

Anonymous

The “Life” of St Piran

(De sancto Pirano episcopo et confessore.)

BHL 4659 ¹

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2022

¹ This text is listed under “Kiaranus ep. Sagiriensis”, where it is the third *Vita*.

² This translation is placed in the public domain by the translator.

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Introduction

St Piran's Day on March 5 is becoming popular, and the cross of St Piran is today considered the Cornish flag. Much of what is said about him is of modern origin.

This document contains the Latin text of a medieval *Life* of St Piran, with my own English translation of it. Unfortunately it tells us nothing about St Piran.

The *Lives* of the Saints are a form of literature not well understood in our times. They are a form of folk-story rather than history. As such the church tended to regard them with some wariness. While they were things "required to be read" (= *legenda*), the marvellous content was sometimes found embarrassing or exploitative.³ The stories contained in them arose among the people, and were repeated and transmitted in much the same way as urban legends are today. Some might have historical basis; others none whatsoever.

In 1516 Wynkyn de Worde printed a volume under the title of *Nova Legenda Anglie* (= NLA), a collection in Latin of the *Lives* of mainly English saints, in alphabetical order. It included a *Life* of St Piran. He advertised this as based on work by John of Tynemouth, and John Capgrave. It seems that John of Tynemouth in the 14th century assembled a "Legendary" – a collection of Saint's *Lives* – in the order in which each saint's day appears in the medieval year, and the *NLA* is based on this.

The text and translation given below come from a 1901 reprint of the NLA. The author is unknown, but John of Tynemouth seems to have abbreviated the text that he found. In his time the shrine of St Piran at Piranzebuloe belonged to Exeter Cathedral Church, and his body was buried there. In the medieval church the services for a Saint's Day featured readings from the *Life* of that saint. St Piran's Day was and is March 5.

But the *Life* of St Piran is not based on history. It is not even a collection of Cornish folk-stories about St Piran. It is in fact a version of the *Life* of the Irish Saint Ciaran of Saighir.

³ There is a note in the 6th century *Decretum Gelasianum* in which the *Lives* of certain saints are condemned as being too silly for words and also heretical. In times of superstition it was all too easy for fraudsters or over-imaginative fools to acquire a self-created reputation for sanctity, which tended to become a source of money and power. The church authorities had a duty to protect ordinary people from such predatory tendencies, and therefore regarded them with suspicion until they proved their *bona fides*. This is still the case today in countries such as Italy.

This exists in two Irish versions, and two Latin versions, and there are translations of some of these available online. A comparison quickly shows that the supposed *Life* of St Piran was produced by the simple process of changing the name, and omitting material, especially that which said that the saint was buried in Ireland, rather than in Cornwall. It has no historical content, and is merely a collection of Irish folktales. Possibly the *Life* of St Piran was composed by one of the canons of Exeter in just this way.

In 1516 an abbreviated translation of the whole NLA was printed by Richard Pynson as *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande*. But this I have not seen.

How I came to make this translation

I never intended to make a translation the *Life* of St Piran. But this year, on St Piran's Day, I happened to see a BBC report that St Piran died when he fell into a well while drunk. This careless reporting caused me to look into the sources for St Piran's life and legends. Almost at once a poster on the Twitter social media site advised me that the story really belonged to a certain Abbot Pir of Caldey Island, who appears in the *Life* of St Samson.

But by this point I had already downloaded the 1901 Horstman edition of Capgrave's *Nova Legenda Angliae*, and located and read the *Life*. On a whim I extracted the few pages on which it was printed, and scanned them using the Abbyy Finereader 15 optical character recognition software. Horstman's text was clear and I thought that it would scan well. Perhaps it was a bit of nostalgia for the efforts in my younger days to scan texts, now more than twenty years ago, that motivated me. The modern software worked very well – far better than those days – and I found it restful to go through the pages and fix the handful of errors. I thought perhaps that I would create a blog post about the sources for Piran, and upload the Latin text there, so that one day some passer-by might make a translation.

I pulled the text into Microsoft Word 2010 – only a fool pays a subscription for his software – and I tried to set the spell-checking language to Latin. This didn't work well, and Word kept changing the language back to Italian or English. While I was fighting with this, a menu previously unknown to me popped up, for “translation”. Curious, I clicked on it, and it did not work. Well, I never really thought it would.

But I was curious. So then I copied the whole text and pasted it into Google Translate, and let it auto-detect the language, which it did. To my utter astonishment the “translation” was really very good indeed, at least compared to my expectations. I do not know if the algorithm has been updated, but usually the output from Latin is barely usable. Not so in this case. The first 5,000 words made perfect sense and flowed fluidly. There were a few glitches, but not many. I wrote a blog post about this marvellous discovery.

It seemed that it might be a simple task, to just fix the few glitches and produce a decent draft translation. Of course it would have no scholarly value, but then few seem to care about translation quality for hagiographical texts. Most texts that discuss these texts hardly bother to translate them. Whatever I ended up with would be better than nothing.

In fact the task was more arduous than I had expected, as there were more errors than a casual glance had suggested. I ended up interleaving the sentences of the Latin and the Google output, just as I usually would, and working on each sentence in turn. But the quality was far, far better than I have found in the past.

It's hard to say why the automatic translation quality was so much better than usual. I can only presume that the formulaic nature of Saint's *Lives* means that the Google database used already contains the formulae used, with a good English translation. At one point the Google output read "hast thou" – a clear sign of using some old text – but mostly it was modern and easy to read.

The result of this process is what you have before you. I hope that it is useful and easy to read. It is a sign of things to come, perhaps; that translation will get easier and easier as the technology develops. Let us hope so.

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Ipswich
March 2022

Translation

St Piran, Bishop and Confessor.

