured. Another striking monument comes from Vaison (I3), in the form of a statue to Jupiter.

(II)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7749.

(I2)Esperandieu, plate 299.

(I3)Esperandieu, plate 303.

The god stands, clad in a short tunic and mantle, holding in his right hand a wheel with six spokes. By the god's left foot is an eagle, the head of which is now missing, behind which a serpent emerges from the trunk of an oak tree. Again, from Bagnols (I4) comes an altar to Jupiter discovered near Laudun. The monument is of crude native workmanship, and depicts the Celtic god, standing up, and wearing a short tunic. He holds a sceptre in his left hand. On the right lateral face is an eagle, and on the left, a wheel with five spokes. There is no consistency in the number of spokes on these monuments, which implies that the number had no special significance. It might be noted that this area is rich in traces of native Gaulish cults, and that several altars on which mallets are depicted were found near the above monument, also another monument representing the wheel symbol, and a stone block on which an oak tree is figured.

An interesting fragment of a statue comes from Mont Auxois, consisting of a representation of the Celtic Jupiter, seated on a throne, the edges of which are

decorated by a wheel. In front of the god are the remains of an eagle (I5). From Theley (I6) comes a damaged slab, on one side of which a bearded Jupiter appears, his shoulders covered by a flowing cloak, holding in his left hand, a wheel. To his right, an eagle stands and looks up at him. A monument from Tongres (I7) depicts the Celtic Jupiter and his consort. Both are seated on a throne. The god is naked, his legs being covered with a cloak. He holds the lightning symbol in his right hand. The goddess, wearing a long robe and cloak, holds the wheel symbol of the Celtic god in her left hand and presses it against her breast. On the other side of the monument, an eagle and a peacock stand on what appears to be a globe. Another monument from Vaison (I8) represents Jupiter as standing up, his shoulders covered by a flowing robe, holding in his

(I5) This monument is of especial interest, because it is from Mont Auxois that the representations of the 'dove-deity' of Alesia come (v. Chapter V, p. 408 ff.). Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7684 is of great value in the study of bird-gods, and it will be noted that the god represented, who seems to be Moritagus, is himself a Jupiter-type, has a dove or raven on each shoulder, and is associated with an oak tree, and a three-headed dog, symbol of the mallet god. See Chapter V, p. 411 for discussion.

(I6) Esperandieu, plate 5116.

(I7) Esperandieu, plate 7217.

(I8) Esperandieu, pl. 7460.

right hand a wheel and the lightning symbol in his left hand. From Angouleme (19) comes a statue depicting a triple divinity, holding in his right hand the lightning symbol which rests on the head of an eagle, and to the left, a two-pronged fork, and below, on the ground, a wheel.

Other monuments pertaining to the Celtic Jupiter are as follows. From Alesia (20) comes a representation of the serpent-footed monster, attacked by a great eagle, his attribute here replacing the horseman deity, which has been mentioned as one of the forms of the Celtic Jupiter. A triangular block from Amiens (21) depicts an eagle with outspread drooping wings, standing on a coronet, while above it is a stylized rose, one of the wheel symbols. The fragment of a cornice from Bordeaux is adorned with eagles, stylized roses, a sceptre, the lightning symbol, and the bust of a bearded man between two women (22).

(19)Esperandieu, plate I387. Not illustrated.

(20)Esperandieu (Lantier), plate 7692.

(21)Esperandieu, plate 3955.

(22)Esperandieu, plate I215.

From Seguret comes a statue of Jupiter with a wheel in his right hand and the lightning symbol in his left hand. To his left is an eagle, and behind him a serpent.

One of the most interesting of the Gallo-Roman monuments from the indigenous point of view, is the altar from Mavilly. On this monument, a group of Gaulish deities is represented, under various guises. Jupiter, clean-shaven, appears seated, holding a sceptre and the lightning symbol. Below him is a well-depicted eagle. Another deity also appears accompanied by an eagle. He is represented as seated, clean-shaven, and has a small dog at his feet (23). He holds a small box-like object in his hands (24), while against his left shoulder is a huge eagle, in the manner of the god-with-the-birds motif (25). Behind him and to his side is a second figure who covers his eyes with his hands. Other deities are represented on this remarkable altar, some of whom have Gaulish torques about their necks or other attributes which identify them as autochthonous deities.

(23) Esperandieu, 2067. The monument has been discussed in an excellent article by Emile Thevenot, Le Monument de Mavilly, in Latomus, 1955, in which he points out that all the deities represented seem to be concerned with healing (ctd. overleaf).

Thevenot has suggested that the box-like object held by the eagle-god contains salve, and the figure with his hands covering his eyes represents one of the devotees of the god, who is seeking relief from eye-troubles. There does seem to have been a great deal of optical illness in Gaul and Britain, as the ex-votos indicate, and the temple of the Gaulish Apollo Vindonnus (26) contained many ex-votos of eyes. The eagle, with its fine powers of vision, and its ability, seemingly, to fly directly into the full brilliance of the sun, would thus be a fitting attribute for a deity with power over sight. The fact that two eagle-gods are represented on the Mavilly altar may indicate either that Jupiter here is duplicated, i.e. that he appears both under his native and his classical guise, or again, that the god with the eagle on his shoulder is independent of the Jupiter representation, and represents a native god, perhaps of the Apollo-type, with eagle attribute.

(23 ctd.) and aquatic cults.

(24) Wearing of the stone makes details of this object indistinct. Thevenot's suggestion seems feasible.

(25) v. Chapter V, p. 408 ff.

(26) v. Chapter V, p. 394 ff.

The above examples are indicative, then, of the cult in Gaul of an important native god, equated with Jupiter, and having the eagle, oak and wheel as his most consistent attributes. Other representations of Gaulish deities accompanied by eagles are listed below. (27)

(27)Stele from Savonnieres-en-Pethois (Esperandieu, plate 4677.) A Gaulish deity in the form of a winged child stands up, resting his right hand on a lance and his left hand on a shield. A bird stands on either side of him at his feet. The bird to his right is an eagle, and the bird to his left, with drooping wings, seems to be a raven, but is indistinct. This god with the eagle would seem to be a Celtic Mars-type, with his weapons. A damaged altar comes from Nimes (Esperandieu, plate 6862). A god and goddess are depicted standing up. The god holds some unidentifiable object in his left hand, and a round object above the headless body of a large bird, probably an eagle. The goddess holds a cornucopia in one hand. From Avenches (Esperandieu, plate 5437) comes a capital, having the bust of a man with long hair on each abacus- at each angle is an eagle with outspread wings. An interesting monument in the form of an altar comes from an unknown district and is now in the museum at Toulouse (Esperandieu, plate 1031). A male figure, clad in a tunic, stands up and gives an enormous eagle a drink from a dish. The bird is perched on top of a column (cf. column to the cavalier and horseman). A similar monument comes from Cologne (Esperandieu, plate 6426), where a naked figure stands up and gives fruits to an eagle which stands on a column. Here the monument may be funerary. Other miscellaneous eagle representations of Celtic interest are as follows. The damaged statue of an eagle comes from Melun (Esperandieu, plate 2934). A block from Treves depicts an eagle struggling with two serpents (Esperandieu, plate 4921). On another block (Esperandieu, plate 5014), also from Treves, a fine eagle perches on a huge leaf and turns its head to the right.

As mentioned above, the eagle also figures on Gaulish funerary monuments, as do various other birds (28), and in these cases it may be taken as being indicative of a belief in the concept of the bird-soul. From Vieux (29) comes a fragment of an altar on which two oarsmen are represented as guiding a boat. To the right, an eagle with outspread wings perches on a rock. What is probably part of a funerary monument comes from Epinal (30), and consists of a damaged statue of an eagle with outstretched wings. From Mayence (31) come the remains of a representation of a man and a woman, with traces of an eagle to their right. This seems to have been a funerary monument. A fragment of a slab from Poitiers (32) depicts a powerful eagle and a serpent. From Bourges (33) comes the fragment of a stele on which an

(28)v. Chapter V, p. 423ff.

(29)Esperandieu, plate 3043.

(30)Esperandieu, plate 4766.

(31)Esperandieu, plate 7343.

(32)Esperandieu, plate 6962.

(33)Esperandieu, plate 6976.

eagle, full face, with outspread wings is depicted. Another monument comes from Cologne (34) on which an eagle, full face and with outstretched wings appears. From Mayence (35) comes a much-damaged block of stone, having an inscription on the principal face, and an eagle holding a wreath of oak in its beak on the right face. Fragments of two altars come from Bordeaux (36) on which eagles are depicted. What appears to be another funerary monument comes from Luzeuil (37), on which an eagle with spread wings is represented. A funerary monument from Savonnieres-en-Perthois (38) takes the form of a statuette of an eagle, now damaged, with drooping wings. Finally, two funerary monuments in the form of statues of eagles come from the territory of the Remi (39).

(34)Esperandieu, plate 6456.

(35)Esperandieu, plate 5756.

(36)Esperandieu, plates I062 and I086.

(37)Esperandieu, plate 5348.

(38)Esperandieu, plate 4676.

(39)Esperandieu, plates 3699 and 3742.

Apart from appearing in Gallo-Roman iconography as the attribute of a deity, and as a symbolic bird in connection with funerary monuments, the eagle also reveals its character as a bird of war by its association with military objects. For example, the lintel of a gate at Antigny (40) is decorated by axes and a shield having stylized roses and leaves on it. The lateral points of the shield are formed by the heads of eagles. Another monument from Narbonne (41) is decorated with shields which terminate in eagle-heads. A fragment from Die (42) consists of a headless eagle, wings outstretched. Behind the bird is a shield. Finally, a block of stone from Saint-Ambroix-sur-Arnon (43) depicts, on one side, an eagle, full face, looking towards a trophy composed of four shields of different shapes. Behind the bird is a javelin. On the right lateral face is a pair of eagles, with outspread wings, and a serpent.

- (40) Esperandieu, plate I406.
- (41) Esperandieu, plate 727.
- (42) Esperandieu, plate 314.
- (43) Esperandieu, plate 6995.

Insular tradition is extremely unrewarding as far as an investigation of the symbolic nature of the eagle in pre-Christian beliefs and religious idiom is concerned. The bird clearly played some role in the earliest religious and superstitious traditions, but it is one of which we are only able to catch an occasional and inadequate glimpse. One or two episodes in the literary tradition would seem to have their origin in genuine beliefs, and may be considered here. The first is found in the mabinogi of Math (44) and concerns the eagle metamorphosis of Lleu (45).

Blodeuwedd (46), wife of Lleu Llaw Gyffes, has taken a lover and wishes to destroy her husband. He is, however practically invulnerable (47), but his wife, on the pretext of loving anxiety for his well-being manages to trick him into revealing the way in which his death may

(44) Ifor Williams, Pedeir Keinc, p. 67 ff.

(45) The Welsh Lleu is the equivalent of the Irish Lugh and the Gaulish Lugus. Welsh tradition would imply that like his Irish and Gaulish counterpart he was in origin a god of the Mercury type, and that like them also, he was multi-functional. The radical Leu- is found in the name Mars Leucetius, from Bath, and may indicate some connection. The lateness of the Welsh literary tradition, however, must always be borne in mind.

(46) v. Chapter V, p. 368 (47) Tom Peete Cross, DI840 (1840)

be brought about. Llew tells his wife that when he has one foot on a specially constructed tub on a river bank and the other foot on the back of a male goat 'pw y bynnac a'm metrei i yuelly ef a wney uy anghau' (48) 'whosoever should strike me thus, he would bring about my death.' The spear in which the deed can be accomplished must be fashioned in a particular manner, 'a reit oed vot blwydyn yn gwneuthur y par y'm byrhit i ac ef a heb gwneuthur dim o honaw, namyn pan uythit ar yr aberth duw Sul' 'and it is necessary to be engaged for a year in making the spear by which I should be struck, and that without making anything of it except when people are at Mass on Sunday' (49). Blodeuwedd thereupon causes the various materials to be furnished and arranged accordingly, and brings it about that Llew rehearses his death. Unknown to him, Gronw, her lover, is in concealment with the fatal spear. When Llew has adopted the necessary position, Gronw rises up - 'ynteu Gronw a gyuodes e uynyd o'r brynn a elwir

(48)Williams, op.cit. p.87.

(49)Williams, p.86. The insular Celts seem to have regarded their deities in the light of demi-gods, i.e. as being almost invulnerable, but capable of death.

Brynn Kyuergyr, ac ar beann y neill glin y kyudes, ac a'r guenwynwayw y uwrw, a'y uedru yn y ystlys, yny neita y paladyr ohonaw, a thrigyaw y penn yndaw' (50) 'Gronw rose up from the hill which is known as Brynn Kyuergyr, and he rose up on the point of one knee, and he cast the poisoned spear, and he struck him in the flank so that the shaft sprang out of him and the head remained in him.' The fatal situation has been brought about, and this we are to take it is LLeu's death, according to his own statement. But, upon the blow having been struck 'yna bwrw ehetuan o honaw ynteu yn rith eryr, a dodi garymleis anhygar. Ac ny chahat y welet ef odyne y maes' (51) 'then he sprang into flight in the form of an eagle and emitted a hideous scream and he was seen no more from then on.' It would seem then that the legend about the death of LLeu was based on some tradition that he actually transformed himself into an eagle, perhaps being reminiscent of an earlier attribute, or that his soul

(50)p.88.

(51)p.88.

left his body in bird form (52). Although Gronw meets his death in precisely the same way in which Lleu is destroyed, his destruction seems to be complete, and there is no reference in the tale to his taking on any form as a substitute for death.

Some time after Lleu has flown off in bird form, Gwydion finds him in a sad state in an oak tree, and after persuading him to descend to his knee, restores him to human form, or 'life'. It is interesting to note that this tree, which is apparently no ordinary tree, is an oak tree, an important tree in Celtic religion. Lleu is represented as being perched in the topmost branches, where such mythological birds as the eagle of Yggdrasil were believed to live. (53) The tree is

(52)The passage describing the death of Lleu is reminiscent of the death of Lazarus, and his restoration to life by Jesus, in the Acts of Pilate, where 'Neither could we keep Lazarus, but he, like an eagle, shaking himself, ~~with all-agility~~ leapt forth with all agility and swiftness, and departed from us' (Apocryphal New Testament, trans. Montague R. James, p.131.) In the Atlamal, an eagle is seen by Kostbera, flying through the hall, which was taken to be Atli's soul in bird form.

(53)Although the eagle will perch in trees, the Welsh must have been more familiar with it in connection with rocks and cliffs.

described in the following englynion (54):

Dar a dyf y rwng deu lenn
 Gorduwrych awyr a glenn
 Ony dywedaf i eu
 O ulodeu Lleu ban yw hynn.

Dar a dyf yn ard uaes
 Nis gwlych glaw nis mwy tawd
 Ugein angerd aborthes
 Yn y blaen, Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

Dar a dyf dan anwaeret
 Mirein modur ymyuet
 Ony dywedaf i (eu)
 Ef a dydau Lleu y'm arfet.

An oak grows between two lakes, very dusky is the sky
 and valley, if I am not telling an untruth this is from
 Lleu's Blodeuwedd.

An oak grows in an upland plain, nor rain wets it nor
 heat melts; nine score hardships has he suffered in its
 top, Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

An oak grows upon a steep, a sanctuary of a fair lord;
 if I speak not falsely, Lleu will come into my lap.

(54)Williams, op.cit. p.89, 90. Translation based on emendations suggested by Jones, The Mabinogion, p.278. The oak in which the metamorphosed Lleu takes up his dwelling is described as being situated on a plain, a site commonly occupied by trees believed to be in some way supernatural. Rain cannot damage the tree or heat destroy it. It was widely believed that being the attribute of the sky god, the eagle could not be struck by lightning. The reference to the nine score hardships suffered by Lleu in the tree top is strangely reminiscent of the suffering endured by Odin in Yggdrasil when he sacrificed himself to himself 'I know that I hung full nine nights on the windy tree wounded by the javelin (Lleu is killed by a spear), and given to Odin, myself to myself' (Havamal, 138). There is thus probably some
 (over)

This account of the metamorphosis of Llew, who was in origin a Celtic god, late though it is, is the most convincing and useful fragment of British information about the eagle in the native mythology. Other accounts of eagle lore in Britain are mentioned below. Taken as a whole, they do seem to present what is probably a fairly genuine picture of the kind of eagle lore current in Wales in medieval times, but individually they seem of little value, in that it is difficult to substantiate them (55).

(54 ctd.) some genuine mythology underlying this account of Llew's transformation and sojourn in the marvellous oak tree, and may indicate Llew's original position in Britain as a god of the Mercury type, having the eagle as his bird attribute. The fact that the oak episode is reminiscent of the passage in the Havamal, and that men were sacrificed to Esus by hanging and stabbing stresses the necessity for a general investigation of religious exchanges and influences between the Celtic and Germanic peoples.

(55) A legend of Eliwlod, son of Madog, a nephew of Arthur, represents him as taking on eagle form after death and conversing with Arthur (Myvyrian Archaeology, I, 176). Geoffrey of Monmouth (whose information is suspect) records the tradition that the grave of Arthur is guarded on Snowdon by a pair of chained eagles. He also records the belief that sixty oracular eagles congregated annually at Loch Lomond and prophesied future events (Historia, IX, 6). An eagle is also believed to have uttered prophecies at the founding of Shaftesbury (cf. the ravens at the founding of Lugudunum). These oracular eagles of Geoffrey probably belonging to a genuine local tradition about the prophetic powers of the bird, although the details are possibly fabricated.

Irish information about eagle traditions is very fragmentary. Fintan (56) spends a considerable period of time in eagle form. Otherwise there is little in the way of eagle transformation, although transformation into various large, and unnamed birds is frequently referred to in the tradition, and as suggested above, some of these may have been eagles, unnamed for superstitious reasons. The eagle as the oldest animal occurs in both British and Irish traditions (57), and the eagle is referred to as a prophetic bird in an Irish poem (58). There is an interesting eagle episode in Maelduin (59), but otherwise little of value or interest from the point of view of

(56)v. Chapter V, p.437 for discussion.

(57)The Eagle of Druim Brecc seems to have belonged to this tradition (Anecdote from Irish mss, p.38). Also the Welsh Eagle of Gwernabwy in the legend of Culhwch and Olwen.

(58)D'aithin me ar chuaird an iolair
 Gach neoin ag filleadh os cionn an Duin
 Nar bhfada go gcuinfinn fein
 Tasg droich-sgeil om thriur.

'I knew by the circling of the eagle each midday wheeling above the Dun, that it would not be long until I should hear evil news of my three.' (Transactions of the Ossianic Society, IV, p.171).

(59)As there are points of interest in this legend, it is proposed to give the Irish from the text published by Stokes in the Revue Celtique, 10, p.73 ff.

(ctd. overleaf).

(59 ctd.) 'La n-aill ann doib, amal batar oc deicsin asan indsi uaidib, adchiad nell aniardess andochum. Iar cen iarom, amal batar ac(a) decsin b(e)os, rathaighset ba hen boi and, ar adchitis na heite ac foluamuin. Iss ed doluid iarum isin n-insi co rotairis for tulaich bui a confocus an locho. Dorumenatar iarum a mbrith do ina chrobaib forsín muir. Dobert les dano gesca do crund mor. Metit(h)er aen na ndarach mor an gesca. Langesca mora as, barr mordluith fair co nduillib uraib. Torad trom imdha fair, bolga derga fair cosmaile fri (caera) finemma, acht nama batar uilliu som. Batar-som a foluch iarom ac fegad cid dogenath. Roboi seal ina tost ara scis. Gabais alaill do torudh an craind do ithe. Tolluidh iarum Mael duin co mbui for ur na tulcha i raibe an t-en, dus an dingnedh ni d'ulc fris, agus ni dherna on. Dolotar a munter uile inadhiaidh isan maighin-sin. 'Tiat aenfer uainn' ar Mael duin, 'coro thecla(ma) ni do thoradh in gesci file arbelaib an eoin.' Luidh aenfer uaidhib iarom, agus teclamaidh drecht dina bolgaib, agus ni rocairigh, agus ni accai an t-en, agus ni rala cor de. Lotarsom an ocht feraib dec co mbatar cona sciathaib forachulo, agus ni dernai ni d'ulc friu. Trath nona do lo iarom conacatar di sain-en mor, conda-turnsad arbelaib an eoin moir. O robatar ciana ina tost gabsad eclaim agus lomrud ina mil batar im oilib agus im smeich an eoin moir, agus imma suilib agus ima cluasa. Batar occa co fescor. Gabsad a triur andside ithe na caer agus toraidh na gesca. O matain arabarach co medon lai gabsad eclaim ina n-anmanda cetna assa curp uile, agus tochora na senchluma ass agus ina senland na claime do ecloim coler ass. Medonlai immurro domarsat na bolga din chruib agus nos-bruidhis cona nguilbnib frisna clocho, agus foscerditis iarom isind loch co raba a uan derg fair. Luidh iarsen an t-en mor isand loch, agus boi occa nigí and confocus do diudh lai. Doluid asand loch iarsin, agus forruim a maighin aile isin telaig cetna, arna diesitis inna mila tallta ass. Matain arnamarach dogensatar ind eoin beous eclaim agus sliachtad inna cluma cona nguilbnib, amal bidh co cir dogenthi. Batar occe co medhon laithe. Ansad iarom biucan, agus lotar iarum il-leth assa tudchatar riam. Airisis immurro an t-en mor dianeis occa clumad agus ac fochrothadh a eite co cend an treas lae.

(ctd. overleaf).

(59 ctd.)

Cotn-ocaib iarom trath terte an treaslai agus foluastar fotri immon indsi, agus foruim biucan airissearin tealai cetna, agus luid ass iarsen hi fot al-leith asa tudhchaidh riam. Agus deiniu agus tressiu a luamuin an fecht sain andas riam, co mbo follus doib uile ba hathnughudh do a senddataidh a n-oitidh, iar mbreithir innd (fh)atha adbeir Renouabitur ut aquil(e) iuuen-tus tua. Ba hand asbert Diuran ic feghadh an moradamra sin: 'Tiagham' ar se, 'isan loch diar n-athnugudh baile an roh-athnuighedh an t-en.' 'Natho' ar a chele, 'ar foragaib an t-en a nem and.' 'Ni maith a n-asberi,' ol se, 'ragadsa cetamus ind.' Luid iarum ind agus not-fotraic and, agus mescais ina beolu a n-uisce, agus ibis lomainn de. Ogslan a suile iarsin aired robo beo, agus ni torchair fiacaill do, na foiltne dia fhuilt, agus ni raibi enerti na indlobra fair o sin immach riam.'

