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NOTES AND COMMENTS

A. NOTES ON SCOTTISH PLACE-NAMES

21. *Kilwinning*

During a field-trip to the island of Arran in the Firth of Clyde in December 1963, I was able to record what appears to be the Arran Gaelic version of the Ayrshire place-name Kilwinning. I had previously recorded from the same person, Mr. John Robertson (92) of Blackwaterfoot, other Gaelic names of some of the more important places on the Scottish mainland, particularly in Renfrewshire and Ayrshire, where Gaelic has been dead for a few hundred years—a fact which makes the recording of the Arran Gaelic pronunciation of these names all the more valuable. However, only Kilwinning shall concern us in this context, and the name as given to me by Mr. Robertson is *Cill Dingean*. As my informant had proved most trustworthy on other occasion and as both his mother and he himself had lived and worked in Kilwinning at different times, this Arran Gaelic version of our name deserves a little closer attention.

For this purpose we first of all turn to the written story of the name. Its early phases are easily followed in Cochran-Patrick 1884, where the relevant documents are very conveniently gathered together. From these the following picture emerges:

kilwinin 1202-7 Glasgow Registrum;¹ *Kilwynnyn*, *Kilwenyne*, *Kilwynnyne*, *Kylwynnyn*, *Kilwynnyn* 1222 Dryburgh Liber;

Kilwynyn 1229 *ibid.*; . . . *Kylwynnyne* c. 1357 Reg. Mag. Sig.;
. . . of *Kilwinnyng* 1482 Acts of Lords Auditors.

Subsequently *-ing* or *-yng* endings occur almost exclusively, with *-w-* and *-v-* on the one hand, and *-n-* and *-nn-* on the other as alternative spellings in the appropriate places. The present forms makes its first appearance in the middle of the 16th century, significantly in a document in the Scots vernacular.

All this points to a very consistent scribal tradition and there is no reason to believe that the various recorded forms are not attempts to represent the actual pronunciation of the name as faithfully as possible. There is therefore also little doubt that the explanation normally advanced for Kilwinning is in all probability correct. It derives the second element from the Welsh form *Gwynnion* (with lenition) of the saint's name "*Finnén*, a diminutive of the name of Findbarr of Moyville" (Watson 1926:165) who died in 579 and is supposed to have been trained at Whithorn. Kilwinning Abbey is said to be a 12th century foundation by Hugh de Morville on the spot where Findbarr's earlier church had stood.

Obviously it is not possible to relate the Gaelic form collected in Arran directly to this written tradition. The question even arises whether it contains the *same* saint's name, for in the only two other instances known to me in which *Dingan* appears in Scottish place-names it is said to be a form of the name *Ninian*: (1) There is a *Chipperdingan Well* in the parish of Kirkmaiden in Galloway which Maxwell (1930:67-8) takes to be an Anglicisation of a Gaelic *Tiobar Dingain* "Ninian's well". He claims that "St. Ninian's name is *often* rendered *Dingan* or *Ringan*, as in Geoffrey Gaimar's *Estorie des Engles*, line 96, 7, written in the twelfth century: 'Ninan aveit ainz baptizé,/Les Altres Pictes del regné:/Ce sunt les Westmaringiens/Ki donc esteient Pictiens./A Witernen gist Saint Dinan/Long tens vint devant Columban'". (2) In the parish of Strathblane (Stirlingshire) behind Blanefield village there is a ridge known as the *Dingan Hill*.²

Does this mean that *Cill Dingenain* too commemorates St. Ninian and not St. Findbarr? Presumably there is no objection on principle to such a parallel commemoration particularly in the light of the latter's alleged training at St. Ninian's Candida Casa. How firm, however, is Maxwell's claim that *Dingan* is in fact St. Ninian? Whereas the rhyming Scots form *Ringan* is well attested in literature and in early Scottish personal names (for some sixteenth century examples see Black 1946:

s.v. Ninian), the equation of Dingan with Ninian seems to be based solely on Gaimar's *Estorie*, and here one is tempted to think of the form with initial *D-* as the result of a misreading as it is not easily explained phonetically.

