

Fabulous History of The Gadelians.

The history of Ireland : ancient and modern, taken from the most authentic records, and dedicated to the Irish Brigade.

Abbé Mac-Geoghegan

•

It is more than probable that Ireland remained desert and uninhabited from the creation to the deluge. No history, not even that of Moses, offers any thing which can lead us to suppose, that before the universal deluge, men had discovered the secret of passing from one country to another that was separated by water. The ark, which was constructed by order of God himself, and which served to preserve man on the watery element, is the first vessel of which we have any knowledge. Consequently the story of the three Spanish fishermen, who were driven by contrary winds on the coast of Ireland, some time before the deluge, and the account of Keasar, daughter of Bith, according to others niece of Noah, who, by means of a vessel which she had built after the model of the ark, [1] retired to that island, to save herself from the waters of the deluge, should be rejected as a fiction, and unworthy of being admitted into a serious history.

There are some old collections of charters, with many other monuments in writing, of the church of Cluan-Mac-Noisk, in Latin “ Cluanensis,” cited by O’Flaherty in the dedicatory epistle of his Ogygia, [2] which fix the arrival of the first colonies in Ireland, under Partholan, in the year of the world 1969, [3] three hundred and twelve years after the deluge ; this colony was followed by the Nemedians, the Fomorians, the Firbolgs, and the Tuatha de Danains. [4] Although most historians [5] who speak of the first inhabitants of Ireland after the deluge, mention those colonies ; they do not however agree upon the origin of those people. Some consider them to have been originally from Scythia, others from Thrace, [6] or Migdonia ; but the opinion of those who suppose that they came from Britain and Gaul, appears more natural, without being subject to the same improbabilities. Those authors following this principle, that all nations had been peopled one from the other successively, [7] say, that according to order and reason, Asia Minor, being nearest to the cradle of the human race, must have been peopled by the descendants of Japhet before Greece, Greece before Italy, Italy before Gaul, Gaul before Britain, and Britain before Ireland ; that therefore those countries must have drawn their first inhabitants one from the other, from Asia to Ireland : by such gradation they pretend that Ireland received her first inhabitants from Britain, or from Gaul. The conjecture is a strong one. The analogy that is between the name of those people and the inhabitants of Belgic Gaul, and other nations, either of Gaul or Britain, added to the proximity of those countries, gives to it an appearance of plausibility. The Fomorians and Firbolgs may have been descended from the Belgæ of Belgic Gaul, and the Tuatha de Danains from the Danmonii, an ancient people of Cornwall in Britain. Whatever truth may be in these conjectures, Partholan having landed with his colony in Ireland, [8] divided the island between his four sons, Er, Orbha, Fearon, and Ferghna ; but his posterity, after three hundred years’ residence in the country, perished miserably by the plague, at Binn-eadair, at present Howth, near Dublin ; after which time the island continued uninhabited for the space of thirty years, until the arrival of the second colony commanded by Nemedius.

It is said that Neivy, or Nemedius, [9] great grand-nephew of Partholan, having learned by some means the disasters and tragical end of his relations in Ireland, and wishing, as heir of Partholan, to succeed him in the possession of that island, embarked with thirty-four transport vessels, carrying each thirty persons, without counting Macha, his wife, and his four sons,

Starn, Janbaneal, Annin, and Fergus, who followed his fortune in the expedition. Macha died after twelve ears, and was interred in a place since called from her name, Ardmach.

Nemedius was not long in peaceful possession of his new kingdom, when he was disturbed by the Fomorians or Fomhoraigs. Nemedius fought some successful battles against them : the first was near the mountain called Slieve Bloemy ; the second at Rossfraochin, in Connaught, where Gan and Geanan, the principal commanders of these strangers, were slain ; the third at Murbuilg, in the country since called Dalriada, otherwise Route, in which Starn, son of Nemedius, lost his life. But the fourth battle was fatal to him, his whole army having been cut to pieces. His son Arthur, who was born in the country, and Jobean, son of Starn, were found among the slain. [10] Nemedius, unable to survive so great a misfortune, died of grief some short time afterwards at Oilean-Arda-Neivy, at present Barrymore, in the county of Cork ; after which the Fomorians easily made themselves masters of the whole island. Those of the colony of Nemedius who had escaped the last defeat, after some few unavailing efforts, being unable to bear the tyranny of those new masters, resolved to abandon the country. Jobath, grandson of Nemedius, led a part of the colony into the north of Germany, from whence are descended the Tuatha de Danains. [11] Briotan Maol, grand son of Nemedius by Feargus, established himself with his tribe in Britain, [12] called, according to the Psalter of Cashel, from his name, and his posterity settled there under the name of Britons. This opinion, which is supported by a number of ancient Irish chronologists, agrees as to the time, with Henry of Huntington, who says, that the Britons came into Britain in the third age of the world, “ Brittones in tertia mundi ætate venerunt in Britanniam ;” this account merits at least as much credit as the fable of Geoffry of Monmouth about Brutus, which has been opposed and rejected by his own countrymen.

