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PhD thesis

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***Cill-* names and Saints in Argyll:
a way towards understanding the early church in Dál Riata?**

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Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
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Abstract

Place-names containing Gaelic *cill* are common throughout the Gaelic-speaking world. In the area of Argyll chosen by the present study, the second element of such names (*cill* + X) is nearly always the name of a saint. This thesis sets out to discover what these *cill*- names and their associated dedications to saints might contribute to the study of the early church in Dál Riata.

It tests the evidence in a variety of ways. Detailed studies are made of three saints who seem to be culted in or near the chosen three areas of study. These three areas are then studied in detail, each area presenting its own characteristics and questions: Kintyre, an area with an impressive density of *cill*- names; Kilmartin and Loch Awe, an area in the heart of Dál Riata, but perhaps at a border between two different *cenéla*, with Dunadd at its core; Bute, an area whose relationship with the various groups within Dál Riata and with the neighbouring Britons is interesting and uncertain.

The data lying behind these studies is presented in a gazetteer of *cill*- sites and a table of saints. The former provides easy access to early forms of place-names, to archaeological data, history, analysis of the place-names and associated traditions. The latter was envisaged as a means of clarifying this difficult material. The many challenges which its construction revealed, however, became a major focus of enquiry: questions regarding where one saint stops and another begins, of layering the conflicting kinds of information into intelligible format, of being able to give any coherence to the development of the various cults over time.

It is concluded that this kind of evidence must be treated with caution. It is capable of diametrically opposed interpretations and there are so many variables that almost any story can be intelligibly told. Its usefulness in our interrogation of the history of the church in Dál Riata was limited, though a very rigorous use of hagiographical material, in particular martyrologies, produced a number of insights.

CONTENTS

VOLUME I

Abbreviations and Navigation Notes	i-vii
---	-------

Chapter One: Introduction, Aims, Setting the Scene, Methodology and Sources

1.1	Introduction: what does the study set out to do?	1
1.2	<i>Cill-</i> in Scotland and Ireland	6
1.3	Dedications in Scotland and Ireland	13
1.4	Methodology	23
1.5	Sources	26

Chapter Two: Three Saints

2.1	Introduction	44
2.2	Fintán Munnu	46
2.3	Colmán Ela	75
2.4	Berach	100

Chapter Three: Three Landscapes

3.1	Introduction	117
3.2	South Kintyre	121
3.3	Kilmartin	154
3.4	Bute	185

Chapter Four: Conclusion

4.1	Introduction	214
4.2	The usefulness of <i>cill-</i> names	214
4.3	What do the saints tell us?	216
4.4	Suggestions for further study	219
4.5	The more you know	219

VOLUME II

Chapter Five: Gazetteer

5.1	Introduction	220
5.2	The format of entries	220
5.3	The sources for historical forms	224
5.4	List of medieval and modern parishes	227
5.5	List of sites	228
4.6	The Gazetteer	
	4.6.1 South Kintyre	230
	4.6.2 Kilmartin and Loch Awe	254
	4.6.3 Bute	276

Chapter Six: Table of Saints

6.1	Introduction	285
6.2	The choice and treatment of saints	285
6.3	Format	288
6.4	Sources	291
6.5	Abbreviations	292
6.6	List of contents	292
6.7	Table of Saints	297

Bibliography	369
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Maps

Argyll showing principal areas discussed in the text	120
The <i>cill</i> - names of South Kintyre	122
Dunadd and surrounding <i>cill</i> - names	166
The southern tip of Bute	188

Abbreviations

- Ab. Brev.* *Breviarum Aberdonense*, 2 vols. (Bannatyne, Maitland and Spalding Clubs, 1854)
- ACC* List of the Monuments of Argyll, Argyll County Council, 1915
- APS* *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland* edd. T. Thomson, and C. Innes 1814-75
- Acta Sanctorum Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur* (Antwerp, Tongerlo, Paris, Brussels, 1643-)
- Adam King* Calendar of Adam King, in Forbes 1872, 141-171
- AFM* *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters* ed. K. Nicholls (Dublin, 1990) (Also at www.ucc.ie/celt)
- Ainm* *Ainm: Bulletin of the Ulster Place-name Society* (Belfast 1986-) (Continuation of *BUPNS*)
- An. Boll.* *Analecta Bollandiana* (Brussels, Paris, Geneva 1882-)
- Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts* edd. O. Bergin, R. Best, K. Meyer, J. O'Keefe (Dublin, 1907-13) (5 parts)
- Annales Cambriae Annales Cambriae and Old Welsh Genealogies from Harleian MS 3859* ed. E. Phillimore 1888 in *Y Cymmrodor* ix, 141-83
- Antiquity* *Antiquity* (Gloucester 1927-)
- Arbuthnott* 'Kalendarium de Arbuthnott' in Forbes 1872, 95-108
- Arg 1* *Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: vol. 1 Kintyre* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh 1971)
- Arg 2* *Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: vol. 2 Lorn* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh 1975)
- Arg 3* *Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: vol. 3 Mull, Tiree, Coll and Northern Argyll* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh 1980)
- Arg 4* *Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: vol. 4 Iona* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh 1982)
- Arg 5* *Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: vol. 5 Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Oronsay* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh 1984)
- Arg 6* *Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: vol. 6 Mid Argyll and Cowal: Prehistoric and Early Historic monuments* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh 1988)
- Arg 7* *Argyll: an Inventory of the Monuments: vol. 7 Mid Argyll and Cowal Medieval and Later Monuments* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh 1992)
- Argyle Charters* Argyle Charters (Unpublished source quoted in *OPS*)
- Argyle Inventory* Argyle Inventory (Unpublished source quoted in *OPS*)
- Argyll Sasines* *Abstracts of the Particular and General Registers of Sasines for Argyll, Bute and Dunbarton, otherwise known as Argyll Sasines*, ed. H. Campbell (Edinburgh 1933-4)
- Argyll Transcripts* *Argyll Transcripts* (Transcriptions of various charters relating to Clan Campbell and their lands, made by Niall, 10th Duke of Argyll, 6 vols. Photocopy in Glasgow University, Dept. of History.)
- AT* *The Annals of Tigernach*, ed. Stokes, 1895-97 (reprinted from *Revue Celtique* by Llanerch, Felinfach 1993)
- AU* *The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131)*, edd. S. Mac Airt & G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin, 1983)
- B** Book of Ballymote (RIA 23 p 12). Used in Ó Riain 1985 for its version of *CGSH*.
- Black* Black 1946 (abbreviation used only in the table of saints)

- Blaeu Atlas Novus vol 5*, Blaeu, J (Amsterdam, 1654)
- Book of Clanranald* The Book of Clanranald in Cameron 1894, 138-309
- Brussels MS** Brussels, BR 5100-5104, ff.209-224. (This contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905)
- BUPNS Bulletin of Ulster Place-name Society* (Belfast, 1952-1982. Continued by *Ainm*)
- Bute Inv. Bute Inventory* (This is a source used in *OPS*)
- Cain Adomnain Cain Adomnáin or Adomán's 'Law of the Innocents'*, translated in Márkus, G (ed.) 1997
- Camerarius Calendar of Saints* by David Chambers in Forbes 1872, 233-243
- Campbell and Sandeman* Campbell, M and Sandeman, M 1962 Mid Argyll: a Survey of the Historic and Prehistoric Monuments in *PSAS* 95, 1-123
- Carm. Gad. Carmina Gadelica: Hymns & Incantations collected in the Highlands and Island of Scotland in the last century* by Alexander Carmichael ed. Moore, C J (Edinburgh, 1992)
- CCH Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*, ed. Wasserschleben 1885
- Celtic Kal. Kalendarium Celticum* in Forbes 1872, 79-92
- CGH Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* ed. O'Brien, M (Dublin, 1962)
- CGSH Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* ed. Ó Riain, P, 1985
- Chelt. MS** The Cheltenham MS, called **C** by Stokes and Ó Riain (Dublin, NLI G 10)
This contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905
- Chron. Bower (Watt) Scotichronicon* by Walter Bower ed. Watt, D (Aberdeen etc 1987-1998)
- Chron. Fordun Chronica Gentis Scotorum* by Johannis de Fordun ed. Skene, W 1871
- Chron. Man The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys* edd. Munch, P A & Goss (Douglas 1874)
- Clon. Group* Clonmacnois Group: annals descending from a chronicle compiled at Clonmacnois in the 10th century
- CMCS** Cambridge / Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies (Cambridge from 1981-1993, Aberystwyth from 1993-)
- CNE Comainmigid noem hEreinn* ed. Ó Riain, P 1985 nos 707-708
- CoA The Commons of Argyll* ed. MacTavish, D 1935
- Colgan 1645 (Acta) Acta Sanctorum Veteris et Majoris Scotiae seu Hiberniae, vol i* ed. Colgan, J (Louvain, 1645)
- Colgan 1647 (Triadis) Triadis Thaumaturgae seu Divorum Patricii, Columbae, et Brigidae* ed. Colgan, J (Louvain, 1647)
- Coll. de Reb. Alb. Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Iona Club, Edinburgh 1847)
- CPDR** *Cethri Prímchenela Dáil Riata* ed. Dumville, D 2000
- CS** *Chronicon Scotorum* edd. Mac Niocaill, G and Hennessy, W, 2003 (published at www.ucc.ie/celt)
- CSSR, i** *Calendar of Scottish Suplications to Rome 1418-22*, edd. Lindsay, E and Cameron, A (*SHS*, Edinburgh, 1934)
- CSSR, ii** *Calendar of Scottish Suplications to Rome 1423-1428*, ed. Dunlop, A (*SHS*, Edinburgh, 1956)
- CSSR, iii** *Calendar of Scottish Suplications to Rome 1428-1432*, edd. Dunlop, A and Cowan, I (*SHS*, Edinburgh, 1970)

- CSSR*, iv *Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome 1433-1447*, edd. Dunlop, A and MacLauchlan, D (*SHS*, Edinburgh, 1983)
- Culross*, *Kalendarium de Culenros* in Forbes 1872, 53-64
- D** The letter used in Sharpe 1991 to designate the two MS of the Dublin collection previously called *Codex Kilkenniensis*, and called by Plummer and Sharpe **M** and **T**
- Δ** This is used in Sharpe 1991 to designate the conjectural manuscript lying behind **M** (Dublin, Primate Marsh's Library MSZ3.1.5) and **T** (Dublin, Trinity College MS 175), the two manuscripts of the Dublin Collection (**D**).
- Dempster* *Calendar of Saints* by Thomas Dempster in Forbes 1872, 177-229
- Dewar MSS* *The Dewar Manuscripts* ed. Mackechnie, J (Glasgow, 1963)
- DIL* *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, Royal Irish Academy (Dublin, 1983)
- Dinnseanchas* *Dinnseanchas* (Dublin 1964-77)
- DLS* *Adamnan's De Locis Sanctis* ed. Meehan, D (Dublin, 1983)
- Dunkeld Litany* *Dunkeld Litany* in Forbes 1872, lvii-lxv
- Eg. 88** London, BL Egerton 88 ff. 80-93 (This contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905)
- Éigse* *Éigse* (Dublin 1939-)
- ER* *The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland* edd. Stuart, J and others (Edinburgh, 1878-1908)
- Eriu* *Eriu* (Dublin 1904-)
- F** Killiney, Franciscan Library A 7 (This contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905)
- Fearn* *The Calendar of Fearn* ed. Adam, R (Edinburgh, *SHS* 1991)
- FO* *Féilire Óengusso Céili Dé: Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee* ed. Stokes, W (London, 1905)
- Forbes* Forbes 1872 (abbreviation used only in the table of saints)
- Fowlis Easter* *Fowlis Easter Breviary*, NLS MS 21247
- GAJ* *Glasgow Archaeological Journal* (Glasgow)
- Glassarie Writs* *Writs* relating to the lands of Glassary, Argyll, printed in *HP* vol ii, 114-245.
- Glenorchy psalter* *The Glenorchy Psalter* (British Library, Egerton 2899)
- Gordon Blaeu SA* *Scotia Antiqua* in Blaeu (NLS WD3B/2) (www.nls.uk/maps/early)
- Gordon Blaeu SR* *Scotia regnum cum insulis adjacentibus / Robertus Gordonius a Straloch descripsit* in Blaeu (NLS WD3B/3) (www.nls.uk/maps/early)
- Gordon Cantyre MS* *Map of Kintyre* by Gordon, R c1636-52 (NLS Adv. MS.70.2.10 (Gordon 39)) (www.nls.uk/maps/early)
- H** Trinity College MS H.2.7 (Used in Ó Riain 1985 for its version of *CGSH*)
- H.3.18** Dublin TCD Library 1337 p 616-622, called **H** by Stokes and given ref. **H.3.18** (This contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905)
- H1** Trinity College MS H.2.17 (Used in Ó Riain 1985 for its version of *CGSH*)
- HE*, *Plummer Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* ed. Plummer, C (Oxford 1896)
- HE*, *Sherley-Price Bede: A History of the English Church and People*, translated by Sherley-Price (Harmonsworth 1968)
- Heist* *Heist* 1965 (abbreviation used only in the table of saints)
- Ephemerides Liturgicae* xciii, 64-72 (reprinted in Richter 1989)
- Herdmanston* *Kalendarium de Hyrdmanistoun* in Forbes 1872, 35-49

- Hogan* Hogan 1910 (abbreviation used only in the table of saints)
- HP* Highland Papers ed. J R N MacPhail (*SHS*, Edinburgh 1914-34)
- Invent. Argyle Writs* Inventory of Argyle Writs (This is a source used by *OPS*)
- IR* *Innes Review*
- JRSAI* *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*
- Kal. Ab. Brev.* 'Kalendarium Breviarii Aberdonensis' in Forbes 1872, 111-124
- Kenney* Kenney 1929 (abbreviation used only in the table of saints)
- KIST* *Kist*, Journal of the Natural History and Antiquarian Society of Mid Argyll (Lochgilphead)
- La** Laud Miscellany 610 (used in Ó Riain 1985 for its version of *CGSH*. It contains a version of *FO* used by Stokes 1905 who calls it L)
- Lb** Leabhar Breac, RIA 23 P 16. Used in Ó Riain 1985 for its version of *CGSH*
- Lc** The Book of Lecan, RIA 23 P 2. Used in Ó Riain 1985 for its version of *CGSH*
- Lhuyd* Edward Lhuyd in the *Scottish Highlands 1699-1700*, ed. J L Campbell and D Thomson (Oxford 1963)
- Life of Columbanus* *Vita S. Columbani Abbatis, Auctore Jona*, Patrologia Latina 87.1011-46, translation at www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/columban.html
- Litany Irish ss I* 'Litany of Irish Saints – I' in Plummer (ed.) 1925, 53-57
- Litany Irish ss II* 'Litany of Irish Saints – II' in Plummer (ed.) 1925, 59-75
- LL** Book of Leinster (Used in Ó Riain 1985, who calls it L, for its version of *CGSH*)
- M** Book of Uí Maine, RIA D ii 1. (Used in Ó Riain 1985 for its version of *CGSH*)
- Macfarlane, Geog. Coll.* *Geographical Collections relating to Scotland transcribed for Walter Macfarlane in 1748-9*, ed. Sir Arthur Mitchell (*SHS*, Edinburgh 1907). Digitised MS on-line at www.nls.uk/pont/texts/index
- Mackinlay* Mackinlay 1914 (abbreviation used only in the table of saints)
- Mart. Ab.* Scottish Entries in the Martyrology of Aberdeen in Forbes 1872, 125-137
- Martin* Martin *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland c 1695* by Martin Martin ed. Donald Macleod (Edinburgh 1994), first published 1698
- MDo* *The Martyrology of Donegal* ed. Todd, J H (Dublin 1864)
- MDr* *The Martyrology of Drummond* ed. Ó Riain, P 2002, 1-120
- Mediaeval Studies* Mediaeval Studies (Toronto 1939-)
- Mercator Scotland* Scotia Regnum by Gerhard Mercator 1595 (Duisberg). NLS Marischal 5. (www.nls.uk/maps/early)
- Mercator South Scotland* Scotia Regnum (south sheet) by Gerhard Mercator 1595 (Duisberg) NLS EMS.s.4a. (www.nls.uk/maps/early)
- MG* *The Martyrology of Gorman* ed. Stokes, W (London 1895)
- Monro 1549* *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland called Hybrides with the genealogies of the chief Clans of the Isles*, (Edinburgh 1774) (reprinted in *A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland circa 1695* by Martin Martin, *Gent* (Stirling 1934 and Edinburgh 1994)
- Mothers of the ss* On the Mothers of the Saints in Ó Riain (ed.) 1985 no. 722, 169-181
- MSFA* 'Míniugud Senchasa Fher nAlban' ed. Dumville, D 2002b, 201-205. Also an edition by J.Bannerman, Bannerman 1974, 41-62
- MT* *The Martyrology of Tallaght* ed. Best and Lawlor 1931 (London)
- Muirchú* 'Vita Patricii by Muirchú' in Bieler (ed.) 1979, 61-121

- Northern Studies* *Northern Studies*, Journal of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies
- NSA* *New Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1845)
- O** The letter used in Sharpe 1995 to designate two MSs in the Bodleian Library: Rawlinson B 485 (**R**) and Rawlinson B 505 (**I**).
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford 2004) (60 vols)
- O'Donnell* *The Life of Colum Cille* by Manus O'Donnell, edited and translated by A O'Kelleher and G Schoepperle, 1918, and re-translated by Lacey, B 1998.
- ODS* *Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, David Farmer (Oxford, fourth edition 1997)
- Ortelius 1573* *Scotiae tabula* by Abraham Ortelius, 1573, NLS Marischal 2. (www.nls.uk/maps/early)
- OS 1st ed.* Ordnance Survey 1st edition 6" map of Scotland, produced 1854-1886
- OS Name Book* Name-books of the Ordnance Survey, County of Argyll (unpublished notebooks available at National Monument Record)
- OS pf* Ordnance Survey Pathfinder
- P** RIA 23/P.3 (Contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905)
- Papal lett Ben XIII* *Calendar of Papal Letters to Scotland of Benedict XIII of Avignon*, 1394-1419 ed. F. McGurk (Edinburgh, 1976)
- Papal lett Clem VII* *Calendar of Papal Letters to Scotland of Clement VII of Avignon*, 1378-1394 ed. C. Burns (Edinburgh, 1976)
- PAST* The newsletter of the Prehistoric Society
- Peritia* *Peritia*, Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland, 1982 -
- Perth psalter* Perth Psalter, NLS MS 652, see Eeles (ed.) 1932
- Pont MS* MS of maps by Timothy Pont published on NLS web-site at www.nls.uk/pont
- POR* Ó Riain 1985 (This is an abbreviation used only in the table of saints)
- PRIA* Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy (Dublin)
- PSAS* *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh)
- Ⓢ This is used in Sharpe 1991 to designate a conjectural manuscript lying behind **D,S** and **O** (Sharpe 1991 p 311 for stemma)
- RB486** Rawlinson B 486. Used in Ó Riain 1985, who calls it R1
- RB502** Rawlinson B 502. Used in Ó Riain 1985, who calls it R
- RB505** Rawlinson B 505. Contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905 who calls it R1
- RB512** Rawlinson B 512 Contains a version of *FO*, used by Stokes 1905 who calls it R2
- RCAHMS* Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
- Rec. Mai.* 'Recensio Maior' of *CGSH* in Ó Riain 1985 nos 1-326
- Rec. Met.* 'Recensio Metrica' of *CGSH* in Ó Riain 1985 no 662
- Rec. Min.* 'Recensio Minor' of *CGSH* in Ó Riain 1985 nos 416-661
- Reg. de Pass.* *Registrum Monasterii de Passelet* ed. Cosmo Innes (Maitland Club, Edinburgh 1832)
- Rev. Celt.* *Revue Celtique* (Paris etc, 1870 -)
- RMS* *Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scotorum* edd. Thomson, R and others (Edinburgh, 1882-1914)
- Roy* Military Survey of Scotland 1747-55 by General Roy, digitised version at www.nls.uk/maps/roy

- RPC The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* (2nd series) edd. Burton, J et al (Edinburgh, 1887-)
- RSCHS Records of the Scottish Church History Society* (Edinburgh 1923-)
- RSS Regestum Secreti Sigilli Regum Scotorum* (Edinburgh 1908-)
- S Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae ex Codice Salmanticensi* edd. de Smedt, C and de Backer, J (Edinburgh, 1888)
- SA Statistical Account of Scotland* ed. Sinclair, J (Edinburgh, 1791-9)
- Scot. Stud. Scottish Studies* (Edinburgh 1957-)
- Scott, Fasti Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae: the succession of ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation* ed. Scott, H (1866-1871)
- SGS Scottish Gaelic Studies*
- SHR Scottish Historical Review* (Edinburgh. 1903-)
- SHS Scottish History Society*
- SHS Misc The Miscellany of the Scottish History Society*, (Edinburgh, 1893-)
- Speculum Speculum* (Cambridge, 1926-)
- SPNDb Scottish Place-name Database*
- Stockdale Map of Scotland from the latest surveys* by John Stockdale (London, 1806)
NLS Newman 1134. www.nls.uk/maps/early
- Studia Hibernica Studia Hibernica*
- TBNHS Transactions of the Buteshire Natural History Society Buteshire* (Rothesay 1908 -)
- TDGNHAS Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society* (Dumfries 1964-)
- TGAS Transactions of the Glasgow Archaeological Society* (Glasgow 1857-1956; continued by *Glasgow Archaeological Journal*)
- ⊕ This is used in Sharpe 1991 to designate a conjectural manuscript lying behind O and S (Sharpe 1991 p 290 for stemma).
- Tírechán Collectanea* by Tírechán in Bieler 1979, 122-165
- Tr Camb Camd Soc Transactions of the Cambridge Camden Society* (Cambridge)
- Tr. Gael. Soc. Inv. Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* (Inverness, 1872)
- TSES Transactions of the Scottish Ecclesiological Society* (Aberdeen, 1903-)
- Ulster Journal of Archaeology Ulster Journal of Archaeology* (Belfast 1853-)
- VC Anderson & Anderson Adomnan's Life of Columba* edd. A O Anderson and M O Anderson (London and Edinburgh, 1961)
- VC Reeves The Life of St Columba* ed. W Reeves (Dublin, 1857)
- VC Sharpe Life of Columba by Adomnan of Iona*, see Sharpe 1995
- Vita Trip. The Tripartite Life of Patrick* in Stokes 1887
- Watson Watson* 1926 (abbreviation used only in the table of saints)
- Whyte almanac* Whyte almanac of 1632, NLS.F.7.g17[2]. Photograph in McAlpine 2000, 80-81
- ZCP Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*

Navigation Notes

- * An asterisk after a place-name or the name of a saint indicates that there will be further information about that place or saint in the table of saints or the gazetteer.

Chapter One

Aims, Setting the Scene, Methodology and Sources

1.1 Introduction: What does the study set out to do?

From at least the seventh century, people in Scotland and Ireland have used the Gaelic word *cell* in the naming of their sacred places. This study will look at what names containing this element can and, perhaps more importantly, what they cannot tell us. The focus of the study is Kintyre, Mid Argyll and Bute.

Cell is an Old Irish term meaning church, ecclesiastical settlement or burial ground. Its exact meaning varies according to context, as will be discussed below in 1.2. It comes from Latin *cella* 'a cell or room in a house', often one containing a shrine to a god.¹

In many cases in Ireland, and most cases in Argyll, the term is accompanied by a personal name, usually thought to be the name of the saint to whom the church is dedicated. These saints have therefore become a major focus of this study. Might an analysis of the saints which appear in *cill*- names (as they will henceforth be called)² throw some light on the date and purpose of these foundations? And, in turn, might a study of the kind of sites represented by *cill*- names throw light on the character and spread of the cults of saints?

This study, then, grapples with two inter-linked but slippery subjects: place names with all their mutability, and the cult of saints as manifested both in these names and in calendars, in literature and in tradition. Argyll, with its numerous *cill*- names (28 in South Kintyre alone) and its apparent representation of at least 40 saints seems to be rich ground for research, but how far is it sensible to push this kind of evidence? It may

¹ It originally had pre-Christian application, but was later applied to Christian settlements in the desert of Egypt, first of single ascetics in their own 'cells', but later of whole communities of monks. St Anthony (c251-356 *sic*), Paul of Thebes who was an older contemporary, and their followers inspired a flourishing of 'monasteries' consisting of groups of cells in the desert. Cellia ('the cells'), about 20 km from Nitria, was founded by Anthony's follower Ammon (White 1998, xviii). The word *cellula* meaning chapel or monk's cell, appears in Irish sources from the seventh century (Latham 1965, 78).

² The nominative form in Old Irish is *cell* (*DIL*, 110) and in later Scottish Gaelic, *ceall* (Dwelly 1901-11, 176), but it is the dative singular form (from an original locative case) that is most commonly used in place-names, which in both languages is *cill*.

be that this, the questioning of certain kinds of evidence, is the most important part of this study.

It will become apparent that for this area, in most instances the term *dedication* is too strong, bringing to mind as it does some kind of official process by which a place or object is offered up publicly, and probably ritually, to the dedicatee or to his or her memory (below, 1.3). In fact, for the majority of places bearing the names of saints, we have no idea if there was any official process of dedication at all; it is quite possible that a place got a name just because that is what people called it. That perhaps is what is implied by Adomnán's story in the *VC* of the naming of a place (now lost) called *Cella Diuni* on the shores of Loch Awe; he writes of a monk named Cailtan who was *praepositus* in '*cella quae hodieque ejus fratris Diuni vocabulo vocitatur*' and to whom Columba sent a message - that is '*ad cellam Diuni*'.³ For so-called dedications, then, the term 'commemoration' might in many cases be more appropriate, but for the sake of simplicity I will retain 'dedication', always bearing the above qualification in mind.

As for the term 'saint', it is not clear what were the criteria by which a person was judged worthy of the title saint; the official process by which a person was given official canonisation was not established until the twelfth century.⁴ Many of the people to be discussed below were simply monks, nuns, priests, and only sometimes founders of churches or workers of miracles. In the Martyrology of Tallaght (henceforth *MT*) under October the 21st, for example, there are over 200 of Fintan Munnu's monks, each one of whom, by virtue of his inclusion, might be considered a saint,⁵ and in the Penitential of Cummean, the medicines for the salvation of souls includes *intercessio sanctorum* - the intercession of saints. These people are simply priests of the church - *presbyteri ecclesiae*.⁶ The importance of this to what follows is that when one is trying to identify which saint or holy man out of 1,000 is being commemorated in a particular place, it is much harder than if one was selecting from a clear and official list of 20.

³ 'in the monastery that even today is called by the name of his brother Diún' (*VC* I.31, tr. Anderson and Anderson 1991, 59).

⁴ The first historically attested canonisation is in 993, but it was not until Pope Alexander III asserted, in c1170, that no-one should be venerated as saint without official recognition of the Roman Church, and that this was subsequently included by Pope Gregory IX in his Decretals of 1234, that this became part of canon law (Cross 1957, 230).

⁵ *MT*, 82.

⁶ Bieler 1975, 108-110.

So, if the endeavour is so hard what is the point? What might be hoped to be achieved from a study of dedications in Argyll?

Most obviously one might discover something about the saints commemorated, individuals who have - it has often been said - contributed so much to the character of the early church in Ireland and Scotland. This is, in fact, the most intractable of all subjects, as will be seen, but nevertheless remains irresistible. If not of the activities of the saint then, the dedications might reveal something at least of the fortune of the cult of the saint - how the popularity of the saint developed over the years following his or her death. This, in turn, might throw light on the growing power and authority both of the ecclesiastical establishments and of particular secular powers who favoured and promoted particular saints. At the other extreme - away from the use made of saints for political and power-building purposes - is the question of personal devotion. It might be hoped that something might be said about local devotion to a saint, in particular by looking at imprints left in the landscape, that is in a non-literary medium. Together, looking both at the big picture - the patterns of saints' dedications over reasonably large areas and the power structures which might lie behind the creation of such patterns - and at the smaller picture of local devotion, one might also hope for some insight into the beginnings, development and organisation of the early church in Scotland. It may be that the evidence is such that no such insight is possible. Even if such a negative conclusion is reached the struggle might still be worthwhile: to prevent over-ambitious use of the evidence in the future and as a warning to be cautious about some of the optimistic conclusions of the past. More generally it might help us understand the nature of our evidence.

All these endeavours have been made before. Dedications in place-names have, in the past, been regarded as providing a concrete representation of the movement of a saint through the countryside, though now the situation is seen as being far more complex.⁷ development of cult has been looked at in a variety of ways, with an interesting recent

⁷ 'It was the peculiarity of the Celtic system, that the saints whose memory was held in veneration were in every instance the planters of the churches in which they were commemorated, or the founders of the monasteries from which the planters of these churches proceeded' (Anderson 1881, 190).

focus on the later medieval cults which may have obscured earlier features.⁸ In the study of cult hagiography is helpful, which it is usually not when looking for information about a saint. As far as the beginnings and development of the church in Scotland and Ireland are concerned, it is to a select number of popular saints that people have looked for explanation and detail; Colum Cille is popularly understood to be the evangeliser of western Scotland, Ninian of southern Scotland, and so on. Certain religious houses, each of which takes as its guide and magnet a particular saint, have also been seen to dominate the picture of church development in Scotland.⁹ With regard to some saints, studies of dedications as they appear in place-names have been able to confirm whatever story people have wanted to believe, but that does not mean that an alternative, more complex, pattern of development is not discernible if a more rigorous approach to the material is taken. This, at least, is what we hope.

Still looking at dedications, but focussing now on the position and nature of the sites themselves, there may be much to be learnt about the kinds of geographical choices people made in establishing their Christian *foci* - their cells, chapels, churches, burial-grounds and monasteries. How do the sites relate to contemporary secular sites? How do they link in with routeways by sea and by land? Are there any clusters of sites all with dedications to, say, saints with Leinster connections? Are there other sorts of clusters which occur more than, say, twice, in the area of study? What kinds of sites had what kinds of names? Dating is, of course, critical to giving sensible answers to all of these questions. Some ideas about what a *cill*- might be, gleaned mainly from literary sources, will be discussed in 1.2, and summaries of the physical characteristics and the individual histories of the *cill*- sites found in the three areas selected for close study will be found in chapter three and in the gazetteer. These expectations and the observations will be looked at together in chapter four.

Close work of the sort described above - looking at the sites with dedications in their landscape context - has also been tackled by several scholars: MacQueen on Galloway, Mac Lean on Knapdale, Ó Baoill on Aberdeen, Clancy on Argyll and Galloway, Taylor in his work on Faelán and on Iona abbots, for example.¹⁰ More will be said about this

⁸ Taylor 2001; Boardman 2002.

⁹ Macquarrie 1997, Clancy 2002.

¹⁰ MacQueen 1973; Ó Baoill 1993; Mac Lean 1983; Clancy 1996 and 2001; Taylor 1999, 2001a.

in 1.3. This study is guided by such work, but has the opportunity to include fuller information.

Finally, there is a crucial role which *cill*- names might be able to play in the clarification of some of the most basic questions we ask about the early historic period in Argyll. Where did the people come from, if anywhere? Do the saints embedded in the names reveal anything about the relationships people living in Argyll might have had with groups elsewhere - the Scottish Dál Riata with the Dál Fiatach or Dál nAraide in Ireland or the British in Strathclyde, for instance. Perhaps we can detect saints favoured by one group among the Dál Riata but not by another. These are the sorts of questions that will be asked in the geographical case studies in chapter three. It may be that the *cill*- names are incapable of answering such questions, or it may be that a fuller study of Argyll is necessary to answer some of them.

Crucial to all these questions is the issue of dating. *Cill*- names have been invoked in Scotland as being indicative of early ecclesiastical activity. It has been suggested that the term was used to create place names only until the early 9th century, at least in the east.¹¹ Even in the west *cill*- names have been invoked as evidence of early Christian activity.¹² Given the existence of Cill Chaitriona¹³ on Colonsay and *Kil-Catrin*¹⁴ in Cowal, however, one of which was certainly not founded until the 15th century and both of which appear to contain commemorations of a saint whose cult was not active until the 10th century,¹⁵ we must, however, be wary. These examples, plus others such as Killintringan in SW Scotland which is 'obviously late'¹⁶ have been long known but have

¹¹ 'Kil-names in the northern half of Scotland, like their counterparts in the south, are in general not likely to be much younger than 800' Nicolaisen 1976, 143. 'Cill is...the earliest dateable Gaelic place-name element we have from eastern Scotland and must date to a period before about 800' Taylor 1996, 99. MacDonald concurs: 'The occurrence of *cill* names along the Great Glen and around the Moray Firth, and through the Perthshire straths into Fife ("unofficial settlement"?) serves to reinforce the view that *cill* had largely ceased to be a creative name-forming element before the Scots were in a position to move into the central regions of Pictland on a large scale - ie before the second half of the 9th century.' MacDonald 79, 12.

¹² In Kintyre 'the evidence of Kil-names, and the distribution of Early Christian carved stones, suggests that many of the medieval and later churches and burial-grounds occupy early ecclesiastical sites.' Arg 1, 20.

¹³ Arg 5 no 326. NR421998.

¹⁴ Arg 7 no 93. The place is now simply called St Catherines, but two merklands of *Kilkatrine* are mentioned in the Argyll Sasines, and Macfarlane, *Geog. Coll.* has *Killcatherine*. It was founded by Duncan Campbell of Lochawe (d. 1453) and is 'unique as a documented foundation of a chapel in Argyll' (Arg 7, 12).

¹⁵ Cross 1957, 249.

¹⁶ Watson 1926, 170.

not shaken the hypothesis of generally early dates for *cill*- sites.¹⁷ In this study, however, no assumptions will be made about the date of the *cill*- sites. Gaelic was widely spoken in Argyll until the last century and *ceall* continued to be used to indicate a church or a burial. The possible date-range for the establishment of each site will be considered individually.

1.2 *Cill*- in Scotland and Ireland: What do we already know?

Few studies have focussed on *cill*- in Scotland alone, work by Aidan MacDonald being an exception. Among his conclusions are that 'most of the sites denoted by generic *cill* names, now or in the past, were probably the lesser and least churches of monastic *paruchia*: minor monasteries that became, very often, medieval parish churches...and small developed cemeteries serving local lay communities, or housing a handful of religious at most (or both together)'.¹⁸ He notes that 'in no case is it certainly known when, or in what circumstances, a particular dedication or group of dedications arose,' but is optimistic about the potential rewards of further study: 'close study of the geographical distributions of the cults of individual saints, or groups of saints, together with their traditional genealogies (where recorded), may yet yield significant information about the spatial activities and political affiliations (ecclesiastical and secular) of some early Scottish churches.'¹⁹ He raises important questions about the use of *cill*- as the specific element in a place-name (such as in Eilean na Cille), wondering if this usage might be younger, and making a plea, as yet unheeded as far as I know, for more work to be done on this subject.²⁰

The dating of *cill*- has been discussed by Nicolaisen, as mentioned above, and distribution maps presented. These have been updated by Taylor, and continue to be worked on.²¹ Watson's study of place-names includes analysis of some 170 *cill*-names.²² The high regard with which this scholar is held has meant that most of his

¹⁷ eg 'a few such late formations are to be expected, even from several centuries after *cill* had ceased to be productive generally' (MacDonald 1979, 16).

¹⁸ MacDonald 1979, 19.

¹⁹ MacDonald 1979, 15.

²⁰ MacDonald 1979, 9. But for similar points made about the place-name element *annat*, see Clancy 1995, and more generally Taylor 1998.

²¹ Nicolaisen 1976, 142; Taylor 1996, 94.

²² Watson 1926.

interpretations have been accepted with little questioning. His identification of the saints in the names is almost invariably accepted by *RCAHMS* in their Argyll inventories for example.

Cill- names have been the subject of enquiry in SW Scotland, in particular in relation to *kirk-* names, the generics in these two name-types apparently being interchangeable.²³ Otherwise there have been no systematic local studies of the type seen in Ireland in, for example, work by Pádraig Ó Cearbhaill on *cill-* and *cluain-* names in co. Tipperary.²⁴ This study includes a categorisation of *cill-* names according to the specific, as opposed to the generic, element of the name. Of the 136 *cill-* names analysed there are, for example, 58 names which include the name of a person (either a Gaelic name or biblical), 20 which include a noun (eg *Cell Achaidh*) and 10 which contain the name of a river (eg *Cell Cromghlaise*). Edmund Hogan's important collection of place-names found in historical documents²⁵ contains several hundred *cill-* names. An analysis of the kind conducted by O'Cearbhaill has not been conducted on these names, an exercise which would be most valuable particularly given the apparent contrast between *cill-* names in Ireland, and those in Scotland where the overwhelming majority seem to contain a personal name. A breakdown of all the names in Scotland has not been carried out either, but from the study area of this thesis it can be observed that all but one contain a personal name.²⁶

There has been no exhaustive study of the use of the term *cill-* in literary sources, looking at its meaning and how this may have changed over time, though discussions of the term inevitably occur in a variety of works on the early medieval church. Conleth Manning's analysis of church terms in the Irish annals, for example, shows that at least from the ninth century the term *cell* (the OI nominative) refers to whole ecclesiastical establishments or settlements. Examples given include *AU* 921, where a distinction is

²³ Variations between Kirk and Kil continue into the 15th century eg Kirkbride in Nithsdale is known in later medieval times as *Kilbride*, and Kirkdominie in Ayrshire is *Kildominie* in 1404. Kilmorie in Arran is *Kilmory* in 1483, but *Kyrkmorish* in 1595 (MacDonald 1979, 10). See Brooke 1983, Grant 2004.

²⁴ O'Cearbhaill 1999. But see Taylor 2006, who gives a detailed analysis of all names in one part of Fife, including all *cill-* names.

²⁵ Hogan 1910, with updates on line at www.ucc.ie/locus. The names are almost all in Ireland, but there are a few in Scotland. He draws from annals, saints' lives and from more modern sources such as Johnston's place names of Scotland (Johnston 1892).

²⁶ Kilneuir*. There are four others which might qualify: Kilchamaig discussed below, 2.3, 90-1, Kilneustrur*, Killervan* and Killoccraw*. The case on Islay is different. Here there are several *cill-* names which do not contain a personal name.

made between prayer houses (*taigi aernaighi*) and the monastery (*in ceall*), and AFM 1082 when the entire establishment (*(don) chill uile*) is referred to in contrast to the stone church (*doimhliag*).²⁷ In earlier annals, written in Latin, the meaning is carried by the term *civitas*.

Etchingham, in his extensive search for monastic terminology in hagiography and in proscriptive material such as canons and law texts, finds a variety of terminology in use for monasteries, churches and the Church. Very often it is not clear which is meant. Five Latin Lives belonging to Sharpe's O'Donohue group (below, 38) are searched, for example. Here it seems that *cella* is not the commonest term for a church settlement, terms such as *civitas* and *monasterium* being preferred.²⁸

My own survey of the use of the term in a few key texts suggests considerable variation. Tirechán, for example, used the term *ecclesia* when describing what Patrick founded, though he *fecit alias cellas multas in Eilniu*. Otherwise the four instances of *cella* or *cill-* in the text are embedded in place-names, with uncertain meaning. There is an interesting reference, however, to Patrick founding a church (*fundavit aeclessiam*) which is then qualified as *.i. Tamnach et Echenach et Cell Angle et Cell Senchuae*, which may imply that there each *cill-* is a subsection of the *ecclesia*. The term *cellola* is five times used. At two there are bishops, and another (surprisingly) is called big - *cellolam magnam quae sic uocatur Cellula Magna*.²⁹ The term *cill-* does not appear in Muirchu at all.

Adomnán, in the *VC*, uses *cella* four times two of which refer to the same place. As we have already seen, he writes of a monk named Caitan who was *praepositus* in '*cella quae hodieque ejus fratris Diuni vocabulo vocitatur*'³⁰ and to whom Columba sent a message - that is '*...ad cellam Diuni*'. *Ecclesia* is the word most commonly used by Adomnán in *VC*, though in one place he uses *cellula*. Here he is referring to a 'little church' (in Sharpe's translation) in Ireland in the charge of one Baitanus (*cellulae*

²⁷ AFM 1082.11 *Reileacc chailleach Chuana Mic Nóis do losccadh cona doimh liag, & gusan trian airtherach don chill uile.*

²⁸ Etchingham 1999, 95-7. The Lives are in Latin. It is not clear if the Latin *cella* corresponds exactly to the use of *cell* in OI.

²⁹ Tirechán, 20 - Bieler 1979, 141.

³⁰ *VC* 1.31.

dominus): it does not have a *cill*- name, but is called Láithrech Finden.³¹ In the same episode, the word used for the building in which people took refuge is *ecclesia*. In *De Locis Sanctis*, Adomnán uses the Latin *cellula* rather than *cella* (which he never uses in that text) for the monks' living quarters. He describes, for example, the monastery of Mount Thabor '*cujus in medio campo monachorum inest grande monasterium, et plurimae eorumdem cellulae*.'³² Two other instances of *cella* in *VC* are *ad cellam magnam Deathrib*, which is Kilmore, Co Roscommon, and the *monasterium, Cell-rois(s)*. It seems clear that by *cella* Adomnán did not mean a small cell, but rather some kind of ecclesiastical settlement. Whatever he meant it is not a term he uses with any frequency.

In *Amra Choluimb Chille* ascribed to Dallán Forgaill, in contrast to Adomnán, *cell* is the only word used to describe churches. It seems to describe a whole institution - *hUile bith, ba háe hé:/ Is crot cen chéis,/ is cell cen abbaid*, ('The whole world it was his: It is a harp without a key, it is a church without an abbot') - as well as physical structures - *Cét cell custóit* ('The guardian of a hundred churches').³³

The earliest life of Munnu m. Tulcháin*, a work possibly of the 8th century, uses the term twice. One refers to a school within a *cill* (*hi Kyll Mair Diathrib*) and the other describes the raising of a man from the dead *in cella Bicsiche*, a place - also called a *locus* - with inhabitants. The word used in the context of founding a church is not *cell*; of the four occasions when he makes a foundation three use the term *locus* (*et edificavit ibi locum, qui nunc dicitur Tech Tailli maicc Segeni*, and variations) and one uses the term *civitas*.³⁴

In a late Irish life of Berach m. Amairgin there is a clear distinction made between monastery and church. When Berach, Fraech and Daigh have constructed and consecrated the monastery of Cluain Coirpthe, Fraech declares "'This (monastery - *cathair*) shall be the western part of the meadow, and my church (*mo cheall*) its eastern

³¹ *VC* 1.20.

³² *DLS* bk 2.27.

³³ Clancy and Márkus 1995, 14 (I.16-17), 110 (VII.3).

³⁴ *Vita Prior S. Fintani* ch 8, 9, 11, 19, Heist 1965, 200, 203.

part" And these holy elders left their blessing with Berach and each of them went to his own church (*dia cill féin*).³⁵

In the Tripartite Life of Patrick, a text of composite date,³⁶ there are differences in ecclesiastical terminology between the three parts of the work. In the first part, where foundations are made they are in both cases of an *eclais*.³⁷ Where *cell* is found it is not clear what exactly is meant; in one example it is prophesied that people will *noifit cella*, 'consecrate (?) churches', and in another someone sees a *cell* (which could be anything from a small hut to a complex of buildings).³⁸ In the second part, founding a church is usually given as *forothaig eclais* (at least 12 times, with minor variations). The word *eclais* is not used if what follows is a name, as in, for example, *Fo[ro]thaig Cill Mó[i]r Maigi Glaiss*,³⁹ 'he founded Cell Mór Maige Glaiss', (at least 4 times like this). There are two examples of *cell* used on its own in connection with founding: *forothaigestar cella and*, and *et fundauit il cella in Dáil Araidi*.⁴⁰ Foundation of a *cell* in conjunction with a *congbail*⁴¹ is found only once in part 2: *Forácaib Patraic mór do cellaib ocus do congbálaib i crich Dálriata* ('Patrick left many churches and cloisters in the district of Dál Riata').⁴² There are at least 11 other occurrences of the word *cell*,⁴³ but in no case is it certain whether a single building or a whole church settlement is meant. There is one case in which *eclais* almost certainly means the former: four-cornered churches - *ecailsi cetharchairi*.⁴⁴

³⁵ *Betha Beraig* ch. 50 - Plummer 1922 vol 1, 33, vol 2, 32.

³⁶ The present text of the Tripartite Life dates to the first half of the 10th century at the earliest. However, the Book of Armagh, which contains much Patrician material, including a life by Muirchú and the *Collectanea* by Tírechán, dates to 807. It includes the *notulae* which is a highly abbreviated list of names and places - function much debated. They correspond to Patrick's journeys around Ireland as represented in the Tripartite Life. Thus it is 'virtually certain that there was an earlier version [of the Trip Life] no later than c800' (Charles-Edwards 2000, 11-13). See also Dumville et al 1993.

³⁷ Stokes 1887, 8, 30.

³⁸ *ibid.*, 34, 60.

³⁹ *ibid.*, 94.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, 160 ('he founded churches'), 164 ('he founded many churches in Dál nAraide').

⁴¹ Translation of the term *congbail* is problematic. *DIL* defines it thus: *congbáil* (-ál f.) vn of con-gaib. a) *act of containing, keeping in...* b) in legal and quasi legal contexts meaning uncertain - sometimes, perhaps, *maintenance, entertainment; legal right or obligation as regards entertainment...* c) (*monastic*) *foundation; habitation; establishment*. Stokes translates it as 'cloister'.

⁴² Stokes 1887, 162.

⁴³ *ibid.*, 22, 76, 96, 112 (x3), 130, 136, 146, 150, 170.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 110.

In part three the formula *forfothaigestar cella ocus congbala and* - and there he founded churches and cloisters - appears at least 6 times⁴⁵ *Eclais*, *cell* and *ecclesia* are all used throughout this section; mostly it is not clear what is meant by the terms, whole settlements or individual buildings. There are a few which give clues, however:

1. Speaking crossly to Malach, a British culdee, Patrick says his cloister (*congbail*) will not be lofty. The *congbail* is called Cell Malaich, and five cows can hardly be fed there.⁴⁶
2. Two boys are buried at a *cell*⁴⁷
3. There is mention of grass around the *eclais* - this does not sound like a whole settlement.⁴⁸
4. Patrick seems to come into the *cell* in a chariot, which does imply a whole settlement.⁴⁹
5. There is a description of measuring the rath (*in raith*) after which is said - 'and in this wise it was that he used to found the cloisters (*congbala*) always'. The process includes measuring out an enclosure (*ind lis*), the great-house (*in tig mor*), the kitchen (*in chuli*) and the oratory (*ind aregal*).⁵⁰
6. Armagh is called both an *ecclesia* and a *cell*⁵¹
7. Distinction is made between *eclais* and *manistrech*, and between *ecclesia* and *monasteria*.⁵²

What can we draw from the above, and is it relevant for Scotland? Broadly we might be able to venture this: *cell* or *cella*, in this small selection of literary sources, seems hardly ever to mean a small single building. More often it appears to indicate an ecclesiastical settlement of reasonable size. This applies from the earliest sources to the latest. It is not a hard and fast rule, however, and exceptions are easy to find. In *AU* 833, for example Feidlimid, king of Caisel, put to death members of the community of Cluain Moccu Nóis and burned their church-lands 'to the very door of their church' (7 *loscudh a termuinn co rici dorus a cille*). The community of Dairmag were treated

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 174, 186, 194x2, 196, 214.

⁴⁶ Stokes 1887, 198.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 202.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 228.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 234.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 236.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 230, 252.

⁵² *ibid.*, 260, 262.

likewise - to the very door of their church (*co dorus a cille*).⁵³ It sounds in these instances as if a single building is referred to rather than a whole complex, though it could be argued either way. More compelling is the example from *scholia* to *FO* in **RB502**, also concerning Clonmacnois. Here the monks of Clonmacnois are deliberating about the expulsion of Mochutu from Rathen: *Dorala do muinntir Clúana mac Nois. Ro laisit siden for a cellaib.* 'Then came the turn of the community of Clonmacnois. They went to their cells.'⁵⁴

Easy conclusions are not forthcoming. Several points need to be kept in mind. First, it is unsafe to equate a term used as an appellative and the same word used as a toponymic. Thus though *cell* or *cella* is **not** the most common word used to describe a particular building or a whole complex of buildings it nevertheless remains overwhelmingly the commonest church term in place-names.⁵⁵ We have seen examples of a preference for *cill-* as the word used for naming in the Life of Munnu where a place is described as a *locus* but is called *cill-* x, and in part 2 of the Tripartite Life where three foundations are called *cill-* x, while the thing Patrick finds is usually described as an *eclais*. It is quite possible that its application as toponymic might well have been much wider than its use as appellative implies.

Second, there may be chronological implication in the changing use of term, but this would be difficult to detect due to uncertain dating of most texts, among other things. Lastly, some vagueness regarding the use of ecclesiastical terms is detectable even in the late 9th or early 10th centuries. Thus Notker Balbulus's martyrology of the late ninth or early 10th century has the following on 9 June:

Cognomento apud suos Columkille, eo quod multarum cellarum, id est monasteriorum vel ecclesiarum institutor, fundator, et rector extitit.

(Known) among them by the name Columkille, because he stood out as arranger, founder and guide of many cells, ie monasteries or churches.⁵⁶

⁵³ *AU* 833.7.

⁵⁴ *FO* March 11.

⁵⁵ It would be interesting to make a comparison with the use of *mainister* as toponymic, which has many listings in Hogan but which seems to have lasted as a place-name in only a handful of cases: *m. an aenaigh* (Mannisteranenagh), *m. buite* (Monasterboice), *m. eibhin* (Monastereven), *m. fheorais* (Monasterois). In many cases *mainister* has disappeared through anglicisation leaving odd hybrid names - *m. derg* > Abbeyderg, *m. shruthra* > Abbeysrule.

⁵⁶ via Reeves *VC*, 5. Notker Balbulus or 'the Stammerer' (c840-912) was author of a Life of St Gall (Cross 1957, 966).

This may not be directly relevant to Scotland, but it is reasonable to accept the possibility that between Ireland and Argyll there was some uniformity in practice in the early church, and thus, some common ground in the use of terminology. No rigid rules will be assumed, but we need to start somewhere.

1.3. Dedications in Scotland and Ireland: What do we already know?

The process by which groups of dedications to individual saints arose in Scotland has been the subject of study at least since the late 19th century. As mentioned above it was, until the 19th century, widely thought that dedications represented the real presence of a particular individual at that place - that a dedication to Columb Cille in Kintyre, for example, implied that Columb Cille himself had been there and set up the church. Indeed it is an idea one still comes across today. Reeves' study of Maelruba⁵⁷ is one of the first major studies of dedications and other evidence to trace the spread of the cult, as opposed to the journey, of a saint in Scotland. Increasingly, studies, though becoming more detailed, have come less and less to pretend that their conclusions might lead the reader to any kind of enlightenment about the time in which the saint lived, or even of the period in the immediately following centuries. Thus, several recent studies have tracked the use of saints to further much later ecclesiastical and secular intentions. For example, devotion to Fáelán might indicate the activity of King Robert Bruce and his associates,⁵⁸ while dedications to Kentigern reflect the pretensions of Glasgow.⁵⁹ There is an impressive body of work of this sort by Macquarrie.⁶⁰ Some of his work links movement of cult with later political development. Some is much more hopeful, perhaps too much so, in its attempt at the reconstruction of a historical character. He has made valuable contributions to the work of translating and interpreting the Aberdeen Breviary, a sixteenth-century compilation which may draw from early sources (below, 36), on which, otherwise, remarkably little work has been done.⁶¹ Exhaustive

⁵⁷ Reeves 1860.

⁵⁸ Taylor 2001a.

⁵⁹ Ross 2002.

⁶⁰ Macquarrie 1997 and see below.

⁶¹ Macquarrie 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001. The Office of Fáelán is translated and interpreted in Taylor 2001a. See also Macfarlane 1985, 231-46 which gives some background to the compilation of the Aberdeen Breviary.

work by Forbes 1872 is little used, but of much value, while Watson's *Celtic Place-names of Scotland* is regarded by many scholars as the ultimate authority.⁶²

In the case of Ninian an interesting contrast has been made between what one might discover in the dedications and what is discoverable in the literary cult. The suggestion that Ninian might be identified with an influential teacher about whom we have more material than usual, including, perhaps, some of his writing, allows us to glimpse something of the intellectual and spiritual vigour of the insular Church in the 6th and 7th centuries.⁶³ A study of the spread of Iona's influence through dedications to Iona abbots also aims to enrich our picture of the character and development of the early church and its necessary negotiation with secular power structures.⁶⁴

Work in Ireland is helped by the existence of many more early texts. In Scotland few place-names are attested before the twelfth century with, in Argyll, only the few that occur in *VC*, and a handful in the annals and martyrologies. In Ireland, by contrast, there are scores of place-names in one seventh-century work - Tírechán - alone. There are many place-names in saints' lives, in annals, in martyrologies and in secular tales, with, for example, over 700 in *MT*. In sum, there is a much richer picture of the early Irish onomastic landscape.⁶⁵

Ireland is blessed also by texts which describe the actual setting up of churches. Thus Etchingham is able to draw on canons, laws and Lives in his attempt to understand church foundation and operation in early medieval Ireland.⁶⁶ The picture he paints is far from clear as much of the evidence is ambiguous, or contradictory, but this is still an improvement on Scotland where there is hardly any evidence at all. Numerous scholars have used the rich textual and onomastic evidence in Ireland to look closely at cults of particular saints as expressed in landscape and literature.⁶⁷

⁶² Watson 1926.

⁶³ Clancy 2001.

⁶⁴ Taylor 1999.

⁶⁵ It would be interesting to know what proportion of these names still exist. Is it mostly the ecclesiastical ones that have been lost, or the opposite, or what?

⁶⁶ Etchingham 1999.

⁶⁷ A recent example is the detailed work done by Ailbhe Mac Shamráin on Glendalough and its surrounding ecclesiastical landscape (Mac Shamráin 1996).

No-one has worked the texts harder than Pádraig Ó Riain, who has looked at martyrologies, genealogies and saints' lives and the effect that each has on the others. The dedications in the landscape are, for Ó Riain, as important a strand of evidence as the texts, and as dynamic. His work has yielded many insights into the process by which cults divide and saints replicate. They principally relate to places and saints in Ireland but since I draw on his methodology in my attempt to untangle the Scottish evidence it might be helpful to describe his ideas in some detail here.

Central to his arguments is that the peculiarities of Gaelic saint nomenclature - 'undoubtedly the most crucial and complicating feature of early Irish hagiography'⁶⁸ - led to cults becoming disconnected from the original saint venerated, giving rise to a multiplicity of new cults and new saints.⁶⁹ The linguistic process by which names, particularly those of saints, are subject to changes of various kinds to form hypocoristic forms or nicknames, is outlined by Ó Riain and described clearly and critically in Russell 2001. A summary of the main points follows to aid understanding of discussions below:

- A base name or 'radical form'⁷⁰ can be given a suffix, the resultant form often also displaying syncope. The most common is *-án* (Flannán < Flann; Colmán < Columb; Berchán < Berach;). Others are *-ín / íne* (Baíthíne < Báeth), and - the least common - *-ach* (Cainnech < Cainne; Lugach < Lug). The suffix *-óc* appears mostly in names which also have a prefix, as will be discussed below (Maedóc < Aed, Mochummóc < Cumma < Columb). Some of these endings are influenced by British usage, a difficult subject which will be touched upon where relevant.⁷¹
- The name can be shortened (Bairre < Bairrfind), a process known as apocope.

⁶⁸ Ó Riain 1982, 147. See also Plummer 1910 vol 2, 344 who talks of the 'luxuriant growth of hypocoristic names in Irish'.

⁶⁹ 'If sense is ever to be made of the appearance of nonsense which accompanies Irish hagiography, then the first requirement is that its claims be reduced to Western European terms. *A priori*, the notion that there existed hundreds of SS Colmán, scores of SS Mochua and Molaisse and dozens of saints of other denominations within one relatively small area by European standards, in the course of a very limited period of time, again by European standards, flouts the most basic rules of common sense not to mention historical criticism, no matter which gloss is put on the word saint.' Ó Riain 1982, 152

⁷⁰ It is not in fact always clear which form is the radical form. Some forms which look like hypocorisms (eg Adomnán) seem to have operated as proper names in their own right, with no reference to any root name. Names which derive from colours seem to be used with the *-án* suffix, with no sense of derivation from another name: Ciarán, Odrán, Donnán.

⁷¹ Russell 2001, 245, and 1990, 108-16, 239-40. Thurneysen 1946, 173-4.

- There can be a doubling of consonants and/or palatalisation (Molaisse < Laisrén; Cainne < Canna < Columb)
- A central cluster of liquid + nasal becomes a double nasal. A front vowel is often added on the end (Dímma < Diarmait; Comma or Conna < Columb)
- The prefix *mo-* or *do-* (my or your) can be added to the name. This causes lenition of the first letter of the original name and results in forms such as Docholmóc (< Colmóc < Columb), Máedóc (< ?*Áedoc < Áed), Mochonna (< Conna < Columb). It is notable that these prefixes are not usually added to the base form; there are very few examples, in the index to *CGSH*, where a name *without* a suffix appears *with* a prefix. Where exceptions occur, something else has happened to the name, usually a truncation such as Mobí (<Brénain or < Berchán < Berach), Mochóe (<?Cóelán) and Molua (<Lugaid). The overwhelmingly most common kind of name with a *mo-* or *do-* prefix has a suffix *-oc*. Likewise a suffix in *-óc* rarely occurs without the *mo-* / *do-* prefix. It is interesting that notable exceptions such as Mernan / Marnan (< Ernán) and Colmóc (< Columb) occur exclusively in Scotland.⁷²

Usually more than one of these processes are seen in a single name, as can be seen from some of the examples given above. A name like Mochommóc from Columb, for example, displays replacement of the liquid and nasal by a double nasal, the addition of the suffix *-óc*, and the prefixing of *mo-*. Russell's contention is that hypocoristic markers build up in this way because as one is forgotten another has to be added.⁷³ Thus, if Comma is no longer thought to be an affectionate version of the name Columb, but a proper name in its own right, then a new hypocoristic marker must be added. This can be seen clearly in the name Momáedóc.⁷⁴ This contains the prefix *mo-* not once but twice.

⁷² *Colmoc<us>...apud Inchmahomo in Mart. Ab. June 7 (Forbes 1872, 131).*

⁷³ Russell 2001, 241.

⁷⁴ Ó Riain 1985 no. 242.1.

Ó Riain shows how a saint of one name might be venerated under various hypocoristic forms of his name as his cult travels about. Thus (to give a hypothetical example of my own) Columb might, at one place, be given the affectionate name Mochommóc and a church called *Cell Mochommóc > Kilmahumaig be founded. At another place he might be given the name Colmán.⁷⁵ After a time it is forgotten that Colmán and Mochommóc are the same as Colum and so new identities arise. Mochommóc might be celebrated on a different feast day from the original saint (perhaps the date on which a transfer of relics took place) and he is given a new genealogy - one which perhaps knits him in with a local kindred, or one which associates him with some other powerful saint. This use of genealogy and feast day in further obscuring a saint's origins is important. It goes against the principle, proposed by Delahaye, and followed by many, that the feast day is one of the important co-ordinates in establishing the identity of a saint.⁷⁶ Sharpe, for examples, when writing of Finnio / Uinniau / Findbarr notes that 'It is one of the fundamental canons of hagiography that the date of a saint's commemoration is conscientiously adhered to.' Thus, the fact that Finnian of Mag Bile (Finnian m. Cairpre), Finnian of Cluain Eraird (Finnian m. Findloga) and Findbarr of Corcach (Bairre m. Amairgin) have different commemoration dates means that they should be considered as distinct: 'While these three saints have all the same name (in different forms), they are in all other respects distinct, and therefore ought to be separate historical individuals.'⁷⁷

For Ó Riain genealogies do not reveal anything about a saint's real origins. They are helpful only in mapping the movement of cult. 'The saint's real origins are generally not discoverable by means of his pedigree and even in the earlier part of the record, where the *Moccu*-formula is often used to describe the saint's tribal affiliation, examination shows that considerations of cult and not of person are likely to be involved.'⁷⁸

⁷⁵ It has not been established whether anyone was ever known by two different kinds of nicknames at the same time - or indeed at all. It is not even clear if any of the individuals were referred to by hypocoristic names during their lifetime, or whether this process only happened posthumously. There are many basic questions still to be answered.

⁷⁶ 'Whenever in hagiographical matters there is question of getting back to the origins of a traditional cult, there are three essential elements to be studied in each case: place, date, legend.' Delahaye 1905, 132

⁷⁷ Sharpe 1995, 318.

⁷⁸ Ó Riain 1985, xvi.

So once a saint is so successful obscured how might we reveal who he really is? Ó Riain's work illustrates various ways in which one might interrogate the evidence - how to uncover bogus saints and to reveal the real extent of a single cult. First, one must not look at one form of evidence in isolation: martyrologies, *vitae*, genealogies and dedications on the ground, must all be looked at together. This is because of the way that one affects and is affected by the other. These sources will be examined in more detail in 1.5., but I will look briefly at them now in so far as they are relevant to Ó Riain's arguments.

Genealogy, as we have seen, is argued by Ó Riain to express the localisation of a cult. A pedigree seeks 'to legitimize the localization, or several localizations which had overtaken the saint's cult.'⁷⁹ Thus, if a saint Fintan from, say, Leinster, has a cult which travels to Ulaid it is likely that a saint Fintan with a Ulaid genealogy will emerge in the record. Working backwards one might therefore say that if a saint has several variant genealogies, as, for instance, does Brénain m. Findloga, the cult of that saint was active among all those people and in the places associated with them.

The localisation of cult might also be expressed in martyrologies. The method by which calendars were compiled is far from clear, as will be seen in 1.5, but one theory is that information in a calendar was drawn from records gathered from churches all over the country, and that the records submitted might derive partly from an 'oral life', that is a local record of stories about a saint and his or her associates which 'can be shown to have loomed large not only in the composition of the vita, but also in that of the martyrology or calendar'.⁸⁰ The names given in for any particular day might come from that day's reading. Along with the main saint of a church, then, an entry in a martyrology might include people with whom the saint had an association in a story, saints who might also be represented in dedications nearby. The location of dedications to a saint might, in turn, influence the writing of a Life: 'No doubt it was common practice to draw up a list of recorded dedications to a saint before composing his Life.'⁸¹ These are only some of the ways in which one source interacts with another. It is not a tidy process. Often it is difficult to assess in which way the influence is travelling.

⁷⁹ Ó Riain 1982, 157.

⁸⁰ Ó Riain 1982, 153.

⁸¹ Ó Riain 1978, 44.

In looking for bogus saints, or doublets, one might look for instances in the calendar where two or more saints appear together on more than one feast day (or on adjacent days). Thus, according to Ó Riain, Columb is almost invariably accompanied by Findbarr in the calendar (Findbarr / Finnian was Columb Cille's teacher).⁸² Another example is that Flannán of Cell Dalua accompanies Molua on 21 Dec, there is a Luigbe and a Flann on Jan 14, a Lugna and Flann on Jan 20-21, and a Ness-Luga and a Flannán on March 14-15.⁸³ This can be explained by invoking Ó Riain's 'oral life' in which these two saints must have appeared together: 'appeal to the concept of an Oral Life can be a very effective means not only of elucidating perplexing passages of the *vita* or *betha* but also of eliminating those redundant surrogate saints thrown up by a cult in the course of its diffusion.'⁸⁴ Sometimes groups of saints appear together on dates close to each other. *MT* has on May 28th, for example, *Maelodran. Sillan. Eogan sapiens.*, while on May 31st are *Eogan episcopus et sapiens...Maelodrán Slaani*. The explanation for this is not certain. It looks as if the commemorations for the two days have come from different sources but both have been included, probably for the sake of comprehensiveness, possibly for fear of leaving anyone out and perhaps through doubt about which was the right date. The *Sillan* of May 28th may have been created from a misunderstanding of *Slaani* (of Sláne), or perhaps *vice versa*. Another example of a place-name mistakenly giving rise to a saint is on the day before, May 30th, where there is a saint *Bile*, apparently part of the place-name Mag Bile which has been partially displaced from the following day.⁸⁵

Groups of saints travel together not just from date to date but also from calendars to Lives. Two of the four saints who appear in the life of Colmán of Dromore, for example, appear in *MT* on Oct 29, the day preceding Colmán's feast.⁸⁶ In arguing for the equivalence of Daig and Dagán, Ó Riain observes that Dagán is accompanied on his feast day (Sept 13) by the three daughters of Colum, while the Life of Daig (a supposedly different saint with different churches) includes an episode where three

⁸² Ó Riain 1982, 155. See my critique below, 21.

⁸³ Ó Riain 1978, 139-142.

⁸⁴ Ó Riain 1982, 152.

⁸⁵ *MT*, 46-7.

⁸⁶ Ó Riain 1985, 154. Note that only the names of the saints match; details of place and genealogy are different. Also, the feast day of Oct 30 is not usually considered to be Colmán of Dromore's, but a saint called Mocholmoc of Lann Mocholmoc. See Ó Riain 1983 for evidence that one is an alias for the other.

daughters of Columba are brought to life. To understand this 'one has to go beyond the written record, to a period when Daig and Dagán represented a single saint, of whom it was said that he had raised from the dead the three daughters of Colum.' In other words, one has to look again to an oral life.⁸⁷ In the course of examining in detail three saints' cults in Argyll we will look out for instances like this where a saint (perhaps in disguise) is accompanied on his feast day by characters from other kinds of hagiographical material about allegedly distinct saints.

Another way of uncovering duplicate saints is demonstrated by Ó Riain in his discussion of the cult of Cainnech. Here he deduces the likelihood of a cult of Colum Cille in a particular part of Ireland highlighted in *VC*. When he looks for the cult on the ground, however, he finds nothing. Instead there appears to be a thriving cult of a saint called Cainnech. His conclusion, having studied the genealogies and associations of various saints, and invoking traces of a saint Mocholmóc as representing an intermediate phase of the cult, is that the cult of Cainnech is simply a portion of the cult of Colum Cille in disguise.⁸⁸ This is to oversimplify as there are many more strands to Ó Riain's argument, not least the linguistic evidence,⁸⁹ but it draws attention to an important device in the attempt to reduce a multiplicity of cults to one. That is, if one encounters the cult of saint x where one would expect to find saint y, one should investigate the grounds for concluding that saint x = saint y. We will attempt this kind of reasoning in 2.4 when we look at the cult of Berach.

Two other techniques discussed by Ó Riain include (i) looking for an association of two or more saints in a literary source being replicated on the ground, and (ii) seeking the

⁸⁷ Ó Riain 1985, 155.

⁸⁸ Ó Riain 1983.

⁸⁹ Russell 201, 247. The process simply involves a sequence of the known hypocoristic processes introduced above, 15-16. Thus the addition of the common suffix *-án* produces Colmán from Colum, and then, if a liquid and nasal become a double nasal, and a front vowel is suffixed, Colmán becomes either Comma or Conna. Palatalisation would then produce Cainne, to which the suffix *-ach* is added to give Cainnech (*ibid.*, 247). The most problematic part of the process is the last - the addition of the suffix. It is the cognate of the common British suffix *-awc*, and though common in some functions it is not used much for hypocorisms. Cainnech is, in fact, the only example given by Russell for the use of *-ach* in this way. Does this case represent, wonders Russell, the hibernicisation of the common British suffix *-óc*? (*ibid.*, 245) The name does turn up, he notes, with an *-óc* termination in the Martyrologies of Gorman and Donegal, and elsewhere. There is some variability regarding palatalisation of the name too, a confusion 'perhaps reflecting a primarily written tradition of the name'. See also O'Brien 1974 for examples of names ending in *-ach* which derive from 'adjectival forms in *-acos*'. These include Berach, Brónach, Conglach and Senach. 'This is one of the most prolific forms in the language' O'Brien 1974, 224.

association of two apparently different saints (x and y) with a single person, with a view to establishing that $x=y$. An example of the latter is that Abbán and Ailbe (who represent 'an ideal radical / hypocoristic pair') are both associated with Ibar (Ibar is uncle of Abbán, and gives his name to Ailbe's church - Imlech Ibair), which is one of several reasons for concluding that the saints might originally have been one.⁹⁰ We will look in the conclusion (chapter four) at examples of these coincidences associated with Argyll, and assess their validity as evidence.

Before proceeding I will raise a few reservations and questions about some of the foregoing. The value of Ó Riain's work is in its encouragement to work hagiographical material to its extreme and in its refusal to be defeated by the material's complexity. Caution is required in some areas, however:

1) There are too many variables, so it is possible to argue almost anything. If, as a cult divides, the saint can come to be known by a number and variety of names, his feast can be celebrated on any day of the calendar and his genealogy is irrelevant to his original identity, then the problem is not so much deciding who *is* simply a portion of another saint's cult as deciding who is *not*. Logically it becomes possible to eliminate almost all of the Columb types (Columb, Colmán, Mochonnoc, Mochumma, etc) on the basis that they might all represent a facet of the cult of Columb Cille. Even Colmán Ela, a saint with a Life, an obit, and an appearance in *VC* is not immune, as we will see. Further, the number of Colmán type names in *MT* means that simply through the laws of probability it is impossible for some of Ó Riain's arguments to fail. We have seen (above, 19), for example, Ó Riain's observation about the feasts of Columb and Findbarr - that 'Findbarr and Colum... are almost inseparable in the calendar as a glance of eight of the former's nine or so feasts ... will show.'⁹¹ My own examination produces results which are superficially impressive, but ultimately inconclusive. A listing of all commemorations in *MT* of saints called Columb or derivative set beside all commemorations to saints called Findbarr or derivative⁹² revealed the following:

- Findbarr-type on same day as Columb-type - 11 times;

⁹⁰ Ó Riain 1985, 152.

