The pre-Christian background to the Celtic tonsure.

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RÉCU
THE PRE-CHRISTIAN BACKGROUND TO THE CELTIC TONSURE

by

Jill Jacqueline Anderson

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Religious Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

The Pre-Christian Background to the Celtic Tonsure

This paper seeks to bring together the multitude of ideas which were embodied in the one symbol of tonsure within the confines of the Celtic Church. The historical record says little on the matter beyond recording that the tonsure was one of the issues of the Celtic-Roman struggle. Because of the sparseness of this record, it has been necessary to turn to symbols, many of which may not have been consciously expressed or even fully understood in their new Christian setting. They have nevertheless survived and remained potent within the record of ancient history, mythology, folklore, saint's lives, and even within language itself.

This study is divided into four sections. The first examines the historical evidence. The possibility of the existence of this particular tonsure in other Indo-European societies is also explored briefly. The remaining sections attempt to gain an understanding of the meaning of the tonsure through myth and symbol. The mythological record centres on the solar-cycle, and it is, within the drama of the daily rising and setting of the sun, the yearly
agricultural cycle, and the eternal struggle of the seasons that one finds the meaning of tonsure.

This mythological drama involves three main characters - the Mother Goddess, her lover, and his tanist. It is from this otherworld lover of the goddess that we get our model for tonsure. Often referred to in the stories as Bran, he can be viewed as lover of the sun-goddess of whom one aspect is the Celtic Muse. Bran is, at times, depicted in the form of a black cropped pig. This earless condition points to his affinity with such deities as Attis, Tammuz, and the Cretan Zeus. His loss of ears brings on the new day, just as the loss of ears of corn brings on the new growing season.

It is with this image of Bran as the dying and rising god, and consort of the Great Mother, that the Druidic classes identify. By identifying with Bran, and through the symbolism of death and rebirth becoming one with him, the aspirant becomes himself the bridegroom to the goddess. Within this context the tonsure becomes the outward sign whereby the devotee displays his allegiance to the sun-goddess to whom he is wedded.

The divine spouse is the herd who in the solar myth slays the dragon to save the sun-maiden whom he weds when she recognizes him by his missing frontal hair. This was the mark of the herd, the lug-mark, which
identified him as herd to the earthly flock as Lug was to the celestial herd. This was the sign of the bond between initiate and deity which was conceptualized symbolically as a marriage. The hair represented the life-force, and its removal — at times symbolic of castration — brought about the death of the initiate, thus allowing his subsequent rebirth as a member of the Druidic class. The long back hair which remained further identified the initiate as in the service of the Great Mother.

Such ideas were not incompatible with Christianity. The concept of an initiate who died to this world and was reborn to dedicate himself to something new was compatible with the ideas of the new church which emphasized the death and resurrection of Christ. On his descent into Hell, Christ was seen as overcoming Bran and ruling in his stead. The new allegiance was to Christ through whom the Christian cleric committed himself to the Church. Within this new religious context the Celtic tonsure retained its great potency as a symbol and it remained so until the final assimilation of Celtic Christianity into Roman Catholicism.
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I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the members of my thesis committee.

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reached far beyond the boundaries of such a definition. I am grateful for all he has done.

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INTRODUCTION

This study explores both the origins and significance of the sacrament of tonsure in the early Celtic Church. The search for relevant material has been a difficult one. In the early material, very little has been said on the subject, which in itself is quite significant since the Celtic tonsure proved to be one of the long-standing points of contention between the Celtic Church and the Romanizers. Most of the early tradition was passed down in oral form, with spasmodic efforts being made in troubled times to record the past in a more permanent manner. Both the Viking invasions and the coming of the Normans provided such an impetus. It is within this record, the bulk of which would probably be from about the twelfth century, that we must seek the key to the understanding of tonsure. The problem is that much of this literature was written by monks either after the Romanization of the Celtic Church, or during periods of monastic reform. One would expect that ideas contrary to existing teaching might be altered or simply forgotten. However, the monks proved to be more tolerant than might have been supposed and preserved much that might otherwise have been lost. For this we must not only admire them, but remain forever in their debt.
It is not only late recording but also loss of what was recorded which is of concern. The Viking invasions, beginning in the 8th century, and even inter-church fighting, especially such as that at Bangor in which it was claimed that 1200 Celtic monks were killed, brought with them not only a constant loss of written and artistic records, but also the persistent loss of life in the ranks of the monks. Thus, it was not only the literature which was destroyed, but tribal memory also was being systematically erased.

Historians present us with a different set of problems. A thread of bias runs through the historical record which is a reflection of the struggle between the Celtic and Romanizing parties, a struggle which was finally settled at the Council of Whitby. If one follows the literature which discusses this conflict, from the Council of Whitby up to the present time, the strong editing bias of Roman and Celtic writers, or of the later Roman Catholic and Protestant writers, becomes evident.

This Celtic-Roman controversy has been used, at times, to fan the fires of Protestant-Catholic debate, especially by Scottish and Irish authors. This is echoed by Healy who says:

Strange as it may seem, the enmity between Protestants and Roman Catholics, which is still characteristic of some parts of the country, is historically connected with this bitterness of feeling which once existed between the Irish and the Romish Church.
This may be something which has arisen after the fact, but nevertheless some feeling of this does run through the literature. An example of this can be seen in the writing of John Salmon and Arthur Lane. John Salmon, a Roman Catholic author, insists the Irish were Roman Catholic from the beginning; the Rev. C. Arthur Lane attempts to prove that the pre-Whitby Celtic Church was Protestant. Of course, the truth is that it was neither.

It is this bias which, of course, distorts the historical record. One would then expect that the natural recourse is to turn to Church documents. This presents a problem of equal proportion. Many documents are difficult to date. Others come from a period later than that previously supposed. This limited amount of material is itself not always accessible, existing in various manuscripts in remote libraries. What has been compiled often remains untranslated, as with the church canons collected by Haddon and Stubbs, a work which remains in Latin. These unindexed volumes, though highly important, guarantee that the material remains only in the hands of the expert. The only work available in English on early Church canons is that of the Irish Penitentials, edited by Beiler, which is excellent in itself, but certainly limits the scope of one wishing to do serious research.

A number of authors, including John Rhys, claimed that the Celtic tonsure was in fact a pre-Christian tonsure.
However, none of these authors discussed this idea in any detail or gave their reasons for reaching such a conclusion. A short survey of the early Irish literature leads one to agree that their decision was probably correct, although one has to dig much deeper to find specific information. In both Primary and Secondary Sources alike, the Celtic tonsure is often referred to, but never in detail. Because of this silence on the part of chroniclers, we are forced to turn elsewhere for our information. Since we are dealing with symbols, or more specifically a particular symbol,\(^2\) it would appear judicious to search within symbol systems such as language, myth,\(^3\) and folklore, and to draw from these the information needed to form a picture of the meaning and form of the early Celtic tonsure.

I have attempted to gain an understanding of the significance of tonsure from three focal points. Firstly, the historical perspective has been explored. The second and third sections explore the mythological record. This mythological record we have approached through two different points of concentration, that of the daily cycle on one hand, and that of the yearly (or agricultural) cycle on the other. Connected with these would appear to be two syllables which have something to do with hair. Namely, *mael* and *coll*, the first being a definite referent and meaning "bald or tonsured" and the second, a possible referent, describes the long hair left hanging at the back of the head.
It would appear that mael has its main focus within the daily solar cycle, and, as such, refers ultimately to the dark side of the deity who is espoused to the sun-goddess and lies with her of a night. On the other hand, coll would appear to belong to the nomenclature of agriculture and animal husbandry and, therefore, would tend to be more at home within the yearly cycle. This latter term, although it proves to be very interesting in the context of our discussion, must nevertheless be left in the realm of conjecture.

The tonsure would appear to be the religious expression of this herding and agricultural people, an expression which centered on the worship of the Great Mother. The herd, represented by Lug in his guise of herd of the heavens, is the lover and devotee of the goddess. The front of the hair is his mark, and was, at times, referred to as the lug-mark. The hair left hanging at the back is the sign of the Great Mother, signifying the flowing mane and her tail simultaneously. For the feminine principle which pre-dominated in early Irish history was expressed often in the form of a mare goddess, a disguise for Cerridwen who as Circe was keeper of the sacred swine. The swineherds imitated the flowing mane of the mare goddess and the tonsure was performed in her honour. The mare goddess as earth mother was often depicted graphically in the form of womb, the generator of new life. The tonsure
followed this pattern and was constant testimony of the fact of re-birth. But we see that the tonsured one, having shorn his locks in this manner, has become, like the Fisher King, infertile. But also like him has in his keeping the horn of plenty, the holy grail.

But the combination of the lug-mark and the mare-tail is also a statement of unity, of a bond through which the masculine devotee establishes his oath of allegiance to the feminine divine. This was the marriage bond of the initiate, who through the shearing of his hair and his gift of this hair to the goddess, demonstrated, in this donation of his life essence, his death to personal worldly pursuits and his re-birth as servant of the goddess.

The Druidic tonsure passed smoothly into Christianity and became a distinctive badge of the early Celtic Church. Referred to mainly as the Celtic or Irish tonsure, it is at times also referred to as the Irish-Scottish tonsure, the Scottish tonsure, or the British tonsure. Despite the variant forms, referrals to it as the Irish tonsure are understandable. For it was mainly through the action of Irish missionaries that this particular practice of tonsure was spread, and in Europe brought Ireland to the attention of the Roman See.

The decision to discuss the Celtic Tonsure from an Irish perspective stems from this emphasis on the activity of the Irish when referring to the Celtic Church. In this
paper, therefore, the Celtic tonsure is referred to as the Irish tonsure, as it has been by many previous writers. The Irish tonsure was the Celtic tonsure, therefore, while this paper speaks of the Irish tonsure and sifts the material mainly from the Irish perspective, any time "Irish tonsure" is mentioned "Celtic tonsure" could be substituted with equal validity. Whatever we say of Irish tonsure applies alike to the Celtic tonsure. We must realize that although the Celtic Church lacked the unity and organization of the Roman Church, it appears to have grown out of a religious system which was organized. Thus, the tonsure we speak of was a Celtic tonsure and its practice was deeply imbedded in a common Celtic heritage.
FOOTNOTE


2A symbol can possibly be best described as a signpost which not only in itself stands for one central idea, but acts as a director which points to a complex of ideas. Symbol is thus multi-layered, reaching far beyond the visible reality. This may be partially demonstrated through the symbol of the wedding-band. Centrally, it implies "married." But it also points to many other ideas, such as its completeness which in one sense represents the sacred space enclosing the family, its circular form representing eternity, and its representation of the bond which binds the pari. The list continues, for symbol is, in fact, inexhaustible. However, we find ultimately that language is insufficient to the task of defining "symbol," for being itself a symbol system it relies on symbol for its form.

3What is meant by myth in this paper is possibly best described in the words of the following authors. Millar Burrows has defined myth as:

A symbolic, approximate expression of truth which the human mind cannot perceive sharply and completely but can only glimpse vaguely, and therefore cannot adequately or accurately express. . . . Myth implies, not falsehood, but truth: not primitive, naive misunderstanding, but an insight more profound than scientific description and logical analysis can ever achieve. The language of myth in this sense is consciously inadequate, being simply the nearest we can come to a formulation of what we see very darkly.

(John L. McKenzie, *Myths and Realities* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1963), p. 184.) To which can be added the words of G. Henton Davies: "Mythology is a way of thinking and imagining about the divine rather than a thinking or imagining about a number of gods." (John L. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 185.)
CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL SETTING OF THE

CELtic Tonsure

The Celtic Church and Its Peculiarities

Though the beginnings of Celtic Christianity are obscure it would appear that Christianity was first introduced into Britain from Gaul. By the fourth century a well-organized church was established. The invasion of the Anglo-Saxons put an end to the Celtic Church in the east of Britain, but it survived in Wales, Cornwall and Strathclyde. Cut off from the Roman Church, the Celts concentrated their missionary activity on other Celtic areas. This church was loosely organized, and seemed to concentrate much of its attention on the formation of large monasteries which in many ways continued the tradition of the Druidic schools which they had replaced.

Christian beginnings in Ireland are also hidden in myth. Two views exist on the method of the conversion of the Irish from Paganism to Christianity. One viewpoint holds that a few early missionaries and possibly Christian slaves gradually converted some Irish to Christianity. The numbers of these converts continued to grow, especially after the coming of Patrick to Ireland. The other viewpoint proposes
that Druidism gradually absorbed Christian ideas, until the old religion was more like the new than its former self. It is impossible to say at what point Druidism became Christianity. The latter viewpoint would help explain some of the many peculiarities of the Irish Church, some of which brought Ireland into direct conflict with Rome.

At the synod of Whitby in 664 A.D., Colman stated that the Irish had received their tradition from St. John. We find existing alongside this claim a long tradition of Eastern influence on the early Church in Ireland. We should possibly bear this in mind when considering the claims made by the Irish in reference to St. John, for the early Syrian Church leaned heavily on Johannine doctrine.

Regardless of what we can make of all this, it seems fairly certain that Irish Christianity evolved independently from that which produced its centre in Rome, and thus this independence will reflect differences in practice between Irish and Roman custom.

In essence it was the structure of early Irish society which affected the structure of the early church. De Paor draws our attention to the absence of towns, cities, large villages, and particularly to the lack of central government. Irish scholarship seems to be changing its view on the latter, and the universality of the law in Ireland, and ability of the Bards and other members of the priestly class to travel freely in Ireland make one at least approach the idea of no central authority with some caution. De Paor
is correct in the final analysis, for some sense of fragmentation did exist, a fragmentation which gave Ireland a monastic form of Christianity rather than Diocesan. Irish monasticism gained its structure from the Irish familial system, a system which was directly responsible for the great missionary impulse of the 6th century Irish rather than any evangelistic impulse. It was inevitably a system which was tribal rather than national. Within this early monastic structure is evident a strong tendency on the part of these early monks toward the life of the anchorite. This reflects Druidic practice from an earlier age.

When it came to religious matters, however, as with pre-Christian Ireland, a claim for uniformity rather than fragmentation was made. The assertion made by the early church was that it had "one head Christ, and one chief Patrick . . . one Mass . . . one liturgy, one tonsure from ear to ear. They celebrated one Easter, on the fourteenth moon after the vernal equinox, and what was excommunicated by one church all excommunicated. They did not reject the society and service of women."

As Rome began to try to bring the Irish church under her sway the differences in practice between the two became more evident. However, the precise nature of these differences is a matter of contention. John Healy summarizes those he felt were important in the following manner:

The points of difference between the Church of Ireland (or, to speak more correctly, the Celtic Churches, for the Scotch, British, and in many respects the Armorican Churches agreed with it)
and the Churches of Western Europe may therefore be classed under seven heads:
1. Independence of Rome.
3. Tonsure.
4. Ordinal.
5. Toleration of Married Clergy.
7. Ritual and Liturgy. 8

The Easter Controversy

The three main points of contention between Ireland and Rome were those pertaining to Easter, baptism, and tonsure. The Irish practices concerning these were so steeped in ancient belief and ritual, that they fought interference from Rome vigorously.

In the early Christian period, Easter seems to have fallen on one of the main pagan festivals of the Celts. 9 Much of this ancient tradition was simply absorbed into Christianity, thus the rhythm of centuries was not disturbed. A request to change the date of Easter, would have struck at the very fabric of Celtic society.

We should also remember that the Irish were avid traditionalists. They saw their customs as being tied to the past, and to the saints they venerated, such as John, Patrick, and Colmcille. Thus, the old ways could not be abandoned lightly. True to this tradition, the Irish still calculated Easter on the Roman and Jewish 84-years cycle which had previously prevailed all over Europe. This now superceded rule had been laid down at the Council of Arles, held in 314 A.D., 10 which stated that Easter be kept on the
14th day of the Paschal moon, if it were a Sunday, whereas the Irish would hold theirs on Sunday the fourteenth if it so fell, for they held Easter "upon the Sunday betwixt the 14th and the 20th day of the moon."

In connection with their efforts to retain the ancient date for Easter, their Roman opponents insultingly referred to them as Quartodecimans. This charge is, however, erroneous. Quartodecimans celebrated Easter on the fourteenth day of the moon regardless of what day it fell on, whereas the Irish invariably held theirs on a Sunday. Tradition was for the Irish their main referent, and thus the struggle with Rome was both bitter and long.

Other Points of Contention

Some authors claim that other differences included baptism, clerical celibacy, and the practice of the "soul friend."

The picture in reference to baptismal practices is rather vague. Bede states that the Sacrament of Baptism was incomplete, although we receive no further details on the matter. There has been much speculation on this point, but the truth of the matter is that we simply do not know how Celtic baptismal practices differed from those of the Roman Church.

On the question of celibacy, it would appear that the attitudes of the Celtic clerics were not so different from their Roman brothers. However, these attitudes compounded
a problem which already existed in a church constantly pushing for reform. Celibacy was an issue which appears to have been almost impossible to deal with.\textsuperscript{19} Many people, such as Abbots, who held positions within the Ecclesiastical hierarchy often were not ordained and so were married. But also among the ordained, marriage was the rule rather than the exception. Eventually a law was passed which at least limited a priest to no more than one wife.

The practice of the "soul-friend" is of particular interest. This partner, who shared all of one's daily life, could be male or female, for we are told that "in early Celtic Christianity women occasionally filled the position of soul-friend."\textsuperscript{20} St. Ita was the soul-friend of Brendan, and Columbanus had a female soul-friend.

The position of the soul-friend was an important one; the saying, attributed both to Brigit and Congall, Columba's teacher at Bangor, 'anyone without a soul-friend is a body without a head' became a proverb.\textsuperscript{21}

The soul-friend appears to have at times acted as counsellor and confessor.\textsuperscript{22} These ascetics and their soul-friends often went on journeys together, and lived together under the same roof. The practice was finally suppressed.\textsuperscript{23}

Tonsure

However, the point of deviation which interests us most within the confines of this paper is that of the tonsure. There were three kinds of tonsure known to the church up to,
and for a while later than, the council of Whitby. These were: (a) the Oriental tonsure; (b) the Roman tonsure; and (c) the Celtic tonsure. The Celtic tonsure is referred to in the sources also as the Scottish tonsure, the British tonsure and the Irish tonsure, although in the main it is simply referred to as the Celtic or Irish tonsure.

In The Independence of the Celtic Church in England, W. S. Kerr put forth the notion that the Celtic tonsure was in fact derived from St. Patrick. Three main reasons are given for this assumption.

1. He points correctly to the fact that the Irish clung tenaciously to their past tradition of which Patrick was an important part, and asks if the Irish would in fact follow a tradition contrary to that of St. Patrick himself.

2. Kerr claims that the Irish saw St. Patrick's mode of tonsure as unique, and that they consequently gave him the pet name of "Tailcend."

3. Kerr accepts "axehead" as a satisfactory gloss for Tailcend, and from there sees the tonsure of Patrick as fitting the common description of the Irish tonsure, namely that of "de aure ad aurem."24

There are, of course, many problems with this approach. It is true that Patrick was an important part of Irish tradition, a tradition to which the Irish Church constantly
referred, especially when seeking confirmation for its various practices. However, when challenged on the question of tonsure, the Irish did not claim that they had received their mode of tonsure from Patrick. This does not, of course, rule out the possibility that Patrick wore a similar tonsure. As a Briton he probably did. The point is that he was not seen as having introduced the tonsure into Ireland.

However, a connection has been made between Patrick and the idea of tonsure. This connection involves a small body of prophetic poetry which foretells the coming of a Tailcend (or the Tailcend) from across the sea, bringing Christianity to Ireland. Nevertheless, inferences in connection with the application of the name of Tailcend should be treated with caution. This name first appears in a prophetic poem cited by Muirchu in his life of Patrick, part of which reads:

The Tailcenn will come over a furious sea
His mantle head-holed, his staff crook-headed,
His dish in the east of his house,
All his household shall answer Amen, Amen. 26

This prophecy is attributed to King Loeghaire's Druids who recited it "regarding the coming of the Taillkenn." 27 An even older prophecy said to be by Finn MacCumhaill which concludes:

Until comes the powerful Tailcenn,
Who will heal everyone who shall believe,
Whose children shall be perpetual
As long as Cothraighe's rock shall live. 28

is in line with the same prophetic tradition.
A number of authors have glossed Tailcend as "adzehead" or even "axehead," which seems to have led writers such as W. S. Kerr to conjecture that Patrick wore a tonsure that appeared at first strange to the Irish population, and which they later adopted. D. P. Cunningham, in his Lives of the Irish Saints and Martyrs, glosses Tailcend as "bald," a rendering which agrees with that of Todd. We find elsewhere that tail is derived from the Old Irish taul, "forehead," and that Taulchinné is a variant form of Tailcend. This tonsure would appear then to accentuate the forehead. If tail can also be rendered as "cropped" or "bald," as some say, then the tonsure would appear to involve baldness over the forehead.

In the very ancient tale of Da Derga, the title Tailchinné appears:

I saw there a portly young man in front of the same couch in the middle of the house. The disgrace of baldness was upon him. As fair as the mountain cotton is every hair that grows through his head. That man is Taulchinné, the royal buffoon of the King of Temair, juggler to Conaire Mór (the monarch); This use of Tailcend in such a setting immediately presents us with a problem, for Conaire Mór, the king in the poem, was killed in 40 B.C. It would seem strange that a pre-Christian jester would be said to have a Christian tonsure, especially if Patrick was thought to have been its originator. The point is that Tailcend was used generally to denote "cleric," as can be seen in its use in the plural at times in the same prophetic poetry referred
to earlier. 34 As we will see, the tonsure was a practice taken from the pre-Christian Druidic religion, and as such it is not surprising to see its existence referred to in a pre-Christian context. The use of the word Tailcend to generally mean "cleric" is also implied in the work of Eugene O'Curry, who accepts this as the general meaning of the word when discussing the prophetic poetry relating to Patrick. He feels that some of this is probably true prophecy, for as he points out, the Irish certainly were aware of the existence of other peoples besides themselves, and must have also been aware of the growing Christian movement. Thus, the poetry anticipated the coming of the first Christians. 35

The possibility needs to be raised as to whether Tailcend, the name applied to Patrick, has in fact any connection with Taillten, one of the four major meeting places mentioned by Joyce. 36 It is here that the ancient historians set the battle in which the Milesians overcame the Tuatha de Danaan. The Milesians, led by Erem (the ploughman), represent, at least on one level, the emerging spring. Thus, the battle represents the struggle between light and darkness, a struggle in which light is victorious. Patrick was also cast in this ancient drama, a drama which set Patrick against the ancient gods and against the old religion.

The Druids held a yearly festival which appears to have had something to do with the onset of Spring and which co-
incised with Easter. All fires were extinguished in preparation. It was forbidden for anyone to light a fire before that of the Druids was kindled, but Patrick ignored this interdict. He lit the Easter fire on the hill of Slane, and by igniting his fire first, he signalled Christ's power over the old religion. Once again, we also see the symbolic expression of light overcoming darkness. This concept permeates Celtic mythology. It is not surprising therefore to see this symbol used to form a thread between Patrick and the old religion.

Taillten also has other possible connections with the tonsure. An idea which we will be exploring to some extent in this paper is that of the tonsure as a bond between an initiate and the Mother Goddess. One aspect of this expression of the feminine is Taillte, the mother of Lug, whom legend has buried beneath the mound which bears her name. She is said to have died giving birth to triplets, which she had conceived as the result of her rape by the three sons of Simon Magus. Since the Roman Church accused the Irish of wearing the tonsure of Simon Magus, it is interesting to note that he is connected by the mythologists to the Great Mother whose very name contains the appellation "cropped."

We can see therefore that the tonsure has been used to connect both Patrick and Simon Magus to the Great Mother. Thus, Patrick is effectively tied to the past, and at the
same time Celtic thought is Christianized. However, this is insufficient grounds for attributing the introduction of the Celtic tonsure to Patrick.

We can see this type of literary treatment operating in many areas. R. P. C. Hanson says that stories of Loeghaire and Patrick come from folk-lore traditions whereby Patrick became linked with important people in the popular mind. 39 Basically, what he is pointing out, and this too applies to our discussion of Tailcend, is that much of this tradition came from oral tradition not written sources. What should also be realized is that oral tradition records truly. For as the old storyteller would say, "not a word has been changed." It is, of course, recorded in the language of poetry, which is that of the mythic image.

Literary evidence which connects Patrick with the Roman tonsure should also be treated with caution. A letter claimed to be written by St. Patrick along with Auxillus and Iserninus in the 5th century, calling for all those not adhering to the Roman tonsure to be ostracized by the community and separated from the church, is a case in point. W. S. Kerr notes that there is "abundant evidence that canons manufactured in later centuries were falsely attributed to Patrick." 40 It is his opinion that this particular canon falls into this category. It is true that Patrick became the cornerstone of Irish Christianity, and thus giving an interdict the added authority of Patrick
would certainly help ensure its acceptance. However, for this precise reason, we must treat those sources which cite Patrick as their authority with extreme care.

The Celtic tonsure, also referred to as the tonsure of St. John or of St. James by its opponents who saw it as a heretical statement reflecting the tonsure of Simon Magus, was one of the points of controversy between Rome and the Celtic Church. The matter was finally settled at the Council of Whitby in 664 A.D. in favour of Roman usage, though many Irish resisted the decision for some time following that.

An Examination of Opinions Regarding the Shape of the Celtic Tonsure

There are three basic views on the form taken by the Celtic tonsure. One view is that a line was drawn from ear to ear and the entire front of the head from this line forward was shaved bare, and the remaining hair was allowed to grow long and hung down behind. Others feel that this is not exactly correct. They see the hair as shaved in front of a line from ear to ear but that while the back hair was long there was also a fringe of hair left in front. Another school seems to want to sit in the middle. They say that if there was not a fringe left, there probably was a tuft of hair remaining.

Those who feel that a fringe or tuft of hair remained, see the tonsure as moon or wedge-shaped (see Appendix,
Figure a). The most thorough source of information on
this is an article by John Dowden which unhappily falls
short of its purpose, for it leaves one with more questions
than answers. Nevertheless, it bears examining, for it
seems to have been the source of information for later
writers such as Hugh DeBlacam, C. A. Lane, and L. Hardinge
(see Appendix, Figure b).

It is very difficult, for example, to understand
Dowden's claim that the picture of St. Columba (see Appendix,
Figure c) to which he refers us, is an example of the
Celtic tonsure. Besides showing a full corona on top,
the hair is short, layered, and leaves the ears bare.
St. Columba was, of course, tonsured in the Celtic manner.
This is common historical knowledge. However, the picture
of Columba to which Dowden refers us, portrays him, not
with the Celtic tonsure, but with a Roman tonsure. Dowden's
picture depicting St. Mummolen (see Appendix, Figure d)
which he sees as displaying a fringe is also not quite
convincing (see Appendix, Figure e). The faint dotted
line appearing across the forehead could just as easily
be a hairband, a band which also seems to appear on the
head of a figure on the Gundestrup Cup (see Appendix,
Figure f).

A number of writers appear to have followed this
crescent theory adopted by Dowden. The theory that seems
to be held on the crescent-shaped tonsure is that it was
possibly in honour of the moon-goddess Hecate, and that it was thus Druidic and so naturally pre-Christian. As such, it was supposed to have been taken up by the early Irish monks, who, in their struggle for independence from Rome, have in a sense become a symbol for Celtic Protestantism. What one suspects to be behind Kerr's thinking becomes explicit in C. A. Lane, who writes:

> When the Church of this country is said to be 'protestant,' we ought not to understand that it has objected to papal influence over it from the times of the Tudor kings only, but that it has never willingly allowed to the bishops of Rome any legal jurisdiction over Churchmen in this realm.

Although some authors have referred to the tonsure as adzes-shaped or axes-shaped, underlying this is the assumption that the tonsure resembles a moon-shape. Consequently, some authors claim that the tonsure was performed in honour of the moon-goddess. We find then that research concentrated on the shape of the tonsure, leaving many worthwhile avenues of evidence unexplored.

Dowden tells us that a number of authors have followed the description of Daniel Rock, who made the statement that the tonsure was "made by cutting away the hair from the upper part of the forehead, with the convex side before." Dowden sees this statement as wholly supporting his view that the tonsure included either a fringe or tuft of hair in front.

P. W. Joyce also subscribes to the theory of a tonsural fringe. He tells us that the Druids who were the tutors
of Loeghaire's daughters wore on their heads the 'Norma Magica' or the magical figure which he tells us is called in Irish Airbacc Giunnae and which he translates as "the Druid's fence." He refers to Dr. Todd having translated this as "the bond of Gehenna or hell"; but, he says, Todd erred in so doing.\textsuperscript{52} Both translations are difficult to substantiate, for neither Thurneysen nor the Irish dictionaries available mention either word. However, the mythological picture would tend to support Todd's view rather than that of Joyce, and even if Joyce were correct his "fence" could mean the back hair as well as the front since a Druid's fence in the early Christian Era would probably have been a thick and bushy hedge.\textsuperscript{53}

We will continue to follow part of Dowden's argument, for he leads us through a reasonable survey of the material. Dowden tells us that writers such as J. H. Todd, F. E. Warren, and W. Reeves saw the tonsure as a complete frontal shaving without fringe or tuft, while others such as D. Rock, L. Loofs, and W. Bright believed that a fringe or tuft remained. His own views coincide with the latter.

Dowden begins his investigation by referring us to the original manuscripts. It is precisely here that we come across our biggest and also most common problem with regard to the Celtic tonsure, that of the interpretation of sources.

