

THE PARISH OF CLOONCAGH.

SITUATION. This Parish is in the Barony of Upper Conello and is bounded on the north by the Parish of Rathkeale; on the east by the Parish of Ballingarry; on the south by Kilmeedy, and on the west by Mahoonagh and Cloonelty.

NAME. This is supposed by Archdal and his followers to be the Cluain Claidheach-Maodhog of the ancient Irish authorities as quoted by Colgan, and I can very easily believe that it is, as the natives assert that St. Maidoc is still remembered in the Parish. The name however, is now pronounced by the natives as if written 171 Cluain Cath, which if correct would signify Battle-Field.

The old Church of Clooneah is in a great state of dilapidation but from what remains it appears to be a ruin of great antiquity. Its choir is entirely destroyed, as is also the south wall of the nave, except a very small fragment near the south west corner from which it appears that the wall was two feet eleven inches thick. The choir arch is much injured in its sides, but its semicircular head remains which is eleven feet from the present level of the ground. The north wall is in good preservation; it is nine feet seven inches in height and built of large stones cemented with very good mortar.

The west gable is up, but its little belfry is nearly destroyed as well as its semi-Cyclopean doorway, which is now reduced to a formless breach.

The nave is thirty seven feet in length and sixteen feet in breadth, but the dimensions of the choir cannot be determined.

The following inscription is on a lime stone flag inserted in the north wall on the outside within about twelve feet of the north west corner:-

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"Here lyeth the bodies of Daniel Sullivan who died Anno Domini 1682, Margaret his wife who died Anno Domini 1690, Derby his son who died on the 22nd day of July 1708, and Joane his wife who died the 28th of March 1693. Mathew Sullivan who died the 7th April 1716."

I here insert what the Irish writers have collected of the history of Cluain Claidheach, which is very little.

This Parish was examined by me.

J. O'Donovan.

July 25th 1840.
Ballingarry.

Cluainclaidheach.
AA. SS. page 212, C.38.
Vit. S. Maidoci.
XXXI Janurii.

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At another time, Saint Moedoc (he, S. Maidoc restored the dead daughter of the Chief to life) hearing that some of his own family were captives among the Momonians, namely in that territory which is called Hy Conaill Gabhra, proceeded to liberate them from their captivity. And when the Man of God had arrived there, the Chief of that Territory (illius terrae) was unwilling to give him audience, nor did he leave him to remain in his fort (in suo castello). Before the entrance of that fort the Man of God fasted three days. The fast being ended, the daughter of the Chief whom he loved very much died suddenly. The wife of the Chief, knowing that this fact was the cause of a miracle, brought the lifeless body to S. Moedoc. And the servant of God being requested by her mother and by her (own) attendants, resuscitated her from death. But the hard (hearted) Chief still (or as yet) resisted S. Moedoc with harsh words. And when Saint Moedoc began to curse the Chief, a certain boy who stood hard by said: Holy Senior (&) Sire, may your malediction be on this rock; and when he had said upon this rock be the curse, instantly was that rock divided into parts (by his curse, he (St. Moedoc) split the rock and thus converted the tyrant to penance). That Chief, seeing this now, did penance and left (or let) his relatives liberated (or free) to St. Moedoc, and offered him the place which is called Cluainchladh-bhaith (Cluain-claidblaim) (37) and the Holy Man erected a Monastery there, and blessing the place itself and the Chief who gave it, retired from thence.

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Note (37). Et obtulit ei locum, qui dicitur Cluain-Claid-bhaich, Cap.39 (recte XXXVIII). More properly Claidheach, as it is found in the Irish (MS.); is in the Diocese of Limerick in the Territory of Hua-Conaill.

There is a Parish of Clouncagh in the Barony of Upper Connello.

AA. SS. page 223, Col.1, Cap.V, Append.
Vit. S. Maidoci, etc.

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Of the Churches founded by Saint Maidoc and the places in which he is held as Patron.

In the Life of S. Maidoc which we have given above, and in another more copious Irish Life of him, are mentioned some (Churches) founded by this Holy Man in every Province of Ireland, and several in some. In the Country of Ulster which is called Fermanach, the Church of Kellabegga (Killybegs) where also there is a miraculous stone, which is from his name called Lac--Maodhoc, that is the stone (lapis) or rock (saxumo) of Maedoc. In Munster, in the Country of the Desii, the Church of Disert Nairbre, and in Conallia, the Monastery of Cluain Claidhech, etc.

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Gough's Camden, R.I.A.
Cluancagh.

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At Cluancagh near Rathkeale was a religious house founded in the 7th century by Saint Mardoc of Fernes (H. 420, Farrar). Croagh Church in the same neighbourhood is said to have been collegiate (Archd. H.) as was that of Greany (H.).

Archdall's Mon. Hib., V.II, p.420, R.I.A.
Cluainclaidheach.

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A religious house in Hua-Conaill, which was built by Saint Madoc of Ferns, who died A.D. 624 (Act. SS., page 215). This is now a Parish Church in the Diocese of Limerick not far from Rathkeale, and is called Cluancagh (Visitation Book).

Lanigan's Ecclesiastical History, V.II, p.338:—

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*** ** Maidoc was remarkable for his hospitality and benevolence. On being informed that some relatives of his were prisoners in Hy-Conall Gabhra (141) he went to that Country, although far distant from Ferns, for the purpose of delivering them and did not desist until he induced the Chieftain, otherwise very harsh on this point, to give them up. It is added that this hieftain was so affected by the Saint's (p.339) conduct that he granted him a place called Cluain-Claidheach, in which he erected a Monastery (142).

Notes:-

(141). Now Upper Connelloe in the Co. of Limerick (p.341).

(142). Life, Cap.38. Archdall says that this place is not far from Rathkeale, and now called Cluancagh.