

The Origins of Feudal Ayrshire

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THE MAKING OF THE SHIRE OF AYR.

That portion of Scotland which is called the shire of Ayr falls naturally into three major divisions, separated by transverse rivers—the Irvine and the Doon.

In the obscure periods before history becomes visible in documentary form these three separated areas may have been petty kingdoms, for they appear to have had individual names as early as 750 A.D., when the Northumbrians overran the plain of Kyle and other regions.¹

Each area has a strong tradition of kingship. By repute Kyle is the land of King Coel—a far from mythical sovereign—and archaeological remains at Coilsfield may lend support to the tradition.²

Hector Boece avers that King Caratacus was interred in Carrick “and thir stones his monument are as yet standing neir the tounne of Turnberry which was questionless the ancient Carrietonium.”³

Whether one agree or disagree with this mediaeval view, it cannot be denied that Turnberry was the centre of the Carrick area, and the discovery in 1632 of many freestone coffins, all lying east and west, within a mile of Turnberry Castle, may supply confirmatory evidence.⁴

The Welsh Bards and the *Book of Taliessen* suggest that a legendary king, Proc, had his residence near Irvine, and that the northern portion, now called Cuninghame, was the scene of the activities of the renowned King Arthur,⁵ a view which is not incompatible with the researches of modern scholarship.⁶

Whatever value one may assign to such traditions, it is at least clear that the three areas separated by the rivers had been also politically separate, and that important centres of population—or government—existed around Turnberry, Coylton, Dundonald and the Irvine-Kilwinning locality.

(1) *Continuatio Bedae* (ed. Plummer). I. 133.

(2) *New Statistical Account—Ayrshire*. Page 752.

(3) *Scotorum Historiae*. Hector Boece (ed. Bellenden). I. XXIX.

(4) *Historie of the Kennedys*. Page 189.

(5) *Archaeological Light on Early Christianising*. Knight. I. Page 265.

(6) See Wade Evans in *Dumfries and Galloway Transactions*, 1948-49. Page 66.

When the district came to be feudalised this tripartite arrangement played a major part in the development, civil and ecclesiastical, of the shire of Ayr throughout the mediaeval period. Thus, for example, each region received an overlord, each region became a deanery of the diocese, and each region contained one monastery.

THE OVERLORDS WHO MADE A SHIRE POSSIBLE.

The three areas were eventually united into the shire of Ayr. Before that could be accomplished each region had to receive a stable government, which was achievable only under a strong feudal superior and so, early in feudal times, we find Cuninghame, Kyle and Carrick each under an overlord. Once such rulers had been established, royal creation of a shire was possible.

At this point it is convenient to mention the two areas of Kyle and to point out that information about the reason for this bisection is very hard to find.

Kyle was subdivided by the Rivers Ayr, Lugar and Glenmuir. The northern part was held by the Stewart and so bore the name, Kyle-Stewart; while the southern half was under vassals who held directly of the king so that this portion was named Kyle-Regis, or King's Kyle.

The division must have taken place when the northern portion was given to the Steward by King David. The nomenclature shows the favourite mediaeval device of denoting ownership of a partitioned property by suffixing the holder's name to the name of the property, *e.g.*, Stair-Montgomerie and Stair-White.

The fact that Kyle-Regis was held by the king explains, in part, why many of the churches of this region were given to the Chapel-royal.

There is a grave deficiency of early records for all parishes in this region with the exception of Coylton, Cumnock and Ochiltree.

THE OVERLORD OF CUNINGHAME.

In Cuninghame the most powerful retainer of King David I. was one Hugh de Morville. This soldier was a Northamptonshire baron and in 1131 his name appears in the Pipe Rolls as a proprietor in the counties of Rutland, Northampton and Huntingdon. Although an English land-holder, he was of Norman type, and his name may be taken from the castle of Morville in the Costentin, Normandy.

We do not know when or why this powerful knight came to Scotland; no charter grant giving Scottish lands to him survives; but it is known that King David gave him possessions in Lothian and Lauderdale, and created him lord of Cuninghame and Largs. He also held the important office of Great Constable of Scotland.

There is confusion in the lineage of the De Morvilles. The original Hugh died a monk in 1162. Another Hugh, grandnephew of the first, had a part in the murder of Thomas à Becket in 1170. This ambiguity causes confusion concerning the foundation of Kilwinning Abbey.

The De Morville family did not last long. Richard de Morville married Avicia de Lancaster; he died in 1189 and his lady in 1191. Their son, William, died childless in 1196, and the only daughter, Elena, married Roland, lord of Galloway, so that Cuninghame and Largs passed to Roland. Then succeeded Alan, son of Roland, who died in 1234. His child, Devorgilla, married John de Balliol in 1228, and the forfeiture of the Balliol family meant the passing of all the De Morville Ayrshire possessions to the Stewarts.

But the De Morvilles had played a powerful part in our district during the troubled times when Scotland was consolidating into a kingdom. From their headquarters in the Kilwinning area this family presided over Cuninghame, and under their tenure arose the abbey of Kilwinning,⁷ while the chapter of Glasgow came into possession of the Canonlands, in the parishes of Dalry and Largs.

THE OVERLORD OF KYLE.

The most powerful baron in Ayrshire was Walter Fitz Alan, who held Kyle-Stewart. In 1141 King David, supporting the cause of his niece, the Empress Maud, made the acquaintance of this son of the Lord of Oswestry. Walter came north, "with no seat save his saddle," as a forfeited baron, when the cause of the empress collapsed. He appears as a witness for King David in 1142.⁸

About 1157 King Malcolm confirmed to this Walter his grandfather's gift of the lands of Renfrew, Paisley, Pollok, Cathcart, eaglesham, Lochwinnoch, etc., and added further donations to the grant. Walter's function was to safeguard the Clyde area, and in 1164 he defeated Somerled of the Isles at Renfrew, and received the defeated's castles of Rothesay and Bute. This victory stabilised the northern border of our shire.