In some time after, the Firbolgs or Belgians, another people of Britain, to the number of five thousand men, commanded by five chiefs, either by the defeat or desertion of the Fomorians, took possession of the island. Those five leaders were, Slaingey, Rughruighe or Rory, Gan, Gannan, and Sengan, all brothers, and children of Dela of the race of the Nemedians. They divided the island into five parts or provinces, which gave birth to the pentarchy, which lasted with little interruption till the twelfth century. Slaingey, governor of Leinster, was the chief of the pentarchy, and monarch of the whole island. The people were known by three different names, viz., Gallenians, Damnonians, and Belgians ; but the last was the general name of the whole colony ; their dominion lasted about eighty years under nine kings, who were, Slaingey, Rory, Gann, Geanan, Sengan, Fiacha, Rionall, Fiobgin, and Eogha, who married Tailta, daughter of a Spanish prince, who gave name to the place of her burial, still called Tailton, in Meath. [13]

In the reign of Eogha, the colony of the Tuatha de Danains, whose ancestors had been conducted into the north of Germany by Jobath, grandson of Nemedius, [14] as we have already said, made a descent upon Ireland under the conduct of Nuagha Airgiodlamh, who immediately gave battle to the Firbolgs, commanded by Eogha their king, at Moyturey near Lake Masg, in the territory of Partrigia, otherwise Partry, in the county of Mayo. [15] The latter lost in one day the battle and possession of the island, and were so reduced as to seek an asylum in the islands of the north. Nuagha, having lost one hand in the action, had one made of silver, whence the name of Airgiodlamh is derived, which signifies silver hand.

It is said that the Tuatha de Danains were very skilful in the art of magic, which was the theology of those barbarians. Before they landed in Ireland, they passed through Norway and Denmark, where their diabolical science procured them respect. They brought from that country the famous stone called, “ Lia-Fail,” in Latin, “ saxum fatale.” This stone, which gave to Ireland the name of “ Innisfail,” that is to say, the island of Fail, was used at the coronation of their kings ; it is pretended, that during the ceremony an astonishing noise

issued from it, like the statue of Memnon in the Thebaid, from which a distinct sound was heard, when struck by the first rays of the rising sun. But the coming of the Messiah, which made all those pagan superstitions vanish, caused this stone also to lose its virtue. There is a prophecy, like wise, which says, that wheresoever the stone should be preserved, a prince of the race of the Scots should reign ; which gave rise to the following lines :

Cineadh Scuit saor an fine,
Munab breg an fhaisdine.
Mar a bf huighid an Lia-fail,
Dlighid flait heas do ghabhail.

which are found thus translated into Latin in the History of Scotland, by Hector Boetius :

Ni fallal fatum, Scoti quocumque locatum
Invenient lapidem, regnare tenentur ibidem.

In the beginning of the thirteenth century of Christianity, Feargus the Great, son of Earcha, having been elected by the Dalriads of Albania for their chief, [16] and seeing that he was able to get himself crowned king, sent to ask this stone from Murrough, then monarch of Ireland, in order to render the ceremony of his inauguration more solemn and august, and to perpetuate the diadem in his own family ; the monarch readily granted the request of Feargus, who got himself crowned first king of the Dalriads of Albania, on that stone which was preserved with veneration in the abbey of Scone, till the thirteenth century, when it was forcibly carried off by Edward I., king of England, and placed in the chair which is used at the coronation of the kings of England, in the abbey of Westminster, where it is, they say, still preserved.

The colony of the Tuatha de Danains, thus called from three of their chiefs, brothers and children of Danan, daughter of Dealboith, of the race of Nemedius, was in possession of that island, according to the Psalter of Cashel, for the space of one hundred and ninety-seven years governed by seven kings successively, namely, Nuagha Airgiodlamh, Breas, Lugh-Lamh-Fada, in Latin “ Longimanus,” Dagma, Delvioth, Fiagha, and the three sons of Kearmada, namely, Eathur, Teahur, and Keahur : who reigned alternately, a year each, for thirty years. Those three brothers were married to three sisters ; they took surnames from the different idols which they worshipped. Eathur, who had married Banba, was called Maccuill, from a certain kind of wood which he adored. Teahur espoused Fodhla, and worshipped the plough ; he was called Mac-Keaght. Keahur, husband of Eire, displayed better taste than his brothers, as he took the sun for his divinity, and was thence named Mac-Greine, that is to say, the son of the sun.

Ireland, which, until the reign of those three brothers, had no other name but that of Inis-fail, or Iniselga, changed it with her king, and was called by the name of the reigning queen, alternately, Banba, Fodla, and Eire ; [17] but the latter was more used, as it was in the year of the reign of Keahur, and consequently when the island was called Eire, that the children of Milesius conquered it.

Those first inhabitants of Ireland, having been destroyed successively, at last gave way to the Scoto-Milesians, and were forced to yield to them the possession of the island.

Some of our modern authors give us, after their ancient Files, the following detail of the origin, voyages, and transmigrations of the Scoto-Milesians.

