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of the church in his time the declinency of the friars, whose lifestyle, in his view, contradicted and insulted the intentions of their founders, who had based their rules on the proposition that Christ was poor. FitzRalph alleged that Christ was vouchsafed this state because he was poor and, consequently, so far as he was concerned, the whole basis of the mendicants’ claim to be imitating the life of Christ in all its aspects was false.

An active preacher, FitzRalph traveled extensively in the northern part of the Pale, which came under his jurisdiction, although it seems that, because of problems concerning the indigenous Irish of his diocese, he never set foot in his cathedral at Armagh. He delivered sermons in both English, to say ‘Anglo-Irish’ congregations, and Latin, to those, only the Latin version survive and he may presume that he gave the vernacular sermons from notes in Latin. It seems that his anti-priestliness to the friars emerged from his experience of running a diocese that was so poor that he could not afford to lose any offerings from his parishioners. The friars were so successful at preaching and giving easy penances in comparison that they attracted money which, in FitzRalph’s opinion, should have gone to his own clergy. This deflection of funds seems to have been a major factor in his anti-mendicancy, and he ostracized the friars in a series of sermons and excommunication decrees that culminated in a proposition known as the Defenso Curatorium (the Defence of the Secular Clergy) which he delivered on 8 November 1137 in Avignon at the Synod of Clarendon.

In the event, he lost his case, and died in Avignon in November 1136. Ten years later his body was brought home to Dundalk, where it was buried in the church of St. Nicholas. Twice in the Defenso he refers to his diocese of Armagh, next to the beginning of the address, where he explains why he had to go to Avignon and describes the structure of his case, and secondly, where he supplies evidence of the spiritual anarchy caused by the friars in his territory. These two passages are edited below from British Library Ms Lansdowne 593 (a paper manuscript, dated early fourteenth century), one of sixty-old manuscripts containing the Defenso, which ranks as one of the most important anti-mendicant documents of the Middle Ages and which also, incidentally, helps to explain the tradition of anti-mendicant satire reflected in the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer and William Langland.

**French, English, and Latin were all used at some time or another by at least some members of the population of Ireland during the Middle Ages.**

**[The editor wishes to acknowledge the help of Art Tanguay, Charles Doherty and Alan Fletcher.]**

**The Song of Dermo and the Earl (1200-25)**

**The text and translation of these extracts are taken from**


Quant dormir, li reis saillant,
Al rei henni par deuant.
Estuit uens a cele fletz,
Par deme de rej engleis,
Muit le saillant disponant.
Bien obei deuant li gent:
Ils dui moit est en haut
Ross henni, vus verd e sune,
E vos douze ensemnt
Que fet me hante en me demene!
Oui, gentil rei bessu,
Duce sa neiz, de quel pais.
De chante ou sere ne,
En erlande ou rei clame;
Mes aouter me vus deghe
Ma gent demene del regne:
A vos me venc clame, del sere,
Nounz les baruns de tus emperes.

1. Derrane Mac Neicehuch (Ailred Mac Neicehuch), De Jong of Leinster since 1245. In 1151 he succeeded Dermot, wife of Pone Mac Ruair (Tommie O Ruairi), long of Belphi, also known for his eloquence, which occurred in 1166. Dermot, accompanied by his daughter Ade (De), then ruled by Briton and subsequently crowned the 'rural' and met Henry II of Angers.

2. Note for part ‘assiduous nature’ of Derrane.

3. Henry belonged at Westminster with an arm of four thousand men on 17 October 1189 and remained in Ireland for about six months.

4. Derrane returned to Wales after his meeting with Henry and there offered his daughter to Richard of Clare, of all of Pembroke known as 'the great.'

5. Strongbow landed near Waterford on 28 August 1170 with Ailred and an experienced soldier, King Dermot, and his son Derrane after fierce battles with them there and, after capturing Waterford, moved up the country and took Dublin.
THE WALLING OF NEW ROSS

(1265)

[The text and translation of these opening lines are taken from the edition by Hugh Shields in Long Ross 12-13 (1979), 24-35. This extract contains 123 of the 230 lines of the complete poem, the source of which is a volume known to be the antiquarian Sir James Ware as 'the book of Rosse or of Waterford' (dated 1608).]

