# WHO WAS MALCOLM, KING OF THE CUMBRIANS?

# A STUDY OF THE KINGS OF STRATHCLYDE AND CUMBRIA AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO KING DUBH'S DESCENDANTS IN THE WORK OF FORDUN AND THE EARLY CHRONICLES.

***By Michael Anne Guido*** [1]

## ABSTRACT

John of Fordun has been cited as the source of errors on the descendants of King Dubh by supposedly creating Malcolm mac Dubh, his eldest son, stated to be King of the Cumbrians. Was this really a fabrication or a mistake? This article proposes a solution to some of the problems in Fordun's work by showing that the tanists were actually governors of Strathclyde based on an analysis of the early chronicles.

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The kingdom of Strathclyde (Fig.1) originated in the 5th century with the rise of many smaller kingdoms after the withdrawal of the Romans from the island of Britain. The inhabitants of Strathclyde were probably descendants of the native people called Damnonii who were first recorded on Ptolemy's map in the second century[2] (MacQuarrie, 1993, p.2; Duncan, 1975, p.17). These Britons were akin to the Welsh[3] (MacQuarrie, p.2) and known in the Welsh chronicles as *Gwyr y Gogledd* (Men of the North). The inhabitants of Strathclyde shared the same root language with Welsh as they spoke Cumbrian which was one of the four dialects of Brythonic Gaelic, the others being Cornish and Breton. These languages form a group called P-Celtic as opposed to Q-Celtic which is the Gaelic language cluster of Irish, Scottish and Manx. The native Celts referred to Britain as Albion, but later this was strictly applied to the north Britons and eventually the term was appropriated by the Scots of Dal Riata as the Kings of Alba[4] (Moffett, 2006, p.10). Strathclyde extended south of the Antonine

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[2] Claudius Ptolemy was an astronomer and mathematician who was working in Alexandria 127-148 AD. He was the first mathematician to lay down the basis for trigonometry which he accomplished in the *Almagest*, his 13 volume work on astronomy. He also authored a major treatise on geography which comprised maps of the entire known world at that time. His geography was the basis for later maps of Britain and except for the unusual orientation of Scotland (at a 90 degree angle to the rest of Britain) his map is well done. The detail of the towns, rivers, bays and seas surrounding Britain was astounding for this period. He had knowledge of all the native British tribes and incorporated their locations into the map.

[3] The Damnonii were related to the Dumnonii of Devon and Cornwall.

[4] In the late 6th century the West Saxons separated Cornwall and Devon from Wales. At this time it appears that the Welsh adopted the name *Cymry* which is derived from the plural of the old Welsh word *Combrox* meaning "compatriot or countryman". This word applied to the Welsh as well as the northern Britons who changed it to Cumber or Cumbria. In the mid 7th century the Mercians conquered the plain of Chester and the North Britons became completely isolated from Wales. This is why the terms Cumbria and Alba became used to refer to kingdoms north of Hadrian's Wall.

Wall, down the Clyde River on the western side of the island to the border of Rheged[5]. The *Damnonii* were considered by the Romans to be the most inaccessible of the Celtic tribes north of Hadrian's Wall, a factor which led to their survival as a country when the other areas held by northern Britons were taken over by the Angles, Picts and Scots[6] (Smyth, 1984, p.8).




**Fig 1.** ***Kingdoms in Scotland in the early 8th century*** *[Based on Magnusson, 2000]*

[5] Rheged occupied the area from Galloway south and included the kingdom of Cumbria. It extended eastward into the Scottish uplands and abutted the kingdom of Gododdin.

[6] Strathclyde was one of the three kingdoms of Northern Britons in the 6th century, the other two being Rheged and Gododdin. The eastern half of Rheged was taken over by the Angles in the 7th century and became part of Northumbria. The western half of Rheged which included Galloway and Cumbria became part of Strathclyde and remained so until the 11th century when Strathclyde was absorbed into Scotland. Gododdin which was centered on Din Eidyn [Edinburgh] was taken by the Angles in 638 and remained in Anglo-Saxon hands until the reign of Indulf.



**Fig.2** ***Dumbarton Rock chief fort of Strathclyde from the 6th century to 870.*** *The fort of Alt Cluaid was on the right hand summit.*

Photographer - Alan Hughes. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Strathclyde
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# A. Kings of Strathclyde [c.550-945]

Dumbarton, the capital city of Strathclyde also known as *Alt Cluaid* in Gaelic or *Petra Cloithe* in Latin, meaning rock of Clyde, was on a rocky area between two crags and sometimes called Dumbarton Rock (Fig.2). The early recorded kings of Strathclyde[7] begin in the sixth century. The *Chronicle of the Picts* shows the first recorded king to be Ceretic Guletic whose son Cinuit had a son Dungual Hen[8]. Ceretic Guletic (Fig.3) is identified with Coroticus the King of Strathclyde in a letter written by Saint Patrick in the fifth century. The meaning of Guletic may be the same as Gwledig which indicates ruler or holder of a large amount of land. Dungual Hen, according to the Harleian Genealogies, had three sons Gwyddno, Clynog and Cynfelyn[9] (MacQuarrie, 1993, pp.5-7). Clynog, also known as Clinoch, had a son named Tudwal. Tudwal was a tyrannical king who was a contemporary of St Ninian. He is mentioned both in the eighth century poem *Miracula Nyniae Episcopi* and also the 12th century *Vita Ninani*[10] (MacQuarrie, pp.5-7). Tudwal was living in the mid sixth century and was the father of Rhydderch Hael. Rhydderch Hael was a contemporary of St Columba and is recorded by Adomnan as '*Roderc son of Tothail, King of Petra Cloithe*'. Rhydderch Hael was a friend of St Columba and was murdered by Aedan Mac Gabran[11] (Macquarrie, pp. 7-8). Rhydderch was an ally of Urien Rheged against Hussa of Bernicia, and Joscelin makes him a contemporary of Kentigern whose death is recorded at Pertnech. The *Annales Cambriae* (Phillimore, 1888) record Rhydderch Hael's death in 612.

It is of interest that Rhydderch Hael may have had a sister who married Aedan mac Gabran and was the mother of many children including his heir Eochaidh I Buide macAidan. St Molaisse of Ireland was the son of Cairell of Dal Fiach who was married to Maithgemma. The book of Leinster states that St Molaisse's mother was a daughter of Aedan mac Gabran. In the *Acta Sancti Laisriani*, Maithgemma is described as the daughter of Aedan mac Gabran and the niece of the British king[12] (Ziegler, 1999) who was Rhydderch Hael at that time. So the future kings of Dal Riata who were the ancestors of the kings of Alba were also descendants of Dungual Hen.

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7 From the 7th to the 11th centuries the terms *regulus Cumbriae*, *rí Bretan*, *rex Alocluate*, *King of the Cumbrians*, etc. all meant the King of Strathclyde and were used interchangeably.

8 Skene (1867) page xcv, Table of the Kings of Strathclyde:
*Run son of Athgal son of Dunnagual son of Riderch son of Eugein son of Dunnagual son of Teudebur son of Beli son of Elfin son of Eugein son of Beli son of Neithon son of Guipno son of Dungual Hen son of Cinuit son of Ceretic Guletic.*

9 MacQuarrie uses the Welsh Genealogies [Harleian MS 3859] to have these three as sons of Dungual Hen. The Welsh sources (*Bonedd Gwyr y Gogledd)* give him other descendants and make both Gwyddno and Ryderch Hael great-grandsons which is chronologically more sound. It is impossible that Neithon son of Gwyddno who died c.621 could be the same generation as Tudwal son of Clinoch who was a contemporary of St Ninian in the sixth century.