Japhet, one of the sons of Noah, [18] had seven sons, who were the first of the human race in Europe, and a part of Asia ; viz., Gomer peopled Gaul and Germany ; Magog occupied Scythia, at present Tartary, Madai and Javan established themselves in the several provinces of Greece, Thubal in Spain, Mosoch in Italy, and the countries which extend from the Mediterranean as far as beyond the river Ister ; and Thyras possessed himself of Thrace. “ Ab his divisæ sunt insulæ gentium in regionibus suis.” [19]

According to the “ White Book,” called in the Scotie language, “ lesvar-drom-sneachta,” and that of “ Conquests and Invasions,” both written in the times of paganism, and cited by Keating, [20] Magog, son of Japhet, had three sons, viz., Baath, Jobath, and Fathochta. From the first was descended Fenius Farsa, king of Scythia, from whom the Gadelians and Milesians derived their origin ; the second was chief of the Amazons, Bactrians, and Parthians ; the third was ancestor to Partholan, and consequently of the Nemedians, the Firbolgs, and Tuatha de Danains, who were the first inhabitants of Ireland.

Fenius Farsa, king of the Scythians, had two sons, viz., Nenual, the elder, heir to his crown, and Niul, who being very learned in the languages multiplied by the confusion of Babel, made a voyage into Egypt, where he married Scota, daughter of king Pharaoh Cincris, and established himself in the country of Capacirunt on the borders of the Red Sea. Niul had by the princess his spouse, a son whom he named Gaodhal, who, at the time that Moses was making preparations to draw the people of Israel out of captivity, having been bitten by a serpent, was presented by his father to the holy patriarch, who cured him by a touch of his wand ; but there remained always a green spot in the place of the wound, which caused him to be called Gaodhal-Glas, otherwise Gadelas, the word *glas* in the Scotie language signifying *green*. Moses foretold, on curing him, that the land which would be inhabited by his posterity, who were called, and even to this day are called, Clanna-Gaodhal, or Gadelians, that is, the children of Gaodhal, would be free from serpents, and all venomous reptiles, which has been verified in regard to the islands of Crete and Ireland.

The posterity of Niul, in the third generation, became numerous, and were consequently suspected by the Egyptians, who, under the orders of Pharaoh-En-Tuir, their king, formed the resolution of making war against those strangers. Finding themselves unable to oppose the superior forces of the Egyptians, they embarked under the conduct of Sur, son of Easur, son of Gaodhal, and after a few days sailing, landed in the island of Crete, where their chief died, and was succeeded in the command by Eibher, otherwise Heber-Scot, his son. From this flight of the Gadelians out of Egypt, we must understand what Washington, an English monk and historian in the fifteenth century, says in his book called, “ Ypodigma.” “ The Egyptians,” says he, “ having been swallowed up in the Red Sea, those who survived that disaster expelled a certain noble Scythian, fearing lest he should usurp a power over them. Being thus driven away, together with his family, he came to Spain, where he lived for many years ; his race was multiplied exceedingly, and from thence they came to Ireland.” [21]

Heber-Scot, having the command of the Gadelians, departed from the island of Crete, and sailing through the Ægean and the Euxine seas, he arrived in the river Tanais in Scythia, the country of his ancestors, where his colony settled for some time ; they were commanded after his death by his descendants successively from father to son ; viz., by Agnamon, Tait, Adnoin, and Lamphion. A persecution however was raised through jealousy of the Scythians against them, and they were compelled to take refuge among the Amazons, having Adnoin for their chief. After sojourning there for some time, they departed, under the conduct of Lamphion, the son of Adnoin, for the country called in their language, “ Gæthluighe,” which some think to be Gothia, or Gothland ; but more probably, according to O’Flaherty, [22] Getulia, in Africa, conformably to this verse from Propertius in Camden : [23]

Hibernique Getæ, pictoque Britannia curru.

They remained in that country during eight generations, under the command of eight chiefs, the descendants of Lamphion, viz., Heber-Glun-Fion, Eibric, Nenuaill, Nuagatt, Alluid, Earchada, Deaghatha, and Bratha. By the last they were led into Spain, inhabited at that time by the descendants of Tubal, son of Japhet.

These new-comers, under the command of Breogan, son of Bratha, made war with success against the old inhabitants, and became masters of the northern provinces, where Breogan built a city, which he called Brigantia, or Braganza, after his own name.

This captain had ten sons, namely, Cuailgne, Cuala, Blath, Aibhle, Nar, Breagha, Fuad, Muirtheimhne, Ith, and Bille. This last was father of Gallamh, otherwise Mileag Espaine, in Latin, Milesius, the ancestor of the Milesians or ancient Irish ; Ith had a son called Lugadg, or Lugadius. Milesius, after whom the ancient Irish were called Clanna-Mileag or Milesians, became in his turn chief of the colony of the Gadelians, and after having secured and extended by many victories the conquests of his predecessors, he made peace with his enemies, and formed the resolution of visiting the country of his ancestors. He left part of the colony to guard his new kingdom, and embarked with the remainder for Scythia, where he was honorably received by Riffloir, then king ; who knew that this prince was, as well as himself, descended from Fenius-Farsa, with this difference, that Riffloir had his origin from Nennual the elder, and successor to the throne of his father ; whereas, Milesius was descended from Niul the younger.