The main support for Dowden's argument for a tonsure which left a frontal fringe or tuft rests on a passage
from Bede about which Dowden writes:

At this point we come to what I regard as the illuminative and, I think, decisive passage ... this is by far the clearest account we have in any early writer of the character of Celtic tonsure.54

The text reads:

Quae primo aspectu in frontis quidem superficie, coronae videtur speciem praferre; sed ubi ad cervicem considerando perveneris, decurtatam eam quam te videre putabas, invenies coronam; ut habitum convenire cognoscas?55

Dowden translates this passage as follows:

Which of the faithful, I ask, would not, instantly on seeing it, repudiate and justly reject, together with his sorcery, that tonsure which they say the sorcerer Simon had? For that tonsure, if indeed you look at merely the forehead seems to bear the appearance of a crown, but as, in looking at it attentively, you follow it to the neck (or the back of the head), you will find that crown, which you thought you had seen, is cut short.56

Since Dowden interprets "corona" as the fringe of hair around the head and not the space left bare in the middle, he tends to emphasize the forehead. Therefore, it is interesting to note the comma after supervicie, which, of course, does not alter the sense of the quote, but does tend to direct attention. Also, whether one concentrates on the space in the middle of the tonsure or the hair surrounding it one has to treat these theories with caution. The picture of Bede taken from a codex at Engelberg Abbey, Switzerland (see Appendix, Figure o) is explanation enough. The spot on top of the head has been reduced to about the size of an egg, while the hair around is quite longish, coming to below the ears.
If we turn to the Loeb edition of Bede, we find even the Latin differs:

Quae in frontis quidem superficie coronae videtur speciem praeferre; sed ubi ad cervicem considerando perveneris, decurquam eam quam te videre putabas invenies coronam; ut merito talem Simoniacis et non Christianis habitum convenire cognoscas. 57

which is rendered:

Which indeed seemeth to shew the likeness of a crown in the outermost part of the head, but when a man cometh near and beholdeth the hinder part, he shall find that which seemed to him to be a crown, to come very short thereof; so that we may rightly understand that such a fashion suiteth not Christians, but Simoniacs. 58

This latter description is not quite as clear as Dowden would like to believe, and although his work is apparently the only work which has been done on the Celtic tonsure, it is a pity that its scholarship is so weak. We are still left in a state of indecision as to the original shape of this tonsure.

The Accusation Connecting the Tonsure with that of Simon Magus

The Celtic tonsure was said to be heretical by its opponents who regarded it as a tonsure derived from Simon Magus. That such an identification was made is not surprising. Since the word "Druid" could be translated by Magus 59 ("a wise man" or "magician"), a translation which appears to have been accepted to some extent by the Celts themselves, 60 the accusation that the tonsure was that of Simon Magus simply meant that the tonsure was derived from
the remote Celtic past. Some clue to the shape of the tonsure may also lie within this accusation, for John Rhys tells us:

The Romans say that the tonsure of the Britons is reported to have originated with Simon Magus, whose tonsure embraced merely the whole front part of the head from ear to ear, in order to exclude the genuine tonsure of the Magi, whereby the front part alone was wont to be covered.61

From the above we learn that in the genuine tonsure of the Magi the back of the head was shaved, while the hair on the front of the head was left long and hanging. We are also informed that this was opposite in form to that of the Celtic tonsure. Thus, it would appear, according to this definition, that the Celtic tonsure did not include a frontal fringe.

Rhys notes that the Goidelic Druids were at times referred to as the School of Simon Druid. These included soothsayers, priests, and medicine men, although their chief character seems to have been that of magician.62

In a story concerning Cormac and his demands for tribute from Munster, we are told that his Druids were overcome by the more powerful Druids of Munster who were under the leadership of Mogh Ruith. Mogh Ruith and his Druids were said to have trained in the East under Simon Magus, who was said to be of the race of the Gaedhils of Erinn.63

This adoption of Simon Magus by the Irish can also be seen as a statement that the Irish and British tonsure were one.64 That they may have been thought to be different
by some is implied in the acts of the Synodus Roma, which attribute to Gildas the statement that:

The Romans say that the Britons derived their tonsure from Simon Magus, while in Ireland the native tonsure was first worn by the swineherd of King Loegaire.65

Since, however, these acts, referred to in the Collectus Canonum Hibernensis, were passed by Romanizing Irishmen in the seventh century A.D., one has to treat them with caution. In relation with Simon Magus it should also be remembered that the Romans associated the magician's name with all that was pagan, and thus, in identifying the tonsure with Simon Magus, they are simply restating what the Irish see in the accusation themselves, namely that the tonsure is of pre-Christian origin.66

There is one point of agreement in any discussion of the Celtic tonsure—that the front of the head was bare, with or without a fringe, and that the back hair hung long.

The true tonsure of the Magi was bare at the back and long in the front. This is, in fact, a description67 of a type of Hittite tonsure (see Appendix, Figure p) and the tonsure of the North African Troglodytes.68 This is very interesting, for we find that the Irish, in their mythology, claim to be connected with both Africa and Egypt. The above description would, of course, exclude from the Celtic tonsure a fringe or tuft in the front, for the tonsure with long hair in front left the head completely bare at the back.
The Proposed Possibility of Eastern Influence

The assimilation of Simon Magus into Irish mythology could also be an acknowledgement that Irish Christianity came directly from the East. Since it appears that early Eastern monasticism may have had some influence on the beginnings of Irish Christianity, since Patrick is said by tradition to have received his tonsure at the hands of St. Martin of Tours, and since the Irish tonsure is said by some to have come from Simon Magus, then we must at least explore the possibility of an eastern origin for the Celtic tonsure.

It would seem that, on the whole, differences in tonsure did not matter to Roman or Eastern Christian leaders. Apart from remarks concerning the Celtic tonsure and some comments regulating the size of the Roman corona at a much later date, early writers are quite silent on this matter. These records, therefore, contain very few details related to the various practices of tonsure. It is only when controversy erupts and marked differences are evident that either annoyance or curiosity seems to lead to the conveyance of detail. Thus, we can only assume that either other tonsorial customs developed from acceptable religious sources while the Celtic did not, or that the tonsure was a visible symbol to the Celtic Christians in a sense that marked them as different from their fellow Christians elsewhere.
The custom of tonsure, or cutting the hair in
performance of a vow or as a sign of mourning, was well-
known in the ancient world. The priests of Isis and Serapis
shaved their heads, as did the followers of Yahweh on
occasion. The custom continued on into Christianity and
served to distinguish clerical workers from the lay popula-
tion. In this form, it seems to have taken on the aspects
of a badge, but must, in many cases, have lacked any deeper
meaning for the Romans eventually had to bring in laws to
force its clerics to continue with the tonsure. Since there
does not appear to have been any conflict in Eastern or
Western quarters over the use of the Eastern tonsure, we
must assume that there was something especially irritating
about the Celtic tonsure. When it was proposed that
Theodore, a monk from Tarsus, in Cilicia, be sent to Britain
in 669 A.D. as Bishop, he was instructed to assume the
Roman tonsure, for it was considered inadvisable for him
to tell the Britons, by example, that different tonsorial
practices were permissible. Theodore, who was tonsured in
the Greek manner, had to wait for four months for his hair
to grow in order to receive the tonsure of Roman usage. From this we learn two things—namely that the Romans did
not approve of the Celts having their own tonsure, and
secondly, that their tonsure was cut differently to that of
the Greeks.
The problem with the Celtic Church was that while it had simply transferred some symbols, such as the tonsure, from the pre-Christian to the Christian situation, these symbols remained rooted in the past. The Celtic sense of identity was firmly tied to these symbols which they defended with stubborn independence. Also, the Celtic clerics exercised a mobility in Europe which was not evident from other Christian branches, apart from those allied with Rome. Syrian monks did exert some influence in the early period, but their numbers were small and their influence easy to bring under control. But the Celtic monks were active throughout Europe, spreading ideas which often differed from those of Rome. Also, since the Celts had built so much on their past, a past which had much in common with other pagan societies in Europe, there must also have been a very real danger of Christianity becoming too allied with Paganism, at least in some instances. The dangers would not have escaped the notice of serious religious thinkers of the time. Thus, the Celts did pose a very real threat to the unity of early Christianity, and it is this underlying threat which such things as tonsure and the date of Easter came to symbolize.

Indo-European Tonsure

If the Celtic tonsure is a remnant of its pre-Christian past, and if the Celts were one of the Indo-European peoples, it stands to reason that its practice may be reflected in
other Indo-European societies. However, it is not our purpose in this paper to prove that the Celtic tonsure had its beginnings in a specific Indo-European culture. Our purpose is merely to explore its possible existence elsewhere, and to note any sign-posts along the way which may help us with our understanding of the tonsure.

Possible Mediterranean Connections

The ancient Irish claimed the Mediterranean as their ancestral home, and saw these distant ancestors as having also had connections with both Egypt and Spain. These are recurring themes in the ancient histories and mythology, and these persistent memories still live on in folktale and fairytale.

According to the later Irish Chroniclers, the Irish gods and goddesses came in one large invasion known as the coming of the Tuatha dé Danann. Two extreme theories exist on just who these gods were. O'Rahilly speaks of these dieties and heroes strictly in terms of the divine and static. Herbert Butler follows a theory that sees these gods in terms of tribal ancestors, the family Lares, who gave the tribe its beginnings and whose name can lead us to information regarding movements, alliances and separations within the old tribal systems.  

The coming of the Tuatha dé Danann (the people of the goddess Dana) was, of course, only one of several invasions
recorded by the Chroniclers. The Dananns were led by Brian, Iuchar, and Iucharba, said to be the sons of Tuireann. A closer look reveals that Iuchar and Iucharba were, in fact, the twin sons of Brian, husband of Dana. Flann Mainistreich in writing of the three, referred to them as "the three gods of the Tuatha de Danann," that is, the gods of the gods. Generally, the Tuatha de Danann is viewed as being composed of opposing groups of divinities similar to the Indian concept of suras and asuras. This is evident in Macalister, who tells us that "the story-teller seems to regard Brian and his brethren as being outside the corporation of the Tuatha de Danann." This whole concept of opposing divinities becomes even more interesting if we consider the above in the light of Hubert Butler's theories. Since the names Iuchar and Iucharba both begin with I-ch, Butler would designate these as belonging to the Ith-Ech-Aed tribal groups to which belonged the Iceni of East Anglia, the Epidie of Galloway and the ep-id-fid-aed folk of Gaul. But checking Butler's glossary, we find that these tribes are, in fact, members of the Milesian tribal groups who, the mythographers tell us, came to Ireland after the Tuath de Danann and fought them for supremacy in Ireland, with victory finally going to the Milesians. Of interest here is the name of the "aed" tribal group, said to be Milesian, for Aed being one of the names of the Dagda, god of the Dananns, ties the Milesians to the Dananns irrevocably.
Thus, what we finally realize is that the twin sons of Brian, the gods of the gods of the Tuatha dé Danann, are in fact Milesian tribal ancestors. Historically, the chroniclers saw the Milesian "invaders" as being able to defeat the gods of the Dananns. It appears that what we have here is a religious belief which expressed itself in terms of gods and anti-gods, a belief which, at a later date, was no longer understood and became re-interpreted. Thus, to my mind, the Tuatha dé Danann and the Milesians, or the Sons of Mil, must be viewed as related groups of people. They both belong to the tribal groups historians refer to as the Dananns.

The Chroniclers tell us that the people of Danann came to Ireland from Europe via Norway and Northern Scotland. Butler points out that "all they are saying is that over the centuries and millenia all the tribes of Europe were in motion, dispersing and merging and replacing each other." Thus, the arrival of the Dananns should not be viewed as an isolated event, nor a large-scale national campaign. It is probably better, historically, to envisage it as a series of small-scale expeditions, probably spread over a considerable period of years.

The Sons of Mil are the Milesians who came from Crete by way of Spain. An early chronicler tells us that Mel of Spain married Scotta, Pharoah's daughter, and their son took Ireland. This connection with Egypt should not be ignored.
The chief god of the Tuatha dé Danann is the Dagda. "He is also called Aed (fire), Eochaid Ollathair (All-Father) and Ruad Rofessa (Lord of Great Knowledge)." If we turn to The Aeneid we hear the father of Aeneus complain of the deity, "Long enough have I dragged a useless life out, since the All-Father blasted me with the winds of his thunder-stroke and laid the finger of flame upon my body." Since the father of Aeneas refers to Crete as the land of their ancestors, and the god of the island of Crete is Jove, then Jove must be "All-Father." Thus, "All-Father," the god of the Sons of Mil, the Ifish Milesian forebears, may be Jove (or Jupiter). A remark from Julius Caesar would appear to confirm this, for he observed that the Celts numbered Jupiter, the ruler of heaven, among their gods. Therefore, the Dagda is possibly connected with the Milesians. It is important to note that the Dagda is also father of Danu, the maternal ancestor of the Dananns. The Tuatha dé Danann (the Dananns), have been equated elsewhere with the Archaean Danaans. What then does history say of the Danaans?

Early history is certainly not silent on the matter, and Homer is, in fact, quite eloquent. Homer refers to Danaans as Archaeans, and Mycenaens. When Homer speaks of the Danaans, he speaks of them in relation to Troy, which fell about 1300 B.C. This is about the same period that saw a certain amount of movement of peoples in the
Aegean. Thus, it is interesting to note that Robert Graves places the main waves of migration of the Danaans into Britain in the 2nd Millennium, around 1600 B.C.\textsuperscript{87}

Coming to Homer's Troy, we note that Trojans were referred to as "great sons of Dardan, blood-descendants of gods."\textsuperscript{88} Dardan, along with Donwy, Danuvios, Danuvia (forms of Danu in Welsh) and Danube, are all derived from a word which in Irish is represented by the adjective dana, which means courageous, daring, intrepid, strong, and is also related to the words fate and destiny.\textsuperscript{89}

Dardanus was the brother of Iasius and Iacchus, sons of Demeter. Demeter is associated with fertility, the underworld, and the horse.

Danu, in Ireland, is the mother of Iachar and Iucharba, and is connected with fertility, the underworld, and the horse.

The Dananns have been linked with the Danaans who fought at Troy. One of these Danaan tribes, the Thebans, was located in Boetia, and also in Troad and Egypt. This warrior people saw their mythological beginnings as being placed in the midst of battle when they sprang fully grown from dragons' teeth. It is probably not mere coincidence that the Irish word for "teeth" is Dannedd, especially since the dragon is a form of the serpent, an attribute of the Great Mother, whom the Dananns saw as their tribal ancestress.
In the pages of Homére the Danaans or Achaeans appear to be a loose confederation of tribes. They appear to have been warriors of some note, and probably were responsible for the destruction of the Minoan cities around 1400 B.C.\(^9\)

In The Iliad we read:

> The Achaeans remained warriors, living in strongly fortified cities like Mycenae, and given to plundering expeditions. The 'Adawasha' were among the 'Sea Peoples' who raided Egypt shortly before 1200 B.C. This was just the time that Greek tradition dated the expedition of the Argonauts up the Black Sea and the raids by Heracles on the Amazons and on Troy.\(^9\)

In Ireland the Dananns are seen as the Tuatha dé Danann, the people of the Goddess Dana, daughter of the Dagda or All-Father, who is probably related to Jove or Jupiter. The Dananns or the Danu, are also referred to as the tribe of Dôn. "Dôn appears in Roman records as Donnus, a divine father of Cottius, the sacred king of the Cottians, a Ligurion confederacy."\(^9\) Danu is a form of Belili,\(^9\) and Belili is claimed by the Welsh as their tribal ancestor. The sons of Mil claim Dôn as an ancestor, so we can see that Danu, in one form or another, is considered a common ancestral figure to these Celtic and pre-Celtic peoples.

Robert Graves equates Danu with Danai and Don.\(^9\) Danai is the ancestor of Danaus, who in turn is the forefather of the tribe of the Danaoi who came to Argolid from Egypt.\(^9\)

Noting this Egyptian link, we should possibly remember here that the old Irish chroniclers claimed a connection with
Egypt through Mil, that is, the Milesians. In connection with Danaus then, we go on to note that the ancestor of Danaus is Epephus, a name very close in pronunciation to Apophis, the ancestor of the Hyksos, who were expelled from Egypt around 1600 B.C. The Hyksos were not a people as such, but were Asiatic nomadic tribes who filtered into Egypt gradually until by their weight, they took over. It has been assumed that they were Semitic, but this assumption was made on the basis of personal names. The Hyksos did not bring a settled culture into Egypt with them. Instead, they tended to copy others. This strong tendency of the Hittite to absorb from those around them should make us very wary of making assumptions on the basis of personal names. The Hyksos were, in fact, a non-Semitic people. In order not to miss a couple of interesting points we should note that the Hyksos (see Appendix, Figure h), in time of battle, bashed out babies brains; so did the conquerors of Troy. The Hyksos referred to their kings as 'Shepherd Kings'; so did the Achaeans. These similarities may point to a common Indo-European heritage.

Furthermore, we cannot ignore the Danaid myth when considering an eastern origin for, or at least an eastern influence on, the tribes of the Dananns. This myth once again connects Danaus with Belus, as the Celts connected Danu with Belili. Danaus and Aegyptus were brothers and Danaus went from Argive to Egypt. However, the brothers
became enemies, and "a dispute about the sovereignty of Egypt was the cause of the enmity." That Danaus went to Egypt then returned should be noted. We should also note that his daughter and a son of Egyptus became the parents of the ancestor of the Argive kings. It has been suggested that "Egypt" in this myth means "Sea," and what we have, in fact, is a connection being made between the Achaeans and the "sea people." This myth is very strong in Celtic tradition. Besides being so pointed in the Irish mythological cycle, it is preserved in such places as the English nursery story of "Hop O'my Thumb" and in the numerous stories involving a witch with a certain number of daughters, who kill the same number of youths while sleeping with them. In the Irish version, the story involves the ritual eating of stock meat, that is to say, the eating of sacred flesh.

Thus, the Milesians and Dananns do appear to be a people of common or related stock who invaded Britain and Ireland "by way of" Spain and Northern Europe, and who, at one time, had connections with Crete and belonged to the Danaan or Achaean confederacy of tribes. They also had some connections with Egypt. This is nothing more than what the ancient Irish Chroniclers related.

The links joining Ireland to Crete, and Irish religion to the mystery religions (see Appendix, Figure i), are quite
significant when we come to view the accusations made against the early Irish Christians by those who had some knowledge of mystery religious practice. Thus, the reference to the Irish tonsure (see Appendix, Figure j) as that of Simon Magus, hinting at pagan overtones, may not have been made by the Romans without reason. That is, they may have been comparing it with other tonsures commonly known to be pagan. The ear to ear tonsure was also known to be followed by the Priests of Isis,\textsuperscript{103} and this was one of the accusations the Romans brought against the Celts, to wit, that they wore the tonsure of the Priests of Isis. It is this tonsure which the ancients called Theseis in honour of Theseus, of whom it was said:

When his childhood was over, he went on a pilgrimage to Delphi, to offer his hair to Apollo. But he did not have all his boyish hair cut off, only the locks on his forehead, a fashion of wearing the hair which was called Theseis after him.\textsuperscript{104}

Graves adds further to this by telling us about Theseus:

At the age of sixteen years (he) visited Delphi, and offered his first manly hair-clippings to Apollo. He shaved, however, only the fore-part of his head, like the Arabians and Mysians, or like the war-like Abantes of Euboea, who thereby deny their enemies any advantage in close combat.\textsuperscript{105}

A number of authors claim that the Celtic tonsure appears to have been inherited from the Druids. O'Curry, who reminds us that both the Milesians and the Tuatha dé Danann brought their own Druids with them, insists that there were also Druids in Ireland at the time of the Firbolgs. Thus, Irish tradition does, indeed, tie Druidism
to the ancient world of Crete, and the Mediterranean world.
It is interesting in this regard to note that Theseus is
identified as the chief hero of Athens, and that Homer
identified the Athenians as Danaans.

Indian Tonsure in Relation
to Celtic

Since writers such as McBain, Donald A. Mackenzie,
and to a lesser extent, P. W. Joyce, have drawn some parallels
between Indian and Irish heritage, it is important for us
to at least take a glance at Indian tonsorial practices.

One description of the Celtic tonsure reads:

In the Celtic Tonsure, the tonsure of St. John
or in contempt the tonsure of Simon Magus, all
the hair in front of a line drawn over the head
from ear to ear (see Appendix, Figure k) was
shaven (a fashion common among the Hindus).106

Unhappily, as is too often the case in researching this
material, no sources for this information are given and
verification through other sources has been impossible to
find. Only vague hints are forthcoming. The Mundaka
Upanishad mentions the Mundaka "vow" which involves a form
of tonsure explained by Sankara as:

Carrying fire on the head - a well known Vedic vow
among followers of the Atharva-Veda.107

Robert Hume, however, does not agree with this gloss, and
prefers to interpret it as a shaving of the head in the
manner of later Buddhist monks.108 He, however, gives no
reasons for his decision.
In one of the hymns of the Rigveda we read:

He with the long loose locks supports Agni, and moisture, heaven, and earth.\textsuperscript{109}

The 'He' being referred to here is the sun. If these long, loose locks were shorn, he would be carrying fire on his head, which could help explain why during the ceremony of tonsure, the kūḍākarana is described as "the making of the crest."\textsuperscript{110} The special quality of Agni is as bestower of life and it is not surprising then to see the kūḍākarana described in hymn as life-giving:\textsuperscript{111} which explains why the forced tonsuring of a Brahmaṇa as punishment is seen as equivalent to capital punishment.\textsuperscript{112} For that which bestows life can also take life. It is within the symbolism of Indian tonsorial practices rather than shape that affinities with Irish practice are most evident.

The whole idea of a death and re-birth, a re-birth which resides in the god-head, such as is evident in Christian baptism, is a concept imbedded in the symbol of tonsure which we will be exploring further.

In Hindu custom we find the practice of tonsure at two levels, that of the monk and that of laity. Among the laity it is the children of the first three upper classes who are tonsured, for these are the dvija, the twice-born, and the tonsure is in this instance considered a re-birth. These three groups include the Brahmans who are the priests and teachers, the Kshatriya class which is the princely warrior class, and the Vaisya or mercantile
class. Children are tonsured at different ages, and it is never considered too late to perform the kudakarna. The tonsure becomes a symbol of the candidate's re-entrance into the spiritual world. The cutting of the hair represents the severing of past associations and bonds with both the material and physical worlds into which the child was born. He, not being a monk, is still a material being, but a whole new dimension of his life has now opened up for him. The actual ceremony now involves the complete shaving of the head. The hair is often then presented to a family member who places it in water. 113

Evidence of other tonsorial practices is nevertheless evident in The Grihya Sūtras, for here we read that when a child was given his tonsure, upon the shaving of the left side of the head, the following words were uttered:

The razor with which Pusan has shaved (the beard) of the Brihaspati, of Agni, of Indra, for the sake of long life, with that I shave thy head. 114

The hair was then either strewn on bull's dung or was buried in the cow-shed. This practice has echoes in the saga of CúChulainn which tells how CúRoi shaved off the hair of CúChulainn with a sword and then smeared his head with cow-dung. 115

In Ireland and Britain too, a lay tonsure seems to have existed alongside the Druidic tonsure. There is first of all a species of tonsure referred to as the County Crop, which was common to all. 116 There may have been some form
of knightly tonsure as is evident in the bonding of Kulhwch which seems to have taken place in the seventh year. Joyce tells us that there was an ancient Irish custom which lasted well into the fourteenth century whereby the sons of kings and great chiefs were knighted at the age of seven, the age at which CúChulainn was admitted.\footnote{This would have entailed the placing of the child under fosterage that he might be educated for his destined place in life. This meant a completely new focus in loyalties and involved an initiation procedure (see Appendix, Figure 1) which included a form of tonsure.\footnote{We are also told elsewhere that children were tonsured up until the tenth century, when the practice gradually changed and became restricted to ecclesiastical personages.}}\footnote{In considering the evidence for a warrior's tonsure in the Irish material, we should also note that a word used for cleric was 'marcach,' that is, "those bearing the message of the canonical scriptures." Clerics are referred to elsewhere as "Knights of the Gospel."\footnote{As with various other societies around the world, the Hittites saw hair as in some sense containing a person's essence, that is, his mana. For them, chest hair, for instance, was a sign of strength.\footnote{O. R. Guerney informs us that: The Egyptian portraits (of the Hittites) show a variety of hair-fashion. In general, the hair seems to have been left to fall uncut in a mass behind the neck, with or without a headband; sometimes the fore-}}
head is shaved. One figure appears to have the whole head shaved except for a short pigtail at the back. . . . All Hittites on the Egyptian monuments are clean-shaven. 122

Another figure also appears to have the whole head shaved except for a frontal piece hanging to one side in front of the right ear (see Appendix, Figure 9). This latter style of tonsure would appear to be identical to that practiced by the Troglodytes, a blue-eyed, fair-skinned nation of the Tahennu, a Libyan people who lived on the western borders of Egypt, in the vicinity of the Mediterranean. There were several excursions against them by the Egyptian kings, including Amenophis II and Rameses II. 123 The Egyptians depicted them on their monuments as:

Having all their hair shaved excepting one large lock, which is plaits and depends from the right side of the head. . . . Each warrior wore also two ostrich feathers, sloping at opposite angles and fastened on his head at the top of the crown. 124

It would appear then that in the ancient world the custom of wearing the hair with or without a headband, shaved in the front, and long at the back, and also a custom of shaving the complete head except for a frontal piece, were quite well-known, along with various other forms of tonsure. If the style with frontal hair was indeed the true tonsure of the Magi, and this was seen as an opposite to the Celtic form of tonsure, it is difficult to see how a frontal fringe could be part of the Celtic custom, as has been suggested by Dowden in his paper on the tonsure.
The Tradition Connecting the Celtic Tonsure with the Swineherds of King Loeghaire

That the tonsure of the Celtic church was derived from the swineherds of King Loeghaire, is attested to at least in a couple of ancient sources. Kathleen Hughes informs us that:

The Romans say that the Britons derived their tonsure from Simon Magus, while in Ireland the native tonsure was first worn by the swineherd of King Loeghaire. 125

Rhys informs us, however, that although it appears that St. Patrick's discourse gives us similar proof that the tonsure is that of the swineherd, he sees this as simply a mistranslation of 'maccu,' who was not the swineherd, but the chief poet of Ireland, and the head of a large number of pupils. 126

This brings us once again into one of the many mazes in which anyone researching this early material is likely to find themselves. We are forced to examine the word 'maccu' a little more closely. Rudolf Thurneysen translates maccu as "sons," treating maccu as the accusative plural of mac. 127 But mac in its various forms seems to mean "derived." We are also told that maca or moccu can mean "offspring," "gens," or even "the chief descendent." It does not, however, appear to have a plural form. 128

Rhys says that the Old Irish mocu, moco or muco became maccu or mac-u. It is his opinion that those who gloss
this as "descendent" are incorrect. Elsewhere Rhys uses mocu as meaning "family," but in a wider sense. He refers us to Mocu-Mín which he translates as "Mín's Kin," and which he says is a family or sept. He is probably using it to mean that larger group to which one owes allegiance and which in the case of fosterage includes a whole new group.

T. F. O'Rahilly sees the whole tradition of Maccu as having been a way of dramatising Patrick's conflict with paganism—that is, the opposition of Patrick to the worship of the god Coll or Goll, "the great orb of the heavens." This opponent of St. Patrick appears as MacCuill (Coll), Maguil (MacGuill), Machaldus, and maccu Greccae (of the Grecraig). We are also told that MacCuill is related to Maccuill or Macuil (corrupted to Maughold), and the earlier Machald(us).

It seems, then, that what we have in the tradition that Patrick came into conflict with the swineherd of King Loeghaire is, in fact, a very complex mythological statement. It would appear that this statement is, in fact, quite correct, and that Rhys was mistaken when he refuted it, although it must also be admitted that he had all the signposts pointing in the correct direction. The Irish were ancestor worshippers, and at least part of their ritual took place at set occasions on burial mounds and included fire, sacrifice, and funeral games. At the heart of these lay the worship of the Great Mother in her many forms. It was with this
religion, then, that Patrick and ultimately the Roman Church had to grapple.

It is against this background that we set the thesis for our paper, namely that the tonsure which was so stubbornly rooted in Celtic soil, was a form of bonding to the service of the Great Mother. The picture, like Celtic art itself, is fluid, abstract, mirror-imaged, but ultimately perfectly balanced. The confusion often shows females become males, males become females, and back again. Shape-shifting is a normal part of the mythological scene and should not concern us unduly. It is the simple picture which lies beneath which concerns us, namely that of the Sun Goddess, her pigs, and the dog who guards the underworld which is the Goddess' ultimate home. Emerging from this material is an image of an ideal human lifestyle in which one offers one's whole life as a living sacrifice to the deity.
FOOTNOTES

1 Colman, an Irish monk who had the See of Lindisfarne, represented the Celtic party at the Council of Whitby.


dé Paor tells us in reference to the anchorites that the Irish Church was becoming corrupt and in an effort to correct this situation and in reaction to it, "a movement of spiritual reform began within the monasteries. The protagonists of the reform were known as the Celi De (servants of God). They laid great stress on the seeking of perfection in the monastic state, on meditation, and on the study and perfection of the Liturgy. Many among them were hermits or anchorites who moved out from the monasteries to solitary cells in lonely places, which are often marked today by the place-name element Desert or Dysert" (de Paor, op. cit., p. 72). From this we get an idea of anchorism as a rather late development. John T. McNeill cautions: "The more intense form of ascetic life is that of the anchorites, and there were many of these. Characteristically they were not in entire detachment from the organized communities but were under the jurisdiction of an Abbot, though living and praying apart from the fraternity. According to the late rule erroneously ascribed to St. Columba, the anchorite is to 'live near a monastery.' The lives of saints have many references to hermit life, revealing different degrees of detachment from the monasteries. The Catalogue of Saints of Ireland represents the spread of anchoritism as a late perversion of Irish Christianity; but no reliance should be placed on this document. The influence of Egyptian and Syrian asceticism in Ireland and Britain, while not fully explained, cannot be denied. But here resemblance is not mere duplication. Differences in climate and terrain made Irish hermitages no exact imitation of those of Egypt and the Near East. But some imitation was intended. Wherever the hermit was, he called the place a desert (disart). The saints' lives show many departures to a 'disart' by earnest monks, and this is no late development. In this connection, George T. Stokes remarked that "from the earliest times the anchorite system formed an essential
part of Celtic monasticism." (John T. McNeill, *The Celtic Churches* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 85.) McNeill sees some of these anchorites as being eager for missionary work as a result of their rigid self-discipline and their solitary life. On this, of course, Nora Chadwick says:

Irish asceticism, commonly known as anchorism ... is quite divorced from mission work, to which, in fact, there is no ground for supposing the early Irish were ever prone. Although in later years we find the Irish widespread over the Continent, this was not connected with missions to the heathen. There were 'papas' in Iceland, but no mission or missionary activity. They went to communities which were already Christian, and it was a very natural outlet for Irish scholars, in the Viking Age and before, to seek asylum and also a natural market for their talents and training in continental centres."

