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## NOTES ON SCOTS *CLACHÁN*

AIDAN MACDONALD

*Department of Archaeology, University College Cork*

There is some variety of opinion among earlier students of Scots place-names regarding the original significance of this term. MacKinnon (1887, 5), referring to a then commonly held belief that it dated back to pagan times, says: "In Scottish and Irish Gaelic the meaning of this word is 'stepping-stones' over a stream. But all over Scotland the word has been used to denote a hamlet or village ... It used to be said that the three requisites of a hamlet were an inn, a smithy and a church. In Gaelic song and in common speech *clachan* is used quite frequently for *the church* ... According to Mr. Skene, the bee-hive cells of the anchorites were of old called *clachan* ... But Dr Joyce is able to prove, by means of Irish place-names, that the present meaning of 'stepping-stones' is a very old one. The fact that villages were often built beside rivers, and that churches were usually built in villages, may account for the signification of both village and church. There is no evidence that the name was used in connection with heathen worship". MacBain (1922, 162), discussing the place-names of Inverness-shire, says: "The name Clachan is common on the West Coast and in the Isles; it means, firstly, the monk's or anchorite's bee-hive stone cell—built where wood and wattle were scarce, so that on the eastern mainland there are no *clachans*. The word developed into the meaning of oratory or kirk, and, from the cluster of *clachans* making a monastic community, into 'village', which is its only meaning in the Lowlands"; and further (1922, 284: note on *Annat*)—"Other church names meet us having slightly different meanings ... *clachan*, church, Irish *clochán*, a stone bee-hive monastic hut ..." (MacBain 1911 has simply: "*clachan*, kirk or Kirktown, Ir. *clochán*, monastic stone-cells singly or in a group; also G. and Ir. 'stepping stones'". Dwelly (1949) gives *clachan* as—village or hamlet in which there is a parish church, inn and smithy. 2. Church. 3. Churchyard, burying place. 4. Druidical circle composed of stones raised on end. 5. Stepping-stones. (2, 3, 4: from Armstrong's Gaelic Dictionary—Mid Perthshire; 5: from MacAlpine's Pronouncing Gaelic Dictionary—

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chiefly Islay and neighbourhood)). Watson appears to have been influenced by MacBain: "*Clachan*, a stone church, Ir. *clochán*, a stone bee-hive monastic hut" (1904, lxv); "*Clachán*, a stone cell, is common, e.g. Clauchaneasy for *Clachán Iosa*, 'Jesus' Kirk' ... This is not the same as modern G. *clachan*, stones, which has dull *a* in the second syllable. It is often made in English 'Kirktown', 'Kirkton' ..." (1926, 170: chapter on Dumfries and Galloway).

The following rough count of *clachán* names, by counties, is based on Watson (1926) and the 1 in. OS maps, via the card index of the Place-Name Survey, School of Scottish Studies. With reference to the 1 in. OS maps, it must be emphasised that, despite due caution and a fair amount of weeding out of dubious instances, the scale is too small and the orthography too uncertain to make it quite sure that examples of *clachán* with the meaning 'stepping-stones', or *clachan*, plural of *clach*, 'stone', have not been included inadvertently. Most of the map occurrences do, however, seem to be reasonably safe. Argyll has 10 examples; Ayrshire 1; Bute 1; Dumbartonshire 1; Dumfriesshire 2; Inverness-shire 10; Kirkcudbright 3; Lanarkshire 1; Perthshire 3; Ross and Cromarty 4; Stirlingshire 1; Sutherland 1; Wigtownshire 8. Three observations may be made immediately on the basis of this count: 1. the modern Gaelic-speaking areas, especially Argyll and (western) Inverness-shire, are well represented; 2. Galloway and Dumfriesshire, including the Ayrshire occurrence (which is in Carrick)—and especially Wigtownshire—are also well represented: but see further below; 3. the NE of the country, from Angus to Nairn, is not certainly represented at all.

