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IONA'S STYLE OF GOVERNMENT AMONG THE PICTS AND SCOTS: THE TOPONYMIC EVIDENCE OF ADOMNÁN'S LIFE OF COLUMBA

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The purpose of this paper is to examine the pattern of survival of Adomnán's church-names in Scotland and Ireland and to draw some tentative conclusions from the examination. It is emphatically not concerned to offer new (or old) identifications for 'lost' sites (an exercise, the writer feels, of limited value in the present state of knowledge), though a few possible sites of Columban foundations will be proposed for purposes of the argument. Attention is focussed primarily, of course, though not exclusively, on those churches that belonged certainly or probably to the *paruchia* of Iona. The edition of the *Life of Columba* used here is that of the Andersons (1961).

Those churches that were certainly or probably in Scotland will be reviewed first. Iona itself is named explicitly as follows: 'in Iova insula' (I 4; I 8; I 16; I 17; I 19; I 29; I 31; I 41; I 43; I 48; II 13 (in chapter-heading); II 4; II 5; II 24; II 39; II 40; II 42; II 45; III 6; III 7; III 8; III 9; III 10; III 11; III 13; III 16; III 22; 'de Iova insula' (II 38); 'Iovam insulam' (I 2; I 19; I 22; II 45; II 5; II 23; 'Iovae insulae' (gen. sg.: I 25; I 37; II 14 (bis); II 15; II 28; II 45; III 23 ('in occidua insulae Iovae'). Iova is the invariable form in MSS A, B1, B2; *iona* is the equally invariable form in MS B3 (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 220 n 3).

A Columban monastery in Tiree is: 'in campo Lunge' (I 30; I 41; 'campi Lunge' (gen. sg.: II 15), which is 'ad Aethicam terram', 'ad Etheticam terrain'; 'monasterium campi Lunge' (II 39), which is 'in Ethica terra', 'in monasterio campi Lunge'; the 'eclesia, in campo Lunge' (III 8), which is 'ad Ethicam terram'. Two voyages to Tiree, moreover, are described in II 9 – 'ad Ethicam insulam, Ethicam ad terram, Aethici spatia pilagi', 'inter Iovam et Ethicam insulam': no church is mentioned, but one of the two voyagers is Baíthéne, three times referred to in the *Life* as superior of Campus Lunge.

Another Columban monastery is in the island Hinba: 'ad Hinbinam insulam' (I 21); 'monasterium, in Hinba insula' (I 45); 'in Hinba insula' (II 24; III 5: twice, in chapter-heading and in text; III 17: the *eclesia* there is mentioned twice; III 18; 'Hinba in insula' (III 23: the monastery is implied in the phrase *inter fratres*, as well as in the mention of Columba's *monaci*; in addition, there is a *locus anchorilarum* in the same island at a place called Muirbolc-mar – 'in Muirbulc-mar').

Other churches which certainly belong to the Columban congregation arc: '(in) cella quae hodiequc cjus fratris [i.e., Cailtan's] Diuni vocabulo vocitatur, ad ccllam Diuni' (I 31); 'monasterium Elenae insulae' (II 18). From the immediate context, it cannot be stated confidently whether the *monasterium* Cailli aufinde of II 31 ('Kailli au inde') is in Scotland or in Ireland, though the wider context of the chapter (a single episode) is a journey of Columba 'trans Brittannicum dorsum', that is, across the mountain range dividing Scottish

Dal Riata and Pictland (II 46). In III 18 Baíthéne is detained by contrary wind in the island of Ege ('in Egea insula'): this may be Eigg (for discussion, see Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 152–3; Watson, 1926, 85); but it is not said why he is there and no church is mentioned. The available documentation, furthermore, does not indicate that the (later?) monastery of Eigg was affiliated to the Columban congregation (Anderson, 1922, I 142–5, 221–2, 240–41).

Adomnán seems pretty clearly to have known or known of many more churches than he actually names. The *Life* neither embraces nor envisages an extended topographical description of the *paruchia* of Iona, in Scotland or in Ireland. Indeed, so reticent can he appear to be in this regard that this reader at least often finds himself wishing that he had been less so. 'To whom else can this favour [freedom from plague] conferred by God be attributed, but to Saint Columba, whose monasteries, placed within the boundaries of both peoples [the Picts and the Scots of Dal Riata], are down to the present time held in great honour by them both?' (II 46). No monastery certainly within Pictish territory is named explicitly, but two may be suggested more or less tentatively.

