LIATHMORE-MOCCHOEMOG.

BY P. J. LYNCH, M.R.I.A., F.R.I.A.I.

The interesting historical notices of the two old churches at Liathmore, near Two-Mile-Borris, Co. Tipperary, by the Rev. St. John D. Seymour, which appeared in this Journal, vol. II., p. 127, induced me to visit them, with a view to the solution of some of the architectural problems which the author felt unable to explain, and to examine the carved ornament he referred to.

Ornament, when found in these early churches, deserves more than a passing notice, as it is of the greatest importance in tracing the developments of style in early Irish architecture. Before entering into a description of the remains at Liathmore, it is necessary to consider some points bearing on the history of ornament in early architecture; and the progress of monasticism, which had so much influence on its development. George Petrie, the first and greatest of our scientific antiquaries, believed in the existence of ornament in early Irish architecture; but he found it very difficult to prove it, the necessary examples having been for the most part cleared away to make room for more pretentious structures, or destroyed in that warfare, which we read of so frequently in the history of the country.

Some of the details in the larger church here, resemble what is met with in Anglo-Saxon work in England, but though writers on architecture now admit an ornamental style amongst the Anglo-Saxons, from the time of Augustine, A.D., 597, they appear to ignore the claims of Ireland to an ornamental style, or, indeed, to any style of church architecture worthy of the name before the introduction of what is known as the Norman style. The earlier churches of the Saxons were generally of wood, though Ninian built a church of stone in the Roman
manner at Galloway, as early as the fifth century. Lardner, in his history of the Anglo-Saxon Church, writes: "When the Saxons in their visits to the tombs of the apostles had seen the public buildings of other countries they blushed at the inferiority of their own, and they resolved to imitate what they had learned to admire." In these efforts, St. Wilfrid, Benedict Biscop, and others were engaged in building Hexham, Ripon, and York. The church at Hexham, built A.D. 674, was described by Richard Abbot of Hexham, writing in 1180, as having various figures sculptured in relief upon the capitals of the columns and the apse; and all descriptions agree that it was a very ornate structure. There are pre-Norman carvings still existing in the churches of Britford, Bradford-on-Avon, Monkwearmouth, and other places in England. Seeing that an ornamental style of architecture prevailed in England in Anglo-Saxon times, it is only reasonable to expect that the Irish Church, whose missionaries travelled over Europe and to the far East, should also have built churches in stone, ornamented with carving. That Irish artists were competent to carve in stone from an early period is proved by the work on the stone crosses, which reached perfection so early as the tenth century.

The earliest monastic abbeys were established in France in the fourth century by St. Hilary of Poitiers, and St. Martin of Touss. Corroyer, the distinguished pupil of Viollet le Duc, in his history of Gothic architecture states: "Three great intellectual centres shed their light on the first centuries of the middle ages. These were Lérins, Ireland, and Monte Casino. Their most brilliant time was from the fourth century to the reign of Charlemagne, by which period they may be said to have prepared the way for successive evolutions of human knowledge by assiduous cultivation of the sciences and arts, more especially architecture, in accordance with the immutable laws of development and progress." Of Ireland he states: "So early as the sixth century Ireland was the centre of art and science in the west. The Irish monks . . . . . . exercised a considerable influence on continental art, by their manuscripts and illuminations, and prepared the way for the renascence of the days of Charlemagne, to which such importance was given by the monuments of the Romanesque movement."
SMALLER CHURCH AT LIATHMORE.

LARGER CHURCH AT LIATHMORE FROM NORTH-EAST.
Columbanus who was a monk of Bangor founded a monastery at Bobbio at the end of the sixth century, but this was of wood, and it may reasonably be supposed that most of our early churches were constructed of wood, which was recognized as the Scotic manner, but, following the example of Ninian at Galloway, there is no doubt many churches were built of stone. St. Enda of Arran was a pupil of Ninian's, and it is natural to suppose that he would ambition to build a church in stone on his return to Arran, particularly as timber was scarce on the Western seaboard; and so with other Irish saints who returned to Ireland after visiting foreign countries, either as missionaries, or pilgrims. The record of the building of a church by these early Irish saints is not sufficient to connect it with any existing remains of a stone structure, as the original church may have been of wood; but where the original church was of stone, it is probable that portions of the original foundation still remain.