The root word is *clach*, 'stone', with suffix *-an* apparently having collective force, so 'place of stone (houses)' (cf. Watson 1904, xxxvii). From what has been said already, it seems likely that Gaelic *clachán* as discussed here denoted originally the chief (stone) buildings around a (stone) church—what in later and post-medieval English-speaking Scotland would normally have been called a 'Kirkton'—presumably including the church and its graveyard as part of the settlement. Later, it could apparently be applied in a more restricted sense to the church and graveyard or to the graveyard alone. It remains to be seen whether its chronological range, and therefore its significance as an ecclesiastical toponym, can be defined more precisely; and whether any qualification may have to be made to this provisional and broad definition.

The primary meaning of early Irish *clochán* (also *clachán*) is 'paved road or causeway', so 'stepping-stones'; the meaning 'stone cell, hut' does not seem to occur historically though *cloch angcaire*, "an anchorite's cell", occurs in AU iii 288.24: Brian mor hUa

Faircheallaigh, n(e)och do tinnsgainn cloch angcaire do dhenum ag tempoll mor Droma-letha(i)n ... "Brian Mor Ua Fairchellaigh, he that began to build the anchorite's cell at the great church of Druimlethan, ..." (A.D. 1484). The nearest approach to Scots *clachán*, *sensu* 'Kirkton', seems to be the uncertain form *clochrad*; trí clochraid (clothraige, clothrai, clóchraid, clochraidí, v.11.) Hérenn; Ard Macha, Clúain Maic Nóis, Cell Dara, "three (collections of) stone-buildings of Ireland: Armagh, Clonmacnoise and Kildare" (Triads)—see *Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language*, C, Fasc. 1, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1968, *cloch*, *clochán*, ? *clochrad*. However, Dinneen (1927) gives *clochán* as "a ruin, remains of an old fort; a heap of stones; a stone circle; a burying ground; village or townland containing the parish church; a causeway; a pavement": a number of these meanings are shared by Scots *clachán* as defined by Dwelly, including the two ecclesiastical ones. Of about twenty individual instances of *clochán* cited by Hogan (1910), none has certainly an ecclesiastical connotation, while two certainly and one probably mean "causeway": without further investigation it is not possible to be sure to what precisely the others refer.

*Clachán* does not seem to occur in the Isle of Man. Kneen (1925–8 (1979)) gives no instances of it under the various historical forms of the names of the individual parishes; nor does he list it under Manx and Irish elements (pp. 638–9); Claghyn ny Killey (p. 23), in the parish of Kirk Christ Rushen, above Kirkill (*sic*), he translates "stones of the church"—observing "probably the ruins of an old church, now disappeared".

In these circumstances, it may reasonably be suspected that Scots *clachán*, 'Kirkton' etc., is a comparatively recent formation. The Irish evidence generally indicates that Dinneen is not reflecting ancient usage—he may, indeed, have incorporated material from Scots Gaelic sources; and it seems safe to say that the term is not attested in Manx toponymy in an ecclesiastical context either. Considerations of internal evidence, moreover, tend to strengthen this suspicion.

*Clachán* is not listed in the indices of persons and places of the first two volumes of the *Regesta Regum Scottorum* (Barrow 1960, 1971), which cover the period 1153–1214. Nor does it occur in the index of the *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland*, Vol. I, 1264–1359. Its earliest appearance in the (admittedly few) sources that the writer has hitherto been able to consult seems to be that in the *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland* (Thomson, Paul, et al., 1882–1914; hereinafter referred to as RMS), 1306–1424, Appendix I.20.: "... villam de Wichterne que dicitur Clachan, ..." "anno regni nostri



vicesimo" (Robert I) = 1326 A.D. (in an early 17th century copy)—Whithorn in Wigtownshire. As the subsequent pattern of occurrences in RMS up to 1620 is of some interest, it seems worthwhile to present the material in detail, before offering comments and suggestions.

