

Title	Iona and the Shrine of Columba, c. 800–1200
Authors	MacDonald, Aidan D. S.
Publication date	2013-01-01
Original Citation	MacDonald, A. D. S. 2013 Iona and the Shrine of Columba, c.800-1200, CORA: Cork Open Research Archive, https://hdl.handle.net/10468/15058
Type of publication	Book
Rights	Iona and the Shrine of Columba, c.800–1200 © 2013 by Aidan D.S. MacDonald is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/ - http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Download date	2026-09-06 04:26:16
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/15058

Iona and the Shrine of Columba, c. 800–1200

Aidan MacDonald



Photo: © Tomás Ó Carragáin

St Columba's Shrine, Iona, Argyll, with St John's Cross (replica) in the foreground. This diminutive early church (which originally had antae projecting from its end walls) was later incorporated into the medieval abbey complex.

Table of Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	3
PART I – THE MONASTERY OF IONA, c.800–1200	7
Historical Overview	9
The Character of the Monastery	22
Ecclesiastical Offices and Scholarly Activity	22
Anchorites, Ascetics and Céli Dé	25
The Possessions of Iona	28
Cellach's Monastery of 1204	31
Material Remains	36
Conclusion	40
PART II – THE SHRINE OF COLUMBA	41
St Columba's Corporeal Relics in the Seventh to Ninth Centuries	43
Erdamh Choluim Chille	54
Early Medieval Pilgrimage and Burial on Iona	58
Later Traditions Regarding 'St Columba's Shrine'	77
PART III – IONA AND THE SHRINE OF COLUMBA, c.800–1200	83
A Reappraisal	85
<i>Appendix 1: The Triple Burial at Downpatrick</i>	97
<i>Appendix 2: The Publications of Aidan D.S. MacDonald</i>	102
Bibliography	104



Photo: © Dermot Roantree

Aidan MacDonald (1941–2013)

A graduate of the Universities of Cambridge (MA) and Oxford (MLitt), Aidan MacDonald worked for several years in the late 1960s and 1970s with the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments of the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works in Edinburgh. From 1978 until his retirement in 2000 he lectured in the Department of Archaeology, University College Cork. He is fondly remembered as a good-natured and supportive colleague, and a very learned and conscientious teacher who encouraged his students to reach their potential.

Foreword

Aidan MacDonald has gifted us a substantial body of work in early ecclesiastical archaeology and cognate fields (see [Appendix 2](#)). Arising from his work with the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, he co-authored several papers in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* detailing surveys and excavations in Scotland, mainly of early ecclesiastical sites. A second long-standing interest of his was early Scottish toponymy, on which he published nine papers over a thirty-year period, beginning in the early 1970s at a time when the importance of place-names to an understanding of settlement and topography in proto-historical contexts had yet to be fully appreciated by most archaeologists. His interdisciplinary instincts also bore fruit in several papers that explored the importance of textual sources for our understanding of the material environment of early Insular monasticism. In 1984, he explained his rationale as follows: ‘The essential function of a monastery, certainly as a whole and very likely also as to its component parts, can probably never be fully amenable to purely archaeological investigation: contemporary or at least reliable written documentation will [...] always be needed to breathe some semblance of life back into scattered and fragmentary bones’ (*Peritia* 3, 300). In *Irish Antiquity*, a festschrift for M.J. O’Kelly published in 1981 (D. Ó Corráin ed., Cork), he presented a comprehensive, and still extremely useful, treatment of the evidence in the *Annals of Ulster* for churches, round towers, and other monastic and domestic buildings, while in 1999 (*Peritia* 13) he presented a more targeted treatment of the term *reiclés*, thereby elucidating the character and functions of specialised ecclesiastical complexes at major monasteries.

In addition to his early survey work, he wrote interdisciplinary papers on several monastic sites, including Clonmacnoise, Durrow, Kingarth, Labbamolaga and Rosemarkie. Undoubtedly, though, the site that commanded most of his attention was Iona, Argyll, especially as represented in the late seventh century *Vita Columbae* by Adomnán. He published substantial papers on the relationship between Iona and its subsidiaries in Scotland (*Peritia* 4; in *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, Lawmaker, Peacemaker*, J. Wooding ed., Dublin, 2010), and on what can be gleaned from textual sources about the built environment of the monastery, its agricultural economy, and the quotidian routines of its monks (*Peritia* 3; in *Studies in the Cult of St Columba*, C. Bourke ed., 1997). In *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (J. Carey, M. Herbert, and P. Ó Riain eds, Dublin, 2001), he published an influential study of the layout of the monastery as portrayed by Adomnán. He demonstrated that the underlying rationale was a threefold hierarchy of sanctity ‘reminiscent of that advocated in the *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*’, the ultimate exemplar for which was most likely ‘Ezekiel’s ideal temple in his restored Jerusalem of the (post-exilic) future (Ez 40–8).’ These observations were later cited by Jenkins as a key inspiration for the only book-

length study of biblical models for the layout of early Irish monasteries published to date (*‘Holy, Holier, Holiest’: The Sacred Topography of the Early Medieval Irish Church*, Turnhout, at pp. x, 35–7, 85–6, 132, 138, 145). One of MacDonald’s last publications, a contribution to *Listen, O Isles unto Me* (E. Mullins and D. Scully eds, Cork, 2011), the festschrift for his esteemed colleague, Jennifer O’Reilly, considered the portrayal of eremitic monasticism in the *Vita Columbae*. Thus, a substantial proportion of his publish oeuvre constitutes a sustained investigation of the character and layout of Iona in the pre-Viking period. Complementing these publications, the present work, which he drafted during his final illness, takes up the story and considers the fortunes of Iona in the period 800–1200.

From the time of its foundation by St Columba in the later sixth century to the turn of the ninth century, Iona occupied a unique position as a conduit of religious, intellectual, and artistic interchange between Ireland, Scotland, Anglo-Saxon England and the wider world. Iona’s output during that period, including Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae* and *De Locis Sanctis*, his detailed description of the Holy Land; the likely contribution of Iona scholars to the formulation of canon law; its sculptural output, including some of the earliest known high crosses; and the work of its manuscript illuminators, which may include the Book of Kells, have deservedly received a great deal of scholarly attention. In 807, however, a new Columban house was established at Kells, Co. Meath, partly because of the frequency and violence of Viking attacks on Iona from the 790s onwards. Traditionally, it was assumed that from then on Iona maintained a sometimes precarious, if not indeed periodically interrupted, existence as a second rank church within an organisation now run from Ireland. However, as recognised in modern scholarship, including the present study, this is an exaggeration; in fact, Iona maintained an important position within the Columban federation in the period after 800.

- Part I of the study provides a detailed historical overview and considers the character of the monastery.
- Part II considers the corporeal relics of St Columba and their shrine. While some have argued that these relics were transferred to Kells in the ninth century, here it is argued that some or all of them remained on Iona. This is supported by the fact that Iona developed as a major centre for pilgrimage and high-status burial.
- Part III explores the implications of the foregoing for our understanding of the role and character of Iona and development of the cult of St Columba during these centuries.

In the words of the distinguished early medievalist and place-names expert, Simon Taylor, ‘Aidan MacDonald is the kind of scholar whose work will increase, rather than decrease in relevance and value as the present renaissance of interest in early medieval Scotland continues to flourish’ (*Scottish Place-Name News* 35, 11). It is hoped that the newly launched digital collection of his publications in University

College Cork’s Open Access institutional repository (see [CORA](#)), including this substantial monograph, will allow researchers to benefit more readily from this rich scholarly legacy.

Prof. Máire Herbert, Roinn na Sean- agus na Meán-Ghaeilge,
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Dr Tomás Ó Carragáin, Department of Archaeology,
University College Cork

Prof. Terence O’Reilly, Department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin
American Studies, University College Cork

Cork, October 2023

Acknowledgements

This manuscript was typed up by Marjorie Boyd and typeset by Tom O’Reilly of ORP Cambridge. Siobhán Bowman of the Boole Library, University College Cork, was instrumental in putting together the Aidan MacDonald Collection in University College Cork’s Open Access institutional repository (CORA), comprising more than thirty articles in addition to this monograph ([Appendix 2](#)).

Iona and the Shrine of Columba, c.800–1200 © 2013 by Aidan D.S. MacDonald is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

To cite this monograph:

MacDonald, A.D.S. 2013 *Iona and the Shrine of Columba, c.800–1200*, CORA: Cork Open Research Archive <https://hdl.handle.net/10468/15058>

PART I

THE MONASTERY OF IONA, c.800–1200

Historical Overview

The foundation of Kells in 807 has often been seen in the past as a watershed in the history of Iona and the Columban churches. In this view, the frequency and violence of Viking attacks on the island during the 790s and early 800s made it impossible for Iona to continue as effective head of a widespread community of churches in Scotland and Ireland. So Kells was founded and hegemony transferred thither; Iona itself maintaining thereafter a sometimes precarious, if not indeed periodically interrupted existence as a second rank church within an organisation now run from Ireland.¹

This view has, of course, been progressively modified and significant aspects of it at least tacitly abandoned. Kells probably did not become at once the formal head church of the Columban community (as official seat of the abbot of Iona, later of the successor of Columba or coarb of Columcille); though it was possibly, as I shall suggest, the usual residence in practice of the abbots during the ninth century.² And, as will be seen, it seems increasingly unlikely that Iona itself was ever actually abandoned. Nevertheless, the character and scope of the surviving documentary evidence, especially the annals, inevitably focuses the attention of historians (in particular) on Columba's churches in Ireland with increasing insistence from the tenth century, if not the ninth. From an Irish perspective, therefore, Iona itself tends to become more remote – the object (as in the annals) of occasional notice, but not of sustained interest. So it seems worthwhile to examine as far as possible systematically and from all categories of evidence available, the state of affairs at Iona itself during the period from the early ninth century to the late twelfth and early thirteenth, and to attempt to assess (or reassess) the actual status of the church there, within and outwith the Columban community, throughout this time. It seems to me that evaluation of the local cult of St Columba is integral to this exercise.

1 Cf. e.g., Reeves 1857, 369, 388; Skene 1876–80, ii, 290–1; Andersen 1922, i, 258–9 (who, however, seems to have seen the final transfer of abbatial authority from Iona to Kells as occurring in 849: *ibid.* 279–80. Earlier, Anderson, apparently influenced by Orderic Vitalis, believed that Iona had been abandoned for a time because of Viking raids, before being rebuilt by Queen Margaret in the late 11th century: 1908, 9; and see below): Kenney 1929, 425, 445–6; Chadwick 1962, 21. But cf. also RCAHMS 1982, 47–8; Herbert 1988, 68–70, who also discusses the political background to the foundation of Kells. The compiler of the *Dublin Annals of Innisfallen* (DAI) also saw the Viking raids and the foundation of Kells as cause and effect: O'Connor 1825, vol. ii, part 3, 28; Anderson 1922, i, 259.

2 Herbert thinks (1988, 78–9) that Kells probably became the seat of the coarb of Columcille in 927, when Dubthach succeeded Máel Brigte mac Tornáin in the coarbship. Bannerman (1993, esp. 29, 31–2, 42–3) believed like Anderson (n.1), that the definitive division of Columba's relics was made in 849; and that the authority of Iona and its founder passed then to Kells in Ireland and to Dunkeld in Scotland. I discuss the matter of Columba's corporeal relics in more detail in Part 2.

At their onset, in the 790s and early 800s, Iona does seem to have suffered severely from Viking raids. It was devastated in 795, burned in 802, and sixty-eight members of the community killed in a raid in 806.³ Cellach, abbot of Iona, oversaw the foundation and construction of the new monastery of Kells from 807 to 814, though it is not clear whether or not he was continuously resident there. AU record his resignation upon the completion of the *templum* (a stone church?) in 814; and his replacement by Diarmait, *alumnus Daigri* (AU 814.9); and his death in the following year (AU 815.6). Only DAI (on what, if any, authority) state that he returned to Iona and died and was buried there.⁴

DAI (n.4) imply that Cellach was normally, possibly continuously resident in Kells. That may be an assumption on their part, but there are occasional indications – few and faint admittedly – that the ninth century abbots of Iona were frequently, if not usually resident in Ireland: not necessarily at Kells exclusively or even predominantly, though it would have been a natural choice. In 818 Diarmait abbot of Iona went to Scotland.⁵ His return to Ireland is not noticed by the surviving annals, but in 829 he went to Scotland again, this time certainly with relics of Columba, returning to Ireland in 831 with (presumably) the same relics.⁶ In 849, Abbot Indrechtach came to Ireland with relics of Columba (*co mindaibh Coluim Cille* – AU 849.7). This entry is often taken to be the Irish notice of the definitive division of the relics of Columba between Kells and Dunkeld, marking effectively the downgrading of Iona within the Columban hierarchy of churches.⁷ The reference to the relics, however, uses exactly the same words as do the entries of 829 and 831. If, then, as is quite possible, an entry noticing Indrechtach's journey to Scotland some time before 849 (or, at the very least, earlier in that year) has been lost, we may in fact be dealing with the same or a closely similar situation to that pertaining in Abbot Diarmait's case. In 865, Cellach son of Ailill, abbot of Kildare and of Iona (*abbas Cille Daro et abbas Ia* – AU 865.2) died in Pictland. The unusual combination of offices, with Kildare given precedence, surely indicates that Cellach was Irish-based. He may have

been in Pictland on official business in his capacity as abbot of Iona; though the death in the same year of Tuathal son of Artgus, 'chief bishop of Foirtriu and abbot of Dún Caillen' (Dunkeld: *primepscop Fortrenn 7 abbas Duin Caillenn* – AU 865.6) need be no more than coincidence.⁸ In 872 according to the *Fragmentary Annals*, *comarba Coluim* narrowly escaped Viking raiders in the neighbourhood of Lough Ree. Anderson translated 'Columba's successor', identifying him as the abbot Feradach of Iona, who died in 880. Radner assumed that he was the abbot of Terryglass (i.e. successor of Colum Mac Cremthainn) but allowed that he 'could be the head of the Columban monasteries ... who seems to have had no fixed abode after the fall of Iona, and might thus be found at or near any of his monasteries'.⁹ I have reservations about a peripatetic abbot of Iona. *Comarba Coluim* rather than *comarba Coluim Cille*, however, perhaps makes it more likely that this individual was head of the community of Terryglass.

These are scarcely more than fugitive signs (cf. also n.13 below). The surviving record itself, moreover, displays numerous gaps. Abbot Diarmait is apparently not noticed after 831, not even his death. His presumed successor Indrechtach is, as we have seen, on record in 849; and on 12th March 854 he was murdered in England while on a pilgrimage to Rome.¹⁰ Cellach son of Ailill, who presumably succeeded Indrechtach under circumstances of which we know nothing (but who was in all probability based at Kildare), died in 865. His putative successor, Feradach son of Cormac, died in 880; and Feradach's equally putative successor, Fland son of Maelduin, died in 891.¹¹ If, however, the abbots primarily of Iona were usually

3 Anderson 1922, I, 256, 258. The devastation of Iona in 795 is recorded by AI only: 'The plundering of Í Coluim Chille...' – *Orcaín Iae Coluim Chille*... AU record more generally the 'devastation of all of the islands of Britain by heathens' – *uastatio omnium insularum Britanniae a gentilibus* – at 794.7; and the burning of Rechru by heathens (*loscadh Rechrainne o geinntib*: Rathlin?) and the overrunning and laying waste of Skye (*Sci do choscradh 7 do lomradh*), presumably also by Vikings – at 795.3. The burning of 802 is at AU 802.9; the massacre of 806 at AU 806.8.

4 Anderson 1922, I, 259–61. DAI, s.a. 807: *seacht bliaghana dho na Abb ann, go ndeach go hAoi tar ais, 7 gur hadhlacadh ann e*; translated into Latin by O'Connor (1825, vol. ii, pt.3, 28) thus: *septum annis Abbas fuit ibi, donec rediisset Hionam et sepultus est ibi*; 'he was abbot there (i.e. in Kells) for seven years, and went back to Iona; and he was buried there' (Anderson, l.c., 259).

5 Anderson 1922, i, 261, from FM (816). What must be the corresponding entry in CS [818] adds 'with the shrine of Colum Cille'. I shall return to this point later. Anderson does not notice the CS entry.

6 Anderson 1922, i, 265–6. *Co minnaib Coluim Cille* (AU 829.3), *co mindaibh Coluim Cille* (AU 831.1).

7 Anderson 1922, i, 279–80, (282). See nn.1 and 2 above and further below.

8 Anderson 1922, i, 295. Herbert (1988, 73 n.24) plays down the apparent significance of the combination of offices: she argues that, since *Cell Daro* is not an unusual or unique compound, a Scottish church so named could be intended. But, though the cult of Brigit is well represented in Scottish place-names (see Watson 1926, 92, 152, 161, 187, 193, 194, 274–5), I know of no church on record called *Cell Daro* – and it would presumably have had to have been an important one. (It seems quite likely, in actual fact, that the most important church in early medieval Scotland dedicated to St Brigit was Abernethy, originally a Pictish foundation: Anderson 1922, i, cxx–cxxi, cxxiv, 121–2, and cf. 440; Anderson 1973, 247, 261–2, 266, 272, 286–9; Van Hamel [1932], § 50).

9 Anderson 1922, i, 304–5 (dating the event to 873); Radner 1978, 146–7 (§ 408), 204: she may have been thinking of Durrow.

10 Anderson 1922, i, 284–5. *Heres Coluim Cille, sapiens optimus, iiii. Id. Márta apud Saxones martirizat* (AU 854.3); *Indrechtach hua Finshneachtain, heres Columbae Cille, sapiens optimus, 4 Idus Martii apud Saxones martirizatur* (AR, § 248); *Indrechtach hua Finechta, abb Iie, hi martra dochoid oc dul do Roim la Saxanu* (AI 854); see also CS [854]; who call him *comharbba Colaim Cille*.

According to the text of the *Fragmentary Annals*, § 242, recording this event, Indrechtach is *comarba Coluim Cille 7 Diarmada sapientissimi*. Radner (1978, 198) regards the words *7 Diarmada sapientissimi* as a scribal error here, noting the occurrence of *Diarmait sapientissimus* in § 245. Anderson's translation of this entry (l.c., 285) makes Indrechtach and Diarmait fellow-martyrs: while he notes that the death of 'Diarmait, the wisest of the Scots' occurs in the next year section here, and in AU and FM under 852 (FM 851), he may have considered that Indrechtach's companion might have been Diarmait, former abbot of Iona. *Dermaít* (AU) *sapientissimus* was one of two *heredes Patricii* (AU) 852.1), *comhorba Pátraicc* (FM 851), one of two abbots of Armagh (*abb Ard Macha: Fragmentary Annals*, § 245). See also AR § 247, AI 852, CS [852].

11 Indrechtach's sudden death may have dislocated the Columban abbatial succession at this point. For Feradach and Fland, see Anderson 1922, i, 358–9 and 368: *Feradach m. Cormaicc, abbas Iae*,

or frequently resident in Ireland, then the accession, apparently in 891, of Máel Brigte mac Tornáin, coarb of Patrick, to the coarbship of Columba also, might have been effected that much more smoothly.¹² No definite conclusion seems to me to be possible. The case for a predominantly nomadic lifestyle, on the one hand (embracing Iona, Kells and elsewhere), for much of the ninth century, would also seem to imply periodic *ad hoc* adjustment on the part of the abbots and their retinues to circumstances as they arose and dictated, rather than their systematic adherence to a preconceived plan. The most convenient place of residence, on the other hand, for abbots of Iona normally or frequently living in Ireland at this time would seem to be Kells, if only to avoid the obvious problems and tensions likely to arise from even short term residence at one or more churches having their own abbots.

Both Herbert and Bannerman are agreed that Kells, as the seat of the coarb of Columba, was the head church of the Columban community of churches during much of the tenth, the eleventh and first half of the twelfth centuries. From this point on, therefore, I shall concentrate attention on Iona itself. Bearing in mind Bannerman's salutary words of caution in relation to distinguishing or identifying abbots of Iona and coarbs of Columba,¹³ I shall for present purposes make the possibly simplistic assumption that, from c. 900 on, individuals designated 'abbot of Iona' or the like are attached to that church directly, unless there is good reason to think otherwise. Dignitaries other than the abbot or unspecified persons more generally are likely to be less problematic in this regard. They are, in any case, not numerous.

The first event explicitly occurring on Iona itself after 807 (apart from the possible burial there of abbot Cellach in 815: see above) is the killing of Blathmac

by Vikings in 825. The annals are terse: 'The violent death of Blamac son of Flann at the hands of the heathens in Í Coluim Chille' – *Martre Blaimhicc m. Flainn o genntib in Hi Coluim Cille* (AU 825.17).¹⁴

The document printed as 'The Monastery of Tallaght' appears to show that Blathmac and his presumed abbot Diarmaid were, at some stage in their clerical careers at least, associated with or actually Céli Dé. This text, dated by its editors to shortly before the middle of the ninth century, seems rather informally composed and is not always as explicit as one might wish. The Diarmaid who gave advice to 'bishop Carthach' (? Abbot of Terryglass, died FM 851) in § 47 is identified as abbot of Iona (*app iae*). In § 80 the Diarmaid, reference to whose fasting practice if coupled with reference to that of Colum Cille, is probably the same individual. In § 65, however, it is not altogether clear to me that the Diarmaid, who with Blathmac mac Flaind breaches the Mosaic law forbidding priestly contact with the dead, is the abbot: the final words of the section, 'and Diarmait also, the Abbot of Iona, was with him on that occasion' (*7 diarmait dano abb ía lais occo*: Clancy's 'agreed with him' does not, to my mind, remove the ambiguity), might imply that two Diarmaids are involved here. (The editors thought that Diarmaid abbot of Iona is referred to throughout). Though Columba appears in a story concerning penance in § 66; and his authority is invoked on fasting in §§ 68 and 69, Iona is not necessarily the physical background implied: the writer could conceivably be reflecting the practice as known to or understood by him of an Irish Columban house. In § 66, indeed, the saint is met just after landing at a harbour apparently somewhere near Comgall's monastery of Bangor. Iona is, on the other hand, sometimes certainly in the writer's mind. In § 85 Adomnán, for much of the tale in Iona, arbitrates in a disputed abbatial succession at Clonmacnoise. The anecdote related in § 52 refers to *reiclésaigh*, 'recluses or religious coenobites', and their unnamed abbot (*ind tapp robói ind hí*). The story seems to be traditional and turns up again in recognisably similar form in the notes to MO for June 9, where it is related of Columba himself and the location is also Iona. All that can reasonably be deduced from the tale is, I suggest, that it was accepted by some in ninth century Ireland (at least for purposes of didactic story-telling) that Iona supported *reiclésaigh*. It appears that these *reiclésaigh* were living under an ascetic discipline of some kind; but they were not necessarily anchorites and they are not said to be Céli Dé. It seems to me unlikely that ninth century Iona, perhaps especially during the first half of the century, was a hospitable environment in which to try to implant new religious ideals. If such was Diarmaid's and Blathmac's intention, then the raid of 825 in which Blathmac was killed may well have destroyed any such hopes, at least for the time being. As we shall see, Céli Dé are not mentioned explicitly at Iona until after the middle of the twelfth century.¹⁵

pausauit (AU 880.1); *Flann m. Maele Duin, abbas ía, in pace quieuit* (AU 891.1). The 9th century succession hitherto may well be intact as we have it; but the fact remains that, after 814, we do not have explicit accession dates.

MO commemorates, under March 23, 'the daughter of Feradach' – *ingen Feradaig* – together with 'my Maedóc, Alba's diadem' – *mo Maedóc mind nAlban* (Stokes 1905, 83). The notes from the Leabar Brecc, March 23, name her Ciannait and identify her father as abbot of Iona (Stokes 1880, lxiv). She is also commemorated on March 23 by MT (9th entry out of ten), MG and MD: *Ingen Fheradaig*. Both the older conventional dating of MT and MO in the late 8th to early 9th century (Hughes 1972, 205, 208) and Ó Riain's revised dating of these two texts to between 828 and 833 (Ó Riain 1990) seem to preclude an identification with the abbot Feradach who died in 880: could Ciannait have been in earlier tradition a daughter of that Feradach whose son Laisrén died as abbot of Iona in 605 (Anderson 1922, i, 125; Anderson 1991, 36–7 (VC i 12), 56–7 (VC i 29, chapter-heading); Sharpe 1995, 273–4 n.91; Ó Riain 1985, 54–5 (no.336); AU 605.4)?

12 Herbert points out (1988, 74–6) that the fact that Máel Brigte was of Cenél Conaill descent may have been important in favouring his election. She sees his tenure of the coarbship of Columba as marking a significant stage in the history of Iona and the Columban federation of churches.

13 Bannerman 1993, 14, 30–3; and see his appendix, 46–7. cf. Herbert 1988, 74. Both Herbert (*ibid.*, 70) and Bannerman (*ibid.*, 32–3) note the absence of Kells from the surviving annalistic record for a considerable time after its foundation: its profanation (*sarugad*) is noted by AU 904.2 – cf. CS [904], FM 899. In my view, of course, an abbot of or at Kells during much of the 9th century was presumably the abbot of Iona. From a rather different perspective, this is also the view of Bannerman (*l.c.* 33).

14 Anderson 1922, i, 263.

15 Gwynn and Purton 1911, 122, 144 (170 notes), 161, 153 (172 notes), 153–4, 155–6, 162–3, 146–7. The *Columba sanctus* to whom Maeldithuib prays in § 8 (p.131) is presumably Colm of Terryglass. See *DIL*, *reiclésach* (where this is the only reference given). MO, notes to June 9: Stokes 1905, 146–7. Cf. Reeves 1860, 168–9. For a different interpretation of this material in a broader

A longer and more circumstantial account of Blathmac's death is provided by the poem in Latin hexameters composed to commemorate him by Walahfrid Strabo, who died abbot of Reichenau in 849. According to this account, Blathmac came to Iona to court martyrdom at the hands of Vikings. Having a presentiment that Vikings are approaching, he advises his companions to act as their own strength or courage moves them. Some stay, others flee. At dawn Blathmac celebrates mass with those who have elected to stay with him. The raiders land and kill his companions. The monks have previously hidden in the earth the shrine of Columba adorned with precious metalwork that the marauders are after: so they kill Blathmac when he refuses to reveal its whereabouts to them. They seek the shrine in vain. It is clearly implied that the Vikings had prior knowledge of the chief object of their quest – a not improbable state of affairs, especially if they were operating from bases in the Hebrides. It is also clearly implied that Blathmac enjoyed some posthumous cult on the island and that religious life and activity more generally continued there afterwards: '... as rumour bares witness, he [Blathmac] rests in the same place, and there many miracles are given for his holy merits. There the Lord is worshipped reverently with fitting honour, with the saints ...'¹⁶ Blathmac is in fact commemorated on July 24 (the height of the raiding season?) in MT (*Blaithmec mac Flainn*: O'Clery's abstract only; LL wanting: fifth entry of nine), MG (*Blathmec (mac Flainn)*) and MD. He is certainly portrayed as leader of his company on Iona (Abbot Diarmaid is not mentioned), but his official capacity there, if any, is not stated. The value of Walahfrid's narrative poem is problematic (not least with regard to Columba's shrine, to which I shall return). On the one hand, it is more or less contemporary: on the other, it is not a firsthand account, though Walahfrid may have learnt of these events from some of those who fled;¹⁷ and it was written far from Iona.

Iona was again ravaged by Vikings, according to the LL version of *Cogadh Gaedhel Re Gallaibh*, between c. 838 and 845. Bannerman dismisses this attack as probably unhistorical.¹⁸

Nothing more seems to be heard of Iona (apart from her abbots) for about a century. Then in 937 died Angus son of Muirchertach, scholar, anchorite and tanist-abbot.¹⁹ *Aonghas mac Muirchertaigh, saoi, angcoire 7 tanaisi abbaidh lae*,

context, see Clancy 1996. I shall propose later an alternative analysis and explanation of the movements of relics of Columba at this time reflected in the annals.

16 Anderson 1922, i, 263–5. *Testis, fert ut fama, loco requiescit eodem, / Multa ubi pro meritis dantur miracula sanctis, / Qua colitur dominus digno veneranter honore / Cum sanctis ...* Duemmler 1884, 301, ll. 165–8.

17 Walahfrid's form of the name Iona, *Eo*, is a linguistically correct one: Watson 1926, 87–9; cf. Anderson 1991, lxxiii; Sharpe 1995, 257–8 (n. 56).

18 Anderson 1922, i, 276–7. Bannerman 1993, 33 n. 2. The relevant passages in Todd 1867 are ch.12 on p. 226 and ch.17 on p. 228, text and translation.

19 Anderson 1922, i, 428. Dubthach, successor of Columcille and of Adomnán, died in 938 – *ibid.* 430: *Dubtach, comarba Coluim Cille 7 Adomnain, in pace quieuit* (AU 938.1).

décc (FM 935). In 947 Cainchomrac, abbot of Iona, died: ²⁰ *Caonchomhracc, abb Ia ... décc* (FM 945).

In 963 died Fothad son of Bran, 'scribe and bishop of the islands of Scotland'. Anderson notes 'This was presumably the head of the Iona community', comparing the entry under 966 (below).²¹ This is possible, though neither set of annals recording his death connects him explicitly with Iona: *Fothud m. Brain, scriba optimus et episcopus Insi Alban, in senili aetate moritur* (AR § 282); *Fothadh mac Brain, scribhuidh 7 espucc Insi Alban ... [décc]* (FM 961). It seems likely that he is to be identified with the *Fothach episcopus* (of Alba – St Andrews?) of the Scottish Chronicle, who died during the reign of Dub son of Malcolm (962–6).²² According to the chronicler Walter Bower, writing in the mid fifteenth century, Fothad [I], bishop of Kilrymont – St Andrews, was driven out by King Indulf (954–62) and after his expulsion from the see he lived for eight years'.²³ In 966 died Fingin, bishop of the community of Iona:²⁴ *Fingin, epscop muintire Iae, quieuit* (CS [964]). FM (964) call him anchorite and bishop of Iona: *angcoire 7 epscop Ia*. If Fothad was in fact expelled from St Andrews, as later medieval tradition asserts, he may have gone to, or been exiled to, the west. If, then, his career and that of Fingin overlapped there, the title accorded him (Fothad) in the annals at his death might reflect a division of episcopal jurisdiction in the Hebrides agreed between him and Fingin as incumbent bishop of Iona. In that case, however, he was probably based elsewhere.

In 978 Fiachra, superior of Iona – *airchinnech Ia* (AU 978.1) – died. Anderson translated *airchinnech* 'prior': possibly because he thought (he does not say so

20 Anderson 1922, i, 450.

21 Anderson 1922, i, 471.

22 Anderson 1973, 252.

23 *Scotichronicon*, bk.6, ch.24, ll. 12–14 (transl.), 9–10 (text): ...*Fothad qui ab Indolff rege expulsus fuit, et post expulsionem ab episcopatu vixit octo annis*. He died on 4 May, according to one MS: MacQueen and Watt 1995, 342–3 (text and translation). The editors think that both Bower and the earlier 15th cent. chronicler Andrew Wyntoun drew on the same account of bishops of St Andrews, now lost (notes, pp. 461–2). Wyntoun's information is much the same as Bower's: 'Nest this Malcolm wes regnand / Indulff nyne yhere in Scotland. / Fodawche the byschape banysyd he / Owt of Sanctandrewys hys awyne Se. / Yhit this byschape nevertheless / Aucht yhere efftyr that lyvand wes.' Laing 1872–9, vol. ii (1872), bk.6, ch.10, ll. 771–6 (p. 91). An agreement made before 955 between the Keledei of Loch Leven and the bishop of St Andrews, a notitia of which is preserved in the Register of the Priory of St Andrews, names the bishop as *Fothath filio Bren*: Lawrie 1905, 4 (no. III), 228–9 (notes). See also Hadden and Stubbs 1869–78, vol. II, pt. i (1873), 147–8, 173; Reeves 1860, 243 (no. 2), 169–70. I know of no good reason to doubt the substantial validity and accuracy of this notice (cf. Cowan and Easson 1976, 50); though the date limit attributed to it is reached by subtracting eight years from the presumed date of Fothad's death in 963. The identity of the two Fothads seems to be generally accepted: see further Reeves 1857, 394; Skene 1876–80, vol. ii (1877), 327–30; Donaldson 1952–3, 110 n. 4; more recently, Woolf 2007, 199–201. The quality of the evidence in detail could, admittedly, be better overall. Cumulatively, however, its testimony cannot be dismissed lightly. The simultaneous existence in Scotland at this time of two bishops named Fothad, -ach son of Bran would strain one's belief in coincidence.

24 Anderson 1922, i, 472.

explicitly) that Fiachra was subordinate to the coarb of Colum Cille, presumably at this time Mugron.²⁵ It is conceivable that Mugron was trying to impose from Kells a more centralised authority over the churches of St Columba on both sides of the sea: at his death in 980 AU describe him as *comarba Coluim Cille eter Erinn 7 Albain* (980.3); CS [978] call him *Ab Iae, scriba et episcopus*; and AR (§ 290), *ab Iae, scriba optimus atque sui-episcop na Tri Rand*, ‘learned bishop of the three divisions,’ (possibly of Ireland, Scotland and Man: similarly FM 978 and see note there).

AI (981.4) designate him simply *comarbai Coluim Cille*.²⁶ Whatever the relationship, however, between Fiachra and Mugron, and the status of Iona within the hierarchy overall of Columban churches at this time, Fiachra seems to have been the actual head of the church of Iona. FM (976) call him abbot: *Fiachra Ua hArtacáin, abb Ia Choluim Chille...[décc]*.

In 986–7 occurred events which may have interesting implications. In 986 ‘the Danes arrived on the coast of Dál Riata, that is, with three ships, and seven score of them were executed and others sold’ – *Na Danair do thuidecht i n-airer Dail Riatai, .i. teora longa coro riagtha secht fichit diibh 7 coro renta olchena* (AU 986.2; similarly FM 985). Then ‘Í of Coluim Cille was plundered by the Danes on Christmas Night, and they killed the abbot and fifteen of the elders of the monastery’ – *Í Coluim Cille do arcaín do Danaraibh aidhchi Notlaic coro marbsat in apaidh 7 .xu. uiros do sruithibh na cille* (AU 986.3; similarly FM 985). The abbot may have been in episcopal orders, if AI (986.4) are recording the same event: ‘Í Coluim Chille was plundered by foreigners and the Isles were devastated by them and they slew the bishop of Í’ – *Indred dano [recte Iae?] Coluim Cille do Gallaib, 7 na Inse do fhásugud doib, 7 epscop Iae do marbad doib*. It is not, of course, clear whether the annals have singled out for notice here the more important casualties of a general massacre; or whether we are looking at an act of deliberate malice against the leaders of the community specifically. (If the latter, one wonders whether these men had committed some such offence as that of Blathmac in 825. Their ransom value, one would have supposed, should otherwise have ensured their survival). The marauders, however, stayed in the area too long for their own safety. Under the following year, AU report ‘A great slaughter of the Danes who plundered Í, and three score and three hundred of them were slain’ – *Ár mor forsna Danaraibh ro oirg I coro marbtha tri .xx.ⁱⁱ 7 tri cét diibh* (AU 987.3; similarly FM 986, adding *tre mhiorbhailibh Dé 7 Cholaim Chille*).²⁷

The first and third events here suggest reasonably efficient coastal defences for the time. (The observation would still apply, if to a lesser degree, if ‘Dál Riata’ is

Irish Dál Riata. This is, of course, possible, but perhaps less likely in view of the context overall. Cf. n. 27). Bannerman pointed out, furthermore, that the Viking attack of 986 is probably the first on record since 825. As he said, Norse raiding during the ninth century was undoubtedly accompanied by Norse settlement, followed by the rapid gaelicization and conversion to Christianity of the settlers, ‘producing the people of mixed origins known by the fifth decade of the ninth century as the *Gall-Gaidheil*, ‘stranger Gaels’, whose most revered saint was Columba himself ... it may be suggested that their presence in this area acted as a deterrent to further Scandinavian attacks on Iona rather than otherwise’.²⁸ I entirely agree; and I shall return to this phenomenon when discussing the local cult of Columba in the ninth century and later. For the present, it is enough to suggest that the presence of the Norse element in the ninth and tenth century population of the Isles seems to have resulted in relatively effective local naval defences: whatever the precise ethnic affinities of fresh raiders into the region,²⁹ their intrusion would have been resented and resisted by all *Gall Gaidheil*, originally Scots, originally Norse and of (increasingly) mixed descent. A settled property-owning population was *ipso facto* vulnerable to highly mobile marauders: the presence of pirates or freebooters in general during these years and the attack on Iona of 986 in particular were a threat to the entire population of Argyll and the Isles. Iona, in practice, was now protected by more than one layer of vested interests. (I do not believe, incidentally, that the abbot of Iona in 986 was Maelciaráin Ua Maigne, successor of Colum Cille, murdered by the Scandinavians (of Dublin?) in the same year: *Maolciaráin .H. Maigne, comarba Coluim Cille, do dul derg martra las na Danaroib a nAth cliath* – ‘Maelciarain Ua Maighne, comarb of Colum Cille, suffered red martyrdom from the Danes at Ath-cliaith’ (CS [984]; similarly FM 985). One event took place on Iona, the other in Dublin, coincidentally involving the violent death of both the abbot of Iona and the coarb of Colum Cille at much the same time).³⁰

In 1005 died Mael Brigitte ua Rímeda, abbot of Iona: *Mael Brigitte H. Rímeda abbas Ia ... in Christo* (AU 1005.1); *MaolbríccdeUa Rimhedha, abb Iae, décc* (FM 1004).³¹ In 1025 died Flannabra, coarb of Iona: *Flannabra comarba Ia ... in Christo dormierunt* (AU 1025.1); *Flannabhra, comharba Iae Colaim Chille ... décc* (FM 1025). Anderson thought that, because Flannabra’s obit is first in the year-section in both AU and FM; and also (probably) because he is designated *comarba Ia*, he was chief abbot of the Columban community at this time. This seems improbable: Máel Muire ua hUchtáin, *comarba Coluim Cille*, died in 1040

²⁵ Anderson 1922, i, 485.

²⁶ See Anderson 1922, i, 488. Bannerman (1993, 30) regarded as erroneous the use of the title ‘abbot of Iona’ as applied to Mugron. Herbert also (1988, 82–3) sees its use by some annals as probably inferred from information such as that given by AU. I shall suggest later an interpretation of the phrase *eter Erinn 7 Albain* here and elsewhere that is not necessarily at odds with their views. For an alternative suggestion regarding the significance of the ‘three divisions’, see Clancy 2011, 93–5.

²⁷ Anderson 1922, i, 489–90, 494. Anderson assumed that ‘Dál Riata’ is Scottish Dál Riata (489 n. 3).

²⁸ Bannerman 1993, 33–4.

²⁹ Crawford (1987, 66) suggests that the Scandinavian leadership in the troubles in the western seas at this time was actually provided by Earl Sigurd of Orkney and his followers. The fact that the attack took place at Christmas might indicate that the launching point was not very far away.

³⁰ This is the conclusion also of Herbert (1988, 83) and of Bannerman (1993, 30). Anderson too (1922, i, 490) gives no indication that he saw a connection between these events.

³¹ Anderson 1922, i, 521.

(AU 1040.2)³² If the latter had in fact succeeded to the office in 1009,³³ then *he* was presumably head of the Columban community when Flannabra died.

In 1070, the abbot of Iona, the grandson of Baethén, was killed by the son of the abbot ua Maeldoraid: *Abbas Ia .i. m. m. Baethen do marbadh do mc. ind abad H. Maeldoraidh* (AU 1070.6). Reeves's contention that 'there can be little doubt that this individual was son of Giollacrist Ua Maeldoraidh', who died as coarb of Colum Cille in 1062, is attractive but not demonstrable.³⁴ A situation might plausibly be envisaged in which Gille Críst's son tried to console himself for some frustrated preferment in Ireland by an unscrupulous attempt to seize the abbacy of Iona by force. This, however, is merely speculation. Herbert's comments are cautiously balanced, though I am not sure that a delay of eight years favours her suggestion that 'it might be thought that the *comarba*'s son, having failed to succeed his father as head of the saint's *familia* was attempting to retrieve his fortunes by assuming control of Iona'.³⁵ It may be noted, on the other hand, that AU, ALC and FM (1062) (but not AT 1062) describe Gille Críst at his death as *comarba Colaim Cille eter Erinn 7 Albain* (AU 1062.2) – whatever the precise significance of that designation.³⁶

It is in this context that Anderson remarks: 'The abbey of Iona seems to have frequently been deserted at this time. Queen Margaret restored it (1070 x 1093) ... presumably as a dependency of Dunkeld ...' He refers to the *Ecclesiastical History* of Orderic Vitalis, book VIII, ch.22: 'Among the other good deeds which this noble lady performed was her restoration of the cell of Iona ... It had fallen into ruins as a result of its great age and the ravages of war, but the pious queen restored it for the use of monks and made sufficient provision for the service of the Lord' – *Inter caetera bona quae nobilis hera fecerat, Huense cenobium quod ... tempestate preliorum cum longa uestustate dirutum fuerat, fidelis regina reedificauit; datisque sumptibus idoneis ad opus Domini monachis reparauit*.³⁷ Cowan and Easson regarded Orderic's testimony as 'untrustworthy'. Certainly,

32 Anderson 1922, i, 568. Cf. Bannerman 1993, 47 (appendix) and 30.

33 A possibility discussed by Herbert (1988, 89).

34 Anderson 1922, ii, 22; Reeves 1857, 401 n. b; Bannerman 1993, 47.

35 Herbert 1988, 92.

36 Cf. Mugron in 980 (above and n. 26). In addition, in the annals after 927 and up to and including the death of Flaithbertach Ua Brolcháin in 1175:– Dubthach (d. 938) is *comharba Colaim chille 7 Adomhnáin i nErinn 7 i nAlbain* (FM only, 936); in 989 *Dub dá Leithe, comarba Patraicc, do gabail comurbuis Coluim Cille a comurle fer nErinn 7 Alban*, 'took the successorship of Colum Cille by the counsel of the men of Ireland and Scotland' (AU 989.7, similarly FM 988, 989), but at his death in 998 he is *comarba Patraicc 7 Coluim Cille* (only – AU 998.2, similarly CS 996, FM 998); in 1007 Ferdomnach assumed the coarbship of Colum Cille at the assembly (*aenach*) of Tailtiu a *comurle fer nErinn* (only – AU 1007.10 (add. H1), similarly FM 1006). It seems to be only in 938, 980 and 1062, therefore, that an individual is said in some annals to be coarb of Colum Cille 'both in Ireland and in Scotland:' the phrase may be, nevertheless, more than a mere rhetorical flourish. I shall return to the matter later.