10 *MacQuarrie states the Harleian Genealogies refer to* '*Titagual son of Clinoch and father of Riderch Hen'* and Adomnan confirms that Roderc (Rhydderch) was son of Tothail (that is Tudwal).

11 Adomnan related that Rhydderch was a friend of St. Columba, to whom he sent a secret message via one of Columba's monks, asking whether he would be slaughtered by his enemies or not. Columba replied that he would die in his own house in his own bed, and not by the hand of his enemies. This incident may imply that Rhydderch was seeking assurances that Aedan mac Gabrain would not attack him, and that Aedan's counselor Columba reassured him. A Welsh 'triad', however, records that *'Aedan the traitor went into Ail Cluit, to the court of Rhydderch Hael; after [his plundering] there remained neither food nor drink, nor any living thing'.* In later times the plundering of Strathclyde became the subject of an Irish folk tale (now lost).

12 Molaisse is also known as St Laisrin and his feast day is April 18th.

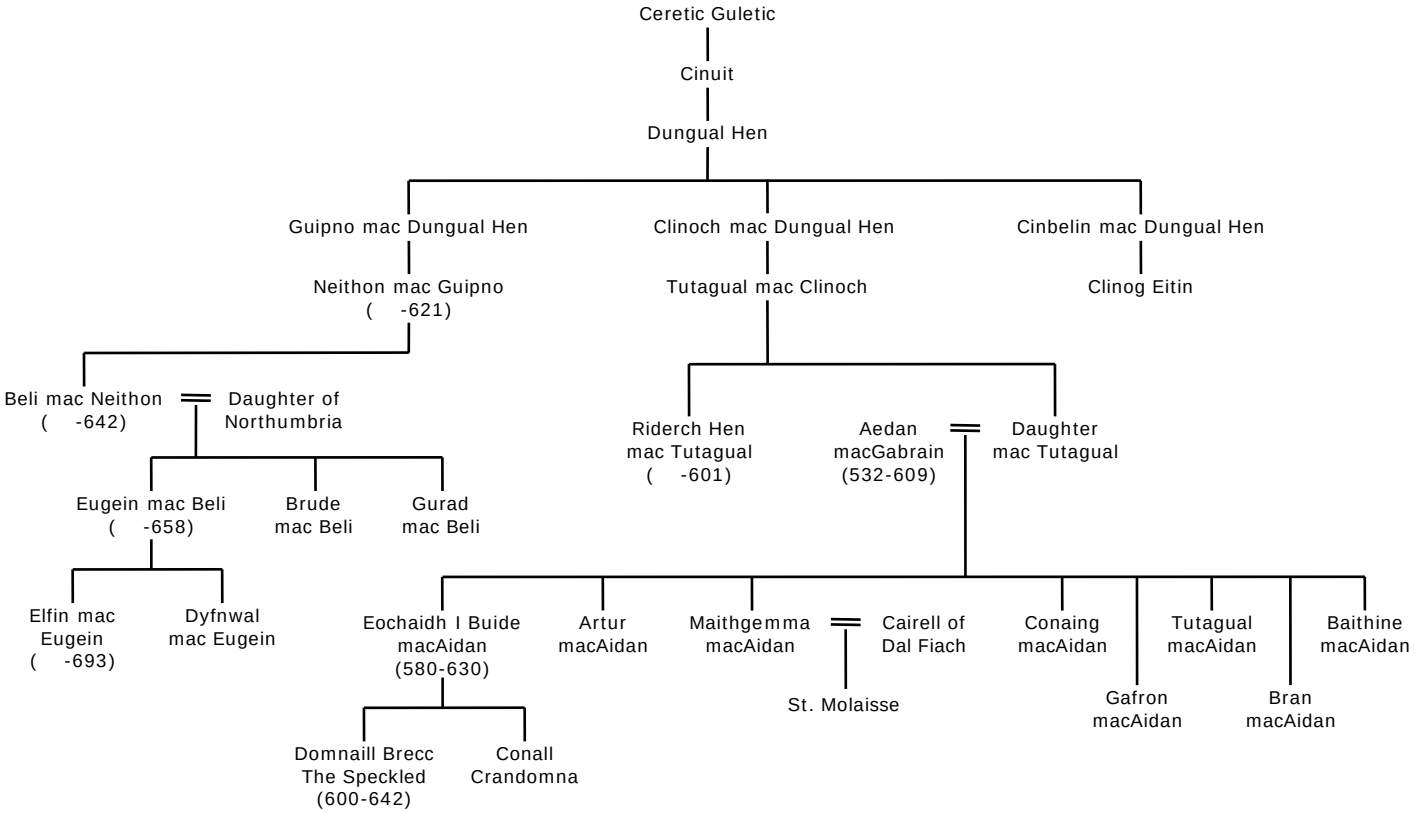



**Fig 3.** ***Descendants of Ceretic Guletic***

After Rhydderch Hael died in 601 the line of succession (Fig.4) passed to Neithon who was another great-grandson[13] of Dungual Hen, and a third cousin. Neithon was succeeded by his son Beli. Beli reigned in Strathclyde from 621 to 633. He was dead before 642 when the Battle of Strathcarron occurred. He appears to have married a woman of the Northumbrian royal house as his son Brude mac Beli[14] is called *'fratruelus'* of Ecgfrith, King of Northumbria, whom he defeated and slew at the battle of Nechtanesmere (Dunnichen) in Angus on 20th May 685[15] (Fig.8) (Skene, 1867, pp.7, 349; MacQuarrie, p.9). Beli was succeeded by his eldest son Eugein [Eochaid or Owen], brother of Brude mac Beli. It was Eugein who defeated Domnall Brecc, King of Dal Riata at the Battle of Strathcarron in 642[16] (Skene, p.348). Ellfin succeeded his father Eugein and died in 693[17] (Skene, p.349) being succeeded by his son Beli who died in 722[18] (Skene, p.355; Jones, 1952, p.2). Beli was followed by his son Teudebur who left the throne to his son Dunnagual who died in 760[19] (Jones, p.2; Skene, p.xcv). The next four kings are recorded solely by their names in the Harleian Genealogies. Eugein succeeded his father Dunnagual. His son Rhydderch followed him, then Rhydderch's son Dunnugual. It is Dunnugual's son Artgal who was the next king. In 870 Artgal was faced by Olaf and Ivar, Norse kings of Dublin, who took Dumbarton by a four month siege[20] (Skene, p.361).

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13 In this case I am using the genealogy of *Bonedd Gwyr y Gogledd* which even though not as complete as *Harleian MS 3859* seems more chronologically appropriate.

14 In this article the Scottish form *mac* is used to designate "son of" and no change will be made for the old Welsh *map* or the Irish *meic*.

15 The Pictish Chronicle: *MS. Colb. Bib. Imp. Paris*, 4126.
*Bredei filius Bili xxi. annis regnavit.* [Brude son of Beli reigned 21 years]. He attacked the Orkneys in 682 and defeated a Northumbrian invasion led by Ecgfrith at Nechtanesmere (near Forfar) on 20th May 685. The Battle of Nechtanesmere is one of the main battles of Scottish history. Brude defeated Ecgfrith in the mountain passes between the hills and a swamp (Nectanesmere) by Dunnichen. This battle stopped the Northumbrians from taking over the area of northern Scotland known as Pictland. If Brude had not won the battle the entire course of Scottish history would have been very different. For a more descriptive account of this see Cruickshank (2000). See also Fig.7 (p.201, below). Brude died in 693.

