

Ulster Archaeological Society

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Source: *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Third Series, Vol. 66 (2007), pp. 132-138

Published by: [Ulster Archaeological Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20699261>

Accessed: 13/03/2014 19:54

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INAUGURATION RITES OF RULERS IN IRELAND AND CARINTHIA: A NOTE

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INTRODUCTION

In an interesting and detailed paper in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* for 1857 Herbert F Hore drew attention to the close similarity between a medieval account of the inauguration ceremony of the dukes of Carinthia (earlier called Karantania) and what early Irish inauguration ceremonies were believed to entail on the basis of scattered medieval sources. The Carinthian ceremony was carried out in the open air at and on a monumental stone, the upturned base of a fluted Roman column, in a meadow at Karnburg (Krnski Grad), a few kilometres north of Klagenfurt in what is now Austria. Hore's main point was that the Carinthian ceremony was so similar to Irish inauguration rites that both must have had a common origin:

should the analogies between those circumstances prove close, the presumption that this people have a common extraction with the nation that used similar ceremonies must undoubtedly be admitted. May it not be safely asserted, that such usages as were practised at a ceremony so high as the installation of a King, are among those to which the remotest degree of antiquity may be described? (Hore 1857, 216).

Hore described Carinthia as a mountainous country north of the Adriatic where Herodotus placed a Celtic tribe, which 'was, at one period, inhabited by a race who must have been cognate to the Celts of the British islands, if the similarity of their inaugural usages be taken in proof' (Hore 1857, 217). According to Hore, the account of the Carinthian inauguration was first quoted in an Irish context by Lynch in his refutation of Giraldus Cambrensis and was used by O'Donovan in his account of the tribes and customs of Hy-Fiachrach (O'Donovan 1844, 436-37). Hore's paper remains intriguing because it proposed a potential link between Carinthia and Ireland, in singular details of the ceremonial processes of ducal and royal inauguration. For example, one of Hore's

conclusions on the Irish rites was that, 'Anciently, the inaugural ceremonials were superintended by the Druids, and, doubtless, included other observances of an augural nature. The entire ceremony must have had a Pagan and an Oriental origin' (Hore 1857, 229).

The detailed similarity pointed out between the Carinthian ceremony and the Irish inauguration rites, parts of which were reported from different places and times in medieval Ireland and assembled by Hore and others, and his assertion of the common origin of the ceremonials seem plausible enough. But why in continental Europe should such a clear example of this inauguration rite survive only in Carinthia? If the ceremonies were inherited from a common ancient tradition why is there not historic testimony, perhaps less explicit, of the survival of similar rites scattered across Europe? The ceremonies associated with the Stone of Mora at Uppsala on which medieval Swedish kings were elevated and acclaimed after election constitute another, possibly ideologically-related, example (wikipedia.org/Wiki/Stones_of_Mora). Clearly, if the Carinthian account was testimony to an independent survival of an inauguration rite that had been handed down from prehistory, it would indeed support the possibility of an anciently shared origin, 'Celtic' or 'Indo-European', of the rites in both Ireland and Carinthia. A hundred and fifty years on, the nature of this connection deserves to be re-examined and its importance re-stated in the light of more recent works on kingship ceremonials and Indo-European comparative studies generally. Here I am concerned mainly to examine the visible parallels between the inauguration rites and not to explore the possibility of interpreting the underlying ideology.

CARINTHIAN INAUGURATION AND INSULAR PARALLELS

The source for the description of the Carinthian ceremony quoted by Hore, following Lynch, was 'Jo: Auban, *de Moribus Gentium*'. This was a widely circulated encyclopedic description of the peoples

of Europe, printed in several editions in a number of cities (eg at Lyon in 1541), entitled *Mores, Leges et Ritus Omnium Gentium*, by Johannes Boemus Aubanus (Johannes Böhm), who lived between about 1485 and 1535. The account of the Carinthian ceremony is in Book III, Chapter XVII, and entitled 'De Bauaria et Charinthia, et earum Priscis Legibus moribusque quibus hodie uiuunt ...'. In Table 1 below, Johannes Boemus' account is reproduced in translation in the left-hand column (after Hore 1857), with what appear to be analogous parts of the (reconstructed) Irish and Scottish inauguration rite(s) in the right-hand column (after Fitzpatrick 2004).

