

## FRIARY WAS FOUNDED BY KING

THE Dominican Friary, in Roscommon town was founded in 1253 by Felim O'Connor, King of Connacht. Archaeologists believe that it occupied the site of St. Coman's ancient (6th century) monastery, after whom it was named. It was consecrated in 1257, according to the Annals of Loch Cé. Romanesque pillars in the ruins are believed to have been part of the early monastery.

Founder King Felim was interred there in 1265 A.D. His tomb effigy is not only one of its most distinctive features, but is also one of the two early Irish royal monumental effigies extant in Ireland. worthy of special attention are the lancet windows in the south wall of the nave overlooking the cloister. The ruins of the Friary date from a 1453 reconstruction mainly. Numerous interesting sculptures may still be seen there.

The Friary ruins consist of the nave, chancel and transept (with the aisle separated from it by four pointed arches resting on massive

round pillars). A window at the main entrance is very attractive. Perhaps the most interesting feature of all is the altar tomb of its founder. It is located under an arch on the north side of the chancel.

It has a rather mutilated effigy of King Felim clothed in a long loose robe from next to ankles, with close-fitting sleeves. On its head is a crown. In the right hand is a sceptre decorated with a fleur-de-lis, while the left hand holds a crucifix. The feet, clothed in pointed shoes, rest on a hound. At the base of the tomb are the figures of eight Gallowglasses (heavily-armed) foot-soldiers), with conical helmets and coats of chain-mail reaching to the knees. One of the soldiers holds a battle-axe, and the others carry broad swords.

This sculptured tomb is regarded as most valuable by antiquarians, because of the unusual and enlightening details of the periodic clothing and armour of the Gallowglasses of the early 14th century.