# Fasting against God

## The semantic shift in Old Irish words for fasting

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# Introduction

On 12 August 1920 Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, died after a hunger strike of seventy-two days.[[1]](#footnote-1) He protested against being imprisoned for minor offences by the British government. Many hunger strikes followed throughout 1922 and 1923. In 1923 almost 8.000 republican political prisoners went on hunger strike in Ireland against the Irish Free State government.[[2]](#footnote-2) In India Mahatma Gandhi, and others, also used several hunger strikes against the British during the Indian Independence movement. The use of a hunger strike by a person of lowly status on someone of higher status is an extremely archaic one, according to Binchy.[[3]](#footnote-3) This practice is still found in the ‘Institutes of Manu’; one of the oldest Hindu law-books dated between 600 and 300 BC.[[4]](#footnote-4) It is also found in Old Irish law, where one of lower rank could engage in a *troscad -* a legal fast - against one of higher rank. With the coming of Christianity another fast was introduced into Ireland, namely the fast as a penitential or ascetic fast. The term for the Christian fast was *aín(e)*. In modern Irish the term for a Christian fast is *troscadh,* while *aín(e)* has disappeared from the Irish language, except in the names for the days of the week, e.g. *Cétaín* ‘first fast’ (Wednesday), *Dardaín* ‘between two fasts’ (Thursday) and *aín díden* ‘final fast’ (Friday).

During the Old Irish period a semantic shift occurred whereby *troscad* lost its meaning as a legal fast and gained the meaning of a religious fast. *Aín(e)* was lost. Binchy explanation for this shift is that the Christian fasting had taken on many aspects of the legal *troscad* and that *aín(e)* and *troscad* therefore semantically merged.[[5]](#footnote-5)

DIL gives the definition of *troscad* as an ‘act of fasting’ and as ‘fasting with a view of obtaining a request’. This *troscad* is a legal fast, while the other definition is *troscad* used as a standard term for fasting. The definition of *aín(e)* in DIL on the other hand is ‘fast, period of fasting (originally as an ascetic practice, as opposed to *troscad* ‘coercive fasting’. The fasting of *aín(e)* is an ascetic practice and stands in opposition to *troscad*. This runs counter to Binchy’s theory that *aín(e)* and *troscad* semantically merged.

A different hypothesis is that *aín(e)* fell out of use and *troscad* became the standardised form for fasting in Old Irish due to societal change. The main question of this thesis is *why and when the semantic shift between troscad and aín(e) occured*.

In order to answer this question the research of this thesis is embedded in Stephen Ullmann’s theories regarding semantics and semantic change. In the first chapter the causes and effects of semantic change are explained. in the second chapter the semantics of *troscad* and *aín(e)* before the shift are established. In the third chapter the semantic changes of *troscad* and *aín(e)* during the shift are discussed. This discussion is split in different subsections: *troscad* as a legal fast, *troscad* as a penitential fast, *troscad* as absolute abstinence and *aín(e)* in the glossaries. In the fifth chapter the socio-historical background during the semantic shift is given and explained and in the final chapter the hypotheses are re-evaluated based on the findings of this research.

# Semantic change

Language, as Edward Sapir wrote, is not static but moves continuously with every word and grammatical structure shifting over time.[[6]](#footnote-6) In this way words acquire different meanings, lose others or disappear. Meillet identified three factors that facilitate semantic shift, namely:

* discontinuous learning: Language is handed down in a discontinuous way with each child having to learn it for themselves. In learning a language they make mistakes. If they are not corrected, these ‘mistakes’ can cause semantic change.[[7]](#footnote-7)
* vagueness: Vagueness, in the meaning of words not having clear boundaries, can also cause semantic change.[[8]](#footnote-8) The word ‘game’ can mean both a boardgame, a videogame, but also Olympic games and can be used in idioms such as ‘I am game’.
* loss of motivation: Loss of motivation occurs when the connection between the word and its root has been severed.[[9]](#footnote-9) The French names for the days of the week - *lundi, mardi, midi, dimanche* - contain the element ‘*di*’, which is derived from Latin *dies* ‘day’. *-di* has not survived as an independent word, but is only found as a suffix.[[10]](#footnote-10)

In addition to these three factors, Ullmann proposes six causes for semantic change: [[11]](#footnote-11)

* linguistic causes:, when words are used in standard pairs the meaning of one word may be transferred to the other in what Bréal defined as contagion.[[12]](#footnote-12) This happened to French where the negation *ne personne* ‘no-one’ is such a prevalent combination that one can answer a question by just saying ‘*personne’* while still retaining the negation.
* historical causes: a society often changes faster than the language the people speak, so that the meaning of existing words change to accommodate the new situation. An example is the word parliament which originally was the name given to the council of French kings, but nowadays refers to a democratically elected body.[[13]](#footnote-13)
* social causes: some words can acquire a restricted meaning in specific professions or groups, which is called specialization. The opposite also occurs where words which originally had a restricted meaning were borrowed from a group-language into common use. This process is called generalization. In falconry the term ‘haggard’ was originally a term denoting a hawk which was caught after it had acquired adult plumage and was therefore considered to be wild and untamed.[[14]](#footnote-14)
* psychological causes: semantic changes can be caused by associations made by the speakers of a language. After the First World War beans were called ‘shrapnels’ in *poilus* slang.[[15]](#footnote-15) Taboo is also a cause for semantic change, for example when a word can’t be said by a people either out of fear or sense of decency. Taboo languages are well-attested, whereby certain names for animals were not spoken aloud, but instead euphemisms were used that described them. In the Jewish religion it is also taboo to speak the name of God and this has led to other words which can denote God, such as ‘The Lord’ etc. The French word *tuer*,meaning ‘to kill’, is derived from the Latin *tutari* ‘to protect’, which was used as slang by Roman soldiers for killing.
* foreign influence: semantic change can also occur due to influence from other languages. The constellations of the Great and Lesser Bear illustrate this well. In French the constellations are called *Ourse,* in Italian *Orsa*, in Spanish, *Osa*, in German *Bär*, in Hungarian *Medve* and in Dutch *Beer*.[[16]](#footnote-16)
* The need for a new name: this process can be most clearly seen in the 20th and 21st centuries where scientific innovations necessitate the need for new names for ideas or objects. This can be done by forming a new word from existing elements, borrowing a term from a foreign language or altering the meaning of an old word.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Semantic change can take many forms, one of which is the change in range. This change can be a restriction or extension of meaning. The English ‘voyage’ originally meant journey, but has been restricted in its meaning and nowadays only means ‘journey over the ocean or water’.[[18]](#footnote-18) The meaning of a word can also be extended such as with the English ‘target’ which was originally the diminutive form of *targe* ‘shield’ and later on became the name for the concentric circles that people shot at.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Of the six causes outlined by Ullmann, the psychological causes and the need for a new name are applicable for modern languages and will not be relevant for this research. In order to establish which causes are relevant for the semantic shift, the semantic shift has to be mapped chronologically.

# Methodology

This research into the semantic change of *troscad* and *aín(e)* was done by a close reading of Old and Middle Irish texts. The basis of the corpus is based on the entries of *troscad* and *aín(e)* in DIL. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but nevertheless is sufficient to understand when and why the semantic change occurred. The attestations of *troscad* and *aín(e)* have been collected and placed in a chronology which has been included in the appendix. With the help of this chronology, patterns could be observed and the hypothesis tested. The findings of this research will be discussed shortly.

The examples are numbered for easy reference: [T] is used for examples of *troscad*, [A] for *aín(e)* and [AT] for examples featuring both *troscad* and *aín(e)*. The English translation of the Irish text is from the same editions as the examples, unless specifically stated in a footnote. This is also true for the appendix. The translation is given between ‘ ‘.