(7) The De Morvilles explain Kilwinning possessions in Lauder.

(8) Liber de Melros. Page 4.

This Fitz Alan was a patron of the abbeys of Paisley and Melrose. Before he died in the monastic habit at Melrose⁹ in 1177 his donations had greatly affected the ecclesiastical organisation of Ayrshire.

Walter's son, Alan, died in 1204,¹⁰ and Walter II. succeeded and took the family name of Stewart together with the seignorial name of Walter of Dundonald.

From very early times the Fitz Alans had been lords of Kyle, as can be seen when about 1165 Walter gave the tenth penny of all his lands except Kyle to the monks of Paisley.¹¹ By the time of the Battle of Largs the family had an important residence at Dundonald and here in 1390 Robert Stewart, *i.e.*, King Robert II., died.¹² Royal residence at this stronghold explains the chapel-royal at Dundonald.

In short, the Stewart held Kyle-Stewart—all the land between the River Ayr and the River Irvine—had a stronghold at Dundonald, and possessed a trading burgh at Prestwick. His overlordship concerns Paisley and Melrose possessions in Kyle, the coming of the Gilbertines to Dalmilling, and the foundation of a royal chapel in our shire.¹³

THE OVERLORD OF CARRICK.

The south-west corner of Scotland until after the Wars of Independence acted like an independent kingdom. The king of the Scots openly admitted the apartness of the area when he addressed his soldiers as Scots, English, Normans and Gallovidians.¹⁴

This unsettled province extended northwards to the River Doon and thus included Carrick. The inhabitants were a militant breed, and when historical times begin they were under the sovereignty of their first recorded prince, Fergus of Galloway. With the help of Walter Fitz Alan, King Malcolm IV. subjugated Fergus who then retired as a monk to Holyrood Abbey, where he died in 1161.

Fergus had married an English princess, a daughter of Henry I., and by her he left two sons, Gilbert and Uchtred, who then ruled Galloway jointly. When William the Lion was captured at Alnwick in 1174 Galloway burst into revolt and sought English vassalage. Civil war broke out and Uchtred was foully murdered by Gilbert's son, Malcolm, in 1174.

(9) *Chronica de Melros.* Page 88.

(10) *Chronica de Melros.* Page 105.

(11) *Paisley Charters.* Page 7.

(12) *Bute in the Olden Times.* J. K. Hewison. Page 81.

(13) *Fitz Alan seals show the typical mounted knight.*

(14) *Munimenta de Melros.* J. No. 1.

When Gilbert died in 1186 Uchtred's son, Roland, possessed himself of all Galloway against the wishes of Henry III. of England. By a peace treaty between Henry and the king of Scotland, Roland was forced to cede a part of Galloway to Gilbert's son, Duncan. This partition was of vital importance to the formation of Ayrshire, for Duncan's share was erected into an earldom under the Scots king and thus in 1186 originated the earldom of Carrick which was soon to be incorporated into the new sheriffdom of Ayr.

The erection of the royal burghs of Ayr and Dumfries was deliberate policy to contain Galloway,¹⁵ which was still dangerously powerful. The lordship flourished under Roland who married the De Morville heiress and became High Constable. His son and successor, Alan, continued as Constable and was a puissant lord. He assisted King Henry in Ireland, was a Magna Carta baron, had a huge private fleet and was a constant raider of the Western Isles. His death in 1234 was a tragedy for this little kingdom. He left behind three daughters, all married to English barons; no lass could inherit in Galloway; a native revolt broke out and the power of Galloway waned.

But the region south of Carrick was politically insecure until after Bannockburn. Edward I. considered Galloway no part of Scotland,¹⁶ and the long, dour struggle in the Carrick area was intensified by local allegiance to the English cause. The victory of Edward Bruce at Craignail ended the political independence of Galloway, but in ecclesiastical affairs Galloway held itself apart from Scotland until 1472. The political and religious apartness of this area is reflected in the diocesan arrangement of lowland Scotland and will be considered later.

THE SETTING UP OF THE SHIRE.

As soon as the three portions—Cuninghame, Kyle and Carrick—were securely held under major vassals of the king, a shire of Ayr was possible. "The royal power moved forward to Dumfries and Ayr, as strongholds planned to contain the turbulent region of Galloway,"¹⁷ using the characteristic feudal device of linked castle, burgh and sheriffdom. Thus it will be seen that the shire of Ayr was a deliberate creation, part of the machinery of feudalism. When a castle had been erected and a sheriff domiciled therein, the area placed under the jurisdiction of the sheriff became a sheriffdom or shire. Clearly a shire could not be a reality until its province was sufficiently subjugated to accept the authority of the sheriff. Thus the shire of Ayr could not come into being until after the disjunction of Carrick from Galloway in 1186. So it was

(15) *Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, 1950-51.* Dr. Pryde. Page 83.

(16) *Historical Documents relating to Scotland.* Stevenson. 1297.

(17) *Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, 1950-51.* G. S. Pryde. Page 83.

then that about the year 1197 William the Lion erected a new castle somewhere between the River Ayr and the River Doon.¹⁸ The extent of the new sheriffdom did not depend ultimately upon geography but upon convenience of jurisdiction. The sheriff of Ayr was given authority over Cunninghame, Kyle and Carrick, because these areas were firmly held by trustworthy vassals of royalty. For similar reasons his jurisdiction extended over the Lordship of Largs and the islands of Cumbrae and Ailsa Craig.¹⁹

His seat was the new castle upon Ayr.²⁰ To complete the feudal process a royal burgh was necessary. In 1203 Ayr was created such a burgh²¹ and thus became the most important place in the shire. In religious affairs this meant that the church of St. John the Baptist had to be a major Scottish church.

