

TOMÁS Ó ICEADHA'S TRANSLATION OF THE ROMAN MISSAL

AT THE time of the compilation of the catalogue of the Irish manuscripts in Mount Melleray, anecdotal evidence existed of the presence in the Monastery of a manuscript written by Tomás Ó Icedha.¹ A thorough search of the library failed to unearth the book in question. Recently, a reorganisation of another area of the Monastery brought the manuscript to light, and it is now numbered MS 17.²

The manuscript contains Ó Icedha's translation, dated 1810 and 1814, of the Roman Missal. The section headed 'Brolach an Ughdair' (pp. v–vi) refers to the source as 'an Coideachta Chum na Haltórach, a meud oireamhnach don phóca'; a related Ó Icedha manuscript, Franciscan MS A 38 (for which see below), has a more comprehensive reference on its title-page: 'An cruinnleabhar Aifrinn nó Cuideachta chum na hAltórach. Ionna ffuilid na hAifrinn a deirthear gach uile Dhomhnach 7 lá saoire tríd an mblíadhain, mar aon re hAifrionnaibh choitcionna agus chinnte na Naomh'. This points to a work entitled *A companion to the altar, or compact pocket missal* as the source in question. This book went through a number of editions subsequent to its first printing in London in 1791,³ and the work of identifying which particular edition Ó Icedha utilised remains to be done.⁴ A Cork edition of 1805 confirms the 'Brolach an Ughdair' section as a translation of the introduction to the *Pocket missal*. Thus the opening sentences:

To accompany the Priest in the prayers which he recites at the time of celebrating the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is a practice, which the ablest divines have strenuously recommended. St. *Chrysostom*, that great Luminary of the Church, exhorts the faithful of his time "to bring the most earnest attention with them on this awful occasion, and to consider, that the priest and people make up but one

¹For commentary on this important scribe see Donnchadh Ó Duibhir, 'Tomás Ó hÍcí, scríobhaí Chill Náile', *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1990) 97–102; Eoghan Ó Súilleabháin, 'Scríobhaithe Phort Láirge 1700–1900', William Nolan and Thomas P. Power (ed.), *Waterford: history and society* (Dublin 1992) 265–308, at 284–90; Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'Litir Ghaelach, 1848', *Decies* 57 (2001) 85–9.

²This follows the acquisition of the Kate O'Brien manuscripts (Melleray MSS 11–16) catalogued in *Éigse* 30 (1997) 92–108. MS 17 has been microfilmed by the National Library of Ireland: NLI microfi lm pos. 9377.

³*A companion to the altar, or compact pocket missal* (London: P. Keating 1791). My thanks to Dr Hugh Fenning O.P. for advice on this matter.

⁴For a note on Ó Icedha's methods as a translator see Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin, 'Seanmóir ar an mBás', *Éigse* 13/1 (1969) 11–25, at 21.

body — that therefore they should join with each other.”
(*Hom. in 2 Cor.*)⁵

appear in Ó Icedha’s translation as:

Do chomhradha ris an Sagairt annsna húrnaighthibh a dearaidh a namm Iodhbairthe na Haltórach do sholamnughadh, is cleachta é, noch dhianmholann na Diaghairighe is tásgamhla. Gríosann N. Criosostom, an soillseán mór san na Heaglaise, fíoraoin a aimsire féin “aire fhíordháribh do thabhairt leo air an úcáid sganraightheachsa, 7 a smaoinéadh, nach deunaidh an Sagairt 7 an pobal acht aoncholain; 7 dá bhrigh sin, budh cheart dóibh cur le chéile.” (*Hom. 2 Cor.*)

The date being so early for an Ó Icedha manuscript — only RIA 136 (24 L 24) p. 1 has an earlier date, 1809 — we may consider the present manuscript in the context of Ó Icedha’s own testimony:

I at last became so fond of it [*sc.* the Irish language] that I determined not to read anything but Irish, even at Mass; for I thought I could not pray fervently in English, and for that purpose I fixed my eyes on the pocket missal which I translated and sent to Clonmel to be bound, where Mr. O’Mara, a most benevolent gentleman who kept a cloth shop, happened to see it, and he liked it so well that he gave me some Irish works to transcribe, for which he paid me honourably, and behaved a sincere friend and benefactor to me as long as he lived.⁶

It seems likely that the manuscript referred to here is what is now Melleray 17. Although the seven leaves missing from the end of the book show that there was probably some lapse of time between writing and binding,⁷ the chronology of the writing of the manuscript and Ó Icedha’s subsequent work for O’Meara (see below) is consistent. Features such as Ó Icedha’s initials blind-tooled on the front cover, and his marginal inscription — ‘Leabhar Urnaighe Thomáis Ui Icedha’ (p. 260) — lend further support to the proposition that Melleray 17 is the manuscript which he made for his own use.