These churches were not built in the Latin or Roman style, but rather after the eastern manner, and it is in Syria that the best examples of these small churches with the entrances having converging sides, and horizontal heads are to be seen. Our early monastic settlement, found its prototype in the Egyptian lura, and some of the earliest pilgrimages of Irish saints were to the Holy Land; and from these facts we can understand the inspiration for early Irish architecture.

The smaller church at Liathmore is an example of the earliest type of Irish church architecture as will be seen by the plan and as described by the Revd. Mr. Seymour. The jambs and head of the original door ope, which had no arch, have been removed. This was no doubt the first stone church erected here.
Liathmore was a monastery of some importance, as its founder Mochoemog was the nephew of St. Ita, also the companion of St. Columbanus at Bangor, and a friend of the great St. Fursey, (A.D. 600 to 650) who converted the East Anglians and then became a famous missionary in Gaul, and is buried at Peronne. He is known to ancient writers as Pulcherius, his original name was Coemghin (Kevin), handsomely born. St. Ita called him Mo-choem-oc which the Latin writers rightly interpreted, Mens pulcher juvenis, hence Pulcherius. He was a native of Uí Conaill Gabhra in West Limerick.

The historical facts connected with the saint’s life are dealt with by the Revd. Mr. Seymour and, as he remarks, may be found in Canon O’Hanlon’s “Lives of Irish Saints” on 13th March (Vol. III), and I do not propose to enter into any details here beyond what bears on the architecture, and probable dates of the buildings at Liathmore.

The earliest church here was probably of wood, though Mochoemog’s father, Beoan, a native of Connacht is described as a renowned artificer in wood and stone. The monastery at this time would have consisted of a number of cells, either of wicker and clay, or of dry stone, covered with reed, and situated north of the old church, in the space lying between the two churches at present. The mounds and irregularities in the ground, noticeable there, mark the site of the cells, and other portions of the ancient monastery.

The original church founded by Mochoemog about A.D. 580 (as Dr. Lanigan supposes) served during his time and after, and the present small church was built probably on its site, and around the saint’s grave, such being the custom in the early church. This may have been the work of Cuangus, a famous Abbot of Liathmore whose death is recorded A.D. 746, and is probably the place where he himself, to use the language of these early saints,—had selected to await resurrection.

The fame of Liathmore appears to rest to some extent on the merits of Cuangus as well as Mochoemog. Their festivals are recorded in the Martyrologies, on the same date, 13th March, and they are commemorated in the Feilire of St. Aengus in the verse noted by the Revd. Mr. Seymour.

“May Mochoemog protect us,
To the eternal protection to come;
Cuangus, the chaste, of perfect knowledge,
From Liathmore, good the two men.”
This in my opinion explains the two figures carved side by side on the same stones, referred to by the Revd. Mr. Seymour as like "Siamese twins," which are to be seen in the walls of the larger church and formed portions of the carved ornament of the early Romanesque church which was erected here by the Irish monks, and most probably dedicated to Mochoemog and Cuangus.

It is safe to conjecture that the smaller church was the principal one here up to the Danish invasions. After these invasions there appears to have been a general awakening of religious zeal; many of the round towers were built as campanilii to the existing churches, as well as for protection, stone crosses of a very ornamental character were carved, and the Irish monks appear to have preserved their reputation for erudition, which, according to Dr. Lanigan—that faithful historian of the Irish Church—had died out amongst the Anglo-Saxons, and other nations of the West. At such a period, activity in church building was to be expected; we are informed in the annals, that Brian Boru repaired and built several churches, A.D. 975-1014, and some of these, as St. Caimín’s at Inniscaltra, we know to have been in an ornamental style. The earliest Romanesque church in Liathmore, portions of which are incorporated in the present structure, was probably built about this time.