'One day then, as they were looking out from the island before them, they see a cloud coming towards them from the south west. After a time, while they were still looking, they perceived that it was a bird, for they could see the feathers fluttering. Then it came into the island and alighted on a small hill near the lake. Then they thought it would carry them in its talons out to sea. Now it had brought with it the branch of a great tree. The branch was as great as one of the great oaks. Large twigs from it and a dense top with fresh leaves. Heavy plentiful fruit on it, red berries on it resembling the berries of the vine, except that they were larger. They were hiding, watching what he would do. It rested for a spell on account of its weariness. It began to eat some of the fruit of the tree. Then Mael Duin went to the edge of the hillock on which the bird was, to see if it would do any harm to him, and it did none. All his people went after him to that place. 'Let one of us go' said Mael Duin, 'in order to gather some of the fruit from the branch that is before the bird.' Then one of them went, and he gathers some of the berries and the bird did not blame him, nor did it see him, nor did it move. The eighteen men

(ctd. overleaf).

went until they were with their shields behind him, and he did no evil to them. About midday of that day they saw two great eagles in the south west in the direction from where the great bird had come, and they swooped down in front of the great bird. When they had been resting for a long while, they began to pick and strip off the lice which were about the jaws and chin of the great bird, and about its eyes and ears. They were thus occupied until evening. The three of them began to eat the berries and the fruit of the branch. From the morning of the next day until midday, they were picking the same lice from out of its entire body, and pulling the old feathers out of it and picking out completely the old scales of the mange. However, at midday they stripped the berries from the tree, and crushed them up against the stones with their beaks and then casting them into the lake so that its foam was red upon it. Then the great bird went into the lake and he stayed washing himself there almost until the close of day. Then he went out of the lake and settled on another place on the same hill, so that the lice which had been taken out of him should not come again. On the following morning the birds still picked and preened the feathers with their beaks as if it were done with a comb. They were engaged in this until midday. After that, they rested a while, then they went away to the quarter from which they had come. However, the great bird remained behind them, preening himself and shaking his feathers until the end of the third day. Then at the third hour on the third day he rose up and flew three times about the island, and alighted for a little while on the same hill. And he went forth after that towards the quarter from which he had come. Swifter and stronger his flight there than previously, so that it was clear to them all that this was a renewal for him from old age into youth, according to the word of the prophet who says 'Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.' Upon seeing that great marvel Diuran said 'Let us go' said he, 'into the lake to renew ourselves where the bird has been renewed.' 'No' said his companions 'for the bird has left his venom there'. 'What you say is not good' said he, 'I will go into it first.' Then he went in and bathes himself there, and plunged his lips into the water and drank sips of it. His eyes were then exceedingly strong as long as he lived, he did not lose a tooth nor a hair of his head, and he never suffered from weakness or infirmity from that time on.'

(59 ctd.) The above account of the renewal of the youth of the eagle is, of course, reminiscent of the phoenix legend. Medieval lore has many examples of this kind. Saint Augustine records the tradition that when the eagle grows old, its eyes dim and its wings become heavy. It then seeks a well of spring^g water and flies as high into the air as possible. The heat of the flight opens the bird's pores and it falls suddenly into the well, where its feathers are changed, its dimness of vision removed and its strength restored. One might also compare the way in which Tuan restores his youth and vigour by means of transformation (v. Chapter V, p. 438). The passage shows an acute knowledge of birds, and the writer was well aware how troubled with lice and parasites all birds are. Belief in the healing powers of certain waters is ancient and widespread, and the cult of thermal waters is well-attested in Gaul and Britain.

The reference to the branch as large as a huge oak tree is interesting, and probably both the monstrous bird and the tree from which the branch was taken belong to an earlier tradition. The description is reminiscent of the passage from the Irish Nennius (v. Chapter III, p. 262) where black birds are described as flying in and out of a belfry of fire, led by one great bird 'luidset in enlaith as iartain, agus in cail for sa n-desidar d'ellig fothu co talamh, agus in dairbri for sa n-desid in t-en mor ut ro fuc lais cona fremaib a talmain agus ni fes cid inluaid.' 'the birds flew away from that place afterwards, and the wood upon which they perched bent under them to the ground. And the oak upon which the said great bird perched was carried by him by the roots out of the earth, and where they went to is not known.'

The number three is used frequently in this legend. It has been noted how large a part ternary conceptions play in Celtic traditions, and it is also reminiscent of Christ imagery here.

There are several British monuments on which huge eagles are depicted, for example on a symbol stone from Birnie, and on a slab from Inveravon, in conjunction with the mirror and comb symbol, and also in eagle-angel form(e.g. from Kirriemuir) but these representations are of little real interest in this context.

bird symbolism. A slab of red sandstone from St. Vigean's (60) seems reminiscent of an episode in the Culhwch and Olwen legend (61). The eagle also figures in the French Welsh Arthurian story of Eagle Boy, which is found in Irish (62).

Its occurrences in the folk tale are equally unsatisfactory, and one or two of them only will be briefly mentioned here. In the Scottish Gaelic story of the Crochaire Lom Rusgach (63), the king of Lochlin tells the champion, Alasdair, that a giant has taken three of his four daughters. The giant's head is eventually cut off and immediately a great golden eagle springs at the champion and strikes him on the face. The soul of the giant seems here to have taken on eagle form. A similar episode occurs in the story of Finn in the House of Blar

(60) Romilly-Allen, plate 250B.

(61) On the St. Vigean's monument, a great eagle is represented as being perched on the back of an equally large fish. In the legend of the oldest animals in the Welsh legend, the two creatures are associated as follows. 'But I have heard nothing of the man you seek. Except that one day I went to Lynn Llyw to seek my food. And when I came there, I sank my talons into a salmon, thinking that he would provide me with food for a long time. But he dragged me down so that I scarcely escaped from him. This is what I did, and all my kindred went after him to seek to destroy him. He sent messengers to parley with me. And he came to me to have
(ctd. overleaf)

Buie (64) where Oscar sees a large eagle about to attack him. When he casts a cauldron of soup at the bird it gives a dreadful shriek and goes out through the wall.

Conclusion.

The above analysis of the role of the eagle in continental and insular religious tradition and folk beliefs, which by no means claims to be exhaustive, seems to point to the following facts. The Celtic coins and vases and the Gallo-Roman monuments indicate clearly that the eagle was venerated in Gaul as the attribute of a god equated with the classical Jupiter, and also seems to figure as the symbol for the bird-soul belief on several of the funerary monuments. The god/gods equated with Jupiter were not, as far as can be gauged at present,

(61 ctd.) fifty tridents taken out of his back.'
(Translated from the Welsh of Strachan's edition,
Introduction to Early Welsh, p. 197, 198.)

(62)ed. by R.A.S. MacAlister, Irish Texts Society, X. The tale is lengthy, and is contained in a ms. written in 1748. A young baby is carried off by a supernatural eagle, and given over to King Arthur.

(63)Waifs and Strays, III. p. 112 ff.

(64)Waifs and Strays III, p.69.

by any means conceived of as being universal within the Celtic sphere, but seem rather to have been yet another form or forms of the major Gaulish god-type, represented in some areas by the tricephalos, in other areas by Sucellus, the mallet god, again by the 'dove-deity', and in other areas by such deities as Lugus and Esus. We know that in certain districts, this Jupiter-type god was known as Taranis. The eagle seems essentially to have been a male symbol and vehicle of metamorphosis.

Insular evidence, which is so rich in bird symbolism of other kinds, is extraordinarily poor in eagle traditions, but such evidence as there is may, perhaps, indicate a greater cult of the bird in Wales than in Ireland, where it appears comparatively rarely in the written tradition, and negligibly in the folk material. It has been suggested that the bird was not called by its own name, i.e. that some name-tabu was observed, as for example it is known both as sar-eun and as fior-eun in Scottish Gaelic and Irish traditions. As the evidence appears at present, however, it can only be concluded that a bird which would have been expected to play a leading role in a culture rich in traditions of birds of all kinds, in actual fact, and for whatever reason, plays only a minor part in the tradition.

Chapter V.

MISCELLANEOUS BIRDS.

Certain species of birds occur with sufficient frequency in the material and literary remains of the Celts to justify the devoting of a separate chapter to individual birds. Other species, however, are represented more infrequently, and would seem to fit more conveniently into the present chapter. To the sub-groups of named birds the large group of unnamed birds has been added, the identity of which it is either quite impossible to determine, or which at best can only be guessed at.

The material remains are, on the whole, fairly satisfactory as far as the identification of the birds is concerned, the species being, as a rule, surprisingly faithfully depicted, particularly on the earliest monuments. Occasionally, owing to deterioration of a monument, over-stylization or careless workmanship, where only a rough outline of the bird is aimed at, identification is problematic or impossible. The strange bird-headed figures (I) on some of the early insular 'Christian' monuments present a much more bewildering problem than

(I) v. p. 43 below.

does much of the continental material, both as far as identification of the species represented is concerned, and an interpretation of the imagery portrayed. It is not proposed to deal in any detail with the genesis of this material, or with that of the so-called 'Pictish' stones, as both seem to have been considerably influenced by Christian motifs, and in the case of the former group, by Scandinavian legends.

As mentioned in Chapter II (2), in connection with the swan, there is a considerable corpus of cult objects dating from the late Bronze Age and Hallstatt periods, on which birds of all kinds are represented, in conjunction with a variety of sacred objects and creatures. Some of these objects are Celtic or proto-Celtic, some are not obviously so, but display sufficient affinity to the Celtic material, and obviously indicate religious concepts close enough to those of the Celtic peoples to justify their inclusion here. Some of these symbolic bird objects may be considered here as being typical of the corpus in general.

Numerous birds in the round come from Urnfield and Hallstatt Europe, mostly fashioned in bronze, and consisting almost entirely of waders of all kinds, and small ducks, beautifully depicted. Several of these birds are mounted on rods, and one group of three shoveller ducks has the link of a chain through the neck of one of the birds (3). The predominance of aquatic birds in the representations of this early period seem to imply that the inhabitants of northern and central Europe were particularly preoccupied with solar phenomena, and with the cult of thermal waters (4). Other birds in the round are illustrated by Kossack (5), dating from the Hallstatt period, and consist of ducks of various kinds, a ring dove, and various vague bird shapes; there is also an interesting group of sandpipers, shags, cormorants, and a well-depicted raven.

Again, there is a group of bird objects, resembling rattles (6), the woodpigeon, bustard, goose, pigeons, a

(3)Kossack, op.cit. plate 6. v.Chapter II, p.73 for discussion of similar representations of the swan.

(4)v.Chapter II, p.73.

(5)Kossack, op.cit. plates 7 & 8.

(ctd.overleaf)

composite bird with ox horns and other birds being represented. A group of amulets with birds and anthropomorphic figures is also illustrated by Kossack (7), one of which consists of an extremely complicated arrangement of chains and wheels suspended from the necks of two duck-like birds in bronze (8). Again, a small votive chariot, dating from the Bronze Age has two shafts and three small passerine birds with upturned beaks (9). There is also a group of bird and bark amulets (10), and several amulets show an extraordinary combining of a stylized anthropomorphic figure with a bird. Another amulet consists of two birds, the necks joining onto a kind of staff. Another extraordinary amulet is made up of a flat tally-like object, with two unidentifiable birds with upturned beaks from which hang, suspended by chains

(6 ctd.) Kossack, *op.cit.* plate 5.

(7) Kossack, *op.cit.*, plate 10.

(8) Kossack, plate 10, no. 9.

(9) Kossack, *op.cit.* plate 4.

(10) Kossack, *op.cit.* plate 11

from the birds' necks, two small human figures. The tally-shape may represent a stylized human figure, in which case, the birds again form part of the arms (II). This object is in bronze.

There is a series of anthropomorphic amulets, with double bird heads, forming hands. It is interesting to note that in this group of cult objects, the position of the hands of the anthropomorphic figures is the same, i.e. drawn up level with the shoulder, the hands frequently replaced by birds. Perhaps the bird-on-the-shoulder concept, which is so widespread in the Celtic material, developed from the bird-hands level with the shoulder motif. Moreover, it seems that this raised position of the arms is the same as that adopted by the druids in prayer, and these figures may then be in a sacred attitude. A most striking figure consists of the head and neck of a male deity, having a bird emerging from his shoulder in place of an arm. (I2) Another group consists of a human figure

(II) Another of these figures, in which the cock occupies a central position, is discussed on p.374 below. Kossack, pl. II

(I2) Kossack, op.cit. plate I3, (4).

surrounded by birds with the remains of chains coming from their beaks. (I3) Also belonging to this group is the figurine of the goddess with ravens emerging from her hips and ears (I4). These representations would seem to belong to a stage of belief at which bird and god were not clearly differentiated; the ornithomorphic deity had not been completely translated into an anthropomorphic concept. Some of the other cult objects may be briefly mentioned. A hammer-shaped amulet has a bird perched on top of it (I5); another amulet consists of bird-heads with rings for suspension (I6), and there are other amulets consisting of horses with birds between fore and hind legs (I7). The chain-bearing ducks and swans which belong to this tradition have already been discussed in Chapter II (I8). Chains are combined with Hallstatt objects in bronze, consisting of ducks and crows, and circles (I9). These are

(I3)Kossack, *op.cit.* plate I3 (I).

(I4)Discussed in Chapter III, p. 185

(I5)Kossack, plate I2, cf. bird-headed dagger from Narbonne, (Esperandieu, plate 70I).

(I6)Kossack plate I2, (2I and also 23).

(I7)cf. Gallo-Roman coins, Chapter I, p. 26

(I8)p. 99 ff.

(I9)Kossack, plate I7.

representative of the type of material found in northern and central Europe pertaining to the early period, and it is abundantly clear that birds of all kinds, but particularly aquatic birds of every species, played a most important role in the religious imagery of the inhabitants. Many of the birds are so faithfully represented as to imply that a very close study of them had been made, even such similar species as the shag and the cormorant being carefully distinguished. The chain-bearing swans and ducks seem to form a link with the Irish literary material, not shared by Gaul, where representations of the swan are infrequent, and there are apparently no examples of birds with chains. Material of this general kind is singularly rare on the Gallo-Roman religious monuments, and not only the swan, but the duck and goose, and other aquatic birds are markedly scarce. One most unusual group, however, pertaining to the Gallo-Roman period, comes from the source of the Seine, where a temple was dedicated to the goddess Sequana. A bronze statuette of this goddess was recovered from the site of the temple (20). She is clad in a long robe, is represented as standing up, wearing on

(20)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7676.

her head a crown decorated with six balls, while the bark in which she stands (21) is composed of the body of a duck, with a finely depicted head, holding a round fruit or cake in its bill. (22)

Also from this temple is the representation of a male figure, standing up, clad in a pleated tunic and cloak, holding in his left hand a bird, and in the right, a round object, perhaps a votive cake or fruit. Another representation is of a bust of a bearded man, much worn, holding a fairly large bird in both hands, against his breast. (23) The work is crude and too worn to allow identification of these birds.

This monument has much in common with the earliest aquatic bird cult objects, which, as we have seen, appear to form a link with the Irish literary material. (24)

(21) This may be compared with the solar bark concept, v. Chapter II, p. 74 ff.

(22) This bird closely resembles the duck with the cake in its beak from Milber Down, Devonshire. (Piggott and Daniel, Picture Book of Ancient British Art, 1951, no. 68.)

(23) Both monuments illustrated Esperandieu, plates 2412, 2427 respectively.

(24) It may be significant that this representation, which has more in common with the Hallstatt than the (ctd. over)

Goddesses with Birds.

Monuments representing goddesses, appearing singly, or in groups and accompanied by a bird or birds, occur with great frequency in Gaul. Some of these goddesses, for example, Rosmerta, Nantosvelta and Epona, apparently had a widespread influence, whereas others, such as the grouped Matres (who were very ^{common} ~~prolific~~ in the Rhenish region) may have been local in distribution, their names and attributes varying from district to district. It is proposed to examine some of the representations of these goddesses with birds, in order to determine whether they follow any particular pattern, or whether anything can be discovered about their nature and functions from their bird attributes.

Some of the most interesting and significant of these representations have already been discussed in Chapter III (25), in connection with the crow/raven., where it was concluded that Gaul shared with Ireland in the concept of

(24 ctd.) Gallo-Roman religious material, comes from a temple dedicated to Sequana, whose name constitutes one of the rare instances of the letter -q- appearing in a -p- Celtic area.

(25)p. 87ff.

a war/fertility goddess, one of whose consistent attributes, and forms, was the crow or raven. Moreover, attention was drawn in Chapter I (26) to a goddess who seems also to have been associated with war, and with the crane. These monuments will not, therefore, be re-examined in this section.

Grouped Goddesses with Birds.

The Gauls seem to have thought of certain of their goddesses as appearing in groups of three, and representations of such groups have been recovered from many districts of Gaul, accompanied by fruits, cornucopiae, sometimes by infants, and sometimes by birds. Epigraphical references to them are frequent, moreover, and it is clear that they enjoyed a very great popularity in Gaul. The following representations may be considered here:

From Limoges (27) comes an altar on which Epona, holding a mare by the bridle, figures, holding a cornucopia; a naked deity, and Mars are also depicted. On another face of the altar, three mother-goddesses are represented, while on the side opposite to Epona is a bird, proceeding

towards the right, which Esperandieu does not reproduce.

From Germanic Gaul, come many monuments dedicated to mother-goddesses, where their cult seems to have been very well-established. They appear with birds on the altar from Nettersheim (28), where three matrones sit in a deep recess, each goddess holding between both hands, a basket filled with fruits. Above is a bird, and some acanthus leaves. On the left lateral face is a cornucopia filled with fruits, and below, a bird.

An altar from Vettweiss (29), dedicated to the Matronis Vesuniahenis, has on the right lateral face a cornucopia filled with fruits, while on the left lateral face a peacock stands on a garland, above a basket filled with fruits. From Muddersheim (30) comes an altar, the dedication reading Matronis Arvagastis. On the principal

(27)Esperandieu, plate I588.

(28)Esperandieu, plate 6559.

(29)Esperandieu, plate 6562.

(30)Esperandieu, plate 6567.

face of the monument are three Matrones, seated, wearing draped robes, each holding some fruit. On the right lateral face is a bird with a long neck, not illustrated, which Esperandieu thinks may represent a swan, and beside it is a cornucopia, containing a pine cone, apples, pears, etc.

Again, from Bonn (31) an altar inscribed Matronis Aufaniabus, has a garland on each lateral face, on which stands a bird. Another monument from Bonn (32), the dedication reading Matronis Aufaniabus, is decorated with a vase placed between two birds, and a tree, round which a serpent entwines. There are several altars to this group of matrones.

It has already been noted (33) that the Celtic goddesses of fertility, symbolised by the dovecote, the cornucopia, fruits, vases, etc., were frequently associated with war, symbolised by the crow/raven (34). These

(31)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 776I.

(32)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7765.

(33)v. Chapter III, p. 187 ff.

(34)The Irish crow/fertility goddesses appear in a group of three, reminiscent of these grouped goddesses.

grouped goddesses, however, seem to be connected exclusively with fertility and maternal matters. The association of Epona with the matres occurs on several occasions and is of interest. Her most consistent attribute is, of course, the horse, and her cult was obviously widely practised in Gaul. Her name is mentioned some twenty-six times in Gaulish epigraphy, and monuments on which she figures are numerous on Gaulish territory. She frequently holds emblems of fertility, such as fruits, cornucopias, and once (35) she holds a dog and a raven on her lap. On the Limoges altar, described above, she is associated with mother goddesses and a bird, and on a stele from Horbourg (36) she appears, wearing a long robe, seated on a mare, on whose back is a fillet, and holding what appears to be a bird in her right hand. Epona, then, would seem to be a horse/fertility goddess, and also to be connected with birds. Some clue about this aspect of her cult may, perhaps be gained from an

(35)v. Chapter III, p. 189

(36)Esperandieu, plate 7290.

Some 88 representations of Epona from Gaul are reproduced in Esperandieu. One altar from Strasbourg, (plate 7297) depicts a bust of Mercury between two representations of Epona on horseback. It might be noted that in the Manawydan story, both Riannon and Manawydan are engaged in crafts.

examination of the insular tradition. In the figure of the Welsh Riannon, one of the leading characters of the Four Branches of the Mabinogion, it appears that, despite the comparative lateness of the tales (37), we are dealing with an early Celtic goddess, euhemerised by the story-tellers, but with her divine origin still very much in evidence. Her name, Riannon, must have originated in some form such as Rigantona, meaning Great Queen (38). That she was in origin a horse goddess is generally recognized (39), and is indicated by passages in both the Pwyll and the Manawydan tales (40). In the Pwyll story, she first appears on a mysterious white horse which no natural horse can overtake. Again, after she has supposedly slain her infant son 'the penance imposed on her was to remain in that court at Arberth till the end of seven years, and to sit every day near

(37)Probably dating in their present form from the second half of the IIth cent.

(38)cf. also the Irish Morrigan, the second element connoting queen, the first element problematic, possibly also meaning great. See Chapter III, p.197 for this.

(39)A recent article by Jean Gricourt (Epona-Rhiannon-Macha, Ogam, VI, (Rennes, 1954)), equates the Gaulish, Irish and Welsh goddesses on the strength of their equine associations.

(40)Ifor Williams, op.cit.p.I ff and p.49 ff.

a horse-block that was outside the gate, and to relate the whole story to everyone who should come there whom she might suppose not to know it; and to those who would permit her to carry them, to offer guest and stranger to carry him on her back to the court' (41).

Moreover, in the Manawydan story, we learn that Riannon's punishment while in captivity with Pryderi was 'Riannon would have the collars of the asses after they had been carrying hay about her neck.' (42)

It seems fairly clear then, that, in Riannon, we have vestiges of a goddess resembling the Gaulish Epona. Similarities between the two deities are strengthened by the singing birds of Riannon, which, in conjunction with the reference to her as distributor of the feast (43) indicate quite clearly that she was an otherworld goddess, and by the representations of Epona with birds.

(41)Williams, op.cit. p.21 for Welsh original.

(42)Williams, op.cit. p.65.

(43)Williams, op.cit., p.14 ff.

In the mabinogi of Branwen, Bran tells his followers before they strike off his head 'a chwi a uydwch ar y ford yn hir: yn Hardlech y bydwch seith mlyned ar ginyaw, ac Adar Riannon y canu ywch.' (44) 'and you will be a long time on the road. In Harddlech you will be feasting seven years, and the birds of Riannon singing to you.'

Again we learn:

'Ac yna y kyrchyssant wynteu Hardlech, ac y dechreussant eisted, ac y dechreuwyt ymdiwllu o uwyta a llynn. Ac y (gyt ac y) dechreuwyssant wynteu uwyta ac yuet, dyuot tri ederyn, a dechreu canu udunt ryw gerd, ac oc a glywssynt o gerd, diuwyn oed pob un iwrthi hi. A fell dremynt oed udunt y gueleit uch benn y weilgi allan. A chyn amlyket oed udunt wy a chyn bydynt gyt ac wy. Ac ar hynny o ginyaw y buant seith mlyned.' (45)

'And then they went on to Harddlech, and they sat them down and began to regale themselves with meat and drink; and even as they began to eat and drink, there came three birds and began to sing them a certain song, and of all the songs they had ever heard each one was unlovely compared with that. And far they must look to see them out over the deep, yet it was as clear to them as if they were close by them; and at that feasting they were seven years.'

This valuable reference to the magic birds indicates that they were three in number (46), and the fact that the

(44)Williams, op.cit.p.45.

(45)Williams, op.cit.p.46.

birds' singing is represented as coming across water, implies that Riannon's regions were in the Otherworld across water - the island paradise, of which Celtic legend is so full (47). The concept of the wonderful birds whose song brings joy, and frequently sleep, is ever-recurrent also in the Celtic tradition, and it is to be found very frequently both in the pagan, and then in the later Christian textual material (48). Another reference to these birds of Riannon is made in the story of Culhwch and Olwen, where the giant Ysbaddaden desires 'the birds of Riannon, they that wake the dead, and lull the living to sleep, must I have to entertain me that night'.(49)

The tradition of the power of Riannon's birds to resuscitate the dead thus stresses her role as an otherworld goddess. (50) The obvious parallel to these Welsh birds, in the Irish tradition, are the magic birds of Cliadhna. They are

(46) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, DI273. I. I, three as magic number.

(47) In the Manawydan story Riannon appears as Manawydan's wife. Manawydan is cognate to the Irish Manannan, a deity connected with the sea (son of Ler the sea-god), and lord of the otherworld islands.

(48) Discussed further on p. 445 below.

(49) G. Jones & T. Jones, The Mabonigion, London, 1949, p. 115.

(50) While a general analysis of Celtic ideas concerning
(ctd. overleaf)

described in the story of the voyage of Tadhg mac Cein (51) In this tale, Tadhg, son of Cian and his companions set out in their curragh over the stormy sea. They hear the singing of a great flock of unknown birds. They come to two strange islands where there are great flocks of wonderful birds, like blackbirds, some of them the size of eagles or of cranes, red with green heads, and with blue and crimson eggs. Some of the men began to eat the eggs, and instantly feathers started to grow on them. ~~Went~~^{Went} they bathed, the feathers dropped off them (52). They come upon a beautiful inlet. In one wood, they find great

(50) ctd. concepts of the otherworld cannot, naturally, be attempted here, an effort will be made to show that wondrous birds are an ever-recurring feature. The idea that birds are associated with the resuscitation of the dead, and the proclaiming of a new age of peace and joy is found throughout the tradition, and is well-illustrated by the following verse from the Martyrology of Tallaght (ed. R.I. Best, 1931, p.96):

Tri fichit cet mbliadna mban
 Amser in domuin cen len.
 Memais trethan dar cach n-airm
 I ndeud aidchi im gairm na n-en.