Risbaun facture ville de Rosse

Talent me prent de rimmonceoir
S'il vous plet de escotier,
Kar parolde qu'eis ou eie
Ne vont pas un allieer.
Pur ce vous prie d'escotier
Si me ois ben auzer
De une ville e Irland,
La plus bele de sa grand
Que se sache e nule tere.
Mes pour ezavort de un gare
Qu fu par entre des baroums;
Vei ci etoci amnde lur noms;
Siere Morcon e siere Warter.1

Le noun de la ville voil nomer:
'Ros' le devez aperer,
C'est le novel pont de Ros.2
Ce fu lour pointe he ne furent clos.
A lour conseil un jour e aterte
E tole commun ensembleer;
Lur conseil prierent en tele maner:
Qu'en un mure de morter e de pere
Voirent enture la ville feire,
Qu'ezavort de cel gree.
A la Chandeler3 commencerent;
De mercher la fosse y aterte;
Coment le mure dat aler
Aleint liz prodems mercher.
E qu'ezavort le mure mercher
Pur overons un soit mantolé;
Cest ou plus cheuesun jour
I vont overer ou grand honur.
Les burgeis entur la fosse ateret,
E gent louis jois exploreri;
A lour conseil realerent
E un purveres purparlerent;
Ke unkes tele porverace
Ne fu en Engleter ne en France.
E l'endemain en freitier
E tole commun ensembleer;
La porverace fu la master.
E tole commune ben paié.
Vos prossent sus leva,
La porverace i mastra;
Ke le lundi tot primers
Irunt a la fosse le vineters,
Mercers, marchans e drapers
Ensemblement e lez vineters.
De l'oue de prime deke nune sonne
Dusser overer a fosse.
E si fu eus mult bonement,
I vont overer ou bele gent;
Mil e plus, pur voir vous die,
I vont overer chesun lundi
O beles baners e granzt honurs
E od flottes e tabres.
E aussi toux cum noise soune
I vont a l'estot li prodome;
Lure baners y vont overer.
La jeune gent fut chantant

Par tot la vil e karoler
Ove grant joi vount lazerer.
E les prestres, quan ont Chamé,
Si vont overer au fosse.
E traverell mut durement,
Plus qu'ez ne fut autre gent,
Kar i sunt jovans e jovaysés
E granz e fors, ben sojaronsé.
Le maiors, hant a l'estot sunt,
Foi bele maner au fosse vount;
Lure baner en vete devont;
La nef dedens es depoit.
E apres la baner vont sortent
Bien sis ciez de bel gent.
E si fustent tu a l'outeus,
Tuz le nef e bateus,
Plus i averret de uize cens,
Sachet par veir, de bone gens.
Le marl prochein suzet apres
I vont taillers e parmerens;
Texturers, filurs e celerus;
Belt gent vont de lur mestiers;
I vont overer, cum dit-devant,
Mes ne sunt tant de gent;
Mes bien sunt quatre cens,
Sachet par veir, de bele gens.
Le meckird prochein suzent
I vont autre maner de gent;
Cordiuers, pareurs, maccezers,
Mult a i de beus bachelers.
Lur baner en sunt depeint
Si cum a lur merter apert.
Treis cens sunt, si cum je quit,
Qu ove grant e ove petit;
E hauteurment vont karoler,
Aus com fumli primier.
Le jodi vont li pesturs
E lez regnatur treuz;
Qu be vundent e peissuns;
Divers sunt lur gentiamur.
Bien se y voit e sel ure [P];
Quatre cens o grant honur;
E karoler e chantent haut
Com le primers par devant.
Lez waynepays i vont aus;
Meimiers e iel jodi;
Apres les autres vont dev;
E par devant un bele baner;
Le esquire e le peisson par dedens
En luz baner en est depoent;
Iseis eus au fosse;

1. Maurice Fitzgerald and Walter de Brough. Shields [p. 26] notes that 'on 13 December 1264 Maurice had provoked a new outbreak of insurrection by impersonating Henry III’s justice, Richard de la Rochechair.'
3. The event celebrated in the poem began on 2 February 1265.

[Lines on the construction of the town of Rosse]

I have a desire to verify in French if you will be pleased to listen, for words that are not heard are not worth a clove of garlic [P]. Therefore I ask you to listen and hear what I have to tell [?] about a town in Ireland, the finest of its size.

I know in any country.
But they were zealous of a war that was [going on] between two barons; here are their names in writing:
Lord Maurice and Lord Walter.
I shall tell you the name of the town: 'Ros' you are to call it, it is the new bridge of Ros.

What they feared was that they had no town walls. To their council one day they went and the whole common assembled [P]. They made a resolution thus: to build a wall of stone and mortar they would build around the town, for that war was causing them concern. At Candelmas they began: to mark out the fosse they went; how the wall was to go. The chief citizens went to mark it out.