37 Anderson 1922, ii, 22; Chibnall 1973 (vol. IV), 272–3. The passage is also translated by Anderson (1908, 116), from Migne's text.

if by *monachi* Orderic envisaged religious of contemporary continental type, Benedictines or others, the entry in AU 1164 (which I discuss below) is evidence rather for a community of native Irish type in the mid twelfth century, as the Royal Commission has pointed out.³⁸ The few eleventh century entries in the Irish annals relating to Iona cannot realistically be invoked as reliable evidence for the actual state of the church there during this time. It is possible that the annals do indeed reflect low vitality in the contemporary community: it is equally possible that they reflect, separately or in combination, limited interest on the part of the recording centres in Ireland, haphazard communications between Iona and Ireland, or the accident of loss of written material – to instance three fairly obvious alternatives. It must be conceded, furthermore, that Orderic's information on the wild west in the late eleventh century is not always accurate: in book X, ch.6, he asserts that the Isle of Man was uninhabited (*deserta*) until King Magnus of Norway settled it; and in book XI, ch.8, he believed, in the context of that King's second expedition to Ireland, that at least some of the islands of the western seas more generally were uninhabited (*desertas insulas*) and that Magnus settled them. It may, therefore, be safest for the present to accept provisionally that Margaret gave some practical support as an act of piety to a venerable ecclesiastical community that may have been experiencing material and perhaps other difficulties; but that she envisaged no radical intervention at that time. As we shall see, aristocratic pilgrimage to Iona is noticed for the first half of the eleventh century at least; and, at any rate as reflected by its leading representatives, the community of 1164 appears to have been stable – whether or not as a result of the queen's reputed patronage.³⁹

The mainly thirteenth century Icelandic accounts of the visit of King Magnus Barelegs to Iona in 1098 contain circumstantial detail of some interest; and, although they are much later in date, there does not appear to be anything inherently improbable, generally speaking, in their testimony. Heimskringla (after 1220 to after 1237) says that 'King Magnus came with his host to the holy island (*i Eyna helgu*), and gave there quarter and peace to all men, and to the household ('possessions' – Hollander) of all men. Men say this, that he wished to open the small church of Columcille (*Kolumkillakirkju ina litlu*); and the king did not go in, but closed the door again immediately, and immediately locked it, and said that none should be so daring thenceforward as to go into that church; and thenceforward it has been so done'.⁴⁰ I defer for the present discussion of Colum Cille's little church. Parallel versions of this account mention the 'market-town' of Iona.' [Magnus] went ashore there in the market-town [of Iona], [and] gave there peace to every man's goods' (Fagrskinna, c. 1240). 'Then he came to the holy island, and went there ashore, in the market-town, and gave there peace' (Morkinskinna, first half of the thirteenth century; and Frisbók, early

38 Cowan and Easson 1976, 49; RCAHMS 1982, 48; cf. Duncan 1975, 123.

39 Chibnall 1975 (vol. V), 222–3; 1978 (vol. VI), 48–9.

40 Magnus Barelegs' Saga, ch.9, in Anderson 1922, ii, 107–8; also translated by Hollander 1964, 675. Icelandic text in Aðalbjarnarson 1979, iii, 220. I follow Anderson's dates for these texts.

fourteenth century) ‘to the town’ (Morkinskinna), ‘to Columba’ (Frisbók) ...⁴¹ The Old Norse word translated ‘market-town’ is *kaup-staðr*.⁴² If the meaning here is just ‘town’, in the sense of a more or less nucleated settlement of some extent, enclosed or unenclosed, then the reference may be simply to the ecclesiastical settlement within the *vallum monasterii*, the *baile* in all likelihood of AU 1204 (see below). If, on the other hand, ‘market-town’ specifically is intended, then we may have here some reflection of a predecessor of the modern village and in the same general area: an extramural settlement dependent more or less directly on the abbey (compare perhaps the variants ‘to the town’, ‘to Columba’, just quoted) and situated to the south of the ecclesiastical enclosure; in which at least some of the inhabitants were engaged to a significant extent in craft activities, or manufacture, or maritime trade: in other words, having elements of a trading centre recognisable to the Norse, albeit presumably of modest proportions. Such medieval communities probably shifted their centre of gravity from time to time. The present village of Baile Mór, facing onto St Ronan’s Bay, was built at the end of the eighteenth or beginning of the nineteenth century (the mid eighteenth century village seems to have extended a little further north as well); but the probable medieval parish church, Teampull Rónáin, (late twelfth or early thirteenth century) lies within its area and is now known to overlie an earlier church and still earlier cemetery.⁴³ The second alternative strikes me as the more likely: so it may be worth noting in this connection that Aberdeen is called a *kaup-staðr* in Heimskringla at the year ?1151; and Kirkwall the same in Orkneyinga Saga at ?1117 or later, when it is said to have had few houses.⁴⁴ One should not, of course, here as elsewhere, place too much

reliance on the evidence of external sources of later date as they survive.

Whether or not the ecclesiastical community is envisaged implicitly in these accounts of King Magnus’s visit (it seems likely that it was), an abbot died the following year: namely Donnchad grandson of Maenach – *Donnchadh m. m. Maenaigh abbas Ia* (AU 1099.6).⁴⁵

I will conclude this section by considering a few loose ends of ecclesiastical tradition, which may (or may not) refer to the period under discussion. For the Irish martyrologies commemorate three individuals, who are sometimes said to be abbots of Iona, but who do not appear as such in the surviving annalistic record.

1. At March 11 MT has Libran (*Librani*) and Libren of Cluain Fota (*Cluana Fota*). MO, March 11, has Librán, glossed *abb iae* by the notes in LB. MG, March 11, has Librán, glossed *Chluana foda*; and Librán, glossed *abb íae Coluim cille*. MD enters both Liobran, *abb ía Colaím Cille*, and Libren *Cluana Fotta* at March 11; and Liobran, name only at March 8.
2. At October 17 MT has *Odrani presbiteri*, with *i l Lettracha* above and *vel o hÍ* below Odran (LL);⁴⁶ also *Odran Lettracha* at October 2. MO has Odrán at October 27, with notes (also in LB at the same date) associating him with Letir/Lettracha Odráin in Muscraige Tire in Munster, or with Tech Airerain/Airennain in Meath, or Reilig Odhráin in Iona of Colum Cille (*nó ó Relicc Odhran i n-Í Choluim chille*), or Gair maic Moga, an island in Corca-Duibne. MG has at October 27 see MS Odrán glossed *abb ía 7 o Tigh Airerain i Midhe*: since MT also enters at October 27 *Airennain o Thig Airennain i mMidi*, Stokes may well have been right in suggesting that the words *o Tigh Airerain i Midhe* of MG’s gloss referred properly to Erennán (the main text of MO, October 27, does not notice Airennán/Airerán); and Odrán, glossed ‘of Lettir’ (*Letrech*) at October 2. MD has at October 27, Odhran, *abb ía acus ó Tigh Airerain i Midhe*, with the further information that he was ‘of the race of Conall Gulban son of Niall’ (*do chenel cConaill Gulban mic Néill do*); and Odhrán of Letir (*Letrech*) at October 2: ‘Odhrán the Master’ (*Odhrán maighistir*), of the race of Conaire son of Moghlamha, and the brother of Medhran, etc.’ (In addition, MG and MD enter Odrán at October 26; glossed in MG *ó Leitreachaibh Odhráin i Muscraighe tire*: see also MD. MT (*Odrani sancti*), MG and MD have an Odrán at 6 March, identified by an apparently secondary note under the Table of the Martyrology in MD as *ab íae do sliocht Conaill Gulban*. This Odrán is also listed by the notes to MO (Franciscan MS) under 6 March. For more on Odrán see below ‘Early Medieval Pilgrimage and Burial on Iona’).

41 Anderson 1922, ii, 109. Icelandic texts in Jónsson 1902–3, 316–17; Unger 1867, 143–4; 1871, 270.

42 Market-town, town. *Kaup* is 1. Bargain, 2. Stipulation, agreement, 3. Wages, pay; *kaupa*, to bargain, buy, etc.; *kaupi*, buyer. *Kaup-angr*, market-place, village, town, is frequent as a Scandinavian place-name denoting old market-towns: Danish Kjöbing, Swedish Köping, etc.; and cf. English Cheap-side, Chipping-Norton, etc. (The best-known instance, archaeologically speaking, is probably Kaupang, a late 8th to 9th century trading centre situated beside a natural harbour on the west side of the entrance to the Oslofjord in south-east Norway). *Staðr*, ‘stead’, place, abode, church-establishment, town. See Cleasby, Vigfusson and Craigie 1957, 333–4, 586. For Kaupang, see, e.g., Graham-Campbell 1980, 11, 98–9.

43 Pennant, in the later 18th century, thought that Cladh nan Druineach, ‘the burial ground of the craftsmen’, was the ordinary burial ground of the people of the town in former times – an opinion noted favourably by the RCAHMS. Its location, a short distance SW of Martyrs’ Bay and close to *An Ealadh* (discussed later), leads me to think that it may also (primarily?) have accommodated the burial of outsiders – people brought from beyond the shores of the island, but perhaps connected with the church of Iona through their occupation: for instance, craftsmen of the Oronsay and other late medieval schools of monumental sculpture (as well, it may be, as those of the Iona school itself). See RCAHMS 1982, 7 (detail of estate-map of 1769), 8–10, 251–2 (no. 13: St Ronan’s Church), 243 (no. 8: Cladh nan Druineach). For the earlier occupation at Teampull Rónáin, see O’Sullivan 1994: limited excavation produced no conclusive dating evidence for the pre-late 12th to early 13th century phases; a Hiberno-Norse silver coin of probably c. 1035–55 was found, but in no significant context. For the place-name Cladh nan Druineach, see also Ritchie 1945, 18, 38; there is another Cladh nan Druineach in Lochcarron parish, Ross-shire – Watson 1904, 200.

44 Aberdeen: Aðalbjarnarson 1979, iii, 328; see also Anderson 1922, ii, 216. Kirkwall: Guðmundsson

1965, 125 (text); Taylor 1938, 221 (translation). Orkneyinga Saga probably dates in its present form from the first half of the 13th century (see Taylor, l.c., 23–5).

45 Anderson 1922, ii, 119.

46 O’Sullivan 1983, 1644.

3. At December 17, MG has Crunnmael, glossed *abb lae*; and MD Crunnmael, *abb lae Coluim cille*. The notes to MO have *Crunnmael Ia* under December 17. It seems unlikely that a Librán associated explicitly with Iona by the twelfth century at least has not some connection, direct or indirect, with Adomnán's Librán 'of the reed-plot', the subject of the long story of *VC* ii 39. It is theoretically conceivable that Iona (and Tiree) promoted some cult of him as a saint (though he is said to have been buried at Durrow) – whether such a cult resulted from or resulted in Adomnán's account of him; and that that cult is reflected by the calendar entry at March 11, perhaps attracted thither by the entry for Librán of Clonfad. That he was a historical abbot of Iona of that name (and so very likely honouring the cult or memory of Librán of the reed-plot) of the tenth to twelfth century period – where there is plenty of room to accommodate him if one feels so inclined – is rendered improbable if the MT entry *Librani* is original and refers to Iona. (It is the second entry; Librán of Clonfad being third, who may also be the Librán of MO). It is, of course, equally possible that MT's *Librani* had no connection with Iona; and that his later association in the martyrological tradition with the island arose from Adomnán's narrative. Odrán, likewise, might have been the name of a tenth century or later abbot, whose name reflected the cult of StOdrán of Reilig Odhráin. It is much more likely, however, that he *is* St Odrán of Reilig Odhráin, whose cult on Iona, apparently well-known in parts of Ireland at any rate in the twelfth century, has led to a mistaken inference that he had been abbot there. (I shall return later to the cult of Odrán on Iona). Crunnmael, on the other hand, seems to me a more hopeful candidate for actual historical status as an otherwise unattested abbot – presumably to be located somewhere in the period after 900. It must be noted, however, that, while the MG glosses call him 'abbot', the MO notes do not. (The indices of AU and FM indicate that the name Crunnmael survived at least into the eleventh century. The Index of Personal Names in AI lists two instances only, both in the first half of the seventh century).

The Character of the Monastery

Ecclesiastical Offices and Scholarly Activity

Whatever the nature of Queen Margaret's intervention in the late eleventh century (if it occurred), AU 1164 (2) reflects an apparently flourishing community of native Irish type in the mid twelfth. An abbot has presumably died, resigned, or been removed from office; or possibly the abbacy has otherwise lapsed:– *Maithi muinnterí Ia, idon, in sacart mor; Augustin 7 in ferleiginn (idon, Dubsidhe) 7 in disertach, idon, Mac Gilla-duibh 7 cenn na Ceile-n-De, idon, MacForcellaigh 7 maithi muinnterí Ia arcena do thiachtain ar cenn comarba Coluim-cille, idon, Fhlaitbertaich hUi Brolcain, do gabail abdaine Ia a comairli Somarlidh 7 Fer Aerther-Gaidhel 7 Innsi-Gall, co ro fhastaei comarba Patraic 7 ri Ereinn, idon, Ua*

Lochlainn 7 maithi Ceneoil-Eogain e – 'Select members (Dignitaries, Anderson) of the Community of Ia, namely, the arch-priest (great priest, Anderson), Augustin and the lector (that is, Dubsidhe) and the Eremite (anchorite, Anderson), Mac Gilla-duib and the Head of the Celi-De, namely, Mac Forcellaigh and select members of the Community of Ia besides (other dignitaries of the community of Iona, Anderson) came on behalf of the successor of Colum-cille, namely, Flaithbertach Ua Brolchain's acceptance of the abbacy of Ia, by advice of Somharlidh (Somerled) and of the men of Airthir-Gaedhel (Argyll) and of Insi-Gall (the Hebrides); but the successor of Patrick and the king of Ireland, that is, Ua Lochlainn, and the nobles of Cenel-Eogain prevented him'⁴⁷

The death of a great priest of Iona (*sacart mór Ia*) is noticed by AU 1195(3) and ALCé 1194. He may be Augustin, but is not named.⁴⁸ The title would seem to reflect the presence in the community of others in priest's orders.

The appearance at this juncture of a *fer léiginn*, if not merely honorary (and possibly hereditary), suggests that Iona was still trying to maintain some intellectual activities and standards, if only at the basic level of a practical clerical training in the community for liturgical and probably also for pastoral purposes. There is, however, no mention of students; and I am not aware of any substantial scholarly or literary output dating to the period 800 to 1200 of certain or probable Iona provenance.⁴⁹ So the office of *fer léiginn* of Iona, to the extent that it was still

⁴⁷ See also Anderson 1922, ii, 253–4.

⁴⁸ Anderson 1922, ii, 344.

⁴⁹ Some 'Versus in Sanctum Columbam', written by a poet, possibly a monk, named Simeon, were probably composed between 1107 and 1114 (?1112) to accompany a text of Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* (VC), at the command of King Alexander I (1107–24) and under the direction of William, who has been identified as Bishop William of Man. The evidence of these verses that Simeon was a monk of Iona, as has sometimes been tentatively suggested, seems inconclusive; though, if William was indeed Bishop of Man, the identification is possible. Columba is invoked as 'Saint Columba, father' – *Sancte Columba pater* (l.1) and referred to as 'holy father and patron Columba' – *pater et patrone Columba* (l.20) and apparently 'holy dove' – *Iona sacer* (l.24). The *insula pontificum* of l.18, *Insula pontificum sibi te cognoscat amicum* – 'Let the island of bishops know you as a friend to it,' has been variously identified as Iona or Inchcolm. Simeon's own status is not defined explicitly, save that he is *poeta*. Reeves appears to accept him as a monk of Iona (though he is only 'Simeon a monk' in the General Index). Haddan and Stubbs thought that he was 'apparently a monk of Hy' (in preference to Inchcolm); Kenney that he 'was, possibly, a monk of Hii itself.' Howlett, while identifying the *insula pontificum* as Iona, does not identify Simeon as a monk of Iona. The most judicious comment to date is probably that of the Andersons: 'The work' (seemingly the copy of VC, including Simeon's verses) 'was apparently done in a religious house that the poet calls *insula pontificum*. There is no reason whatever to suppose that Iona was meant. Further study is needed to establish the identity of this *insula*, but it may be said that the most likely place seems to be the house of Céili-dé on the island of St Serf in Loch Leven.' That was written in 1961. In 1991 Mrs Anderson endorsed the argument, pointing out that Loch Leven was closely associated with bishops of St Andrews in the eleventh century, perhaps the tenth. See Howlett 2000, 19–23 (text, translation and commentary); Reeves 1857, xxix – xxx; Haddan and Stubbs 1869–78 ii (1873), 276–7; Kenney 1929, 434 (no. 216); Anderson 1961, 10 and 1991, lix – lx, where Mrs. Anderson adds (lx, n. 182), 'The copyist seems to be named as Simeon, not William as in Anderson (1961); William was apparently Simeon's superior.' The question must, it seems, remain unresolved for the time being. For present purposes, it is sufficient to note that a scriptorium at Iona is a possible, but not apparently a very likely candidate for the location of

functional and not purely nominal, may nevertheless have had little more than localised importance. It is perhaps pertinent to note in this connection that the Scottish saint Catroe, who was born probably c. 900, after receiving a basic clerical training from his foster-father Bean, was sent in his youth to Armagh for secular studies (*saecularibus studiis, mundanas litteras*, XI). This was almost certainly, as Anderson noted, during the period when Máelbrigte mac Tornáin ruled the churches of both SS Patrick and Columba. Anderson assumed, presumably on the basis of the references to the *sepulchrum* (VI), *tumulum* (IX) *Beati Columbani*, that the church where Catroe's parents prayed for a child and where the infant Catroe was handed over to Bean for fosterage, was that of Iona. If that were so, his dispatch to Armagh might imply a direct and rather unfavourable reflection on the state of education at Iona under the hegemony of Máelbrigte. I think, however, that Anderson's assumption was incorrect. The Scottish topographical indications in the late tenth century (?) continental *Life* of Catroe (whose author had never known the saint personally in any case) are scarcely explicit; but Catroe's (and Bean's) possible family connections and Catroe's British (?) or even Pictish (?) name may point to a church closer to the heart of the Picto-Scottish kingdom as it must have been under Constantine II (900–43): that church was probably Dunkeld. Dunkeld, furthermore, may also have been Bean's church and the place of Catroe's childhood training. It appears, nevertheless, that no Scottish church (including, presumably, Iona) could provide in the early tenth century the kind of liberal education available at the time in the schools of Armagh. The *Life*, indeed, seems to make this situation more explicit (if not always altogether clear – XII). 'Having been thus instructed, he (Catroe) crossed the sea again, and returned to Bean. And to his fellow-servants throughout all Scotland (*Scotiam*) he faithfully served out the wheat of wisdom entrusted to him: for the Scots (*Scoti*) have many thousand teachers (*paedagogorum*), but they have not many fathers (*Patres*). [Catroe] was those [teachers'] father in training in the arts ... from the time of his arrival none of the sages (*sapientum*) had crossed the sea; but they continued to dwell in Ireland (*Hiberniam*)' (Anderson's translation).⁵⁰ Such may, in fact, have been a widespread state of affairs in Gaelic-speaking Scotland for a long time to come. In 1169 – in the same decade as the embassy from Iona to Flaithbertach Ua Brolcháin under consideration – Ruaidhri Ua Conchobhair, King of Ireland, 'gave ten cows every year from himself, and from every king after him to doom to the lector of Ard-Macha, in honour of [St] Patrick, to give lectures to students of Ireland and Scotland' – *dorat ... deich m-bú cecha bliadhna uadh féin, 7 o cach righ in – a dhegaidh co brath do ferleiginn Aird-Macha, i n-onoir Patraic ar leighinn do dhenamh do macaibh leighinn Erenn 7 Alban* (AU 1169(3); similarly FM 1169). The Scots in view were most likely those of Argyll and the Isles in the first instance; but Ruaidhri's action might also have attracted the attention of

students from elsewhere in Scotland whose native language and literary culture was Gaelic.

If they are not merely eulogistic attributes thought appropriate to the occasion and the person, there are a few passing indications in annalistic obits of the period after 800 and before 1164 that might point to the existence at Iona (or at least more or less closely associated with the community there) of occasional individuals having some intellectual attainments. At his death in 854, abbot Indrechtach is described as *sapiens optimus* by AU, AR and CS (*eaccnaidh tocchaidhe*, FM). The tanist-abbot Aenghus son of Muirchertach, who died in 935, is also *saoi* and *angcoire* (FM). Fothad, 'bishop of the isles of Scotland', if he was at any stage associated with Iona, is *scriba optimus* (AR), *scribhnidh* (FM), at his death in 963. Fingin (d. 966) is a bishop (*epscop*, CS, FM) and an anchorite (*angcoire*, FM); and the abbot killed in 986 may also have been in episcopal orders (AI) – though a poorly educated bishop or priest is not unimaginable. Muirgrón, coarb of Colum Cille (d. 980), if he did in fact have a definite association with Iona, is *scriba et episcopus* (CS), *scriba optimus atque sui-epscop na Tri Rand* ('of the Three Divisions', AR) *scribhnidh 7 epscop, saoi na tTri Rand* (FM). All or any of these men could presumably have had a constructive influence on such intellectual life as there was at Iona in their time, though they need not have been educated there themselves. (In the case of Fothad, for example, this seems likely enough). Even viewed optimistically, however, the list is not a long one; and it peters out before 1000. It has probably to be conceded, furthermore, that none of the annalistic entries concerning Iona throughout the period in question need have reached Ireland in written form.

Anchorites, Ascetics and Céli Dé

I have suggested elsewhere⁵¹ that (at least in AU and during the period 650 to 1050) the anchorite of a given church is more likely to be head of the anchorites of that church than necessarily a practising anchorite himself; and I drew attention in that context to the *disertach* here. He is numbered among senior members of the community – men of authority well qualified to be sent on an important embassy. At least one of his fellow-emissaries, the head of the Céli Dé, clearly superintends a group of clerics within the community overall; the *fer léiginn* may have had responsibility for both students, however few, and a scriptorium, however basic; and it has seemed reasonable to suggest that the *sacart mór* headed those in priest's orders in the church of Iona. All these men, therefore, had or may have had responsibility for others. The place wherein the *disertach's* immediate authority ran was, almost certainly, the site known as *Cladh an Díseirt* ('burial-ground of the *diseart* or hermitage'), situated some two hundred and fifty to three hundred metres north-east of the north rampart of the *vallum monasterii*. The surviving visible remains consist of the footings of a small oriented rectangular building, possibly a chapel and probably of twelfth century or later date, lying within a

Simeon's activities as copyist and author.

50 Anderson 1922, i, 431–43, lxxiii; Colgan 1645, 494–501 (with his section numbers); cf. Kenney 1929, 609–10 (no. 428). Catroe left Scotland for the continent, 940 x 941; and died there probably not long after 971. See also Boyle 1980; Macquarrie 1997, 199–210; Dumville 2001.

51 MacDonald 1981, 316–17.

walled or embanked enclosure. There are two springs associated with the site; but no surface traces of what might have been more probably domestic buildings. An early medieval cross-marked boulder was found c. 1870 in the vicinity of *Cladh an Dísirt*; but a cross-fragment mentioned in connection with the site in 1881 cannot now be identified. The alternative name *Cladh Iain* ('John's burial-ground') probably indicates a dedication to a St John. St John the Baptist, together with the Old Testament prophets Elijah and Elisha, was recognized from the late fourth century on as a prototype of the desert monks.⁵² The *fratres* of St John of Strathearn at Inchaffray (Perthshire), on the other hand, whose head is described as presbyter and hermit (which I take to be his twin titles of office), enjoyed the patronage of St John the Evangelist.⁵³ The dedication of *Cladh an Dísirt* was probably to one of these two saints; though one might have expected *Cladh Eathain*.⁵⁴

The anchoritic tradition at Iona, whatever its precise physical manifestations at any given time, goes back to the mid eighth century in the annals. Cilline Droictech, anchorite of Iona, died in 752 (AU 752.1, *anchorita Iae*, AT [752].1, *ancorita Iae*; but abbot of Iona and anchorite (*abb Iae 7 angcoire*), FM 747, abbot of Iona, MT (*ab*), MG and MD (*abb*) at 3 July).⁵⁵ Nothing more is heard of the anchoritic life on Iona until the death in 937 of Aengus son Muirchertach, scholar, anchorite and tanist-abbot (see above). Under 964 = 966 FM call Fingin 'anchorite and bishop of Iona'; while CS [964] calls him 'bishop' only (see above). Then again there is silence until the entry under discussion, AU 1164(2). There may be many reasons for the paucity of entries in the annals reflecting the presence of anchorites on Iona. It may be worth noting, however, that Adomnán makes no reference to their presence there in Columba's (and his own?) day. He mentions anchorites explicitly twice in *VC*.⁵⁶ In i 49 he gives as his informant for the fulfilment of a prophecy of Columba, Finán, 'who for many years lived irreproachably the life of an anchorite beside the monastery of the plain of the oakwood [Durrow]' – *qui uitam multis anchoriticam annis iuxta roboreti monasterium campi inreprehensibiliter ducebat*. And in iii 23 Virgno, 'after completing irreproachably many years in subjection among the brothers' (*inter fratres*, of the cenobitic community on the

island of *Hinba*) 'completed other twelve years as a victorious soldier of Christ, leading the life of an anchorite, in the place of the anchorites, in Muirbolc mór' (also apparently on *Hinba*) – *alios xii. in loco anchoritarum in Muirbulc mar uitam ducens anchoriticam Christi uictor miles expleuit*. Virgno explicitly followed what had long been accepted practice:– 'There are in Egypt three kinds of monks. Two of them are very good ... The first is that of the cenobites, who live together in a community and are governed by the judgement of one elder ... The second is that of the anchorites, who are first instructed in the cenobia and then, perfected in their practical way of life, choose the recesses of the desert'. Prior formation in a cenobium was considered essential because 'the first beginning of salvation is acquired in communities and people cannot be sound in the desert unless the medicine of the cenobia has first made them sound'.⁵⁷ This may have been Finán's position at Durrow also, but that is not made clear.⁵⁸ So the anchoritic tradition at Iona itself may have been a relatively late development in the history of the community there; and perhaps never a prominent influence in its religious life generally.⁵⁹

The origins of the *dísirt* itself could only be established, if at all, by systematic excavation. As a generic element in Irish church-names, *dísirt* appears in the annals in the early ninth century, see MS p.44: *Dísirt Teornóc* (AU 819.6, FM 817: unidentified, but already an established church at that date). Site and name may not, of course, originate at the same time: an existing church settlement might, in theory at least, acquire a *dísirt* name whenever these were fashionable, an older generic being presumably displaced in the process. As a lexical item, including (it would seem reasonable to suppose) its use as specific element in place-names, the word is likely to pre-date the early ninth century by a longer or shorter period. The documentary evidence already discussed, however, such as it is, indicates that it is unlikely to have appeared at Iona earlier than the eighth century – if then.

The composition of such a *dísirt* as that of Iona is also debatable. If my analysis of the basic function of the *dísirtach*'s office is correct, then the site was probably normally occupied by a number of persons, rather than by a single solitary. The possible church, on the other hand, is small: internally about 7.9m from WNW to ESE by 4.2m. transversely. The numbers involved, though, probably fluctuated through time. There are indications, furthermore, that a *dísirt* associated with a larger church might, by the eleventh or twelfth century at any rate, have accommodated on occasion more than its regularly professed ascetics. Evidence from Kells indicates the presence of a community of *Céli Dé* in its *dísirt*. The

52 '...they (the anchorites) are not afraid to penetrate the vast recesses of the desert in imitation of John the Baptist ... and of Elijah and Elisha and the others whom the Apostle recalls thus: "They went about in sheepskin and in goatskin, in distress, afflicted, needy, the world unworthy of them, wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and caverns of the earth" (Cassian, *Conf.* xviii. 6.2, quoting Hebrews 11:37–8 – Ramsey 1997, 639 (translation); Pichery 1959, 17 (Latin text)).

53 RCAHMS 1982, 21, 242–3 (no. 7: Cladh an Dísirt), 188–9 (no. 6, 60: cross-marked boulder), 6 (map showing relationship of *Cladh an Dísirt* to abbey and early medieval monastic enclosure); Chitty 1966, 14 (St John the Baptist as 'protomonk'); Cowan and Easson 1976, 48, Bower's *Scotichronicon*, bk. 8, ch. 73, ll 37–8 (Corner, Scott, et al. 1994, 459), Neville 2005, 169 (Inchaffray and St John the Evangelist).

54 Cf. Watson 1926, 273–4; 1904, lxxi; RCAHMS 1984, 165 (no. 332).

55 Anderson 1922, i, 240–1.

56 Anderson 1991, 88–91, 226–9.

57 Cassian, *Conf.* XVIII. 4.2 and XIX. 13.2: Ramsey 1997, 637 and 679; Pichery 1959, 14, 51.

58 For an alternative view of Finán's relationship with the monastery at Durrow, see Sharpe 1995, 316 n. 207.

59 As noted earlier, the *reicléasaigh* at Iona of the mid 9th cent. *Mon. Tal.* (§ 52) are not explicitly anchorites, though such occur elsewhere in this text – *anchore* (§ 34), *ancarae* (§ 67), *anchoire* (§ 77), all single (and solitary?) individuals: Gwynn and Purton 1911, 147, 141, 155, 159. It was also noted that *DIL* offers this instance only of the term *reicléasach*, 'recluse or religious coenobite'. See above and no. 15.

disert of Kells seems to have had its own superior. Charter material in the Book of Kells, dated to the period 1073–87, records the grant of *disert* and herb-garden ‘to God and to pious pilgrims forever’. It stipulates, moreover, that no one should have rights in it, ‘until he dedicate his life to God and be pious’⁶⁰ That clerics at least might retire to a *disert* towards the end of their lives is indicated by the obit in AU 1122(6) of Mael-Coluim Ua Brolcháin, *episcop Aird-Macha*, who ‘died on his pilgrimage in the Hermitage of Daire, with victory of suffering and of penance’ – *do éc in-a ailithri i n-Disiurt Daire fo buaidh martra 7 haithrighi* (similarly FM 1122). If, therefore, the *disert* of Iona expected, whether frequently or only occasionally, external traffic whose destination lay there rather than within the main enclosure, such a state of affairs might help to explain the location of the site – close to the shore of the Sound of Iona and the little inlet known as *Port an Díseirt*. The *disertach* was the responsible official in the community; but unnecessary disturbance of the community would thus be avoided.

Apart from the entry here, the presence of *Céli Dé* at Iona is noticed only by two English lists of religious houses, one apparently of early, the other of late thirteenth century date, as they survive.⁶¹ (Neither list gives the Benedictines or black monks explicitly: *In Insula Abbatia ... Keledei* (Gervase of Canterbury);⁶² *Abbatia in Insula* [i.e. Iona] ... *Keledei* (Henry of Silgrave).⁶³ Both, therefore, may pre-date c.1203 in origin).

The particular function, if any, of the *Céli Dé* within the community of Iona overall at this time is not indicated. They are, however, apparently a distinct body from that of the *disert*; and it is noticeable that the Irish annals generally suggest no significant coincidence of *Céli Dé* and anchorites.

The English lists, whether by accident or design, appear to emphasize the importance of the *Céli Dé* at Iona. The testimony of AU is, however, to be preferred: they were one (specialised?) group among others within the community. It would probably be unwise, on the other hand, to read too much significance in terms of precedence into the order of appearance of the dignitaries making up the embassy.

The Possessions of Iona

The failure of the embassy to Flaithbertach Ua Brolcháin may have had unfortunate consequences for Iona. The Royal Commission has suggested that Somerled and his sons may have withdrawn their patronage from the community as a result, noting the foundation at about this time by Somerled or his son Reginald, or both,

⁶⁰ Herbert, 1988, 103; Gearóid Mac Niocaill, ‘The Irish ‘charters’, in *The Book of Kells, MS 58, Trinity College Dublin: Commentary*, ed. P. Fox (Lucerne, 1990, 153–65; M. Herbert, ‘Charter material from Kells’ in *The Book of Kells*, ed. Felicity O’Mahony (Aldershot, 1994), 60–77.

⁶¹ Anderson 1922, ii, 697–700; 1908, 327–8.

⁶² *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*. Ed. W. Stubbs. London 1879–1880 (2 vols): ii, 442 (1880) (Mappa Mundi).

⁶³ Haddan and Stubbs 1869–78, II, i (1873), 181–2.

of a Cistercian monastery at Saddell in Kintyre, probably colonised from Mellifont in Co. Louth.⁶⁴ This may well be so, though I suspect that monastic reform was not Somerled’s only motive in approaching Flaithbertach: restoring paramouncy over the Columban federation of churches in Scotland and Ireland to Iona – the practical consequence of installing the coarb of Colum Cille in the abbacy there – would surely have gained for him and his family a considerable access of political power, especially in the context of their dealings with the kings of Man and of Scotland. Loss of lay support may, however, have been more widespread. In a charter dated 1172 x 1174 William I granted four churches and chapels (*ecclesias siue capellas*) in Galloway, in which Iona Abbey had proprietary right (*que ad ius abbacie de Hij Columchille pertinent*), to Holyrood Abbey beside Edinburgh: namely (*ecclesia de*) *Kirkecormach* (Kirkcormack in Kelton), *ecclesia(m) Sancti Andree* (St Andrew, Balmaghie), (*ecclesia*) *de Balencros* (Barncross, in Tongland), (*ecclesia*) *de Cheletun* (Kelton: these churches are all in Kirkcudbrightshire). The grant had apparently been made previously by Uhtred son of Fergus, lord of Galloway; but ‘the wording of the king’s charter is that of a fresh grant, and suggests a definite act of deprivation, possibly connected with the reform of Iona under the impetus of the family of Somerled and of Flaithbertach Ua Brolcháin, abbot of Derry ...’ (comment).⁶⁵ It must be pointed out, of course, that we do not know that any reform was actually carried out in or after 1164, following the failure of the embassy to Derry and the death of Somerled at Renfrew in the same year.⁶⁶ Reform might have entailed some loss of what was seen as excessive wealth in churches and lands. Equally, failure to reform might have resulted in penalisation, expressed in terms of loss of patronage and possessions. The precise significance of this particular loss to Iona must depend, at least in part, on how long the abbey had held these churches: the more ancient the tenure, the more traumatic the loss, presumably. The Royal Commission suggests that they may have been donated at the time of St Margaret in the later eleventh century.⁶⁷ If that were the case, their acquisition was a relatively recent event in 1172–4; but it can be a suggestion only and the fact remains that we have actually no concrete information.

We do know, however, that the loss occurred. That specific knowledge, together with the general consideration that the estates of Iona must have fluctuated in extent and composition with changing circumstances and fortunes over the

⁶⁴ RCAHMS 1982, 49; see also *ibid.*, 1971, 140–5 (no. 296), Cowan and Easson 1976, 77–8.

⁶⁵ Barrow 1971, 213–4 (no. 141); cf. 443–4 (no. 485, perhaps of 1209). See also Cowan 1967, 13, 93, 119.

⁶⁶ For Somerled’s death, see Anderson 1922, ii, 254–8. For his career generally, see, e.g., McDonald 1997, 39–67. That the embassy to Derry and the attack on Scotland (which resulted in his defeat and death) both occurred in the same year, may not be coincidence. (A retrospective reference to the embassy of 1164 in his obit of 1175 says that Flaithbertach was offered *comurbus hla* (AU 1175(2)). That the offer is mentioned here points to the continuing prestige (possibly also practical importance) of Iona, at Derry in particular or in (northern) Ireland more widely, in the late 12th century).

⁶⁷ RCAHMS 1982, 48.

centuries since Columba's day, makes it the more difficult to assess realistically the situation reflected in the bull of Innocent III of December 1203, which includes a list of lands granted to the Benedictine community at or soon after its foundation (*infra*):— *locum ipsum in quo prefatum monasterium situm est cum omnibus pertinentiis suis. ecclesias de Insegal. de Mule. de Coluansei. de Cheldubsenaig. de Chelcenneg. et de Ile. Insulas Hy. Mule. Coluansei. Oruansei. Canei. et Calue. Terra de Magenborg. de Mangecheles. de Herilnean. de Sotesdal. Terras Abberade in Yle. de Markarna. et de Camusnanesre* —⁶⁸ 'The place itself in which the aforesaid monastery is situated with all its appurtenances. The churches of the Hebrides (specifically the Long Island?); of Mull; of Colonsay; of *Cheldubsenaig* (unidentified); of Kilchenzie in Kintyre(?); and of Islay. The islands of Iona; Mull; Colonsay, Oronsay, Canna; and *Calue* (Eilean Chalbha, Iona?). The land of *Magenborg*; of *Mangecheles* (both in Islay); of *Herilnean* (possibly also in Islay); of *Sotesdal* (?Sorisdale, in Coll). The lands of *Abberade* in Islay ('of the abbacy'); of Muckairn (in Lorn); and of Kames (in Melfort)'.⁶⁹ It might be reasonable to suppose *a priori*, though it cannot be demonstrated, that some or all of these lands had belonged to the native community before 1203; though the degree of continuity in land tenure may depend, at least in part, on the state of the community in the second half of the twelfth century and on the degree of continuity (if any) between the native and Benedictine communities. The Commission allows that the lands of the 'abbacy' in Islay probably belonged to the pre-Benedictine community; but is cautious about assuming that such was the case where the rest of the properties are concerned.⁷⁰ More may have been due to the generosity of various branches of Somerled's descendants than to ancient rights of ownership. But even if it be assumed for the sake of argument that many or all of the properties listed had belonged to the native community c. 1200, it cannot safely be further assumed that the list is representative of the twelfth century as a whole, let alone of an earlier period or periods. Apart from considerations of the likelihood of periodic gains and losses, it may have omissions as it came from the papal chancery. It is noticeable, for instance, that Tiree does not seem to be represented, though Iona had a strong interest there in Adomnán's day and probably later; and several holdings there by the early sixteenth century.⁷¹ If, furthermore, Iona itself still owned property in Ireland at this time, it is likely that it was lost as a direct (if not immediate) consequence of the foundation of the Benedictine abbey.

⁶⁸ Reeves 1874, 353–5.

⁶⁹ The lands and churches of the Benedictine Abbey are discussed in RCAHMS 1982, 145–8. I have followed the identifications given or suggested there; though the suggestion that *Insegal* might be specifically the chain of the Outer Hebrides from Lewis to Barra (the Long Island) is mine.

⁷⁰ RCAHMS 1982, 143. The lands of the nunnery, for which see *ibid.* 178–9 and map 146–7, very likely included (esp. those on Iona itself) former possessions of the Columban community.

⁷¹ RCAHMS 1982, 147; MacDonald 2010.