⁹¹ Ó Riain 1985, 155.

⁹² Possible derivatives of Columb include Cainnech, Cammine, Colmán, Columba, Commian, Comma, Comman, Conac, Conan, Conna, Cumean, Cumman, Cummene, Cummine, Cumne, Dochumma, Mochammoc, Mocholmoc, Mochomma, Mochommoc, Mochonna, Teochonna, Tochonna. Equivalents of Findbarr include Finden, Fintan, Findbarr, Barrfhinn, Finnio, Finnian and Uinniau.

- Columb-type occurs the day before (but not on day or day after) - once;
- Columb-type occurs the day after (but not on day or day before) - 3 times;
- Columb-type occurs both day before and day after - 3 times;
- Columb-type does not occur on day, or day before, or day after - 3 times.

There are, however 175 Columb-type dedications, which, if spaced out evenly would occur at least every other day, there being only 316 days in *MT* (365 less the days which are missing). A dedication to *anyone* is therefore almost bound to occur within a day of a dedication to a Columb-type. This does not mean that the principle of looking for coincidences of one name with another is unsound, simply that it is necessary to be aware of false positives. The technique works better for unusual names but this does not often help since the more fissile a cult the more likely the name is to be common.

2) In sequences of equivalent saints where $a=b$, $b=c$, and $c=d$, it is often difficult to be persuaded of the equivalence of a and d , though logically that should be the correct conclusion. The case that Cainnech of Achad Bó is simply a reflex of the cult of Columb Cille⁹³ rests on the acceptance of several logical steps on the way, each of which is just credible but which cumulatively lead to a conclusion that I judge to be ultimately unstable. This may again be the result of there being too many variables, and the suspicion that a series of different, but equally credible, steps might have led to an entirely different conclusion. The sheer unpredictability of name mutations makes navigation through this material difficult. For example, Mochumma ought to derive from Columb, which indeed it does. But there is some evidence that it might also have been (or have been understood to have been) a derivative of Comgall⁹⁴ and is in at least one *Vita* confused with Mochóeme.⁹⁵

3) There is a danger that the determination to reduce the number of saints all bearing the same or related names results in the elimination of too many. There is no doubt that

⁹³ Ó Riain 1985, 148. Ó Riain 1983.

⁹⁴ *Vita prior S. Fintani seu Munnu* ch 4, Heist 1965,199. It is possible, however, that the original subject of this part of the story was not Comgall at all, but either Columb m. Nainneda (a place called Combur Da Glas appears in the story, a name very similar to Tír Dá Glas, Columb's main foundation) or Columb Cille (who appears in the next chapter). Ó Riain considers these two Columbs to be the same (Ó Riain 1982,150-151. When Comgall was grafted on a trace of the original saint was left behind in this reference to *Mochoma*.

⁹⁵ There is a Mochóeme aka Mochonna of Tír Dá Glas who appears in *Rec. Mai*, Ó Riain 1985 no 181.5. In *Vita Santi Fintani abbatís de Cluain Ednech* ch. 3 there is a monk of Tír Dá Glas who is Mocummin in D, Mochuimi in S and Mocumma in O (Plummer 1910, 97).

some names simply were popular; in a ten year period *AU* records the death of four churchmen called Cuimmíne, for instance.⁹⁶ Also, the popularity of the names Colmán and Fintan is noticed in several sources. Thus, the *Vita S. Albei*, one of Sharpe's O'Donohue Lives, mentions many men from Ireland, all with the same name: 'ie 12 Colmans, 12 Comgens and 12 Fintans.'⁹⁷ In an Irish litany of saints⁹⁸ there are, amongst the saints of Fintan m. Gaibréin of Cluain Eidnech, 8 Fintans - *ocht Fintain dib*.⁹⁹ Notice, however, that Ó Riain is scarcely ruthless in his elimination of saints sharing names despite his realisation that there are far too many.¹⁰⁰ Of the 97 Colmáns he finds in *MT* he allows only one per cluster, leaving 67. 67 is still a lot.¹⁰¹

Ó Riain's work inspired much of what follows. He works the evidence available to him to the limit, which is what I wished to do in Argyll. I may have some anxieties, as expressed above, about the difficulties of arriving at credible conclusions when there are so many variables, but the kind of exercise Ó Riain has performed on hagiographical material in Ireland seems worth attempting in Scotland even if only to show the limitations of this kind of evidence.

1.4. Methodology: a brief history of the project

This thesis is about two related kinds of evidence - *cill*- names and dedications to saints - and what they can tell us about the early church in Argyll. In seeking to evaluate the evidence I at first resolved to create an electronic database as the best way to organise, present and interrogate the data. The database itself is not presented as part of this thesis but since the creation of its structure raised questions about the nature of the material it might now be worth providing a brief outline of its development.

⁹⁶ *AU* 659.1 *Cummeni episcopus Naendroma* [and others] *mortui sunt*. *AU* 662.1 *Cummeni Longus* [and another] *dormierunt*. *AU* 665.6 *Cummeni abb Cluano moccu Nois* [and others] *dormierunt*. *AU* 669.1 *Obitus Cummeni Ailbi abbatis Iae*. Thanks are due to Thomas Clancy for pointing out this clump. This is not to say that duplication of saints doesn't occur in the annals too, however. Accompanying Cuimmíne, abbot of Cluain mac Nois in 665, for example, is *Colmán Cass abb Cluona m. Noais*, who looks suspiciously like a doublet.

⁹⁷ Heist 1965, 121 ch. 14.

⁹⁸ Kathleen Hughes 1972, 209 thought the Litany was compiled around 800, Sharpe thought 9th or 10th century (Sharpe 1984, 256) and Sanderlin 1975, 252 considered the 'date of composition may well have been after 900'.

⁹⁹ *Litany Irish Saints II*, 60.

¹⁰⁰ Ó Riain 1982, 152.

¹⁰¹ Ó Riain 1975, 79.

The database programme I chose was MS Access; this was chosen, rather than a simple spread-sheet programme such as MS Excel, because Access allows a variety of options to be chosen for each entry. This I considered crucial when dealing with material about which there is so much doubt; it allows uncertainty to be expressed, but in a structured manner. Thus, for instance, for a site like Kildavie in South Kintyre, where the location of the ecclesiastical site suggested by the *cill*- name is not known, it was possible to record a number of grid references of varying degrees of probability. It is indeed often the case that the location of the *cill*- is not known, the only remaining clue as to its original whereabouts being a settlement. While I often chose the National Grid Reference of the settlement to locate the *cill*- name I was able to make it clear that this was not necessarily the original site. It was possible to generate lists which showed at a glance which *cill*- locations were secure and which were not, and to offer some alternatives. This transparency is essential in the presentation of this kind of data, whose uncertainties might otherwise be concealed, leading to misleading conclusions. A distribution map showing *cill*- names as they are placed in the modern landscape might, for instance, allow the conclusion that *cill*- sites tend to be located in good fertile land in strategic positions. This might indeed be so for the settlement sites which took their names from the *cill*- sites, but it obscures the possibility that the original *cill*- may have been a small burial site, say, in an exposed position above the settlement.

Similarly, when choosing a saint as the dedicatee of a site I wanted to present various options. Thus, to return to the example of Kildavie, it would be possible to show that it might be a dedication to a saint called Móbí or Dobiú, for which there are various candidates, or to a saint called Berchán or Berach, or even to Brenáinn. One could then navigate in the database to any one of these saints to find out about the affiliations of that saint - where he came from, the whereabouts of his main churches, his patrons - and his likely *floruit*. I also wished to layer the various kinds of data about a saint into degrees of probability, and I thought it might be possible to date some of this material. It would thus be possible to chart the varying profile of a saint through time.

It was at this point that the limitations of the database became apparent. The material was even more elusive than I had originally thought. Each time I found I could not fit data into an existing category I had to create a new category, leading to the realisation

that either I was going to have to force the information into categories in which it was uncomfortable or the database had to be allowed to grow into something so cumbersome as to be almost unusable. These difficulties were most apparent in dealing with saints, beginning with what might be thought to be his or her most basic attribute: his name. The name might be where one begins but it is not a neutral piece of information. The St. Catán associated with Bute, for instance, is sometimes identified with a saint listed by Ó Riain as Catán m. Matain, but it is quite possible that Catán of Bute and Catán m. Matáin are separate entities and should be listed separately. If one imagines that each name is a kind of bag into which one puts various bits of hagiographical information, one is faced, each time one approaches a body of information about one or a number of saints, with the decision as to how many 'bags' are needed to contain the material. This is at the very heart of the thesis. It turns out to be one of the central questions that needs to be answered, rather than one to which we already know the answer and which can then be used as a tool to answer other questions. In other words the decisions about inputting data into the database might be regarded as the *result* of an enquiry into the nature of saints' cults rather than simply the first steps in the pursuit of a greater goal. Or, to put it another way, the fact that that the database proved so difficult to design and use suggested that the tools which I thought were going to be used to investigate the history of Argyll should themselves be the subject of the investigation.

The endeavour to construct a framework into which data on saints could be fitted, then, suggested that there was a good deal of work to do on the data itself before it could be much use as a tool in illuminating the history of the early church in Argyll. An examination of the nature of the evidence might, in other words, be a worthy study in its own right. I concluded that presenting a table of saints (chapter six) in which information is properly provenanced and in which possible overlaps between one saint and another is highlighted, not obscured, would at least provide the transparency which I felt was lacking in much previous discussion of cult, and that, accompanied by detailed studies of three saints in Argyll (chapter two), a reasonably helpful picture might be gained of the uses to which data on saints and their cults can, and can not, be put in Scotland.

The database, meanwhile, proved to be of some use in organising the data on *cill*- sites, not least because it is constructed in such a way as to be compatible with the Scottish Place Name Database. While this aspect of the database could have been presented as part of the thesis, I decided that the disadvantages (creating a user-friendly front-end) outweighed the advantages (searchability) and that the presentation of a gazetteer of sites was an adequate arrangement for the time being. This dry data is accompanied by three case-studies (chapter three) which look at the sites in their historical and geographical contexts. Here the sites are linked with the various saints who might be the dedicatees, and some hypotheses put forward regarding the distribution of the sites. Each hypothesis is, of course, dependent on which saint is chosen (usually from several possibilities) as dedicatee of each site, which returns us to the central problem of the material. It is capable of such varying interpretation that sometimes it is possible to make two diametrically opposed statements from the same pieces of evidence. And there are too many variables. It was hoped that the geographical case-studies might reveal groups of, say, Leinster saints coinciding with a historical context in which there might be evidence for contact between Argyll and Leinster. The trouble is that every element of the argument is unstable: the identity of the saint, the saint's affiliations (to kin-group and to ecclesiastical bodies), the land-holding history of Argyll, the affiliations of the landholders (if their identities can be discovered). It is quite possible to create a pattern, but its value has to be judged according to the reliability of each element in its make-up.

In this thesis, the process of trying to make sense of the evidence can be examined in some detail. All the data that went into almost every argument in geographical case-studies and the detailed studies of saints is on display either in the table of saints or in the gazetteer. Choices have to be made, and these are subjective, but at least it will be possible to see the complexity of the data lying behind them.

1.5 Sources

The usefulness of the sources drawn on for this thesis depends a) on their date and method of composition, and b) on our understanding of their function. A description of the main sources used will follow, beginning with the most difficult, the martyrology.

The martyrology

As we have seen, Ó Riain regards the martyrology as vital to unravelling the development of saints' cults and of identifying bogus saints: 'Of the Irish calendar it may be said that an understanding of its mode of composition is the most urgent desideratum in the study of Irish hagiography.'¹⁰² This, and the question of dating, has been extensively discussed with regards all the main Irish martyrologies from which I will draw: *FO*, *MT*, *MG* and *MDo*.¹⁰³

First, what is the difference between a martyrology and a calendar of saints, and how do I use the terms? Hennig proposed that they have different functions and advised careful use of terminology.¹⁰⁴ He may well be right, but his thoughts on the matter have not generally been taken up by later commentators and the terms martyrology and calendar are used more or less indifferently. I usually use 'martyrology' to describe *FO*, *MT*, *MG* and *MDo* but I do not imply anything regarding function by the use of that term. I mostly use 'calendar' when referring to the Scottish works such as Adam King's *Calendar*. Again my use of the term is not to be taken as a comment on how these works might have been used; often I am simply following Forbes, from whose edition I have usually been working.

The purpose for which these documents, both Irish and Scottish, were written varies from work to work. In the case of *MT* it seems that the original intention of the document was superseded as the document grew, as will be seen as I outline below the key characteristics and uses, from the point of view of a modern historian, of each of the works in turn.

¹⁰² Ó Riain 1982, 157.

¹⁰³ Stokes 1895, 1905, Best and Lawlor 1931, Ó Riain 1975, 1990, 1993, 2001, 2006 (the latter bringing together much of the preceding work), Richter 1989 (this brings together the work of John Hennig from 1946 - 1982), Dumville 2002.

¹⁰⁴ 'A calendar (or better: *kalendarium*) serves a liturgical purpose: it records commemorations actually observed in a particular place... The martyrology, on the other hand, records virtually as many commemorations as it can gather... It serves a historical purpose' Hennig 1964, 317.

The Martyrology of Tallaght

The date of the Martyrology of Tallaght (*MT*) has been discussed in various places.¹⁰⁵ There is no universal consensus but, based on an analysis of scholarly opinion, I accept the following: there was a version of *MT* at Tallaght sometime in the last quarter of the eighth century or first quarter of the ninth century;¹⁰⁶ documents from which this version arose may have been compiled much earlier, and one version may have spent some time on Iona up to about 740;¹⁰⁷ the version we now have, which is based on a MS compiled soon after 1152,¹⁰⁸ shows signs of interpolation in the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁰⁹ In sum one cannot be secure in assigning even a 9th century date to any of the entries in *MT*, though it is reasonable to suggest that the majority of entries were in place by then.¹¹⁰

As far as function is concerned, Hennig put forward the proposition that the lists of saints in the Hieronymian section¹¹¹ of *MT* were originally for insertion in the liturgy, in particular in the section of the Stowe Missal known as the *apostolorum*.¹¹² Dumville accepts this suggestion up to a point, and extends the insight to include the Irish saints; he does not accept Hennig's proposition that the fact that the national saints were rendered in Irish, and were often associated with place-names, made them 'patently unsuitable for liturgical purposes'. He also expands on Hennig's suggestion that such a list was specifically for the Stowe Missal; if what is seen in that missal is part of an

¹⁰⁵ Ó Riain 1990, 1993, 2001. Dumville 2002. These articles summarise earlier work on the subject.

¹⁰⁶ Dumville 2002, 43. 'When T was first composed 'is still quite unknown' Dumville 2001,46.

¹⁰⁷ Ó Riain 1993, 11-13, 21.

¹⁰⁸ It appears in the Book of Leinster (*LL*), compiled after 1152, probably at Terryglass and probably by Áed mac Crimthainn. (Ó Riain 1990, 21). Four folios are missing in this MS (Jan 30 - March 11, May 20 - July 31, Nov 1 - Dec 16). These can partly be made up from a copy made in 1627 - 1636 by Michael O'Clery in Brussels. The copy used by O'Clery was probably itself a copy of *LL*, before it lost Jan 30 - March 11, and May 20 - July 31 (Best and Lawlor 193, xvii. Dumville 2002 expands on Best and Lawlor, pointing out in particular the composite nature of O'Clery's (and probably Colgan's) work.) Nov 1 - Dec 16 are missing even from O'Clery's edition, however; an attempt at reconstruction can be made using *MG*: *MG* 'drew its Irish saints almost entirely and, as far as can be judged, faithfully, from an independent, no longer extant, copy of T' (Ó Riain 1990, 22).

¹⁰⁹ Dumville 2002, 43.

¹¹⁰ 'We...cannot start from the presumption that T began as a work of the late 8th century...Any conclusion which places T before 904 must depend on showing why entries which are thereby stigmatised as additions should be so regarded. It is not easy to see how this can be done' Dumville 2002, 37.

¹¹¹ The Hieronymian Martyrology is a work compiled in northern Italy in the sixth century, a copy of which may have been brought to England in the 660s or 670s (Ó Riain 1993, 1-3). It lies behind the non-Irish section of *MT*.

¹¹² Hennig 1964, 324: 'My contention is that the places where the Stowe *Misa apostolorum* provides for the insertion of names, the complete list of names found in T was inserted and that this original purpose of T accounts for its reducing H to a bare list of names of persons in the genitive case.'

ongoing tradition, rather than a new phenomenon, then 'we have as yet no reason to attribute it [*MT*] to the culdees of Tallaght at that date rather than, say, to the monks of Iona in the earlier eighth century.'¹¹³ But while *MT* may have begun as a liturgical document, Hennig considered that it later returned to 'the narrative trend': 'There can be no doubt that in its present form *T* is no longer what it was originally intended to be'.¹¹⁴

Ó Riain is more interested in method of composition than in function (though the two are related). He contends that after 716, when Iona adopted the Roman Easter, there was a need there for a Hieronymian martyrology, and that a copy duly arrived and was annotated there before leaving for Ireland before 767, 'perhaps about 740 when the Iona chronicle left'.¹¹⁵ Its further expansion at Tallaght, and the compilation of *FO* (more below) may have been motivated by the Council of Aachen's decree in 817 ordaining that a martyrology must be read in a monastery at the hour of Prime.¹¹⁶

The compilation of the Irish section may have been influenced, as we have seen, by oral lives of saints, that is collections of traditions about saints known in the neighbourhood of the church in which they were commemorated. If Ó Riain is right, then this is a potentially useful insight as it would imply that groups of saints appearing together in *MT* may be related in other ways too. An illustration of his ideas is given through his analysis of a single day in *MT* - June 13 - where he shows that all but one of the saints listed belong to the south east part of the diocese of Clogher, and the remaining saint is connected by genealogy.¹¹⁷

Various oddities in *MT* reveal something of the method of compilation. There are many examples of duplications, for instance, which could suggest that at some point a scribe was working from more than one source. Some of these have been discussed above. March 8th for instance has the following pairs: two saints Mochonna; a Colmán Chirr and a Mac Colmáin Chirr; a Liber and a Librán; a Mochua and a Cronán. The last pair does not represent an obvious duplication (Mochua is a hypocoristic form of Cronán, but the linguistic progression from Cronán to Mochua is not transparent), but sometimes

¹¹³ Dumville 2002, 46.

¹¹⁴ Hennig 1964, 325.

¹¹⁵ Ó Riain 1993, 11-13, 21.

¹¹⁶ Ó Riain 2002, 224.

¹¹⁷ Ó Riain 1975, 81-3.

the duplications are so obvious one is bound to wonder if their retention was deliberate. On February 17th, for example there is both *Cumeane episcopi et Lacteani sacerdotis* and *Colmani et Lactani episcopi* (all names in the genitive case). It is just possible that the scribe did not notice the repeat, or was in doubt, but it could be that the pairs are consciously in twice because they represent the cult of these two people in two different places. In other words it might be worth considering the possibility that at some time in *MT*'s evolution there was an interest in mapping cult, but while the names of the saints have been retained the places in which they were commemorated have been dropped. An example of an entry in which the place-name has been obscured rather than dropped is the one on April 17th which reads *Donnán. Failbe i nInis. Enan. Ega*. My interpretation is that in an earlier version Donnán, Failbe and Enan appeared one below the other, with, in a column to the right, the words *i nInis Ega*, thus:

Donnán

Falbe i nInis

Enan Ega

All three saints, in other words, are connected with the Island of Eigg. There may be other examples where the place name has accidentally been incorporated into the list of saints. More usually, perhaps, the name of the place which links the saints - the place which may have submitted the list - has been omitted.

The entry on Oct 21 declares itself as a list of monks associated with Munnu m. Tulcháin. 219 monks are named making it easily the longest entry in *MT*. There is no obvious connection between *MT* and Tech Munnu, Fintan's main church, and the reason for the saint's special treatment here is unclear. It may be that the list is an example 'of the widespread European practice of preserving within monasteries *libri memoriales* which, as well as commemorating the monastery's lay and clerical benefactors, also remembered the members of the community.'¹¹⁸ Such lists may lie behind other entries in *MT*, and also, thinks Ó Riain, behind sections in the Book of Leinster which record the names of bishops, priests, deacons and others.¹¹⁹ While these *libri memoriales* may have fed into martyrologies such as *MT*, another important list in L - *Comainmnigud*

¹¹⁸ Ó Riain 1985, 216.

¹¹⁹ Ó Riain 1985 nos 704-6, 709-11.

neom hErenn - may have in part derived from the martyrologies.¹²⁰ There are examples in this list of the kind of connections between one saint and another in a cluster which, like some of the entries in *MT*, suggest the existence of an 'oral life'.¹²¹

There is much in *MT* which cannot be explained by invoking memorial lists, or any other single explanation. Its compilation over a long period means that much will probably always defy easy rationalisation. There are entries which look more suited to annals: the entries on Colmán Ela and Comgall of Bangor both include their ages on death, for example. Others commemorate events: March 22 has *Egressio familiae Brendini*, for instance. Some suggest a particular focus on the place of (partial) compilation: August 10 and September 6 both commemorate the coming of relics to Tallaght.¹²² And there are some odd narrative entries such as the one on May 9th about Mamertus instituting the singing of solemn litanies. The most bizarre is on April 5th: a decapitated head apparently declared *Libera nos a malo*.¹²³

As a source *MT* promises much. It hints at the existence of *vitae* now lost to us, and it gives tantalising glimpses of relationships between one saint and another, and between saints and places. Its method of composition remains largely obscure to us, however, and while we may have some idea of its purpose at an early stage of its evolution, this becomes increasingly unclear. Many of the problems of this source derive from its late and imperfect survival and the fact that it probably suffered alteration at least until the 10th century. One can make suggestions based on evidence from *MT*, but the insecurities regarding the date of any particular entry mean that arguments based on the *MT* alone (or its derivatives) should be treated with caution.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Ó Riain 1985 no 707-8 and 217. There is 'little doubt but that a martyrology served as one of the principal sources of the text' but despite a 'striking correspondence' to *MT* in places, *MT* was probably not the source.

¹²¹ eg 3 bishops preceding Berchán of Cluain Sasta in a list of bishops (Ó Riain 1985 no.704.180-84) have names held by characters in the life of Berach (which is possible evidence for the identity of Berach and Berchán). This is one of the lists Ó Riain regards as deriving from a *liber memorialis*.

¹²² Aug 10: *Mael Ruain cum suis reliquiis sanctorum martirum et uirginum ad Tamlachtain uenit* . Sept 6: *Aduentus reliquiarum Scethi filiae Méchi ad Tamlachtain* . But note that Mael Ruain is not top of the list on his commemoration date (July 7).

¹²³ This entry has been much discussed. See Ó Riain 1993, 4-5.

¹²⁴ It is not safe, for instance, to say that Blane was commemorated on Iona in late 8th century on the evidence of *MT* alone (Fraser 2005, 113). We don't know he was in *MT* when a version of it was there. It seems likely, in fact, that the entry, as it stands, was not added until the 10th century (Dumville 2002).

MT is the most important of the Irish martyrologies for the purpose of this thesis, but I draw on the others too, so a summary of the issues most relevant to this thesis, including any assumptions I have made about dating, will follow.

Félire Óengusso and others

The main text of *FO* consists of a four line stanza of poetry per day, plus a prologue of 85 stanzas, and an epilogue of 141 stanzas with final couplet. The verses commemorate Roman martyrs, figures from the Bible and Irish saints. Feasts of the Church such as the circumcision of Christ, the feast of All Saints and Easter (which had a fixed date as well as a moveable one) are noticed too. Added later to the main text are two prefaces and a considerable body of notes relating to the text.

Stokes suggested, in his 1905 edition of the text, that it dated to around 800. In this he was influenced by the arguments of both Strachan and Thurneysen.¹²⁵ Ó Riain argued, however, that neither *MT* nor *FO* 'can in fact have been composed before about 828'.¹²⁶ He based his argument on the presence, in the calendars, of saints who did not die until some time after 800. He also proposed an interpretation of some stanzas in *FO*'s prologue which would give a context for the composition of the work between 828 and 833.¹²⁷ His ideas have been questioned, however, both by Liam Breatnach¹²⁸ and by David Dumville,¹²⁹ and it seems that a date for the composition of *FO* at the beginning of the 9th century is still accepted by most scholars.

As for the date of the commentary, Ó Riain thinks he can detect a version of this underlying all the surviving manuscripts which, from internal textual evidence, he dates to 'within a clearly delimited period of the late twelfth century'.¹³⁰ The commentator used *MG* as a source, he argues, and was in turn used as a source by the Martyrology of Drummond (*MDr*). This puts the dates between about 1170 and 1174.¹³¹ He further

¹²⁵ Stokes 1905, vii.

¹²⁶ Ó Riain 1990, 25.

¹²⁷ Ó Riain 1990, 38.

¹²⁸ Breatnach in McCone and Simms 1996, 74-5. Breatnach argues that only two of the later saints appear in *FO* and that of those one died in 803 and the other's identification with a particular *Dímmán* who died in 811 is unsafe.

¹²⁹ Dumville 2002.

¹³⁰ Ó Riain 2001, 235.

¹³¹ Ó Riain 2001, 236.

suggests Armagh as a likely provenance for the commentary, with later reworking at a church in the west Midlands of Ireland.¹³² Dumville, while clearly aware of Ó Riain's article, remains unsure: the preface and commentary may be 'tentatively dated to the eleventh or twelfth century'.¹³³

The main source of *FO* has usually been accepted as *MT*, a proposition first made in the 12th century preface to *MG*. Ó Riain declares, for instance, that *MT* 'served, with few exceptions, as the sole source of MO [ie *FO*].'¹³⁴ This does not mean that *MT as we now have it* predates the early 9th century, simply that an earlier version of it was used in the compilation of *FO*.

The intention of *MG*, as stated in its preface, was 'besides the seeking of heaven for himself and for everyone who should sing it through, 'tis this that impelled him to make it, the fewness of the saints of Ireland whom Oengus brought into his martyrology, and the multitude of the saints of the rest of the world for whom the Church has appointed festival and mass (but whom) Oengus has left out, and (lastly, because) a great number of those whom he brought in were not arranged on the days on which the Church celebrates their festivals.' It was composed by Máel Muire Ua Gormáin, abbot of Knock Abbey in Louth 'some time between 1166 and 1174'.¹³⁵ Stokes argued that the glosses were added 'a considerable time after the text was composed' but there are reasons to believe that they are, in fact, contemporary.¹³⁶

MG displays a very close correspondence with *MT*. Ó Riain argues that Ua Gormáin drew almost exclusively on *MT* for his information, showing that the version he used was better than the one in *LL* and perhaps fuller.¹³⁷ The few saints who appear in *MG*, but not in the version of *MT* we now have, may have been in a previous version of *MT*, or they may have come from one of Ua Gormáin's other sources.¹³⁸ The extensive use

¹³² Ó Riain 2001, 236.

¹³³ Dumville 2002, 25.

¹³⁴ Ó Riain 2001, 221-3. He finds 40 exceptions.

¹³⁵ Stokes 1895 xiv.

¹³⁶ Ó Riain 2006, 152-3.

¹³⁷ Ó Riain 2006, 155-158.

¹³⁸ Ó Riain suggests *FO*, a set of annals, and some pedigrees in *LL*. *Ibid.*, 158-165. Ernán of Midluachair* is a saint in *MG* but absent from *MT* (Oct 26).

of *MT* made by *MG* means that we can be quite confident in reconstructing the missing portion of *MT* in *LL* (Nov 1 - Dec 16) from *MG*.

MDr, which may come from Armagh, dates to around 1170 and has been shown by Ó Riain to use the commentary on *FO* which in turn draws on *MG*. It may 'very occasionally' have drawn directly from *MG*. Fraech on 20th December in *MDr*, for example, appears in *MG*, but not in *MT*, *FO* or *FO* commentary.¹³⁹

The Martyrology of Donegal was written almost entirely by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh, and the first version dated 1628. The second version, which was heavily annotated, was dated 1630. It was edited and published in 1864 and is the edition drawn on for this thesis.¹⁴⁰ The work was conceived by Muiris Ultach Mac Seáin and others and begun by Cú Choigcríche, one of the authors of the Annals of the Four Masters. It was composed in order to improve on *FO* and *MG* which 'had been compiled obscurely, in poetic measure, in verse'. Its author was to search 'every part of Ireland', drawing on whatever could be found 'of the Lives of the saints, of their martyrologies and calendars, and of every other antiquity that appertained to them'.

Its main source was *MG* (the exemplar of the one we now have) and the author also had access to a copy of *MT*, *FO* and a set of annals. Other material included individual saints' Lives in the vernacular, the hagiographical portion of the Book of Leinster, pedigrees of the saints (though not *CGSH*) and other works such as *Cáin Adomnáin*. It also benefited from knowledge gathered by Míchéal Ó Cléirigh as he travelled around Ireland, and from his own familiarity with north-west Ulster.

To sum up the foregoing and give an indication of how I use these martyrologies in this thesis, I accept a date early in the 9th century for the main text of *FO*, and while I consider that some of the annotations may date to the late twelfth century I would not assume it for any of them unless there is confirmation in *MDr*. Regarding *MG* I accept that the glosses are contemporary with the main text, and belong to 1170 at the latest. *MG* is useful in reconstructing lost parts of *MT*, and possibly at showing what may have

¹³⁹ Ó Riain 2002, 12-15.

¹⁴⁰ It was edited by James Todd and William Reeves from a transcript of 1851. It is not possible to tell from this edition which parts belonged to the first version and which to the annotated version.

been in *MT*'s earlier editions. *MDo* does not add any earlier material, but there are some useful insights from Míchéal Ó Cléirigh and it is of great value in revealing what reliable and erudite Irish scholars of the early part of the 16th century believed about Irish saints.

The Scottish calendars

I draw on all the calendars printed in Forbes 1862 except for the Drummond Calendar which, while it resided in Perthshire when Forbes wrote, is almost certainly of Irish origin (as discussed above). I use Forbes as my authority on all the works except for the Calendar of Fearn for which there is a modern edition: Adam 1991.

There have been recent studies on Adam King, Thomas Dempster and David Chalmers of Fintray (called by Forbes 'Camerarius'). Their works have not been republished nor a detailed analysis made of the content of their calendars, however, so an assessment of the value of these sources must be considered provisional. King's Calendar was published in 1586 as a preface to a translation of the catechism of the Jesuit Peter Canisius,¹⁴¹ Dempster's appeared around 1627¹⁴² and Chalmer's Calendar, which was part of a larger work, *De Scotorum Fortitudine*, was published at Paris in 1631.¹⁴³

There is a consensus regarding Dempster which can be summed up in Durkan's words: 'Too often Dempster's devotion to Scottish interests leads him astray. He felt the Irish claimed more people as Irish than was justifiable and went to the opposite extreme with results that are incredible.'¹⁴⁴ Both Forbes and Ross consider that despite the manifold errors Dempster may have had access to genuine sources no longer extant. As long as this is a possibility it is worth taking seriously every entry in his work, remembering always the words of Ross: 'Nothing can rest on his authority securely. If passion, ungoverned imagination and invention were all absent from his pages, they still contain

¹⁴¹ Durkan 2001, 196.

¹⁴² This was the date of Dempster's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Scotorum* (Ross 1950, 11), a work 'akin to' his *Menologium*, the work printed by Forbes and the one used in this thesis (Forbes 1872, xxxviii).

¹⁴³ Ross 1950, 12.

¹⁴⁴ Durkan 2003, 78.

enough evidence of hasty compilation, and of reliance on the memory of which he was so proud, to induce caution in the modern reader.¹⁴⁵

Chalmers seems to have used Dempster as a source though the exact relationship of the texts is not quite clear.¹⁴⁶ Ross considered Chalmers to be 'more sober than Dempster' in his approach to evidence, and 'free from suspicion of deliberate invention.'¹⁴⁷ Forbes, too, considered his work to have some value: 'Although very uncritical, and often incorrect, it contains facts concerning them [the Scottish saints] which are to be found nowhere else.'¹⁴⁸ Both Chalmers and Dempster drew on Adam King, and all three were influenced by the Aberdeen Breviary.

The compilation of the Aberdeen Breviary and the nationalist intention behind its creation is discussed by Macfarlane.¹⁴⁹ It was published in Edinburgh in 1509/10, Scotland's first printed book. The sources from which it drew its material on saints are varied, some probably quite early. This is discussed by Macfarlane, Macquarrie and Galbraith.¹⁵⁰ An example of the use of an early Iona hagiographical source, now lost, is discussed by Herbert and Macquarrie.¹⁵¹

Two Scottish calendars not printed by Forbes are drawn on in this thesis. One is the Perth Psalter (NLS MS652) which I consult in the edition given by Frances Eeles in 1932. He dates it to the 'latter part of the fifteenth century', perhaps about 1475. It includes on 3rd Sept *Dedicacio ecclesie de perth* and consists of a Calendar, a psalter, some canticles and most of a litany. The Calendar has a few Scottish saints in the original hand, but the majority are added later 'probably in the sixteenth century'. Many names are common to the Aberdeen Breviary but nine of the added names do not occur in that work; they include *Colmonelus* on Sept 26 and *Bartamus* (probably Berchán) on Dec 4, both references unique in Scottish Calendars. Another is a work called by

¹⁴⁵ Ross 1950, 12.

¹⁴⁶ Ross claims that 'Camerarius draws considerably on Dempster' (Ross 1950, 12). Durkan wonders if there may have been some material on early ecclesiastical affairs in Scotland which Chalmers was given by the rector of the Scots College in Paris. Chalmers then passed on the material to Dempster (Durkan 2003,77).

¹⁴⁷ Ross 1950, 12.

¹⁴⁸ Forbes 1872, xxxvii.

¹⁴⁹ Macfarlane 1985, 231-46, 441, 447.

¹⁵⁰ Galbraith 1970, Macfarlane 1985, Macquarrie 1997, 6-10.

¹⁵¹ Herbert 1988, 172-3, Macquarrie 2000, 12-15.

Forbes the Marquis of Bute's Portiforium or Breviary.¹⁵² It is now in the NLS where it is entitled the Fowlis Easter Breviary,¹⁵³ indicating its probable provenance in Fowlis Easter in Perthshire in the 15th century. It includes some saints not noticed by any other Scottish Calendar, notably Móbí on October 12th.

An important record of the commemoration of saints in medieval Scotland is the calendar contained in the Glenorchy Psalter (British Library, Egerton 2899), probably of fifteenth-century date and inscribed *Liber Coline Campbell of Glenurquhay*. It has hardly been drawn upon for this thesis however, and the MS has not been consulted, as my attention was drawn to it too late in the development of this thesis.¹⁵⁴

A final, and somewhat problematic, Scottish source is the work called by Forbes the Dunkeld Litany.¹⁵⁵ It is discussed by Clancy who regards it as 'at the very best a much-doctored litany purporting to be ancient'. It was among the manuscripts of a known forger of monastic documents and 'declares its Roman Catholicism in an unmistakably post-Reformation way'. Nonetheless, Clancy considers some aspects of it to be consistent with an early medieval date, in particular a prayer for a king *Girich*, probably to be identified with Giric mac Dúngaile (878-89): 'he seems an unlikely king on which to father a complete forgery'.¹⁵⁶ The document may have a ninth century core, though the exact details of what constitutes this core are hard to determine.

Saints' Lives

There is a mass of material on saints' lives and how to read them, but Plummer's introduction to *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae*¹⁵⁷ remains invaluable despite being written nearly 100 years ago. More recently there has been a trend to regard many saints' lives as having some kind of political agenda, a view expressed by Kim McCone after analysing Cogitosus's Life of Brigit: 'As far back as we can go, then, the saint's Life in Ireland seems to have been geared as a genre to political propaganda rather than to

¹⁵² Forbes 1872, xxiv.

¹⁵³ Fowlis Easter Breviary, NLS MS 21247. A transcript was made in 1900 by William Dunn Macray.

¹⁵⁴ Thanks to Simon Innes for drawing attention to this source, and for sending me his notes. Of obvious relevance to this thesis are the commemorations of St Domongart on March 24th and of Maeldub on October 20th (see table of saints p 340 and 363).

¹⁵⁵ I draw from Forbes' edition, and on an unpublished transcript by Gilbert Márkus.

¹⁵⁶ Clancy 2002, 416-419.

¹⁵⁷ Plummer 1910 vol 1.

moral exemplar or biography proper.¹⁵⁸ I tend to support the view of Kathleen Hughes, however, who stated, in 1972, that it would be 'imperceptive to lump all saints' Lives together as if they belong to a common pattern'.¹⁵⁹ The truth of this statement is immediately evident on considering a small sample of lives from saints potentially represented in dedications in Argyll. The *Life of Columba (VC)* is the work of a scholar and an intellectual and is the result of painstaking research. While there may be an overarching determination to promote the monastery of his patron saint above all others, this does not devalue Adomnán's integrity or moral purpose. He is concerned with presenting true stories about the saint, and is concerned with historical accuracy. The *Life of Abbán*, in contrast, though probably also aimed at a monastic audience, shows no regard whatsoever for chronological consistency, the saint being found consorting with characters from the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries. The primary *Life of Munnu* lays considerable stress on Munnu's grave and seems, unlike the previous two Lives, to have as its aim the drawing of pilgrims to the saint's primary foundation.¹⁶⁰ There was, then, great variety in intention (and skill) among the writers of early Irish hagiography, but it is worth remembering that scholars in the late medieval period, notably the man who brought together the collection of Latin Lives called by Sharpe, D, may have had imposed some degree of uniformity on the Lives they copied.¹⁶¹

Two of the Lives considered at some depth in this thesis belong to a group termed the O'Donohue group by Sharpe, who argues that 'the linguistic evidence strongly supports the view that in the O'Donohue group we have nine or ten Lives preserved largely as they were known in the Old Irish period. Their composition should almost certainly be dated earlier than about 800. It is possible that some may be as early as the Lives of SS. Patrick, Brigit, and Columba, but only historical argument from the content of the several texts will be able to establish the dates of composition.'¹⁶² His thesis has not been universally accepted,¹⁶³ but in general scholars have welcomed his insights and accepted his arguments, as I do. For the dating of other lives I rely on Kenney or, if there is one, on the authority of a modern editor. Few lives have very accurate dates,

¹⁵⁸ MacCone 1984, 30.

¹⁵⁹ Hughes 1972.

¹⁶⁰ See Stalmans 2003 for an detailed analysis of several Latin Lives including those of Munnu m. Tulcháin, Cainnech and Colmán Ela and conclusions regarding their differing purposes.

¹⁶¹ Sharpe 1991ch 12.

¹⁶² Sharpe 1991, 334.

¹⁶³ Carey 1993, Stancliffe 1993.

but there are exceptions. The Life of Adomnán is dated by Herbert to between 956 and 964.¹⁶⁴ The most important hagiographical document for the period also has a secure date - the *Vita Columbae* (*VC*).

From the point of view of this thesis one of the most interesting aspects of this work is the way Adomnán wished to portray the nature of relationships between his subject and other saints, in particular with saints who have a cult in Scotland. This is explored in some depth in the following chapters. His portrayal of relations between Iona and the various political factions of the time are of importance to this study too. I tend towards Fraser's view that there was a degree of propaganda in Adomnán's work, though I do not ultimately doubt Adomnán's integrity. There is a danger of an over-correction of our past readings of hagiography in which too much was believed, to a situation where almost nothing is, and all is regarded as the product of scheming cynicism and 'spin'.

There is a huge body of work on *VC*, one of the most important remaining an edition by Reeves in 1857. Other important studies include editions by Anderson and Anderson, and by Sharpe, while a work which puts the Life in context and investigates its method of compilation is Herbert's study of Columba's *familia*.¹⁶⁵

Genealogies

The use to which genealogies of saints might be put has been discussed above, and dating outlined in Ó Riain 1985. In summary there are versions of the *Corpus Genealogiarum Sanctorum Hiberniae* (*CGSH*) in several medieval manuscripts, the one used by Ó Riain as the main text of the *Recensio Maior* (with all variant readings noted) being the one in the Book of Leinster (whose compilation began around 1152). The earliest manuscript of *Rec. Mai.* is in Rawlinson B502 (**RB502**) dateable to around 1120-30, probably, thinks Ó Riain from a text composed at Kells after 938.¹⁶⁶ This recension shows 'slight evidence' of the use of a source possibly composed in north east

¹⁶⁴ Herbert 1988, 169. Note, however, that it has been dated elsewhere to the 970s using the same methodology.

¹⁶⁵ Anderson and Anderson 1981, Sharpe 1995, Herbert 1988.

¹⁶⁶ Ó Riain 1985, xvii.

Ulster, possibly Bangor, possibly in the early 10th century.¹⁶⁷ 'The grounds for an early dating of the Corpus in any form are, however, by no means very strong.'¹⁶⁸

The *Recensio Minor* does not appear in the Book of Leinster (LL) and is printed by Ó Riain from The Book of Lecan (Lc). It is considered by Ó Riain to date from the second half of the fourteenth century and is used as a source by the *Recensio Metrica*, also known as *Náemshenchus náem Inse Fáil*.¹⁶⁹

Other hagiographical material which appears in LL, and which is drawn on below, is printed and discussed by Ó Riain whose conclusions I broadly accept.¹⁷⁰ *Comainmnigud noem hErenn*, a list of homonymous saints, may have an early origin: 'That some of the earlier materials may ultimately have been of considerable antiquity is shown by the large sprinkling of *moccu* forms' (though probably via intermediate texts).¹⁷¹ This text is interesting, as mentioned above, as it may have had a martyrology as one of its main sources. Another text drawn on is the Tract on the Mothers of the Saints, which may have had an earlier version in **RB502**. There is no clear evidence of provenance, however, and 'sources...were probably very varied'.¹⁷²

Further material used in the following chapters, such as litanies of saints, poems by or about saints, and penitentials will be discussed as it is encountered.

Annals and other secular material

My use of the Annals of Ulster is based on the understanding, first fully articulated by Bannerman and accepted by Hughes among others, that they incorporate a chronicle kept at Iona between about 563 and 740. It is not certain when the records were contemporary. Charles-Edwards thinks that from soon after the foundation of Iona around 563 some basic contemporary records may have been kept, as notes added to Easter tables for example.¹⁷³ Hughes considered that these may have been converted

¹⁶⁷ Ó Riain 1985, xxvii-xxix.

¹⁶⁸ Ó Riain 1985, xxvii.

¹⁶⁹ Ó Riain 1985, xxxix.

¹⁷⁰ Ó Riain 1985.

¹⁷¹ Ó Riain 1985 no 707-8, p 207.

¹⁷² Ó Riain 1985 no 722, p 220.

¹⁷³ Charles-Edwards 2006, 8.

into and continued as a year-by-year chronicle from around the 680s (perhaps encouraged by Adomnán, abbot from 679).¹⁷⁴ Herbert concludes that 'a systematic, year-by-year chronicle, varied in its scope, is in evidence in Iona at least from the early seventh century' and that around the same time records began being filled in for previous years, a process which 'may have been assisted by the existence of some data - notes on tablets, perhaps - from the early decades of Iona's existence.'¹⁷⁵

The annals kept at Iona were the first stratum in a set of annals now known as the Chronicle of Ireland, a chronicle (432-911) which no longer exists but which can be reconstructed from a series of daughter chronicles: chiefly *AU*, *AT* and *CS*. This task of reconstruction has recently been accomplished by Thomas Charles-Edwards, who describes the Chronicle as constituting 'the principal narrative source for early Irish history'.¹⁷⁶

After Iona the chronicle was probably kept in Brega until 911,¹⁷⁷ though this may be to oversimplify. For understanding of the complexities of the text's history reference must be made to Charles-Edwards detailed arguments. For the purposes of this thesis it is sufficient to know that I accept his summary of the likely development of the Chronicle of Ireland.¹⁷⁸ I also keep in mind the ecclesiastical bias of the document: 'The Chronicle of Ireland was a thoroughly ecclesiastical text, and not merely in origin. Mostly early-medieval chronicles were compiled by monks or clergy; what made the difference was the intended readership. The Chronicle of Ireland was not written for a court.'¹⁷⁹ The reliability and suggested provenance of individual entries will be discussed where necessary.

Aside from Iona annals the most important document bearing witness to developments in Argyll is *Míniugud senchasa fher nAlban*, a curious text containing genealogical information along with what appears to be the result of a civil survey and military

¹⁷⁴ Bannerman 1974, 9-26. Hughes 1972, 119.

¹⁷⁵ Herbert 1988, 23.

¹⁷⁶ Charles-Edwards 2006, 1.

¹⁷⁷ Charles-Edwards 2006, 9, 13, 14 'The simplest theory, therefore, seems to be the best, namely that the Chronicle of Ireland was written in a church in Brega with Armagh connections from c740 to 911' (p14).

¹⁷⁸ Charles-Edwards 2006, 58. A significant insight is that the fifth and sixth century portion of the annals was added while the annals were in Brega, that is after 740, and that they were amplified 'on a Patrician basis'.

¹⁷⁹ Charles-Edwards 2006, 6.

assessment of Argyll. It is accepted by both its editors as having a seventh century core,¹⁸⁰ but the date of its final compilation is uncertain. Bannerman considered it to have been compiled in the 10th century, a proposition refuted by Dumville ('the politics of the tenth century have not been found in it')¹⁸¹ who offers no alternative suggestion.

A host of documentary sources, including maps, have been drawn upon for the thesis, in particular for the compilation of the gazetteer. Those which were used in the collection of historic forms for the names are discussed in 4.3. The most important secondary sources used, all of which I regard as completely reliable, are the 7 inventories of Argyll monuments produced by the *RCAHMS* (called here *Arg 1*, *Arg 2* etc), the field survey by Marion Campbell and Mary Sandeman (on which much of *Arg 6* and *Arg 7* relies) and Ian Fisher's study of early medieval sculpture from the western Highlands, most of whose data is extracted from the *RCAHMS* Argyll inventories. The work by Campbell and Sandeman is particularly valuable in its recording of traditions relating to monuments in the landscape.¹⁸² Little of this tradition relates to saints, however, which is perhaps surprising given their strong onomastic presence.

The place-names themselves are, of course, a primary source for this thesis. In other places such as Fife they can give indication of dating because of the use of a language only spoken during a particular period of history. In Argyll this is not the case. They are almost all Gaelic or English, with a few Norse names. They can be useful in revealing past land use, areas of ritual focus, bits of land formerly pertaining to the church and landscape features dimly remembered as having some connection to a saint - Suidhe Mhunge on Loch Awe for example, as we shall see. These names are not simply a reflection of the past which it is possible to 'read off' as they have a dynamic of their own, giving rise to stories as well as reflecting them.

¹⁸⁰ Bannerman 1974, 39, Dumville 2002b, 189-90. Dumville sees evidence for 'an underlying seventh-century genealogical document' (p 205). The whole is a perplexing collection of elements whose intention is obscure. 'I am inclined to say that it is a text only by an historical accident (or series of them).' (p 208).

¹⁸¹ Dumville 2002b, 210.

¹⁸² They record traditions even when clearly sceptical. On Kilbride*, Loch Gair in Glassary parish they write, for example 'A nunnery in local trad., as usual in sites with this dedication'. Their record of one story - that there was a cross hidden somewhere at Kilbride* farm, Rhudil, also Glassary parish - proved thrillingly accurate; a stone cross was found there in 2002, sadly after both authors had died. Campbell and Sandeman no 443, 445.

The study of saints and *cill*- names brings together a myriad of sources, not all particularly concerned with the 'truth'. We find devotion, the bringing of the landscape alive through story, the elevation and deposition of particular families and institutions, the attempt to make sense of the chaos of the world in a creative way. Monsters and wizards live side by side, in the sources, with earnest devotion and true scholarship.

Chapter Two

A study of three saints

2.1 Introduction

The central question of this thesis is how *cill-* names and a study of saints can help in the illumination of the early church in Argyll. This chapter will look in detail at three saints whose names appear in *cill-* names in Argyll, tracking their cults through time and space. We attempt an overview of specific cults, seek contexts in which the flourishing of each saint's cult might be explicable, and try to tie locations from hagiographical material with the local landscape. Do the results of this endeavour expand our knowledge of early ecclesiastical development? If not, do they at least suggest other methods we should be trying, or questions we should be asking?

In one case, the saint of Kilberry, the study is not of one cult but of many. The identity of the saint is far from clear, so several need to be considered. It is an appraisal of the bewildering evidence of cults of various saints of the same, or similar, name in Scotland, an attempt at clarification, and a test of the usefulness of regarding the cults of several apparently different saints as potentially springing from a single individual.

Munnu m. Tulcháin and Colmán Ela, by contrast, are chosen because their cults are well defined, or so it seems. It is unlikely that the place-names Kilmun and Kilcalmonel contain the names of saints other than these two. For both saints there are Lives which belong to Sharpe's O'Donohue group, making it possible that they were written as early as the early eighth century,¹ and both appear in *VC*. For Munnu and Colmán Ela, then, there are reasonably solid foundations on which to build, though even these are open to question, as we shall see.

Munnu is a west coast saint, favoured in particular in Argyll. Is there anything peculiar to developments in Argyll which might explain the cult's success? We look at his cult in Ireland to determine with which part of the country Munnu was most associated and by which group there he was claimed. Might this throw light on the origins of the cult

¹ Sharpe 1991, and above p 38.

in Scotland? We examine too his relationship with Iona, and the part he is alleged to have played in the Easter controversy. Do either of these lines of enquiry help advance our understanding of the development of his cult?

Colmán Ela's cult in Scotland is a predominantly western cult too, in Argyll and the southwest. His name, as it appears in place-names, is unmistakable, but perhaps the saint is not so easy to identify as we at first thought. Are cults of other saints called Colmán simply manifestations of detached parts of Colmán Ela's cult? Is Colmán Ela himself a detached portion of someone else's cult?

The saints discussed are all relatively obscure; none have become figures of national acclaim like Columb Cille, Ninian or Kentigern. But all are interesting, all show evidence of fertile cults, and all enrich our picture of early medieval devotional life even if the material left for us does not easily enable us to construct a convincing historical narrative regarding early ecclesiastical development.

The three studies presented here complement the table of saints in chapter five and correct the impression, which a superficial glance might give, that there are neat dividing lines between one saint and another. Each study in its own way provides another way of testing the evidence provided by *cill*- names and dedications to saints.

2.2 Munnu m. Tulcháin

Munnu m. Tulcháin is a potentially fruitful subject for study for several reasons: his name appears in relatively unmistakable form in four places in Argyll, all called Kilmun; he appears in the *Vita Columbae*, and has an early and very interesting Life, probably of the eighth century;² his cult is evident in later Medieval Argyll both in patronage by the Campbells and in the existence of a hereditary keeper of his staff;³ and some kind of further devotion is suggested by the appearance in Argyll of the personal name Mac Gille Mund.⁴

In looking in detail at the traces left by this saint and his cult we seek to answer the following questions: How early are we able to push back traces of a cult of Munnu in Argyll? Can we find a historical context (or contexts) in which the flourishing of the cult of this saint is explicable?

First we will locate his cult in Argyll as precisely as we can. Of the four Kilmuns the only one to become a parish church was Kilmun on Holy Loch in Dunoon. There is evidence of early Christian activity here in the form of a cross-incised stone. It is very plain - similar to ones from Ardnadam (Cowal), Cladh a' Bhile (Knapdale), Dunans (Knapdale), Kilkenneth (Tiree), Calgary (Mull), Kirkapoll (Tiree), and Iona.⁵ There is evidence of other early Christian activity in the immediate area in the form of a chapel a few miles away at Ardnadam, and long-cists at Innellan.⁶ The name of the Loch on which the site is situated is itself suggestive: Holy Loch on modern maps, Loch Aint on Pont⁷, and Loch Shiant in SA⁸ indicating an original Gaelic *seunta*, 'sacred'.

² VC I.2. *Vita prior S. Fintani seu Munnu*, Heist 1965, 198-208.

³ RMS vol 2 no 2385.

⁴ Black 1946, 545. 'Members of this old sept of unknown origin are often found mentioned in writs connected with Cowal'. There are examples in 16th c Bute and 17th c Loch Aweside. The name MacPhun may also come from Mac Gille Mhund. Holders of the name are found in 17th c Argyll (Black 1946, 555-6).

⁵ Fisher 2001, 31.

⁶ Arg 7 no 4 and 135.

⁷ Pont MS, Stone 1989, 103.

⁸ Campbell 1913, 29.

The church itself is fifteenth-century and the earliest record of the name is 1230x46.⁹ This site became extremely important to the Campbells from as early as 1442 when it was established as a Collegiate church by Duncan Campbell of Loch Awe, first Lord Campbell. It became the main burial place of the Loch Awe Campbells perhaps from as early as the mid fourteenth century when they first acquired the land.¹⁰ By at least the early sixteenth century Kilmun in Cowal was promoted as the main monastery of the saint in Scotland; in the Aberdeen Breviary it is said that he founded a monastery here, and that this is where he was buried. Another tradition says he was buried nearby at *Sith- Mun*,¹¹ a name which would appear to come from the G. *suidhe* meaning seat and often applied to prominent landscape features associated with saints.¹² There is no such place now known near Kilmun in Cowal, but there is a Suidhe Mhunge¹³ beside Kilmun on Loch Awe, the possible implications of which will be discussed below.

At Inverchapel, 5 km NNE of Kilmun in Cowal, a half mark of land called *Pordewry* is said in 1497 to be occupied by a certain official called a dewar who held the crozier of St Munnu.¹⁴ The term dewar, as discussed comes from Gaelic *deoradh* meaning, originally, 'stranger or outlaw'. It came to refer to the keeper of a saint's relic who travelled about (thus a stranger) using the power of the relic to formalise various kinds of transactions, from land transfer to payments of compensation for crimes. Its ultimate meaning seems to have taken one of two courses: either it simply meant the keeper of the relic, who might no longer travel at all, or it referred to an official engaged in various law-keeping tasks not necessarily associated with a relic.¹⁵ The whereabouts of this crozier is now unknown.

⁹ *Reg. de Pass.*, 132-3.

¹⁰ Sometime between 1347 and 1361 Mary, countess of Menteith, gave over all her lands in Cowal 'held directly from the Steward [ie Robert, future Robert II - over lord of Cowal]' to Gill-easbuig Campbell; this included the lands of Kilmun with the patronage of the kirk of St Mun. Boardman 2005, 126. Sir Duncan was the first Campbell unquestionably to have been buried at Kilmun, though there may have been one or two beforehand. *Ibid.*, 136. See also Boardman 2006, 141-3.

¹¹ Mackinlay 1914, 71 (no source given, other than 'tradition').

¹² cf Suidhe Blaan and Suidhe Cattan on Bute.

¹³ Suidhe Mhunge is at 355 NM 9714.

¹⁴ This is a charter confirming the sale of certain lands by John Colquhoun to Archibald Earl of Argyll, including 'dimeietate unius mercate terre (vocat. Pordewry) in territorio de Inverquhapil occupate per quendam procuratorem, cum baculo Sancte Munde, Scotice vocato *Deowray*.' *RMS* vol 2 no 2385. These lands, including *Kilmone* had been given to John Colquhoun of Luss in 1474, on their resignation by James Scrimgeour (*Jac. Scrimgeour de Dudup*). *RMS* vol 2 no 1185.

¹⁵ Watson 1926, 264. Gillies 1996.

Another Kilmun with possible early Christian remains is a site in Glen Aray. The layout of the site, with a chapel within a sub-circular enclosure of about 17m diameter, is suggestive of an early date and is comparable to chapel sites on Islay. It is, in fact, the only chapel site on mainland Argyll - apart from Ardnadam - which the RCAMS considers to be early in form on the basis of surviving architecture alone.¹⁶ No carvings have been found here and the earliest reference to the name is 1631, but there is an interesting name in the immediate vicinity, possibly suggestive of early ecclesiastical activity: Bile Garbh, which may include reference to a sacred tree - *bile* - often associated with early ecclesiastical sites.¹⁷

The final two Kilmuns are within a few km of each other near Loch Awe. One, near Dalavich, consists of the scanty remains of a rectangular building, 'presumably a chapel', within an enclosure of irregular shape.¹⁸ There is a tradition that the site was used for burial during the Campbell occupation of the castle on Innis Chonnell (and presumably before they buried their dead at Kilmun in Cowal), less than 3km SSE on Loch Awe, but there are no tombstones visible at the site now. The other Kilmun, 400m N of Loch Avich, comprises a circular wall enclosing a rectangular structure. It may occupy the site of an early medieval chapel or burial, but the surviving remains are of 18th century character and the physical evidence does not support the identification of the inner structure as a chapel.¹⁹ It is first mentioned in 1414 and is described in the OS Name Book as a private burial-ground of the MacDougalls.²⁰

Notice that all the sites so far mentioned lie close to important nodes of Campbell power: the Cowal site was near a manor house in Glen Masson, of which there is now no trace, and it was in a strategic position dominating the Clyde and Loch Fyne; Kilmun in Glen Aray was near Inveraray, established by the Campbells as their power-base in the mid 15th century;²¹ and the two sites on Loch Avich were close to the

¹⁶ 'The chapel and its enclosure resemble others of probably early Christian date elsewhere in Argyll, and especially in Islay' (*Arg* 7 no 79).

¹⁷ cf Cladh a' Bhile in Knapdale, *Arg* 7 no 20. Gondek discusses the role of this important early Christian burial ground as part of a wider ritual landscape (Gondek, M, forthcoming).

¹⁸ *Arg* 2 no 265.

¹⁹ *Arg* 2 no 226.

²⁰ *Name Book* no 53,137 via *Arg* 2 no 226.

²¹ Inveraray appears to have been 'built or rebuilt' before 1432 by Sir Colin Campbell, first Laird of Glenorchy, who died in 1480 (*Arg* 7 no 132).

Campbell's original heartland around Loch Awe, the stronghold of Inis Connell in particular. We will return to this later.

Apart from the sites mentioned in Argyll there is a commemoration of the saint at Eilean Munde on Loch Leven, near Ballachullish, where there is an old parish church and burial-ground containing three medieval monuments. The burial enclosure is said to be that of MacDonal of Glencoe.²² There may be a commemoration at Forfar²³ and in the Aberdeen Breviary there is a reference to an unidentified place called *Dissert*,²⁴ which, for reasons I will give later, I think likely to be Glenorchy in Argyll.

Let us now look at how the saint was perceived and promoted in Ireland, his native land, and in which parts of the country he was commemorated. This might allow us to present some suggestions as to when and why his cult might have developed in Argyll. If, for instance, we find that he is primarily a Leinster saint we might be able to point to a historical context in Argyll in which the cult of a Leinster saint might find fertile ground in which to flourish.

The earliest reference to Munnu is in *VC*. Here he is called Fintan, not Munnu, the hypocoristic form of his name.²⁵ He is described as son of Tulchán and assigned to a *gens* called the Moccu Moie (*Mocumoi*). He is friend of a priest called Columb Crag who is 'of his own people'. They appear to live less than a day's journey from Derry.²⁶ Another member of the Moccu Moie appears in *VC* 1.18, near a harbour where ships land from Scotland - perhaps also near Derry. We will examine the changing perception of Munnu's relationship with Columb Cille shortly, but for now it is enough to say that apart from this apparently northern origin Munnu is also, in *VC*, given a strong association with Leinster (Columb Cille says he will found a monastery there, not far from the sea). It is also clear that by the time Adomnán was writing Munnu has

²² 'This church served the former parish of Elanmunde which comprised, on the N side of Loch Leven, the districts of Mamore and Onich, lying in Invernessshire and, on the S side of Loch Leven, Glencoe and part of Appin, lying in Argyll' (*Arg* 2 no 245).

²³ *Forum S. Moindi* (*RMS* vol 4 no 1442).

²⁴ He is abbot 'apud Kilmund et Dissert' in the opening prayer for Oct 21st.

²⁵ Fintán > *Mo-finn (where the f is lenited and therefore silent) > Munnu. See Russell 2001, 242. Note that Munnu is not the only hypocoristic form deriving from Fintan, nor is Fintan the only name which gives Munnu. The index in Ó Riain 1985 implies that Fintan > Moinnoc and that Munnu < Fínán.

²⁶ *VC* I.2.

a cult which was sufficiently well established for Adomnán to say that Munnu came to enjoy renown among all the churches of the Irish (*per universas scotorum ecclesias*).²⁷

Munnu's membership of the Moccu Moie is not mentioned in his own Lives, nor indeed elsewhere, possibly because this kindred had ceased to be important, or because the terminology for it had changed. The earliest Life (henceforth *Vita prior*) 'probably dates from the 8th century'²⁸ and assigns Munnu to the Uí Neill on both sides: his father is of the Cenél Conaill, his mother is descended from Niall's son, Maine. The Cenél Conaill, Columb Cille's family, were part of the Northern Uí Néill; their leaders were among the most powerful kings in Ireland at the time Adomnán wrote and intermittently throughout the 7th and early 8th centuries but not thereafter.²⁹ The descendents of Maine - the Cenél Maine - were (or thought they were) a branch of the Southern Uí Neill who ruled the area of southern Tethbae, now roughly Co. Longford, and possibly part of Co. Offaly.³⁰ According to one tradition it was the Cenél Maine king, Áed mac Brénainn, who gave Durrow to Columba.³¹

In the *Vita prior*, Munnu's birthplace is not specified, though the mention of the stone on which he was born 'honoured by everyone' suggests that it was known at the time of writing. It seems to be near Uisneach in Co. Westmeath as it is to here that Comgall comes to find him when he is still a boy.³² His subsequent journey through various unidentified places take Munnu to Comgall's monastery; we might assume this to be Bangor, but this is not actually stated. He studies there under Comgall, and then in Cell Mór Dithrib, Co. Roscommon, under Columb Cille, and finally in Devenish on Loch Erne, Co. Fermanagh. In Iona he is commanded to settle down in Leinster, which he

²⁷ VC I.18.

²⁸ Sharpe 1995, 255. This Life, *Vita prior S. Fintani seu Munnu*, from the Codex Salmanticensis (S), is given in Heist 1965, 198-209. Heist 1965, 247-56 gives another Life from S (*Vita altera S. Fintani*). There is a life from D in Plummer 1910 ii 226-56 (henceforth *Vita Sancti Munnu* or Life in D). The Life in O is not published. Kenney derives all 4 Latin Lives from one ultimate source (Kenney 1929 no 231), while Sharpe sees a more complex set of relationships (Sharpe 91, 394).

²⁹ There may have been a member of Cenél Conaill sharing the kingship 944-50. Moody, Martin, Byrne 1984, 127.

³⁰ Byrne 1973, 87, 89 (map representing position in c. 800). The dynasties of Maine and Cairpre shared the territory of Tethbae in Co. Longford. Maine may originally have extended into Offaly (p 91). Uí Maine (Connacht) and Cenel Maine (Uí Néill) are distinct (p 92). Kings of both were buried at Clonmacnoise 'from an early date' (p 92). Also Charles-Edwards 2000, 633. It may be that they were originally one, but that the Cenel Maine were inserted into Uí Neill genealogies to explain and further their absorption into that group.

³¹ Byrne 1973, 91.

³² *Vita prior S. Fintani* ch 1, 4 - Heist 1965, 198, 199. Translation by RB.

does, but not straight away. He establishes a monastery near Durrow in Co. Offaly, and has adventures in Louth and Meath. There are, in other words, quite a succession of places with which he is associated even before we consider his impact in Leinster proper. Was there some kind of commemoration of Munnu at each of the places mentioned? If so, it seems that his cult was reasonably widespread, at least in the 8th century, having particular strength in central Ireland - in areas of S. Uí Néill control and including eastern Connacht - but also in Co. Fermanagh in the north and perhaps northern Co. Tipperary in Munster.³³

Regarding his time in Leinster it is interesting to note who is depicted as Munnu's enemy and who his friend. In *Vita prior* the man who gives Munnu land on which to build Tech Munnu, the monastery which became Munnu's most important³⁴, is Dímma, a *dux* of the Fothairt who later becomes a cleric. Munnu prophesies a peaceful death for him, ordains that he might be buried among Munnu's monks, and rescues him from his enemies. The theme of friendship with the Fothairt is continued in the person of another Dímma, this one a king of the Fothairt. Munnu fosters one of his sons, and gives Dímma his miraculous tunic to enable him to escape invisible from the father of a prince killed by Dímma's other son.³⁵

The Uí Cheinselaig³⁶ come off rather worse by comparison with the Fothairt. Guaire mac Eogain³⁷ plunders the land of the Uí Bairride, is unrepentant and is killed, and Crundmáel³⁸ is the avenging father from whom Munnu has to rescue his friends.

³³ He spends some time in *regione Ele* which includes Offaly but seems also to include north Tipperary around Thurles and Roscrea. Charles-Edwards 2000,53.

³⁴ Tech Munnu < Taghmon. There was another one in Co. Westmeath.

³⁵ In the Life in D there are two Fothairt leaders, as in *Vita Prior*, but only one is called Dímma (the other is nameless). It is possible that the two Dímmas are, in origin, the same man. In *Vita Prior* they are a) Dímma m. Áeda and b) Dímma Camchois. Dímma m. Áeda appears in *CGSH* with alias Dímma Donn: 168.2 (father of a saint Berchan), 261 (ditto), 562 (ditto), 662.175 (ditto), and among saints of Laicchin in *rec met*. He may be the same as the Dímma m. Áeda m. Echach Treailchich in *CGH* 126a 44,85 ie father of Cellach (below) and the same as Dímma Camchos (below)? (There is also a Dímme m. Áeda m Cellacháin *CGH* 122a 37,51 who is of the Lagin.) Dímma Camchos appears in *CGH* 126a 3,82 under the Fothairt: 'Húi Chellaich meic Dímma Camchois'.

³⁶ The Uí Cheinselaig were one of the two dominant Leinster dynasties, who, with the Uí Dunlainge (the other) 'monopolized the kingship of Leinster for more than four centuries before the Anglo-Norman invasion' (Smyth 1982, 14). It is probably unwise to look at them as a homogenous group. There was much civil war among them; criticism of one line wouldn't necessarily mean anything to another.

³⁷ He might be identified with a Guaire m. Éogain Cháich m. Nath-í, who appears in *CGH* 317ab 33,45 among the Lagin. See also Byrne 1973, 290 where he appears among kings of Uí Cheinselaig.

³⁸ Charles-Edwards 2000, 118 n.166 considers this to be Crundmáel mac Áeda of the Uí Chennselaig. *ob.* 628. see also, 618 no. 12a.

Crundmáel's failure to dispatch his enemies in the face of Munnu's superior power, however, causes him to repent, unlike Guaire. He gives over the prisoner Dímma, together with his (Dímma's, I think) inheritance and offspring.³⁹

Looking at the evidence from Adomnán and this eighth-century life, then, there is reason to believe that his cult was well known and widely dispersed. It is not, however, clear by whom in particular Munnu might have been claimed as patron saint and when: the S. Uí Néill, the N. Uí Néill, a small group - the Moccu Moie - possibly within the N. Uí Néill, the Fothairt, the Uí Cheinselaig, or all or some of these. Added to these (or perhaps within the S. Uí Néill) are the Corco Roide, whose territory lay a few miles north of Uisnech, described by Byrne as one of the 'subject tribes' in Westmeath, Longford and Offaly, tribes which were 'of obscure but disparate origins'.⁴⁰ It is to this group that Munnu is assigned in some versions of the genealogies,⁴¹ perhaps simply as a means of explaining the existence of his cult in that region. That he was commemorated near Uisnech is likely, as we have said, as this seems to have been where there was a stone marking the alleged place of his birth. There was also another Taghmon in Co. Westmeath, also in Corco Roide territory. His assigning in some manuscripts of *CGSH* to the Uí Dega may similarly be the genealogists way of accounting for the location of his main monastery in Co. Wexford;⁴² the Uí Dega were a minor Leintser sept, connected both with the Uí Chenselaig (Daig is brother of Énna Cennsalach) and Uí Dúnlainge (Daig is cousin of Dúnlaing).⁴³

If it is not clear by whom Munnu was claimed we do not have a base from which to build up a context in which spread of his cult to Argyll would be explicable. Or, to put it another way, the possibilities are too many and too vague to admit much more than the building of houses on sand. He is not, for example, a simple 'Leinster saint' as he has sometimes been presented,⁴⁴ at least not on the evidence we have explored so far. He might have been perceived and promoted as such at very specific times, however, a matter we will look into further below.

³⁹ *Vita Prior S. Fintani* ch 25 - Heist 1965, 205.

⁴⁰ Byrne 1973 p 69. Charles-Edwards 2000, 31, 49.