THE MINOR VASSALS AND THE "VILLS" OF THE SHIRE.

The subjugation and settlement of the major areas of Ayrshire necessitated the intrusion of lesser military vassals into each region. By a process of sub-infeudation each area was subdivided into tenements of land held of the overlord in military tenure by vassals exercising, each in his allotted place, jurisdiction in the name of his overlord. In Cunninghame all such subordinate areas were held from the De Morvilles, in Kyle-Stewart from the Stewart, in Carrick from the Earl.

There is not sufficient evidence of the process of penetration to decide whether it was peaceful or violent, or whether local leaders accepted the new order and rose to power under it. There was no Norman conquest of the area, but many Norman-type knights were settled by royal authority to procure the feudalisation of the shire.

The lands were allotted in parcels, the boundaries actually stepped out, and the "divisas" meticulously recorded in charter form. All matters within each parcel were carefully defined as to jurisdiction; for example, rights over pastures, free forests, fishings, turbaries and mills. Each holder of a unit exercised his jurisdiction over all things within his unit.

It was a military system based upon ability to provide armed vassals for the overlord when necessity arose. The new owners in Ayrshire were neither agriculturists nor land-improvers;

primarily they were warriors and bore upon their shields the symbols of their origin and occupation, a mounted mail-clad warrior displaying a drawn sword.²²

Many of their seals are to be seen in the *Melrose Muniments* and in Laing's *Catalogue of Seals*. From local charters and from the *Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland* it is possible to list many of these landholders "del conte de are." But a complete list is out of question, for charter evidence for many localities is non-existent, e.g., Auchinleck, Barnweill, and Cumnock. However, from documents still available it is possible to assign many Ayrshire knights to their localities.

De Morville Vassals.

- ARDROSSAN. Arthur of Ardrossan. Memorials of Montgomeries. I. No. 1.
- ARDROSSAN. Philip de Horssey. Pont's Cunninghame. Page 100.
- ARDROSSAN. Richard de Barclay. Kilwinning Charters. Page 138.
- ARDROSSAN. Simon de Beaumont. Pont's Cunninghame. Page 58.
- EGLINTON. Eglin of Eglinton. Irvine Muniments. I. No. 1.
- GIFFIN. Alexander de Neuham. Liber de Dryburgh. No. 226.
- KELBURNE. Richard Boyle. Pont's Cunninghame. Page 59.
- KILBRIDE. Robert Croc. Lennox Charters. No. 2.
- KILMARNOCK. Malcolm Loccart. Pont's Cunninghame. Page 290.
- KILMAURS. Warnebold. Liber de Calchou. I. No. 283.
- KILMAURS. Hugh de la Rokely. Liber de Calchou. I. No. 286.
- LARGS. Thomas Seysil. Reg. Epis. Glasg. I. Page 192.
- LOUDOUN. Lambinus. Dalrymple Collections.
- RICCARTON. Richard Loccart. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 66.
- STEVENSTON. Stephen Loccart. Kilwinning Charters. I. No. 1.
- STEWARTON. Godfrey de Ros. Paisley Charters. Page 70.

(22) Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Scottish Seals. Henry Laing. Robert de Bruce. Page 29. John Comyn. No. 222. Pat Dunbar. No. 283. Saer de Querci. No. 679. Roger de Sealabroe. No. 719. W. Fitz Alan. No. 769. Richard Wallace of Barmore. No. 838.

(18) Chronica de Melros. Page 103.

(19) Cumbrae is now in Buteshire; it used to be in Largs Parish.

(20) William, vicecomes de novo castello super Ar. Mun. de Melros. I. No. 36.

(21) Muniments of the Burgh of Ayr. No. 1.

Stewart Vassals in Kyle.

- CRAIGIE. Walter Hose. Paisley Charters. Page 231.
- CROSBIE. Henry Croc. Paisley Charters. Page 70.
- DALMELLINGTON. Thomas Colville le Scot. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 192.
- DUNDONALD. Donald, son of Ywen. Paisley Charters. Page 70.
- MAUCHLINE. Peter de Curri. Melrose Muniments. I. Nos. 69, 75.
- MAUCHLINE. Richard Wallace. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 69.
- MAUCHLINE. Nes de Walouton. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 74.
- MAUCHLINE. Gilbert, son of Richard. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 66.
- MAUCHLINE. Roger, son of Glaia. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 73.
- MAUCHLINE. Robert, son of Fulbert. Paisley Charters. No. 2.
- MAUCHLINE. Ywen, son of Donald. Paisley Charters. No. 2.
- OCHILTREE. Philip de Colville. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 397.
- PRESTWICK. Arnald. Paisley Charters. No. 2.
- ST. QUIVOX. Hugh Janitoris. Paisley Charters. Page 227.
- SYMINGTON. Simon Loccart. Paisley Charters. No. 2.
- TARBOLTON. Adam, son of Gilbert. Memorials of Montgomeries. I. Page 18.

Vassals in Carrick.

- CARMICHAEL. John de Gemilston. R. M. S. (1306-1424). No. 20.
- DUNDUFF. Walter Champenais. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 191.
- GREENAN. Roger de Scalebroc. Melrose Muniments. I. Nos. 33, 34.
- GREENAN. Henry, son of Thurston. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 33.
- GREENAN. Roderick Mac Gillescop. Melrose Muniments. I. No. 36.

As these vassals spread over the shire into their centres of authority, they had of necessity to set up residence. A fortified dwelling was a *sine qua non* of such a military system, but it was too early for any castle except the primitive mote-and-bailey type. Where then did these rulers live?