The last Abbot of Liathmore recorded in the annals is Conaing son of Fin, A.D. 1015; Conaing was Abbot of Doire-mor, and Liath. In the life of St. Mochoemog, the former place is stated to have been about four miles (some translate it one mile) distant from Liath, and was ruled by a Bishop named St. Colman. It would be natural to identify Doire-mor with Rathmanagh, with which it is grouped in the Papal Taxation of 1291. Canon O’Hanlon following O’Donovan locates it at Kilcoleman about 3 miles south-east of Birr, which is 30 miles away. The Acts of the saints are strong evidence against that conjecture (1).

The barony of Kilnamanagh adjoins Eliogarty and is not far from Liathmore; Dr. Joyce states the name means “wood of the Monks,” so that portion of an ancient “Doire-mor,” or great wood, in which the

(1) See O’Hanlon’s Lives—St Colman 20th May.
monastery was located, was at one time close to Liathmore. As Conaing is mentioned as Abbot of both monasteries, there may have been a fusion of the two about this time, after which the site of Doire-mor, dropped out of recognition.
I have prepared a plan of the larger church, in which the portions coloured black represent what remains of the foundations of the early church, though portions of this work have been rebuilt on the old lines at different periods. The west gable and about three feet of the side walls were rebuilt, when other alterations were being carried out some time about the fourteenth century, leaving a nave of about 41ft. 6in. by 18ft. 6in. (2). The nave of the original church may have been about the same dimensions. The door on the north side appears to be the original entrance, though its position may have been changed from the west end, but it is not so clear that the present southern opening was an original door. It may have been, and used as a passage from the cells of the monks, which were on the south side; but it is more likely that it was formed in later years as a passage to a room or gallery, which was in the west end of the church, as the window high up in the present west gable would indicate. It is difficult now to determine if the original church had a chancel. It is probable it had, with a small chancel arch, which is often found in early churches (3). The present chancel arch is 9ft. 6in. wide, with a 5½in. bead, or bowtell moulding, on the angles of the jambs. Only a rough stone arch now remains; the original thin stone facing has been removed. The opening up or increasing the width of this chancel arch was portion of an extension which was made probably early in the twelfth century. It will be seen that the antae, a feature of the earliest church, was preserved. (See plan, east end).

The nave of the original church was lighted by two small windows of an early type, with semi-circular heads, about 8 inches wide at the bottom and tapering towards the top, the head cut out of one stone; a sunk margin was worked around the south window on the outside. This south window, of which I made a sketch, was rebuilt at some time, but only the head of the original window was replaced. This was a comparatively modern restoration, for the lintel inside is a stop-chamfered stone, recovered from the ruins.

In the twelfth century the original chancel was removed, a new arch formed, and an addition of about 27 feet added to the east end; providing a choir, with a chancel beyond. This later chancel has been

---

(2) The breadth 13 feet 6 inches, Vol. II., p. 128 is a typographical error.
entirely removed, but the lines of the chancel arch can be seen in the present eastern wall, and in the view of the east window. It had plain, rough jambs, and impost, with an arch of two orders, recessed. This arrangement of nave, choir, and sanctuary, was common in pre-Norman churches in England (4).

There is no record apparently of any foreign order of monks having been established at Liathmore (5); and how long the Irish order established by St. Mochoemog, remained in possession it is difficult to say. The Synod of Rathbreasil, held A.D. 1118, by establishing an episcopacy to rule over the diocese of defined limits, weakened the power of monastic abbots and bishops; and the coming of the Cistercians in A.D. 1148, may be said to have made the fall of Irish monasticism inevitable. Canons Regular were taking the places of the Columban Orders in many monasteries, early in the twelfth century; perhaps some such change took place here, but in the absence of any records this can only be conjectured. The Annals give little information as to the breaking up of the early Irish monasteries; it is to the MSS. that lie hidden away in the old monasteries on the continent founded by Irish monks, we must look for these particulars. Some Columban monasteries continued in Ireland, for in the Annals of Ulster, A.D. 1158, it is recorded, that at a Synod, held at the Hill of MacTaidhg, Flaithbertach Ua Brolchain of