⁴¹ Ó Riain 1985 no 155. Also in marginal notes to *MT*, 121-3.

⁴² Ó Riain 1985 no 155 - *L*^a and *R*¹ only.

⁴³ Byrne 1973, 137, 288.

⁴⁴ Mac Lean 1983.

Perhaps there are other questions we can ask about the saint and his cult that might help us reconstruct the cult's development. Does it help to think of Munnu as a Columban saint, for example? He is sometimes presented as an Iona saint, as someone who furthered the cause of Columb Cille. Does this bear scrutiny, and does it help us understand why he has such a strong presence in Argyll?

Munnu and Iona

The connection between Munnu and Columb Cille is first noted by Adomnán who describes how Munnu, a person unknown to Baithéne, arrives on Iona shortly after Columb Cille's death. When Munnu explains to Baithéne who he is, Baithéne recognises him as someone about whom Columb Cille had issued a prophecy. Columb Cille had said that he would arrive on Iona seeking to become a monk. It would not be desirable that he should be accepted, however, as his destiny lay as an abbot rather than as a monk. He should, therefore, be sent back to Ireland where he would found a monastery in Leinster and become known among all the churches in Ireland, as we have seen. We also learn that Adomnán was told this story by one of Munnu's own monks, a man whose lineage places him on the borders of Leinster and Munster.⁴⁵ 'I am in no doubt as to its truth' says Adomnán.⁴⁶

If we accept that Adomnán is relating accurately what he has been told, the implication is that Munnu wished to project his image as a would-be monk of Iona and that his followers accepted this. This is reinforced by the presentation of the relationship between the two men in *Vita prior*. Here not only does Munnu attempt to join the community at Iona but he also studies with Columb Cille (and Baithéne) in Ireland.⁴⁷ Indeed Columb Cille is introduced at the very beginning of this Life predicting the boy's future greatness, and again near the end where we find Columb Cille, Munnu, Cainnech and Brendan together in the Land of Promise.⁴⁸ Munnu's genealogy in *Vita prior* also makes a link with Columba.

⁴⁵ Oisséne mac Ernáine from the line of moccu Néth Corb. *VC* 1.2. Sharpe 1995, 259 n. 57.

⁴⁶ *VC*, 1.2.

⁴⁷ *Vita prior S. Fintani* ch. 6 - Heist 1965, 199.

⁴⁸ *Vita prior S. Fintani* ch. 2 - Heist 1965, 198; Columb Cille tells Munnu's father Tulchán that he (Tulchán) will be famous because of his son. Perhaps there is a story about Tulchán which we no longer have. In *D, Vita altera*, and the Aberdeen Breviary, Tulchán becomes a monk. In the notes in *Laud 610* to *FO* Tuchán is described as a druid - *Munna mac Telchain druad*. Tulchán is as important as his son in

It seems clear, then that Munnu's party wished to project their saint as a follower of Columb Cille (not an unusual position to adopt) but do we have anything to suggest that Iona was as active in claiming and promoting Munnu? This seems less clear. Indeed the statement that Munnu studied under Columb Cille in Ireland is more or less contradicted by Adomnán in *VC*, who makes very clear the fact that Baithéne has no idea who Munnu is.

One is bound to ask what Adomnán might gain from claiming that a Leinster monastery was established by someone inspired by the teaching of Iona, and sent there by Columb Cille *post mortem*. At the time of writing *VC* Adomnán was committed to his *Lex Innocenti*, to be approved and supported, he hoped, by secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries all over Ireland and Scotland. At the time he wrote, Leinster was ruled by Cellach mac Gerthidi⁴⁹ who, according to later tradition, was a far from compliant participant in Adomnán's plans. He was a signatory to the list of guarantors,⁵⁰ but perhaps one who required persuasion. That a successful monastery in his territory had been established by a man inspired by the teachings of Iona might set a precedent for accepting more of these teachings in the form of Adomnán's Law.⁵¹

And what might Columb Cille (or his immediate successor) have gained from there being a friendly ecclesiastical foundation in the heart of Leinster? Around the time of Columb Cille's death a member of his own family, Áed mac Ainmirech of the Cenél Conaill, was among the most powerful of the kings in Ireland⁵², but he was much under pressure, in particular from the Laigin. It is possible that by the time of his death in 598 he was no longer in a position to call himself king of Tara. His killer was Brandub of the Uí Cheinselaig at a battle which represented an important victory for the

the story about them in the Life of Cainnech. See below. There is no-one of this name in the martyrologies, however, except one in the list of Munnu's monks under Oct 21 in *MT. Vita Prior* ch 31 - Heist 1965, 207-8; the story of the land of promise is more detailed in *Vita Prior S. Fintani* than in *D*. It is omitted altogether in *Vita Altera* in *S*.

⁴⁹ Charles-Edwards 2000, 618. ob. 715.

⁵⁰ Markús 1997, 16. Ní Dhonnchadha 1982, 202. The story of Cellach's obstinacy may, of course, have been invented much later to explain why, despite being a signatory, no king of the Uí Máil - his lineage - ruled Leinster again.

⁵¹ But the dynamic between Adomnán and each of the alleged guarantors is difficult to assess, obscured as it often is by later legend. Moling Luachra m. Fáelán (June 17 in *FO, MT* etc), one of the signatories, is presented as incurring the wrath of Adomnán for tricking the Uí Néill into lifting the *bóruma* or cattle tax. Stokes 1892.

⁵² Byrne 1973, 275.

Leinstermen in what later Leinster literature portrayed as their perpetual struggle against the oppression of the Uí Néill.⁵³ We have to consider the mechanism by which a man sent by the Uí Néill monastery of Iona might set up his own monastery in the heart of a potentially unfriendly Leinster, and the potential political gains if it were feasible.⁵⁴

We will return to the question of Munnu and Leinster later, but first let us look again at Columb Cille and Munnu in Argyll. As we have seen there may have been a powerful cult of Munnu in Argyll, yet Adomnán makes no mention of this, locating Munnu's church far away in southern Leinster. One must be wary about inferring too much from silence, and he does say that Fintán became known *per uniuersas Scotorum*⁵⁵ but it is worth keeping two possibilities in mind. One is that indeed there was no cult of Munnu in Argyll at the time Adomnán wrote - that his cult arrived later. There are contexts into which a late arrival of the cult might fit, as we shall see. The other is that his cult was present in Argyll, but that Adomnán was wary of mentioning it, as indeed he seems to have been of the cult of any other saint in Argyll.⁵⁶ The possibility that there was some rivalry between cults is perhaps suggested by a story in the *Vita Cainnechi* in S regarding Munnu and Columb Cille. In the earliest version of this Life, perhaps belonging to late 8th century⁵⁷, Munnu is the son of a monk on Iona, Tulchán⁵⁸, who, according to Baithéne's report to Columba, shows more love for his son than he does for God. It is thus ordained by Columba and his monks that the little boy should be tossed into the sea from a high cliff. Cainnech, on his way from *regione Heth* (Tiree) to Ireland, sees, by divine inspiration, the tragedy unfold, races to the scene and snatches the boy from the waves just in time. We are told that as a result Cainnech was angry with Columba - *et vix potuit mens eius placari*, 'his mind could scarcely be soothed'.⁵⁹

⁵³ Byrne 1973, 144. The struggle is given literary form in the *Bóruma Laigen* of perhaps the 12th century. See Stokes 1892.

⁵⁴ Charles-Edwards 2000, 298. An over-king might give away land to found churches in the territory of a potential rival as a means of reducing that rival's resources.

⁵⁵ *VC* 1.2.

⁵⁶ Moluag of Lismore is no-where mentioned. The dedicatees of the other monasteries on Tiree are not given etc. But one could argue that the fact that Adomnán makes so much of Fintan's admiration of Columb Cille is indicative of Adomnán's awareness of a powerful cult nearby and his consequent desire to portray it as effectively part of Iona's overall plan. In other words, Munnu's presence in *VC* (and possibly Colmán Ela's too) converts a potentially competitive cult into a *quasi* Columban one.

⁵⁷ It is a O'Donohue Life (Sharpe 1991, 297-340). Dating and content is discussed by Maire Herbert who uses it to support the idea that the *VC* was known in Ireland in the 8th century, probably by 727. Herbert 2001, 39.

⁵⁸ cf fn 48 re Tulchán.

⁵⁹ *Vita Cainnechi* in S, ch. 26 - Heist 1965, 188. The D version, in its usual way, makes the scene more palatable by adding that Columba and Cainnech then made friends and all was well.

Herbert's analysis of this scene focuses on what she sees as a carefully designed criticism of the Iona community made in the years between 766 and 780 when through political expediency the community seemed to have 'lost its moral compass'.⁶⁰ This reading might imply that Munnu is simply a literary pawn in the hagiographer's moral game, but perhaps this misses something. If hagiography of this kind is as carefully crafted as Herbert (and others) imply then the choice of *dramatis personae* is unlikely to be random. We cannot discard the possibility that in the late 8th century at least there was something either about the perceived relationship between Columb Cille and Munnu or about the actual relationship between Munnu's followers and Columb Cille's which enabled a story like this to make sense to its audience. Perhaps it shows some antagonism between the two.

Other readings are possible, of course. It might be said, for example, that Munnu is carefully chosen as a known supporter of Columb Cille, whose friendship he here almost loses, through excessive rigidity. This is something of a reversal of character, perhaps a deliberate one. It is usually Munnu who is depicted as excessively harsh, even in his own Life. Indeed it is because of his harshness that he is afflicted with leprosy, at least according to some sources.⁶¹

That Munnu was not a man without enemies might be inferred from his description, even in his own life, as harsh - *asperus*.⁶² A memory of his antagonism might partly be explained by his position regarding the date of Easter, and this, in turn, might tell us more about his monastery's relationship with Iona.

⁶⁰ Herbert 2001, 38. Herbert deduces from the Life's positive association with Colmán Bec that it may have been written in the aftermath of the murder of Colmán's descendant, Follomon, who gave his name to the Caille Follomon. Implicated in the murder was Donnchad mac Donnall, who appears to have had the support of Iona despite his reign being 'marked by aggression'. Was Columb Cille's negative depiction in the life an expression of disapproval of this? Herbert 2001, 37-39.

⁶¹ eg *Vita prior* ch 28 - Heist 1965, 206-7. Also, in the Life of Mochua m. Lonáin Mochua cures Munnu of leprosy which Munnu had asked for in penance for his arrogance (*Vita Mochua* in *O* ch 5-7 - Plummer 1910 vol ii, 184-9). *MDo* (Oct 21), on the other hand, expressly says that Munnu had leprosy 'from the beginning'.

⁶² It is interesting that the disciplinary rigidity for which Columb Cille is implicitly being criticised in *Vita Cainnechi* is what Munnu himself is chastised for in his own life. There Columba prophesies that Munnu won't easily accept Baithene's instruction to go back to Ireland, because 'the nature of that man is harsh' (*natura enim illius viri aspera est*). *Vita Prior S. Fintani* ch 7 - Heist, 199-200.

Munnu and Easter

In all versions of his Life, Munnu is presented as a supporter of the old Easter - *vetus Pascha*. The primary representative of the new Easter in these lives is Molaisse m. Cairill Chruaid of Lethglenn. This has led some scholars to wonder if Munnu is the *paries dealbatus* - the whited wall - of Cumnian's Letter to Ségéne. Here Cumnian, whose identity is not certain, explains to Ségéne, abbot of Iona from 623-652, the means by which he, and others, came to a decision regarding when they should celebrate Easter. A consensus had apparently been reached at the synod of Mag Léne which was overturned by a trouble-maker - the whited wall - who caused divisions on both sides of the debate. As a result a delegation was sent to Rome for final judgement. This, after 3 years, came down in favour of the new date. It is thought that the letter dates to about 632, three years before Munnu's death.⁶³

Walsh and Ó Cróinín seem to lean towards accepting the identification, noting the following: he had 'close connections' with the northern churches, Iona and Bangor; there is a possible confirmation of Munnu's affliction by leprosy (mentioned in all of his lives) in Cumnian's reference to disagreement *inter lepram et non lepram*; and he is represented in *Vita prior* as *princeps et primus eorum qui vetus Pascha defendebant*, 'the principle and first of them who defended the old Easter'.⁶⁴

I would consider that the first may be true but it may also have been much exaggerated by later propaganda; we know, from Adomnán, that Munnu's followers claimed that Munnu had received posthumous instructions from Columb Cille, but we do not know how significant the links between Tech Munnu and Iona really were prior to these claims being made. The second point is suggestive but not conclusive; if we are looking for lepers there is another candidate in the form of Sceallan the leper of Ard-Macha.⁶⁵ A letter of Pope John elect, described by Bede as an attempt to correct the error of wrong observance of Easter, addresses itself to a *Scellanus* (among others). He is

⁶³ Walsh and Ó Cróinín 1988. Kenney 1929 no 57, 220.

⁶⁴ *Vita Prior* ch 29 - Heist, 207.

⁶⁵ *Sceallan lobar, ó Ard Macha. MDo*, Sept 1.

identified by one of Bede's editors as Sillán of Devenish,⁶⁶ but it might just as easily be Sceallán of Ard-Macha in which case here, as leper and supporter of the old Easter, he would be a prime candidate for the 'whited wall'.⁶⁷ The third - that he is presented in his own life as chief among the supporters of the old Easter - is the most compelling. There is another point too which is that perhaps his description as a whited wall might be a play on the mischief maker's name: Fintán < *Find* = white; Munnu, though not meaning wall, might be thought to have a resonance with the latin *munio*, to build (esp a wall).⁶⁸

If he was, then, an outspoken defender of the old Easter at a time when most of the churches in southern Ireland had apparently accepted the new⁶⁹, and if Taghmon, Munnu's main foundation, continued to support these beliefs while all around had converted, might there be implications regarding the likely spread of his cult, in particular in Scotland? Might one suggest, for example, that the development of his cult was impeded by his beliefs, so that it branched off in a particular direction - to Scotland, for instance, where Iona monks were keeping the old date until 716? With so little knowledge of any detail regarding when and where customs changed I think it unwise to make such speculations. We have no idea at what point the churches in Argyll, other than Iona, accepted the new Easter. It may be that there was a variety of practice, as might be suggested by the proximity (Arran and Cowal) of dedications to Munnu and Molaisse. Even this possibility cannot be presented without considerable hesitation; we do not have a snapshot of the dedications at any one date, so geographical proximity is meaningless in terms of real relationships between one saint and another, or even of the followers of one saint and another. In addition, very little detail is known about the situation regarding Easter observance in southern Ireland. Finally, even if it was possible to ascertain that there was a divergence of practice between one church and its

⁶⁶ HE II.19. See HE, Sherley-Price for identification with Sillán of Devenish, whose obit. appears in AFM at 658. HE, Plummer also notes possible id. with Sillán of Devenish, but notes Scellan the leper, of Armagh as an alternative.

⁶⁷ Munnu's teacher on Devenish is said, in D, to be Silell filius Miannaidh and, in *Ab.Brev.*, to be Sillenus. Silell m. Miannach is represented elsewhere as a pupil of Finnian of Clonard.

⁶⁸ 'Whited wall' is, however, a biblical phrase, commonly used in patristic literature: 'then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?' (Acts 23:3). (Thanks to Gilbert Márkus for pointing this out).

⁶⁹ Charles-Edwards 2000, 428. I'm not sure how one can be sure about this. If Bangor and Armagh in the north still followed the old computations what about their daughter houses in the south? Bangor had several in Leinster, as is apparent in Munnu's own life.

neighbour we don't know that this necessarily made relations between them difficult. One aspect of Munnu's *Vita prior* that is particularly stressed, in fact, is tolerance. The final judgement is that each should do according to their own belief, and the relationship between Munnu and Molaisse is portrayed as amiable. The only person who does badly out of the meeting is Suibne of the Uí Bairrche, who loses his head (literally).

The fact that this episode is included at all implies, I think, that Munnu's reputation as a defender of the old Easter was well enough established for omission of the matter to appear evasive. It seems to me likely that Tech Munnu too stuck to the position of its founder long enough for it to be one of its defining features. By 716 even Iona accepted the new Easter so the Life needed to show that despite subsequent judgements going against Munnu's belief, the integrity and sanctity of the man (and institution) should not be in doubt.⁷⁰ The Life also makes clear that despite the intellectual disagreement Munnu remained on good terms with Molaisse, suggesting, perhaps that maintenance of good relations between the churches of Tech Munnu and Leighlinn (or between any of the other churches connected with these two saints) was important at the time of writing. It is interesting in this regard that Munnu appears in the Life of Molaisse. Here it is said that Molaisse was Munnu's pupil in Scotland and that he was instructed as much in doctrine as by the example of his life - *tam doctrina instructus quam exemplo vite regulatus*.⁷¹ This strange reversal of events perhaps relates to the proximity of dedications to the two saints: Munnu in Cowal, Molaisse on the island of Arran, and possibly on Bute.⁷²

As for whether Tech Munnu's position regarding Easter derives from its relationship with Iona, or, conversely, that its relationship with Iona was strengthened by its position on Easter, I think we have to be careful of circularity. There may be no link at all. It might, indeed, be argued that Tech Munnu's relationship with Bangor was more important. Munnu is depicted as a pupil of Comgall and he has close contact with Bangor's daughter houses in Leinster (he is in fact depicted as interim abbot of one of them). Bangor was itself a late supporter of the old Easter. Did the daughter houses in

⁷⁰Perhaps Munnu's harshness and his consequent affliction by leprosy should be seen in the light of Taghmon's struggle to justify Munnu's misjudgement. He may have had his faults, it seems to be saying, but Munnu himself suffered for them and they did not ultimately detract from his sanctity, and the power of intercession he had with God.

⁷¹ It is a late 13th century liturgical document, thinks Sharpe 1991, 395. *Vita Lasriani* ch 4-5 - Heist, 341.

⁷² Lamlash on Arran (Watson 1926, 306 and see Lasren/Molaisse in gazetteer). Ardmoleish on Bute.

the south celebrate the old Easter when churches round about had converted? I am not sure that we know the answer to this.

Munnu and Leinster

To what extent is Munnu claimed by Leinster, or portrayed as a Leinster saint? Which group claimed him, and when? Does this help us to understand his cult in Argyll?

As was said above Munnu is not a Leinster saint in a very straightforward way. According to most representations of the divisions of Ireland it would be true to say that Munnu was born in Leinster (nr Uisnech, co. Westmeath) to people who ruled in Leinster (the Uí Néill). It would, however, be equally true to say that he was presented as a Leinster saint, neither (usually) by genealogy⁷³ nor by birthplace. This is because the true member of the Laigin was a member of one of the four *prímshluinte* (chief stocks) of the Leinstermen: Dál Messin Corb, Dál Cairpre, Dál Cormaic, or the descendants of Nia Corb.⁷⁴ These groups may once have provided kings of Tara and they may once have controlled the important midland territory which included Westmeath and Offaly, but by the 6th century their power was restricted to the more southern counties and the kings of Tara were provided by the Uí Néill, almost without exception. Relations between the Laigin and the Uí Néill were unstable, and, during the time of Munnu's life, particularly marked by aggression.

Whatever the truth of his origins the fact remains that Munnu is presented in the eighth century as a member of a family - the Uí Néill - with whom the Laigin appeared to be locked in perpetual struggle. This is to oversimplify, however, for the Laigin were not themselves a united force (and neither were the Uí Néill), at least not all the time. If we are to understand Munnu as in any sense a representative of the Laigin might it be as a representative of a particular group at a particular time?

Vita prior would not lead us to believe that he represents the interests of any of the true Leinster groups. Approval is given neither to the Uí Cheinselaig, who were one of the

⁷³ There are variant readings of Munnu's genealogy in *Rec. Mai.* (Ó Riain 1985 no 155). Two manuscripts assign him to the Uí Dega. See gazetteer.

⁷⁴ Byrne 1973, 288.

dominant lineages in Leinster until the mid eighth century and then again from the eleventh, nor to the Uí Bairrche. The great hero of the Uí Cheinselaig was Brandub, the scourge of the Uí Néill and killer of Aed mac Ainmirech. He is notably absent from Munnu's Life. This contrasts with the unquestioning support Brandub is given in the Life of Maedóc of Ferns, the tentative support he receives from Colmán Ela and at least the acknowledgment of power in the Life of Molua.⁷⁵

There is little sense of unity among the Laigin, with Guare mac Eogain ravaging the lands of southern Leinster in his quest for the kingship of Leinster, and Suibne mac Domnaill, apparently deservedly, being ingloriously decapitated by his nephew. Regarding the former Munnu predicts that if he repents, his *genus* will hold the kingship of Uí Cheinselaig. He does not repent which perhaps allows us to suppose that at the time of writing Guare's line - the Síl Máeluidir - were lacking power. (A similar prediction is made for this line in the Life of Finnian of Clonard⁷⁶.) Since at least by 770 we find a member of this group holding (and losing) the kingship of Uí Cheinselaig we might wonder if *Vita prior* was written before this date.⁷⁷

The only group for whom Munnu performs helpful miracles are not a true Leinster group: the Fothairt, who were categorised as an alien people, a *fortuath*. The Fothairt, as we said above, are presented in a relatively good light. It is they who present Munnu the land on which to build his monastery.

Tech Munnu, it seems, does not consider itself beholden to any Laigin group, though there is a nod towards Crundmáel⁷⁸ who repents and in some way submits to Munnu. At the same time nearly all Fothairt land was in Leinster (some in Armagh) potentially enabling Tech Munnu to knit itself into communities throughout the province and elsewhere. The presentation of Tech Munnu's foundation having been due to the

⁷⁵ *Vita S. Aedani seu Maedoc episcopi Fernensis*, Heist 1965, 234-247; *Vita prior S. Lugidi* ch 43, 51, Heist 1965, 140, 142; *Vita S. Colmani abbatis de Land Elo* ch 39-40, Heist 1965, 221.

⁷⁶ *Vita S. Finniani* ch 13, Heist, 99. The Cormac mac Diarmata of this story is grandfather of Suibne mac Domnaill. *CGH*, 11 no. no 117 a 47. He is also the man who, in *Vita Comgalli*, gives Comgall land and becomes a monk in Bangor. Plummer vol ii, 16 ch. 42.

⁷⁷ One might argue, conversely, that the Life was written at a time when, as a result of a kind of retrospective symbolic repentance in the form of alliance with Tech Munnu, the group were successful. This was the case in 817 when the head of the Síl Máeluidir, recorded as king of Uí Cheinselaig, allies with Tech Munnu in an attack against the *familia* of Ferns, killing 400. Byrne 1973, 149.

⁷⁸ Charles-Edwards 2000, 188 n166 considers this to be Crundmáel m. Aeda of the Uí Cheinselaig (ob. 628).

Fothairt meant that Tech Munnu neither had to involve itself in Leinster's factional politics, nor did it appear to be a plant by the Uí Néill overkings.

The evidence of this Life, then, suggests to me that Munnu's community (if it was they who produced this Life) did not see themselves as representatives of the Laigin. Their allegiance, at this time at least, seems to be more with the Uí Néill. Munnu's role contrasts markedly not only with saints in hagiographical literature such as Maedóc, as mentioned above, but also with Máedóc m. Eogain and Bishop Áedán of Glenn Dá Locha⁷⁹, as presented in the Fragmentary Annals and the *Borúma*. Here the Leinster saints' merciless treatment of the Uí Néill king Áed mac Áinmirech and his son Cummasach includes Máedóc's incitement to murder the latter, and Áedán's curse of castration on the former.⁸⁰

A survey of how Munnu is depicted in other saints' Lives reveals, however, that though Munnu was not claimed as a Leinster saint during his own life time or in the period when the *Vita prior* was written, in later centuries perhaps he was. The most interesting and sustained of his encounters is with Maedóc of Ferns, though the depiction is late - a Latin Life of Maedóc probably of late 11th or early 12th century.⁸¹ Here Maedóc is characterised as a key champion of the Uí Cheinselaig king Brandub, against the Uí Néill; at this time Ferns lay within the territory of the ruling Uí Cheinselaig dynasty.⁸² Munnu is presented as a good moral example, and friend - someone with whom Maedóc is willing to share his vision; he is an ally, in other words, of the then patron saint of the Uí Cheinselaig. Maedóc is notably absent from Munnu's Lives, however, and relations between Tech Munnu and Ferns were, in the 9th century, far from amiable as we have seen.⁸³

⁷⁹ Máedóc m. Eogain aka Áed ua Dúnlaing (*Rec Mai* - Ó Riain 1985 no 285). A Bishop Áedán, brother (through his mother) of Áed m. Ainmirech, appears in Ó Riain 1985 no 380.1 and 722.64. These two saints are understood to be different saints from Máedóc m. Sétna, Ferna, though there may, in fact, be some overlap.

⁸⁰ Davies 1996, 56-59.

⁸¹ Sharpe 1991, 395.

⁸² Byrne 1973, 144.

⁸³ In 817 one branch of Uí Cheinnselaig, with help from the *familia* of Tech Munnu, inflicts defeat on the *familia* of Ferns, killing 400. Byrne 1973, 149.

Another saint in whose *vita* Munnu appears is Cóemgen m. Cóemloga*.⁸⁴ Here Munnu overhears two demons complaining about their difficulties traversing freely around the monastery of Glenn dá Locha; the fervour of prayer at the monastery there is such that the demons fear being burnt. When Munnu hears the demons planning to take advantage of the place while Cóemgen is away on pilgrimage, he rushes to Glenn dá Locha to advise Coemgen to stay at home, thus saving the monastery. Coemgen is a straightforward Leinster saint, with a Leinster genealogy and a monastery in co. Wicklow. The relationship depicted is that of mutual help and friendship, neither saint particularly with the upper hand. Again this is a saint who does not appear in Munnu's own Lives. With Abbán m. Laignig too, another saint with Leinster genealogy and Leinster monastery⁸⁵ and absent from Munnu's own *vita*, Fintán is depicted as having an equal relationship, in which each saint respects the other.⁸⁶

In short, it is perhaps significant that when Munnu makes an appearance in the Life of a Leinster saint, as he does three times, he is depicted in a good light and is shown in every case to be a friend. In none of the three cases does the saint appear in Munnu's own Lives and all three of the Lives of the Leinster saints are late. The other saints (apart from Colum Cille) in whose Lives he appears are Cainnech, Mochua, Molua and Molaisse, all of whom, apart from Mochua, appear in Munnu's own Lives. In none of these cases is the relationship straightforward.

Mac Lean makes something of the good relations between Dál Riata and Leinster in the second half of the 7th century implying that this might be a time when the cult of Abbán (and possibly Munnu) might have reached Argyll.⁸⁷ There are guarantors from Leinster for Adomnán's *Cáin*, and a king of Leinster was married to a woman from Dál Riata, he points out. But there were guarantors from all over Ireland (and Scotland), and marriage alliances knitted together - or attempted to knit together - many peoples, usually invisibly. Of course one can envisage a child of the Leinster / Dál Riata marriage alliance returning to Argyll full of happy memories of the local church Tech Munnu, and naming his private chapel, say, after the patron saint. One can envisage

⁸⁴ Plummer vol 1 ch 21, 244 (a D Life).

⁸⁵ He is among the Laigin in Ó Riain 1985 no. 287.1-4 and 662.165. His main monasteries are at Mag Arnaide in co. Wexford and Cell Abbáin in co. Leix.

⁸⁶ Plummer vol 1 ch. 37, 25 (D Life). This is an incidental remark that Abbán has in the past made pacts of fraternity with various saints, one of which was Munnu. Also in Heist, 270 ch 31 (derived from D).

⁸⁷ Mac Lean 1983, 58.

many things. On balance I consider that, while Munnu's cult may well have been flourishing in Argyll in the seventh century, a diplomatic connection between there and Leinster does not provide the most compelling context in which to explain its development.

Munnu and the Campbells

It is clear that at least by the early nineteenth century the Campbells in Argyll considered Munnu their patron saint⁸⁸ and there are indications that the adoption of Munnu took place long before. For one thing the Campbells buried their dead at Kilmun in Cowal from at least the mid fifteenth century.⁸⁹

It was noted above that the four dedications to Munnu in Argyll are near places which are or were Campbell power centres.⁹⁰ The Campbells held extensive lands in Argyll and had many centres of power, so this might simply be a coincidence, but if not we must try to deduce whether the location of the secular centres was motivated by the position of the dedications, or whether the dedications were created late to accompany the secular centres. We might also wonder why the relatively obscure Munnu was chosen as the patron saint.

As we have seen, of the four places called Kilmun one (Kilmun in Cowal) has early sculpture and one (Kilmun in Glen Aray) has the remains of a structure of early Christian character. We know that the Kilmun in Cowal existed long before the Campbells held power in the area, and it is likely that the Kilmun in Glen Aray did so too. In the case of the former we know of a grant from the Lamonts to Paisley Abbey in the mid 13th century of the church and lands of Kilmun. The Campbells did not gain their lands there until the middle of the following century, by which time the Campbells were linked to the Lamonts by marriage.⁹¹ It is possible, though unsupported by

⁸⁸ Campbell 2000, 124. It was Niall, the 10th Duke, who claimed, in the late 19th century, that Munnu was the Campbell patron saint, drawing, presumably, from his considerable scholarship.

⁸⁹ Campbell 2000, 123. Boardman 2005, 136.

⁹⁰ Noted by Campbell 1913, 32, and more recently in Campbell 2000, 124 and, with reservations, Boardman 2005, 154n87.

⁹¹ Gillespie Campbell married Isabella Lamont around 1342. Boardman 2006, 61.

evidence to date,⁹² that the Lamonts held Munnu in special affection, and that the Campbells continued to support the cult as a way of retaining favour among the local kindred. It is notable that as well as supporting Munnu the Campbells made dedications to Catherine and Mary.⁹³ This was in line with the cosmopolitan profile they wished to cultivate along with the local Highland one.⁹⁴

The earliest Campbell centre was not in Cowal however, but in or near Loch Awe. Inis Chonnell, a castle on an island in Loch Awe was held by the Campbells at least by 1315⁹⁵ but may have been held by the MacDougalls prior to its becoming a Campbell centre. It was probably still in MacDougall hands in 1308 when a MacDougall mentions his three castles on 'a loch twenty four miles long'.⁹⁶ The earliest Campbell stronghold in Argyll may rather have been *Caisteal na Nighinn Ruaidh* on Loch Avich.⁹⁷ Both of these places are near to two further Kilmuns.

Neither of these (Kilmun nr Dalavich and Kilmun on Loch Avich) have remains of particularly early character, as we have seen, and neither name is attested early. In fact the remains at the former site are thought by the *RCAHMS* to be no earlier than the eighteenth century. There are names round about, however, both place-names and personal names, which might suggest that ecclesiastical activity and possibly devotion to Munnu might be long embedded in the landscape. Less than 500m northeast of Kilmun on Loch Awe is Suidhe Mhunge, which, as suggested above, may be a saint's 'seat' of the same kind as is found in Bute, where both Suidhe Chatain and Suidhe

⁹² Munnu would not be an obvious choice for a family who claimed descent from Niall Noígiallach via the Cenél nÉogáin Kings of Ailech in Northern Ireland. The 16th c *Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne* (LCS) claims that Ánrothán son of Aodh Athlamhan was the first to come to Scotland (Aodh died in 1033) (Sellar 1971, 24). The reason for choosing one patron over another, however, is prone to all manner of whim and historical accident, now quite invisible to us. Munnu may have been perceived as a Columban saint at the time of his hypothetical adoption by the Lamonts in which case it would not be a surprising choice. Or it could be something to do with the Vikings' exodus from Ireland in the early 10th century (Ó Cróinín 1995, 255); Lamont is a Norse name (< *logmadr*, lawman, lawyer) and Wexford, near Munnu's foundation of Tech Munnu, was a Norse settlement. There is some evidence that Irish saints' cults travelled with the Norse to Galloway at this time (unpublished work by Fiona Edmonds), and it is possible they reached Argyll too.

⁹³ eg St Catherine's chapel, Strachur, founded by Duncan Campbell of Lochawe in 1453. *Arg* 7 no 93. The collegiate church at Kilmun had a joint dedication to Mary. Boardman 2005, 157 n126.

⁹⁴ Boardman 2005, 141.

⁹⁵ *Arg* 2 no 292, 231 with reference to the confirmation of the lordship of Loch Awe to Sir Colin Campbell by Robert I. *OPS*, 122. *RCAHMS* note that the castle was in MacDougall hands in 1308, but suggest that it was built 'by a founder member of the Campbell family of Loch Awe, of whose origins little is known'. The earliest section of the castle belongs to the first half of the 13th century. *Arg* 2 no 292, 223.

⁹⁶ Campbell 2000, 73.

⁹⁷ Campbell 2000, 73. *Arg* 2 no 281.

Bhlain are present. To the southwest of the same Kilmun there is Larach na Iobairte. The Gaelic word *iobairt*, offering or sacrifice, is several times used in Medieval sources to refer to lands granted to the Church; there are several examples in the Book of Deer.⁹⁸ The evidence from personal names is late and relates to Glassary parish, but is noteworthy none the less. People holding versions of the name MacMunn < Mac Gille Mhunna appear at the west end of Loch Awe, around Fincharn, Loch Ederline and Glasvaar.⁹⁹

It is possible that the name Kilmun applied originally to the Dalavich site, but was used later to label a family burial site on Loch Avich, by which time the original site may no longer have had any upstanding remains or obvious sign of ecclesiastical character.¹⁰⁰ It may also be that the tradition which mentions Kilmun in Cowal and the nearby Sith-Mun¹⁰¹ originally applied to the Kilmun and Suidhe Mhunge on Loch Awe. The story was transferred to the Cowal Kilmun because of the erection of the Collegiate Church there.

The earliest landholders we know of in the area around Loch Avich and Dalavich are the MacGilchrists, later the family who designated themselves 'of Glassary'.¹⁰² It is not clear how the Campbells managed to acquire their lands around Loch Awe, but it seems they did so at least partly by marriage into the Glassary family, rather as they did in Cowal.¹⁰³ Again we might suppose that Munnu was a saint (among others) already culted in the area when the Campbells were gaining their powers. It is possible too that it was a family ancestral both to the Lamonts in Cowal, and to the MacGilchrists in

⁹⁸ Watson 1926, 254.

⁹⁹ 'Joanne mcDonche Vcilmund witnessed sasine of Glasver and Arnfad in the barony of Glasrie, 1608' (Black, 545). Angus M'Illmund, Fincharne Nedder, 1672 (*HP* vol ii, 208). Dougal Mc ilmun in *ffincharnichtarich*, 1685 (*CoA*, 8).

¹⁰⁰ Or could have been the other way around. It is the Loch Avich site that comes on record first (1414). It is notable that one of the Kilmuns is traditionally associated with the MacDougalls (Kilmun on Loch Avich) while the other is linked to the Campbells (Kilmun nr Dalavich). Relations between these two families were strained and this may have been their border territory. Less than 2km north of Kilmun on Loch Avich is a cairn, Carn Chailein (*Arg* 2 no 227) commemorating the place where Sir Colin Campbell was killed by the MacDougalls in 1296.

¹⁰¹ Mackinlay 1914, 71.

¹⁰² Alexander II grants lands around Fincharn to 'Gillascop mac Gilcrist' in 1240 (*HP* vol ii, 121). It is interesting that around the time the Campbells were gaining lands in Lamont territory in Cowal and marrying into the family, they were also making vows of allegiance to the Glassary family, and that these vows were made in Kilmun church in Cowal. Thus in 1361 Colin Campbell binds himself to act in the interests of Gilbert of Glassary within the sherrifdom of Argyll. *HP* ii, 147.

¹⁰³ Glassary Writs in *HP* vol ii, 114-245.

Glassary, who originally culted Munnu. Their common ancestor was said to have come from Ireland to Scotland in the 11th century.¹⁰⁴

Is it just coincidence, then, that Munnu was the saint culted around Loch Awe, where the Campbells had their first power base, in Cowal, the area in which the Campbells' powers grew in the fourteenth century, and near Inveraray where a new seat of administrative power was built in the mid fifteenth century?¹⁰⁵ I think it is impossible to answer this question on available evidence but the following is at least plausible. Munnu was a saint with a powerful cult in Argyll possibly from the seventh century. The sites bearing his dedications were in strategic positions (all near routeways and waterways, well spaced within Argyll), and were possibly near early secular centres, now gone. We do not know precisely where these centres were, though it might be possible to make some suggestions. The fact that the Campbells chose to position their power bases in similar ones as were chosen centuries before is not surprising; there is no doubt but that there were good strategic reasons for choosing every one of them. They may have taken advantage of the proximity of dedications to Munnu as a way of reinforcing their ancient rights, their rootedness in the ancient landscape, and what better way of asserting authority and ownership over significant pieces of land than by burial there of the family's dead.¹⁰⁶ It seems to me, in other words, that the Campbells drew on an ancient cult for their own purposes. They may have revitalised it through support of fairs on Munnu's feast day and so on¹⁰⁷, but I do not see any evidence for them having created any of the *cill*- sites (with the possible exception of the duplicate Kilmun on Loch Avich) themselves. It is possible too that by appropriating a cult that had previously belonged to a local kindred that might have been a rival, they neutralised the power of that cult. In this context it is interesting that two of the sites associated with Munnu, Kilmun on Loch Avich and Eilean Munde on Loch Leven were associated with branches of Clan Donald.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Sellar 1971 and above, fn 92.

¹⁰⁵ The castle or manor of Inveraray appears to have been a residence of the lords of Lochawe. It was 'built or rebuilt' by Sir Colin Campbell, first Laird of Glenorchy, who died in 1480 (*Arg* 7 no 132)

¹⁰⁶ It is possible that a site near the Kilmun in Glen Aray was used for Campbell burial. Near the early Christian site there is Creag a'Chaibeil, where *caibeal*, *-eil m* means chapel or family burial ground (Dwelly 1911,140). Tom na Cuirte [cuairt, *-e f* circle, circuit (Dwelly 1911,284), court, palace (MacLennan 1925,114)] is 2km nne which is suggestive of assertions of power of a different kind.

¹⁰⁷ When the burgh of Kilmun in Cowal was created in 1490 two fair days were declared, one on the feast of St Munnu, *die S. Mundi*. *RMS* vol 2 no 1993.

¹⁰⁸ *Arg* 2 no 226, *Arg* 2 no 245. The former is associated with MacDougalls, the latter with MacDonalds.

There were other ways too in which the Campbells used the cult of Munnu. The readings for Munnu in the Aberdeen Breviary begin with a prayer for St. Mund, abbot *apud Kilmund et Dissert*.¹⁰⁹ It is not certain where this *Dissert* is but it can be assumed that the name comes from the Latin *desertum* via Gaelic *diseart*, meaning desert and so hermitage. There are several places in Scotland containing this element, including Dysart in Fife, connected with St Serf.¹¹⁰ In 1441 Duncan Campbell of Lochawe proposed that the revenues of the parish church of 'St Conan of Dysart' (now the parish church of Glenorchy in Dalmally) be transferred to the new collegiate church, Kilmun.¹¹¹ St Conan's was at that time in the hands of Campbell rivals and, as Boardman points out, the annexation of the benefice to a Campbell foundation was a crafty way of regaining control there.¹¹² It seems to me almost certain that the *Dissert* mentioned in the Aberdeen Breviary is this place and that the connection with Munnu was created to legitimise the Campbells' request; if Munnu could be shown to have been abbot at the church in Dalmally then it would be natural and proper that its fruits should be used to the glory of Munnu in the grander foundation, Kilmun, in Cowal.

The readings in the Aberdeen Breviary about Fáelán (January 9th) might support the notion that Munnu was, at least in the early sixteenth century, thought to have a connection with Dalmally. Here Fáelán is presented as Munnu's pupil, and successor as head of his monastery when Munnu dies.¹¹³ It has been suggested that the link between these two saints might be due to the name Fáelán occurring 3 (or possibly 4) times in the list of Munnu's monks in *MT*.¹¹⁴ While this might be so, the existence of a church connected to Munnu in Dalmally, so close to Strathfillan with its many associations with Fáelán, might seem to reinforce the likelihood of a relationship between the two.

Beyond Kilmun

In looking for place-names which might contain references to our saint we have so far only considered those which contain the name in hypocoristic form: Munnu or Mund.

¹⁰⁹ *Ab. Brev.* Oct 21st.

¹¹⁰ Watson 1926, 256.

¹¹¹ *CSSR iv* no 791.

¹¹² Boardman 2006, 143.

¹¹³ *Ab. Brev.* Jan 9th. Edition and translation in Taylor 2001a, 197.

¹¹⁴ Taylor 2001a, 180. *MT* Oct 21.

Thus we have found four places called Kilmun, one called Suidhe Mhunge and one called Eilean Munde. This approach assumes that it was only under this hypocoristic form of his name that he was commemorated in Scotland whereas it is apparent that this was not the form always used, at least in Ireland. A comparison of his name as it appears in the Lives, martyrologies and annals can be made by way of illustration. In the *Vita prior* he is consistently called Fintan. There is no mention of the name Munnu except in the title. In the Life of Molua, another O' Donohue Life he is also Fintan.¹¹⁵ In the earliest martyrologies, *FO* and *MT*, he is Fintan as he is also in *AU*. In *VC* he is Fintenus. It looks as if Fintan is consistently the earliest form used but the pattern is broken by his appearance in the O' Donohue Life of Cainnech as Mundus.¹¹⁶ We can deduce too that Munnu or Mundu was a name by which he was known by the time his *Vita prior* written, even if it is not explicitly stated, for we hear of his monastery called *Domus Mundu*,¹¹⁷ the latinisation of one of the two establishments in Ireland called Tech Munnu, now Taghmon. It nevertheless seems that Fintan, if not the only form, was certainly the preferred form in the earliest literature. In later hagiography and in martyrologies from *MG* onwards he is almost always Munnu¹¹⁸ and in all Scottish sources he is Mund or Mundus.

If the name Fintan by itself was the one by which the saint was commonly known in the earliest period we have to consider the possibility of *cill*- names other than Kilmun commemorating his cult. There are, for example, a couple of names in Morvern which almost certainly derive from Fintan / Finden: Killundine / Cill Fhionntáin and Kilintag.¹¹⁹ In Cowal there are two names, Kilfinan and Killellan¹²⁰ (*Kyllenane* 1375 RMS vol 1 no 574), which are more likely to derive from the name Fínán, a name with a different origin from Fintan;¹²¹ the course of place-name change is scarcely predictable, however, making a derivation from Fintan at least possible. If any of these names were admitted as possible commemorations of Fintan Munnu then the likelihood

¹¹⁵ Heist 1965, 382-8.

¹¹⁶ Heist 1965, 182-7.

¹¹⁷ *Vita prior* in S ch. 24. Heist 1965, 204.

¹¹⁸ eg *MG*, *MDo*, *MDr*, *FO* notes, marginal notes in *MT* (p 121-3), all Lives in *D* plus others such as the 13th century life of Molaisse in which he is Mundus. In his own Life in *D* and *Vita altera* in *S* he is Munnu with no reference to the name Fintan.

¹¹⁹ Watson 1926, 304.

¹²⁰ Kilfinan NR934788. Killellan NS107689. There is also Kilennan on Islay, NR372573.

¹²¹ Watson, for example, considers most of these to be dedications to Fínán Lobur (March 16), including Kilfinan. Watson 1926, 285.

is that they were coined early. The converse - that the names containing the hypocorism, Munnu, are likely to be late - is not, however a safe hypothesis. As we have seen Tech Munnu appears in a life probably dating from the eighth century.¹²²

Munnu and Fintan of Cluain Eidnech

Another assumption that has been made in this chapter is that the identity of Munnu is uncontaminated by overlap with other saints; we have not, in other words, identified any other saints as possible doublets. I look at the bewildering leakage between one saint's cult and another in the chapter on Berach, so I am not going to explore this subject here. A few points are worth making, however, in the hope that further work might be done in the future.

First it is possible that while the testimony of the Aberdeen Breviary, with its feast day on 21st Oct and its lessons conforming to the stories that occur in the Irish tradition, suggests that the Munnu commemorated in Scotland was perceived as being the same as the one culted in Ireland, there are some hints that a separate St Mund branched off and was thought to be a completely different individual. There is, for instance, a Mund who appears in some of the later Scottish calendars on April 15th¹²³, and Alastair Campbell raises the possibility that the Eilean Munde burial site on Loch Linnhe might commemorate a different St Mund from Munnu m. Tucháin.¹²⁴ One cannot, of course, completely discount the possibility that another person of this name did exist at some time in Scotland, possibly named after the Irish saint.

Second, there was bound to be some confusion between one Fintan and another, Fintan being such a popular name in hagiographical literature that jokes were made.¹²⁵ In an

¹²² Sharpe 1995, 255.

¹²³ The following are all on April 15: *S. Munde abbot and confess. in argyle vnder king kennede 2. 962.* (Adam King, where 962 indicates obit.); *In Orcadibus Mundi abbatis sanctitate mirabilis. K.* (Dempster, where K is used by Dempster to mean Adam King); *Sanctus Mundus Abbas, sanctitate vitae & miraculis celebris ad haec nostra tempora in prouincia Argathelia* (Camerarius).

¹²⁴ Campbell 2000, 124. Campbell's source is 'Angus McLean, unpublished manuscript', a source used also by the Clan Campbell Society of North America who distinguish Fintan Munnu from a St Mund who was 'a 10th century saint who was abbot of Glenorchy with his seat at Clachandysart' (see under the name MACPHUN at www.ccsna.org/septs.htm.) This looks like a conflation of data from *Ab. Brev.* and *Adam King*, but without seeing the manuscript it is impossible to comment further.

¹²⁵ *Vita S. Albei* ch 14 - Heist 1965, 121. There are many Irishmen in Rome, many with the same name: 12 Fintans, 12 Colmans, 12 Domongenii (Domongenii is the genitive).

Irish litany of saints the monks of Fintan mac Uí Echach are mentioned, '8 Fintans among them',¹²⁶ and *FO* notes in RB512 on Feb 21 reveal considerable confusion as to who Fintan Corach might be and 'the four Fintans of Cluain Eidnech' are thrown in to add to the mix.

A few instances of confusion regarding Munnu can be pointed to. For one thing there is the apparent difficulty of understanding the reason behind his two names; it seems that the fact that the names Fintan and Munnu are in origin the same was not transparent to everyone (or perhaps to anyone much). Thus a story to explain his dual name is given in *FO* notes in Laud 610 which declares that it is the simple result of a name swap with Fintan of Cluain Eidnech (Fintan m. Garbáin).¹²⁷ Perhaps interaction between the two Fintans went deeper simply than a name swap however, as *MG* gloss and *MDo* say Munnu is abbot of Cluain Eidnech. A scan at the genealogy of Fintan of Cluain Eidnech and at his Life in *S* reveals several similarities with the profile of Munnu: both are connected with the Fothairt, Munnu as their supporter, Fintan m. Garbáin as a relative¹²⁸; significant stones are associated with both saints, Munnu's is the one on which he was born, Fintan's is the stone on which he was baptized;¹²⁹ both are associated with Dímma of the Fothairt,¹³⁰ and with a saint called Mochuma;¹³¹ both are depicted as very strict or harsh and both are visited by angels; there are 7 churches at Cluain Ednech, and 7 *loca* at Taghmon.¹³² Many of these points are common hagiographical motifs and on their own amount to little. Together they are at least suggestive of some overlap of tradition between the two saints, whatever that means. It is interesting too that Fintan of Cluain Eidnech's feast day - February 17th in *FO*, *MT* etc

¹²⁶ *Litany Irish ss II*, 61 - *ocht Fintain dib*.

¹²⁷ *FO* notes in Laud, Oct 21: *Fintan .i. Mundu .i. Fintan .i. Munna mac Telchain druad ideo hic Fintan dicitur .i. aenta doroine 7 Fintan Chluana hEidnech i Láigis, co tartad ainm cechtair de for araille in commemoraitione (sic) societatis*. It is interesting that the Fintan on the day before (Oct 20) also has a name swap with Fintan of Clonenagh - this is Fintan Maeldubh (who is made into 2 separate saints in *MDo*.) There may be a dedication to Maeldubh at Kilmalieu*, Inveraray, a possibility strengthened by the inclusion of *Maldybil* on October 20th in the *Glenorchy psalter*.

¹²⁸ *CGSH, Rec Mai* - Ó Riain 1985 no 3.

¹²⁹ *Vita prior S. Fintani* ch 1 - Heist, 198; *FO* notes in RB512, 77.

¹³⁰ In the case of Fintan of Cluain Eidnech this connection is through Berchan (*FO* notes, 77), said elsewhere to be son of Dímma of the Fothairt.

¹³¹ In *vita prior S. Fintani* ch 4 - Heist, 199 - this seems to be an alternative name for Comgall. In the life of Fintan of Cluain Eidnech, Mochuimi (in *S*) / Mochummin (in *D*) / Mocumma (in *O*) is a fellow disciple under Columba of Terryglass (Heist 1965 ch 3, 146; Plummer 1910 vol 2, 97).

¹³² *Vita prior S. Fintani* ch 19 - Heist 1965, 203. The 'seven churches of Clonenagh' are part of local tradition (O'Hanlon 1875-1905, vol 2, 578).

- is one which was observed in Scotland, at least according to the somewhat unreliable testimony of Adam King.¹³³

Summary and conclusion

Let us now return to our original questions and sum up the foregoing. First, how early have we been able to push back the cult of Munnu in Argyll?

The earliest firm evidence of Munnu in Scotland is the first attestation of the name Kilmun in 1230 x 1246.¹³⁴ An earlier date for the existence of the cult is likely on the grounds of early Christian sculpture at two Kilmuns, and structural remains of early medieval remains at another. Another hint of an early spread of the cult of Munnu is his mention in *VC*, by which time it seems to be assumed that his fame is widespread. It might be argued that the naming of the Argyll Kilmuns was a later activity by the Loch Awe Campbells, prompted by their desire to promote their patron saint, but it seems to me more likely that they simply adopted the saint, who was already well established in the landscape, as part of their bid to embed themselves into the local cultural community.

At least four historical contexts have emerged in which the flourishing of the cult of Munnu might be explicable. They are of varying usefulness.

1) The seventh century is a possibility, between the death of Columb Cille and the composition of *VC*, by which time, on the evidence of Adomnán, the cult of Munnu was well known. His cult may have come from his homeland in the north, or from his monastery in southern Leinster, and his links with Columba were apparently being stressed by members of his own monastery at least by the time Adomnán wrote. If his status as a would-be Iona saint was a significant part of his profile, and if Fraser is correct in his deduction that Iona, at least for part of the seventh century, was not the favoured ecclesiastical focus in Argyll, in particular in Kintyre, then here might be an

¹³³ S. Fintane pryor in scotland. 973. (*Adam King*). In *Scotia Fintani prioris*. ML. qui postea episcopatum gessit (*Dempster*). This is also the day Finan of Lindisfarne, successor of Aidan (ODS, 184), who is commemorated in several Scottish Calendars. Both *Fintane* and *Finnane* appear in *Adam King*.

¹³⁴ *Reg. de Pass.*, 132-3.

explanation for the distribution of dedications which are in Cowal, and around Loch Awe and Loch Linnhe, and absent from Kintyre, and Knapdale.¹³⁵

2) The theory that good relations between Leinster and Argyll provided a stimulus for the flourishing of the cult is too vague to be helpful. Munnu's monastery was in Leinster, but was he adopted by the Laigen at an early stage, or was Tech Munnu thought to be connected more with the Uí Néill? The presentation, possibly from the 8th century, of Munnu himself as belonging to the Uí Néill suggests the latter might be the case.

3) A context might be found with the Dublin Norse emigration in the early 10th century. Wexford (>Veigsfjörthr), near Tech Munnu, was one of several Norse 'proto-towns' on the east and south coasts and it is possible that some of its inhabitants were part of the 'large-scale exodus of Vikings from Ireland' at this time.¹³⁶ Munnu appears in an Irish Litany among pilgrims and voyagers,¹³⁷ and there are hints too of his travels in *Vita prior*¹³⁸ references which perhaps reflect the movement of his cult, as much as the movement of the man. It is tempting to suppose that the Lamonts of Cowal, with their Norse name (<logmadr, lawman, lawyer),¹³⁹ might have come to Scotland at this time, bringing a local cult.¹⁴⁰ The Lamonts' own traditions, however, claimed the first member of the family to reach Scotland did so in the 11th century, and was the ancestor also of the Mac Sweens and MacGilchrists.¹⁴¹ And the Norse name may be a late adoption - they appear to have had a Gaelic name too, Macerchar < Mac Fherchair, son of Farquar.¹⁴² Another possibility, then, is that the cult came in the 11th century with the arrival of the ancestor of the Lamonts, MacSweens and MacGilchrists. But the origin of these kindred was with the Cenél nEogain, and though there may be a reason why they favoured Munnu, this is now lost to us and there is no trace of his cult, as far as I know, in Cenél nEogain territories in Ireland.

¹³⁵ Fraser argues, too, however, that Iona may have been for a time out of favour in Cowal too, with preference going to Kingarth (Fraser 2005).

¹³⁶ Ó Cróinín 1995, 245, 255.

¹³⁷ *Litany Irish ss II*, 63. There does not seem to be a consensus about the date of this document. Hughes thought it dated to around 800, Sanderlin to 900 or later and Sharpe to the 9th or 10th century. Hughes 1972, 209. Sanderlin, 252. Sharpe 1984, 256.

¹³⁸ *Vita prior* ch 31, Heist 1965, 208.

¹³⁹ Black 1946, 412.

¹⁴⁰ See Rekdal 2004 for the transmission of cults with the Norse.

¹⁴¹ Sellar 1971.

¹⁴² The lands of Lochman M'Kilcolim M'Ereuer and others in Kintyre were erected into the sheriffdom of Kintyre in 1292. Black 1946, 490.

4) It is possible that the cult in Argyll originated with the Campbells, but it is more likely that it was simply supported and perhaps reinvigorated under their lordship. The prominent role they played as benefactors and masters of the church at Kilmun helped them to win authority over the Lamonts and other local families, for whom Munnu may have been an important saint. Boardman suggests that in addition 'the creation of the collegiate kirk at Kilmun seems to have been designed to restrict the ability of the bishop of Argyll to impose his own candidates in benefices traditionally controlled by the Campbell lords.'¹⁴³ The Campbell's adoption of the saint may not have been entirely opportunistic, but they cannot have been blind to the advantages it might bring. In 1490 Earl Colin Campbell had Kilmun recognised as a burgh, and a fair established on 21 Oct. As Boardman notes, the fair conveniently coincided with the time when merchants from Spain, France and Brittany were most likely to be in the Firth of Clyde.¹⁴⁴

Ultimately, while able to present some models, we remain uncertain as to the origin of or date of the cult, and our endeavours have not advanced our understanding of the ecclesiastical development in Argyll. Even with a clearly defined cult and good solid information about the saint - an obit., a family affiliation, an early life and consistent presence in all the martyrologies - we can do little. There are matters of some interest which have turned up along the way, however. The apparent appropriation of the cult by a late medieval expansionist force is testament to the enduring authority of the saint both at popular level and as an instrument of power among lords and bishops. The persistence of personal names associated with a saint in places whose link with the saint is very ancient shows how deeply embedded into everyday life was saintly devotion. But the endurance of the cult of Munnu, at least in names - both place-names and personal names - is not accompanied by precision of memory. Traditions of the saint are now attached only to the medieval church at Kilmun and stories which once have been attached to land-marks around the Loch Awe Kilmuns may have been transferred to the more famous site in Cowal. Finally, a single St Munnu seems not to have been enough, and at least by the seventeenth century there is evidence for the creation of another.

¹⁴³ Boardman 2005, 137.

¹⁴⁴ Boardman 2005, 299.

2.3 Colmán Ela

Introduction

Colmán Ela has only one dedication in Argyll¹⁴⁵ but he is a potentially fruitful subject of study for several reasons: his name appears whole in the name of the church of which he is patron, Kilcalmonel, and is unlikely to represent any other saint; three Medieval Lives survive, one an O' Donohue Life and therefore probably relatively early,¹⁴⁶ and another which brings the saint to Kintyre; and he appears in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae (VC)*.¹⁴⁷ In addition, the first mention of Kilcalmonel is reasonably early, at least by Argyll standards: it appears in the Register of Paisley Abbey in 1247 as *Ecclesia Sancti Colmaneli in Kyntyir*,¹⁴⁸ and in 1320 as *Kilculmanel*.¹⁴⁹

First we will look at his cult in Argyll, in particular at the church bearing his name, followed by a brief survey of dedications elsewhere in the west. We will discuss the saint's origins and affiliations and then consider a number of contexts in which a cult of St Colmán Ela might have arisen. We will look at dedications to other saints in the area, and at other place-names which might throw light on the likely date or nature of the foundation to our saint. Colmán Ela will then be subjected to more rigorous enquiry. His name is distinctive, but is he really so clear cut as we first thought?

Colmán Ela in Argyll

The church of Colmán Ela in Kintyre is attested from 1247, as we have seen, when a pennyland granted to the church was confirmed by Pope Innocent IV.¹⁵⁰ There is some debate over the site of church. It was probably at Clachan,¹⁵¹ site of a church dating to 1760 and home of two early Medieval¹⁵² and 14 Medieval carved stones. Alternatively, there is an early Christian disc-headed cross at a site less than a kilometre away near

¹⁴⁵ There is another Kilcalmonel marked on Blaeu's map of 1654 in Southend. There is good reason to believe that this is a mistake however. See gazetteer.

¹⁴⁶ Sharpe 1991, 297-339 and above, p 38.

¹⁴⁷ *VC* 1.5, *VC* II.15.

¹⁴⁸ *Reg. de Pass*, 123.

¹⁴⁹ *RMS* vol 5 no 2070.

¹⁵⁰ *Reg. de Pass*, 123.

¹⁵¹ NR 764560. *Arg 1* no 270.

¹⁵² Fisher 2001, 117.

Ballinakill (NR 767561) and this has also been cited as a possible early church site.¹⁵³ Blaeu marks both *Bal na Heglish* (presumably a former name for Ballinakill) and *Kilchalmanel*.¹⁵⁴

The parish of Kilcalmonel has been of changing form, at one time including part of Kilberry parish in Knapdale and at another losing its eastern half to form, with the eastern part of Killean, the parish of Saddell and Skipness. The medieval parish seems to have stretched from coast to coast, and from Tarbert to Runahuran Point on the west, and on the east from Tarbert to the vicinity of Cour.¹⁵⁵

There are interesting names associated with the church, such as Dalnascenkill, a name of a kind not frequent in Scotland derived from O.I. *sen chell*, 'old cill'; its usage in Ireland, where the term is 'not uncommon', is thought to be early.¹⁵⁶ Kilcalmonel seems to have had dependent chapels at Skipness (the chapel of St Columba), Kilmichael and Kilchamaig¹⁵⁷ and in 1269 it is known as 'the mother church of St Colmanel in Kentyir'.¹⁵⁸ In a couplet quoted in the OSA the church, its patron saint and the local kindred are invoked, along with the same for three other important churches in Argyll. It has been convincingly argued that all four churches may have been chief or mother churches of long-standing.¹⁵⁹

There are dedications to Colmán Ela also in Carrick in Ayrshire - the church known in the 12th century as Kirkcolmanel and now just as Colmonell - and in Buittle in

¹⁵³ *Arg 1* no. 260. Fisher 2001, 53. Of nine crosses of similar kind in Argyll, five are from Iona, one is from Ardnamurchan, one from Kilmorich on Loch Fyne, one from Kingarth on Bute and one from Southend in Kintyre.

¹⁵⁴ Blaeu plate 19, Cantyra.

¹⁵⁵ *OPS* ii (1), 27.

¹⁵⁶ Sharpe 1992, 93 considers (with some reservations) that such names may 'form a class (or part of a class) of churches with a special character depending on their antiquity.' In 1632 Alasdair MacAllister is granted 'the two marks of old extent of the lands of Kilcalmannell, called Ballenakeill, with the mill, the acre called Dallenascenkill, and the acre lying around the chapel of Skipnische' *Retours* via *OPS*, 29. See also Clancy 1995, 102.

¹⁵⁷ Kilchamaig is at NR 802610, pf 413, *Arg 1* no 72. Kilmichael is at NR 728519 pf 426, *Arg 1* no 293.

¹⁵⁸ *Reg. de Pass*, 136 via *OPS*, 28.

¹⁵⁹ *Colmonel, Clan a Gorry; Barry, Clan Murachie;*

Mac O Charmaig, Clan Neill; Martin, Clan Donochee.

SA vol xix, 318. 'Given the assembled evidence of probably ancient dedications, old nomenclature and sculpture, and a continuity in medieval times of assigning the churches jurisdiction by secular kin-groups and divisions, it is at least plausible to suggest that all four of these churches held their patron's relics and were *andóit* churches for their particular areas in the early medieval period, becoming the parish churches by force of tradition sometime after 1100' Clancy 1995, 108.

Kirkcudbrightshire - a dedication attested from the late 14th century.¹⁶⁰ There is an interesting match of a cluster of dedications between Kintyre and Ayrshire with Colmán Ela, Bláán, Donnán, Faolán, Mochoe, Ciarán, Brigid and Columb Cille commemorated in both places. This is noted by Watson who thinks it 'likely to be more than a coincidence'¹⁶¹ and it has been suggested by several scholars that the cults may have moved together through emigration from Argyll. Woolf, for example, considers that by the 12th century the *Gallgaedel* occupied Ayrshire and that this was 'certainly the result of conquest of that region from Argyll'. It is not clear when this happened, nor who was conquered but it is certain, he contends, that 'by the end of the 11th century Gaelic language and saints' cults associated with Argyll had been introduced into the area.'¹⁶²

There are no other dedications to Colmán Ela in Scotland, as far as I know, but there is a *Colman<us>* in the Martyrology of Aberdeen and a *Colmonel<us>* in the Perth psalter, both on Colmán Ela's Irish feast day of September 26th.¹⁶³ In the Calendar of Fearn there is a *Macolm<us> abba<s>* two days before which may also be a reference to our saint.¹⁶⁴ There are no fairs associated with Colmán Ela in Scotland, although a fair at Tarbert (Argyll) on October 16th may be indirectly associated with this saint, as will be discussed below. I have discovered no commemoration in the Scottish calendars of Colmán Ela's other Irish feast day of October 3rd.

Who is Colmán Ela?

The earliest reference to this saint occurs in *VC* where he appears twice. I will discuss the two incidents further below, but for now I want to concentrate on his origins, as they were perceived then. On his first appearance he is called, in a chapter title, *Sanct<us> Colman<us> episcop<us> mocusailni* (the holy bishop Colmán moccu Sailni).¹⁶⁵ In the main text of that chapter he is *Columbanus filius Beognai*.¹⁶⁶ On his second

¹⁶⁰ Mackinlay 1912, 77.

¹⁶¹ Watson 1926, 171.

¹⁶² Woolf 2004, 99.

¹⁶³ *In Ybernia Sancti Colmani confessoris viri Dei inter suos diuinis scripturis eruditissimi. Mart Ab.* Sept 26th. *Perth psalter* has *colmonel<us>* as an addition made 'probably in the 16th century' (Eeles 1932, 426).

¹⁶⁴ *Fearn*, Sept 24th.

¹⁶⁵ *VC*, Sharpe I.5. An alternative to Sharpe's translation is possible here: St Colmán, bishop of the moccu Sailni.

¹⁶⁶ *VC* I.5.

appearance he is called *Columban<us> fili<us> Beogni* in the title, and *Columban<us> presbyter<us>* (Colmán the priest) in the main text.¹⁶⁷

Adomnán is drawing attention here to his affiliation with the Moccu Sailni or, more usually, the Dál Sailni, an affiliation which is ignored in all his Lives, as we shall see. The Dál Sailni were a group who occupied the area around Connor in county Antrim and may have controlled Connor, the important church there.¹⁶⁸ They were one of the constituent groups of the Cruithni and were closely allied to the Dál nAraide, who were another. The Dál nAraide, who were ruled by the Uí Choelbad, were the most successful of the Cruithni and by 800 the name Dál nAraide was used to denote all the Cruithni.¹⁶⁹ He belongs, in other words, to a group independent of the Uí Néill with close associations - not always friendly ones - with the Dál Riata.

The link with the Dál Sailni is not made in the next references to our saint. In *MT* he has two feast days, on the 26th of September and the 3rd of October,¹⁷⁰ in both of which he is distinguished from other Colmán's by the addition of the name of his monastery. In the former he is *Colmani Lainni Elo <lu anno aetatis>* and in the latter *Colmani Elo* (both in genitive). Similarly in *FO* he is *Colmán ó Laind Elo* and *Colmáin Ela* (genitive). Neither *MG* nor the notes to *FO* add any further details as to Colmán's origins.

Lann Ela (now Lynally) is near Tullamore in County Offaly, Leinster. There are various stories as to why he set up here rather than anywhere else, but the main point just now is that because Lynally is Colmán's main foundation he is often portrayed as a Leinster saint¹⁷¹, and, unsurprisingly, was claimed as patron by the people of that area, as we shall see.

¹⁶⁷ *VC* II.15.

¹⁶⁸ Charles-Edwards 2000, 58-9. By 640 Connor 'may already have been the most important church among the Cruithni', 58. Tírechán (*Coll.* 48.3) says that Patrick founded churches which 'the people of the church of Connor possess.'

¹⁶⁹ Charles-Edwards 2000, 99.

¹⁷⁰ These feast dates are an octave apart. Ó Riain and others have observed that a saint often has feasts an octave apart (Ó Riain 1982, 155).

¹⁷¹ That is his designation in *Arg 1*, for example.

Lives are difficult to date as we have seen. A date of around the late 7th or 8th century for the *Vita S. Colmani* in S¹⁷² (henceforth, Life in S) has been put forward by Sharpe. Here Colmán is placed among the Uí Néill, though no further detail is given. He is simply *Colmanus, filius Beugne, de Nepotis Neill*. The location of his home is not given, but he is born in *Vallis Hoichle*,¹⁷³ a place to which his parents flee from enemy devastation at the time of his birth. This has been identified as Glenelly, in the parish of Badoney (<Bothdomnach) in County Tyrone¹⁷⁴, among the lands of the Cenél Eogain.

At the hands of the early thirteenth century redactor in D¹⁷⁵ Colmán's pedigree is made more explicitly noble - *de nobile gente Hybernie, id est de Nepotibus Neil* - and his home is claimed as Meath. His links with County Antrim are made clear in this Life, in a way which they are not in S, but he is not linked genealogically with the people there. For example, where in S we are told that he sets out on his travels but are not told to where, in D it is stated that he went to Connor which, as we have seen, was the principal church of the Dál nAraide and was located among the Dál Sailni in County Antrim.

A different focus again to Colmán's affiliation is given in his Irish Life. Here he is again a member of the Uí Néill and his northern origins are ignored, but now he is said to be the nephew of Colum Cille: *.i. Mór inghen Feidhlimidh, meic Fergusa Cend-fada, meic Conuill Gulban, meic Neill naói-ghiallaigh, mathair Cholmain*¹⁷⁶. The only copy of this life to survive is that made by O'Clery in the 17th century. It was copied from a book owned by Eachraidhe Ó Siaghail of Fir Chell and is a compilation of stories in both prose and verse made, thinks Kenney 'in the later middle ages'.¹⁷⁷ Colmán Ela is claimed as a saint of the Fir Chell also known as Uí Fíachach of the Southern Uí Néill

¹⁷² Sharpe 1995, 263n 70. Various attempts at refinement can be attempted. First, the life is unlikely to pre-date the death of Dimma Dub in *AU* 659 (who appears in the life). Second, to borrow an argument used by Charles-Edwards in dating the Life of Áed mac Bricc (Charles-Edwards 2000, 445 n12), it is perhaps possible to use the Life's bolstering of the power of Áed Slaine (it is he who gives CE land for the monastery of Lann Ela rather than Áed mac Ainmirech, who was present at the meeting in which the donation was made) to suggest that it was written during a period of ascendancy of the Sil Áeda Slaine, that is not after about 743, apart from a brief period between 944 and 956 (Byrne 1973, 87). There are hints that the date of the Life might be later, however. Colmán Ela's body is enshrined in the Life (ch. 52, Heist 1965, 224), a practice which Charles-Edwards argues did not occur in Ireland until the late 8th century (Charles-Edwards 2000, 348-350, Charles-Edwards 2003, 156).

¹⁷³ *Vita S. Colmani* ch 1, Heist 1965, 201.

¹⁷⁴ Plummer 1910 vol 2, 329; for map see Charles-Edwards 2000, 53. Hogan 1910, 439 lists Glenn Aichle...; in Cenél Eogain,...; Glennelly nr Strabane, c. Tyrone.

¹⁷⁵ Probably Leinster, Sharpe 1995, 263n70.

¹⁷⁶ *Betha Cholmain Eala* ch. 4 - Plummer 1922 vol 1, 168, vol 2, 162.

