

I.

NOTES ON THE TRUE DATE OF THE OCTOBER FESTIVAL OF ST
 REGULUS OF ST ANDREWS, AS BEARING ON THE SUGGESTED
 IDENTIFICATION OF ST REGULUS AND THE IRISH ST RIAGHAIL.
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In a paper read before this Society on June 10, 1861 (*Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. iv. pp. 300–321), the late Mr W. F. Skene, when treating of the suggested identification of the Scottish St Regulus with the Irish St Riaghail, lays stress on the fact that the festivals of these two Saints came within a day of one another in the Scottish and Irish calendars.

Dr Reeves, again, in his well-known essay *On the Culdees* (p. 34) which was published in 1864, remarks that Regulus “appears in Scotch calendars at the 17th of October, and is conjectured to be the same as one [*i.e.* the Irish] Riaghail of Muicinis, who is commemorated with us [*i.e.* in Ireland] on the preceding day.”

Mr Skene, in his last important work, *Celtic Scotland* (ii. 267–8, 2nd edition, 1887) repeats the same statement. Riaghail “appears in the old Irish martyrologies on the 16th day of October. . . . Regulus of St Andrews, however, is commemorated in the Scottish calendar (*sic*) on the 17th of the same month.” And he then goes on, with much confidence, to explain this difference of dates. “We find,” he writes, “that there is usually a confusion in the celebrations on these two days, when the 16th day of the month is also the 17th day before the kalends of the next month.” And he illustrates his statement as to this *usual* confusion by a single example, upon which I shall afterwards have a word to say.

Now, I would first observe that a confusion between the 16th and the 17th of a month, arising from the mediæval calendars ordinarily exhibiting dates according to the old Roman method,¹ is much more likely to occur to a writer in the nineteenth century, who was not

¹ The double method, it may be observed, will be found in the standard copies (the ‘Sealed Books’) of the present book of Common Prayer of the Church of England.

accustomed to the daily use of the Roman method, than to the mediæval ecclesiastics, who were thoroughly familiar with it, and used it every day of their lives.

But my object in making this communication to the Society is to point out that there is no need of any conjectural explanations, ingenious or otherwise, of how the confusion originated, since, as a matter of fact, no confusion exists, except what has been imported into the question. Mr Skene was probably misled by simply looking at the Calendar of the Aberdeen Breviary, which a few years before his communication to the Society had been made known to scholars generally in the beautiful reprint issued (1854) for the members of the *Bannatyne* and *Maitland Clubs*.¹ In that calendar we find, under the month of October, for the 15th, 16th, and 17th days,²

A. Idibus.

b. xvii. Novembris Michaelis de mōte tūba ix. l. Colmani.

c. xvi. kl. Reguli ab. ix. l. nisi fact fue in qdra (ēpi. ix. l.

But when we turn from the Calendar to the place in the Breviary where we should look for the office for the October festival of S. Regulus, all is at once made plain. The rubric at that place declares that the day of St Regulus is the same day as that of St Colman and of St Michael in Monte Tumba, but that the office was in Aberdeen to be "deferred" to the "morrow" of the 16th. This was according to a well known practice of the Mediæval Church. When two or more festivals happened to fall upon the same day, it was the practice to celebrate only one, and to "defer" the other, or others, to a different day or days. The more important festival holds its proper place; the less important is celebrated on another occasion. Now, at Aberdeen (at least in the time of Bishop Elphinstone, who was responsible for the issue of the Aberdeen Breviary printed by Chepman, which is now in our hands), the festival of St Michael the Archangel in Monte Tumba, commemorating a supposed appearance of the Archangel to Bishop

¹ Or by a reference to T. Dempster's *Menologium Scoticum* (1622), or Adam King's *Ane Kallendar Perpetuale* (1588).

² The words *Michaelis de monte tumba* are in red letter, indicating their importance

Autbert in Normandy at, as it would seem, the remarkable rocky eminence now known as Mont St Michel, was reckoned a day of such importance that it is marked in red letter in the Calendar, and causes the deferring of the festivals of Colman and Regulus.¹

This is only one illustration out of hundreds of the influence of the English Service-books, and more particularly those of Sarum (all naturally affected by Norman thought and feeling), upon the devotional system of the Mediæval Scottish Church.

From what has been said, it will be seen that Mr Skene would have been both saved from attributing an extraordinary piece of stupidity to the Scottish mediæval ecclesiastics, and from propounding his own very unsatisfactory attempt to account for it, and also would have been able to have greatly strengthened his case for the identity of St Regulus and St Riaghail, had he thought of referring from the Calendar to the Breviary Offices for the October Festival of St Regulus.

