



University  
of Glasgow

McNamara, Carolyn Jeanette (2021) *Tracing the Community of Comgall across the North Channel: an interdisciplinary investigation of Early Medieval monasteries at Bangor, Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree*. PhD thesis.

<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/82061/>

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>  
[research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk)

**Tracing the Community of Comgall across the North Channel:  
An Interdisciplinary Investigation of Early Medieval Monasteries at  
Bangor, Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree**

Carolyn Jeanette McNamara  
B.A., M.Sc., M.A.

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Celtic and Gaelic | Ceiltis is Gàidhlig  
School of Humanities | Sgoil nan Daonnachdan  
College of Arts | Colaiste nan Ealain  
University of Glasgow | Oilthigh Ghlaschu

## Abstract

This research project places the North Channel at the centre of an active and peopled seascape. Rather than viewing the foundations around its rim as peripheral in relation to more inland centres of power and modern understanding, the goal is to place the North Channel Zone at the centre of an active and connected region. Although modern scholarship widely accepts the existence of an ecclesiastical Community based around Columba and his foundation of Iona, and Dalriadan holdings on both sides of the North Channel, there has been less scholarship surrounding the idea of a North Channel seascape awash in the movement of peoples and community structures.

In order to examine this idea more fully, a case study approach is employed on another proposed Community of monasteries linked by the sea: those related to, or potentially related to, St Comgall and his main monastery at Bangor. The main question asked focuses on whether a Community of Comgall wider than the monastery of Bangor itself existed between the sixth to eleventh centuries. This inquiry is made by selecting specific sites in the west of Scotland: Applecross and the islands of Lismore and Tiree, and undertaking an interdisciplinary analysis of the sites, including textual, art historical, archaeological, and toponymic evidence along with a general phenomenological approach. A chapter is devoted to each site in turn.

The findings indicate that a Community of Comgall is discernible. Additionally, the importance and influence of Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree within their respective seascapes and landscapes are highlighted by the available evidence. The influence and importance of additional ecclesiastical foundations in the west of Scotland, especially those with connections to the Community of Comgall based at Bangor in Ireland, is brought into clearer focus. This allows a fuller understanding of the movement of people and ideas between the west of Scotland and north of Ireland in the early medieval period.

# Table of Contents

Abstract .....	2
List of Tables .....	6
List of Figures .....	7
Dedication .....	9
Acknowledgements .....	10
Abbreviations .....	12
1 Introduction .....	14
1.1 What is a Community? .....	14
1.2 The Gap .....	23
1.3 Research Questions .....	25
1.4 Significance .....	26
1.5 Geographical Context .....	26
1.5.1 Seascape .....	32
1.6 The North Channel Zone as Seascape .....	37
1.6.1 Modern Treatment of the North Channel Seascape .....	38
1.6.2 Phenomenology .....	41
1.6.3 Sea Conditions .....	45
1.6.4 Movement .....	46
1.7 Introduction to Principal Saints .....	48
1.7.1 Comgall .....	48
1.7.2 Maelruba .....	48
1.7.3 Moluag .....	49
1.8 Summary of Thesis Chapters .....	49
2 Textual Sources .....	52
2.1 Annals .....	52
2.2 Genealogies .....	58
2.3 Martyrologies .....	59
2.4 Hagiographies .....	61
2.4.1 Hagiographic Intertextuality .....	69
2.5 Liturgical Books .....	74
2.5.1 Antiphony of Bangor .....	74
2.5.2 Aberdeen Breviary .....	75
2.6 Place-Names .....	75
2.6.1 Maps .....	76
2.6.2 Records .....	77
3 The Monastery at Bangor .....	80
3.1 The political geography of Bangor .....	81
3.2 Wider Context .....	84
3.3 Surviving Features and Artefacts .....	87
3.3.1 Sculpture .....	88
3.3.2 Metalwork .....	93
3.4 Place-name Discussion .....	97
3.5 Textual Records for Bangor .....	102
3.5.1 Types of Work .....	102
3.5.2 Writing at Bangor .....	107
3.6 Events .....	113
3.7 Comgall .....	116
3.8 The Wider Community of Comgall .....	123
3.8.1 Ireland .....	124

3.8.2	Scotland .....	127
3.9	Abbots of Bangor .....	130
3.10	Height and Decline .....	137
3.11	Looking Outwards .....	140
3.12	Conclusion .....	143
4	Applecross .....	145
4.1	Introduction .....	145
4.2	Political Context of the Foundation of Applecross .....	145
4.3	Applecross in the Textual Record .....	151
4.3.1	Establishment .....	154
4.3.2	Ascent .....	155
4.3.3	Continuation and Decline .....	157
4.4	Maelruba .....	159
4.4.1	Maelruba Hagiotoponyms .....	162
4.4.2	Cult of Maelruba .....	167
4.4.3	Ecclesiastical Place-Names .....	171
4.5	Surviving Features .....	175
4.5.1	Sculpture .....	178
4.5.2	Nearby Secular Features .....	194
4.6	Wider Context .....	196
4.6.1	Wider Context: Travel .....	196
4.6.2	Wider Context: Religious .....	199
4.6.3	Wider Context: Secular .....	206
4.7	Applecross' Ecclesiastical Connections .....	210
4.7.1	Bangor .....	210
4.7.2	Within Scotland .....	210
4.8	Conclusion .....	211
5	Lismore .....	213
5.1	Introduction .....	213
5.2	Lismore in the historical record .....	215
5.2.1	The Two Lismores .....	216
5.2.2	Moluag .....	228
5.3	Surviving Features .....	230
5.4	Place-name evidence .....	252
5.4.1	Lismore as a place-name .....	252
5.4.2	Ecclesiastical place-names on Lismore .....	255
5.5	Lismore in Dál Riata .....	260
5.6	Lismore in the ninth and tenth centuries .....	269
5.7	Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries .....	273
5.8	Cult of Moluag .....	275
5.8.1	Western Cult .....	277
5.8.2	Eastern Cult .....	279
5.9	Conclusion .....	282
6	Tiree .....	284
6.1	Introduction .....	284
6.2	Tiree in the Historical Record .....	287
6.2.1	Annalistic Evidence .....	287
6.2.2	Hagiographic Evidence .....	288
6.3	Place-Name Evidence .....	299
6.3.1	Gaelic place-names with Uncertain Dating .....	303
6.3.2	Norse Place-Names .....	308
6.3.3	Likely Late Place-Names .....	310

6.4	Extant Ecclesiastical Sites.....	315
6.4.1	Kirkapoll .....	318
6.4.2	Soroby .....	322
6.4.3	Cladh Beag.....	327
6.4.4	Caolas .....	329
6.4.5	Cill Choinnich.....	330
6.4.6	Teampall Phàraig .....	332
6.4.7	Cill Fhinnein (Kenovay) .....	335
6.5	Sites with no surviving visible evidence.....	336
6.5.1	Kilmoluag .....	336
6.5.2	Cill Tunnain.....	337
6.5.3	Cnoc a' Chluidh .....	337
6.5.4	Cill Fhinnein (Balephetrish) .....	337
6.5.5	Kilbride.....	338
6.5.6	Caibeal Thomais .....	338
6.6	Travel from Tìree.....	338
6.7	Conclusion .....	340
7	Conclusion.....	344
7.1	Summary of chapters:.....	344
7.2	Significance.....	345
7.3	Community Criteria Review .....	346
7.4	Future research .....	348
7.4.1	Physical artefacts.....	348
7.4.2	Additional Sites .....	349
7.4.3	Hagiography .....	350
7.4.4	Literature .....	351
7.5	Final Reflection .....	352
	Appendix: Timeline of Events.....	354
	Bibliography: .....	361

## List of Tables

Table 3.1 Bangor Spelling Variations .....	97
Table 3.2 Abbots and <i>Comarbai</i> of Bangor AD 600 - 1123. ....	131
Table 4.1 Maelruba Place-Names .....	166
Table 4.2 Concordance of Applecross Numbering Systems .....	178
Table 5.1 Francis J Byrne's list of abbots and bishops of Lismore Mochutu .....	221
Table 5.2 Ecclesiastics certainly associated with Lismore Moluag or Mochutu..	222
Table 5.3 Ecclesiastics possibly associated with Lismore Moluag or Mochutu. ..	224
Table 5.4 Abbots of Lismore unable to be assigned. ....	225
Table 5.5 Additional Ecclesiastics Associated with Lismore Mochutu. ....	226
Table 5.6 Ecclesiastics unable to be assigned to a specific Lismore.....	227
Table 5.7 Hagiotoponyms associated with Moluag.....	276
Table 6.1 Hagiographic Mentions of Tíree .....	289

## List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Topographic Map of UK and Ireland.....	28
Figure 3.1 Map of the North Channel.....	86
Figure 3.2 Bangor Cross Shaft Fragment .....	89
Figure 3.3 Bangor Sundial .....	90
Figure 3.4 Bangor Altar Cross.....	92
Figure 3.5 Photograph of Bangor Altar Cross.....	93
Figure 3.6 Handbell from the monastery at Bangor .....	94
Figure 3.7 Lead Stylus found at Bangor .....	96
Figure 3.8 Sites in Ireland associated with Comgall.....	124
Figure 4.1 Genealogy of Cenél nGartnait .....	149
Figure 4.2 Place-names associated with Columba (C), Donnán (D), and Maelruba (M) .....	153
Figure 4.3 Hagiotoponyms associated with Maelruba .....	165
Figure 4.4 Applecross site showing potential vallum.....	177
Figure 4.5 Applecross 2.....	180
Figure 4.6 Photo of Applecross 3.....	181
Figure 4.7 Applecross 4.....	181
Figure 4.8 Photographs of Applecross Cross-Slab Fragments.....	182
Figure 4.9 Ornamentation Schematic of Applecross Cross-Slab Fragment 1.1 ..	183
Figure 4.10 Reconstruction of Applecross 1 .....	184
Figure 4.11 Reconstruction of Applecross 1 .....	185
Figure 4.12 Figures with hands covering their crotches. ....	187
Figure 4.13 Photos of humanoid figures.....	188
Figure 4.14 Rosemarkie Sandstone Panel (Rosemarkie 7) .....	190
Figure 4.15 St Vigean's 7, face A.....	191
Figure 4.16 Nigg Cross-Slab, face A.....	193
Figure 4.17 Suggested travel route from Applecross to Bangor .....	198
Figure 4.18 Ecclesiastical sites possibly active in late seventh century.....	200
Figure 4.19 Distribution of Class I and II Pictish Stones.....	207
Figure 4.20 Pictish Stones Along Routes Relevant to Applecross.....	209
Figure 5.1 Lismore.....	214
Figure 5.2 Drawing of Clachan 1 fragments showing face A.....	231
Figure 5.3 Detailed Drawing of Clachan 1.2 and 1.3 .....	232



Figure 5.4 Photo of Clachan 1.2 and 1.3, face A .....	233
Figure 5.5 Photo of Clachan 1.2 and 1.3, face D .....	234
Figure 5.6 Kilnave, face A.....	236
Figure 5.7 Kilnave, face A photo .....	237
Figure 5.8 Kildalton Cross drawing.....	239
Figure 5.9 Kildalton Cross drawing, face C .....	240
Figure 5.10 Kildalton Cross photo, .....	241
Figure 5.11 Kildalton Cross photo, .....	242
Figure 5.12 St John’s Cross drawing .....	244
Figure 5.13 St John’s Cross drawing .....	245
Figure 5.14 St John’s Cross photo.....	246
Figure 5.15 St John’s Cross photo.....	247
Figure 5.16 Drawings of Bronze Pins.....	249
Figure 5.17 Map of Irish <i>les/lios</i> place-names.....	253
Figure 5.18 Argyll.....	263
Figure 5.19 Hagiotoponyms associated with Moluag .....	277
Figure 6.1 Tiree Parish Map.....	286
Figure 6.2 Hagiotoponyms associated with St Cainnech.....	293
Figure 6.3 Hagiotoponyms associated with Brendan .....	294
Figure 6.4 Ecclesiastical sites on Tiree.....	318
Figure 6.5 Map of sites at Kirkapoll.....	319
Figure 6.6 Carved Crosses near Kirkapoll Chapel .....	320
Figure 6.7 Cladh Soroby .....	322
Figure 6.8 Soroby 1.....	323
Figure 6.9 Encircled Carved Stone Crosses .....	324
Figure 6.10 St Conall’s Stone, Kilcashel, Co. Donegal .....	324
Figure 6.11 Drawing of Soroby 2 .....	325
Figure 6.12 Photographs of Soroby 2 .....	325
Figure 6.13 Drawings of Cross Carved stones from Cladh Beag.....	328
Figure 6.14 Drawing of Caolas 2.....	329
Figure 6.15 Carved cross at Kilkenneth .....	331
Figure 6.16 Site plan of Teampall Phàraig.....	332
Figure 6.17 Drawing of Carved Stones at Teampall Phàraig.....	334
Figure 6.18 Photos of Carved Stones at Teampall Phàraig .....	334
Figure 6.19 Suggested Travel Routes from Tiree .....	340

## Dedication

To my family, friends, and loved ones whose support has encouraged and buoyed me when undertaking the many great adventures of life.

River names are the oldest,  
the first things in a landscape.  
So many times they simply mean The Water.

And the ones we tell a story about?  
—they might be the names of lost gods and goddesses  
we say. The chances are, in some lost language  
they simply meant The Water too.

We come here for the mountain: we're in awe  
before its grandeur.  
But there's no living on mountains

—it was named for the river that grows  
out of that thin burn at its foot.  
It was the burn  
and not the mountain brought The People

with their stone blades  
their feet calloused from wandering  
their lost word for the water.

— "The Water", by Judith Taylor, in *The Interpreter's House*  
(59) 2015

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I offer my deepest thanks to my supervisors, Professor Thomas Owen Clancy and Professor Katherine Forsyth. Their guidance, support, and feedback on countless chapter drafts has been invaluable in the development of my research and this thesis. Further thanks go to Dr. Cynthia Thickpenney, for her insight and expertise on key-pattern and the Applecross Cross Slab, and for providing me with an advance copy of her article. My thanks go also to my examiners, Dr. Simon Taylor and Dr. Alex Woolf (University of St Andrews), and to the convenor of my oral examination, Dr. Geraldine Parsons.

My family has supported me unconditionally throughout my studies, and I thank them wholeheartedly. Special thanks go to my uncle, Andrew Kuykendall, without whose support I would not have been able to undertake my PhD studies in another country. Many thanks go to my husband, Chopper, who has helped hold me together and ensured I remembered to eat, sleep, and take breaks during long hours of research and writing. The love and support of my family, Rick, Lorna, Kate, Christy, and Brian, has likewise bolstered me throughout my studies.

I am indebted to An Iodhlann, Tiree's Historical Centre, and especially to John Holliday, who provided me access to An Iodhlann's archives and gave me great assistance in visiting Tiree's many early ecclesiastical sites during my visit in July 2019. I am also indebted to Ionad Dualchais na Comraich, the Applecross Heritage Centre, and Tony Jackson, who facilitated my research by answering questions, providing additional resources, and sharing photos with me both during my visit and afterwards. Further thanks go to Ionad Naomh Moluag, the Lismore Gaelic Heritage Centre, where two fragments of the Lismore Cross are on display. Thanks also go to the North Down Museum, especially to Leanne Briggs, who provided me with valuable reports, information, and images from the museum collection. The ability to visit these sites and discuss them with their local caretakers has been invaluable.

My thanks go also to my friends, who have provided opportunities for discussion and assisted me more than I can describe. Special thanks go to Carol and Ivor Shields and Alan Bryan, who have accompanied me on many an adventure by

foot, car, and even boat in the pursuit of early medieval ecclesiastical sites and their attendant sculpture. My thanks also go to Gwen Jones-Edwards who, along with Carol, continues to pursue Early Gaelic language studies with me and valiantly offered to assist with final proofreading.

My research has greatly benefitted from generous funding awards. My thanks go to the Hunter Marshall Bequest from the Centre for Scottish and Celtic Studies at the University of Glasgow, which enabled me to engage in fieldwork in July 2017. I was able to attend a conference in Vancouver, Canada in April 2019 to present my research due to the support of the College of Arts' Research Support Award and the Centre for Scottish and Celtic Studies' Scottish History Research Fund.

## Abbreviations

### *Scottish Parish Abbreviations*

ABO - Aberdour Parish	KDT - Kirkcaldy and Dysart Parish
APC - Applecross Parish	KGL - Kinglassie Parish
BEA - Beath Parish	KKC - Killean and Kilchenzie Parish
BGY - Ballingry Parish	KKD - Kirkpatrick Durham Parish
BRL - Bracadale Parish	KKM - Killarrow and Kilmeny Parish
CLS - Collessie Parish	KKT - Kilninver and Kilmelfort Parish
CRA - Crail Parish	KTT - Kettle Parish
CUP - Cupar Parish	LAR - Largo Parish
DGY - Dalgety Parish	MAI - Markinch Parish
FAL - Falkland Parish	SCO - Scoonie Parish

### *Scottish County Abbreviations*

ABD - Aberdeenshire	LAN - Lanarkshire
ANG - Angus	MLO - Midlothian
ARG - Argyll	MOR - Moray
AYR - Ayrshire	NAI - Nairnshire
BNF - Banffshire	PER - Perthshire
CLA - Clackmannanshire	RNF - Renfrewshire
DMF - Dumfriesshire	ROS - Ross-shire
FIF - Fife	ROX - Roxburghshire
INV - Inverness-shire	SUT - Sutherland
KCB - Kirkcudbrightshire	WIG - Wigtownshire
KCD - Kincardineshire	WLO - West Lothian

### *Other Abbreviations*

- AB* - Alan Macquarrie (ed) (trans). *Legends of Scottish Saints: Readings, Hymns and Prayers for the Commemorations of Scottish Saints in the Aberdeen Breviary*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012.
- AI* - Seán Mac Airt (ed) (trans). *The Annals of Inisfallen: MS. Rawlinson B. 503*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951.
- Allen and Anderson, *ECMS* - J. Romilly Allen and Joseph Anderson. *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland: A Classified, Illustrated, Descriptive List of the Monuments with an Analysis of their Symbolism and Ornamentation*, vols. 1-2. Edinburgh: Neill, 1903.
- AntB* - FE Warren and William Griggs. *The Antiphonary of Bangor: An Early Irish Manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1893.
- AU* - Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (trans). *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983.
- AT* - Whitley Stokes. *The Annals of Tigernach*. Felinfach, Lampeter, Dyfed: Llanerch Publishers, 1993.
- DoSH* - Database of Scottish Hagiotoponyms. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk).
- eDIL* - Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language. [www.dil.ie](http://www.dil.ie).
- EG* - Early Gaelic
- ER* - John Stuart, George Burnett and George P. McNeill. Scottish Record Office. *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland: Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum*, vols 13 and 17. Edinburgh: General Register House, 1878.

- FA - Joan Newlon Radner (ed). *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978.
- Fisher, EMS - Ian Fisher. *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands*. Edinburgh: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2001.
- G - Scottish Gaelic
- Heist, VSH - WW Heist. *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae Ex Codice Olim Salmanticensi Nunc Bruxellensi*, vol. 28. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1965.
- Herbert, IKD - Máire Herbert. *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Mar - Martyrology
- MarG - Whitley Stokes. *Féilire húi Gormáin: The martyrology of Gorman, from a manuscript in the Royal Library, Brussels*. Henry Bradshaw Society 9, London: Harrison, 1895.
- MarT - Richard Irvine Best and H. J. Lawlor (ed) (trans). *The Martyrology of Tallaght: from the Book of Leinster and MS. 5100-4 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, vol. 68, London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1931.
- MarO - Whitley Stokes (trans). Saint Óengus the Culdee. *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Óengus the Culdee*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1905.
- NGR - National Grid Reference
- Nicolaisen, SPN - WFH Nicolaisen. *Scottish Place-Names: Their Study and Significance*. London: Batsford, 1976.
- NIPNP - Northern Ireland Place-name Project. [www.placenamesni.org](http://www.placenamesni.org).
- ODNB - Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. [www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com).
- ON - Old Norse
- Ó Riain, CGSH - Pádraig Ó Riain. *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985.
- Plummer, VSH - Charles Plummer, *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vols. 1-2. Oxford: Henry Frowde, 1910.
- VBaith - *Vita Sancti Baithini abbatis Hiensis - Life of St Baithéne abbot of Iona*, in Heist, VSH, 379-381.
- VBren - *Vita Altera Sancti Brendani abbatis Clonfertensis - Another Life of St Brendan*, in Heist, VSH, 324-331.
- VC - Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (trans). Saint Adomnán. *Adomnán's Life of Columba*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd, 1961.
- VCain - Gilbert Márkus (ed) (trans). "The Life of St Cainnech". *Eòlas nan Naomh: Early Christianity in Uist*. Accessed 10 May 2019. [uistsaints.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-andnotes.pdf](http://uistsaints.co.uk/wpcontent/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-andnotes.pdf).
- VColumb - Alexander O'Hara and IN Wood (ed) (trans). Jonas of Bobbio. *Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, and Life of Vedast*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017.
- VCom - *Vita Sancti Comgalli - Life of St Comgall*, in Plummer, VSH, vol. 2, 3-21.
- VMal - Hugh Jackson Lawlor (trans). Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. *Life of St. Malachy of Armagh*. London: SPCK, 1920.
- Watson, CPNS - William J Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1926.

# 1 Introduction

Comgall moccu Aridi and his monastic foundation at Bangor (Co Antrim) were well-known in the early medieval world of Scotland and Ireland. The posited Community of Comgall, which stretched from Ireland to Scotland, described a seascape within which his Community operated, and which provisionally included Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree as locations of dependent foundations. In order to examine the evidence for this Community, it is first necessary to discuss what is meant by “Community”, to define the idea of a seascape, and to identify what is meant by “North Channel Seascape”.

## 1.1 What is a Community?

Community as a term can be vague without a definition that will allow for the gathering and analysis of evidence. The terms *paruchia* and *familia* have been in use on the topic of early medieval ecclesiastical communities in Ireland and Scotland, and it is necessary to briefly review the main scholarly understandings of them which precedes my own work.<sup>1</sup> This discussion will ultimately come to agree with Etchingham, who argues that *paruchia* “denotes any area of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, usually that of a bishop”, and later becomes the term of reference for a parish.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century the general understanding of ecclesiastical organisation in early medieval Ireland was one centred on a bishop who likely resided at a monastic foundation and had authority over an associated geographical area which constituted their *paruchia*.<sup>3</sup> It was also believed that this diocese-based system of organization was subsequently overtaken during the sixth century by a monastic system wherein its *paruchia* was based not on geographical territory, but on the dependent foundations over which the main abbot claimed authority.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> A much fuller discussion can be found in Colmán Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland A.D. 650 to 1000* (Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999), 12-46.

<sup>2</sup> Colmán Etchingham, "The Implications of Paruchia", *Ériu* 44 (1993), 139.

<sup>3</sup> JB Bury, *The Life of St Patrick* (London: Macmillan, 1905), 171-183, 243-244, 375-379.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 377-379.

This understanding of ecclesiastical organisation in early medieval Ireland was reassessed and challenged by Kathleen Hughes, in *The Church in Early Irish Society*, wherein she argued that the changes observed had been “misunderstood and oversimplified”.<sup>5</sup> The organisation of the church in the early sixth-century is identified as one where “[e]ach bishop held authority within his own *paruchia*, and could not exercise his functions in the *paruchia* of another bishop without his brother’s permission” and a priest could not say mass in a newly built church until the bishop of the *paruchia* wherein that church was located had consecrated it.<sup>6</sup> These bishops were the highest ecclesiastical authority within their own geographical area. Hughes identified a shift in authority towards the abbot after AD 549,<sup>7</sup> arguing that this new abbatial authority superseded that of the bishop to the extent that “a bishop might be forced into action of which he disapproved.”<sup>8</sup> Hughes suggests that the jurisdiction of the abbot evolved separately from that of the bishop.<sup>9</sup> These abbots were clerics, but not always bishops, as was the case for Columba and Comgall.<sup>10</sup> She also noted a change in the *paruchia* itself, arguing that rather than being associated with the territory within which the bishop operated, the monastic *paruchia* instead consisted of “scattered houses”.<sup>11</sup> At this point there was some conjecture as to whether the structure of the church in Ireland was based on influence from the pre-Christian Celtic social hierarchy combined with a lack of “native *civitates*”,<sup>12</sup> which divided ecclesiastical organisation into Roman and Celtic/Irish branches.<sup>13</sup> This divide between bishop and abbot is further defined by Hughes in the observation that secular families that endowed monasteries seemed to retain an interest in, if not control over, the foundations they created while bishops guarded closely their control over churches and priests from secular influence.<sup>14</sup> Hughes further suggests that the differences in approach to secular influence may have indicated that episcopal and monastic churches were not founded in the same areas and thus came into little contact with each other initially.<sup>15</sup> Hughes saw a

---

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), x.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, 50.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 65, 67-68, 70.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 62-63.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

<sup>10</sup> Hughes notes that the correlation of *abbas* with *princeps* shows that abbots were in control of governing church affairs in *Church in Early Irish Society*, 63, 126-127.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 63, 71.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 71, 78, 87.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, x.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 77.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 78-81.



number of monastic *paruchia* existing across and outwith Ireland, including that of Columba, Comgall, Fursey, and more.<sup>16</sup> She seems also to have viewed the efforts of Armagh and Kildare to expand the influence and power of their bishops throughout Ireland as an effort to transition from an episcopal *paruchia*, which was confined to the episcopal territory, to the monastic *paruchia*, which had no specific geographic boundaries.<sup>17</sup>

Richard Sharpe's article, "Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland",<sup>18</sup> re-addressed the prevailing understanding of ecclesiastical organization. In his article he critiqued Hughes as being hesitant to admit the existence of evidence for administrative power in the hands of bishops at the beginning of the eighth century.<sup>19</sup> He suggested, instead, that "a more flexible approach to the historical context, a willingness to shift from the theory that the episcopate was superseded by abbatial government, might alleviate the difficulty".<sup>20</sup> Rather than keeping to the argument that Patrick introduced Ireland to a church organised on episcopal territory, Sharpe argued that "[h]ow Ireland was converted to Christianity is wholly obscure".<sup>21</sup> Whereas Hughes and earlier historians attempted to unpick the purposeful structure of the early church, Sharpe considered that "the Irish church may have reached its developed form by degrees, without ever having been deliberately organized", and pointed to the slow advance of Christianity in Ireland during its first two centuries as evidence of a lack of structure or authority in the process of conversion.<sup>22</sup> Sharpe further observed that the hierarchy set out for bishops, with archbishops above them, surely fits within the hierarchy observed for local kings, with *ruri* or overkings above them. It is, rather, the monastic *paruchia* concept "which is essentially extra-tribal and extra-familiar".<sup>23</sup> The idea of many non-territorial federations of ecclesiastical foundations across Ireland was also re-examined, and Sharpe argued that positive evidence for this was "less secure than has generally been noted".<sup>24</sup> The context from which *paruchia* was

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 81-82.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 83-90.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Sharpe, "Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland", *Peritia* 3 (1984), 230-270.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 239-240.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 240-241.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 243.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

borrowed, the *paruchia Patricii*, claimed individual churches as belonging to Armagh “in a proprietary sense rather than falling under its episcopal jurisdiction”.<sup>25</sup> Iona, which is undoubtedly a recognisable confederation, referred to itself as *familia lae*, rather than a *paruchia*,<sup>26</sup> which may suggest that even by Adomnán’s time this was not a term in wide use. Sharpe notes that the level of attention given to Armagh by Hughes overlooks its claim, not only to a wider geographical territory, but also to “apostolic precedence, metropolitan authority and primatial jurisdiction”.<sup>27</sup>

The picture ultimately painted by Sharpe is of a predominantly lay monastic sphere, which had some priests who were primarily focused on the care of their own members, rather than general pastoral work within society at large. He also notes that the unfree status of churches may refer to one which is under royal *census*, one owing *census* to a powerful church’s abbot (here he uses the word *parochial*), or one under the hereditary control of the family which founded or made possible the foundation of the church, but that regardless of a church’s status, it was supervised by a bishop.<sup>28</sup> The bishop’s role is thus described:

[A]s bishop he was responsible for the pastoral jurisdiction over local churches as well as for the sacramental offices of his order ... He would appoint priests, perform their ordinations, carry out visitations in their churches, consecrate the baptismal chrism, and in general insure the orderly maintenance of the church’s ministry.<sup>29</sup>

An abbot’s role included the control of the lands and revenues belonging to the mother-church, as well as power over the people committed to their care, who may have been monks (to whom he acted as father) or laymen (to whom he acted as a landlord).<sup>30</sup>

This view was again re-examined by Colmán Etchingham in the last decade of the twentieth century. He determined that a *paruchia* was an episcopal sphere of jurisdiction, but could in practice be administered by an *abbas*, which in early medieval Ireland could be a person of a lower clerical status than a bishop, or

---

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 244-245.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 249.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 257-258.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 263.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 263-264.

perhaps in an otherwise secular condition.<sup>31</sup> Further, he argued that a *paruchia* consisted of a geographical sphere of authority and could describe a large region which consisted of smaller areas that may or may not have been contiguous, or a “relatively restricted sphere” of authority.<sup>32</sup> Etchingam further examined the relationship between head and dependent foundations, where he identified four different types of foundation which could accrue rights to different groups to choose an abbot.<sup>33</sup> These included: *eclais fine érlama* or a “church of the founding or patron saint’s kin” wherein the founder’s kin-group had the first right to choose the succeeding abbot; *eclais fine griain* or a “church of the landowner’s kin-group” had the first right of choosing; *cell manach* or a “church of *manaig*”, where the kin of the ecclesiastical tenants/dependants had the first right of choosing; and finally the *déorad Dé* or “pious outsider” as an option of last resort.<sup>34</sup> He has further noted the possibility of *eclais fine érlama 7 griain imalle* or a “church of the saint’s and landowner’s kin as one”, which occurred when the founding saint established a church on the land of their own kin.<sup>35</sup> The *eclais fine érlama* was further identified by Etchingam as a class which could include the *andóit* or “primary foundation/mother church” separately from the *fine érlama*, and further described the existence of *daltae* or “daughter churches/dependent foundations” as well as a *compairche* or church belonging to the same *paruchia*, and even a *cell comocuis* or a “neighboring church”.<sup>36</sup> It is thus evident that modern scholars have used both *paruchia* and *familia* to describe a confederation of monasteries which looked to a common founder, and this terminology has been understood in a variety of different ways within the overall structure of the early Gaelic church.

The purpose here is to look for discernible connections between monastic foundations which might indicate that they worked together within a network as monasteries. This discussion is not intended to examine the pastoral work or obligations of a religious foundation, and for this reason I have chosen to discuss the specific Community of Comgall rather than a more general *paruchia* or *familia*. A “Community” as defined here is a group of people who have a shared

---

<sup>31</sup> Etchingam, “Implications of *Paruchia*,” 141-144, 146, 148, 153.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 148-153.

<sup>33</sup> See also Etchingam, *Church Organisation*, 223-238.

<sup>34</sup> Etchingam, “Implications of *Paruchia*,” 153-157.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 156.

characteristic (such as an ideology or way of life) in common or some sense of cultural sharing or belonging together. In an ecclesiastical sense this is perhaps easiest to see at the wider scale of sharing in the beliefs of Christianity and its related behaviours. Here the intent is to look for smaller groups of sharing and Community, which may have encompassed multiple monastic foundations that had this sense of belonging or sharedness, which could have been partially based on the rights accorded to the primary foundation (*andóit*). This will be predominantly evident through behaviours which can be observed and recorded, perhaps best seen in the responsibilities and benefits of belonging to a saint's monastic Community.

The Community's primary foundation could be expected to be the one with which the saint is associated, such as Iona for Columba, Armagh for Patrick, and Bangor for Comgall. This served as the central point to which all other people and foundations looked for their sense of sharedness and belonging. Bede, writing over a century after the death of Columba, noted that Iona had authority over churches in both Ireland and Britain, which were associated with Columba:<sup>37</sup>

From both of these [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 pre-eminence.

*In quibus omnibus idem monasterium insulanum, in quo ipse requiescit corpore, principatum teneret.*<sup>38</sup>

In forming this Community, the primary foundation and its leader had responsibilities which tied it to the dependent foundations, but also benefits which accrued in return, all of which appeared to be separate from the obligations associated with being part of an episcopal diocese. Responsibilities may have included providing for the overall safety and provisioning of dependent foundations, responsibility for the liturgical order and details of worship, being involved in the selection of leadership for dependent foundations, and making

---

<sup>37</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 36.

<sup>38</sup> Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (ed) (trans). Saint Bede the Venerable, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, rev. Ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), III.4; Translation: Judith McClure and Roger Collins (trans). Saint Bede the Venerable, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People: The Greater Chronicle and Bede's Letter to Egbert* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), III.4.

visits. Responsibilities of an abbot generally have previously been identified as including the organization “of the material and spiritual life of a group of people who have accepted his Rule as a way of life and his person as chief”;<sup>39</sup> this could be applied to the head of a wider Community in addition to the other responsibilities just mentioned. Benefits could be seen in the spread of the reputation of the central saint and the primary foundation and the ability to groom future leaders through the experience of leading dependent foundations and receiving provisions. Herbert stated:

The saint’s immediate authority was as abbot over his own community of Iona. In addition, however, he would appear to have had supreme jurisdiction over all the foundations associated with his name. Evidently it was he who selected from among his community those who were to govern his churches for him.<sup>40</sup>

Further notable is the similarity of organizational structure of Columba’s Community with that seen in “secular concepts of overlordship, kinship, and inheritance, so that the system had an in-built potential for survival and continuity in Irish society”.<sup>41</sup>

On the other side of this relationship is the dependent foundation, whose benefits and responsibilities corresponded to those mentioned for the primary foundation. Benefits included the protection provided by association with the head of the Community and its primary foundation (both spiritual and political), receiving aid from the primary foundation as needed, and the visitation of the head of the Community or his relics. There was likely also a perceived benefit in having the leader of the dependent foundation become the leader of the primary foundation.

Specific examples of these different responsibilities and benefits could be seen in action on the ground. As mentioned above, these could include the provisioning of goods and services, appointment of leaders for dependent monasteries, appointment of members to dependent monasteries, the visitation of the head of the Community or his relics, and religious or spiritual protection.

---

<sup>39</sup> Hérold Pettiau, “The Abbot and the Monastic Community in the Gaelic Churches, 550 to 800”, in *The Brendan Legend: Texts and Versions*, (ed) Glyn Burgess and Clara Strijbosch (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 242.

<sup>40</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 33.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 35.

Regarding the provision of goods and services from dependent monasteries for the main foundation, it is noted that Columba was able to direct goods to be sent from dependent foundations such as *Mag Luinge* to other locations.<sup>42</sup> Sharpe noted that this control could also include the tithes owed for secular pastoral work,<sup>43</sup> which can be seen in *Cáin Adomnáin* and *Cáin Pádraig*.<sup>44</sup> Cainnech's responsibility to provide for monks of a dependent monastery can be seen in his *Vita*, wherein the monks complained they had no ability to process grain in a dry place.<sup>45</sup>

The provisioning of the leadership of dependent monasteries is perhaps best evidenced from Columba's *Vita*, where leaders of Hinba, *Mag Luinge*, and Durrow are noted. Ernán, Columba's uncle, was sent to serve as *praepositus* at Hinba,<sup>46</sup> Baithéne, Columba's cousin, served as *praepositus* or "one put in command" of *Mag Luinge*,<sup>47</sup> and Laisrén served as head of Durrow.<sup>48</sup> Related to this is the placement of individuals within a dependent monastery, again seen most explicitly in Columba's *Vita*. Librán was sent to *Mag Luinge* for seven years to serve penance, and at the end of his life sent to Durrow, where he died.<sup>49</sup>

The movement of abbots from primary monasteries, or of the relics of their founders, suggests that it was important to move between connected foundations, likely in order to renew or maintain physical, cultural and spiritual connections. Cumméne Find, seventh abbot of Iona (AD 657-669), journeyed to Ireland c. 661, and likely visited dependent monasteries,<sup>50</sup> such as that on *Rechra*.<sup>51</sup> Fáilbe, eighth abbot of Iona, travelled to Ireland c. 673, returning three years later, which may indicate that he was "undertaking a visitation of

---

<sup>42</sup> VC I.41.

<sup>43</sup> Sharpe, "Some Problems", 246-247.

<sup>44</sup> Wendy Davies, "Clerics as Rulers: Some implications of the terminology of ecclesiastical authority in early medieval Ireland", in *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, (ed) Nicholas Brooks, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), 86-87; Kuno Meyer, "Cáin Adomnáin: An Old-Irish Treatise on the law of Adomnán". *Medieval Sourcebook*. Accessed 2 April 2020. [sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/cainadamnain.asp](http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/cainadamnain.asp), §24-25.

<sup>45</sup> *VCain* §35.

<sup>46</sup> VC I.45.

<sup>47</sup> VC I.30, I.41, II.15, III.18; University of Notre Dame. William Whitaker's Words, "praepositus", Accessed 10 May 2020. [archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=praepositus](http://archives.nd.edu/cgi-bin/wordz.pl?keyword=praepositus).

<sup>48</sup> VC I.29.

<sup>49</sup> VC II.39

<sup>50</sup> Aidan Breen. "Cumméne (Cummíne, Cummian) Find", in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, (ed) James McGuire and James Quinn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Accessed 4 Jan 2020. [dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2293; AT 660.4](http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2293; AT 660.4).

<sup>51</sup> Herbert has identified this foundation with Lambay Island in *IKD*, 42; AT 637.2.

his Irish churches” and may have “served to assert the unity of Columban churches under the saint’s Iona successor” as well as maintain the Community’s relationships with secular rulers.<sup>52</sup> Adomnán visited Ireland in AU 692,<sup>53</sup> perhaps also in an effort to strengthen support for *Cáin Adomnáin*, which would be proclaimed at the Synod of Birr in AU 697.<sup>54</sup> The relics of Adomnán were taken to Ireland in AU 727 and returned three years later as part of a campaign to strengthen the secular ties there to *Cáin Adomnáin*, and was likely also intended to strengthen ties within the Community of Columba.<sup>55</sup> The relics of Patrick were taken to Connacht in AU 811 and 818, and it was noted that the shrine of Patrick was not taken on tour in AU 819, suggesting this was an unusual occurrence.<sup>56</sup>

Perhaps another indicator which shows the depth of the sense of sharedness or belonging which existed between members of a Community under the headship of a founding saint or his heirs was the protection indicated for members of the dependent foundations, both physical and spiritual. When the monks of Durrow were overworked, Columba intervened on their behalf with the leader of the community in order to ease their burden.<sup>57</sup> Adomnán’s portrayal of Columba’s obligations for the physical safety of his monks is reinforced in the miracle wherein Columba saved a monk falling from the roof of a house at Durrow.<sup>58</sup> He also summoned Cailtán, *praepositus* of *cella Diuni*, so he could spend his last days “with his ecclesiastical father”.<sup>59</sup> These examples suggest that the head of the Community had an obligation for the care of the physical and spiritual needs of monks within that Community, even when at dependent foundations.

With this in mind, there are a few criteria to look for in examining the evidence for a Community of Comgall. These include: instances of Comgall or his relics travelling, the abbot of Bangor or *comarba* of Comgall travelling, the movement of goods or services between Bangor and purported dependent foundations, paternalistic physical or spiritual protection of monks at purported dependent

---

<sup>52</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 45.

<sup>53</sup> AU 692.1.

<sup>54</sup> AU 697.3.

<sup>55</sup> AU 727.5; AU 730.3.

<sup>56</sup> AU 811.1, 818.5, 819.8.

<sup>57</sup> VC I.29.

<sup>58</sup> VC III.15.

<sup>59</sup> VC I.31.

monasteries by Comgall or his successors, and the instalment of clerics from purported dependent monasteries as abbot of Bangor.

## 1.2 The Gap

Traditionally the North Channel is described as a zone of division between Ireland and Scotland, most clearly expressed by O’Rahilly describing these peoples as the “sea-divided Gael[s]”.<sup>60</sup> Ewan Campbell brought this discussion firmly to the fore in his publications in 1999 and 2001,<sup>61</sup> with some controversy. Campbell argued that there was a distinct settlement pattern in Argyll and a lack of evidence suggesting a physical movement of people from Ireland to Argyll in the late Iron Age or early medieval period, based on an examination of settlement patterns (including brochs, raths, cashels, hilltop dun, and crannogs) and personal adornment items (including brooches and dress-pins).<sup>62</sup> He stated that:

“[a]t best, the evidence shows a shared cultural region from the Iron Age, with some subsequent divergence in the later 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD. Any cultural influences could be argued as likely to have been going from Scotland to Ireland rather than *vice versa*.”<sup>63</sup>

The historical record regarding the origins of Dál Riata are not contemporary. The entry regarding Fergus mór mac Erc in the *Annals of Tigernach* at 500 and the census *cum* genealogical document *Senchus fer nAlban* are the closest; both evidence influence from the tenth-century change in kingship wherein rivals attempted to stress their own lineage’s “antiquity and Irish origins”.<sup>64</sup> Campbell asserted that it would be “almost unparalleled in onomastic history” for the complete displacement of one language for another without “substantial population movement” that would be recognizable in the archaeological record.<sup>65</sup> He suggested instead that the inhabitants of Argyll had their own regional Gaelic speaking identity beginning in the Iron Age.<sup>66</sup> He further argued

---

<sup>60</sup> Thomas Francis O’Rahilly, *Irish dialects past and present with chapters on Scottish and Manx* (Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1932), 123.

<sup>61</sup> Ewan Campbell, *Saints and Sea-kings: the first kingdom of the Scots* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1999); Ewan Campbell, “Were the Scots Irish?” *Antiquity* 75, no. 288 (2001), 285–92.

<sup>62</sup> Campbell, *Saints and Sea Kings*, 10, 13-4; Campbell, “Scots Irish?”, 286-288.

<sup>63</sup> Campbell, “Scots Irish?”, 287.

<sup>64</sup> Campbell, “Scots Irish?”, 288-289.

<sup>65</sup> Campbell, “Scots Irish?”, 289.

<sup>66</sup> Campbell, *Saints and Sea Kings*, 14-15; Campbell, “Scots Irish?”, 291.



that we should follow the early medieval commentators' view of the Grampian Highlands (also called *Druim nAlban*) as the dividing line between languages, citing in part the fact that there are "only two or three narrow routeways through the highland massif."<sup>67</sup> He concluded that "[t]he proximity of Antrim to Argyll is such that, in eras when travel by sea was far easier than by land, the two sides of the North Channel are likely to have been in permanent contact from early prehistory onwards."<sup>68</sup>

A direct response to Campbell's argument was published by David Dumville.<sup>69</sup> Despite this disagreement with much of Campbell's arguments, those Dumville presented came to a similar conclusion, ultimately stating that by looking at the Gaelic culture of Argyll, Arran, Bute, and the Inner Hebrides as "the northernmost extension ... of the gaelicisation (however achieved) of Ireland in the first millennium B.C." one removes the need to consider late fifth- or early sixth-century Gaelic settlement or invasion.<sup>70</sup> Since then, there has been some movement towards Campbell's position, but there is still far to go to fully flesh out the bones which he began. The growing corpus includes the work of academics such as Pamela O'Neill,<sup>71</sup> Richard Oram, and Rachel Butter.<sup>72</sup> Work on Columba and his Community, including that of Campbell, recognizes that it existed in both Ireland and Scotland, but does not go so far as to describe a seascape which included the bodies of water between the islands.

Sites that were connected with Columba or Iona seem to have received the bulk of attention due to the survival of records discussing the site. Looking at sites with less textual evidence and which have received less attention enables a clearer picture to emerge of the west of Scotland and northeast of Ireland during the sixth through eleventh centuries. Whithorn, located in Galloway, has

---

<sup>67</sup> Campbell, "Scots Irish?", 290.

<sup>68</sup> Campbell, "Scots Irish?", 261.

<sup>69</sup> David Dumville, "Ireland and North Britain in the Earlier Middle Ages: Contexts for Míniugud Senchasa Fher nAlban", in *Rannsachadh Na Gàidhlig 2000: Papers Read at the Conference Scottish Gaelic Studies 2000 Held at the University of Aberdeen 2-4 August 2000*, (ed) Nancy McGuire Colm Ó Baoill (An Clò Gaidhealach, Obar Dheathain (Aberdeen), 2002), 185-211.

<sup>70</sup> Dumville, "Ireland and North Britain", 195.

<sup>71</sup> Pamela O'Neill, "Reading cross-marked stones in Scottish Dalriada", *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 2 (2006), 193-206.

<sup>72</sup> Richard Oram and Rachel Butter, "Historical Framework", in *Inchmarnock: An Early Historic Island Monastery and its Archaeological Landscape*, (ed) Christopher Lowe (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008), 35-36.

also seen analysis and there is much there to unpick and attempt to unpack.<sup>73</sup> There has been a growth in understanding of the ecclesiastical field of Scotland, with excavation reports published from additional sites such as Inchmarnock (2008) and Portmahomack (2008),<sup>74</sup> both of which help shed light on ecclesiastical and secular life in early medieval Scotland.

The west of Scotland has often been looked upon as a peripheral space,<sup>75</sup> contrasted with the core of the Central Belt and the lands that became the heart of the kingdom of Alba in the tenth century. This is further compounded by the focus of life and travel in the modern period, where travel by land is made exponentially easier and central by the construction of modern roads.<sup>76</sup>

The west of Scotland is placed in the forefront here, showcasing its importance in the early medieval period and setting the west back into the larger context of the North Channel Seascape. Its connections westward with Ireland are foregrounded, rather than attempting to contain it within an artificially limited political context that incorrectly prioritizes land-based connections rather than water-based ones.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The overall question addressed in this thesis is whether a Community of Comgall wider than the monastery of Bangor itself existed between the sixth to eleventh centuries. This is examined by looking for evidence of what a saint's Community could have looked like. The focus will be solely on the north British monasteries which have been held to be part of the Community of Comgall. This is completed

---

<sup>73</sup> David Dumville, *The Churches of North Britain in the First Viking-Age* (Whithorn: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 1997); Wendy Davies, *Whithorn and the World (Sixth Whithorn Lecture)* (Whithorn: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 1998); Fiona Edmunds, *Whithorn's renown in the early medieval period: Whithorn, Futerna and magnum monasterium* (Stranraer: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 2009); Thomas Owen Clancy, "The Real St Ninian", *Innes Review* 52 (2001), 1-28; James Fraser, "Northumbrian Whithorn and the Making of St Ninian", *Innes Review* 53 (2002), 40-59; Peter Hill, *Whithorn and St Ninian: The Excavation of a Monastic Town, 1984-91* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997); David Griffiths, *Early Medieval Whithorn: The Irish Sea Context* (Stranraer: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 2014).

<sup>74</sup> Christopher Lowe (ed), *Inchmarnock: An Early Historic Island Monastery and its Archaeological Landscape* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008); Martin Carver, *Portmahomack: Monastery of the Picts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

<sup>75</sup> Oram and Butter, "Historical Framework", 35.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 36; James Miller, *The Finest Road in the World: The Story of Travel and Transport in the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2017).

through a thorough examination of textual, toponymic, architectural, art historical, and landscape evidence of Bangor, Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree.

I also bring together evidence for each site in an effort to assemble the major evidence and further elucidate the ecclesiastical context of the west of Scotland between AD 600 - 1000. Further, the importance of Tiree as a central piece of the North Channel Seascape is examined, especially considering its claim to have an abundant early medieval ecclesiastical presence.

## **1.4 Significance**

The North Channel zone should be viewed as a seascape and a geographic area connected by the North Channel, as discussed below. In the early medieval period, this seascape was traversed by travellers and communication networks. This perspective encourages the seeking out of a Community of Comgall between the sixth and eleventh centuries. An interdisciplinary investigation is implemented here as a means of casting a wide net to capture evidence of the specific monastic sites chosen for this thesis as well as looking for the threads of connection that exist between them and the monastery at Bangor.

In addition to clarifying the existence of a Community of Comgall and analysing the North Channel Seascape as its context, this thesis makes great strides in highlighting additional ecclesiastical centres in the west of Scotland. This analysis of Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree consolidates the evidence for these sites which has not previously been brought together into a single cohesive analysis.

## **1.5 Geographical Context**

Geography provides the canvas upon which the events of life occur and helps to shape the cultural decisions made by the inhabitants of a defined geographic area. The geographic boundaries of interest here extend from the northeast of Ireland, across the North Channel, and include the western coast of Scotland and the Hebrides. Note that Galloway and Ayrshire, which make up a large portion of the eastern shore of the North Channel itself and are therefore geographically

closely located to Ireland, are not included in the present analysis. There is some evidence of Bangor connections with the south and southwest of Scotland, specifically in the place-name Dercongall, which may be a Comgall hagiotopeponym, and the possible sculptural links with Whithorn and Kirkmadrine (see section 3.3.1). It is perhaps surprising that so little evidence of interaction with Comgall and Bangor should be evident in the landscape closest to Bangor across the North Channel. It seems possible that ecclesiastical sites could have existed but became lost either due to the influx of the Norse language, or perhaps fell out of vogue with the diminution of influence of the Community of Comgall, though future research on this gap would be valuable. All references to Ireland in this thesis are to the island of Ireland, not any modern country specifically, and therefore does not differentiate between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The North Channel is the strait that runs between the north of Ireland and western Scotland. It connects the Irish Sea with the Atlantic Ocean and consists of part of the marine area which has been officially classified as the "Inner Seas off the west Coast of Scotland" by the International Hydrographic Organization.<sup>77</sup> The narrowest part of the strait is between the Mull of Kintyre in the west of Scotland and Torr Head in the northeast Ireland where its width is 21 km.<sup>78</sup> The narrowing of the sea into the North Channel causes intensely strong tides which, between the landmasses of northern Ireland and western Scotland, can reach up to 9.2 km per hour.<sup>79</sup> Dangerous whirlpools, such as *Slog na mara* between Rathlin Island and the Irish mainland (which may have been the original Corryvreckan),<sup>80</sup> or those northeast of Rathlin Island, are also affected by the tides.<sup>81</sup> The North Channel Zone further includes the waterways up to and including part of the Minch, thus extending further than the North Channel itself.

---

<sup>77</sup> International Hydrographic Organization "Limits of Oceans and Seas, 3rd edition". 1953. Accessed 9 Mar 2018. [www.iho.int/iho\\_pubs/standard/S-23/S-23\\_Ed3\\_1953\\_EN.pdf](http://www.iho.int/iho_pubs/standard/S-23/S-23_Ed3_1953_EN.pdf).

<sup>78</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, "North Channel". Encyclopædia Britannica, 1998. Accessed 9 Mar 2018. [www.britannica.com/place/North-Channel-strait](http://www.britannica.com/place/North-Channel-strait).

<sup>79</sup> Jonathan M. Wooding, *Communication and Commerce along the Western Sealanes AD 400-800* (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996), 8.

<sup>80</sup> Sharpe, VC, 264-265.

<sup>81</sup> Captain G. H. Richards. Scotland - west coast - sheet 3 - Mull of Kintyre to Ardnamurchan [Map]. 1868. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 7 Oct 2020. [maps.nls.uk/view/101956223](http://maps.nls.uk/view/101956223).

The first of these geographic areas to be examined is Ireland. The locations of major interest within Ireland include the modern counties of Down and Antrim in the northeast of Ireland. Between the fifth and ninth centuries the dominant polity in Down and Antrim was the Ulaid, who shared the territory with other less powerful population groups.

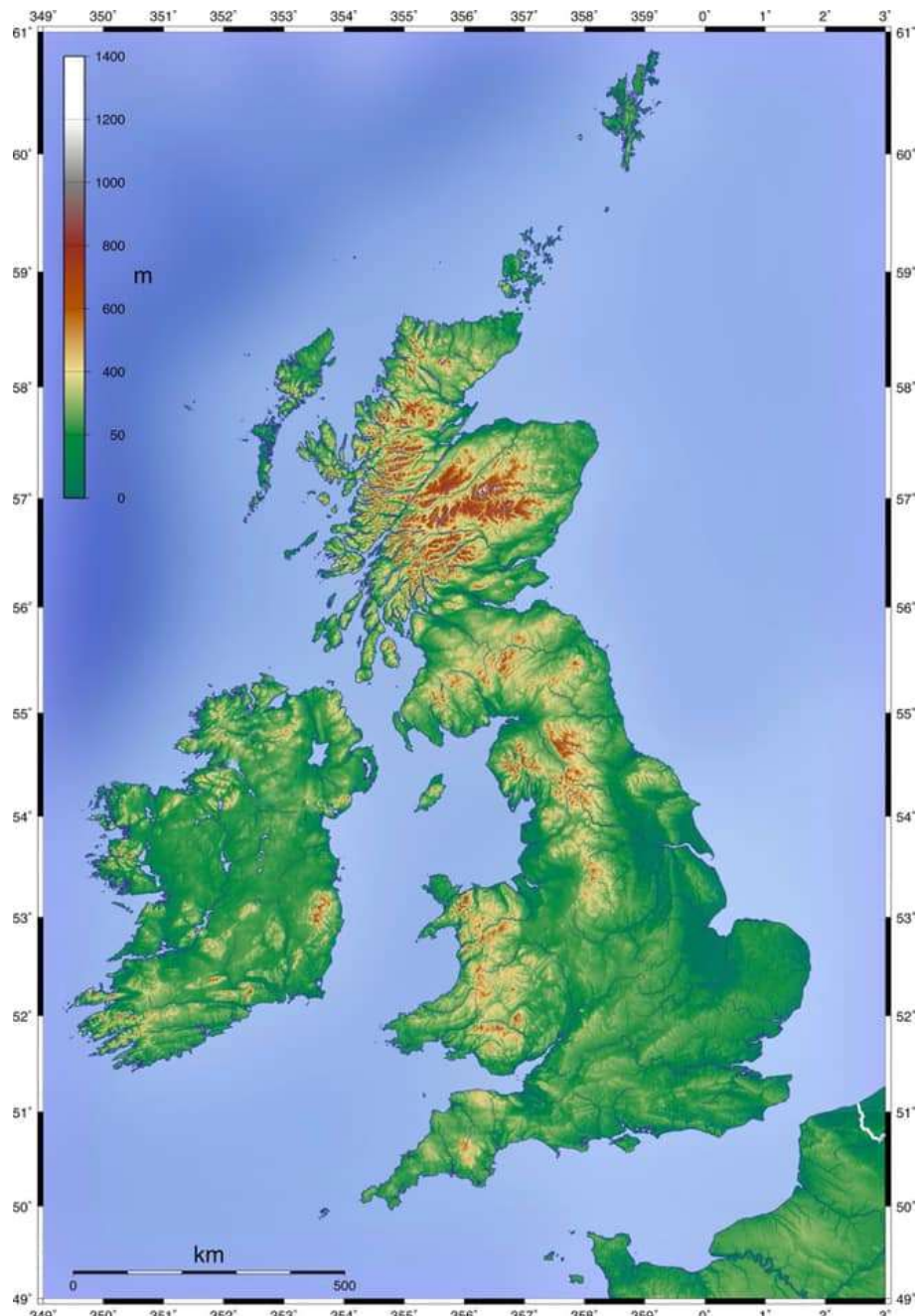


Figure 1.1 Topographic Map of UK and Ireland (original by Equestenebrarum, CC BY 3.0, commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4200926).

Early Ulster in general has been described as being divided from Connacht and Leinster by “strong geographical obstacles”.<sup>82</sup> Modern County Donegal is higher in altitude than the rest of early Ulster, with two mountain ranges within its borders: Derryveagh in the north, of which the highest peak, Errigal, is 752m and Blue Stack in the south, of which the highest peak, Lavagh More is 676m.<sup>83</sup> Its coastline has deeply indented sea loughs as well as the northernmost point of Ireland, Malin Head. Modern County Derry/Londonderry has plateaus and peat bogs in the north and higher altitudes in the south, culminating in the Sperrin Mountains, of which the highest peaks, Sawel, Mullaclogher, and Mullaghaneany, all exceed 608m.<sup>84</sup> Moving eastwards, the land dips into the Bann river valley while to the west it descends to the Foyle river valley. In the southeast it touches the shores of Lough Neagh while the north coast has cliffs, dunes, and beaches. Lough Neagh is located just east of the centre between the eastern and western coasts, with higher altitude geographic features ranging around it. County Antrim is the part of northeast Ireland which most obviously faces western Scotland and forms part of the western boundary of the North Channel. Geographically, it consists of a large area of high plateaus falling steeply to the sea. The narrow strip of coast does have some level or gently sloping areas which allow for settlement. In addition, the deep, wide glens open towards the coast while the rivers draining into Lough Neagh have cut deep valleys into the uplands. Low lying areas can be found along the Bann valley, on the shores of Lough Neagh, and beside the river Lagan.<sup>85</sup> Torr Head, a promontory that juts outwards towards the west of Scotland, is 21 km from the Mull of Kintyre, which can be seen with the naked eye, along with Islay. The coast of Antrim also has two large sea loughs, Belfast Lough and Larne Lough, from which sea-based transportation between the north of Ireland and west of Scotland would be possible. Lough Foyle, between County Derry/Londonderry and County Donegal is a third substantial sea lough which would facilitate maritime travel. Antrim also has bays which could have been useful landing places at: White Park Bay (D

---

<sup>82</sup> J.H. Andrews, "The geographical element in Irish history", in *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, (ed) Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 18.

<sup>83</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Donegal", accessed 5 May 2020. [britannica.com/place/Donegal-county-Ireland](http://britannica.com/place/Donegal-county-Ireland).

<sup>84</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, "Londonderry", accessed 5 May 2020. [www.britannica.com/place/Londonderry-former-county-Northern-Ireland](http://www.britannica.com/place/Londonderry-former-county-Northern-Ireland); Encyclopædia Britannica, "Sperrin Mountains", accessed 5 May 2020. [www.britannica.com/place/Sperrin-Mountains](http://www.britannica.com/place/Sperrin-Mountains).

<sup>85</sup> Ann Hamlin and Thomas R Kerr, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity in the North of Ireland* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008), 27-28.

0216 4413), Ballycastle Bay (D 1229 4116), Murlough Bay (D 1984 4200), Portaleen Bay (D 2329 3987), Cushendun Bay (D 2492 3303), Cushendall Bay (D 2421 2793), Red Bay (D 2435 2525), Carnlough Bay (D 2362 1718), and Ballygalley Bay (D 3741 0777).

Modern County Down has a shoreline on the south-western side of the North Channel. Eastern County Down is low lying while to the west, towards the river Bann and south of Lough Neagh, the terrain is higher, culminating towards the south in the Mourne Mountains, whose highest peak, Slieve Donard, rises to 849m.<sup>86</sup> Drumlins, elongated hills created by the movement of glacial ice, cross a significant portion of the county. Hamlin describes how the deep glens of Antrim leading towards the sea and Down's low lying eastern lands seem to be compatible with a settlement pattern that has a "[s]trong easterly and coastal emphasis in distribution".<sup>87</sup> The northern and western margins are defined by the river valleys of the Lagan, Bann, and Newry. The upland mass begins at the Bann, moves through Slieve Croob (535m),<sup>88</sup> and then falls steeply to Carlingford Lough.<sup>89</sup> Strangford Lough, which opens to the Irish Sea at its southern end, makes up a large portion of the eastern part of the county. Belfast Lough opens onto the North Channel directly across from the Rinns of Galloway, which lie approximately 34 km to the east.

The tidal stream through the North Channel, along the coasts of Counties Derry/Londonderry, Antrim, and Down, runs as expected through the major channel between the north of Ireland and Galloway, Ayrshire, the Mull of Kintyre, and Islay.<sup>90</sup> This would facilitate travel between the north of Ireland and the west of Scotland, provided one waited for a favourable tide. Wind patterns vary according to the season, with winds favouring travel from the north of Ireland to the west of Scotland in winter, and winds favouring travel from the

---

<sup>86</sup> Sam Moore, *The Archaeology of Slieve Donard, Co Down: A Cultural Biography of Ulster's Highest Mountain* (Downpatrick: Down County Museum, 2012), 1.

<sup>87</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology of Early Christianity*, 30.

<sup>88</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Slieve Croob", accessed 5 May 2020. [www.britannica.com/place/Slieve-Croob](http://www.britannica.com/place/Slieve-Croob).

<sup>89</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology of Early Christianity*, 30.

<sup>90</sup> John Waddell, "The Irish Sea in Prehistory", *Journal of Irish Archaeology* 6 (1991/92), 30.

west of Scotland to the north of Ireland in autumn. Spring and summer winds are such that travel in either direction would be well possible.<sup>91</sup>

Galloway and Ayrshire make up most of the eastern shore of the North Channel itself, though the focus of the investigation of the Community of Comgall is centred further north in the deep-sea lochs and fjords of the coast of Argyll, the islands of the Hebrides, and the mainland coast of Wester Ross. These sea lochs and fjords recall the Scandinavian fjords and its connected seafaring culture, underscored by the important place-names on the west coast of Scotland containing ON *fjörðr* such as Moidart and Knoydart.<sup>92</sup> Looking to the geology of the area, particularly that which is west of the Highland Boundary Fault, much of this part of Scotland lies within the ancient great Caledonian mountain chain, which stretches from western Norway, through Shetland, the Grampian mountains, a large swathe of the west including Argyll, Jura, Islay, and Bute, and on into the west of Ireland.<sup>93</sup> Mainland Scotland has approximately 9,910 km of coastline, with nearly 800 offshore islands, most of which are off the northern and western coasts. With the melting and movement of glaciers the face of western Scotland was carved out to its present form. Early Scotland would have been heavily forested and punctuated with peat, heath and grassland. Deforestation occurred both naturally, due to a deterioration in climate beginning approximately 5,000 years ago, and due to the activities of humans.<sup>94</sup> This geological history means that the resulting landscape is much more attuned to travel by water than by land, and indeed two places on the same island or same bit of mainland coast may have been much more easily traversed by sea than by land.

The Kintyre peninsula extends south-south-west from the Argyll mainland between the Isle of Arran to the east and the Islands of Islay and Jura to the west. Kintyre's close proximity to Ireland, part of Galloway, and Ayrshire means that land can be seen in a wide arc from its southern cliffs, indeed giving the

---

<sup>91</sup> Richard Callaghan and Chris Scarre, "Simulating the Western Seaways", *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 28:4 (2009), 363-364.

<sup>92</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 124.

<sup>93</sup> Cornelius Gillen, "Geology and Landscape", in *The Argyll Book*, (ed) Donald Omand (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2004), 1.

<sup>94</sup> Gillen, "Geology and Landscape", 15.



impression one is in a landlocked basin.<sup>95</sup> Lorn is an excellent example of the general type of geography encountered in coastal western Scotland. To its west is the Firth of Lorn, which separates it from the Isles of Mull and Lismore, while to the north-east is the Grampian mountain chain.<sup>96</sup> The southerly reaches of Lorn remain mountainous, though they are cut by a number of long valleys, some of which form sea lochs.<sup>97</sup> The Isle of Mull is further separated from the mainland by the Sound of Mull towards the northeast, while on its western side, like much of western Scotland, forms into a few sea-lochs with additional bays and inlets.<sup>98</sup> The islands of Coll and Tiree lie approximately 30 km off the western coast of Mull. The form of the western coastline of the Scottish mainland, along with a number of the nearby islands, gives the firm image of a landscape heavily penetrated by water passageways, yet still capable of being viewed as a cohesive geographical unit. It is in these rugged landscapes that the monasteries which may have comprised the Community of Comgall are found.

### 1.5.1 Seascape

Although at first glance the sea (in a general sense) may appear to be a single, indivisible body of water that makes little sense to those who are not familiar with its day to day vagaries, “[t]his is a seascape traversed by known seaways, a place of paths that linked communities”.<sup>99</sup> Similar to how pathways emerge on dry ground, paths within the sea emerge for those who build familiarity with it,<sup>100</sup> enabling communities to travel within the seascape to locations that may be perceived as part of the same geographic area. Indeed, early Irish law saw a polity’s jurisdiction as inclusive of territory which was partially made up by sea, known as *muirchrech*, and perhaps meaning a “sea-boundary”;<sup>101</sup> suggesting that

---

<sup>95</sup> RCAHMS. *Argyll: An inventory of the Ancient Monuments volume 1: Kintyre*, (Glasgow: Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd, 1971), 1.

<sup>96</sup> RCAHMS. *Argyll: An inventory of the Ancient Monuments volume 2: Lorn*, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1975), 1.

<sup>97</sup> RCAHMS. *Argyll: Lorn*, 1.

<sup>98</sup> RCAHMS. *Argyll: An inventory of the Ancient Monuments volume 3: Mull, Tiree, Coll & Northern Argyll*, (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1980), 1-3.

<sup>99</sup> Paul Rainbird, *The Archaeology of Islands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 47.

<sup>100</sup> Rainbird, *Archaeology of Islands*, 47.

<sup>101</sup> Pamela O’Neill, “Old Irish *muirchrech* ‘sea-boundary,’” *Éiru* 67 (2017), 1-106.

“the sea was not considered separate from, but included within, a broader definition of society”.<sup>102</sup>

Sea-based travellers may also use natural geographical features, known as seamarks, to assist in locating oneself along a sea pathway.<sup>103</sup> The existence of seamarks may have assisted in general navigation, while also demarcating valuable locations such as safe harbours from foul weather or desirable destinations.<sup>104</sup> Despite the likely waxing and waning intensity of travel across the North Channel, the sea-based pathways of travel and communication likely existed for a fairly deep period of time prior to the historic period.<sup>105</sup> Building from the use of natural geographical formations in the Neolithic, some peoples may have moved to the use of man-made structures to serve the same purpose. Recent research in the Orkneys has determined that the Neolithic cairns in that area had a specific and purposeful relationship to the water, though it may be unnecessary to view them as seamarks.<sup>106</sup> Additionally, Bronze Age cairns on Gotland were examined for the possibility that they may have also served as seamarks for sea-based transportation.<sup>107</sup> These seamarks would have existed in conjunction with mental maps, known or expected travelling times, directions, and memory in sequence to create a personal perception of an island landscape.<sup>108</sup>

One need not rely solely on economic reasons to explain the purpose and value of movement across a seascape. This travel could have been undertaken as part of the regular activities of communities who viewed their territory as larger than the physical boundary of their island. As an example from a later time in the same geographic area: during the later sixteenth century, a letter between Dr. Hanmer and Lord Burleigh indicates that the Earl of Tyrone “has only to make a signal fire on the coast, when within seven hours he can be joined by an endless supply of Scots”<sup>109</sup> This indicates that communication can also take place via

---

<sup>102</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, 21.

<sup>103</sup> Sean McGrail, “Cross-Channel Seamanship and navigation in the Late First Millennium BC”, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 2:3 (November 1, 1983), 315.

<sup>104</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, 17; Rainbird, *Archaeology of Islands*, 47.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 154.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 149-150.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, 150.

<sup>108</sup> Cyprian Broodbank, *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 23.

<sup>109</sup> Marshal Bagenal, Herbert F. Hore, and Lord Burghley. “Marshal Bagenal’s Description of Ulster, Anno 1586”. *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 2 (1854), 156 f. 1.

methods that do not require boat travel. Beacon bonfires are known from medieval contexts in Cornwall, where a beacon hermitage was found.<sup>110</sup> Such fires were also mentioned on seventeenth century maps of Ireland. The 1601 Map of East Ulster, contains a note that “Here the Scotts make their warning fyres”,<sup>111</sup> and John Norden’s 1610 map of Ireland, likewise includes a note at the same location that “[a]t this marke the Scottes used to make their warning-fire”.<sup>112</sup> Sailing and communications technology between the early medieval and early modern periods still experienced many similarities, suggesting that the crossing between the north of Ireland and west of Scotland could have been viewed in a similar manner in the sixth and seventh centuries.

Sailing times are a variable factor in determining the possible connectedness between two shores. There is unfortunately little direct evidence to examine for the sixth through eleventh centuries, though a hypothesis can be established based on similar data. Callaghan and Scarre created a simulation for Neolithic sea travel for both paddle-powered and sail-powered craft.<sup>113</sup> Neolithic boats have been found of log and skin type. The log boats were carved from a single log to form a boat which could reach upwards of 10 metres in length, and were originally believed to be limited to riverine, inland lake, and estuary contexts, though the Greyabbey logboat was found in an “overtly maritime context” on the foreshore of Greyabbey Bay (Co Antrim).<sup>114</sup> Skin boats have not been positively identified in archaeological contexts, but are believed to have been in use from the Neolithic through to the curragh familiar in Ireland in the twentieth century, and may be what is depicted in the Broighter Hoard Gold Boat.<sup>115</sup> These boats were formed by stretching a covering made of animal hides over a light frame of wood and could vary in size between 1.5m to 10m.<sup>116</sup> Based on this simulation, it is posited that for the 27 nautical mile distance across the North

---

<sup>110</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, 17.

<sup>111</sup> East Ulster, Ireland [map]. 1602. "P/49(25)". National Maritime Museum. Accessed 8 June 2017. [collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/541705.html](http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/541705.html).

<sup>112</sup> John Norden. "The Plot of Ireland with the Confines". [Map] Scale: 1 in to 9 mi. circa 1610. The National Archives, Kew. MPF 1/67.

<sup>113</sup> Callaghan and Scarre. "Simulating Seaways", 357-372.

<sup>114</sup> Gary Robinson, "A Sea of Small Boats: places and practices on the prehistoric seascape of western Britain", *Internet Archaeology* 34 (2013). doi.org/10.11141/ia.34.2, §3.1. For more information on the Greyabbey logboat see Thomas McErlean, Rosemary McConkey, and Wes Forsythe, *Strangford Lough, an Archaeological Survey of Maritime Cultural Landscape* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2002), 48, 405.

<sup>115</sup> Robinson, "A Sea of Small Boats", §3.3.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

Channel, it would have been easier to travel from Antrim to Argyll in winter; travelling between the two locations would be equally possible in spring and summer; and travelling from Argyll to Antrim would be easier in autumn with the journey taking 1-2 days in either direction.<sup>117</sup> Although Callaghan and Scarre do not provide specific disembarking or destination locations, for the present purpose one might consider the closest points: the Mull of Kintyre to Torr Head. The experience in a paddle-powered boat, according to the simulation, would be largely the same.<sup>118</sup> Of additional interest is the ability to travel between Argyll and Orkney, which was suggested in the *Life of Saint Columba*,<sup>119</sup> though Callaghan and Scarre's simulation suggests sailing alone would be extremely difficult; paddle-powered craft could be expected to travel between Argyll and Orkney within 6-9 days.

Medieval boats which have been recovered include the Sutton Hoo (seventh century) and Graveney (tenth century) boats. Although the timber of the Sutton Hoo ship did not survive, the imprint discovered indicated that it was clinker-built with a keel and fastened with rivets. It was originally 27m long,<sup>120</sup> much longer than the Neolithic boats discussed above. The Graveney boat is clinker-built, meaning that it is composed of wooden planks attached to an internal wooden frame, with a keel and an estimated original length of 14m.<sup>121</sup> Research by Christopher Ferguson shows that vessels such as Sutton Hoo and Graveney could reach cruising speeds of between 9.6 and 16.7 km per hour, and when applied to sea travel from Bamburgh to other east-coast sites such as Abercorn, Jarrow, Hartlepool, and Loftus shows just how far one might be able to sail in a day.<sup>122</sup> Sailing from Bamburgh to Abercorn, a distance of over 112 km by sea, could be undertaken in 8.65 hours.<sup>123</sup> Although Adomnán describes the ability, under full sail, to travel from Iona to *Mag Luinge* (Tiree) by “the third hour” of the day, the omission of the time of departure means it is only possible to hypothesise the amount of time the trip of perhaps 36km by boat actually

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 363-365.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 365.

<sup>119</sup> VC II.42.

<sup>120</sup> Angela Evans, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* (London: British Museum Publications, 1986), 23-29.

<sup>121</sup> Angela Evans and Valerie Fenwick, “The Graveney boat”, *Antiquity* 45 (1971), 92-93.

<sup>122</sup> Christopher Ferguson, “Re-evaluating Early Medieval Northumbrian Contacts and the ‘Coastal Highway,’” in *Early Medieval Northumbria: Kingdoms and Communities, AD 450-1100*, (ed) Davit Petts and Sam Turner (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 291, with a fuller discussion of recent research 290-292.

<sup>123</sup> Ferguson, “Northumbrian Contacts”, 294.

took.<sup>124</sup> We may look at the work of later travel writers, whose more detailed accounts can allow us to estimate possible daily sailing distances.

Thomas Pennant, a well-known travel writer of the eighteenth century, provided some context for his own travel by ship around the Hebrides.<sup>125</sup> For 8 July, he notes that he set sail from the eastern coast of Colonsay “in the morning” and arrived within sight of Iona “towards evening”.<sup>126</sup> Calming was noted as an issue for the ship, with a distance of perhaps 29km covered. However, when leaving Iona on 11 July they set sail from Iona at 8am and, despite poor weather impeding progress, dropped anchor at 7pm in a harbour on the Isle of Canna, travelling approximately 101km.<sup>127</sup> Out of 15 days where the beginning of a voyage was noted, 8 of those days covered at least 48km.<sup>128</sup>

There is evidence for connections between the north of Ireland, western Scotland, and the Isle of Man from the Mesolithic up to and including the beginning of the historic period. The dating sequence along with stylistic similarities between raths, cashels, and crannogs suggests the possibility of influence from the east into Ireland.<sup>129</sup> The lack of evidence of any significant population movement during the first millennium AD may show “a shared cultural region from the Iron Age, with some subsequent divergence in the later 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD”, and the type G penannular brooch is also presented as possibly showing evidence of cultural exchange from the western side of Britain and into Ireland.<sup>130</sup> Woolf notes that the type G penannular brooch highlighted by Campbell, produced at Dunadd (Argyll), Dooey (Donegal), and Moynagh Loch (Meath), was evident at Dunadd before either of the Irish sites.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> VC II.15; a further quick trip is described when Columba dispatches a note to Baithéne at *Mag Luinge* to take provisions to a man on Coll who was on the edge of death, VC I.41.

<sup>125</sup> Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides* (Chester: Printed by John Monk, 1774).

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 240-241.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 271.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid*, 157-359.

<sup>129</sup> Campbell, “Scots Irish?” 286-287.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, 287.

<sup>131</sup> Alex Woolf, “Ancient Kindred? Dál Riata and the Cruithin”, Unpublished paper available at [st-andrews.academia.edu/AlexWoolf](http://st-andrews.academia.edu/AlexWoolf). Accessed 5 Dec 2016, 2.

## 1.6 The North Channel Zone as Seascape

Placing locations that are viewed as on the edge of land into the concept of seascape moves these locations from the edge of consideration into a more connected and engaged larger geographic area which can lead to new insights. The north Irish Sea basin, especially the North Channel area, makes sense as a connected and potentially related culture area rather than a separated and segregated series of culture areas. Based on archaeological and geographical evidence, and through the use of the theory of phenomenology as applied to the current research project, the areas comprising the north of Ireland and western Scotland in the early medieval period should be considered and treated as a single seascape.

Humans are most at home in a land-based setting. The land is where our ancestors evolved. However, land alone does not make up the contents of our world, and where difficult geographical features are encountered, it can act as a barrier for travel and thus for communication. It is necessary to counter this perception of land as the focal point of our world, and see the important position occupied by water, which can serve as a valuable means of connecting places in its own right. How academics interact with these land-based and water-based areas can affect the course that research, and thus understanding, takes. To consider landscape alone omits the function and interaction that water brings to the location. To access the necessary base understanding of the geography under investigation here, we must first look at the academic perception of seascapes, islandscapes, and seaways for their implications for the context of this thesis and the area termed here The North Channel Seascape.

In the northern Irish Sea basin, on a good day, there is high intervisibility between “southwest Scotland, Man, Ulster, and Kintyre”.<sup>132</sup> Snaefell, the highest point in Man, can be seen from both Ireland and Scotland on a clear day and, combined with the tidal conditions around the Isle, would lend itself to being a focal point of sea-based travel. Based on both archaeological and maritime evidence, the Irish Sea may be viewed by modern researchers as consisting of

---

<sup>132</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, 17.

northern and southern zones or basins.<sup>133</sup> The distribution of ogham stones may suggest such a division, with the concentrations of such stones in counties Kerry, Cork, and Waterford in Ireland; Dyfed and Gwynedd in Wales; northern Cornwall; and the southern tip of Man circumscribing the southern basin. The winds, currents, and land visibility mentioned above may “encourage the northern lands to at times look more naturally to each other, than to lands south of a Dublin - Gwynedd line”.<sup>134</sup> The focus here, however, is on an area I am calling the North Channel Zone, which begins in the south between the Ards peninsula and the Rhinns of Galloway and extends northwards into the Hebrides as far as the Minch.

### 1.6.1 Modern Treatment of the North Channel Seascape

In the modern perspective, the sea is not often considered a unifying feature. Today it is more usual to travel by car, train, or bus on land, and even via airplanes rather than to use coastlines or waterways to get around. However, this has not always been the case. Combined with this perspective, it is also understandable that histories are often published within the political boundaries of modern nations, which provide much of the funding and educational context for the ongoing work of historical research. Within the dual contexts of Columba’s founding of Iona and the cross-channel existence of Dál Riata we find the perceived barrier of the Irish Sea in general, and the North Channel more specifically, is addressed by modern historians.<sup>135</sup> These historically attested phenomena led some modern historians more recently to draw their boundary line across the island of Britain during the sixth century, rather than using the North Channel as the dividing line.<sup>136</sup> The strengthening of this more recent perspective allows greater investigation into the movement of peoples not associated with Iona and the development and maintenance of additional

---

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, 38.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas Francis O’Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946), 385; Leslie Alcock, “Was there an Irish Sea culture-province in the Dark Ages?” in *The Irish Sea Province in archaeology and history*, (ed) Donald Moore (Cardiff: Cambrian Archaeological Association, 1970), 56.

<sup>136</sup> Campbell, *Saints and Sea-Kings*, 11-5; Campbell, “Scots Irish?” 285-292; Thomas Owen Clancy, “Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: Advent and Expansion”, (The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture, 2009), *Proceedings of the British Academy* 167 (2011), 357-358; Oram and Butter, “Historical Framework”, 35-36; O’Neill, “Reading cross-marked stones”, 193-206; Woolf, “Ancient Kindred?” 1-11.

networks of interaction and communication between the west of Scotland and north of Ireland.

When working within a seascape, the paths travelled between two places can be termed a seaway, a term which is strongly associated with E.G. Bowen's book, *Saints, Seaways and Settlements in the Celtic Lands*,<sup>137</sup> wherein he considers the connection of ecclesiastical sites to estuarine locations, highlighting the southwest coast of Britain.<sup>138</sup> He argues that:

...the general location of churches is related not only to the importance of the estuaries as lines of movement, but also to the fact that during the Age of Saints, the valley sides of most Cornish rivers were clothed in damp oakwood forest, while rough land characterized the moorlands above 600 ft.<sup>139</sup>

Additionally, he describes the sea as a unifying, not separating feature: “[t]he sea-routes alone can explain how the Galloway peninsula, Isle of Man, north-east Ireland and Kintyre, and the lands bordering the estuary of the Clyde could be united at this time within a single cultural stimulus”,<sup>140</sup> an indication of the accessibility of travel between Kintyre, Galloway, Ayrshire, the Isle of Man, and Counties Antrim and Down.

However, this work is not supported by the more recent changes in historical and archaeological understanding of the area and the period. As an example, Bowen leans heavily on the idea of numerous invasions into Britain to explain cultural movement and development, and his argument is also deeply flawed in its methodology, especially through the use of “third order” migratory saints as evidence of how seaways were used in the Early Christian Period.<sup>141</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> E.G. Bowen, *Saints, Seaways and Settlements in the Celtic Lands* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 221.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*, 73.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*, 69; “third order” refers to the three classifications of early saints as described by Ussher, of which the orders descend in sanctity according to timeframe. The first order begins with St Patrick and ends c. 543, the second order runs c. 543-549, and the third order 549-664 as defined in T. Olden, “On the Consortia of the First Order of Irish Saints”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 3 (1893-1896), 415-420.



A further issue is identifiable in his confusing analysis of the distribution of churches dedicated to these less famous “third order” saints. He admits that:

...it would be absurd to think that the present-day dedications to Celtic saints are all originally associated with the saint concerned, or that they can always be taken to indicate either his own travels or those of his immediate followers.<sup>142</sup>

He presses on in the next few sentences to argue that this distribution is “likely to produce the best indication of how the seaways were, in fact, actually used in the Dark Ages”, a claim which directly conflicts with his earlier denial of that exact evidence.<sup>143</sup> Part of his reason for this is that the cults of these more obscure saints were necessarily local, and were unlikely to be revived in later times, as was the case for more popular saints such as Columba, Brigit, and Patrick. Though he admits the absurdity of such an application of the evidence, he goes on to use his evidence in this exact way.<sup>144</sup> Further issues with his methodology include a direct statement that the dates of dedications do not matter, since he is seeking the widest geographic area possible that is associated with a saint, but then uses his evidence to discuss an early timeframe for a saint.<sup>145</sup>

Bowen’s lack of concern regarding a time factor when charting the limit of a saint’s culture area means he could be looking at places that were dedicated much later than the actual lifetime of the saint. He argues that the later adoption of a saint by a new area “is merely another aspect of the continuity of tradition on a territorial basis”.<sup>146</sup> If this is the case, there seems to be no reason for choosing specifically local saints for his research, especially with the argument that they were not re-adopted later, which was the case with more prolific saints such as Patrick.

Campbell allows the early medieval peoples themselves to draw a boundary line. His map, positing a boundary drawn across the Grampian Highlands,<sup>147</sup> suggests the predominant historical perspectives suffer from a modern conception of

---

<sup>142</sup> Bowen, *Saints*, 69.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>147</sup> Campbell, “Scots Irish?” 290.

Ireland and Scotland as separate units. In allowing for the medieval people to draw the boundary line, the perspective perhaps invites the consideration of a phenomenological view, which will be introduced below.

David Dumville responds negatively to the change in archaeological circles away from an invasion model for the Gaelicization of Argyll and North Britain. He denounces what he argues are nationalistic arguments regarding the origins of Gaeldom in western Scotland before going on to make arguments that are in line with the views that he claims to be disagreeing with. Dumville does not see a separation of the Irish and British halves of Dál Riata in the early period, and points to later absorption by the Picts and/or falling away of usage in north Britain during the Viking age.<sup>148</sup>

The resulting modern view of the North Channel Seascape is perhaps best summed up in Alex Woolf's recognition of the muddy waters of such a seascape, especially seen in his discussion of Dál nAraide and Dál Riata as kindreds which seemed to have connections in both modern Scotland and Ireland by the time they arrive within our existing documentary evidence, and the necessary back and forth flow of culture and language that would happen with the movement of peoples across the North Channel.<sup>149</sup> Ultimately we are left with enduring questions about the depth and nature of contact across the North Channel Seascape even while specific interaction from the seventh century, in the form of Iona and Dál Riata are evidenced. One should consider the sea itself and what that can tell us about the possibilities of travel, and through that, the formation and maintenance of the necessary cultural networks which allow a Community of Comgall to exist.

### **1.6.2 Phenomenology**

In an attempt to better cut through the biases and expectations of my own modern experiences, I turn to the philosophy of Phenomenology, "which is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously

---

<sup>148</sup> David Dumville, "Ireland and North Britain", 196.

<sup>149</sup> Woolf, "Ancient Kindred?" 7-11.

experienced”.<sup>150</sup> This philosophy was brought into the field of Landscape Studies by Cyprian Broodbank,<sup>151</sup> but is more heavily examined by Tilley, who argues that “[g]eographical experience begins in places, reaches out to others through spaces, and creates landscapes or regions for human existence”.<sup>152</sup> This serves as a reminder that geography is not merely a series of equations or contour lines on a map, but cultures and the experiences of people who interacted directly with the land and sea. This may affect how we as historians may interpret and conceptualize the peoples and areas under review. This being in place suggests attempting to adopt or adapt to perspectives that attempt to get modern researchers closer to the perception of early medieval peoples.

Phenomenology in archaeology, and especially the work of Tilley, has received criticism.<sup>153</sup> Ultimately, the critique lies predominantly in the application of the theory and the specific sample of Mesolithic and Neolithic monuments in Wales, England, and Orkney,<sup>154</sup> while the philosophical aspect is determined to be useful and promising.<sup>155</sup> Despite the issue with his sample, there is value in his philosophical approach.

Campbell’s argument that modern perceptions of Ireland and Scotland as distinct units alters our perceptions of prehistoric geographical landscapes finds support in more general arguments against islands as inherently discrete units.<sup>156</sup>

Broodbank admonishes the reader, arguing that “the identification of the island as the primary unit is simply an imposed view: the most obvious unit that we can pick out”.<sup>157</sup> This fits with the idea that this is an expectation that has become ingrained in the Western psyche, and which continues to serve as a lens through which the histories and cultures of islands and their peoples have been filtered,

---

<sup>150</sup> Encyclopædia Britannica, "Phenomenology". Encyclopædia Britannica, 1998. Accessed 9 Mar 2018. [www.britannica.com/place/phenomenology](http://www.britannica.com/place/phenomenology).

<sup>151</sup> Broodbank, *Island Archaeology*.

<sup>152</sup> Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 15.

<sup>153</sup> Andrew Fleming, "Phenomenology and the megaliths of Wales: A dreaming too far?" *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 18:2 (1999), 119-125; Joanna Brück, "Experiencing the Past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory", *Archaeological Dialogues* 12:1 (2005), 45-72; Beatrice Widell, "The Monastic Lifeworld: Memories and Narratives of Landscapes of Early Medieval Monasticism in Argyll, Scotland" *Landscapes* 18:1 (2017), 4-18.

<sup>154</sup> Fleming, "Phenomenology and the megaliths", 119-120.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 119; Widell, "Monastic Lifeworld", 8.

<sup>156</sup> Campbell, "Scots Irish?" 290-291; Rainbird, *Archaeology of Islands*, 3, 67; Broodbank, *Island Archaeology*, 22.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. Emphasis in original.

most often in a negative way.<sup>158</sup> We may prefer to extrapolate from this argument and refer to the modern psyche, rather than the Western psyche, as this may be partially derived from “a Victorian fear of the sea”.<sup>159</sup> By changing our perspective from being land focused, we can attempt to shift our perspective of the people who inhabited the North Channel Zone, and ultimately seek a closer interpretation of their experience within and across this area and “accept that people were at home with the sea...” rather than actively avoiding it.<sup>160</sup>

This phenomenon is seen on islands as large as Britain, which historians readily note held numerous different communities simultaneously. However, it can also be applied to smaller islands, such as the Isle of Man, which Wooding has suggested was divided between the north and south basins of the Irish Sea based on Ogham inscription evidence.<sup>161</sup> The geography of the island itself does seem to play some part in this as a possibility. Where the steep topography and dense forests make traversing an island more difficult, communities may choose to focus on other forms of travel, leading people to have closer connections with those on the opposite shore than on the other end of their same island, known as a “passage area”.<sup>162</sup> These observations can be transferred to the context of the North Channel and may help us examine and understand interactions in this seascape. “The sea was simply one of the media of transport available to early medieval peoples” for travel within their own island, whereas travel between islands would understandably necessitate sea-based travel.<sup>163</sup> Their choice of route and method of travel would consider destination, labour cost, difficulty of terrain, and other factors. The possibility of rugged or difficult interior terrain may cause the coasts of adjacent islands to be considered closer or more accessible than the other side of the same island, arguing against island homogeneity and for the idea that the social or cultural line can be drawn through an island, not just around it.<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>158</sup> Rainbird, *Archaeology of Islands*, 3.

<sup>159</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, 3.

<sup>160</sup> Rainbird, *Archaeology of Islands*, 67.

<sup>161</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, 38.

<sup>162</sup> Rainbird, *Archaeology of Islands*, 22; Broodbank, *Island Archaeology*, 23.

<sup>163</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, p. iii-iv.

<sup>164</sup> Broodbank, *Island Archaeology*, 23.

As an example of a culture which existed across a body of water, we can look to islands off the western coast of British Columbia and Alaska. The Haida people are a First Nation group residing in British Columbia, Canada. While all Haida peoples are part of the Haida Nation, they can be broken down into four branches: the Masset Haida, on the Masset Inlet of northern Graham Island; the Skidegate Haida, including the village of Skidegate and nearby areas of southern Graham Island and northern Moresby Island; the Kunghit Haida, on Kunghit Island, Anthony Island, and southern Moresby Island; and the Kaigani or Alaskan Haida, on Dall Island, southern Prince of Wales Island, and adjacent parts of the southeast Alaskan mainland.<sup>165</sup> A possible additional Haida group, known as the Pitch-Town-People, are believed to have occupied the mainland coast.<sup>166</sup> The distance between Graham Island and Dall island is approximately 56.4km, across the Dixon Entrance. Graham Island and Moresby Island are so close that in some areas they are separated by as little as 70m, which, along with Kunghit Island, Anthony Island, and others make up Haida Gwaii. Haida Gwaii, formerly known as the Queen Charlotte Islands, is an archipelago separated from the mainland of British Columbia to its east by Hecate Strait, which varies in width from approximately 48km at its narrowest and 140km at its widest, and the Prince of Wales Archipelago in southeast Alaska to its north by Dixon Entrance, approximately 56.4km wide.<sup>167</sup> The Haida people and their ancestors have lived in the area for over 10,000 years,<sup>168</sup> showing that it is possible for a single culture group to exist across a body of water.

Taking the phenomenological approach further, Widell connects it to the spiritual perceptions of monks and the relationship of ideas of sacredness to physical landscape, arguing that “the embodied experiences of particular landscape features and movements in the landscape are influenced by our own gender, faith, and age”.<sup>169</sup> Widell’s association between landscape and faith leads to an investigation of “how the monks’ movements in the landscape and

---

<sup>165</sup> Trevor Jonathan Orchard, “Otters and Urchins: Continuity and Change in Haida Economy during the Late Holocene and maritime Fur Trade periods”. PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2007, 65-66.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 66.

<sup>167</sup> Madonna L. Moss, “Islands Coming Out of Concealment: Traveling to Haida Gwaii on the Northwest Coast of North America”, *The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 3:1 (2008), 36.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Widell, “Monastic Lifeworld”, 5.

linked religious experiences influenced their perceptions of monasteries and their location in the landscape”, and potentially even their choice of location for monasteries.<sup>170</sup> She focuses on “what made the landscape isolated in the monastic mind instead of our contemporary notions”. This perception of the sea as a place of danger which must be navigated prioritises the experience of danger rather than the specific physical characteristic, and thus could potentially be applied to other geographic features, such as a steep hill.<sup>171</sup>

### 1.6.3 Sea Conditions

With the experience of early medieval seafarers at the front of our minds, we should consider the sea as they experienced it. The characteristics of the sea and wind in the North Channel Zone necessarily inform the development of possible or likely seaways for communication. Of prime importance for sea travel in the early medieval period are tides, winds, and possible landing sites. There is understandably concern about changes in the shoreline across thousands of years, which Wooding argues “would mostly be within the modern tidal range”, with other differences able to be considered generally negligible for the west coast of Scotland,<sup>172</sup> though the same cannot be said for many parts of the east coast of England.

Early seafarers in the Irish Sea may have looked to safe landing places either to weather storms or as the arrival point for a specific and intended destination. Considering what these locations may have looked like, we should not look for intensely built docks or harbours. These early medieval travellers are more likely to have made use of naturally sheltered bays with shallow shores where their boats could be safely beached.<sup>173</sup> A sailor’s preferred landing site may be described as one which has distinct natural features, such as headlands, an approach that is easy almost without regard to wind direction, a landing place which is sheltered from both the predominant wind and swell, and a beach of gently sloping sand, shingle, or mud.<sup>174</sup> This description acknowledges the unlikelihood that any archaeological evidence would remain at the landing place

---

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, 6, 16.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 13-14.

<sup>172</sup> Wooding, *Communication*, 7.

<sup>173</sup> Rainbird, *Archaeology of Islands*, 82.

<sup>174</sup> Sean McGrail, “Cross-Channel Seamanship”, 311.

itself, unless archaeologists were to experience a great deal of luck in happening upon evidence of fires that may have been set for cooking or warmth near the landing place.

#### 1.6.4 Movement

There is textual evidence for the movement of peoples across the North Channel from as early as the eighth century, visible through the work of Adomnán where we see a widely travelled Community of Columba that spreads from Ireland to Iona, Hinba, Ardnamurchan, *Mag Luinge*, and even to Skye.<sup>175</sup> More general discussion about travel between Ireland and Britain can be seen in the work of Gildas in the sixth century and Bede in the early eighth century. In the ninth century Dícuil writes about sea travel between Ireland and islands to the north. Although Gildas focuses on his own peoples in Britain in his *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*, he does make reference to the *Scoti*, by which he means Goidelic speakers, perhaps from Ireland, and who attacked the Britons.<sup>176</sup> This suggests movement between Ireland and the island of Britain from at least this time. Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, written c. 731, notes that Oswald and his brothers, sons of King Aethelfrith of Bernicia, "together with many young nobles, were living in exile among the Irish or the Picts" during the reign of King Edwin of Bernicia and Deira (d. 633),<sup>177</sup> which could again refer to a movement across the Irish Sea or North Channel. While the use of the word exile does suggest the idea of a place separated from, or apart, this does not necessarily require a geographical separation. Oswald and his brothers were exiled from Northumbria and fled to a separate cultural polity, which could include Dál Riata or Pictland.

Dícuil (fl. c. 795-825) was a monk and geographer from Ireland who travelled to the continent sometime between AD 795 and 814 and spent time at the court of

---

<sup>175</sup> Ireland: VC I.49; Hinba: I.21, I.45, III.5, III.17-18, III.23; Ardnamurchan: I.12, II.10, II.22; *Mag Luinge*: I.30, I.41, II.15, II.39, III.8; Skye: I.33, II.26.

<sup>176</sup> Michael Winterbottom (ed) (trans). Gildas, *The Ruin of Britain, and Other Works* (London: Phillimore, 1978), § 14-15, 19.

<sup>177</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.1; David Dumville and Simon Keynes (ed) (trans), *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983), AD 617.

Charlemagne.<sup>178</sup> In his work, *Liber De Mensura Orbis Terrae*,<sup>179</sup> (completed c. 825) he discussed the islands in the north Atlantic:

There are islands around our own island Hibernia, some small and some very small. Near the island Britannia are many islands, some large, some small, and some medium-sized. Some are in the sea to her south and some in the sea to her west, but they abound mostly to the north-west and north. Among these I have lived in some, and have visited others; some I have only glimpsed, while others I have read about.

*Circum nostram insulam Hiberniam sunt insulae; sed aliae parvae, atque aliae minimae. Juxta insulam Brittanniam multae aliae magnae, aliae, parvae, aliaeque mediae sunt, aliae in Australi mari et aliae in Occidentali; sed magis in parte circii et septentrionis illius abundant. In aliquibus ipsarum habitavi, alias intravi, alias tantum vidi, alias legi.*<sup>180</sup>

In this statement he established his own personal experience and familiarity with the seascape between Ireland and Scotland, as well as to the north of Scotland. He also noted that he spoke with other monks who travelled to islands even further afield.<sup>181</sup> Although Dícuil did not name the Faroes,<sup>182</sup> he described islands to the north of Britain that were reachable “in two summer days and the intervening night” sailing in a “two-benched boat”.<sup>183</sup> It is further established that “for nearly a hundred years” anchorites had been sailing from Ireland to island anchorages in the area, though they were later deserted due to attacks by Northmen.<sup>184</sup> This length of sailing and eremitical activity may have been able to stretch as far as *Thule*, a sometimes mystical island first mentioned by Pytheas and later discussed by Dícuil and Bede.<sup>185</sup> Adam of Bremen (d. 1081/5) explicitly identified *Thule* as Iceland,<sup>186</sup> though more modern interpretations have also

<sup>178</sup> John Contreni, "Dícuil". Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Accessed 10 May 2019. doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/7624.

<sup>179</sup> James J. Tierney (trans). Dícuil. *Liber De Mensura Orbis Terrae*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 5 April 2019. celt.ucc.ie/published/T090000-001/index.html.

<sup>180</sup> Dícuil, *Liber De Mensura Orbis Terrae*, Book VII, ¶6, in Charles Athanase Walckenaer (ed). Dícuil. *Dicuili liber De mensura orbis terrae ex duobus codd. mss.* Bibliothecae imperialis. (Parisiis: ex typis Firmini Didot, 1807), 37-38.

<sup>181</sup> Dícuil, *Liber De Mensura*, Book VII, ¶11, ¶14.

<sup>182</sup> This connection is made by Alfred P. Smyth in *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland AD 80 – 1000* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), 167-168.

<sup>183</sup> Dícuil, *Liber De Mensura*, Book VII, ¶14.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid, ¶15.

<sup>185</sup> Dícuil cites Isidorus, Priscian, and Iulius Solinus, *Liber De Mensura*, Book VII, ¶8, ¶9, ¶10; an additional mention of Thule is seen in Faith Wallis (trans). Saint Bede. *The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 91.

<sup>186</sup> Francis Joseph Tschan, Adam of Bremen. *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), §35; This interpretation has continued into the



suggested Ireland,<sup>187</sup> Shetland,<sup>188</sup> and Norway.<sup>189</sup> Monks had reported trips to the Faroes to Dícuil thirty years before he penned his work, placing them there by AD 725 at the latest.<sup>190</sup> This apparent flurry of early sea travel by Christian ecclesiastics in Ireland suggests that sea-travel itself was widespread and wide ranging by the early eighth century. Rather than serving as an arbitrary or modern political boundary, it is apparent that the North Channel Seascape was a central and active player in the lives of those who lived on its shores and traversed its waves.

## 1.7 Introduction to Principal Saints

As this thesis is organised by site rather than timeframe, it is sometimes necessary to discuss a saint prior to the chapter in which they are introduced in depth. A very brief introduction is given to them here along with the evidence connecting them to Comgall.

### 1.7.1 Comgall

Comgall was the founder of the monastery at Bangor in County Down, Ireland and is introduced in chapter three. His birth is recorded at AU 516 and repeated at AU 520,<sup>191</sup> and his death is recorded at AU 601.<sup>192</sup>

### 1.7.2 Maelruba

Maelruba was the founder of the monastery at Applecross in Wester Ross, Scotland. His birth is not recorded, but his voyage to Britain is recorded at AU

---

modern period in R.M. Ogilvie and Ian Richmond. Cornelius Tacitus. *Cornelii Taciti De Vita Agricola* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 172.

<sup>187</sup> Charles Vallancey, *An Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language* (London: Richard Ryan, 1772), 1-8.

<sup>188</sup> A.L.F. Rivet and Colin Smith, *The Place Names of Roman Britain* (London: Batsford, 1979), 42; Christina Horst Roseman, *Pytheas of Massalia: On the Ocean. Text, Translation and Commentary* (Chicago: Ares, 1994), 155.

<sup>189</sup> Lionel Casson, *The Ancient Mariners: seafarers and sea fighters of the Mediterranean in ancient times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 125-126; David J. Breeze and Alan Wilkins, "Pytheas, Tacitus and Thule," *Britannia* 49 (2018), 303-308.

<sup>190</sup> David Howlett, "Dicuill on the islands of the north", *Peritia* 13 (1999), 134. In the twelfth century Ari Þorgilsson notes that Irish ecclesiastics were believed to have lived in Iceland prior to its settlement by Scandinavians, in Siân Grønlie (trans). Ari Þorgilsson. *Íslendingabók, Kristni saga: The Book of the Icelanders, The Story of Conversion* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2006), 4.

<sup>191</sup> AU 516.2, 520.3; AT 517.1.

<sup>192</sup> AU 601.3, 602.1; AT 600.1.

671 and the foundation of Applecross is included at AU 673.<sup>193</sup> His death is recorded at AU 722,<sup>194</sup> and he was a nephew of Comgall according to the *Martyrology of Óengus* and the *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*.<sup>195</sup> The *Martyrology of Tallaght* notes Maelruba as an abbot of Bangor.<sup>196</sup> There is no surviving *Life* for Maelruba, though he is included in the *Aberdeen Breviary* at 27 August.<sup>197</sup>

### 1.7.3 Moluag

Moluag, the hypochoristic of Lugaid, was the founder of the monastery at Lismore, on the island of the same name in Loch Linnhe. The foundation of Lismore itself is not mentioned in the annals, though Moluag's death is recorded at AU 592<sup>198</sup>. There may be kin-based links between Moluag and Dál nAraide, notably in the *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*, which lists a Moluoc mac Luchta,<sup>199</sup> though no connection is directly attested between him and Comgall in pre-modern sources. A member of Comgall's Community named Luanus, sometimes assumed to be Moluag, is mentioned in the *Life of St Malachy*.<sup>200</sup> There is no surviving *Life* for Moluag, though details given in the *Libellus de nativitate Sancti Cuthberti*, and the *Aberdeen Breviary* suggest that a *Life* may have previously existed.<sup>201</sup>

## 1.8 Summary of Thesis Chapters

With an understanding of the North Channel Seascape and perceptions by modern historians of its peoples and places in the early medieval period, the foundation of the search for the Community of Comgall can really begin. The investigation of Comgall's Community is broken down by location, beginning first with Bangor itself and then moving through the selected locations beginning with the one which seems to have the greatest body of evidence to connect it to the

---

<sup>193</sup> AU 673.5; AT 673.4.

<sup>194</sup> AU 722.1; AT 722.1.

<sup>195</sup> *MarO* 21 Apr, notes; *Suaibsech mathair Mael Rubai m. Elgonaig*. Ó Riain, *CGSH*, Tract on the Mothers of the Saints, 175 (no. 722.50), 178 (no. 722.86).

<sup>196</sup> *MarT*, 21 Apr.

<sup>197</sup> *AB* 27 Aug.

<sup>198</sup> AU 592.1; AT 588.4, 590.1.

<sup>199</sup> Ó Riain, *CGSH*, §121; Macdonald, "Early churches of Tiree", 230.

<sup>200</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 494; Macdonald, "Early churches of Tiree", 230.

<sup>201</sup> Madeline Dodds (trans), "The Little book of the birth of St. Cuthbert", *Archaeologica Aeliana* 4<sup>th</sup> Series 6 (1929), 52-94; Clancy, "Magpie Hagiography", 222-223; *AB*, 25 Jun, 397.

Community, Applecross, thereafter moving in a descending manner of the strength of the evidence to Lismore and then Tiree.

Before moving straight to Bangor, however, Chapter 2 examines the context for relevant textual sources which provide evidence of each monastery. In addition, it is in part from this evidence that the possible Community of Comgall is tested.

Chapter 3 focuses on the evidence for the monastery of Bangor, examining the wider geographic, political, and ecclesiastical landscape within which it was founded and operated. Through the survival of artefacts at Bangor along with textual evidence, the chapter looks at the life and work of Comgall and the general history of the monastery from its foundation, with a focus on pre-Viking events, but extending as far as 1123 for additional context. Place-name evidence looks at other sites in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Brittany with similar names, thus assisting in placing it within its wider landscape. The work undertaken at Bangor and the scholarly and ecclesiastical achievements of its inhabitants and associated literary and liturgical works are also discussed. The chapter ultimately discusses the high status of Bangor monastery and of Comgall himself and the wide spread of his cult.

Chapter 4 focuses on the evidence for the monastery of Applecross and its founder, Maelruba. This chapter begins with the textual evidence for Applecross, placing it within its wider political landscape and looking at the evidence for its abbots. Place-name evidence and surviving artefacts are also included to demonstrate the high status of Applecross at its peak and the stylistic connections seen between Applecross and other Scottish foundations such as Lismore, as well as Ireland and the continent. The evidence for Maelruba is examined for his connections to Bangor as well as the existence of sustained connection after his death and the spread of his cult eastwards across Scotland.

Chapter 5 focuses on the foundation of Lismore. The textual evidence is critically analysed for the connection previously seen in it between Bangor and Lismore Moluag. It goes into specific detail on the confusion of Lismore Moluag and Lismore Mochutu which appears in more modern analyses of the foundations, and seeks to clarify the list of abbots of Lismore Moluag. Surviving artefacts, place-names, and detail about Moluag himself and his later cult are

brought together to discuss the status of Lismore in early medieval Scotland and the evidence for its connections within and outwith Scotland.

Departing somewhat from the format of previous chapters, Chapter 6 focuses on the multiple foundations on the island of Tiree. The chapter places Tiree within its wider seascape and discusses the different saints who were claimed to have made foundations in the sixth and seventh centuries. The island's wider connection to Iona is discussed briefly as is the evidence for each of the saints connected with foundations, as well as the sites noted in archaeology and place-name evidence. Discussion of the saints Comgall, Cainnech, Columba, and Brendan is undertaken, especially in regard to the perception of their personal relationships as evidenced within the *Lives* of each saint, and how this may evidence the use of Tiree as a central station in a water-based travel route between Ireland and Scotland.

Chapter 7 brings together the conclusions from each of the locations discussed in the thesis and brings them back together in the wider question of the visible aspects of a Community, and how that can evidence the existence of a Community of Comgall.

## 2 Textual Sources

It is necessary to make use of a variety of types of textual records in order to get at the heart of the period between AD 500 and 1000. These include annals, genealogies, martyrologies, hagiographies, histories, an antiphony, and a breviary. Below is a discussion of specific sources used along with information on their survival and dating. Due to the low survival rate of textual records from early medieval Scotland, it is necessary to gather the various surviving sources which together can allow conclusions to be drawn, but which on their own may not enable such statements.

### 2.1 Annals

Annals are written materials concerned with the recording of events in chronological order by year and can vary from short, bare entries to descriptions including high levels of detail.<sup>202</sup> In early Ireland, which is the present focus for annals, the entries generally tend towards short, simple entries. This makes them useful not only in determining the existence of an event, but also in setting an approximate date for specific events such as the death of an abbot or major event at a monastery, such as attack or burning. What they are usually unable to provide is any real level of detail regarding the person or event mentioned. Three different annalistic sources are primarily used: the *Annals of Ulster*,<sup>203</sup> the *Annals of Tigernach*,<sup>204</sup> and the *Fragmentary Annals*.<sup>205</sup> The *Annals of Inisfallen*, which focus more on Munster,<sup>206</sup> have also been consulted in

---

<sup>202</sup> See generally David Dumville, "What is a Chronicle?" in *The medieval Chronicle II: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle, Driebergen/Utrecht 16-21 July 1999*, (ed) Erik Kooper, 1-26 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002).

<sup>203</sup> Two sources are used for the *Annals of Ulster*: in English translation – Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed and trans). "Annals of Ulster AD 431-1201". Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie/published/T100001A/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100001A/index.html); in dual Latin and English – Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (ed and trans). *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983).

<sup>204</sup> Two sources are used for the *Annals of Tigernach*: In English Translation - Gearóid Mac Niocaill. "Annals of Tigernach". Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie/published/T100002A/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100002A/index.html); in dual Latin and English - Tigernach, Whitley Stokes. *The Annals of Tigernach* (Felinfach, Lampeter, Dyfed [Wales]: Llanerch Publishers, 1993).

<sup>205</sup> Two sources are used for the *Fragmentary Annals*: In English Translation - Joan Newlon Radner (trans), "Fragmentary Annals of Ireland". Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie/published/T100017/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100017/index.html); In the original language – Radner, Joan Newlon. *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978.

<sup>206</sup> Thomas Charles-Edwards, *The Chronicle of Ireland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 2.

chapter 4 to assist in the interpretation of entries associated with foundations called Lismore.<sup>207</sup> I have shied away from using *The Annals of the Four Masters* due to their late composition in the seventeenth century and the inability to confirm the details of events that solely appear in that set of annals.<sup>208</sup> I will, however, refer to them briefly where directly applicable to the discussion. Scholarly opinion on when annals in Ireland become contemporary ranges from as early as the mid-sixth century to as late as the latter half of the seventh century. Charles-Edwards argued that, even if incorporated later, earlier-sixth-century items could still derive from “genuine information”,<sup>209</sup> while Hughes viewed the 680s as a more appropriate date.<sup>210</sup> Though there must be events that were entered retrospectively by the inherent nature of incorporating one annalistic source into another, this does not require all entries from prior to that incorporation date to be faulty. With the possibility of earlier dates of contemporaneity in mind, we may choose to follow a middle ground and view the annals as contemporary “at least from the early seventh century”.<sup>211</sup>

A copy of the “Iona Chronicle” was taken to Ireland c. 740, which then underlies the Chronicle of Ireland (up to 911), which is itself the foundation of the later medieval collections such as the *Annals of Ulster* and *Annals of Tigernach*.<sup>212</sup> There is some possibility that the “Iona Chronicle” was merged with a separate chronicle based at Bangor.<sup>213</sup> Sillán moccu Mind, abbot of Bangor (AD 608-610)

---

<sup>207</sup> Three sources are used for the *Annals of Inisfallen*: In English Translation – Seán Mac Airt (trans). *The Annals of Inisfallen*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie/published/T100004/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100004/index.html); Seán (ed. and trans.), *The Annals of Inisfallen*: MS. Rawlinson B. 503 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951); in the original language - Seán Mac Airt (ed). *Annals of Inisfallen*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie/published/G100004/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/G100004/index.html).

<sup>208</sup> Though Colmán Etchingham does make an argument for their inclusion in Colmán Etchingham, *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century: A Reconsideration of the Annals*, vol. 1 (Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, St Patrick's College, 1996), 4-6.

<sup>209</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 443-444; this view seems to be shared by Daniel P. McCarthy, *The Irish Annals: Their Genesis, Evolution and History* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), 159.

<sup>210</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 118.

<sup>211</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 23.

<sup>212</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Chronicle of Ireland*, 1-2; Isabel Henderson, *The Picts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), 165-168. This will be discussed further below. James Fraser takes the existence of an Iona Chronicle as established throughout his book: James E. Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland: Scotland to 795*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009). Nicholas Evans, “Irish chronicles as sources for the history of northern Britain, A.D. 660-800”, *The Innes Review* 69.1 (2018), 46.

<sup>213</sup> Compilation suggested c. 740 according to O’Rahilly, *Early Irish History*, 253; John W.M. Bannerman, “Notes on the Scottish Entries in the Early Irish Annals”, in John Bannerman *Kinship, Church and Culture: Collected Essays and Studies* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2016), 9-10, 25; Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 163; compilation suggested between AD 690 and 710 in MacNeill, Eoin. “The Hymn of St. Secundinus in Honour of St. Patrick”, *Irish Historical Studies*

may have been involved in the development of a hypothetical “Bangor Chronicle”, which would have merged into the “Iona Chronicle”.<sup>214</sup> In 1940 Eoin MacNeill first suggested that the chronicle underlying the *Annals of Ulster* was compiled at Bangor.<sup>215</sup> Following this line of reasoning, O’Rahilly suggested that an “Ulster Chronicle” had been compiled c. 740 in eastern Ulster, likely at Bangor; a suggestion which appears to be based on the inclusion of material from a chronicle kept at Iona.<sup>216</sup> Kathleen Hughes then suggested the existence of a “Bangor Chronicle” which focused on the Dál Fiatach and Dál nAraide, based on the correlation of annalistic obits for abbots of Bangor and the list of abbots included in the *Antiphonary of Bangor*.<sup>217</sup> Isabel Henderson notes the suggestion that a compilation of annals may have happened at Bangor, but goes on to further discuss a Scottish annalistic record located at Iona in the middle of the eighth century.<sup>218</sup> Bannerman suggests that Bangor is a likely place of origin for the inclusion of Scottish entries into the *Annals of Ulster* because of its known contacts with Iona specifically, but also with Scotland more generally.<sup>219</sup> Smyth argues that it was the “traditional friendship between Bangor and Iona ... that must account for the fact that the copy of the Iona annals was transcribed c. 740 at Bangor”.<sup>220</sup> Smyth further argues that the evidence for Bangor having its own annalistic tradition “is rendered very weak” when the lack of original material which can be assigned to Bangor is considered, especially as much of it can be assigned to Iona itself.<sup>221</sup>

Gearoid Mac Niócaill argues against any placement of the annals at Bangor, “on the grounds that close relations between Bangor and Iona are a sufficient explanation of material relating to east Ulster in the text”.<sup>222</sup> He goes on to

---

2, no. 6 (1940), 130; Henderson notes the suggestion that the *Annals of Ulster* may have been compiled at Bangor, but gives no argument of her own, Henderson, *The Picts*, 167-168; Thomas Charles-Edwards argues that the AD 740 compilation occurred at Iona before moving to Brega in *Chronicle of Ireland*, 58.

<sup>214</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 122-123.

<sup>215</sup> Eoin MacNeill, “The Hymn of St. Secundinus in honour of St Patrick,” *Irish Historical Studies* 2.6 (1940), 130.

<sup>216</sup> O’Rahilly, *Early Irish History*, 253-255.

<sup>217</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 122-123.

<sup>218</sup> Henderson, *The Picts*, 165-168

<sup>219</sup> John Bannerman, “Notes on the Scottish Entries in the Early Irish Annals,” in John Bannerman *Kinship, Church and Culture: Collected Essays and Studies* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2016), 14-15.