# Two words for fasting

In early Irish society there were two different types of fasting, namely the *troscad* and *aín(e)*. *Troscad* was originally a legal procedure whereby one party fasted in front of the house of the other party in order to compel him to seek a settlement. The practice of *troscad* is described in the *Cethairṡlicht Athgabálae* tract of the *Senchas Már* which deals with the practice of distraint.[[20]](#footnote-20) Distraint is the formal seizure of property belonging to another without recourse to a court of law.[[21]](#footnote-21) The normal course in carrying out distraint is firstly that the ‘plaintiff’[[22]](#footnote-22) must give notice to the ‘defendant’. Secondly there is a delay in which the ‘defendant’ can put matters to right.If this is not done then thirdly the ‘plaintiff’ will move into the ‘defendant’s’ land and remove cattle to the amount due to the ‘plaintiff’. He will do this in the early morning accompanied by an *aigne* ‘law-agent’. The cattle is then driven to a private pound for a waiting period where, if nothing has been done by the ‘defendant’, the cattle is forfeited in stages of days.[[23]](#footnote-23)

The procedure changes however if the ‘defendant’ was of the *nemed* class i.e. kings, lords, clerics or poets.[[24]](#footnote-24) This is due to the hierarchical structure of Old Irish law in which the most important societal distinctions were those between *nemed* ‘sacred’ and the non-*nemed* i.e. people of lower rank. The oath of a person of higher rank carried more weight than that of a person of lower rank. Even though the *nemed* did not stand above the law, they did enjoy certain legal privileges. An example of one of these privileges is that it was not permitted by non-*nemed* to go into their land and distrain their cattle. In order to be able to do this the non­*-nemed* had to perform a ritual fast called a *troscad*.

[T1] Do’fet aurfocra cach n-athgaba[i]l(a) la Féine, inge ma[d] do nemthib no ma[d] for nemthib; to’fet troscud a tobach saide[[25]](#footnote-25)

‘An announcement is made before every seizure of the *Féni* except when they are of *nemed* rank or are made against *nemed*; their collection is preceded by fasting.’[[26]](#footnote-26)

The fast lasts from sundown until sunrise and the ‘plaintiff’ is to eat nothing, but remain in complete abstinence before the house of the accused.[[27]](#footnote-27) If the accused ate during this time the accused had to pay twice of what he owed.

[T2] Intí loingess nad’oige reir di troscud, is [s]i a breth la Feni: as’ren diabul neich ara’troiscther aire.[[28]](#footnote-28)

‘One who eats without wanting to fulfil the basis of fasting, on him the judgement is with the Féni: he pays double of what is fasted against him.’

If the ‘plaintiff’ fasts and the accused does not offer a surety or pledge on the basis of this fasting then he will be considered one who tries to evade justice, which is not an inconsiderable thing in a society where one’s word and honour counts for a lot.

[T3] Nech nad’gella di troscud, is eluthach na n-uile.[[29]](#footnote-29)

‘One, who does not provide a surety on the basis of fasting is considered to be one who evades everything.’

If a *nemed* is found to *elúdach* ‘evade/abscond’ justice, then he would not be able to find refuge with another *nemed* no matter how elevated.[[30]](#footnote-30) A *nemed* could therefore theoretically not just ignore a non-*nemed* doing a *troscad*.

*Aín(e)* on the other hand is an Irish loanword of the Latin *ieiunium*, meaning fasting, which was originally tied to the practise of religious fasting. The Early Irish Church was characterised by a strong ascetic tradition and, according to Fergus Kelly, ‘tinged with melancholia and an obsessive fear of damnation.’[[31]](#footnote-31) This is shown in the *Apgitir Chrábaid* ‘alphabet of piety’ which formulates the ideal Christian conduct. The answer to the question ‘what should be learned by mankind’ is answered by

[A1] Ní anse. Foss oc etlai, anbatae mbríathar, bráthirse n-ailgen, ascaid la rédi, ríagol do chomalnad cen érchoíltiu, érge la cét-rair, céim n-erlatad ar Día, ílgud fúarrige, forrumae lubair, lére ernaigthe, aíne co comaltai….[[32]](#footnote-32)

‘It is not hard [to say]: Perseverance in holiness, brevity(?) of speech, gentle brotherliness, [bestowing] a gift with serenity, fulfilment of a rule without injunctions, rising at the first break of day, a step in obedience before God, clement forgiveness, attendance on a sick person, diligence in prayer, fasting with calmness…….’

The Early Irish Church observed fasts during the three Lents; forty days before Christmas, forty days before Easter and forty days before Pentecost. During these fasts both clergy and laymen were to abstain from eating meat. [[33]](#footnote-33)

[A2] Ro-áinius iarum, & ro-m-etarscarus o dáinib, & nir-chaithes araill acht arán & usce & saland, amal gnathaigit fri ré in chorgais.[[34]](#footnote-34)

‘Then I fasted and separated myself from men, and ate nothing but bread and water and salt, as is customary during the time of Lent.’

There was also a twice-weekly fasting on Wednesday and Friday on which no meat was to be eaten. [[35]](#footnote-35) In addition to these fasts there were also penitential fasts which were imposed on laymen or clergy for sins they had committed in order to cleanse themselves of sin. [[36]](#footnote-36)

[A3] Nech cuilles aini ascon And is it commongarar ind eclais pendid diabul na aine dara hesi[[37]](#footnote-37)

‘Anyone who breaks a fast that is proclaimed in church keeps a double fast thereafter as penance.’

The practise of *troscad* and *aín(e)* were originally quite distinct. *Troscad* was a fast in order to obtain something from someone. During this fast the ‘plaintiff’ was to abstain completely from eating. *Aín(e)* on the other hand was a fast in order to cleanse the soul either voluntary or imposed as a penitential fast. The major difference here is that *troscad* is done *frí* ‘against’ someone while *aín(e)* is done solely for the cleansing of one’s own soul. A second difference between the two types of fasting is that *troscad* is a complete abstinence of food while *aín(e)* is a reduction of one’s rations and abstaining from certain foodstuffs such as meat. A final difference is the time limit where *troscad,* as defined by the *Senchas Már,* is a one day fast, *aín(e)* on the other hand can take as long as one is willing (or physically capable) to fast.

**Other Old Irish words for fasting**

In Old Irish there were other words used for fasting than *troscad* and *aín(e)*. One of these words was the verb *do-cin* ‘fasts’ and the corresponding verbal noun *toichned*. *Do-cin* does not have many attestations in DIL and does not seem to have been a common form. The verbal noun *toichned* has multiple attestations in DIL. The attestations of *toichned* as an act of fasting are few however. DIL gives the meaning of *toichned* as ‘the act of (illegally) withholding food from someone’ or as an ‘act of fasting’, but most attestations deal with the former.[[38]](#footnote-38) Another Old Irish word for fasting is *tredan*. DILconsiders *tredan* to be the Irish loanword of the Latin *triduana*.[[39]](#footnote-39) It could also be possible that it is a combination of the Irish word for three and *aín(e)*, because *tredan* is the name given to the three day fast. *Do-cin* was not as widely used as *troscad* or *aín(e)* and will therefore not be included in this research. *Tredan* falls outside of this research, but does provide a good basis for further research into other Old Irish words for fasting.

# The blurring of the lines

In order to establish when the semantic change occurred, it is important to look at attestations of *troscad* and *aín(e)* in the original texts. The examples used are found outside of legal texts, because in these sources a semantic shift is best observable. The examples are given in chronological order and grouped thematically.

**Troscad as a legal instrument**

In the *Betha Phátraic*, written in the 9th century St. Patrick comes across slaves who are treated very badly by their king Trían. Patrick helps the slaves and then fasts against the king:

[T4} Ocus troisciss Patraic fair. Ní derna Trían ní ari.[[40]](#footnote-40)

‘And Patrick fasted against him. Trían did nothing for him.’ [[41]](#footnote-41)

St. Patrick fasts against the king in order to compel him to treat his slaves better. Trían does not react to the *troscad* and does not provide sureties. According to the laws described by the *Senchas Már* he is therefore considered to be evading justice and Patrick curses the king, his descendants and the territory over which he rules. This is a clear example of *troscad* being used to compel a member of the *nemed* class i.e. king Trian.