2. It seems as if Mr Skene, in preparing his *Celtic Scotland*, had relied merely upon his earlier inquiries, as detailed in his communication to this Society. He still speaks of "the Scottish Calendar," as if there were only one calendar, while in the mediæval period not only every diocese, but even many an important church would, under certain restrictions, possess its own list of commemorations and festal observances. Bishop A. P. Forbes' *Kalendars of Scottish Saints* was published in 1872, and contained, beside the Calendar of the Aberdeen Breviary, several other important calendars, drawn mainly from manuscript sources. Among these is an interesting calendar said to belong to Ferne in Ross (*Nova Farina*). The manuscript, which Bishop Forbes had not the advantage of himself examining, was (1872) in the possession of the Duke of Sutherland at Dunrobin Castle. It certainly deserves a more careful study than has yet been afforded it. But the point of interest in our present inquiry is that "Regulus Confessor" appears on the 16th of October. The Feast of St Michael in Monte Tumba not being entered at this date in this calendar, there was no need to defer the day, as in the case of the Aberdeen Breviary.

¹ Mabillon (*An. Ord. S. Benedicti*, ii.) gives the date of this appearance at A.D. 710.

Once again, in vol. ii. p. 256 of the *Proceedings* of this Society will be found Mr Laing's extracts from the Aberdeen Martyrology of the 16th century. There we read:—"xvij Kl. Nouembris. In Scotia Sancti Reguli abbatis apud ecclesiam de Kylrewni." Perhaps it may not be wholly unnecessary to remark that this Martyrology abounds throughout in examples of Scotia being unquestionably used for Scotland—Ybernia being used for Ireland—as indeed we might have inferred from the date of the work, which appeared to have been written in the early part of the sixteenth century. It may suffice to cite in illustration "xiiij Kl. Julij Natalis Sancte Margarite regine Scocie," &c. "Kl. Aprilis in Scotia Sancti Gilberti episcopi apud cathedralem civitatem suam de Dornoch," . . . "cui tunc regum obsequia spernenti nunc non solum reges sed et universale vulgus Britannie et Ybernie peregrinando gracia eiusdem precibus et clarissimis miraculis illuminantur."¹

Such testimonies as have been adduced can leave no doubt that in Scotland the proper day for the October Festival of St Regulus, though not everywhere the day of its actual celebration, was xvii Kal. Nov., *i.e.*, the 16th of October. And whatever weight may be attributed to the identity of the days of St Regulus and St Riaghail, as an argument for the identity of the persons themselves, may now with confidence be accepted.²

Mr Skene, in support of his very bold statement (*Celtic Scotland*, ii. 268) that there is *usually* a confusion of these two days [*i.e.*, the 16th and 17th of a month] when the 16th day of the month is also the 17th day before the Kalends of the next month, cites but one example, upon

¹ The only clear exception to the prevailing use of "Scotia" in the Aberdeen Martyrology is at "xv. Kl. Aprilis. In Scotia natalis Sancti Patricij episcopi et confessoris qui primus ibidem Christum euangelizavit." It looks like an entry from some much earlier source.

² It is scarcely to be expected that when a man of such eminence as the late Mr Skene makes a statement such as we have been considering, other writers should not follow in his track without further examination. And so we have his statement repeated without demur in two recent ecclesiastical histories of Scotland, the *History of the Catholic Church of Scotland*, by Dr A. Bellesheim, translated with notes by Dom Hunter Blair (vol. i. p. 94), and in *The Church of Scotland from its Foundation to the Reign of Malcolm Canmore*, by Rev. James Campbell, D.D., F.S.A., p. 73.

which a few words may be said. But first it may be observed that the coincidence referred to occurs in no less than seven months in the year, that is, in the case of all the months having thirty-one days. So that, if the confusion is usual, we ought to have many examples producible. Mr Skene supplies what he thinks to be one. He writes, "St Patrick is commemorated at Auvergne on the 16th March, while his day in the Irish martyrologies is the 17th of that month." Any weight that attaches to this argument proceeds, of course, on the assumption that the Patricius commemorated at Auvergne was not a different person from the Apostle of Ireland. Dr Todd, in his learned work on *St Patrick, Apostle of Ireland* (p. 305), considers the Patricius of Auvergne was not the great Patricius of Ireland, but Palladius, his unsuccessful predecessor in the work of converting Ireland to Christianity. It would be impossible to discuss on the present occasion the question as to who the Auvergne Patricius really was. But we must remember how common at the time was the name Patricius. Gibbon (*Decline and Fall*, iv. p. 300, edit. Milman and Smith) declares that "the meanest subjects of the Roman empire assumed the illustrious name of Patricius" [*i.e.*, at the close of the 5th century]. And in Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography* we find notices of no less than twelve different persons bearing that name before the time of Charlemagne. There is nothing in the entry in the martyrologies in which the name occurs to suggest that this Patricius was connected with Ireland. And, as we learn from the Bollandists, the learned John Sauaro, who adopts the view that this Patrick and the Irish Patrick are the same, suggests in his *Origines Aruernenses*,¹ as the explanation of the name appearing on the 16th, and not the 17th March, that the name was entered last on the 16th with reference to the vigil of this festival, and that afterwards, by an error *depositio* [*i.e.*, death], was in some copy inserted (Bollandists, *Acta Sanctorum*. Martii, tom. ii. 417). This, too, is mere guesswork, but it is a better guess, it seems to me, than that of Skene. At any rate, the identification of the two Patricks is too doubtful to make this case of any value in support of his contention, which contention we have

¹ I have not been able to consult this work.

already seen is wholly unnecessary in the case of St Regulus and St Riaghail.