Cellach's Monastery of 1204

The annals are scarcely enlightening as to the condition of the church of Iona generally between 1164 and 1204. I have already noted the death in 1195 of the *sacart mór* – whether or not he is Augustin of 1164. Pilgrimage continued (*infra*); and it is probably in this light that we should understand the entry under 1200, 'The saintly Maurice Ua Baetain reposed in peace in Iona of Columcille' – *Sancus Mauritius Uo Baetain i n-hI Coluimcille in pace quieuit* (AU 1200(3)).⁷² Hogan has two entries for Ui Baedáin, Baetáin: 1. Ui Baedáin of Badna in Hi Maine, a territory nearly coextensive with the barony of Ballintober, Co. Roscommon; 2. Ui Baetáin, near Maistiu (in Ui Muiredaig in Leinster).⁷³ It is less likely, perhaps, that Maurice was a member of the community whose reputation for sanctity was widely enough known and accepted that his death should be noted in northern Ireland. But if that were the case, the possibility that he was Scots rather than Irish should be considered. The district of Morvern in Lorn was anciently called Kinelvadon, i.e. *Cineal Bhaodáin*, for earlier *Cenél Báetáin*, a branch of Cenél Loairn.⁷⁴ The great priest apart, no other senior member of the community appears in the surviving record during these forty years.⁷⁵

The final notice in the Irish annals of Columban Iona requires discussion. In 1204 'A monastery was built by Cellach, ['abbot of Iona' supplied in the translation by MacCarthy: see below] in the centre of the enclosure of Iona, without any right, in dishonour of the Community of Iona, so that he wrecked the place greatly. A hosting, however, was made by the clergy of Ireland, namely, by Florence Ua Cerballain, bishop of Tir-Eogain and by Mael-Isu Ua Dorig, that is, bishop of Tir-Conaill and by the Abbot of the Monastery of Paul and Peter in Ard-Macha and by Amalgaidh Ua Fergail, abbot of the Monastery of Doire and by Ainmire Ua Cobhthaigh and a large number of the Community of Doire and a large number of the clergy of the North, so that they razed the monastery, according to the law of the Church. That Amalgaidh aforesaid took the abbacy of Iona by selection of Foreigners and Gaidhil' – *Mainistir do dhenumh do Celluch ...⁷⁶ ar lar croí Ia gan nach dlígedh, tar sarughudh muinnteri Ia, co romill in baile co mór. Slogadh dono la cleirchibh Erenn, idon, la Florint hUa (see MS) n-Dorig, idon, espuc Tire-Conaill 7 la abad reiclesa Poil 7 Petair i n-Ard-Macha 7 la hAmalgaidh hUa Fergail, abad reiclesa Doire 7 la hAinmire hUa Cobhthaigh 7 sochaidhi mór*

⁷² Anderson 1922, ii, 352. 'There is something peculiar in the title given to this individual' – Reeves 1857, 409 n.n.

⁷³ Hogan 1910, 661, 535. Is *Mauritius* in this entry for Irish *Muiredach*?

⁷⁴ Watson 1926, 122; Anderson 1922, i, clii–iii, clvi. The name *Muiredach* also occurs in the Cenél Loairn genealogies.

⁷⁵ For Domnall Ua Brolcháin, *prioir* (? Of Derry – AU 1203(4), also ALC 1202, FM 1202) and 'Donaldus O Brolchan', mid 15th. cent. master-mason (?) at Iona, see RCAHMS 1982, 274 n. 170 and refs., 106–7, 102–3, 24.

⁷⁶ Blank = space for about 8 letters left in MS(A). The missing words, there can be little doubt, are *abbad Ia* – 'abbot of Iona' – MacCarthy, fn. This is, of course, an assumption: v. *infra*.

do muinnter Doire 7 sochaidhi mor do cleirchibh in Tuaisceirt, co roscailset in Mainister do reir dlighidh na hecailsi. In t-Amhalgaidh remhrait sin do ghabhail abdaine Ia tre togha Gall 7 Gaidhel (AU 1204(4); similarly FM 1203).⁷⁷

The triumphant tone of this entry is not corroborated by the actual course of events known or deducible from other sources. Cellach is presumably the Celestine, abbot of Iona, of Innocent III's bull of December 1203: ... *Celestino abbati Sancti Columba de Hy Insula eiusque fratribus ... religiosam uitam professis* ... '(to) Celestine abbot of Saint Columba of the island of Iona and his brothers who have professed the religious life'⁷⁸ If MacCarthy's restoration of the text of AU is correct, then Cellach may have been the incumbent abbot of the native community, who decided, no doubt by an imponderable mixture of personal conviction and external persuasion, to submit himself and his community to the Rule of St Benedict. But MacCarthy's restoration may be wrong: would AU actually have called him 'abbot of Iona' without qualification under the circumstances they describe and in view of their clearly partisan outlook – whether he were Columban or Benedictine abbot? Anderson surely saw this when he commented on MacCarthy's restoration that 'the context does not favour such an insertion' (see n. 76). It is, on balance, probably more likely that the sons of Somerled took the opportunity, as perhaps their father had done in 1164, to intervene *sede vacante*. It seems, in any case, unlikely that a community of native Irish type (as Iona presumably still was at this juncture) would or could convert completely to a monastic discipline, which there is no reason to believe formed an element in its existing observance, without the help and guidance of a colony (of whatever size) introduced from elsewhere.

If 'Cellach' is his original name – a more likely supposition, one would think, than that AU has gaelicized 'Celestinus' – then it is reasonably to suggest that Cellach was Irish; and that the colony came from a Benedictine house in Ireland.⁷⁹ We have seen already that Saddell in Kintyre was probably founded from Mellifont; and the Commission has suggested of the contemporary nunnery that 'the nucleus of trained canonesses was obtained from Ireland'.⁸⁰ In pursuit of their ecclesiastical policy, it seems that Somerled and his sons turned naturally to Ireland.

AU 1204(4) hints at two local sources of opposition to the new foundation, one within and the other outwith the existing community of Iona. Either or both could have set in train the process which prompted the reaction of the northern Irish clergy – especially by sending the news of what had occurred in the form of a protest to Derry. Cellach's action is said to be 'without any right, in dishonour of the Community of Iona' – *gan nach dlighedh, tar sarughudh muinnteri Ia*. This

⁷⁷ See also Anderson 1922, ii, 363, whose translation of *cró* as 'sheepfold' is surely misleading here: v. *infra* and n. 88.

⁷⁸ Reeves 1874, 353. Cf. RCAHMS 1982, 143; Anderson 1922, ii, 361.

⁷⁹ Cf. RCAHMS 1982, 143. Less probably, from an Irish Benedictine house on the continent.

⁸⁰ RCAHMS 1982, 178. For the likely Hiberno-Romanesque affinities of the W doorway of the mid 12th century St Oran's Chapel, probably built by Somerled or his son Reginald, see *ibid.*, 245–51 (no. 12).

suggests that possibly all, or at least a significant part, of the native religious community, the *muinter*, opposed Cellach. The entry closes with the statement that Amalgaidh Ua Fergail took the abbacy of Iona 'by selection of Foreigners and Gaidhil' – *tre togha Gall 7 Gaidhel*. If *Gall 7 Gaidhel* here is the equivalent of *Fir Aerther-Gaidhel 7 Innsi-Gall* of 1164, then it looks as though the *muinter* had lay support also for its resistance in Argyll and the Hebrides.

The composition of the Irish party of intervention also requires some comment. It seems to be made up largely of clergy of Derry in particular and of Cenél Eogain and Cenél Conaill more generally. Considering its purpose, this seems natural enough. Amalgaidh Ua Fergail is abbot of the monastery of Derry – *abad reiclesa Doire* – where 'monastery' is likely to be the correct translation of *reiclés*.⁸¹ He is not called *comarba Coluim Cille* and it seems safest to assume that he was not. Ainmire Ua Cobhthaigh was presumably a senior member of the community of Derry at this time: he is described as *ab reiclesa Daire (coluim cille, add FM)* at his death in 1214 (AU; FM 1213), but not as coarb of Colum Cille.⁸² Amalgaidh Ua Fergail seems to drop from sight after taking the abbacy of Iona; and it is not clear whether he took that office in virtue of his abbacy of Derry, or whether he resigned Derry in favour of Iona. In view of his failure to appear again in the Irish annals, the latter alternative may be the right one.⁸³ In view of the probable composition of the majority of the party, then, the appearance in it of the abbot of the *reiclés* of Paul and Peter at Armagh is interesting – the more so since he, a senior figure, is not named. He may represent the authority of Armagh among 'the clergy of the North', to reinforce more generally the authority of the Irish mission. Armagh, on the other hand, had no authority in the Hebrides or Argyll. The church of SS Peter and Paul in Armagh had been Augustinian probably since the 1130s or 1140s.⁸⁴ I think it possible, therefore, that its abbot's presence here has some

⁸¹ *Reiclés Daire* appears again under AU 1213, where 'monastery' may also be the correct translation. It appears three times under AU 1214, where it is clearly distinct from the *Dubreiclés*, the name of an individual church at Derry, which occurs twice in this same year.

⁸² The coarbial succession at Derry between 1200 and 1220 is not clear to me from the annals. In 1198 Gilla Mac Liac Ua Brenain resigned the *comarbus* and Gilla-Crist Ua Cernaigh was inducted in his place *i n-abdaine Coluimcille* (AU). But at his death in 1210 Gilla-Crist is called *comarba condere* (Connor, Co. Antrim – AU; ALC, FM 1209). Under 1201 AU refer to the violation of *comarba Coluim-cille* and a shrine of Colum Cille ('some time before' add FM 1200: neither source names the coarb). The *comarba Coluim-cille* raided by Aedh Mac Lochlainn in 1215 is likewise unnamed (AU; ALC, FM 1214). In 1219 died Mael-Isu Ua Daighri, *airchinnech Daire Coluim-cille*, after forty years in office (AU; ALC, FM 1218). In any case, AU 1220, in describing the disputes following the death in that year of Fonachtan Ua Bronain, *comarba Coluim-cille*, show *airchinnech Daire* and *comarba Coluim-cille* as two separate individuals (ALC and FM 1219 report the death of Fonachtan and election of his immediate successor, but not the subsequent disputes). Cf. Reeves 1857, 408–10 (who gives c. 1202 for the resignation of Gilla-Crist Ua Cernaigh, but without offering any evidence).

⁸³ Cf. Reeves 1857, 412–13; though I doubt that Amalgaidh's acceptance of the abbacy of Iona would have been regarded at Derry as a promotion (n.f): his action may rather have been in the nature of a resignation from the abbacy of Derry.

⁸⁴ Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 157.

connection with the Augustinian nunnery on Iona.⁸⁵ Though two nuns' churches at Armagh had been Augustinian probably since c. 1144,⁸⁶ I do not suggest that the Iona foundation was necessarily made from there, or that the abbot of SS Peter and Paul accompanied any such colony in any capacity of support. The Irish expedition to Iona of 1204, as noticed by AU, was hostile in intent, collectively and individually.⁸⁷ The presence on that expedition, however, of a senior representative of the Irish Augustinians, whatever he personally hoped to achieve, may provide some additional evidence, however indirect, that the nunnery was in existence by that year.

In the medium to longer term, the Irish intervention of 1204 was, we know, a failure. But AU represent it as a success. Probably the Irish clergy effected a temporary lodgement within the walls, as it were, supporting and supported by the local *muintir*, or that part of it which opposed Cellach; and aided additionally, perhaps, by a conservative element among the local laity, which may not have been friendly to the sons of Somerled. However long or short a time this temporary success lasted, AU knew only that it had been achieved; and were not sufficiently concerned to report any subsequent developments in the direction of the ejection and ultimate failure of their party that might have come to their attention. We are here, it seems, as so often, at the mercy of annalistic caprice.

Cellach is said to have built his monastery 'in the centre of the enclosure of Iona' – *ar lár croí Ia*, 'so that he wrecked the place greatly' – *co romill in baile co mór*. Reeves took the annalists' account of the events of 1204 at face value and did not connect Cellach with the foundation of the Benedictine abbey. He also professed uncertainty as to the meaning of *cró*: though he drew attention to the appearance in FM 1163 of *Cro-Ciarain* and *Cro-Coemghin* at Glendaloch, he accepted the contemporary interpretation of *cró* as 'house'. Since, therefore, he believed that Cellach's (attempted) foundation had been frustrated and comprehensively destroyed by the northern Irish clergy, he was able to suggest that its site was in Gleann an Teampuill, a valley in the centre of the island running in a south-westerly direction behind Cnoc Mór and opening onto the Machair near the farmhouse of Culbhuirg. The name, he says, 'has long been a subject of local speculation as to its origin': he offered Cellach's foundation in explanation of it and of the absence of any visible remains there.⁸⁸ It may well be that Reeves's

conjecture influenced Anderson in translating *cró* here 'sheepfold'.⁸⁹ *Cró* is 'a term of very wide application, the basic meaning being 'enclosure, enclosed space, fold, pen' etc.', also 'hut, cell, prison'; but, though *Cró Caoimhghin* (FM 1125) is noted and identified as 'St Kevin's Kitchen' (at Glendaloch), *ar lár croí Ia* is translated simply 'in the middle of Iona' (with reference to FM, not AU; and possibly also influenced by Reeves).⁹⁰ *Cró Ia* here, however, must surely refer concretely to the area enclosed by the *vallum monasterii* of the early medieval settlement, or to the *vallum* itself, or both: a glance at the Commission's plan of the earthwork enclosure system of the Columban monastery and the buildings of the Benedictine abbey shows clearly that the new foundation was indeed placed 'in the centre of the enclosure of Iona'.⁹¹ And if this is in fact the case, then it is evidence that the earthwork enclosure was probably still functioning as such – at the least recognised for what it was at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

FM 1125 record the death of Maeltrena, 'noble priest and learned senior of Cró-Caeimhghin' – *uasal shagart 7 sruith shenoir Chraoi Caoimhghin*; and FM 1163 record the burning of Glendaloch, 'together with Cro-Chiarain and Cro-Chaeimhghin, and the church of the two Sinchells' – *im Cró Chiaráin, im Cró Chaoimhghin, 7 im reccles an dá Sinchell*.⁹² I take it that in these two cases also, although on a far smaller scale than at Iona, *cró* may denote not only the churches, but also whatever domestic buildings and enclosures accompanied them: the total area, in other words, of enclosed ecclesiastical settlement.

This area at Iona, or at least that more restricted part of it where the principal church or churches and domestic buildings presumably lay, was the *baile*. The exact relationship between *cró* and *baile* here is not clear. The most straightforward procedure might be to take *cró* as the enclosing element – the *vallum monasterii* – and *baile* as the space thus enclosed. Alternatively *baile* might be restricted to a more intensive habitation zone, around and including the core of the settlement, within the larger enclosure defined by the *vallum* – the *cró* – which probably contained wide areas not actually occupied by buildings. *Baile* is a "place, piece of land, homestead, farmstead". Often of religious foundations': the instance under discussion is noticed from FM; 'town, city, village, suburb, townland.'⁹³ It is, like *cró*, a term of broad application and it may be wiser not to try to define either term too precisely in the present context. But it appears beyond reasonable doubt

⁸⁵ Founded traditionally at about the same time as the Benedictine abbey and also under the auspices of the sons of Somerled: RCAHMS 1982, 178; Cowan and Easson 1976, 151.

⁸⁶ Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 312–3.

⁸⁷ Reeves (1857, 412, n.b) commented on the military connotation of the word *slogadh*, 'hosting', in the AU entry. It should be noted that FM 1203 has *Maoliosa ua dorigh epscop thire conaill, 7 abb recclésa póil 7 peadair in ard-macha* – 'Maelisa O'Deery, Bishop of Tirconnell [Raphoe], and Abbot of the church of SS Peter and Paul at Armagh': thus creating one individual with an unlikely combination of offices. The text of this entry given by Reeves (*ibid.*, 412) is that of FM. The reading of AU almost certainly carries more weight; and is that upon which my discussion, generally and in particular, is based.

⁸⁸ Reeves 1857, 411–13, 417. Gleann an Teampuill, I believe, refers to Cladh na Meirghe at the head of the glen.

⁸⁹ Anderson 1922, ii, 363 (and see n. 76).

⁹⁰ *DIL*, I *cró*.

⁹¹ For the monastic *vallum*, see RCAHMS 1982, 36–9; and for its relation to the buildings of the Benedictine abbey, plan and vertical air photograph, 32–3. Assuming that the scarp to the east, topped perhaps by a fence or hedge, formed the east side of the *vallum*, the area thus enclosed may have exceeded 8ha (36).

⁹² The position of the two small churches of St Kevin and St Ciaran at Glendaloch, in relation to each other and to the main complex of the ecclesiastical settlement, may be seen in Henry 1967, 44 (fig.5). They are described and illustrated in detail by H.G. Leask in *Glendalough*, Dublin n.d., 21–6.

⁹³ *DIL*, I *baile*.

that the *baile* included anyway that part of the ecclesiastical settlement where the Benedictine abbey was founded. It was, therefore, not the *kaupstaðr* of King Magnus's visit of 1098, if I am right in suggesting that that was ancestral, directly or indirectly, to the later medieval and modern villages. In other words, the *baile* lay within, the *kaupstaðr* outwith the *vallum monasterii*.

In addition to the occurrence under review, AU use *baile* several times of ecclesiastical settlement at this period: e.g., Downpatrick (1170), Derry (1173), Ardstraw (1179), Derry (1212), Coleraine (1214).

Material Remains

I defer for the present discussion of the possibly tenth century chapel, 'St Columba's Shrine'. Some other material remains, however, reflect broadly ecclesiastical activity in and around the abbey throughout the period under review. These remains comprise the repair (possibly) of one 'high cross' and the erection of another; a group of free-standing crosses or cross-slabs; a group of recumbent cross-slabs; probable or possible pre-Benedictine fabric or footings embedded in or under the abbey church and a probable pre-Benedictine stone building at the south-east angle of the cloister; and Teampull Odhráin, or St Oran's Church. I follow the Commission's suggested dating.

St John's Cross probably dates from the middle or the second half of the eighth century. It seems to have fallen subsequent to its original erection and to have been damaged in the process. The ensuing repairs, involving the employment of stone struts to strengthen the head of the cross, 'which has the widest span of any known cross of Early Christian date in the British Isles' (a span probably originally unsupported), may incidentally have resulted in the production of a ringed cross on Iona. 'The ringed cross-head, adopted locally following an early mishap with St John's Cross ... was probably disseminated in Ireland and Pictland through Iona's importance as a centre of pilgrimage, although the possibility of independent development in Southern Ireland cannot be discounted'.⁹⁴ Pilgrimage to Iona of lay notables is recorded by Irish annals at c. 763, 778 and 782–3. There is then no further record of such activity in these sources until 980;⁹⁵ but the silence of the annals does not preclude the possibility of pilgrimage by more obscure individuals (including clerics and craftsmen) who did not rate the annalists' notice, alongside more local movement (about which they knew nothing). The postulated fall of and consequent repairs to St John's Cross could have occurred within the period under review, possibly in the early ninth century.

St Matthew's Cross, displaying affinities with the Kells crosses, probably dates from the ninth or early tenth century. Like St John's Cross, it originally stood in the immediate vicinity of the west front of the abbey church.⁹⁶

⁹⁴RCAHMS 1982, 197–204 (no. 82), 17–19; Fisher 2001, 132–3, 48–9.

⁹⁵Anderson 1922, i, 245, 249 (cf. 247), 253–4, 487.

⁹⁶RCAHMS 1982, 208–11 (no. 84), 19; Fisher 2001, 134, 51.

A group of smaller free-standing crosses, surviving in fragmentary form, is also likely to be of ninth to tenth century or later (perhaps twelfth century) date. These are, in the Commission's gazetteer, nos. 85 (ringed cross?), 86 (ringed cross, tenth century or later), 87 (ringed cross), 87A (ringed cross, but ring not pierced), 88 (ringed cross, twelfth century or earlier?), 89 (part of the shaft of a free-standing cross, tenth or eleventh century? – found in Reilig Odhráin in 1972), 90 (fragment of a cross-shaft, formerly in Reilig Odhráin), 91 (fragment, possibly part of the head or an arm of a free-standing cross), 92 (part of arm of a cross, probably of the eleventh or twelfth century), 93 (fragment of a cross-arm), 94 (fragment of the upper part of an upright cross or cross-slab, closely resembling certain Norse slabs on the Isle of Man and probably of tenth century date), 95 (lower part of the shaft of a free-standing cross or cross-slab, Scandinavian in character and ?tenth to ?twelfth century in date). Numbers 85 and 90 may belong to the same monument.⁹⁷ Some of these more modest crosses may have had a funerary function, especially nos. 89 and 90, if their location in Reilig Odhráin was original (and no. 85, if it and no. 90 go together). Others may have had a more broadly commemorative character (of persons or events in the history of the community); or have marked important locations – at buildings, boundaries or prayer stations (in a pilgrimage round, or for more generally private meditative as well as public liturgical purposes).

Recumbent cross-slabs are probably more likely to be funerary monuments. Those of relevant date seem to be (again in the Commission's gazetteer) nos. 14, formerly in Reilig Odhráin and bearing a half-uncial Old Irish inscription to one Máil-Phátraic dated epigraphically by K.H. Jackson to the ninth century; 31, found in 1976 in front of 'St Columba's Shrine' and having a half-uncial Old Irish inscription to one Fergus considered by Jackson to be probably of eighth century date, just possibly ninth; 47, formerly incorporated in the paving in front of 'St Columba's Shrine' and bearing a half-uncial Old Irish inscription to one Loingsechán dated epigraphically by Jackson to the late eighth or ninth century; 57 to 59, apparently of ninth century or later date (p. 19): no. 57 was identified in Reilig Odhráin in 1979 and no. 59 was also formerly there, where it had formed originally part of the composite cross-base no. 99, before being trimmed and reused as a graveslab and decorated with a ringed cross (no. 58 was also reused by being cut down from a larger slab); 68, formerly in Reilig Odhráin and probably of the tenth century; 69, found close to Reilig Odhráin in 1962 and dated by the spelling conventions of its Old Norse runic funerary inscription to probably the late tenth or eleventh century;⁹⁸ and 70, probably of the ninth or, more likely, tenth century.

No. 79, the head only of a small disc-headed cross-slab, may be as late as the twelfth century; and it is suggested that the carving may possibly have represented a crucifix. It may have been a grave-marker, and have stood upright, as the disc-

⁹⁷RCAHMS 1982, 210–13, 19; Fisher 2001, 134–5, 52–3.

⁹⁸RCAHMS 1982, 181, 184, 186–7, 188 (and 214–15), 189–90 (and 16–17), 190 (and 16–17), 191; Fisher 2001, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131.

headed cross-slabs nos. 77 and 78 surely did; but the carving is on one face only, the other face being undecorated and possibly incomplete.⁹⁹

Four coped grave-covers (nos. 109–12) are dated to the twelfth to thirteenth century and so possible span the period of transition from the Columban to the Benedictine monasteries. Nos. 109 and 111 are in Reilig Odhráin. No. 112 (at the Nunnery), only 1.22m. long, presumably marked the grave of a child.¹⁰⁰

There is little surviving evidence of buildings that might be attributed, with varying degrees of confidence and whether of stone or timber, to the period under review; though it is likely enough that the medieval church and cloister and some of the subsidiary chapels have swallowed most of what there was c. 1200.

The fragmentary and much reduced original south wall of the nave of the abbey church shares a plinth with the base of the western section of the north wall and a short length of the outer face of the west wall. All of these walls are uniformly 0.85m. thick: the eastern part of the north wall, which lacks the plinth, is 1.15m. thick. The west wall, to north of the inner face of the south wall, preserves a considerable amount of facework in squared and regularly-coursed sandstone rubble. Similar masonry occurs in part of the outer face of the north wall, but not elsewhere in the abbey complex, save in the upper part of the west gable of St Oran's Chapel, where it probably dates to the third quarter of the twelfth century. This work differs from the Romanesque north transept both in its distinctive masonry and in the presence of the plinth; and from the early thirteenth century choir in its lesser width: it may therefore be a relic of a pre-Benedictine twelfth century church.¹⁰¹ About 7m. length of the central part of the north wall of the nave has original footings only 0.75m. thick, whose slightness possibly associates them with the foundations of three cross-walls below the nave poorly recorded during the restoration of 1910. These three walls are, from east to west, respectively 0.75, 1.1 and 0.75m. thick and apparently terminate at the line of the south wall of the early nave. The character, age and purpose of these walls is, however, quite uncertain: while the thin east and west cross-walls, together with the north wall of the nave, might represent part of an early medieval stone church, other explanations are equally possible.¹⁰² (The block of sandstone, numbered 108 under entry 6 in the Commission's Inventory, 0.50m. wide, 0.23m. thick and 0.49m. high, having on one face a central recess or channel between two moulded panels, has been interpreted as being possibly from an anta from an early medieval building, or possibly a respond to hold a wooden screen. It was identified in 1977 in a stone-pile at the abbey: whether or not the modern findspot reflects the general area of its original location is, of course, unknown).¹⁰³

⁹⁹RCAHMS 1982, 192, 17; Fisher 2001, 131.

¹⁰⁰RCAHMS 1982, 219. The precise location and extent of the early monastic cemetery (around 'St Columba's Shrine?') are uncertain: cf. *ibid.*, 13, 49, 114.

¹⁰¹RCAHMS 1982, 108.

¹⁰²RCAHMS 1982, 109, 41.

¹⁰³RCAHMS 1982, 218–9.

Some 3m. north-west of the north-west angle of the nave is the small chapel, rebuilt in 1962 and now called 'St Columba's Shrine'. It was originally freestanding, the gap between it and the north-west angle of the nave of the abbey church being filled by a tower in the fifteenth century. It measures 3.2m. from east to west by 2.15m. transversely at the east end and 2.3m. at the west end, within walls 0.55m. thick. When the site was cleared in 1874–5, the walls were found standing to a uniform height of about 1m. The chapel has a west door, 0.54m. wide with vertical jambs; and antae at the west, probably also at the east gable. It contains two rectangular slab-lined cists, each 2.0m. long internally and 0.5m. wide, set against the eastern parts of the north and south walls and probably of later medieval date. It has been suggested that this little building is not earlier than the ninth or tenth century: later disturbance precluded the possibility of stratigraphic dating during partial excavation in 1976; and there is no evidence for or against the possibility that it succeeded an earlier timber oratory. Though the name by which it is now known is modern, since at least the late seventeenth century the site has been regarded traditionally as that of Columba's tomb or 'monument'. The Commission suggests that the tradition should be taken seriously and I agree. I shall discuss this chapel again: (see MS p.79) King Magnus visited in 1098 (above), as seems likely, it is at least as early as the late eleventh century.¹⁰⁴

A rectangular stone building, whose foundations were identified at the south-east angle of the cloister c. 1908, probably predates the Benedictine abbey. The side-walls presumably extended below the nave, though they are not related to the cross-walls there discussed above. The wall-footings extended north-north-east for 6.4m. from the north wall of the nave and their overall width was 5.8m., the north-east angle being only about 0.4m. from the west wall of the north transept. The building was subdivided by a cross-wall. The alignment of this structure was slightly different from that of 'St Columba's Shrine' and the nave; and its subdivision suggests that it was not associated with the nave. Limited excavation in 1957 disclosed a mass-burial outside its north-west angle; but no dating evidence was found and the depth of the footings below the present surface remains unknown.¹⁰⁵

Outside the main enclosure, St Oran's Chapel is the earliest surviving stone building on Iona. Its western doorway, decorated with chevron and animal-head ornament, closely resembles Irish work of the third quarter of the twelfth

¹⁰⁴RCAHMS 1982, 41–2, 52, III. The Commission reflects the typological scheme of Leask 1955 (1977), though with due caution with regard to chronology. Ó Carragáin 2003 favours an 8th to 9th century date for the earliest of these small stone 'shrine-chapels' (a predominantly Irish group of buildings which includes also Temple Ciaráin at Clonmacnoise) – though he is prepared to consider the possibility of later dating: see esp. 130–38, 144 (suggesting that perhaps the Iona shrine-chapel was actually the first, being built for Columba's postulated mid 8th century translation), 150–52. See now also Ó Carragáin 2010, 66–85, for a wide-ranging discussion of these chapels and their probable broader context and significance. I shall return later to the question of the original date of 'St Columba's Shrine', as it may bear upon the question of Columba's continuing 'presence' at Iona in the 10th century and later. See also RCAHMS 1982, 137–8 for the chapel and its environs in the later medieval period.

¹⁰⁵RCAHMS 1982, 42–3.

century, although the fabric in which it is set may be rather earlier. Its rectangular groundplan (it measures 9.0m. by 4.8m. within walls varying from 0.7m. to 0.9m. thick) and single west doorway are also characteristically Irish, though the Commission notes that the absence of an east window is unusual. In the later medieval period the MacDonald Lords of the Isles were buried in the chapel; and the Commission suggests that St Oran's may have been built as a family mortuary chapel by their ancestor Somerled, or by his son Reginald.¹⁰⁶ I shall argue later the further possibility that the cult of St Odhrán at Iona had developed originally in the context of pilgrimage to the island.

For the possible twelfth century chapel at Cladh an Díseirt, see above.

Conclusion

None of the material reviewed so far, it must be said, really allows one to approach a satisfactory understanding of the (possibly fluctuating) status and circumstances of Iona during the period from 800 to 1204. None of the annal entries, it seems to me, need emanate from a local scriptorium: all such information reaching Ireland could have done so by word of mouth in the first instance, as could also the little preserved in the martyrological (and hagiographical) traditions. Some evidence may be adduced for church building. Most of the sculptured and incised stones, on the other hand, may have to do with burial activity, lay as well as clerical; though St Matthew's Cross seems to attest to the existence in the ninth or early tenth century of a community (of whatever size) having sufficient theological literacy to require it (insofar as the condition of the surviving remains of the cross allow such an observation to be made) and commanding sufficient craftsmanship or wealth or both to meet the requirement. Other evidence, however, now to be examined, may help to show more clearly how Iona stood in this period, as regards both her neighbours and those at further remove: that, namely, reflecting the indigenous cult of St Columba and the character of the shrine which must have been its focus.

PART II

THE SHRINE OF COLUMBA

¹⁰⁶ RCAHMS 1982, 21, 245–51 (no. 12).

St Columba's Corporeal Relics in the Seventh to Ninth Centuries

Contemporary or near-contemporary evidence bearing on the status and location of Columba's bodily remains, especially as regards the ninth century and later, has been interpreted variously.¹⁰⁷ It seems worthwhile to review the evidence again from the beginning, as systematically as possible. The crux of the problem, it seems to me, is that it is frequently difficult or impossible to determine, in any given case, the precise nature of the relic or relics referred to.

Adomnán states in his general conclusion to his life of St Columba (*VC* iii, 23) that 'even after the departure of his most gentle soul from the tabernacle of the body, this same heavenly brightness, as well as the frequent visits of holy angels, does not cease, down to the present day, to appear at the place in which his holy bones repose; as is established through being revealed to certain elect persons' – *quae etiam post egressum animae de tabernaculo corporis almissimae, sicuti quibusdam electis ostensum habetur conpertum, locum in quo ipsius sancta pausant ossa usque hodie eadem caelestis claritas frequentare con cessat, et sanctorum frequens uisitatio angelorum* (135 ab). Adomnán's conclusion immediately follows his account of Columba's funeral, in which he has already described how, at the close of the ceremonies, 'the venerable body of the holy and blessed patron was wrapped in clean fine cloths, and laid in the appointed burial-place that had been made ready and was interred with fitting veneration, to rise again in bright and eternal light' – *sancti et beati patroni uenerabile corpus mundis inuolutum sindonibus et praeparata possitum in rata busta*¹⁰⁸ *debeta humatur cum ueneratione, in luminosa et aeternali resurrecturum claritudine* (133 ab). Previously in the same chapter devoted to Columba's death and burial, Adomnán has mentioned the saint's pillow, 'a stone which even today stands beside his burial-place as a kind of grave-pillar' – *lapidem qui hodieque quasi quidam iuxta sepulchrum eius titulus stat monumenti* (129a).¹⁰⁹ Bannerman, arguing that Columba's remains had been translated and enshrined before Adomnán wrote *VC* towards the end of the seventh century, possibly 'before Cumméne began to write, perhaps as early as 637, his *Liber de virtutibus sancti Columbae*', believed that Bede used the word *sepulchrum*, in the context of the translation and enshrinement of St Cuthbert in 698, 'to describe Cuthbert's permanent shrine within the church at Lindisfarne'; and that Adomnán's 'specific reference to Columba's 'holy bones'

¹⁰⁷ See, e.g., for recent discussion of Columba's relics generally, Bannerman 1993, 1999; Ó Floinn 1997; Bourke 1997.

¹⁰⁸ 'Busta' seems to be the accusative plural of *bustum*, 'tomb': Anderson 1991, 231 n. 259.

¹⁰⁹ For brief discussion of *titulus monumenti*, see Anderson 1991, 224 n. 247; see also Sharpe 1995, 374–5 n. 411.

might suggest that they were accessible'.¹¹⁰ Bede seems, however, to distinguish between the *sepulchrum* from which St Cuthbert's body has been removed and in which the body of bishop Eadberht is eventually laid, and the *area* above in which St Cuthbert is enshrined: *Cuius corpus in sepulchre benedicti patris Cudbercti ponentes, adposuerunt desuper arcam, in qual incorrupta eiusdem patris membra locauerant* – 'His (i.e. Eadberht's) body was placed in the sepulchre of the blessed Father Cuthbert and they put over it the coffin in which they had laid the incorrupt limbs of the father.' During the process of translation and enshrinement and before Eadberht's death, the brothers 'wrapped the body (i.e. of Cuthbert) in a new garment, put it in a new coffin and placed it on the floor of the sanctuary' – *inuolutum nouo amictu corpus nouaque in theca reconditum supra pauimentum sanctuarii posuerunt*. The *theca* and the *arca* appear to be the same.¹¹¹ In his prose life of St Cuthbert, Bede uses much the same wording, the only notable variation in vocabulary being in the heading of chapter XLIII: *Quomodo corpus Eadberti in tumulo uiri Dei ponentes, sarcophagum illius desuper posuerunt* – 'How the body of Eadberht was placed in the tomb of the man of God, and the sarcophagus of the saint placed upon it.' The essential distinction, however, between Cuthbert's original tomb and present shrine does not appear to be thereby blurred.¹¹² It is also worth noting here that the *titulus monumenti* of Genesis 35:20 that probably lies behind Adomnán's choice of the term in *VC* iii, 23 marks a tomb (*sepulchrum*) – that of Rachel, Jacob's wife: *Erexitque Iacob titulum super sepulchrum eius: Hic est titulus monumenti Rachel usque in praesentem diem* (Gn 35:20 Vulg.: 'And Jacob erected a pillar over her sepulchre. This is the pillar of Rachel's monument, to this day' – Douay version; cf. n. 3 above). On balance, it still seems to me the most natural interpretation of the relevant passages in *VC* iii, 23 that Adomnán refers to a grave, not a shrine.

A note supplementary to Tírechán's *Collectanea* has the following: 'Columb Cille, moved by the Holy Spirit, showed where Patrick's grave was and confirms this, that is, in Saulpatrick, in the church near the sea, where there is the coming together of the martyrs, that is, of the bones of Columb Cille from Britain and of all the saints of Ireland on the day of Judgement' – *Columb Cille Spiritu Sancto instigante ostendit sepulturam Patricii, ubi est confirmat, id est in Sabul Patricii, is est aeclessia iuxta mare proxima, ubi est conduction martirum, id est essuum Coluimb Cillae de Britannia et conduction omnium sanctorum Hiberniae in die iudicii*.¹¹³ Reeves argued, on the basis of this note, that there existed a belief by the end of the eighth century 'that the bones of Columkille had, before that period, been brought to Ireland from Britain and deposited in Saul'.¹¹⁴ He thought that *martires* here meant 'relics', as in AU 734.3, 743.11 and 776.5. It seems, however, that the

note must be regarded as much earlier than the late eighth century.¹¹⁵ Columba's showing of Patrick's grave may be related ultimately to a tradition recorded by AU (from the Book of Cuanu) at 553.3: where, however, the interest is focused on the discovery, enshrinement and distribution of three secondary relics; and it looks as if the traditional location of Patrick's burial has moved from Saul to Downpatrick (*Dún*).¹¹⁶ Crucial to an understanding of the overall significance of the passage in question, it seems to me, are the final words *in die iudicii*, which Reeves did not discuss. In traditional Christian belief, the Day of Judgement involves the bodily resurrection of all the dead at the end of time. If these words apply as seems a natural reading, to everything from *ubi est conduction martirum*, then the context is surely not present time, but the eschatological event that brings time itself to an end. If that is so, then it is not necessarily the case that Columba's bones were at Saul when the note was written (in the late seventh or earlier eighth century?): they will presumably be transported thither *de Britannia* (i.e., from Iona) instantaneously, 'in the twinkling of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds' (as St Paul teaches, 1 Co 15:52), to foregather with the saints of Ireland around St Patrick. If *martirum* applies particularly to Columba, then possibly 'white martyrdom' in the sense defined by the Cambrai Homily is intended: separation for the sake of God from everything one loves, though fasting or labour are involved.¹¹⁷ Of this form of martyrdom Columba was a conspicuous example: *de Scotia ad Britanniam pro Christo perigrinari uolens enauigauit* – '[he] sailed away from Ireland to Britain, wishing to be a pilgrim for Christ' (*VC*, second Preface, 4a). The assembly on the last day of all the saints of Ireland at Saul is probably to be referred to the granting to Patrick just before his death of his (fourth) request that he judge all the Irish on the day of judgement (*in die iudicii*) as their apostle, as recounted by Muirchú in his Life of St Patrick.¹¹⁸ A passage in Tírechán's main text, however, in which the holy men of Ireland gather round Patrick as their father on Croagh-patrick, may also be pertinent.¹¹⁹ That the reference to Columba's *ossa*, furthermore, need not imply that they were already enshrined is also indicated by a preceding note, [III 4] 54.iiii: *ubi sunt ossa eius nouit* – 'nobody knows where his (i.e., Patrick's) bones rest'.¹²⁰

Bede, speaking of Columba, his mission to the northern Picts and of the

110 Bannerman 1993, 18–9, 22–3. See further below, § 2 and n. 14.

111 H.E. iv, 30: Colgrave and Mynors 1969 (1991), 444–5.

112 Bede's Life of St Cuthbert, chs. XLII and XLIII: Colgrave 1940, 290–7.

113 Bieler 1979, 164–5 ([III 5] 55.(2)) and Commentary, 234.

114 Reeves 1857, 312–4.

115 Charles-Edwards (2000, 439–40) would date Tírechán's *Collectanea* to c. 688 x 693. But the supplementary notes, III 2–8 in Bieler 1979, 164–6, 'do not appear to have been part of Tírechán's original text' (Charles-Edwards 2000, 10 n. 13): probably post 684 anyway (ibid., 439). F. Kelly, in Bieler 1979, 234, notes of *Columb* gen. *Coluimb* that 'the final -b in this word is well attested in seventh-century sources'; and that probably it 'was lost during the eighth century'.

116 In Muirchú's Life of Patrick, Patrick died at Saul (II 5, (2) and II 7 (6.)) and was buried at Downpatrick (II 11 (9). (2)): Bieler 1979, 116–9, 120–1. Charles-Edwards (2000, 439–40) would date Muirchú's work to c. 695.

117 Stokes and Strachan 1901–3, ii, 247.

118 Muirchú II 6 (5).(3): Bieler 1979, 116–7.

119 Tírechán 38.(1) – (4): Bieler 1979, 152–3.

120 Bieler 1979, 164–5.

Columban church, says (*HE* iii.4): ‘From both of these (i.e., Iona and Durrow) sprang very many monasteries which were established by his disciples in Britain and Ireland, over all of which the island monastery in which his body lies held preeminence’ – *Ex quo utroque monasterio plurima exinde monasteria per discipulos eius et in Brittania et in Hibernia propagata sunt, in quibus omnibus idem monasterium insulanum, in quo ipse requiescit corpore, principatum teneret*. In itself the phrase *in quo ipse requiescit corpore* – ‘in which he himself rests in the body’ – is not decisive either for burial or for enshrinement. Bede has, earlier in the same chapter, used almost identical words of St Ninian of Whithorn: ‘His episcopal see is celebrated for its church, dedicated to St Martin, where his body rests, together with those of many other saints’ – *cuius sedem episcopatus, sancti Martini episcopo nomine et ecclesia insignem, ubi ipse etiam corpore una cum pluribus sanctis requiescit*. The reference to *plures sancti* could indicate burial in a communal cemetery. There is, however, evidence from later in the eighth century that Ninian’s corporeal relics, at least, were by that stage enshrined within a church; and it seems reasonable to suppose that they were already so in Bede’s time and probably for long before.¹²¹ It must be pointed out, on the other hand, that in neither case is Bede a firsthand authority; and that he may have interpreted whatever he had heard of both Columba and Ninian in the light of his own direct experience. He is not, furthermore, making a formal and explicit statement about the contemporary resting-places of the two saints: these references are incidental to broader contexts. In the case of Columba, his posthumous presence there, however his remains are actually disposed, validates (or validated) the authority of Iona over all other Columban churches. In the case of Ninian and the many other saints at Whithorn, Bede may have intended to emphasize the deep-rooted significance in the local landscape of an ancient episcopal church that had recently (when he wrote) become a Northumbrian see.