(Nora Chadwick, *The Celts*, intro. by J. X. W. P. Corcoran (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974)). Kathleen Hughes, *The Modern Traveller to the Early Church* (London: SPCK, 1977), p. 29 tells us that 'disart' means 'retreat,' and that this is basically how the desert was viewed. It could be in the monastery itself or nearby. John Healy, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-89 tells us that there were anchorites following both the Irish systems and others. However, there were no famous anchorites who had their deaths recorded until the end of the seventh century. This, we should note, brings us once again to the period of Culdee blossoming. How solitary was their life-style? The rules of Columcille, which actually come from a later period, tell us what the hermit must and must not do. He is (1) not to talk except on business, (2) to make sure his servant is, among other things, discreet, (3) to go naked like Christ. (Hugh De Blacam, *The Saints* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1942), p. 99.) This seems to support the statement of Kathleen Hughes who says that we are to think of these early monks as ascetic rather than anchoristic. In the *Catalogue of the Saints*, summarized by the eighth century (see de Paor, *op. cit.*, p. 47 ff), we find references to the First, Second, and Third order of Saints. The first are Patrick and his helpers, the second include saints such as Columcille, and the third are the anchorites. This ordering seems to point to a hierarchy of importance which is temporal in content. In other words, the anchorites would appear to have come later, and since this is eighth century, possibly once again with the development of the Culdees reform.

6de Paor, op. cit., p. 50. Carolus Plummer tells us: We hear of an Irish druid in Wales who . . . had a . . . rath of his own. To this position the saints and the ecclesiastics of the new faith largely succeeded . . . For a time . . . the two systems existed side by side. It was not only to the position of the druids at court that the clergy succeeded; they succeeded also to their property. We . . . the clergy imitated the circuits and collections of dues made by their predecessors; they seem also to have taken their land, the process probably being that when a chief was converted to Christianity he transferred the mensal lands of the ministers of the old religion to the ministers of the new religion.

(C. Plummer, Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae, Vol. 1 of 2 Vols., p. clxv.) Healy also informs us that:
Before the introduction of Christianity, the Druids formed communities similar in many respects to the early monasteries. They were not only priests, but lawgivers, philosophers, historians, teachers and bards. To all these offices the Christian ecclesiastics succeeded. Their establishments were not only centres of religious worship, but schools where whatever learning the land possessed could alone be found. In them, too, the laws of the land were made, for neither in pagan nor Christian times were the kings lawgivers merely by virtue of their office.

(John Healy, The Ancient Irish Church, p. 42.) This is added to by McNeill who tells us:
As schools of learning the monasteries must have had a more than accidental relation to the well-developed colleges of pre-Christian Ireland in which druids, bards, and brehons underwent exacting courses of instruction. In the druidic schools the successful completion of a twelve-year period of disciplined study earned the rank or degree of Ollam, signaling the highest attainment in learning.

(McNeill, op. cit., p. 73) P. W. Joyce, in his Social History of Ancient Ireland, Vol. I, p. 419, gives a very full description of these schools.

7de Paor, op. cit., p. 48.

8Healy, op. cit., p. 125. Some of these issues were naturally considered more important than others. On the question of independence from Rome, the divergence of opinion is subtle, but evident. For example, John McNeill
says: "Toward Rome there was no antagonism, but respect without obedience." (John McNeill, The Celtic Churches (London: The University Press, 1974), p. 30.) W. S. Kerr says of Colman after the Council of Whitby, that: "Rather than acquiesce in the demand to obey 'the decrees of the Apostolic See,' when obedience meant turning his back on Celtic churchmanship, he gave up... Lindisfarne." (W. S. Kerr, The Independence of the Celtic Church in Ireland (Toronto: The Macmillan Company, 1931), p. 67.) Edmund Curtis says:

The Celtic churches were found to have tenets and rites older than those of the existing Roman Church... But all these, though they caused great controversy later, never amounted to independence of the papal authority or the rejection of Catholic unity.

(E. Curtis, A History of Ireland (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1976), p. 11.) While Dodd says:

When Augustine sat under the oak-tree near Chepstow in 603, waiting for the Celtic bishops, he had great hopes of a united Christian Church... the Celtic and Roman Churches went their separate ways for sixty years before Augustine's idea of union made any progress. There does not appear to have been any active opposition to Rome on the part of the Celtic Church... The idea, however, of a distant bishop, such as the Bishop of Rome, exercising a controlling influence over the Church in Great Britain or Ireland was entirely strange to the Celtic Christians who looked to Iona for leadership. The Celtic Church, in fact, did not trouble itself greatly with organization.

(B. E. Dodd and T. C. Heritage, The Early Christians in Britain (London: Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd., 1966), p. 84.) A great deal of this discussion has arisen from misunderstanding, much of which could possibly be avoided if "autonomy" were substituted for "independence." The Easter question caused the greatest concern. The difference in the form of tonsure, ordination procedure, and ritual and liturgy were also important issues. In reference to the latter, it appears that the main concern was with the improper observation of the baptismal procedure. On the question of married clergy, it would appear that the argument centered on celibacy. The struggle for a celibate priesthood was a long one, and, of course, was not a problem confined to the Celtic Church. However, Celtic attitudes to the question certainly were not helpful to the elements within the Roman Church who were fighting for reform. Although it was not until the Lateran Council IT in 1139 that clerical celibacy was declared a canonical obligation, there were attempts as early as the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. to prescribe clerical celibacy, although without success. However,
efforts continued throughout the years for this type of reform. (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion. Ed. Paul Meagher et al. "Celibacy" (Washington: Corpus Publications, 1979, Vol. E-E) pp. 686-688.) This position is supported elsewhere where we read: "laws dealing with celibacy are found as early as the beginning of the 4th century" (Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology. Ed. Karl Rahner with Cornelius Ernst and Kevin Smyth "Celibacy" (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968, Vol. I), p. 276.) That pressure was being brought to bear on the Celtic Church for a celibate priesthood, even though Rome was still struggling to enforce celibacy in Europe, can be seen in a record for the year 961 A.D. pertaining to the Welsh clergy. Quoting from Haddan and Stubbs, Healy writes:

The married clergy of Wales were an old institution, for we have the curious record under the year 961:

'The same year Padarn, Bishop of Llandaff, died, and Rhodri, son of Morgan the Great, was placed in his room, against the will of the Pope, on which account he was poisoned. And the priests were enjoined not to marry without the leave of the Pope, on which account a great disturbance took place in the diocese of Tielaw, so that it was considered best to allow matrimony to the priests.'

(Healy, op. cit., p. 124.) Healy's use of "ordinal" is a little confusing. The Roman use of the word refers to the books giving the ordo, or the ritual and rubrics, for liturgical ceremonies. The Anglican use of the term, however, refers to ordination. It would appear that it is, in fact, ordination which Healy has in mind, for he mentions that it did pose a problem. "Of more importance was the question of ordination: but unfortunately we cannot now say in what the difference between the two Churches consisted." Healy, op. cit., p. 120. That friction between the Roman and Celtic parties existed for some time after Whitby, and that ordination procedure was part of its cause, may be seen in a comment of Gordon Donaldson.

How prolonged and how bitter may have been the controversy within Pictland between the adherents of Peter, representing external influence, we can only guess. But when Nechtan, king of the Picts, who had put his kingdom under the protection of St. Peter (711), expelled from his dominions the Columban clergy who would not accept the Roman uses (717), we have the first known instance of a Scottish government imposing ecclesiastical changes and depriving the clergy who would not accept them. The pattern was to be many times repeated. Certain changes in organization followed the Pictish acceptance of Roman authority: even before . . . Whitby . . . But in the western Irish kingdom of Dalriada, to which the non-conforming clergy had been forced to return, the triumph of the new
ways was not complete. The Roman ruling on the
date of Easter was indeed accepted, after some
debate, even in Iona itself, but the church of
Dalriada clearly retained much of its monastic
character and such peculiarities in other respects
that its ordinations were rejected, and its usages
condemned, by councils in England and France.
(G. Donaldson, Scotland (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark Ltd.,
1973), pp. 11-12)

9 This dual celebration can be seen in the story of the
lighting of the Easter fire at Slane by St. Patrick, a story
which is used to symbolize his taking over the religious
authority in Ireland, since it was, in fact, forbidden for
anyone to light a fire before the Druids on that particular
day. For a version of this story see D. P. Conyngham,
Lives of the Irish Saints and Martyrs with introduction
by Rev. Thomas S. Preston (New York: D. & J. Sadlier &
Co., 1885), pp. 55ff. Some adjustment may have been made
at a later date to bring the old festival up to coincide
with the Easter dating. For until very recent times in
England, we find the festival which involves the annual
feeding of the emerging corn spirit to coincide with
Easter Day. See Christina Hole, Dictionary of British

10 Supposedly the Celtic Church was represented at the
Council of Arles so possibly some of its decisions may have
been implemented.

11 Rev. C. Arthur Lane, Illustrated Notes on English
Church History: From the Earliest Times to the Dawn of

12 W. S. Kerr, The Independence of the Celtic Church in

13 Thomas Fuller, The Church History of Britain. Ed.
with Preface by J. S. Brewer (Oxford: The University Press,

200 to 1200 (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974),
p. 110.

15 Kerr, op. cit., p. 40. However, further study on
this question may be in order, for the ancient Irish
apparently did not always keep the Sunday as the Sabbath.
I do not know, however, how widespread the practice was.
Apparently, Saturday was observed as the Sabbath just as
it had been with the early Christians. (Alan and Marjorie Anderson, Adomnán's Life of Columba (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1961), p. 27.) Thus, when we read that Colmcille Easter on days other than Sunday, he may have simply been adhering to Saturday and not Sunday as the Sabbath day.


19 The effort to encourage a celibate clergy can be seen in the number of prohibitions against a non-celibate state in The Irish Penitentials by L. Bieler (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1963). Also, refer back to fn. 7 of this Chapter. The celibate state was an ideal long before it became a fact. This can be seen in the Irish Berla Law, where we read:

A virgin bishop has the highest honour-price . . . a virgin priest has a price of one slave less. A bishop of one wife has two-thirds of the price of the virgin bishop and similarly with the priest of one wife.


21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.


29 W. S. Kerr, *op. cit.*, p. 77. Here Kerr refers us to *Adamnan* by Reeves, p. 351, *St. Patrick* by Todd, p. 411, and also to *History of Ireland*, Vol. I by O'Clery, p. 209. The Irish Texts Society Dictionary, *Focloir Gaedilge Agus Bearla*, ed. by Rev. Patrick S. Dinneen (Dublin: The Educational Company of Ireland Ltd., 1927), also gives 'adze-head' as the meaning of Taillkenn but prefixes the gloss with "said to" and thus gives the impression of not being sure. He is also a little more general in his approach and less emphatic than Kerr on this. It is of note that Dinneen lists 'Taille' as meaning - a fee, a fee for apprenticeship, a cut of a tower, while Thurneysen, *Old Irish Reader* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies) glosses cenn as "head, end" thus what we have in fact is the expression of the tonsure as head-fee, a paying of some due with the hair of one's head, a not uncommon or confined concept in ancient thought, p. 67.

30 Conyngham, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

31 Kerr, *op. cit.*, p. 77, fn. 29 see remarks re *St. Patrick* by J. H. Todd.


33 Ibid., p. 509.

O'Curry, Ancient Irish History, pp. 397-398.

Joyce, op. cit., Vol. II of 2 Vols., p. 7. In the legend which connects Patrick to this mound, we see Patrick associated with the spring festival and the Christian Easter. It is the coming of Spring, of new life, after death and darkness, that is being celebrated here. It was common Celtic custom in the course of these festivals to compress the course of a yearly cycle into that of one day and speak of it as such mythologically.


Kerr, op. cit., p. 85.

The beginnings of Celtic Christianity are obscure, but by the fourth century, Christianity was well established in Britain. The Celtic Church eventually came to the notice of Rome, who finally managed to bring it under its wing. The end of the Celtic Church was spelled out at the Council of Whitby. However, many of its practices took much longer to be replaced. For example, the Welsh Church did not accept the Roman Easter until 768. This, however, did not finally settle the matter, for as late as 809 conflict still arose here over the dating of Easter. Their acceptance of the Roman tonsure in place of the Celtic tonsure came even later.

Chambers Encyclopedia, 1973. Ed., s.v. "Tonsure." This article refers to the Celtic tonsure as "the Scottish (or Irish) tonsure that was in use in Britain."

John Dowden, "An Examination of Original Documents on the Question of the Form of the Celtic Tonsure," PSAS XXX, 3rd series, 6 (1896), pp. 325-327.

It is interesting to note here that the Irish for headband is filléadr̄ while the word for poet is fill or file and filed, and a member of the priestly class, but whether or not the latter is related to filléadr̄ I do not know.
In reference to this, see Leslie Hardinge, *The Celtic Church in Britain*; and also, Rev. C. A. Lane's, *Illustrated Notes on English Church History*, particularly pages 52 and 53.

That is, Protestantism as it evolved in those countries which we refer to as Celtic.


Leslie Hardinge, *The Celtic Church in Britain* (London: The Church Historical Society, 1972), pp. 194, 195. It is interesting in this respect to view the razor which was, probably in current use. It certainly could perform the task but one would have expected some refinement to facilities the cutting of this particular style (see Appendix, Figure g).

Dowden refers to the "crescent" shape of the tonsure, *op. cit.*., p. 352. Lane emphasizes the "crescent shape" of the tonsure as well, *op. cit.*., p. 53.

Dowden, *op. cit.*., p. 326.


Dowden, *op. cit.*., p. 328.

On this, see John Dowden, *op. cit.*., p. 328. Here, he says he is quoting Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, v. 21.

Dowden, *op. cit.*., p. 328.

58 Bede, _op. cit._, p. 355.


61 _Ibid._, p. 74.

62 Rhys, _Celtic Britain_, p. 71. Rhys refers us for further information on this to O'Mulcormy's Glossary MS H2, 16 (Col 116) which is at Trinity College, Dublin.

63 This is also mentioned in O'Curry, _Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish_. Vol. II, pp. 282 and 300, and also in Rhys, _Lectures_, p. 213.

64 For some said that the Irish wore the tonsure of King Loeghaire's swineherds, while the British wore that of Simon Magus.


66 Rhys, _Lectures_, p. 214.


68 George Rawlinson, _History of Ancient Egypt_ (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1881, Vol. 2 of 2 Vols.), pp. 292-293. The word "troglodyte" comes from the Greek and means "cave-dweller." Trogladyte was therefore a name given to all cave-dwelling peoples. These particular ones were claimed by some to be related to the Egyptians. Others claimed that they fought the Egyptians. They apparently were blue-eyed and blonde, and were not very technically advanced.
Both Egyptian and Syrian monasticism appear to have influenced early Christianity in Ireland. However, the emphasis is on Syrian rather than Egyptian.

Bede, op. cit., p. 204.

For a very thorough treatment of the worship of the family Lares in ancient religion, see The Ancient City by Fustel de Coulanges. In reference to Ireland, Kathleen Briggs has pointed out how this worship of the ancestral spirits centered around the family hearth and how it still survives in some respects in Ireland in association with beliefs in the fairies. For more information on this, see Katherine Briggs, A Dictionary of the Fairies. Since the fairies are now equated with the Tuatha dé Danann in the minds of the people, this is an interesting observation on the part of Briggs. The Realm of the Great Goddess by von Cles-Reden also gives much information in reference to the connection between the Lares and ancient burial mounds.


MacAlister, op. cit., p. 16.

MacAlister, op. cit., p. 16.


It is interesting to note what Eoin Nessan, The First Book of Irish Myths and Legends (Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1976) wrote on this. First of all, he sees the Macedonians, Sythians and Milesians as being the same people and a Celtic folk (p. 13). He goes on to say the "Nemedians, the de Danaans and the Milesians had a common origin, a common tongue, and were very much kith if not indeed kin" (p. 16), and also that it is the Tuatha de Denna who are mystical and who brought the mystic religion to Ireland from Asia Minor (p. 17).

MacAlister, op. cit., p. 16. MacAlister says that this division of the Tuatha de Denna is a fundamental concept. They are called the "dee" and the an-"dee". An-"dee
is often glossed as "un-gods," but "anti-gods" is a more precise rendering.


80 Butler, op. cit., p. 70.


82 MacAlister, op. cit., p. 70.


84 Ibid., p. 56.


Troy I 3000-2500 B.C. Troy VI 1800-1300 B.C.
" II 2500-2200 B.C. " VIIa 1300-1260 B.C.
" III 2200-2050 B.C. " VIIib 1260-1190 B.C.
" IV 2050-1900 B.C. " VIIib2 1190-1100 B.C.
" V 1900-1800 B.C. " VIII 700 B.C.

It is Troy VIIa which is claimed to be Homer's Troy. Ibid., p. 15.


88 Vergil, op. cit., p. 95.


91 Homer, op. cit., p. 5.

92 Graves, op. cit., p. 61.

93 Graves, op. cit., pp. 58-59. We should also possibly note in passing, the mention of Belili in the Middle Eastern literature. In a poem concerning Dumuzi, the shepherd of Erech, he in one portion flees to "a goddess known as Belili, the wise old lady." Samuel Kramer, Sumerian Mythology (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), p. 114.

94 Graves, op. cit., p. 61.


96 Ibid., p. 637.

97 In conversation with Professor Crowley in reference to this particular problem, he states that the hyksos are unquestionably a non-Semitic people. Professor Crowley is professor of Hebrew Biblical Literature at the University of Windsor.


100 Bonner, op. cit., pp. 139-148.

101 Bonner, op. cit., p. 151.

102 For further information on this, see Robert Graves, The White Goddess, particularly pp. 64 and 131.


108 Ibid.


111 Ibid., p. 308.

112 The Hymns of the Rgveda, p. 320. Which states that according to the Laws of Manu "tonsure of the head is ordained for a Brahmana instead of capital punishment; but men of other castes shall suffer capital punishment." This probably implies a total separation from that which is divine, thus would entail spiritual death.

113 This was learned in a conversation with Dr. Mahesh Mehta, a practicing Hindu and professor of Indian religions.


115 Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees, p. 378. Also Evans in Irish Folk Ways, op. cit., p. 272, tells us that cow dung was used as a charm and was considered to have protective qualities. Similar views are held in India and other traditional cattle cultures.
116. The Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "tonsure."


118. Rees, op. cit., p. 256.

119. The Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. "Tonsure."


122. Guerney, op. cit., p. 213. It should be noted that the tonsure of the Irish is identical to that described here where the forehead is shaved. See Appendix, Figures f and h.


124. Ibid., pp. 292-293. Rawlinson also refers to the same tonsure as being assigned to a nation called the Maxyes.


126. Rhys, Celtic Britain, p. 74.


130. John Rhys, Celtic Folklore, p. 545.

Here, then, we see that Maccu is also Coll.

133 O'Rahtilly, op. cit., p. 471.
CHAPTER II

SUN SYMBOLISM

The Symbolism Behind the Introduction of Simon Magus into Irish Ancestral Geneologies

The ancient Celt comprehended his world through an intricate system of complex symbol. We will now examine one of these symbols as it relates to tonsure, namely, Simon Magus. A number of claims have been made in association with the tonsure.

1. The tonsure was that of Loeghaire's swineherds.
2. The tonsure was that of Simon Magus.
3. Magus is glossed as "Druid."
4. Simon Magus became Simon Drui or Simon the Druid.
5. Some claimed that Maccu, Loeghaire's swineherd, was in fact chief poet of Ireland and was, therefore, a member of the Druidic class.

It would therefore appear that the accusation that the tonsure of the Celts was that of Loeghaire's swineherds and the corresponding accusation that it was that of Simon Magus, were in fact one and the same. We will now examine what in actuality was being said by this statement, and how it affects the concept of the tonsure as adopted by the early Irish clerics.
Since the Irish saw everything in terms of the past, it was necessary with the emergence of Christianity to fit the new mythos into a composite picture with the old. This probably was not a conscious effort. Rather, the old stories grew, taking on new meaning with the passage of time. One of these important links between the new present, symbolized by Patrick, and the past, a symbol of which is the feminine principle, is served by Simon Magnus. Thus, in discussing Simon Magus, it is in the chain that he forges, rather than the figure of Simon himself, that we are interested.

Tradition tells us that Mog Ruith, a celebrated Irish Druid from the Island of Valencia, went with his daughter to the East to study under Simon Magus. Here Mog Ruith and Simon perfected a wheel, the Roth Fáil or Fál's Wheel, which was supposed to help Simon fly through the air. Something went wrong and the wheel was partially destroyed, but the daughter managed to take some fragments of it to Ireland.¹

We learn elsewhere that Mog Ruith means Servus Rotoe, or "the Slave of the Wheel," a wheel which John Rhys has identified for us as the Roth Fáil, the wheel of Light.² This, of course, connects the Archdruid (Simon Magus) and the Druid (Mog Ruith) with the sun, and the Druid being described in terms of "slave" would place his allegiance in this direction.
The wheel was one of the attributes of the Sun Goddess:

(It) suggested not only the shape of the sun, but also its motion. Hence we find the word roth, 'wheel,' applied to a kind of circular brooch. The sun itself was the great celestial wheel: compare roth gréine (the sun), like Lucretious solis rota. So we find God referred to not only as ardRi gréine, 'supreme King of the sun,' but also as ard Ruire ind róith, 'supreme King of the wheel,' which means just the same thing. So the sun-goddess may be called a wheel.  

It is noted in connection with this that the old Gaulish sun-god was represented with a wheel in his hand, and that this was the self-same wheel used by the Druids for purposes of divination. 4 O'Rahilly too wants to equate Mug Ruith (Mog Ruith) 5 with the sun. He is, of course, correct when he identifies "Ruith" as "sun," and it is hard to argue when he points out that Mac Roth, the messenger of Ailill and Medb, who was said to have circled Ireland in a day, was also foster father to Mug Ruith. 6 While O'Rahilly simply sees Mug as a prefix added in order to humanize what he claims was a deity named Roth (sun) at a previous time, 7 he also maintains that mug is interchangeable with mag. 8 Mag is equated elsewhere with mac 9 which is glossed as "son," 10 which would tend to reinforce O'Rahilly's view on this.

However, Thurneysen glosses mag and mug separately, and renders mug as either "servant" or "slave." 11 We see then that Thurneysen agrees with Rhys 12 when he says that Mog Ruith means Servus Rotoc, or "the Slave of the Wheel."
In respect to the latter we should note that while Thurneysen glosses mag as "field," he also notes that mog is the stem of the nominative plural of mug, which means "serf" or "slave."¹³

Thus, ultimately, we have to recognize that Mog Ruith is the "slave" of the wheel and not the "wheel." He is the messenger who is identified with Aillill and Medb, and who "circles Ireland in one day." Since he is not the wheel he must drive the wheel.¹⁴ In other words, he is the charioteer who drives the vehicle of the solar deity. In this respect, it is of interest to note the description of CuChulainn's charioteer:

Of the outfit for chariot-driving which he put on was his smooth tunic of skins, which was light and airy, supple and fine texture, stitched and of deerskin which did not hinder the movement of his arms outside. Over that he put on his-mantle black as raven's feathers - Simon Magus had made it. . . . The same charioteer now put on his helmet, crested, flat-surfaced, past the middle of his shoulders. This was an adornment to him and was not an encumbrance. His hand brought to his brow the circlet of red-yellow like a red-gold plate of refined gold smelted over the edge of an anvil, as a sign of his charioteering, to distinguish him from his master.¹⁵

Since many authors, including Charles Squire,¹⁶ identify Cuchullain as a solar deity, the above then is a description of the charioteer of the sun deity. This sun deity must have been thought of initially as a goddess, for when that to which we refer as Old Irish was forming, this deity was conceived in terms of the feminine.
The golden disk in association with the Mother Goddess is supported by archaeology. A large number of golden disks, often bearing an incised cross, have been recovered from mounds in Europe and also in the Near East, and always in association with the Great Mother cult. One of the figures on the Gundestrup Cup, a deity (probably Cernunnos) holding up two stags, is also depicted with a circle in the centre of the forehead. Other panels depict the Great Mother, and emphasize her association with death and fecundity. One of the aspects of this goddess is that of Sun-Goddess, a function only later adopted by Ogma who assumed the title of "Grianainech the sunny-faced."

We see this also in the Finn tradition which, in many tales, places Finn as setting Grainne (Suh) certain tasks before he would consent to marry her. But in the oldest Irish tradition, Grainne does not like Finn and forces him to bring a pair of each kind of animal to Tara before she would agree to their marriage. Since all good things, including animals, were seen in Irish mythology as coming initially from the underworld, this identifies Finn as the underworld deity. Also, since Grainne is the word for sun in Irish, this identifies the intended spouse of Finn as the sun in the form of feminine principle. As is common in Celtic myth and saga, it is the masculine which acts, but at the initiation of the feminine.
Thus, it appears that the consort of the feminine principle (in this instance the sun and all we associate with it) appears to show his allegiance to her by the wearing of a golden disk, her sign, which by the use of some form of band he places in the middle of his forehead. This custom, if in any form assumed by her followers, would tend to accent the forehead, thus making the forehead appear larger and more prominent.

One of the aspects of the sun-goddess is that of Medb, and it is in this form that she is connected with Mógh Ruith. We should not forget that Mógh Ruith is above all identified by the texts as a druid. That the druid would be in a symbolical sense linked with the wheel which transmits the sun deity daily would be in order, for he was in charge of the divination wheels and part of his duty would have been to ensure the proper passing of the sun. These same texts tell us that Mógh Ruith was so named because he was fostered by Roth, son of Ri-goll. But beside this we realize he is also identified as chief druid of the world, as Jesus was to be identified by a developing Christianity.

This "divine" aspect of Mógh Ruith is emphasized in the story of his daughter and Simon Magus. Mógh Ruith had originally gone to the east with his daughter, Tlachtga, to help Simon Magus make the wheel which would help him fly into the air and thus fly higher than the apostles.
The wheel, which was made of rock, met with an accident and shattered. Tlachtga brought fragments back to Ireland and these were such that anyone who looked at them was struck blind. While in the East, so we are told, Tlachtga was raped by the sons of Simon Magus, and consequently died giving birth to triplets, so she too met with an "accident." Here, we will recognize the myth of the great ancestress Tailltiu, daughter of Magh-Mor, the Prince of Spain, which we have previously seen is a synonym for the Celtic underworld. It is this myth which ties many otherwise apparently unrelated particulars together. These would appear to be as follows:

1. Tailltiu, in the form of the feminine principle, is connected with the ruler of the underworld.

2. Tlachtga, who eventually has charge of the wheel of light, the sun, is another form of Tailltiu. Thus, the sun as feminine principle is allied with the underworld ruler in the form of masculine principle.

3. The Chief Druid who helps drive the wheel (of the sun) is one form or aspect of the masculine principle. This can be seen through the image of charioteer.

4. This charioteer is referred to as "the slave of the wheel" and possibly can be distinguished by a golden circle hung in the middle of the forehead.
possibly by some form of band, which not only emphasizes the forehead, but acts as a badge showing where his allegiance lies. That the underworld deity may also display a golden circle or headband has already been pointed out by our looking at the Gundestrup Cup examples.

5. The "Norma Magica" was the form of the Celtic tonsure. It was said to be that of King Loeghaire's swineherds, who themselves had received it from Simon Magus. This tonsure has been described by J. H. Todd as "the bond of Gehenna or Hel."

It does appear that the Druid showed his allegiance to the feminine principle, in this instance the sun, by some outward sign or symbol. That this was reflected in mythological images also seems apparent. The reference to the Druid as "the slave of" the deity, would lead us to suspect that a form of bonding or oath of allegiance took place which was associated with an outward symbol and which involved slave terminology.

The Sun as Life-giving Feminine

The goddess of the wheel was the sun seen in terms of feminine principle. This goddess could also be viewed in terms of the principle of life and death. The sun which denied life in the winter months, also brought new life
with the coming spring. Men saw this yearly drama mirrored in miniature in the daily cycle of the sun whose rising they viewed as crucial to their well-being. It is to this life-giving principle, viewed at times obliquely through the jaws of death, that the Druidic class pledged themselves through the symbolism of tonsure. Although, at times, we find in the literature instances of females who were tonsured, especially in the period of early Christianity, it appears mainly to be an expression of the male towards the feminine divine. It also appears to be the sign which marks him as being in her service. This never, of course, forms a neat, precise picture. The insular groups in Ireland as well as Britain must have been constantly open to new ideas either through immigration, or their own raiding and warfare. Thus, we not only find this feminine principle expressed through a variety of names and ways, but sometimes the feminine and masculine become juxtaposed, although the strength of the feminine is never completely submerged.

To understand how the early Celts expressed this dedication to the Great Mother through the act of tonsure we must wend our way through some rather confusing strands of mythology which tie the acts of the yearly drama together through sun symbolism. Everywhere we turn in Ireland we can see how important was the sun as a symbol of the forces which men saw order-
ing their lives. Stonehenge, with its ability to mark the solstices, and to predict eclipses is, of course, a prime example.\textsuperscript{29} The architecture of Newgrange which was designed with one intent, to catch the rays of the sun of the winter solstice, is another.\textsuperscript{30} It is evident again in burial custom. W. B. Yeats notes that the coffin about to be buried had to be carried around the grave three times following the course of the sun to ensure that the dead would rest in peace.\textsuperscript{31} Another custom connected with sun-worship, which lasted up till the present in remote places and was opposed strongly by the clergy, was that of turning the stones. As sun-wise motions brought good fortune, anti-sunwise motions could be used to bring a curse upon another. Thus, the cursing stones, as they were called, were always turned in an anti-sunwise direction as the formulae were pronounced.\textsuperscript{32} This practice was eventually rendered harmless by being incorporated into another Christianized custom connected with sun worship, namely, that of well-patterns. Many of these customs still exist. On the special day of the patron saint, the locals gather at the holy well to make the rounds. The routine varies, but basically consists of going around the well a set number of times in a sun-wise direction.\textsuperscript{33} Each cycle is marked by the turning of a stone and the recitation of a prayer such as a Pater-Noster. This custom is now almost extinct. Thus, the sun as symbol
played a very important part in ancient Celtic ritual. This was expressed in the earlier period in terms of the feminine. This is not surprising, for the word for "sun" in Old Irish as well as modern assumes the feminine form.