In III 14 there occurs the conversion and baptism through Columba's agency of named individuals – and the immediate death of one of them – at a named place. At Urquhart on Loch Ness-side, the good old pagan Emchath (Emchatus) is converted, baptized and dies on the spot; while his son Virolec (Virolecus) is similarly converted and baptized 'with his whole house' ('cum tota domu'). The detailed information given suggests that we may have here the foundation legend of a Columban monastery at Urquhart: the tomb of Emchath, actual or traditional, may still have been shown in Adomnán's day, within or near the monastery; and the kindred of Virolec may have been regarded as the donors of the land which supported the community. Admittedly, there is no hint of the existence of a church herein Adomnán's text – 'in ilium ... agrum qui Airchartdan nuncupatur' – but it may be observed that the probably P-Celtic name is here already gaelicized (Anderson and Anderson, 1961,493 n 8, 157–8; Watson, 1926, 95), indicating an Irish presence or interest in the locality in the late seventh century. Though there is no mention of an interpreter (see below), the personal names Emchath and Virolec are probably P-Celtic (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 160–61); and the very geographical location of Urquhart points to its being firmly within Pictish territory in Adomnán's as in Columba's day – 'the Irish name Airchartdan ... suggests that a Columban monastery may have existed at Urquhart in Adomnán's time, and may have been the principal source of his account of Columba's visit to the Picts' (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 106).

In I 33 a very similar episode is related as having taken place in Skye. Again, the conversion and baptism through Columba's agency and the immediate death of a named individual occur at a named place. Again, the individual, Artbranán, is an aged pagan 'who has preserved natural goodness throughout his whole life': he is not in the bosom of his family, it seems, but is described as leader of the cohort of Geon (?), possibly a military organisation ('Geonae primarius cohortis': see Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 274 n 6, where they speculate that Geon (?) might have been an island name; but see also their Introduction, 156). Here, the burial and the raising of a cairn of stones over Artbranán's grave by his companions is

explicitly referred to: ‘it [the cairn] can still be seen today upon the sea-coast’. The precise location of the incident seems to be important: ‘in a certain place he [Columba] struck with his staff a plot of ground beside the sea (‘alicujus loci terrulam mari vicinam baculo percutiens’) and spoke thus to those that accompanied him: ‘My children, strange to tell, today in this place, on this plot of ground (‘in hac hujus loci terrula’) a certain pagan old man ... will be baptized, and will die, and will be buried’. It is identified by a river rather than by a placename (was it an island in the river?): ‘And the stream of that place [it is also a harbour], in which he received baptism, down to the present day named after his name, is called by the people of the district “dobur of Artbranán”’. The name Artbranán was probably not Irish, since Columba and he had to communicate through an interpreter; but *dobur* is Old Irish (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 275 n 11, 12; 158). Again, a church or monastery is not explicitly mentioned, but the circumstantial detail suggests that, as with Urquhart, we have here what is essentially the foundation legend of a Columban monastery in what was probably the Pictish territory of Skye in Columba’s, if not also in Adomnán’s day. The grave-mound sounds, it has to be said, pagan: the explanation may be that an existing (and quite likely prehistoric) tumulus stood near the church of *dobur Artbranáni*; and was either the origin of or attracted to itself the tradition of a special burial here. The site has not been identified.

In II 32, on the other hand, a superficially similar situation has, in fact, a quite different emphasis. The chapter opens with ‘at the time when Saint Columba passed some days in the province of the Picts, a certain layman with his whole household heard and believed the word of Life, through an interpreter, at the preaching of the holy man; and believing, was baptized, the husband, with his wife and children, and his servants’. The rest of the chapter, however, concerns not a good death and burial but the resuscitation of the layman’s dead son; and that Adomnán regarded this as the real subject is confirmed both by the chapter-heading and by the summary in I 1. The episode is, moreover, located no more narrowly than ‘in Pictorum provincia’ and the Pictish participants are not named individually. It seems quite clear, therefore, that here, in contrast to the situation in the two episodes just discussed, the actual site and its detailed topography were not considered important.