In the *Monastery of Tallacht*  written in the early 9th century it is explained why penitents could not survive solely on bread and water during a penitent fast. A lot of people died during these fasts, while ‘in the days of the elders’ they did not. Because of these deaths a group of saints fasted in a *troscad* against God.

[T5] Rotheiscet iarum imbi fri dia.[[42]](#footnote-42)

‘Then they fasted against God on account of this.’

An angel is sent to explain that, due to the wickedness of mankind, water and bread cannot sustain a man anymore. The *troscad* is used in this instance to compel God to stop the deaths caused by penitential fasts. God does not evade the judgement, but acts on the *troscad* and sends an angel to explain why there are so many deaths due to penitential fasts. This *troscad*, even though it is done against God, does adhere to all the criteria of an original, legal *troscad.*  God is the highest power and therefore also the highest *nemed*.

Another example of *troscad* with this original meaning is found in the story of the *Michaelmas Sheep Rawl. B512. fo. 108 a. 2, line 19)* written in the 11th century. In this tale St. Patrick was in conflict with the pagan king Lóegaire and he fasted in order to compel God to curse Lóegaire.

[T6] Bai Patraic ina troscad fri Día for Loeguiri.[[43]](#footnote-43)

‘Patrick was fasting towards God upon Loeguire.’

In this instance Patrick is not fasting against the king, but instead uses a *troscad* to compel God to curse Lóegaire. The *troscad* here is different than the others in the sense that it is not the ‘defendant’, i.e. Lóegaire, whom is fasted against, but rather it is God whom is compelled through a *troscad* to curse Lóegaire. God is the lord of Patrick and Patrick fasts against his own nemed in order to compel him to do something about his enemy Lóegaire. That this is considered to be a *troscad* is also shown in the discussion between the queen and her son in the following paragraph of the same text.

[T8] “Ní cóir duit,” for a mathair, “bíad do chaithim ocus Patraic hi troscad foraibh.” Ní formsa trois(c)ess,”, ar an mac, “acht for Loeguiri.”

“‘It is not proper for thee”, said his mother, “to eat food while Patrick is fasting on you.” “It is not on me that he is fasting,” says the boy, “but on Lóegaire.”[[44]](#footnote-44)

The boy eats a piece of mutton, which wedges in his throat and he dies. This *troscad* is different from the previous examples, because the aggrieving party is not the one fasted against. The *troscad* is used in this instance as a means to call divine wrath upon Lóegaire. Another difference is the fact that the entire family of Lóegaire has to fast, rather than just the one fasted against. Even though it differs from the *troscad* described in the *Senchas Már*, it is still a fast used to compel one of higher rank.

King Lóegaire was not a Christian and therefore did not accept God as his *nemed*. The fasting of Patrick against God upon Lóegaire has to be viewed as the fasting of a subject against his own *nemed* to act againstsomeone from outside of the tribe. It is reminiscent of a section which was added in the *Senchas Már* by another hand in the early 12th century, when the land is threatened by a group of strangers:

[T9] Tet aige fine as-a tir I’mbi co rig Tuatha ocus troscaid aire; as’congair side don tuaith no’gaibed a n-athgabail, ocus dingaib lin uile iarum[[45]](#footnote-45)

‘The committee of the clan, whose land it is, goes to the king of the tribe and fasts against him, he calls the tribe together, sureties are given and all together go away.’

In a similar way to the fasting of the committee of the clan, Patrick fasts against his *nemed* in order to compel him to act against the enemies of the tribe i.e. the pagan king.

There seems to be a difference between the one whom is fasted against (*frí*) and the one whom is fasted upon (*ar/for*). In [T8] for example God is the one whom is fasted against and Lóegaire is fasted upon. The *troscad* is against God, but concerns Lóegaire. *For* can also mean ‘because’ and that would change the translation to fasting ‘because of Lóegaire’. In [T9] *ar* is used and could imply that the committee is fasting against someone else because the king does not act. This might be a scribal error, for this later example is added in a later hand which may not have understood the intricacies of the legal practice of *troscad*.

The *Lebor na Cert*, written in the 11th century as well, also deals with the conflict between St. Patrick and Lóegaire. In this book the conflict comes to an end when Patrick and his people together with saints fast against Lóegaire and his people.

[T10] Iss ead immorro rod báidi flaith Temrach troscad Pádraic cona muinter for Laegairi mac Néill, ocus troscad Ruadán Lothra meic Aengusa co naebaib Érind for Diarmaid mac Cerbaill 7 forceithri finib na Temrach[[46]](#footnote-46)

‘The princedom of Tara was extinguished by the fasting of Patrick with his people against Laegaire son of Niall, and the fasting of Ruadán of Lothra, son of Aengus, with the saints of Ireland against Diarmait son of Cerball and the four kindreds of Tara.’

The *troscad* they employ against Lóegaire and the others is not a way to compel them to come to justice, but rather a magical ritual to destroy an entire kingdom in biblical fashion. This fast shows similarities to the previous fasts, but seems to drift further from the *troscad* as described in the *Senchas Már.* The *troscad* seems to be employed as a means to compel God, as the highest *nemed,* to take action against the enemies of the saints rather than as a way to clear legal pursuits.

Even though these examples are from religious texts they show *troscad* being used as a legal instrument. Patrick and the other saints fast in a *troscad* against a *nemed*. The *nemed* in [T4] was a king and in the other examples the *nemed* was God. In [T10] the saints and Patrick extinguish the princedom of Tara by fasting. This seems to be a similar instance where they fast against God to compel him to act, even though it is not explicitly mentioned in the text. With the fasting of the saints, *troscad* began to be associated with Christianity. This led to *troscad* not just being used in secular law, but also in religious law as the term for a penitential fast.

**Troscad as a penitential fast**

A manuscript of the ‘MonasteryofTallaght’ contains: four Old Irish texts including a copy of the *Apgitir Chrábaid* and the Penitential written in the first half of the 9th century.[[47]](#footnote-47) The text is written in both Latin and Old Irish. The word used for penitential fasting in the text is *troscad*. In the Penitential *aín(e)* is used for non-penitential fasts which also may be ordained by the Church.

[T11] Mad sacart no deochain asrocoile a bith-manchai teora bliadnai col-leith for uisciu 7 bargin troscad cacha sechtmaine díib acht etir da notlaic…[[48]](#footnote-48)

‘If he be a priest, a deacon who has taken a vow of perpetual celibacy, he spends three and a half years on bread and water, with a fast in every week of the time, except between the two Christmases….’

The fast described here is not a legal instrument used to compel someone to pay damages or to demand justice, but instead is a fast that is imposed on someone to atone for sins committed. The meaning of *troscad* has shifted a lot from the *troscad* of the *Senchas Már*. The penitential fast is not a form of total abstinence, because he can still take water and bread, nor is it done against someone. It is clear from this example that the meaning of *troscad* is starting to shift.

*Aín(e)* on the other hand does not undergo a semantic shift, but is still used to describe a personal, voluntary fast.

[A4]Mad galar fodera nó ma iar nn-aine móir nó ma ar foilti inn-ocht sollamnaib inna bliadna….[[49]](#footnote-49)

‘If this is caused by disease, or if it happens after a long fast, or in rejoicings at the eight festivals of the year…..’

[A5] Nech aines i ndomnuch tri faill no chaillti pendith uii. main for uisci 7 bargin.

‘Anyone who fasts on a Sunday through carelessness or austerity does a week’s penance on bread and water.’

[A6] bas anmcharath dó 7 dugne figill 7 aine 7 ernaigti du día col-leir.

‘so that He shall be his confessor: and let him perform a vigil and a fast and prayers to God diligently.’

These are all examples from the same penitential, which shows that *aín(e)* has retained its meaning as a fast done for personal spiritual health. It appears then that the semantic field of *troscad* has been broadened with the meaning of penitential fast.