¹⁷⁷ Kenney 1929, 400.

who traced their descent from Fiachu, one of the many sons of Niall Nógiallach.¹⁷⁸ They occupied lands in co. Offaly, Fiachu having allegedly won them from the Laigin. They may have held the area of Meath around Uisnech but were pushed by the Clann Cholmáin into the area to the south of Uisnech. Lann Ela, 30km south of Uisnech, was in their territory, as was Cell Áir, the church of Áed mac Bricc, another of the saints of the Cenél Fiachach. They seem to have been a client kingdom under an over-king from another branch of the Uí Néill.¹⁷⁹ It can perhaps be inferred that at the time of writing, a *bachall*, alleged in the Life to have been made from the spear with which Duinecha of the Fir Chell killed a monster in Scotland, was used to exact tribute from various groups around Lann Ela, and that Lann Ela was expected to provide in return some protection for the Fir Chell nobility.¹⁸⁰ In other words Colmán Ela, according to the testimony of this Life, is related to an important Northern Uí Néill dynasty but protects and is protected by a dynasty, albeit it a minor one, of the Southern Uí Néill.

Colmán's close kinship with Colum Cille is also stated in the Martyrology of Donegal, unsurprisingly since the martyrology was also compiled, like the Irish Life, by O'Clery; here he is a member of the Uí Néill through his mother, and through his father is *do sliocht Eachdhach mic Muireadha*. This Eochu m. Maireda, as he is termed by Ó Riain, appears in several versions of Colmán's genealogy and is ancestor both of the Dál Sailni, who were mentioned above as holders of land around Connor, and of the Dál mBuain.¹⁸¹ He has a death tale in *Lebor na Huidre* in which Eochu comes originally from Munster, fleeing his father whose wife he had stolen. Eochu is eventually drowned in an overflowing well, the flood of which formed Loch nEchach (>Loch Neagh).¹⁸² Among his descendents, according to the genealogies of saints, are Senán m. Fintain* of Láthrach Briúin, Mobí mac Comgaill* and bishop Mac Nise m. Faibrig.¹⁸³ His link with Mac Nise is particularly significant and will be discussed further below. It is a link which is also made in the Life of Mac Nise himself when Mac Nise predicts the

¹⁷⁸ Byrne 1973, 280.

¹⁷⁹ Charles-Edwards 2000, 28, 298. Byrne 1973, 93.

¹⁸⁰ *Betha Cholmain Eala* ch. 27-8 - Plummer 1922, vol 1, 175-8, vol 2, 169-70.

¹⁸¹ *Rec Mai*, Ó Riain 1985 no 399, 311. *Rec. Min.*, Ó Riain 1985 no 454. The latter entry is *Colman Ela m. Beodna ar sliocht Echach m. Aeda*, where m. Aeda is probably a misreading of Maireda (Eochu m. Maireda appears in La as Eachach Maireda (446, 565, 566)).

¹⁸² Charles-Edwards 2000, 64. *Lebor na Huidre*, Best and Bergin 1929, 95-100.

¹⁸³ *Rec. Met.*, Ó Riain 1985 no 662.184. Charles-Edwards 2000, 62 fig 1.7 shows relationship between Colmán Ela, Senán and Mac Nise.

founding of the monastery of Lann Ela by a member of his family - *de mea nascetur parentela*.¹⁸⁴

A further source that points to Colmán Ela's origins, or at least to the part of Ireland Colmán Ela was perceived to be associated with is the *Acallamh na Senórach*. This is a series of conversations between St Patrick and a pagan called Cailte Mac Ronáin, written, thinks John Carey, in about 1200.¹⁸⁵ Here Colmán Ela, and another man called Eoganán, are called 'two priests of the household of Patrick'. Their encounter with Patrick is nowhere near Lann Ela, but at Loch nDaim Deirg in Dál nAraide.

To add to the above literary evidence we might note that, in addition to the dedication at Lann Ela, there are dedications to Colmán Ela at Muckamore in Co. Antrim and possibly in Kilroot, near Carrickfergus, also in Co. Antrim. There are two points of interest about the saint's association with Muckamore. One is that this may be the site of a church claimed for Patrick in the Book of Armagh,¹⁸⁶ which is consistent with later Patrician tradition claiming, in the face of all chronological likelihood, Colmán Ela as one of Patrick's entourage.¹⁸⁷ The other is that the meaning of the place-name, Muckamore, is plain of the confluence (< Mag Comhair), which may indicate that this was the place to which the story in S about a flood at a *cella* built *in concursu duorum fluminum*, originally applied.¹⁸⁸

To round up the foregoing we have seen that in the late 7th century a bishop Colmán moccu Sailni, also known as Colmán mac Beogna, is believed to have existed at the

¹⁸⁴ Heist 1965, 406 ch. 14.

¹⁸⁵ Carey 2000, 9. See also Dooley 2004. For the text see Stokes 1900. It is translated in O'Grady 1892.

¹⁸⁶ *Conlae m(acc) C(oilboth). Dom(nach) Combar la cenél Fiachrach* (Notulae no. 17, Bieler 1979, 180) In *Vita Trip*. Patrick goes to Dál Araide where he meets the 12 sons of Cóelbad. One son, Sarán, expels Patrick and 'Patrick deprived him of heaven and earth.' Another one, Conlae, offered to Patrick Domnach Comhair. 'And Patrick blessed him and left [as a benediction] that there would be kings and princes of his race for ever. And he founded many churches in Dál Araide.....' (*Vita Trip*. vol i, 163-4). Matching of Domnach Comhair with Muckamore is made by Charles-Edwards 2000, 59. Kay Muhr (pers. comm.) confirms that early forms of the name Muckamore would support this.

¹⁸⁷ In addition to the reference to Colmán Ela in *Acallamh na Senórach*, Jocelin has Patrick predict the foundation of Muckamore (*Mucoomuir*) by Colmán Ela (*Colmanellus*). Jocelin ch. 96 via Reeves 1847, 97.

¹⁸⁸ *Vita S. Colmani* ch 29, Heist 1965, 218. But note frequency with which churches turn up at confluences - natural meeting places. Indeed Colmán Ela's church at Clachan in Kintyre is at a confluence of two small streams. At the confluence of the Rivers Lochy and Spean in Lochaber is a probably early church, Kilmonivaig; the place was formerly known as Mucomir, a name deriving, like Muckamore, from Mag Comhair. Note also that Columba m. Nainneda's main church was at Terryglass < Tír Dá glas, land of the two streams.

time of Colum Cille. Around the same time, or perhaps a little later, this Colmán mac Beogna is identified with Colmán Ela and said to belong to the Uí Néill (in the most general of terms) and to have been born in County Tyrone. No clue is given as to the saint's origins in the early 9th century martyrologies, where he is simply called Colmán Ela. The genealogies ignore any Uí Néill link, instead recording Colmán's link with Eochu m. Maireda, the progenitor of both the Dál Sailni and the Dál mBuain, groups settled in southern Co. Antrim in territory of the Dál nAraide. In a later redaction of Colmán's life additions are made to the original, perhaps around the 1220s, which acknowledge both his Antrim links (he is said to be the second patron of Connor) and his links with the Uí Néill. At around the same time he is portrayed in a secular work as a priest of Patrick's, possibly again in Antrim. Later still he is claimed as a close relative and friend of Colum Cille and a member of the Northern Uí Néill group the Cenél Conall. His Antrim links are dropped and he is portrayed as patron of the Uí Fiachach, a minor branch of the Southern Uí Neill in Meath.

This changing profile of Colmán Ela does not lead to the easy formulation of questions regarding the development of his cult in Kintyre. We cannot, for example, simply ask when the conditions might have been appropriate for the establishment of a church dedicated to a saint of the Uí Néill, because we are not sure to what extent Colmán Ela was an Uí Néill saint. Each question of this sort has therefore to be preceded by a preliminary enquiry, often, as we shall see, with ambiguous results.

Since his first mention is in *VC* we will begin by investigating his relationship with Colum Cille and Iona.

Colmán Ela and Iona

As we have seen Colmán is introduced in *VC* not as Colmán Ela but as *Sanct<us> Colman<us> episcop<us> mocusailni*. It is his role as an ecclesiastic in northern Ireland that is noticed, not his role as monastic founder in Uí Néill territory in the south. He is the subject of one of Adomnán's stories illustrating Colum Cille's ability to 'see' events happening at some geographical remove and he is a beneficiary of Colum Cille's ability to control the wind. He is not depicted as a monk of Iona, but the text could be interpreted as implying that he was more than simply a casual visitor. When

Colmán Ela leaves for Ireland, Columb Cille prophesies that the two will never meet again,¹⁸⁹ a prophesy which would only have weight if a meeting in the future would in normal circumstances be expected. In the same passage Columb Cille sends for Colmán Ela and tells him when to set sail. The two are not depicted as equals, and Colmán Ela is not portrayed as Columb Cille's friend (as, for example, is Colmán moccu Lóigse¹⁹⁰). Their relationship is not necessarily that of master and pupil (or former pupil), but the text is capable of supporting such a reading.

In Colmán's own Life in S the relationship is portrayed differently and in perhaps significant ways. Here Colmán Ela is placed in a more overtly subordinate position to Columb Cille, the former depicted as a willing recipient of both the instruction and favour of the latter. Colmán Ela is instructed by Columb Cille to return to his homeland, despite his original intention to be an exile in Scotland.¹⁹¹ He is saved by the prayers of Columb Cille's monks¹⁹² (in VC there are no prayers, simply a miraculous observation of Colmán Ela's plight¹⁹³), is given the site of his monastery through Columb Cille's intervention,¹⁹⁴ and prays at an altar in the Columban monastery of Derry.¹⁹⁵ In one curious passage Colmán Ela seems to admit that his powers of prophecy are unequal to those of Columb Cille. In addition, contemplating the matter appears to remove Colmán Ela's gift for writing - *cessavit gratia scribendi*.¹⁹⁶ All of these stories, apart from the intervention regarding the establishment of Lann Ela, are absent from D, suggesting, perhaps a drawing back from such a dependent relationship. In the Irish Life the relationship between the two saints is different again. Here although the blood relationship is stronger the respect shown by Colmán Ela to his senior is weaker. Far from obeying Columb Cille, Colmán Ela corrects his morally reprehensible behaviour; thus while the former wishes to kill his own nephews on

¹⁸⁹ VC II.15.

¹⁹⁰ VC III.12.

¹⁹¹ *Vita S. Colmani* ch. 13, Heist 1965, 213-4.

¹⁹² *Vita S. Colmani* ch. 13, Heist 1965, 213-4.

¹⁹³ VC I.5.

¹⁹⁴ *Vita S. Colmani* ch. 14, Heist 1965, 214.

¹⁹⁵ *Vita S. Colmani* ch 23, Heist 1965, 214.

¹⁹⁶ *Vita S. Colmani* ch. 42, Heist 1965, 222. See Sharpe VC, 263-4 for interpretation. For Plummer the main point of the story is that an interruption to Colmán Ela's rapid writing causes his inspiration to cease - the fact that the interruption was an exchange about Columb Cille is presumably irrelevant. Plummer 1910 vol i, 270 n 8. There is an interesting passage in *Vita Sancti Mochua* (Plummer 1910, 184-5, ch ii and iii) in which Colmán Ela, through pride, has his *scientia* taken away (and restored by Mochua). Perhaps both stories dimly reflect some lost tradition of Colmán Ela losing his mind?

account of their being the offspring of first cousins, Colmán Ela instead adopts them (and suckles them) as his own.¹⁹⁷

In sum, *VC* can be interpreted as implying reasonably close connections between Colmán Ela and Iona during Columb Cille's life. These connections, and the influence of Columb Cille over Colmán Ela, are highlighted in Colmán Ela's own early Life, perhaps implying that the Life was written in a monastery with some kind of dependent relationship with a Columban house.¹⁹⁸ There is no direct evidence that Colmán Ela was a pupil on Iona but the possibility that he might have studied there for a time is strengthened by a work by Colmán moccu Beognae, who can, as will be argued below, be identified with Colmán Ela. The work, *The Alphabet of Devotion*, draws upon sources such as Cassian, known also to have been used by Columb Cille.¹⁹⁹

If Colmán Ela is, then, in some respects a protégé of Iona we might now ask whether that fact might help us to date a foundation dedicated to the saint in Kintyre. It will be argued in chapter 3.2 that Áedán mac Gabráin may have given lands in Kintyre, the heartland of Cenél nGabrain, to support the monastery on Iona. A dedication to Colmán Ela might be explicable in such a context. It is notable too that there is a dedication to Columb Cille nearby at Skipness chapel, and that the lands there are combined with those of Kilcalmonel in a grant of 1261.²⁰⁰ A dedication to an Iona-friendly saint could be argued to have occurred at almost any time, however, partly depending on what one believes regarding the influence or otherwise of Iona.²⁰¹ And Adomnán's inclusion of Colmán Ela in *VC* is capable of various interpretation. It might, for example, be said that there is nothing in *VC* that implies the existence of a cult of Colmán Ela in Scotland at the time he wrote, but it is possible too that the very fact Adomnán mentions the saint at all is significant; he knew there was a cult and wished to show that its subject was a follower of Columb Cille.

¹⁹⁷ Plummer 1922 ch 32-4.

¹⁹⁸ Note proximity of Lann Ela to Durrow.

¹⁹⁹ The work is discussed and given in translation in Clancy and Márkus 1995, 195-207.

²⁰⁰ Dougall son of Sweeny gives *jus patronatus ecclesie Sancti Colmaneli que est in terra mea de Kentyr... et cum capella Sancti Columbe que sita est juxta castrum meum de Schepehinche* to the monks of Paisley. *Reg. de Pass.*, 120-121. The lands continued to be mentioned together in 1632 (*Retours via OPS*, 27, 29). *Arg 1* no 314. The chapel of St Columba at Skipness was built in the first half of the 13th century but excavation revealed earlier Christian burials.

²⁰¹ Fraser 2004 argues that it is much exaggerated by Adomnán. Jennings 1998 argues that it remained strong throughout the period of Viking attack and settlement.

Colmán Ela may, of course, have been a follower, even a pupil, of Columb Cille without that fact having much to do with the foundation in Kintyre. It is his status as bishop and member of the Dál Sailni that is highlighted in *VC* and it is possible that this is a more fruitful line of enquiry in seeking to throw light on Colmán Ela's cult in Argyll.

The Dál Sailni were closely associated with, and ultimately considered to be a part of the Dál nAraide,²⁰² a group who held lands in northern Ireland and who, under the powerful ruling dynasty of the Uí Chóelbad expanded their territories from the 6th century onwards, possibly at the expense of the Irish Dál Riata.²⁰³ There is some evidence to suggest that the Dál nAraide and the Scottish Dál Riata were on friendly terms in the early part of the 7th century, possibly in alliance against the Dál Fiatach, the third of the most important groups in northern Ireland at that time.²⁰⁴ Several saints of the Dál nAraide may be represented in dedications in southern Kintyre, as will be discussed in chapter 3.2, and it might be that an early 7th century context might fit well with their development. There are various ways in which the scant data on alliances and enmities can be interpreted, however, particularly since the delimitation between one group and another is never clear, with sub-groups within, for example, the Dál nAraide apparently at odds with one another. Inferences drawn about the development of cults based on the possibility of transient political alliances must therefore be treated with caution.²⁰⁵

The status of the Dál Sailni within the Dál nAraide is not clear but it seems that though they were 'base clients' (probably before the middle of the seventh century)²⁰⁶ they retained some independence, probably because of their control of the church of Connor, which was the most important ecclesiastical centre for the Dál nAraide from the mid 7th

²⁰² The Dál Sailni and the Dál nAraide were, in fact, both part of the Cruithni, but since the Dál nAraide became the most powerful force it is their name which is used, increasingly from the 8th century, to refer to all the previously independent groups.

²⁰³ Charles-Edwards 2000, 54, and below, 143.

²⁰⁴ Bannerman 1973, 101, 105 and below, 143-150.

²⁰⁵ See below, 142 fn 130.

²⁰⁶ Their close relatives the Dál mBuain were a subject group by that time (Charles-Edwards, 64) so perhaps the same can be said for the Dál Sailni.

century.²⁰⁷ It seems that lands which formerly had belonged to the Irish Dál Riata came under the control of Connor,²⁰⁸ and Tírechán states that churches founded by Patrick were, at the time he wrote, owned by the *Coindiri*.²⁰⁹ Connor also had the distinction of holding, or claiming to hold, the body (but not the head) of the Southern Uí Néill king Diarmait mac Cerbaill.²¹⁰ This might imply that the Dál Sailni had provided some support for Diarmait in opposition to the king's killer, Áed Dub, a member of the Uí Choelbad,²¹¹ the ruling dynasty of the Dál nAraide proper. It is tempting to make something of this but again the evidence is capable of diametrically opposed interpretation so caution is required.²¹²

Connor, and the expansion of its influence, is only of relevance to this study if it can be shown that Colmán Ela had a connection with the place. In addition to the saint's assignation, both by *VC* and in *CGSH*,²¹³ to the family which controlled the church there, there is indeed reason to suppose that Colmán Ela's identification with the church was quite strong from the earliest date.

In the Life in S, although there is no direct mention of Colmán Ela's connection with Connor there are hints in the person of Dimma Dub.²¹⁴ Dimma Dub, about whom

²⁰⁷ The link in *VC* between Colmán Ela's episcopal status and his membership of Dál Sailni may suggest that 'the kingdom of which Dál Sailni was the *gens* was free, a *sóerthúath*.' Only later did it become a base client, as a result of growing power of Uí Chóelbad. Even then there may have been an arrangement whereby the Uí Chóelbad supplied the principal kings while Dál Sailni retained the principal church. 'Since the status of bishop was equated with that of king, both *gentes* continued to have their high status sustained by their hold over an exalted office, political in the one case, ecclesiastical in the other.' Charles-Edwards 2000, 63. For the increasing power of Connor, *ibid*, 58-9.

²⁰⁸ Charles-Edwards 2000, 58.

²⁰⁹ Tírechán 48.3 - Bieler 1979, 161.

²¹⁰ *AT* 565. Charles-Edwards considers that much of this annal entry probably dates to the 10th century (Charles-Edwards 2000, 527n).

²¹¹ He was a ruler of Mag Line (Charles-Edwards, 295).

²¹² Adomnán gives approval to Diarmait mac Cerbaill, and criticism to his killer (*VC* I.36). One might, therefore suppose he would support Diarmait's protector. It might also be thought significant that Diarmait's son, Colmán Bec is recorded in the annals as going on an expedition with Conall mac Comgaill (*AU* 568), whose descendants may have been the power holders in Argyll in the mid 7th century (Fraser 2004, 91). But we know too little of the circumstances: we do not even know whether the holding of a body was an act of reverence or an act of defiance.

²¹³ *Rec. Met.*, Brussels version, Ó Riain 1985 no 662.184. There is possible confusion in his descent in *Rec. Min.* in Le 'ar slicht Echach m. Aeda.' This Echach m. Aeda might be identified with Eochu m. Áeda m Lóegaire m. Néill in which case Colmán Ela would be of the S. Uí Néill, as he is in other sources. But Echach m. Aeda looks like a garbled version of Eochu m. Mairedaig, who appears in *La* as Eachach Maireda (446, 565, 566) ie the progenitor of the Dál Sailni and the Dál mBuain. Also in *AT: Quies Colman Ela maic húi Seilli .l.ui. anno etatis sue*.

²¹⁴ Life in S, ch. 26. He appears on Jan 6th in *MT Dimmae Duib*, *MG Dimma* (with gloss *Dimma Dubh, epsoc Condere*), *MD Diomma Dubh, epscop Coindere* (with further notes). He is not in *FO* or *FO* notes.

Colmán Ela prophesies good things but about whom nothing further is stated, is, according to other sources, a bishop of Connor. His death is recorded in *AU* 659²¹⁵ and he may be one of the northern clerics mentioned by Bede.²¹⁶ It is possible that this indirect link with Connor was further developed in whatever source the author of the life in *S* was drawing from.

A link between Colmán Ela and Connor is made explicit in his Life in *D*. Here, early in his career, he goes to Connor in Ulster, where the bishop Mac Nise lies. He lives there for many days and is the second patron of that monastery - *civitas*.²¹⁷ In the Life of Mac Nise there is a further developed relationship between the two. Here St Patrick, St Brigit and Mac Nise pass, on their travels together, through the place in which Lann Ela was later founded. Mac Nise lingers and on being asked by Patrick why, he declares that he can see angels there, and that 60 years hence a son of his family, Colmán Ela, will found a monastery at that place.²¹⁸ The familial relationship between the two is restated in accounts of their separate genealogies where Mac Nise is assigned to the Dál mBuain, a group closely related to the Dál Sailni. In the *recensio metrica* Colmán Ela and Mac Nise appear together in the same stanza.²¹⁹

A further indirect link between Colmán Ela and Connor appears in various annal entries after his death which attest to there being joint headship of Lann Ela and Connor. The first is in *AU* 778: *Dormitatio Ainschellaigh abbatis Conndire & Lanne Ela*. In the early 10th century we hear of joint headship not only of Connor and Lann Ela, but of Láthrach Briúin (in county Kildare) too.²²⁰ The fact that St Senán of Láthrach Briúin is also assigned to Colmán Ela's family²²¹ might make one wonder if the genealogical

²¹⁵ *AU* 659 *Dimma Niger episcopus Conndire [and others] mortui sunt*.

²¹⁶ *HE* II.xix. Bede quotes a letter of 640 from John (later Pope) to Tomiano, Columbano, Cromano, Dinnao, et Baithano episcopis and others. Dinnao is given as *Dimao* in MS C (Plummer 1896, 123). Plummer, notes p 112-3, considers this to be 'probably Dima Dubh' but notes there is another bishop Dima or Dimna of unknown location who died in 662. The other bishops are tentatively identified as being from Armagh, Clonard, Nendrum, and Bangor.

²¹⁷ Life in *D* ch. 3, Plummer 1910.

²¹⁸ *Vita S. Macnissei* in *S* ch. 14, Heist 1965, 406. Kenney considers this *vita* to be late - 'perhaps prepared for monks of the diocese of Connor after the Norman invasion - but is probably an abbreviation of an older text.' Kenney, 352. Sharpe notes that it is part of a group of 3 or 4 lives in *S*, all from Ulster and possibly all from the same source (Sharpe 1991, 326-7).

²¹⁹ Ó Riain 1985 no 662.184. This is a verse which occurs only in the Brussels MS.

²²⁰ *AU* 901.2: Típrate son of Nuadu, *airchinnech* of Connor and of other churches, that is, of Lynally and Laraghbryan, [died].

²²¹ He descends from Eochu m. Maireda (legendary progenitor of Dál mBuain and Dál nSailni) in *Rec. Mai*. (Ó Riain 1985 no 299, Lc1 and H only) and *Rec. Met*. (Ó Riain 1985 no 662.182).

relationship between the saints Colmán Ela, Mac Nise and Senán is created to account for and / or justify the union of their three monasteries under one ruler.²²² It is on the other hand possible that the family who held the lands around Connor were instrumental in setting up monasteries elsewhere (as is almost certainly so in the case of Colmán Ela), that family members held prominent positions in all of these places, and that links between the foundations were retained.²²³

I mentioned above a St Mac Nise. Now, in three places (at least) Colmán Ela's relationship with Connor is intertwined with this Mac Nise, as we have seen (Colmán Ela's life in D, Mac Nise's life, the genealogies). The case for a Connor connection being significant in the original act of dedication in Argyll may therefore be strengthened by the possible existence of a dedication to Mac Nise in the vicinity of Kilcalmonel.

About 5 km NNE of Kilcalmonel there is a burial site, Kilnaish, whose dedication may be to a saint called Angus.²²⁴ There are no early forms of the name, but the antiquity of the site is suggested by the presence of a pillar incised with a plain cross, thought by *RCAHMS* to be of the early Christian period. Plain incised crosses are common and easy to execute so it may not be helpful to invoke specific *comparanda*. It may be worth noting, however, that the rounded terminals on the cross at Kilnaish are similar to those on a cross from a probable early Christian monastery on the island of Canna, and another cross from Canna bears comparison with one of the two crosses at Kilcalmonel.²²⁵

Watson does not make a firm suggestion as to who the dedicatee at Kilnaish might be, but implies that it might be the same Óengus as the one commemorated at

²²² Charles-Edwards 2000, 61: 'a linked headship of churches found its justification in the genealogies on the grounds that the founding saints were of the same *gens*.'

²²³ Note that Dál mBuain were of sufficient importance (and their church of Inis Causcraid with its saint Móbí m. Comgail a threat to the status of Saul and its saint Dichu) for a story to be created c650 to discredit the family. Charles-Edwards 2000, 64-67.

²²⁴ This is proposed by Watson and accepted by *RCAHMS* (Watson 1926, 272, *Arg* 7 no 18). The forms of the name: *Killnash* 1753 Roy, *Kilnash* 1801 Langlands 1801, *Kilnaish* 1832 Thomson 1832. There are two place-names nearby containing the name Aengus: Loch Cill' an Aoghais NR7761 and Carraig Aonghais NR 7359.

²²⁵ *Arg* 7 no 18; Fisher 2001, 97 (2), ill 29M; Fisher 2001, 117 no 270 (1) ill. 33P; Fisher 2001, 97 (10), ill 33M.

Balquhidder.²²⁶ Mac Nise's other name is Óengus, however, and it is possible that this is the saint of Kilnaish. There is no record of him being called Óengus until the 12th c but it is quite likely that the identification appeared somewhat earlier in *MT*.²²⁷ He appears in *FO*, and in some Patrician material,²²⁸ in which he is shown favour by Patrick. It might be significant that near Kilnaish is Ard Patrick.

The course of this saint's cult is far from clear, however, with the possibility of overlaps with other saints called Mac Nise²²⁹ and the reliability of his obit, questionable.²³⁰ The important point here, however, is that if there are understood to be connections between Mac Nise, Colmán Ela and Patrick in, say, the early 9th century in Ireland, and the factor that brings the three together is Connor, then it is at least possible that a cluster of three dedications together in Argyll also has some link with Connor. The dedications could be late, as the association between the three continued at least until the composition of Mac Nise's life, but the fact that there are so many early Christian remains in the area suggests otherwise. Apart from the early sculpture already described from Kilnaish, Clachan and Balinakill, there is also a cross socket from Cille Bhríde, Whitehouses, and a burial ground of early Christian character at Ardmínish, near Ardpátrick.²³¹

The possibility remains, however, that the dedication at Kilnaish might be to someone else altogether - a local saint or even an important local land-holder - in which case the argument collapses. Dedications to St Patrick are extremely common too, and, in the

²²⁶ Watson 1926, 272.

²²⁷ Unfortunately this day is missing in *MT*, but the identification does appear in *MG* who lifted much of his info directly from *MT* (Sept 3: *epscop mor Mac nissi* with gloss *epscop Condoire. Aonghas a cédainm, Caemán Brec ainm ele dó*. The link with Caemán Brec will be discussed below.). If the annal entries are thought to be of 10th century date or earlier (see below, n230) then this would be another early attestation of his name being Oengus.

²²⁸ He appears in the *notulae* in the Book of Armagh (Bieler 1979, 181-2, no 20,58), the MS of which belongs to 807, and in the *Vita Trip* (Stokes 1887 part ii, 162, 166).

²²⁹ There is a Mac Nise who is abbot of Cluain mac Noise on June 13 in *MT* etc (*AU* 585, 591), called Óengus in the Lismore Life of Ciarán of Clonmacnoise (Lismore Life in Stokes 1890,19), and another abbot of Cluain mac Noise on Jan 20 in *MT* etc called Oenu or, according to notes in RB505 to *FO*, Oengus (*AU* 570). On the same day, Jan 20, MD records a feast of Mac Nise, bishop of Connor (in addition to a feast of Oenu). See Ó Riain 1975,81ff for argument that all these represent the same saint (despite each appearing separately in the annals).

²³⁰ *AU* 507 *Quies Mc. Nisse Condaire episcopi*; *AU* 514 [addition in H2] *Mac Nisi .i. Aenghus episcopus Coindre quieuit. AT: Mac[c]nissi .i. Aengus epoc Conndere quieuit, cuius pater Fobraech dictus est, cuius mater Cness ingen Comcaide de Dáil Ceterne, a qua nominatus est Mac Cneise* [corresponds to 500 in *AI*, acc. to *AT* ed.]. *AI: Quies Meicc Nissi Condere*. Many annal entries pre 595 are much later additions. However, Hughes considers that when entries pre 595 are replicated in *AI*, *AT* and *AU*, they may have existed as marginal notes in the copy of the Annals of Ireland in use c913 (Hughes 1972,144). See above, 1.5.

²³¹ *Arg* 1 no 269; *Arg* 7 no 1.

absence of an ecclesiastical generic in the place-name (Ard Patrick) it need not commemorate the saint at all. There are many uncertainties.

Another context in which it might be fruitful to seek grounds for a dedication to Colmán Ela is the centuries during which the lands around Kilcalmonel were held by the MacSweens. Dougall the son of Sweeny is the first name we know of in connection with Kilcalmonel, when in 1261 he grants to the monks of Paisley 'the right of patronage of the church of Saint Colmanel...'²³² The MacSweens of Knapdale, along with their relatives the Lamonts and MacLachlans of Cowal traditionally claimed descent from Niall Nógiallach, or Niall of the nine Hostages, the apical ancestor of the Uí Néill. In particular they claim to be connected with the Cenél Eogain branch of the N. Uí Néill. David Sellar's examination of these claims led him to conclude that the genealogical tradition regarding the origins of families of Cowal and Knapdale 'is clear and reasonably consistent'.²³³

The common ancestor of the MacSweens, Lamonts, MacLachlans and others who is alleged to have been the first to come to Scotland was Ánrothán son of Aodh Athlamhan some time in the 11th century (his father died in 1033).²³⁴ The Cenél nEogain were based in Co. Tyrone so we might now ask if there is any evidence of a cult of Colmán Ela there, which might have been brought to Scotland. The answer is inconclusive. In the Life in S, Colmán Ela is born not in central Ireland where his parents are said to live but in *Valle Hoichle*,²³⁵ a place to be identified as Glenelly in Co. Tyrone. It is quite likely that the place is given this distinction in the Life because a cult of the saint was known there, so here, perhaps, is the evidence we require.²³⁶

References in Colmán Ela's Irish life imply a link between Kintyre and a different part of Ireland, however. The connection implied there is between the Fir Chell, a minor branch of the Southern Uí Néill living in central Ireland, as we have seen, and the king in Kintyre. It is notable that the debt owed by the people of Kintyre to the killer of the monster is not directly to Colmán Ela as it is not actually he who does the killing;

²³² *Reg de Pass.*, 120-121.

²³³ Sellar 1971.

²³⁴ Sellar 1974, 24.

²³⁵ *Vita Colmaneli* ch 1, Heist 1965, 209.

²³⁶ Is there a cult of a Colmán in this area of Ireland? This would be worth investigating.

rather it is Duinecha, son of the Fir Chell king.²³⁷ But is the story likely to reflect any historical reality? Is it likely, or indeed possible, that at any time any dues were paid by anyone in Kintyre to the Fir Chell or to the church of Lann Ela?

It is worth noting that if this tale was written in order to reassert ancient rights to tribute it is extraordinarily vague. No particular group in Kintyre is named, as they are in the equivalent story in Ireland, and the closest we get to hearing of a particular individual is to *righ Alban*²³⁸ 'the king of Alba', who, it seems, we are to imagine residing in Kintyre. It is possible that some memory of contact between the two places is buried in the story, and it is interesting that two saints with whom Colmán Ela is associated in this Life are ones with particular associations with the Scottish west coast, Bute in particular - Blaán and Marnóc.²³⁹ It is not impossible that further work might suggest a feasible context in which this might have taken place. It is equally possible, if not probable, that the story was informed simply by knowledge of the existence of a dedication to Colmán Ela in Kintyre.

It is interesting, in this regard, that just a few km from Kilcalmonel there is a Loch na Beiste.²⁴⁰ This could mean one of three things: i) The monster story (the monster is specifically said to dwell in a lake) was created partly to explain this name, or at least to fit in with the local onomastic landscape; ii) The name was created to conform with the story; or iii) There was a pre-existing story which linked the lake with Colmán Ela which was known to the author of the Irish Life. It seems that Colmán Ela was generally associated with monsters - there is a monster story relating to Ireland too²⁴¹ - indeed one of the (several) stories given to explain the name Lann Ela is that *Lainn* was the monster after whom the place was named.²⁴²

Another name near Kilcalmonel which might be interpreted as having some resonance with the Irish Life is Kilchamaig²⁴³ in Kilcalmonel parish, about 7km NE of

²³⁷ *Betha Cholmain Eala* ch 29 ff, Plummer 1922 vol 1, 176, vol 2, 169.

²³⁸ *Betha Cholmain Eala* ch 27, Plummer 1922 vol 1, 175, vol 2, 169.

²³⁹ *Blaán and Mernag. Betha Cholmain Eala* ch 8, Plummer 1922 vol 1, 169, vol 2, 163.

²⁴⁰ OS pathfinder no 427, NR 7654.

²⁴¹ *Betha Cholmain Eala* ch 2-10, Plummer 1922 vol 1, 168-9, vol 2, 162-3.

²⁴² *Betha Cholmain Eala* ch 7, 14, Plummer 1922 vol 1, 169, 172, vol 2, 163, 165.

²⁴³ There is a tradition of a church and burial at OS pathfinder 413 NR 8061. Kilchamaig is the form of the name on OS pathfinder and on Thomson's map of 1832. The earliest attestation is *Kilcamok*, 1481, *RMS* vol 2 no 1485.

Kilcalmonel itself. The name is thought by Watson to commemorate a saint called Cammoc, and this is indeed possible.²⁴⁴ Another interpretation of the name might be considered however. It could come from word for crozier (SG *camag*, *camaig* (gen.) f Dwelly, OI *cammóc* f. DIL). Colmán Ela's crozier is significant in the Scottish episode and elsewhere in his Irish Life, and it has prominence also in the Latin Lives.²⁴⁵ If this was the origin of Kilchamaig it would be unusual among *cill*- names in Scotland, of which the overwhelming majority contain saints' names. The word for staff or crozier does, however, appear in Scottish place names with other generics. There is, for example, Pitbachlie near Dunfermline, which contains SG *bachall* from Latin *baculum*, 'a staff'.²⁴⁶

It is not impossible that there was a genuine association with the saint's crozier and the crozier's keeper, as seen also in the case of Munnu m. Tulcháin.²⁴⁷ It is interesting that Kilchamaig is included among lands listed in connection with the office of *toschederach*.²⁴⁸ The term may simply refer to the office of coroner or sheriff, but there are situations in which it seems to have meant the relic of a saint, or the custodian - *deoradh* - of that relic.²⁴⁹ It is high speculative, but one could build a case for other elements of the stories about Colmán Ela being reflected in the onomastic landscape too. Colmán Ela is compared with St John (it is not specified which) in *FO*, in his life in S (John the Apostle)²⁵⁰ and in the life in his life in D (John the Baptist),²⁵¹ while on the ground in Kintyre the neighbouring parish to Kilcalmonel is Killeen. He has a close relationship with the monastery at Clonmacnoise, where, we are told, a feast is held every year in Colmán Ela's honour;²⁵² a loch just above Kilcalmonel is Loch Ciaran.²⁵³

²⁴⁴ Watson 1926, 303. He notes a Mo-Cammóc of Irris Cáin on April 13. Note, however, that in none of the historic forms is there a hint of the mo-, and the name Camóc or Cammóc is not attested in *CGSH*, *FO*, *MT*, *MG*, *MDo* or the Chronicle of Ireland. It is a most unusual form of hypocorism (ie with the -óc termination, but no mo-/do- affix). Even Mochammóc is unusual; the only one attested is the one mentioned by Watson, who appears in the martyrologies but in an unstable form (it is rendered *Mochaemhog* in *MDo*), and not at all in Chron. Ireland or *CGSH*. A further name which might be considered is Commaig, or which there is one - Commaig ingen Echach - listed in Ó Riain 1985.

²⁴⁵ *Betha Cholmain Eala* ch 27, 28 - Plummer 1922 vol 1, 170-1. *Vita S. Colmani* in S ch 29, 51 - Heist 1965, 218, 224.

²⁴⁶ Watson 1926, 266.

²⁴⁷ *RMS* vol 2 no 2385.

²⁴⁸ *RMS* vol 6 no 870, 1598. See Gillies 1996 for a discussion of the term.

²⁴⁹ Watson 1926, 246-66.

²⁵⁰ Life in S ch 20, Heist 1965, 216.

²⁵¹ Life in D ch 15, Plummer 1910.

²⁵² Life in S ch 43, Heist 1965, 222.

²⁵³ OS pf no 427 NR 7754. Is is about 1.5km sse of the village of Clachan, and about 30m from Loch na Béiste.

The site of the church at Clachan (the probable original church of Kilcalmonel) itself suggests consistency with stories about the saint, bounded prominently, as it is, on two sides by streams, which come together just to the west of the church. Churches at confluences feature in at least two traditions about Colmán Ela. The church at Muckamore in Co. Antrim, whose name derives from OI *mag + commar*, plain of the confluence, is associated with the saint, and in a story in S, Colmán Ela's crozier is used to prevent a church built at a confluence from flooding.²⁵⁴

The process by which stories about saints come about is complex and difficult to unravel, affected as it may be by half-remembered relationships with other holy men and women, by wished-for relationships with these people, by place-names, by desire for control over churches and lands. In addition stories once applied to one saint become attached to another, or to another manifestation of the saint under a new name, as we shall see.

The leakiness of Colmán Ela

It is not just Mac Nise who becomes more problematic the more one subjects him to scrutiny.²⁵⁵ The same can be said for Colmán Ela himself. I will not attempt a comprehensive account of all the problems associated with this saint, nor will I offer any solutions. I will simply give some examples of what must be faced, and raise some questions.

Colmán of Kilroot

There is some evidence to suggest that there is some overlap between the cults of Colmán Ela and Colmán Cell Ruad*.²⁵⁶ Cell Ruad, now Kilroot, is on the coast of Co. Antrim. Its patron, Colmán, is said to be a bishop,²⁵⁷ and the see of Kilroot one of several which was absorbed by Connor. This Colmán, like Colmán Ela, is brought into contact with Mac Nise, who in both cases is the senior saint. Colmán of Kilroot has no

²⁵⁴ Life is S ch 29, Heist 1965, 218.

²⁵⁵ See above, fn 229.

²⁵⁶ This is how he is listed in Ó Riain 1995 index. He does not have a genealogy but appears in *CNE* (707.96), two after a *Colman Alo*.

²⁵⁷ Life of Mac Nise ch 9. *MG* gloss, *FO* notes, *MDo* - all on Oct 16.

recorded genealogy nor does he have an obit. It would thus be easy to graft on those details from Colmán Ela's portfolio without doing damage to the record as it stands. There are three main differences between the two Colmán's, none of which amounts to an objection to the possibility that the two have their origin in a single person. One is that Colmán of Kilroot is usually presented as a bishop, while Colmán Ela is better known as an abbot. In our first encounter with Colmán Ela, however, he is indeed a bishop - *Sanct<us> Colman<us> episcop<us> mocusailni*, as we have seen.²⁵⁸ The second is that Colmán of Kilroot is presented as a young boy during Mac Nise's lifetime which, if we accept an obit. for Mac Nise of 506 / 512, would make Colmán Ela's obit. of 612 a poor fit. There is reason to doubt the reliability of Mac Nise's obit., however, as there is of all such early entries in the annals.²⁵⁹ The third difference is that Colmán of Kilroot has a distinct feast day, October 16th. This, of course, would not stand in the way of a belief that a single cult has split into two. One simply imagines that the alternative date is the day the new church was dedicated or when the original saint's relics arrived.²⁶⁰

If we look at Colmán of Kilroot's feast day, do we find anyone who elsewhere is found accompanying Colmán Ela? One of the saints on Oct 16th is an unidentified saint called Cóemán. It is possible that this corresponds with Colmán Ela's teacher who, on his first appearance in Colmán Ela's life in S is called *Cainnechus Coiman*, but who afterwards is consistently *Coiman*.²⁶¹ In D he is always *Caemhan*.²⁶² There is no further information about this person, though he is identified by O'Hanlon (I do not know on what grounds) with Cóemán Enach Truim. If a senior saint near Colmán Ela's homeland is to be sought, a strong contender would be *Cóemán Brecc of the Dál Riata, one of the few saints to be considered of sufficient importance to be given a retrospective birth in AU.²⁶³ This Cóemán's feast day is given in MT as September 14th, but there is reason to suppose that he might be commemorated on October 16th too.²⁶⁴ Apart from his status as an important saint of northern origin there is another reason to

²⁵⁸ VC 1.5

²⁵⁹ Hughes 1972, 144. It is possible that Mac Nise's obit. was calculated on the basis of his alleged relationship with Patrick or to make Connor diocese earlier than something / someone else.

²⁶⁰ It remains difficult to know which was the original feast day.

²⁶¹ Life in S ch 2, Heist 1965, 209.

²⁶² eg Life in D ch 1, Plummer 1910.

²⁶³ AU 529.1 *Natiuitas Coemain Bricc*. AU 615.4 *Caeman Brecc quiéuit*.

²⁶⁴ In MT on October 16th Cóemán and Bricc are represented as separate saints. MG attaches the Bricc to another saint of the day, Coemgen, but it might as well be attached to Cóemán.

suppose that Cóemán Brecc might have been associated with Colmán Ela. This is the fact that his identity has at times been confused with that of Mac Nise of Connor.²⁶⁵

The particular interest in a possible overlap between Colmán of Kilroot and Colmán Ela with regards to North Kintyre is that the former's feast day of October 16th seems to have been observed here.²⁶⁶ It is a late attestation and might be thought not to relate to a saint at all, but it is notable that this is a date observed in several Scottish calendars.²⁶⁷

There is a dedication to Colmán Ela in North Kintyre and a fair nearby on Oct 16th, the feast day of saint called Colmán. Let us suppose for a minute that the fair originated as a feast of Colmán Ela also known as Colmán of Kilroot, and consider the implications. Since it seems to me that the northern Irish commemoration of this saint - specifically at Kilroot - was on Oct 16th then the implication of a commemoration on the same date in Kintyre is a) that the cult developed in North Kintyre in conjunction with that in the north of Ireland rather than from Lann Ela, and b) that it developed prior to the beginning of the 9th century when the cults of Colmán of Kilroot and Colmán Ela had divided.

There is much uncertainty in all of this, not least the fact that our record of the fair day is very late. And of course we have no idea who, if anyone, was commemorated on that date.

Colmán of Dromore

Further complications arise when we look at the another saint who seems to overlap in some ways with Colmán Ela: *Mocholmóc m. Conrathain. This saint's similarities with Colmán Ela (apart from the name) lie in his genealogy, in his association with Mac Nise (as is the case of Colmán Cell Ruad), and in the role they both play in the life of a

²⁶⁵ eg *MG* gloss on *episcop mor Mac nissi* of Sept 3rd: *Caemán Brecc ainm ele dó*. Ó Riain 1985 lists two saints called Cóemán Brecc: Cóemán Brecc m. Lugna, a brother of Ibar, and Cóemán Brecc m. Nisse, Ros Ech. The latter appears in *Rec. Mai* no 206, *Rec. Min.* no 492, *Rec. Met.* no 662.138, and possibly in the Tract on Mothers of ss no 722.48 (*Ness mathair Choemain sacairt*).

²⁶⁶ Mitchell 1886, 77. The fair was established by Act of Parliament in 1705.

²⁶⁷ *K. Brev. Ab.*, Oct 16 *Colmani epi ix l*

Mart Ab, Oct 16 *in Scotia Sancti Colmanni episcopi et confessoris*

Adam King, 15 Oct *S. Culmane bishop and cofess. in scotland vnder king Conranus. 512.*

Dempster, 16 Oct *Comini abbatis. MA.* Also, 15 Oct *In Scotia Colmanni episcopi. K.*

Leinster king. Mocholmóc m. Conrathain's genealogy places him among the Dál nAraide,²⁶⁸ as does Colmán Ela's - at least according to some sources, as we have seen - and in Mocholmóc's life he sets up his monastery on the river Locha by advice from Mac Nise.²⁶⁹ The story which appears both in the Life of Colmán Ela and in the Life of Mocholmóc is one in which Brandub of Leinster is brought back to life so he might do penance and receive holy communion before he dies. Each saint, in his own Life, is, of course, the worker of the miracle, and the other saint does not appear.²⁷⁰ In addition to the above, both saints have, or are thought to have, cults in Scotland.²⁷¹

Not only does the identity of Mocholmóc m. Conrathain seem to merge with that of Colmán Ela but also, according to Ó Riain, Mocholmoc may well be a doublet of the above Colmán of Kilroot. The link between the two, argues Ó Riain, lies in their relationship with St Ailbe. Thus in Colmán of Dromore's *vita* he is sent to be educated by Ailbe at Emly,²⁷² a fact not mentioned in Ailbe's *vita*. In Ailbe's *vita*, however, there is a member of his *familia* called Colmán who sets up the church of Kilroot in Lower Belfast.²⁷³ 'It is too much to expect that Ailbe could have been associated with two saints Colmán from the same part of Ulster yet neither source can have been drawing on the other. The assumption must be, then, that there survived in each area an independent recollection of a connection between Ailbe and the northern Colmán which probably took the form of an episode in the local Oral Life.'²⁷⁴

In addition to this merger between Mocholmóc m. Conrathain and Colmán Cell Ruad, Ó Riain also argues for the identity of the former with *Cainnech m. Luigthig (Moccu Dalonn).²⁷⁵ He goes even further than that, suggesting that Cainnech might in turn be identical to Columb Cille.²⁷⁶

²⁶⁸ *Rec. Mai.*, Ó Riain 1985 no 99.

²⁶⁹ Heist 1965, 358 ch 5-6.

²⁷⁰ Heist 1965, 359 ch. 10 (Colmán of Dromore); Heist 1965, 221 ch 40 (Colmán Ela).

²⁷¹ Mocholmóc m. Conrathain's feast date is June 7th, celebrated, according to *Mart. Ab* at Inchmahome in Menteith. Note that on this day in *MT* there is a Caemhán, as there is on the feast day of Colmán Cell Ruad. The Caemhán on June 7th is called by Ó Riain Cóemán Santlethan m. Taláin and though usually attached to the Síl Fergus is given a Dál nAraide genealogy in *Lc* (Ó Riain 1985 no 131).

²⁷² Heist 1965, 358 ch 4. This, according to Sharpe, is 'a short and late Θ text' Sharpe 1991, 392.

²⁷³ Heist 1965, 123 ch 23: '*unus de familia ipsius, Colmanus nomine, cellam edificavit que dicitur Cell Roid.*'

²⁷⁴ Ó Riain 1982, 153-4.

²⁷⁵ 'Nothing then would appear to stand in the way of the identification suggested for Cainnech of the Ulaid with Colmán of Dromore.' Ó Riain 1983, 26.

²⁷⁶ Ó Riain 1983, 27-30.

If one accepts all the arguments of Ó Riain and my own suggestion regarding the identity of Colmán Ela and Colmán of Cell Ruad then one has at least to consider the possibility that Colmán Ela might simply be yet another manifestation of the cult of Columb Cille of Iona. I find this last proposition difficult to accept though each of the separate arguments which leads up to it might be compelling. The problem may simply be too many uncertainties, one built on top of another.

Colmán moccu Beognae, Colmán moccu Loígse

Another Colmán who is sometimes presented as a separate individual from Colmán Ela but for whom there are good arguments for identity is Colmán moccu Beognae. His feast day is Jan 22 and he has in places been associated with Lismore.²⁷⁷ To this Colmán various literary works have been attributed, the most famous of which is the Alphabet of Devotion. Kenney writes that 'Colmán is a personage of whom little is known; he is described as of Liss-mór, and, in places, as a disciple of Mo-Chuta'.²⁷⁸

Recent translators of the Alphabet of Devotion accept Colmán Ela as the author, however, noting support for this from other quarters.²⁷⁹ The similarity of name argues for the possibility of their being the same individual in origin and Colmán moccu Beognae's companions on his feast day seem to me to strengthen the case. Here one finds, in *FO* and *MT*, the daughters of Comgall - Columba, Boga and Lasi. These saints are connected genealogically with Colmán Ela which would suggest the strong possibility that this Colmán moccu Beognae is Colmán Ela in disguise - that Colmán Ela and the daughters of Comgall have travelled together by way of an Oral Life into both the genealogies and into the Calendar where in both places they have stuck together.

A more distant link can be made with a Colmán moccu Loígse who appears in *VC*²⁸⁰ as a bishop and friend of Columb Cille in Leinster. In the genealogies there is a Colmán

²⁷⁷ *Colmán maccu Béognae* in *FO*, *Mocholmoc* <.i. Liss Móir> *m.h.Beonna* in *MT*, *Colmán .i. il-Lismoir* in *FO* notes in L etc.

²⁷⁸ Kenney 1929, 172 no 265.

²⁷⁹ Clancy and Markus 1995, 195, 257 n4. Also translated in Carey 2000, 231-245.

²⁸⁰ *VC* III.12.

m. Comgail²⁸¹ who is a member of the Loígse and thus probably the same man. He in turn is confused with Colmán m. Lugna,²⁸² of which two are listed. One of these appears among the Dál mBuain along with Mac Nise and the above daughters of Comgall.²⁸³ The Dál mBuain, as we have seen, are relations of Colmán Ela. A further connection is made between the three daughters of Comgall and a Colmán in Manus O'Donnell's Life of Columba. Here Columb Cille meets a boy and three women in the house of Comgellan in 'the land of the Dál Riata of Ulster'. The boy is Colmán son of Comgellan.²⁸⁴ There is a lot to untangle here but I think it at least plausible to suggest that the cult of a single saint called Colmán (or similar) underlies all these connections made with the daughters of Comgall, manifested as they are in various different ways and in various places. It is possible that this saint is Colmán Ela. Note too that one of the possible manifestations of the cult of Mac Nise may be a saint assigned to this same group, the moccu Loígse.²⁸⁵

Ultimately one is left with some scenarios to consider, rather than a neat narrative of what has happened: 1) There are several distinct saints / ecclesiastics called Colmán whose cults have become confused. Stories and genealogies originally attached to one have been grafted onto another by accident / imprecision of memory; 2) There was originally one saint who has split into many. The stories have remained more or less intact but new individuals have been created on which to graft them; 3) Both process 1. and process 2. have happened simultaneously, which is why the record we are faced with today is so difficult to interpret.

Conclusion

Some interesting possibilities arise from an examination of Colmán Ela in Argyll:

i) There may be some links between a work of hagiography written in Ireland in the middle ages and some place-names in Kintyre. I do not know in which direction the

²⁸¹ Ó Riain 1995 no 145, 662.203.

²⁸² One is Colmán m. Lugna, Tulach Mac Comgail (Ó Riain 1985 no 187) which is an exact doublet of the entry on Colmán m. Comgail but omits the name of the latter's father. The other is simply called Colmán m. Lugna (Ó Riain 1995 no 153, 556, 662.185).

²⁸³ Ó Riain 1995 no 153, 556, 662.185.

²⁸⁴ Lacey 1998, 107.

²⁸⁵ See above, fn 229. Assignment to the group occurs in *MT* Jan 20, *CGSH Rec. Mai.* - Ó Riain 1985 no 144 (the entry after Colmán m. Comgail) and elsewhere.

influence went, nor can I offer a political context in which it might have arisen; further work might be worthwhile here.

ii) If an early foundation it may be testament to a more complicated political situation *vis a vis* the different groups in northern Ireland than has hitherto been detected in dedicatory evidence.

About neither of the above can we be certain. Most importantly this is a demonstration of how close examination of saints and their cults tends to lead to disintegration. Even a simple saint like Colmán Ela with a Life, an obit, a feast day, a well-established profile is not immune from overlap and confusion with other cults.

2.4 Berach

The saint of Kilberry in Knapdale is Berach of Cluain Chairpthe, declares Watson.²⁸⁶ What do we know of this saint and his cult, and does further study incline us to agree or disagree with this statement? If we disagree, what alternatives are there? Are there other traces of a saint called Berach in Argyll? This chapter will explore many possibilities, some of which reveal some incidental matters of interest but none of which leads us to a state of great certainty. It is a case history in the elusiveness of certain saints and that fact that some saints, when subjected to scrutiny, become not more transparent, but more obscure. It is an illustration of the tendency for the cults of saints to divide, to merge with the cults of other saints and to activate the creation of completely new saints. In this way this chapter contrasts with the chapters on Munnu and Colmán Ela, saints whose cults, while not impervious to overlap with other cults, are far better defined than the cults of any of the Berachs or Bercháns to be discussed here. I offer this chapter by way of warning.

First we will look at the traditions regarding the saint at Kilberry itself, starting with a scan through the Statistical Accounts of the parish. The Statistical Accounts of Scotland, the first compiled in the 1790s and the second in the 1840s, are often fruitful places to search for local traditions on saints' ecclesiastical history. They were compiled by the parish minister, however, so much depended on his personal interest and knowledge. The 1792 Statistical Account records that 'Kilberry means the burying place of St Berry, of whom no history is on record; but it would appear that the principal heritor of that parish is descended from that saint, as he is in possession of his name, his place of residence, and his revenues.'²⁸⁷ It seems that at this time, although Kilberry was recognised as a 'parochial place of worship', there was no church here.²⁸⁸ The Statistical account of 1843 is even less helpful: 'Kilberry...is compounded of *Cill a-Mhairi*, the burying-place of Mary.'²⁸⁹ There is, however, an interesting reference to *Barry* in the 1792 Statistical Account for South Knapdale. Here it is said that the *Macmurachies* were proprietors of Kilberry, and, in a couplet apparently handed down

²⁸⁶ Watson 1926, 301.

²⁸⁷ SA vol 10, 183. See below, fn 291 for possible implication of the name-sharing.

²⁸⁸ SA *ibid.*, 183-4. It is noted in NSA, 411 that a church at Kilberry was built in 1821.

²⁸⁹ NSA vol 7, 408.

'by the genealogists of this place' (that is, South Knapdale) links are made between four families and four saints:

*Colmonel, Clan A gorry, Barry, Clan Murachie,
Mac Charmaig, Clan Neill, Martin, Clan Donachie.*²⁹⁰

The connection between Kilberry and Clan Murachie is further underlined by a grave slab of the fourteenth or fifteenth century in the graveyard of the medieval church of Kilberry, which commemorates John, a son of Mauritius, apparently a representation of Gaelic Muiredach or Murchad.²⁹¹ There may be significant implications in the link between the saint and this family, but unfortunately the origins and affiliation of Clan Murachie are difficult to unravel without a more sustained study than is possible here.²⁹²

Nowhere in the traditions of St Berry or Barry at Kilberry is there any record of the saint's origins or likely *floruit*. A bell is recorded in the late eighteenth century, apparently inscribed with the saint's name,²⁹³ but again there is nothing other than the Christian name. The name also turns up in local place-names: Curachan Berry (NR701644) and Dabhach Bberry (NR705639).²⁹⁴ The former, a narrow reef in the sea, is also given as Curach a'Bheirri with the tradition that it is 'St Barr's coracle' which turned to stone to mark the saint's landing place.²⁹⁵ There is a parallel, and very recent, tradition of Berach's boat in Ireland, an interesting duplication since there is no mention of a boat in either of Berach's Lives. According to the Irish story, a member of the family of the hereditary custodians of Berach's crozier, the Mac Coilidh family

²⁹⁰ *SA* South Knapdale, vol. 19, 311 and 318.

²⁹¹ *Arg* 7 no 48; Steer and Bannerman no. 88. The latter's reading of the inscription is HIC IACET IO/HA(N)NES M[A]V/RITI(I) ET EIVS FILIVS. Murchad and Muiredach are different names but, as Steer and Bannerman point out, either could be represented here - 'these two very similar Gaelic forenames were early confused, especially when the process of Scotticisation was taking place'. *Ibid.*

²⁹² Black 1946, 546, 547, 569, 619, 620 for relevant names, some related, some conflated. It is tempting to see something more than coincidence in the fact that one prominent Barry shares the name of the clan - Berchán m. Muiredaig < Muiredach - and that this was a recurrent name in the Cenél Loairn genealogy of which this Berchán was, at least by 12th c, thought to be a part (eg Muiredach m. Ainbcellach, Muiredach m. Loairn). But it is a very common name (32 in Ó Riain 1985) and overlaps with other names, also common. See also Steer and Bannerman, 152. Note also the likelihood that when the author of *SA* claimed that the proprietor (a Macmurachie) of Kilberry shared the saint's name he was referring to the saint's patronymic - Berchán m. Muiredaig.

²⁹³ A report of 1786 mentions 'the pious invocation on the old Church Bell here, *Sancta Barrantic ora pro nobis*. (MS in NMRS: 'Case and State of the Parish of Kilberry, 1786'. via *Arg* 7, 543 no 48 n9.) See also *OSA* vol 19, 318 (South Knapdale): 'The bell of St Barry's Chapel is still in preservation at Kilberry Castle...It is inscribed with the saint's name, in the Latin language and Saxon character, but unfortunately without date.'

²⁹⁴ Both names are strange orthographic hybrids. Berry is not a Gaelic form.

²⁹⁵ Campbell and Sandeman, 65 no 424. *Beirri* could also represent the element found in Cailleach Beirre ie not Berach at all (Thomas Clancy, pers. comm).

(anglicized as Cox) 'unearthed St Berach's boat' in 1890 and placed it near Kilbarry in Co. Roscommon.²⁹⁶ There is a parallel Irish tradition also concerning Dabhach Bherry - 'Berry's vat' - which we will look at later.

None of the above amounts to a case for linking the saint of Cluain Chairpthe - Berach m. Amairgin - or any other particular saint for that matter, with Kilberry. Watson must have had his reasons, however, and one may have been that in the Irish Life of this St Berach the saint comes to Scotland, specifically Aberfoyle. Here Aedán mac Gabráin, the king of Alba in the Life, is so impressed with his miracles that he makes him a generous grant: 'And Aedan offered the fort to Berach; that is *Eperpuill*²⁹⁷, a monastery of Berach's in Alba. And the king offered to Berach and to his convent after him his own royal suit, and that of every king after him, and dues from all Alba. And the youths offered their own service to Berach, and that of their offspring and seed till doom, and their districts and territories.'²⁹⁸

But is there any other reason to associate Berach with Scotland, or indeed Aberfoyle? A search around that area reveals commemorations to a saint called Berchan or Mobi (both names related to Berach), but the saint there is commemorated in October, nowhere near Berach m. Amairgin's feast day of February 15th. We will discuss this below. The only mentions of Berach in the Scottish calendars are in Dempster and Camerarius, both on February 24th, but while worth noting (Dempster did have access to sources now lost), these are not reliable pieces of evidence for commemoration in Scotland.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ info. from Catholic Encyclopedia on-line at www.newadvent.org. In *AFM* 1485 Donough Mac Coilidh, Erenagh of Bearach, who kept a house of public hospitality, died.

²⁹⁷ Watson makes the identification between Aberfoyle and *Eperpuill*, p225, following Plummer, and it has not been disputed, as far as I know.

²⁹⁸ Irish Life ch. 59 Plummer 1922 vol 1, 35: *Ocus ro edhbair Aodhan an dun do Bherach. Conadh hi sin Eperpuill .i. cathair atá ag Berach i nAlbain. Ocus ro edbair an rí a rígh-erredh féin, & o gach rí ina diagh dó, & mór-cuairt Alban, & día shamhadh ina dhiaigh. Ocus ro edhbairset an mhacraidh a mancine fein, & maincine a síl & a seimen go bráth cona crich & cona ferann do Bherach.* Plummer vol 2, 34 for translation.

²⁹⁹ Dempster has *In Scotia Berecti monachi. M.* on Feb 24th: *M = Martyrologium Romanum Illustrissimi Baronii.* (Forbes 1872,192) Camerarius has *Sanctus Berectus Monachus & Confessor qui profuit & vitae santissimae exemplo & praedicatione* (Forbes, 235).

Berach m. Amairgin is a Connacht saint descended in the genealogies, in *FO* notes, *MDo* and his *Irish Life*, from Brian m. Echach Mugmedoin.³⁰⁰ His main church of Cluain Chairpthe is in modern Kilbarry, in the parish of Termonbarry, Co. Roscommon. Kenney's conclusion is this: 'Neither church nor saint holds a very prominent position in the literature, but in popular regard, especially in Connacht, they seem both to have stood high'.³⁰¹ Some indication of his wider importance may lie in the fact that in the manuscript containing his Latin Life, his is the only one decorated with a miniature portrait,³⁰² but this may simply be a reflection of the manuscript's provenance. He is associated with Cenél Dobtha through his descent from Dobtha m. Óengusa, and was the patron saint of the Ó hAinle family (anglicized Hanley) in Connacht.³⁰³ His *Irish Life*, a late work, but probably not as late as the Latin life which appears in a manuscript dating from perhaps the 14th century,³⁰⁴ infers commemorations well beyond Connacht, in Leinster (he is trained at Glendalough and leaves his bell there), Ulster (he is given a fort by Áed Dub, and is fostered by his uncle Fraech in Louth) and Brega (he is given land there),³⁰⁵ and he is traditionally associated with a church at Kilbarrack in Dublin. Evidence for this more widespread cult will be discussed below.

Apart from Berach's visit to Scotland in the *Life*, then, there is no obvious reason to link the saint with Scotland, and even at Kilberry, the only church which has been suggested as his, there is no local tradition which would incline us to support that particular identification. One might indeed ask why Berach - any Berach - is a more likely dedicatee than one of the many Bercháns. A glance at the historic forms of the name Kilberry reveals Berchán as just as likely a dedicatee, with forms such as *St Berthan* in 1427 and *Kilbarren* in 1654. It will be recalled from the discussion of hypocoristic

³⁰⁰ Ó Riain 1985 no 25, 430, 662.85; *FO* notes in RB512 - Stokes 1905,74; *Irish Life* - Plummer 1922 vol 1, 23-4).

³⁰¹ Kenney 1929, 402.

³⁰² Sharpe 1991, 225.

³⁰³ See <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~ehandley/hanly.html> where a rousing poem is quoted, including the following lines: 'Revere St. Berach and support O'Hanley,/ The heir of Dofa and enemy of Stanley!' (Stanley was governor of Ireland at a crucial phase of Elizabethan policy in Ireland).

³⁰⁴ Sharpe examines the evidence for date and provenance of R and I (I is a copy of R, and the letter used by Sharpe to designate the hypothetical original is O), finding estimates among scholars ranging from 1200-1350 for R and 1300-1400 for I. He seems to settle for the late 14th century for I (Sharpe 91, 255) but his overall conclusion is that neither date nor provenance can be certain (Sharpe 91, 265): 'It is frustratingly the fact that this quantity of evidence, some of it to all appearances authoritative, does not pin down the original place of writing or even the medieval repository of either manuscript [ie I or R]. One may be sure, however, that both belonged from the start somewhere in the district of Longford or Westmeath.'

³⁰⁵ *Betha Beraig* chs 29 & 44, ch 60 & 15, ch 28 respectively.

forms (1.3) that Berchán is, in any case, simply a form of Berach showing the addition of the suffix -án, and syncope. Berchán can be further reduced, especially in Scotland, to Barran³⁰⁶, and there is an additional development in which the name (and other personal names beginning with B) can become Mobí or Dobí, as we shall see.

There is another reason why Watson may have chosen Berach as the saint of Kilberry, however: his descent, according to an alternative genealogy, from Áed m. Erc,³⁰⁷ and his relationship with another saint with alleged dedications in Scotland.³⁰⁸ The saint with this genealogy is listed separately from Berach m. Amairgin in *CGSH*, however, under the name Berchán m. Nemnann,³⁰⁹ although he almost certainly has his origin in the same saint; Berach and Berchán are the same names, as we have seen, and the Connacht Berach's father's name is represented in various ways, including Nemnann.³¹⁰ Perhaps we have to consider the possibility that Berach's Connacht connections represent just one part of a much more widespread cult of a saint called Berach or Berchán. The most we can say is that by the late twelfth century, when these genealogies were written into the Book of Leinster, there were either dedications on the ground, or associations with particular families or churches, which were reflected in a partially Scottish ancestry for the saint.

A re-examination of the area around Aberfoyle reveals some interesting things. In Aberfoyle itself there was a *Féill Bercháin* in mid October³¹¹ and nearby in Kippen a Mobí (a name which derived from Berchán) was celebrated around the same time at a fair known as 'Semvies Fair'.³¹² If we look in the calendars for a saint of relevant name commemorated around this time we find, on October 12th, Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind, also known as Mobí Cláirenach. The chance that it is this saint that is commemorated

³⁰⁶ Hudson 1996, 110.

³⁰⁷ Erc, Áed's father, is the progenitor of the men who came from Dál Riata in Ireland to settle in Scotland, at least according to *MSFA* (Bannerman 1973, 41). Áed himself is not mentioned, but there is some doubt, even in *MSFA*, as to who Erc's sons were (eg *Alii dicunt h-erc habuisse alium filium cuius nomen uocabatur muredach. ibid.*).

³⁰⁸ 'His grandfather was Áed, son of Erc, son of Eochaidh Muinremar (LL 351 c); Berach was therefore a first cousin of Torannán and his brothers.' (Watson 1926, 301).

³⁰⁹ Ó Riain 1995 no 239.

³¹⁰ *FO* notes in **RB512**. Sometimes, eg *Rec. Mai.* no 25, it is his grandfather who has this name, or a variant.

³¹¹ Watson 1926, 194, 225. Plummer has a note in his edition of the Irish Life which quotes from a letter from a Rev Moncrieff-Taylor of Aberfoyle who claims there were fairs in April and October held in a field called *Feil-barachan*. Plummer 1922 vol 2, 327-8.

³¹² The fair was held on the second Wednesday of October. Semvie < Saint Mabhl/Mobí. It is recorded in the 1880s. Black 1999, 42.

in the area is strengthened by the appearance of *Mobí* on that date in a 15th-century calendar produced in Fowlis Easter, Perthshire.³¹³ *Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind / Mobí Clairenach* will here be treated as a single saint, though there is some doubt about this.³¹⁴ He is always, however, presented as a completely separate saint from *Berach*; his *floruit* is much earlier³¹⁵ and his main monastery was at Glass Noínden (Glasnevin) in Dublin. He is a pupil of *Finnian of Clonard*³¹⁶, one of the 12 apostles of Ireland³¹⁷, and he appears in the *Lismore Life of Colum Cille*, as tutor of *Colum Cille*, *Cainnech*, *Comgall* and *Ciarán*.³¹⁸

There are various explanations as to why the explicit link of one saint - *Berach m. Amairgin* - to a place should be matched by commemorations of another - *Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind*. The first is that there were two Irish saints of similar name but different generations, both with cults in the same part of Scotland. The second is that there were two Irish saints of similar name, but only one - *Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind* - had a genuine cult around *Aberfoyle*; *Berach m. Amairgin* is linked to the area simply because the author of his *Irish Life* has been misled by the dedications in the area to a saint called *Berchán* into bringing his hero to *Aberfoyle*. In this context, it is notable that the author of the *Latin life* mentions *Scotland* only briefly and does not specify *Aberfoyle*.³¹⁹ The third is that there were genuine traditions linking *Aberfoyle* both with a saint *Berchán* of the 12th October and a saint *Berach* from *Connacht*, but that these traditions derived not from two original saints, but one. The original saint - let's call him *Q Berach* - of unknown origin had a widespread cult, which at least by the first part of the 9th century (when *FO* was compiled) had been reinterpreted as the cult of two

³¹³ Fowlis Easter Breviary NLS MS 21247. Fowlis Easter is on OS pathfinder sheet 338, NO3233.

³¹⁴ In *MT* it seems that two separate saints are commemorated, but later sources combine them. Most scholars consider them to be one, but some have their doubts eg *Anderson 1922*, xxxvi.

³¹⁵ *AU 545.1: Mortalitas prima que dicitur blefed in qua Mo-Bí Clarainech obiit*. Also in *AT* (see table of saints).

³¹⁶ *Heist 1965*, 83, 191.

³¹⁷ *Ó Riain 1995* no 402.

³¹⁸ *Stokes 1890*, 174 line 859.

³¹⁹ Regarding dating of the *Lives*, the MS of the *Irish Life* has the following colophon: 'This was copied from a bad old vellum book, belonging to the children of *Brian O'Mulconry the younger*. In the convent of the friars on the *Drowes* on Feb 6, 1629 the poor friar *Michael O'Clery* wrote it.' (*Plummer 22 vol 2,43*). A search for internal indications as to date might point to the depiction of the importance of *Clann Cholmain*, but this does not narrow the dating margin much as the group was powerful from 728 onwards except for brief period between 944 and 956. (*Byrne 1973*, 87). It was perhaps less important after 1022 (*Byrne 1973*, 276 - *King List*). The *Irish Life* is apparently later than the *Latin one* whose MS I is dated variously 1300-1350 (*Falconer Madan*) - c1400 (*Macray, Francis Wormald*) (*Sharpe 1991 254-5*). Both the *Latin and Irish Lives of Berach* are late, but 'the *Irish* appears to be earlier and more original than the *Latin*.' Neither 'offer evidence of having been based on early texts' (*Kenney*, 402 no 196).

saints, both of which appear in *FO*: Berchán or Mobi in Glasnevin, and Berach, principally in Connacht.