⁵*The pocket missal or companion to the altar, for all the Sundays, the Holydays, the days of devotion, &c. &c. throughout the year* (Cork 1805) p. v. On this edition see Hugh Fenning O.P., ‘Cork imprints of Catholic historical interest 1805–1830: a provisional check-list (Part 2)’, *JCHAS* 101 (1996) 115–42, at 116. (A later Cork edition, without this preface, is in the Russell Library, NUI Maynooth: *The pocket missal for the use of the laity* . . . (Cork: John O’Brien, 5, Patrick Street, n.d.), Table of Movable feasts for 1838–54.)

⁶Quoted (from *Nation*, 17 April 1852, p. 523) in Ó Duibhir, ‘Tomás Ó hÍcf’, 100.

⁷The discrepancy between the date of writing and the table of Movable Feasts (p. xxv) beginning in 1834 is explained by the fact that the latter is a late scribal addition.

His decision to have his manuscript bound led to commissions for further work from James O'Meara.⁸ Manuscripts written by Ó Icedha for him are dated 1819⁹ and 1821,¹⁰ and a further manuscript, NLI MS G 415, written in 1827, consists of a shortened version of the missal made by Ó Icedha to replace an earlier missal by him which O'Meara had given to a friend who had admired it.¹¹

The binding of his own manuscript attracted attention from other sources also, as Ó Icedha himself remarks:

Do shaoileasa air thionnsgnadh threasbhearluhadh an leabhairsi, nach geabhain a láimh a sgríobad go bráth arís, do bhrigh nár bheag liom fein an chéd leabhar air fedh mo shaoghail, 7 nach raibh sé air mo chur a thabairt amach a cclódh: 7 nidh oile fós, níor shaoileas go mbeith aon mhian aig daoibh chuiige: gidheadh is amhlaidh chidhim ó fuarus cuibhrighthe é, go ffuil ainmhian eugmhaiseach aig morán daoine chuiige, acht go madh ró thromm an costus dóibh a fhaghail sgríobhtha.¹²

One of those whose interest was aroused by the sight of Ó Icedha's manuscript, and who could afford to have it replicated, was Risteard Ó Faoláin, of Coitín,¹³ Co. Waterford. Franciscan MS A 38 was written for him by Ó Icedha in 1823–4. It consists of another copy of the scribe's translation of the *Pocket missal* similar to that in Melleray 17.¹⁴

⁸It seems likely that the binder was John Hackett, one of two booksellers cum binders listed for Clonmel in Pigot's *Directory* of 1824. Hackett was married to O'Meara's daughter Frances (NLI MS 763, pp. 49–50, where O'Meara is described by Maurice Lenihan – a cousin of O'Meara's wife – as 'woollen draper (and first class Irish scholar)'), and in 1826 started the *Tipperary Free Press* (William P. Burke, *History of Clonmel* (Waterford 1907) 352–5).

⁹Maynooth MS M 108.

¹⁰NLI MS G 230.

¹¹NLI MS G 415, p. 4.

¹²Franciscan MS A 38 (UCD Archives Department) f. 6v.

¹³Townland of Cutteen South, par. Kilrossanty. Tithe Applotment records show that the entire townland (1024 acres) was jointly held in 1828 by John, Thomas, and Richard Whelan; in Griffith's *Valuation* of 1851 the townland is divided between Pierce and Thomas Whelan, and the Parish Priest, Fr John Casey. A headstone in Irish to Pierce (died 1888, aged 73) is in Kilrossanty churchyard.

¹⁴This includes Ó Icedha's own 'Tulradh' ('Brolach' in Melleray 17), which was edited from A 38 by Pádraig Ó Súilleabháin: 'Aistriúchán ar an Leabhar Aifrin', *Irisleabhar Muighe Nuadhat* (1957) 75–8; a bibliography of excerpts published from A 38 is given in Myles Dillon, Canice Mooney and Pádraig de Brún, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Franciscan library Killiney* (Dublin 1969) 76. Scribal references to Risteard Ó Faoláin in the manuscript not noted in the catalogue are: (a) f. 34v, lower margin. 'Risteard Ó Faoláin, Rí na NDaiseach.' (b) f. 54r, lower margin. 'Risteard Ó Faoláin. 1823.' (c) f. 150r, lower margin. 'Risteard Ó Faoláin, Coitín 1824.' (d) f. 162r. 'Críoch air na hAifrionnaibh Coitcionna / 1824 / le Risteard Ó Faoláin.' For similar insertion by Ó Icedha of a patron's name in one of his manuscripts cf. John Rylands University Library MS 134, section 2, written in 1832 for Tomás Ó Cathbhuidh of Lios Ard, par. Ballylaneen, Co. Waterford.