Hore drew attention to 'The many and striking analogies between the several circumstances relating to inauguration in Ireland and in Carinthia', and in an interesting discussion elaborated and underlined the extent of the close parallels between the ceremonies. The first concurrence he noted is that the chieftain was 'created', implying that he was 'made' in the open-air public assembly, sometimes standing on a stone. Further, the form of government in Carinthia was described as a 'republic' whereas in Ireland Hore suggested that each 'great tribe' could be described as a 'commonwealth' (1857, 220). The humility of the approach of the archduke designate as he approached investiture, when 'he acts the herdman more than the prince', may accord with the deportment and garb of the prince of Cenél Conaill on the inaugural occasion described by Giraldus Cambrensis (O'Meara 1950, 168). Similarly, the importance of shoes, or rather the absence of footwear, is manifest in the Carinthian account, something that may be paralleled in Irish ceremonies where there is documentary evidence for the use of shoes. The clothes of the Austrian duke were bestowed on the inaugurator. Similarly, in Ireland the clothes worn by the chief-elect were originally the sole perquisite of the inaugurator (Hore 1857, 222-23). Further parallels could be the hereditary post of inaugurator, the turn around to face all directions and a drinking ceremony.

RECENT WORK ON MEDIEVAL IRISH INAUGURATION RITES

Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (2004, 11) in her comprehensive study of the evidence for royal inauguration in Gaelic Ireland, offers a conjectural reconstruction of an Irish inauguration ceremony, based on snapshots of information in sources ranging from the 12th to the 17th century (this in outline is compared in Table 1 below with the Carinthian ceremony). The tributary chiefs and Church leaders of the kingdom arrived at the traditional inauguration site. The royal candidate arrived on horseback, probably in a procession. He

may then have been dressed for the occasion in a simple habit or robe. His inaugurator performed a series of rites as the royal candidate stood or sat on the designated spot which may have been an 'ancestral' mound, or there may have been a flagstone or a stone chair. A white wand, symbolizing the authority of the office (in place of a sword), was brought down over the head of the candidate - possibly a symbolic threat like the slap on the face administered to the Carinthian duke - and presented to him. In some Irish ceremonies attested from the late medieval period a single shoe was thrown over the head of the candidate and placed on his foot afterwards. Fitzpatrick also refers to the Carinthian ceremonies:

The act of robing in simple garments and surrendering the royal attire is not peculiar to the Irish rite. In the account of the inauguration of Meinhard II as duke of Carinthia in 1286, written by Johann abbot of Viktring [this includes some details not given by Johannes Boemus], in the fourteenth century, the duke-elect is freed of his precious garments and put into peasant dress (a grey linen shirt, a pale hat and simple shoes) by a hereditary 'dresser' (Fitzpatrick 2004, 7).

Fitzpatrick refers further to the Carinthian ceremony in the discussion of the use of stones at inauguration sites (2004, 153-54). The *Fürstenstein* or Prince's Stone (*Knežji Kamen* in Slovenian) used in the Carinthian ceremony was a fragment of an ionic pillar, apparently taken from the ruins of the Roman town of Virunum, near Klagenfurt. It stood in the open field near Karnburg and after the open-air inauguration the ducal party participated in a religious rite in the church of Maria Saal, 3km to the east. From there they went to the Zollfeld nearby where the new duke dispensed justice and granted privileges from a two-seat, back to back, stone chair. This was known as the *Herzogstuhl* or Duke's Chair (*Vojvodski stol* in Slovenian). Fitzpatrick notes (2004, 192) that ducal ceremonies involving distinct secular and Church ceremonies were recorded in Ireland and Europe in the later medieval period, and again cites the Carinthian ceremony as an example.

