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An Historical Study of the Gael and Norse in Western

Scotland from c.795 to c.1000.

by Andrew Jennings.

Presented for the Degree of Ph.D

University of Edinburgh 1993.



Dedications.

I dedicate this thesis to my family, particularly my wife,
daughter and parents, for their patience and support.

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This thesis is an interdisciplinary study with two major objectives, namely to investigate both the cultural and historical developments which took place between c.795 and c.1000 in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

Various types of evidence are examined in order to understand the impact of the Norse upon the preexisting population of Western Scotland and *vice versa*. In Chapter 1, the onomastic evidence is reviewed in order to isolate the total area of Norse settlement, and to find within it areas where this settlement developed in differing ways. In Chapter 2, I survey the archaeological evidence. Chapter 3 examines the linguistic situation pertaining in the west *vis a vis* Norse and Gaelic, while Chapter 4 reviews the evidence for the survival or otherwise of Christianity. Particular attention is paid to the investigation of the people called Gall-Gaidheil 'Foreign Gael'. Using onomastics and historical sources, the area of their ethnogenesis is isolated and their linguistic and religious affiliation explored. Chapter 5 examines the evidence for their later presence in Galloway.

On the historical side, Chapter 6 investigates the Norse raids and settlement and provides a date for these events. Also in Chapter 6, and in Chapters 7 and 8, I focus upon the political links between the West Highlands and Islands and the kingdoms of Scotland and Dublin during the ninth and tenth centuries.

AC	<i>Annales Cambriae</i> ed. E.Phillimore (1888)
ACL	<i>The Annals of Clonmacnoise</i> , ed. D.Murphy (1896)
AI	<i>The Annals of Innisfallen</i> , ed. S. MacAirt (1951)
ASC	<i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> , ed. B.Thorpe (1861)
AT	<i>The Annals of Tigernach</i> ed. W.Stokes (1897)
AU	<i>The Annals of Ulster</i> (to AD1131), I, eds.S.MacAirt & G.MacNiocail (1983)
Bannerman <i>Dalriada</i>	J.Bannerman, <i>Studies in the History of Dalriada</i> (1974)
BAR	<i>British Archaeological Reports</i>
Benediktsson, <i>Landnámabók</i>	J.Benediktsson ed., <i>Landnámabók</i> , in <i>Íslendingabók: Landnámabók</i> , (Íslenzk fornrit 1968)
BT	<i>Brut y Tywysogion</i> ed. T.Jones (1952)
BUPNS	<i>Belfast University Place-Name Studies</i>
CCC	<i>Caithréim Cellacháin Caisil</i> ed. A.Bugge (1905)
CDS	<i>Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland</i> ed. J.Bain, i-iv (1881-8)
CGG	<i>Cogadh Gáedel re Gallaib</i> in <i>The Book of Leinster</i> , ed. R.I.Best & M.A.O'Brien, vol.V (1967)
CGS	<i>The Companion to Gaelic Scotland</i> ed.D.S.Thomson (1983)
Crawford <i>Scand.Scot.</i>	B.E.Crawford <i>Scandinavian Scotland</i> (1987)
CS	<i>Chronicon Scotorum</i> ed. W.M.Hennessy (1866)
DIL	RIA <i>Dictionary of the Irish Language</i> (1983)
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Eighth Viking Congress</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress, 1977</i> , ed. H.Bekker-Nielsen, P.Foote & O.Olsen (1981)
ES	<i>Early Sources of Scottish History, AD500-1286</i> , i, ed. A.O.Anderson (1922)
ESE	<i>East-South-East</i>
FA	<i>Fragmentary Annals of Ireland</i> ed. J.N.Radner (1978)
FM	<i>Annala Rioghachta Eireann:Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616</i> , ed. J.O'Donovan (1848-51)
<i>Fifth Viking Congress</i>	<i>The Fifth Viking Congress, 1965</i> , ed. B.Niclasen (1968)
HMSO	<i>Her Majesty's Stationery Office</i>
JRSAI	<i>Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland</i>
KLNM	<i>Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder</i> , i-xxii (1956-78)
Megaw 'Norse and Native'	B.Megaw 'Norse and Native in the Kingdom of the Isles' in <i>SS xx</i> (1976)
<i>Ninth Viking Congress</i>	<i>The Viking Age in the Isle of Man: select papers from the Ninth Viking Congress, 1981</i> , ed. C.Fell, P.Foote, J.Graham-Campbell & R.Thomson (1983)
NLS	<i>National Library of Scotland</i>