16 The Annals of Ulster: *642 Kal. Jan. 3, f.l. 24. Anno Domini DCLXI.*
*Postea Domhnaill breacc in bello Sraith Cairinn in fine anni in Decembre interfectus est ab Hoan rege Britonum, regnavit annis XV. Bellum Oissu inter Britones.*

17 The Annals of Ulster indicate that a another son of Eoghain, Domhnall [Donald], succeeded him but died in 694 and he appears in none of the Regnal lists:
694 Kal Jan. Anno Domini DCXCIII.
*Domhnall mac Auin rex Alocluate moritur.*

18 Annales Cambriae: *722 Beli son of Elffin dies. And the battle of Hehil among the Cornish, the battle of Garth Maelog, the battle of Pencon among the south Britons, and the Britons were the victors in those three battles.*
The Annals of Ulster: *722 Kal. Jan. Anno Domini DCCXXI.*
*Bile mac Eilpin rex Alocluate, moriuntur.*

19 Annales Cambriae: *760 Dunnagual filius Teuddubr moritur; [Dyfnwal the son of Tewdwr died.]*

20 The Annals of Ulster: 870 Kal Jan Anno Domini DCCCLXIX.
*Obsessio Ailecluithe a Nordmannis i. Amlaiph et Imhar ii. Regis Nordmannorum obsederunt arcem illam et destruxerunt in fine [four] mensium arcem et predaverunt.*
871 Kal Jan Anno Domini DCCCLXX.
*Amlaiph et Imhar do thuidhect a frithisi du Athacliath a Albain dibh cedaib long et preda maxima hominum Anglorum et Britonum et Pictorum deducta est secum ad Hiberniam in captivitate.* [Amlaebh and Imar came again to Athcliath from Alban, with two hundred ships (Celtic translation)].

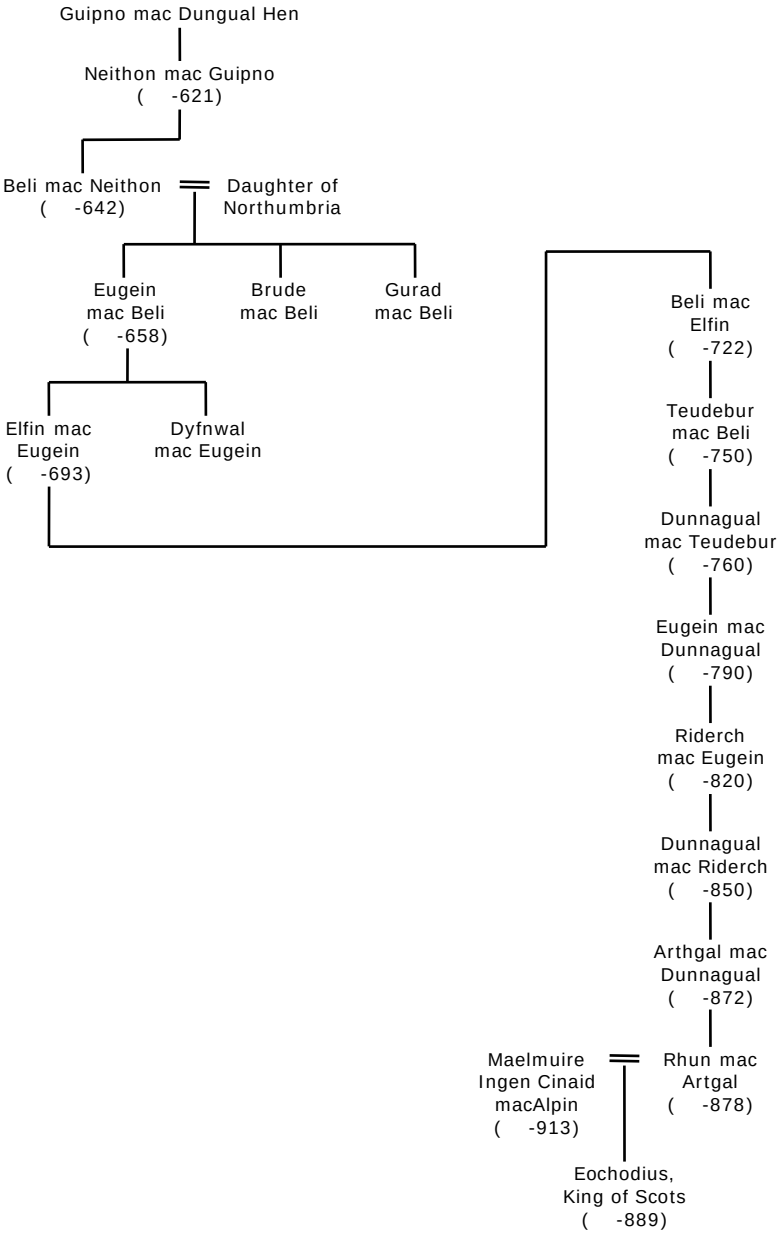



**Fig 4.** ***Descendants of Guipno mac Dungual Hen***

The kings of Dublin took the summit of Dumbarton rock, known as the White Tower, and cut off the water supply. This ended the siege and Olaf and Ivar took many prisoners including Artgal, king of Strathclyde. Before the siege of 870 Constantine I, king of Alba had married his sister to Rhun, son and heir of Artgal. Rhun was obviously very young and in 872 Constantine made a pact with Olaf and Ivar to have them kill Artgal. After Artgal's death, Constantine ruled Strathclyde through his young brother-in-law[21] (Mac Airt & Mac Niocaill, 1983, pp.328-329). Rhun's son by Constantine I's sister was called Eochaid. In 878 upon the death of Constantine I[22] (Skene, p.362) Eochaid became king of Alba. He was a puppet ruler for Giric who was the real king. This arrangement lasted until 889 when both Eochaid and Giric were expelled and Donald II assumed the kingship[23] (Skene, p.9; MacQuarrie, pp.13-14).

Under Donald II[24] (Skene, p.362), Strathclyde went through a definite change. It appears from recent archeological evidence that the centre of Strathclyde moved from Dumbarton to Govan, and the Norse became involved in Strathclyde probably through marriage between the rulers of the province and the Manx from the Isle of Man. Hog-back tombs (Fig.5) have been discovered in Govan Churchyard[25] (Driscoll, 1997) and though the names of the rulers and culture remained predominantly Briton, there was definitely a strong Norse presence in the court[26] (Driscoll, 1997). Eochaid was the last ruler we have a definite ancestry for in Strathclyde.

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21 The Annals of Ulster: *872 Kl Ianair Anno Domini DCCCLXXI.*

*5. Artgha[l], rex Britanorum Sratha Cluade, consilio Custantini filii Cinaedho occisus est.*

[Artgal, King of the Britons of Strathclyde, was killed at the instigation of Constantine son of Cinaed.]

22 The Annals of Ulster: *878 Kal Jan Anno Domini DCCCLXXVII.*

*Aedh mac Cinadan rex Pictorum a sociis suis occisus est.*

23 The Pictish Chronicle: *DCCCCLXXI-DCCCCXCV, MS. Cole Bib. Imp. Paris, 4126.*

*On the other hand Eochaid the son of Rhun the king of the Britons, grandson of Kenneth by his daughter, ruled for 11 years. Admittedly others say that Giric the son of ? ruled at that time; because he became teacher and "prime minister" to Eochaid. In his second year Áed the son of Niall died ; and in his ninth., on the very day of St Ciricius, there was an eclipse of the sun. Eochaid, with his "foster-son", was then thrown out of the kingdom.* The eclipse was 16 June 885.