The idea that the sun was an expression of the life-giving feminine, was not confined to the Celts. In Hurrian mythology the Sun Goddess appears to be thought of as the wife of the Weather God. The Weather God is associated with two bulls, Day and Night, which pull the chariot of the Sun Goddess. Out of these concepts the idea of the Great Mother emerged, which found its expression in such cults as that of Cybele and other similar goddesses in the Aegean. It is some variant of this which we seem to glimpse in the Irish and other Celtic material. Here, Sun-mythology seems to have played a major role in the everyday life of the people. Although, at a later time, many of the heroes such as Lug and Cuchullain do appear to be identified as sun deities, this identification would not always appear to be correct. That these are often disguised weather-gods can be detected in the fact that one of the feats which Cuchullain learned from Scáthach, his female warrior tutor, was "the thunder feat." It is also evident in one of the titles of Lug, who is at times referred to as "Lugaid of the Spear," for the spear is often associated with lightning. One deity, however, is of particular
interest, for he combines the function of weather-god with that of messenger-god. This is MacCecht, otherwise identified with MacCuill, Coll, MacGrene, and Aed. 39 Of MacCecht, O’Rahilly relates:

His primary function as traveller of the heavens stands out clearly towards the end of the tale where we are told that he journeyed all over Ireland 'before morning,' carrying with him a huge golden cup (i.e., the cup of the sun, the sun itself), and that he found all the rivers and lakes of Ireland dried up, in which we have a reminiscence of the evaporative power of the sun-god, whose heat, wherever he travels, is able to dry up the waters. 40

It is the role of MacCecht as messenger which must be noted, for as such he acts in the capacity of servant to the goddess. It is this role which the Druid, who wears the tonsure referred to as mael, would appear to adopt.

The Otherworld Picture and Its Relationship to Water

The Celtic Otherworld or Underworld was seen as being situated in each and all of various locations. At times, it was seen as being in a burial mound where the Sidhe, the fairies or hill-folk resided. At other times, it was seen as being located on an island, a city beneath the sea, a city behind the west wind, 41 or was even referred to as Spain. Actually, if often appears as a dimension rather than a specific location.

However, the theistic expression of the sun’s daily cycle gave precedence to the sea as an image for the underworld. This was not a concept confined to the Celts
as Sibyllé Von Cles-Reyen informs us:

In many civilizations, the Egyptian for example—the realm of the dead was connected with the setting sun; and man's hope of resurrection may at a very early stage have been connected with the sun's rising in the east.42

The Masculine Principle and the Solar Cycle

John Rhys tells us that the Celts equated darkness with the world of waters.43 This concept comes through in the mythological stories and is supported by cultural practices.44 However, his contention that the powers of lightness and darkness were seen as forces in constant opposition, such as in the stories of strife between Belinus, an Apollo figure, and Bran, the underworld figure,45 is not so clear cut. It is not that Rhys is incorrect, but rather that the picture is not as clear as he presents it. Bran, the black crow, is ultimately Bran the white crow; Bran is ultimately Belinus, and conversely Belinus is in essence Bran.

The sun, described in masculine terms, would appear to be quite a late development in the Celtic world of ideas. Despite the views of writers such as Charles Squire46 that the solar deity was expressed in masculine terms, views we will be further examining, the only figure which comes through clearly at times as a sun-god is Cuchullain,47 and even he displays many lunar characteristics. Since the stories of Cuchullain and those of Finn and Lug belong to different
saga cydes, this may have some bearing on the matter. However, the question in itself appears to be a complicated one, since there is much overlap and an investigation of this would simply be outside the scope of this paper. It would appear more likely that these figures of sun in masculine terms were at one time seen as helpmates to the Sun Goddess in the form of Underworld Deity.

Lug, often identified as a sun god, is a case in point. The Welsh equivalent for Lug is llew-ad, or "Luminary," "a moon." We are also told that Lug was fostered by Tailtiú, daughter of the king of Spain. Since this means that Lug is fostered to the Queen of the Underworld, he is here associated with both darkness and light. In one of the stories connecting him with Cuchullain, this night-association is again emphasized. In this instance, we are told that Cuchullain, while sitting at a feast, sent Lug to see the stars to find out when midnight occurred, for that was when Cuchullain must begin his journey home. Here, both Lug and Cuchullain show characteristics which associate them with darkness. Therefore, any claim that these are strictly sun-deities is built on shaky ground.

Cuchullain killed the Spanish hound of Culann the Smith, and thus pledged himself to taking the hound's place. He was therefore given the name "the hound of Culann." This would, of course, be the hound of Hell; thus the mythographers are telling us that here Cuchullain is
guardian of the Otherworld. In this context, it is not surprising to see that one of the *geiss* or "taboos" put upon Cuchullain was the prohibition against eating dog's meat. In other words, the *geiss* merely strengthens the identification of Cuchullain as a dog. That the function of this dog was connected with the powers of darkness is also explained in a prohibition against disturbing the sleep of Cuchullain. It is this prohibition which makes some believe Cuchullain was a sun-god.\(^{55}\) We are told that, at one time, he was sleeping while a battle was raging, but on account of the *geiss* he could not be wakened. What has often been forgotten in this particular instance is that wars were not fought during the night. They were a daytime activity.\(^{56}\) But even more to the point is the actual function of dogs in these early communities. When darkness fell the dogs were let loose within the enclosure, and they were relied upon to guard the place until daybreak. This practice is echoed in the words of Culann as the stage is set whereon Cuchullain kills his dog.

> When they had all arrived Culann said to Conór: 'Is everybody here?' 'Yes' said Conór, forgetting that Setanta had said that he would follow. 'In that case,' said Culann, 'I will lock the gates and let my guard dog free to protect the house and my belongings.'\(^{57}\)

It is this dog which Cuchullain kills and which he pledges to replace. It is this dog which Cuchullain becomes.

Cuchullain certainly comes very close at times to being a sun-god, and although we know that in the course of
time this identification did become complete, we must not let our interest in the male character in these stories prevent us from watching carefully the function and actions of the female. We will find that the latter exerts her authority in very subtle ways.

The mythographers have given us a rather vivid account of the heat given off by Cuchullain in his battle fury. We are told of one instance in which Cuchullain, still emanating heat, must be cooled off before he enters the compound. The people, having placed him in one vat which he promptly burst,

They thrust him into another vat and it boiled with bubbles the size of fists. He was placed at last in a third vat and he warmed it till its heat and cold were equal. Then he got out and Queen Mugain gave him a blue cloak to go around him with a silver brooch in it, and a hooded tunic.58

Mugain, who consequent to an incestuous relationship, gave birth to Cuimné,59 is portrayed elsewhere in the mythology as the wife of Diarmait,60 whose name O'Duibhne reveals the prefix 'dubh' or 'black',61 and identifies him as the dark one. As lover of Grainne, or sun, we see his position solidified.62 This might begin to look rather confusing if we did not realize that Mugain, who cooled the ardour of Cuchullain, is none other than Mor of Munster63 of whom it is said when the sun is shining, "Mor is on her throne."64
That these reflections of the masculine principle are also echoed in Finn becomes evident on a rather close inspection. Finn is portrayed as the older husband who is cast aside for his younger nephew Diarmait, whose image seems to be reflected in that of the black mis-shapen man who visited Finn from the Otherworld, and who "as the light of day came upon the churl a beautiful form and shapeliness and radiance" came upon him. That Diarmait is then simply a facet of Finn could be reflected in an observation by Rees that "Finn changes his form; and the Old Woman of Beare renews her youth, time and time again." Thus, the saga of the daily travels of the Sun Goddess with her helper-lover across the sky, and their ritual battle with the power of darkness, another face of her lover, involves the constant cycle of death and re-birth.

Basically, what seems to be said here is that the feminine principle is seen as being the main force behind the daily cycle, but that it achieves its purpose only with the help of the masculine principle. This would also help explain the multiplicity of stories and names woven into the mythological picture. The feminine as the principle which ultimately bestows life and death, and the ambiguous transitory-permanent nature of this principle can be seen in the story cycles involving the images of Morgan, Grainne, Rhiannon, Cerridwen, and many others.
The Role of the Masculine in the Celtic Otherworld

As we have seen, one cannot categorize the Celtic pantheon as one could those deities of the later Romans. Shapeshifting and re-birth form part of the Celtic Otherworld as they were believed to have formed part of this world, and the gods were seen to enjoy life much as those who believed in them did. It should not confuse us to find that Bran, as king of the underworld, also has charge of the cauldron of Renovation which brought the dead back to life.\(^{75}\) As Bran the Blessed, he brought Christianity from the Celtic Hades\(^{76}\) as a gift for men, an interesting gift from the King of the Underworld.

We find the exact counterpart of Bran in the Morrigan. It is she who takes the form of a hooded-crow in the Cuchullain story and who shows both sides of her nature in her attempt to seduce the hero and then express the wish for his death. Since he himself is an Otherworld deity, she is simply laying claim to her lover. This twin aspect is seen in her counterpart, Cerridwen, who is the owl goddess, a goddess of death and re-birth who has charge of the cauldron of Inspiration. Bran has much in common with this goddess, for he is identified with Janus, the god of beginnings and endings.\(^{77}\) Bran's cauldron of Renovation\(^{78}\) is suspiciously like Cerridwen's Cauldron of Inspiration,\(^{79}\) for he, like her, is identified as the god of eloquence.
Although John Rhys tells us, in reference to such aspects of deity as Bran and Diarmait, that it was "the more dread divinities of the deep and of death, who according to the Celtic notion, were the patrons of poetry and bardism,"\(^{80}\) ultimately it appears that Ceridwen holds the position by right, for the god of the underworld is espoused to the Sun Goddess\(^{81}\) and it is she who ultimately seems to be the source of all wisdom.

In an ancient Irish prayer we also see the concept of wisdom as gift being bestowed by the divine sun.

Sanctify, O Christ! my words:
O Lord of the seven heavens!
Grant me the gift of wisdom,
O Sovereign of the bright sun!
O bright sun, who dost illuminate
The heavens with all thy holiness!
O King who governest the angels!
O Lord of all the people!
O Lord of the people!
O King all-righteous and good!
May I receive the full benefit
Of praising Thy royal hosts.
Thy royal hosts I praise,
Because Thou art my Sovereign;
I have disposed my mind,
To be constantly beseeching Thee.
I beseech a favour from Thee,
That I be purified from my sins
Through the peaceful bright-shining flock,
The royal host whom I celebrate.\(^{82}\)

Although possibly a Christian poem, it uses a lot of sun imagery, imagery which associates the sun, through symbol, with wisdom. This idea is strengthened when we remember that it was Morgen, the Sun Goddess, who put the blue cloak around the shoulders of Cuchullain, an instance of poetic
which gains importance when we realize that the bards also wore blue cloaks. In a sense, it would then appear that the "inspired" ones identified with the god of the Underworld, but only inasmuch as he was espoused to the Great Goddess.

If the imagery of Cerridwen as Bardic inspiration tends to submerge that of Bran in a similar role, we would expect to find another figure behind that of Bran. This is apparently the case. Bran the Blessed is, in fact, Maelduin under Christian influence. Maelduin is none other than Maeldubh, a name which identifies him as the dark tonsured one. The voyages of both Maelduin and Bran to the Otherworld are similar in many details to the myth of Circe and Odysseus.

It would appear that the attribute "tonsured" or "bald" belonged to the spouse of the Great Goddess. We find it not only attached to Bran in his counterpart of Maeldubh, but also in other aspects of the same deity. The tonsure is evident in Lug who is given the appellation mal in Cuchullain, in Kulhwch, in Arthur whose name is commemorated in the mountain of Bannychdeni, called by some, Moel Arthur, and in the tale of Diarmait whose brother was transformed into a grey cropped pig. The title of "bare ear" also seems to be associated with the tonsure. Ailill received his name of Ailill Aulom or Ailill Bare-ear. This is especially interesting when
we learn that during a struggle between the two, it was Aine who cut off his ear, an act which gains in significance when we consider the remarks of Jean Markale in reference to a similar incident:

One wonders which prudish author replaced testicles with ears, when describing how Deirdre grabbed hold of Noise to pronounce her geis on him.

Another cropped deity known as Corc Duibhe "Duben's Cropped One," or Corc Donn "the Brown Cropped One," was also said to have lost an ear in a struggle with his brother. This is confusing in the context of the preceding stories, but the addition of Donn to the brother's name, in one version at least, raises the suspicion that it was his mother-lover who is the real culprit. In the opinion of John Rhys, these stories concerning the cutting off of ears represent the action of the sun on the darkness of night.

As we have already seen, shapeshifting is not an uncommon occurrence in these mythological stories. Thus, we do not meet the unexpected when we see Bran at times depicted as the dog of Finn, a dog which Finn finally killed in a fit of rage. Bran, as the cropped dog, may be reflected in the name of St. Maelcu, of whom H. Butler says:

Maelcu means Bald dog, or, as an early commentator wrote, Molossus sine auribus, dog without any ears.

This is, of course, the description of our Celtic tonsure, namely, sine auribus, thus a description of a
cleric as tonsured without ears, is a normal one for that particular period. Some echo of this may remain in folklore, for stories of a black cropped dog abound.\(^{102}\)

What, then, in the final analysis, does \textit{sine auribus} mean? We cannot, at this point, answer the question in a definite sense, but only in terms of possibility.

We have seen the king of the Underworld described as cropped and without ears. Although we ultimately realize that both descriptions belong to the one deity, it is often one or the other attribute we see used in a particular instance. That both attributes have to be present simultaneously is ultimately unnecessary. The bald dog of Finn, a dog of the Underworld, appears in folklore as a ghostly black crop-eared hound with red eyes like two coals, a description very like that of the brother of Diarmait who took the form of a dark cropped pig. Ailill, whose espousal to Maeve, identifies him as Bran, is also described as Aulom or ear-bare, that is, without ears. It would seem that the cutting off of ears is, at times, equated with baldness, that is, with being cropped. But, as we have learned from Markale, this possibly means being cropped in a special sense, namely, castration. This, then, is possibly the idea reflected in the story of Finn. Firstly, Finn received his knowledge when on a certain occasion his "thumb" was hurt. Secondly, he saved his own life by assuming a fetal position (that of a baby in
a crib) and biting off the "finger" of the giant who was threatening him, thus severing the giant's power. This latter appears to be a reflection of the Cronus myth. Since the bardic class identified with the Underworld deity, we assume that they also possibly performed some type of castration. Since we read of many married Druids, and know that the art of the Bard was considered to be hereditary, this castration must have been symbolic. It would further appear that this symbolic castration was connected with baldness, and was probably then enacted through the ritual of tonsure. This act of tonsure may have had, at least on some occasion, a connection with the festival of Samhain, for as John Rhys explains:

The epithet of Aulom or Olom literally meant 'ear-bare,' which is explained by a story relating how on a November eve one of the Tuatha de Danann goddesses stripped the skin and the flesh completely off one of his ears, leaving him ever afterwards with that blemish, which she is said to have inflicted on him in retaliation for injury and outrage.103

John Rhys explained that the action of the sun on the darkness of night was described by the mythographers as the sun cutting off the ear of darkness. We have seen in the stories of Naisi and Finn that this may be a Cronus myth in disguise. Thus, the son castrates the father and replaces him. The Bard, for whom this underworld deity is emblem, represents his affinity with the Underworld King, and his relationship to the Queen, namely, the Great Mother, through the act of tonsure.106 The tonsure from ear to ear
would then be best described as from east to west, from death to re-birth.

Evolution from Feminine Principle to Masculine Principle

There does appear to be some indication in the mythological material that the feminine principle seen in an earlier period as the source of life and nourishment began gradually to lose ground to the masculine and finally assumed a less prominent role. However, the importance of the feminine principle never disappeared entirely from the Celtic imagination.

Morgen\(^{107}\) was seen as sea-goddess, as sun-goddess, and in such guises as Morgan le Paye and the Lady of the Lake who took the dying Arthur away to be healed, goddess of death and re-birth. Her feminine character was gradually replaced by the masculine and she appears in the early material as both Morigena and Morigenos. That her role as Underworld goddess is being challenged by or confused with the masculine is evident in a poem describing the defeat of Nende, Lord of Tir-Chonaill, the first verse of which reads:

Raghallach, on Lammas-Day,
Cellach, and Fergus the Choleric,
And Muirenn Mael, with her necklaces
Were preparing for the Games of Cruachan.\(^{108}\)

Here, we see a description of the goddess as the cropped deity of the Underworld, a position formerly held by her consort.
This change of emphasis is evident elsewhere. A number of things in the mythological cycle identify Muirenn Mael as the death goddess.\textsuperscript{109} Her appearance in one tale as the nurse of Cael who helped him compose a poem\textsuperscript{110} also confirms her authority over the cauldron of Inspiration. But that her character is evolving into that of the masculine can be seen in her title of "mael." This is the only time a tonsured woman appears in the mythology. We are told of Muireen that to hide her baldness she wore a cap\textsuperscript{111} of gold which on one occasion she was forced to remove. Calling on the saints for help, her head suddenly appeared full of golden curls which fell down her shoulders. Her golden cap, golden curls, and her title of "fruitful"\textsuperscript{112} only emphasize her still obvious role as life-giving Sun. On the other hand, the title of mael would itself identify her as "the slave of the sun," rather than being the sun itself.

Grannos also appears as a masculinized form of Grainne. His cultic site in Britain depicts him as god of thermal springs,\textsuperscript{113} which Proinsias MacCaná informs us identifies him as a Celtic Apollo, the sun-god. His name Grannos means "to glow," "gleam," or "light bringer." But this could, of course, be descriptive of his nightly character and thus he could be connected with either the moon or sun. Since Rhys further identifies him with Aesculapius,\textsuperscript{114} this only confirms his Underworld character.\textsuperscript{115} Some
sense of transition, however, is echoed in the song connected with bonfire night in Auvergne which emphasizes an all-encompassing Granno, for here they chanted "Granno mio, Granno my friend, Granno my father, Granno my mother."\textsuperscript{116}

It is, of course, in Europe that we see our best evidence for the ascendancy of the male principle over the female. The Celtic monument of Jupiter from Paris, another from Chalet, and the clustering of a number of Celtic deities under the title of 'Apollo'\textsuperscript{117} would show that, at least in the Romano-Celtic context, it was the masculine principle which gained in importance, and the sun was by then seen in terms of masculine principle. Although in the Insular material such an identification is not so definite, confusion nevertheless exists. The horse as psychopomp, for instance, is expressed in one lot of stories through the feminine in the figure of Rhiannon, in another context in the masculine through Manannan. The pig as an embodiment of a tonsured dark deity is seen in one instance as Diarmat's brother, in another as Cerridwen. Bran, in one instance, owns the underworld cauldron, in another it is Cerridwen. In one set of stories, Finn is depicted as being accompanied by the Underworld dog Bran, in another context Rhiannon as Epona is depicted on a Gaulish monument accompanied by the dog.
Although we may be inclined to argue about specific deities and their attributes or functionary role, the confusion in the mythological literature which gives grounds for such arguments simply reflects transition. Such transition can be witnessed in the concept of dawn-goddess. It is very easy to change a pair of lovers who are chased by a jealous rival into a pair of lovers being chased by an irate father— to change a struggle between day and night into the pursuit of the dawn by the sun. That the feminine never becomes fully submerged can be seen in the role of decision-making in the stories of the latter. It is the heroine who tells the hero what to do; it is she who finally rids them of their pursuer. The original dominance of the feminine principle is confirmed by T. F. O'Rahilly who writes:

That Grian was the sun-goddess is obvious, for her name means simply 'Sun.' That her double, Aine, was likewise the sun-goddess is no less obvious.

That the male assumed the goddess' identity can be seen in such stories as those of Aillil, in which he assumes the title of Aine, and thus on such occasions appears as Aillil Aine. Aine also appears to have become a dawn goddess. Aine means "a ring." The ring was the symbol of the sun, but in Modern Irish it becomes 'fáinne,' "the dawn of the day," that is, the "ring of light on the sky-line at day-break." The transition is then obvious, but at the same time much more subtle than that portrayed by authors
such as Squire. The full transition from sun-goddess to dawn-goddess is graphically portrayed in the Celtic fairy-tale "The Battle of the Birds" in which the hero and the giant's daughter (the dawn) flee her father (the sun). The father's character is obvious, for the narrator informs us that "at the mouth of day the giant's daughter said that her father's breath was burning her back." They rested through the night but once again "at the time of breaking the watch, the giant's daughter said that she felt her father's breath burning her back." The daughter finally manages to drown the father, which seems to reflect the belief that the sun was drowned in the ocean of a night, to be born anew the following day. That this story involves the symbols of the Otherworld is corroborated by Nutt who said that the story of pursuit was connected with the Old Teutonic Hades.

The Use of Mael in Irish Literary Sources

A short perusal of early Irish history will emphasize the frequency with which "mael" appears as a defining characteristic in a personal name. Normally, it appears as a prefix, as in Maelumha. This initial prefix appears in many variants, such as Mel, Mail, Mael, Mal, Mall, Maille, and even Meud. The concept of "bald" or "tonsured," which is expressed in Irish by mael or its variants, is represented in Welsh by moel. A glance at the Annals
of the Four Masters gives convincing evidence of the widespread and frequent use of this prefix in name forms right up to the late ninth century. Its use appears to be quite common among the ruling class, in the names of the priestly class, and even in the names of many mythological characters. Its persistence is evident in its survival in the modern name of Malcolm.

That mael means tonsured or bald appears to be accepted by scholars. What is questioned is the nature of this baldness. P. W. Joyce sees mael as having rather negative connotations and thus glosses mael as "baldness," "a blemish." Joyce is not alone in this view, but as will be made clear in our discussion on hair symbolism, the act of tonsure has, on the whole, a very positive dimension which is often entirely ignored by these authors.

We have seen the use in various names of mall, moel, and mal, all of which are a form of mael or "tonsure." In Welsh we find mal129 glossed as "gold,"130 or "coin." In Irish mal is glossed as "prince" or "poet,"131 mál is also given to mean "prince" or "poet," and mael is glossed as "gain," "armour," "prince," or "lord."132 Mall in the Welsh glosses has its meaning given as "corrupt," "blasted," "evil" and "connected with the devil,"133 while in Irish it is at times glossed as "slow."134 Moel seems to have been the word preferred when referring to a tonsure in the Welsh context.
Thus, we see that Mael, meaning bald or tonsured, is here associated with the three Celtic ruling classes which consist of the kings, priests and warriors. These are in turn associated with the lord of the Underworld. Here, it is interesting to recall Dr. Todd's assertion that the hair-cut of the two druids, Mael and Caplait, who attended Loeghaire's daughters, and which was in the form of the Norma Magica, the magical figure called in Irish Airbacc Giunnae, could be rightly translated as "the bond of Gehenna or Hell."135 John Rhys, in a particular instance, gives a description of the tonsure, for he glosses Maelchu or Maelchon, the Irish form of Maelgwn, as "the Hound's Slave."136

The prefix mael has other interesting associations which at least point to probabilities in association with the tonsure under investigation. Mael is rendered in Latin by meil.137 Meil appears to be related in Latin to meiles, which is related to miles, a soldier. Miles would in turn appear to be related to Miletis and Milesius138 which are references to the Milesians, and which bring us to the mythical ancestors of the Irish who were the descendants of Mil139 of Spain. O'Rahilly informs us that "Mil's full name is Mil Espäne which is merely Miles Hispaniae, the soldier of Spain."140 We can say in theistic terms that the Irish associated themselves with the soldier of the Underworld monarch who is, mythologically
speaking, the tonsured boar. This idea does not seem to have entirely evaded D. A. Mackenzie, who refers to Mil as the "divine ancestor Mile, son of Beli, the god of night and death." Butlär also sees mæl as a tribal word, and connects such a tribe or tribes with the Milesians.

Also of interest is the English word mæl or mel which is related to Old Irish mil, meaning "honey," honeyed words," or "honeymoon." The mæl was the last sheaf (the mæl-sheaf) of corn cut by the harvestors on mæl-day; after this sheaf was cut, the harvestors attended a mæl-supper. This connection of mæl with fertility could explain the alternate use of mæl as meaning "horse tail." This is especially interesting since the Great Mother at times took the form of a fawn but more often the form of a mare in the stories which tell of her seduction of the Underworld deity. If mæl is at all related to mæl, which is at least a possibility, then mæl, which is itself a feminine word, could refer to the tail of Rhiannon. This would ultimately be the symbolical point of union between the Underworld lover and the Great Mother, and thus between the bard and his Source of Inspiration.

In the Christian literature, the tonsured cleric was often referred to as "sine auribus." We have seen that it is an attribute of the Underworld deity, and therefore there is at least room for speculation that "without ears" could at times be a metaphor for "without
horns." Mog Ruith, the chief Druid of Ireland, spouse to the Great Mother, can be described as blind and hornless. We are told that when the druidic fires were at their height, Mogh Ruith did as follows:

Called for his 'dark-gray hornless bull-hide,' and 'his white-speckled bird-headpiece, with its fluttering wings,' and also 'his druidic instruments,' and he flew up into the air to the verge of the fires, and commenced to beat and turn them northwards. 147

Such a description makes one suspicious of influence from the Minoan bull cult, especially when we learn that in Crete, at least on one occasion, Zeus was depicted without ears. 148 As son of Rhea, such an attribute may merely identify him as the young hornless bull who only later appropriated the position held by the Great Mother in Minoan Crete, before Hellenistic influence.
FOOTNOTES


5 O'Rahilly, *op. cit.*, p. 557.

6 O'Rahilly, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

7 O'Rahilly, *op. cit.*, p. 490. And which he elsewhere identifies as the sun god (see p. 519). See also, Eugene O'Curry, *On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1861, Vol. II of 3 Vols.), p. 279 who points out, Mog Ruith is blind, a fact which would connect him with darkness rather than light.

8 O'Rahilly, *op. cit.*, p. 557.


14. It is important to realize that he appears to be the messenger of Medb here rather than that of Aillil, that is, he is on an errand for Medb, not Aillil, when he performs this feat. See, Táin Bó Cúalnge: From the Book of Leinster. Ed. by Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1970), p. 139.


20. O'Rahilly, op. cit., p. 519.


22. O'Rahilly, op. cit., p. 519.


27 This takes the form of the underworld deity who also shows signs of having the attributes of a weather god. This is made reasonably clear in an anecdote from Joyce (Ancient Ireland, Vol. II, p. 271) which assigns to Mog Ruith the spear which is an attribute of the Celtic weather god. This story relates that at the siege of Knocklong, the Munster army was without water. Mog Ruith was called upon to help. He hurled his spear, the soldiers were told to dig where it fell. Water burst forth, thus relieving the company.

28 It is, of course, the "toothed vagina" which we have in mind.

29 For more information on this, see On Stonehenge by Fred Hoyle. His well-argued thesis is concerned with these particular points. Hoyle, On Stonehenge (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Co., 1977).


34 The German word for the sun, die Sonne, is also feminine.


36 Thomas F. O'Rahilly, Early Irish History (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976), pp. 61 ff.
37 Thomas F. O'Rahilly mentions the thunder feat as one of the attributes of Cuchullain. See, *Early Irish History* by T. F. O'Rahilly, p. 61.

38 O'Rahilly, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-62.

39 Ibid., p. 66.

40 Ibid. The problem here, of course, is that MacCecht does his work "before morning" thus identifying the cup as the moon. O'Rahilly believes that "before night" was the original, but bases this on the assumption that MacCecht is a sun-god. MacCecht is also owner of a spear which identified him as a weather-god, and which would explain his interest in the parched land he passes over. Further, MacCecht is referred to elsewhere as "the Guide," which would explain his connection with the moon rather than the sun. That this cup may have been, at times, also thought of in terms of a boat may be reflected in the story of Condle the Red who is carried away to the Otherworld by the Fairy-maid in her glass boat. Elsewhere we see that the oars of the Roth Fail are equated with the sun's rays, which "were suggested by the comparison of the sun to a barge moving through the celestial sea" (O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History*, p. 520). A parallel to the story of Condle the Red can be seen in the story-cycle concerning the Lady of the Lake, who by means of her boat carried Arthur off to the Otherworld. We know that the ship symbol was very important to Northern Europeans, and evidence of its importance can be found among the East Anglians in Pre-Christian England. This ship symbolism was connected for them with ideas of the land of the dead. See, H. R. Ellis Davidson, *Gods and Myths of Northern Europe* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976), pp. 133-135.

41 Apparently in association with this concept, was the deeply rooted Celtic belief that the Underworld lay in the West. The idea of the West came from the ancient Sun-cult. This idea has survived almost intact to the present day in the custom of giving the West-room to the elderly of the household, a room that is considered to be closest to where the fairies walk. See, Conrad Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman* (New York: The Natural History Press, 1968), pp. 38-40.


44 The existence of such a concept is reflected in Celtic burial practice. In reference to Scotland, we read, 'The custom has grown up among them that, when someone of common and base-born rank dies there, he is left unburied in the field or on the road. But if he was rich, they tie a stone about his neck and sink him in the sea. If, however, he was of noble rank, they tie him to a tree extended as if he were on a rack, and let him decompose there.' Alan F. Lacy, "Some Additional Celtic and Germanic Traces of the Tri-Functional Sacrifice," *Journal of American Folklore*, 1980, 92, p. 338.


46 Squire, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.

47 Even here I have many reservations and feel that much of the time this classification represents a misinterpretation of the available material. That he eventually came to be seen in terms of sun-deity appears to be true, but that this was always so is highly questionable.