The reasons why the similarities between the Irish inauguration rites and the Carinthian ceremony are pointed out, seem to range from anthropological comparisons to implications that some ancient, possibly Indo-European heritage was shared by both traditions. But again we have to ask: why do the comparisons between Ireland and Carinthia appear so close, especially when it is difficult to point to much intervening evidence for similar rites of inauguration? And here we come to the crux of this

CARINTHIA	IRELAND and SCOTLAND
In Carinthia, as often as a new prince of the republic enters upon the government, they observe a solemnity no where else heard of.	Kings were inaugurated according to specific rites, drawing authority from their antiquity and unlike any used elsewhere.
In the open fields, stands erect a marble stone, which, when the duke is about to be created, a certain countryman, to whom through his race the succession to that office hereditarily belongs, ascends,	In the medieval period, designated inauguration sites, sometimes with mounds or stones, often stood in a plain commanding a wide view. The chief offices of a kingdom, including that of inaugurator, were hereditary.
having on his right hand a black heifer in calf, while on his left is placed a working mare remarkable for leanness.	Horses played prominent roles in some recorded ceremonies, either for sacrifice or transport to or from the site.
The people of the country assemble around in a vast crowd;	The people of the kingdom assembled around the inauguration site.
then the duke about to be invested with the purple moves thither surrounded by a multitude, the ensigns of the principality preceding him; and the entire company are richly dressed	The royal candidate arrived on horseback, probably in procession and then dismounted near the site. The tributary chiefs, dignitaries and church leaders congregated at the traditional open-air inauguration site.
except the future duke himself. He, in the common dress of the country, wearing a hair cap, carrying shoes and a pastoral staff, acts the herdman more than the prince.	The candidate surrendered royal attire and dressed in simple clothes. Putting a shoe on the chief (and other shoe symbolism) was an important part of some recorded ceremonies.
As he is approaching, he who has possession of the stone, on beholding him, exclaims in the Illyrian language, who is this who comes on so proudly? The surrounding multitude reply; - he that that is to become the prince of the country. Then he asks whether he is a just judge? Does he desire the welfare of the country? Is he of free birth? Is he worthy of the honour? A cultivator and defender of Christian piety?	Parts of the ceremony were spoken by the participants, but we have little direct evidence for what was said. Rhetorical questions, however, would be appropriate. It is likely that praise poems and genealogies of the chief elect were recited.
It is exclaimed, he is indeed, and will be. Again the same man says, I ask by what law will he remove me from this seat? The master of the ducal hall replies, this place is bought from thee for sixty pence; these cattle shall be thine, pointing with his hand to the heifer and the mare; you shall have the dress which the duke will put off; and you with all your house shall be free from tribute.	The master of the hall was a hereditary office, the steward of the chief. At the inauguration of O'Connor in 1315 an ounce of gold was paid to an official who prepared and guarded the cairn on which the ceremony took place and only he could be present with the inaugurator and chief-elect on the cairn. The chief designate's horse and garments were given to other participants.
Which being said, the countryman strikes the cheek of the duke, the blow being lightly struck, and commands him to be an equitable judge, and cedes up the place, leading away the price.	The candidate was touched by a white wand, substituting for a sword, brought down over his head, which was then given to him as a symbol of authority. Inauguration was confirmed by the pronouncement of the king's new title and acclamation by the surrounding people.
Then the prince takes possession of the stone, turns himself round to every part brandishing a naked sword, addresses the people, and promises to be an equitable judge.	The inaugurator moved three times around the chief in a <i>deiseal</i> or cosmic rotation. Sometimes the chief himself turned around several times to view his lands and people.
They bring water, and it is offered to him to drink in the cup of the country, as an argument of future sobriety, etc. Thus the princes of Austria obtain the empire and are called Archdukes.	The ceremony was followed by a feast at which a ceremonial drink and ritual bath were taken.

Table 1 Comparison between medieval Carinthian and Irish inauguration rites.

paper: in the 8th century Ireland and Karantania did have a close connection. The Slavic and other peoples of Karantania were evangelized to Christianity over a forty-year period by Irish monks operating from Salzburg under the direction of Virgilius (Fergil) from Aghaboe, Co Laois. As well as being an administrator and missionary, Virgilius appears to have been a natural philosopher; following the ancient Greeks, he is said to have believed in a round earth and in antipodeans and to have fallen out of favour with his superior, St Boniface of Mainz, on account of some of his views (Kenny 1966, 523-26).