'Three score hundred fair years the world's age without sorrow, the ocean will burst over every place at the end of the night, at the call of the birds.'

(51) Silva Gradelica, I. p. 342 ff.

(ctd. overleaf)

purple berries and beautiful shining birds eating the berries, with white bodies, purple heads and gold beaks. While eating the berries, they sing sweet music, that would have put sick and wounded men to sleep. Cliadhna meets Tadhg, and while they are talking, three beautiful birds come to them, one of them blue, with a crimson head, one crimson with a green head, and one speckled with a golden head (53). They sing sweet music. Cliadhna gives

(52)Fácbait iar sin in t-oiléin sin agus imrit rempa, agus fogabat dá oilén ingnathacha in teolus do chuatar agus loin imda ingantacha inntib. Araile díob i méit ilar nó chorr agus siat corcra agus cinn uaine orthaib agus uige gorma glanchorcra acu. Agus aduatar dáine díobsom ní do na hugaib sin agus do fhásad celtchair cluim i cétóir tré gach aen gá ithed. Agus in tan dognídis fothracad uisce téiged díob i cétóir in cluim sin, agus in tallmarach báí acu is é tuc in teolus sin dóib. ár ro búiside for uidigecht in mara fecht naill in chonair do chuatarsóm.....

(S.H.O'Grady, *Silva Gadelica*, I, p.345.)

(53)Ocus fácbait é agus fogabat fionnchoill álainn iar sin agus ba mór febas a bolaid agus a boltxanais agus caera corcra cruinne fuirre....énlaith álainn édrocht oc tomailt na gcaer fíneama. agus ba hécsamail an énlait húi ann .i. eoin ghela co cennaib corcra agus co nguilbnib órda. canait ceol agus airphéited oc tomailt na gcaer. Agus ba sirrechtach sainemil in ceol sin...

(Silva Gadelica, I, p.347.)

the birds to Tadhg for guidance and entertainment. (54)
 This concept of the magic singing of the wonderful birds of the otherworld appears again and again in the pagan Celtic literature (55) where the birds are sometimes specifically stated to be metamorphosed beings, sometimes this is not stated, but implied, and on other occasions they seem to be birds, but with magic powers (56). The same motif reappears in the Christian literature.

In the Gallo-Roman representations of the mother-goddesses with birds, of Epona, the horse goddess with birds, and in all probability some of the birds which appear to be purely decorative (57), we have a concept

(54)Ocus mar do bátar ar na briáthraib sin confacadar tri heoin áille tre shlios an tige istech chuca .i. é n gorm co cenn corcra, ocus é n corcra co cenn uaine. ocus é n brec condath óir for a chenn. ocus suidit forsin abaill nálainn bui ina bfiadhnaise.

(Silva Gadelica, I, p. 325.)

Colour, and every combination of colour, plays an important part in the Celtic idea of the happy otherworld. One charming description of the birds of the otherworld in which colour is mentioned occurs in the Serglige Con Culaind. Laeg tells Cu Chulainn:

Atát arin dorus sair
 Tri bile do chorcor-glain,
 Dia ngair in é nlaith buan bláith
 Don macraid assin rígráith.

(ctd. overleaf)

which seems to be parallel to that found in the insular traditions, common to both the British and the Irish cultures, i.e. the concept of an otherworld goddess/goddesses concerned with sexual love and fertility, and possessed of magic birds by whose singing all sorrow is obliterated, pain healed, and even the dead are brought to life again.

One or two other Gallo-Roman monuments may be briefly mentioned here, as being illustrative of the motif of the goddess with the bird. Two bas-reliefs from Marseilles

(54 ctd.) 'There are, at the eastern door, three trees of crimson crystal, from which sings the bird-flock, enduring, gentle, to the youths from out the royal rath.'

(Myles Dillon, Serglige Con Culainn, Dublin, 1953, p.17.)

(55) This point is discussed more fully on p. 445 below.

(56) Discussed on p. ^{445 ff. = Chap. II, p. 102 ff.} below. Pagan in this context implies that the background of the tales was that of a pagan society, i.e. that the sense of values to be construed from them is such as is not normally found in a fully Christian society.

(57) It is important to remember that decorative and symbolic motifs can not easily be distinguished on these monuments, but it is unlikely that birds were used purely for decorative purposes on religious monuments of this period, where they are so closely allied to the gods and goddesses.

depict a deity, who appears to be the mallet god, accompanied by a goddess (58), while two persons appear on a second stone, one of whom holds a bird; they are represented as standing in a bark. Here there may be some idea of the concept of the bird soul, or the soul of the dead being guided by a bird (59), or offering a bird to the deity concerned; again the concept of the bark may represent the dead (or living) setting out on a journey to find the otherworld, guided by aquatic birds, agents of an island god or goddess.

An altar from Boulogne-sur-Mer (60) has, on one face, the figure of a goddess, much-worn. A bird stands beside her, extending its neck towards a dish. The remains of a stele (61) represents the bust of a woman between two pilasters, Above her is a bird

(58)Esperandieu, plate 53.

(59)The motif of a man, woman or child holding a bird, is one which appears frequently on funerary monuments. It is discussed on p.423 below, in connection with the idea of the soul in bird form.

(60)Esperandieu, plate 3963.

(61)Esperandieu, plate 326.

resembling a small hawk, facing left. There is also a raven on her right shoulder.

In the insular tradition, the Irish warrior-queen Medb, ~~who~~ seems clearly to have been a goddess in origin, with fertility attributes. (62). The squirrel and the bird (not specified) which she is represented as wearing on her shoulders, and which Cu Chulainn destroys (63), are reminiscent of these Gaulish goddesses with their bird and animal attributes (64).

The Gaulish Minerva.

One of the most problematic of the equations of the autochthonous deities with the classical pantheon, made by Caesar, is that of Minerva. It seems almost impossible

(62)For discussion of the divine origin of Medb, v. R.Thurneysen, Gottin Medb?, Z.C.P. 18, 1929-30.

(63)E.Hull, The Cuchullin Saga, London, 1898, p.157, information from the Book of Leinster, 68B.

(64)Squirrels appear frequently on Gallo-Roman monuments, in company with the owl. Esperandieu illustrates the following: plate 29I, from Vaison, frieze with foliage, fruits, nuts, an owl and a squirrel; plate 407 from Vienne, representation of a large squirrel, eating a fruit; plate 4775 from Bruyeres, a large squirrel on one side of the
(ctd.overleaf)

to determine which Celtic goddess he had in mind when making the equation. It is absolutely clear that the continental and insular Celts believed in a war/fertility goddess, having the crow/raven for attribute (65). This goddess-type however, does not seem to correspond to the concept of the classical Minerva, the fighting goddess, and it seems doubtful whether she does in fact exist in that form in the Gaulish monumental material. Indeed, there are no clear traces of a goddess of the Athene/Minerva type, a goddess who actually fought in battle, and was equipped with weapons, the war/fertility goddesses rather influencing the outcome by means of magic, and frequenting the battle-fields in crow or raven form.* Such a figure as Medb, the warrior queen, who does show traces of a divine origin, may conceivably have fulfilled such a role in Irish tradition (66). A clue to the personality of the Gaulish Minerva, however, may lie in the fact that Caesar mentions that she was a patroness of the arts and

(64 ctd.) monument and a naked deity on the other. Plate 5033 from Treves depicts a squirrel, birds, a serpent and foliage.

(65)v. Chapter III above.

(66)The troops of Ailill and Medb in the Tain are described as having three wonderful bird-flocks flying above them, while three crows prophesy about the battle (Chap. III, p. 277)
* *Ovid (Metam. 11.547 ff) says bird of Minerva was originally crow, displaced by owl.*

crafts, and it is perhaps in this aspect of her functions that she is most prominent in Gaul. (67).

The classical Minerva is depicted many times on religious monuments from Gaul, but most of these representations appear to be entirely classical in execution and imagery, and it is thus not easy to separate the indigenous goddesses from her classical counterpart. Two monuments, however, do seem to represent a native goddess with a thin classical veneer, and these may be mentioned here. One consists of a stele from Pistorf (68) on which a most striking representation of Minerva occurs. The sculpture itself is very crude in design and in execution, the head of the goddess being much too large for her body, and the features coarse and flat. The body itself is badly proportioned. The goddess is seated on a throne (69), and holds a lance in her right hand (70), while her left hand rests on a shield. One

(67)The Italian Minerva seems to have been originally a goddess of handicrafts, her war associations being acquired when she was equated with the Greek Athene.

(68)Esperandieu, plate 4498.

(69)cf. the divine couple of the Aedui who are invariably represented as sitting on a crude throne.

(ctd. overleaf)

of the most striking features of the monument is the fact that the large owl which appears to the right, a little above the level of the goddess' shoulder, is standing upon a huge cock, which is represented as running towards the right. This is the only occasion on which any bird other than the owl is represented with the classical figures of Minerva, and it is likely that here we have the attribute of another deity in company with her own attribute. This is discussed further on p.36/ below.

Another monument of interest in this context, is that from Rimbourg (71). The work is again very crudely executed and depicts a squat, broad-faced Minerva, similar to the Pistorf goddess, in company with a bearded deity, also squat in appearance, in a recess. The goddess, wearing a crude type of helmet and a long garment, holds a lance in her right hand, and an oval shield in her left hand. The god wears a tunic and holds a patera in his right hand, and what appears to be a purse in his left hand.

(70)The Nantosvelta-type goddess from Chaumont (v. Chapter III, p.300) holds a lance or sceptre in her hand.

(71)Esperandieu, plate 7640. Rimbourg and Pistorf are not a great distance apart.

A malicious-looking owl stands between the two deities, level with their shoulders. On each lateral face is a laurel tree. The deity would seem to be some indigenous form of Mercury, as the purse indicates. This god appears with an owl again on the monument in terra cotta from Vienne (72), where he is represented as being bearded and naked (73). He holds a purse in his right hand and a caduceus in his left hand. An enormous owl perches level with his right shoulder and a cock stands at his feet. It may be noted that on the Pistorf monument, the owl stands upon a huge cock (74).

Another unusual representation of what would seem to be a Gaulish Minerva, comes from Alzey (75). The goddess wears a Gaulish torque, and is apparently veiled. She holds a lance in her right hand, while an owl perches on her left shoulder. Some other representations of the apparently classical Minerva, but where she appears in non-classical contexts, are listed below.

(72)Esperandieu, plate 339.

(73)The classical Mercury is never bearded, v. p. 387 below.

(74)For the cock as an indigenous Celtic symbolic bird, v. p. 373 below.

(ctd. overleaf).

The owl appears on other Gaulish religious monuments, where it is not associated with the classically represented Minerva, some of these monuments being as follows:

(75)ctd. Esperandieu, plate 7747. Minerva appears with apparently non-classical deities on the following monuments:

Plate 5925 from Rheinzabern illustrates three deities standing up in a recess, side by side. The representations are rather crude, the figures being squat with large, broad faces. Mercury is naked, accompanied by the cock and tortoise, and Minerva has a huge owl level with her left shoulder. The third figure is that of a man clad in a short tunic, and bearded. It will be seen that Minerva is depicted on several occasions in company with such a bearded deity.

Plate 5116 from Theley is of a damaged block, which apparently formed the base of one of the columns to the Celtic Jupiter (v. Chapter IV, p. 309). Minerva is present, helmeted, with lance and shield, an owl standing by her left arm.

Plate 6347 from Euskirchen consists of the fragment of a monument, depicting the lower part of Minerva, seated, holding a shield in her left hand. On her left knee stands an owl. There are traces of a naked god to the right.

Plate 5905 from Godramstein is also of interest, illustrating Minerva, standing up, clad in a long robe and helmeted, holding a lance, the tip of which rests on an altar, while an owl perches on a pillar to her left, level with her shoulder. On the other side of the block is the huge bust of a bearded man.

Finally, plate 5901 from Rheinzabern illustrates another unusually depicted Minerva, again squat in form, with a broad, round face. A large owl stands close to her left shoulder. The monument shows traces of having been coloured.

Mention has already been made to owls appearing with squirrels. (76) This bird also appears in company with bulls, or bulls' heads on several monuments. One important Gaulish cauldron is decorated with bulls and owls (77). Some interesting monuments come from Saintes (78) on which the heads of bulls are represented. These are decorated with fillets, and are accompanied on one block by an owl. Another striking group from Saintes (79) shows similar imagery. A group is depicted, consisting of a god, seated, cross-legged, holding in his right hand a torque, and in his left, a purse. His head is missing. Beside him is a goddess holding a bird in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left hand. A small female figure stands beside her. Here we seem to have a representation of the horned, squatting god, the purse

(76) v. p. 357 above.

(77) O. Klindt-Jensen, Bronzekedeln fra Brä, Aarhus, 1953.

(78) Esperandieu, plate I364.

(79) Esperandieu, plate I319.

perhaps indicating his association with the classical Mercury, in company with some fertility goddess. On the other side of the monument, the horned god appears again, cross-legged, and below are the heads of two bulls. To the left stands a woman, wearing a draped garment, and holding what appears to be a bird in her right hand, while a naked male figure stands on the other side of the god, and below him is the head of a third bull. In the light of the first group of monuments from Saintes, where the owl is associated with the bull-heads, and keeping the cauldron with owl and bull heads in mind, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the birds depicted here are also owls.

The owl appears again on a sarcophagus from Eauze (80), in company with a clover leaf, a mallet and two shields. The fragment of an altar from Vienne (81) represents an owl which flies out of a bay tree. Again, a cippus from Metz (82) depicts an owl perched on a stylized branch. The bird figures again on a stele from Sens (83) which depicts a bird catcher standing up, clad in a long tunic,

(80)Esperandieu, plate 1048.

(81)Esperandieu, plate 347.

(82)Esperandieu, plate 4369.

and fixing a twig to the trunk of an artificial tree, which he holds with his right hand. Cages are suspended from the tree and on the ground. An owl stands on a rod stuck into the ground, and is obviously used as a decoy for other birds i.e. all the smaller birds will mob him when they see him, and thus fall into the trap.

An important owl monument comes from Alesia (84), in the form of a representation of the bird in bronze. Again, what may represent the cult of a Gaulish Minerva appears at Entremont (85) in the form of a terra cotta owl. Moreover, several Celtic cauldrons have recently been recovered, apart from the important one mentioned above, on which bulls and owls are represented. Another most significant piece of evidence testifying to the symbolic character of the owl in Gaul, is the Bronze Age

(83 ctd.) Esperandieu, plate 2775.

(84) Mentioned by Emile Thevenot, Culte des Eaux et Culte Solaire, Ogam, 6, 1954, p.15.

(85) Thevenot, op.cit. p.15. Thevenot believes the Gaulish Minerva to have been a goddess of healing, connected with the cult of thermal waters. Representations of the goddess appear frequently in Gaulish temples at the source of streams, v.p.369 below.

fibula from Reinheim, Saarbrücken (86), on which the head of a goddess is depicted, with an owl emerging from the top of her head. Also, the goddess in the house-shaped niche, from Luxembourg (87) who seems clearly to belong to the war/fertility type of goddess, has a well-depicted owl on the opposite face of the monument.

Insular tradition is singularly lacking in material pertaining to owls, and thus can be of little help here. It does occur in the story of Math (88), which contains some genuine mythological traditions, where Blodeuwedd, (who is not represented as being human in the first instance) is changed into an owl as punishment for her betrayal of her husband Llew, who became transformed into an eagle (89). It is quite possible then, that

(86) Germania, XXXIII, 1955, p.33, plates 4 and 5. (*gold; from a royal grave*)

(87) Esperandieu, plate 4264; mentioned in connection with the crow/raven goddesses, Chapter III, p. 190

(88) Williams, Pedeir Keinc, p.67 ff.
Gwydyon

(89) ~~Llew~~ pursues and overtakes Blodeuwedd, and tells her how he will punish her for her treachery:

'Ac yna y gordiwawd Gwydyon hitheu, ac y dywot wrthi,
'Ny ladaf i di. Mi a wnaf yssyd waeth it. Sef yw hynny,'
heb ef, 'dy ellwng yn rith ederyn. Ac o achaws y kywilyd

(ctd. overleaf)

Blodeuwedd was an early Welsh goddess, symbolised by the owl. Otherwise, insular texts have little information on the subject of owls. However, the literary material only allows occasional glimpses of the religious background of the insular Celts, and no really satisfactory conclusions can be drawn from the apparent lack of evidence.

Although the owl does appear in company with what are obviously straightforward classical representations of Minerva/Athene, the evidence of the Celtic fibula, of the Luxembourg goddess with the owl, of the altars with owl and bull imagery and of the Celtic cauldrons decorated with owls and bulls (90) does strongly suggest that the owl was known in Gaulish religious contexts, and that an indigenous owl goddess was known in Gaul, prior to the introduction of the classical Minerva. It is therefore possible that

(89 ctd.) a wnaethost ti y Lew Llaw Gyffes, na ueidych ditheu dangos dy wyneb lliw dyd byth, a hynny rac ouyn yr holl adar. A bot yn anyan udunt dy uaedu, a'th amherchi, y lle i'th gaffant. Ac na chollych dy enw, namyn dy alw uyth yn Blodeuwed. (Williams, op.cit.p.91)

'And then Gwydyon overtook her, and he said to her, 'I will not slay you. I will do what is worse to you. That is,' said he, 'to let you go in the form of a bird. And by reason of the dishonour you have done to Llew Llaw Gyffes, you are never to dare to show your face in
(ctd. overleaf)

the classical goddess-with-the-owl belongs to an early Indo-European religious tradition known to Celts and Italo-Celts alike, parallel, but not necessarily borrowed from one to the other. Blodeuwedd's transformation in insular tradition, late although the text undoubtedly is in its present form, may also stem from some earlier legend concerning a British owl goddess. It seems then that although there was some tradition in Gaul of a native owl goddess, she was not a fighting goddess, but possibly another fertility/domestic goddess, as the Luxembourg altar would seem to indicate.

The whole problem of the interpretatio Romana becomes greater as the material is examined more closely, and it appears that, not only were Caesar's equations of

(89 ctd.) the light of day, and that through fear of all birds:and that it be their nature to mob you and to attack you wherever they may find you; and you shall not lose your name, but you shall be for ever called Blodeuwedd.'

(90) The Brå cauldron is one of the finest examples of Danish/Celtic art in existence. The broken fragments were found in 1952, in company with a huge iron axe. The cauldron is huge having a capacity of some 28 gallons. There are six bronze bulls' heads, and the ring handles are ornamented with owls' heads. It belongs to the early La Tene period. Apparently many Celtic craftsmen went to work for the expanding Germani. It belongs to the same tradition as the Gundestrup cauldron (v.p. 407 below), and the inspiration for these Danish Celtic cauldrons may have come from Asia Minor.

the autochthonous with the classical deities general and tentative in the extreme, but he could not have appreciated the multiplicity of function which seems undoubtedly to have characterised the Celtic gods and goddesses, both continental and insular. It is not possible to investigate the general problems of the deities and their identities within the scope of this work, but it does seem unlikely that the Gauls knew of a fighting war goddess with an owl attribute, yet Caesar obviously had some Celtic goddess in mind when the equation was made. The question of which goddess accompanies the representations of the Gaulish Mars may help to illustrate the nature of the goddess in question. Briefly, Thevenot (91), in his interesting analysis of the Mavilly monument, draws attention to the representation of the couple identified with Mars/Minerva, accompanied by a ram-headed serpent (92). Mars hand rests upon a shield, discussed below. His companion, identified as Minerva, wears a soft robe, and has her left breast uncovered, in the manner of a mother-goddess.

(91)Emile Thevenot, Le Monument de Mavilly, Latomus, Janu-March, 1955.

(92)v. p. 377 below.

Mars wears Celtic armour (93). Thevenot (94) sees in the Gaulish pseudo-Minerva a goddess having affinities with water (v. p. 365 above) and therefore with healing, and he notes that in Britain, Sul Minerva is found in connection with the waters at Bath, where Mars also appears as a god of healing, as Mars Loucetius.

Summary and Conclusion.

In this section, we have examined, to as great an extent as the limitations of the subject permit, the evidence for an autochthonous Minerva. It has been seen that, whereas representations of Minerva/Athene in Gaul are numerous, very few of these would seem to have any obviously non-classical features. It must, however, be stressed that some of the apparently purely classical representations may show Celtic influences in other ways, for example, the deities accompanying the classical goddess may be indigenous, as seems to be the case with the Godramstein monument, where the huge bust of a bearded deity appears with Minerva. Moreover, bird or other attributes may help in detecting traces of native

religious symbolism under a classical art form. The context of the monument may also be of importance, e.g. it may have formed part of an edifice to the Celtic Jupiter. This problem, however, must, like all other aspects of early Celtic religion, await further study, and much work is being done in France at the present time on the Gallo-Roman material.

It was noted that two or three monuments, mostly from the region of Germanic Gaul, show distinctly non-classical features, both in the nature of execution and in imagery. On these monuments, Minerva appears with a bird attribute other than the owl, and in company with a bearded deity, who, on account of the purse symbol, may represent a pseudo-Mercury. Moreover, a bearded Mercury appears on another monument, accompanied by an owl, therefore, in certain areas, the consort of Minerva seems to be an autochthonous Mercury, rather than a Mars, this fact stressing her role in Gaul as a patroness of the arts and crafts rather than of war.

Although there is, perhaps, a temptation to associate owl-goddesses in Gaul with a classical prototype,

it has been noted that, not only do owls appear on Gaulish monuments which do not show any obvious traces of classical influence, such as the Bra cauldron and the Saintes monuments, and most impressive of all, the owl goddess fibula from Saarbrücken, and the Luxembourg goddess, but these goddesses with owls seem to imply that there was an early owl-goddess in Gaul (and Blodeuwedd may indicate this for Britain), who in common with the classical goddess, may belong to an Indo-European tradition, going back to the Italo-Celtic period.

We have also seen that representations of goddesses other than the classical Athene/Minerva may indicate an indigenous Minerva, the goddess Caesar must have had in mind when he made the comparison, and that it is to functions other than her patronage of war that we must look in order to recognise her. Thevenot's theory which stresses her function as a goddess of healing, and looks for her in the consort of the Gaulish Mars, also a patron of medicine, has been briefly mentioned.

The position then, as it stands, is clearly unsatisfactory, but it does seem clear that although the Gauls did possess a pseudo-Minerva, and although owl symbolism

and owl goddesses were clearly known in Gaul, the concept of the classical fighting owl-goddess would seem to be foreign to the Gaulish religious tradition.

The Problem of Mercury, the God with the Mallet and the Cock.

Three problems concerning Celtic religious belief on continental territory, and which are closely interconnected, are those of the Gaulish deity/deities equated by Caesar with Mercury (a most unsatisfactory equation); the identity of the Gaulish mallet god, and his connection with the cock and with Mercury; the cock as an indigenous Celtic cult bird.