The Commission discusses some indications that Columba’s corporeal remains were translated and enshrined about the middle of the eighth century, citing in this connection the promulgations in Ireland in 753, 757 and 778 of the ‘law of Columba’ (in 757 and 778 by or in conjunction with the abbot of Iona); and the possibility that the Book of Kells was produced on Iona at this time to mark the occasion.¹²² Columcille’s law (*Lex Coluim Cille*, AU 753. 4, 778.4, *Lex Columbe Cille*, AU 757.9) was promulgated first by Domnall Midi of the Clann Cholmáin branch of the southern Uí Néill, overking of the Uí Néill for twenty years until his death in 763; then by abbot Sléibéne; lastly by Donnchad (Midi, son of Domnall

and overking in his turn, dying in 797) and abbot Bresal.¹²³ The provisions of this law are unknown; but they were presumably of some importance to involve the overking and the abbot of Iona directly.¹²⁴ That relics of the saint, corporeal or derived, served to enforce the law, is a legitimate and probable inference. In 727 ‘the relics of Adomnán are brought over to Ireland and the law is promulgated anew’ (*Adomnani reliquiae transferuntur in Hiberniam 7 Lex renouatur*, AU 727.6: in this case the *Lex Innocentium* – AU 697.3. It is not certain, however, that *reliquiae* here must mean corporeal relics: see below). In 734 AU notice ‘the bringing on tour of the relics of Peter, Paul and Patrick to fulfil the law’ – *Commotatio martirum Petri 7 Phoil 7 Phatraicc ad legem perficiendam* (AU 734.3). These postulated relics of Columba were not necessarily corporeal: the notable frequency, on the other hand, of the enactment of his law from shortly after 750, may indicate a recent important event connected with the saint’s cult; and it is a reasonable suggestion that it is the definitive translation and enshrinement of his *sancta ossa* (*VC* 135a) at Iona which the promulgation of his law in Ireland three times between 750 and 780 in part reflects. It may also be worth noting here that St John’s Cross, which is dated by the Commission to about the middle or second half of the eighth century, stands immediately west (in front) of ‘St Columba’s Shrine’.¹²⁵ Pilgrimage to Iona, furthermore, at least at aristocratic level, is first noticed in the annals at 763 (in a source of admittedly doubtful authority), then 770 (cf. 778) and 783 (cf. 791).¹²⁶

Under 818, CS states that Diarmaid, abbot of Iona, ‘went to Alba with the shrine of Colum Cille’ – *Diarmaid Ab Iae co sgrin Colaim Cille do dul a nAlbain*. What appears to be the corresponding entry in FM (816), says merely that Diarmaid abbot of Iona went to Scotland – *Diarmaid, abb Iae Coluim Cille, do dul i n-Albain* – with no mention of Columba’s shrine. It is, of course, possible that this entry is defective (FM do not contain the entries of 829 and 831, below). I suspect, however, that an originally identical or closely similar CS entry has been embellished, the words *co sgrin* or *co sgrin Colaim Cille* being added erroneously by confusion with or (false) deduction from the entry for 829 (no. 7, below). Diarmaid’s subsequent return to Ireland is not recorded.

The only explicit reference to the bones of Columba in their shrine occurs in Walafrid Strabo’s poem on the martyrdom of Blathmac at Iona in 825: ‘... the precious metals wherein lie the holy bones of St Columba’ – *preciosa metalla / ... quis sancti sancta Columbae/ossa iacent* (ll. 142–4). The precious metals include gold, *aurum* (l. 151). Such a richly decorated shrine is not inherently improbable in an Irish (or, presumably, Gaelic Scottish) context at this date: compare, for instance, AU 800.6 (the placing of the relics of Conlaed bishop of Kildare ‘in a

121 Colgrave and Mynors 1969 (1991), 220–3. For Ninian see also 1. The late 8th century poem *Miracula Nynie Episcopi*, ed. and trans. W.W. MacQueen, *Trans. Dumfries and Galloway Nat. Hist. and Antiq. Soc.* 37 (1960), 21–57, esp. X 300, XI 326–7. XIII 399–402, and cf. IV, XII 347, 349–50, 369, XIV 450–2 (differing nuances of interpretation are possible). 2. Alcuin, Letter 273, in E. Dümmler, ed., *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae 4. Epistolae Karolini Aevi II*, Berlin 1985 (Munich 1994), 431–2 – written 782–804.

122 RCAHMS 1982, 47.

123 Anderson 1922, i, 241, 242–3, 249.

124 Cf. Herbert 1988, 64–7.

125 RCAHMS 1982, 17–9. 204; and see Iona Abbey, ground plan VI at end of volume. See also Fisher 2001, 15–6, 133 (no. 82).

126 Anderson 1922, i, 245, 247, (249). 253–4.

shrine of gold and silver’ – *hi scrin oir 7 argait*); AU 801.1 (the placing of the relics of Rónán son of Berach of Dromiskin ‘in a gold and silver casket’ – *in arca auri 7 argenti*). Columba’s shrine could have been similarly adorned half a century previously; or further embellished in the meantime. It seems to have been portable, at least by several persons, and detachable from some kind of (fixed?) base: ‘... [the monks] had lifted the shrine from its pediments, and had placed it in the earth, in a hollowed barrow, under a thick layer of turf’ – *suis de sedibus arcam/tollentes tumulo terra posuere cavato, / cespitem sub denso* (ll. 144–6). There is no indication here of a substructure below ground (such as might have represented an original grave-pit); or of where exactly it was normally housed.¹²⁷ All this is, nevertheless, not implausible; and Walahfrid was a contemporary – at a distance – of the event. The problem is to decide how far his description of the shrine, such as it is, reflects the direct report to him of one or more eye-witness informants (not impossibly refugees from the attack – compare ll. 116–31); or how far it reflects, perhaps subconsciously, a type or types of unspecialised Carolingian shrine familiar to him at Reichenau and elsewhere. In this connection it is worth repeating that he employs a linguistically correct form –

Eo (l. 96) – of the name Iona.¹²⁸ What cannot reasonably be doubted is the presence on Iona in 825 of the shrine holding St Columba’s corporeal relics: its existence there is apparently known to the ‘Danes’ – *hanc praedam cupiere Dani* (l. 147), ‘this booty the Danes desired’ – and his refusal to tell them where it has been hidden is the immediate cause of Blathmac’s murder by them. It is, therefore, central to Walahfrid’s narrative.

In 829 Diarmait, abbot of Iona, went to Scotland ‘with the halidoms of Colum Cille’ (*co minnaib Coluim Cille*, AU 829.3; *co miondib Colaim Cille*, CS 829); and returned to Ireland in 831 ‘with the halidoms of Colum Cille’ (*co mindaibh Coluim Cille*, AU 831.1; *co miondoibh Coluim Cille*, CS 831). *Mind* (*minn*) is ‘(a) ‘a distinguishing badge or emblem of honour or rank’, esp. one worn on the head, ‘a crown, diadem’ etc.’; ‘(b) ‘a halidom or venerated object,’ esp. something connected with a saint’.¹²⁹ The word clearly has broad application, denoting frequently (if not usually) secondary (associated) relics. (The named *minda Colaim chille* of AT [1090], for instance, are all secondary relics). It is also noteworthy, I suggest, that in the AU and CS entries under discussion, the definite article is not used with *minn*: ‘with halidoms of Colum Cille’ or ‘with relics of Colum Cille’ would then be even less specific than the use of *minn* alone might imply. (Bannerman sees these two entries not as a pair, but as denoting separate circuits by the abbot of Iona of Irish Columban houses: that of 829 being notice of the end of one, that of 831 of the beginning of another.¹³⁰ His contention assumes that the abbot was still normally resident at Iona at this time – an assumption that

I shall argue is debatable. On balance, it seems to me more straightforward to take these two entries together as reflecting a single journey).

In 849 Indrechtach, abbot of Iona, ‘came to Ireland with the halidoms of Colum Cille’ (*do thiachtain dochum nErenn co mindaibh Coluim Cille* – AU 849.7; *do thiachtain i nEirinn go mhionnaibh Coluim Cille lais* – FrA § 238). The same observations apply, in respect of the use of *minn* and the absence of the definite article, as in the case of no. 7. The verb used is the same as for Diarmait’s return to Ireland in 831 (*do tiachtain*, AU). It is at least conceivable that Indrechtach’s outward journey to Scotland, corresponding with Diarmait’s of 829, was not noticed: it has not survived, at any rate, in the extant record. Nevertheless, much has been made of this entry in the annals, as will be seen.

The Scottish Chronicle in the Poppleton MS, which may be originally of late tenth century date (the MS dates to around the middle of the fourteenth century), records that ‘in the seventh year of his reign’, Kenneth son of Alpin, King of the Picts and Scots, ‘transported the relics of St Columba to a church that he had built’ – *Septimo anno regni sui reliquias sancti Columbe transportavit ad ecclesiam, quam construxit*.¹³¹ Since discussion here concerns *minutiae* (comparatively speaking) of interpretation, it is necessary to consider first the ambiguities arising from the lack of either definite or indefinite article in Latin. In line with his overall view of the historical significance of this event (see below), Anderson translated *reliquias* ‘the relics’: on the face of it, ‘relics’ would be an equally likely rendering. Anderson conversely translated *ad ecclesiam*, ‘to a church’: ‘to the church’ is equally possible. While it seems perverse to doubt seriously that Dunkeld is the place meant, it has always struck me as noteworthy that it is not actually named, as might have been expected from the context. It seems unlikely that the chronicler did not know the destination of the relics. Possibly the words in the second sentence of the chronicle – *quos ut diximus Cinadius deleuit*, ‘whom [i.e., the Picts], as we have said, Kenneth destroyed’ – refer back, as M.O. Anderson thought, ‘to a lost version of the story of Kenneth’s destruction of the Picts.’¹³² Such a version might have included a more explicitly detailed account of Kenneth’s activities at Dunkeld; which might in turn have helped to explain the omission of the place-name here. Broun’s suggestion, on the other hand, that the destination of the relics is not named because it was also the place where this record was written, is distinctly plausible and may, in fact, be the solution of the problem.¹³³ His explanation would also strengthen the case for translating *ad ecclesiam* ‘to the church’. Tradition surviving elsewhere attributes the original foundation of Dunkeld to Constantine son of Fergus, who died in 820. The terse *iste/hic* [sc. *Constantinus*] (*a*)*edificavit Dunkelde(i)n* gives little away; and we are not told that his church was dedicated to Columba. In the present context, however, translating *quam construxit* as ‘which he

¹²⁷ Duemmler 1884, 297–301 (text); Anderson 1922, i, 263–5 (translation from l. 95 to end).

¹²⁸ Watson 1926, 87–90, esp. 87–9. And see n. 17 to Part 1.

¹²⁹ *DIL*, I mind (*minn*); cf. also §§ (c) and (d).

¹³⁰ 1999, 75 n. 21.

¹³¹ Anderson 1922, i, 288 (translation); Anderson 1973, 250 (text). For discussion of the Scottish Chronicle see Anderson 1949, 37–9; Cowan 1981.

¹³² Anderson 1973, 249 and n. 121; 1949, 37. Cf. Anderson 1922, i, 288 n. 1. See also Cowan 1981, 12–19. For a different view, see Howlett 2000, 52–63, esp. 58.

¹³³ Broun 1999, 104–5.

built', rather than Anderson's pluperfect 'that he had built', 'to the church which he built' might suggest that Kenneth actually constructed a special shrine-church for his *reliquiae*, complementing rather than superseding Constantine's earlier foundation, which perhaps remained the principal church of Dunkeld.¹³⁴ *Reliquiae* seems to have some of the same ambiguity as *minn*, as regards the nature of the relics envisaged: at any rate, it presumably was not claimed that 'the relics of Peter and Paul, Stephen and Lawrence, which', says Tírechán, 'are in Armagh' – [*partem de*] *reliquis Petri et Pauli, Laurentii et Stephani quae sunt in Machi* – were corporeal relics of those apostles and protomartyrs.¹³⁵ A staff (*bachall*) of Columba called *Cathbuaid*, 'victory in battle' or 'battle-triumph', was used as a battle-talisman by the Scots against Scandinavian invaders in, apparently, 904 and 'often': it is quite likely to have been kept at Dunkeld and might originally have formed part of Kenneth's *reliquiae*.¹³⁶ On the other hand, we have already seen (in part 1) that what was believed to be the *sepulchrum* or *tumulus* of St Columba (*Beati Columbani*) is mentioned in the late tenth century (?) life of St Catroe as being at a church which is probably to be identified as Dunkeld. In an Anglo-Saxon list of saints' resting-places 'completed in its present form in or shortly after 1031', 'Columcylle' is said to rest at 'Duncachan' or 'Duncabean' on the River 'Tau'. The first half of this list appears 'to relate principally to the situation in Northumbria and the Midlands in the pre-Viking period' and to be based on material of ninth or tenth century (and possibly even earlier) date.¹³⁷ With the garbled place-name forms 'Duncachan' and 'Duncabean' may be compared (*abbas*) *Duin Caillenn* (AU 865.6), (*princeps*) *Duin Chaillden* (AU 873.8), (*abb*) *Duine Caillenn* (AU 965.4), *Dun Caillenn* (AU 1027.7), (*ab*) *Duine Caillenn* (AU 1045.6). Judging by Watson's analysis of the river name Tay, 'Tau' is closer to a Pictish (or at least Brittonic) than a Gaelic original.¹³⁸ Dunkeld, moreover,

claimed to have at least one bone of St Columba in the time of bishop George Brown (1483–1515).¹³⁹ Though the reliability of the evidence (coming as it does from two foreign sources and a very late native one) is not what one would wish, nevertheless its cumulative weight is probably sufficient to make a reasonably convincing case that Kenneth's *reliquiae* included corporeal relics of St Columba. It may, on the other hand, be significant in this connection that the Irish annals do not record any subsequent pilgrimage to Dunkeld; though CS 963 records the death of Aedh son of Maelmíthidh in pilgrimage (*in peregrinatione*) at St Andrews (*hi Cind rimonaidh*).

Since Skene's time, and especially perhaps since A.O. Anderson's, it has been common to see a link between Indrechtach's journey to Ireland in 849 *co mindaibh Coluim Cille* and Kenneth's removal of *reliquiae sancti Columbe* 'in the seventh year of his reign' to (presumably) Dunkeld; and to interpret the joint activity thus created as marking the definitive division of Columba's corporeal relics between Kells and Dunkeld – thus satisfying the demands of the saints' cult in both Ireland and Scotland. Skene regarded Kenneth's action as the Scottish part of such a definitive division. And, though he dated that action to 850 or 851, he does seem to have connected it with Indrechtach's journey of 849.¹⁴⁰ Anderson argued the association more forcefully, equating Kenneth's 'seventh year' with 848–9.¹⁴¹ The most notable protagonist of this view in recent times has been Bannerman.¹⁴² There is really nothing, however, in the annal entry AU 849.7 to distinguish it qualitatively from AU 831.1, as we have seen. Although, moreover, the opening sentence of the Scottish Chronicle might be in favour of interpreting Kenneth's *septimus annus regni* as his seventh year over the Picts, the sentence immediately preceding that in question actually refers to his reception of *Dalriete regnum*, 'the kingdom of Dál Riata', *biennio antequam ueniret Pictauiam*, 'two years before he came to Pictland'.¹⁴³ In the absence of a more explicit date, therefore, it seems to me that considerable uncertainty must remain as to the precise year intended; and serious doubts as to whether these events are really connected. Kenneth's action in bringing relics of Columba into the kingdom effectively controlled by him may well have had importance for, in particular, the churches and cult of the saint within that kingdom: an importance that I shall later have to try to assess. It may not, on the other hand, have had such an impact on the consideration of Columba's churches overall.¹⁴⁴

In 878 'the shrine of Colum Cille and his other halidoms arrived in Ireland,

134 Regnal lists D, F, K in Anderson 1973, 266, 273, 287 (*Constantin fitz Fersusa.xl. aunz. Cesti fist edifier Dunkeldyn* – 'Constantine son of Fergus 40 years. He caused Dunkeld to be built': the second sentence is Skene's translation, 1867, 202. Cf. ... (*deuant qe*) *leglis de Dunkeld just edifie du roy Costentin roy des Pictis* – '... (before) the Church of Dunkeld was built by King Constantine, king of the Picts': Skene, l.c., 201); H (Skene 1867, 201; Anderson 1922, i, 121 n. 3); Fordun, bk. 4, ch.12 (Skene 1871–2, i, 154–5, ii 144). Bannerman (1999, 74–5) argued a direct connection between Constantine's foundation of Dunkeld and the donation (804) and foundation (807) of Kells.

135 Bieler 1979, 122–3 ([II 3](5)); *partem de reliquiis Petri et Pauli et aliorum* also in Tírechán 48 (3) – *ibid.* 160–1. For the kinds of derivative relics possibly involved, see Thomas 1971, 136–7, Rollason 1978, 80–1. The demonstration of Pope Leo that 'contact' relics are as efficacious as the corporeal relics from which they have derived their power (by contact), alluded to by Rollason, may throw some light on a miracle recorded of the relics of Peter and Peter 'on Patrick's altar at Ard Macha' in 1033 (AU 1033. 9). Cf. also Van Dam 1988, 45–6.

136 FrA § 429 (Radner 1978, 168–71); see also Anderson 1922, i, 407–8. For the crozier or crosiers appearing on late 12th and late 13th cent. chapter seals of Dunkeld Cathedral, see Henderson 1987, 190–1 (fig. 260); Bourke 1997, 173–7 (and fig. 4); Glenn 2002, 439–41 (illus. 2: obverse of late 13th cent. seal; illus. 3: late 12th cent. seal); Hall 2005, 69–71 (12th cent. seal illustrated on p. 70).

137 Rollason 1978, 68 and 87.

138 Watson 1926, 50–1.

139 Myln's 'Vitae Episcoporum Dunkeldensium', translated in Hannay 1915, 312–13; Latin text in Myln 1831, 43 – *Os beati Columbae*.

140 Skene 1876–80, i 310, ii, 305, 307–8.

141 Anderson 1922, i, 279–80 (esp. 279 n. 4), 288 n. 4.

142 Bannerman 1993, esp. 31–2, 42–3, 29–30; 1999, 73–4, 88, 92.

143 Anderson 1973, 249–50; Anderson 1922, i, 288.

144 Cf. Broun 1999, 104–5, esp. n. 40. Broun, nevertheless, seems to accept in principle the division of relics in 849 proposed by Anderson and Bannerman: cf. also *ibid.*, 108.

having been taken in flight to escape the foreigners’ – *scrín Coluim Cille 7 a minna olchena du tiachtain dochum nErenn for teicheadh ria Gallaibh* (AU 878.9; similarly CS 878, omitting the verb; FM 875). The explicit reference to the shrine of Columba and his other *minna* makes it at least a reasonable inference that this was the primary shrine containing the saint’s corporeal relics (less whatever had been removed by Kenneth son of Alpin?) – the same shrine, it may be, that had been hidden at Iona from Vikings in 825. Reeves believed that the shrine now probably remained in Ireland, being housed possibly at Skreen (*Scrín Coluim Cille*) in Co. Meath.¹⁴⁵ It is difficult to understand, however, why, in that case, a relatively minor church such as Skreen¹⁴⁶ should have been chosen as permanent depository of such an important cult-object, central to the spiritual life and devotion (one would have thought) of all Columba’s churches and, more generally, a focus of pilgrimage and so a source of revenue – rather than, say, Durrow or Kells. It seems to me more likely that Skreen would have housed – and been named for – a secondary relic or relics of Columba. *Scrín Coluim Cille* was plundered in 974 (CS) or 976 (AT 230) and 986 (CS). In 1027 it was plundered by Roen (‘o’Melaghlin’, A Clon) (FM, A Clon). It was pillaged, along with Duleek, by the Dublin Norse in 1035 (CS) or 1037 (FM); by the men of Teathbha and Cairbre in 1058; and by the Uí Briuin, along with Dunshaughlin and Trevet, in 1152 (FM). In 1132, (ALC) the community of *Scrín Coluim Cille (to muintir na Scrín C.C.)* were engaged in battle in which the *airchinnech*, Macraith Ua Niallain, was killed. In 1127, ‘the shrine of Colum-Cille was carried off into captivity by the foreigners of Ath-cliaith, and was restored again to its house at the end of the month’ – *Scrín Cholaim Chille do bhreith do Ghallaibh Atha cliath leo i mbroid, 7 a hidhnacal doridhisi i ccinn mís dia thigh* (FM). This was, it seems reasonable to argue, the actual shrine which gave Skreen its name. The other references are more likely to be to the church itself or to the whole ecclesiastical settlement. (The notices of 974/6, 986, 1058 and 1132 can be read naturally as referring to a church settlement; those of 1027, 1035/7 and 1152 definitely so refer).¹⁴⁷ The theft of the shrine in 1127, while worthy of the annalists’ attention, does not seem to have been regarded as the traumatic event that the theft, even by superficially Christian Norsemen, of St Columba’s primary shrine ought to have been. Other *scrína* of Columba, moreover, eventually appear. In 1201 the death of Conchobar Becc Mac Lachlainn, king of Cenél Eogain, at the hands of the Cenél Conaill, is seen as being ‘in reparation of Colum-cille and of his successor and of his Shrine that he dishonoured’ – *i n-einech Coluim-cille 7 a comarba 7 a scrine rodhomíadhaigh* (AU 1201; ‘that he had violated some time before’, FM 1200). In 1204 ‘Diarmait, son of Muircertach Ua Lochlainn, with a force of Foreigners

¹⁴⁵ Reeves 1857, 315–18.

¹⁴⁶ Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 44. See also Ó Muraíle 1997, 202 (no. 29).

¹⁴⁷ AClon 1027 relates that ‘Roén o’Melaghlin robbed the shrine of Saint Columé’. It seems probable that Mageoghagan misunderstood the significance of *Scrín Coluim Cille* or the like in his Irish source: FM 1027, stating that *Scrín Cholaim Chille* was plundered by Roén, adds that ‘a great prey of cows was carried off from thence’. Cf. Bhreathnach 1996, 37–45, esp. 41–3.

came on a foray into Tir-Eogain, so that they plundered the Shrine of Colum-cille’ – *co roairgset in Scrín Coluim-cille* – ‘until a party of the Cenél-Eogain overtook them [and] defeat was inflicted upon the Foreigners [and] Diarmait was killed through miracles of the Shrine’ – *tria mírbailibh na Scrine* (AU 1204; similarly ALCé 1203, FM 1203). It is not clear to me whether one and the same shrine is in question in these two entries, or two different ones; but both O’Donovan (note e under FM 1203) and Hennessy (note 1 under ALCé 1203) identify the latter shrine with the old church of Ballynascreen in the barony of Loughinsholin, Co. Derry.¹⁴⁸ O’Donnell describes an apparently ornate shrine traditionally begun by St Patrick to hold the gospels and many relics (*taisi*) of the saints. This shrine was eventually completed at the behest and through a miracle of St Columba ‘and it is the Shrine of Colum-cille today’ – *gonadh í scrín C.c. aniugh hí*. In it Columba placed many relics (*taisi*) of the saints of Ireland, the side hair ‘it is said’ of the Virgin Mary, and the thumb of the right hand of the holy man Tice. ‘And that is the sanctuary of Mac Gilligan’s Height today. And this shrine is the chief relic of Columcille in the place from that time to this ...’ – *gonadh e sin termond Arda meg Gillagain aniugh, 7 isí an scrín is airdmhind do C.c. and osin ille ...* (BCC § 146).¹⁴⁹ *Taise* is (a) ‘dead body, corpse, remains’ (b) ‘relics (of a saint)’ (c) ‘remnant, remains, ruins’ (d) ‘manes, spirit, ghost’:¹⁵⁰ so the primary reference of (b) is perhaps to corporeal relics. In the present case, however, the shrine seems to have contained a mixed bag. It is, in any case, called *Scrín Coluim Cille*, in the tradition recorded by O’Donnell, not because it contained relics of Columba himself, but because the relics it contained were collected mainly by him.¹⁵¹

The shrine presumably came to Ireland either from Iona or from Dunkeld. Herbert appears to favour Iona, as does, more definitely, Dumville.¹⁵² Bannerman, on the other hand, believed, in accordance with his prior view, that it was removed

¹⁴⁸ So also Reeves 1857, 282; 1850, 82–3 (note g). See also Munn 1985 (1925), 43–4. The association of coarb and shrine of Colum Cille in 1201 suggests a closer connection with Derry itself.

¹⁴⁹ Reeves 1857, 282; 1850, 78: the shrine was kept at ‘Scrín in nArda’, ‘Scrinium de Ardo’, an ancient chapel site (‘Skreen church in ruins’ (OS)) in the townland of Craig, parish of Tamlaghtard or Magilligan, diocese and county of Derry – *Ballo[nes]krene de Ardo* I n 1397. See also Munn 1985 (1925), 234. O’Donovan, however, associates this shrine with an old church of St Patrick in the townland of Duncrun or Duncroon (FM 1206, n. f); and it is Patrick’s oratory in *Dun cruin* which is named by O’Donnell (l.c.) in connection with this shrine. Cf. Munn 1985 (1925), 230–1, who states further that the old parish church, erected by St Patrick, was also called ‘Ballenescrine’, after this shrine; and he refers to O’Donovan’s note under FM 1206. But he also says that the ruins of the old parish church, under the invocation of St Cadan or Catanus (of Patrick’s household), are in the townland of Tamlaght, ‘which adjoins the townland of Duncrun on the S.W.’ For present purposes, it is probably sufficient to note that only one shrine, apparently, is in question; and that, whatever its precise location in the later medieval period, it was within the parish of Magilligan.

¹⁵⁰ *DIL*, 2 *taise*

¹⁵¹ For further discussion of *scrín*, both as artefact and as toponym, with particular reference to *scrína* of Columba, see Bannerman 1993, 18–24, 27–9; Ó Floinn 1997, 137–40; Ó Muraíle 1997, 202–4.

¹⁵² Herbert 1988, 73; Dumville 1997, 21.

probably from Dunkeld.¹⁵³ Certainly the heart of the Picto-Scottish kingdom, including (it is likely enough) Dunkeld, seems to have been in a perilous state around this time – in danger, apparently, of being overrun by Scandinavian invaders. Constantine, Kenneth’s son, was defeated and killed by them in 877, during or after which time ‘the Northmen passed a whole year in Pictland’. His brother and successor, Aed, was killed – *a sociis suis* – ‘by his own associates’ (AU 878.2: by his successor (?) Giric, according to a possibly later tradition – perhaps because he was judged an ineffectual war-leader in a time of crisis?) in 878.¹⁵⁴ Alarms and rumours of alarms must, however, have been a common enough occurrence in the Hebrides during this century of Norse raiding and settlement. So it would be well within the bounds of possibility that a local threat, actual or perceived, should seem serious enough to the community of Iona in 878 (with the death, it may be, of Blathmac and his companions in mind) that they should take the action they may in fact have taken to see St Columba’s shrine to at least comparative safety in Ireland.¹⁵⁵ As Dumville has observed in the present context, ‘all through the century, the threat or the fact of Viking pressure impinged upon Iona’.¹⁵⁶

The doubtless dramatic circumstances of the arrival in Ireland of St Columba’s shrine in 878 attracted the attention of the annalists. The provisional character, on the other hand, of its sojourn in the country may be implied by their failure to say where it was housed. Its subsequent return to Scotland when the crisis had passed, if that is indeed what happened, may not have seemed to Irish writers worthy of notice.

Erdamh Choluim Chille

In the Irish Life of Adamnán (§ 16), a demon has occupied a corpse that has been brought to Iona for burial; and from the shore challenges Adamnán with difficult questions. The undaunted saint recognises the diabolical nature of his opponent and says, ‘open up the reliquary of Colum Cille’ – *Oslaicidh in [n]-erdamh do Cholum Chilli*. ‘This was done, and Adamnán made the sign of the cross in the direction of the corpse’, thereby putting the demon to flight.¹⁵⁷ Whatever the *erdamh* contained was not deployed directly, it being apparently sufficient to open it: it is the sign of the cross made towards the demon that actually repels it, presumably reinforced by the auxiliary power of the contents of the *erdamh*. The editors propose a date between c. 956 and c. 964, more narrowly between 961 and 964, for the composition of this life, probably at Kells. Reviewing in brief the significance generally of the term *erdamh*, they give it as their opinion that

here ‘it manifestly refers to the building containing the corporeal and other relics of Colum Cille (his *cella memoriae*?)’, noting the reference in AU 1007 to the western *airdom* in the great stone church of Kells.¹⁵⁸

Ó Floinn argues that St Columba’s shrine was probably brought to Kells in 878; and that the reference to the *erdamh* of Colum Cille here, though the episode is set historically in later seventh century Iona, actually reflects its presence at Kells when *Betha Adamnáin* was composed there.¹⁵⁹ Accepting the influence of his immediate physical background and personal experience on the author of the Life,¹⁶⁰ it is, of course, possible that his use of *erdamh* reflects the existence at Kells at this time of one or more structures so-called, some housing reliquaries – as apparently in AU 1007.11. The episode of § 16 is, nevertheless, set on Iona; and Iona can scarcely have been *terra incognita* to the tenth century community of Kells. It seems, therefore, just as plausible to believe that the author of *Betha Adamnáin* knew, if only by hearsay, of a contemporary building at Iona which housed a shrine of Columba. This building he called the *erdamh* of Colum Cille, either because this would have been regarded as an appropriate designation for it at Kells; or because it was actually known on Iona as *Erdamh Choluim Chille*.

There is, furthermore, another consideration that seems to bear directly on the question of the presence or otherwise of Columba’s corporeal relics at Kells, at any rate in the second half of the twelfth century. The Irish Life of Colum Cille, § 38, says that ‘He [Columba] arrived at the place where Kells is today ... He then marked out the boundaries of that monastery in the manner in which it is (laid out), and he blessed it in its entirety and said that it would be the most distinguished foundation which he would have on earth, though his resurrection would not take place there’ – *cenco bad innte no beth a esergi*.¹⁶¹ Sharpe has observed that ‘it was assumed that where the body was buried, there the person would rise again on the last day. *Resurrectio*, therefore, is often used in Hiberno-Latin to mean ‘place of burial.’ It is a common motif in the Lives of Irish saints that in life they wander until they arrive at the place where it is meant by God that they should live out their lives and die; that place is the saint’s *resurrectio*.¹⁶² Adamnán, indeed, probably

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 3–44, 84.

¹⁵⁹ Ó Floinn 1997, 139–40; cf. 160.

¹⁶⁰ ‘... it may ... be inferred that the Iona episodes in *Betha A* took their present form in the scriptorium at Kells’ (except for the verse in §§ 14, 17): Herbert and Ó Riain 1988, 41.

¹⁶¹ Herbert 1988, 257–8 (translation), 232–3 (text).

¹⁶² Sharpe 1995, 340 n. 318, with reference to the death of Librán (VC ii 39). The place of a saint’s resurrection may be said to be a hagiographical commonplace. The following examples are taken from Plummer’s two great editions of Irish saints’ lives, Latin and Irish. The list makes no claim to being exhaustive. Plummer 1910, i: Abbab § 25; Ailbe § 29; Bairre §§ 10, 11, 12, 14; Brendan 1, §§ 9, 75, 77, 102; Cainnech § 6; Carthage §§ 35, 36, 42, 62, 63; Ciarán of Clonmacnoise §§ 21, 28; Ciarán of Saigir § 3; Coemgen §§ 24, 25; Colmán Elo § 3. Plummer 1910, ii: Declan § 15; Enda § 13; Fintan of Clonenagh §§ 3, 4; Maedoc § 6; Mochoemog §§ 11, 14, 15; Molua §§ 27, 28; Munnu §§ 7, 8, 12, 17; Ruadan § 2; Maedoc 2 § 6. Plummer 1922: Abban § xxiv (40); Bairre §§ ix (20), xi (25), xii (26), xiii (28), xxi (38), xxvi (49); Brendan of Clonfert § ix (21, 22), xlvii (156), lxi (183, 184), lxi (207); Ciarán of Saigir 2 §§ i (1), xxv (53), xxvi (55); Maedoc of Ferns 2 §§ x (24), xiii

¹⁵³ Bannerman 1993, 20, 43.

¹⁵⁴ Anderson 1922, i, 350–8.

¹⁵⁵ For the background, see, e.g., Crawford 1987, 39–58; McDonald 1997, 24–30.

¹⁵⁶ Dumville 1997, 21.

¹⁵⁷ Herbert and Ó Riain 1988, 58–61.

had this idea in mind in his account of the burial of Columba: ‘... the venerable body of the holy and blessed patron was ... laid in the appointed burial-place ... and was interred with fitting veneration to rise again in bright and eternal light’ – *sancti et beati patroni uenerabile corpus ... possitum in rata busta debeta humatur cum ueneratione, in luminosa et aeternali resurrecturum claritudine* (VC iii 23, 133ab). If, in the meantime, the saint’s remains were translated and enshrined, the shrine would presumably become the place of his or her *resurrection*: normally, one would think, on or near the site of the original burial – at least within the same ecclesiastical complex. In effect, therefore, the Irish Life of Colum Cille seems to be more or less explicitly denying that Kells housed Columba’s primary shrine, at least at the time of its composition; while making no such claim on behalf of any other Columban church in Ireland – in particular (at this date) Derry. If the Life was in fact written at Derry, as Herbert argues, its silence in this regard seems to me significant. Even if it was compiled at Armagh as Bannerman believed, its silence is still noteworthy.¹⁶³ Herbert believes also that the Kells foundation legend of § 38 probably originated at Kells.¹⁶⁴ Even if one were to argue that the legend as we have it here derives from a version written down originally in the first half of the ninth century (when there seems to be general agreement that Columba’s shrine was still on Iona), the very explicitness of the Life’s statement is still remarkable, as indeed its repetition in the second half of the twelfth century if it was known to be untrue. In fact, the compiler of the Irish Life of Colum Cille seems to think that the saint’s mortal remains are still on Iona. Having given a very brief account in § 64 with the statement: ‘His body, indeed, is here on earth, honoured and venerated by God and man, daily performing wonders and miracles ...’¹⁶⁵ The transition, furthermore, from § 64 to § 65 appears to be seamless.

Erdamh, *airdam(-dom)* is a problematical term. Its usage in written sources was discussed at some length by Petrie,¹⁶⁶ who concluded provisionally that it ‘was variously applied to any extraneous or side-building, of any kind, attached to a greater’; and that its use in the annals most probably denoted ‘sacristies, or other lateral apartments, entered from the interior of the church’) p.444). His

(30), lviii (157, 159), lxxii (225, 228); Mochuda §§ xiii (22), xxvi (41, 43); Expulsion of Mochuda § viii (25); Ruadan § ii (4). The concept is at least as old as the *Additamenta* ([VIII 2] 14.(1)) in the Book of Armagh (written in 807 – Charles Edwards 2000, 11 and refs. there); Bieler (1979, 176–7). Bieler thought (ibid. 48) that the Leinster records VIII 1–2 were brought to Armagh in the period 661–88. Cf. also VC iii 23 (132a: burial of Ernène mocu Fir róide at Drumhome).

163 Herbert 1988, 189–93, arguing for a Derry provenance and a date of c. 1150 – c. 1170 for its composition; cf. 198–9. Bannerman 1993, 40–1 preferred an Armagh provenance, while agreeing with Herbert’s dating.

164 Herbert 1988, 192, 197. Depending, of course, on how much time such a foundation legend would need to develop, its final form might be later than the 9th century.

165 Herbert 1988, 265 (translation), 242–3 (text). For a possible belief that Columba’s body, or at any rate some parts of it, was still at Iona c. 1210, see Clancy 1998, 242–6 and ref., 339. The allusion, however, is not explicit enough and seems to me ambiguous.

166 Petrie 1845, 437–44. See now also Ó Carragáin 2010, 34–5.

conclusion was followed in the main by *DIL* (s.v. *airdam*) – ‘vestibule, porch’, etc. A recent discussion of its occurrence in the annals is that of Manning.¹⁶⁷ He suggests that four of the six annalistic references ‘would indicate that *erdamh* meant a freestanding building and not a porch, vestibule or other structure attached to or within a church’; and speculates that *erdamh* could be ‘a small subsidiary church associated with but not attached to a large church? If Erdamh Chiaráin (mentioned at FM 1070 and CS 1113) ‘is what we today call Teampall Chiaráin at Clonmacnoise, as seems very likely, it would fit this description.’ The occurrence of *erdamh* apparently as a place-name would tend, I think, to reinforce the belief that the term refers, at least on occasion, to a distinct, separate and probably freestanding structure: Failbe Erdaim (MT, April 8; cf. February 8 – Airdoni. Falbe); Failbe Erdoimh (MG, Feb. 8), F. Erdaimh (April 8).

Manning’s suggestion that Erdamh Chiaráin is probably Temple Ciarán at Clonmacnoise has relevance for a possible identification of an Erdamh Choluim Chille at Iona.¹⁶⁸ Temple Ciarán stands close to both the Cathedral and Temple Kelly: very close, in fact, to the south-east corner of the latter. This relationship, perhaps especially with regard to Temple Kelly,¹⁶⁹ is reminiscent of that of ‘St Columba’s Shrine’ to the north-west corner of the nave of the abbey church at Iona. This chapel, as we have seen, was originally freestanding: if a twelfth or pre-twelfth century church, or a succession of them, occupied the site of the nave of the abbey church, with its or their west gable(s) on or near the line of the existing west gable (cf. Part 1, above and notes 100, 101), then St Columba’s Shrine’, if of eighth, ninth, or tenth century date (see Part 1, above, including n. 103), or a predecessor if later, as a ‘small subsidiary church associated with but not attached to a large church’ could be the *erdamh* of Betha Adamnáin. Shrines in this position in relation to a church can be found on sites in Ireland. Two good examples, both from Co. Kerry, are Reask and Illaunloughan.¹⁷⁰ If, furthermore, ‘St Columba’s Shrine’ is the ‘little church of Colum Cille’ of the account of the visit to the island of King Magnus of Norway in 1098 (see Part 1, above and n. 40), its interior, so probably its contents, seems to have overawed the king. Magnus is said to have closed the door and locked it without going in, forbidding entry to the church thenceforth. A permanently locked church seems rather unlikely – not to say futile. Anderson noted that ‘the alleged locking of Columba’s church is a

167 Manning 2000, 39–40.

168 I do not think that Manning’s suggestion and my argument (MacDonald 2003, 130–4) that Temple Ciarán was also known as ‘Eaglais Beag’, even if the latter name was used at the same time as ‘Erdamh Chiaráin’, need be mutually exclusive. If both names were contemporary, e.g., ‘Erdamh Chiaráin’ may have applied to the church specifically, ‘Eaglais Beag’ more broadly to the church and any community that served it. But the latter name may, in any case, be later.

169 I have discussed briefly the relationship of these three churches and some of its possible implications, with refs., in MacDonald 2003, 133–4.

170 Reask: Fanning 1981, figs. 2,6 and pl. III b; Illaunloughan: White Marshall and Walsh 2005, 38 (29), 65 (50b), 223 (113).

parallel instance to the alleged locking of St Olaf's shrine by Harold Hardrádi'.¹⁷¹ I suspect that what Magnus actually ordered to be shut and permanently locked was a shrine of Columba rather than the church which housed it; but that the two were inseparably associated in the minds of contemporaries and so conflated by later Icelandic tradition.

'St Columba's Shrine' was preserved by the Benedictine community and incorporated more or less into its claustral complex. Its preservation and accommodation in this way surely indicate that it still had not just a function but an important one, at the heart of the religious life of Iona, during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Clearly, a precise date for 'St Columba's Shrine' is a desideratum. If the building dates originally to the eighth century, then the historical context might quite well be the postulated midcentury translation and enshrinement of what were believed to be the saint's physical remains (or at least whatever survived of them). If, on the other hand, it dates to the tenth century or later, then the building of a chapel of predominantly Irish type on Iona at this time may take on much greater significance. If the building were commissioned by the community of Iona itself, it must have been of sufficient importance for it to undertake the effort and expense of apparently hiring Irish masons, in preference to resident or at any rate local craftsmen. If the chapel were commissioned by the coarb of Colum Cille from Kells, some pressing consideration must have prompted him to go to similar trouble and expense. A new house for Columba's corporeal relics would surely provide sufficient motive in either case; and an adequate hypothetical explanation for a tenth or eleventh century structure (regardless of what did or did not precede it). Much may eventually depend, therefore, on what chronological information 'St Columba's Shrine' may be persuaded to yield to future investigation of the site. (See above, Part 1 and n. 103).

Early Medieval Pilgrimage and Burial on Iona

In the Irish Life of Colum Cille, § 52, we read: 'Then Colum Cille said to his company: 'It would benefit us if our roots were put down into the ground here', and he said to them: 'Someone among you should go down into the soil of the island to consecrate it.' The obedient Odrán rose up and said: 'If I be taken, I am prepared for it', said he. 'Odrán', said Colum Cille, 'you will be rewarded for it. No one will be granted his request at my own grave, unless he first seek it of you.' Then Odrán went to heaven'.¹⁷²

In the first place, I believe that this section contains basic directions for pilgrims to Iona – whether or not the compiler of the Life was aware of it himself. I suggest that it was common for early (and later) medieval pilgrims to land at Port nam Mairtear, Martyrs' Bay, south of the modern village, where in the eighteenth

century and probably long before, funeral parties landed.¹⁷³ At the head of the bay is An Ealadh, now a low grassy mound, traditionally identified as a resting-place for coffins. Proceeding northwards past the site of the nunnery and St Ronan's Church and approaching the main monastic enclosure, pilgrims would come first to St Oran's Chapel, standing beside a main entrance through the *vallum* (see further below). They would then move on to St Columba's shrine at the heart of the ecclesiastical complex; and so return eventually to Martyrs' Bay. In outline, this itinerary is reminiscent of O'Donnell's description of a pilgrimage circuit at Derry (BCC § 218): 'from the altar at the ship quay at the east end of the settlement to the 'Righthand-wise Turn' at the west end' – *ó an ulaidh ata ag port na long 'sa cend toir don baili, conuige an t-impódh dessiul ata 'sa cend tiar*. By Pope Gregory's favour bestowed upon Columba, this pilgrimage had 'the same indulgence as for the station of Rome'.¹⁷⁴ *An t-Impodh Deisiul*, 'The Righthandwise Turn', was on the south-west side of the *Tempoll Mór* of Derry, where Columba was said to have spoken with Christ face to face (BCC § 78).

