THE GAELIC INSCRIPTION ON THE O’DALA TOMBSTONE, MUNGRET.

My attention has been directed to an interesting article, entitled "Two Irish Inscriptions in Mungret Abbey Churchyard," in last year's "Mungret Annual," from the scholarly pen of the Rev. John MacErlean, S.J.* I am glad that my appeal for more light on the Maigue poets has elicited the information that Father MacErlean has in his possession a MS. containing three additional poems by O'Dala. I hope they will soon appear in print. As regards Father MacErlean's reading of the O'Dala inscription, I have a few remarks to make. We agree substantially in our readings of the first part of the inscription. In the second part, i.e., An níos Íor (the epitaph), we differ both in some minor points and in the very substantial span of twenty years in assigning the year of the poet's death. I think Fr. MacErlean is clearly right in taking ṣcăt as the imperative mood, dictate, compute, as also in taking čw as one word meaning fifty. I tried to divide the word čw, because of the two letters coming after it. In the imperfect photograph which I had when writing for the Journal, these letters appeared to me to be če. In the later photograph taken by Dr. Fogarty they are clearly če. In other small points, too, Father MacErlean is right and I was wrong. I beg, however, to differ completely with Father MacErlean in his interpretation of ṣcăt as meaning twenty. The form, of course, was strange to me, but I thought it looked like our present word člá, forty, but wearing an air of antiquity. I looked up Grammaire du vieil-Irlandais par M. J. Vendryes, page 131, but the only ancient form for "forty" therein is cethora. Distrusting my own knowledge in such matters, I sent a photograph of the stone to the Rev. Dr. Henebry, of University College, Cork. His remark on ṣcăt was: "ṣčăt 1. 40. Focal

* See page 191 of this Journal.
é na páid mar sa gheoléig. As neamhm aithnír an nóchar gen. ón m ár nócha .1. 90, do bith ré. According to Dr. Henebry, therefore, vocale = 40; the word was never in use in Irish, the composer was merely imitating nóchar gen. of nócha 90. Perhaps our readers would have no objection that I should transcribe here Dr. Henebry's rendering of the entire inscription, together with his remarks on some of the words:

I' gceim 'm mór cáir ar lám fa leag i gene—chult an gle-spar váin nó char thlach i bhríosáil gaeoléigSeumas cárd ó Dálaigh an bille theachtachI' a dé-sa álaim pós é mearp do thionoa.an peart laoir.Seacht sceatha nóig i' reachtaigharo orpa beochDafchra'n na veàgharn acht laethit nócha beith ar ù thsbeocht ùn Dé go'r eug an pilte da beochBa haorron féinid són tuir eile beoch-chieft.

His translation into English is as follows:

"It is a casualty and a woe stretched under a flag in clay-quilt
The gallant sprout of the poets who was not weak in the Irish tongue
Chaste James O'Daly the poetic branch
And oh kind God I beseech leave him amongst Thy herds.

THE EPITAPH.

Seventeen hundreds and seventy on them set
Forty after that, but ninety days subtracted
From the coming of the Son of God, until the poet died, exactly.
The age of the hero another fifty precisely."

Dr. Henebry's remark on it is: — r. i. v. t. vero. Óo cuiti ùr
tomorro ó mha chnuard-saoléig acht it ùn a bhig inmho .1. u
.1. o ár u .1. aorpa .1. aorpa. And on 'beacht: — da choir
beachtaig arn Lat. dictare

It would appear, therefore, that Seumas O'Dala died ninety
days before the end of 1810, and not on the 2nd of October, 1790.

TOMÁS DE ÓALL, S.O., Ph.D.