It is possible that there was a Columban foundation in Ardnamurchan, though such is more likely to have lain in Dalriadic territory, at least in Adomnán’s time. Columba is reported as being there on three occasions: 1I 12; II 10; II 22. In I 12, a place *Muirbolc paradisi* is mentioned as a harbour to which sailors from Ireland resort; and from which, apparently, Columba and his companions set sail. The name is discussed by Watson (1926, 79–80) in the context of *muirbolc*, from *muir* ‘sea’ and *bole* ‘bag’ – ‘sea-bag’, applied primarily to a rounded sea-inlet. Watson felt that the Irish word probably being rendered in Latin by *paradisus* was *lubgort* ‘garden’ (lit. ‘herb-garden’), rather than *pardus*. It does not seem likely, in any case, that either Old Irish *pardus* (from *paradisus*) or Latin *paradisus* are significant indicators of a monastic presence in this context (DIL s.v. pardus; Latham, 1965, s.v. paradisus), though there remains the possibility that the one or the other could be. In II 10 Columba produces water from a rock for a baptism and ‘there even today a spring is seen, that is potent in the name of Saint Columba’ (‘ubi hodieque fonticulus sancti nominee

Columbae pollens cernitur'); but the saint is on a journey and the place is merely said to be in Ardnamurchan ('in Artdaibmuirchol'). In II 22 an incident occurs at a harbour 'that is called in Irish Aithchambas Artmuirchol'. *Aithchambas* is from *áith* 'sharp' and *cambas* (modern Sc. G. *camas*) 'bay', i.e. a bay narrowing to a point at the inner end (Watson, 1926, 94). Perhaps it is unnecessary to say that none of these places has been identified: but none is an obvious candidate for the site of a Columban monastery in Ardnamurchan that might have been the source, direct or indirect, of these episodes related by Adomnán. (For brief discussion of the name Ardnamurchan – *Artda-muirchol* (nom. pi.), *in Artdaib-muirchol* (dat. pi.), *Art-muirchol* (gen. pi.,) – see Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 133, 150, 233 n 14; more fully Watson, 1926, 93–4, where the derivation of *-c(h)ol* from *coll* 'hazel', accepted by the Andersons (150), is rejected; it is basically a district name.)

An apparently non-Columban monastery is *Artchain* in Tiree (I 36), founded by the priest Findchan: 'monasterii ... quod scotice Artchain nuncupatur in Ethica terra'. Adomnán implies the existence of non-Columban foundations in Tiree in III 8, where the *fratrum monasteria* of that island are ravaged by a demonic visitation of disease – all except Baíthéne's community of *campus Lunge*, which is clearly distinguished from the 'cetera ejusdem insulae monasteria'. (For later tradition of the foundation of monasteries in Tiree by both Brendan of Clonfert and Comgall of Bangor, see Anderson, 1922, i 17–18, 52–4.)

There are thus a possible seven named churches in Scottish Dal Riata, including Iona itself and the probably non-Columban *Artchain*. And the names may be given of two churches that, in the context of the Life, lay within Pictish territory, certainly or probably. One of the most striking aspects of these names is that most of them seem to have vanished without trace: we do not even have sufficient information to document a change of name subsequent to the late seventh century, whereby it might have been possible at least to identify the places in question. The obvious exception to this observation, Iona apart, is Urquhart – modern Sc. G. *Urchardan* (Watson, 1926, 95) and compare the form of the name given by Adomnán. But Urquhart would presumably have remained in Pictish political control until the mid-ninth century. It was, therefore, very likely lost to Iona during the early eighth century at least for a time.

So far as the writer is aware, most of the names appear only in the pages of Adomnán. *Campus Lunge* is noticed in Irish annals at c. 673 (AU s.a. 672 [=673]; ATig, AFM, s.a. 671 [= 673]; Anderson, 1922, i 182) and in 775 (AU s.a. 774 [= 775]; AFM s.a. 770 [= 775]; Anderson, 1922, i 247–8). The forms are as follows: 'Combustio Maige Lunge', AU 673.1; 'Combustio Muighe luinge', ATig; 'Losccadh Maighe Lunge', AFM 671; 'Conall Maighe Luingi', AU 775.1, 'Conall, abb Maighe Luinge', AFM 770. Early Irish mag 'plain, open stretch of land' frequently corresponds to Latin *campus* (DIL s.v.). These two entries apart, the record appears to be silent with regard to the other Scottish or probably Scottish churches, both within and outwith the Columban congregation.