The blessed Piran, who by some is called Keranus, is called Piran in Cornwall, where he rests. One of the first saints of Ireland, he flourished at the time when Blessed Patrick, sent by Pope Celestine, converted the people of Ireland to the Lord. Piran, therefore, was from Ossory, a province of Ireland, by his father Domuel and his mother Wingella. After the child was already conceived in the mother's womb, one night her mother, resting on her bed, saw a star brighter than the others falling into her mouth.

But when the young child had been born and brought up, he came to the island by the name of Clera, and for thirty years served God with great abstinence and holy works. On a certain day, therefore, a hawk, which is also said to have been a falcon, with great speed, coming down on the nest, snatched a certain bird from before Piran with its claws, and carried it up into the air. Upon seeing this, he blessed her: and immediately after, the hawk released her, and she began to lie down upon her nest.

At length he departed for Rome, reading the Holy Scriptures and learning the ecclesiastical rule, and remained there fifteen years, and received the episcopal rank. At that time there was in Italy that great Saint Patrick; who, instructed by the Holy Spirit, said to the blessed Piran, "Make haste before me, my beloved son, and construct a house for yourself in the midst of an island on the bank of the river Waran. For it is pleasing to God, and He foresaw that in that place the honour of your holiness will be declared to men. But finally you will arrive in Britain, serving God until the end of your life, and you will await the blessing of the

common resurrection and eternal life.” To which Piran replied humbly, “Perhaps I will not find that place unknown to me.” Patrick said, “Go ahead, my son, feel safe, the Master will be with you, and in whatever place your bell sounds of its own accord, make yourself a place without hesitation.”

Then Piran came into Ireland, and near the river his bell rang with no one touching it. Then the boar, the fox, the badger, the wolf, and the hind with a fawn came to him humbly and obediently served him.

On a certain day the fox stole the shoes of blessed Piran, and, desiring to eat them, carried them with him to his former habitation. Then Piran sent the badger⁴ into the woods to hunt for the fox with the shoes. Going to the fox's hiding-place and finding him, he cut off his ears and tail with his teeth, and violently pulled off his hair.⁵ Then the fox followed the badger and came with the shoes safe at the ninth hour to St. Piran. And He said to him, “Why did you cause so much wrong by not enduring a shortage of food and drink?” But the fox, repenting, fasted for three days.

Then after the faith had grown in Ireland through the preaching of St. Piran, many were set on fire with the love of God by his example and led a hermit's life, and left all worldly things to follow God. Among them was a certain man named Brendan, who established his house not far from Piran.

He [St Piran] had a single cow. It wandered off, and was stolen by the king of Leinster. When he reached at a certain mountain, thick gloom and darkness surrounded him, so that like a blind man he could see nothing. Wandering about hither and thither, he fell into a certain river and was drowned; and the cow went back to St Piran.

When he wished to give it to Brendan, he was unwilling to accept it, because he had decided he would never have a cow. Piran thought about how he could get Brendan to accept that cow. Feigning illness, he asked that a little milk be given to him by Brendan. But Brendan blessed a vessel full of water, which was immediately turned into fresh milk as if it were freshly-made wine. Piran accepted this and blessed it, and it turned back into water again. Hearing this, Brendan gladly received the cow from Piran. Piran thanked him for accepting his gift, and said, "Surely I say to you, that every year until the end of the age, God will give to your home a cow and a calf."

Now when St. Geranus, serving a certain king, a tyrant and an unbeliever, had nothing to give to the poor, he gave them the king's cauldron⁶; wherefore the king was angry and he cast him into prison; and then said to him, “If you want me to set you free, find me seven cows without horns, red-haired, and with white heads.” After searching for such things and not finding them, he finally came to St. Piran and found two St Brendan men with him.

⁴ *taxo*, *taxoninus* = badger, according to Gaffiot.

⁵ In the Irish life, the badger comes and finds the fox has eaten the ears and thongs from the shoes.

⁶ *concauum* = cauldron, in DMLBS, quoting this passage.

Overjoyed for his guests, Piran said to his servant, "What do you have under your hand that it may be given to our guests tonight?" "I," he said, "have nothing but a shoulder for them, and I think that it is the day of fasting and the time of Lent." To which Piran said, "Set it before our guests so that they may eat, and it will become their bread and vegetable, fish and honey, and oil and wine." Now there was a layman among the guests, who out of pride was indignant that he should eat with the rest. To whom the blessed Piran, as if offended by his pride, said, foreseeing the future by the spirit of God, "In punishment of your pride, because you despised eating with our other guests, you will eat the flesh of a donkey during the Lenten fast before Easter, and in that hour when you are murdered and beheaded by your enemies, you will be excluded from the kingdom of God." And so it happened.

On the next day Geranus, with the blessing of the man of God, went along the bank of a certain river, and found seven cows without horns, red-haired and with white heads, and he gave them to the king for his freedom. But the following night they disappeared, and were never afterwards seen in that land.

A certain boy, a servant of Geranus, at the instigation of the devil, extinguished the fire under the drinking liquor⁷ of the monks of Piran. Piran said to the brothers: "Behold, our fire has been extinguished by the curse of Geran's boy. There will be no fire in this place until fire comes from God to us." The boy was then slain by wolves on the following day in a forest and lay dead.

When Geran came, Piran went out, and poured out his prayers to God, and fire fell from heaven onto his chest, and he brought it to their lodging with his clothes uninjured. Then supper was served, and Geranus said, "I will not eat in this place until my boy comes to me alive." And while Piran was praying, the boy, rising from death, came to them and ate with them.

Again, after the fire had been extinguished by a certain brother, he blessed the hearthstone, and immediately it began to burn with flames, and taking a stone with his bare hands, he carried it away without harm to St Rodan (who had come to warm himself).