RMS, 1424–1513:—No. 452: "... terras de ... Clauchane ... in baronia de Tybris, vic. Drumfres" (A.D. 1450)—Tibbers, Penpont parish, Dumfriesshire; no. 461: "... villam de Wytterne que dicitur Clachhane ..." (A.D. 1451)—Whithorn: confirmation by James II of Robert I's charter of 1326; no. 733: "villam de Quhittarne, antiquitus *Clachane* nuncupatam ..." (A.D. 1459)—Whithorn; no. 2702: "... Clachane, in insula de Arane, ..." (A.D. 1502)—Arran.

RMS, 1513–1546:—No. 32: "... Kirkcoun de Strouane nuncupat. *le* Clauchane ... vic. Perth ..." (A.D. 1515)—presumably Struan in Atholl: this charter is in favour of the Earl of Atholl and the above-mentioned place *inter alia* had belonged to Robertson of Struan: Struan, Blair Atholl parish, Perthshire: Clachan on OS 1 in.; no. 980: "... terris de Clauchane et Uchiltre ... in baronia de Uchiltre ... in balliatu de Kyle, vic. Are ..." (A.D. 1530)—Ochiltree, Ochiltree parish, district of Kyle, Ayrshire; no. 1757: "... 5 marcatas terrarum de Clauchane, in baronia sua de Rosnethe, vic. Dunbertane" (A.D. 1531)—Rosneath, Rosneath parish, Dumbartonshire: Clachan House on OS 1 in.

RMS, 1546–1580:—No. 1594: "... *lie* Clauchane de Strathaven ..." (in baronia de Avendale, vic. Lanark) (A.D. 1564)—Strathaven, Avondale parish, Lanarkshire; no. 2202: "... Clauchane de Glenluce ... vic. Wigtoun" (A.D. 1572)—Glenluce, Old Luce parish, Wigtownshire; no. 2332: Ovir Clauchantoun in parochia de Colmonell (A.D. 1570)—Colmonell, Colmonell parish, district of Carrick, Ayrshire: Clauchanton on OS 1 in.

RMS, 1580–1593:—No. 6: "... *lie* *Clachane* et villam de Cumnok ..." vic. Air (A.D. 1580)—Cumnock, Old Cumnock parish, Ayrshire; no. 410: "... Clauchane ... in insula de Arrane, vic. Bute" (A.D. 1582)—Arran; no. 1030: "... villa *lie* Clouchanetoun ..." (terras, dominium et baroniam de Uchiltre, vic. Air) (A.D. 1586)—Ochiltree, Ochiltree parish, Ayrshire; no. 1556: "... in villa sua *lie* Clauchanetoun de Uchiltre ... in baronia de Uchiltre, Kyle-regis, vic. Air" (A.D. 1587)—as preceding; no. 1805: "... *lie* Clauchane ..." of Sweetheart Abbey (A.D. 1590)—New Abbey, New Abbey parish, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright; no. 2136: "... villam et *lie* Clauchane de Invermessane ..." (in parochia de Inch, vic. Wigtoun) (A.D. 1592)—Invermessan, Inch parish, Wigtownshire: Invermessan is about one and a half miles N of a place called Clachanpluck on OS 1 in. (see also below).