CARINTHIA AND THE IRISH MISSION (Table 2)

At the end of the 6th century the Slovenes were established in the eastern Alps, in their own state called Karantania, based on the former Roman province of Noricum. There was a residual population of Romanised elements of the Celtic Norici and Illyri, Roman *coloni*, people of Germanic origin, and Ostrogoths, Lombards and Franks. From about 623 until 738 the mountain state of Karantania appears to have been relatively unmolested. But in about 743 Duke Odilo of Bavaria (738-748) answered a call from Duke Borut of Karantania to drive off an Avar invasion. The victorious Bavarians, however, remained in Karantania and Borut had to surrender his Slovene state to the Bavarians, send hostages to Odilo, accept for his people the Christian faith and submit to the ecclesiastical authority of the bishops of Salzburg (Kuhar 1967, 32). The hostages, Borut's son Gorazd and his cousin Hotimir, probably with sons of other noble Slovene families, were sent to the monastic school on an island in Chiemsee, some 45km west of Salzburg (ibid, 35). The Slovenes in Karantania, some 180km south-east of Salzburg and on the opposite, southern side of the Alps, retained some independence, for they continued to live under their own dukes. They retained the right to suggest the names of their dukes for Frankish approval and afterwards to invest them 'by a most individually national ceremony of enthronement' (ibid, 32-3, n). Borut, who did not become Christian, was succeeded around 750 by his son Gorazd, who was succeeded in 753 by his cousin Hotimir; the latter ruled until about 770 when he was succeeded by Waltunc.

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- 784 Death of Virgilius.
 - 772 From 772-784 six groups of missionaries, collaborators of Virgilius, worked in Karantania.
 - 772 Tassilo of Bavaria conquered Karantania's Slovenes following uprisings.
 - 770 Hotimir succeeded by Waltunc.
 - 765 Dub-dá-chrich became abbot of Chiemsee after Virgilius made bishop.
 - 757 Virgilius sent major mission to Karantania led by Modestus, an Irishman.
 - 755 Death of Boniface, archbishop of Mainz.
 - 753 Gorazd succeeded by Hotimir, who travelled several times to Salzburg (and visited Virgilius).
 - 751 Anointment of Pippin III as king of the Franks at Soissons.
 - 750 Borut, duke of Karantania, succeeded by Gorazd.
 - 748 Odilo of Bavaria succeeded by Tassilo III.
 - 746 Virgilius in Salzburg, ran bishopric as abbot of St Peter's.
 - 743 After takeover of Karantania by Bavaria, Borut's son Gorazd and nephew Hotimir at monastic school in Chiemsee near Salzburg.
 - 743 Odilo of Bavaria asked by Duke Borut of Karantania to help drive off Avar invasion.
 - 742 Virgilius left Ireland, spent two years at court of Pippin.
 - 741 Pippin became Mayor of the Palace and duke of the Franks.
 - 704 Death of Adomnán, ninth abbot of Iona.
 - 500 Before 500 Noricum under see of Sirmium.
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Table 2 Sequence of key events.

The missionary activity of the bishopric of Salzburg during the Bavarian period was organized by Virgilius from before 748. The episcopal functions were carried out up to 767 by Dobdagrecus (Dub-dá-chrich) (Kenny 1966, 523-26), another Irishman, who then became abbot of the monastery of Chiemsee. Hotimir went to Salzburg on several occasions to pay his due (*servitium*) to the bishop. Christianity must have spread over Karantania to some extent during Duke Gorazd's reign, for Hotimir invited Virgilius to visit Karantania (Kuhar 1967, 35-36). Virgilius could not go in person (because he had not yet been consecrated bishop), but instead sent an important mission in or around 757 composed of Modestus (an Irishman), four

priests and other helpers, who came to the residence of the dukes of Karantania, at Karnburg. Modestus founded, according to the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum*, three churches reflecting the districts of Roman civil and religious administration, but under different political conditions (ibid, 36). The first church was *ecclesia Sanctae Mariae*, at Maria Saal in Carinthia, close to the Roman see of Virunum, and its successor on the same site was where the religious part of the inauguration ceremony of the dukes of Carinthia took place in the middle ages. It was the centre of missionary work in Karantania and the mother church of the Slovenes.