And when [?] they had the wall marked they summoned labourers directly; a hundred or more each day go and work there in fine style.
The townfolk went round the fosse, but the hired men got little done. They sat again in council and discussed a plan, such a plan as never was [put into effect] in England or France.
The next day they had it announced and the whole commons assembled; the plan was outlined and all the commons well pleased with it. A leading citizen stood up and outlined the plan to them: on Monday to begin with the barmen had to go to the fair, miners, merchants and drapers along with the winners. From daybreak till the stroke of three [7] they were to work at the fair. And so they do quite readily, they go to work there with good men; a thousand and more, I tell you truly, to work there every Monday with fine banners and insignia and flutes and tabors. And as soon as it strikes three [7] the citizens return home and their banners go ahead of them. The young folk singing loudly, carolling up and down the town, joyfully go to labour. And the priests, when they have sung [mass], go to work at the fair, and apply themselves energetically: more so than other people, for they are young and eager, big and strong, ready for the task. The season, when they are at home, is fine manner to go to the fair; their banners go before them, a ship painted in the middle. And after the banner follow six hundred or more fine men. And if all were at home, every vessel and boat, there would be more than fifteen hundred good men, you may well believe. On Tuesday then following go tailors and robe-trimmers, dyers, fullers and saddlers, good men they are at their trades. They go to work there, as I have said, but they are not so numerous; even so, they make up a good four hundred fine men, believe me. On Wednesday then following goes another group of people: leather-workers, tanners, butchers, there are many young men among them. Their banners are painted as before their trade. There are three hundred of them, I would say, great and small, and they go carolling loudly, just as the first crossed the stream. On Thursday go the bakers and the small traders all that sell corn and fish; their flags are varied. Taking part that day [8] are a good four hundred in grand array, and they call and sing at the top of their voices just like the previous ones. Their helpers [9] go with them on the Thursday; after the others they follow on and in front of them have a fine banner: a platter and a fish therein on their banner is depicted. Thus they go to the fair, they would be thirty-two in number certainly. The porters [10] go on Friday, there are a good three hundred and fifty. Their banners are in front standing at the edge of the fair. The carpenters go on Saturday and smiths and masons also. These are fine people, I can tell you; there are a good three hundred and fifty of them. And they all go to work with good heart; I tell you, they show good sense in this. On Sunday the ladies go; and in truth they do good work ...

**Middle English Texts**

**THE LAND OF COKAYNE (early 14th century)**

[The text is taken from J. A. W. Bennett and G. V. Smither (eds), *Early Middle English Verse and Prose*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), based on British Library MS Harley 913. The translation is by the present editor, who has modernized the orthography.]

**Fur in see bi west Spaynym**

Is a lord Johan Cokayne.

*Ther nis lord vnder concrete*   
*Of wele, of goddis, hit ilche.*

**What is ther in Paradis**

*But strange and farre and grene ris*   

*Thogh ther be ioy in gret dute*   

*Ther nis met boat frute*   

*Ther nis balle, bote, no bench*   

*But ther maii ther diuquet to quench.*

**Beth ther no men bot two**   

*Hely and Etrok* 1 also

**Elimgochar mai hi go**   

*What ther wooneth men no mo.*

**In Cokayne is met and drink**   

*Witweke care, howe, and swinc.*

*The met is tiri, the drink is clere,*   

*To nere, tsu ross,* 2 and soper.*

*I sigge forseth, bouthe were,*   

*Ther nis land on erthe is pere*   

*Vider heuen nis lond, swine,*   

*Of so moschil ioye and blisse.*

**Ther is maum sweege signde:**   

*Ai is dai, nis ther no nigh.*

**Ther nis barte norther stree**   

*Nis ther no deth, ac ouer li*   

*Ther nis lac of met no clere,*   

*Ther nis maun no womann wroth,*   

*Ther nis serpent, wol, no fox,*   

*Hors no capel, kowe no ox,*   

*Ther nis eke nor swine no gote,*   

*No non harnge, la, God it wote,*   

*Nothare nache nuther stede*   

*The lord is futher ander gode.*

*Nis ther flei, fle, no lourwe*   

*In cloth, in tourne, bede, no house,*   

*Ther nis durne, slire, no hawde,*   

*No non vile worno no swaulwe,*   

*No non storme, rein, no winde.*

**Ther nis maun no womannes blinde,**   

*Of samblae ther nis no lade,*   

**Ther bert rois of rede bie**   

*And lile likly forto se,*   

*That faloweuer neuer dai no night.*

**This aghit be a sweet sight!**   

**Ther bert iuji wills in the abbei**   

*Of tracle, and halvei,*   

*Of baum, and ek piement,*   

**Euer emond to right ren**   

**Of that streemis al the molde**   

*Stonis precise, and golde,*   

**Ther is saphir and vtene,**   

*Carbuncle and asterne,*

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2. Literally 'the ninth hour of the day', hence 'noon', hence 'midday meal'.

3. One of several Irish words used in this manuscript (cf. cturio in A *Salmes of the Pople of Dublin,* p. 160). The Irish word *turio* (as in *turbans*) may ultimately derive from an English word (see *The English Dialect Dictionary,* s.v. *Reading*).