RMS, 1593–1608:—No. 366: "... villam et *lie* Clauchane de Stranrawer ..." vic. Wigtoun (A.D. 1595)—Stranraer, Inch and Leswalt parishes, Wigtownshire; no. 424: "... villam *lie* Clauchane de Stranrawer ..." (A.D. 1596)—as preceding; no. 453: "... terras de Rarsay, viz. Claichane, Oiscaig, etc. ..." (A.D. 1596)—Island of Raasay, Portree parish, Inverness-shire: Clachan, Churchton Bay, on OS 1 in.; no. 519: "... Ovir et Nether Clauchanes de Kirkcum, cum molendino vocato *the* *Clauchanmilne* ... in parochia de Kirkcum, vic. Wigtoun" (A.D. 1594)—Kirkcolm, Kirkcolm parish, Wigtownshire: Clachan, High Clachan on OS 1 in.; no. 526: "... *lie* *mure* de Clachane ... *lie* Clauchane—akiris de Calmonell ... infra parochiam de C(almonell), comitatum de Carrik, vic. Air ..." (A.D. 1596–97)—Colmonell, Colmonell parish, Ayrshire; no. 574: "... Clauchanland ... in parochia de Newabbay, senesc. Kirkcudbrycht; ..." (A.D. 1597)—New Abbey, New Abbey parish, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright; no. 711: "... Clauchan de Dundranane ... in senesc. Kirkcudbrycht ..." (A.D. 1598)—Dundrennan, Rerrick parish, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright; no. 846: "... Clauchtane de Glenluce ... vic. Wigtoun ..." (A.D. 1598–99)—Glenluce, Old Luce, Wigtownshire; no. 1123: Clauchane (terrae dominicales de Glenluce, vic. Wigtoun) ... Clauchin ... de Glenluce (A.D. 1598)—as preceding; no. 1358: "... Clachannis ... in parochia de Kirkcum ... vic. Wigtoun" (A.D. 1602)—Kirkcolm, Kirkcolm parish, Wigtownshire; no. 1430: "... Clauchane ... infra baroniam de Haliewode, vic. Drumfreis ..." (A.D. 1603)—Holywood, Holywood parish, Dumfriesshire; no. 1820: Clauchen of Girtoun (in Scots English): in Galloway (A.D. 1606)—Girthon, Girthon parish, Stewartry of Kirkcudbright; no. 1872: "... cum *lie* Clauchane nuncupat. *lie* Castelmerk de Dalmellington ..." (in Kyle-regis, vic. Air) (A.D. 1607)—Dalmellington, Dalmellington parish, district of Kyle, Ayrshire; no. 1878: "... Over Clachantoun de Calmonell ... *lie* Nether Clachane de Calmonell ... in balliatu de Carrik, vic. Air" (A.D. 1607)—Colmonell, Colmonell parish, Ayrshire.

RMS, 1609–1620:—No. 53: Clauchaneholme in baronia de Tybberis (vic. Drumfreis) (A.D. 1609)—Tibbers, Penpont parish, Dumfriesshire; no. 298: "... de terris de Raisay, viz. Claichane, Oiscaig, etc. ..." (A.D. 1609)—Island of Raasay, Portree parish, Inverness-shire; no. 1138: "... *lie* Clauchane de I(nvermessane) ... in parochia de Inche, vic. Wigtoun ... *lie* Clauchanes et alias terras ... et certas alias terras ... in parochiis de Inche, Leswade et Kirkcoim ... et omnia suprascripta incorporavit in liberam tenandriam de Moit de Invermessane" (A.D. 1613)—Invermessan, Inch parish, Wigtownshire: it is not clear to this writer to what specifically the



phrase "*lie* Clauchanes" refers: Clachanpluck is near the old church of Inch; Clachan and High Clachan are at Kirkcolm; Leswalt has not previously occurred in connection with the name Clachan—except that Stranraer (see above) is partly in this parish: but the wording of the document does not seem to allow precise identification; no. 1248: "... cum villa *lie* Clauchanetoun de Uchiltrie ... vic. de Air ..." (A.D. 1615)—Ochiltree, Ochiltree parish, Ayrshire; no. 1421: "... Over et Nather Clauchane de Kirkcum ... in parochia de Kirkcum et baronia de Invermessane ... vic. de Wigtoun" (A.D. 1613)—Kirkcolm, Kirkcolm parish, Wigtownshire; no. 1817: Clauchane, of Holywood Abbey, vic. Dumfries (A.D. 1618)—Holywood, Holywood parish, Dumfries-shire.