(4) Bond's Gothic Architecture, p. 221.
(5) The Rev. Mr. Seymour refers page 133 to a record of 1634 giving the rectory to Abbey Owney, in the Co. Limerick; but, though he is the author of a very exhaustive paper on the records and history of Abbey Owney, which appeared in the Journal of the R.S.A.I., I find he has not discovered any documents in these records bearing on this connection. This too may be some confusion with Ileagh (see infra), which was a rectory, and vicarage; and the territory of Ileagh, or O'Leary, belonged to the Fitzwalters, who founded Abbey Owney, now Abington.
the Derry monastery, was appointed to the “Arch-Abbacy in general of the churches of Columcille throughout all Ireland,” and in A.D. 1161 this same Abbot of Derry “made the circuit of Ossory” and “the churches of Columcille in Meath and Leinster were freed” by him, and “their tribute and jurisdiction were given to him.” The Abbot of Derry and “successor to Columcille” was, no doubt, anxious to preserve—the Columban monasteries, but they may be said to have disappeared from Irish history after the twelfth century. On the foundation of the Cistercian monastery of Holy Cross in this locality in 1182, it is certain that Liathmore ceased to be an important ecclesiastical centre, as the policy of the Cistercian Order was to ignore all the Celtic foundations. We find Liath-mochoemog in the list of manors at the end of the twelfth century; so that by that time the Anglo-Normans had established themselves here.

In consulting the records some confusion is likely to arise between the references to the ancient territory of Hy Luigdhdheach (Ileagh) or Tuath O’Luigdhdheach (sometimes styled Tuath O’Leyath), in which Borrisoleigh now stands (Burgage Ileagh) in the parish of Glankeen, and barony of Kilnamanagh; and this Liath, or Liathmore, in the parish of Two-Mile-Borris (sometimes called Borrisleigh—Burgage Liath), in the adjoining barony of Eliogarty (6). I find that Canon O’Hanlon, confuses the parishes of Glankeen and Two-Mile-Borris (7). The grant of Archbishop McCarvill to Hore Abbey in the thirteenth century, which the Rev. Mr. Seymour mentions, was “of the church of Glankeen, and the chapel of Burgage Milath (8), with its appurtenances in O’Leyath” (Hy Luigdhdheach—Ileagh), and refers to the ancient territory of Ileagh, which nearly corresponds with the present parish of Glankeen (9), and.

---

(6) Burgage is the Anglo-Norman term for borough.
(8) Probably Gurteenadawn, the site of a chapel in Ileagh in ancient times, near Borrisoleigh.
(9) Glankeen Gleann-Choain, the beautiful glen, was the site of an ancient church said to have been founded by St. Patrick. Archdall in error includes it with the abbeys of the Co. Clare, but he does not define the locality. Though in the County Tipperary, it is close to the boundary of the portion of the Killaloe Diocese in that county as he describes. It was dedicated to St. Celin or Calanus. See Proceedings R.I.A., Vol. XIV. (1825), and O’Hanlon’s “ Lives of Irish Saints,” Vol. II., p. 620. Feb. 18.
not to Liath or Liathmore, as the Rev. Mr. Seymour supposes. Had this connection between Liathmore and Hore Abbey been established we might have looked for some Cistercian influences here in the latter half of the thirteenth century.