After the death of Modestus and of Hotimir (late 760s) there were revolts against foreign and Christian rule and the Bavarian missions were suspended for several years. But missionaries were sent in six groups to Karantania in the twelve years preceding Virgilius's death (772-784). Many of the Karantanian missionaries seem to have been close collaborators of Virgilius. The relative ease with which Karantania was converted to Christianity has been attributed to the mild missionary methods of the Irish who worked in Karantania for forty decisive years, and to the fact that the see of Salzburg was in the hands of an Irish bishop who at the same time presided over a monastic *familia*, which had jurisdiction over the Karantanian Slovenes (Kuhar 1967, 42-3). To sum up, the missionaries who worked among the Slovenes were sent there by Virgilius, an Irishman. An important group was led by Modestus, an Irishman. The missionaries were prepared for their task at the Chiemsee school where Dobdagrecus, another Irishman, was the superior. The first Christian dukes of Karantania were educated for a time at Chiemsee and there is evidence for general support of the Christian mission by the rulers of Karantania (ibid, 51).

In 788 the Carolingians stepped in and by the end of the 8th century all the Slovenes, the Lombards, the duchy of Bavaria and the Avar state had been brought within the boundaries of the Frankish empire (Kuhar 1967, 53). By the 13th century the native Slovenes had disappeared in riverside Noricum and Pannonia. The situation in those parts of Carinthia and Styria north of the Drava was different. There, as contemporary documents show, Slovene was still the language spoken in several areas. An example of Slovene survival is the installation ceremony on the Prince's Stone which was conducted in the Slovene language until 1597 (ibid, 215-16).

DID IRISH MISSIONARIES CONTRIBUTE TO THE CARINTHIAN INAUGURATION CEREMONY?

The Slovenes appear to have settled in the area of Carinthia in the post-Roman period, among a mixed population some of whom were also recent immigrants and some of whom were already Christian. It is possible that the incoming Slovenes brought a ready-made inauguration ceremony with them; but is this likely, given the apparent lack of surviving parallels for a similar ceremony from their suggested homelands or other Slavic lands? The other population groups in the region were of mixed origins and are unlikely to have developed such an unusual inauguration ceremony in the immediately post-Roman period. The fact that the inauguration stone came from an abandoned Roman site shows that its use in the ceremony could not be earlier than the abandonment of Roman Virunum, perhaps in the 6th century. While the incoming Slavic people could have brought the ideology of the ceremony with them to the region, the selection of such an overt symbol of Roman power as an inauguration stone suggests that the ceremony itself was not established at this place until after the end Roman Virunum.

As we have seen, the account of the Carinthian ceremony has such close parallels with the Irish rites, some aspects of which are otherwise singular or unusual, that to suggest a generic relationship between them is plausible. If a group of Irish monks could, over a space of forty years, convert this region to Christianity, might they not also have advised the leaders of the same emergent dukedom on an appropriate inauguration ceremony for their dukes? The ceremony does indeed have evidence of Church influence, for example asking the new chief if he would be a defender of the faith, and this element may have originated in the early days of Christianity when it would be appropriate from an ecclesiastical perspective for a new duke to affirm his commitment. Although outdoors, in parallel with the Irish ceremonies, the inauguration of the Carinthian dukes took place in a field not far from the chief church of the region, in which the religious part of the ceremony was carried out, and which certainly had been founded by the Irish missionaries. If Irish involvement in the design of the ceremony is accepted as a possibility then the Carinthian ceremony might give some insight into an 8th-century Irish inauguration ceremony relayed, and perhaps in the process idealized or reformed, by the missionaries. It may be that the Carinthian ceremony was a composite rite, with its main elements originating locally, but with a structure that was influenced by the Irish missionaries, many of whom were presumably of noble birth and who would be

familiar with the rites and conduct of inauguration ceremonies in Ireland. It is also possible that a reflux process could have taken place, with missionaries returning to Ireland and bringing back new ideas derived from a Carinthian ceremony which influenced development of inauguration rites in Ireland. At least, it seems that the correspondences between Ireland and Carinthia can not be adduced as *necessarily independent* examples of a once widespread Indo-European rite of inauguration in view of the highly influential position of Irish missionaries in the region at a crucial time for the origins and political development of the duchy.