It does not seem altogether convincing to impute the blame for this lamentable state of affairs entirely to the Norse settlement and large-scale superimposition on the existing place

nomenclature of the areas in question of Norse place-names during and after the ninth century. Admittedly, a significant amount of such 'blanketting-out' may well have taken place in the islands and (to a lesser extent perhaps) in the coastal districts of the western mainland; and some at least of the names under discussion here, or their successors, may have perished in the process. But it is well to remember in this connection that the place-names of the more important churches of the western seaboard not only survived the period of Norse settlement and occupation, but survive in recognisable form, whether in Gaelic or in English, throughout medieval times down to the present day – including, of course, Iona.

The various Gaelic forms of the ghost-name Iona, ancient and modern, are discussed by Watson (1926, 87–90; see also Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 154–5).

The annalistic evidence for Applecross, Lismore, Eigg and Kingarth is as follows.

APPLECROSS: 'eclcsiam Apor Croosan', AU 673–5; 'cclcsiam Aporcrosan', ATig; 'Ecclcsiam Aporcrosan', CS [669]; 'ecclas Aporcrosan', AFM 671; 'i nApur Chroson', AU 722.1; 'in Apurchrosan', ATig; 'i nApurcrosan', AFM 721 ; 'Felbe... heres Crosan', AU 737.2; 'Failbc ... haeres Mael rubai Apuircrosan', ATig; 'M. Oigi Apuir Chrosan abbas Bcnnchair', AU 802.5; 'Macoige Aporcrosain, abb Bennchuir, AFM 797 [= 802]. The name is discussed by Watson (1904, 201–3; 1926, 124–5, 458–9). The old name is now preserved only by the English form (already Ablecross in 1275), the modern Gaelic name of Applecross being a' Chomraich; 'the girth' or 'sanctuary'.

LISMORE: (G. lios mór, 'great enclosure'): 'Obitus Lugide Lis Moer', AU 592.1; Obitus Lughdach Lis moir', ATig [588]; 'Obitus Lugdach Liss móir .i. mo Luóc', ATig [590]; 'Obitus Lughdach Lis Móir', CS [590]; 'Lughaidh Lis móir', AFM 588; 'Neman ab Lis móir', ATig [608]; 'Neman, abb Lis móir', AFM 610; 'Echuidh Liss Móir obiit', AU 635.7; 'Eochaid, abb Lis móir', ATig; 'Eochaidh, abb Lis móir', AFM 634; and see further MacDonald (forthcoming).

EIGG: 'combustio martirum Ega', AU 617.1 (first hand of MS H); 'Combustio Donnáin Ega', ATig; 'Orguin Donnáin Ega', AI [619].2; 'Combustio Donnáin Ega', CS [617]; 'Oan princeps Ego', AU 725.7; 'Cummene nepos Becce relegiosus Ego', AU 752.2; 'Cumine hua Becce, religiossus Eco', ATig. The name is discussed by Watson (1926, 85) and by the Andersons (1961, 152-3).

KINGARTH: 'Daniel episcopus Cinn Garadh', AU 660.1 ; 'Dainel espoc Cind garadh, ATig; 'Daniel Epscop Cinngarad, CS [656]; 'Dainiel, epscop Cinngaradh', AFM 659; 'Iolan episcopus Cinn Garath', AU 689.1; Iohannes espoc Cínd Galaráth (sic), ATig; 'Iolan Epscop Garad', CS [685]; 'Iolan, epscop Cinngaradh', AFM 688; 'Teimnen Cille Garadh', AU 732.8; 'Temnen Cille Garadh', ATig; 'Timnen Cille Garadh', AFM 726; 'Mors Ronain abbatis Cinn Garadh', AU 737.1; 'Bass Ronain, ab Cind Garadh', ATig; 'Ronán, abb Cinn Garadh', AFM 732; 'Mors Mele Manach abbatis Cinn Garadh', AU 776.6; 'Maolmaenaigh,

abb Chinn garadh', AFM 771; 'Mors Noe abbatis Cinn Garadh', AU 790.1; 'Noe, abb Cinngaradh', AFM 785 [=790]. The name is discussed briefly by Watson (1926, 470–71).

Though the surviving recensions of these annalistic texts are admittedly very much later than the period in question, the various name-forms seem reasonably well preserved. And it would surely be carrying caution too far to suggest that the names of any or all of these churches might have changed radically sometime during the period before the extant forms were first recorded.