- Northern and Western Isles* A.Fenton & H.Pálsson (eds.) *The Northern and Western Isles in the Viking World* (1984)
- Notes and Queries* *Notes and Queries of the Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research*
- NS *Northern Studies*
- NTS *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*
- ON *Old Norse*
- OS *Ordnance Survey*
- Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, *The Book of Settlements: Landnámabók* (trans) H.Pálsson & P.Edwards (1972)
- PICCS 'The Impact of the Scandinavian Invasions on the Celtic-speaking Peoples c.800-1100AD', *Procs.International Congress of Celtic Studies, 1959* (1962) ed. B.Ó Cuív
- POAS *Proceedings of the Orkney Antiquarian Society*
- PSAS *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*
- RCAHMS *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*
- RIA *Royal Irish Academy*
- SAF *Scottish Archaeological Forum*
- Saga-Book* *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*
- Seventh Viking Congress* *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, 1973*, ed. B.Almqvist & D.Green (1976)
- SGS *Scottish Gaelic Studies*
- SHR *Scottish Historical Review*
British Isles 850-880 (1977)
- Smyth *York and Dublin*, A.P.Smyth *Scandinavian York and Dublin* (1975 & 1979)
- Smyth *Warlords* A.P.Smyth *Warlords and Holy Men* (1984)
- SS *Scottish Studies*
- Steer & Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture* K.A.Steer & J.W.M.Bannerman *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (1977)
- TGSI *Trans. of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*
- TRHS *Trans. of the Royal Historical Society*
- Viking Antiquities*, *Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed.H.Shetelig I-V (1940), VI (1954)
- Watson *Celtic Place-names* W.Watson *The History of the Celtic Place-names of Scotland* (1926)

I am indebted to Dr.J.Bannerman, of the Scottish History Department of Edinburgh University, for his indispensable support and guidance. I am also most grateful to Prof.W.Gillies, of the Celtic Department of Edinburgh University, for his erudite advice on linguistic matters. Finally, I would like to thank A.Kruse, lecturer in Norwegian at Edinburgh University, for his comments on Norwegian place-names and history.

I was interested in researching the historical and cultural trends in Western Scotland during the period c.795 to c.1000, for the simple reason that such a survey is long overdue¹. My study concentrates on the Norse settlement therein, and the interaction of these new arrivals with the existing population. Within this broad remit, I was particularly interested in tracing the place of origin and the development of the people of mixed ethnicity known as Gall-Gaidheil.

Single disciplinary studies of this period, like the onomastic studies of M.Oftedal and W.F.H.Nicolaisen and the archaeological work of I.A.Crawford exist, and I have used these and commented upon their conclusions throughout this thesis. However, modern historians have been loath to produce broad overviews of the historical and cultural situation. It is not difficult to understand the reason for this historiographical abstinence- the topic requires a multi-disciplinary approach, namely an understanding of various disparate types of evidence, not just historical, and a working knowledge of several Celtic and Scandinavian languages, for example Old Irish, Modern Gaelic, Old Norse and Modern Norwegian. Indeed, close scrutiny of the linguistic material is absolutely essential.

Of course, the general historical and cultural situation in Western Scotland has not been totally neglected. It has been referred to within the ambit of wider studies. For example, it merits two pages in P.Sawyer's study of the Scandinavian raids and colonies throughout Europe². B.E.Crawford, in her recent book on Scandinavian Scotland³,

¹Essentially the only large-scale study of the Norse impact on the west published is G.Henderson *The Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland* (1910) which is clearly out of date

²P.Sawyer *Kings and Vikings* (1982), 110-1. This is not his fault but merely highlights the scarcity of source material and studies from which he was drawing, in comparison to the other areas of Europe which experienced Scandinavian settlement.

³Crawford *Scand.Scot.*, 47-51

devotes considerable space to the West, and, most valuably, does review the archaeological, onomastic and historical evidence for the Scandinavian settlement there. She also mentions the Gall-Gaidheil. However, I think it fair to say that her major focus is on the Northern Isles.

Indeed, it is not too much of an exaggeration to claim that the only recent study which is really comparable to that which I attempt is the single page on the *Western Isles c.800-1095*, contributed by D.Sellar to the *Historical Atlas of Scotland*⁴. Despite, however, making acute observations, for example that the conversion of the Norse incomers must have been common from the ninth century onwards, and that there are likely to have been peaceful communities of mixed race and Christian religion in the Isles during that century, he is, for obvious reasons of space, necessarily terse.

