

GCE



CCEA GCE AS
Exemplifying Examination
Performance
Religious Studies

**AS 5: The Celtic Church in Ireland in the
5th, 6th and 7th Centuries**

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EXEMPLIFYING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

GCE Religious Studies

Introduction

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It is intended that the materials should provide a benchmark of candidate performance and help teachers and students to raise standards.

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Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Finlay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'y'.

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GCE: AS Religious Studies

**SRE51: The Celtic Church in Ireland in the
5th, 6th and 7th Centuries**

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Answer **one** question from Section A

Q1a Describe how the social and religious background that existed in pre-Patrician Ireland influenced Christianity. [25]

Student's response

The Ireland Patrick came to was a very different Ireland than today's. We see a dramatic difference in social and religious backgrounds, that influenced Christianity.

Society was very different at this time. People were rated by honour and status. This rating system would hinder the idea of equality in Christianity. Honour was measured by the number of cattle in ones possession. Status depended on who you were. A kings status depended on the number of tuathe he ruled over, (tuathe meaning 'people), nobles based on the amount of clients they had. A typical freeman's status was based on the extent of his possessions. This also helps display the social hierarchy at that time, with at the top the king, to the nobles to the freemen, to the unfree, where the unfree were slaves of the freeman. This would have hindered Christianity as Christians believe in equality and a hierarchy is unheard of unless God is at the top.

Living conditions were also a great contrast to today's. Celts lived in ring forts, which was a circular enclosure and the less fortunate would have lived in unenclosed timber homes. Crannogs were a man-made island that families lived in if they were more wealthy. As Ireland was never Romanised there were no signs of modernisation with no coinage or transport systems. This would have hindered Patricks travel and therefore have a negative influence on Christianity.

The people were known for their barbaric nature. Binchy says the structure was 'tribal, rural, hierarchal and familiar'. They were illiterate and uneducated and if an outsider entered their country they were treated with suspicion, hindering Patrick's mission of bringing Christianity to Ireland.

Religious background again was very different. The majority of the Irish public were pagan and so had many beliefs and worships. They believed in the sanctity of trees and groves. Grooves were sacred as was the oak tree. Trees were believed to connect 3 worlds; the roots were connecting the underworld, the trunk, earth and the high leaves and branches were connected to heaven or the after life. Sun worship and the worship of human heads was common. Human heads were a symbol of divinity. These would have been problematic to Christianity as they needed to be stamped out. Patrick would have began preaching close to trees and then slowly move to the idea of an alter. Some beliefs did however help the movement of Christianity into Ireland. The number 3 was worshipped in Pre-Patrician Ireland, as

the world was viewed in triplets. This benefitted Patrick as he would explain and develop Christianity with the idea of a holy trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as one.

Some practices would have been similar therefore benefiting Christianity for example, the idea that water was life giving aided the idea of baptism.

Examiner's comments

The answer clearly engages with the question. The candidate shows considerable knowledge of social background and accurately describes the social hierarchy with the king and the nobles at the top, down to the slaves. The candidate also mentions the lack of influence of the Romans in Ireland and the impact of this. Binchy is also referenced in relation to the social structure of the time and also makes good use of information on the religious background in Ireland and demonstrates how e.g. the number three was important in pagan Ireland and provided the foundation to teach the doctrine of the Trinity and the use of the shamrock. Those pagan religious ideas which were more problematic such as the worship of human heads are also mentioned and the use of the oak groves which were adopted for Christian purposes. Further development in some areas was possible.

(Band 4 – 20 marks)

Q1b “The references in early sources to the mission of Palladius to the Irish are problematic, but also significant.”

With reference to this statement, evaluate the suggestion that Patrick took the credit for the work of Palladius. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

Anne Hughes depicts the mission of Palladius to be “shrouded in mystery”. Many scholars debate over the fact if Palladius mission was evangelistic or if he was sent to uncontaminate the infant church in Ireland. However Palladius is mentioned in 431 by Prosper, he is part of Ireland’s first unassailable date, therefore his existence cannot be denied whereas his contribution to Irish Christianity is enigmatic.