This impression of a significant degree of toponymic continuity is to some extent reinforced when we look at the island names. It is true that others besides those already discussed have apparently vanished: Ommon (nom. sg. I 36); *ad Oidecham ... insulam, terrulae Aithche* (gen. sg., II 14); *Airlhrago* (gen. sg., II 45); *adSaineam ... insulam* (II 45), *de Sainea insula* (II 45); and *(in) ilia insula ... quae latine longa vocitari potest* (II 24) – 'the island that in Latin may be called "long"', may well not have been, as Watson observed (1926, 90–91; cf. Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 156), the 'Long Island' now so-called, that is, the chain of the Outer Hebrides from the Butt of Lewis to Barra Head. But many of Adomnán's island-names do survive essentially to the present day. They are discussed inter alia by the Andersons (1961, 152–6), who argue that Adomnán's Latin forms are to be taken generally as nouns; and by Watson (1926, ch. 3), who regarded them as usually adjectival (Mull and Coll, 84; Eigg, 85; Islay, 86–7; Iona, 87; *Sainea insula*, 91; *Oidecha insula*, 91). Tiree seems, admittedly, problematical (Watson, 1926, 85–6: early Irish *Tír-iath* (*Eth- > iath*); modern G. *Tireadh* (locally); *Tir-idhe*, *Tir-ithe* (normally elsewhere)), though it seems clear that the pre-Norse name, whatever its original form and etymology, is reflected in its various guises, later medieval and modern. Mull is 'in Maleam ... insulam' (I 22); 'ad Maleam ... insulam' (I 41); 'inter Maleam et Colosum insulas' (II 22); it is now G. *Muile* (Watson, 1926, 38; Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 152). The island called by Adomnán 'in Coloso insula' (chapter-heading of 141), 'de insula Coloso'' (I 41) and 'inter Maleam et Colosum insulas' (II 22) is probably Coll, mod. G. *Cola* (Watson, 1926, 84–5; Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 155–6). '(In) Ilea insula' (II 23) is Islay, early Irish *Íle*, *Íla*, modern G. *Ìle* (Watson, 1926, 86–7; Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 152). Skye is 'in Scia insula' (chapter-headings of Book 1, referring to I 33); '(in) insula ... Scia' (I 33); 'in Scia insula' (II 26): see Watson, 1926, 38–40 (where various early Irish forms are cited; modern G. *an t-Eilean Sgiathanach* or *Sgitheanach* 'the Isle of Skye' (adjectival), *an cuan Sgì* 'the (narrow) sea of Skye'); Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 155. For the other larger islands, furthermore, that have apparently pre-Norse names but are not mentioned by Adomnán, see Watson, 1926, 95–7 (Rum, Bute, Arran).

Adomnán names a number of churches in Ireland. O f those that, on his evidence, certainly or probably belonged at that time to the paruckia of Iona, Durrow is mentioned most frequently: 'Monasterio[l]um quod scotice dicitur Dairmag' (1 3); 'in monasterio roboreti campi' (1 29); 'juxta roboreti monasterium campi' (1 49); 'prope monasterium roboris campi' (11 2); 'ad monasterium ... roborei campi' (11 39); 'in roboreti campo' (in 15 bis). Durrow is the modern

anglicized form representing early Irish Dam-, dair-, dur-, der-mag ‘oak-plain’ (DIL s.vv. dair, daur, mag) which Adomnán generally renders in Latin.

Derry is mentioned three times: ‘a roboreto Calgachi' (I 2; the church is not referred to explicitly, but the place is apparently a harbour for Columban monks sailing from Britain); ‘in roboreto Calcagi ... ad ejusdem loci cclesiam’ (I 20: it is implied in this chapter that there was a monastic cemetery at Derry); ‘ad locum qui scotice vocitatur Daire-Calcig’ (II 39: again, the church is not mentioned, but the passage indicates that the place was a harbour used by Columban monks). Actually, Adomnán nowhere calls Derry *monasterium* or the like; nor does he say that the church there was founded by Columba. On the other hand, Columba and his monks are probably the only identified people explicitly or implicitly associated with the place. (The Baítán of I 20 who died and was buried in Derry appears to have been a monk of Columba, at least at an earlier stage of his career: see further below). The end of the chapter suggests that Adomnán himself may have visited Derry: was Mailodran a Columban monk?). ‘Daire Coluim Cille fundata est’ (AU 546; see also Gwynn and Hadcock, 1970, 67–8, 168–9). *Daire Calcig* is ‘oakwood of Calgach (?)’, *Calgach* being traditionally taken to be a personal name (DIL s.vv., daire, doire; Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 130). Again, it is usually rendered in Latin by Adomnán. Daire; al. Doire is now generally anglicized Derry and occurs in the names of some 1010 townlands and 12 parishes (Hogan, 1910, 326).