A different text called *The Table of Penitential Commutations* (Rawl. B512) dated around A.D. 800 also used *troscad* for the penitential fast.

[T12] Arra tessairgne anma a iffurn .i. coic pr ar tri .xxtib art rib cétaib acus coic slechtain art rib .xxtib art rib cétaib accus .u. bemend art rib .xxtib art rib cétaib di abaind hi cach æn llau co cend mbliadnæ acus troscud cach mis doessairc anmæ…[[50]](#footnote-50)

‘A commutation for rescuing a soul out of hell: three hundred and sixty-five Paters and three hundred and sixty-five genuflexions and three hundred and sixty-five blows of the scourge every day for a year, and a fast every month…’

[T13] Hitt e tra cetamus arrai conarmid… ind noeib di dubthroscad iar morchin…[[51]](#footnote-51)

‘These, now are the commutations of a black fast [due] after grievous sin….’

In the Penitenital Commutations the word for a penitential fast is *troscad*. There is also mention of a specific kind of *troscad*, namely a *dubthroscad*, or ‘black fast’. A black fast was a fast where one did not eat during the day and only had one meal after the sun had gone down. This was usually done in the time before Lent. The black fast is a special one because it is not an imposed fast. In this case *aín(e)* is expected, but *troscad* is used. It could be argued that because one did not eat during a *dubthroscad* it was more like the legal *troscad* than a lessening of food in a voluntary *aín(e)*. The use of *dubthroscad* as a voluntary fast further blurs the line between *troscad* and *aín(e)*.

What is especially interesting is that the manuscripts in which the Commutation is found differ in the following example in the word for fasting that they use.

[T14] Arre tredain do neuch legas….[[52]](#footnote-52)

[T14] Arre troiscthe do neuch legas[[53]](#footnote-53)

‘Commutation of a (three-days’) fast for one who can read’

The fact that *tredain* is used in one manuscript and *troiscthe* in the other shows that *troscad* has started to become the standard form for fasting. The broadening of the semantics of *troscad* can also be seen in the following extract from ‘The Monastery of Tallaght’ written between 831 and 840.

[AT1] Ni molatharsom ind troscud is ferr lais ind fit mesraigti dogres niconfil eiter ind riagail I fueregtar acht mad a cinta oirccne. Aon troscut hi riagail comgeild .i. ind cetain ria caisc. Trí troisciud immurco tantum la colum chilli in ando .i. aidchi notlacc steill .i. post .xii. nataleis 7 ochtmad imbairgine coluim cilli isuidiu 7 seilind 7 bochtan ais maith bat ead indas ind troiscti sin 7 ind centa cétaoin de quadragissima 7 in cena cetain post pensticostin ochtmhadh in cechae. Ind aine immurgu in chesta dosforslaicde colum cille for noebaib herenn fobithin atbathatar dend aine sin sruithi iar sircacht in chorgis[[54]](#footnote-54)

‘He does not commend fasting: he prefers a regular measured pittance. There is no Rule where it is imposed, except on account of injury done. There is one fast in Comgall’s Rule -namely the Wednesday before Easter. However Colum Cille recognized three fasts only in the year: the eve of Epiphany- that is, twelve days after Christmas, and the eighth part of Colum Cille’s loaf at that time, with a *seland* and a *bochtan* of good milk: that was the manner of that fast; and the first Wednesday of Lent, and the first Wednesday after Pentecost: the eighth of a loaf to each fast. However, Colum Cille relaxed the fast of the Passion for the saints of Ireland, because old men died of that fast after the long privations of Lent.’

The interesting thing here is that the penitential fasts are denoted as *troscad*, but the fasts recognized by Colum Cille are written as *trí troisciud* instead of *tredan* or *trí aín(e)*. The fast of the twelve days after Christmas and the eighth part of Colum Cille’s loaf is written as *troiscti*. However the fast of the Passion is still written as *aín(e)*. This all points to the blurring of the lines between *troscad* and *aín(e)*, where both are used for non-penitential religious fasts.

From the use of *troscad* in secular law, through the legal fast by the saints of Ireland, the term came to also mean a penitential fast. These fasts were originally in opposition to the voluntary fast of *aín(e)*, but eventually became conflated. *Troscad* began to be used interchangeably, which indicates that *troscad* had also acquired the meaning of a voluntary fast. This process is also visible in *troscad* meaning ‘total abstinence’.

**Troscad as total abstinence**

One of the oldest texts in which *troscad* is attested outside of a legal text is in the story of *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* written around A.D. 800.[[55]](#footnote-55) The story begins when Mac Dathó is asked for his priced pig by both Medb and Ailill as well as the Ulstermen and he is stuck in a dilemma over what to do. In this state he cannot eat, nor sleep and his wife asks him:

[T15} is fota in troscud i taí[[56]](#footnote-56)

‘you are making a long fast’

In this text Mac Dathó is not trying to compel anyone to come to justice, but is not eating due to stress over the decision he has to make. It is possible that *troscad* also meant ‘total abstinence’ before it was used as a legal instrument and is therefore used in this text. The line between a fast where one does not eat and complete abstinence from food is very thin and prone to blurring.

There is also a Latin loanword *abstanait* ‘abstinence’, but it is mostly used in conjunction with *aín(e)* as a collocation.

[A7] tria timorcuin a chuirp I n-aine 7 I n-abstanait.[[57]](#footnote-57)

‘repression and subjugation of his body through fasting and abstinence.’

There are many examples of the collocation of *aín(e)* and *abstinait* in the *Leabhar Breac* which can be found in the Appendix. The abstinence meant here is not a complete abstinence that would be expected in a legal *troscad*, but rather an abstinence from certain foodstuffs such as meat or fish.

*Troscad* did acquire the meaning of religious abstinence as well. In a different text from the *Leabhar Breac* it shows *aín(e)* and *troscad* used in a similar way to [A4].

[AT2} co festais indus bud chóir dóib aíne 7 troscad do dénum[[58]](#footnote-58)

‘so that they might know how they should perform fasting and abstinence’

*Troscad* is used here in a religious text in the same context as *abstinait*. This shows that already in the 11th century *troscad* was being used as a term for religious abstinence.

DIL does not give ‘abstinence’ as a definition for *troscad.* It is possible that the practice of *troscad* where one did not eat anything was similar enough to *abstinait* that due to the growing prevalence of *troscad* it replaced *abstinait* in the collocation with *aín(e)*. This shows that *troscad* was already well established in the non-legal, Christian context. Due to the increased use of *troscad*, *aín(e)* slowly fell out of use. This process is also visible in the glossaries.

**Aín(e) in the glossaries**

Although it is difficult to establish when *aín(e)* was completely lost in the Irish language, beyond its use in the days of the week, it is possible to see the decline in use with the help of glossary entries. If a word needs to be explained in a glossary then it can be assumed that it is not in common use. As has been shown by the previous sections, *troscad* became widely used for religious fasts. The use of *aín(e)* can be followed through the Irish glossaries.

Some of the oldest Irish glossary entries are found in O’Mulconry’s Glossary.[[59]](#footnote-59) O’Mulconry’s Glossary translates and explains Irish terms into Latin. Mac Neill dates the first stratum of the glossary to the middle of the 7th century.[[60]](#footnote-60) The glossary’s main purpose was to show the Hebrew, Greek and Latin origins of ca. 800 Irish words.[[61]](#footnote-61) In this glossary there is an attestation for *aín(e)*:

[A8] Aine .i. a ieiunia. ieiunia enim est tenue intestinumm.[[62]](#footnote-62)

‘*Aíne* that is a fast. A fast truly so that the stomach lessens.’[[63]](#footnote-63)

Even though it might seem contradictory the fact that *aín(e)* is found in this glossary does not mean that it was not in common use. In fact it means the opposite. This glossary was not used to explain Irish words which had fallen out of use to Irish readers. It was used to explain the origin of the Irish language. Because *aín(e)* is one of the 800 words to be explained in Latin, it means that it was common and important enough to warrant a gloss in O’Mulconry’s Glossary. This might be due to the fact that there is a clear connection, because *aín(e)* is a Latin loanword. Nevertheless it shows that *aín(e)* was in common use at the time as a term for voluntary fasting.