In the cultural sphere, the main conclusion of my survey, put baldly, is that Western Scotland, after the Norse settlement, can be broadly divided into two cultural provinces - a western one, essentially Northern Skye, Coll, Tiree and the Outer Hebrides, where Norse language and culture appear to have predominated, and an eastern one, consisting of the remainder of the Inner Hebrides with the Western littoral of the Mainland, where, in contrast, despite also receiving Norse settlement, Gaelic traditions remained to the fore. This divided situation appears to reflect that of the pre-Norse period, when the Outer Hebrides, according to archaeological evidence, appear to have had more in common with Orkney than with Dál Riata. This suggests the Pictish area of the west, like Orkney but unlike the neighbouring Gaelic area, suffered a systems collapse and was unable to withstand the Norse pressure.

⁴W.D.H.Sellar, 'The Western Isles c.800-1095' in *An Historical Atlas of Scotland c.400-c.1600* eds. P.McNeill & R.Nicholson (1975), 23-4

On a more detailed level, in Chapter 1 on onomastics, my research on Norse topographical names leads me to conclude that, initially, the Norse settlement was not restricted to the Hebrides, but also affected the western littoral, as stated above. Within this wide area, it is possible to discern three different zones of Norse settlement development⁵. In Zones 1 and 2, which make up the eastern cultural province, I reach the conclusion that the more restricted settlement development was due to the influence of a surviving native population. In Zone 3, however, Norse settlement development was not restricted, suggesting that, if there was a surviving native population there, it was not in a position to influence the Norse settlers.

The archaeological evidence, dealt with in Chapter 2, helps to reiterate the distinction between Zones 1 and 2 on the one hand, and Zone 3 on the other, with the latter being the more clearly Norse area.

In Chapter 3, dealing with linguistic matters, I scrutinize the evidence for the Gall-Gaidheil, and conclude that these people of mixed ethnicity developed in Zones 1 and 2. Their name is evidence that Gaelic was the common tongue in this area by the 850s. I also survey the evidence for Norse speech during the period, and suggest that it was predominantly a Zone 3 phenomenon.

Chapter 4 concludes that Christianity definitely survived in the eastern cultural province of Zones 1 and 2. The monastery of Iona continued, and the Gall-Gaidheil can be seen to have been Christian. It is also clear that, by the tenth century, Christianity was establishing itself amongst the Norse in Zone 3.

Having established a clear understanding of who and what the Gall-Gaidheil were, it was relevant in Chapter 5 to review the evidence for their presence in Galloway. I conclude that the territory did indeed take its name

⁵See (fig. 8)

from them, and that it was so-called at least by 1034, after a movement of Gall-Gaidheil from Zones 1 and 2 during the tenth century. Further, once the territory was so-called, the people who remained in Zones 1 and 2 were no longer called Gall-Gaidheil.

Having dealt with the cultural situation, my final three chapters review the political history of Western Scotland from c.795 to c.1000. One of my main conclusions in Chapter 6 is that Norse settlement took place over a space of about thirty years, between c.795 and c.825. The Irish annals show that this was a period of disturbance in the West, unparalleled in the rest of the ninth century. In this chapter, I also assess the evidence for, and the importance of, Gofraid mac Fhergusa, and conclude that there is every reason to regard him as an authentic figure, and the first *Rí Innse Gall* 'king of the Isles'. His existence is evidence that native kindreds remained in positions of power after the Norse settlement and also that the king of Scots retained influence in the West. In Chapter 7, I conclude that Caittil Find, Ketil Flat-nose of the Icelandic sagas, was likely to have been Gofraid's successor as *Rí Innse Gall*. I conclude that the presence of this individual with his Gall-Gaidheil in Ireland in the 850s can be explained by the fact that they were there to fight in support of Mael Sechnaill, king of Tara, because the latter was a major enemy of the kingdom of Dublin. From the mid ninth century, Dublin appears to have played an important role in the political history of Western Scotland, and, possibly by 866, the *Rí Innse Gall* had changed his allegiance from the MacAlpín dynasty to Dublin. Certainly, my major conclusion in Chapter 8 is that, during the tenth century, the *Rí Innse Gall*, acted as if the king of Dublin were his overlord.