It is reasonably certain that hill-top forts, mottes, and crannogs provided accommodation for the newcomers. Greenan Castle was sited on an old fort.²³ "The feudal castle of De Ros at Dunlop probably occupied the site of a more ancient fort of Celtic origin."²⁴

On Caerwinning Hill there is a multivallate fort which has kept its old Gaelic name.²⁵ In Dailly parish is the remnant of a huge encampment bearing the name of Maxwellton.²⁶

Such enclosures, surrounded by a fence or a wall called *l'enclos*, bore in Lowland Scots vernacular the name of "ton." Ayrshire has many such, e.g., Riccarton, Symonton, Eglinton, Boydston, Shewalton, Lambrochton and Galston.

Mottes were a similar type of fortified structure, as has been shown by excavations at the Mote of Urr.²⁷

Ayrshire had many of these mottes and well-known survivals were at Dalry, Beith, Largs, Dalmellington and Ochiltree.

Crannog-type dwellings were at Kilbirnie, Lochlee, Buston and Lindston, while Martnaham Loch was inhabited till the 16th century.²⁸

The naming of such residences shows two modes. The old site-name in Gaelic could be retained as at Craigie, Caerwinning, and Dundonald. Alternatively the residence could develop a new appellation ending in the suffix "ton." In such cases the first part of the word showed either the proprietor's name, as at Riccarton, Symonton and Shewalton, or described the location as at Bogton, Milton and Brigton.

Scribally all dwellings of whichever nomenclature were called "vills." Lawrie's *Early Charters* make this abundantly clear with references to such places as "villa que vocatur Karkarevil," "villam nostram de Pittendreich," "villa que dicitur Nesbit,"

(23) Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire. Smith. Page 182.

(24) Archaeological Collections of Ayr and Wigtown. IV. Page 27.

(25) Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire. Smith. Page 68.

(26) Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire. Smith. Page 205.

(27) Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, 1950-51. Page 167.

(28) Gavin Ros Protocols. No. 649. April, 1523.

"The principal mansion of Martnaham situated in the lake."

and "villa de Middleham," all of which show a retention of names of the old order. In Ayrshire we find a similar usage in "villa de Are,"²⁹ "villa de Giffin,"³⁰ and "villa de Kilmaurs."³¹

Dwelling-names suffixed by "ton" are referred to in the same fashion. In Lawrie we find "villa de Haddington," "villa de Sprouston," "villa de Leving" (Levingston), and "villa Filie Sadin" (Shettleston), while Ayrshire has "villa Symonis de Kyle,"³² "villa Stephani,"³³ and "villa de Stewardton,"³⁴ which are Symonton, Stevenston and Stewarton.

THE ORIGIN OF PARISHES.

Such villas were residences surrounded by a defined area of jurisdiction. Once a vill had been established there was around it a specified area of land which came under the authority of the lord who held the vill. Such villas play a dominant part in the erection of parishes.

From the earliest recorded times we find churches attached to villas. Lawrie records for the year 1114 A.D. a "villam que vocatur Karkarevil et ecclesiam ejusdem villae,"³⁵ and "ecclesia ville Thancardi que dicitur Woodkirk."³⁶ Similarly in Ayrshire we find "ecclesia de terra mea in Kyle,"³⁷ and we know that the land referred to was Craigie.

Not only did each vill have a church but provision had been made for its maintenance by the setting aside of lands, pasturage and teinds. About 1177 Peter of Pollok gave Mearns Kirk to the monks of Paisley "cum terris et decimis, pratis et pascuis et omnibus asiamentis que ad ipsam ecclesiam juste pertinere debent."³⁸ Such alienations of churches prove that the vill-holder considered that the church of his vill was his property, and additional proof of this is seen in such a references as "in eadem villa illam carucatam terrae quam Nicholaus, clericus meus, de me habuit et tenuit."³⁹

It is probable that the civil jurisdiction of each vill coincided with the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of its church. As a fuller parochial organisation was developed the churches of the major villas would become parish churches, the status of the lord providing the

deciding factor. In an area of many villas that which held the residence of the chief vassal would provide the parochial church, the other churches remaining as chapels of this mother church. Such an arrangement is seen in "the Church at Dundonald, with its chapels of Riccarton and Crosbie" given to the Gilbertines in 1208 by Walter Fitz Alan of Dundonald.⁴⁰

There is a possibility that most parishes had this feature of a mother-church and subordinate chapels, and references to such a system occur at Colmonell⁴¹ and Maybole.⁴² Such a system would account for the vast extent of many parishes such as Dundonald, which stretches from Kilmarnock to the sea coast at Troon. Subdivision of such huge parochial areas would not be easy, for the vill-owner would resist loss of jurisdiction and of patronage rights. However, in a later process of decentralisation many such chapels did emerge as parish churches, as was the case with Riccarton and Crosby, offshoots of Dundonald, which attained full parochial status long before the Reformation.⁴³ An excellent example of similar subordinate villas rising into parishes occurs outside Ayrshire at a place called Wiston, where two chapels are elevated into parochial churches. The church of Wiston, with its two chapels, one at the "ton" of Robert, the other at the "ton" of John, gives rise to the three parishes of Wiston, Robertson and Crawford John.⁴⁴

The vill system was not possible in all areas. Where a vill was already established its boundaries became the limits of the parish, but where civil jurisdiction had not been defined clearly it was necessary to create a parochial area by perambulating the "divisas." When the Stewart gave to Paisley the church outside the burgh of Prestwick, he gave with it an extent of land which was carefully demarcated by his vassal, Donald, son of Ywen, and the boundaries thus arrived at were explicitly recorded in a charter together with the names of the adjoining proprietors.⁴⁵ When the monks had built a "ton" in their new property the parish took the name of the vill and became to the scribe "villa monachorum" and to the common folk "Monkton."⁴⁶ This transformation of the church of "altera Prestwic" into the parish of Monkton is an ideal example of the creation of an Ayrshire parish. The erection of the enormous parish of Mauchline under the monks from Melrose is not so clearly recorded. Did the Cistercians receive a forested waste with no church of any kind in it? Early at their Mauchline

(29) Charters of Friars Preachers of Ayr. No. 7.