<sup>220</sup> AP Smyth, “The Earliest Irish Annals: Their First Contemporary Entries and the Earliest Centres of Recording”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 72 (1972), 35-41.

<sup>221</sup> Smyth, “Earliest Irish Annals,” 41.

<sup>222</sup> Mac Airt and Mac Noicaill, *The Annals of Ulster*, x.

suggest Meath, and specifically Clonard, as the location of the annals following Iona due to an increased interest in Meath seen in the annals.<sup>223</sup> Thomas Charles-Edwards argues that the “Iona Chronicle” fed into a “Brega Chronicle” after AD 740 rather than one at Bangor based on the inclusion of scholars (*scriba* and *sapiens*) at Briga in the Chronicle, and which, along with the Chronicle, also had an interest in Armagh.<sup>224</sup> The final consideration of a “Bangor Chronicle” is thus not completely settled, though Bangor’s position as a monastery known for its written output (see section 3.5.2), a reputation for learning, and its high-status position, in addition to its interest in the west of Scotland through foundations such as Applecross,<sup>225</sup> suggests that we might expect annals to have been kept there.

The reconstructed *Chronicle of Ireland* was an ecclesiastical document meant for an ecclesiastical readership and reached AD 911.<sup>226</sup> The *Annals of Ulster*, described as “the best text of the early annals”, is part of a textual tradition from the *Chronicle of Ireland* which continued at Armagh,<sup>227</sup> having diverged from its related Clonmacnoise-group of annals c. 911.<sup>228</sup>

The *Annals of Ulster* survive in four manuscripts, H, R, C, and D. MS H is held at Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 1282 (*olim* H. 1. 8), and dated to the sixteenth century.<sup>229</sup> MS R is held at Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 489, and dated to the early sixteenth century.<sup>230</sup> MS R is a fair copy of MS H but with supplementary entries, and it preserves some text lost by mutilation in MS H.<sup>231</sup> MS C survives in two parts, known as C(1) and C(2), and is dated to the seventeenth century.<sup>232</sup> C(1) is held at London, British Library, Additional 4795

<sup>223</sup> Mac Airt and Mac Noicail, *The Annals of Ulster*, xi-xii.

<sup>224</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Chronicle of Ireland*, 9-14.

<sup>225</sup> Nicholas Evans, *The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 25-27. Isabel Henderson suggests records from Applecross were integrated with the *Chronicle* via Bangor in “North Pictland”, in *The Dark Ages in the Highlands*, edited by Edward Meldrum (Inverness: Inverness Field Club, 1972), 43-49.

<sup>226</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Chronicle of Ireland*, 1-6.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, Kathryn Grabowski and David Dumville, *Chronicles and Annals of Medieval Ireland and Wales: The Clonmacnoise-group Texts* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1984), 55-56.

<sup>229</sup> CELT. *Annals of Ulster*; CODECS. “Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1282”. Accessed 5 June 2018. [vanhamel.nl/codecs/Dublin,\\_Trinity\\_College,\\_MS\\_1282](http://vanhamel.nl/codecs/Dublin,_Trinity_College,_MS_1282).

<sup>230</sup> CODECS. “Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 489”. Accessed 5 June 2018. [vanhamel.nl/codecs/Oxford,\\_Bodleian\\_Library,\\_MS\\_Rawlinson\\_B\\_489](http://vanhamel.nl/codecs/Oxford,_Bodleian_Library,_MS_Rawlinson_B_489).

<sup>231</sup> CELT. *Annals of Ulster*.

<sup>232</sup> C(1): CODECS. “London, British Library, MS Additional 4795”. Accessed 5 June 2018. [www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,\\_British\\_Library,\\_MS\\_Additional\\_4795](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,_British_Library,_MS_Additional_4795); C(2): CODECS.



(*olim* Clarendon xlix); the text extends from AD 431 to 1132.1 and 1156 to 1307.<sup>233</sup> C(2) is held at London, British Library, Additional 4789 (*olim* Clarendon xliiii); the text extends from AD 1486 to 1504.<sup>234</sup> MS D is held at London, British Library, Additional 4784 (*olim* Clarendon xx), and has been dated to the early seventeenth century.<sup>235</sup> This is a translation into Latin of the Irish text, AD 1200-1296.<sup>236</sup> The *Annals of Ulster* will be consulted as the anchoring annalistic source, with others used to further support or supplement where possible.

The *Annals of Tigernach*, which likewise incorporate the “Iona Chronicle”, have an unfortunate gap between AD 767 and 973. Despite this void, The *Annals of Tigernach* are used alongside The *Annals of Ulster* in order to uncover the *Chronicle of Ireland* which underlies both, with The *Annals of Tigernach* belonging to the Clonmacnoise group of annals.<sup>237</sup> The *Annals of Tigernach* survive in two manuscripts, however only one is of interest to the period under investigation. This MS is held at Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 488, in three fragments: (i) AD 489-766, (ii) 973-1003, (iii) 1018-1178,<sup>238</sup> which have been variously dated in part to the late fourteenth - early fifteenth century and in part to the seventeenth century.<sup>239</sup>

The *Fragmentary Annals* often venture into extended prose, unlike The *Annals of Ulster* and *Annals of Tigernach*, which are predominantly in a short-form reporting style. The *Fragmentary Annals* are limited in terms of entries and appear to have a likely compilation date (in their current form) as late as the fifteenth century.<sup>240</sup> What is of value, however, is the underlying series of short-form annal collections, which contain some unique information, and the augmented prose which, where available, provides a substantial level of detail for the events described.<sup>241</sup> The *Fragmentary Annals* survive in a single

---

"London, British Library, MS Additional 4789". Accessed 5 June 2018.  
[www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,\\_British\\_Library,\\_MS\\_Additional\\_4789](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,_British_Library,_MS_Additional_4789).

<sup>233</sup> CELT. *Annals of Ulster*.

<sup>234</sup> CELT. *Annals of Ulster*.

<sup>235</sup> CODECS. "London, British Library, MS Additional 4784". Accessed 5 June 2018.  
[www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,\\_British\\_Library,\\_MS\\_Additional\\_4784](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,_British_Library,_MS_Additional_4784).

<sup>236</sup> CELT. *Annals of Ulster*.

<sup>237</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Chronicle of Ireland*, 7.

<sup>238</sup> CELT. *Annals of Tigernach*.

<sup>239</sup> CODECS. "Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 488". Accessed 5 June 2018.  
[www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Oxford,\\_Bodleian\\_Library,\\_MS\\_Rawlinson\\_B\\_488](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Oxford,_Bodleian_Library,_MS_Rawlinson_B_488).

<sup>240</sup> Radner, *Fragmentary Annals*, vii.

<sup>241</sup> Michael Curran, *The Antiphonary of Bangor and the Early Irish Monastic Liturgy* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1984), 81-83.

manuscript, now held at Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 5301-5320, dated to the seventeenth century,<sup>242</sup> and copied by the scribe Dubhaltach Mac Firbhisigh from a vellum MS, now lost, of Giolla na Naomh (alias Nehemias) Mac Aodhagáin, who may have died c. 1443.<sup>243</sup> This lost MS was in poor condition, partly unbound, and illegible in places when Mac Firbhisigh copied it. The surviving text contains annals in five parts: AD 573-628, AD 662-704, AD 716-35, AD 851-73, and AD 906-14, and may ultimately derive, at least partially, from annals kept at the monastery of Clonenagh;<sup>244</sup> however, Radner suggests that the source for FA I-III could have been compiled at Durrow (Co Offaly) due to its interest in the Uí Néill, Iona, and Adomnán.<sup>245</sup> Byrne suggests that a member of the Ua Brolcháin family, which includes Máel Gaimrid, abbot of Bangor (d. 839), and Dub Innse, bishop of Bangor (d. 953), could have been a compiler of the *Fragmentary Annals*.<sup>246</sup>

*The Annals of Inisfallen* were compiled c. 1092, perhaps at Emly or Inisfallen Abbey, both in Munster,<sup>247</sup> and continued into the early fourteenth century at different monasteries in Munster, perhaps including Tomgraney, Killaloe, and Lismore (Mochutu) before reaching Inisfallen, which understandably gives them greater focus on the south of Ireland. The *Annals* were obtained by Sir James Ware (d. 1666) sometime in the very early seventeenth century, and are recorded in his catalogue of books as “*Annales coenobii Inisfallensis in agro Kerriano*”.<sup>248</sup> The *Annals of Inisfallen* survive in a late eleventh-century manuscript which includes later additions, now held in the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 503).<sup>249</sup>

---

<sup>242</sup> CODECS. "Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 5301–5320". Accessed 5 June 2018. [www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Brussels,\\_Bibliothèque\\_Royale\\_de\\_Belgique,\\_MS\\_5301-5320](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Brussels,_Bibliothèque_Royale_de_Belgique,_MS_5301-5320).

<sup>243</sup> CELT. *Fragmentary Annals*.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Radner, *Fragmentary Annals*, xix-xxi.

<sup>246</sup> Francis J. Byrne, "Ireland before the battle of Clontarf", in *A New History of Ireland*, vol 1, (ed.) Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 856.

<sup>247</sup> Mac Airt, *Annals of Inisfallen*; suggesting compilation at Emly: CELT. *Annals of Inisfallen*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie/published/T100004/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100004/index.html); suggesting compilation at Inisfallen: Evans, *Present and the Past*, 12-13; Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 99-162.

<sup>248</sup> CELT, *Annals of Inisfallen*.

<sup>249</sup> CODECS. "Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 503". Accessed 22 May 2018. [www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Oxford,\\_Bodleian\\_Library,\\_MS\\_Rawlinson\\_B\\_503](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Oxford,_Bodleian_Library,_MS_Rawlinson_B_503).

## 2.2 Genealogies

Medieval Irish genealogies were created for the purpose of supporting claims to power, territory, and association between specific peoples or larger family groups, succinctly put by Donnchadh Ó Corráin as “the demand the present makes upon the past, not knowledge of the past for its own sake”.<sup>250</sup> This means it is important not to accept its evidence at first glance, though “a considerable amount of the material that can be independently verified is remarkably accurate”.<sup>251</sup> This information can be useful to track purported kinship relations for saints, and attempt to identify possible secular power groups that may have supported their monastery. Genealogies are also useful for cross-referencing information found in hagiographies or martyrologies, thus helping to make all three types of textual evidence stronger when examining details of possible members of the Community of Comgall.

The *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* is a collection of genealogies of saints and other miscellaneous records of saints, which survives in numerous manuscripts.<sup>252</sup> As Ó Riain succinctly puts it, the genealogies “were never intended to be simple memorials of the past” and their creators were concerned with ecclesiastical dynasticism.<sup>253</sup> With this in mind, the genealogies are of value as they may provide information on what families provided successors to a saint’s church,<sup>254</sup> or were in later control of it and wanted to make links between themselves and the founding saint, or even with secular patrons. The earliest surviving manuscript is Rawlinson B 502 (R), previously known as *The Book of Glendalough*, consisting of a collection of multiple independent texts brought together and written down in the first half of the twelfth century, with a likely original composition sometime after c. 938, possibly in north-east Ulster, or

---

<sup>250</sup> Donnchadh Ó Corráin, “Creating the Past: The Early Irish Genealogical Tradition”, *Peritia* 12 (1998), 185.

<sup>251</sup> Nollaig Ó Muraíle (ed) (trans), *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach: The Great Book of Irish Genealogies*, vol 1 (Dublin: Éamon de Búrca, 2003), 11; see also: Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 160-162.

<sup>252</sup> A discussion of the manuscripts is available in the Introduction of Ó Riain, *CGSH*, xviii-liv.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid*, xlvii.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid*, xv.

perhaps even at Bangor.<sup>255</sup> Also of note is the *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, another collection of Irish genealogical material, both secular and ecclesiastic.<sup>256</sup>

*Leabhar mór na nGenealach* is a collection of genealogical material compiled by Dubhaltach MacFírbhí at St. Nicholas' Collegiate Church in Galway between 1649 and 1666, containing Irish genealogical lore from pre-Christian times up to the middle of the seventeenth century.<sup>257</sup> One of the major sources used for Book 8: Genealogies of the saints was “almost certainly” the *Book of Leinster*, a twelfth-century codex.<sup>258</sup>

## 2.3 Martyrologies

A martyrology is a list of saints' names and their corresponding feast days, organized according to the calendar of the year,<sup>259</sup> sometimes giving additional detail about the saints and their lives. They are helpful for collecting additional evidence of monks associated with Bangor, Applecross, Lismore, or other monasteries of interest, which can also go into constructing lists of abbots. Three martyrologies are consulted in this thesis: the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, the *Martyrology of Óengus*, and the *Martyrology of Gorman*.

The *Martyrology of Tallaght* was originally compiled at Tallaght between AD 828 and 833,<sup>260</sup> and a metrical version of this same martyrology, known as the *Martyrology of Óengus*,<sup>261</sup> was composed soon after, likely also at Tallaght.<sup>262</sup> The *Martyrology of Tallaght* survives in two manuscripts: Dublin, Trinity College, MS 1339 (Book of Leinster) (*olim* H 2.18) - dated to the twelfth century; and

---

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii, xxvii-xxix.

<sup>256</sup> Michael O'Brien and John Kelleher, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001).

<sup>257</sup> Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar Mór*, 4-5.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.

<sup>259</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, *Feastdays of the Saints: A History of Irish Martyrologies* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 2006), xvii.

<sup>260</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, “The Tallaght Martyrologies, Redated”, *Cambridge Medieval Studies* 20 (1990), 36-37; Ó Riain, *Feastdays*; see also David Dumville, “*Féilire Óengusso*: Problems of Dating a Monument of Old Irish”, *Éigse* 33 (2002), 19-48; Richard Irvine Best and H.J. Lawlor (ed) (trans). *The martyrology of Tallaght: from the Book of Leinster and MS. 5100-4 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, vol. 68 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1931).

<sup>261</sup> For a discussion on the dating and surviving manuscripts of *The Martyrology of Óengus*, see Pádraig Ó Riain, “The Martyrology of Óengus: The Transmission of the Text”, *Studia Hibernica* 31 (2000/2001), 221-242; Whitley Stokes (trans), Saint Óengus the Culdee. *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* (London: Printed for the Society by Harrison and Sons, 1905).

<sup>262</sup> Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, xxiii.

Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 5100-5104 - dated to 1630. The modern edition of the *Martyrology of Tallaght* referred to in this thesis was edited and translated by Richard I. Best and Hugh J. Lawlor in 1931.<sup>263</sup> The *Martyrology of Óengus* was originally composed between AD 829 and 833,<sup>264</sup> and survives in ten manuscripts dated to between 1400 and 1630, all of which contain a later commentary and glosses.<sup>265</sup> These manuscripts, along with their approximate dates (as given by Ó Riain) are: Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 5100-5104 - dated to 1630; Dublin, National Library of Ireland, G 10 - dated to the sixteenth century; Killiney, Franciscan Library A 7 - dated to 1490; Oxford, laud Misc. 610 (White Earl's Book) - dated to the early fifteenth century; Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 23 P 16 (Leabhar Breac) - dated to 1408-1411; Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 23 P 3 - dated to 1467-1470; Oxford, Rawlinson B 505 - dated the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries; Oxford, Rawlinson B 512 - dated to 1500; London, British Library, Egerton 88 - dated to 1569; and Dublin, Trinity College Library, 1337 (*olim* H 3.18) - date uncertain.<sup>266</sup> The modern edition of the *Martyrology of Óengus* consulted in this thesis was compiled and translated by Whitley Stokes and published in 1905.<sup>267</sup> The *Martyrology of Gorman*,<sup>268</sup> a text related to both the martyrologies of *Tallaght* and *Óengus*, was compiled around AD 1165-1175 by Máel Muire Ua Gormáin at Knock Abbey near Louth,<sup>269</sup> though it survives in a single copy by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh from 1630: Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MS 5100-5104.<sup>270</sup> Although the *Martyrology of Tallaght* is the earliest and arguably core text,<sup>271</sup> the extant MS has some missing

---

<sup>263</sup> Richard Irvine Best and H. J. Lawlor (ed) (trans). *The martyrology of Tallaght: from the Book of Leinster and MS. 5100-4 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, vol. 68 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1931)

<sup>264</sup> Best and Lawlor, *Martyrology of Tallaght*, ix.

<sup>265</sup> Ó Riain, "Martyrology of Óengus", 225, 235-238. Note that Ó Riain has detected an interrelationship between the *Martyrology of Óengus* and the *Martyrology of Gorman*.

<sup>266</sup> Ó Riain, "Martyrology of Óengus", 226.

<sup>267</sup> Whitley Stokes (trans). Saint Óengus the Culdee. *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Óengus the Culdee*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1905.

<sup>268</sup> Dated to c. 1170 in Ó Riain, "Martyrology of Óengus", 235; Whitley Stokes, *Féilire húi Gormáin: The martyrology of Gorman, from a manuscript in the Royal Library, Brussels*. Henry Bradshaw Society 9 (London: Harrison, 1895).

<sup>269</sup> Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, xxiii.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, 147.

<sup>271</sup> The earliest surviving copy is part of the *Book of Leinster* made after c. 1152, as noted in Ó Riain, "Tallaght Martyrologies", 21.

folios and needs to be supplemented by comparing it with the Martyrologies of Óengus and Gorman.<sup>272</sup>

The *Martyrology of Tallaght* shows a firm interest in events in Scotland, seen in the inclusion of twelve abbots of Iona,<sup>273</sup> and the martyrdom of Donnán of Eigg with his monks c. 617.<sup>274</sup> The importance of St Comgall, and thus the monastery at Bangor, is indicated by the detailed treatment the saint receives, which includes the name of his church, his age, and the number of years, months, and days he spent as abbot.<sup>275</sup> It is suggested that Bangor had a role in the transmission of the *Martyrology*, which may have come to Bangor from Iona before moving on to Tallaght.<sup>276</sup>

While the martyrologies of *Tallaght* and *Óengus* were first compiled in the ninth century, considerable notes were added in the twelfth century.<sup>277</sup> Thus, careful consideration must be taken to prioritise the earliest data from the sources and to be clear when the later notes are being referred to. The main body of text for the *Martyrology of Óengus* is in verse and contains only a fraction of the information seen in the Martyrologies of *Tallaght* and *Gorman*, with the appended notes included in a more prose format.

## 2.4 Hagiographies

Hagiographies are not strict histories as we understand them to be today. Kathleen Hughes stated that “[h]agiography is not history”,<sup>278</sup> noting instead that it is “a conscious literary composition and not merely a repository of evidence for historian and archaeologist”.<sup>279</sup> Widell further describes the purpose of a hagiography as presenting “the life and spiritual events related to a saint that took place in various locations which together shape a mental landscape of the

<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 21-23; Ó Riain, “Martyrology of Óengus”, 222 n. 6; A useful discussion of the dependence of MO on MT is seen in Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, 99-118.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 59; MT, 12 Jan, 10, 17, 20, 29, 30 Apr; AU 617.1; AT 615.1.

<sup>275</sup> *Comgaill Bennchair xci anno aetatis eius principatus autem .I. anno et mense iii et decimo die*, Comgall of Bennchor, 91 years old, in the leadership (of Bangor) 50 years, 3 months, and 14 days, MT 10 May.

<sup>276</sup> Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, 68, 75, 319.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>278</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 219.

<sup>279</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 25.

author's own time".<sup>280</sup> From a phenomenological perspective, hagiographies accurately present "the outwardly- and inwardly-experienced landscapes of early medieval Christians",<sup>281</sup> and authentic experiences of monasteries as places and the experience of monks' travels.

The stories related in hagiographies may reveal one of four different possibilities: that the hagiography reveals what it was really like in the time in which the story is set, what the author thought things were really like in the time the story is set, what things were really like in the time in which the author was writing, or what the author would have liked things to be like in the time in which he is writing.<sup>282</sup>

With this in mind, it is possible to comb through the hagiographic conventions apparent in saints' Lives to find useful information. Hughes notes that "it is the incidental information in the Lives which is likely to be of most value to the historian".<sup>283</sup> Hagiographies seem, perhaps unintentionally, to heavily contain information from the time of the author. This means that the researcher must dig through this much later material in an attempt to reach any underlying early material which derives from much earlier in the medieval period, with the exception of the few surviving earlier compositions, such as Adomnán's *Life of St Columba* written c. 700.<sup>284</sup> Their purpose then, seems to have included a desire to leverage the importance and sanctity of their subject as a means of supporting their own models of behaviour at the time of writing, and indicating the relationships they wanted to portray between their own Communities and the Communities of other saints and foundations,<sup>285</sup> including political and power-based interests in both ecclesiastical and secular arenas. Thus, it is

---

<sup>280</sup> Widell, "Monastic Lifeworld", 6.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>282</sup> Gilbert Márkus, "Iona: monks, pastors and missionaries", in *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots: Saint Columba, Iona and Scotland*, (ed) Dauvit Broun and Thomas Owen Clancy (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 121-122.

<sup>283</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 220.

<sup>284</sup> James F. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical: An Introduction and Guide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 297; Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 217-248; Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 10; Herbert, *IKD*, 12.

<sup>285</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 299.

possible to coax useful information from them, provided care is taken to examine them critically and with an awareness of their purpose and context.<sup>286</sup>

Many of the extant Irish collections of Latin *Lives* of saints survive in manuscripts from the thirteenth through seventeenth centuries.<sup>287</sup> These Latin *Lives* have been abridged in some cases and edited to varying degrees in nearly all cases.<sup>288</sup> The *Lives* of Comgall, Cainnech, and Brendan included in the present research come from two main sources, both called *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, with one edited by Heist and one by Plummer, which incorporate different manuscripts for their versions. Additionally considered is Adomnán's *Vita Sancti Columbae* (c. 700), Jonas' *Vita Columbani* (c. 639-641) and Bernard of Clairvaux's *Liber De vita et rebus gestis Sancti Malachiae Hiberniae Episcopi* (c. 1150).

The *Life* of Comgall has the most obvious relevance here, though the *Lives* of Columba, Brendan, and Cainnech are valuable as well. These saints were also active in the North Channel Seascape, thus providing some additional insight into that area. Further, the four saints were contemporary and even appeared in each other's *Lives*. The *Life* of Columbanus is included because he was a student of Comgall, and the possibility remains that some sense of Comgall's Rule and tutelage may be discernible through the *Life* of Columbanus. The *Life* of Malachy touches on the history of Bangor in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, bringing information on the decline of the foundation and its networks. The so-called Irish *Life* of Cuthbert is of note due to its connections to Moluag.

*Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* as edited by Plummer was published in 1910.<sup>289</sup> Kenney, writing in 1929, described it as “the most valuable of recent contributions to Irish hagiology”.<sup>290</sup> It contains 34 Latin *Lives* along with an introduction, *addenda*, and *corrigenda*. The *Lives* in Plummer's edition come from four manuscripts: Two “sister” MSS called the Dublin Collection:<sup>291</sup> (M) V. 3.4 in Marsh's Library, Dublin (also called *Codex Kilkenniensis* or *Codex Ardmachanus*) and (T) Dublin, Trinity College, MS 175 (*olim* E 3.II); and two

---

<sup>286</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 9.

<sup>287</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 293.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid*, 294.

<sup>289</sup> Plummer, *VSH*.

<sup>290</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 290.

<sup>291</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 94.



related MSS known as the Oxford Collection located in two Rawlinson MSS in the Bodleian Library, Rawlinson B 485 (R1) and Rawlinson B 505 (R2).<sup>292</sup> (R2) was thought to be a copy of (R1) by Plummer,<sup>293</sup> who further believed both MSS to have belonged to Saints' Island in Lough Ree.<sup>294</sup> Sharpe questioned the connection of the manuscripts prior to their coming together in the possession of Sir James Ware, ultimately concluding that they indeed had separate histories until that time.<sup>295</sup> Plummer dates (M) and (T) to the fifteenth century,<sup>296</sup> and (R1) between the first half of the thirteenth and the fifteenth century.<sup>297</sup> Sharpe gives a fourteenth-century date to (R1), and dates (R2) to the late fourteenth-century.<sup>298</sup> These dates appear to refer to the compilation of the various recensions, with the date of the language itself less addressed. Sharpe argues that the "earliest and fullest version now surviving" for the *Life of Comgall* comes from a text called (D), which represents a late twelfth-century recension common to both (M) and (T), and is that printed by Plummer in *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*.<sup>299</sup> This is the version used in this thesis for *Vita Sancti Comgalli*. Although Plummer, *VSH* contains *Lives* for Brendan, Cainnech, and Columba, I have chosen to draw my sources from other versions in an attempt to work from the most complete versions available.

The *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* as edited by Heist comes from the manuscript known as *Codex Salmanticensis*, which "has on the whole undergone the least editorial revision by the fourteenth-century compilers", with the language itself suggesting earlier composition, which Heist places in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.<sup>300</sup> *Codex Salmanticensis* was transcribed in Ireland in the fourteenth century and includes forty-eight *Lives* of saints, all except one of which are Irish saints.<sup>301</sup> In approximately 1620 or 1625 the manuscript was obtained from the College of Salamanca for a collection owned by Father Heribert Rosweyde, the founder of the Bollandists, and finally became part of the Burgundian Library,

---

<sup>292</sup> Sharpe labels these, (R) and (I), respectively in Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 247.

<sup>293</sup> Plummer, *VSH*, ix, xx.

<sup>294</sup> Plummer, *VSH*, ix, xx.

<sup>295</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 249-262.

<sup>296</sup> Plummer, *VSH*, xii.

<sup>297</sup> Plummer, *VSH*, xxi-xxii.

<sup>298</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 249, 252-254; Plummer, *VSH*, xxi-xxii.

<sup>299</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 94-119, 216, 393.

<sup>300</sup> Heist, *VSH*, xi.

<sup>301</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 221.

which is now the Royal Library of Brussels.<sup>302</sup> *Codex Salmanticensis*, and through it Heist's *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, includes a series of likely nine *Lives* which survive as a detectable and coherent collection called the O'Donohue Lives after the man who incorporated them into the collection, which Sharpe dates to the eighth century and Herbert more specifically dates to AD 766-780.<sup>303</sup> These nine *Lives* include: Ailbe of Emly (*Imlech*); *Vita prior* of Lugaid of Clonfert Molua (*Cluain Ferta Molua*); Fintan of Clonenagh (*Cluain Edhnech*); Finan of Kinnitty (*Cenn Etigh*); Ruadán of Lorrha (*Lothra*); Áed, bishop of Killare (*Killariensis*); Cainnech of Aghaboe (*Achad Bo*);<sup>304</sup> *Vita prior* of Fintan of Taghmon (*Tech Munnu*); and Colmán of Lynally (*Lann Elo*).<sup>305</sup> Of this group, only the *Life* of Cainnech will be analysed here. Kenney notes that the *Lives* contained in the beginning of the manuscript must necessarily be older than those in the later sections, while the whole manuscript, "compared with other collections of Irish *Acta Sanctorum*,<sup>306</sup> represents an earlier stage of development", which he argues is visible in the "primitive character" of the subject matter and the early forms of Irish place-names and personal names.<sup>307</sup> This is the source used for the *Lives* of Brendan, Cainnech, and Baithéne. Five versions of the Latin *Life* of Brendan survive, of which four are conflated with the *Navigatio*.<sup>308</sup> The version of Brendan's *Vita* chosen here, *Vita altera sancti Brendani abbatis Clonfertensis*, does not include the *Navigatio*. *Codex Salmanticensis* contains a very short version of the *Vita Sancti Comgalli*, which will be briefly discussed here, but is not used as the main manuscript of Comgall's *Life*.

The *Codex Salmanticensis*/Heist version of *Vita Sancti Comgalli Abbatis Bennchorensis* consists of only 6 sections. The first section mentions the names

---

<sup>302</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 305.

<sup>303</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 297-303; Máire Herbert, "The Vita Columbae and Irish hagiography: a study of Vita Cainnechi", in *Studies in Irish hagiography: saints and scholars*, (ed) John Carey, Máire Herbert, and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 39.

<sup>304</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 297-300; Gilbert Márkus, "The Life of St Cainnech of Aghaboe". *Eòlas nan Naomh: Early Christianity in Uist*. Accessed 14 March 2019. [uistsaints.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-and-notes.pdf](http://uistsaints.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-and-notes.pdf).

<sup>305</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 297.

<sup>306</sup> Joseph Hippolyte Ghesquière, Corneille Smet, and Jean François Thys, *Acta Sanctorum Belgii Selecta: Quae Tum Ex Monumentis Sinceris in Bollandiano Opere Editis, Tum Ex Vastissimo Illo Opere, Servatâ Primigeniâ Scriptorum Phrasi* (Bruxellis: typis Matthaei Lemaire, 1783).

<sup>307</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 305.

<sup>308</sup> J.S. Mackley, *The Legend of St Brendan: A Comparative Study of the Latin and Anglo-Norman Versions* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 45-46; Richard Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 390-391.

of Comgall's parents and tells a brief story about a conversation they had with Saint Mac Nisse, the bishop of Connor, before Comgall's birth. The second section discusses Comgall's infancy. Section three discusses Comgall's childhood and apparent holiness even at a young age. Section four details miracles of the raising of the dead, and refers to Comgall as abbot of the monastery, though no name is given to said monastery. Section five details a story of Columba traveling from Iona to Bangor, where he recognises Comgall's sanctity, and Comgall thereupon raises to life a monk belonging to Columba who died during the sea crossing. Section six is a record of Comgall's death, noting he reached his 80th year and died on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the Ides of May [10 May].<sup>309</sup> As noted above, the dating of this version of Comgall's *Life* has only been generally placed as likely in the eleventh-century. Additional work specifically on this *Life* may be able to provide firmer footing for its date of composition in the future.

By comparison, the Plummer version of *Vita Sancti Comgalli abbatis de Bennchor* consists of 58 sections. The same story of his parents' conversation with Mac Nisse is included in section 5. Comgall's holiness as a child is also included in sections 6 and 7, although the stories are not the same as in Heist's version. Miracles of the raising of the dead are also included in Plummer's version, a monk is raised in section 16, which might be compared to the raising of a monk mentioned in Heist's section 4. The story of Columba's arrival with a monk who died en route and was restored to life by Comgall in section 31. Plummer's version gives much more detail about Comgall's youth, his studies and ordination, and his life after becoming leader of his own group of monks. His death is recorded in section 57, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the Ides of May, though no mention is made of his age.<sup>310</sup>

*Vita Sancti Columbae* was written by Adomnán, the ninth abbot of Iona and kinsman of Columba.<sup>311</sup> The earliest work on Columba was written by Cumméne Find, the seventh abbot of Iona c. 657 to 669, whose work is mentioned in an

---

<sup>309</sup> Heist, *VSH*, 332-334. Note that Comgall's age as recorded in this *Life* does not match that reported in the annals, where his age is given as 91 (see the end of section 3.7).

<sup>310</sup> Plummer, *VSH*, 1-21.

<sup>311</sup> See genealogical table in Richard Sharpe (trans). *Saint Adomnán. Life of St Columba* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), table 1; Additionally, I have consulted a dual language Latin and English version of the *Life* in Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (trans). *Saint Adomnán. Adomnán's Life of Columba* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd, 1961).

insertion in the same hand of the copyist of one of the manuscripts.<sup>312</sup> Adomnán's *Vita Sancti Columbae* has been dated between c. 679 and 704.<sup>313</sup> Of interest is Adomnán's concern about the reliability of his work: he assured his reader that his sources were "trustworthy men" and emphasised his own "diligent inquiry" of pre-existing writing.<sup>314</sup> *Vita Sancti Columbae* shows influence from Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Sancti Martini* and Evagrius' Latin translation of the *Life of St Antony*,<sup>315</sup> thus firmly putting Adomnán's work within hagiographical tradition despite his desire for veracity.<sup>316</sup> The *Life* of Columba survives in two unrelated manuscript traditions. The (A)-text is a contemporary manuscript, written by Adomnán's successor, Dorbbéne (d. 713), Schaffhausen Stadtbibliothek, MS Generalia 1, ff 1-69 in Schaffhausen, Switzerland. The B-text is found in three manuscripts, known as (B1), (B2), and (B3).<sup>317</sup> (B1) is held in the British Library, MS Additional 35110 ff 96v-143r, dated to around AD 1195, and probably written in Durham.<sup>318</sup> (B2) is held in the British Library, Cotton Tiberius D III ff192r-217v, written in a late twelfth century hand.<sup>319</sup> (B3) is held in the British Library, MS Royal 8D IX ff1r-70r, written in a fifteenth or sixteenth century hand.<sup>320</sup>

The *Liber De vita et rebus gestis Sancti Malachiae Hiberniae Episcopi*, written by Bernard of Clairvaux in the first half of the twelfth century, covers the life of Máel Máedóc Ua Morgair, known as Malachy, abbot of Bangor monastery in Ireland between c. 1123 until his death c. 1148.<sup>321</sup> Bernard and Malachy personally knew each other, suggesting that much of the detail for the *Life* came directly from Malachy himself or sources close to him.

---

<sup>312</sup> Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, 357, n. 360.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid, 3; Herbert gives a more general date of the end of the seventh century in Herbert, *IKD*, 12.

<sup>314</sup> VC, Second Preface.

<sup>315</sup> Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, 57-58.

<sup>316</sup> See Chapter 1: "The Saint and his Times: The Early Sources and their Testimony", in Herbert, *IKD* for a detailed discussion of the context of the writing of *Vita Sancti Columbae*.

<sup>317</sup> Anderson, *Life of Columba*, 3-5.

<sup>318</sup> CODECS. *Vita sancti Columbae*. Accessed 8 Jan 2020.

[www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Vita\\_sancti\\_Columbae\\_\(Adomn%C3%A1n\)](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Vita_sancti_Columbae_(Adomn%C3%A1n)).

<sup>319</sup> CODECS. London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius D iii. Accessed 8 Jan 2020.

[www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,\\_British\\_Library,\\_MS\\_Cotton\\_Tiberius\\_D\\_iii](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/London,_British_Library,_MS_Cotton_Tiberius_D_iii).

<sup>320</sup> CODECS. *Vita sancti Columbae*.

<sup>321</sup> *VMal* II §12, n. 1, VII, §63, n. 1.

The *Vita Sancti Columbani* was written by Jonas of Bobbio,<sup>322</sup> who joined the community shortly after Columbanus' death,<sup>323</sup> and is dated c. 642/643.<sup>324</sup> The *Life* survives in approximately 168 manuscripts, which date between the first half of the ninth century and the sixteenth century.<sup>325</sup> The earliest manuscript, St Gallen 553, which may have been copied at the monastery of Reichenau, contains the whole of Book One, but only chapters 1 through 6 and 23 through 25 of Book Two.<sup>326</sup> The *Monumenta Germanicae Historica-Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, containing a version of Columbanus' *Life*, edited by Bruno Krusch in 1896,<sup>327</sup> made use of 114 manuscripts and has been used as an authoritative edition as recently as 2017.<sup>328</sup>

The *Libellus de nativitate Sancti Cuthberti*, sometimes called the "Irish Life of St Cuthbert", was composed in the late twelfth century, but survives only in a series of fourteenth-century manuscripts from Durham.<sup>329</sup> An edition, taken from "one of the least satisfactory" manuscripts,<sup>330</sup> York Minster MS XVI I 12,<sup>331</sup> was made in 1838. The *Libellus'* description of the subject's birth and childhood in Ireland and subsequent travel to Argyll along with mention of Lismore are fairly clearly based on traditions of Moluag rather than Cuthbert (see section 5.2.2).<sup>332</sup>

---

<sup>322</sup> Alexander O'Hara and I. N. Wood (ed) (trans). Jonas of Bobbio. *Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, and Life of Vedast* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017); Munro, Dana Carleton Munro (trans). Abbot Jonas of Bobbio. *Life of St. Columban* (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1993); Jacques-Paul Migne (ed), "Vita Sancti Columbani", in *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, cols. 1014-1046 (Paris: Apud Garnieri Fratres, 1844).

<sup>323</sup> It is suggested he joined within three years of Columbanus' death in Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints Lives*, 8; a swifter period of three months is given in O'Hara and Wood, *Life of Columbanus*, 33-34.

<sup>324</sup> O'Hara and Wood, *Life of Columbanus*, 1, 34-35. See also 37-41 for a fuller discussion on the manuscript tradition.

<sup>325</sup> O'Hara and Wood, *Life of Columbanus*, 38.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid*, 38-39.

<sup>327</sup> Bruno Krusch (ed), *Monumenta Germanicae Historica-Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, vol 4. 1896; Helena Walsh Concannon, *The Life of St. Columban: A Study of Ancient Irish Monastic Life* (Dublin: Catholic Truth Society, 1915), xvi.

<sup>328</sup> O'Hara and Wood, *Life of Columbanus*, 37-38.

<sup>329</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, "Magpie hagiography in twelfth-century Scotland", in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints Cults* (ed) Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), "Magpie hagiography", 216.

<sup>330</sup> Clancy, "Magpie hagiography", 216; J Raine (ed), "Libellus de nativitate Sancti Cuthberti", in J. Raine (ed), *Miscellanea Biographica* (Edinburgh: Laing and Forbes, 1838), 63-87.

<sup>331</sup> Richard Sharpe, "Were the Irish Annals Known to a Twelfth-Century Northumbrian Writer?" *Peritia* 2 (1983), 137.

<sup>332</sup> Clancy, "Magpie hagiography", 219-223; Paul Grosjean, "The Alleged Irish Origin of St. Cuthbert", in *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, (ed) Charles Francis Battiscombe (Oxford, 1956), 144-154; 332 Macquarrie, *AB*, 395-397.

### 2.4.1 Hagiographic Intertextuality

The Isle of Tiree boasts a full and active presence of ecclesiastics in the early medieval period. It is beneficial to the discussion of ecclesiastical sites on the island to discuss here the relationships apparent within and between their hagiographical traditions. At the centre of this discussion lies the *Life of Columba*, which is the earliest attested text, and through which it is possible to examine the intertextuality between these four hagiographies. Comgall, Cainnech, and Brendan all appear in the *Life of Columba*, and we must consider that Adomnán may have intentionally brought these saints together in his work as a means of raising Columba's reputation and the strength of his cult. It is also possible to consider that Comgall, Cainnech, and Brendan here serve as proxies for the Communities of these saints in Adomnán's own time. If this was the case, it seems logical that Comgall might represent Maelruba (who was contemporary with Adomnán), Cainnech may represent the head of his leading foundation in the west of Scotland at that time, and Brendan may represent the head of the Community of Lismore Moluag.

The *Lives* of Cainnech and Brendan follow very quickly on the heels of VC compared to that of Comgall, which makes it possible that Cainnech and Brendan's *Lives* could have been written without their authors having read Columba's *Life*. However, the fact that Cainnech's *Life* directly borrows from two events in VC indicates its author must have had access to it.<sup>333</sup> Comgall's *Life* borrows from the story of Columba's first trip to the court of King Bridei of Fortriu, suggesting heavily that the author of that *Life* was also aware of VC.<sup>334</sup> A likely connection between the communities of Comgall and Columba is indicated by the fact that Cenn Fáelad (d. 705), abbot of Bangor,<sup>335</sup> was signatory number three in the Guarantor List of *Cáin Adomnán*;<sup>336</sup> this indicates the two Communities were in communication with each other. The nature of the relationship between the two Communities can be further elucidated in Notker's *Martyrology*, written at St Gallen in the 890s, which appears to describe Comgall as "the sole heir of [Columba's] virtues and merits" as a means of drawing a

---

<sup>333</sup> VC I.4 to VCain §28 and VC II.13 to VCain §54; Herbert, "Study of Vita Cainnech", 39.

<sup>334</sup> VC II.35 to VCom §51.

<sup>335</sup> AU 705.1; AT 705.5.

<sup>336</sup> Ní Dhonnchadha, "Guarantor list of Cáin Adomnán", 186.

connection between their founding saint, Columbanus, and Columba.<sup>337</sup> A cursory examination shows no indication in the *Vita altera sancti Brendani abbatis Clonfertensis* of any borrowing from VC, though this is not evidence that the author of *Brendan's Life* was not aware of it. Based on these facts it appears that at least two of these *Lives* were directly responding to claims made in VC, which will be further discussed below.

Firstly we will examine the nature of the relationships between the saints as they are portrayed by Adomnán in VC, and thereafter will compare that with how the authors of the other saints' *Lives* portray them. According to Adomnán, the relationship between Columba and Cainnech was very positive.<sup>338</sup> In VC, Cainnech is highly praised as a holy man and sacred founder of monasteries.<sup>339</sup> Cainnech is also "honourably and hospitably received" by Columba upon one visit,<sup>340</sup> and Columba miraculously returns Cainnech's staff to him when it is accidentally left behind on Iona.<sup>341</sup> As hagiographies have a strong literary component, future research may consider whether Cainnech leaving behind one of the symbols of his position, his holy staff, and its return by Columba is meant to be a symbol of their relationship, or perhaps of relations between the Communities of Columba and Cainnech in Adomnán's time.

Cainnech's relationship with Columba is portrayed very differently in his own *Vita*. *VCain* reveals a Cainnech angry with Columba or who views him in a negative light.<sup>342</sup> Máire Herbert argues that *VCain* "is not framed as homage for he appears not as a second Columba, but rather as a superior alternative".<sup>343</sup> This is most apparent in the story where Columba and Baithéne instructed one of their monks to throw his own son into the sea, but the son was rescued by Cainnech, who then rebuked Columba for his actions.<sup>344</sup> The superiority of Cainnech is further shown in the story of a time Cainnech, Comgall, and Columba

---

<sup>337</sup> *Qui cum plurimos discipulos vel socios sanctitatis suae suppare habuisset, unum tamen Comgellum, scilicet latine Fausti nomine illustrem, praeceptorem beatissimi Columbani, magistri domini et patris nostri Galli, virtutum ac meritorum suorum quasi unicum exemplo Isaac reliquit haeredem.* St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 456: A martyrology by Notker Balbulus, 9 Jun, 210; Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, n. 205.

<sup>338</sup> VC I.4, II.13, II.14, III.17.

<sup>339</sup> *est abbas Cainnichi sancti viri*, VC II.13, *Sancti fundatores de Scotia*, III.14.

<sup>340</sup> *ab eo honorifice et hospitaliter susceptus est.* VC I.4.

<sup>341</sup> VC II.14.

<sup>342</sup> This is discussed in the introduction of Márkus, "Life of St Cainnech".

<sup>343</sup> Herbert, "Study of *Vita Cainnech*", 34.

<sup>344</sup> *VCain* §26.

gathered outside when it began to rain and snow. Cainnech was protected from getting wet due to his holiness while both Comgall and Columba got very wet.<sup>345</sup> Cainnech seems to have his sanctity confirmed by events happening within Columba's sphere of influence, but without Columba's presence.<sup>346</sup> On another occasion, as Cainnech, Comgall, and Columba were fighting for the soul of a monk named Áed at the request of Éogan, bishop of Ardstraw, Baithéne rang the bell for service. This apparently disrupted the work of the saints, and Columba sent Baithéne to Cainnech for judgement. After searching for three years he finally found Cainnech, who sent him home, telling him the search constituted the penance for angering the saints.<sup>347</sup> Cainnech is even reported to have driven all the mice out of the island of Uist,<sup>348</sup> though this seems to be a known trope of hagiographies, with perhaps the best-known version being that of St Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland in a thirteenth-century version of his *Vita*.<sup>349</sup>

The criticism of Columba found in *VCain* may stem from the communities falling on opposite sides of a dispute amongst the southern Uí Néill in the second half of the sixth century. The Community of Cainnech was allied with Colmán Bec's line and the Community of Columba was allied with Colmán Mór, with the specific issue appearing to be the treacherous killing of Folloman (of Colmán Bec's line) by Donnchad (of Colmán Mór's line), with Iona subsequently continuing to favour Colmán Mór's line.<sup>350</sup>

However, Cainnech appears to make multiple visits to Iona,<sup>351</sup> and in other situations seems to assist Columba.<sup>352</sup> This suggests that the author wanted to criticize the Community of Columba, but still noted their connections and mutual work. Notable evidence of the possibly close nature of their relationship can be seen in the survival of praise poems about each other. A hymn attributed to Cainnech in praise of Columba survives in Rawlinson B 505 f. 60a,<sup>353</sup> while a

<sup>345</sup> *Sed vestimenta duorum sanctorum Comgalli et Colombe valde humida erant, VCain* §20.

<sup>346</sup> *VCain* §§24-25.

<sup>347</sup> *VCain* §27.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibdone insula, VCain* §29. This has been suggested as Uist, in Clancy, "Hebridean Connections", 27-40.

<sup>349</sup> Edmund Swift. Jocelin of Furness, *The Life and Acts of Saint Patrick the archbishop, primate and apostle of Ireland* (Dublin: Hibernia Press Company, 1809), §171.

<sup>350</sup> Herbert, "Study of *Vita Cainnechi*", 37-39; See also Márkus, "Life of St Cainnech", n. 63-64.

<sup>351</sup> *VCain* §28 (relating the same story as VC I.4), §52.

<sup>352</sup> *VCain* §27, 54 (relating the same story as VC II.13).

<sup>353</sup> Kuno Meyer (ed), "Neue Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften: Cainnech's Hymnus auf Colum Cille", *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie* 3 (1907), 217-219.



poem attributed to Columba in praise of Cainnech survives in Royal Irish Academy MS 23 N 10.<sup>354</sup> These poems are part of a series of poems attributed variously to Cainnech and Columba, underscoring a strong link between them.<sup>355</sup>

The relationship between Comgall and Columba, as seen in both of their *Lives*, indicates it was positive and mutually esteemed relationship (see section 3.7). Comgall and Columba reportedly travelled back from the convention at *Druim Cett* together.<sup>356</sup> This story may provide some idea of the relationship between the two Communities, as from the time of Columba and Comgall to the time of the battle of *Dún Cethirn*, it seems to have been an amicable one. Fínán, who reported the event to Adomnán, had come from Comgall's foundation at Camus that day, though he lived as an anchorite near Durrow.<sup>357</sup> Columba also prayed for the deliverance of the souls of some of Comgall's monks who drowned in Belfast Lough.<sup>358</sup> Within Comgall's *Life*, we see Columba visiting Bangor, where Comgall resurrected one of Columba's monks who had died on the ship coming over,<sup>359</sup> again visiting Comgall (which one may assume was again at Bangor) and where Columba was allowed to lead the service,<sup>360</sup> the two encounter a demon in a chair at Comgall's monastery,<sup>361</sup> and Columba visits Comgall again, this time bringing his students.<sup>362</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Adomnán's portrayal of the relationship between Columba and Brendan is also a positive one. Columba received Brendan's student, who was noted to be "a truly religious man".<sup>363</sup> *Vita Columbae* also relates that Brendan saw a "radiant ball of fire shining very brightly from Columba's head", an indication of Columba's holiness, and then revealed the vision to Comgall and Cainnech.<sup>364</sup> Interestingly, this does not appear in Brendan's own *Life*. In fact, Brendan's *Vita* fails to mention Columba, Cainnech, or Comgall at all. It should be noted that there are an astonishing number of manuscripts which survive for

---

<sup>354</sup> Kuno Meyer (ed). "Neue Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften: Colum Cille's Lobgesang auf Cainnech", *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie* 3 (1907), 219-221.

<sup>355</sup> Clancy and Evemalm discuss this in *Eólas nan Naomh*. "Coinneach, Cainnech, Kenneth".

<sup>356</sup> *VC* I.49.

<sup>357</sup> *VC* I.49.

<sup>358</sup> *VC* III.13.

<sup>359</sup> *VCom* §5.

<sup>360</sup> *VCom* §33.

<sup>361</sup> *VCom* §34.

<sup>362</sup> *VCom* §41.

<sup>363</sup> *Vir valde relegiosus*, *VC* I.26.

<sup>364</sup> *VC* III.17.

Brendan, many of which have been conflated with the *Navigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*, an *imramma* tale about Brendan.<sup>365</sup> This leaves a confusing web of stories and manuscripts for Brendan. As it stands, it seems unlikely that the *Vita altera* of Brendan is responding to *Vita Columbae*, though it is still possible that it was influenced by it.

Adomnán seems to be attempting to display the high regard that the Communities of Comgall, Cainnech, and Brendan had for the Community of Columba, and was perhaps even suggesting the superiority of his Community, as most of the stories involve people coming to visit Columba. The portrayal of the relationships between Cainnech, Brendan and Comgall are of further value here.

Both *VCom* and *VCain* present a positive relationship between the two saints, and thus likely also with their cults at the time of authorship. *VCom* relates a story in which Comgall told a man to wait for Cainnech, who would be the one to raise his son from the dead, and when the son was raised Cainnech said the son has been given to Comgall by God.<sup>366</sup> In *VCain*, a visit by Cainnech to Comgall was mentioned, where Cainnech was “welcomed with great joy” by him and invited to give the service, after which he received high praise from Comgall.<sup>367</sup> The only potentially negative portrayal of Comgall is the story which relates the soaking of Comgall and Columba as they sat outside in the rain with Cainnech.<sup>368</sup>

As briefly mentioned above, Brendan’s *Life* is different from the others examined here in that it mentions neither Comgall, Columba, nor Cainnech. Brendan is mentioned very briefly in *VCain*, in relation to his search for gold to complete an altar cup.<sup>369</sup> In this story Cainnech was said to “vomit his love”,<sup>370</sup> which turned out to be pure gold that he gave to Brendan. While Comgall and

---

<sup>365</sup> A useful introductory overview of the Brendan manuscripts is available in Clara Strijbosch, “Searching for a versatile saint: Introduction”, in *The Brendan Legend: Texts and Versions*, (ed) Glyn Burgess and Clara Strijbosch (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1-9.

<sup>366</sup> *VCom* §20.

<sup>367</sup> *Sanctus Kannechus dominica die venit ad sanctum Comgallum ac, ab eo cum magna Letitia receptus*, *VCain* §18.

<sup>368</sup> *VCain* §20.

<sup>369</sup> *VCain* §53.

<sup>370</sup> *Hic suam caritatem vomens*, *VCain* §53.

Brendan are placed in the same location at the same time,<sup>371</sup> they do not appear in each other's *Lives*.

Many of the tales mentioned in the *Lives* concern one-on-one meetings between saints, though there are stories where multiple saints are noted together.<sup>372</sup> Adomnán notes a mass celebrated by Columba in the presence of Brendan, Comgall, and Cainnech.<sup>373</sup> Cainnech's *Vita* relates a story in which Cainnech, Comgall, and Columba were "all in one place",<sup>374</sup> which could possibly refer to a similar story that occurs in both *VCom* and *VC* wherein a trip is undertaken to Fortriu to visit King Bruide.<sup>375</sup> *VCain* notes an incident wherein Columba, Comgall, and Cainnech helped the bishop of Ardstraw (Co. Tyrone) fight demons for the soul of one of his monks.<sup>376</sup> A final mention of multiple saints together is also seen in *VCain*, when Comgall, Cainnech, and Columba were sitting in the rain (as mentioned above).<sup>377</sup> It seems then, that when the *Lives* do mention each other, even when there is some conflict noted between the saints, they are still presented as colleagues who work together.

The intertextuality which is observable between these various *Lives* shows the degree to which the relationships between existing Communities focused on saints were still in the process of being developed and negotiated hundreds of years after their death. Understanding the relationships between these saints and their Communities in particular, will help in chapter 6 when an examination of multiple early-medieval ecclesiastical sites on Tiree is undertaken.

## 2.5 Liturgical Books

### 2.5.1 Antiphonary of Bangor

An Antiphonary is a type of liturgical book containing chants for use during Mass and the canonical Hours. The *Antiphonarium Benchorensis* or *Antiphonary of*

---

<sup>371</sup> *VC* III.15.

<sup>372</sup> Sharp expresses disbelief in these group meetings as actual events, in Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, 24.

<sup>373</sup> *VC* III.17.

<sup>374</sup> *Erant congregati in uno loco*, *VCain* §20.

<sup>375</sup> *VCom* §51; *VC* II.35.

<sup>376</sup> *VCain* §27.

<sup>377</sup> *VCain* §20.

*Bangor* has been described as “one of the most precious surviving witnesses to the early Irish church”.<sup>378</sup>

The *Antiphonary* contains three hymns, all written in the second half of the seventh century, which are discussed in more detail in section 3.5.2. Now housed in Milan at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, it is believed to have been written at the monastery of Bangor in Ireland at the end of the seventh century.<sup>379</sup> It was taken to Italy where it was part of the library at Bobbio until it was moved to Milan by Cardinal Frederic Borromaeo upon the founding of the Ambrosian library, catalogued as MS C 5 inf.<sup>380</sup> An edition of the *Antiphonary of Bangor* was made by F.E. Warren and William Griggs in 1893,<sup>381</sup> and was further discussed by Michael Curran in 1984.<sup>382</sup>

### 2.5.2 Aberdeen Breviary

The *Aberdeen Breviary* was published in 1510 in Edinburgh as a collection of legends, offices, and feast days of Scottish saints as directed by King James IV of Scotland.<sup>383</sup> It contains details on saints venerated in Scotland, and provides additional detail on Comgall, Maelruba, and Moluag; this is especially useful considering little hagiographic material survives for either Maelruba or Moluag. The difficulties in using such a late source are obvious; however, the *Aberdeen Breviary* is a unique source in Scotland, as little documentary evidence of this type survives from the centuries before its creation. It is useful, much like the genealogies, in looking at evidence for the cult of saints.

## 2.6 Place-Names

Place-names are “a record of human interaction with the environment” and can sometimes be useful in determining who held land, where boundaries were drawn in the past, or to what purpose land was put.<sup>384</sup> One type of place-name

---

<sup>378</sup> Michael Lapidge, “Columbanus and the ‘Antiphonary of Bangor,’” *Peritia* 4 (1985), 104. doi.org/10.1484/J.Peri.3.99.

<sup>379</sup> Lapidge, “Columbanus”, 104; Stevenson, “Bangor and the Hisperica Famina”, 212.

<sup>380</sup> Reeves, “The Antiphonary of Bangor”, 171; CODECS. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana. Accessed 9 Jan 2020. www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Milan,\_Biblioteca\_Ambrosiana.

<sup>381</sup> Warren and Griggs, *Antiphonary of Bangor*.

<sup>382</sup> Curran, *Antiphonary of Bangor*.

<sup>383</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, xv.

<sup>384</sup> Simon Taylor, “Place-names and the early church in Scotland”, *Scottish Church History Society* 28 (1998), 1.

which is particularly useful to this thesis is the hagiotoponym. Hagiotoponyms are place-names which include an element that is a saint's name. This type of place-name evidence is potentially helpful in determining the area within which a saint was culted but does not serve as firm evidence of the personal physical presence of a saint.<sup>385</sup> While hagiotoponyms are valuable for a direct comparison with textual evidence, there are significantly more place-names that are not so specific.

The existence of ecclesiastical elements in place-names gives an idea of the density of Christian foundations and associations that may have existed from as early as the sixth century. There has been much scholarship on the dating of *cill*-place-names,<sup>386</sup> with recent discussions suggesting that many *cill*-place-names may have been coined between the eighth and twelfth centuries (though there is evidence of usage much later).<sup>387</sup> Settlement names are used here as a major source of evidence due to their survival in early documents such as charters or other official records, and on early maps, which are discussed below. The use of settlement names allows a more macro-level investigation, which is appropriate when undertaking the wider-scale examination seen in this thesis. Micro-level place-names are often more difficult to discover and are most appropriate when engaging in the closest reading of a specific location and its nearby landscape.

### 2.6.1 Maps

Early maps are an additional useful source for finding early forms of settlement names, which can potentially indicate the location of ecclesiastical settlements or their dependent lands. These are sometimes even able to provide forms earlier than in the formal records discussed below. The earliest mapping source available to look at place-names around Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree are in

---

<sup>385</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, "Saints in the Scottish Landscape", *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 33 (2013), 1.

<sup>386</sup> Nicolaisen, *SPN*, 128-136, 143-144; Aidan Macdonald, "Gaelic Cill (Kil(l)-) in Scottish Place-Names", *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-Name Society*, Series 2, 2 (1979), 9-19; Simon Taylor, "Place-names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland", in *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, (ed) Barbara E. Crawford (St Andrews: St John's House, 1996), 93-110; Thomas Owen Clancy, "Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: Advent and Expansion", (The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture, 2009), *Proceedings of the British Academy* 167 (2011), 364-368; Rachel Butter, "Cill-names and saints in Argyll: a way towards understanding the early church in Dál Riata?" (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2007), 7-13.

<sup>387</sup> Clancy, "Gaelic in Medieval Scotland", 366.

Joan Blaeu's *Atlas Novus*, dated to 1654.<sup>388</sup> These maps are based largely on the earlier work of Timothy Pont (c. 1564-1614), though unfortunately his maps of these areas do not survive. Added to the *Atlas Novus* is Blaeu's *Atlas Maior* produced c. 1662-1665, also based heavily on data from the Pont maps.<sup>389</sup>

Ordnance Survey maps were created in the nineteenth century and were "the most detailed and comprehensive record of the toponymy and topography ... that had ever been".<sup>390</sup> The earliest and most effective of these, frequently used in place-name studies is the First Edition OS six-inch map.<sup>391</sup> These maps are perhaps the most useful source for identifying possible ecclesiastical sites in the vicinity of Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree.

## 2.6.2 Records

The *Register of the Great Seal of Scotland* provides early forms of settlement names in Scotland,<sup>392</sup> and is useful for determining the possible extent of potential early ecclesiastical sites as well as later spread of the cults of Maelruba, Moluag, and sites on Tiree which became associated with Columba (in addition to *Mag Luinge*). The source includes copies of charters (mainly dealing with royal land grants and confirmation of grants between non-royal parties) which were produced for the royal chancery and bore the royal Great Seal.<sup>393</sup>

---

<sup>388</sup> Joan Blaeu. *Lorna cum insulis vicinis et provinciis eidem conterminis* [Map]. *Atlas novus*. Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1654. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/00000459](https://maps.nls.uk/view/00000459); Joan Blaeu. *Mula Insula, quae ex Aebudarum numero una est, et Lochabriae ad occasum praetenditur* [Map]. *Atlas novus*. Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1654. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/00000483](https://maps.nls.uk/view/00000483).

<sup>389</sup> Joan Blaeu. *Mvla Insvla* [Map]. Scala Miliarium, 4 = 5.4 cm. *Atlas Maior*, vol. 6. 1662. Amsterdam. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/108520530](https://maps.nls.uk/view/108520530); Joan Blaeu. *Skia vel Skiana* [Map]. Scale: 6 Milliarum Scotia communia = 7.3 cm. *Atlas Maior*, vol. 6. Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1662. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/108520536](https://maps.nls.uk/view/108520536).

<sup>390</sup> Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, vol. 5 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), 142.

<sup>391</sup> Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map], sheet LXXII, 6in = 1mi. Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1875.

<sup>392</sup> James Balfour Paul, J. Maitland Thomson, William Kirk Dickson, and J. H. Stevenson, *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum; the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland; A.D. 1424-1659*, vol. 4. Edinburgh: 1882; Great Britain. *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum. The Register of the Great Seal of Scotland*. Edinburgh: H.M. General Register House, 1882.

<sup>393</sup> Taylor and Márkus, *Place-Names of Fife*, vol 5, 138-141.

The *Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* can be seen as Crown account books,<sup>394</sup> recording royal incomes from properties across Scotland.<sup>395</sup> These Rolls are especially useful in looking for early forms of place-names on Tiree, as well as identifying which lands became associated with Iona c. 1380.

The *Ordnance Survey Name Books* are lists of place-names collected in the process of creating the Ordnance Survey maps. A useful general discussion on their format and method of data collection is provided elsewhere.<sup>396</sup> They are considerably more recent than the *Exchequer Rolls* and *Register of the Great Seal*, dating to the nineteenth century.<sup>397</sup> Used in conjunction with other sources discussed here they can be helpful in determining early forms of settlement names, sometimes including potentially relevant recordings of local stories and traditions attached to a name, and help establish the possible extent of ecclesiastical sites.

Not records themselves, but useful additional resources from which additional place-name data was acquired include the Database of Scottish Hagiotoponyms (DoSH) / “Saints in Scottish Place-Names”, The Northern Ireland Place-name Project, and the Tiree Place Names website. In some cases, the history of a place-name is also recorded by earlier historians such as William Reeves and Erskine Beveridge,<sup>398</sup> whose personal experiences and records of place-names at the time of their collection is still useful.

DoSH is a web-based database focusing on hagiotoponyms in Scotland. It is a project undertaken by Thomas Owen Clancy, Rachel Butter, Gilbert Márkus, and Matthew Barr and includes “over 5000 places, 13,000 place-names, and some 750 saints potentially commemorated in these names”, predominantly taken

---

<sup>394</sup> Ibid, 141.

<sup>395</sup> John Stuart, George Burnett, George P. McNeill. Scottish Record Office. *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland: Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum*, vols 13 and 17 (Edinburgh: General Register House, 1878).

<sup>396</sup> Taylor and Márkus, *Place-Names of Fife*, 143-144; see also Eila Williamson, “‘Hence the Name:’ Berwickshire Parishes Along the Anglo-Scottish Border as Described in the Ordnance Survey name Books”, *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 9 (2015), 83-96.

<sup>397</sup> OS Name Books, *Argyll Ordnance Survey Name Books*, 1868-1878. ScotlandsPlaces. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/argyll-os-name-books-1868-1878/argyll-volume-28](http://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/argyll-os-name-books-1868-1878/argyll-volume-28).

<sup>398</sup> William Reeves, “The Island of Tiree”, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 2 (1854), 233-244; Erskine Beveridge, *Coll and Tiree: their prehistoric forts and ecclesiastical antiquities with notices of ancient remains in the Treshnish Isles* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1903).

from the Ordnance Survey First Edition six-inch maps produced between 1843-1882.<sup>399</sup> This database is useful as a central and searchable repository of place-names potentially associated with specific saints, such as Maelruba and Moluag.

The Northern Ireland Place-name Project, based at Queen's University Belfast, created a Place-Name Gazetteer which is searchable and includes historical administrative names and at least 20,000 non-administrative names within the 6 counties of Northern Ireland.<sup>400</sup> Each historical name form is supported by a reference to where the form is found. The investigation of place-names associated with Comgall and Bangor monastery is supported by use of this database.

The Tiree Place Names website is managed by John Holliday and includes over 3,300 place-names recorded for Tiree.<sup>401</sup> This is a searchable database that includes some additional information of place-names, and when coupled with Holliday's book *Longships on the Sand*,<sup>402</sup> provides valuable place-name evidence for the investigation of early medieval ecclesiastical sites on Tiree.

The focus here has been on the various textual sources which are examined throughout each chapter, enabling a cohesive discussion in a single place rather than spreading them throughout the thesis as they are encountered. I have not included a detailed discussion here of the various types of material evidence, as there is insufficient scope for this within the thesis. Types of material evidence are discussed within each chapter.

---

<sup>399</sup> DoSH: Database of Scottish Hagiotoponyms. Accessed 5 April 2020. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/about.php](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/about.php).

<sup>400</sup> NIPNP. Accessed 5 April 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/aboutus.php](http://www.placenamesni.org/aboutus.php).

<sup>401</sup> Tiree Place Names. Accessed 5 April 2020. [www.tireeplacenames.org](http://www.tireeplacenames.org).

<sup>402</sup> John Holliday. *Longships on the Sand. Scandinavian and medieval settlement on the island of Tiree: a place-name study*. Scarinish: Iodhlann Press, 2016.



### 3 The Monastery at Bangor

Bangor, in the north of Ireland was well-known in the early medieval period as a monastic centre, which we can discern from numerous mentions in textual sources. Aside from Iona, it was the only other monastery with well-established evidence for a cross-channel Community. It is by looking at the evidence for this Community of Comgall that the full importance and influence of Bangor in the early medieval period can be revealed. This analysis must necessarily begin with Bangor itself. Though Bangor is frequently mentioned in modern scholarship,<sup>403</sup> its character and nature have not yet been studied in detail and not yet been brought together into a single place. This chapter attempts to bring together the different types of surviving evidence (textual, archaeological, place-name, and art historical) to create a comprehensive picture of the history of the monastery at Bangor in the early middle ages, with a focus on the period from its origins in the sixth century into the early tenth century.

First, its location will be examined, placing the monastery in both its early medieval context as well as providing some modern context. Included in this section is the geographic location, comprising its early medieval political structures and more modern county location. Second, I will review what is currently known about the site itself, comprising archaeological and textual evidence, and situating it within the greater context of Belfast Lough. The place-name evidence will additionally be reviewed. Third will be a more focused history of the monastery, including a review of its known abbots including Comgall, the monastery's founder. Fourth, the significance of the site, its importance as an early medieval monastic foundation, and why it is worthy of continued research in the modern period will be discussed. As part of this analysis, I will look at the fact that Bangor seems to have had dependent houses of varying dates and closeness in Ireland, and then I will consider the evidence

---

<sup>403</sup> David Dumville, "Latin and Irish in the Annals of Ulster: A.D. 431-1050", in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, (ed) Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 320; Fraser, *Caledonia to Pictland*, 105; Elva Johnston, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2013), 118; Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland 400 – 1200* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 193.

for cross-channel dependent foundations, three of which will be reviewed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

### 3.1 The political geography of Bangor

The monastery at Bangor is located in the north of Ireland on the Ards peninsula, approximately 800 metres from the southern shore of Belfast Lough. The peninsula's name comes from *Aird Ua nEchach*, or “promontory of the Uí Echach (tribe)” who held this area in the seventh and eighth centuries, though this name was replaced in the ninth century with *Uladh*, or “of the Ulstermen”.<sup>404</sup> The monastery's coastal location fits within a wider assemblage of ecclesiastical sites in this region which have a water-focus, whether they occur on islands, on the shore, within a mile of the shore, or otherwise “conveniently close to the sea”.<sup>405</sup> The most powerful churches in local politics were Connor (*Conderi*, *Condaire*) among the Cruithni, and Nendrum (*Nóendruimm*) among the Dál Fíatach.<sup>406</sup> Bangor (*Bennchor*) and Movilla (*Mag mBili*) both had strong intellectual traditions while Bangor, and probably also Movilla, had wide links with other major monasteries, such as Iona.<sup>407</sup> Movilla, like Nendrum, was also associated with the Dál Fíatach.<sup>408</sup> Annalistic evidence records three bishops at Movilla, including Uinnianus (d. 579), Sinell (d. 603), and Sillan (d. 619).<sup>409</sup> The seat of bishops at that point appears to move to nearby Nendrum with the report of the deaths of bishops Crídán (d. 639), Crónán (d. 643), and Cuiméne (d. 659).<sup>410</sup> Bangor itself was situated approximately 6.4km from Movilla and 15km from Nendrum (in a straight line), which would logically place Bangor within the authority of bishops located first at Movilla and then at Nendrum. Bangor still

<sup>404</sup> Patrick McKay, *A Dictionary of Ulster Place-Names*. 2nd ed. (Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 2007), 7; The Northern Ireland Place-name Project, “Ards Lower, County Down”. Accessed 4 June 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=17698](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=17698).

<sup>405</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 30. Hamlin and Kerr note that Figure 50 shows a clear riverine emphasis for ecclesiastical sites.

<sup>406</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 55, 58, 260.

<sup>407</sup> Thomas Charles-Edwards, “Saints of Ulster”. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Accessed 15 May 2018. [doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/51011](https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/51011).

<sup>408</sup> The death of Movilla's founder, Finnin, notes he is of the Dál Fíatach, AU 579.1; Clancy, “Real St Ninian,” 13.

<sup>409</sup> AU 579.1; 603.4; Sillan as abbot, 619.2; Sillan is recorded as bishop at 618.2 in John O'Donovan (trans). *Annals of the Four Masters*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 20 Oct 2020. [celt.ucc.ie/published/T100005A/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100005A/index.html).

<sup>410</sup> AU 639.4, 643.2, 659; Woolf, “Columbanus's Ulster Education,” 92; See Charles-Edward's discussion of Nendrum as the principal episcopal church of the Ulstermen in *Early Christian Ireland*, 260.

managed to retain its strong links with Dál nAraide, although it was not in the core of their territory. It can perhaps be likened to Iona's position outwith the territory of Cenél Conall but still closely connected with it.

Panning out to the wider northeast of Ireland during in the sixth century, there were three main political groups or kingdoms: the Cruithni, whose territories spread from Eilne in the north, between the rivers Bann and Bush, down to Mag Cobo south of Lough Neagh; the Dál Fiatach, located southeast of Lough Neagh, who were generally considered as the "proper" Ulaid; and the Dál Riata, located in the north-east, east of the River Bush and north of Glenarm.<sup>411</sup> From the mid-seventh century to the end of our period of interest the major players were a branch of the Cruithni, the Dál nAraidi, whose oldest lands lay near Antrim Town, and the Dál Fíatach, around Downpatrick (*Dún Lethglaise*),<sup>412</sup> though as will be seen below, the political climate was malleable to the point that Bangor appears to later come under Dál Fíatach patronage (see section 3.10).

The dynastic struggles of the kingship of Ulaid shaped the overall political climate within which the monastery of Bangor was founded and existed. T.M. Charles-Edwards has compiled, from the *Book of Leinster*, a list of Kings of Ulaid up to AD 750, which shows the dynastic struggle between the Cruithni (of which Comgall was a member) and the Dál Fíatach.<sup>413</sup>

Connor (*Condaire*) was the seat of the bishop of Dál nAraidi, though Bangor was an important and high-status monastery in its own right despite being located outside the kingdom's known geographic range, on the frontier between the territories of the Cruithni and the Ulaid.<sup>414</sup> Some of the monasteries recognized by modern historians as dependent churches of Bangor confirm its original status as a foundation associated with the Cruithni: *Óentreb* (Antrim), situated in the leading kingdom of Dál nAraidi, *Mag Line* (Moylelinny), and *Cambas* (Camus),

---

<sup>411</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 54; Alex Woolf. "Columbanus's Ulster Education", In *Columbanus and the Peoples of Post-Roman Europe*, ed. Alexander O'Hara (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 92.

<sup>412</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 65-66.

<sup>413</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 623; for additional discussion of the shifting power alliances of the north east in the sixth through ninth centuries, see 54-67; Francis J. Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings*, (London: Batsford, 1987), 106-109; and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "The Political Background to Columbanus's Irish Career". In *Columbanus and the Peoples of Post-Roman Europe*, ed. Alexander O'Hara (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 92-106.

<sup>414</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 99.

situated on the west bank of the River Bann approximately 4.8km southeast of Coleraine, were probably founded before the Cruithni were pushed east of the Bann.<sup>415</sup> It may not be an accident that two important monasteries, Bangor and *Mag mBili* (Movilla), were close to the boundary between the Cruithni and Dál Fiatach, as well as being close to each other: they may have been placed there deliberately to assist peace-keeping or other mediation-based activities.<sup>416</sup> The importance of peripheral locations as meeting points could add value to the siting of Bangor in such a liminal space. Indeed, Ó Riain notes that ecclesiastical settlements were known to be situated on political boundaries in the early medieval period.<sup>417</sup> This may provide additional support for Woolf's argument that Bangor, Movilla, and Nendrum should be viewed "as a unified ecclesiastical province whose clerics interacted with one another on an almost daily basis",<sup>418</sup> identified as such not only due to their close proximity, but also to their being part of the same diocese. The high-status secular site at Scrabo Hill, approximately 4km from Movilla, indicates that the area was desirable, with Bangor perhaps attempting to benefit from this connection.<sup>419</sup>

The mid-eighth century saw changes in patronage from Dál nAraide to Dál Fiatach for the monastery, which might have presaged or otherwise contributed to its notable decline from the ninth century onwards (see section 3.10).<sup>420</sup> Placing Bangor within its more modern political context, it is in County Down, whose name was derived from the parish of Down and settlement of *Dún Lethglaise* (Downpatrick).

---

<sup>415</sup> ODNB. "Saints of Ulster".

<sup>416</sup> Ibid; Pádraig Ó Riain, "Boundary association in early Irish society", *Studia Celtica* 7 (1972), 26.

<sup>417</sup> Ó Riain, "Boundary association", 18, with further discussion on the practice and prevalence of allotting boundary lands to the professional classes 19-21.

<sup>418</sup> Woolf, "Ulster Education", 97.

<sup>419</sup> Ewan Campbell, *Continental and Mediterranean Imports to Atlantic Britain and Ireland, AD 400-800*. CBA Research Report 157 (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2007), 110; Woolf, "Columbanus's Ulster Education", 93.

<sup>420</sup> Kathleen Hughes, "The Distribution of Irish Scriptoria and Centres of Learning from 730 to 1111", in *Studies in the Early British Church*, ed. Nora K Chadwick, et al. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 259-260.

## 3.2 Wider Context

Bangor sits on the southern shore of Belfast Lough, though its earliest name was likely a Celtic word which lies behind the EG word *laíg*, “calf”,<sup>421</sup> which likely informs Ptolemy’s recording of *Logia* in his *Geographia*, which translates as “female calf”,<sup>422</sup> and led to Adomnán’s description of it in Latin as *stagnum uituli* or “calf lake”.<sup>423</sup> The current name of Belfast Lough came into usage in the latter half of the eighteenth century, with the rise in importance of the city of Belfast.<sup>424</sup>

Although there is evidence for the high-status site of Emain Macha (Co. Armagh) in the north of Ireland in the first century BC, it had been completely destroyed by the end of the first century BC, well before the foundation of Bangor.<sup>425</sup> The decline of these power centres may have coincided with a breakup of the larger political units which likely would have been necessary to support them.<sup>426</sup> In the period just preceding the foundation of Bangor, and during its rise, there does not appear to have been any secular sites of particular note on the shores of Belfast Lough, suggesting there had been no obvious power centre.<sup>427</sup>

The closest elite secular sites of interest both to Bangor and the period of its development are *Ráith Mór*, the seat of the Dál nAraide,<sup>428</sup> and nearby *Ráith Bec* located at *Mag Line* (Moylelenny), just northeast of Lough Neagh and east of Antrim.<sup>429</sup> Downham argues that by the sixth century the many kingdoms which existed had a tendency to be organised around a central plain (*mag*),<sup>430</sup> and it is

---

<sup>421</sup> Edmund Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum Locorum Et Tribuum Hiberniae Et Scotiae: An Index, with Identifications, to the Gaelic Names of Places and Tribes* (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co, 1910), 500; NIPNP, “Belfast Lough”.

<sup>422</sup> NIPNP, “Belfast Lough, County Antrim/Down”. Accessed 4 June 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6524](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6524).

<sup>423</sup> *stagnō vituli*, VC III.13.

<sup>424</sup> NIPNP, “Belfast Lough”.

<sup>425</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 146-148..

<sup>426</sup> Clare Downham. *Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 11.

<sup>427</sup> For a general view of the archaeological evidence and known sites in Ulster, see J. P. Mallory and Tom E. McNeill, *The Archaeology of Ulster from Colonization to Plantation* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1991).

<sup>428</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 108.

<sup>429</sup> NIPNP, “Moylelenny, County Antrim”. Accessed 4 June 2018.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=18283](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=18283); Rescue excavation work was carried out at *Ráith Bec* in 1967 and further information on it can be found at Cynthia Warhurst, Deirdre Flanagan, and J.R. Pilcher. “Excavations at Rathbeg, Co. Antrim”, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Third Series, 32 (1969), 93-100. [www.jstor.org/stable/20567643](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20567643).

<sup>430</sup> Downham, *Medieval Ireland*, 11.

possible that *Mag Line* was the central plain that formed the core of Dál nAraide territory before being pushed north by the Ulaid. *Ráith Bec* is first mentioned in AT 563 with the death of Diarmuid mac Cerbuill.<sup>431</sup> *Ráith Mór* is first mentioned in AU 682 in a battle with the Britons, where Cathasach son of Mael Dúin, king of the Cruithni, was killed.<sup>432</sup>

In addition to secular sites, Bangor existed within a wider ecclesiastical context on and around Belfast Lough. Movilla was likely the largest other church in Bangor's immediate vicinity. It is first mentioned in AU 603,<sup>433</sup> and had a reputation for scholarly works, which will be discussed below. *Cell Ruaidh* (Anglicised as Kilroot), in modern County Antrim was likely founded in the late fifth or early sixth century; though its history is largely obscure, and it is first mentioned in AU 1122.<sup>434</sup> Shankill, also in County Antrim, shows undoubted evidence of an early church although the date of foundation is unknown.<sup>435</sup> Holywood, in modern county Down, was known from the twelfth century, but there seems to be some possibility of an early medieval foundation.<sup>436</sup> Donaghadee, in modern county Down, is a much less secure site as there is no early evidence for it apart from the place-name possibly referencing a church.<sup>437</sup>

---

<sup>431</sup> *Ráith Bec in Magh Line*, AT 563.4. It may be worth noting that Diarmaid's body was said to be taken to Connor for burial; The killing, though not the location, is mentioned again at AU 565.1.

<sup>432</sup> *Ráith Mór Maigi Lini*, AU 682.2; AT 682.3; FA 82.

<sup>433</sup> AU 603.4; AT 601.3.

<sup>434</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 212; *Cell Ruaidh*, AU 1122.5.

<sup>435</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 227.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid*, 300; NIPNP, "Holywood, County Down". Accessed 23 May 2018 [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6648](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6648).

<sup>437</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 291; McKay, *Dictionary of Ulster Place-Names*, 57.

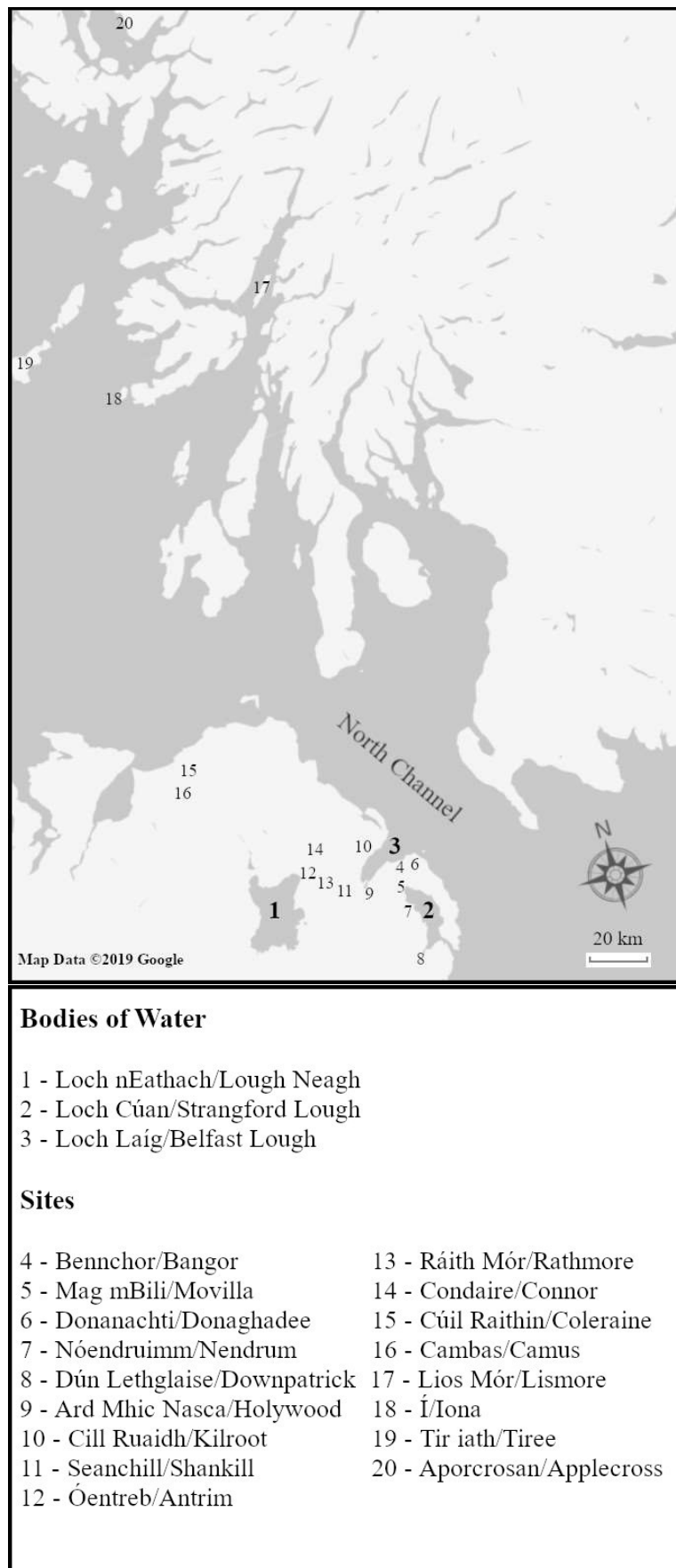


Figure 3.1 Map of the North Channel. Early Medieval Sites Mentioned in Chapter.

Moving slightly further afield, there are other important monastic centres in the northeast of Ireland which deserve a mention here. *Nóendruimm* (Nendrum), located on an island in Strangford Lough, was first mentioned in AU 497 with the death of its founder, Mo Choi,<sup>438</sup> though this is obviously an insertion in AU as this event is repeated in AU 499 with a note that it has come from another book.<sup>439</sup> As mentioned above, it was likely the chief foundation of the Ulaid, with bishops sometimes in residence. *Óntreb* (Antrim), first mentioned in the annals in AU 613,<sup>440</sup> is located on the northeast coast of Lough Neagh with the original monastic settlement likely within approximately 2 km of the shoreline where a round tower now stands.<sup>441</sup> *Dún Lethglaise* (Downpatrick) sits on the Quoile River southwest of Strangford Lough, and there is evidence of a prehistoric ring fort at this site, which served as the foundation of the early monastery.<sup>442</sup> *Dún Lethglaise* itself is mentioned first in AU 496,<sup>443</sup> with a specific mention of *Druim Lethglaise* and its bishop in AU 584.<sup>444</sup> It is likely that the first contemporary entry is in AU 753 with the death of Scannlán of *Dún Lethglaise*.<sup>445</sup> The church there was possibly patronized by Fiachnae mac Áed Rón,<sup>446</sup> whose son, Loingsech, died there as abbot in AU 800.<sup>447</sup>

### 3.3 Surviving Features and Artefacts

Turning the focus to the site of Bangor itself, we examine what is known about its layout and structures as well as what artefacts have survived to the present day. The early medieval site sits at an elevation of approximately 30 m above

---

<sup>438</sup> AU 497.2, 499.4; AT 497.3.

<sup>439</sup> AU 499.4

<sup>440</sup> AU 613.1; AT 611.3

<sup>441</sup> NIPNP, "Antrim, County Antrim"/ Accessed 10 June 2018.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5566](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5566).

<sup>442</sup> NIPNP, "Downpatrick, County Down". Accessed 10 June 2018.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=12718](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=12718).

<sup>443</sup> AU 496.3, 498.1; AT 496.3

<sup>444</sup> AU 584.1, 590.4; AT 582.5.

<sup>445</sup> AU 753.6; AT 753.6

<sup>446</sup> Ailbhe Mac Shamhráin. "Fiachnae". Royal Irish Academy. Accessed 4 June 2018.

[dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3070](http://dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3070); Charles-Edwards notes a possible distinction between *Dún Lethglaise* and *Druimm Lethglaise*, with the former notating the secular site and the latter the ecclesiastical foundation, though *Dún Lethglaise* seems to have ultimately referred to both in *Early Christian Ireland*, 65-66.

<sup>447</sup> AU 800.2.



sea level, with the ground sloping gently to Belfast Lough (the small bay is today called Bangor Bay) approximately 800 m to the north.<sup>448</sup> Its buildings would have been built of timber, a fact which is emphasized by the complaints made when Máel Máedóc Ua Morgair (Anglicized as Malachy) later built a church of stone.<sup>449</sup> There is no clear evidence of any enclosure,<sup>450</sup> although McHugh argued for the possibility “that some trace of the monastic enclosure is preserved in the curvilinear corner between Abbey St and Newtownards Rd”, though he admitted this feature could have been created as part of the reconstruction by Sir James Hamilton.<sup>451</sup> The earliest surviving features of the monastery of Bangor date to the thirteenth century,<sup>452</sup> though the church was rebuilt c. 1616 by the direction of Sir James Hamilton, who appears to have caused great destruction to the existing features on the site, including reusing stone from the old abbey in newer church buildings.<sup>453</sup> However, even this structure appears to have fallen into ruin as the first edition Ordnance Survey 6-inch maps dating to 1833 show no trace of the abbey, marked instead with “Glebe House”, while later editions note Bangor Abbey as a ruin.<sup>454</sup> The current church on the site dates mainly from the nineteenth century, and heavy landscaping in more recent years further affects the site.<sup>455</sup>

### 3.3.1 Sculpture

Only three pieces of stonework have been found and associated with the site at Bangor. These include a cross-shaft, a cross-carved stone, and a sundial, the dating of which has been discussed by Hamlin and Kerr.<sup>456</sup> The cross shaft survives only as a fragment, which at some point was set into the wall of the

---

<sup>448</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 285.

<sup>449</sup> *VMal* 109-110.

<sup>450</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 42.

<sup>451</sup> Ronan McHugh, “Excavations at Malachy’s Wall, Bangor Abbey, County Down”, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 63 (2004), 70. [www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/stable/20568338](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/stable/20568338).

<sup>452</sup> H.C. Lawlor, “Bangor Town, Abbey Church”, in *A Preliminary Survey of the Ancient Monuments of Northern Ireland* (ed.) D.A. Chart (Belfast: H.M.S.O., 1940), 82; E.M. Jope, *An Archaeological Survey of County Down* (Belfast: H.M.S.O., 1966), 266.

<sup>453</sup> McHugh, “Excavations”, 69.

<sup>454</sup> *Ibid*, 69.

<sup>455</sup> Lawlor, “Bangor Town”, 82; E.M. Jope, *Archaeological Survey*, 266.

<sup>456</sup> The dating of these pieces is extremely difficult as non-figural crosses in the north of Ireland have received tentative dates as widely varying as the eighth to twelfth centuries, in Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 108-109.

private chapel on the Clandeboye estate, approximately 3km southwest of Bangor abbey.<sup>457</sup>



Figure 3.2 Bangor Cross Shaft Fragment (Harbison, *High Crosses 2*, fig. 69).

The remnant measures approximately 0.77m tall by 0.35m wide and has a single, all-over panel of median-incised interlace with a plain frame,<sup>458</sup> and appears to show stylistic relations with sculpture found at Kirkmadrine and Whithorn in

---

<sup>457</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 285.

<sup>458</sup> Defined as an ornamental pattern "where the strand is lightened by giving it a median-incised line", in Isabel Henderson, "Fragments of Significance: The Whole Picture", in *Able Minds and Practised Hands: Scotland's Early Medieval Sculpture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, (ed.) Sally Foster and Morag Cross (Leeds: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2005), 74.

Scotland,<sup>459</sup> and at Banagher and Clonca in Ireland.<sup>460</sup> The full width survives, but the fragment is broken near the top of the shaft, though the surviving remnant suggests the original cross would have been well over 2m tall. Hamlin and Kerr suggest this fragment may be the “termon cross” marked at Cross Hill on the 1623 estate map.<sup>461</sup> Harbison argues that the decoration on this cross-fragment suggests it is more likely to belong to the earlier group of crosses than it is to belong to the Romanesque period,<sup>462</sup> while Craig applies a date of post eighth-century to the potentially related sculpture at Whithorn.<sup>463</sup>



Figure 3.3 Bangor Sundial, face A (© North Down Museum).

<sup>459</sup> See Derek Craig's list of sculpture pieces which include median-incised interlace, marked "Table 7" in "The Distribution of Pre-Norman Sculpture in South-West Scotland: Provenance, Ornament, and regional groups", (PhD thesis, University of Durham, 1992), 310.

<sup>460</sup> Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland: An Iconographical and photographic survey*, vol 2 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1992), fig 65, 121a/b, 122a/b.

<sup>461</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 285.

<sup>462</sup> Peter Harbison, *The High Crosses of Ireland: An Iconographical and photographic survey*, vol 1 (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1992), 376.

<sup>463</sup> Craig, "Pre-Norman Sculpture", 208.

The other piece of stonework associated with early Bangor is the sundial.<sup>464</sup> Figure 3.3 shows face A, while faces B, C, and D are not pictured. It is now located on the grounds of Bangor Castle and likely was originally located at the abbey, though it was sadly not recorded.<sup>465</sup> The sundial stands approximately 1.5m in visible height with a width that varies from 0.25m by 0.22m at the base to 0.30m by 0.28m at the top.<sup>466</sup> As currently erected, face A is oriented to the south and is badly damaged, though some small portions of the sundial lines are still visible. There are three small Latin crosses visible on the shaft of the stone with moulding around the edge. Face C is plain except for edge grooves which extend off the top of the stone, and faces B and D each have edge grooves which turn in at the top to form a completed rectangular panel.<sup>467</sup> Sundials in Ireland are notable for their rarity, of which Hamlin and Kerr note only four in the north.<sup>468</sup> The lines on the face of the sundial appear to create an eight-fold subdivision with nine radii, appropriate for marking the canonical day and subdivisions between them,<sup>469</sup> thus making them explicitly monastic by marking the liturgical Hours. Hamlin and Kerr note a possible connection with one of the later reform movements, such as the Céli Dé, based upon Bernard of Clairvaux's complaint of the Irish not observing the hours properly.<sup>470</sup>

---

<sup>464</sup> The sundial is excluded from the 1966 archaeological survey of County Down for unknown reasons, Jope, *Archaeological Survey*.

<sup>465</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 286.

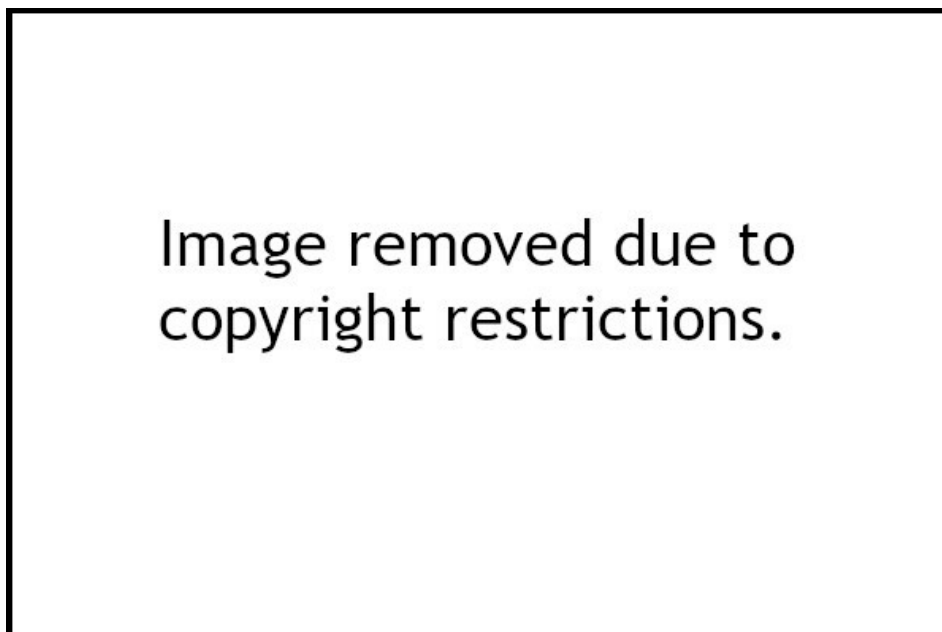
<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>468</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-137.

<sup>470</sup> *VMal* I.7; Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 137.



**Figure 3.4 Bangor Altar Cross (Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*).  
Faces shown from left to right: C, D, A, and B.**

The small cross-carved slab, pictured in Figures 3.4 and 3.5, was reportedly found c. 1823 in the abbey ruins and is currently held in the North Down Museum.<sup>471</sup> It is carved on all four faces, suggesting that it was intended to stand upright. Its size also indicates it would have been reasonably portable, perhaps as part of a portable altar, and has been noted for the accomplished level of carving.<sup>472</sup> It is heavily worn with a broken and chipped base and the surviving piece measures approximately 0.33m high, 0.11m to 0.13m wide, and 0.05m to 0.07m thick.<sup>473</sup> Face A bears a ringed cross in false relief with a stepped base and equal-armed crosses on either side of the main shaft, which appears to be meant to stand upright.<sup>474</sup> Face C has a single large, equal-armed cross while faces B and D each bear an additional equal-armed cross, though face B also has a four-petalled flower in false relief above the cross.<sup>475</sup> This altar cross is believed to date to the twelfth century and is associated with Malachy's renovations of the church when he became abbot.<sup>476</sup>

<sup>471</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 285.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid*, 135.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid*, 285-286.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid*, 135.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid*, 286.

<sup>476</sup> Leanne Briggs, Museum Assistant, North Down Museum, personal communication.



Figure 3.5 Photograph of Bangor Altar Cross, face A  
(© North Down Museum).

### 3.3.2 Metalwork

A very fine bronze bell associated with Bangor was discovered in the abbey ruins in the 1790s,<sup>477</sup> and is held at the North Down Museum.<sup>478</sup> The bell's physical dimensions are approximately: 0.35m high, including the handle; the mouth measures 0.22m by 0.20m; and it weighs approximately 9.3 kilograms.<sup>479</sup> The weight of the bell suggests that it was not intended to be easily portable, especially when compared with the 1.7 kilograms of the iron 'Bell of St. Patrick's Will', which is easily and comfortably portable".<sup>480</sup> Hamlin and Kerr

<sup>477</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 286.

<sup>478</sup> North Down Museum. "Museum Treasures". Accessed 5 Dec 2019. [www.northdownmuseum.com/Collections/Museum-Treasures](http://www.northdownmuseum.com/Collections/Museum-Treasures).

<sup>479</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 286.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid*, 168.

describe it as the “fine Bangor bell [which] is decorated with an unringed cross on the front (the ‘Nendrum type’) and a fretwork border round the mouth”, now known as key-pattern. Hamlin and Kerr note similarities between the Bangor bell and one discovered at Lough Lene.<sup>481</sup>



**Figure 3.6 Handbell from the monastery at Bangor  
(© North Down Museum).**

Bourke drew parallels between the Bangor bell and those of Cashel (Co. Tipperary) and Loch Lene (Co. Westmeath), which possess decoration of both key pattern and similar crosses.<sup>482</sup> He dates the bell to the early ninth century

<sup>481</sup> Ibid, 168; Françoise Henry, *Irish Art* (London: Methuen, 1965), 125.

<sup>482</sup> Cormac Bourke, "Early Irish hand-bells", *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 110 (1980), 55. More recently he reiterated this connection in Cormac Bourke, "Early ecclesiastical hand-bells in Ireland and Britain", *Journal of the Antique Metalware Society* 16 (2008), 24.

based on its method of manufacture and stylistic components,<sup>483</sup> and identifies it as belonging to his Class 2, which has a distribution concentrated in central Ulster.<sup>484</sup> The use of handbells in Scotland may be the result of influence from Irish ecclesiastics, suggested by the “indistinguishable” characters of iron bells in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.<sup>485</sup> While Bourke attributes this spread of handbells strictly to the Columban church,<sup>486</sup> the increase in research on non-Columban monasticism in Scotland suggests that handbells could have been in use by other ecclesiastical communities. Indeed, one of the few stories surviving of Moluag, of whom more will be seen in chapter 5, involves his own handbell. Five bronze bells survive in Scotland, from Loch Shiel (Argyll),<sup>487</sup> Insh (Inverness-shire), Forteviot (Perthshire), Little Dunkeld (Perthshire), and Strathfillan (Perthshire), though Bourke dates them all to the tenth century, suggesting they are evidence of increasing cultural separation between Ireland and Scotland developing in the ninth century.<sup>488</sup>

A lead stylus of the type used to score lines in manuscripts was discovered during excavation in 2011. It is described as having a circular shaft (91mm long with a diameter of 5mm) with a flattened head (7mm wide and 2.2mm long) that narrows to a rounded point.<sup>489</sup> It was found in a context which included material that was given a radiocarbon range of 840 ± 45 BP.<sup>490</sup> This date range falls firmly into Bangor's period of high activity and provides further evidence for a scriptorium at Bangor.

---

<sup>483</sup> Bourke, “Irish hand-bells”, 52-57.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>485</sup> Cormac Bourke, “The hand-bells of the early Scottish church”, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 113 (1983), 464-465.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 466.

<sup>487</sup> This bell was sadly stolen in July 2019 and has yet to be recovered.

<sup>488</sup> Bourke, “Irish Hand Bells”, 466.

<sup>489</sup> Archaeological Development Services, Ltd. “Bangor Abbey, Co. Down”. Final Excavation Report, March 2014, 130.

<sup>490</sup> Archaeological Development Services, Ltd. “Bangor Abbey, Co. Down”, 28.





**Figure 3.7 Lead Stylus found at Bangor. Penny included for scale (© North Down Museum).**

Although the surviving physical evidence from Bangor seems at first glance to be poor, it is worthwhile considering the range of pieces which exist: a portable and highly accomplished cross, a sundial which potentially gives insight into Bangor's relationship with religious reform movements, a piece of decorated metalwork in the bell, and a decorated cross-fragment which suggests artistic relationships outwith Ireland. Further, the suggested dates for these artistic works tend to land just when Bangor was becoming quiet in the textual records, lending them additional value. Bangor did experience severe deterioration, likely beginning around the tenth century, which explains the poor level of survival of its features (see section 3.10).<sup>491</sup> Nevertheless, these fragments support the assertion that Bangor was an important site which maintained contacts with other locations throughout Ireland and across the North Channel Seascape.

---

<sup>491</sup> Bangor "was destroyed by pirates", noted in *VMA*/ II.13.

### 3.4 Place-name Discussion

The name Bennchor (Bangor) itself is of interest as it may assist in associating or distinguishing it from other places within and outwith the north of Ireland which have similar names. The goal of this discussion is to get an idea of the variations of the place-name in spelling, geographic location, and interpretation. This is not intended to be an exhaustive investigation, though that would be useful for further development and understanding of the topic. The Early Gaelic place-name for the site in modern County Down has been recorded in a number of spelling variations, as noted in the *Annals of Ulster*, *Annals of Tigernach*, *Fragmentary Annals*, *Antiphony of Bangor*, *Martyrology of Tallaght*, *Martyrology of Gorman*, and *Martyrology of Óengus*. Bangor, as the Anglicised name for the foundation on the shore of Belfast Lough, first appears c.1454 in the ‘De annatis Hiberniae.’<sup>492</sup>

**Table 3.1 Bangor Spelling Variations**  
Dates given indicate first use of spelling variation in source.<sup>493</sup>

	AU	AT	FA	AntB	MarT
Beannchair	516.2		22		
Bendchair		517.1			12-Jun
Bennchair	520.3		38		
Bennchair	602.1	557.2			28-Feb
Benncair	559.1	608.2	32		
Bennchoir	606.1				
Benncoir	613.1				
Beannchuir			38		
Beandchuir			39		
Benchuir	691.1			30r	
Beanncuir			165		
Benncuir	728.3				
Bennchur	823.8				
Benncor	824.2 <sup>A</sup>				

The meaning of the name has been much discussed and there seem to be two main avenues of interpretation. One theory argues that the name contains the

<sup>492</sup> Bedwyr Lewis Jones, “Why Bangor?” *Ainm* 5 (1991-1993), 63-64; the question why this name was Anglicised as such here and not elsewhere is raised, but not discussed at NIPNP, “Bangor, County Down”. Accessed 10 June 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=17106](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=17106). It is possible that the Anglicised version of the name was influenced by Welsh.

<sup>493</sup> A) Note that this date in AU includes a poem. The poem uses *Benncor* while the entry itself uses *Benncair*.

first element *beann* which can mean “horn”, “point”, or “peak” with a second element *cor* meaning “cast” or “setting”.<sup>494</sup> The suggestion based on this explanation is that the name ties in with some sort of geographical feature, whether a pointed or rocky shoreline, the bend in a river, or peaked hills.<sup>495</sup> Another interpretation for the first element in Old Irish is “prong”,<sup>496</sup> with the suggestion that the second element could be *cor* meaning “act of putting, placing; setting up”.<sup>497</sup> In the early twentieth century it was noted that *bangor* occurs in the Welsh laws with the meaning of “wattling”.<sup>498</sup>

Irish-language sources offer origin legends and explanations for the meaning of the name *Bennchoir* as well. The Old Irish text *Táin Bó Fraích* contains an explanation for *Trácht Bennchoir*, “Bangor shore”,<sup>499</sup> and a nearly identical story is found in *The Metrical Dindshenchas*.<sup>500</sup> In this story, the Connaught warrior Fróech and the Ulster warrior Conall Cernach were returning to Ireland from the Alps with Fróech's cattle when Conall's servant, Bicne mac Láegaire, died at the place which then came to be known as *Inber mBicne*, and known today as Bangor Bay.<sup>501</sup> When they came to shore, the cattle shed their horns, and so it was named *Trácht mBennchoir*, “shore of horn-casting”.<sup>502</sup> Here *Bennchoir* is taken to derive from *benn* “horn” + *cor* “casting”. A similar story from the *Féilire Óengusso* (Anglicised as the *Martyrology of Óengus*) is found in the notes under 10 May, where it is explained that news regarding the death of Cú Chulainn

<sup>494</sup> NIPNP, “Bangor, County Down;” Watson, *CPNS*, 480; P. W. Joyce, *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* (Dublin: McGlashan & Gill, 1869), 349-350.

<sup>495</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 480-481; Simon Taylor, Peter McNiven, and Eila Williamson, *Place-Names of Clackmannanshire* (forthcoming); NIPNP, “Bangor, County Down”. I greatly appreciate Simon Taylor providing me with relevant information in advance of the publication of this book.

<sup>496</sup> eDIL, s.v. “benn”, accessed 10 June 2018. [www.dil.ie/5654](http://www.dil.ie/5654).

<sup>497</sup> NIPNP, “Bangor, County Down”.

<sup>498</sup> Alfred Neobard Palmer and Edward Owen. *A History of Ancient Tenures of Land in North Wales and the Marches*, second ed. (History of Economic Thought Books, 1910), 79; Arthur W. Wade-Evans. *Welsh Medieval Law: Being a Text of the Laws of Howel the Good, Namely the British Museum Harleian Manuscript 4353 of the 13th Century: With Translation, Introduction, Appendix, Glossary, Index and a Map* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 326.

<sup>499</sup> Wolfgang Meid. *Táin Bó Fraích* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967), 381, 383; Alan Orr Anderson, “Táin Bó Fraích”, *Revue Celtique* 24 (1903), 128-142 *Bennchur* is specifically mentioned at p 142.

<sup>500</sup> Edward Gwynn, *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, vol. 4 (Dublin, Ireland: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1991), 224-225.

<sup>501</sup> Gwynn, *Metrical Dindshenchas*, 224-225; Meid, *Táin Bó Fraích*, 381; Anderson, “Táin Bó Fraích”, 142.

<sup>502</sup> Gwynn, *Metrical Dindshenchas*, 224-225; Meid, *Táin Bó Fraích*, 383; Anderson, “Táin Bó Fraích”, 142.

causes Conall Cernach to put the horns of the cattle from his raid into the earth at that location.<sup>503</sup>

*Bennchor* as a place-name is not limited to the foundation in County Down. Similar place-names are attested in other areas of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and even Brittany. The etymology of the term as a reference to a row of peaks has had support in Ireland,<sup>504</sup> though it seems more recent scholarship favours the wattling interpretation.<sup>505</sup> There are several townlands in various parts of Ireland which have been anglicized Banagher and derive from an original *Beannchar* or similar variant, including: Banagher (Co Offaly),<sup>506</sup> Banagher (Co Fermanagh),<sup>507</sup> Banagher (Co Westmeath), Banagher (Co Mayo), Banagher (Co. Leitrim), Banagher (Co Kilkenny), Banagher (Co Galway), Banagher (Co. Derry),<sup>508</sup> Drumbanagher (Co Armagh),<sup>509</sup> Banagher (Co Cavan),<sup>510</sup> Banagher Forest (Co Derry), and Movanagher (Co Derry).<sup>511</sup>

The name also occurs in Scotland where modern scholarship leans towards an association of *beann* with geographical rather than built features in a manner related to, but distinct from, how it is employed in Ireland.<sup>512</sup> The specific geographical feature referred to by the horn in these cases is the bend in a river.<sup>513</sup> Additional *Beannchor* place-names in Scotland include: Loch Vennachar

<sup>503</sup> *MarO* 4 Aug, marginal notes and poems.

<sup>504</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 395, no. 87; Joyce, *Irish Names of Places*, 352.

<sup>505</sup> NIPNP, "Bangor, County Down;" though a hesitant interpretation of "Row of points?" is given in Pádraig Ó Riain, Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, and Kevin Murray, *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames*, vol. 2 (London: Irish Texts Society, 2003), 126.

<sup>506</sup> Placenames Database of Ireland, "Banagher, Co. Offaly". Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge (DCU) and The Placenames Branch. Accessed 12 July 2018. [www.logainm.ie/en/41153](http://www.logainm.ie/en/41153).

<sup>507</sup> NIPNP, "Banagher, County Fermanagh". Accessed 1 June 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=7651](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=7651), first mentioned c. 1630 with an ecclesiastical association.

<sup>508</sup> Placenames Database of Ireland, Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge (DCU) and The Placenames Branch. Accessed 12 July 2018: "Banagher, Co. Westmeath". [www.logainm.ie/en/51725](http://www.logainm.ie/en/51725); "Banagher, Co. Mayo". [www.logainm.ie/en/34594](http://www.logainm.ie/en/34594); "Banagher, Co. Leitrim". [www.logainm.ie/en/29965](http://www.logainm.ie/en/29965); "Banagher, Co. Kilkenny". [www.logainm.ie/en/26440](http://www.logainm.ie/en/26440); "Banagher, Co. Galway". [www.logainm.ie/en/21582](http://www.logainm.ie/en/21582); "Banagher, Co. Derry". [www.logainm.ie/en/1165150](http://www.logainm.ie/en/1165150).

<sup>509</sup> First mentioned c. 1032: NIPNP, "Drumbanagher, County Armagh". Accessed 1 June 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=14480](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=14480).

<sup>510</sup> Placenames Database of Ireland, "Banagher, Co. Cavan". Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge (DCU) and The Placenames Branch. Accessed 12 July 2018. [www.logainm.ie/en/4800](http://www.logainm.ie/en/4800).

<sup>511</sup> The NIPNP. Accessed 1 June 2018. "Banagher Forest, Co. Derry". [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=1132](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=1132); "Movanagher, Co. Derry". [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=1797](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=1797); Ó Riain, *Gaelic Placenames*, 126.

<sup>512</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 480; Taylor, McNiven, and Williamson, *Clackmannanshire*; William J. Watson, *Scottish Place-Name Papers* (Edinburgh: Steve Savage, 2002), 141-142.

<sup>513</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 481; Taylor, McNiven, and Williamson, *Clackmannanshire*; Watson, *Place-Name Papers* (Edinburgh: Steve Savage, 2002), 141-142; see also Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, vol. 1 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), 400-401.

(*Loch Bheannchair*), PER (NGR NN 572 055); Loch Beanncharann, ROS (NGR NH 232 514); Loch Beanncharan, INV (NGR NH 304 389); Beannchar, INV (NH 76191); Tullybanchor (*Tulaich Bheannchair*), PER (NGR NN 746 220); Banchor, PER (NGR NH 912 407); Benchar, on the river Ness (lost); Glen Banchor, INV (NGR NN 671 987); Edinbanchory, ABD (NGR NJ 480 196); Corbanchory, ABD (NGR NJ 488 150); and Banchory, FIF (NGR NT 259 882).<sup>514</sup> Banchory, CLA (NS 861 955) has been mentioned as early as AD 1416 (as Banchry), which lies along a notable bend in the River Devon, along with Banchory-Ternan, KCD (NGR NO 696 964), first mentioned as Bencoryn c. 1178; the nearby *lacus de Benchoir*, possibly an early name for Loch of Leys, KCD (NGR NO 703 978), mentioned in a charter of 1247;<sup>515</sup> and Banchory-Devenick, KCD (NGR NJ 910 023), first mentioned as Benchorideneueth c. 1276, may comprise the EG elements *bean* + *cor* + *in*, and seem likely to come from the “horn cast” interpretation referencing the bend of a river.<sup>516</sup> Indeed, both of the lochs associated with this place-name element have a tapering shape, which may give more weight to the association of the term in Scotland with the shape of horns.<sup>517</sup>

Bangor is additionally a known place-name in Wales where it is usually interpreted as referring to the built element of a wattled fence as well as the area it enclosed, rather than a geographical one.<sup>518</sup> Perhaps the most famous Bangor site in Wales is that known in the Irish annals as Bangor of the Britons, where its name is spelled similarly to the Bangor in County Down.<sup>519</sup> Whether this suggests that seventh-century people understood the names of these two places to be the same is unclear.<sup>520</sup> While Bangor in Gwynedd is the most well-known of the medieval Welsh Bangors, there is another early foundation at Bangor-is-Coed c. 560,<sup>521</sup> and Bangor in Teifi in Ceredigion, is mentioned in the twelfth century.<sup>522</sup> Bangor sites in Wales which are first recorded after the medieval period include Maes Bangor (c. 1621-2), Cefn Bangor near Aberystwyth

<sup>514</sup> Watson, *Place-Name Papers*, 141-142; Watson, *CPNS*, 481.

<sup>515</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 481; Joseph Robertson, *Illustrations of the topography and antiquities of the shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. 3 (Aberdeen: William Bennett, 1857), 337.

<sup>516</sup> Taylor, McNiven, and Williamson, *Clackmannanshire*.

<sup>517</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 481.

<sup>518</sup> Jones, “Bangor?” 59-63.

<sup>519</sup> *Bennchoir Moer in Britannia*, AU 632.2; *Bennchair Brittonum*, AU 672.6; *Bennchair Britonum*, AT 672.5.

<sup>520</sup> Jones, “Bangor?” 64-65.

<sup>521</sup> Sabine Baring-Gould and John Fisher. *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 2 (London: The Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion, 1911), 326.

<sup>522</sup> Jones, “Bangor?” 62.

(c. 1692), Trefangor (c. 1786), Cefn Bangor near Caernarfon, Bwlch Bangor, Waun Bangor, and Penalltfangor.<sup>523</sup> Here, it seems that the common noun *bangor* became a marginally successful place-name element from the early medieval period for ecclesiastical settlements and into the early modern period for agricultural settlements, though it is possible that some Bangor place-names that are first attested later (such as Cefn Bangor and Trefangor) could still be survivals from an earlier period.<sup>524</sup> The Breton place-name of *Bangor*, on Belle-Île-en-Mer off the coast of Brittany, was first attested c. 1451.<sup>525</sup> It has been suggested that its name is a Breton cognate,<sup>526</sup> and Breton scholars appear to follow the weaving or plaiting theory seen in Wales.<sup>527</sup> The perception of the modern inhabitants of Bangor, Belle-Île-en-Mer is that it was founded in the sixth century by monks from across the Channel,<sup>528</sup> though this claim is unconfirmed.

This brief examination of *Beannchor* place-names around the Irish Sea gives some evidence that the usage of *Beannchor* was not isolated. The place-name is evident both in Ireland and further afield, though the interpretation of the word seems to have some variability. It would be worth making a closer examination of the geographical locations of each of the *Beannchor* places in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Brittany to see what, if any, geographic relationship may exist between them. However, due to a limitation of space in the current work, this has not been undertaken. Based on the information above, a cognate relationship between the various *Beannchoir* locations, with a divide in meaning possibly running along Gaeilge/Gàidhlig and Welsh/Brittonic lines, seems apparent. Out of the *Beannchor* type place-names in Ireland, it appears that at least four have a noted ecclesiastical association: Bangor (Co Down), Banagher (Co Fermanagh), Banchory (Co Offaly), Banagher (Co Derry/Londonderry), and in Scotland both Banchory-Ternan and Banchory-Devenick are associated with early church sites.<sup>529</sup> In Wales both Bangor (Gwynedd) and Bangor-is-Coed (Wrexham)

---

<sup>523</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid, 62-63.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> Léon Fleuriot and Claude Evans. *A Dictionary of Old Breton: Dictionnaire Du Vieux Breton: Historical and Comparative* (Toronto: Prepcorp, 1985), 422, *cor.*

<sup>528</sup> Bangor Belle-Île-en-Mer. "Bienvenue à Bangor", Mairie de Bangor 2018. Accessed 16 Sep 2020. [bangor.fr](http://bangor.fr).

<sup>529</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 280, 316.

are ecclesiastical sites, though unfortunately in Brittany there is too little evidence to make a definitive argument.

### 3.5 Textual Records for Bangor

The present section primarily makes use of three different annalistic sources as well as other types of textual sources in order to tease out the character of the monastery at Bangor. The annalistic sources include: the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, and the *Fragmentary Annals* (for a discussion on my choice not to include the *Annals of the Four Masters* and introduction to the annalistic sources, see section 2.1).

The first mentions of Comgall and Bangor have duplicates, which are likely evidence of these events being incorporated into *The Annals of Ulster* from other records, possibly shown by the four-year difference in each case.<sup>530</sup> Comgall's birth is recorded in AU 516, and repeated in AU 520.<sup>531</sup> The foundation of the monastery at Bangor is recorded in AU 554, and likewise repeated in AU 559.<sup>532</sup> In addition to this most basic information about the foundation of the settlement, the textual evidence can give further insights into the character of the settlement and its inhabitants. Of interest are the positions its monks and laymen may have held, and what kind of events were taking place there and in related locations.