It will, perhaps, be more satisfactory to examine the last problem first, i.e. the role of the cock in the native Celtic traditions. The domestic fowl was known to the Aryan peoples from very early times, and the fact that it appears on central European cult objects, some of which are described below, indicates that it was known, and had religious sanctity in that area at least as early as the latter part of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the

Iron Age. Some of these Celtic and proto-Celtic cult objects are illustrated by Kossack. One of these consists of a hanging ornament in bronze, belonging to the east Alpine Hallstatt culture, having an anthropomorphic figure at the top, and a cock suspended from one of the chains (93). Again, the bird appears on bird and bark amulets, one of which seems to represent the solar bark concept, but having the heads of highly stylized cocks in place of the more usual swan (94). There is a central pillar, (anthropomorphic image?) having what appear to be arms, with birds' heads instead of hands. A cock dating from the Hallstatt period appears in conjunction with ducks and doves (95). The bird also appears on Gaulish coins. (96)

Esperandieu illustrates two very interesting monuments (97) from Dole. The first consists of a stele

(93)Kossack, *opcit.* plate I7. Chain discussed Chap.II, p. 77.

(94)Kossack, plate II.

(95)Kossack, plate 7.

(96)'Les Gaulois aussi, dont les monnaies affectent une grande predilection pour les symboles solaires de toute espece, connaissaient l'embleme du coq, auquel ils associaient la rosace.' (A.Roes, L'Animal au Signe Solaire, *Revue Archeologique*, 1938, p.180. *A coin of the Veromandi depicts a cock facing a solar wheel* (Lengyel, *pl. xxxvi*).

(97)Esperandieu, plates 5302, 5303.

having on one of the lateral faces a fierce cock, which is represented as pecking at some elongated object resembling a bulrush. Above it is a stylised eight-petalled rose, a recognized solar symbol. The second monument, which closely resembles the first, consists of a stele, now in two pieces, on one face of which is another cock, having, in common with the above bird, a cross on its crest. It too pecks at some bulrush-like object, while above it is a similar eight-rayed object, this time resembling eight bulrushes, their stalks meeting in the centre (98).

Other Gallo-Roman monuments on which the cock figures, apart from those connected with Mercury or with the mallet god (99), are as follows. From Sanct-Julian (100) comes a worn block, the symbolism of which is extremely difficult to understand. A creature, resembling a sphinx, sits to the right. An animal, like a large seal has a bird with a long neck perching on its back, possibly a cormorant. In the left-hand corner is a large cock,

(98)cf. Gaulish coins with cock and rose symbols.

(99)These are discussed on p. 378 ff. below.

(100)Esperandieu, plate 6085.

below the feet, which are also large, which are all that remain of some person, standing up on a kind of step. Another unusual scene comes from Merlebach (IOI). On one side of the monument is the worn bust of a goddess, while on the other side, to the right, is a small, bearded man, wearing a robe, beside whom stand five female figures, the central one of whom holds a large cock. Above are the remains of the feet of some large deity, whose statue must have surmounted the block. On the other lateral face is the bust of a goddess. The cock does not usually occur as a female bird attribute, and the deity crowning the monument may thus have been male, although the fact that it is five women who hold the cock, (IO2), and the two busts are of goddesses, suggests that the monument was connected with the cult of some goddess.

From Nimes (IO3) comes a block having on one side a small cock separated by a tree from another object now unidentifiable, while on the other side is a Gaulish torque, flanked by trees.

(IOI)Esperandieu, plate 443I.

(IO2)But, the cock appears with an owl on its back in company with the very unusual Pistorf Minerva, v. p. 359 above.

(IO3)Esperandieu, plate 466.

On a very worn monument from Trèves (I04), a naked god stands, holding in each hand a worn object. To his right a bird stands on the ground, and turns its head back. The identification of the bird is complicated by the worn condition of the stone, but it seems fairly definitely to represent a cock. A fragment from Mayence (I05) depicts the body of a cock, the head now missing, facing left, and originally represented as pecking at a bunch of grapes. From Beziers (I06) comes a fragment of a monument, the relief of which is now very faint. On one side is the greater part of a large cock, and on the other side, what seems to be the remains of a flute.

Caesar testifies both to the presence of and the sanctity of the cock in Britain in his well-known passage:

'Leporem et gallinam et anserem gustare fas non putant; haec tamen alunt animi voluptatisque causa.' (I07)

'They account it impious to eat of hare, fowl and goose; but these they rear for pastime or pleasure.'

(I04)Esperandieu, plate 504I.

(I05)Esperandieu, plate 58I7.

(I06)Esperandieu, plate 6876.

(I07)Bell.Gall. V, 12.

From this chance statement we learn that the cock was already established in Britain at the time of the coming of the Romans, and that since it could not be eaten, it must have played some part in the religious beliefs of the time. It may also have been used for gaming. Its guts were, moreover, used for the purpose of tying up victims intended for sacrifice.

It seems quite clear then, from the above evidence, that in the Celtic areas, prior to the Roman occupation, the cock had divine associations, and was connected with indigenous cults.

This brings us to a consideration of the other problems, namely, that of Mercury and the cock as they appear on the Gallo-Roman monuments, and of the Gaulish mallet god accompanied by the cock, and their relation to each other. The mallet god with the cock will be considered first.

There are many representations in Gaul of the Celtic god-with-the-mallet, an attribute which does not appear in classical religion. This deity is best represented in the

valleys of the Rhone and the Saone. On the Sarrebourg altar (I08), where he appears with Nantosvelta, and a huge raven, he is called Sucellus. He also appears epigraphically in Yorkshire (I09).

The mallet god seems to have been an important deity in the Nimes area. There are five altars at Nimes, on four of which this deity is depicted, while his mallet symbol appears on the fifth (I10). He is represented as wearing a short tunic with a cloak, bearded, and holding a long-handled mallet. Most of these altars are considerably worn, and some of the attributes are unrecognizable or have been completely erased. On the much-damaged altar (III) on which the god appears with his consort, the upper part of whose body is missing, a serpent is entwined about the handle of the mallet. On each of these four altars a dog appears with the mallet god and looks up at him. A detailed investigation of the representations of this deity in Gaul makes it clear that the mallet and the dog are his most consistent attributes, while the serpent is sometimes

(I08)Esperandieu, plate 4566, v. also Chapter III, p. 19 for discussion of this monument.

(I09)E. Anwyl, T.G.S.I., 26, p. 410.

(ctd. overleaf)

present also. It is however, another attribute which is of major importance here, i.e. the cock which occasionally accompanies the god. On one of the Nimes altars (II2), where the god appears with mallet, dog and vase, a cock stands beside his left leg, facing right. Another most striking monument (II3) shows a bearded deity, arms upraised, possibly in an attitude of prayer (II4), accompanied by a serpent with a cock's head, and a dog. This is almost certainly another representation of the mallet god. This monument may be compared with the stele from Langres (II5), on which a male deity is depicted, standing up, clad in a

(II0)Esperandieu, plates 434, 435, 436, 437 and 440.

(III)Esperandieu, plate 435.

(II2)Esperandieu, plate 437.

(II3)Esperandieu, plate 4018. The attitude of the arms is that of the Hallstatt anthropomorphic amulets discussed above on p.339ff. It is of interest to note that here the serpent and bird attributes are combined, and they too are reminiscent of the composite animals of the Celtic and proto-Celtic Hallstatt tradition, where aquatic birds (usually goose or duck) appear with horns, and sometimes with four legs. The cock-headed serpent may be compared with such a concept as the ram-headed serpent, attribute of the Celtic Mars, and would seem to be a chthonic/fertility symbol.

(II4)The druids apparently prayed in this attitude.

(II5)Esperandieu, plate 3219.

short tunic and having a crown with three points on his head. He holds in his right hand a cock-headed serpent, and in his left hand a cock with its neck hanging limp, apparently wrung (II6).

A stele from St Romain (Lyonnaise) depicts a bearded deity with long hair, clad in a short belted tunic and a cloak, holding a bird in his left hand and a mallet in his right hand. (II7) A stele from Entrains (Lyonnaise) depicts a god holding a mallet in his right hand and a vase in his left hand. He wears a tunic and is accompanied by a dog, which sits at his right side and looks up at him, while a cock pecks at the ground at his right foot (II8). Another striking altar from Pierre-Ecrite (II9) now damaged, shows a deity, seated, with mallet, short tunic, dog and vase, while on the opposite side is a much-worn, bearded head, with a cock at each ear (I20), indicating the intimate connection between bird and god. Again,

(II6) This may be compared with the bicephalos from Senon (v.p. 390 below) who holds a cock in his hand, its neck wrung. In the legend of Hadingus, they come to the otherworld, and meet with a wall, which a woman tries unsuccessfully to leap over. She seizes a cock, wrings its neck, and flings it across. It is then heard crowing on the other side, having regained life in the next world. (Saxo Grammaticus, I, 31, p. 37).

(ctd. overleaf.)

another monument from Spire (I21) depicts a male figure, clad in a short tunic and cloak, a dog to his left, looking up at him, holding what appears to be a mallet in his right hand, and a bird in his left hand. Here again we have what seems to be a representation of the mallet god. A monument from Vaisson (I22) is also important here. It consists of a damaged altar, on which a god is represented, wearing Gaulish clothing, holding the handle of a mallet in his right hand, and in his left hand, a vase above an altar. A mallet is placed to his left, and on the right lateral face is a cock. There are also traces of what was probably a dog. A god with the mallet symbol, vase, dog and cock is represented on a monument from Entrains (2309).

(II7)Esperandieu, plate 2069.

(II8)Esperandieu, plate 2309.

(II9)Esperandieu, plate 2208.

(I20)cf. representations of Minerva in company with a bearded god clad in a short tunic, or a bearded bust, and Minerva with the cock (p.359 #above.)

(I21)Esperandieu, plate 5955.

(I22)Esperandieu, plate 276.

From the evidence above, and following, it would seem that the Celtic god with the mallet was yet another Gaulish deity, certain of whose characteristics caused him to be likened to the classical Mercury. Reasons for such a conclusion are as follows:

The mallet god appears frequently with the cock, which was both an indigenous cult bird, and one of the attributes of Mercury. The district of Gaul known as Gaul Narbonnaise is poor in representations of Mercury, most of which seem to belong to the vicinity of Nimes, where the mallet god was also an important deity (I23). Several altars testify to the cult of Mercury, some of them extremely interesting. One (I24) depicts the caduceus; another represents the deity accompanied by a dolphin (I25); a third altar is decorated with the attributes of Mercury, a cock proceeding to the left, and a caduceus entwined with serpents (I26). On another face of this altar are two masks surrounded by foliage and surmounted with pine cones. This may be

(I23)v. p. 379 above. Plate 440 illustrates an altar decorated with a mallet.

(I24)Esperandieu, plate 438.

(I25)Esperandieu, plate 439.

(I26)Esperandieu, plate 441. cf. plate 435 for mallet entwined with serpents.

compared with the altar from St. Beat (I27), on one side of which a bearded deity is represented, clad in a short tunic, with a bill-hook and a vase in his hands, while another face of the altar is decorated with the bust of a deity surrounded by foliage and pine cones, below which are a cock and a tortoise. There is a similarity of imagery in these altars, and it may well be that the god with the bill-hook is also another form of the mallet god. (*cf. Esp: 6849*).

We have seen, then, that in the Nimes district, representations of the mallet god and of Mercury appear in close proximity, otherwise the general area is not rich in Mercury representations. Apparently then, both a Gaulish mallet god and Mercury were worshipped in this area. Another monument from Nimes (I28) shows a Gaulish torque and a cock, both in company with trees, and we may here be faced with the attributes of either the mallet god, or of an indigenous Mercury. One other representation which is a vital factor in the equation of these two gods

(I27)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 8I22. These altars may also be compared with the extraordinary monument from Mont Auxois, which is discussed in greater detail on p. 411 below, and is of tremendous importance in a study of bird gods, where the bearded deity has a large bird on either shoulder, is accompanied by a three-headed dog, and has behind him an oak tree covered with acorns. (Lantier/Esperandieu, pl. 7684)
 (I28)Esperandieu, pl. 466. v. p. 376 above.

is found on the fragment of a stele from Strasbourg (I29). An unusually depicted Mercury wears a petassus and brandishes a mallet in his right hand. Here then we have the mallet god appearing with a cock, a bird attribute which he shares with Mercury, Mercury represented with the symbol of the mallet god, and both appearing in company with the serpent. This community of symbols would naturally be an incentive for equation of the two deities. This leads to the difficult problem of the Gaulish Mercury.

The following is a brief study of the Gaulish Mercury. The position with regards to this deity in Gaul is extremely unsatisfactory. Mercury seems to have been a comparative newcomer to the classical pantheon, and it is evident that the Romans themselves were not very sure as to his precise nature and significance. There thus seems to have been a tendency to equate the many Gaulish deities who were difficult to classify, with Mercury, and these equations therefore seem often to mean very little, apart from a very general similarity of function. Some 442 dedications

(I29)Esperandieu, plate 5490.

to Mercury have been noted in Gaul, and there are numerous monumental representations of the god. From these it is manifest that local concepts of the god/gods equated with the classical deity, varied greatly. Some of the most interesting representations of the autochthonous god, from the point of view of a general study of Gaulish religious beliefs, include those monuments on which he appears without his bird attribute, or where the state of the stone makes it impossible to be sure of such an attribute. But as this investigation is primarily concerned with the deities that are accompanied by birds, these representations cannot be examined here. For this reason, this cannot by any means claim to be a comprehensive study of the Gaulish Mercury. In many instances the god appears in full classical guise, i.e. he is represented as being young, clean-shaven, wearing a petassus, carrying a caduceus and purse, accompanied by the cock, tortoise and goat. In such cases it can only be concluded that the classical god is the deity invoked. Sometimes, however, when a monument to Mercury, purely classical in art form, is accompanied by an inscription, we are provided with an indication that a Gaulish god is concealed by the Greco-

Roman art-form by the addition of a native surname to the classical name, e.g. Mercurius Cissonius, which appears frequently in upper Germany, or by the prefixing of the word deus to the Roman name. Again, the Roman Mercury is never bearded.

On several monuments, relevant here, Mercury is accompanied by his Celtic consort, Rosmerta. Some of these representations are listed below. ^(I30) It is not possible within the scope of this analysis to make an exhaustive study of the Gaulish gods equated with Mercury, but there can be no doubt that the area of Belgic Gaul occupied by the Remi was an important centre of the cult of some god having features in common with the Roman deity.

- \ (I30) Mercury + goddess + bird occur in the following districts:
 - 1) Fleurieu-sur-Saone (plate 1800), Mercury & Rosmerta, much worn: cock on one lateral face.
 - 2) Paris, (plate 3143) Rosmerta on one side of altar; Mercury & cock on other side.
 - 3) Reims, (plate 3668) Rosmerta & Mercury, a cock & ram's head below.
 - 4) Laon, (plate 3756), Mercury, seated (unusual representation), with cock on knee, facing left, in company with Rosmerta, and surmounted by a tricephalos.
 - 5) Arras (plate 3962) Mercury (here strikingly similar to St.-Apollinaire Mercury in art-form (plate 3595), + Rosmerta, + cock.
 - 6) Metz (plate 4346), Mercury + cock + Rosmerta.
 - 7) Treves (plate 4929), Mercury wearing Gaulish torque, + Rosmerta, + bird. On the other side of altar, Esus, the bull and the three egrets (v. Chapter I, p. 3 ff). The above monuments are in fairly close geographical proximity, forming part of what was Belgic Gaul.

In this district, many representations of a three-headed, or more correctly, three-faced deity have been recovered, the god normally only consisting of a head, no attempt at a body having apparently been made. (I31) The head is usually bearded, and frequently crowned with bay leaves, and is accompanied by the head of a ram and a bird. These attributes are usually very worn and it is not easy to determine the species of bird represented. It is depicted from an unusual angle, i.e. as if viewed from above (I32). Representations of this bearded triple head, with the bird and the ram occur on several altars (I33). A bearded tricephalos, with cock attribute, going towards the left, and a ram's head facing the cock has been recovered from Soissons, which is also in the general area under discussion. In outline, the bird depicted on these altars resembles a raven or a dove, but it may have been a cock, particularly in the light of the Soissons altar. It seems almost certain that this concept of the triple head

(I31)v. Pierre Lambrechts, L'Exaltation de la Tête dans la Pensée et dans l'Art des Celtes. Bruges, 1954, for an analysis of the significance of the head in Celtic religious belief.

(I32)cf. Esperandieu, plate 3979 from Bavay, Belgic Gaul, statuette of a dove depicted in similar attitude to the above birds.

(I33)Esperandieu, plates 3652, 3654, 3656, 3657, 3659.

with the ram and the bird represents a local deity, of considerable importance, equated with Mercury. Some reasons for such a supposition are as follows. On one monument (I34) Mercury appears, bearded, clad in a short tunic, with traces of a caduceus, and embracing a ram's head, which as we have seen is one of the attributes of the tricephalos. Rosmerta, wearing a long draped garment, stands beside him. Below is a well-depicted cock, proceeding left, and to the left of this bird is another ram's head. These two attributes appear on the Soissons monument. On another altar (I35) a fairly thick-set Mercury is depicted, naked and probably bearded, not apparently accompanied by his bird attribute, but the stone is extremely worn, and attributes are very difficult to determine. On the opposite face of the altar is a huge bearded face, closely resembling that of the tricephalos with below, on the badly worn stone, traces of a ram's head. Presumably the bird was once also discernible beside it. Again on the monument from Laon (I36),

(I34)Esperandieu, plate 3668.

(I35)Esperandieu, plate 3669.

(I36)Esperandieu, plate 3756.

Mercury is depicted, seated and naked, Rosmerta at his side, while on his knee is a small cock. The whole is surmounted by an enormous bearded, three-faced head. A most interesting stele comes from Senon (I37) on which a bi- or tri-cephalos is depicted, having, in this case, a body, standing and holding a large cock. This again may represent a Gaulish Mercury (I38). It seems clear then, from the above evidence alone, which is confined to monuments on which a bird is depicted, that the link between the tricephalos, with ram and bird attributes, and Mercury was a very strong one, and that in the Reims area the two gods seem to have been equated.

We have seen in earlier chapters (I39) that Esus and Lugus also seem to have been important Gaulish deities equated with Mercury. Other non-classical representations of the deity, of interest in this context, are as follows. Several striking monuments come from the region of Bonn, where a Gaulish god under the guise of Mercury was worshipped. One (I40) depicts a naked Mercury, standing up,

(I37)Esperandieu, plate 4640.

(I38)v. also p. 395 below.

(I39)Chapter I, p. 4 ff, and Chapter III, pp. 226, 234.

(I40)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7779.

having two wings on his head and a cloak about his shoulders. He holds a purse in his right hand, above a ram's head. In his left hand is a caduceus. To his left is a large cock, and a bay tree figures on each lateral face. The inscription, which reveals the indigenous nature of the deity, reads Deo Mer(curio) Gebrin(io). Another representation of this deity (I41) depicts the native Mercury naked, as above, except for a cloak about his shoulders, with caduceus and purse resting on the head of a ram, and a cock to his left. A bay tree figures with a dove (I42) at its foot. To the left is a cornucopia, filled with pine cones, apples and flowers. The altar is again dedicated to Mercurio Gebrinio. A further altar, damaged, (I43) is also dedicated Mercurio Gebrinio, the naked deity standing between two columns, holding a huge purse and caduceus, accompanied by a male goat and a cock. A bay tree appears on each lateral face (I44). It will be seen that this imagery resembles that depicted on the monuments to the tricephalos of the Remi.

(I41)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7780.

(I42)cf. the dove from Bavay, p. 388 above, and the dove (or raven) accompanying the tricephalos.

(I43)Esperandieu (Lantier), plate 7782. Plate 7781 shows similar imagery. A very early tablet also from Bonn
(ctd. overleaf)

Another interesting representation of a Gaulish Mercury comes from Vienne (I45), where the bearded deity is accompanied by a huge owl and a cock. Other monuments are listed below. (I46)

(I43 ctd.) (plate 7783) depicts a naked male figure between two columns, head missing. The shoulders are covered by a floating cloak. The right hand is raised and holds an enormous purse, up to which a serpent rears. Two other purses appear on the floor.

(I44) Trees and foliage appear frequently in conjunction with the Gaulish Mercuries.

(I45) Esperandieu, plate 539. v. also p. 36/above.

(I46) Non-classical Mercuries appear on the following monuments: Esperandieu, plate 4398 from Metz, where the god is bearded and the inscription reads Deo Mercurio, indicating a native deity. Plate 5029 from Treves, bearded Mercury. Plate 5583, from Langensoultzbach, bearded Mercury, wearing a Gaulish torque. Plate 5647 from the Temple of Gundershoffen, dedicated to Mercury, who here appears as bearded. Plate 5925 from Rheinzabern, with Minerva and the owl, and a bearded man in a short tunic. Plate 6423 from Cologne, seated Mercury. Plate 6610 from Horn, Mercurius Arvernus (found only in Rhenish territory) seated, a rare attitude for this deity to be depicted in. It may be noted that the two seated representations of the deity are both from Germanic Gaul, which is rich in monuments to an autochthonous god having the attributes of Mercury. Plate 7457 from Spire where the god is accompanied by a raven. Another monument comes from Paris (plate 3143) in the form of an altar, having on one side a representation of Mercury, naked and of stout build, a cock against his left shoulder. Rosmerta appears on another side of the monument holding a caduceus before her in both hands. This is a 1st cent. Gallo-Roman work.

The above notes are intended to indicate the way in which the native Gaulish gods may appear under the guise of Mercury, accompanied by the cock. A close study of the monuments leads to the conclusion that a major Gaulish god/type (I46) was equated with the classical Mercury, having different attributes and characteristics according to local traditions. Thus it seems that Esus, the mallet god, Lugus and the tricephalos of the Remi are all fundamentally variants of the same religious concept, depicted individually according to region. It is clear, however, that in order to make an exhaustive study of the bird-symbolism of these Gallo-Roman monuments alone, a complete study of the entire corpus of remains would be essential, as, as has been evident in the foregoing discussion, a monument on which a deity is depicted, without a bird attribute, can be invaluable in throwing light on the identity of some deity accompanied by a bird (I47)

(I46) Type of deity is referred to rather than an individual god, for, as stressed above, the Gaulish deities seem to have been universal only as regards function which was of greater importance than individuality of personality.

(I47) Other miscellaneous Gallo-Roman monuments depicting cocks are an early block from Aquitania (plate I034) on which a cock figures, with three hens. Another block from Beaune (plate 2101) shows a well-depicted cock and a hen. From Windisch (plate 544I) comes the fragment of a frieze, with a cock at the base of some foliage.

Apollo Vindonnus.

Caesar testifies to the worship in Gaul of a god whom he equates with Apollo. This god is both a solar deity and a god of healing. Only the bird symbolism of this deity can be considered here, therefore the investigation is of necessity limited.

It is clear that in the Bronze Age and early Iron Age, the Celts and proto-Celts were deeply concerned with solar phenomena, and it seems that the 'solar' deity was also a god of healing. This is attested by belief in the medicinal powers of water and the cult of aquatic birds (I48). It is therefore not surprising to find a form of Apollo worshipped in Caesar's time, but it is interesting to note that representations of aquatic birds are fairly rare on the Gallo-Roman monuments, whereas those of other birds are prolific. Indeed, the god of the temple of Essarois seems to have been symbolised by the cock (I49). From this temple a fragment of a statue has been recovered of an extraordinarily depicted cock, lying over on its right wing,

(I48) For discussion of these, v. Chapter II, p. 73 ff.

(I49) It has been established that the cock is an indigenous Celtic cult bird associated with solar mythology (v. p. 374 above)

its head and neck arched towards the ground. Its neck, however does not appear to have been wrung, and it has a fierce, ~~a~~^ggressive appearance. (I50) The sanctuary seems to have been frequented in particular by devotees suffering from eye complaints, as the ex-votos indicate. The sanctuary, moreover, is situated close by a stream. The god appears winged, and wearing a pointed crown (I51) on a much damaged monument from the temple (I52), while the dedication reads

Deo Apollini Vind(onno) et Fontibus

making his association with springs clear. Ex-votos of eyes indicate that he was primarily a god of sight, while ex-votos, consisting of two persons, each holding a bird in his left hand (I53) must be considered as representing his sacred bird. In this particular area, the cock seems

(I50)cf. also the monument from Senon, mentioned on p. 381 above. The cock held by the bicephalos is in an attitude similar to the bird of Apollo Vindonnus, only in this case the neck does seem to have been wrung. Artistically the two birds, which are most strikingly portrayed, are almost identical. The Senon deity may thus have been both a Gaulish Mercury, and in some of his aspects, a Gaulish Apollo.