Up to this point our inquiry has resulted in establishing on a basis of fact, not of conjecture, the correctness of Mr Skene's suggestion that the Festivals of Regulus of St Andrews and Riaghail of Muicinis fell on the same day of October. But the value of the argument based on this fact for the identification of the two persons so commemorated is considerably diminished, if it be not wholly destroyed, by certain other considerations presented to us on a further study of the mediæval calendars, which I now proceed briefly to notice.

The October Festival of St Regulus was not the only festival of that saint in the Scottish calendars. His name appears also in the Calendar of the Aberdeen Breviary at March 30th (iii., Kl. Aprilis). And the rubric (*Pars Æstiva*, fol. cxxviii.) directs that it is when the spring celebration has not, for certain liturgical reasons, been observed that the October Festival is to be celebrated.¹ It was contrary to liturgical usage to celebrate the festivals of saints in the solemn season overshadowed by the thought of the passion of Christ, or in the season when the thoughts of the faithful were occupied by the joys of the great festival of Christ's resurrection. Our forefathers would not allow any mere human associations, however venerable, to intrude themselves on the more sacred thoughts of the Passion and Easter. Now, the 30th March would necessarily with much frequency fall either within the last two weeks of Lent or in the week following Easter. The direction in such cases was that, except in the churches dedicated to St Regulus, where the rule was not to apply, the festival was to be "transferred" to the "morrow" of St Michael in Monte Tumba. You will observe then that, liturgically considered, the October Festival, when it was observed, was only the Festival of March 30th "transferred." In this connection it may be pointed out that no notice whatever is taken of

¹ The rubric runs, "q̄u in xl [*i.e.*, in Lent] de eo non fuerit servicium;" and the direction is more fully given in the rubric at the Calendar (end of March), "Si festa sanctorum olaui martyris et reguli abbatis infra passionē do. cōtegerit seu oc. pas transferre debent videlz [dies] sancti reguli usque ad crastinum michaelis de monte tumba nisi in ecclesiis de eisdem dedicatis."

the October Festival in the Calendar of the Missal of Arbuthnot, but on March 30 we find "St Regulus, bishop and confessor," as a feast "of nine lessons." This system of transferring a festival, for the reasons assigned, or for similar reasons, could be easily illustrated by other examples. It may suffice to notice that St Olaf, whose day also falls on March 30, was "transferred" by the Aberdeen Breviary, for the same reasons, to the second half of the year, namely, to July 29th. But, further, it was by express rubric permitted by the Aberdeen Breviary to celebrate the Festival of St Regulus, should it in any year fall within the period in spring already referred to, on any convenient day after the octave of Easter; that is, after the Sunday next after Easter. The same rule applied to the Festival of St Olaf. This tends to show that, at least when the Aberdeen Breviary was arranged, the particular date of the 16th October did not seem to possess any very highly-marked and peculiar significance in connection with Regulus.

4. In estimating the weight to be attached to the coincidence of the October Festival of St Regulus with the festival of the Irish St Riaghail, we must not omit to notice that the spring Festival of St Regulus coincided with that of an unquestionable "Regulus" (whether a real person or a hagiological invention),—St Regulus who was reputed to be the first Bishop of Senlis (*Silvanectæ* or *Silvanectum*) in France, and who was popularly venerated as St Rieul, with which compare our popular name St Rule. It will be remembered that in the Scottish St Regulus legend he is represented as a Greek monk from Patras. The French St Regulus is also represented as a Greek (*Argolicâ derivatus et nobiliter exortus prosapia*¹).

Other resemblances between the two stories are hardly more than what may be reckoned as the commonplaces of hagiology, such as miraculous healing of the blind and the deaf, &c.

And I do not think there is the slightest ground for supposing any connection in fact between the two Reguluses, if indeed either of them ever existed. But we can scarcely doubt that there is some connection between the two *festivals*. For myself, after a careful examination of

¹ *Vita ex codice MS. Audomarensi*, printed by the Bollandists (AA.SS. Martii iii. p. 818).

the evidence, I am inclined to think it is a fruitless inquiry to ask "who was the historic Regulus of St Andrews?" And the conjecture I would venture to offer as to the two coincidences of festivals that have been indicated is this—that when the cultus of St Regulus began to establish itself in Scotland, and, according to the prevailing liturgical usage of the time, it became necessary to fix a day for celebrating the festival, the calendar-makers were just as ignorant as we are ourselves, and finding a St Regulus noted on March 30 in some earlier calendar which they had consulted, it was assumed that that entry indicated the day to be observed. Again, the 16th October in some Celtic calendar with Riaghail noted, may, through the resemblance of the names, together with, possibly, some further confusion of the name "Muicinis" with the name "Mucros," which appears in the Scottish legend, have led to indicating the 16th as an alternative festival for Regulus. There does not exist, so far as I know, a particle of evidence for any connection in fact between St Riaghail of Muicinis and Scotland