*Aín(e)* is not found in any other glossaries afterwards until O’Davoren’s Glossary written in 1569. [[64]](#footnote-64) From this it can be assumed that *aín(e)* was so common that it did not need a gloss. It is not certain when *aín(e)* did fall out of use, but what can be said for certain is that *aín(e)* had been phased out by the end of the 16th century. In O’Davoren’s Glossary, which is a legal glossary ‘par *excellence’* that explains legal terms, there is a mention of *aín(e)*:*[[65]](#footnote-65)*

[AT3] Ain .i. troscad ut est firbes athgabáil aine[[66]](#footnote-66)

‘*ain* (fasting), that is, *troscad* (fasting) which is the futile fasting (*ain*) of distraint’.[[67]](#footnote-67)

A very interesting thing to note is that *aín(e)* here is explained to be the legal *troscad* of the *Senchas Már*. In order for this change of meanings *troscad* had to have lost its meaning as a legal fast. *Aín(e)* also had to have completely disappeared as a voluntary fast and to have only survived in the days of the week. *Aín(e)* is not found in any of the other important glossaries such as Cormac’s glossary. This implies that the word was still in active use or at least did not need a gloss to explain it. By the time of O’Davoren it was interpreted by him as being a term for the legal fast. It is then explained by the only word meaning fast in O’Davoren’s time, namely *troscad*. By this time the practise of fasting as a legal procedure has completely ceased to be and is described in the gloss as a futile fast. This glossary entry marks the definite end date of the semantic shift of *troscad* and *aín(e)*, whereby *troscad* has become the standard term for fasting and *aín(e)* is just found in glossary entries which need to be explained.[[68]](#footnote-68)

What is clear from the glossary entries is that *aín(e)* was in common use from at least the middle of the 7th century. Because it is not found in any of the major glossaries it can be assumed that it stayed in common use. The definitive end of the common usage of *aín(e)* is 1569, which is shown by O’Davoren’s Glossary. Here *aín(e)* is used as a term for the legal fast for which *troscad* was originally used while *troscad* is used in the same gloss as the standard word for fasting. The semantic change is completed. In order to establish why this change took place it is necessary to consider the societal changes that occurred during this time.

# Societal change

**Irish asceticism and the Céli Dé**

Christianity was introduced in Ireland in the 5th century. it is unclear from the sources how ascetic the first Christian converts were, but starting from the 6th century it is possible to trace the asceticism of the Irish Church. Already in the 6th century authors such as Columbanus and Gildas promoted an ascetic lifestyle.[[69]](#footnote-69) This emphasis on asceticism was further enhanced by the emergence of the *Céli Dé* in Ireland. The *Céli Dé,* also known as culdees,were a religious order whose name translates as ‘clients of God’. They emerged in Ireland in the second half of the 8th century and were strictly ascetic.[[70]](#footnote-70) The monastery of Tallaght produced a number of important culdee abbot-bishops, such as Mael Ruain under whose leadership the *Old Irish Penitential* was written, as well as the manuscript which has been called ‘The Monastery of Tallaght’.[[71]](#footnote-71) The culdees employed fasting as a penitential measure and fasted voluntarily as well every Lent and a fast every Wednesday and Friday.[[72]](#footnote-72) The *Céli Dé* movement composed the earliest works of vernacular religious literature after the second half of the 8th century.[[73]](#footnote-73) The emphasis on asceticism and fasting and the use of the vernacular could explain the distinction between *aín(e)* and *troscad* that was shown in the previous examples. Because there was such a strong focus on fasting, it makes sense that there were terms for specific fasts.

The Irish Church underwent a reform in the 11th and 12th centuries in which it formed closer ties to the Continental Church.[[74]](#footnote-74) This reform occurred before the Norman-English invasion of Ireland. The change was preceded by the Scandinavian bishopric of Dublin which had close ties to the English Church.[[75]](#footnote-75) The reform resulted in the Irish Church conforming more to the church in Rome. The *Céli Dé* order was replaced by the continental orders such as the Cistercian order in the early 12th century, the Dominican order in 1224 and the Franciscans in 1231.[[76]](#footnote-76) These orders did not place as great an emphasis on asceticism and fasting as the *Céli Dé* had done and this could explain the disappearance of *aín(e)* outside of the name for the days of the week. If fasting was not as important then there would be no need for two different words for it. By this time *aín(e)* was already being used in the days of the week, as shown in example [AT1].

**The changing legal system**

it is unclear how long fasting was used as a legal instrument for distraint, but Binchy argues that it has to have been in use after the introduction of Christianity because the higher members of the church are incorporated into the *nemed* class in the law text.[[77]](#footnote-77) By the 9th century however fasting as a legal measure was not practised anymore and had become entirely symbolic.[[78]](#footnote-78) Even though it is not clear when exactly the practise of legal *troscad* fell out of use, it happened sometime between the 5th and the 9th century. This is a very long time span in which great societal change occurred, namely the giving up of paganism, the introduction fo the *Céli Dé* and from 795 onwards raids by the Vikings.[[79]](#footnote-79)

The loss of *troscad* as a legal practice could have initiated the semantic change, bringing *troscad* out of the legal niche and into general use. In the *Críth Gablach* Binchy states that already in the 8th century ‘sick maintenance’ is not practiced anymore.[[80]](#footnote-80) This would be in line with the social and historical causes for semantic change as set out by Ullmann.

# Conclusion

Binchy’s hypothesis was that the Christian fast merged with that of the native tradition of the legal *troscad* and resulted in the loss of distinction between *troscad* and *aín(e)*. This is however not what appears to have happened. *Troscad* was lost as a legal procedure between the 5th and 9th centuries and through the process of generalization, as described by Ullmann, acquired the meaning of penitential fast, religious abstinence and finally religious fast. *Aín(e)* on the other hand did not change semantically. The sources show that *aín(e)* was lost after the *Céli Dé* were replaced by continental religious orders and the focus on asceticism was lost. Because fasting was not done as much anymore, there was no need for a separate very specific term for fasting. *Aín(e)* fell out of use so much that it was interpreted by O’Davoren in his glossary as the term for the legal fast. It was not a merging of semantics, but rather *troscad* became more and more associated with the Christian church. First through the fasting of the saints and afterwards through the penitential fasts.

The outcome of this research would imply that the semantic change that took place was one of social causes as defined by Ullmann. *Troscad* originally seemed to have a restricted and niche semantic meaning, but after the legal *troscad* was not practiced anymore,it was borrowed into common use. It then became the standard word for fasting. Meanwhile *aín(e)* retained its niche meaning as a voluntary religious fast. This meaning has not shifted and, unlike Binchy’s assertions, kept being used in the same context until it was lostdue to the decline of asceticism in the Irish Church.

In both the case of *aín(e)* as well as with *troscad* the ‘loss of motivation’ occurred. The context between word and root were severed. This happened with *troscad* when the legal *troscad* fell out of use and with *aín(e)* when the emphasis on asceticism and fasting disappeared after the reform of the church in the 12th century. After the loss of motivation *troscad* generalized and *aín(e)* disappeared as an independent noun and, like the French *di,* is retained only in the name for days of the week.

There is still more to be studied in further research into this semantic shift. . Theshift seems to have occurred between the 5th and the 16th centuries. This is a very large timeframe and through use of a larger corpus this timeframe can be narrowed down further. This study only considered *troscad* and *aín(e)* due to the limited scope of the research*,* but further study could include *tredan* and *do-cin* as well for a broader picture. This research was also narrow in scope due to it being a bachelor thesis. The corpus is based on the attestations found in DIL, which was mostly compromised of religious texts. A corpus research separated thematically in legal, religious and prose texts to place these findings in a broader context could further shed a light on fasting in Early Medieval Ireland.