The least plausible explanation seems to me to be the first, but even this is possible. It is difficult to choose between the second and the third. If we look at the third, that is the case for the original identity of Berach and Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind, we find nothing conclusive, but their cults do overlap more than is at first apparent. Although unlike the former the latter is not usually thought of as a Connacht saint he is, according to one of his genealogies, a member of the Corco Tri³²⁰ whose main lands were in County Sligo, which neighbours Co. Roscommon - Berach's county - to the north.³²¹ The Corco Tri also had lands near Kells. Here there is a Kilberry which may correspond to the place called in Berach's Latin Life *Cell Beraych* in Mide³²², where the saint is given lands. This, therefore, may represent a dedication to Berach in lands associated with the family of Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind. Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind's main monastery was at Glass Noínden, north of Dublin. In the same barony is a parish dedicated to Berach (Kilbarrack).³²³

Our start point for considering the possibility of the original identity of the two saints is the Irish Life of Berach and his visit therein to an area (Aberfoyle) full of dedications to another saint - Mobi; that same source (or a closely related one) is then used again to add strength to the case. It is unsafe to rely so much on one source but there is enough here for at least entertaining the possibility that the two may have their origins in the same saint. If so, all we can say so far is that by the ninth century there was a saint with a cult in Leinster and Connacht (where the main monasteries are situated) and that by the time the Irish Life was written there was a cult also in Ulster and in central Scotland around Stirlingshire and Perthshire. We do not know the origin of this saint, nor when his cult first emerged in Scotland.

³²⁰ Ó Riain 1985 no 266, *MT* 12th Oct.

³²¹ Modern counties are given simply to give some orientation. They are not necessarily relevant for the early period.

³²² Latin Life ch xvii, Plummer 1910, 82. This seems to correspond to *Disert Bearaigh i mBreghaibh* Disert Bregha in Bregha of the Irish Life ch. 28, though the circumstances of the gift differ. It is not certain where this place is.

³²³ Mary Dunne, local historian pers. comm. See also www.kilbarrackfoxfieldparish.ie

We have already accepted the possibility that Berach m. Amairgin and Berchán m. Nemnainn might be different names for the same saint. Perhaps we can be helped by looking at the cults of other saints called Berach or Berchán in Scotland. We have already seen that Berchán m. Nemnainn is descended in one genealogy from Áed m. Erc. In another, however, he is *do síol Loairn*.³²⁴ There is another Berchán with this distinction, a saint with a feast day observed in Scotland: Berchán m. Muiredaig. This seems to be the saint of Kilbarchan in Renfrewshire where December 4th - deduced to be Berchan m. Muiredaig's feast day (see below) - was celebrated with a fair.³²⁵ It seems a remarkable coincidence that two Berchans, both with descent from Loarn m. Eircc Móir could exist, and it is tempting to conclude that they are one and the same.³²⁶ In addition to the genealogical link, which connects Berchán m. Muiredaig with Scotland at least by the 12th century, a more explicit link is made in the *FO* notes in Laud, thus by the mid fifteenth century at the latest.³²⁷

So who is this Berchán m. Muiredaig? A glance at Table 1, appended to this chapter, shows that no saint by the name Berchan m. Muiredaig appears in the martyrologies. It seems logical to deduce, however, that the Berchán who in *MG* is a prophet³²⁸ and in *MG* gloss is a bishop from Cluain Sasta (in County Offaly) is the same as the saint called Berchán m. Muiredaig in the genealogies who is a 'profeta & episcopus'³²⁹ from Cluain Sasta.³³⁰ The author of *MDo* seems to take this step in so far as he assigns the Berchán of December 4th to the same genealogical line as Berchán m. Muiredaig, though he does not use the name Berchán m. Muiredaig (when usually he aims for completeness).³³¹

Looking at the table again it can be seen that there is another Berchán associated with Cluain Sasta. This one is commemorated on August 4th. It is likely that the two dates of

³²⁴ *Rec. met.*, Ó Riain 1985 no 662.135.

³²⁵ Watson 1926, 194. The Perth psalter has *bartan<us>* on Dec 4th, which is surely the same saint. It is an addition probably of the 16th century (Eeles 1932, 426).

³²⁶ It is also possible that the Lorn genealogy given to Berchán m. Nemnainn was simply the result of mistaken confusion with Berchán m. Muiredaig, the more famous saint.

³²⁷ See Table 1 appended to this chapter.

³²⁸ It is lamentable that the relevant page in *MT* is missing. This entry from *MG* is the closest we can get to ascertaining what it might have contained.

³²⁹ *Rec. Mai.* Ó Riain 1985 no 201.

³³⁰ *Rec. Min.* Ó Riain 1985 no 556.

³³¹ in *Rec. Mai.* Ó Riain 1985 no 201 Berchán descends from Eochu Riata aka Cairpre Rígfota, from whom sprang the Dál Riata. In *MDo* Berchán is simply said to be of the seed of Cairpre Rígfota.

August 4th and December 4th represent commemorations of the same saint, but other explanations are possible.³³² Intriguingly, the former date of August 4th was observed in Scotland, in particular in Rosshire. There are two pieces of evidence for this: one is his commemoration in the Calendar of Fearn, and the other is the celebration of *S. Barquan* in the burgh of Tain.³³³ There is no knowing what genealogy was assigned to the saint commemorated in Ross-shire, if any, but it is interesting, given the descent from Loarn m. Erc assigned to Berchán m. Nemnann and to Berchan m. Muiredaig, that Ross-shire was a key area in the struggles for the kingship of Alba in the 11th century, in which dynasts claiming descent from Cenél Loairn played an important part.³³⁴

At least from the late tenth century a prophet called Berchán was celebrated in Ireland. Gerald of Wales, in the late 12th century wrote about the four great prophets of Ireland: Columb Cille, Patrick, Moling and *Braccanus*.³³⁵ The most famous surviving work attributed to him is Berchán's Prophecy, whose earliest section may have been written in the first part of the ninth century. The above Berchan m. Muiredaig, celebrated on December 4th (and probably August 4th) is called, in *MG*, *Berchan Cluana in coemfaid* and it is perhaps this saint who was envisaged as author of Berchán's Prophecy. In fact we have no idea who the author was, but it is perhaps fair to say that by the middle ages people generally associated the famous prophet with the saint of Cluain Sasta; a genealogy in the Book of Leinster describes, for example, *Berchan profeta 7 episcopus 7 poeta*³³⁶ m. *Muiridag*.³³⁷ Cluain Sasta never became a particularly important place, however, and no life of this Berchán was ever written - nor of any other saint called Berchán for that matter.³³⁸ The lack of a life seems odd for someone so famous in the

³³² Why not two saints of the same name from one place? One might take the name out of reverence for the other?

³³³ Watson 1926, 194 ('*diem S. Barquhani 4 Aug*' 1612, *RMS* vol 7 no 768) and Forbes 1872, 279. Charter of privileges for burgh of Tain on 10 Jan 1587 '*Dies S. Barquhani qui fuit tercius dies post festum S. Petri ad Vincula vocat. Lambes*' (*RMS* vol 5 no 1432). Day of St Peter's chains is 1st Aug. Fearn has *Brachani confessoris* on Aug 4th (Adam 1991, 54).

³³⁴ Grant 2000 in Cowan and McDonald 2000, 97, 98, 100. Hudson 1996, 240-1.

³³⁵ Hudson 1996, 111. There is a legendary Welsh king / saint called Brychan who it is possible Gerald of Wales has in mind here. This Brychan is linked with both Scotland and Ireland but is not, however, associated with prophecy, as far as I know (*ODS*, 77).

³³⁶ Berchán m. Beoáid aka Mo Bi is also presented as a *poeta* in his obit. in *AT* (c545), and, possibly as prophet in both *AT* and *CS* (where 'prophet' is Charles-Edwards' emendation of *CS*'s *prorectano* and *AT*'s *brecanó* - Charles Edwards 2006,97). *ACLon* adds 'who was supposed to be called in English Merlyn'. On Feb 17th in *FO* notes in *RB512* a Berchán (not specified which) sings a song 'to the stone on which Fintan had been baptized'. This is Fintan of Cluain Eidnech, co. Laois.

³³⁷ *CGSH* - Ó Riain 1985 no 201, LL only.

³³⁸ Hudson sees Cluain Sasta as having 'some slight fame in the later Middle Ages' (p 108), and notes the existence of a book called the Book of Berchán from which a legend of Alexander was copied into the

later period, but less so if there is any truth in his genealogy which would give him a *floruit* in the late 8th or early 9th century. The vast majority of Lives were of saints of the 6th and 7th centuries; later saints such as Maelrubha (died c. 722) and Maelruain (ob. 792), both important figures, did not, for example, attract hagiographers.

Traditions of prophecy attached to a saint called Berchán or Berach in Scotland are uncertain,³³⁹ and at Kilberry in Argyll there are no stories at all of its saint being associated with prophecy, as far as I know. One interesting link that does exist between our Kilberry and the prophet Berchán m. Muiredaig is the Dabhach Bherry alluded to above. This name is not given on OS Pathfinder, but is recorded in the OS Name Book, and glossed 'Berry's Vat'.³⁴⁰ Among memoranda and miscellaneous notes written by Michael O'Clery or one of his associates on the fly leaves at the beginning and end of the Martyrology of Donegal is the following: 'The tub of Berchain - *Dobac Bercáin* - was found new in Uí Failge, in the territory of Uí Berchain; the timber was still round the water. It is there Clonsost is, and it is there is Tempull Berchain, and was'.³⁴¹

It may be that the reference twice to a *dabhach* of Berchán or Berach is coincidental, (and the meaning of the term in each instance might in any case be quite different).³⁴² Or it may be that the Argyll name is a late coinage, influenced by knowledge of an association between Berchán and a *dabhach* in Ireland. It is just possible, however, that there was an early story, now lost, which brought together the saint and this vessel, and that this is reflected in the traditions attached to these two geographically distant places.

Leabhear Breac. It survived at least until 1526 when it appears in an inventory of the earl of Kildare as *Saint Beraghan's boke* (p 113).

³³⁹ There is a possible appearance of a prophet called Berach or Berchán in a poem in the sixteenth century Book of the Dean of Lismore; here a *Barrán* issues a warning of future treachery (Hudson 1996, 114 referring to the poem by Ailéin mac Rhuaidhrí in Ross N 1939 *Heroic Poetry from the Book of the Dean of Lismore*, Edinburgh p 152). There is another version in BL Egerton MS 209 (see notes in Ross 1939,238) where the name is *Cairbre*, however (information from T. Clancy).

³⁴⁰ Campbell and Sandeman 1962, 65 no 425.

³⁴¹ *MDo*, xli.

³⁴² Head meaning in Dwelly for *dabhach*, *-aich* f. is vat, but the third meaning is simply a portion of land. The size of this portion, and whether it is uniform or whether it relates to what might be sown from a *dabhach* containing grain is debated, as also is its possible ecclesiastical significance. A glance at Hogan 1910 would suggest that names in *dabhach* are not common in Ireland - only four are listed, three of which are associated with saints and are wells.

As we have seen, there seems to be a link between another local place-name - *Curachan Berry* - and not Berchán m. Muiredaig but Berach m. Amairgin. Might it be possible that Kilberry is linked to both of these saints, or, more accurately, that there is some overlap between the two saints, so Kilberry is linked to traditions relating to two different parts of the divided cult? There is indeed some evidence to suggest some confusion between Berach and Berchán m. Muiredaig, none conclusive but together perhaps worth considering. It is possible too that there was some kind of 'proto-life' - Ó Riain's 'oral life', referred to above (1.3) - which contained anecdotes about a *curach* and a *dabach*, and that these features became localised in various places.

First there is the link via Berchán m. Nemnann, which has been introduced above. That is, there is reason to believe that Berach m. Amairgin is the same as Berchán m. Nemnann. The latter has a Loarn genealogy, as does Berchán m. Muiredaig, making it probable that there is some overlap here too.

Second, important characters and incidents in the Irish life of Berach concern political dynamics which would be of much greater interest to a man with a monastery in Cluain Sasta (in the territory of the Uí Failge) than one with a monastery in distant Connacht. For instance, Berach is a helper of Fáelán mac Colmáin while the latter is being looked after at Glendalough.³⁴³ Fáelán is an important figure in the Uí Dúnlainge, who held the kingship of Leinster from 738 until 1042, with the kingship being shared between three sub-dynasties - Uí Dúinchada, Uí Fáeláin and Uí Muiredaig.³⁴⁴ Uí Failge territory borders that of the latter two.³⁴⁵ Glendalough belongs within another nearby group, the Uí Garrchon, to whom Coemgen was assigned in the genealogies. The relationship between Coemgen and Fáelán in Coemgen's *Vita* (in which Berach does not appear) is clearly designed to underline later relations between the Uí Dúnlainge and the monastery. It is possible that the depiction of Berach's relations with Fáelán was originally designed to do the same, though this would make much more sense with a monastery at Cluain Sasta than one in Connacht. It seems also that the Uí Failge were

³⁴³ Irish life ch 33-38.

³⁴⁴ Byrne 1973, 151. Fáelán m. Colmáin died in the mid 7th century (his obit. of 666 is, according to Byrne, too late) Byrne 1973, 150.

³⁴⁵ see map in Byrne 1973, 133.

under threat both by Clann Cholmain and by Uí Dunlainge, who allied against them³⁴⁶ A monastery in the territory of Uí Failge would want to curry favour with or demand respect from both these groups, which is the case in the Irish Life of Berach. It is even claimed that Berach is given lands in Meath, the territory of Clann Cholmain, and that he is entitled to exact 'a scruple from every city [or monastery - the Irish (*gacha cathrach*) bears both meanings] of Clann Cholmain every third year henceforth til doom.'³⁴⁷ In later tradition it is Berchán m. Muiredaig rather than Berach who is associated with Meath, however; according to a note in *MDo* concerning the former saint, 'At first we were in Alba, The next first in Meath'.³⁴⁸ Berach's link in his Life with Brega (where he is given lands) also finds parallel in traditions associated with Berchán m. Muiredaig, whose mother is said to be from a Brega dynasty.³⁴⁹

Third, in a list of bishops in the Book of Leinster,³⁵⁰ of the four names immediately preceding *Berchan i Chuain Sasta*, three appear in the Life of Berach. One of these names is admittedly very common (Sillán), and another not uncommon (Daig / Dagán) but one (Conchenn) is rare - it appears only twice in *MT*. The names Dagán and Conchenn are associated again in *MT* - they appear on consecutive days (12th and 13th March), and on the following day is another name from the Life of Berach, Talmach - his only appearance in the calendar. This bunching of names in association with two allegedly separate saints is often presented by Ó Riain (with regard to other groupings of saints) as evidence for two saints' original identity.³⁵¹

There are many other illustrations of the slippery nature of the name Berchán m. Muiredaig and the probability he has split into many parts. Where the *Rec. Mai.* of *CGSH* in LL has Berchán m. Muiredaig, for instance, **M** and **La** have *Berchan m.*

³⁴⁶ Faelán allies with Conall m. Suibne in 633; Faelán may have had a wife from Clann Cholmain; Clann Cholmain kill Áed Ron of Uí Failgi in 604. Byrne 1973, 154.

³⁴⁷ *Betha Beraig* ch. 28 - Plummer 1922 vol 2, 27.

³⁴⁸ *MDo* Dec 4. Todd and Reeves, 327. *Céd duin i nAlbain, / Ced aile i Midhe*. Thomas Clancy (pers. comm.) offers an alternative translation: 'A hundred forts in Alba. Another hundred in Meath'

³⁴⁹ *Tract on Mothers of the saints* - Ó Riain 1985 no 722.63. Hudson 1976, drawing from this tract in the Book of Leinster says that through his mother B. m Muiredaig is descended 'from the northern branch of the powerful Uí Néill dynasty' but in this he appears to be mistaken. Berchán's mother is descended from Loegaire m. Neill who was a king of the S. Uí Neill and whose kingdom was considered part of Brega (Byrne 1976, 87, 93).

³⁵⁰ Ó Riain 1985 no 704. Of this list Ó Riain writes, 'The impression is that Áed mac Crimthainn, the probable author, was drawing on lists similar to those used in the composition of the entries for certain days in the L version of the Martyrology of Tallaght.' Ó Riain 1985, 216.

³⁵¹ Ó Riain 1975 and 1982, and above, 1.3.

*Micáin m. Dega do Cruithnib do.*³⁵² This Berchán of Cruithne descent appears also in *Recensio Minor*.³⁵³ Hudson treats this Berchán m. Micáin as a distinct saint, noting that he is said to be the author of the poem of *Ind ráth hi comair in dairfheda* which is found in the genealogies for the kings of Leinster³⁵⁴ and that he is recorded as head of the church of Armagh and tutor of Flann Febla mac Scannlan, who died in 715.³⁵⁵ Ó Riain, on the other hand, treats Berchán m. Muiredaig and Berchán m. Micáin as two facets of a single saint³⁵⁶, as I would.

It is notable how bits of Berchán's name as given in *Rec. Mai.* - Berchan m. Muiridag m. Dega Dimmasaig³⁵⁷ - turn up as names of other saints. First there is a Berchán m. Dega.³⁵⁸ Second there are two saints called Berchán m. Dimma.³⁵⁹ Third, one of the Berchán m. Dimmas is associated with a place called Domnach Sinchill, and Berchán m. Dega is also listed as Berchán Senchilli. Another coincidence is that there are two Bercháns associated with Cluain Chaí or Cluain Cháin; there is Berchán m. Ultáin in *CGSH*³⁶⁰, who also appears in *MT* on May 24th, and there is Berchán m. Fidne, also assigned to Cluain Cháin.³⁶¹ In the Irish Life of Berach one of the places claimed by the saint (it is one of the places ploughed by his escaped oxen) is Cluain Cai.³⁶² To add to this, in one source Berchán m. Muiredaig's father is given the alternative name of Caf.³⁶³ Cluain Cháin is admittedly a common place-name³⁶⁴, but the concentration here is nonetheless marked.

If we return now to Berchán m. Micáin, the saint mentioned above of Cruithne descent who Hudson considers to be distinct from Berchán m. Muiredaig, here again we find there is the possibility of overlap with yet another Berchán: Berchán or Mobí m. Comgail who also has a Cruithne genealogy. This Mobí m. Comgail shares a

³⁵² Ó Riain 1985 no 201.

³⁵³ Breccan m. Maiccaim do Cruithneachaib (*Recensio Minor*, Ó Riain 1985 no. 473).

³⁵⁴ *CGH*, 58.

³⁵⁵ Hudson 1996, 107, drawing from Best and Lawlor 1919, *Ancient List of the Coarbs of Patrick*, PRIA 35, section c number 9, 321.

³⁵⁶ All references to the latter are listed in the index under the former. Ó Riain 1985.

³⁵⁷ Ó Riain 1985 no 201.

³⁵⁸ *ibid.* no 263, 560, 662.160, 704.188.

³⁵⁹ *ibid.* no 168.2, 261, 562, 662.175; POR no 262, 662.180.

³⁶⁰ *ibid.* no 267.

³⁶¹ *ibid.* no 268.

³⁶² *Betha Beraig* ch. 75.

³⁶³ Ó Riain 1985 no 473 (in Laud only).

³⁶⁴ There are 15 places called Cluain Cáin listed in Hogan, plus a further nine which have a third element (eg Cluain Cáin Cairrill). Hogan 1910, 256-7.

significant characteristic with another Berchan: Mobí of Glasnevin aka Berchán m. Beoáid Bairrfind, mentioned above. Their shared characteristic is their by-name, *Clairinach*, meaning flat faced: they are both referred to as Mobí Clairinach.³⁶⁵ Mobí m. Comgail is chiefly associated with the church of Inis Cuscraid (Inch or Iniscourcey) about a kilometre NW of Downpatrick. Downpatrick, meanwhile, is the scene of a pronouncement by Berchán the prophet.³⁶⁶

To sum up some of the above, what we have been doing is to link one saint to another of similar name in a chain. One saint might plausibly be thought to overlap with the adjacent saint, but the connections might be more difficult to accept when they are at some remove. At one extreme one believes that all the saints derive from a single individual, at the other one believes that each one is a different saint and there are more to boot.³⁶⁷ The middle way is the wisest, of course. That there was more than one Berchán or Berach is undeniable, but that there may have at some time been a particularly dominant individual whose widely spread cult became reinterpreted as the cults of many different saints seems also quite probable. It is quite likely too that bits of the cult of our putative original Berchán became combined with the cults of other saints called Berchán, creating a confusion of tradition and half-remembered stories which is now impossible to unravel.

As for trying to find a context in which the development of a cult in Argyll might be explicable we have a problem: with a predominantly Leinster saint such as Abbán moccu Cormaic one might see links between Leinster and Argyll in, say, the seventh century (and even this is suspect), but in the case of Berach / Berchán with what place or polity are we to seek connections? If all manifestations of the name originated in a single saint, and we envisage that the cult spread in Scotland soon after, or even during,

³⁶⁵ Several saints have this tag. Perhaps it describes some medical condition.

³⁶⁶ O'Donnell's *Life of Columba* - O'Kelleher and Schoepperle 1918 ch. 371, 420-2. See also Anderson 1922 i, 47.

³⁶⁷ Thus one can introduce the Berchán and the Berach from *VC* (i.19, iii.21), Berchán of Eigg (*MT* April 10th), Berchán of Bennchor (d. 664 A4M), all possibilities. Adomnán does not characterise the two in *VC* as important figures, compared to his depiction of Fintan Munn and Colmán Ela. Both illustrate the danger of disobedience. Berach fails to follow Colum Cille's advised route to Tiree as a result of which he has a terrifying encounter with a whale (*VC* i.19). Berchán, Colum Cille's *alumnus*, peers through his master's keyhole despite instructions to stay away, as a result of which he almost drops dead; his future in Ireland is revealed by Colum Cille as an unhappy one (*VC* iii.21).

the saint's lifetime then we need to know where that saint came from, but we do not, nor do we even know when he lived.

Moreover, even if all the evidence of Berach / Berchán in Scotland did originate in a single saint the spread of separate bits of the cult, each with different character, will probably have happened at various times. Thus for the Berach m. Amairgin branch of the cult one might seek a link with Connacht / Ó hAnle. But when? It could be very late indeed, or it could be quite early if Ó Riain is right about splits happening within 100 years of a progenitor's death (as he claims in the case of Cainnech / Columba).³⁶⁸

The problem remains that, lacking commemoration dates in Argyll, too many possibilities are open to us. So, if we turn now to the other possible Berach / Berchán dedications in Argyll, we find it is possible to make connections to a variety of places over a long period, depending on whom we pick as dedicatee. *Kildavie, for example, as discussed in the Kintyre chapter, could be a commemoration of Móibí m. Comgaill, especially in view of other dedications nearby, but there are plenty of other possibilities. The early forms of Island Davaar³⁶⁹ make one of the saints called Bairre or Findbarr quite a likely dedicatee, but a Berchán or Berach is not out of the question.³⁷⁰ Even if it was a dedication to Bairre or Findbarr, however, we have not necessarily escaped the shadow of Berchán as it seems to me possible that there is some leakage between the cults of the well-known saint of Cork, Bairre m. Amairgin, and the saint with which we began this chapter, Berach m. Amairgin of Connacht. I will not labour this question here as without considerable work (and possibly even with it) it does not take us very far, but it is perhaps worth flagging up the following few points where the cults appear to meet.

First, Bairre and Berach have similar genealogies, both being descendants of Brian m. Echach Muigmedóin;³⁷¹ they appear in the same section of the metrical recension of

³⁶⁸ Ó Riain 1983.

³⁶⁹ *insula de Sanctbarre* 1508 *RMS* vol 2 no 3170.

³⁷⁰ The first vowel of Berach / Berchán is often represented by 'a'. Thus we find St Barry's bell at Kilberry, and Blaeu renders Kilberry, *Kilbarren*. The place associated with Berach in Connacht is Kilbarry and the village commemorating Berchán in Renfrewshire is Kilbarchan. Confusingly, although Barran is a common rendering of Berchán, especially in Scotland, it can also derive from Bairrfind, as in Kilbarran, the church of Bairrfind (Hogan 1910, 176).

³⁷¹ For Bairre see Ó Riain 1985 no 314 and 484. For Berach see Ó Riain 1985 no 25 and 430.

CGSH.³⁷² Second, they both have a father called Amairgein. Third, they share a given name, as according to his Irish Life Berach is christened Fintan.³⁷³ And a final point in favour of some kind of overlap between the two is the presence of a saint called Talmach in both lives (and in Brendan's³⁷⁴). It is an uncommon name. In Berach's Life Talmach gives the saint final communion, in Bairre's Irish Life Tamlach is one of Bairre's pupils.³⁷⁵

We have to ask, was this study worth while? We have not been able to decide between one Berach / Berchán and another as a likely dedicatee of Kilberry, or anywhere else for that matter, and even if we had, it is not clear that it would have revealed much about the development of the early church in Argyll. But even if no direct help is given, the study perhaps still stands scrutiny as an object lesson regarding the danger of too much certainty. Beware of being lured into making confident declarations on the basis of apparently simple names.

³⁷² Ó Riain 1985 no 662.79 and 662.81.

³⁷³ *Ise dano ainm baiste Beraigh .i. Fintan*. Irish Life of Berach ch. 16. Findén, Findbarr and Bairrfind are interchangeable (as well as Finnian) as can be seen in the case of Finnian m. Cairpre of Mag Bile (Ó Riain 1985 index, 245).

³⁷⁴ Irish Life of Brendan of Clonfert, *Betha Brenainn Clúana Ferta*, ch. 168, 171-3, where Talmach is Brendan's attendant. It is interesting that an alternative name for Brendan is none other than Mobí (Lismore Life, Stokes, 248 line 3361; *Betha Brenainn* ch 7, Plummer ii, 45, i, 45).

³⁷⁵ *Betha Beraig* ch. 90. *Betha Bairre* ch. 21.

APPENDIX 1

Berchán Cluain Sasta / Berchán m. Muiredaig in the Calendars

	Aug 4	Dec 4
FO	[only <i>moLua Macc oche</i>]	<i>ba hóen ar sóer sruithe/ in fíal Fer dá lethe</i> - one of our noble elders was the modest Fer dá lethe [man of two parts].
MT	<i>Berchan Clúana Sasta</i> [Complete entry is <i>Moluae meic Ochaë Clúana Ferta. B. Midnat Cilli Lucinní</i>]	page missing
MG	<i>Berchan builid</i> - blooming Berchan	<i>Berchan Cluana in coemfaid</i> - Berchán of Clúain, the dear prophet
MG gloss	no gloss	<i>epscop ocus fáidh Dé, ó Chluain Sosta i n-Uibh Failge</i> - a bishop and God's prophet, from Cluain Sasta in Húi Failgi
FO notes in RB505	no notes	<i>Fer dá lethe .i. Berchan Cluana sosta in Huib Failge</i> [ie Offaly]
FO notes in Laud 610	no notes	<i>No Fer da lethe i Laid treoit ind Albain. Sacardos hé. Fer da leithe .i. leth a tsaegail dó a ndoman 7 a leth aili a n-aithre, ut ferunt.</i>
FO notes in F	no notes	<i>periti</i>
MDr	no Berchán	<i>...natale sancti confessoris Fir Da Lethi seu Berchain.</i>
MDo	[Berchan, <i>Mar. Cluana Sosta, M Taml.</i>] This is added by a 'more recent hand' says <i>MDo's</i> editor, Todd. But it is still pre 1630. It is not in O'Clery's index. <i>Mar</i> is <i>MDo's</i> abbreviation for MG	<i>Berchan, epscop acus fáidh Dé, ó Cluain sosda, i n Uibh Fáilghe. Do sliocht Cairbre Righfoda, mic Conaire ata do siol Eiremhoin do. Ferdaleithe ainm oile do, .i. leth a saogail i nAlbain acus an leth oile i nErinn, amail ro ráidh féin - Céd duin iAlbain, Ced aile i Midhe, Ni ruan fir baoith boi ar m'aire, Nir fuair gnúis laoich im lighe [Ceithri fáidí Gaidel nglan, Feirdi an tir a ttangadar, Colum Cille, Moling lán Brenainn Biorra acus Berchan] Bearchan, Bishop and Apostle of God, of Cluain-sosta, in Ui-Failghe. He was of the race of Cairbre Righfoda, son of Conaire, who is of the seed of Heremon. Ferdaleithe was another name for him i.e. he spent half his life in Alba, and the other half in Erin, as he himself said:- At first we were in Alba The next first in Meath;* Truly it was not foolish sleep that I went bent on, I did not find the face of a hero by sleeping. [The four prophets of the fine Gaels, Better of it the country whence they came, Colum Cille, Moling the perfect, Brenainn of Biorr, and Berchán]</i>
Scottish calendars	Fearn has <i>Brachani confessoris</i> on Aug 4 th (Adam 1991 p 54)	<i>Bartan<us></i> in 16 th century addition to Perth psalter (Eeles 1932 p 434)

* Thomas Clancy gives alternative translation: 100 forts in Alba, 100 others in Meath.

Chapter Three

A study of three landscapes

3.1 Intro

The early history of Argyll is poorly understood, despite intense study and a recent spate of scholarly articles. The *RCAHMS's* series of inventories of Argyll's monuments,¹ for example, is unsurpassed in scholarship and detail, and there has been close study of the few pieces of documentary evidence which relate to Argyll by Sharpe, Dumville, and Fraser among others.² In addition the results of excavations on the important sites of Dunadd and Loch Glashan crannog have recently been published, with detailed analyses of finds from these and related sites, and various studies which put these sites in context.³ Basic issues remain the subject of debate, however, such as when, or even if, there was large-scale migration from northern Ireland to Argyll in the early Medieval period.⁴

Some of problems in the historical record are highlighted through the local studies which follow. They draw attention to our uncertainties regarding dating, the position of boundaries, the position of one group with regards another in terms of retention of power, and the very definition and identity of these groups and their relationships with groups in Ireland. Each area has its own characteristics both in terms of the distribution and nature of its *cill-* names, and in its political make-up. In each case the *cill-* names will be examined to see if they enable us to answer specific questions relevant to that area.

Thus in Kintyre we are looking at what might traditionally be thought of as the heartland of Cenél nGabráin, a group which at least for a time seems to have been the most powerful of the *cenéla* of the Dál Riata in Argyll, and the group which Adomnán, in *VC*, marks out for Columba's special favour. Place-names and other evidence

¹ *Arg 1-7*. Fisher 2001 brings together Argyll's early medieval sculpture from these works, with additional insights.

² Bannerman 1974, Sharpe 2000, Dumville 2000, Fraser 2004, 2005, 2006. *VC* has had over a century of detailed first class scholarship, including the editions by Reeves (1857) and the original and revised Anderson editions (1961), as well as Sharpe's annotated translation (1995).

³ Lane and Campbell 2000 (Dunadd). Crone and Campbell 2005 (Loch Glashan crannog).

⁴ Campbell 2001.

suggest that the area was later subject to Norse settlement though this too is a matter of debate.⁵ From the twelfth century the area seems to have been held by Somerled and his sons, though the details are unclear; it is at least probable that most of Kintyre was held by Somerled's son Ragnall.⁶ One certainty is that Kintyre was in a strategic position with regards contact with Ireland, the islands and the Firth of Clyde, and that its lands were relatively fertile. In *Heimskringla* it is described as 'a great land, and better than the best island in the Hebrides, excepting Man.'⁷ It was thus subject to attack, though the outcome of these endeavours to gain territory (or booty) are not always clear.⁸ For the purposes of this study the most important feature of South Kintyre is the remarkable density of *cill*- names, many of which became medieval parish churches. We will ask if these names reveal anything about relationships this area may have had either with secular groups locally and elsewhere, and with ecclesiastical centres, in particular Iona.

The names on Bute are required to answer similar questions, though the characteristics of the names are different. The most important early ecclesiastical site on Bute does not have a *cill*- name, though there is a *cill*- name (Kilblane) which has an uncertain relationship with it. Only one (*Kilbrook*), now obsolete, seems to have given its name to a parish, and then only for a short time and not exclusively. Bute's status within Dál Riata and its relationship with the Britons and with the *Gallgaidil* is much debated.⁹ The affiliation of its main church is of particular interest in recent scholarship. We will ask if *cill*- sites help to progress the debate.

Kilmartin has a different set of issues. The borders between one group and another are uncertain here, and it is not clear to whom some of the key sites such as the important ceremonial site of Dunadd may have belonged. There are potentially interesting relationships between Dunadd and the *cill*- sites round about which will be explored here, and though the distribution of *cill*- names is patchier than in Kintyre there is

⁵ There is 'good evidence that in the early twelfth century Kintyre was not in Norse hands' (Duncan and Brown 1957, 194).

⁶ Duncan and Brown, 198.

⁷ *Heimskringla* ch 10 (Anderson 1924, 113-4).

⁸ Magnus Bareleg's famous deception in 1098 by which he claimed Kintyre as one of his 'islands' by drawing a skiff across the narrow neck of land at Tarbert seems not to have had practical effect. In 1100 the diocese of Sodor is founded which does not include Kintyre, which is still apparently counted as part of Argyll. And David I regarded Kintyre as part of his kingdom. Duncan and Brown 1957, 194. The story is in *Heimskringla* ch 10 (Anderson 1924, 113-4).

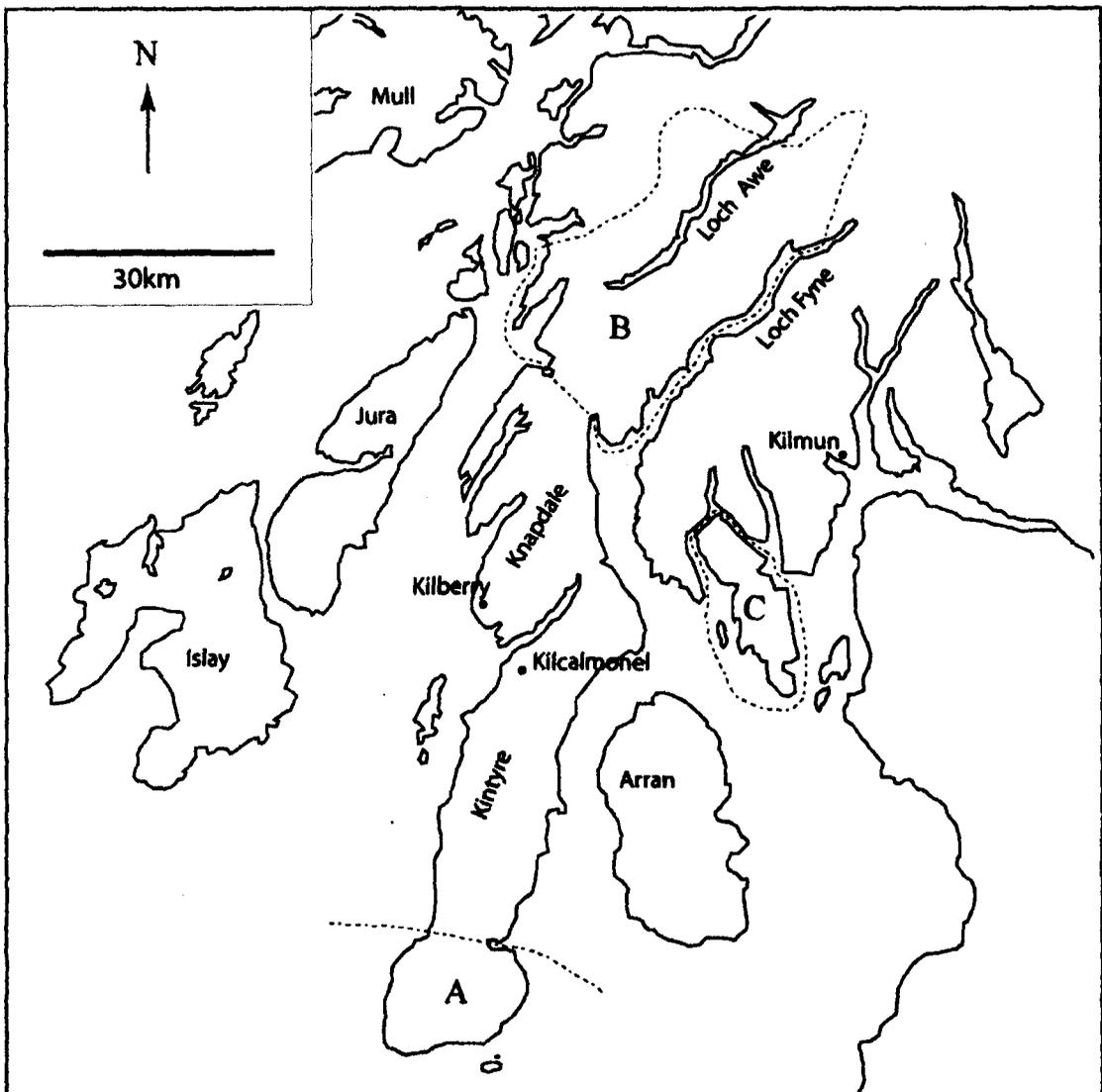
⁹ Fraser 2005.

interesting complementary evidence of other kinds - evidence of literacy and the webs of contact revealed by the artefacts found in the area, the results of detailed excavation.

For all three areas the question of pastoral provision will be raised. Do the *cill*- names of any of the three areas help us to envisage the practical operation of the church in the early medieval period, or, failing that, in any other period? And what do we learn of the *cill*- names themselves? What kind of sites do they seem to represent?

Using *cill*- names and dedications to saints as analytical tools, we find ourselves confronted by difficult questions to which there are no ready answers. We observe in Kintyre, for example, a group of saints, all affiliated with the Dál nAraide, and this causes us to ask if such a cluster might thus reveal something about ecclesiastical and/or political relations between that area and north-east Ireland, the home of the Dál nAraide? Ignoring the problems regarding the initial proposition for a moment (that one can ever be confident about asserting that a real rather than imagined group of saints has been found), we find that the way in which we are led to ask the question might bear fruit. There will be little certainty, but one might, through the question, discover the beginnings of a story.

We are attempting to use *cill*- names and dedications to saints to throw light on ecclesiastical history. The *cill*- names and dedications are the tools, but, as we discovered in the introduction, as tools they may not be as robust as we had hoped. Here we are putting them further to the test. Is it possible to define their limitations in a way which might be useful to scholarship?



MAP OF ARGYLL SHOWING PRINCIPAL AREAS AND PLACES DISCUSSED IN THE TEXT

Key

..... The areas demarcated by dotted lines are the three principal areas discussed in the thesis. The three settlements marked appear in the case-studies of saints.

- A** South Kintyre
- B** Kilmartin area
- C** Bute (including Inchmarnock)

3.2 South Kintyre

Kintyre as a distinct territory is on record from at least the seventh century. In *Miniugud senchasa fher nAlban*¹⁰ (henceforth *MSFA*) Kintyre is recorded thus: 'This is the Cenél nGabráin, five hundred and sixty houses, Kintyre, and Crích Chomgail with its islands, two seven-benchers every twenty houses in a sea expedition.'¹¹ A few kings of, or from, Kintyre are mentioned in the sources, the earliest record being that of *Dunchad Becc, rex Cinn Tire* in *AU* 721¹², and several battles appear in the annals, *Bellum Telochó i Ciun Tire* in *AU* 576 being the first. An important but uncertain reference to a place in Kintyre is *Obsessio Aberte apud Selbachum* in *AU* 712, probably the stronghold of Dunaverty on Kintyre's southern coast.

This study will concentrate on the southern half of Kintyre, an area about 27km north to south, and from about 7km to 18km east to west. It contains 8 medieval parishes and 24 names consisting of *cill-* plus a saint's name.¹³ There is a scattering of early sculpture, all of it at places with *cill-* names with one exception,¹⁴ and there is evidence for early Medieval activity at six hill-top sites.¹⁵ There is a striking display of duns and forts, though without excavation it is impossible to say if any more than the six mentioned were inhabited in our period. It is likely that at least some were.

¹⁰ Bannerman considers the text to be a tenth century compilation deriving from a seventh century original (Bannerman 1973, 39). Dumville seems to accept a date for the 'hypothetically original text' in the mid 7th century (Dumville 2000, 189-90, Dumville 2002, 199) but is not convinced by the 10th century compilation: 'I can find no coherent case to offer that the text or any part of it is arguing a tenth-century political point' (Dumville 2002, 208). See 1.5.

¹¹ Cenel ngabrain in so. tri xx. taige ar c[h]oic c[h]etaib cend tire & crích c[h]omgail *cona* insib Da s[h]ec[h]t sess cach xx. taige a fec[h]t mara. Bannerman 1974, 43. Cf Dumville's edition (Dumville 2004, 203).

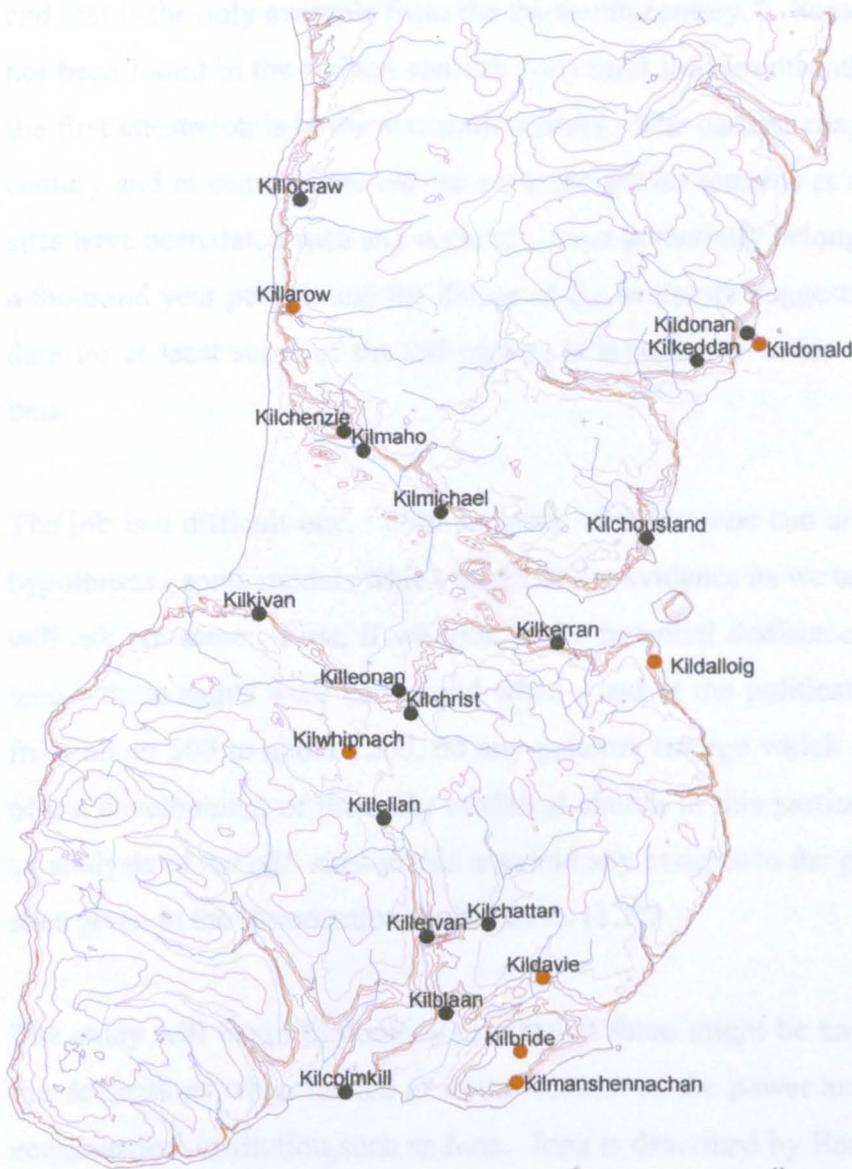
¹² An earlier king is called Domangart of *Cindyre* (*AI* 505), but unlike the notice of Dunchad Becc this is not a contemporary record. The other king mentioned with reference to Kintyre is *Aedh m. Cinadan, rex Pictorum* in *AU* 878, who in a four line stanza is said to be *a críchaib Cinn Tire*.

¹³ This is the number of names which almost certainly contain these elements. There are a few more where either the element *cill-*, or the meaning of the second part, or both, are uncertain: Kilsolane, Killoccraw, Killypole, Killegruer, Killervan. These are all discussed in the gazetteer.

¹⁴ St Ciarán's Cave, Kilkerran parish Pf 478 NR766169. *Arg* 1 no 298. Fisher 2001, 298 describes two stones of early medieval date: a boulder bearing an incised marigold design (ill. 27G) and a cross base / socket stone (ill. 55M). There is also a stone trough or basin.

¹⁵ Early medieval artefacts were found at four duns or forts: Kildalloig (*Arg* 1.219), Kildonan Bay (*Arg* 1.220), Dun Fhinn (*Arg* 1.203) and Ugadale (*Arg* 1.238). For one there is a possible early Medieval annal reference (Dunaverty, *AU* 716 mentioned above) and one has remains suggestive of 'a Dark age origin' (Ranachan Hill, *Arg* 1.173). In addition Keil Cave (*Arg* 1.243) has been inhabited intermittently from the 3rd or 4th centuries onwards.

S Kintyre with cill-



Kilmashenaghan, Sanda



10 0 10 Kilometers

- Location of ecclesiastical site certain
- Location of ecclesiastical site uncertain

This impressive density of evidence for ecclesiastical activity, possibly from an early period, in an area rich with archaeological remains and reasonably well represented in early annals (at least for Scotland) is what draws one to ask questions - to look for pattern and meaning. Unfortunately, however, no *cill*- name is on record until 1253, and that is the only example from the thirteenth century.¹⁶ Some, such as Kilmaho have not been found in the written sources (yet) until the seventeenth century, and for many the first attestation is in the sixteenth century. The earliest chapel buildings are twelfth century and at some of the *cill*-names there are no remains at all. None of the secular sites have been dated with any accuracy, most potentially belonging anywhere in at least a thousand year period, and the dating of the sculpture suggestive of an early medieval date for at least some of the *cill*-names, is accurate to within only about 100 years at best.

The job is a difficult one. With so many variables one can aim at best for a series of hypotheses - some models which might fit the evidence as we have it. The questions we will ask are these: First, if we look at the potential dedicatees of the *cill*- names - at where these saints were culted and when - and at the political context as it developed from about 500 to about 1200, do any patterns emerge which might aid understanding of the development of the early medieval church in this particular area? Second, does an analysis of the *cill*- sites in this area add any insights to the general discussion of *cill*-sites given in the introduction to this thesis (1.2)?

The study will begin by looking at whether there might be any patterns discernable in the dedications when looked at in the context of the power and ambitions of a mighty ecclesiastical institution such as Iona. Iona is described by Bede as 'for a long time the principal monastery of nearly all the northern Scots and all the Picts'¹⁷ and is usually considered to be the most powerful ecclesiastical influence in Argyll¹⁸, at least for some part of the early period. Does it make sense to regard many or indeed any of the foundations in South Kintyre as having been founded from Iona?¹⁹

¹⁶ *Kelkeran 1253 Reg. de Pass*, 129. If the reference to *Celcenneg* in a papal bull of 1203 refers to Kilchenzie, then this would be the earliest *cill*- ref. in Kintyre. This is far from certain, however. See *Arg 4*, 145-147, and below.

¹⁷ *HE*, Sherley-Price III.3.

¹⁸ But see below, 135-6, 201 where the view of a self-proclaimed 'Iona sceptic' is discussed.

¹⁹ Bede states that from the monasteries of both Iona and Durrow 'Columba's disciples went out and founded many others in Britain and Ireland' *HE*, Sherley-Price, III.4.

The name which seems to have the most obvious link with Iona is Kilcolmkill, a name which has been applied both to a church and to a parish. This is unusual among *cill*-names in that we can be certain to whom the dedication was made: Columb Cille. But how early is a) the name, and b) the place? Does it seem that the church or surrounding lands ever belonged to Iona?

The name, in this form with *cill*-, is not attested until 1617²⁰, but that the dedication was to Columb Cille is evident in a Latin form of 1326: *Ecclesia Sancti Collomkilli in Kintire*.²¹ What of the name form Columb Cille itself? When was the saint first known by this nick-name? It is not used by Adomnán, who always used the Latin form *Columba*, but it was nevertheless probably in use by about 600, and certainly known by 730.²² The *Amra Choluimb Chille*, a poem probably written within a few years of his death²³, uses the name Columb Cille in the text as well as in the title, and the line *Columb cen beith, cen chill* ('Columb, lifeless, churchless'²⁴), if taken as a play on this name, would imply that the name was by then well established. The form *Colomb Cille* also occurs in Tírechán.²⁵

Are there any early references to places called Cill + Columb Cille in Ireland, or elsewhere in Scotland? An examination of the distribution and nature of sites of this name reveals a few interesting results. First, there are at least 12 places with this name in Scotland, while there is only one in Ireland²⁶. Second, and related to this, of all place-names containing the name of the saint in its full form - Columb Cille - more than

²⁰ *APS* vol iv, 605 via *OPS*, 7.

²¹ *RMS* vol 2 no 461. This survives as a confirmation charter of 1451. Also *RMS* vol 1 app 1 no 20

²² 'Columba is now known by some people as Columbkil, a name compounded from 'Columba' and 'cell.'
HE v.9.

²³ Clancy & Márkus 1995, 96.

²⁴ Clancy & Márkus 1995, 104 l.6.

²⁵ Bieler 1979 164. 26.

²⁶ Ó Muraíle 1997, 199-206. Note that the Irish evidence is based only on townland maps (6" OS maps 1829-1843). Ó Muraíle points out that a more detailed search, on maps with larger scale, remains to be done, before any firm conclusions can be reached. The Scottish results are drawn principally from Reeves 1857, Watson 1926 and Taylor 2000b. It is likely that more might be found in Scotland, particularly if they lurk behind forms now rendered Callumkill or similar. (The form Cill + Columb Cille was evidently unstable, people tending to drop the initial *cill*-. Thus Blaeu has Cholumbkil for the site in Kintyre (the lenition suggests a missing initial word) and one of the two sites of this name on Islay is now marked on OS pathfinder as Callumkill). A rapid search adds two more to Ó Muraíle: Gleann Challuim Cille (NR 5791) and Corpach Challuim chille (NR 5791), both on Jura. It is possible that these correspond to the otherwise mysterious *Colunekil* floating on John Speed's map to the west of northern Jura.

half, according to Ó Muraíle, also contain *cill-* as the generic (12 out of 22, with the non-*cill* elements being Clachan, Fuaran, Loch, Eilean and Salen Dubh) whereas in Ireland there are 41 names containing Columb Cille, only one of which contains *cill-*.²⁷ Third, all of the Kilcolmkills²⁸ in Scotland are in the western isles or on the western seaboard, with one exception in Sutherland.²⁹ This pattern contrasts with that produced by other Columba (or potential Columba) dedications, which occur all over the country.³⁰ Last, at none of the Scottish sites called Kilcolmkill are there any early Medieval remains (neither carvings nor early enclosures of early Medieval character), though most have evidence of use in the later Medieval period, and four were parish churches. The possible implications of all this will be discussed below.

To return to Kilcolmkill in Kintyre, the earliest structural remains at the site date to the thirteenth century, with re-used decorative fragments of possibly the late 12th or early thirteenth century. Part of the head of a wheel cross was found on a reef nearby, 'obviously a late descendant of the Irish high cross. A twelfth or thirteenth century date seems likely'.³¹ Evidence of early activity on the site does not, so far, seem compelling.

As far as land-holding is concerned it seems that the church was held by Patrick MacScilling and his wife Finlach, and given to the monks of Whithorn before 1326, when the act is confirmed by Robert I.³² There were subsequent disputes over rights and by 1437-8 it was said to be in the hands of laymen, with the parsonage a prebend of Lismore Cathedral by 1382.³³ The 1451 confirmation of the grant to Whithorn was 'evidently unsuccessful'.³⁴ Much of the land in the parish was part of a barony granted

²⁷ Ó Muraíle 1997 199-206. Taylor 2000b. There is only one well in the Scottish count, however, which is misleading. My own rapid scan adds at least four *Tobar Chaluim Chille* in Arran, southern Argyll and its islands. But if wells are excluded from the Irish list too (there are 7 of them) the contrast between the countries is still apparent.

²⁸ I will use this form - Kilcolmkill - as a generalised form of all the places of this name in Scotland, even if the OS pathfinder (or other most recent) form is a variant.

²⁹ This is near Loch Brora in the parish of Clyne, Sutherland. NC8509.

³⁰ Apart from the Kilcolmkills, Ó Muraíle's list contains only one *cill-* name (Kilmaccolm, Renfrewshire) but if one admitted names such as Kilmachalmaig on Bute and on the Kyle of Sutherland (Watson 1926, 253, 279), where links with Columb Cille are far less certain, one would be able to include a few more. See also map in Taylor 1999, 37 and Taylor 2000b, 129.

³¹ *Arg 1* no 300.

³² *RMS* vol 1 app 1 no 20. *RMS* vol 2 no 461.

³³ Cowan 1967, 98.

³⁴ *ibid.*

by the crown in 1545 to a James MacDonnell of Dunivaig (Islay) and the Glens (Antrim, Ireland).³⁵

There is then no obvious proprietorial link with Iona in the later Medieval period. This does not preclude the possibility of links having existed earlier, of course; it just does not add to our case.

To return to the dating evidence, the case for early use of the site is perhaps more compelling when looked at in the context of sites round about. The wheel-headed cross, mentioned above, may once have stood in a socket on a knoll beside the churchyard.³⁶ Near the socket are carvings of two human footprints. One is recent, but the other may be prehistoric³⁷ or early medieval. Ian Fisher points out that it points east towards the fortress of Dunaverty and 'may have been associated with inauguration-rituals of that period.'³⁸ The physical remains at Dunaverty are not dateable more specifically than to the medieval period, but the site is almost certainly the subject of a siege listed in *AU* in 712: *obsesio Aberte apud Selbachum*.³⁹ It will be seen that all the potential Iona sites in South Kintyre which have evidence for activity in the early medieval period are close to secular sites.⁴⁰

In sum, the evidence either of an early date for church at Kilcolmkill or for a link with Iona is not compelling. The proximity to Dunaverty and the presence of the carved footprint may make an early date for the site more likely, but alternative explanations for these are available, in particular for the footprint. We will return to this later. A late context might also be offered for the use of the name Kilcolmkill, also to be discussed below.

³⁵ *RMS* vol 3 no 3085.

³⁶ *Arg 1* no 300, 150. Fisher 2001, 118.

³⁷ *Arg 1* no 300, 150. 'The date of the southern footprint is uncertain, but it may be as early as the end of the 1st millennium BC.'

³⁸ Fisher 2001, 118.

³⁹ *AU* 712.5. Watson 1926, 237: 'There seems no doubt that Dunaverty is meant, though *dún* is omitted and the natural spelling would be (*Dún*) *Ábartaig*.'

⁴⁰ Further, but difficult to interpret, evidence of prehistoric and early historic activity nearby come from Keil Cave (*Arg 1*.243), on the coast immediately adjacent to the church. Finds have been compared both to Romano-British sites and to probable early Medieval cave sites on the Northern Antrim coast (*PSAS* 99 (1966-7) 104ff).

The next site to examine is Kilchenzie. This might be considered to be a foundation connected with Iona for two reasons: the alleged good relations between Columba and the probable dedicatee Cainnech of Aghaboe, and the possibility that even if this was not a dedication to Columba's friend Cainnech, it might be a dedication to Columba himself. We will consider the validity of these mutually exclusive propositions after we have considered the characteristics and history of the site itself.

A Papal Bull of 1203 outlining lands held by the monastery of Iona, includes a number of churches over which Iona claimed rights. One of these is *Chelcenneg*.⁴¹ This may be a reference to the Kilchenzie in Kintyre,⁴² and if so it is the earliest occurrence of the name I know. The next occurrence of the name - *Kilchaidnich* - is in Robert Gordon's map of 1636-52, with the same form appearing in Blaeu's map published in 1654. The name *Skeirkenze* appears first in 1561 in an Iona Rental. It also occurs in the Argyle Inventory in 1609 and 1636 and in *Retours* in 1695.⁴³

It seems that 40 merklands of Skeirchenzie belonged to the monks of Iona before 1560, but it is not clear how early,⁴⁴ nor what exactly is meant by the name Skeirchenzie. It might be assumed that it would have the same meaning as the parish of Kilchenzie; the word *skeir* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *scir*, district, shire, and *sgír* or *sgíre* is the Gaelic word for parish.⁴⁵ When the lands are first itemised⁴⁶, however, it is clear that some are in the parish of Killarow. It is not known when the parishes of Kilchenzie and

⁴¹ Smith 1895, 5-8.

⁴² *Arg* 4 no 145. Another possibility is the Kilchenzie on Tiree. Hogan has two places called *Cell Cainnig*, both in Ireland.

⁴³ *Coll. de Reb. Alb.*, 3. Listed under 'The landis quihilk the Clandonald of the West Illis haldis of the Abbatt' is 'the fourtie merk landis of Skeirkenzie in Kintyre, 26 lib.13s.4d.'

⁴⁴ There are very few sources on Iona land holdings between the papal bull of 1203 and this 1561 rental.

⁴⁵ MacLennan 1925. *Scir* - / *sgir* - is discussed by Barrow in several places eg Barrow 1973, 46.

⁴⁶ These names have caused some bewilderment, so I will go through them one by one. They come second-hand from *OPS*, 21 since I have not yet examined the original source (The Argyle Inventory). They are as follows, in the order in *OPS*: *Puttychan* [Putechan Lodge Hotel 453 NR6531 - also S. Putechantuy and Corputechan], *Killemorich* [Looks like Kilmorich in Cowal qv, but when these lands are itemised in 1623 (*RMS* 8 no 545) they include Kilmacho (ie Kilmaho*). Could Kilmorich be a garbled version of this? Another possibility is a place on Roy's map called Killmloch, unidentified so far (by me); it is marked to the south of Tayinloan, perhaps further north than would be expected.] *Skeirblaen* [Looks like this should refer to lands in the parish of Kilblaen*, 2 parishes away. But in Kilchenzie parish there is Skeroblin Loch 466 NR 7026, plus West and East Skerblingory 466 NR 7026, Skeroblin Cruach and Skeroblinraid], *Cargleish* [Can't identify this. Might include *eaglais*], *Largbeg* [Largiebeg 466 NR 6725], *Kilvorow* [Killarow* 466 NR6628], *Kilmacroy* [Killocrow* 453 NR6630], *Laggalreif* [N Lagalgarve 466 NR6629]. They 'and others' amount to 'a £30 land of old extent, with the heritable office of bailie of these lands and of the regality of the monastery of Icolmkill, lying within that regality and in the lordship of Kintyre...'

Killarow were united - 'before or about the period of the Reformation' suggests *OPS*.⁴⁷ Whatever the detail, it is significant that some lands around the church of Kilchenzie belonged to Iona, and that, also before 1561, the parsonage of the church belonged 2/3 to the monks of Iona and 1/3 to the bishop of the Isles.⁴⁸

As for the physical remains at the site, these include walls which may belong to the 12th century, part probably of a single-chambered church about 13.3m long.⁴⁹ The building was extended by about 9.1m, probably in the 13th century.⁵⁰ There are several late medieval slabs, all of the Kintyre school, a group of carvers who probably operated between about 1425 and 1500, and may have been closely associated with the Cistercian Saddell Abbey.⁵¹ The one reported early Christian stone is now lost: a Latin cross formed by raised beading on a natural boulder.⁵² The ring-quadrants carved above (and not below) the arms are paralleled by those on two crosses at Cladh a' Bhile in Knapdale.

Another *cill*- name in Argyll containing the personal name Cainnech is Cill Choinnich, a small chapel, now disappeared, on the island of Colonsay⁵³. The earliest mention I have found is in the nineteenth century, and sculpture is recorded from the site. Two burials were found in the area around 1880, but since even then the exact site of the chapel was unknown it cannot be certain that the chapel and burials are related⁵⁴. There are two further places of this name which do have early remains, however, one on the island of Tiree,⁵⁵ the other on Iona. At the former there is a chapel from the Middle Ages and a cross of the sixth-ninth century.⁵⁶ There are now no remains at the latter, but an early cross with triangular terminals is alleged to have come from the site.⁵⁷ The location of all these dedications would suggest possible links to the monastery on Iona; one is on Iona itself, one is on an island, Tiree, part of which had demonstrable links

⁴⁷ *OPS*, 20.

⁴⁸ *OPS*, 20-21. Coll. de Reb. Alb., 3. The 'personage of Skeirkenze in Kintyre' appears as 'pertaining the Abbat of Ecolmkill.'

⁴⁹ *Arg 1* no 121.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ Steer and Bannerman, 49-50.

⁵² Fisher 2001, 117 & 39L.

⁵³ *Arg 4* no 329, 331.

⁵⁴ *PSAS* 15 1880-1, 123.

⁵⁵ *In Vita S. Cainnechi* ch. 26, an O'Donohue Life, Cainnech is depicted living on Tiree - *in regione Heth habitans*. Heist 1965, 188.

⁵⁶ *Arg 3*, 147 no 298.

⁵⁷ *Arg 4*, 244 no 9.

with Iona,⁵⁸ and one is on an island, Colonsay, which is thought by at least one scholar to be the site of the Columban monastery Hinba.⁵⁹

To return to our site in Kintyre, its position in relation to other sites is interesting. It is located at the foot of a prominent hill (Rannachan Hill, 215m OD) on which are the remains of a fortified site. Two phases of construction are considered likely here, one perhaps in the early medieval period.⁶⁰ It shares an architectural characteristic with two other sites, both of which also have early medieval remains: a dun at Kildalloig in Kilkeran parish, and a dun at Kildonan Bay⁶¹ in Kilchousland parish, both of which we will meet again. Regarding other ecclesiastical sites Kilchenzie is remarkably close to Kilmaho (less than a km away), with Kilmichael only a further 2km south east

Kilchenzie then, to summarize the foregoing, is a site with early Christian sculpture, of some importance in the Middle Ages and with attested links with Iona. It may be among lands held by Iona in the early 13th century or before, but of this we cannot be certain. The same dedicatee, St Cainnech, was invoked at three other sites in Argyll, all of which may be linked with Iona and two of which have early Christian sculpture.

Let us return now to the justification for regarding this as a potential Iona site in the first place. The basis on which we regard Cainnech to be a friend of Columba is his appearance in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.⁶² There are similar passages in his own life, but these are not independent.⁶³ Although this could be put forward as reason to suppose that a foundation from Iona might carry a dedication to Cainnech, another interpretation is possible too. It might be argued that the reason that Cainnech is portrayed as a friend of Iona is that at the time Adomnán wrote, there was an independent cult of Cainnech in Argyll - in an area of some importance to Iona. It was therefore understandable that Adomnán portrayed Cainnech as a friend, not a rival, to show Cainnech as a devotee if

⁵⁸ It is mentioned several times in *VC* (I.19, I.36, II.15, II.39, III.8) and there was a Columban monastery on Tiree at Mag Luinge (II.39, III.8).

⁵⁹ Sharpe 1995, 308.

⁶⁰ *Arg I* no 173.

⁶¹ *Arg I* nos 219, 220. The characteristic is an internal revetment in the walls. It is thought to be an Iron Age feature, but it is nonetheless interesting that such sites - perhaps a little more sophisticated than the others - were the ones which attracted settlement in the early medieval period, and that they are all adjacent to ecclesiastical sites.

⁶² *VC* I.4, II.13-14, III.17.

⁶³ Heist 1965, 182-198. Herbert 2001.

possible, and that perhaps foundations to Cainnech were in some way indebted to the memory of Columba, or to the friendship between the two men.

The second consideration is the possibility that Kilchenzie is in fact a commemoration of Columb Cille himself, in that Cainnech may simply be a hypocoristic form of Columb.⁶⁴ Let us suppose then that it was a foundation of the early 7th century, called after one of Columb Cille's hypocoristic names to distinguish it from other foundations and to establish a more intimate relationship with the dead saint. Stories about Columb Cille accumulated here, but after a generation or so people forgot that Cainnech originally meant Columb Cille and thought the stories were about someone else. Fragments of the attachment to Columb Cille remained in the stories, however, so that when Adomnán came to collect stories about his patron he would find traditions of meetings between Columb Cille and a saint called Cainnech.

This seems to me possible, but quite unprovable. There is, however, one piece of evidence which looks interesting in the light of Ó Riain's arguments. One of the figures on which Ó Riain hinges his argument regarding the identity between Cainnech and Colmán of Dromore (who in turn is a doublet of Columb Cille), is a saint called Cóelán / Caelán / Cól. This character appears, together with a saint called Áed, in Colmán's *vita*, on the day before the feast day of Colmán's surrogate Mochonna of Lann, and on another pair of days (ie Áed, Cól and Colmán spread over two days in the calendar). Crucially, on both the occasions when these three saints bunch in the calendars, they are accompanied by a character from Cainnech's *vita* - a saint with the uncommon name Lurech / Luarán.⁶⁵ Ó Riain's interpretation of this data is that Luarán, Coelán and Aéd must have appeared in an oral life associated with a saint variously called Colmán and Cainnech. In view of this, it may be significant that the site less than a kilometre from Kilchenzie is Kilmaho, possibly a dedication to Mochoe - a hypocoristic form of Cóelán.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ See above, p 20.

⁶⁵ Ó Riain 1983. *MT* Oct 29 has Áed, Luaran, Caelan, and on Oct 30th Mochomóc of Lann. *MT* Feb 16 has Áed, and on Feb 17 Lurech, Cail and Colmán. For further explanation of Ó Riain's technique of using *vitae*, calendars (and genealogies) to find links between saints see 1.3.

⁶⁶ There are of course many possible dedicatees for Kilmaho, some of which can be found by looking at the gazetteer (ch. 4) and the table of saints (ch. 5). One is Kentigern, which does not derive from Coelán.

Finally, it should be remembered that one can reject part of Ó Riain's arguments while accepting another. Thus one could accept, with Russell, that a place called Kilchenzie might be a dedication to Columb Cille in so far as Cainnech is an acceptable hypocoristic form of Columb, while still believing that there was a separate saint called Cainnech m. Luigthig* (of Aghaboe). Kilchenzie could thus represent a dedication to Columb Cille, or to Cainnech m. Luigthig, but it might equally commemorate someone else called Columb (or derivative), or someone else called Cainnech.⁶⁷

A less slippery name (or so it seems), and one which seems to have clear links with Iona, Killeonan*, marked on the OS Pathfinder 'St Adamnan's Chapel'. If it is, as it seems to be, a dedication to the abbot of Iona it would probably have to be later than early eighth century, when Adomnán died.⁶⁸ The site itself is inconclusive, with no early remains and no sculpture. It is said to have been used for burial until 1838.⁶⁹ The first reference to the place is in 1468 when two charters are issued there by John of Islay. Its next appearance is in 1481, among lands belonging to the same John of Islay, Lord of the Isles.⁷⁰ Its position is interesting, on the shores of a former loch, now drained. Loch Sannish looks quite extensive on Blaeu's map, making a distinct divide between two sections of Kintyre. According to Macfarlane's notes (possibly deriving from Pont) the loch was 4 miles long.⁷¹ It is possible the loch marked a boundary between discrete areas of control. This will be discussed further below.

Nothing about the site makes it seem particularly early, and in view of the devotion with which Adomnán was held in the later Middle Ages, in particular among the family of Somerled, a dedication in the 12th century or later is quite plausible.⁷² It is, however, possible that this is not a dedication to Adomnán at all, but to a saint called Eoganán, of which there is at least one suitable candidate, who will be discussed below. A

⁶⁷ There are, in fact, rather few saints called Cainnech. In the index to *CGSH* (and other hagiographical texts - Ó Riain 1985) there are 6 apart from C. mac Luigthig, none of whom have genealogies. There is no other Cainnech in *MT*.

⁶⁸ There are examples of cell sites being named after people still alive, but in early examples (*Cella Diuni*) it was someone who lived there, and later examples (lists in *CNE*) aren't reliable.

⁶⁹ *Arg 1* no 289.

⁷⁰ See gazetteer for forms.

⁷¹ Macfarlane, *Geog. Coll.*, 187: 'Thrie mylls from the head of this Logh [Logh of Kilkerrane] there is a ffresh water Logh of foure mylls of length, there is abundance of salmond slaine in this Logh which is called Loghsainesse.' Similar p 527 - 'Loch Sanish'.

⁷² Black 1946, 305. Gilleonain 'servant of (S.) Adamnan' was 'formerly a Christian name in the Highlands, in the Macdonald family, and first recorded as *Giolla-Adhamhnain*, the name of the father of Somerled of the Isles. It was a favourite name in the Macdonald family'.

dedication to an obscure saint such as this would incline me to believe it might be earlier.