The next alteration that can be traced in the building converted it into a church with a chancel and a residence for the vicar, and possibly an assistant priest, as we now see it. This was effected by removing the existing chancel and building up the chancel arch, constructing a barrel vault over the choir, and forming a residence over it approached by an entrance from the church, and a flight of stone steps on the south side, as shown on the plan. To construct these, it was necessary to remove the existing south wall of the choir. The new wall supports the vaulting, and in it, the credence and piscina, described by the Rev. Mr. Seymour, were constructed. To support the vault on the north side, it was considered better to build a light wall, 1ft. 10in. thick inside the existing north wall of the choir. The roots of ivy have grown up between these walls now, and forced them about three inches apart, and will ultimately throw down one, or both walls. The western end was built at this time, and a garde robe was built projecting from the north side (10), the entrance to which was from the floor of the residence, and is now covered up with ivy. A window, as illustrated, was introduced to light the new east end of the church; the problems the Rev. Mr. Seymour found it difficult to unravel, in connection with this east end, are technical ones, caused by this window cutting through the existing chancel arch. Windows in this style were common in England in the fourteenth century, and it is to this period we should assign these alterations. The present west end of church, with window, was built at the same time. At this time the revenue of Liathmore belonged to the Treasurer of Cashel Cathedral, and the duties were probably performed by a vicar, for whom a residence was provided. This vaulting of the choir, and sometimes of the choir and sanctuary, with a residence over for the priest, is met with in Norman churches in England, and also in churches of the fourteenth century (11). The east window is about 7 feet

(10) Appearing in view from N. E.
(11) See Bond's Gothic Architecture, p. 221.
EAST WINDOW, LIATHMORE
SHewing EARLIER CHANCEL ARCH BUILT UP.
high, from the sill to the hood moulding, 9 inches clear light, and with 6 inch mullions. The window high up in the west gable is a single light in the same style. The walls of the church stand about 12 feet high. The difference in the dates of the alterations assigned to the fourteenth century or later, and the earlier work, is marked in the cut stone, all of which is limestone in the late work, and sand stone in the chancel arch, and other earlier work. The church and residence combined, represent the last structural change in the plan; but since that was made, the building must have frequently suffered—during the troubles of succeeding centuries—and portions of the nave must have been rebuilt at different periods. This is evident by examining the walls of the building, but in the absence of any records, outside what the Rev. Mr. Seymour has been able to collect, it is difficult to arrive at any conclusion, particularly as to when these renewals or the re-building took place.

To the antiquary, the carved stones which are built into the walls in several places, and in no case, I should say, in their original position are of great interest. The north doorway, with its upright jambs and heavy impost projecting from the face of the wall has all the characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon style of architecture. It resembles the doorway in Temple Connor, Clonmacnoise, which Petrie illustrates (p. 276), and assigns from the records to A.D., 1010. Both impost were carved, but the carving on the western one is for the most part weathered away; on the front the bead ornament, and what may have been a head, can be traced. The carving on the side of the eastern impost is fairly clear (the front is broken away). I have prepared a drawing of it from a rubbing. The lower member is a ball or pellet ornament, roughly carved; this is an early type of ornament, and is found on the Irish crosses; it is a classic detail often met with on the architrave of the Corinthian entablature, and common in Italian church architecture of the eighth century. The figure carved in low relief, barbarous in outline, in the spirit of some eastern prototype, has the outline formed by bands, as is usual in the early Irish MSS. At the feet the design of the ornament is now defaced; it is suggestive of two heads as of angels, with wings. This figure would be classed amongst those known as "Sheela-na-gigs." This is a name for which there is no authority; it was given at one time by an uninformed farmer,
in reply to an inquiry as to what such figures were called, and so passed into the books without question (12), but very little is known about them. Judging by the sculpture, writers have in some cases dated them from the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, but one has been discovered on the pillar of St. Adamnan on Tara Hill. Windle states (13):—

“At Barnahealy was found a brown gritty stone female figure—one of these old Fetish figures often found in Ireland on the fronts of churches, as well as castles. They are called “Hags of the Castle,” and when placed above the keystone of the door arch were supposed to possess a tutelary or protective power, so that the enemy passing by would be disarmed of evil intent against the building on seeing it.” As they have generally been found in, or near old churches, or built into the walls of castles, it is probable the figure is a survival from pagan times, and was supposed to act as a talisman, and in this way came to be used in the early churches. Probably the superstition was preserved by some of the castle builders, who made use of those from the ruined churches, or had new ones carved for the same purpose. The treatment of this figure, and its adoption as a decorative feature in this position is unique.