48 See, for instance, Squire, *Celtic Myth*, p. 62 for he makes this identification.

49 Rhys, *Lectures*, p. 408.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 409. In making the claim that Lug is fostered out to the Queen of Hades, who we know is ultimately the Great Mother, the mythographer also tells us that Lug is now bound in loyalty to the feminine divine (a binding which, if we are to go by the story of Cuchullain's fosterage, involved an act of tonsure) and thus owes her his first allegiance. Of course, it could possibly be a way of getting around the incest taboo, or could simply be a way of saying that he has tasted her blood as did Cuchullain, thereby clearing the way for his successor.

51 Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 470.
52 Of interest here also is the coupling of Lug and Cuchullain as the two masculine characters placed in association with the Sun Goddess. These two are always said by the mythographers to be related in some way. Lug, in some story cycles, is depicted as the foster brother of Cuchullain. In the story of Sealgige Con Culainn, because Cuchullain has helped the swan-maiden (and thus tasted her blood) he can no longer have carnal knowledge of her and thus passes her on to Lug. See, Anne Ross, Pagan Celtic Britain (London: Sphere Books, 1974), p. 308. Here, then, Cuchullain precedes Lug and passes his lover on to Lug. This may have reflections in the daily cycle myth in which the lover of the sun, having grown old, is usurped by the son, who is in actuality himself. The storyteller often expressed the incest taboo by making the older lover the maiden's father.

53 The smith has always been connected with the Underworld, a connection which has lasted almost up to the present day. Since he traditionally was given the head of any boar killed in the village, and Diarmait as counterpart of Lug and Cuchullain was depicted as a boar which was ultimately killed, this incident in the Cuchullain tale cycle is noteworthy.

54 Rhys, Lectures, p. 452.

55 Ibid.

56 Even until fairly recent times, the hours of darkness were treated with a special sense of awe. This, of course, was when the fairies roamed, and one could become trapped on a 'fairy-sod' or 'the centre field' and be unable to find release until daybreak. Only special people such as smiths, who always carried something of iron in their pocket, and had an "in" with the fairies were comparatively safe.


58 Sharkey, op. cit., p. 81. What we should note here is not only the role of Mugain, the Great Mother and Sun Goddess, but also the blue cloak which was associated with bardism and the Underworld deity, and the silver brooch, silver normally being associated with the moon rather than the sun. My own feeling about this particular
episode in the story cycle is that it reflects the phase when the power of the feminine was on the wane, but certainly far from eclipsed. However, Cuchullain is beginning to annex some of the authority formerly associated with the sun.

59 Rees, op. cit., p. 234. Note that this name also contains the syllable "cu" meaning 'dog' or 'hound' and ultimately relates him to the hounds of Hell.

60 Ibid., p. 334.


62 Rhys explains this drama clearly when he describes Grainne's grief at the death of her lover.

Grainne's grief when she heard of it was no less profound and frantic than that of Aphrodite when her darling Adonis was killed by the boar. . .

So the noble Diarmait, beloved of all, and the grisly Boar were the offspring of one mother: they represent light and darkness.

See, Rhys, Lectures, p. 511. Although Grainne is the sun, I would temper this by saying that the death of Diarmait represents the struggle between lightness and darkness.

63 We should note that Munster is equated with the Underworld in the mythology.

64 Rees, op. cit., p. 136.

65 Squire, op. cit., p. 315.

66 Just as Arthur, his counterpart, was cast aside by Guinevere.

67 This personification of darkness was not confined to the Celtic world, nor the idea that as such it rose from a watery underworld, for in The Aeneid we read, "Meanwhile the sky turned round in its course and from the ocean rose the night" Vergil, The Aeneid. Translated by Patric Dickinson (New York: The New American Library Inc., 1961), p. 36.

68 Rees, op. cit., p. 137.
Finn, in one context, is seen as husband of Aine, an aspect of Gráinne. Aine is identified as a solar deity (as is Gráinne), in this context by association, and also by her title "bright cheeks."

Rees, op. cit., p. 136.

This cosmic struggle is portrayed graphically in the story of Eithne related by Joyce who tells us that when Eithné, daughter of King Echaidh Feidlech, was expecting a child, "she was drowned by her sister's son, Lugaid Sriaib-n-Derg, who caused the child - afterwards called Furbaide, to be cut from her womb." Joyce, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 622. This is reflected in the aspect of Dylan, and also Manannan and Morgen who were also sea gods. In fact, Manannan was called son of Lir, 'son of the sea,' which brings home the point that the sea itself was in a sense considered divine. See, J. A. MacCulloch, The Religion of the Ancient Celts (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1911, p. 178, and also, O'Rahilly, Early Irish History, p. 292. That this sense of the divine was seen in terms of the feminine is seen clearly in the poem commemorating the drowning of Conaing, son of Aedan, son of Gabhran, in 622 A.D.

Great, bright sea-waves, and
The sun, that punished him,
in His weak wicker skiff
Against Conaing they arrayed themselves.
The woman who flung her fair locks
Into his skiff, over Conaing:—
Pleasantly she smiles
Today, before Bile Tortan.

The sea as feminine and sun as feminine should, I think, be thought of in terms of separate ways of portraying the same feminine principle which is seen fundamentally as the generator of life.

That the Irish traditionally thought in such symbolic terms can be seen in the later poetry of a conquered Ireland, where Eriu was often painted as a fickle harlot who had disowned her children. See, T. F. O'Rahilly, "On the Origin of the Names Erainn and Eriu," Eriu, XIV, p. 19.

This is explained quite simply, of course, in the idea of the daily cycle, the microcosm in the macrocosm, which involved the constant death and rebirth of the principles of lightness and darkness.
Morgan, whose name means 'born of the sea' (see, Rhys, Lectures, p. 229 and also Markale, Women, p. 43) and who possesses long, golden hair, is described as daughter of the King of the Underworld. See, W. Y. Evans Wentz, The Fairy-faith in Celtic Countries (New York: Lemma Publishing Corporation, 1973), p. 203. She is simply an aspect of Morrigan or Mórigh, called "The Great Queen," and in this aspect is reflected in the character of Morgan Le Faye, that, "the Fate." (Graves, The White Goddess (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1975), p. 143 and also Rhys, Lectures, p. 43.) Mórigh seems to be the equivalent of Bodg, or Badb, the goddess of war and carnage, (Rhys, Lectures, p. 43 and Wentz, The Fairy-faith, p. 305), and is certainly an aspect of the war-witch Morrigan. See, Joyce, Ancient Ireland, Vol. II, p. 513. Morgen is equated by the figure of The Lady of the Lake in the Arthur cycle, Gwendydd (Guinevere) in the Welsh texts, and Vivienne in the French. (Markale, Women of the Celts. Trans. A. Mygind, C. Hauch, and F. Henry (London: Gordon Cremonesi Publishers, 1975), p. 133-134) But this is none other than Rhiannon (Squire, Celtic Myth, p. 361) who in her form of horse, shows that she is none other than Eriu herself. (Since Talltey, daughter of Magh Mor, prince of Spain, is a refelcion of Eriu, we can see how effectively Patrick was tied to the Celtic past.) We can see then that often what appears to be many gods and goddesses, is simply a variety of stories, often local, of different perceptions of the same theistic expression.

Squire, op. cit., p. 366.

Hades is, of course, a term introduced with Christianity. Whether we refer to this next dimension as Hell, Hades, Otherworld, Underworld, or even Annwn, we are speaking of the same thing. This is a place, out of time, out of space. It is here and now if we take the step needed to enter it.

Rhys, Lectures, p. 94.

This story of Bran going to Ireland (Hades) to rescue Branwen, and the description of his revival of the dead in the Cauldron of Renovation reminds one of the stories of Odin's Valhalla.

In a story concerned with this, Gwydion spilt some of the brew on his finger, put it in his mouth, and suddenly received all knowledge.
Rhys, Lectures, pp. 323-324.


O'Curry, History, pp. 365-366. The word 'Christ' was added by a later redactor. The poem actually has the contraction CR. A General Vallancey stated that this stood for Greas, a word, he claimed, for sun, common to both Ireland and India. O'Curry says the General was overzealous. One would suspect that O'Curry has little sympathy for any such comparisons for he says:

I regret that space does not allow me to embody this short pamphlet with the present lecture, as, perhaps, no better example could be found to show the manner in which, among the last generation, the character of an Irish historian and scholar could be acquired by the pedantic use of the most fanciful collation of our language and manners with the Sanscrit and other Eastern languages or dialects. And I am sorry to say that there are still among us writers who pass for historians and antiquarians, but who stand much in need of the lesson contained in this ridiculous example of General Vallancey's astuteness.

O'Curry, History, p. 366. Since this is the only proof O'Curry gives us that Vallancey is wrong, one wonders in the face of such bias, what really is the correct answer.

O'Curry, Manners, Vol. III of 3 Vols., p. 186. On the other hand, Rees said they wore cloaks of bird feathers (Celtic Heritage, p. 17) which again identifies them with Bran, though this time in form of crow.

We have already encountered the role of the Underworld deity as that of 'helper' and thus it makes sense when we hear that Bran carried the musicians of his court on his way to Ireland (Hades) on his shoulders, including the bards. Rhys, Lectures, pp. 96, 269.

Bran the Blessed, bringer of Christianity, is none other than Finn, lord of the Underworld, for we have seen the connection between Finn and Bran elsewhere. T. F. O'Rahilly, op. cit., pp. 159, 285 tells us that Finn is, in fact, Morann, and Morann is portrayed as one of the three druids who foretold the coming of Patrick. Thus, we see in both Bran and Morann an expression of the Celtic view of Christianity as a gift from the Underworld.

87 If Bran is Maelduin, and Bran is Lug (Markale, *Celtic Civilization*, p. 77) and Lug is Maeldubh (*Carolus Plummer, Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, London: Oxford University Press, 1968, Vol. II of 2 Vols., p. 364) then Maelduin is Maeldubh.

88 We have already referred to Butler's use of Dubh as dark, and will be discussing "mael" as meaning "bald" or "tonsured" in more detail. Maelduin's love for the sea-maiden is celebrated in a voyage to the Otherworld where, although he periodically half-heartedly pretends to leave, she lures him back by throwing him her golden ball.

89 Markale, *Women*, p. 52. It is of importance to note in this myth that Circe not only turns men into pigs, but more importantly, turns pigs into men. It was this important fact that Sweeney Todd capitalized on.

90 O'Rahilly, *op. cit.*, p. 77.


92 Rees, *op. cit.*, p. 231. We should note then that all of these names including Lug, Cuchullain, Kulhwch, and Arthur are associated with baldness. Lug is referred to as "mael" or tonsured, Cuchullain was not only sent to the barbers (presumably to be tonsured) by Scathach, but was also tonsured in battle by Curoi. Kulhwch, whose name means cropped pig, was tonsured by Arthur with the "golden shears," and Arthur is referred to as Moel Arthur or "cropped Arthur." Diarmait, we find, was also associated with the cropped pig.


94 Aine is, of course, the Great Mother.


96 Markale, *Women*, p. 221. The geiss to which Markale refers is that Naoise run away with her, that is, become her lover. I don't know if "ears" was in fact the original here, though Markale would certainly appear to be making this suggestion.

We have met this name before and therefore realize it is a form of Danu, the Great Mother.

Rhys, Lectures, p. 505.

Finn, incidentally, received his wisdom when he hurt his "thumb" (O'Rahilly, Early Irish History, p. 328) as Gwydion did when he wet his "finger." For a reference to Brân as Finn's Favourite hound see Squire, Celtic Myth, p. 242.


Rhys, Lectures, p. 391.

Squire tells us that the raven as a symbol of Brân as Underworld god, the God of Eloquence, was a badge of the bards (Celtic Myth, p. 329). Thus, once again we see the bards make some form of identification with the Underworld deity.

This relationship is not seen simply in "sexual" terms. His total dedication to the spouse is the emphasis required. Also, we should not forget that ultimately it is the Sun Goddess, and not the King of the Underworld, who has control of the Cauldron of Inspiration and Rebirth.

This may explain the unusual tradition that on occasion the druids buried their tongues on the hill under the Samhain fire. Since the word for dumb is "moen" or "moin," which means treasure or gift, and is related to the Lithuanian "mainas," meaning exchange (see, O'Rahilly, Early Irish History, p. 103, and Thurneysen, Grammar, p. 43), this myth may mean that they cut off something (possibly hair) and gave it in exchange for their tongues, and that the use of these tongues was a sacrificial act. That some idea like this was also connected with the Underworld deity is reflected in the name of Clan, the father of Lug, who was also known as "the dumb phantom." (O'Rahilly, Early Irish History, p. 103 fn.)

Her name is related to the Irish "muir," genitive "mara" (sea), and the Welsh "môr" (Rhys, Celtic Folklore, p. 432) which are related to "mura," that is "head," a synonym for sun. See, O'Rahilly, Early Irish History, p. 292.
108 O'Curry, *Manners*, Vol. II of 3 Vols., p. 343. The title given to Muirenn, that of mael, implies that she is the "slave or servant of" someone, probably her consort Raghallach. This was the title assumed by the male who dedicated himself to the goddess. Muirenn's necklace, like that of Kali, would emphasize her role as death goddess.

109 This was really always her function, for the goddess who gave life would naturally take care of souls awaiting re-birth.

110 O'Curry, *History*, p. 308.

111 See the picture of the Goddess of Rebirth on the Gundestrup Cup (figure f). The Great Mother is depicted here also as wearing a metal cap, although her hair does appear to have been pulled through it by means of a small hole in each side.


118 O'Rahilly, *op. cit.*, p. 290. In connection with this we should note that the King, who at his inauguration was wedded to the Great Mother, was under obligation to go out of his palace every morning to greet the rising sun.


121 Rhys, Lectures. See especially his chapter "The Rise of the Sun Gods" in which he seems to see this as one group of people conquering another, with the main hero of the conquering people being Lug. Lug was, of course, seen in the Romano-Celtic context as a sun-god, but in the Insular literature such an identification is not so clear. However, the feather-cloak he wore as Cuchullain's charioteer could identify him with the sun-bird. Rhys identifies Lug with Nuada of the Silver Hand, or Nuada Finfarr, "Nuada of the White Light" and thus sees a connection between Llud and Nud (p. 127). The latter survives to the present day in the nursery rhyme of Winkin, Blinkin, and Nod, where he is identified with the stars and the night. Rhys does, however, identify Cuchulainn as a solar-hero (p. 138, Lectures). What we realize here, of course, is not what a particular hero represents, but how complicated and ambiguous this material really is.

122 Which seems to be a direct borrowing from some earlier myth in which the sun was swallowed by the night for the Gaelic "Beul na h-oidheach" – i.e., "nightfall" means literally "the mouth of night." See, Alexander MacBain, Celtic Mythology and Religion. Intro. by William J. Watson (Edinburgh: Stirling Scot & Mackay, 1917).


124 Ibid., p. 219.

125 Ibid., p. 266. The older cycle involving the sun-goddess, on the other hand, is reflected in the story of Arthur. Here, we see the abduction of Guinevere (the sun) by the dark god Melwas, who takes her to the Otherworld. In due course she is rescued by Arthur, his lighter aspect. See, Geoffrey Ashe, King Arthur's Avalon: The Story of Glastonbury (London: Fontana Books, 1974), pp. 21-23, 71. Such stories may reflect their own ambiguity, for the whole series of Celtic Dragon Myth stories involve a herd, the beautiful maiden he must rescue, and the monster he must overcome. Rhys tells us that the herd was seen in mythological terms as the moon god, for it is the moon who shepherds the stars which represent his grazing animals. See, Rhys, Celtic Folklore, pp. 560ff.

126 See Appendix I.

127 Hubert Butler, Ten Thousand Saints: A Study in Irish and European Origins (Kilkenny: The Wellbrook Press,


129 O'Curry, Manners, Vol. II, p. 51. Here, O'Curry tells us that Mal was the brother of Roighne Roğadach (the Glossarist) who invented the Ogham alphabet which identifies him as Ogma. These brothers were said to be descendants of the Milesians.

130 This is possibly connected with the practice of coinage being determined, or accepted, according to its weight. If the coin was worth too much for the particular cost of the moment, a piece was simply cut off the coin. That is, it was tonsured. This is reflected in P. W. Joyce's gloss for mæl (op. cit., Vol. II, p. 218) which is rendered as 'blunt' 'cut off.'

131 Thurneysen, Grammar, p. 79. See also, Butler, Saints, p. 30.

132 Thurneysen, Grammar, p. 79.

133 Y Geiriadur Mawr: The Complete Welsh-English Dictionary, s.v. "mall" (Gwasg Gomer: Christopher Davies, 1976). This mention of the devil is interesting for there is a Welsh belief that the devil sits in a cave cross-legged like Cernunnos, guarding his wealth.

134 In the Indo-European context, slowness is associated with the powers of darkness.


136 O'Rahilly, op. cit., p. 360. Such concepts were carried over into Christianity by names such as Maelpladraic, meaning the tonsured slave of Patrick, and which is paralleled in the Welsh by Meudwy, meaning "God's Slave." John Rhys, Celtic Britain (New York: E. & J. B. Young & Co., 1884), p. 73. Mac seems to have acquired the same attributes as Mæl, for we see MacGreine referred to as "the son or devotee of the Sun." (Joyce, Ancient Ireland, Vol. I, p. 290.) This then would equate Maelicu with Maccu, the latter meaning "surety," "a binding," "a bond," in Indo-European. See_D. A. Binchy, "Celtic Suretyship, A Fossilized Indo-European Institution?" in Indo-European
and Indo-Europeans. Ed. by G. Cardona, H. Hoenigswald, and A. Senn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), p. 360. We should also note that if Maelcu and Maccu are equivalents, it would seem that both would translate as "the devotee of the Dog" or, as Rhys put it, "the hound's slave." However, any connection between the two, though interesting, may lie in the realm of guesswork. Of particular interest in this section is the mention of Maelgwn, for he was notorious for stirring up rivalry between the bards and poets. Thus, he is a link between the concept of bonding to the Underworld deity and the learned classes. It is worth remembering too that Discord was the brother of Bran, and we have already seen that Bran was the patron of the bards.

137 See, O'Rahilly, op. cit., pp. 360-361. Meil appears to be related in Latin to meiles, which is in turn related to miles, a soldier.


140 O'Rahilly, op. cit., p. 195.

141 Mackenzie, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

142 Butler, op. cit., p. 239.

143 There does seem to be at least some mythological connection between mil and maol, for in the story of Balor and Gaibhde the smith (Sean O'Sullivan, The Folklore of Ireland (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1974), p. 21), Balor sends his two men Maol and Mullogue to all newlyweds to claim his right to spend the first night with the bride. The two are also connected in the Berla laws in which we read that if a man removes the pubic hair of a woman in order to seduce her against her will, the penalty is the same as that for castrating a man. In other words, the act of tonsure is here a shaving connected with the ploughing of the sacred furrow which prepares the soil for fertility. In this sense, the bard would undergo tonsure in exchange for a fertile mind which will bring him inspiration besides forming a bond between him and the source of his inspiration.
It is because of the strength of this bond that I think that the laws are so strict in regard to the taking of hair by force or deceit. The bond appears to be strong regardless of the means of forging it; thus, if one is put into bondage unwillingly, one has in essence been forced into slavery.

144 This is mainly evident in the story cycles involving Rhiannon as Great Mother.

145 Thurneysen, Grammar, p. 188.

146 Interesting here is the related word Melling in English, which means, among many things, "copulation."


CHAPTER III

ANIMAL SYMBOLISM AND ITS CONNECTION
WITH PRIESTHOOD

From the discussion in the previous Chapter in reference to Mog Ruith, we realize that animal and bird symbolism must have held an important place in the religion of the Celtic peoples. A variety of animals and birds feature in the mythology. However, in reference to the drama of the solar cycle, it is the horse, the pig, and the dog which appear to hold the most prominent positions.

The Horse

The horse was the Celts' chief link with the Otherworld,¹ a link represented in Gaul by the horse goddess Epona, a form of the White Goddess.² Although we find the horse appears also as a form of the masculine principle in Celtic lore, its main symbolic form is that of the feminine, particularly in the name of Epona, an expression of the feminine principle equivalent to Etain, Medb, Macha,³ and Rhiannon.⁴

Aine, elsewhere Grene,⁵ is also represented by Macha the horse goddess.⁶ Thus, here also we can see the horse goddess is none other than the Mother Goddess referred to
by Robert Graves and elsewhere as the White Goddess. That the cherished land Eriu was also thought of at times as a horse capable of great fertility, whose grasses and grains would then be her flowing mane,\textsuperscript{7} can be seen in the Irish kings' inauguration ceremony, a description of which we receive from Giraldus Cambrensis:

Once all the people had been assembled together, a white mare was led into the middle of the crowd. Then, in full view of everybody, this person of highest rank (the king) approached the mare bestially, not like a prince but like a wild beast, not like a king but like an outlaw, and behaved just like an animal, without shame or prudence. Immediately afterwards the mare was killed, carved up into pieces and thrown in boiling water. A bath was prepared for the king with the broth, and he sat in it while scraps of the meat were brought for him to eat and to share with the people around him. He was also washed with the broth and drank it, not with a cup or his hands, but directly with his mouth. Once this ritual had been performed, his rule and authority were assured.\textsuperscript{8}

As can be seen, the mare symbolism played an important role in the ritual of kingship which was, in the case of the kings of Tara, referred to as "the 'mating' of Tara."\textsuperscript{9} Thus, the king was the spouse of the tuath to whom he was bound in wedlock. Such ritual mating was intended to bring fertility,\textsuperscript{10} and consequently the king was held responsible for the welfare of the land. The horse, as a fertility symbol, is firmly rooted in the Celtic mind and is represented by the white horse which often presides over seasonal fairs,\textsuperscript{11} the snapping horses' heads directed at young women on festive occasions,\textsuperscript{12} and bound up with
Scottish rituals connected with the last sheaf of the harvest. The depth of this reverence for the divine as represented through the horse can be seen in its survival up to relatively recent times. G. E. Evans tells us that "In Ireland horses were sacrificed in the twelfth century; in Wales even later. At a shrine near Abergele . . . horses were offered to St. George," such offerings being connected with fertility. This reverence for the horse can still be seen in modern times in the aversion of both the British and Irish to the eating of horse flesh.

It has been stated in this paper that the tonsure was a form of binding to the Great Mother, who we have seen could be viewed symbolically in the form of horse. We have also noted that early clerics were sometimes referred to as 'marcach.' 'Marcach' meaning 'messenger' was a referral to clerics as "those bearing the message of the canonical scriptures," and as we have seen was translated elsewhere as Knights of the Gospel. Marcach is also related to marc (a horse), and thus we see a definite tie through language between the early cleric and the goddess in horse form.

Rhiannon is probably the best Insular example of the Celtic goddess in mare form. Through her, as with Grianne, we can see the connection of the Great Mother with the dog and the pig. Rhiannon is represented in Gaul by Epona, and in Gallo-Roman sculpture Epona is, at times, depicted
accompanied by a dog. What she is hunting, of course, is souls, for they must be shown the way to the Otherworld. Through Pwyll she is connected to the divine swineherd. Thus, her companions are the dog, the swineherd, and by necessity, the pigs.

The Religious Significance of the Pig

The significance of the pig not only as a cultic animal but also as a representation of the Great Mother reaches back into the Neolithic period. The animal was as important to the Celtic peoples as it was to their neighbours. For many, the flesh of the pig, except on special occasions, was strictly taboo. In J. A. MacCulloch we read:

The Galatian Celts abstained from eating swine, and there has always been a prejudice against its flesh in the Highlands.

This prejudice extended to the north of Ireland which always had a certain amount of influence on it from Scotland. However, the geiss against pig flesh does not seem to have existed in the rest of Ireland. Pigs were an important part of the economic system and pork was usually featured at the head of all flesh meats in the Irish stories. Thus, the pig was significant from both an economic and a religious point of view. This significance cannot have been confined to Ireland, for we have only to see the importance given to the Three Swineherds of Britain in the Welsh Triads to perceive this.
There are and were many survivals of this reverence for the pig. A pig was given to every monk and nun in Ireland at Martinmass, a custom which tradition claimed was instituted by St. Patrick in gratitude to St. Martin of Tours. But the pre-Christian concepts connected with the pig survived also in folklore, sometimes up to the present day.

There is no doubt that the pig was a representation of the divine and that through it we can see the symbolism of death, fecundity and re-birth. Thus, we see stories such as those of the marvellous pigs of Manannan, whose flesh preserved the eternal youth of the gods, and which had the ability, no matter how often they were slaughtered for the gods to dine upon, always to rise whole and well the following day.

The most important aspect of the pig was that of the Great Mother. That is, the mother of men was a pig, and one would then expect her offspring to be pigs. The pig-mother is represented by Henwen, the White Ancient one, the sow of fecundity as grain goddess, or by her darker side which is connected with death and the Otherworld. This darker aspect was especially visible at Samhain when she was portrayed as the black sow who had neither tail nor ears. As such she was represented at times as the wife of Tegid the Bald, though at times also as his twin sister. This, then, is a representation of Cerridwen, the
owner of the cauldron of Inspiration, the cauldron of Birth and Death, to whom at one time the first born were offered, and whose darker side is that of the mother who devours her new-born young. These beliefs, then, are echoed in those connected with Demeter; for her other self, her daughter Persephone, was also known as Pherrephata or "killer of suckling pigs." Of course, the mythological remains do not declare openly that men were once pigs, but the evidence has not been entirely repressed, and probably comes through the clearest in the story of Circe who turned pigs into men. As has been noted, the Great Mother was seen in one of her aspects as the "black cutty sow" who at times devoured her young and in this form we see her being offered the first born of men. Thus, men are identified here as her offspring. In her form of White Sow, the fruitful mother, she is seen giving suck to Cretan Zeus, the father of men, an idea which once again identifies man with the pig.

The connection between the sow-goddess and fertility, and thus as goddess of health and healing, is echoed in many beliefs. It is visible in the tale of the pigs of Asal, of which it is said "whosoever eats a part of them shall not suffer from ill health," and in the story concerning one of the possessions of the sun-god, "a pig's skin whose touch made whole." Isis also was connected with fecundity as the white sow and her litter, and her son,
Osiris, apparently had a boar form. As we have seen, the boar form was also assumed by the Irish king of the Underworld who can also be seen in terms of the dying and rising god. This was the role represented by Diarmait whose other self took the form of the grey cropped pig. We should also remember that Aengus, an expression of Diarmait, is described as Aengus In Mac Oc, that is, "Aengus devotee of the pig," or as some would translate it, "Aengus son of a pig." That the son of the sow-goddess had a boar form was equally true in Celtic-Europe, for we read that:

A god Moccus, 'swine,' was also identified with Mercury and the swine was a frequent representative of the corn-spirit or of vegetation divinities in Europe. The flesh of the animal was often mixed with the seed corn or buried in the fields to promote fertility.

This practice echoes that of the Eleusinian mysteries in which sanctified pigs were thrown into the caverns of Demeter to rot and were at the appropriate time retrieved and mixed with the seed corn. We are told of the same practices in relation to Osiris and Tammuz and their human representatives. Thus, a parallel is drawn between the anthropomorphic son of the great goddess and the boar son of the sow-goddess, and between man and the pig.

This identification of man with the pig is stated clearly in the initiation rites of the Eleusinian mysteries. As part of these rites, the candidate took a ritual bath in the sea with a pig which later was sacrificed. Such initiation was important:
'Whoever goes uninitiated to Hades,' says Plato, 'will lie in mud, but he who has been purified and is fully initiate, when he comes hither will dwell with the gods.'

The pig, of course, is the substitute sacrifice, the 'other self,' and as we have been told, he will lie in the mud where pigs belong - unless raised to higher things. The idea of men being pigs which originally came from the Underworld, or Otherworld, is also expressed in a fragment of Welsh folklore. In this respect, John Rhys informs us that "the people in the southern portion of Dyfed are nicknamed by the men of Glamorgan to this day Moch Sir Benfro, 'The Pigs of Pembrokeshire.'" Since Dyfed was at times used as a reference to the Otherworld, the place from which all good things come, one must note the implications. In one mythological cycle, Gwydion, Word son of Words, is given credit for bringing pigs from the Underworld:

Now it came to Gwydion's knowledge that the king of Dyved, who was Pryderi, son of Pwyll Head of Hades, had been presented from Hades with a species of animals never before met with in this country, namely, hobeu, that is to say, swine, and Gwydion resolved to bring some of them into . . . his own . . . country.

Thus, we see that Gwydion, one of the Three Swineherds of Britain, was the hero who brought the swine from the Otherworld, just as was Finn at the command of the sungoddess. Both Finn and Gwydion are also shown to be followers of the muse. The thumb of knowledge at Finn's command is matched by the art of Gwydion. He is not only
portrayed as "the best teller of tales in the world" and said to be "well versed in the art of magic," but it is also Gwydion who introduced the knowledge of letters into Wales.\textsuperscript{42} The muse is the dark side of the Great Mother often seen in the guise of Cerridwen. It is she whom we have noted, controls the cauldron of Inspiration. This connection between the swineherd and devotee of the muse\textsuperscript{43} has been noted by Robert Graves who says, "to be a swineherd was originally to be a priest in the service of the Death-goddess whose sacred beast was a pig."\textsuperscript{44} This does not, of course, mean that all swineherds were priests, but rather that all priests saw themselves as swineherds and devotees of the goddess. It follows naturally that the pigs the swineherd tend for his goddess\textsuperscript{45} can be none other than men.