Milesius became by his courtly manners so great a favorite with the king, that he appointed him his first minister, and general and chief over his troops ; as a greater proof of his confidence, he gave him his daughter Seaug in marriage, by whom he had two sons, Donn and Aireach, surnamed Feabhrua. But the death of his wife, added to some difference he had with the king, caused him to leave Scythia. He embarked with his two children and little troop of faithful Gadelians, for Egypt, where the king, Pharaoh-Nectonebus, gave him the command of his army in a war in which he was engaged against the Ethiopians.

Milesius acquitted himself of that commission as usual, with honor, and Scota the king's daughter was given him in marriage, as a reward for his services. He had by this princess in Egypt, Heber-Fionn and Amhergin. During his residence in that country, he caused twelve young men of his suite to be instructed in the different arts and sciences then in use, in order that they might, on their return to Spain, instruct their countrymen in the same.

Milesius thinking it time to put an end to his labors, and to join once more his relations and friends in Spain, to enjoy with them the sweets of repose, after a residence of seven years in Egypt, [24] took leave of the king and all his court, to return with the princess his wife, his children, and attendants. After arriving in an island called Irene, on the frontiers of Thrace, Scota was delivered of a son, whom they called Ir. [25] During their voyage she had another, to whom they gave the name of Colpa ; and at length, after many fatigues and dangers by sea and land, they arrived in Spain, where this great captain, after appeasing some troubles which had arisen during his absence, and having had two more sons, Aranann and Heremon, ended his days in peace.

The family of Breogan, of which that of Milesius king of Gallicia, his grandson, formed the most considerable branch, was become numerous. [26] A drought of several years, followed by a want of grain and all kinds of provisions, having caused a famine, ruined and compelled them to seek a remedy for so pressing an evil. All the chiefs of the tribes assembled at Braganza, to deliberate on what should be done. The result of the conference

was, to abandon their settlement in Spain, and seek for one in some other country ; particularly as Caicer, the druid, a famous prophet among them, had foretold long before, that their descendants should be possessed of the most westerly island in Europe. [27] But as it was of importance to learn where that island lay, before they should bring the whole colony thither, the assembly intrusted the discovery of it to Ihy, otherwise Ithe, (son of Breogan and uncle of Milesius,) a man of prudence and consummate experience. Ith having accepted the commission, equipped a vessel, and taking one hundred and fifty soldiers on board, besides rowers and sailors, he set out with Ludgadh, his son, to make the discovery to which he had been appointed. On his arrival in the north of the island, he offered sacrifices to Neptune, and inquired from the inhabitants what the name of the country was, the people who inhabited it, and likewise the prince who ruled there : they told him that the island was sometimes called Innisfail, sometimes Inis-Ealga, and that it was governed by three princes who were brothers, and children of Kearnada of the nation of the Tuatha de Danains ; that they were then at Oileag-Neid, at present Inish-Owen, in the northern part of the province, since called Ulster. Ith, conducted by a guide, and escorted by one hundred of his soldiers, took the road to Oileag-Neid. On his arrival he was presented to the princes, who received him honorably, and seeing him possessed of much wisdom, they appointed him arbiter of their differences, namely, on whom should the right of succeeding Kearnada, their father, devolve. Ith having acquitted himself on this occasion to the satisfaction of the parties concerned, he exhorted them to peace and union among themselves, congratulating them on their happiness in possessing so fertile a country, and situated in so fine a climate ; he then set out to join the rest of his men, whom he had left to guard his vessel. The three princes began to reflect on the praises which Ith had bestowed on their country, and conceiving a mistrust towards him, they looked on him as a man of an enterprising turn, and capable of coming with a more numerous force, to conquer a country which he thought so fine. In order to obviate that danger they dispatched a force of one hundred and fifty chosen men, commanded by MacCuille, in pursuit of him ; they attacked him at a place since called after his name, Moy-Ith, in the county of Tyrone. The combat was bloody, and the resistance on the side of the Gadelians obstinate, till at length seeing their commander Ith dangerously wounded, and unable to withstand the superior force of their enemies, they reached their vessel with difficulty, and embarked for Spain, but had the misfortune, during their voyage, to witness their commander expire of his wounds. During the interval of Ith's expedition, Milesius, after a reign of thirty-six years in Galicia, died, universally regretted by the whole colony ; but the arrival of Lugadius, who presented to them the dead body of Ith, his father, added considerably to their affliction. With eyes bathed in tears, and language the most energetic which the grief of a son (who loved his father tenderly) could make use of, he displayed the perfidy of those three princes of the western isle, and forcibly impressed upon them, that, as the death of his father had been the effect of his zeal for the common cause, he trusted, that an attempt whereby the law of nations had been violated, and an insult that might reflect upon the entire colony, should not be left unpunished. [28]

