

Dalriada

CFIS, pg. 72

The *Dal Riada* were originally a tribe of North Antrim in Ireland, but from as early as the third century, and especially during the late fifth century there had been a steady settlement of the adjacent coastal and island areas of Scotland by these Dal Riada Scots. This area, which became the Scottish part of the greater tribal kingdom of Dal Riada, was separated from the rest of Scotland by mountains. The Scottish part of the tribal kingdom of Dal Riada was known as Argyll which means "coastland of the Gaels", for by this time the population of Ireland had long been Gaelic-speaking, and the Dal Riada considered themselves to be Gaels in the general sense, though nonetheless kin in the context of ethno-dynastic politics. About A.D. 500 the kings of Dal Riada took up permanent residence in the Argyle, and with the coming of the Vikings in the ninth century, the tribe, by then centered in Argyle, was cut off from their Irish collateral kindred in Antrim. The chief kindreds of the Dal Riada of Argyle, the Ceneal Loairn and the Ceneal nGabrain, soon spread into much of Scotland with the uniting of their kingdom and the Kingdom of the Picts.

The Ceneal Loairn derive their descent from Loarn, son of Erc, a king of Dal Riada in the fifth Century. They originally inhabited the present districts of Lorn (named for them) and Mull, with the adjacent mainland and island territory to the north and west. This territory comprised the northern part of Scottish Dal Riada, and when the time came for expansion, the Ceneal Loairn migrated up the Great Glen.

The Ceneal nGabrain originally dwelt south of the Ceneal Loairn in the island districts of Jura, Bute, and Arran, and the mainland districts of Cowal and Kintyre. They derive their descent from Gabhran, King of Dal Riada in the sixth century. They were the chief clan of the Dal Riada, and merged with the Pictish Royal House in the ninth century.

SHD, pg 1

Whether the Dal Riada had settled in Scotland before the advent of Fergus Mor mac Eirc, c. 500, is open to argument, but there is little doubt that in his person the Dalriadic dynasty removed from Ireland to Scotland.

There is no indication that Fergus Mor relinquished his authority over his Irish territories when he left for Scotland. The first positive evidence for the assumption that Fergus Mor and his immediate successors continued to rule Dal Riada in Ireland is the Convention of Druim Cett. The assembly convened in 575 AU to discuss the future status of the Irish Dal Riada in relation to Aedan mac Gabrain, king of Dal Riada in Scotland (d. c. 608), among other things. It was finally decided that, although the armed forces of Dal Riada in Ireland should go in future to Aed, son of Ainmire, as overlord of Northern Ireland, Aedan should continue to levy taxes and tributes, which meant that effective government was to remain in the hands of Aedan and his successors for as long as they could prove capable of retaining it.

Dal Riada in Ireland formed part of the historical province of Ulster which corresponded more or less to the present-day counties of Antrim and Down. , on the one hand, to Aed, son of Ainmire (d. 508).

KCS, pg 2

The ancestors of the medieval Scottish monarchs are to be found in the kingdom of Dal Riata. Dal Riata originally was confined to the northeast coast of Ireland in what is now County Antrim, west of the Kintyre peninsula.

Sometime in the late Roman/early medieval period there was an emigration from Dal Riata northeast to Britain, across the thirteen miles of the Atlantic Ocean known as the North Channel, which separates the Antrim coast from the Mull of Kintyre. The date at which the initial emigration occurred is unknown, but early medieval records suggest that the kings of Dal Riata in Ireland left their fortress at Dunseverick for residence in Britain circa A.D. 500.

AB, pg 13-14

Argyll is much more than a county. It is more even than a province. Some would say perhaps that, historically at least, it is the most important part of Scotland, in the main, was Christianised. Under the latter-day so-called reform of local government, Argyll county becomes part of the vast, unwieldy and shapeless region of Strathclyde, with its administrative center at Glasgow - of which nothing could be more ridiculous for most of the area. It was the the second-largest county in the land only 22 miles short of being half the length of the entire mainland of Scotland, covering 3255 square miles or over 2 million acres, and including some of the largest and best-known islands of the Hebrides such as Mull, Islay, Tiree and Jura. It is so cut up by sea-lochs sounds and kyles that despite its vast size no part of Argyll is more than 15 miles from salt-water. And, of course, it is one of the most beautiful areas in the land, some might claim, in the world, with a notable variety of scenery and attractions, its archaeology renowned, its antiquities abundant, its history dramatic.

The name Argyll comes from Araghaidal, or Ergadia, the boundary of the Gaels. In Pictish times its links were with Ireland rather than with the rest of Alba, not unnaturally in the geographical context; and it is interesting that the original Dalriada in Northern Ireland, is believed to have been colonised by Cruithne (corn-eaters) the true name for the people the Romans called Picts, from Alba, generations before the tide reversed and the Irish Dalriads, calling themselves Scots now, returned as colonisers and missionaries to Ergadia and named it Dalriada, in turn.

Dunadd, on Loch Crinan, became the Dalriadic kingdom's capital, and Iona, off Mull, the Church's headquarters. Argyll was the cradle of the new nation. Eventually the place of rule had to move to a more central location for the whole country, and the Perth vicinity of Forteviot, Abernethy and Scone became the new government focus of State and Church. With the putting down of the Celtic Church by Malcolm Canmore's Queen Margaret and her sons, in favour of the Roman Catholic faith, Argyll's importance began to fade ecclesiastically as it had done secularly, leaving the Norsemen, who had themselves much inter-married with the Celtic people and become Christian, with the major influence.

The huge territory can be divided conveniently into five great sections - Cowal, Kintyre, Lorn, Ardnamurchan-Movern, and the Isles. Kintyre, with Knapdale its northern link with the mainland, is the mighty peninsula which stretches southwards from Crinan for about 55 miles, its extremity at the Mull of Kintyre level with Turnberry in Ayrshire.

KI, pg. 11 (c. 1100 - c. 1366)

Medieval Argyll was much more extensive than the modern region of the same name; it embraced the whole area from the Mull of Kintyre and the Clyde in the south to Lock Broom and beyond in the north. The seventeenth-century *Book of Clanranald* several times refers to Argyll as encompassing the lands from Dumbarton to Caithness, or from Dingwall to the Mull of Kintyre. This vast and rugged region with its extensive coastline was commonly divided into two areas: North Argyll, the region between Elenelg and Loch Brook, which pertained to Moray and Ross in the Middle Ages, and South Argyll, stretching from Knoydart to the Mull of Kintyre, known as 'Ergadia que pertinent and Scociam' ('Argyll which pertains to Scotland'). The eastern boundary of Argyll was the natural barrier of the mountain range known as Drumalban, the Spine of Britain. The twelfth-century tract *De Situ Albanie* referred to it as 'the mountains which divide Scotia from Argyll', and its use to distinguish the west from the central and eastern regions dates back to the time of St. Columba. These mountains cut off the Atlantic coast from the rest of Scotland, and throughout this period, travel from Argyll and the Isles by sea to Norway was easier than the overland route through heavily forested mountains, to the Scottish court at Edinburgh, Perth, or Stirling.

This vast coastal region has been historically divided into several distinct regions: Kintyre and Knapdale, Cowal, Lorn, Ardnamurchan and Morvern. Kintyre, along with its northern link of Knapdale, forms a long, narrow peninsula jutting south from Crinan for about fifty-five miles to its southern-most extremity, the Mull of Kintyre. Because the sea-loch of West Loch Tarbert penetrates to within a mile of East Loch Tarbert, Kintyre is all but an island, which means that its history is closely linked with that of the western seaboard, rather than with the mainland.

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