

## VI.

SCOTTISH BISHOPS' SEES BEFORE THE REIGN OF  
DAVID I.

By GORDON DONALDSON, M.A., PH.D., D.LITT., F.S.A.ScOT.

The attribution to David I of the establishment of most of the Scottish episcopal sees has, if only through repetition, become a convention. Yet, while historians have been in general agreement about David's work, they have differed profoundly as to the details. A very recent writer has gone so far as to remark, "Before David's time St Andrews was the only bishopric in Scotland proper; he added six or more probably eight."<sup>1</sup> Other modern historians have allowed that two or three sees were founded in the reign of David's predecessor, Alexander I.<sup>2</sup> The older historians and chroniclers were less confident about the extent of David's work. Boece attributed to David the foundation of only four bishoprics, in addition to six previously existing,<sup>3</sup> and he was followed by George Buchanan.<sup>4</sup> John Major says of David, "Finding four bishoprics in his kingdom, he founded nine more."<sup>5</sup> Two versions of Wyntoun, again, tell each a different story:

Bischoprikis he fand bot thre;  
Bot, or he deit, xi left he.

Or

Bischopis he fand bot foure or thre;  
Bot, or he deit, ix left he.<sup>6</sup>

This confusion might have suggested that the convention requires critical examination.

The source of the convention is undoubtedly the *Scotichronicon*; but the *Scotichronicon* is content to reproduce the statement of David's contemporary, Ailred of Rievaulx,<sup>7</sup> who says something quite different from all later works, with the exception of one of the versions of Wyntoun. He says that in the

<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie, W. M., *Scottish Burghs*, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Dowden, *Bishops of Scotland*, pp. 47, 98, 144, 294-5; Dunbar, *Scottish Kings*, pp. 51-52; cf. McEwan, *Church History*, I, 164.

<sup>3</sup> *Bellenden's Boece* (S.T.S.), II, 172, 185.

<sup>4</sup> Buchanan, *Historia* (1582), fo. 77v.

<sup>5</sup> *Historia Majoris Britanniae* (S.H.S.), 141. These figures would give a total of thirteen bishoprics in the kingdom on David's death, when in truth there were only ten (Orkney and the Isles being as yet outwith the Scottish realm, and Argyll not yet in existence).

<sup>6</sup> *Original Chronicle* (S.T.S.), IV, 384-5.

<sup>7</sup> *Scotichron.*, v, xlvi; cf. A. O. Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, p. 233.

whole kingdom of the Scots David found three or four bishops—not bishoprics; the other “churches” were suffering from lack of a pastor—and “churches” here means episcopal sees, as is apparent from the context and as can be proved by parallel statements in contemporary writings.<sup>1</sup> David, Ailred goes on, restored some old bishoprics and founded some new ones, to make, at his death, a total of nine. This account by Ailred, it will emerge, is altogether more credible than the statements of later writers.

In the Columban Church, it is well known, jurisdiction had pertained to the abbot, who might or might not be a bishop, and there is no reason to dispute Bede’s statement that in Scotland the primacy (if we may use the term) belonged to the abbot of Iona, to whom, though he was only a presbyter, the whole province, including the bishops, were subject.<sup>2</sup> Some of the developments in the century after Columba suggest that this scheme might readily undergo modification. When Oswald, king of Northumbria, was introducing the mission from Iona into his realm, it was for a bishop, not an abbot, that he asked,<sup>3</sup> and Aidan and his successors, Finan and Colman, were abbots of Lindisfarne and bishops of the Angles.<sup>4</sup> In the same period two Scots, Diuna and Ceollach, became bishops of the Mercians, and Finan consecrated Cedd as bishop of the East Saxons.<sup>5</sup> Thus a kind of tribal, if not regional, episcopate would seem to have been taking shape, under “Columban” auspices, even before the Synod of Whitby.

