

Mael Muire

KCS, pg. 45

Cinaed and his family were not living in a self-contained world, and the extent of their interests can be gauged from the marriages of his daughters, whose husbands included powerful kings in northern Britain and in Ireland. One of his daughters was named Mael Muire (d. 913), she was the wife of two of the overlords of the Ui Neill confederation. Her first husband was *Aed findliath mac Neill* (d. 879) of Cenel nEogain, located in the extreme north of Ireland with their stronghold on the Irishowen peninsula. Aed was one of the most influential of all the Irish kings of his day and, although he occasionally used them as allies, was a leader in the Irish resistance to the vikings. The marriage of Mael Muire and Aed may have been intended by Cenel nGabrain and Cenel nEogain to end the hostilities of the eighth century and to promote a united effort against viking attacks on Dal Riata and the northeast coast of Ireland. Alliances would be a standard way of Cenel nGabrain to respond to enemies. A second benefit would have increased prestige for the two dynasties with a marriage link between two islands. More than prestige may have been involved, and the Ui Neill may have been supporting Cenel nGabrain against external foes and also against rivals among the Scottish dynasties. It may not be entirely coincidental that Cinaed's family lost control of the kingship about the time of Aed's death and regained it after Mael Muire's second husband, *Flann Sinna mac Mael Choluim* (d. 916), became the unchallenged head of the Ui Neill confederation and Aed's successor in preeminence in the north of Ireland.

Cinaed had another daughter whose marriages were equally important for the fortunes of Cenel nGabrain. Her Christian name is not given, and her existence is known through references to her son Eochaid, who would reign briefly in the late ninth century. In the Scottish Chronicle accounts of Eochaid's accession, his tie to Cinaed mac Alpin is explicitly stated: "Eochaid the son of Rhun, king of the Britons, grandson of Cinaed by his daughter".

Note:

Cinaed = Kenneth

Mael Muire = Mary/Margaret

Aed = Ed

Cenel = Kindred (ex: Cenel nGabrain = Kindred of Gabrain)

Mael Choluim = Malcolm

Ui = Family (ex: Ui Neill = Family of Neill)

©Patricia Adams, Nov 2001