Firstly, Palladius was mention in 429 in Prosper’s Chronicles where Prosper states he is a “pillar of orthodoxy.” Charles-Edwards believes this points to Palladius’ role in the fight against Heresy in the infant Church. Therefore this suggests that Palladius did not evangelise Ireland he only prevented contamination of heresy. I concur with this opinion therefore Patrick did not take credit for the work of Palladius because Palladius was not evangelistically involved with Ireland.

Furthermore another issue that is very speculative surrounding his mission is the debate of how long he was actually in Ireland. Many scholars do not deny that Palladius did travel to Ireland because we are told by Prosper in 431 that he is sent “To the Irish believing in Christ”. “Palladius is sent as the first bishop.” However although many scholars do not argue this they question the nature of his mission with help of the time frame he was there for. Ryan believes Palladius was dead within a year, Bicher also concurs, suggesting Palladius’ mission would not have been a successful evangelistic mission as a year is not a long time to evangelise, emphasising that his mission had a purpose of securing the foundation of Christianity rather than building upon it.

Continuing with this point, if Palladius was sent to the “Irish believing in Christ” surely this highlights the presence of Christianity already in Ireland, emphasising Palladius did not go to evangelise as the seed of Christianity had already been sown. Binchy is of the opinion that Palladius went to Leinster, the south of the island. In AD 375 it is believed that Saint Declan travelled from Roman Britain to Waterford to set up an oratory. This implies that Christianity existed in Ireland even before the mission of Palladius, therefore Palladius did no work in spreading Christianity. Also evidence of trade suggest that there was other channels for Christianity to enter, this is confirmed by Claire O’Kelly who believes recent findings of coins suggest contact between the continent and Ireland. I concur with this, and disagree with the statement as Patrick took no credit for the work of Palladius because Palladius didn’t evangelise.

On the contrary, others believe that Palladius did in fact evangelise, O’Ranilly argues that he laboured for many years, he draws his inspiration from the contra collatorium who mentions Palladius. He argues why prosper would mention Palladius years later if he was dead. Hagiographers suggest Palladius work was attributed to Patrick Palladius also known as “Patrius” (O’Ranilly). However hagiography must be treated with caution as it is biased.

In conclusion Patrick did not take credit for the work of Palladius because many sources prove that Palladius did not evangelise. This is supported by camey who doubts completely if Palladius even came to Ireland. O’Cróinian postulates “although Palladius disappeared without a trace his influence cannot be denied.”

Examiner’s comments

There is wide assembly of evidence and scholarly references. Some very good points are elaborated such as the firm date in relation to Prosper who refers to Palladius. The candidate goes on to make good use of available evidence and information which forms the foundation for important evaluative points. The candidate mentions that Palladius is likely to have come to Ireland principally to counter heresy and if this was Palladius’s role, then he could not be given the credit for the evangelisation of Ireland, since this was not his mission in the first place. The answer makes clear that the mission of Palladius is surrounded in mystery and aspects of that mission are speculative. The issue of the length of that mission which some put at about a year (reference to Ryan) though Bieler (not referenced, does say that Palladius could have been active in Ireland for two or three years) is mentioned and the conclusion is drawn that if this was the case, then a year is not a long enough time to carry out a successful mission. Further evidence is cited, such as the discovery of coins from Europe and evidence of trade, which suggests that Christianity could easily have reached Ireland before Patrick and thus Christianity could have had other channels of entry. Hagiography is mentioned, but again the difficulty of deriving firm conclusion being reached from such evidence is also mentioned.

(Band 5 – 22)

Q2a With reference to the contribution of any **two** monastic founders, explain the development of monasticism in Ireland. [25]

Student's response

Monasticism means religious life. It was brought to Ireland by a gradual process with the help of saints. Monasticism is defined by Ann Hughes as, "the rejection of worldly goods and single mindedly seeking devotion to God".

Monasticism was first brought to Ireland through a gradual process with the help of monastic founders. These monastic founders were famous for living a life of monastic virtues and encouraging others to live a monastic life by building foundations to encourage religious knowledge and manual work.

Amongst these monastic founders, Enda was the name of one. He was born into a noble family, as his father was a warrior. He originated in Meath.