The success of the Roman party at Whitby was very soon followed by changes in ecclesiastical organisation. Archbishop Theodore, regarded as the organiser of the English Church, ruled at Canterbury from 668 to 690, and several of the dioceses of the southern province date their foundation in that period. In the north the same kind of thing seems to have happened, for in 681 bishops were appointed for Hexham and Abercorn, and somewhat later for Whithorn<sup>6</sup>—a development which represents something a little more like diocesan episcopacy. It is true that the Abercorn experiment was shortlived, for Bishop Trumwin, appointed in 681, had to withdraw after Nechtansmere.<sup>7</sup> But Northumbria, though it suffered a military and political defeat, was presently to win an ecclesiastical victory, when early in the 8th century the king of the Picts decided to submit to Rome. About 710 King Nechtan, on the advice of Ceolfrid, abbot of Jarrow, accepted the

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* “ne diutius [sine] pastore vacillaret ecclesia” (Symeon of Durham [Rolls Series], II, 204); “diu ecclesia sine pastore fuit” (Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, II, 127).

<sup>2</sup> Bede, III, 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 25. To the Irish annalists, Aidan was “bishop of the Saxons” (Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots*, pp. 71, 348).

<sup>5</sup> Bede, III, 21, 22, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Bede, IV, 12; V, 23. One can only note, without comment, the appearance in 660 and 689 of bishops of Kingarth (*Picts and Scots*, pp. 71, 73, 349, 351; *Early Sources*, I, 176–7, 198), followed in the next century by abbots of Kingarth (*Picts and Scots*, pp. 76, 359).

<sup>7</sup> Bede, IV, 26.

Roman uses and put his kingdom under the patronage of St Peter.<sup>1</sup> A few years later he expelled the Columban clergy from his dominions.<sup>2</sup>

In Scotland as in England the success of the Roman party must have been followed by changes in organisation. As Skene observes, "With the expulsion of the family of Iona terminated the primacy of its monastery over . . . the kingdom of the Picts,"<sup>3</sup> and a new organisation had to take the place of the old. It is perhaps to this point that we should assign the alleged bishopric of Abernethy. There is a statement in the *Scotichronicon* that at Abernethy, which was the chief royal and episcopal seat of the Pictish realm, three elections of bishops were made when there was only one bishop in Pictland. Some MSS. read "Scotland," but that "Pictland" is correct is apparent from the context.<sup>4</sup> Skene, reading "Scotland," assigned the Abernethy bishops to the later part of the 9th century; yet, inconsistently, he recognises the existence of an "old Pictish bishopric of Abernethy," as if it had existed before the union of the Picts and Scots under Kenneth mac Alpin.<sup>5</sup>

As Abernethy was the Pictish capital, and as the church there had been endowed by earlier Pictish kings,<sup>6</sup> nothing would seem more likely than that King Nechtan, after he decided to follow the example of Northumbria in other respects, would follow that example also by planting at Abernethy a tribal or regional bishop.<sup>7</sup> It may be that he would go on to plant bishops elsewhere in his dominions; and there is evidence for the appearance at this point of Curitan, bishop and abbot of Rosemarkie, whom Skene identifies with the legendary Boniface (for whom, according to Wyntoun, Nechtan "foundit Rosmarkyne").<sup>8</sup> It may be significant of the likelihood that the Romanisers introduced a new conception of the episcopal office, that at this period, when in Iona itself there was a prolonged dispute between the Roman and native parties, a "bishop of Iona" appears for the first time.<sup>9</sup> Skene assigns likewise to this period St Fergus, a bishop associated with various parts of the country.<sup>10</sup> Whatever the truth about the Pictish bishops of the period in general and about Fergus in particular, it is consonant with the theory that bishops' sees were founded in Pictland on its submission to Rome in the early 8th century, that one Fergustus, or Fergusius, described as a Pictish bishop of Scotland, was present at a council

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, v, 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Sources*, I, 217.

<sup>3</sup> *Celtic Scotland*, II, 178.

<sup>4</sup> *Scotichron.*, IV, xii. Cf. *Extracta e variis croniciis Scocie*, p. 44: "Hiis temporibus fuit sedes illa principalis regalis et pontificalis tocius regni Pictorum; quum fuit solus unus episcopus in regno Pictorum."

<sup>5</sup> *Celtic Scotland*, II, 310-1, 397.

<sup>6</sup> *Early Sources*, I, 121-2.

<sup>7</sup> This suggestion has the support, for what it is worth, of Boece (I, 411).

<sup>8</sup> *Celtic Scotland*, II, 231; Wyntoun, IV, 122-3.