The Gadelians, affected by the just resentment of Lugadius, [29] prepared themselves for revenge, resolved to shed in sacrifice to the manes of Ith, the last drop of their blood, and without loss of time had a fleet of sixty sail equipped with every thing necessary for so important an expedition. The little fleet being provided with all things, and ready to sail, the entire colony, that is to say, the descendants of Breogan divided into different tribes, embarked with their wives and children, their vassals, a number of soldiers, artisans, and laborers of every kind, under forty chiefs, of whom the principal were the eight sons of Milesius, namely, Donn, Aireach, Heber-Fionn, Amhergin, Ir, Colpa, Aranann, and Heremon, with their mother Scota. After coasting along part of Spain, Gaul, and Britain, they at length arrived on the southern coast of the western island, which had been promised to them by their druids. While they were preparing to disembark, they were overtaken by a violent storm, which soon changed their hopes into despair. The heavens were darkened ; a wind from the

southeast swelled the waves ; their confusion was great and the danger inevitable, so that in a little time the fleet was scattered, and out of sixty ships of which it was composed, not two of them remained together. The first victim to Neptune's wrath was Donn ; he perished with his entire crew, on the western coast of the island, at a place called after his name, Teagh-Duinn. Aranann was driven to sea by a sudden gust. It was shipwrecked upon the southern coasts, his body was found upon the strand, and buried in a craggy island, called Skeilg-Mihil, within a few leagues of Dingle in the county of Kerry : it is called, in Mercator's map of Ireland, Midelskyllighs. Heremon, Aireagh, and Colpa, were driven by the storm towards the north. The two last, with the whole of their attendants, perished. Colpa being wrecked at the mouth of the river, afterwards called the Boyne, the place was named Invear-Colpa, that is, the bay of Colpa, below the city of Drogheda. The storm, however, having abated, and being succeeded by a calm, Heremon, more fortunate than his brothers, reached Invear-Colpa, and at the same time Heber-Fionn, Amergin his brother, with all their attendants, disembarked at Invear-Skeiny, at present Bantry, in the county of Cork, or rather the county of Kerry. [30]

This account, says Keating, is taken from an ancient poem of Eochaid O'Flain, beginning with those words : " Taoisig Na-Luing Sinter lear," related in the Psalter of Cashel. [31]

Heber-Fionn had no time to rest after his fatigues ; for at the end of three days he was attacked at Sliave-Mish, [32] at present in the barony of Truchanaimy, in the county of Kerry, by a party of the Tuatha de Danains, commanded by the princess Eire, wife of Mac-Greiny, who, after losing a thousand men, was put to flight by the Milesians.

The princess Eire, after collecting the remains of her army, led them to Tailton, where the princes being assembled, she gave them an account of her defeat. The Milesians lost three hundred men in the action, besides Scotia, the widow of Milesius, Fais a lady of quality, some druids, and several officers who had fallen. Scotia and Fais were buried at the foot of a mountain, in two valleys, which were called after their names, Glean-Scioithin and Glean-Fais.

Heber, after this first advantage, having refreshed his troops, advanced into the country to make further discoveries, in hopes of meeting some of the colony that were scattered by the storm some time before, and, after a long and fatiguing march, arrived at Invear-Colpa, where he found Heremon with his division, by whom he was informed of the disasters that had befallen his brothers Aireagh and Colpa, who had perished on that coast. The brothers now uniting their forces, formed their plans of operation for a campaign. They determined to go in quest of the enemy, who, according to the reports of their scouts, was not far off. [33] They began their march, and after a few days came up with the three princes of the Tuatha de Danains, in the plains of Tailton, with a formidable army ready to meet them. [34] The action began, and this battle, which was to decide the fate of both parties, was for a long time doubtful, the troops on both sides making extraordinary efforts ; the latter to defend their patrimony against the invaders, who wished to wrest it from them ; the former, less to revenge the death of their countryman, than to obtain the possession of an island which had been destined for them, according to the prophecy of the druids. At length the three princes of the Tuatha de Danains, together with their principal officers having fallen, the army was put into disorder, and the rout became so general, that more were killed in the pursuit than on the field of battle. That day, so fatal to the Tuatha de Danains, decided the empire of the island in favor of the Milesians.

Heber-Fionn and Heremon, brothers and children of Milesius, as chiefs of the colony, divided the island between them. Heber possessed Deisiol Eirionn, that is, the southern part, afterwards called the province of Munster, where he built a palace. Heremon enjoyed the sovereignty of Leinster, and had the palace of Rath-Beothaig built at Airgeodross, upon the

banks of the river Nore, in the county of Ossory ; at the solicitation of his wife Thea, daughter of Lucha, son of Ith, he afterwards built the palace of Teamor, which signifies the residence of Tea. They gave the northern parts of the island, at present the province of Ulster, to Heber-Donn, son of Ir, and to some other chiefs. The descendants of Heber-Donn, called the Clanna-Rorys, built in the county of Armagh the palace of Eamhain-Macha, which lasted for almost seven hundred years, and was possessed by that tribe till the time of the three brothers, called the three Collas, by whom that superb edifice was destroyed. They conferred on their cousin Lugadh, son of Ith, the sovereignty of Corca-Luidh. [35] The fiefs and lordships throughout the various provinces were, in fine, distributed among the other chiefs, according to their rank and merit ; and in consideration of the services which the remaining party of the Firbolgs had rendered them in the conquest of the island, they bestowed on them the province of Connaught, which their descendants retained till the third age of Christianity. I do not find that any portion was given to their brother Amhergin, who was still living, and a druid by profession ; he was probably treated like the tribe of Levi, who possessed no share in the land promised to the Israelites.