Tending swine among the less privileged may have been a servile occupation, but the royal swineherd\textsuperscript{46} had charge of the king's wealth. These often fed great herds of swine in the woods for the king and were consequently held in great honour.\textsuperscript{47} When checking the sources in this regard, however, we should approach them with great caution. Many of the figures are being spoken of in mythological not historical terms. For example, when A. & B. Rees tell us that "in Dyfed the chief is a swineherd and in Munster swineherds are freemen closely associated with the kingship,"\textsuperscript{48} we must realize that the context is not the here-and-now,
but that of the Otherworld. Thus, the swineherd of Dyfed is Pryderi who, as a form of Bran, is the bardic emblem. Thus, the chief of the bards is the swineherd. Since on his trip to Ireland Bran carried the learned class on his shoulders, while the others followed behind, the herd he watched was that of the druidic hierarchy. One must then assume that the swineherd Bran tends the swine, that is, the druidic classes, which are the pigs belonging to the sun-goddess. However, since this priestly hierarchy assume the stance of Bran, they also assume the stance of swineherd whose herd is that of man. It would not appear to be merely the priests who made this identification or they alone who made this identification with the Mother Goddess through the spouse-boar. Markale says, in reference to Gaul, that "soldiers often took the wild boar as an emblem, and there are inscriptions in honour of Mercury-Moccus which contains the Gallic name for wild boar or pig." Along with this we should note that Diodorus wrote of the same warriors that "they constantly smeared their hair with a thick wash of lime, and drew it back from the forehead to produce a weird effect like the mane of a horse." Thus, the soldier allied himself to the Great Mother (here in the form of horse-goddess) through an identification with her boar spouse. This alliance, as with the priestly classes, was expressed through hair symbolism. In the Annals of the Four
Masters we find a poem about Flann, son of Conaing, in which this same identification is alluded to. The army with its leader would appear to be thought of as a group of swine with their swineherd, for the statement is made, "kill the herd along with the boar."56

It has already been noted that the Druidic swineherd identified with the spouse of the sun-goddess, and that Bran is possibly our best witness to this fact. But we should also note that Bran was one of the principal names of the Celtic DisPater,57 who was referred to as the "god of druidism."58 DisPater was also called the "lord of great knowledge," and was identified as Ruad-Rofhessa59 or Rudraige,60 that is, Raghallach61 the spouse of Muireen Mael, the sun-goddess. We have seen that Gwydion and Coll62 were aspects of Bran. The Chroniclers tell us that they were the swineherds of King Matholwch, and Robert Graves adds that the swineherds of King Matholwch of Ireland were oracular priests.63 Graves is, of course, correct, except that their reflection belongs to the other world, not this. King Matholwch64 had horse's ears,65 and his story would appear to be from an age that felt it had to explain ideas which previously would have been automatically understood. Thus, the mythographer is telling us that the swineherd belongs to the horse, to the Mother in horse form. But it is still a secret, and he who tells the secret must die,66 just as the barber of Matholwch must also die.
That these swineherds were priests can also be seen in their accomplishments. Coll, one of the three swineherds of Britain, was taught magic, as was Gwydion who was taught by Mathonwy. An Irish story tells of the vision of a swineherd which fortells the coming of Conall Corc to Cashell and to the kingship of Munster. In the Tain Bo Cuailnge, the swineherds of the king of the Elves of Munster and Connaught show their magic and shape-shifting powers by turning themselves into two worms who are reborn as the two bulls which do battle in this Irish epic. Thus, the swineherd displays the magic, shape-shifting and oracular powers of the priest who sacrifices his other self, which normally is performed through the act of tonsure.

This act of sacrifice of the self, in order to become something other than the self, can also be seen in a tale involving Arthur and Kulhwch. In order to win Olwen, "she of the white tracks," the sun-goddess, Kulwych, must retrieve the comb, the razor, and the pair of shears from between the ears of Twrch Trwyth. In other words, Kulwych must gain the tools of barbering from his rival, the dark, cropped god of the Underworld. Kulwych himself then becomes the cropped boar; the slayer becomes the slain.

The Celts believed that one could take on the aspect of the dead cultic animal. Such beliefs were, of course, not confined to the Celts. In reference to the Indo-
European practice of military societies, we are told that they put on the skin of a wolf and "the initiate assimilated the behaviour of the wolf; in other words he became a wild beast warrior,\textsuperscript{72} irresistible and unvulnerable. (Thus) "Wolf" was the appellation of the members of the Indo-European military societies."\textsuperscript{73} It has been suggested by D. A. MacKenzie that these animals may have originally been totems and that when the totem was slain the priest-king was wrapped in its skin, thereby becoming the incarnation of the totemic animal.\textsuperscript{74} Therefore, when the totemic animal is the King of the Underworld, that is what the priest becomes.\textsuperscript{75} Since the totemic animal is man who was once a pig, and who is connected with the goddess of healing and re-birth, the sacred skin would have corresponding virtues. Thus, we see that the pig-skin of Tuis, the King of Greece, which the sons of Tuirenn were under geis to obtain, was described so:

It has two virtues: its touch perfectly cures all wounded or sick persons if only there is any life still in them; and every stream of water through which it passes is turned into wine for nine days.\textsuperscript{76}

The picture drawn then from the mythological record is reasonably clear. It would appear that the Underworld deity, who at times assumes the identity of pig, is emulated by the priest in order to form a union with the mother-goddess to whom he owes allegiance. He thereby becomes the chief pig, the leader boar of the pig-pack which is the family of men. It is not surprising, then,
to find a great majority of the druidic class referred to as swineherds in the early manuscript material, or to learn that the priest was herd to the family of men in his service to the Great Mother. That the description of the priest, tonsured "sine auribus," matches that of the Underworld boar, "cropped earless pig," should surprise us even less.

The Dog

The importance of the dog in Celtic mythology is beyond question. Dogs are mentioned constantly throughout the literature, and the most imposing of these is the Irish wolf-hound which probably existed in Ireland from the earliest times. However, the mythological references do not appear to be to these alone, but instead cover a wide variety of dog breeds. For example, we are told that "the howl of Ossar, King of Conare's messan or lapdog, portended the coming of battle and slaughter." In fact, lapdogs are mentioned frequently in the stories. This divinatory aspect of the dog reached well beyond the hound's howl. Cormac, in his glossary of Old Irish, explains:

The fili (seer) must chew the flesh of a dog (red pig or cat) in order that his gods should show him the things which he desired they should reveal.

Thus, we see that the function of the dog was not only to lead the way for the soul on its journey after death, but he also acted as guide to the seer on his spiritual quest to the Otherworld.
The dog also seems to have assumed both an actual and a mystical role in the field of battle. The Celts of Gaul trained dogs to fight in battle and, although no evidence exists that the Irish did likewise, we should remember that the wolf was the form assumed by the Morrigú in order to do battle with Cuchullain. Possibly here the mythographer is reminding us that the hound is ever-present at the scene of battle, in readiness to escort the souls of the dead to Hades. For this is the function of the mythological hound. In reference to Gwyn, Rhys tells us that what Gwyn hunts with his dogs are the souls of the dead. It is interesting to note here that Gwyn's dog is called March, which is Welsh for "horse." The same confusion would appear to exist in the case which presents the hunter of souls as the Great Mother, and that which makes her take on dog-form and assume the same role in The Tain.

The syllable cu, meaning dog, recurs in many important names connected with the religious sphere. In the early period we find mention of Cuchullain, Milchu, Maelchu, Cruachu, and many more, while in the later Christian period we find it appearing in such names as St. Onchu, St. Caelcu, and St. Cudub. The most interesting of these from a mythological point of view is Cuchullain or "the hound of Chullain" whom we should note was under geiss never to eat dog's flesh. As noted earlier, this title
identifies Cuchullain as the Celtic hound of Hell, and we have also seen that he could also be identified as the black cropped dog. His tutor was the chariot-god Domnall, otherwise known as Domnal Moel, or Domnal Maelmud, that is, Domnall the bald and mute. 85

The dog, like the boar, plays a confused role in the daily solar epic. On one level they are both different aspects of the same masculine principle. As such, they play a part, along with the feminine principle, in the role of sun-goddess, in the daily drama of the rising and setting sun. The tales involving this drama often take the form of hero stories. It should not be surprising then to note the number of these heroes who meet their death over water, or who have a death connected with water. The dying Cuchullain tied himself to a rock by the lakeside, and so managed to stand facing his enemies to the last. Lug was slain while bathing in the Liffey. 86 The dying Arthur was carried across the water to Avalon by the Lady of the Lake. The departed Finn was also believed, until quite recent times, to still be living on an island in the western sea. The death of Yspaddaden Penkawr was connected with water, as was that of Twrch Trwyth whose life seems to have been bound to his. And there was also the death of Lleu Llaw Gyffres, the spouse of Blodeuwedd, who was killed by his wife's lover while he stood balanced "with one foot on the edge of his bath and the other on a goat's back." 87
The concept of "dog" in the mythological context appears to be interchangeable with that of wolf. The common name for wolf is *cu-allaidh* or 'wild hound,' thus, the Irish obviously saw very little difference between the two. This may be reflected in the mythology by the name Lug, which we are told possibly means lynx, and certainly confirmed by the mythological remnant which records that Lughaid Mac Con was the son of a wolf-dog. Since Bran, the cropped earless dog, is his other self, in Lug we see a mythological equation drawn between the dog and the wolf.

Thus, the wolf also played a strong role in the mythical sphere. Cormac mac Art is said to have been suckled by a she-wolf. In the Welsh tale of Math, Gilfaethwy and Gwydion turned into wolves. The Irish also had many stories of were-wolves, and "it seems that there were certain persons among the inhabitants of the Ossary who whenever they pleased, took the shape of wolves, and then ravaged and devoured cattle like real wolves, returning to their human shape when they had had enough." Possibly the Celts once venerated a god who had some special affinity with the wolf. J. A. MacCulloch says that there may very well have been a Celtic wolf totem-god of the dead, for he says the Celtic Dispater was shown as wearing a wolf-skin as did the Roman Sylvanis. As previously mentioned, Dispater was an aspect of Bran, who took, at
times, the form of the underworld dog. We should not forget that, as such, he was not so much (at least not initially) himself the prominent deity, but instead formed one of the links between man and the Mother of all. 98

The Underworld as Composite; A Symbol of Priesthood

The basic images then which emerge from the multiplicity of divinities, heroes, and events connected to the underworld picture are those of the Mother Goddess and her two rival-lovers. 99 These rivals, although in fact one, are, at times, expressed through the imagery of dog and boar; 100 the cropped black dog with eyes like two live coals, and the dark cropped pig without ears or tail. The three main forms through which the Mother Goddess is expressed consist of those of horse, the white sow of fecundity, or the black cropped sow without ears or tail. Although the dog has occasionally been represented in the feminine as the black bitch, this identification is rare.

This pattern of the association of a man with a dog and a pig is a frequent one in Irish tradition. Arthur, husband of the sun-goddess, hunts the magical pig Twrch Trwyth with the supernatural hound, and Mesroid Mac Datho, son of the "two silent ones," that is, deaf and dumb, or as one could say, without ears or tongue, had a famous hound and pig. It was he who created discord between Ailill and
Maeb, and act that identifies him as Bran, since discord is identified elsewhere as related to Bran, and Bran was described as "the cropped pig without ears or tail."

Since tail and tongue have been here equated, we can now see that the strange tradition which claimed that the Druids buried their tongues under the fire of Samhain means literally that the shorn hair was dedicated at this particular time to the goddess. This idea is once again supported by the reference to Bridget, whom we know at times took the form of "the cutty black sow without ears or tail," which gives her the appellation of "deaf and dumb." 101

The favourite representation of the consort of the Mother Goddess appears to be that of the cropped pig without ears or tail. As pointed out previously in this paper, it is this image which the Druidic hierarchy assumes in order to express its allegiance to the feminine principle.

"Without ears or tail" becomes, then, a focal symbol in our discussion of tonsure. We have already discussed the idea of "tail" as a point of contact between the masculine and feminine principle. The tail not only represents the binding of one to the other, but also, at the particular moment of union, represents the whole animal. 102

Since the tail represents the whole, having possession of the tail 103 means one can either regain or form contact with the whole.
The grey, or black, horse of mythology (having devoured the solar white, or red horse) emits fire from his mouth or tail. This black horse being the night, the horse's jaws and tail which emit fire, represent the luminous heavens of evening and of morning; when, therefore, the tail of his horse (stolen by the robber in the same way as the bull and the cow) remains in the mythical hero's hand, this light-streaming tail is enough to enable him to find the whole animal.104

Thus, the tail is that which forms the connection between the black horse and the white horse, between death and rebirth.

The Druidic hierarchy then relate to the divine through the symbolism connected with that of "tail." We have seen that Michael Dames illustrated quite convincingly that the Mother Goddess was often depicted through the symbol of the vagina, a shape represented by the "torc" which we have seen was also a word for pig. This understanding of the tail symbolism is demonstrated in the story of Cinderella, a sun-maiden myth. Here, the shoe serves the same function as the tail. The lost article provides the means by which the hero regains the desired one.105 This idea is supported by Bruno Bettelheim who points out that, "In the myth of Cacus . . . the mythical figure of the slipper and that of the lost tail are perhaps united."106 This latter is important, for the slipper is shown to be a symbol of the vagina,107 the tail a symbol of the procreative force, the lost tail a symbol of the absence of such.

By gaining power over the tail, one either gains power over the whole or shares in that power. This is portrayed
in the Gilgamesh epic in which Gilgamesh gains power over the Bull of Heaven by grasping his tail, the same power which he claimed for himself when, having killed the Bull of Heaven, he removed its horns. The generative force and vigor represented by the tail is once again represented in the horns which the hero claims. That the procreative powers of the bull which were represented here by the tail and the horse was also seen to reside in the ears and the tail can be seen in the ritual killing of the bull in the Spanish bull-ring. As part of this ritual, the matador, upon killing the bull, cuts off its tail and ears as a sign of his manhood and thus transfers the bull's strength and procreative prowess to himself.

In reference to the Druidic class, then, the idea of no ears and no tail, expressed visibly through the sacrificial act of tonsure, is seen to be a symbolic castration, and symbolizes the dedication of the procreative powers of the disciple to the feminine principle. We have already stated that this took the form of an identification with the spouse of the Mother Goddess. This idea is echoed by John Rhys who states that:

It is unavoidable to come to the conclusion that the bards thought themselves as a class, to be under the special protection of the dark divinity under his various forms and names such as Urien, Brân, Æthr Ben, and others.

This dark divinity was often represented as a pig or a dog, although the pig was the dominant form, a form whose dark side was especially evident in the figure of the Muck
Olla. His allegiance to the Mother Goddess is expressed through drama in many annual processions which took place at Halloween and St. Stephen's Day.\textsuperscript{116} Of one particular one, we are told:

At Ballycotton in Co. Cork a procession of horn blowing youths used to be led by a man called Lár Bhán,\textsuperscript{117} whose body was covered by a white sheet, and who carried, or wore, the skull of a mare, in much the same way as his Welsh kinsman, the Mari Lwyd, still does. \ldots They visited the various houses of the district and demanded largesse in the name of the Muck Olla, a legendary boar of a monstrous size.\textsuperscript{118}

That the followers of this boar were seen as swineherds whose flocks must have been men, has been discussed. This concept is further expressed in the figure of Maccu, Loeghaire's swineherd who is connected with the coming of Patrick to Ireland. Maccu's name has been taken by early commentators to be connected with 'pig,' and thus we are told he was a swineherd.\textsuperscript{119} But he has also been identified as the chief poet of Ireland,\textsuperscript{120} whom we have learned owes his allegiance through the underworld deity to the Great Mother. Since MacGreine has been glossed as "the son or devotee of the Sun,"\textsuperscript{121} we can legitimately gloss Maccu as "the son or devotee of the dog." Thus, the underworld pig is connected to the dog. Since Maccu in Indo-European is "a binding," "a bond,"\textsuperscript{122} we are told this dog-pig is bound to something, and since mac appears to possibly be another form of mael, as can be seen in the preceding gloss of "devotee of," this bonding possibly
takes the form of the tonsure. Thus, once again, we seem to get an expression of the swineherd with his flock expressing his identification with the "great pig," following the Mother Goddess who here takes the form of white mare.
FOOTNOTES


3 As with maccu, mach also means "a binding," "a bond." But whether the Indo-European mach is related to Irish macha, I do not know.


7 Since the Sea, Morgen, was also an aspect of the same principle, it is of interest to note that the crest or spray of a wave was frequently referred to as "hair" or "mane" in Irish Keenings (Carolus Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae: Partim Hactenus Ineditae Ad Fidem Codicum Manuscriptorum Recognovit Prolegomenis Notis Indicibus Instruxit* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968, Vol. I of 2 Vols.), p. xxxii). Here we see the "mane" as an attribute of the Great Mother, a concept which may be echoed in The Iliad. On three separate occasions the warrior in The Iliad is described as having "set on his mighty head the well-made horseshair-crested helmet, whose plume dreadfully nodded down from above." Rhys Carpenter, *Folk tale, Fiction and Saga in the Homeric Epics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962). One can see here how "mane" which one clings to and "tail" which lures could in a sense be equivalent symbols representing the Great Mother and a bonding to her. The Irish warrior considered it lucky to see a crow on his way to battle. Apparently his accompaniment by the goddess of war and death (the Great Mother's other self) meant many of his enemies would be killed that day. One wonders then if the crested helmet of the Iliad warriors could have been some similar reference to the mare goddess known in Ireland in her wâr aspect as Macha (also crow, and also in another contest, the guardian of the hearth. To the ancient Celts the kindling of fire was highly significant. For
them, it was associated with taking possession of the land, which we have already seen the king wedded in the form of mare) which is merely another name for Grian, who as sun goddess was seen in the form of red mare (O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History*, p. 293). Thus, we see the mare represented in all three dimensions.


10. Ibid., pp. 44-45.


16. Ibid.


22 The pig was connected in many ways with effecting cures, which is merely a reflection of its connection with the healing powers of the Mother Goddess. That it was also connected with Maia, the goddess in her fertility guise, is seen in the custom of driving a pig into the house on May morning to bestow good luck for the coming year. See, Evans, Folk Ways, p. 117. This connection with the Mother Goddess, who we are told had charge of the four winds, is reflected in the strong Irish belief that pigs can smell the wind. (P. W. Joyce, A Social History of Ancient Ireland (New York: Arno Press, 1980, Vol. II of two Vols.), p. 158.)


24 In the European context the Celtic goddess Ardiunna, elsewhere Diana or Epona, was represented as riding a wild boar, and thus must have been seen at times as sow-goddess. Markale, Women, p. 93.

25 John Rhys, Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1888), p. 517. One should also note that this description of Cerridwen is that of Diarmait's "other self" for we are told that he was turned into "a boar without bristles, ear, or tail" (Markale, Women, p. 94).

26 Rhys, Lectures, p. 544.


28 The key words here are, of course, "at times." Although we do have stories of the death goddess and her rather ravenous appetite, we should remember that most of the time it is actual and natural death which is being spoken of.


31 Ibid.


33 Mackenzie, *Myths of Crete*, p. 158.

34 MacCulloch, *op. cit.*; pp. 24-25.

35 One wonders if this is part of the message contained in *The Tain*, for by this time it would appear that the message is scrambled. Here the bulls (one aspect of the swineherds, that is, pigs become bulls) fight to the death. The winner, the dark bull (Autumn?) "appears in triumph carrying the dead body of his enemy on his horns, and he scatters bits of it throughout the land. (Sibyelle Von Cles-Reden, *The Realm of the Great Goddess: The Story of the Megalithic Builders*. Trans. by Eric Mosbacher (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961), p. 273.)"

36 And here we should possibly note the event recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters* wherein we are told there was "a mill race at the mill of Maelodhram where Dunchadh and Conall were killed by the Leinstermen" (*Annals of the Four Masters*, p. 263) and who were then placed within the mill and ground with the meal. What we need to note here is the names of the men who performed the sacrifice, namely, Maelodhram or the tonsured. . . . and Marcan (related to marc meaning horse). That is, a representative of the Mother-Goddess and her consort. The bodies being ground with the meal is too close a similarity to the practice of mixing the dead pig with the new seed, for there not to be a connection. Thus, once again we see men and pigs being treated as if there is a relationship between the two.

37 Mackenzie, *Myths of Crete*, p. 176. There must have been a clear statement somewhere in the old mythology which
acknowledged that men were first pigs, for we are told of Ceres that she took the acorns off men and gave them better food. (Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1975), p. 71.)

38 Alwyn and Brinley Rees also make an important observation which could be relevant here. They refer us to the Battle of Dun Bolg wherein the Leinstermen, in order to infiltrate the camp of the High King of Ireland to whom they must pay tribute, conceal themselves with the food which is being carried into the camp in baskets. Here we are told, the Leinstermen are making an identification between themselves and the products of fertility. There is, in fact, an identification made in which "the king is the eater, the yeomanry food; the yeomanry is another's tributary, another's food." (Alwyn and Brinley Rees, *Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), pp. 124-126.)

39 There was a Celtic belief that men too sprang from the Underworld and eventually would return there (MacCulloch, *The Religion of the Ancient Celts*, p. 218).

40 Rhys, *Lectures*, p. 243. Of course, we see elsewhere that at one time Finn, at another Pwyll, were given credit for this achievement.

41 Although Gwydion is often referred to as one of the three swineherds of Britain, *The Triads of Britain* list them as Pryderi son of Pwyll and Dyved, Coll who was herd to Henwen, and Trystan who kept the swine of March. (The *Triads of Britain* compiled by Iolo Morganwg with intro. by Malcolm Smith (London: Wildwood House Ltd., Ltd., 1977), p. 65.)


43 Gwydion, we have noted, was one of the three swineherds of Britain. The significance of these three would be lost if we didn't realize that the druids also, at times, were referred to in groups of three, as in the case of the three druids of Conn, who were Maol, Bloc and Bhocene. (Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (New York: Burt Franklin), p. 620.)
Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1975), p. 220. We should also possibly note that Wentz tells us that the pig was an animal sacred to the Druids, although according to him the meaning of this has now been lost. See, W. Y. Evans Wentz, *The Fairy-faith in Celtic Countries* (New York: Lemma Publishing Corporation, 1973), p. 378.


Patrick's master was the swineherd Milchu, that is, Maeldu or "the devotee of the Dog," which seems to me to be merely another attempt on the part of mythographers to tie Patrick to the old religion, for they have symbolically identified him as a Druid.

The goddess and her consort are often spoken of in conflicting terms. The Irish Underworld picture is far from static and possibly the shapeshifting element can be thought of best in the same manner as one would view Demeter. The sow goddess beds down with the grey cropped pig (the night) and is likewise accompanied by his lighter side, such as in the figure of Aengus, on her daily travels. This lighter side of the goddess can be seen in many ways. The golden cup or the Holy Grail is the sun from which all life comes. The golden-haired White Goddess, who is a symbol of light, warmth, and fertility. The white sow, related to the white mare, both related to the claiming of land and fecundity. These are all simply different views of the same feminine principle best referred to as The Great Mother.


However, we must remember that in many ways the Otherworld mirrors the here-and-now.

In connection with Bran as cropped-pig and "Chief-Druid," it is important to note that the Irish word for boar is "torc," which is the same word (sometimes torque) used for the neck ring which was often used as a symbol of deity or authority. The torc assumes the shape of a broken circle, which recurs in architecture and art from the Megalithic period onwards, and is shown by Michael Dames in *The Silbury Treasure*, using mounds as his example, to be the representation of the womb of the goddess.
51 A male assembly it should be noted.

52 These are made up of the Brehon whose area of responsibility was the law, the Fili who was the poet and keeper of historical knowledge, and the Druid who fulfilled the priestly function. We have repeatedly in this paper referred to this group collectively as the Druidic or priestly class, for as such they were viewed by the ancient chroniclers and later historians.

53 We have shown earlier the tendency of this class, to assume the tonsure referred to as 'sine auribus' in imitation of Bran.

54 Markale, Women, p. 93.

55 Powell, op. cit., p. 65.


58 Rees, op. cit., p. 33.


60 O'Rahilly, Early Irish History, p. 480.

61 Rhys, Lectures, p. 589 fn. Here, Rhys says he feels these are one and the same ancestral figures.

62 That is, Coll who was herd to Henwen, the Great Mother as White Sow.

63 Graves, op. cit., p. 170.

64 Possibly Matholwch is also King March whose swine-herd was Drystan (Trystan) son of Tallwch, from whom King Arthur tried to steal a sow and failed. (Rhys, Celtic Folklore, p. 499.) Rhys also tells us that March ab Melrhchion corresponds to Irish Labraid Lorc, which he says implies horse's ears, and which he says is probably
the same figure as Loegaire Lorc, whose Druid Milchu (the devotee of the Dog) was master to St. Patrick.

65 As did Midas in the Aegean.

66 Just as Math ab Mathonwy, or Matholwch, could hear all that was said in the kingdom, so the fairies too heard everything that was uttered out of doors. In this respect we should note that they too did not like their secrets being told, and punished the betrayer, often with sickness and death. Thus, we get beliefs which forbid the telling of the old stories to strangers, or at times other than those specified as appropriate.

67 Rhys, *Celtic Folklore*, p. 326.

68 Ibid. We should also note here that Gwydion is in fact often mentioned along with Gwion who stirred the cauldron of Inspiration and was re-born to Cerridwen as Taliesin, the legendary bard. Gwion was exposed, but rescued by Maelgwyn or "the devotee of the white one." That is, having been devoured by and reborn to the sow of the night, he was suckled by the white sow, her other self, as was Zeus.

69 Just as another such a vision foretold of the coming of Patrick.


71 That is, the dark bull slays the white bull (the fertile bull), and spreads his body throughout the land.

72 Just as in the Irish context where the warrior took Bran for his emblem, and the warriors saw themselves as pigs following the royal swineherd. In this context we are not surprised to find a reference to a battle scene in which "the kine of the enemy roared with javelins." (O'Donovan, *Annals*, Vol. I, p. 179.)


Here, we should note that Gwydion, the swineherd who steals the pigs from the Underworld, is also at times seen as a swine-god. (MacCulloch, Ancient Celts, p. 106.)

Squire, op. cit., p. 96.


Charles Squire, Celtic Myth and Legend Poetry and Romance (Hollywood: Newcastle Publishing Co. Inc., 1975), p. 170. What should also be remembered is the title given this warrior-hero. As 'the Hound of Ulster,' he is identified as the hound of the Otherworld, the guardian hound of Hades (here identified with Ulster) equated with warrior-hero.

Rhys, Arthurian Legend, p. 155.

Ibid., p. 156.

Jean Markale gives a very good explanation of geis in the following.

The geis is . . . complex. Since it influenced the whole fate of its human (and sometimes animal) victim, it was not cast lightly, but only when justified by a very serious reason. It was a kind of prohibition, imposed on a particular person as a result of certain events, and it left a definite mark. Anyone transgressing a geis was exposed to serious trouble and finally to a painful death, which was also hateful and shameful, because the moral and social weight of the prohibition placed the offender outside the established social order.

(Markale, Women, p. 213.)

Rhys, Lectures, p. 449.

Ibid., p. 539.
87 Squire, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

88 One of the important functions of the Irish wolfhound was that of hunting the 'wild-hound' or 'wolf.' See, P. W. Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 457, Vol. III. This is a concept which should possibly be kept in mind when looking at the stories of Bran (or related heroes) and his killing his other self.


90 In fact, this is spelled out by Anne Ross who states, "The wolf must be considered as playing a similar role to the dog in Celtic tradition." (Ross, *Celtic Britain*, p. 426.)


93 Ibid.


96 Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 427. But at times the dog appears to have been seen as an aspect of the Great Mother. Seen as the earth-mother, the vegetation waving in the breezes was often referred to as her tresses. Thus, the grasses and withies used to thatch the roofs of houses were made from the hair of the Mother. Therefore, when we find that the word *scolb* (originally Danish) is the root of "scollops" or withies (which are used to bind the thatch), and that the *olb* syllable contained in it means "wolf," we see that in some respect the "wolf" is the hairs which flow behind the Great Mother. Also, what we have, of course, is that constant reminder that there is a connection between the symbolism of hair and the Great Mother. See, Kevin Danaher, *In Ireland Long Ago* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1976), p. 12.

97 MacCulloch, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

98 As in other mythologies, we see represented here repeatedly the constant struggle between light and dark. Although the struggle is at times bitter and fierce, light does prevail. The sun does rise again, and Spring once
again emerges from the death of winter. The Eddic poets speak of a similar situation in reference to the female sun, for they tell us, "The Sun (Sol) shall bear a daughter ere the Wolf destroy her, the maid shall ride, when the powers have passed away, along the paths of her mother." (Rhys, Lectures, p. 572.) One of the differences we see between this and the Irish stories is that there is first of all no consistency in the view that the sun dies and is reborn. Secondly, the Sun appears to have a companion, the lighter side (since Day is a character in Fairy-tales, the hero here might fulfill this function) of the darkness which gives chase, and the nightly and thus yearly struggle seem mainly to take place between these two, a concept which to me appears to be at the root of the Celtic Dragon Myth cycles.

99 This we have seen is expressed as a cycle in which the dominant-self overcomes the other-self. Irish stories are full of heroes who die by the hand of the daughter's son, as we see, for example, in the story of Balor. See, Elizabeth Andrews, Ulster Folklore (Wakefield, England: E. P. Publishing Limited, 1977), p. 73. We have up till now been speaking of the microcosm, but this microcosm is reflected in the macrocosm of which Graves says in relation to the poetic theme of the bard Taliesin, "(the poetic theme) is the ancient story, which falls into thirteen chapters and an epilogue, of the birth, life, death and resurrection of the God of the Waxing Year; the central chapters concern the God's losing battle with the God of the Waning Year for love of the capricious and all-powerful Threefold Goddess, their mother, bride and layer-out. The poet identifies himself with the God of the Waxing Year and his Muse with the Goddess; the rival is his other self, his weird." (Graves, White Goddess, p. 24.)

100 It is interesting to note here that the Hittites, after particular battles, offered "a man, a pig, and a dog" as a sacrifice. (O. R. Guerny, The Hittites (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1954), p. 151.)


102 An idea we find rather loosely expressed in the reference to a woman as "a piece of tail."

103 As the monk does in his form of tonsure.
104. Angelo De Gubernatis, Zoological Mythology: Or The
of 2 Vols.), p. 236.

105. Ibid., p. 235.

106. Ibid., p. 234.

107. Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The
Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage
Books, 1977), p. 265, and also, J. E. Cirlot, A Dictionary
of Symbols. Trans. from the Spanish by Jack Sage, Foreword
by Herbert Read (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc.,
1976), p. 295. This same idea is also possibly expressed
in the nursery rhyme "Cock a doodle doo."