Further research should therefore take the form of an in depth corpus research with religious, legal and prose texts. This should be coupled with a more thorough investigation into the societal change regarding the impact of Viking settlement and the founding of the bishopric of Dublin as well as the invasion by the Anglo-Normans. Furthermore this research should also take other similar developments into consideration; such as the disappearance of sick maintenance in the *Críth Gablach* explained previously.

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# Appendix

This appendix offers a chronological overview of the sources used for the research into the semantic shift of *troscad* and *aín(e)*.

7th century:

**Senchas Már (AL I 112-118)** (ca. 660-680[[81]](#footnote-81))[[82]](#footnote-82)[[83]](#footnote-83)

* + [T1] *Do’fet aurfocra cach n-athgaba[i]l(a) la Féine, inge ma[d] do nemthib no ma[d] for nemthib; to’fet troscud a tobach saide*
    - An announcement is made before every seizure of the Féni (Free Irish), except when they are of *nemed* rank or are made against *nemed*; their collection is preceded by fasting.
  + [T2] *Nech nad’gella di troscud, is eluthach na n-uile.* 
    - One, who does not provide a surety/pledge(?) on the basis of fasting is considered to be one who evades everything.
  + [T3*] Intí loingess nad’oige reir di troscud, is [s]i a breth la Feni: as’ren diabul neich ara’troiscther aire.* 
    - One who eats without wanting to fulfil the basis of fasting, on him the judgement is with the Féni: he pays double of what is fasted against him.
  + [T4] *Inti troisces tar tairscin reir[e] do, at’baill a dligid a fuigiull Fene.*
    - One, who fasted, even though his desire has been offered, his claim dies out of the trial of Free Irish.
  + [T5] *Iss ed coir cach troiscthe la Feine: arach for soraith nad’elai, no gell do geallaib treibi ne[i]ch frisa’troisc(i)ther aire.* 
    - This is proper with every fast with the Free Irish: a bond on a good surety that does not escape/is not deprived or a surety from the sureties of the hous (of the debtor) for that, against which was fasted.
  + [T6] *is as sin is folus conad i in adaigh deiginach don apadh adaig in troscthi*
    - from this it is clear that the night of fasting is the last night of the apad.

8th century:

**Apgitir Chrábaid** (first half 8th century)[[84]](#footnote-84)

* + [A1] *aíne co comaltai*
    - fasting with calmness
  + [A2] *Frigidir fri aíni 7 ernaigthi*
    - He is cold(?) towards fasting and prayer.

**Fiacc’s Hymn** (middle 8th century)

* + [A3] *In insib Mara Torrian áinis, indib adrimi*
    - In the isles of the Tyrrhene sea he fasted

9th century:

**Leabhar Breac:[[85]](#footnote-85)**

* **Betha Phátraic**
  + [T7] *Ocus troisciss Patraic fair.*
    - And Patrick fasted against him.
  + [T8] *Dátrian introiscthi forsindailig, trian forsindríg ocus forsindum ocus forsintúaith.*
    - Two thirds of the fasting on the rock, a third on the king and on the fort on the district.
  + [A4] *iarnáine ocus ernaigthi*
    - after fasting and prayer
      * Right after this piece a Latin insert uses *ieiunium* for fasting “*et ieiunium post misericordiam et benignitatem*”

**Monastery of Tallaght[[86]](#footnote-86)**

* + [T9] *Nech loingis ríasind trath cóir troscud ind nó bith for usciu ocus 7 bargin ind aidchi dara heisi.*
    - If anyone eats before the proper hour, a fast is the penalty for it, or to be put on bread and water the next evening.
  + [T10] *Dia fercaichther tra friu nech cid sechtair cid frit muindtir ma fosnather trist do tabirt for nech nó aithis troscud ind*.
    - (Now if thou art angry with anyone, whether a stranger or one of thine own monks, if thou art wroth so as to lay a curse on anyone, or revile him, fasting is imposed for it).
  + [T11] *Gille dano nó timtirid ní hecen aithrigi disuidiu arnachoarda eislis acht troscud deit fadéin tantum*.
    - As for a servant or attendant, penitence is not necessary on his account, lest thou increase(?) his carelessness, but only fasting for thyself.
  + [T12] *Troscud darahesi aidchi arabarach statím*.
    - He had to fast the next night immediately thereafter.
  + [T13*] Gilde 7 ócláoich dobered a colaind do máolruaoin doluigti troscad dóib indtand nombid ein troiscid leo*.
    - A lad or youth that gave up his body to Maelruain, such would be excused from fasting when they had made themselves liable to fast.
  + [A5] *Rogai do saccrafic 7 isintturtt chetna biae tre cach oena*.
    - Thou shalt go to the sacrament, and shalt continue under the same rule through each fast.
  + [AT1*] Ni molatharsom ind troscud is ferr lais ind fit mesraigti dogres niconfil eiter ind riagail I fueregtar acht mad a cinta oirccne. Aon troscut hi riagail comgeild .i. ind cetain ria caisc. Trí troisciud immurco tantum la colum chilli in ando .i. aidchi notlacc steill .i. post .xii. nataleis 7 ochtmad imbairgine coluim cilli isuidiu 7 seilind 7 bochtan ais maith bat ead indas ind troiscti sin 7 ind centa cétaoin de quadragissima 7 in cena cetain post pensticostin ochtmhadh in cechae. Ind aine immurgu in chesta dosforslaicde colum cille for noebaib herenn fobithin atbathatar dend aine sin sruithi iar sircacht in chorgis*.
    - He does not commend fasting: he prefers a regular measured pittance. There is no Rule where it is imposed, except on account of injury done. There is one fast in Comgall’s Rule -namely the Wednesday before Easter. However Colum Cille recognized three fasts only in the year: the eve of Epiphany- that is, twelve days after Christmas, and the eighth part of Colum Cille’s loaf at that time, with a seland and a bochtan of good milk: that was the manner of that fast; and the first Wednesday of Lent, and the first Wednesday after Pentecost: the eighth of a loaf to each fast. However, Colum Cille relaxed the fast of the Passion for the saints of Ireland, because old men died of that fast after the long privations of Lent
  + [T14*] do leith troscud is dir insin cena caraet immurgu in tan is troscud .i. cena in nocte*
    - this is properly applicable to a half-ration and half-fast; “*cena careat*” however, is used when a fast is meant -that is, *cena in nocte*.
  + [T15*] Is hed rochuala la crundmael acht fo thri nico rotroisci maelruain o gabis tamlachti .i. for artrig mac faelmuire im chaingin robui de muintir tamlachti friss. Iarsin chetna troscud cetemus romemaid coss ind ríg indó. Iarsin trosc tanaise rotuit in tenid corroloisc hé o mulluch co talmin. Iarsin tress troscud fogeib in rí bás.* 
    - This I have heard Crundmael say, that Maelruain never fasted but thrice since he settled at Tamlacht – namely, against Artri son of Faelmuire, about a business that arose between the monastery of Tallaght and him. After the first fasting the king’s leg broke in two; after the second, the fire fell and burnt him from top to toe; after the third fasting the king died.
  + [T16] *Rotheiscet (Rotroiscit) iarum imbi fri dia.*
    - They fasted against God on account of this.
  + [A6] *Cith áointech bat romor a abstinait*
    - if ascetic, that his abstinence is excessive]
      * Though it is not translated as such the glossary gives the translation *áintech* ‘given to fasting’.
  + [T17]*Bithbés troisceta dano ní forgein lasna naobu acht áon troscut indorsa. Ni forgeni la comgald .i. aidchi ceulai a aithliu na cetaoine accus ni dentai immurgo aidei ind césta. Tri troiscthe immurcu la colam cilde ind ando 7 leth fít ind cach ái díb 7 ba cumlechtach ind lethfítt hisin. Arre troiscethe la diarmait da fítt chert chutrume cid mín cid anmín dondecme 7 inddala hí do tabirt do día Araile do tomailt fadein 7 artáott troscud sin*.
    - Now continual fasting was not practised by Comgall, and it is not practised by the saints at present, save one fast, namely the eve of Maundy Thursday after the Wednesday. On the eve of the Passion, however no fast is to be observed. Colum Cille, however, kept three fasts in the year, with a half-ration on each of them, and this half-ration was liberal. As an equivalent for fasting Diarmait used to allow two exactly equal rations to be made, whether it happened to be coarse or light food, and one of these to be given to God; the other he was to eat himself; and this serves in place of a fast.