At another time, St. Wingella, mother of St. Piran, was living not far away with her maidens, and had a very beautiful fosterling named Bruncta, the daughter of a king. A certain king, being allured by her beauty, took her away, and kept her captive for many days in the citadel of his castle. When Piran asked the king for her, and he would not agree, he said, "I refuse to relinquish this woman to you, unless in the morning the voice of a stork rouses me from sleep." For it was winter. That night a great snowfall covered the castle and the entire land. It did not touch the place where Piran and his men were. But in the citadel of the king a crane was singing, strangely and contrary to its nature, and it roused the king from sleep. Then the king arose and prostrated himself at the feet of St. Piran, and, desiring pardon, returned to him the foster-daughter of his mother.

⁷ Small beer, perhaps, which was safer than water.

But afterwards the king was grieved that he had sent her away. When he wanted to take her away (again), he found her dead. Very annoyed, he said to Piran, "Because," he said, "you have killed my wife, you shall not live in this house, but I will drive you out of there." And he said, "You are not God, nor is this place yours, but God's: and I shall remain in this house." And when the king went out with great anger and fury, he saw his citadel, with the adjacent houses, burning in flames of fire. But the queen, who had two sons, had forgotten about her favourite son in the house, and, weeping and wailing, said, "I commend my dearest son into the hands of blessed Piran." The whole house was completely destroyed by fire, but the queen's son was found safe and sound. Then the king was greatly astonished, and he came to Piran, and with a ready mind carried out whatever he ordered, and he offered his two sons to serve God under his discipline. And when the king departed, Bruneta, the fosterling of his mother, was raised alive by the prayer of Piran.

A certain king by the name of Cohingus had seven harpists skilled in his art, who were slain by the people in the neighbouring town. The king, much concerned about their delay, inquired of Piran what had happened to them. He said, "Those men," he said, "were slain by the people and were cast into a lake. Their harps are hanging on a tree on the bank of the lake." Then at the request of the king, Piran went with many men to the place. After completing a three-day fast, the lake dried up, and the bodies of the dead were found at the bottom. And although they had lain dead under the waters of the lake for an entire month, after prayers were poured out to God, St. Piran immediately revived them. But that lake has remained without water until this day.

The steward⁸ of a certain king and his twenty companions stole a pig from the man of God. When they placed it on the fire with its throat cut, they could not see the pig at all. They all fled, and then they fell to the ground dead. When he learned of this, Piran came and said to the deceased, "In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up, and come with me to my house." They immediately rose from death to life, and when they saw the pig Piran raised it also.

At another time that same steward of the king had been slain by a certain man, and by the entreaty of his wife St Piran recalled him to life through his merits.

One day the servant of blessed Piran killed a horse, and was detained in prison by King Cohingus. When Piran could not get him returned except at a price, he gave to the king a great quantity of gold and silver. But while Piran was leaving with his captive, the gold and silver disappeared, nor could they ever be seen afterwards. Annoyed, therefore, the king came to Piran, saying, "Why have you deceived me? Give me my gold and silver, for everything you gave me was illusions and fake." He spoke to the man of God with many harsh words. To which Piran said, "Instead of your gold and silver, you will get a curse." And immediately the king was surrounded by darkness and he fell to the ground and expired.

On seeing this, a certain nephew of the king was very saddened, and with all humility he desired the blessed Piran to deign to raise the king from the dead. So he prayed and the king

⁸ Prefectus here in the text and elsewhere. I have translated this as "steward", following the Irish Life.

rose from the dead and prostrated himself at the feet of St Piran, and, doing penance, gave him his son.

In the autumn, the holy Piran spread a linen cloth over a bush that bore blackberries⁹, and left it there, for he foresaw in the spirit that the bush would be indispensable. For after Easter, King Cohingus came to the great dinner which King Concolor had prepared for him in the territories of Ossory. But Cohingus' queen was in love with King Concolor and wanted to become his wife. For King Cohingus was an old man, but Concolor, refusing to commit a sin, avoided the king's wife while he was alive. But the queen, seeing herself despised, was not afraid to stir up discord between the two kings. She even pretended to be ill. So everybody said, "What do you want to be given to you?" The queen said, "My longing is not of this season: I want to eat blackberries." But King Concolor, afraid that the queen might entice him to sin, humbly begged help from St Piran. Then Piran sent to the bush mentioned earlier, and it was found full of its fruit, and with a linen cloth spread over it. And when the fruit was brought, the queen was satisfied, and it was like honey in the mouths of those eating it.

But when peace was made by Piran between the kings, the queen prostrated herself at the feet of the man of God. To whom the holy man said, "I cannot defend you from the death of murder." And it happened that the queen herself was later murdered, and King Concolor presented her (body) to Piran with all her property forever.¹⁰

When king Loigaire came with his army to make war against the king of Cashel, Piran went out and came to make peace between them. But the kings, puffed up with arrogance, refused to receive peace. Blessed Piran, therefore, in praying, obtained from God what he could not obtain from men. For when the enemies had advanced from this point on, and thence to war, the wood between them was suddenly overthrown by its roots, and both of the armies separated from one another without achieving their design.¹¹ But Piran gave one cow to the army of (one) king, and a shoulder to that of his own, and the whole army was satisfied and then they sent away some leftovers.

Some robbers were going out to plunder and slay others. While they were hiding themselves in a wood, a certain noble Lovanus rushed upon them. When they saw his face, they were afraid with a great fear, and despairing that they could live, they prayed that God, by the merits of St Piran, would assist them. And suddenly that whole forest between them shimmered with sparks of fire, and Lovanus, afraid of the sudden fire, returned to his own country. Those robbers were made safe, and came to St. Piran, and they remained with him until the day of his death.

