Remarks on the Theological Aspect of the Hell-Motif in Síaburcharpat Con Culaind

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Manuscript Witnesses for *ShCC*

**Version I**

Lebor na hUidre (LU):
- RIA MS 23 E 25, fo. 113a—115b
- “Book of the Dun Cow”
- 12th century.

**Version II**

British Library Egerton 88:
- fo. 14b¹—15a²; Late 16th century.

British Library Additional 33,993: fo. 2b—3b; 16th century.

An ro chesusa d’imned
a Loegairi
That which I suffered of trouble,
for muir ñ tir.
O Lóegaire,
bá ansa damsa óenadaig
on sea and land;
la demon co n-ír
More severe to me was a single night
with the Demon with rage.

Mo chorpan ba crethnaigthe
la Lugaid a búaid.
My small body was pierced
with Lugaid his victory.
roucsat demna m’anmain
isin richis rúaid
The demons brought my soul
into the red ember.
Immárubartsa in clétine
gai bolgae do léir.
I plied on them the javelin,
ra bása i comchétbúaid
the gae bolga, assiduously.
frí demon hi péin
I was in my complete victory
against the Demon in pain.
Bá comnart mo gaiscedsa
mo chlaideb ba crúaid.
My weapons were strong
mo chlaideb ba crúaid.
my sword was hard.
domrimartsa in demon co n-óenmeór
The Devil pressed me with one finger
isin richis rúaid
into the red ember.

Ind ríg consniat a rríge
cia beit co mméit a mbrigi.
The kings who contend for their sovereignty
ní cumcat ni la mac nDé
though they may be with greatness of their might.
acht a cubatt i ndire.
They achieve nothing with respect to God’s son
except their own length of arm in the grave.
Immárubartsa in clétine
gai bolgæ do léir.
ro básæ i comchétbúaid
fri demon hi péin[.]

I plied on them the javelin,
the gæ bolga, assiduously.
I was in my complete victory
against the Demon in pain.

Egerton 88/Add. 33,993

Imrubairt-sa cleitine
gai bolga co leir.
robadhusa a comchétfaid
fri demon a pein[.]

I plied the spearlet
and the gæ bolga diligently;
I was in concert
with the Demon in suffering.*

*Acknowledgement to Feargal Ó Béarra (NUI Galway) for his reading of Egerton 88/Add. 33,993 here.
“On his journeys Patrick finds a 120-foot long grave (monument). Patrick’s companions marvel at its length and the saint suggests that he will call back the dead man from the other world. He prays and the dead man is restored to life. He gives his name and says that he was a swineherd murdered a hundred years ago and reports of the torments suffered by him in hell whither he was sent because he was a pagan. When he refuses to return to hell Patrick baptizes him and the man dies again, now finding his way to heaven” (J. Szővérfy, citing “Heroic Tales” in ZCP, xxv (1956), 183-210).
Acallam na Senórach

‘Ocus aiscid rob áil liumsa d’iarraid ort, a naemchleirig,’ ar Cailtì. ‘Cá haiscid sin, a m’anam?’ ar Péatraic. ‘Mo deirbtşiur do thabairt a piannaib, uair tarrasa dot muintir us ñ do gráda.’
‘Do máthair ñ t’athair ñ do thigerna Find mac Cumaill do thabairt a piannaib ortsu,’ ar Pétraic, ‘massa maith lé Dia.’ (4120)
Ro altaig Cailte sin don Tailgind, conid hí sin étail is ferr fuair Cailti riam.

I’d like to make a request, holy cleric, said Caílte.
What is it, friend? asked Patrick.
I’d like my sister to be delivered from torment now that I have become one of your followers and favoured ones.
May she, your father and mother and your lord Finn mac Cumaill be delivered from torment for your sake if it be God’s will, said Patrick.
Caílte thanked the Táilchenn. It was the best gift Caílte ever got.