E(a)lad(h) and *ulad(h)* are both variant forms of the word also found as *ailad*, *aulad*, *ilad*, translated (a) 'tomb, sepulchre, burial-cairn', (b) 'penitential station' (DIL, *ailad*). The term probably referred to a variety of structures, in some cases having both above – and below – ground elements, in others built entirely above-ground; and having a variety of (not necessarily mutually exclusive) functions, including that of stations in a pilgrimage circuit, some serving, if flat-topped, as altars. What were seen as tomb-shrines were probably regarded as reliquaries; or could have been built specifically to house relics. Such constructions could also be associated with crosses (cf. e.g., FM 1026, 1070). The kinds of structure called *leachta* could probably have been known on occasion as *elaidh*, *ulaidh*.¹⁷⁵ Mounds or cairns could also apparently be so called. For the compiler of the Latin Life of Declan (§ 35), *Ullath* (sc. *Declain*) is *aceruus Declani*, explicitly *aceruus lapidum*, 'a pile of stones' *cum cruce*, 'with a cross': in the Irish Life (ch.41), it is an unnamed *carn cloch agus cros*, '(a) pile of stones and a cross'.¹⁷⁶ A grave so-called may have been stone-built, or at least marked on the surface by a stone surround and crosses.

At St Moluag's foundation on Lismore in the Firth of Lorn is a standing stone called 'Clach na h-Ealadh'. It is an erratic granite boulder roughly cross-shaped,

¹⁷³ Pilgrims landing at Columba's Bay, at the south end of the island, could, by turning east on reaching the Machair, and crossing the island, arrive also at Martyrs' Bay. For reasons which should become clear in the course of the discussion, I would regard Martyrs' Bay and An Ealadh as the formal start and finish of the pilgrimage circuit. (For possible medieval pilgrim activity at Port an Fhir-bhréige at Columba's Bay, see RCAHMS 1982, 257 (no. 19)).

¹⁷⁴ I have used the translations of both O'Kelleher and Schoepperle 1918, 213 and of Lacey 1998, 114. It may be worth noting that, at one time, when the coffins had been placed on An Ealadh on Iona, the funeral parties went three times *deisiol*, 'righthandwise', round the place: Reeves 1857, 423(4).

¹⁷⁵ For general discussion of *leachta*, see Thomas 1971, 169–75.

¹⁷⁶ Plummer 1910, ii, 56; Power 1914, 62–3, 176 n. 88.

¹⁷¹ Anderson 1922, ii, 107–8. For a probably apocryphal account in the Manx Chronicle of Magnus' opening of St Olaf's Shrine and its consequences, see *ibid.*, 102.

¹⁷² Herbert 1988, 261 (translation), 237 (text).

situated about 60m. south of the east wall of the cathedral. It is 0.80m. high, 0.60m. wide at the base and 0.40m. at the top. It is supposed to have marked a boundary in connection with certain rights of sanctuary associated with an adjacent building, the site of which is shown on the OS 6 in. map.¹⁷⁷

In Scots Gaelic *ulaidh* (dative used as nominative) comes to mean ‘treasure, hoard’, from the idea that graves contained treasure.¹⁷⁸ The Ritchies’ map of Iona shows ‘Liana na h-Uilidh’ (*sic*), translated ‘Meadow of the dog-fishes’ (?) or ‘Meadow of the Treasure’, above the north-east shore of Iona. ‘Port nam Murlach’ is adjacent; but I do not know to what the alternative name refers.¹⁷⁹

O’Donnell does not describe the *uladh* at Derry; nor is it clear to what the name ‘An Ealadh’ at Iona originally applied. The mound to which it is now attached proved on excavation in 1969 to be a natural feature created by blown sand after the area had ceased to be used for burial. Pipe-laying operations in 1960–1 at the south edge of the mound had exposed two long-cist burials (but apparently crouched); other burials in the vicinity were recorded by the Ordnance Survey; and many more were found during the 1969 excavation of the south-west quadrant of the mound. Most were concentrated in the vicinity of what was probably a sand-filled gully leading to the sea, some 4m. long and 2m. wide between rock outcrops, underlying the southern half of the later mound; while other burials had been placed in adjacent hollows within the surrounding rocks. Three further long-cist burials were discovered in the lowest levels; though most of the burials lay in a densely-packed mass in the central gully, without coffins. They were extended inhumations, orientated and presumably Christian, though strict east-west orientation was absent, probably prevented by the lie of the land. Many of the skeletons had been greatly disturbed by later burials; but some forty individuals could be identified, a majority being female, whose average age at death was around forty. Of the eight females whose skeletal remains allowed a determination to be made, none had borne children; and remains of children were markedly absent. It was also noted that neither men nor women seemed to have experienced hard manual labour; nor had any died violently. In sum, the remains were judged to be those of lightly-built people, generally healthy, adequately fed and exercised, comparatively long-lived and mildly inbred.¹⁸⁰

The 1969 excavation was not exhaustive and the overall limits of the area of burial were not established. The question, also, of the relationship of the burials discussed here to other burials in the close vicinity, perhaps especially to Cladh nan Druineach, is not addressed. So it seems the safer course to limit comments. The indications are that these people were of relatively high status, perhaps

177 RCAHMS 1975, 162–3 (no. 267). The Commission calls the stone ‘Clach na n-eala’, ‘the stone of the swan’, but this etymology is very doubtful: cf. Watson 1926, 260. The same meaning was once given to *ealadh* on Iona: Reeves 1857, 423(4).

178 Watson 1926, 260.

179 Ritchie 1945, map and 40.

180 See RCAHMS 1982, 244 (no. 10), for summary discussion of Port nam Mairtear, An Ealadh, and the burials. The full report on the 1969 excavation is in Reece 1981, 63–102 (esp.) 104, 106.

belonging to closely related families; and the women might conceivably have adopted (individually?) a religious rule of life. I find, nevertheless, the suggestion that these burials were somehow associated with the nearby Augustinian nunnery unconvincing. If the women were nuns, burial outside their enclosure seems to me problematical: the nunnery is only a few hundred metres away. The location, furthermore, at the head of Martyrs’ Bay, suggests to me that we are more likely to be dealing with successive burials of individuals brought to the island for this purpose from elsewhere, in whatever circumstances. (I suggested in Part 1, n. 43, that Cladh nan Druineach, a short way south-west of Martyrs’ Bay, might have had similar origins). This cemetery, cramped and overcrowded as it is, was clearly a desirable final resting-place over some period of time. The chronology, overall and in detail, is uncertain: some stratification of burials was observable, but no artefactual dating evidence was forthcoming and radio-carbon dating proved inconclusive. Burial may, notwithstanding, have developed here in the first instance around a special grave or shrine which the term *ealadh* originally denoted. In this connection, the suggestion that *Port nam Mairtear* was originally *Port nam Martrae*, ‘harbour of the relics’, or *na Martre*, ‘of the (saint’s) tomb’ or ‘shrine’, very likely with reference to ‘An Ealadh’, is attractive (see *DIL*, *martrae* (c)).¹⁸¹

It is possible, I think, that Martyrs’ Bay was also Adomnán’s harbour. In *VC* i, 30, Columba and his attendant Diormit are sitting on the top of the hill ‘that at a little distance overlooks this monastery of ours’ – *qui nostro huic monasterio eminus supereminet*. Columba wonders why a ship from Ireland approaches so slowly. Shortly thereafter, Diormit, ‘looking out to the south, saw the sail of a ship that was approaching the harbour’ – *ad austrum prospiciens ... uelum nauis uidet ad portum propinquantis*. It seems likely that the hill in question is Cnoc Mór, to the south-west of the abbey and overlooking the modern village from the west. If Adomnán meant that the harbour, and not just the approaching Irish vessel, were to the south of this hill (Diormit points out to Columba that the ship is coming in – *ad-uentantem*), then Martyrs’ Bay, a short distance south-south-east of Cnoc Mór, fits his admittedly not very explicit narrative, as Reeves saw, better than St Ronan’s Bay, where is the modern jetty, which lies rather east-south-east of Cnoc Mór.¹⁸² It may be, of course, that Adomnán had more than one harbour in mind in

181 The Ritchies note this possibility, though not as their own idea (1945, 41). Donaldson (1923, 340–1) also refers to this derivation, noting also that an alternative name for the bay was ‘Port nam Marbh’, ‘bay of the dead’. I have not been able to trace the suggestion to a primary source. Innes calls Port nam Mairtear ‘Port-na-Marbh’: *OPS* 2, i, (1854), 297, 302. Reeves calls it ‘Port na(m) Mairtear’ or ‘Martyrs’ Bay’, ‘Martyrs’ port’ (1857, 59, 418, 423, 425, 430 and map opposite 424), without further comment. Skene 1876–80 has on his map (vol. ii, opposite p. 100) ‘Port na Martir’ ‘By a tradition which it is hard to pin down, and impossible to date, the Bay was the site of a massacre of some sixty monks by the Norse in one of their raids in the ninth century, possible in A.D. 806’: Reece 1981, 63, giving no source(s). This sounds to me like antiquarian speculation in origin, very likely of the 19th cent.: cf. AU 806.8. For some additional relevant discussion, in the broader context of segregated burials and cemeteries, see O’Sullivan 1994, 359–60, esp. n. 2 (362).

182 For the possible identification of the hill with Cnoc Mór, see Reeves 1857, 58–9 note a (and note b: Martyrs’ Bay); Anderson 1991, 56–7 n. 62; Sharpe 1995, 292 n. 140.

VC (though it seems to me just as likely that he envisaged one principal one only for the island and the monastery). North of St Ronan's Bay are a number of small inlets, such as Port na Muinntir and Port an Díseirt, closer to the abbey, that were probably used at least occasionally, perhaps for specific purposes.

If Martyrs' Bay was already the 'sea-gate' of Iona and its monastery in Adomnán's, if not also in Columba's time, with a quasi-ceremonial function as a formal place of reception for favoured visitors and guests,¹⁸³ such official status, over above practical considerations of ease of access, would to far towards explaining its significance in later, including post-medieval, times.

Since my proposed pilgrimage circuit is a schematic outline only, offering no more than a starting-point, a mid-point and an end, there seems to be no justification for trying to link it to what is known hitherto of the system of later medieval streets on Iona. It is probably sufficient for present purposes to refer to the Commission's succinct discussion of this phenomenon.¹⁸⁴ If my suggestion has any validity, a path at the least, wholly or partly paved or otherwise, must have led from Port nam Mairtear via Reilig Odhráin to 'St Columba's Shrine'; but its precise course and how it would have related in detail to neighbouring sections of the later medieval street system is unknown.¹⁸⁵

In the second place, what is undoubtedly the most striking feature of the Irish Life of Colum Cille § 52, seemingly the more so because the context is a saint's life, is the self-immolation of Odrán. In the notes to MO, Odrán of 'Relicc Odrán i n-Í Choluim chille' is identified with Odrán of 27 October; his other churches being said to be Tech Airennain or Aireran in Meath, Letir or Lettracha Odráin in Munster and Gair maic Moga, an island in Corca-Duibne. The main text of MO, 27 October, has 'Odrán strong, noble (and) buoyant' – *Odrán sab sóer snámach*. MT has, October 27, *Odrani presbiteri i lletracha <vel o Hí>*, the words in angular brackets being an interlinear gloss, 'though undoubtedly by the text hand' (Introduction, xxvi).¹⁸⁶ then, two saints intervening, *Airennain o Thig Airennain i*

mMidi. MG has on October 27 *Odhran*, followed immediately by *Erennán*, with the note *in marg.*, *Odhran abb ía, 7 o Tigh Airerain i Midhe*: Stokes suggested (p. 204, note c) that *o Tigh Airerain i Midhe* actually glossed Erennán, not Odrán, comparing MT. MD has likewise on October 27 *Odhran, abb ía, acus ó Tigh Airerain i Midhe*, with the additional information that 'he is of the race of Conall Gulban, son of Niall' – *do chenel cConaill Gulban, mic Néill do*.

MG and MD also enter Odrán Lettracha on 26 October: *Odhran*, with the note *ó Lettreachaibh Odhráin i Muscraighe tire* (MG); *Odhran, o Letrechaibh Odhrain, i Muscraighe thire* (MD).

He is also entered at October 2: *Odran Lettracha* (MT); *Odran*, with the note *Letrech* (MG); *Odhran Letrech*, 'and he is Odhrán the Master (*Odhrán maighistir*), who is of the race of Conaire (*do shliocht Conaire*), son of Moghlamh, and the brother of Medhran, etc.' (MD).

The genealogy of Odrán of Iona is given as *mac Aingheine ... mic Boghaine ... mic Conuill Gulban*; that of Odrán Lettracha as *mac Meic Craith* (or *Menchra* or *Mioncraith*) *m. Throchaill m. Essamain Daigre m. Nuadat Nemnich*, of Uí Daigri of Slicht or Síl Conaire Móir.¹⁸⁷

The obvious uncertainty and hesitancy of the tradition as to how many Odráns are commemorated in October and the number of churches to be attributed to him or them, suggests that we are dealing with either an originally single individual whose chief cult localisations eventually split him into two; or two saints whose cults were not sufficiently clearly differentiated. The former alternative appears to me the more likely. Accepting Stoke's suggestion in his edition of MG and dismissing as an error of copying any association of an Odrán with Tech Airennain or Tech Airerain in Meath, we have in the martyrologies three churches associated with a saint of the name in this month, namely, St Oran's in Iona, Latteragh in the barony of Upper Ormond, Co. Tipperary, and Gar-Inis in Co. Kerry.¹⁸⁸ In the interpretation of Odrán of October as originally one saint, (separate genealogies do not need to be explained, of course, if pedigrees were provided at some stage or he was originally two) stages in the process of progressive differentiation of his cult that were considered appropriate as relevant to what were almost certainly his two chief localisations: a Cenél Conaill descent for Odrán on Iona (before or after tradition made him an abbot there?); and an attachment to the Uí Daigre of Múscraige Tíre (who claimed descent from both Conaire Cáem mac Moga-láma and ultimately from Conaire Mór) for Odrán at Latteragh and (judging by the place-name Gair maic Moga) on Gar-Inis too.¹⁸⁹ In this interpretation (and also in that of Odrán in October as originally two distinct saints) it seems to me most straightforward to allocate the twenty-seventh of the month primarily to Odrán of

183 In VC i, 4, Columba and the brothers go to meet Cainnech's ship and, though the harbour is not explicitly mentioned, 'honourably and hospitably received him' – *honorifice et hospitaliter susceptus est*. In i, 22, Columba goes down to the harbour – *ad portum* – to prevent a basically impenitent sinner from landing, 'so that he may not set foot on the sod of this island' – *ne huius insulae cispitem calcet*. In i, 30, here, the saint goes to the harbour – *ad portum* – to meet the truly repentant Féchna's ship: 'And Féchna rising was joyfully received by the saint' – *Qui surgens gaudenter a sancto susceptus ...* In i, 45, he goes to meet his dying uncle Ernán, *praepositus of Hinba, ad portum*. In ii, 14, it may be safely inferred, I think, that Columba has formally seen Cainnech off *a portu louae insulae*.

184 RCAHMS 1982, 142–3 and refs.

185 In VC i, 45, two crosses stand 'some twenty-four paces' – *quasi xxiiii. Pasuum* – apart, possibly near the harbour and probably on the route between it and the monastery. Adomnán seems to have regarded them both as essentially commemorative. But they may also have stood beside, and so marked, a path; as did the cross fixed in a mill-stone of iii, 23 (127a), 'standing by the roadside' – *stans in margine ... uiae* – between a barn and the monastery, also apparently seen by Adomnán as basically commemorative.

186 See Best and Lawlor. Anne O'Sullivan's edition of MT indicates that *i lletracha* is written above, *vel o hÍ* below Odran, LL VI, 1644: the original entry, in that case, presumably read simply *Odrani*

presbiteri.

187 Ó Riain 1985, 82 (662.28); 34 (200), 72 (555), 95 (662. 131, 132), 109 (665.1). For Odrán of Iona, see also Watson 1926, 309.

188 Hogan 1910, 487 (lettir odrain), 435 (gair mic moga).

189 Cf. O'Brien 1962, 367, 369.

Iona; and the second (on the testimony mainly of MT) to Odrán of Latteragh (and Gar-Inis) as his principal feast-day. In this possibly simplistic view, the allocation of Odrán of Latteragh to 26 October also by MG or its source (followed by MD) would then reflect the kind of continuing uncertainty in the tradition as to identities that is also reflected by the notes to MO.

His Irish background does not seem to provide a ready explanation for Odrán's eventual prominence at Iona: whether with regard to his dramatic self-sacrifice, or to his apparently crucial role consequently in granting or denying access to Columba's tomb to devotees. Adomnán knows nothing of him; nor does the list, possibly of tenth century or later date, of Columba's original twelve companions on the voyage to Britain, attached as an appendix to the B text of *VC*.¹⁹⁰ Adomnán, indeed, presents in *VC* iii, 6 a tradition of the first death of a monk on Iona – an unnamed Briton – that seems quite irreconcilable with the story of Odrán in § 52 of the Irish Life of Colum Cille. Conceding, however, that his cult on the island is later than Adomnán's time, perhaps later than the tenth century (see further below),¹⁹¹ it is nevertheless possible, I believe, to offer an explanation for his eventual popularity there, in the context of pilgrimage and by recourse to his martyrological attributes and the position of his church in Reilig Odhráin.

Odrán's most striking quality in MO (October 27), both main text and notes, is his aquatic ability. The main text describes him as (among other things) *snámach*, which Stokes translates 'buoyant'. The notes emphasize his prowess in this regard by relating a tradition that he entered the island of Gar-Inis by swimming: (*nó*) *i Gair meic Moga ata .i. indsola i Corca-duibne, 7 for snam dochuaid innti* – '(or) he is in Gair maic Moga, i.e. an island in Corco-Duibne, and by swimming he went into it'. *Snámach* could also be translated 'swimmer' (cf. *DIL*, s.v.).¹⁹² The personal name Odrán is a diminutive based on Old Irish *odur* (*odur*), 'dun, or greyish brown colour' (adjective and noun), itself used as a personal name (Odhar). It has been suggested that *odur*, from IE **udros*, 'watery' (cf. Greek ὕδωρ, 'water'), passed through the successive meanings 'watery' to 'water animal' (i.e. otter), to 'otter-coloured' (*DIL*, *odor*, *odrán*).¹⁹³ In this connection it is interesting to note that

190 Anderson 1991, 237–9.

191 In *VC* i, 20, Adomnán's informant for the fulfilment of a prophecy of Columba is Máel Odráin moccu Cuirin, a priest of Derry (?). Sharpe (1995, 281–2 n. 113) draws attention to the name, which means 'tonsured one (devotee) of Odrán', and its possible implications for the cult of Odrán at Iona. If Odrán here is indeed the saint's name, it would be interesting potential evidence for the early development of his cult within the Columban congregation (though not necessarily at this stage at Iona). As Sharpe points out, the name is of a common type. The indices of AU and FM, on the other hand, suggest that *máel* + saint names are rare before the 9th century. The name Máel Odráin appears, in a secular context, in 651 (AT, CS [648], cf. AU 651.1); and Maelodar, Mael Odor, Mael Odar, all apparently laymen at AU 641.1, 693.4, 694.3 respectively.

192 The fact that it is the talent alluded to in the main text of MO that enables him to perform the exploit of swimming to the island, the name of which is, as we have seen, associated rather with Odrán of Latteragh (or Odrán in his 'Latteragh aspect'), may, be additional ground for postulating one original saint Odrán in October.

193 C.f. Thurneysen 1946, 74, noting Old Norse *otr*, Lithuanian *údra*, *údras*, etc. and comparing

in a modern Scots Gaelic version of the Odrán legend, referred to by Watson,¹⁹⁴ Odhrán is called Dobhran, 'otter': but I am not competent to decide whether this is a genuine reminiscence of his traditional supernatural character, or a coincidence arising from homophony. Indeed, speculation about a possible prehistoric role as a pagan water-sprite seems idle. A saint, however, with such marked aquatic skills might well have been regarded as a beneficial patron by pilgrims who, wherever they were coming from, were faced with longer or shorter sea-crossings to Iona. Invoking also St Columba's own well-known influence on wind and wave in favour of his followers (cf. e.g., *VC* i, 1 (6b–7a), 4, 5, 18; ii, 4, 12, 13, 15, 22, 34, 39 (90a–91a), 42 (96b–97b), 45; iii, 23 (133b–134b)), such pilgrims might justifiably have felt that they were as adequately insured as possible against the many potential hazards that might threaten them during a voyage to Iona.¹⁹⁵

Otters were, it may be observed in passing, traditionally friendly to saints. When St Cuthbert visited St Aebbe at Coldingham, he used to pray in the sea below the monastery at night; and when he came out near dawn two otter (*lutraeae*) helped to dry and warm him.¹⁹⁶ In the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, an otter (*luter*) brought the hermit Paul a fish every three days for thirty years.¹⁹⁷

None of this, of course, explains Odrán's self-immolation, which the Life sees as an act of consecration of the island. A tentative explanation of how this story actually arose may, however, be offered. Herbert has referred to it as a foundation–sacrifice, suggesting that, while 'nothing can be discovered about the origin of the legend', 'it may be suggested that its propagation was connected with the enclosure of the *reilic* [sc. Reilig Odhráin] and the building there of a church or shrine.¹⁹⁸ This is certainly possible. The idea of foundation-sacrifice is attested in medieval insular sources: perhaps the best-known literary example is Vortigern's unsuccessful attempt to sacrifice the boy Ambrosius in order to build his new stronghold in north Wales, recounted by the early ninth century *Historia Brittonum* (chs. 40–2).¹⁹⁹ I think, however, that the idea underlying the Odrán legend is, more specifically, that of threshold sacrifice or, rather, burial.

Greek ὕδρος, ὕδρα, 'water snake'; *odar*, *odur* may go back to a form **udaro-s* (cf. Greek ὕδαρς, 'watery'). English 'otter' (Old English *otor*) is related to the word 'water': see, e.g., *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, Edinburgh 1972; *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, vol.1, A–O, Oxford 1971.

194 Watson 1926, 309 n. 1.

195

The perils of the seas for the community of Iona and others were real enough: see AU 641.4, 691.5, 749.7 and (probably) 1034.9.

196 Colgrave 1940, 188–91 (Bede's Life of St Cuthbert, ch. X). The Anonymous Life, ii.3, calls them simply 'two little sea animals' – *duo pusilla animalia maritime*: *ibid.*, 80–1.

197 Selmer 1959, 74–5 (cap. 26); O'Meara 1978, 64. See also Plummer 1910, i, cxliv.

198 Herbert 1988, 197.

199 Morris 1980, 29–31, 70–2. Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, bk. VI, §§ 106–8 (Reeve and Wright 2007, 136–41). The building was to be consecrated by sprinkling Ambrosius's blood on the fortress, not by burying his body beneath it. See Eliade 1959, 55–6.

Excavation in 1979 revealed an entrance causeway over a ditch, both apparently in existence in the early seventh century, adjacent to part of the north side of the north boundary wall of Reilig Odhráin. The ditch, of substantial proportions, probably formed part of the contemporary south side of the *vallum monasterii* (rather than the north). The causeway, which survived long enough to have a medieval street laid over it, was very likely the principal entrance at this time and later into the enclosure from the south – possibly indeed the principal entrance to the monastery.²⁰⁰ St Oran's Chapel stands just outside and to the east of this gateway, flanking the final approach to the entrance passage from the south.²⁰¹ St

200 The mutilated remains of the massive free-standing cross, now known as St Oran's Cross, were recorded in the late 19th century as being in St Oran's Chapel. The Commission has proposed that this is the earliest of the Iona crosses, dating probably from about the middle or the second half of the 8th century. See RCAHMS 1982, 17–8, 192–7 (no. 6 (80)). See also Fisher 2001, 131 (no. 80), 170 (8). If it was near its historical site in the late 19th century, St Oran's Cross might originally, I suggest, have stood beside this entrance, marking formally the threshold of the monastic enclosure. The Commission, on the other hand, has suggested that the cross-base situated 15m. S of St Oran's Chapel possibly marked at some stage an entrance though the *vallum* (ibid. 17, 32, 38–9 and 216 (no. 6 (103)); and Fisher (ibid., 17, cf. 135 (no. 103)) has suggested that his cross-base may have been designed to house St Oran's Cross. My scheme for the cross as an entrance marker would envisage an original position to N or NW of the site of St Oran's Chapel, depending on whether it stood to right or left of the early entrance causeway.

For the free-standing cross that formerly marked the entrance to the Rath of Armagh, perhaps of 9th or early 10th century date, fragments of which survive, see Henry 1964, 19–20, 29–30 and pls. 36–8 (pl. 37 (top) shows it *in situ* on an early 17th century plan); 1967, 42, 146, 154–5 and pl. 97. There is, of course, no necessary historical connection between the chronology and function of St Oran's Cross, so-called, and the chronology of the cult of St Odrán at Iona. And as we shall see too, discussion of these problems does not automatically throw light on that of the origins and chronology overall of Reilig Odhráin.

201 RCAHMS 1982, 37–9 and plan, 32. I would provisionally regard the southward extensions of the enclosure system, to south of the putative early *vallum* ditch and known mainly from geophysical survey, as later developments, broadly speaking, in the absence of firm dating evidence. Barber's fig. 5 (1981, 289) shows on a larger scale the N wall and NW and NE corners of St Oran's (unnamed) in relation to the ditch and causeway. My account follows basically that of RCAHMS, including the belief that the ditch represents the *south*, not the *north* side, of an early monastic enclosure. For the 1979 excavations, see Barber 1981, esp. 292–9, 309–11, 355–8, 360–1, 361–4. In the later medieval period, Reilig Odhráin is apparently a (traditionally royal and) aristocratic lay cemetery: see, e.g., Fordun's *Chronicle* (1384–7?), bk. 4, ch.23 (Skene 1871–2, i, 165, ii, 157); Bower's *Scotichronicom* (1441–9), bk. 3, ch.24, bk. 4, ch.25 (MacQueen 1989, 62–3, 342–3); Monro's *Western Isles of Scotland* (1549) § 103 (Munro 1961, 62–3). These authorities name St Oran's or Reilig Odhráin explicitly: Fordun once (in the context of royal burial – *basilica beati Orani*); Bower twice (in the same context – *ecclesia Sancti Orani*, *basilica beati Orani*); Monro describes the 'Sanctuarie' or 'Kirkzaird' of 'Religoran' as a royal burial-ground and as the resting-place of the Lords of the Isles and of other West Highland lineages, as also of 'the best men of all the Isles'. Wyntoun's *Cronykil*, (1420–24) bk. 6, chs. 8, 9, and 10 (Laing 1872–9, ii, (1872), 84–6, 88–9, 91–2) and the 'Description of the Isles of Scotland' printed by Skene (1876–80, iii (1880), 428–40, at 436) and dated by him 1577–95 (440), do not name St Oran's or Reilig Odhráin explicitly – mainly in the context of royal burial, though Skene's 'Description' ends with 'In this [sc. Ile] are all the Gentlemen of the Isles bury it as yit'. For the clan Donald burials within the chapel, see RCAHMS 1982, 250, with ref. to the Book of Clanranald.

VC i, 16 is testimony that laymen might be buried on Iona in Adomnán's day and possibly earlier. Symeon of Durham in the early 12th cent. (*Libellus de Exordio*, i, 9 – Rollason 2000, 46–7) records a tradition that King Ecgfrith of Northumbria was buried on Iona after his defeat and death at Dún Nechtain in 685. And the probably mid 10th cent. *Betha Adamnáin*, § 14, reflects a belief that

Oran's in its present form is dated by the Commission to about the third quarter of the twelfth century, in part possibly a little earlier, built probably by Somerled (d. 1164) or his son Reginald.²⁰² Assuming for present purposes (I shall return this problem shortly) that the cult of Odrán at Iona predates the twelfth century and that perhaps one or more successive earlier structures, shrine or church or both, embodied his cult on this site before 1150, I suggest that the perceived close physical relationship of a shrine or church of St Odrán with this boundary and entrance gave rise, at some time and probably in the context of pilgrimage, to the idea of the saint's self-sacrifice on the threshold of the sacred enclosure which contained at its heart the tomb or shrine of St Columba.

Boundaries of all kinds, both spatial and temporal, were charged with a highly numinous significance for early and traditional societies. In general, they mapped the inhabited world within the surrounding wilderness; defined order encompassed and constantly threatened by chaos. The observation holds true, in the spatial domain, of both religious and mundane contexts (if the distinction is not altogether a valid one, historically speaking, it is convenient for purposes of discussion); but is probably especially true of boundaries enclosing explicitly sacred space (open or roofed) and so controlling human access to the supernatural. Enclosures bounding and containing the sacred separated it from the profane world without; and thus protected its essential integrity. They also signalled its potentially dangerous presence; and inhibited (at any rate in intention) any tendencies on its part to break out. The threshold of such enclosures and buildings were particularly important in this view, mediating as they did formal ingress to and egress from the sacred area, thus enabling the meeting of the two worlds. Thresholds of temples, shrines and sacred precincts were, therefore, frequently the scene of ceremonial activity in many cultures and societies. Such activity sometimes and in some places involved human sacrifice.²⁰³

Ecgfrith's conqueror, the Pictish King Brude son of Bile, was brought to Iona for burial on his death in 693 (Herbert and Ó Riain 1988, 56–9). Adomnán implies pretty clearly, however, that his late 7th cent. community at least would not have countenanced a mixed monastic-lay cemetery (see, e.g., VC ii 39, 92a – Librán; iii 23, 132a – Ernène mocu Fir róide; and esp. iii 23, 133b/134a – Columba's own funeral and burial). Even a strictly partitioned cemetery would probably not have satisfied this apparently exclusive attitude to monastic burial. If Reilig Odhráin, on the other hand, was the original monastic cemetery, it would have had to go through a mixed phase, presumably, in the process of changing into a lay cemetery. I think it more likely (in the present state of knowledge anyway) that the original cemetery of the monks was at or near the probable focus of Columba's monastery, to NNE of St Oran's in the vicinity of the high crosses, 'St Columba's Shrine' and the west end of the abbey church. In this view, Reilig Odhráin is peripheral and not a promising candidate for the role of final 'sleeping-place' for the early generations (at any rate) of Columba's monks. Its position suggests that it may have been the early lay cemetery. The whole matter is discussed briefly by the Commission (RCAHMS 1982, 13, 49 (no. 4), 245–51 (no. 12)). (For Donal Bán's translation to Iona post 1097 and that of Godred King of Man thither in 1187–8, see below, Part 3 and nn. 31–4).

202 RCAHMS 1982, 245–51 (no. 12).

203 Eliade 1958, 367–87 (ch.10): the threshold divides sacred and profane space (379). Eliade 1959, 25 (the threshold is paradoxically both boundary and passage at the same time; it is, therefore, supernaturally guarded; cf. 181); 51–2, 54–8, 100 (building sacrifice). Frazer 1951 (1911), vol. 3,

Boundaries, enclosures and thresholds were also significant generally for Celtic society, both continental and insular.²⁰⁴ Concerning the particular phenomenon under review here, namely threshold sacrifice or burial, and confining discussion to medieval insular literary testimony, evidence is forthcoming. Potentially significant burial (rather than sacrifice) at a *built* threshold, on the one hand, seems to be rare. According to Monmouth (bk. III, § 53), King Lud (Lludd) was buried near the gate of London called Ludgate. Geoffrey does not seem to be supported by Welsh tradition, though Lludd son of Beli is closely associated with London in the tale ‘Lludd and Llefelys’ and is credited with the renewal of its walls and the building on them of countless towers.²⁰⁵ I suspect that Geoffrey’s assertion may be based on the place-name ‘Ludgate’ alone. According to the *Brut*, Cadwallen was buried at the west gate of London (originally east?) ‘to cause terror and fear to the Saxons.’²⁰⁶ If, on the other hand, one may legitimately extend the concept of boundary and threshold to include natural topographical features, then examples of human burial (in whole or in part) in such contexts are less difficult to find.

In the Welsh Triads (37 and 37R), the bones of Gwerthefyr (Vortimer) were buried in the chief ports of Britain, to guard against Saxon invasion.²⁰⁷ In her discussion of such talismanic burial or deposition, Bromwich adduces a likely Irish example: that of Eógan Bél, king of Connacht, who was killed in the battle of Sligo in 543 (AU 543.2). The dying king orders his people, the Uí Fiachrach, to bury him, standing, on the south side of the River Sligo (the boundary of his territory here), armed and facing the Uí Néill, his traditional enemy, across the river northwards. As long as his body remained thus, Connacht continually defeated the northerners. They, however, eventually learned the reason for their discomfiture, exhumed the king’s body and, taking it north across the Sligo, buried it face downward in the cemetery of Lough Gill (at Aenach Locha Gile) on the north side of the river. Eógan Bél is said to be buried on the plain beside the fort of

89–92, gives concrete examples of foundation, especially threshold sacrifice, including human and sometimes of children. His most explicit examples of human sacrifice in this context are, however, all from eastern Asia. See also *Aftermath*, (Frazer 1951 (1936)), 224–6: his examples here cover a wider geographical range, including the Pacific and Africa.

204 Rees 1961, 94; Brunaux 1988, 7, 25–7, 116–7; see also Ó Riain 1972.

205 Reeve and Wright 2007, 66–7. Davies 2007, 111–15, esp. 111. For the Welsh text, see I. Williams, ed, *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, Bangor 1922; B.F. Roberts, ed. *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, Dublin 1975.

206 Bromwich 2006, 97. His body was incased in a bronze effigy, armed and mounted on a bronze horse, placed above the west gate of London, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, bk. XI, § 201 (Reeve and Wright 2007, 276–7).

207 Bromwich 2006, 94–102. Triad 37 is contained in the early version of ‘Trioedd Ynys Prydein’, the earliest surviving MS of which (§ iv of Peniarth 16) is of 13th century date. The fuller 37R is in a MS of c. 1400 (the Red Book of Hergest), which represents a version different from that of the early version. Bromwich argues that the MS transmission goes back to the early 12th century; and that the roots of the tradition, oral or written, might go back to the 9th or 10th century: Bromwich 2006, xvi, xx, xc, xcvi–ix. According to the *Historia Brittonum* (ch.44), Vortimer ordered his followers to bury him by the coast, in the port whence the English he had beaten had left Britain; but they disobeyed him and buried him inland: Morris 1980, 32, 72. Cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, bk. VI, § 102 (Reeve and Wright 2007, 132–3).

Ráth Ua Fiachrach.²⁰⁸ The topographical detail is not as explicit as one would wish and a crossing of whatever kind is not actually mentioned; but the background is a battle at a river which can therefore be crossed by hostile armies. The king’s grave is apparently envisaged as guarding a crossing-point of the river, which the fort may also watch. The river is a boundary and the crossing, probably a ford, is then a threshold affording passage to and from the territories on either side.²⁰⁹

Burial of warriors at fords is an identifiable theme in both Irish and Welsh literature. The explanation sometimes offered for this is that the warrior was buried where he fell. In some cases, at least, this may have been true. One suspects, however, in light of the material just reviewed, that the original underlying reason, possibly no longer known to those responsible for the dissemination of the surviving texts, is that the presence of the warrior in death guards the ford. If the river or stream in question is the boundary between home and hostile territory (in a certain sense, therefore, between order and chaos, the known and the unknown), the ford provides the crossing of this frontier-boundary in both directions.²¹⁰ In other words, in terms of the argument outlined above, these may reasonably be regarded as threshold burials. Thus, in Version A of the Death of Conchobar (§ 6), the king is killed by a sling bullet in a fight between the men of Ulster and the men of Connacht: ‘On the brink of the ford of Daire Dá Báeth (unidentified) it was that Conchobar fell. His grave is there where he fell, and a pillar-stone at his head, and another at his feet’.²¹¹ Graves at fords are mentioned in the texts ‘On the Graves of Leinster Men’, number 7(b); and ‘On the Deaths of some Irish Horses’, numbers 13(a), 25(b).²¹² There are doubtless other instances in Irish literature. The Welsh ‘Englynion y Beddau’ or ‘Stanzas of the Graves’ also provide examples: numbers 10(b), 24 (though ‘with its head downhill’ – cf. 18, Series III), 36(c), 55, 71(c) in Series I.²¹³

A radical connection between burials and boundaries may be further emphasized by Ross’s observation that burial mounds were regarded in insular Celtic belief as

208 Bromwich 2006, 96, citing K. Mulchrone’s edition of *Caithréim Cellaig*, 1971. See also O’Donovan 1844, 471–3; notes w, x under FM 537.

209 A bridge could also be regarded as a threshold, linking as it does two spaces or, symbolically, two conditions: cf. Eliade 1959, 181–3. There was a bridge at Sligo by 1188: AU 1188 (1).

210 ‘This mysterious character of boundaries (which usually follow rivers and streams) enhances the significance of combats fought at fords ...’: Rees 1961, 94.

211 Meyer 1906, 6–7. Even within this version there are inconsistencies as to the circumstances of Conchobar’s death. Probably, conflicting traditions have been combined without much attempt at reconciling them. That given in the text is complete in itself; and is contained in the Book of Leinster’s version of the tale (LL 124a, 29–31 – Best and O’Brien 1956, 459).

212 Dobbs 1954, 140, 145; Stokes 1902, 306–7, 310–11, 320, 325 (11a), 328. Both these tracts are in LL and both are dated traditionally to the 10th cent.: Dobbs, 139, Stokes 303.

213 Jones 1967, 120–1, 122–3 (136–7), 124–5, 128–9, 132–3. Series I is from the Black Book of Carmarthen, a MS copied for the most part probably in the second quarter of the 13th cent. (nos. 1–69); nos. 70–73 were added later, probably in the second half of the 13th cent. They were probably composed originally as early as the 9th or 10th cent.: Jones, 97–8, 100.

entrances to the otherworld and sometimes themselves the residences of divine beings.²¹⁴ Access to and from the otherworld, however, involved crossing temporal as well as spatial boundaries; and here there is some evidence that human sacrifice was practiced. At Samain (in Old Irish: November 1), probably the most important feast of the pre-Christian Celtic religious year, the summer half of the year ended and the winter half began. The boundary between the two halves of the year was regarded as being outside mundane time and therefore not subject to the normal cosmic order that maintained and regulated human and all other mortal existence. It represented, indeed, a reversion to a primeval and mythical state of affairs, where the divisions between gods and men and all else were distinctly porous: a dissolution of creation into chaos in order to effect its recreation. The hours of darkness between sunset on October 31 and dawn on November 1 (the night of Hallowe'en) were held to be especially risky: a time when the supernatural forces of the otherworld could break out into this world to its harm, actually or potentially; but also, conversely, when the otherworld itself was open to intrusion by those heroic enough to attempt the feat.²¹⁵ In these uncanny circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising to find that some, possibly all, Celtic communities felt compelled to offer human victims to secure the continuing good will of their deities, or at least to avert their wrath. 'Famous kings and heroes die at Samhain ... sometimes within an elaborate scenario which is strongly redolent of ritual' (Mac Cana). At Mag Slécht in Co. Cavan, human sacrifices (the first-born of every family) might be offered to an idol, Crom Crúaich, called the 'chief idol of Ireland' in early medieval times, at Samain. Samain was probably principally a New Year celebration in a predominantly pastoral cycle.²¹⁶

Sacrifice by a community of an essentially passive human victim, however, willing or unwilling, does not seem to be envisaged by the traditions of heroic threshold burial considered above. If any sacrifice is involved here, it is active self-sacrifice: the hero gives his life, if necessary to death in action, on behalf of his country and his people. In consequence, in death as in life, he continues to be held a worthy guardian of his community and its territory: the apotropaic function of many of these burials is clear and is further corroborated, I suggest, by the consideration of two final cases. Welsh Triads 37 and 37R, already invoked,

214 Ross 1992 (1967), 65. For the Neolithic passage-tomb of Newgrange, Co. Meath (and its neighbours of the Boyne Valley complex) as residence of the god Oenghus Mac ind Óg, see also Mac Cana 1970, 132–3; and for the Neolithic passage-tomb of Knowth as a *sid*, or otherworld dwelling, *ibid.* 64. See also Harbison 1992, 265–6, 264.

215 In several Fenian tales the hero overcomes his otherworld adversary as he enters the *sid*: as he crosses its threshold – Rees 1961, 94. Whether this was at Samain or not is not said.

216 For some modern accounts of Samain, see Powell 1958, 116–19; Rees 1961, 83–94; MacCana 1970, 126–8; Green 1992, 185–6; MacKillop 1998, 333–4, 100, 283. The tradition of the sacrifice to Crom Crúaich of the first-born of humans and animals (Rees 1961, 196, from the Prose Dindshenchas) seems certainly to have Old Testament reminiscences. MacNeill drew attention to the biblical accounts of Tophet and Moloch (MacKillop 1998, 100). The injunction in the Book of Exodus (Ex 13: 11–16, 22: 28–30, 34: 19–20) that the first-born male of men and beasts be dedicated to God may have contributed something to the Irish literary tradition also; as, more explicitly, may Psalm 106: 36–8.

record a tradition that the head of Bendigeidfran, son of Llŷr (Brân the Blessed), was buried in the White Hill in London ('with its face towards France', R). 'And as long as the Head was there in that position, no ('Saxon', R) Oppression would ever come to this Island'. 'And Arthur disclosed the Head of Bendigeidfran from the White Hill, because it did not seem right to him that this Island should be defended by the strength of anyone, but by his own' (R). The tradition of Triad 37 appears also in the closing stages of the Second Branch of the Mabinogi.²¹⁷ A later medieval Scottish instance is provided by the fourteenth century chronicler John of Fordun, who describes (bk. iii, ch.33) how 'King Eugenius' wished to be, in death as in life, a terror to the enemy. So, that he might defend his kingdom posthumously, he ordered that, at his death, his right arm should be immediately cut off at the shoulder and buried, 'decked with the war device of the lion, and with sword in hand, as a strong bulwark for them ever after.' The location of the burial, *in extremis ad austrum regni finibus*, 'at the extreme southern boundary of the kingdom', indicates that Fordun had, not surprisingly, the English enemy in mind.²¹⁸

These ceremonial depositions of significant parts of dead heroes or warriors as apotropaic talismans harks back to the distribution of the bones of Gwerthefyr-Vortimer among several coastal locations, mentioned (in Triad 37) above.²¹⁹

In sum, the Odrán episode in the Irish Life of Columcille and the burials at fords etc. of the Irish and Welsh literary traditions share, I suggest, several common traits.