Another similarity is that of the leather binding of the two manuscripts, save that, as befits a patron's manuscript, that of A 38 is more ornate, with gold-tooling instead of the blind-tooling on Ó Icedha's book, three endpapers front and back instead of Ó Icedha's one.

Finally we may notice one further holograph copy of Ó Icedha's translation of the missal, that in RIA MS 129 (24 L 19). This copy has a binding dating from 1863, and is unsigned and undated, but has been assigned a date of late 1844 or early 1845 based on the Table of Movable Feasts which begins with the year 1845.¹⁵ Examination suggests that the text of this manuscript, rather than being a translation of the pocket missal, is a fresh translation of the Roman Missal proper, including the additional material found therein, particularly in the Proper of Saints.¹⁶ The following extract from Ó Icedha's introduction to RIA MS 129 (p. i) is worth quoting as it suggests that it is a translation made for his own personal use, and raises the possibility that he may no longer have had his previous translation of the *Pocket missal* in his possession.

... Air an adhbharsan, is ceart do gach aon dá mbeith láithreach, an tAifrionn dfóráil mar aon leis an Sagairt, an uiriod 7 is féidir leis: Agus chum na críche sin, is fearr do leabhar, ionna ffaicfidh sé gach roinn de'n Aifrionn, ionnus go ffeudfaidh sé gabhail thríd na naoinfheacht leis an Sagairt. Agus air an adhbhar nach fuil leabhar air bith is cirte d'éireannach, ioná leabhar gaothailge, 7 mar nach faicim aon leabhar úrnúighthe clodh-bhuailte, do mheasas leabhar a sgríobh dom fein do bheith agam re leughadh an amm Aifrinn; 7 níor theangmhaigh aon leabhar liom, is mó ar chuireas mo dhúil ann, ionná leabhar Aifrinn na tuatach, mar is ann do frith na teagaisg, na Soisgéil, 7 gach ceacht, úrnúighthe 7 laoidh oile, atá oireamhnach do gach lá san mbliadhain timcheall, do réir léighthear leis an Sagairt iad. Uime sin do ghabhus orm a sgríobh a ngaoidheilge; 7 gé gur dom fein fó leith a bheartuighim é; tairis sin, atá ródhealrach go tuitfidh sé a lamhuibh dhaoine dom mhalairt;

If Melleray 17 is Ó Icedha's original translation of the missal, the passage quoted above might be taken to imply that it had passed from his ownership some time between 1834 (the first year in the Table of Movable Feasts), and 1845 (the first year in the Table in RIA MS 129).

Mount Melleray MS 17

¹⁵RIA Cat., 381; the last date in the Table (p. xvi) for which details are filled in is 1876, the years themselves being continued up to 1890.

¹⁶Edition compared: *The Roman Missal for the use of the laity* (Liverpool 1826).

19th cent. Paper. 17.5 × 11 cm. Pp. 376, pagination i–xxix (skipping xi and xii), [2–3], 4–350. Scribe: *Tomás Ó Iceadha* (pp. iv, xxix, 36, 260), Baile Ghrae [Graystown, bar. Slievardagh, Co. Tipperary] (p. iv), 1810 (pp. xxix, 36), 1814 (p. iv); watermarks dated 1808.

Bound in full leather; blind tooling on spine ('CRUINN / LEABH-AR / AIFRIN') and front cover ('T. H. '); one endpaper front and back. Gathered in eights, incomplete at end; pp. i–iv, vii–x bifoliums, v–vi a singleton; pp. 17–30 an eight wanting 7 between pp. 28 and 29 (stub survives, no loss of text); pp. 31–44 a six (pp. 41–2 a singleton); pp. 349–50 a singleton, probably originally 1 of an eight. Ruled in dry point, 32–40 lines; catchwords; running titles. Stationers' embossments top upper corners. Slight damage, with minor loss of text, to pp. 222–3, 228–9, 234–5, 242–4, 246–7, 253–5; staining pp. 108, 138–9. Two jottings p. i: 'duischill' (upper margin); 'Mary' (lines 1–2, interlinear). Later scribal additions pp. viii–x, xxv–xxvi.

p.