Then St. Piran, after slaying eight of his cows, fed Bishop St Patrick, with ten kings of Ireland and their armies, miraculously for three days. The water of the fountain, blessed by him, was at the same time turned into excellent wine.

⁹ morus = black mulberry tree, mori, moros seems to be the berries. DMLBS confirms the usage for blackberries.

¹⁰ i.e. she was buried at his monastery. potestas = authority, power, but I think this means personal property.

¹¹ Lit. "the effect of their desire."

A certain man, resurrected from death by Saint Piran, gave him his son along with many fields.

Saint Piran, on the night of our Lord's birthday, after his people had received the sacrifice from his hands, went out into remote places near the cell of the virgin St. Cote, to bring to her the Body of Christ.¹² Before morning he came back again from the western sea as far as the city of Cluana.¹³

The rock of the virgin St. Cote, on which she was accustomed to pray alone, was in the sea, not far from her house, standing among the waves. But St. Piran often walked to that rock upon the sea with dry feet without a boat.

On a certain day, when Piran was come to the cell of St. Cote, and a large number of people were with him, they gave him there a shoulder for food. From that shoulder Piran made corn, honey, fish, and beer; and when he had blessed the water of the fountain, it was turned into excellent wine. The number of those who were satisfied with that dinner was nine hundred and forty men.

One time, while St Piran was sitting in a large council of men, King Corbanus was there, who had wicked and evil eyes. For the nature of his wickedness was such that he could immediately kill he whom he stared at hard and maliciously, by mere sight. When, therefore, a certain young man came to the council with Piran, King Corbanus stared at him maliciously for a long time, and the young man fell to the ground, and died. When Piran saw this, he became angry with the king, and immediately the king became blind. Then the king prostrated himself at the feet of St Piran, and begged pardon with great humility. Then St Piran prayed for him, and the king's eyes were opened. The dead young man also was revived by his praying.

A disciple of Saint Cote wanted to unite in a carnal friendship with a disciple of St. Piran, and both of them came together in a certain forest, and each gazed upon the face of the other. Then suddenly a dove fell from heaven between them, and being terrified by a great fear, they said nothing to him, and took flight from each other, and went to their homes. But from that day until her death, that virgin remained blind, and the young man was sent into exile by Piran over the Gallic Sea and he did penance for seven years, and learned the holy Scriptures.

In the house of Saint Cote, some wood was placed on a wall. The fire unexpectedly took hold of it, and set fire to the house. But St Piran, when he saw a ball of fire ascend on high from the house, raised his hand and made the sign of the cross to the fire, and immediately the fury of the fire ceased, and the house was left intact and uninjured.

A certain girl was slain and beheaded by enemies. St Piran prayed and she arose alive and sound.

¹² I.e. the sacrament.

¹³ Possibly Clonfad, in Westmeath, Ireland.

Geranus, the priest of St. Cote, when he had died while walking on the road, was revived by the prayers of St. Piran, and he ministered for many years to St. Cote.

The brothers Odranus and Medardus wanted to go travelling. When they came to Saint Piran, Medardus wished to remain with him. To which his brother said, "You did not say this to me, but you promised to go on a pilgrimage with me." But Piran said to him, "May God judge between us whether he will go with you or stay with me. Let him hold an unlit candle in his hand without fire and oil, and if the lamp itself is lighted by the breath of his mouth, let him remain with me." Then Medardus, holding a candle in his hand, breathed on it; and immediately it lit. Therefore Medardus remained with Piran until the day of his death.

A matron by the name of Ethilde had died by falling from her chariot. St. Piran revived her three days later, and she offered him her own field which is called the 'grove of Ethilde' until this day.

The steward of a certain king slew Cronanus, St. Piran's cook. St. Piran revived him seven days after his death, saying, "The man who slew Cronanus, he himself will be slain also by an evil death." And it was so. So the king came to Piran, to ask for his steward from him: and the blessed Piran revived him, and kept him with him. And when that king had offended Piran with harsh words, he immediately became speechless. Then the king, falling down at his feet, did what pleased him, and his tongue was loosened. Corbanus, a layman and monk of Piran, fearing murder, asked St. Piran to free him from sudden death. To which the saint said, "I cannot obtain what you ask, because you will expire tonight. But after your blood is shed, I will pray for you, my lord, that your soul may be delivered from hell." And it was so.

On a certain night Piran went out, and went into the cold water, to pray to God. A certain stranger by the name of Germanus, going along with him, was seized by the extreme cold. But Piran blessed the water and it became hot.

Now St. Piran in his entire life never wore sheep's wool, but the skins of wolves and wild animals. He manfully abstained from flesh and fleshly desires, and he did not drink intoxicating drink. He did not even worry about sleeping, except a little rest. But the angels frequented him with constant visits. He ordained innumerable priests, bishops, and clergy.

For more than two hundred years he lived in the body, without the pain which is accustomed to infest naturally the elderly, and without diminishing either in teeth or eyesight. For he was one of the twelve chief bishops whom that great saint Patrick, who first preached the faith in Ireland, appointed to preach the gospel in Ireland. He made friends for himself of his enemies, and rendered good for evil. He had indulgence, mercy, and compassion toward his neighbours. He practiced working with his hands, so that he could distribute the necessities of life to those in need. For he used to afflict his flesh with fastings and sleepless nights, in cold, hunger and thirst, in nakedness and chastity, in charity and hospitality. From his childhood to the day of his death he led his life in great cleanliness, praying, reading, doing, and teaching; humble, affable, prudent, sober, and merciful. He disregarded none of the commandments of God; he fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, received guests, and

clothed the naked. He taught the monks to love one another, to direct the eyes of the mind to God, to desire a heavenly homeland.