In the first place, it seems likely that many, if not most of these instances in RMS do occur in broadly ecclesiastical contexts. Most of the names are those of medieval parishes: Whithorn (Cowan 1967, 209); Struan (ibid., 193); Ochiltree (ibid., 158); Rosneath (ibid., 173); Strathaven (ibid., 190); Glenluce (ibid., 76); Colmonell (ibid., 34—Glasgow, Carrick); Cumnock (ibid., 42); New Abbey (ibid., 135—Lochkindeloch); Raasay (ibid., 168); Kirkcolm (ibid., 119); Dundrennan (ibid., 170—Rerrick); Holywood (ibid., 82); Girthon (ibid., 73); Dalmellington (ibid., 44). A few, moreover, in Galloway and Dumfries, are also the locations of major conventual churches: Whithorn (cathedral and Premonstratensian priory: Cowan & Easson 1976, 103, 212); Glenluce (Cistercian abbey: ibid., 75); Sweetheart (Cistercian abbey: ibid., 78); Dundrennan (Cistercian abbey: ibid., 74–5); Holywood (Premonstratensian abbey: ibid., 102). There are, however, a few instances where ecclesiastical association is not at once apparent: Tibbers, Innermessan and Stranraer were not medieval parishes. It may be that we are dealing in these cases with settlements around non-parochial churches or chapels. It is not the case that *clachán* invariably denotes the Kirkton of a (medieval) parish church. Clachan, Kilfinan, Argyll, is a farm just to N of Kildavaig (OS 1 in.—see Watson 1926, 304), which was not a medieval parish. Clauchan Glen, Kilmory, Bute, refers to neither of the two medieval parish churches of Arran (OS 1 in.—see Cowan 1967, 96 (Kilbride, Isles), 107 (Kilmorie, Isles); Innes 1850–5, II, 1, 245, 254), though it almost certainly refers to an old church site (Innes 1850–5, II, 1, 254). Allt a' Chlachain, Kilmonivaig, Inverness, in Glen Garry, flows from the N into Loch Garry; at its foot is Cill Donnain (OS 1 in.), which was not a medieval parish church. Clachan Comair, Kiltarlity and Convinth, Inverness, probably has *comar*, 'confluence' as its specific (Watson 1926, 476), with

reference to the nearby junction of the R. Glass and the R. Cannich; Comar itself and the church shown there on the OS 1 in. being in the parish of Kilmorack, on the opposite side of the Glass. Kiltarlity, Kilmorack and Convinth were all medieval parishes, but Clachan Comair is near none of the parish churches. Before the 13th century the lands of Cumber were part of the parish of Convetth; the lands of Comerkle in the barony of the Ard are mentioned in 1539; and the Kirkis of Convinth and Cumer, Conveith and Cummer, in a rental of Beaully Priory, 1561–66 (Innes 1850–5, II, 2, 511, 514, 517). Comerkle looks as though it could be *comar* (*na*) *cille*, on the analogy of Newnakle 1563, Nonakiln, Rosskeen, Ross, G. *Neo' na Cille* (Watson 1904, lxiii); Culnakle 1662, Calnakil, Applecross, Ross, G. *Cal na Cille* (ibid., 206). The fact, however, that Comar and Clachan Comair are on opposite sides of the river suggests, the ecclesiastical association notwithstanding, that *clachán* here could refer to stepping-stones or the like. Clachan (Kilmartin), Kilmuir, Inverness (OS 1 in.) is not connected with a medieval parish church (cf. Innes 1850–5, II, 1, 349). Clauchaneasy, Penninghame, Wigtown, is *Clachán Iosa*, 'Jesus' Kirk' (Watson 1926, 170): it was not a medieval parish and the OS 1 in. shows nothing and no other significant names in its vicinity. It is now the name of a farm on the R. Cree, near its junction with the Water of Minnoch. The name, however, would indicate the former existence of a church here. Two interesting instances are those of Kilmaluag and Kilmuir, Kilmuir, Inverness. Watson (1926, 315) makes passing mention of Clachan of Kilmaluag, in Skye, though Clachan is not shown here on the OS 1 in. But Clachan does appear on the OS 1 in. at Kilmuir, which apparently succeeded Kilmaluag as the parish church after the Reformation: Kilmaluag is on the NE. Kilmuir on the NW coast of the parish (Innes 1850–5, II, 1, 349: cf. Cowan 1967, 107—Kilmuir (Isles) 1.; Watson 1926, 292). On the other hand, the possibility must be entertained that *clachán* could denote secular settlement—castleton, perhaps, rather than kirkton. Tibbers Castle (Gothic) is shown on the OS 1 in. at Tibbers. Penpont, Dumfries. RMS 1593–1608, no. 1872, refers to the "Clauchane" called the "Castelmerk" of Dalmellington, 1607 (see above). "Moit de Invermessane" is associated with the "Clauchane" of Innermessan, 1613, in RMS 1609–1620, no. 1138 (see above). Clachan of Myrton, Glasserton, Wigtown, appears on the OS 1 in.: it is not near Glasserton itself (Cowan 1967, 74) and does not seem to have been a medieval parish. But Maxwell (1930, 216) says of a place called Myrton, which may be this one (he fails to give the parish), that its full name is Myrton McCulloch, the castle having