Two of the stones on the impost on the north side of the chancel arch, have carving in low relief which I consider worth reproducing. The centre stone, and the stones forming the impost on the south side of the arch are plain undressed stones. The impost measures 3 feet 7 inches across. The east stone (carved) is 16 inches long, one end is broken away; the west stone, also carved, is 15 inches long, and each 4½ inches thick. From the ground it is very difficult to say what the design is, particularly on the western stone, which is built in upside down, so that the animal (which is very clear in the illustration) is difficult to understand. After a rubbing has been taken, and developed, the design becomes clear. That these carved stones were not designed for this position is clear, first from the fact of the animal being set in on its back, and that one stone has the carving inside a margin, while the other has not, and the spirit of the ornament in each is different. There must have been some other stones in the building to correspond with these in

LIATHMORE CHURCH—DETAILS OF CARVING.

NORTH DOORWAY—IMPOST ON EAST SIDE.

CHANCEL ARCH—IMPOST NORTH SIDE
CARVED STONE SET IN UPSIDE DOWN.

CHANCEL ARCH—IMPOST NORTH SIDE—CARVED STONE, EAST END.
design, and they formed portion of the ornament of an earlier church, which existed before the extension already described was made—about the twelfth century—when these stones were taken from the ruins of the earlier church and built in to form this impost, and having been plastered over it has helped to preserve the carving on them, while the exposed stones are badly weathered; this mode of utilizing the carved stones of the early churches was quite common in Norman times. It is difficult to classify the ornament on these stones; on the western stone the closeness of the foliage design, and the reedy lines of the pattern, resembling striated leaves, or a modification of the V shaped section, suggest Byzantine influence; this combined with the animal symbolism represented by the lion is very characteristic of the Lombardic style. The eastern stone has a classical motif and exhibits that erratic use of the volute, which is sometimes met with in the remains of Saxon Architecture in England (14).

Carving of this kind is not usually found in Irish churches, and of the Irish sculpture that remains that which might be assigned to the eleventh or twelfth century is of a different style. Very little early ornament has been preserved, as when larger churches were erected on the site of ancient monasteries the earlier church was removed and the carved work used as ordinary building stones in the new structure. The conventional foliage and the absence of any attempt at interlacement remove this carving from the category of Celtic art. The fact that this carving was treated as debris and used as rough stone in forming this chancel arch—which is built of sandstone and probably of the twelfth century—is an argument against advancing it into that period, even that the ornament was characteristic of it, which it is not. Work with the same classical feeling was very common amongst the Italian Byzantine, or Lombardic architecture of Italy, from the tenth century onward, and such work may have been introduced here by monks who had travelled on the continent.

The important elements of travel, and intercourse between the people of different countries have always received consideration from writers on architecture. Rivoira one of the latest authorities on

Lombardic, when dealing with the Anglo-Saxon style, quite unintentionally shows that Ireland derived some of the features of her early architecture from the province of Poitou (15). A striking feature in Anglo-Saxon architecture is the use of long and short stones alternately to form quoins, and the dressings around the doors and windows and known as "long-and-short work." Petrie called attention to this feature as being general in the ancient churches of Ireland and illustrates it on a quoin of the older of the two churches at Monasterboice (16). Rivoira referring to this long-and-short work in the Anglo Saxon church of St. Peter's Monkwearmouth, calls it "a product of barbarism in the art of quoining," and states its introduction into Britian . . . must have been due to French craftsmen, perhaps from Poitou, as there is no other locality where we find its use so deeply rooted." He instances it in the baptistry of St. Jean at Poitiers erected in the first years of the eleventh century, and adds, "in this connection it is interesting to note that just at the time of Benedict Biscop there is evidence of direct contact between the north of England and Poitou, in a fragment of the will of Ansoald, Bishop of Poitiers (682-696) from which we learn that he appointed a Bishop named Romanus, from the land of the Scoti, accompanied by a band of his countrymen to govern and occupy the monastery of Mazerolles sur Vienne, which had been restored by him." Rivoira here falls into the same error as some other writers, by taking the "land of the Scoti" to mean Scotland, from which he believes this style passed into England through Northumbria; but it is now well known that from St. Jerome's time, and on even to the twelfth century Ireland was the only country known as Scotia, so that it is through Ireland, this feature of Romanesque architecture is most likely to have passed from France into Britain, and it may safely be conjectured that to this early intercourse, both Ireland and England owe many of the features common to the early architecture of the three countries.