Enda's monastic contribution probably began when he was thinking about getting married to a young woman who was from his sister, Franchea's convent. However, overtime his sister advised him not to get married. Therefore, he took her advice and travelled to see his brother-in-law, King Aengus. This meeting marked the beginning of Enda's important monastic contribution because Aengus gave Enda land. "Aengus gave him land of Golden Vale." This land would have had good soil and possible to be a good location. However, Enda demonstrated monasticism because, "Enda refused the Golden Vale for poor land and lonely land". This showed monastic contribution because it follows monastic virtues of living in isolation. According to Columbanus Rule, a monastic life was to be like for from native territory. Additionally, Enda's choice to have poor land shows monastic contribution because he lived a life away from material goods, "it's wrong for them to have what they don't need" (Columbanus Rule).

In 480, Enda built his monastic foundation where many monks were welcomed. This showed monastic development as these monks, "fed and clothed themselves through manual work". Showing monastic virtue of work. Overall, Enda was known as, "the first great founding monastic father" (Hughes).

Furthermore, there were many male monastic founders, but Brigit was also a monastic founder. She was born to, "Dubtach a chieftain and Briosceach a slave girl baptised by Patrick" this shows her religious background which contributed to her monastic development. Her monastic development was also enhanced as she had an early form of communication from a druid. Showing her religious education.

Furthermore, Brigit was assisting her mother, when they returned he father believed she should get married. The man she would choose had to be, "a man living a life of chaste, a poet" (Hughes). However, Brigit showed monastic development as she said to her father, "I wish to be a virgin to Christ". This shows monastic contribution because of how she chose a life of chastity which is a monastic virtue to show full love and commitment to God, alone. Additionally, Brigit and seven other girls took their vows under Bishop Elm. Highlighting monastic development by setting good examples.

Brigit demonstrates monastic development because she asked the king for land, to build her foundation. Once it was built, monastic development was emphasised because, "Brigit thought they needed a bishop to administer sacraments". Henceforth, monastic development was shown as Brigit and Bishop Conteach joined together to lead the Kildare foundation. This showed monastic contribution as it highlighted, "the first double monastery in Ireland." They both died in the 520's and were buried in Kildare, showing monastic development by building, "the greatest monastic school" where monks and nuns come as they were attracted to her piety and monastic life.

To conclude, monastic development was caused by Enda having 'twelve Apostles' who he educated and carried out his work in the foundation he built. Similarly many followed Brigit's chastity example in the first double monastery.

Examiner's comments

This essay begins with a definition of monasticism and then goes on to provide accurate information on Enda, such as the building of his monastic foundation on Aran Island in 480 and the nature of the profoundly ascetic lifestyle which was such a characteristic of Enda's monastic foundations which were passed on to his daughter houses where this extreme asceticism was copied. The fact that Enda was offered the Golden Vale with its rich lands which he refused in favor of the rocky earth of Aran where monks tilled the land with their bare hands.

The next important figure to be described is Brigit of Kildare whose contribution was important in that she was woman. The answer begins with some reference to her lineage, e.g. that she was born to Dubthach of Leinster, while her mother was Brocessa who was a slave girl. The description of Brigit goes on to refer to the development of her monastic tendencies and the fact that she refused to marry, but instead wished to adopt a monastic lifestyle telling her father that she wished to be a virgin of Christ. An important contribution was that Brigit was the founder of the first double monastery in Ireland. Some further development of the contribution of these two monastic founders was possible.

(Band 5 – 21)

Q2b Comment on the view that Celtic monasticism was both limited and negative in its influence. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

As depicted by John Ryan monasticism was a 'complete detachment from the self' and involved harsh devotion. Over time it became increasingly difficult to stay with family members as it encouraged temptation, so it left monks with little option but to go remote places.

Brendan-another monastic founder, suffered from this and he chose to found his monastery in Mount-Brandon in order to prevent any form of temptation. Other places of isolation included the dangerous island of Skellig Michael.