The two brothers Heber-Fionn and Heremon reigned together during the space of a year ; but the ambition of Heber's wife became the cause of her ruin. Not content with the division that was made between the two princes, she influenced her husband to do justice to himself by force of arms. Prince Heber, weak and condescending, yielded to the importunities of his wife, and declared war against his brother Heremon. [36] War being now commenced, the two armies met upon the plains of Geisiol, the frontier boundaries of the provinces of Leinster and Munster. [37] The battle was bloody and obstinate, but Heber and his chief officers being slain, [38] Heremon, like a second Romulus, became sole possessor of the island, over which he reigned for thirteen years. [39] This is confirmed by the authority of Aongus Celide or Colideus, an author of the eighth century, cited by Ware in the second chapter of his *Antiquities of Ireland*. [40] The foregoing is a slight sketch of what ancient and modern histories set forth respecting the origin of the Milesians ; let us now view the difficulties which would be advanced against the voyages and transmigrations of the Gadelians. The first is, to reconcile a point of chronology on the subject of Gaodhal, who, according to the manuscripts followed by Keating, was the sixth descendant from Japhet, and contemporary of Moses, which made the fourteenth or fifteenth generation after Shem. Keating injudiciously supposes that he has smoothed a difficulty by imagining Niul or some of his ancestors to have lived for many ages, in order to make the sixth descendant on one side fall in with the fourteenth on the other ; but if mankind lived then to a great age, the supposition is equally applicable to the ancestors of Moses, as to those of Niul. It is more natural to think that the anachronism has arisen through some copyist of the manuscripts of the Milesians, who might have omitted some generations between Japhet and Niul. As to the histories of those times so far remote, there are many things in them very obscure, and several difficulties therein hard to be resolved. Do we not see the learned differ about the king that reigned in Egypt in the time of Moses, and who was drowned in the Red Sea ? Some pretend that it was Amenophis, father of Sesostris, while others say that it was Pheron, son of the latter. The Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Latins disagree concerning the number of years that elapsed from the time of the creation to the coming of the Messiah ; their differences, however, do not affect the truth of the events which are recorded to have happened at that time, viz., the creation of the world, the deluge, the genealogy of Abraham, whether in ascending up to Adam, or descending down to Moses. A similar anachronism with respect to Gaodhal and Moses, ought not to destroy the truth of the history of the Gadelians, as to their origin and genealogy.

It will be perhaps again objected, that navigation being unknown at those early periods, it cannot be believed that the Gadelians had been able to make such distant voyages by sea, as

from Egypt to Crete, from Crete to Scythia, from Scythia to Africa, from Africa to Spain, and from Spain to Ireland.

This difficulty will vanish if we but consider that the art of sailing had been at all times in use, at least since the deluge. We know that long before Solomon, the Phœnicians, Egyptians, and Greeks possessed the art of navigation. The Phœnicians, says Herodotus, [41] who traded to all countries, with the merchandises of Egypt and Assyria, arrived at Argos, a trading city in Greece, and after disposing of their merchandise, they carried off the wives of the Greeks, together with Io, daughter of king Inachus, who reigned at Argos about the year of the world 3112 ; after which, some Greeks trading to Tyre, carried away in their turn, Europa, daughter of the king of Tyre, to be revenged for the insult their countrymen sustained by the carrying off of their wives from Argos.

We find that David, after conquering and reducing the kingdom of Edom into a province of his empire, established commerce at Elath and at Asiongaber, two ports on the Red Sea. But Solomon carried it still farther, for in his time they traded from the Red Sea along the coast of Arabia, Persia, the Indies, and as far as the western coast of Africa. History informs us that Nechao, the second of the name, and king of Egypt, having equipped a fleet on the Red Sea, had Phœnician pilots brought to command it. This fleet, after having coasted along the Red Sea, entered the ocean, and crossing the Torrid Zone, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and after sailing round Africa, returned to Egypt through the Straits of Gibraltar, by the Mediterranean Sea ; so it is more than probable, that from the earliest times, and immediately after the deluge, mankind had discovered the art of building ships, from the model of the Ark, which had saved their ancestors from the waters of the deluge.

But it may be asked, why did they not establish themselves in some part of the continent, rather than expose themselves to so many dangers by sea, to seek after an island in the Atlantic Ocean, and separate themselves forever from all intercourse with mankind ? The weakness of that question will be perceived, when we consider that a taste for voyages and emigrations prevailed in the early ages of the world. Men had not been sufficiently settled, nor property in the possession of lands established as it has since become. For besides, a colony of Tyrians, who, having coasted along Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Gaul, and the several countries which surround the Mediterranean Sea, without stopping in any, sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar into the ocean, established themselves in the western coast of Spain, and built the city of Cadiz, long before Utica and Carthage. Moreover, there were colonies sent into different countries by the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Greeks, and Carthaginians, who were themselves a colony of Phœnicians. Carthage herself, after having founded three hundred cities on the coast of Africa, and finding herself still overcharged with inhabitants, sent Hanno with a fleet and thirty thousand volunteers, to make discoveries on the coast of Africa beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and to establish some colonies there. [42]

The Scythians, from whom the Gadelians were descended, and who were masters of the vast regions which extended from the Boristhenes to the country of the Massagetes, and from the Saces to the east of the Caspian Sea, had neither cities nor houses ; they were continually roving, and lived in tents, sometimes in one country, sometimes in another.