24 The reign of Donald II was 889-900.

The Annals of Ulster: *900 Kal Jan Anno Domini DCCCXCIX*

*Domhnall mac Caustantin ri Albain moritur.*

25 The Govan Churchayard contains 31 early medieval gravestones. All are carved in the British style but 5 are hog-backs and 21 recumbent slabs with interlace crosses. Driscoll believes that these are burials of the Strathclyde Royal House. If so this proves that some of those members were of Norse origin which would explain the hog-back markers.

26 Driscoll states that the Norse kings of Man were the dominant political force in the Irish Sea during the 9th and 10th centuries, and the similarities between Govan and the Tynwald suggest a strong Norse influence in Strathclyde at the time. Some of the Govan tombs, particularly the hog-backs which in England are associated with Scandinavians, point to the same conclusion. It used to be thought the Vikings disappeared from Strathclyde after their 870 incursion. It now seems more likely that the British kings of Strathclyde - their names, contained in king-lists, remain British, not Norse - intermarried with the Manx dynasty, as the coastal rulers of Wales and Ireland are known to have done. Some of the leading figures at the Strathclyde court may even have been Norse.




**Fig 5.** ***Sculptured hog-back stones in the kirkyard of Govan*** *[with note by Sir John Stirling Maxwell]. Printed for private circulation, Glasgow, 1899.*

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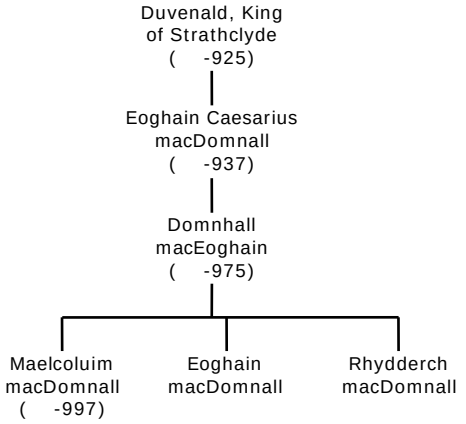



**Fig 6.** ***Descendants of Duvenald, King of Strathclyde***

Eochaid was succeeded by a Domnall who is recorded in the Annals of Ulster as king of the Britons. This Domnall[27] ruled until c.925 when he was succeeded by his son

[27] The Pictish Chronicle: *DCCCCLXXI-DCCCCXCV, MS. Cole Bib. Imp. Paris, 4126.*

Eoghain [Owen]. Eoghain was an ally of Constantine II and fled with him in 934 from Aethelstan (Smyth, pp.202-205). He was also with Constantine and Olaf Gothfrithsson, King of Dublin in 937 when they were defeated at the battle of Brunanburh[28] (MacQuarrie, p.14). There is much confusion about the succession in Strathclyde after Eoghain died (Fig.6). His death occurred in 937 or later and is not recorded in any of the annals. After Eoghain's death it appears that a Domhnaill became king. The next important information is from the Anglo Saxon Chronicle in the year 945[29] (Swanton, 1998, p.110). The Winchester Manuscript [MSS A] states for 945 "*Here King Edmund raided across all the land of Cumbria and ceded it to Malcolm, king of the Scots, on the condition that he would be his co-operator both on sea and land".* This is the last the chronicles state on Cumbria [Strathclyde] until 973 (Swanton, p.119; Thorpe, 1964, pp.142-143; Darlington & McGurk, 1995, pp.422-425) when we are told Malcolm son of Donald [Domhnaill] was King of the Cumbrians.

## B. Governors of Strathclyde [945-973]

It is clear that something changed in the way Strathclyde was governed between 945 and 973. The complete lack of information on the kingdom by the English Chroniclers, Irish and Welsh Annals and the Scottish Chronicle leave no contemporary sources for this period. It is not until the 1370s that John of Fordun first wrote his account[30] (MacQueen & MacQueen, 1989) of the rulers of Strathclyde in this period which states:

pp.348-349: *King Malcolm was at peace with Eadred after he paid homage to him in the person of Indulf for Cumbria.*[31]

pp.350-351: *After Indulf was crowned, Duf son of King Malcolm was advanced to the lordship of Cumbria, after taking the customary oath of fealty to King Eadred.*[32]

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*Et mortui sunt in temprore hujus, Donevaldus rex Britannorum, et Duvenaldus filius Ede rex eligitur; et Flann filius Maelsethnaill, et Niall filius Ede, qui regnavit tribus annis post Flann,* etc.

Originally it was thought that the Duvenaldus filius Ede listed above was the successor of Donveldus rex Britannorum but Hudson (1988, pp.145-149) has shown that this is not the case, rather that the Dunvenaldus filius Ede was the son of Aedh King of Ailech who died in 915. Donald King of the Britons must have died in the same year according to the entry. There are two possibilities as to the date of death of Donald King of the Britons: either the annals are incorrect as to the year or this is an entirely different person than the Donald King of Strathclyde that died in 925. The annals have been shown in some instances to be incorrect but I do not think that is the case here.

28 The Early Chronicles all record simply that the king of Strathclyde was with Constantine II and Olaf at Brunanburh and his name is not mentioned.

29 John of Worcester (Florence of Worcester) shows the same information and it appears that control of Strathclyde was put into the hands of Malcolm I of Scotland. This 'letting' of the land of Cumbria to Malcolm does not imply that the Scots were not in control of Strathclyde before 945, but Strathclyde's status as a satellite kingdom must have changed at this point.

30 The *Scotichronicon* is the joint work of John of Fordun and his continuator Walter Bower who was Abbott of Inchcolm. John of Fordun wrote the first five books and part of the sixth. Walter Bower initially served strictly as a copyist of Fordun's work then subsequently composed the remainder of the total of 14 books that comprise the work.

31 *Malcolmus autem rex cum Eadredo pacem habuit, facto sibi prius hominio pro Cumbria per Indulphum.*

32 *Ad Cumbrie vero dominium eo coronato promotus est Duffus Regis Malcolmi filius, Eadredo regi solita fidelitatis fide facta.*

pp.358-359: *During the whole of his reign he [Kenneth II] himself with his contemporaries the kings of the English Edgar and two of his sons the blessed martyr Edward and Aethelred faithfully preserved their mutual affection, keeping up their devotion to lasting peace and friendship with each other. Immediately after Kenneth's coronation Edgar gladly recognized Malcolm son of Duf (next in line of succession if he had lived) as under-king of Cumbria under the accustomed oath of fealty. This kind of treaty of mutual peace and friendship between kings and kingdoms that had been happily initiated originally by Malcolm king of Scots and Edmund king of the English persisted without any din of strife continuously and unshakably for one hundred and twenty years and more, up to the time when William the Bastard invaded and conquered England.*[33]

Page 378-379: *Around about the twentieth year of Kenneth's reign after he had ratified the laws of succession, and after the death of Malcolm, son of Duf under-king of Cumbria, wishing to make his own son Malcolm under-king of the same lordship, he sent him to king Ethelred, who readily accepted him under the afore-mentioned terms of allegiance and homage, as given above.*[34]

Fordun presents a definite progression of titles in relationship to the Tanists and Strathclyde. The position of Indulf under Malcolm I is unspecified. He may have held responsibility for Strathclyde as he appeared to the English king to offer homage for the province. With the accession of Indulf as King of Alba, Fordun relates that Dubh was 'lord of Cumbria'. It is not until the reign of Kenneth II that we see the title '*regulus Cumbriae*' used in connection with the heir apparent, Malcolm mac Dubh (see Fig.7). It is impossible that any of the royal line of Alba held the position of King of Strathclyde. One answer to this dilemma is that the Tanists were actually *Satrapas* [Governor] of the province[35]. This office must have begun in 945 under the rule of Malcolm I which is where Fordun starts this procedure of the Tanaise holding power in Strathclyde. It appears from Fordun that Malcolm must have appointed Indulf to this position right after the incident of 945 (Swanton, 1998, pp.110-111; Darlington & McGurk, 1995, pp.422-423).