At length he called together his children, whom he fathered in God, and said to the people, "My dear brothers and sons, it is necessary for me to go from Ireland by divine arrangement and travel to Cornwall and wait there for the end of my life. I cannot resist the will of God. I admonish you, brothers, to build a house in good works and deeds, because the children of perdition and death will come. Mortality and battles will also come. The churches shall be deserted, and truth will be turned into iniquity. Faith will not shine upon good works, shepherds will pay more attention to themselves than to the sheep, feeding themselves more than the flock. I ask you, brethren, pray God that my journey may not be dark, and that I do not find my king and lord angry after death, but mild and favorable and welcoming, when I shall appear before him."

Having concluded these and other matters more thoroughly, he sailed to Cornwall, and made an house for himself, and showed many miracles among the people to the honour of God.

At length, when he was seized with an infirmity and became weak, he called his brothers, and he instructed them in many words concerning the kingdom of God, and ordered a tomb to be prepared. Descending into the pit, on the third of March, with great glory, his soul entered the heavens.

He rests in Cornwall above the sandy sea, fifteen miles from Petrokstowe, and twenty-five from Mousehole.

THE END

Latin Text

De sancto Pirano episcopo et confessore.

Beatus autem Piranus qui a quibusdam Keranus vocatur, in Cornubia ubi quiescit Piranus appellatur. De primis enim Hibernie sanctis, floruit eo tempore quo beatus Patricius a Celestino papa missus populum Hibernie ad dominum convertit. Piranus itaque Ossiriensi Hibernie provincia, ex patre Domuel et matre Wingella originem traxit. Postquam autem puer in utero matris iam conceptus esset, quadam nocte mater eius in lectulo quiescens quasi stellam aliis clariorem in os suum cadentem vidit. Nato vero infantulo, et educato, ad insulam nomine Cleram accessit, et triginta annis in magna abstinentia et operibus sanctis deo servivit. Quadam itaque die accipiter, que et nisus dicitur, cum impetu descendens avem quandam super nidum cubantem coram Pirano unguis rapuit et in aera asportavit. Quo viso, eam benedixit: et statim a niso dimissa, super nidum suum cubare cepit. Demum Romam profectus, scripturas sanctas legens et ecclesiasticam regulam discens quindecim annis ibidem mansit, et gradum episcopalem suscepit. Illis diebus fuit in Italia sanctus ille magnus Patricius; qui spiritu sancto edoctus beato Pirano ait: 'Festina ante me, fili dilecte, et in medio insule super ripam fluminis Waran tibi locum construe: placet enim deo, et previdit quod in eo loco honor sanctitatis tue hominibus declaretur; in Britannia tamen demum perveniens, usque ad finem vite tue deo serviens communis resurrectionis et vite eterne beatitudinem expectabis.' Cui Piranus humiliter respondit: 'Forsitan locum illum mihi ignotum non

inveniam.’ Patricius ait: ‘Perge, fili, securus, dominus tecum erit, et in quocumque loco cimbalum tuum sponte sonuerit, sine omni dubietate tibi locum constitue.’ Veniens ergo in Hiberniam Piranus, et juxta prodictum flumen, cimbalum suum, nemine tangente, clarum sonum dedit. Aper vero, vulpes, taxus, lupus, et cerva cum hinnulo ei humiliter venientes obedienter servierunt. Quadam autem die vulpes beati Pirani ficones furata est, et volens comedere ad suum pristinum habitaculum secum deportavit. Tunc Piranus taxonem in silvas misit, ut vulpem cum ficonibus quereret. Qui pergens ad latibulum vulpis, et eum inveniens, aures eius et caudam dentibus detruncavit et pilos eius violenter detraxit. Tunc vulpes, sequens taxum, cum sanis ficonibus ad sanctum Piranum hora nona venit: cui et dixit: ‘Quare tantum malum fecisti, penuriam esce et potus non sustinens?’ Vulpes vero penitentiam agens tribus diebus ieiunavit. Postquam autem per predicationem sancti Pirani episcopi fides in Hibernia crevisset, exemplo eius multi in amorem dei accensi, vitam heremiticam ducentes omnia mundana deum sequendo reliquerunt, inter quos erat quidam nomine Brendanus, qui non procul a Pirano sibi locum constituit. Habuit autem vaccam unam, quam profectus regis Laginensium furatus est et cum ad montem quondam pervenisset, caligo et tenebre circumdederunt eum ut tanquam cecus nihil videre posset, et huc atque illuc oberrans in quendam fluvium cadens submergitur, et vacca ad sanctum Piranum revertitur. Quam cum Brendano dare vellet, et ille eam accipere nollet, quia nunquam se vaccam habiturum decreverat; cogitavit Piranus qualiter efficere posset ut vaccam illam Brendanus acciperet. Et simulato morbo quesivit modicum lactis a Brendano sibi dari. Brendanus autem vas plenum aqua benedixit, que statim versa est in lac novum quasi noviter mulsum. Quod Piranus accipiens benedixit: et in aquam iterum reversum est. Quo audito, Brendanus vaccam libenter a Pirano accepit. Cui Piranus gratias agens pro accepto a se munere, ait: ‘Vere tibi dico quia quolibet anno usque in finem seculi dabit deus loco tuo vaccam unam cum vitulo.’ Cum enim sanctus Geranus cuidam regi tiranno et infideli serviens nec haberet quod pauperibus erogaret, largitus est eis concavum regis, quamobrem iratus rex in carcerem cum misit; et postea ei dixit: ‘Si vis ut te liberum dimittam, quere mihi septem vaccas sine cornibus, hispidas, rubrasque cum capitibus albis.’ Quesitis vero talibus, nec inventis, peruenit tandem ad sanctum Piranum, et duos Brendanos viros sanctos secum inuenit. Et gavisus pro hospitibus, Piranus dixit puero suo: ‘Quid habes sub manu tua ut nostris hospitibus detur hac nocte?’ ‘Ego, inquit, non habeo nisi humerum suis; et cogito quod dies ieiunii est et tempus quadragesime.’ Cui Piranus ait: ‘Pone illum coram hospitibus nostris ut comedant, et fiet illis panis et olus, piscis et mei, et oleum et vinum.’ Erat autem inter hospites quidam laicus, qui cum ceteris comedere per superbiam indignabatur. Cui beatus Piranus pro superbia eius quasi offensus, in spiritu dei futura previdens ait: ‘In penam huius superbie tue, quod cum aliis hospitibus nostris comedere contempsisti, carnem de asina in ieiunio quadragesimali ante pascha comedes et in illa hora ab inimicis tuis jugulatus et decollatus, a regno dei alienus eris.’ Et factum est ita. In crastino autem Geranus cum benedictione viri dei pergens iuxta ripam cuiusdam fluminis, septem vaccas sine cornibus, hispidas et rubras cum capitibus albis invenit: et regi pro sua liberatione dedit. Nocte autem sequenti disparverunt et nusquam postea in terra illa vise sunt. Puer quidam servus Gerani, diabolo instigante ignem sub liquore potus monachorum Pirani extinxit. Et ait fratribus Piranus: ‘Ecce ignis noster a maledicto puero Gerani extinctus est: in hoc loco ignis non erit, donec a deo nobis ignis adveniat.’ Puer autem ille die crastina in silva a lupis occisus, mortuus iacebat. Adveniente autem Gerano, exivit Piranus foras: et fusa ad deum prece, ignis de celo in gremium illius cecidit, quem ad hospitium vestibus illesis detulit. Apposita autem cena, dixit Geranus: ‘In loco isto non comedam, donec puer meus vivus ad me veniat.’ Et orante Pirano, puer a morte resurgens, venit ad eos et comedit cum illis. Iterum a quodam fratre extincto igne, lapidem benedixit: et statim flammis ardere cepit: et nudis manibus lapidem assumens, ad sanctum Rodanum (qui ad califaciendum se venerat) sine lesione deportavit. Alio tempore sancta Wingella, mater