<sup>9</sup> *Annals of Ulster* (ed. Hennessy and MacCarthy), I, 160; *Picts and Scots*, p. 73.

<sup>10</sup> *Celtic Scotland*, II, 232-3.

at Rome in 721. He was accompanied by Sedulius, a bishop of Britain of Scottish race, in whom Skene sees a bishop set up by the Strathclyde Britons on their recovery from Anglian domination.<sup>1</sup> Since the see of Whithorn, as already mentioned, came into existence about this time, it looks as if in the early 8th century there may already have been five or six bishops' seats within the bounds of the later kingdom of Scotland.

The position of Abernethy as the chief bishopric of Pictland—if such it had been in the early 8th century—was bound to be affected by the transfer of the affections of the Pictish kings to St Andrews before the middle of that century,<sup>2</sup> even although we do not hear of a bishop at St Andrews until very much later. Before we have information about further developments there had occurred the union of the Picts and Scots under Kenneth mac Alpin. How far the apparent domination of the Scottish element in the united kingdom was reflected in the restoration of "Columban" clergy to central and eastern Scotland it is hard to determine; but on the whole the indications are that communication with Ireland became again closer, and that there was a certain reaction towards the earlier, "Columban," tradition, reflected in ecclesiastical organisation to the extent that the development towards a normal diocesan organisation was checked and that there was a reversion to a system based on the monasteries. Presently, too, Scotland was very largely isolated by Norse attacks and settlements, and the process of assimilation to England and other countries was interrupted for two centuries.

The next recorded development concerns Dunkeld. The church there had been founded c. 820 by a Pictish king; and to it Kenneth mac Alpin brought relics of Columba, apparently with a view to its becoming the ecclesiastical centre of the united kingdom, superseding at once Iona on the one hand and Abernethy or St Andrews on the other. The one fact to emerge is that in 865 there died a cleric described in Irish annals as "abbot of Dunkeld and first bishop of Fortriu." In printing the Annals of Ulster in his *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots*, Skene reproduced a reading "primus episcopus" and, contending that this bishop was first in time and not first in rank, was led to regard him as a sole bishop of Pictland and was compelled to relegate the Abernethy bishops to a later date. But the authoritative reading is undoubtedly the Celtic "primepscop," which in Ireland carried the quite distinct connotation of the chief bishop of a tribe or

<sup>1</sup> Labbe, *Sacrosancta concilia*, vi, 1458; *Celtic Scotland*, II, 220, 232. Fergus is designated "episcopus Scotiæ Pictus," and has been taken to be a Pict who was a bishop in Ireland; but it seems as likely that he was a Pictish bishop (*i.e.*, a bishop in Pictland) of Scottish (or Irish) race, and if the Scots were providing bishops for English sees (p. 107 *supra*) they might well provide one for Pictland. Sedulius was "episcopus Britanniae de genere Scotorum", and the scribe may have been deliberately varying his diction.

<sup>2</sup> The first abbot of St Andrews died in 747 (*Early Sources*, I, 238). Boece (who knows nothing of the intervention of Dunkeld [p. 110 *infra*]) says that the bishop's seat was translated from Abernethy to St Andrews (II, 53).

kingdom, and the element "prim" normally means "primary, foremost, chief, principal".<sup>1</sup> Skene's view of the situation may thus be dismissed as untenable, and it can be accepted that there was at Dunkeld in the middle of the 9th century a chief bishop of Fortriu. Fortriu, while it sometimes had a narrower meaning, is quite consistently used by the Irish annalists to signify the whole of the Pictish kingdom,<sup>2</sup> and it may be so taken here. If there was a chief bishop at Dunkeld, it is a safe assumption that there were other, inferior bishops elsewhere; that the *primepscop* was an abbot-bishop suggests that the "Columban" reaction was predominant in central Scotland, but whether the inferior bishops were secular bishops, abbot-bishops or bishops subordinate to abbots cannot be determined.