(I51)cf. the young, winged deity on the Mavilly stone (v.p. 419 below) and the deity on the monument from Langres (plate 3219) who wears a pointed crown and is accompanied by a serpent and a cock which seems to have had its neck broken. The deity of the Essarois temple is illustrated by Esperandieu on plate 3414.

(ctd. overleaf)

to have been associated with his cult, and it is possible that its sanctity in Britain, attested by Caesar (I54) originated from its association there with a deity of this kind (I55). As mentioned below (I56), the bird does not apparently figure to any great extent in the insular mythology (I57), but it does appear on one Irish 'Christian' monument, where the Christian element is open to doubt.

From the radical Vindo derive the Welsh Gwynn and the Irish Finn (I58). It also occurs in some Gaulish place-names. The possibility of the divine origin of Finn has been discussed by Murphy (I59). He does not appear in Irish literature and folk tradition in conjunction with the cock, but Finn literature is comparatively late, and any real traces of divine origin had disappeared. It is also possibly the case that the cock was the local

(I52 ctd.) Esperandieu, plate 34I4.

(I53) Esperandieu, plate 3432.

(I54) v. p. 377 above. Scandinavian mythology contains traditions of fierce otherworld cocks. For example, in the Völuspá there is a bright red cock in the bird wood, and a dark red cock in the halls of Hel. Cf. the fierce red birds which emerged from the Cave of Cruachan every Samhuin to lay waste to the whole countryside, v. p. 453 below.

(I55) Lugus appears in Ireland as a god of the Mercury type with powers of healing. (ctd. overleaf)

rather than the universal attribute in Gaul of the native Apollo (I60). The bird however does figure in an interesting context on the Monasterboice West Cross , where a seated figure is represented with a dog on either side of him, and a large cock in the act of crowing on his left shoulder. This figure may represent Finn, who seems to appear on other 'Christian' monuments (I6I), and the presence of the dogs and the bird here make his identity possible. We can at least say with reasonable certainty that we have here some pagan god or hero, with bird attribute, which is not surprising, for we are aware that sculptors sometimes introduced pagan scenes into Christian contexts.

The Pre-Roman Sanctuary at Roquepertuse and the Celtic Mars.

In 1923, the representation of a large goose, in the round, and showing traces of having been coloured, was

(I55 ctd.)The name may mean 'light' and for this reason he has been regarded as an indigenous solar deity comparable with Apollo. Mars also, however, figures as a god of healing, and the name Leucetius by which he is known at Bath and in Germanic Gaul on several inscriptions, contains the same element, which is also found in the Welsh Lleu.

(I56)v.p. (Additional notes.)

(Ctd. overleaf.)

discovered in the pre-Roman sanctuary of Roquepertuse by Gerin-Ricard (I62), and is now in the museum at Marseilles. The bird is strikingly executed, its head turned vigorously to one side, its whole aspect fierce and powerful. It originally occupied a dominant position above a portico of human skulls. Horses decorate the gateway, and below these are the niches containing the heads. It was originally thought that the sanctuary was used for the

(I57 ctd.) The problem of the numerous birds in Celtic insular tradition which are un-named, and yet are of obvious mythological significance has been discussed in Chapter IV above (p. 304), in connection with the eagle. Cocks and eagles are rarely named, and yet the evidence points to their having been sacred to the Celts from a very early period. Perhaps the concept of a superstitious dislike of naming things or being which were particularly sacred or held in great superstitious awe comes into operation here.

(I58) The same radical appears in the name Fintan, whom O'Rahilly takes to be an otherworld god. He appears in eagle and hawk form (v.p. 438 below). O'Rahilly derives the name from such a form as Vindo-senos 'the white ancient', or Vindo-tenos, a form of tene 'fire' (T.F. O'Rahilly, 'Early Irish History and Mythology' Dublin, 1946, p. 319.)

(I59) Gerard Murphy, Duanaire Finn, III, Dublin 1953, LXXXII.

(I60) This point is mentioned again on p. 414 below. (*where Celtic Apollo is associated with doves*).

(I61) Murphy, op. cit. LXII.

(I62) H. de Gerin-Ricard, Le Sanctuaire Preromain de Roquepertuse, Marseilles, 1927 (a copy of this has not been available.)

preservation of the severed heads of deceased chieftains and persons of importance in the area, the head being held in great esteem by the Celts (I63). Subsequent examination, however, revealed that all the skulls were those of young men in the prime of life, none being much older than forty years. It would seem then, that the sanctuary was used as a repository for the skulls of enemies, probably killed in battle, or as captives, only the heads of the prized victims being used. We know that the Celts used to decapitate their enemies, and that such trophies were greatly prized by them. That the sanctuary was connected with war seems to be testified to, not only by the age of the skulls, and the habit of the Celts of de-capitating their enemies, but by the presence of the goose, one of the attributes of Mars, the war god, and of the horses, also connected with this deity (I64). The dominant position and fierce aspect of the bird indicate that it was considered as being of major importance, and was either sacred itself (i.e. as the manifestation of the deity), or deeply respected as the symbol of the god worshipped

(I63)For discussion of this, v. P.Lambrechts, L'Exaltation de la Tete...

(I64)The Celtic Mars also appears as a god of death, symbolised by the serpent, of agricultural prosperity and of healing. (ctd. overleaf)

in connection with battle, to whom the heads were presumably dedicated (I65).

Mars is one of the five deities named by Caesar as being of major importance in the religion of the Gauls (I66). He is probably one of the oldest of the Italian gods, and common to the Indo-European peoples. Lambrechts (I67) has devoted part of a chapter to the study of the distribution of monuments and inscriptions to the Celtic equivalent of Mars, and the results of his researches substantiate Caesar's statement. There are some 225 dedications to Mars in Gaul, 135 of which clearly pertain to an autochthonous deity. In Britian likewise, the cult of a native god, having functions similar to those of Mars, is well-attested. The ram-headed serpent was one of the attributes of the Celtic Mars, and he appears in company with a huge ram-headed serpent on the Mavilly altar, where the serpent, the Gaulish armour worn by the god, and the fact that his companion is the Celtic Minerva (I68) indicate his indigenous nature (I69).

(I65)cf. Macha's mast, i.e. the heads of the slaughtered, Chapter III, p. 197

(I66)'Mars bella gerere' Caesar, Bell. Gall. VI, 17.

At Lyoiatt Park, in Gloucestershire, a relief of a ram-headed serpent was discovered amongst reliefs of Mars, while on one plate of the Gundestrup Cauldron (I70) a line of soldiers is led by a ram-headed serpent. A most interesting monument comes from St.-Anastie (I7I), apparently pertaining to the cult of an autochthonous god comparable with Mars. It consists of two busts which were discovered in 1927. They represent a beardless man, his head covered by an extraordinary helmet (I72) which reaches his shoulders and which is decorated with ram's horns (I73). There are traces of some sort of armour on the breast, and the neck is adorned by a collar. Horses

(I67) Lambrechts, Etudes, VIII, 121 ff.

(I68) For discussion, v. Emile Thevenot, Le Monument de Mavilly, Latomus, XIV, jan-Mars, 1955, pp.75-99.

(I69) The god's shield is identical with the egret-bearing Celtic shields from Orange, v. Chapter I, p.20.

(I70) Discussed below, p.407 ff.

(I71) Esperandieu, plate 76I4.

(I72) cf. the Gaulish coin of the Boii and Pannonii on which a huge bird, probably an eagle, has a helmeted human head. (Lengyel, plate XLIV.)

(I73) cf. ram-headed serpent.

and an ox are also depicted (I74). The work dates from the 5th century, B.C. Another unusual monument dating from the Hallstatt period, is a pyramidal pillar from the sanctuary of Caisses (Rhone) on which are engraved, on the four faces, horses, riders, a human figure holding a disc, and a large powerful bird, resembling a goose, but the relief is now fairly indistinct (I75). It seems clear then, that the cult of a local war-god equated with the classical Mars was practised in the area round the lower Rhone, who was also a god of death, and that the goose was regarded as one of the symbols of this deity.

We know that the goose was a sacred bird in Britain at the time of the Roman occupation as Caesar's statement makes clear (I76). The fact that the goose was not eaten in Britain, and was, nevertheless kept, indicates that it had some religious significance, and it may have then been the attribute of the British war-god. The bird appears in

(I74)cf. horses on the Roquepertuse portico, horses in the Italian October Horse sacrifice to Mars, and the bull on the Paris and Treves altars, where Esus appears as Mars and Mercury, etc.

(I75)Esperandieu, plate I893.

(I76)'Leoporem et gallinam et anserem...v. p.377above.

conjunction with Mars on the Risingham monument (I77), erected by the Fourth Mounted Cohort of Gauls. The slab was first recorded by Camden and Cotton in 1599 (I78). It is decorated with shields and other weapons, and the dexter arcade contains a winged goddess. The sinister arcade depicts the god Mars, in a panel, below whom a goose proceeds to the right, where there is a two-handled cup. A crane, which likewise seems to have been associated with war (I79) is also represented. The Fourth Mounted Cohort of Gauls consisted of some 500 men, 120 of whom were mounted. It was stationed at Risingham in the 2nd cent. A.D.

On the Continent of Europe, the goose appears, with other aquatic birds, on cult objects dating from the late Bronze Age and Hallstatt period (I80), and obviously played an important part in the religious beliefs of the inhabitants of central Europe. It is also represented

(I77) Northumberland County Hist. XV, 136.

(I78) v. Chapter I, p. 20.

(I79) v. Chapter I, p. 21.

(I80) Kossack, op. cit. plate 5, no's 10, 11, probably 4 etc.

with Mars on the block from Iggelheim (I81). This block apparently formed the base of a monument to the cavalier and serpent-footed monster group, and therefore is of obvious Celtic interest. Again, Mars appears in company with the goose on a silver patera from Wettingen, Switzerland. A fragment of a vase from Bavai depicts the bearded head of what is taken to be a representation of the god Mars (I82), above which is a fine goose, running towards the left. This bird closely resembles that on the altar from Vaison (I83). This is a most striking monument from the point of view of bird symbolism. On it a naked deity is most crudely depicted, standing up, full face. Two birds are to his left, one, the great goose mentioned above, walks towards the right and looks back at the anthropomorphic figure. The other bird, crudely and vigorously depicted also, resembling a raven, stands on the god's left arm and places its beak close to his ear in the manner of the birds-with-the-god motif (I84). As the goose and the raven are both war birds, and as Mars is

(I81)Esperandieu, plate 5988.

(I82)M. Renard, Poteries a Masques Prophylactiques, Latomus, XIV, Mai-Juin, 1955, 202-240.

(I83)Esperandieu, plate 306.

(I84)v. p. 407 below.

frequently naked on these monuments, the Iggelheim block providing an immediate example of this, we may here have another example of the indigenous war god. The goose appears again on a 5th cent. B.C. frieze from Montpellier, near Nimes (Sextantio), where it flies above a slim dog running to the left. (I85)

The bird is represented again in Britain on the following monuments. A sculptured slab from Easterton of Roseisle (I86) has a fine goose on one side, its head turned towards its back, while below is the fish symbol (I87). The district is rich in neolithic remains, but it is not clear whether there is any connection between these and the symbol-bearing stones. The mirror and comb symbol also appears. A slab of red granite from Tillytarmont, Aberdeen, is decorated with a more crudely depicted goose, below which is the mirror symbol. A goose flies at the eye of a warrior on the Aberlemno monument (I88). Geese

(I85) Lantier/Esperandieu, II, plate 7652.

(I86) J. Romilly Allen, The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland, 1903. The interpretation of the Scottish symbol stones is extremely problematic. The present tendency is to interpret them all by Christian symbolism. Many of them certainly seem to stem from ecclesiastical influences, but some, for example the above, seem to have a great deal in common with the pagan symbolism, and the
(ctd. overleaf.)

figure with swans, horses and crosses in the Fife caves (I89).

It seems then, that the sanctuary of Roquepertuse was associated with the cult of an autochthonous deity equivalent to Mars, symbolised by the goose (I90), which

(I86 ctd.) problem is certainly deserving of further investigation.

(I87) The fish figures on several Gallo-Roman monuments of Celtic interest, and is associated with severed heads.

(I88) In a poem on Gwallawg ap Lleenawg from the Black Book of Carmarthen, XXXII, a reference is made to a guit which plucks out Gwallawg's eye. Skene (Ancient Books of Wales, I, p. 336) translates this as 'tree', but the word seems rather to be gwydd 'goose', which makes much better sense, and is reminiscent of the imagery on this monument.

(I89) v. Chapter II, p. 94.

(I90) Figures of horses associated with flying aquatic birds and fish, and some foliage, also decorate the pillars of the portico. This sanctuary, like that at Entremont, has affinities with the Italic and Iberian civilisations. A bird surmounts the portico of the sanctuary at Osuna, where the fragments of sculpture bear a remarkable resemblance to those at Roquepertuse. From Roquepertuse also, come two male heads, clean-shaven, and joined together by the great beak of some bird, possibly a goose. The heads have no base and were obviously intended for placing on a pillar or stand. They are illustrated by Esperandieu, plate 76I6

also figures as a symbolic bird on the Gallo-Roman monuments (I91), and in Britain, where the cult of the native Mars is well-attested (I92). The sanctity of the bird on the Continent at an early stage is evidenced by the Celtic and proto-Celtic cult objects, and Caesar's statement, together with other monuments mentioned above, indicate that it was held in superstitious regard in Britain.

(I91) Two other Gallo-Roman monuments on which the goose figures are as follows. Part of a tablet was recovered from Chatenay, from a temple dedicated to Borvo, a Gaulish Apollo (Esperandieu, plate 2207) on which the head and neck of a goose is represented, holding a serpent in its beak. A man clad in a short tunic, and the head and forepaws of a rabbit or hare are also depicted. This symbolism is reminiscent of the British goose and hare tabu mentioned by Caesar. The hare figures several times on Gallo-Roman iconography. A monument from Entrains (Esperandieu, plate 2301) depicts a bearded naked god, standing up, holding a huge hare in his left hand. A stele comes from Brugg (Esperandieu, plate 7288), on which a goose and a raven are represented. On each side of the front, a lion crouches.

(I92) Mars Leucetius at Bath, seems to have been especially concerned with optical ailments, as the ex-votos indicate.

The goose also figures in a Welsh folklore tradition. Rhys, in a note, quotes from a manuscript of a Welsh essay on the folklore of Carnarvonshire, by E. Lloyd-Jones, 1880, printed later in the American newspaper, the Drych:- 'It was an evil omen to see geese on a lake at night, those likewise must be witches, and especially in case the time was the first Thursday night of the lunar month. Rhys mentions that his wife recollected the same belief pertaining in Arvon when she was a child. (John Rhys, Hibbert Lectures, 1886, p.174). This seems to be a variant of the swan-maiden motif, only here the birds are evil.

The Gundestrup Cauldron.

One of the most important and fascinating objects illustrating the religious beliefs of the Celts on the Continent, is the Gundestrup cauldron. This silver cauldron dates from the 1st century B.C., is of Gaulish origin (I93) while showing Eastern European art influences, and was discovered in 1891 by a peat-digger in a bog east of Ars (I94). The cauldron shows no traces of Roman influence, and depicts the pre-conquest religion of the Celts. Some of the motifs which appear on it, figure also on Gaulish sigillata. For example, a stylized eagle with outstretched wings, from Vertault, corresponds to the eagles on the plate of the cauldron, on which a goddess is also depicted, and to the stylized birds on the Troisdorf vase (I95). This goddess is reminiscent of the Nantosvelta type of deity (I96), and

(I93) Artistic motifs and the religious symbolism indicate this, (although the griffin shows eastern influence,) and such technical details as the filling in of the back of the reliefs with resin testify to Celtic workmanship.

(I94) Ole Klindt-Jensen, Foreign Influence in Denmark's Early Iron Age, Copenhagen, 1950. Another superb example of a Danish/Celtic cauldron is that from Brå, v. p. 368 above.

(I95) Renard, op. cit. p. 213 ff.

(I96) v. Chapter III, p. 19 ff.

and has a small raven-like bird on her hand and is accompanied by a small quadruped, almost certainly a dog. On another plate a group of officers marches, each with an animal or a bird-crest on his helmet, and led by a ram-headed serpent. Cernunnos, the 'squatting' god is depicted, as is the Celtic Jupiter with the wheel symbol. Altogether, this is a most valuable source for the study of the pre-Roman Celtic religion, and one which would benefit from a closer and more detailed study in the light of the Gallo-Roman and insular evidence.

The Dove-deity of Alesia, and the Motif of the God-with-the-Birds.

The dove is a bird which has figured largely in pagan cults, and this fact, in conjunction with its absorption into Christianity as a major bird symbol, (i.e. the Heavenly Dove as the spirit of God) makes it difficult at times to ascertain, particularly in the later Celtic textual material, whether the imagery is indigenous or ecclesiastical. In such cases, it seems that the

Christian motif frequently strengthened and reinforced pagan bird traditions, and that the two were then fused. One of the most highly developed of the pre-Christian dove cults was the cult of the Dodonean Zeus, who was worshipped in an oak grove, where there was a spring, and the priestesses were actually known as doves. The dove was also the symbol of fertility, and the attribute of Aphrodite.

Doves figure on Bronze Age and Hallstatt cult objects (I97). They are also represented on Gallo-Roman monuments at an early stage. Some of these representations are as follows. From Le Comminges, Aquitania, an area rich in pagan remains, comes an altar (I98) on which two doves facing each other are represented. A stele from Salechan (I99) has on it the busts of a bearded man and a

(I97) Kossack, op.cit. plate 5, fig.3; plate 7, figure 3 in bronze, the first bird is Bronze Age, the second is Hallstatt.

(I98) Esperandieu, plate 873.

(I99) Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7669.

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woman. Above them are three stylized roses (200), while below, two doves peck at grapes. A fragment of a stele from Chartres (201) depicts two garlands of flowers which join in one round flower, which seems to represent a stylized rose. Below are traces of a dove. This possibly formed part of a funerary monument.

Associated again with a funerary monument, the dove appears on a monument from Arles (202), on a fragment of which the bird has in front of it a branch of bay, and behind it, an ear of corn. This may have formed part of a Christian tomb, and the dove certainly appears as a bird-soul in Christian contexts (203), but here this is problematic. From Mayence (204) comes a two-handled vase, decorated with leaves, below which stand two doves one on either side of the vase. The borders of the

(200)The stylized rose was apparently a solar symbol, v. p.375 above.

(201)Esperandieu, plate 2960.

(202)Esperandieu, plate 222.

(203)v.p.44 below.

(204)Esperandieu, plate 737I.

tablet are decorated with laurel leaves. From Bordeaux (205) comes part of a pilaster, on which two doves are depicted back to back, on a vine branch.

Newell (206) in his most informative article, has maintained that it is from the Cote d'Or in general, and from the site of Alesia in particular, that the cult of the dove was strongest in Gaul. In support of this theory, he mentions six monuments (207) on five of which the bearded head of a deity is represented, in each case much damaged, with a bird apparently in the act of speaking into his ears. The state of the monuments is such as to make certain identification of the birds impossible, but from what does remain of them, the raven, rather than the dove would seem to be the sacred bird. In the case of the sixth monument (plate 7684), one of tremendous importance from the point of view of bird-gods, the birds are also

(205) Esperandieu, plate 1214.

(206) Adrian N. Newell, The Dove Deity of Alesia and Serapis Moritasgus, Revue Archeologique, 1939, pp. 133-158.

(207) Esperandieu, plates 2355, 2354, 2377, 7280: Lantier/Esperandieu, plates 7680, 7684.

headless, but the bodies strongly suggest ravens. This point, however, must remain controversial at present. The god is represented as standing up, clad in a short tunic and cloak, bearded, accompanied by a three-headed dog. An oak-tree with acorns is depicted behind him, and on it perch two birds, level with his shoulders. This invaluable monument was discovered on Mont Auxois, the site of the temple of the god Moritasgus, who was equated with Apollo (Apollo Moritasgus), a spring deity.

Whatever the species of bird depicted, it is quite clear that in Alesia a bird-deity was worshipped. The identity of this 'dove' deity is discussed by Newell, and there are three possible gods, i.e. Alisanus, Ucuetis, and Moritasgus. Newell selects Moritasgus as representing the 'dove' god, because he was a spring deity equated with Apollo (a god of healing, and there was an association between springs and medical practices), and because another spring deity has dove attributes, i.e. the goddess Januaria (208). Moreover, the god appears with

(208) This most interesting goddess had a temple at Beire-le-Chatel, near Dijon (Cote d'Or) from which come numerous groups of doves (Esperandieu, plate 3636) and representations of the three-horned bull.

an oak tree behind him (209) and Newell compares this dove/oak deity with the Dodonean Zeus. The Alesia god would seem to have much in common with the mallet god, who\$ is invariably bearded, has a bird attribute (the cock) which is sometimes depicted on his shoulder, a dog attribute (210), and appears on many altars associated with trees. It has been noted that Mercury and the mallet god seem to have been identical in certain districts of Gaul (211) and Mercury and the tricephalos of the Remi are equated. Moreover, the tricephalos has dove or raven attributes (212), and two doves, headless, were found in the same well at Beaune (213) in which a trio of deities was discovered, including a beardless tricephalos, each holding a cornucopia. One may also compare the

(209)Esperandieu, plate 7684.

(210)The three-headed 'Cerberus' which accompanies the Alesia deity, may be compared with such three-headed Celtic concepts as the three-headed gods, the three-headed serpent held by a goddess (Esperandieu, plate 8083) and in insular mythology, the three-headed bird from the Cave of Cruachan (v.p. 453 below).

(211)v. p. 385 above.

(212)v. p. 388 above.

(213)Esperandieu, plate 2107 for doves (other doves illustrated on plate 2109), and plate 2083 for trio of gods.

altar to Sucellus, the mallet god, and Nantosvelta, with dove-cote and raven symbolism. (214). Also, the dove goddess, Januaria, was a spring goddess, and the raven/fertility goddesses also seem to have had aquatic associations (215); a mallet head was discovered among the votive offerings in her temple. In the site of a temple from Chatenay (216) a pair of doves in the round were discovered, amongst ex-votos of eyes etc., and a head of Borvo (equated with Apollo^{*}), with curled hair, and a representation of a small person holding a bird, a frequent motif in these Gaulish temples (217). This god was also connected with healing waters. It thus almost seems as though there was some definite basic system underlying the apparent chaos of Gaulish religious imagery, and a study of the material along broader lines might help to substantiate this.

(214)v. Chapter III, p. 191.

(215)v. Chapter III, p. 206.

(216)Esperandieu, plate 2210.

(217)v. p. 423 below. Also from the Cote d'Or, at Ampilly-les-Bordes, comes the representation of the god Bemilugovi, who holds a dove in one hand, which pecks at some grapes (Esperandieu, plate 2340).

* v. 396 above for Apollo with cock attribute.

The dove figures in insular tradition where it has been both fused and confused with Christian material. It frequently appears as the symbol for the soul (218), and is represented on Christian monuments. The saints are associated with doves, and Saint Columba was, of course, known as the 'dove of the Church'.

An example of the concept of the dove as bird soul comes from the Agallamh na Senorach (219), where Patrick delivers the soul of a member of the Fianna from Hell, and it comes in the form of a white dove, and alights on a pillar stone above the saint.

The infant Moling is protected from death by a supernatural dove, which comes and protects him with its wings (220).

(218) Associated with the righteous soul, the souls of the impious being represented by ravens. 'The dove, because it has a gentle nature, and because of the purity of its plumage, has been selected as the image of the Holy Ghost. Souls of saints, being made in the image of God, may also be represented by doves'. (Didron, Christian Iconography, I, p.459.