sancti Pirani, non procul cum suis virginibus habitabat, habens alumpnam valde pulchram nomine Brunctam, cuiusdam regis filiam: cuius pulchritudine rex quidam illectus, eam rapuit, et in arce castri sui multis diebus captivam detinuit. Quam cum Piranus a rege peteret, et ille non acquiesceret, ait: 'Nolo hanc mulierem tibi relinquere, si in aurora vox ciconie me a sompno excitare non contingat.' Erat enim hiems, et nocte illa nix magna descendens castrum et totam terram operuit, locum ubi Piranus cum suis erat non tetigit. In arce autem regis inconsuete et contra naturam suam ciconia cantabat et regem a sompno excitabat. Tunc rex surgens prostravit se ad pedes sancti Pirani, et veniam petens, alumpnam matris sue reddidit ei. Postea vero dolens rex quod eam dimisisset; cum eam rapere vellet, illam mortuam invenit. Et offensus valde, Pirano dixit: 'Quia, inquit, uxorem meam occidisti, in loco isto non habitabis, sed inde expellam te.' Et ille: 'Tu non es deus, neque locus iste tuus est, sed dei: et ego in hoc loco manebo.' Et exiens rex cum ira et furore magno, vidit arcem suam, cum domibus adiacentibus, flammis ignis comburentem. Regina autem duos filios habens, filium cariorem in domo oblita, flens et eiulans dixit: 'In manus beati Pirani charissimum commendo filium meum.' Tota autem domo igne penitus consumpta, filius regine sanus et incolumis reperitur. Tunc rex vehementer ad mirans, et ad Piranum venit et quecumque precepit prompta mente implevit, et duos filios ad serviendum deo sub disciplina eius obtulit. Recedente vero rege, oratione Pirani Bruneta matris sue alumpna a morte viva resurrexit. Rex quidam nomine Cohingus septem citharistas in arte sua habens peritos, qui in urbe vicina a plebe occisi sunt; pro quorum mora rex multum sollicitus, quesivit a Pirano quid de eis factum fuisset. Qui ait: 'Viri, inquit, illi a plebe occisi in aquarum stagno projecti sunt, citharis eorum super ripam stagni in arbore suspensis.' Rogatu autem regis Piranus cum multis ad locum pergens: trium dierum expleto ieiunio, arefactum est stagnum, corporibus mortuorum in fundo repertis. Quos, licet mense integro sub aqua stagni mortui iacuissent, fuis ad deum precibus sanctus Piranus statim resuscitavit. Stagnum vero illud usque hodie sine aqua remansit. Prefectus cuiusdam regis cum viginti suis sociis porcum viri dei rapiens, cum jugulatum super ignem posuissent, porcum omnino videre non potuerunt. Fugientibus vero omnibus, in terram mortui corruerunt. Quo intellecto, Piranus accedens ait defunctis: 'In nomine Jesu Christi, surgite, et ad locum meum mecum venite.' Qui cum statim a morte ad vitam resurrexissent, videns Piranus porcum, suscitavit et illum. Alio tempore eundem regis prefectum a quodam occisum, prece uxoris sue sanctus Piranus ad vitam suis meritis revocavit. 7 Servus beati Pirani equum quondam occidens, a rege Cohingo in vinculis detinebatur: quem cum nisi precio redemptum Piranus habere non posset, magnum pondus auri et argenti dedit regi. Pirano vero cum captivo recedente, aurum et argentum evanuerunt nec unquam postea videri potuerunt. Offensus igitur rex venit ad Piranum, dicens: 'Quare seduxisti me? Da mihi aurum meum et argentum, nam omnia que dedisti mihi fantasmata erant et vana.' Multisque verbis asperis loquutus est viro dei. Cui Piranus ait: 'Pro auro tuo et argento, maledictum portabis.' Et statim rex tenebris circumdatus, in terram cadens expiravit. Quo viso, nepos quidam regis contristatus valde, cum omni humilitate rogavit beatum Piranum ut regem a mortuis resuscitare dignaretur. Quo orante, rex a mortuis resurgens, prostravit se ad pedes sancti Pirani, et penitentiam agens dedit ei filium suum. Tempore autumnii sanctus Piranus lintheamen unum expandit super rubum quendam moros nigros habentem, et illud ibi reliquit, previdit enim in spiritu quod rubus ille necessarius esset futurus. Post pascha enim venit Cohingus rex ad cenam magnam quam sibi paraverat Concolor rex in finibus Ossirie. Regina autem Cohingi amabat regem Concolorem et uxor eius fieri volebat. Rex autem Cohingus senex erat: sed Concolor peccatum committere renuens, viventis regis uxorem accipere detestabatur. Videns autem regina se esse contemptam, inter duos reges discordiam suscitare non timuit; se etiam infirmam simulavit. Cui omnes dixerunt: 'Quid vis ut detur tibi?' Regina ait: 'Desiderium meum non est huius temporis: volo moros comedere.' Timens autem Concolor rex ne regina eum ad peccandum