That is all we hear of abbot-bishops at Dunkeld, and the experiment was evidently not enduring. It may be that a development at St Andrews, begun earlier and interrupted by the intrusion of Dunkeld, was soon resumed. It is believed that from 906 until 1093 there was at St Andrews a succession of bishops, bearing such titles as "episcopus Scotorum," "epscop Alban" or "ardepiscop Alban," variously rendered as "head bishop" or "high bishop" of the Scots or of Scotland.<sup>3</sup> Skene, elaborating this, held that each member of the line was not merely "high bishop," but sole bishop, and we are further asked to believe that after the death of the last of the line, in 1093, Scotland had no bishops whatever for a number of years, until the vacancy at St Andrews was filled by Alexander I and the other sees founded by him or by David.

The alleged St Andrews succession is not of itself wholly convincing, and it might emerge on examination that some of the line really had their sees elsewhere;<sup>4</sup> the earlier sources, at any rate, do not assign them to any specific see, and they are "bishops of St Andrews" only in the pages of Wyntoun, the *Scotichronicon*, and the *Register of the Priory of St Andrews*. An investigation of their credentials, however, is not relevant to the present argument, which is concerned only to dispute the claim that there was, during these two centuries, only one bishop in Scotland.

It is true that it is not easy to produce the names of other Scottish bishops, besides those in the alleged St Andrews succession, in this period. But this is in no way surprising, in view of the great dearth of information

<sup>1</sup> *Annals of Ulster* (ed. Hennessy and MacCarthy), I, 374; Skene, *Picts and Scots*, pp. 361, 405; *Early Sources*, I, 296. On "primepscop" I have been able to consult Professor Kenneth Jackson, whose opinion is incorporated in the text. Cf. L. Gougaud, *Christianity in Celtic Lands*, pp. 219, 221.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. *Picts and Scots*, pp. 72, 76; *Annals of Ulster*, I, 313, 333; cf. Chadwick, *Early Scotland*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Scotichron.*, IV, 17; VI, 24; Wyntoun, IV, 182-5, 192-3, 244-7, 318-9, 345; Boece, II, 53, 122, etc.; *Reg. prioratus S. Andree*, pp. 113, 116. Some of these bishops are known only from Fordun and Wyntoun.

<sup>4</sup> Cellach, allegedly the first of the St Andrews line, is merely "Bishop Cellach" (*Picts and Scots*, p. 9). Fothadh, the second of them, is known to the Irish annalists as "bishop of the islands of Alba" and appears also as simply "Bishop Fothach" (*Early Sources*, I, 471; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, II, 330 n., and *Picts and Scots*, p. 10); A. O. Anderson thought that he was in truth head of the Iona community. The third of the line is simply "Bishop Maelbrigde" in *Picts and Scots*, p. 10.

about Scottish affairs at that time. And yet the sources do not entirely fail us: we hear of a bishop of Iona in 966, 980 and 986: <sup>1</sup> at a council held in England in 977 or 978, a bishop from Scotland, Bernelm by name, is said to have been present; <sup>2</sup> and in 1055 we hear of a bishop called John, who had been consecrated in Scotland and who was sent to the Orkneys by Adalbert of Bremen.<sup>3</sup> Such stray names are, however, the least of the evidence that Scotland did not have only one bishop.

The strongest evidence is perhaps the term "ardepiscop Alban" itself. If there was a "high bishop" or "head bishop," at St Andrews or elsewhere, there is more than a presumption that there were other bishops, inferior in status though not standing in the technical relation of suffragans to a metropolitan. The term "ardepiscop," like the earlier "primepiscop," was in regular use in Ireland, where, indeed, *aird-easpog* is still the term for an archbishop.<sup>4</sup> It would be incorrect to translate the term, when we find it in Ireland or Scotland c. 1100, as "archbishop," since by that time "archbishop" had come to have the technical sense of a metropolitan who had received the *pallium* from Rome. But there is some evidence of the recognition by contemporaries of the *ardepiscop* as, quite simply, a metropolitan without a *pallium*.<sup>5</sup> The title might be rendered into Latin as *summus episcopus*.<sup>6</sup> *Epscop Alban*, again, might be rendered *episcopus Scotorum*—not to imply that the possessor of the title was the sole bishop in Scotland, but to imply that whereas other bishops might be bishops of this see or that see, the head bishop was bishop of the nation, or the bishop *par excellence*, as an early writer puts it.<sup>7</sup> The title *episcopus Scotorum* certainly does not imply a sole bishop, for it remained in use (by the bishops of St Andrews) long after the existence of other sees is well documented.<sup>8</sup>