Another Iona abbot possibly represented is Coeddi, in Kilkeddan, a contemporary of Adomnán. He appears as *Ceti epscop* in the list of signatories to *Cain Adomnáin*, is noticed in *AU*, and may be the dedicatee of Logierait and other places in upper Strath Tay.⁷³ But there seems also to have been a cult of someone called Coeddi in Ireland, who may or may not have been the Iona Coeddi.⁷⁴ Also, there is a worrying overlap with the Northumbrian saints Cedd (ob. 672) and/or Chad (ob. 664) for which see entry under Coeddi in the saints table. It would not, however, be impossible for there to be a Northumbrian dedication in Kintyre, especially if it was inspired by Iona; Adomnán had good relations with the Northumbrian king, Aldfrith, visiting him⁷⁵ and in 687 negotiating the return of captives taken in Ireland.⁷⁶ It is possible too that Aldfrith had an Irish mother (of the Cenél nEogain).⁷⁷ The site at Kilkeddan has no early features,⁷⁸ but its position is interesting. It is 2km from a possible early historic dun, which shares characteristics with the fort near Kilchenzie, with another dun showing possible signs of occupation in our period 1km further north.⁷⁹

The saint of Kildalloig may be Dallán Forgaill, also known as Eochu mac Colla, the probably author of *Amra Choluimb Chille*.⁸⁰ As a dedicatee he would be an attractive choice from the point of view of Iona, but this is far from certain. There is a place in Ireland of the same name which is a commemoration to a female saint called Lallóc.⁸¹ Again there are no early remains here, but the location is interesting. It is close to a dun

⁷³ See ss table.

⁷⁴ See ss table.

⁷⁵ *VC* ii.46.

⁷⁶ *AU* 687.5 *Adomnarus captiuos reduxit ad Hiberniam .lx.*

⁷⁷ Sharpe 1995, 350.

⁷⁸ *Arg 1* no 259. It is described as a chapel and burial ground. Remains consists of a sub-rectangular enclosure. No sculpture.

⁷⁹ The first is *Arg 1* no 220 Dun, Kildonan Bay. The other is *Arg 1* no 238 Dun, Ugadale Point. Excavation reveals similarities with *Arg 1* no 220 'where occupation began in the late 1st or early 2nd century AD, and continued, with interruptions into the medieval period.'

⁸⁰ Clancy and Márkus 1995, 98. In *MT* he is Dallan mac Forgaill ó Maigin. He is possibly from Co. Cavan in Connacht, where there is a Kildallan near a place called Moynehall (Clancy and Márkus 1995, 98). There are, however, many places which might derive from Maigin. Other possibilities for his origin include Colla Uais (Ó Riain 1985 no 426 - not *Rec. Mai.*) and Dál Fiatach (*CGH* p 407, 330b31 - add. in *Lc.*).

⁸¹ I do not know how the Irish name is pronounced. The place in Kintyre is stressed on the penultimate syllable. Kildalloge is near Roscommon in Connaught. St Lallóc is a 5th century female saint attached to St Patrick (Charles-Edwards 2004-5b, 7).

on which excavations have uncovered sherds of E-ware⁸², the same kind of early medieval imported pottery that was found in quantity on Dunadd, and a bead which can be compared with one from the crannog at Lagore in Co. Meath.⁸³ It is also connected to Island Davaar.

Island Davaar is part of the farm of Kildalloig, a situation which is thought to be longstanding.⁸⁴ Though called an island it is in fact reachable on foot when the tide is right.⁸⁵ The earliest reference to it is in a 1508 confirmation of an earlier charter confirming land of Saddell Abbey to the Bishop of Argyll when it is called *Insula de Sanctbarre*.⁸⁶ There are many possibilities as to who might be the dedicatee, but one is Bairre m. Amairgin, also known as Bairre of Cork. Another is Finnian of Moville, who is also known as Findbarr.⁸⁷ There is some confusion and overlap between saints called Finnian, Findbarr and even, perhaps, Berach (see section on Berach / Berchán), and it is quite possible that Bairre of Cork is in fact a reflex of the cult of Finnian of Moville.⁸⁸

In *VC*, Columba is a pupil of someone called variously Uinniau (II.1), Finnbar (I.1, II.1) and Finnio (III.4). It is possible that it is he who is commemorated here, whoever he ultimately corresponds to. On the surface he would appear to be a legitimate choice for a dedication promoted by Iona, if we take Adomnán's words at face value. It is worth keeping in mind, however, what was said above about Cainnech: that some elements of Adomnán's story might have been motivated by existing dedications in Argyll (and elsewhere?), that there was a cult of Finnian / Findbarr in Kintyre, which Adomnán wishes to be allied to. More work need to be done to test the validity of this hypothesis.

⁸² Ewan Campbell, pers com.

⁸³ *Arg I* no 119. This dun also shares the revetment of the walls, characteristic of the duns near Kilchenzie and near Kilkeddan.

⁸⁴ Martin 1984, 8.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 193.

⁸⁶ *RMS* vol 2 no 3170.

⁸⁷ Ó Riain 1985 no.703.18: *Finnbarr aimn Finnen Maige Bili*.

⁸⁸ There is in turn possible overlap between Finnian of Moville and Finnian of Clonard, though not all commentators would go so far as Ó Riain 1977 who says they are one and the same. Thomas Charles-Edwards, for example, denies the identity (Stalmans & Charles-Edwards 2004-5), while Sharpe thinks that while they 'ought to be separate historical individuals' it might be best bracket them all together under one neutral name (Sharpe 1995, 318).

On the island itself there are no clues. There are no known ecclesiastical remains and, as far as I know, no traditions of links with a particular saint.⁸⁹ Our evidence lies in the name alone. It is interesting, however, that the name is attested in at least one relatively early Irish source (though not referring to this place): *Vita Fintani* in S - one of Sharpe's O'Donohue Lives.⁹⁰

As well as being close to Kildalloig, the island is also in view of Kilkerran, another site whose dedication might lead us to suppose an Iona connection. The church first appears (*Eccelsia Sancti Querani*) in the 1240s when it is granted by Angus son of Donald, Lord of Islay to the monastery of Paisley.⁹¹ There is also a reference to 'Gilbert<us> persona de Kilchiarane' from before 1250 but this survives only in a confirmation charter of 1507.⁹²

It is generally assumed that the dedication is to Ciaran of Clonmacnoise (Ciarán m. Beodáin qv)⁹³, though this cannot be considered certain. Ciarán does not himself appear in *Vita Columbae*, but Columb Cille and his monks visit Clonmacnoise where Columb Cille is received 'as if he were an angelic messenger'.⁹⁴ Although there are no remains of the original church at Kilkerran there is an early Christian monument similar to ones on Iona and at Achadh na Cille in Knapdale.⁹⁵ It must have been an important enough church in the Middle Ages for Fordun to think it feasible that Aedán mac Gabráin might have been buried here.⁹⁶ There is no earlier record of this tradition, as far as I know, but

⁸⁹ Dempster has on May 28 'In Kintyre Vvinini persbyteri, cujus cellae adhaerebat fons omnibus languoribus & morbis inveteratis sanandis oportunos' (Forbes 1872, 201). He claims to get this information from R Holinshedus. There is no supporting evidence for this commemoration, as far as I know, and there is no knowing where in Kintyre is meant.

⁹⁰ In index of Heist's Lives there is ref. to *Tobairri insula*, with cross ref. to Iris Barri (*recte* Inis Barri, I think), a place mentioned twice in the life of Munnu: *in Inso Bairri for Loch Edidach* p 205; *in insula Barri* p 252. (I'm not sure why Heist gives the form *Tobairri insula*, since it does not seem to appear in the Lives.) Hogan has 'Inis Tobairri; al. Inis Bairri on L. Edidach, Cs. 406; in c. Wexf., in b. Forth; seems nr Taghmon.' [Cs = Codex Salmanticensis] Hogan, 470. Ó Riain 1985, drawing from KWN equates Loch Edidach with Loch Echach in Fotharta in co. Wexford, and wonders if Inis Bairre might be the same as Inis Doimle, connected with Findbarr m. Aeda (Ó Riain 1985 no 6).

⁹¹ *Reg. de Pass*, 128. It has been suggested that the donations of churches to Paisley by relations of Somerled may have to do with Somerled's death near there (near Renfrew 1164) and the fact that the monks took care of his body (McDonald 1997, 223).

⁹² *RMS* vol 2 no 3136.

⁹³ eg Watson 1926, 278.

⁹⁴ *VC* 1.3.

⁹⁵ *Arg 1* no 285. Fisher 2001, 35q and 38h.

⁹⁶ *et apud Kylcheran, quo praedecessorum nullus antea, tumulatur*. Chron. Fordun III.31. Skene 1871, 117. One would have thought Iona would have been a more obvious choice.

if it was true, and if Áedán's links with Iona were as strong as Adomnán reports, then the case for Iona's influence in its foundation might be strengthened.

There are several other sites which might be considered to have a connection with Iona, but the last I will consider now is Kilmore. This site is problematic for two reasons. First, it is only attested once that I know of, in a 1545 list of lands in South Kintyre⁹⁷; it is possible, therefore, that it is a mistake, and, even if it isn't, its exact location is unknown. Second, though it is possibly a dedication to Mary, it is also possible that it is derived from O.I. *cill mor* - big church; churches called Kilmore are very common in Ireland, but less so in Scotland, though there is one in Knapdale - Keillmore. It is worth mentioning, however, to make the point that if it is a dedication to Mary then it would fit well within a pattern of Iona dedications. There is evidence that devotion to Mary was a characteristic of Iona from at least the 8th century, in literature, on sculpture and in illuminated manuscripts.⁹⁸

So are these early foundations from Iona or not? The pros and cons.

The fact that there are places called Kilcolmkill only in the western isles and on the west coast could either strengthen the case for these being Iona dedications, or throw doubt on the case. The fact that these are the places nearest Iona might be held to suggest that they are the earliest sites, whereas the ones that take other forms and occur all over the place, could have been formed much later when the cult of Colum Cille had spread.

There is evidence, however, that the cult of Colum Cille did in fact spread early⁹⁹ so an explanation for the distribution of Kilcolmkill should be sought elsewhere. The most obvious would be in devotion to the saint among Somerled and his descendants in the later Middle Ages.

⁹⁷ *Kilmoir RMS* vol 3 no 3085. Same lands are listed in a charter of 1558 - same form.

⁹⁸ See Clancy and Márkus 1995, 33-4. Mary is given prominence on St John's Cross and in the Book of Kells. For poetry see *Cantemus in Omni Die* by Cú Chuimne, *ibid*, 182-192. An image of Mary is described in Adomnán's *De Locis Sanctis: DLS*, 118-9. See also Hawkes, 197.

⁹⁹ The *Amra Choluimb Chille*, probably written soon after Colum Cille's death has this: *Cluidsius borb béolu bendacht / batar ic Tol toil Ríg* (His blessing turned them, the mouths of the fierce one / who lived on the Tay, to the will of the King). From Clancy and Márkus 1995, 113. See also Taylor 1999, 35-70 esp. p. 42.

The fact that none of the Kilcolmkills are demonstrably early is not particularly surprising; only a fraction of the chapel sites on mainland Argyll have architectural characteristics of an early period, and those that do don't necessarily have early sculpture (and vice versa). Nevertheless this lack does open up the possibility for all of these sites being founded and named in the later medieval period, especially if a suitable context can be found.

Kilchenzie looks strong in some respects: there is early sculpture, there is a possibility that it is among lands held early by Iona, and Iona certainly held lands in the parish in the later Middle Ages. None of these factors need necessarily find explanation in early foundation from Iona, but it is nevertheless notable that there are other Kilchenzies in Argyll also with early sculpture and also with connections with Iona. This contrasts markedly with the situation regarding the Kilcolmkills.

As far as Kilkerran is concerned the case would be helped if we could point to any other Columban foundation commemorating this saint, though the same might be said for the other potential Columban foundations in South Kintyre. Hogan records five places in Ireland called Cell Ciaráin, none of which is obviously connected with Iona or any of its daughter houses. The warmth between Columb Cille and the monks of Cluan mac Nois recorded in *Vita Columbae* might be interpreted as showing the affinity between the saints, but equally it could be seen less as reflecting the situation as it really was as 'an ideal of harmony between the country's churches'.¹⁰⁰ Certainly relations were not always good between the Columban monasteries and Clonmacnoise; in 764 there was a battle between the *familia* of the latter, and the monastery of Durrow, with 200 men from Durrow losing their lives.¹⁰¹ And Ciarán had a whole other network of support, in no way connected to Iona, as we will touch on below.

All the sites mentioned - Kilcolmkill, Kildalloig, Kilkeddan and the others - might have been established from Iona, but on the basis of name, structural remains at the sites and history of who has held the sites, the case is not compelling. In fact every one of these sites can be fitted into other patterns of dedications, if that is what we wish to do. There

¹⁰⁰ Herbert 1988, 54.

¹⁰¹ *AU 764.6 Bellum Arggamain inter familiam Cluana Moccu Nois & Dermaighi ubi ceciderunt Diarmait Dub m. Domnaill & Dighlach m. Duib Liss & .cc. uiri de familia Dermaige. Bresal m. Murchada uictor exstetit cum familia Cluana.*

is, however, one argument which seems to me to be in favour of regarding it as at least possible that Iona had holdings - possibly churches - in Kintyre, and this is given some support from the distribution of the main church sites in relation to early sculpture and to early medieval secular sites.

In his *Vita Columbae* Adomnán takes great pains to support Cenél Gabráin, and to promote them as the main, if not only, ruling kindred of Argyll. If Fraser is correct in his arguments that this group was very far from being the only significant group in Argyll, and might indeed at times in the 7th century have had quite reduced powers,¹⁰² we have to ask why it was so important to Adomnán to persist in the promotion of those who were, in his time, the losers.¹⁰³ It could be argued that what he displays is simply loyalty to former allies. Áedán mac Gabráin was a personal friend of Columb Cille and it was the alliance between this strong king and Iona that helped both to become successful. Adomnán's support of one particular group might also be attributable to his admiration for unified kingship, his support of the ideal of a single anointed king. It is possible that both were partly true, but that there were material considerations too. In their mutual support it is likely that lands were given over to the monastery by Áedán, and if, as Fraser suggests, Áedán's heartland was in Kintyre, then it is quite likely that it was land there that was given. Iona would wish to keep hold of its rights to such lands which might be made difficult if they were no longer held by the family of the friendly donors. Support for that family and assertion of its rights, would therefore remain

¹⁰² Fraser contends that the Cenél Comgaill 'maintained credibility as rivals for the kingship of the Dál Riata throughout the sixth century, when it was Conall mac Comgaill who donated land for the establishment of Iona, and on into at least the middle decades of the seventh.' Fraser 2004, 89. In the mid 7th century Ferchar mac Connaid of Cenél Comgaill had ascendancy over Domnall Brecc and may have been who Cuimínne the White had in mind as having wrested the sceptre of the kingdom from the descendants of Áedán mac Gabráin (Fraser 2004, 91). Marjorie Anderson's position on this Ferchar is the same, up to a point (Anderson M 1973, 153-4). There are other important members of Cenél Comgaill such as Finguine Fota, who was probably king of Cowal, and 'was entirely credible as a rival for the kingship of Dál Riata in the wake of the killing of Domangart mac Domnaill Brecc rex Dál Riata in 672', Fraser 2004, 95. The group retains importance into the 8th century, at least according to some: 'That Cenél Comgaill was an active political force in 710 is clear', Dumville 2000, 189. There was pressure on Cenél nGabráin also from Cenél Loairn, at least from the late 7th century: 'In Argyll and the Hebrides, the period of Adomnán's abbacy was the period of the rise to prominence of Cenél nEchdach, the Cenél Loairn kindred whose kings, beginning with Ferchar Fota, in the last years of the seventh century managed to establish themselves as the paramount kings on the Gaelic seaboard of northern Britain.' Fraser 2006, 6. Sharpe maintains that in Adomnán's time the Cenél nGabráin 'were still ruling as kings of Dál Riata, although from the 690s they had opposition to cope with', Sharpe 1995, 358.

¹⁰³ It is notable that the passage from Cuimínne the White's book which draws attention to the waning fortunes of the Cenél nGabráin (*VC* III.5) is not in both MS traditions, indicating that Adomnán may not have authorised its inclusion (Sharpe 1995, 357). Explanation may perhaps be found in the fact that during Adomnán's abbacy the Cenél nGabráin were still kings of Dál Riata. They may have been under pressure, but they were not 'held in subjection' as Columba prophesied in this passage.

crucial. If, on the other hand, the lands were still safely held by Cenél nGabráin (their power diminished elsewhere perhaps, but not in Kintyre) then the requirement to retain the family's friendship would be equally necessary.¹⁰⁴ Iona would wish to promote - perhaps to exaggerate - its own power, in order to attract (or retain) the support of powerful patrons, another view held by Fraser who draws attention to 'the partisan perspectives of Iona represented by the combined force of Adomnán's *Vita Sancti Columbae* and a selective reading of the chronicle material based ultimately upon the Iona Chronicle.'¹⁰⁵ It is interesting that Bede, writing in 731, writes in the past tense of Iona's glory.¹⁰⁶

One might also wonder, if Cenél Loairn, or - to be more precise Cenél nEchdach, one of their three constituent parts - was so much more powerful than Cenél nGabráin in the late 7th century, why it was so important for the former's genealogists to construct a blood relationship with the latter failing group. The answer may have to do with the Cenél nGabráin's special relationship with Iona, and the privileges which this entailed. Iona, meanwhile, did not support claims of other groups to be part of the family of Áedán mac Gabráin.¹⁰⁷

So let us suppose that Iona did, at the time Adomnán wrote, have land interests in Kintyre. Where might they be? One would suppose they would be in strategic positions near to centres of secular power, and this might indeed be what we see. Of the sites discussed above there are three which retained importance into the middle ages and which became parish churches: Kilchenzie, Kilchiarán and Kilcolmkill. At all three there is early sculpture or, in the case of the last, possible signs of early activity and all three are near secular sites where there is evidence of occupation in the early period. These characteristics - that a site has both early sculpture, and is near an early secular

¹⁰⁴ Woolf wonders if by the end of the 7th century the Cenél nGabráin may not have been so uniquely committed to Iona as Adomnán may have liked to portray - 'Cenél nGabráin may well have had eyes for other saints than Colum Cille alone, and, for a dynasty which aspired to rule in Britain, the Emperor Constantine may have proved an attractive patron.' Woolf 2006, 12.

¹⁰⁵ Fraser 2006, 5.

¹⁰⁶ Iona 'was for a long time the principal monastery of nearly all the northern Scots and all the Picts and exercised a widespread authority.' *HE*, Sherley-Price iii.3. The monastery of Iona 'long remained venerated by the people of the Picts and Scots.' *HE*, Sherley-Price v.9. Note that Bede's informants may have been Picts, who may have had their own agenda.

¹⁰⁷ Fraser 2004 ii, 88. It is possible that Iona 'did not recognise the pedigrees enunciated by Cenél Loairn in *CPDR*, tracing two branches of Cenél Echdach back to the eponymous Loarn and claiming common ancestry with Cenél nGabráin.' *ibid.*, 87.

site - are not held by any of the other *cill*- sites in South Kintyre with the possible exception of Kilmashanaghan on Sanda. In addition the sites are evenly distributed, with one on the south coast, one on the east, and one near the west.

An alternative explanation

However possible it is that these were sites founded from Iona, it is still necessary to look at some alternative (and not necessarily mutually exclusive) explanations, one of which has been hinted at above. As I said the distribution of Kilcolmkill dedications might lead one to seek an interpretation which would allow them to have been founded in the later middle ages, the most obvious context being the Lordship of the Isles.

Respect, at least, towards Iona is suggested in the family of Somerled by the personal names which they chose; Somerled's grandfather was *Gille Adomnáin*, and this remained a popular name in his family as we have seen. Somerled himself gave much attention to Iona, apparently attempting to persuade Flaithbertach Ua Brolchain of Derry, *comarba* of Columb Cille, to become the abbot of Iona,¹⁰⁸ and it has been suggested that the tradition that Iona was from the earliest times a royal burial place was particularly promoted by Somerled and his descendants in their attempts to re-establish Iona as the country's most important monastery.¹⁰⁹ It was certainly the burial place of the later Lords of the Isles and it is perhaps worth noting in this context the proliferation of dedications to Columba on Islay when set against their complete absence in Cowal.

As a balance it might be noted that in showing devotion towards Columba, the Lords of the Isles were scarcely swimming against the tide. David I, Somerled's contemporary, revered that saint (among others), and both his father and son were called Malcolm. Indeed, 'one of the most consistent names in the royal dynasty of Alba was Máel Coluim'.¹¹⁰ The reliquary of St Columba, the *Brechebennach*, was carried into battle by kings of the Scots as a protective relic and a kind of nationalist symbol.¹¹¹ Also, although Columba was sometimes presented as protecting the interests of the Hebrides

¹⁰⁸ *AU* 1164. In this Somerled was blocked by the *comarba* Patraic and the Cenél nEogain. The political motivation behind both the request and the rejection are not clear.

¹⁰⁹ McDonald 1997, 206n. It was not, however, an idea which originated with Somerled, as the idea of royal burial was already in Iona before 1124.

¹¹⁰ Clancy 2002, 408.

¹¹¹ Barrow 1981, 64.

and the west (see below), a 12th-century poem has the Bishop of Glasgow proclaim, on receiving into his hands the bloody head of Somerled (champion of the west) 'The Scottish saints are surely to be praised!';¹¹² Kentigern is named but Columba is surely meant here too, Columba being, as Clancy puts it 'the most national of saints'.¹¹³

Columba seems to have been understood and invoked in the west and elsewhere as a powerful, even dangerous, force, one which perhaps every ruler wished to be in control of. Thus it is reported that in 1098 King Magnus of Norway dared not enter Columba's church on Iona,¹¹⁴ despite his plundering elsewhere, and that it is disregard of Columba's advice that led to the death of Alexander II on Kerrera.¹¹⁵ Ranald, son of Somerled, inserted into a charter granting land to Paisley Abbey a curse in the name of Columba, by which anyone who mistreated a monk of Paisley would die.¹¹⁶

Devotion to Columba does not mark out Somerled and his descendants from other rulers, then, but it is possible to accept, I think, that they may have made a particular effort to promote and perhaps create churches with dedications to the saint. In the case of Kilcolmkill in Kintyre the presence of the footprint there has been put forward as a reason for suspecting an early date for the site, but such a symbol fits equally well into a Lords of the Isles context. The footprint, which itself might well be early,¹¹⁷ both reflected the perceived potency of the site in the landscape, and made this potency real by attracting ritual activity over subsequent centuries thus embedding the site's importance in the collective memory. The appropriation of such a symbol by successive power holders would enhance their authority, and legitimise their rule. Where better for the Lord of the Isles to establish a church, or, if there was one there already, to assert the authority of their favoured saint, Columb Cille? It is, in fact, in a Lords of the Isles context that we first know of the ritual use of such artefacts in Scotland, through the description of the 17th century MacDonald historian Hugh MacDonald describing an inauguration ceremony on Islay of perhaps the 15th

¹¹² Clancy 2002, 397.

¹¹³ Clancy 2002, 409.

¹¹⁴ *Heimskringla* quoted in Anderson 1924 vol ii, 107-9.

¹¹⁵ Anderson 1922 vol ii, 556-7.

¹¹⁶ *Reg. de Pass.*, 125.

¹¹⁷ Other carved footprints in Scotland may have an Iron Age origin, such as the two footprints carved into a slab of stone within Clickimin broch, Shetland. The one on Dunadd may have been used for kingship rituals in the early medieval period. The dating of such artefacts is far from secure, however. See Campbell 2003, 46 for a synopsis of literature on the subject.

century.¹¹⁸ Martin Martin too describes the use of the carved footprint in inauguration ceremonies at Finlaggan¹¹⁹; it is interesting that Finlaggan shared a chaplainry with one of the two places called Kilcolmkill on Islay.¹²⁰

The earliest holder of lands at Kilcolmkill had a partially Norse name: Patrick MacScilling. It is difficult to ascertain what the relationship was between the MacScillings and the family to which Somerled belonged, but it may be significant that a MacScilling is attested in 1154 commanding a fleet consisting of the Gallgaedil of Arran, Kintyre, Man and the sea-board of Scotland,¹²¹ and that when this Patrick MacScilling turns up in Kintyre he is giving his lands there to a Galloway monastery.¹²²

Supposing we accept Kilcolmkill in Kintyre as a dedication made in the later Middle Ages, does this disturb the pattern of early Iona dedications suggested above? There are several proposals that would allow the pattern to be retained. One could suggest that the ecclesiastical site that went with Dunaverty was the one on Sanda island,¹²³ whose dedication has become hopelessly confused: variant traditions assign it to Adomnán, Ninian, and Senán, and there are even associations with St. Ultán. It is a site with early sculpture, and is known at least from the fourteenth century as a sanctuary.¹²⁴ It is the only site in South Kintyre with early Medieval sculpture plus a church and burial that does not become a parish church, possibly, it could be argued, because Kilcolmkill usurped its importance. Note also the island / mainland pairing of names: Kilmanshenachan on the mainland with Kilmashenaghan on Sanda.¹²⁵ This pattern is seen in significant locations elsewhere.¹²⁶ There are precedents also for the pairing of a

¹¹⁸ *HP* vol 1, 24.

¹¹⁹ Martin Martin, 273.

¹²⁰ *Arg* 5 no 327.

¹²¹ Black 1946, 563. *Do-chuas ó Chenel Eoghain, & o Mhuircertach, mac Néill dar muir co ruaiclidis .i. go cendcadis longas Gall-Ghaoidhel Arann, Cinn Tìre, Manann & ceñtair Alban archena, & mac Scelling í c-ceanas forra.* The Cinel-Eoghain and Muirheartach, son of Niall, sent persons over sea to hire (and who did hire) the fleets of the Gall-Gaeidhil, of Aran, of Ceann-tìre, of Manainn, and the borders of Alba in general, over which Mac Scelling was in command. *Annals of the Four Masters* M1154.11, from <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/>. Other readings of this text are possible, however. Anderson renders it '...the ships of Galloway, Arran, Kintyre, Man and the shores of Scotland also' (Anderson 1922 ii,227) See discussion in Clancy, pub. forthcoming 'The Gall-Ghaidheil and Galloway'.

¹²² The grant is to Whithorn and it occurs before 1326 when it is confirmed by Robert I. See gazetteer.

¹²³ *Arg* 1 no 301 St Ninian's Chapel, Sanda.

¹²⁴ *Arg* 1 no 301. *Chron. Fordun* bk II ch. 10 (Skene 1871, Skene 1872, 39). *Insula Aweryne, ubi capella sancti Sanniani* [Anniani or Niniani in other MSs], *ibique pro transgressoribus refugium.*

¹²⁵ See discussion of both names in the gazetteer.

¹²⁶ eg Lamlash / Eilean Molaisse on Arran and (possibly) the two Kildovanans, for which see discussion in 3.4, 157.

powerful secular centre with an island-based ecclesiastical one.¹²⁷ An alternative ecclesiastical site to go with Dunaverty would be Kilblaan qv. adjacent to the biggest fort in Kintyre, possibly an Iron Age *oppidum*.¹²⁸ Lastly there is a possibility that even if the name Kilcolmkill is found to be attributable to the later Middle Ages, the church itself might still have an early Medieval origin.

Turning away now from Iona and Columba as the motivating force behind dedications in Kintyre, let us look at some of the other potential patterns that I mentioned above. I will look for context at the rule of Áedán mac Gabráin (d. 608) and his successors in the 7th and first half of the 8th century.

If we accept that there was some formalised process in the establishment of churches,¹²⁹ then we cannot regard the choice and affiliation of the various churches in Kintyre as random. Let us allow for a moment that the dedications belong to the period from about 550 to 750; from this (provisionally) firm ground we will ask if there are any patterns (other than the Iona one) which make sense in the particular political climate which prevailed at that time (in so far as we know).¹³⁰ As we have seen there is little to prevent the dedications being much later, and of course if they are not restricted in time there is no knowing how formalised or otherwise they were. Nonetheless, let us

¹²⁷ An example is Cladh a' Bhearnaig on Kerrera and Dunollie. For other examples see Fisher 2001, 4, and Márkus, forthcoming.

¹²⁸ Fort, Cnoc Araich. *Arg 1* no.161.

¹²⁹ Etchingham 1999 looks at this in some detail, referring in particular to material in *Collectio Canonum Hibernensis* of the early 9th century. See, for example bk 43 c.4: 'If an outsider should come into a community, let him not baptise, nor offer, nor consecrate, nor build a church, until he receives permission from the bishop of that province' (my translation). Most of the material is prescriptive rather than descriptive, however. The situation in reality is unclear, and it is unknown, in any case, to what degree it relates to Argyll.

¹³⁰ The uncertainty among scholars about the political situation and allegiances between different peoples in Ireland and Argyll is illustrated by the many interpretation of what is meant by Cuimmíne the White when he claims that the 'sceptre of the kingdom' is taken from the descendents of Áedán mac Gabráin, and that they were then held under subjection by *extranei* (VC III.5). The Andersons, in their edition of VC (1961) argued that by the 'kingdom' Cuimmíne meant the Irish part of Dál Riada. Marjorie Anderson, however, later concluded that what was meant was 'the complete status of *king of the Dál Riata*'. (Anderson 1973, 153). She further suggested that Ferchar mac Connaid of Cenél Comgaill took the sceptre of the kingdom (Anderson 1973, 153-4 - Ferchar shared the rule of Dál Riata with Domnall Brecc from 637-641, and ruled alone until his death in 650) but that the Bernicians were the *extranei* who suppressed it (Anderson 1973, 157). Fraser accepts the former proposition but rejects the latter (Fraser 2004, 91 - and in his opinion the kingdom from which the sceptre was taken was simply that of Cenél nGabráin, not of Dál Riata as a whole). Thomas Charles-Edwards wonders if the Britons might be among those holding Dál Riata in subjection (Charles-Edwards 2001, 61). He also points out that as a result of the battle of Mag Roth the Uí Coelbad (whose rival Congal Caech had been killed in the battle) attacked Irish Dál Riata, ultimately subjecting the former bishopric of Armoyn to the power of Connor as well as reducing the territories of Irish Dál Riata to nothing. (*ibid.*, 58).

suspend our doubts for a moment and try out some models. There will be room for doubts later, even if we find what appears to be a good fit. We can talk only of relative probability.

Áedán mac Gabráin and his shifting alliances is a good place to begin. We have already looked at his alleged allegiance to Iona, as presented by Adomnán, but what of his other friends and foes, in particular the various groups in Northern Ireland?

Bannerman regards the rather scanty and confusing evidence about the relationships between the different groups in northern Ireland as tending to suggest that Áedán and his successors in Scotland were in alliance with the Cruithni, of which the dominant group became the Dál nAraide. In support of this he cites, among other things, Áed Dub mac Suibne's¹³¹ apparent exile in Scotland (probably after his murder of Domnall mac Cerbaill in 565)¹³², the alleged support given to Áedán m Gabráin by a Cruithni king *fri Saxanu*¹³³, and the killing of an enemy of the Dál nAraide in 627¹³⁴. This enemy is a king of the Dál Fiatach and Bannerman sees the dynamic between the three groups - the Dál nAraide, the Dál Fiatach and the Dál Riata¹³⁵ - as vital to understanding 7th century developments. The Dál Fiatach are generally found in conflict with the Dál nAraide. The Dál Riata also fight the Dál Fiatach, and tend to support the Dál nAraide. In this Bannerman sees the Dál Riata as attempting to preserve their Irish territories.¹³⁶ There may be problems with this interpretation, or at least refinements necessary, but let's try it out for a moment. If there was an alliance on a secular level one might expect to see some co-operation on an ecclesiastical level too. Is this discernible?

¹³¹ AU 588.4 *iugulatio Aedha Nigri (mc. Shuibhne i luing)*. [Bracketed bit is add. H2 in marg.].

¹³² AU 565.1 *Occissio Diarmato m. Cerbuill, (i. la hAedh nDhubh mc. Suibhne)* [Bracketed bit is interl. H2] Exile is implied by VC 1.36. Adomnán is extremely critical of this king, for reasons of his own. Bannerman thinks that by the time Adomnán wrote the alliance between Dál Riada and Dál nAraide was off (Bannerman 1974, 8).

¹³³ This reference occurs in an Old Irish story, *Compert Mongáin* ed. K Meyer and A Nutt, *The Voyage of Bran*, 42-5. See Bannerman 1974, 4, 88.

¹³⁴ Connadh Cerr kills Fiachna m. Demain. AU 627.1 (But Connadh Cerr may have been Cenél Comgall). This entry does not specify who killed Fiachna: *Bellum Ardda Corrand, Dal Riati uictores erant, in quo cecidit Fiachna filius Demain*.

¹³⁵ This tripartite division is probably too simple.

¹³⁶ Bannerman 1974, 101, 105.

There is one group of saints which I think are at least worth consideration as a representation from the Dál nAraide. These are Mobi m. Comgail, Senán Lathrach Bríuin and Cóelán m. Luachain of Óendruimm. All are related in the genealogies to the Dál mBuain or the Dál Sailni, two important and related groups around Connor, the latter probably controlling the church for a while. Also belonging to these groups are Colmán Ela (above, 2.3), who is represented in Northern Kintyre, and Óengus Mac Nisse, who may be present there too. Other saints of Dál nAraide who we can find in dedications in South Kintyre are Catán m. Matain*, and Faelán, brother of Fursu*.

There are problems with this interpretation which make it unsafe without further work. For instance, it is too crude to talk about the Dál nAraide or the Cruithni as if they are a single united force, with which it would be possible for the Dál Riata (who weren't a single united force either)¹³⁷ to be in some general sense an ally. Which group exactly were supported by Áedán mac Gabráin, and was it the same as the one supported by Eochaid Buide, and Domnall Brecc? It seems the latter's ally, Congal Caech, though possibly king of Tara for a time in the 630s¹³⁸, was not a member of the ultimately most successful group of the Cruithni, the Dál nAraide under their ruling dynasty the Uí Chóelbad. The Uí Chóelbad, far from being allies were, thinks Thomas Charles-Edwards, the main enemy of the Irish section of the Dál Riata. After the Battle of Mag Roth in 637 the Uí Chóelbad, having completed their successful absorption of other branches of the Cruithni¹³⁹, attacked Irish Dál Riata, considerably reducing their power and transferring lands which originally had belonged to the Dál Riata bishopric of Armoay, to Connor.¹⁴⁰ Thus, if it is largely saints associated with Connor whom we see in Kintyre we have to look for a context in which relations between rulers in Kintyre (which may, in the mid 7th century, have been the Cenél Comgail) and rulers, or at least the church, around Connor were cordial.

¹³⁷ This, of course, adds a whole new dimension of complication as one group of Dál Riata may have supported one group of Cruithni, while another group of Dál Riata supported another. We are not helped by the fact that in the case of some key figures in the succession of Scottish Dál Riata kings we are not sure to which group they belonged. Thus, as we have seen, Connad Cerr is thought by Bannerman (1974, 96) to be son of Eochaid Buide (ie Cenél nGabráin) while Fraser holds that he is son of Conall mac Comgail (ie Cenél Comgail, and the people who, according to Fraser, may have been the Cuimmine White's subjectors of the Dál Riata (Fraser 2004, 93).

¹³⁸ Charles-Edwards 2000, 498. Sharpe 1995, 315 thinks he held this position, if at all, between 628 and 629.

¹³⁹ This process began in the 6th century and was probably complete by the mid 7th century (Charles-Edwards 2000, 54).

¹⁴⁰ Charles-Edwards 2000, 60.

We do not, of course, need to believe that relations were good at all times between the Dál nAraide and Dál Riata, just that there were times in which the establishment of a church by a devotee of a saint of the Dál nAraide might be considered acceptable. It must be remembered too that no saint belonged to any group exclusively, not at any rate if he or she had a cult which spread at all. Nearly all saints were claimed by several groups at different times (or perhaps even all at the same time), many had more than one genealogy, and sometimes - as in the case of Ciarán m. Beodáin* - a saint was adopted by one group (in this case the Connachta) though his genealogy and main church site were located elsewhere. In fact, Ciarán, according to one account, is another saint linked with the Cruithni; he is said to belong to Latharna Molt, now Larne in Co. Antrim.¹⁴¹

One also has to consider the overlapping identities felt by the saint himself (or by anyone else). He might be Dál Fiatach by birth, but Iona by leaning. His Dál Fiatach birth might be stressed by later genealogies, but from the point of view of, say, Áedán mac Gabráin he was fundamentally a devotee of Columba. We do not now know which of a saint's credentials was most obvious or important to his contemporaries, or to himself. An example is given by Muirchú in the 7th century when he says that Assicus, a bishop and a coppersmith who served Patrick, was Patrick's monk 'but the community of Columb Cille and the community of Ardd Stratha claimed him.'¹⁴²

To stick to northern saints for a moment, let us now see if we can find any others who might have dedications in Kintyre, in particular those linked with Dál Riata itself. An interesting one is Cóemán Brecc m. Nise*. He is interesting because he is related to the ruling house of Dál Riata in some accounts, and also because he is sometimes confused with Óengus Mac Nisse of Connor, mentioned above; there may be some overlap between the two.¹⁴³ Kilkivan has always been assumed to be a dedication to Cóemgen m. Cóemloga of Glendalough, but although he was the best known saint of this name in Scotland in later times, there is no reason to exclude other candidates. This Cóemán

¹⁴¹ *Rec. Mai.*, Ó Riain 1985 no 125.2.

¹⁴² *Tírechán* 20 - Bieler 1979, 141.

¹⁴³ This is discussed in the section on Colmán Ela, ch 2.3.

Brecc may have been a saint of some importance, though he is little known now. He is one of only a handful of saints given a retrospective birth in the Annals of Ulster.¹⁴⁴

Another saint who has not been considered because of an assumption that the dedicatee of that site must be the best known saint of that name is Eoganán m. Oengusa*. The site in question is Killeonan*, always assumed to be a dedication to Adomnán. Eoganán is another saint related in *CGSH* to the main house of Dál Riata.¹⁴⁵

It is perhaps interesting, in light of Bannerman's theory above, that the chief holy man of the Dál Fiatach¹⁴⁶ is missing: Comgall. In fact, he is missing not only from Kintyre, but from the whole of Argyll.¹⁴⁷ If one looks still further to the rest of Scotland, again he is hard to find, turning up only in a 1669 record as dedicatee of the parish of Durris.¹⁴⁸ It would be interesting to explore why this might be, given the apparent devotion given to him by Columba among others, and the influence of his pupils.¹⁴⁹ As far as other saints of Dál Fiatach are concerned one might find Cóelán m. Luachain* at Kilmaho*, whose chief monastery of Nendrum was in the Dál Fiatach territory (though he also had a Dál nAraide profile, as we have seen), Fáelán the brother of Fursu* at Killelan* (but who might also be presented as Northumbrian or a member of the Eoganachta), and Finnian m. Cairpre at Island Davaar. The last saint and site embody many of the difficulties inherent in attempting to find meaning in this difficult type of evidence. There are many possibilities as to the potential dedicatee of the site and no clues to help us. Even when fixing on this Finnian as a potential candidate we are scarcely on firm ground; he overlaps with other saints in a way that is difficult to untangle, and even without the overlap it would be hard to say if (or when) his identity as saint of the Ulaid would be more important than his identity as teacher of Columba Cille.

¹⁴⁴ *AU* 529.1 *Natiuitas Coemain Bricc*.

¹⁴⁵ *Rec. Mai.*, Ó Riain 1985 no 209.

¹⁴⁶ Though he was adopted by the Dál Fiatach he belonged, according to his genealogy, to the Dál nAraide. Ó Riain 1985 no 97.

¹⁴⁷ In his *Life* there is a claim that he set up a church on Tíree, but no evidence of this survives. Plummer ii, 11. Translation in Anderson 1924 i, 52-3. This is a *D* text (Sharpe 1991, 393).

¹⁴⁸ *SPNDb*. There was apparently a fair day here on May 9th. *PSAS* 52 1918, 166.

¹⁴⁹ An interesting possibility presents itself in the earliest (perhaps late 7th or 8th century) *Life of Fintan Munnu* where Comgall appears to be referred to by the hypocorism *Mochoma*. If so (the sense of the passage in question is not absolutely clear) then one might be able to consider names such as Kilmachumaig in Knapdale as being possible dedications to Comgall. Heist 1965, 199 ch. 4.

There are many ways of organising the dedications, as I have said, and there are some I have not touched on at all. I will deal with some of these briefly now, but much work remains to be done. Is it helpful to look to British influence, for instance, to explain some of the saints represented in South Kintyre? One might see British saints at Kilblane* (Blaan*), Kilchousland* (Constantine*) and Kilmaho* (Kentigern*), but when might such dedications have arisen? None of these sites is straightforward.

Blaan has sometimes been regarded as a British saint, or at least as the bishop of a monastery on Bute with British connections. This will be discussed in the separate study of that area, but for now it might be noted a) that first mention of the site does not occur until 1538,¹⁵⁰ and b) that it is paired with Kilchattan (first attested 1545)¹⁵¹ which suggests one of two things: since no link is made between Catán and Blaan until the later middle ages it is possible that the pairing of the dedications didn't happen until then either, in other words that either or both dedication is late; or, the link between Blaan and Catán was made in the literature to explain the fact that in two places (Bute and Kintyre) dedications to these two saints appear together.

Of all the saints Constantine* is one of the most difficult to unravel. As Dumville says, 'If the cults of SS. Constantine in various parts of the Insular world can be traced to a single origin, we must suppose that they have received different local attributes which now present a chaotic picture.'¹⁵² The Irish martyrologies recognise a Constantine who was British, and the British church of Govan's dedication is to a saint of that name, but the many traditions about saints and kings called Constantine would allow us to consider that a dedication such as Kilchousland might have no British connection whatsoever. The Constantine who is commemorated (rather doubtfully) in *MT*, and noticed in *AU* (ob. 820), is a descendant of Domnall Brecc, and the first king to rule both Dál Riata and the Picts; he may have been involved in the foundation of Dunkeld.¹⁵³ Later, another Constantine of Cenél nGabráin descent renounced his kingship and took the staff - *baculum cepit*. It is likely that his father came from Kintyre. There is much confusion, but elements of this Constantine's life certainly enter into later medieval calendars. Jocelin's St. Constantine, on the other hand, is certainly

¹⁵⁰ *RSS* vol 2 no 2724.

¹⁵¹ *RMS* vol 3 no 3085.

¹⁵² Dumville 1999, 235.

¹⁵³ Clancy 1995, and see Broun 1998, 81.

British, but he may be no more than a device. He and his father, Rhydderch Hael, defer to Kentigern in all things and may, thinks Macquarrie, be simply a means by which Constantine's relationship with Kentigern is shown properly to reflect the subordinate position of Govan (with its Constantine dedication) to Glasgow (dedicated to Kentigern).¹⁵⁴ Another possibility is that the dedication was in origin a commemoration of the Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, a suggestion given weight by the proximity of the feasts of the insular Constantine and the emperor. Dumville noted this coincidence, venturing, of the insular Constantine, 'The date of commemoration suggests strongly that the cult has an artificial origin, for it immediately follows that of the Christian archetypal Constantine'.¹⁵⁵ Woolf has recently given the idea more emphasis, and a context.¹⁵⁶

As far as Kentigern is concerned it is possible from a linguistic point of view that he is commemorated at Kilmaho*, but there are many other possibilities, as we have seen. And even if it was a dedication to Kentigern, and even if Kentigern himself was in origin British,¹⁵⁷ it is not necessary to seek contact with British people for an explanation of the spread of his cult.

Ignoring the uncertainties for a moment, might we in any case find a context or contexts for foundations which commemorate British saints in Kintyre? What were relations like between the Dál Riata and the British?

On a secular level there are two quite different accounts of relations in the reign of Áedán mac Gabráin. According to one he had a British mother,¹⁵⁸ married a British princess¹⁵⁹ and helped the Britons at the battle of Degstastan.¹⁶⁰ According to another

¹⁵⁴ But see Broun 2004.

¹⁵⁵ Dumville 1999, 235.

¹⁵⁶ Woolf 2006.

¹⁵⁷ The name is Brittonic and he is first attested in a Welsh source. It is possible to have a British name and not be British, however, as is probably the case for Kentigerna*, daughter of an 8th century king of Leinster.

¹⁵⁸ Bannerman 1974, 88 drawing from *De Situ Brecheniauc*.

¹⁵⁹ Áedán's grandson is Molaisse m. Cairill Chruaid* whose mother is Gemma, '*filia regisque Britannie neptis fuit*' (*Vita S. Lasriani*, Heist 1965, 341 ch 1). This Gemma corresponds with *Maithgemme Monaidh* - Maithgemm of Monad - in *FO* notes in *RB512*, 116-117. In another source Áedán is grandson of a king of Strathclyde (Bannerman 1974, 89) and it is noted that one of his sons has a British name (Artúr) - *ibid.*, 91, Charles-Edwards 2000, 6 - the name 'may point to friendly relations between the Irish settlers in Argyll and their British neighbours'.

(a Welsh source) his behaviour to the British was treacherous.¹⁶¹ Two battles which may have been against the Britons are recorded, but in neither case is the identity of the enemy secure.¹⁶² Bannerman considers that Áedán preserved the peace with the Britons, with 'undertones of hostility'.¹⁶³

Domnall Brecc was killed by a British force at Strathcarron in 642. Charles-Edwards thinks that the Britons may have been considered by Cuimmíne the White to be among the outsiders holding the Dál Riata in subjection according to the prophecy by Columba.¹⁶⁴ After his death the kingship of the Dál Riata in Argyll may have been held by Ferchar son of Connad Cerr¹⁶⁵, who belonged to the Cenél Comgail. James Fraser notes 'the apparent orientation of the descendants of Comgall towards the episcopal church of Kingarth'¹⁶⁶ and puts forward the suggestion that there may have been some kind of alliance between the British of Clyde Rock and the Cenél Comgail.¹⁶⁷

The ecclesiastical relations may mirror the secular, at least according to one view: 'Throughout the sixth century relations between the British and Irish churches remained very close' but a weakening of these relations may perhaps be seen in the second half of the seventh century.¹⁶⁸ The important teachers of probably British origin - Uinniau, who founded a monastery in Ireland, and Gildas, who was in correspondance with Irish monasteries - belong to the 6th century, as does Mochta 'a certain pilgrim from Britain' who prophesies Columba.¹⁶⁹ After that relationships are uncertain, but some incidental details in *VC* would suggest cordial relations again by the early 8th; there are

¹⁶⁰ Bannerman 1974, 88 doubts this. The battle may have been near Lochmaben in Dumfriesshire, notes Sharpe, 'and it may be supposed he acted in alliance with the Britons' (Sharpe 1995, 270).

¹⁶¹ Bannerman 1974, 88.

¹⁶² *VC* I.8-9 records a battle against the *Miathi*. They have been thought to be a British, or perhaps Pictish tribe, but Sharpe doubts this, considering them more likely to be 'an isolated highland group than a branch of the Pictish or British kingdoms' (Sharpe 1995, 269). The *bellum Manonn* (*AU* 582.1) may have been against the people of Manaw, or possibly it was part of a campaign over the Isle of Man (Sharpe 1995, 270).

¹⁶³ Bannerman 1974, 105.

¹⁶⁴ *VC* iii.5. Charles-Edwards 2001, 61.

¹⁶⁵ Bannerman 1974, 99-100n7. Fraser suggests that after 637 or 638 Ferchar 'extended his lordship from Cowal in such a way as to constrain the hapless Domnall Brecc in Kintyre.' Fraser 2004, 92.

¹⁶⁶ Fraser 2004 ii, 92.

¹⁶⁷ 'In both 637-42 and 710-12 we have indications of cooperation between the leaders of Cenél Comgail and Clyde Rock in pursuing their foreign policies, sharing an enemy in common in the earlier case, and latterly a common ally.' Fraser 2005, 107.

¹⁶⁸ Sharpe 1995, 283.

¹⁶⁹ *VC* 2nd preface, *VC*, Sharpe, 104.

British monks on Iona¹⁷⁰, a monk is sent to do penance in a British church,¹⁷¹ and a warm relationship is depicted between Columba and Rhydderch of Clyde Rock.

This last relationship draws attention to the problem in much of the above summary of relations between the British and the Dál Riata: neither the British nor the Dál Riata represented a united force. For example, it is possible to argue, as Fraser does, that Adomnán's depiction of good will between Columba and Rhydderch Hael ap Tudwal of Clyde Rock¹⁷² need not imply approval of the British force responsible for the death of Domnall Brecc; the victors at the Battle of Strathcarron were apparently led by someone from a rival Clyde Rock dynasty.¹⁷³

In sum, given the overlapping identities of the saints, and the ever-changing political alliances, not to mention the possibility that at some level it may have been possible that relations between churches transcended political squabbles, it is doubtful whether it is possible to add much to our understanding of either the development of the church or the history of the Dál Riata in Argyll through this method of enquiry, at least with regards relations with the Britons.

So far we have been concerned with the direction of influence in the founding and dedication of churches in Kintyre. It has been seen that various models, not necessarily compatible, can be presented to explain the existence of at least some of the churches. None is completely satisfactory. If this method of enquiry fails to result in any real progress in the field can we at least use a study of the physical nature of the *cill*-sites and their distribution to make some suggestions as to how the early church might have operated?

The answer depends on our assumptions regarding dating, and also about size of territories. Thus, once again, there are various scenarios to consider:

i) All *cill*-sites are early, but of varying function. This would imply an impressive degree of pastoral care, though there is a notable lack of sites on the western side of the

¹⁷⁰ VC iii.6. These monks could be from anywhere in British territory.

¹⁷¹ VC i.22.

¹⁷² VC i.15.

¹⁷³ Fraser 2005, 105-6.

peninsula, land which is considerably less attractive for cultivation and settlement. Marjorie Anderson thought Kintyre may have constituted a *tuath*, but notes the lack of evidence.¹⁷⁴ If her instinct was right there may have been one bishop serving Kintyre. Or perhaps the area of jurisdiction was smaller, and there was one bishop for the north, and another for the south, the latter covering the area examined in this study.¹⁷⁵ A division into north and south Kintyre is attested from the middle ages. It is possible too that there was a further division within the south part, the boundary provided by the former Loch Sannish.¹⁷⁶

ii) Only the sites with early sculpture are early Medieval: Kilmashanaghan (Sanda), Kilcolmkil, Kilkerran, St Ciaran's cave, and Kilchenzie. The sites are well spread out and are near secular sites. If each one (apart from St Ciarán's Cave) dispensed pastoral care the provision would have been reasonable.

Looking at the table below, a number of observations can be made. First, there is no obvious link between the holding of early Medieval sculpture and later status. Of the three sites with early sculpture, two became parish churches (Kilchenzie, Kilkerran), but one, apparently, did not (Kilmashanaghan, Sanda). A further site with early sculpture, St Ciaran's Cave, did not even attract settlement though, as a probable eremetical site, this is not surprising. It might also be noted that in none of those cases is the sculpture elaborate or highly skilled. There is nothing to compare with the carvings at Cladh a' Bhile in Knapdale, for example, except perhaps the hexafoil at St Ciaran's cave.

Second the number of probable Medieval sites of broadly similar dimensions is notable. These date from the 12th century to the later Medieval period.¹⁷⁷ There are no architectural remains belonging to the early Medieval period but it is possible that these churches overlie earlier foundations, or that the earlier churches were wooden. It is impossible to say, on the evidence so far, if these *cill*- sites consisted of ecclesiastical

¹⁷⁴ 'At the time of the second assessment the Cenél nGabráin forms what we may guess are two *tuatha*, one in Mid Argyll, with its centre at Dunadd, the other in Kintyre' Anderson 1973, 162. But did each *tuath* have a king? She notes that Dunchad Becc is *rex Cinntire* in *AU* 720, but this 'is really the only direct evidence that Kintyre was a *tuath* whose chief had the status of *rí*.' *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁷⁵ To make comparison with northern Ireland see *VC* 1.50. Here it seems that there is a bishop presiding over the people of Mag nEilni. This was a small area between the Rivers Bann and Bush, perhaps 13km across.

¹⁷⁶ above, p 131.

¹⁷⁷ *Arg 1*, 22. There are plans of many of the churches on p 23.

settlements, and it is not clear what one would seek by way of evidence in any case. Most have church and burial, though some may have consisted of only a church (Killarow, Kilchrist) or only a burial (Killervan, Kilchattan, Killocrow). On the basis that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, however, certainty is impossible, and in eight cases the ecclesiastical site, if there was one, has not been located at all (Kildonald, Kilcalmonel, Kildavie, Kilbride, Kilmanshennachan, Kilwhipnach, Kilmore, Kildalloig).

In summary then, the *cill*- sites in South Kintyre have not, despite their impressive number, significantly refined our picture of the development of the early Church in Argyll. We have, however, outlined some models which might help ask further questions about developments, both political and ecclesiastical, here, and we have explored the possibilities that some *cill*- sites, in particular Kilcolmkill, might be late formations. We have tested the capabilities of *cill*- sites and dedications to saints as tools in asking historical questions and we have found that they must be treated with caution.

Cill- in Kintyre

Place-name	Ch?	Bur?	Earliest Structure	Early Medieval Sculpture	Late Medieval Sculpture	Earliest ref.	Note
Kilchousland parish							
Kilchousland	y	y	12 th c 11.9m x 6.7	n	shaft of cross	1393	parish church.
Kildonald	?	?	modern	?	?	1753	No eccl. site found. Probably a version of Kildonan
Kildonan	y	y	no remains	n	n	1541	
Kilkeddan	y	y	sub-rectangular encl. - unknown date	n	n	1306-29	19 th c report of cross having been nearby in mid 18th
Kilblaan parish							
Kilblaan	y	y	no remains	n	n	1538	old parish name
Kilbride	?	?	no remains	?	?	1541	No ecclesiastical site found.
*Kilcalmonell	?	?	?	?	?	1654	probably a mistake
Kilchattan	y?	y	mound of stones			1541	
Kildavie	?	?	no remains	?	?	1306-1329	No eccl. site found.
Killellan	y	y	Medieval. 11.2m x 6.3	n	n	1329	

Killervan	?	y	no remains	n	n	1541	
Kilmanshennach an	?	?	modern settlement	?	?	1203? 1584	No eccl. site found.
Kilmashenaghan	y	y	'later Middle Ages' 10.2m x 6.3	2: a cross- marked slab and a cruciform slab		1845	chapel is mentioned by Fordun
Kilcolmkill parish							
Kilcolmkill	y	y	late 12 th or early 13 th c. 8.8m x 5.6 (originally)	part of wheel head cross (12 th c?)	8 items	1326	parish. no settlement.
Kilkivan parish							
Kilkivan	y	y	13 th c. 17.4m x 7.2	n	8 items	1380i sh	parish.
Killypole	?	?	modern	?	?	1481	No eccl. site found. Probably not a <i>cill</i> -
Kilwhipnach	?	?	modern	?	?	1541	No ecclesiastical site found
Kilmarow parish							
Killarow	y	y?	no remains, lost	n	n	1532 x 1603	parish
Killocrow	?	y?	platform	n	n	1576	traditionally a burial ground
Kilmichael parish							
Kilmichael	y	y	no remains	n	2 slabs	1306- 1329	parish
Kilkerran parish							
Kilchrist	y	n	no remains. 19 th c report says 12.2m x 4.6.	n	n	1562	
Kildalloig	n	n	nothing	n	n	1481	No eccl. site found
Kilkerran	y	y	In 19 th c c18.2 x c6m	wheel- cross on stone	7 items	pre 1250	parish
Killeonan	y	y	foundations of chapel. 16m x 6m	n	n	1468	
Kilmore	?	?	?	?	?	1543	single attestation, may be a mistake
Kilsolane	?	?	?	?	?	1481	scribal error?
Kilchenzie parish							
Kilmaho	y?	y?	no remains	n	n	1623	tradition of chapel and burial
Kilchenzie	y	y	12 th c. 13.3m x 6.7	wheel- cross on boulder	13 slabs	1439	parish

A 'n' means there is no evidence for a church / burial / sculpture. A '?' means that the characteristics and contents of the site are unknown because the site has not been located (as in the case of Kilbride). A 'y?' means that there is evidence that might be interpreted as indicating the presence of church / burial / sculpture, but that other interpretations are possible.

3.3 Kilmartin, Craignish and Glassary

The parishes of Kilmartin, Glassary and Craignish are in Argyll proper, an area thought traditionally to be distinct from Lorn, Knapdale, Cowall and Kintyre. Thus John Gregorson Campbell, writing in the late 19th century, observed, 'The district forming the parishes of Kilmartin and Kilmichael, at the west end of the Crinan Canal, is known in the neighbourhood as Argyle (*Earra-Ghaedheal*)... The people, for instance, of Loch Aweside say of a person going down past Ford that he is going down to Argyle. In course of time the name has been extended to the county.'¹⁷⁸ In records collected in the late 17th or early 18th century, there is a distinction made between *Kintyria* (Kintyre), *Argath* (Argyll), *Couallis* (Cowall), *Cnapdallia* (Knapdale) and *Lorna* (Lorn).¹⁷⁹ Similarly, a declaration is made at Dunadd in 1506 concerning 'thir partis of Ergile, Lorne, Kintyre, Knapdale, Morwarne, Ardmurphy, and all pairtis of the Ilis for gude reule and governance of his liegis within the said bondis...'¹⁸⁰ Charters of the 12th and 15th centuries make distinctions between, respectively, Argyll and Kintyre, and Argyll and Lorn, but do not reveal where the other territories fit within the scheme.¹⁸¹ Whether Knapdale has been considered a part of Kintyre or distinct from it is unclear,¹⁸² for example; it is probable that the meaning of these designations has been somewhat fluid.

The relevance of all this for the present study is that this area might be seen as representing the heart-land of the Gaels in early medieval Scotland, with people of Dál Riata all around: Cenél Loairn to the north, Cenél Comgall to the east and Cenél nGabrain stretching all the way down to the southern tip of Kintyre.¹⁸³ It is possible too that this was the centre from which the Dál Riata built their power, based at the important ceremonial centre of Dunadd. It was certainly an area of relatively extensive

¹⁷⁸ Black R (ed) 2005, 292.

¹⁷⁹ SM 3/14 71v in Scottish Catholic Archive.

¹⁸⁰ ER vol. 12, 703-4.

¹⁸¹ Half of the king's tithes *de Ergaithel et de Kentir* are granted to Dunfermline Abbey in 1150 x 1152 (Barrow 1999, 137 no 172). A charter of 1476 concerns lands *infra bondas de Ergile et Lorne* (RMS ii no 1210).

¹⁸² Knapdale (a Norse name) would not be included in Kintyre if the border is at the place where Magnus Barelegs in 1098 is alleged to have dragged his boat over the isthmus at Tarbert from shore to shore (Anderson 1922 ii, 113).

¹⁸³ Bannerman 1974, 111-118 for discussion of the boundaries between the three *cenéla*. The divide between Cenél nGabrain and Cenél Loairn 'is not easily defined' (*ibid.*, 112), but Bannerman favours a boundary 'somewhere between Dunadd in the north and Tairpert Boitter in the south' (*ibid.*, 113).

settlement and wide-ranging contacts, with the sites of Bruach an Druimein¹⁸⁴ (for which see Kilchiaran in gazetteer, and discussion below), the crannog on Loch Glashan,¹⁸⁵ and the fortified site at Ardifuar¹⁸⁶ yielding evidence of the use of imported goods, the on-site manufacture of crafts and a variety of other uses in the early medieval period.

Of importance too is the fact that at the same time as being a heart-land, this was also a border zone. It may lie in the centre of Dál Riada territory but it is not always clear to which *cenél* within that people the lands pertained. Cenél nGabrain has been proposed as the power holder here¹⁸⁷, but this is partly because of a sequence of assumptions whose basis has recently been called into question.¹⁸⁸ Cenél Loairn are the other candidates but there is no conclusive evidence either way and the border between the territory of Cenél nGabrain and Cenél Loairn remains far from clear. It is possible that it was somewhere quite close to and on the north side of Loch Awe, or perhaps it was slightly further south.¹⁸⁹ Bannerman considered that Cenél Loairn stretched into Knapdale and included Dunadd, at least in the 8th century.¹⁹⁰ It seems probable that the border was fluid, and it is certainly unclear: the very well informed authors of OPS were unable even to decide whether the parishes of Craignish and Kilmartin belonged to the deanery of Lorn or Glassary.

To turn now to the central question of the thesis, how might the church have developed and operated in such an area, and are the *cill*- sites and dedications to saints helpful tools in advancing the investigation? The value of evidence that can be gleaned from *cill*- sites in this area will be tested through a series of very specific questions, following

¹⁸⁴ *Arg 6* no 350.

¹⁸⁵ *Arg 6* no 354; Crone and Campbell 2005.

¹⁸⁶ *Arg 6* no 270.

¹⁸⁷ Anderson 1973, 136, 162, 185. Bannerman 1974, 112 'It has generally been accepted that Dunadd was the chief seat of the Cenél nGabráin.' But Bannerman is not himself sure about this, proposing rather that the Cenél Loairn were the chiefs here, at least from about 700 (*ibid.*, 113).

¹⁸⁸ The sequence of assumption is based on the testimony of Adomnán, who assures us that the pre-eminent group in the latter part of the 6th century was Cenél nGabrain. The *caput regionis*, where Columb Cille meets Gallic sailors, is thought to be Dunadd, and thus - since a *caput* would naturally have been inhabited by the most important group - held by Cenél nGabrain. It is possible, however, that Adomnán exaggerates the importance of Cenél nGabrain, and that though they may have been the most powerful group in Kintyre in the latter 6th century, their pre-eminence over a wider area or over a long period can be called into question. See Fraser 2004, 2005, 2006.

¹⁸⁹ Lane and Campbell 2000, 256 consider Dun Chonallaigh to be in 'southern Lorn'. This is only 5km ne of Kilmartin.

¹⁹⁰ Bannerman 1974, 113.

which some examples will be given which illustrate - if more illustration is needed - some of the key problems in the evidence. I will conclude with an analysis of what I think might be achievable with the benefit of more detailed research, and what I think will remain beyond our reach however hard we push this kind of evidence.

The first question is this: Do the *cill*- sites reveal anything about the relationship between churches and secular power centres? This is a good place in which to pose the question because of the undisputed importance of Dunadd.

Dunadd may be the *Caput Regionis*, the chief place of the region, mentioned by Adomnán, where St Columba converses with Gallic sailors, presumably traders.¹⁹¹ It is one of the few Scottish sites to be mentioned in the Irish annals, not once but twice, and both annal entries are likely to have been contemporary and have derived from Iona.¹⁹² Thus we hear that in 683 there are sieges of Dunadd and of Dundurn, and in 736 Dál Riata is laid waste by a king of the Picts and Dunadd is taken.¹⁹³

Archaeological evidence would suggest Dunadd was an important trading centre, with, for example, more wheel-turned French pottery (E-ware) than on any site in Britain and Ireland.¹⁹⁴ It is possibly from here that exotic goods such as herbs, dyes, wine and oil were distributed throughout Dál Riata. There are links too with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to the south-east, with high status jewellery and other decorative work showing a remarkable fusion of elements from the Celtic and Anglo Saxon worlds. Links with Iona are suggested by a cross-incised quern,¹⁹⁵ and there are other signs of ecclesiastical presence in, for example, a slate inscribed with the words *i nomine*. That its ceremonial activities were an important part of the function of the site is suggested by a cluster of carvings near the site's summit: a footprint, a stone-cut basin, an ogham

¹⁹¹ VC I.31. Watson argued that *caput regionis* was a translation of the Old Irish *cenn tíre* and therefore corresponds to Kintyre (Watson 1926, 92), a conclusion rejected by several scholars since. For a summary of the various positions see Lane and Campbell 2000, 39 who conclude that that though Dunadd was the primary site in terms of trade 'the historical sources do not allow us to identify the *caput regionis* or to know what the term might mean to an Iona audience'.

¹⁹² Bannerman 1974, 9-26. Lane and Campbell, 38.

¹⁹³ AU 683.3 *Obsessio Duin Att et obsessio Duin Duirn*. AU 736.1 *Oengus m. Fergusso, rex Pictorum, vastavit regiones Dail Riatai et obtenuit Dun At et combussit Creic et duos filios Selbaich catenis alligavit, .i. Donngal et Feredach*. The identification of Dun Att / At with Dunadd was first made by Skene (Skene 1886, 229, 264.) in the late 19th century and has not been seriously challenged.

¹⁹⁴ Campbell 1996, 83.

¹⁹⁵ Campbell 1987.

inscription and an incised boar. In addition there is evidence that the natural form of the summit area was manipulated to draw attention to the ceremonial platform, where perhaps kings may have been inaugurated.¹⁹⁶

Might any of the *cill*- sites be the ecclesiastical centre serving this place? We ask this question not because it is assumed that such a site must by necessity have existed (though it might be noted that at no excavated early Medieval fort in Scotland is there evidence of a chapel¹⁹⁷), but rather as one of several possible routes into building up a series of scenarios which might make some sense of the distribution and nature of the sites. Within a short distance of Dunadd there are two churches which were of sufficient importance to become parish churches: Kilmartin 5.5km north and Kilmichael 2km east. We will look at these two first, starting with Kilmichael, the parochial centre of the parish in which Dunadd is located, the parish of Glassary.

There are two reasons for supposing Kilmichael might have been of some importance in the early medieval period. One is the sculpture - a slab with ringed Latin cross in relief is of early medieval in date.¹⁹⁸ The other is that an early iron bell was found near the site; this could be as early as the 7th century.¹⁹⁹ Its importance was such that it was later enshrined in an intricate metal-work holder of perhaps the 12th century.²⁰⁰ The church is on record from at least 1315, and the accumulation of sculpture from the 14th century onwards is impressive. It is in a strategic position, favoured from prehistoric times as the cup-and-ring marks and standing stones bear witness. It was the site of one of the most important markets on the west, and later a centre for the Barony courts.²⁰¹

Glassary's parish church was not, however, at Kilmichael until some time around the Reformation. It is possible that its importance, at least as an ecclesiastical site, was all late, and even that when the parish centre moved, the bell came too. The previous parish centre - at Kilneuir*, 10 km to the NNE on the shores of Loch Awe - was also in

¹⁹⁶ Lane and Campbell 2000. For summary of findings see *Arg 6* no 248 and *Arg 7* no 281.

¹⁹⁷ Lane and Campbell 2000, 257. It would be difficult to recognise the remains of a chapel, however, insubstantial and lacking distinguishing features as they well might be. An accompanying burial ground might be suggestive, as is the case on Traprain Law where rectangular foundations close to a child's long cist burial have suggested the interpretation as chapel (Armit and McCartney 2005, 4).

¹⁹⁸ *Arg 7* no 69.

¹⁹⁹ Bourke 1983, 465.

²⁰⁰ Bourke 1997, 176.

²⁰¹ Campbell and Sandeman 1962 no 563.

a strategic position, at one end of a key route between that Loch and Loch Fyne, and there too there was a market.²⁰² According to some traditions even this was not the original parish centre; this was at Killevin* on Loch Fyne.²⁰³ We will return to Kilneuir and Killevin in due course.

Kilmartin's claim to early foundation is based partly on its dedication, which will be discussed below, and to its four early Christian stones. There are three slabs with incised Latin crosses and one free-standing cross. The cross 'probably dates from the 10th century'²⁰⁴ and was said in 1881 to have come from a site a quarter of a mile from the church, where a socket was said to remain.²⁰⁵ The church itself was built in the 19th century, but there is evidence of a church having been on or near the site at least from the 14th century when a vicar of Kilmartin is mentioned.²⁰⁶ It is in an attractive place for settlement, on a gravel terrace about 30m above the valley floor. Other similar sites, such as Upper Largie, about a km to the north, and Kilchiaran* about a km to the south west have been used since prehistory.²⁰⁷

Unlike the church at Kilmichael, Kilmartin church has been the parish church for as long as there are records. Its importance in the later Medieval period is suggested by its impressive collection of sculpture: 76 graveslabs, 3 effigies, 3 tomb chests, 3 crosses.²⁰⁸ It was of sufficiently high status that in 1480 Colin Campbell of Glenorchy was 'honorablie bureit in the Kirk of Kilmertyne'.²⁰⁹ This was a family keen to affirm its ancient rights to be here. The choice of burial ground was crucial for asserting a sense of identity rooted in a particular place and may suggest that Kilmartin was considered to be a foundation of considerable antiquity. Of some significance also, perhaps, is the evidence that Kilmartin may have been the chief church for one particular kin-group,

²⁰² Campbell and Sandeman no 567, who record the market's name: *Am Margadh Dubh* - the Black market.

²⁰³ NSA, 685. Campbell and Sandeman 1962 no 466. The former also records the belief that Kilneuir was built from stones quarried at Killevin. RCAHMS are sceptical (*Arg 7*, 548 no 81 n. 7.)

²⁰⁴ Fisher 2001, 149.

²⁰⁵ Campbell and Sandeman no 492.

²⁰⁶ See gazetteer.

²⁰⁷ For descriptions of the prehistoric sites see *Arg 6*, or the extract focussing only on the Kilmartin area, RCAHMS 1999.

²⁰⁸ *Arg 7* no 68.

²⁰⁹ *Arg 7* no 128.