Reicne Fothaid Canainne

48 Scarfìd frit cēin mo chorp toll, m’anum do pìenadh la donn, serc bethu cé is miri, ingi adradh Rìgh nimhi.

48 My riddled body must part from thee awhile, my soul to be tortured by the black demon. Save (for) the worship of Heaven’s King, love of this world is folly.

XXII

(2) Is and sin do múchastair rí na glóiri in bás foa chosaib ṛ ro eadarglacastair Satanus, oirchindeach Ifrind, ṛ da chuibrich hé ṛ do theilc i fudomain Ifrind.

(2) Thereupon the King of Glory destroyed death beneath his feet and seized Satan, Prince of Hell, and bound him and cast him into the depths of Hell.

Irish Gospel of Nicodemus (YBL)

[XXIII opens with Hell receiving Satan and “reproaching him strongly”, and it closes with Christ placing Satan under the command of Hell.]

XXIV

(1) Ocus ro sín a láim uad ḏ adbert: ‘Ticid chucum a maemu grádacha da neoch agá fuil m’ímáigin ḏ mo cho(i)smailis fén uair do damnad sib tré chrand ḏ tré diabul ḏ do saeradh sib tré chrann ḏ tromum-sa.’ Ocus ro gab Ádam ara láim deis ḏ adubairt fris: ‘(Do-rigne mé thú ḏ) síth 810 duid ḏ dod (t)huili chlaind fhíreóin.

(1) And he [i.e. Christ] stretched out his hand saying: ‘Come to me beloved saints who have my image and likeness, for you were condemned by a tree and by the devil and you have been liberated by a tree and by me.’ And he took Adam by his right hand and said to him: ‘Peace be with you and all your righteous children. And when I created you, it was not for this place that I made you. Come along with me to my own kingdom for I have bought you with my own flesh and blood.’
113. Sech do-rrochuíni, at-bath,  
ní arraid in ndílguthach;  
ráncsart co Satan serb  
druing duib demnae i n-ifernn.

He both despaired and died;  
he did not approach the forgiving one.  
Black hosts of devils brought  
him to Hell to harsh Satan.

Mo chorpan ba crethnaigthe  
la Lugaid a búaid.  
ráncsart demna m’anmain  
isin richis rúaid.

My small body was shaken  
with Lugaid its victory.  
The demons have brought my soul  
into the red-white [glowing?] embers.

My chief trouble was with two well-known heretics of the worst sort, blasphemers against God and the catholic faith. One, called Aldebert, is a Gaul by birth, the other, called Clemens, is a Scot... Contrary to the teaching of the holy fathers he contends that Christ, descending to the lower world, set free all who were imprisoned there, believers and unbelievers, those who praised God and the worshipers of idols...”

[From Letter CLXIII [163]. From Evodius to Augustine.] “I ask also a fourth question: Who are those spirits in reference to whom the Apostle Peter testifies concerning the Lord in these words: “Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, in which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison?” giving us to understand that they were in hell, and that Christ descending into hell, preached the gospel to them all, and by grace delivered them all from darkness and punishment, so that from the time of the resurrection of the Lord judgment is expected, hell having then been completely emptied.”

[From Letter CLXIV [164]. From Augustine to Evodius.] “It is established beyond question that the Lord, after He had been put to death in the flesh, “descended into hell;” (II.3)...”

REPLY: We have already seen that Christ, when he descended into hell, acted by the power of his passion. His descent into hell, then, brought the fruit of liberation to those only who were joined to Christ’s passion in faith vivified by love, which takes away sin. But those who were in the inferno of the damned were either wholly without faith in Christ’s passion, such as the infidels, or having had that faith, had no likeness in charity to the suffering Christ. These, consequently, were not cleansed of their sins. Christ’s descent into hell therefore brought them no deliverance from the guilt of hell’s punishment...

3. That some were not delivered from every part of hell, as from every situation in the world, is not to be ascribed to a want of power on Christ’s part, but to their different conditions. As long as men draw breath they can be converted to faith and charity, for in this life men are not confirmed in either good or evil; after their departure from this world, however, they are so fixed.

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http://ovalscreams.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/cuchulainn-war-chariot.jpg