A vision at the time of Columba’s death was granted to, among others, Ernéne mocu Fir-roíde ‘qui inter aliorum sancti Columbae monacorum reliquias, et ipse sanctus monacus, in dorso Tomme sepultus’ (III 23). This is now Drumhome, a parish in Donegal (Reeves, 1857, 238 note m; Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 534 n 3, where *Dorsum tómme* is said to stand for Old Irish *druimm-tómme*, later *-tuamma*. The Andersons (106) further suggest that this cemetery ‘was probably beside a religious house, which was later associated with the monastery of Derry’. See also Gwynn and Hadcock (1970, 35, 466).

The passage immediately preceding the foregoing (III 23) tells of the vision seen at the hour of Columba’s death by Luguid, son of Tailchan, ‘sanctus senex, Christi miles, in illo ... monasterio quod scotica nominatur lingua Cloni-finchoil’. Luguid then relates his vision to one Virgno, also *christianus miles*, who subsequently rows over to the island of Hinba, where he spends the rest of his life and is the source (main or sole) of the story as eventually related by Adomnán. The monastery is merely said to be in Ireland and it has not been certainly identified (Reeves, 1857, 235 note a; Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 530 n 5, where the form is discussed). Luguid, moreover, is made to say that he has never been in Iona himself. But the granting of such a vision to Luguid (alone) suggests that there may have been thought to be a close or formal connection between him and Columba: possibly *Cloni-finchoil*, like Drumhome, was a Columban monastery. Virgno certainly passes a considerable amount of time and ends his days in a Columban milieu: he is not explicitly said to be a monk of *Cloni-finchoil*, though that would be a natural inference from the passage; and, if so, he seems to transfer directly from *Cloni-finchoil* to Hinba.

The Baítán who died and was buried in Derry (see above) appears to have been, when he was seeking the desert in the ocean, a monk of Columba. It may reasonably be inferred from the place of his death and burial that he continued to be so. In the meantime 'multis ... annis cujusdam cellulae dominus permansit quae scoticc Lathrcg-inden dicitur' (I 20). This church also has not been identified for certain (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 249 n 12), but, unless Baítán had for some reason abandoned during this time his former allegiance, it may be suggested at least that it too was a member of the Columban congregation.

All this is, admittedly, meagre fare. Perhaps five named churches at most can be shown, with greater or less probability, to belong to the *paruchia* of Iona in Ireland. Of these five, three can be shown to retain their original names in recognisable form. The most that can safely be said, in these circumstances, is that the rate of survival is better for Ireland than for Scotland but that little weight may be placed upon such small numbers. Adomnán's apparent lack of concern to specify churches by name is again noticeable in the Irish context. It is perhaps most noticeable in connection with scenes of Columba's childhood and youth, though the anonymous churches in question need have had no formal relationship, actual or claimed, with the (later) Columban congregation. In II 1 the young Columba is studying as a deacon with bishop Findbarr in Ireland, but it is not said here where is the bishop's church, nor in I 1, where this episode is summarised. In III 4, similarly, the young Columba goes to 'the venerable bishop Finnio, his master', but neither place nor circumstances are described. In III 2 the child Columba is living with his foster-father, the priest Cruithnechán, whose church may be monastic but is neither named nor located. In II 25 Columba, still a young deacon, is studying somewhere in Leinster with the aged Gemmán: a church does not figure at all in this episode. In the second preface, furthermore, an unnamed and otherwise unlocated Columban monastery is apparently situated adjacent to a foundation of Mochta of Louth. And the existence of a possible Columban church, under the superiority at a certain stage of Colcu, Áid Draigniche's son, 'one of the descendants of Fechre', may be reflected in I 17 – compare III 20: it was in the territory of one of the kindreds called Uí Fhiachrach.