#### 3.5.1 Types of Work

Bangor was reportedly home to large number of monks, some of the four thousand "under the yoke of Comgall", if a Middle Irish litany of saints is to be believed.<sup>533</sup> Looking at the terms and depictions of positions and work in the textual evidence can help identify what kinds of roles were valued sufficiently to be recorded, thus giving insight into the character of the community at Bangor.

<sup>530</sup> Grabowski and Dumville, *Chronicles and Annals*, 117-120.

<sup>531</sup> *Natiuitas Comgaill Beannchair*, AU 516.2; AT 517.1 ; AU 520.3.

<sup>532</sup> AU 554.3; AT 557.2 ; AU 559.1.

<sup>533</sup> Charles Plummer, *Irish Litanies: Text and Translation*, vol. 62 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1925), no. 8; This litany has been more recently dated on linguistic and historical grounds to the tenth century, likely compiled at Lismore Mochutu in Ireland in Sarah Sanderlin, "The Date and Provenance of the 'Litany of Irish Saints-II' (The Irish Litany of Pilgrim Saints)", *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, vol. 75 (1975), 262.

Terms which are used in relation with work and positions related to Bangor specifically include: *abbas*,<sup>534</sup> *comarba*,<sup>535</sup> *equonimus*,<sup>536</sup> *scriba*,<sup>537</sup> and *doctor*.<sup>538</sup> In addition to these terms are the inclusion of poems and songs (see section 3.5.2), which necessitate the existence of poets and writers, as well as an interesting mention of a fisherman. It is important to note that the interpretations and understanding for some of the terms for roles are still under discussion and not yet fully understood, for example the difference between *abbas* and *princeps*.<sup>539</sup> *Abbas* was the term used at Bangor for what would be considered the head of the monastery.<sup>540</sup> Thirty-two abbots are recorded in the annals, some of whom are noted for undertaking additional functions or work (see table 3.2). It is evident that *ancharait*, or anchorites lived within the community of Bangor. The deaths of what we can presume were prominent or well-known anchorites are recorded: Aedán, in AU 610;<sup>541</sup> Mael Gaimrid, in AU 839, of whom more is said below;<sup>542</sup> and Céile, in AU 928, who also receives additional attention below.<sup>543</sup> Dub Inse is recorded as bishop of Bangor in AU 953 in his obit,<sup>544</sup> though this is towards the end of the period of interest for the current research.

In addition to the role of bishops and abbots, the position of *comarba* is identified as one of authority, whereby the holder of the office, often determined via kinship, inherited the temporal rights and principalities of the original owners or donors of the soil.<sup>545</sup> The *comarba* served as the heir of a patron saint, though scholars have as yet been unable to certainly determine

---

<sup>534</sup> AU 601.3, 606.1, 610.2, 613.1, 616.3, 646.2, 663.1, 664.4, 669.1, 680.1, 691.1, 705.1, 728.3, 747.7, 767.3, 791.1, 794.2, 800.1, 802.5, 817.6, 820.4, 839.1, 849.11, 871.8, 881.1, 884.9, 906.5; AT 600.1, 604.1, 608.2, 611.4, 614.1, 647.2, 663.4, 664.3, 666.7, 667.1, 669.1, 680.1, 691.1, 705.5, 728.3, 747.8, 760.4; FA 22, 32, 38, 39, 41, 77, 108, 204, 389.

<sup>535</sup> AU 921.1, 828.7, 929.3, 940.6, 953.2, 958.2, 968.1, 981.2; FA 423.

<sup>536</sup> AU 782.1.

<sup>537</sup> AU 730.9, 839.1, 929.3.

<sup>538</sup> AU 806.7, 928.7, 929.3.

<sup>539</sup> J.M. Picard, "Princeps and Principatus in the Early Irish Church: a reassessment", in *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History, and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 146-147.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid, 147; A bishop is mentioned at Bangor with the death of Dub Inse at AU 953.4.

<sup>541</sup> *anchoritae*, AU 610.2; *ancharad*, AT 608.2.

<sup>542</sup> AU 839.1.

<sup>543</sup> AU 928.7, 929.3.

<sup>544</sup> AU 953.4.

<sup>545</sup> Sharpe, "Some problems", 264; Colmán Etchingham, "coarb", in *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, (ed.) S.J. Connolly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).



whether the office necessitated one being in religious orders.<sup>546</sup> That the *comarba* position is joined to a saint's cult is markedly different to the position of an abbot, who served a geographical location, which can be seen in the difference in obit entries for Beóguin, *abbatis Bennchoir*,<sup>547</sup> and Maenach mac Siadhail, *comarba Comgaill*.<sup>548</sup> At Bangor, the use of *abbas* ends with the death of Indrechtach in AU 906,<sup>549</sup> and appears to be replaced by *comarba* in the next entry that mentions Bangor in AU 921,<sup>550</sup> and all those following, until the end of the period under review here. This change is largely contemporaneous with the ending of the "Chronicle of Ireland" c. 911. This might reflect a change in local preference regarding terminology, or perhaps a more general terminological shift from Latin to Irish which begins to take place in the eighth century.<sup>551</sup>

Ultán held the position of *equonimus* at Bangor,<sup>552</sup> which is understood as a form of stewardship or administration position. This position also existed at other monasteries, as can be seen from the same entry that records the death of Ultán, where the death of Muiredach son of Uargal, steward of Iona, was also recorded.<sup>553</sup> The Bangor obituaries directly preceding and following that of Ultán are for Augustin (d. 780) and Sirne (d. 791), both abbots. There are likely open questions about the relationship between the different positions of *equonimus* and *comarba* within the hierarchy of a Community, though a lack of space here prevents a discussion.

The general use of *scriba* as a term in the annals develops around the end of the seventh century, becomes more common in the eighth and ninth centuries, and then dwindles in the tenth century.<sup>554</sup> Although earlier interpretation of the term *scriba* suggested it applied to anyone who wrote or copied manuscripts in a monastic setting,<sup>555</sup> the prevailing theory is that of Thomas Charles-Edwards, who identifies lower status copyists as *scriptor* rather than *scriba*,

---

<sup>546</sup> Sharpe, "Some problems", 264; The position of *comarba* could be combined with ecclesiastical positions such as bishop or could be left to laymen, Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, 67-68.

<sup>547</sup> AU 606.1; AT 604.1.

<sup>548</sup> AU 921.1.

<sup>549</sup> AU 906.5.

<sup>550</sup> AU 921.1.

<sup>551</sup> Dumville, "Latin and Irish in the *Annals of Ulster*", 323-327.

<sup>552</sup> AU 782.1.

<sup>553</sup> *equonimus of Í*, AU 782.1.

<sup>554</sup> Johnston, *Literacy*, 120.

<sup>555</sup> Hughes, "Irish scriptoria", 243-269.

acknowledging *scriba* as a biblical reference meaning someone who was well educated and wise, especially in regard to Biblical law, and who may have performed a specific function or office for a monastery.<sup>556</sup> This position appears to become associated with other high-status offices in the annals.<sup>557</sup> Three individuals are identified as *scriba* at Bangor. Cochall Odar (d. 730) is noted as a *scriba* of the family of Bangor.<sup>558</sup> Mael Gaimrid (d. 839) is remembered as an anchorite, *scriba optimus*, and abbot of Bangor.<sup>559</sup> He is twice mentioned as an authority in the Milan Irish glosses on a Latin commentary on the Psalter.<sup>560</sup> Céile is mentioned as *scriba* in the second notice of his death in AU 929.<sup>561</sup> The absence of obits recorded for people described as *scriptor* in the annals suggests that it might not be of sufficient status to merit inclusion, though there are three references to passages being written. An annalist writes in AU 603 that the events written in the subsequent entry were from the Book of Cuanu.<sup>562</sup> In AT 686 another annalist discusses writing to Rome.<sup>563</sup> Yet another annalist writes in AU 790 that a battle between Conall and Custantín was entered at this point in other books, suggesting it was a later copyist making the entry.<sup>564</sup> It would then be the *scriba* who took a primary position in the creation of original manuscripts, whereas the copying of existing manuscripts could be left to less prestigious copyists, such as our *scriptores* are purported to have been.<sup>565</sup> The high status of an individual with the title of *scriba* further indicates the ability of Bangor to maintain people of this level of skill.

Bangor's association with learning and scholarship is further evident in the mentions of *doctores* or teachers at Bangor.<sup>566</sup> This term seems to have a wide

---

<sup>556</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 264-271.

<sup>557</sup> Johnston, *Literacy*, 122.

<sup>558</sup> *Scriba familie Benncair*, AU 730.9; He is called *sui*, or learned, in FA 217.

<sup>559</sup> AU 839.1.

<sup>560</sup> Johnston, *Literacy*, 123; Whitley Stokes and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus: a collection of Old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose and verse*, vol 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), 185 (56b33), 233 (68c15); Rijcklof Hofman (trans). Priscian. *The Sankt Gall Priscian Commentary*, vol. 1 (Münster: Nodus, 1996), 22. Accessed 17 July 2018. [www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/description/csg/0904/](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/description/csg/0904/); Griffith, Aaron. "A Dictionary of the Old-Irish Glosses in the Milan Codex Ambrosianus C 301 inf". Universität Wien. Accessed 8 Jul 2018. [www.univie.ac.at/indogermanistik/milan\\_glosses](http://www.univie.ac.at/indogermanistik/milan_glosses).

<sup>561</sup> It is unclear why his death was mentioned twice, AU 929.3.

<sup>562</sup> *Omnia quae scripta sunt in anno subsequente, inueni in Libro Cuanach in isto esse perfecta*, AU 603.3.

<sup>563</sup> *Et hanc donationem aureis scriptam litteris Romam direxit*, AT 686.3.

<sup>564</sup> *Bellum Conaill 7 Custantin hic scriptum est in aliis libris*, AU 790.7.

<sup>565</sup> Johnston, *Literacy*, 120-124.

<sup>566</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 277.

interpretation, potentially indicating a position with the range of a teacher of religious law, scriptural commentator, or preacher and includes a practical or behavioural component.<sup>567</sup> Bede specifically mentions *doctores* as part of the hierarchy of the British church,<sup>568</sup> and they seem to hold a position of significant importance within the Irish church.<sup>569</sup> Two such teachers at Bangor are mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster*: Loithech, whose death is recorded in AU 806;<sup>570</sup> and Céile, mentioned several times above as scribe and anchorite, and additionally *comarba* of Comgall, who was further considered an “Apostolic teacher of all Ireland”.<sup>571</sup> Apostolic refers to a “pre-eminent authority as a champion of religious orthodoxy”.<sup>572</sup> It may be that in order to possess the title of *doctor*, one must already have obtained the status of *scriba*, though the degree of regulation for the acquisition of such titles is not clear.

The *Martyrology of Tallaght*, written between AD 828 and 833,<sup>573</sup> was compiled based on earlier martyrologies, one of which included a stage of compilation at Bangor, as evidence within the text itself shows.<sup>574</sup> One major indicator is the inclusion of Bishop Sédrach mac Sobarthain, whose death is mentioned alongside that of abbot Augustín.<sup>575</sup> He is further mentioned at the feast days of 20 Apr (where both he and his father Sobarthain are listed as *sancti*),<sup>576</sup> 22 Aug,<sup>577</sup> and 29 Sep.<sup>578</sup> Although he is never explicitly tied to Bangor, the contexts where he appears place him squarely in that company.<sup>579</sup> Accompanying him in the martyrology at 22 Aug is Beóguin mac Daigri, Comgall’s immediate successor as abbot, and at 29 Sep Sédrach is associated with Comgall himself as well as with an association to relics, and possibly the keeping of a martyrology, which could explain the intense level of attention Sédrach receives.<sup>580</sup> That the martyrology which underlies *MarT* and *MarO* underwent compilation at Bangor along with the

---

<sup>567</sup> Johnston, *Literacy*, 113.

<sup>568</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, II.2.

<sup>569</sup> For a more detailed discussion on this term, see Johnston, *Literacy*, 112-114.

<sup>570</sup> AU 806.7.

<sup>571</sup> *Apostolicus doctor totius Hiberniae*, AU 928.7, 929.3.

<sup>572</sup> Johnston, *Literacy*, 113.

<sup>573</sup> Ó Riain, "Tallaght Martyrologies, Redated", 38.

<sup>574</sup> Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, 319.

<sup>575</sup> Although he is not directly connected to Bangor in the entry at AU 780.11.

<sup>576</sup> *MarT* 20 Apr.

<sup>577</sup> *MarT* 22 Aug.

<sup>578</sup> *MarT* 29 Sep.

<sup>579</sup> Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, 67-68.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

*Chronicle of Ireland* indicates the importance and high status of writing which occurred at Bangor.

### 3.5.2 Writing at Bangor

Bangor was the location of composition for poetic works, further seen in the *Antiphonary of Bangor*, which includes poems that commemorate both the community of Bangor and its first fifteen abbots (see Table 3.2).

The *Antiphonary* contains three hymns which specifically relate to Bangor: the first is in honour of Comgall - *Hymnus Sancti Comgilli Abbatis Nostri*,<sup>581</sup> the second hymn includes the first fifteen abbots of Bangor - *In Memoriam Abbatum Nostrorum*; and the third honours the community of Bangor - *Versiculi Familiae Benchuir*.<sup>582</sup> Jane Stevenson has further argued that the *Antiphonary* shows evidence of the origin place of the “Hisperic style” in literature,<sup>583</sup> which is perhaps most notable for its distinctive use of vocabulary described as “bizarre”; this appears to be an exercise in the collection of synonyms from sources such as Isidore of Seville, Philip the Presbyter, and Orosius,<sup>584</sup> making Bangor part of a widely spread literary culture.

It has also been suggested as the place of writing of *Immram Bran*, “The Voyage of Bran”, possibly as early as the seventh century,<sup>585</sup> and the stories of Mongán mac Fiachna (sometimes themselves referred to as the Mongán Cycle), which together have been suggested to “constitute a sort of minor cycle belonging peculiarly to Bangor and Dál nAraidi”,<sup>586</sup> and thus perhaps even to the eighth

---

<sup>581</sup> Warren and Griggs, *Antiphonary of Bangor*, hymn 14; This hymn has been dated to the seventh century based on language; Curran, *Antiphonary*, 81.

<sup>582</sup> Curran, *Antiphonary of Bangor*, 81-83; Lapidge, “Columbanus”, 105; Warren and Griggs, *Antiphonary of Bangor*, xvi, hymns 95 and 129. Translations for *Versiculi familiae Benchuir* and *In memoriam abbatum nostrorum* can be found in William Reeves, “The Antiphonary of Bangor”, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, First Series, 1 (1853), 175-178.

<sup>583</sup> For a full discussion of *Hisperica Famina* and its relationship to Bangor, see J. Stevenson, “Bangor and the *Hisperica Famina*”, *Peritia* 6-7 (1987-88) 202-216.

<sup>584</sup> Stevenson, “*Hisperica Famina*”, 202-203, 205.

<sup>585</sup> Alfred Trübner Nutt, and Kuno Meyer. *The Voyage of Bran, Son of Febal, to the Land of the Living: An Old Irish Saga* (London: D. Nutt, 1895), xvi.

<sup>586</sup> Proinseas Mac Cana, “Mongán Mac Fiachna and *Immram Bran*”, *Ériu* 23 (1972), 106; Ó Riain argues that the identification of Bangor specifically as the source for *Buile Shuibhne* is uncertain in Pádraig Ó Riain, “The Materials and Provenance of ‘*Buile Shuibhne*,’” *Éigse* 15.3 (1974), 175.

century text *Cín Dromma Snechtai* more generally.<sup>587</sup> The Mongán cycle includes a poem which ties the main character directly to Bangor:

In Bangor  
Is Mongán mac Fiachna:  
With him is Conchobur  
At the contest of shield-splitting.

*I mBendchur  
atá Mongán mac Fíachna:  
is le[is] atá Conchobur  
ar grafaind scáilte sciathcha.*<sup>588</sup>

Bangor may also be the place of writing of *Buile Shuibhne*,<sup>589</sup> placing it in a position of importance in more than one literary tradition. We are also able to see songs and poems either attributed to, or likely composed by monks at Bangor within the martyrology and annalistic sources. A poem in the notes appended to the *Martyrology of Óengus* is attributed to Mael Gaimrid:

Bangor delightful, pure,  
place of forgiveness of crimes:  
a time will be for the power of abbots  
it will be a dwelling of sharp-nosed dogs.

*Bennchor alaind idhan  
loc dilgudha na cinadh:  
biaidh uair do brigh na n-apadh  
bid adhba madagh mbirach.*<sup>590</sup>

The annalistic poems are addressed in the order in which they appear in the annals as it seems possible, and in some cases likely, that they may be a later interpolation. The first poem is attributed to Cenn Faelad in AU 669 in the

<sup>587</sup> Mac Cana, "Mongán Mac Fiachna", *Ériu* 23 (1972), 102-106; See also David Stifter, "Ulster Connections of *Cín Dromma Snechtai*", in *Ulidia 4: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, (ed) Mícheál B. Ó Mainnín and Gregory Toner (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 23-37; Nora White, *Compert Mongáin and Three Other Early Mongán Tales: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Textual Notes, Bibliography and Vocabulary* (Maynooth: The Leinster Leader, NAAS, 2006), 60-70.

<sup>588</sup> Mac Cana, "Mongan mac Fiachna", 106; White, *Compert Mongáin*, 60.

<sup>589</sup> Ó Riain, "Materials and Provenance", 175; Robin Flower, *The Irish Tradition* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, Ltd, 1994), 16-17; Mac Cana, "Mongan mac Fiachna", 104-106; Joseph Falaky Nagy, "Writing from the 'Other Shore' and the Beginnings of Vernacular Literature in Ireland", in *A Companion to British Literature: Volume 1: Medieval Literature 700-1450*, (ed) Robert DeMaria, Jr, Heesok Change, and Samantha Zacher (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014), 328-329.

<sup>590</sup> MarO, 10 May, notes.

*Annals of Ulster*, and is likely the same Cenn Faelad whose death as abbot of Bangor is recorded in AU 705:<sup>591</sup>

No dearer to me  
Is one king rather than another  
Since Mael Fothartaig was taken  
In his shroud to Daire.

*Ni diliu  
nach ri lim-sa alaliu  
o bretha Mael Fothartaigh  
ina geimnen do Dhairiu.*<sup>592</sup>

The *Fragmentary Annals* include a song by Riaguil of Bennchor erroneously placed under the death of Flann Fína, also referred to as Aldfrith son of Oswy, and king of the Saxons:

Today Bruide fights a battle  
over the land of his ancestor,  
unless it is the wish of the Son of God  
that restitution be made.

Today the son of Oswy was slain  
in battle against gray swords,  
even though he did penance  
and that too late in Iona.

Today the son of Oswy was slain,  
who used to have dark drinks;  
Christ has heard our prayer  
that Bruide would save Brega.

*Iniu feras Bruide cath  
im forba a senathar  
manad algas lá mac Dé  
conid é ad genathar*

*Iniu ro bíth mac Ossa  
a c-cath fria claidhmhe glasa  
cia do rada aithirge  
is h-í i nd-h-Í iar n-assa*

---

<sup>591</sup> AU 705.1; AT 705.5.

<sup>592</sup> AU 669.1; The same death announcements are made for this entry in AT, though the song is excluded, AT 669.1; the equivalent entry in FA mentions three of the four deaths recorded in AU and AT and also excludes the song, FA 39, 40, 43.

*Iniu ro bíth mac Osa  
lasa m-bidis dubha deoga  
ro cúala Crist ar n-guidhe  
roisaorbut Bruide bregha.*<sup>593</sup>

Although this poem is included under the report of Aldfrith's death in the *Fragmentary Annals*, it is actually about his predecessor, Ecgrith, who was killed at the Battle of Dunnichen in AU 685.<sup>594</sup> The report of Flann Fína's death is also mentioned in the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Annals of Tigernach*, though Riaguil and his song are not,<sup>595</sup> which may be a further indicator that this poem was inserted in this entry during the process of compilation for the *Fragmentary Annals*, thus explaining the error and serving as evidence for Bangor's interest in politics in Northern Britain. Aldfrith, however, is also of note here as he represented "the confluence of the two most influential families in Ireland and Britain of his day",<sup>596</sup> and would therefore be of significant interest to both Irish and British audiences. There is evidence that Aldfrith's education occurred in Ireland,<sup>597</sup> perhaps especially at Bangor,<sup>598</sup> and on Iona.<sup>599</sup> Additionally, there is a possibility that Aldfrith's mother was of the Cenél nÉogan branch of the northern Uí Néill,<sup>600</sup> which would provide a further Irish connection.

The next poem is included in the *Annals of Ulster* in AU 824, following an entry on an attack at Bangor: "The heathens plundered Bennchor at *Airtiu* (Ards), and destroyed the oratory, and shook the relics of Comgall from their shrine", possibly suggesting the shrine was taken, but Comgall's bones were left behind:

---

<sup>593</sup> FA 165; See an alternative translation in Thomas Owen Clancy, *The Triumph Tree: Scotland's earliest Poetry AD550-1350* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1998), 115.

<sup>594</sup> AU 686.1; AT 686.4; FA 96; Clancy, *Triumph Tree*, 115; James E Fraser, *The Battle of Dunnichen 685* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2002), 39; Colin Ireland, "Where Was King Aldfrith of Northumbria Educated? An Exploration of Seventh-Century Insular Learning", *Traditio* 70 (2015), 45.

<sup>595</sup> AU 704.3; AT 704.4. *Riagail Bennchair* is mentioned at *MarT* 11 Jun.

<sup>596</sup> Colin Ireland, *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Briathra Flainn Fhina maic Ossu* (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1999), 55; Bede advises that Aldfrith "was said to be the brother of Ecgrith and son of King Oswiu, Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, IV.26.

<sup>597</sup> Flower, *Irish Tradition*, 12; Ireland, "Aldfrith Educated?" 52-55, 58-63.

<sup>598</sup> Ireland, "Aldfrith Educated?" 63-72.

<sup>599</sup> Aldfrith is called "pupil of Adomnán in the record of his death: *dalta Adamnáin*, FA 165; Fraser, *Battle of Dunnichen*, 91.

<sup>600</sup> Michael A. O'Brien and John V. Kelleher, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001), 135; Though this argument been criticized by Ireland, "Where Was King Aldfrith of Northumbria Educated?" 31.

It will be true, true,  
 By the will of the High-king of kings,  
 My bones shall be borne without harm  
 From Bennchor of the fighting to *Aentreb* (Antrim).

*Bidh fir fir  
 do dheoin Airdrigh inna righ  
 berthair mo chnama cen chron  
 o Benncor bagha d'Oentrob.*<sup>601</sup>

There is no attribution in this poem, but it seems likely that it was written by someone with a close interest in Comgall. It is noteworthy that the poem is written from Comgall's perspective and implies that his relics ended up in Antrim, which will be discussed as a potential dependent house below. The final poem, in the *Annals of Ulster* in AU 929, references Céile, already mentioned several times above, commemorating his death:

Thrice nine and nine hundred years  
 Are reckoned by clear rules  
 Since the year of Christ's birth (a benign occurrence)  
 Until the holy death of the cleric Céile.

*Tri .ix., .ix. cet do bliadnaib  
 rimthir fo riaghlaibh reilibh  
 o gein Crist, gnim cen deni  
 co bas caidh Ceili clerig.*<sup>602</sup>

There is again no direct attribution, though the nature of the composition suggests that it was written by a monk at Bangor, and the many high-status titles associated with him should allow the possibility that it could have been written elsewhere. It may be of significance that the entry containing the poem is the duplicate entry recording Céile's death,<sup>603</sup> which also names him as a *scriba*. These poems stand as evidence of a long-standing tradition of writing, including that of poetry and songs, which can be associated with Bangor and its scholastic and intellectual culture.

Lay members of the ecclesiastical community are sometimes mentioned in the textual sources generally, often referred to as *manaig*, or monastic clients,

---

<sup>601</sup> AU 824.2.

<sup>602</sup> AU 929.3.

<sup>603</sup> Céile's death is first reported at AU 928.7, without the accompanying poem.



though it should be noted that the interpretation of the term still requires a great deal of clarification.<sup>604</sup> The *Annals of Tigernach* report a curious event that is connected to St Comgall and Bangor in AT 564, which is worth including here in full:

In this year the *muirgelt* was taken on the strand of Ollarba in the net of Beóán son of Indle, namely Airiu daughter of Eochaid son of Muirid. Beóán son of Indle, St Comgall of Bennchor's fisherman, caught her.

*In hoc anno capta est in muirgelt for Tracht Ollarbai l-lín Beoain maic Indle .i. Airiu ingen Eachach maic Muiredha. Beoan mac Indle .i. iascaire Comgail Bennchair, ros-gab.*<sup>605</sup>

The same story is mentioned in the notes of the *Martyrology of Óengus* for 27 Jan, though the *muirgelt*'s name is changed to Líbán.<sup>606</sup> Ollarba is a hydronym that has been associated with the Six Mile Water,<sup>607</sup> which enters Loch nEchdach (now Lough Neagh) near Antrim town and would thus indicate a beach near the mouth of the river on Lough Neagh. Although this entry is found at AT 564, the reference to the Six Mile Water suggests the possibility that this was an insertion that happened around the time that Comgall's relics were taken to Antrim in AU 824.<sup>608</sup> This story can be seen in various tales of the death of her father, Eochaid mac Maireda, which further connect the story of the *muirgelt* to Comgall,<sup>609</sup> though it should be noted that this entry likely represents a later insertion based on the survival of the story in literature. *Muirgelt* has been translated as mermaid due to descriptions of Airiu/Líbán as half woman and half fish, however, the word may be better translated as "sea-wanderer" or "sea-lunatic", more in line with the story of *Suibhne Gelt*.<sup>610</sup> What is of interest in this report is

<sup>604</sup> Hughes, *Church in Early Irish Society*, 137; Charles-Edwards notes that prior to the twelfth century, *manach* appropriately referred to everyone living under an abbot's authority, even if they had only taken "one of the three standard vows of poverty, chastity and obedience", in "The Church and Settlement", in *Ireland and Europe: The Early Church*, (ed.) Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 171; Sharpe, "Some problems", 263; for an extensive discussion on the position of *manaig*, see Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, 363-454.

<sup>605</sup> AT 564.1; AU 572.5.

<sup>606</sup> *MarO* 27 Jan, notes.

<sup>607</sup> NIPNP, "Six Mile Water, County Antrim". Accessed 29 June 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5659](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5659).

<sup>608</sup> AU 824.2.

<sup>609</sup> An excellent treatment of the various versions of this story can be found at Ranke de Vries, *Two Texts on Loch nEchach: De Causis Torchi Corc Óche and Aided Echach Maic Maireda* (London: Irish Texts Society, 2012).

<sup>610</sup> Ranke de Vries, "The Names of Lí Bán", in *Myth in Celtic Literatures: CSANA Yearbook 6*, (ed) Joseph Falaky Nagy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 50-53.

Beóán's position as fisherman. His role is defined here as a secular one, though that does not necessarily preclude him living in monastic orders as part of the Community of Comgall, perhaps based at Antrim specifically.

Bangor was known as a place for the study of the calculation of the date of Easter, known as *computus*, and played an important part in the well-known controversy in Ireland and Britain in the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>611</sup> Sillán moccu Mind, known as Mo-Sinu, abbot of Bangor between AD 608 and 610, was recorded as having a particular expertise in arithmetical computation and "was the first of the Irish who learned the *computus* by heart".<sup>612</sup> The hymn commemorating the abbots of Bangor in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* calls Sillán "famous teacher of the world".<sup>613</sup> Bangor's involvement with the computation of Easter is further strengthened by the letter from Columbanus to Gregory the Great and the letter from Pope-elect John (IV) to the clergy of Ireland.<sup>614</sup> The positions mentioned in the textual sources confirm Bangor's identity as an intellectual institution and place of learning.

### 3.6 Events

Of additional interest are the events and happenings that are recorded at and about Bangor. These are, by nature, extreme events that merited recording about the monastery, and thus are primarily regarding burnings and attacks on the monastery. Two burnings (*combustio*) of Bangor are mentioned in the annals, though no details on the cause or culprit are given: one in AU 616,<sup>615</sup> and the other in AU 756, which we are told happened on the feast of St. Patrick.<sup>616</sup> As the first known Viking attack on Ireland was the raid at *Rechru* in AU 795,<sup>617</sup>

---

<sup>611</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, II.19; VC, I.3; See "The Paschal controversy", in Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 391-415.

<sup>612</sup> This comes from a note bound within, but unrelated to, an eighth-century Irish text of the Gospel of Matthew in the Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS M. p. th. f. 61.1. A transcription and translation of this note is available in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, "Mo-Sinnu moccu Min and the *computus* of Bangor", *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 283-285.

<sup>613</sup> *famosum mundi magistrum* in Warren and Griggs, *Antiphonary of Bangor*, 32.

<sup>614</sup> See Anderson's discussion on the possible Bangor connections with pope-elect John's letter in Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 22-23.

<sup>615</sup> AU 616.3; AT 614.1.

<sup>616</sup> AU 756.1; AT 756.1.

<sup>617</sup> AU 795; While the term Viking is problematic in its own right, it will be used here to refer to the period following the inception of raids from Scandinavia generally as well as the peoples who instigated said raids and settled from Scandinavian lands.

which has been identified as possibly being Rathlin island off the north coast of Antrim, or Lambay island, off the coast of County Dublin.<sup>618</sup> It is unlikely these attacks on Bangor were committed by Scandinavian foreigners, unlike attacks in the ninth century, mentioned below. Neither entry about Bangor attributes the *combustio* to a person or people, so it is unclear whether this was an attack on the monastery, or a fire caused accidentally either by a person or nature. Fires specifically caused by lightning are mentioned in AU 916 and 996, though *combustio* is not used in their description,<sup>619</sup> while many fires described as *combustio* are recorded with no further detail. This can be seen in AU 775 which, on its own, saw *combustio* at *Ard Macha*,<sup>620</sup> *Cell Dara*,<sup>621</sup> and *Glen dá Locha*.<sup>622</sup> Lucas has shown that attacks on monasteries by Irishmen are well documented prior to the arrival of Scandinavian raiders,<sup>623</sup> and it is even possible that an attack may have been perpetrated by members of another monastic community.<sup>624</sup> Indeed, the *combustio* (and martyrdom) of Donnán of Eigg and Connor, and the ravaging of Tory occurred in the year after the first *combustio* of Bangor.<sup>625</sup> These additional events suggest that the *combustio* of Bangor was an attack, though by whom, exactly, is unknown. Reports of *combustio* at *Rechru* (AU 795) and *Inis Pátraic* (St Patrick's Isle) (AU 798) were specifically attributed to *gentiles*, or heathens, a term understood to mean Scandinavians.<sup>626</sup> Two attacks on Bangor in the ninth century appear to be directly attributable to Scandinavian attack, as they are recorded as involving *gentiles*. The first attack occurred in AU 823,<sup>627</sup> while the second in AU 824 seemed to be a more devastating event, in which Bangor was plundered and the oratory destroyed, with the relics of Comgall being shaken from their shrine.<sup>628</sup> Bangor's position near the shore on a sheltered and navigable sea loch would place it in prime position for Scandinavian attack. The poem mentioned above (see section 3.5.2)

---

<sup>618</sup> Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum*, s.v. Rechra, 579; Herbert, *IKD*, 42.

<sup>619</sup> *Ard Macha do loscadh di ait i quint kl-. Mai, .i. a leith deiscertach cosin Toi & cosint Saboll & cusin chucin & cosind lius abad h-uile*, AU 916.8; *Tene di ait do ghabail Aird Macha connafarcaibh dertach na dam liac na h-erdamh na fid-nemedh ann cen loscadh*, AU 996.1.

<sup>620</sup> AU 775.2.

<sup>621</sup> AU 775.3.

<sup>622</sup> AU 775.4.

<sup>623</sup> A.T. Lucas, "The Plundering and Burning of Churches in Ireland, 7<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Century", in *North Munster Studies* (ed) Etienne Rynne (Limerick: The Thomond Archaeological Society, 1967), 174-176.

<sup>624</sup> Lucas, "Plundering and Burning", 178.

<sup>625</sup> AU 617.1; AT 615.1.

<sup>626</sup> AU 795.3, 798.2.

<sup>627</sup> AU 823.8.

<sup>628</sup> AU 824.2.

refers to “Bangor of the fighting”,<sup>629</sup> and seems to describe the bones of Comgall being taken inland to Antrim, possibly for safe keeping in a time when attack seemed frequent. Two attacks in as many years would likely seem devastating to the monks of Bangor.

A perhaps unbelievable, and indeed physically impossible, event was recorded for Bangor under the year AD 753, though the entry reports that it occurred the prior year, in 752 and which is worth including in its entirety:<sup>630</sup>

A whale was cast ashore in Bairche in the time of Fiachna son of Aed Rón, king of Ulaid. It had three gold teeth in its head, each containing fifty ounces, and one of them was placed on the altar of Bennchor this year, that is, in AD 752.

*Mil mor do-rála docum tiri i m-Bairchiu i nd-aimsir Fiachnai mc. Aedha Roin righ Uladh, & tri fiacla oir ina chinn & l unga in gach fiacail dibh; co rugad fiacail dibh co raibi for altoir Bennchuir an bliadain-si, scilicet Anno Domini 752.*<sup>631</sup>

It is worth noting that this is during the period when Fiachna was patron of Bangor, and likely when his nephew Diarmait was studying at Bangor, as he had not yet founded his own monastery, *Dísert Diarmata*, by that time. This entry may be evidence of that patronage, and that Bangor received special objects because of Fiachna’s attention. The Bairche coast is south of Strangford Lough, and one might therefore assume that items of great value would go to the altar at Downpatrick, rather than Bangor. McCarthy argues that the entry is both retrospective and allegorical,<sup>632</sup> though one might wonder if this is a reference instead to ambergris, which can sometimes have a yellow colour and is valued to this day for its pleasing smell.<sup>633</sup>

<sup>629</sup> *Bennchor bagha*, AU 824.2.

<sup>630</sup> AU 753.13; Instead of giving the date the gold was placed on the altar, AT advises it sat there “for a long time”, AT 744.11; It seems there was a possible tradition of sorts of special items being placed on altars, often with a connection to the otherworld, as discussed in Kevin Murray, “The Role of the *Cuilebad* in *Immram Snédgusa 7 Maic Riagla*”, in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature* (ed.) Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 187-193.

<sup>631</sup> AU 753.13.

<sup>632</sup> McCarthy, *Irish Annals*, 165-166. He argues that the “teeth” were instead valuable books which found their way to Iona in an unconventional fashion, and suggests the books included in *MarT*, the *Iona Chronicle*, and the psalter known as the *Cathach*.

<sup>633</sup> Suggested by Thomas Owen Clancy, personal communication; Encyclopaedia Britannica. “Ambergris”. Accessed 5 Dec 2019. [www.britannica.com/science/ambergris](http://www.britannica.com/science/ambergris).

### 3.7 Comgall

Now I turn to look specifically at the founder of Bangor, Comgall. As mentioned above (see section 3.5), his birth is reported at varying dates in the annals.<sup>634</sup> His feast day is given as both 10 and 12 May.<sup>635</sup> Comgall's birth is recorded twice, at AU 516 and AU 520.<sup>636</sup> His father's name was Setna,<sup>637</sup> and his mother's name is given as Brig(a) in both versions of his *Life*.<sup>638</sup> He reportedly also had a sister named Subthan.<sup>639</sup> Comgall is firmly recognized as a member of the Dál nAraide, an important sub-kingdom of Ulster also known as Cruithni (see section 3.1). Adomnán directly refers to Comgall as *moccu Aridi*,<sup>640</sup> and writes of a conversation between Columba and Comgall following the convention of Druim Cett, when he and Comgall stop to rest and discuss a future battle between their two families, the Uí Néill and the Cruithni.<sup>641</sup> Comgall's heritage is further delineated in the notes of the *Martyrology of Óengus* where his lineage is son of Sétne, son of Eochaid, son of Broen, son of Forgo, son of Ernan, son of Crimthan, son of Eochaid, son of Lugaid, son of Ross, son of Imchad, son of Feidlimid, son of Cass, son of Fiachra Araide.<sup>642</sup> The alternate name of Faustinus is given for Comgall in Notker's *Martyrology*;<sup>643</sup> however, this seems to be an error based on a series of 13 sermons attributed to Columbanus, in the second of which it was written that the author was a student of Faustus, now understood to be Faustus of Riez (d. 490).<sup>644</sup>

Details on Comgall's life come to us from two extant *Lives* (see section 2.4), and the sixteenth-century *Aberdeen Breviary* also contains a brief set of lessons for Comgall.<sup>645</sup> While hagiographical works were never intended to meet strict

<sup>634</sup> AU 516.2, 520.3; AT 517.1.

<sup>635</sup> *MarT* 10 May; *MarO* 10 May; *MarG* 10 May; *AB* 12 May.

<sup>636</sup> AU 516.2, 520.3; AT 517.1,

<sup>637</sup> Ó Riain, *CGSH*, Tract on the Mothers of the Saints, §97, §722.86; Setna is given as the name of Comgall's maternal grandfather in *MarO* 21 Apr, notes.

<sup>638</sup> Heist, *VSH*, *VCom* §1; Plummer, *VSH*, *VCom* § 5.

<sup>639</sup> Ó Riain, *CGSH*, §722.86.

<sup>640</sup> *VC* III.17.

<sup>641</sup> *VC* I.49.

<sup>642</sup> *MarO* 10 May, notes; see also *CGSH* 97.

<sup>643</sup> Notker, *Martyrology*, 9 Jun, 210.

<sup>644</sup> Clare Stancliffe, "The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship", in Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings, (ed) Michael Lapidge (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 93-96; the sermons themselves are available in G. S. M. Walker (trans). St Columbanus. *Sancti Columbani Opera* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957).

<sup>645</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 120-123.

historical requirements, they are still able to transmit valuable information about the saint and his life.<sup>646</sup> Comgall's hagiographer spends time setting up connections between the saint and other important local places, such as Movilla and Nendrum, as well as locations of greater interest to this thesis, including Iona, Tiree, and Pictland.<sup>647</sup>

The *Vita Sancti Comgalli* obviously seeks to capitalize on and stress the idea that Comgall's Bangor was the centre of a vast network of ecclesiastical churches and foundations. Section thirteen of his *Vita* notes that so many monks came to him that it was not possible for them to all be in one place, and that many churches and monasteries had to be constructed around the provinces of Ireland in order to hold them all. The number given in this text is 3000, which may be a symbolic number, if not an inflated one. The section goes on to specifically describe the major position of Bangor as the seat of Comgall's community.

He built a great monastery, which was called Bangor, in the region called the height of the Ulaid [Ards peninsula], next to the eastern sea. And a great multitude of monks came there to holy Comgall, so it was not possible for all to be in one place. And thus many churches and many monasteries were constructed not only in the region of the Ulaid, but in other provinces of Ireland. And in the many churches and monasteries there were three thousand monks under the care of the holy father Comgall. But greater and more celebrated than the other places is the monastery of Bangor, where the bright city in honour of Saint Comgall is built.<sup>648</sup>

*Constituitque magnum monasterium, quod vocatur Beannchor, in regione que dicitur altitudo Ultorum, iuxta mare orientale. Et maxima multitudo monachorum ibi venit ad sanctum Comgallum, ut non potuissent esse in uno loco. Et inde plurimas cellas et multa monasteria, non solum in regione Ultorum, set per alias Hibernie provincias [construxit]. Et in diversis cellis et monasteriis tria milia monachorum sub cura sancti patris Comgalli fuerunt. Set maior et nominacior ceteris locis predictum monasterium Beannchor est, ubi clara civitas in honore sancti Comgalli edificata est.*<sup>649</sup>

---

<sup>646</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 9.

<sup>647</sup> *VCom* §§8-19, §28, §42.

<sup>648</sup> Translation by author.

<sup>649</sup> *VCom* §13.

Comgall's *Vita* makes a connection with the Uí Bhairrche of Carlow in Leinster (whose name is the origin of Obargy). There was a church there dedicated to Comgall,<sup>650</sup> likely the one for which Comgall was expressly granted land, identified as Kinneigh (Co Carlow), by Cormac mac Diarmata.<sup>651</sup> Fiachra of the church of Ullard, near the river Barrow in the Carlow barony of Idrone gives Comgall his last rites in his *Vita*.<sup>652</sup> In the north of Ireland (Co Derry/Londonderry), his *Vita* associates Comgall with *Cambas* (Camus), *Tamlacht Uí Chroiligh* (Tamlagh O Crilly), and *Díseart Mhártain* (Desertmartin - later associated with Martin).<sup>653</sup>

In the textual traditions, Comgall is associated as a teacher of a number of other known, and in some cases important, early medieval ecclesiastical figures within their own *Vitae*, and it is useful to mention them briefly here: Fiontan of *Dún Bleisce* (Doon), from the barony of Coonagh (Co Limerick);<sup>654</sup> Molua of *Clonfertmulloe* (Kyle), whose life is arguably dated to the twelfth century,<sup>655</sup> is said to have spent time studying with Comgall in Bangor prior to founding his own monastery at Kyle;<sup>656</sup> Fintan of *Tech Munnu* (Taghmon) in Co Wexford;<sup>657</sup> and Daigh of *Inis Céin* (Inishkeen) in Co Monaghan.<sup>658</sup> Ó Riain suggests the *Vita* which gives us this connection likely dates to the twelfth century;<sup>659</sup> Moluog, founder of *Lios mór* (Lismore) in the Inner Hebrides, is said to have spent some time in the north of Ireland, possibly with Comgall.<sup>660</sup> Maelruba likely spent time at Bangor before crossing the North Channel to found Applecross and is mentioned as abbot of Bangor in the *Martyrology of Tallaght*.<sup>661</sup> Columbanus is also a known student of Comgall.<sup>662</sup> It is possible that some of these purported

---

<sup>650</sup> *VCom* §42.

<sup>651</sup> O'Brien, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, 54; Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 20, 32 n. 86.

<sup>652</sup> *VCom*, §§57-58.

<sup>653</sup> Cambas, Tamlacht Uí Chroiligh, and Díseart Mhártain are listed together under Comgall's name, along with his feast day (10 May) in a seventeenth century collection of saints and their dedications known as the Wadding Correspondence (Franciscan Library MS. D I), transcribed in Rev. Canice Mooney, O.F.M., "Topographical Fragments from the Franciscan Library", *Celtica* 1 (1950), 83.

<sup>654</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, *A Dictionary of Irish Saints* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), 341; Heist, *VSH*, 114 §5.

<sup>655</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 490-493.

<sup>656</sup> Heist, *VSH*, 134 §15-28; Plummer, *VSH*, 210-214 §16-25.

<sup>657</sup> Heist, *VSH*, 199 §4; Gilbert Márkus, *Brilliant Flame: St Munnu in medieval literature and his church at Kilmun in Cowal* (Kilmartin, Argyll: Kilmartin Museum Trust, 2015).

<sup>658</sup> Heist, *VSH*, 390 §6.

<sup>659</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 252.

<sup>660</sup> *AB* 150-151.

<sup>661</sup> *MarT* 35.

<sup>662</sup> *VColumb* § 9.

connections are later hagiographical assertions that could reflect anachronistic political motivations rather than actual historic truth, though that attests to the great status given to Comgall at the time of their composition.

Columbanus is perhaps Comgall's most famous student; well known for his travels to France and Italy, where he founded monasteries at Annegray,<sup>663</sup> Luxeuil,<sup>664</sup> and Bobbio,<sup>665</sup> among others. Born in Leinster, he first studied with an ecclesiastic named Senilis, who has been associated with the Sillán moccu Mind who became the fourth abbot of Bangor,<sup>666</sup> before travelling to Bangor itself where Comgall was still abbot.<sup>667</sup>

We are fortunate to have extant copies of multiple works that have been attributed to Columbanus, including his *Epistles*,<sup>668</sup> *Sermons*,<sup>669</sup> and *Rules*.<sup>670</sup> The content of these works shows the type of intellectual tradition within which Columbanus was taught and which are thought by some to possibly give a window into the tradition within Bangor itself.<sup>671</sup> The existence of a Rule of Comgall is known from a reference to a copy of it held in the ninth century at Fulda, which was written in Latin, but which is now lost.<sup>672</sup> Comgall's Rule was also praised in the *Antiphony of Bangor*, but insufficient detail is given in order to understand what the Rule was.<sup>673</sup> An Early Gaelic Metrical Rule, dated to no later than AD 800, survives in four manuscripts with one noting "the Rule of Comgall, founder and first abbot of Bangor".<sup>674</sup> It is possible that Columbanus' own *Regula Monachorum* may have drawn inspiration from that of his teacher.<sup>675</sup>

---

<sup>663</sup> *VColumb* §12.

<sup>664</sup> *VColumb* §17.

<sup>665</sup> *VColumb* §60.

<sup>666</sup> Alternative identification of Senilis: Sinell son of Mianiach, abbot of Claen Inis (Cleenish) is suggested in Donald Bullough, "The Career of Columbanus", in *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, (ed) Michael Lapidge (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), 4. Woolf also notes the possibility of association with Sinell, abbot of Movilla c. 579 – 603, Woolf, "Ulster Education", 91.

<sup>667</sup> *VColumb* § 9; Woolf, "Ulster Education", 91.

<sup>668</sup> Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 2-59.

<sup>669</sup> Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 60-121.

<sup>670</sup> Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 122-181.

<sup>671</sup> Michael Lapidge, "Columbanus and the 'Antiphony of Bangor,'" *Peritia* 4 (1985), 116; Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, xlvii.

<sup>672</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 397.

<sup>673</sup> Clare Stancliffe, "Columbanus's Monasticism and the Sources of his Inspiration", in *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards* (eds.) Fiona Edmonds and Paul Russell (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011), 28; Kenney, *Sources*, 266.

<sup>674</sup> *Riagail Comhgaill Bendchair indso*, J. Strachan, "An Old-Irish Metrical Rule", *Ériu* 1 (1904), 192.

<sup>675</sup> Kenney, *Sources*, 197-198.



There is some overlap in topics between the *Regula* and the Metrical rule, as each speaks of food and drink, though the Metrical Rule enjoins monks to “eat thy due portion of food”,<sup>676</sup> while the *Regula* seems to balance the need for fasting and eating.<sup>677</sup> The Metrical Rule seems concerned foremost with outward behaviour while the *Regula* more so with inward thought and relationship with God. A line from the *Regula* states that prayers should be offered “lastly for our enemies, that God reckon it not to them for sin that they persecute and slander us, since they know not what they do”,<sup>678</sup> which Dunn argues likely “evolved in a country where Christianity was still being established”, a reference to Ireland generally and suggesting Bangor specifically as the context within which Columbanus’ ecclesiastical philosophy was developed.<sup>679</sup>

The expectation of immediate and enthusiastic obedience to one’s monastic superior is found in the *Regula Monachorum*,<sup>680</sup> the *Vita Columbani*,<sup>681</sup> and the *Vita Comgalli*,<sup>682</sup> which suggests the possibility at least of one common thread between Columbanus’ and Comgall’s monastic Rules and behavioural expectations,<sup>683</sup> but which could potentially also be reflective of the evolution of Columbanus’ Rule after leaving Ireland.<sup>684</sup> While Bangor and its Rule was possibly the inspiration for much of Columbanus’ own Rule and regulations, the lack of surviving material on Comgall’s Rule makes the attempt to reconstitute it from the works of Columbanus practically impossible.<sup>685</sup>

Bangor was founded and rose to a position of prominence during the centuries of widespread activity by Irish ecclesiastical founders, and there is evidence that Comgall interacted with and had enduring connections with other important ecclesiastics. Aside from those who were understood to have studied at Bangor, two important people with whom we can see Comgall’s connection are Cainnech

---

<sup>676</sup> Strachan, “Metrical Rule”, 194, quatrain 4.

<sup>677</sup> Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 125-126, §III.

<sup>678</sup> Columbanus, *Regula Monachorum* §7, Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 130-131.

<sup>679</sup> Marilyn Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 155.

<sup>680</sup> Columbanus, *Regula Monachorum*, §1; Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, 122-25.

<sup>681</sup> *VColomb* §19, 20, 26.

<sup>682</sup> *VCom* §23-24, 33, 39.

<sup>683</sup> Stancliffe notes the similarity of Columbanus’ discussion on obedience with *The Rule of the Master*, and the likeliness that he encountered this source while still at Bangor, Stancliffe, “Columbanus’s Monasticism”, 23-27.

<sup>684</sup> Stancliffe, “Columbanus’s Monasticism”, 28.

<sup>685</sup> Especially on the view that the first six chapters of the *Regula Monachorum* are merely a restatement of Comgall’s own rules, see Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, xlvi.

and Columba. It has been suggested that Columba may have even viewed Comgall as superior to himself,<sup>686</sup> largely based on an examination of the interactions between the two saints given by Adomnán in his *Life of Saint Columba*. While Adomnán never mentions where Columba took his vows, or who his monastic teacher was,<sup>687</sup> Woolf notes that “particular respect is paid to Comgall of Bangor, who is mentioned more than any abbot other than Columba himself, and the Iona chronicle appears to have noted the death of every single Bangor abbot”.<sup>688</sup> Adomnán’s *Life of St Columba* mentions Comgall three times, and seems to present Columba’s relationship with Comgall as one between collaborators and colleagues.<sup>689</sup> This can be contrasted with how Adomnán portrays Findchán, founder of Artchain.<sup>690</sup> Enmity between saints is referred to elsewhere such as in the *Life of Saint Ciarán*, of whom it is recorded that his fellow saints were jealous of him, though it does show friendship with Columba.<sup>691</sup> The first occasion which reveals this collegial relationship is in book I, when Columba and Comgall were returning from the convention of Druimm Cett to the east coast of Ireland, they sat together and Columba prophesied the battle of Dún Cethern.<sup>692</sup> In book III, Adomnán shows the depth of Columba’s connection to and concern for Comgall and his community when he calls his monks to pray for the souls of Comgall’s monks who were drowning on Belfast Lough.<sup>693</sup> The final mention of Comgall in Columba’s *Vita* discusses four saints: Comgall mocu-Aridi, Cainnech mocu-Dalon, Brendan mocu-Alti, and Cormac nepos Leathain coming to visit Columba on Hinba, and where he calls Comgall one of the “holy founders” of Ireland.<sup>694</sup> If Comgall’s *Vita* is to be believed, Cainnech and Comgall further accompanied Columba to visit King Bruide in Pictland,<sup>695</sup> though they are not mentioned in any of Adomnán’s stories about

---

<sup>686</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 105.

<sup>687</sup> Woolf advises that neither Cruithnechán (a priest), Gemmán, nor Uinnianus (a bishop) were ever referred to as being in monastic orders in Woolf, “Ulster Education”, 94.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid*, 94; It should be noted that Cainnech is mentioned four times to Comgall’s three, though the sentiment of positivity towards Comgall is not diminished by this fact.

<sup>689</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 283-284.

<sup>690</sup> VC I.36.

<sup>691</sup> Described in the notes for 9 Sept for the feast of Ciarán of Clúain in *MarO* 205-205, notes; also mentioned in the *Life of Saint Ciarán* in Whitley Stokes, *Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore*, (Oxford: 1890), ll. 4472-4476; Hughes, “Distribution of Irish Scriptoria”, 253.

<sup>692</sup> VC I.49.

<sup>693</sup> VC III.13.

<sup>694</sup> *Sancti fundatores*, VC III.17.

<sup>695</sup> *VCom* §51.

Columba's visits there (for further discussion, see section 2.4.1).<sup>696</sup> A later connection between Bangor and Iona can be seen by the fact that Cenn Fáelad (d. 705) grandson of Áed Brecc and abbot of Bangor,<sup>697</sup> was signatory number three in the Guarantor List of *Cáin Adomnán*,<sup>698</sup> an indication of precedence given to him by Adomnán. There is a mention of the death of Scannal grandson of Tadc, abbot of *Achad Bó* (Aghaboe) (Cainnech's main foundation), who died in AU 782 on the feast of St Comgall,<sup>699</sup> which may indicate the feast day of Comgall was well-known by the annalist in the late eighth century. Looking at Comgall's connections to other prominent saints helps to establish his position as well as that of Bangor itself. From here we can look at what are often referred to as dependent houses, which are understood to have participated in a Community with Bangor in a more intimate way than Comgall's friendship with saints like Columba and Cainnech, meaning that Bangor might have been expected to hold some kind of authority or influence over dependent foundations (see section 1.1).

Comgall's death is first recorded in AU 601 and is repeated the following year. The earlier entry must have been added later as the annalist notes the record was "found in the book of Cuanu".<sup>700</sup> His death is recorded in great detail in AT 600:

Comgall abbot of Bangor in the 91st year of his age, but in his leadership 50 years, 3 [months] and 10 days, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the Ides of May [10 May] he rested.

*Comgoll ab Bendchair .xci. annó etatis sue, principatus autem sui .i. anno et .iii. et .x. die. ui. idus Mai quieuit.*<sup>701</sup>

The degree of specificity both of his age and the years, months, and days of his leadership of Bangor indicates his importance to those recording the event of his death, though it must be questioned whether this was a contemporary record,

---

<sup>696</sup> VC I.37, II.33, 34, 35, 42. Herbert argues that VC influenced the tales seen in *VCain* and the tales of other Irish saints, which may arguably include Comgall, Máire Herbert, "The *Vita Columbae* and Irish Hagiography: A Study of *Vita Cainnechi*", in *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars* (eds.) John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 31-40.

<sup>697</sup> AU 705.1; AT 705.5.

<sup>698</sup> Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha, "The guarantor list of *Cáin Adomnán*, 697", *Peritia* 1 (1982), 186.

<sup>699</sup> AU 782.1.

<sup>700</sup> AU 601.3, 602.1.

<sup>701</sup> AT 600.1.

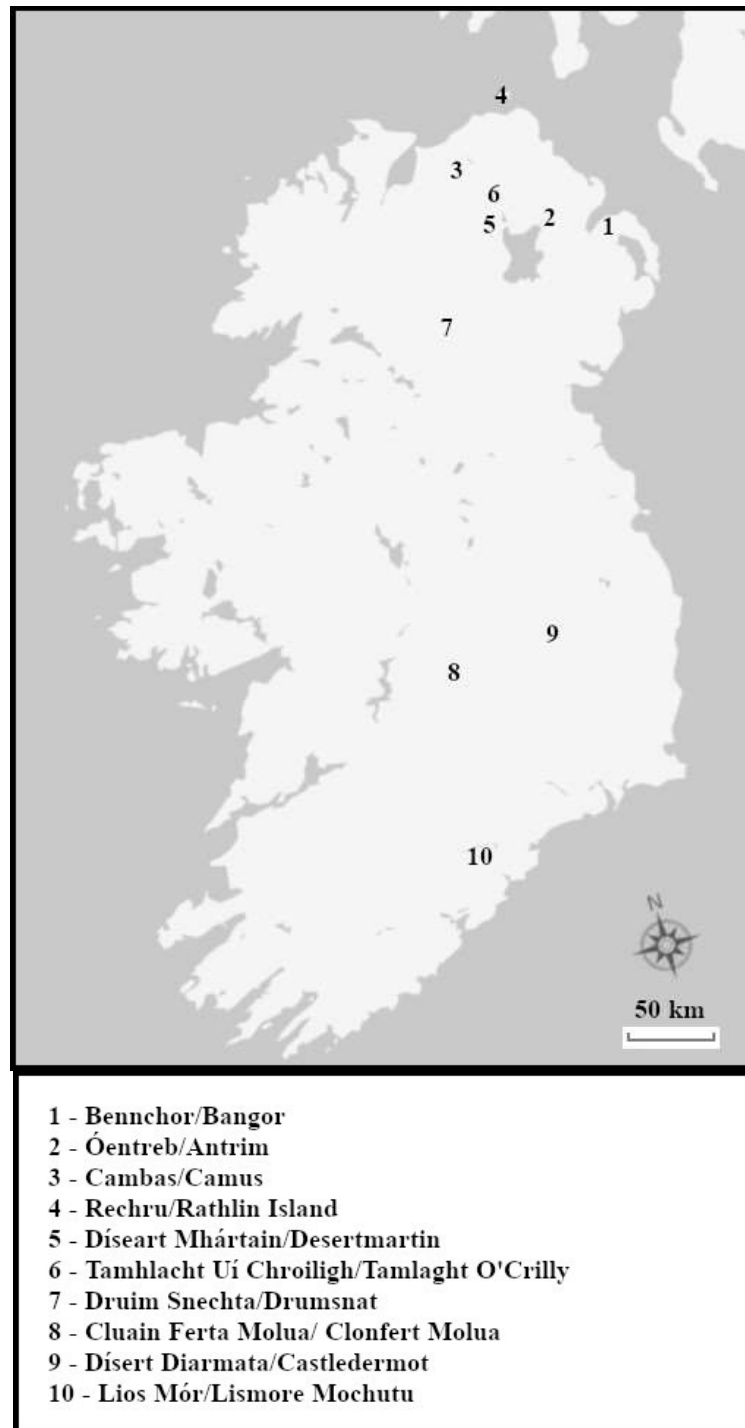
and whether it originated in the “Bangor Chronicle”. Of note, however, is the lack of alignment between the specific timeframe given for Comgall’s leadership and the dates given for Bangor’s foundation. Bangor’s foundation is variously recorded at AU 554, AU 559, and AT 557 while reports of Comgall’s death are given at AU 597, AU 602, and AT 600. The question becomes whether the dates reported in the annals are wrong, whether the specific time period given in this report of his death is wrong, or whether Bangor, perhaps, was not the original site of Comgall’s community.

### **3.8 The Wider Community of Comgall**

The wider community of Comgall and Bangor includes proposed dependent houses in Ireland itself as well as the Inner Hebrides and Wester Ross. Ann Hamlin’s map shows places in the north of Ireland which have dedications or associations with Comgall,<sup>702</sup> and which can help us begin to conceptualize how widely Comgall and Bangor’s sphere of influence spread. We will first take a brief look at settlements in Ireland and then move on to those that are across the North Channel.

---

<sup>702</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 178.



**Figure 3.8 Sites in Ireland associated with Comgall**

### 3.8.1 Ireland

The settlement of Antrim was described as the refuge for the relics of Comgall following an attack by “the Heathens” in AU 824, which suggests it was a part of

the ecclesiastical Community centred on Bangor and Comgall.<sup>703</sup> Bangor's connection with Antrim spans three centuries in the annals as, in addition to the movement of Comgall's relics to Antrim, the annals record two abbots of Bangor who are specifically said to have come from Antrim: Finntan of Antrim's (*Aentrab*) death is recorded in AU 613,<sup>704</sup> and Flann of Antrim's (*Aentrab*) death is recorded in AU 728.<sup>705</sup> Comparison with Iona and the Columban community is apposite here, considering the movement of relics of Columba from Iona to Kells and Dunkeld in AU 849,<sup>706</sup> and the abbots of Iona who can be shown to have first spent time as the head of daughter houses within the wider Columban community. Baithéne, the second abbot of Iona, spent time as head of *Mag Luinge*.<sup>707</sup> Laisrén, the third abbot of Iona, was previously head of Durrow.<sup>708</sup> Additionally, both of these abbots had familial connections to Columba.<sup>709</sup>

*Rechru* has been noted as a place associated with the community of Comgall,<sup>710</sup> though there is some uncertainty as to whether this refers to Rathlin Island in modern county Antrim,<sup>711</sup> or Lambay Island, near Dublin. More than one island was named *Reachlainn/Reachrainn/Rechru/Rechra* in the early medieval period, thus making it difficult to identify which island is referred to in any given mention.<sup>712</sup> Figure 2.6 shows Comgall is culted throughout the northeast, making it more likely that this *Rechru* refers to Rathlin Island. According to Comgall's *Vita*, though the foundation was made, Comgall was driven off by thirty armed men.<sup>713</sup> It is possible that, rather than this story telling about an actual attempt to establish a foundation at *Rechru*, it may instead indicate an effort at the time of the writing of Comgall's *Life* to fabricate an incident meant to support a more

<sup>703</sup> Ibid, 179; Charles-Edwards, *Chronicle of Ireland*, 127, 201; AU 824.2.

<sup>704</sup> AU 613.1; AT 611.4.

<sup>705</sup> AU 728.3; AT 728.3.

<sup>706</sup> AU 849.7; Alfred P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland AD 80 – 100* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), 187; Herbert, *IKD*, 72.

<sup>707</sup> Second abbot, Francis J. Byrne, "Heads of Churches to c. 1220", in *A New History of Ireland*, vol. IX, (ed) T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and Francis J. Byrne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), Iona, 257; He is described as head of *Mag Luinge* in VC I.30, 41, III.8.

<sup>708</sup> Third abbot, Byrne, "Heads of Churches", Iona, 257; He is mentioned as the head of Durrow in VC I.29.

<sup>709</sup> Lucas, "Plundering and Burning", 177; Herbert, *IKD*, 40.

<sup>710</sup> The Life of St Comgall notes that there was local opposition to his foundation on *Rechru*, *VCom* §50.

<sup>711</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 179, 216.

<sup>712</sup> Herbert discusses the foundation of a monastery at *Rechra* within the Community of Columba in AD 635, *IKD*, 42; NIPNP, "Rathlin Island, County". Accessed 1 June 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=15372](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=15372).

<sup>713</sup> *VCom* §50.

recent claim to *Rechru*. In this way it could be presented as an enforcement of the claimed original grant, or of a return to the original site.

*Cambas* (Camus), near Coleraine, which we are told was sometimes referred to as *Camus Comgail*, was likely part of the ecclesiastical community which looked to Comgall as its founder.<sup>714</sup> It is referred to directly by Adomnán as a monastery of St Comgall,<sup>715</sup> during the time of the battle of Dún Cethern.<sup>716</sup>

*Disert Diarmata* was founded by Diarmait (d. 825),<sup>717</sup> grandson of Áed Rón and nephew of Fiachnae, overking of Ulaid, c. 811.<sup>718</sup> It was located in Leinster, and is now known as Castledermot, in county Kildare.<sup>719</sup> Diarmait began his ecclesiastical studies at Bangor during the time that Fiachnae became its patron. The *Fragmentary Annals* mention it as “a place belonging to Comgall” c. 908,<sup>720</sup> as part of a story which included Móenach, *comarba* of Comgall, whose death is recorded in AU 921.<sup>721</sup> In this story Móenach is brought between two warring factions as an adjudicator or mediator, and therefore likely is viewed as a neutral party in the dispute, which speaks to the high regard in which the *comarba* of Comgall was held c. 908. *Disert Diarmata* seems suggested in this story as a compromise burial location for the expected death of Cormac, as he had studied there, and acceptable to Móenach as it was affiliated with the Community of Comgall. It is important to note that despite being claimed as one of Comgall’s places, *Disert Diarmata* was established well after Comgall’s lifetime. This suggests that such a claim could come later to any foundation.

These ecclesiastical settlements show a strong connection between Comgall and Bangor with other settlements in Ireland that appear to have looked towards both Comgall and Bangor for leadership. Calling settlements “a place belonging to Comgall” seems to firmly root them in a Community that is focused on Comgall, perhaps extending to Bangor itself, and is further supported by the movement of monks from one of these foundations to the abbacy of Bangor. This

---

<sup>714</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 179; Sharpe, VC, n. 207.

<sup>715</sup> VC I.49.

<sup>716</sup> AU 629.2; AT 632.3; FA 78.

<sup>717</sup> 21 Jun, MarT, MarO; AU 825.2; Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 146.

<sup>718</sup> Ailbhe Mac Shamhráin. "Diarmait". Royal Irish Academy. Accessed 4 June 2018. [dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2564](http://dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2564).

<sup>719</sup> Ó Cróinín, “Political Background”, 94.

<sup>720</sup> *baile la Comhgall Disiort Diarmada*, FA 423.

<sup>721</sup> AU 921.1.

connection of abbots from Bangor Community settlements can also be seen from locations across the North Channel. It is possible to invoke the patronage of a long-ago saint without putting oneself under the rule of his living heir, however in the case of *Disert Diarmata* and *Cambas*, the connection seems to be deeper than hagiographic convention.

### 3.8.2 Scotland

Maelruba left Ireland in AU 671 and travelled to Britain,<sup>722</sup> where he founded the monastery at Applecross in Wester Ross two years later.<sup>723</sup> The genealogical tracts record his father as Ealganach, a member of the Cenél Binnigh, a branch within the Cenél Eoghain, and his mother, Subthan, was a sister of Comgall.<sup>724</sup> There is some concern here regarding Maelruba's exact relationship to Comgall as Comgall died c. 602 and Maelruba was born c. 642. Similar to Antrim, Applecross also supplied at least one abbot to Bangor. The death of Mac Óige "of Applecross" is recorded in AU 802,<sup>725</sup> and there are a total of four specific mentions of Applecross, and one of Maelruba, in the *Annals of Ulster* during the period of interest.<sup>726</sup> If the previous discussion of Antrim concludes that providing an abbot to Bangor implies significant connection between the monasteries, then one could use the same argument regarding Applecross.<sup>727</sup> That Maelruba likely had a familial connection to Comgall, studied at Bangor prior to founding Applecross in the seventh century, with Applecross later providing an abbot for Bangor at the beginning of the ninth century, demonstrates that the links between these settlements were likely enduring (a full discussion is seen in Chapter 4).<sup>728</sup>

Lismore is the earliest ecclesiastical settlement which can possibly be associated with Bangor:<sup>729</sup> the death of its abbot, Moluag (Lugaid), was recorded in AU

---

<sup>722</sup> AU 671.5, 673.5.

<sup>723</sup> AU 673.5; AT 673.4.

<sup>724</sup> Ó Riain, *CGSH*, §722.50, §722.86; Ó Riain erroneously notes Subthan as a niece of Comgall rather than sister in *Dictionary*, 446.

<sup>725</sup> *Apúir Chrosan*, AU 802.5.

<sup>726</sup> AU 671.5, 673.5, 722.1, 737.2, and 802.5.

<sup>727</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Chronicle of Ireland*, 263.

<sup>728</sup> Douglas MacLean, "Maelrubai, Applecross and the Late Pictish Contribution West of Druimalban", in *The Worm, the Germ, and the Thorn: Pictish and related studies presented to Isabel Henderson*, ed. David Henry (Balgavies, Forfar, Angus: The Pinkfoot Press, 1997), 181; *VMal*, 27-28.

<sup>729</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 105.



592.<sup>730</sup> The patrilineal line given for him in *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* gives his pedigree as “*Moluoc mac Luchta mac Findchada mac Feidlimthe mac Sogain Salbude mac Fiathach Arade*”,<sup>731</sup> which appears to make this Moluag a member of Cenél Sogain, one of the kindreds which makes up the Dál nAraide. An alternate pedigree is given for him in *Genealogiae regum et sanctorum Hiberniae*, from a seventeenth-century manuscript by Michael O’Clery: “*Moluocc mac Luchta nam Coelbadius mac Cruinn badrai mac Eachthach cobha mac Luighdech mac Rosa mac lomchada mac Feidlimidh mac Cais mac Fiacha auride*”,<sup>732</sup> which would give Moluag a much closer relationship to Comgall, though there is still an issue with the number of people in each pedigree. According to the later genealogy for Moluag, there are 3 people between himself and Eachthach cobha while there are 5-6 people between Comgall and Eachthach cobha. Even if we consider that Comgall may have been born a generation after Moluag, this does not account for the number of additional ancestors between himself and the shared ancestor. The pedigree in *CGSH* is even more sparse, giving only 4 ancestors between himself and Fiathach Arade, while Comgall has 12 ancestors in the same space. Even if either of these pedigrees for Moluag were accepted, neither would give a particularly close relationship between Moluag and Comgall, though they are both generally part of Dál nAraide. It should be noted that another Lismore, located in modern Co. Waterford, was established c. 635 by Mochutu of Raithen, whose death is recorded in AU 637,<sup>733</sup> and has thus led to difficulties in identifying which entries refer to the Irish house and which to the Scottish.<sup>734</sup> The nature and durability of these suggested links is discussed in Chapter 5.

Tiree, the westernmost island in the Inner Hebrides, is mentioned in relation to several early saints in the maritime world that reached from the North Channel into the Atlantic Ocean. Its proximity makes the connection with Iona seem

---

<sup>730</sup> AU 592.1; AT 588.4, 590.1

<sup>731</sup> Ó Riain, *CGSH*, no. 121; The Aberdeen Breviary says he is “from a noble family of the Scots” (*ex Scotorum nobili familia*), AB, 150-151.

<sup>732</sup> Rev. Paul Walsh, *Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Maynooth: Gill & Son, 1918), 100.

<sup>733</sup> AU 637.2; there is a death of Eochaidh, abbot of Lismore at AT 637.5 which might possibly refer to Mochutu.

<sup>734</sup> Aidan Mac Donald, “Two Major Early Monasteries of Scottish Dalriata: Lismore and Eigg”, *Scottish Archaeological Forum* 5 (1973), 49.

obvious; however, there is evidence for several monastic foundations on the island.<sup>735</sup>

*Vita Columbae* tells stories of monks travelling to the Columban foundation at *Mag Luinge* on Tiree,<sup>736</sup> and it is mentioned twice in AU.<sup>737</sup> However, there is also mention of other, apparently non-Columban monasteries on Tiree.<sup>738</sup> Comgall's *Vita* places him at *Heth* c. 562, approximately seven years after his founding of Bangor.<sup>739</sup> *Heth* was thought to have been a coastal territory in northern Britain, later referred to as *Terra Heth*,<sup>740</sup> and equated with Tiree by modern scholars.<sup>741</sup> Adomnán reports that Comgall came to visit Columba in *Vita Columbae*, though the timing of the visit is not stated. That Tiree was known to be a site of monastic foundations looking to different saints' Communities suggests that the island itself may have served as a kind of inter-organizational crossroads between different Communities as well as a physical crossroads to enable travel between Scotland and Ireland (for further discussion see Chapter 6).

The sixteenth century *Aberdeen Breviary* associates Paisley with Comgall and Bangor, noting that its founder, Mirren, was a disciple of Comgall.<sup>742</sup> This is, however, a tenuous connection based on the similarity of style observed between the *Aberdeen Breviary* and the Hiberno-Latin *Life* of St Comgall, together with the late date of compilation of the *Aberdeen Breviary* and the lack of other sources regarding Mirren.<sup>743</sup> Paisley is well-known as an important ecclesiastical centre which developed strong links to the Govan school, where upright crosses of tenth-century design survive, all of which were in the British

---

<sup>735</sup> RCAHMS. *Argyll: Mull, Tiree, Coll & Northern Argyll (Excluding the Early Medieval & Later Monuments of Iona) / an Inventory of the Ancient Monuments* (Edinburgh: H.M.S.O, 1980), 27; Aidan Mac Donald, "Adomnan's *Vita Columbae* and the early churches of Tiree", in *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, lawmaker, peacemaker*. (eds.) Jonathan M. Wooding, Rodney Aist, Thomas Owen Clancy, and Thomas O'Loughlin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 219.

<sup>736</sup> VC I.19, I.30, II.39.

<sup>737</sup> AU 673; AU 775.

<sup>738</sup> VC III.8.

<sup>739</sup> VCom §22; Aidan Mac Donald, "Adomnan's *Vita Columbae* and the early churches of Tiree", in *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, lawmaker, peacemaker*, (ed) by Jonathan M. Wooding, Rodney Aist, Thomas Owen Clancy, and Thomas O'Loughlin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), 228-230; Sharpe, VC, n. 107; Could this be the same visit mentioned by Adomnán in VC III.17?

<sup>740</sup> *Ethica terra, regio Heth*, RCAHMS, *Argyll*, 27.

<sup>741</sup> VCom §22; RCAHMS, *Argyll*, 27; Anderson, VC, 244-245, 24b; Watson, *CPNS*, 85.

<sup>742</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 212-213.

<sup>743</sup> Alexander Boyle, "Notes on Scottish Saints", *Innes Review* 32, no. 2 (1981), 73.

kingdom of Strathclyde.<sup>744</sup> Future inquiry into Mirren and Paisley should look at whether there is evidence of an early link between Bangor and the area or perhaps a later expansion of influence that coincided with the Strathclyde period.

The various ecclesiastical settlements associated with Comgall himself, or with the Community of Bangor following Comgall's death, evidence the wider Community within which Comgall and his successors worked. These relationships seem to be of a different character from Comgall's relationships with other major saints, such as Cainnech and Columba (see section 2.4.1). Despite the presence of foundations in western Scotland which may have been part of the Community of Comgall, and the various travels detailed within his own *Vita* and those of other saints, there is a curious and pervasive dearth of hagiotonyms in Scotland associated with Comgall. There are a few possible reasons one might consider to explain this situation: first, that it indicates that hagiotonyms were largely coined in the west of Scotland in the period after the strength of Bangor's reputation and influence had waned considerably; second, that hagiotonyms which did exist on the western littoral and in the Hebrides were lost with the coming of the Norse language; and third, that as the influence of Bangor waned, church sites could have been abandoned altogether or re-dedicated to more influential Scottish saints.

### 3.9 Abbots of Bangor

The survival of the list of abbots of Bangor in the Antiphony of Bangor and within the annals is extraordinary, enabling a further analysis of the status of the monastery and its leaders as well as the relationships between them and other ecclesiastics and foundations. FJ Byrne makes a list of abbots of Bangor, which differs slightly from the list below (Table 3.2). The only sources directly cited for his list include: *The Antiphony of Bangor*, *The Martyrology of Tallaght*, and the *Annals of the Four Masters*.<sup>745</sup> The order of a few of the

---

<sup>744</sup> Steven Driscoll, Oliver O'Grady and Katherine Forsyth, "The Govan School Revisited: Searching for Meaning in the Early Medieval Sculpture of Strathclyde", in *Able Minds and Practiced Hands: Scotland's Early Medieval Sculpture in the 21st Century*, (ed) by Sally Foster and Morag Cross (Leeds: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2005), 135-158.

<sup>745</sup> Byrne, "Churches", Bangor, 241-242.

earliest abbots is switched, and some of the specific dates of death are slightly different.<sup>746</sup> I have chosen to follow the order laid out in the *Antiphonary of Bangor*,<sup>747</sup> which is supported by the annalistic evidence used to compile this list. Byrne additionally inserts an abbot, Maelruba mac Elgonaig, abbot of Applecross, between Crítán (13) and Colmán (14), noting that he is mentioned as abbot in the *Martyrology of Tallaght* and in the *Annals of the Four Masters*.<sup>748</sup> However, each of the three annals consulted for this list and the *Antiphonary of Bangor* mention both Crítán and Colmán and exclude Maelruba. I have chosen to exclude him from the list of abbots, following the *Antiphonary of Bangor*, though there is some possibility that he could have served as abbot between the completion of the *Antiphonary* c. 700 and his death c. 722. Byrne inserts Snédcheist mac Tuamchon and Conall mac int Saír between Fidbadach (20) and Augustín (21), locating them in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, which I have not included.<sup>749</sup> Robartach is similarly inserted between Mac Óige (25) and Máel Tuili mac Dondgaile (26), again from the *Annals of the Four Masters*.<sup>750</sup> I have chosen to exclude the *Annals of the Four Masters* due to their late date of compilation and the inability, in the case of some entries, to determine which early sources they were compiled from.

**Table 3.2 Abbots and *Comarbai* of Bangor AD 600 – 1123.**  
Entries given are notices of death unless otherwise noted.<sup>751</sup>

	Name	AU	AT	FA	<i>AntB</i>	Mar
1	Comgall	601.3/ 602.1	600.1		Y	10-May <sup>G</sup>
2	Beóguin mac Daigri	606.1	604.1 <sup>A</sup>		Y	22-Aug
3	Aedán	610.2 <sup>B</sup>	608.2 <sup>C</sup>		Y	09-Oct
4	Sillán moccu Mind	610.2	608.2		Y	28-Feb
5	Finntan Aentraibh	613.1	611.4		Y	

<sup>746</sup> Ibid. I have chosen not to discuss the difference in dates due to considerations of space and a lack of specific citation for their origins in Byrne.

<sup>747</sup> Warren and Griggs, *Antiphonary of Bangor*, x.

<sup>748</sup> Byrne, "Churches", Bangor, 241-242.

<sup>749</sup> Ibid.

<sup>750</sup> Ibid.

<sup>751</sup> A) AT does not specify the name of the abbot whose death is announced. This is assumed to be Beóguin B) AU records the death of Aedán, an anchorite of Bangor. It may be the same Aedán listed as abbot in *AntB*. C) This also refers to the anchorite Aedán. D) There is some confusion in the date for Baíthéne. I have chosen to follow the order of *AntB* E) This is the date of Mael Tuile's *exultat*, likely becoming an anchorite, as suggested with Aedán F) This is the last use of *abbas* in the annals. Mentions after this date refer to the *comarba*, or successor of Comgall. G) Comgall is also mentioned at 29 Sep and 7 Oct. H) Byrne includes this name, but without a source. \* indicates entry from the *MarG* (Brussels, BR 5100-5104, ff. 124-197; (ed) Stokes).

6	Mac Laisre	646.2	647.2		Y	16-May
7	Ségán moccu Cuinn	663.1	663.4	22	Y	10-Sep
8	Berach	664.4	664.3/ 667.1	32	Y	21-Apr
9	Cumméne		667.1	32	Y	17-Sep
10	Colum		667.1	32	Y	01-Oct
11	Mac Aodha (Áedán moccu Chuind)		667.1	32	Y	
12	Baíthéne		666.7 <sup>D</sup>	38	Y	
13	Crítán	669.1	669.1	39	Y	16-Sep
14	Colmán	680.1	680.1	77	Y	
15	Crónán moccu Cuailne	691.1	691.1	108	Y	6-Nov*
16	Cenn Faelad grandson of Aed Brec	705.1	705.5			08-Apr
17	Flann Aentraibh	728.3	728.3	204		15-Dec*
18	Sárán	747.7	747.8			01-Aug
19	Suairleach		760.4			13-Dec*
20	Fidbadach	767.3				
21	Augustín	780.11				27-Oct
22	Sirne	791.1				
23	Tomás	794.2				22-Apr
24	Airmedach mac Conaill	800.1				
25	Mac Óige of Aporcrosan	802.5				
26	Máel Tuili mac Dondgaile	fl. 817.6 <sup>E</sup> d. 820.4				
27	Máel Gaimrid	839.1				
28	Airennán	849.11				
29	Maengal	871.8		389		
30	Ferchar mac Congusso	881.1				
31	Rogaillnech	884.9				
32	Indrechtach	906.5 <sup>F</sup>				
33	Móenach mac Siadail	921.1		423		
34	Céle Dabaill mac Scannail	fl. 928.7 d. 929.3		fl. 429		
35	Muiredach	940.6				
36	Máel Cothaid mac Lachtnáin	953.2				
37	Tanaide mac Uidir	958.2				
38	Cellach ua Bánáin	968.1				
39	Ardgal mac Cosracháin	975 <sup>H</sup>				
40	Sínach mac Muirthilén	981.2				

41	Diarmait ua Máel Telcha, bp	1016.2
42	Máel Brigte ua Críchidén	1025.1
43	Óengus ua Cruimthir	1030.3
44	Máel Martain mac Assída	1055.2
45	Colmán ua hAirechtaig	1058.5
46	Augéne mac in Bécánaig	1068.1
47	Lergus Ua Cruimthir	1097.1
48	Óengus Ua Gormáin	1123.3

Following Indrechtach (32), Byrne includes an additional eighteen names, though Diarmait ua Máel Telcha (41) was only mentioned as a bishop at Bangor.<sup>752</sup> These people were listed in the annals as *comarba* or “successor”<sup>753</sup> of Comgall rather than abbot. The title of *comarba* at Bangor seems to gain traction in the late ninth century, becoming quite noticeable in the tenth century. This is especially seen in annal entries following Indrechtach (d. 906), and occurs at other well-known monasteries in addition to Bangor, such as Suairlech (d. 870),<sup>754</sup> abbot of Clonard, who is titled *Comarba Finnio* in AU 859.<sup>755</sup> Though following his death five *principes* or “leaders”,<sup>756</sup> *Cluana Iraid* and one *airchinnech* or “leader”,<sup>757</sup> *Cluana Iraid* are recorded,<sup>758</sup> “from c. 944 onwards *comarba* with the saint’s name is reinstated and remains undisturbed for the rest of our period”.<sup>759</sup> *Comarba Cainnig*, “successor of Cainnech” is first applied to Mael Martain of Aghaboe in AU 889,<sup>760</sup> and aside from one *princeps Achaid Bó* in AU 935,<sup>761</sup> is never again replaced.<sup>762</sup> The high status of the title *comarba* plus saint’s name is highlighted by the fact that it was only ever given to one person at a time,<sup>763</sup> rather than conceptualising it in a way that would allow for multiple people to

<sup>752</sup> Byrne, “Churches”, Bangor, 242.

<sup>753</sup> eDIL, s.v. “comarba”, accessed 10 April 2020. dil.ie/10739.

<sup>754</sup> AU 870.1.

<sup>755</sup> AU 859.3.

<sup>756</sup> Picard, “*Princes and principatus*”, 146-153.

<sup>757</sup> eDIL, s.v. “airchinnech”, accessed 10 April 2020. dil.ie/1719.

<sup>758</sup> AU 882.8, 884.1, 885.7, 926.3, 932.1, 942.6.

<sup>759</sup> John Bannerman, “*Comarba Coluim Chille* and the Relics of Columba”, *The Innes Review* 44 (1993), 15.

<sup>760</sup> AU 889.2.

<sup>761</sup> AU 935.1.

<sup>762</sup> Bannerman, “*Comarba Coluim Chille*”, 15.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

simultaneously be heirs of a saint. The change to *comarba* was not universal, as seen by monasteries where the title of *comarba* alternates with *princeps* or *airchinnech* such as at Monasterboice, Devenish, and Lismore Mochutu.<sup>764</sup>

Next, we must examine the implications of this change in title, if there are any. The term is used in a secular context to refer to an heir or inheritance of property or wealth,<sup>765</sup> and may have “acquired an added but complementary ecclesiastical dimension”,<sup>766</sup> where *comarbae ecalso* or “ecclesiastical successor” refers to an abbot as the heir of the monastery’s founder, whether or not they are in ecclesiastical orders.<sup>767</sup> This usage of *comarba* in an ecclesiastical context is seen in the Annals of Ulster in AU 851, where the drowning of Cinaed mac Conaing, king of Ciannacht occurs “in spite of the guarantees of the nobles of Ireland and of *comarba Pátraic* in particular”.<sup>768</sup>

It is likely that this usage stems from the secular responsibilities an abbot must undertake, such as managing the lands and revenues belonging to the church. These administrative and paternal duties could be separated between a lay administrator and abbot much as paternal and pastoral duties can be divided between abbot and bishop.<sup>769</sup> These secular rights could then be transferred to either a secular or ecclesiastical heir in two ways: through election within the monastic community itself or via appointment by a family or political unit. Armagh in the seventh century saw these secular powers combined with episcopal and abbatial authority while the tenth century saw the position of *comarba* held by laymen in what became a hereditary office which did not maintain interest in the pastoral supervision of monks in the religious life.<sup>770</sup> Reforms which occurred in the Irish church in the eleventh and twelfth centuries focused on ecclesiastical organization and saw a regularization of bishops and their diocesan jurisdiction while the *comarba* position was maintained and

---

<sup>764</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>765</sup> Fergus Kelly, *Guide to Early Irish Law*, 93, 102.

<sup>766</sup> Bannerman, “*Comarba Coluim Chille*”, 15.

<sup>767</sup> Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988), 41 n. 20.

<sup>768</sup> AU 851.2.

<sup>769</sup> Sharpe, “Some Problems”, 263.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid, 264-266.

ecclesiastical property was “often continued in the hands of hereditary coarbs and erenachs, now separated from the ecclesiastical system”.<sup>771</sup>

Another important distinction seen with the institution of the office of the *comarbai* is what appears to be the divorce of the holder of that title from the founder’s main monastery. Máel Brigte mac Tornáin became *comarba* of Columba despite already holding the position of abbot of Armagh, which may suggest he did not live on Iona, and at his death c. 927 he was noted as *comarba* of Patrick and Columba, which indicates that the office of *comarba* could be “separated from its traditional association with the abbacy of the founder’s chief church where his relics were preserved”.<sup>772</sup> It has been suggested that it is the location of the relics of the founding saint that enables the title of *comarba* to move,<sup>773</sup> but this does not seem to allow for the holding of the title by secular people, unless the possibility exists that a secular *comarba* was able to be in possession of them.

*Comarba* is most heavily used in conjunction with the name of the founding saint, such as *comarba Comgaill*,<sup>774</sup> *comarba Patraicc*,<sup>775</sup> *comarba Coluim Cille*,<sup>776</sup> or *comarba Brigti*.<sup>777</sup> There are, however, some instances in which *comarba* is combined with the name of a place: *comarba Bennchoir* (Bangor),<sup>778</sup> *comarba Doire* (Derry),<sup>779</sup> *comarba Liss Crist* (Liss Crist),<sup>780</sup> and *comarba Dúin* (Downpatrick),<sup>781</sup> which “suggests that *comarba* when followed by a saint’s name might mean something more than just abbot of the monastery founded by that saint”.<sup>782</sup> The *comarba* of Columba is shown to be based at Kells during the

---

<sup>771</sup> Ibid, 267-268.

<sup>772</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 76-77; David Dumville, “Mael Brigte mac Tornán, pluralist coarb (†927)”, in *Celtic Essays, 2001-2007*, (ed) David Dumville (Aberdeen: The Centre for Celtic Studies, 2007), 137; Thomas Owen Clancy, “Iona v. Kells: Succession, Jurisdiction and Politics in the Columban *Familia* in the Later Tenth Century”, in *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards. Studies in Celtic History* 31, (ed) Fiona Edmonds and P. Russell (Woodbridge: Boydell Press), 89-101.

<sup>773</sup> Bannerman, “*Comarba Coluim Chille*”, 26.

<sup>774</sup> AU 928.7.

<sup>775</sup> AU 973.5.

<sup>776</sup> AU 938.1.

<sup>777</sup> AU 979.1.

<sup>778</sup> AU 958.2.

<sup>779</sup> AU 939.7, 1025.1, 1066.4.

<sup>780</sup> AU 957.2.

<sup>781</sup> AU 972.3.

<sup>782</sup> Bannerman, “*Comarba Coluim Chille*”, 16.



leadership of Dubthach, successor of Máel Brigte mac Tornáin.<sup>783</sup> Connmac, priest of Kells, (d. 968) was also *comarba* of Ultán of Ardbreccan.<sup>784</sup> Máel Finnén mac Uchtáin (d. 969), bishop of Kells was *comarba* of both Ultán of Ardbreccan and Cairnech of Tuilén.<sup>785</sup>

As mentioned above, only one *comarba* is specifically noted to be at Bangor, Tanaide mac Uidir (d. 958) (48), leaving open the possibility that the other fifteen people mentioned with the title *comarba* could have been based elsewhere. Móenach mac Siadail (d. 921) (33), was *comarba* of Comgall, but was abbot of *Dísert Diarmata*.<sup>786</sup> Óengus Ua Gormáin (d. 1123) (48),<sup>787</sup> the last *comarba* mentioned in the annals was recorded as dying on pilgrimage at Lismore Mochutu, likely meeting Máel Máedóc prior to his taking up the position of abbot of Bangor, though this does not provide any firm basis for understanding where Óengus Ua Gormáin was normally based. Máel Cothaid mac Lachtnáin (d. 953) (36),<sup>788</sup> *comarba* of Comgall also served as *comarba* of Mo-Cholmóc, and both Ardgál mac Cosracháin (d. 975) (39) and Máel Brigte ua Críchidén (d. 1025) (42) served as *comarba* of both Comgall and Finnen.<sup>789</sup>

This shows the variability of location possible for the *comarba* of Comgall and the current inability to firmly tie those holding this title with Bangor specifically. As the change to *comarba* occurs at the end of the main period of interest, and the many possible changes suggested by the use of this title, the focus here is on those called abbot instead of also including the title of *comarba*. However, there is a possibility that the extent of the position of *comarba* indicates how widely the Community of Comgall could have spread by the tenth and eleventh centuries and could be useful for attempting to examine a change of geographic focus following the decline of Bangor.

---

<sup>783</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 79-80; A disagreeing argument is made in Clancy, "Iona v. Kells", 92.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid*; AU 968.4.

<sup>785</sup> AU 969.1; Herbert, *IKD*, 82.

<sup>786</sup> AU 921.1; FA 423.

<sup>787</sup> AU 1123.3.

<sup>788</sup> AU 953.2.

<sup>789</sup> AU 1025.1; William M. Hennessy and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (trans), "Chronicon Scotorum", Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 11 Nov 2019. [celt.ucc.ie/published/T100016/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie/published/T100016/index.html), 975.

It should be noted that the *Martyrology of Tallaght* does include Tarannan as an abbot of *Benncair* under 12 Jun,<sup>790</sup> though he does not receive mention elsewhere. It seems most likely that this is a reference to the Torannan whose name is given to Banchory-Ternan in Scotland, making the *Benncair* in question likely Banchory.<sup>791</sup>

The *Martyrology of Tallaght* includes a member of the community named Cass, whose feast day is listed as 26 Apr,<sup>792</sup> though unfortunately there is no mention of him elsewhere. His inclusion in the *Martyrology* indicates he was in religious orders and someone of sufficient standing to be included, though unfortunately the reason for said inclusion has been lost.

### 3.10 Height and Decline

It is difficult to pinpoint the height of Bangor's success and influence, though the rate of mention of Bangor in the annals does not markedly decline through the ninth century. The seventh century has three entries which consist of more than the report of an abbot's death or an attack on the monastery,<sup>793</sup> out of a total of fifteen entries, and is also when the *Antiphonary of Bangor* is believed to have been written.<sup>794</sup> The eighth century has four entries out of thirteen total,<sup>795</sup> and the ninth century has three such entries out of a total of eleven.<sup>796</sup> It must be noted that these entries all come out of the *Chronicle of Ireland*, a reconstructed annal which continued up to AD 911. The *Annals of Ulster* then continued at Armagh (see section 2.1), a location which would have less interest in Bangor and may have thus created the illusion of decline due to a decreasing appearance in the annals.

In the seventh century Dál nAraide seems to have focused on a northern expansion into Dál Riata, suggested by clashes evident in the annals as well as "ecclesiastical aggression" which resulted in a Dál nAraide takeover of Dál Sailni,

---

<sup>790</sup> *MarT* 12 Jun.

<sup>791</sup> DoSH. "Banchory Ternan, Parish". Accessed 20 May 2020. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=540&name\\_id=853](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=540&name_id=853).

<sup>792</sup> *Cass Bennchair, MarT* 26 Apr.

<sup>793</sup> AU 610.2, AU 669.1; FA 41.

<sup>794</sup> Lapidge, "Columbanus", 104; Stevenson, "*Hisperica Famina*", 212.

<sup>795</sup> FA 165; AU 730.9 (also in FA 217); AU 753.13 (also in AT 744.11); AU 782.1.

<sup>796</sup> AU 806.7, 824.2, 839.1.

another Cruithnian kindred, and Dál nAraide's focus on the church of Connor, which was part of Dál Sailni.<sup>797</sup> Clashes between Dál nAraide and Dál Riata are evidenced in AU 629, 637, 691, and 731.<sup>798</sup> This could mean that their interest in and patronage of Bangor had waned. At the same time, Fiachnae mac Áed Rón (d. 789),<sup>799</sup> king of Dál Fiatach, appears to have taken a greater interest in Bangor.<sup>800</sup> Nendrum was the main church of the Dál Fiatach at this time, with bishop Ogedchar's death noted at AT 735,<sup>801</sup> which could have had influence on the direction in which Bangor looked for additional support. Fiachne was also pushing westwards around the same time, evidenced by his defeat of the Uí Echach Cobo in AU 761,<sup>802</sup> perhaps allowing a western spread of Dál Fiatach control into western Down, which could have further reduced Bangor's connection to Dál nAraide. Fiachnae's interest in Bangor may be seen in the fact that his nephew, Diarmait (d. 825),<sup>803</sup> began his ecclesiastical studies there.<sup>804</sup> Byrne argues that Dál Fiatach names appear later in the list of Bangor abbots, though he provides no explanation or evidence for this assertion.<sup>805</sup>

This same time period also sees the competition for the primacy of Ireland, with Armagh making great strides in acquiring power and authority in the name of Patrick, seen in the seventh-century *Lives of Patrick* by Muirchu Maccu Machteni and Tírechán as well as the ninth-century *Liber Angeli* or *Book of the Angel*.<sup>806</sup> The creation of these texts evidences the amount of financial support that Armagh was able to amass, alongside its position as an episcopal see. This stands in marked contrast to Bangor, which was only able to boast of three bishops, Dub Inse (d. 953), Diarmait ua Máel Telcha (d. 1016), and Malachy (d. 1148), the latter becoming bishop of Connor, then Archbishop of Armagh, and then bishop of Down, but who remained at Bangor.<sup>807</sup> The presence of bishops at Bangor in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries indicates that Bangor was not

<sup>797</sup> Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 54-64.

<sup>798</sup> AU 629.1, 629.2, 637.1, 691.3, 731.5; AT 629.1, 632.1, 639.1, 731.4.

<sup>799</sup> AU 789.2.

<sup>800</sup> Mac Shamhráin, "Fiachnae"; Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 70.

<sup>801</sup> AU 735.1.

<sup>802</sup> AU 761.2.

<sup>803</sup> AU 825.2.

<sup>804</sup> Mac Shamhráin, "Diarmait".

<sup>805</sup> Byrne, *Irish Kings*, 119.

<sup>806</sup> Dáibhí Ó Cróinín. *A New History of Ireland, volume 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 385.

<sup>807</sup> Ailbhe Mac Shamhráin. "Malachy (Máel-M'áedóc) Ua Morgair". Royal Irish Academy. Accessed 26 Oct 2020. [dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5406](http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5406).

necessarily crumbling away, even though its power and influence does seem to wane.

Colin Ireland has recently argued that the height of Bangor's achievement and power could be seen in the education of Aldfrith, king of Northumbria from AD 685 until his death in AD 704.<sup>808</sup> Bede noted the general reputation of Ireland as a location ripe for pursuing education,<sup>809</sup> noting particularly that Aldfrith had been in exile in Ireland, where he had pursued his education.<sup>810</sup> Aldfrith's death was noted in the *Annals of Ulster*, where he is recognized as *sapiens* or "noted scholar and intellectual",<sup>811</sup> a distinguished term to use for him and likely a great honour.<sup>812</sup> This suggests a real possibility that Aldfrith was educated at Bangor, giving the Community of Comgall an important role and position in secular society for the education of a king believed to be extremely well educated.<sup>813</sup>

Hughes attributes the change in fortune and reputation of Bangor to the decline of both the Dál nAraide and the Ulaid in eastern Ulster. Her argument that the educational ability and therefore reputation of a scriptorium and monastery is tied to financial ability is logical.<sup>814</sup> A comparison can be made with the rise of Armagh and its successful political use of the story of Patrick, which Hughes contrasts with Comgall's association with personal austerity, disinterest in accepting gifts from unsuitable kings, and failure to establish a monastery on Rathlin Island.<sup>815</sup> However, the picture Hughes paints of Comgall as ineffectual and unsuccessful in the foundation of additional monastic houses is heavily contradicted by the evidence of Bangor generally and Comgall specifically as a power-house of the early ecclesiastical culture of Ireland.<sup>816</sup>

---

<sup>808</sup> Ireland, "Aldfrith Educated?" 63-68; David Dumville and Simon Keynes. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983), 685; AU 704.3; AT 716.1.

<sup>809</sup> Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.27.

<sup>810</sup> Bertram Colgrave (ed and trans). Saint Bede. *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), §24.

<sup>811</sup> Colin Ireland, "What Constitutes the Learning of a *Sapiens*? The Case of Ceen Fáelad", *Peritia* 27 (2016), 63; see also Johnston, *Literacy*, 99-112.

<sup>812</sup> AU 704.3; Ireland, "Aldfrith Educated?" 40.

<sup>813</sup> Ireland, "Aldfrith Educated?" 63-68.

<sup>814</sup> Hughes, "Irish Scriptoria", 252, 255.

<sup>815</sup> The failed foundation on Rathlin island in *VCom* §50 is mentioned, along with Comgall's refusal of gold and silver from a king in *VCom* §28 in Hughes, "Distribution of Irish Scriptoria", 260-261.

<sup>816</sup> Plummer, *Irish Litanies*, 60-61; Sir George F. Warner, *The Stowe Missal: MS. D. II. 3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1906) fo. 30v, p. 14; Warren and Griggs, *Antiphonary of Bangor*, no. 14 (fol. 15v).

Although Scandinavian raids were likely a disruption to the normal operation of the monastery, AD 823-824 may be considered the years of heaviest impact,<sup>817</sup> and Bangor continued to prosper at least until the late ninth century.<sup>818</sup> By the time Malachy arrived at Bangor c. 1123, we are told that the monastery had deteriorated to such an extent that near complete rebuilding was necessary due to its destruction by pirates,<sup>819</sup> though the list of abbots continues right up until Malachy becomes abbot. In light of the wide reforms visible in the Irish church in the twelfth century,<sup>820</sup> it seems more probable that the “rebuilding” needed had more to do with Malachy’s reform interests, a theme seen throughout *Malachy’s Life*. It seems possible the poem attributed to Mael Gaimrid in the notes of the *Martyrology of Óengus* (see section 3.5.2) was intended to prophesize Bangor experiencing a time of success as well as a time of decay.<sup>821</sup> What is likely is that, despite Bangor’s reputation for intellectual excellence and ties to the creation and transmission of literature, it was not able to continue to access or mobilise the kinds of resources available to much wealthier and more influential churches such as Armagh.

### 3.11 Looking Outwards

Bangor’s location on Belfast Lough, in which a group of Comgall’s monks drowned,<sup>822</sup> sets the stage for looking at its wider context and the possibility of a Community of Comgall spread across the North Channel Seascape. As discussed above (see section 3.7), Columba’s *Life* depicts Comgall traversing the North Channel to visit Columba on at least one occasion and possibly to establish his own monastery on the island of Tiree. Furthermore, Comgall’s students are known to have crossed from Ireland into Scotland and even to the Continent to establish their own monastic houses. *The Antiphonary of Bangor* survives in a manuscript from Columbanus’ foundation at Bobbio, Italy,<sup>823</sup> showing that there was communication with Columbanus’ own foundations on the Continent after he left Bangor, and which suggests the possibility for continued interaction

---

<sup>817</sup> Raids are recorded in both 823 and 824, AU 823.8, 824.2.

<sup>818</sup> Hughes, “Irish Scriptoria”, 259-261; Hamlin and Kerr noted a decline in annal entries in the later tenth and eleventh centuries, *Archaeology*, 285.

<sup>819</sup> *VMal* §13.

<sup>820</sup> Ó Cróinín, *New History of Ireland*, 299-301.

<sup>821</sup> This reading suggested by Thomas Owen Clancy, personal communication.

<sup>822</sup> VC III.13.

<sup>823</sup> Pádraig Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, 65; Kenney, *Sources*, 707.

between Bangor and the monastic foundations of its students across the North Channel. A slate with the phrase “*adeptus sanctum premium*”, from *Ymnum S. Comgilli abbatis nostri* included in the *Antiphonary of Bangor* and written in praise of Comgall, was found at Inchmarnock, an island just west of the Isle of Bute in the Firth of Clyde, suggesting a possible connection with Bangor, perhaps through Kingarth and St Bláán.<sup>824</sup> Work on the provenance of the *Martyrology of Tallaght* by Ó Riain suggests that Bláán was being commemorated by Iona as early as the middle of the eighth century, while the *Aberdeen Breviary’s* mention of Bláán studying with Comgall is likely to reflect the late development of this story, probably at Dunblane.<sup>825</sup> Investigating the late development of this connection to Bangor may help bring additional clarity to the continuation of the reputation and importance of Comgall and Bangor after the twelfth-century. Future research into the education of possible students may provide additional clarification of Bangor’s relationship with additional foundations through time. This may also demonstrate Bangor’s ability to influence its dependent houses and whether it formed a cohesive, visible Community with authority or influence moving from Bangor towards dependent foundations. If this is the case, the next question is what the wider community that formed under the headship of Comgall might have looked like. Applecross, Lismore, and the possibility of an unsuccessful foundation at Tiree provide opportunities for this investigation and clarification.

The description of Comgall’s many foundations in his *Vita* (see section 3.7) indicates the perception by his hagiographer that he was involved in building a Community. It further suggests the existence of a tangible Community when referencing a common custom amongst the monasteries of Comgall, wherein monks are expected to accept rebuke immediately and humbly, regardless of wrongdoing:

It was the custom in the monasteries of the Holy Father Comgall so that if anyone rebuked another, whether ‘he’ is guilty or not guilty, as soon as he was rebuked he should humbly fall to his knees.

---

<sup>824</sup> Katherine Forsyth and Carlo Tedeschi, “Text-inscribed slates”, in *Inchmarnock: An Early Historic Island Monastery and its Archaeological Landscape*, (eds) Christopher Love and Daniel Atkinson (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008), 130, 138-139.

<sup>825</sup> *AB* 10 Aug; Fraser, “Strangers,” 114-115.

Mos erat in monasteriis sancti patris Comgalli, ut si quis alium increparet, quamuis 'ille' esset culpabilis aut inculpabilis, statim qui increpabatur genua humiliter flecteret.<sup>826</sup>

In chapter 1 the concept of Community was addressed, specifically looking at what the expected connections between the primary foundation, in this case Bangor, and its dependent monasteries may have looked like. The nature of authority, obligation, and benefit between primary and dependent foundation was likewise examined. These concepts can be put to a more concrete test based on the information gleaned about Comgall and Bangor in this chapter.

*Vita Sancti Comgalli* argues that Comgall's Rule was so desirable that thousands of men wished to live according to it. Despite the extent to which this claim was hagiographic hyperbole, it does emphasize the importance of the relationship between the head of a Community and its members. The monks who lived under Comgall's Rule, and the foundations within which they lived, must have perceived a tangible benefit to doing so, whether it was a religious or practical one, and one which was separate from their episcopal connections with other foundations in their geographic area. Abbots of Bangor were sourced from monasteries which may be perceived as dependent, including Antrim and Applecross. Beóán mac Indle, a fisherman noted as belonging to Comgall was likely not based at Bangor, as he caught the *muirgelt* on Lough Neagh (see discussion towards the end of section 3.5.2).<sup>827</sup> One might interpret this as a situation where Beóán was part of the *manaig* of a dependent monastery, perhaps Antrim, which could have provided supplies to Bangor as part of their reciprocal relationship with Bangor, in return for benefits provided by that foundation. The movement of Comgall's relics to Antrim in AU 824, as suggested by the poem describing his relics being shaken from their shrine, is similar to the movement of Columba's relics to Kells and Dunkeld. One may expect that a benefit available to a dependent monastery within the Community would be eligibility for the long term (if not permanent) reception of the founding saint's relics.

---

<sup>826</sup> Translation by author, *VCom* §23.

<sup>827</sup> AT 564.1; AU 572.5.

### 3.12 Conclusion

This chapter has served to pull together information on the monastery at Bangor from multiple sources and directions with the goal of providing a level of detail on the remains, history, and character of the monastery that has not previously been achieved. The above discussion clarifies the important position held by St Comgall and his foundation at Bangor in the early medieval period, especially in terms of its participation in intellectual traditions and relationships within the wider ecclesiastical community of the North Channel Seascape.

Bangor achieved a reputation for its intellectual rigour that reached across Ireland and even to the Continent. This is seen through the titles of *scriba* and *doctor* given to members of the community of Bangor. Students such as Columbanus went on to found monasteries of their own while maintaining a link with Bangor. Some of these foundations even provided later abbots for Bangor. Hagiographic materials suggest that Comgall had an interest in Britain and may have travelled there himself with the intention of founding additional ecclesiastical settlements. Preliminary links with monasteries in Scotland, especially at Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree, have been suggested based on the evidence from Bangor. Directions for further research on the evidence for Bangor, especially in art historical and literary directions have been noted.

Bangor was of sufficient power and status as to plausibly be the centre of a wide-ranging network of ecclesiastical foundations across both Ireland and the west of Scotland. Here we must recall the specific indicators outlined (see section 1.1) for visible signs of a Community of Comgall: travel of Comgall during his life or of his relics, travel of the abbot of Bangor or *comarba* of Comgall, evidence of the transfer of goods or services between Bangor and a purported dependent foundation, the taking of an abbot from a purported dependent foundation to serve at Bangor, or paternalistic physical or spiritual protection of monks at a purported dependent foundation by Comgall or his successors.

The travel of Comgall may be seen in the possible foundation of a monastery on Tiree (see section 3.8.2).<sup>828</sup> Additionally, it is possible that the relics of Comgall

---

<sup>828</sup> *VCom* §22.



were taken for safe keeping to Antrim following the attack on Bangor c. 824 (see sections 3.5.2 and 3.6). We should also consider the fact that the *comarba* of Comgall, Óengus Ua Gormáin, died on pilgrimage in Lismore Mochutu c. 1123.<sup>829</sup>

Three abbots of Bangor were taken from purported dependent monasteries. These include Finntan of Antrim (*Aentrab*) (d. 613), Flann of Antrim (*Aentrab*) (d. 728), and Mac Óige of Applecross (d. 802). Future examination of the relationship between Columbanus and his own monks in the *Life* of Columbanus could potentially bring greater clarity to the relationships between Comgall and his own monks. It has already been noted that his Rule likely developed from that of Comgall, and it might be presumed that his interactions with his own Community could have reflected the arrangement of the Community of Comgall.

---

<sup>829</sup> *Oenghus H. Gorman comarba Comghaill do éc in a ailithri i I-Lis Mór Mo Chutu / Oengus Ua Gormán, successor of Comgall, died on pilgrimage in Lis Mór Mochutu, AU 1123.3.*

## 4 Applecross

### 4.1 Introduction

Bangor's importance as a foundation in Ireland, along with the possibility of it showing interest in cross-channel influence and communication has been established in chapter 3. Moving on from that, we need to examine the proposed Community of Comgall from the perspective of the purported dependent foundations. Applecross seems to have the most *prima facie* evidence of connection to Bangor, suggesting it as the first potential dependent foundation to examine. This chapter examines the surviving evidence for Applecross: as a foundation, as a major foundation in Scotland, and as part of a perceived and visible Community of Comgall centred on Bangor. In order to get a well-rounded picture of Applecross, I will: examine the textual evidence for Applecross, place the foundation within its local context, look at Maelruba as a historical person and as the central figure of the later cult of Maelruba, and examine surviving physical and place-name evidence related to both Maelruba himself and to the foundation of Applecross.

### 4.2 Political Context of the Foundation of Applecross

Major sources for information regarding Applecross include the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, the *Martyrology of Gorman*, the *Martyrology of Óengus*, and the *Aberdeen Breviary*, all of which have been discussed previously (see section 2.3).

Douglas MacLean views the area around Applecross as “a Pictish neighbourhood”,<sup>830</sup> seeing the foundation of Applecross as an intrusion of Gaelic culture and control in the area.<sup>831</sup> A tenth-century Irish tale locates a royal residence at *Inis Moccu Chein*, which has been identified by Colm Ó Baoill with Raasay.<sup>832</sup> *Cethri Prímchenéla Dáil Riata*, a genealogical text dating perhaps from

---

<sup>830</sup> MacLean, “Maelrubai”, 173

<sup>831</sup> Macquarrie, *The Saints of Scotland: Essays in Scottish Church History, AD 450-1093* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997), 171.

<sup>832</sup> Colm Ó Baoill, “Inis Moccu Chéin”, *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 12.1 (1976), 267–270.

the time of Congus, grandson of Cano, son of Gartnait,<sup>833</sup> claims Cenél nGartnait to be part of Cenél nGabráin through Aedán (a Gaelic name) rather than Accidán (a Pictish name) and thus within the political sphere of Dál Riata, suggesting Cenél nGartnait had interests in Argyll and specifically Kintyre,<sup>834</sup> with possible support and patronage from Dál Riata via Cenél nGabráin or Cenél Loairn.<sup>835</sup> The Annals, which are more contemporary, give Gartnait's father as Accidán,<sup>836</sup> making him the brother of Talorc, whose death is recorded at AU 686, but which likely belongs under AU 643.<sup>837</sup> The claim to Dalriadic kinship could have been a later manoeuvre intended to be politically beneficial during a change in political landscape.<sup>838</sup> By this we should view Cenél nGartnait as most likely a Pictish kindred, perhaps with later claims to being Gaelo-Pictish, who became capable of operating within a Gaelic cultural environment.<sup>839</sup>

As will be discussed below (see section 4.3.1), it is possible that with the return of Cenél nGartnait from Ireland there was an invitation to Bangor to come and found Applecross.<sup>840</sup> MacLean further suggests this invitation may have come from the rulers of Fortriu; this speculation seems plausible given the later evidence of contact between Applecross and Rosemarkie,<sup>841</sup> seen especially in sculpture (see section 4.5.1), and the probability that Rosemarkie was the episcopal see to which Applecross belonged. One may also consider here the story in Comgall's *Vita* of his visit to Fortriu;<sup>842</sup> this visit may reflect significant relationships which existed at the time Comgall's *Vita* was written (possibly in the late twelfth century, see section 2.4).

Before looking specifically at Applecross in the annals, it is notable that the annalistic evidence seems interested in Skye and its environs between AU 643

---

<sup>833</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, (forthcoming).

<sup>834</sup> David N. Dumville, "Cethri Prímchenéla Dáil Riata", *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 20 (2000) §14–21; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 206; see also James Fraser, "The Iona Chronicle, the Descendants of Áidán mac Gabráin, and the 'Principal Kindreds of Dál Riata", *Northern Studies* 38 (2004), 77–96.

<sup>835</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 252; Macquarrie, *Saints*, 171.

<sup>836</sup> AU 649.4

<sup>837</sup> AU 686.2; AT 686.5; Anderson and Anderson, *Early Sources*, vol. 1, 179–180, 194; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 205.

<sup>838</sup> Fraser suggests this may have been the work of Congus in *Caledonia*, 249.

<sup>839</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 205.

<sup>840</sup> See also Thomas Owen Clancy, "Hebridean Connections", 36.

<sup>841</sup> Macdonald, *Lismore and Eigg*, 68 n. 47; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 252–253.

<sup>842</sup> *VCom* §51.

and 734, via the inclusion of eleven separate entries associated with this region, and special attention seems to be paid to the family of Gartnait:

- AU 643.4: The burning of Iarnbadb son of Gartnait.
- AU 649.4: The warfare of the descendants of Aedán and of Gartnait, son of Accidán.
- AU 668.3: ...and the voyage of the sons of Gartnait to Ireland with the people of Skye.
- AU 670.4: The sept of Gartnait came back from Ireland.
- AU 673.3: The capture ... of Conamail son of Cano.
- AU 688.2: The slaying of Cano son of Gartnait.
- AU 690.3: ...and Coblaith, daughter of Cano, dies.
- AU 705.4: The killing of Conamail son of Cano.
- AU 731.6: A battle between the son of Aengus and the son of Congus, but Bruide defeated Talorgan, who was put to flight.
- AU 734.5: Talorg son of Congus was held captive by his brother, handed over to the Picts, and drowned by them.

- AU 643.4: *Loscoth Iarnboidbh m. Gartnaith.*
- AU 649.4: *Cocath huae nAedhain 7 Gartnaith mc. Accidain.*
- AU 668.3: *...nauigatio filiorum Gartnaidh ad Hiberniam cum plebe Sceth.*
- AU 670.4: *Uenit genus Gartnaith de Hibernia.*
- AU 673.3: *Gabail ... Conamail filii canonn.*
- AU 688.2: *Occisio Canonn filii Gartnaidh.*
- AU 690.3: *7 Choblaith filia Canonn moritur.*
- AU 705.4: *Iugulatio Conamlo m. Canonn.*
- AU 731.6: *Bellum inter filium Oengussa 7 filium Congussa, sed Bruideus uicit Talorcum fugientem.*
- AU 734.5: *Talorgg m. Congusso a fratre suo uinctus est, traditur in manus Pictorum 7 cum illis in aqua demersus es.*

Clancy notes a special focus on the Hebrides and areas of the Scottish mainland north of Ardnamurchan between the late 660s and 670s, pointing out a likely referral to the Uists, and also to Rum. Thus, to the list of annal entries I can add two more:

- AU 672.2: The *Ibdaig* (Uists) are destroyed.
- AU 677.6: Beccán of Rum rested.
- AU 672.2: *Deleti sunt Ibdig.*
- AU 677.6: *Beccan Ruimm quieuit.*

The final date of AD 740 may be significant due to the possibility that information from Bangor was included in the Chronicle of Ireland around this

time (see section 2.1). Discussion of the travails of Cenél nGartnait in the annals shows that the area within which Applecross was founded was of interest to annalists. It is possible that this secular elite was among those with whom Applecross and its abbots developed relationships and would have interacted. Gartnait's son Cano was also the subject of the pseudo-historical romance, *Scéla Cano Meic Gartnáin*.<sup>843</sup> Although the annals only record the return of the sept of Gartnait at AU 670, it might be assumed that Cano was the leader of that party. Though there is no record of his taking up the kingship of Cenél Gartnait, it is obvious that at some point he does so as the annalistic record notes events involving his family (see figure 4.1), such as his own death in AU 688,<sup>844</sup> the capture of his son Conamail in AU 673,<sup>845</sup> the killing of the latter in AU 705,<sup>846</sup> and the death of his daughter Coblaithe in AU 690.<sup>847</sup> Further records relate to Cano's great-grandsons, noting the defeat of Talorg son of Congus in AU 731 and capture by his brother in AU 734.<sup>848</sup>

---

<sup>843</sup> Daniel A. Binchy (ed), *Scéla Cano Meic Gartnáin*, (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975), xiv.