(219) Silva Gadelica, I, p.II8. 'Nemh uaimse dhó ar Pátraic i lógh a náire agus a thabairt a péin. agus táinic a

(ctd. overleaf)

The dove also figures in Irish and Scottish Gaelic folklore contexts. For example, in the Scottish Gaelic story of 'An Tuairisgeal Mor' (221), a dove is called to sit on each of the king's shoulders.

(219 ctd.) anam a péin isin uair sin go raibe ina cholom ghel ar in cairthe cloiche ós cionn Pátraic.'

(220) 'Rola' iaramh a da' doitrighidh imme d'immirt bais 7 ecca 7 aidedha fair. Is aire sin tra ro chuir in Coimdiu colum do nimh do dhitin in maic bhice sin, co tucc an colum a cluimh agus a eitidha im cnes na naidhen, co raibhe ica chlutadh 7 ica teghadh. No sinedh in ingen a lamha ara ammus in leth na bidh in colum d'immirt bais fair. Ticed immorro in colum da cech leith imme, 7 nos-gabadh a heidha 7 a ingne dar a ghnuis 7 dara haigidh na hingine, agus ro boi occ ditin na naidhen fon cumma sin, co tainice trath don lo' 7 don laithe foisin.'

'Then (his mother) put her forearms about him, to inflict upon him death and extinction and tragic fate. So therefore the Lord sent a dove from heaven to protect that little child. And the dove put its plumage and its wings about the infant's skin, so that it was covering and warming the babe. The girl was stretching out her hand towards him on the side on which the dove was not, in order to kill the child. But the dove would come around him on every side, and put its wings over his countenance and its claws over the girl's face; and in this wise it was protecting the infant until daytime came thereunder.'

(W. Stokes, The Birth and Life of Saint Moling, Revue Celtique, 27, 1906, p. 264. The legend is preserved in a ms. in the R.I.A., the Liber Flavus Fergusiorum, which was written at the end of the 14th cent. or early 15th cent. and in the Brussels Ms. I490-4200, written by Michael O'Clery from an older lost ms.

(221)v. Chapter II, p. 156.

The bird representations from Alesia are the most important and striking of the Gallo-Roman monuments constituting the 'god-with-the-birds' motif, i.e. a deity represented with a bird or birds, which either perch on his shoulders or fly towards him, but seem to be engaged in conversation with him. It seems to reflect a similar belief to that connected with the Scandinavian Odin, (222) where the god is reputed to derive all his wisdom from the two ravens which habitually perch upon his shoulders. The origin of the Odin cult is problematic, and may perhaps have Gaulish connections (223), and there are certainly several major Gallo-Roman monuments (224) on which bird and god (225) are depicted in this intimate attitude. These are mentioned in the relevant chapters, the birds in question being doves, ravens, cocks, cranes, and a goose. Textual references pertaining to insular mythology also seem to reflect a similar concept, and the Celts seem clearly to have believed that the bird attributes of their deities manifested themselves in such a position, and were of prime importance in the cult.

(222)v. Chapter III, p. 248

(223)v. Chapter III, p. 227

(224)v. Chapter III, p. 249 for what may be Hallstatt examples.

(225) Goddesses occur, but mostly gods are represented.

Miscellaneous Gallo-Roman Monuments.

Apart from the material which has been incorporated into the earlier sections of this chapter, there remains a miscellany of Gallo-Roman monuments on which birds are represented symbolically, which it is proposed to examine briefly.

There are many monuments from Gaul depicting deities who are unidentifiable either because their appearance and attributes are not sufficiently familiar to make identification possible, or because the state of the stone is such as to obliterate the clarity of the attributes. Some of these are as follows. An unusual monument comes from Le Donon, where there was a temple to Mercury. A naked god is depicted, having a cloak about his shoulders, on which is the head of an animal resembling a wolf (226). Below this, fruits are hung, and a pine cone (227). To the right of the god is a stag, on the buttocks of which stands a bird, which cannot be identified

(226)Lantier/Esperandieu, plate 7800. cf. also Mavilly stone where a young winged deity is represented as having the head of an animal on his cloak.

(227)cf. Mercury with pine cones and mother goddesses.

from the illustration. The god is bearded. To his left is an attribute resembling an axe (228). Lantier suggests that this deity is Vogesus.

On several of the Gallo-Roman monuments the deities, male and female are represented as being winged. This would seem to imply that their ornithomorphic origin had not entirely given way to anthropomorphism.

Nantosvelta is depicted as having wings on at least two of the Gaulish monuments (229) and she was clearly a raven goddess. A young god with wings figures on the Mavilly stone (230), and a naked, clean-shaven, young winged god who has not been identified, is represented on a monument from Entrains (231). Again, the bust of a young winged god crowned with bay leaves comes from Entrains (232). A stele from Avallon (233) depicts a naked, beardless man, winged, standing up, having long, curling hair, holding what seems to be an oar in his

(228)cf. the long-handled axe held by Esus, v. Chapter I, p. 2 ff.

(229)v. Chapter III, p. 192

(230)v. Chapter IV, p. 314

(231)Esperandieu, plate 2283.

(232)Esperandieu, plate 2284. (233)Esperandieu, pl. 2215.

right hand, and his left hand resting on an object resembling a tub. A river deity is perhaps represented here. Again, a most extraordinary statue comes from Etaules (234), of a naked deity, winged, and seated in a cross-legged position. The head and arms are now missing, the short wings are crossed, and there are two female breasts and eight small breasts.

A naked deity figures on a stele from Treves (235), standing up in a recess. Against his right shoulder are traces of a bird. Deities and devotees are frequently depicted on the Gallo-Roman religious monuments with birds in their arms. From Dhronecken (236) comes the damaged representation of a naked deity holding a large bird in both hands. The monument was found in the ruins of a small temple in 1899. Part of an altar was discovered at Naix (237) on which a naked child (238)

(234)Esperandieu, plate 2218. This seems to represent a goddess of the bird/fertility type, v. Chapter III, p. 27ff.

(235)Esperandieu, plate 5039.

(236)Esperandieu, plate 5121.

(237)Esperandieu, plate 4659

(238)Deities are sometimes depicted as children on the Gaulish monuments.

figures, standing up and holding a large bird against his breast. Another stele comes from Bordeaux, depicting a child, in a recess, holding a rather large bird which he feeds with his right hand (239).

Other miscellaneous representations of deities with birds, of Celtic interest are, a very worn stone from Reims (240), the workmanship of which is very primitive, on one face of which is a naked god. At his right is a bird, now very indistinct. On the right face of the stone is another naked deity, seemingly engaged in combat. Fragments of very worn broken blocks of stone were recovered from Saint-Georges-de-Montagne (241) on which various unidentifiable deities are depicted, one of whom is accompanied by a small hawk-like bird. A stele comes from Saint-Romain (242) on which a bearded deity with long hair is represented, standing up and clad in a short

(239)Esperandieu, plate II87.

(240)Esperandieu, plate 3684. The territory of the Remi is the area in which the cult of the tricephalos with bird attribute was highly developed, v.p. 388 above.

(241)Esperandieu, plate I248.

(242)Esperandieu, plate 2069.

tunic, holding in his left hand a bird. From Langres (243) comes a bas-relief depicting a young, beardless man. He wears a tunic which reaches his calves, and holds a bird in his left hand, the wings of which are upraised. A rectangular block from Becval-Bois-les-Dames (244) depicts a man, standing up, clad in a long tunic, holding in his left hand two birds, suspended by the neck. The monument seems to be funerary, thus the birds may represent a sacrifice to the deity. A hand, holding a bird, comes from the Temple de la Foret d'Halatte (245) and possibly represents an offering to the divinity of the temple. Two funerary monuments come from Metz (246) one of which represents a man, standing up, holding a very large bird in his arms, the identity of which is not clear. This perhaps represents the concept of the bird soul, which is mentioned in connection with the insular material in a later section of this chapter (247).

(243)Esperandieu, plate 3346.

(244)Esperandieu, plate 3773.

(245)Esperandieu, plate 3875.

(246)Esperandieu, plate 4408.

(247)v. p. 445 below.

Birds are frequently represented on funerary monuments. For example, fragments of steles were discovered at Landstuhl-Kindsbach (248), on one of which a person figures, holding a bird. These are remains of funerary monuments. A man holding a bird figures on a much worn stele from Andernach (249). An interesting funerary monument comes from Langensoultzbach (250), depicting a man, clad in a tunic and cloak. He holds a bird on his left arm, and a rabbit in his right hand. Another funerary monument from Oberstaufenbach (251) depicts a small person, perhaps a child, holding a bird in his left hand and apparently feeding it with his right hand. This motif occurs with frequency, and it seems abundantly clear that birds figured prominently in Gaulish concepts of death and the otherworld.

An interesting series of complete or damaged statues

(248)Esperandieu, plate 6558.

(249)Esperandieu, plate 6210.

(250)Esperandieu, plate 5597.

(251)Esperandieu, plate 6095.

was discovered in 1920 near Treves (252) in the ruins of a temple. One of these depicts a child, naked, standing up, holding a bird in his left hand. This subject appears five times. A sixth statue, much larger than the others, represents a man, naked, standing up, and also holding a bird. A damaged stele from Kefersheim (253) depicts a man, clad in a tunic, his right hand on an altar and in his left hand is a small bird. From Bordeaux (254) come the busts of two children. A small girl holds a bird.

A funerary monument which differs from those described above comes from Oberstauftenbach (255). A large wolf suckles a human child. To the right is a large M and below this a bird appears. Representations of thrushes and other passerine birds are listed in a footnote below. Birds associated with foliage on funerary monuments probably represent such concepts as

- (252) Esperandieu, plate 7604.
- (253) Esperandieu, plate 5117.
- (254) Esperandieu, plate 1127.
- (255) Esperandieu, plate 6097.

wonderful otherworld birds, and bird souls.

Birds also figure on the Gallo-Roman monuments in association with weapons. Some of these are mentioned elsewhere. A group of weapons comes from Narbonne (256), consisting of a breast-plate, a helmet, a Gaulish trumpet and a shield, on which a dagger is depicted, having its handle in the form of a bird-head. From Bordeaux (257) comes a fragment of a cornice on which a shield, and a bird fighting with a snake are amongst the objects depicted. From Dijon (258) come blocks of stone decorated with shields and breast-plates, and on one of these blocks, a wading bird is depicted.

This does not claim to be in any way a comprehensive examination of the bird imagery of the Gallo-Roman religious monuments. Only a selection of the monuments have been described, in order to reveal the frequency

(256) Esperandieu, plate 701.

(257) Esperandieu, plate 1218.

(258) Esperandieu, plate 3524.

with which birds of all kinds appear in conjunction with gods and goddesses, deceased persons, children, weapons, and other objects of religious significance, and to help to indicate the prominent part played by them in the religious concepts of the continental Celts (259).

(259) Passerine birds occur on the following monuments: the fragment of a block from Bingen (Esperandieu, plate 6135) depicts a large thrush-like bird, which faces right, and raises its head. The stone is badly damaged, and it is not possible to determine the context in which the bird originally appeared. Another thrush comes from Amiens (Esperandieu, plate 3954) where it appears on a stele, standing beneath acanthus leaves, in which are two nests. A monument from Bourges (territory of the Bituriges Cubi, Lantier/Esperandieu, 8159) has decorative motifs on two faces, one being surmounted by a bird in profile (not illustrated). Another thrush appear with a serpent, which attacks it, on the fragment of a tablet from Nimes (Esperandieu, plate 6865). Two other thrush-like birds appear on monuments from Treves along with vines and acanthus leaves (Esperandieu, plate 5011, 5019). Thrushes are depicted again on a tablet from Porquerolles inscribed 'Diis Manibus', in conjunction with leaves (Esperandieu, plate 7438). What appears to be a funerary monument in the form of an altar comes from Neumagan and has on one side a pilaster, decorated with a stylized plant. The right lateral face is adorned with a garland, on which stands a basket full of fruit, and on each side of which is a bird, one resembling a small hawk, its neck encircled by a collar, and the other with its head missing (Esperandieu, plate 5211). From Narbonne comes what may again represent part of a funerary monument, in the form of a tablet, on which small birds in a nest among vine leaves are depicted (Esperandieu, plate 7565).

There seems to be little of importance for bird symbolism in the corpus of British material remains. An early Iron Age duck in bronze with a human head on its back, comes from Cranbourne Chase (260), and a duck with a cake in its mouth was discovered at Milber Down, Devonshire. (261) A small gold filigree wren was found at Garryduff, Ireland, and is now in Cork Museum (262). It is of post-Roman workmanship, but may not have belonged to a Christian context. The wren played a considerable part in ornithomancy and the druids used to draw omens from its chirping (263).

(260)Pitt-Rivers, Excavations in Cranborne Chase, 1888, II, plate CIII, 6.

(261)Piggott and Daniel, Picture Book of Ancient British Art, 1951, no. 68.

(262)Francoise Henry, Early Christian Irish Art, Dublin, 1954, plate 7a.

(263)A charming example of wren lore was published by Best (Eriu, 8, Dublin, 1916, p.122, 123), and is as follows: (v. Chapter III, for example of raven lore, and textual details, p.270ff):-

Dreanacht andso sis.

Mad congaire an ceanandan duit anair turus daine craibtheach cucad co n-agairbe fort. Madh anairdes gaires an drean druith uallcha dorioith. Mad aniar

(ctd. overleaf)

esurraidh dobi cucaib. Mad anairtuaidh goires aes lasa mbi cele fesa no mma tic and. Mad atuidh is inmuin leat anti tic and. Mad anairtuaidh tic aes craibthech tic and. Mad od leith anneas gai(res) acht minab edrud 7 grian turus inmuin tic cucaib. Mad edrut 7 gri(an) guin duine dil duit no adharc fort budein. Mad ad cluais cli comrac fri hog ua cein no fess la mmai oic. Mad ad deaghaidh gaires guidhi do mna d'fer ele dod c(h)ind. Mad for talmain tis ad deaghaid berthar do ben uaid ar eigin. Mad anair gaires an drean aes dana do thiachtain cuccad no scela uathaibh. Mad andes i(d) diaigh gaires taisigh clerech maith nodcifi no tasc athlaoch uasul adcluifne. Mad aniardhes gaires ladraind 7 drochbachlaigh 7 drochmhna do t(h)iachtuin cucad. Mad aniar drochdhaine gail tic ann. Mad anairtuaidh gaires deghlaoch soc(h)enelach 7 brugadha uaisle 7 mma maithi dothic ann. Mad atuidh gaires drochdaine tic ann, gidhad oig gidhad clerigh cidad drochmhna aos ocbaid aingidh do rochtain. Mad andes gaires galur no coin allta for do c(h)ethruib. Mad do t(h)almain no do c(h)loich no do chrois gaires tasc duine moir indiis duit. Mad do c(h)rosuib imda gaires ar daine sin 7 in lin fechtus teid forsin talmain is ed in lin marb dlomus, an leth forsa mbi a aghaid is as dlomus na mairb.

Wren Lore.

If the little white-headed one (264) call to you from the east, pious men are journeying towards you with discourtesy for you (?) If the wren call from the south-east, it is proud jesters that are coming. If from the south-west, ex-freemen (265) are coming to you. If it call from the north-east, people with a bedfellow or women are coming. If it be from the north, dear to you is he that is coming. If it come from the north-west, pious folk are on the way. If it call from the south side of you, provided it be not between you and the sun, a fond visitation is coming to you. If it be between you and the sun it is the slaying of a man that is dear to you, or a horn on yourself. If it be at your left ear, union with a young man from afar or sleeping with a young woman. If it call from behind you, importuning of your wife by another man in despite of you. If it be on the

(264)Ceanandan is difficult to understand. It certainly seems to mean white-headed, but such a description (over)

ground behind you, your wife will be taken from you by force. If the wren call from the east, poets are coming towards you, or tidings from them. If it call behind you from the south, you will see the heads of good clergy, or hear death-tidings of noble ex-laymen. If it call from the south-west, robbers and evil rustics and bad women are coming towards you. If it be from the west, wicked kinsmen are coming. If it call from the north-west, a noble hero of good lineage and noble hospitallers and good women are coming. If it call from the north, bad people are coming, whether warriors or clerics or bad women, and wicked youths are on the way. If it call from the south, sickness or wolves among your herds. If it be from the ground or from a stone or from a cross it calls, death-tidings of a great man it relates to you. if it call from many crosses, it is a slaughter of men, and the number of times it alights on the ground is the number of dead it announces, and the quarter towards which its face is, from thence are the dead it announces.

The bird appears again as a bird of omen in the legend of Saint Cellach (v. Chapter III, p. 275) It was also a widespread custom in the British Isles to hunt the wren on Saint Stephen's Day. As the wren is traditionally associated with augury, this gold representation from Garryduff may have been a personal ornament worn, for example, by a druid.

(264 ctd.) is hardly applicable to a wren. (*Perhaps 'bright-headed' with reference to quick, brilliant eye?*)
 (265) Best has a note on this, p. 125. Urrad means freeman, thus esurraid would seem to mean the opposite of this, i. e. ex-freemen.

As mentioned above (266), birds are used symbolically on the early British and Irish 'Christian' monuments, but this large corpus of material remains cannot be investigated here, involving as it does, a full-scale study of Christian bird symbolism in general. Such an investigation could not take place without a thorough analysis of all the relevant material, and much of the symbolism of the British monuments, particularly those belonging to Ireland, does seem to be genuinely and exclusively ecclesiastical in genesis. It is, of course clear, that in certain cases, pagan elements have been incorporated into the Christian monuments, and in Scotland, Scandinavian influence also seems to have been strongly-developed. The influences present in the figured slab stones of the east of Scotland, are even more confused and unsatisfactory. It is abundantly clear that much of the symbolism could, and does, fit into the general pattern of indigenous mythology, which is also largely the case with the Christian textual material, and there can be little doubt that native material was worked into the

(266)v.p. 355 above.

fabric of both the texts and the monuments. These indigenous elements, however, are so closely inter-woven with the intrusive material that in certain cases it seems impossible to separate the two traditions.

There are many provocative monuments, such as the Papil Stone from Burra, representing a small human head with a bird-headed figure on either side of it, with clawed-feet, but human arms, each holding an axe. For some reason this is usually interpreted as representing Daniel in the Lion's Den (267), but it would appear to have much more in common with the Gaulish god-with-the-birds motif, where the head of the deity is depicted as being between two birds each with its beak close to his ear, or again, with the Scandinavian concept of Odin with his raven attributes. Indeed, the head on the Papil Stone resembles artistically the type of Gaulish head which figures, for example, on the monument illustrated by Esperandieu on plate 6I70. In view of the complex nature of the material, however, and the great number of existing monuments, it is not proposed to examine them in this context.

(267)Helen Roe, An Examination of Certain Symbolic Sculptures of Early Christian Ireland, J.R.S.A.I.LXXV,3,'45.

Miscellaneous Bird Transformations.

In the early textual material, people and deities assume bird form on certain occasions only, and this is found to a highly-developed degree in the later folk material. Sometimes, in the case of deities, the bird metamorphoses are a regular feature of the popular concept of the god or goddess. These can thus be classified as bird deities, and have been discussed in the chapters on individual birds. Another group of transformations is concerned with the assumption of bird form in order to evade capture. This is known as the flight and pursuit motif (268), and occurs in both the early textual material, and in later oral contexts, and is internationally known. It is proposed to examine one or two examples of bird metamorphoses in such contexts.

In the legend of the sons of Tuireann (269), the manuscript of which is comparatively modern, whereas the

(268) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D 671, Transformation Flight. One of the finest Celtic examples of this motif occurs in the Hanes Taliesin, where bird form is assumed in the course of the transformations. Taliesin also refers to bird form (e.g. duck, crane) in his description of shapes in which he has previously been (Skene, I, p. 509, from Book of Taliesin.) (269) v. Chapter II, p. 158

subject matter clearly incorporates earlier material, the brothers transform themselves into birds in order to evade pursuit (269)⁷⁰. Method of transformation in this instance is by means of the magic wand, the metamorphoses being accomplished by one of the brothers in each instance. (270) Another instance of bird metamorphosis in order to evade pursuit, occurs in the Irish tale of 'The Fisherman of Kinsale' (272). Here the motif of the helpful animals, and the flight and pursuit metamorphosis seem to have become confused. The boy is promised to a mermaid when he is twenty-one years of age. He sets out to find his fortune and meets a hawk, bear and hedgehog disputing over

(270)The swan transformation is mentioned in Chapter II, p. 159. The hawk transformation is as follows:-

Do mholadar san an chomhairle sin; agus do bhuaill Brian do fhleisg doilbhthe draoidheachta iad, iona triur, go ndearna tri seabhaic aille eagsamhla dhiobh. Agus gluaisid d'ionnsaighe na n-ubhall. Agus mothaighid an lucht coimheadtha iad, agus do ghaireadar ar gach taobh dhiobh. agus do chaithsat frasa feargacha firneimhneacha riu,.....agus annsin cromaid ar na hubhla go hurlamh... Agus teid an sgeal sin fo'n cathraigh, agus fo'n crich a coithcinne. Agus do bhadar tri hingheana glioca gaosmhara ag an righ sin. agus do chuireadar iad fein a reachtaibh teora griobha ingneacha; agus do leanadar na seabhaic 'san fairrge, agus do leigeadar saighneana teintighe 'na ndiaidh agus rompa; agus do bhadar na saighneana sin aga losgadh go mor.'

(ctd. overleaf)

the division of a dead sheep. He divides the carcass for them, and they then pledge themselves to assist him in future difficulties. However, when need arises, he thinks of the hawk, but instead of the hawk coming to his aid, he himself becomes transformed into a hawk, with full power of flight.

Another type of bird transformation occurs in the motif of the eternal battle. (273) The contestants fight

(270 ctd.) 'They praised this counsel; and Brian struck them with a transforming druidical wand, each of the three, and turned them into three beautiful, wonderful hawks. And they went forth towards the apples, and the guardians perceived them, and they shouted upon all sides of them, and they threw angry poisonous showers at them...and then they swooped down upon the apples courageously,...and this news spread throughout the fort, and through the land in general. And this king had three wise crafty daughters; and they put themselves into the shapes of three taloned 'griffins' (274) and they pursued the hawks into the sea; and they sent shafts of lightning after them, and before them, and these lightnings were scorching them greatly.'

(O'Curry, op.cit. Atlantis, IV, p.196)

(271) Transformation by means of wand, v. Chapter II, p. 139

(272) J. Curtin, Irish Folk Tales, p. 36.

(273) Tom Peete Cross, Motif-Index, D659.2, transformation to animals to fight.

(274) griobh seems to mean some sort of mythical hawk-like bird.

in the shape of different animals for a long period. One of the best known examples of this motif is the battle of the two swine-herds, who eventually become the two bulls involved in the Tain, and perish in that form (275). Another example occurs in a version of the Finn tale, 'Giolla na gCroiceann' (276). In this instance, a man arrives on a mysterious ship and attacks the Giolla, who seems to have been another form of Finn (277). They fight in various shapes, until eventually they fight in bird-form. In this form they are killed. Finn throws one dead bird into the sea. The other, which is the Giolla, he places in the ship and takes him back to Ireland. His wife makes a little boat for him, and

(275) In the Rennes Dindshenchas, the transformations of the swineherds are referred to as follows:

('Ath Luain canas roainmigid? Ni ansa.) Ath Mor a ainm ar tús co gleicc in Duind Cuailgne 7 ind Findbennaigh, ised atfet in Echtra Nera imthus na da muccaid badar i secht rec(h)taib .i. bliadain lan cach hae, 7 batar hé sin da mac Chruind meic Aghnoman, Rucht 7 Ruicne a n-anmand. Eitte is Engan a da n-ainm ina n-énaib. Cú 7 Cethen íad ina conaib....

