

shall not enter here'. Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the city of David . . . So David dwelt in the fort and called it the city of David and built around about from Millo and inward" (2 Sam./Kgs. 5:4-9).

In both cases a vassal people was supplanted, the Canaanite Jebusites by David and the *Dési Breg* by Cormac (cf. ch. 3, 8). If Odrán's initial objection to Cormac and his followers' intrusion into Tara can be compared with that of Jerusalem's Jebusite defenders, the subsequent accommodation between the two may well have been inspired by David's friendly negotiation with Araunah (the Jebusite for the purchase of his threshing floor for building purposes (2 Sam./Kgs. 24:18-25).

There can be no doubt that Cormac's role in early Christian Irish *senchus* as the perfect pre-Patrician king was inextricably linked, whether as cause, effect or a mixture of both, with his alleged worship of God and adherence to Mosaic law. Like David in the Bible itself, he was the 'Old Testament' embodiment and prefiguration of what was to become the Christian ideal of kingship by God's grace, and monastic writers' enhancement of the similarities between these two mythical paragons of sovereignty need come as no surprise.

Fire and the arts

1. It has been argued above that medieval Irish men of letters saw divine providence as operating through a series of trinitarian filters whereby the sovereignty's cosmic attributes were reconstituted in her personal ones and these then matched with her regal husband's three definitive traits, which in turn reflected the three primary social classes embodied by the king, namely hospitaliers, warriors and men of art (ch. 5, 9-10). The aim of the present chapter is to show that the men of art or *áes dáno* too were classified into three further main spheres of activity correlating with those of society as a whole. This will lead to a consideration of the role of fire and cooking in descriptions of the *áes dáno* and other major social groups.

2. The Latin Life of St. Daig of Inishkeen in the Salamanca codex is unusual in displaying a striking thematic consistency that is clearly enunciated as early as the third section. During a visit by its youthful hero to the nearby monastery of Louth and its founder St. Mochtae "then the man of God ordered the holy lad to be brought to him and greatly rejoiced at his arrival. And taking his hand he said: 'this is the physician (*medicus*) concerning whom I once foresaw in the spirit that he would cure me of my three infirmities.' For Mochtae suffered from a severe ailment of head, heart and kidneys. However, by placing the boy's hand upon the sick members he was immediately cured. After this he blessed the same hand and said, 'that hand will artistically make very many utensils of iron and bronze as well as gold and silver for the use of the Church. In addition it will also write very many volumes most excellently (*plurima de ferro et aere, de auro etiam atque argento utensilia ad usum ecclesiae pertinentia artificiose manus ista operabitur. Insuper et plurima peroptime scribet volumina*)'" (Heist, 1965, 389). Throughout the rest of his life Daig's actions conform overwhelmingly to this prediction: in addition to some other cures the dead are restored to life with monotonous regularity, a long inventory of his various ecclesiastical metal artefacts is given (par. 3), and the production of such objects as well as books is mentioned from time to time. The Church's interest in and patronage of key *áes dáno* specializations are thus clearly asserted (see ch. 4, 2), as is the trichotomization of these under the major headings of healing, metalwork and learning.

Virtually the same tripartition of the arts is made quite unambiguously in the scholar-king Cormac mac Cuilennáin's ninth-century Glossary entry for Brigit: "Brigit, i.e. the poetess (*ban-file*), daughter of the Dagdae. This is Brigit the female seer or woman of insight (*ban-éces nó bé n-éicsí*), i.e. the goddess whom poets (*filid*) used to worship, for her cult was very great and very splendid. It is for this reason that they call her (the goddess) of poets (*poetarum*) by this title, and her sisters were Brigit the woman of leechcraft (*bé legis*) and Brigit the woman of smithcraft (*bé ngoibnechtá*), i.e. goddesses, i.e. three daughters of the Dagdae are they. By their names the goddess Brigit was called by all the Irish" (Stokes, 1862, 8). This antiquarian passage in Old Irish interspersed with Latin gives a remarkably clear insight into the likely pagan antecedents of a major early Irish saint. Moreover, in presenting a trinity of identically named patronesses of the arts subdivided into medicine, metalwork and the learned discipline of poetry it almost exactly replicates the scheme just identified from Daig's Life.

3. Apart from healing miracles, particularly the cure of lepers, that are too much of a hagiographical commonplace to prove much in isolation, the St. Brigit of hagiography displays little thematic affinity with the identically named daughters of the Dagdae as described by Cormac above. On the other hand, all of the early Brigidine Lives from Cogitosus' roughly mid-seventh-century *Vita Brigitae* on (trans. Connolly and Picard, 1987) share a rather distinctive obsession with the miraculous provision of food, drink and goods, hospitality and other acts of generosity. The obvious prototype for these would be a *bríugu* or "hospitaller", and *Cethirslicht Athgabála* duly mentions the judgement of a legendary Brig *bríugu*, mother of the Ulster Cycle's peacemaker Sencha mac Ailolla (*CIH* 377.26 and 380.14-5, cf. Kelly, 1988, 358).

The names Brig and Brigit were prone to interchangeability in early Irish sources. Thus the inventory of identically named female saints, *Comannmann Násh-dag nÉrenn*, lists ten different Brigit's, twelve Brigs and three Brigit's *alias* Brigs depending upon the manuscript (Ó Riain, 1985, 153-4 = no. 708.1-23), the Dagdae's daughter Brigit the poetess is called Brig in *Cath Maige Tuired* (Gray, 1982, 119), and Brig daughter of Comloch in the Old Irish *Beithu Brigte* (par. 31) turns up as a Brigit in the so-called *Vita I* or "First Life" in Latin (par. 27; Bollandus, 1658, 121). The Christian St. Brigit's cult or attributes may, then, be partly based upon those of the mythical female hospitaller whose name is preserved in a legal context as Brig the *bríugu*.

Another mythical Brig mentioned in the law tracts is "Brig *ambue*, the female expert of the men of Ireland in wisdom and prudence", as she is called in a list of pre-Christian Irish legal paragons attached to the H.3.17 version of the so-called 'pseudo-historical' prologue to the *Senchus Már* (*CIH* 1654.12). *Ambue* "stranger, outlaw" denoted someone without the property and attendant legal rights of a *bue* or full member of the *túath* such as the *bó-aire* or "cow-freeman", whose legal status is ascribed by *Críth Gablach* (pars. 13 and 24) preeminently to the ownership of cattle, the basic measurement of wealth in ancient Ireland as in many other societies (cf. Binchy, *Críth Gablach*, 105.6). Etymologically *bue* and *ambue* are from Celtic **bowyos* "possessing cows", (< IE **g^howyas*; Gk. *-boios*, Skt. *gavyah* "pertaining to cattle") and **am-bowyos* "cowless" (privative *am-* < IE **h¹-* "un-") respectively (McCone, 1986d, 11; 1987, 150, n. 15). The world of the *ambue*