<sup>844</sup> AU 688.2; AT 688.2.

<sup>845</sup> AU 673.3.

<sup>846</sup> AU 705.4.

<sup>847</sup> AU 690.3; AT 690.3.

<sup>848</sup> AU 734.5.

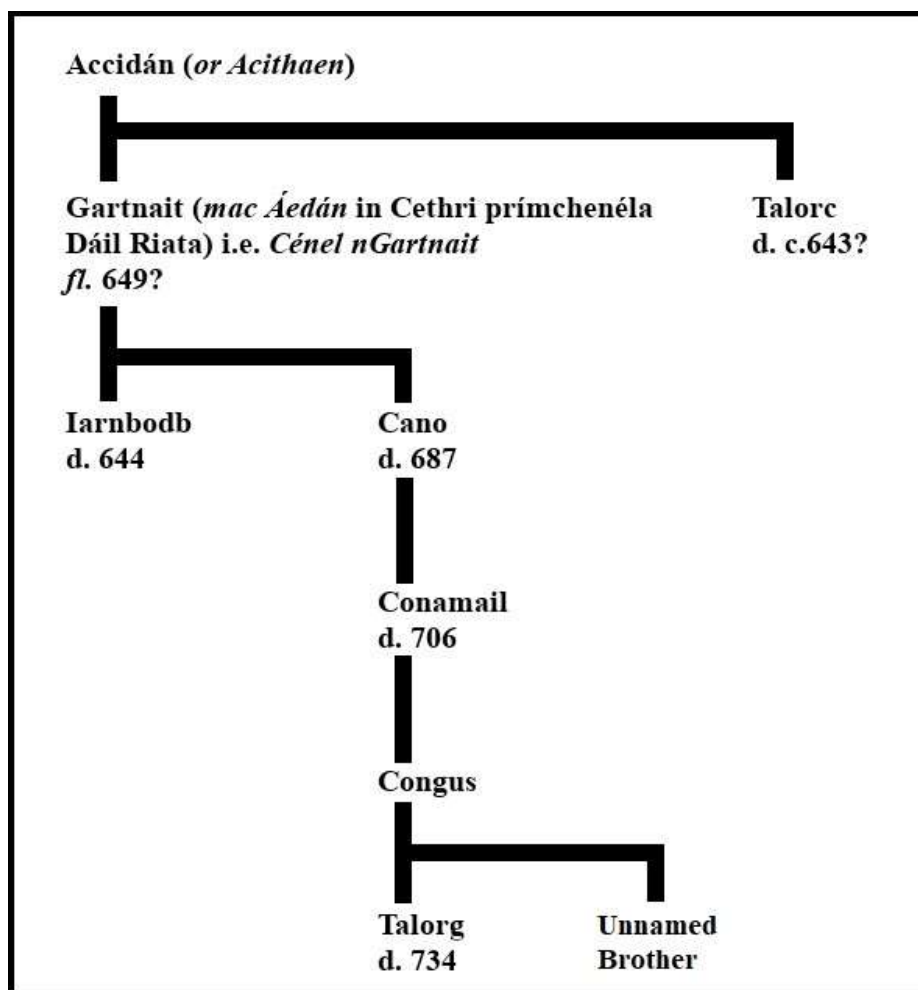


Figure 4.1 Genealogy of Cenél nGartnait  
(based on Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland*, 204).

Macquarrie's pedigree includes a third son of Congus; however, the purported third son seems to stem from a misinterpretation in the *Annals of Tigernach* which reverses the roles of Talorg and his brother.<sup>849</sup> Talorg's brother is often identified as Cú Bretan,<sup>850</sup> though this appears to be an error. Cú Bretan was the son of Congus, King of *Fir Rois* (a poet who wrote on the battle of Almhain which occurred in AU 718)<sup>851</sup> whose death was recorded in AU 740.<sup>852</sup> Cano's flight to Ireland amidst dynastic problems is far from novel. Tarachin fled from Pictland to Ireland in AU 699,<sup>853</sup> and may be referred to in Adomnán's story of the exiled Pictish nobleman named Tarain who seeks safe exile under Columba's

<sup>849</sup> AU 734.5; AT 734.5; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 290 n. 36.

<sup>850</sup> Anderson, *Kings and Kingship*, 232; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 204.

<sup>851</sup> FA 178; Charles-Edwards, *Chronicle of Ireland*, 202, n. 5; Diarmuid Mac Iomhair, "The History of Fir Rois", *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society* 15 (1964), 338.

<sup>852</sup> AU 740.5.

<sup>853</sup> Following the loss of his kingship two years prior in AU 697.1, 699.3.

protection.<sup>854</sup> Additionally, Brude was removed forcibly from Tory Island off the coast of Co. Donegal in AU 733, suggesting he had also fled to Ireland for safety.<sup>855</sup>

Due to the location and the nature of political relationships, which often end in the intermarriage of different kindreds, it is unsurprising that a major family on the western coast of Scotland could have kin-based links to various kindreds of Dál Riata. What is of greatest interest here, however, is not the history of Cenél nGabrain's finer details, which are excellently discussed by James Fraser.<sup>856</sup> The focus, rather, is on the understanding that the foundation of Applecross was undertaken in an area under general Pictish control, which had already been exposed to Gaelic culture.

Maelruba's foundation is located on the Applecross peninsula, part of the Scottish mainland, in Wester Ross at the mouth of what is now called the Applecross River (also known in the nineteenth century as *Abhuin Maree*, Maree's River, referring to Maelruba),<sup>857</sup> overlooking Applecross Bay which opens onto the Inner Sound between the mainland and Raasay, Scalpay, and the Isle of Skye.

The name "Applecross" itself requires some attention and discussion.

"Applecross", written as *Apor Crosán* in the annals,<sup>858</sup> derives from Pictish *aber*, meaning "the mouth of a river", and *crosán*, which is the name of the river that flows into the bay just west of the church. One question is whether *crosán* comes from a Pictish or EG word for "cross", the answer to which may have repercussions for how the origin of the site is interpreted. If we view the name as entirely Pictish, then it is possible that Maelruba did not intentionally choose the name, as recently suggested by Guto Rhys. He argues that Pictish *aber* was intentionally chosen instead of the existing EG *inber* already in use for estuaries, evidencing an "intimate, multileveled and enduring interaction between both

---

<sup>854</sup> VC II.23; Thomas Owen Clancy, "Personal, Political, Pastoral: The Multiple Agenda of Adomnán's Life of St Columba", in *The Polar Twins*, (ed) Edward Cowan and Douglas Gifford (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd, 1999), 50–51.

<sup>855</sup> AU 733.1; Smyth, *Warlords*, 80–81.

<sup>856</sup> See generally Fraser, "The Iona Chronicle", 77–96; Fraser, *Caledonia to Pictland*.

<sup>857</sup> William Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha: his History and Churches", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 3 (1857), 272.

<sup>858</sup> Listed as *Apor Crosán* in AU 673.5, 722.1, and 737.2; Listed as *Aporcrosan*, *Apurchrosan*, and *Apuircrosan* at AT 673.4, 722.1, and 737.2, respectively.

linguistic communities”.<sup>859</sup> This, however, is not the only way to interpret this evidence. It is also possible that Maelruba’s monastery was founded at a site which already had the Pictish name *Apor Crosán*, perhaps keeping the name out of a desire to integrate more easily into the mix of Pictish and Gaelic culture in the area. A further possibility may be that a religious community already existed here, which Maelruba moved into and further developed. Further, if the *crosán* element was itself a reference to Maelruba’s ecclesiastical foundation, then we must consider the possibility that the site was later re-named by the local population. Despite the multiple avenues of analysis for the origin of the place-name “Applecross”, the site itself suggests the interaction of Pictish and EG peoples and cultures.<sup>860</sup> This connection and the meaning of Applecross has not always been well understood, evidenced by Reeves’ discussion of various erroneous etymologies of the place-name given between approximately 1792 and 1854, all of which referred to a physical cross in the form of planted trees.<sup>861</sup>

### 4.3 Applecross in the Textual Record

There are five mentions of Applecross in the *Annals of Ulster* and four in the *Annals of Tigernach*, giving five unique entries:<sup>862</sup>

AU 671.5: Maelruba voyages to Britain.

AU 673.5: Maelruba founded the church of Applecross.

AU 722.1: Maelruba in Applecross in the 80th year of his age 3 months and 19 days, on the 11th of the Kalends of May, the third day, rested.

AU 737.2: Failbe son of Guaire, i.e. successor of Maelruba of Applecross, was drowned in the depth of the sea together with his sailors, twenty-two in number.

AU 802.5: Mac Óige of Applecross, abbot of Bangor, Muiredach son of Óchobor, abbot of Clonfert, Coscrach grandson of Fraech, abbot of Lugmad, Clemens of Terryglass – all ended their lives happily and in peace.

AU 671.5: *Mail Rubai in Britanniam nauigat.*

AU 673.5: *Mail Rubai fundauit ecclesiam Apor Croosan.*

---

<sup>859</sup> Guto Rhys, "Approaching the Pictish Language: Historiography, Early Evidence and the Question of Pritenic" (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2015), 200–201.

<sup>860</sup> Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 272–274; Watson, *CPNS*, 458.

<sup>861</sup> Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 273.

<sup>862</sup> AU 671.5, 673.5, 722.1, 737.2, and 802.5.



- AU 722.1: *Mael Ruba i n-Apurchrosan anno .lxxx. etatis sue tribus mensibus et .x.íx. diebus peractis in .xí. Kl. Maias tercié ferie díe pausat.*
- AU 737.2: *Felbe filius Guaire, Mel Rubi, .i. heres Crosan, in profundo pilagi dimersus est cum suis nautis numero .xx.ii.*
- AU 802.5: *M. Óigi Apuír Chrosan abbas Bennchair, Muiredach m. Olcobair abbas Cluana Ferta Brendain, Coscrach nepos Froich abbas Lughmaidh, Clemens Tire Da Glas—omnes feliciter uitam in pace finierunt.*

This survival of annalistic evidence for Applecross might be explained if Applecross is seen as a centre of writing and gathering information, similar to Bangor,<sup>863</sup> though it can be argued that since only two of the four entries mentioned here are directly about Applecross, this might indicate Iona as the source.

According to the *Annals*, the monastery of Applecross was founded in AU 673 by Maelruba, who came to Britain from Ireland. Smyth speculates that c. 671 he travelled initially to Skye with the intention to revive the work of Donnán of Eigg,<sup>864</sup> who founded a monastery on the isle of Eigg, and in AU 617, was killed there with perhaps 150 of his monks.<sup>865</sup> This idea that Applecross was a renewal of the work of Donnán on Eigg is based on the geographic distribution of place-names associated with Columba, Donnán, and Maelruba. Smyth argues that Donnán and Maelruba place-names are found in the same area, while neither are found in the same areas as place-names associated with Columba.<sup>866</sup>

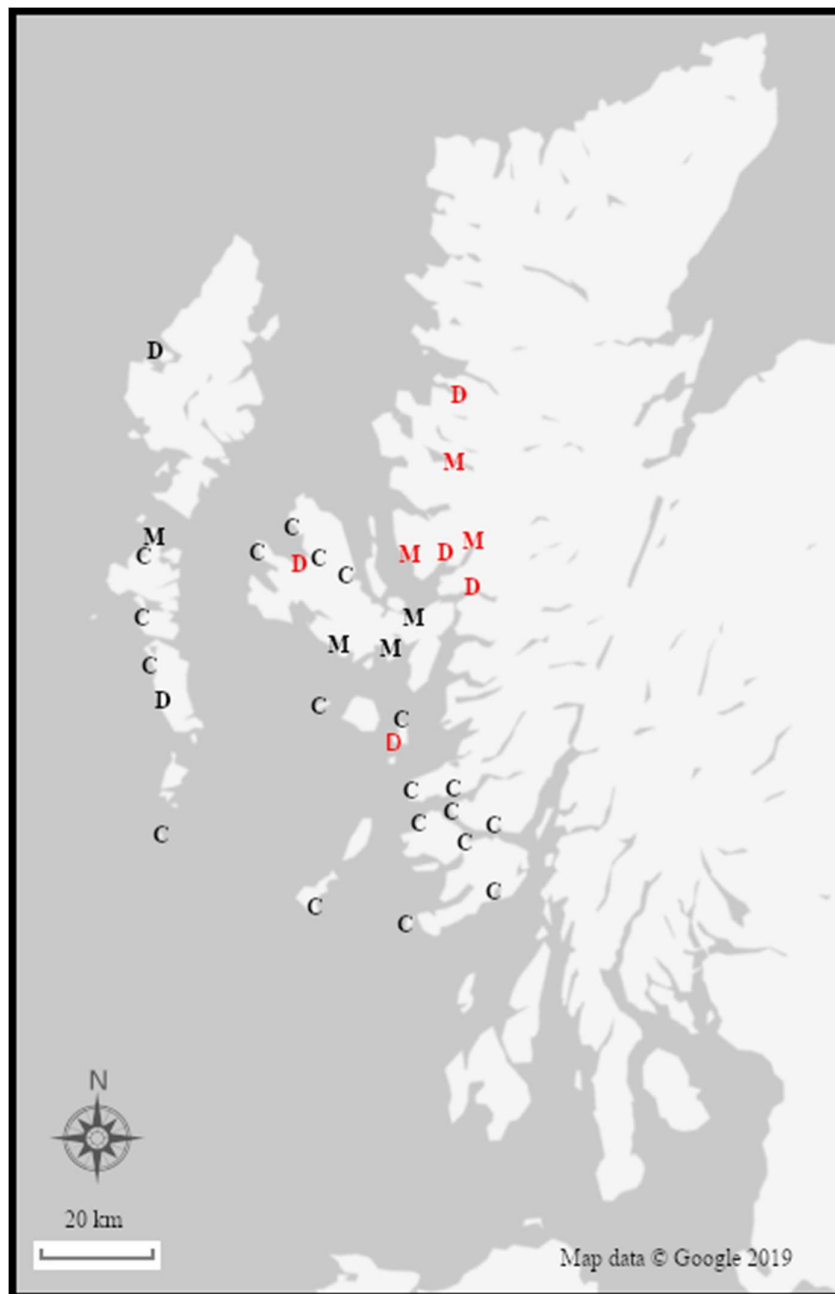
---

<sup>863</sup> Isabel Henderson, "North Pictland", in *The Dark Ages in the Highlands: Ancient Peoples, Local History, Archaeology*, (ed) The Inverness Field Club (Inverness: Inverness Field Club, 1972), Appendix A, 48.

<sup>864</sup> Smyth, *Warlords*, 107–111; see also Macquarrie, *Saints of Scotland*, 166, 170.

<sup>865</sup> AU 617.2; Smyth, *Warlords*, 108–109.

<sup>866</sup> *Ibid*, 110.



**Figure 4.2 Place-names associated with Columba (C), Donnán (D), and Maelruba (M). Place-names mentioned by Smyth in Red.**

The place-names Smyth uses to support his argument include: Applecross, Clachán Ma-Ruibhe (Loch Carron), and Eilean Ma-Ruibhe (Loch Ma-Ruibhe) for Maelruba; Kildonnan (Eigg), Seipeil Donnáin (Loch Kishorn), Eilean Donnáin (Loch Alsh), Kildonnan (Little Loch Broom); and Kildonnan (Skye) for Donnán. Specific place-names for Columba are not mentioned. The difficulty with looking only at the place-names for the personal presence of these saints has previously been discussed (see section 2.6). Even so, these few place-names do not represent a sufficient selection, and in adding additional hagiotoponyms from the Database

of Scottish Hagiotoponyms (DoSH), it becomes apparent that the place-name evidence is not quite as clear as Smyth suggests. Additionally, this is insufficient evidence to support the theory that Maelruba meant to rebuild or take the place of Donnán. Furthermore, the re-emergence of the ecclesiastical community of Donnán in the historic record in AU 725 suggests that Eigg had its own ecclesiastical trajectory.<sup>867</sup>

### 4.3.1 Establishment

The annals tell us that Maelruba went from Ireland to Britain in AU 671, though it is difficult to know exactly which two places he travelled between or where in Britain he was leading up to the notice of the founding of Applecross in AU 673. One might speculate whether the time prior to the foundation of Applecross was spent in the area, possibly on Skye or Raasay, though no evidence survives upon which to hang a theory. Although it may be coincidence, it is possible that the foundation of Applecross is connected to the movement of the sons of Gartnait between Skye and Ireland between AD 668 and 670.<sup>868</sup> Macquarrie suggests that the sons of Gartnait may have converted in exile, choosing to bring monks from Bangor to their territory based on this new association with Christianity.<sup>869</sup> However, considering the density of Christian sites in the area (see section 4.6.2), the mentions of Columba (d. 597) travelling in Skye,<sup>870</sup> and the development of Eigg before the martyrdom of Donnán in AU 617, it is more likely that the sons of Gartnait had already been exposed to Christianity prior to their exile to Ireland. As mentioned, Smyth argues that the foundation and development of Applecross is tied to the history of Eigg and the work of Donnán,<sup>871</sup> though this need not be the explanation, as there is no real evidence that Maelruba was connected with Donnán in any way, and the establishment and focus of Applecross can be better connected to association with Cenél nGartnait.

It is possible that an association between Cenél nGartnait and Bangor was developed when they were in Ireland, leading to Maelruba's subsequent travel to

---

<sup>867</sup> AU 725.7.

<sup>868</sup> AU 668.3, 670.4; AT 668.1, 670.4.

<sup>869</sup> Macquarrie, *Saints of Scotland*, 166-171.

<sup>870</sup> VC I.33, II.26.

<sup>871</sup> Smyth, *Warlords*, 109-110; see also Macquarrie, *Saints of Scotland*, 166.

Britain and foundation of a monastic centre at Applecross. A sixth or seventh century dating of the ecclesiastical site at Raasay may suggest that Comgall had already developed a relationship with the leading family of the area (see section 4.2). The seventh-century dating of the ecclesiastical foundation at Raasay hangs on the existence of early Christian carved crosses and a Class II Pictish symbol stone on Raasay, suggesting an early ecclesiastical presence, along with the likely later Kilmoluag place-name (see section 4.6.2 for further discussion of the sculpture). If confirming evidence for these dates can ultimately be found, it could show that the foundation of Applecross was an additional religious house in the area rather than the first one in the area of the Inner Sound.<sup>872</sup> It seems unlikely that Maelruba would have been successful in founding his monastery without the support of the local secular elite, if the experiences of Comgall's failed foundation at *Rechru* (see section 3.8.1) and Donnán's martyrdom at Eigg are to be believed. We must therefore accept that a sufficiently powerful local secular ruler, such as Cano, supported the foundation.

### 4.3.2 Ascent

The rise of Applecross may be connected to the continuing power of Cenél nGartnait, and the Applecross cross-slab, as discussed below (see section 4.5.1), shows that the monastery had reached a position of power and importance by the eighth century. Maelruba's death is recorded with more detail than Comgall, but slightly less than Columba in the *Annals of Ulster*:

Maelruba:

AU 722.1: Maelruba died in Applecross in the 80<sup>th</sup> year of his age.

AU 722.1: *Mael Rubai i n-Apur Chroson anno .lxxx. etatis.*

Comgall:

AU 601.3: ...and the repose of Comgall...

AU 602.1: The repose of Comgall of Bangor.

AU 601.3: ...& pause Comghaill...

AU 602.1: *Quies Comghaill Bennchair.*

---

<sup>872</sup> The tenuous nature of this association is discussed in Richard Sharpe, *Raasay: A study in island history* (London: Grant & Cutler Ltd, 1977), 23-25.

Columba:

AU 595.1: The repose of Columba on the fifth of the Ides of June in the 76<sup>th</sup> year of his age.

AU 595.1: *Quies Coluim Cille .u. Id. Iuini anno etatis sue .lxx.ui.*

The *Annals of Tigernach* show an even higher level of detail for these three ecclesiastics:

Maelruba:

AT 722.1: Maelruba in Applecross in the 80<sup>th</sup> year of his life 3 months and 29 days, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of the Kalends of May, the third day, rested.

AT 722.1: *Mael Ruba I n-Apurchrosan anno .lxxx. etaitis sue tribus mensibus et .x.ix. diebus peractis in .xi. Kl. Maias terciē ferie die pausat.*

Comgall:

AT 600.1: Comgall, abbot of Bangor in the 91<sup>st</sup> year of his age, but in his abbacy 50 years and 3 [months] and 10 days, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of the Ides of May [10 May], rested.

AT 600.1: *Comgoll ab Bendchair .xci anno etatis sue, principatus autem suí .l. anno et .iii. et .x. díe .ui. idus Mai quieuit.*

Columba:

AT 593.1: The rest of Columba on the Sunday night of Pentecost, the fifth [of the Ides] of June in the year of his peregrination 35, of his age indeed 77.

AT 593.1: *Quies Coluim Cille in nocte dominica pentecostes, quintidh Iuin, año perigrinacionis sue .xxxu. etatis uero .lxx.uui.*

This high level of interest in Maelruba as an important (and likely holy) person as this level of detail is infrequently seen in the annalistic record. Maelruba may have been in contact with Curetán, bishop of Rosemarkie, and his successor.<sup>873</sup> The death of Brecc of Fortriu, who may have been bishop of Ross after Curetán, is recorded in AU 725, just a few years after Maelruba.<sup>874</sup> It is possible that Maelruba could have been in contact with Rosemarkie via Curetán or Brecc, developing the relationships that would later lead to the existence of ninth century sculpture at each foundation which likely came from the same school (see section 4.5.1). Applecross is still worthy of mention in AU 737, when the

<sup>873</sup> *MarT* 16 Mar.

<sup>874</sup> AU 725.7; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 261; Márkus notes Brecc as likely an ecclesiastic, but not a bishop in "Iona: monks", 138.

drowning of Maelruba's successor as abbot, Failbe mac Guaire and his twenty-two companions is recorded.<sup>875</sup> In AU 802 the annalists find it noteworthy that Mac Óige, the abbot of Bangor, was previously of Applecross, where he likely served as abbot before taking on the role at Bangor.<sup>876</sup> What is unfortunate is that just when Applecross seems to be coming into the height of its importance, it drops out of the historic record, though this disappearance does not indicate decline of the foundation.<sup>877</sup> Isabel Henderson argues that material focused on Pictish affairs between c. 670 and 750 may have come from an annotated set of Easter tables kept at Applecross,<sup>878</sup> though this has not been generally accepted.<sup>879</sup> Only the mentions of Failbe and Mac Óige (see section 4.3) attest to its continued activity and value. However, the survival of sculpture from Applecross, as discussed below (see section 4.5.1), suggests that it was around this time that a Pictish artist was commissioned to craft the Applecross cross-slab, which likely occurred due to contact with Easter Ross. The picture of eighth and ninth century Applecross, then, is one of a well-appointed foundation with significant income and patronage by local elites, which maintains contact with both more eastern parts of the Scottish mainland and with foundations in Ireland. Some recognition of this importance, in the person of Maelruba, survived for inclusion in the *Martyrology of Tallaght*,<sup>880</sup> *Martyrology of Gorman*,<sup>881</sup> *Martyrology of Oengus*,<sup>882</sup> and the *Aberdeen Breviary*.<sup>883</sup>

### 4.3.3 Continuation and Decline

The *Annals of Ulster* record a Viking attack on *Rechra* in AU 795, understood to be Lambay island, off the coast of Dublin.<sup>884</sup> Further attacks on Iona were reported in AU 802 and 806.<sup>885</sup> These attacks place Scandinavian peoples within the general seascape within which Applecross operated, as does the

---

<sup>875</sup> This drowning recalls a similar situation mentioned in VC III.13, which notes the drowning of monks of St Comgall in Belfast Lough.

<sup>876</sup> AU 802.5.

<sup>877</sup> MacLean, "Maelrubai", 176-177.

<sup>878</sup> Henderson, *The Picts*, 167-168; Henderson, "North Pictland", 41-42, appendix 43-49; this argument is accepted by Anderson in *Kings and Kingship*, 8-9.

<sup>879</sup> An excellent discussion of the source for entries in this time period is available in Evans, "Irish chronicles as sources", 1-48, see especially 25-30 for Evans' discussion on Henderson's theory.

<sup>880</sup> *MarT* 21 Apr.

<sup>881</sup> *MarG* 21 Apr.

<sup>882</sup> *MarO* 21 Apr.

<sup>883</sup> *AB* 27 Aug.

<sup>884</sup> AU 795.3; Herbert, *IKD*, 42-43.

<sup>885</sup> AU 802.9, 806.8.

Scandinavian settlement in the Western Isles, which was underway by the second half of the ninth century.<sup>886</sup> The *Chronicle of the Kings of Alba* provides some insight into the situation in the ninth and tenth centuries, though it must be noted that this is a text based on a king list from the middle of the tenth century and survives in a fourteenth-century manuscript,<sup>887</sup> with the *Chronicle* perhaps written in central or eastern Scotland.<sup>888</sup> Though there is little mention of Wester Ross and no mention of Applecross specifically, noting which geographic areas were of interest to the *Chronicle* can give insight into places of importance to the annalists, and may give some additional information on what was happening in the general area of Applecross. Mention of a battle between the Vikings and the Scots at *inuisibsolian*, possibly to be interpreted as the island of Seil off the coast of mainland Argyll, may be evidence that the kingdom of Scots maintained a degree of presence in Argyll towards the end of the ninth century.<sup>889</sup> However, this entry is poorly understood and the identification is not firmly accepted.<sup>890</sup> There is little doubt, however, that the coming of Scandinavians caused a change in the political realities of the Hebrides and the western coastline of the Scottish mainland.<sup>891</sup> As noted by Smyth and more recently reasserted by Alasdair Whyte, the continued success of Iona is likely related to a change in support from Dalriadan to Scandinavian patrons.<sup>892</sup> If part of Iona's continued existence was due to successfully changing patrons, it stands to reason that a possible explanation for the decline of Applecross was a removal of patronage in the area (see section 4.4.2 on how this may have affected the spread of Maelruba's cult). Márkus suggests that control of the Southern Hebrides may have been transferred by Cináed mac Ailpin from Dál Riata to Scandinavians in an effort to make gains for the church overall and secure military assistance for the emerging Kingdom of Scots.<sup>893</sup> It may never be possible to know when exactly Applecross began to decline as a foundation, as the source material is so sparse.

---

<sup>886</sup> Anna Ritchie, *Viking Scotland*, (London: B T Batsford Ltd, 1993), 92.

<sup>887</sup> Alex Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba, 789 to 1070* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 358.

<sup>888</sup> Benjamin Hudson, "The Scottish Chronicle", *Scottish Historical Review* 77 (1998), 135.

<sup>889</sup> Hudson, "Scottish Chronicle", 139.

<sup>890</sup> Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 123-125.

<sup>891</sup> Ritchie, *Viking Scotland*, 92; Smyth, *Warlords*, 149.

<sup>892</sup> *Ibid*, 171-174; Alasdair Whyte, "Settlement-names and society: analysis of the medieval districts of Forsa and Moloros in the parish of Torosay, Mull" (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2017), 62-63; Clancy, "Iona v. Kells", 100; Andrew Jennings, "Iona and the Vikings: Survival and Continuity", *Northern Studies* 33 (1998), 41-43.

<sup>893</sup> Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Bute* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2012), 27; Whyte, "Settlement-names and society", 64.

That Applecross became a part of the bishopric of Ross centred on Rosemarkie rather than part of Suðreyar, which included most of the Hebrides, further underlines Applecross' relationship with Rosemarkie and eastward focus towards the end of the first millenium.<sup>894</sup> Activities associated with the ecclesiastical foundation at Applecross are not attested in the annals after AU 802, and the surviving sculpture and architecture shows a gap between the late ninth century and the fifteenth, when the current chapel in the east end of the graveyard was built.

#### 4.4 Maelruba

Maelruba's foundation of Applecross in AU 673 is explicitly mentioned in the textual record, as is the date of his death. Additionally, he is one of only five saints explicitly linked with Scotland (Alba) in the main section of the *Martyrology of Óengus*.<sup>895</sup> His feastday is recorded in Irish sources as the 21<sup>st</sup> of April,<sup>896</sup> which coincides with the report of his death on the 11<sup>th</sup> of the Kalends of May in AU 722.<sup>897</sup> A confusion with St Rufus of Capua happened in the Scottish sources, leading the *Aberdeen Breviary* to erroneously record his feastday on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August.<sup>898</sup> Both the *Martyrology of Óengus* and the *Martyrology of Gorman* note that he was a member of Cenél Eogain (of the northern Uí Néill),<sup>899</sup> with his father's name given as Elganach.<sup>900</sup> He is reportedly related through his mother to Comgall of Bangor.<sup>901</sup>

The *Martyrology of Óengus* gives additional detail regarding Maelruba. In the main body of the text it specifically refers to his departure to Scotland along with his mother:

---

<sup>894</sup> Ian B. Cowan, *The parishes of medieval Scotland*. vol. 93 (Edinburgh: Scottish Record Society, 1967), 7.

<sup>895</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 383; *I n-Albain*, *MarO* 21 Apr.

<sup>896</sup> *MarT* 21 Apr; *MarG* 21 Apr; *MarO* 21 Apr.

<sup>897</sup> *AU* 722.1; *AT* 722.1.

<sup>898</sup> *AB*, 27 Aug; Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 447.

<sup>899</sup> *MarO* 21 Apr, notes; *MarG* 80; Alan Orr Anderson and Marjorie Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History, AD 500 to 1286*, vol. 1 (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1990), 219-220; Ó Riain, *CGSH* §§ 17, 479, 662.35, 722.50.86.

<sup>900</sup> *Mael Rubae m. Elganaig m. Gairb m. Oirballaig m. Con Bairend m. Cremthaind m. Binnig m. Eogain m. Neill Noigiallaig*. Ó Riain, *CGSH*, §17.

<sup>901</sup> *MarO* 21 Apr, notes; *Suaibsech mathair Mael Rubai m. Elgonaig*. Ó Riain, *CGSH*, Tract on the Mothers of the Saints, 175 (no. 722.50), 178 (no. 722.86).



In Scotland with purity,  
after leaving every happiness,  
our brother Maelruba went  
from us with his mother.

*I n-Albain co nglaini  
iar lécud cech súbai,  
luid úainn con máthair  
ar mbráthair Mael-rubai.*<sup>902</sup>

Among the notes, which were later appended to the main text, is greater detail on Maelruba's family connections, including a claim to his connection via his mother:

Maelruba, i.e. the feast of Maelruba's obit, and of the kindred of Eogan was he, his church is in Scotland, and this is the feast of his obit. His mother, now, was Subthan daughter of Comgall, or daughter of Setna; and in Applecross is his church.

*Mael rubai .i. feil eitsechta Mael rubai, 7 do Cheinel Eogain dó, ind Albain immorro atá a chell 7 feil a eitsechta so. Subthan didu ingen Comgall nó ingen tSetna a máthair, 7 i n-Apur crosen a cheill.*<sup>903</sup>

Issues have been previously raised regarding the exact lineage of Maelruba's mother.<sup>904</sup> As Maelruba was born c. 642 and Comgall died c. 602 there is very little possibility that Maelruba's mother was Comgall's sister.<sup>905</sup> The important point seems to be representing a close kinship-based link with Comgall himself, whether the reality included any kind of relation or not is unknown. As the earliest sections of the *Martyrology of Óengus* were composed in the early ninth century with the notes being added later, it may be a retrospective fabrication of evidence of Maelruba's relationship to Bangor and Comgall (see section 3.8.2) which could have been part of an effort by Bangor to influence and subjugate the monastery at Applecross. The entry on Maelruba in the *Martyrology of Gorman* gives less detail, though what it provides is similar:

Holy Maelruba (abbot of Bennchor: of the Kindred of Eogan was he, and he blessed (a church) at Applecross in Scotland).

---

<sup>902</sup> *MarO*, 21 Apr.

<sup>903</sup> *MarO*, 21 Apr, notes.

<sup>904</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 383.

<sup>905</sup> *Ibid.*

*Maelruba naem (abb Benncair, do Chenel Eogain dosidhe, 7 robhendaigh i n-Apur Crossan i n-Albain.*<sup>906</sup>

This mention both of Maelruba's lineage and his position at Bangor are in a note below the main entry, suggesting that they could have been added in. The *Martyrology of Tallaght*, however, includes the position of abbot in the main text, though the entry itself is extremely bare:

Maelruba, abbot of Bangor.

*Maele Rubi abbas Bennchair.*<sup>907</sup>

It is possible that Maelruba could have served as abbot of Bangor despite his exclusion from the *Antiphonary of Bangor* (see section 3.9). The timeframe within which this service would have to occur would be following the completion of the *Antiphonary* c. 700 and his death, recorded in AU 722. It seems unlikely, however, that he would leave his own personal foundation to take up the abbacy at Bangor. It is also possible that he could have held another important position at Bangor which was later confused with taking the actual position of abbot. An undisputed abbot of Bangor, Berach (d. 664),<sup>908</sup> shares a feastday with Maelruba.<sup>909</sup> Considering the *Martyrology of Tallaght* spent some time at Bangor (see sections 2.3 and 3.5.1), one would expect it to be a reliable witness to the abbots of Bangor. Despite the confusion, it speaks to the close relationship that was understood to exist between the two foundations, whether Maelruba actually held the position of abbot or not.

The much later *Aberdeen Breviary* makes no mention of Maelruba's genealogy and gives his feastday as 27 August, in conflation with St Rufus of Capua. In the *Breviary* he is specifically referred to as a martyr in the heading beginning the entry, the Antiphon, the prayer, and the lessons.<sup>910</sup> The conflation with Rufus is apparent as following the prayer it instructs: "Then should be made the commemoration of St Rufus, martyr".<sup>911</sup> Maelruba's name underwent numerous permutations in Scotland, which perhaps contributed to the confusion and

---

<sup>906</sup> *MarG*, 21 Apr.

<sup>907</sup> *MarT*, 21 Apr.

<sup>908</sup> AU 664.4; AT 664.3, 667.1.

<sup>909</sup> *MarT* 21 Apr; *MarG* 21 Apr.

<sup>910</sup> *AB* 27 Aug.

<sup>911</sup> *Deinde fiet memoria de sancto Rupho martyre*, *AB* 27 Aug.

conflation with St Rufus of Capua. A discussion of the many names and how they may have been formed is provided by Reeves and examined below (see section 4.4.1).<sup>912</sup>

Maelruba's death is recorded in multiple places and forms. The most straightforward record is that of the annals, which note his death in Applecross at age 80 (see section 4.3). The *Annals of Tigernach*, which gives the most detailed entry for his death, uses the word *pausat*, which especially suggests a peaceful death. It should again be noted that the extreme level of detail used in the record of Maelruba's death attests to his perceived importance by annalists and likely by their monasteries. By contrast with this more sedate entry, the later records identify Maelruba as a martyr, as mentioned above, and further make impossible connections between Maelruba and Norwegians. The *Aberdeen Breviary* describes a cruel death in Urquhart (on the Black Isle) at the hands of Norwegians (*uiri de Noruagii regniculo*) who struck him with their swords and left him for dead, "to be devoured by wild dogs and birds", though he reportedly lived long enough to direct that his body be returned to Applecross.<sup>913</sup> This version of Maelruba's demise is undoubtedly apocryphal, as there is no record of Norwegians in the area this early. The most recent version of his death is recorded by Reeves, citing local tradition, which is also apocryphal, in a story of Maelruba's death at Ferintosh, though he again was able to direct that his body be returned to Applecross. This story maintains the connection to Norway, in claiming that his tombstone was sent from there by the king's daughter.<sup>914</sup> It is interesting that both these later stories connect Maelruba with locations further east on the Scottish mainland, which are likely indicators of the later spread of his cult and may suggest the origins of later Gaelic settlers in these areas towards the end of the Pictish period (see section 4.4.2 for a discussion of eastern sites associated with the cult of Maelruba).

#### 4.4.1 Maelruba Hagiotoponyms

Affecting the analysis of the cult of Maelruba is the variation seen in his name form. It is well known that saints' names could morph (such as the creation of

---

<sup>912</sup> Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 264-270.

<sup>913</sup> *AB* 27 Aug.

<sup>914</sup> Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 278-279.

hypochoresis forms) and show up in unexpected forms such as the “charter” form of place-names and in Anglicized, Scotticised, and Latinised forms. Many variations of Maelruba were noted by Reeves:

Group 1: “preserving the radical letters”

Mulruby	Malruf	Malrou	Molroy
Mulrew	Malrew	Mulrui	Melriga

Group 2: “dropping the *l* from *maol*”

Marow	Marrow	Maro	Maroy
Morew	Morow	Murrui	Mareve

Group 3:

Märe	Märie	Märy	Mury
------	-------	------	------

Group 4: “drop[ping] the initial letter of the names in composition”

Arrow	Erew	Errew	Olrou
-------	------	-------	-------

Group 5: “discard[ing] the first element of the compound name”

Rice	Ro	Row	Ru
Rufus	Ruvius		

Group 6: “combin[ing] both name and title [Saint]”

Summaruff	Samarive	Samarevis	Samerivis
Samarvis	Samervis	Smarevis	Smarivis <sup>915</sup>

It is likely that this morphing of his name has played a part in the confusion of some of the sites associated with him being erroneously associated with the Virgin Mary and also with St Rufus. Some of these forms are seen in the surviving place-names.

The dedications and other commemorations of Maelruba have been reviewed more than once, in many cases analysing the same information, thus building up the understanding of place-names in the cult of Maelruba.

---

<sup>915</sup> Ibid, 271-272.

Forbes, in his *Kalendars of Scottish Saints* has associated several places in the west of Scotland with Maelruba (see Figure 4.3) including: Harris, Bracadale, Portree, Strath (Gairloch), Muckairn (Ardchattan), Craignish (Argyll), Strathlachlan (Argyll), and Killarow parish (Islay).<sup>916</sup> Kilmare, mentioned by Reeves, may be synonymous with the Cille Mhaire/Kilmarie mentioned above (table 3.1). Two further locations, reported by Forbes but unlocated, are Kilmarow and Craig.<sup>917</sup>

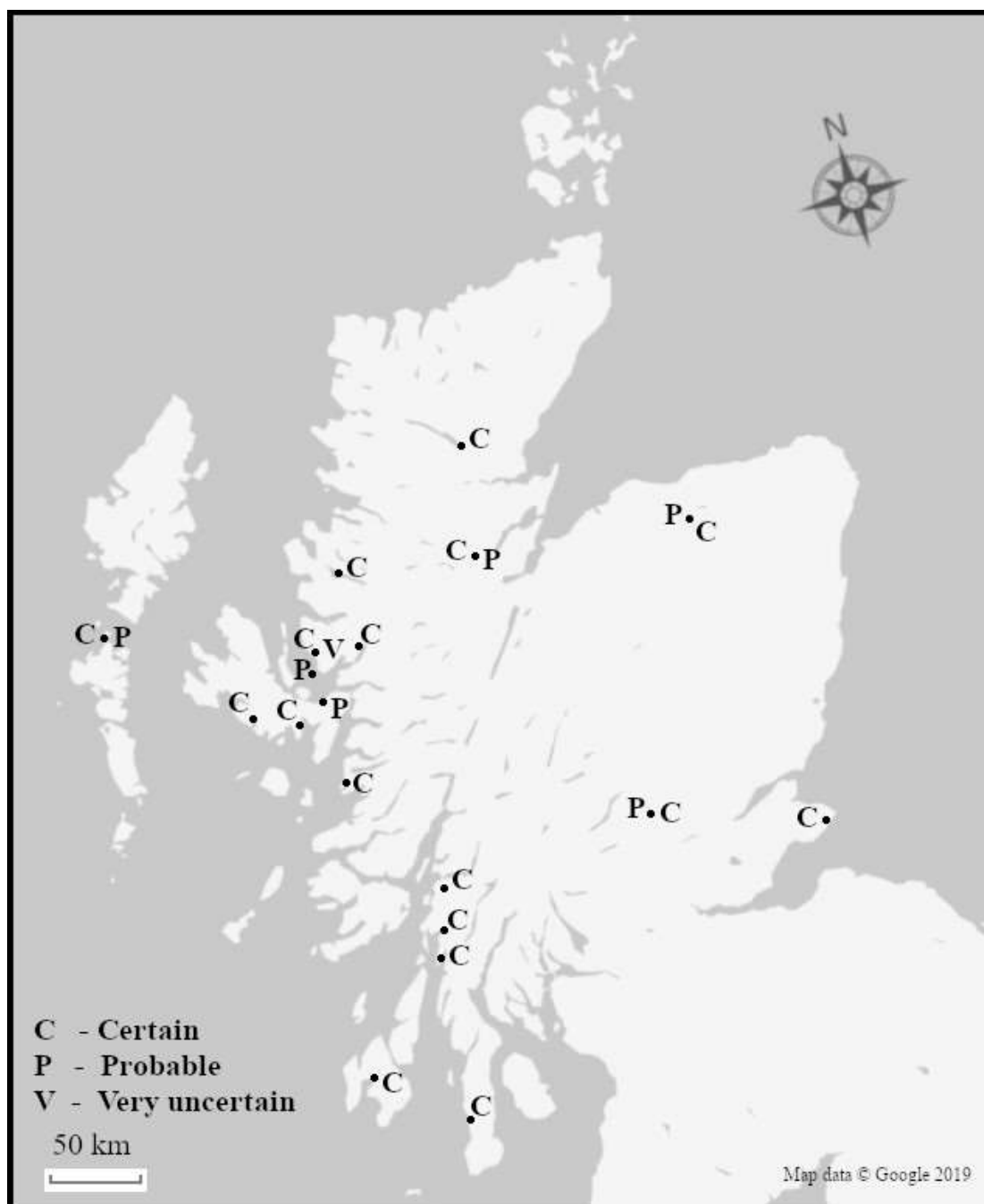
Twenty-seven place-names have been identified from DoSH that may contain the name of Maelruba in one of its many forms. Of these locations, 23 are certainly associated with Maelruba and 4 are probably associated with him. As shown in Figure 4.3, these hagiotoponyms range from Harris in the Outer Hebrides in the west to Keith in Moray and Crail in Fife in the east, with the actual form of Maelruba's name changing dramatically.

What becomes apparent when looking at the map of hagiotoponyms associated with Maelruba (see Figure 4.3) is the heavily sea-focused setting in which they occur. This is especially the case when looking at the western sites, including the Hebrides and west coast of the mainland. These sites are situated such that water-based transportation would likely be the most feasible, and in some cases are locations that would be within 1- or 2-days' sailing of Applecross itself. In this way a Maelruba seascape becomes apparent within its setting, which also ties into the larger North Channel Seascape setting that reaches all the way down to Ireland. This is discussed further below (see section 4.6).

---

<sup>916</sup> Alexander Forbes, *Kalendars of Scottish Saints* (Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872), 383; For Harris, see Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 265.

<sup>917</sup> Forbes, *Kalendars*, 383.



**Figure 4.3 Hagiotoponyms associated with Maelruba**  
(including data from DoSH, Máel Ruba m. Elganaig of Applecross).

Ten of the twenty-eight hagiotoponyms associated with Maelruba consist of *cill*-names, which may suggest establishment between the eighth and twelfth centuries.<sup>918</sup> Additional place-names, such as those including *ecclesia* refer to a church, even if they are not specifically *cill*-names.

<sup>918</sup> Nicolaisen suggests dating between the sixth and eighth centuries in *SPN*, 128-130; Macdonald, "Gaelic Cill", 9-19; Clancy, "Gaelic in Medieval Scotland", 364-368; Butter, "Cill-names and saints", 7-13.

Table 4.1 Maelruba Place-Names (DoSH, Mael Ruba m. Elganaig of Applecross).

Place-name	Location	NGR	Certainty (DoSH)
Cille Mhaire	Strath (Skye)	NG 553 172	certain
Clachan Mulrui	Lochcarron	NG 914 412	certain
Cladh Maolruibhe	Harris (Berneray)	NF 911 806	certain
Comraich Maolruibhe	APC	NG 712 458	certain
Eilean Ma-Ruibhe	Lairg	NC 576 068	certain
Isle Maree	Loch Maree, Gairloch	NG 931 723	certain
Killarow	KKC (Kintyre)	NR 662 280	certain
Ecclesia Sancti Molrubii	KKC (Kintyre)	NR 662 280	certain
Killarow	KKM (Islay)	NR 335 625	certain
Kilmolrui	Minginish, BRL (Skye)	NG 375 259	certain
Kilvaree	Ardchattan & Muckairn	NM 910 310	certain
St Maelruba's Chapel	Arisaig & Moidart	NM 658 869	certain
Kilmory	Arisaig & Moidart	NM 658 869	certain
ecclesia Beati malrubii	Contin	NH 456 557	certain
ecclesia Sancti Maelrubai	Keith	NJ 427 506	certain
ecclesia Sancti maelrubai	Kilmelfort KKT	NM 849 130	certain
Cill Ma-Ruibhe	Little Dunkeld	NN 901 368	certain
St Maol Rubha's Chapel	Little Dunkeld	NN 901 368	certain
Capella Sancti Malrubii	Crail	NO 613 075	certain
Kilmaruibhe	Lochcarron	NG 914 412	certain
Kilmory	Craignish	NM 778 014	certain
Aiseag Maolruibhe	Cill Aiseig, Strath (Skye)	NG 686 242	certain
Amulree	Little Dunkeld x Dull	NN 900 367	certain
St Rufus Park	Keith	NJ 431 509	probable
Àird Ma-Ruibhe	Harris (Berneray)	NG 931 723	probable
St Rufus' Island	Crowlin Islands (APC)	NG 691 347	probable
Preas Màiri	Contin	NH 460 558	probable
Kilvoury	APC	NG 721 466	very uncertain

#### 4.4.2 Cult of Maelruba

The extent of cultic activity for Maelruba suggests that he was considered an important saint, an idea supported by his inclusion in the *Aberdeen Breviary* and *Martyrologies*. Evidence of his cult goes as far west as Harris and as far east as Crail in Fife (see figure 4.3).<sup>919</sup> The earliest possible dating for cultic activities associated with Maelruba would be in the eighth century. The question which arises is whether the movement of Maelruba's cult was attached to an eastward movement of his relics similar to the movement of Columba's relics east to Dunkeld for safe keeping.<sup>920</sup> The main distribution area of his cult focuses first on Applecross, and also in Lorn and Knapdale. This Lorn connection may suggest that Maelruba's cult was connected with Cenél Loairn and benefitted from their expansion to the northeast in the eighth and ninth centuries (see chapter 4 for more discussion on the movement of Cenél Loairn).<sup>921</sup> An earlier saint, Moluag of Lismore (discussed in Chapter 5), is also associated with Cenél Loairn and experiences a similar cultic spread, which may indicate that these cults were spread together.

The widespread nature of Maelruba's cult asks the question whether this was a breadth that existed in Maelruba's own time based on his personal work, or whether there was some later secondary spread. Further, what does it mean for Maelruba and Applecross for one or the other of these situations to be the case?

As noted below (section 4.5), the stylistic associations of carving at Nigg and Rosemarkie attest to an eighth-century connection between the western coast and Easter Ross. Place-names, in addition to cultic activities such as fairs, can give some additional information regarding the timeframe and spread of his cult. Perhaps the most obvious locations associated with the cult of Maelruba are Loch Maree and Isle Maree. This association may come from Maelruba's own time,

---

<sup>919</sup> DoSH. St. Maolrubha's Chapel, Crail. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1346756414](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1346756414); DoSH. Àird Ma-Ruibhe, Harris. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1321444699](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1321444699).

<sup>920</sup> AU 829.3, 831.1; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 369; Clancy, "Deer and the early church", 387-389.

<sup>921</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, "Local saints and national identities in early medieval Scotland", in *Local saints and local churches in the early medieval West*, ed. Richard Sharpe and A. Thacker, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 415-416; Thomas Owen Clancy, "Deer and the early church in North-Eastern Scotland", in *Studies in the Book of Deer*, (ed) Katherine Forsyth (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008), 387-389.



suggested by the survival of two cross-carved slabs at Isle Maree, of which Isle Maree 1 shows features “of early character”.<sup>922</sup> Isle Maree 1 and 2 show some similarity to Raasay 1 and 2, in that they resemble processional crosses and have similar ends to the lower arm.<sup>923</sup>

The 1656 minutes of the presbytery of Dingwall claim that Protestants in the area of Applecross, ROS; Lochcarron, ROS; Loch Alsh, ROS; Kintail, ROS; Contin, ROS; Fodderty, ROS; Gairloch, ROS; and Loch Broom, ROS traditionally sacrificed bulls to “St Mourie” (Maelruba) on his feastday (27 Aug in Scotland), then gave the meat to the poor and “mentally deranged” who were known as “St. Mourie’s afflicted ones”.<sup>924</sup> They are also supposed to have made pilgrimages “to his monuments of idolatry” in different locations associated with Maelruba, one such being Isle Maree (on Loch Maree), where the devout were said to scandalously walk around them sunwise, and divined the future using a round stone with a hole in it.<sup>925</sup> This excerpt suggests that nearly the whole of Wester Ross and parts of Easter Ross had a tradition that acknowledged the feast of Maelruba. This has led to a belief that Maelruba himself travelled to Isle Maree, usurping a pre-Christian site and practice with Christian worship.<sup>926</sup> The site was described by Thomas Pennant in 1774 as “a circular dike of stones with a regular narrow entrance”,<sup>927</sup> though no archaeological works have been undertaken and thus no firm dating evidence is available.<sup>928</sup> Surviving tradition at Ashaig, on the Isle of Skye, says that there was a bell which hung from a tree there which rang of its own accord on Sundays,<sup>929</sup> when he would come to preach. It also notes a cliff near the surviving graveyard and well upon which Maelruba is said to have stood while preaching. This tradition is noted today by the existence of interpretation boards in the walled enclosure surrounding the well. Much like Isle Maree, it has

---

<sup>922</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 90.

<sup>923</sup> Pointed out by Thomas Owen Clancy, personal communication.

<sup>924</sup> William Mackay (ed), *Inverness and Dingwall Presbytery Records 1648-1688* (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable: Edinburgh, 1896), xxxvii-xxxviii.

<sup>925</sup> Mackay, *Presbytery Records*, xxxviii.

<sup>926</sup> A. Mitchell, “On various superstitions in the North-West Highlands and Islands of Scotland, especially in relation to lunacy”, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 4 (1860-2), 252.

<sup>927</sup> Pennant, *Tour in Scotland*, 330.

<sup>928</sup> Canmore. Isle Maree. Accessed 28 May 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/12049/isle-maree](http://canmore.org.uk/site/12049/isle-maree).

<sup>929</sup> Reeves, “Saint Maelrubha”, 290-291.

a burial ground and holy well in addition to being a hagiotopeponym (*Aiseag Maolruibhe* in Table 4.1).

Evidence of the spread of Maelruba's more eastern cult can be found at: Urquhart, ROS; Contin, ROS; Fodderty, ROS; Forres, MOR; Fordyce, BNF; Keith, BNF; Amulree, PER; and Kinnel, ANG,<sup>930</sup> seen through the hagiotopeponyms discussed above (see Table 4.1) as well as the existence of fairs. These sites describe a contiguous zone of parishes reaching from Applecross on the western coast, through Poolewe, Fodderty, and Contin, to Urquhart and Western Logie wherein Maelruba was venerated. The presence of such fairs may be indicative of the importance of a saint's local cult when the name of the fair includes that of a saint, and one might assume that the fair "developed naturally out of commercial transactions between people visiting the church, chair, well, shrine, or tomb of such a saint" from some point after the saint's death.<sup>931</sup> Evidence of nine markets in Maelruba's name speaks to the breadth of his cult across Scotland, and he is further described "in the matter of fairs, the most popular Celtic saint in Scotland".<sup>932</sup> While the existing records of fairs tend to be quite late and is not definitive proof of the existence of the cult of Maelruba in that location between the seventh and tenth centuries, their survival can still show the breadth of the cult of Maelruba that may have existed. It is unclear why Maelruba should be associated with so many fairs though it seems unlikely that the survival of these fairs should be attributed to mere happenstance.

*Féil Ma-Ruibhe* in Contin is recorded as early as 1510 in the *Aberdeen Breviary*, which tells of an attack on the men of Contin while celebrating the saint's "annual solemnity" in the church of St Maelruba at Contin.<sup>933</sup> *Summer eve's Fair* was noted in Keith, Banffshire, which in 1724 was held on the first Tuesday in September and where a church dedicated to Maelruba survives (*ecclesia Sancti*

<sup>930</sup> Forbes, *Kalendars*, 383; DoSH. Máel Ruba; Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 294-296.

<sup>931</sup> Ronald Black, "Scottish Fairs and Fair-names", *Journal of the School of Scottish Studies* 33 (1999), 19.

<sup>932</sup> James Balfour Paul, "Saints' names in relation to Scottish fairs", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 52 (1917), 163.

<sup>933</sup> *in ecclesia beati Malrubii de Contan annuam ancti uiri celebrarent solennitatem*, AB 198-199; Forbes, *Kalendars*, 383.

*Maelrubai*, in table 3.1).<sup>934</sup> Forbes further notes that in 1214 Keith is called Kethmalruf, which may indicate a hagiotoponym associated with Maelruba.<sup>935</sup>

Fairs in Forres and Fordyce have previously been noted,<sup>936</sup> and Sir James Balfour Paul further notes fairs occurring in Keith, BNF; Pitlessie, FIF (first noted in 1541);<sup>937</sup> and Lairg, SUT (first noted in 1630).<sup>938</sup> Keith, Forres, and Fordyce appear to be a cluster of locations in northern Banffshire, and two Amulree markets (*Áth Maol Ruibhe*) were recorded in Perthshire.<sup>939</sup>

Urquhart (ROS), on the Black Isle,<sup>940</sup> appears to be part of a later cult of Maelruba, as a story of his death would necessarily have come into being after he died. Additionally, the apocryphal nature of this story further supports its creation well after the time of the saint.<sup>941</sup> Indeed, it would make the most sense for this story's creation to be set well after the onset of the Viking age had passed out of living or recent memory, perhaps as late as the fifteenth century. The Lessons in the *Aberdeen Breviary* emphasize Maelruba's connection with Easter Ross, which has led some historians to consider whether there was a second saint, perhaps with a similar name, that has been confused with Maelruba of Applecross.<sup>942</sup> This Ross perspective may also give some additional information regarding when various stories included were originally constructed. Lesson eight identifies the men of Ross as the "good" guys and their enemies as the men of the Isles.<sup>943</sup> This could perhaps be correlated with events of the thirteenth century, when Ferchar Mac An t-Sacairt (Anglicised Farquar MacTaggart) was created earl of Ross (at this point seeming to comprise mostly Easter Ross) by King Alexander II (between 1215 and 1230).<sup>944</sup> Ferchar was believed to be active in assisting his son-in-law, Óláfr's campaign to obtain the

<sup>934</sup> Sir Arthur Mitchell. *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland made by Walter Macfarlane*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1906), 89; Paul, "Saints' names", 163; Forbes, *Kalendars*, 383.

<sup>935</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 382; Forbes, *Kalendars*, 383.

<sup>936</sup> *Ibid*; Paul, "Saints' names", 163.

<sup>937</sup> There is a suggestion that the fair associated with Maelruba may be connected to a church at Pitlessie which may have been dedicated to him, in Taylor, *Place-names of Fife*, vol. 2, 112.

<sup>938</sup> *Ibid*; Forbes, *Kalendars*, 383.

<sup>939</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 287-289.

<sup>940</sup> Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 290.

<sup>941</sup> *AB* 27 Aug; Forbes, *Kalendars*, 382-383.

<sup>942</sup> Boyle, "Notes on Scottish Saints", 72-73; Macquarrie, *AB*, 383.

<sup>943</sup> *AB* 27 Aug.

<sup>944</sup> R Andrew McDonald, "Old and New in the Far North: Ferchar Macintsacairt and the Early Earls of Ross c. 1200-1274", in *The Exercise of Power in Medieval Scotland c. 1200-1500*, ed. Steve Boardman and Alasdair Ross (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 30.

kingship of the Isle of Man, including an assault on Snizort in Skye which appears to have been launched from lands held by the earl of Ross.<sup>945</sup> Lesson seven sets the men of the Isles as the “good” guys in contrast to the Danes.<sup>946</sup> This can perhaps be paralleled with the fifteenth century, a period when the Lordship of the Isles had been combined with the earldom of Ross in the person of Alexander MacDonald and his son John MacDonald. Alexander was recognised as earl of Ross by King James I in 1436, and his primary focus from that time seems to have been the administration of the earldom.<sup>947</sup> If lesson seven comes from this period, it may be the result of Alexander’s attempt to influence the perception of the Lordship of the Isles in Ross. The Danes and Norwegians seem an easily selected enemy that conjures memories of Viking invasion and likely the fact that the Outer Hebrides formally remained part of Norway until 1266, and which is seen elsewhere in the Lessons for Maelruba in the *Aberdeen Breviary*, which was written in 1510.

#### 4.4.3 Ecclesiastical Place-Names

In addition to strict hagiotoponyms related to Maelruba, looking at Applecross and its immediate surroundings for ecclesiastical place-names gives additional insight into the monastery’s integration into the landscape, both geographically and culturally. Name elements seen in the area of Applecross include *comraich*, *cill*, *annaid*, *eglais*, and *naomh*.

*Comraich Maolruibhe*, “Maelruba’s sanctuary”, (NG 712 458) also referred to as *A’ Chomraich*, “the sanctuary”, is the modern Gaelic name used for Applecross itself, a usage which is compatible with the idea of a six-mile radius of sanctuary said to have existed around the church.<sup>948</sup> Less than 1km south of the church at

---

<sup>945</sup> McDonald, “Old and New”, 30, 39-40; Richard Oram, *The Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2000), 125.

<sup>946</sup> AB 27 Aug.

<sup>947</sup> Richard Oram, “The Lordship of the Isles”, in *The Argyll Book*, ed. Donald Omand (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2004), 134-135.

<sup>948</sup> DoSH. Comraich Maolruibhe. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [www.saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1365689863](http://www.saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1365689863); William J. Watson, *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty* (Inverness: Northern Counties Printing & Publishing Co, 1904), lxvi; MacLean, “Maelrubai”, 177.

Applecross is *Lagan na Comraich*, “the little hollow of the sanctuary”, (NG 7167 4495) and the supposed site of Maelruba’s cell.<sup>949</sup>

Place-names in *cill* have received significant discussion,<sup>950</sup> and have the possibility to be early, though it has been shown that in some parts of Scotland this name element was productive quite late.<sup>951</sup> It may be reasonable to interpret some *cill* names as early medieval when they occur in association with early Christian saints,<sup>952</sup> especially if archaeological evidence of a pre-ninth-century church is also apparent.<sup>953</sup> *Kalnakill* (NG 694 550) lies approximately 13.5 km by boat north of Applecross along the mainland coast, with the earliest form given as *Culnakle* in 1662.<sup>954</sup> There is no surviving evidence of a church and no tradition of a church locally. *Castel Kilmolnock* is listed on Raasay on Blaeu’s Atlas,<sup>955</sup> though it is unclear if there is any surviving structure to which it may refer. The Ordnance Survey Name Book for Inverness-shire (Skye) records the site of *Cill Ashik*, “church of the ferry” (NG 687 242),<sup>956</sup> (now modern Ashaig) which seems to have been shortened from *Askemorruey* or “the ferry of Moluag” on Blaeu’s Atlas.<sup>957</sup> Associated with it is *Tobar Asheik*, “well of the ferry” (NG 687 242), which at least today is treated as a holy well, as identified by the interpretation panel on site. Local tradition notes that this was the landing place for Maelruba’s ferry, and where there was a bell which would ring of its own accord when he was coming to preach.<sup>958</sup> Two names in *cill* are found on the southern coast of Skye, reachable on foot from Ashaig as the route runs between Beinn na Cailleach and Beinn an Dubhaich. The first is *Kilchrist*, approximately 10 km from Ashaig, which served as the parish church of Strath,<sup>959</sup> appearing on Blaeu’s Atlas and surviving as *Cill Chriosd* (NG 61709 20701) on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS

<sup>949</sup> Watson, *Ross and Cromarty*, 203.

<sup>950</sup> Nicolaisen, *SPN*, 128-133; Macdonald, “Gaelic Cill”, 9-19; Clancy, “Gaelic in Medieval Scotland”, 364-368; Butter, “Cill-names and saints”, 7-13.

<sup>951</sup> Butter, “Cill-names and saints”, 214.

<sup>952</sup> See Thomas Owen Clancy, “The church and the domains of Gaelic in early medieval Scotland”, (forthcoming) for a deeper discussion on place-names which could be pre-Norse survivals.

<sup>953</sup> Márkus, *Place-Names of Bute*, 25.

<sup>954</sup> Watson, *Ross and Cromarty*, 206.

<sup>955</sup> Blaeu, *Skia vel Skiana* [Map].

<sup>956</sup> OS Name Books, Inverness-shire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1848-1878. Vol. 10, 25. ScotlandsPlaces. Accessed 29 Sep 2020. [scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/inverness-shire-os-name-books-1876-1878/inverness-shire-skye-volume-10](http://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/inverness-shire-os-name-books-1876-1878/inverness-shire-skye-volume-10).

<sup>957</sup> Blaeu, *Skia vel Skiana* [Map].

<sup>958</sup> Reeves, “Saint Maelrubha”, 291.

<sup>959</sup> DoSH. Strath, aka Kilchrist, Parish (Skye). Accessed 29 May 2020. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1474](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1474).

six-inch map and the second is *Kilvrid*, also appearing on Blaeu's Atlas, approximately 13.3km from Ashaig and likely the place-name *Kilbride*, "St Bridget's Chapel" (NG 58965 20298), which is shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map. Each of these sits within their own immediate landscape of ecclesiastical place-names, which will not be examined here.

The place-name Coilmor (NG 721 466), perhaps "big wood" from G *coille* + *mór*, is reported on Roy's 1747 Military Survey of Scotland map.<sup>960</sup> It was later reported by Reeves as either "Caoill Mhourie",<sup>961</sup> or "Coille Mhourie" (perhaps confusing it as a Maelruba hagiotoponym),<sup>962</sup> but is now marked as Hartfield on the OS map, near the church site in Applecross.

*Annait* comes from EG *andóit* (which possibly derives from L *antitatem*), and can refer to church lands generally when in use as one of multiple elements in a place-name, or the existence of a "mother church" when used in simplex.<sup>963</sup> One definition given for *andóit* is:

"a church in a superior relationship to others, but still potentially functioning at a local level, and involved in the provision of pastoral care, and more specifically [...] in receipt of certain pastoral dues both from its constituents and its subordinate churches".<sup>964</sup>

This definition must be kept in mind when looking at *annait* places in the vicinity of Applecross. The first of these place-names is *Annat*, near Torridon (NG 8982 5469), which has a surviving burial ground that has been expanded and is still in use, though there is no surviving evidence of the chapel which is reported to have once stood there and indicated by the simplex. The place-name also suggests that the church at this location was part of a group of ecclesiastical foundations (likely other small churches or chapels) locally over which it had a superior relationship (which may have included its ability to be involved in the selection process of new leaders at subordinate foundations).<sup>965</sup> The mountain

<sup>960</sup> William Roy, Military Survey of Scotland [Map]. 1747-1755. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 26 Sep 2020. [maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html](https://maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html).

<sup>961</sup> Reeves, "Saint Maerubha", 281.

<sup>962</sup> Watson, *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty*, 204.

<sup>963</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, "Annat in Scotland and the origins of the parish", *Innes Review* 46 (1995), 92, 96-97, 101-102; Aidan MacDonald, "'Annat' in Scotland: A Provisional Review", *Scottish Studies* 17 (1973), 135-46; Taylor, *Place-Names of Fife*, 283; Márkus, *Place-Names of Bute*, 521; Watson, *Ross and Cromarty*, 209; Watson, *CPNS*, 250-251.

<sup>964</sup> Clancy, "Annat in Scotland," 100.

<sup>965</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-102.

above is *Beinn na h-Eaglaise*, “mountain of the church” (NG 905 503). It is possible this mountain had a sufficiently distinctive shape as to be used for navigation in Upper Loch Torridon. Due to its closeness to *Annat*, it may be associated with it and may suggest lost place-names in the area wherein *annait* could have been an element. It is curious to consider how *Annat* may have fit into the ecclesiastical landscape of its area, especially if it we postulate that the superior church in relationship with Applecross was Bangor. *Annat* became part of the parish of Applecross once it was established. It may also be possible, if a foundation existed at Applecross prior to the coming of Maelruba, that this prior foundation may have looked to *Annat* as its superior foundation.

The second location is *Camas na h-Annait*, “bay of the church lands”, (NG 6964 3472), on Eilean Mòr in the Crowlin Islands, less than 12km sailing from Applecross.<sup>966</sup> Watson notes a *Port na h-Annaide*, “port of the church lands”, on Eilean Mòr,<sup>967</sup> which is not visible on the first edition OS six-inch map and may be an alternative name for *Camas na h-Annait*. The Crowlin Islands are also part of Applecross parish, and it is very likely that the *annait* referenced in *Camas na h-Annait* and *Port na h-Annaide* was located on Eilean Mòr itself. Of interest is the fact that Eilean Mòr is called St Rufus’ Island on the 1832 Thomson map,<sup>968</sup> and was thus likely an important part of the immediate seascape of Applecross. Additional research into the place-names and history of Eilean Mòr would be valuable, and could potentially provide additional information regarding the ecclesiastical seascape of the Inner Sound.

*G eaglais*, *EG eclais*, originally from *L ecclesia*, refers to a church.<sup>969</sup> While *EG eclais* can be an early place-name element (possibly dating to AD 500-800),<sup>970</sup> there is no *prima facie* reason to believe the *G eaglais* place-names mentioned here should be early. *Beinn na h-Eaglaise*, “mountain of the church”, (NG 905 503), mentioned above, is connected to *Lochan Beinn na h-Eaglaise*, “the lochs of the mountain of the church”, (NG 907 520) and *Allt Beinn na h-Eaglaise*, “the

<sup>966</sup> Canmore. *Camas na h-Annait*, Eilean Mor. Accessed 15 Oct 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11607](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11607).

<sup>967</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 253.

<sup>968</sup> John Thomson, Part of Inverness Shire: Skye Island &c [Map]. 1 = 5 mi. *Atlas of Scotland*. Edinburgh: John Thomson & Co, 1824. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 22 Jan 2020. [maps.nls.uk/view/74400149](http://maps.nls.uk/view/74400149).

<sup>969</sup> Taylor, “Place-names and the early church”, 11. Watson, *CPNS*, 153; eDIL, “eqlais”. [www.dil.ie/19585](http://www.dil.ie/19585); Taylor, *Place-names of Fife*, 361.

<sup>970</sup> Taylor, “Place-names and the early church”, 3-5.

river of the mountain of the church” (NG 908 516). These names appear on the first edition OS six-inch map. Most likely the church referred to in these place-names is to the chapel previously identified at *Annat*.

One place-name with the element *naomh* is found in this area: *Eilean nan Naomh*, “Island of the saints” (NG 701 411) located less than 5km by boat south of Applecross. The presence of St Maol-luag’s Chapel on Raasay is also of note, which will be discussed in further detail below.<sup>971</sup>

The ecclesiastical place-names discussed above are all within Applecross parish with the furthest, *Annat*, approximately 40km away by boat. Much like the position of the monastery at Applecross, the parish associated with it was also maritime focused, enabling exposure to Christianity over a wide area. The immediate seascape within which Applecross operated may have stretched as far as *Annat* in the north and *Ashaig* to the south on Skye.

## 4.5 Surviving Features

Applecross as an ecclesiastical foundation is physically oriented on the western facing coast of mainland Scotland, which prioritises water-based travel over land-based travel. The terrain on the mainland is rough and extremely rocky, making overland travel difficult. Indeed, *Bealach na Bà*, “the pass of the cow”, was originally a drove road,<sup>972</sup> and was turned into a modern road around 1826,<sup>973</sup> the first linking Applecross with the wider mainland. The coastal road is recorded as under construction in 1952.<sup>974</sup> Due to the surrounding geography, the use of boats would have been essential to the functioning of the monastery and the maintenance of communications with both secular and ecclesiastical networks.

---

<sup>971</sup> Canmore. Skye, Raasay, St Maol-luag’s Chapel. Accessed 15 Oct 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/319470](http://canmore.org.uk/site/319470).

<sup>972</sup> Watson, CPNS, 482 A.R.B. Haldane, *The Drove Roads of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, LTD, 1960), 108-109; N.G. Matthew, *The Drove Roads of Scotland*. [Map] (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960).

<sup>973</sup> Iain MacLennan, *Applecross and its Hinterland: A Historical Miscellany* (Glasgow, A’Chomraich Publishing, 2013), 92.

<sup>974</sup> Brenda Macrow, *Torridon Highlands*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Hale, 1969), 164.



The early monastery sat on the northwest bank of the Applecross River and approximately 250m from the head of Applecross Bay (NG 7135 4583). This site is occupied by an L-shaped burial-ground containing the former parish church of 1817, which is now owned by the Applecross Trust, and a small fifteenth century chapel close to the eastern boundary.<sup>975</sup> The 1817 church was built partially over the foundation of a previous church which may have survived until 1792.<sup>976</sup> Although aerial photographs taken in 1947 suggest the existence of a larger curvilinear enclosure measuring at least 180m by 140m,<sup>977</sup> the area south and east of the burial-ground was planted with conifers in the 1960s and no surface-remains survive.<sup>978</sup> A low curving mound in the western part of the burial-ground may represent the small enclosure described by Reeves in 1857 as “the vestige of some ancient appendage of St Maelruba’s primitive church”.<sup>979</sup> Reeves also described an elevated area to the south of the chapel called *Cladh Maree* or Maree’s cemetery, supposedly the burial-place of the saint.<sup>980</sup> The church was situated within a wider area known as *a’ Chomraich* or “the sanctuary”,<sup>981</sup> demarcated by an unknown number of cross-carved stones, one of which survived until approximately 1870 at Camusterrach, 4km to the south, and may now be marked by a broken slab approximately 0.4m tall.<sup>982</sup>

---

<sup>975</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 87.

<sup>976</sup> Reeves, “Saint Maelrubha”, 280.

<sup>977</sup> Charles Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1971), fig. on p. 43; National Monument Record Scotland air photo unit, CPE/SCOT/UK/284, nos. 3036 and 4044 (August 1947).

<sup>978</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 87.

<sup>979</sup> Reeves, “Saint Maelrubha”, 280.

<sup>980</sup> Reeves, “Saint Maelrubha”, 281.

<sup>981</sup> Aidan McDonald, “Iona’s style of government: the toponomastic evidence”, *Peritia* 4 (1985), 179.

<sup>982</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 87.



**Figure 4.4** Applecross site showing potential vallum (Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, 43).

Approximately 1km south along the coast from the monastery is a site called *Lagan na Comraich*, “the little hollow of the sanctuary”, which is the supposed site of Maelrubha’s cell.<sup>983</sup> Simpson’s 1935 description of the site advises that it “comprise[s] the apparent footings of a small building, one side of which abuts on the road boundary wall, measuring about 4m square with walling 1m thick” and a featureless interior.<sup>984</sup> A nameless and supposedly holy well (NG74SW 1) is situated approximately 50m just north along the shoreline from *Lagan na Comraich*, though no further information on its reported sanctity is given.<sup>985</sup>

<sup>983</sup> Watson, *Ross and Cromarty*, 203.

<sup>984</sup> W. Douglas Simpson, *The Celtic Church in Scotland: A Study of its Penetration Lines and Art Relationships*, (Aberdeen: University Press, 1935), 59, 76, 79-80; Canmore. Applecross, St Maelrubha’s Cell. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11741/applecross-st-maelrubhas-cell](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11741/applecross-st-maelrubhas-cell).

<sup>985</sup> Watson, *Ross and Cromarty*, 203.

### 4.5.1 Sculpture

The surviving sculpture can give insight into the high-status possibilities of the site in the absence of textual evidence, making it possible to glimpse the potentially connected nature of the monastery. The remains of three or four carved stone monuments of early medieval date have been recovered from the churchyard.

**Table 4.2 Concordance of Applecross Numbering Systems**

McNamara	Fisher	Thickpenny
1.1	1	1
1.2	2	2
1.3	3	3
1.4		5.1
1.5		5.2
1.6		5.3
1.7		5.4
1.8		5.5
1.9		5.6
1.10		5.7
1.11		5.8
1.12		5.9
1.13		5.10
1.14		5.12
1.15		5.13
1.16		5.14
1.17		5.16
1.18		5.17
1.19		5.18
2	4	4
3		5.11
4		5.15

The numbering system for each of the fragments discovered at Applecross has become somewhat unwieldy, and for the sake of clarification I have numbered the monuments Applecross 1, 2, 3, and 4. As Applecross 1 consists of a large number of fragments, it is subdivided into sections 1.1-1.19. In order to allow ease of comparison between my discussion and those of Fisher and Thickpenny, I am providing a concordance of each numbering system.

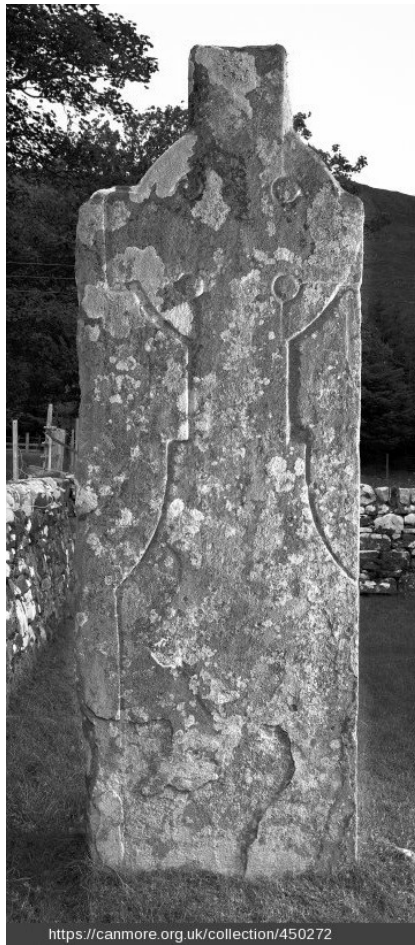
The relatively simple cross-slab, Applecross 2, made of Torridonian sandstone, is approximately 2.63m in visible height by 0.99m in maximum width, tapering

upwards from roughly 100mm to 75mm in thickness.<sup>986</sup> The surface is heavily flaked in the lower part and shows heavy wear. Face A has the outline of an apparently undecorated ringed cross with a short shaft supported on a pedestal with concave upper sides. The cross has short side-arms with circular armpits approximately 60mm in diameter, with the ring-quadrants slightly sunk below the surface-level of the cross itself. The right edge of the base and the right arm extend to the edge of the slab, while the left has a margin roughly 0.15m wide.<sup>987</sup> The top of the slab has been shaped to the outline of the upper part of the cross-head, though there is no obvious reason why the shaping was not continued around the left side of the cross. Due to the simple and unfinished nature of its decoration, it is difficult to suggest a date for Applecross 2, though its shape contains some broad similarities to Applecross 1, perhaps tentatively associating it with a ninth-century date.

---

<sup>986</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 90.

<sup>987</sup> *Ibid*, 90.



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/450272>



**Figure 4.5 Applecross 2 Photo (Left) (Canmore 450272 © Crown Copyright: HES) and Drawing (Right) (Fisher, EMS).**

Applecross 3 consists of a single fragment approximately 133mm long by 32mm wide which contains a zoomorphic leg and foot, which does not correlate with any of the other surviving monuments at Applecross.<sup>988</sup>

<sup>988</sup> Cynthia Thickpenny, "Abstract Pattern on Stone Fragments from Applecross: The Master Carver of Northern Pictland?" *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 148 (2018), 159. I am most grateful to Dr. Cynthia Thickpenny for sharing this article with me in advance of publication and for discussing the fragments and their significance with me.



Figure 4.6 Photo of Applecross 3 (Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 153).

Applecross 4 is also a single fragment measuring 122mm long by 80mm wide and lacking any kind of decoration.<sup>989</sup>



Figure 4.7 Applecross 4 (Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 154).

Applecross 1 is a more complex and likely earlier cross-slab which survives in a series of 19 fragments (Applecross 1.1-1.19). One fragment (1.1) was discovered

---

<sup>989</sup> Ibid, 159.

built into the wall of the fifteenth-century chapel while two others (1.2 and 1.3) were found in the graveyard and moved into the modern church in the twentieth century.<sup>990</sup> The remaining fragments (1.4-1.19) were recovered in 2016-2017, also built into the wall of the ruined fifteenth-century chapel, along with the fragments comprising Applecross 3 and 4.<sup>991</sup>



**Figure 4.8 Photographs of Applecross Cross-Slab Fragments 1.1 (Left), 1.2 (top right) and 1.3 (bottom right) (Fisher, *EMS*; HES).**

---

<sup>990</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 88; Joanna Close-Brooks, *The Highlands* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1986), 123.

<sup>991</sup> Thickpenny, "Abstract Pattern", 147.



Figure 4.9 Ornamentation Schematic of Applecross Cross-Slab Fragment 1.1  
Faces A (Left and Centre) and B (Right) (Canmore 404553; HES).





Image removed  
due to  
copyright  
restrictions

Figure 4.10 Reconstruction of Applecross 1 with fragments discovered before 2016 (Canmore 404552; HES).



**Figure 4.11 Reconstruction of Applecross 1 including fragments discovered in 2016 (Thickpenny, "Abstract Pattern", 158; base image HES).**

Applecross 1 consists of nineteen separate sculpture fragments, sixteen of which were discovered in 2016 and 2017 in the wall of the ruined post-medieval chapel and first described by Cynthia Thickpenny.<sup>992</sup> On face A of the cross-slab is a ringed cross with pierced armpits and step and key pattern on the ring. The centre of the cross shows a central circular field with interlace. The upper arm shows spirals framed by a band of complex interlace. The right arm shows a field of interlace within a simple border. The lower arm shows a panel of key pattern within a simple border. Beneath the lower arm is a small panel of key pattern

---

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-176.

within a simple border. To the right side of the shaft is a panel of complex spirals, some showing bird or beast-headed terminals (discussed below with St Vigean's 7). The lower third comprises a large "base" with a central panel of key pattern surrounded by a frame of interlace. The thin edge, face B, has a panel of spirals below a panel of interlace, and at the top is a naked human shown with his legs apart and his hands covering his genitals. The cross-slab would have originally stood at least 2.2m in height and a possible span of the ringed cross approximately 1m. The largely intact carving on face B suggests that only a thin layer may have been lost from face C, the opposite side of the stone from face A. The current width varies in thickness between 55mm to 95mm, meaning this was a very thin cross-slab for something so large. This is also seen in Applecross 2 which ranges in thickness from 75cm to 100cm,<sup>993</sup> and the Nigg cross-slab measures 160mm in thickness.<sup>994</sup>

Nakedness in medieval art is often a sign of sin or a threat of some type, except for scenes depicting Adam and Eve before the fall.<sup>995</sup> In the Barberini Gospels, which date to around the second half of the eighth century, there is a naked figure on the column of a canon table which shows a man with his hand just above his genitals while the other appears to be stroking his beard.<sup>996</sup> This figure, which Geddes calls "the exhibitionist imp" may represent the punishment of lust or a liminal scene of purification before a reader enters the gospel itself.<sup>997</sup> The Strathmartine man may represent shame and awareness of sin,<sup>998</sup> considering the figure is portrayed in the same way as Adam after the fall in the Bible of Moutiers-Grandval (possibly written in Tours c. 840),<sup>999</sup> and also on the ninth century cross of Patrick and Columba at Kells.<sup>1000</sup>

---

<sup>993</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 90.

<sup>994</sup> Canmore. Nigg. Accessed 10 Oct 2019. Canmore.org.uk/site/15280.

<sup>995</sup> Jane Geddes, *Hunting Picts: Medieval Sculpture at St Vigean's, Angus* (Edinburgh: Historic Environment Scotland, 2017), 124.

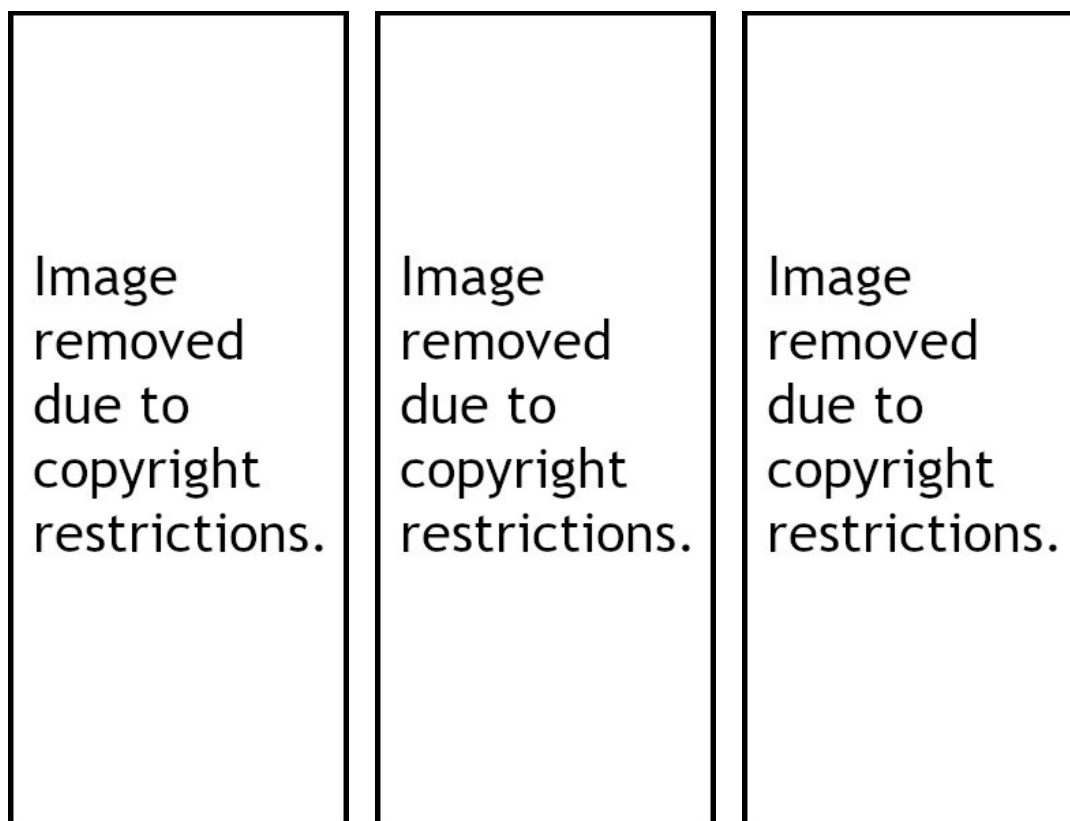
<sup>996</sup> *Barberini Gospels*. Rome, Vatican Bibliotheca. *Apostolica Barberini*, MS Lat 570; Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, III, 239.

<sup>997</sup> Geddes, *Hunting Picts*, 124.

<sup>998</sup> *Ibid*, 124.

<sup>999</sup> *Moutier-Grandval Bible*. London, BL, Add. MS 10546; Archer St. Clair, "A New Moses: Typological Iconography in the Moutier-Grandval Bible Illustrations of Exodus", *Gesta* 26.1 (1987), 19.

<sup>1000</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses* 2, fig 348, 660.



**Figure 4.12 Figures with hands covering their crotches. Barberini Gospels Imp, Lat. 570 f1 (left) (© 2013 Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), A'Chill, Canna, face B (centre) (Canmore 373295), Strathmartine 8, end of cross arm (right) (Crown copyright, HES).**

Additionally, the human figure seen on the surviving edge of the cross-slab may be compared to similar small figures in analogous locations on the crosses at A'Chill, Canna (NG 2695 0553), which may date to the eighth century,<sup>1001</sup> and Strathmartine 8,<sup>1002</sup> Angus (NO 3784 3525), perhaps dating to the ninth or tenth century.<sup>1003</sup> Both crosses have a small human (male) figure in roughly similar locations on the sculpture and composition of their bodies.<sup>1004</sup> The Strathmartine man appears naked, covering his genitals with one hand while stroking his beard with the other, a position remarkably similar to a figure found in the late eighth century Insular Barberini gospels.<sup>1005</sup> The figures on the Canna cross, however, look like they may be clothed, or perhaps are carrying something,<sup>1006</sup> and have their legs together, suggesting their meaning may be markedly different than

<sup>1001</sup> Pamela O'Neill, "When Onomastics met Archaeology: A Tale of Two Hinbas", *Scottish Historical Review* 87 (2008), 35-36.

<sup>1002</sup> Geddes, *Hunting Picts*, 124.

<sup>1003</sup> Canmore. Strathmartine Sculptured Cross. Accessed 19 Oct 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/31885/strathmartine-sculptured-cross](http://canmore.org.uk/site/31885/strathmartine-sculptured-cross).

<sup>1004</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 16, 98, no. 28.

<sup>1005</sup> Geddes, *Hunting Picts*, 124.

<sup>1006</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 98.

that of the naked figures. O'Neill argues that while the Canna figures are in an Irish style, the covering of their genitals with their hands is not.<sup>1007</sup> Adam and Eve are depicted on Irish high crosses, having eaten the apple in the garden of Eden, with hands covering their nakedness at the upper base of the cross at Moone,<sup>1008</sup> the Kells Market Cross,<sup>1009</sup> the Kells Broken Cross,<sup>1010</sup> and the Cross of Patrick and Columba, also at Kells.<sup>1011</sup> The presence of the hands covering genitals at Kells, however, could reflect a westward stylistic movement from Scotland.



**Figure 4.13** Photos of humanoid figures Forteviot 1 (Left) (Canmore 1546671 © © Historic Environment Scotland) Drosten Stone (Centre) (Canmore 1950760 © Crown Copyright: HES) and Glamis 1 (Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, III, 220).

Forteviot 1 (Perth and Kinross) has the upper half of a human (male) figure who could potentially be naked on face B, though the lower half of the person has either been lost or was never completed.<sup>1012</sup> The Drosten Stone at St Vigean's has a figure which looks similar, and which may portray a devilish character or imp, suggested in opposition to a lost angel in the opposite position.<sup>1013</sup> This image is similar to one seen at Glamis, where there is an obvious angel in the upper left

<sup>1007</sup> O'Neill, "Onomastics", 35.

<sup>1008</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses* 2, fig. 509.

<sup>1009</sup> *Ibid*, fig. 344.

<sup>1010</sup> *Ibid*, fig. 328.

<sup>1011</sup> *Ibid*, fig. 345.

<sup>1012</sup> Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, III, 324, fig. 335B.

<sup>1013</sup> Geddes, *Hunting Picts*, 125.

portion of the face, and what looks like a bird headed person along with a mostly lost figure in the upper right portion of the cross.<sup>1014</sup>

That this is a cross-slab rather than a free-standing cross shows its connection to Pictish sculptural styles, while the presence of a pierced ring is more similar to Irish styles.<sup>1015</sup> It bears a notable similarity in overall shape to the Gask cross-slab described in *ECMS* as “an interesting example of a transitional type of monument between the upright cross-slab and the free-standing cross”.<sup>1016</sup> The panelled treatment of this slab closely resembles that of Pictish cross-slabs, especially those at Nigg and Rosemarkie,<sup>1017</sup> with possible additional connections to Tarbat (Easter Ross) and Farr (Sutherland). The closest parallel for the spiral roundels is on a slab at St Vigean (Angus).<sup>1018</sup>

Applecross 1 shows a distinct blending of Irish and Pictish stylistic traditions.<sup>1019</sup> Connections to Irish stylistic forms are shown in the presence of a pierced ring and the use of triquetras to link spirals,<sup>1020</sup> a form which is found on the Nigg cross-slab,<sup>1021</sup> the Book of Kells,<sup>1022</sup> and in Irish crosses such as Termonfechin in Co. Louth.<sup>1023</sup> Further links are indicated by the flat style of ornament, similar to St Vigean and the Ahenny crosses, which invoke metalwork techniques.<sup>1024</sup> These stylistic features, along with the very skilled execution of decoration on the slab suggests a date for Applecross 1 in the eighth or ninth centuries.<sup>1025</sup> The strongest link, however, appears to be with Easter Ross, as noted by MacLean and Fisher and recently confirmed by Thickpenny.

---

<sup>1014</sup> Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, III, 220.

<sup>1015</sup> MacLean, “Maelrubai”, 177.

<sup>1016</sup> Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, III, 291, fig 307.

<sup>1017</sup> Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 147-176.

<sup>1018</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 88.

<sup>1019</sup> *Ibid*, 14, 23, 88.

<sup>1020</sup> MacLean, “Maelrubai”, 178.

<sup>1021</sup> Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, III, 80, fig. 72.

<sup>1022</sup> *Book of Kells*, TCD MS 58. Digitised manuscript from the Library of Trinity College Dublin.

Accessed 4 Jun 2020. [digitalcollections.tcd.ie/concern/works/hm50tr726?locale=en](https://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/concern/works/hm50tr726?locale=en), Folio 34r.

<sup>1023</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses 2*, fig 583; Fisher, *EMS*, 88.

<sup>1024</sup> MacLean, “Maelrubai”, 178; Nancy Edwards, “An Early Group of Crosses from the Kingdom of Ossory”, *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 133 (1983), 11.

<sup>1025</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 88; MacLean, “Saint Maelrubha”, 177-178; Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 149.



**Figure 4.14** Rosemarkie Sandstone Panel (Rosemarkie 7). Drawing (top) (Canmore 1766615 © Crown Copyright: HES) and photo (bottom) (Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 160).

Rosemarkie is a high-status Pictish site in Easter Ross where the similarity of sculpture to Applecross was identified by MacLean and Fisher.<sup>1026</sup> This connection is confirmed by the recent meticulous analysis by Thickpenny of the key-pattern on the Rosemarkie sandstone panel (NH 7372 5763), which has likewise been dated to the ninth century.<sup>1027</sup> MacLean noted similarities between Applecross 1 and Rosemarkie 1 in the interlace border which frames a panel of key-pattern,<sup>1028</sup> also with Rosemarkie 2 in the two vertically adjacent key patterns on each cross-slab,<sup>1029</sup> and Thickpenny has argued convincingly that the panels at Applecross, Rosemarkie, and Nigg were made by either a single master sculptor, or a team of sculptors who were part of a single workshop.<sup>1030</sup> This suggests either the existence of a travelling sculptor/team of sculptors or of communication and interaction between the two foundations sufficient for Applecross to have a sculptor brought to it from Easter Ross or, less likely, vice versa.

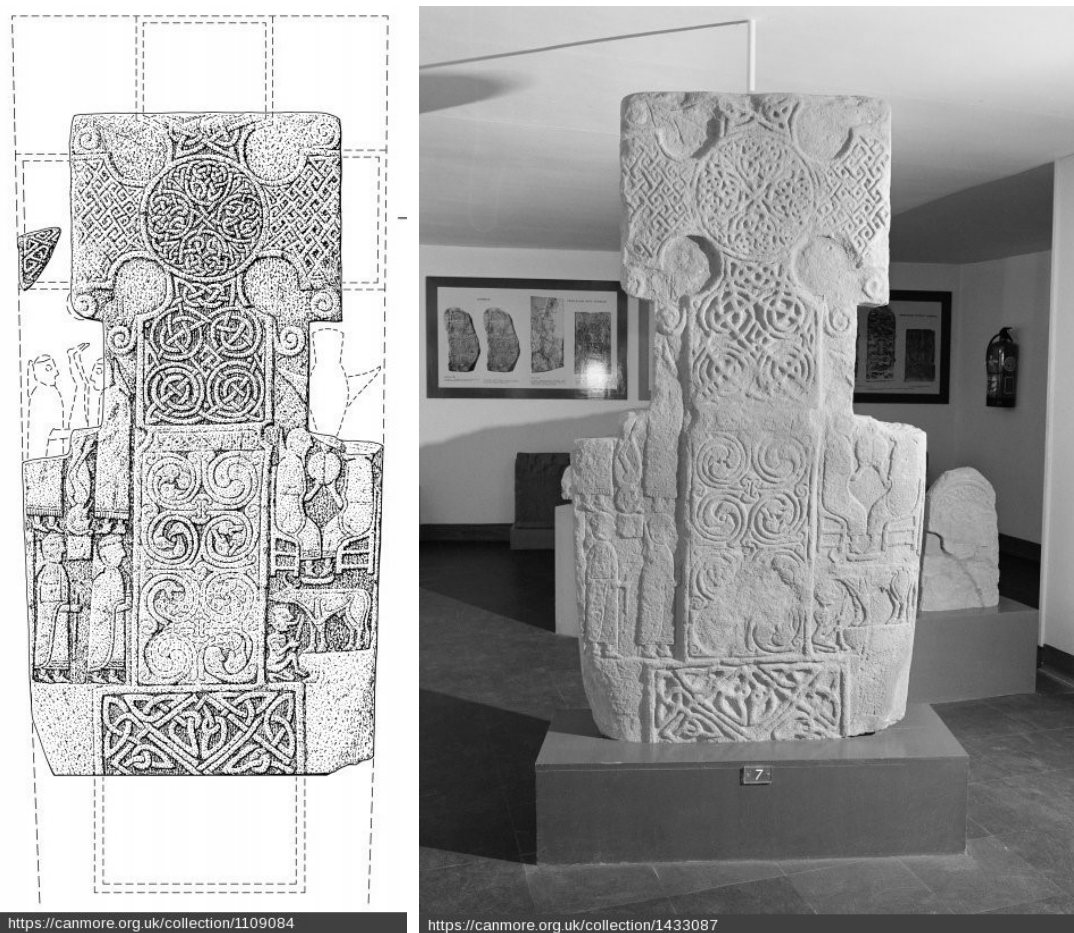
<sup>1026</sup> MacLean, “Maelrubai”, 177-181; Fisher, *EMS*, 14, 88.

<sup>1027</sup> Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 165; George Henderson and Isabel Henderson, *The Art of the Picts: sculpture and metalwork in early medieval Scotland* (London, 2004), 206-207.

<sup>1028</sup> MacLean, “Maelrubai”, 178.

<sup>1029</sup> *Ibid*, 177.

<sup>1030</sup> Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 148.



**Figure 4.15 St Vigean 7, face A. Drawing (left) and photo (right)**  
 (Canmore 1109084 © Crown Copyright: HES, 1433087 © © HES (Tom and Sybil Gray Collection)).

St Vigean 7 (NO 6383 4294) (Angus) is a cross-slab that has a panel with four pairs of zoomorphic triple spiral roundels just below the bottom arm of the cross.<sup>1031</sup> This is very similar to the panel at Applecross which contains six sets of zoomorphic triple spiral roundels, set just to the right of the lower cross arm,<sup>1032</sup> though Geddes notes that Applecross 1 “mixes spirals with interlace in order to link the elements”.<sup>1033</sup> Even with this difference, Geddes notes that many of the motifs visible on Applecross 1 “can be compared with patterns in eastern Pictland”, and concludes that Pictish craftsmen from the east would have inspired the design of this monument.<sup>1034</sup> Further evidence of zoomorphic spirals in use in Pictland include Birnie 2, Elgin (now lost), and Kirriemuir 18.<sup>1035</sup>

<sup>1031</sup> Canmore. St Vigean. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. canmore.org.uk/site/35587/st-vigean.

<sup>1032</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 14, 88; Geddes, *Hunting Picts*, vol. 2, 235.

<sup>1033</sup> Geddes, *Hunting Picts*, 75.

<sup>1034</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

<sup>1035</sup> Henderson, “Fragments of Significance”, 74-75.



Beast-headed or zoomorphic spirals are known from Irish crosses such as Tybroughney Cross;<sup>1036</sup> the North Cross, Ahenny;<sup>1037</sup> the South Cross, Ahenny;<sup>1038</sup> and the Dromiskin Cross.<sup>1039</sup> Slightly less stylised are the three birds in a spiral on the east face of the Carndonagh cross at Carndonagh, Co. Donegal.<sup>1040</sup> The zoomorphic spirals are also noted in the Book of Armagh,<sup>1041</sup> the Lindisfarne Gospels,<sup>1042</sup> and the Book of Kells.<sup>1043</sup> Henderson further argues that the use of zoomorphic spirals is “long-established”,<sup>1044</sup> and evidenced on such pieces as the Hunterston Brooch.<sup>1045</sup> Similar style spiral work, though without the zoomorphic quality, is found on the Belt Reliquary at Moylough, Sligo.<sup>1046</sup>

This could be further evidence of stylistic borrowing from an eastern Pictish sculptural influence though more detailed analysis would be beneficial. Fisher has identified the ornamentation as fret and interlace patterns, though it might more clearly be called key pattern as described by Thickpenny for fragment 1.4. This ornamentation is also seen at Tarbat and Farr.<sup>1047</sup>

---

<sup>1036</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses* 1, fig. 625.

<sup>1037</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 8.

<sup>1038</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 19-20, 26.

<sup>1039</sup> Henry Crawford, *Handbook of Carved Ornament from Irish Monuments of the Christian Period* (Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1926), 54-56.

<sup>1040</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses* 2, fig. 1027.

<sup>1041</sup> *Book of Armagh*, IE TCD MS 52. Digitised manuscript from the Library of Trinity College Dublin. Accessed 4 Apr 2019.

[digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/#folder\\_id=1827&pidtopage=MS52\\_328&entry\\_point=70](http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/#folder_id=1827&pidtopage=MS52_328&entry_point=70), f33v;

Harbison, *High Crosses* 2, fig. 1028.

<sup>1042</sup> *Lindisfarne Gospels*, Cotton MS Nero D IV. Digitised manuscript from British Library. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton\\_ms\\_nero\\_d\\_iv\\_fs001r\\_f29r\\_f139r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_nero_d_iv_fs001r_f29r_f139r).

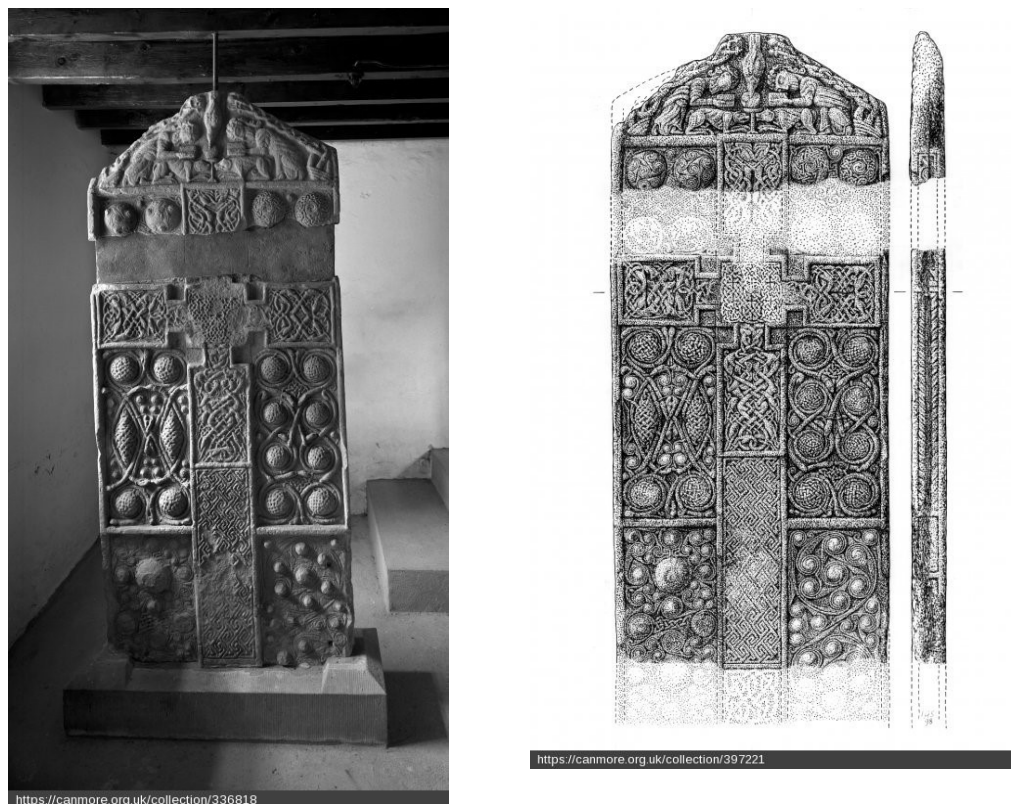
<sup>1043</sup> Isabel Henderson, “Pictish Art and the Book of Kells”, in *Ireland and Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, (ed) Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David Dumville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 90, plate xiii a.

<sup>1044</sup> Henderson, “Pictish Art”, 90.

<sup>1045</sup> Robert Stevenson, “Brooches and Pins: Some Seventh- to Ninth-Century Problems”, in *Ireland and Insular Art: AD 500-1200*, (ed) Michael Ryan (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987), 94.

<sup>1046</sup> Henry, *Irish Art*, plate 34.

<sup>1047</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 88.



**Figure 4.16 Nigg Cross-Slab, face A Photo (left) and drawing (right)**  
 (Canmore 341233 © Courtesy of HES; 397221 © Courtesy of HES (Ian G Scott Collection)).

The Nigg cross-slab (NH 8046 7171), located in Easter Ross, is a highly decorated Class II Pictish sculpture dated to the ninth century.<sup>1048</sup> Of primary interest here is face A, which contains an arrangement similar to that on the Applecross cross-slab, most notably the panelled cross with key-pattern. Although stylistic similarities in general have been recognized between it and Applecross, Thickpenny's detailed analysis of the key pattern on Applecross 1 has led her to propose a strong link with the cross-slab from Nigg, Easter Ross which bears identical patterns in the field directly below the lower cross arm on Applecross 1 and the shaft on Nigg.<sup>1049</sup>

We may never be able to determine whether additional decoration was intended for Applecross 2 (see figure 4.5), nor whether its final form was intended to resemble an Irish-type or Pictish-type cross. For this reason, dating Applecross 2 is an extremely difficult task, and thus far none has been suggested. This cross-slab is likely no longer in its original context, as local tradition notes it was

<sup>1048</sup> RCAHMS. *The archaeological sites and monuments of Easter Ross, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region*, The archaeological sites and monuments of Scotland series no 6. Edinburgh, 1979a), 27, No. 231.

<sup>1049</sup> Thickpenny, "Abstract Pattern", 165-166.

moved from an earlier location at the mouth of the nearby river and re-erected within the graveyard in 1800.<sup>1050</sup> Local tradition is divided on who the cross-slab is associated with, as one surviving tale connects it with Mac Óige of Applecross and abbot of Bangor (d. 802),<sup>1051</sup> and further claims that Ruairidh's body floated back to Applecross from Bangor on this stone,<sup>1052</sup> which is somewhat similar to the tales of Moluag floating on a stone from Bangor to Lismore. The second local legend is that the cross-slab is associated with an ancient chief of Applecross, Ruairidh Mór MacCoigen, thought perhaps to have been killed during a battle with Danes.<sup>1053</sup>

Fragments 3 and 4 (see figures 4.6 and 4.7, respectively), discovered during excavation in 2016 and 2017, do not resemble any of the other surviving pieces of sculpture from Applecross and appear to be the remains of two further monuments.<sup>1054</sup> Fragment 3 measures approximately 133mm by 32mm with worn zoomorphic design and Fragment 4 is approximately 122mm by 80mm and shows a curved edge with no decoration.<sup>1055</sup> Unfortunately it is not possible to determine from the surviving remains what the original dimensions of these monuments might have been. These fragments, along with Applecross 1 and 2, suggest at minimum the existence of three to four different carved sculpture pieces, of varying artistic styles, in the early medieval period, further attesting the prestige and wealth of Applecross as an ecclesiastical site.<sup>1056</sup> This level of sculpture would only be attainable by a foundation with cultural importance and financial support.

#### 4.5.2 Nearby Secular Features

Within 2km of the monastic settlement of Applecross are the remains of an Iron Age broch (NG 7118 443), situated at the highest point of a low ridge, just next to a site called the Mains of Applecross. Archaeological investigation at the site was able to reveal “a structure with key characteristics that can be attributed to the Atlantic Iron Age architectural tradition, and to confirm that it belonged to

---

<sup>1050</sup> Macrow, *Torridon Highlands*, 161.

<sup>1051</sup> Reeves, “Saint Maelrubha”, 274-275; AU 802.5; Macrow, *Torridon*, 160-161, Fisher, *EMS*, 90.

<sup>1052</sup> Macrow, *Torridon Highlands*, 161.

<sup>1053</sup> Reeves, “Saint Maelrubha”, 280.

<sup>1054</sup> Thickpenny, “Abstract Pattern”, 172-173.

<sup>1055</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1056</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

the class of brochs rather than that of duns or wheelhouses”.<sup>1057</sup> It should be noted that all work thus far has intentionally avoided excavation of primary occupation layers, meaning that most finds were discovered in secondary and redeposited contexts<sup>1058</sup> Future excavation opportunities that allow for the investigation of primary occupation layers could provide additional information to confirm the habitation dates and activities that were undertaken at this broch.

A wealth of material was found during excavation, indicating multiple periods of occupation and re-use, including the Iron Age, sixth and seventh centuries, and Norse contexts,<sup>1059</sup> suggesting that the broch could have been a local centre of secular power and authority during much of Applecross’ active lifetime. Excavations in 2009 and 2010 recovered small finds ranging in material from antler, ceramics, copper alloys, glass, and iron, leading archaeologists to believe the site was used for metalworking and made use of high-status metalware, including pins similar to known Hebridean examples from the sixth and seventh centuries.<sup>1060</sup>

The evidence for high-status goods and intensive craftwork that has been suggested for this broch in close relation to a monastery whose founder was himself from Ireland suggests that it could have had connections to Ireland. In addition to metalwork, there appears to be evidence of animal processing of some sort, which may not be stretched so far as to suggest the preparation of hides for vellum, but more comfortably may suggest deer processing.<sup>1061</sup> Further archaeological study of the broch would allow greater understanding of the settlement of the area and may be able to confirm whether the broch’s residents interacted with those of the monastery at Applecross. This could consist of the dating of materials such as the bone, ceramics, and antler. Further excavation into the primary occupation layers, which the community

---

<sup>1057</sup> John Wood, “Applecross Mains, Highland (Applecross parish), community archaeology project, excavation”, *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 7 (2006), 85.

<sup>1058</sup> Cathy Dagg and Cait McCullagh, “Applecross Broch Community Archaeology Project, Highland (Applecross parish), excavation”, *New Discovery Excavation Scotland* 10 (2009), 86-87; Cathy Dagg, Cait McCullagh and M. Peteranna, “Applecross Broch Community Archaeology Project, Highland (Applecross parish), excavation”, *New Discovery Excavation Scotland* 11 (2010), 84-85.

<sup>1059</sup> Dagg and McCullagh, “Applecross Broch (2010)”, 84.

<sup>1060</sup> Dagg and McCullagh, “Applecross Broch (2009)”, 86-87.

<sup>1061</sup> Dagg and McCullagh, “Applecross Broch (2010)”, 84.

excavation project intentionally avoided would also be of great benefit. Even without this increased level of detail, it is apparent that the site was in use between the sixth and ninth centuries, making it active at the time of the foundation of Applecross and during its burgeoning centuries. Comparing the evidence of the broch with that of the monastery at Applecross, it is evident that there was a high degree of patronage and wealth in this area which was able to support an ecclesiastical foundation of importance, as evident through the surviving sculpture at Applecross.

## 4.6 Wider Context

### 4.6.1 Wider Context: Travel

The terrain of the Applecross peninsula does not lend itself to a focus on overland travel. Sea-based transport would have been much more common, as is reflected in the immediate seascape seen in the parish of Applecross and sites associated with Maelruba along the western coast of Applecross. This is not intended to suggest that the only means of connection Applecross would have undertaken was sea-based, indeed the Applecross cross-slab (Applecross 1) shows that Rosemarkie, a trip to which would have included land-based travel, was part of Applecross' network.

The presence of later drove roads highlights the few difficult routes available for land-based travel towards markets, possible population centres, and likely Applecross' episcopal leader. It is possible that the eighteenth-century drove roads follow an earlier route that could have been taken between Applecross and Rosemarkie. These drove roads indicate the "natural route" from Applecross runs up Strathcarron and Strath Bran to Strath Conon and ultimately the Cromarty Firth.<sup>1062</sup> This route passes known Maelruba dedication sites (see table 4.1), including: St Maolrubha's Church at the head of Lochcarron (NG 914 412); Contin, with its church dedicated to Maelruba and where the place-name *Preas Màiri* (NH 460 558) is also found;<sup>1063</sup> and Fodderty, which lies roughly 6.6km northeast of Contin, mentioned as a centre of veneration for Maelruba in the

<sup>1062</sup> Haldane, *Drove Roads*, 108-109; Matthew, *Drove Roads*. [Map]

<sup>1063</sup> DoSH. Preas Màiri. Accessed 4 Nov 2020. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1315222687](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1315222687).

1656 minutes of the presbytery of Dingwall. There are few other church sites along this route, though further research into the early ecclesiastical history of this area would be beneficial. As mentioned above, the *Bealach na Bà*, now a modern road which utilizes a pass to get to Applecross, was part of this series of drove roads leading east.

This physical evidence can be combined with surviving textual evidence, as seen in the *Life of St Columba* and Adomnán's mentions of the voyages of Baétán and Cormac Ua Liatháin.<sup>1064</sup> The type of stories about saints' sea-travel, known as *imrama* or "rowing about",<sup>1065</sup> specifically refer to the "prolonged adventurous voyage at sea" of saints.<sup>1066</sup> Further mentions of Irish clerics reaching even further north to the Shetlands, perhaps the Faroes, and maybe even Iceland is seen in sources such as *Landnámabók*,<sup>1067</sup> Dícuil's *De mensura orbis terrae*,<sup>1068</sup> and Walafrid Strabo's *Vita Sancti Galli*.<sup>1069</sup>

As the primary interest of the thesis is the consideration of Applecross as part of the wider Community of Comgall, we turn now to consider the sea route which may have been taken when traveling between Applecross and Bangor. Both the route itself as well as any possible points along the journey at which a ship may land in order to overnight are discussed here. The specific route and overnighting locations are initial suggestions which will benefit from additional future research. A discussion of the possible distance which an early medieval ship could sail is found towards the end of section 1.5.1. Based on this discussion, it is presumed here that an early medieval ship, in good weather, should have been able to comfortably travel approximately 90km in a day, assuming a 9 hour sailing day and an average speed of 10 km per hour.

---

<sup>1064</sup> VC, Baétán: i.20, Cormac: i.6, ii.42.