There are a number of statements in the late 11th and early 12th centuries which tend to confirm the view that there was a plurality of bishops' sees in Scotland before the reign of David I. In 1080 we read in an English chronicle that the archbishop of York, in consecrating the bishop of Durham, could not obtain the assistance of the Scottish bishops, who were subject to him.<sup>9</sup> In 1101 Pope Paschal II writes to the suffragans of the arch-

<sup>1</sup> *Early Sources*, I, 472, 488, 490. Did "Fothad I of St Andrews" (p. 110, n. 4) really belong to this succession at Iona?

<sup>2</sup> Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, II, 220.

<sup>3</sup> *Early Sources*, II, 8-9. The question should also be raised of the identity of "John, bishop of Athole," who appears in the *Orkneyinga Saga* in the 12th century (ed. Anderson, p. 113). One can only speculate about "Gervadius, bishop and prechour of Murraye," and "Glaciane, an excellent doctour and bishop" (Boece, II, 31, 172; Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, II, 369). "Dubthach the Scot, chief confessor of Ireland and of Scotland," who "reposed in Armagh" in 1065, may or may not be the St Duthac of legend, who was chief bishop of Scotland (*Early Sources*, II, 10, and n.).

<sup>4</sup> Information from Professor Jackson.

<sup>5</sup> Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, II, 234-6; Symeon of Durham (*Rolls Series*), II, 204.

<sup>6</sup> Wharton, *loc. cit.*; *Picts and Scots*, p. 190.

<sup>7</sup> *Picts and Scots*, p. 191.

<sup>8</sup> The style was used on seals until the end of the 13th century.

<sup>9</sup> Earle and Plummer, *Two Saxon Chronicles*, I, 289.

bishopric of York throughout Scotland.<sup>1</sup> In 1108, when Turgot had been appointed to St Andrews after a long vacancy, the bishop of Durham proposed to consecrate him with the assistance of the bishops of Scotland and of the Orkneys; <sup>2</sup> this would suggest that there were at least two bishops on the Scottish mainland at a time when St Andrews was vacant. In 1119 and 1122, when St Andrews was once more vacant, we find the pope addressing "all the bishops throughout Scotland" and rebuking them for carrying out consecrations without reference to a metropolitan.<sup>3</sup> It would seem a fair comment that, if the Scots were a peculiar people who never had more than one bishop, and sometimes had none, they were remarkably successful in concealing the fact from their neighbours in England and from headquarters at Rome.

It may be suggested, further, not only that there was a plurality of bishops, but that they were established in some of the sees the erection of which has been wrongly ascribed to David I.

When the earliest references to bishops after 1100 occur, they appear in charters, a source of information then appearing for the first time. It is somewhat hazardous to argue that, because as soon as charters appear we find the names of bishops, therefore before there were charters there were no bishops. And to attribute the "foundation" of a bishopric to the date at which there occurs the first casual, isolated mention of the name of a bishop is wholly unsound. (Yet it is on no stronger evidence that the "creation" of various sees has been attributed to Alexander I and David.) It might be sounder to argue that, because bishops appear when charters appear, therefore bishops already existed. And this argument receives some confirmation from the names of the earliest bishops to appear on record. In most cases the first bishop named is clearly a native—Cormac, Gregory, Nechtan, Macbeth—and not one of the Anglo-Normans whom the innovating kings of the 12th century imported to fill the other high offices in church and state. Each of these manifestly Celtic bishops seems to represent not the beginning of a new line but the continuation of an old.

The influence of an older regime may be detected in the choice—if choice indeed there was—of the bishops' seats. It does seem significant that, while abbeys were planted at sites such as Dunfermline, Scone, Cambuskenneth and Holyrood, in close proximity to royal castles and residences, bishops' sees remained at what were evidently old ecclesiastical sites. If the supposed innovators had not been building on old foundations, they might have been expected to plant their bishops at the seats of sheriffs, so that civil and ecclesiastical government should have the same focus; but cathedral and sheriff's seat coincided only at Aberdeen and Elgin, and in each of those instances the bishop's seat is known to have been moved.