Whatever truth may be attached to what I have now related with regard to the voyages and transmigrations of the Gadclians in different countries, it appears at all times indisputable, that that people derived their origin from the Scythians ; their name Kinea Scuit, or Scota, denotes it. [43] The accounts of foreign authors and those of their Fileas [44] confirm it. Newton, [45] with Appina and others, says, that Greece and all Europe had been peopled by the Cimmerians or Scythians from the borders of the Euxine Sea, who, like the Tartars in the north of Asia, led a wandering life. Spain had perhaps her share in peopling a part of Europe,

and consequently the ancient Spaniards were descended from the same Scythians. Although the Milesians claim the glory of having come directly from Egypt to Spain, they do not at the same time lose sight of their Scythian origin. They call themselves at all times the descendants of the Iberians or Scythians of the Euxine Sea. [46] They pretend that the colony, after having been led into different countries by their princes, established themselves at last in Spain. However, if they pass themselves for the children of Magog, rather than of Gomer, from whose posterity Gaul, Germany, and other countries of the north had been peopled, it is a matter which is of itself but of little importance.

The truth of the Scoto-Milesians having passed from Spain to Ireland is supported by proofs that are equally strong. Foreign authors are in perfect accordance with the monuments of that people on that head ; this constitutes a certainty beyond all doubt. Among the number are Nennius of the ninth century, Walsingham, Henry of Huntington, [47] Buchanan, [48] and others. The opinion of these authors, says Camden, accords with the opinion of the Irish, who gladly call themselves the descendants of the Spaniards. [49] We can likewise add to this the authority of an ancient Latin manuscript in Gothic characters, of which Harris speaks : [50] it was discovered a few years ago, in the archives of a monastery in Galicia, by Sir John Higgins, counsellor of state, and head physician to Philip V. This manuscript is entitled “ Concordantia Hispaniæ atque Hiberniæ à Sedulio Scoto genere Hiberniensi et Episcopo Oretensi,” and is attributed to Sedulius the younger, who lived in the eighth century. The subject of it is, according to Harris, as follows : Sedulius having acquired a high Reputation by his commentaries on the Gospel of St. Matthew, and the Epistles of St. Paul, [51] Pope Gregory II. sent him into Spain, having nominated him bishop of Oreto, to allay some troubles that had arisen among the clergy of that nation. Sedulius, meeting with some opposition from the Spaniards in consequence of being a stranger, wrote this treatise, wherein he shows, that, as an Irishman, and being descended from the Spaniards, he should consequently enjoy the same privileges as they did. He continued therefore to enjoy his bishopric, until driven from it by the Moors. The pope afterwards nominated him titular bishop of Great Britain, and in that quality he assisted at a council at Rome, against unlawful marriages. [52]

The testimony of the Spaniards themselves, particularly of Alderetus, in his Antiquities of Spain, and of Florianus del Campo, joined to a tradition among the people, who look upon the Irish as their children, and as a colony which had left their country, in consequence of which they are treated as inhabitants of the country, particularly in Galicia, and the northern parts of the kingdom, where they enjoy the same privileges as the natives ; these are conclusive proofs on the subject, although Camden pretends that it was ambition made Florianus del Campo say, that the Brigantes had passed from Spain into Ireland, and from thence into Britain.

The great difficulty consists in settling the time of the transmigration of the Scoto-Milesians from Spain to Ireland, on account of the different calculations of the annalists. Following the ancient monuments, Keating fixed it 1300 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. Cambrensis, and the author of the Polychronicon, reckon 1800 years from their arrival in the island, [53] till the mission of St. Patrick in the fifth century, which agrees pretty nearly with the calculation of Keating. The number of kings who reigned in Ireland from Heremon to the twelfth age of Christianity was 181. The epoch of their commencement in the time of Heremon depends upon the length of their reign ; if we allow to each a reign of fourteen years, we must necessarily ascend from the twelfth century upwards to the epoch fixed upon by Keating ; but if with Newton, [54] we give to each a reign of eighteen or twenty years, which, in a warlike nation, is not probable, we must ascend much higher than that era. Camden, as well as Nennius, presumes that we should search for their migrations in more modern times ; this, however, is not conclusive. O’Flaherty, who was much more capable

than those foreigners of fathoming the antiquities of his country, has in accordance with ancient monuments, defined the time that each Milesian king reigned, from the arrival of the colony in Ireland until the birth of our Saviour, and places it in the time of Solomon, that is, about 1000 years before Jesus Christ. [55] This account agrees with the period of the conquest of Spain, ; by Sesac or Sesostris, of which Newton speaks, [56] and which, according to Buchanan, was probably the cause of the flight of that colony, “ A potèntioribus domo pulsam.”

We might, perhaps, with a greater appearance of truth, place that event a century later, that is, in the time of Melcartus, or Hercules the Tyrian, who was, according to Newton, the second conqueror of Spain, and the founder of Carteia, particularly as that learned man thinks, that they had not taken distant voyages (such as to Britain or Ireland) before the time of that conqueror.

[1] Were, cap 2. [2] Page 10. [3] Were, cap 2.

[4] Ogyg. part 2. p. 65 ; part 3, p.2.