**Scél Tuáin Meic Chairill** (second half 9th century)

[DT1]*Docinet lais fo domnach (variant readings) Coro t(h)roiscet* (Lebor na hUidre/TCD H.3.18)/*coro troiscet* (Rawl.B 512)

* + - They fasted against him all Sunday

11th century:

**Leabhar Breac** (most texts from the 11th century; *Betha Phátraig* 9th century) **[[87]](#footnote-87)**

* **Of Sylvester and Constantine** 
  + [A7*] tuc áine dredenosta forna sechtarestib bui accu*.
    - He enjoyed a fast of three days on the catechumens.
  + [A8] *acht aíne dognítis innte.*
    - But fasted thereon.
  + [A9] *atbert aíne isin t-sapoit, ar is innte ro-bui corp Crist isin & is innte no aíntis apstail & descipail Dé, & atbert fríu uli aíne innte amal conn-icfitis.*
    - And enjoyed a fast on the Sabbath; for on it Christ’s body lay in the grave; on it the apostles and the disciples of God fasted; so he bade them also all fast according to their ability.
  + [A10*] Ro-ainestar Siluestar & in popul uli aine trédenosta co ro-s-dingbad Dia in plag-sin don uli popul. Iarsin lo na h-aíne tra…*
    - So Sylvester and all the people fasted a three-days’ fast, that God might take away that plague from all the people. Now after the last day of the fast….
  + [A11] *dena tra aine isin t-sechtmain-sea,* 
    - Fast, now, this week,
* **Pasion of John the Baptist** 
  + [T18] *Tancatar iar sin da mhanach noemda a h-oirthur domain iar céin mair co h-Jerusalem do troscad i n-anmum in choimded.*
    - Now a long while after, there came two holy monks from the East of the world to Jerusalem, to fast in the name of the Lord.
* **Passion of Stephen**
  + [A12] *Ro-áinius iarum, & ro-m-etarscarus o dáinib, & nir-chaithes araill acht arán & usce & saland, amal gnathaigit fri ré in chorgais.*
    - Then I fasted and separated myself from men, and ate nothing but bread and water and salt, as is costumary during the time of Lent.
  + [A13*] Ro-gnius-sa tra atlugud budi do Dia, & ro-áinius fon indus cetna doridisi secht laa na sechtmaine.*
    - I gave thanks to God and fasted again in the same manner the seven days of the week.
* **Passion of Bartholomew** 
  + [A14] *co ro-chlói Crist tria áine isin dithrub in ti ro-clói Adam I Parrdus tria craes;* 
    - so that Christ conquered through fasting in the desert him who overcame Adam in paradise through gluttony;
* **Passion of the Apostle Philip** 
  + [A15] *crochaid bar tolacollaide i n-áine* 
    - crucify your carnal wills by fasting
* **Gospel of Nicodemus** 
  + [A16*] Is ed didiu is coir dó, co n-derna áine*
    - This also is proper in him, to observe fast
* **Fasting and Temptation of Christ in the desert** 
  + - *De IEIUNIO DOMINI IN DESERTO incipit, et de temptationibus cibus diabolus eum temptauerat.* The text is written in both Latin as well as Irish
  + [A17] *Ísu Crist mac Dé bíí, slánícid síl Ádaim uli cu coitchend, do thocht i n-díthrub srotha Íordanén, co ro-áin cethracha lathi & cethracha n-áidche, & co ro-bris cath fa thri for demun i forbu a áine & a abstane.*
    - Jesus Christ, son of the living God and Saviour of all the seed of Adam, went into the desert of the river Jordan, and fasted forty days and forty nights; and how He there fought a battle against the devil at the end of His fast and abstinence.
* **On the Archangel Michael** 
  + [A18*] tria timorcuin a chuirp i n-aine & i n-abstanait.*
    - repression and subjugation of his body through fasting and abstinence.
  + [A19*] Na h-ecnaide imorro & na Cristaige & na h-iressaig ro-thothlaigset fortacht o Dia, co n-deraib frisin coimdid, co n-aintib & co n-ernaigthib;*
    - The educated Christians and believers besought aid from God with tears and fastings and prayers;
  + [A20] *fororcongair side cu ra-ainitis uli feraib maccaib mnaib*
    - who enjoyed a fast on all the inhabitants, men women and children
  + [A21] *O ra-forbad didiu in tredan cusin aine*
    - when the three days of the fast were over
  + [A22] *Batar tra na Cristaige i n-aine & in-apstanait resin cathúgud*
    - Before the battle the Christians observed fasting and abstinence
  + [A23] *co ro-áinitis dib-linaib*
    - that they should observe a fast
  + [A24] *In adaig dedinach iarum ina h-aine*
    - And so on the night of the fast
* **On the Epiphany** 
  + [A25] *troethaid bar colaind tria óine*
    - ‘Subdue your body by fasting
* **On the Lord’s Prayer**
  + [A26] *In banscal craibdech didiu indister i l-lebraib Rig .i. Anna, o do-rigne áine & ernaigthe n-dúthrachtaig co Día, tucad di in mac erdraicc, .i. Samuél fáith;—*
    - The believing woman, Anna, of whom mention is made in the Book of kings had the famous son, Samuel the prophet, given to her, when she fasted and prayed earnestly to God;
* **On the Soul’s Exit from the body**
  + [A 27] *a lesci áine & ernaigthi & estechta forcetail Dé*
    - in respect of fasting and prayer and listening to God’s teaching

**Homily on St. Patrick[[88]](#footnote-88)**

* + [A28] *Bene oras, et bene ieiunas*
    - An angel says this to Patrick in Latin in an otherwise Irish text.
  + [A29] *Luid Pátraic iarsin indithrub .i. hiCruachan Oigle. foindsamail Moysi ocus Helii ocus Crist. Coroaín .xl. lathi ocus xl. aidche isinluccsin, ocus iiii. cloche imbe ocus cloich foi. amal roáin Moysi isleib Sina octidnocul dó inrechta. uair roptar cosmaile hó ilmodaib .i. Moysi ocus Pátraic c. xx. mbliadan anaes diblinib. Toisech popuil cechtar de. Roainset .xl. naidche islebtib. At indreba ocus anadnocuil dib linib.*
    - Thereafter Patrick gat him into the wilderness, that is, to Cruachan Aigli, after the manner of Moses and Elias and Christ. And for forty days and forty nights he fasted in that place, having four stones about him and a stone under him, even as Moses fasted on Mount Sinai when the Law was delivered unto him. For they, Moses and Patrick, were alike in many ways. One hundred and twenty years was the age of them both. Each was a leader of people. Forty nights on mountains they fasted. And the burial-places of them both are uncertain.
* **The Michaelmas Sheep** 
  + [T19] *Bai Patraic ina troscad fri Día for Loeguiri.*
    - Patrick was fasting towards God upon Loeguire.
  + [T20] *Ocus asbert in ríghan nách caithfed ní ocus Patraic ina troscad.*
    - and said she would not consume anything while Patrick was fasting.
  + [T21] *“Ní cóir duit”, for a mathair, “biad do chaithim ocus Patraic hi troscad foraibh.”* 
    - “It is not proper for thee”, saith his mother, “to eat food while Patrick is fasting on you”.
  + [T22] *Ní formsa trois(c)ess”, ar an mac, “acht for Loeguiri.”*
    - “It is not on me that he is fasting”, said the boy, “but on Lóegaire.”