1. They are all burials at thresholds. 2. They involve a voluntary act of self-sacrifice that is qualitatively different from that of willing assent to passive sacrifice at the corporate decision of a community or of its religious leaders – let alone unwilling or impotent dissent. 3. One of their functions, possibly the principal one, is apotropaic: 'No one will be granted his request at my own grave, unless he first seek it of you.' It seems to me, therefore, that the Odrán episode represents, not so much a human sacrifice in the usually accepted sense of that term, as what I have already termed a 'heroic threshold-burial': a concept having, probably, deep roots in the pre-Christian past,²²⁰ but at the same time not offensive

217 Bromwich 2006, 94–5; Davies 2007, 32, 34 (236, 237). The Welsh text of the 'Four Branches of the Mabinogi' was edited by I. Williams, *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, Cardiff 1951 (2 ed.). A date of c. 1050–1120 has been proposed for its composition, Bromwich preferring the latter date: l.c., xcvi–n. 167.

218 Skene 1871–2, i 119, ii III – the words *in extremis ... finibus* being untranslated, presumably by inadvertence. The whole passage was incorporated in the 1440s by Walter Bower into his *Scotichronicon* (iii 40): MacQueen 1989, 114–15.

219 The secular heroic ethos seen to justify such boundary-threshold burials, is vividly portrayed in Tírechán's *Collectanea* (12(2)), when Loíguire tells Patrick why he cannot accept Christianity: 'My father Níall did not allow me to accept the faith, but bade me to be buried on the ridges of Tara (*in cacuminibus Temro*), I son of Níall and the sons of Dúnlang in Maistiú in Mag Liphí, face to face (with each other) in the manner of men at war ... because of such fierceness of our (mutual) hatred' – Bieler 1979, 132–3.

220 Green (2002) offers, with due caution, several examples of human burial or other apparently

to Christian sensibilities in the way that human sacrifice would be: indeed sharing something broadly in common with the mentality of recourse to special graves and reliquary shrines.²²¹ Burial, furthermore, especially a significant burial, would be

ritual deposits or phenomena – some perhaps sacrificial – in possibly significant relationships with boundaries and thresholds, from the Iron age and Roman periods in Britain and continental Europe:– the contemporary inhumation of three women, possibly sacrificial victims, in the ditch of the enclosure surrounding an aristocratic cremation burial of c. 55 A.D. at St Albans, Herts. (65), near its entrance (159, 165); the human heads found in the enclosure ditch at the entrance to the sacred site of Gournay-sur-Aronde (Oise) are interpreted as having once hung from the temple gateway; likewise, the entrances to some British hill-forts and Celtiberian strongholds were once apparently hung about with human heads, which subsequently fell into the ditch below (104); the burials of some young men at, e.g., Danebury (Hants.) and South Cadbury (Somerset) hillforts may have been those of honoured war-dead, buried as they were behind the ramparts, as though both to signalise their courage and ‘symbolically to reinforce the protective strength of the defences’ (146).

As for foundation sacrifice more explicitly, the quartered remains of a 12 year old boy, deposited in four pits along with the remains of butchered livestock, may have been such for an early Iron Age house at Hornish Point in South Uist (154); and there is evidence to suggest that very young children, including babies, were offered as foundation sacrifices at Iron Age and Romano-British shrine and temple sites, including Maiden Castle, Dorset (just outside the entrance of a possible sanctuary) and Springhead, Kent (154–5); cf. 166–7.

Green also discusses generally, pp. 125–9, burial alive as a form of sacrifice, including possible instances from Britain and Ireland.

For Ireland, Raftery (1994) provides some suggestive cases of Iron Age burial deposits possibly associated with boundaries:– at Grannagh (Co. Galway) a ringbarrow contained at least six cremation burials, the earlier ones centrally placed, four in the silted ditch (189–90); at Oran Beg (Co. Galway) three cremations were found in the ditch, one in the central mound of the ringbarrow (189); at Carrowjames (Co. Mayo), there appear to be several deposits of cremated bone in the ditch of the ringbarrow (191, fig. 114); at Carrowbeg North (Co. Galway) four probably late Iron Age inhumations were inserted into the silted-up ditch of a Middle Bronze Age barrow (193–4); at Knowth (Co. Meath), of some 30 inhumations, some at least of Iron Age date, around the Neolithic passage tomb, three (one extended, two disturbed) are in the outer ditch surrounding the mound (195–6).

It may be, too, that the Iron Age cemetery at Kiltierney (Co. Fermanagh) should be viewed in this light. A circular Neolithic cairn, probably a passage tomb, originally stood on the site. In the period late first century BC to early first century AD, the mound was reused as a burial place and substantially remodelled. At this time a ditch was dug around the cairn and the upcast used, partly to heighten the mound, partly to construct some 19 small circular ‘satellite’ mounds around its perimeter. This secondary activity was apparently conceived and executed in a single phase. The satellite mounds averaged 3m. in diameter and around 1m. in height. A series of cremations in small pits was placed in the main mound; and the small mounds also covered deposits of cremated human bones. The satellite mounds stand on the outer edge of the secondary ditch (Raftery 1994, 192–3).

The possibility that the frequent burial of young children with adults in Iron Age graves reflects the prior sacrifice of the children is briefly discussed by Raftery (*ibid.*, 199).

It is well to remember that, in terms of archaeological evaluation, the original intention and activity behind the apparently ritual treatment of human remains *post mortem* is probably irretrievable and, in particular, does not necessarily imply that such persons had met their deaths beforehand through sacrifice. ‘Convincing evidence of human sacrifice is surprisingly rare in the archaeological record’ (Cunliffe 1997, 192: cf. the conclusion of Brunaux (1988, 136). Certainly, the Danebury and South Cadbury deposits would appear superficially to have more in common with my ‘heroic threshold-boundary burial’ concept than with human sacrifice in the usually accepted sense. Detached heads, furthermore, are not automatically those of sacrificial victims.

221 It would in fact be possible, at a stretch, to interpret Odrán’s action in purely Christian terms

seen as making the place sacred or more sacred (for the Irish Life of Columcille the purpose of Odrán’s burial is to consecrate the soil of the island). Such an additional function for Odrán’s grave may be a relevant consideration, even though it was situated outside the ecclesiastical enclosure proper. Fundamentally, however, I would see Odrán as having through time a dual role at Iona: originally, aiding sea-borne pilgrims; later and primarily, guarding at its threshold the enclosure at the centre of which lies St Columba’s own burial or shrine.

None of this, of course, helps to date the cult of Odrán at Iona more closely. The written evidence explicitly linking Odrán with Iona appears to be no earlier than the eleventh, more probably the twelfth century: the Irish Life of Colum Cille, which, as noticed earlier, both Herbert and Bannerman agree to be of mid twelfth century date or a little later;²²² the notes to MO;²²³ and the glosses on MG.²²⁴ As has already been noted, the earlier martyrologies (MT probably and MO, main text, certainly) apparently attributed no church originally to Odrán of October 27. As has also been noted earlier, Adomnán knows nothing of him and indeed seems to preclude the possibility (in *VC* iii 6) that such a tradition attached to such a personage could have been current at Iona in the late seventh century; and Odrán is not entered in the possibly tenth century or later list of Columba’s

by recourse to St John’s Gospel: ‘A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends’ (Jn 15:13). This text could have been in the author’s mind; and could well have occurred to (especially) clerical readers.

For a story telling how an abbot (Eimíne Bán of Monasterevin(?)) and some of his monks voluntarily sacrificed themselves on behalf of the equivalent number of lay notables of Leinster threatened by plague, in return for certain privileges and guarantees for their monastery, see C. Plummer, ‘Cáin Eimíne Báin, *Ériu* 4 (1910), 39–46. (For the Irish text, see J.G. O’Keeffe, ed., ‘Cáin Eimíne Báin, *Anecdota From Irish Manuscripts*, I, ed. O.J. Bergin, R.I. Best, K. Meyer, J.G. O’Keeffe, Dublin 1907, 40–5).

222 See n. 163 above.

223 ‘The bulk of these are probably of the eleventh century or later’: Kenney 1929, 481. ‘[M]O had been supplied with a preface, glosses, and notes probably by the eleventh and certainly by the late twelfth century’: Ó Riain 1990, 22.

224 The text of which was composed 1166–74: Stokes 1895, xviii–xx; Kenney 1929, 482–4 (no. 275). The accompanying glosses were added ‘perhaps by Máel Muire [Ó Gormáin] himself’: Ó Riain 1990, 25–6.

[i] *relic Odráin aird-Míá*, ‘[in] the burial-place of Odrán of high Iona’ occurs in the *Metrical Dindshenchas*, part iv, 84–7 (ed. E. Gwynn, Dublin 1991 (1924)). There appears to be no mention of it, or of Odrán in connection with Iona more generally, in the Prose Dindshenchas collections. According to Hughes, ‘the prose *dindshenchus* appears to belong to the earliest part of the Middle Irish period, perhaps between 950 and 1000. The metrical versions are mostly of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries’ (K. Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources*, Cambridge 1972, 167, with refs.). If so, a later rather than an earlier origin for the Odrán legend at Iona is again probably reflected by these texts.

(At 1055, AT record the death of Maelduin, son of Gilla Odráin, bishop of Alba (*espoc Alban*). CS [1053] has *Maolduin mac Gille Andrias, epscop Alban*, as do FM (1055) – *Maoldúin mac Gilleandreas, epscop Alban*. If a clerical family of St Andrews, where the bishops ‘of Alba’ probably normally resided, is in question here, *Gille Andriais* is perhaps more likely than *Gille Odráin*. In any case, even if *Gille Odráin* is right, there is no indication as to which Odrán is intended: MG, e.g., according to the Index of Persons, enters five saints of the name, in addition to the one or more discussed here. Cf. Anderson 1922, i, 599).

original twelve companions on the voyage to Britain appended to the B text of *VC*. The evidence, such as it is and admittedly negative, suggests then, that Odrán's cult at Iona may not long predate the first references to it in written sources. It seems likely, however, to have established itself there rather earlier than the time of Somerled in the mid twelfth century: the Odrán episode in the Irish Life of Columcille would have needed time, from its original appearance at Iona, to be assimilated and disseminated in (at least northern) Ireland – even if that process, aided by returning pilgrims, was a fairly rapid one.²²⁵

The origins of St Odrán's cult at Iona need not, of course, have a direct bearing on the origins of the Reilig Odhráin as a cemetery. The cemetery as such may have developed around a shrine or church of St Odrán in the first instance, or it may predate his cult, perhaps by a considerable period. While prolonged speculation would be idle, Adomnán does provide evidence (*VC*, i 16) that laymen might be buried on Iona in his, if not in Columba's day. It seems just as likely to me that this situation reflects either a concession to the neighbouring population on the part of the monastic community, or its accommodation of local (?) prior rights of burial on the island – as that it reflects occasional favours to individual families. Adomnán has nothing to say about the background; nor does he give any clue as

225 Iona apart, Odhrán's cult in Scotland appears to be limited. Watson (1926, 309) gives only *Cill Odhrán* in Colonsay and *Cladh Odhrán*, 'Odhrán's burial-ground', in Tiree. 'The saint had a chapel at Kiloran on the north of Loch Scridan in Mull' (MacKinlay 1914, 145): no such site is listed or referred to in RCAHMS 1980. The place intended, however, is presumably Tioran, on the N side of Loch Scridain: Teyr(e)howrane, 1493–4 (*OPS*, 2, i, 315; *RMS* 1424–1513, no. 2200), 1537–8 (*RMS* 1513–46, no. 1745).

Nevertheless, *Cill Odhrán* in Colonsay and *Cladh Odhrán* in Tiree might have some connection, if only geographical, with Columban churches named by Adomnán. 1. The island of *Hinba*, not certainly identified, contained a Columban monastery (*VC* i 21, 45, ii 24, iii 5, 17, 18, 23). Colonsay–Oronsay has been proposed as a possible candidate for *Hinba*: e.g., Sharpe 1995, 306–8 n. 194, MacQuarrie 1997, 91–102. In north-central Colonsay is Kiloran (*Cill Odhráin*). There does not seem to be surviving site, but *Tobar Odhráin* ('Odhrán's Well') lies within the garden of Colonsay House, about 90m. E of the main block of the house (RCAHMS 1984, 290 (no. 409)). The tradition of a religious house on the site of Colonsay House (*OPS*, 2, I, 280–1) is probably baseless (RCAHMS 1984, 348 (no. 409 n. 1), Cowan and Easson 1976, 99). Kilouran church, in the village of the same name, was the 'principal church' of Colonsay c. 1695 (MacLeod 1934, 280): Killorane 1545 (*RMS* 1513–46, no. 3085). But the medieval parish church was at Kilchattan: see RCAHMS 1984, 193–4 (no. 364). 2. Kirkapoll in Tiree, (RCAHMS 1980, 153–8 (no. 310), where 'Cladh Odhráin' or 'Cladh Mór' is a walled cemetery some 44m. SE of the medieval parish church (one of two on the island, both dedicated to St Columba), is, I suggest, a possible candidate for the site of Adomnán's *Campus Lunge* (*VC* i 30, 41, ii 15, 39, iii 8): cf. MacDonald 2010, 221–4, 231, 232, 233.

(RCAHMS 1928 lists Teampull Orain, Oronsay, Vallay, N. Uist (no. 166). There are here the foundations of a rectangular building lying E and W and measuring 24 x 17 feet (7.3 x 5.2m.) internally, with dry-built walls about 4 feet (1.2m.) thick. This structure may have been a church; but the name appears to be a 'ghost-name', inferred from the name Oronsay: 'it would ... seem more probable that the chapel derived its name from the islet than *vice versa*' says Beveridge, who describes Oronsay as a 'small annexe to Vallay at its north side, now separated as a distinct island only by the highest tides' (2001 (1911), 297 and n. 3). It is, therefore, Norse *örfirir-ey*, 'ebb-isle', i.e. an island joined to the mainland at low water by a reef which is covered at high water (Watson 1926, 505). Beveridge, discussing the place-name Oronsay etc. in some detail (2001 (1911), 85–8), remarks that, of the 28 instances known to him on the W coast of Scotland, this is the only case where a dedication to St Odhrán has definitely been deduced (86 n. 3)).

to where precisely they were buried. Any such lay burial-place, however, is likely to have been outside the *vallum monasterii*; and it seems to me that the idea of an extramural cemetery, coeval with the sixth to seventh century monastery or older and outside what was probably its main gate (in a manner somewhat reminiscent of extramural cemeteries at the gates of Roman walled settlements), has merits as a working hypothesis. Excavation might settle the question of the actual age of the Reilig Odhráin. (Cf. also n. 200 above).

The evidence afforded by the material considered so far is not conclusive, even cumulatively. It seems to me, nevertheless, to indicate with some consistency the existence at Iona during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries (at, admittedly, long intervals), of an important shrine of Columba: the *erdamh Choluim Chille* of the Irish Life of Adomnán; the 'little church of Colum Cille' of King Magnus's visit; Columba's grave that Odrán guards in the Irish Life of Colum Cille. It may be safely asserted that the shrine containing Columba's corporeal relics was certainly at Iona in 825; and that it was probably the same shrine that took refuge in Ireland from a perceived Viking threat in 878 – being brought from Iona and, as I would argue, being returned thither at some unrecorded time subsequently. In view of Columba's death and burial at Iona as recounted by Adomnán (*VC* iii, 23) – and the problem of the precise date of the translation and enshrinement of his physical remains notwithstanding – it seems to me entirely reasonable to suppose that that shrine held the lion's share of the saint's corporeal relics.

There is, furthermore, some more general circumstantial evidence to support the contention that Columba's main shrine was normally housed at Iona.

There is, apparently no equivalent body of written material pointing similarly to any one of Columba's major Irish churches. As we have seen, the Irish Life of Colum Cille seems quite explicit in its denial of the position of keeper of its patron's physical remains to Kells (even if it is incorporating a ninth century source in order to do so); and makes no such claim on behalf of Derry. Before the foundation or at least rise of Kells, Columba's chief church in Ireland was probably Durrow. A not particularly edifying episode preserved in the notes to MO under June 21 suggests that Durrow may have had or claimed to have a little finger or other digit of her founder.²²⁶ If, as the Royal Commission has suggested (§ 4 above), Columba's physical remains were enshrined about the middle of the eighth century, the occasion might have seemed an appropriate one for the donation of such a relic, no doubt suitably enshrined and possibly accompanied by an assortment of derivative relics, to a church that had close connections with the Clann Cholmáin, then the dominant ruling dynasty of the Uí Néill.²²⁷ Nothing

226 Stokes 1905, 156–7. The possibility is also noted by Ó Floinn (1997, 144), primarily on the basis of O'Donnell's Life. Cf. also the poem in Reeves 1857 (270–75), where it is the whole of Columba's thumb that Cormac cuts off (273). Tice's right thumb formed part of the contents of *Scrín Coluim Cille* at Ardmagilligan: above and nn. 149–51.

227 Herbert 1988, 64–7. The power and authority of such a corporeal relic were not proportionate to its mere physical size: in theory at least, the part was as efficacious as the whole. In his Life in the Salamanca codex, § 9 (Heist 1965, 184), St Cainnech promises his Italian foundation that his burial and *resurrectio* will take place there. Whereupon his angel reminds him that his *resurrectio*

known to me, however, convinces me that any other of St Columba's *sancta ossa* – or the whole assemblage – were ever permanently lodged at any Irish church, whether belonging to the saint's congregation or not.

Pilgrimage to Iona at the social level noticed by the annalists resumes, after an extended period of apparent inactivity covering the ninth and much of the tenth century, in 980,²²⁸ with the pilgrimage and death there of Olaf son of Sitric, king of Dublin (CS 978, AT 234, FM 978, 979, ACLon 974, DAI 980). Then in 1026 Mael Ruanaid Ua Maíl Doraid, king of the North, went on pilgrimage to Clonfert of St Brendan, thence to Iona and to Rome (AI 1026.4). In 1047, bishop Cethernach from Teach-Collain (Stackallan, Co. Meath) died on pilgrimage at Iona (FM 1047).²²⁹

In 1174 Mael Pátraic O'Banain, bishop of Condeiri and Dal-Araidhe, died on Iona, presumably on pilgrimage (AU 1174(2), ALCé 1174, FM 1174). In 1188 Amhlaimh Ua Daighri died on pilgrimage at Iona (AU 1188(4), ALC 1188, FM 1188). Maurice Ua Baetain, who died at Iona in 1200 (AU 1200(3), ALC 1199, FM 1199), may conceivably also have been there on pilgrimage. This is, admittedly, not an impressive total.²³⁰ It is well to bear in mind, however, that medieval people

is destined to take place in Ireland. God, however, resolves his quandary by sending a fiery dragon from heaven, which amputates the little toe (?) of his right foot (*extremem digitum pedis dextri sancti Kannichi*). Cainnech leaves the toe with his Italian church, thereby, fulfilling his promise to it (*suam promissionem implens*); and returns to Ireland at the angel's behest. The implication is quite clear that his *resurrectio* may now take place both in Italy by virtue of the presence there of his toe and in Ireland by virtue of the presence there of the rest of his corporeal remains. Sharpe (1991, 297–339) has proposed an 8th century origin for the Salmanticensis Life of Cainnech. Cf. Plummer 1910, i, 154–5 (§ vi); Brown 1981, 78–9, 88, 95–6.

Was it this relic of Columba in particular that validated *Lex Coluim Cille*?

228 Anderson 1922, i, 487.

229 This entry seems to have escaped Anderson's notice. It appears that 1047 is the correct year.

230 Actually, a review (originally) of six sets of annals for the period 900–1200 – AU (1132–55 wanting), AT 973–1178 (1003–17 wanting), AI (1131–59, 1182–89 wanting), CS 900–1150 (1132–41 wanting), ALC 1014–1200 (1139–70 wanting) and FM (continuous) – indicates that, where the place is named and the intention explicitly that of pilgrimage, Iona ranks third equal with Clonard and Clonmacnoise (4 instances each), after Armagh (8+) and Lismore(6). See table on page 77.

Neither Kells nor Dunkeld occur in this context; and Derry only once, if one excludes the death of a pilgrim in the *disert* there in 1122 (AU 1122.6), late in the 12th cent. In the period 800–900, in the sets of annals consulted that are available for the period (four), only one pilgrimage is noted and it was probably regarded as a special case (retrospectively): Aedhacan of Louth died at Clonmacnoise, the progenitor there of the clerical family of Conn na mBocht (d. 1060 (AU 1060.4): CS 835, FM 834, cf. ACLon 832).

Otherwise, no explicit pilgrimage to a named place occurs before 950. So the pattern of pilgrimage to Iona for the whole period 800–1200, as recorded in these annals, accords well with that to churches in Ireland.

This evidence, of course, takes no account of local (Scottish), or socially more modest pilgrimage thither. (It is possible, nevertheless, that these annalistic notices may provide also the broad chronological framework for the development of the cult of Odrán at Iona).

were not likely to undertake lightly or in a spirit merely of religious or historical sentiment the difficult, possibly expensive and actually or potentially dangerous business of visiting holy places, both at home and, especially, abroad. A real and tangible shrine and real and tangible relics of established efficacy at the end of the journey would have had to justify the risks involved in mounting what was, after all, a two-way expedition.

Later Traditions Regarding 'St Columba's Shrine'

If later Norse accounts are to be trusted, there was some cult of Columba at least among Christian Norse settlers in the Hebrides and by extension, Iceland, in the late ninth and early tenth centuries. According to the probably late thirteenth to early fourteenth century Landnámabók, Orlyg Hrappsson, on leaving the Hebrides for Iceland, obtained from a local bishop Patrick, his foster-father, church-timber, a 'plenarium', an iron bell, a gold penny and consecrated earth to place under the corner-posts, for the purpose of consecrating a church to Columba where he settled in Iceland. (And local veneration of Columba apparently continued in Iceland for a time after the initial settlement). The earth could have been consecrated for the occasion by bishop Patrick. The context seems more likely to indicate, however,

Table

- Armagh: 1. AU 989.1, CS 974, 986, FM 974, 987. 2. AU 1004.1, FM 1003. 3. AI 1029.8.
- 4. AU 1037.1, 1043.1, AT 1037, [1043], AI 1043.2, CS 1035, ALC 1037, 1043, FM 1037, 1043 (thrice). 5. AU 1063.1, FM 1063. 6. AU 1073.1, FM 1073. 7. AU 1103.8 (Armagh interlined), FM 1103. 8. FM 1151.
- Lismore: 1. FM 1056. 2. AI 1116.5. 3. AU 1123.3, FM 1123. 4. AI 1126.6. 5. AT[1127], FM 1127. 6. ALC 1136.
- Clonard: 1. CS 1050, FM 1052. 2. FM 1070. 3. AI 1092.8. 4. ALC 1185, FM 1185.
- Iona: 1. AT[979], CS 978, FM 979. 2. AI 1026.4. 3. FM 1047. 4. AU 1188(4), ALC 1188, FM 1188.
- Clonmacnoise: 1. FM 1100. 2. FM 1101. 3. ALC 1118, FM 1118. 4. AT 1167. (Note that all four instances fall within the 12th century).
- (Derry: 1. AU 1122.6 (*disert*). 2. AU 1188(7), ALC 1188, FM 1188).

Other annalistic references to pilgrimage to named places are:

- Glendalough: 1. FM 951. 2. AU 1030.7, ALC 1030, FM 1030. 3. FM 1122.
- Cong: 1. AU 1168. 2. ALC 1183 (1185); 3. Misc A 1198.1.
- Killaloe: 1. AT 1142. 2. FM 1159. 3. AT 1165.
- Inchcleraun: ALC 1193 (*bis*).
- Aghaboe: CS (1092) 1096, FM 1100.
- St Andrews: CS 963.
- Inis Cathaig: AI 1024.7.
- Cork: AI 1028.2.
- Monahincha: FM 1138.
- Tuam: FM 1170.

(Armagh 1. additionally, AR §§ 288, 293, ACLon 981. Iona 1.: additionally, ACLon 974. Lismore 5.: additionally, Misc A 1126.5).

prior consecration by contact with and derivation from a place or object already made holy by close association with St Columba; and that could well have been a shrine or the traditional site of the saint's grave on Iona (or both together).²³¹ Such evidence would not, of course, even if reliable, necessarily reflect the presence there of some or all of Columba's corporeal relics; but it may be some reflection of a continuing cult of the saint among the indigenous population of the Western Isles in the ninth century and often vigorous enough to communicate itself to Christian converts of the second or third generation of Norse settlers there.

Two more or less contemporary accounts of King Alexander II's expedition to the Hebrides and death there in 1249 seem to offer more tangible evidence, though admittedly they refer to a period rather later than that directly under discussion. The version of Hakon Hakon's son's Saga in Eirspennill describes a dream the king had while he lay off Kerrera, in which three men appeared to him. The third of these was the largest and most threatening and ordered the king peremptorily to retreat. Alexander described his dream and the three apparitions were interpreted by the Hebrideans as St Olaf of Norway, St Magnus of Orkney and, the largest, St Columba. The king's death shortly afterwards is attributed to his refusal to heed the warning of his dream. The English chronicler Matthew Paris (who was in Norway on papal business in 1248) seems to reflect this story when he says in his account of the king's death (though without explicit reference to a dream) that Alexander's perversity with regard to a local vassal 'incurred the displeasure of God and of St Columba, who lies in those regions (i.e., Argyll) and is honoured there' – *offensam incurrit Dei et sancti Columkille, qui in partibus illis jacet et honoratur*.²³² The island of Kerrera is separated from the mainland of Argyll eastwards by the narrow Sound of Kerrera and Oban Bay; and from Mull westwards by the Firth of Lorn. Iona lies off the south-western peninsula of Mull – the Ross of Mull – the Sound of Iona being about a mile (1.6 km.) wide on average. So Matthew's 'in those

regions', if vague, is at least broadly accurate. The Norse account, furthermore, clearly represents Columba as very much a local Hebridean, or at any rate Gaelic – Norse saint. Matthew's words also clearly imply his or his source's belief that Columba's corporeal remains or relics were locally buried or enshrined.

It was apparently believed in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century that corporeal relics of Columba were available at Iona for enshrinement or renewed embellishment. Donald, Lord of the Isles (d. 1421) 'made a covering of gold and silver for the relic of the hand of Columba', according to the MacDonald history contained in the Book of Clanranald.²³³ This relic was most probably believed to be the saint's writing hand.²³⁴

There seem to be no further references in the medieval period to traditional corporeal relics of the saint at Iona. What has been discussed here so far, however, must have some bearing on post-medieval local tradition about his grave. Two late seventeenth century accounts of Iona, both by John Fraser, Dean of the Isles, mention Columba's grave. One, describing Iona alone and dated 1693, mentions 'Columbus his buriall there in a litle chapell be himselfe', and contradicts the tradition that he was buried in Ireland. The other describes the islands of Tiree, Gunna, Coll and Iona; and also mentions 'Columbus who is buried in it (i.e., Iona)' and 'a Church of considerable dimensions dedicated to Columbus' – the abbey church.²³⁵ Martin Martin, writing c. 1695, says, 'Near to the west end of the church (i.e., the abbey church which he (Martin) says was dedicated to St Mary) in a little cell lies Columbus's tomb, but without inscription.' He reports the robust assertion of the people of Iona that Columba had been buried there; and his body never subsequently removed to Ireland.²³⁶

In addition to these two local sources, a more or less contemporary account was written by William Sacheverell, former governor of the Isle of Man, of his visit to Iona in 1688; in which he provides more physical circumstantial detail. 'On the west end [of the abbey church], he says, 'stands the monument of Columbus ... at present nothing but a ruinous heap of stones, and gives us no idea of what it was

231 Anderson 1922, i, 343–4; see also Pálsson and Edwards 1972, 23–4 (ch.15, transl.); text in Benediktsson 1968, 52–5. The consecrated earth would have been itself, in that case, actually a derived relic. For a brief account of the MS tradition of Landnámabók, see Pálsson's and Edward's Introduction, 3–4 (§ II).

232 Anderson 1922, ii, 556–7. Anderson dated the original composition of Hakon Hakon's son's Saga to 1263 x 1284 (Bibliographical Notes in *ibid.*, i, lxi–ii). Anderson 1908, 360–1. Matthew Paris's *floruit* was 1236 to 1259 (Bibliographical Notes in Anderson 1922, i, lxxxii). For his visit to Norway, *ibid.*, ii, 548 n. 11 (with refs.). Matthew's Latin text is in *Matthaei Parisiensis, Chronica Majora*, ed. H.R. Luard, vol. V (1248–59), London 1880, 89. It may be noted that his statement does not appear to be derived from Bede, H.E. iii, 4: *monasterium insulanum* (i.e., Iona), *in quo ipse* (i.e., Columba) *requiescit corpore* – 'the island monastery in which his body lies' (Colgrave and Mynors 1969 (1991) 222–3).

Did knowledge of King Alexander's expedition to and death in the Hebrides and such traditions surrounding these events prompt this entry in AU and ALC under 1249? 'Twelve years and seven hundred years since Colum-cille went to Iona to this year' – *Da bliadhain dec 7 secht cet bliadhan o dochuaidh Colum-cille co hI gus an bliadhain si* (AU 1249(1); similarly ALC 1249). There seems no reason in an Irish context why this observation should be made here; and the computation is wrong. The entry in AU is the first in the year; in ALC it is the last. Judging by the relevant indices in the editions (in particular those of AU, ALC, FM, AI, A Clon and AC), Irish annalists generally had lost all interest in Iona long before the mid 13th century.

233 *Do rine cumdach óir 7 airgid do thaisibh laimhe choluim chille* – Cameron 1892–4, ii, 160–3.

Cf. RCAHMS 1982, 145. *Cumdach*: 'cover, case, shrine', 'ornament' – *DIL*, cumtach, (c) and (d).

In its surviving form, this history of the MacDonalds appears to be mainly of 17th century date: Cameron 1892–4, ii, 138–47.

234 Henderson 1987, 191. A 14th cent. list of the relics at Durham has 'De ossibus et reliquiis Sancti Columkelli abbatis': Reeves 1857, 318. A channel of communication between Iona and Durham might possibly have been opened up by the visit to Durham of Dougall son of Somerled in 1175: Barrow 2004, 113–4; Rollason 2007, i, 94 (folio 16v3, 1–6), iii, 441–2. Henderson (1987, 210 n. 101) refers to a 12th cent. list of Durham relics that does not include St Columba. It is more likely, however, that, as Ó Floinn has suggested (1997, 144), these relics came ultimately from Downpatrick. (The same, however, cannot be presumably, true, of the rib of Columba that Abingdon claimed to possess (Anderson 1908, 9 n. 1): 'Costa Sancti ... Columkilnae', listed under 'De confessoribus' in an account of the relics claimed by Abingdon – 'De Reliquiis hujus Ecclesiae' – in 1116 according to its preamble (Stevenson 1858, ii, 155–8, at 158)).

235 Mitchell 1906–8, ii (1907), xxxii–iii, 216, 219.

236 MacLeod 1934, 287–8.

originally; but seems to have been plain, rude, and suited to the simplicity of those ages ... At the end of this monument stands three large crosses of black marble, finely engraved, of which one that is high and proportionably big is yet entire, and more than half of the other two remaining.' Sharpe, noting this passage, observes, 'the configuration he meant is unclear.' I suggest that Sacheverell's 'monument' was probably the rectangular enclosure 4.1m. east-west and about 3.4m. north-south, defined by a clay-mortared wall averaging 0.6m. thick; and containing in its eastern half 'St Columba's Shrine.' The inner face of its west wall is in line with the east edge of the base of St John's Cross. Fragments of the wall remain on west and south. The purpose and date of this enclosure are uncertain; but it may have been built in the sixteenth or early seventeenth century and used, with the 'shrine', as a private burial-aisle. Sacheverell, I take it, included under the term 'monument' the whole complex – chapel, enclosure (and St John's Cross?).²³⁷

Father Thomas Innes (d. 1744), as might perhaps be expected, shows more explicit concern for the relics themselves: 'It is the constant tradition and belief of the inhabitants of Ycolmkill and of the neighbourhood at this day, that S. Columba's body ('relics or body' a little further on) lies still in this island, being hidden by pious people, at the time of the new Reformation, in some secure and private place ('in some unknown place', p. 217) in or about the church, as it used frequently to be in former ages during the ravages of the infidel Danes' (a reminiscence, surely, of Walahfrid's poem on the death of Blathmac, which Innes quotes subsequently); 'and not only the inhabitants of Ycolmkill ... but all the Scots look upon the pretended translation of S. Columba's body to Ireland as fabulous.' Innes endorses this position in some detail; but he does not mention the chapel here.²³⁸

The Irish tradition to which Fraser, Martin and Innes take exception is that of the burial of SS Patrick, Brigit and Columba in the one grave at Downpatrick.²³⁹ I shall discuss this tradition later (see appendix to Part 3).

The late seventeenth century accounts of Fraser, Martin and Sacheverell point clearly to the chapel now known as 'St Columba's Shrine' as the traditional site of the saint's grave. Beneath the existing wooden floor of the chapel are two rectangular cists, each 2.0m. long internally and 0.5m. wide, lined on three sides with slabs of mica-schist and set against the eastern parts of the north and south walls, their open feet abutting the east wall. They are probably of late medieval date. Pococke in 1760 was shown a 'flat plain tombstone', reputed to cover St Columba's body and apparently placed on the south cist.²⁴⁰ Only investigation below the level of these cists, however, could establish (if at all) whether or not an earlier grave-pit (or the remains of one) lies along the central axis of the floor of the

chapel; and dug from a ground surface at or below that on which the foundations of the chapel rest.

The evidence for identifying the chapel, therefore, as the site of Columba's original grave is circumstantial and relies heavily on post-medieval tradition. It seems to me, however, to be at least plausible. We have seen that the building belongs, perhaps significantly, to a predominantly Irish group of structures (Part 1 and n. 103);²⁴¹ and that it was preserved, however inconveniently at the outset for the Benedictine ground plan overall, into the later medieval period. It was clearly a structure of importance, at any rate into the thirteenth century: an importance that its traditional role would adequately explain. It is at least a reasonable supposition, moreover, that a chapel marking the original grave site was actually built to house the exhumed and translated remains of the saint in their shrine – both before (certainly) and after (as I would argue) the mid to late ninth century;²⁴² though, if it did, management of large numbers of pilgrims at any one time was presumably not envisaged as a problem by the Columban community. Alternatively, the reliquary may have been housed in the main church (as the Commission believes),²⁴³ from the beginning. Another possibility is that the shrine was originally housed in the chapel; but moved into the church subsequently, when perhaps an increase in the numbers of pilgrims causing a practical problem of access and order might have coincided with a desire on the part of the community itself for more public display of its patron's shrine.²⁴⁴ Certainly, the presence of the late medieval cists (see above) suggests a change or loss of function for the chapel by the period to which

241 It is worth noting in this connection that a review of the plans in the Ecclesiastical Monuments sections of the five relevant volumes (1, 2, 3, 5 and 7) of the RCAHMS Inventory does not suggest that any other potentially early church or chapel in Argyll, with remains still visible (more or less) above ground, had *antae*.

242 The *sepulchrum* (§ VI) and *tumulus* (§ IX) of *Beatus Columbanus* of the late 10th cent. (?) Life of St Catroe (see Part 1 and n. 49 there) I have taken to refer probably to a shrine at Dunkeld containing (*inter alia*?) corporeal relics of St Columba. (Cf. Macquarrie 1997, 201). If, on the other hand, as Anderson assumed (1922, i, 433 n. 1; c.f. 436 n. 6) and as Boyle (1980, 5) is prepared to consider, the location was actually Iona (the Life, as we have seen, is neither local nor strictly contemporary with these events; and its author may well not have known the name of the place), then Columba's primary shrine was till housed there c. 900. That the *sepulchrum* – *tumulus* *Beati Columbani* was in Scotland is reasonably clear: the Life, unfortunately, provides no explicit evidence in favour of either Iona or Dunkeld.

For a shrine on a probably late 12th cent. seal matrix – the seal is of the chapter of Dunkeld Cathedral – see Hall 2005, 69–70, Glenn 2002, 441. The house-shaped reliquary is perhaps of the 10th or 11th cent. I am indebted to Mark Hall, History Officer at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, for information on the seal matrix, including a copy of his paper.

243 RCAHMS 1982, 42.

244 Compare with this Henderson's observation (1987, 190–1) that in the thirteenth century 'A disproportionately large south transept was begun in the monastic church at Iona, giving access to a dramatically raised presbytery which can only have been intended to display a shrine of some pretension'. The project failed: but, while Henderson does not envisage that this shrine was the primary shrine of St Columba (as containing all or most of his corporeal relics), it may well be that, in my scheme of things, this frustrated building activity nevertheless represents approximately the period during which the chapel ceased to be the repository of the shrine.

237 'A Voyage to I-Columb-Kill, in the Year 1688', in Cumming 1859, 95–109, at 101. Sharpe 1995, 375 n. 411. RCAHMS 1982, 137–8 and fig. on p. 137.

238 Innes 1853, 214–17.

239 Martin's 'distich', which he does not give verbatim, is presumably that (or a variant of it) quoted by Fraser. Martin seems sympathetic with the reaction of the islanders; and accepts the identification of Columba's tomb.

240 RCAHMS 1982, 137–8.

they belong – though the significance of these cists is unclear. A third possibility is that, for a time at least, the relics were divided between the chapel and the main church, though that seems less likely. All this is, of course, speculative, but one or two pertinent observations may be made. In the first place, it seems to me most improbable that medieval pilgrims, for reasons outlined earlier, would have been easily satisfied with a cenotaph. The grave and the relics that the grave had given up at translation could, at least in theory, have been interdependent – mutually complementary – whether situated together or separately within the same ecclesiastical complex: an empty tomb alone would have held little or no attraction for pilgrims, especially at the end of a hazardous voyage. In the second place, it also seems to me unlikely that the tradition of Columba's grave, associated as it is with a particular building, would have persisted so long and so specifically, if the saint's physical remains had been entirely removed from Iona by the end of the ninth century. Even granted the tenacity of oral tradition in the Gaelic-speaking world and its frequent substantial accuracy, the complete early removal of the relics – to Ireland or elsewhere – would also have removed definitively the physical basis on which that tradition rested. I doubt that so palpable a tradition would have survived indefinitely the vacuum of an empty chapel. It is not, furthermore, a serious problem, as it seems to me, that the documented tradition remembers a grave rather than a shrine. The tradition is first recorded some one hundred and thirty years after the Reformation; and from an at least nominally protestant population to whom the idea of a special grave would be comprehensible, the more technical concept of a shrine or reliquary very likely not. In any case, the distinction in the present context is perhaps a somewhat arbitrary one. After translation, a saint's shrine *was* his or her tomb, whether it was a built structure incorporating elements at least of the original grave-pit, or (as in Columba's case) a portable casket. This would presumably apply as long as the skeleton remained more or less whole; or as long as the reliquary contained the major portion of the corporeal relics, as I have argued was the case with Columba's shrine at Iona both before and after c. 900. After translation and enshrinement, it was from his or her shrine that, ideally in the expectation of his or her community, a saint's *resurrectio* would take place *in die iudicii*.

PART III

IONA AND THE SHRINE OF COLUMBA, c.800–1200

A Reappraisal

That there was a shrine of St Columba at Iona during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries (and later) is not, I think, in doubt. Though it is mentioned infrequently in the surviving written record, it was important enough to attract pilgrims thither (such a shrine must have been their goal) from the late tenth century; and to provide the energy, it is surely safe to assume, for a local cult of the saint vigorous enough to communicate itself concretely to early generations of Norse settlers in the Hebrides and thence in Iceland. So much seems reasonably secure. The evidence, on the other hand, that the shrine contained the corporeal relics of the saint, in whole or in large part, is admittedly mainly circumstantial and relies heavily on post-medieval tradition concerning the saint's grave and its location. It may be plausibly argued, however, that the existence of the shrine indicates *a priori* its probable contents. Iona was Columba's *matrix ecclesia* (*VC* i, 5) and the place where he was buried. It was probably regarded as paramount, at least in theory, while the head of the saint's *familia* was referred to as 'abbot of Iona' – that is, until shortly before 900.²⁴⁵ The continuing importance of the tradition that he was buried in Iona is noticeable, even allowing for a pervasive influence from Adomnán's account of the saint's funeral and burial (*VC* iii, 23). It is Columba's grave on Iona that is mentioned in his mid to later twelfth century Irish Life, not the whereabouts of his corporeal relics elsewhere.²⁴⁶ Matthew Paris (or his source) believed in the mid thirteenth century that Columba lay and was venerated in that part of Argyll where Iona lies.²⁴⁷ And Donald, Lord of the Isles, between 1388 and c. 1423, caused to be enshrined or further embellished what was believed to be the (writing) hand of the saint.²⁴⁸ The late seventeenth and eighteenth century references to the grave, furthermore, show beyond reasonable doubt that the local tradition focused on a particular and still identifiable building. None of the considerations rehearsed in this paragraph, it may be well to stress again, amounts to proof, even cumulatively, that the usual resting-place of the saint's enshrined bodily remains was Iona, both before and after 900; but they should, I suggest, be given due weight by those who assume, perhaps too readily, that his *sancta ossa* were re-housed, broadly during the second half of the ninth century, either in Ireland or at Dunkeld or both.

