

**THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT
AENGUSSIUS HAGIOGRAPHUS:
OR SAINT AENGUS THE CULDEE,
BISHOP AND DYSARTENOS,
QUEEN'S COUNTY**

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The Life and Works of Saint Aengussius Hagiographus: Or Saint Aengus the Culdee, Bishop and Dysartenos, Queen's County by John O'Hanlon

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JOHN O'HANLON

**THE LIFE AND WORKS OF SAINT
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OR SAINT AENGUS THE CULDEE,
BISHOP AND DYSARTENOS,
QUEEN'S COUNTY**

W. H. Kelly

THE

LIFE AND WORKS

OF

SAINT ÆNGUSSIUS HAGIOGRAPHUS.

L. 4

William Kelly

Dedication.

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TO THE

Very Reverend Monsignore

PATRICK F. MORAN, D.D.,

Professor of Irish History

IN THE

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY.

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MY DEAR DR. MORAN,

You are already aware the following biographical notices, regarding a holy and learned Irishman, had been prepared to form the substance of a lecture. It was delivered in our city under the auspices and at the request of members constituting the charitable Society of St. John the Evangelist.* The object of this Religious Confraternity, being to promote the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, furnished motives sufficient to engage sympathy and coöperation. It was your good pleasure, with the present change of title, form, notes, and emendations, which

* On the 10th of September, 1858, in Alderman Crotty's Great Rooms, Christ Church Place. The original title of this Lecture was "The Life, Labours, and Learning of Ængus the Culdee, Irish Monk and Author of the Eighth Century".

met your kind approval, to wish a subsequent publication, in the IRISH ECCLESIASTICAL RECORD. Having appeared in successive numbers of that most useful and erudite periodical, owing so much of its interest and value to your enlightened zeal and literary ability, I have now ventured to reproduce this memoir as a separate issue, and without material alteration. I am very sensible of its many imperfections, and I feel altogether assured, that future historic investigators will be able to correct the writer's various oversights and inaccuracies. However, it must be admitted, Irish Hagiology presents a difficult field in which to labour; nor are its fruits yet sufficiently ripe for the harvest.

To no other person than yourself could the writer more appropriately dedicate this little biographical tract. He might indeed desire to render it much more worthy of your acceptance, and much less liable to the fair strictures of a candid criticism. It is offered, however, as an humble tribute to real goodness of disposition and to distinguished talents, combined in just proportions. The services you have rendered to Irish ecclesiastical history and biography are destined, I fondly trust, to insure a prospective increase. They have already deserved and obtained national approbation.

With every sentiment of true esteem and respect, my dear Dr. Moran, receive assurances of obligation and regard from your faithful servant,

THE AUTHOR.

Dublin: SS. Michael and John,
Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1868.

William Kelly

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*William Kelly*

THE  
LIFE AND WORKS  
OF  
ST. ÆNGUSIUS HAGIOGRAPHUS,  
OR  
ST. ÆNGUS THE CULDEE,

BISHOP AND ABBOT AT CLONENAGH AND DYSARTENOS, QUEEN'S  
COUNTY.

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I.—*Introduction.—Sources of biography to illustrate the acts of St. Ængus.—His pedigree and early life.—He studies at the monastery of Clonenagh.—Monastic training and learning.*

IF the life of every good man can be presented "to point a moral and adorn a tale", some account regarding the labours, learning, and life of a holy Irish monk, who flourished in the eighth and ninth centuries, may claim attention and interest, when brought before Irish readers. They serve to illustrate the habits and usages of our early monasticism. Our regards cannot be lessened towards the subject of this biographical notice, because he has deserved to rank among the host of Irish saints. As a poet, too, his life abounds in the romance of reality. Much could we desire to glean fuller particulars respecting him, and to render his name and works more popularly known and appreciated, than they have hitherto been. We can only offer some brief biographical statements, and a necessarily imperfect analysis regarding his valuable writings. The time must soon arrive, when more satisfactory and learned efforts will make the venerable name of Ængus the Culdee be remembered and invoked, by every pious and enlightened Irish Catholic.