(30) Liber de Dryburgh. No. 226.

(31) Liber de Calchou. I. No. 285.

(32) Paisley Charters. Page 70.

(33) Kilwinning Charters. No. 1.

(34) Paisley Charters. Page 380.

(35) Early Charters. Lawrie. No. LII.

(36) Liber de Calchou. Page 229.

(37) Paisley Charters. Page 231.

(38) Paisley Charters. Page 98.

(39) Early Charters. Lawrie. No. CCXVIII.

(40) Paisley Charters. Page 22.

(41) Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis. Page 19.

(42) Carte Monialium de North Berwick. No. 13.

(43) In parrochia de Riccarton. Kyle-Stewart. R.M.S. (1424-1515). No. 144. Year 1481.

See also Gavin Ros Protocols. No. 528. 1521.

Parish Church of Crosbie, 1520. Gavin Ros Protocols. No. 423.

(44) Origines Parochiales Scotiae. I. Page XXVIII.

(45) Paisley Charters. Page 5.

(46) Paisley Charters. Page 410.

headquarters the monks set up a church dedicated to St. Michael.⁴⁷ Later this became the baptismal church of all their domains.⁴⁸ But in between these two events Melrose had purchased the teind rights of their Bare Moor from a certain A . . . , who was rector of Ballinclog.⁴⁹ Was Ballinclog a pre-existing church in this area? If so, where was Ballinclog? Is it represented to-day by Auchencloich or Clogston or Barcleuch? If the priest called A . . . was indeed the rector of a local church, then the existence of a rectory proves that Mauchline area already had a parish before the district was donated to Melrose.

A further problem is presented by the parish of Kirkmichael in Carrick. It has been said that this parish emerged from the clan territory of Muntercasduf.⁵⁰ Even if this is the case it is evident that the clan was centred on the vill of Kirkmichael, so that the process of erection is not really exceptional.

It is to be noted that parishes evolved in a process of time and not in one grand multiple genesis. The shire did not in one movement develop all its parishes under some master plan of subdivision devised by a planning expert of early feudal times. When the need arose a parish was created. Each parish will have its own peculiar origin and history. Some origins are evident—Monkton was created for the monks, Ayr originated automatically in the erection of the burgh in 1203, and Symonton grew out of the vill of Simon Loccart. Other beginnings appear completely lost, because of missing records—Dalrymple, Dalmellington, Cumnock, Coylton and many others are not documented until long after the process of parish formation is complete.

THE NAMES OF THE PARISHES.

You can divide the parishes of Ayrshire into three groups, according to their nomenclature. Group "A" contains names prefixed by "kil" or "kirk." Group "B" contains names with the suffix "ton." Group "C" contains the remainder.

Cuninghame.

Group "A."	Group "B."	Group "C."
Kilbirnie.	Pierston.	Ardrossan.
Kilbride.	Stevenston.	Beith.
Kilmarnock.	Stewarton.	Dalry.
Kilmaurs.		Dreghorn.
Kilwinning.		Dunlop.
		Irvine.
		Largs.
		Loudoun.

(47) *Munimenta de Melros.* I. No. 73.

(48) *Munimenta de Melros* II. No. 407.

(49) *Munimenta de Melros.* I. No. 226.

(50) *Historical MSS. Commission V.* Page 613.

Kyle.

Group "A."	Group "B."	Group "C."
None.	Coylton.	Alloway.
	Dalmellington.	Auchinleck.
	Galston.	Ayr.
	Monkton.	Barnweill.
	*Riccarton.	Craigie.
	Symington.	*Crosbie.
	Tarbolton.	Cumnock.
		Dalrymple.
		Mauchline.
		Ochiltree.
		Prestwick.

Carrick.

Group "A."	Group "B."	Group "C."
Kirkbride.	Straiton.	Dailly.
Kirk-Colmanel.		Girvan.
Kirkcudbright-Innertig.		Maybole.
Kirkmichael.		Turnberry.

* Chapels which developed into parish churches.

Since parishes grew out of vills it is easy to explain Group "B" and Group "C." Group "A" presents a problem, for the prefix "Kil" denotes a church and not a dwelling-place. Kilwinning parish obviously took its name from a church dedicated in Celtic times to St. Winning. Why was this Celtic dedication carried on into the feudal period? Does it break the rule that parishes were named from vills?

To get an adequate explanation of questions raised by these "Kil" churches, it is necessary to investigate the church in Ayrshire, which was re-organised when feudal parishes were set up.

What do we know of the pre-feudal church in the shire of Ayr? Most of our knowledge comes from legends, martyrologies and archaeological finds.

Archaeological evidence—not yet fully interpreted—gives witness of many religious places in the shire. If Celtic crosses indicate ecclesiastical sites, Ayr is not lacking in examples. In 1907 at the renovation of the old graveyard of St. Cuthbert's in Girvan "an upper middle portion of a Celtic cross" was uncovered. It is similar to a cross preserved at Durham which is ascribed to the year 698.⁵¹

(51) *Proceedings of Soc. of Antiquaries (Scot.),* 1912-13. Page 174.