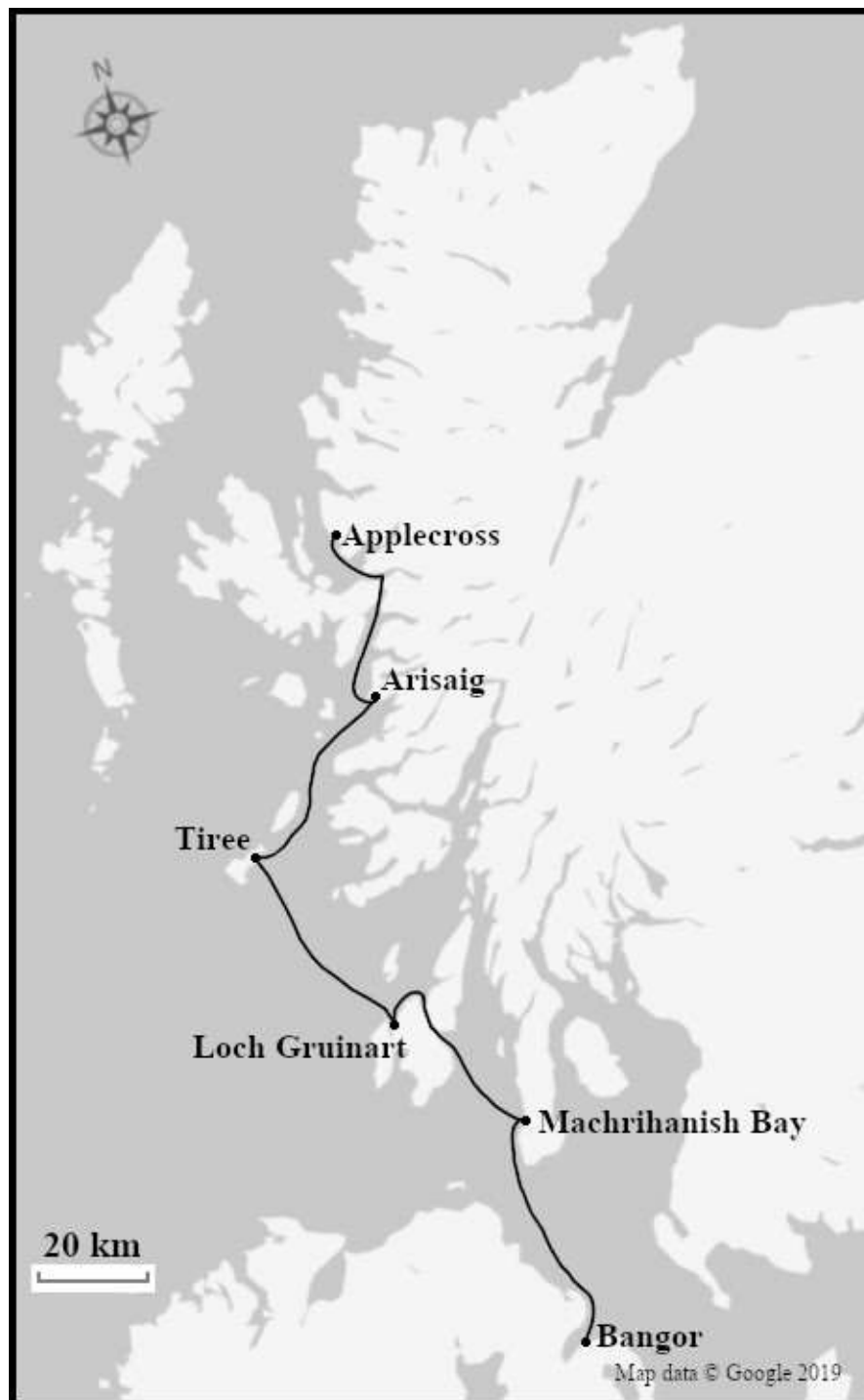
<sup>1065</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, "Subversion at Sea: Structure, Style and Intent in the *Imrama*", in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, (ed) Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 195.

<sup>1066</sup> William Flint Thrall, "Clerical Sea Pilgrimages and the *Imrama*", in *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: An Anthology of Criticism*, (ed) Jonathan M. Wooding (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), 15.

<sup>1067</sup> Hermann Pálsson and Paul Geoffrey Edwards, *The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók* (Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2012).

<sup>1068</sup> David Howlett, "Dicuill on the Islands of the North". *Peritia* 13 (1999), 127-134.

<sup>1069</sup> Walafrid Strabo, *Vita Sancti Galli*. Luzern, Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek, P 33 4°. Accessed 25 Feb 2020. [www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/zhl/P0033-4, II.46](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/zhl/P0033-4,II.46); Heinrich Zimmer, *The Irish Element in Mediaeval Culture* (London: GP Putnam's Sons, 1891), 57; Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 212.



**Figure 4.17 Suggested travel route from Applecross to Bangor**

Beginning from Applecross, travellers could be expected to make the approximately 79km journey to Arisaig on Loch nan Ceall or possibly the 82km to Kildonnan, Eigg. Both of these locations include a sheltering harbour, and Arisaig includes two Maelruba hagiotoponyms (discussed in section 4.4.1). The second day would bring our travellers to Tiree, with a trip of between 70 and 80km depending on which part of the island was the destination. I have chosen not to

include a specific location here, as a discussion of Comgall's connection with Tiree and the various early medieval ecclesiastical foundations is found in chapter 6. What can be said here is that much of Tiree includes beaches on which it would be easy to land a small craft, and Gott bay particularly would have made for an attractive harbour. Day three would see our travellers covering a distance of approximately 77km, making for Loch Gruinart on Islay. Again, this site has an attractive beach and was in use during the early medieval period (a discussion on early medieval carved crosses which includes the Kilnave Cross is seen in section 5.3). Another Maelruba hagiotoponym is found at Killarow on Skye, though I have not suggested this location as the overnighting location on a trip from Applecross to Bangor as it would be over 112km to reach it from Tiree. It is possible that this site may have been more accessible for trips from Bangor to Applecross than for the direction of travel discussed here. The third day would cover a distance of approximately 75km, bringing our travellers to Machrihanish Bay, Kintyre. Although there is no protecting harbour, the beach here would be attractive for landing ships. Additionally, the north end of the bay is approximately 2km from Killarow, another Maelruba hagiotoponym discussed above. The final day would include a slightly longer distance of approximately 93km to reach the shore at Bangor. This same route also shows how travel and thus communication between possible members of the Community of Comgall at Applecross and Tiree could have reached each other.

#### **4.6.2 Wider Context: Religious**

Applecross is part of a widespread and well-peopled ecclesiastical area, especially along the sea-route that would necessarily be used for trips to and from the monastery at Bangor in the north of Ireland. This is highlighted by the existence of many other sites in the west of Scotland that have varying degrees of surviving ecclesiastical material. Some of these sites contain more substantial evidence, while others consist of a single cross.



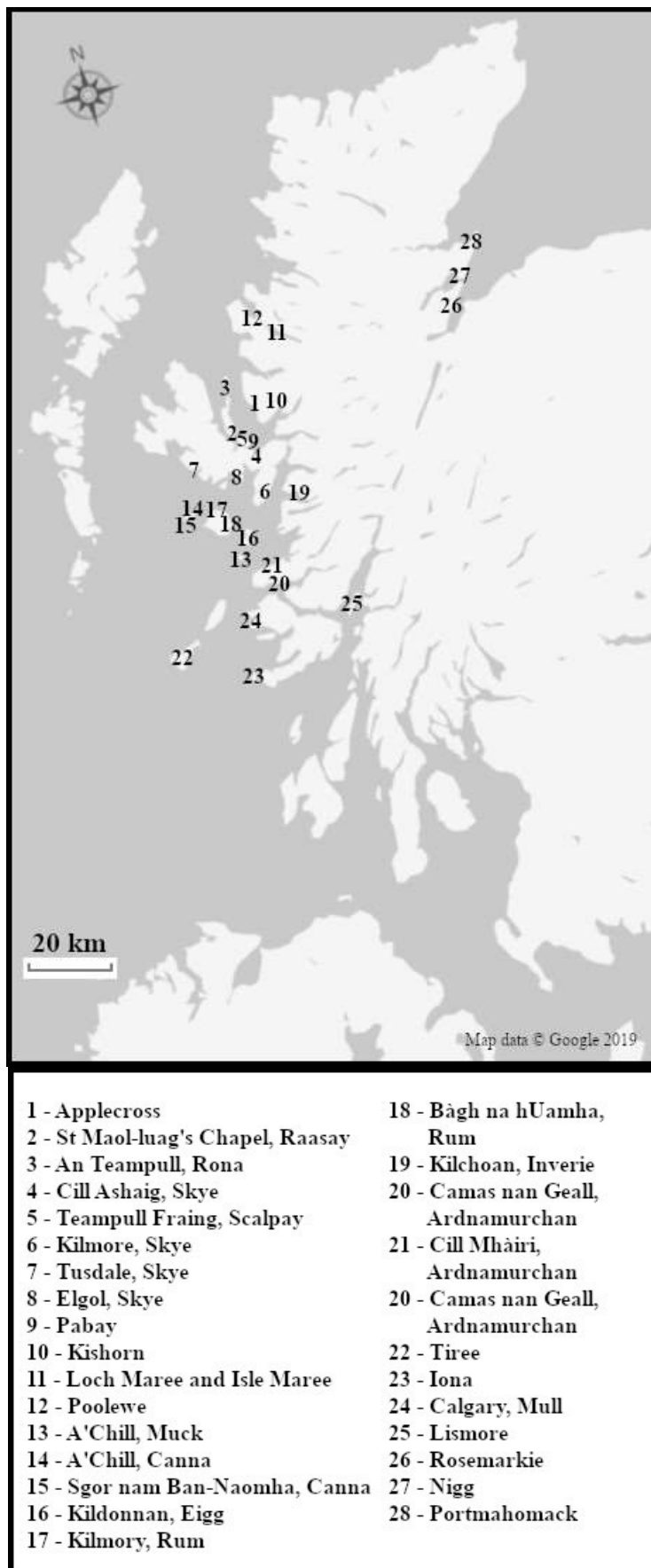


Figure 4.18 Ecclesiastical sites possibly active in late seventh century, within approximately 1-2 days' sailing of Applecross (plus Rosemarkie, Nigg, and Portmahomack).

Applecross' foundation occurred in a Christian context observable in the survival of ecclesiastical sites, most of which were within one- or two-days' sailing both to the north and south of Applecross. Locations with a potentially closer connection to Applecross through the Cult of Maelruba and Community of Comgall are examined first, with other ecclesiastical sites active around the seventh century discussed afterwards.

Cill Ashaig (NG 6872 2430), as seen above (section 4.4.3), illustrates the connection between Maelruba on the Scottish mainland and the Isle of Skye. Loch Maree and Isle Maree (NG 9310 7236) are located in Wester Ross near the modern village of Poolewe. Loch Maree empties to the northwest via the river Ewe and Loch Ewe. Isle Maree, one of five wooded islands, is located roughly midway along the loch, and forms an important part of the wider religious context of Applecross. Both Loch Maree and Isle Maree are hagiotoponyms associated with Maelruba (for discussion of the cult of Maelruba see section 4.4.2).<sup>1070</sup> Isle Maree contains a burial ground, well, and two early medieval cross-marked stones.<sup>1071</sup> Local tradition has it that a chapel was founded on the site by Maelruba c. 671-722.<sup>1072</sup> Evidence for the onset of the culting of Maelruba here is lacking, though it did exist into the seventeenth century (see section 4.4.2).

Rosemarkie and Nigg are not within Applecross' seascape, as they are located on the Moray Firth on the East coast, but there is much to suggest a close relationship with Applecross. It would therefore be more likely for travellers between Applecross and Rosemarkie to travel a combined water and land-based route. As mentioned above (section 4.5.1), Rosemarkie was a high-status ecclesiastical site, at which seventeen early medieval carved stones or fragments of stones survive, including one class II and four class III Pictish symbol stones.<sup>1073</sup> Although only a single cross slab survives at Nigg (NH 8046 7171), it is of a high level of artistry and skill and the site of a Class II Pictish symbol stone, possibly dated to the ninth century. The stylistic connections between sculpture

---

<sup>1070</sup> DoSH. Isle Maree, in Loch Maree, Gairloch. Accessed 18 Jan 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1314704868](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1314704868).

<sup>1071</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 90, no. 19.

<sup>1072</sup> Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha", 286-289.

<sup>1073</sup> Canmore. Rosemarkie, Church Place, Rosemarkie Parish Church. Accessed 15 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/14392/rosemarkie-church-place-rosemarkie-parish-church](http://canmore.org.uk/site/14392/rosemarkie-church-place-rosemarkie-parish-church).

at Rosemarkie, Nigg, and Applecross show a high degree of movement, in this case of stone carvers, and the level of information exchange necessary to bring a school of carvers from the Black Isle to Applecross. Portmahomack, an important Pictish monastery, possibly active between the sixth and ninth centuries,<sup>1074</sup> was closely located to Rosemarkie and Nigg and could have been part of a network of communication around the Moray Firth. The cross-slabs at Nigg, Shandwick, Hilton of Cadboll, and Portmahomack are believed to have marked landing places that described the boundaries for the territory of Portmahomack.<sup>1075</sup> This usage of boundary stones can be paralleled at Applecross, and may further indicate the nature of the relationship between Applecross and Easter Ross.

Raasay sits just 13 km across the Inner Sound from Applecross, with an important site on the southern end of the island at Kilmoluag (NG 54832 36635), which is dedicated to Moluag of Lismore (see section 1.7.3 for a very brief overview of Moluag). Kilmoluag, Anglicised as St Maol-luag's Chapel, is located just where the modern ferry from Skye lands and is particularly interesting due to being just 23km by boat from Applecross. The survival of a seventh-century cross incised on an outcrop of rock and a Class II Pictish stone bearing an incised cross of arcs denotes the existence of ecclesiastical and secular power centres active in the area around the time of Applecross' foundation,<sup>1076</sup> and with which the people of Applecross must have had interaction. The current church structure has been dated to the thirteenth century, though it is believed to overlay an earlier religious site presumed to date to just after Moluag's lifetime through the art historical dating of the crosses.<sup>1077</sup> This may suggest Moluag's activity in the area during his own life, or the later spread of his cult. If Moluag were part of the Community of Comgall, one might see this as evidence of the interaction of subordinate foundations within that Community. There is, however, little evidence to support Moluag's participation in the Community of Comgall (see

---

<sup>1074</sup> Carver, *Portmahomack*, 81.

<sup>1075</sup> *Ibid*, 173.

<sup>1076</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 103, no. 34; RCAHMS. *Ninth report with inventory of monuments and constructions in the Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1928), 178, No. 573; Iain Fraser, *The Pictish Symbol Stones of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2008), 94, no. 133.

<sup>1077</sup> J.S. Wood and J Macdonald, "Skye, Raasay, St Maol-luag's Chapel", Canmore. Accessed 8 Oct 2018. [Canmore.org.uk/event/928448](http://Canmore.org.uk/event/928448).

chapter 4) and could represent a separate Community of Moluag which worked in the area of Applecross.

Tiree is an intriguing island, which seems to have boasted a relationship with at least four separate early medieval saints: Comgall, Cainnech, Columba, and Brendan (see chapter 6). It is a lengthy distance from Applecross, approximately 147km by sea (versus a much more manageable 40km from Iona), which could not be reached within a day (for discussion on sailing distances see section 1.5.1). Its location and the evidence of multiple ecclesiastical foundations speaks to its geographic importance in the North Channel seascape, likely as a stopping point between the west of Scotland and the north of Ireland, as suggested in Figure 4.17. A full discussion of the sites and Tiree's potential as part of the Community of Comgall is seen in chapter 5.

Iona is a well-known monastic foundation which sits on an island variously called *Í* or *Í Colum Cille*,<sup>1078</sup> off the coast of the Ross of Mull. Founded by Columba in AU 563,<sup>1079</sup> it grew to a foundation of great power and importance. This is evidenced in the annals (which dutifully record the deaths of Iona's abbots),<sup>1080</sup> Adomnán's *Life of St Columba*,<sup>1081</sup> and physical evidence on site.<sup>1082</sup> Within the sphere of influence of Iona were additional foundations, most notably *Mag Luinge* on Tiree and Hinba, which remains to be firmly located,<sup>1083</sup> though Jura,<sup>1084</sup> Oronsay,<sup>1085</sup> and Canna have been suggested.<sup>1086</sup> Despite multiple raids on the monastery during the Viking Age, textual and physical evidence for it has managed to survive the sometimes indiscriminate fortunes of time. Little more on Iona need be mentioned here as it has received substantial attention from historians and archaeologists alike elsewhere.<sup>1087</sup>

---

<sup>1078</sup> AU 563.4, 802.9.

<sup>1079</sup> AU 563.4; AT 562.1.

<sup>1080</sup> Included here are only the first ten abbots of Iona: AU 595.1, 598.1, 605.4, 623.1, 652.1, 657.1, 669.1, 679.1, 704.2, 710.1; AT 593.1, 596.1, 603.4, 624.1, 652.1, 656.2, 669.1, 679.1, 704.3, 710.1.

<sup>1081</sup> VC.

<sup>1082</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 126-135.

<sup>1083</sup> O'Neill, "Onomastics", 26.

<sup>1084</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 83.

<sup>1085</sup> Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, 308, n. 194.

<sup>1086</sup> O'Neill, "Two Hinbas", 34-41.

<sup>1087</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*; Anna Ritchie, *Iona*, (London: Historic Scotland, 1997); Tasha Gefreh, "Place, Space and Time: Iona's Early Medieval High Crosses in the Natural and Liturgical Landscape" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2015); Ewan Campbell and Adrián

Eigg, located approximately 80km from Applecross by sea, is well-known for the ecclesiastical foundation of Donnán, who was martyred along with perhaps as many as one hundred and fifty of his monks in AU 617.<sup>1088</sup> We know that the monastery was active again by AU 725, when the death of its *princeps*, Oan, was recorded.<sup>1089</sup> Other ecclesiastics from Eigg are found in *The Martyrology of Tallaght*: Conán,<sup>1090</sup> Berchán,<sup>1091</sup> Congalach,<sup>1092</sup> and perhaps Énán,<sup>1093</sup> as noted by Thomas Owen Clancy.<sup>1094</sup> Additionally, there are seven surviving cross-carved stones dated to the seventh through ninth centuries, six of which are described by Fisher,<sup>1095</sup> with an additional cross carved stone discovered in the graveyard in 2012.<sup>1096</sup> In addition to these is Kildonnan 6, a ninth century cross-slab showing strong Pictish stylistic associations.<sup>1097</sup> The survival of these stones, in conjunction with its mentions in the historical record,<sup>1098</sup> illustrate the importance of the site in the time of Applecross' foundation and rise.<sup>1099</sup>

Rum, approximately 80km by sea from Applecross, was another important seventh century ecclesiastical island. Its prominence may be seen in Cummine Fota's letter, *De Controversia Paschali*, written after c. 630 and which was addressed in part to "secluded Beccan, dear brother of flesh and spirit",<sup>1100</sup> who potentially might be identified as the anchorite Beccán of Rum (d. 677).<sup>1101</sup> Additionally there are two seventh-century praise poems to Columba attributed

---

Maldonado, "A New Jerusalem 'at the ends of the earth': interpreting Charles Thomas's excavations at Iona Abbey 1956-63", *Antiquaries Journal* 100 (2020), 33-85.

<sup>1088</sup> AU 617.1. Thomas Owen Clancy argues this number was more likely to be 52 in "St Donnán of Eigg: Context and Cult", Eigg History Society, 2015. Accessed 15 November 2018. [www.spanglefish.com/eigghistorysociety/index.asp?pageid=616291](http://www.spanglefish.com/eigghistorysociety/index.asp?pageid=616291).

<sup>1089</sup> AU 725.7.

<sup>1090</sup> *MarT* 12 Jan.

<sup>1091</sup> *MarT* 10 Apr.

<sup>1092</sup> *MarT* 22 Dec.

<sup>1093</sup> *MarT* 29 Apr.

<sup>1094</sup> Clancy, "St Donnán".

<sup>1095</sup> Canmore. Eigg, Kildonnan. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/22158/eigg-kildonnan](http://canmore.org.uk/site/22158/eigg-kildonnan); Fisher, *EMS*, 11, 92-94, no. 25.

<sup>1096</sup> John Hunter, *The Small Isles* (Edinburgh: Historic Environment Scotland, 2016), 134-135.

<sup>1097</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 94, no. 25.

<sup>1098</sup> AU 617.1, 725.7, 752.2; VC III.18, *Egea insula*; *MarT*, 12 Jan, 10 Apr, 17 Apr, 27 Apr, 30 Apr; Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 57.

<sup>1099</sup> Relevant here is also the thesis put forward by Smyth that Maelruba was rebuilding Donnán's efforts, though the evidence does not support it, in Smyth, *Warlords*, 109-110.

<sup>1100</sup> *Beccanus solitarius, carus carne et spiritu frater*, in Maura Walsh and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (eds). *Saint Cummin. Cummin's Letter De Controversia Paschali: Together with a Related Irish Compustical Tract De Ratione Computandi* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1988), 8-9.

<sup>1101</sup> AU 677.6; Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 60.

to a Beccán mac Luigdech, who may be the same Beccán to whom Cummine Fota's letter was addressed.<sup>1102</sup>

Additional sites are attested in the historic record contemporary with the foundation of Applecross. It is not possible to know definitively whether they were founded before or after, but their dating gives further evidence to the populated and Christianized nature of the seascape within which Applecross was established. These sites include: *An Teampull*, Rona (3);<sup>1103</sup> *Teampull Fraing*, Scalpay (5);<sup>1104</sup> Kilmore, Skye (6);<sup>1105</sup> Tusdale, Skye (7);<sup>1106</sup> Elgol, Skye (8);<sup>1107</sup> Pabay (9);<sup>1108</sup> Kishorn (10);<sup>1109</sup> Poolewe (12);<sup>1110</sup> *A'Chill*, Muck (13);<sup>1111</sup> *A'Chill*, Canna (14);<sup>1112</sup> *Sgor nam Ban-Naomha*, Canna (15);<sup>1113</sup> *Bàgh na hUamha*, Rum (18);<sup>1114</sup> Kilchoan, Inverie (19);<sup>1115</sup> *Camas nan Geall*, Ardnamurchan (20);<sup>1116</sup> *Cill Mhàiri*, Ardnamurchan (21);<sup>1117</sup> and Calgary, Mull (24).<sup>1118</sup>

---

<sup>1102</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy and Gilbert Márkus, *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), 129-134.

<sup>1103</sup> Canmore. Rona, An Teampull, Doire Na Guaile. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11616/rona-an-teampull-doire-na-guaile](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11616/rona-an-teampull-doire-na-guaile).

<sup>1104</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 102, no. 33.

<sup>1105</sup> Cross carved pillar stone at Kilmore: Fisher, *EMS*, 102, no. 30; Canmore. Skye, Kilmore, Old Parish Church Of Sleat. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11542/skye-kilmore-old-parish-church-of-sleat](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11542/skye-kilmore-old-parish-church-of-sleat).

<sup>1106</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 104, no 35; Canmore. Tusdale, Skye. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/113415/tusdale-skye](http://canmore.org.uk/site/113415/tusdale-skye).

<sup>1107</sup> Roadside cross carved stone at Elgol: Fisher, *EMS*, 102, no. 31; Canmore. Elgol, Skye. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11444/elgol-skye](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11444/elgol-skye).

<sup>1108</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 102, no. 33.

<sup>1109</sup> *Ibid*, 87 no. 17; Canmore. Courthill House, St Donan's Chapel, Cemetery. Accessed 18 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11920/courthill-house-st-donans-chapel-cemetery](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11920/courthill-house-st-donans-chapel-cemetery).

<sup>1110</sup> John Wood, "Londubh Burial Ground, Poolewe", Watching Brief. Highland Archaeology Services Ltd (2006). Accessed 4 Jun 2020. [librarylink.highland.gov.uk/LLFiles/9998/full\\_9998.pdf](http://librarylink.highland.gov.uk/LLFiles/9998/full_9998.pdf); Fisher, *EMS*, 91, no. 21.

<sup>1111</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 11, 92. No 24; A'Chill 1: Canmore. Muck. A'Chill. [canmore.org.uk/site/319417](http://canmore.org.uk/site/319417); A'Chill 2: Canmore. Muck. A'Chill. [canmore.org.uk/site/319419](http://canmore.org.uk/site/319419).

<sup>1112</sup> A'Chill 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 14: Fisher, *EMS*, 96-97, no. 28; Canmore. Canna, A'Chill, St Columba's Chapel. Accessed 7 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/319885/canna-a-chill-st-columbas-chapel](http://canmore.org.uk/site/319885/canna-a-chill-st-columbas-chapel); Canna, St Columba's Graveyard, Sculptured Cross. Accessed 7 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/10705/canna-st-columbas-graveyard-sculptured-cross](http://canmore.org.uk/site/10705/canna-st-columbas-graveyard-sculptured-cross); Suggested as the site of Hinba in O'Neill, "Onomastics", 34-40.

<sup>1113</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 101, no. 29; Canmore. Canna, Sgorr Nam Ban-naomha. [canmore.org.uk/site/319395/canna-sgorr-nam-ban-naomha](http://canmore.org.uk/site/319395/canna-sgorr-nam-ban-naomha).

<sup>1114</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 95, no. 26.

<sup>1115</sup> *Ibid*, 87, no. 16.

<sup>1116</sup> *Ibid*, 123, no. 263.

<sup>1117</sup> *Ibid*, 123, no. 270; Canmore. Kilmory, Cill Mhairi. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/22342/kilmory-cill-mhairi](http://canmore.org.uk/site/22342/kilmory-cill-mhairi).

<sup>1118</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 123, no. 262.

### 4.6.3 Wider Context: Secular

In addition to ecclesiastical sites, Applecross operated within a context that included secular sites and people, from those as close as the broch within 2km of the monastery at Applecross (see section 4.5.2 for possible contemporary use of the broch and monastery) to those further afield on Skye or even as far as the Moray Firth and Fortriu. General evidence of secular activity can be seen in the survival of duns and hillforts, though additional research is needed to determine exactly which sites may have been in use at the time of Applecross' foundation and what the precise nature of those sites were.

The survival of Pictish stones on Skye and Eigg are currently more concrete evidence for secular power and positions in the Western Islands and mainland north of Ardnamurchan in the sixth through ninth centuries, giving a useful picture of secular power at the time of Applecross' founding and development.



**Figure 4.19** Distribution of Class I and II Pictish Stones (Mack, *Symbols and Pictures*).

Figure 4.18 shows the distribution of Class I and II Pictish stones, thus indicating the extent of sufficient Pictish cultural standing for the construction and erection of a Pictish stone. Although the vast majority of stones are found in the east and north of modern Scotland (corresponding with northern and southern Pictland), the few found on Skye and Raasay, and on the Tarbat peninsula, are further evidence of the multicultural context within which Applecross was founded and flourished.

Three Class I Pictish stones have been discovered on Skye: in reuse as a cap on the well called *Tobar Na Maor*, “the warden’s well”, (3) (NG 2408 4648) which



sits next to the broch of *Dún Osdale*;<sup>1119</sup> at Fiskavaig Bay (4) (NG 330 340), discovered on the shingle beach and now housed at NMS (X.IB 213);<sup>1120</sup> and at Tote, *clach Ard*, “the tall stone”, (2) (NG 4210 4908), found in reuse as a door jamb in a cottage in 1880 and re-erected 9m north of the road in Tote.<sup>1121</sup> On Raasay is St Maluog’s Chapel (1), the site of a Class II Pictish stone. Gairloch (5) (NG 7997 7221), approximately 41km from Applecross by boat, is the location of a class I Pictish stone.<sup>1122</sup> Poolewe (6) (NG 8603 8096) is also the site of a class I Pictish stone.<sup>1123</sup> Along the route between Applecross and the Moray Firth, there are Class I stones at Strathpeffer (13) (NH 4845 5852),<sup>1124</sup> Rosskeen (7) (NH 6810 6902),<sup>1125</sup> and Tain (8) (NH 746 845).<sup>1126</sup> Class II stones were found at Hilton of Cadboll (9) (NH 8730 7688),<sup>1127</sup> Shandwick (10) (NH 8555 7471),<sup>1128</sup> Nigg (11) (NH 8046 7171),<sup>1129</sup> and Rosemarkie (12) (NH 7372 5763).<sup>1130</sup>

---

<sup>1119</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 104-105; Canmore. Skye, Tobar Na Maor, Duirinish. Accessed 7 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/10831/skye-tobar-na-maor-duirinish](http://canmore.org.uk/site/10831/skye-tobar-na-maor-duirinish).

<sup>1120</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 104; Canmore. Skye, Fiskavaig Bay. Accessed 7 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11078/skye-fiskavaig-bay](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11078/skye-fiskavaig-bay).

<sup>1121</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 105; Canmore. Skye, Tote, ‘clach Ard.’ [canmore.org.uk/site/11276/skye-tote-clach-ard](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11276/skye-tote-clach-ard).

<sup>1122</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 91; Canmore. Gairloch, Pictish Symbol Stone. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11962/gairloch-pictish-symbol-stone](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11962/gairloch-pictish-symbol-stone).

<sup>1123</sup> Canmore. Inverewe Church. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/11977](http://canmore.org.uk/site/11977); Fisher, *EMS*, 91, no. 21.

<sup>1124</sup> Canmore. Strathpeffer, Clach An Tiompain. Accessed 16 Apr 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/12458/strathpeffer-clach-an-tiompain](http://canmore.org.uk/site/12458/strathpeffer-clach-an-tiompain).

<sup>1125</sup> Canmore. Rosskeen, ‘clach a’ Mheirlich.’ Accessed 16 Apr 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/13617/rosskeen-clach-a-mheirlich](http://canmore.org.uk/site/13617/rosskeen-clach-a-mheirlich).

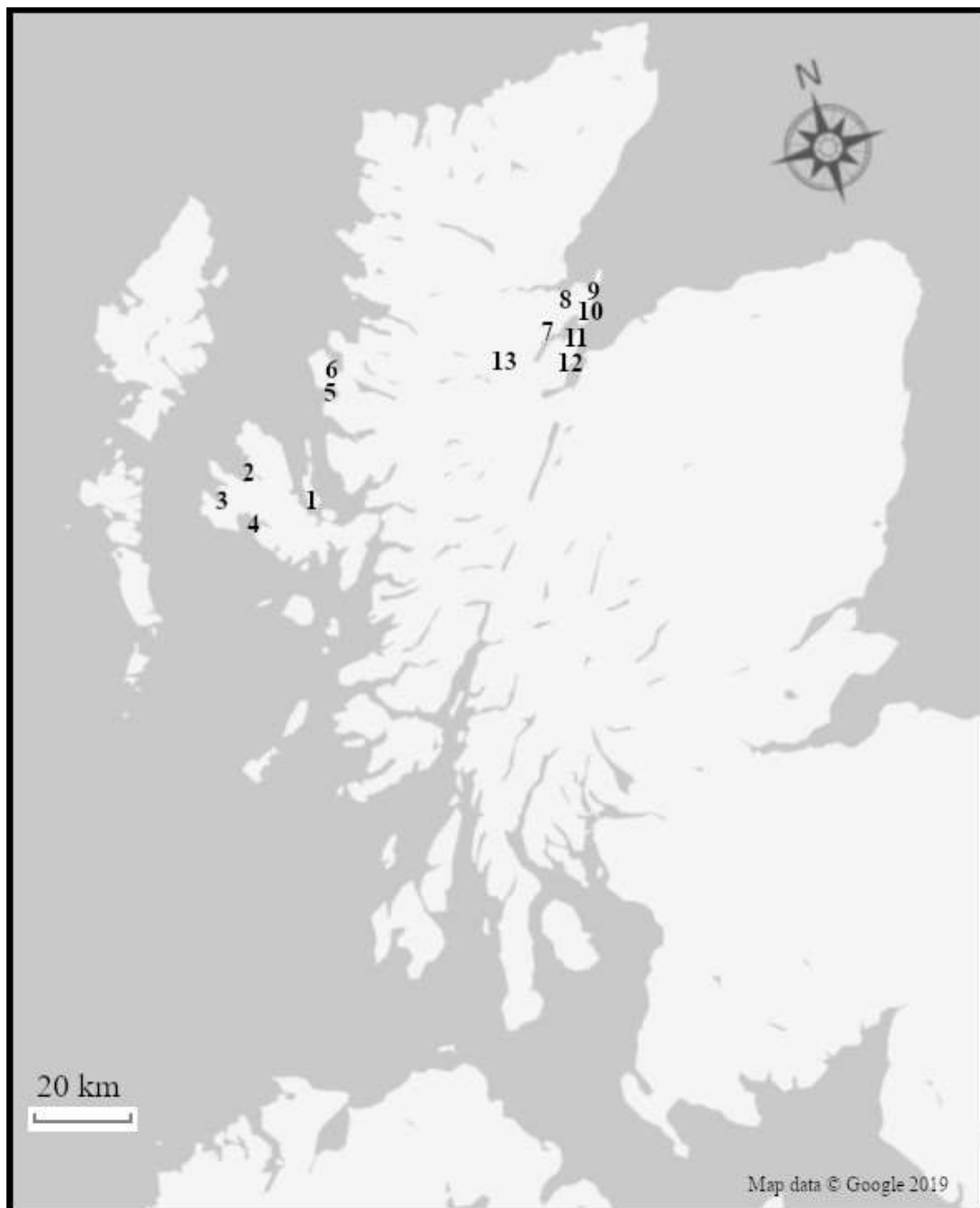
<sup>1126</sup> Canmore. Ardjachie Farm. Accessed 16 Apr 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/14736/ardjachie-farm](http://canmore.org.uk/site/14736/ardjachie-farm).

<sup>1127</sup> Canmore. Hilton of Cadboll, ‘Cadboll stone.’ Accessed 16 Apr 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/15261/hilton-of-cadboll-cadboll-stone](http://canmore.org.uk/site/15261/hilton-of-cadboll-cadboll-stone).

<sup>1128</sup> Canmore. Shandwick Stone. Accessed 16 Apr 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/15278/shandwick-stone](http://canmore.org.uk/site/15278/shandwick-stone).

<sup>1129</sup> Canmore. Nigg. Accessed 16 Apr 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/15280/nigg](http://canmore.org.uk/site/15280/nigg).

<sup>1130</sup> Canmore. Rosemarkie, Church Place, Rosemarkie Parish Church, Cross Slab. Accessed 16 Apr 2020. [canmore.org.uk/site/14393/rosemarkie-church-place-rosemarkie-parish-church-cross-slab](http://canmore.org.uk/site/14393/rosemarkie-church-place-rosemarkie-parish-church-cross-slab).

**Class I:**

- 2 - Tote, Skye
- 3 - Tobar na Maor, Skye
- 4 - Fiskavig Bay, Skye
- 5 - Gairloch
- 6 - Poolewe
- 7 - Rosskeen
- 8 - Tain
- 13 - Strathpeffer

**Class II:**

- 1 - Raasay
- 9 - Hilton of Cadboll
- 10 - Shandwick
- 11 - Nigg
- 12 - Rosemarkie

Figure 4.20 Pictish Stones Along Routes Relevant to Applecross.

## 4.7 Applecross' Ecclesiastical Connections

### 4.7.1 Bangor

There is evidence that an enduring relationship between Bangor monastery and Applecross was developed and maintained, even after the death of its founder. This is initially indicated through Maelruba's reported dynastic links with Comgall (see section 4.4). By the ninth century there was a specific claim that Maelruba was directly connected with Bangor as its abbot, though no contemporary evidence of this relationship exists.<sup>1131</sup> The considerable detail included in AT on the death of Maelruba indicates a strong interest in Applecross by the annals' scribes, which may include data compiled at Bangor (see section 2.1).

An enduring connection is indicated in the report of Mac Óige, abbot of Bangor, who was recorded in the annals as "of Applecross",<sup>1132</sup> suggesting that this was a significant connection worthy of recording. This is also seen in the two abbots of Bangor who were notably from Antrim (see section 3.9). It is possible Maelruba was invited to found Applecross by the sons of Gartnait during their exile in Ireland, possibly because of a relationship between Bangor and Cenél nGartnait (see section 4.3.1). Based on this evidence, one may provisionally name Applecross as a dependent house of Bangor.

### 4.7.2 Within Scotland

There is a clear association between Applecross and Rosemarkie demonstrated by the deep stylistic similarities visible in the surviving sculpture which lead to the belief that sculpture carving was undertaken at Rosemarkie and Applecross (and Nigg) by a single school or even a single master craftsman from Pictland (see section 4.5.1). Rosemarkie seems to have been the episcopal see under which Applecross operated (see section 4.2), which would help explain the presence of sculptural stylistic and functional similarities.

---

<sup>1131</sup> *MarT*, 21 Apr; Reeves, "Saint Maelrubha". 264.

<sup>1132</sup> *M. Oigi Apuír Chrosan*, AU 802.5.

Nigg was likely also part of the see of Rosemarkie, a view supported by the clear association through the sculpture at Applecross and Nigg. This, combined with the culting of Maelruba in Easter Ross, may be further evidence that communication between the two foundations existed as part of the episcopal see to which they belonged.

Smyth suggests that Applecross' foundation was a direct and purposeful attempt to re-establish the work of Donnán of Eigg; however, no evidence to support this claim yet exists. Although Applecross was founded during the lifetime of Adomnán, he makes no mention of it in his work. This, however, may speak more to the purpose and perspective of Adomnán than it does to the importance of Applecross at the time of writing. Columba reportedly travelled in Skye,<sup>1133</sup> which may suggest that his successors could have also been active in the area (perhaps based at Tusdale, Elgol, Kilmore, Raasay, Scalpay, or Pabay) and potentially in contact with Applecross. Iona's historic importance has been cemented in the surviving historic record, though "[t]he fact that [Iona] is so much better evidenced than Kingarth, Applecross, and Lismore is not proof that these other Hebridean monasteries, with their different affiliations, were not also great centres".<sup>1134</sup>

## 4.8 Conclusion

Maelruba himself was an important saint, as shown by his inclusion in the annals, Irish Martyrologies, and the *Aberdeen Breviary*. An immediate seascape consisting primarily of the Inner Sound appears to have a strong association with Maelruba and Applecross. That his cult was widespread, and that numerous fairs in his name persisted into the fifteenth century and beyond speaks to the depth of cultic activity surrounding him. In addition to considering Maelruba specifically, the monastery at Applecross was itself of high status. This value is indicated in the survival of the foundation's name in a recognizable form to the present day,<sup>1135</sup> given that its inclusion in annals and visibility in the surviving sculptural remains of the monastery, namely Applecross 1, are still extant. The monastery itself may have been a space where the mixture of Pictish and Gaelic

---

<sup>1133</sup> VC I.33, II.26.

<sup>1134</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 337.

<sup>1135</sup> McDonald, "Iona's style of government", 178.

culture happened, evidenced in its connection to Bangor, the sculptural tradition linked to Rosemarkie and possibly in the movement of Cenél Gartnait between Skye and Ireland. Applecross stands as a testament to the intercommunication of both these cultures and between Scotland and Ireland. Maelruba was not fortunate enough to have a dedicated biographer such as Adomnán, if a *Life* of Maelruba was indeed ever written down. Examining the evidence for Applecross and understanding its prominence in the ecclesiastical seascape of the west of Scotland helps to correct the image that sees Iona as a lone bulwark of early medieval Christian effort. Future research in the area of Applecross could focus on ecclesiastical place-names on the Applecross peninsula, especially *Annat*, and on islands in the Inner Sound, especially the Crowlin Islands, to better understand the relationship between these ecclesiastical sites and Applecross itself.

## 5 Lismore

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on Applecross, which has a clear and direct connection with the monastery at Bangor. This chapter focuses on a foundation similarly situated in the west of Scotland, though its connection with Bangor specifically is far less clear and potentially questionable. As noted in chapter 3, Lismore is the earliest ecclesiastical settlement in Britain that has been associated with Bangor. Combined with the significance of its physical location at the southern end of the Great Glen, the geographic feature which provides a primarily water-based route from western Argyll into the lands of Fortriu and the Moray Firth offers sufficient evidence for undertaking a deeper evaluation of the site and its connections to other foundations both around Scotland and to Bangor in Ireland.

In addition to a possible connection with Bangor, Lismore occupies a strategic location at the southern end of Loch Linnhe, providing a point of control for access up the Great Glen, which Adomnán notes was a means of travel between Iona and *Pictorum provincia*,<sup>1136</sup> identified now as Fortriu.<sup>1137</sup> Anyone using this route to travel between the western islands or Ireland and the northeast of Scotland would have to pass this island. Additionally, routes eastwards into modern Perthshire may begin by travelling up Loch Etive, up the river Awe, and perhaps following the river Orchy towards Loch Lyon and Glen Lyon.<sup>1138</sup>

---

<sup>1136</sup> VC II.32.

<sup>1137</sup> VC II.32, II.34, 42, III.14 n. 297; Alex Woolf, "Dún Nechtain, Fortriu and the Geography of the Picts", *Scottish Historical Review* 85:2 (2006), 188-200.

<sup>1138</sup> Simon Taylor suggests possible routes from Iona to Atholl and Lindisfarne which are of interest in "Seventh-century Iona abbots in Scottish place-names", *Innes Review* 48:1 (1997), 72.

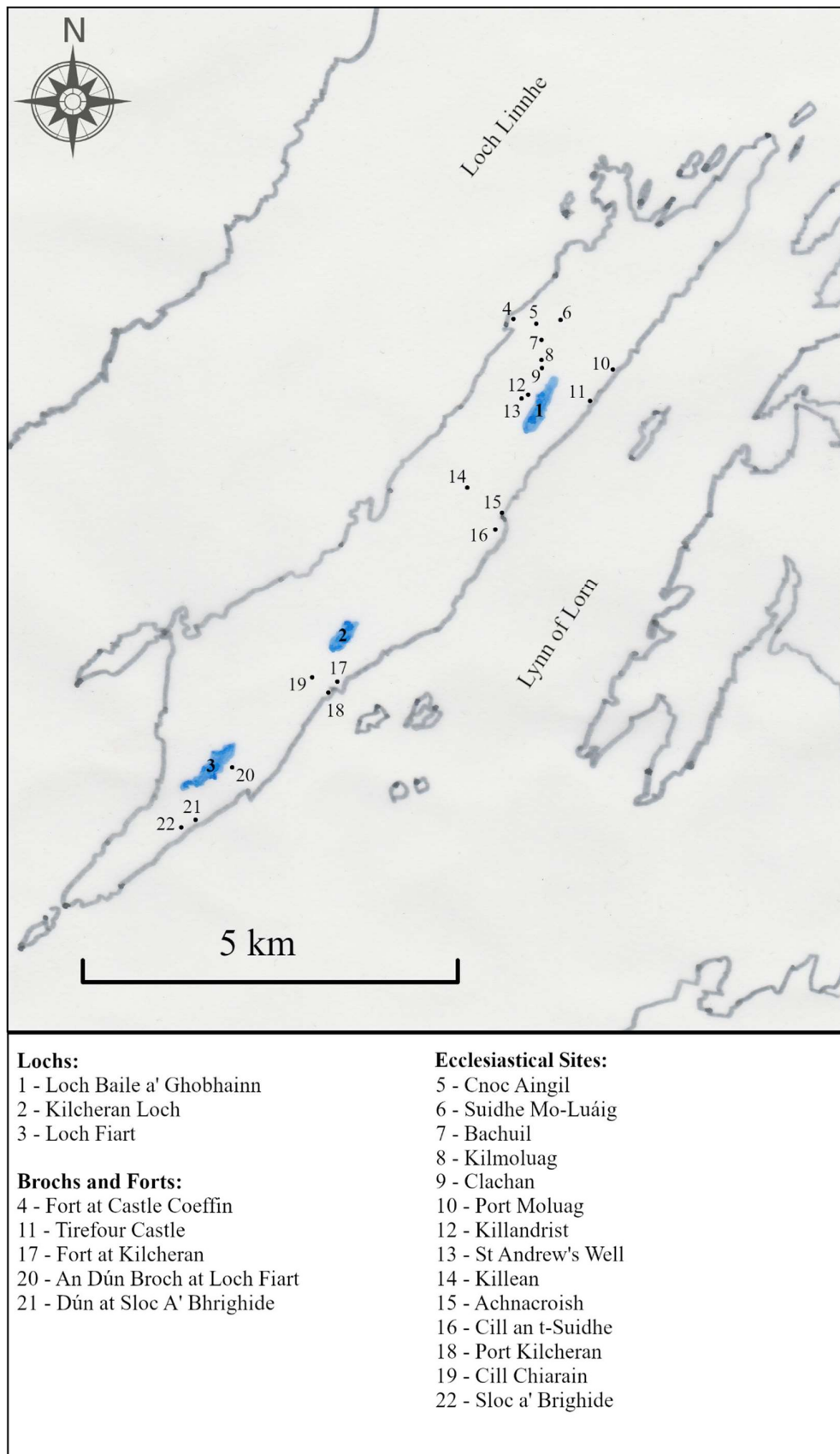


Figure 5.1 Lismore, denoting brochs, forts, and ecclesiastical sites.

Later evidence supplied by the drove roads of the eighteenth century shows similar routes and additionally emphasizes the importance of Oban and its environs as a landing place for travel from the Hebrides to the east of Scotland.<sup>1139</sup> This places Lismore at the junction of two important routes. The survival of Iron Age fortified sites such as the brochs known as Tirefour Castle and *An Dún* at Loch Fiart on the southeastern side of the island show that the island of Lismore was inhabited prior to the early medieval period.<sup>1140</sup> Two further forts, whose age has not been determined, are visible at Kilcheran and Castle Coeffin.<sup>1141</sup> This Iron Age occupation is likely to have continued into the early medieval period.

## 5.2 Lismore in the historical record

The monastery at Lismore was founded during the lifetime of Comgall and Columba, judging from the record of Moluag's death in AU 592.<sup>1142</sup> Although there is no direct record or evidence of the foundation of the site, one recent radiocarbon date acquired from a sample of material from the graveyard at Clachan returned a possible date between AD 656-768, making the site active sometime in the seventh or eighth century, while another sample dated to between AD 970-1030.<sup>1143</sup> Perhaps future excavations will be able to reveal additional dating evidence. Genealogical texts specified Moluag as a member of Dál nAraide in the north of Ireland, from which Comgall himself descended.<sup>1144</sup> Moluag is the hypocoristic form of the name Lugaid, formed by adding *mo-* as a prefix onto *Luóc*, a truncated version of his name. The *Life of Malachy*, abbot of Bangor from c. 1123, refers to a member of Comgall's community named Luanus,<sup>1145</sup> whose numerous monasteries filled both Ireland and Scotland and who is often assumed to be Moluag of Lismore.<sup>1146</sup> The sixteenth-century *Aberdeen Breviary* includes a story, likely apocryphal, that Moluag intended to travel with companions to the site, but they left him behind in Ireland, taking ship without

<sup>1139</sup> Haldane, *Drove Roads*; Matthew, *Drove Roads* [Map].

<sup>1140</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: an inventory of the ancient monuments volume 2: Lorn* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1975): Tirefour Castle: 75-76, no. 147; An Dún: 75, No. 146.

<sup>1141</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn: fort at Kilcheran: 72-73, no. 140; fort at Castle Coeffin, 65, no. 126.*

<sup>1142</sup> AU 592.1; AT 588.4, 590.1.

<sup>1143</sup> Clare Ellis, "Lismore Glebe, Isle of Lismore, Argyll-461 ©Argyll Archaeology". (Data Structure Report: Archaeology of the Glebe Lands, Isle of Lismore, 2019), 16.

<sup>1144</sup> Ó Muraile, *Irish genealogies*, no. 121.

<sup>1145</sup> VMal 28, §12.

<sup>1146</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 494.



him.<sup>1147</sup> Miraculously, according to the story, he managed to arrive at the intended landing place first through the intercession of God and a stone that carried him across the channel.<sup>1148</sup> The *Breviary* further notes that subsequent to the foundation of Lismore, Moluag struggled to convert the locals and spent time at Melrose receiving further instruction prior to returning to Lismore and success, an unlikely connection whose source will be discussed below.<sup>1149</sup>

### 5.2.1 The Two Lismores

One major difficulty in investigating Lismore in Scotland is that a monastery of the same name was founded in Ireland c. 635, causing confusion for modern historians attempting to interpret the textual record. The Lismore in Co Waterford was founded by St Mochutu, also known as Carthage, whose death is recorded in AU 637.<sup>1150</sup> This foundation will be referred to here as Lismore Mochutu, while the earlier Lismore in Scotland will be referred to as Lismore Moluag. An attempt will be made here to clarify the identity of some of the people mentioned in the annals and martyrologies and associate them with either Lismore Moluag in Scotland or Lismore Mochutu in Ireland. In addition to the annals consulted up to this point, *The Annals of Inisfallen* have been added here due to their compilation in Munster,<sup>1151</sup> which suggests a primary interest in that part of Ireland, and which may assist in unpicking the knot of Lismore.

A major question to consider is how these two monasteries become confused in the mind of the modern historian. It seems obvious that at the time of their foundation there was little confusion and thus little reason for annalists to specifically note one Lismore versus the other. The martyrologies note the separate and unrelated feast days of Moluag on 25 June and Mochutu on 14 May.<sup>1152</sup> Where the confusion seems to come into play is that the founders of both Lismores may have some level of connection with Comgall and Bangor

---

<sup>1147</sup> AB, 25 Jun.

<sup>1148</sup> AB 25 Jun. A similar story is told of Cybi, whose boat without a hide covering is carried on a rock to Anglesey, Arthur Wade-Evans (ed), "Vita Sancti Kebii", in *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae Et Genealogiae* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 1944), §15.

<sup>1149</sup> AB 25 Jun, 152-155.

<sup>1150</sup> AU 637.2; AT 639.4; Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 470-473; Kenney, *Sources*, 451-452.

<sup>1151</sup> Hughes, *Early Christian Ireland*, 108-113.

<sup>1152</sup> MarT 25 June, 14 May.

monastery. By examining the connections between Comgall and Mochutu and Comgall and Moluag, it starts to become clearer where this confusion begins.

The first point of confusion appears to be between Moluag of Lismore and Molua of Clonfertmulloe (Kyle). The *Martyrology of Tallaght* includes, under notes for 4 Aug, a poem which at first glance appears to refer to Moluag of Lismore:

Molua was soul-friend to David  
across the tranquil sea  
and to Máedóc and to Mochóemóc  
and to Comgall.

An Angel foretold:  
The men of Heaven, the men of earth, a might inheritance,  
they thought it was Doomsday, Lugaid's death.

There has not come, there will not come, a bright course,  
Another saint more welcome to the men of Heaven.

Nine hundred of Bangor, six hundred of Antrim,  
Five hundred of Connor of the combats,  
The son of Carthach the just, was soul-friend to them after Comgall.

*Molu aba anmcharata do Daid  
dar muir modmall  
is do Maedóc is dom Chaemóc  
is do Chomgall*

*Angelus cecinit  
Fir nime fir thalman trén rudrach  
andar leo ba lá bratha bás Lugdach.*

*Ni ranic ni ricfa réim ngaile  
Sanct aile rissba mo failte fer nime.*

*Nóe cét Bennchuir  
Sé chét Oentruib  
Cóic cét Condere na comland  
Mac Carthaig cóir  
Ba anmchara dóib iar Comgall.<sup>1153</sup>*

This event is included at 4 Aug in the *Martyrology of Óengus* as a much expanded prose story, but incorporates part of the same poem.<sup>1154</sup> Upon closer inspection these entries refer to Molua of Clonfert-Mulloe/Killaloe, whose feastday is 4 Aug

---

<sup>1153</sup> *MarT* 4 Aug, notes.

<sup>1154</sup> *MarO* 4 Aug.

and who was also reputedly a student of Comgall of Bangor.<sup>1155</sup> There is a further mention in the same place of the death of a Lugaid who is connected to Bangor, Antrim, and Connor, and which again mentions Comgall.<sup>1156</sup> Molua has a surviving *Vita* which has him studying at Bangor,<sup>1157</sup> while the *Aberdeen Breviary* notes Moluag's studies with Brendan.<sup>1158</sup> If the Moluag/Brendan connection were early, it could help explain Brendan's inclusion in *VC*, where he potentially served as stand-in for the Community of Moluag which existed at the time of Adomnán's writing. Unfortunately, although there is evidence that a *Vita* of Moluag likely existed, it has not survived to the present day.<sup>1159</sup> Perhaps it could have further assisted in clarifying any association Moluag may have had with Bangor and Comgall, but considering it further is merely wishful thinking. Thus, there is no reason to correlate this Lugaid in the martyrologies with our Moluag aside from the name, which was in heavy use during this time.<sup>1160</sup>

A second point of confusion appears to be in the genealogy of Moluag. Although he is potentially a member of the Dál nAraide according to *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hibernia* and is more generally associated with Ireland in the *Aberdeen Breviary*, this fails to prove any kind of close relationship to Comgall (see section 3.8.2 for a fuller discussion of the issues of Moluag's pedigree and relationship to Comgall). It is possible to accept Moluag as a member of Dál nAraide, but not closely related to Comgall, and this seems the most prudent course of action.

The third point of confusion continues with regard to Molua, but also introduces Lismore Mochutu into the picture. Bernard of Clairvaux, in the twelfth century *Life of St Malachy*, refers to a student of Comgall named Luanus who founded a hundred monasteries in Scotland and Ireland;<sup>1161</sup> this is often thought to refer to Moluag of Lismore, but seems just as likely to refer to Molua, discussed above.<sup>1162</sup>

<sup>1155</sup> *MarT* 4 Aug; Heist, *VSH*, "Vita Prior Sancti Lugidi Seu Moluae Abbatis de Cluain Ferta Molua", §15, Comgall has an extended presence, evident in §§6-28; Ó Riain, *Feastdays*, 491.

<sup>1156</sup> *MarT* 4 Aug, marginal notes.

<sup>1157</sup> Heist, *VSH*, "Vita Molua", 141.

<sup>1158</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 150-151.

<sup>1159</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, "Magpie hagiography in twelfth-century Scotland", in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints Cults* (ed) Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 219-223; Grosjean, "Alleged Irish Origin", 144-154; Macquarrie, *AB*, 395-397.

<sup>1160</sup> Three pages of Luguids are listed in the index of O'Brien and Kelleher, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, 677-679; See also the Luguids and Moluas in Ó Riain, *CGSH*, 250, 260, 294-295.

<sup>1161</sup> *VMal* §12.

<sup>1162</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 398.

The mentions of Lismore and of a Lugaid within the *Life* have been identified as evidence of a possible link between Lismore Moluag and Bangor,<sup>1163</sup> an interpretation which has been further supported by the existence of a Manx monastery at Rushen which was originally dedicated to Moluag and incorporated into the Cistercian order in 1148.<sup>1164</sup> The mentions of Lismore, however, appear to all refer to Lismore Mochutu, which was prominent in the ecclesiastical reforms of the twelfth century.<sup>1165</sup> First mentioned was Malachy's visit to Bishop Malchus in Ireland, who was previously a monk at Winchester in England, which associates him with the Irish Lismore Mochutu rather than the Scottish Lismore Moluag.<sup>1166</sup> Next, Malachy's sister reportedly died at Lismore, which appears again to be Lismore Mochutu.<sup>1167</sup> Furthermore, the *Life* notes that Malachy was "prepared" in the district of Lismore, again likely referring to Ireland.<sup>1168</sup> Mention of the "City of Lismore" twice confirms that this is the location in Co Waterford.<sup>1169</sup> Malachy can be expected to have had a familiarity with the traditions of Bangor and its relationships with other foundations in its community, which he could and likely would have transmitted to his friend, Bernard of Clairveaux.

Added to this is that the *Life of St Mochutu*, dating from the thirteenth century,<sup>1170</sup> connects Mochutu with Comgall both in the prophecy Comgall makes about him,<sup>1171</sup> and directly noting that Mochutu was his student.<sup>1172</sup> Additionally, mentions of Lismore Mochutu in the *Life of St Malachy* indicate that an actual connection between Comgall and Mochutu (and therefore Bangor and Lismore Mochutu) was likely.

This shows that it is not the record itself that has confused the two Lismores, but those historians who are attempting to interpret that record in the modern

---

<sup>1163</sup> *VMal* II.12, n. 3; Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 494; Iain G. MacDonald, *Clerics and Clansmen: The Diocese of Argyll between the Twelfth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 34.

<sup>1164</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary of Irish Saints*, 494; Woolf, "Cult of Moluag," 310.

<sup>1165</sup> Maurice F. Hurley, "Gateways to southern Ireland: Cork and Waterford in the twelfth century", in *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century: Reform and Renewal*, (ed) Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 51.

<sup>1166</sup> Lawlor suggests instead of Lismore, read Waterford, in *VMal* I.8.

<sup>1167</sup> *VMal* II.11-12.

<sup>1168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1169</sup> *VMal* VI.46.

<sup>1170</sup> Byrne, "Heads of Churches", 262-263.

<sup>1171</sup> Plummer, *VSH*, "*Vita Sancti Carthagi siue Mochutu episcopi de Less Mor*", §2.

<sup>1172</sup> *Ibid.*, §15

era. It is unclear exactly when this confusion commenced, however. In 1886, William Skene identified the Luanus of one hundred Churches in the *Life of Malachy* as Molua of Clonfert (Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, vol. 2, 56), which was refuted by Ian Carmichael in 1948 (Lismore in Alba, 36). A cautious suggestion of connection between Lismore and Bangor was suggested by MacDonald in 1985.<sup>1173</sup> Richard Sharpe, writing in 1991, suggested that the Luanus referenced in the *Life of Malachy* was Moluag.<sup>1174</sup> By 2004, Moluag is noted as a student of Comgall in Donald Omand's *The Argyll Book*,<sup>1175</sup> and in 2009 as being from Bangor,<sup>1176</sup> though Fraser, following MacDonald's earlier caution, merely noted the possibility of connection between the two foundations.<sup>1177</sup> In 1973 MacDonald noted that "from this time [c. 637] on annalistic entries relating to both Lismores have become mixed up - possibly, though hopefully not, irretrievably",<sup>1178</sup> outlining the difficulty for modern historians in interpreting the textual evidence. It is to the annalistic and martyrological sources which we now turn.

A total of fifty distinct entries (incorporating sixty-seven mentions) of a Lismore in the annals are found between AD 592 and 1000. This includes twenty entries in the *Annals of Ulster*,<sup>1179</sup> eleven in the *Annals of Tigernach*,<sup>1180</sup> three in the *Fragmentary Annals*,<sup>1181</sup> and thirty-three in the *Annals of Inisfallen*.<sup>1182</sup>

Abbots of Lismore Mochutu appear in the annalistic record from at least AU 637, when the death of Mochutu himself is recorded.<sup>1183</sup> One should not assume that all recorded abbots of Lismore following AU 637 should be associated with Lismore Mochutu, though this has often been the default. The Dalriadic hinterland continues to be of interest to annalists right up to the mid-730s, as seen in the inclusion of five annal entries referring to *Dún Ollaig*, which further

---

<sup>1173</sup> MacDonald, "Iona's style of government", 184-185.

<sup>1174</sup> Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives*, 33, n. 122.

<sup>1175</sup> Omand, *Argyll Book*, 71.

<sup>1176</sup> Robert Hay, *Lismore: The Great Garden* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), 24.

<sup>1177</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 105.

<sup>1178</sup> MacDonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 49; see also Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, 99, n. 2.

<sup>1179</sup> AU 592.1, 635.7, 700.3, 718.4, 746.7, 753.2, 757.4, 760.7, 768.3, 774.5, 776.10, 781.3, 783.2, 825.13, 851.8, 856.7, 912.2, 959.4, 959.4, 960.5.

<sup>1180</sup> AT 588.4, 590.1, 609.5, 637.4, 703.3, 718.5, 746.6, 751.10, 753.2, 757.4, 760.3.

<sup>1181</sup> FA 157, 273, 445.

<sup>1182</sup> AI 638.1, 638.2, 639.3, 701.1, 707.1, 730.1, 752.3, 760.1, 763.1, 768.1, 774.2, 778.2, 783.3, 794.4, 814.1, 814.2, 818.2, 825.1, 833.1, 867.1, 883.1, 894.2, 912.1, 920.1, 938.1, 953.2, 954.3, 958.3, 959.2, 961.1, 965.2, 983.3, 987.2.

<sup>1183</sup> AU 637.2; AT 639.4; AI 639.3; Byrne, "Heads", 262-263.

suggests the possibility that some of these post-637 entries could relate to Lismore Moluag.<sup>1184</sup>

Some effort has been made to clarify which entries belong to which monastery, and the difficulty of the task has been noted on multiple occasions.<sup>1185</sup> Francis J Byrne has compiled a list of abbots and bishops of Lismore Mochutu (see Table 5.1), though the reason for his assignment of people to Lismore Mochutu is not always clear. This list begins with its founder, Mochutu (d. 637/9), and includes an additional twenty-eight abbots, ending with Gilla Mochutu Ua Rebacháin (d. 1129).<sup>1186</sup> It should be noted that I have corrected a spelling error for Crónan ua hEoáin, which Byrne gives as Crónan ua hEcaín.

**Table 5.1 Francis J Byrne's list of abbots and bishops of Lismore Mochutu (A New History of Ireland, vol. IX).**

Abbot	Death
Carrthach (Mo Chutu)	14 May 637/9
Conodur	fl. 696/7
Iarnlach (Iarlug, Iarlaga), bishop	16 Jan 700
Cuandae (Cuanu)	4 Feb 701
Colmán mac Finnbarra (Mocholmóc)	22 Jan 703
Crónán ua hE[o]áin	1 June 718
Colmán ua Lítáin	25 July 730
Mac Óige	3 Dec 752/3
Tríchmech (Trígrimech), bishop	7 July 760
Rónán	9 Feb 763
Áedán	19 July 768
Suairlech mac Ciarán	4 Dec 774
Órach, also abbot of Inis Doimle	781
Áedán moccu Raichlich, (mac uí Raichlich), bishop	16 Mar 814
Fland mac Fairchellaig, also abbot of Cork and Emlý	21 Dec 825
Daniél ua Liathaidi, also abbot of Cork	863
Fland mac Forbassaig	894
Máel Brigte mac Máel Domnaig	912
Cormac mac Mothla	920
Ciarán mac Ciarmacáin	938
Diarmait	953

<sup>1184</sup> AU 686.1, 698.3, 701.8, 714.2, 734.6; AT 714.2.

<sup>1185</sup> Etchingham, *Church Organisation*, 99, n. 2; Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 49.

<sup>1186</sup> Byrne, "Heads of Churches", 262.

Diarmait mac Torpthai	954
Cináed ua Con Minn, bishop of Inis Cathaig	958
Máenach mac Cormaic	959
Cathmug, also bishop of Cork	961
Cináed mac Máel Chiaráin	965
Cormac mac Máol Chiaráin	983
Ua Máel Sluaig	1024
Muiredach Ua Rebacháin	1041
Cináed mac Aichir	1063
Máel Dúin Ua Rebacháin	1090
Gilla Mo Chutu Ua Rebacháin, bishop	1129

I have analysed the annals and martyrologies up to AD 1000 to review the list of abbots of Lismore Mochutu as compiled by Byrne and to determine if any abbots currently listed as having resided at Lismore Mochutu by him would be better listed elsewhere. In order to make this analysis as clear as possible, it will be addressed by considering those associations which are most certain, then those with possible associations, and finally finishing with those for which not even a tentative association can be attempted. Following this analysis, a list of ecclesiastics who did not hold the title abbot, *princeps*, or *airchinnech*, will be examined and each ecclesiastic associated with either Lismore Moluag or Lismore Mochutu, if possible. Finally, annal entries which describe events which occurred at a Lismore site will be addressed.

**Table 5.2 Ecclesiastics certainly associated with Lismore Moluag or Mochutu.**

Name	Feastday	Death Year	Foundation
Moluag/Lugaid	25-Jun	592	Moluag
Neman		609	Moluag
Echuid	17-Apr	635	Moluag
Mochutu/Carthagi	14-May	637	Mochutu
Mocholmóc/ Colmán ua Líatháin	25-Jul	731	Mochutu
Mac Óiged	03-Dec	753	Mochutu
Órach		781	Mochutu
Flann mac Fairchellach	14-Mar 21-Dec	825	Mochutu
Danéil		863	Mochutu

Ciarán mac Ciarmacán	938	Mochutu
Diarmait mac Torpaid	953	Mochutu
Cathmug	960	Mochutu
Cinaed mac Mael Ciarain	965	Mochutu
Cormac mac Mael Ciaráin	983	Mochutu

Four annal entries occur before the foundation of Lismore Mochutu and can be definitively associated with Lismore Moluag.<sup>1187</sup> It has been suggested that these entries comprise a complete list of three abbots of Lismore Moluag from its foundation until AD 635,<sup>1188</sup> which is likely. A further five entries are explicitly identified as abbots of Lismore Mochutu,<sup>1189</sup> making eight entries immediately associated with their appropriate monastery. Four further entries can be confidently associated due to context provided in the annals themselves or known because of other details provided.<sup>1190</sup> As an example, in the *Annals of Inisfallen* c.825 Flann is abbot also of Emly and Cork, which suggests that the Lismore mentioned must be that in Co. Waterford:

Repose of Flann son of Fairchellach, abbot of Les Mór, Emly, and Cork.

*Quies Flaínd meicc Fairchellaich, abb Lis Moir & Imblecha Ibair & Corcaige.*<sup>1191</sup>

Órach is listed as abbot of Lismore as well as Inis Doimle in County Wexford.<sup>1192</sup> Mocholmóc/Colmán ua Líatháin is listed as an abbot of Lismore in AI 730, but is directly associated with Lismore Mochutu in the notes of the *Martyrology of Óengus*.<sup>1193</sup> Similarly, Mac Óiged is mentioned as abbot of Lismore in the annals and specifically mentioned as abbot of Lismore Mochutu in the *Martyrology of*

<sup>1187</sup> This includes a duplicate entry for the death of Moluag, AU 592.1, 635.7; AT 588.4, 590.1, 609.5, 637.4.

<sup>1188</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 105.

<sup>1189</sup> AU 637.2, 833.10, 953.4, 965.3, 978.6, 983.1; AT 639.4, 978.4; AI 639.3, 833.1, 938.1, 965.2, 983.3.

<sup>1190</sup> AU 781.3; AI 825.1, 863.1, 961.1.

<sup>1191</sup> AI 825.1; AU 825.13.

<sup>1192</sup> AU 781.3.

<sup>1193</sup> MarO 25 Jul, notes; AI 731.1; he is also mentioned at AU 731.8; MarT 25 Jul; MarG 25 Jul.



*Óengus*.<sup>1194</sup> This completes our list of those certainly associated with either Lismore Moluag or Lismore Mochutu. Next I will examine those possibly associated with each foundation.

**Table 5.3 Ecclesiastics possibly associated with Lismore Moluag or Mochutu.**

Name	Feastday	Death Year	Foundation
Iarnlaigh	16-Jan	700	Moluag
Cúanna	04-Feb	701	Mochutu
Crónán Ua Eóáin	01-Jun	718	Moluag
Tríchmech	07-Jul	760	Mochutu
Conait		760	Moluag
Aedán moccu Raichlich	16-Mar	814	Mochutu
Flann mac Forbasach		894	Mochutu
Mael Brigte mac Mael Domnaig		912	Mochutu

Those possibly associated with either Lismore Moluag or Lismore Mochutu include those where there is some evidence, even if small or fragile, that suggests one foundation rather than the other. The names of the individuals themselves may also be helpful in this discussion. For example, the name Iarnlaigh, and variants thereof, also turn up in the Hebrides, where an Iarlog and two Iarnlug are listed alongside Donnán and his martyrdom on Eigg c.617.<sup>1195</sup> Based on this, one could very tentatively associate the Iarnlaigh mentioned c.700 with Lismore Moluag. The name Oan/loan is not common in the eighth century, though there seems to be a local focus for the name. Two loans are noted as signatories of *Cáin Adomnáin*,<sup>1196</sup> an Oan (perhaps loan) was *princeps* of Eigg c.725,<sup>1197</sup> and a secular loan son of Conall of the Cenél nGabráin (based in Ardnamurchan) is mentioned in *The Life of St Columba*.<sup>1198</sup> It is feasible that an loan's descendants could have been called Ua Oain/Eóáin, and for this reason Crónán Ua Eóáin is tentatively associated here with Lismore Moluag. Conait has been associated with the place-names Kilquhanity, KKD (NGR NX 765 705) and Kilquhanatie, KKD (NGR NX 765

<sup>1194</sup> MarO 3 Dec; AU 753.2, AT 753.2; AI 752.3.

<sup>1195</sup> MarT 17 Apr; Clancy, forthcoming.

<sup>1196</sup> Kuno Meyer (trans), "Cáin Adomnáin: An Old Irish Treatise on the Law of Adomnán", Internet Medieval Sourcebook, 2001. Accessed 18 November 2018. [sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/cainadamnain.asp](http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/cainadamnain.asp).

<sup>1197</sup> AU 725.7; Clancy, "St Donnan of Eigg".

<sup>1198</sup> VC II.22.

705) in Galloway,<sup>1199</sup> a distance of approximately 195km in a straight line (as the crow flies) from Lismore Moluag in Argyll,<sup>1200</sup> and it is possible that these locations could describe part of the seascape in which an abbot of Lismore Moluag was venerated.

As the *Annals of Inisfallen* focus on Munster rather than the north of Ireland or Scotland (though this does not mean entries from these northern areas never appear), it may be possible to associate a further four entries with Lismore Mochutu.<sup>1201</sup> Following the association of Flann mac Forbasach with Lismore Mochutu, we must then associate Mael Brigte mac Mael Domnaig with the same foundation, as AI specifies that Mael Brigte took the abbacy after Flann.<sup>1202</sup> It should be noted that the *Annals of Inisfallen* include an error regarding the association of Conodur, whose death is reported at AU and AT 707 noting him as abbot of Fore, and AI 707 noting him as abbot of Lismore.<sup>1203</sup> *Cáin Adamnáin* also notes a Conodur of Lismore as a signatory, though this is also possibly an error and he should be properly associated with Fore as indicated by AU and AT.<sup>1204</sup> It is unclear where Byrne derives a *floruit* for Conodur of 696/7 and whether that also references Lismore. Due to this error he is not included in the lists for Lismore Mochutu.

**Table 5.4 Abbots of Lismore unable to be assigned.**

Name	Feastday	Death Year
Mocholmoc/ Colmán mac Finnbarra	22-Jan	703
Finnchú		757
	19-Jul	
Maadhóg/Aedán	29-Dec	768
Suairlech ua Cú Chiaráin	04-Dec	774
Eógan mac Rónchenn	16-Oct	776
Tipraite ua Baíthenach		851
Suibne ua Roichlech		856
Máenach mac Cormaic		959
Comman ua Ciarán	31-Oct	

<sup>1199</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 166.

<sup>1200</sup> DoSH. Kilquhanity, settlement, Kirkpatrick Durham. Accessed 25 Jun 2020. [www.saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1367880761](http://www.saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1367880761).

<sup>1201</sup> AI 701.1, 760.1, 814.1, 894.2.

<sup>1202</sup> AI 894.2.

<sup>1203</sup> AU 707.1; AT 707.1; AI 707.1.

<sup>1204</sup> Ní Dhonnchadha, "Guarantor list of Cáin Adomnáin", 180, 187.

This leaves nine ecclesiastics who are specified as abbot of Lismore in the annals or martyrologies, but who we are unable to even tentatively associate with Lismore Moluag or Lismore Mochutu based on the evidence reviewed here. This includes four people listed by Byrne as abbots of Lismore Mochutu: Mocholmoc/Colmán mac Finnbar, Maodhóg/Aedán, Suairlech ua Cú Chiaráin, and Máenach mac Cormaic. While all these ecclesiastics are specifically called abbot of Lismore, there is insufficient evidence at this time to place them on the list for either Lismore Moluag or Lismore Mochutu.

**Table 5.5 Additional Ecclesiastics Associated with Lismore Mochutu.**

Name	Feastday	Death Year
Rónán Find	09-Feb 22-May	763
Cormac mac Mothla		920
Cinaed Ua Con Minn		958
Mael Anfaid	31-Jan	8th-9th C
Neman	08-Mar	
Mo Šilóc	25-Jul	

In addition to those explicitly called abbot of Lismore, there are those who are given positions other than abbot, or no specific position, but who can be associated with Lismore Mochutu. Rónán Find is called a bishop of Lismore Mochutu in the notes of the *Martyrology of Óengus* at 9 Feb and at AI 763.<sup>1205</sup> He is more generally called a bishop in the notes of the *Martyrology of Gorman*, and associated with both Lismore and Lann Ruadan in the *Martyrology of Tallaght*.<sup>1206</sup> Ronan is listed as an abbot of Lismore Mochutu by Byrne, though the evidence here places him at the foundation, it does not give him the position of abbot. Cormac mac Mothla appears to have been an extremely busy person, as he is noted as bishop and vice-abbot of Lismore, abbot of Cell Mo-Laise, king of the Déisi, and chief counsellor of Munster at AI 920.<sup>1207</sup> It should be noted that the *Annals of Inisfallen* confuse Cormac mac Cuilennán, a king whose death is reported in AU 908 with the king/abbot Cormac mac Mothla, whose death is

<sup>1205</sup> MarO 9 Feb; AI 763.1.

<sup>1206</sup> MarG 9 Feb, notes, associated with Lann Ruadan at 22 May, notes; MarT 9 Feb, 22 May, notes.

<sup>1207</sup> AI 920.1.

reported in AI 920.<sup>1208</sup> Cormac is also in Byrne’s list of abbots of Lismore Mochutu, but again has not been included in that list here due to a lack of evidence that he actually held the abbacy. Cinaed Ua Con Minn is noted as bishop of Lismore and Inis Cathag in AI 958.<sup>1209</sup> Mael Anfaid is noted as abbot of Darinis at Lismore Mochutu in the notes of both the *Martyrology of Óengus* and the *Martyrology of Gorman*.<sup>1210</sup> Neman is called bishop of Darinis in the notes of the *Martyrology of Gorman*, and associated more generally with Darinis in the *Martyrology of Tallaght*.<sup>1211</sup> Mo Šilóc is specifically associated with Lismore Mochutu in the notes of the *Martyrology of Óengus* and more generally with Lismore in the *Martyrology of Gorman*.<sup>1212</sup>

**Table 5.6 Ecclesiastics unable to be assigned to a specific Lismore.**

Name	Feastday	Death
Mac Luiged		751
Airdmesach		778
Suairlech ua Tipraiti		783
Mael Doid	21-May	
Sillan	21-Dec	

The final group of ecclesiastics are those who did not hold the title abbot, who are associated with a Lismore, but who cannot be even tentatively assigned to a specific foundation based on the current evidence. Mac Luiged is generally associated with Lismore at AT 751,<sup>1213</sup> Airdmesach given the same association at AI 778,<sup>1214</sup> Suairlech ua Tipraiti is referred to as a “celebrated anchorite of Lismore” at AU 783,<sup>1215</sup> Mael Doid is generally said to be “of Lismore” in the martyrologies,<sup>1216</sup> and Sillan is noted as bishop of Lismore in the martyrologies.<sup>1217</sup>

<sup>1208</sup> AU 908.3; AI 920.1; see also Thomas Owen Clancy’s discussion on the identification of Cormac in “Saint and the Fool: The Image and Function of Cummine Fota and Comgan Mac Da Cherda in Early Irish Literature” (PhD Thesis. University of Edinburgh, 1991), 137, n. 70, 139, n. 78.

<sup>1209</sup> AI 958.3.

<sup>1210</sup> MarO 31 Jan, notes; MarG 31 Jan, notes.

<sup>1211</sup> MarG 8 Mar, notes; MarT 8 Mar.

<sup>1212</sup> MarG 25 Jul; Mo Šilóc is referred to as the fosterling of Moling at MarT 25 Jul.

<sup>1213</sup> AT 751.10.

<sup>1214</sup> AI 778.2.

<sup>1215</sup> AU 783.2; he is more generally noted to be “in Lismore” at AI 783.3.

<sup>1216</sup> MarT 21 May; MarG 21 May, notes.

<sup>1217</sup> MarT 21 Dec; MarG 21 Dec, notes.

Having dealt with the personnel, we now turn our attention to events associated with Lismore. There are ten entries which reference nine separate events involving a Lismore foundation rather than specific people. The first of these is the record of the founding of Lismore in AI 638, which is obviously the founding of Lismore Mochutu.<sup>1218</sup> Another three specifically reference Lismore Mochutu,<sup>1219</sup> and two can be associated with Lismore Moluag based on details included in the entries.<sup>1220</sup> This leaves three events which are tentatively associated with Lismore Mochutu based on their inclusion only in the *Annals of Innisfallen*.<sup>1221</sup>

Ultimately there is a long way to go to firmly and fully flesh out the lists of abbots for Lismore Moluag and Lismore Mochutu. However, it is hoped that this analysis helps to push us further in the right direction by removing some of the less critical associations with Lismore Mochutu, while encouraging the search for additional supporting evidence before assigning ecclesiastics with any certainty to Lismore Mochutu.

### 5.2.2 Moluag

The existence of a lost *Vita* for Moluag is suggested based on an analysis of the *Libellus de nativitate Sancti Cuthberti*,<sup>1222</sup> and the *Aberdeen Breviary*.<sup>1223</sup> The *Libellus*' description of the subject's birth and childhood (in Ireland) and subsequent travel to Argyll along with mention of Lismore are fairly explicit references to Moluag rather than Cuthbert.<sup>1224</sup> Both the *Libellus* and the *Aberdeen Breviary* include the miraculous forging of a bell as well as the miracle of the stone which took the subject across the sea.<sup>1225</sup> It seems likely, based on these sources, that a *Life* of Moluag did at some point exist and was probably in circulation at late as the twelfth century.<sup>1226</sup>

---

<sup>1218</sup> AI 638.2.

<sup>1219</sup> AU 833.10, 978.6; AT 978.4; AI 833.1,

<sup>1220</sup> AI 818.2, 987.2.

<sup>1221</sup> AI 794.4, 867.1, 883.1.

<sup>1222</sup> Madeline Dodds (trans), "The Little book of the birth of St. Cuthbert", *Archaeologica Aeliana* 4<sup>th</sup> Series 6 (1929), 52-94; Clancy, "Magpie Hagiography", 222-223.

<sup>1223</sup> *AB*, 25 Jun, 397.

<sup>1224</sup> Clancy, "Magpie hagiography", 219-223; Grosjean, "The Alleged Irish Origin of St. Cuthbert", 144-154; Macquarrie, *AB*, 395-397.

<sup>1225</sup> *AB* 25 Jun; Dodds, "The little book", Chapter XIX.

<sup>1226</sup> MacDonald, *Clerics and Clansmen*, 35.

There is, fortunately, more to be said on Moluag himself, with his feastday marked on 25 June,<sup>1227</sup> even though his early years are virtually unrecorded. A poem including Moluag is included in the *Martyrology of Óengus*:

Sinchell's feast, Telle's feast:  
they were Ireland's heights,  
with Moluag pure, brilliant,  
the sun of Lismore in Alba.

*Féil Sinchill, féil Telli,  
bátir Érenn ardae,  
la m'Luóc glan ngeldae  
grían Liss mór de Albae.*<sup>1228</sup>

We do not know exactly when he was born, or where, but it has been suggested that he was the Lugaid mentioned in the *Life* of Comgall who administered Comgall's ordination,<sup>1229</sup> though this is far from certain. There are kin-based links between Moluag and Dál nAraide, notably in the *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hibernia*, which lists a Moluoc mac Luchta (see section 3.8.2).<sup>1230</sup> The *Aberdeen Breviary* notes more generally that Moluag “drew his origin from a noble family of the Scots”,<sup>1231</sup> and that he arrived in “the northern parts of Ireland through many dangers of the sea”,<sup>1232</sup> which suggests generally that he was from Ireland, rather than making an explicit link to Comgall or Dál nAraide. The potential confusion with Molua, which can come with attempting to interpret textual records, was discussed above in section 5.2.1. It is possible that Moluag's genealogical connection to Dál nAraide is a fabrication that was intended to create or demonstrate a perceived closeness to Comgall. Moluag's association with a miraculous stone of travel that took him across the sea to the island of Lismore is noted in the *Aberdeen Breviary* and the *Libellus de nativitate Sancti Cuthberti*, with the former source placing him at Melrose in the Scottish Borders to receive additional training prior to being successful at Lismore. This story, however, must be anachronistic as Melrose was founded by

<sup>1227</sup> *AB* 25 Jun; *MarT* 25 June; *MarG* 25 June; *MarO* 25 June.

<sup>1228</sup> *MarO* 25 Jun.

<sup>1229</sup> *VCom* §11.

<sup>1230</sup> Ó Riain, *CGSH*, §121.

<sup>1231</sup> *Qui ex Scotorum nobili familia ortum susceperat*, *AB* 25 Jun.

<sup>1232</sup> *AB* 25 Jun.

Aedan of Lindisfarne just before his death in AU 651,<sup>1233</sup> and likely represents a mingling of the lost *Life* and the associations of the actual Cuthbert.

Moluag is presented as a prolific traveller in the *Aberdeen Breviary*: he supposedly travelled as far as Thule, where he instructed the inhabitants on Christianity; he was also depicted travelling around Ross spreading Christianity and building churches.<sup>1234</sup> Perhaps surprisingly, the *Breviary* gives Moluag such a strong connection to Rosemarkie that it has him dying and being buried there. This indicates that, at least at the time of the *Breviary*'s compilation, there was an idea that Moluag was well-travelled, and also deeply associated with Rosemarkie. This connection with Rosemarkie will be examined in greater detail below (see section 5.8.2).

### 5.3 Surviving Features

The exact site of the early medieval monastery at Lismore has not been securely located, though it seems reasonable to accept that it likely underlies the extant medieval church at Clachan (NM 86079 43497), which is centrally located on the island of Lismore and dedicated to Moluag.<sup>1235</sup> The excavations of 1950-1953 failed to find any structures earlier than the current medieval church,<sup>1236</sup> though community-based excavations undertaken at the site in the summers of 2016 and 2017 showed evidence of twelfth century features.<sup>1237</sup> The report for the 2018 digging season reveals the discovery of both seventh/eighth and tenth/eleventh century burials, which confirms the usage of the site within perhaps 100 years of its reported founding as well as a continuation of use through the Viking Age.<sup>1238</sup> It is also possible to make out what was possibly the site's vallum,<sup>1239</sup> fossilized in the sub-rectangular outline of the field boundaries noted on the Langlands estate map of 1778,<sup>1240</sup> and noted in the minutes of the Kilmore Presbytery from 27 February 1760 indicating that even at that time it was known as an ancient

---

<sup>1233</sup> AU 651.1; AT 651.1.

<sup>1234</sup> *AB* 25 Jun.

<sup>1235</sup> Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 50.

<sup>1236</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 156-163, no 267; Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 50.

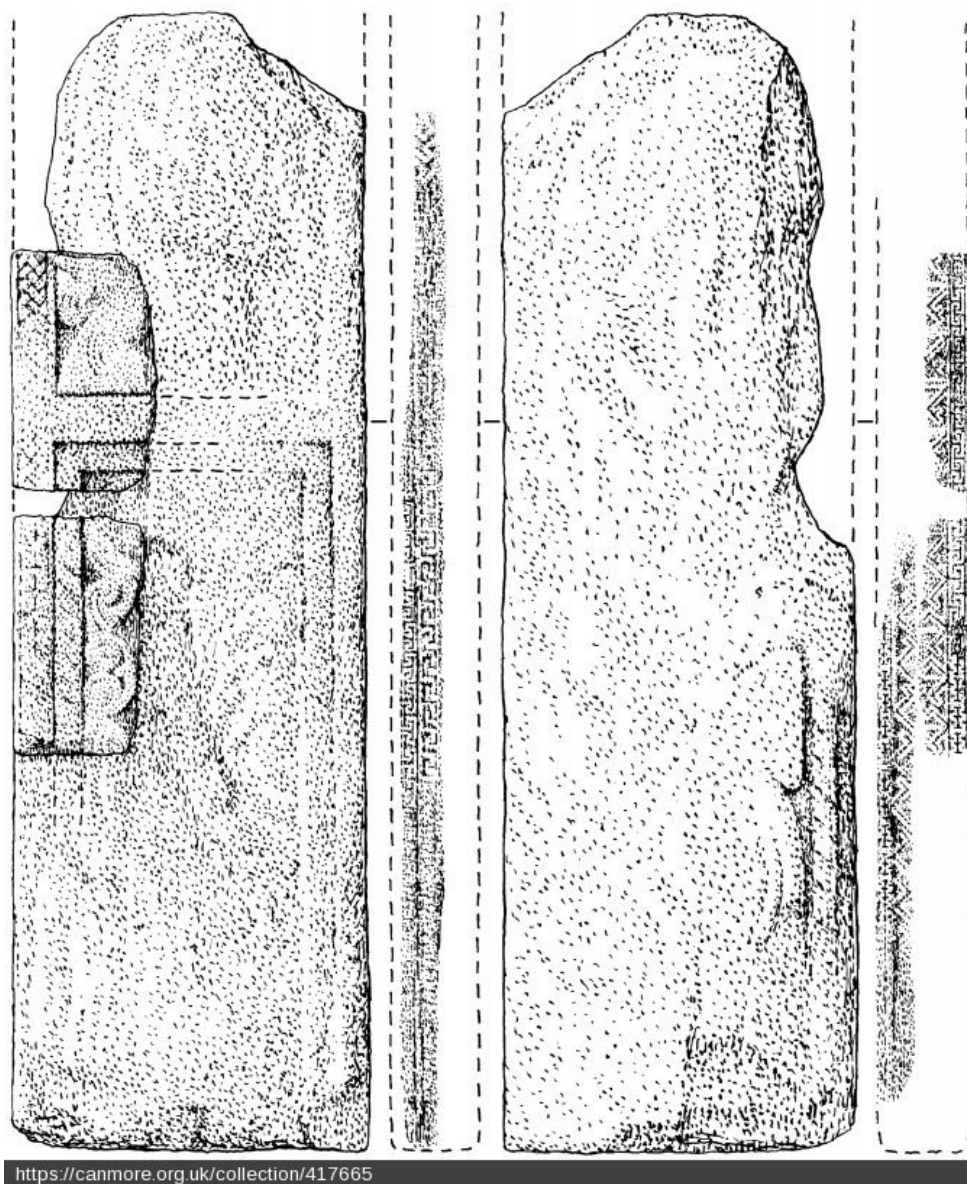
<sup>1237</sup> Clare Ellis, "Lismore Nave, Lismore Cathedral, Excavation", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 17 (2017), 37-38; Clare Ellis, "Lismore Nave, Lismore Cathedral, Excavation", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 18 (2018), 37, 59.

<sup>1238</sup> Ellis, "Lismore Glebe", 16.

<sup>1239</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 21, 156, no. 267; Fisher, *EMS*, 121.

<sup>1240</sup> Scottish Record Office Register House Plan 8180, "Plan of Lismore Estate" [Map] (unpublished, 1798).

boundary.<sup>1241</sup> The vallum lines are further recorded on the first edition OS six-inch map and more recently outlined as part of the field report of excavation in 2018.<sup>1242</sup>

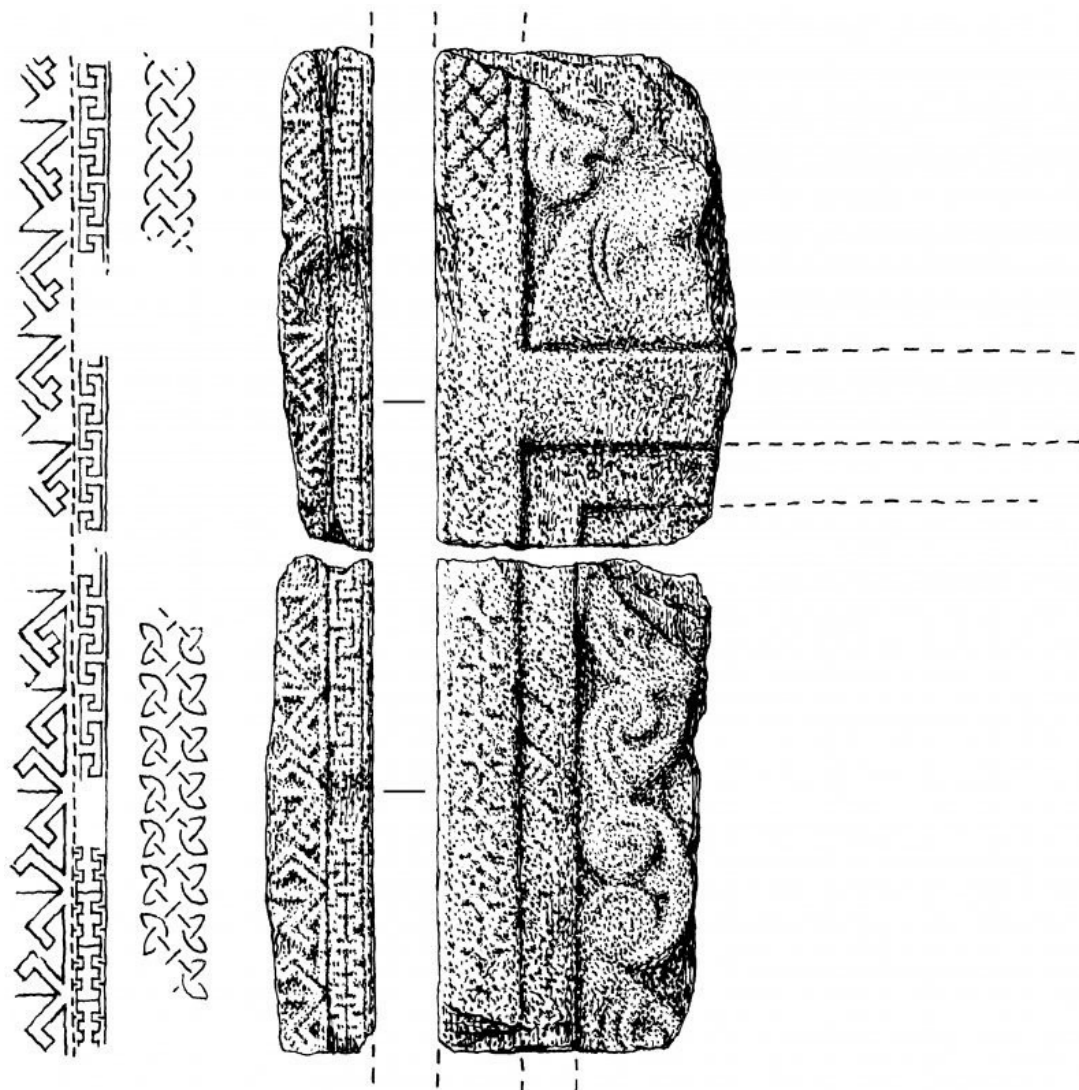


**Figure 5.2 Drawing of Clachan 1 fragments showing face A (Canmore 417665 © Courtesy of HES (Ian G Scott Collection)).**

<sup>1241</sup> Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 52-56.

<sup>1242</sup> Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map], sheet LXXII; Ellis, "Lismore Glebe", 4.





<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/417668>

**Figure 5.3 Detailed Drawing of Clachan 1.2 and 1.3  
(Canmore 417668 © Courtesy of HES (Ian G Scott Collection)).**



Figure 5.4 Photo of Clachan 1.2 and 1.3, face A (Canmore 408804 © Crown Copyright: HES).



**Figure 5.5 Photo of Clachan 1.2 and 1.3, face D (Canmore 408807 © Crown Copyright: HES).**

The churchyard contains several late medieval grave slabs and the remains of an early medieval cross-slab or cross-shaft of possibly eighth-century date, which survives as three fragments that have been trimmed for reuse as grave slabs in the modern era. These fragments are identified here as Clachan 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3. The largest fragment, Clachan 1.1, measures roughly 1.89m by 0.60m and is approximately 0.15m thick, and Clachan 1.2 and 1.3 appear to be adjacent

fragments taken from Clachan 1.1, indicated by the fact that the edges of their key pattern can be aligned.<sup>1243</sup> Clachan 1.2 measures approximately 0.40m by 0.24m and Clachan 1.3 measures roughly 0.40m by 0.22m.<sup>1244</sup> All the faces of the slab are heavily damaged, though a margin containing interlace is evident on face A. On this face two panels are defined by a transverse strip of the same width showing traces of interlace, one panel has a lightly sunken inner frame that encloses the remnants of a low-relief spiral ornament with voluted trumpets and a large pelta. The second panel, just above the first, is even more damaged but may have included foliage decoration.<sup>1245</sup> Most of the surface of face C is lost, though near one end a section of diagonally-fluted moulding is visible within a plain margin alongside a tapering curved stem of “uncertain character”, with the spiral ornament noted by Fisher to be consistent with an eighth century date.<sup>1246</sup> Faces B and D have different types of key-pattern carved on them, which will be discussed in more detail below. Although the monument’s incomplete survival and unusual features, including the recessed edges, make it difficult to be certain whether it would have originally been a narrow cross-slab or a slab-like cross, based on the similarity of its features to other surviving sculpture, it seems most likely that it was originally a freestanding cross.<sup>1247</sup>

The comparison of stylistic features, especially the use of defined panels with spiral ornament, peltae, and diagonal key-pattern suggest a relationship with the Kilnave Cross on Islay, Kildalton Cross also on Islay, and the St John’s Cross on Iona, all dated to the eighth century, as with Clachan 1 at Lismore.<sup>1248</sup>

---

<sup>1243</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 121.

<sup>1244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1246</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 121-122.

<sup>1247</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>1248</sup> *Ibid.*, Kilnave: 16, 122, 139, Kildalton: 48, 138-139, St John’s: 49, 133.



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/423677>

Figure 5.6 Kilnave, face A drawing (Canmore 423677 © Crown Copyright: HES).



**Figure 5.7 Kilnave, face A photo (Canmore 423673 © Crown Copyright: HES).**

The Kilnave Cross contains a sunken inner frame, much like the one at Lismore, in addition to the use of diagonal key-pattern, spiral ornament, and peltae on face A while face C incorporates diagonal fluting along the margin on the edge, which is also seen on faces A and C at Lismore. The cross itself stands

approximately 2.63m in visible height (plus a butt of 0.72m) with an original span of approximately 1.65m in width,<sup>1249</sup> and has been dated to the eighth century.<sup>1250</sup> The Kildalton Cross stands approximately 2.65m in visible height and 1.32m in span, dating most likely to the second half of the eighth century.<sup>1251</sup> Though it does not include a sunken inner frame, it contains other stylistic similarities to Clachan 1: key-pattern, spiral ornament, peltae, and diagonal fluting in the margin, though the key-pattern here is on the ring of the cross,<sup>1252</sup> which the Kilnave Cross does not have, and which does not survive from the St John's Cross. The St John's Cross on Iona features sunken inner frames on the lower three panels of the shaft on face A,<sup>1253</sup> with the bottom panel showing a very similar spiral and peltae design to those seen on the Kildalton, Kilnave, and Lismore crosses. The Kildalton cross stands approximately 5.3m in height with a span of 2.17m,<sup>1254</sup> and has been dated to the eighth century.<sup>1255</sup>

---

<sup>1249</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 139.

<sup>1250</sup> RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 5: Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Oronsay* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1984a), 219-23, No. 374.

<sup>1251</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Islay*, 206-208.

<sup>1252</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 138-139.

<sup>1253</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>1254</sup> *Ibid*, 133.

<sup>1255</sup> Sally Foster, Siân Jones, and Stuart Jeffrey, "Concrete and non-concrete: an ethnographic study of the contemporary value and authenticity of historic replicas, *Ethnographic study*", *New Discovery Excavation of Scotland*, 18 (2017), 50-51.



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/416746>

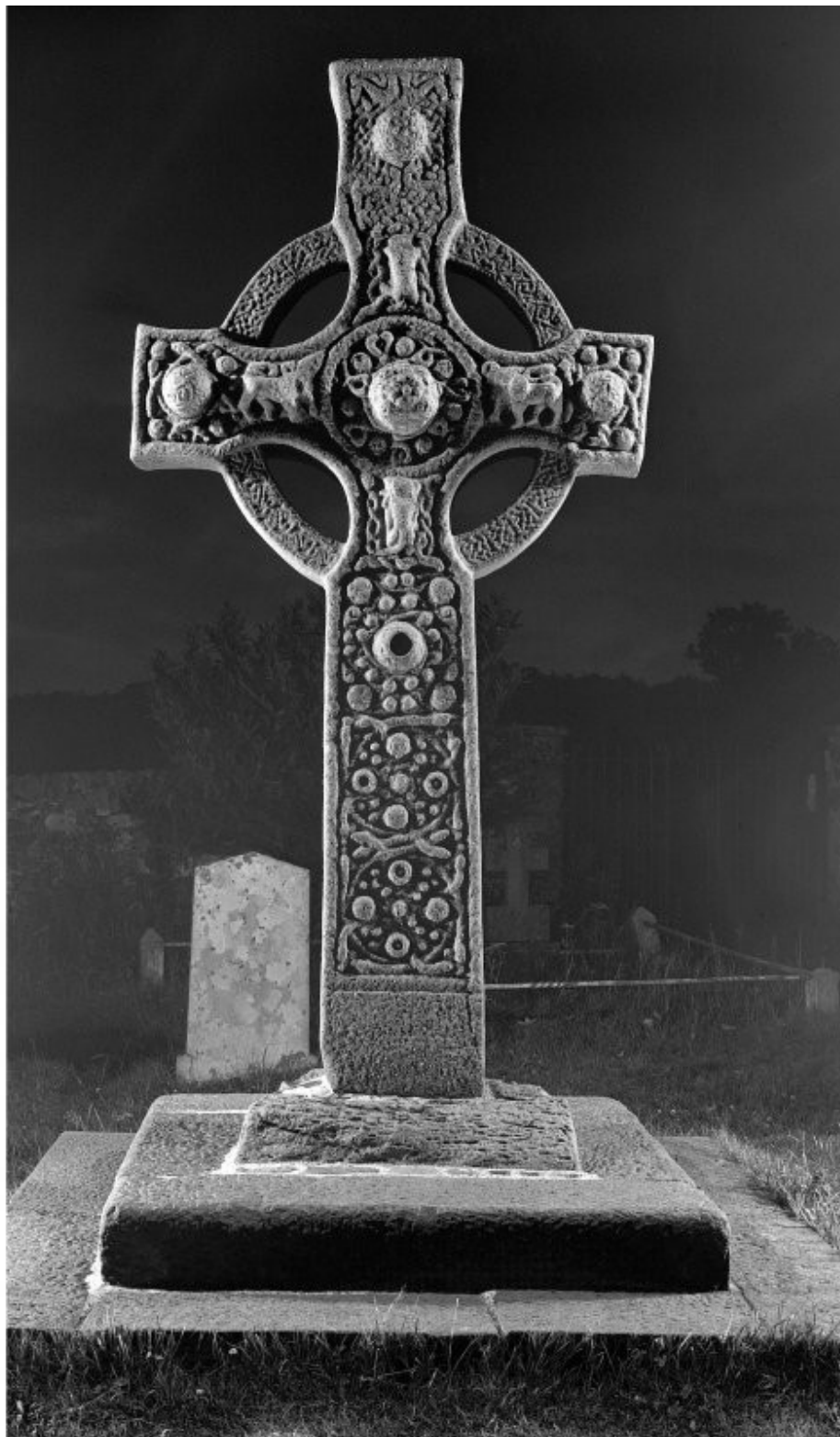
Figure 5.8 Kildalton Cross drawing, face A (Canmore 416746 © Crown Copyright: HES).





<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/416744>

Figure 5.9 Kildalton Cross drawing, face C (Canmore 416744 © Crown Copyright: HES).



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/416747>

Figure 5.10 Kildalton Cross photo, face A (Canmore 416747 © Crown Copyright: HES).



**Figure 5.11 Kildalton Cross photo, face C (Canmore 540512 © Crown Copyright: HES).**

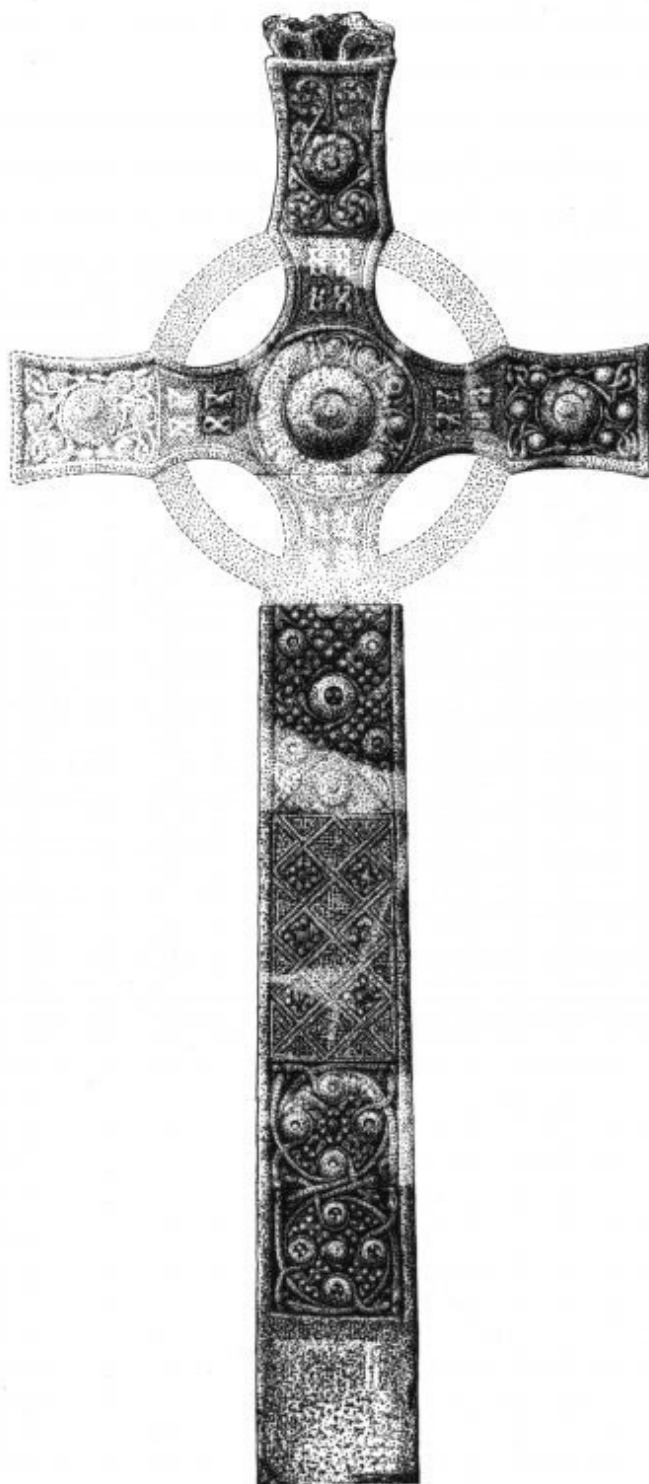
These crosses fit into the timeframe established for Clachan 1, and their similarities in style suggest the possibility of connection or influence between these sites. Additionally, looking at the dimensions of similar crosses allows us to make an estimation of the possible original height and span of Clachan 1. We are fortunate that the measurement for the Kilnave cross includes a measurement of the butt, allowing us to calculate that the butt is approximately 21 percent of

the total height of the cross, and the span was approximately 31 percent of the height. By comparison using 20 percent and 30 percent as guidelines, we can estimate the butt of the St John's cross at approximately one metre and the span at 40 percent of the total height. The full height of the Kildalton cross can be estimated at approximately 3.2m with the span consisting of approximately 40 percent of the total height. The cross fragment from Lismore includes neither the butt nor the shoulders of the cross, so we must assume additional height for these sections. Even if we assume that the upper panel of the remaining fragment included the section of the cross to just below where the shoulders would be, that adds possibly another meter of visible height to the cross. Assuming then, that the visible height of the cross was as much as 2.89m, then we might expect a butt as long as 0.5m, giving a full height of perhaps 3.4m and a possible arm span between 1m and 1.36m. This, then, would have been a substantial cross and the amount of detail work on its faces, while common in design, indicates a high level of effort put into its erection.



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/377096>

Figure 5.12 St John's Cross drawing, face A (Canmore 377096 © Crown Copyright: HES).



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/377094>

Figure 5.13 St John's Cross drawing, face C (Canmore 377094 © Crown Copyright: HES).



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1450835>

Figure 5.14 St John's Cross photo, face A (Canmore 1450835 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Figure 5.15 St John's Cross photo, C (Canmore 1450833 © Crown Copyright: HES).

Looking at the key-pattern element of decoration, which shows up on each of these crosses, key-pattern, gives an idea of where connections may be made



throughout the west of Scotland and even to Bangor in the north of Ireland. Key-pattern is a type of geometrical decoration found worldwide which comprises straight lines that form spiral shapes.<sup>1256</sup> As mentioned, fragments Clachan 1.2 and 1.3 contain key-pattern which can be aligned, showing three separate visible types: a ‘square’ key-pattern forming a single row or band on the right edge of Clachan 1.2 and the top right edge of Clachan 1.3, with a four discrete rows or bands of another, different ‘square’ key-pattern stacked one atop the other on the lower right edge of 1.3.<sup>1257</sup> On the left side of both fragments is a diagonal key-pattern. All three of these patterns are reasonably common in the insular world.<sup>1258</sup> The diagonal pattern does show some evidence of embellishment,<sup>1259</sup> which is also seen on the Bangor Bell,<sup>1260</sup> though its usage on the bell is a more linear style while the Clachan fragments are a panel of diagonal key-pattern. This may suggest a closer relationship with other crosses that contain panels of diagonal key-pattern, such as face C of the St John’s Cross on Iona (see Figure 5.15) and face A of the Applecross Cross slab (see Figures 4.8-4.10). Looking at this design element is only a very tiny portion of the artistic and stylistic investigation that is possible for Lismore, but it does show the possible extent of connections from the island towards the west in Islay, Iona, and Ireland.

Pieces of metalwork have been discovered, both on the island and further afield, that are associated with Lismore, including an ecclesiastical bell and pins. The *Aberdeen Breviary* mentions a square iron bell, which it claims was miraculously forged while Moluag was a student of Brendan and was reportedly still held in the church at Lismore at the time of the breviary’s writing in 1510.<sup>1261</sup> The bell was subsequently lost, perhaps sometime in the sixteenth century as the cathedral was noted to be in a ruinous state by the seventeenth century.<sup>1262</sup> In 1814 a bell was discovered in Kilmichael Glassary, which was at the time

---

<sup>1256</sup> Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, II, 312.

<sup>1257</sup> Many thanks to Cynthia Thickpenny for discussing the structure of these key-patterns with me and suggesting terminology for their description. Thickpenny discussed key-pattern structure and terminology in her 2019 doctoral thesis, “Making Key-Pattern in Insular Art: AD 600 to 1100”, 38-69, 203-231; see also Allen and Anderson, *ECMS*, II, 323-326 for a discussion differentiating square and diagonal key-pattern structures.

<sup>1258</sup> Thickpenny, “Making Key-Pattern”, 203-231.

<sup>1259</sup> A useful definition and overview analysis of the wide variety of such ‘embellishments’ in Insular key-pattern can be seen in Thickpenny, “Making Key-Pattern”, 203-231.

<sup>1260</sup> See Figure 2.5.

<sup>1261</sup> *AB* 25 Jun; Alan Macquarrie, “Moluag [St Moluag]”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Accessed 15 May 2018. doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/94648.

<sup>1262</sup> James Mackinlay, *Ancient Church Dedications in Scotland* (Edinburgh: George Waterston & Sons, Ltd, 1914), 158.

believed to be the lost Lismore bell, though this argument has been shown to have little merit.<sup>1263</sup> The use of handbells in Scotland likely indicates influence from Ireland,<sup>1264</sup> suggesting connections between Lismore and Ireland in terms of material culture and liturgical organization.



**Figure 5.16 Drawings of Bronze Pins FC 141 (Left), FC 142 (Centre), and FC 143 (Right). Found at Lismore (MacDonald, “Lismore and Eigg”, 51).**

Three bronze pins were reportedly found near Kilmoluag in 1841 when new trenching work was undertaken and were given to the minister at that time (National Museum of Scotland FC 141-143).<sup>1265</sup> Pins FC 142 and 143 are frustum-headed pins, meaning they are shaped like a truncated pyramid,<sup>1266</sup> a predominantly Scottish type that has Irish connections, and likely dated to the eighth century.<sup>1267</sup> FC 141 is described as a ‘mushroom-headed’ pin, a type which is common on the western coast of Scotland and “may be regarded as a native

<sup>1263</sup> David Caldwell, Susy Kirk, Gilbert Márkus, Jim Tate, and Sharon Webb, “The Kilmichael Glassary Bell-shrine”, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 142 (2012), 201-207, 231-233; Gilbert Márkus, *Power and Protection: The ‘Torhblaren Bell,’ its Shrine and the Relic Tradition*. (Glasgow: Kilmartin House Museum, 2009), 5.

<sup>1264</sup> Bourke, “Early Scottish church”, 465-466.

<sup>1265</sup> Macdonald, “Lismore and Eigg”, 50.

<sup>1266</sup> A discussion of frustum headed pins is available in Colleen Batey, “A copper alloy pin from Urquhart Castle, Inverness-shire”, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 122 (1992), 351-353.

<sup>1267</sup> A note from Lloyd Laing quoted in Macdonald, “Lismore and Eigg”, 50-51.

type”.<sup>1268</sup> Although this class of pin may be found as early as the sixth or seventh centuries, FC 141 shows incised hatching on the shank, which is associated with later pins, leading Laing to date it to the late eighth century, or possibly slightly later.<sup>1269</sup>

In addition to the stone monument and metalwork, there is a wooden staff associated with Moluag and Lismore, known as the *Bachall Mór*, or “Great Staff”, which is claimed to have been the saint’s own pastoral staff and is in the care of the chief of the Livingstone family. The staff is first mentioned in a charter of Archibald Campbell, Earl of Argyll, in 1544 which appears to affirm the hereditary role of the MacLeays (who later became known as Livingstone) as keepers of the staff.<sup>1270</sup> The staff is badly damaged at both ends, with only a length measuring approximately 0.86m remaining,<sup>1271</sup> and the wood contains so many nail holes that researchers have thus far been unable to decipher any decoration.<sup>1272</sup> While it has previously been suggested that the metal casing, which is now almost completely missing, was made of copper,<sup>1273</sup> or even gold,<sup>1274</sup> more recent research suggests a silver covering.<sup>1275</sup> Stylistically, the crosier has been dated to the end of the eleventh or early twelfth centuries, partially through comparison with other surviving Scottish crosiers.<sup>1276</sup> Although tradition states that the wood of the crozier is actually Moluag’s and from the sixth century, additional investigation has determined that it “did not have an independent existence before” the application of the metal cover.<sup>1277</sup> While this does not allow us to support an idea of continuity through the Viking Age with

---

<sup>1268</sup> Lloyd Laing in Macdonald, “Lismore and Eigg”, 51.

<sup>1269</sup> Lloyd Laing in Macdonald, “Lismore and Eigg”, 51.

<sup>1270</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 21; Fisher, *EMS*, 121; Macquarrie, “St Moluag;” Cosmo Innes and James Brichan, *Origines Parochiales Scotiae: The Antiquities, Ecclesiastical and Territorial, of the Parishes of Scotland*, vol. 2, part 1 (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1850), 163; Alexander Carmichael, “Barons of Bachuill”, *The Celtic Review* 5 (1909), 373-374.

<sup>1271</sup> Innes and Brichan, *Origines Parochiales*, 163; Mackinlay, *Ancient Church Dedications*, 158.

<sup>1272</sup> Perette Michelli, “Four Scottish crosiers and their relation to the Irish tradition”, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 116 (1986), 376.

<sup>1273</sup> Innes and Brichan, *Origines Parochiales*, 163.

<sup>1274</sup> Carmichael, “Barons of Bachuill”, 371.

<sup>1275</sup> Michelli, “Four Scottish Crosiers”, 376.

<sup>1276</sup> A discussion on dating is available in Michelli generally, with the date of the *Bachall Mór* at Michelli, “Four Scottish Crosiers”, 387.

<sup>1277</sup> Griffin Murray, “Insular croziers: an independent tradition?” in *Islands in a Global Context: Proceedings of the seventh international conference on Insular art, held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, 16-20 July 2014*, (ed) Conor Newman, Mags Mannion, and Fiona Gavin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017), 171. See also Murray’s discussion on similar croziers from the continent whose wood cores also match the dating of their associated casing.

the *Bachall Mór*, it does inform us of the strength of the cult of Moluag around the time of the establishment of the bishopric of Argyll c. 1189.

The cathedral was built at Clachan (NM 86079 43497) sometime in the late twelfth century with additions as late as the fourteenth;<sup>1278</sup> the dimensions of the medieval nave and choir measure approximately 38m by 7.2m with walls approximately 1m thick, which seems to be of reasonable, if small, size for cathedrals built around the thirteenth century: Brechin's cathedral is approximately 25.6m long,<sup>1279</sup> and Dunblane's nave measures 39.3m by 17.4m.<sup>1280</sup> St Andrews' cathedral, also begun in the thirteenth century, is a staggering 109m,<sup>1281</sup> and Glasgow's cathedral experienced two enlargements during the thirteenth century, leading to its current grand stature.<sup>1282</sup> There appears to have been a tower built onto the western wall of the nave in the fourteenth century,<sup>1283</sup> with the size and additions to the cathedral indicating it was a place of importance in the west, but fell short of the level of interest received by bishoprics such as St Andrews and Glasgow. The cathedral on Lismore had reached a ruinous state by the seventeenth century and was renovated and adapted to meet the community's needs as a parish church in 1749,<sup>1284</sup> likely when the heights of the roof and floor were altered, and the pulpit and communion table moved to the west end.<sup>1285</sup>

The Clachan cross is a strong attestation of the high status of Lismore by the eighth century, especially in light of the growing prominence of Iona and its programme of cross-making at that time. Indeed, it has been recognized that the comparative wealth of surviving texts from Iona in the sixth and seventh

---

<sup>1278</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 156-157; Ellis, "Lismore Cathedral 2017", 37-38; Ellis, "Lismore Cathedral 2018", 59.

<sup>1279</sup> Canmore. "Brechin Cathedral", Accessed 30 September 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/35055](http://canmore.org.uk/site/35055).

<sup>1280</sup> Dunblane Cathedral. "The Nave", Accessed 30 September 2018. [www.dunblanecathedral.org.uk/page/49/nave](http://www.dunblanecathedral.org.uk/page/49/nave).