[5] Ogyg. part 2.p. 73

[6] Camd. Brit. edit. Franc, p. 12.

[7] Ogyg. part 1, p. 7, part 2.

[8] Walsh, Prospect of Irl. part 1, sec. 1.

[9] Ogyg. part 2, p. 65.

[10] Ogyg. part 3, cap. 7.

[11] Keating.

[12] Walsh, Prosp. of Ireland, part 1, sect. 1.

[13] Ogyg. part 3, cap. 9.

[14] Ogyg. part 2, page 81.

[15] Ogyg. part 3, cap. 10.

[16] War. Antiq. Hiber. cap. 5, Ogyg. part 1, p. 45.

[17] Ogyg. part 3, cap 15.

[18] Gen. cap. 10.

[19] Ibidem, ver. 5.

[20] Page 53, et seq.

[21] “ The Egyptians being drowned in the Red Sea, those who remained drove from among them a certain noble Scythian who lived in the country, lest he should usurp dominion over them. After being driven out, he with his family came to Spain, where he lived for many years ; and from thence came to Ireland.”—*Ad. ann.* 1185.

[22] Ogyg- part 2, cap. 67.

[23] Edit. Lend. p. 87.

[24] Lecan. fol. 13, p. 2, col. 1.

[25] Keat. p. 80, et seq.

[26] O’Sull. Compendium, vol. i. lib. 3, cap. 1.

[27] Keating.]

[28] Keating.

[29] Ogyg. part 3, cap. 16.

[30] Ogyg. part .3, cap. 10.

[31] Ogyg. part 2, page 82 and 83

[32] Ogygia, part 2, page 86.

[33] Gratianus Lucius, cap. 8, page 58.

[34] Walsh, Prosp. of Ireland, part 1, sec. 1.

[35] Ogyg. part 1, page 11.

[36] War. Antiq. cap. 2.

[37] Ogyg. part 3, cap. 17.

[38] Grat. Luc. cap. 8, page 58.

- [39] “ After several battles and doubtful events of war between the brothers, victory fell at length to Heremon, and in one of these battles Heber, his brother, being slain, Heremon became sole master of the kingdom, and was the first monarch of the Irish people, who inhabit the kingdom to this day.”—*Gerald Camb. Topography of Ireland*, c. 7.
- [40] “ The island Hibernia was divided between the two princes of the army called Milesians, and into two parts. Heber obtained the southern parts, and to Heremon fell the northern, together with the monarchy. Heremon was the first of the Scots who ruled over the whole of Ireland, during 13 years, and had 5 sons elected, 4 of whom governed the kingdom for 3 years, and Jarel, the prophet, during 10. Of the descent of Heremon, 58 kings ruled over Ireland before Patrick had preached the doctrines and sufferings of Christ to the Irish. After the time of Patrick, 50 kings of the above lineage ruled over Ireland.”
—*Ware’s Antiquities, and Ogyg.* p. 3,c. 7.
- [41] Lib. 1.
- [42] The learned are divided about the time of the expedition. Strabo supposes it to have been a few years after the Trojan war ; but Vossius, who believes Hanno to be more ancient than Homer, asserts that it took place at least a century before the taking of that city.
- [43] War. Antiq. Hibern. cap. 1, page 3.
- [44] Bards.
- [45] Chron. Dublin edit, page 10.
- [46] Ogyg. part 2, page 66 et 82.
- [47] “ The Britons came into Britain during the third age of the world, and the Scoti into Ireland in the fourth age. Whereas those matters are uncertain, it is indubitable, that they came from Spain to Ireland, and emigrating from thence, they added a third nation in Britain to the Britons and the Victs.”—*Huntingdon*, pp. 88, 729.
- [48] “ There is a prevailing report, which says, that a great number of Spaniards, who were either driven from the country by the great ones, or from a redundancy of population, went of their own accord and passed into Ireland.”—*Buchanan*, b. 4, c. 5.
- [49] “ To this opinion, prevalent among the Irisli, jnay be added, i. e. ‘ they confess most freely,’ that they are descended from the Spaniards.”—*Irish Writers*, vol. 2, c. 5.
- [50] Irish Writers, vol. 2, c. 5.
- [51] Usser, Primord. cap. 16, page 780.
- [52] Bini Concil. tome 5. Baleus, Cent. 14, n. 28.
- [53] Walsh, Prospect of Ireland, page 393.
- [54] Chron. Dublin edit. chap. 1, p 55 and 57
- [55] “The best among the irish writers are agreed, that it was during the reign of Solomon the Scoti passed from Spain to Ireland. “ Ogyg. part 2, p. 83
- [56] Chron. Dublin edit. page 17.

The history of Ireland : ancient and modern, taken from the most authentic records, and dedicated to the Irish Brigade (1851)

Author : Mac-Geoghegan, abbé (James), 1702-1763 ; O’Kelly, Patrick, 1754-1835?

Volume : v. 1

Publisher : New York : D. & J. Sadlier

Language : English

Digitizing sponsor : Boston College Libraries

Book contributor : Boston College Libraries

Collection : Boston_College_Library; blc; americana

Source : Internet Archive

<http://archive.org/details/historyofireland01macg>

Edited and uploaded to www.augty.org

July 26 2013