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Source: *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Dec., 1919/1920), pp. 341-343

Published by: [County Louth Archaeological and History Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27729232>

Accessed: 14/06/2014 01:06

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## St, Fintan, Abbot of Dromin.

BY REV. HENRY PARLIN.



THE ancient records of Ireland mention at Oct. 10th the Feast of St. Fintan of Dromin in Ui Segain, the genealogies making him son of Eoghan son of Catan son of Fergus, &c., up to Oilíoll Olum. But there are numerous Dromins in Ireland, and Ui Segain proves a very illusive place-name, and as a result different writers claim this St. Fintan for different Dromins.

Professor MacNeill gives sound advice when a case of this kind is in hand : to fix on the ascertained facts, and work from these.

What are the facts in this Fintan case ?

1. The name is Fintan—not Finnian, or Finn, or any other etymologically akin to it. All the records give Fintan. Not one gives a different name, the *t* being *always* present.

2. Among the dozens of saints named Fintan only one is designated *of Dromin*. This is very important. For if it can be shown that Dromin, Co. Louth, *v.g.*, had a St. Fintan as patron at any time, then the records refer to that Dromin alone.

3. The various forms in which "Dromin" appears in the records raise no difficulty. There is no discussion on the point of spelling.

4. Here is the cardinal fact in the case : St. Fintan was the recognised patron of Dromin, Co. Louth, in 1412. The evidence for this is incontestible.

The *Register of Primate Fleming*\* [of Armagh] records at that year the collation of the rectory of St. Fintan's, Dromin (Dromyng), vacant by the death of Master Richard Barry, to Nicholas Alexander, a clerk of the diocese of Meath. The instrument was given at Drogheda.—*Cal. of Fleming's Register—R.I.A. Proc.*, Vol. XXX., Sec. C., p. 148.

It is exceedingly strange how O'Hanlon missed this decisive point, for Reeves refers to it in his *Adamnan*, p. 103. It is valuable also inasmuch as it fixes one place for a certainty in Ui Segain ; and by doing so lends great probability to "Enda's" contention, that Rathcoole, Co. Louth, is the "Rathcuile" of the *Seventh Life of St. Patrick*. See Colgan's *Trias*, c. 14, p. 151 ; and *I. A. J.* for 1912, pp. 31, 32, &c.—article on "Rathcool, Ui Segain, Leire," O'Hanlon admitted some probability in this view (March 17, p. 677, note 2). Two hundred years later than the above collation only one Dromin was still known to have a St. Fintan as its patron, *i.e.*,

\* May 1, 1404, consecrated ; died June, 1416.

when O'Clery compiled the Martyrology of Donegal and the pedigree of this Saint Fintan. We are therefore compelled to conclude that Dromin, Co. Louth, is the place referred to in the records, which are reproduced hereunder from O'Hanlon, October 17.

#### THE RECORDS—Oct. 10.

1. The pubd. Martyrology of Tallagh—St. Fintan Droma Ing.
2. That copy of M.T. in B. Leinster gives—Fintain Droma Ing., i.e., Fintan of Druim Ing.
3. Felire of Oengus—Leabhar Breac copy—Fintan find frem fine Droma Ingard aige, i.e., Fintan the fair, a vine's root, pillar of Druim Ingard.
4. The commentator adds that his place was "in Ui Segain."
5. Mart. of Marianus O'Gorman—Abb Droma in fial Fintan, i.e., the modest Fintan, Abbot of Druim.
6. Commentator adds—Droma hIng i nUibh Segain, i.e., of Druim Ing in Hu Segain.
7. MS. in T.C.D. marked B. 3-12—Fintaini Dromanig, iii. Lect, i.e., [Feast of] Fintan of Dromin [having] three proper Lections.
8. Mart. of Donegal (edited by Todd and Reeves) gives—Fionntan, Abbot of Druimhing in Ui Segain. It is worth noting that this last was written a full century after Manus O'Donnell had told his version of the alleged quarrel over the Book—"Once upon a time Colum Cille visited Finnian (Findein) of Dromin (Droma Find)," &c. It shows there never had been any confusion over the name, and that "Finnian of Dromin" had merely a legendary, never a real existence. O'Hanlon quotes O'Clery as stating that the mother of St. Fintan was Nemh of Luaighne.
9. Pedigree of St. Fintan of Dromin from the Archiv. Hib., Vol. VI, Suppl. pp. 123, 2—Fionntan Droma Hing m Eoghain m Catain m Fearghosa m Fionn-caoinh m Fecc m Fionnchadha ullaigh m Connla m Faidhcc m Cen m Oilealla oluim et cetera.
10. Pedigree of St. Finnian of Maghbile, *ib.*, pp. 83, 2.—Finden Moighe Bile m Cairbre m Oilealla m Trichim m Fecc m Iiomcadha m Breasail m Siorchaadha m Fiattaigh finn m Daire m Dluthaigh m Detsin m Eathach m Sin m Rosin m Triuin m Roitriuinn m Airnil m Maine m Forgo m Fearadhaig m Oilella éranm m Fiachain firmara m Aonghasa tuirmigh temhrach et cetera.