<sup>1281</sup> Canmore. "St Andrews Cathedral", Accessed 30 September 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/34299](http://canmore.org.uk/site/34299).

<sup>1282</sup> Canmore. "Glasgow Cathedral", Accessed 30 September 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/45002](http://canmore.org.uk/site/45002).

<sup>1283</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 156-157; Ellis, "Lismore Cathedral 2018", 59.

<sup>1284</sup> J. O'Sullivan, "Lismore Parish Church (Lismore & Appin parish): Churchyard assessment", *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (1994), 57-58.

<sup>1285</sup> Macquarrie, "St Moluag".

centuries has heavily influenced how modern historians perceive and construct the history of the sixth through eighth century west of Scotland.<sup>1286</sup>

## 5.4 Place-name evidence

### 5.4.1 Lismore as a place-name

The place-name Lismore is of interest and will be analyzed in a similar manner to that adopted for Bangor seen in section 3.4. Looking at the place-name itself may assist in associating or distinguishing it from other places with the same or similar names. We may also be able to understand whether the name itself was intended to be ecclesiastical in nature. Place-names in *les/lios* exist in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and are briefly examined here before returning to the discussion of Lismore Moluag.

I begin with the understanding of *les* in Ireland, before moving to British *lis* and then finally examine its use in Scotland. Place-names in *les* are prolific in Ireland, as evidenced in Figure 5.17, which shows place-names where *les/lios* is either the first or only element in the place-name. Despite the large number of place-names indicated on the map, between 592 and 1201 only nine place-names in *les* are seen in AU and AT: two likely secular sites, *Less Dochuinn* and *Lios Luigde*;<sup>1287</sup> six ecclesiastical sites, *Les mór* [Moluag], *Lesán in Uí Tuirtri*, *Tulach Léis*, *Les mór Mochutu*, *Liss Cr[íst?]*, and *Les Oeiged*;<sup>1288</sup> and one which is undetermined upon first consideration, *Coradh Lisairglinn*.<sup>1289</sup> Once additional records become available in the twelfth-century, however, a long list of additional *les* sites are attested.<sup>1290</sup> The dating of *lios* place-names is unsurprisingly complicated, and a helpful discussion is provided by Gregory Toner.<sup>1291</sup> In Ireland there appears to be a prestige divide between place-names in *dún* and *ráth* on the one hand (as more prestigious), and *les/lios* on the other hand (as less prestigious), though there are exceptions.<sup>1292</sup> Despite this less

<sup>1286</sup> James Fraser, "Strangers on the Clyde: Cenél Comgaill, Clyde Rock and the Bishops of Kingarth", *Innes Review* 56:2 (2005), 210; Lane and Campbell, *Dunadd*, 37.

<sup>1287</sup> AT 637.5, 1156.5.

<sup>1288</sup> AU 592.1, 744.3, 809.3, 833.10, 957.2, 1004.2; AT 590.1, 744.3.

<sup>1289</sup> AU 1118.7.

<sup>1290</sup> Gregory Toner, "Settlement and Settlement Terms in Medieval Ireland: *ráth* and *lios*", *Ainm* 8 (1998-2000), 25.

<sup>1291</sup> Toner, "Settlement Terms", 1-40.

<sup>1292</sup> Toner, "Settlement Terms", 22.

prestigious position, it appears that *les* “is perhaps the oldest settlement term to appear in Irish place-names” and was a productive element into the thirteenth century.<sup>1293</sup>



**Figure 5.17 Map of Irish *les/líos* place-names (Flanagan and Flanagan, *Irish Place Names*, 111).**

Gregory Toner notes that in the Early and Middle Gaelic periods, there appear to have been a number of uses for *les*, including:

(a) an enclosed space about a dwelling-house, (b) a (large) settlement, probably within an enclosure, and by extension a city (c) part of a (monastic) complex, (d) a palisade or stockade, and (e) a ringfort, circular earthwork, or cashel.<sup>1294</sup> What this ultimately tell us is that in Ireland, the *les* element could refer to enclosed space or an

<sup>1293</sup> Toner, “Settlement Terms”, 30.

<sup>1294</sup> Toner, “Settlement Terms”, 21.

enclosing structure itself, whether secular of ecclesiastical, but generally of a lower level of prestige.

Notable is the British cognate *lis*, which made its way into modern Welsh as *llys*, meaning “court, manor house, hall”.<sup>1295</sup> Four place-names in *llys* are briefly examined here to demonstrate the British usage: *Bronllys*, *Llyswen*, *Llysfæen*, and *Llyswry*. *Bronllys*, Brecknockshire (now Powys) meaning “Court hill” is a village and Community in Wales as well as the name of a motte and bailey castle which is believed to be situated on the same site as a pre-Norman *llys* or “court” and was first recorded c. 1165 when a fire caused damage to the ‘principal tower’.<sup>1296</sup> *Llyswen*, Brecknockshire (now Powys) meaning “White court” was first attested in 1127 as *Lisewan* and is a village which is now part of the Community of *Bronllys*. It is reportedly connected with Rhodri Mawr, a great prince of South Wales in the ninth century and may have been the site of a Norman castle, though neither the castle nor the reported palace of Rhodri Mawr have been identified.<sup>1297</sup> *Llysfæen*, Caernarfonshire (now Conwy) meaning “Stone court” is a village and Community in North Wales that is first attested as *Lleswaen* in 1245.<sup>1298</sup> *Llyswry* (Anglicised as Liswerry), Newport meaning “Maiden court” is a Community in the city of Newport where a Manor house was recorded in 1248 along with Sir W. Herbert, its Chief Steward.<sup>1299</sup> While this is far from a complete list of *lis/llys* place-names in Wales, it does confirm the seemingly higher status and administrative usage of *lis/llys* in British and Welsh language.

Twenty-one names which include *les* or *lis* are identified by Taylor and Márkus in Scotland. From Aidan MacDonald’s earlier work come the first twelve: Lesmoir, ABD; Lessendrum, ABD; Auchterless, ABD; Lesraigie, ABD; Leschangie, ABD, Lesmurdie, BNF; Lessens, KCB; Lessnessock, AYR; Lesmahagow, LAN; Leswalt, WIG; Lismore, ARG (our site of interest); and Kirkliston, MLO/WLO. To this is

<sup>1295</sup> Taylor and Márkus, *Place-Names of Scotland*, vol. 5, 426

<sup>1296</sup> Coflein. Bronllys Castle, Tower. Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [coflein.gov.uk/en/site/96535/details/bronllys-castle-tower](http://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/96535/details/bronllys-castle-tower).

<sup>1297</sup> Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. Historic Settlements Survey - Brecknock. Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [cpat.org.uk/ycom/breck/llyswen.pdf](http://cpat.org.uk/ycom/breck/llyswen.pdf).

<sup>1298</sup> Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. Historic Settlement Survey - eastern Conwy - 2014. Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [cpat.org.uk/ycom/conwy/llysfæen.pdf](http://cpat.org.uk/ycom/conwy/llysfæen.pdf).

<sup>1299</sup> Bangor University. Geiriadur Bangor. “gwyryf”. Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [geiriadur.bangor.ac.uk/?locale=en#gwyryf](http://geiriadur.bangor.ac.uk/?locale=en#gwyryf); Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record. “Manor House”. Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/page.php?watprn=GGAT00174g&dbname=ggat&tname=cor e&sessid=CHI2aylokry&queryid=Q138212001606510012](http://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/page.php?watprn=GGAT00174g&dbname=ggat&tname=cor e&sessid=CHI2aylokry&queryid=Q138212001606510012).

added Erchless, INV; Seann Lios, INV; Leslie, ABD; Lasswade, MLO; Lessuden, (now St Boswells) ROX; Restalrig (now South Leith), MLO; Lassodie, BEA; Lathrisk, KTT; and Collessie, CLS.

Taylor and Márkus note that eleven of these names are of medieval parishes, some of which survived into modern times: Auchterless, ABD; Leslie, ABD; Lesmahagow, LAN; Leswalt, WIG; Lismore, ARG (again, our site of interest); Kirkliston, MLO/WLO; Lasswade, MLO; Lessuden (now St Boswells), ROX; Restalrig (now South Leith), MLO; Collessie and Lathrisk, both now KTT.

These sites appear to include centres of both secular and ecclesiastical administration, suggesting they are high-status place-names.<sup>1300</sup> Additionally, this high-status usage seems at odds with the lower-status usage in Ireland discussed above, and more in line with the British *lis* which developed into modern Welsh *llys*. This connection is perhaps strengthened if you consider the possibility that Lismore is a Gaelicized pre-existing place-name given to a “perhaps pre-Christian, ceremonial and assembly site...” which occupied the same enclosed area which is today identified as the monastic vallum.<sup>1301</sup> Other ecclesiastical sites which appear to make use of pre-existing place-names include Dunkeld, Iona, Kinrymont (later St Andrews), and perhaps Applecross.<sup>1302</sup> Taking all this together, it appears that Lismore Moluag was likely founded on an existing high-status or administrative site, and should perhaps be interpreted as “great court” in line with British/Welsh usage rather than the generally lower status “large enclosure” that would follow a Gaelic interpretation.

#### 5.4.2 Ecclesiastical place-names on Lismore

The frequency of ecclesiastical place-names on the island of Lismore suggests the possibility of heightened religious importance in the history of the island. Indeed, the existence of the monastery of the same name, which became the seat of the bishopric of Argyll in the twelfth century, indicates that further analysis should be undertaken. Although a number of ecclesiastical place-names are visible on the ground today in Lismore, it is more difficult to discuss them in

<sup>1300</sup> Aidan MacDonald, “Caiseal, Cathair, Dùn, Lios and Ràth in Scotland: 3”, *Ainm* 2 (1987), 50-51.

<sup>1301</sup> MacDonald, “Lios and Ràth in Scotland: 3”, 48.

<sup>1302</sup> MacDonald, “Lios and Ràth in Scotland: 3”, 47-47; Taylor and Márkus, *Place-Names of Scotland*, vol. 5, 428.



an early-medieval context, considering the relative lateness of their initial recording. The sources of evidence here are *Macfarlane's Geographical Collections*, dated to 1630; Blaeu's atlas, dated to 1654; and the Ordnance Survey 6-inch first edition map, which dates to 1843. When considering sixth-century ecclesiastical foundations, these sources are frustratingly recent.

The hagiotonyms in *cill* will be discussed first, beginning with those attested on Blaeu's atlas, before moving through those first attested in the OS 6-inch first edition map, and then through additional ecclesiastical place-names. The potential *cill* place-names on Lismore examined here are: Kilmaluag, Killandrist, Kilcheran (also Port Kilcheran and Kilcheran Loch), Killean, and Ballmackilicha. Kilmaluag (NM 860 435), "the Church of Moluag", located in the village of Clachan is now the site of the current parish church which was formerly the cathedral of the bishopric of Argyll.<sup>1303</sup> It is believed to overlay the original sixth-century foundation (see section 5.3). Killandrist (NM 8589 4273), "the Church of Andrew", is now the site of a farmstead, though the place-name is first attested in Blaeu as Kilandreyn,<sup>1304</sup> which includes a symbol of a structure of some sort, perhaps showing that a chapel did previously exist at the site, though it was later unable to be physically confirmed by RCAHMS.<sup>1305</sup> There is a well dedicated to St Andrew immediately to the south of the supposed chapel location, with both the chapel and well appearing on the first edition 6-inch OS map.<sup>1306</sup> If this is an early, perhaps eighth-century place-name,<sup>1307</sup> it would be noteworthy as the main cult of St Andrew is generally associated with the east of Scotland.<sup>1308</sup> *Cill Chiarain* (NM 824 387), "the Church of Ciaran" (Anglicised as Kilcheran) was first attested in Blaeu and is noted in RCAHMS as an "ancient site" which was believed to include a chapel and burial ground.<sup>1309</sup> A burial ground has been confirmed nearby (NM 8240 3882) with two Roman Catholic bishops interred as

<sup>1303</sup> Mitchell, *Geographical Collections*, 155; RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 156-163, no. 267.

<sup>1304</sup> Blaeu, *Lorna cum insulis vicinis* [Map].

<sup>1305</sup> Noted in Donald F. Macdonald (ed). *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation, Revision*. vol 4. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1915), 98; RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 149.

<sup>1306</sup> Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map], sheet LXXII.

<sup>1307</sup> Clancy, "Gaelic in Medieval Scotland", 364-368.

<sup>1308</sup> James Fraser, "Rochester, Hexham and Cennrígmonaid: The movements of St Andrew in Britain, 604-747", in *Saints' Cults in the Celtic World*, (eds) Steve Boardman, John Reuben Davies, and Eila Williamson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 1-17.

<sup>1309</sup> CANMORE. "Lismore, Cill Chiarain". Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/23009/lismore-cill-chiarain](http://canmore.org.uk/site/23009/lismore-cill-chiarain).

Kilcheran house was used as a Roman Catholic college from 1792-1822.<sup>1310</sup> Port Kilcheran and Kilcheran Loch are not hagiotoponyms themselves, as they are derived from a previously existing placename, *Cill Chiarain*, which is the actual hagiotoponym.<sup>1311</sup> Killean, first attested on Blaeu's atlas,<sup>1312</sup> may refer to John (whether John the Apostle or John the Baptist is uncertain) or possibly to Ioan/Eoan with what would likely be a cult of someone local. There is no surviving evidence of a chapel,<sup>1313</sup> and tradition states that this is not the earliest location of a church by this name, as discussed below. It is also possible that it might be one of the loans noted to be active in the eighth century (see section 5.2.1). Ballimackilicha is noted in the first edition 6-inch OS map but is not included in Canmore or the Database of Scottish Hagiotoponyms, supporting the argument that, while it does contain a saint's name, it is part of a patronym and is not a hagiotoponym. Indeed, local tradition notes the site as a patronymic toponym. Ballimackilicha aside, this is an impressive number of *cill* sites on what is a reasonably small island. Though it is not possible to confirm these place-names as early medieval, the possibility exists that some of these could be smaller chapel sites arranged around a central ecclesiastical foundation, as is seen on Iona in St Oran's Chapel,<sup>1314</sup> St Mary's Chapel,<sup>1315</sup> and *Cill Chainnich*.<sup>1316</sup>

Other potential hagiotoponyms, all first attested in 1843,<sup>1317</sup> include: *Sloc A' Bhrighide* (NM 802 365), "Brigid's Hollow"; *Cnoc Aingil* (NM 8638 4397), "hill of the angel"; and *Suidhe Mo-Luáig* (NM 869 440),<sup>1318</sup> "St Moluag's Chair".<sup>1319</sup> Again, because of the late date of first attestation for these place-names, it is difficult to determine how early they might have existed. An Iron Age dun is recorded in

<sup>1310</sup> CANMORE. "Cill Chiarain".

<sup>1311</sup> DoSH. "Port Kilcheran, Lismore & Appin". Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323704116](https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323704116); DoSH. "Kilcheran Loch, Lismore & Appin". Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323704280](https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323704280).

<sup>1312</sup> Blaeu, *Lorna cum insulis vicinis* [Map].

<sup>1313</sup> DoSH. "Killean, ~eccles. Lismore & Appin". Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323362602](https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323362602); RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 118.

<sup>1314</sup> DoSH, "St Oran's Chapel, KKV (Iona)". Accessed 5 Jun 2020. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320842202](https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320842202).

<sup>1315</sup> DoSH, "St Mary's Chapel, KKV (Iona)". Accessed 5 Jun 2020. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320842870](https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320842870).

<sup>1316</sup> DoSH, "Cill Chainnich, Eccles. KKV (Iona)". Accessed 5 Jun 2020. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1337937526](https://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1337937526).

<sup>1317</sup> Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map], sheet LXXII, LXXXVI.

<sup>1318</sup> Suidhe Mo-Luáig is the form provided by Watson in *CPNS*, 263; St Moluag's Chair is the form provided on the OS 6-inch map.

<sup>1319</sup> Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map], sheet LXXII.

Canmore near *Sloc a' Bhrighide*,<sup>1320</sup> which may have a connection to the place-name, though this is uncertain. *Cnoc Aingil* is noted by RCAHMS as the largest cairn in Lorn, measuring approximately 43 metres in diameter and about 7 metres in height.<sup>1321</sup> The name itself refers to an angel, possibly the archangel Michael.<sup>1322</sup> It is of interest that a similar place-name occurs on Iona (NM 272 237 - assumed location), and is mentioned twice by Adomnán in *Vita Columbae*.<sup>1323</sup> There is some difference between these sites, as the one at Lismore contains a built structure, while the hill on Iona does not (provided the Iona *Cnoc Aingil* has been correctly identified). Both the stories related by Adomnán refer to sacred events or actions taking place in the landscape and provide a direct connection to St Columba. One might consider whether *Cnoc Aingil* in Lismore similarly recognizes a sacral landscape, especially considering its location on the *bachuil* lands of the monastery. *Suidhe Mo-Luáig* has an obvious association with Moluag, the founder of Lismore. *Suidhe* place-names are places where saints were believed to have sat in contemplation,<sup>1324</sup> also seen in the place-name *Suidhe Bhaodáin* near Ardchattan where a saint named Baétán was active,<sup>1325</sup> and *Suidhe Bhlain* on Bute, which refers to St Bláán,<sup>1326</sup> and *Suidhe Chatain*, also on Bute, referencing St Cattán.<sup>1327</sup> It should be noted that there is another chair place-name on Lismore, *Cill an t-Suidhe* (NM 8483 4051), “church of the seat”, containing a roughly circular enclosure and burial ground possibly of early Christian dating and which may be the earlier site of the church of Killean, which tradition noted to be in the area.<sup>1328</sup> Unlike *Suidhe Mo-Luáig*, there does not appear to be any geological formation or other indication of anything looking like a chair, though the site is at the top of a cliff overlooking the Lynn of Lorne, and it could be this to which the seat is meant to refer. Another interpretation could be that the site was a seat in that it was a focus of ecclesiastical or cult activity. *Cill an t-Suidhe* was likely intervisible with *Dún Ollaig*, which could

<sup>1320</sup> Canmore. "Lismore, An Dun, Sloc A' Bhrighide", Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/22658](http://canmore.org.uk/site/22658).

<sup>1321</sup> Canmore. "Lismore, Cnoc Aingil", Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/23086](http://canmore.org.uk/site/23086).

<sup>1322</sup> DoSH. "Cnoc Aingil, Lismore & Appin". Accessed 28 Sep 2018.

[saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323271383](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1323271383).

<sup>1323</sup> VC II.44, III.16.

<sup>1324</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 260, 262.

<sup>1325</sup> Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Bute* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2012), 573.

<sup>1326</sup> *Ibid*, 268; DoSH. *Suidhe Bhlain*, St Blane's Hill, Kingarth. Accessed 5 Jun 2020.

[saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1335271350&name\\_id=27393](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1335271350&name_id=27393).

<sup>1327</sup> Márkus, *Place-Names of Bute*, 268; DoSH. *Suidhe Chatain*, Kingarth. Accessed 5 Jun 2020.

[saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1335173521&name\\_id=27349](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1335173521&name_id=27349).

<sup>1328</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 118, no. 229.

suggest a relationship between the two sites and the possibility that it was a very early ecclesiastical site.

The remaining place-names which seem to have an ecclesiastical or religious association include *Tobar a' Bhaistidh*, *Clach na h-Eala*, *Bachuil*, and Achnacroish.<sup>1329</sup> *Tobar a' Bhaistidh*, the “baptismal well” (NM 8617 4343) is located on the OS map within the boundary of the immediate church area at Clachan, as is the place-name *Clach na h-eala*, translated as “stone of the swan” (NM 8609 4342) in Canmore;<sup>1330</sup> however, it is more likely to be “tomb” or “penitential station”<sup>1331</sup> referencing a surviving granite cross that may have served as a sanctuary marker. These place-names, along with their surviving features, speak to the intense ecclesiastical presence of the site associated with Moluag’s church. A final potentially ecclesiastical place-name is Achnacroish, “field of the cross”, (NM 851 409), located on the southeast coast of the island and the present landing place of the car ferry. This place-name includes elements EG *achadh* “field”,<sup>1332</sup> + *cros*, referring to the ecclesiastical cross generally, but also to cross shaped objects, such as a crossroads.<sup>1333</sup> This site is mentioned on Blaeu’s atlas,<sup>1334</sup> though there is no surviving evidence of an actual cross. Its proximity to Dún Ollaig and suitability as a landing site gives two possible interpretations: the first, that there was an actual physical cross erected there which has subsequently been lost; and second, that it refers to a crossroads of sorts where travel from off island intersected with travel on the island and represented a change of transportation type from maritime to terrestrial. *Bachuil* (NM 8632 4378), “staff”, referencing a saint’s crozier (in this case Moluag) is located approximately 340 meters northeast of the present church at Clachan, and is the current site of Bachuil Country House, home of the Livingstone family, who are the hereditary custodians of the *Bachuil Mór*, the great staff of Moluag, as confirmed by the charter of Archibald Campbell, Earl of Argyll, in 1544.<sup>1335</sup> Indeed, *bachuil* itself is known as a place-name element

<sup>1329</sup> Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map], sheet LXXII.

<sup>1330</sup> Canmore. "Lismore, Clach Na H'eala, Clachan". Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/23090](http://canmore.org.uk/site/23090).

<sup>1331</sup> Evan Maceachen, Alexander Macbain, and John Whyte. *Faclair Gaidhlig is Beurla: Maceachen's Gaelic-English Dictionary* (Inverness: Highland News Office, 1902), 380.

<sup>1332</sup> eDIL, s.v. “achad”. Accessed 10 Jun 2020. [www.dil.ie/186](http://www.dil.ie/186).

<sup>1333</sup> eDIL, s.v. “cros”. Accessed 28 Sep 2018. [www.dil.ie/13123](http://www.dil.ie/13123); Taylor, *Place-names of Fife*, 345.

<sup>1334</sup> Blaeu, *Lorna cum insulis vicinis* [Map].

<sup>1335</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 21; Fisher, *EMS*, 121; Macquarrie, “St Moluag;” Innes and Brichtan, *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, 163; Carmichael, “Barons of Bachuill”, 373-374.

referring to the lands which supported the custodian of a saint's staff. For example: Drumbauchlie, Bachilton, and Bauchland, PER; Barnbauchle, DMF; Dulbathlach (attested c. 1203), INV; and Pitbauchlie, FIF (near Dunfermline).<sup>1336</sup> The latter formed part of an estate endowed by King Malcolm III and Queen Margaret to the church of the Holy Trinity at Dunfermline, though it seems likely there was an important earlier church in the region of Dunfermline.<sup>1337</sup>

Although there are a number of ecclesiastical place-names that survive on Lismore, it is difficult to determine with any certainty how early they actually are. What we can be certain of is that today there are a number of ecclesiastical place-names on the island which suggest an association of the land with a sacral landscape as far back as the early ninth century. However, place-names which are tied to demonstrably early features in the archaeological record, or those which can be compared to similarly situated place-names elsewhere in Scotland, may have a greater chance of being early themselves. It is reasonable to suggest that some of these place-names could feasibly be from the early medieval period, considering the survival of the church at Clachan and the cult of Moluag on the island. Although we may never be able to firmly and confidently identify them as being of early medieval provenance, place-names which fall into this category include: Kilmaluag, Killandrist, Cill Chiarain, Killelan, and Cnoc Aingil, Suidhe Mo-Luáig, and Bachuil.

## 5.5 Lismore in Dál Riata

The island of Lismore is situated within a geographic context that includes secular sites which show evidence of habitation as early as the Iron Age. Brochs and forts on the island itself have already been mentioned, so we turn now to sites external to the island. Perhaps the most important external secular site is *Dún Ollaig*, Anglicised as Dunollie, a fortification “wreathed by the sea”,<sup>1338</sup> which overlooks the natural harbour of Oban Bay.<sup>1339</sup> In the modern period, a ferry makes the approximately 12km journey between Oban and Achnacroish on the southeastern shore of Lismore, which takes approximately one hour. The

---

<sup>1336</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 266-267; Simon Taylor and Gilbert Márkus. *The Place-Names of Fife*, vol. 1 (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), 346-349.

<sup>1337</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1338</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 243.

<sup>1339</sup> Lane and Campbell, *Dunadd*, 3.

entirety of the trip is within sight of the mouth of Oban bay, which is overlooked by *Dún Ollaig*. Due to the nature of the winds, as well as the tidal stream, which can run around 4.6 km per hour, as well as the sheer cliffs that dominate the southeastern shore of Lismore and its small offshore islands, it would perhaps be more difficult for a boat to make landing elsewhere on the island from the south. There seems a possibility that Lismore could have interacted with Dunollie in a manner similar to that seen between Bamburgh and Lindisfarne, though additional research would be necessary to investigate this possibility. Additionally, Lismore could have been a hub of ecclesiastical activity, especially for those travelling up the Great Glen to Fortriu and its hinterlands, possibly giving greater weight to contact between Lismore, Iona, and Rosemarkie.

*Dún Ollaig* is believed to have been a royal centre of Cenél Loairn with activity from the seventh and eighth centuries,<sup>1340</sup> and is more frequently mentioned in the annals than any other stronghold in northern Britain,<sup>1341</sup> including once as an *arx*.<sup>1342</sup> *Dún Ollaig*'s burning in AU 698 and destruction in AU 701 indicate the likely existence of rival claimants in the area.<sup>1343</sup> It was rebuilt by Selbach in AU 714,<sup>1344</sup> who is later recorded as abdicating his position as King of Dál Riata and entering clerical life in AU 723.<sup>1345</sup> Lismore was likely closely connected with one or more of the kindreds around the Firth of Lorne,<sup>1346</sup> and thus was probably also the principle church of Cenél Loairn,<sup>1347</sup> with regular travel between the secular and ecclesiastical sites. The *Senchus fer nAlban* mentions a client kingdom belonging to Cenél Loairn, possibly meaning Pictish peoples situated around the head of Loch Linnhe.<sup>1348</sup> The monastery at Iona was previously considered the

---

<sup>1340</sup> Leslie Alcock and Elizabeth Alcock, "Reconnaissance excavations on Early Historic fortifications and other royal sites in Scotland, 1974-84: 2, Excavations at Dunollie Castle, Oban, Argyll, 1978", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, 117 (1987), 120, 123-124. It was called the "chief stronghold of the Lorn kings in Northern Dalriada" in RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 197.

<sup>1341</sup> AU 686.1, 698.3, 701.8, 714.2, 734.6; AT 714.2.

<sup>1342</sup> Fraser argues that the use of *arx* connotes a form of paramountcy for the fort in *Caledonia*, 243; *Talorrggan filius Drostain comprehensus alligator iuxta Arcem Ollaigh*, AU 734.6.

<sup>1343</sup> AU 698.3, 701.8.

<sup>1344</sup> AU 714.2; AT 714.2.

<sup>1345</sup> AU 723.4; AT 723.4.

<sup>1346</sup> James Fraser tentatively suggests Cenél nEchdach was in control of Upper Lorn in the seventh and eighth centuries in "The Three Thirds of Cenél Loairn, 678-733", in *Bile ós Chrannaibh: A festschrift for William Gillies*, (ed) Wilson McLeod, Abigail Burnyeat, Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart, Thomas Owen Clancy, and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (Perthshire: Clann Tuirc, 2010), 148-159.

<sup>1347</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 106, 250, 372; Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 49.

<sup>1348</sup> John Bannerman, "Senchus Fer nAlban", in *Kinship, Church and Culture: Collected Essays and Studies*, edited by John Bannerman, Dauvit Broun, and Martin MacGregor (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2016), 49, 115; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 353; *Miniugud senchasa fher nAlban*, §§ 39-48.

premier and sometimes only ecclesiastical influence in the early medieval north, though this idea of the primacy of Iona has been heavily curtailed by the recognition of other important ecclesiastical centres and their relationships with different kindreds within Dál Riata, such as Lismore for Cenél Loairn and Kingarth for Cenél Comgaill.<sup>1349</sup> The burning of *Tairpert Boitir* (usually identified with Tarbert on Loch Fyne, in the middle of the Kintyre peninsula) in AU 731 by Dúngal son of Selbach,<sup>1350</sup> king of Cenél nEchdach in Lorn occurred in the same year as a battle between Talorc mac Congussa, of either Cenél nGabrain or Cenél Gartnait descent, and Bridei mac Onuist, perhaps implying that Dúngal was working in tandem with Onuist.<sup>1351</sup> Further cooperative campaigning is suggested by the fleet from Fortriu,<sup>1352</sup> while Dúngal's actions against Inis Cuirenrigi in AU 733 and Tory Island (where an ecclesiastical foundation was located) causes some confusion as to whether Dúngal betrayed an existing alliance with Bruide there, or was allied against the Picts and Cenél nÉogain from the start.<sup>1353</sup> Dál Riata overall seems to have been brought under Pictish control by Onuist in the 730s and 740s, which might show continuing effects through the district of Lorne later being known as the “sea stewartry”.<sup>1354</sup> Onuist himself entered Argyll in AU 736, laying waste Dunadd and putting Dúngal and his brother Feradach in chains,<sup>1355</sup> suggesting Onuist's control over Argyll and much of Dál Riata at this time was well-established.

---

<sup>1349</sup> Fraser, “Strangers”, 111-113, 118-119; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 372

<sup>1350</sup> AU 731.4.

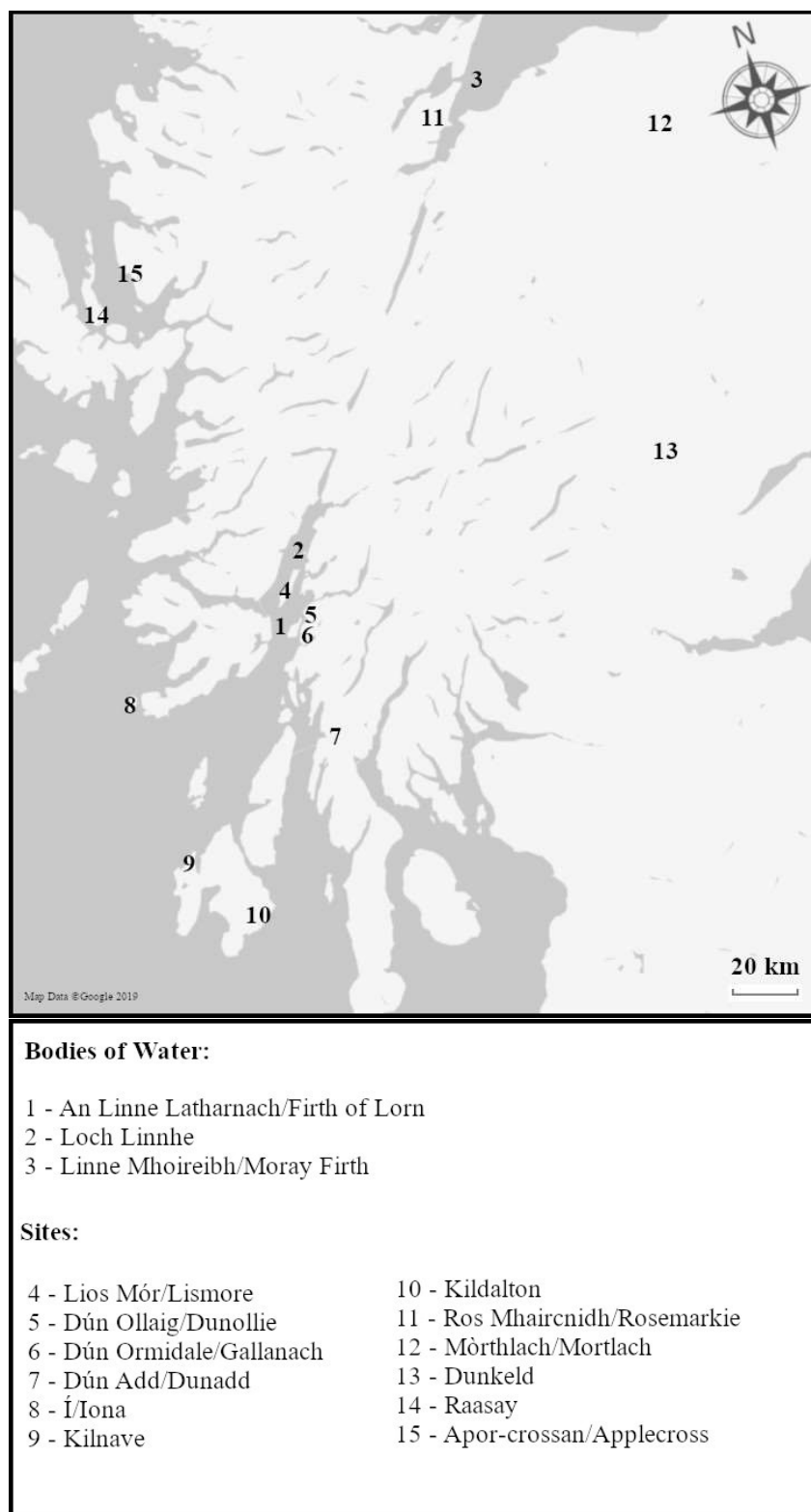
<sup>1351</sup> Fraser, *Caledonia*, 293-295.

<sup>1352</sup> AU 734.8; AT 734.5; a *Fortreanoibh*, FA 221.

<sup>1353</sup> AU 733.1; AT 733.1; Fraser sees this as an act of betrayal due to Muiredach mac Ainfcellaich taking the kingship of Loairn in AU 733.2, *Caledonia*, 295-296 ; Brian Lacey argues that the 733 Tory event suggests the possible existence of parallel alliances between Cenél nÉogain and the Picts on one side, and Cenél Conaill and Dál Riata on the other in “Fahan, Tory, Cenél nÉogain, and the Picts”, *Peritia* 20 (2008), 339-342.

<sup>1354</sup> Fraser, “Three Thirds”, 148.

<sup>1355</sup> AU 736.1; AT 736.1; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 300.



**Figure 5.18 Argyll: sites mentioned in chapter.**

Roughly 5km southwest along the coast from Oban and controlling the passage through the Sound of Kerrera towards *Dún Ollaig* sits the largest fort in Lorn, *Dún Ormidale*. Considering its large and open form and intervisibility with *Dún*



*Ollaig*, it has been posited as an early secular gathering site rather than a full-time occupation site.<sup>1356</sup>

*Dún Add*, Anglicised Dunadd, is generally considered to be the royal inauguration centre of Dál Riata, and a place of high importance in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>1357</sup> Its location may have been a borderland area between Cenél Loairn (northwards), Cenél nGabrain (southwards), and Cenél Comgall (eastwards).<sup>1358</sup>

*Dún Add* is approximately 50km by sea south of Lismore, though sailors would need to pass through the difficult waters of the Gulf of Corryvreckan or the Straight of Lunga in order to reach Crinan Bay, where the Add, upon which *Dún Add* is situated, flows into the sea (*Dún Add* was accessible by sea likely into the eighth century).<sup>1359</sup> If making a southwards journey from Lismore with an ultimate destination of Ireland, *Dún Add* may have been a possible layover point. It is approximately 60km from Lismore to Dunadd, easily reachable in a day's sailing in good weather (see section 1.5.1). From Dunadd it is approximately 65km to the coast of Kintyre near South Muasdale, from which it is approximately 2km overland to reach Kilmaluag, possibly an established overnighing site. From Kilmaluag it would be approximately 56km by boat to reach the nearest shore of Ireland, perhaps the beach at Cushendun. From the shore of Ireland, a further journey could have been possible to any other destination within Ireland. Bangor, for example could have been reached in an additional day, covering a distance of perhaps 60km. This describes a trip of 4 days from Lismore to Bangor in good weather. It could have been possible to reach Iona from Lismore within a single day's sailing in good weather, a distance of approximately 74km. An even wider seascape within which Lismore is likely to

<sup>1356</sup> Fraser, "Three Thirds", 158; RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 16, 70, no. 137.

<sup>1357</sup> Lane and Campbell, *Dunadd*, 39-40; RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 6: Mid-Argyll and Cowal, prehistoric and early historic monuments* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1988), 149-59, No. 248; RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 7: Mid-Argyll and Cowal, medieval and later monuments* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1992), 525-527, no. 281; Fraser does argue that Dunollie is equally likely to be the *caput* regionis mentioned by Adomnán in Fraser, *Caledonia*, 243-244; Dunadd may be dated to earlier than the eighth century, and there is evidence of its continued use after it falls out of the annalistic record c. 800 as seen in Lane and Campbell, *Dunadd*, 233, 234; Ian Armit, "The Iron Age", in *The Argyll Book*, (ed) Donald Omand (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2004), 69-70; Richard Cox and Richard Lathe, "The Question of the Etymology of *Dunadd*, a Fortress of the Dalriadic Scots", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 11 (2017), 21-36.

<sup>1358</sup> John Bannerman, *Studies in the History of Dalriada* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), 111-118.

<sup>1359</sup> Richard Lathe and David Smith, "Holocene relative sea-level changes in western Scotland: the early insular situation of Dun Add (Kintyre) and Dumbarton Rock (Strathclyde)", *The Heroic Age* 16 (2015), 4-7.

have been active could have included the north side of Mull, reachable within a good day's sailing (potentially reaching Calgary Bay and the Kilmaluag site there), and from there on to Tiree.

There is evidence of secular contact between the Hebrides and Ireland during the seventh and eighth centuries. This is visible in the mentions of the sons of Gartnait travelling first from Skye to Ireland,<sup>1360</sup> and then back to Scotland again,<sup>1361</sup> and the flight of Dúngal mac Selbaig, king of Cenél Loairn to Ireland in AU 734.<sup>1362</sup> If we accept the argument that Lismore was part of a wider seascape that included Ireland (see section 1.6) we should ask what part of Ireland demonstrates evidence of connection. *The Martyrology of Óengus* associates Moluag with *Cell Delga* in Ardgall,<sup>1363</sup> which Stokes tentatively places in eastern Meath,<sup>1364</sup> which is likely modern *Cill Dealga* or Kildalkey.<sup>1365</sup> The surviving place-name *Ceall Moluóg* (Kilmeloge) in the parish of Kilkeel, Co. Down may be additional evidence of his cult in Ireland.<sup>1366</sup>

In addition to secular sites, Lismore existed within a greater ecclesiastical environment in the west of Scotland, extending outwards both northeast and southwest into Pictland and Ireland, respectively. Three sites specifically appear to sit within an easily reachable geographic setting and further contain stylistic similarities in their crosses, suggesting the possibility that Lismore had some form of contact with them, whether as stopping points along a traversed path towards Ireland, or based on deliberate travels between these sites and Lismore. Iona is perhaps the most well documented and well-known monastic foundation and community in the west of Scotland, founded in AU 563 AD by St Columba,<sup>1367</sup> which was known to have had satellite churches such as Hinba and *Mag Luinge*, and on Loch Awe, perhaps at Kilchrenan. This is notable as it sits along a possible route to eastern Scotland (see section 5.1).

---

<sup>1360</sup> AU 668.3; AT 668.1.

<sup>1361</sup> AU 670.4; AT 670.4.

<sup>1362</sup> AU 734.7.

<sup>1363</sup> *Cille Delgai nArdgal*, MarO 25 Jun.

<sup>1364</sup> MarO 374.

<sup>1365</sup> Placenames Database of Ireland, "Cill Dealga". Accessed 21 Nov 2019 [www.logainm.ie/en/39075](http://www.logainm.ie/en/39075).

<sup>1366</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 494; NIPNP, "Kilmeloge, County Down". Accessed 20 November 2018. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=15087](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=15087).

<sup>1367</sup> AU 563.4; AT 562.1.

Kilnave (NR 28524 71520), the site of a previously mentioned eighth century free-standing cross with stylistic links to Lismore, consisting of a burial ground and chapel, sits on the western shore of Loch Gruinart, on the northern side of Islay, approximately 90km southwest of Lismore by sea.<sup>1368</sup> Kilnave itself is a hagiotopeponym, referring to the Church of Nem or possibly Nemán,<sup>1369</sup> which could possibly suggest later links with the abbot Nemán of Lismore, whose death is recorded in AT 609.<sup>1370</sup> Kilnave could possibly have served as a stopping point for travel from Lismore before making the run across the North Channel to Ireland, perhaps with Rathlin Island off the north Antrim coast as a destination.

Kildalton, situated within approximately 5km of the southern coast of Islay and likely accessible from Port Mór or Aros Bay, is again possibly linked with Lismore via stylistic similarities on its free-standing cross. The site includes a chapel, dedicated to St John the Evangelist,<sup>1371</sup> the free-standing cross, and a burial ground.<sup>1372</sup> Similar to Kilnave, though on the opposite side of Islay, it would have been well suited as a layover site for sailing between Lismore and Ireland.

The stylistic connections that appear on eighth century sculpture at Lismore, Kilnave, and Kildalton show that regular communication, and likely visitation, existed amongst these sites and their inhabitants. This is also the case with the St John's cross on Iona. Iona is located approximately 75km by sea from Lismore, and possibly reachable within a day's sailing. Its community was well connected, especially with Cenél nGabrain amongst the Dál Riata,<sup>1373</sup> and as mentioned above, stylistic similarities between Clachan 1 and the St John's Cross suggest a degree of communication existed between the two islands. Indeed, the relationship between Lismore and Iona is one of interest, considering the pervasive expectation of influence from Iona that has persisted due to the survival of Iona-focused texts. Interest in Lismore by Iona is likely the reason for

<sup>1368</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Islay*, 219-223, no. 374.

<sup>1369</sup> DoSH. "Kilnave, Settlement, Kilchoman (Islay)", Accessed 3 Oct 2018. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1369383454](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1369383454); a bishop called Neamh is recorded at Tulach Cheinéil Aonghasa, which has been associated with Tulach, Co. Antrim in notulae Ludwig Bieler (ed) (trans). *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979), 180; Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 513; DoSH, "Nem of Tulach". Accessed 1 Dec 2018. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/saint.php?id=166](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/saint.php?id=166).

<sup>1370</sup> AT 609.5.

<sup>1371</sup> DoSH. "Kildalton, Eccles. Kildalton & Oa (Islay)", Accessed 3 Oct 2018. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1321280552](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1321280552).

<sup>1372</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Islay*, 203-15, no.367.

<sup>1373</sup> Adomnán, VC, ii.22; Fraser, *Caledonia*, 143-144.

the inclusion of entries regarding it in the annals. In fact, a folktale was recorded by Alexander Carmichael that places Moluag and Columba in competition for the island of Lismore. In this story they were racing to the island next to each other, each hoping to claim it for their main foundation. In order to claim the island for himself, Moluag cut off one of his little fingers and flung it onto the shore, thus defeating Columba.<sup>1374</sup> The later development of this folktale is likely intended to explain why Columba had to make do with the less desirable island of Iona rather than the more fertile and larger island of Lismore. It also indicates the possibility of interaction between the cults of Columba and Moluag.

The existence of the *Lapis Echodi* stone could be surviving evidence of the relationship between Lismore and Iona, perhaps having been raised by the Community of Columba to honour abbot Echuid (d. 635) of Lismore, who may have visited Iona regularly or perhaps was in frequent communication with the monastery. It is, however, difficult to imagine why a member of Lismore's Community might elect to be interred and memorialized at Iona rather than at the foundation he led. However, there are other Eochuids which it could commemorate, including those mentioned specifically in VC or associated with a manuscript of VC: Eochaid, who is listed as one of twelve monks who originally went with Columba to found the monastery on Iona in a list following the B manuscripts;<sup>1375</sup> Eochaid Buide mac Áedan, whom Columba prophesied to be king of Dál Riata;<sup>1376</sup> Eochaid Laib, a Cruithin king, the subject of another prophecy;<sup>1377</sup> and Eochaid mac Domnaill, king of Cenél nÉogain, whose death was foretold by Columba.<sup>1378</sup>

Adomnán himself, in the *Life of St Columba*, never mentions Lismore,<sup>1379</sup> even though Moluag and Columba were contemporaries,<sup>1380</sup> and their monastic

---

<sup>1374</sup> Alexander Carmichael, "Story about the saints connected to Lios Mòr/Lismore, 2 September 1870". The Carmichael-Watson Collection, Coll-97/CW106/2. Edinburgh University Library Special Collections. [http://lac-archives-live.is.ed.ac.uk:8081/repositories/2/archival\\_objects/142237](http://lac-archives-live.is.ed.ac.uk:8081/repositories/2/archival_objects/142237) Accessed September 28, 2020; Alexander Carmichael, "The Barons of Bachuill", *The Celtic Review*, (1909), 358–359.

<sup>1375</sup> Sharpe, VC, 354, n. 356.

<sup>1376</sup> VC I.9.

<sup>1377</sup> VC I.7.

<sup>1378</sup> VC I.12.

<sup>1379</sup> *Ibid*, 105-106; Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 65-66, n. 6.

<sup>1380</sup> Columba's death is mentioned just three years after Moluag's, AU 595.1; AT 593.1; FA 595.

foundations would have sufficient reason to interact, especially upon any Columban missions up the Great Glen. Considering the mentions made of Comgall and Bangor in the *Life of St Columba*, it is somewhat surprising that no mention of Lismore is made and may imply a lack of working relationship between Lismore and Bangor. Further, Adomnán does not mention non-Columban ecclesiastical settlements in Scotland, aside from the single mention of other monasteries on Tiree.<sup>1381</sup> This could be an intentional move by Adomnán to facilitate the perceptual and political rise of Iona to prominence in the eighth century. While the *Aberdeen Breviary* notes that Adomnán took the abbacy of Lismore by instruction of his abbot,<sup>1382</sup> it is most likely that this connection between Adomnán and Lismore is an error,<sup>1383</sup> or a remnant of an abandoned attempt by Iona to lay claim or exert influence over Lismore.<sup>1384</sup> A dialogue between the cults of Columba and Moluag seems to be evidenced, if we also consider the folktale of the race to Lismore mentioned above.

At this point, the question may be asked whether Lismore was a monastery that was an island or an island that had a monastery on it. One might make comparisons to Iona, which is typically regarded as a monastery which encompasses an island. Iona clearly consists of a most sacred space, where the church and most prominent sculpture are found. This is surrounded by a vallum, but sits in a wider landscape that has been sacralized through stories and place-names that indicate sacred people and actions existing in the wider island landscape of obviously ecclesiastical sites such as *Cnoc nan Aingeal* (NM 272 237) and *Suidhe Choluimcille* (NM 460 330), and smaller chapels. Although Lismore is substantially larger than Iona and has much more desirable land which could bring additional secular interest and power structures to the island, it does appear to have a similar makeup. The church site is coupled with an impressive and detailed cross contained within a vallum, and even a likely sanctuary marker stone survives. The surrounding areas point to a sacred landscape within which

---

<sup>1381</sup> There is a Moluag hagiotopeponym on Tiree, and first attested in Blaeu. *Mula Insula* [Map]; VC III.8.

<sup>1382</sup> *AB* 23 Sept.

<sup>1383</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 319.

<sup>1384</sup> MacDonald, *Clerics and Clansmen*, 34; Alan Macquarrie, "The Offices for St Columba (9 June) and St Adomnan (23 September) in the Aberdeen Breviary", *Innes Review* 51:1 (2000), 14, 38, n. 2.

*Suidhe Moluag, Cnoc Aingel*, likely chapels, and lands supporting the *bachall* exist.

## 5.6 Lismore in the ninth and tenth centuries

The above discussion, which attempts to delineate people associated with either Lismore Moluag or Lismore Mochutu shows that the textual evidence for Lismore Moluag is firmest up to c. 635 and the death of Echuid. Surviving records of secular events in Argyll in the eighth century give some additional insight into Lismore's political landscape prior to the onset of Norse incursion and settlement.

We turn now to make what sense we can out of Lismore's experience from the beginning of the ninth century, at which point the Scandinavian people began to appear, at first glance, to have wreaked havoc on the ability to maintain established links across the North Channel. It seems likely that Lismore came under threat of Viking attack or Viking influence, given that the southern Hebrides as a whole were thus exposed. As an example, although understood as an early gathering site,<sup>1385</sup> *Dún Ormidale*'s surviving name consists of mixed elements of Gaelic and Old Norse, with the earlier element being ON *Orm* (possibly a name) + *-dalr* "valley",<sup>1386</sup> which was later prefixed to G *dún* "fort".<sup>1387</sup> The use of *-dalr* as a place-name generic is known on the western coast of Scotland, and can be connected with Norse settlements, especially in this coastal area.<sup>1388</sup> Additional local Norse place-names include: those in ON *sandr*, "sand" such as Glensanda (NM 820 468) and Inversanda (NM 939 594);<sup>1389</sup> and Eriska (NM 901 430), which is likely the name *Erik* + ON *ey*, "island";<sup>1390</sup> and those in ON *munkr/munkar* "monk/monks" such as Musdale, ARG (NM 935 221) and possibly also Eilean Musdile, ARG (NM 780 353).<sup>1391</sup> The survival of these Old Norse place-names on mainland Argyll highlights the very real presence of Norse

<sup>1385</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 16, 70, no. 137.

<sup>1386</sup> Ross G. Arthur, *English-Old Norse Dictionary* (Cambridge: Publications Linguistics Series, 2002), 156.

<sup>1387</sup> eDIL, s.v. "dún", accessed 5 Dec 2018. [www.dil.ie/19227](http://www.dil.ie/19227).

<sup>1388</sup> Arne Kruse, "Norse Topographical Settlement-Names on the Western Littoral of Scotland", in *In Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, (ed.) Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 107-108.

<sup>1389</sup> Arthur, *English-Old Norse*, 123.

<sup>1390</sup> *Ibid*, 80.

<sup>1391</sup> Denis Rixson, "Too Many *Papar* – Not Enough *Munkar*", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 5 (2011), 153, 160-163.

influence and settlement in what must be considered the immediate area of Lismore. The name of Argyll itself (from *airer Góidel*, “border/shore of the Gaels”),<sup>1392</sup> gives context for the mingling of peoples, languages, and cultures that occurred in the area of Lismore, whether this name was coined earlier because of the mixing of Gaelic and Pictish peoples, or following the advent of Norse language and peoples. Indeed, the runic inscription at Iona commemorating Fogl is evidence of the close relationships that could exist between the Norse and surviving churches in the west of Scotland.<sup>1393</sup> Jennings further argues for continuity of the networks and church organization for Iona,<sup>1394</sup> along with similar arguments for the survival of Christianity in Orkney,<sup>1395</sup> which may also be compared to the possible continuity of Lismore.

If Lismore remained part of the lands of Cenél Loairn into the ninth century, it may have participated in the change of focus towards Pictland by Dál Riata at that time, whether as a “rump” kingdom entering into treaty with Pictavia,<sup>1396</sup> or only semi-autonomous under Óengus mac Fergus (d. 834).<sup>1397</sup> However, it is also possible that the onset of the Viking Age and its instability allowed Lismore to continue as a place of importance within the west, with its own political development and focus, even while the general political interest of Dál Riata moved eastwards.<sup>1398</sup>

Márkus argues that the devastation of Pictish political strength by Norse invaders and settlers led to the relinquishing of the Hebrides c. 847,<sup>1399</sup> according to a note in the *Annals of St Bertin* in Francia which noted the Norse taking

---

<sup>1392</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 120-121.

<sup>1393</sup> Andrew Jennings, “Iona and the Vikings: Survival and Continuity”, *Northern Studies* 33 (1998), 47.

<sup>1394</sup> *Ibid*, 47-49.

<sup>1395</sup> Raymond Lamb, “Carolingian Orkney and its Transformation”, in *The Viking Age in Caithness, Orkney and the North Atlantic*, (ed) Christopher Morris, Colleen Batey, and Judith Jesch (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), 260-272.

<sup>1396</sup> Note the conquest of Lorn in the 730s and 740s by a Pictish king as noted in Fraser, “Three Thirds”, 148.

<sup>1397</sup> MacDonald, *Clerics and Clansmen*, 23; Alex Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba: 789-1070* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 62-66; Alex Woolf, “The Age of Sea-Kings: 900-1300”, in *The Argyll Book*, (ed) Donald Omand (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2004), 97-98; AU 834.1.

<sup>1398</sup> Lesley Abrams, “Conversion and the Church in the Hebrides in the Viking Age”, in *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 181-182.

<sup>1399</sup> Márkus, *Place-Names of Bute*, 27; Gilbert Márkus, *Conceiving a Nation: Scotland to AD 900* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 233; This argument was accepted by Whyte, “Settlement and Society”, 64.

possession of the islands around Ireland.<sup>1400</sup> This could have allowed space for Lorn to re-assert itself. This regional importance could help explain the later establishment of the bishopric of Argyll in Lismore in 1189. Norse presence in the middle of the tenth century “did not present an insurmountable impediment to structured ecclesiastical life”,<sup>1401</sup> possibly allowing churches with a strong saint cult focus and strong local associations to maintain continuity despite the potential for disruption to wider ecclesiastical relationships across the area,<sup>1402</sup> and it seems likely that Lismore had this capability. Indeed, the recent discovery of tenth century burials in the churchyard at Lismore shows a surviving continuity of use at the site.<sup>1403</sup>

The political focus of Gaelic Scotland in the ninth century was turning eastwards,<sup>1404</sup> though that does not mean that established sites, such as monasteries, necessarily lost their connections with other ecclesiastical foundations or their Communities to the west, especially in Ireland. More likely, they would have continued to make the journeys that maintained their connections and sense of community with their ecclesiastical contacts and worked to navigate through the new political landscape to obtain new secular support where necessary.

The development of Norse settlements and cultural areas in the Isles, especially in the ninth century, provides a changing context for political engagements and alliances, though it seems to go too far to suggest that they caused a complete cessation of contact between Dál Riata and Ulster. The Irish Sea was experiencing “intense political conflict and competition” during the ninth and tenth centuries,<sup>1405</sup> perhaps best exemplified by the year 849 which saw internecine strife between different groups of “foreigners”,<sup>1406</sup> and the removal

---

<sup>1400</sup> Janet Nelson (trans) (ed), *The Annals of St-Bertin* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), AD 847.

<sup>1401</sup> Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 201.

<sup>1402</sup> Dumville, *North Britain*, 18-19.

<sup>1403</sup> Ellis, “Lismore Glebe”, 16, 43.

<sup>1404</sup> James Fraser argues that Argyll and Alba were distinct political units, with the kings of Scots “turn[ing] their backs on the ancestral homeland”, in “From Ancient Scythia to the Problem of the Picts: Thoughts on The Quest for Pictish Origins”, in *Pictish Progress: New Studies on Northern Britain in the Middle Ages*, (ed) Stephen Driscoll, Jane Geddes, and Mark Hall (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 31.

<sup>1405</sup> Patrick Wadden, “Dál Riata c. 1000: Genealogies and Irish Sea Politics”, *Scottish Historical Review* 95:2 (2016), 169.

<sup>1406</sup> AU 849.6.



of the relics of Columba from Iona to Ireland,<sup>1407</sup> or perhaps split between Ireland and Dunkeld.<sup>1408</sup>

The general eastward movement of Dalriadic peoples in the ninth and tenth centuries may explain the claim of Rosemarkie to hold the body of Moluag,<sup>1409</sup> though Lismore itself seems to have maintained its own identity and connection to Moluag. Despite the turmoil and confusion of the time, there continued to be contact between the north of Ireland and west of Scotland.<sup>1410</sup> The kingdom of Dublin and its rulers maintained contact with the Western Isles through continued navigation, while also becoming active in Irish internal interests. Woolf argues for the nativization of at least some of the *Gaill* into Irish society by the time of the death of Amlaíb Cuarán (d. 980),<sup>1411</sup> and it should be possible to extrapolate the process of cultural assimilation described for Amlaíb outwards from Dublin, perhaps more so if one accepts Clancy's suggested division of Amlaíb's dominion into *Fine Gall* (Dublin with its hinterland), *na hInnsi*, (the isles, excluding Man), and *na Renna* (the Rhinns, around modern Wigtownshire).<sup>1412</sup> Wadden cautions that the resurgence of mentions of Dál Riata seen in 986 and 989 should be viewed in light of tenth century developments in the Irish Sea region, perhaps specifically noting Gofraid mac Arailt, described as *rí innse Gall* upon his death in AU 989,<sup>1413</sup> who may have participated in religious warfare between Columban houses.<sup>1414</sup> Further, Brian Bóruma's description as *imperator Scottorum* in the *Book of Armagh*,<sup>1415</sup> which may potentially have included a claim on Dalriadic territory in the west of Scotland, indicates the interest of multiple people in the control of Dál Riata,<sup>1416</sup> or at the very least, the value of connecting themselves to it. While much of this discussion is more

---

<sup>1407</sup> AU 849.7.

<sup>1408</sup> Anderson, *Early Sources*, 399, 407-408; Bannerman, "Comarba Coluim Chille", 29; Thomas Owen Clancy, "Iona, Scotland and the Céili Dé", in *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, (ed) Barbara E. Crawford (St Andrews: St John's House, 1996), 111-115.

<sup>1409</sup> Kenneth Veitch, "The Alliance between Church and State in Early Medieval Alba", *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30:2 (1998), 196; Woolf, "Age of Sea-Kings", 98.

<sup>1410</sup> Bannerman argues that the split of Iona's holdings between Dunkeld and Kells had little to do with Scandinavian incursions in "Comarba Coluim Chille", 42.

<sup>1411</sup> Woolf, "Amlaíb Cuarán and the Gael, 941-81", in *Medieval Dublin III*, (ed) Seán Duffy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), 34-43.

<sup>1412</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, "The Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 2 (2008), 27-28.

<sup>1413</sup> AU 989.4; AT 989.3.

<sup>1414</sup> Whyte, "Settlement and Society", 84.

<sup>1415</sup> Aubrey Gwynn, "Brian in Armagh (1005)", *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* 9 (1978), 35-51.

<sup>1416</sup> Wadden, "Dál Riata c. 1000", 174-175.

generally focused, the implications for Lismore itself suggest that it was able to maintain connections both eastwards and westwards throughout the ninth and tenth centuries.

## 5.7 Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries

The reconvening of the fair of Tailtiu c. 1007 has been associated with eleventh century concerns regarding overlordship and tribute between Ireland and Gaelic Scotland.<sup>1417</sup> Additional evidence shows that the people of Moray in the eleventh century traced their descent from Cenél Loairn,<sup>1418</sup> which may relate to the existence of rivals to the kingship from this area.<sup>1419</sup> It is possible that Lismore was at least tenuously part of the kingdom of Alba until c. 1141-1142, when David I of Scotland seems to have lost control of mainland Argyll to Somerled.<sup>1420</sup> Ailred of Rievaulx states in his account of the Battle of the Standard in 1138 that the king of Scots' third line included men of the Isles and men of Lorn, while the king "retained the Scots and the men of Moray in his own line",<sup>1421</sup> which suggests that Lorn was not considered part of the kingdom of Scots at that time. The quick ascent of Somerled carved territory away from both the king of Scots and the king of the Isles, including parts of the diocese of Dunkeld and what was to become the new bishopric of Lismore.<sup>1422</sup> The "Song of the Death of Somerled" also divides the "Argylesmen" from the "Albanians", or men of Scotland, perhaps further supporting this view.<sup>1423</sup>

---

<sup>1417</sup> Máire Herbert, "Sea-divided Gaels: constructing relationships between Irish and Scots, c. 800-1169", in *Britain and Ireland, 900-1300: Insular responses to medieval European change*, (ed) Brendan Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 92.

<sup>1418</sup> Anderson, *Kings and Kingship*, 204; Woolf, "Age of Sea-Kings" 98; Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 227-228, n. 11, 340-342; Alex Woolf, "The Moray Question", *The Scottish Historical Review* 79 (2000), 148-149; Alexander Grant, "The province of Ross and the Kingdom of Alba", in *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Middle Ages*, (eds) EJ Cowan and RA McDonald, 97; Wadden, "Dál Riata c. 1000", 167; Aidan MacDonald, *Curadán, Boniface and the early church of Rosemarkie* (Rosemarkie: The Trust, 1992), 29.

<sup>1419</sup> Wadden, "Dál Riata c. 1000", 179; Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 221-230.

<sup>1420</sup> Woolf, "Age of Sea-Kings", 103-104.

<sup>1421</sup> Jane Patricia Freeland (trans) and Marsha L. Dutton (ed). Aelred of Rievaulx. *Aelred of Rievaulx, The Historical Works* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 2005), 260.

<sup>1422</sup> Woolf, Alex. "The Diocese of the Sudreyar", in *Ecclesia Nidrosiensis 1153-1537*, (ed) Steinar Imsen (Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2003), 175.

<sup>1423</sup> Anderson, *Early Sources of Scottish History*, vol. 2, 256; *Argaidenses freti ui Albanica*, Alex Woolf, "The Song of the Death of Somerled", *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History* 14 (2013), Appendix.

*Dún Ollaig* appears to have been abandoned at some point in the tenth century and rebuilt in the late twelfth or thirteenth century,<sup>1424</sup> which may be connected to the continued importance of Lismore and its selection as the seat of the bishopric of Argyll. The diocese of Argyll was created via subdivision from Dunkeld in 1189, with the cathedral built at Kilmoluag on Lismore.<sup>1425</sup> Although the original siting of the cathedral on the island makes sense in terms of its accessibility and connection to *Dún Ollaig*, Lismore's position as seat of the bishopric did not last, and it has had more life as a parish church.<sup>1426</sup> It is possible that the clergy of Lismore, with local secular support, eventually chose to elect their own bishop.<sup>1427</sup> The fact that Lismore is not mentioned in the Papal Bull of March 1192, *cum Universi*,<sup>1428</sup> which named nine Scottish sees, may support the idea that Lismore was not at that time considered part of the kingdom of the Scots.<sup>1429</sup> Argyll does, however, appear in the *Liber Censuum*, dated around the same time as *Cum Universi*.<sup>1430</sup> This may indicate that the formation of Argyll was in contention at the time of the bull's issuance, perhaps on the part of the bishop of Dunkeld or even King William I.<sup>1431</sup> That the west as a whole lost importance for the kings of Scots is evidenced by the surviving textual record based in the east of the Scottish mainland, and it is likely that a west coast or Hebridean-based documentary source, had one survived, would contain a significantly altered perspective,<sup>1432</sup> and might show Lismore as an important Gaelic ecclesiastical centre.

It is possible, even considering the evidence of continuity at Lismore through the Viking Age, that there was a renewal or resurgence of the cult of Moluog in the twelfth century alongside the election of the bishop of Argyll. This could be seen

---

<sup>1424</sup> Alcock and Alcock, "Reconnaissance Excavations", 126-127.

<sup>1425</sup> Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 49; RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 160.

<sup>1426</sup> *Ibid.*, 160-161; Macdonald, "Lismore and Eigg", 49.

<sup>1427</sup> Woolf, "Diocese of the Sudreyar", 180.

<sup>1428</sup> For a detailed discussion on the context in which *Cum Universi* was written, see A.D.M. Barrell, "The Background to *Cum Universi*: Scoto-papal relations, 1159-1192", *Innes Review* 46.2 (1995), 116-138.

<sup>1429</sup> Woolf, "Diocese of the Sudreyar", 175.

<sup>1430</sup> P. Fabre and L. Duchesne (eds), *Le Liber Censuum de l'église romaine*. Bibliothèque de écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2e sér., 6 (Paris: 1889-1910), i, 232; Robert Somerville, *Scotia Pontificia: Papal Letters to Scotland before the Pontificate of Innocent III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 144, no. 157.

<sup>1431</sup> Barrell, "Background to *Cum Universi*", 134-135.

<sup>1432</sup> Lane and Campbell, *Dunadd*, 37.

through the enshrining of the *Bachull Mór* in the twelfth century, and the continued importance of the earlier bell associated with Moluog.<sup>1433</sup>

The name of the first recorded dean of Lismore, Gillemoluoc “servant of Moluog”, c. 1240, serves as evidence of the continuation of the cult of Moluog and “together with the surviving evidence as to the early composition of the cathedral clergy, suggests continuity from an earlier community”.<sup>1434</sup> The survival of the Appin place-name, from *apdaine* or abbey and referring to abbey lands,<sup>1435</sup> near Lismore likely indicates the existence of abbey-controlled lands connected to Lismore and further suggests continuity of the ecclesiastical centre of Lismore across the Viking Age.<sup>1436</sup> The construction of Dunstaffnage Castle at the mouth of Loch Etive (NM 88266 34491) in the thirteenth century underlines the continued importance of Lismore’s hinterland.<sup>1437</sup>

## 5.8 Cult of Moluag

The Cult of Moluog spread widely, in the Isles and across the Scottish mainland. There appears to have been primarily two parts of his cult, one which seems to have been earlier and in the west, and another which seems to have been later and in the east. In order to examine the spread of his cult, it is first necessary to understand the nature of the surviving sources.

An examination of the cult of Moluog gives additional perspective on the geographical connections made by the ecclesiastical centre on Lismore both during and after Moluog’s life and assists us in outlining where these connections were made; however, we must take care to consider the evidence for said cult activity as much of it dates to the twelfth century or later.<sup>1438</sup>

---

<sup>1433</sup> MacDonald, *Clerics and Clansmen*, 34.

<sup>1434</sup> MacDonald, *Clerics and Clansmen*, 34.

<sup>1435</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 124.

<sup>1436</sup> Macdonald, “Lismore and Eigg”, 50; Watson, *CPNS*, 124.

<sup>1437</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll: Lorn*, 198-211, no. 287.

<sup>1438</sup> Clancy, “Deer and the early church”, 390.

Dedications to Moluag are also found in the Hebrides at Raasay,<sup>1439</sup> Tiree,<sup>1440</sup> Skye,<sup>1441</sup> and Mull,<sup>1442</sup> though the current existence of hagiotonyms referring to him do not indicate whether the sites were founded by Moluag himself or by the spread of his cult more generally. The Database of Scottish Hagiotonyms identifies twenty-four place-names potentially associated with Moluag, with levels of certainty ranging from doubtful (Percylieu, in Clatt), to certain (thirteen sites).<sup>1443</sup> The certain and probable sites are spread widely across Scotland, including in Argyll, Renfrewshire, the Hebrides, and Aberdeenshire.

**Table 5.7 Hagiotonyms associated with Moluag (data from DoSH).**

Name	Location	NGR	Probability
Croit Moluag	Dores, INV	NH 539 250	Certain
St Moluag's Chapel	Dores, INV	NH 539 250	Certain
St Maol-luag's Chapel	Raasay	NG 548 366	Certain
Cill Moluaig	Lismore & Appin, ARG	NM 860 435	Certain
Suidhe Mo-Luáig	Lismore & Appin, ARG	NM 869 440	Certain
Port Moluag	Lismore & Appin, ARG	NM 871 432	Certain
Ecclesia Sancti Moloci	Clatt, ABD	NJ 538 259	Certain
Kilmaluag	Skye	NG 435 749	Certain
Kilmaluag	Tiree	NL 960 460	Certain
St Moluag's Church	Lewis	NB 519 651	Certain
Kilmaluag	Harris	NF 889 869	Certain
Kilmaluig	Mull	NM 355 488	Certain
Dochmaluag	Fodderty, ROS	NH 519 599	Certain
Cill Mo luaig	Tarland, ABD	NJ 481 043	Probable
Cill Maluaig	South Knapdale, ARG	NR 722 696	Probable
Cloch Maluidh	Rhynie, ABD	NJ 484 290	Probable
Kilmaluag	Kilmacollm, RNF	NS 360 720	Probable
Kilmaluag	Killeen & Kilchenzie, ARG	NR 700 379	Probable
St Luke's Chapel	Kildrummy, ABD	NJ 455 212	Probable
St Luke's Well	Kildrummy, ABD	NJ 457 212	Probable
Tobar Ma Luaig	Inverallan & Advie, MOR	NJ 065 289	Probable
St Luke's Chapel	Harris	NF 970 913	Probable
St Luag's Church	Rhynie, ABD	NJ 497 271	Probable
Percylieu	Clatt, ABD	NJ 534 264	Doubtful

<sup>1439</sup> Kilmoluag (NG 548 366), possibly a sixth century foundation as noted in the notes of a field visit from 2005, by JS Wood and J Macdonald, "Skye, Raasay, St Maol-luag's Chapel". Canmore. Accessed 8 October 2018. [canmore.org.uk/event/928448](http://canmore.org.uk/event/928448); DoSH, "St Maol-Luag's Chapel, Portree (Raasay)". Accessed 9 October 2018. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1321372054&name\\_id=24726](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1321372054&name_id=24726).

<sup>1440</sup> Kilmaluag, Blaeu, *Lorna cum insulis vicinis* [Map].

<sup>1441</sup> Kilmaluag, mentioned c. 1630 in Macfarlane's Geographical Collections. Additionally, a "Master Mertyn M' Gillemertyne" is noted as rector at this church between 1507 and 1536 in Innes and Brichan. *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, 348-349.

<sup>1442</sup> Kilmaluig, Blaeu, *Lorna cum insulis vicinis* [Map].

<sup>1443</sup> DoSH, "Mo Luóc M. Luchta of Lismore".



marked contrast to much of the eastern cult. In these place-names it is possible to see the seascape within which the cult of Moluag travelled.

The site at St Maol-luag's Chapel on the southwest side of Raasay, just where the modern ferry from Skye lands, is particularly interesting due to its closeness to Applecross (approximately 23km by boat), the survival of seventh-century cross-incised stones,<sup>1444</sup> and a Class I Pictish stone, which bears an incised cross of arcs.<sup>1445</sup> The current church structure has been dated to the thirteenth century, and may overlay an earlier religious site,<sup>1446</sup> though no evidence yet confirms this theory. It has been suggested that the founders may have come from Lismore or Bangor,<sup>1447</sup> though evidence for this claim is lacking.<sup>1448</sup> If Raasay had a Bangor connection, one would expect to see evidence of a connection between Raasay and Applecross (see chapter 4 for additional detail on Applecross).

The parish of Kirk Malew, Rushen, Isle of Man is likely associated with Moluag,<sup>1449</sup> though Broderick argues that it may more likely refer to Mo-Lúa of Clúain-fert-Molúa,<sup>1450</sup> with whom we have previously seen our Moluag confused (see section 5.2.1). However, Maughold (in the east of the Isle of Man) shows stylistic similarities to sculpture from Pictland, specifically in a style which Trench-Jellicoe argues to be Columban in the mid- to late ninth century,<sup>1451</sup> indicating connections both east and west for Man. Rushen was granted to the Sauvignac order in 1134 and incorporated within the Cistercian order in 1148,<sup>1452</sup> which could have brought it into closer contact with Bangor from that time. That Cristinus, an intermediate bishop of Man between Rogvald (d. 1170) and John

---

<sup>1444</sup> RCAHMS. *Ninth report with inventory of monuments*, 178, No. 573; Fisher, *EMS*, 104, no. 34.

<sup>1445</sup> *Ibid.*, 103; Alastair Mack, *Field guide to the Pictish symbol stones*. (Balgavies: Pinkfoot Press, 1997), 113.

<sup>1446</sup> Wood, "Skye, Raasay, St Maol-luag's Chapel".

<sup>1447</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1448</sup> Sharpe, *Raasay*, 23-25.

<sup>1449</sup> Wolf, "Diocese of the Sudreyar", 175.

<sup>1450</sup> George Broderick, *A Dictionary of Manx Place-Names* (Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, 2006), 195.

<sup>1451</sup> Ross Trench-Jellicoe, "Manx Sculptured Monuments and the Early Viking Age", in *Mannin Revisited: Twelve Essays on Manx Culture and Environment*. (ed) Peter Davey, David Finlayson, and Philippa Tomlinson. (Edinburgh: Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 2002), 23-25, 30.

<sup>1452</sup> J.C. Atkinson and J. Brownbill, *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey*. Vol. II (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1886), 708-709; Alex Woolf, "The Cult of Moluag, the See of Mortlach and Church Organisation in Northern Scotland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries", in *Fil Súil nGlais/A Grey Eye Looks Back: A Festschrift in Honour of Colm Ó Baoil*, (ed) Sharon J. Arbuthnot and Kaarina Hollo (Ceann Drochaid: Clann Tuirc, 2007), 299.

(consecrated c. 1210), was said to be from Argyll and buried at Bangor is further evidence for connection between Man and the wider community of Bangor from at least the twelfth century.<sup>1453</sup>

### 5.8.2 Eastern Cult

It has been proposed that Moluag's cult experienced an eastwards expansion in the ninth and tenth centuries, likely spreading as part of the Moray expansion of Cenél Loairn during the ninth and tenth centuries to such places as Fodderty, ROS (which we have already seen in connection with Maelruba in section 4.4.2); Inverfarigaig, INV; Strathspey, MOR; Cromdale, MOR; Chapel Park, MOR; Mortlach, BNF; Clova, ANG; Kildrummy, ABD; Clatt, ABD; and Tarland, ABD.<sup>1454</sup> Part of this eastward expansion may have been due to a change in the political fortunes of Cenél Loairn and Dál Riata.<sup>1455</sup> Clancy suggests a slower, long-term Gaelic acculturation of the northeast, which could have caused existing foundations such as Clova, Kildrummy, and Clatt to change dedication to Moluag based on an increased influence from Mortlach.<sup>1456</sup> He further suggests, though unsupported by surviving evidence, the possibility that Lismore additionally served as a site for the training of Pictish clergy, possibly in the seventh or early eighth centuries, which “would account for the greater penetration of Mo Luag's cult into the straths of Spey, Dee and Don”.<sup>1457</sup>

The cult of Moluag spread northeast to include Inverfarigaig along the eastern shore of Loch Ness, with a possible new eastern cult centre at Rosemarkie and additional expansion east into Mortlach, Clatt, Clova, and Kildrummy.<sup>1458</sup> The *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* notes a discrepancy in the sources for the whereabouts of Moluag's body, or possibly just that his relics, and not his body, remained at Lismore.<sup>1459</sup> The claim of Rosemarkie to the body of Moluag suggests

<sup>1453</sup> Woolf, “Diocese of the Sudreyar”, 175; *Cronica Regum Mannie et insularum*, British Library, Cotton MS Julius A. VII, f. 50v.

<sup>1454</sup> Clancy, “Deer and the early church”, 388; Watson, *CPNS*, 293; Mackinlay, *Ancient Church Dedications in Scotland*, 157-161; Alex Woolf, “Cult of Moluag”, 311-312.

<sup>1455</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 397.

<sup>1456</sup> Clancy, “Deer and the early church”, 388-389.

<sup>1457</sup> *Ibid*, 388, 392.

<sup>1458</sup> *Ibid*, 389; Woolf, “Cult of Moluag”, 312, 322.

<sup>1459</sup> Innes and Brichan, *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, 159, n. 9; The relics of Moluag at Lismore and his body at Rosemarkie are also noted in *Acta Sanctorum, Molocus seu Molonachus, Episcopus in Scotia*, Joseph Hippolyte Ghesquière, Corneille Smet, and Jean François Thys. *Acta Sanctorum Belgii Selecta: Quae Tum Ex Monumentis Sinceris in Bollandiano Opere Editis,*



the importance of either real or perceived connections between Ross, Moray, and Lorn, also noted in the sixteenth century *Aberdeen Breviary*.<sup>1460</sup> This association with Moluag should be viewed in light of the Moray expansion of Cenél Loairn in the ninth and tenth centuries,<sup>1461</sup> and the further twelfth century claims of kinship between the people of Moray and Cenél Loairn.<sup>1462</sup> The desire for eleventh-century rulers of Moray to show hereditary association with Cenél Loairn is recorded in the fifteenth century *Book of Ballymote*, which traces descent from Ferchar Fota of Cenél Loairn (d.697).<sup>1463</sup> Some suggest this is due to the physical movement of members of Cenél Loairn into Moray, who would naturally have brought the worship of their own saints with them.<sup>1464</sup> There is little firm evidence to suggest direct hereditary relationships between the rulers of Moray and Cenél Loairn. The proliferation of the cults of Moluag and Maelruba is interesting and may suggest a movement of both cults with Cenél Loairn.

A small cluster of place-names does appear around Clatt (St Moluag's Church, Clatt - NJ 53 259), Rhynie (Cloch Maluidh, Rhynie - NJ 484 290), and Kildrummy (St Luke's Well, Kildrummy - NJ 457 212 - and St Luke's Chapel, Kildrummy - NJ 455 212), with a "maybe" site (as defined by the DoSH project) at St Luag's Church, Rhynie (NJ 497 271) and the previously mentioned "doubtful" site at Percylieu, Clatt (NJ 534 264). The density of Moluag placenames in Rhynie, Clatt, and Kildrummy suggests the importance of the cult in this area, which tracks with the general expansion of Cenél Loairn in the ninth century.

Although outside this specific cluster of Moluag hagiotoponyms, Mortlach is of interest as Mortlach Church is dedicated to Moluag and sits approximately 25km inland from the Moray Firth where it meets the mouth of the river Spey.<sup>1465</sup> There

---

Tum Ex Vastissimo Illo Opere, Servatâ Primigeniâ Scriptorum Phrasi (Bruxellis: typis Matthaei Lemaire, 1783), June VI, 240-241.

<sup>1460</sup> AB 25 Jun, 154-155.

<sup>1461</sup> Clancy, "Deer and the early church", 388-389.

<sup>1462</sup> Anderson, *Kings and Kingship*, 204; Woolf, "Age of Sea-Kings", 98; Woolf, *Pictland to Alba*, 227-228, n. 11, 340-342; Grant, "The province of Ross", 97; Woolf, "Cult of Moluag", 318.

<sup>1463</sup> AU 697.1, AT 697.2; MacDonald, *Curadán*, 29; Woolf, Alex. "The Moray Question", *The Scottish Historical Review* 79 (2000), 148.

<sup>1464</sup> MacDonald, *Curadán*, 29; Nick Aitchison, *Macbeth: Man and Myth* (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 30, 39.

<sup>1465</sup> Penelope Dransart, "Saints, stones and shrines: the cults of St Moluag and Gerardine in Pictland", in *Celtic hagiography and saints' cults*, (ed) Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 236-238; Dufftown Magazine. "Welcome to Dufftown", Dufftown 2000, Ltd. Accessed 7 Dec 2018. [www.dufftown.co.uk/documents/DUFFTOWN-MAGAZINE-Mar2018-onlineF.pdf](http://www.dufftown.co.uk/documents/DUFFTOWN-MAGAZINE-Mar2018-onlineF.pdf).

is strong evidence of early settlement at Mortlach visible through the surviving Class I and Class II Pictish stones.<sup>1466</sup> The church was granted by King Máel Coluim mac Donnchada (Malcolm III - 1058-1093) as the episcopal seat of the bishops of Aberdeen,<sup>1467</sup> though any discernible connection with Moluag seems tenuous and may be drawn from a potentially apocryphal story that the *comarba* of Moluag was based at Mortlach c. 1065-1130.<sup>1468</sup> Clatt, approximately 30km from Mortlach, if taking into consideration the likely used travel routes between them, has a somewhat similar situation in that it is also known as an early settlement site due to the survival of Class I Pictish stones,<sup>1469</sup> and it is suggested that the Parson of Clatt himself may have had a hand in the creation of the *Aberdeen Breviary*, which may help explain why Moluag gets particular attention there.<sup>1470</sup>

Rosemarkie, situated on the shore of Rosemarkie Bay and within 15km of modern Inverness by boat, is identified as the burial place of Moluag in the *Aberdeen Breviary*.<sup>1471</sup> This is curious as Rosemarkie has a strong association with Curetán, bishop of Rosemarkie, who was still alive in 697.<sup>1472</sup> Curetán was the twenty-second name listed as a signatory of *Cáin Adomnán*.<sup>1473</sup> Henderson has argued that Rosemarkie, and perhaps Curetán, may have been part of the monastic *familia* of Moluag, from which he could have “engaged in putting through the Roman reforms decreed by Nechtan in the early-eighth-century”.<sup>1474</sup> It seems more likely, however, that the association was created as Cenél Loairn moved eastwards, drawing the cult of Moluag along with it.<sup>1475</sup> The surviving sculpture, including a Class II Pictish stone and an Early Christian cross-slab, indicate that

<sup>1466</sup> Mortlach 1 and 2: RCAHMS, *Pictish symbol stones: a handlist* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1994), 13.

<sup>1467</sup> Cosmo Innes (ed), *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis: Ecclesie cathedralis aberdonensis regesta que extant in unum collecta* (Publisher not identified, 1845), 3; translation in Woolf, “Cult of Moluag”, 312-313.

<sup>1468</sup> Woolf mentions this but does not provide any evidence for it in “Cult of Moluag”, 322.

<sup>1469</sup> Canmore. Clatt, Clatt 2. Accessed 25 November 2018. [canmore.org.uk/site/17676/clatt-clatt-2](http://canmore.org.uk/site/17676/clatt-clatt-2);

Canmore. Clatt, Clatt 3. Accessed 25 November 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/319685/clatt-clatt-3](http://canmore.org.uk/site/319685/clatt-clatt-3).

<sup>1470</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, xxvi.

<sup>1471</sup> *AB* 25 Jun; Woolf, “Age of Sea-Kings”, 98.

<sup>1472</sup> Woolf, “Cult of Moluag”, 312.

<sup>1473</sup> Márkus, *Conceiving a Nation*, 176-177.

<sup>1474</sup> Isabel Henderson, *The Art & Function of Rosemarkie's Pictish Monuments*. (Rosemarkie: Groam House Museum, 1990), 21-22.

<sup>1475</sup> MacDonald, *Curadán*, 29; MacDonald, *Clerics and Clansmen*, 23; Woolf, “Cult of Moluag”, 312, 317; Fraser, “Strangers”, 112; Clancy, “Deer and the early church”, 385-389.

Rosemarkie had a high degree of importance in the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>1476</sup> Rosemarkie may have had some degree of interaction with Lismore, as the two centres lay at opposite ends of the major northeast to southwest passage through mainland Scotland. However, Rosemarkie was not necessarily under the influence of the earlier church, and it may only have been later that deep connections were created for some perceived benefit of Rosemarkie itself.

## 5.9 Conclusion

Based on the surviving physical and textual evidence, it is clear that Lismore itself was an important foundation from at least the eighth century and into the final years of the twelfth century. The stylistic similarities of sculpture between Lismore, Islay, and Iona, combined with its physical location speaks to Lismore's connection with other ecclesiastical and secular locations, indicating long term movement of people and ideas. The importance of Moluag in both east and west into the twelfth century and beyond, speaks to the staying power of his cult.

The connection that this thesis focuses on is that of Bangor. Aidan MacDonald argues that the only evidence of a relationship between Bangor and Lismore is through *The Life of St Malachy*, though "it appears from this that a tradition existed according to which Bangor claimed such a relationship at one time, whether or not it was ever recognized by Lismore".<sup>1477</sup> Based on the evidence presented in this chapter, it does not seem clear that Bangor ever really made an effort to claim authority over Lismore, nor is there much evidence upon which to posit a relationship between Lismore and Bangor.

As discussed, Moluag's family connections are only specified in later sources, such as *The Aberdeen Breviary* and *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hibernia*, meaning that they are not contemporary and could easily be associated with a later creation rather than an actual sixth-century relationship between the founders and monasteries. Despite more recent suggestions by modern historians that Moluag studied at Bangor and was thus part of the Community of Comgall,

---

<sup>1476</sup> RCAHMS, *The archaeological sites and monuments of the Black Isle, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region, The archaeological sites and monuments of Scotland series no 9.* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1979), 19, No. 122.

<sup>1477</sup> Macdonald, "Early churches of Tiree", 230.

the evidence does not seem to support this idea, making it highly unlikely that Lismore Moluag was part of the Community of Comgall.

## 6 Tiree

### 6.1 Introduction

While previous chapters have focused on specific ecclesiastical sites, this chapter looks at the island of Tiree as a whole as there appears to have been multiple foundations on the island by important saints, all within the same period. Specific associations with Comgall, Cainnech, Brendan, and Columba on an island which appears at first glance to be situated far on the periphery of the early medieval world lends Tiree a high degree of interest, especially considering the density of early medieval ecclesiastical foundations. As with previous chapters, the investigation here considers textual, archaeological, art historical, and place-name evidence with the aim of identifying links of various types between ecclesiastical sites. This should lead to a better understanding of early Christianity in the North Channel seascape and Tiree's connections outwards to both the west of Scotland and the north of Ireland.

Tiree is the westernmost island of the Inner Hebrides and can seem, from our modern perspective, to sit in a peripheral and inaccessible place. While its inhabitants likely conceived of it thus in relation to Jerusalem or Rome, in its own local sphere it would have been more accessible than is considered by modern perspectives. Thomas O'Loughlin provides a useful discussion of contemporary perspectives of Iona in the wider world during the early medieval period, though the part of greatest interest here is the discussion on how *Vita Columbae* described its local area: its islands were conceived as comprising a province of Britain.<sup>1478</sup> The geographical location of Iona was of high value in its seascape due to its central position between the north of Ireland and the west of Scotland, as well as being a convenient staging post between the Inner and Outer Hebrides. Adomnán notes that it is possible to sail from Iona to *Mag Luinge* within half a day,<sup>1479</sup> a distance of perhaps 40km. Tiree is the sixth largest island of the Inner Hebrides, comprising approximately 7800 hectares, a large proportion of which is fertile and useful. Rum, the fifth largest island measures at over 10,400 hectares, though its useful land area is quite small. It has been

---

<sup>1478</sup> Thomas O'Loughlin, "Living in the Ocean", in *Studies in the Cult of St Columba*, (ed) Cormac Bourke (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997), 19-20.

<sup>1479</sup> VC II.15.

estimated that, between approximately 800 BC and AD 400, Tiree had a population of about 600 people.<sup>1480</sup> There are three theories regarding the linguistic situation on Tiree prior to the arrival of Norse: that its inhabitants were Pictish speaking, following an argument of later Gaelicisation;<sup>1481</sup> that the island may have fallen within a zone of Gaelic development, arguing that Gaelic as a language need not be an interloper from Ireland, but rather developed within a cultural zone which included Hebridean islands, especially those in easy reach of Ireland;<sup>1482</sup> or that there was a Gaelic-speaking elite within a Pictish-speaking indigenous population.<sup>1483</sup> As will be seen, given Tiree's position within a seascape wherein travel was well attested, it seems most likely that Gaelic and Pictish were both in use on the island from the early periods of its development.

Columba's foundation can be expected to be Gaelic and Latin-speaking at the very least, if the story of Columba needing a translator to communicate with a man on Skye is any indication.<sup>1484</sup> However, it is possible (perhaps probable, considering Columba's excursion to Fortriu) that members of his Community could themselves speak Pictish. By the seventh century, Tiree was likely under the overlordship of Cenél Loairn (see section 5.5), placing it firmly in a Gaelic-speaking political arena, even if exposure and interaction with Pictish peoples, language, and culture was frequent.<sup>1485</sup>

---

<sup>1480</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 50.

<sup>1481</sup> Márkus, *Place-Names of Bute*, 19.

<sup>1482</sup> Campbell, "Scots Irish?" 290.

<sup>1483</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 53; Relevant here is Clancy's observation that Tiree originally had the Celtic name *Rincina*, recorded by Ptolemy, but by Adomnán's day had obtained the Gaelic name Tír-iath, in "Hebridean connections", 32-33.

<sup>1484</sup> VC I.33.

<sup>1485</sup> Alan Macniven, "The Norse in Islay: A settlement Historical Case-Study for Medieval Scandinavian Activity in Western Maritime Scotland" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006), 43.

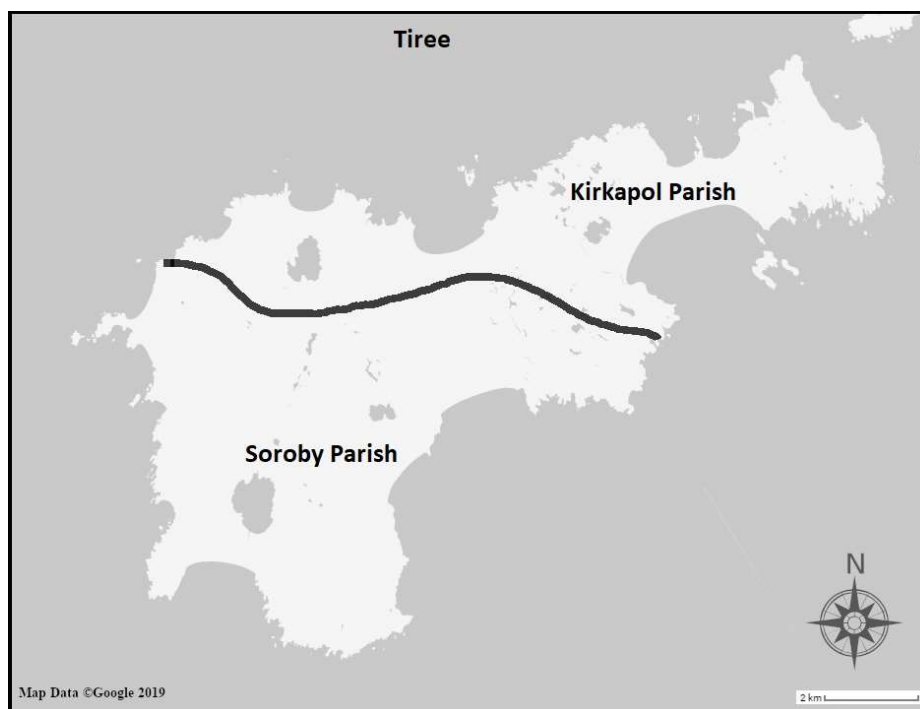


Figure 6.1 Tiree Parish Map

Tiree was divided into two parishes, centred on Soroby and Kirkapoll, following the creation of the diocese of Sodor and Man c. 1135.<sup>1486</sup> The boundary ran predominantly from east to west, beginning just south of Scarinish, and ending at a point just northwest of Ben Hough.<sup>1487</sup> Elsewhere in Scotland, twelfth-century parish boundaries appear to reflect earlier ecclesiastical and secular units. A confirmation charter from 1380 names “the church of St Columba of Tiree” as belonging to Ardchattan Priory, though it is unclear whether this referred to Kirkapoll or to Soroby.<sup>1488</sup> A church dedicated to Columba is first attested at Soroby c. 1421,<sup>1489</sup> which could possibly be that referred to in the 1380 charter. The extent of Iona’s land holdings on Tiree becomes even more visible in the sixteenth century, where Kirkapoll is “allegit pertening to the abbay of Icomkill”.<sup>1490</sup> In 1561 the Abbot of Iona held “the personag of Soiribie in

<sup>1486</sup> Macniven, *Vikings in Islay*, 95.

<sup>1487</sup> 1380 ER 13, 216-217; Sarah Thomas, “Beyond the Parish Church: A Study of Chapels in the Parishes of Kirkapoll on Tiree and Snizort on Skye”, *Journal of the North Atlantic* 2015 (901), 73-74.

<sup>1488</sup> Charles Burns, (trans). Clement VII. *Calendar of Papal Letters to Scotland of Clement VII of Avignon, 1378-1394*. vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1976), 46; J.R.N. Macphail, *Highland Papers*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1914), 138-140.

<sup>1489</sup> Macphail, *Highland Papers*, vol. 4, 169.

<sup>1490</sup> ER 17, 615; Janet MacDonald, “Iona’s local associations in Argyll and the Isles, c1203-c1575” (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2010).

Teirie”,<sup>1491</sup> while the Bishop of the Isles held the church of “Kirkapost in Teirie”, and “the personage of Kirkapost in Teirie”.<sup>1492</sup>

This chapter will consider two main questions: first, whether the evidence supports the idea that four separate monastic foundations were actually established on Tiree by the seventh century; and second, what is the likelihood that Comgall himself (or any part of the Community of Comgall) had a tangible connection to the island. A basic background will be established, followed by an examination of hagiographical material. There is a notable disconnect between the written sources and the state of evidence on the ground at Tiree. The place-name evidence begins a transition towards the investigation of the extant sites, and the conclusion will include an analysis on whether any of the surviving sites can be matched up with those mentioned in the texts.

## 6.2 Tiree in the Historical Record

The island of Tiree is referred to in a range of sources from as early as the seventh century, including annals, saints’ lives, and the *Aberdeen Breviary*, testifying first to the fortune of its survival, but also to its continued importance due to inclusion in the *Breviary*.<sup>1493</sup> Looking at the textual evidence for Tiree gives a starting point from which to attempt to amalgamate the various types of sources for the island in the sixth through tenth centuries.

### 6.2.1 Annalistic Evidence

*Mag Luinge*, a dependent foundation which was part of the Community of Columba (see section 6.2.2) which has been confidently located on Tiree,<sup>1494</sup> is mentioned twice in the annals, an indication of its importance to the authors of the “Iona Chronicle”, and thus in the *Annals of Ulster* (see section 2.1). The first of these entries is in AU 673 when the burning of *Mag Luinge* was reported,<sup>1495</sup>

---

<sup>1491</sup> Iona Club. *Collectanea De Rebus Albanicis: Consisting of Original Papers and Documents Relating to the History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1847), 2.

<sup>1492</sup> Iona Club, *Collectanea*, 3-4.

<sup>1493</sup> Mac Donald, “Early churches of Tiree”, 220-221.

<sup>1494</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 92, 279; William Reeves, “The Island of Tiree”, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 2 (1854), 233-234; MacDonald, “Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*”, 221-223.

<sup>1495</sup> AU 673.1; AT 673.5.



and the second was a notice in AU 775 of the death of Conall of *Mag Luinge*,<sup>1496</sup> likely the superior at that time. This can be compared with the entries of nearby Eigg, another small island which has been noted for its importance, which has three mentions in the annals.<sup>1497</sup> These three entries include: AU 617 on the martyrdom of St Donnán of Eigg,<sup>1498</sup> the death of Oan, abbot of Eigg in AU 725,<sup>1499</sup> and the death of Cummene grandson of Becce, a religious man of Eigg in AU 752.<sup>1500</sup> The record of the devastation of Uist (*Ibdig*) in AU 672 further shows that annalists were interested in activity in the area.<sup>1501</sup> Although the location is not specified, an additional entry reports the killing of Áed Dub mac Suibne on a ship in AU 588,<sup>1502</sup> which appears to correspond with a prophecy in Adomnán's *Vita Sancti Columbae* that reports the "invalid" ordination of this Áed Dub mac Suibne on Tiree and foretells his death on a ship,<sup>1503</sup> a story which may have been inserted later based on Adomnán's story, as the annals are unlikely to have been contemporary c. 588.

## 6.2.2 Hagiographic Evidence

The importance of Tiree is further reflected in the fact that specific mentions of Tiree are seen seven times in *Vita Columbae*, and once each in *Vita Sancti Comgalli*, *Vita Sancti Cainnechi abbatis de Achad Bo*, and *Vita Altera Sancti Brendani*. We can see the various forms the name Tiree takes in the *Vitae* in Table 6.1.

*Mag Luinge* has been comfortably associated with Tiree based on descriptions in VC. Adomnán describes the experience of sailing to it, noting both that it is north of Iona and that one can make a direct course towards it.<sup>1504</sup> It is an obviously fertile place, notable by Adomnán's inclusion of the order for food to be dispatched from there.<sup>1505</sup>

---

<sup>1496</sup> AU 775.1.

<sup>1497</sup> AU 617.1, 725.7, 752.2; AT 616.1, 752.3.

<sup>1498</sup> AU 617.1; AT 616.1.

<sup>1499</sup> AU 725.7.

<sup>1500</sup> AU 752.2; AT 752.3.

<sup>1501</sup> AU 672.2; Thomas Owen Clancy has argued convincingly that *Ibdig* should be understood as a referring to Uist in Clancy, "Hebridean Connections", 32-38.

<sup>1502</sup> AU 588.4.

<sup>1503</sup> *quamvis non recte*, VC I.36.

<sup>1504</sup> VC I.19, II.15.

<sup>1505</sup> VC I.41.

Table 6.1 Hagiographic Mentions of Tíree and the form used in the original text.

Source	Form
VC I.19	<i>Ethicam</i>
VC I.19	<i>Ethicam insulam</i>
VC I.36	<i>Ethica terra</i>
VC II.15	<i>Aethicam</i>
VC II.15	<i>Etheticam terram</i>
VC II.39	<i>Ethica</i>
VC III.8	<i>Ethicam</i>
VBaith §9	<i>terra Heth</i>
VCom §22	<i>regione Heth</i>
VCain §26	<i>regione Heth</i>
VBren §15	<i>terra Ethica</i>

Adomnán is perhaps the best place to start as his work is earliest in date and provides the most mentions (six) of Tíree. These provide details about the purported relationship between Iona and *Mag Luinge* including: the discussion of a whale along the sea route between Iona and *Mag Luinge*;<sup>1506</sup> a penitent sent to *Mag Luinge*'s superior, Baithéne;<sup>1507</sup> Columba ordering “a fat beast and six measures of grain” to be sent to a man who had planned to steal from Iona;<sup>1508</sup> Baithéne sailing from Iona to *Mag Luinge*;<sup>1509</sup> Librán sent to *Mag Luinge* to serve penance;<sup>1510</sup> and a demonic attack on Tíree.<sup>1511</sup> The *Vita Sancti Baithini*, however, is the only source thus far which explicitly places Columba on Tíree to found *Mag Luinge*.<sup>1512</sup> The demonic attack and the mention of Findchán's monastery of Artchain on Tíree are the only mentions within VC that note other, likely non-Columban monasteries on the island.<sup>1513</sup>

Adomnán gives a clear impression of the relationship between *Mag Luinge* and Iona in VC, and *Vita sancti Baithini* states explicitly that *Mag Luinge* was founded by Columba.<sup>1514</sup> Even though Adomnán could not describe *Mag Luinge* exactly as it was in Columba's own day, we may view this description as insight into how Adomnán wanted to present these sites and their relationship in the

<sup>1506</sup> VC I.19.

<sup>1507</sup> VC I.30.

<sup>1508</sup> VC I.41.

<sup>1509</sup> VC II.15.

<sup>1510</sup> VC II.39.

<sup>1511</sup> VC III.8; MacDonald provides a fuller discussion of these events in “Early churches of Tíree”, 221-223; see also MacDonald, “Iona's style of government”, 174-186.

<sup>1512</sup> *quodque per sanctum Columbam in terra Heth fundatum est*, VBaith §9.

<sup>1513</sup> VC I.36.

<sup>1514</sup> VBaith §9.

seventh and early eighth centuries, before the coming of the Norse. *Mag Luinge* had a prior,<sup>1515</sup> as did the monastery on the unlocated island of Hinba,<sup>1516</sup> both positions that Baithéne held before succeeding Columba as head of his Community.<sup>1517</sup> Baithéne is mentioned in fourteen different stories in *VC*,<sup>1518</sup> which shows how important he was considered by Adomnán. Baithéne was born in AT 534<sup>1519</sup> and died in AT 596.<sup>1520</sup> At one point he held the position of *dispensator operum*, “dispenser of tasks”.<sup>1521</sup>

This suggests there was an overall organizational structure into which *Mag Luinge*, Hinba and the other dependent foundations in both Ireland and Scotland fit as part of a wider Community of Columba.<sup>1522</sup> It is also made clear that *Mag Luinge* was a place to which those undergoing long periods of penance were sent,<sup>1523</sup> though there were also penitents on Hinba.<sup>1524</sup> It might be argued that *Mag Luinge* was a major dependent foundation as Baithéne was prior there before taking over as Columba’s successor. Adomnán portrays *Mag Luinge* as a very fertile place, with grain, cattle, and reeds cultivated there.<sup>1525</sup>

It is interesting that Librán was sent as a messenger on the business of Iona from *Mag Luinge* to Durrow in Ireland.<sup>1526</sup> This suggests that dependent foundations may have had direct contact with each other rather than only directly with the primary foundation. The details that can be cautiously obtained from *Vita Columbae* and *Vita Baithini* may serve as a framework upon which to hang the scanty mentions of lesser foundations on Tiree suggested for Comgall, Cainnech, and Brendan. If these other monasteries were also places of penitential work and waystations to provision travelling members of each saint’s Community, it might be expected that the physical evidence of the sites in question could be small. Indeed, the site on Tiree with the most surviving visible and early physical remains is not a large site. The space within the enclosure wall at *Teampall*

---

<sup>1515</sup> *Praepositum*, *VC* I.30, I.41, III.8.

<sup>1516</sup> *VC* I.21, I.45.

<sup>1517</sup> *VC* I.21, I.30, I.41, III.8.

<sup>1518</sup> *VC* I.2, I.19, I.21, I.22, I.23, I.30, I.37, I.41, II.15, II.39, II.45, III.8, III.18, III.23.

<sup>1519</sup> AT 534.3

<sup>1520</sup> AT 534.3, 596.1; AU 598.1.

<sup>1521</sup> *VC* I.37.

<sup>1522</sup> Herbert, *IKD*, 33-35; MacDonald, “Iona’s style of government”, 485.

<sup>1523</sup> *VC* I.30, II.39.

<sup>1524</sup> *VC* I.21.

<sup>1525</sup> *VC* I.41, II.39.

<sup>1526</sup> *VC* II.39.

*Phàraig* measures perhaps 36m in diameter (see section 6.4.6). The lack of surviving information on Cainnech and Brendan's foundations sadly means we may never know the full extent and purpose of their foundations.

Adomnán mentions the existence of other monasteries on the island of Tíree, most notably in the story of the preservation of all but one of Baithéne's monks from a sickness brought by demons: "For while many in the other monasteries of the same island died of that disease, only the one man of whom the saint had spoken died in Baithéne's community".<sup>1527</sup> We have already seen mention of one of these other monasteries, that of Artchain, founded by Findchán. It is very unusual that Adomnán should mention another monastery in the western islands, as his tendency was only to mention monasteries that were part of the community of Columba. As an example, there is no mention in *Vita Columbae* of Eigg or Lismore. From this we may presume that additional monasteries were either known of, or were surviving on Tíree during Adomnán's day. If these monasteries were not Columban, we must consider to whom else they belonged. By examining which other saints are referred to in *Vita Columbae*, we may get an idea of which hagiographies to look at for additional mentions of foundations on Tíree.

Comgall (c. 516 - 602)<sup>1528</sup> was mentioned three times by Adomnán, once in Ireland after the Convention of Druim Cett,<sup>1529</sup> once when Columba prayed for the salvation of some of Comgall's monks on the sea,<sup>1530</sup> and once on Hinba.<sup>1531</sup> Cainnech (d. 599)<sup>1532</sup> was likewise mentioned three times by Adomnán, when visiting Columba on Iona,<sup>1533</sup> when Columba found himself in dangerous seas and told his sailors Cainnech would pray for their safety,<sup>1534</sup> and on Hinba.<sup>1535</sup> Brendan moccu Altae (d. 577),<sup>1536</sup> also known as Brendan the Navigator, was mentioned

---

<sup>1527</sup> *Nam cum multi in ceteris ejusdem insulae monasteriis eodem morbo morirentur, nemo nisi unus de quo sanctus dixit apud Baitheneum in sua est mortuus congregatione, VC III.8.*

<sup>1528</sup> Birth: AU 516.2, 520.3; AT 517.1. Death: AU 601.3, 602.1; AT 600.1.

<sup>1529</sup> VC I.49.

<sup>1530</sup> VC III.13.

<sup>1531</sup> VC III.17.

<sup>1532</sup> Birth: AU 521.1, 527.1; AT 518.1. Death: AU 599.2, 600.1; AT 598.1. AT notes that Cainnech was in his 87<sup>th</sup> year when he died, which would put his birth c. 511 and does not correspond well with any of the entries for his birth in AU or AT.

<sup>1533</sup> VC I.4.

<sup>1534</sup> VC II.13.

<sup>1535</sup> VC III.17.

<sup>1536</sup> AU 577.3, 583.5; AT 575.3.

twice, when his student visited Columba on Iona,<sup>1537</sup> and in his own person visiting Hinba in the company of Comgall and Cainnech.<sup>1538</sup> What is interesting about these mentions is that these are all well-known Irish saints whose importance in Scotland persisted sufficiently for their inclusion in the *Aberdeen Breviary*. Other important founders of the time, including Moluag of Lismore, Donnán of Eigg, Bláán of Kingarth, and even other churches in Pictland, such as Portmahomack, fail to be mentioned.<sup>1539</sup> One may suggest there was a politically expedient reason Adomnán did not want to connect his Community with others on the Scottish side of the North Channel seascape. This may have been in the purpose of his writing: Adomnán was attempting to highlight the importance of Columba's work and position in Scotland, and it would not serve his goals to mention any significant foundations that may have been perceived as competition. It is also possible that Adomnán's portrayal of Columba's relationships with Comgall, Cainnech, and Brendan was intended to influence or reflect the nature of the relationships between his Community and those of the other saints at the time he was writing. It is not necessary to unquestioningly believe each detail of the inclusion of these saints in the *Vita Columbae*; however, their depiction does warrant a consideration of their own hagiographic texts.

---

<sup>1537</sup> VC I.26.

<sup>1538</sup> VC III.17.

<sup>1539</sup> Márkus, "Iona: monks", 137.

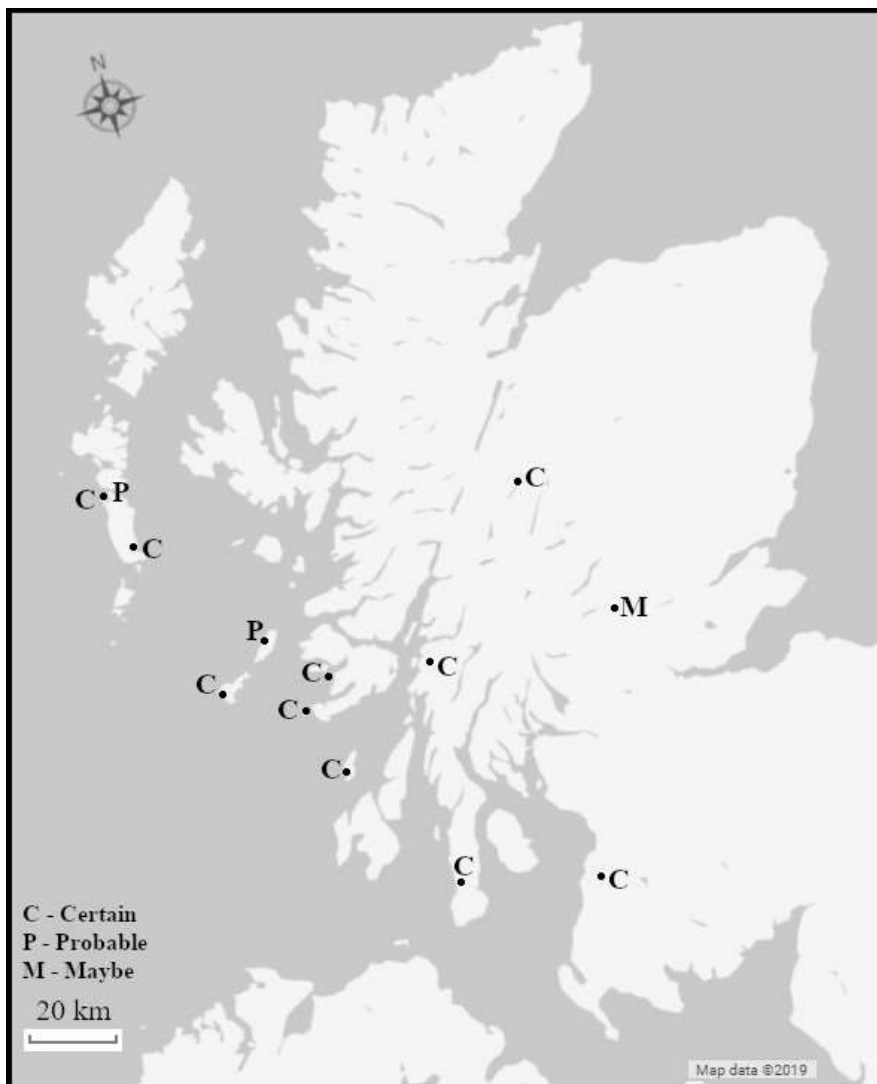


Figure 6.2 Hagiotoponyms associated with St Cainnech (data from DoSH).

Each of the above saints is associated in the textual record with a monastic foundation on Tiree. Columba's *Mag Luinge* has already been mentioned. Cainnech's foundation is not named, even in his own *Vita*, though it does place him specifically in Tiree,<sup>1540</sup> in Britain more generally,<sup>1541</sup> in the Hebrides (likely Uist),<sup>1542</sup> and on Iona.<sup>1543</sup>

<sup>1540</sup> *In regione Heth habitans*, *VCain* §26.

<sup>1541</sup> *VCain* §21, §24.

<sup>1542</sup> *VCain* §29; Clancy, "Hebridean Connections", 34-35; See also the discussion on Cainnech by Thomas Owen Clancy and Sofia Evemalm, in *Eòlas nan Naomh*, "Coinneach, Cainnech, Kenneth". Accessed 9 Jun 2020. [uistsaints.co.uk/saints/coinneach/](http://uistsaints.co.uk/saints/coinneach/).

<sup>1543</sup> *VCain* §25-§26; He is also placed on Iona in *AB* 11 Oct.

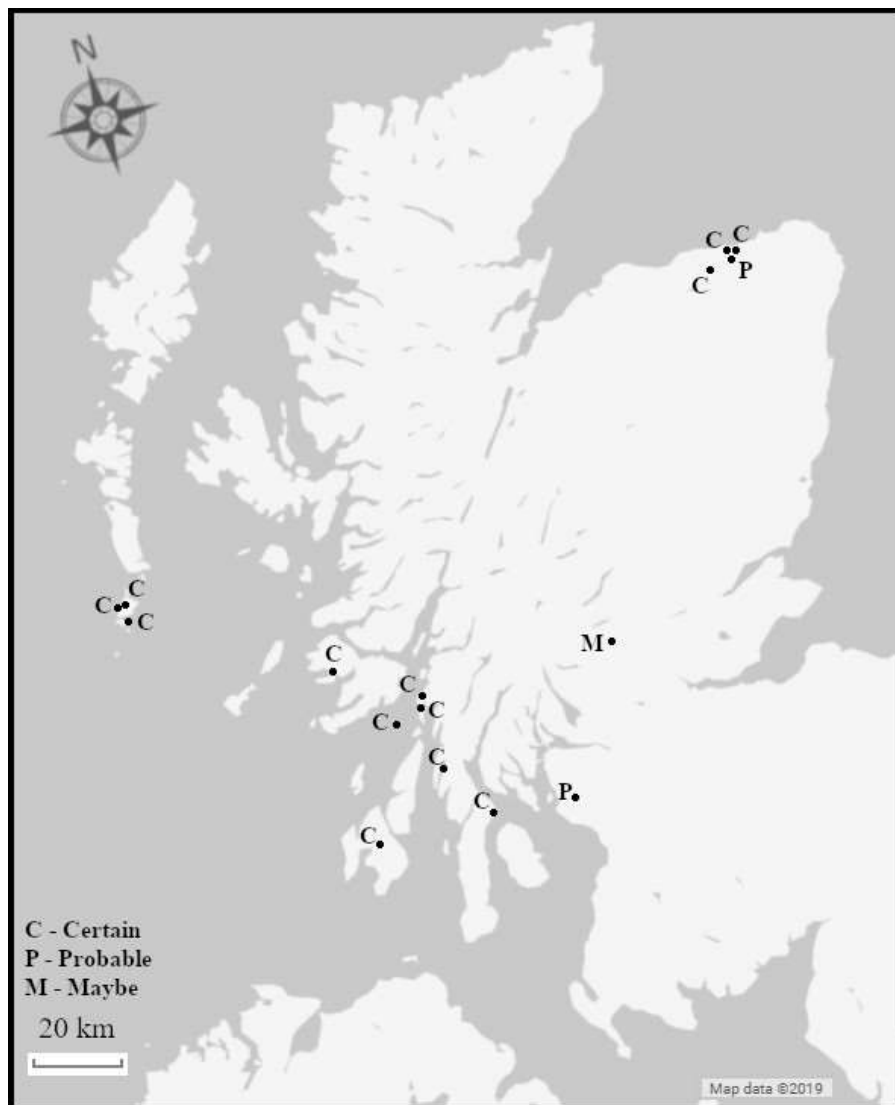


Figure 6.3 Hagiotoponyms associated with Brendan (data from DoSH).

Brendan's *Vita* notes that he founded a monastery on Tiree called *Bledua*, in addition to another island monastery in Britain called Ailech,<sup>1544</sup> and other travels in Britain.<sup>1545</sup> Some doubt has been expressed regarding the historicity of a Tiree foundation by Brendan, with the suggestion that it could be a confusion for the foundation of Ailech which is also mentioned and which has been placed in the Garvellachs.<sup>1546</sup> Given the cultic spread of Brendan in Scotland, it seems at least plausible that he had a foundation on Tiree.

<sup>1544</sup> *In Britanniam remeavit ac duo monasteria, unum in insula Ailech, alterum in terra Ethica, in loco nomine Bledua, fundavit, VBren §15.*

<sup>1545</sup> *VBren §13.*

<sup>1546</sup> Identified as Garvellachs in the Firth of Lorn in Watson, *CPNS*, 81-82; MacDonald, "Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*", 226-228.