'Ath Mor was its name at first till the contest of the Donn of Cuailgne and the Findbennach. It is this that the Echtra Nera narrates, the story of the two swine-herds, who were in seven shapes, namely, a full year in each of them. And those were the two sons of Cronn son of Agnoman, named Rucht and Rucne, Wing and Talon their two names when they were in bird-form, Cu and Cethen when they were wolves... (W. Stokes, *Revue Celtique*, XV, p.464) (v.note attached.)

(275 ctd.).

In the Lebor Laigin text, the swineherds are called Friuch, (swineherd to Bodb of Sid ar Femun) and Rucht, swineherd to Ochall Oichni of the Sid of Munster). The two herds quarrel. They spend two full years in raven form, one year in the north on Dun Cruachan, and one year in the south on Sid ar Femun. The men of Munster gather there on a certain day, and comment on the noise the two birds are making. The birds then become men, and are recognized as the swineherds.

In the Irish folktale of Sgiathan Derg (Chapter III, p.289), the three ravens, who are transformed men, fight with each other.

(276) This version of the story is from Lady Gregory's 'Gods and Fighting Men', p.191ff.

(277) v. Gerard Murphy, Duanaire Finn, III, p. 33

Finn pushes it out to sea. As they watch the boat, they see two birds flying, with a dead bird between them. They put the dead bird down on an island, from which it rises up living, and flies off. Manannan's daughter brings the Giolla back to life in this way (278).

Reincarnation in bird form is also referred to in the Irish textual material. Perhaps the two best-known examples of this motif are the rebirths of Tuan and Fintan (279).

(278) This incident of the restoration of the dead bird by the two living birds would seem to reflect some tradition similar to that contained in what may be called the 'Phoenix' episode in Maelduin (Chapter IV, p. 327A). Moreover, the immediate recovery of the bird upon its touching the ground of the island indicates that this was an otherworld island. Manannan is clearly an otherworld god, and it is his daughter who heals the Giolla in this legend. Compare also the restoration of the dead cock upon its crossing the wall between this world and the next (p. 381 above). Throughout the tradition, ravens are accredited with supernatural knowledge, and especially of healing. Ravens on the Gallo-Roman monuments are frequently associated with springs and are represented as drinking out of vases, while the modern tradition contains such incidents as the ravens having access to the well of virtues, and the ravens discussing ways in which the king can be healed, etc. etc. The birds here may possibly have been ravens, but most birds in Celtic belief and tradition seem to have been accredited with knowledge of a super-normal kind.

Two Welsh examples of the eternal battle motif occur (ctd. overleaf)

flies all over Ireland, 'eager and lusty' and discovers all that goes on (282). He is in bird-form for a great length of time, and outlives all the races that invade Ireland.

Deities and persons possessed of supernatural powers frequently adopt bird form for a temporary and specific reason. For example, in the mabinogi of Culhwch, Menw assumes bird-form in order to converse with Twrch Trwyth (283). In the same story, Gwrhŷr, who has the language

(282) 'Lud-sa iarsin dom durais dilis dogres. Cuman lim cach richt irraba riam. Ro-ainius mo thredan amal dogniind dogres. Nimbai cumang cena. Lud-sa iarsin i ndeilb segi mori .i. murrach adbul. Maith lim on dano mo menma. Ba fortail me for cach ret. Ba sirthech imtholtanach dano. Noluinn dar Erind, rofhindainn cach ret.'

'Then I went to my own dwelling always. I remembered every shape in which I had been before. I fasted my three days as I had always done. I had no more strength. Thereupon I went into the shape of a large hawk, namely, ~~a~~ wonderful *noble*. Then my mind was again happy. I was able for anything. I was eager and lusty. I would fly across Ireland; I would find out everything.'

(283) 'Ac ymrithaw a oruc Menw yn rith ederyn; a disgynnu a wnaeth uch penn y gwal.'

'And Menw transformed himself into bird form, and alighted above his lair.'

(J. Strachan, An Introduction to Early Welsh, Manchester, 1937, pp. 201-2.)

of the birds and the animals, also goes in bird-form to converse with the enchanted boar (284). Cormac had two geasa connected with birds, namely, it was tabu for him to pursue the birds of Mag Da Ceo (285), and it was tabu ^{for} ~~with~~ him to swim with the birds of Loch Lo (286). Cormac violates his tabus, and evil ensues. One hundred and fifty youths are transformed into birds by Craiphtine, with poisonous spells in their wings, which they shake on the hosts. Scenb, however, comes in hawk form, and kills all the birds except one. Here we have traces of what seem to be bird tabus similar to that imposed upon Conaire, whose father and ancestors were birds.¹ Perhaps a similar legend was also connected with Cormac originally. It is fitting that birds should be employed to bring about destruction for the violation of a bird tabu. The youths are here transformed temporarily in order to bring about

(284) 'Mynet a oruc Gwrhryr yn rith ederyn...'.
'Gwrhryr went in bird form...'. (Strachan, op.cit.203)

(285) 'Robdar ietsic dono ercailti a hsaeguil.i.geis do foraim for enlaithe Moighe da ceo.'

'Now these were his life's prohibitions, namely... a tabu to pursue the birds of Magh Da Ceo.'

(W.Stokes, Da Choca's Hostel, Revue Celtique, XXI, 1900. The story is found in two mss, i.e. H.3.18 and H.1.17, Trin.Coll. Dublin.

(ctd. overleaf)

the evil prophecies. The number of youths transformed, one hundred and fifty, is one which is commonly used to describe the flocks of magic birds. There seem to have been many legends current in Ireland about flocks of wonderful birds composed of metamorphosed beings.

Another transformation motif for a specific purpose is that of the bird lover. This varies in detail, but fundamentally is consistent in that the lover assumes bird form in order to gain the desired persons love, or comes to her in bird-form, whether assumed specifically for that purpose or not. For example, Conaire's father comes to Mes Buachalla in bird form, but he seems to have been primarily a bird, whereas, in the legend of Nar, the lover transforms himself into a bird in order to deceive the woman's husband (287). In the modern Scottish and

(286) 'géis do comsnam fri henlaithe Locha Lo' (p.152)
'a tabu to swim with the birds of Loch Lo...'

Ro bator tra na druid ic mifocul 7 ic micelmaine (do Chormac).....Ro collad dno geisi Cormaic isind lo sinboi dno ic foraim for enlaith Moige da cheo .i. Loch na -n en aniu... (p.154).

'Now the wizards were foreboding evil and uttering ill omens (to Cormac)...so on that very day tabus of Cormac were violated...and he was pursuing the birds of Magh Da Cheo - today (called) Loch na -n En, the loch of the birds.' (ctd. overleaf).

(286 ctd.) Lotar iarsin for eraim. dar Crich Maine (Fhir da ghiall) cor-rancatar Loch Lou. Luid Cormac isin loch, 7 boi hi comsnam fri henaib in locha. (Is annsin ro foillsiged do Craiftine a mbeith air bru a comshnamh fri henlaith Locha Lo. Delbais Craiftine tri L macaim a rechtaibh en 7 bricht neme ina n-eitibh, co tangadar air linn Locha Lo, 7 gur craithsit a n-eitedha for na sluagaib. Badar 'na colladh iarsin a farradh in locha ag urnaidhi a minteri, co tainic Scenb cucu a fuath thseige, gurrus-marbh na heoin uli acht madh aenen nama. (p.156).

'Thereafter they went forward over the territory of Maine Fer da Giall, till they reached Lough Lo. Cormac entered the lough and was swimming with the lake-birds. There it was revealed to Craiftine that they were on the brink swimming with the birds of Lough Lo. So Craiftine shaped thrice fifty youths into bird form and a poisonous spell in their wings, and they came on the water of Lough Lo and shook their wings on the hosts. Thereafter they were asleep beside the lake, awaiting their people, till Scenb came to them in the semblance of a hawk and killed all the birds except one.'

(287)The legend of Bude and the wife of Nar has much in common with the type of transformation discussed in Chapter II. The birds here are clearly some sort of water bird, and they are described as alighting at the ford and swimming there. Cranes are described as being at fords (v. Chapter I, p. 52A), but men are rarely found in crane form, and many of the crane transformations seem to have been inflicted on people as a form of punishment. These birds have much in common with the swan tradition. The swan was a bird form frequently assumed by people going on an amorous mission, and it was adopted by persons of both sexes. These birds are described as being exceedingly lovely, and as enchanting the hosts with their music and causing them to sleep, a power with which the magic swans were often attributed. The poem of Snamh da En 'The Swimming-place of the Two Birds' occurs in one of the Dindshenchus poems, from the Book of Leinster. The following version was published by T.P. Cross, in the R.C. XXXI, from a version published by E.J. Gwynn.

(ctd. overleaf)

Snamh Da Én.

Snamh da Én na eóin diatá,
Sloinfet duib can immarga:
Senchas sar confeith in slúag
In ni diatá in Snam sírfúar.

Nár mac Féic meic Conaill Chais
Nirsat briathra fir anbais
Rob í a chéile, coem in ben
Estiu in ban-fhénnid bith-gel.

Buidi mac Deirg co ndír i
A crúachánaib Dubthiri
Ba lennán d'Estin amra -
Budi mac Deirg dath-amra.

Budi mac Deirg dian-garta
Ocus Luan a chomalta
Ir-richt da én oebda sin,
Tictis co h-Estin imglain.

Andsin dochantais dan tslúag
Ceól seng sírechtach sír buan
Co cotlad in slúag uile
Risín ceól na sídchuire.

Tráth n-a chotlad cách do chéin
Tictis n-a rectaib fadéin:
Dobid Buide, ní deccair,
Is Estiu i n-oenlepaid.

Andsin no s-iarfaigend Nár
Dia druid, ba dichra in comrad,
Ca bale óssa tecat na h-eóin
Co h-Estin álaind ardmóir?

Is andsin atbert in drúi
Ni chélam-ni fhort a rí:
Is iat na h-eóin dothaet and,
Bude is Luan nach lanmall.

(The birds are then slain at the ford and Estiu dies of grief.)

'Snamh da Én, from what birds is it named? I will set (ctd. overleaf)

(287 ctd.) forth to you without deceit; a tale of violent deeds that the host encounters, the cause from which the ever-cold swimming place is named.

Nar, son of Fiac, son of Conall Cas, his were not the words of an untrustworthy man, his mate, fair the woman, was Estiu, the amazon, ever-white.

Bude son of Derg, with fitness, from the mounds of Dubthir, was the lover of famous Estiu, Bude, son of Derg, famed for beauty.

Bude son of Derg of ready hospitality, and Luan, his foster-brother, in the form of those two lovely birds, came to radiant Estiu.

Then they chanted to the host a shrill bewitching ceaseless strain, until the entire host fell asleep at the music of the fairy people.

At an hour when all were long asleep, they came in their own shapes. Bude, it was no strange thing, and Estiu in the same bed.

Then Nar enquires of his druid - earnest was their discourse, from what quarter come the birds to lovely, lofty Estiu?

Then the druid said we do not conceal it from you o king; these are the birds that come hither, Bude and Luan who is not slow.'

The prose version of the above legend, adds little information about the bird transformations. It does, however, stress Bude's great magic powers 'Baoi draoidheacht adhbhal ar chor an Bhuidhe sin ...' 'Bude possessed enormous magic power..' It may be noted, that in the Dream of Angus, Caer likewise has tremendous powers of magic attributed to her by her father. It is also perhaps of interest to note that, in several of the earlier literary traditions of bird transformations, the major character goes on some mission in bird form, accompanied by a second person in the shape of a bird, whose presence is not essential to the plot, e.g. Derbforgail is accompanied by her maid in bird form; Fand is accompanied by Li Ban, although here both women
(ctd, over)

Irish version of the Cupid and Psyche tale, the lover comes to the girl in crow form, which he must, however assume by compulsion. Other bird transformations for the purpose of gaining the love of some desired person are discussed throughout the first four chapters. There are many instances of this motif in the modern folk tale, and it is one with an international vogue. It appears in ballads such as the Scots 'Earl of Mar's Daughter' (288), and in such tales as the Irish Sgiathan Derg, who is a bird by day and a man by night. This tale is full of bird transformations.

The Singing Birds of the Otherworld, and the Concept of the Bird Soul.

It was natural that the belief, which was clearly highly-developed amongst the Celts from the earliest period, that birds were an integral feature of the otherworld, would develop into a belief that birds themselves

(287 ctd.) are major characters in the tale; Aed's wife, and her serving girl are turned into cranes by Columba, and in the above, Bude takes his foster-brother with him as a bird, etc.

(288)v. Chapter II, p. 132

were actually connected with death. Gods and goddesses were worshipped at first in bird form, and later, in anthropomorphic shape, symbolized by birds. It would, therefore, be natural to suppose that the birds which were so intimately associated with the deities should appear in the role of guides to their territory, leading the soul there after death. Ultimately, the soul itself seems to have become thought of as adopting bird-form upon, (or sometimes in later folk tradition, even before) separation from the body.

As has been mentioned above (289), the Gallo-Roman monuments indicate beliefs such as these. There are numerous examples of birds, figuring in various ways on monuments which are clearly funerary. For example, the defunct may be represented as holding a bird in his/her hand, or may appear to be feeding a bird, or have it pressed close to his breast. Again, the bird may figure below or above the image of the deceased, but all these instances seem to indicate propitiation of the bird, and

(289)v. p. 423 above.

a belief that birds and death were closely connected.

In the insular textual material, there is also copious evidence of the belief that the souls of the dead take on bird form. Bird imagery is connected with supernatural phenomena in general, and what may be interpreted as a belief in the souls of ancestors manifesting themselves in bird form, appears in several texts.

As birds are associated so intimately with the pagan concept of the happy otherworld, and regarded as a form adopted by otherworld beings, it is natural that the concept of the bird soul, and of the singing otherworld birds, bestowers of joy and forgetfulness, and relievers of pain, should be transferred with ease and with little modification into a Christian milieu, itself rich in bird symbolism drawn from many traditions and mythologies. The miracle-working saint with bird attributes is not so very far removed from the wonder-working god or druid also possessed of helpful birds or magic bird flocks. The

three stately birds on the throne of God in the Vision of Adamnan, who concentrate exclusively on their Lord (290), are not fundamentally different from the pagan concepts of, for example, the three symbolic egrets on the altars to the Gaulish Esus, or the two ravens perched on the shoulders of the Scandinavian Odin.

The genesis of the motifs in the Christian texts is complicated and complex, and like that of the iconographical material, provides scope for a major study in itself. It is thus proposed here, to merely examine a few examples of the bird soul and bird ancestor concepts, and of the magic bird flocks of the otherworld, as being indicative of the main corpus of the material.

(290) 'Tri eoin aregda imorro isin chathair i fiadnaise ind rig, ocus a menma ina n-dulemain tria bithu, isse sin a n-dan.'

'Three stately birds, moreover, in the chair (or city) in the presence of the king, and their mind on the lord for ever, that is their fate.'

(Windisch, Irische Texte, I, Leipzig, 1880, p. 175. Text from Lebor na hUidre.)

There are many examples in early Irish literature of marvellous otherworld trees filled with sweetly singing flocks of magic birds. Some of these have been discussed in earlier chapters. The later Christian texts contain numerous examples of such a concept which do not differ fundamentally from the pagan descriptions, apart from the fact that the birds are specifically stated to represent the souls of the righteous. The plains of the happy otherworld have been exchanged for the plains of heaven, and the pagan Irish, in search of the happy otherworld, have become saintly voyagers on a similar quest. It is not easy to estimate how much borrowing of motifs did take place at this stage, and earlier, but it seems highly likely that, in a tradition as rich and varied as that evolved by the Celtic peoples, whatever borrowings did take place would only be likely to have occurred where the intrusive art and literary forms were in line with and sympathetic to the abundant native material. The idea of the magic tree and the otherworld birds is not, of course, peculiar to the Celts, but it was developed by them to a high degree, and formed an enduring and significant feature of their otherworld beliefs, and one which is ever-

recurrent in the tradition. The singing birds of Riannon and the flocks of brilliant coloured birds owned by Cliadhna do not differ so greatly from the bright bird flocks encountered by the Ui Corra (291), and the descriptions of the Christian heaven, where the angels appear in bird form (292).

(291)Uainebhuidhe from the sidh of Dornbuidhe, a woman minstrel, is also represented as being in possession of marvellous otherworld birds. She is described, however, as coming from the region of Cliadhna's wave, therefore there may be some confusion here with Cliadhna's birds:

'ocus crét in cairche ciuil atchualamar ar sé (i.e. Caeilte). Uainebhuidhe a síd Duirn bhuide andes ó thuinn Chliodhna agus énlaithe tíre tairngaire ina farrad. agus ba háirfitech tíre tairngaire uile i. agus a mbliadhna is lei techt d'innsaigid in tsida so agus bliadain gacha sida ar an ingen. agus tancadar isin síd anunn iar sin agus tainic in enlaithe gur shuidset ar chorraib agus ar cholbadaib an tsida. agus tainic tricha en díob i tech na narm in bhaile amboi Caeilte agus do ghabsat cliar istig. ro ghab Cascorach a thimpan agus gach adhbann ro sheinnid ro ghabdais in enlaithe leis. is mor gceol do chualamar ar Caeilte agus ni chualamar ceol a chommaith sin.' (Silva Gadelica, I, 223, from the Agallamh.)

'and what was the burst of music that we heard, said he. Uainebhuidhe from the sidh of Dorn Buidhe, in the south from Cliadhna's wave, and the birds of the Land of promise accompanying her, and she was the minstrel of the entire land of promise. And this year it is incumbent on her to visit this sidh, and a year to every sidh, said the girl. And thereupon they had come across to the sidh, and the birdflock came so that they perched on the cornices and couches of the sidh. And thirty birds of them went into the house of the weapons, where Caeilte was, and they made

(ctd. overleaf)

(291)ctd.

a chorusing inside. Cascorach seized his stringed instrument, and every piece that he played, the birds took up with him. We have heard much music, said Caeilte, and we have not heard music as excellent as that.'

In the legend of the voyage of the sons of O'Corra, the brothers come to an island where there were 'enlaithi ailli edrochta innti, 7 ceol sirrechtach sirbinn oca chantainn acu.' 'beautiful bright bird-flocks therein, singing plaintive melodious music.'

Again, the brothers are rowing on the sea : '..co tarfas doibh enlaithi mora ildathacha, 7 ba dermhair a lin.' 'until there appeared to them great, many-coloured bird-flocks, and vast was their number.' (Stokes, R.C. I4 p.44, 48)

(292) Again in the Voyage of the Hui Corra, which is full of bird imagery of a pagan nature, Lochan, one of the brothers, becomes converted through seeing a vision of the otherworld:

'Roconnarc iarsin mu bhreith do dhegadh nimhe, roconnarc in Coimchi fesin 'na rigshuidhi 7 enlaith aingel ac oirfidedh do. Roconnac tra en edrocht, 7 ba binne na gach ceol a canad. Michel immorro is e bhai a richt an eoin i fiadhnusi an Duileman.'

'I perceived thereafter, that I was borne away to look upon heaven, and I looked upon the Lord himself on His throne and a bird-flock of angels making music to Him. Then I saw a bright bird, and sweeter than every music his singing. Michael, moreover, it is he who was in bird-form in the presence of the Creator.'

(Stokes, R.C. I4, p.32. The text is from the Book of Fermoy, but Stokes believes it to have an 11th century ms. origin.)

Michael also appears to Brenainn in bird-form. (W. Stokes, Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore, Oxford, 1890, p.XIV.)

Other bird flocks encountered in these Christian texts occur in, for example, in the legend of the Voyage

(ctd. overleaf)

(292 ctd.) of Snedgus and Mac Riagla, where the birds are described as being the birds of the plain of Heaven:

'Nodo-seite an gaeth iarsin co hinnsi a mbui crand mor co n-enlaith alaind. Bui en mor uaso co cind oir co n-etib argaiti 7 indisid scela tossaigh ind domain doib....ocus indisidh scela Bratha: ba handsidhe notuair clis an enlaith uile cona n-eitib a taebó co siltis a mbaenu folo assa taebuib ar omun airdhe mBratha....ocus dober an t-en duillind do duillib an craind-sán dona cleirchib, 7 meit seched daim moir an dulind-sin.....Ba bind ceol ina n-en sin....ar ba henlaith muigi nime eat.'

'Thereafter, the wind wafts them onto an island where there was a great tree with a beautiful bird-flock. There was a great bird at the top with a head of gold and with wings of silver; he relates tales of the beginning of the world to them...and he tells tales of Doom; then all the birds used to beat their sides with their wings, so that showers of blood dropped out of their sides for terror of the signs of Doom...and the bird gives a leaf of the leaves of that tree to the churchmen, and that leaf was the size of the hide of a large ox...sweet was the music of those birds...sinzthey were the bird-flock of the plain of Heaven.'

(W. Stokes, Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla, R.C. IX, p.20, 21.)

The bird-flock of the Land of Promise is mentioned again with reference to Saint Patrick. We have in this instance what may be a combination of several motifs, e.g. the birds of the otherworld come to aid the saint, and are empowered to recognize and serve him; the bird-ancestor belief may also apply here, the birds representing the souls of Patrick's kinsmen (v, p, 445 ff for an example of this). This legend is mentioned in Chapter II, p. 152ff, in connection with the swan. These birds are clearly water-birds. It is yet another example of the early saints being connected with the wonderful otherworld birds. The legend of Gruffydd an Rhys, recounted by Giraldus (Giraldus Cambrensis, The Itinerary through Wales, ed. W. Llewelyn Williams, Lond. 1944, -p. 31, 32) in which all the birds of the lake acknowledge the rightful lord of the country, resembles the legend of Patrick and the birds of Findloch Cera. In the Welsh legend, the birds are empowered to recognize their rightful ruler, whereas men are not capable of this.

Apart from wonderful singing birds of the pagan happy otherworld, there were also traditions about flocks of evil, destructive birds, harmful to man (293). The Christian tradition also knew such malevolent bird-flocks, which they employed as tormentors of the souls of the unrighteous, or into which they turned the pagan deities. An example of such a concept has been discussed in connection with the swan (294), and the evil black birds which beset Patrick on Cruachan Aigle have been mentioned in Chapter III (295). The Cave of Cruachan, from which a variety of hostile birds and animals emerged according to pagan tradition, seems to have been regarded as constituting the entrance to some pagan idea of hell.

(293) These have been discussed in previous sections of the examination of this material. Many traditions of hostile birds and bird flocks must have been current in the early tradition. *O'Grady (Silva Gadelica, I, p. 242,) states that a lacuna in the ms. covered the account of the charming of the pernicious birds that ravaged the fields, which seems to refer to another legend of a malevolent bird flock. The legend of the Red Birds is typical of this concept of destructive otherworld birds:

'Mag Mucrima didiu .i. mucca gentliuchta dodechatar a huaim Cruachna. Dorus iffirn na Herenn sin. Is esti dano, tanic in t-ellen trechend rofhasaig Herind, conid ro marb Amairgene athair Conaill Cernaig ar galaib oenfhir arbelaib Ulad uili. Is esti dano, dodechatar ind enlathi chruan co rochrinsat in Herinn nach ni taidlitis a n-anala, conda-romarbsat Ulaid dano asa tablib.'

(ctd. overleaf)

* u Additional Note

'Magh Mucrime, now, magic pigs came out of the Cave of Cruachan, that is Ireland's gate of hell. It is out of it then came the monstrous three-headed bird that wasted Ireland, until Amairgene, the father of Conall Cernaig, killed it in single combat before all the men of Ulster. It is out of it also that the red birds came that withered up everything in Ireland that their breaths would touch, until the Ulstermen slew them with their slings.'

(W. Stokes, The Battle of Mag Mucrime, R.C. XIII, 1892, p. 448. Text from LL, the language being early Middle Irish.)

(294)v. Chapter II, p. 104. In this legend, the swans are described as being black, and therefore evil.