<sup>1</sup> Raine, *Historians of the Church of York*, III, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Eadmer, *Historia* (Rolls Series), p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> Raine, *op. cit.*, III, 40-41, 45-46.

Ancient survivals are equally apparent in the boundaries of some of the dioceses. St Andrews straggled up the east coast from the Tweed to the Dee, including most of Berwickshire, the Lothians and Fife and large tracts north of the Tay, and extending along the Forth beyond Stirling, up the Tay to Scone and far into the highlands of Angus. Intermingled with it lay detached portions of Dunkeld (*e.g.* Aberlady, Inchcolm, Cramond and Abercorn) and Dunblane (Culross and Abernethy), and the whole of the scattered diocese of Brechin. By contrast, Glasgow, Galloway and the northern dioceses represent continuous tracts of territory. Once more one feels that if the bishoprics had been founded in the 12th century they would have shown signs of coinciding with, or approximating to, sheriffdoms; but this they never do, except in the one case of Aberdeen, and even it included part of the sheriffdom of Banff. In any event, the contrast between the intermingled boundaries of the central dioceses and the simpler structure of those in the south and north demands some attempt at explanation, however tentative.

The episcopate cannot be considered in detachment, but must be viewed in relation to the remainder of the ecclesiastical structure, of the character of which, at that period, we know far too little. Possibly the maintenance of services and the cure of souls were still, in some parts of the country, dependent on the monasteries, or at least carried on within the framework of an organisation centred on the monastery. Allow that the ancient "Columban" model had been retained, or had been revived, to the extent that administration pertained to the abbot, who might or might not be a bishop, and that the bishop might still be in a subordinate position in the monastery. What then happened when, as is usually accepted, the office of abbot became secularised? It seems very likely that an abbey would still maintain its bishop for the ordination and supervision of its clergy. If the monasteries were performing spiritual functions at all, the bishop would still be essential; and, while there might be lay abbots, there could not be lay bishops. It may even be that, as the abbots relinquished ecclesiastical functions, these functions would fall increasingly to the bishops, whose importance would grow in consequence. Hence, by a natural process of development, the bishop might emerge from comparative obscurity and become a prominent figure. His sphere of work would, at first, be not a diocese as commonly understood, but the churches dependent on the monastery, which might be scattered over a large area. Such a development would go far to explain the peculiar boundaries of the later dioceses of Dunkeld and Brechin, and perhaps Dunblane.<sup>1</sup>

It is often said that in Dunkeld and Brechin, when the see was "created"

<sup>1</sup> Dunkeld was undoubtedly the heir of Iona. It included central and western Scotland until a bishopric of Argyll was created c. 1200; thereafter it still retained the parish of Muckairn, and apparently claimed Iona itself (Hunter, *Diocese and Presbytery of Dunkeld*, I, 75).



or "founded" in the 12th century, the abbot became the first bishop.<sup>1</sup> Such a development is *prima facie* unlikely, for a man already in episcopal orders, although occupying a subordinate position, could more easily be turned into a diocesan bishop than could a lay abbot. But it is, in any event, demonstrably untrue, for at Brechin the line of abbots continues long after bishops begin to be mentioned in charters, and we find an abbot of Brechin witnessing a charter by a bishop of Brechin;<sup>2</sup> while at Dunkeld, although we do not find the name of an abbot so late, the "abbacy" of Dunkeld is mentioned c. 1150, in a charter to which the bishop of Dunkeld was a witness.<sup>3</sup> If a bishop and abbot thus existed concurrently in the middle of the 12th century, it is hard to detect any reason why they should not have so existed much earlier.

The monastery, however, is not the whole picture. There were the culdees, who, whatever they may have been in earlier times, were in their later days little else than colleges of secular priests. The possibility cannot be overlooked that in some instances the spiritual functions of abbeys had wholly lapsed and that those functions were instead performed by culdees. In any event, the existence of the culdees, bodies of clergy not dependent on monasteries, might suggest that there were necessarily non-monastic bishops. Moreover, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that there were, already before 1100, secular priests serving local churches. When, for instance, a "church" is "given" to a body of culdees,<sup>4</sup> it may be that it had previously been served, and perhaps continued to be served, by a resident secular priest. If there were such secular clergy, they were presumably under the jurisdiction of a territorial, and not a monastic, bishop.