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[33] *Omni tempore sue regnacionis ipse suique contemporanei reges Anglorum. Eadgarus videlicet ac sui duo filii, beatus videlicet martir Eadwardus et Ethelredus fideliter adinvicem diligentes firmissime pacis et amicicie servabant alterutris communionem. Eo quoque statim coronato, Malcolmum filium Duff successioni proximum si vixisset, in regulum Cumbrie libenter Eadgarus recepit sub sacramento fidelitatis consueto. Huiusmodi mutue pacis et amicicie pactum inter reges et regna feliciter a regibus Malcolmo Scotorum et Anglorum Eadmundo primitus initum absque contencionis aliquo strepitu jugiter et inconcusse centum viginti perseveravit annis et amplius eciam usque Willelmus Bastard' invasit Angliam et optinuit.*

[34] *Ipsius Kenedi circa vicesimum annum postquam successionis statuta firmasset, defuncto Malcolmo filio Duff, Cumbrie regulo, filium suum Malcolmum eiusdem dominii regulum efficere volens, Anglorum Ethelredo regi misit. A quo sub pretactis, ut supra, fidelitatis et hominii condicionibus sponte susceptus est.*

[35] Satrap' (*satrapys*) was usually connotated as Governor. Hudson (1998, p.143) explains that this term during the tenth century appears in some cases to be interchangeable with the title of *Mormaer*, which was elevated to mean Earl by the late 11th through to the 13th centuries. He further presents that originally a satrap was the ruler of a Persian province, and the term is found in medieval literature throughout Britain and Ireland. Insular historians and hagiographers probably borrowed the term from the Bible, where it is used several times in the Old Testament. Bede noted in his *Ecclesiastical History* that the continental Saxons were ruled by a satrap rather than a king.

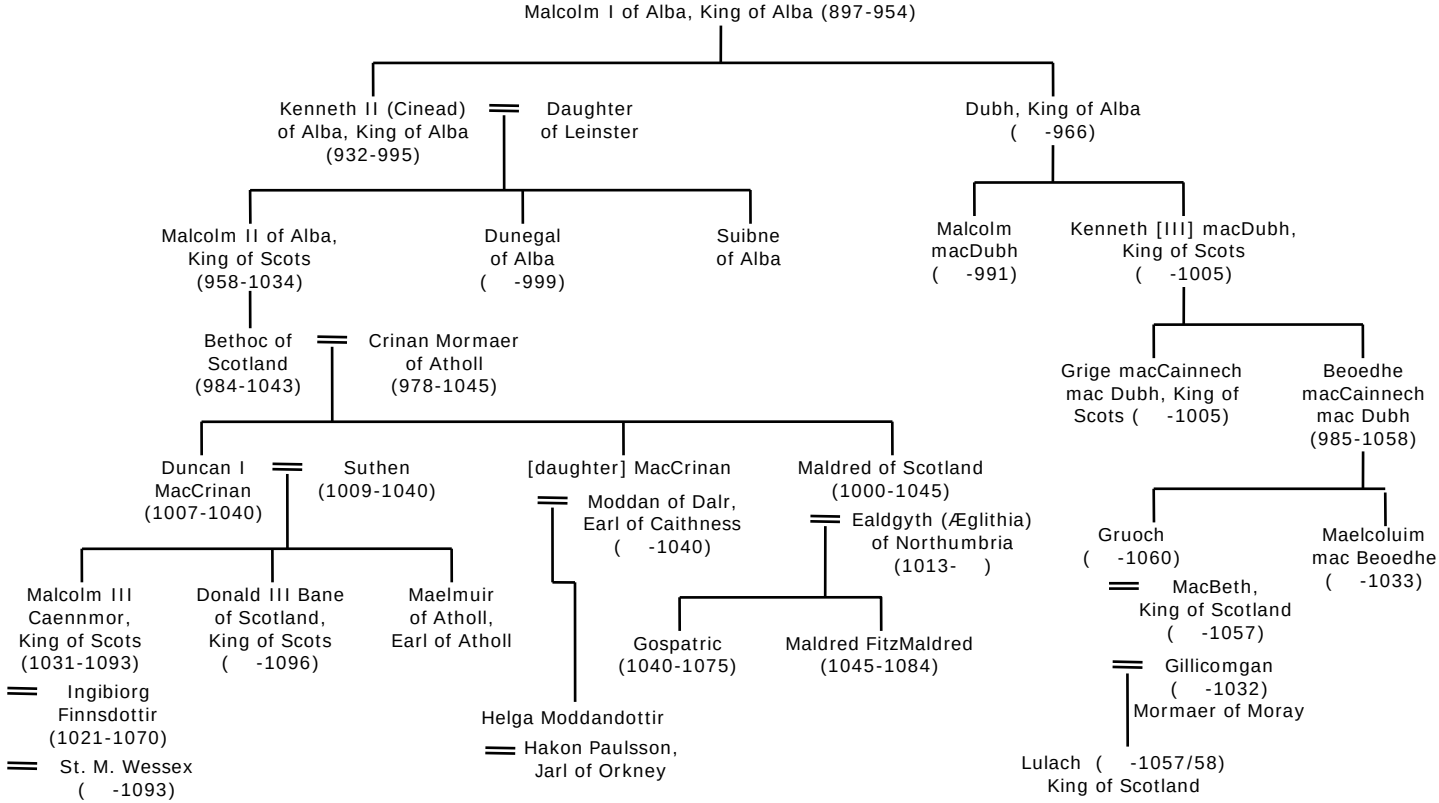



**Fig 7.** ***Descendants of Malcolm I, King of Alba***

This theory is also strengthened by the abdication of Constantine II in 943 to Malcolm I and his retirement to the Culdee Abbey of 'Cennrigmonaid' [St Andrews]. Constantine had ruled for forty years (Hudson, 1998, p.155). He had lost a son in the Battle of Brunanburh in 934 (Hudson, p.157). His daughter was the wife of Olaf Gothfrithsson, King of Dublin who had united all the Norse towns in Ireland under his rule by the fall of 937 when he attacked York in an attempt to become its king. Constantine II had joined an alliance with Olaf as well as Eoghain, King of Strathclyde, and leaders of York and the Hebrides (Smyth, 1984, p.204). Constantine is cited by one early source[36] as being the central figure in this scheme (Smyth, p.204). After Brunanburh Olaf withdrew but soon after King Æthelstan's death in October 939 Olaf returned to make himself king of York and the five boroughs of the southern Danelaw. Olaf Gothfrithsson died in 941. Although the Scottish Chronicle states that Constantine was "*infirm in his old age, he took up the staff and served the Lord, and committed the kingship to Mael [Coluim] son of Donald*" (Hudson, p.157) this is contradicted in the same source in the next entry where, in reference to the raid of Malcolm I into England in 950, it states, "*Others say, however that Constantine made this raid, asking from the king, that is Malcolm, to be given the kingship for the space of a week so that he might visit the English. That in fact, is not so: Malcolm made the raid, but Constantine incited him, as I have said.*" (Hudson, p.158). As a Culdee monk Constantine had great freedom unlike the stricter rules of the Roman ecclesiastical orders. He was the power behind the throne until his death in 952 (Hudson, p.158) and it was probably at his suggestion that the kingship of Strathclyde was abolished and his son Indulf[37] (Smyth, p.210) became the provincial governor. Malcolm I only survived 2 years after Constantine's death and never again attained the same degree of ruthlessness and cunning that he had shown in the beginning of his reign.