(295) An example of the concept of evil otherworld birds in a Christian context occurs in the legend of the Ui Corra. The voyagers reach an island full of lamenting people. Great numbers of jet-black birds with beaks of fire and red-hot fiery talons follow and flutter around them tearing them and burning them. The people tell the travellers that they are dishonest smiths and artisans, who, because of their dishonesty, are being punished by these evil birds. In the Edda of Saemund (translated by Thorpe, I, p. 117), slanderers are represented as having their eyes plucked out by Hel's ravens. These birds probably were thought of as otherworld ravens. Other flocks of vicious black birds have been discussed in Chapter III.

Another legend of malevolent black otherworld birds which occurs in a Christian milieu, is that concerning Duncan, King of Ossory. Duncan, son of Flann, son of Malachy, ordered a wall and foss to be built around Saighir Ciaran. His wife's deceased father, Duncan the Fat, was brought to the church and buried. At night, nine jet-black jesters appeared, and chanted over the grave. Mass was offered, and the grave was consecrated in order to get rid of the demons, who now took on bird-form. Compare the legend of the great birds which stamped above the grave of Cearbhall, - Chapter III, p. . . . (D. MacKinnon, Descriptive Catalogue of Gaelic Mss., p. 130 Ms. V).

Edinburgh, 1912

The concept of the bird soul occurs in several of the Christian voyage texts, and it is found throughout the later tradition where birds are frequently associated with death and impending death. There are two passages in the Voyage of the Ui Corra in which bird souls are specifically mentioned (296). The concept also occurs in the legend of Mael Duin (297). It is implied in the Life of Brenainn, where Brenainn and his companions

(296) 'Celebrait don mmai iar sin ⁊ imrait in curach fersin fairge co tarfas doib enlaithi mora ildathacha, ⁊ ba dermar a llin. Tairnis en dib for bord in churaig... croda a dath in eoin isin, .i. tri ruithni ailli etrochta co soillse grene ina bruinne. 'A tir nErenn damsá,' ol in t-en, ' anim banscaile me....'

'they parted from the woman thereafter and they rowed the curach on the sea until there appeared to them great many-coloured bird-flocks, and vast was their number. One of the birds alighted on the gunwale of the boat...vivid was the colour of that bird, namely, in its breast were three beautiful bright rays with the sun's radiance. 'From the land of Ireland I am,' said the bird, 'and I am the soul of a woman...'

(Text from Van Hamel, op.cit.p.104 ff.)

The woman is being punished for her treatment of her husband, and here we have the concept of bird-form as a means of punishment. Other souls from Hell appear in bird shape in this text, and are described as being released from Hell every Sunday, and as flying about and singing.

Again, in the same text, the soul of a jester is represented as taking up bird form:

'Atbath in crosan acu iarsin, ⁊ batar cutoirsech
(ctd. overleaf)

enter the land of promise (298).

The later folk tradition contains many examples, which although the majority of them are general and not very well-located, are consistent in conveying superstitious feeling about birds in connection with evil and the dead. There are some examples of these superstitions in Welsh folk material (299), and many stories of bird souls and birds of death are still current in the Highlands (300).

(296 ctd.) > dobronach de sin. Amal robatar ann co bfacadar in t-en beg ar bord in churaig, conud ann asbert an t-en 'Ar Dhia ribh, a daine, innisidh dam adhbhur bur toirsi.' 'Crosan bec bui againn ag oirfited duin, > atbath o chianuib isin curuch, > is e adhbhur ar toirsi.' 'Is misí bur crosan, 'ar in t-en, 'ocus na bití-sí bronach ní is mo, oir ragatsa fhor nemh anosa.'

'Thereafter the jester died on board, and they were sad and sorry on account of that. As they were there, they saw the little bird on the gunwale of the boat so that the bird said then 'For God's sake, O men, tell me the cause of your sadness.' 'We had a little jester delighting us, and he died a little while ago in the boat, and that is the cause of our sadness.' 'I am your little jester,' says the bird, 'and do not be sad any longer, for I shall now go to Heaven.' (Stokes op.cit.p.42)

(297) 'Imraiset biucan ond insi sin co fuaratar insi n-aile nar bu mor. Craind imdai inti, > eoin imdai foraib. Ocus conac(ca) tar iarsin fer is ind indsi, > a folt ba hetach do. 'Ind eoin atchithi-si dano isna crannaib,' ol se, 'anmand mo clainne-sea > mo cheinoil, etir nma > firu ate sut oc ernaide lai bratha.' (ctd. overleaf)

(297 ctd.)

'They rowed a little from that island, and found another island which was not large. Many trees in it, and many birds upon them. And after that they saw a man and his hair was clothing for him,....'the birds which you see in the trees, ' said he, 'are the souls of my children and my kindred both women and men: they are awaiting the Day of Doom.'

(W.Stokes, Voyage of Mael Duin, R.C. IX, p.494/5.)

(298) 'Is amlaid immorro bai in senoir noebh sin. cen etuch ndaenna etir, acht ba lan a corp uilá do clumuibh gleghealaibh amail cholun no fhailinn 7 ba herlabra aingil acht bec bui aice.'

'It is thus moreover, that the holy old man was: without any human raiment, but all his body was full of bright white feathers, like a dove or sea-gull, and it was almost the speech of an angel that he had.'

(Stokes, Lives of the Saints, I, 3876.)

(299) Gwynn Jones refers to a Welsh popular tradition about the coming of the birds of death (Welsh Folklore, p.200.). Again, any bird beating its wings against the window at night was supposed to be the ederyn corff, according to Welsh superstitious belief, but according to Jones (p.205) this supernatural bird is traditionally described as having neither feathers nor wings. Jones recounts an event connected with the bird soul belief, which is typical of both Welsh and Scottish Gaelic superstitions. The episode apparently took place in Cardiganshire in recent years. Two men from Cardiganshire, both deacons of one of the Free Churches, (it may be noted that frequently in the Highlands, individuals experiencing extra-normal phenomena are members of one of the stricter religious sects) were going at night to sit up with a neighbour who was very ill. It was a moonlit night, and while they were going along a lane, one of the men drew the other's attention to a bird which was perching on a tree. Neither of them could identify it. One of them picked up a stone and

(ctd. overleaf)

(299 ctd.)

threw it at the bird, which flew away. They saw it again on another tree. A stone was again thrown and the bird disappeared. When the men got to the house and the door was opened, a bird flew in, up the stairs and out through the window. Next morning the invalid died. This death-bird seems to correspond to the Scottish Gaelic tradition, still current, of an t-eun sith, a mysterious bird seen about the house in which a death is about to take place, or near a person about to die. A similar bird is called a tamhusg in districts of Skye, and is likewise of an unidentifiable species. Other legends are known about strange unnatural birds which herald evil. For example there is a tradition, alive at the present time in Barra, of a mysterious great black bird, with white in its feathers, which screams at night and is a sign of evil. This bird seems to correspond to the sgreuchan-aitin referred to by Martin Martin (p.73)* described as being the size of a big man. The vague although colourful way in which these inauspicious birds are described, perhaps indicates that some of the mysterious, malevolent otherworld birds of the early literary tradition derived from popular beliefs such as these, where the birds are perhaps general rather than specific, but where they had a deeper religious significance than is possible today.

(300) There are also countless tales of supernatural birds in the folk tradition, although all the birds are not necessarily bird-souls. The cuckoo has a widespread reputation as a bird of evil, and in some parts of the Highlands, including Skye, it is believed to be a sign of death when the bird approaches a house or alights on the window-sill.

J.G. Campbell (Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands) recorded several bird traditions of the above type. One which concerns a tradition of the helpful bird comes from Mull (p.99). A man in the Ross of Mull was apparently sowing his land with a sheet filled with seed oats. As he sowed, the sheet remained full. A neighbour, observing this, said 'The face of your evil and iniquity be on you, is the sheet never to be empty?' A little brown bird leapt from the sheet and the supply of seed ceased. The bird was the Torc Sona and was peculiarly attached to that particular family.

* In the edition of 1884, the reading is sereachan-aitin and the bird is described as 'striking hideously.'

Birds in the Folktale.

Folk tale is here clearly differentiated from folk lore. The primary function of the folk tale is that of entertainment. The tale may, and sometimes does, contain ossified beliefs, but their significance has largely disappeared when they become circulated for purposes of amusement. With folklore, however, the case is rather different. Folk legends may not always be consciously believed, but the belief element is nevertheless present. In Scottish Gaelic and Irish tales, birds reveal characteristics which, in general, they share with the bird-motifs in any well-developed folktale tradition. Not infrequently, they contain motifs and concepts which clearly stem from an earlier tradition (e.g. in the case of the swan), where an element of belief was originally present. In general, however, they follow the international pattern. From the point of view of the history and development of bird beliefs, therefore, the traditional folk lore is of greater significance and interest than the tale.

It is proposed to conclude this discussion of miscellaneous bird traditions by drawing attention to a few examples of bird appearances in folk tales. The episodes which appear to be most in sympathy with the earlier traditions have been selected. In the story of Cronan mac Imilt, Goll is represented as fighting with the eldest daughter of Cronan. He is being worsted in the fight when a little bird speaks to him and encourages him. He overcomes his opponent (301).

One of the tales of Oisín refers to birds of a type familiar to the earlier material. Oisín goes hunting with a hound puppy of nine months old, and a servant. When Oisín blows on his horn, the hills and mountains grow black with little birds. He blows again and the sky darkens about a large solitary bird that is approaching. The hound and the bird fight, and the bird is killed (302).

(301) 'Bhí sí a thurnadh d'a thnathadh nuair a labhair an t-énin uasal ar barr a chrainn..'
(Bealoideas, II, p.33). One is reminded of the episode in the Lay of Helgi Hjorvardsson, where a mysterious bird comes and speaks to Atli and demands worship in return for its secret.

(302) 'Chim duchtaint na gcnoc is na sleite do mhion-
(ctd. overleaf).

A tradition similar to that of the singing otherworld birds, is found in the Irish tale of The Bird of the Golden Land (303). A king, who is the father of three sons, promises his crown to the son who can bring him the coveted singing Bird of the Golden Land. The youngest son overcomes all difficulties and captures the bird, who is a metamorphosed queen, who has the power to transform herself at will.

Bird transformations occur in some of the Scottish Gaelic tales. For example, in a story about Oscar (304), he and Laoghaire go to the Big House. When Oscar reaches the cooking-place he sees a huge hero lifting a quarter of a deer out of a cauldron. When Oscar approaches, the man is no longer to be seen, but there is instead, a huge buzzard with outstretched wings, ready to swoop on him. He draws his weapon and attacks the buzzard, breaking off

(302 ctd.) eanlaithe. Chim an speir a dhorachu tiompall
orm age ean muar ata ag teacht.
(Bealoideas II, p.66)

(303) J. Curtin, Irish Folk Tales, p. 14 ff.

(304) MacDougall, Waifs and Strays, III, p.67.

one of its wings, and it falls to the ground and is seen no more by Oscar (305).

The buzzard again figures, this time in the role of the helpful (enchanted) bird in another story from MacDougall's collection (306). In the story of the Crochaire Lon-Rusgach, the hero, Alasdair journeys to rescue the king of Lochlin's daughter. The path through the Yellow Mountain is narrow and dangerous, becoming progressively so, and the hero finds that his strength and courage are beginning to fail him. As he is about to return, a great buzzard flies over his head and cries to him 'A mhic Righ Eirionn, cuimhnich comhairle na h-Iorasglach-urlair', 'Son of the King of Ireland, remember the advice of the Iorasglach-urlair.' The buzzard in this tale seems to have been the Iorasglach in bird-form.

(305)Disenchantment by means of a blow is a motif met with in different contexts in this analysis. In this instance, the metamorphosed bird simply disappears when struck.

(306)MacDougall, op.cit. p.127.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

a). Note to Preface, p.VII.

It should perhaps be stressed that an important part of the work of this thesis has consisted of a careful examination of the birds depicted in the iconographical and textual material, from the ornithological point of view, and an attempt to identify them according to species has in all cases been made, involving research into ornithological material and consultation with ornithologists.

b). Note to Chapter II, p.I70.

With reference to Carmichael's statement concerning the making of vows on the swan in Uist, Martin Martin says of the swan in North Uist:-

'When the natives kill a swan, it is common for the eaters of it to make a negative vow (i.e. they swear never to do something that is impracticable.) 1884 edit.

c). Note to Chapter III, p.262.

The following references to malevolent, otherworld birds, omitted by O'Grady, are published with a translation by Stokes (Acallamh na Senorach, Irische Texte, Leipzig, 1900.) The Irish text recounting how Caoilte banished a flock of baleful birds, appears on p.175; the translation part of which is as follows, is given on p.245:-

'Then said Flann son of Flann and Derg son of Dinertach, 'It were meet for us to ask for that spell, O Cailte my soul.' 'For what reason,' asks the king of Munster. 'Each of our men, including the two that we are, has eight cantreds which amount to the whole kingdom of west Munster, and at the very time and hour for reaping our harvest, three flocks of birds come to us from the western sea, with beaks of bone and breaths of fire out of their necks; and as cold as a spring wind is the wind that issues from their wings. And when everyone wishes (to put) a hand to the fields, they come to us,' says Flann, son of Flann,'

'And at one time in every twelve-month a bird attacks every ear in our cornfield and they carry it off: the second time they bear away (our fruit) so that they leave neither apple on apple-tree, nor nut on hazel nor berry on rowan, and when they come a third time they leave neither fledgling nor fawn on the ground, not silly little child; nor is there aught that they can lift that they take not away. 'And whence do they come?' says Cailte, 'or what are they themselves, or to what end do they go?' 'Some of us are saying' said Derg, son of Dinertach, 'that they come out of the elfmound and from the Tuath de Danann.....'

Cailte puts spells on the birds and:

'Then the bird-flock arose at that charm which Cailte put upon them, and they fared forward out to sea, and each of them killed the others with their beaks of bone and their breaths of fire.'

Another reference to destructive bird-flocks occurs in ll.7136-7137, and is translated on p.259; it refers to the way in which Cailte and his companions killed three bird-flocks from Sliab Fuait in the north:

'There was the time and season that three ruddy beautiful bird-flocks came from the borders of Sliab Fuait in the north to the green of this elfmound. They ate the grass down to the gravel and the bedrock and bare flagstones. Ilbrec sang:

'Three bald flocks, ruddy, thick, beautiful, come and graze the green, leaving not enough for a single race.' Cailte and his companions draw their slings and destroy the birds.

Caoilte also destroys another malevolent bird, with a beak of iron and a tail of fire which used to come and perch at a golden window that was in the sidh and shake itself there every evening, until it would leave no weapon in its place, but bring them all down on the inhabitants heads. Missiles that were hurled at the bird landed on the occupants of the sidh. Caoilte draws a copper rod from the rim of his shield and kills the bird with it. (Silva Gadelica, I, p.129.) The bird belonged to Lir, who comes to avenge its death and is killed by Caoilte.

d). Note to Chapter IV, p.311.

Esperandieu 3849.

An altar from Nîmes, dedicated Iovi et Silvano, depicts the wheel symbol twice, with six and seven spokes, lightning, a pot, bill-hook, a mallet, and an eagle above the wheel.

e). Note to Chapter III, p.219.

Lengyel illustrates a Gaulish coin (plate VII) depicting a raven standing on horseback, as big as the horse. (Unelli, Turones, Baiocasses.) Another coin (plate XL) shows a small raven perching.

f). Note to Chapter V, p.396.

The following are fragments of insular cock lore, which, although unlocated, are typical of the role played by the cock in British folk customs.

'A goblin came one night to a door and failed to get admittance. He said that were it the red cock of Autumn that were inside, it would open the door for him. Because the black cock of Spring was inside, it would not open.' (Cf. rust red birds from the Cave of Cruchan, red cocks in the halls of Hell.)

(Banks, Calendar Customs, II, p.16.)

'When a cock was hatched in March, its crow was believed to have more effect against evil spirits than that of a bird hatched in Autumn. A March bird tended to be kept for crowing on the last night of the year in N.E. Scotland, cocks are believed to crow.'

(Banks, p.67.)

'On Bride's Eve, if, after the ashes have been smoozed, there is no trace of Bride's wand, she must be

propitiated, and a sacrifice is usually offered to her: i. e. a cock or a pullet is buried alive near a place where three streams meet, and burnt as incense on the hearth, the last thing before going to bed.'

(Banks, p.151. v. also Carmina Gadelica, pp.167-87.)

'A cock crowing before midnight is a sign of approaching news. When heard, its legs were felt. If they were cold, the tale would be of death: if hot, the news would be good.'

(Campbell, Superstitions, p.257.)

'An Islay tradition holds that an Islay woman was stolen by the fairies. In order to retrieve her, her husband had to go to a certain hillock, taking with him a black cock born at seed-sowing time, and a piece of steel. He entered the fairy mound with the cock in his arms and hid. Towards morning the cock crew, and the man was allowed to go home with his wife.'

(Superstitions, p.87.)

An Irish legend also refers to the Coileach Mharta:

'Chuala da mbeadh coileach firinneach Marta agat agus go mbeadh namhaid a'teacht go n-aithneodh sae an namhaid i ngiorracht pairce do'n tig, agus da mbeadh sae chun teacht isteach go leinheadh a'coileach, a'buala (a) sgiathan is a' glaach, chon saru a thuir do'n namhaid. Deir siad leis, nach ceart an coileach a chuir i n-aon cheangal aon uíhe sa mbliain.

(Bealoideas II, p.25)

On the first Monday of the quarter, a living creature was thrust outside by the first person who rose in the morning. The door was then shut. This was apparently a propitiatory sacrifice to evil spirits, and was usually a cock, sometimes a duck or hen.

(Carmina Gadelica, II, 243; Banks, II, 23).

g). Note to Chapter V, p.442.

A version of Snámh da En was published by Carl Marstrander (Eriu V, 1911, p.219 ff.) with a second poem, also from the Book of Leinster, which explains the 'Snámh' as resulting from a combat between Aed Rind, son of Ronan, and Conan mac in Dagdai over Find's love for Aed's daughter Celg. Remur and Cael, two sons of Ailill and Medb, come to aid Conan in bird form.: p.225:

'Tancatar as Sid Ban Find . irrecht da éa os cath dind
 Snait in sruth súaire in dál . is on tshnámh atá in
 Snám.'

EPILOGUE.

In these five chapters, an attempt has been made to assemble and examine the occurrence of birds in 'supernatural' contexts within the entire Celtic tradition, and to estimate their relative and changing significance within that tradition. It must be emphasised that no clear-cut line of demarcation can be found between 'belief' traits and 'wonder' traits, although an attempt has been made wherever possible to give some indication of the significance of any single piece of evidence. The work has had of necessity to be compressed on account of the overwhelming amount of material, and most of the major sections are thus capable of expansion and development. The introduction of wider comparative study could well be beneficial at this stage.

It has been seen that an intensive study of an individual symbol, such as the symbolism of the bird, not only brings to light the previously unsuspected wealth of avian beliefs and traditions, but also opens up possibilities for the study of other related aspects of the imaginative life of the Celts. Bird fashions, i.e. the popularity of a certain bird/birds at any given stage in the

tradition, seem to reflect different facets of the outlook and attitudes of the people, the bird which is popular at a given time or place, or in a given set of circumstances, inevitably reflecting something of the life of the people concerned. It has been observed that birds fulfil many varied roles in Celtic belief and popular superstition. They occur both as attributes and as substitutes for pagan deities; they act as oracles and prophets; there are many examples of birds as servants of gods and heroes, and the motif of the helpful bird is well known in the Celtic tradition. Malevolent individual birds and destructive bird flocks are represented, and there is the highly-developed tradition of the beautiful otherworld birds which heal pain and soothe sorrow. Bird metamorphoses of all kinds occur, both voluntary transformations and enforced metamorphosis for punishment, or through maliciousness, being well-represented. There are many legends linking the Christian saints with birds, and the concept of the bird soul is also one which is familiar to this material.

In connection with the iconographical material, it has been seen that certain areas of Gaul are rich in bird imagery and symbolism pertaining to autochthonous cults, and it would seem from such symbolism that the Celtic peripheral areas have an affinity with the peripheral regions of the adjoining cultural groups. For example, it seems that the imagery of southern Gaul has affinities with that of the Italo-Ibero complex, while the north appears to be spiritually aligned to the Germanic tradition. In the region of the Cote d'Or a highly-developed cult of bird gods is indicated, and this region in particular would benefit from a more intensive study of the native religious idiom. Again, from the viewpoint of bird symbolism, the Hallstatt cult objects from north and central Europe would seem perhaps to link the early Celtic and proto-Celtic culture of this region with the early Irish literary imagery, while Gaul seems to show closer affinities with Britain in this respect. This, however, is only a very tentative statement, as study along more general lines must of necessity be undertaken in order to substantiate it. However, as

repeatedly stressed above, underlying the whole complex of Celtic religious symbolism and imagery is the evidence of a fundamental coherence and unity of system, the component elements united, possibly, by the universal influence of druidism, which is in itself deserving of a more analytic study.

As mentioned above, the material dealt with can by no means be regarded as being of equal value. As regards the iconography, numismatics, ceramics and metalwork, Gaulish territory is rich in monuments illustrative of the religion of the Gauls, although the deities have frequently undergone the process of interpretatio Romana which confuses the evidence and makes segregation of the motifs more problematic, although not impossible, and there are many cult objects and monuments on which birds are depicted in a striking and provocative fashion. As is inevitably the case in dealing with all records, both material and manuscript, the investigator is at the mercy of chance survival. Where, as in the case of the continental material, there are no native literary

documents to assist in the substantiation and interpretation of the iconographical evidence, that evidence alone must be relied upon. Apart from some chance references by classical writers to certain religious customs or peculiarities of the Celts, there is no manuscript tradition which can guide the investigator into an understanding of the symbolism of the monuments, and when once an intensive study of this imagery has been made from the Celtic point of view, the wider comparative method can possibly be used to advantage. It is of course possible, and indeed essential, to refer to the insular manuscript tradition, and to insular monuments contemporaneous with the continental material. This has been done throughout the above examination, and has been found to be of value in providing, on occasions, some clue to an understanding of the continental evidence. This can, however, be a dangerous approach, and must, of course, be used with caution.

The manuscript tradition, although it provides evidence of a more detailed kind than does the iconography, is more malleable, and thus more liable to alteration

by individuals. One person can alter the tradition through, for example, religious scruples or for literary reasons, i.e. to make a better story, and thus we must rely on those who committed the tradition to writing in the first instance, and who must certainly have altered or modified it as or if they thought fit. While the Irish church, which was responsible for the early manuscript tradition, was tolerant of the native beliefs, it is unlikely that it would have allowed to be transcribed and perpetuated, anything that too obviously implied bird worship or animal worship, or indeed active worship of any non-Christian kind. Thus sacred birds would tend to become wonderful or fantastic birds, or, in the case of ravens and other ominous birds, transformed pagan deities, or demons. Episodes did, however, slip through inadvertently, which may not have appeared obviously pagan then, but stand out as such from the perspective of time. It seems then, that it is not in the straightforward literary tradition that one is most likely to glimpse the strongest undercurrents of

pre-Christian cults, but in such popular traditions as those pertaining to the saints, and certain places (dindshenchas), even holy places, like Saint Patrick's Purgatory, and one may also find traces of beliefs, frowned on by the Church, and omitted from the literary tradition, emerging later in folk lore and practise.

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Bibliographical Note.

The bibliography which follows is a rigidly selective one: In the course of preparing a thesis on such a topic as bird symbolism, which inevitably calls for an examination of all remains of Celtic culture, it has been necessary to consult a great number of books of a general nature, some of which were completely irrelevant, others useful in shaping the general treatment of the subject without having direct relevance to the particular subject under discussion. The bibliography is not concerned with books of a general nature: only those studies which have proved to be most useful and informative have been included along with the texts and discussions of material remains that form the essential groundwork of the thesis. It has been felt that a bibliography of so exclusive a kind would be most useful to those with internal knowledge of the subject, in addition to providing a basis of the essential material for those who may have less direct interests in the subject.

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