It may be that we can detect, even in central Scotland, the making of two distinct types of diocese, the monastic and the secular. Dunkeld and Brechin are clearly monastic; but may it be suggested that St Andrews was the seat of the bishop who had a sort of residual jurisdiction within the area, supervising the clergy of the churches served by seculars and not attached to monasteries? In any event, the dioceses of the south and the north clearly have a different origin from those of the centre. Glasgow, at any rate, was the bishopric of the kingdom of Strathclyde, and it had not been affected by the persistence of the monastic tradition in areas under "Columban" influence. To what extent it had been continuously effective is unknown, but there were appointments in the 11th century, and the inquest into its possessions, made c. 1120, suggests that its existence as an entity

<sup>1</sup> This is stated of Dunkeld by Myln in his *Lives of the Bishops* (Bannatyne Club, pp. 4-5), but Myln is demonstrably wrong on other matters, and no doubt he was concerned only to produce what seemed a simple explanation.

<sup>2</sup> *Liber de Aberbrothoc*, I, 134, 163.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrie, *Early Scottish Charters*, No. ccix. That there was an "abbacy," but no abbot, would be explained if it could be shown that the abbey had fallen to the crown after the death of Abbot Ethelred, son of Malcolm and Margaret.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. *Reg. Prior. S. Andree*, p. 116.

had not been in any doubt. Galloway, again, whatever its history between c. 800 and c. 1100, emerges in the 1120's as clearly the bishopric of the lordship of Galloway. The position in the north is more obscure. One can only speculate as to whether a secular clergy had gained a footing there in the 8th century and had retained it when the "Columban" reaction, along monastic lines, took effect in the centre of the country. But there is another possible explanation of the northern dioceses. The regions which formed them were not, in the 11th century, effectively subject to the Scottish crown. In the far north the earl of the Orkneys held Caithness and Sutherland and sometimes a good deal more; the ruling house of the province of Moray seems to have been at the height of its power in the 11th century. Is this situation reflected in the church? The earl of Orkney established a bishopric for his earldom; the king of the Isles established one for his realm; the lords of Galloway established one for their lordship. Is it unlikely that a great mormaer, of Moray or Ross, would establish, or foster, one for his? <sup>1</sup> Some such theory would satisfactorily explain the territorial dioceses of the north. In any event, the existence, before 1100, of bishops for such comparatively small areas as Orkney and the Isles renders it highly improbable that one bishop sufficed for the entire Scottish mainland.

Dunblane and Aberdeen require special mention. Dunblane, in its possession of the ancient ecclesiastical sites of Abernethy and Culross as detached parishes, partakes of the character of a monastic bishopric; but on the other hand, in its intimate association with the earldom of Strathearn, whose earls were its patrons, it resembles the territorial dioceses of the north and Galloway in the south. It may be that it had a dual origin: there was within it a monastic bishop, who obtained recognition from the earl as the bishop for the earldom of Strathearn. Aberdeen is to all appearance a purely territorial bishopric, and the choice of Aberdeen as a bishop's seat may well be attributed to a 12th-century king; but the tradition that the see developed from a monastic bishopric based on Mortlach <sup>2</sup> must not be dismissed merely because it happens to have been incorporated in a spurious charter, and seems rather to represent the strong probability that there were Celtic bishops somewhere in the area, and very likely at Mortlach, before the casual appearance of the equally Celtic Nechtan at Aberdeen in the 12th century.

Whatever the precise situation before 1100, it is plain that a period of serious dislocation may have intervened before the restorative work of David I. No doubt one reason was the confused political situation following

<sup>1</sup> It may be asked why, if this was so, these dioceses do not show the features of others of non-royal foundation—especially the local magnate's right of patronage, which appears in Orkney, the Isles, Dunblane and Galloway. But there can be little doubt that in Moray, at least, on the suppression of the virtual independence of the province, the crown would assume the rights formerly belonging to the mormaers.