There are a few other instances where the name of the church in question could have been given quite naturally – might indeed have been expected in some cases – but where it does not occur. I 2 has to do with the young St Finten, son of Tailchán – Munnu – and with a prophecy of Columba concerning him: he was founder of Tech-Munnu (Taghmon, Co Wexford), but his monastery is referred to here only by the words 'so that he may construct a monastery in the coastal territories of the Lagin [Leinster]' (see Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 101–02, 206 n 1, 212 n 9). It is true that in the context of the prophecy its later name might have seemed unnatural; but Adomnán himself might have identified the church explicitly. In III 12 bishop Colman mocu-Loígse is designated merely *episcopus lagenensis* 'a bishop of the Lagin'. In III l, in contrast, in a closely similar episode, Brenden is explicitly said (in the chapter-heading) to be 'the founder of the monastery that is called Birra in Irish' (Birr, Co Offaly). III 13 concerns monks of St Comgcll, drowned *in stagno viluli* 'in the lake of the calf; Irish Loch-Lafg i.e. Belfast Lough. Comgell's monastery of Bangor was on the south side of the loch, but is nowhere mentioned, either directly or indirectly (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 491 n 10). It seems fairly clear that Adomnán is not concerned with the

territorial aggrandisement of Iona at the expense of other churches, an obvious literary context within which to 'drop names'. It seems equally clear that he assumes of his readership a considerable amount of background knowledge. Frequently, moreover, he identifies individuals by kindred rather than by place: a striking instance of this tendency is to be found in III 17, where three prominent traditional monastic founder-saints are identified thus and not by their monasteries, though they are called *monasteriorum sancti fundatores* – Comgcll mocu-Aridi (of Bangor), Cainnech mocu-Dalon (of Aghaboe) and Brenden mocu-Alti (of Clonfert).

The other Irish churches that Adomnán names do not, for the most part, seem to present serious difficulties. Clonmacnoisc (I 3) is 'in Clonoensi sancti Cerani ccnubio', 'in Clonoensi cenubio'. Trevct (barony of Skreen, Co Meath: Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 292 n 9) is 'monasteriolum quod scotice Trioit vocitatur' (I 40). Coleraine is 'Culcrathin' (gen.) in I 50. Clogher is 'hi Clochur filiorum Daimcni' (Old Irish dat.), 'ad Clocherum filiorum Daimcni' (II 5 bis). Aghaboe (II 13) 'latine campulus bovis dicitur, scotice vero Achedbou'. Terryglass, Tfr dha ghlass 'land of two streams', is likewise and only rendered in Latin by Adomnán (II 36): 'de eclesiaeduorum agri rivorum simili reclusione' (chapter-heading), 'in monasterio duum ruris ... rivulorum' (text). At the end of the episode described in III 3 MS A (but not the B MSS) appends the sentence *hoc famen factum est hi Teilte* 'this utterance was made in Tciltiu'. The Andersons suggest (1961, 470 n 7) that it was added by Adomnán to the exemplar of A. *Teilte* is Teltown, Co Meath: gen. *Tailllen(n)*, *Ta(i)lle(a)n*; dat. *Ta(i)lt(e)in*; and with Teilte compare *Tailli*, *Taillae* (DIL s.v. tailtiu). Adomnán does not mention a church, but the meeting in question is ecclesiastical. (Compare, for example, AU 784.9: *Aduentus reliquiarum filii Eirc ad ciuilalem Taillen* 'the coming of the relics of Erc's son to the city of Tailtiu'; sec also Gwynn and Hadcock, 1970, 406).

'Monastcrium quod dicitur Cell-rois in provincia Maugdornorum', 'de Anteriorum genere, prope fines illorum ubi illud monasterium cernitur quod dicitur Ccll-roiss' (I 43) was identified by Reeves (1857, 81 note c; see also Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 300 n 1, 2) with Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan. 'Monasterium sancti Comgil quod scotice dicitur Cambas' (I 49) was likewise identified by him (1857, 96 note o) with Camus, a parish on the west of the Bann in the diocese of Derry. 'Ad cellam magnam Deathrib' (I 50) is said by the Andersons (1961, 70, 322 n 2) to be Kilmore in northern Co Roscommon. The 'monasterium, quod scotica vocitatur lingua Snam luthir' (II 43) was identified by Reeves (1857, 173 note f) with Slanore, in the parish of Kilmore, Co Cavan.

