

Limerick and Killaloe

AN ANCIENT BOUNDARY PROBLEM

THE boundaries of Limerick diocese were set out 850 years ago, and they correspond with the present limits at all points except possibly one. Rath Breasail began its meandering where the Mulcair enters the Shannon, and continued clockwise past natural features and ancient sanctuaries like Loughgur, Ardpatrick, the Ballyhouras, Tullil-ease, the Feale and back to the Shannon at Tarbert. Then the river is crossed and three places are named on the frontier with Thomond, namely Cuinche, Crosa at Sliabh Uidhe an Rí, and Dubh-abha. The latter two names raise no problem. The King's Grave is beside Glen na gCros which is still a border townland, and the Clare Blackwater remains the approximate boundary between Parteen and Clonlara.

But what of Cuinche? Is it really Quin, seven miles away to the N.W. from the nearest point of the present border on the Bunratty river at Sixmilebridge? Quin indeed does appear as Cuinche in Annal entries and in the Saga of Turlough O'Brien from early medieval times. But was there another Cuinche? The diocesan boundaries south of the Shannon begin and end on the river in the Rath Breasail enumeration. On the Thomond side the last named boundary is the Blackwater, which enters the Shannon almost opposite the Mulcair. Was there a Cuinche on the Shannon too? So it would seem.

Colgan published a Latin Life of Saint Ciaran of Saigir in the 17th century, and further Irish and Latin lives of Ciaran have been edited in recent times by Plummer. The narrative mentions frequent visits of the saint to his foster-mother, Coca, at her nunnery in Ros Bennchair. The story goes on to mention a rocky islet in the tideway south of Ros where the holy woman loved to retire for meditation. An Irish Life has this to say of the rocky hermitage among the waves: "and it is still called Cuinche Rock (*gonad carraic Chuinchi a hainm osin bheos*)."

Was Ros Beanncahir the present Rossmanagher which adjoins Bunratty to the north and has for its eastern boundary the Bunratty river which is tidal to this point? Archdall lists Ros B. under Co. Clare but adds "now wholly unknown". The Ordnance Survey Letters quote Colgan and discuss the possibility that it may be Rossmanagher though "it is strange that no tradition connected with it can be found in the locality". The *Onomasticon* holds that Rossmanager is the site: so does Plummer in his place-name index. There is a mound and a *cillin* amid whitethorns 600 yards north from Rossmanagher Castle to the west of a laneway leading from the castle. Saint Coca appears in the Martyrology of Donegal under June 29th; she is also mentioned in a Life of Saint Finbarr.

Two miles south of Rossmanagher the Bunratty (Uí Cearnaig) River—a mile wide at its exit—enters the Shannon estuary. Across the mouth of the tributary stand Quay Island, Little Quay Island, Bird Rock and various rocks and islets now nameless. Perhaps one of them is the Cuinche of St. Coca's devotions. If so it stands on the lower course of the Bunratty River, an age-old boundary between Killaloe and Limerick dioceses.

M.M.

Limerick Made Silver

The Church of Waterville, Co. Kerry, possesses a handsome mid-eighteenth century chalice and paten, bearing the words "STERLING," together with maker's mark of a lion rampant flanked by the letters "I. I." These pieces were made by Joseph Johns, who was noted by Westropp in this Journal to have been a silversmith of Limerick, and Mayor in 1773.

The Waterville plate has an inscription which shows that it had originally belonged to Killeely Church in Limerick city, no doubt being transferred when this Church was closed.

"Francis Pierpoint Burton Esq. to the Church of Killeely," above the Burton crest, a gauntlet proper out of a ducal crown.

I am indebted to the late Mr. J. Hyde ffolliott for the following notes about the donor and the Church of Killeely:

'Killeely Church near Meelick appears to have been built as a private Church during the second half of the eighteenth century. It was erected by Elizabeth (nee Clements) wife of Francis Pierpoint Burton whom she married on the 19th. March 1750. She died in 1814.

Francis Pierpoint Burton of Buncraggy, Co. Clare (near Ennis) was the eldest son of the Rt. Hon. Francis Burton of Buncraggy M.P. and Mary, daughter of Henry Conyngham M.P. for Co. Donegal.

Francis Pierpoint Burton was M.P. for Co. Clare in 1761 and he died the 22nd. May 1787. He succeeded his maternal uncle as second Baron Conyngham of Mount Charles, Co. Donegal on the 2nd. April 1781. His wife Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of the Rt. Hon. Nathaniel Clements, M.P. for Co. Cavan and sister of the first Lord Leitrim.'

ROBERT LIMERICK

CORRIGENDA

The references to the Mungret Hoard in *NMAJ* vol. VIII (1958-1961) p. 131 should read :

Lindsay (H) p. 125 ; Memorials of Adare Manor, (1865), pp. 150-151 ; *NMAJ*, N.S. vol. ii (1940-1941), p. 86 ; *NMAJ*, N.S. vol. VIII (1958-1961), pp. 116-133 & 205.

Mr. Dolley also points out that there is a seventeenth hoard from Great Britain and Ireland to contain Viking-age ingots and coins, the 1855 find from Scotby in Cumberland which appears to have been concealed c. 935. In Mr. J.D.A. Thompson's *Inventory* pp. 119 and 120 there is no mention of objects other than coins but see *Victoria County History of Cumberland*. vol. I, p. 282. The ingots are not described but may be assumed to be of types A and B at least.

Consequently in the table on p. 128 there should be intercalated between the finds from Co. Dublin and from Skye the following entry :

c. 935 Scotby^{33a}(B)

A/S ? ?

and the following footnote added :

^{33a} *Inventory* 324 but the ten or twelve ingots are not there mentioned (cf. *VCH* Cumberland I, p. 282).