**Lebor na Cert** (11th century) [[89]](#footnote-89)

* + [T23] *Is ed dano foruair sin troscad do naebaib imdaib i Temair*

was caused by the fasting of many saints at Tara,

* + [T24*] Iss ead immorro rod báidi flaith Temrach troscad Pádraic cona muinter for Laegairi mac Néill, ocus troscad Ruadán Lothra meic Aengusa co naebaib Érind for Diarmaid mac Cerbaill 7 forceithri finib na Temrach*;
    - The princedom of Tara was extinguished by the fasting of Patrick with his people against Laegaire son of Niall, and the fasting of Ruadán of Lothra, son of Aengus, with the saints of Ireland against Diarmait son of Cerball and the four kindreds of Tara.
  + [T25] *Ó ra thraisceadur na naím for Temair sochluta saír*,
    - When the saints fasted against famous noble Tara,
  + [A30]  *mo fhaíne mo esgaine*
    - Might be an example of aíne (with fh as a hypercorrection). Is dubious though.

**Annals of Ulster** (from the year 1096-1129)[[90]](#footnote-90)

* + [T26] *Uamon mór for feraibh Erenn ria feil Eoin na bliadna-sa co ro thesairc Dia tria troisctibh comarba Patraic & cleirech n-Erenn archena.* 
    - Great fear seized the men of Ireland before the feast of John in this year, and God protected them through the fasts of the successor of Patrick and the other clerics of Ireland.
  + [T27] *Caer teinedh do thiachtain aidche fheil Patraic for Cruachan Aighle co on does .xxx. on does troisci.*
    - A ball of fire came on the night of the feast of Patrick 17 March on Cruachain Aighle, and destroyed thirty of those fasting.
  + [A31] *oentigh ernaigthidh*(?)
    - fasting, prayer,
  + [T28*] comarba Coluim Cille cona shamudh & ro traisc budéin Colum Cille ime & toisech mac leighind Daire im a breith d'a reilic.*
    - Colum-cille himself and the head of the students of Daire fasted regarding it,—for his being carried to [Christian] burial.

12th century

**Imramm ua Corra**

* + [T29] *(Do)ronsat iarum troscadh fri Demun*,
    - “Then they fasted against the Devil”

**Senchas Már (**addition in another handca.1128)[[91]](#footnote-91)

* + [T30]*Tet aige fine as-a tir I’mbi co rig Tuatha ocus troscaid aire; as’congair side don tuaith no’gaibed a n-athgabail, ocus dingaib lin uile iarum* 
    - The committee(?) of the clan, whose land it is, goes to the king of the tribe and fasts against him, he calls the tribe together, sureties are given and all together go away.

1. Sweeney, 2004, p. 340. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sweeney, 2004, p. 339. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Binchy, 1982, p. 168. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Binchy, 1982, p. 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Binchy, 1982, p. 170. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ullmann 1977, p.193. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ullmann, 1977, p. 193. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ullmann, 1977, p. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ullmann, 1977, p. 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Ullmann, 1977, p. 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ullmann, 1977, p. 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ullmann, 1977, p. 198. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ullmann, 1977, p. 199. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ullmann, 1977, p. 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ullmann, 1977, p. 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ullmann, 1977, p. 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ullmann, 1977, p. 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ullmann, 1977, p. 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Ullmann, 1977, pp. 227-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Breatnach, 2011, p 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Kelly, 1988., p. 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Terms such as ‘plaintiff’ and ‘defendant’ imply a modern court of law, but there was no court of law as such in Early Medieval Ireland. The terms are used in favour of others such as ‘one party’ and ‘the other party’ to facilitate easier reading. In order to avoid confusion with modern law courts the terms are placed in quotation marks. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Kelly, 1988, p. 179. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Kelly 1988, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Thurneysen, 1925, p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. [T1-T3] are translated into English from Thurneysen’s German translation of the *Senchas Már*. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See Appendix, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Thurneysen, 1925, p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Thurneysen, 1925, p. 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Kelly, 1988, pp. 9-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Kelly,1988, p. 343. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Hull 1968, p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Kelly, 1988, p. 346. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Atkinson, 1887, p. 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Kelly, 1988, p. 347. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Kelly, 1988, p. 347. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Gwyn, 1914, p. 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. eDIL, s.v. toichned ([dil.ie/41200](http://dil.ie/41200)), accessed 2-07-2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. eDIL s.v. 1 tredan ([dil.ie/41690](http://dil.ie/41690)) [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Stokes, 1877, p. 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. A more litteral translation would be ‘And Patrick fasted on him. ‘Trian did nothing because of it’. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Gwynn and Purton, 1911/1912, p. 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Stokes, 1877, p. 556. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. This translation is my own English translation of Thurneysen’s German translation of the Irish tekst of the *Senchas Már*. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Thurneysen, 1925, p. 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Dillon, 1962, p. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. The Penitential is a document which describes the penalties for particular sins. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Gwynn, 1914, p. 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Gwynn, 1914, p. 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Binchy, 1962, p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Binchy, 1962, p. 59. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Binchy, 1962, p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Binchy, 1962, p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Gwynn and Purton, 1912, p. 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Thurneysen, 1969, p. iv. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Thurneysen, 1969, p. 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Atkinson, 1887, p. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. McLaughlin, 2010, p. 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Russell, 2009, p. 87. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Mac Neill, 1932, p.117. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Mac Neill, 1932, p. 116. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. <https://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/irishglossaries/texts.php?versionID=10&readingID=20057#20057>, accessed 20-06-2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. This is my own translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. ‘par excellence’: Russell, 2009, p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Russell, 2009, p. 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Williams and Norgate, 1862, p. 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. This sentence has been translated with great help from Mícheál Ó Flaithearta. *Firbes* is interpreted as being *forbás* ‘futile, empty’. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Glossaries are by their very nature conservative and contain many words that have long fallen into disuse. This means that the end date of 1569 is does not reflect precisely when the semantic shift ended, but due to the lack of information it gives a definite endpoint with the interpretation of *aín(e)* as a legal fast. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Follet, 2006, p. 85. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Follett, 2006, p. 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Follet, 2006, p. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Follet, 2006, p. 185. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Follet, 2006, p. 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Richter, 1988, p. 129. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Richter, 1988, p. 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Richter, 1988, pp. 127-8, 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Binchy, 1973, p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Binchy, 1973, p. 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Richter, 1988, p. 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. See *Críth Gablach* by D.A. Binchy for further information. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Breatnach, 2011, p. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. The translations of [T1]-[T6] are translated into English by me from the German translation of Thurneysen. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Thurneysen, Rudolf, ‘Aus dem Irischen Recht II’, Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie, (vol. 15 1925) pp. 238-276. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Hull, Vernam, ‘Apgitir Chrábaid: the alphabet of piety’, *Celtica,* (vol. 8 1968) pp. 44-89. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Atkinson, Robert, *The passions and the homilies from Leabhar Breac*, Dublin 1887. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Gwynn, E. J., Purton, W. J., ‘The monastery of Tallaght’, Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: archaeology, culture, history, literature, (vol. 29 1911/1912) pp. 115-179. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Atkinson, Robert, *The passions and the homilies from Leabhar Breac*, Dublin 1887. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Stokes, Whitley, The tripartite life of Patrick with other documents relating to that saint, (vol. 1 and 2) London 1887. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Dillon, Myles, lebor na Cert; The book of rights, Dublin 1962. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. [ed.] [tr.] Mac Airt, Seán, Mac Niocaill, Gearóid (eds. and trs.), The Annals of Ulster, to AD 1131, Dublin 1983. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Thurneysen, Rudolf, ‘Aus dem Irischen Recht II’, Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie, (vol. 15 1925) pp. 238-276. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)