Clan Donachie²¹⁰:

*Colmonel, Clan A gorry, Barry, Clan Murachie,
Mac Charmaig, Clan Neill, Martin, Clan Donachie.*²¹¹

The reference is late, and the clans are not necessarily of very long standing in their areas, but the pattern may nevertheless represent early practice. Kilmartin, like Kilcalmonel, Kilberry and Kilmacormack, may have been considered 'mother churches' with traditions stretching back to a time when the areas to which they administered represented secular territorial units, in existence, perhaps, even before the formation of parishes in the 12th century.²¹²

The medieval parish of Kilmartin seems to have been co-extensive with the barony of Ardszkodnish.²¹³ That is to say, its significance was as much as a secular unit as an ecclesiastical. If, as seems to me likely and as is the case according to the definition of parishes in the 1890s outline, the eastern boundary of the parish in its southern half was on the River Add and north up the Kilmartin (formerly Ardszkodnish) Burn then Kilmartin parish (and presumably Ardszkodnish) controlled the coast, depriving Glassary (and Dunadd) of access to the sea.²¹⁴ In addition Kilmartin seems to have held lands at Kilmahumaig, which one would otherwise expect to be held by North Knapdale. This may have facilitated access to the best harbour in the area, Crinan Harbour, less than a kilometre to the SW. In addition to this strategic advantage, Kilmartin may have had power of another kind too, for although some of Kilmartin's impressive complex of prehistoric ritual monuments would have been buried beneath peat, many, such as the

²¹⁰ Clan Donnachie (> MacConachie and variants) are most usually associated with Clan Robertson of Struan, the name deriving from *Fat Duncan de Atholia* who lived at the time of Robert I (Black 1946, 215, 474). There were MacConachies in Argyll who had a different origin, however: Campbells descending from a Duncan Skeodnish son of Gillespie Campbell of Lochawe (d. before 1394) (Campbell 2000, 99-100) or from a Duncan Campbell, son of Sir Neil (d. before 1316) (Black, 475). I do not know what to make of the fact that one of the wives of the Colin Campbell said to be buried at Kilmartin in 1480 was *ane woman off the Clandonoghie*, a daughter of Robertson of Struan (Campbell 2000, 134)

²¹¹ *SA* South Knapdale, vol. 19, 311 and 318.

²¹² Clancy 1995, 108.

²¹³ Ardszkodnish is on record from at least 1323 (*APS* vol 1, 122). A similar name, Scotnish survives as a house name (Scotnish 387 NR 7588) and as a northern arm of Loch Sween (Caol Scotnish 387 NR7688). Near Kilmartin there is Scodaig at 377 NR 783965 - a Norse name.

²¹⁴ *OPS* allows Glassary some coast line, but does not state on what authority. The 1 inch 2nd ed. OS 1898-1904 sheet 36 Kilmartin shows the parish boundary following the River Add and then Kilmartin Burn (formerly Ardszkodnish Burn) ie Glassary is denied any coastline at all. Account in *SA* is unclear. It states that Glassary is bounded 'by Kilmartin and North Knapdale upon the W' - no mention of the coast (*SA*, 97). *NSA* states that two sides of the parish are bounded by water; this must mean Loch Fyne and Loch Awe (*NSA*, 677) - again no mention of the sea.

standing stones at Ballymeanoch,²¹⁵ would almost certainly have been visible. The appropriation and control of such monuments may have been considered a vital part of the establishment of authority both of spiritual and temporal nature.

It has been suggested that secular units of possibly ancient standing may underly medieval parishes.²¹⁶ If this is so, it is interesting then that Dunadd and Kilmartin may have been in different territories. If Dunadd, for strategic and possibly symbolic reasons, required a good relationship with its neighbouring territory how better to establish this than by some kind of reciprocal arrangement of protection and promotion with the ecclesiastical foundation at Kilmartin? Unfortunately it is not possible to take this kind of reasoning any further because of our limited understanding of early Medieval land units in Scotland. It might be countered, for example, that while Kilmartin parish, and Glassary parish were in separate sub-territories, as reflected in later parish boundaries, they were in the same *tuath* - an area under the jurisdiction both of a king and a bishop - and that an obvious natural boundary of this *tuath* presents itself not far away to the north of Kilmartin church, following the Barbreck River / Glen Domhain from Loch Craignish to Loch Avich, or, possibly further north around the Braes of Lorn. The meaning of *tuath* when applied to Scotland is far from clear, however. It may correspond to the area controlled by any one of the four main *cenéla* or kindred of the Dál Riata but this is uncertain,²¹⁷ and even if it was, we do not know exactly where these groups dwelt, as discussed above.

Returning to the *cill*-sites in the vicinity of Dunadd, there are three more to consider, none with the status of parish church, but all with some claim to early foundation. The nearest is Kilbride (Rhudil)* in Glassary parish. Two early Christian stones were found here, the earlier dating perhaps to the ninth century. The site retained importance at least until the thirteenth century when a small stone chapel was erected. Its location at 35m

²¹⁵ *Arg 6* no 199.

²¹⁶ John Rogers examined the subject of parish formation in detail, focusing on Perthshire. His conclusions are tentative but 'it may be that pre-existing settlement units exercised a substantial influence on the forms taken by parishes.' Rogers 1997, 90. See also Bridgland 2004, 85: 'The dioceses in Scotland appear to have been based on the great earldoms, and it is likely that the parishes followed similar secular subdivisions'.

²¹⁷ Lane and Campbell 2000, 34, including refs to relevant discussions. They see a contrast, however, between this model and that in Ireland where a *tuath* may include several kindreds. In fact the main *cenéla* in Scotland do seem to have consisted of various kindreds, Cenél Loairn consisting of Cenél Salaig, Cenél Cathboth and the Cenél nEchdach (Fraser 2006, 6).

above the Rhudil valley is perhaps a little higher than one might expect for an important early medieval foundation, but a site like Kingarth at 70m OD reminds us not to be dismissive. The fact that the two carved stones were found only recently, both in outbuildings in the nearby Kilbride farm,²¹⁸ reminds us of the fragility of such evidence. If it had not been for their chance retention we might have assumed that this was a foundation of late Medieval date. The traces of an enclosure about 30m in diameter might, however, be another clue to early date.

There are traces of neither enclosure nor church at Kilchoan*, which is in Kilmartin parish. The only hint that this might be an early site is that a long cist was found here (the dedication will be discussed below). The find was poorly recorded, however, and its exact location is now unknown. Very few long cist burials have survived from Argyll, but whether this is due to the destruction (or invisibility so far) of evidence or the fact that this was not a popular way to dispose of the dead here is unknown. The latter is perhaps more likely. Other Argyll sites are at Kilchiaran* (to be discussed next) and near Dunoon in Cowal, the former consisting of four cists,²¹⁹ the latter only 2.²²⁰ A few other groups of long cists have been found elsewhere in Argyll, some without visible ecclesiastical associations;²²¹ in all cases the number of graves is small. In comparison sites extensive enough to be called cemeteries are located at Hallow Hill near St Andrews,²²² and in Wales and Ireland there are hundreds of such sites. Dating at Hallow Hill ranged from the fifth to the tenth centuries.²²³ It is not possible to date the Kilchoan cist on the basis of similar sites near by, since of those there are so few, and in any case the date range of long-cist burials is wide so the best we can say is that there is likely to have been some kind of ecclesiastical presence here at some point between about AD 500 and 900. Note that it is likely rather than certain; long cists were used by non-Christians too. Another interesting but inconclusive feature of the site is the presence of a stone cut basin.²²⁴ On a site like Dunadd, when such a feature appears in conjunction with other signs of ritual (the footprint) there is no hesitation in

²¹⁸ See gazetteer.

²¹⁹ *Arg* 7 no 91.

²²⁰ *Arg* 7 no 35.

²²¹ *Arg* 7 no 7.

²²² Proudfoot 1998.

²²³ Proudfoot 1998, 66.

²²⁴ Noticed by RB and Gilbert Márkus in 2004. Not in Campbell and Sandeman's list of rock-cut basins, 102-4.

pronouncing the feature to be both early and significant. Elsewhere, however, this type of artefact / monument has been somewhat overlooked, and often they are said simply to be of recent domestic use, possibly for processing sea food. It is difficult to be sure of the function of the basin at Kilchoan.

There is some much later evidence from Kilchoan which is of potential significance. This is the record of people holding the name Dewar having lived here.²²⁵ The name Dewar comes, according to Watson²²⁶ from the Gaelic *deòradh* meaning stranger and signifies a person carrying around the relics of a saint. These relics might be used in formal proceedings to seal deals, binding all parties to honour the terms of any agreements reached. The term might thence come to refer simply to the guardian of relics, even once settled and no longer, therefore an outsider.

There are two main problems with this evidence. One is that it is late, the earliest reference to a dewar at the site belonging to the seventeenth century. The other is there are alternative explanations as to how the meaning of the term *deoradh* developed; it has been argued that the person holding the title was nothing more than a perfectly secular member of the judiciary, another perfectly logical development from the original function of the person holding the title.²²⁷ In addition, by the 17th century people holding the name surname Dewar (or variant) were widely dispersed;²²⁸ even if the name originally did have some connection to guardianship of relics, by this time its meaning had been diluted to insignificance. The only point in favour of the dewars of Kilchoan having had some real position - whatever it was - is the existence of a place-name nearby. This is Port an Deora 1 km to the west. There is also a reference from the mid 14th century to people holding the name MacIlchomhghain (< Mac Gille Chomhghain) in the vicinity. They are Roderick and Ivar, sons of M'Gillecoan (*Roderico*

²²⁵ eg John M'Indeor of Kilchoan 1659 *Argyll Sasines* vol i no. 422. See Campbell 2000, 105, 125. Black says 'McKenechow or McKinchow was the original name of the Dewars of Kilchoan' First citation is 1660 in Inveraray. Black 1946, 525.

²²⁶ Watson 1926, 264-266. Black 1946, 207 says the word comes from *deoradh* meaning pilgrim, 'later an official designation which afterwards became a family name'. See also the discussion by Lane and Campbell, 39 of the *thoisreachdeowra* of Dunadd and his possible guardianship of the Kilmichael bell. He is first mentioned in 1436.

²²⁷ Gillies 1996.

²²⁸ In the 1685 list of rebels in Kilmartin parish there are three men by the name MacIndeor, in three different townships (*Inverleiverbeg, Archamsh, Achrome*). *CoA*, 8-9. Black cites several MacIndeors in other parts of Argyll (Black 1946, 516).

et Yuaro filiis M'Gillecoan), and are among the witnesses to a charter by John Campbell, lord of Ardscofnish to Gilbert of Glassary.²²⁹

More solid evidence comes from Kilchiaran*, just 1km NE of Kilchoan* and 4km NW of Dunadd, though there are problems with the name; the name Kil y Kiaran is attested just once in a very late source.²³⁰ The site itself is of undoubted importance, not just in the early medieval period. There are signs of settlement from at least the Iron Age, and prior to that, in perhaps the first half of the second millennium BC, the site was used for the most prestigious burials in the valley.²³¹ It was from a cist here that a magnificent necklace was found, made of jet from Whitby in northern England, one of the finest such treasures in Scotland.

Evidence of activity in the early medieval period includes two glass beads and, interestingly, a motif piece which might show Norse influence.²³² The most significant find in the context of this study, however, is the long cist, one of very few in Argyll, as mentioned above. In association with the cist, though not in it, was a stone fragment inscribed with the word CRONAN in ogham. This may have been carved as early as the sixth century.²³³ It cannot be certain but it seems likely, given the probable date, and assuming that the cist and the inscription are contemporary, that this was a Christian burial, perhaps part of a more extensive burial ground to which the name Kilchiaran originally belonged. No evidence of a chapel has been found, though the remains here are ambiguous; full publication of the excavations are still awaited. The site's location in the very heart of the prehistoric complex of Kilmartin valley is notable. The stone circles at Temple Wood and stone alignments at Nether Largie are less than a km to the east, Ri Cruin, a Bronze Age cairn is under a km south, and there are prehistoric cup-and-ring marked carvings within sight.²³⁴

²²⁹ *HP* ii, 141. The charter is undated but is from about 1355. Black 1946, 510

²³⁰ Craw 1929, 156.

²³¹ *Arg 6* no 104; *Arg 6* no 350.

²³² Crone and Campbell 2005, 126.

²³³ Lane and Campbell 2000, 257. The excavator in 1928 wrote of the ogham stone that 'there can be little doubt that it has been broken at some recent time from a slab of one of the graves'. *Arg 6* no 91. See discussion in Forsyth 1996, 443-55.

²³⁴ These and many other monuments in the Kilmartin Valley are described in *Arg 6*. For an overview of the main monuments in their landscape context see Butter 1999.

The evidence of literacy within such a small area is notable. Apart from the oghams on Dunadd and at Kilchiaran, there was a further early medieval inscription from another site possibly containing the element *cill*-. This is Barnakill,²³⁵ a site in Glassary, the closest piece of dry land (the site rises above the bog) to Dunadd. Here there is a rock-cut cross of a type possibly associated with sites connected with Iona, and similar to the one on the quern from Dunadd.²³⁶ The inscription appears on a cross now located outside a Victorian chapel about 5km north of the find site. The cross's exact original position in the landscape is unknown, but it seems to have been found in an enclosure near High Barnakill settlement (now deserted).²³⁷ The inscription has been interpreted in several ways, one of which suggests '(In the name) of Christ. Re[i]ton'. The personal name may be a form of the early Irish 'Rethe' or 'Rithe'.²³⁸

Barnakill is not listed in the gazetteer as it belongs to a different category of *cill*- name where *cill*- is the specific rather than the generic element, a kind of name which may indicate a piece of land held by a church rather than the church or burial site itself.²³⁹ It is mentioned here for several reasons. First there is the proximity to Dunadd and the presence of the inscription, as discussed. Second is that even if it was not an ecclesiastical site itself, but rather was a holding of another church, this is in itself interesting. Third, if we are looking for an important ecclesiastical site near Dunadd we should certainly not restrict ourselves to sites in the format *cill*- plus x since many of the most significant ecclesiastical sites (Iona itself for one) do not have names of this type. The richest site in the study area in terms of early Christian sculpture is Cladh a' Bhile in Knapdale.²⁴⁰

The last *cill*-site we will look at is Kilmahumaig, just under 5km due west of Dunadd. This is just over the border in the parish of North Knapdale, on the south side of the Add estuary but it seems to have belonged to the parish of Kilmartin, at least in the 17th

²³⁵ Could contain *coille* rather than *cill* though early forms tend to support the latter. There is another Barr na Cille in Kilmartin parish, on the shores of Loch Craignish (366 NM 8000).

²³⁶ Campbell 1987.

²³⁷ NR 825920. Campbell and Sandeman no 417.

²³⁸ Fisher 2001, 141 no 13.

²³⁹ MacDonald 1979. Another one is Eilean na cille (NR7597) a few km off the coast near Kilmartin, and there is Allt na Cill (NM 8705) on the north side of Loch Awe. The presence of the carvings, in particular the rock-cut cross, at Barnakill would, however, suggest more than simply church-owned land.

²⁴⁰ Arg 7 no 20.

century.²⁴¹ This site may have had an important strategic relationship with Dunadd, given that it is less than a kilometre from Crinan Harbour, the safest harbour in the region. There is some evidence of early medieval activity here in the form of an eighth or ninth century bead found on the island of Eilean dá Mheinn, a few metres from the harbour.²⁴² At Kilmahumaig itself there is an early Christian cross.²⁴³ The dedication, which may be to Columb Cille, will be discussed below.

A glance at the map on the following page shows that there was an impressive ecclesiastical presence in the area around Dunadd in the early medieval period. At all of the sites shown - all *cill*- names except for Dunadd - there was either early Christian sculpture, or a burial of probable early medieval date. Three sites had, in addition, early inscriptions. To add to this unusually high concentration of evidence of literacy (there are only two other sites with inscriptions in the whole of the rest of the study area - the island of Inchmarnock off Bute, and the island of Gigha off Kintyre), there is a further glimpse of scholarship at another site, just off the map: the crannog at Loch Glashan.

This island dwelling seems to have flourished at the same time as Dunadd. There was evidence of fine craftsmanship here, in particular in leather- and wood-working and there were the remains of several wheel-turned pots from the Continent, made of the same fabric - E-ware - as the mass of pottery from Dunadd from which it is likely they were brought. It is probable there was close contact between the two sites, only about 7km apart; relationships between similar sites are attested in Ireland.²⁴⁴

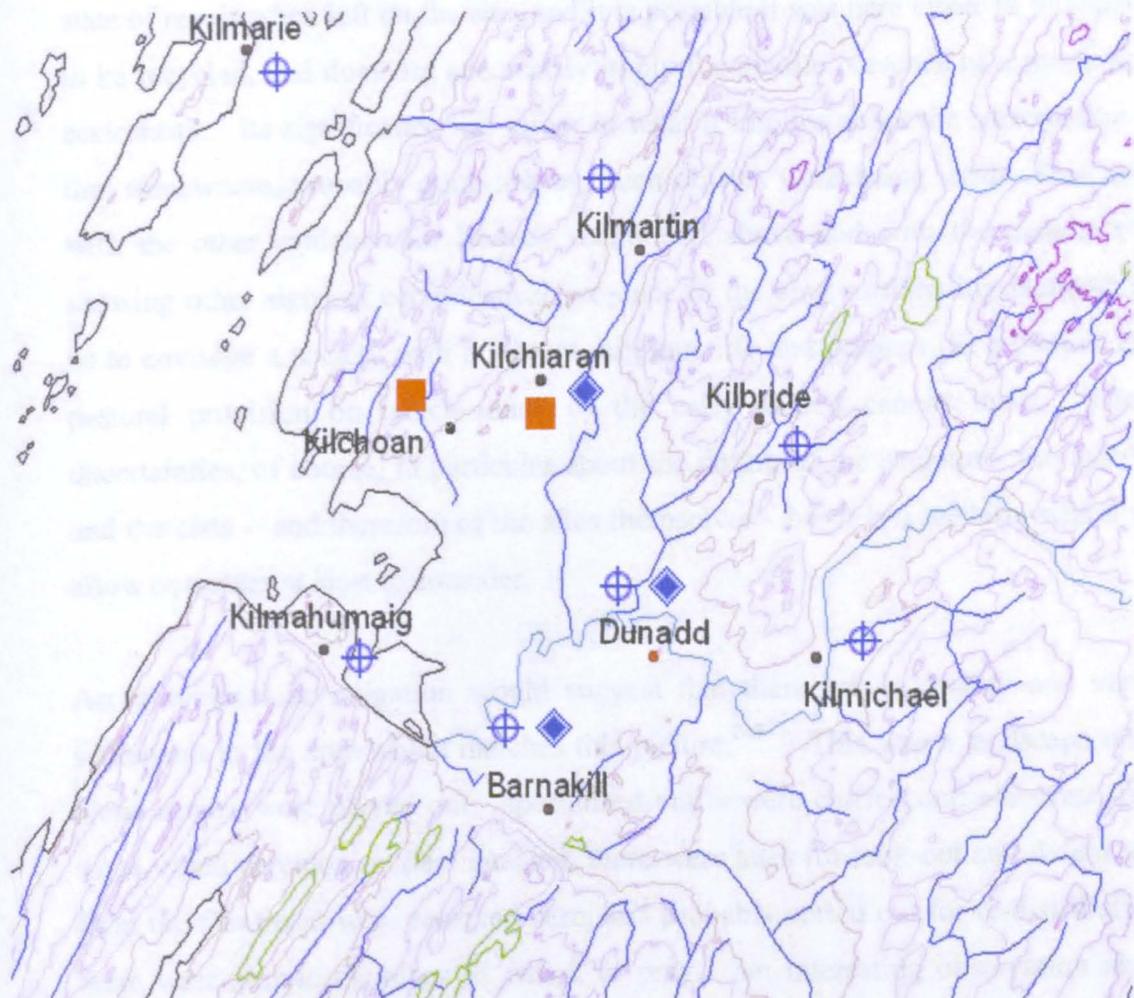
²⁴¹ NR7893. In 1651 'the chappell lands of Kilmachumack' are proposed to be removed from Kilmartin parish and annexed to Kilmichael Inverlussa. Mactavish 1943, 241.

²⁴² Lane and Campbell, 3.

²⁴³ Fisher 2001, 148, 41F; *Arg* 7 no 64.

²⁴⁴ Crone and Campbell 2005.

Dunadd and surrounding cill- sites



3 0 3 6 Kilometers

-  Early Christian sculpture
-  Long cist
-  Inscription

The evidence of literacy at Loch Glashan comes in the form of a leather book-satchel. These artefacts rarely survive, with only a handful from Ireland and none apart from this one from Scotland.²⁴⁵ They are described in hagiographical sources, however, and are depicted on early sculpture. It seems that they were an important part of the paraphernalia of the ecclesiastic.²⁴⁶ The one from Loch Glashan was already in a bad state of repair when left on the site, and it is possible it was here either to be repaired or to be recycled, and does not necessarily imply the on-site presence of a monk or other ecclesiastic. Its significance lies rather in what it implies about the surrounding area - that somewhere, probably quite nearby, such objects were being used. This, together with the other evidence for literacy mentioned above and with the density of sites showing other signs of ecclesiastical presence in the area surrounding Dunadd, allows us to envisage a society with a vibrant religious life and perhaps the generous level of pastoral provision on which many of the early church canons insist. There are uncertainties, of course, in particular about the dating of the sculpture, the inscriptions and the cists - and therefore of the sites themselves - but it is a scenario which we can allow ourselves at least to consider.

Archaeological investigation would suggest that there was a density and variety of settlement in the area which matches this picture.²⁴⁷ This was a landscape on which many scenes were played out: specialised crafts were carried out; elaborate, possibly royal, ritual ceremonies were enacted; there were sites for look-out and defence; goods from the Continent were received here, and probably sorted out for re-distribution; and there were simple churches in which to pray. An interesting observation about the distribution of all these sites is that the ecclesiastical ones are not in marginal positions, as apparently is the case elsewhere, but are in prime spots nearest to the best agricultural land.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Crone and Campbell 2005, 81-92 where the satchel is described in detail.

²⁴⁶ An interesting place-name, now obsolete, is attested on the banks of Loch Glashan, variously Dalnearnach / Darinerinach. It may include the Irish word *airchinnech* one of whose meanings is the holder of monastic office (*DIL*, 22); or perhaps it is from *erenach*, meaning 'Irish' (*DIL*, 167). See gazetteer entry on Kildomongart for details.

²⁴⁷ It is clear that this was a densely settled landscape with a wide variety of settlement types in use' Crone and Campbell 2005, 126. Four settlement sites of early medieval date are focussed on in their study: Dunadd, Bruach an Druimein, Ardifuir and Loch Glashan crannog.

²⁴⁸ Lane and Campbell 2000, 25

Apart from building up a general picture from the *cill*- sites here and related secular ones it is ultimately not possible to say with any certainty which ecclesiastical site, if any, had precedence over another, at least on the evidence so far presented. It is possible too that the most important Christian site in the area has yet to be uncovered, as will be discussed below. If there had been a monastery of any wealth it may have been abandoned (and become invisible) in face of Norse incursion, though this is a debated issue.²⁴⁹

For the next question we will turn to the saints: Are the names of saints, embedded in the *cill*-names, revealing of relationships with any powerful ecclesiastical centre such as Iona, or of favour by a particular kin group? Are the name of any use in dating the sites?

If we accept that 'there is no doubt that the centre of Columba's activity was close to the heart of Dál Riata and not far from Dunadd,²⁵⁰ then we might expect to see evidence of Columb Cille and / or Iona in the surviving dedications to saints. Columb Cille does indeed appear in two, or perhaps three places, and there is one further piece of evidence which might suggest that the saint's feast day was remembered.

First, there is a record of a 'St Columba's Well' somewhere near Dunadd. The single informant is not always reliable²⁵¹ and Columb Cille was a common patron of wells in Argyll (and elsewhere),²⁵² but it is possible that it is a record of a genuine tradition of some connection between the saint and Dunadd. Second there is the dedication to the saint at Kilneuair*, the former parish church of Glassary, attested from at least 1389.²⁵³ This is a particularly interesting *cill*-name in the fact that it does not contain the name of a saint. This, as was noted in the introduction, is extremely unusual in mainland Argyll, but is relatively common on Islay and is the norm in Ireland. It is possible that this kind

²⁴⁹ Norse influence is discussed by Crone and Campbell 2005, 126: 8/9th century Norse bead from Loch Glashan, plus axehead of Norse type from same site. Motif piece 'bearing Norse style ring-plait ornament' at Bruach an Druimein. There is also an 11th century coin hoard 'of probably Viking origin' from Temple Wood, near Kilmartin (Lane and Campbell 2000, 24). Scodaig on coast near Kilmartin (< > Ardscofnish?) is a Norse place-name.

²⁵⁰ Lane and Campbell 2000, 37.

²⁵¹ Leitch 1904 via Campbell and Sandeman no 508a.

²⁵² There are, for example, wells commemorating Columb Cille at Ellary in Knapdale, at another location in Knapdale, on the Garvellachs, and in Lunga.

²⁵³ the parish church of St Columba in Glosros, Lismore diocese, 1389, *Papal lett Clem VII*, 143.

of name might be earlier than the ones containing saints' names, though further research is required to make this hypothesis more secure (or otherwise). The reference in this name to a tree (Kilneuir < *cill an iubhair*, 'cill of the yew tree'), reminds one of important early sites in Ireland such as Kildare and Derry. Cladh a' Bhile,²⁵⁴ the richest site for early Christian sculpture in Argyll (apart from Iona) gets its name from *bile* meaning (among other things) a sacred tree. Third, a commemoration of Columb Cille may be present in the name Kilmahumaig, which, as noted above, is not in Glassary or Kilmartin parish, but is less than 5km from Dunadd, and was at some time annexed to Kilmartin parish. The name embedded in this place-name is Mochummoc or similar, and there are a multitude of saints to which it might refer. The chance that it is Columb Cille that is here represented seems to me quite high, however: Mochumma is a name specifically identified as one used for Columb Cille²⁵⁵; the site is 600m from the harbour to which any sea-borne visitor to Dunadd, including monks from Iona, would almost certainly have come; if Dunadd is accepted as the *caput regionis* then Adomnán is placing the saint, conversing with Gallic sailors, almost at this very site; and the site's importance is suggested first by its relatively elaborate early Medieval carving, second by its annexation to Kilmartin parish and third by the fact that a chaplainry was attached to the land - 'the chaplainry of St Colmocus, known as Kilmachumag'.²⁵⁶

Finally there may be an echo of a commemoration to Columb Cille in a document 'writtin at Dunadd in Ergile' in 1503 which records a declaration made by the king's commissioner about how the lands should be governed.²⁵⁷ The choice of location from which this proclamation was made may well have been symbolic and so, perhaps, was the date - June 10th, the day after the feast day of Columb Cille. It is possible that we are seeing here the deliberate use of local tradition to legitimate and give authority to

²⁵⁴ *Arg* 7 no 20.

²⁵⁵ I accept the equation of Mo Chummae with Columb Cille in the mid seventh-century poem *Fo Réir Choluimb*, though not all commentators have done so (Clancy and Márkus, 137, 249n for text and discussion). The equation is made explicit in a 12th-century gloss to the *Amra Choluimb Chille*: (*Colum*) *cille, caid in band. (a ainm b)áithis blaith (C)rimthann, / (mo Ch)umma, ba cain (in bé)s. ba hé [a] ainm (in)na recles.* 'Colum, beautiful the deed - his smooth baptismal name was Crimthann. Mo-chumma - fair was the custom - this was his name in his minster' (Stokes 1899 p 414).

²⁵⁶ *Argyll Sasines* vol. 2 no 479. 13 Nov 1633. Did people think that Colmoc was present in the name Kilmahumaig? We cannot be sure on this evidence though the fact that Blaeu calls the site *Kilchumnack* (ie without the *mo-*) might indicate they did. It is interesting to see two different hypocoristic forms of Columba's name being used simultaneously.

²⁵⁷ *ER* xii, 703-4.

ordinances from a remote king, and to consolidate the power of the Campbells, the royal commissioners.²⁵⁸

A saint who we know was venerated on Iona was St Martin of Tours. Adomnán draws extensively on St Martin's Life by Sulpicius Severus in compiling his Life of Columba, Sharpe describing it as 'Adomnán's primary literary model,'²⁵⁹ and Adomnán mentions, in passing, that there was regular mention of Martin in the Iona monks' prayers.²⁶⁰ In addition, Martin's feast is mentioned in *AU* 692, when the annals were probably contemporary, and may have derived from Iona: 'The moon [turned] to the colour of blood on the Feast of the Nativity of St Martin.' Kilmartin might thus seem to have an appropriate dedication for a church set up from Iona, or at least influenced by it. Some qualifications must be made, however.

First he was popular throughout the Irish Church. *FO*, for example, commemorates Martin on three separate dates in the main text, a rare distinction, and Jonas, writing in the mid 7th century, says that Columbanus visited the tomb of Martin on his way from Ireland to France.²⁶¹ Second, the Irish were not alone in their devotion to Martin. Bede reports a church dedicated to Martin in Canterbury, apparently pre-dating the arrival of Augustine,²⁶² and tells us that Ethelbert of Kent was buried 'in Saint Martin's Porch in the Church of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, where Bertha his queen also rests.'²⁶³ We also learn that the episcopal see of Ninian, probably a Briton, was named after St Martin.²⁶⁴ Third, the cult of Martin remained popular throughout the Medieval period and beyond, making it impossible to be sure, without other evidence, that a Martin dedication is early.²⁶⁵

²⁵⁸ Boardman 2006, 322.

²⁵⁹ Sharpe 1995, 240.

²⁶⁰ III.12 'As they [the monks on Iona] were singing the office, they reached the point where the prayer is usually chanted which mentions the name of St Martin. Here St Columba suddenly said to the singers: 'Today you must chant 'for St Colmán the bishop'" Sharpe thinks this was probably 'a prayer for departed saints, perhaps headed by St Martin' Sharpe 1995, 366.

²⁶¹ Life of Columban by the monk Jonas, part 42 (PL 87.1011-46, column 1035; translation at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/columban.html>).

²⁶² *HE* I.25.

²⁶³ *HE* II.5.

²⁶⁴ *HE* III.4. The influence behind this dedication is not certain. Ninian's identity is not clearly either British or Irish - he seems to have aspects of both - and, in any case, at the time Bede wrote the place belonged to Bernicia.

²⁶⁵ *Latha Martainn Builg* (lit. Martin of the bag's day) was celebrated in Scotland on July 4 / 16. It is the day when Martin's relics were transferred to the cathedral at Tours and is also known in Scotland as St Martin of Bullion's day (Black 2005, 556, 596). Martin's feast day (not sure which one) also appears in a

Fourth, at the other end of the time frame, Martin might equally be thought to be a pre-Columban saint. It is to be remembered that Adomnán nowhere implies a need for conversion within Scottish Dál Riata. The implication, therefore, is that by the late 6th century most of the people were already Christian.²⁶⁶ If this was the case then there must have been churches. Who would they have been dedicated to, if anyone? They would not, for obvious reasons, have been 'Columban' saints. Martin would be an appropriate dedicatee to an early site (as Whithorn is) especially one surrounded by pagan remains. In his life Martin is to be found specifically dealing with the physical manifestations of superstition, error, and pagan belief; sometimes he goes about this through research and careful explanation such as when he uncovers the fact that an altar commemorates not a man of virtue but 'an ugly and ferocious-looking shade', and at other times he chooses wholesale elimination, such as when he destroys an ancient temple and chops down a sacred tree.²⁶⁷ Many literate Christians would have known these stories. It is not certain that all of the prehistoric remains would have been visible in the early historic period (they may have been covered by peat), but those on higher ground would have been, and it is extremely likely the gravel terrace on which Kilmartin church is sited was itself exploited, as were other similar sites overlooking the valley such as Upper Largie and Bruach an Druimein. At Kilmartin, evidence of former belief systems would have been all around.

Another site which might be interpreted, on the basis of its dedication, as possibly being part of the Columban *paruchia* is Kilchiaran.²⁶⁸ There is some uncertainty regarding the authenticity of the place-name, it being rash to assume too much on the basis of a single testimony from a 20th century source, but in this case the suggested name - Kil y Kiaran - is so unsuitable, at least superficially, as to be worthy of serious consideration. It is, in other words, an unlikely invention, there being little to suggest to a local resident in the 1920s that this was a site of ecclesiastical activity. Why then, we might

blessing of the ocean in *Carmina Gadelica* no. 118. There is also a 15th century record of an image of St Martin being taken in procession to mark a land transaction associated with Peebles parish church. Higgitt 2003, 28.

²⁶⁶ Márkus 1999. Lane and Campbell 2000, 36-7.

²⁶⁷ Life of Martin XI.4, XIII.1. White 1998, 145-6.

²⁶⁸ MacDonald 1979, 15 suggests that dedications to Brendan of Birr, Ciaran of Clonmacnoise and Cainnech might all suggest some association with Iona, a suggestion taken up by Andrew Jennings 1998, 50.

wonder, does the name not appear in any other source? The answer might be that it did not become a focus for settlement, there were no above-ground features which would encourage the name to be perpetuated very widely or to appear on a map, and it was probably part of another land-holding such as Raslie or Nether Largie which would mean it would never need to be singled out in any record of land-transaction. Many names must disappear for this reason.

Even if the name is accepted as likely to be authentic, however, the proposition that a site dedicated to Ciarán of Clonmacnoise is likely to be part of the Columban *paruchia* must be treated with caution. It is partly because of the good relations depicted by Adomnán between Colum Cille and Ciarán of Clonmacnoise that this deduction is made but the case might equally be argued the other way round - that Adomnán is eager to depict good relations between the saints because of the proximity of dedications between one and the other.²⁶⁹ In addition there is no certainty that this was a dedication to Ciarán of Clonmacnoise rather than Ciarán of Saigir.

Fintan Munnu is also presented as a friend of Colum Cille by Adomnán, and this too might lead one to the conclusion that a site such as Kilmun*²⁷⁰, just outside Kilmartin parish on Loch Awe, may have been founded from or had some relationship with Iona. The argument stated above with regards dedications to Ciarán apply here too, however, although there is perhaps a slightly better case for considering Munnu and his followers affiliates of Iona that there is with Ciarán. For a wider discussion of this see above, 2.2.

A more direct link with Iona might be seen at Killevin* on Loch Fyne - if, that is, the dedication is accepted as being to Sléibíne, abbot of Iona from 752-767. This would then be a dedication unusual in the lateness of its saint; the majority of dedications are to saints of the 6th and 7th centuries. The period of Sléibíne's abbotship is one in which Iona enjoyed something of a golden age,²⁷¹ with support from successive high kings in Ireland and, probably, a good influx of revenues from fines deriving from the

²⁶⁹ That the followers of Columba and those of Ciaran were not always in accord is illustrated by *AU* 764.6 when a battle between the communities of Durrow and Clonmacnoise led to the death of at least 200 men. The struggle probably related to differences in opinion over the succession of local secular rulers (Charles-Edwards 2000, 594).

²⁷⁰ There are two Kilmuns in close proximity, both in Kilchrenan parish. See gazetteer.

²⁷¹ Sharpe 1995, 77.

imposition of the Laws of Adomnán and Columba.²⁷² If this is a dedication to Sleibine, then, it comes from a period of consolidation and confirmation of Iona's power rather than from an earlier period when a network of Iona churches was first being established. The dedication would provide a nice balance to the commemoration to Columba at Kilneuair, the two being at either end of an important routeway between Loch Awe and Loch Fyne.

There is another possible dedication to Sléibíne in Argyll: Kilslevan in Kilarrow parish, Islay a site with no early sculpture, but whose scant architectural remains are thought to belong to the early medieval period.²⁷³ It remains possible, of course, that while both might be dedications to a Sléibíne, it might not be to the Iona one, and, in the case of Killevin it is possible that the dedication is not to a Sléibíne at all.

The saint Watson favoured for this site was Oíbfínd ingen Maine*, one of Brigit's holy maidens. There are two sites within 8 km dedicated to Brigit, with another in the same parish, so a dedication to an associate might seem at least feasible. How likely is it, however, that a saint who has no visible cult even in her home area, would be culted in Argyll? She is invisible in the martyrologies and the whereabouts of the church with which she is associated is unknown. A saint with a slightly higher profile is Éimíne Ros Glais* who appears in all the martyrologies (Dec 22) and even appears in the secular story tradition.²⁷⁴ Here he and his forty nine monks sacrifice their lives in order to save a Leinster king and his forty nine princes from the plague. It is possible that Killevin was dedicated to such a saint, but the evidence is hardly conclusive.

An intriguing aspect of the site is that there does seem that there was some local following of the saint, whoever she or he might have been. Evidence for this lies in a cluster of people holding the name Macileven / MacIllevin and variants in the

²⁷² eg *AU 757.9 Lex Columbe Cille la Sleibene*.

²⁷³ *Arg 5.375*, plan p 26.

²⁷⁴ Poppe 1986.

immediate area.²⁷⁵ This name does not appear to have been common and is not described by Black.²⁷⁶

It is difficult to know how to interpret the evidence of personal names, all of which is late. Were these people who bear the saint's name, whoever he or she was, office holders at the church? Did they come here, possibly in relatively modern times, because of the existence of a site bearing their patron saint's name? Some more work on this subject would be valuable. Meanwhile, there are a few points of interest about this site. Unlike most of the other sites in *cill*-, this one is mentioned nowhere in any medieval source, despite allegedly being the original parish church of Glassary. Of the church there is no trace and no mention is made anywhere of its incumbent. No settlement bears its name, not even a farm.²⁷⁷ It might be argued that the obscurity of the name Killevin makes it likely to be an early dedication, however, and there is interesting early Christian sculpture from the site.²⁷⁸ The very unusual depiction of a bearded human figure at the top of a cross-shaft may have been thought to be the patron saint, whether that was the original intention or not.

Let us return for a moment to the possibility that the site represents a dedication to the Iona abbot, Sléibíne. If we accept this, and we accept the other sites discussed as deriving from Iona, then there is a strong Columban presence in the area. To add to these must be added the lost site Cella Diuni,²⁷⁹ somewhere on Loch Awe, a site which will be discussed below. Apart from Cella Diuni, none of the links with Iona is secure, however, and there can be no certainty that the definite dedication to Columba - the one at Kilneuair - is earlier than the 14th century. The dedications have suggested possibilities, but they have not given answers. Might we have more success if we look at dedications to saints which probably do not look to Iona?

²⁷⁵ See *CoA*, 7. Several people called McIleven in 1685 (all in vicinity of Killevin - Feorlin NR9597, Minard NR9796, Gortonronoch NR9392 - and one at Kirnan NR8795). See also Begg 2002. There is a John McIllevin from Stronalbanch (now Strone 378 NR 9697) less than 2km west of Killevin.

²⁷⁶ A search on the web of various permutations of the name McIlleven produces only 4 hits in total (all McIlleven). Three members of the McIlleven family are attested around Loch Sween in the late 18th century, for example.

²⁷⁷ There may have been another place called Killevin in Argyll. The *Argyll Sasines* vol ii, 251 has a Killevin on Lismore. This may be a site otherwise known as Killelan (*Arg* 2 no 229), or it may be a site that has completely disappeared.

²⁷⁸ Fisher 2001, 148 no 63. Comparison can be made with a carving from Riasg Buidhe on Colonsay, 'and a date in the 8th or 9th century may be tentatively suggested'. *Arg* 7 no 63.

²⁷⁹ *VC* 1.31.

Kilmarie* was the parish church of Craignish, Kilmartin's neighbouring parish to the north. The saint commemorated here is Mael Ruba m. Elganaig*. This is an assertion we can be more confident about than usual as Mael Ruba is by far the best fit with the evidence from the early place-name forms, and there is only one saint who has this name. This saint came from the monastery of Bangor, and it was from there, not Iona, that he established his monastery on the Scottish north west coast at Applecross. There is good evidence that he had a successful cult in the north west and in Argyll, and he appears in all the Irish martyrologies.

This dedication belongs to the 8th century at the earliest since Mael Ruba did not die until 722.²⁸⁰ It has been suggested that the spread of his cult might reflect the growth in power of the Cenél Loairn at just this time.²⁸¹ This seems a possibility given that this is border country, perhaps newly acquired by Cenél Loairn at this time, and there is a dedication to the same saint a few km further north at Kilmelfort.²⁸² If so it might be interesting to speculate if they were re-dedications. It seems at least possible that there was a church on the Craignish peninsula much earlier, and if not at Kilmarie, then where? There are possibilities (site of Leac an Duine Chóir 365 NM 7703²⁸³) but Kilmarie remains by far the most attractive position.

The dedications to Mael Ruba in Kintyre and Islay²⁸⁴ are more difficult to explain by Cenél Loairn expansion. This does not deny the possibility of a link between the saint and Cenél Loairn; it simply implies that if that group did adopt Mael Ruba as a patron,²⁸⁵ it may not have been alone.

Another saint who may have had a link with Cenél Loairn is Comgán. The dedications to the saint in Argyll and the north west occur largely in territory that was held by Cenél

²⁸⁰ *AU* 772.1.

²⁸¹ Clancy 2002, 415-6.

²⁸² *Arg* 2 no 263.

²⁸³ *Arg* 7 no 83.

²⁸⁴ The parish church of Kilarrow, Islay is first on record in the 14th century. The site is not of particularly early medieval character and there is no early sculpture. *Arg* 5 no 359. For the lost parish church of Kilarrow in Kintyre see gazetteer.

²⁸⁵ Of Mael Ruba and Mo Luag, Clancy, in reference to their eastern distribution, writes that 'both these Gaelic saints seem to some extent to belong as patrons to one, eventually sidelined, branch of Dál Riata, and the ultimately limited scope of their cults may be testimony to this'. Clancy 2002, 416.

Loairn.²⁸⁶ In addition the Moray dynasty, which claimed descent from Cenél Loairn²⁸⁷ and which held the kingship of Scotland under Macbeth from 1040-1057, had at least one important member bearing the name Gille Comgan: Gillacomgan, son of Maelbrigde, *mormaer* of Moray appears in the Irish annals in 1032.²⁸⁸ His son Lulach Macgillecomgan, Macbeth's stepson, was briefly king of the Scots until his death in 1058.²⁸⁹

Comgán is usually presented as a Leinster saint, a connection which is highly questionable. First, the link is first made late, and it may derive simply from a need to explain the proximity of three dedications, one of which was alleged to commemorate a Leinster princess, Kentigerna. Second, Comgán's feast day is shared with another Comgan who is attested earlier and whose only known connection is with Connacht (see table of Saints). In summary we don't know where the saint commemorated at Kilchoan in Kilmartin came from, but it is possible that he was at some time taken on as patron by the Cenél Loairn, or a branch of the Cenél Loairn.

The affiliation of other saints represented in the area is even less clear. Domongart of Kildomangart* is an example of one who seems promising but ultimately yields little. The doubts about the location of the site which bears his name, and indeed about the name itself, will be discussed below, but for now we will simply look at the saint himself. The only saint of this name with any profile is a saint of northern Ireland, with - it seems - a small cult following in scattered locations in Scotland (see Saints' table).²⁹⁰ In the section on South Kintyre we looked at the possibility that the Cenél nGabrain in Kintyre may have had a relationship with the Dál nAraide (or at least some section of it) which was conducive to the establishment of ecclesiastical centres dedicated to their saints. In Domangart we may feel we have found another illustration of this pattern, but there are difficulties. Though the saint is in some places associated with the Dál

²⁸⁶ Apart from the western dedications, there is one in Kiltearn parish, Easter Ross. See map of parishes in Dioc. Ross in Alston 1999, 179. It is adjacent to the parish of Dingwall to the north and east.

²⁸⁷ Thomson D 1994, 160.

²⁸⁸ AU 1032.2 *Gilla Comgan m. Mael Brighde, mormaer Murebe, do loscadh co coecait do dainibh ime.* GC m MB was burned together with fifty people.

²⁸⁹ Barrow 1981, 27.

²⁹⁰ The *psalter of Glenorchy*, whose existence I discovered too late for proper inclusion in this thesis, has a commemoration of this saint on his feast day of Oct 20th. This is potentially very significant, given the likely Argyll provenance of the psalter.

nAraide he is also given a Dál Fiatach genealogy. At times he has been linked with the Dál Riata.

His Irish links aren't clear enough, and his *floruit* unknown.²⁹¹ If we knew more about his associations with other saints we might be helped - there is, for example, some glimpse of a relationship with Molaisse²⁹² - but there is too little information and what exists is insecure. The Scottish cult is too dispersed to tell us much about its origin, and too late; more work on this might be worth doing, however (see below). It might also be worth considering the possibility of a link with the secular Domangart, apical figure of at least part of the Dál Riata.²⁹³ Finally we have to return to the possibility that he is simply a local holy man about whom nothing is written, a man like the 'saint' of Cella Diuni, about whom nothing would be known were it not for a brief incidental mention in the Life of Columba.

Ambiguous dedications to Irish or Scottish saints leave much room for speculation about alliances with different family groups or ecclesiastical institutions at different times. This is illustrated in the section on South Kintyre, and in the case studies of Colmán Ela, Berach and Fintan Munnu. Michael, Martin and Mary, however, are the subject of devotion so universally, both in time and space, that such speculation is less tempting. It is even possible that the choice of universal saints such as these might be deliberate in a border zone such as this; they are politically neutral and show no greater intercessory favour for one particular group over another. The same might be said of Brigit, who also appears in this area (at least twice). She has, as Thomas Charles-Edwards points out, several 'constituencies' some of which are particular and local (she is a saint of Leinster and a saint of the Fothairt). She is also acclaimed as one of the saints of all the Gaels, and of all who are poor and weak.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Obit given in Annals of Four Masters is incompatible with other info.

²⁹² He is linked, genealogically with *Molaisse of Lethglenn, in one place being given a common grandfather. See table of saints.

²⁹³ Fraser 2006, 2.

²⁹⁴ Charles-Edwards 2004.

What seems to be the characteristic of a *cill-* in this area? Are there similarities between one and another?

The three parishes of this study area contain a great diversity of sites bearing the name *cill-*, as a look at the table below, and a scan through the gazetteer reveals. The evidence is difficult to interpret, and where one expects patterns one finds none.

There is variety even among the parish churches. Two - Kilmartin and Kilmichael - are still in use, and both have good collections of both early and late Medieval sculpture. Both have good sized settlement around them, to which they give their names. Kilmarie is similar in that there is both early and late sculpture on the site, but no settlement bears the name and the township nearby was modest in size. Kilneuair has no early sculpture, and only modest settlement, and yet its name suggests it may be the one of the earliest sites. At Killevin there is no settlement at all and although there is early sculpture there is nothing from the late Medieval period.

One feature common to all the parish churches is that they all consist, or have consisted, of both church and burial, as one would expect. This is not so for all *cill-* sites, however. At three sites, all of which had early Christian sculpture, there is no trace or tradition of a church. Given the likelihood that the earliest churches were almost certainly wooden it is impossible to say if this is significant or not.

Some problems

There are general problems in using the evidence from *cill-* names and dedications to saints for trying to build up a picture of development and organisation of the early church. Some specific issues which this particular geographical area highlights are problems relating to the distribution of sites, and a related problem in which the chance survival of records concerning one particular site - in this case Dunadd - tempt us to make that site the focus of all our models, perhaps blinding us to the possibility of other patterns.

The distribution of *cill*- sites

Regarding distribution of sites we are, in this area, perhaps more aware than usual of the fact that our distribution map of *cill*- sites contains important omissions. The most significant of these is *Cella Diuni*, a site said by Adomnán to be *stagno adhaerens Abae fluminis*, 'by the loch of the River Awe' and presided over by a *praepositus*.²⁹⁵ There is, in other words, a Columban foundation in our area, or possibly just a little outside, but we do not know where it is.²⁹⁶ In terms of our interest in sites relating to Dunadd, however, we do at least know that this particular *cill*- cannot have been in Dunadd's immediate vicinity; Loch Awe is some 11km away, and the River Awe is over 30km distant. Its loss is particularly regrettable as it is the only place in Scotland called by Adomnán a *cella*. Indeed he uses the term only four times in *VC*, *Cella Diuni* accounting for two of them.

Another site we know about but cannot place is Kildomongart*, a site probably, but not certainly in Glassary parish (see gazetteer). If it were not for one chance reference in a 13th century charter we would have no idea of its existence. The fact that it has disappeared from all maps and turns up in no other documentary source might lead us to believe that such a site may have been of little importance. This would be a great mistake, however, as the evidence of *Cella Diuni* proves. *Cella Diuni* is mentioned only in one source yet it was clearly of some significance to Iona, and, since it seems to have been still standing in Adomnán's day, it must have lasted for at least a hundred years.

Yet another *cill*- site which has, if I have interpreted the data correctly, been lost to modern scholarship until now is Kilmichael Beg at Castleton*. In this case there were two sites in close proximity both with the name Kilmichael Beg, and both on the northern shore of Loch Fyne.²⁹⁷ This was the case until at least the 18th century. At some point after that, one of the names ceased to be used, possibly because the settlement of that name was abandoned. All charter references to Kilmichael Beg have subsequently been assumed to refer to the one that has survived. We do not know why

²⁹⁵ *VC* i.31.

²⁹⁶ Many suggestions have been put forward as to its likely whereabouts, including Kilchrenan* or the annat nearby (Clancy 1995, 112-3) and Kilneuir* on the other side of the loch (Campbell, M pers. comm.). A reference in *AU* may, suggests, Charles-Edwards, refer to the same place (Charles-Edwards 2006, 161): *AU* 676.3 *Multi Pictores dimersi sunt i lLaind Abae*.

²⁹⁷ See gazetteer for data on both these places.

there were two places of identical name in the first place, nor do we know what their relationship was with Kilmichael Glassary though it is probable that it was in relation to this Kilmichael, an important settlement and parish church, that they were *beg*. We do know, however that the place which lost the label Kilmichael Beg has evidence of early medieval activity, and the one that retains the label has traditions of there having been a chapel and burial ground, but nothing which the *RCAHMS* were able to verify.

The three sites mentioned above, so nearly lost, alert us to the possibility of there being others which are completely lost. Early foundations, almost certainly built of wood, would not necessarily have stone carvings and would not necessarily attract settlement in their immediate vicinity. With no physical trace and no settlement to which the *cill*-name might have become attached there would be no record of the place whatsoever. It may be a particular type of site which we lose through this process - small retreats, say, dependent on larger monasteries nearby, for instance - in which case our assessment of what a *cill*- is, based on surviving evidence, will be distorted.

The dominance of Dunadd

Our attention is drawn to potentially early ecclesiastical sites in Argyll by the survival of *cill*- names and by the existence of early Christian sculpture. There is only one example (Kingarth) in our study area of a site of this type which appears in early documentary sources. For secular sites we can be more reliant on written evidence, and the focus of the annals on sieges and battles means that a good number of sites are indeed mentioned. The survival of documents is as much a victim of fortune as the survival of sites and names, however, and there is the additional in-built distortion provided by the particular preoccupations of the author. It is thus difficult to know where the most important sites in reality were.

In the case of Dunadd we can be quite confident that this site was indeed a significant one, but there were almost certainly others which have escaped the attention of the annalists. The parishes of Kilmartin, Kilmichael Glassary and Craignish are full of duns and forts, any one of which may have been home to a powerful local family, and, as Loch Glashan and Bruach an Druimmein show, settlement need not have been in defended positions nor on high ground. In exploring the relationship between secular

and ecclesiastical sites, an examination of Dunadd and its surrounding sites may be a good place to start, but in order to progress we need to look at other secular sites as potential *foci*. Kilchoan, for example, is closer to the secular site of Ardifuair (NR 789969) than it is to Dunadd, and here there was archaeological evidence of occupation and industrial activity during the early medieval period, including crucibles and E-ware. Ardifuair is also very close to Port an Deora (NR 7996) mentioned above in connection with Kilchoan's possible link with the guardianship of a saint's relics, and all three places are in Kilmartin parish, rather than Glassary where Dunadd is located.

It is very likely that Dunadd was the most important site in the area, possibly even the most important - at least at times - in Dál Riata. Even so, it may not have been occupied throughout the year, and almost certainly not continually by the king and his retinue. More likely it would have been only one of several places which the king visited on circuit, displaying his power and gathering render. If the main duty of the church was to administer pastoral provision to ordinary resident people then Dunadd as a powerful but, by its nature, intermittent focus becomes perhaps less important.

The dominance of Dunadd has a further potentially negative effect on our ability to read the ecclesiastical landscape, and that is that its undoubted strength in the 6th and 7th centuries, combined with its traditional association with Columb Cille and Iona, tends to obscure the fact that it may have been quite an insignificant place when the first of the churches were founded. As we have mentioned, the impression given by Adomnán is that Argyll was already Christian when Columb Cille arrived, and this was well before there is any archaeological evidence for a flourishing of activity on Dunadd. There must have been churches, and their position in the landscape may have made sense in relation to some other secular site, unexcavated, unrecorded and therefore invisible.

Where more research is worthwhile, and where it is not

Further concentration on the *cill*- names themselves, in particular on the different saints which might be detected as being commemorated in the names might enable us to offer more models as to how the early church around Kilmartin might have looked, but there are other lines of enquiry which I think might now be more useful.

1. Dating is crucial, and the existence of a *cill*- name is not sufficient by itself to claim an early date for a site. A plea for excavation is hardly original, but in an area which has every appearance of having been in active use in the early medieval period but whose interpretation is compromised by focus on just a few sites, a strategy of excavation which yielded accurate dates from both secular and ecclesiastical sites would be most appropriate. This, together with a thorough review of all contemporary references in the literature to relations between secular and ecclesiastical sites - in hagiography and in secular tales as well as in prescriptive texts such as canons and laws - would do much to enhance our understanding of this extraordinarily rich landscape.
2. A study of the differences between Ireland and Scotland regarding the use of *cill*- + universal saint would be most valuable. It may be that this could be shown to be a late development. Michael, Martin and Brigit were very popular in Scottish tradition, throughout the medieval period and into the modern, making it very difficult to date these dedications.
3. Our understanding of devotion to saints in general, not specifically in the early medieval period, would be enhanced by a study of the relationship between *cill*-names and personal names. This is discussed more widely elsewhere in this thesis but a few examples from this area can be highlighted. First there is the incidence already discussed of the unusual name MacIlevin in settlements near Killevin. Second there is a cluster of people with the name MacIlmun in Glassary and around Loch Awe,²⁹⁸ not far from the two Kilmuns in the parishes of Kilchrenan and Inveraray (both of which border Glassary) and close to Campbell heartland. Third there is, according to Black, a small sept called MacIledhonagart near Benderloch.²⁹⁹ Given the existence of the name Kildomongart somewhere in Glassary (probably) it would be worth asking if the personal name occurs there too. Fourth there is some evidence of people with a name deriving from saint Faelán living in the vicinity of St Fillan's well in Craignish parish.³⁰⁰ If this was found to be more than coincidence it would

²⁹⁸ *CoA*, 7-8. 7 men of this name are listed.

²⁹⁹ Black 1946, 513.

³⁰⁰ OS pf 365 NM7906. Donald McLalan 1592 is witness for Ronald Campbell of Barrichbeyan (OS pf 365 NM 8007). Black 1946, 470. There is a *John Mcilelan* at *Barinleanich, Craignes paroch* 1685. *CoA*, 9.

strengthen the case for the existence of an otherwise unknown cult of this saint in the area. It would also add another instance of a dedication to Fáelán occurring close to a dedication to Comgán,³⁰¹ and one might also see a dedication to Kentigerna at Kilmaha on Loch Awe. These three saints (Comgán, Fáelán and Kentigerna) appear together in stories from at least the 16th century, in particular in the Aberdeen Breviary.³⁰²

This is an extraordinary area, rich in early Medieval remains, both ecclesiastical and secular. These remains together with the evidence of *cill*- names enables us to picture a sophisticated, literate society with wide-spread links to other parts of Britain and to Europe. The detail of church organisation remains elusive, however, and while further work may achieve some refinement, the limitations of *cill*- names and dedications to saints as tools in this endeavour can here be acknowledged.

³⁰¹ See discussion of Comgán in saints' table.

³⁰² Taylor 2001a for discussion. It is interesting, in the context of the link between Fáelán and Comgán, that two men associated in the 1590s with Ronald Campbell of Barrichbeyan (a settlement less than 2km ne of St Fillan's well) are called Donald McIllichuan (Black 1046, 511) and Donald McLalan (Black 1946, 470).

Cill- names in Kilmartin, Glassary and Craignish

Place-name	Church?	Burial?	Earliest Structure	Early Medieval Sculpture	Late Medieval Sculpture	Earliest ref.	Note
Kilmartin parish							
Kilchiaran	n	y	remains of early Med. occupation	7-8 th c ogham	n	1929	
Kilchoan	n	y	no remains	n	n	1559	
Kilmartin	y	y	1836	One cross, 3 slabs	large collection	1323	
Craignish parish							
Kilbride	site of?	site of?	no remains	n	n	1621	Marked as site of chapel and burial ground on OS 1 st ed.
Kilmarie	y	y	13 th c. 14.5m x 6.1	2 slabs	31 items	1440	
Glassary parish							
Kilbride (Rhudil)	y	n	13 th c. 11.1m x 5.1	2 cross frags	n	1563	enclosure c30m diameter
Kilbride (LochGair)	y	y	?	n	n	1617	small enclosure (site of original church?) within larger
Kildomangart	?	?	?	?	?	1240	lost
Killevin	y	y	nothing	2	n	1849	
Kilmachumag	y	?	?	?	?	1632	lost
Kilmichael Beg (Minard)	y?	y?	no remains	?	?	1571	
Kilmichael Beg (Castleton)	?	y	nothing	one	n	1539	
Kilmichael Glassary	y	y	1870s	one slab	29 items	1315	7 th c bell
Kilmory	y	y	mid 19 th c burial enclosure	n	n	1230x 1246	
Kilnestrur	?	?	nothing	n	n	1651	
Kilneuir	y	y	13 th c. 21m x 5.6	n	four	1394	

A 'n' means there is no evidence for a church / burial / sculpture. A '?' means that the characteristics and contents of the site are unknown because the site has not been located (as in the case of Kilbride). A 'y?' means that there is evidence that might be interpreted as indicating the presence of church / burial / sculpture, but that other interpretations are possible.

3.4 The Island of Bute

The island of Bute is a tempting target for research into the development of the early church: Kingarth, its chief ecclesiastical site, has more early Irish annal references than anywhere else in Scotland other than Iona, and there are important assemblages of early Christian sculpture on the nearby island of Inchmarnock and at Kingarth itself. Nevertheless, as Aidan Macdonald observed in 1998, 'Uncertainties abound: in the broader context, we do not know the position or connections of the church of Kingarth in relation to the churches of Dál Riata, or Strathclyde, or other British or Gaelic churches of the south-west.'³⁰³

Since Macdonald wrote, at least one scholar has made a case for quite specific geographic and political contacts for Kingarth in the early period, drawing mostly from documentary sources. An argument put forward by James Fraser, for example, is that Kingarth was the ecclesiastical focus for the Cenél Comgaill who, he claims, held Bute as part of their territory and who were probably for a time the most powerful of the *cenéla* among the Dál Riata. It is also possible that they were in some kind of alliance with the Britons of Clyde rock.³⁰⁴ In this chapter we will ask whether evidence from dedications to saints on Bute is able either to confirm or deny such theories. Starting with a detailed examination of some of the key *cill*- names and the saints with which they are, or might be, associated, we may find that ultimately not only do they not help, but that they create even greater confusion. Perhaps there are other models which are better able to explain the pattern of dedications or perhaps we must fall back on Macdonald's abounding uncertainties.

The dedications on Bute are numerous and represent a variety of saints from the British and Irish, such as Ninian and Ciarán, to the universal saints such as Mary and Michael. There are 11 names which contain the element *cill*- plus a personal name, and at least 5 others which apparently contain the name of a saint in conjunction with an element other than *cill*-. Before looking at what, if anything, this particular pattern of dedications might imply, we will look at a selection of sites in detail. Is it possible to be certain which saint is represented at any of these sites? What do we know of that saint's

³⁰³ Aidan Macdonald in Laing *et al.* 1998, 554.

³⁰⁴ Frazer 2005.

cult in Scotland? Are we able to say with any certainty that either the name of the site, or the site itself, is early?

Kingarth, Kilblane and Kilchattan

An investigation of the early church in Bute must begin with Kingarth. This does not look like a name in *cill-*, but for at least part of its history it seems to have been called Kilblane, as we shall see. Kingarth is one of the few ecclesiastical foundations given an early mention in Irish sources, and one of the few Scottish place-names attested as early as the eighth century. There are references in the Irish Annals to bishops, priests and abbots of Kingarth of the seventh and eighth centuries³⁰⁵, and under Aug 10 in the main text of the Martyrology of Oengus of around the beginning of the 9th century there is this:

*Croch lán Laurint deochain
dia chorpán ba calad:
la slúag slán sóer sodath
Bláán cáin Cinn Garad³⁰⁶*

The Martyrology of Tallaght has the following:

Blaani episcopi Cind Garad i nGallgaedelaib³⁰⁷

And in 1204 the name appears in a charter in which Alan the Steward grants lands and privileges to Paisley:

....ecclesiam de Kengaif in insula de Bote, cum omnibus capellis et tota parochia ejusdem insule, et cum tota terra quam Sanctus Blanissicum dicitur [Sanctus Blanus per sicum, ut dicitur?] olim cinxit a mare usque ad mare, per

³⁰⁵ AT 659 (assumed date) *Daniel espoc Cind garadh* [reposed]; AU 689.1 *Iolan episcopus Cinn Garath obiit*; AU 737.1 *Mors Ronain abbatis Cinn Garadh*; AU 776.6 *Mors Mele Manach abbatis Cinn Garadh*; AU 790.1 *Mors Noe abbatis Cinn Garadh*.

³⁰⁶ 'The full cross of Laurence the deacon, to his poor body was hard: with a sound, noble, well-coloured host, fair Bláán of Cenn Garad.' Stokes 1905, 175.

³⁰⁷ '[festival of] Blaán, bishop of Kingarth in Gall-Ghàidheil.' The mention of the *Gallgaedelaib* makes this one of the entries which shows that entries were made into *MT* at least until the early 10th century. See above, 1.5.

*metas certas et apparentes, ita libere et quiete sicut aliqua ecclesia in toto regno
Scotie tenetur liberius et quietus....*³⁰⁸

The changes over time in how this name was used are worth looking at, in particular in relation to two other ecclesiastical names - the ones which contain within them the names of two of Bute's most celebrated saints, Blaan and Catán.

The name Kingarth (< *Cenn Garad*) means bushy headland or head of a copse/thicket (*gar* (nom), *garad* (gen.)).³⁰⁹ It was then applied to a monastery - one whose territory extended over a good section of southern Bute (possibly that bounded by the marker referred to by Alan the Steward). It then seems to have been applied to a parish covering the whole island, and then to a parish covering roughly half the island. It is now the name of a tiny settlement, some 3km north of the ecclesiastical remains.

Note that the term Kingarth does not seem to have applied directly to a church building and, interestingly, it has not lasted as the name applied to the monastic complex as a whole. These remains consist of a 12th century church - 'a nave-and-chancel building with Romanesque ornament' within a *vallum* and, in the two graveyards, several early and later medieval carved stones³¹⁰. They are now marked on the OS Pathfinder as 'Remains of Monastery and St Blain's Church.'

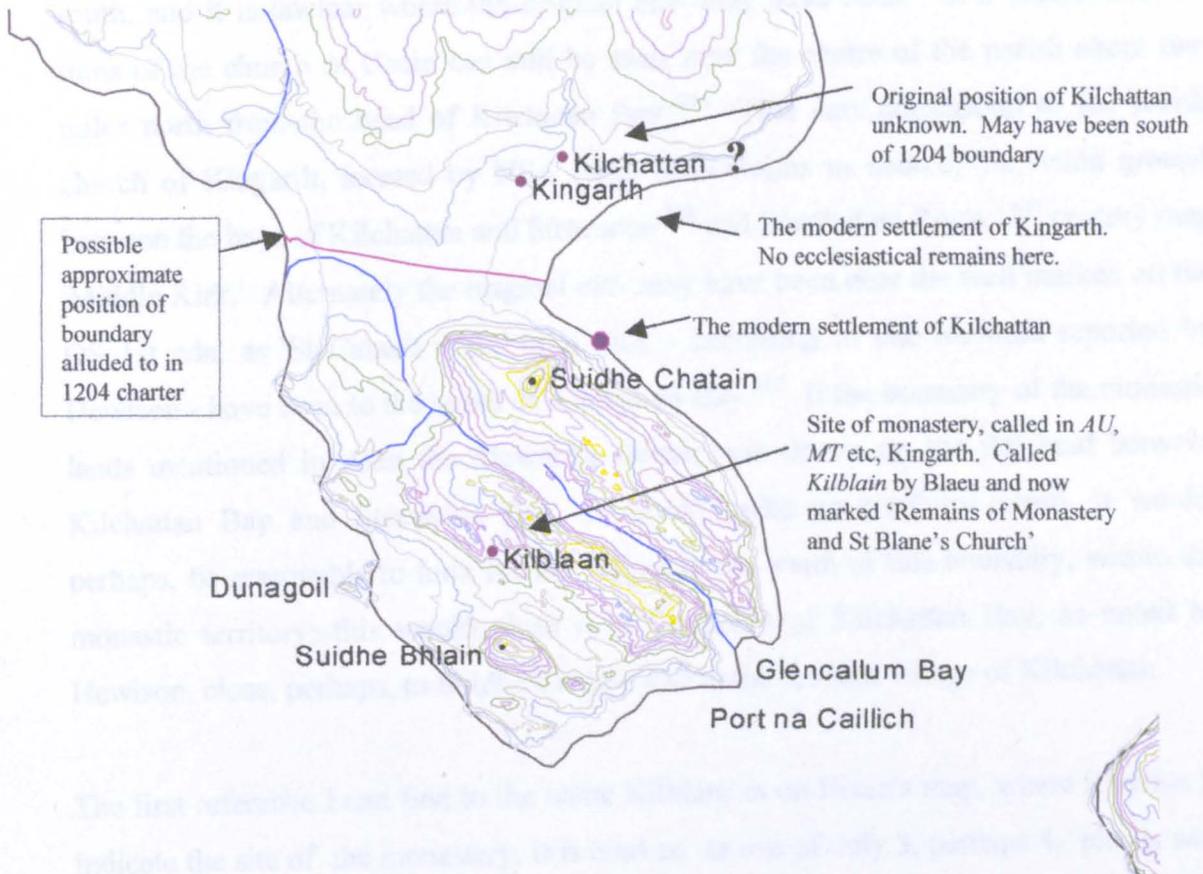
Within a few kilometres of these remains have been two names in *cill*:- Kilchattan and Kilblane. Both of these names have moved about over time, and one - Kilblane - has now disappeared.

³⁰⁸ He grants 'the church of Kengaif in the isle of Bote, with all the chapels and with the whole jurisdiction [parish] of the same isle, and with the whole land which St Blaan, it is said, formerly girded across country [or, by a syke] from sea even to sea, by boundaries secure and visible, so that freely and quietly as any church in the whole kingdom of Scotland it shall be held more free and peaceable.' *Reg. de Pass.*, 15. Square brackets are in pub. ed. of *Reg. de Pass.* Translation Hewison 1893, 285.

³⁰⁹ Macquarrie 2001, 114. Watson 1926 does not directly give derivation of Kingarth. He mentions it three times, spelling it *Cend-garad* (p 173), *Cenn Garadh* (p 309) and *Cenn Garad* (p 470). He suggests (p 470), by extrapolation from other names, that it comes from *gar* (?meaning), which is connected with *garadh* meaning a den or copse. It can't (or at least the other names containing this element can't) come direct from *garadh* because the genitive in the place-name seems to be *garadh* (the correct genitive for *gar*) while the genitive of *garadh* is *garaidh*. NSA, on the other hand, declares that Kingarth 'takes its name from a promontory forming its extreme point to the south, called in the Gaelic language *Ceann Garbh*, which signifies *stormy end*, or *stormy head*.' This, presumably, corresponds to Blaeu's *Garoch Head*, in the same position.

³¹⁰ Fisher 2001, 73. See also Laing *et al.* 1998.

Bute - southern tip



1 0 1 2 Kilometers



The first reference to the name Kilchattan is 1440, by which time it already represents two estates;³¹¹ these two, *Kilchattan beg* and *Kilchattan M*, appear on Blaeu's map (1654), but neither has a church logo. A church dedicated to Catán is mentioned by Martin Martin (1695) but not by Monro (1549),³¹² and Colgan (1645) says that *Killicathan* on Bute is the place where Catán is buried.³¹³ The name Kilchattan is now applied to a bay, a bridge, a village and to three farms (Little Kilchattan, Meikle Kilchattan and Meikle Kilchattan Butts). These cover an area of three km north to south, and it is unclear where the original *cill-* may have been. *OPS* claims that the ruins of the church of Catán can still be seen 'near the centre of the parish about two miles north from the head of Kilchattan Bay.'³¹⁴ This may correspond to the parish church of Kingarth, located by NSA (who *OPS* claims as source) 'on rising ground between the bays of Kilchattan and Stravanan'³¹⁵ and labelled on Roy's 18th century map 'Middle Kirk.' Alternately the original *cill-* may have been near the well marked on the OS 1st edn. as 'St Catan's well,' or it may - according to one tradition reported by Hewison - have been to the south of Kilchattan Bay.³¹⁶ If the boundary of the monastic lands mentioned in Alan the Steward's charter was drawn on the flat land between Kilchattan Bay and Stravanna Bay, as would make geographical sense, it would, perhaps, be reasonable to look for the chapel to the south of this boundary, within the monastic territory; this would place it to the south of Kilchattan Bay, as noted by Hewison, close, perhaps, to Suidhe Chatain and to the modern village of Kilchattan.