- i. 'Brolach.' Beg. *IS tearc go bhfuil obair dá fheabhas, air nach faghann duine éigin locht*. Ends (p. iv) *Dia feartach go neartuightheadh sinn a ngrásaibh ⁊ a ngradh ⁊ a ccarrthanacht le chéile ⁊ le gach nidh bheanus le honóir ár Ndúithe*: 'gur ab é sin mian bhur nóglách dilios, gaodhalach, / Tomás Ó Iceadha. / Baile Ghrae. Iuil 24. 1814.'
- v. 'Brolach an Ughdair.' Beg. *Do chomhradha ris an Sagairt annsna húrnaighthibh a dearaidh a namm Iodhbairthe na Haltórach do sholamnughadh*. Ends (p. vi) *chifidhear go bhfreagóraidh [sic] an Coideachta Chum na Haltórach, a meud oireamhnach don phóca, gach gnodh budh phráinn do leabhraibh Aifrinn budh mhó ⁊ budh liosta*.
- vii. Lists of Contents: (a) 'Clár Domhnaighe ⁊ Féilte Aistrightheacha.' (b) 'Foillsiughadh air an Láimhstiuir' [vii.35]. (c) 'Orrthana' [viii]. (d) Feast-days arranged by month [xiii]. Ends p. xxiv.
- xxv. 'Clár Cásga.' Table of movable feasts for 1834–90; with Dominical Letter, Golden Number, and Epact.
- xxvi. 'Tionnsganta' (table of Latin incipits).
- xxvii. 'Air Dhomhnaighibh roimh Aifrinn Solmanta, singthear na Rannasa leanus ag craitheadh an Uisce Choisreagtha.' Beg. *Anth. Asperges me, Domine, Hissopo / Craith Iosóip orm, a Thigh-earna*. Ends (p. xxviii) *ionus go molfainn thu mar aon ris na Hainglibh a saoghal na saoghal. Amen*.
- xxix. 'Cruinneabhar beacht / Aifrinn. / a nGaoidheilge. / Air na sgríobhadh re Tomás Ó Iceadha. / A.T. 1810. / Orrthann.

- chum ullmhaighthe roimh Aifrinn [*repeated*].’ Beg. *Sleachta a spiorad ag cois haltórach naomhtha*. Foll. (p. [2]) by: ‘Ordo Missae’ with facing translation in Irish (p. [3]) ‘Coitchinne an NaomhAifrinn’. Beg. *In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen / A Nainm an Athar, 7 an Mhic, 7 an Spiorad Naoimh. Amen*. Ends (p. 36) *ós tú an tslighe, an fhúrinne 7 an bheatha. Tre Christ ar ttighearna. Amen*. ‘Tomas O Iceada. San mbliagain 1810.’
- 36.8. ‘Na hAifrinn Oireamhnacha do gach uile Dhomhnach agus féile tríd an mbliaghain.’ Beg. ‘Céad Dhomhnach Adbhaint .i. Tigheacht.’ Ends (p. 179) with text headed (p. 178): ‘XXIV. nó an Domhnach deighionnach iar gCingcís’.
180. ‘Coitchine na Naomh.’ Beg. ‘An tAifrinn. Statuit ei, dho mhartarda [mairtíreach *above*] 7 easbog’. Ends (p. 223) with text headed (p. 221): ‘Na hAifrinn choitchiona dona marbhaibh’. ‘Críoch air na hAifrionnaibh coitchionna.’
- 223.16. ‘Oireamhuin na Naomh.’ Beg. ‘N. Aindrias an tasbol. 30 lá do Shamhuin’. Ends (p. 301) ‘XXI. Taisbeunadh na M. B. Muire’. (‘Leabhar Urnaigh Thomáis Uí Iceadha’ p. 260.)
302. ‘Breis air an gCruinnleabhar Aifrin; ann a bhfuilid na hAifrinn is ionraidhte Diardaoin, Dia hAoine 7 Dia Sathrain ria Chaisg. 7 cra. Ris an bhfear ceadna.’ Beg. (p. 303) ‘An tAifrinn do Dhiardaoin na Comaoine’. Ends (p. 347) with text headed (p. 345): ‘An tAifrinn a namm chogaidh’.
- 347.z. ‘Urnaighthe a ndiaigh Aifrinn.’ Beg. (p. 348) *A ndiaigh Aifrinn is féidir a radh Te Deum*. Breaks off (p. 350) *Do ghlacamair; a Thighearna, go humhal, tiodhlaicthe naomhtha an mhistéirsi, ag impighe ort go madh congnamh dár nanbhfáine an nidh daithin tusa dhuinn a dheunamh a ccuimhniughadh ort. Tre.* and catchword *Ann*.