History of the Bull as Symbol of Power and Fertility

109. Ibid., p. 42. Conrad also points out that "In
Crete, as in Asia Minor, there existed the belief that the
great procreative and physical power of the bull was
somehow brought to focus in his horns." (Conrad, Ibid.,
p. 121.)

110. This association between the bull and fertility
is brought to our attention by Jack Conrad who tells us
that, "To kill and eat the Apis ... was to strengthen
and revitalize the Egyptian king." (Conrad, The Horn,
p. 94.)

111. We have already mentioned the Druid who in prepara-
tion for a particular ritual put on the skin of the hornless
bull. Since normally he was associated with the earless
pig, the analogy drawn between the hornless bull and ear-
less pig is self-evident.

112. The life-giving power of the horns can be seen in
the folk-story of the husband who, by blowing into the cow
horns, restores his wife to life. (De Gubernatis, Zoological

113. This information was received from Ms. Jimenez,
secretary to the Spanish Consulate General in Chicago.
As Ms. Jimenez also pointed out, this honour of receiving
both ears and tail is not extended to every matador who kills a bull, but only to him who shows extremely fine excellence and skill during his performance.


115 Rhys, Arthurian Legend, p. 260.

116 The day when the wren was sacrificed and the straw boys were once again evident. It was taboo to kill a wren at any other time of year.

117 Which means literally the "red white-horse," and which identifies the horse with the red horse as sun-goddess and the white horse of fecundity. It also reflects once again the idea that the swineherd (on the human level the Druidic class) saw himself as following the sun-goddess. Some authors note that the man who follows the "horse" and who basically leads the rest of the "procession," is identified as the swineherd.


120 Ibid.


CHAPTER IV

HAIR SYMBOLISM

Hair as an Expression of the External Self

To understand the concept of tonsure further, we must examine popular beliefs generally associated with hair. As we have seen in the previous discussion concerning ears and tails, these extremeties can often be seen to represent the whole animal. Hair also seems to have been approached symbolically in the same manner.\(^1\) This is demonstrated quite clearly by Julian Morgenstern in his discussion of the Arabic ceremony of the Akikah, which was performed at the birth of a baby boy. In this ceremony, the infant's head was shaved and daubed with the blood of a sacrificial lamb:

The hair was an offering to the deity, and as such, was sometimes mingled with a meal offering. The symbolic use of hair as a substitution for the self\(^2\) in the fulfillment of a vow can be demonstrated by an incident ... a woman had difficulty in childbirth. Her sister, who was attending her, vowed that if all was to go well, the child born would be dedicated to Mår Djerdjis.\(^3\) After the child was born, he was often told 'you belong to Mår Djirdjis.' On his twelfth birthday, along with other boys, the lad was shaved at the shrine of this saint, in a consecration ceremony. The hair was weighed, and its weight given in money to the shrine.\(^4\)
The hair was stated to be a substitute for the child. In the Aryan context also the hair could be seen as a substitute for the self, for it contained the manna, the life-essence, of the person to whom it belonged. The Ordinance of Manu declares that the cutting of a Brahman's hair against his will incurs a sentence of capital punishment, that is, a life for a life. The Irish, too, laid down precise and detailed laws regarding the cutting of hair. For example, we read in the Berla Law:

The fine for cutting off the hair shall be paid for the hair of women and also for that of poets and scribes.

Ireland was very much a matriarchal society, as can be seen in the custom of women keeping their maiden name after marriage, a custom which persisted in many places until the last century. The idea of the sacred feminine was never completely lost, an idea which had been very explicit in the earlier period which saw the earth as feminine and the grasses and vegetative growth as the hair of the goddess. These grasses were held to be as sacred as the goddess herself, and in a sense represented the divine essence. This idea is once again reflected in Indian thought which saw the earth in the form of a divine cow in reference to which we read that "having attained this status (of divine) the sanctity of the cow was such that every part of her body was regarded as divine and her hair inviolable."
Remnants of the belief that one's essence resides in the hair and fingernails, and that if another takes the cut hair or nails they can thereby gain control of the person, could still be seen in Ireland not long ago, for we are told:

Some of the old people believed that they must have all their hair on the day of Judgment, and when they had a hair-cut they gathered up the hair and hid it away safely. 9

Admittedly, much of the meaning has been lost, but the mere fact that these clippings are 'hidden' is an echo of past beliefs. 10 These beliefs are stated more openly in those involving babies, for it is the infant who is particularly susceptible to the power of the fairies. They seem to have been especially interested in boys, for we are told that the young male progeny were hidden in their sister's petticoats until the period of danger was past. 11 In order to protect these infants "the nails, like the milk teeth and locks of hair, had to be carefully destroyed, for fear that they should fall into the hands of witches and be used against the child." 12 We also find evidence of the self being identified with hair in an early Irish poem. In this poem, through the act of tonsure, Murchoh apparently dedicates himself to Mary, and puts himself under her protection:

Murdoch, what thy razor's edge,
Our crowns to pledge to Heaven's Ardrih!
Vow we now our hair fine-pressed
To the Blessed Trinity!
Now my head I shear to Mary;
'Tis a true heart's very due.
Shapely, soft-eyed Chieftain now
Shear thy brow to Mary, too!

Then our shorn heads from weather wild
Shield, Daughter mild of Joachim!
Preserve us from the sun's fierce power,
Mary, soft Flower of Jesse's Stem!  

This transference of power which accompanies the
possession of hair is also evident in customs connected
with grasses and fertility. In England the mummers and
in Ireland the straw-boys often dressed as straw-men. They
were in evidence at the turn of the seasons and at weddings,
always as bringers of luck and fertility. Straw was even
in evidence at the wake, an example of which can be seen
in the game of the Bees and the Honey.

Hair and Oath-Making

References to the beard on the chin and those to the
hair on the head often become confused in the material and
in many cases seem to be synonymous. This does not happen
in the Irish literature alone, for in Tacitus we read:

Civilis (a Gaul) had sworn an oath, like the
primitive savage he was, to dye his hair red and
let it grow until such time as he had annihilated
the legions. Now that the vow was fulfilled he
shaved off his long beard.  

We are even more confused when we hear the conqueror of the
son of Uatach, King of Connaught, proclaim, "I have the
grey beard in my hand of Maelbrighde, son of Mothlachan," and
when we learn that Kei, after an adventure, returned
to Arthur's court and presented him "with a trophy consisting of the beard of a giant called Dillus."

Since the trophy would have been a head, there does appear to have been some confusion between the "hair" and "beard." This confusion is also evident in an early source referred to in Celtic Britain where we read concerning the tonsuring of Fiacc:

Fiacc . . . asked what they were preparing to do. 'To tonsure Dubthach,' said they. - 'That is idle,' said Fiacc 'for there is no poet equal to him in Erinn' - 'Thou wouldst be accepted in his stead?' said Patrick - 'The loss of me to Erinn,' said Fiacc, 'is less than that of Dubthach,' so Patrick shored his beard then from Fiacc, and great grace came upon him thereafter.18

There does appear to be some connection between the concept of oath-making and hair, and such oath-making would appear to have taken the form of pledging one's life to the deity. This is illustrated to some extent by the story of Owein,19 a knight of Arthur's. After an adventure, during which he acquired a wife, he returned to Arthur's court. However, he forgot his pledge to return to his wife, and was therefore confronted by her in the form of her other self:

She went right up to Owein and took away the ring that was on his hand, saying, 'Thus is done to a deceiver, a false traitor, for a disgrace to they beard.' She then rode away.21

Owein is wedded to the sun-maiden. Therefore, the oath which he has broken is that which is outwardly represented by tonsure - thus the statement "a disgrace to thy beard." But this treatment of hair and beard in similar terms is
seen in the form of oath-making by the grasping of the beard of the chin while making an oath.25 This is only hinted at in the Irish record for although there does not appear to be any direct references to such a custom, the motif of beard grasping is used in the Irish illuminations.22

As we are reminded in The Tain,23 Irish artwork was never intended to illustrate the text but rather to add to it. As a vehicle of ideas it formed an extension of the text. Thus, the possibility that these artists were well-versed in pun-craft cannot be ignored.24 Caesar recorded:

All the Britons . . . dye themselves . . . a bluish colour . . . they wear their hair long, and have every part of their body shaved except their head and upper lip.26

Thus, the beard may be a synonym for head, and the Irish illuminations (see Appendix, figure m) could in some instance represent an example of the idea of oath-making being connected with hair.27

We have previously seen that hair symbolism is connected with the sun-goddess, thus, we could reasonably expect oath-making to be likewise. This seems to have been the case. We are told by O'Rahilly:

The root ei ... may ... underlie Eriu, the name of a goddess ... and might mean something like 'the regular traveller.' That Eriu was the sun-goddess is suggested by her traditional epithet an ... . Another word from the same root ei - viz. I.E. oitos, 'motion, course,' likewise acquired a religious connotation among the Celts and the Teutons, doubtless because it was associated
especially with the movement of the sun-deity through the heavens. In Celtic (cf. O.Ir. oeth, 'oath,' Welsh anudon, 'perjury!') oitóes came to be applied to a solemn declaration the truth of which one or more divine powers were called upon to witness.28

The oath to the deity is bound by some sacred object. In the Irish context the self becomes the sacred object, and the shaved head the outward sign of the oath binding the devotee to the divine. We find this bond portrayed through art in a representation of Ogmios, the god of eloquence and father of ogham. Usually depicted as an extremely old man, he was generally described as bald in the front with a wisp of grey at the back:

(He) draws after him a great number of men bound by their ears, and the bonds are slender cords wrought of gold and amber . . . they never try to run away . . . in fact, they look like men who would be grieved should they be set free . . . (he) represents the power of speech which is wont to show its perfection in the aged . . . age has something wiser to tell us than youth.29

In summary then, the bond which binds the Druid to the divine involves both the act of oath-making and a giving of the self enacted through tonsure.30 Here, the devotee's life is the willing sacrifice to be offered to the deity. The Druid becomes both spouse and victim, with the tonsure the visible affirmation of his nuptial vows.31

The Symbolism of Tonsure in Reference to the Yearly Cycle

We have already witnessed many faces of the Great Mother. As goddess of the underworld, "she is concerned
alike with the crops and the seed-corn buried beneath the earth." It is in this form, that of agricultural goddess, that we will now examine her.

As we have seen, Celtic mythological thought was tied to sun-worship. In the yearly epic of the struggle between the forces of light and darkness, of growth and non-growth, of birth and death, we see a reflection of the daily drama connected with the rising and setting sun. This view of the yearly struggle of the cosmos was, of course, not confined to the Celtic world. Thus, in the Telipinu myth, the Mother Goddess sends out a bee to search for her missing son, Isis searches for Tammuz, Cybele for Attis, and Demeter for Kore. Without the lost loved one, life will not return to the earth. Of this return we read:

In the Lesser mysteries at Afrai ... (March 2nd), when Kore was supposed to return from the underworld in the young corn and bring with her lengthening days, a procession assembled ... and in the evening started with torches in celebration of life and light after the death and darkness of the year's decline. In Scotland, the sacred fire of St. Bride, or Bridget, was carefully guarded, and a bed made of corn and hay on the Eve of Candlemas surrounded by candles as a fertility rite. Here St. Bride played the role of Kore, and the fire symbolized the victorious emergence of the sun from the darkness of the departing winter.

One suspects that the soft bed prepared here is the nuptial bed, for the soil was originally the domain of the Mother Goddess and to disturb it was a perilous undertaking. Thus, the first ploughing must have been performed with the sacred plough, possibly that of the king himself since
he was acknowledged to be wed to the land and responsible for its productivity. It should also be remembered that it was the king's task to sleep with the bride on her wedding night, his task to plough the ground\textsuperscript{36} to make it fertile. The idea of equating the penis with the plough is further supported by the Irish law tracts which use the word \textit{uidim} for penis, "a word which could also mean "implement," "instrument," or "tool."\textsuperscript{37} Thus, the reference to Mac Cecht\textsuperscript{38} as "the ploughman,"\textsuperscript{39} might possibly identify him with the fertility figure at Cerne Abbas, Dorset (see Appendix, figure n). It certainly does identify him as the spouse of the Great Mother.

Thus, whether or not the consort was seen as preparing the ground for the seed, or as implanter of seed, it was necessary that the Mother Goddess contract a sacred marriage. As we have seen, this was effected on various levels and we can view the otherworld god, the king, and the priestly class, as being espoused to the Great Mother, and thus being in turn part of the mythological drama. An ancient Anglo-Saxon charm which was recited in order to quicken the waking earth declared, "Hail, Earth, Mother of Men, be fertile in the god's embrace, be filled with fruit for man's use."\textsuperscript{40}

Just as the king was responsible for the fertility of the land on the physical level, so the Druidic class was responsible for its fertility on the spiritual level.\textsuperscript{44}
As pointed out earlier, the Druid displays the tonsure as the visible sign of his marriage vows. Thus, his responsibility for fertility is displayed through the head:

Onians has argued that in early times the seed is believed to reside in the head, and the testes are not the source of the seed but the channel through which it is emitted. Castration thus preserves the seed, which is the principle of life, in the body of those who are dedicated to the mother.

Some representation of the head, then, as the field which receives the sacred furrow in the act of tonsure, and thus prepares the fertile mind which is to be wedded to Wisdom, may be seen in the story of Cian. As son of Ailill (ear-bare), and the druidess Sadb, Cian is identified by Rhys as connected with the sun. It is of interest, then, to read that "he had the peculiarity that a sort of ridge or skin or caul extended over his head from ear to ear, and as he grew, that excrescence also grew. So when he became a man, he did not suffer those who shaved him to live to divulge the secret." This brings to mind King Mark who also killed off his barbers who might betray his connection with the Mother Goddess. We are told that one day Cian was attended by a barber less afraid than the rest, who lifted the head-skin and a worm appeared, which escaped and made its abode in a dark cave. The story identifies the worm as Cian's other self, and can possibly be identified with the one-eyed monster which guards the
world tree. But, that there may also have been a recollection of its connection with the Mother Goddess can possibly be seen in the Celtic fairy tale from England of The Laidley worm, which portrays the worm as none other than the goddess in disguise. Thus, the "furrow" across the head, probably identifies Cian as being the divine spouse.

If we realize that the head, since it contains the seed, can in some instances be viewed as being equivalent with the testicles, we can see how religious practice involving castration could exist in the mystery religions side by side with a ritual reaping of an ear of corn. Hippolytus remarked that in part of the Elusinian mysteries:

An ear of corn was reaped in a blaze of light before their wondering eyes, and the birth of a divine child, Brimos or Iacchos, was solemnly announced.

If we consider the stories wherein the discarded organs of an emasculated god grow into a tree, from which the fruit makes a goddess pregnant, we realize that "the germinating ear would be at once the symbol of the harvest of the grain and that of the rebirth to immortal life of the neophytes."

Ears of corn are also featured in one of the Celtic underworld sagas. In this particular myth, Manannan is seeking his wife Rhiannon and her son Pryderi who have been trapped in the underworld. Because of need, he plants corn. At midnight, there was a clap of thunder, a
horde of mice appeared, and each mouse carried off an ear of corn. Manannan managed to catch one mouse which was particularly slow, and as this was in reality the pregnant wife of Iwyd, lord of the Underworld, he was able to barter for the release of Rhiannon and Pryderi. Here, it is the fat mouse of harvest who cuts the ears from the stem. In the Demeter cult, Zeus, who at times has the appellation of "mouse," has a place on her threshing floor. The idea that the ears which have been removed are synonymous with the removed testicles in the Cybele cult may be seen in the liturgy of the mysteries, which refer to Attis as the 'cornstalk.') Some connection between the Celts and the mystery religions can be seen in Tacitus, who mentions the Maharvali, a Celticized tribe who worshipped a divine couple, and whose priests identified with the goddess in the same manner as did the priests of Cybele.

It would appear that castration could be either symbolic or actual in these ceremonies. In many instances, the slaying and death of the god is a metaphor for the threshing and planting of corn. Such ideas can be seen in the Ugaritic texts which describe how Anat killed Mot with a ritual sickle and scattered his flesh over the fields. Having first winnowed him, he scorched him and ground him in a mill. Thus, the god is being treated as the harvest grain. Just as his flesh was seen to be represented in the cereal crop, his life blood could be
seen to be represented in the flowing sap of vegetation.
One of the scenes depicted in the Temple Tomb at Knossos
gives an example:

[It] shows a young male attendant pulling down the
branch of a tree and holding out a small flask,
presumably containing the expressed juice of its
fruit, to the goddess who sits on the border of
her shrine.55

Similar customs were evident in Britain, for in reference
to the stone circle of Rollright in the Forest of Wychwood
we read:

The monument represented a king and his army turned
to stone by a witch who . . . turned herself into
an 'eldern tree.' . . . On Midsummer Eve when the
eldern tree was in blossom it was a custom for
people to come up to the king's stone and stand
in a circle round it. Then the eldern was cut, and,
as it bled, with real blood, 'the king moved his
head.' Of all the trees of the wood, indeed,
'Dame Elder,' with its berries of blood-red juice,
has been the last to lose its supernatural life.56

In reference to Celtic Ireland, the whole mythological
picture is admittedly blurred, but certain beliefs are
evident. The macrocosm is in essence a reflection of the
microcosm. The mythology connected with the daily struggle
of night and day is that of the yearly cycle, and in turn
is that of the struggle of all time.57 This is often
recorded symbolically as the journey of the god to the
Otherworld, and his eventual return. Maelduin voyaged to
the Island of women where he remained in perpetual pleasure
for nine months.58 In a similar journey, Teigue, son of
Cian, travelled to the Otherworld, where he found a queen
draped in golden fabric, who informed him that he was in the earth's fourth paradise. The voyage of Pwyll and also of his son, Pryderi, to the Otherworld are similar stories, and the son's return with the corn in the cycle involving Manannan would tend to confirm his connection with Attis. The Arthurian cycle can be viewed in the same manner. Arthur is related to Airem meaning "ploughman," and this would associate him with the returning spring as well as divine spouse. The wantonness of his mate, Gwynhwyvar, is similar to that of Mab, who must not have a jealous husband, for "behind one lover stands another." As the spouse of the earthly king, her lovers do constantly change. Mab is also Maeb, the Queen of the May, the lover of the ploughman who ploughs the first furrow, and who is responsible for the coming fertility. That these story cycles are once again reflected back into the imagery of the daily course of the sun can be seen in a decree of Arthur's which he issued because of the attempted abduction of Creiddylad, daughter of Lludd Llawereint. This demanded:

The maiden should remain in her father's house unmolested by either side, and there should be battle between Gwyn and Gwythyr each May-Calends for ever and ever, from that day till doomsday, and the one of them that shall be the victor on doomsday, let him have the maiden.

Coll as a Mythological Referent

A syllable which appears in the names of saints and which seems to have some implications for the furthering
of our understanding of tonsure is that of coll. Like mael it can be seen as a referent to a tribal ancestor. Those ancestors can be seen in the form of the three brothers Colla of the Eremonian race who in 331 are said to have overthrown the Uhtonians. These brothers were of the Clan Colla or the Oriellians. The syllable does not appear to have survived as a prefix to the same degree as Mael, so one wonders if its usage was less adaptable within a Christian context. Its meaning is also much less clear.

Coll was one of the Three Swineherds of Britain who guarded Dallben's sow, Henwen, or "the White Ancient One." Thus, Coll is evidently a divine being connected with pigs. We are here reminded of Kulwych who is connected by mythology with the mythical pig Twrch Twyth and whose name is a compound of Kul a variant of Cul, and wych meaning "pig." The swineherd Coll is connected with Druidism, for he is reputed to have learned magic from the Dwarfs.

In the numerous sources, coll is given a variety of meanings. Some of these are implicit and others explicit in their connection with cultic practice. However, it is words which point to the Underworld which prove the most interesting. Celtic words which we find related to the Latin culus, or cule, are cul or cil, meaning "back of the head" or simply "back," and those in English derived from
the same source, namely, *cul*, meaning "the anus" or "the bottom as in cul de sac." But we are told that the English *cul* is equivalent to *cull* or *coll* and that *cull* means a piece (of something). *Cut*, a word of similar meaning, refers to a piece as in lots by straw, or to the act of castration, especially in reference to bore pigs. This similarity of meaning between *cut* and *cull* can also be seen in the expression "madge cull" for a homosexual. Thus, we see that *cul* (or *coll*) may be connected in some way to a selective cutting which possibly could take the form of symbolic castration, and is also, in its reference to cul-de-sac, possibly a pointer to the Underworld.

This connection of *coll* with the Underworld can also be seen in the figure of Old King Cole of the nursery rhyme. King Cole was said to have lived in the third century A.D., ascending to the throne of Britain upon the death of Asclepiod. He supposedly had a daughter who was quite skilled in music. McBain identifies him as Old King Coul or Coel Hen, who was none other than the war-god Camulus. Since his name "Cole" is etymologically related to Old English and Old French *Col* (Old High German *coals*), meaning a piece of carbon or charred wood, and his name Coel Hen identifies him as "the ancient interpreter of omens," together with the claim that he was in some way connected with music, we must assume that he was in some respect seen as Lord of the Underworld.
and chief Druid. The identification of King Cole with the war-god, that is, the god of death and carnage, is then understandable. This identification of the name coll with the Underworld is stated quite clearly in the mythology, for in the name Be Cuill which is glossed as "the Wife of Coll" we see coll identified with cuill. Elsewhere we find a mythological hero referred to as Mac Cuill, "Son of Perdition and Destruction," and thus we see a direct link between Coll and Hades. We are also told that Moc Omloc was a hypocritical for Colman, while Colmanus, simply another form of the name Colman, was also rendered as Mochoilmog. The reference to moch (pig), of course, brings to mind the Moch Olla in whose name tribute was demanded to ensure success on the farm the following year. Refusal of tribute meant withdrawal of the Moch Olla's favours. This once again links the underworld pig, the King of Hades, with the syllable coll, an association which we find earlier confirmed by the identification of Coll as the herd to the divine Sow.

An understanding of the function of herd in these stories can be gained through an examination of the Celtic dragon-myth cycle. These involve three main characters. The herd who in the highland tales is the ploughman's son, the beautiful princess who is normally portrayed with long golden hair, and the monster which wishes to carry off the maiden and which must be destroyed. This
is a representation of the daily and yearly cycle and the
destruction of the powers of infertility and darkness.\textsuperscript{89}
As noted previously in the hero stories, this death
always takes place in connection with water.\textsuperscript{90} Typical
also of the herd in these stories is that he can be
recognized by the hair which the princess had clipped
from his head in order to identify him later.\textsuperscript{91} We are,
indeed, told that "nobody knew him, but at last he showed
the hair of his brow, and his mother knew him by a mote
and a scar that were on his forehead, and then there was
joy."\textsuperscript{92} In each case, the herd is recognized by the
missing hair.

That King Cole may be identified in a similar manner
seems also likely, for coul (cole), a variant of cumaill,\textsuperscript{93}
means "the tonsured dog" or "the servant of the dog," a
title which once again connects him with the Underworld.
As we have seen, so too are Coll and Kulwych, the divine
herds. Since this deity was described in terms of "bald"
or "cropped," one wonders if this attribute has some
connection with the syllable coll, for it is a title which
appears in all three names.

In The Tain, we learn that the hair was parted in four
sections - three braided round the head, and the fourth left
hanging.\textsuperscript{94} This long hair left hanging down the back of
the head was called cüil, from cúil; the back of the head.\textsuperscript{95}
As mael appears to be a referent to the shaved part of the
head, *coll* would appear to be a reference to the hair remaining at the back, and as *mael* appears to have its referents in the animal kingdom, so *coll* would appear to have its imagery tied to the agricultural world. *Coll* or *cul*, meaning "to collect" or "to gather the choice things," is related etymologically to the Latin *colligere*. As a small amount of hair is referred to by *cul* (*col*), so *col* and *cola* refer to the beard of the corn.

As discussed earlier, the human head was, at times, seen as the residence of the seed of life. Likewise, the head of the bearded corn holds the seed of the next generation. Thus, the castrated Attis is referred to as "Cornstalk," and we can then see how the removal of the "beard" (*coll*) could be translated both in terms of "no ears" or castration. This, of course, involves the "death" of the initiate, here symbolized by the removal of the life force, the sacrifice of the life force to the deity.

At the time of the harvest, the same referent is used for the life force of the deity. The golden harvest crops were a metaphor for the golden hair of the Great Mother. In this context, we find the syllable *coll* used to represent both a haycock or a clump of straw. Thus, we find that the hair left hanging at the back of the head, the beard of the barley, and a bunch of straw are referred to in similar terms. These all in a sense mean "a part of," "a piece of," and in this way are similar
to "coal" (cole) or "charcoal." We also find a word coll which refers to the "hog-score"\textsuperscript{105} in a curling-rink, and a "hogshead" (cole).\textsuperscript{106} Since Old King Cole has shown an association between "coal" and the Underworld, and this dark prince took, at times, the form of boar (or hog), and since he was also seen as "cropped," the association between hair and the Underworld king is certainly expressed, at least mythologically, though not etymologically, in the syllable "coll." We should also note the use of coll in earlier Scotland where it meant "to cut the hair," "to cut," or "to trim,"\textsuperscript{107} or "blackness."\textsuperscript{108}

Some similarities also exist between the Celtic coll and the Icelandic koll.\textsuperscript{109} We are told that "shaven crown," "without horns," "polled," and "violation" are related etymologically to the Icelandic koll and the Scottish coll meaning "haystack." There does, therefore, seem to be some connection between the syllable coll and the cutting of hair in a particular manner. The various associations with the syllable coll also point to the possibility that this cutting could be a tonsure, even a tonsure sine auribus.\textsuperscript{110} The evidence would point to the need for further investigation of such possibilities by someone competent in the field of linguistics.

Having examined the available evidence, it would appear that both coll and mael are possible referents to the Celtic tonsure. Both point to the tonsure as the mark which
distinguishes the spouse of the Mother Goddess. The
erding and agricultural associations connected with coll
seem to point to the relationship of coll to the yearly
cycle. The stories which point to mael as a referent for
tonsure, would appear to be connected with the daily
cycle of the sun.111

This daily action of the sun across the sky is said
to cut off the ears of night. These ears could be a
 synonym for head, beard, or testicles. Thus, the rising
sun which "shaves" the night is mimicked by the cleric
in his form of tonsure. It is this hair, this self, on
which the pledge of allegiance to the Great Mother is made.
That is, the cleric offers his life, or his 'generative
force, as surety to his deity, through the act of tonsure.
In return, he receives the gift of inspiration.
FOOTNOTES

1. This is seen in the Hittite belief that chest hair was a sign of strength.

2. Thus, when straw is seen as representative of hair, we expect it to perform in a similar manner. A curse against O'Hare, a landlord in the Longhrea district (Co. Glawey, Ireland) was executed in the following manner. Twelve girls whose names were Bridget each buried a sheaf of corn on O'Hare's land. They then sat around a quern and took it in turns to rotate it anti-clockwise against the landlord. (Patrick C. Power, The Book of Irish Curses (Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1974), p. 24.) A curse against Hardy, a landlord in the same area was carried out in a like manner. To curse him the women made seven straw dolls 'the Seven Mary's' which they laid out ceremoniously as if they were dead. Then the dolls were 'keened' in the old Irish manner . . . the women took the 'Seven Mary's' and buried them on the landlord's ground near his house. (Ibid.)

3. This idea should be kept in mind when viewing references to "child sacrifice," for the possibility exists that a token sacrifice such as this could be what is, at times, referred to. This is especially true in Ireland, for alongside a tradition which states that children were sacrificed to Crom Cruach (who incidentally is referred to in fairytales as Crom The Good) we have an equally persistent tradition in which each family has attempted to dedicate one of its members to the church. Evidence for this can be seen even in the lives of the early saints, especially if we look at the system of "fosterage."


7M. J. Macauliffe, Gaelic Law: The Berla Laws: or, the Ancient Irish Common Law (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co., 1923), p. 75. The 'eric was a fine equal to wergeld, though, at times, its meaning seems to be modified. For more on this, see P. W. Joyce, A Social History of Ancient Ireland (New York: Arno Press, 1980, Vol. 1 of 2 Vols.), pp. 207ff.


9Often these were buried in a spot unknown to others, or hidden in the house in matresses or elsewhere. Danaher, who discusses this, feels it is because of a belief that one must be complete at one's resurrection. But the furtive hiding would point to something beyond this. Hair was also believed to be used in charms by witches in Ireland as well as in England.

10These beliefs involving hair are probably best understood through the concept of the external soul, a motif which recurs frequently in Celtic literature.

11This would have been at age seven, for this was when the hair was cut and he was fostered out. This was the age of reason, and the end of the first of one's seven year cycles which ring in the changes.

12Russell Ash et al., Folklore Myths and Legends of Britain (New York: Reader's Digest Association Limited, 1977), p. 51. We have also seen that grasses were treated as if they were hair, and there is a belief on Aran island that someone passing the house by taking a straw from one's thatch can take away the luck one is likely to have in that day's fishing.

13For the complete poem, see "The Shaving of Murdoch" cited in an anthology of poetry by A. F. Graves. (Alfred Perceval Graves, A Celtic Psaltery (New York: F. A. Stokes Co., 1917), pp. 40, 41.) We should also possibly note the reference to the shaving of the "brow" in this.

14That is, the hair of the Mother Goddess. The hair which carries with it her life bestowing essence. The symbolism of the golden straw, the golden hair of the Great Mother is also evident in many of the fairy tales. We see it for instance in the story of "The Goose Girl," in which the princess (sun-goddess) has hair of gold,
some of which is desired by the goose boy, Curdken. The denial of the hair, of course, was a denial of the favours of the goddess herself. See, Andrew Lang (ed.), *The Blue Fairy Book* (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1965), pp. 266ff.


19. Owein's story belongs to those of the sun-cycle. He is the hero of light, who overcomes the Black Knight, and wins the sun-goddess as lover.

20. That is, he was confronted by her other self.

21. *John Rhys, Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by Celtic Heathendom* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1888), p. 352. The combination of ring, beard, and oath is also evident in the fairy tale "The Yellow Dwarf" in which the dwarf pledges his truth to the princess by placing a ring on her finger made from one of his red hairs. Since the dwarf in the story is described as completely bald, she is probably bound by the oath made on the hair of his beard.


