

Finbarr and the Coming of Christianity

Opinions differ as to whether Dornoch's Finbarr is the same person as Finbarr of Cork or Finbarr of Ulster and Candida Casa and Moyville where Columba was his pupil. Accepting the latter view as does Dr. Bentinck and Rev. A. Scott in his book "The Pictish Nation" we then assume that Finbarr came to Dornoch about 540 A.D. and established a muinntir or settlement there. Possible evidence of this settlement was found on Schoolhill and in ~~are~~ what may have been the ruins of his church at the east end of the Cathedral cemetery.

Other monks connected with the Dornoch muinntir are Demham, Callen, and Machlie.

Place-names in and around Dornoch commemorate Finbarr - Templebar, the site of his church, Croc Varr where he prayed, Davockfin. The first dedication of the Cathedral itself was to Finbarr while the most important fair was St. Barr's fair.

(Sage's description of a Dornoch fair seems to offer the greatest design possibilities)

(Insert para re Norsemen from over the page here)

The first firm historical evidence of a Christian presence in Dornoch comes in a mandate of David I, dated c. 1136 and directed to the Earls of Orkney and Caithness which freely translated reads "Respect and maintain free from harm the monks and their men dwelling in Darnach". By 1150 David had made a grant to Andrew Bishop

over

of Caithness" which indicates that the See of Caithness (present day Sutherland and Caithness) was now under the rule of the Roman hierarchy.

Design Possibilities:

1. Sage's description of a fair based, say, on Sir David Wilkie's "Pittlessie Fair" and "The Penny Wedding." Photocopies enclosed. Copyright?
2. A "Book of Kells" type of illustration to illustrate the Finbarr - Columba relationship.

Insertion as indicated on other side of this page)

By the late 9th Century the fury of the Norsemen would have wreaked havoc on the Dornoch Christian minster. This may explain why there is little concrete evidence of Finbarr's settlement but by the 11th Century we there are records which suggest that St. Duthac of Tain may have been ministering in the Dornoch area.

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Alternative spellings - Finbar, St. Barr, St. Barr

Diminutive Finnian. Findbarr (Watson)

Findbarr of Magh Bille

Scott says he was an Irish Pict sent from Aondruim to Whithorn - Candida Casa - there 520-540

said to have visited East Coast of Pictland, founded a "munnter" (settlement of brother monks)

Returned to Moyville in Ulster. Teacher there. Loved manuscripts. Columba ordained as deacon by Finbarr. Secretly copied Finbarr's manuscript. "To every cow her calf" led to Columba's going to Iona.

Bentinck p. 491 Professor W. J. Watson claims that he was St. Barr of Cork whose day was Sept. 25th

Schoolhill - site of earliest religious settlement a munnter. Illustration in Bentinck p. 41

Craven I. The legend of St. Finbarr - the bishop "que in Cathania magno cum honore habetur" is plainly identified with that of St. Finbarr, first bishop of Cork (i) The Irish (Picts) colonists brought the honouing of his name to their Dornoch settlement.

(i) See Watson above

II. Scottish account says he was born in Cathania

Scott's III

Version See above

~~Bentinck~~ St. Gilbert dedicated Dornoch Cathedral firstly to
~~Craven~~ St. Bar. The name of "Barresfair" in Dornoch 1592.
~~Buchanan~~

Christianity in Dornoch after Finbar.

* Laing.

Accepting that Christianity ^{had its beginnings} was established in Dornoch in the late 6th Century we must assume that it would have grown there as it did throughout the north through saints like Donnan of Egg, Columba himself and Maelrubba* of Applecross, Redatus abbot Redatus (d. 762) of Mid-Fearn, and Boniface in Rosemarkie; The recent work at Portmahomack suggests a strong Pictish Christian settlement there as do the Pictish symbol stones (Christian) of Easter Foss Edderton Shandwick, Nigg, Creich, Golspie, Farr, Reay, Ulbster and Skinnert show that Christianity was well-established throughout the north by 800 A.D.

The "furore Normanorum" had a devastating effect on Christian Pictland but by the 11th century we learn that St. Duthac of Farn may have been ministering in the Dornoch area.

c. 1136

With the crowning of David I (1124-1153) we get the first ^{written} evidence of a Christian community in Dornoch when David sends a mandate to the Earls of Orkney and Caithness to "respect and maintain free from harm the monks and their men dwelling in Dornoch in Caithness"*. By 1150 David made a grant of land in Dornoch to Andrew, Bishop of Caithness which indicates that Caithness was now controlled by the Roman hierarchy, coming under the control of the Roman hierarchy.

* Translated freely from the Latin.

Fairbairn and the Coming of Christianity

St. Donnan of Egg - more influential than Columbo - 560 - 700
St. Maebribba of Applecross } - late 7th Cent.

MacKay p. 3 Taylor - "I a native of Caithness and Bishop of Cork"
"Church beside Town Cross"

Tradition sites his church at east end of churchyard.

Barr's Fair - Gaelic "Beill bar"

Bentinck kept in former times 25 Sept.

p. 158 transferred to 10th October 1592 - harvest implications

203 - Various fairs 207-209. (and profit)

Up to 7 fairs by 1759 - burgh gained "much entertainment"
481 Sage on Dornoch fairs - this is the most detailed
description of an actual fair - photocopy 481-483
also Sage pp. 122-3

("Bloody fray" on same page)

Receiving House played a part - photograph available
Daniel Print 1821)

David Wilkie's Little's Fair. Page 158

Alexander Carse Oldhamstock's Fair 1795 p. 166 in
"Painting in Scotland."

David Wilkie The Penny Wedding - Colour Plate 42
in "Painting in Scotland".

Scott p. 506 Cele De - God's man - Culdee.

Bangor-Mayo - Moyville?

Bangor Down - Ulster.

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Rev. Archibald Scott in "The Pictish Nation, Its People and Its Church" says that Finbarr was born at Aondruim about 500 A.D. He received his early training at Aondruim by Strangford Loch south-east of Belfast. He was then sent to Candida Casa to complete his education. He remained attached to Candida Casa for twenty years as pupil, master, and missionary. He founded Magh Mile (or Moyville) in Ulster and then led a highly equipped mission to the Britons in present-day Gyrshire. Scott then goes on to say that "it was on the east of the three northern counties, Ross, Sutherland and Caithness, that his most enduring work was done. He concentrated his attention on the district between St. Ninian's Edderton, the original Celtic Abbey of Fearn, and St. Ninian's foundation at Wick. He established a munntir (a fellowship and settlement) at Dornoch". Across the firth at Geanies was a St. Barr's Finbar's Chapel and another at Berrisdale (Barudal) in Caithness.

In Dornoch, Templebar at the east end of the Cathedral cemetery is traditionally thought to be the site of Finbar's church. The Cathedral itself was ^{dedicated} designated by Gilbert first of all to Finbar but later to Mary. Cnoc Carr and Davochfin are further commemorations ^{to Finbarr} who according to The Martyrology of Aberdeen died "in the land of Cat". The Irish Annals say he died on Sept. 10th, 578 A.D.

ST. BARR'S CHURCH

Porra - Jim is not so sure
about bracketed paragraph now

Finbar had close links with St Columba when they were both in Ireland. [St Columba's church was probably thatched with rushes. It had two low (4') doors one on the west & one on the south. There was a narrow window on the north and a small window on the north wall near the NW corner]

Finbar's church would have been about 30' x 15' & built of Dorroch Sandstone.



ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH NEAR LITTON