In 1928, within the grounds of Cambusdoon School, adjoining the burial-ground of Alloway Kirk, there was unearthed a slab of sandstone bearing a beautiful equal-armed cross, typical of a class of monuments found within the sphere of influence of the Ninianic Church, which supposes a date of about 450 A.D.⁵²

In 1925 a fragment of a tenth-century cross was found at Fardenreoch Farm in Colmonell.⁵³

Kilbirnie churchyard has ancient cross-marked stones.⁵⁴

About 1928, remnants of an old Celtic cross were retrieved at Kirkbride in Carrick.⁵⁵

Excavations at the site of the old chapel at Machar-a-Kill, near Kilkerran, revealed stones bearing Christian markings.⁵⁶

Probably before the agrarian revolution there were many more examples, and it is possible that an increased interest in excavation may lead to the finding of many more. From such discoveries it can safely be inferred that Ayrshire had many sacred places before the idea of parochial arrangement had been born. Were these holy places churches? It would seem so in many cases, for in Bute similar stone crosses can be associated with little stone churches called "Kills."

Burials in stone coffins may also indicate Christian sites. They are not uncommon in the county. A large stone coffin found at Fail in 1852 is said to belong to mediaeval times,⁵⁷ although stone coffins were in use as early as 687 A.D.⁵⁸ About 1880, "human bodies enclosed in coffins made of flagstones and lying at full length with the feet pointing eastward" were found near West Kilbride Church.⁵⁹ When excavations were carried out at St. John's, Ayr, "a stone coffin and several incised and very beautiful slabstones were found."⁶⁰ The index to Smith's *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire* contains many references to stone coffins, but it is not clear if they are of Christian type. From such memorials in stone we may at least deduce that Ayrshire had many pre-feudal churches.

The same conclusion is offered by a study of place-names in the shire. In every parish in our county appear names bearing a dedication to a saint. Too much and too little has been built on

(52) Archaeological Light on Early C. Knight. I. Page 205.

(53) Society of Antiq. (Scot.), 1925-26. Page 26.

(54) Arch. Collections of Ayr and Wigtown. II. Page 130.

(55) Soc. of Antiq. (Scot.), 1927-28. Page 127.

(56) Arch. Collections of Ayr and Wigtown. III.

(57) Collections of Ayrshire Arch. Society, 1947-49. Page 137.

(58) Bute in the Olden Times. J. K. Hewison. I. Page 189.

(59) Arch. Collections of Ayr and Wigtown. III. Page 60.

(60) Scottish Ecclesiastical Society Transactions, 1911-12. Page 335.

such shaky foundations. The extremist would have nearly every saint that came out of Ireland personally building cells in our district. The scoffer dismisses all such pious activities as mediaeval concoctions "as utterly impossible and absurd as the mind of man could conceive."⁶¹ It is not necessary to hold belief in a saint personally present to explain churches bearing his name. To dismiss the names as absurdities is to go, not only against the traditions and legends unchanging for centuries, but against indisputable evidence afforded by modern research. The excavations at Chapel-Finnian have proved the existence of a small Celtic church,⁶² and many "kil" prefixed names in Ayrshire have chapel ruins in their locality. The connexion between a "kil" dedication and an actual church is to be seen in Paisley Charters of the thirteenth century dealing with Gaelic areas. In 1230 appears "illam nummatam de Kilmor cum capella Sancte Marie in eadem terra fundata,"⁶³ in 1253 "ecclesiam Sancti Finnani que vulgariter appellatur Kylinan,"⁶⁴ and in 1269 "Sancti Querani in Kentire que Kilkerran appellatur."⁶⁵

As a very minimum we must believe that in many cases such "kil" dedications are indicative of actual churches. So from the evidence of stone crosses, coffins and little churches, and of place-names still existing or recorded in early charters, it can be shown that in pre-feudal times Ayrshire had many churches whose names were prefixed by "kil."

From evidence of stones and place-names it has been shown that Ayrshire had many churches. The following list is not exhaustive nor does it attempt to identify the saints commemorated, but each name has been carefully checked:—Kilbirnie, Kilbride, Kirkbride, Killibenath, Kirkenbreth, Kirkcudbright, Kilquhonell, Kilcrene, Kilcaffy, Kirkdomine, Kildon, Kildonan, Kilellie, Colennan, Kilfeather, Kilfene, Kilgrane, Kilgallioch, Kilgrossan, Kilhenzie, Kilkerran, Killoch, Killochan, Kilmarnock, Kilmaurs, Kirkmichael, Kilmannach, Kilmark, Kilmore, Kilmechannache, Kil-saint-Ninian, Kylynekelly, Kirkoswald, Kirkpatrick, Kilruskan, Killintringan, Killumquhan, Kilwinning.

The organisation of the chapels represented by such names is unknown. It may be that there was a connexion with Iona as was the case in Galloway, where Holyrood of Edinburgh received "ecclesias sive capellas in Galweia que ad jus abbatie de Hii Columchille pertinent."⁶⁶ Whatever the ecclesiastical organisation, it was all assimilated into the new format desired by the feudalisers, and in the process some, and only some, became parish churches. In such cases the name of the parish was taken from the name of

(61) Carrick Gallovidian. K. McDowall. Page 51.

(62) Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, 1949-50. R. Radford. Page 28.

(63) Paisley Charters. Page 132.

(64) Ibid. Page 135.

(65) Ibid. Page 136.

(66) Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis. No. 51.

the church and not from the name of the manor, which seems a breach of the rule that parish names develop from vills or dwelling-places. But there may be an explanation to show that this is not the case. I believe those that emerged as parochial centres did so because they were at the focal points of the vills of which they became principal churches, so that the name could refer to either vill or church. If the church was inside, or adjacent to, the fortified dwelling a parochial name beginning with "Kil" is possible.