As well as the geographical negativity associated with monasticism there are several aspects of this practice that make monasticism all the more negative. Sleep was interrupted frequently for praying. Brendan prayed at five different times in correspondance to Jesus' trial before Pilate. Iona slept on straw bales and others had a stone as a pillow.

Fasting was another major negative element of Celtic monasticism, which heightened at religious events such as Lent. Columbanus allowed one meal a day and there were severe punishments for the indulgence of beer.

The practice of asceticism was a negative aspect and Gougaud so comments that the practice of praying crossfigill was common enduring pain and suffering. Dress was also limited and Jonas tells us that on occasions the monks were allowed to wear gloves.

Despite this, there are several other traditions and qualities of Celtic Monasticism which make it a more positive practice. Learning scripture was a major element and because of the skilled monks, a wealth of literature has been preserved with productions of the Book of Kells and the Book of Durrow originating back to Celtic monasticism. Kathleen Hughes tells us that the monks whilst writing also gave an insight to their thoughts. For example, on the story of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot, one particular monk couldn't resist the urge to write "wretch" in the margin. Another monk jotted on the margin the pain endured in his hand, thus giving us a wonderful opening into their mindsets in the 5th century. They also produced a number of beautiful broaches as they were skilled in metal work and the Ardagh Chalice was also produced.

Even for the public at the time of the monastic foundations there were many benefits which outweighed the limitations and negative aspects. Scholars claim "hospitality

was an inflexible rule for all Celtic monasteries” ensuring care for all. There were also employment opportunities for the liaty in the monasteries. Penitents also were eligible to avail of setting into a monastery rather than doing harsh penances and the monasteries acted as a sanctuary for everyone. It was inclusive and catered for the needs of a range of people from criminals to kings wanting to store goods. Therefore I opine that Celtic Monasticism was limited and negative in its influence but to a slight extent as it also had many positive attributes.

Examiner’s comments

This question demanded that candidates evaluated the ‘limited and negative influence’ of the Celtic monastic lifestyle. Part of that assessment would also demand a statement of the contrary view to the one stated in the question. The answer begins with a good introduction being provided in the form of a definition of monasticism which necessitated leaving family and going to remote places, or as the candidate describes it; ‘geographical negativity to escape temptation’. Brendan is mentioned as settling on Mount Brandon, while other monks settled in remote spots like Skellig Michael off the coast of Kerry. Some examples of the negativity are enumerated, such as the interruption of sleep, frequency of praying, sleeping on stone pillows, having only one meal per day and the general ascetic and punitive nature of monastic life. As would be expected in this answer comment was provided on the positive aspects of monastic life, such as hospitality that provided ‘taking care of all’; also ‘sanctuary and inclusivity’ that was provided to penitents even criminals and kings. There is also mention of the educational traditions of the monasteries and the work of the scriptorium which resulted in the production of the Books of Durrow and Kells. In conclusion this candidate is able to provide evidence for both sides of the argument as would be expected.

(Band 5 – 25)

Section B

Answer **one** question from Section B

Q3a In what ways are the Penitentials important sources of information for life and religious practice in the Celtic Church? [25]

Student's response

The Penitentials are described by Kenny "as expiatory works drawn up for the use of confessors." They were books which aided the monk or anamchara to decide on a particular penance for the penitent. Kathleen Hughes describes them as "extremely boring" however they provide us with an insight into the moral code and society of Ireland at that time.

Firstly the three main Penitentials we known of are Finnian's, Columbanus' and Cumeann's. Plumber believes that "37% of Finnian's penitential addresses sexual sin". This highlights the moral code of Celtic society at this time, clearly sexual sin and morality was a pressing issue on the early church in Ireland."

Furthermore the Penitentials emphasise how almost a few generations after Patrick paganism was still a threat to the development of the Christian Church in Ireland. Bradley & Walsh agree with the use of Penitentials and they refer to the listing of penances for magic in these penitentials, emphasising that paganism was still rampant in Irish society. They make reference to the fact that the penitentials helped to fight against "persausive paganism" which still existed in Irish society at this time.

