

## PLACE NAMES IN VITA FINNIANI.

A comparison of certain passages in the Latin Life<sup>1)</sup> of Finnian of Cluain Eiraird with the Irish Life<sup>2)</sup> published by Stokes helps us to identify some place names found in both. Considering the confusion which the commentators display in their remarks on the passages in question, it is not surprising that Hogan's Onomasticon does not give much help beyond the collecting of references; in one case, indeed, it makes confusion worse confounded by suggesting a second wrong identification.

### 1. Escair Branán.

There is more than one indication that in early times an ancient road led from Cell Dara northwards into Meath through the district of Fid Gaible and the territory of Fotharta Airbrech, which latter extended eastwards from Bri Éile (the hill of Croghan in King's Co.) into Co. Kildare, as will appear later. The Connacht people, returning from Bruden Maic Dathó, fled 'past Druim Criaig, which is to-day called Cell Dara, past Ráith Imgain (now Rathangan) in Fid Gaible, to Áth mac Lugnai, past Druim dá maige<sup>3)</sup> over Droichet Cairpre<sup>4)</sup>'. When Patrick went on a visit to the king of the two Munsters he travelled the same route<sup>5)</sup>. Finnian, we are told, coming from the south, paid a visit to Brigid at Cell Dara. Proceeding by the route referred to, he came *ad fines Forthartensium*, where he met Cassanus, son of Neman. Of this Cassanus I find a trace in Cloncassan, the name of a townland

<sup>1)</sup> *Codex Salmanticensis*, col. 189—210.

<sup>2)</sup> *Lives of Saints from the Book of Lismore*, p. 75—83.

<sup>3)</sup> Drumomuy in King's Co. See *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1913), II 197.

<sup>4)</sup> *Irische Texte* I 106.

<sup>5)</sup> *Acallam na Senorach* l. 693.

in the parish of Clonsast, barony of Coolestown. Next he crossed the Boyne, and came *ad locum qui Escayr Branán dicitur, et ibi fundavit ecclesiam atque in circuitu eius fossavit*<sup>1)</sup>. The Irish Life says: *táinic Finnén iar sin tar Bóinn co hEiscir mBrandáin áit itá Ard Relec innú* 'Finian came after that over the Boyne') to Eiscir Branáin, the place where Ard Relec is to-day'<sup>3)</sup>. But where is Ard Relec? Certainly not at Ardsalagh, as Cogan says in a passage referred to in the Onomasticon. He probably took this from some other writer. Nor will anyone who scans the official maps or lists of place names find it. There was once a parochial church or vicarage there, but in 1302 it was worth 'nothing, because waste'<sup>4)</sup>. The name appears as Ardrelicke in 1597<sup>5)</sup>, and as Ardrellick in Charles I.'s time<sup>6)</sup>. It is still remembered in the locality of Clonard. See sheet 47 of the Ordnance Survey 6-inch map of Co. Meath.

Colgan says<sup>7)</sup> that Aengussius, by whom he means the author of the litany in LL 573, calls Escair Branán by the name of Ard bren ndomnaich, but we learn nothing from LL itself as to where the latter place was: *in da fer déc de muntir Finnio i nAird bren donnaig*. The Codex Salmanticensis has no such name, though the Onomasticon would imply that it has.

## 2. Ros Findchuill.

Colgan states<sup>8)</sup> that Cluain Eraird was formerly known as Ros Findchuill. For this statement he is taken to task by Reeves<sup>9)</sup>. Let us examine our narratives:

<sup>1)</sup> *Cod. Salm.* § 16.

<sup>2)</sup> If the Yellow River, the first tributary of importance which enters the Boyne, be not thus referred to, Finnian probably crossed the Boyne itself twice.

<sup>3)</sup> *Lismore Lives* i. 2624.

<sup>4)</sup> *Calendar of Documents, Ireland, 1302—1307*, p. 257. The place is corruptly called *Ardrely* and *Ardri*.

<sup>5)</sup> *Fiants of Elizabeth*, no. 6185. 'Licence to Thomas, lord bishop of Meath, to alien to Edward Loftus, son of Adam, lord bishop of Dublin and Chancellor, the manor of Killian and lands of Molericke, Ardrelicke, Clonard, Monygaliagh and Rosan.' All these places are in the Clonard district.

<sup>6)</sup> *Leinster Inquisitions, Meath* no. 140.

<sup>7)</sup> *Acta SS.* 398, n. 21.

<sup>8)</sup> *Ibid.* n. 23.

<sup>9)</sup> *Life of Columba*, 236.

## Cod. Salm.

§ 17. Finnian finds his successor at Escair Branán.