alliceret, a sancto Pirano humiliter auxilium petiit. Tunc Piranus misit ad rubum supradictum: et inventus est cum suo fructu plenus, et lintheamen super se habens expansum. Et allato fructu regina satiatur, et erat quasi mel in ore comedentium. Facta autem per Piranum inter reges pace, regina prostravit se ad pedes viri dei. Cui vir sanctus ait: 'Non possum te a morte jugulationis defendere.' Et factum est ut ipsa regina postea jugulata sit; et Concolor rex obtulit se Pirano cum omni potestate sua in eternum. Cum venisset Loigaire rex cum exercitu suo ad bellum contra regem cassiliensem, Piranus exiens venit ut pacem mitteret inter illos. Sed reges superbia inflati pacem recipere recusarunt. Orans igitur beatus Piranus, quod ab hominibus adipisci non potuit a deo impetravit. Nam cum hostes hinc et inde ad bellum processissent, subito inter illos silva radicitus prostratur, et exercitus uterque sine desiderii sui effectu ab invicem digressus est. Piranus vero exercitui regis vaccam unam et humerum suis cuiusdam dedit: et toto exercitu inde saturato nonnullas reliquias dimiserunt. Latrunculi quidam ad spoliandum et jugulandum exeuntes dum in quadam silva se occultarent, Lovanus quidam nobilis irruit super eos. Cuius faciem illi videntes, timuerunt timore magno, et desperantes se vivere posse, oraverunt ut deus meritis sancti Pirani adiuveret eos. Et subito tota illa silva inter eos flammis ignis choruscante, Lovanus, ignem repentinum timens, ad sua rediit: et latrones illi salui effecti, ad sanctum Piranum venientes, usque ad diem mortis sue cum eo permanserunt. Sanctus autem Piranus sanctum Patricium episcopum cum decem regibus Hibernie et eorum exercitibus, occisis octo vaccis suis miraculose tribus diebus pavit; et aqua fontis ab eo benedicta per idem tempus in vinum optimum conversa est. Quidam a sancto Pirano a morte resuscitatus, dedit ei filium suum cum agris multis. Sanctus autem Piranus in nocte natalis domini, postquam populus eius sacrificium accepisset, de manibus illius exhibat ad remota loca ad cellam sancte Cote virginis, ut sibi etiam corpus Christi afferret; et ante matutinas iterum veniebat a mari occidentali usque ad Cluanam civitatem. Petra autem sancte Cote virginis, super quam ipsa sola orare solebat, in mari erat, non procul a loco suo constans inter undas; ad illam autem petram sanctus Piranus saepe sine navi siccis pedibus super mare ambulabat. Quadam autem die cum venisset Piranus ad cellam sancte Cote, et multa turba cum eo, dederunt ei ibi in cibum humerum suis: et ex illo humero fecit Piranus frumentum, mel, piscem et cerevisiam; et cum aquam fontis benedixisset, in vinum optimum versa est. Erat autem numerus illorum qui de cena illa saturati sunt, nongenti et quadraginta viri. Quodam tempore cum sanctus Piranus sederet in magno consilio hominum, erat ibi rex Corbanus, qui oculos nequam et nephandos habebat: erat enim talis natura malitie sue ut quem maliciose et perspicaciter aspiceret, statim solo visu interficeret. Cum ergo iuvenis quidam cum Pirano ad consilium venisset, Corbanus rex eum maliciose diu intuitus est et iuvenis in terram cadens mortuus est. Hoc videns Piranus iratus est contra regem: et statim rex caecus effectus est. Tunc rex prostravit se ad pedes sancti Pirani, cum magna humilitate veniam precabatur. Orante autem pro eo sancto Pirano, aperti sunt oculi regis; iuvenis etiam mortuus illo orante resuscitatus est. Cum autem alumpna sancte Cote cum alumpno sancti Pirani carnalem amicitiam vellet conjungere, et in silva quadam convenientes uterque faciem alterius prospexisset, subito Columba de celo cecidit inter eos, et nimio timore perterriti, nihil sibi dicentes ad invicem fugam arripientes ad domos suas abierunt. Ab illa autem die usque ad mortem suam virgo illa caeca permansit; et iuvenis, a Pirano trans mare gallicum in exilium missus, septem annis penitentiam egit, et scripturas sanctas didicit. In domo sancte Cote lignum in pariete positum ignis incaute apprehendens, domum incendit. Videns autem Piranus globum ignis de domo in altum conscendere, elevata manu signum crucis igni opposuit: et statim ignis vehementia cessavit, et domus integra et illesa permansit. Quedam puella ab hostibus jugulata et decollata, orante sancto Pirano viva et sana surrexit. Geranus, presbiter sancte Cote, cum per viam ambulans mortuus fuisset, precibus sancti Pirani resuscitatus, multis annis sancte Cote ministravit. Odranus et Medardus fratres proficisci volentes, cum ad sanctum Piranum venissent, Medardus cum ipso manere volebat.