been the chief residence of the McCulloch family.<sup>1</sup> Clearly the matter requires more detailed investigation, but it may be relevant to compare Irish *cloch*, 'stone', in the sense of "'a construction of stone', esp. 'fortress, stronghold, castle'" (*Contributions to a Dictionary of the Irish Language*. C, fasc. 1, *cloch* (f.), Royal Irish Academy, Dublin 1968).

✓ The spatial distribution of *clachán* from Watson (1926) and the OS 1 in. and its spatial-chronological distribution in RMS as quoted, are probably misleading at first glance. Watson gives 6 examples for Wigtown, 2 for Kirkcudbright, 3 for Ross, 1 for Argyll, and 2 for Inverness: a heavy weighting in favour of Galloway. The corresponding OS 1 in. totals are: Argyll 9, Ayr 1, Bute 1, Dumbarton 1, Dumfries 2, Inverness 8, Kirkcudbright 1, Lanark 1, Perth 3, Ross 1, Stirling 1, Sutherland 1, Wigtown 2. Watson's Galloway examples, moreover, strongly suggest that he extracted most of them from the indices of RMS. In RMS, Whithorn is the only occurrence in the 14th century (assuming it to be genuine); in the 15th, we have Tibbers and Whithorn (twice); in the first half of the 16th, Arran, Struan, Ochiltree and Rosneath: in the second half, Strathaven, Glenluce (thrice), Colmonell (twice), Cumnock, Arran, Ochiltree (twice), Sweetheart/New Abbey (twice), Innermessan, Stranraer (twice), Raasay, Kirkcolm, Dundrennan; in the period 1600–1620, Kirkcolm (twice), Holywood (twice), Girthon, Dalmellington, Colmonell, Tibbers, Raasay, Innermessan, Ochiltree. In other words, most of the occurrences in Galloway and the SW generally fall in the period after 1550: the instances before that date, though few in number, have a proportionately broader geographical range. It can be said, however, on the basis of the evidence afforded by RMS, that *clachán* appeared as early in SW Scotland as in the NW and the Highlands generally. (It is interesting to observe that the name Clachan at Whithorn seems to be regarded as obsolete in 1459: RMS, 1424–1513, no. 733, above).

*Clachán*, then, does not seem to occur *sensu* 'kirkton' etc. in historical Irish contexts; nor in the place-names generally of the Isle of Man. It is, moreover, significantly absent from the NE of Scotland—in Watson (1926), on the OS 1 in. maps and in RMS 1306–1620. These superficial considerations would seem to indicate a late date for its appearance as a toponym having the range of meanings under discussion: quite possibly (though not necessarily )

<sup>1</sup> The only place of this name listed in Groome's *Ordnance Gazetteer* is (Vol. 5, p. 90) Clachan of Myreton, "a tiny hamlet in Glasserton parish, Wigtownshire, ...". *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland*. Francis H. Groome. 6 vols., London, n.d.