§ 18. *Alio die uenit angelus ad eum dicens: Noli hic amplius laborare, quia non erit tua resurrectio ibi, sed familiae tuae tantum. Surgens ergo uerus obediens, secutus est angelum usque ad locum qui Cluayn Irayrd dicitur. Ingressus ergo locum dixit: Haec requies mea, &c.* Then a boar flies from him. Then an interview with a *magus nomine Fraechanus* takes place.

## Lism.

ll. 2628—2639. F. finds his successors but, being warned by God, moves a little to the East (*seal soir*).

ll. 2640—2645. The coming of three thousand disciples and the selection of the twelve Apostles of Ireland.

ll. 2646—2652. A story and prophecy about Colum Cille.

ll. 2653—2660. The Lismore text is here slightly wrong owing to the mistake of the scribe occasioned by two occurrences of the word *Finnén*. Following the Brussels MS. the reading is: *Táinic aingel Dé co Finnén co n-ebert fris, ní hé so inad th' eiséirghe atré dano drem mór dot muindtir isund. Táinic ria<sup>1)</sup> Finnén cu Ros Findchuill, is éisidhe Les in Memra inniu. Annsein gabhuis Finnén in fersa fáthachda. Hec requies mea 7rl.* 'The angel of God came to Finnian, and said to him: "This is not the place of thy resurrection, but many of thy disciples shall rise here". He came with Finnian to Ros Findchuill, that is Les in Memra to-day. Then he sang the prophetic verse *Haec requies &c.*' Then follows

<sup>1)</sup> The *co* in Stokes' edition really belongs to the opening of the first sentence, also the word *aingel*.

Cod. Salm.

Lism.

an interview with the druid  
Fraechán.

§ 19. Coming of remarkable disciples.

§ 20. Story of Columba.

To anyone who reads these narratives it must be evident that they refer to the same events and places, and that Cluain Eraird and Ros Findchuill are identical as Colgan says. Compare also the words of the Irish Life with the following entry in the Four Masters<sup>1</sup>): *Cluain Eraird do loscadh ass an rainn as mó in Less an memra.*

The monastery which was founded at Ros Findchuill was afterwards known as Cluain Eraird, and was a little to the east of the church Finnian had already founded in the neighbourhood.

Reeves had, however, authority for stating that a Ros Findchuill was anciently called Eiscir Branáin. He cites a passage from a tale named *Caithréim Dathí mic Fiachra*, of which there is a complete copy in 23 N 11, R. I. A., and a portion in 23 D 15. It is quite modern in language. It states that Ros na rígh was once known by the names just mentioned. There is absolutely no evidence or reason for connecting this place with those in the Lives of Finnian. Yet it is hardly possible that the two places, Eiscir Branán and Ros Findchuill should be connected in succession with Finnian, and that in another portion of the country two identical names should be given in succession to one place. It seems to be a case of an old tradition retouched at a later time by a person who had not grasped the real facts.

### 3. Cell Ríгнаige.

We read that Rignach, sister of Finnian, with her mother, and the mothers of Ciaran and Colman, resided in a cell called Cella Sanctae Rignachae<sup>2</sup>). Except that the Lismore Life mentions two sisters and omits Colman's mother, the texts agree<sup>3</sup>). Colgan,

<sup>1</sup>) A. D. 1143.

<sup>2</sup>) *Cod. Salm.* § 22. *Rignathae* is a misreading.

<sup>3</sup>) Stokes' *i.* 1. 2662 should be 7 (*ocus*).

commenting on the Latin Life, says *Killrighnaighe est parochialis ecclesia diocesis Cluanensis*<sup>1)</sup>, meaning thereby the church of Righnach in the town of Banagher, parish of Reynagh and diocese of Clonmacnoise. By the time he compiled his Indexes he had changed his mind; he has *Killrignaighe, eccl. in occidentalis Mediæ et Lageniæ confinibus*<sup>2)</sup>. The place is, of course, the modern Kilreiny in the Co. Kildare, on the opposite side of the Boyne to Clonard. There is record of a grant of the rectory of Kylreyny 'parcel of the possessions of the late abbey of Clonard' to William Bermyngham, Knt. in 1541<sup>3)</sup>. Hogan's conjecture that Cell Rignaighe is in Wexford is due to the fact that it is stated to have been in Fotharta Airbrech; but Fotharta Airbrech is not the barony of Forth in Wexford.

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<sup>1)</sup> *Acta SS.* 399.

<sup>2)</sup> *Ibid.* 881.

<sup>3)</sup> *Piants of Henry VIII* no. 191.

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