In addition to this, although Plumber describes the Penitentials as "deplorable" they are important in providing the reader with an insight into life at this time, although they were not meant to be history books they provide us with incidental information. They enlighten us about the system of penance, the new system as it is described by Bradley and Walsh as "more accomodating to human frailty." The reader can note how the anamchara or soul friend will provide the penances in accordance to age and status. Cummean's penitential makes reference to the fact the penance for a young boy was much different to that of a mature man. Also the reader can see listed what penances this new system offered and can detirmine the strictness of religious authority at this time.

In conclusion although K.Hughes believes that the penitentials were a danger to society I concur with Bradley and Walsh who believe that the penitentials improved the moral code of the society and gives us an insight into life and religions practice in the Celtic Church.

Examiner's comments

This is an answer to the question on the Penitentials and the ways in which they are important sources of information for life and religious practice in the Celtic Church.' This candidate is clear from the beginning as to the intentions of the question keeps in mind what the question is asking throughout and provides what information he/she can to suggest what the Penitentials tell us about life and religious practice in the Celtic Church. After a definition from Kenny the candidate goes on to say that the Penitentials do provide 'an insight into the moral code and society of Ireland at that time.' Reference to the Penitentials of Finnian, Columbanus and Cummean as important sources and further reference is made to Plummer and other scholars are provided. Plummer is quoted in relation to his assertion of the importance of sexual sin in the minds of people at the time. Only a few generations after Patrick, paganism was obviously still a problem and some reference to the nature of that problem is discussed. As well as the harsher elements of penance being mentioned, they are also described from Bradley 'as being more accommodating to human frailty.' The importance of the anamchara is also discussed and how such a person was chosen in relation to age and status.

(Band 5 – 23)

Q3b With reference to other aspects of human experience, consider the importance of self-denial and asceticism for the religious life. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

In the Celtic Church, self denial and asceticism were viewed as necessary traits in order to lead a religious life. Gougauds comments that in the Celtic Church, the practice of praying crosfigill was common and sometimes people "plunged into the water, in the freezing cold, terrified with the cold and remaining there for a greater or lesser time. This extreme length of living a religious life can be seen as unnecessary now.

There are more important ways in which a religious life can be lived like attending mass or praying. Jesus taught us in the story of the Rich Young Man that we should give up our wealth and most religious people today through religious charities like Trocaire and St.Vincent de Paul.

With the huge decline religion in the twenty first century, virtues like asceticism would only make the pursuit of a religious life all the more undesirable and off putting. In a modern world we face a multitude of temptations that wouldn't have been faced in the 5th – 7th Century. In a world that is rife with technology, it seems impossible to be in a state of complete self-denial and sexual aspects are brought in almost everywhere in the media ranging from raunchy outfits worn by celebrities, sexual music videos and lyrics, it would be extremely difficult to live an ascetic life in the way the people did in the 5th Century, highlighted in the story John Ryan tells us of a "nun so chaste, she died without knowing there was a difference between the two sexes".

There are forms of self denial and asceticism that appeal today for the religious life such as Lough Derg pilgrimage which have millions of vistors each year who pursue an ascetic lifestyle similar to that in the 5th century. Climbing Croagh Patrick can be viewed as another form of asceticism for the religious life and thousands climb it, some even go the extra mile by climbing it barefoot, paralleling with McNeills view that in the 5th– 7th century they also "went the extra mile" in terms of leading a religious life. There are also people who give up their lives to live a strict religious life. A perfect example of someone who was devoted to self-denial is the BBC presenter Martina Purdy who gave up a life of luxury to live in self denial. Mother Teresa is another famous example of someone who was strictly following the rules of self denial and asceticism by giving all her wealth to the poor and helping them.

Although I see the significance and importance of self denial and asceticism for the religious life, it shouldn't be taken so strictly. We can engage in religious events and practice self-denial in times such as Lent. It is important to recognise that its

increasingly difficult for people like nurses, doctors, the sick and elderly and prayer is the most important more or less connection.