It is peculiar that Scotland is completely devoid of place-names which refer to Comgall, especially considering the connection which existed for his Community across the North Channel. This is a huge contrast to that seen for Brendan and Cainnech (see Figures 6.2 and 6.3). According to his *Vita*, as it appears in Plummer, *VSH*,<sup>1547</sup> Comgall founded a monastery on Tiree seven years after the foundation of Bangor (thus between AD 561 and 566).<sup>1548</sup> Comgall is set in opposition to a raiding force named as Picts, though their actions, as seen in the translation below, is very reminiscent of Viking raids in the taking of material wealth and humans (for sale as slaves?). It seems likely that this kind of behaviour was what twelfth-century hagiographers best envisioned when thinking of attacks on monasteries, especially as the attackers were specified as non-Christians. Comgall was active during the conversion period of the west of Scotland, and it may be that his hagiographers were attempting to show his strength and power in Christianity over that of the non-Christians whom he was presumed to have encountered. In light of Comgall's connections with the west of Scotland, the intended focus of this story could have been on portraying Comgall as having overpowered his enemies, thus highlighting his ability and success in subjecting his will and religion on the area. This could further be an attempt by the twelfth-century hagiographer to remind their audience of an actual or fabricated connection between the west of Scotland (and specifically Tiree) and Bangor. It is worth quoting the translation by Anderson in full:

Also in the seventh year after the monastery of Bangor had been founded the holy father Comgall sailed to Britain, wishing to visit there certain saints, and to remain there for a time. And he founded a monastery there, in a certain village in the district of Heth; there he remained for a while.

One day, while St Comgall was alone at work out-of-doors in a field, he placed his chrisal [pall] over his robe. That day many heathen robbers of the Picts invaded the village, to carry off everything that was there, both human beings and cattle. But when the heathen came to St Comgall where he was at work out-of-doors, and saw his chrisal over his gown, they thought that the chrisal was St Comgall's god; and the robbers dared not touch him for fear of his god. But the spoilers took to their ships St Comgall's brethren with all their substance.

---

<sup>1547</sup> This story does not appear in the extremely short *Vita* in Heist, *VSH*, which only contains 6 sections compared to the 58 in Plummer, *VSH*. That the Salamanca version of the *Vita* is so short makes it difficult to determine at what point in the development of Comgall's cult this particular story was incorporated.

<sup>1548</sup> *VCom* §22.



Now when the holy father Comgall saw this, he was enraged, and said: ‘The Lord is my support and my refuge and my deliverer’. And worshipping the Lord he signed the sky and the earth and the sea; and immediately the heathens were struck with blindness, and moreover the sea swelled dreadfully, so that it cast the ships upon the shore, and the bodies of the heathens were severely injured. Then they abandoned all that they had taken, and with earnest prayers begged for pardon from St Comgall: and the saint, moved with pity, prayed for them. And they recovered their eyesight, and calm was restored, and they returned, empty and feeble. Afterwards St Comgall was conducted back to Ireland by many holy men.<sup>1549</sup>

There is some suggestion that this refers to a monastery that was not founded by Comgall, but was believed to be associated with Bangor,<sup>1550</sup> perhaps Artchain (see below). It should be noted that there is some possibility that Comgall travelled further in Britain, as his *Vita* places him in the party (which in this telling includes Comgall, Cainnech, and Columba) that went to visit Bridei, along with a general interest in Britain (see chapter 3).<sup>1551</sup> As discussed, the only explicit mention of Columba on Tiree comes from *Vita Sancti Baithini*.<sup>1552</sup> In *VC* there is no mention of Columba on Tiree or at *Mag Luinge*, though he is mentioned at Hinba in five separate sections.<sup>1553</sup>

Questions arise regarding the nature of the relationships between the foundations on Tiree, and specifically of their founders, as this may help explain the number of separate foundations. Smyth suggests there existed “a strong hint of bitter competition between these rival communities which were clearly overcrowding Tiree”,<sup>1554</sup> though it is not necessary to assume a rivalry between these saints. A cursory examination can be made by looking at the hagiographies involved (see section 2.4.1).

Returning to the earliest hagiography, *VC*, we should note that Findchán is the only ecclesiastic whom Adomnán specifically mentions as having founded a monastery on Tiree. Although both the founder’s name and the name of the monastery, Artchain, are mentioned, the distinct impression given is a negative

<sup>1549</sup> Anderson, *Early Sources*, 52-54.

<sup>1550</sup> MacDonald, “Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae*”, 239.

<sup>1551</sup> *VCom* §51; *VC* II.35.

<sup>1552</sup> *VBaith* §9.

<sup>1553</sup> *VC* I.21, II.24, III.5, III.17, III.18; MacDonald, “Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae*”, 222-223.

<sup>1554</sup> Smyth, *Warlords*, 100-101.

one.<sup>1555</sup> The validity or structure of the ordination of Findchán's companion, Áed Dub, is called into question, possibly because of Findchán placing his hand on Áed's head before the Bishop, but also possibly because of the nature of Findchán's affection for Áed. This affection is described by Adomnán as *Aidum carnaliter amans*, which has been variously translated as a physical/sexual love, an earthly love, or a familial love.<sup>1556</sup> We might consider the possibility that Findchán, and thus Artchain, was part of the Community of Comgall. The Áed Dubh (d. 588) mentioned in *VC* was king of Dál nAraide, and associated with Moylinny (AT 563.4), which has been previously connected to Bangor and Comgall (see section 3.1). There is some possibility that Findchán, and thus Artchain, may have been part of the Community of Comgall. This possibility might allow for the story in Comgall's *Life* of the attack by Picts on Tíree to perhaps place him at Artchain (in the absence of any specifically Comgall-named ecclesiastical site). A firm conclusion to this possibility is, however, difficult to make due to the flimsy nature of the surviving evidence. Adomnán mentions Eigg once in *Vita Columbae*, when Baithéne is held up there by adverse winds.<sup>1557</sup> Donnán of Eigg, the martyr, is not mentioned, nor is his foundation there. Similarly, Moluag of Lismore is also left out. The *Martyrology of Óengus*, in its later notes, tells the story of Donnán approaching Columba to ask him to serve as Donnán's confessor, which Columba refused on account of Donnán and his Community impending fate of a red martyrdom.<sup>1558</sup>

A final question to consider here is whether having a foundation on Tíree became a hagiographic trope amongst the powerful saints of the North Channel Seascape. Beginning with *VC*, detailed mentions were made of the island foundations of *Mag Luinge* (on Tíree) and Hinba (not on Tíree). Further, it is within this *Vita* that the first mention of the other monasteries on the island were made, which has been interpreted as referring to foundations outside the Community of Columba. The level of detail in *VC* combined with the annalistic entries seem to root *Mag Luinge* in a secure existence. One must consider whether this trope, if it existed, would have existed at the time of Adomnán's writing, and whether it would have led him to refer to multiple other

---

<sup>1555</sup> *VC* I.36.

<sup>1556</sup> Michael Meckler, "Carnal love and priestly ordination on sixth-century Tíree", *Innes Review* 51:2 (2000), 101-103.

<sup>1557</sup> *VC* III.18.

<sup>1558</sup> *MarO* 18 Apr, notes.

monasteries on the island for this reason alone. The leap of belief necessary for this argument seems unconvincing, but perhaps engaging with the other *Vitae* will provide a clearer picture.

Due to Brendan's fame being tied to his "rowings about",<sup>1559</sup> it is very possible that his presence on Tiree was inserted into his *Vita* later as an attempt to further show just how many different places he travelled. The lack of interaction between Brendan and the other saints with purported foundations on Tiree may be indicative that this is more likely to be due to hagiographic tradition rather than actual presence, and Tiree's position along the route from Ireland to the Outer Hebrides and further places makes it a logical place to suggest.

Insofar as *Vita Cainnechi* does seem to be a response to *Vita Columbae*, it is possible to think that his presence on Tiree specifically is only because Columba was there (see section 2.4.1 for discussion on the perceived link between Columba and Cainnech). However, that alone is not a sufficiently strong argument considering Cainnech's widespread cult, showing him to be a Hebridean saint,<sup>1560</sup> and that VC has him active in the area as well. The widespread nature of Cainnech's cult makes it possible, though not proven, that he actually visited Tiree. Cainnech is commemorated elsewhere in Scotland in names such as: *Aird Choinnich*, South Uist; *Beinn Ruidh Choinnich*, South Uist; Cill Chainnich, KKV (Iona); *Cill Choinnich*, Colonsay; Dalchonzie, Comrie; Inchkenneth, Mull; Kilchainie, South Uist; Kilchainie, Coll; Kilchenzie, Killean & Kilchenzie; former parish of Skeirchenzie, Killean & Kilchenzie; Kilchoinich, Kilmore & Kilbride; Kilhenzie, Maybole; St Cainneach's Chapel, KKV (Inchkenneth); St Kenneth's Church, Laggan; Logie Coinnich, Laggan; and the well at Tibberchindy, Alford.<sup>1561</sup> In the sixteenth century *Aberdeen Breviary* the feast day of St Kenneth notes that he is "held as patron at Kennoway in the diocese of St Andrews",<sup>1562</sup> though this appears to be based on an incorrect

---

<sup>1559</sup> Mackley, *Legend of St Brendan*, 21-22.

<sup>1560</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 188, 276; Holliday, *Longships*, 60; Clancy, "Connections", 37.

<sup>1561</sup> DoSH, "Cainnech M. Luighthig of Aghaboe".

<sup>1562</sup> *AB* 11 Oct; *MarG* 11 Oct, the later notes mentioning a church at St Andrews itself.

derivation of the name, with any connections between Cainnech and Kennoway first appearing in the twelfth century.<sup>1563</sup>

In his own hagiography, Comgall is placed in and around Pictland and his interest in Britain generally is noted. It could be that his placement specifically on Tiree was due to the existence of a hagiographic trope, but this possibility seems no more likely than the idea that he did visit it. Based on hagiographic evidence, it seems very likely that *Mag Luinge* did exist, and possible that Cainnech's foundation did. There is less certainty for the foundations of Comgall and Brendan on Tiree, though there is no evidence that clearly leads one to rule out the possibility.

### 6.3 Place-Name Evidence

While some place-name research has been undertaken regarding Tiree,<sup>1564</sup> it lacks the same kind of survey level attention available for other areas of Scotland such as Fife,<sup>1565</sup> Bute,<sup>1566</sup> Carloway,<sup>1567</sup> Barra,<sup>1568</sup> and Clackmannanshire.<sup>1569</sup> Due to space and time, a full investigation will not be undertaken here. The place-name evidence which may assist in clarifying settlement and ecclesiastical foundations between the sixth and tenth centuries will be examined. The main difficulty that arises is the need to understand the interplay between the languages known to have been spoken on the island: a pre-Norse Celtic language, Norse, and post-Norse Scottish Gaelic. Part of this difficulty comes in assessing the date of coining for many place-names, as few are attested early and are therefore difficult to differentiate between surviving pre-Norse place-names and post-Norse Gaelic coinings.

A major topic of discussion has been the effect of Norse intrusion in Scotland, especially on the islands, which questions the survival of pre-Norse place-names

<sup>1563</sup> Taylor and Márkus, *Place-Names of Fife*, vol. 2, 210.

<sup>1564</sup> Holliday, *Longships*; Anne Johnston, "Norse settlement in the Inner Hebrides ca. 800-1300; with special reference to the islands of Mull, Coll and Tiree" (PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1991); Also see the Tiree Place Names website: [www.tireeplacenames.org](http://www.tireeplacenames.org).

<sup>1565</sup> Taylor and Márkus, *Place-Names of Fife*.

<sup>1566</sup> Márkus, *Place-Names of Bute*.

<sup>1567</sup> Richard Cox, *The Gaelic Place-Names of Carloway, Isle of Lewis: Their Structure and Significance* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2002).

<sup>1568</sup> Anke-Beate Stahl, "Place-names of Barra in the Outer Hebrides" (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1999).

<sup>1569</sup> Taylor, McNiven, and Williamson, *Clackmannanshire*.

and thus also of pre-Norse settlements, including monasteries.<sup>1570</sup> Arne Kruse mentioned the possibility of population replacement to explain “an onomastic change of this magnitude” regarding the level of Norse-language coverage in the Hebrides.<sup>1571</sup> George Broderick provides a useful discussion on the survival of pre-Norse island names in the Hebrides, including Skye, Mull, Islay, Lewis, Uist, and Tiree.<sup>1572</sup> The Isle of Skye’s name was recorded as EG *Scii*,<sup>1573</sup> meaning “winged isle”,<sup>1574</sup> L *Scia insula*,<sup>1575</sup> and ON *Skíð*.<sup>1576</sup> Mull was recorded as EG *Malaíos*, meaning “lofty isle”,<sup>1577</sup> L *Malea insula*, and ON *Myl*.<sup>1578</sup> Islay was recorded as EG *Íle*, which may have a meaning of “flank”, referring to a body part,<sup>1579</sup> L *Ilea insula*,<sup>1580</sup> and ON *Íl*.<sup>1581</sup> Lewis was not recorded in a pre-Norse language, though its ON form, *Ljóðhus*, was likely modelled on a pre-Norse name, and it also seems to be the same for Uist, where we have ON *Ívist*.<sup>1582</sup>

The name for Tiree appears in Latin and Gaelic in comparatively stable forms. In Latin we see *Heth regio*,<sup>1583</sup> *terra Heth*,<sup>1584</sup> and adjectival forms *Ethica*,<sup>1585</sup> *Ethica terra*,<sup>1586</sup> and *Ethica insulam* (see Table 6.1).<sup>1587</sup> In Gaelic the name is a compound form including Gaelic *tir* “land, region” seen as *Tir-iath*.<sup>1588</sup> The Old

<sup>1570</sup> Jennings, “Survival and Continuity”, 37-53. Andrew Jennings and Arne Kruse, “One Coast – Three Peoples: Names and Ethnicity in the Scottish West during the Early Viking Period”, in *Scandinavian Scotland – 20 Years On*, (ed) Alex Woolf (St Andrews: The Committee for Dark Age Studies, 2009), 75-102.

<sup>1571</sup> Arne Kruse, “Explorers, raiders and Settlers. The Norse Impact upon Hebridean Place-Names”, in *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of Names*, (ed) Peder Gammeltoft, Carole Hough, and Doreen Waugh (Lerwick: NORNA, 2005), 158-162, 167-169.

<sup>1572</sup> George Broderick, “Some Island Names in the former ‘Kingdom of the Isles’: A Reappraisal”, *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 7 (2013), 1-28.

<sup>1573</sup> AU 701.7.

<sup>1574</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 39.

<sup>1575</sup> VC I.33, II.36.

<sup>1576</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 38-39.

<sup>1577</sup> *Ibid*, 37-38.

<sup>1578</sup> Arne Kruse, “Explorers, Raiders and Settlers”, 169.

<sup>1579</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 87.

<sup>1580</sup> VC II.23.

<sup>1581</sup> Peder Gammeltoft, “Scandinavian Naming-Systems in the Hebrides—A Way of Understanding how the Scandinavians were in Contact with Gaels and Picts?” in *West over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300*, (ed) Beverley Ballin-Smith, Simon Taylor, Gareth Williams (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 487.

<sup>1582</sup> Kruse, “Explorers, Raiders and Settlers”, 169; Jennings and Kruse, “One Coast – three peoples”, 82; Clancy, “Hebridean Connections”, 32-35.

<sup>1583</sup> *in regione Heth*, *VCain* §26; *VCom* §22.

<sup>1584</sup> *VBaith* §9.

<sup>1585</sup> VC II.39.

<sup>1586</sup> VC I.36, II.15, II.39, III.8; *terra Ethica*, *VBren* §15.

<sup>1587</sup> VC I.19.

<sup>1588</sup> *Tir-iath*: As noted by Watson in *CPNS*, 85-86; AU 678.3; AT 678.4.

Norse name is *Tyrvist*,<sup>1589</sup> which includes ON *vist* “dwelling”.<sup>1590</sup> The name of the island seems to be a Celtic survival through the Norse period, as the modern name, *Tiriodh*, was not developed from Old Norse. While some uncertainty regarding the derivation of the name persists”,<sup>1591</sup> more recent study suggests both elements come from Early Gaelic words for “land”.<sup>1592</sup>

What is important to note here is whether the Gaelic forms of the modern names for the islands come from Old Norse or Early Gaelic, as this may give some further insight into the linguistic landscape they developed from. In the case of *Leòdhas* (Lewis) and *Uibhist* (Uist), the modern Gaelic form of the island names seem to come from Old Norse, while *An t-Eilean Sgitheanach* (Skye), *Muille* (Mull), *Ìle* (Islay), and *Tiriodh* (Tiree) appear to come directly from the Early Gaelic forms, which are noted above.<sup>1593</sup> Watson notes that the modern *Tiristeach*, “a Tiree man”, more likely comes from Old Norse.<sup>1594</sup> The difference in the survival of place-names, and also of the origin of the modern Gaelic forms of islands, appears to draw a distinction between the Inner and Outer Hebrides. The argument is no longer that one group experienced settlement while the other did not, but rather the degree of settlement and disruption that was experienced.<sup>1595</sup> Unsurprisingly, the mainland section of Dál Riata shows the strongest evidence of linguistic continuity, while the Outer Hebrides match the northern Isles in their level of linguistic change.<sup>1596</sup> Tiree, interestingly, seems to straddle the divide, notable by the survival of both Gaelic and Norse derived modern names (*Tiriodh* and *Tiristeach*, as noted above). It is possible that some pre-Norse place-names could survive, even in the face of heavy language replacement.

In this study, place-names are predominantly sourced from the first edition OS six-inch map, but also collected from the Ordnance Survey Name Book,<sup>1597</sup> in the

---

<sup>1589</sup> Arne Kruse, “Explorers, Raiders and Settlers”, 169.

<sup>1590</sup> Clancy, “Hebridean Connections”, 32.

<sup>1591</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 85-86; Reeves, “Tiree”, 237; Broderick, “Some Island Names”, 11-12.

<sup>1592</sup> Clancy, “Hebridean Connections”, 34.

<sup>1593</sup> Kruse, “Explorers, Raiders and Settlers”, 169; Jennings, “One Coast – Three Peoples”, 82; Watson, *CPNS*, 86-87.

<sup>1594</sup> *Ibid*, 86.

<sup>1595</sup> Kruse, “Explorers, Raiders and Settlers”, 169-170.

<sup>1596</sup> Jennings, “One Coast – Three Peoples”, 79-87.

<sup>1597</sup> OS Name Books, *Argyll Ordnance Survey Name Books*, 1868-1878. ScotlandsPlaces. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/argyll-os-name-books-1868-1878/argyll-volume-28](http://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/argyll-os-name-books-1868-1878/argyll-volume-28).

case of primary evidence. Secondary sources consulted include William Reeves,<sup>1598</sup> Erskine Beveridge,<sup>1599</sup> Anne Johnston,<sup>1600</sup> and John Holliday.<sup>1601</sup> A further source is Blaeu's *Atlas Maior* c. 1662-1665, based heavily on data collected for the Pont Maps c. 1583-1614.<sup>1602</sup> Blaeu's *Atlas* uses various symbols to denote settlements of both secular and ecclesiastical nature, though there remain questions regarding the variation seen in symbol use on the maps.<sup>1603</sup> Some sites are obviously ecclesiastical as their symbols are structures with a cross on top (as at *Kilchainie*), while others with obviously ecclesiastical names bear symbols with no cross (such as *Kilmolowaig*).<sup>1604</sup> Perhaps the difference in symbols indicates active churches at the time of recording, or those structurally recognizable as churches at that time. There seems to be little specific research on the portrayal of churches in symbol on Pont and Blaeu's map, limiting the ability to interpret them here.

Ecclesiastical place-names in *aingil*, *annaid*, *bachuil*, *cill*, *clach*, *comraich*, *crois*, *eglais*, *naomh*, *suidhe*, and *naomh* have already been mentioned (see sections 4.4.3 and 5.4.2). To this is now added place-names in *caibeal* and *teampall*. Further, hagiotoponyms may give insight into the sixth and seventh centuries on Tiree. The more generic place-names will be discussed first, before moving on to hagiotoponyms. The density of potentially early ecclesiastical sites on Tiree was noted by Reeves and is still striking today,<sup>1605</sup> as seen in comparison with other areas in the Hebrides which have received full place-name investigations.

---

<sup>1598</sup> Reeves, "Tiree", 233-244.

<sup>1599</sup> Beveridge, *Coll and Tiree*.

<sup>1600</sup> Anne Johnston, "Norse Settlement patterns in Coll and Tiree", in *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain*, (ed) Barbara E. Crawford (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), 108-126.

<sup>1601</sup> Holliday, *Longships*.

<sup>1602</sup> Blaeu, *Mvla Insvla* [Map].

<sup>1603</sup> Charles McKean, "Timothy Pont's Building Drawings", in *The Nation Survey'd: Essays on Late Sixteenth-Century Scotland as Depicted by Timothy Pont*, (ed) Ian Cunningham (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001), 117.

<sup>1604</sup> Blaeu, *Mvla Insvla* [Map].

<sup>1605</sup> Reeves, "Tiree", 243.

**Table 6.2 Ecclesiastical Place-Names in Carloway, Barra, Tiree, and Bute (Holliday, *Longships*, Table 4).**

	Carloway	Barra	Tiree	Bute
<b>Population</b>	500	1,150	2,416	10,563
<b>Cill</b>	1	3	6	11
<b>Caibeal</b>	0	0	3	1
<b>Teampall</b>	1	0	4	1
<b>Cladh</b>	3	1	10	1
<b>Eglais</b>	1	0	5	1
<b>Crois</b>	0	0	3	0
<b>Chapel</b>	0	0	0	10
<b>Church</b>	0	0	0	3

The place-names analysed here are divided into three groups: place-names with Gaelic elements with uncertain dating, place-names of Norse construction, and place-names of probable or definite later provenance. Utilising these groups allows a better understanding of the history of Tiree and uncovers some questions about place-name survival.

### 6.3.1 Gaelic place-names with Uncertain Dating

It is possible that Early Gaelic place-names could have survived through the Norse period, especially when connected with ecclesiastical foundations.<sup>1606</sup> Place-names in Gaelic are difficult to date due to the late recording of most place-names and the resurgence of Gaelic after the Norse period. I approach the analysis of place-names by geographic area, with an eye to understanding each site from its place-name evidence before moving on to surviving features in sections 6.4 and 6.5.

*Caolas* itself is not an ecclesiastical toponym. It comes from Gaelic and means “a strait”.<sup>1607</sup> Its location on the east end of Tiree makes it very near the strait that runs between Tiree and Gunna and was first attested in 1509 as The Kylis.<sup>1608</sup> There are a number of ecclesiastical place-names associated with *Caolas*. Perhaps the most obvious is *Crois a’ Chaolais* (NM 0809 4870), “the cross of Caolas”, which is first attested as “Croish-a-Chaolish” by Reeves in 1854, who notes a burial ground and chapel and was recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch

<sup>1606</sup> Thomas Owen Clancy, “The church and the domains of Gaelic in early medieval Scotland”, (forthcoming).

<sup>1607</sup> Maceachen, Macbain, and Whyte, *Faclair Gaidhlig is Beurla*, 61.

<sup>1608</sup> ER 13, 216; Holliday, *Longships*, 288.



map.<sup>1609</sup> These names do seem to refer to a physical cross in the landscape, and though it is no longer visible, the setting for the cross at *Crois a' Chaolais* was previously recorded (see section 6.4.4). *Cladh a' Chaolais* (NM 08063 48717), “Caolas graveyard”, is referred to by Reeves as a cemetery that, at the time he wrote, was tilled as working farmland.<sup>1610</sup> This is likely the graveyard referred to in *Pàirc a' Claidh* (NM 0852 4835), “field of the graveyard”, also near *Caolas*, though it was recorded only recently.<sup>1611</sup> Finally, there is *An annaid* (NM 0855 4865), again near *Caolas*, which suggests an early church in the area and first attested by RCAHMS in 1974.<sup>1612</sup> *Annad* was previously discussed as a place-name referencing lands which supported a church, often nearby (see section 4.4.3). These place-names together reveal a well-documented ecclesiastical site, which seems to have consisted of a church, graveyard, sculptural cross, and with supporting lands, though of which little survives today. The physical remains of *Caolas* are further discussed below (see section 6.4.4).

*Cladh Beag*, “the little graveyard”, (NL 9782 3905) near Hynish, was first recorded by Reeves in 1854, and appears on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map.<sup>1613</sup> While this is a generic place-name, the survival of early sculptured stone associated with it speaks to its early connections (see section 6.4.3). *Cnoc a' Claoth*, “hill of the graveyard”, (NL 942 425) near Barrapool was first recorded in 1854 by Reeves as “Knock-a-Chlaodh”.<sup>1614</sup>

*Cill Choinnich* (NL 9430 4470), “the church of Cainnech”. is first reported on the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland in 1509 as *Kilquhynich*,<sup>1615</sup> and appears on Blaeu's Atlas as *Kilchainie*. Nearby is *Chladh Chille Choinnich* (NL 9430 4470), “the graveyard of the church of Cainnech”, first recorded as *Kilkeneth* in the *Statistical Account* of 1794,<sup>1616</sup> and also by Reeves.<sup>1617</sup> *Abhuinn na Cille* (NL 944 445), “the river of the church”, which includes *G abhainn* “river”,<sup>1618</sup> was first

---

<sup>1609</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 243.

<sup>1610</sup> *Ibid*, 244.

<sup>1611</sup> Canmore. Caolas. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21497/tiree-caolas](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21497/tiree-caolas); Tiree Place Names. *Pàirc a' Chluidh* or *An Cladh Beag*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [www.tireeplacenames.org/caolas/pairc\\_a\\_chluidh](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/caolas/pairc_a_chluidh).

<sup>1612</sup> Canmore. Caolas.

<sup>1613</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 243.

<sup>1614</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 244.

<sup>1615</sup> 1509 ER 13, 217.

<sup>1616</sup> Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. x, 402.

<sup>1617</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 242.

<sup>1618</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 439.

attested on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map,<sup>1619</sup> is a stream that flows just to the south of *Cill Choinnich* towards *Tràigh Ghrianal* and which seems to refer to *Cill Choinnich*. Like *Caolas*, the place-names indicate the nature of the ecclesiastical site, with the obvious difference being a lack of support land, whether using elements such as *annaid* or *bachuill*. There is a possibility that it was a smaller chapel site, rather than a full foundation on its own. The discussion of its surviving features is below (see section 6.4.5).

*Cill Moluag* (NL 9650 4800), anglicized as Kilmoluaig, is first recorded in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland in 1541,<sup>1620</sup> and also appears on Blaeu's *Atlas* in 1654, where the name is given as *Kilmolowaig*.<sup>1621</sup> As seen in chapter 5, there are also *Cill Moluag* sites on Lismore and Skye. Both sites are recorded by Blaeu, with each site marked with a symbol depicting a settlement, though the ones on Lismore and Skye include a symbol for a church. The reason for the use of these different symbols is unclear, though the possibility exists that at the time of recording for the *Atlas*, the *Cill Moluag* site on Tiree had deteriorated to the point of no longer being an active church site. *A' Chrois* (NL 9670 4790), from *G crois*, and *Mullach na Croise* (NL 9661 4785), from EG *mullach*, "top" + *crois*,<sup>1622</sup> are located practically on top of each other at the site of *Cill Moluag*. Both are first attested on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map in 1878. This small cluster of place-names does lend some weight to the argument that an early ecclesiastical foundation could have existed on the site. However, a lack of physical evidence makes it difficult to determine the dates it was in use with any certainty (see section 6.5.1).

Two sites with the place-name *Cill Fhinnein* are recorded on Tiree. *Cill Fhinnein* (NL 9934 4675) was reported by this name as early as 1854 by Reeves, though it seems the site was recorded by Blaeu as *Kenbay ycrach*,<sup>1623</sup> a completely different place-name which may have originated from EG *Ceann a' Bhàigh*, "end of the bay", or ON *kinnarvágr* "cheek bay". The second *Cill Fhinnein* (NM 019

<sup>1619</sup> Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map], sheet LXIV, 6in = 1mi. Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1882.

<sup>1620</sup> 1541 ER 17, 614.

<sup>1621</sup> Blaeu, Joan. *Mvla Insvla* [Map]; Innes and Brichan, *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, 330; MacDonald, "Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*", 230.

<sup>1622</sup> eDIL. s.v. "mullach". Accessed 4 Jan 2020. dil.ie/32822.

<sup>1623</sup> The symbol for this site does not include a cross, Blaeu, *Mvla Insvla* [Map].

474) was also first mentioned by Reeves in 1854,<sup>1624</sup> and appears on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map. Reeves noted that stillborn children were sometimes buried here,<sup>1625</sup> which may give additional weight to its former life as a church site, as abandoned (but not unconsecrated) sites were sometimes used for this purpose.<sup>1626</sup> Although now these appear to be two separate sites named *Cill Fhinnein*, it seems possible that this could have originally referred to a single site which extended around Balephetrish Bay. Further discussion of these sites and any surviving features is below (see sections 6.4.7 and 6.5.4).

*Cill Brighde* (NL 9780 4680), Anglicized as Kilbride, was first attested by Reeves in 1854 and located “just north of the farm at Cornaigmore”,<sup>1627</sup> though the site was unable to be located on recent visits.<sup>1628</sup> *Brigit Maighi Luinge* is one of the fifteen saints named Brigit in Rawl. B 502, 94, d 45.<sup>1629</sup> Brigit of Kildare is said to have lived between c. 451 and 525. Her cult is widespread in Ireland and Scotland, and she is often referred to as one of the patron saints of Ireland. Richard Sharpe argues that *Mag Luinge* is a productive place-name in Ireland,<sup>1630</sup> and that there is no reason to associate her with Tiree, especially lacking any additional place-name evidence.<sup>1631</sup> A hillslope just to the south of the supposed chapel site is known as *Creag Bhrìde* (NGR unknown).<sup>1632</sup> Blaeu’s Atlas shows a *Koirnaig M.*,<sup>1633</sup> which appears to be a Gaelicized place-name from ON *korn* “corn, grain” with ON *vík* “bay”: *Kornvík* with G *mór* appended,<sup>1634</sup> but there is no mention of a Kilbride, nor does it appear on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map.

*Killyne* (NGR unknown) appears to consist of EG *cill* + an unknown second element and was first recorded in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland for 1541.<sup>1635</sup>

---

<sup>1624</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 241.

<sup>1625</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1626</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1627</sup> *Ibid.*; also mentioned by Beveridge in *Coll and Tiree*, 146; Tiree Place Names. Cille Brighde or Kilbride. Accessed 10 Jun 2020. [www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/cille\\_bhrìde/](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/cille_bhrìde/).

<sup>1628</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Cornaigmore. Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21444/tiree-cornaigmore](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21444/tiree-cornaigmore); this site was also unlocated on a site visit made by the author in July 2019.

<sup>1629</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 92; Ó Riain, *CGSH*, §708.13.

<sup>1630</sup> Hogan, *Onomasticon Goedelicum*, 525.

<sup>1631</sup> Sharpe, *Life of St Columba*, 303, n. 182.

<sup>1632</sup> Tiree Place Names. Creag Bhrìde or Creag Ghille Bhrìde. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/creag\\_bhrìde](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/creag_bhrìde).

<sup>1633</sup> Blaeu, *Mvla Insvla* [Map].

<sup>1634</sup> Johnston, “Norse settlement in the Inner Hebrides”, 104; Tiree Place Names. Còrnaig Mòr or Cornaigmore. Accessed 10 Jun 2020. [www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/cornaigmore/](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/cornaigmore/).

<sup>1635</sup> 1541 ER 17, 614.

*Cill Tunnain* (NL 9490 4530) survives as a field name, first recorded in 1993,<sup>1636</sup> which has been connected to Donnán, possibly of Eigg. These toponyms perhaps suggest the existence of small chapels dedicated to saints which, because of their position socially as dependent chapels, would not have survived as major place-names.

While a number of these place-names suggest the possibility of an early connection, it is difficult on the weight of the place-names alone to make a clear or firm dating decision regarding them. However, Thomas Clancy suggests a new line of inquiry in his forthcoming article that the Gaelic language achieved a degree of prominence and importance such that it could be considered "the professional language of the church, not only in Ireland, but also substantially in northern Britain, among people whose native language was not Gaelic".<sup>1637</sup> Alongside this degree of importance and prestige, he suggests that Gaelic became "the language in which the church is spoken about".<sup>1638</sup> This suggests the possibility that some *cill* place-names could have survived through the Norse period, a hypothesis that can be strengthened when physical evidence on site is associated with the early medieval period.<sup>1639</sup> Although Clancy largely focuses on place-names in Uist (though not solely, he does also touch on Eigg and eastern Scotland), the question raised is the survival of Gaelic *cill* place-names through the Scandinavian period, despite the "comprehensive and intense" nature of Scandinavian settlement in the area. While Clancy's argument is still in its early days, there is some value in bringing this idea to Tiree, which also experienced widespread Norse language change. More of Tiree's early history is known in comparison with Uist, and it has some place-names in *cill* that could potentially be survivals from the pre-Norse period. Place-names on Tiree which may fit into Clancy's set include: Kilkenneth (Cill Choinnich), Kilmoluaig (Cill Moluag), Cill Fhinnein, and Cill Brighde, though more in-depth analysis of these place-names and Clancy's theory is needed. These place-names are discussed below in conjunction with surviving features which may make an early association somewhat more likely (see especially section 6.4).

---

<sup>1636</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 300.

<sup>1637</sup> Clancy, "Church and domains of Gaelic".

<sup>1638</sup> Clancy, "Church and domains of Gaelic".

<sup>1639</sup> Clancy, "Church and domains of Gaelic".

### 6.3.2 Norse Place-Names

Place-names with Norse elements are somewhat easier to date, as they only come into being after the coming of Scandinavian peoples into the area during the Viking Age. While there are some concerns about specific dating in Norse place-names, they are of less concern to the present research, which focuses more on the early medieval period and the survival of Gaelic place-names.

Place-names with an element in ON *kirkja*, “church”, can be examined as they may point to church sites that existed during the Norse period of Tiree, or which were perhaps established earlier. Three *kirkja* place-names are found on Tiree. Place-names in *cross* may also come from ON *kross*, “cross”, and can include both secular and ecclesiastical place-name traditions.<sup>1640</sup>

*Rinn Chircnis* (NL 937 401) consists of G *Rinn*, “point” attached to the existing name in ON *Kirkjunes*, “promontory” thus meaning “point of \**Kirkjunes*”. This indicates the incorporation of an earlier Norse place-name into a Gaelic one. The ON elements seem to refer to the ecclesiastical foundation at *Teampall Phàraig* (NL 9377 4013), which may have been a working church at some point when Norse was spoken on Tiree. It is possible that it refers to a pre-Norse ecclesiastical foundation which could have become important to Norse speakers and could signal the survival of an ecclesiastical settlement from the pre-Norse period.

*Àird Chircnis* (NM 022 472) attaches G *àird* to the existing ON place-name *Kirkjunes*, meaning “height/headland of *Kirkjunes*”, which lies near Balephetrish and the *Cill Fhinnein* (NM 0195 474) site there. *Àird Chircnis* is first attested by Reeves in 1854 as *Ardkirksnish* and listed on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map.<sup>1641</sup> This place-name, like *Rinn Chircnis*, looks to be a Gaelicized place-name in ON, this time with ScG *àird*, “high or elevated” affixed. Where a Gaelic element appears affixed to a previously occurring Norse place-name, such as is seen in *Rinn Chircnis* and *Àird Chircnis*, indicates that the final and current form of the name was created during the resurgence of Gaelic on Tiree.

<sup>1640</sup> Eòlas nan Naomh. “\*Crosgard”. Accessed 10 Jun 2020. [uistsaints.co.uk/south-uist/crosgard/](http://uistsaints.co.uk/south-uist/crosgard/).

<sup>1641</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 244.

Kirkapoll (NM 045 475) is from ON *kirkja* + *bólstaðr*, “the farm of the church”.<sup>1642</sup> It was first recorded in 1375 in reference to the Church of St Columba at “Kerepol” in a in a papal letter from Pope Gregory XI to the Bishop of Lismore in Scotland which reveals that one Niall MacFinnlaech had falsely claimed that the church was vacant.<sup>1643</sup> The site also appears on Blaeu’s *Atlas as Kirkabol*. Two fourteenth century chapels survive along with likely early crosses (see section 6.4.1). An additional site in ON *kirkja* + *bólstaðr*, *Eilean Chirceboist*, from \**Kirkibost* is found in North Uist.<sup>1644</sup> The timeframe for *bólstaðr* as a productive element has been cautiously placed between the late ninth to late twelfth or thirteenth centuries AD.<sup>1645</sup> In contrast to *Rinn Circnis* and *Àird Chircnis*, Kirkapoll is a more general place-name without a specific geographic context. A farm or settlement might exist further from the church it is in relation to, and also expresses a different kind of social relationship between the place itself and those naming it.<sup>1646</sup> Either a church already existed at this site which was then re-named in Norse, or a church was founded during the time Norse was the dominant language.<sup>1647</sup> Kirkapoll became an important ecclesiastical site in the later medieval period, serving as the parish church of Kirkapoll parish, and its surviving features are discussed below (see section 6.4.1).

The other parish church, *Sorobaidh* (NL 983 416), Anglicised as Soroby, is also of Norse construction. It was first attested in 1509 as “Soreby”,<sup>1648</sup> and is likely from ON *saur*, “sour or swampy” + ON *býr*, “farm”.<sup>1649</sup> The place-name evidence here seems to be sparse in comparison with Kirkapoll, though it became the second of the two parish churches on Tiree. The surviving evidence discussed below (see section 6.4.2) better evidences the importance of the site.

---

<sup>1642</sup> Nicolaisen, *SPN*, 87-94.

<sup>1643</sup> *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. VII. Christiania. 1847-1995. Accessed 9 Dec 2020. [www.dokpro.uio.no/perl/middelalder/diplom\\_vise\\_tekst.pr!?b=6849&s=n&str=](http://www.dokpro.uio.no/perl/middelalder/diplom_vise_tekst.pr!?b=6849&s=n&str=), no. 293; Thomas, “Beyond the Parish Church”, 73.

<sup>1644</sup> Eòlas nan Naomh. “\*Kirkibost (G \*Circeabost)”. Accessed 10 Jun 2020. [uistsaints.co.uk/north-uist/kirkibost/](http://uistsaints.co.uk/north-uist/kirkibost/).

<sup>1645</sup> Gammeltoft, *Place-name element bólstaðr*, 162-163.

<sup>1646</sup> Clancy, forthcoming.

<sup>1647</sup> See discussion in MacDonald, “Iona’s local associations”, 52-53.

<sup>1648</sup> ER 13, 217; Holliday, *Longships*, 427.

<sup>1649</sup> Nicolaisen, *SPN*, 101-102.

*Crossapoll* (NL 9970 4330), is from ON elements *kross* + *bólstaðr*, “farm”.<sup>1650</sup> First recorded as *Crosoboll* in 1496,<sup>1651</sup> it appears as *Krosbol* on Blaeu’s *Atlas*, and *Crossapol* on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map. There is no indication of a standing cross or ecclesiastical site, though it is possible a previously existing cross is now lost. While less likely, it could refer to a crossroads, as the 1868 OS Name Book notes that the site is “at the south west corner of the Reef or Great Green Plain and north of Port a’ Uhaide”.<sup>1652</sup>

*Croisgeir* (NL 9650 4740), likely from ON elements *kross* + *gerði*, “fence or field”, was first recorded in 1932 and sits within 700m of *Cill Moluag*.<sup>1653</sup> The place-name does not appear on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map, but does appear on the OS map used by Canmore as the name of a pump, given as “Croishgearr” (NGR NL 9652 4736).<sup>1654</sup> Further research may be able to tell whether there is a relationship between these two sites. Considering the survival of Gaelic place-names referencing a cross, this perhaps gives additional linguistic support to its former existence.

*Crosgar* (NL 9470 4530), perhaps from ON *kross*, “cross” + *garðr*, “court”,<sup>1655</sup> is first attested as *Krosghairth* in 1654 on Blaeu’s *Atlas*. This place-name was last attested as *Kerachrasgar* in 1862,<sup>1656</sup> and no longer survives in the oral tradition.<sup>1657</sup> It sits within 700m of *Cill Chainnech*, and could possibly have some relationship with it, though it does also seem to sit at a place where the road forks, thus possibly referring to a crossroads.

### 6.3.3 Likely Late Place-Names

Gaelic place-names which are of much later construction than the early medieval period can cause some confusion when attempting to understand the

---

<sup>1650</sup> Peder Gammeltoft, *The place-name element bólstaðr in the North Atlantic Area* (Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2001), 304.

<sup>1651</sup> Paul, *Registrum*, (1496) 2329.

<sup>1652</sup> OS Name Books, *Argyll Ordnance Survey Name Books*, 1868-1878.

<sup>1653</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 321.

<sup>1654</sup> Canmore. Canmore.org.uk.

<sup>1655</sup> Ross, *English-Old Norse*, 31.

<sup>1656</sup> Adam Black and Charles Black. Black's new large map of Scotland [Map]. Centre South West section. Scale: One Quarter Inch to a Mile. Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1862.

<sup>1657</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 324.

early toponymic landscape. There are a number of place-names on Tiree which fall into this category, including names in *Teampall*, *Caibeal*, and *Eaglais*.

*Teampall*, originally from Latin *templum*, refers to a church,<sup>1658</sup> though a deeper discussion is necessary to understand the implications of this place-name element. Reviewing 22 place-names in *teampall* in modern Northern Ireland, 18 are first attested in the seventeenth century.<sup>1659</sup> Of these 18, 3 are originally attested without the *teampall* element: Templepatrick, County Antrim (c. 1605) was first attested as Villa Hugonis de Logan (c. 1222);<sup>1660</sup> Templeton Park, County Antrim (c. 1605) was first attested as Ballipatricke (c. 1605), and continues to alternate between the two names until at least 1621;<sup>1661</sup> and Templecarn parish, County Fermanagh (c. 1659) was first attested as *Termonn Dabeóic* in AU 1043.<sup>1662</sup> Templecormac, County Antrim was first attested in 1780.<sup>1663</sup> This suggests that place-names in *teampall*, at least in this area, are

<sup>1658</sup> eDIL, s.v. "tempul", accessed 17 May 2019. [www.dil.ie/40485](http://www.dil.ie/40485); Simon Taylor, "Place-names and the early church in Scotland", *Scottish Church History Society* 28 (1998), 13.

<sup>1659</sup> Place Names NI. Templepatrick, County Down. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6684](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6684); Place Names NI. Temple-ffin, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=18578](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=18578); Place Names NI. Templecorran House, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6213](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6213); Place Names NI. Templepatrick, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5663](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5663); Place Names NI. Templepatrick, County Down. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6684](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6684); Place Names NI. Templeton Park, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5662](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5662); Place Names NI. Mussenden Temple, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=68](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=68); Place Names NI. Templeaffrin, County Fermanagh. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=12962](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=12962); Place Names NI. Ballintemple, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=19203](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=19203); Place Names NI. Templetown, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=19133](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=19133); Place Names NI. Templemoyle, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=573](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=573); Place Names NI. Templemoyle, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=656](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=656); Place Names NI. Templereagh, County Tyrone. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6079](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=6079); Place Names NI. Ballintemple, County Armagh. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=14916](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=14916); Place Names NI. Ballintemple, County Armagh. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=14119](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=14119); Place Names NI. Farrantemple Glebe, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=19204](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=19204); Place Names NI. Templecarn parish, County Fermanagh. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=20320](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=20320); Place Names NI. Magherintemple, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020. [www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=15601](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=15601).

<sup>1660</sup> Place Names NI. Templepatrick, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5663](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5663).

<sup>1661</sup> Place Names NI. Templeton Park, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5662](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=5662).

<sup>1662</sup> Place Names NI. Templecarn parish, County Fermanagh. Accessed 30 Nov 2020.

<http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=20320>; AU 1043.6.

<sup>1663</sup> Place Names NI. Templecormac, County Antrim. Accessed 30 Nov 2020.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=18317](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=18317).



most likely to have been coined in the seventeenth century, and may have displaced earlier place-name elements, if not the complete name. The final three place-names in *teampall* include Templecowey Point, County Down (c. 1570);<sup>1664</sup> Templemoyle, County Derry (c. 1397);<sup>1665</sup> and Templemore Parish, County Derry (*Tempull mór Dairi*) first attested in AU 1164.<sup>1666</sup> While these earlier names post-date the main period of interest, they do serve to caution against assuming that all place-names in *teampall* necessarily date to the seventeenth century. This small sample agrees with the statement from Flanagan and Flanagan that *teampall* place-names are frequently associated with churches of the post-reformation period.<sup>1667</sup> Taylor and Márkus note that many place-names in Scotland in temple are those in association with lands held by Knights Templars, including Templehall, ABO; Templehall, KDT; Templehall KGL; Templehall, KDT; Templeland BGY; Templeland, ABO; Temple Plantation, DGY; Temple, LAR; The Temple, MAI; Templelands, FAL; \*Templelands of Colliston, SCO; \*Templeland, CRA; and Temple-Hill, CUP.<sup>1668</sup> Bringing this discussion back to Tíree we can now address the place-names which include *teampall* as an element. *Teampall Phàraig* (NL 9377 4013) “Patrick’s Church”, survives at the site of *Ceann a’ Mhara*. It was first recorded in 1794.<sup>1669</sup> Holliday identifies two additional *teampall* sites: *Teampall Odhrán*, “Orán’s Temple”, (NM 0420 4735) and *Teampall Choluim Chille*, “Columba’s Temple” (NM 0423 4727), both at Kirkapoll.<sup>1670</sup> These place-names do not appear on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map, though the remains of chapels at these locations are noted. *Teampull Orain* (NF 772 771) is also found in North Uist,<sup>1671</sup> and *Teampull Chaluim Chille* (NF 7810 5480) is found in Benbecula,<sup>1672</sup> which are recorded on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map. Templefield (NL 9806 4277),<sup>1673</sup> recorded by Reeves near Heylipol is distinct from the other place-names in *teampall* as it is

---

<sup>1664</sup> Place Names NI. Templecowey Point, County Down. Accessed 30 Nov 2020.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=12612](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=12612).

<sup>1665</sup> Place Names NI. Templemoyle, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020.

[www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=1089](http://www.placenamesni.org/resultdetails.php?entry=1089).

<sup>1666</sup> Place Names NI. Templemore Parish, County Derry. Accessed 30 Nov 2020; AU 1164.6.

<sup>1667</sup> Flanagan and Flanagan, *Irish Place Names*, 148.

<sup>1668</sup> Taylor and Márkus, *Place-Names of Fife*, vol 5., 510.

<sup>1669</sup> Sir John Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland: Drawn up from the Communications of the Ministers of the Different Parishes*, vol. x (Edinburgh: William Creech, 1794), 402.

<sup>1670</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 63.

<sup>1671</sup> Eòlas nan Naomh. “Teampull Orain”. Accessed 10 Jun 2020. [uistsaints.co.uk/north-uist/teampull-orain/](http://uistsaints.co.uk/north-uist/teampull-orain/).

<sup>1672</sup> Eòlas nan Naomh. “Teampull Chaluim Chille”. Accessed 10 Jun 2020. [uistsaints.co.uk/benbecula/teampull-chaluim-chille/](http://uistsaints.co.uk/benbecula/teampull-chaluim-chille/).

<sup>1673</sup> Reeves, “Tíree”, 243.

in the specific position, not the generic. Based on the brief discussion included here, it seems most likely that these place-names are post-Reformation coinings, though a small possibility exists that they may have overridden just part of a previous ecclesiastical place-name. If that were the case then the dedications to Columba and Orán may be original.

*Teampall Odhrán* and *Teampall Choluim Chille*, as just mentioned, are located at Kirkapoll. To these is now added *Cladh Odhrán* “Orán’s Graveyard”, (NM 0432 4723). *Cladh Odhrán* was first noted by Reeves in 1854,<sup>1674</sup> and also appears on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map. A consideration of these Gaelic place-names together emphasizes the continued importance associated with the site. The discussion of the Norse origin of Kirkapoll as a place-name is seen above (section 6.3.2), with the surviving features analysed in section 6.4.1.

Perhaps the most notable of these later place-names are *Cladh Kirkapoll* (NM 0423 4726) “Kirkapoll graveyard”,<sup>1675</sup> and *Cladh Sorobaidh* (NL 983 416) “Soroby graveyard”. *Cladh Sorobaidh* was first recorded in 1854 by Reeves,<sup>1676</sup> and appears on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map. Some confusion arises here at Kirkapoll as Reeves noted it was the more modern graveyard which was called *Cladh Òrain*,<sup>1677</sup> while the OS six-inch map notes the older graveyard. Holliday notes that the modern graveyard is called *An Cladh Mòr*, *Cladh Odhrán*, and *Cladh Chirceabol*.<sup>1678</sup> Both *Cladh Chirceabol* and *Cladh Sorobaidh* are obvious Norse names with G *cladh* affixed.<sup>1679</sup> As mentioned above, this affixing of a Gaelic element to an existing Norse place-name indicates that the name was constructed after Gaelic had made a resurgence on the island.

Additional later place-names contain the ecclesiastical element *caibeal*, from L *capella*, “chapel”,<sup>1680</sup> and do not seem to be attested in Early Gaelic. It is possible that names with *caibeal* were formed as part of the process of the post-Norse re-emergence of Gaelic in the Hebrides. Three sites with the element

---

<sup>1674</sup> *Ibid*, 241.

<sup>1675</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 241.

<sup>1676</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 244.

<sup>1677</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1678</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 66-67.

<sup>1679</sup> Nicolaisen, *SPN*, 101-102.

<sup>1680</sup> eDIL, s.v. “seipél”. Accessed 17 May 2019. [www.dil.ie/36948](http://www.dil.ie/36948); Taylor, “early church”, 13.

*caibeal* have been noted. *Caibeal Thòmais* (NM 0422 4483),<sup>1681</sup> “the chapel of Thomas” near Scarinish could be connected to the Iona Nunnery which owned the lands of Scarinish from the sixteenth century.<sup>1682</sup> *Tìr Chaibel* (NM 0384 4599), “the land of the chapel”, was recently recorded near Gott.<sup>1683</sup> This could refer to lands held by Iona in the area in 1588.<sup>1684</sup> *Cnoc a’ Chaibeil*, “the hill of the chapel”, (NM 0420 4735) was recently recorded in Kirkapoll.<sup>1685</sup> These place-names were all formed in the post-Norse period, and are thus out of scope for the purposes of this thesis.

The place-name element *\*eglēs/\*eclēs*,<sup>1686</sup> originally from L *ecclesia*, refers to a church. This is often an early place-name element, possibly dating to AD 500-800,<sup>1687</sup> when a connection directly with *\*eclēs* can be drawn. This does not seem to be the case with *eaglais*, which is the modern Gaelic form, and which seems to have been productive quite late on Tiree. Holliday notes five place-names in *Eaglais*, though none are recorded on the first edition OS six-inch map. *An Eaglais Shaor Chirceabol* (NM 0463 4734) refers to the Free Church of Kirkapoll, which is a Victorian Era foundation.<sup>1688</sup> Additional place-names which seem to refer to post-medieval structures include: *An Eaglais Thin*, “the tin church” (NL 9841 4200);<sup>1689</sup> *An Eaglais Ùr*, “the new church” (NL 9800 4713);<sup>1690</sup> *An Seann Eaglais*, “the old church” (NL 9836 4734), built in 1856;<sup>1691</sup> *Crois na h-Eaglaise*, “crossroads of the church” (NL 9646 4327), which refers to the church of *Eaglais (Mhòr) na Mòinteach*, “the big church at Moss”<sup>1692</sup> (NL 9650 4321) built in 1902 on

<sup>1681</sup> Tiree Place Names. *Caibeal Thòmais*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.

[www.tireeplacenames.org/scarinish/caibeal-thomais/](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/scarinish/caibeal-thomais/).

<sup>1682</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll* 3, 158; Canmore. Iona, Iona Nunnery. Accessed 1 Dec 2020.

[canmore.org.uk/site/21621/iona-iona-nunnery](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21621/iona-iona-nunnery).

<sup>1683</sup> Tiree Place Names. *Cill Chaibeil* or *Tìr Chaibeil*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.

[www.tireeplacenames.org/gott/cill\\_burial\\_ground\\_chaibeil/](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/gott/cill_burial_ground_chaibeil/).

<sup>1684</sup> Paul, Thomson, Dickson, and Stevenson, *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum*, no. 1491.

<sup>1685</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 64.

<sup>1686</sup> Taylor, “The early church”, 11. Watson, *CPNS*, 153; eDIL, s.v. “eaglais”. [www.dil.ie/19585](http://www.dil.ie/19585);

Taylor, *Place-names of Fife*, 361.

<sup>1687</sup> Taylor, “The early church”, 3-5.

<sup>1688</sup> Tiree Place Names. *An Eaglais Shaor Chirceabol*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.

[www.tireeplacenames.org/kirkapol/an\\_eaglais\\_shaor\\_chirceabol](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/kirkapol/an_eaglais_shaor_chirceabol).

<sup>1689</sup> Tiree Place Names. *An Eaglais Thin*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.

[www.tireeplacenames.org/balinoe/an\\_eaglais\\_thin](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/balinoe/an_eaglais_thin).

<sup>1690</sup> Tiree Place Names. *An Eaglais Ùr* or *Eaglais a’ Chontractar* or *An Eaglais Chòrnaig*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/an\\_eaglais\\_ur](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/cornaigmore/an_eaglais_ur).

<sup>1691</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Cornaig, Congregational church. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.

[canmore.org.uk/site/294010/tiree-cornaig-congregationalchurch](http://canmore.org.uk/site/294010/tiree-cornaig-congregationalchurch).

<sup>1692</sup> Tiree Place Names. *Eaglais (Mhòr) na Mòinteach*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.

[www.tireeplacenames.org/moss/eaglais\\_mhor\\_na\\_mointeach](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/moss/eaglais_mhor_na_mointeach).

the site of a previous church built in 1841;<sup>1693</sup> *Eaglais Bhàisteach Bhaile Mhàrtainn*, “the Baptist church of Balmartine” (NL 985 413), built in 1854; *Eaglais Bheag Ruaig*, “the small Ruaig church” (NM 0660 4810),<sup>1694</sup> noted as an independent chapel on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map; and *Eaglais Chirceaboil*, “Kirkapoll church”, (NM 0408 4681), built in 1842.<sup>1695</sup>

What we can glean from this place-name analysis is the possibility that some names could have survived from the pre-Norse era, though it is very difficult to say with much certainty that any particular place-name has in fact survived from the early medieval period. Analysing the surviving features can play a part in increasing the probability that place-names could have survived from the pre-Norse era.

## 6.4 Extant Ecclesiastical Sites

The disconnect between the textual record and the “on the ground” evidence is striking. This section will look at the different types of evidence that point to what is discoverable today, including hagiotoponyms, archaeological remains, and sculptural evidence in an attempt to bring together a well-rounded and clearer view of the sites identified. Fifteen place-names with hagiotoponym elements are included in the present examination and include possible commemorations of Moluag, Cainnech, Findchán, Columba, Òran, Brigit, Thomas, Patrick, and Donnán.

Carved stones of possibly early medieval date have been discovered at *Ceann a’ Mhara*, Kirkapoll, Kilkenneth, Soroby, *Caolas*, and *Cladh Beag*. It should be noted that, due to the movable nature of many of these sculptures, it is not always possible to be certain whether they are in their original position, while others are certainly found in secondary contexts.

Even before the sixth century and the reported arrival of multiple saints, Tiree was teeming with activity which can be seen in surviving sites which may broadly

---

<sup>1693</sup> Tiree Parish Church. Our History. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [tireeparishchurch.com/about-us/our-history](http://tireeparishchurch.com/about-us/our-history).

<sup>1694</sup> Tiree Place Names. *Eaglais Bheag Ruaig*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [www.tireeplacenames.org/ruaig/an\\_eaglais\\_bheag\\_ruaig](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/ruaig/an_eaglais_bheag_ruaig).

<sup>1695</sup> Tiree Place Names. *Eaglais Chirceaboil*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [www.tireeplacenames.org/kirkapol/an\\_eaglais\\_chirceabol](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/kirkapol/an_eaglais_chirceabol).

date to the Iron Age (700 BC - 800 AD). This includes between twenty and twenty-seven Atlantic roundhouses and up to four possible crannogs.<sup>1696</sup> There are thirteen potential ecclesiastical sites identified on Tiree, as noted in Table 6.3.<sup>1697</sup>

**Table 6.3 Ecclesiastical Sites Recorded on Tiree since the Nineteenth Century.**

Site	Canmore ID	Type	Commemoration	Visible?
(1) Kirkapol Old Parish Church	21513	Church, Cross	St Columba	Y
(1) Cladh Kirkapol	21532	Cemetery, Chapel	Odrán	Y
(1) Kirkapol	21502	Chapel		Y
(1) Cladh Orain	21522	Burial Ground, Chapel	Odrán	Y
(2) Soroby	21465	Church, Burial Ground, Monastery	St Columba	Y
(3) Cladh Beag	21411	Burial Ground, Chapel		Y
(4) Caolas	21497	Burial Ground, Chapel		N
(5) Cill Choinnich/ Kilkenneth	21471	Burial Ground, Chapel	Cainnech Mocu Dalon of Achadh Bo	Y
(6) Teampall Phàraig	21477	Chapel, Enclosure, Monastery, Well	Patrick	Y
(7) Cill Fhinnein (Kenovay)	21428	Burial Ground, Chapel	Finnen	Y
(8) Kilmoluag	21443	Burial Ground, Chapel	Moluag	N
(9) Cill Tunnain			Donnán	N
(10) Cnoc A' Chluidh	21479	Burial Ground, Chapel		N

<sup>1696</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 49.

<sup>1697</sup> RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 3: Mull, Tiree, Coll and Northern Argyll (excluding the early medieval and later monuments of Iona)* (Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1980); Beveridge, *Coll and Tiree*, 155-156; Reeves, "Tiree", 238-243.

(11) Balephetrish/ Cill Fhinnein	21511	Burial Ground, Chapel	Finnen	N
(12) Kilbride	21444	Burial Ground, Chapel	Brigid of Magh- Luing?	N
(13) Caibeal Thomais	21543	Burial Ground, Chapel	Thomas	N

Of these thirteen sites, only seven have currently visible features, though four are known to have been robbed of stone in order to build newer structures.<sup>1698</sup> There are two sites which might suggest a level of habitation indicative of a monastic community, Kirkapoll and *Teampall Phàraig* (see sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.6 respectively),<sup>1699</sup> though *Cill Fhinnein* (Kenovay), *Cill Choinnich* (Kilkenneth), and Soroby are also notable.

<sup>1698</sup> Ibid, Soroby: 238, Kilmoluag: 242, Cnoc a' Claodh: 243; Kilbride, 241.

<sup>1699</sup> MacDonald, "Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*", 230-231.

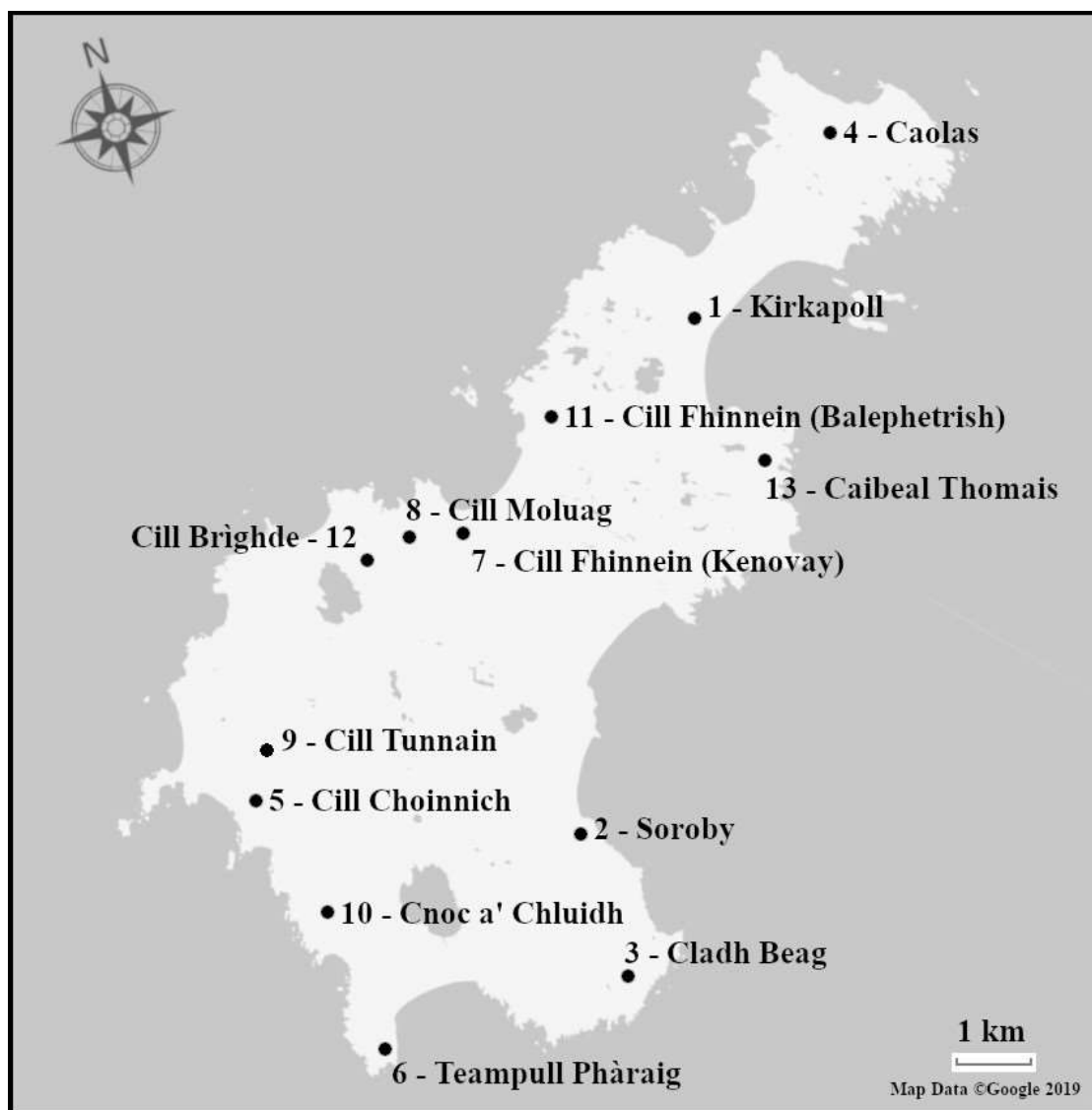


Figure 6.4 Ecclesiastical sites on Tìree mentioned in chapter.

### 6.4.1 Kirkapoll

At Kirkapoll is *Cladh Òrain* (NM 0432 4723), or Òran's graveyard, which has been connected to the Òran of *Rèilig Òrain* at Iona.<sup>1700</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map shows a *Cladh Òrain*,<sup>1701</sup> and the name seems to have survived locally,<sup>1702</sup> though the modern OS map does not reflect it. The chapel and church seem to be connected with Òran and Columba, as the names *Teampall Odhrán* (NM 0420 4735) and *Teampall Choluim Chille* (NM 0423 4727) survive for them.

<sup>1700</sup> Reeves, "Tìree", 241; Watson, *CPNS*, 309.

<sup>1701</sup> OS Six-Inch. Tìree [Map].

<sup>1702</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 66.



Figure 6.5 Map of sites at Kirkapoll.

There are several archaeological features at Kirkapoll, including two carved crosses (1), a chapel (2), the old parish church dedicated to Columba (NM 04232 47274) sitting within a burial ground (3), and an additional burial ground (4). The Old Parish Church is one of two medieval parish churches on Tiree.<sup>1703</sup> Its parsonage was allotted to the Bishop of the Isles in 1561.<sup>1704</sup> The chapel at Kirkapoll (NM 04208 47355) stands very near the Kirkapoll Old Parish Church, and both seem to be “of similar architectural character”, leading RCAHMS to suggest a possible late fourteenth-century date for the two buildings.<sup>1705</sup> This coincides with dates obtained from human interment below the east wall of the church.<sup>1706</sup> The old parish church sits within its own small burial ground, known as *Cladh Beag*,<sup>1707</sup> but perhaps more anciently as *Cladh Òrain* (and seems to be an

<sup>1703</sup> Iona Club, *Collectanea*, 4.

<sup>1704</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

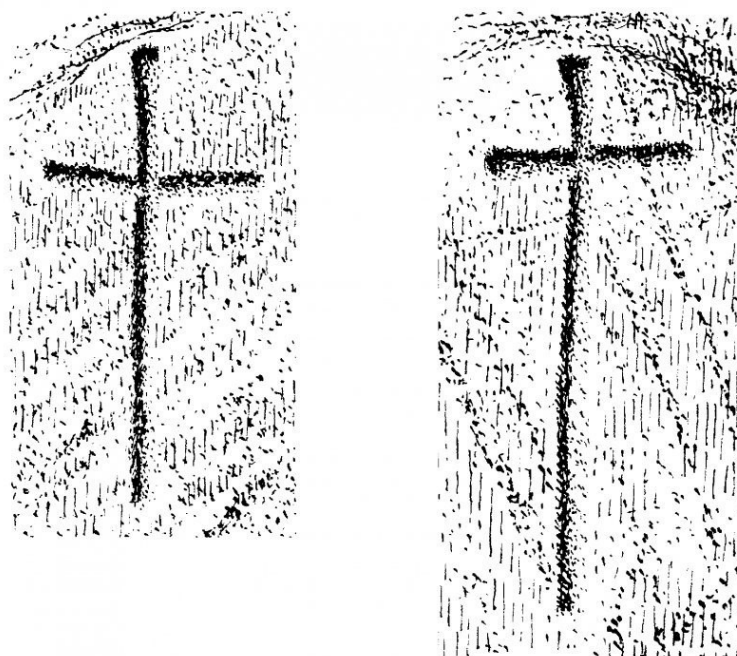
<sup>1705</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll* 3, 155-156.

<sup>1706</sup> Olivia Lelong, "Kirkapol Old Parish Church, Tiree, Argyll and Bute (Tiree parish), medieval ecclesiastical site; burials", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 2 (2001), 24.

<sup>1707</sup> Tiree Place-Names. An Cladh Beag. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.  
[www.tireeplacenames.org/kirkapol/an\\_cladh\\_beag](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/kirkapol/an_cladh_beag).



association with Òran of Iona).<sup>1708</sup> *Cladh Kirkapoll* (NM 0432 4723) is a cemetery which remains in use today, including the modern extension. A grave robber reported the discovery of a building foundation in the cemetery a few years prior to 1903 which may have been a chapel dedicated to St Òran, but this has not been further confirmed.<sup>1709</sup> The two incised linear crosses carved on rock outcroppings suggest a possibly earlier date.<sup>1710</sup>



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/370487>

**Figure 6.6 Carved Crosses near Kirkapoll Chapel  
(Canmore 370487 © Crown Copyright: HES).**

These are both Latin crosses, the first with a slightly expanded upper terminal measuring approximately 0.44m by 0.21m, and the second with a triangular upper terminal and measuring approximately 0.54m by 0.2m.<sup>1711</sup> The simple nature of these crosses makes them difficult to date and compare. However, it should be noted that they bear some similarity to the Latin cross at Kilkenneth (see section 6.4.5). The first cross is carved into the E face of a rock outcropping (NM 0420 4741), so that when the viewer is looking at the cross, they are looking west. The second cross is located within this viewshed (NM 0418 4740), only a few meters away, but is not visible as it is carved on the SW face of another

<sup>1708</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll* 3, 153-156.

<sup>1709</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Kirkapoll Burial Ground, Cladh Kirkapoll. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/2153](https://canmore.org.uk/site/2153).

<sup>1710</sup> MacDonald, "Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*", 233.

<sup>1711</sup> Fisher, *EMS* 124, no. 310.

outcrop, such that the viewer of the cross is facing NE. Neither of these positions seem to indicate an approach to the surviving chapels, but could indicate some kind of boundary around the church and burial grounds.<sup>1712</sup> *Cladh Beag* 3 is now in a reclining position next to a field dyke just to the east of the modern extension of Cladh Kirkapoll after reportedly being used as a gravestone by the MacLeans of Hynish during WWII,<sup>1713</sup> but it will be discussed with the site of *Cladh Beag* (see section 6.4.3).

Kirkapoll could have been the site of *Mag Luinge*, mentioned by Adomnán. It is one of the two considered possibilities, the other being Soroby. The geography around the site is right to be a “plain of the boat”,<sup>1714</sup> as the beach there is sandy and would make for easy landing. The bay itself is large and could provide protection from winds and currents and is within easy reach of Iona. The modern ferry landing is within Gott Bay, showing its enduring usefulness to sea-based travel. Local place-names exist which refer to Columba attempting first unsuccessfully and then successfully to land his boat.<sup>1715</sup> In addition to the place-names and surviving features already discussed, the 1375 papal letter from Pope Gregory XI to the Bishop of Lismore in Scotland (see section 6.4.2 above) mentioned the “church of St Columba of Tiree” annexed by Ardchattan Priory before the end of the thirteenth century, a church confirmed in the possession of that house in 1380, which was very likely Kirkapoll.<sup>1716</sup> This perhaps lends additional weight to the identification of Kirkapoll as *Mag Luinge*.

---

<sup>1712</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>1713</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Hynish, Cladh Beag. Accessed 10 Aug 2019.  
[canmore.org.uk/site/318517/tiree-hynish-cladh-beag](http://canmore.org.uk/site/318517/tiree-hynish-cladh-beag).

<sup>1714</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 92.

<sup>1715</sup> Tiree Place Names. "Mallachdaig or Mollachdag". Accessed 10 Aug 2019.  
[www.tireeplacenames.org/gott/mallachdaig/](http://www.tireeplacenames.org/gott/mallachdaig/).

<sup>1716</sup> Burns, *Papal Letters*, 46; Macphail, *Highland Papers*, vol. 4, 138-140; Canmore. Tiree, Soroby, Old Parish Church.

### 6.4.2 Soroby



Figure 6.7 Cladh Soroby site with dot showing location of Soroby 2 (Canmore).

Soroby (NL 9838 4165) is the location of the second medieval parish church on Tiree, and is the site of a burial ground and medieval church dedicated to St Columba with two cross-carved slabs of possibly early medieval date.<sup>1717</sup> Reeves suggests Soroby as the possible site of Columba's *Mag Luinge*,<sup>1718</sup> though Kirkapoll has also been suggested, as mentioned above.

The church is said to have occupied a site near the northwest corner of what is now a walled burial-ground, but the majority of the structure was evidently removed during the first half of the 19th century.<sup>1719</sup> Low mounds are still visible, representing a foundation of approximately 14m by 8m, along with a number of

<sup>1717</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll* 3, 166-170.

<sup>1718</sup> Fisher notes it as a medieval church of St Columba in *EMS*, 125, no.327; Reeves, "Tiree", 239.

<sup>1719</sup> *Ibid*, 238.

thirteenth-century architectural fragments in re-use as burial markers, distributed mainly in the north half of the cemetery.<sup>1720</sup>



Figure 6.8 Soroby 1 (Fisher, *EMS*, 28; HES).

There are two early medieval carved stones at Soroby of extremely different styles. The first, Soroby 1, is on a small, thin stone roughly tau-shaped, measuring approximately 0.47m by 0.38m and incised with a Latin cross with the head of the cross enclosed in a circle and with a short lower transom making a secondary cross.<sup>1721</sup> That this tau-shape is original is noteworthy. Encircled crosses are seen elsewhere, notably at Lochgoilhead, Monymusk, and Iona 5 and 6, though these lack the lower transom seen on Soroby 1.<sup>1722</sup> Iona 5 is on a kite-shaped slab and of closely comparable size, measuring approximately 0.64m by 0.39m.<sup>1723</sup> A slightly more similar design, including an encircled cross where the cross extends beyond the circle on all legs, with a transom just before the end of the arm is seen on St Conall's Cross at Kilcashel, Co. Donegal.<sup>1724</sup>

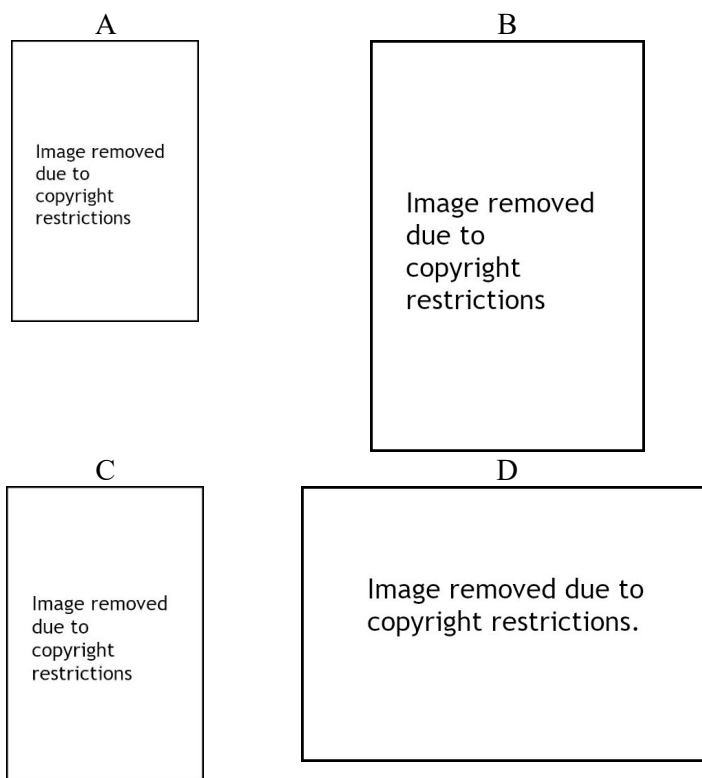
<sup>1720</sup> Canmore. Tیره, Soroby, Old Parish Church. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21465/](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21465/).

<sup>1721</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 125, no. 327 (1).

<sup>1722</sup> *Ibid*, 28, A (2), B (6), and D (5).

<sup>1723</sup> *Ibid*, 126, no 6 (5).

<sup>1724</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses 2*, fig. 365.



**Figure 6.9 Encircled Carved Stone Crosses: Iona 6 (A), Iona 5 (B), Lochgoilhead (C), Monymusk (D) (Fisher, *EMS*, 22, 28; HES).**



**Figure 6.10 St Conall's Stone, Kilcassel, Co. Donegal (Harbison, *High Crosses 2*, fig. 365).**

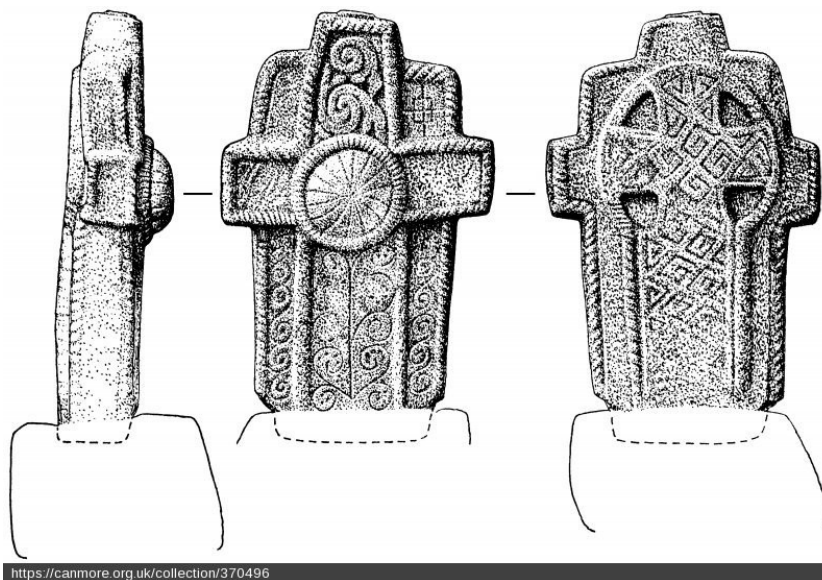


Figure 6.11 Drawing of Soroby 2 (Canmore 370496 © Crown Copyright: HES).



Figure 6.12 Photographs of Soroby 2. Left: face A, Right: face B. (Photos by author).

The second slab, Soroby 2 is notably larger and more detailed in decoration:

Cruciform slab, 1.27m by 0.8m by 0.25m, with cable-moulded angles and a slight finial. Similar mouldings outline two crosses, that on the E face (a) being a Latin cross with a fluted central boss in a 0.35m moulding. The upper arm contains three coiled serpents and the shaft

encloses light scrolls and is flanked by linked S-scrolls. Face (*b*) bears a disc-headed Latin cross with slightly expanded arms, filled with worn key-ornament.<sup>1725</sup>

This cross-slab may be in its original socket stone on the east side of the burial ground. The head of the cross on face B does appear to be ringed in a style very broadly similar to Soroby 1. It is notable that Soroby 1 shows some stylistic links with Iona (see figure 6.9), especially considering the later links found in the textual evidence (see sections 6.1 and 6.4.1). Soroby 2 is interesting because the cross on face A extends beyond the edges of the general slab shape, while the cross on the back sits easily within the same slab area. The level of detail wrought on both sides of the cross slab is impressive. The s-scrolls have been compared to those on face A of *Cille Bharra* 4, though overall Soroby 2 has a greater degree of intricacy.<sup>1726</sup> The shape of face A is broadly similar to that of *Riasg Buidhe*, Colonsay,<sup>1727</sup> though the decoration is notably different. A similar observation can be made for Killevin.<sup>1728</sup> Kilchenzie's cross, in Kintyre, is perhaps more similar in shape and decoration, as the cross outline is of raised moulding like Soroby 2.<sup>1729</sup> The coiled serpents or dragons on the upper arm of the cross are the only type of figural ornament on the entire cross slab. A similar design of coiled serpent or dragon heads is seen on the shaft of the west face of a fragmentary cross at Moone, Co. Kildare.<sup>1730</sup> Serpents are known from crosses at Iona, and the motif seems to have been associated with Columba,<sup>1731</sup> as seen in his act on his final day of life to protect people on Iona from the venom of snakes.<sup>1732</sup> The serpent/dragon motif may come from Irish crosses similar to that at Dromiskin, Co. Louth.<sup>1733</sup> The connection with *Cille Bharra* and Iona suggests the possibility of a Norse era dating, perhaps to the tenth century.<sup>1734</sup>

While Soroby 1 has not been dated, there is a possibility that it is early, and can potentially be grouped as similar in date to the stones at Monymusk, Lochgoilhead, and Iona, with which it shares some stylistic links. Soroby is

---

<sup>1725</sup> Ibid, 125, no. 327 (2).

<sup>1726</sup> Ibid, 107, no. 41 (4).

<sup>1727</sup> Ibid, 140, no. 389 (1).

<sup>1728</sup> Ibid, 148, no. 63 (2).

<sup>1729</sup> Ibid, 117, no 280.

<sup>1730</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses* 1, 156, no. 182; Harbison, *High Crosses* 2, figs. 521b, 522.

<sup>1731</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 16, 19.

<sup>1732</sup> VC III.23.

<sup>1733</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 14, 19.

<sup>1734</sup> Ibid, 10, 107.

situated at a site that fits the description given by the name *Mag Luinge*, with its position on a sandy bay which would be appropriate for landing boats along a plain, as with Kirkapoll (mentioned above). Soroby continued as an important religious centre through its position as the site of the parish church. Its church was also dedicated to Columba, as attested in 1421, and could be a sufficiently substantial site to locate a monastery.<sup>1735</sup> The level of detail for Soroby 2 indicates the degree of financial support received by the site and could suggest that Soroby was *Mag Luinge*.

### 6.4.3 Cladh Beag

*Cladh Beag* (NL 9782 3905),<sup>1736</sup> is shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map, situated along the *Allt Ban*, just west of Hynish. The closest beach appears to be *Tràigh Balbhaig*, though there is also a Port a'Mhuilinn nearby. In Reeves' own time there was no associated dedication, and he reported the site was no longer visible.<sup>1737</sup> There has been some recent consideration of the site,<sup>1738</sup> though a formal archaeological review would be beneficial to assess whether any structures can be identified.

---

<sup>1735</sup> Macphail, *Highland Papers*, vol. 4, 169.

<sup>1736</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Hynish, Cladh Beag. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21411](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21411).

<sup>1737</sup> Reeves, "Tiree", 243.

<sup>1738</sup> John Holliday, personal communication.



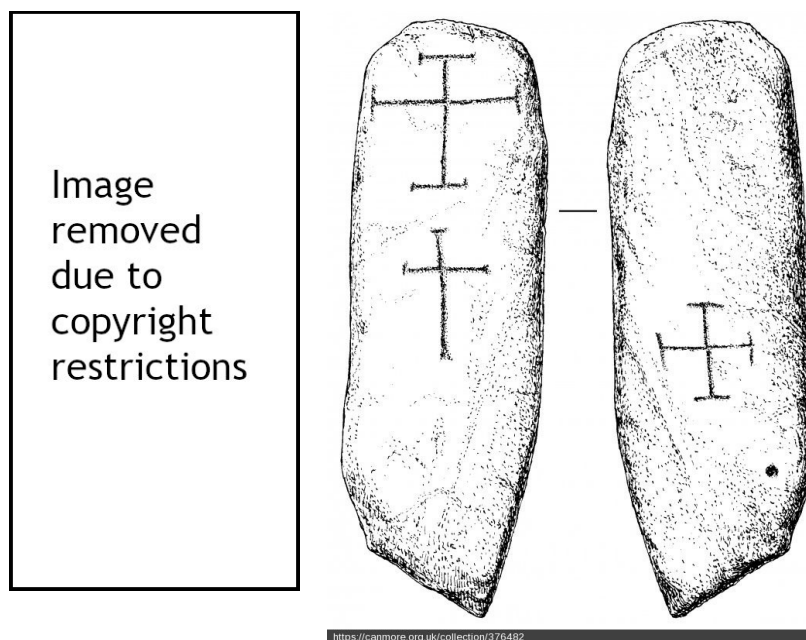


Figure 6.13 Drawings of Cross Carved stones from Cladh Beag Cross-incised slab, Cladh Beag 1 (Left) (Fisher, *EMS*, 32), Cross-incised pillar, Cladh Beag 3 (Right) (Canmore 376482 © Crown Copyright: HES).

Three early medieval stones are recorded from *Cladh Beag* (NL 9782 3905),<sup>1739</sup> though only one now survives. *Cladh Beag* 1 is recorded in a drawing and described as approximately 0.4m by 0.15m with a sunken Latin cross, though it is now lost; *Cladh Beag* 2 is recorded only as a “slab with incised cross”, and is also now lost; *Cladh Beag* 3 was moved to the cemetery at Kirkapoll,<sup>1740</sup> reportedly for use as a gravestone during WWII,<sup>1741</sup> and currently is lying on the ground outside the enclosure for the modern extension to the larger graveyard with face A visible. It is an unshaped pillar, measuring 1.33m by 0.47m, carved on two faces, A has two incised Latin crosses, the top having bar-terminals with what appears to be awkward ratios between the lengths of the top and bottom sections when compared to the length of the arms on each side. The lower cross has slightly expanded terminals while face B has a single equal-armed cross with bar terminals.<sup>1742</sup> In consideration of the awkward arm lengths of the top cross, those found at Pabbay, Barra; Ardnadam; *Eilean Mór*; and Inverneil house on Loch Fyne have a similar awkwardness to their designs.<sup>1743</sup>

<sup>1739</sup> Canmore. Hynish, Cladh Beag.

<sup>1740</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 123, no. 276.

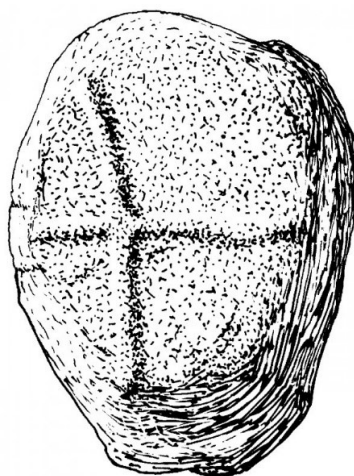
<sup>1741</sup> Canmore. Cladh Beag.

<sup>1742</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 123, no. 276.

<sup>1743</sup> *Ibid*, 30, U, Z (2), BB, and CC.

#### 6.4.4 Caolas

*Caolas* (NM 0809 4870)<sup>1744</sup> sits along the B8069 on the extreme east end of Tìree, the early medieval site sitting next to a crofter's house. Here there was reported a standing stone, now lost and reported as used in the construction of a local house.<sup>1745</sup> Two lost stones are recorded from *Caolas*, where *Crois a' Chaolas*, "the cross of Caolas", previously stood before it was removed for reuse in a nearby building prior to 1903.<sup>1746</sup> The location of the building which the stone was built into seems to have been lost, limiting its use in the current study. *Caolas 2*, measuring approximately 0.59m by 0.44m, was found during ploughing.



**Figure 6.14 Drawing of Caolas 2 cross-incised stone (Canmore 554365 © Crown Copyright: HES).**

This second stone was discovered in 1998 on the north field dyke of the B8069. It indicates it was carved with an irregular cross in relief rather than incised, which would be more usual. It was approximately 20mm high and 35mm across.<sup>1747</sup> As with other stones found on Tìree and included in this discussion, the simplicity of the relief cross makes it difficult to date based on design characteristics, but it is possible it could have been early. It is perhaps most similar in design to the cross on face B of pillar 2 at Calgary, Mull because of its relief carving and crooked presentation.

<sup>1744</sup> Canmore. Tìree, Caolas. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21497](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21497).

<sup>1745</sup> Beveridge, *Coll and Tìree*, 155-156.

<sup>1746</sup> *Ibid*, 155.

<sup>1747</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 123, no. 264.

### 6.4.5 Cill Choinnich

*Cill Choinnich* (NL 9430 4470), Anglicised as Kilkenneth, is marked on Blaeu's Atlas as "Kilchainie", along with a symbol for a church.<sup>1748</sup> This site is associated with Cainnech moccu Dalon of *Achad Bó*.<sup>1749</sup> Cainnech is commemorated elsewhere in Scotland, including on Iona (see section 6.2.2). In the *Life of Saint Cainnech* (dated to AD 766-780, see section 2.4.1) he is noted as "staying in the region of Tiree", from whence he travelled to Iona to save the son of a monk there.<sup>1750</sup> While Cainnech is an early-medieval saint whose cult was sufficiently widespread to allow for the possibility of him establishing a foundation on Tiree,<sup>1751</sup> it is difficult to confirm his appearance at this site as part of his own personal foundation. Considering the closeness that seems to have existed between the cults of Columba and Cainnech (see section 2.4.1), it is possible that his cult benefitted from the expansion of property ownership by Iona in the thirteenth century and later, which could have brought his cult back to Tiree. What that means is that the Cainnech dedication is plausible for either the sixth or the thirteenth century.

The chapel may have been a dependant of the former parish church of Soroby by the early thirteenth century.<sup>1752</sup> In 1903 distinct traces of a wall surrounding the chapel at *Cill Choinnich* were observed and it was visible to the southeast of the chapel during an RCAHMS visit in 1974.<sup>1753</sup> The chapel was associated with a burial-ground which was abandoned before the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>1754</sup> Due to an architectural similarity to the chapel at Kirkapoll, a tentative fourteenth century date has been suggested for the site.<sup>1755</sup> Resistance survey work undertaken in 2007 provided hints of possible structures associated with the Chapel.<sup>1756</sup> Today only the east and west gable and some portions of wall are visible above the sand. The entire interior has been filled with sand. A small bronze bell, about 50mm in diameter, was found at Kilkenneth prior to 1903

<sup>1748</sup> Blaeu, *Mvla Insvla* [Map].

<sup>1749</sup> DoSH. Cill Choinnich, Eccles. (Tiree). Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320671334](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320671334).

<sup>1750</sup> *VCain* §26.

<sup>1751</sup> Watson, *CPNS*, 188, 276; Holliday, *Longships*, 60.

<sup>1752</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll* 3, 146; MacDonald, "Iona's Local Associations", 3-4, 112.

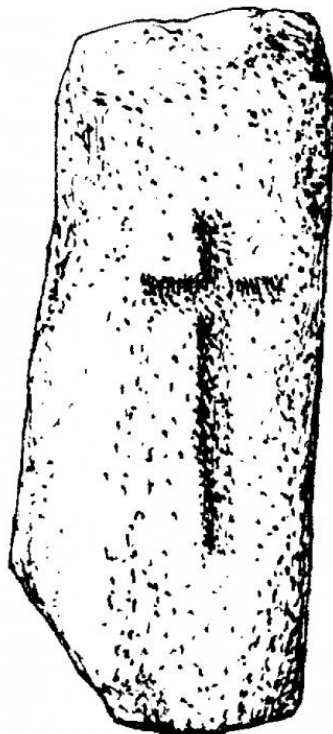
<sup>1753</sup> *Ibid*, 146.

<sup>1754</sup> Sinclair, *The Statistical Account of Scotland*, 401-402.

<sup>1755</sup> RCAHMS, *Argyll* 3, 146.

<sup>1756</sup> Sue Ovenden, "Kilkenneth Chapel, Tiree, Argyll and Bute (Tiree parish), geophysical survey", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 8 (2007), 58.

when it was known to be in the possession of the family of Lord Archibald Campbell.<sup>1757</sup> The date and current location of the bell is unknown, though it may be in Inverary,<sup>1758</sup> which was the seat of the Duke of Argyll.



<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/374554>

**Figure 6.15 Carved cross at Kilkenneth (Canmore 374554 © Crown Copyright: HES).**

A slab measuring approximately 0.42m by 0.17m and carved with an incised Latin cross was discovered in re-use in the chapel at Kilkenneth.<sup>1759</sup> Unfortunately this cross slab now appears to be missing. Its simplicity makes dating difficult, though it bears some similarity to the Latin crosses found at Kirkapoll and is likely to be early medieval. The possibility of the stone having an early medieval date, in connection with the place-name and surviving church structure, allows the possibility that the site was in use prior to the erection of the current structure. It is also possible that this is a thirteenth-century foundation in association with Iona which made use of an earlier carved stone from another

<sup>1757</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Kilkenneth, Cill Choinnich. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21471](https://canmore.org.uk/site/21471).

<sup>1758</sup> John Holliday, personal communication; Alison Diamond, archivist at Inverary Castle, advised that if the bell was in the possession of the ninth Duke, it may be among the many items lost from his collection, personal communication.

<sup>1759</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 124, no. 298.

location. It might be possible to set firmer dates of activity for this site if the burials in the graveyard could be examined in greater detail.

#### 6.4.6 Teampall Phàraig

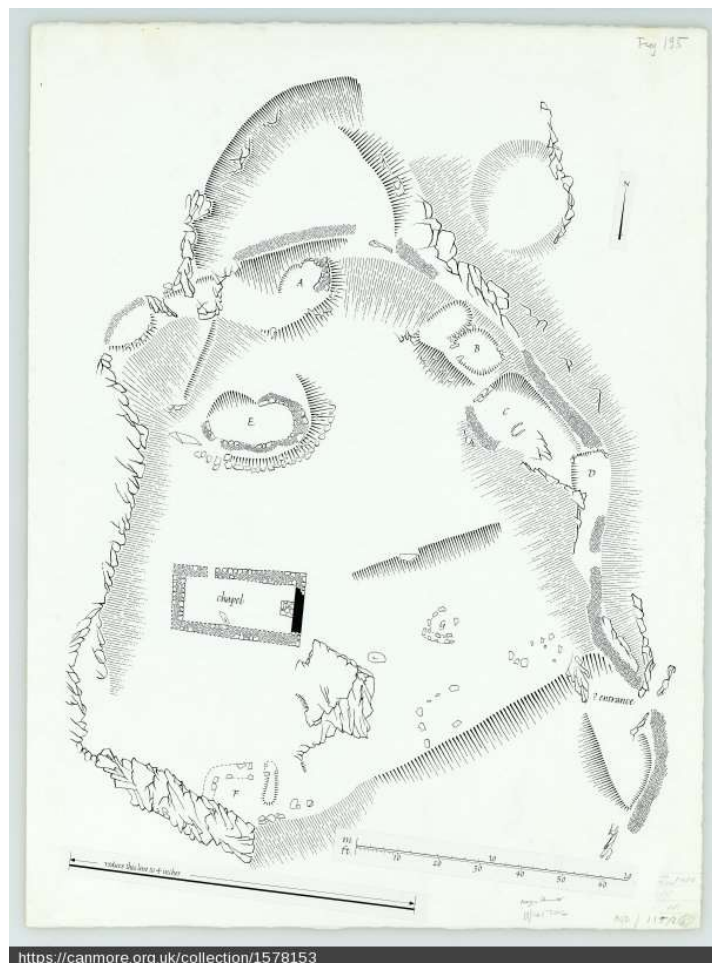


Figure 6.16 Site plan of Teampall Phàraig (Canmore 1578153 © Crown Copyright: HES).

*Teampall Phàraig* (NL 9377 4013) bears an obvious dedication to Patrick of Ireland.<sup>1760</sup> It is first recorded in 1784 along with St Patrick's Vat (a well near the shore),<sup>1761</sup> and also appears on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map. It is worth mentioning the survival of *Rinn Chircnis* at this site, indicating a Norse-period church in the vicinity (see section 6.3.2). The question becomes whether there was a Norse foundation at this site. The site seems to have a visual relationship with Iona, as it is at this point on the *Ceann a' Mhara* headland that Iona can be

<sup>1760</sup> DoSH. "St Patrick's Chapel, Tiree". Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1374148194](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1374148194).

<sup>1761</sup> Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, 402.

seen across the water,<sup>1762</sup> which might have made it an attractive site for a foundation within the Community of Columba. While it might be confusing to think of a site dedicated to Patrick in a Columban context, it should be noted that the *comarba* of Patrick and Columba were united in the person of Mael Brigitte mac Tornáin in the tenth century, and the tower cross at Kells is dedicated to both Patrick and Columba,<sup>1763</sup> showing that such a dedication is possible.

Teampall Phàraig is a medieval chapel within an early enclosure with three cross-incised stones, remnants of small huts, and a nearby well.<sup>1764</sup> The site is probably that of a settlement or monastery of the Early Christian period, though the remains of the enclosure wall appear to be less substantial than expected in monuments of this class, enclosing approximately 0.14 ha.<sup>1765</sup> Some of the hut-sites may be broadly contemporary with the enclosure wall, while the chapel was subsequently added during the medieval period.<sup>1766</sup> No further archaeological investigation has yet taken place, and it is hoped that future work may be able to add firm dates to this broad record. Nothing is known of the history of the site, and while a dedication to Patrick survives today, there is little to indicate this was the original dedication (as noted above, the Patrick dedication is first attested in 1784).<sup>1767</sup> *Ceann a' Mhara* is thus notable for its early features which are consistent with the identification of an ecclesiastical foundation - and likely a monastery, judging by the wall (possibly a vallum?), the church structure, and the huts which could have been for habitation or work.

---

<sup>1762</sup> I appreciate John Holliday pointing this fact out to me during my visit in July 2019.

<sup>1763</sup> Dumville, "Mael Brigitte mac Tornán", 137; Harbison, *High Crosses* 1, 108, no. 127; Harbison, *High Crosses* 2, figs. 345-359.

<sup>1764</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Ceann a' Mhara. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21477](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21477).

<sup>1765</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 124, no. 325; Canmore. Tiree, Ceann a' Mhara.

<sup>1766</sup> Canmore. Ceann a' Mhara.

<sup>1767</sup> Sinclair, *Statistical Account of Scotland*, 402.

Image removed due to  
copyright restrictions.

**Figure 6.17 Drawing of Carved Stones at Teampall Phàraig. Pillar 1 (Left), Pillar 2 (Middle), Pillar 3 (Right) (Fisher, *EMS*, 32; HES).**



**Figure 6.18 Photos of Carved Stones at Teampall Phàraig. Teampall Phàraig 1, face A (Left), Teampall Phàraig 2, face A (Middle), Teampall Phàraig 2, face B (Right) (Photos by author).**

*Teampall Phàraig* has two pillar stones with carvings of Sunken Latin crosses on two opposing faces, and a third stone with a single carving of a Latin cross. Stone 1 measures approximately 0.68m by 0.19m, stone 2 measures approximately 0.94m by 0.45m, and stone 3 measures approximately 1.02m by 0.54m.<sup>1768</sup> The pillar stones were described by the Ordinance Survey in 1972 as

<sup>1768</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 124, no. 325.

“loose” within the interior of the chapel, thus confirming they are removed from their original context.<sup>1769</sup> The crosses on stones 2 and 3 have slightly expanded vertical arms. While these are still very simple cross designs, they differ from those seen at Kirkapoll and *Cill Choinnich* in that the width of the arms of the crosses is greater. The simplicity of design makes dating, even by stylistic association difficult, but also allows for the possibility that they are of early date. The carvings are similar in style to crosses at Iona;<sup>1770</sup> Kilmory, Rum;<sup>1771</sup> and *Cladh Beag*, Hynish, Tiree.<sup>1772</sup>

#### 6.4.7 Cill Fhinnein (Kenovay)

*Cill Fhinnein* (NL 9934 4675), near Kenovay, consists of an enclosure “of irregular pentagonal plan” measuring approximately 26m in maximum east to west length and a transverse width of approximately 19m.<sup>1773</sup> The turf-covered remains of an oblong building, potentially consistent with a chapel, are set amongst “a scatter of boulders” that might be burial markers.<sup>1774</sup> It is noted that the “remains are otherwise untypical of structures of this class”.<sup>1775</sup> This dedication appears to be to Finnen, or perhaps Findchán. Findchán is the name given by Adomnán for the founder of Artchain,<sup>1776</sup> presumably coming from Early Gaelic *aird* “high or elevated”,<sup>1777</sup> (such as we saw in *Àird Chircnis*) and *caín* “fair, beautiful, smooth”.<sup>1778</sup> Anderson and Anderson suggest that the two name elements do not qualify each other, and thus could be put together as “high and smooth”, an interpretation which seems unlikely.<sup>1779</sup> The area itself is slightly elevated from sea-level, though it is hardly considered high, especially as the land continues to slope upwards from the site to the centre of the island. Nor does it seem very smooth; some bedrock is visible, and it is not easy to traverse, in comparison with much smoother fields along the same road, making it a poor

<sup>1769</sup> Canmore. Ceann a' Mhara.

<sup>1770</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 127, no. 6 (20), 129, no. 6 (44).

<sup>1771</sup> *Ibid*, 95, no. 27.

<sup>1772</sup> Fisher, *EMS*, 123, no. 276 (1).

<sup>1773</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Kenovay, Cill Fhinnein. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. canmore.org.uk/site/21428.

<sup>1774</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1775</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>1776</sup> VC I.36.

<sup>1777</sup> eDIL, s.v. “ard”. Accessed 10 May 2019. www.dil.ie/4041.

<sup>1778</sup> eDIL, s.v. “caín”. Accessed 10 May 2019. www.dil.ie/7787; Holliday, *Longships*, 55; The existence of Kilfinichen in Mull suggests the possibility of a cultic area for Findchán. See Macdonald, “Adomnán’s *Vita Columbae*”, 224-225; Watson, *CPNS*, 304.

<sup>1779</sup> Anderson and Anderson, *Adomnan’s Life of Columba*, 150.



fit for Artchain. A translation of “high and beautiful” also seems like a poor fit. The name *Cill Fhinnein* was first attested by Reeves in 1854, and the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS six-inch map notes a ruined chapel called *Cill-phinnean* in 1878, recorded as being located on the farm of Kenovay.<sup>1780</sup> The second *Cill Fhinnein* site is discussed below (see section 6.5.4), with the possibility that the sites together could have comprised Artchain.

## 6.5 Sites with no surviving visible evidence

Seven sites have been attested by Reeves and Beveridge, but no longer have surviving surface evidence.

### 6.5.1 Kilmoluag

No physical remains are found today on site, though Reeves records that the stones of the chapel were used to build cabins and the graveyard was at the time of his writing under tillage.<sup>1781</sup> Additional relevant place-names at this site include *A'Chrois* and *Mullach na Croise* (discussed in section 5.3), which indicates the former presence of a cross, possibly related to the chapel. *Cill Moluag* (NL 9650 4800) is associated with Moluag of Lismore.<sup>1782</sup> Some historiographical evidence suggests Bangor had a working relationship, or perhaps even some influence over Lismore, though the evidence for this is severely lacking (see Chapter 4). The possibility exists that *Cill Moluag* could be the site of Comgall's foundation mentioned in his *Vita*, which seems somewhat viable as a site because it fits the landscape suggested in the story, as a boat containing raiders could have landed at nearby *Tràigh Chornaig* from which to attack Comgall and his monks. However, as seen in chapter 5, there is little firm evidence of an actual relationship between Bangor and Lismore generally or Comgall and Moluag specifically. The survival of *Vita Comgalli* from a version dated to the twelfth century, however, allows for the possibility that this site was appropriated by the hagiographer or hagiographic tradition in a later

---

<sup>1780</sup> Holliday, *Longships*, 55.

<sup>1781</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 242.

<sup>1782</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Kilmoluag. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21443](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21443); Reeves, “Tiree”, 242; Watson, *CPNS*, 292; DoSH. Kilmaluag, Settlement (Tiree). Accessed 10 Jan 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320671074](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320671074).

attempt to harness and influence the cult of Moluag (see discussion on this story above in section 6.2.2).

### 6.5.2 Cill Tunnain

*Cill Tunnain*, “the church of Donnán” of Eigg (d. 617) (NL 9490 4530), could be an early dedication as the cult of Donnán became popular from the eighth century amongst Norse Christians.<sup>1783</sup> Donnán dedications are found elsewhere in the Hebrides, including Kildonnan on Eigg,<sup>1784</sup> St Donnán’s Chapel on Little Bernara,<sup>1785</sup> Kildonnan on Skye,<sup>1786</sup> and *Cille Donnain* on South Uist.<sup>1787</sup>

### 6.5.3 Cnoc a’ Chluidh

Reeves notes that the stones for the chapel at *Cnoc a’ Chluidh*, “hill of the graveyard”, (NL 942 425),<sup>1788</sup> had been re-used to build some dwellings nearby and that he personally saw bones on the surface that had been uncovered in the graveyard on his visit in 1852.<sup>1789</sup> Again, there is no surviving dedication here and nothing yet discovered by which to attempt to date the site.

### 6.5.4 Cill Fhinnein (Balephetrish)

This is the second *Cill Fhinnein* (NM 019 474),<sup>1790</sup> site found on Tiree, though this one has no obvious material remains. Reeves supposed the site may be the “church” referred to in the place-name Ardkirknish (see section 6.3.2). It definitely has some feeling of height, especially in relation to the nearby beach, though a much higher hill is adjacent to the site. It is still not a smooth place, though rather than taking that translation, one might prefer “beautiful”. This

<sup>1783</sup> Clancy, “St Donnan of Eigg”.

<sup>1784</sup> DoSH. Kildonnan, Eccles. Small Isles (Eigg). Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320664588](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320664588).

<sup>1785</sup> DoSH. St Donnan’s Chapel, Uig (Little Bernara). Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1337811367](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1337811367).

<sup>1786</sup> DoSH. Kildonnan, settlement Duirinish (Skye). Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320339111](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1320339111).

<sup>1787</sup> Eòlas nan Naomh. Cille Donnain. Accessed 15 Jan 2021. [uistsaints.co.uk/south-uist/cille-donnain](http://uistsaints.co.uk/south-uist/cille-donnain).

<sup>1788</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Cnoc a’ Cluadh. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21479](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21479).

<sup>1789</sup> Reeves, “Tiree”, 243.

<sup>1790</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Balephetrish. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21511](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21511). This site is marked on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS Six-Inch map.

site might make a better candidate for Artchain, though the possibility still exists that the sites were originally one and thus could still both be Artchain.

### 6.5.5 Kilbride

*Cill Brighde* (NL 9780 4680) is a curious site.<sup>1791</sup> Reeves notes that the site was robbed of stone to build nearby structures and that the chapel had been dedicated to St Brigit;<sup>1792</sup> her cult was widespread across Scotland and was potentially particularly popular among the *Gall-Ghàidheil*.<sup>1793</sup> A level area in the southwest corner of the former stackyard of the farm may have been the site of the burial ground. Burials accompanied by iron swords, shields, helmets, and a spear were discovered in the eighteenth century,<sup>1794</sup> which may possibly be dated to the Norse period.<sup>1795</sup>

### 6.5.6 Caibéal Thomais

*Caibéal Thòmais* (NM 0422 4483) likely refers to Thomas the Apostle.<sup>1796</sup> As mentioned above, *caibéal* was not attested in Early Gaelic and thus likely reflects a later foundation, possibly in connection with the nunnery of Iona, which owned lands in the area from the sixteenth century.

## 6.6 Travel from Tiree

Travel between a dependent house and Bangor was briefly discussed for Applecross above (see section 4.6.1). Although undertaking this discussion for possible ecclesiastical sites on Tiree associated with the Community of Comgall is difficult due to the lack of a single site to discuss, it is possible to make some general statements. First, the lack of Comgall hagiotoponyms either in Scotland more generally and on Tiree specifically must be noted. This difficulty would persist even if we were to attempt to look at a site firmly associated with another known dependent foundation, such as Applecross. Due to this, the suggested travel route between Tiree and Bangor is based on the route

---

<sup>1791</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Cornaigmore. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21444](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21444).

<sup>1792</sup> Reeves, "Tiree", 241.

<sup>1793</sup> Clancy, "Saints in the Scottish Landscape", 23-30.

<sup>1794</sup> Joseph Anderson, "Notes on the Relics of the Viking Period of the Northmen in Scotland", in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 10 (1872), 555.

<sup>1795</sup> Johnston, "Norse Settlement in the Inner Hebrides", 104.

<sup>1796</sup> Canmore. Tiree, Caibéal Thomais. Accessed 8 Jan 2019. [canmore.org.uk/site/21543](http://canmore.org.uk/site/21543).

previously discussed for Applecross, especially considering that the previous discussion included Tiree as a landing place. Based on the discussion towards the end of section 1.5.1, and as mentioned for travel from Applecross in section 4.6, the estimated distance a ship in the early medieval period could cover in a good day with good weather is approximately 80km. With this estimate, it could take as little as three days to travel between Tiree and Bangor. The suggested destination for the first day is Loch Gruinart, on Islay. This site could be as close as 77km by boat, depending upon what part of the island the departure point was situated. As mentioned previously, the site has a sandy beach which would lend itself to easy landing, and is near the early medieval Kilnave Cross (see section 5.3 where the Kilnave Cross is briefly discussed). Day two would see Machrihanish Bay, Kintyre as the destination, approximately 75km away. The beach, again, is sandy and attractive for landing boats, and is within 2km of Killarow, with a church dedicated to Maelruba, which ecclesiastics from Tiree could have presumably called upon for shelter and provisions on their journey to Bangor. The third day would perhaps be a stretch, with a 93km distance to Bangor.

Travel between the dependent houses of Tiree and Applecross would likely also mirror the travel route suggested between Applecross and Bangor, a journey of perhaps 2 days in ideal weather. The first destination would likely be Arisaig, which is the site of two Maelruba hagiotoponyms, a sailing distance of perhaps 70 and 80km, depending on the point of origin from Tiree. The second day would then see the travellers covering 79km from Arisaig to Applecross. Using this route it would have been relatively easy for dependent foundations on Tiree and at Applecross to maintain a connection with each other as well as ensure successful travel to Bangor and back.

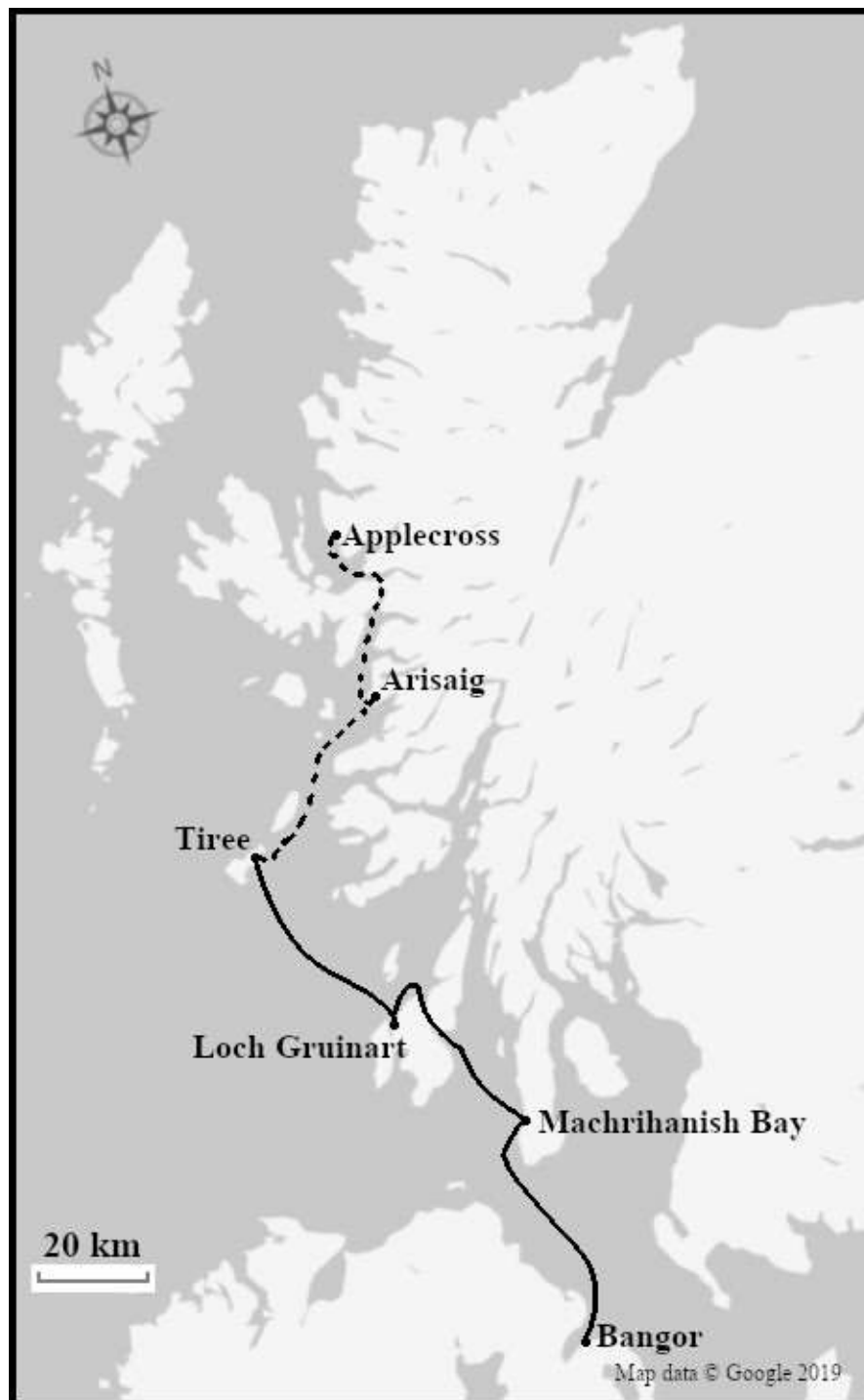


Figure 6.19 Suggested Travel Routes from Tiree to Bangor (solid line) and Applecross (dashed line)

## 6.7 Conclusion

Unlike previous chapters, this chapter looked not at a single ecclesiastical site, but rather at a single island which was known to simultaneously have multiple active ecclesiastical foundations. This allows us to look at Tiree both as a part of the larger religious networks that existed in the early medieval period and as an

example of the degree of Christian activity that persisted in the western islands. Starting first with the historic record, the likely presence of multiple ecclesiastical foundations was noted. It is impressive that many of these various sites were the location of early Christian sculpture. Important sites on Tiree were identified as Soroby, Kirkapoll, *Teampall Phàraig*, *Caolas*, and *Cill Choinnich*. The possibility that these sites could have had an early medieval date and could have been substantial enough to support a monastery is supported to different extents by the archaeological record and the place-name evidence. All five of these sites merit additional attention, which could identify additional structures that might indicate the presence of monastic activity. This could be suggested by the presence of additional buildings on-site for living and crafting, with perhaps some emphasis on manuscript creation. It is, however, possible that some were smaller churches or chapels which supported a generally lay community rather than a monastic one.

The density of ecclesiastical presence on the island suggests that Tiree was considered important. This could have been for practical reasons such as a waystation between ecclesiastical Communities centred on the North Channel, because of its reputation as a desirable agricultural island, perhaps due to characteristics which made it spiritually desirable, or perhaps for all of these reasons. A number of the foundations are associated with saints known for their movement between Scotland and Ireland from the sixth century. This further supports the idea that Tiree was a valuable place for those who travelled in the North Channel seascape, both in the early medieval period and well into the Viking Age.

The place-name evidence seems to support a heavy replacement of Celtic language by Norse, though the possibility of the survival of some place-names remains. The lack of evidence for the period between the seventh and fourteenth centuries, when the re-established historic record notes strong links between Tiree and Iona, makes it difficult to firmly locate *Mag Luinge*. Soroby has potentially earlier evidence that suggests links to Iona from the ninth or tenth century via Soroby 1, and the level of detail on Soroby 2 indicates a high level of skill involved in carving, which would necessitate funding adequate to attract a carver of high skill. Kirkapoll similarly has early carved crosses, though

they are much simpler, and Kirkapoll's church dedication to Columba is attested earlier. Both Soroby and Kirkapoll have strong links to Iona from the thirteenth century and geographically sit in places which fit the description of *Mag Luinge* as the plain of the ship. Despite the variety of evidence available for these two sites, it is still difficult to suggest one or the other as being the more likely site of *Mag Luinge*.