From the sixth century the Irish monks had helped to spread the light of Christianity amongst the nations of Europe and were the life spring of Mediaeval culture. Zimmer (17), referring to the Irish monk

---

(15) Lombardic Architecture Rivoira Vol. II., p. 137.
(16) Petrie's Ecclesiastical Architecture p 188.
(17) The Irish element in Mediaeval culture, H. Zimmer.
Moengal states, "In my opinion there were few men who in the middle of the ninth century exerted such a beneficent influence upon the German mind in the cultivation of the higher arts and sciences as Moengal and his followers." In the tenth century the Irish monks were still in power; in 957 there was an Irish Columbanus at Ghent; the monastery of St. Martin at Cologne was given over to Irish monks, and St. Pantaleon at Cologne was ruled by an Irish Abbot; while Irish monks were to be found in many monasteries on the Rhine. While such men were engaged in founding and beautifying churches on the continent, and constantly travelling to and from Ireland, it would be strange indeed if nothing worthy of the name of art could be found in the churches of their own land until inspired by the developments of Anglo-Norman architecture in the twelfth century (18) as stated by some recent writers.

The remarks of the late Sir Gilbert Scott on Anglo-Saxon architecture (19) might well be applied to Ireland. "There exists, however, throughout the length and breadth of the land remnants, and in a few cases large portions of buildings of a wholly exceptional character not assignable to the Norman or any of the well-known styles which have prevailed in England, but evidently of earlier date. They are clearly not early Norman, for with the single exception of the round arch, they have nothing in common with the specimens of that style erected in the reign of the Conqueror, but are clearly in a style quite distinct from them. . . . The most obvious rules of induction, then, point to the conclusion that these are the remains of buildings of Anglo-Saxon date." The argument might be carried further in the case of Irish architecture, by considering the superiority of the Irish sculptors of the tenth century, to the Anglo-Saxons which would naturally affect the details of Irish church architecture, so that with a direct inspiration from Gaul, the style known as Norman, would develop here earlier and more rapidly than in England, where it was derived from the same source.

The two figures carved on the same stone before referred to may be seen in the view of the south door, built in over the arch between two carved heads. A similar stone with two figures carved on, is built into.

(19) Lectures on Mediaeval Architecture, Scott Vol. II., p. 35.
this south wall a little distance east of this door, and another head west of it. These stones are so weathered and broken that it is difficult to form an opinion on the carving, it would appear to have been of the same character as the Irish crosses, but has been much injured, more, perhaps, by vandalism, than by time. The rough, pointed arch over this entrance could not have been portion of the original work, probably these carved stones were built into position, following traditional lines, when this arch was being constructed in later years. This position for a representation of the titular saint was usual in Lombardic architecture, and may be seen built into the wall in the same way, over the door of San Michele at Pavia. The fact of the other stone of the same design being built into the wall at random, not far distant, strengthens the opinion that neither are in the original position, and that they formed part of the ornament of the orginal church built by the Irish order of monks, and represent "the holy confessors, Mochoemog and Cuangus," who were honoured on the same natal day, 13th March" (20). In the same way the carved heads can be explained. In the inner jamb of the small southern window of the nave, a small stone about 10 inches square is built in, on which is carved in relief a diagonal interlacement as under. This is the only bit of interlaced ornament preserved in the present structure. In the nave, on the south side of the chancel arch, a stone with a volute carved on, is built in. On the inside of the small window to the north side of the nave; a stone is built in which looks like a portion of an architrave, or frame, around this or a similar window. It is