Some corrections by MacNeill—

- (a) Ui Sogain sometimes mistaken for Ui Segain, v.g., by Shearman in *Loca Patriciana*. "The neighbourhood of Tuam was inhabited by a Pictish race, the Sogain, until the ninth century; and some of the same race were subject to the rulers of Ui Maine long afterwards."—*Ir. Hist. Tract*, A.D. 721, p. 146.
- (b) "O'Donovan strangely sought in *Book of Rights*, p. 151, to connect the names of Ui Dorthainn and Bile Tortain, and has been followed by others in locating Ui Dorthainn near Ardbraccan in Meath. The references in the annals show that the Ui Dorthainn, who were a branch of the Airgialla, were situated in Oriel, probably S. of Armagh in Monaghan Co."
- (c) In *Phases of Irish History* he points out two other wild guesses by O'Donovan in the annals, by which other editors are misled, p. 264.

Other corrections suggested here—

(d) Index to *Calendar of the Chartularies of St. Mary's Abbey*, supplied by Dr. Lawlor—Fintan, Finnian, or Finn—referring to St. Fintan.

The *Calendar* nowhere confounds these names. The editor of the *Calendar*, Mr. Gilbert, distinguishes them specifically in his introduction.

(e) *A Charter of Cristin, Bishop of Louth*, by Dr. Lawlor, p. 38 :—

“ Church of St. Fintan of Drumcar.” Read—“ Church of St. *Finnian* of Drumcar. Nowhere in the *Chartularies* quoted is the Patron of Drumcar called *Fintan*.

(f) *The Cathach of St. Columba*, by Dr. Lawlor, page 312, line 28—“ Finnian of Druim Finn, which is certainly the place now known as Dromin, Co. Louth.”

No such saint occurs in the records. The author next line gives the Patron of Dromin, St. *Fintan*, who is found in the records.

(g) Same page, line 32—“ Fintan, Finnian or Finn.” True for Fintan : not for Finnian or Finn, of whom there is no record in connexion with Dromin.

(h) “ No mention of him [St. Fintan] in the Kalendars ” ! See the records above.

(i) Page 312, last line. Reeves is plainly wrong, as the genealogies show.

(j) Page 313, line 13. “ Finnian of Dromin is no other than Finnian of Maghbile.” There is no trace whatever in the records of Finnian of Maghbile having had any connection with Dromin.

There can be now no reasonable doubt therefore, that the *Fintan of Dromin* whom the records give, was the Patron of Dromin, *Co. Louth* ; that the name was always clearly known as *Fintan*, not one of the records omitting the *t* or exchanging it for *d* ; that although the earlier records say nothing of Ui Segain, the commentators must have good authority for giving it, as if they were locating the Saint on their own authority we should expect them to give the then name of the district instead of the ancient one ; that one Louth place is thus certainly in Ui Segain and that consequently we must reject the guesses of those learned authors who would confine it to the present county of Meath ; that the legendary quarrel of St. Columba about the Book was a mere myth—with *Finnian* not of Dromin as given by the various records quoted above, but of Druim *Find* (apparently a place that never was met with in Irish literature) ; that it is unsafe, therefore, to turn legend into history ; and that the opinions of great scholars like O'Donovan, Reeves, &c., ought in all cases be put to the test of proof.

HENRY PARLIN.