after Scots Gaelic and Manx had largely separated; when spoken Gaelic was becoming confined to the Highlands and Isles and to its latterday areas of survival in Galloway and spoken Scots-English already making its presence felt to a considerable extent in these parts, at any rate at administrative levels (see further below). (O'Rahilly has suggested that Irish and Scots (with Manx) were growing apart, perhaps already noticeably so, in the 13th century; but that "the spoken Gaelic of Scotland and Man must have been substantially identical down to a comparatively late period" (1932 (1976), 140, 162; cf. 248–9, 263). Jackson has concluded that the first divergent developments in Western Gaelic (Irish), on the one hand, and in Eastern Gaelic (Scots and Manx), on the other, can be detected in and after the 10th century (not before the end of the Old Irish period), but that the two remained substantially identical until the 13th century, when they finally drew apart; and that Scots and Manx continued to be basically one language during the 13th and 14th centuries at least, "but probably by the fifteenth century and demonstrably by the sixteenth they had at last become separated" (Jackson 1951, 74–5, 78, 79, 81, 82, (86), (88), esp. 91–2). Both O'Rahilly (117, 140) and Jackson (78) believe that Gaelic was spoken in Galloway down to the 17th century and possibly later). Such a conclusion seems reasonable on the basis of the documents the writer has hitherto consulted. Moreover, MacBain's explanation (see above) of the absence of *clachán* from NE (at least Inverness-shire) place-names (and the absence from the same area of stone bee-hive monastic huts?) is not borne out by the historical range of meanings of Irish *clochán*; nor, in fact, by such considerations as the building sequence of the oratory and the round hut established by O'Kelly (1958) at Church Island, Valencia, Co. Kerry; or the activity of the Iona community described by Adamnán in Bk. II, ch. 45 of his *Life of Columba* (Anderson & Anderson 1961, 452–7). If it is an early term that was largely replaced by its English equivalent(s) as Gaelic receded westwards, one could expect a few fossilized survivals here and there, especially in the NE generally, both in later and post-medieval documentary sources and also at the scale of the 1 in. OS maps. But there are other pointers in the same general direction.

The old church of Kintail, in Ross, is Cill Dubhthaich or Clachán Dubhthaich, on Loch Dubhthaich, L. Duich (Watson 1904, 179; 1926, 284). The alternative generics here suggest that a later is in process of replacing an earlier—that *clachán*, in fact, is replacing *cill*. Similarly, Clachán Ma-Ruibhe, apparently the site of the old parish church of Lochcarron, Ross, where the old graveyard is called Cladh a' Chlacháin (Watson 1904, 192; 1926, 288) may



well have been Cill Ma-Ruibhe originally. Kirkton of Lochalsh, Ross, is the same in Gaelic—an Clachán Aillseach (Watson 1904, 189; 1926, 170). This looks like a fairly recent formation: the patron saint of Lochalsh is Comgan and, on the analogy of other churches called Kilchoan, we might postulate an original Cill Chomhghain here too (see Watson 1926, 281).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, the site (ancient and modern) of the parish church of Lochbroom (G. Lochbhraoin), Ross at the head of Lochbroom, is Clachán Loch-Bhraoin—the old dedication is lost (Watson 1904, 241); and Clachán an Dìseirt (Dalmally), Argyll, referred to Dìseart Chonnáin, ‘St. Connan’s hermitage’ there—the parish of Glen Orchy being sometimes called Dysart (Watson 1926, 256–7). In these three examples, *clachán* is qualified by the name of the parish or district: the specific does not refer directly to the church itself (even, probably, in the case of Clachán an Dìseirt), as, for instance, a dedication element would. Admittedly, *cill* is also sometimes qualified by a topographic specific (MacDonald 1979, 12); though the semantic construction in the cases under discussion here seems closer to the form “ecclesia de X”, “Kirk of Y” of 12th century and later documentary sources, where the parish name, X or Y, may well be the name originally of the church itself. (Compare perhaps Nicolaisen 1976: “Certainly the semantic picture does not point to any particular antiquity of any of the names (having generic *cnoc/knock*, ‘hill’). Not only do we find a recent situation with regard to descriptive adjectives, but the frequent naming from features of the surrounding countryside is an even surer sign of relative modernity ...” (146); “... names referring to some feature outside the stream named tend to be later than those describing some quality of the stream itself” (57). The analogy should not, however, be pressed too far). But an even clearer example of the type of name in question is surely afforded by the following. St. Fillan’s in Strathfillan, Killin, Perth, is called in Gaelic *an Clachán* or *Clachán Shraitheo*, where *Sraitheo* is the local pronunciation of *Sraithibh*, “(at) Straths”, the dative-locative plural of *srath*; the burn of Gleann a’ Chlachain flows by St. Fillan’s Chapel (Watson 1927–8, 251–4, 272: the OS 1 in. shows Allt Gleann a’ Chlachain here; just downstream from the junction of this burn with the R. Fillan is St. Fillan’s Chapel, with Kirkton just to E). These instances may well, in fact, be translating the