The first reference I can find to the name Kilblane is on Blaeu's map, where it seems to indicate the site of the monastery. It is marked as one of only 3, perhaps 4, places with the church symbol.³¹⁷ The name does not appear in *OPS*, and in a papal letter of 1394 there is a reference to 'the parish church of St Blaen de Kyngarth' but not to the name Kilblane.³¹⁸ As with Catán, Blaen is mentioned by Martin Martin but not by Monro,

³¹¹ *Kilyecatanbeg, Kilyecatanmor* 1440 *ER* vol 5, 79.

³¹² 'The churches here are as follow: Kilmichael, Kilblain, and Kil-Chattan, in the South Parish; and Lady Kirk in Rothessay is the most northerly parish.' Martin Martin, 252. Monro has this: 'In this ile ther is twa parochie kirks, that are southe callit the kirk of Bride, the uthor northe in the Borrowstone of Buitt, with twa chappells, one of them above the towne of Buitt, the uthor under the forsaid castle of Kames.' p 486-7

³¹³ Colgan 1645 *ASH* vol 1, 233.

³¹⁴ *OPS*, 211.

³¹⁵ *NSA*, 88.

³¹⁶ Hewison 1893, 137.

³¹⁷ Churches are sometimes marked with a cross, but this is not always clear. The Bute map shows clear crosses at *Kilblain*, *Marg na heglisk* and *Lady Kirck*. There may be one at Ascog.

³¹⁸ *Papal lett Clem VII*, 197.

who confuses the issue by proclaiming the parish church of the southern part of Bute to be dedicated to Bridget. The name Kilblane has now disappeared altogether.

To sum up the above then: Kingarth is a name applied to a monastic site of considerable importance - a monastery whose clerics are noticed in the annals from the 7th century. The name seems, by the early 13th century, to be applied to a parish - probably covering the whole of Bute - but not to the site of religious focus which instead finds attached to it the name of Saint Blaán. By the early 14th century the parish name Kingarth applies only to the southern of the two parishes in Bute, the other being known as Rothesay, or simply Bute³¹⁹. The name Kilblain (as opposed to St Blaán's) is first found attached to the supposed monastic site at a relatively late date (1646 Blaeu)³²⁰, a fact which might be explained in one of two ways: a) It is a late coinage, created because of persistent associations between the site and St Blaán; b) It is a genuinely early coinage possibly referring to a chapel within the monastery as a whole and the reason it is not mentioned in early documents is because it never applied to a farm or lands and no-one lived there. The name Kilchattan, meanwhile, is found in compound form over a wide area. The location of the burial ground of that name is not known and although a site of the church is given in *OPS* this cannot be regarded with any security as the site of the original *cill*- which may have been obscured by the modern village of Kilchattan.

St Blaán and St Catán

As for Blaán and Catán, can we discover anything about these saints or their cults which throws any light on the ecclesiastical history of Bute and its relationship with other places? Blaán is first noted in a 9th century Irish martyrology, as mentioned above, on August 10. He is not, however, noticed in *AU*, nor any of the annals making up the *Chronicle of Ireland*.³²¹ A *Blane* also appears in the Dunkeld Litany, a document which may have a 9th century core,³²² after *Mirine* and before *Baithene, Segene, Adamnane*.

³¹⁹ *OPS*, 221. *Chronicle of Man and the Isles* records that in 1321 Alan bishop of the Isles is buried in the church of the Virgin Mary of Rothersay.

³²⁰ It is, however, possible that the 1394 reference to 'the parish church of St Blaán' mentioned above corresponds to a Gaelic *Cill Blaán*.

³²¹ Charles-Edwards 2006. Blaán is absent from the comprehensive index of persons in vol ii.

³²² See above, 1.5.

The name Dunblane appears in the Chronicle of the Kings of Alba,³²³ possibly indicating the presence of a cult of Blaan in Perthshire at least by the second half of the 10th century.

Notes in two of the manuscripts of the Martyrology of Oengus add that Blaan was a bishop and that his main seat was in Dunblane.³²⁴

Bláán .i. Balaan [sic] epscop Cinn garad hi nGallgaidelaib. RB505.

.i. espoc Chinn garadh 7 Dul Blaan a primhchathair 7 o Chinn garadh dó .i. a n-Gallgaidelaib. F.

The Martyrology of Gorman (c1170) describes him as *Blaan buadach Bretan*, Victorious Bláán of the Britons, and another possible 12th century source - the Drummond Calendar - has, again on 10th Aug, *in Britannia confessoris Blaain*.³²⁵

Around the same time or later, a life of Molaisse³²⁶, which according to Kenney is 'a late and unsatisfactory production - probably not earlier than the 12th century' says a *Blaanus* was an uncle to Molaisse, that Molaisse was son of *Gemma* the daughter of *Edanus, rex Scotie*³²⁷ and that Molaisse set up on an island *inter Britanniam et Scociam*³²⁸. Sharpe dates this to the late 13th century 'probably'³²⁹. Blaan also makes a brief appearance in the Irish Life of Colmán Ela as a spectator with other saints, including *Odhran* and *Mernag*, when a monster is killed in the lake at Lann Ela.³³⁰

Bower writes that '*Columba in Dumblan' et Blaanus in Botha insula tumulantur*³³¹
This Columba, according to Bower's account, was the dead son of an English king, who

³²³ Anderson 1973, 250. *Britanni autem concremaverunt Dulblaán*. The *dul*, meadow, later became assimilated to the more familiar *dun*, fortress.

³²⁴ Both probably go back to an annotated version of the late 12th century. Ó Riain 2001, 235.

³²⁵ Ó Riain 2002, 86. Ó Riain notes that where *FO* commentary has *Alba*, the Martyrology of Drummond, which uses the commentary as a source, has *Britannia*. *Ibid*, 72.

³²⁶ Heist 1965, 340-343.

³²⁷ This is probably supposed to be Áedán m Gabráin.

³²⁸ It has been suggested that this is Holy Island, off Lamlash, Arran. Lamlash, a contraction of Eilean MoLaisse, was originally the name of the island (Watson 1926, 306).

³²⁹ Sharpe 1991, 395.

³³⁰ Plummer 1922 i, 169, ii, 163.

³³¹ *Chron. Bower (Watt)* vol vi, 60, 221-2 (bk 11 ch 21).

was brought back to life, baptised and named Columba by Blaan. The king, in gratitude, gave Blaan lands 'in Anglia': (*Appilbi* [probably Appelby in Westmoreland³³²], *Congere, Troclingham and Malemath*). Macquarrie reads this tradition as an attempt to link Dunblane and Kingarth (a Columba of Kingarth³³³ is commemorated in the Irish martyrologies) and to justify Dunblane's hold over lands in northern England centred on Appelby.³³⁴ We will return to this Columba later (p 203).

The next account is the Aberdeen Breviary, Aug 10, dating from 1509-10, which has the following:

'Blaan was born in the Isle of Bute; his mother was Ertha sister of the bishop St Cattán, and they drew their parentage from a noble Irish race. He spent seven years in Ireland receiving the light of the Christian religion from the holy bishops Comgall and Kenneth; and excelling in ecclesiastical discipline, he soldiered in the church of God as a brave warrior in the fight. After seven years he appeared with his mother in the island of his birth, miraculously brought there from Ireland in a boat without sail or oars.'³³⁵

There are other readings, and allusions to events in Blaan's life which make it probable that there was a *vita*,³³⁶ now lost, underlying the record of the Aberdeen Breviary. This may be the life of Blaan (or its source) alluded to by Colgan in 1645, who gleaned his information from Dempster, a writer whose reliability is questionable.³³⁷ The life referred to was apparently written by George Newton, Archdeacon of Dunblane.³³⁸

³³² Macquarrie 2001, 115.

³³³ A Columba of Kingarth appears in several martyrologies, but not *FO*:

MT, March 1st: *Columbae Cinn Garah* - '[Festival] of Columba of Kingarth'

MG, March 1st: *Colum Caemfial* - 'Colum the gently-modest', with note Cinn Garadh 'of Kingarth'.

MDo, March 1st: 'Colum of Kingarth'. There is also a *Colum*, glossed *mac Bláan*, in *MG* on Sept 2nd (this day is missing in *MT*). It is possible this is a commemoration of the same saint. The gloss may reflect a tradition of his connection with Kingarth, rather than a real blood relationship with Blaan.

³³⁴ Macquarrie 2001, 115. A similar story in *Ab. Brev.* is located in England but the child's name is not given (Macquarrie 2001, 124-5 (Latin) p 132 (English translation)).

³³⁵ *Ab. Brev.* ii, 3, 77. Translation is from Macquarrie 2001, 130. See also Anderson 1922, 177.

³³⁶ 'A date in the tenth or eleventh century would possibly fit best; certainty seems impossible' Macquarrie 2001, 115.

³³⁷ It is interesting that Colgan quotes Dempster at all given advice from his fellow scholars. Stephen White, in a letter to John Colgan of 1630, for example, writes of schemes for 'diminishing the credit of our adversaries, Dempster, Chambers, Boece, Major, Buchanan, etc.' Sharpe 1991, 60.

³³⁸ Cockburn J H 1954, *The Celtic Church of Dunblane*, 69. Newton was archdeacon of Dunblane Cathedral from 1521 until his death in 1533 (Fraser 2005, 114 n55). Dempster's *Menologium Scotorum* is printed in Forbes 1872, 172-229.

Colgan notes, presumably drawing indirectly from the life, that Blaan's uncle, Catán is buried on Bute at *Kill-cathan*, and that though hagiologists celebrate him on Feb 1st he has another feast in Scotland, May 17th.³³⁹

What we really know of the life of Blaan is adequately expressed by Hewison in 1893 - 'Of Blaan's life in Bute we know absolutely nothing',³⁴⁰ though this did not, of course, mean nothing was said about it, for - as the writer of the first Statistical Account (1790s) observes - tradition adds 'many particulars respecting him grossly fabulous and not deserving to be recorded'.³⁴¹ Though the traces of his cult remain in place-names around Scotland, we do not know where he was born, where he died nor when he lived. Although he is first attested, around 800, as bishop of Kingarth, there is no reason to suppose he did not spend a large part of his life elsewhere - Dunblane for example.³⁴²

Of Catán we know even less. There is no Catán in the main text of *FO*, nor in *MT* and he is not in the Dunkeld litany. He appears nowhere in the *scholia* to *FO*, nor in the Drummond calendar and does not appear in a 13th c Paris psalter, whose patron was probably Scottish, despite the presence of Blaan, Brendan, and Fintan Munnu - saints whose cults are notably local to Bute and Cowal.³⁴³ Blaan appears in the Life of Molaisse, as we have seen, but Catán does not.

His first mention in an Irish source is in the Martyrology of Gorman on 1st Feb as *Cattan trednach tennócc*, Cattán the abstinent, stern warrior / virgin, with a gloss saying *aitte Blaain*, Bláán's tutor or foster-father. This is the first link to be made between Blaan and Catán - about 1170 if Ó Riain is right in suggesting that the glosses and main text of *MG* are contemporary.³⁴⁴ Most of the information on Irish saints in *MG* comes

³³⁹ *sed hoc vel eius festum scoto-britanni die 17 May ferunt celebrari*. Colgan 1645, 233. The date of May 17th might have been a date of convenience for the Stewarts of Bute as it was the day after the feast of their patron St Brendan and the family are often to be found on Bute at this time.

³⁴⁰ Hewison 1893, 172.

³⁴¹ *SA*, 84.

³⁴² By way of comparison, the Colmán who we know from Bede to have been associated with Iona and Lindisfarne and who only latterly returned to Ireland is commemorated in *FO* Aug 8 as *Colmán epscop aille*, / *ó Inis Bó Finde*. If we did not happen to have the testimony of Bede we would have an unbalanced view of the whereabouts of his primary *locus* of activity.

³⁴³ Psalter produced in Paris in the early 13th c for a patron with particular interest in saints of the Clyde and Argyll. Boardman, forthcoming. Note, however, his point that much of the calendar is missing, including Feb 1; it is therefore possible he was commemorated there (the Irish date) rather than at May 17 (the Scottish). Manuscript is Bodleian Library MS Douce 50. It is commented on in Glenn 1998.

³⁴⁴ Ó Riain 2006. See 1.5.

from *MT*, but in this case, the author must have used another source (or possibly another version of *MT*).

The first attempt to link this unlocalised Catán to a genealogy is the comment in *MDo*: 'There is a Catan, son of Madan, of the race of Irial, son of Conall Cernach, who is of the Clanna-Rudhraighe'. The same broad genealogy is given by Colgan in *ASH* who appears more certain.³⁴⁵ It is possible that he got his information from Newton / Dempster from whom he certainly drew, but it is more likely, I think, that he is simply repeating, with more emphasis, what O'Clery suggested. The genealogy corresponds to an entry in *CGSH Rec. Mai* in which Catán appears among the saints of the Dál nAraide.³⁴⁶ He is descended from 'Cronnd who was a druid' (*Cruind Ba Drui*), ancestor of the Ulster Cruithne. In *CGSH Rec. Met.* he appears in a group headed by Comgall of Bangor, and in the company of such saints as Ulltan Aird Breacain, Molaise Daimhinse and Epscop Iubair mac Lughna.³⁴⁷

Catán is not celebrated on Feb 1st in any Scottish calendar printed by Forbes, nor in any fairs on that date, as far as I know.³⁴⁸ He does, however, appear on May 17th in Dempster, as already mentioned, and in Camerarius (the two are often in agreement).³⁴⁹

It seems to me impossible on this evidence to say for certain either if the Catán celebrated in Scotland was connected in any way with the Dál nAraide or even if he was of Irish origin. Blaán's links with Ireland are even more tenuous. Blaán appears in Irish martyrologies of the 9th and 10th centuries, linked solely to Scotland, and in the Dunkeld litany of possibly the same time, but he is not sufficiently important, or perhaps familiar, in Ireland by the 12th century to have a genealogy. If genealogies

³⁴⁵ Colgan 1645, Feb 1, p 233. *Patre ortus Madane regia prosapia inter Dalaradios oriundo. Fuit enim Madamus Calbhadii Dalaradiae principis & vltimi Hiberniae ex sua familia Regis ex Bracano filio nepos.* [Catán was] born of his father Madan, springing from a royal lineage among the Dál nAraide. For Madan was grandson of Caelbad (through Bracan his son) prince of Dál nAraide and last king of Ireland from his family.

³⁴⁶ Catan m. Matain m. Braccain m. Caelbaid m. Cruind Ba Drui (*CGSH Rec. Mai.* - Ó Riain 1985 no 102). See saints' table.

³⁴⁷ *Rec. Met.* - Ó Riain 1985 no 662.211.

³⁴⁸ Forbes 1872. He does not appear on 12th December either, the date on which another unlocalised Catán appears in *MG* and *MDo*.

³⁴⁹ *Insula Buta Cathani episcopi, qui S. Blani ex Bertha sorore avunculus, unde Kilcathan locus dictus.* Georg. Newton. Dempster 17th May, Forbes 1872, 200.

Sanctus Cathanus Episcopus in Buta Scotiae Insula Camerarius 17th May, Forbes 1872, 237.

were often created to explain the location of cult, as argued convincingly by Ó Riain³⁵⁰, then one might suggest that the cult of Blaán may have been weak in Ireland, or non-existent.³⁵¹ He appears in two *vitae* of Irish saints, Molaisse and Colmán Ela; in both cases there is a Scottish connection, suggesting that it was in this context that he was principally known.³⁵²

The relationship between Blaán and Catán is interesting. The genealogical link may well be artificial³⁵³, but there is no doubting the proximity of dedications to these two saints in at least two locations, possibly three. In South Kintyre the former parish church of Kilblane* is less than 3 km from Kilchattan* and there is a similarly close relationship in Bute as we have seen. There are other Kilchattans in Argyll on Colonsay, Gigha, Islay and Luing (all islands, 3 former parish churches) and one other Kilblane near Inveraray. Unfortunately the earliest date for any of these names is very late, the first being Kilchattan on Bute in 1440. The earliest date in Argyll recording a dedication to Catán is Ardchattan near Benderloch. Here there is a rector of late 13th c³⁵⁴ and a 13th century seal.³⁵⁵ It is not in my mind certain that Ardchattan genuinely began as a commemoration of a saint called Catán (though it seems to have come to be understood as such).³⁵⁶ Catán, like Blane, is also commemorated in central Scotland. There is, for example a chapel dedicated to Catán at Aberuthven in Dunblane diocese, Perthshire for which there is an attestation in 1198: *ecclesia Sancti Catani de Aberruthven*.³⁵⁷ Here we may again be seeing Blaán and Catán together, since Muthill,

³⁵⁰ Ó Riain 1985, xvi.

³⁵¹ The name possibly appears in Ireland, however, in Taughblane townland which is church land in the parish of Hillsborough Co. Down, and which might come from *Teach Blaán*, St Blaán's church (Kay Muhr, pers. comm).

³⁵² Irish Life of Colmán Ela ch. 8, Plummer 1922 vol 1, 169. Latin Life of Molaisse ch. 3, Heist 1965, 341.

³⁵³ In the absence of any tradition of his origin, a link with a northern Irish saint of royal blood with connections with Bangor would be an attractive choice, given the provenance of Moluog and Maelrubha and the Bangor links of St Mirrine of Paisley.

³⁵⁴ 'Pieres the prior of Ercattan' in 1296 (Ragman Rolls, 117 via OPS, 149). This, though, does not necessarily mean a saint called Catán was perceived to be in the name, which might derive from the G. word for small cat (Dwelly, 173). There is, however, a reference to *Martinus Prior de S^o Kattans* in 1371 (HP vol ii, 147 drawing from a Macfarlane transcript in Adv. Bib, Oct 12 1371). A papal letter of 1395 has a similar reference - 'Martin Filani, prior of St Cathani' (*Papal Lett Ben XIII*, 41).

³⁵⁵ SIGILL CONVENTUS DE ARDKATAN IN ARGADIA (OPS, 153n).

³⁵⁶ The dedication of the priory of Ardchattan (founded c1230) was to Mary and John the Baptist and the former name of the parish appears to commemorate a saint called Boadán (Watson 1926, 122). Clan Chattan make various conflicting claims about the origin of the clan name, one of which is that it derives from a baillie of Archattan named after the saint, but rival claims over which family is the true Clan Chattan and where their origin might be makes this kind of history confusing and unreliable.

³⁵⁷ Watson 1926, 277.

the former cathedral church before the see was moved to Dunblane³⁵⁸ is about 10km NNW of Aberuthven, and Dunblane itself is about 20km SW.

What then, in sum, do we know of these two saints? References from two early ninth century Irish martyrologies suggest that Blaán was, at least by then, a figure of some importance, connected, as bishop, with Kingarth on Bute. By at least the second half of the tenth century a place comes on record which seems to contain the name Blaán - Dunblane - and by the 12th century links between this Dunblane and the Blaán of Kingarth are being made. Of his origin we know nothing, except for what we might infer from a 13th century life of Molaisse, and what we are told in 15th and 16th century accounts, possibly drawing from a lost earlier *vita*. The former says that a Blaán was uncle to Molaisse and the latter says he was illegitimate and related to a saint of Irish origin called Catán.

There are several Catáns in the Irish record. The one who has been tentatively attached to Blaán is a saint of the Dál nAraide, but there are other possibilities.³⁵⁹ In fact we have as little idea who the Catan was as the 17th century author of *MDo*. It is possible he was a saint of local origin, probably somewhere in Argyll. The pattern of dedications suggests that the cults of Blaán and Catán travelled together.³⁶⁰ We do not know what the real relationship of the saints are. It is even possible that there was none. The proximity of dedications in Bute may have led to stories of association which in turn led to dedications being made together elsewhere; the pattern of dedication in Argyll and Bute with Kilchattan and Kilblane together also in South Kintyre could even be coincidence - with 5 dedications to Catán and 3 to Blaán it is not impossible that the two should appear together more than once (Ciarán and Catán also appear together in three instances and nothing is made of that).³⁶¹

The sum of the foregoing is rather depressing as regards our understanding of the early ecclesiastical history of Bute. The two *cill*- sites have proved elusive. We do not even

³⁵⁸ Macquarrie 2001, 116-7.

³⁵⁹ eg Catán of Tamlacht Arda, a Patrician saint.

³⁶⁰ But the cult of Blaán is found by itself in Ayrshire / Dumfries which is where it was ultimately most popular giving rise to many people of the name MacBlain < *Mac Gille Blaán* (see Black 1946, 485). It may be that the cult of Blaán, along with that of several other saints in Kintyre, was an import from Argyll. Woolf 2004, 99.

³⁶¹ Bute, Islay, Southend.

know where either of them was: the original Kilchattan could be anywhere within a 3 km area and Kilblane may have originally indicated a chapel or it may simply be a late alternative to the name Kingarth. Of the saints we know that Blaán was associated with Kingarth by the 9th century but we do not know his origin nor when he lived. Catán is a saint with a cult widely spread over the islands of Argyll and elsewhere. He is associated with Blaán by the 12th century by which time his cult is visible, along with Blaán's, in central Scotland.³⁶² Again we do not know his origins though he was given a royal northern Irish pedigree in line with several other saints who were popular in Scotland in the middle ages.

The challenge of some other Bute *cill*- names

Having tackled two *cill*-sites whose original whereabouts and character are unrecoverable, and whose saints, though well known in popular tradition, are found to be quite opaque in terms of origin or affinity, we will now look to see if there are any sites or saints which might reveal any insights into Bute's early ecclesiastical or political history which might be more helpful. If the answer is negative are there other things we might learn from such a study?

Kildavanan is a site which presents some different challenges but whose obscure name, and the possible presence of the affectionate *do*- in the saint's name, might suggest an early date. The first attestation of the name is earlier than is the case with Kilblane and Kilchattan, but there are no traditions as to who the saint might be, and the name has been applied to two separate ecclesiastical sites.

The earliest form found so far is from a late 13th century charter in the Paisley Register in which a *Douenald<us> cleric<us> de Kildufbenin* is named as a witness.³⁶³ The next form is *Kyldavanan* in 1429, with *Kilmavanane* in 1466 and *Kildovanane* in 1610.³⁶⁴ It appears from most early forms of the name that this is a personal name with the affectionate *mo/do* though the earliest form, *Kildufbenin*, might suggest that the first

³⁶² It is also possible that it is a completely separate individual, also called Catán, that is represented there.

³⁶³ It is not certain that Kildavanan is meant, but the fact that the neighbouring witness, *Ferchar filio Nigilli de Buyt*, is from Bute perhaps makes it more likely. *Reg. de Pass.*, 128.

³⁶⁴ For full list of forms see gazetteer.

element in the personal name is G. *dubh*.³⁶⁵ The last syllable is insecure, with *Kildauanach* on Blaeu and *Kildavanna* on Roy. The remains of a chapel near the farm now known as Kildavanan were visible at least until the late 19th century.³⁶⁶

On Blaeu's map it is not the site on the west coast of Bute that is indicated with this name, however, but a site - not specifically designated ecclesiastical - on Inchmarnock. It is possible that this is simply a mistake, but there are other examples of ecclesiastical names - or at least the dedications - which migrate between main land and island. On the south coast of Kintyre is Kilmanshennachan, for instance, with, on the nearby Sanda island, the remains of a chapel which is said by a 19th century source to have formerly been called Kilmashenaghan³⁶⁷, a name no longer appearing on the island. Both of these names seem to commemorate a saint called Senchán, Senach or Senán. Another example is Kilmacormack in Knapdale, a name which has been attached both to the remains on Eilean Mór and the church on the mainland at Keills.³⁶⁸ The name has now disappeared. Yet another example is Lamlash on Arran, a name commemorating one of the saints called Molaisse. The name used to be attached to the island now known as Holy Island (the name actually contains a contracted form of the Gaelic word for island - *eilean*) but is now attached to a settlement on Arran itself.³⁶⁹

It is possible, therefore, that there was some connection between the chapel at what is now called Kildavanan and Inchmarnock, but the detail is lost. Such a connection would perhaps have been obscured when Inchmarnock was given to Saddell in perhaps the thirteenth century.³⁷⁰ In the 17th century, even though it was under the jurisdiction of one of the parishes of Bute there remained some confusion as to which one exactly.

³⁶⁵ A few saints with this element are listed in Ó Riain 1985 index eg Dub Dúin. There are many more listed among non-saints eg Dub Conna, Dub Cuille etc. A pictish king called Dub Tholarg is found in *AU* 782.1 and Black cites a *Dufscolork* in 1204x11 Angus (Black 1946, 226).

³⁶⁶ See gazetteer.

³⁶⁷ Howson 1842, 80.

³⁶⁸ Mac Lean 1983.

³⁶⁹ Watson 1926, 306.

³⁷⁰ Around 1220 says *NSA*. Also Black 1890, 440, source not stated. More reliable is that in c1360 Saddell received Inchmarnock from Crossraguel in exchange for lands in S. Ayrshire. *HP* iv,142 records the confirmation 30 years later.

Thus an unfortunate fornicating couple were called to be tried by two kirk sessions, the one at Kingarth and the one at Rothesay.³⁷¹

And who are the saints represented in these names? Watson makes a comparison with Kilvannan in Uist, called Kilbannan by Martin Martin, and suggests - on the basis that Kilbannan near Tuam in Ireland is dedicated to this saint - Benignus, a bishop and disciple of St Patrick and, according to both Muirchu and Tirechán his successor in Armagh.³⁷² This is far from certain, of course, but if Watson's attribution was correct then this dedication would fit well into a group of dedications on Bute which are distinctly non-Columban. The person commemorated might, of course, be a local holy man with no trace in the Irish record, or even a lay person. A further point of confusion is the suggestion made in the late 19th century that the site commemorates Adomnán.³⁷³ The transformation of the name Adomnán to Davannan is improbable and is not supported by the early forms, but it is the kind of suggestion, made by a respected local man, that can easily take root in local tradition, feeding local desire for association with Columba and giving rise to stories linking Bute with Iona.

As for the saint of Inchmarnock (not a *cill*- name, but relevant here) there are many possibilities. The name again contains the diminutive *mo- /do-*, being a contracted form of Mo-ernóc. Here is Watson on the subject. 'Ernóc is a diminutive of Ernéne, itself a diminutive form... Ernóc might equally well be from Ernán, Ernín, Erníne, all names of saints. 22 saints were called Mo-Ernóc.....'³⁷⁴ The remains from the site itself may, in this case, yield further information, and even - perhaps - another name. Recent excavations have revealed several slates inscribed with lettering. They are similar in style to those from Kingarth in the use of similar letter-forms, forms which suggest a date of perhaps the 8th century for at least one of them. One even contains the name Ernán.³⁷⁵ But even with this information the fact remains that to assign any one Ernán (St Columba's uncle is a favourite, for example) rather than another must be regarded as

³⁷¹ Paton 1931, 82 - June 14 1692 - the Island of Inshmarnock 'doth neither properly belong to the paroch of Kingarth nor Rothesay but to the paroch of Sadel' but '..they of Inshmarnock do commonly come to Rothesay for marriage, baptism and other ordinances...'

³⁷² Watson 1926, 301. O Riain 1985 no 672.5 has *Benen a sailmcedlaid* - Benen his [Patrick's] psalmist. See list of saints in gazetteer.

³⁷³ Hewison 1893, 209.

³⁷⁴ Watson 1926, 187.

³⁷⁵ Forsyth, K in Lowe, forthcoming.

insecure. An intriguing possibility is that the name connects with the cult of Brendan, promoted by the Stewarts from perhaps the 12th century onwards. This will be discussed below.

In the name *Kilbrook*, in contrast, there is something of a shortage of saints that might be commemorated, and it has even been argued that it does not contain the name of a saint at all. It has long disappeared as a name used on Bute. According to the first Statistical Account the original name of Rothesay parish was *Cilla 'bhruic* or *Sgìreachd Bhruic* with annual fair *Féill Bhruic* or St Broke's day (*ibid.*). 'By those who speak the Gaelic language, the parish is always called Cilla'bhruic, or Sgìreachd Bruic, that is St Broke's parish.'³⁷⁶

The New Statistical Account says a fair was held in July and called 'St Brux day' or 'Brux day fair' but denies the dedication to a saint, saying that the dedication is to Mary, and St Broke 'is no better than a nickname, there being no such saint in the Romish Calendar.'³⁷⁷ The author of the *NSA* thinks the word comes from the word *brok* (which in the Concise Scots dictionary is defined as the profit or interest on capital; usufruct); in 1618, says *NSA*, the minster's stipend is described as the 'vicarage and small *Brokis* of Rothesay'. In support of his argument the author of *NSA* downplays the importance of all the three fairs held in Rothesay (first Wed of May, the third Wed of July and the last Wed and following Thurs of Oct): 'They are ill attended, and of little importance'.

OPS affirms it as a dedication 'to St Brieuc or Brioc': 'An historical memoir prefixed to the Bute Inventory says that the tutelar saint of Rothesay was Saint Brock.'³⁷⁸ As for the importance of St Brux day to the inhabitants of Rothesay, the 17th century parish records would suggest that the day was at the very least well known. It is in several places cited as the orientation point from which to work out on what day something happened - usually, of course, a crime of passion.³⁷⁹ More conclusive, perhaps, is a

³⁷⁶ Statistical Account, 301.

³⁷⁷ *NSA*, 102. An 'egregious blunder' says Hewison 1893,101.

³⁷⁸ *OPS*, 223.

³⁷⁹ Paton 1931, Dec 20th 1660. The case against Alexander Bannatyne and Nancy Throw. 'Being demanded quhen and quher he first hade her answered about a yeire and ane halfe since in James M'Nivans house quhen she was servant there. Being demanded quhilck was the last tyme he hade her answered about 8 dayes before St. Braksday last in Robert Bannatynes house at the Mylne of Atrick.'

papal letter of 23 June 1397, which mentions 'the perpetual vicarage of St Bruterni, in Buth, Sodor diocese.'³⁸⁰

The only map reference to this name is Roy, who marks *Killbrook*. Blaeu and OS 1st ed. have no such name, the parish church from the 13th century being known as St Mary's. There may be a parallel dedication bringing together Mary and St Brioc in the church of Dunrod on Wigtown Bay³⁸¹ and Hewison cites a reference to a rector of the island of St Braoch, near Montrose.³⁸²

Watson³⁸³ considers this saint to be one of the seven daughters of Dalbrónach of Dál Chonchobair in the Deisi of Brega; her sister, Bróicseth, was the mother of Bridget. More likely is Brioc, a saint possibly of Cardigan who according to his 11th or 12th century Life founded the monastery of Brioux in Brittany and may be represented in St Breock in Cornwall.³⁸⁴ His feast day is 1st May which accords with the celebration of a fair around this time in Rothesay.³⁸⁵ If this identification is accepted it might be a late dedication introduced by the Stewarts, whose origins were in Brittany.

Having looked at a *cill*- name, Kildavanan, which may have moved from one place to another (between the 'main-land' of Bute and the island of Inchmarnock), and at one which may be a ghost or may be a dedication from the Middle Ages (Kilbrook), it should be apparent that *cill*- names are not necessarily what they seem. Kilmichael, the next one to be examined, may promise to be more straightforward. This is not so, however, for there is a local insistence that this is not a dedication to the Archangel, but to a saint called MacCaille. So far I have found three sources which might have fed this tradition. The first is Dempster who claims there was a celebration of a saint called

³⁸⁰ *Papal lett Ben XIII*, 71. Consultation of the document on microfilm suggests the possibility of a c in place of the t, but it is far from clear.

³⁸¹ Hewison 1893, 99. cf Black 1946, 499 who under name MacGillegunnin (servant of Finnian / Finan) quotes a charter of reign of Malcolm IV regarding the church of S. Marie and S. Bruoc of Dunrod - ref is to LSC, 20 = Liber Cartarum Sancte Crucis...Edinburgh, 1840.

³⁸² Hewison 1893, 101 mentions a church on the isle of Inchbraoch in S Esk nr Montrose. A 1328 witness there is designated *Rector insule Sancti Braochi*.

³⁸³ Watson 1926, 301.

³⁸⁴ Farmer 1978, 76. His life appears in Doble 1965, 67-104. Kenney 1929, 181 mentions two Irish saints, both with connections with Cornwall: Breaca, a woman who came to Cornwall with Senan and others, and Briac, the son of an Ulster prince who became pupil of St Tugdual in Wales and founded monastery of Bourbriac in Brittany. The lives of these (and other) saints are described by Kenney as 'of late date and fabulous character'. See ss table.

³⁸⁵ Paul 1917, 166 notes fairs dedicated to St Brioc on 1st May in Rothesay and Coull (nr Tarland, Aberdeenshire).

Maccaeus on the 11th April in Bute.³⁸⁶ In addition on October the 4th he has the celebration of Machillae.³⁸⁷ The second is a correspondence between the 3rd Marquis of Bute and the Bishop of Aberdeen regarding the reinstatement into the calendar of various local saints.³⁸⁸ The Marquis - a Gaelic speaker and careful scholar - was convinced of the existence of a cult to Macaille on Bute. Finally there is Hewison, who is extremely tentative in his suggestion, but notes that the fact that there is a 'Michael's grave' nearby (a prehistoric cairn) 'implies that the local patron was not looked upon as of celestial origin.'³⁸⁹

There is a follower of Patrick called Mac Caille who might be considered a candidate in which case we may be seeing an interesting companion dedication to Kildavanan, if, that is, we accept that the commemoration there is to Patrick's successor, Benignus. On the other hand Mac Caille is also closely associated with Brigit, as is Conleth, a potential dedicatee at Kilwhinleck, making a possible pairing associated with the saint of Kildare. It is more likely, however, that the dedication is after all to Michael the Archangel; all the early forms suggest Michael and there is no evidence of local pronunciation on the last syllable, which is what one would expect if the name was Mac Caille.

A promising dedication in view of the possible British connections of Bute mentioned in the opening, is Kilchousland. The problem here, however, is that the only attestation of the name is on the modern OS pathfinder. It appears on no earlier map, as far as I can discover, and is not mentioned by Watson. Its position corresponds to a chapel known by Hewison as *Cruiskland*³⁹⁰ and by others as *Cruikslan*. The chapel appears on OS 1st ed but is nameless. If Kilchousland is the most authentic form then this is an interesting dedication - probably, like Kilchousland in Kintyre - to Constantine. Again, of course, there are various Constantines this might represent,³⁹¹ but interestingly one is

³⁸⁶ *Aprilis xi Insula Buta Maccae vatis S. Patricii Hibernorum Apostoli discipuli*

³⁸⁷ *in Buta Machillae episcopi, qui S Brigidam velavit.*

³⁸⁸ Information from Rosemary Hannah, Cnoc an Rath, Bute (2003).

³⁸⁹ Hewison 1893, 112.

³⁹⁰ Hewison 1893, 234. Description of the chapel is given, including, from Blain (a source used by Hewison), that 'a century ago the hallowed ground was then marked out'. In Hewison's time only 'two huge stones' of the enclosing wall were visible.

³⁹¹ See saints' table.

the patron of Govan. Here perhaps is another British connection, as we will discuss below.

It is close to a place called Kilmachalmaig, whose interpretation is bedevilled by the proliferation of possible dedicatees; the personal name here is a hypocoristic form of Colum or Colmán of which there are, as we have seen, many. There are at least four avenues to take in looking at this name. One can simply regard it as a hopeless case for the reason already stated; it could be any of the hundreds of saints with the name Colmán or a derivative, or it might be a local Colmán who has left no record other than this name. Alternatively one can look for possible dedicatees only among saints of appropriate name with attested cults in Scotland, for which see the saints' table in the gazetteer. The last two options, which we will explore a little here, are either that it might represent a dedication to Colum Cille or that the saint might be the Colmán of Kingarth mentioned above (p 191-2) as appearing in *MT* on March 1st.

The name is first attested in 1476³⁹² but the presence of an early Christian stone³⁹³ suggests that the site is considerably older. In 1516 there is mention of a chaplainry of St Columba somewhere on Bute, which may relate to this site,³⁹⁴ but it is also possible that there was a chapel of Columba in Rothesay, at or near a place still called Columshill.³⁹⁵ If the reference is to Kilmachalmaig, I think we can assume that at least in the 16th century the place was assumed to be dedicated to Colum Cille, though this does not help for the early medieval period. The name Colum, or the Scottish version Calum, turns up again near Kingarth at Glen Callum and Glencallum Bay (OS pf 428 NR 1152). Again, this does not help much, and we cannot even be sure that a saint is meant here. An assessment of whether any or all of these names are likely to commemorate Colum Cille is perhaps best made in the context of Bute's relationship with Iona, in so far as we can discern what this might have been like. This will be touched on below.

As far as Columba of Kingarth is concerned it seems to me that the likelihood of there being a dedication on Bute to this saint depends on whether we accept that it is his cult

³⁹² *terr<ae> de Kylmacolmoc* 1476 *RMS* vol 2 no 1214.

³⁹³ Fisher 2001, 81 no. 9.

³⁹⁴ *RSS* vol 1 no 2775.

³⁹⁵ Fisher 2001, 80 (under Rothesay).

that we see reflected in the medieval stories of a Columba buried in Dunblane. Macquarrie, for instance, suggests that some relics of this Columba may have travelled to Menteith with the cult of Blane 'some time probably not later than the end of the reign of Kenneth mac Alpin c.858'.³⁹⁶ A saint whose relics are considered to be of this significance might well have a dedication of his own on Bute. On the other hand it could be that it was relics of Columb Cille that were in Dunblane, and even that the Columba of Kingarth is simply a reflex of the Iona saint. This could have arisen thus: Columb Cille, as the most famous saint in western Scotland, with a multitude of followers, was commemorated on Bute at Kilmachalmaig.³⁹⁷ When records were collected for the compilation of *MT* he was named 'Columba of Kingarth' because Kingarth is where the record came from. The feast date of March 1 may have marked the day of translation. Columba of Kingarth is not noticed in the Chronicle of Ireland because he did not exist.

Contexts for the dedications

Having looked at a selection of the *cill*- sites on Bute I will now look at the wider historical context, in particular at ideas recently put forward regarding the relationship between Bute and the various peoples in its vicinity in the 6th and 7th centuries: the rival *cenéla* of the Dál Riata and the Britons of Dumbarton. How do the dedications on Bute look in relation to these arguments?

There has been some debate over the last few years as to the homogeneity or otherwise of the Dál Riata in Argyll in the 6th - 8th centuries.³⁹⁸ If, as Fraser has argued, the rule in Argyll was not so unified as Adomnán would have us believe, and that the Cenél

³⁹⁶ Macquarrie 2001, 116. There are other theories about the transfer of Blaan's relics (if they were transferred at all). Woolf, for example, wonders if the relics might have been moved to Dunblane at the same time as the other three *cenéla* of Dál Riata were staking claims in the heartland of Scotland, perhaps as part of a planned strategy rather than as a reaction to the Viking attacks of the late 8th (Woolf 2004, 98). The implication made by Laing et al, however, is that there was still a shrine to Blane at Kingarth in the 10th / 11th centuries (Laing et al 1998, 553); this would tend to be supported by Bower's words. A suggestion made by Gilbert Márkus, pers. comm., is that the apparent shift of status of Kingarth away from being an episcopal see (marked by the lack of refs to bishops at Kingarth after 689) is indicative of the main focus of the cult - including, presumably the relics - having been transferred to Dunblane. It is not certain that Kingarth did stop being episcopal, however; it is possible that the bishops are simply no longer recorded.

³⁹⁷ A 12th century gloss states of Columb Cille that 'Mo-chumma was his name in his minster' See p 169 n255.

³⁹⁸ Sharpe 2000, Dumville 2000, 2002b, Fraser 2004, 2005, 2006.

nGabráin, with its alleged allegiance to Iona, was not the only powerful group within the Dál Riata, then one might expect to find more than one centre of ecclesiastical power and possibly a contrast between the character of one cluster of dedications and another.

In relation to Bute, Fraser argues that the island was probably under the control of the Cenél Comgaill of Cowal and that this was a group who offered a real challenge to the power of the Cenél Gabrain who were based in Kintyre. Under the leadership of Ferchar mac Connaid in the 630s the Cenél Comgaill may even have been the *extranei* mentioned by Cumméne Find as usurping the power of the grandsons of Áedán mac Gabráin. It is possible too, argues Fraser, that there was some kind of allegiance between the Cenél Comgaill and the Clyde Rock Britons. Most important in the context of this study, however, is the argument that the Cenél Comgaill may not have held the view that devotion to Colum Cille was paramount, and that they showed allegiance not to Iona, but to Kingarth in Bute.³⁹⁹ As we have seen two bishops of Kingarth of the second half of the seventh century are recorded in the Irish annals, and three abbots in the eighth, signifying that it was a place of some importance.

In terms of dedications, what would we look for to confirm or deny such a theory? If we knew of a saint associated more with Cenél Comgaill than with Cenél nGabraín we might seek his or her commemorations, but there are no obvious candidates. Nearly all the saints commemorated in Cowal are found elsewhere in Argyll, and those that aren't are not on Bute either (Fintan Munnu is in Cowal, in Lorn, and in Lorn / Mid Argyll, and Muredach - if that is the correct saint - is in Cowal alone, for example). Molaisse might raise some hope, as he may be commemorated on Bute, in Cowal and on Arran, but nowhere else in Argyll. There are problems here, however.⁴⁰⁰ We might also interpret the absence of dedications to Iona saints - if such an absence can be found - as tending to support Fraser's theories.

Fraser himself was sceptical about the power of dedications either to support or weaken his arguments, and in many ways this study justifies his misgivings. Further to our

³⁹⁹ Fraser 2005.

⁴⁰⁰ The dedication on Arran is secure, but the one on Bute (Ardmoleish) is questionable, as is the one in Cowal (*Kilmalash*, but early forms include *Kilmaglass*).

study of some of the *cill*- names above, and to an overview of all dedications on the island a few points might be worth making however:

1. The pattern of dedications on Bute does not have a particularly distinctive character. When compared with S. Kintyre for instance there are potentially 8 identical dedications: Blaan (at Kilblane in both places), Catán (at Kilchattan in both places), Constantine (at Kilchousland in both places), Ciarán (at Kilkerran in Kintyre, at Kilchiarán on Bute), Brigit (at Kilbride in both places), Mary (at Kilmore in Kintyre, at Kilmore in Kintyre), Michael (at Kilmichael in both places), and Ninian (at Kilmashenaghan, Sanda on Kintyre and at St Ninian's Chapel on Bute).⁴⁰¹
2. One might argue for two of the dedications possibly having a pre-Columban character: Kildavanan (Benignus) and Kilmichael (Mac Caille); Kilbrook is another whose saint appears to have no connection with Colum Cille, though there might be another explanation for this (see below)
3. Columba is notably absent from Cowal, particularly when compared with the western sea-board and western isles; for an explanation which has nothing to do with Cenél Comgaill / Cenél Gabráin rivalry see above, 3.2., however. There are no certain dedications to Columba on Bute, but Kilmachalmaig is a strong possibility.
4. If Fraser's tentative suggestion that the Clyde Rock Britons may have accepted the Roman Easter before Iona finds support then perhaps the possible dedication to Molaisse - traditionally a supporter for the Roman dating - may be significant.⁴⁰²

Another argument that has been made regarding Bute is that the island was part of the British kingdom at least from the ninth century onwards⁴⁰³ and that it might be this, rather than the Viking invasions of the late eighth century, that explains the absence of Bute from the Irish annals from 790.⁴⁰⁴ A British explanation has also been put forward

⁴⁰¹ All of these are in the gazetteer with the exception of St Ninian's Chapel on Bute, OS pf 414NS 0361. See Aiken 1955. The chapel is thought to date to the 8th century or before, with even earlier Christian burials. The name does not appear on Blaeu. Roy has *Pt of St Ninian* but no chapel.

⁴⁰² But see fn 296. According to *AU* Iona accepted the Roman Easter in 716.

⁴⁰³ It is not clear, however, to what extent British power was focussed at Dumbarton by this time, especially after the sack of Dumbarton by the Dublin Norse in *AU* 870. Clancy, pers. comm., points out *Historia Brittonum's* description of Loch Lomond as being in Pictland.

⁴⁰⁴ Laing et al 1998, 553.

for Blaán's description in *MG* as *Bláán buadach Bretan*, that is that Kingarth was under British authority at the time that *MG* was compiled in the late 12th century.⁴⁰⁵

The Norse are also invoked as potential overlords of Bute, possibly from as early as the early 10th century. This does seem to be implied in the description of Kingarth being *i nGallgaedlaib*,⁴⁰⁶ but there are problems here. Not only is the dating of the statement in some doubt (though a date in the early 10th century is quite plausible), but also the meaning of the term Gall-Gaedhil is unclear. If we believe it to mean Norse *Dál Riata*⁴⁰⁷ then the implication is not the same as if we believe it to imply some kind of general Norse overlordship, applying as much in Strathclyde as in *Dál Riata*.⁴⁰⁸ The truth is that the period from about 800 to 1200 is very poorly documented, and, as Woolf points out: 'From the late ninth century to the twelfth almost no events can be securely located within Argyll.'⁴⁰⁹ Lane and Campbell end their discussion of the relationship between, and whereabouts of, the Scots, Norse and Picts at this period with the comment that, 'The historical evidence seems capable of diametrically opposed interpretations.'⁴¹⁰

The link with the British and the possibility of Norse influence come together if we consider the archaeological record at Inchmarnock, Cumbrae (an island to the east of Bute) and Kingarth: 'All three sites have carvings related to the Norse-period sculpture of Strathclyde and northern England, and at Rothesay there are a cross-slab and a cross showing similar influences.'⁴¹¹ Norse influence can be detected in Strathclyde, in particular at Govan, from at least the 10th century, but it is not clear to what extent the area was in fact subject to Norse rule.⁴¹² The similarities detected between carvings at

⁴⁰⁵ Laing et al 1998, 553, who imply that this point was made by Watson. Watson in fact suggests that Bute may have been British 'in his time' ie at the end of the 6th century (Watson 1926, 165).

⁴⁰⁶ *MT* Aug 10 and *FO* notes in F.

⁴⁰⁷ 'It seems most likely that the term Gallgaedél emerged as a way of designating 'Norse *Dál Riata*' and that even when this *regnum* was absorbed into the *Uí Ímair imperium* it maintained, and perhaps continued to develop, its own cultural identity in which language, and apparently religion, drew upon the *Dál Riata* heritage while the male-oriented aristocratic culture had its roots in Viking-Age Scandinavia.' Woolf 2004, 97. Clancy stressed the importance of language - a Gallgaedel was 'a foreign-seeming Gael; a scandinavianised Gaelic speaker'. Clancy, forthcoming.

⁴⁰⁸ The term appears twice in 9th c Irish annal, meaning unclear. After that it does not appear again until the late 10th or 11th century. Woolf 2004, 96. In its late application to a restricted area of SW Scotland the meaning is quite different and should be ignored when attempting to define what it originally signifies.

⁴⁰⁹ Woolf 2004, 95.

⁴¹⁰ Lane and Campbell 2000, 36.

⁴¹¹ Fisher 2001, 9.

⁴¹² Sack of Dumbarton by Dublin Norse *AU* 870, but what then?

Govan and those on Bute can be interpreted as resulting either from the influence of the Norse common to both places, or simply to the fact that both places are British. A further influence at Govan is thought by Alan Macquarrie to be provided by the Cenél nGabrain. It is possible, if one rejects Fraser's theory of Cenél Comgaill rule here (which after all is far from proven) that the Cenél nGabrain might be exerting their influence here too, though by the 10th century it is questionable how useful this term is.⁴¹³

Regarding dedications which might throw light on any of the above, the variables are such that it is difficult to decide what one might seek by way of supporting evidence. Columba has been put forward as a saint particularly favoured by the Norse, but his presence or absence in any particular place is so prone to multiple interpretation it is hardly worth exploring. His absence does not necessarily mean that he was not here at some time, supported by the Norse, for example, as there is some evidence that the Stewarts may have wished specifically to overwrite his dedications. The potential dedication to Constantine is intriguing, as mentioned above, but ultimately inconclusive also for reasons mentioned above. That is to say, a link with Govan on account of the common dedication might be thought to reveal a relationship with Strathclyde in, say, the 10th century. But Constantine the saint (whether in origin a British king, a Pictish king, the Emperor Constantine or someone else altogether) may have been favoured as much by the Cenél nGabráin as by the British.⁴¹⁴

Finally there is the argument that devotion to saints by powerful families in the latter Middle Ages may affect patterns of dedication and records of cult as much as, or even more than, developments in the early period. In the case of Bute the relevant argument is one put forward by Steve Boardman that the Stewarts, who had been granted lands in Bute at least by the late 12th century, brought with them the cult of Brendan. Opponents of the Stewarts meanwhile, who attacked Rothesay Castle and were a

⁴¹³ The rulers of joint Dál Riata and Pictland - called, by the early 10th century, *Alba* - thought of themselves as being descended from the house of Gabráin, or so later genealogies would have us believe. But to what degree the association with Cenél nGabráin was part of anyone's sense of identity is not known.

⁴¹⁴ Woolf 2007, 12. Also, Macquarrie argues that Constantine was a personal name favoured by the Cenél nGabrain, but one of his examples, Constantine son Fergus / Uurguist (d. 820), has been argued by Broun to be Pictish on both sides; his presence in a Dál Riada king-list is the result of later re-writing. Macquarrie 1994, 31. Broun 1998, 82.

perpetual threat, supported Columba, a saint who the Stewarts ignored or perhaps even tried to excise.⁴¹⁵ The apparent veneration for Brendan by the Stewarts does not result in a dedication to Brendan on Bute visible today but there are other signs of his cult on the island. In 1336, for instance, there is a reference to the *Brendani of Bute*, and people born on Bute are still, apparently known as Brandanis.⁴¹⁶ Fordun derives the name Bute from the 'both' of St Brendan: *Sanctus Brandanus in ea botham idiomate nostro bothe .i. cellam construxit. Unde et deinceps et usque tempus nostrum habetur binomia quod aliquando Rothisay, .i. insula Rothay sic et aliquando insula de Bothe ab indiginis nuncupatur.*⁴¹⁷ It is possible to see other signs associated with Brendan's cult too, if one wishes to. The name Inchmarnock is interesting, for instance, since a key figure in the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* is an abbot called Mernoc, who set up an eremitical community on the Delightful Isle. This Mernoc, together with his godfather Barinthus (sometimes identified as the Cenél Conaill saint Bairrfhinn ua Néill, patron of Kilbarron (Cell Bairrfhinn, Donegal) and Drumcullen)⁴¹⁸ sail off together to find the Blessed Isle and it is this (successful) voyage that inspires Brendan.⁴¹⁹ On the east coast of Kintyre, not far from Bute, there is an island called Island Davaar, in early references *Insula de Sanctbarre.*⁴²⁰ One might imagine that what we are seeing here is a fantasy landscape created by the immigrant Stewarts who, inspired by the *Navigatio*, were attempting to embed themselves into western Scottish society by localising and, presumably, controlling the cult of an internationally popular saint.

Support for the idea that the Stewarts may have imported their own dedications into their new territories might be found at Kilbrook qv. In Brittany the Stewarts were hereditary *seneschals* of the bishops of Dol;⁴²¹ they were nobles whose importance was perhaps reinforced by their status within the church. St Brioc was the saint of the

⁴¹⁵ Boardman notes that the chapel dedicated to Columba at Skipness Castle is superceded by one dedicated to St Brendan. He also observes that in the 12th century Paris psalter (see above, fn 340), which may have been produced for Argyll patrons, the entry on Columba has been excised (Boardman, forthcoming, 9-10).

⁴¹⁶ OPS, 226, 240, and local information.

⁴¹⁷ 'St Brendan built there a *botha* in our language - a *both* is a church. That's why from then on, till our own time, it has two names: sometimes Rothesay, that is *the island of Rothay* and at other times it is called *the island of Bute* by the locals.' Skene 1871, 25, Skene 1872, 24.

⁴¹⁸ Thornton 2004. His feast day is said to be on May 21st. Although on a different day (Jan 5th) it is interesting that Dempster notes a commemoration in Argyll of Barnitus, associate of Brendan (Forbes 1972, 189 in *Argadia Barniti S. Brandani socii*).

⁴¹⁹ *Navigatio Brendani* ch. 1, Selmer 1959.

⁴²⁰ RMS vol 2 no 3170, a confirmation charter of the mid 15th century.

⁴²¹ Boardman (forthcoming), 2.

neighbouring parish and while it is possible to argue that Brioc might thus have been regarded as a rival saint it seems, from evidence of annual pilgrimages which linked all seven saints of Brittany,⁴²² that there was a sense of identity among the Bretons with all these saints. There is some evidence too of an association of Brioc with Mary in at least two locations in France, which may be significant given that the other dedication at Kilbrook is to Our Lady.⁴²³

The nature of *cill*-

If the dedications disappoint, we might wonder if the sites themselves offer any insights into our understanding of what a *cill*- is. As can be seen from a glance at the following table, the 11 sites are generally modest in size and have not developed into major settlements. Three are of a size consistent with parochial chapels of Kintyre, as defined by RCAHMS:⁴²⁴ Cille Bhruic, Kilchousland, Kilmory. It is interesting that the Kilchousland on Bute (11.12 x 6.55) has similar dimensions to the Kilchousland in Kintyre (11.9 x 6.7), the latter dated to the 12th century.⁴²⁵ The chapel at Inchmarnock, of the same date, is similar again (11.7 x 6.2).⁴²⁶

Five of the names have disappeared altogether, including the only one which gave its name to a parish, and then only for a short time - Cille Bhruic. Kilblane, another of the obsolete names, is the only site with high status early medieval sculpture, but, as we have seen, it is not accurate to apply the name Kilblane to a site which when first recorded was known as Kingarth.

At all of the *cill*- sites there is evidence of a church (apart from Kilbride where no ecclesiastical site has been discovered at all) and at four there was evidence of burial too. None of the *cill*- sites seem to have consisted of a burial site alone.

⁴²² Doble 1965, 101. It seems also that both Samson and Brioc were commemorated in Angers. *ibid.*, 103.

⁴²³ A tradition of a dedication being changed from Mary to Brioc is reported (Doble 1965, 101) and the chapel of Brioc in Angers is now dedicated to Our Lady (*ibid.*, 103). The church of Rothesay, formerly known as Kilbrook, is now called St Mary's Chapel and has had this dedication from at least 1323 (*Ecclesia Beatae Mariae de Rothersay in Buth* 1323 Chron of Man & Isles via OPS, 221).

⁴²⁴ *Arg I* no 22. 10-13m in length x 4.5-5m in width internally.

⁴²⁵ *Arg I* no 22.

⁴²⁶ Fisher 2001, 77.

As we have said it is notable that the main ecclesiastical site on Bute, Kingarth, did not have a *cill*- name, at least in its earliest attestations. The same might be said of the ecclesiastical site on Inchmarnock, which, though it may have had the label Kildavanan for a time, this is far from certain. A further site of early Medieval age - the only site other than Kingarth and Inchmarnock to have been excavated - is St Ninian's Chapel, again a site without a *cill*- name.⁴²⁷

The dedications on Bute: a summary

The hope of discerning revealing *patterns in the dedications in Kintyre* was based partly on their sheer number, while in Kilmartin the allure was more their proximity to the well-documented early Medieval site of Dunadd. In the case of Bute hope was raised by the relatively high profile Kingarth has in the early historic hagiographic and annalistic record, the visibility of its associated saints in Scottish medieval tradition (and the ease with which their names can be recognised in dedications outside Bute), and the rich archaeological record.

Nothing very conclusive has been added through this study, however, but perhaps some correctives are offered for some models, or at least a warning to be cautious. In the study of Kintyre it was shown how the multiplicity of interpretation available for each dedication means that interpretations can be selected to support whichever theory one happens to favour. This has not been attempted for Bute to the same degree, but the sites are none the less capable of such treatment. An example is that one might detect a grouping of saints of the Cruithni at Kilchattan, Inchmarnock and Kilmachalmaig: Ternoc m. Ciaráin, Cathan m. Matain and Mocholmoc m. Conrathain all appear together in the *Rec. Met.* There is a Molaisse too, though not the one usually linked with Arran.

We have seen how unpredictable *cill*- names are. They seem to move about (Kildavanan), they lose contact with their original *cill*- (Kilchattan), they are subject to reinvention (Kildovanan, Kilmichael) and perhaps even to modern creation

⁴²⁷ Excavation report is Aitken 1955. Though likely to be early medieval, the evidence does not allow close dating (Fisher 2001, 4). Its dimensions (9m x 6.3) allow comparison with the remains at Kilchousland and Kilmory.

(Kilchousland). Even with the name of one of the most important monasteries in early Scottish history we are not sure how the labelling worked (what is the relationship between Kingarth and Kilblain?)

Cill- on Bute

Place-name	Ch?	Bur?	Earliest Structure	Early Medieval Sculpture	Late Medieval Sculpture	Earliest ref.	Note
Rothesay parish							
Cille Bhruic	y	y	Late medieval, chancel is 8.17 x 5.2m.	n	y	1747	Also <i>St Bruterni in Buth</i> , 1397
Kilbride	?	?	Modern settlement	?	?	1576	No ecclesiastical site yet found
Kilchiaran	y	y?	No remains	n	n	1893	Chapel attested in 18 th c. Not clear if the burial site - 'Clacheiran' - was at Kilchiaran or at a distance.
Kilchousland	y	n	Date unknown, remains extant c11.12 x c6.55m	n	n	OS pf	'The church is oriented a little north of east' Hewison 1893,234-5
Kildavanan	y	n	Date unknown, no remains, 5.79m x 4.87 in 1890s	n	n	13 th c? or 1429	
Kilmachalmaig	y	y	Date unknown, no dimensions	relief cross	n	1475	Chapel and cemetery were extant in 18 th century
Kilmichael	y	y	Date unknown 7.72 x 5.79m.	n	n	1449	Hewison 1893, 114.
Kilmory	y	n	Date unknown, extant in 1890s 10.67 x 5.41m, no remains	n	n	1440	'It is oriented but not exactly' Hewison, 233
Kilwhinleck	y	n	Date unknown, gone by 1890s	poss.	n	1440	The 'MacAlister Stone', now in Rothesay, may have come from here.

Kingarth parish							
Kilblane	y	y	12 th c	y	many	1393	
Kilchattan	y	n	Date unknown, now gone	n	n	1440 or 1517	

A 'n' means there is no evidence for a church / burial / sculpture. A '?' means that the characteristics and contents of the site are unknown because the site has not been located (as in the case of Kilbride). A 'y?' means that there is evidence that might be interpreted as indicating the presence of church / burial / sculpture, but that other interpretations are possible.

Chapter Four Conclusion

4.1 Introduction

On trial have been the various kinds of evidence relating to saints and their cults in Argyll. We have focussed on *cill*- names but have also drawn on literary evidence relevant to the saints who might be represented in those *cill*- names. We have asked the evidence to provide insight into the early Church and its development, and, failing that, on other matters such as the nature of cult, and relations between the Church and secular power. The success or otherwise of the evidence in providing answers has been assessed as the thesis has progressed; we will now look back over what has been discovered.

4.2 The usefulness of *cill*- names

In the introduction we discussed the characteristics and date of *cill*- sites as encountered in literature and on the ground, and concluded that while *cill*- might very often appear to imply an ecclesiastical settlement rather than a burial site or a small cell or hermitage, there is also evidence for the range of meanings carried by the term being much broader. This study has confirmed the huge variety in the use of the word, from sites with early Christian sculpture, which retained sufficient importance into the later medieval period to become parish churches, to tiny hillside burial grounds.

Regarding dating, we have seen how the term was used to create names in Argyll from early medieval (*Cella Diuni*) to late medieval (*Kil-catherine*) times. A few other late ones may, perhaps, be added: Cille Bhràic* on Bute, and Kilcolmkill* in S. Kintyre are proposed, for example, as sites which may have been named (if not actually founded) in the later medieval period. On the other hand, there is an impressive representation of *cill*- sites whose dedications are to relatively obscure saints, not saints who would be obvious choices as patrons in the later period: Kildavanan* on Bute, Kilwhipnach* in Kintyre and Kildomangart* in Glassary for example. Even here there must be doubt, however, due to our lack of information about popular devotion to saints who might have had strong local cults in the later Medieval period and who became 'obscure' only relatively recently. A hint of this is given in the presence of people holding personal

names containing the names of unusual saints, some of these families living close to *cill*- names with the same commemoration. An example is the Macilevens living, in the 17th century, close to Killevin*.

Problems with the dating of *cill*- sites mean these methods can offer limited advance in our knowledge of the early church. If most were early then location (at fairly low altitude, near rivers, near settlements) and distribution (clumps here and there, but in general an even coverage: wherever you are in the study area, you will seldom be further than five km from a *cill*) might be suggestive of comprehensive pastoral provision. But we cannot always tell which sites are contemporary with each other, though there are areas (the area around Dunadd in particular) where, with the evidence of sculpture, we can paint a picture of a culturally rich, Christian society, well-connected with Iona and beyond, and well served by a good number of local churches, in the early medieval period.

If the evidence of *cill*-names does not allow us to reach any very robust conclusion about early medieval church foundations and their relationship to cult and secular power, there are other interesting and potentially useful insights that have been offered by careful sifting of the archaeological and literary evidence.

- A few *cill*- names have been rediscovered: Kildomongart* and Kilmichael Beg*, for example.
- There are examples of *cill*-names which seem to have moved around: Kilblane*, Kildavanan*, Kilchattan* on Bute and Kilmoshenaghan*, for example.
- There are hardly any sites with early remains that do not have *cill*-names. In our three study areas there are only Kingarth and St Ninian's Chapel (both on Bute), St Ciarán's Cave (South Kintyre), Barnakill and Dunadd (both in Glassary parish).
- Some contrasts are apparent between the three areas studied. For example, there is a comparatively large number of *cill*- sites in South Kintyre compared with Bute. Could this be to do with South Kintyre experiencing a greater renaissance during the twelfth-century reforms, securing the survival of perhaps early foundations by reconstruction in stone, or (just as likely) foundation from scratch?

- It may be possible to argue that the main *cill*- sites are near important early medieval secular centres (3.2), but problems arise from the excess of variables which make this hard to substantiate.

4.3 What do the saints tell us?

The hope was expressed in the introduction that insight into the characteristics and affiliations (both tribal and ecclesiastical) of the saints represented in dedications in Argyll might throw light on the motivation behind the establishment of some of the *cill*-sites, and perhaps help refine dating. The difficulty of the material was, however, recognised and discussed, and the project continued on the basis that even if our picture of early medieval ecclesiastical development was not to be clarified significantly, we might at least be able to offer some insight into the nature of the evidence.

What did we manage to find out about (i) the saints and (ii) the evidence relating to them?

i) The saints

There are webs of connections, ecclesiastical and secular, between Scotland and Ireland which might provide a context which could make sense of the existence of a cult for almost every one of the saints examined. But there is rarely any certainty about who was commemorated at any of the sites. There are simply too many possibilities. Several explanatory stories would be possible for each site, depending on which saint we might regard as the probable dedicatee in each case. Indeed, even when we can identify one saint with some degree of certainty for a particular site, there are still several ways of explaining why that saint should have become the dedicatee in one century or another. Nevertheless, the exercise has not been entirely sterile, and we have found some interesting possibilities relating to the cults of some saints, such as Colmán Ela.

ii) The evidence relating to the saints

The evidence is slippery in the extreme. One only has to look, for example, at the many Coemáns in the table of saints (below, p 323) to see examples of overlap and confusion.

Nevertheless, some of the techniques suggested by Padraig Ó Riain have borne some fruit in our study of Berach/Berchán, for example:

1. We have seen that the evidence may point to the existence of an oral life (or a lost written one) of Berach / Berchán, in which various elements, currently scattered among traditions of various saints of this name, were originally found together: for example a currach, a davoch (above, 101, 109).
2. In the Life of Berach there appear events and relationships which would make more sense if they were attached to Berchán m. Muiredaig, usually considered to be a different saint (above, 110).
3. In additions to *CGSH* from other MSS (Ó Riain 1985 no. 410.1) there is an entry which lists a Conchennan, a Failbe Finn, a Dachua and a Fintan. The first three are characters in the Life of Berach. The fourth is Berach's baptismal name. This is the kind of evidence that would tend to support Ó Riain's invocation of common sources lying behind different kinds of hagiographical material.
4. Three bishops who precede Berchán of Cluain Sasta in a list of bishops have names held by characters in the life of Berach. This is possible evidence for the identity of Berach and Berchán (above, 111).

The examination of other saints' cults has offered further possible insights:

5. An oral life of Colmán Ela which brought together his church, the monster, and his staff, may have related to, and been interpreting, a cluster of place-names.
6. It is possible that Colmán Ela and Colmán of Kilroot, both of whom are associated with Mac Nise are aspects of the same cult. A close examination of *MT* allows us to use this information to link a fair date in the vicinity of Kilcalmonel to a commemoration of Colmán Ela (above, 93ff)

In the end we have perhaps discovered a little about the nature of the evidence relating to saints. But have we discovered anything about the saints themselves? And does any of this tell us anything about the establishment or development of the early Church in Argyll, or in our three chosen areas of study? Are there, for instance, any patterns of secular influence discernible in the establishment of any of the *cill*- sites?

1. Saints of Dál nAraide. Perhaps there are more dedications to these saints than would be explicable by coincidence: Mocholmoc m. Conrathain of Druimm Mor*; Molaisse m. Nadfroích of Daiminis*; Moluóc mac Luchta*; Catán mac Matáin*.

The overriding problem with this suggestion is that the identity of none of these with our Scottish dedications is certain.

2. Saints of Dál mBuain, a group who, with their close relatives the Dál Sailni, include several saints who may be represented in Kintyre: Mochua m. Beccáin*, Cóelán m. Luacháin*, Colmán Ela m. Beogna*, Mac Nise m. Faibrig, and Mobi Cláirenach m. Comgaill*. The relationship between the Dál Sailni and Dál mBuain with the church of Connor make this an intriguing line of enquiry.

At the heart of the problem is the fissile nature of all the cults, and the consequent difficulty of making a firm connection between any particular cult as manifested in a *cill*- name and any particular saint. In deciding whether to clump divergent cults, or split convergent ones, each case has to be considered separately. In most cases one could do either, but in the end it is probable that both processes have affected the record we are now left to tackle.

Another feature which this study highlights is that of a saint's various constituencies. A saint belongs to one group by birth-place, another by the location of his main church (or churches), another by genealogy and another by inclination (poor people, women, sailors for example). Some of these, especially genealogy, are prone to manipulation over time. This became particularly apparent in our detailed studies of the saints. Recall the range of possibilities in the case of Fintan Munnu, and the range of possibly explanatory political alliances in seventh-century Argyll. Fintan Munnu was chosen because there are so many ways of looking at him - as a Leinster saint, as a representative of the old Easter, as a friend of Columb Cille. In the end the hunt becomes rather desperate, and we are no nearer the truth. It is the fact that there are so many possibilities that ultimately frustrates success. The same applies to Colmán Ela (a saint of the north, a member of the Southern or Northern Uí Néill, a representative of Connor, a monster slayer). The logical progression from a saint of many profiles is to a saint who explodes into many bits. Perhaps this is what we see with Berach / Berchán.

The ever-changing profile of a saint is what makes it so difficult to make credible statements about how he or she might make a fit with what is an ever-changing political situation in Argyll. Or rather the number of available variables make so many options possible as to make all fairly worthless.

4.4 Suggestions for further study

The thesis has enabled us to identify the uses and (perhaps more accurately) the limitations of the evidence, and has raised issues which indicate that further study would be fruitful:

1. We have found that in the areas around some *cill*- sites there are clusters of personal names reflecting devotion to the same saint as that honoured in the *cill*-name: Kilmanshenachan / Macilshenoch, Kilmaluag / Macilmaluag, Killevin / Macillevin.
2. The relationship between clans and saints, as touched on in the case of Berach and Clan Murachie (above, p 101 n 292), merits further study. This is a complex question because of the obscurity of that clan's history, but perhaps worth confronting.
3. There is a need for a systematic comparison between Irish and Scottish uses of the term *cill*-.
4. Scottish sources such as *Dempster*, *Camerarius* and *Adam King* need to be properly studied.
5. Some of the Scottish calendars need to be re-edited, including the Paris psalter, the Perth psalter, and the Fowlis Easter Breviary. A modern edition and analysis of the Dunkeld litany would also be most beneficial.
6. Archaeological investigation is required at many sites, both secular and ecclesiastical, in Argyll, not least to discover dates for their foundation and periods of occupation or use.

4.5 The more you know the more you doubt

The seeming infinity of possibilities makes every one of them less convincing. The more one questions, the more the structuring narrative falls away, meaningless. One is left with chaos. It is, of course, that chaos that requires people to be forever making up new stories. The work of analysis of these stories may seem, at one level, to be frustrating. But it should help us to appreciate and celebrate the constant process of creation and recreation.



Photograph by Gilbert Márkus, who always said the right thing at the right time,
and to whom this thesis is dedicated with thanks and love.