Columba, 'cujus monasteria intra utrorumque populorum terminos fundata ab utrisque usque ad praesens tempus valde sunt honorificata' – so Adomnán (sec above). Bede is even more definite: 'Hii ... cuius monasterium in cunctis pene septentrionalium Scottorum, et omnium Pictorum monasteriis non paruo tempore arcem tenebat, regendisque eorum populis praccrat' (HE III 3; Plummer, 1896, i 132). It is not simply, however, that we are left to speculate about the identity and location of the monasteries of the Picts beyond the Spine of Britain (a people whose lands Adomnán gives little indication of knowing well in any case): we have seen that the churches of the west coast that can with more or less probability be attributed to

Columba and, therefore, to the hegemony of Iona, cannot now be identified with any degree of confidence. That is not to say, of course, that their sites have not survived as those of churches or burial grounds or both, into later medieval or modern times: they may have indeed, but the fact is beyond the possibility at present of satisfactory demonstration. The implication, it is suggested here, is that they were not important or powerful enough as ecclesiastical settlements that their early names were sufficiently deep-rooted in the landscape to survive the storms of time and circumstance – unlike Iona itself, or Applecross, Lismore, Kingarth and Eigg.

None of these apparently greater churches, however, seems to have owed allegiance to Iona. The association of Applecross was pretty clearly with Bangor (Anderson, 1922, i 181, 182–3, 2 19–20, 258) though Máelrubai himself is not listed among the abbots of Bangor (Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 107). There is a possibility that Lismore, too, had a connection, direct or indirect, with Bangor (Anderson, 1922 i 95). Moluóc's genealogy, as given by Watson (1926, 292 n 3), is Mo-Luóc mac Luchtai maic Findchada m. Feidlimthe m. Sogain Salbuide m. Fiachach Araidi (citing Book of Leinster 348h, Book of Ballymote 218d43, Leabhar Breac 15e and observing that the Book of Leinster omits Fiacha Araide, the other two Fedelmid). Compare with this the genealogy of Comgall: Comgall Bennchair m. Setnai m. Echach m. Broen m. Forgo m. Ernaine m. Crimthaind m. Echdach m. Lugdach m. Rosa m. Imchada m. Fheidlimid m. Caiss m. Fhiachach Araide (kindly supplied by Professor Padraig Ó Riain, University College, Cork, to whom the writer is grateful for permission to consult and quote from his edition of the genealogies of the saints in advance of publication). The point to note here, other possible problems implied in these genealogies notwithstanding, is that both Moluóc of Lismore and Comgall of Bangor are assigned to the same kindred of north-east Ulster, the Dál nAraide (see Plummer, 1910, i lviii–lix; Anderson and Anderson, 1961, 107). The relationship, if any, between Lismore and Bangor need not, of course, have been a client one in either direction. The earlier superiors of Kingarth seem, frequently at least, to have been bishops (Anderson, 1922, i 176–7, 198, at C. AD 659, 688). Abbots here are recorded only in the eighth century (ibid., 236, 248, 254). Kingarth may have been originally a British foundation (see Watson, 1926, 164–5). For Eigg, sec above.

A reasonable conclusion to be drawn from these considerations, therefore, is that Iona in the seventh century kept a tight grip on her dependent churches. In Scottish Dál Riata and in Pictland that grip may have been tight enough that the growth, actual or potential, of the Columban churches towards a less circumscribed relationship with the mother-house was effectually stunted (in many or most cases) by the harsher climate of the eighth and ninth centuries. Such a situation may, of course, have been brought about in Pictland by a breaking of ties, whether permanent or temporary. The Irish churches, on the other hand, were in practice probably somewhat less closely controlled: a hazardous sea-voyage separated them from Iona. Events, moreover, political, military and ecclesiastical, were possibly less traumatic for them during the coming two centuries than for their Dalriadic and Pictish counterparts. Nevertheless, it is worth bearing in mind that, of perhaps five Columban churches in Ireland named by Adomnán, only three can now be certainly identified.

The foregoing discussion has been based on the toponymic evidence of the *Life*, such as it is; or to be more precise, on the pattern of survival of the names given by Adomnán principally to Columban churches in Scotland and Ireland. In the opinion of the writer, however, there is little doubt that other categories of evidence could be adduced that would point to the same general – if tentative – conclusion: namely, that the government of her dependent churches – certainly during the seventh century, probably from the beginning and possibly for long after Adomnán's day – seems to have been highly centralized upon the matrix ecclesia of Iona.

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