Examiner's comments

This question deals with one of the eight bullet points which list 'other aspects of human experience.' The particular bullet point in question relates to 'the importance of self-denial and asceticism for the religious life.' This candidate offers some very effective references to the world we live in today and how the asceticism of the past is totally unsuited to people today. Reference is made in the first paragraph to the ascetical practices of the Celtic Church. Strictly speaking part (b) question in Section B can only deal with 'other aspects of human experience' and not the practices of the Celtic Church. Still, in the second paragraph it is obvious that the Celtic Church references provide some comparison to the world we live in today. The candidate is aware that the contemporary religious and moral values of the world are completely different to the beliefs about asceticism and self denial practiced in the Celtic Church which the candidate then proceeds to discuss. The answer goes on to point to the teaching of Jesus about wealth and how this is understood today in the work of charities like St Vincent de Paul or Trocaire. Presumably the candidate is illustrating how Christians today practice some degree of self denial but would oppose asceticism, because it is unsuitable and 'off putting' for people today. A good point is made in the suggestion that the modern world has temptations that would never have been dreamt off in earlier centuries. The example provided is sexuality which is so overt and obvious in modern culture in a way that it certainly was not in the 5th century and thus there is some merit to the point made by the candidate that it would be extremely difficult to live an ascetical life in the way that was practiced in the 5th century. The candidate now returns to an earlier point that other forms of self denial like Lough Derg, climbing Croagh Patrick barefoot can be viewed as alternative forms of asceticism that are practiced today. Other relevant contemporary examples like Martina Purdy and Mother Teresa are quoted as people who live religious lives, but differently from those in the Celtic Church. Finally, the candidate makes a good point by drawing attention to the work of doctors, nurses, the sick and the elderly who are certainly not people who are in a position to live an ascetical life in the way that it was in the past.

(Band 5 – 25)

Q4a “Hagiographical writings seek to edify and enhance the religious authority and sanctity of the saint they describe.”

With reference to this quotation, discuss the importance of Muirchú’s **Life of Patrick**. [25]

Student’s response

Hagiography was a documentation used to praise the Saint and this shows it was used to, “Sanctity of the Saint they describe”. The Hagiography “wasn’t a biography” says Hughes.

The Life of Patrick was written by Muirchu. He was asked by Aed of Sletty, a Christian bishop to write this document to show Christians triumph over paganism and propaganda for the Armagh Church. Therefore agreeing with the claim, “writings seek to edify and enhance the religious authority”. In order to do Muirichu had to show the Church was chosen by Patrick, a powerful being who was granted divine justification.

The Muirichu’s Life of Patrick was used to enhance the religious authority by showing Patrick to be severely ascetic and to set a good example for the Armagh church. Evidence of this in this hagiography is by how he states, “Patrick prayed a hundred times a day” showing the faith of Patrick and how it sanctity the saint Muirichu is describing.

As well as this, Muirichu’s Life of Patrick was also important because of how it praises Patrick for his close connection and harmony with the animal world. An example of this would be how Patrick showed kindness to a young fawn which was being used in a sacrifice. Patrick challenges the status quo, “he lifted the fawn on his shoulders and carried it, the hind followed him like a tame sheep until he let the fawn be free”. Another example would be how Patrick raised a horse from the dead. ‘Go and sprinkle your horse with this water’...the horse came back to life’. Disagreeing with the claim, shows her kindness.

As well as this, Patrick was shown in the Muirchu’s document to enhance the religious authority because Patrick was shown to be more powerful than the druid magicians of the king. This was all highlighted in chapter 20- “the contest of Patrick and the magician”. Examples that show Patrick enhanced the religious authority is because he survived a ‘fire, “Patrick was in the house and the cloak took in the flames”. As well as this, Patrick was shown to be more powerful than the magician as he could not be fooled by the magician who tried to kill him, by putting something in his cup, “ he tipped the cup and the only drop that fell was the substance of the magician”.

Furthermore, Muirichu's life of Patrick was also to enhance the religious authority and was important as on many occasions it highlights from God acted through Patrick-For example Patrick stated "may God arise and may his enemies be scattered. This made the king angry and as a result, "a large cloud covered the land in darkness and commotion arose" and this shows the importance of showing Patrick's and God's close connection.