If my contention is valid, the chief consequence, it seems to me, is that the status

²⁴⁵ The last abbot of Iona in this sense was apparently Flann son of Mael Dúin, who died in 891 (AU 891.1, CS 891, AI 891 (Faelán), FM 887): cf. Bannerman 1993, 46–7.

²⁴⁶ See Part II and n. 171.

²⁴⁷ See Part II and n. 231.

²⁴⁸ See Part II and nn. 232, 233. Donald may have died as late as c. 1423: Munro 1986, 299–300.

of Iona after c. 800, or at any rate after c. 900, has to be evaluated anew. During the ninth century, the dislocations caused by Norse activity – not least the likely disruptions of communication lines between Iona and her Irish interests – and the consequent, possibly *ad hoc*, withdrawal of her abbots to Ireland, must have militated (one would have thought on the face of it) towards the isolation and marginalisation of the community. Such a situation might have been exacerbated, in addition, by progressive dismantling of locally established centres of effective political and military control in Scottish Dál Riata. Certainly, the annals of the late ninth, tenth and subsequent centuries, in this pessimistic view, appear to reflect, when they notice it, a second-rank church in practice, subsisting, on the periphery of Irish ecclesiastical and literary interests, in a doubtless fluctuating and periodically uncertain condition – while maintaining some sort of communal and religious life, at least for some of the time. During the ninth century, some Irish-based abbots seem, possibly, as opportunity offered, to have retained some formal contact with the mother-house by way of official visitations: this is how I would interpret the journey to Scotland of abbot Diarmaid in 816/18 and his journey to and from Scotland in 829–31; and the (return) journey to Ireland of abbot Indrechtach in 849 – in the latter two cases with relics validating their office and giving ceremonial formality to the occasion. For most practical purposes, however, the paramount interests and activities of the Columban *familia* were henceforth increasingly centred in Ireland; and, in this view, the welfare of distant Iona would have been very much subordinated to Irish concerns.

If, on the other hand, Columba's corporeal relics were normally housed at Iona, a different picture emerges. The commonly accepted interpretation whereby his *familia* cut its losses and regrouped, as it were, in Ireland, leaving Iona in particular and her Scottish churches in general to fend for themselves in the main, has to be adjusted to recognize a much more creative response to the crises of (especially) the ninth century. This response lay, I suggest, in a redeployment of the saint's *potestas* to meet the exigencies of the new political situation, both civil and ecclesiastical. During this century, circumstances probably dictated that the abbots of Iona remain (usually) in Ireland, whether at Kells or elsewhere; and whether or not their postulated retirement thither was planned from the outset. If, however, Columba's shrine remained (usually) in Iona, then in effect a dual centre of authority evolved, whether consciously created or improvised by his *familia*, to meet new pressures and challenges as they arose. This must actually have been the situation, if the abbots were normally resident in Ireland, up to c. 850/878: I submit that it continued to be the situation thereafter. The *familia* of St Columba, far from retreating and accepting consequent loss, material or spiritual or both, radically reconstituted itself as a still organic whole of which Iona was an integral and crucial part.²⁴⁹

249 Many years ago I proposed, on the basis of toponymic evidence, that, at least as far as VC was concerned, the rule of Iona over her dependent churches, in Scotland especially, was highly centralised (MacDonald 1985). I did not discuss other categories of evidence; nor would I now stand over all that I wrote then. But it is worth observing in this connection that Adomnán nowhere calls the head for the time being of any community under the hegemony of Iona

Compared with the ninth century, the tenth may in fact have been less troublesome in the context under discussion. After the long reign of Máel Brigte mac Tornáin as coarb of Patrick and Columba, possibly from 891 until his death in 927 (AU 927.1), the coarbs of Columba/Colum Cille, heads of his *familia*, seem to have resided normally at Kells until the first half of the twelfth century. (In 1150, it seems, that hegemony passed to Derry in the person of Flaithbertach Ua Broilcháin).²⁵⁰ During this century, Norse-Gaelic chiefs probably strengthened their position in the Argyll Hebrides, thus bringing a measure of stability and security to a region that must have experienced considerable disturbance in the preceding hundred years. The likely spread of Christianity, furthermore, among Norse settlers, would probably have helped to consolidate the authority of the new *Gall-Gaidheil* ruling class – both developments no doubt contributing significantly to the safety of Iona.

Coarbial visitations thither with relics do not seem to occur in the tenth century and later.²⁵¹ A more inclusive relationship may, nevertheless, have developed within the saint's *familia* in Ireland and Scotland at this time, at least to meet certain contingencies. A number of individuals are said by the annals to be coarbs of Colum Cille both in Ireland and Scotland. Dubthach is called *comarba Coluim Cille 7 Adomnain* in his obit in AU (938.1), but *comharba Colaim chille 7 Adomhnáin i nErinn 7 i nAlbain* in FM (936). At his death in 980 Muirón is described by AU (980.3) as *comarba Coluim Cille eter Erinn 7 Albain*. (He is *comarbai Coluim Cille*, AI 981.4; *Ab Iae*, CS 978; *ab Iae*, AR § 290; *abb Iae*, FM 978).²⁵² Gilla Críst ua Mail Doraid died in 1062 as *comarba Colaim Cille eter*

and Columba, either in Scotland or in Ireland, 'abbot'. This 'pachomian' organisation (if such it was) may have had to be progressively modified during the course of the eighth century to accommodate centrifugal tendencies among some at any rate of (in particular) the major Irish Columban houses. Judging, however, from the indices of the five sets of annals perhaps more likely to provide accurate (if partial) information (AU, AT, AI, CS and FM), no abbot of Durrow explicitly so-called appears until 793 (obit of *Cinaedh m. Cumuscaigh abbas Dermhaigi* – AU 793.1); and no abbot of Derry until 882 (obit of *Muirchertach m. Neill abbas Daire calcaigh 7 aliarum ciuitatum* – AU 882.2). It would, of course, be unwise to deduce too much in detail from the annalistic record, especially where it is silent. We may, however, be seeing in that record some reflection of centripetal tendencies in the government of the Columban *familia*, in Ireland as well as in Scotland, continuing throughout the eighth century. In that case, the initial Norse raids, on Iona and elsewhere, and the consequent disruption of communications between Scotland and Ireland that is likely to have ensued, would have exacerbated any problems for the abbots of Iona arising from centrifugal tendencies that may have developed among individual Irish dependencies. By modifying, on the other hand, rather than rejecting any such centralising tradition (in response to the challenges of this period) and by integrating it positively into the reorganisation of the Columban *familia* that I have adumbrated, it may in effect have been easier to achieve the desired reorganisation; and also to maintain a creative diarchy between Kells as (from the outset?) the new administrative headquarters of the *familia* and Iona as repository of *Scrín Coluim Cille*.

250 Herbert 1988, 112–14.

251 But cf. the incident recorded in 1034, in which the lector of Kells (*fer leiginn Cenannsa*) and thirty other men were drowned coming from Scotland (*a h-Albain*) and Columba's fan (*cuilebad*) and three relics of Patrick were lost (AU 1034.9).

252 Clancy (2011) argues that Muirón was actually resident on Iona as abbot, a situation he sees as resulting from the broader political ambitions and actions of the Norse king of Dublin, Olaf

Erinn 7 Albain (AU 1062.2; similarly ALC 1062, FM 1062; *Húa Mail-doraigh, comurba cholaim cilli*, AT 1062). The phrase ‘both in Ireland and Scotland’ is probably made more explicit by the notice that, after the death of Dúnchad ua Robocáin, coarb of Colum Cille (and Adomnán, FM 988), Dub dá Leithe, coarb of Patrick, ‘took the successorship of Colum Cille by the counsel of the men of Ireland and Scotland’ – *do gabail comurbuis Coluim Cille a comurle fer nErinn 7 Alban* (AU 989.5, 7; similarly FM 988). (Compare with this the notice (in AU among a number of additions in Hi) that in 1007, when Muiredach son of Críchán resigned the successorship of Colum Cille, Ferdomnach was installed, at the revived assembly of Tailtiu, ‘in the successorship of Colum Cille by the counsel of the men of Ireland’ – *i comarbus Coluim Cille a comurle fer nErinn* (AU 1007.9, 10; similarly FM 1006); and the notice that in 1198 Gilla Mac Liac Ua Brenain resigned his successorship (*a comurbuis*) and Gilla-Crist Ua Cernaigh ‘by choice of laity and clergy of the North of Ireland was ordained in his stead in the abbacy of Colum-cille’ – *ar togha loech 7 cleirech Tuaisce[i]rt Erinn do oirdned i n-a inadh i n-abdaine Coluim-cille* (AU 1198(1); similarly ALC 1197, though with different word order; likewise FM 1198)). The arrangement, if such it was, seems to have been applied irregularly – only three times among possibly seventeen coarbs in the tenth and eleventh centuries²⁵³ – and is not reflected in the extant record much beyond the middle of the eleventh century. Even where it appears, furthermore, in some sets of annals, it is not noticed by others recording the same event. On the other hand, the fact that it is noticed only occasionally indicates that its usage in those annals when and where it does occur is not merely formulaic: perhaps certain situations that were perceived to be actually or potentially difficult, for whatever reason or reasons, invoked this arrangement in response. The principle seems to have been maintained at Teltown in 1007, though it apparently excluded the men of Alba on that occasion; and probably also, though with yet more localised application, in the North of Ireland in 1198. ‘Alba’ or the ‘men of Alba’ I take to be basically the same as the men of Airthir-Gaedhel (Argyll) and Insi-Gall (the Isles) who backed Somerled and Iona in their approach to Flaithbertach Ua Brolcháin in 1164:²⁵⁴ the Gall-Gaidheil aristocracy which in all likelihood included at least some of the clerical establishment of Iona. (When in 1204 Amalgaidh Ua Fergail took the abbacy of Iona in the northern Irish reaction to the foundation of the Benedictine abbey, he did so ‘by selection of Foreigners and Gaidhil’ – *tre togha Gall 7 Gaidhel*).²⁵⁵ As so often, there is not

sufficient evidence, in quantity or in detail, to demonstrate the case conclusively. It seems reasonable to argue, nevertheless, that the annal entries discussed above do reflect a rather more active participation by Iona and her local support system, sporadically at any rate, in the affairs of the Columban *familia* at large during this period, than has generally been allowed hitherto. The regular presence at Iona of the primary shrine of the patron saint would have given the community alone the corporate status to be consulted in this way.

I am not aware that Bannerman’s discussion of *comarbus Coluim Cille* and the saint’s primary shrine has been systematically challenged in Scotland. His treatment is detailed and thorough. His position is closely argued and, in reviewing such aspects of it as seem relevant here, I cannot be entirely sure that I do him full justice. Bannerman’s two basic contentions, for present purposes, are that annalistic references to *scrina* denote the shrines containing the corporeal relics of the saint in question; and that such *scrina* were the source of coarbial authority. In other words, the presence of the corporeal relics of St X at a given church entitled the head of that church to be called *comarba X*: if these validating insignia were removed, then the title moved with them. This may have been the case in theory and in original practice; though, unless Armagh was prepared to effect a *pia fraus* (of which she was no doubt entirely capable), St Patrick must obviously have posed a problem in this regard. It has been shown already, however, that it is very doubtful that *scrina* always and everywhere contained corporeal relics – at least in the later part of the early medieval period and as far as St Columba is concerned;²⁵⁶ and Bannerman himself concedes that eventually the validating insignia of coarbial status may no longer be corporeal relics, for a variety of reasons.

The case of St Columba provides, indeed, a concrete example of the latter development. In Bannerman’s view, the removal of Columban relics to Kells was subordinate to the removal of *Scrín Coluim Cille* to Dunkeld. Some bones may have gone to Kells, though there is no evidence of it. So *comarbus Coluim Cille* in Ireland must have been validated from the outset by some other relic or relics. Bannerman suggested that this might have been, at Kells, the *Cuilebad* lost in 1034; and, at Derry from 1150, *Soiscéla Martain* until its theft by Anglo-Normans in 1182.²⁵⁷

I find somewhat unconvincing Bannerman’s explanation for the absence from the annals of the term *comarba* in Scottish contexts: according to his own hypothesis, the early abbots of Dunkeld at least should have been the actual coarbs of Colum Cille and so called.²⁵⁸ On the other hand, an at least theoretical derivation of coarbial authority at Kells from a shrine housed at Iona can, I believe, be postulated. If the Columban *familia* remained or was reconstituted a closely integrated organisation in the ninth and tenth centuries and later, then the coarb of Colum Cille, as head of that organisation, had formal hegemony over the (local) abbot of Iona. By

Cuaran (apparently the Olaf Sigtrygg’s son who died at Iona on pilgrimage in 980: Anderson 1922, i, 487–8). In this view, Olaf’s temporarily successful attempt to transfer *comarbus Coluim Cille* back to Iona would foreshadow to some extent the unsuccessful attempt of Somerled in 1164 to achieve the same end, prompted probably by similar ambitions.

It is certainly noteworthy that three of the five sets of annals that record Múgrón’s death call him *ab(b) Iae*.

253 Cf. Bannerman 1993, 46–7.

254 See Part I and n. 46.

255 See Part I and no. 76.

256 See Part 2, § 10 and nn. 145–155.

257 Bannerman 1993, esp. 21, 26–8, 28–30, 42–5.

258 Ibid., 17, 31.

extension, therefore, his hegemony involved official responsibility for Columba's shrine; and benefitted from the spiritual (and probably material) power that emanated from the shrine to validate his office. In this view, had Flaithbertach Ua Broicháin accepted the invitation of 1164, he would in fact have returned to the immediate presence of what was still the ultimate source of his authority as head of the saint's *familia*.

It does not seem possible, on the basis of the surviving written record, to assess adequately the contemporary perception of the relationship between Iona and Dunkeld: it may have varied over time in any case. Anderson seems to have envisaged an equal division of authority over Columba's churches between Kells and Dunkeld from 849.²⁵⁹ Bannerman, arguing for the removal of *Scrín Coluim Cille* to Dunkeld at this time, and with it authority over the Columban *familia* on both sides of the sea, allows only that the status of administrative centre eventually conceded to Kells was owing to 'the perceived difficulty of overseeing the Columban *familia* in Ireland from east of Druim Alban'; and because 'for Iona to have maintained oversight of the Irish *familia* would have meant two Columban centres in the one country with the ongoing potential for a serious conflict of interest'.²⁶⁰ In my view, the intentions of the Scottish king, who only had some corporeal relics to take to Dunkeld, were probably more limited: namely, to recreate the hegemony of St Columba and Iona within his Picto-Scottish kingdom and at a place accessible if required to royal authority; without, it would seem, necessarily envisaging oversight also of Columba's Irish churches – which were now to be administered on the axis of Kells – Iona. Kenneth son of Alpin may have still ruled a kingdom which included the Argyll Hebrides and Iona, at least in theory. In practice, however, any residual royal control of this region must surely have been seriously if not fatally weakened during the crises faced by his successors in the 870s.²⁶¹ Evaluation, on the other hand, of Kenneth's precise intentions with regard to Dunkeld is rendered difficult if not impossible, it seems to me, by the complete lack of concrete information wherewith to evaluate the intentions regarding the same church of its traditional founder, Constantine son of Fergus.²⁶² In the tenth century, the primacy in the Picto-Scottish church perhaps originally intended for Dunkeld and its abbots seems to have passed to St Andrews and its bishops, probably during the reign of Constantine son of Aed (900–43).²⁶³

²⁵⁹ Anderson 1922, i, 279–80.

²⁶⁰ Bannerman 1993, 42–3. It is regrettable that Bannerman never published his projected *Studies in the History of Scotia*.

²⁶¹ See Part 2, § 10 and n. 154.

²⁶² Anderson 1922, i, 121 n. 3, 262, (279 n. 4); 1908, 9 n. 1; Anderson 1973, 266, 273, 287; Skene 1871–2, i, 154–5, ii, 144. See also Part 2 and n. 134.

²⁶³ Cf. Anderson 1922, i, 444–8. The Scottish Chronicle does not notice bishops probably resident at St Andrews until the second half of the tenth century: the death of Fothach, 962–66 (but see Part 1 and nn. 21–4 there); the death of Maelbrigte and the accession of Cellach son of Ferdalach (?), 966–71 – *ibid.*, 472, 475. Cf. Haddan and Stubbs 1869–78, vol. 2, part 1 (1873), 173–4. An Irish magnate died on pilgrimage at St Andrews in 965 – *ibid.*, 472.

While Dunkeld remained the chief church of St Columba within the borders of the Scottish kingdom, the new situation may have led eventually to the local view that, while possession of corporeal and other relics of her patron guaranteed that more narrowly defined hegemony, it also, more defensively, guaranteed the independence of Dunkeld and Columba's churches within Scotland against possible encroachment by, or interference from, coarbs of Colum Cille based at Kells.

The Irish annals take a moderate interest in Dunkeld until the middle of the eleventh century. The obits are entered of Tuathal son of Artgus, chief bishop of Fortriu and abbot of Dunkeld, at 865 (AU, FM, Frag. A); and of Flaithbertach son of Muirchertach, abbot of Dunkeld, at 873 (AU, FM). The death in battle of abbot Donnchad is noticed at 965 (AU); and of abbot Crinan in 1045 (AU, AT, ALC). The place was totally burnt in 1027 (AU, ALC). These brief entries, however, scarcely afford a sufficient basis on which to gauge the attitude to Dunkeld during this period of the Irish church in general or of the Columban *familia* in Ireland in particular.²⁶⁴ The statement in the first lesson for Adomnán's feastday (23 September) in the Breviary of Aberdeen that Columba appointed Adomnán abbot of Lismore (*ad Lismorenssem ... abbaciam*), dismissed summarily by Reeves,²⁶⁵ might have originated, I suggest, in twelfth century propaganda concocted by those in the contemporary community of Dunkeld who opposed moves to detach Argyll from the diocese of Dunkeld. Argyll was erected into a separate diocese, with Lismore as its see probably from the outset, in 1183 x 1189.²⁶⁶ If so, though appeal is made to the authority of Columba (and Adomnán), which Dunkeld could legitimately claim to represent within the twelfth century Scottish kingdom, the interest is focused upon retaining control of Argyll-Lismore, not of Iona, which at the time lay outwith Scots civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction.²⁶⁷

Iona probably ceased to be, for practical purposes, the administrative centre of the Columban *familia* in the early ninth century. While I would argue that she

²⁶⁴ The earliest annalistic notice of a bishop of or at St Andrews appears to be the obit of Maeliosa, bishop of Alba, at CS [1031]: *Maoliosa, Epscop Alban quieuit*.

²⁶⁵ The relevant text of Brev. Aber., with discussion (including reference to Reeves's judgement), may be found conveniently in Herbert and Ó Riain 1988, 36–9.

²⁶⁶ Cowan and Easson 1976, 210.

²⁶⁷ In the 14th and 15th centuries, 'a special relationship seems to have existed between Iona and the see of Dunkeld; the bishop was one of the recipients of most papal mandates relating to the abbey, and in 1431 Abbot Dominic did obedience to Bishop Robert de Cardeny 'as if to his diocesan ordinary'. An abbatial consecration was performed by the Bishop of Dunkeld c. 1320; but by the Bishop of the Isles c. 1354 and in 1421 (RCAHMS 1982, 144 and refs.). In 1289, the Benedictine abbey of Iona was a direct subject of the Roman church, having been from its foundation in 1203 under the direct protection of the Holy See (*ibid.*, 143, 144). Possibly the Roman Curia had frequent recourse to the bishops of Dunkeld in relation to Iona because the two churches shared a common patron. There is no evidence known to me, however, that this 'special relationship' reached back before 1200.

See also Bannerman 1999; Broun 1999a. (For an older view that Iona actually was within the diocese of Dunkeld, see Haddan + Stubbs 1869–78, 2.1. (1873), 236 (note at top of page and refs.)).

suffered no loss of prestige thereby, it has to be admitted that there is little or nothing in the material record after 800 to indicate a significant amount of surplus wealth at the disposal of the community. Though, as we have seen, St Matthew's Cross may date to the ninth or early tenth century,²⁶⁸ there does not appear to be any convincing evidence for the production of elaborate metalwork here, or for the output of a sophisticated and busy scriptorium.²⁶⁹ Offerings by pilgrims of the social level noticed by the annals were probably substantial, if intermittent; but revenue from pilgrimage more generally must have derived largely from the contributions of socially and economically more modest devotees, who did not merit the serious attention of, or were entirely unknown to, the Irish annalists. Such income was no doubt expended locally on the abbey itself, on the churches dependent directly on Iona, on the agricultural lands and stock on which the community relied; and on works of charity. A part, perhaps a large part, may have been sent to Ireland. There are, on the other hand, indications from time to time, both positive and negative, of a reasonably healthy economic life on the island. In 986, 'Danes' thought it worthwhile to attack Iona;²⁷⁰ though the accompanying massacre of the abbot and fifteen of the seniors of the community could have been precipitated by the marauders' frustration at not finding the kinds of movable wealth that they may in fact have been seeking. In 1070, it was apparently worthwhile for the son of the abbot ua Maeldoraid to kill the incumbent abbot of Iona²⁷¹ (though the actual motive for the murder is, admittedly, not given). The *kaup-staðr* of the time of King Magnus's visit of 1098, if it is (as I have argued) a lay extramural settlement lying outwith the monastic enclosure but dependent on the abbey and engaged in various kinds of commercial activity, probably reflects the fundamentally sound economic state of Iona, civil and ecclesiastical, at the end of the eleventh century.²⁷² The community of 1164 certainly supported a clerical establishment whose members were probably by no means all rigorous ascetics (AU 1164 (2)).²⁷³ Finally, faced with the impending suppression of the Columban monastery and the loss of Iona in 1203/4, the leadership of the northern Irish church reacted with forceful, if perhaps belated and ultimately unsuccessful, determination (AU 1204 (4), FM 1203). The motivation for this action may well have derived as much from material as from spiritual concerns.²⁷⁴

Royal burial would also no doubt have added significantly to the wealth of the

268 See Part 1 and n. 95.

269 I am not competent to discuss the date of the Book of Kells on internal evidence. If it is of 9th century date rather than 8th, then broader historical considerations of the generally unsettled and uncertain conditions probably prevailing locally during this century do not, it seems to me, favour Iona as its place of origin.

270 See Part 1 and n. 27.

271 See Part 1 and nn. 34–6.

272 See Part 1 and nn. 40–4.

273 For detailed discussion of this entry, see Part 1 and nn. 46–62.

274 For detailed discussion of this entry, see Part 1 and nn. 75–92.

community, at least on occasion. As far, however, as the tradition of Scottish royal burial at Iona is concerned, the weight of scholarly opinion seems now to be against it. Cowan has pointed out that the Scottish Chronicle does not mention Iona, let alone royal burial there.²⁷⁵ Broun implies that the 'claim to be the kingship's mausoleum' came from the community itself of Iona; and suggests that it may have been prompted by the translation of Donald Bán's remains from Dunkeld to Iona at an unknown date subsequent to his death in 1097.²⁷⁶ It is not easy to see why Iona should have made such a claim at this time. Cowan suggests that both claim and translation may have been inspired by King Magnus of Norway's expedition to the Hebrides 'and so represent an assertion of Scottish sovereignty over the territories claimed by the Norwegian king'.²⁷⁷ In which case, the claim probably did not originate in Iona. Alternatively, if the claim to be the ancient royal place of burial was made first about the middle of the twelfth century on behalf of Reilig Odhráin specifically, we may have to do here once again with the political manoeuvring of Somerled and his family.²⁷⁸ It could then have been taken up and elaborated by Scottish propagandists to further Scottish interests. I am not sure, however, whether or not this suggestion could be accommodated readily to the chronology hypothesized for the origins and transmission of the later medieval regnal list tradition.

It would not be seriously maintained nowadays that Iona was ever entirely deserted during the centuries from 800 to 1100, whether for longer or shorter periods. Nevertheless, the written record on which we depend to a great extent for our knowledge of events in the life of the community there during this time – its internal religious life is largely inaccessible to us – may be evaluated in different ways. The long silences of the annalists can be interpreted pessimistically as reflecting a relatively unimportant church on the periphery of Irish interests, sometimes perhaps impoverished and depleted of personnel and occasionally threatened by external forces: a church that had lost status significantly when she ceased to exercise hegemony over her founder's *familia*. The material remains

275 Cowan 1981, 6–7; and arguing that a version of this chronicle may have existed by the late 10th cent., but that the version surviving in the 14th cent. Poppleton MS is likely to be of 12th cent. date. Dumville (2000, 83–6, esp. 86) prefers a later date and thinks that the text did not reach its final form until the early 13th cent. See also Hudson 1994, 159.

276 Broun 1999b, 188–9. Cowan also accepts Donald Bán's translation as historical: l.c.7 and refs.

277 Cowan 1981, 7.

278 The earliest reference that I know to St Oran's explicitly in the context of royal burial is John of Fordun's statement that after Constantine son of Aed's burial at St Andrews, the monks of Iona (*Hyenses ... monachi*) exhumed and translated his bones 'and buried them in the tomb of his fathers in the church of blessed Oran' – *in basilica beati Orani partum tumulo condiderunt* (in the year 947): *Chronicle*, bk. 4, ch.23 (Skene 1871–2, i, 165, ii, 157). Fordun's *Chronicle* 'appears to have been concluded 1384 x 1387': Anderson 1922, i, lvii–lviii. Godfrey (Godred), King of Man, died on 10 November on St Patrick's Isle in Man; 'and in the beginning of summer, his body was carried over to the island that is called Iona' (*ad insulam que uocatur hy* – Broderick 2004, f. 40r.) – in 1187–8: Anderson 1922, ii, 313. This seems to be the first royal translation to Iona after (presumably) that of Donald Bán.

at the site, furthermore, in the form of crosses and cross-slabs of ninth to twelfth century date and fugitive traces around the Benedictine church and cloister of earlier stone building, do not really represent a serious obstacle to such an interpretation. (St Oran's Chapel may owe its existence rather to the initiative of Somerled and his family than to that of the community itself).²⁷⁹ If, however, Iona did not in this period keep her own historical record (for whatever reason or reasons), as seems probable, then her appearance or otherwise in the annals is just as likely to reflect their preoccupations as her actual circumstances at any given time. In other words, the caprice of the annalists may accidentally present a distorted picture (by omission rather than commission) of the real situation of the abbey of Iona between 800 and 1200 – due allowance being made for fluctuations in that situation from time to time.

If, on the other hand, as I have argued here, Iona remained throughout this time the usual repository of St Columba's Shrine, *Scrín Coluim Cille*, then we are dealing with a church retaining much higher status and still central to the spiritual life of the Columban *familia* overall, both in Argyll and the Isles and in Ireland. The reasons for the seemingly haphazard attention paid to the monastery and its shrine by the contemporary annals may still be seen to lie in other multifarious and doubtless more engaging interests of the annalists themselves: after all, the only occasion on which the shrine is mentioned explicitly in these sources is in 878, when it came to Ireland as a refugee – a dramatic enough event – and its arrival caught their attention.²⁸⁰ Their failure to notice it again after 878 – though named secondary relics of Columba are mentioned from time to time – is because (I would maintain) it did not leave Iona again; and its whereabouts were widely known and taken for granted. This argument could, of course, also be applied to Kells (Dunkeld probably lay on a more distant horizon where the Irish annalists were concerned). The annals do seem, however, to reflect the presence of the shrine on Iona, if not directly or explicitly. I have already noted that, from an apparent revival of the practice in the late tenth century to the end of the period under review, Iona as a destination for high-ranking pilgrims compares favourably with the most popular churches in Ireland itself. In contrast, neither Kells nor Dunkeld is noticed in this connection; and Derry only late in the twelfth century.²⁸¹ This evidence, in both its positive and negative aspects, if, I believe, of considerable importance in the present context; and I do not think that its significance has been fully appreciated hitherto.

When all has been said, however, the case for Iona as normally housing St Columba's Shrine throughout the relevant period remains, like that for Kells or Dunkeld or Kells-Dunkeld, a hypothesis only. Neither the quality nor the quantity of the surviving evidence permit a conclusive demonstration in favour of any one solution in particular. Arguments from silence are always less than satisfactory;

and the fragmentary nature and probably random survival of the existing written record renders any dogmatic assertion foolhardy – indeed, any assumption likewise, unless it is clearly acknowledged for what it is. So to maintain a particular position is, perhaps unavoidably, to give a hostage to fortune. And while creative speculation is surely legitimate, if kept within reasonable limits and in touch with the available evidence, in the final analysis it remains – speculation. The crux of the problem of the usual place of residence of St Columba's Shrine, as it seems to me, is the essentially ambiguous nature of the relevant terminology, both Latin and Irish, relating to relics. Neither language seems to provide a specific enough technical vocabulary for the reader to be certain in every instance what kind of relic or relics precisely is or are intended, unless, of course, they are explicitly named. Where, on the other hand, the relic or relics in question are not named, the choice of term to denote it or them may reflect the preference of the individual writer, whether or not he himself knew exactly what was involved; and the significance of general terms – e.g. *reliquiae*, *mionn*, *taise*, (*scrín* too) – may have varied over time anyway. In arguing a case, therefore, the validity of which (or otherwise) depends on explicit identification, one should be able to tell, ideally, whether one is dealing with the saint's actual physical remains (in whole or in part), or with one or other of a possible range of secondary relics. Frequently enough this is not possible and the relic or relics are, as recorded, anonymous. Where St Columba's shrine and relics are concerned, assumptions have been made by different writers, including, of course, the present one. A practical difficulty that has arisen as a consequence lies, it seems to me, not so much in recourse to assumptions as in failure to acknowledge clearly that they are such.

I must allow, finally, that the suggestion I have offered regarding the redeployment of St Columba's presence and power within his *familia* during the ninth and tenth centuries and later, proposes an unusual response to changing circumstances. The situation, however, was an unusual one. To a greater degree, probably, than any other major Gaelic church of the early middle ages, the network of churches acknowledging Columba's patronage extended on both sides of the sea separating Scotland and Ireland. Iona is in Scotland: her focus of interest in the eighth century and later may quite possibly have centred increasingly upon Ireland. My case, therefore, argues a creative response to developments which may have had the effect of separating Scotland and Ireland progressively from each other as political power in the Scottish kingdom shifted eastwards and the Scandinavian presence intruded itself into the zone between the two countries. This response would have been intended to maintain the essential integrity of the Columban *familia* on both sides of the sea by, in effect, dividing the saint's authority between Iona and (eventually at least) Kells. The postulated arrangement may have worked fairly well; and as a solution may have survived the transfer of *comarbus Coluim Cille* from Kells to Derry c. 1150. Ultimately, however, developments in both countries proved cumulatively too overwhelming for such internal resourcefulness to overcome; and Iona and the Columban churches in Ireland appear to have parted company, for most practical purposes, at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

²⁷⁹ See Part 2 and n. 202.

²⁸⁰ See Part 2, § 10.

²⁸¹ See Part 2 and nn. 228–30, esp. the table included in n. 230.

Appendix 1: The Triple Burial at Downpatrick

The legend of the burial of SS Patrick, Brigid and Columba in the one grave at Downpatrick has, of course, no relevance whatever where discussion of the location (or locations) of Columba's corporeal relics is concerned. Belief in it, however, appears to have become quite widespread in the later middle ages; and it has been necessary to refer to it occasionally here. So it seems as well to say something about it more explicitly, though the following account makes no claim to being exhaustive.

Ó Floinn²⁸² has written a succinct account of the discovery and enshrinement of the bones of the three saints staged by John de Courcy in 1185 (and of a counter-translation (?), possibly favouring Saul in Co. Down, carried out by the Archbishop of Armagh (*Comarba Padraic*), Nicholas Mac Mail-Issu, in 1293).

Whatever de Courcy's motives, he can scarcely be seen as orchestrating the occasion *in vacuo*. The three saints had been more or less closely associated in the tradition of the native Irish church for some time past. To give merely a few of the more obvious topographical instances of this association from the annals, that might be relevant in the present context:– the *reiclés* of Colum Cille at Armagh is on record in 1011 (AU 1011.1); the crosses of Colum Cille and of Brigit at Armagh are mentioned in 1166 (AU 1166 (4)); the church of Brigit (*i n-ecluis Brigte*) at Downpatrick in 1007 (AU 1007.4); and probably to be noted also in this connection is the entry in AU under the year 553, from the Book of Cuanu – 'The relics of Patrick (*reilci Patraic*) were placed sixty years after his death in a shrine (*i scrin*) by Colum Cille. Three splendid halidoms (*minna*) were found in the burial-place (*isin adhnucal*): his goblet, the Angel's Gospel and the Bell of the Testament. This is how the angel distributed the halidoms (*minna*): the goblet to Dún (Downpatrick), the Bell of the Testament to Ard Macha, and the Angel's Gospel to Colum Cille himself' (AU 553.3).²⁸³

The story seems to have been accepted quite readily by Anglo-Norman and later English circles, following the contemporary account of Giraldus Cambrensis.²⁸⁴ At the end of the twelfth century 'Benedict of Peterborough' notes, under A.D. 1177, *Dun, quae est caput Wlvesterae; ubi etiam requiescunt corpora Sanctorum Patricii et Columbae (confessorum adds Howden) et Sanctae Brigidae virginis* –

²⁸² Ó Floinn 1997, 140–3, cf. 160–1.

²⁸³ See also Anderson 1922, i, 19–20. AU 553.3 may also be related, as I have already suggested, to the passage in Tírechán's *Collectanea* (late 7th or early 8th cent.?) where Columba locates Patrick's grave at Saul: see Part 2, § 2 and notes 113–120. One wonders if Tírechán's note also inspired Nicholas Mac Mail-Issu in 1293.

²⁸⁴ *Topographia Hibernica*, Distinctio III, cap. XVIII, in Brewer, Dimock and Warner 1861–91, vol. 5 (1867), 163–4. Tr. O'Meara 1951, 89–90. Giraldus believed that the three saints were contemporaries. Presumably burials of some sort were found and creatively interpreted. Apparently the bodies were lying side by side: *quasi in spelunca triplici, Patricio in midio jacente, aliis duobus hinc inde* – '... in a cave that had three sections. Patrick was lying in the middle, and the others were lying one on either side'. It is conceivable that what were found were contiguous stone-lined long-cist burials or something similar – if such a configuration could be described as *spelunca triplex*.

‘Down(patricks), which is the capital of Ulster; where also rest the bodies of Saints Patrick and Columba (confessors) and the virgin Saint Brigit.’²⁸⁵ Roger Howden’s wording under 1177 is practically identical.

Ranulph Higden (died 1364) bases the brief account in his *Polychronicon* (bk. 5, ch.4) explicitly on that of Giraldus, also making the three saints contemporaries and recording that they were buried at Downpatrick in Ulster *quasi in spelunca triplici*, where they were found in [1185]. He omits, however, Giraldus’s description of the relative positions of the bodies; and any reference to the involvement of John de Courcy, substituting instead the following verse supposedly found in the tomb: *Hi tres in Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno. Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba pius* – ‘These three were buried in the one tomb at Down. Brigit etc.’²⁸⁶

The legend was known to the fifteenth century Scots chroniclers. Andrew of Wyntoun, prior of St Serf’s Lochleven (1390–1421), who wrote his *Orygenale Cronykil* sometime between 1420 and 1424, has, bk. vii, ch.8, ll. 1957–8 [A.D. 1186]: ‘Off Saynt Patryk, Saynt Colme, and off Saynt Bryde, / The bodyis were fundyn in that tyde’.²⁸⁷ Walter Bower, abbot of Inchcolm (died 1449), wrote his *Scotichronicon* during the 1440s. In bk. viii, ch. 40, he relates how, in 1186, the remains (*reliquie*) of SS Columba, Patrick and Brigit were found in Downpatrick (*in civitate Dunensi*), the saints themselves having revealed where they were buried. They were then translated to the church of that city (*in urbis eiusdem ecclesia*) by the bishop of the diocese, John de Courcy and the people. Bower then quotes a variant of the verse also found in Higden: *Tres sunt in Duno tumulo tumulante sub uno / Bridida, Patricius atque Columba pius* – ‘Three saints there are in Down, with one burial mound covering them, / Bridget, Patrick and holy Columba’.²⁸⁸

Hector Boece, in his *Scotorum Historia* (edition of 1575), bk. 9, § 57, says that Columba died *in Iona insula*, recording also that Bede has him die *in Heu insula* (apparently not realizing that Bede’s *Hii* was in fact Iona); and that ‘Irish historians’ – *Hibernicarum rerum scriptores* – assert that he is buried *in Duno oppido Hiberniae*, where is his monument with the inscription, *Hi tres in Duno tumulo tumulantur in uno, / Brigida, Patricius, atque Columba pius*. He says that Columba’s death on Iona was ‘as our annals record’ – *ut nostril tradunt annals*: beyond that, he passes no comment and expresses no opinion of his own.²⁸⁹

285 Stubbs 1867, i, 137. Stubbs 1868–71, ii, (1869), 120.

286 Babington and Lumby 1865–86, v (1874), 302–4. For other English or Anglo-Irish writers carrying the story, see Sharpe 1991, 210 n. 211 (following Ussher).

287 Laing 1872–9, ii (1872), 215. Macpherson’s Preface to his edition of 1795, in Laing, l.c., i (1872), xvii–xlviii, at xxxiv; and Nicholson 1974, 278, state that Wyntoun composed (Nicholson) or finished (Macpherson) his chronicle between 1420 and 1424. He was prior of Loch Leven from 1390 until his resignation in Dec. 1421 (Watt and Shead 2001, 140).

288 Corner, Scott, Scott and Watt 1994, 368–9 (ll. 29–35, text, 36–43, tr.). It is to be noted that Bower lists Columba before Patrick; but, though his own abbey was under the patronage of St Columba, he offers no comment on the tradition.

289 Hector Boethius, *Scotorum Historia* (1575 version). Ed. D.F. Sutton, University of California,

(William Stewart, in his metrical version (1531–5) of Hector Boece’s *Histories* (1527), rejects the Downpatrick legend where Columba is concerned. For him, Columba died and was buried ‘In Iona Yle’ or ‘Intill a place callit Ecolumkill, / Quhair that his bodie restis zit (yet) thair still. / Thocht (thought) mony man that speikis out of tune, / Quhilk (which) dois alledge that he lyis in Dunwn, / Within Ireland, into Sanct Patrikis graif, / Siclike (in like manner) Sanct Bryde, I hald thereof tha raif (they rave)’).²⁹⁰

It seems that there was some acceptance eventually of the Downpatrick legend into Gaelic Irish tradition. The *Prophecy of Berchán*, a poem that seems to have been composed by different authors from the mid ninth to the late eleventh century, contains the following stanzas: “‘My grace in Iona without blame, and my soul in Derry; and my body under the stone, under which are Brigit and Patrick’” – *Mo rath i nÍ can cairi / is in anim i nDairi / agus mo corpán fon lig / fo-tá Brigit is Pádraic* (112); ‘And I am certain that though he may come, there will be no lack in Iona; every day in Derry in his choir, and his body in Downpatrick’ – *Acus is derbh lem cíá-thí / nocho bia esbaidh in nÍ / cach áenlá i nDairi ‘na chlais / oculus a corp a leathglais* (114). While observing that ‘the extant versions of the Prophecy of Berchán represent a text that has been reworked, modified, expanded and modernized’; and that ‘the process of revision would continue for centuries,’ Hudson nevertheless opts for an eleventh century date for the section containing these stanzas. He draws attention, in particular, to the assaults, chiefly by Vikings, on the principal churches of all three saints, during the first half of the ninth century, endangering their relics; and concludes that ‘after the chaos of the early and mid-ninth century a plausible argument could be made for the interment of the three great saints of the Gael at Downpatrick’.²⁹¹ While Hudson’s analysis and chronology are accepted here, his conclusion seems to me to be doubtful. In the first place, Giraldus’s account (see n. 284 above) seems pretty clearly to envisage burials, not reliquaries as actual translations would have required. (His description of the remains as *tres nobiles thesauri*, ‘three noble treasures’, is presumably to be understood in a figurative sense).²⁹² In the second place, there is nothing else in what is known or deducible of the movements of Columba’s relics (whatever opinion is favoured concerning their final resting-place) to suggest that any part of them might have ended up in Downpatrick. In the third place, the mention of

Irvine. Posted February 26, 2010. [Accessed 31/5/12 and 14/6/12: Latin text, pp. 36–7, Eng. Tr., pp. 41–2]. (<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/boece/>).

290 Turnbull 1858, ii, 292 (ll. 28, 865–880: bk. 9). Stewart, however, seems to base his belief as to the location of Columba’s grave on Bede (cf. HE, iii, 4: Colgrave and Mynors 1991, 222–23). It is not quite clear to me whether or not Stewart realized that ‘Iona Yle’ and ‘Ecolumkill’ were the same place.