<sup>2</sup> Since the original time of writing, the following statement came to the writer’s notice: “The parish of Lochalsh was known in 1600 as Kilchoen in Lochalsh, from a church bearing the saint’s name (Congan) situated at Kilchoan on the east shore of the loch” (MacKinlay 1914, 162). (The writer had no access to Innes 1850–5, when this note was first written: it is—Kilchoen in Lochaelsh, 1600–1640; Kilchoen, c.1640 (Innes 1850–5, vol. 2, part 2 (1855), 395). A.D.S.M.: 1 Dec. 1986).

concept “Kirkton of ...”.

It is, therefore, tentatively suggested that *clachán* as discussed here arose in Scots Gaelic toponymy to render the Scots-English terms ‘Kirkton’ and (possibly) ‘castleton’ and all that they denoted; that it originated in a late medieval context and probably continued to spread as a creative name-forming element, both in Gaelic and (Gaelic-influenced) English, well into post-medieval times. In other words, *clachán* is the Gaelic response to *kirkton*, not *vice versa*. This suggestion is not susceptible of clear demonstration on the basis of the material assembled here, or of the superficial investigation that the writer has hitherto been able to undertake: it must remain at this juncture a suggestion only, which more detailed and systematic work in the future may either confirm or disprove. Nevertheless, it is worth noting in passing that *Kirkton* occurs already in the 12th century: possibly Kyrktoun (Old Aberdeen), 1163 (but the charter is spurious); certainly Kirketun (St. Ninian’s, Stirling), 1165 × 1174 (Barrow 1960, 258–9 (no. 237); 1971, 206–7 (no. 130)).

It is further suggested that *clachán* either arose in a significantly bilingual milieu, or that it quickly passed into one; and that, once it had appeared, it also passed fairly rapidly into the usage of neighbouring English-speaking areas. Forms such as Clauchantoun (Colmonell), 1570, Clouchanetoun, Clauchanetoun (Ochiltree), 1586, 1587, Clauchan-milne (Kirkcolm), 1594, Clauchanland (New Abbey), 1597, the phrase Clauchen of Girtoun, 1606. Clauchaneholme (Tibbers), 1609, probably indicate its adoption into English usage by the second half of the 16th century anyway. And it seems likely that the geographical distribution of the element at this stage in the SW is significantly wider than that of surviving SW Gaelic. Indeed, an origin in a bilingual situation, both in the SW and in the Highlands, need not be surprising if the milieu in which it arose was predominantly ecclesiastical or (where secular) aristocratic.

An extension of the Scots-English usage just discussed is perhaps to be seen in such forms (on the OS 1 in. maps at any rate) as Clachan of Glendaruel, Kilmodan, Argyll—referring to Kilmodan; Clachan of Campsie, Campsie, Stirling; and The Clachan, Farr, Sutherland—in Farr (all three are also medieval parishes: Cowan 1967, 105, 26, 65). Indeed, we may go further and point to a probably recent and still living extension of colloquial usage having, apparently, no more specialised connotation than that of a “collection of (stone) houses”; even if it has not received much, if any, “official” recognition from modern cartographers (though this would need to be checked in detail). *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* (Edinburgh 1972) has “clachan (Scot.) n. a small village



...":— "'Now', said he, 'there is a little clachan' (what is called a hamlet in the English) 'not very far from CorrynaKiegh, and it has the name of Koalishnacooan'" (Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, Ch. 21).

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