Such a contiguity of residence and chapel is very probable. Bede, under the year 651, describes how Bishop Aidan "was in the royal vill not far from the town of Bamborough . . . for having in this vill a church and a bed-chamber, he had been accustomed very often to turn aside and stay there and to go out in all directions to preach God. And this he used to do also in other royal vills."⁶⁷

The tradition of St. Medana upholds this view, for her churches were planted at fortified sites such as Dundonald and Stirling.⁶⁸

Early castles continued the practice of having a chapel near at hand as can be proved from the following references:—

- 1127—"Ecclesia sancti Cuthberti juxta castellum."⁶⁹
- 1128—"St. John's Church in the Castle of Roxburgh."⁷⁰
- 1147—"Chapel in the Castle of Stirling."⁷¹
- 1261—"Capella Sancti Columbe que sita est juxta castrum meum de Schepehinche."⁷²

It may be that all early churches were situated close to a fortified hill. In many cases monastic settlements were set within the ramparts of a fort,⁷³ and churches were often positioned near the summits of hills.⁷⁴ At Lochwinnoch in 1177 there was a hill-fort next to the site of an old chapel.⁷⁵ In Ayrshire the old church of Ardrossan stood on the castle hill;⁷⁶ Kilwinning church was near to Caerwinning Fort;⁷⁷ West Kilbride church was "a parochial kirk near to which anciently was there a strong fort."⁷⁸ Thus if you have a hill on which there are a dwelling and a church, the vill may be described by the church and may bear a "kil" name.

Language factors may have contributed to the process. Prefixes such as Kil, Kirk and Caer are very similar in sound;

(67) *Historia Ecclesiastica*. III. I. Pages 159-160.

(68) *Vita S. Modwenna* by Conchubranus.

(69) *Early Charters*. Lawrie. LXXXII.

(70) *Ibid.* LXXXIII.

(71) *Ibid.* CLXXXII.

(72) *Paisley Charters*. Page 120.

(73) *Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, 1948-49*. R. Radford. Page 122.

(74) *Ibid.* Page 118.

(75) *Paisley Charters*. Page 48.

(76) *Cuninghame*. Timothy Pont. Page 10.

(77) *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire*. Smith. Page 68.

(78) *Cuninghame*. Timothy Pont. Page 19.

they are apt to be confused, may even become interchangeable. Smith states that Kirkhill Fort may be a corruption of Caer Hill.⁷⁹ Kilwinning is near Caerwinning. Kirkbride is often Kilbride.⁸⁰ Kilmichael of the Great Seal Register of 1548 is Kirkmichael of Bagimont's Roll, while locally it is still Carmichael. In the fourteenth century William de Knokoswald is also designated William Kirkoswald,⁸¹ and Nicol Knokdolian is also Nicol Kirkdolian.⁸² The same interchangeability is seen in the yielding of the old Castle Donan to the modern Kildonan.⁸³

To sum up, parishes were based upon vills. Some vills bore the new proprietor's name with "ton" affixed. Other vills retained the old Gaelic place names, some of which were really church names.

Consideration of parish churches is incomplete without further study on what happened to the remaining chapels which did not achieve parochial status. This has, to my knowledge, never been the subject of careful research, so it is only possible to outline the main changes.

The setting up of the parochial system caused Celtic chapels to be:—

- (a) Retained as parish churches and rebuilt in Romanesque style.
- (b) Suppressed and the church lands secularised.
- (c) Suppressed and the church lands given to a religious order.
- (d) Transformed into hospitals, etc.
- (e) Maintained as outlying chapels of ease.

Examples of each type are easily found in Ayrshire. Type (a) was the pattern for all parish churches. An evident case of type (b) is at the mansion of St. Bride's Kirk in Irvine. The donations of Kirkbride in Carrick to the North Berwick nuns, of St. Bride's Chapel at Giffen to Dryburgh Abbey, and of Kildonan in Carrick to the monks of Saddle in Kintyre belong to the (c) group. It is hard to find information for group (d), but Kilcase and St. Leonard's seem probable examples. Members of the last group may be much more numerous than has hitherto been suspected.

The whole subject has been neglected and requires research, for the history of the church in Scotland can never be adequately written until this bridge-period, where Celtic church passed over into feudal church, has been sufficiently explored.

(79) *Prehistoric Man in Ayrshire*. Smith. Page 198.

(80) *Carte Monialium de North Berwick*. No. 2. Page 31.

(81) *R.M.S. (1306-1424)*. Index.

(82) *R.M.S. (1306-1424)*. App. II. No. 336.

(83) You find many similar examples in *R.M.S., e.g., Kilcase for Kincase*. *R.M.S. (1424-1515)*. No. 528. *Kirkbrek for Knokbrek*. *R.M.S. (1580-93)*. No. 2263.

THE DIOCESE.

In the diocesan organisation set up by the feudalisers all parishes were grouped into deaneries. Ayrshire churches were allocated to the diocese of Glasgow, and the three deaneries of Cuninghame, Kyle and Carrick were based on the old tripartite division of the shire. There is much political history underlying this arrangement of dioceses. The first "bishopric" in Scotland had been at Candida Casa, and the shrine of St. Ninian there was the most popular place of pilgrimage in Scotland. Why then did Galloway not become the chief bishopric of western Scotland? and why did the shire of Ayr not fall within the see of Whithorn? The answers appear to lie in the political position of Galloway at the time when dioceses were being created.

The bishopric set up by St. Ninian had faded, had re-emerged as a Northumbrian see from 731 until 802, and had faded again during the Viking occupation which lasted till about the beginning of the 12th century.

During this last period the Canmore dynasty had been intent on the business of making Scotland into a feudal kingdom, and as yet Galloway remained independent and resistant.