Furthermore, Muirichu's life of Patrick is also importance because it was highly reliable. According to Hughes, "Muirchu used Patrick's confession, first synod of Patrick and the vitae of Patrick". This shows the reliability as Patrick's own documents were used as primary sources of Muirchu. Examples of this reliable evidence is how Patrick's confession says, "prayed hundred times a day", the same quotation used in the life of Patrick.

Additionally, the Life of Patrick by Muirichu was also important because it gives examples and ideas of the time period it was written in, "some put faith in chariots, some in horses". This shows reliability because its gives the mode of transport available at the time.

As well as this, Muirichu's Life of Patrick was also important because it used factual information, "Patrick was taken captive at sixteen".

However, it wasn't as important because some information was over exaggerated and was therefore unreliable. Examples would be how Patrick cheated death turned Corotigus into a fox or to make snow disappear, "Patrick uttered a blessing and the snow dissappeared faster than any could mutter a word". This may be other exaggerated to "enhance the religious authority" with propaganda.

To conclude, Muirichu's Life of Patrick was important as it was very reliable to enhance the religious authority and sanctify the saint through miracles and actions of Patrick to show how divine justification and close connection with God.

Examiner's comments

The candidate is aware of, and deals with the content of the quotation throughout the answer as well as referring to the 'importance' of Muirichu's **Life of Patrick**. The candidate also integrates the content of the quotation with Muirichu's work. Details are provided as to the origins of the hagiography and the candidate then goes on to illustrate how the work furthers the claims of Armagh and other aspects of the propaganda in the work and the purpose of such exaggeration. From the references to the work, it is evident that the student is familiar with and understands the work's content and is credited accordingly. He/she also provides relevant quotations. The candidate also brings out the magical and supernatural nature of the work with useful references as all of this enhances the religious authority of Patrick and by extension Armagh. The candidate is aware that as well as the work being exaggerated in places

it is also likely to be reliable at other points, e.g. Muirchu's likely borrowing of content of his work from a primary source like Patrick's **Confession**. The candidate is also aware that the document provides an insight into the historical period in which it was written.

(Band 5 – 22)

Q4b With reference to other aspects of human experience, explore the view that in a secular age, religious writings are no longer relevant or important. Justify your answer. [25]

Student's response

In a secular age religious writings can be thought to be no longer relevant or important because people feel that they can no longer relate to the stories within them.

For example in this day and age people cannot relate to someone bringing Christianity to their home country, or any other religion because its already been there for so long and has already been established. We cannot understand the struggle of introducing this new religion back when there was no way of spreading it without word of mouth or books because everything can now be easily spread through the media.

They may also seem irrelevant because some of the things viewed to have been important as wealth and status have changed, for example now wealth is not measured by how many cattle you have or how much land you own, but by how much money you make, so it can be hard to determine how God wants you to live based on your status.

However the teachings in religious writings can have relevance in todays society. For example after Donald Trump announced that he would be banning immigrants from 13 different Muslim countries into America Pope Francis tweeted about Jesus teachings on inviting foreigners into our lands with open arms. And many people responded and retweeted it.

Most of the Ten Commandments from the Old Testament are still relevant in our laws today, 'Thou shalt not murder, thou shalt not steal'. And they can also be relevant in our own personal morals, "Thou shalt not commit adultery".

So to conclude some people may view religious writings to be no longer relevant in secular society today however they can still be found in the basis of our morals and some beliefs.

Examiner's comments

This candidate makes an effort to say something about both sides of the argument, though some of the points might have been better developed. The answer begins with a contrast between the past when religious writings were important and today in a secular age when religious writings are no longer as important as they once were. Parts of second paragraph in the answer are not entirely clear! A relevant point is also made that in our time religious writings are not spread through books etc but through the media. The candidate identifies status, based on money as an important feature of the secular world and for this reason the candidate suggests that religious writings are not important to many people, the lives of whom are not based on religion but on the values of a materialist world. Alternatively and importantly, the Decalogue is quoted as still providing a foundation for morality and thus religious writings are still relevant. At the end, the candidate distinguishes between those who are secular in their outlook and for whom religious writings mean very little and those who are religious, for whom religious writings are still relevant. There are parts of the answer which are not clearly articulated.

(Band 4 – 16)