24. The pun was a favourite device of the early bardic school.
25. The oath taken on a beard is evident in the story of "The Three Pigs" who say in turn "not by the hair of my chinny-chin-chin." It is also evident in The Iliad where we find that Thetis clasps the beard of Zeus to obtain a boon. The Egyptians also had a custom of grasping the beard while pronouncing an oath.

26. George Harris, "Domestic Everyday Life, Manners, and Customs in the Ancient World," Royal Historical Society London Transactions, Vol. V, 1877, p. 89. We must point out, however, that Caesar is speaking here of the "people who matter," that is, the privileged classes which just may be the Celtic overlay of a conquered people. For Caesar also says that the privilege of wearing the hair long was confined to the upper classes, with men of inferior rank wearing the hair closely clipped. This is probably what is referred to elsewhere as the 'county crop.' This custom has survived in places to the present day. The head is shaved in the spring, and those questioned on this practice say they do it because it is cooler. It is, however, an old custom and a generation ago one would have been told "it makes the hair grow thicker and healtheir." This was apparently a belief current in Harris' own day, and is evident in his statement that "the Egyptians begin from childhood to shave their heads, and the bone is thickened by exposure to the sun: from the same cause also they are less subject to baldness." (Harris, op. cit., Ser. No. IV, 1876, p. 3.) Such statements, of course, bear witness to the fact that there was seen to be a connection between shaving the head, fertility, and the sun.

27. Just as the stories which depict a custom of shaving the victim before beheading him might be simply the mythographers way of describing the trimming of the sacred pine (the rising and dying god) before felling a tree. See, Rhys, Celtic Folklore, pp. 560ff for references to this custom. Also of relevance here is Rhys' reference elsewhere to Yspyddon, who was treated in this manner, as "an incarnation of the sacred hawthorn." (Rhys, Lectures, p. 254.)


MacCulloch also appears to see the Druid in this light for he says:

There was also some special tonsure used by the Druids, which may have denoted servitude to the gods, as it was customary for a warrior to vow his hair to a divinity if victory was granted him. Similarly the Druid's hair would be presented to the gods, and the tonsure would mark their minister.


Once again we see here the connection between hair and oath-making. For at this point we remember the story of "The Yellow Dwarf" in which the Dwarf puts a ring of a single red hair on the finger of the princess in order to bind her to him.

James, op. cit., p. 32.

We see this same principle at work in stories such as "Beauty and the Beast" and "The Wonderful Sheep," where the failure of the young (fertile) maiden to return results in death or near death.

James, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

The custom which still persists in some areas of taking the ploughs to the church on Plough Monday, to have them blessed (i.e., made sacred) before the first ploughing.

In many parts of Europe the identification was made of the woman with ploughland, phallic with plough, and sexual intercourse with working the land. (Michael Dames, The Avebury Cycle (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), p. 155.) The same idea is expressed in the Rig Veda where Mother Earth is personified as a furrow, and later portrayed as being born of it. That is, from being the field, she becomes a godling of the ploughed field. (James, op. cit., p. 115.)

Patrick C. Power, The Book of Irish Curses (Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1974), p. 14. This idea was also in existence elsewhere in societies which still held reverence for the Great Mother. Thus, we find that "among the Romans the plough with which the sacred boundary furrow was ploughed when a new town was founded had to be of pure copper, though iron had been in use for centuries." (Sibylle Von Cles-Reden, The Realm of the Great Goddess: The Story of the Megalithic Builders, trans. by Eric
Also Balarama, Rama the Strong and the avatar of the
serpent Sesha presided over agriculture. His weapon was
seen to be the ploughshare with which he cut down his
wife to suit his statute. (James, op. cit., p. 115.)

38 McClel has already been discussed as one of the
gods wedded to the Great Mother in her triad form.

39 J. A. MacCulloch, The Religion of the Ancient Celts

40 James, op. cit., p. 248.

41 This does not mean to say the Druid had nothing to
do with earthly fertility. He performed many important
functions in this regard. It is simply that he does not
appear to have been held personally responsible as the
king was.

42 Of course, in the case of the Druid this is symbolic
through the act of tonsure.

43 John Ferguson, The Religions of the Roman Empire
(London: Thames & Hudson, 1970), p. 27. Although Ferguson
does not feel that Onians has proved his case, there is
enough evidence within the Irish material, especially in
connection with the cult of the head and holy wells, to
give full support for such a theory. Heads were certainly
seen as a fertilizing agent. As the 'fertile' king kept
away danger, so with the head, and thus we read that the
head of Bran buried at London ensured that the country
would never be invaded. (Alwyn Rees and Brinley Rees,
Celtic Heritage: Ancient Tradition in Ireland and Wales
(London: Thames & Hudson, 1974), p. 48.) Horses' skulls
buried under the threshing floor were not only a protective
aid against evil, but also helped in the threshing process.
See, George Ewart Evans, The Pattern Under the Plough

44 Anne Ross has this to say in reference to the Celtic
cult of the head.
The Celts were unique in that they developed this
common reverence for the human head into a subtle
and sophisticated cult. Not only did they decapitate
their enemies and preserve their heads, but they came
to regard the head as a religious symbol, connoting
divinity, the powers of the Otherworld (a head often
presided over the divine feast), and prophetic knowledge.

45 Rhys, Lectures, p. 392.

46 This could also be a garbled version of his slayer. For the description of the escape of the worm could be a pun for the ploughing of the field in spring. For it is the herd who kills this monster of darkness, the hero who is identified ultimately as 'the son of the ploughman.'

47 Just as the act of sexual mutilation identified the priests of Cybele as being bound to her, so the Celtic Druidic class shaved their heads. In the Isis and Cybele cults, the priests shaved their heads and wore white robes as did the Celtic Druid. The maypole is reminiscent of the pine tree venerated in connection with Attis, and we are reminded of the sacred marriage of Cybele and Attis in the yearly appearance of the May Queen and Jack O'Green.

48 James, op. cit., p. 159.

49 Ibid., p. 160. We see elsewhere in the ancient world that birth and death were at times viewed as one and the same, for we read that, 'I have sunk beneath the bosom of Despoina' was a formula relating both to death as return to the Earth-Mother, and birth as emergence also. (G. R. Levy, The Gate of Horn (London: Faber & Faber, 1963), p. 298.)

50 There is record of a hand-clapping ceremony being held on hill tops. Little appears to be known of it, and it may or may not be associated with this.


52 This immediately reminds us of other incidents in Celtic mythology which portray the pregnant goddess as desiring the fruit which brings both death and new life.

53 These ideas should be kept in mind when considering the customs in Europe, including Britain and Ireland, in reference to the cutting of the last sheaf. The remarks of Tacitus concerning the Maharvali should also be remembered, for he saw them as worshipping in a similar manner to the followers of Cybele.
54 James, op. cit., p. 72.


58 Ibid., p. 321.


60 That is, Erem son of Mil. Such an appellation would, of course, identify the invasion of the Milesians with the insurgence of an agricultural society.

61 For an excellent discussion on this aspect of Maeb and her connection with Eriu, see the article "Medb Chruachna," by Tomas O. Maille, Zeitschrifté Fur Celtische Philologie, Vol. XVII, pp. 129-146.


63 In this discussion, the name of Columba is not intended to be included. This is normally glossed as meaning "dove" or Columcille, "dove of the church." However, it is interesting to note that A. O. & M. O. Anderson in their Adomnan's Life of Columba claim the name to be Latin. On the other hand, cul or col means a piece of hair hanging at the back and 10mm means "bare," while cell means the clergy as a group, that is, as opposed to the tuath, and is derived from the latin cella. One can, however, see the possibility for a link between Celtic use and Latin of the reference to "dove." The doye, it should be remembered, was an attribute of the Mother Goddess whose tonsure still adorned the heads of the early Celtic clergy.

64 See the glossary in Ten Thousand Saints by Hubert Butler (Kilkenny: The Wellbrook Press, 1972), p. 328.

66 However, a quick glance at the Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland. By the Four Masters (O'Donovan, Annals) shows its survival as a final syllable in Irish names, such a position probably being quite appropriate.


70 Rhys, Celtic Folklore, p. 503. It should also be remembered that Col is used as a reference to a Druidess, that is, it is used at times to mean Druidess.

71 For example, coll is often glossed "hazel," less often "holly." (Rudolph Thurneysen, A Grammar of Old Irish. Trans. with intro. by D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975), p. 42. Col (or coll) is at times glossed as "druidess."


73 The Oxford English Dictionary, 1942 ed., s.v. "cull," "coll," "cul."... We should point out that philologists maintain that coll (collect, cut) is from a different etymological root to col (coal). But the meaning does
appear to have somehow become connected, for coal was believed to "grow" under the ground, and thus a "piece" of it could be referred to as with a "piece of charcoal."

74 *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1942 ed., s.v. "cut." What is being said is that a bore pig is a castrated pig. He has been "bored" or we could even say he has been culled or cut.


76 Especially since cul also means "fundament." That is, the foundation, the main part of which something is built, that which is at the very bottom.

77 However, we should point out that in our discussion of coll or similar syllables in this section, we are not meaning to imply the existence of etymological relationships unless these are specifically stated. The relationship which interests us here lies in the world of imagery, not of etymology.

78 An interesting comment which shows that Geoffrey of Monmouth may have been telling more of the truth than we realize. A variant spelling of col is cuil, which is the genitive of ceol, meaning "music." Thus, Geoffrey's tradition merely tells us here that King Cole or Coel Hen was connected with the arts. See McBain, *Celtic Mythology and Religion* (Folcroft: Folcroft Library Editions, 1976), p. 88. It is also evident in John Rhys, *Lectures*, p. 579, where we find Be-cuill glossed as 'Wife of Coll.' Once again we find cuil equated with cuil in Joyce, *Social History*, Vol. II, p. 179.


82 That is, his daughter was said to be gifted in music. One should also remember that the rhyme which commemorates him has music as its theme.

83 This should be viewed in the same light as Taliesan's referral to Jesus as "my Druid."

84 Rhys, Lectures, p. 579. We should perhaps note that cuil is simply the genitive of col which is often written as cul or coll.

85 Rhys, Lectures, p. 142.


87 See Rhys, Celtic Folklore, p. 500 and Ross, Celtic Britain, pp. 393, 531. We are here reminded of the Moch Olla, the supernatural pig who laid waste the countryside, and who was commemorated in a yearly pilgrimage of the youth into the countryside demanding tribute in his name. See, William Hackett, "Folk-lore No. 1," Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society, 1853, p. 309.


89 Ibid., pp. xlvi, xxxii.

90 Ibid., p. xli.

91 Of interest here in reference to our Celtic tonsure is that one story not only records the clipping of the hair but states that the 'mark' also included the tip of his left ear (Ibid., p. 60). Of the hair we are told: The mark varies in foreign stories - sometimes a ring is fastened to the hair. In Gaelic the mark is the "lugmark" of the shepherd and herdsman almost invariably where this incident occurs, and it is common to many stories. (Ibid., p. 139)

92 Ibid., p. 106.


95 Ibid.

96 Coll and cull appear in one form in Old English as culen and Old French as cuill. For some information on this, see Focloir Béarla Agus Gaeilge: English-Irish Dictionary (Dublin: Díolta Fioliseacalm Rialtais, 1943), and also, An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, s.v. "cull" (Oxford: The Claredon Press, 1935).

97 In a similar vein we are told elsewhere that a small amount of hay is a lock of hay and analogous to a lock of hair. See Glassie, op. cit., p. 157. Also, the Welsh rib (Irish ribe) which refers to a single hair or a piece of straw, shows that corn and hair could at times be thought of in similar terms. (Focloir Gaeilge Agus Béarla: An Irish-English Dictionary, s.v. "ribe" (Dublin: The Educational Company of Ireland Ltd., 1927.) We should also note the Scottish use of coll which is not only used in reference to a haycock, but is also given the meaning 'to cut.' Whether or not both uses stem from the same root is not clear, however, the meaning would appear to be connected, for to make a haycock, one must first cut the hay. (For coll in this context, see Scots Dictionary, s.v. "coll" (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965.)

98 In Irish this name of "Cornstalk" would be rendered as "Culm."

99 Remembering that in some circumstances coll and cull are interchangeable, and that "beard" is rendered coll, it is of interest to realize that the word for testicles is culls, and that testicles are also referred to as "low coll." (A Dictionary of Slang and Underworld English, s.v. "culs" (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1976.)

100 Graves also saw a Celtic and an Irish Barley Cult as existing in this context. Graves points out that Zeus banished Cronus (the Celtic Bran) his emasculated father to the Western Underworld. He notes that the Druids commemorated this emasculation in the cutting of the mistletoe with the moon-shaped sickle. He sees the druids as combining this oak cult with the barley cult.
As he rightly points out "reaping means castration." (Robert Graves, The White Goddess (London: Faber and Faber, 1975). Here we should possibly note the word anaicul meaning "protection." (Thurneyson, Grammar, p. 113.) Since ana was a form of Dana, that is, the Great Mother, we can see the possibility that the hair left hanging could also have been seen as a sign of being under the special protection of the goddess. Since Coel (Coel Hen) is directly related (i.e., etymologically) to the German heilig or "holy" and the Latin sacer and santis, and bearing in mind that sacer is etymologically related to sacrificium which means "to put to death." See Benveniste, op. cit., pp. 450-451. This is a reasonable conclusion to come to. We should possibly note here that the word cull as in the expression of "cull-me-to-you" (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1942 ed., s.v. "cull") which means in a sense "to bind."


102 Cul is a variant of coll or cull and whose genitive is cuil.


104 Not etymologically the same.

105 Scots Dictionary, 1965 ed., s.v. "coll." We should also possibly note the Welsh cut and cull meaning "sty." (Y Geiriadur Mawr: 1976 ed., s.v. "sty" and "cul.")

106 Anglo-Saxon and Old English Vocabularies, s.v. "colle" (Darnstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968). Another word which might be of some interest in this respect is collac or "wild boar." See Focloir Gaeolige Aghas Bearla, 1927 ed., s.v. "collac."

107 But we are also told that this use of coll is obscure. (A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, s.v. "coll" (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937).) Some entries in Scots Dictionary, 1965 ed. are also of possible interest. These are cole, "a haycock," and cole, "coal." In A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue, 1937 ed., we find cole, coll, kole, cole, coile, coill, coall, koill, M. E. cole, later coole, coale, O.E. col, coll all meaning 'coal.' Under a separate entry
we are given coll, meaning "blackness." Under separate entry again we are given coll (of obscure origin), M. E. collo, meaning to "cut hair"; and again under separate entry, we find coll (of obscure origin), meaning "to cut," or "to trim." These sources do not say that "coal" as found underground, and coll pertaining to hair and cutting are derived from the same I. E. root.


109 We are told by Thurneyson that coll can mean "violation" and that it is of obscure origin. (Rudolph Thurneyson, A Grammar of Old Irish. Trans. with intro. by D. A. Binchy and Osborn Bergin (Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975), p. 95.) Since to cut the hair against one's will is a violation and the Icelandic definitely gives violation and haircutting as having the identical word root, there may be some connection between the two. Alongside this we should consider the Welsh use of coll to mean "defect." (Y Geiriadur Mawr, 1976 ed., s.v. "coll") for "defect" is used on numerous occasions to describe the Celtic tonsure.

110 In Modern English, coll means "head," "top of a plant," and is equivalent to kollr (Old Norse), and kol and kolle in Middle German, where it also means "head" or "top of a plant." (Webster's Third International Dictionary, 1968 ed., s.v. "coll.") This would give weight to the possible use of "head and beard as synonyms. Also, "top of the plant," if used symbolically to refer to testicles, would act as a pointer to the use of "head," "testicles," and "beard" as synonymous terms. We should also remember the English countryman's use of "culls" for testicles, which we are told in explanation are "low coll." 

111 O'Curry tells us that the Feara Cul, a tribe who followed King Mormael, went to war with the Tuatha dé Danaan on the night of Samhain. (O'Curry, History, p. 286.) Thus, we see that coll (cull or cul) has been related to and combined with mael, at least in the mythological context.
SUMMARY

It is thought that Christianity entered Britain via Gaul, and that from Britain some influence reached into Wales and Ireland. Exactly when is a matter of debate, but Christianity was well established in Britain by the 4th century. With the Anglo-Saxon invasions, this budding church of the Celtic peoples was pushed to the west, and for some time was left to its own devices. Due to a surge of evangelizing activity by the Irish, the Celtic Church was brought to the attention of Rome. Rome was attempting to bring some form of uniformity to the Western Church, and the activity of the Irish, such as that of Columbanus in Gaul emphasized this need. There was also a surge of Irish missionary activity into Scotland and Britain that was spreading religious customs which differed from the teachings of Rome. Also at this time, English Romanizers saw in the expansion of the Celtic Church a threat to their own power. It was therefore to their advantage to bring the Celtic Church under the sway of Rome.

The Celtic Church still upheld many practices which had become obsolete elsewhere, and which formed the base for controversy between the Romanizing parties and themselves. The three main points of controversy centered on
(1) the dating of Easter, (2) the form of Baptism, (3) the style of tonsure. This was settled to some extent in 664 A.D. at the Council of Whitby which resulted in the expulsion of Colman from Lindisfarne and his return to Ireland, and a victory for Wilfrid and the Roman party. However, complete abandonment of the tonsure took much longer, surviving in Iona for instance until the time of Adomnan.

It would not appear that the idea of different tonsures upset the Romans overly much. What they were trying to do was to bring some kind of uniformity to the Church, and Celtic Christianity was anything but uniform in its practices, even within its own churches. The Celts, who had always been independent, were reluctant to give up that independence. For the Celts, it wasn't simply independence that was at stake, but tribal identity. Their tonsure represented a symbol system which tied them to the past and had become buried in tradition. But exactly what the components of this tradition were appears to be a little confused. The Romans inferred that the Irish received the tonsure from Simon Magus. This is, at times, corroborated by Irish chroniclers who maintain that it was the tonsure of the swineherds of King Loeghaire who, according to tradition, received it from Simon Magus. Later, writers at times claimed it came from St. Patrick, others from St. James, while the early church claimed it was that of
St. John. Despite the variety of opinion in reference
to the origins of the Celtic tonsure, very little work has
actually been done on investigating these origins.

The assertion that the tonsure was derived from Simon
Magus might point to the east as its place of origin, but
it would appear that, although this particular style of
tonsure did exist at an early period in both the east and
the west particularly among Aryan peoples,¹ it does not
appear to have come from the east with Christianity, as
the Eastern monks shaved their head completely. It
certainly was not a Roman tonsure; thus, it must have been
a native tonsure. Patrick, being a Briton, probably was
tonsured in the Celtic manner.

Some controversy also exists over the style of the
tonsure. Some say it "differed from the Roman tonsure in
that the ring of hair about the head was broken, the shaven
spot being continued forward to the forehead."² Elsewhere
we read that "the Celts shaved the front of the head, from
ear to ear, and allowed the hair to hang down behind,"³
and that in their insistence on their particular tonsure
"which consisted in shaving the hair in front of a line
drawn from ear to ear, they were merely perpetuating a
practice which reflected an older system which had become
obsolete elsewhere."⁴ Some also say that a fringe or tuft
of hair was left in the front.
The proponents of the theory of a tonsure which features a frontal fringe appear to be following the works of John Dowden. In a paper titled "An Examination of Original Documents on the Question of the Form of the Celtic Tonsure," published in 1896, he proposed a wedge or moon-shaped tonsure in which the hair was cut in front of a line drawn ear to ear which left the back hair long and a fringe in front. This theory does not appear to be correct. However, his further claim that the tonsure was worn in honour of the moon-goddess Hecate was closer to the truth. Such a statement points to the existence of the tonsure in the pre-Christian period, which indeed appears to have been the case.

Other authors have maintained that the tonsure involved a complete shaving of the entire front of the head, and it is this tonsure which is in tune most with the evidence. There is sufficient proof to indicate that those who proposed such a tonsure were correct. This tonsure involved the removal of all the hair from in front of a line drawn over the top of the head from ear to ear, while the back hair was left long and hanging. This style of tonsure was not unique to the Celts and was evident in the mystery religions with which the Celts probably had some contact. It would appear that the Druidic cult absorbed many of the ideas from the mystery religions, re-working them in the process. However, much
of what was explicit in the mystery cults became implicit in the Druidic context, at least by the time of emerging Christianity. Many of these ideas, which for the Celts were tied firmly to sun-worship, became centered in the simple symbol of tonsure.

It is in the saga of the daily rising and setting of the sun, the yearly agricultural cycle, and the eternal struggle of the seasons that one seeks the meaning of tonsure. This mythological drama involves three main characters — the Mother Goddess, her lover, and his tanist.5 These are the divine twins, whom we realize are ultimately one. While the one is always destined to kill the other, he who kills is by that act doomed to die. The companion of the day becomes the lover of the night and in this manner becomes the father of himself — thus, the stories in these cycles of the son fated to kill the father. This struggle is represented in terms of the solar battle, in which the lighter face of the god fights and kills his darker side, thereby condemning himself to death. The god who has been killed is seen as being born anew of the goddess, and in this cyclical manner replaces his other self. Thus, we see the concept of the eternal cycle.

It is from this Otherworld lover of the goddess that we get our model for tonsure. Often referred to in the stories as Bran, he can be viewed as lover of the goddess
of death and re-birth, "lover of the goddess who possesses the cauldron of Inspiration, the goddess of whom one aspect is that of the Celtic Muse. Bran is, at times, depicted in the form of a black cropped earless dog, or as a dark cropped earless pig. This earless condition is a pointer to the Celtic solar myth, for the Chroniclers tell us that the action of the rising sun "cuts off the ear of night." Thus, the loss of ears brings on the new day, just as the loss of the ears of corn brings on the new growing season. This latter is expressed in many ways, which includes the removal in the spring of the ears of corn from the 'last sheaf' which has been saved all winter, and mixing in some manner with the new corn, or even the feeding of this 'last sheaf' to the horses which pull the plough to drive the first furrow.

This is the image of the dying and rising god, the Underworld spouse of the Great Mother. It is this male divinity with whom the Druid identifies and by so doing also assumes for himself the status of bridegroom to the goddess. As the priest assumes the role of bridegroom, so Bran is seen in terms of "Chief Druid." As Bran is seen as the divine herd to the pigs of the sun-goddess, so the Druid becomes the swineherd whose herd is the community of men. This representation of priest as herd occurs in much of Celtic literature, although such representation is not explicit. The symbolism of the
herd can be seen through the Celtic Dragon Myth, which involves the daily struggle of the herd with the powers of darkness. It is he who releases the goddess so that she regains her freedom. In return for his services to her he wins her as his bride. He is to be recognized by the clipped hair over the forehead, a sign of his having been bound to the goddess.

Since within hair lies the life essence, the giving of the hair represents the giving of one's life. Through tonsure the devotee gives his life as a willing sacrifice to the goddess. The initiation of the devotee then involves a symbolic death and re-birth, and an unbreakable oath to the deity.

The rewards for such devotion can be seen in the symbolism of the agricultural cycle. The shaved head represents, in a sense, the harvested corn, the preserved seed from which life will spring - in this case, intellectual life which will be devoted to the goddess. This symbolism is further enhanced by that of the first ploughing of the field, the ploughing of the sacred furrow, which prepares the soil and makes it fertile. The Celtic tonsure, at times referred to in terms of "bald, without ears," may be depicted in the seasonal pageant in the following manner. The shaving of the head from ear to ear, from east to west, possibly represents the 'making' of the sacred furrow, while the attribute 'without ears' probably refers to
the lopping of the ears by the sun's daily action across the sky. This action harvests and plants the seed in preparation for the fertile crop.

Why the symbolism of tonsure was absorbed into Christianity is understandable. The Christian monks gradually took over from the Druidic class. The Irish were an historical people who saw continuity with the past, and thus a symbol such as tonsure helped tie this past to the new religion. The Christian symbolism of the initiate's dying and rising in Christ resembled the death and re-birth of the Druid in the service of the goddess. In Celtic thought, Christ, after his crucifixion, was seen as descending into Hell where he overcame Bran and ruled in his place. In this way, Christ became chief Druid to the early monks in Ireland. However, because of the shift of religious focus, much of the marriage symbolism became lost or changed. Thus, what was an expression of the male devotee towards the feminine principle became confused, and in the Christian context we begin to find that women, too, were tonsured. However, the tonsure still represented a life-time covenant between the priestly class and the divine, an offering of oneself as the sacrifice to the lamb who was himself the willing sacrifice for man.

Thus, we realize that the tonsure was tied into the mythological patterns of the past, and, in fact, interwoven with the symbol system of their very tribal beginnings.
Consequently, to deny the importance of this past, as would seem to be required when one adopted the Roman style of tonsure in its stead, one had to, in a sense, deny one's ancestors, one's lineage. To an historical people, this would have seemed an almost unthinkable act. This shift in focus from one's own historical past could only be accomplished by the re-interpretation of that past, in which Patrick, a Christian Saint, became the new tribal symbol, and Adam and Eve the new tribal ancestors. In this reworked mythology, Christ became the Lord of the Underworld, the "Chief Druid" of a succeeding age. It was only in this fresh context that the threads with the past could be broken and conformity with the Roman Church begun.
FOOTNOTES

1 In this paper, "Aryan" is synonymous with "Indo-European."


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Tanist glosses as "successor," "heir," "he who is parallel or second to another. Since, in the solar cycle, he who dies is the other side of the solar king, his substitute or 'other self,' it is in the sense of successor who is the 'other self' that the term tanist is used here. Of course, the dark divinity must die and be reborn to succeed.

6 George Ewart Evans, The Pattern Under the Plough (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), p. 138. Here, Evans informs us that it was believed that the land should be ploughed from east to west in order to ensure a good grain crop especially if one was planting barley or wheat.

7 This is at least the manner used by nature. The action of the sun ripens the grain. Fully ripe, it falls to the ground, to the womb of the earth, laying there through the winter ready to swell and burst into growth with the warm spring rains. Thus, harvest and planting are simultaneous actions wrought by the sun, just as was the castration of Cronus, for the belief was widespread that women could become pregnant by bathing in a river or the sea.
The above works are cited in detail in the bibliography.

We can see then by a simple glance at the chart that all of the above, excepting
each particular author sees the above variances referred to by him as equivalents.

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Legend: * Related

Appendix I
APPENDIX II

Tuatha dé Danann

Many Gods

Dagda - Titles - Aed - Eochaid Ollathair - Ruad Rofessa

DAGDA

Danu

Brian

Iuchar

Iucharba

through Danu - Danaë - links to Argos

The Milesians

The Sons of Mil - Tribal Connections

Ith - Ech - Aed - ep - ḫd - fid

Associations with Dānī

Legend = Similarities
APPENDIX III

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure a: Dowden's rendering of a Celtic tonsure. See also Figure c and Figure d which he claims are identical to Figure a.

Figure b: The Celtic tonsure as seen by L. Hardinge. He has adopted Dowden's theory of a wedge-shaped tonsure, and refers to it as an "axehead" shape.

Figure c: A picture depicting St. Colmcille, and which Dowden claims represents an example of the Celtic tonsure.
Figure d: It is this picture of St. Mummolen which Dowden claims bears a fringe and represents the Celtic tonsure. Compare this with Dowden's own rendering of the Celtic tonsure in Figure a.

Figure c: This illustration represents Dowden's own rendering of the Roman tonsure, a tonsure which Dowden sees as resembling the Celtic tonsure in the front. Compare this with Figure a and Figure c.
Figure f: This figure featured in the centre of this particular panel of the Gundestrup Cup and representing a female deity, appears to be wearing a headband, or a cap with a band.

Figure g: A representation of an ancient Irish razor.
Figure h: Hittites as depicted on Egyptian wall panels.
Figure 1: A cultic scene taken from "the ring of Nestor," Crete. Note the hairstyle of the masked celebrants.
Figure j: A representation of St. Matthew taken from the Book of Durrow and claimed by some to be an illustration of the Celtic tonsure.

Figure k: A figure of an Irish monk taken from a cross at Clonmacnois.
Figure 1: This figure is from the cross of Castledermot. As a bard he would be depicted with the bardic (druidic) tonsure.

Figure m: An illustration taken from the illuminations in the Book of Kells. This is only one of the many examples of "beard-pullers" found here.
Figure n: One of the many "hill-figures" found in England, this particular one is found in Dorset. Dating back to ancient times, this figure was allowed to grow over during the Victorian era. It has, of course, been restored.
Figure o: A picture of Bede shown tonsured in the Roman manner.

Figure p: A Hittite captive shown on an Egyptian wall carving.
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Stokes, George T. *Ireland and the Celtic Church.* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1888.


VITA AUCTORIS

EDUCATION

1948  Competed in the Queensland, Australia, Eisteddfod, in the elocution section, obtaining second prize. This apparently trivial piece of information is, in fact, quite important for the Eisteddfod is claimed to be a continuation of the ancient practice of bardic competition which was supposedly part of the Druidic system.

1950  Completed the Grade VII practical music exams and passed with honours.

1950  Graduated from St. Gabriel's Church of England Girl's College, Charters Towers, Queensland, Australia.


1972  Received the Permanent Elementary School Teacher's Certificate.

1973  Obtained the Elementary Certificate in Special Education.

1974  Obtained the Intermediate Certificate in Special Education.

1975  Obtained the Specialist's Certificate in Special Education.

1975  Obtained the Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Windsor.

1980  Began studies in the M.A. program at the University of Windsor.
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE


1960-1962 Held position as customs control clerk with Lacy & Hodges Ltd., a large imports firm in Victoria, Australia.

1962-1965 Worked as a bookkeeper for The American Armed Forces, Munich, Germany.

1965-1966 Worked as bookkeeper for The Royal Insurance Company, Toronto, Canada.


1972-1979 Taught for the Windsor Board of Education in the capacity of special education teacher.

1976-1979 As part of teaching duties trained visiting teachers from the Faculty of Education.

1978-1979 As part of teaching duties trained visiting students from St. Clair College in the methods of education for the retarded.