Olaf Gothfrithsson was succeeded by his cousin Olaf Cuaran. Olaf Cuaran became a Christian in 943 with Edmund of England being his godparent[38] (Darlington & McGurk, pp.396-397). In 944 King Edmund expelled the two Norse invaders[39] (Darlington & McGurk, pp.398-399) from York. Olaf fled to Strathclyde where he sought refuge from Edmund. Edmund wanted to close the Clyde so that the Norse from Dublin could no longer invade England and this could not be accomplished without the cooperation of Malcolm I, King of Alba or Donald, King of Strathclyde. In 945 Edmund attacked Strathclyde and "*laid waste to the land.*" Edmund also punished Donald, King of

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[36] John of Worcester cites *"Hiberniensium multarumque insularum rex paganus Anlafus, a socero suo rege Scottorum Constantino incitatus, ostium Humbre fluminis ualida cum classe ingreditur."* The Heathen king of the Irish and of many islands, Olaf, at the instigation of his father-in-law Constantine, king of the Scots, entered the mouth of the River Humber with a strong fleet. John of Worcester is the only source for this statement (Darlington & McGurk, 1995, p.392-393).

[37] It may be possible that Indulf's mother was Norse as the name Indulf may be a derivation of Hildulf a Norse name meaning "Battle Wolf". It is certain that one of the sons of Indulf did bear the name Amlaibh [Olaf] as the Annals of Ulster cite that in 977 "*Amlain mac Ailuilb ri Albain do marbhadh la Cinaet mac n-Domhnall. Amlain, son of Illuilb, king of Alban, slain by Kenneth, son of Domnall"* (Skene, 1867, p.365). If this were the case this may strengthen the reason behind the marriage between Indulf's sister and Olaf Gothfirthsson.

[38] *"In the same year [943] the king received King Olaf, whom we have mentioned above, from the font of holy regeneration, and gave him a royal gift."*

[39] The second rebel was Ragnald son of Guthfrith, King of Northumbria, whom Edmund sponsored at his confirmation and adopted as his son the preceding year [943] (Darlington & McGurk, 1995, pp.396-397).

Strathclyde by blinding two of his sons, because of the sanctuary given Olaf[40] (Giles, 1993, pp.252-253). As Strathclyde was supposedly a satellite kingdom of Alba, Edmund also held Malcolm I responsible. Edmund ceded Strathclyde back to Malcolm under the condition that Malcolm remained an ally on land and sea, which meant stopping the men of Dublin from coming through Strathclyde to invade England.

It was imperative that Malcolm I keep control of Strathclyde as Edmund would certainly attack again if Malcolm broke faith with him (Mynors et al., 1998, pp.228-229). There was one advantage in that Olaf Gothfrithsson's successor, Olaf Curran, was a much weaker king (Smyth, p.206). Malcolm I had become the stronger power through this and must have decided that it was better to keep the province without a native leader. This is shown by the annals as there is no record of any King of Strathclyde between 945 and 973. This seems to indicate that either the kingship was dissolved during this period or that the kings were completely under the control of the Governor. This served two purposes as it showed the English that Malcolm was keeping his word to them and stopping the men of Dublin from entering through Strathclyde to invade Wessex. It also was an excuse to take control out of the hands of the old Cumbrian kings and to increase his own holdings in other areas of the lowlands[41] (Macqueen & Macqueen, 1989, pp. 348-349). Indulf who showed himself to be a valiant king[42] was probably equally adept at keeping Strathclyde in line during his tenure there. When Indulf succeeded to the throne in 954, his Tanaise Dubh became Governor of Strathclyde. The problems started when Dubh ascended the throne of Alba. In the period 962 to 965 we assume that Duncan, lay Abbott of Dunkeld was appointed Governor[43] as we know that he was killed in 965. Who held this position between 965 and 973 is not recorded but it certainly was not Cuilen who was Tanaise to Dubh. Cuilen became King of Alba in 967 and was killed in 971 by Rhydderch son of Donald, brother of Malcolm who became King of Strathclyde in 973. This murder leaves many unanswered questions. The Annals of Ulster state that Cuilen was killed in battle with the Britons[44] (Skene, 1867, pp. 364). Fordun gives a reason, the supposed abduction and rape of a daughter of Rhydderch who was the brother of Malcolm future King of Strathclyde, which may be a glossed over version of

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[40] This account is only given in Roger of Wendover's History, written before 1237. "*In the same year king Ædmund with the aid of Leoling, king of South Wales, ravaged the whole of Cumberland, and put out the eyes of the two sons of Dummail, king of that province. He then granted that kingdom to Malcolm, King of the Scots, to hold of himself, with a view to defend the northern parts of England from hostile incursions by sea and land.*"

[41] Fordun states that in the fifth year of the reign of King Eadred, he along with Malcolm, King of Alba "*devastated with savage slaughter the Northumbrians who were conspiring against him [Eadred] and setting up a new king for themselves. This support afterwards resulted in great loss to Malcolm's own kingdom*," by incurring the hostility of the Danes and Norwegians who before had been Malcolm's allies. Malcolm obviously honoured the treaty between him and Eadred at this point to weaken the Northumbrian hold on Lothian as his successor Indulf used this to his advantage in conquering the province. This point is also brought out by Mitchison (2002, p.12).

[42] In 952 Indulf recovered Edinburgh for the Scots and he also annexed Lothian to Alba.

[43] This fact is given credence in *The Origins of the Family of the Irvines or Erinvines*, written in 1678 by Dr. Christopher Irvine, MD, Historiographer Royal of Scotland as the Irvines claimed descent from Duncan. It is also mentioned in *Royalty for Commoners* (Stuart, 1998) but this source is not completely dependable.

[44] The Annals of Ulster: *971 Kal Jan Anno Domini DCCCCLXX*

*Culen Illuilb ri Albain do marbhadh do Bretnaibh irroicatha.*

[Culen {son of} Illuilb, king of Alban, slain by the Britons in battle.]

the actual facts (MacQueen & MacQueen, pp.354-357). This version of Cuilen's death is also presented in the later king lists. The truth may well lay in another source *The Prophecy of Berchan.* This source cites that Cuilen was killed by the Britons while he was 'seeking' apparently a reference to trying to collect taxes (Hudson, 1998, p.160). As Cuilen apparently had no Governor of Strathclyde he tried to control these functions, such as overseeing the collection of taxes, personally. This obviously infuriated the local population and gave them access to rid themselves of this problem by killing him. In 971 Kenneth succeeded to the throne and after his invasion and punishment of Rhydderch he must have appointed Malcolm son of Donald as the new King of Strathclyde as the first we hear of another king is in 973 when Malcolm, King of the Cumbrians, pledges his allegiance to King Edgar as an ally along with Kenneth II, King of Alba (Swanton, 1998, p.119).