291 Hudson 1996, 14–20, 40, 83. I have used Hudson’s edition here, both text and translation; and followed generally his dating of the poem.

292 Latham (1965) does not indicate that *thesaurus* ever means ‘reliquary’. Cf. Lewis and Short 1907; Souter 1949.

Derry in the same breath, as it were, with Iona, indicates that these stanzas are, on historical grounds, unlikely to be older than the second half of the twelfth century, at the earliest.²⁹³ The tradition, however, of Columba's (though apparently not Brigit's) *burial* at Down is demonstrably older than this.

The notes to the *Amra Choluimb chille* – 'The Eulogy of Colum Cille' – in MS Rawlinson B502 (in the Bodleian Library, Oxford), edited by Stokes, have the following notes on verse 44: *rofess roím a adnaicthi. i. Hii nó Dún* – 'the cemetery (*ruam*) of his burial was known, i.e. Iona or Downpatrick'; *His Dun dano atberat araili eserge Coluimb cille [do bith], ut [dixit poeta:] Hii co n-ilur a martra. / diarbo Colum coemdatta. / doluid essi fo dered. / conid Dun a sen-nemed.* – 'At Down, then, some say that Columba's resurrection will be, as the poet said: "Iona with the multitude of its relics, (Iona) of which Columba was a dear fosterling: thence at the end he went, so that Down is his senior church."'²⁹⁴ Down, of course, means Patrick; but Brigit is not reflected here. The MS is generally dated to the first half of the twelfth century;²⁹⁵ the text of the *Amra* and its commentary are contemporary with the MS.

Two fifteenth to sixteenth century MSS of the Irish Life of Colum Cille contain additional material at § 63, including the following: *Tri hinaid .v.º ita lanaitreb Coluim Cille .i. Ii 7 Dun 7 Doire* – 'There are three places, indeed, wherein is a true habitation of Colum Cille, Iona, Down, and Derry', and introduces a variant of stanza 112 of 'Berchan', *A rath a nI cen caire, / is a anum a nDoire, / 7 a corpan 'man leic' / ma ta Brigit is Patraic* – 'His saintly power in blameless Iona, / and his spirit in Derry, / and his body beneath the flagstone / under which are Brigit and Patrick.' The stanza that also occurs in the notes to the *Amra* – *I co n-ilar a martra etc.* – is then quoted.²⁹⁶

In *BCC* O'Donnell introduces the legend twice, on the second occasion with much detail. In ch. II (§ 36), it is told how each of the three saints prophesied their common burial at Downpatrick. In ch. XXXIII (§§ 371–4), 'holy Berchán' (*Berchan naemtha*) is invoked as the authority for the tradition; and credited with a story relating that, at some unspecified time subsequent to Columba's burial on Iona, 'Mandar son of the king of Lochlann' plundered the monastery, including its cemetery, searching for treasure; the Vikings carry off to their ships Columba's coffin, thinking that it must contain valuables; at sea, they open the coffin and,

finding in it only Columba's body, they shut it again and throw it overboard; the coffin drifts to Downpatrick where, cast ashore, it is recognised for what it is by the abbot and laid in the one tomb with Patrick and Brigit.²⁹⁷ A version of *Prophecy of Berchan*, stanza 112, is then quoted; followed by a more extensive account of the prophecies of the three saints concerning their shared tomb. Finally, two verses attributed to Dallan Forgaill are quoted, the second being a version of *Hii co n-ilur a martra etc.*²⁹⁸

MD refers to the triple burial under February 1 (Brigit) and June 9 (Columba); but not under March 17 (Patrick). FM record, under the year 493, that Patrick was buried at Downpatrick (*i nDún da leathglas*); and, under 525, they record that Brigit was buried there (*i nDún*) in the same tomb as Patrick. Under 592, however, they do not repeat the same tradition of Columba. The belief that Patrick was buried at Down was, of course, at least as old as Muirchú (II 11(9)). In general, it seems that the Four Masters and their circle accepted the legend of the triple burial.²⁹⁹

The fact that the *Amra* text and accompanying commentary in Rawlinson B 502 are original to the MS shows beyond doubt that the tradition of Columba's burial at Down goes back before c. 1150 and possibly to a much earlier date. Brigit's presence at Armagh and Downpatrick in the eleventh century, as reflected in the annals, makes it quite likely that a tradition of her burial at Down is also earlier than the late twelfth century. De Courcy, therefore, probably did not create *ex nihilo* the tradition of the triple burial, but made use of existing material, including, it seems reasonable to suppose, a version of this tradition, in whole or in part. He may, however, have brought it into sharper focus; and he certainly gave it tangible and visible expression. His stage-managed *inventio* encouraged apparently widespread acceptance among Anglo-Norman and later English literary circles; perhaps more limited acceptance in Gaelic learned society. But however piquant or otherwise an episode in itself, this tradition, as was said at the outset, merely confuses the trail where Columba's actual corporeal relics and their location or locations are concerned.³⁰⁰

²⁹³ The notes to MO under February 1 (Brigit), March 17 (Patrick) and June 9 (Columba) (Stokes 1880, 1905) make no mention of a common burial at Downpatrick; nor does MG under the same dates.

²⁹⁴ Stokes 1899, 178–9.

²⁹⁵ Rawlinson B502 is dated c. 1125 by Carney (1971, 40); the second vellum part of the MS (folios 13 ff.) 'can hardly be earlier than the middle or beginning of the twelfth century' (Oskamp 1972, 56); the second vellum part of Rawlinson B502 is described as 'consisting of seventy folios written by a single scribe in a Leinster monastery and dated to c. 1130' by Ó Riain (1981, 161–2). Ó Cuív, in a detailed account of the MS, concluded that the second parchment section (ff. 19–89) belongs to the 'second quarter of the 12th cent.' (2001, i, 163–200 no. 34).

²⁹⁶ Herbert 1988, 212, 242, 264–5.

²⁹⁷ The story of Mandar here is in some ways reminiscent of the account in his saga of the death and burial at sea (c. 1007?) of Hallfrod, Ottar's son, Vandraedaskáld. He was laid in his coffin with all his treasures and put overboard. The coffin came to the Holy Island (Iona), where the abbot's servants looted it and threw the corpse into a swamp. The abbot was apprised of their crime in a dream. See Anderson 1922, i, 526–7 (526 n. 6), with refs.

Their action may have had mantic significance for Hallfrod's companions: 'As soon as Ingolf caught his first glimpse of Iceland he threw his highseat pillars overboard, hoping for a good omen, and declared he'd settle wherever the pillars happened to be washed ashore' (*Landnámabók*, § 8: Pálsson and Edwards 1972, 20; Icelandic text in Benediktsson 1968, 42).

²⁹⁸ O'Kelleher and Schoepperle 1918, 20–1, 420–5.

²⁹⁹ Bieler 1979, 120–1 (Muirchú). Keating too seems to have accepted the legend: Comyn and Dinneen 1902–14, iii, 104–5.

³⁰⁰ I wish to record here my thanks to the staff of the Department of Special Collections and Western Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library in Oxford, for their generous response to my enquiry concerning the dating of the *Amra* text and notes in MS. Rawlinson B502.

Appendix 2: The Publications of Aidan David Somerled MacDonald

- Macdonald, A.D.S. and Lloyd R. Laing 1968, [‘Early Ecclesiastical Sites in Scotland: a Field Survey, Part I’](#), *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 100, 123–34.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. and Lloyd R. Laing 1970, [‘Early Ecclesiastical Sites in Scotland: a Field Survey, Part II’](#), *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 102, 129–45.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1973, [“Annat” in Scotland: A Provisional Review](#), *Scottish Studies* 17, 135–46.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1974, [‘Two major early monasteries of Scottish Dalriata: Lismore and Eigg’](#), *Scottish Archaeological Forum* 5, 47–57.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. and Lloyd R. Laing 1975 [‘Excavations at Lochmaben Castle, Dumfriesshire’](#), *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.*, 106 (1974–75), 124–57.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1977, [‘On “Papar” names in north and west Scotland’](#), *Northern Studies* 9, 25–30.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1977, [‘Old Norse “Papar” names in N. and W. Scotland’](#), in *Studies in Celtic Survival*, ed. L. Laing, (British Archaeological Reports, Oxford), 107–11.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1979 [‘Gaelic Cill \(Kil\(l\)–\) in Scottish Place-Names’](#), *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-name Society*, series 2, vol.2, 9–22.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1981, [‘Caiseal, Cathair, Dùn, Lios and Ràth in Scotland, I: Dùn’](#), *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-name Society*, series 2, vol. 3, 30–9.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1981, [‘Notes on monastic archaeology and the Annals of Ulster, 650–1050’](#), in in Ó Corráin, D. (ed), *Irish Antiquity: Essays and Studies Presented to Professor M.J. O’Kelly* (Cork: Tower Books), 304–19.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1982 [‘Notes on terminology in the Annals of Ulster, 650–1050’](#), *Peritia* 1 (1982), 329–333.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1982, [‘Caiseal, Cathair, Dùn, Lios and Ràth in Scotland, II: Ràth’](#), *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-name Society*, series 2, vol. 4, 32–57.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1984, [‘Aspects of the monastery and monastic life in Adomnán’s Life of Columba’](#), *Peritia* 3, 271–302
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1984, [‘Obituary: Deirdre Flanagan’](#), *Peritia* 3, 595–596
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1985, [‘Iona’s style of government among the Picts and Scots: the toponymic evidence’](#), *Peritia* 4, 174–86
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1987, [‘Caiseal, Cathair, Dùn, Lios and Ràth in Scotland, 3: Lios’](#), *Ainm (Journal of the Ulster Place-name Society)* 2, 37–54.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1987, [‘Notes on Scots Clachan’](#), *Ainm (Journal of the Ulster Place-name Society)* 2, 83–95.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1992, [‘Curadán, Boniface and the early church of Rosemarkie’](#) (Groam House Museum lecture publications, Rosemarkie).
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1995, [‘A fruit tree at Durrow’](#), *Hallel* 20.1, 10–14.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1997, [‘Adomnán’s monastery of Iona’](#), in *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, ed. C. Bourke (Dublin), 24–44.
- Lloyd Laing, Jennifer Laing and David Longley with a contribution by A.D.S. MacDonald 1998 [‘The Early Christian and later medieval ecclesiastical site at St Blane’s, Kingarth, Bute’](#), *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 128, 551–565. The contribution is, ‘Early Kingarth’, 553–555.
- D.W. Hall, A.D.S. MacDonald, D.R. Perry and J. Terry 1998 [‘The archaeology of Elgin: excavations on Ladyhill and in the High Street, with an overview of the archaeology of the burgh’](#) *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 128, 753–829
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1998, [‘When were St Columba’s corporeal relics enshrined?’](#) *Hallel* 23.1, 20–30.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 1999, [‘Reiclés in the Irish annals to ad 1200’](#), *Peritia* 13, 259–75.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 2000 [‘St Molaga and Leaba Molaga’](#) in Cleary, R. ‘Labbamologa, Co. Cork.’ *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* 105, 44–65 at 44–48.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 2001, [‘Aspects of the monastic landscape in Adomnán’s Life of Columba’](#), in *Studies in Irish Hagiography, Saints and Scholars*, ed. J. Carey, M. Herbert and P. Ó Riain (Dublin), 15–30.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 2002, [‘The papar and some problems: a brief review’](#), in *The Papar in the North Atlantic: Environment and History*, ed. B.E. Crawford (St Andrews), 13–30.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 2003, [‘The “cathedral”, Temple Kelly and Temple Ciarán: notes from the annals’](#), in *Clonmacnoise Studies, Volume 2: Seminar Papers, 1998*, ed. H. King, Dublin, 2003, 125–35.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 2010, [‘Adomnán’s Vita Columbae and the early churches of Tiree’](#), in *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, Lawmaker, Peacemaker*, ed. Jonathan M. Wooding, with Rodney Aist, Thomas Owen Clancy and Thomas O’Loughlin (Dublin), 219–36.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 2011, [‘Seeking the desert in Adomnán’s Vita Columbae’](#), in *Listen, O Isles unto Me, Studies in Medieval Word and Image in Honour of Jennifer O’Reilly*, ed. E. Mullins and D. Scully (Cork), 191–203.
- Macdonald, A.D.S. 2012, [‘Curadan-Boniface revisited’](#), *Scottish Place-Name News* 32, 6–7 (summary of a paper given to the Scottish Place-Name Society conference in Dingwall, November 2011).
- MacDonald, A.D.S. 2013 [‘Iona and the Shrine of Columba, c.800–1200’](#), CORA: Cork Open Research Archive <https://hdl.handle.net/10468/15058>
- See also, Taylor, Simon. 2013, [‘Obituary: Aidan MacDonald M.A. \(Cantab\), M.Litt. \(Oxon\), F.S.A. Scot., 1941–2013 \[Obituary and Bibliography\]’](#), *Scottish Place-Name News* 35, 10–12.

Bibliography

- AC: *Annála Connacht. The Annals of Connacht (A.D. 1224–1544)*. A.M. Freeman, ed. Dublin 1970.
- A Clon: *The Annals of Clonmacnoise*. Murphy, D., ed. Dublin 1896.
- Aðalbjarnarson 1979: Aðalbjarnarson, B., *Heimskringla*. 3 vols. Reykjavík 1979. (*Íslenzk Fornrit* 26, 27, 28).
- AI: *The Annals of Inisfallen*. S. MacAirt, ed. Dublin 1951.
- Anderson 1908: Anderson, A.O. *Scottish Annals From English Chroniclers, A.D. 500 to 1286*. London 1908.
- ALC: *Annals of Loch Cé*. W.M. Hennessy, ed. 2 vols. London 1871.
- Anderson 1922: Anderson, A.O. *Early Sources of Scottish History, A.D. 500 to 1286*. 2 vols. Edinburgh and London 1922.
- Anderson 1949: Anderson, M.O., ‘The Scottish Materials in the Paris Manuscript, Bib. Nat., Latin 4126.’ *Scot. Hist. Rev.* 28 (1949), 31–42.
- Anderson 1973: Anderson, M.O., *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*. Edinburgh and London 1973.
- Anderson 1991: see *VC*.
- AR: ‘The Annals of Roscrea.’ D. Gleeson and S. MacAirt, ed. *Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad.*, 59c (1957–59), 137–80.
- AT: ‘The Annals of Tigernach’, Stokes, W., ed. *Rev. Celt.* 17 (1986), 119–263, 337–420; 18 (1897), 9–59, 150–98, 267–303. Reprinted in 2 vols. Felinfach 1993, with continuous pagination.
- AU: *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*. S. MacAirt and G. MacNiocaill, ed. Dublin 1983. *Annals of Ulster: A Chronicle of Irish Affairs From A.D. 431 to A.D. 1541*. W.M. Hennessy and B. MacCarthy, ed. 4 vols. Dublin 1887–1901.
- Babington and Lumby 1865–86: Babington, C. (vols. 1 and 2) and J.R. Lumby (vols. 3–9), ed. *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*. 9 vols. London 1865–86.
- Bannerman 1993: Bannerman, J., ‘*Comarba Coluim Chille* and the Relics of Columba’, *Innes Review* 44, no.1 (Spring 1993), 14–47.
- Bannerman 1999: Bannerman, J., ‘The Scottish takeover of Pictland and the relics of Columba.’ *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots*, 71–94. Broun, D. and T.O. Clancy, ed. Edinburgh 1999.
- Barber 1981: Barber, J.W., ‘Excavations on Iona, 1979.’ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* III (1981), 282–380.
- Barrow 1971: Barrow, G.W.S., ed., with W.W. Scott. *The Acts of William I, King of Scots, 1165–1214. (Regesta Regum Scottorum, II)*. Edinburgh 1971.
- Barrow 2004: Barrow, G., ‘Scots in the Durham *Liber Vitae*’. *The Durham ‘Liber Vitae’ and its Context*, 109–16. D. Rollason, A.J. Piper, M. Harvey and L. Rollason, ed. Woodbridge 2004.
- BCC: *Betha Colaim Chille. Life of Columcille*. (Compiled by Manus O’Donnell, 1532)., O’Kelleher, A. and G. Schoepperle, ed. Chicago 1918 (text and tr.). *The Life of Colum Cille by Manus O’Donnell*, Lacey, B., ed. Dublin 1998 (tr.).
- Benediktsson 1968: Benediktsson, J. *Íslendingabók. Landnámabók*. Reykjavík 1968.

- Best and O’Brien 1956: Best R.I. and M.A. O’Brien, ed. *The Book of Leinster*. 2. Dublin 1956.
- Beveridge 2001 (1911): Beveridge, E. *North Uist: Its Archaeology and Topography*. Edinburgh 2001 (first published 1911).
- Bhreathnach 1996: Bhreathnach, E., ‘The Documentary Evidence for pre-Norman Skreen, County Meath.’ *Ríocht na Midhe* 9.2 (1996), 37–45.
- Bieler 1979: Bieler, L., ed. *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*. Dublin 1979.
- Bourke 1997: Bourke, C., ‘Insignia Columbae II’. Bourke, C., ed. *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, 162–83. Dublin 1997.
- Boyle 1980: Boyle, A., ‘St. Cadroe in Scotland.’ *Innes Review* 31 (1980), 3–6.
- Brewer, Dimock and Warner 1861–91: Brewer, J.S. (vols. 1–4), J.F. Dimock (vols. 5–7) and G.F. Warner (vol. 8), ed. *Giraldi Cambrensis Opera*. 8 vols. London 1861–91.
- Broderick 2004: Broderick, G., ed. *Cronica Regum Mannie 7 Insularum. Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*. Manx National Heritage 2004.
- Bromwich 2006: Bromwich, R., ed. *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: The Triads of the Island of Britain*. 3ed. Cardiff 2006.
- Broun 1999a: Broun, D., ‘Dunkeld and the origin of Scottish identity.’ Broun, D. and T.O. Clancy, ed. *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots*, 95–111 Edinburgh 1999.
- Broun 1999b: Broun, D. *The Irish Identity of the Kingdom of the Scots in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries*. Woodbridge 1999.
- Brown 1981: Brown, P. *The Cult of the Saints*. London 1981.
- Brunaux 1988: Brunaux, J.L. (tr. D. Nash). *The Celtic Gauls: Gods, Rites and Sanctuaries*. London 1988.
- Cameron 1892–94: Cameron, A. (A. MacBain and J. Kennedy, ed.) *Reliquiae Celticae*. 2 vols. Inverness 1892–94.
- Carney 1971: Carney, J., ‘Three Old Irish Accentual Poems.’ *Ériu* 22 (1971), 23–80.
- Chadwick 1962: Chadwick, N.K., ‘The Vikings and the Western World.’ *Proc. International Congress of Celtic Studies, Dublin 1959*, Dublin 1962, 13–42.
- Charles-Edwards 2000: Charles-Edwards, T.M. *Early Christian Ireland*. Cambridge 2000.
- Chibnall 1969–80: Chibnall, M., ed. *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*. 6 vols. Oxford 1969–80.
- Chitty 1966: Chitty, D.J. *The Desert A City*. Oxford 1966.
- CS: *Chronicon Scotorum*. W.M. Hennessy, ed. London 1866.
- Clancy 1996: Clancy, T.O., ‘Iona, Scotland and the Céli Dé.’ *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, Crawford, B.E., ed. St. Andrews 1996, 111–30.
- Clancy 1998: Clancy, T.O., ed. *The Triumph Tree: Scotland’s Earliest Poetry, A.D. 550–1350*. Edinburgh 1998.
- Clancy 2011: Clancy, T.O., ‘Iona v. Kells: succession, jurisdiction and politics in the Columban *familia* in the later tenth century.’ Edmonds, F. and P. Russell, ed. *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards*, 89–101. Woodbridge 2011.
- Cleasby, Vigfusson and Craigie 1957: Cleasby, R., G. Vigfusson and W.A. Craigie. *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*. 2 ed. Oxford 1957.
- Colgan 1645: Colgan, J. *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae*. Louvain 1645. (Reproduced in

- facsimile, Irish MSS. Commission, Dublin 1948).
- Colgrave 1940: Colgrave, B., ed. *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*. Cambridge 1940.
- Colgrave + Mynors 1969 (1991): Colgrave, B. and R.A.B. Mynors, ed. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Oxford 1969 (reprinted with corrections 1991).
- Comyn and Dinneen 1902–14: Comyn, D. and P.S. Dinneen, ed. *The History of Ireland by Geoffrey Keating, D.D.* 4 vols. London 1902–14.
- Corner, Scott, et al. 1994: Corner, D.J., A.B. Scott, W.W. Scott, and D.E.R. Watt, ed. *Scotichronicon by Walter Bower*. Vol. 4. Edinburgh 1994.
- Cowan 1967: Cowan, I.B. *The Parishes of Medieval Scotland*. Edinburgh 1967.
- Cowan and Easson 1976: Cowan, I.B. and D.E. Easson, *Medieval Religious Houses: Scotland*. London 1976.
- Cowan 1981: Cowan, E.J., 'The Scottish Chronicle in the Poppleton Manuscript.' *Innes Review* 32, 1 (Spring 1981), 3–21.
- Crawford 1987: Crawford, B.E. *Scandinavian Scotland*. Leicester 1987.
- Cumming 1859: Cumming, J.G., ed. *An Account of the Isle of Man ... by William Sacheverell, Esq.* ... Douglas, Isle of Man 1859.
- Cunliffe 1997: Cunliffe, B. *The Ancient Celts*. Oxford 1997.
- Davies 2007: Davies, S., tr. *The Mabinogion*. Oxford 2007.
- DIL: Dictionary of the Irish Language* (Royal Irish Academy). Dublin 1931–76.
- Dobbs 1954: Dobbs, M.E., 'On the Graves of Leinster Men.' *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 24 (1954), 139–53.
- Donaldson 1923: Donaldson, M.E.M. *Wanderings in the Western Highlands and Islands*. 2 ed. Paisley 1923.
- Donaldson 1952–53: Donaldson, G., 'Scottish Bishops' Sees before the Reign of David I.' *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 87 (1952–53), 106–17.
- DAI: Dublin Annals of Innisfallen*, ed. O'Connor, C., *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores*, vol. ii, part 3, Buckingham 1825, 1–83.
- Duemmler 1884: Duemmler, E., ed. *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini*, 2, 297–301. Berlin 1884. (*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*).
- Dumville 1997: Dumville, D.N. *The Churches of North Britain in the First Viking-Age*. Whithorn 1997.
- Dumville 2000: Dumville, D.N., 'The Chronicle of the Kings of Alba.' Taylor, S., ed. *Kings, clerics and chronicles in Scotland 500–1297*, 73–86. Dublin 2000.
- Dumville 2001: Dumville, D.N., 'St. Cathróe of Metz and the Hagiography of Exoticism', *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars*, 172–88. Carey, J., M. Herbert and P. Ó Riain, ed. Dublin 2001.
- Duncan 1975: Duncan, A.A.M. *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom*. Edinburgh 1975.
- Eliade 1958: Eliade, M. *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. London and Sydney 1958.
- Eliade 1959: Eliade, M. *The Sacred And The Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York and London 1959.
- Fanning 1981: Fanning, T., 'Excavation of an Early Christian Cemetery and Settlement at Reask, County Kerry.' *Proc. Roy. Ir. Acad.* 81C3 (1981), 67–172 and pls. 1–13.
- Fisher 2001: Fisher, I. *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands*. Edinburgh 2001.
- FM: Annals of Ireland by the Four Masters*. J. O'Donovan, ed. 7 vols. Dublin 1856.
- Fr A: Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*. J.N. Radner, ed. Dublin 1978.
- Frazer 1951: Frazer, J.G. *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*. Part II (vol. 3) of *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. 3 ed. London 1951 (1911).
- Glenn 2002: Glenn, V., 'The late 13th century chapter seals of Dunkeld and Oslo Cathedrals.' *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 132 (2002), 439–58.
- Graham-Campbell 1980: Graham-Campbell, J. *The Viking World*. London 1980.
- Green 2002: Green, M.A. *Dying for the Gods*. Stroud 2002.
- Green 1992: Green, M.J. *Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend*. London 1992.
- Gwynn and Hadcock 1970: Gwynn, A. and R.N. Hadcock. *Medieval Religious Houses: Ireland*. London 1970.
- Gwynn and Purton 1911: Gwynn, E.J. and W.J. Purton, 'The Monastery of Tallaght.' *Proc. Roy. Irish Acad.* 29c (1911), 115–79.
- Guðmundsson 1965: Guðmundsson, F., ed. *Orkneyinga Saga*. Reykjavík 1965. (Íslensk Fornrit 34).
- Haddan and Stubbs 1869–78: Haddan, A.W. and W. Stubbs, ed. *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*. 3 vols. Oxford 1869–78.
- Hall 2005: Hall, M.A., 'Of holy men and heroes: the cult of saints in medieval Perthshire.' *Innes Review* 56, 1 (Spring 2005), 61–88.
- Hannay 1915: Hannay, R.K., tr. and ed. *Rentale Dunkeldense*. Edinburgh 1915.
- Harbison 1992: Harbison, P. *Guide to National and Historic Monuments of Ireland*. Dublin 1992.
- Heist 1965: Heist, W.E., ed. *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae, Ex Codice Olim Salmanticensi Nunc Bruxellensi*. Brussels 1965.
- Henderson 1987: Henderson, G., *From Durrow to Kells*. London 1987.
- Henry 1964: Henry, F. *Irish High Crosses*. Dublin 1964.
- Henry 1967: Henry, F. *Irish Art during the Viking Invasions (800–1020 A.D.)*. London 1967.
- Herbert 1988: Herbert, M., *Iona, Kells, and Derry*. Oxford 1988.
- Herbert and Ó Riain 1988: Herbert, M. and P. Ó Riain, ed. *Betha Adamnáin: The Irish Life of Adamnán*. London 1988.
- Hollander 1964: Hollander, L.M., tr. *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway*. Austin 1964.
- Hogan 1910: Hogan, E. *Onomasticon Goedelicum*. Dublin and London 1910.
- Howlett 2000: Howlett, D. *Caledonian Craftsmanship. The Scottish Latin Tradition*. Dublin 2000.
- Howlett 2000: Howlett, D. *Caledonian Craftsmanship: The Scottish Latin Tradition*. Dublin 2000.
- Hudson 1994: Hudson, B.T. *Kings of Celtic Scotland*. Westport 1994.
- Hudson 1996: Hudson, B.T. *Prophecy of Berchán*. Westport (Connecticut) and London 1996.
- Hughes 1972: Hughes, K. *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources*. London 1972.

- Innes 1853: *The Civil and Ecclesiastical History of Scotland*; by Thomas Innes. A.D. LXXX–DCCCXVIII. Aberdeen 1853.
- Jones 1967: Jones, T., ‘The Black Book of Carmarthen: ‘Stanzas of the Graves.’” *Proc. Brit. Acad.* 53 (1967), 97–137. London 1968.
- Jónsson 1902–03: Jónsson, F., ed. *Fagrskinna*. Copenhagen 1902–03.
- Kenney 1929: Kenney J.F. *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland, I: Ecclesiastical*. New York 1929.
- Laing 1872–79: Laing, D., ed. *The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland* by Andrew of Wynton, 3 vols. Edinburgh 1872–79.
- Latham 1965: Latham, R.E. *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources*. London 1965.
- Lawrie 1905: Lawrie, A.C. *Early Scottish Charters Prior to A.D. 1153*. Glasgow 1905.
- Leask 1955 (1977): Leask, H.G. *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings, I*. Dundalk 1955 (1977).
- Lewis and Short 1907: Lewis, C.T. and C. Short. *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford 1907.
- LL: see Best and O’Brien 1956; O’Sullivan 1983.
- MacCana 1970: MacCana, P. *Celtic Mythology*. Feltham 1970.
- MacDonald 1985: MacDonald, A.D.S., ‘Iona’s Style of Government among the Picts and Scots: the Toponymic Evidence of Adomnán’s Life of Columba’. *Peritia* 4 (1985), 174–86.
- McDonald 1997: McDonald, R.A. *The Kingdom of the Isles*. East Linton 1997.
- MacDonald 2003: MacDonald, A., The ‘Cathedral’, Temple Kelly and Temple Ciarán: Notes from the Annals’. King, H.A., ed. *Clonmacnoise Studies volume 2: Seminar Papers 1998*, 125–35. Dublin 2003.
- MacDonald 2010: MacDonald, A., ‘Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae* and the early churches of Tiree’. Wooding, J.M. *et al.*, ed. *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, lawmaker, peacemaker*, 219–36. Dublin 2010.
- MacKillop 1998: MacKillop, J. *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. Oxford 1998.
- MacKinlay 1914: MacKinlay, J.M. *Ancient Church Dedications in Scotland: Non-Scriptural Dedications*. Edinburgh 1914.
- Macleod 1934: Macleod, D.J., ed. *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland Circa 1695 by Martin Martin, Gent*. Stirling 1934.
- Macquarrie 1997: Macquarrie, A. *The Saints of Scotland*. Edinburgh 1997.
- MacQueen 1989: MacQueen, J. and W., ed. *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower, vol. 2. Aberdeen 1989.
- MacQueen and Watt 1995: MacQueen, J. and W. and D.E.R. Watt, ed. *Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower, vol. 3. Edinburgh 1995.
- MD: *The Martyrology of Donegal*. J.H. Todd and W. Reeves, ed. J. O’Donovan, tr. Dublin 1864.
- MG: *Félire Húi Gormáin: The Martyrology of Gorman*. W. Stokes, ed. London 1895.
- MO: *Félire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*. W. Stokes, ed. London 1905. W. Stokes, ‘On the Calendar of Oengus’. *Trans. Roy. Ir. Acad.*, Irish MS Series, Vol I, Part 1. Dublin 1880.
- MT: *The Martyrology of Tallaght*. R.I. Best and H. J. Lawlor, ed. London 1931.
- Manning 2000: Manning, C., ‘References to church buildings in the Annals’. *Seanchas*, Smyth (A.P.), ed., 37–52. Dublin 2000.
- Meyer 1906: Meyer, K. *The Death-Tales Of The Ulster Heroes*. Roy. Ir. Acad., Todd Lecture Series 14. Dublin 1906.
- Mitchell and Clark 1906–08: Mitchell, A. and J.T. Clark, ed. *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland Made by Walter Macfarlane*. 3 vols. Edinburgh 1906–08.
- Morris 1980: Morris, J., ed. and tr. *Nennius: British History and The Welsh Annals*. London and Chichester 1980.
- Munn 1985 (1925): Munn, A.M. *Notes on the Place Names of the Parishes and Townlands of the County of Londonderry*. Ballinascreen Historical Society 1985 (originally published 1925).
- Munro 1961: Munro, R.W. ed. *Monro’s Western Isles of Scotland and Genealogies of the Clans, 1549*. Edinburgh and London 1961.
- Munro 1986: Munro J. and R.W., ed. *Acts of the Lords of the Isles, 1336–1493*. Edinburgh 1986.
- Mylne 1831: Myln, A. *Vitae Dunkeldensis Ecclesiae Episcoporum, A Prima Sedis Fundatione, Ad Annum M.D.XV*. Edinburgh 1831.
- Neville 2005: Neville, C.J. *Native Lordship in Medieval Scotland*. Dublin 2005.
- Nicholson 1974: Nicholson, R. *Scotland. The Later Middle Ages*. Edinburgh 1974.
- O’Brien 1962: O’Brien, M.A., ed. *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*. 1. Dublin 1962.
- Ó Carragáin 2003: Ó Carragáin, T., ‘The Architectural Setting of the Cult of Relics in Early Medieval Ireland’. *Jour. Roy. Soc. Antiq. Ir.* 133 (2003), 130–76.
- Ó Carragáin 2010: Ó Carragáin, T. *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland*. New Haven and London 2010.
- Ó Cuív 2001: Ó Cuív, B., *Catalogue of Irish Language manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and Oxford College manuscripts*. 2 vols. Dublin 2001.
- O’Donovan 1844: O’Donovan, J., ed. *The Genealogies, Tribes, and Customs of Hy-Fiachrach*. Dublin 1844.
- Ó Floinn 1997: Ó Floinn, R., ‘Insignia Columbae I’. Bourke, C., ed. *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, 136–61. Dublin 1997.
- O’Kelleher and Schoepperle 1918: O’Kelleher, A. and G. Schoepperle, ed. *Betha Colaim Chille: Life of Columcille*. Chicago 1918.
- O’Meara 1951: O’Meara, J.J., tr. *The First Version of the Topography of Ireland by Giraldus Cambrensis*. Dundalk 1951.
- O’Meara 1978: O’Meara, J.J., tr. *The Voyage of Saint Brendan: Journey to the Promised Land*. Dublin 1978.
- Ó Muraíle 1997: Ó Muraíle, N., ‘The Columban Onomastic Legacy’, Bourke, C., ed. *Studies in the Cult of Saint Columba*, 193–218. Dublin 1997.
- Ó Riain 1972: Ó Riain, P., ‘Boundary Association in Early Irish Society’. *Studia Celtica* 7 (1972), 12–29.
- Ó Riain 1981: Ó Riain, P., ‘The Book of Glendalough or Rawlinson B 502’. *Éigse* 18.2 (1981), 161–76.
- Ó Riain 1985: Ó Riain, P., ed. *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*. Dublin 1985.
- Ó Riain 1990: Ó Riain, P., ‘The Tallaght Martyrologies, Redated’. *Cambridge Medieval*

- Celtic Studies* 20 (Winter 1990), 21–38.
- OPS: *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*. Innes, C., ed. 2 vols. in 3. Edinburgh 1850–55.
- Oskamp 1972: Oskamp, H.P.A., ‘The First Twelve Folia of Rawlinson B 502.’ *Ériu* 23 (1972), 56–72.
- O’Sullivan 1983: O’Sullivan, A., ed. *The Book of Leinster* 6. Dublin 1983.
- O’Sullivan 1994: O’Sullivan, J., ‘Excavation of an early church and a women’s cemetery at St. Ronan’s medieval parish church, Iona.’ *Proc. Soc. Antiq. Scot.* 124 (1994), 327–65.
- Pálsson and Edwards 1972: Pálsson, H. and P. Edwards, tr. *The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók*. University of Manitoba Press. 1972.
- Petrie 1845: Petrie, G. *The Ecclesiastical Architecture of Ireland: An essay on the origin and uses of The Round Towers of Ireland*. Dublin 1845.
- Pichery 1959: Pichery, E., ed. *Jean Cassien, Conférences XVIII–XXIV*. Paris 1959.
- Plummer 1910: Plummer, C., ed. *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*. 2 vols. Oxford 1910.
- Plummer 1922: Plummer, C., ed. *Bethada Náem nÉrenn: Lives of Irish Saints*. 2 vols. Oxford 1922.
- Powell 1958: Powell, T.G.E. *The Celts*. London 1958.
- Power 1914: Power, P., ed. *Life of St. Declan of Ardmore and Life of St. Mochuda of Lismore*. London 1914.
- Raftery 1994: Raftery, B. *Pagan Celtic Ireland*. London 1994.
- Ramsey 1997: Ramsey, B., tr. *John Cassian: The Conferences*. New York – Mahwah 1997.
- RCAHMS 1928: *The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland. Ninth Report. With Inventory of Monuments and Constructions in the Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles*. Edinburgh 1928.
- RCAHMS 1971: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Argyll: *an Inventory of the Ancient Monument, 1, Kintyre*. H.M.S.O. 1971.
- RCAHMS 1975: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Argyll: *An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments, 2, Lorn*. Edinburgh 1975.
- RCAHMS 1980: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Argyll: *an Inventory of the Monuments, 3, Mull, Tiree, Coll and Northern Argyll*. Edinburgh 1980.
- RCAHMS 1982: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Argyll: *An Inventory of The Monuments, 4, Iona*. H.M.S.O. 1982.
- RCAHMS 1984: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Argyll: *An Inventory of the Monuments, 5, Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Oronsay*. H.M.S.O. 1984.
- Reece 1981: Reece, R. *Excavations in Iona 1964 to 1974*. University of London, Institute of Archaeology, Occasional Publication No. 5. London 1981.
- Rees 1961: Rees, A. and B. *Celtic Heritage*. London 1961.
- Reeves 1850: Reeves, W., ed. *Acts of Archbishop Colton in his Metropolitan Visitation of the Diocese of Derry, A.D. 1397; etc.* Dublin 1850.
- Reeves 1857: Reeves, W., ed. *The Life of St. Columba ... Written by Adamnan ...* Dublin 1857.
- Reeves 1860: Reeves, W., ‘On the Céili-dé, commonly called Culdees.’ *Trans. Roy. Ir. Acad.* 24 (1860), 119–263.
- Reeves 1874: Reeves, W., ed. *Life of Saint Columba*. Edinburgh 1874.
- Reeve and Wright 2007: Reeve, M.D., ed., N. Wright, tr. *Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History Of The Kings Of Britain*. Woodbridge 2007.
- Ritchie 1945: Ritchie, A. and E. *Iona, Past and Present*. 4 ed. Edinburgh 1945.
- RMS: *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum: The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*. Thomson, J.M. and others ed. Edinburgh 1882–1914.
- Rollason 1978: Rollason, D.W., ‘Lists of saints’ resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England’. *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978), 61–93.
- Rollason 2000: Rollason, D., ed. *Libellus de Exordio Atque Procursu Istius, Hoc Est Dunhelmensis, Ecclesie*. Oxford 2000.
- Rollason 2007: Rollason, D. and L., ed. *The Durham ‘Liber Vitae’*. 3 vols. London 2007.
- Ross 1992 (1967): Ross, A. *Pagan Celtic Britain*. Revises. London 1992. (Originally published 1967).
- Selmer 1959: Selmer, C., ed. *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*. Notre Dame 1959. Reprinted Blackrock 1989.
- Sharpe 1991: Sharpe, R. *Medieval Irish Saints’ Lives*. Oxford 1991.
- Sharpe 1995: Sharpe, R., tr. *Adomnán of Iona: Life of St. Columba*. Harmondsworth 1995.
- Skene 1867: Skene, W.F., ed. *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and other Early Memorials of Scottish History*. Edinburgh 1867.
- Skene 1871–72: Skene, W.F., ed. *Johannis de Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum. John of Fordun’s Chronicle of The Scottish Nation*. Edinburgh 1871–72.
- Skene 1876–80: Skene, W.F. *Celtic Scotland: A History of Ancient Alban*. 3 vols. Edinburgh 1876–80.
- Souter 1949: Souter, A. *A Glossary of Later Latin to 600 A.D.* Oxford 1949.
- Stevenson 1858: Stevenson, J., ed. *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*. 2 vols. London 1858.
- Stokes 1899: Stokes, W., ed., ‘The Bodleian Amra Choluimb Chille’. *Revue Celtique* 20 (1899), 30–55, 132–83, 248–87, 400–37.
- Stokes 1902: Stokes, W., ‘On the Deaths of some Irish Heroes’. *Revue Celtique* 23 (1902), 303–48.
- Stokes and Strachan 1901–03: Stokes, W. and J. Strachan, ed. *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus*. 2 vols. Cambridge 1901–03.
- Stubbs 1867: Stubbs, W., ed. *The Chronicle Of The Reigns Of Henry II And Richard I, A.D. 1169–1192; Of ‘Benedict of Peterborough’*. 2 vols. London 1867.
- Stubbs 1868–71: Stubbs, W., ed. *Chronica Magistri Rogeri De Houedene*. 4 vols. London 1868–71.
- Taylor 1938: Taylor, A.B., tr. *The Orkneying Saga*. Edinburgh and London 1938.
- Thomas 1971: Thomas, C. *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*. Oxford 1971.
- Thurneysen 1946: Thurneysen, R. *A Grammar of Old Irish*. Binchy, D.A. and O. Bergin, tr. Dublin 1946.
- Todd 1867: Todd, J.H., ed. *Cogadh Gaedhel Re Gallaibh: The War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*. London 1867.

- Turnbull 1858: Turnbull, W.B., ed. *The Buik of the Croniclis of Scotland; or a Metrical Version of the History of Hector Boece; by William Stewart*. 3 vols. London 1858.
- Unger 1867: Unger, C.R., ed. *Morkinskinna*. Christiania 1867.
- Unger 1871: Unger, C.R., ed. *Codex Frisianus*. Christiania 1871.
- Van Dam 1988: Van Dam, R., tr. *Gregory of Tours, Glory of the Martyrs*. Liverpool 1988.
- Van Hamel [1932]: Van Hamel, A.G., ed. *Lebor Bretnach: The Irish Version of the Historia Britonum Ascribed to Nennius*. Dublin n.d. (Introduction dated 1932).
- VC: *Vita Columbae*: Anderson, A.O. and M.O., ed. *Adomnán's Life of Columba*. Edinburgh and London 1961. Revised M.O. Anderson. Oxford 1991.
- Watson 1904: Watson, W.J. *Place-Names of Ross And Cromarty*. Inverness 1904.
- Watson 1926: Watson, W.J., *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*. Edinburgh and London 1926.
- Watt and Shead 2001: Watt, D.E.R. and N.F. Shead, ed. *The Heads of Religious Houses in Scotland from Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries*. Edinburgh 2001.
- White Marshall and Walsh 2005: White Marshall, J. and C. Walsh. *Illauloughan Island: an early medieval monastery in County Kerry*. Bray 2005.
- Woolf 2007: Woolf, A. *From Pictland to Alba, 789–1070*. Edinburgh 2007.