The acts of this illustrious saint, known generally to Irish scholars as Ængus the Hagilogist, have been published by

Colgan, at the 11th of March.<sup>1</sup> This latter researchful writer doubted not, that the life of Saint Ængus had been written at full length, and had been accessible, at a more remote period. But Colgan complains that this life was not available, at the time he had been engaged in publishing the acts of our Irish saints. However, the virtues of Ængus have been specially recorded, by some old writer, who prefixes an argument or an introduction to this saint's existing writings. Another Irish poet, likewise bearing the name of Ængus, has celebrated the Culdee's praises in certain verses, sufficiently indicative of great antiquity.<sup>2</sup>

Ængus the Culdee, sometimes named Ængusius Hagiographus, or Æneas, is said to have been descended from Coelbach, king of Ireland.<sup>3</sup> The name of his father was Ængavan, called in Harris' *Ware*<sup>4</sup> Oengobhan, the son of Oblein, the son of Fidhraus, according to a genealogy made out for him in our Martyrologies.<sup>5</sup> He was sprung from the royal race of the Dalara-

<sup>1</sup> See Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ, xi. Martii. Vita Ængusii*, pp. 579 to 583.

<sup>2</sup> Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ, xi. Martii. Vita S. Ængusii*, cap. ii. p. 579. In note 8, p. 582, Colgan remarks, the author of this metrical life, in the penultimate verse of his panegyric on the saint, prays that he may enjoy with his namesake the bliss of eternal life. He extols St. Ængus with surpassing encomiums, stating that the saint was often engaged in colloquies with celestial spirits. He styles St. Ængus the Sun of Western Europe. On account of those things related regarding the studies of our saint in his youthful days, his daily and wonderful exercises, his rare humility and austerity, the day of his death, being *ferio sexta*, the place of his burial, and such like notices, Colgan is under an impression, that the writer must have been a friend of St. Ængus, and have lived contemporaneously with him. Wherefore, owing to the concurrence of time, neighbourhood, and great erudition, it is supposed, that the writer had been no other than Ængus, Abbot of Cluin-fearta-Molua, who died in the year 858. See O'Donovan's *Annals of the Four Masters*, vol. i. pp. 492, 493. Colgan says, from the metrical panegyric, and the scholiast who wrote a preface to the Festivity of Ængus, he derived all his materials for the life of this saint. A few particulars only are excepted, and these were drawn from other sources. See Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ, xi. Martii*, n. 5, p. 582.

<sup>3</sup> The following is St. Ængus' pedigree, as contained in a preface to his *Féiré*, in the *Leabhar Breac*, R. L. A., Dublin: "Ængus, the son of Oengobai, son of Oblein, son of Fidra, son of Diarmait, son of Ainmire, son of Cellar, son of Oengus, son of Natsluagh, son of Coelbad [of the Rudrician or Ultonian race, who was monarch of Erin, and was slain, a. d. 357], son of Crumbadrai, son of Eochaidh Cobai". See Professor Eugene O'Curry's *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, Lect. xvii. p. 363, and *Appendix*, No. cxi. p. 609.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. ii. *The Writers of Ireland*. Book i. p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Such is an account left us by the anonymous scholiast on the *Festilogium* of Ængus, and to whom allusion has been made, as also in the *Santilogium Genealogicum*, cap. 23, where his genealogy is given in these words: "S. Ængusius filius Ængavani, F. Hohleui, F. Fidrai, F. Diarmida, F. Ainmirei, F. Cellarii, F. Ængusii, F. Natsluagii, F. Coelbadi, F. Crunnú Badhrat, F. Eochadú Cobhai, F. Lugadú, F. Rosu, F. Inchadú, F. Fethlendú, F. Casu, F. Fiach Aradú, a quo Dalardorum familia nominatur". See Colgan's *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ, xi. Martii. Vita S. Ængusii*, nn. 1 et 3 p. 582.