Looking at the place-name evidence alone, there is no compelling reason why Ninian should come into the picture at all. Mr. Robertson's *Cill Dingean* for Kilwinning might contain the second person singular of the hypocoristic possessive pronoun *d'* "thy" which is evidenced for Northern Ireland and Kintyre. Arran has *t'* but then *Cill Dingean* is not necessarily an Arran name although used in the island, and it is quite possible that the Gaelic of the south-west mainland of Scotland went with Northern Ireland and Kintyre rather than Arran.³ Medial *-ng-* would be from $-\text{[ŋ']}-\text{<[N']}$, and the whole name *Cill D'Fhinnéain*, containing the Gaelic form of the saint's name whereas Kilwinning has the Welsh variant. The Galloway *Chipperdingan* might then be interpreted as *Tiobair D'Fhinnéain* (unless it is *Tiobaird Fhinnéain*, with subsequent metanalysis) and *Dingan Hill* as Gaelic *Cnoc D'Fhinnéain*, or the like (if the name has the same origin, that is). We might also compare *Killimingan* in Kirkgunzeon (<-gwynnion) in Kirkcudbrightshire which represents Gaelic *Cill M'Fhinnéain* "My Finnén's Church" (Watson 1926:165), whereas *Cill D'Fhinnéain* (= Kilwinning) would be "Thy Finnén's Church".⁴

NOTES

- ¹ The source abbreviations used are those recommended in the Appendix to the *Scottish Historical Review* 42 (1963).
- ² This was brought to my notice in a letter from Mr. Gilbert Innes of Killearn.
- ³ Unless *t* became voiced after *l* as is evidenced in Manx (Jackson 1955:83). This was pointed out to me by Professor Kenneth Jackson whose advice also prevented me from straying into the realms of mere speculation in the present discussion.
- ⁴ Cf. also *Kildavie* (Mull), Gaelic *Cill Da-Bhì* "Thy Bì's Church" and *Kildavanan* (Bute) the old forms of which alternate between *Kyldavanan* 1429 and *Kilmavanane* 1476 (Watson 1926:273 and 301).

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B. NOTES ON COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Goat-Keeping in the Old Highland Economy

Amid all the bitter memories of the "Forty-Five", the people of Moidart enjoyed a gleam of humour unexpectedly provided by a herd of domesticated goats. Still remembered long after goats have ceased to play any significant part in the Highland economy, the tale has a two-fold interest for us, as we shall see. Though the subject has been practically ignored hitherto, it seems likely that until the mid-eighteenth century goats may have had, for the majority of the population, the lesser tenants and cottars, an importance comparable in its way to that of cattle in the economy of the chiefs and tacksmen.

On May 3, 1746, after the return of Clanranald's men from Culloden, a naval engagement took place between two French and three English frigates at the entrance to Loch Ailort, which separates the districts of Moidart and Arisaig. Father Charles MacDonald, priest of Moidart in the 1880's, heard how

The natives on each side of the Loch stationed themselves on knolls and on the slopes of the hills, whence they had a complete view of what was going on before them. During the hottest part of the fight, one of them, an old man belonging to Gaotal [on the Arisaig side], was heard to offer up the most fervent supplications to Heaven for the preservation, not of the French, less so of the English, but of some goats belonging to himself, and which were grazing on an island within close range of the combatants' guns (MacDonald 1889:184).

In 1959, Mr. Sandy Gillies, of Glenuig in Moidart, then 80 years of age, informed me that "Goat Island was a place grazed by goats in 1745",—indicating the grassy islet, crowned by a vitrified fort, which lies in the mouth of Loch Ailort (O.S. "Eilean nan Gobhar", NM/694794).¹ Like some other islets so named, this Eilean nan Gobhar was no doubt traditionally used in former times for summer pasturing, an alternative to the hill shieling, which simultaneously took advantage of the availability in such places of rich seasonal grazings and also protected the township's cereal crops from trespass (*cf.* Whitaker 1959:173-8).