## C. Governors and Kings of Strathclyde [973-1018]

Malcolm ruled Strathclyde from 973 to 997[45] (Skene, 1867, p.365). Domhnaill is mentioned in the Annals of Ulster in 975 as going on pilgrimage to Rome and it is assumed that he became a cleric[46] (MacQuarrie, 1993, p.15) and abdicated his throne to his son in or before 973[47] (Skene, p.368). The events of 973 are detailed in all the major contemporary chronicles. They all state relatively the same information:

MSS E [Peterborough MSS]: "*972 Here the Aethling Edgar was consecrated as king on the Feast of Pentecost on 11 May at the Hot Baths, in the 13th year after he succeeded to the kingdom; and he was then 29 years old. And immediately after that the king led his whole raiding ship-army to Chester, and there six kings (1) came to meet him and all pledged that they would be allies on sea and on land.*"

(1) Florence (I, pp.142-143) says: "*his eight under-kings, that is: Kenneth, king of the Scots, Malcolm king of the Cumbrians, Maccus king of many islands, and five others, Dufnal (Dunmail), Siferth, Hywel, Jacob (Iago), Juchil, met him, as he commanded and swore that they would be faithful to him and be his allies by land and sea. On a certain day he went aboard a boat with them, and, with them at the oars, he took the helm himself and steered it skillfully on the course of the River Dee, proceeding from the palace to the monastery of St John the Baptist, attended by all the company of Ealdormen and nobles also by boat. Having prayed there he returned to the palace with the same pomp. As he was entering, he is reported to have said to his nobles that any of his successors could well pride himself on being king of the English, when he might have the pomp of such honours, with so many kings subservient to him*" (Swanton, 1998, pp.119).

William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: "He [Edgar] suffered no treachery from his own people and no destruction from foreigners. Kenneth, king of Scots, Malcolm, king of the Cumbrians, Mascusius, the pirate king, and all the Welsh kings (whose names were Dyfnwal,*

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[45] The Annals of Ulster: *997 Kal. Jan Anno Domini DCCCCXCVI*
*Maelcolaim mac Domnaill ri Bretain tuaiscert moritur.*
[Malcolm, son of Domnall, king of the Northern Britons, dies.]
The Annals of Tigernach (Stokes, 1896, p.351): *T997.3*
*Mael Colaím mac Domnaill, rí Bretan Tuaisceirt, mortuus est.*

[46] MacQuarrie cites Anderson (1922, Vol.I, p.478) as the source for the statement that "*Dunguallon, King of Strathclyde, went to Rome in 975 and received the tonsure*". Duncan (1975, p.96) also states that Domnhall entered the religious life.

[47] The Annals of Ulster: *975 Kal Jan Anno Domini DCCCCLXXIV*
*Domhnall mac Eoghain ri Bretann in ailitri.*
[Domnall, son of Eogan, king of Britain, in pilgrimage.]

*Giferth, Hywel, Iago and Iudethil) he compelled to attend his court, and bound them to him by a perpetual oath, so much so that, when they all met him at the city of Legions, he took them for a triumphal procession on the river Dee. For he set them in one boat, and made them row while he sat at the prow, as a way of displaying the majesty of a king who held the power of so many kings in subjection. Indeed, he is reported to have said that his successors would only be able to boast of being kings of England when they enjoyed so singular an honour. The result was that, as his fame 'flitted o'er the lips of men' [Virgil, Georgics, Vol. iii, 9 and recalled at 167.1], foreigners in crowds, Saxons, Flemings, even Danes, visited this country and became Edgar's friends;"* (Mynors et al., 1998, pp.238-241).

*Brut Y Tywysogyon: "971-973. A year after that, there was a great fleet along with Edgar, king of the Saxons, at Chester"* (Jones, 1952, p.8).

Roger of Wendover: *"In the same year Eadgar the Pacific, coming to the City of Legions [Chester], received the oath of fealty from eight tributary kings, to wit, Rinoth king of Scots, Malcolm king of the Cumbrians, Maco king of Mona and numerous isles, Dusual king of Demetia, Siferth and Huwal kings of Wales, James the king of Galwallia, and Jukil king of Westmoreland; and on the morrow, embarking with them in a vessel, and placing them at the oars himself took the helm, and skillfully steering the vessel according to the course of the river, all his nobles following in other vessels, to the admiration of multitudes he voyaged from the palace to the monastery of St John the Baptist, where divine service was performed; after which he returned with the same pomp to the palace; and as he entered the vessel, he is reported to have said to his nobles, that now at length each of his successors could boast that he was king of England, having been so honoured by so many obsequious king"* (Giles, 1993, pp.263-264).

The chronicles all testify to a meeting of eight kings at Chester in 973/4. The fact that this gathering is documented in the Welsh annals is positive proof of the event. Though all the kings in attendance cannot be identified with certainty some are easily recognized: Kenneth King of Scots, Malcolm King of Strathclyde, Magnus King of Man, Hwyal King of Gwynedd and Iago King of Powys. Dufnal is probably former King of Strathclyde before he left for Rome although Roger of Wendover describes him as King of Demetia which was the Roman name for Dyfed. The identity of Siferth and Iuchil is not readily apparent. Duncan has stated that Kenneth II came to the meeting to obtain Edgar's consent to the Scottish occupation of Lothian which must have been a "*fait accompli, acknowledging a Scottish occupation for the sake of promises of peace and an end to the ravaging of Northumbria*" (Duncan, 1975, p.96). If this is true then the conference of kings must have been to arrange peace within the island of Britain and possibly Siferth and Iuchil are Scandinavian rulers who were raiding the eastern coast. The rowing of Edgar on the Dee seems an English elaboration for the fact that some or all of the kings attended mass together at the monastery of St John the Baptist. It is certain that Kenneth II went for the sole purpose of gaining an undeniable claim to Lothian as he was not a direct vassal of Edgar and neither was Malcolm, king of Strathclyde who was a vassal of Kenneth II. It appears that Kenneth had instituted the kingship again in Strathclyde because of the revolt against Cuilen and to maintain a calm authority over the kingdom. With the attainment of Edgar's approval of the Scottish authority in Lothian[48] (Anderson, 1908, p.77), Kenneth II had to worry about establishing control over the native subjects there. He could not afford to have his focus split on two different sides of the lowlands. Lothian had initially been regained by Indulf, but during the succeeding rivalry between Dubh and Cuilen

[48] Symeon of Durham in De Primo Saxonum Adventu says, "*And when [Kenneth, King of Alba] had done him homage, King Edgar gave him Lothian; and with great honour sent him back to his own.*"

the province had apparently retained its Northumbrian character and it was in Kenneth's reign that the land was brought under complete Scottish rule (Duncan, 2002, pp.24-26).

In order to maintain peace Kenneth II appointed his nephew and Tanaise Malcolm son of Dubh as Governor of Strathclyde. He must have held this position until his death in 990. It is only logical that Kenneth II would have appointed Malcolm as Rhydderch had just killed Cuilen and Kenneth probably feared retaliation from Constantine, the son of Cuilen, who was not named as Kenneth's successor. It is also in the *Scotichronicon* that Kenneth is said to be the first to try and implement a lineal succession in Alba. This is an indication that he at first bypassed the line of Cuilen by naming Dubh's son Malcolm as his heir. Kenneth intended to keep the line of succession alternating between his descendants and that of his brother Dubh completely eliminating the line of Aedh mac Cinead from the throne. This was exacerbated by another son of Cuilen[49] (Robertson, 1862, p.79), Olaf [Amlaibh], who must have shared the throne of Alba with Kenneth II for a period or usurped it for a short time as he is shown in the Annals of Ulster to have been killed in 977[50] (Skene, 1867, p.365).