(20) Scotch Kalendar of Drummond.
not moulded, but has a double face sunk on it, but owing to the condition of the interior it was impossible to get near enough to examine it. From these few scattered specimens of carving, built at random, into the present structure, it would be impossible to form any idea as to what was the scheme of decoration in the original church here, or how the sculpture—the greater portion of which must have been destroyed—was placed in the original building. However, in these carved figures, panels, and interlacements, &c., enough remains to justify the belief, that an early Romanesque church of an ornamental type was erected here before the twelfth century, at a time when the Irish order of monks was in power, and that it was dedicated to the Irish confessors, Mochoemog and Cuangus, whose remains were probably transferred there. Early in the twelfth century the power of the Columban orders was on the wane, and later on churches were not dedicated to Irish saints, and some that were had the names changed (21).

The surrounding fence of this church, of stones and clay, can still be clearly defined. It is roughly elliptical, measuring 140 feet on the major axis, east and west, and 100 feet on the minor axis, north and south. It is not massive enough—such as those at Leaba Molaga and elsewhere—to be considered an ancient "cashel," which would have encompassed the earlier church as well. It appears to have been an ordinary enclosure, probably marking sanctuary, in the later church. When the ground was opened up what was supposed to be the foundation of a small round tower was found to be only loose stones.

Why or when Liathmore ceased to be a burial place does not appear. When the castle was built, the Burgage or Borough (now Two-Mile-Borris) formed itself around it, with its parish church (now a ruin, and the burial place of the district), and so in time Liathmore was deserted. The only signs of burials there now are the few broken tomb stones in the chancel, and these afford food for sad reflection. One stone, evidently that of an ecclesiastic, the greater portion of which still remains, was carved in relief, a bead 1½ inches wide is raised around it

as a margin with a crucifixion inside, but it is now so injured and worn as to be indistinct (22). I have taken a rubbing of a fragment of another stone now lying in a heap of rubbish, it reads:—

\[
\text{LYETHY}
\]

The style of lettering on this stone, would shew that Liathmore was used as a burial place, up to comparatively modern times.

The vaulted chancel is used as a shelter for cattle. That the floor of the nave (if not the chancel) is covered with tomb stones is a statement, though denied, that I feel inclined to entertain; it is certainly covered with something of an impervious nature, if not tomb stones, perhaps the original floor, for on both my visits the nave, which was open to the weather, was a tank of filthy liquid mud, fully 12 inches deep, while outside the church, the soil was absorbent and dry.

In conclusion I would earnestly appeal for some protection for these interesting ruins at Liathmore. It is sad to see these relics of the past, desecrated and neglected, and fast crumbling to decay. Irishmen are proud to boast, that their country was once an "Island of Saints and Scholars"; the essayist is fond of dilating upon that theme, and the orator will on occasions, carefully work it into his peroration; but if we would learn to what depth the sentiment has sunk into the soul of the nation, it would be well to turn into one of these lonely grave-yards, scattered over the Island—probably its ruined temple stands upon the site of what was once the home of some of these Saints and Scholars,—and see how it is cared for. It will generally be found to be a mass of clinging, ruinous ivy, and crumbling tombs! surrounded by tottering grave stones, just visible through a dense mass of weeds and shrub wood. It should be the aim of every intelligent Irishman, to create and foster such a strong public opinion in this country, as would force County Councils, and other authorities, to do their duty in protecting grave-yards and preserving these memorials of the past. Then perhaps a new lease of life will open up for Liathmore-Mochoemog.

I have to thank Dr. George Fogerty who, with his usual kindness, assisted me with photographs, notes, &c., for this paper.

(22) On my last visit to Liathmore I found that the manure from the cows, during the previous summer, had completely covered these tomb stones.