<sup>2</sup> *Reg. Aberdeen*, I, xvii, 3; II, 246-7; *Scotichron.*, IV, xlv.

the death of Malcolm III; but another undoubtedly was the question, which was soon to become acute, of the validity of the appointment of bishops without confirmation by a metropolitan. At any rate, St Andrews itself was apparently without a *consecrated* bishop from 1093 to 1109, and again from 1115 to 1127. If St Andrews, the chief see, could be so long vacant, other sees may well have been vacant as long or longer. In Glasgow, we are told, Archbishop Kinsi of York (1055-60) had consecrated Bishops Magsuea and John; thereafter, "because of hostile invasion and desolation and the barbarity of the land for long the church was without a pastor," or "almost beyond memory had not had the solace of a bishop," until Michael was consecrated between 1109 and 1114.<sup>1</sup> At Dunblane there was a tradition that there had been a vacancy of a century or more.<sup>2</sup> It is not difficult to understand why Ailred should write of "churches wavering without a pastor."

Ailred's statement that David found "three or four" bishops is perhaps not to be taken literally, and it is uncertain whether his account refers to Scotia north of the Forth and Clyde or to the whole of modern Scotland. That David, on his accession, found bishops at Dunkeld, Moray, Ross and Mortlach or Aberdeen is more than likely. St Andrews was without a consecrated bishop, Whithorn had presumably been long without a bishop, and there may have chanced at the time to be no bishop at Brechin, while Dunblane was very likely in a state of decay. Caithness has by far the strongest claim to be regarded as a new foundation by David;<sup>3</sup> but Dunblane possibly underwent such reconstruction in David's reign, if not at his own hands, that it would be regarded as falling in the same category; and if David moved a bishop's seat from Mortlach to Aberdeen, then that see might likewise rank as a new foundation. Glasgow, to which appointments were made when David was earl in Cumbria, would be reckoned as one of his restorations. Some such picture agrees broadly with what Ailred says, and accords better with the facts than does the convention which has dominated most recent writers.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTE.

The English council of Cealchythe [*Chelsea*], in 816, laid down that no one of Scottish race should be allowed to administer Baptism or Holy Communion in any English diocese, since it was uncertain where and by whom they had been ordained, and stated that it was improper to receive

<sup>1</sup> *Scottish Annals*, pp. 133-4.

<sup>2</sup> Theiner, No.. xci.

<sup>3</sup> Very likely Caithness proper, which was territorially subject to the Orkney jarls, had formed part of the bishopric of Orkney.

the ministrations of foreigners among whom there was no regular organisation under a metropolitan.<sup>1</sup> It may be that the reference was to Ireland rather than Scotland, but it is hard to see any reason why Scottish orders would not have been covered by the same condemnation. Yet, when we come to the late 12th century, we find that Queen Margaret, though critical of much else, had evidently no criticism to make of Scottish orders or organisation. The question thus arises whether any change, to regularise the position in Scotland, had occurred during the intervening period, especially as Margaret is unlikely to have taken a less rigid view than the council of Cealchythe. It is possible only to say that there are one or two indications that some such change did in fact take place. There is the *Scotichronicon's* statement that "Bishop Cellach II of St Andrews," in the late 10th century, was the first bishop of the Scots to go to Rome for confirmation; <sup>2</sup> and there is the claim made by the York historian, Hugh the Chantor, that Bishop Fothad II (d. 1093) was sent by Malcolm and Margaret to make canonical subjection to York as his metropolitan.<sup>3</sup> Some reconstruction may indeed have been done by Malcolm and Margaret. Boece alone, and that in a passage bristling with manifest errors, attributes the restoration and foundation of some bishops' sees to Malcolm III; <sup>4</sup> but it is certainly carrying the evidence from silence altogether too far to say, as McEwan does, "To the establishment of dioceses they [Malcolm and Margaret] did not in any way contribute." <sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins, *Concilia*, I, 170. The concern here does not seem to have been merely with the activities of *episcopi vagantes*, which the council of Chalons, three years earlier, evidently had in view when it denounced the ordinations carried out by "certain Scots persons calling themselves bishops" (Labbe, VII, 1281-2). Cf. McEwan, *Church History*, I, 104.

<sup>2</sup> *Scotichron.*, VI, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Raine, *York*, II, 126, 363.

<sup>4</sup> *Bellenden's Boece* (S.T.S.), II, 172.

<sup>5</sup> *Church History*, I, 160.