DISCUSSION

The possibility that Irish missionaries might have been responsible to some extent for influencing the inauguration ceremony of the dukes of Carinthia raises several other questions: for example, is there evidence that the church in early medieval Ireland was interested in modifying or reforming inauguration rites at home? Secondly, is there any evidence that Irish churchmen or missionaries influenced inauguration ceremonies elsewhere in Europe? The first question has been considered by Elizabeth Fitzpatrick. She notes three aspects of inauguration rites in which Church influence is apparent: first, the participation of ecclesiastics in inauguration ceremonies; secondly, alterations to the ceremony itself and the objects used; and, thirdly, examples of the movement of the ceremony to church sites from traditional secular assembly sites (Fitzpatrick 2004, 173). Most of the evidence comes from sources of the 11th and 12th centuries, rather later than the 8th-century period this paper is chiefly concerned with. Fitzpatrick suggests that the ceremonial turn to the right, *deiseal*, might have been introduced by churchmen. It was carried out on at least one recorded instance by a cleric and she notes that it was also used in the Carinthian ceremony (ibid, 175). The use of relics and shrines in inauguration ceremonies is attested in medieval sources. Although they are perceived first as ecclesiastical objects they were also royal objects, commissioned and paid for by kings and 'probably used more extensively in Irish royal ritual than the written records reveal' (ibid, 177). The use of portable shrines and relics, on which it was customary to take oaths, by churchmen in inauguration ceremonies was one way of transmitting the sacredness of an ecclesiastical setting to an outdoor location. An example of the expansion of Church authority may be represented by the stipulation in the late medieval life of Máedóc of Ferns that the 'rod of kingship' to be used in the inauguration of the king of Bréifne must be cut from

a sacred hazel tree dedicated to the saint growing on a hill in Leinster (ibid, 58).

These questions have also been discussed by Michael Enright (1985) in his study of the possible influence of the Irish Church in the anointment of Pippin III as king of the Franks at Soissons in 751. He draws attention to the writing of Adomnán, ninth abbot of Iona after Columba, in which it is clear that he was strongly drawn to the study of the Bible and tried to put biblical directives into practice. In keeping with Irish reverence for the Old Testament and for biblical precedent in general, Adomnán decided to make the First Book of Kings the model for a form of royal inauguration ritual. This interpretation is based on the appearance of four different and completely novel kingship ideas in the *Vita Columbae*, all of which are also to be found within a few pages of each other in the First Book of Kings. These include the concept of inviolability for anointed kings, now applied to the Uí Néill, the ordination of Áedán, based on the unction of Saul, the choosing of Eochoid Buide, based on the story of the first unction of David, and the appearance of a book of the ordination of kings given to Columba and corresponding to the book in which Samuel wrote the laws of the kingdom. All of the biblical examples which Adomnán drew on refer to royal unction and the concept of royal inviolability which is clearly tied to it (Enright 1985, 24).

Enright discusses the possible influence of Iona thinking on Virgilius and Iona influence in Bavaria. He sees Virgilius of Salzburg as a likely transmitter of Adomnán's biblically-derived anointing ritual to the inauguration ceremony of Pippin III at Soissons in 751 (Enright 1985, 94-106). If, however, Columban missionaries were responsible for transmitting an approved inauguration rite from Ireland and Scotland to other parts of Europe we would expect there to be some similarity between the rituals thus derived that emerge into history. It has to be admitted that there are marked differences between the inauguration ceremony at Soissons in 751 and that attested centuries later from Carinthia, but arguably having its origin much earlier than the time of its first record. There is no evidence to suggest that unction was used in Carinthia, but neither is there much information about what may have taken place during the Church phase of this and the reported ceremonies in Ireland, where the accounts mainly refer to aspects of the outdoor components – which even in medieval times appear to have been regarded as remarkable. It seems, however, no less plausible (in terms of process) to suggest that the Irish or Scottish missionaries in Karantania in the 8th century may have influenced the design of an outdoor inauguration ritual in

accordance with their native rites (perhaps modified in the light of Christianity), than to suggest that they introduced biblically-inspired unction to the inauguration ceremony of the king of the Franks in 751.

In 1857 Herbert Hore concluded:

we will not sound a trumpet to proclaim that this similarity proves a connection between these two people; but our *cor de chasse* has, at the least, started a fresh hare. Certainly the strong similarity between the Austrian ceremonies ... and those which ... were incident to Celtic inauguration, is even more remarkable in the meaning or moral than in the close similarity of particular circumstances (Hore 1857, 235).

We could now add that if a connection between the areas needs to be sought to explain the similarities, it could exist in the 8th-century Irish missionary activities in Carinthia.

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