By turning the two line system of succession into three lines Kenneth II created chaos in the kingship of Alba. In 995 Kenneth II[51] (Skene, p.10) was murdered by a member of the house of Atholl[52] [Dubh had killed Dubhacon in 965 and the concept of blood feud was not new in 10th century Scotland] and was succeeded by the last remaining member of the original second line of succession, the line of Aedh mac Cinead, Constantine III son of Cuilen. In 997 Constantine was killed and the crown of Alba was taken by Kenneth mac Dubh, brother of Malcolm. It was Kenneth III who sought to name his son Giric as Leth-Righ[53] (Duncan, 1975, p.113), joint king, bypassing the line of his brother Malcolm and trying to make sure the succession continued in Clan Dubh. This did not work as Malcolm son of Kenneth II killed both Kenneth III and Giric at Monzievaird in Tayside on March 25, 1005[54] (Skene, pp.175,

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49 Robertson states that no opposition seems to have been offered upon the death of Colin to another son of Malcolm the First, who ascended the throne as Kenneth the Second. The subsequent death of Colin's brother Olave, about six years later, may point to a continuation of the struggle between the rival branches of the reigning family, and appears to have established Kenneth for the remainder of his life in undisputed possession of the throne.

50 The Annals of Ulster: *977 Kal Jan Anno Domini DCCCCLXXVI*

*Amlain mac Ailuilb ri Albain do marbhadh la Cinaet mac n-Domhnall.*

[Amlain, son of Illuilb, king of Alban, slain by Kenneth, son of Domnall.]

51 The Pictish Chronicle *DCCCCLXXI-DCCCCXCV, MS. Cole Bib. Imp. Paris, 4126:*

*Kenneth the son of Malcolm ruled for years. [sic]*

52 In 995 Kenneth was lured to a house in Fettercairn by Finella (daughter of Cunthar, mormaer of Angus) and there killed in fantastic fashion, in revenge for the death of her son.

53 Duncan says that the two sharing royal segments thus became three rival ones, a fact which explains the turbulence and uncertain succession from 995 to 1005, or indeed to 1058. He has theorized that the two versions of who ruled from 997 to 1005 may possibly be explained by an attempt on Kenneth III's part to exclude other segments by associating his son Giric with himself not just as tanaise but as joint king, leth-righ. If so the attempt was unsuccessful.

54 Chronicle of the Picts and Scots, MCCLXXX, MS. Corpus Christi College, Cant. Scalacronica.

*Grige mac Kyneth mac Douf viiii aunz, et fust tue de Malcolme fitz Kynech.*

*[Grige mac Kyneth mac Douf nine years, and was slain by Malcolm son of Kynech.]*

*Girus mac Kinath mac Duff 8 annis. Interfectus a filio Kinet in Moeghauard et sepultus in Iona.*

206). Malcolm II finally succeeded in making direct descent the method of succession in Scotland[55] (Smyth, 1984, p.226). To be sure that there were no more upheavals in the kingship, Malcolm II killed all potential threats to the throne including Malcolm son of Beoedhe in 1033[56] (Skene, p.368) and appointed his grandson Duncan to the position of Mormaer of Strathclyde in 1018[57] (Smyth, pp.220-221; Duncan, 1975, p.128). The last king of Strathclyde that we have any documentation of is Eoghain son of Domhnaill who was with Malcolm II at the Battle of Carham in 1018[58] (Smyth, p.227). In the annals he is referred to as "Owen the Bald" and after that there is no mention of any other king recorded.

## D. Summary

Fordun muddled the actual facts together in his account of Malcolm mac Dubh, but he certainly didn't fabricate him. Fordun used William of Malmesbury, a reliable and usually accurate chronicler, for his early history. It has been shown by Prof AAM Duncan (2002, p.38) that John of Worcester who was a contemporary of William of Malmesbury used a lost manuscript that was related to Manuscript C [the Abingdon Manuscript] and Manuscript D [ the Worcester Manuscript] as his source, and so too did William of Malmesbury[59]. The material seems to indicate that Fordun had access to a now lost annal which dealt with a little recorded period in Scottish history. The historical facts testify that Malcolm I was held responsible by King Edmund in 945 for

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*[Grige reigned 997-1005 when he was killed by Malcolm II.]*

55 Malcolm II had withdrawn to Strathclyde during the reign of Kenneth III, which may be an indication that he was governor at that time. Fordun relates that Malcolm II refused to pay tribute to the Danes and Strathclyde was destroyed and ravaged for this act in 1000. This event is delineated in the Chronicles but no reason is given for the destruction.

56 The Annals of Ulster: *1033 Kal. Jan. ii. f. l. xxvi. Anno Domini MXXXIII*

*M. meic Boete meic Cinaedha do marbhadh la Maelcolaim meic Cinaeda.*

*[The son of the son [The son of] Boete, son of Cinead slain by Malcolm, son of Cinaed.]*

57 Malcolm II made his grandson Duncan Mormaer of Strathclyde and by this time it is possible that Malcolm II may have had an idea of using this position as a stepping stone to the throne. After Duncan ascended the throne the title becomes null, but Maldred, brother of Duncan, was called Regent of Strathclyde indicating that the governorship must have passed to him. The last mention of any principal in Strathclyde occurs in the reign of Alexander I when he was forced to make his brother, the future David I, earl of Cumbria by which he ruled all of southern Scotland. This may have been a hereditary title at this point such as the ones Ethelred inherited as Abbot of Dunkeld and Abthania of Dule. Duncan states "*By 1113, and probably not long before that date, reluctantly and under threats Alexander (I) gave his endowment to David: Lothian south of Lammermuir, Teviotdale and Strathclyde.*"

58 Smyth relates that according to the *Historia Regum*, Owen the Bald, yet another son of Donald, was King of Strathclyde in 1018 when he fought alongside Malcolm II in the Battle of Carham.

59 Duncan proposes that the source of William of Malmesbury's information was a corpus of material now lost but represented by the chronicle of John of Worcester, William's contemporary, but writing perhaps a decade later [c.1135, as William of Malmesbury wrote c.1125], who, unlike William, stuck to an annalistic format and also used these materials. The main element in this corpus of materials was a lost version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, related to manuscripts C and D. Lost sources are often found in existing chronicles. The Dunkeld Chronicle cited by Dauvit Brown (1997) is one such case. Its existence between 849-903 or later is postulated by Prof Brown based on 17 entries in the Scottish Chronicle dating from 849-952. Sometimes the proof of a lost source may simply be a sentence or a few unique words in the corpus of an existing work. For a discussion of such a lost Pictish source see Forsyth (2000).

the actions of Strathclyde and it is implied there was a treaty between Malcolm and Edmund. Fordun's account of Indulf and Dubh ruling Strathclyde is accurate and the best explanation of the historical events which followed but he does not realise the actual position held by each Tanist. Fordun also mixes the positions of governor and king once the royal line is put back on the throne of Strathclyde by Kenneth II. The transition to lineal descent by the kings of Alba was not a process just begun under Malcolm II. There had been civil unrest and assassinations since the time of King Dubh and in the end the line of Aedh mac Cinead was eliminated and the heirs of King Dubh were bypassed. His descendants continued as a royal segment in the House of Fife and were second only to the kings themselves in Scotland for 300 years. Malcolm II finally changed the laws of succession but not without leaving a quagmire for his descendants which led to the rise of MacBeth and the troubled reign of his great-grandson Malcolm III. The works of Fordun do provide us a glimpse of the lost history of Strathclyde and its place in medieval Scotland.

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**Fig. 8** ***Pictish cross at Aberlemno in Angus, believed to represent the battle of Nechtansmere*** *(footnote 15 above)* [http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/195962]

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