Cui frater suus dixit: 'Non id mihi dixisti, sed mecum in peregrinationem ire promisisti.' Piranus autem ait illi: 'Deus inter nos iudicet utrum tecum eat an mecum maneat: Teneat ipse lucernam siccam in manu sua sine igne et oleo, et si ipsa lucerna accensa fuerit flatu oris illius, mecum maneat.' Tunc Medardus lucernam in manu sua tenens insufflavit in eam: et statim accensa est. Mansit ergo Medardus cum Pirano, usque ad diem mortis sue. Quedam matrona nomine Ethilde dum de suo curru cadens mortua fuisset, sanctus Piranus resuscitavit eam post iii dies; et ipsa obtulit ei agrum suum qui dicitur 'Saltus Ethilde' usque hodie. Prefectus cuiusdam regis cocum sancti Pirani Cronanum jugulavit: quem post septem dies obitus sui Piranus resuscitans, dixit: 'Vir qui jugulavit Cronanum, et ipse jugulatus mala morte interibit.' Et factum est ita. Venit ergo rex ad Piranum, ut suum prefectum peteret ab eo: quem beatus Piranus resuscitans secum retinuit. Cumque rex ille verbis asperis offendisset Piranum, statim mutus effectus est. Tunc rex ad pedes eius prostratus, fecit quod illi placuit: et lingua eius soluta est. Corbanus quidam laicus et monachus Pirani timens mortem iugulationis, rogavit sanctum Piranum ut ab instanti morte liberaret eum. Cui sanctus ait: 'Quod petis, impetrare non possum, quia exhibis in hac nocte; et sanguine tuo effuso, rogabo pro te dominum meum ut ab inferno liberetur anima tua.' Et factum est ita. Quadam nocte exivit Piranus et aquam frigidam intrans ut deum oraret; quidam peregrinus nomine Germanus cum eo pergens nimio frigore corripitur: sed Pirano aquam benedicente, calida facta est. Sanctus autem Piranus in tota vita sua nunquam lanis ovium, sed pellibus luporum ferarumque indutus est. A carnibus et carnalibus desideriis viriliter se abstinuit, et potum inebriantem non bibit; sompnum etiam non curavit, nisi modicam quietem. Illum autem angeli crebris visitationibus frequentabant. Innumerabiles presbiteros, episcopos, et clericos ordinavit. Plusquam enim ducentis annis vixit in corpore, sine dolore qui senes naturaliter infestare solet, et sine diminutione tam dentium quam lucis oculorum. Ipse enim erat unus ex duodecim primis episcopis quos ille sanctus magnus Patricius, qui primo fidem in Hibernia predicavit, ad predicandum evangelium in Hibernia constituit. Amicos sibi de inimicis faciebat, et bonum pro malo reddebat. Indulgentiam, misericordiam, et pietatem in proximos habuit; operationem manibus exercuit, ut indigentibus necessaria tribuere posset. Affligebat enim carnem suam ieiuniis et vigiliis, in frigore, fame et siti, in nuditate et castitate, charitate et hospitalitate. A pueritia sua usque ad diem mortis sue vitam suam in magna mundicia duxit, orans, legens, faciens, et docens; humilis, affabilis, prudens, sobrius, et misericors. Nihil de mandatis dei preterivit; esurientes pavit, sitientibus potum dedit, hospites suscepit, nudos vestivit; monachos se invicem diligere, oculos mentis ad deum dirigere, celestem patriam desiderare docuit. Demum convocatis filiis suis quos deo genuit, et populo, ait: "Fratres mei et filii charissimi, oportet me dispositione divina ab Hibernia peregre proficisci et Cornubiam petere, et finem vite mee ibidem expectare: voluntati dei resistere non possum. Moneo vos, fratres, edificare locum in bonis operibus et exemplis, quia filii perditionis et mortis futuri sunt. Venient etiam mortalitas et prelia; ecclesie destructe erunt et deserte, et veritas in iniquitatem vertetur; fides bonis operibus non lucebit, pastores plus sibi intendent quam ovibus, plus seipsos quam gregem pascentes. Deum, queso fratres, rogate, ne tenebrosus sit iter meum, et ne regem meum et dominum iratum post obitum inveniam sed mitem et placabilem et letum, quando ante faciem eius apparebo." Hiis et aliis prolixius peroratis, in Cornubiam navigans, mansionem sibi fecit, et multa miracula ad honorem dei in populo ostendit. Demum cum infirmitate correptus languesceret, convocatis fratribus, multis sermonibus de regno dei eos instruxit, sepulchrum parari iussit: et in foveam descendens, tertio nonas marci cum magna claritate anima eius celos penetravit. Quiescit autem in Cornubia supra mare sabrinum, a Petrokstowe miliaribus quindecim, et a Mousehole vigintiquinque.

FINIS