The Scots kings were engaged in a grim contest with England for jurisdiction of the debatable border areas. No less grim was the struggle with the papacy, for the Roman pontiff was hard to convince that Scotland was an independent unit, and in 1119 had demonstrated his belief by declaring that all the Scottish bishops were suffragans of York.⁽⁸⁴⁾ The dioceses erected by King David showed a "concurrence of pious and political ends."⁽⁸⁵⁾ When he revived the ancient non-feudal diocese of Glasgow—supposedly based on the old Cumbrian kingdom—it is probable that he intended it as an ecclesiastical bulwark against English claims, and in this he was abetted ably by Bishop John.

Meanwhile Galloway deliberately remained apart. The old Northumbrian see was revived and the first prelate of the new succession was instructed by Pope Honorius to seek consecration from the Archbishop of York. He was thus consecrated about 1128. It was evident that Galloway did not consider itself part of Scotland and when in 1155 Pope Adrian IV. ordered all the Scots bishops to accept Archbishop Roger of York as their metropolitan, Galloway alone obeyed the mandate.⁽⁸⁶⁾ It would have been political folly to add deaneries to this pro-English diocese, and so when Carrick was created an earldom in 1186 it was allied to the

shire of Ayr and became a deanery in the diocese of Glasgow. In 1188 Pope Clement decided that Scotland, now a kingdom, should have its national church free from English domination.⁽⁸⁷⁾ In 1225 Pope Honorius gave the Scots church the right to hold its own provincial councils, so that now Scotland had a fully independent national church.

But Galloway stayed outside the fold, considering itself as under English ecclesiastical jurisdiction and having its bishops consecrated at York until 1355. Increasing Papal centralisation, and the Great Schism of 1378-1418, helped to break this Anglic connexion "and there is no evidence that any bishop after Michael (1355-59) gave formal obedience to York."⁽⁸⁸⁾

Gradually Galloway diocese came under Scottish control and in 1472, when St. Andrews was created an archbishopric, Whithorn was included in its province. Finally, in 1492, the see of Glasgow attained archiepiscopal rank and Whithorn was transferred to its jurisdiction.

The struggle outlined above had a marked effect on the ecclesiastical development of Ayrshire. The county was attached to the cathedral of Glasgow; many Ayrshire church revenues went towards the maintenance of it; many Ayrshire priests played a prominent part in the Glasgow chapter; and many Ayrshire donations went to the foundation of altars in Glasgow's major church.

On the other hand the bishopric of Candida Casa played a minor part in the religious history of the county. There was only one major donation to it, the parish of Kirkmichael.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Indeed, the existence of Galloway diocese can be ignored in Ayrshire history until the days of the Chapel Royal of Stirling.

The diocese of Glasgow, which contained Ayrshire, was of enormous extent. For purposes of jurisdiction it was subdivided into two archdeaconries containing rural deaneries arranged in the following manner:—

Archdeaconry of Glasgow Proper.

Rural Deanery of Rutherglen.		
"	"	" Lennox.
"	"	" Lanark.
"	"	" Kyle.
"	"	" Cuninghame.
"	"	" Carrick.

(87) Benedict of Peterborough. II. Pages 234-235.

(88) Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, 1948-49. Gordon Donaldson. Page 133.

(89) R.M.S. (1306-1424). No. 20.

(84) Raine's York. III. Pages 40-41.

(85) The Scottish Burghs. W. Mackay Mackenzie. Page 55.

(86) Haddan and Stubbs. Councils. II. Pages 231-232.

Archdeaconry of Teviotdale.

Rural Deanery of Teviotdale.		
"	"	" Peebles.
"	"	" Nithsdale.
"	"	" Annandale. ⁹⁰

It will be noted that the allocation of deaneries took cognisance of the three subdivisions of Ayrshire, Kyle, Carrick and Cunninghame. It is common practice among Ayrshire's historians to allocate only two deaneries to the shire, and to combine Kyle and Cunninghame. This seems to be a mistake and may arise from an entry in the Glasgow Registers on page lxxi, where Kyle and Cunninghame are shown together for purposes of taxation. Cosmo Innes repeats the combination in *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, and local historians follow suit.

But a careful study of appropriate charters will reveal three separate deaneries. A document of 1342 shows compts for the deaneries. It separates Carrick (£28 16/-), Cunninghame (£65 17s 4d) and Kyle (£16 18s 8d).⁹¹

A Crossraguel charter of 1547 shows a similar separation of the deaneries and lists the deans:—

Dean of Kyle	John Layng.
Dean of Carrick	John Campbell.
Dean of Cunninghame	Lambert Blair. ⁹²

From such evidence it seems obvious that the ecclesiastical organisation did follow the ancient tripartite division of the shire.

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ADDENDUM.

For further study of parochial origins reference may be necessary to similar findings outwith the shire of Ayr. Many investigations have been going on in various parts of Scotland, and the conclusions arrived at thereby confirm the finding of the above essay.

Two examples may help to illustrate this. R. C. Reid, writing of Minigaff, says:—"Here we find both church and fortress on the

summit of a hill and the village below. Here, too, we have the true parochial origins of Norman times. Within one hundred yards of this ruin is a mote, the sure hall-mark of the Norman settler. Close to it, sheltering as it were in its strength, we would expect its occupant to have a chapel, rude and simple perhaps, but yet the rudimentary beginnings of what was later to be founded and endowed by him or his descendants as a parish church. For such were our parochial origins."⁹³

Dr. W. D. Simpson finds the same phenomenon at Mortham in East Lothian. "Here we have a distinct case, as at Coull, of a parish formed out of the manor of an immigrant Norman baron, its castle and church standing side by side as the civil and ecclesiastical centre of the parish."⁹⁴

(93) Dumfries and Galloway Transactions, 1924-25. Page 246.

(94) Proc. of Society of Antiquaries (Scot.), 1923-24. Page 370.

(90) Scotland in the Middle Ages. Cosmo Innes. Page 30.

(91) Reg. Ep. Glasg. No. 288.

(92) Crossraguel Charters. I. Pages 109-112.