As Reeves mentioned, though we cannot be sure that all the ecclesiastical sites now recorded on Tiree:

can date their origin from such an early period as the sixth or seventh century, still there can be little doubt ... that this island was well known and much frequented at a very early stage of Christianity in Scotland.<sup>1797</sup>

Similarities noted between Tiree's sculpture and other locations, such as Iona, Monymusk, and Lochgoilhead may serve as an indication of Tiree's far-reaching networks.

Future work could include more archaeological investigation at sites with high potential, such as Soroby and Kirkapoll. *Cladh Beag* would benefit from a less invasive review in order to determine whether any features could be discerned and the potential of the site for digging. It would be helpful to try to find the lost *Crois a' Chaolas* stone in order to compare it to other pieces of sculpture. Finally, a search for the bell noted from *Cill Choinnich* would allow a review of that item to determine whether it was likely to be a pre-Norse or post-Norse item, which might give further dating weight to the site of *Cill Choinnich*.

Our understanding of Comgall's relationship with Tiree is completely dependent upon the textual record, and specifically his *Vita*. This does provide some opportunity to examine which particular aspects of a Community of Comgall existed in his *Vita*, as well as the degree to which the purported Tiree foundation was directly included. In the story of Comgall's Tiree foundation, it does appear that he exercised responsibility for the physical safety of his monks, as the *Vita* attributes to Comgall a miracle which caused the release of his

---

<sup>1797</sup> Reeves, "Tiree", 243.

monks (see discussion of this story above in section 6.2.2).<sup>1798</sup> As mentioned above, the complete lack of hagiotoponyms including Comgall on Tiree is peculiar and may speak to a lack of continuity in Tiree's affiliation with the later Community of Comgall, or perhaps to an eclipse of his cult by Maelruba or Moluag. Some suggestion of this lack of continuity was discussed in chapter 5.

---

<sup>1798</sup> *VCom* §22.



## 7 Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary of chapters:

Scholarly views of the Christianization of the west of Scotland have been heavily influenced by the survival of the *Life* of Columba and the traditional view that placed the west coast in a peripheral position. This thesis articulates a seascape that puts the west coast and the western islands into context for travel and thus communication between the sixth and eleventh centuries. It further establishes tangible criteria via which a possible Community of Comgall can be identified and tracked.

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the thesis, examining the term “Community”, identifying existing gaps in research and the subsequent research questions to be addressed. It further discusses the geographical context discussed as well as the concept of the North Channel Zone as a seascape.

Chapter 2 discusses the major textual sources consulted for analysing the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. This includes annals, genealogies, martyrologies, hagiographies, liturgical books, and place-names.

Chapter 3 places Bangor monastery within its wider secular and religious landscape and demonstrates the high status of Bangor as an ecclesiastical site and place of learning within Christian Ireland. The high regard in which Comgall was held by other well-known ecclesiastics such as Columba and Adomnán is indicated, and an outline of the possible evidence for a Community of Comgall is discussed.

Chapter 4 focuses on Applecross, similarly putting it within its wider secular and religious landscape and discussing the strong textual records which indicate its connection to Bangor. Underscored by the art historical work of Douglas Mac Lean and Cynthia Thickpenny, it highlights the connections that are evidenced eastwards with Pictland via Rosemarkie and Nigg. Western connections with Bangor are also identified and placed into context within a possible Community of Comgall. As with Bangor, the quality and intricacy of the surviving sculpture of the site indicates it was well-supported and of high status.

Chapter 5 utilises the same methodology as previous chapters, looking closely at Lismore in its own right as well as within its wider landscape. The confusion between Lismore Moluag and Lismore Mochutu in the historical record by modern historians is addressed. The increasing status of Lismore up to the point of the creation of the Bishopric of Argyll is confirmed and the possible relationship with Bangor is clarified. The conclusion of this chapter is that Lismore Moluag was not part of the proposed Community of Comgall, and that Lismore Mochutu is more likely to have been in a closer relationship with Bangor.

Chapter 6 breaks somewhat with the level of focus that was given to a single specific site in the previous chapters, though the island of Tiree as a whole is looked at in a similar vein. The existence of multiple early medieval ecclesiastical sites is affirmed. Attention is given to Comgall's association with Tiree as well as his interactions with other well-known ecclesiastics of the time, Cainnech, Brendan, and Columba, who are also associated with Tiree. The degree of ecclesiastical attention which Tiree received between the sixth and eleventh centuries shows that it was an important site for multiple early medieval networks and served as a central part of the sea-based travel network between the north of Ireland and the west of Scotland.

## **7.2 Significance**

The use of an interdisciplinary methodology successfully integrates disparate evidence from place-names, archaeology, art history, and textual evidence in order to compile a cohesive picture of each of the ecclesiastical foundations under scrutiny, which had not been sought or accomplished before. It therefore is able to place the foundations of the monasteries of Bangor in Ireland and Applecross, Lismore, and the island of Tiree in the west of Scotland into their appropriate contexts within the wider North Channel Seascape between the sixth and eleventh centuries, both ecclesiastical and secular. This further demonstrates the high status that these sites attained during their active lifetimes. In identifying the criteria for a Community of Comgall, this thesis provisionally tests the existence of networks of contact which ranged from the west of Scotland to the north of Ireland.

### 7.3 Community Criteria Review

As discussed in Chapter 4, there is evidence that an enduring relationship between Bangor monastery and Applecross was developed and maintained, even after the death of their founders (see section 4.7.1). The suggestion that Applecross was a dependency must be checked against the criteria set out in Chapter 1 for testing for Community. One criterion is evidence for the provisioning of abbots for the head foundation, in this case Bangor. This is seen in Mac Óige, abbot of Bangor, who was recorded in the annals as “of Applecross”,<sup>1799</sup> and also in the two abbots of Bangor who were notably from Antrim (see section 3.9). The second criterion is evidence for the movement of abbots/relics from the primary monastery to dependent monasteries, for which there is no evidence between Applecross and Bangor. Additionally, evidence is lacking for a sense of spiritual or physical protection by Comgall’s successor over those at Applecross. There is, however, some evidence that should be included despite not fitting into these criteria. Maelruba likely studied at Bangor prior to leaving for Scotland and founding Applecross.<sup>1800</sup> Additionally, the detail included in the annals on Maelruba’s death, the source of which was likely a record kept at Bangor, and its similarity to the record of Comgall’s death, indicates a strong interest in Applecross, which Bangor annalists may have considered part of the Community of Comgall.

Lismore was an important foundation in its own right from at least the eighth century to the final years of the twelfth century. There is, however, scant evidence to suggest that Lismore was part of a Community of Comgall. Moluag’s family connections are only specified in later sources, such as *the Aberdeen Breviary* and *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*, meaning that they are well removed from the actual context and could easily be associated with a later creation rather than an actual sixth-century relationship between the founders and monasteries. There is no early evidence that meets the criteria set out for identifying a Community of Comgall at Lismore. Although the lack of evidence supporting Lismore’s membership in the Community of Comgall is not itself positive evidence that Lismore was not part of the Community, it still seems

---

<sup>1799</sup> *M. Oigi Apuír Chrosan*, AU 802.5.

<sup>1800</sup> Reeves, “Maelrubha”, 261; *MarT* 21 Apr; *MarO* 21 Apr; *MarG* 21 Apr.

most likely that the tenuous connection suggested is based on the confusion by modern historians of Lismore Moluag in Scotland with Lismore Mochutu in the south of Ireland.

Tiree is included in this thesis partially because of Comgall's purported foundation there, but also because of the surprisingly dense number of foundations purported there within a very short timeframe. Due to the nature of the evidence existing exclusively in hagiographical records, this is the only indication of the presence of a Community of Comgall on the island. This includes hagiographic evidence of physical protection by Comgall over those at the dependent foundation, thus potentially meeting some criteria of belonging to Comgall's Community. The lack of survival of the foundation in place-names or the archaeological record means there is insufficient information that can be used as evidence of the provisioning of leadership or the movement of abbots or relics. However, based upon the little evidence and the claim that Comgall himself oversaw the foundation, it would have been within a larger Community of Comgall while it lasted.

Bangor is the central site from which we analyse the existence of a Community of Comgall. There is evidence for the provisioning of leadership from dependent foundations, as abbots were selected twice from Antrim, once from Applecross, and Máel Máedóc (Malachy) came from Lismore Mochutu. This suggests its inclusion in a Community of Comgall, though perhaps more associated with the twelfth-century church reforms of which Lismore Mochutu was a prominent part. It is possible that we see the movement of Comgall's relics from Bangor to Antrim c. 824 following a raid, and perhaps also Óengus Ua Gormáin (d. 1123),<sup>1801</sup> the last *comarba* mentioned in the annals, who was recorded as dying on pilgrimage at Lismore Mochutu. Comgall's own journey to Scotland, mentioned in his *Vita*, might have been part of a circuit to visit dependent houses, but can only be speculation at this point. The mention of Beóán mac Indle, a fisherman noted as belonging to Comgall on *Loch nEchdach* (now Loch Neagh) near Antrim Town, could suggest that goods moved from a foundation there towards Bangor, but this is again speculation. Comgall's *Vita* gives additional information to the sense of community and sharedness that would have existed within the

---

<sup>1801</sup> AU 1123.3.

Community of Comgall. It acknowledges the existence of specifically subject or dependent foundations that were “under the care of the holy father Comgall”,<sup>1802</sup> and confirms Bangor as the most important foundation.<sup>1803</sup> It also discusses shared customs of expected behaviour when being chastised or rebuked.<sup>1804</sup>

Based on the evidence presented, it is likely that a Community of Comgall existed both during Comgall’s lifetime and through his successors. This Community likely included Applecross as a Scottish foundation, along with the unnamed Tíree foundation. It is very unlikely that it included Lismore Moluag.

## 7.4 Future research

The information brought together here also serves as valuable groundwork upon which further research could build, and which could continue to illuminate the cultural and physical interactions which existed between the north of Ireland and the west of Scotland between AD 500 and 1000.

### 7.4.1 Physical artefacts

The physical artefacts found via archaeological excavation at Bangor, primarily the bell and sculpture, have been put into a wider art historical context, examining possible connections to the Whithorn School,<sup>1805</sup> and perhaps also to Armagh.<sup>1806</sup> However, a deeper art historical investigation of additional ecclesiastical foundations which may have been part of the Community of Comgall would help us better understand what kinds of artistic influences were shared. This would then help to better show how communication and influence may have been experienced between the foundations that made up the Community. Peter Harbison’s work lays the groundwork for additional research into sculptural connections between sites that could have been part of the Community of Comgall, especially regarding sculpture at Camus and Connor.<sup>1807</sup>

---

<sup>1802</sup> *Sub cura sancti patris Comgalli fuerunt, VCom, §13.*

<sup>1803</sup> *Set maior et nominacior ceteris locis predictum monasterium Beannchor est, VCom §13.*

<sup>1804</sup> *Mos erat in monasteriis sancti patris Comgalli, VCom §21.*

<sup>1805</sup> Ian Fisher, “The Govan cross-shafts and early cross-slabs”, in *Govan and its Early Medieval Sculpture* (ed) Anna Ritchie (Dover: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994), 47-54.

<sup>1806</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 109.

<sup>1807</sup> Harbison, *High Crosses* 1, 374.

Regarding the iron bell found at Bangor, Cormac Bourke uses artistic similarities to connect it to bells at Cashel, Co. Tipperary and Loch Lene, Co.

Westmeath.<sup>1808</sup> He further connects the bell to the *Book of Dimma*, a gospel book dated to the second half of the eighth century, and the *Book of MacDurnan*, dated to the ninth century.<sup>1809</sup> Undertaking further research on the possible connection of the Bangor bell to these other bells and manuscripts may provide additional clarity on the relationships that existed within the community of Bangor as well as between that community and others.

#### 7.4.2 Additional Sites

The analysis of Applecross, Lismore, and Tiree is a jumping off point for understanding the possible extent of the Community of Comgall. This research can and should go further in Scotland and Ireland to include additional sites that were possibly part of the Community of Comgall. In Scotland this should include Paisley, Inchmarnock, Dercongal, and Durris. An investigation should also be undertaken in an attempt to locate any additional sites in Scotland which may indicate connection with Comgall or his Community. Paisley's founder, St Mirren, is described as a disciple of Comgall in the *Aberdeen Breviary*.<sup>1810</sup> Inchmarnock, associated with St Ernán, is the site where a slate with a fragment of *Ymnum S. Comgilli abbatis nostri* from the *Antiphony of Bangor* was found.<sup>1811</sup> Dercongal may be a place-name which incorporates the name Comgall, and thus could be a rare hagiotopeponym associated with Comgall in Scotland.<sup>1812</sup> The parish of Durris seems to have been dedicated to Comgall, and a "St Comgall's Fair" was celebrated there on 9 May.<sup>1813</sup>

In Ireland there are a number of sites that bear investigation, including: *Cambas/Camus* (Co Derry/Londonderry), *Tamhlacht Uí Chroiligh/Tamlaght O'Crilly* (Co Derry/Londonderry), *Disert Mhártain/Desertmartin* (Co Derry/Londonderry), *Druim Snechta/Drumsnat* (Co Monaghan), *Cluain Ferta*

<sup>1808</sup> Bourke, "Irish hand-bells", 55.

<sup>1809</sup> *Ibid*, 55-56.

<sup>1810</sup> Macquarrie, *AB*, 212-213, 393.

<sup>1811</sup> Forsyth and Tedeschi, "Text-inscribed slates", 130, 138-139.

<sup>1812</sup> DoSH, "Holywood Abbey, aka Dercongal, Holywood". Accessed 12 Dec 2019. [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1359992799&name\\_id=31663](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk/place.php?id=1359992799&name_id=31663).

<sup>1813</sup> Clancy, "Saints in Scottish Landscape", 26-27; Catriona Gray, "The bishopric of Brechin and Ecclesiastical Organisation in Angus and the Mearns in the Central Middle Ages". (PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013), 119; Paul, "Saints' names in relation to Scottish fairs", 166.

*Molua*/Clonfert Molua (Co Laois), *Óentreb*/Antrim (Co Antrim), Kinneigh (Co Carlow), *Dísert Diarmata*/Castledermot (Co Kildare), *Rechru*/Rathlin Island, *Lios Mór Mochutu*/Lismore (Co Waterford), and *Tech Munnu*/Taghmon (Co Wexford). Camus is mentioned as a monastery of Comgall's in the *Life of St Columba*.<sup>1814</sup> Camus, Tamlaght O'Crilly and Desertmartin are listed together under Comgall's name and feast day (10 May) in the seventeenth-century *Wadding Correspondence*.<sup>1815</sup> Drumsnat and Clonfert Molua are both ecclesiastical sites associated with Molua of *Cluan Fearta Molua*, who has a hagiographic connection to Comgall. Antrim received Comgall's relics c. 824 after they were shaken from their shrine by an attack.<sup>1816</sup> Two abbots of Bangor, Finntan of Antrim (d. 613) and Flann of Antrim (d. 728),<sup>1817</sup> came from Antrim, suggesting a relationship between the foundations. There is a possibility that Antrim may have also been the base of Beóán mac Indle, a fisherman who belonged to Comgall, who reportedly caught a *muirgelt* in Lough Neagh.<sup>1818</sup> Kinneigh has been identified as the location of a foundation granted to Comgall by Cormac mac Diarmata, king of the Uí Bhairrche of Carlow.<sup>1819</sup> Castledermot was mentioned as "one of Comgall's places" according to Móenach mac Siadail (d. 921), who served as *comarba* of Comgall.<sup>1820</sup> Rechru, likely Rathlin Island,<sup>1821</sup> was an additional foundation of Comgall's mentioned in his *Vita*, to which local opposition was expressed.<sup>1822</sup> Lismore Mochutu was the site where Óengus Ua Gormáin (d. 1123),<sup>1823</sup> the last *comarba* of Comgall mentioned in the annals, died. This was also the place where Máel Máedóc Ua Morgair (Malachy) was based prior to taking up the abbotship of Bangor.<sup>1824</sup>

### 7.4.3 Hagiography

Research into the Community of Comgall would likewise benefit from a translation and close analysis of the *Life* of St Comgall. Comgall's appearance in

<sup>1814</sup> *monasterium sancti Comgil*, VC I.49.

<sup>1815</sup> *Wadding Correspondence* (Franciscan Library MS. D I, p. 1031), transcribed in Rev. Canice Mooney, O.F.M., "Topographical Fragments from the Franciscan Library", *Celtica* 1 (1950), 83.

<sup>1816</sup> AU 824.2.

<sup>1817</sup> AU 613.1, 728.3; AT 611.4, 728.3.

<sup>1818</sup> AT 564.1; AU 572.5.

<sup>1819</sup> Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 20, 32 n. 86.

<sup>1820</sup> FA 423.

<sup>1821</sup> Hamlin and Kerr, *Archaeology*, 179, 216.

<sup>1822</sup> *VCom* §50.

<sup>1823</sup> AU 1123.3.

<sup>1824</sup> *VMal* II.11-12.

the *Lives* of other saints, especially those considered his students, such as Mirren, Molua of Clonfert Molua, Mochaomhóg of Leigh, Fintan of Doon, Mochutu, Fintan of Taghmon, and Daigh of Enniskean should all be examined.

Fiachra of Ullard (Co Carlow) gives Comgall his last rights in Comgall's *Life*.<sup>1825</sup> Mirren of Paisley (Scotland) is mentioned as a student of Comgall under Comgall's feast day (12 May) and as prior of Bangor under Comgall under his own feast day (15 Sept) in the *Aberdeen Breviary*.<sup>1826</sup> Molua of Cluan Feartha Molua (Co Laois), Killaloe (Co Clare), and Drumsnat (Co Monaghan) studied with Comgall at Bangor according to his own *Life*,<sup>1827</sup> and is mentioned as the *anmchara* or "soul friend" of Comgall in the Martyrology of Tallaght.<sup>1828</sup> Mochaomhóg of Leigh (Co Tipperary) is presented as a student of Comgall within his own *Life*.<sup>1829</sup> Fintan of Doon (Co Limerick) studies at Bangor in his own brief *Life*.<sup>1830</sup> Mochutu of Lismore (Co Waterford) is foretold by Comgall and studies with him in his own *Life*.<sup>1831</sup> Fintan of Taghmon (Co Wexford) has an association with Comgall within his own *Life*.<sup>1832</sup> Daigh of Enniskean (Co Monaghan) also has an association with Comgall in his own *Life*.<sup>1833</sup>

#### 7.4.4 Literature

The extent of this investigation is necessarily bounded by space, and although it has attempted to pull together many sources for understanding the character and context of the monastery at Bangor in the early medieval period, it has not focused on vernacular literature, though it has sometimes been mentioned briefly where appropriate and useful to the argument. Further research would greatly benefit from pulling together and analysing connections to the monastery at Bangor within secular literary traditions of the early medieval period. Some secular literature has been briefly mentioned here, including the tales relating to Mongan mac Fiachnai, *Buile Shuibne*,<sup>1834</sup> and *Immram Brain* (possibly dating to

---

<sup>1825</sup> *VCom* §§57-58.

<sup>1826</sup> *AB* 12 May, 15 Sept.

<sup>1827</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 490-493.

<sup>1828</sup> *MarT* 4 Aug, marginal notes and poems.

<sup>1829</sup> Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 460.

<sup>1830</sup> *Ibid*, 341-2; Heist, *VSH*, 114 §5.

<sup>1831</sup> *Ibid*, 470-471.

<sup>1832</sup> Heist, *VSH*, 199 §4.

<sup>1833</sup> Heist, *VSH*, 390 §6; Ó Riain, *Dictionary*, 252.

<sup>1834</sup> Ó Riain, "Provenance of 'Buile Shuibne,'" 175.



the seventh century). Mac Cana argues that Bangor was likely “the home of *Immram Brain* and the *Mongán cycle*”.<sup>1835</sup> To this short list should be added *Buile Shuibhne* and *Cín Dromma Snechtai*, as well as specific characters such as Airiu/Líbán the *muirgelt*.<sup>1836</sup> Of additional benefit would be further examination of the poems associated with Bangor as found in the annals and martyrologies.

Questions on this topic could include looking at which, if any, additional secular literature mentions Bangor, what the dates are for these surviving stories, and asking what they can add to the annalistic and hagiographic evidence. Additionally, within this literary sphere, a more in-depth analysis and understanding of the poems and songs associated with Bangor would be beneficial, especially attempting to relate their subjects with any historical people or locations. This would at least include the poems and songs included in the annals as well as those from other sources such as the *Antiphonary of Bangor*.

## 7.5 Final Reflection

The examination of hagiotoponyms throughout the western littoral of the Scottish mainland and the Hebrides, combined with physical evidence of island-based or island-like ecclesiastical foundations shows that the North Channel Seascape was a place of active movement in the early medieval period for more than just the communities of Comgall and Columba. Foundations such as Lismore, Applecross, Iona, and Eigg were not just chapels perched solitary on windswept islands or remote mainland shorelines. They were influential foundations and stand as a testament to the importance of sea-based travel in the early medieval period.

Returning to the initial questions set forth, regarding whether a Community of Comgall wider than the monastery of Bangor itself is discernible in the evidence, the answer is yes. The outline of this Community is not nearly so bold as can be seen with Columba and does seem to shift over time, but it is there. It is further clear that the Community of Comgall did expand into the North Channel

---

<sup>1835</sup> Mac Cana, “Mongan Mac Fiachna”, 106; Ó Riain argues that the identification of Bangor specifically as the source for *Buile Shuibhne* is uncertain in Ó Riain, “Materials”, 175.

<sup>1836</sup> De Vries, “The Names of Lí Bán”, 39-54.

Seascape. However, with the removal of Lismore Moluag from the Community, its connections were not as strong as hypothesized. It seems likely that it receded from its seascape and eastern focus at some point following the tenth century, perhaps in connection with the decline of Bangor itself and the possible relocation of the centre of Comgall's cult southwards in Ireland. This move may have been due to an increased difficulty of travel across the North Channel Seascape predicated by Norse settlement, and certainly by the rise of Somerled and the Lordship of the Isles, there could have been additional barriers to maintaining contact and thus connection and Community. These connections could also have been affected by church reform movements such as the *Céili Dé* and the Cistercians, and the eastwards movement of Dalriadic political focus in Scotland.

## Appendix: Timeline of Events

The purpose of this Appendix is to provide a single place for a chronological list of events for all the foundations focused on in this thesis.

Date	Event	Sources
516	Birth of Comgall of Bangor.	AU 516.2, 520.3; AT 517.1
555	The church of Bangor was founded.	AU 555.3, 559.1; AT 557.2
564	Comgall of Bangor's fisherman, Beóán son of Indle, caught a <i>muirgelt</i> named Airiu daughter of Eochaid son of Muirid on the strand of Ollarba	AT 564.1
592	Death of Lugaid of Lismore	AU 592.1; AT 588.4, 590.1; 25 Jun MarT, MarO, MarG
601	Comgall abbot of Bangor in the 91st year of his age, but in his leadership 50 years 3 [months] and 10 days, on the 6 <sup>th</sup> of the Ides of May [10 May] he rested.	AU 601.3, 602.1; AT 600.1
606	Repose of Beóguin, abbot of Bangor.	AU 606.1; AT 604.1
609	Neman, abbot of Lismore [dies].	AT 609.5; 8 Mar MarT, MarO
610	Death of Sillán moccu Mind, abbot of Bangor, and the death of Aedán, anchorite of Bangor, and the death of Mael Umai son of Baetán.	AU 610.2; AT 608.2
613	Repose of Finntan of Antrim ( <i>Aentrab</i> ), abbot of Bangor.	AU 613.1; AT 611.4
616	The burning of Bangor.	AU 616.1; AT 611.4
635	Echuid of Lismore died.	AU 635.7; AT 637.4; 17 Apr MarT, Mar G
637	MoChutu of Raithen (and Lismore Mochutu) rests.	AU 637.2; AT 639.4; AI 639.3
646	Mac Laisre, abbot of Bangor, rested.	AU 646.2; AT 647.2
663	Repose of Ségán moccu Cuinn, abbot of Bangor, and death of Guaire of Aidne.	AU 663.1; AT 663.4; FA 22
664	Death of Cernach son of Diarmait son of Aed Sláine son of Diarmait Cerrbél son of Conall of Cremthann; and an earthquake in Britain; and Comgán moccu Teimni and Berach, abbot of Bangor, rested.	AU 664.4; AT 664.3, 667.1; FA 32
666	Baithine abbot of Bangor rested	AT 666.7; FA 38
667	The mortality in which four abbots of Bangor passed away i.e. Berach, Cuimine, Colum, Mac Aodha.	AT 667.1; FA 32

668	The voyage of Columbanus with the relics of many saints to Inis Bó Finne, where he founded a church.	FA 41
669	Death of Cuiméne the Fair, abbot of Iona, and of Crítán, abbot of Bangor, and of Mo-Chua son of Cust; and death of Mael Fothartaig son of Suibne, king of Uí Thuirtri.	AU 669.1; AT 669.1; FA 39
	Cenn Faelad sang: No dearer to me is one king rather than another, Since Mael Fothartaig was taken in his shroud to Daire.	FA 39
670	The sept of Gartnait came back from Ireland.	AU 649.4; AT 670.4
671	Maelruba voyages to Britain	AU 671.5; AT 671.4
672	Expulsion of Drost from the kingship and the burning of Bangor of the Britons.	AU 672.6; AT 672.5
673	The burning of Mag Luinge.	AU 673.1; AT 673.5
	Maelruba founded the church of Applecross.	AU 673.5; AT 673.4
678	Slaughter of the Cenél Loairn in Tíriu.	AU 678.3; AT 678.4
680	Colmán, abbot of Bangor, rests.	AU 680.1; AT 680.1; FA 77
691	Crónán moccu Cuailne, abbot of Bangor, died.	AU 691.1; AT 691.1; FA 108
700	The falling asleep of Iarnlach, abbot of Lismore.	AU 700.3; 16 Jan MarT, MarG
701	Repose of Cúánna of Lismore.	AI 701.1
703	Colmán son of Finnbarr, abbot of Lismore.	AU 703.3; AT 703.3; FA 157; 22 Jan MarT, MarO, MarG
704	The death of Flann Fína, son of Oswy, king of the Saxons, the famous wise man, pupil of Adamnán; of whom Riaguil of Bangor sang: Today Bruide fights a battle over the land of his ancestor, unless it is the wish of the Son of God that restitution be made. Today the son of Oswy was slain in battle against gray swords, even though he did penance and that too late in Iona (?). Today the son of Oswy was slain, who used to have dark drinks; Christ has heard our prayer that Bruide would save the hills (?).	FA 165
705	Cenn Faelad grandson of Aed Brec, abbot of Bangor, fell asleep.	AU 705.1; AT 705.5
707	Conodur of Fore died. Alt: Conodur of Lismore rested.	AU 707.1; AT 707.1 AI 707.1
718	Crónán grandson of Eóán, abbot of Lismore dies.	AU 718.4; AT 718.5; 1 Jun MarT, MarG
722	Maelruba died in Applecross in the 80th year of his age.	AU 722.1; AT 722.1
728	Flann of Antrim, abbot of Bangor, died.	AU 728.3; AT 728.3; FA 204
730	Cochall Odar, scribe of the community of Bangor, fell asleep.	AU 730.9; FA 217

731	Faeldobur Bec the learned, of Fobar, Adamnán bishop of Ráith Maige Aenaig, and Colmán grandson of Lítán, doctor of religion, [and abbot of Lismore], rested.	AU 731.8; AI 730.1
737	Failbe son of Guaire, i.e. successor of Maelruba of Applecross, was drowned in the depth of the sea together with his sailors, twenty-two in number.	AU 737.2 AT 737.2
746	Kinslaying at Lismore.	AU 746.7; AT 746.6
747	Death of Sárán, abbot of Bangor.	AU 747.7; AT 747.8
751	The death of Muirgius son of Fergus, king of the Déise, and Mac Luiged of Lismore and Fland Fortri, king of Corco Laige	AT 751.10
753	A whale was cast ashore in Bairche in the time of Fiachna son of Aed Rón, king of Ulaid. It had three gold teeth in its head, each containing fifty ounces, and one of them was placed on the altar of Bangor this year, that is, in AD 752.	AU 753.13; AT 744.11
	The falling asleep of Mac Oiged, abbot of Lismore.	AU 753.2; AT 753.2; AI 752.3
756	The burning of Bangor the Great on St Patrick's Day 17 March.	AU 756.1; AT 756.1
757	Death of Finnchú, abbot of Lismore	AU 757.4; AT 757.4
760	Death of Conchobor grandson of Tadc of Teimen; and Conait, abbot of Lismore, and Gaim Dibáil, abbot of Árainn of Énna, died.	AU 760.7; AT 760.3
	Suairleach abbot of Bangor, Ailgin son of Ganai, the second abbot of Clonard, died.	AT 760.4
	Tríchmech, abbot of Lismore, rested, and Abnér, abbot of Imlech Ibuir.	AI 760.1
763	Repose of Rónán, bishop of Lismore.	AI 763.1; 9 Feb/22 May MarT, MarO, MarG
767	Fidbadach, abbot of Bangor, rested.	AU 767.3
768	Aedán abbot of Lismore [dies].	AU 768.3; AI 768.1; 19 Jul/29 Dec MarT, MarG
774	Suairlech grandson of Cú Chiaráin, abbot of Lismore [dies].	AU 768.3; AI 768.1; 4 Dec MarG
775	Death of Cinadu, king of the Picts; and Donngal son of Nuadu, abbot of Lugmad, and Fianchú, abbot of Lugmad, and Conall of Mag Luinge, and Suairlech, abbot of Linn, died.	AU 775.1
776	Eógan son of Rónchenn, abbot of Lismore, and Mael Ruba, grandson of Maenach, died.	AU 776.10; 16 Oct MarT
	Repose of Airdmesach of Les Mór.	AI 778.2
780	Augustin of Bangor, and Sédrach son of Sobarthan, and Nádarchú the learned, died.	AU 780.11

781	Senchán, abbot of Imlech Ibair, and Órach, abbot of Lismore; the abbot of Inis Daimle, and Saergal grandson of Edairngne, abbot of Clonfert Molua, and Dub Innrecht son of Fergus, abbot of Ferna, and Ailngnad, bishop of Ard Brecáin, and Maenach grandson of Maenach, abbot of Lann Léire, and Fechtach, abbot of Fobar, and Colgu son of Cellach, king of Uí Chremthainn, and Ailbran son of Lugaid, abbot of Cluain Dolcáin, Nuadu grandson of Bolcán, abbot of Tuaim da Ólann, Dúngal son of Flaithnia, king of Uí Máil, the learned Saergal grandson of Cathal, and Fergus son of Eochu, king of Dál Riata—all died.	AU 781.3
782	Uarchride, grandson of Mael Toile, and Cormac son of Bresal, abbot of Ard Brecáin and other monastic cities, and Dub Tholarg, king of the Picts on this side of Mounth, and Muiredach son of Uargal, steward of Iona, and Bécán of Lifechair, and Scannal grandson of Tadc, abbot of Achad Bó—on the feast of Comgall, in his 43rd year of office—and Banbán, abbot of Claenad, and Aedán abbot of Ros Comáin, and Ultán, steward (equonimus) of Bangor, and Ferdornach of Tuaim dá Gualann—all died.	AU 782.1
783	Suairlech [ua Tipraití] a celebrated anchorite [dies].	AU 783.2; AI 783.3
791	Cernach son of Muiredach; Frecmarc, bishop of Lusca; Cú Dínaisc son of Cú Fásaig, abbot of Armagh; Donngal son of Buachaill, king of Int Airthir; Artgal son of Cathal, king of Connacht, in Iona; Saerberg, abbot of Clonmacnois; Caínchomrac, bishop of Finnglas; Sirne, abbot of Bangor; Muiredach son of Aengus, abbot of Lusca—all died.	AU 791.1
794	Tomás, abbot of Bangor, and Ioseph grandson of Cerna abbot of Clonmacnois, died.	AU 794.2
800	Airmedach, abbot of Bangor, Connla son of Artgal, Aildobur, abbot of Roscommon, Mimtenacha, abbot of Glendalough, died.	AU 800.1
802	Mac Óige of Applecross, abbot of Bangor, Muiredach son of Óchobor, abbot of Clonfert, Coscrach grandson of Fraech, abbot of Lugmad, Clemens of Terryglass—all ended their lives happily and in peace.	AU 802.5
806	Loithech, teacher of Bangor, rested.	AU 806.7
814	Repose of Aedán moccu Raichlich, abbot of Lismore.	AI 814.1
	The abbacy of Lismore to Flann, son of Fairchellach.	AI 814.2
817	Mael Tuile, abbot of Bangor, goes into exile.	AU 817.6
820	Mael Tuile, abbot of Bangor, rested.	AU 820.4

823	Heathens invaded Bangor the great.	AU 823.8
824	The heathens plundered Bangor at Airtiu (?), and destroyed the oratory, and shook the relics of Comgall from their shrine.	AU 824.2
	It will be true, true / By the will of the High-king of kings / My bones shall be borne without harm / from Bangor of the fighting to Antrim.	
825	Flann son of Fairchellach, abbot of Lismore, fell asleep.	AU 825.13
839	Mael Gaimrid, an excellent scribe and anchorite, and abbot of Bangorr, rested.	AU 839.1
849	Airennán, abbot of Bangorr, fell asleep.	AU 849.11
851	Tipraite grandson of Baíthenach, abbot of Lismore fell asleep.	AU 851.8
856	Suibne grandson of Roichlech, scribe, anchorite and abbot of Lismore, and Cormac of Lathrach Briúin, a scribe and bishop, fell asleep in peace.	AU 856.7; FA 273
863	Repose of Dainél, abbot of Lismore and Cork.	AI 863.1
871	The pilgrim Maengal, abbot of Bangor, happily ended his life as an old man.	AU 871.8; FA 389
881	Ferchar, abbot of Bangor, died.	AU 881.1
884	Rogailnech, abbot of Bangor, Dúnacán son of Cormac, abbot of Monasterboice, and Conallán son of Mael Teimin, superior of Inis Caín Dega, fell asleep.	AU 884.9
894	Repose of Flann son of Forbasach, abbot of Lismore. Mael Brigte succeeded him in the abbacy.	AI 894.2
906	Indrechtach, abbot of Bangor, died.	AU 906.5
908	Castledermot mentioned as "one of Comgall's places".	FA 423
912	Repose of Mael Brigte son of Mael Domnaig, abbot of Lismore.	AU 912.2; AI 912.1; FA 445
920	The martyrdom of Cormac son of Cuilennán, bishop and vice-abbot of Lismore, abbot of Cell Mo-Laise, king of the Déisi, and chief counsellor of Mumu, at the hands of the Uí Fhothaid Aiched.	AI 920.1; FA 423
921	Móenach son of Siadal, successor of Comgall, chief master of erudition in the island of Ireland, fell asleep.	AU 921.1; FA 423
928.7	Céile, successor of Comgall and apostolic doctor of all Ireland, went on pilgrimage.	AU 928.7; FA 429
929	Céile, successor of Comgall, scribe and anchorite and apostolic doctor of all Ireland, rested happily at Rome on his pilgrimage, on the eighteenth day before the Kalends of October 14 Sept., in the 59th year of his age.	AU 929.3

	Thrice nine and nine hundred years / Are reckoned by clear rules / Since the year of Christ's birth (a benign occurrence) / Until the holy death of the cleric Céile.	
938	Repose of Ciarán son of Ciarmacán, abbot of Lismore Mochutu.	AI 938.1
940	Repose of Muiredach, successor of Comgall.	AU 940.6
953	Mael Cothaid, successor of Comgall and Mo-Cholmóc, died.	AU 953.2
	Mael Martain son of Maenach, Ruadacán son of Eitigén, king of eastern Gailenga, Mael Pátraic son of Coscán, lector of Armagh, Mael Muire, superior of Tech Féthgna, Cenn Faelad, superior of Saiger, Diarmait son of Torpaid, superior of Lismore Mochutu, Dub Inse, bishop of Bangor, died.	AU 953.4; AI 953.2, 954.3
958	Tanaide son of Odar, coarb of Bangor, was killed by the foreigners.	AU 958.2
	Repose of Cinaed Ua Con Minn, bishop of Lismore and Inis Cathaig.	AI 958.3
959	Maenach son of Cormac, superior of Lismore, died.	AU 959.4; AI 959.2
960	Repose of Cathmug, bishop of Cork and abbot of Lismore.	AU 960.5; AI 961.1
965	Ioseph and Dúnchad, abbots of Terryglass, and Cinaed, abbot of Lismore Mochutu, rested in Christ.	AU 965.3; AI 965.2
968	Cellach ua Banan, successor of Comgall, dies.	AU 968.1
981	Cleirchéne son of Donngal, successor of Feichíne, Eógan ua Cadáin, successor of Brénainn, and Sínach son of Muirthilén, successor of Comgall, fell asleep in Christ.	AU 981.2
983	Cormac son of Mael Ciaráin, successor of Mochutu, and Muiredach son of Muirecán, prior of Armagh, die.	AU 983.1; AI 983.3
1016	Eithne daughter of Ua Suairt, successor of Brigit, and Diarmait ua Maíl Telcha, successor of Comgall, rested.	AU 1016.2
1025	Flannabra, successor of Iona, Muiredach son of Muigrón, successor of Ciarán, Mael Eóin ua Toráin, successor of Daire, Cenn Faelad son of Flaithbertach, superior of Daiminis, Mael Brigitte ua Críchidéin, successor of Finnén and Comgall, Dub Inse ua Fairchellaig, superior of Druim Lethan, and Saerbrethach, abbot of Emly, fell asleep in Christ.	AU 1025.1
1030	Ua Cruimthir, i.e. Aengus, successor of Comgall, died.	AU 1030.3
1055	Mael Martain son of Aisíd successor of Comgall, Colum ua Cathail, superior of Ros Ailithir, Odar ua Muiredaig, superior of Lusca. Gilla Pátraic,	AU 1055.2



	king of Osraige, and Fiachra ua Corcráin, all fell asleep in the Lord.	
1058	Colmán ua hAirechtaigh, successor of Comgall, and ua Flannchua, superior of Emly, rested in peace.	AU 1058.
1068	Domnall ua Cathasaigh, superior of Dún, Colmán ua Críchán, lector of Armagh, Mac an Bécánaigh, successor of Comgall, and Cinaedh, successor of Coeimghein, migrated to Christ.	AU 1068.1
1097	Lerghus ua Cruimthir, successor of Comgall, died after excellent repentance.	AU 1097.1
1123	Aengus ua Gormán, successor of Comgall, died on pilgrimage in Lismore Mochutu.	AU 1123.3

## Bibliography:

**Primary Sources:** Consists of textual sources containing material dated prior to AD 1700, dictionaries, maps, personal travel diaries, and air photo unit records.

Anderson, Alan Orr. "Táin Bó Fraích", *Revue Celtique* 24 (1903), 127-154.

Anderson, Alan Orr and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (eds). *The Chronicle of Melrose: From the Cottonian Manuscript, Faustina B. IX in the British Museum: A Complete and Full-Size Facsimile in Collotype*. London: Percy Lund Humphries & Co. Ltd, 1936.

Anderson, Alan Orr and Marjorie Ogilvie Anderson (trans). Saint Adomnán. *Adomnán's Life of Columba*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd, 1961.

Arthur, Ross G. *English-Old Norse Dictionary*. Cambridge: Publications Linguistics Series, 2002.

Atkinson, J.C. and J. Brownbill. *The Coucher Book of Furness Abbey*. Vol. II. Manchester: Chetham Society, 1886.

Bagenal, Marshal, Herbert F. Hore, and Lord Burghley. "Marshal Bagenal's Description of Ulster, Anno 1586", *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 2 (1854), 137-60.

*Barberini Gospels*. Rome, Vatican Biblioteca. Apostolica Barberini, MS Lat 570.

Best, Richard Irvine, and H. J. Lawlor (ed) (trans). *The martyrology of Tallaght: from the Book of Leinster and MS. 5100-4 in the Royal Library, Brussels*, vol. 68, London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1931.

Bieler, Ludwig (ed) (trans). *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1979.

- Binchy, Daniel A. (ed). *Scéla Cano Meic Gartnáin*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975.
- Blaeu, Joan. *Lorna cum insulis vicinis et provinciis eidem conterminis* [Map]. *Atlas novus*. Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1654. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/00000459](https://maps.nls.uk/view/00000459).
- Blaeu, Joan. *Mula Insula, quae ex Aebudarum numero una est, et Lochabriae ad occasum praetenditur* [Map]. *Atlas novus*. Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1654. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/00000483](https://maps.nls.uk/view/00000483).
- Blaeu, Joan. *Mvla Insvla* [Map]. Scala Miliarium, 4 = 5.4 cm. *Atlas Maior*, vol. 6. Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1662. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/108520530](https://maps.nls.uk/view/108520530).
- Blaeu, Joan. *Skia vel Skiana* [Map]. Scale: 6 Milliarum Scotica communia = 7.3 cm. *Atlas Maior*, vol. 6. Amsterdam: Blaeu, 1662. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/108520536](https://maps.nls.uk/view/108520536).
- Book of Armagh*. IE TCD MS 52. Digitised manuscript from the Library of Trinity College Dublin. Accessed 4 Apr 2019. [digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/#folder\\_id=1827&pidtopage=MS52\\_328&entry\\_point=70](https://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/#folder_id=1827&pidtopage=MS52_328&entry_point=70).
- Book of Kells*. TCD MS 58. Digitised manuscript from the Library of Trinity College Dublin. Accessed 4 Jun 2020. [digitalcollections.tcd.ie/concern/works/hm50tr726?locale=en](https://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/concern/works/hm50tr726?locale=en).
- Burns, Charles (trans). Clement VII. *Calendar of Papal Letters to Scotland of Clement VII of Avignon, 1378-1394*, vol. 1. Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1976.
- Colgrave, Bertram and R.A.B. Mynors (ed) (trans). Saint Bede the Venerable. *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, rev. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.

Concannon, Helena Walsh. *The Life of St. Columban: A Study of Ancient Irish Monastic Life*. Dublin: Catholic Truth Society, 1915.

*Cronica Regum Mannie et Insularum*. British Library, Cotton MS Julius A. VII, ff. 31r-52r.

*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, vol. VII. Christiania. 1847-1995.  
[www.dokpro.uio.no/dipl\\_norv/diplom\\_field\\_eng.html](http://www.dokpro.uio.no/dipl_norv/diplom_field_eng.html).

Dodds, Madeline (trans). "The Little book of the birth of St. Cuthbert",  
*Archaeologica Aeliana* 4<sup>th</sup> Series 6 (1929), 52-94.

Dumville, David and Simon Keynes (ed) (trans). *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*. Cambridge: Brewer, 1983.

East Ulster, Ireland [Map]. 1602. "P/49(25)". National Maritime Museum.  
 Accessed 8 June 2017.  
[collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/541705.html](http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/541705.html).

Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language (eDIL). [www.dil.ie](http://www.dil.ie).

Fabre, P. and L. Duchesne (eds), *Le Liber Censuum de l'église romaine*.  
 Bibliothèque de écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2e sér., 6. Paris:  
 1889-1910.

Freeland, Jane Patricia (trans) and Marsha L. Dutton (ed). Aelred of Rievaulx.  
*Aelred of Rievaulx, The Historical Works*. Kalamazoo: Cistercian  
 Publications, 2005.

Ghesquière, Joseph Hippolyte, Corneille Smet, and Jean François Thys. *Acta Sanctorum Belgii Selecta: Quae Tum Ex Monumentis Sinceris in Bollandiano Opere Editis, Tum Ex Vastissimo Illo Opere, Servata Primigenia Scriptorum Phrasi*. Bruxellis: typis Matthaei Lemaire, 1783.

Paul, James Balfour, J. Maitland Thomson, William Kirk Dickson, and J. H. Stevenson, *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum; the Register of the Great Seal of Scotland; A.D. 1424-1659*, vol. 4. Edinburgh: 1882.

- Griffith, Aaron. "A Dictionary of the Old-Irish Glosses in the Milan Codex Ambrosianus C 301 inf". Universität Wien. Accessed 8 July 2018. [www.univie.ac.at/indogermanistik/milan\\_glosses](http://www.univie.ac.at/indogermanistik/milan_glosses).
- Grønlie, Siân (trans). Ari Porgilsson. *Íslendingabók, Kristni saga: The Book of the Icelanders, The Story of Conversion*. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2006.
- Gwynn, Edward. *The Metrical Dindshenchas*, vol. 11. Dublin, Ireland: School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1991.
- Heist, W. W. *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae Ex Codice Olim Salmanticensi Nunc Bruxellensi*. vol. 28. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1965.
- Hennessy, William M. and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (trans), "Chronicon Scotorum", Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 11 Nov 2019. [celt.ucc.ie//published/T100016/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100016/index.html).
- Hofman, Rijcklof (trans). Priscian. *The Sankt Gall Priscian Commentary*, vol. 1. Münster: Nodus, 1996. Accessed 17 July 2018. [www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/description/csg/0904/](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/description/csg/0904/).
- Innes, Cosmo (ed). *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis: Ecclesie cathedralis aberdonensis regesta que extant in unum collecta*. Publisher not identified, 1845.
- Innes, Cosmo and James B. Brichtan (eds). *Origines Parochiales Scotiae: The Antiquities, Ecclesiastical and Territorial, of the Parishes of Scotland*, vol. 2, part 1. Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1850.
- Iona Club. *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis: Consisting of Original Papers and Documents Relating to the History of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Thomas G. Stevenson, 1847.
- Krusch, Bruno (ed). *Monumenta Germanicae Historica-Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum*, vol 4. 1896.

Lawlor, Hugh Jackson (trans). Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. *Life of St. Malachy of Armagh*. London: S.P.C.K, 1920.

*Lindisfarne Gospels*. Cotton MS Nero D IV. Digitised manuscript from British Library. Accessed 4 Apr 2019.  
[www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton\\_ms\\_nero\\_d\\_iv\\_fs001r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_nero_d_iv_fs001r).

Mac Airt, Seán (ed) (trans). *The Annals of Inisfallen: MS. Rawlinson B. 503*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1951.

Mac Airt, Seán (ed). *Annals of Inisfallen*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie//published/G100004/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/G100004/index.html).

Mac Airt, Seán (trans). *Annals of Inisfallen*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie//published/T100004/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100004/index.html).

Mac Airt, Seán and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (trans). *The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983.

Mac Airt, Seán and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (trans). "Annals of Ulster AD 431-1201". Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018.  
[celt.ucc.ie//published/T100001A/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100001A/index.html).

Maceachen, Evan, Alexander Macbain, and John Whyte. *Faclair Gaidhlig is Beurla: Maceachen's Gaelic-English Dictionary*. Inverness: Highland News Office, 1902.

Mackay, William (ed). *Inverness and Dingwall Presbytery Records 1648-1688*. Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable: Edinburgh, 1896.

Mac Niocaill, Gearóid (trans). "Annals of Tigernach". Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie//published/T100002A/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100002A/index.html).

Macphail, J.R.N. *Highland Papers*, vol. 1-4. Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 1914.

Macquarrie, Alan (ed) (trans). *Legends of Scottish Saints: Readings, Hymns and Prayers for the Commemorations of Scottish Saints in the Aberdeen Breviary*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2012.

Márkus, Gilbert (ed) (trans). “The Life of St Cainnech”. *Eòlas nan Naomh: Early Christianity in Uist*. Accessed 10 May 2019. [uistsaints.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-and-notes.pdf](http://uistsaints.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-and-notes.pdf).

McClure, Judith and Roger Collins (trans). Saint Bede the Venerable. *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People: The Greater Chronicle and Bede's Letter to Egbert*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Meid, Wolfgang. *Táin Bó Fráich*. Vol. 22. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967.

Meyer, Kuno (ed). “Neue Mitteilungen aus irischen Handschriften”, *Archiv für celtische Lexicographie* 3 (1907), 213-246.

Meyer, Kuno (trans). “Cáin Adomnáin: An Old Irish Treatise on the Law of Adomnán”. *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, 2001. Accessed 18 Nov 2018. [sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/cainadamnain.asp](http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/cainadamnain.asp).

Meyer, Kuno (ed). “Cainnech’s Hymnus auf Colum Cille”. *Thesaurus Linguae Hibernicae*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [www.ucd.ie/tlh/text/km.acl.3.005.text.html](http://www.ucd.ie/tlh/text/km.acl.3.005.text.html).

Meyer, Kuno (ed). “Colum Cille's Lobgesang auf Cainnech”. *Thesaurus Linguae Hibernicae*. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [www.ucd.ie/tlh/text/km.acl.3.006.text.html](http://www.ucd.ie/tlh/text/km.acl.3.006.text.html).

Migne, Jacques-Paul (ed). “Vita Sancti Columbani”. In *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, cols. 1014-1046. Paris: Apud Garnieri Fratres, 1844.

Mitchell, A. "On various superstitions in the North-West Highlands and Islands of Scotland, especially in relation to lunacy", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 4 (1860-2), 251-288.

Mooney, Rev. Canice, O.F.M. "Topographical Fragments from the Franciscan Library", *Celtica* 1 (1950), 64-85.

*Moutier-Grandval Bible*. London, BL, Add. MS 10546.

Munro, Dana Carleton (trans). Abbot Jonas of Bobbio. *Life of St. Columban*. Felinfach: Llanerch, 1993.

National Monument Record Scotland air photo unit. CPE/SCOT/UK/284. nos. 3036 and 4044 (August 1947).

Nelson, Janet (trans) (ed). *The Annals of St-Bertin*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991.

Norden, John. "The Plot of Ireland with the Confines". [Map] Scale: 1 in to 9 mi. circa 1610. The National Archives, Kew. MPF 1/67.

Nutt, Alfred Trübner and Kuno Meyer. *The Voyage of Bran, Son of Febal, to the Land of the Living: An Old Irish Saga*. London: D. Nutt, 1895.

O'Brien, Michael A. and John V. Kelleher (eds). *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001.

John O'Donovan (trans). *Annals of the Four Masters*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 20 Oct 2020. [celt.ucc.ie//published/T100005A/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/T100005A/index.html).

Ogilvie, RM and Ian Richmond. Cornelius Tacitus. *Cornelii Taciti De Vita Agricolae*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.

O'Hara, Alexander and I. N. Wood (ed) (trans). Jonas of Bobbio. *Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, and Life of Vedast*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017.



O’Keefe, James G. (trans). *Buile Shuibhne*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 14 June 2019. [celt.ucc.ie//published/T302018](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/T302018).

Ó Muraile, Nollaig (ed). *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach: The Great book of Irish Genealogies*. Dublin: Éamon De Búrca, 2003.

Ó Riain, Pádraig. *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985.

OS Name Books, Argyll Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1868-1878.

ScotlandsPlaces. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/argyll-os-name-books-1868-1878/argyll-volume-28](http://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/argyll-os-name-books-1868-1878/argyll-volume-28).

OS Name Books, Inverness-shire Ordnance Survey Name Books, 1848-1878.

ScotlandsPlaces. Accessed 29 Sep 2020. [scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/inverness-shire-os-name-books-1876-1878/inverness-shire-skye-volume-10](http://scotlandsplaces.gov.uk/digital-volumes/ordnance-survey-name-books/inverness-shire-os-name-books-1876-1878/inverness-shire-skye-volume-10).

Pennant, Thomas. *A Tour in Scotland and Voyage to the Hebrides*. Chester: Printed by John Monk, 1774.

Plummer, Charles. *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*, vols. 1-2. Oxford: Henry Frowde, 1910.

Plummer, Charles. *Irish Litanies: Text and Translation*, vol. 62. London: Harrison and Sons, 1925.

Radner, Joan Newlon (ed). *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1978.

Radner, Joan Newlon (trans). “Fragmentary Annals of Ireland”. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 22 May 2018. [celt.ucc.ie//published/G100017/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/G100017/index.html).

Raine, J. (ed), “Libellus de nativitate Sancti Cuthberti”. In J. Raine (ed), *Miscellanea Biographica*, 63-87. Edinburgh: Laing and Forbes, 1838).

Reeves, William. "The Antiphony of Bangor", *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, First Series 1 (1853), 168-179.

Robertson, Joseph. *Illustrations of the topography and antiquities of the shires of Aberdeen and Banff*, vol. 3. Aberdeen: William Bennett, 1857.

Sharpe, Richard (trans). Saint Adamnán. *Life of St Columba*. London: Penguin Books, 1995.

St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. Sang. 456: *A martyrology by Notker Balbulus*. Accessed 15 April 2019. [www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0456](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/csg/0456).

Stokes, Whitley. *Lives of the Saints from the Book of Lismore*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890.

Stokes, Whitley. *Féilire húi Gormáin: The martyrology of Gorman, from a manuscript in the Royal Library, Brussels*. Henry Bradshaw Society 9, London: Harrison, 1895.

Stokes, Whitley. *The Annals of Tigernach*. Felin Fach, Lampeter, Dyfed: Llanerch Publishers, 1993.

Stokes, Whitley and John Strachan (eds), *Thesaurus palaeohibernicus: a collection of Old-Irish glosses, scholia, prose, and verse*, vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901.

Stokes, Whitley (trans). Saint Óengus the Culdee. *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1905.

Strabo, Walafrid. *Vita Sancti Galli*. Luzern, Zentral- und Hochschulbibliothek, P 33 4°. Accessed 25 Feb 2020. [www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/zhl/P0033-4](http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/zhl/P0033-4).

Strachan, J. "An Old-Irish Metrical Rule", *Ériu* 1 (1904), 191-208.

- Stuart, John, George Burnett and George P. McNeill. Scottish Record Office. *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland: Rotuli Scaccarii Regum Scotorum*, vols 13 and 17. Edinburgh: General Register House, 1878.
- Swift, Edmund (trans). Jocelin of Furness. *The Life and Acts of Saint Patrick the archbishop, primate and apostle of Ireland*. Dublin: Hibernia Press Company, 1809.
- Tierney, James J. (trans). Dícuil. *Liber De Mensura Orbis Terrae*. Corpus of Electronic Texts. Accessed 5 Apr 2019. [celt.ucc.ie//published/T090000-001/index.html](http://celt.ucc.ie//published/T090000-001/index.html).
- Tschan, Francis Joseph. Adam of Bremen. *History of the Archbishops of Hamburg-Bremen*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- University of Notre Dame. William Whitaker's Words. [archives.nd.edu/words.html](http://archives.nd.edu/words.html).
- Wade-Evans, Arthur (ed). "Vita Sancti Kebii". In *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae Et Genealogiae*, edited by Arthur Wade-Evans, PGS. Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 1944.
- Walckenaer, Charles Athanase (ed). Dícuil. *Dicuili liber De mensura orbis terrae ex duobus codd. mss. Bibliothecae imperialis*. Parisiis: ex typis Firmini Didot, 1807.
- Walker, G.S.M. (trans). Saint Columban. *Sancti Columbani Opera*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1957.
- Wallis, Faith (trans). Saint Bede. *The Reckoning of Time*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999.
- Warner, Sir George F. *The Stowe Missal: MS. D. II. 3 in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1906).

Warren, F.E. and William Griggs. *The Antiphony of Bangor: An Early Irish Manuscript in the Ambrosian Library at Milan*. London: Harrison and Sons, 1893.

Winterbottom, Michael (ed) (trans). Gildas. *The Ruin of Britain, and Other Works*. London: Phillimore, 1978.

Würzburg Saint Matthew. Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS M. p. th. f. 61.1.

**Secondary Sources: Consists of textual sources containing material collected, written, and/or published after AD 1700 as well as sources which are analyses of those listed above as primary sources.**

Abrams, Lesley. "Conversion and the church in the Hebrides in the Viking Age". In *West Over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300*, edited by Beverly Ballin Smith, Simon Taylor, and Gareth Williams, 169-193. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Aitchison, Nick. *Macbeth: Man and Myth*. Stroud: Sutton, 2000.

Alcock, Leslie. "Was there an Irish Sea culture-province in the Dark Ages?" In *The Irish Sea Province in archaeology and history*, edited by Donald Moore, 55-65. Cardiff: Cambrian Archaeological Association, 1970.

Alcock, Leslie and Elizabeth A. Alcock. "Reconnaissance excavations on early historic fortifications and other royal sites in Scotland, 1974-84: 2, Excavations at Dunollie Castle, Oban, Argyll, 1978", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 117 (1987), 119-147.

Allen, J. Romilly and Joseph Anderson. *The Early Christian Monuments of Scotland: A Classified, Illustrated, Descriptive List of the Monuments with an Analysis of their Symbolism and Ornamentation*, vols. 1-2. Edinburgh: Neill, 1903.

Anderson, Alan Orr and Marjorie Anderson. *Early Sources of Scottish History, AD 500 to 1286*, vol. 1-2. Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1990.

Anderson, Joseph. "Notes on the Relics of the Viking Period", *PSAS*, 10 (1872-74), 536-594.

Anderson, Marjorie Ogilvie. *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973.

Andrews, J.H. "The geographical element in Irish history". In *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, edited by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 1-31. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Archaeological Development Services, Ltd. "Bangor Abbey, Co. Down". Final Excavation Report, March 2014.

Armit, Ian. "The Iron Age". In *The Argyll Book*, edited by Donald Omand, 94-109. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2004.

Bangor Belle-Île-en-Mer. "Bienvenue à Bangor", Mairie de Bangor 2018. Accessed 16 Sep 2020. [bangor.fr](http://bangor.fr).

Bangor University. Geiriadur Bangor. "gwyryf". Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [geiriadur.bangor.ac.uk/?locale=en#gwyryf](http://geiriadur.bangor.ac.uk/?locale=en#gwyryf).

Bannerman, John. *Studies in the History of Dalriada*. Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974.

Bannerman, John. "Comarba Coluim Chille and the relics of Columba", *Innes Review* 44 (1993), 14-47.

Bannerman, John. "The Dál Riata and Northern Ireland in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries". In *Kinship, Church and Culture: Collected Essays and Studies* edited by John Bannerman, Dauvit Broun, and Martin MacGregor, 1-8. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2016.

Bannerman, John. "Notes on the Scottish Entries in the Early Irish Annals". In *Kinship, Church and Culture: Collected Essays and Studies*, edited by John Bannerman, Dauvit Broun, and Martin MacGregor, 9-26. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2016.

- Bannerman, John. "Senchus Fer nAlban". In *Kinship, Church and Culture: Collected Essays and Studies*, edited by John Bannerman, Dauvit Broun, and Martin MacGregor, 27-154. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2016.
- Baring-Gould, Sabine and John Fisher. *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 2. London: The Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion, 1911.
- Barrell, A.D.M. "The Background to *Cum Universi*: Scoto-papal relations, 1159-1192", *Innes Review* 46.2 (1995), 116-138.
- Batey, Colleen. "A copper alloy pin from Urquhart Castle, Inverness-shire", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 122 (1992), 351-353.
- Beveridge, Erskine. *Coll and Tiree: their prehistoric forts and ecclesiastical antiquities with notices of ancient remains in the Treshnish Isles*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1903.
- Black, Adam and Charles Black. Black's new large map of Scotland [Map]. Centre South West section. Scale: One Quarter Inch to a Mile. Edinburgh: A & C Black, 1862.
- Black, Ronald. "Scottish Fairs and Fair-names", *Journal of the School of Scottish Studies* 33 (1999), 1-75.
- Bourke, Cormac. "Early Irish hand-bells", *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 110 (1980), 52-66.
- Bourke, Cormac. "The hand-bells of the early Scottish church", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 113 (1983), 464-468.
- Bourke, Cormac. "Early ecclesiastical hand-bells in Ireland and Britain", *Journal of the Antique Metalware Society* 16 (2008), 22-8.
- Bowen, E.G. *Saints, Seaways and Settlements in the Celtic Lands*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969.

- Boyle, Alexander. "Notes on Scottish Saints", *Innes Review* 32, no. 2 (1981), 59-82.
- Breeze, David J. and Alan Wilkins, "Pytheas, Tacitus and Thule", *Britannia* 49 (2018), 303-308.
- Broderick, George. *A Dictionary of Manx Place-Names*. Nottingham: English Place-Name Society, 2006.
- Broderick, George. "Some Island Names in the Former 'Kingdom of the Isles': A Reappraisal", *The Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 7 (2013), 1-28.
- Broodbank, Cyprian. *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Brück, Joanna. "Experiencing the Past? The development of a phenomenological archaeology in British prehistory", *Archaeological Dialogues* 12:1 (2005), 45-72.
- Bullough, Donald. "The Career of Columbanus". In *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, edited by Michael Lapidge, 1-28. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997.
- Butter, Rachel. "Cill-names and saints in Argyll: a way towards understanding the early church in Dál Riata?" PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2007.
- Byrne, Francis J. "Heads of Churches to c. 1220". In *A New History of Ireland* vol. IX, edited by T.W. Moody, F.X. Martin, and Francis J. Byrne, 237-263. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.
- Byrne, Francis J. *Irish Kings and High-Kings*. London: Batsford, 1987.
- Byrne, Francis J. "Ireland before the battle of Clontarf". In *A New History of Ireland*, vol I, edited by Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, 852-861. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

- Caldwell, David, Susy Kirk, Gilbert Márkus, Jim Tate, and Sharon Webb. "The Kilmichael Glassary Bell-shrine", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 142 (2012), 201-244.
- Callaghan, Richard and Chris Scarre. "Simulating the Western Seaways", *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 28:4 (2009), 357-372.
- Campbell, Ewan. *Saints and Sea-kings: the first kingdom of the Scots*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1999.
- Campbell, Ewan. "Were the Scots Irish?", *Antiquity* 75, no. 288 (2001), 285-92.
- Campbell, Ewan and Adrián Maldonado. "A New Jerusalem 'at the ends of the earth': interpreting Charles Thomas's excavations at Iona Abbey 1956-63", *Antiquaries Journal* 100 (2020), 33-85.
- Canmore. [canmore.org.uk](http://canmore.org.uk).
- Carmichael, Alexander. "Story about the saints connected to Lios Mòr/Lismore, 2 September 1870". The Carmichael-Watson Collection, Coll-97/CW106/2. Edinburgh University Library Special Collections. [http://lac-archives-live.is.ed.ac.uk:8081/repositories/2/archival\\_objects/142237](http://lac-archives-live.is.ed.ac.uk:8081/repositories/2/archival_objects/142237) Accessed September 28, 2020.
- Carmichael, Alexander. "Barons of Bachuill", *The Celtic Review* 5 (1909), 356-375.
- Carver, Martin. *Portmahomack: Monastery of the Picts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
- Casson, Lionel. *The Ancient Mariners: seafarers and sea fighters of the Mediterranean in ancient times*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Charles-Edwards, Thomas. "The Church and Settlement". In *Ireland and Europe: The Early Church*, edited by Próinséas Ní Chatháin and Michael Richter, 167-175. Stuttgart: Klett-Cota, 1984.



- Charles-Edwards, Thomas. *The Chronicle of Ireland*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006.
- Charles-Edwards, Thomas. *Early Christian Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Saint and the Fool: The Image and Function of Cummine Fota and Comgan Mac Da Cherda in Early Irish Literature". PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1991.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Annat in Scotland and the origins of the parish", *Innes Review* 46 (1995), 91-115.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Iona, Scotland and the Céli Dé". In *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, edited by Barbara E. Crawford, 111-130. St Andrews: St John's House, 1996.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. *The Triumph Tree: Scotland's earliest Poetry AD550-1350*. Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 1998.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Personal, Political, Pastoral: The Multiple Agenda of Adomnán's Life of St Columba". In *The Polar Twins*, edited by Edward Cowan and Douglas Gifford, 39-60. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd, 1999.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Subversion at Sea: Structure, Style and Intent in the *Immrama*". In *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, edited by Jonathan M. Wooding, 194-225. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "The Real St Ninian", *Innes Review* 52 (2001), 1-28.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Local saints and national identities in early medieval Scotland". In *Local saints and local churches in the early medieval West*, edited by Richard Sharpe and A. Thacker, 397-422. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Magpie hagiography in twelfth-century Scotland". In *Celtic Hagiography and Saints Cults*, edited by Jane Cartwright, 216-231. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Deer and the early church in North-Eastern Scotland". In *Studies in the Book of Deer*, edited by Katherine Forsyth, 363-397. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "The Gall-Ghàidheil and Galloway", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 2 (2008), 19-50.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen, "Gaelic in Medieval Scotland: Advent and Expansion", (The Sir John Rhys Memorial Lecture, 2009), *Proceedings of the British Academy* 167 (2011), 349-392.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Iona v. Kells: Succession, Jurisdiction and Politics in the Columban *Familia* in the Later Tenth Century". In *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards. Studies in Celtic History* 31, edited by F. Edmonds and P Russell, 89-101. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Saints in the Scottish Landscape", *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 33 (2013), 1-34.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "St Donnan of Eigg: Context and Cult", Eigg History Society, 2015. Accessed 15 Nov 2018.  
[www.spanglefish.com/eigghistorysociety/index.asp?pageid=616291](http://www.spanglefish.com/eigghistorysociety/index.asp?pageid=616291).
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "Hebridean connections: in Ibdone insula, Ibdraig, Eboudai, Uist", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 12 (2018), 27-40.
- Clancy, Thomas Owen. "The church and the domains of Gaelic in early medieval Scotland", (forthcoming).
- Clancy, Thomas Owen and Gilbert Márkus. *Iona: The Earliest Poetry of a Celtic Monastery*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995.

Close-Brooks, Joanna. *The Highlands*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1986.

Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. Historic Settlements Survey - Brecknock.

Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [cpat.org.uk/ycom/breck/llyswen.pdf](http://cpat.org.uk/ycom/breck/llyswen.pdf).

Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust. Historic Settlement Survey - eastern Conwy -

2014. Accessed 27 Nov 2020. [cpat.org.uk/ycom/conwy/llysfafen.pdf](http://cpat.org.uk/ycom/conwy/llysfafen.pdf).

CODECS: Collaborative Online Database and e-Resources for Celtic Studies.

[www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Home](http://www.vanhamel.nl/codecs/Home).

Coflein. Bronllys Castle, Tower. Accessed 27 Nov 2020.

[coflein.gov.uk/en/site/96535/details/bronllys-castle-tower](http://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/96535/details/bronllys-castle-tower).

Colgrave, Bertram (ed and trans). Saint Bede. *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940.

Cowan, Ian B. *The parishes of medieval Scotland*, vol. 93. Edinburgh: Scottish

Record Society, 1967.

Cox, Richard. *The Gaelic Place-Names of Carloway, Isle of Lewis: Their Structure and Significance*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2002.

Cox, Richard and Richard Lathe. "The Question of the Etymology of *Dunadd*, a

Fortress of the Dalriadic Scots", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 11 (2017), 21-36.

Craig, Derek. "The Distribution of Pre-Norman Sculpture in South-West Scotland". PhD thesis, University of Durham, 1992.

Crawford, Henry. *Handbook of Carved Ornament from Irish Monuments of the Christian Period*. Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1926.

Curran, Michael. *The Antiphony of Bangor and the Early Irish Monastic Liturgy*.

Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1984.

- Dagg, Cathy and Cait McCullagh, "Applecross Broch Community Archaeology Project, Highland (Applecross parish), excavation", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 10 (2009), 86-87.
- Dagg, Cathy and Cait McCullagh, "Applecross Broch Community Archaeology Project, Highland (Applecross parish), excavation", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 11 (2010), 82-85.
- Database of Scottish Hagiotoponyms (DoSH). [saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk](http://saintsplaces.gla.ac.uk).
- Davies, Wendy. "Clerics as Rulers: Some implications of the terminology of ecclesiastical authority in early medieval Ireland". In *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain*, edited by Nicholas Brooks, 81-97. Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982.
- Davies, Wendy. *Whithorn and the World (Sixth Whithorn Lecture)*. Whithorn: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 1998.
- Dictionary of Irish Biography. [dib.cambridge.org](http://dib.cambridge.org).
- Downham, Clare. *Medieval Ireland*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Dransart, Penelope. "Saints, stones and shrines: the cults of St Moluag and Gerardine in Pictland". In *Celtic hagiography and saints' cults*, edited by Jane Cartwright, 232-248. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003.
- Driscoll, Steven, Oliver O'Grady and Katherine Forsyth, "The Govan School Revisited: Searching for Meaning in the Early Medieval Sculpture of Strathclyde". In *Able Minds and Practiced Hands: Scotland's Early Medieval Sculpture in the 21st Century*, edited by Sally Foster and Morag Cross, 135-158. Leeds: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2005.
- Dufftown Magazine. "Welcome to Dufftown", Dufftown 2000, Ltd. Accessed 7 Dec 2018. [www.dufftown.co.uk/documents/DUFFTOWN-MAGAZINE-Mar2018-onlineF.pdf](http://www.dufftown.co.uk/documents/DUFFTOWN-MAGAZINE-Mar2018-onlineF.pdf).

- Dumville, David. "Latin and Irish in the *Annals of Ulster: A.D. 431-1050*". In *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, edited by Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David Dumville, 320-344. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Dumville, David. *The Churches of North Britain in the First Viking-Age: Fifth Whithorn Lecture*. Whithorn: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 1997.
- Dumville, David N. "Cethri Prímchenéla Dáil Riata", *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 20 (2000), 170-91.
- Dumville, David. "What is a Chronicle?" In *The medieval Chronicle II: Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Medieval Chronicle, Driebergen/Utrecht 16-21 July 1999*, edited by Erik Kooper, 1-26. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002.
- Dumville, David. "Ireland and North Britain in the Earlier Middle Ages: Contexts for Míniugud Senchasa Fher nAlban". In *Rannsachadh Na Gàidhlig 2000: Papers Read at the Conference Scottish Gaelic Studies 2000 Held at the University of Aberdeen 2-4 August 2000*, edited by Nancy McGuire and Colm Ó Baoill, 185-211. An Clò Gaidhealach, Obar Dheathain (Aberdeen), 2002.
- Dumville, David. "Félire Óengusso: Problems of Dating a Monument of Old Irish", *Éigse* 33 (2002), 19-48.
- Dumville, David. "Mael Brigte mac Tornán, pluralist coarb (†927)". In *Celtic Essays, 2001-2007*, edited by David Dumville, 137-158. Aberdeen: The Centre for Celtic Studies, 2007.
- Dunblane Cathedral. "The Nave", Accessed 30 Sept 2018.  
[www.dunblanecathedral.org.uk/page/49/nave](http://www.dunblanecathedral.org.uk/page/49/nave).
- Dunn, Marilyn. *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

- Edmunds, Fiona. *Whithorn's renown in the early medieval period: Whithorn, Futerna and magnum monasterium*. Stranraer: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 2009.
- Edwards, Nancy. "An Early Group of Crosses from the Kingdom of Ossory", *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 133 (1983), 5-46.
- Ellis, Clare. "Lismore Nave, Lismore Cathedral, Excavation", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 17 (2017), 37-38.
- Ellis, Clare. "Lismore Nave, Lismore Cathedral, Excavation", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 18 (2018), 59.
- Ellis, Clare. "Lismore Glebe, Isle of Lismore, Argyll-461 ©Argyll Archaeology". Data Structure Report: Archaeology of the Glebe Lands, Isle of Lismore, 2019.
- Encyclopædia Britannica. "North Channel". Encyclopædia Britannica, 1998. Accessed 9 Mar 2018. [www.britannica.com/place/North-Channel-strait](http://www.britannica.com/place/North-Channel-strait).
- Eòlas nan Naomh. [uistsaints.co.uk](http://uistsaints.co.uk).
- Etchingham, Colmán. "The Implications of Paruchia", *Ériu* 44 (1993), 139-162.
- Etchingham, Colmán. *Viking Raids on Irish Church Settlements in the Ninth Century: A Reconsideration of the Annals*, vol. 1. Maynooth: Department of Old and Middle Irish, St Patrick's College, 1996.
- Etchingham, Colmán. *Church Organisation in Ireland, A.D. 650 to 1000*. Maynooth: Laigin Publications, 1999.
- Etchingham, Colmán. "coarb". In *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, edited by S.J. Connolly. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Accessed 10 May 2020. [www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234837.001.0001/acref-9780199234837-e-363](http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199234837.001.0001/acref-9780199234837-e-363).

Evans, Angela. *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*. London: British Museum Publications, 1986.

Evans, Angela and Valerie Fenwick, "The Graveney boat", *Antiquity* 45 (1971), 89-96.

Evans, Nicholas. *The Present and the Past in Medieval Irish Chronicles*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010.

Evans, Nicholas. "Irish chronicles as sources for the history of northern Britain, A.D. 660-800", *The Innes Review* 69.1 (2018), 1-48.

Ferguson, Christopher. "Re-evaluating Early Medieval Northumbrian Contacts and the 'Coastal Highway'". In *Early Medieval Northumbria: Kingdoms and Communities, AD 450-1100*, edited by David Petts and Sam Turner, 283-302. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011.

Fisher, Ian. "The Govan cross-shafts and early cross-slabs". In *Govan and its Early Medieval Sculpture*, edited by Anna Ritchie, 47-54. Dover: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1994.

Fisher, Ian. *Early Medieval Sculpture in the West Highlands and Islands*. Edinburgh: The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2001.

Flanagan, Deirdre and Laurence Flanagan. *Irish Place Names*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1994.

Fleming, Andrew. "Phenomenology and the megaliths of Wales: A dreaming too far?" *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 18:2 (1999), 119-125.

Fleuriot, Léon and Claude Evans. *A Dictionary of Old Breton: Dictionnaire Du Vieux Breton: Historical and Comparative*. Toronto: Prepcorp, 1985.

Flower, Robin. *The Irish Tradition*. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, Ltd, 1994.

Forbes, Alexander. *Kalendars of Scottish Saints*. Edinburgh: Edmonston & Douglas, 1872.

Forsyth, Katherine and Carlo Tedeschi, "Text-inscribed slates". In *Inchmarnock: An Early Historic Island Monastery and its Archaeological Landscape*, edited by Christopher Love and Daniel Atkinson, 128-150. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008.

Foster, Sally, Siân Jones, and Stuart Jeffrey, "Concrete and non-concrete: an ethnographic study of the contemporary value and authenticity of historic replicas, Ethnographic study", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, 18 (2017), 50-51.

Fraser, Iain. *The Pictish Symbol Stones of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 2008.

Fraser, James. *The Battle of Dunnichen: 685*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2002.

Fraser, James. "Northumbrian Whithorn and the Making of St Ninian", *Innes Review* 53 (2002), 40-59.

Fraser, James. "The Iona Chronicle, the Descendants of Áidán mac Gabráin, and the 'Principal Kindreds of Dál Riata'" *Northern Studies* 38 (2004), 77-96.

Fraser, James. "Strangers on the Clyde: Cenél Comgaill, Clyde Rock and the Bishops of Kingarth", *Innes Review* 56:2 (2005), 102-120.

Fraser, James. *From Caledonia to Pictland: Scotland to 795*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

Fraser, James. "Rochester, Hexham and Cennrígmonaid: The movements of St Andrew in Britain, 604-747". In *Saints' Cults in the Celtic World*, edited by Steve Boardman, John Reuben Davies, and Eila Williamson, 1-17. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009.



- Fraser, James. "The Three Thirds of Cenél Loairn, 678-733". In *Bile ós Chrannaibh: A festschrift for William Gillies*, edited by W. McLeod and William Gillies, 135-166. Brig O' Turk: Clann Tuirc, 2010.
- Fraser, James. "From Ancient Scythia to the Problem of the Picts: Thoughts on The Quest for Pictish Origins". In *Pictish Progress: New Studies on Northern Britain in the Middle Ages*, edited by Stephen Driscoll, Jane Geddes, and Mark Hall, 13-43. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Gammeltoft, Peder. *The place-name element bólstaðr in the North Atlantic Area*. Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Forlag, 2001.
- Gammeltoft, Peder. "Scandinavian Naming-Systems in the Hebrides—A Way of Understanding how the Scandinavians were in Contact with Gaels and Picts?" In *West over Sea: Studies in Scandinavian Sea-Borne Expansion and Settlement Before 1300*, edited by Beverley Ballin-Smith, Simon Taylor, Gareth Williams, 479-495. Leiden: Brill, 2007.
- Geddes, Jane. *Hunting Picts: Medieval Sculpture at St Vigean's, Angus*. Edinburgh: Historic Environment Scotland, 2017.
- Gefreh, Tasha. "Place, Space and Time: Iona's Early Medieval High Crosses in the Natural and Liturgical Landscape". PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2015.
- Gillen, Cornelius. "Geology and Landscape". In *The Argyll Book*, edited by Donald Omand, 1-16. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2004.
- Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record. "Manor House". Accessed 27 Nov 2020.  
[www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/page.php?watprn=GGAT00174g&dbname=ggat&tname=core&sessid=CHI2aylokry&queryid=Q138212001606510012](http://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/page.php?watprn=GGAT00174g&dbname=ggat&tname=core&sessid=CHI2aylokry&queryid=Q138212001606510012)

- Grabowski, Kathryn and David Dumville. *Chronicles and Annals of Medieval Ireland and Wales: The Clonmacnoise-group Texts*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1984.
- Grant, Alexander. "The province of Ross and the Kingdom of Alba". In *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Middle Ages*, edited by EJ Cowan and RA McDonald, 88-126. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, Ltd, 2000.
- Gray, Catriona. "The bishopric of Brechin and Ecclesiastical Organisation in Angus and the Mearns in the Central Middle Ages". PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013.
- Gray, Catriona. "The medieval church of Montrose: a place 'of much antiquity and abundantly populous'", *The Innes Review* 65.1 (2014), 13-32.
- Griffiths, David. *Early Medieval Whithorn: The Irish Sea Context*. Stranraer: Friends of the Whithorn Trust, 2014.
- Grosjean, Paul. "The Alleged Irish Origin of St. Cuthbert". In *The Relics of Saint Cuthbert*, edited by Charles Francis Battiscombe, 144-154. Oxford, 1956.
- Gwynn, Aubrey. "Brian in Armagh (1005)", *Seanchas Ard Mhacha* 9 (1978), 35-51.
- Haldane, A.R.B. *The Drove Roads of Scotland*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1960.
- Harbison, Peter. *The High Crosses of Ireland: An Iconographical and photographic survey*, vols 1-2. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1992.
- Hamlin, Ann and Thomas R. Kerr. *The Archaeology of Early Christianity in the North of Ireland*. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2008.
- Hay, Robert. *Lismore: The Great Garden*. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009.
- Henderson, George and Isabel Henderson. *The Art of the Picts: sculpture and metalwork in early medieval Scotland*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2004.

Henderson, Isabel. *The Picts*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1967.

Henderson, Isabel. "North Pictland". In *The Dark Ages in the Highlands*, edited by Edward Meldrum. Inverness: Inverness Field Club, 1971.

Henderson, Isabel. "Pictish Art and the Book of Kells". In *Ireland and Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, edited by Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick, and David Dumville, 79-105. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Henderson, Isabel. *The Art & Function of Rosemarkie's Pictish Monuments*. Rosemarkie: Groam House Museum, 1990.

Henderson, Isabel. "Fragments of Significance: The Whole Picture". In *Able Minds and Practised Hands: Scotland's Early Medieval Sculpture in the 21st Century*, edited by Sally Foster and Morag Cross, 69-84. Leeds: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2005.

Henry, Françoise. *Irish Art*. London: Methuen, 1965.

Herbert, Máire. *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

Herbert, Máire. "Sea-divided Gaels: constructing relationships between Irish and Scots, c. 800-1169". In *Britain and Ireland, 900-1300: Insular responses to medieval European change*, edited by Brendan Smith, 87-97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Herbert, Máire. "The *Vita Columbae* and Irish Hagiography: A Study of *Vita Cainnechi*". In *Studies in Irish Hagiography: Saints and Scholars*, edited by John Carey, Máire Herbert and Pádraig Ó Riain, 31-40. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001.

Hill, Peter. *Whithorn and St Ninian: The Excavation of a Monastic Town, 1984-91*. Stroud: Sutton, 1997.

- Holliday, John. *Longships on the Sand. Scandinavian and medieval settlement on the island of Tiree: a place-name study*. Scarinish: Iodhlann Press, 2016.
- Hogan, Edmund. *Onomasticon Goedelicum Locorum Et Tribuum Hiberniae Et Scotiae: An Index, with Identifications, to the Gaelic Names of Places and Tribes*. Dublin: Hodges, Figgis & Co, 1910.
- Howlett, David. "Dicuill on the islands of the north", *Peritia* 13 (1999), 127-134.
- Hudson, Benjamin. "The Scottish Chronicle", *Scottish Historical Review* 77 (1998), 129-161.
- Hughes, Kathleen. "The Distribution of Irish Scriptoria and Centres of Learning from 730 to 1111". In *Studies in the Early British Church*, edited by Nora K. Chadwick, Kathleen Hughes, Christopher Brooke, and Kenneth Jackson, 243-272. London: Cambridge University Press, 1958.
- Hughes, Kathleen. *The Church in Early Irish Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966.
- Hughes, Kathleen. *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972.
- Hunter, John. *The Small Isles*. Edinburgh: Historic Environment Scotland, 2016.
- Hurley, Maurice F. "Gateways to southern Ireland: Cork and Waterford in the twelfth century". In *Ireland and Europe in the Twelfth Century: Reform and Renewal*, edited by Damian Bracken and Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, 36-55. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006.
- International Hydrographic Organization. "Limits of Oceans and Seas, 3rd edition". 1953. Accessed 9 Mar 2018, [www.iho.int/iho\\_pubs/standard/S-23/S-23\\_Ed3\\_1953\\_EN.pdf](http://www.iho.int/iho_pubs/standard/S-23/S-23_Ed3_1953_EN.pdf).
- Ireland, Colin. *Old Irish Wisdom Attributed to Aldfrith of Northumbria: An Edition of Briathra Flainn Fhina maic Ossu*. Tempe: Arizona State University, 1999.

- Ireland, Colin. "Where Was King Aldfrith of Northumbria Educated? An Exploration of Seventh-Century Insular Learning", *Traditio* 70 (2015), 29-73. doi.org/10.1353/trd.2015.0010.
- Ireland, Colin. "What Constitutes the Learning of a Sapiens? The Case of Cenn Fáelad", *Peritia* 27 (2016), 63-78.
- Jennings, Andrew. "Iona and the Vikings: Survival and Continuity". *Northern Studies* 33 (1998), 37-54.
- Jennings, Andrew and Arne Kruse. "One Coast - Three Peoples: Names and Ethnicity in the Scottish West during the Early Viking Period". In *Scandinavian Scotland - Twenty Years After*, edited by Alex Woolf, 75-102. St Andrews: The Committee for Dark Age Studies, University of St. Andrews, 2009.
- Johnston, Anne. "Norse settlement in the Inner Hebrides ca. 800-1300; with special reference to the islands of Mull, Coll and Tiree". PhD thesis, University of St Andrews, 1991.
- Johnston, Anne. "Norse Settlement patterns in Coll and Tiree". In *Scandinavian Settlement in Northern Britain*, edited by Barbara E. Crawford, 108-126. London: Leicester University Press, 1995.
- Johnston, Elva. *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2013.
- Jones, Bedwyr Lewis. "Why Bangor?", *Ainm* 5 (1991-1993), 59-65.
- Joze, E.M. *An Archaeological Survey of County Down*. Belfast, 1966.
- Joyce, P.W. *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*. Dublin: McGlashan & Gill, 1869.
- Kelly, Fergus. *A Guide to Early Irish Law*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1988.

- Kenney, James F, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical: An Introduction and Guide*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1929.
- Kruse, Arne. "Norse Topographical Settlement-Names on the Western Littoral of Scotland". In *Scandinavia and Europe 800-1350: Contact, Conflict, and Coexistence*, edited by Jonathan Adams and Katherine Holman, 99-109. Turnhout: Brepols, 2004.
- Kruse, Arne. "Explorers, Raiders and Settlers. The Norse Impact upon Hebridean Place-Names". In *Cultural Contacts in the North Atlantic Region: The Evidence of names*, edited by Peder Gammeltoft, Carole Hough, and Doreen Waugh, 155-172. Lerwick: NORNA, 2005.
- Lacey, Brian. "Fahan, Tory, Cenél nÉogain, and the Picts", *Peritia* 20 (2008), 339-342.
- Lapidge, Michael. "Columbanus and the 'Antiphony of Bangor'", *Peritia* 4 (1985), 104-116. doi.org/10.1484/J.Peri.3.99.
- Lamb, Raymond. "Carolingian Orkney and its Transformation". In *The Viking Age in Caithness, Orkney and the North Atlantic*, edited by Christopher Morris, Colleen Batey, and Judith Jesch, 260-272. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993.
- Lane, Alan and Ewan Campbell. *Dunadd: An Early Dalriadic Capital*. Oxford: Oxbow, 2000.
- Lathe, Richard and David Smith. "Holocene relative sea-level changes in western Scotland: the early insular situation of Dun Add (Kintyre) and Dumbarton Rock (Strathclyde)", *The Heroic Age* 16 (2015), 1-12.
- Lawlor, H.C. "Bangor Town, Abbey Church". In *A Preliminary Survey of the Ancient Monuments of Northern Ireland*, edited by D.A. Chart, 82-83. Belfast: H.M.S.O., 1940.

- Lelong, Olivia. "Kirkapol Old Parish Church, Tiree, Argyll and Bute (Tiree parish), medieval ecclesiastical site; burials", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 2 (2001), 24.
- Lowe, Christopher (ed). *Inchmarnock: An Early Historic Island Monastery and its Archaeological Landscape*. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008.
- Lucas, A.T. "The Plundering and Burning of Churches in Ireland, 7th to 16th Century". In *North Munster Studies*, edited by Etienne Rynne, 172-229. Limerick: The Thomond Archaeological Society, 1967.
- Mac Cana, Proinseas. "Mongan mac Fiachnai and Immram Brain", *Ériu* 23 (1972), 102-142.
- MacDonald, Aidan. "Two Major Early Monasteries of Scottish Dalriata: Lismore and Eigg", *Scottish Archaeological Forum* 5 (1973), 47-70.
- MacDonald, Aidan. "'Annat' in Scotland: A Provisional Review", *Journal of Scottish Studies* 17 (1973), 135-46.
- MacDonald, Aidan. "Gaelic Cill (Kil(l)-) in Scottish Place-Names", *Bulletin of the Ulster Place-Name Society, Series 2.2* (1979), 9-19.
- MacDonald, Aidan. "Iona's style of government: the toponomastic evidence", *Peritia* 4 (1985), 174-186.
- MacDonald, Aidan. "Caiseal, Cathair, Dùn, Lios and Ràth in Scotland: 3", *Ainm* 2 (1987), 37-54.
- MacDonald, Aidan. *Curadán, Boniface and the early church of Rosemarkie*. Rosemarkie: Groam House Museum, 1992.
- MacDonald, Aidan. "Adomnán's *Vita Columbae* and the early churches of Tiree". In *Adomnán of Iona: Theologian, lawmaker, peacemaker*, edited by Jonathan M. Wooding, Rodney Aist, Thomas Owen Clancy, and Thomas O'Loughlin, 219-236. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010.

- Macdonald, Donald F. (ed). *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae: The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation, Revision*. vol 4. Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1915.
- MacDonald, Iain G. *Clerics and Clansmen: The Diocese of Argyll between the Twelfth and Sixteenth Centuries*. Boston: Brill, 2013.
- MacDonald, Janet. "Iona's local associations in Argyll and the Isles, c1203-c1575". PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2010.
- Mac Iomhair, Diarmuid. "The History of Fir Rois", *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society* 15 (1964), 321-348.
- Mack, Alastair. *Field guide to the Pictish symbol stones*. Balgavies: Pinkfoot Press, 1997.
- Mack, Alastair. *Symbols and Pictures: The Pictish Legacy in Stone*. Brechin: Pinkfoot Press, 2007.
- Mackley, J.S. *The Legend of St Brendan: A Comparative Study of the Latin and Anglo-Norman Versions*. Boston: Brill, 2008.
- Mackinlay, James. *Ancient Church Dedications in Scotland*. Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1914.
- MacLean, Douglas. "Maelrubai, Applecross and the Late Pictish Contribution West of Druimalban". In *The Worm, the Germ, and the Thorn: Pictish and related studies presented to Isabel Henderson*, edited by David Henry, 173-187. Balgavies, Forfar, Angus: The Pinkfoot Press, 1997.
- MacLennan, Iain. *Applecross and its Hinterland: A Historical Miscellany*. Glasgow: A'Chomraich Publishing, 2013.
- MacNeill, Eóin. "The Hymn of St. Secundinus in Honour of St. Patrick", *Irish Historical Studies* 2, no. 6 (1940), 129-53.  
[www.jstor.org/stable/30006100](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30006100).



Mac Niocaill, Gearóid. *The Medieval Irish Annals*, vol. 3. Dublin: Dublin Historical Association, 1975.

Macniven, Alan. "The Norse in Islay: A settlement Historical Case-Study for Medieval Scandinavian Activity in Western Maritime Scotland". PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2006.

Macniven, Alan. *The Vikings in Islay: The Place of Names in Hebridean Settlement History*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2015.

Macrow, Brenda. *Torridon Highlands*. London: Hale, 1969.

Mac Shamhráin, Ailbhe. "Diarmait". Royal Irish Academy. Accessed 4 June 2018. [dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2564](http://dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a2564).

Mac Shamhráin, Ailbhe. "Fiachnae". Royal Irish Academy. Accessed 4 June 2018. [dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3070](http://dib.cambridge.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a3070).

Mac Shamhráin, Ailbhe. "Malachy (Máel-M'áedóc) Ua Morgair". Royal Irish Academy. Accessed 26 Oct 2020. [dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5406](http://dib.cambridge.org/viewReadPage.do?articleId=a5406).

Macquarrie, Alan. *The Saints of Scotland: Essays in Scottish Church History, AD 450-1093*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997.

Macquarrie, Alan. "The Offices for St Columba (9 June) and St Adomnan (23 September) in the Aberdeen Breviary", *Innes Review* 51:1 (2000), 1-39.

Mallory, J.P. and Tom E. McNeill. *The Archaeology of Ulster from Colonization to Plantation*. Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1991.

Márkus, Gilbert. "Iona: monks, pastors and missionaries". In *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots: Saint Columba, Iona and Scotland*, edited by Dauvit Broun and Thomas Owen Clancy, 115-138. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.

Márkus, Gilbert. *Power and Protection: The 'Torbhlaire Bell', its Shrine and the Relic Tradition*. Glasgow: Kilmartin House Museum, 2009.

Márkus, Gilbert. *The Place-Names of Bute*. Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2012.

Márkus, Gilbert. *Brilliant Flame: St Munnu in medieval literature and his church at Kilmun in Cowal*. Kilmartin, Argyll: Kilmartin Museum Trust, 2015.

Márkus, Gilbert. *Conceiving a Nation: Scotland to AD 900*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017.

Márkus, Gilbert. "The Life of St Cainnech of Aghaboe". Accessed 14 March 2019. [uistsaints.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-and-notes.pdf](http://uistsaints.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Vita-Sancti-Cainnechi-with-GM-translation-and-notes.pdf)

Matthew, N.G. *The Drove Roads of Scotland*. [Map] Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1960.

McCarthy, Daniel P. *The Irish Annals: Their Genesis, Evolution and History*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2008.

McDonald, R. Andrew. "Old and new in the far North: Ferchar Maccintsacairt and the early earls of Ross, c. 1200-1274". In *The exercise of power in medieval Scotland, c. 1200-1500*, edited by Steve Boardman and Alasdair Ross, 23-45. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003.

McErlean, Thomas, Rosemary McConkey, and Wes Forsythe. *Strangford Lough, an Archaeological Survey of Maritime Cultural Landscape*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 2002.

McGrail, Sean. "Cross-Channel Seamanship and Navigation in the Late First Millennium BC", *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 2:3 (November 1, 1983), 299-337. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0092.1983.tb00345.x.

McHugh, Ronan. "Excavations at Malachy's Wall, Bangor Abbey, County Down", *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 63 (2004), 65-75. [www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/stable/20568338](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/stable/20568338).

- McKay, Patrick. *A Dictionary of Ulster Place-Names*. 2nd ed. Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 2007.
- McKean, Charles. "Timothy Pont's Building Drawings". In *The Nation Survey'd: Essays on Late Sixteenth-Century Scotland as Depicted by Timothy Pont*, edited by Ian Cunningham, 111-124. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2001.
- Meckler, Michael. "Carnal love and priestly ordination on sixth-century Tiree", *Innes Review* 51:2 (2000), 95-108.
- Michelli, Perette. "Four Scottish croziers and their relation to the Irish tradition". *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 116 (1986), 375-392.
- Miller, James. *The Finest Road in the World: The Story of Travel and Transport in the Scottish Highlands*. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2017.
- Mitchell, Sir Arthur. *Geographical Collections Relating to Scotland made by Walter Macfarlane*, vol. 1. Edinburgh: Printed by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society, 1907.
- Moore, Sam. *The Archaeology of Slieve Donard, Co Down: A Cultural Biography of Ulster's Highest Mountain*. Downpatrick: Down County Museum, 2012.
- Moss, Madonna L. "Islands Coming Out of Concealment: Traveling to Haida Gwaii on the Northwest Coast of North America", *The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 3:1 (2008), 35-53.
- Muir, T.S. *Ecclesiological notes on some of the islands of Scotland*. Edinburgh, 1885.
- Murray, Griffin. "Insular croziers: an independent tradition?" In *Islands in a Global Context: Proceedings of the seventh international conference on Insular art, held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, 16-20 July 2014*, edited by Conor Newman, Mags Mannion, and Fiona Gavin, 167-177. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017.

Murray, Kevin. "The Role of the *Cuilebad* in *Immram Snédgusa 7 Maic Riagla*". In *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature*, edited by Jonathan M. Wooding, 187-193. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000.

Nagy, Joseph Falaky. "Writing from the 'Other Shore' and the Beginnings of Vernacular Literature in Ireland". In *A Companion to British Literature: Volume 1: Medieval Literature 700-1450*, edited by Robert DeMaria, Jr, Heesok Change, and Samantha Zacher, 323-336. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2014.

National Museum of Scotland. [www.nms.ac.uk](http://www.nms.ac.uk).

Nicolaisen, W.F.H. *Scottish Place-Names: Their Study and Significance*. London: Batsford, 1976.

Ní Dhonnchadha, Máirín. "The guarantor list of Cáin Adomnáin, 697", *Peritia* 1 (1982), 178-215.

Nolan, M.J. "Bell of Bangor Abbey", *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 3, no. 2 (1933), 243.

North Down Museum. "Museum Treasures". Accessed 5 Dec 2019.  
[www.northdownmuseum.com/Collections/Museum-Treasures](http://www.northdownmuseum.com/Collections/Museum-Treasures).

Northern Ireland, Ministry of Finance. *An Archaeological Survey of County Down*. Vol. 1. Belfast: H.M.S.O, 1966.

The Northern Ireland Place-Name Project. [www.placenamesni.org](http://www.placenamesni.org).

Ó Baoill, Colm. "Inis Moccu Chéin", *Scottish Gaelic Studies* 12.1 (1976), 267-270.

O'Brien, Michael and John Kelleher. *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2001.

Ó Corráin, Donnchadh. "Creating the Past: The Early Irish Genealogical Tradition", *Peritia* 12 (1998), 177-208.

Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí. “Mo-Sinnu moccu Min and the computus of Bangor”, *Peritia*, 1 (1982), 281-295.

Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí. *A New History of Ireland, volume 1: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí. *Early Medieval Ireland 400 - 1200*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2017.

Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí. “The Political Background to Columbanus's Irish Career”. In *Columbanus and the Peoples of Post-Roman Europe*, edited by Alexander O'Hara, 92-118. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Olden, T. “On the Consortia of the First Order of Irish Saints”, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 3 (1893-1896), 415-420.

O'Loughlin, Thomas. “Living in the Ocean”. In *Studies in the Cult of St Columba*, edited by Cormac Bourke, 11-23. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997.

O'Neill, Pamela. “Reading cross-marked stones in Scottish Dalriada”, *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 2 (2006), 193-206.

O'Neill, Pamela. “When Onomastics met Archaeology: A Tale of Two Hinbas”, *Scottish Historical Review* 87 (2008), 26-41.

O'Neill, Pamela. “Old Irish *muirchrech* ‘sea-boundary’”, *Éiru* 67 (2017), 1-10.

O'Rahilly, Thomas Francis. *Irish dialects past and present with chapters on Scottish and Manx*. Dublin: Brown & Nolan, 1932.

O'Rahilly, Thomas Francis. *Early Irish History and Mythology*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1946.

Oram, Richard. *The Lordship of Galloway*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2000.

Oram, Richard. “The Lordship of the Isles”. In *The Argyll Book*, edited by Donald Omand, 123-139. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2004.

- Oram, Richard and Rachel Butter. "Historical Framework". In *Inchmarnock: An Early Historic Island Monastery and its Archaeological Landscape*, edited by Christopher Lowe, 35-56. Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2008.
- Orchard, Trevor Jonathan. "Otters and Urchins: Continuity and Change in Haida Economy during the Late Holocene and maritime Fur Trade periods". PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2007.
- Ordnance Survey, First Edition [Map]. sheet LXXII. 6in = 1mi. Southampton: Ordnance Survey, 1875.
- Ordnance Survey, First Edition. Argyllshire Sheet LXIV (includes: Tiree) [Map], 6in = 1mi. 1882. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 16 May 2019. [maps.nls.uk/view/74427351](http://maps.nls.uk/view/74427351).
- Ó Riain, Pádraig, "Boundary association in early Irish society", *Studia Celtica* 7 (1972), 12-29.
- Ó Riain, Pádraig, "The Materials and Provenance of 'Buile Shuibne'", *Éigse* 15.3 (1974), 173-188.
- Ó Riain, Pádraig. *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1985.
- Ó Riain, Pádraig. "The Tallaght Martyrologies, Redated", *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 20 (1990), 21-38.
- Ó Riain, Pádraig. "The Martyrology of Óengus: The Transmission of the Text", *Studia Hibernica* 31 (2000/2001), 221-242.
- Ó Riain, Pádraig. *Feastdays of the Saints: A History of Irish Martyrologies*. Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 2006.
- Ó Riain, Pádraig. *A Dictionary of Irish Saints*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011.

Ó Riain, Pádraig, Diarmuid Ó Murchadha, and Kevin Murray. *Historical Dictionary of Gaelic Placenames*, vol. 2. London: Irish Texts Society, 2003.

O'Sullivan, J. "Lismore Parish Church (Lismore & Appin parish): Churchyard assessment", *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* (1994), 57-58.

Ovenden, Sue. "Kilkenneth Chapel, Tiree, Argyll and Bute (Tiree parish), geophysical survey", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 8 (2007), 58.

The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. [www.oxforddnb.com/](http://www.oxforddnb.com/)

Palmer, Alfred Neobard and Edward Owen. *A History of Ancient Tenures of Land in North Wales and the Marches*, second ed. History of Economic Thought Books, 1910.

Pálsson, Hermann and Paul Geoffrey Edwards. *The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press, 2012.

Paul, James. "Saints' names in relation to Scottish fairs", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 52 (1917), 159-170.

Pettiau, Hérold. "The Abbot and the Monastic Community in the Gaelic Churches, 550 to 800". In *The Brendan Legend: Texts and Versions*, edited by Glyn Burgess and Clara Strijbosch, 241-263, Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Picard, J.M. "*Princeps* and *Principatus* in the Early Irish Church: a reassessment". In *Seanchas: Studies in Early and Medieval Irish Archaeology, History, and Literature in Honour of Francis J. Byrne*, edited by Alfred P. Smyth, 146-160. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000.

Placenames Database of Ireland. [www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie).

Rainbird, Paul. *The Archaeology of Islands*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

- RCAHMS. *Ninth report with inventory of monuments and constructions in the Outer Hebrides, Skye and the Small Isles*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1928.
- RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the ancient monuments volume 1: Kintyre*. Glasgow: Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd, 1971.
- RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the ancient monuments volume 2: Lorn*. Edinburgh: HMSO, 1975.
- RCAHMS. *The archaeological sites and monuments of Easter Ross, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region, The archaeological sites and monuments of Scotland series no 6*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1979.
- RCAHMS. *The archaeological sites and monuments of the Black Isle, Ross and Cromarty District, Highland Region, The archaeological sites and monuments of Scotland series no 9*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1979.
- RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 3: Mull, Tiree, Coll & Northern Argyll (excluding the Early Medieval & later monuments of Iona)*. Edinburgh: HMSO, 1980.
- RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 5: Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Oronsay*. Edinburgh: HMSO, 1984a.
- RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 6: Mid-Argyll and Cowal, prehistoric and early historic monuments*. Edinburgh: HMSO, 1988.
- RCAHMS. *Argyll: an inventory of the monuments volume 7: Mid-Argyll and Cowal, medieval and later monuments*. Glasgow: Bell and Bain Ltd, 1992.
- RCAHMS. *Pictish symbol stones: a handlist*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS, 1994.
- Reeves, William. "The Antiphonary of Bangor", *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, First Series 1 (1853), 168-179.



- Reeves, William. "The Island of Tiree", *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 2 (1854), 233-244.
- Reeves, William. "Saint Maelrubha: his History and Churches", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 3 (1857), 258-296.
- Rhys, Guto. "Approaching the Pictish Language: Historiography, Early Evidence and the Question of Pritenic". PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2015.
- Richards, Captain G. H. Scotland - west coast - sheet 3 - Mull of Kintyre to Ardnamurchan [Map]. 1868. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 7 Oct 2020. [maps.nls.uk/view/101956223](https://maps.nls.uk/view/101956223).
- Ritchie, Anna. *Viking Scotland*. London: B T Batsford Ltd, 1993.
- Ritchie, Anna. *Iona*. London: B T Batsford Ltd, 1997.
- Rivet, A.L.F. and Colin Smith. *The Place Names of Roman Britain*. London: Batsford, 1979.
- Rixson, Denis. "Too Many *Papar* - Not Enough *Munkar*", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 5 (2011), 153-168.
- Robinson, Gary, "A Sea of Small Boats: places and practices on the prehistoric seascape of western Britain", *Internet Archaeology* 34 (2013). [doi.org/10.11141/ia.34.2](https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.34.2).
- Roseman, Christina Horst. *Pytheas of Massalia: On the Ocean. Text, Translation and Commentary*. Chicago: Ares, 1994.
- Roy, William. Military Survey of Scotland [Map]. 1747-1755. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 26 Sep 2020. [maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html](https://maps.nls.uk/roy/index.html).
- Scottish Record Office Register House Plan 8180. "Plan of Lismore Estate" [Map]. Unpublished, 1798.

- Simpson, W. Douglas. *The Celtic Church in Scotland: A Study of its Penetration Lines and Art Relationships*. Aberdeen: University Press, 1935.
- Sinclair, Sir John. *The Statistical Account of Scotland: Drawn up from the Communications of the Ministers of the Different Parishes*, vol. x. Edinburgh: William Creech, 1794.
- St. Clair, Archer. "A New Moses: Typological Iconography in the Moutier-Grandval Bible Illustrations of Exodus", *Gesta* 26.1 (1987), 19-28.
- Sanderlin, Sarah. "The Date and Provenance of the 'Litany of Irish Saints-II' (The Irish Litany of Pilgrim Saints)", *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, vol. 75 (1975), 251-262.
- Sharpe, Richard. *Raasay: A study in island history*. London: Grant & Cutler Ltd, 1977.
- Sharpe, Richard. "Were the Irish Annals Known to a Twelfth-Century Northumbrian Writer?", *Peritia* 2 (1983), 137-139.
- Sharpe, Richard. "Some problems concerning the organization of the church in early medieval Ireland", *Peritia* 3 (1984), 230-270.
- Sharpe, Richard. *Medieval Irish Saints' Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991.
- Smyth, Alfred P. *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland AD 80 - 1000*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984.
- Somerville, Robert. *Scotia Pontificia: Papal Letters to Scotland before the Pontificate of Innocent III*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.
- Stahl, Anke-Beate. "Place-names of Barra in the Outer Hebrides". PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1999.
- Stancliffe, Clare. "The Thirteen Sermons Attributed to Columbanus and the Question of their Authorship". In *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin*

*Writings*, edited by Michael Lapidge, 93-202. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997.

Stancliffe, Clare. "Columbanus's Monasticism and the Sources of his Inspiration". In *Tome: Studies in Medieval Celtic History and Law in Honour of Thomas Charles-Edwards*, edited by Fiona Edmonds and Paul Russell, 17-28. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011.

Stevenson, J. "Bangor and the *Hesperica Famina*", *Peritia* 6-7 (1987-88), 202-216.

Stevenson, Robert. "Brooches and Pins: Some Seventh- to Ninth-Century Problems". In *Ireland and Insular Art: AD 500-1200*, edited by Michael Ryan, 90-95. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1987.

Stifter, David. "Ulster Connections of *Cín Dromma Snechtai*". In *Ulidia 4: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, edited by Mícheál B. Ó Mainnín and Gregory Toner, 23-37. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2017.

Strijbosch, Clara. "Searching for a versatile saint: Introduction". In *The Brendan Legend: Texts and Versions*, edited by Glyn Burgess and Clara Strijbosch, 1-9. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Taylor, Simon. "Place-names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland". In *Scotland in Dark Age Britain*, edited by Barbara E. Crawford, 93-110. St Andrews: St John's House, 1996.

Taylor, Simon. "Seventh-century Iona abbots in Scottish place-names", *Innes Review* 48:1 (1997), 45-72.

Taylor, Simon. "Place-names and the early church in Scotland", *Scottish Church History Society* 28 (1998), 1-22.

Taylor, Simon and Gilbert Márkus, *The Place-Names of Fife*, vols. 1, 5. Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006.

Taylor, Simon, Peter McNiven, and Eila Williamson, *Place-Names of Clackmannanshire* (forthcoming).

Thickpenny, Cynthia. "Abstract Pattern on Stone Fragments from Applecross: The Master Carver of Northern Pictland?", *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 148 (2018), 147-176.

Thickpenny, Cynthia, "Making Key-Pattern in Insular Art: AD 600 to 1100". PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2019.

Thomas, Charles. *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*. Glasgow: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Thomas, Sarah. "Beyond the Parish Church: A Study of Chapels in the Parishes of Kirkapoll on Tiree and Snizort on Skye", *Journal of the North Atlantic* 2015 (901), 67-82.

Thomson, John. Part of Inverness Shire: Skye Island &c [Map]. 1 = 5 mi. *Atlas of Scotland*. Edinburgh: John Thomson & Co, 1824. Electronic copy at National Library of Scotland. Accessed 22 Jan 2020. [maps.nls.uk/view/74400149](https://maps.nls.uk/view/74400149).

Thrall, William Flint. "Clerical Sea Pilgrimages and the Imrama". In *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature: An Anthology of Criticism*, edited by Jonathan M. Wooding, 15-21. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000.

Tilley, Christopher. *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments*. Explorations in Anthropology. Oxford: Berg, 1994.

Tiree Parish Church. Our History. Accessed 10 Aug 2019. [tireeparishchurch.com/about-us/our-history](http://tireeparishchurch.com/about-us/our-history).

Tiree Place Names. [www.tireeplacenames.org](http://www.tireeplacenames.org).

Toner, Gregory. "Settlement and Settlement Terms in Medieval Ireland: *ráth* and *lios*", *Ainm* 8 (1998-2000), 1-40.

Trench-Jellicoe, Ross. "Manx Sculptured Monuments and the Early Viking Age".  
In *Mannin Revisited: Twelve Essays on Manx Culture and Environment*,  
edited by Peter Davey, David Finlayson, and Philippa Tomlinson, 11-36.  
Edinburgh: Scottish Society for Northern Studies, 2002.

Vallancey, Charles. *An Essay on the Antiquity of the Irish Language*. London:  
Richard Ryan, 1772.

Veitch, Kenneth. "The Alliance between Church and State in Early Medieval  
Alba", *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30:2  
(1998), 193-220.

Vries, Ranke de. "The Names of Lí Bán". In *Myth in Celtic Literatures: CSANA  
Yearbook 6*, edited by Joseph Falaky Nagy, 39-54. Dublin: Four Courts  
Press, 2007.

Vries, Ranke de. *Two Texts on Loch nEchach: De Causis Torchi Corc' Óche and  
Aided Echach Maic Maireda*. London: Irish Texts Society, 2012.

Waddell, John. "The Irish Sea in Prehistory", *Journal of Irish Archaeology* 6  
(1991/92), 29-40.

Wadden, Patrick. "Dál Riata c. 1000: Genealogies and Irish Sea Politics", *The  
Scottish Historical Review* 95:2 (2016), 164-181.

Wade-Evans, Arthur W. *Welsh Medieval Law: Being a Text of the Laws of Howel  
the Good, Namely the British Museum Harleian Manuscript 4353 of the  
13th Century: With Translation, Introduction, Appendix, Glossary, Index  
and a Map*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909.

Walsh, Maura and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (eds). Saint Cummian. *Cummian's Letter De  
Controversia Paschali: Together with a Related Irish Computical Tract De  
Ratione Computandi*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies,  
1988.

- Walsh, Rev. Paul. *Genealogiae Regum et Sanctorum Hiberniae*. Maynooth: Gill & Son, 1918.
- Warhurst, Cynthia, Deirdre Flanagan, and J.R. Pilcher. "Excavations at Rathbeg, Co. Antrim", *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, Third Series, 32 (1969), 93-100. [www.jstor.org/stable/20567643](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20567643).
- Watson, William J. *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty*. Inverness: Northern Counties Printing & Publishing Co, 1904.
- Watson, William J. *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1926.
- Watson, William J. *Scottish Place-Name Papers*. Edinburgh: Steve Savage, 2002.
- White, Nora. *Compert Mongáin and Three Other Early Mongán Tales: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Textual Notes, Bibliography and Vocabulary*. Maynooth: The Leinster Leader, NAAS, 2006.
- Whyte, Alasdair. "Settlement-names and society: analysis of the medieval districts of Forsa and Moloros in the parish of Torosay, Mull". PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2017.
- Widell, Beatrice. "The Monastic Lifeworld: Memories and Narratives of Landscapes of Early Medieval Monasticism in Argyll, Scotland", *Landscapes* 18:1 (2017), 4-18.
- Williamson, Eila. "'Hence the Name:' Berwickshire Parishes Along the Anglo-Scottish Border as Described in the Ordnance Survey name Books", *Journal of Scottish Name Studies* 9 (2015), 83-96.
- Wood, John. "Applecross Mains, highland (Applecross parish), community archaeology project, excavation", *New Discovery and Excavation in Scotland* 7 (2006), 85.

- Wood, John. "Londubh Burial Ground, Poolewe". Watching Brief. Highland Archaeology Services Ltd, 2006. Accessed 4 Jun 2020.  
librarylink.highland.gov.uk/LLFiles/9998/full\_9998.pdf.
- Wood, J. S., and J. Macdonald. "Skye, Raasay, St Maol-luag's Chapel". CANMORE. Accessed 8 Oct 2018. canmore.org.uk/event/928448.
- Wooding, Jonathan M. *Communication and Commerce along the Western Sealanes AD 400-800*. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996.
- Woolf, Alex. "The Moray Question", *The Scottish Historical Review* 79 (2000), 145-164.
- Woolf, Alex. "Amlaíb Cuarán and the Gael, 941-81". In *Medieval Dublin III*, edited by Seán Duffy, 34-43. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002.
- Woolf, Alex. "The Diocese of the Sudreyar". In *Ecclesia Nidrosiensis 1153-1537*, edited by Steinar Imsen, 171-181. Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk Forlag, 2003.
- Woolf, Alex. "The Age of Sea-Kings: 900-1300". In *The Argyll Book*, edited by Donald Omand, 94-109. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2004.
- Woolf, Alex. "Dún Nechtain, Fortriu and the Geography of the Picts", *Scottish Historical Review* 85:2 (2006), 182-201.
- Woolf, Alex. "The Cult of Moluag, the See of Mortlach and Church Organisation in Northern Scotland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries". In *Fil Suil nGlais - A Grey Eye Looks Back: A Festschrift for Colm O' Baoill*, edited by Sharon Arbuthnot and Kaarina Hollo, 311-322. Ceann Drochaid: Clann Tuirc, 2007.
- Woolf, Alex. *From Pictland to Alba, 789 to 1070*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.
- Woolf, Alex. "The Song of the Death of Somerled". *Journal of the Sydney Society for Scottish History* 14 (2013), 1-11.

Woolf, Alex, "Ancient Kindred? Dál Riata and the Cruthin", Unpublished paper available at [st-andrews.academia.edu/AlexWoolf](http://st-andrews.academia.edu/AlexWoolf). Accessed 5 Dec 2016.

Woolf, Alex. "Columbanus's Ulster Education". In *Columbanus and the Peoples of Post Roman Europe*, edited by Alexander O'Hara, 91-99. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Zimmer, Heinrich. *The Irish Element in Mediaeval Culture*. London: GP Putnam's Sons, 1891.