This chapter will attempt to use the onomastic record to identify the geographical extent of Norse settlement. It will also attempt to show how the onomastic record can reveal the timing and the course of the development of Norse settlement in the west of Scotland. The first question has met with two different answers from the eminent scholars, W.F.H.Nicolaisen and M.Oftedal. The former tends to restrict Norse settlement to the Hebridean islands¹, while the latter includes the western littoral². The second part of the chapter will dispute the pessimistic statement of G.Fellows-Jensen³, to the effect that the distribution of Scandinavian settlement names cannot reveal a great deal about the development of such settlement in the Western Isles. I believe it is possible to provide a framework which does, in fact, show how settlement developed. Comparison of the variations in this development between different areas within the west of Scotland, I also believe, provides good evidence for the survival of a Gaelic population in the west of Scotland. It has important ramifications for our understanding of how the populations reacted one with the other.

A study of the Norse place-names of the west of Scotland has to begin by referring to the work of Nicolaisen. In 1976⁴, he presented an interesting hypothesis which set out to both define the area of Norse settlement in Scotland and to work out a chronological progression for its development. He noted that the distributions, in Scotland, of the three

¹W.F.H.Nicolaisen *Scottish Place-names* (1976), 96

²M.Oftedal 'Scandinavian place-names in Celtic territory. An attempt at a linguistic classification', in *Norna-Rapporter* 17 (1980), 163-91, Map p.168 (See fig.6)

³G.Fellows-Jensen 'Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles; the Place-name Evidence as seen from Denmark and the Danelaw', in *Northern and Western Isles*, 165

⁴Nicolaisen *Scottish Place-names*

habitative generics, *staðir*, *setr / sætr*⁵ and *bólstaðr*, made a very definite pattern (see figs.1-3). He believed this pattern could be used to reconstruct, in relative chronological terms, the gradual settling of the islands in the first century, or century and a half, of Scandinavian settlement. By comparing their distribution with that of *dalr* 'dale' (see fig.4), he also believed that a rough outline could be provided of areas of "permanent" Scandinavian settlement, defined by the habitative generics, and of the fringe areas of cultural influence, defined by *dalr*. Nicolaisen was, at this time, convinced that to be a settlement it had to be called "farm".

It is an attractive theory to suggest that the differing distributions reflect a chronological sequence, that *staðir*, having the most restricted distribution, ought to be considered the earliest of the three, that *setr/sætr*, having a wider distribution, could represent a later extension of Norse settlement into new areas, and that *bólstaðr*, having the widest distribution of the three, might be considered to be the map of ultimate Norse settlement, it being assumed that the areas lying outwith the *bólstaðr* distribution, although they might be covered by *dalr*, did not really see much actual Norse settlement. Nicolaisen guessed that the date of deposition of *staðir* names could have been from c.800 to c.850, of *setr* names from c.850 to 900, and of *bólstaðr* names from after 900.

However, attractive as this schema is, it presents problems and has met with much criticism. For example, it presupposes a gradual process of settlement, from north to south, which ignores the undoubted mobility of the Norse in their ships, at this period. It also suggests the unlikely scenario that the Norse changed their common name for farm twice within 50 years,

⁵Recent research has suggested that *setr/sætr* was not initially a habitative generic after all, see *infra*, 13-14

and does not take cognisance of the more likely scenario that the terms could be describing different kinds of settlement. Nicolaisen, in the light of these criticisms, has been reappraising his earlier work, and now admits that his maps of settlement generics, from which he made the equation⁶ of less extensive distribution with earlier settlement, and more extensive with later, were “admittedly far too simplistic”.

Ultimately damning for this attractive hypothesis, however, is that it ignores what seem to have been the oldest, and most wide-spread Norse farms, those bearing the names of topographical features. B.E.Crawford offered the following corrective of Nicolaisen’s maps: “in one very important respect, the place-name maps of the Norse settlement of Scotland are entirely defective, and that is because they do not include what are now recognised as being some of the earliest and most important farms of all: those with topographical names.”⁷ Fellows-Jensen states, in a similar vein: “it is important to bear in mind that the settlement pattern that can be deduced from the plotting on a map of various types of habitative names is incomplete, and it may well be that it is the oldest settlements which are lacking.”⁸

To get a clearer picture of the extent and development of Norse settlement, it is necessary to look more closely at Nicolaisen’s three habitative generics to see whether there is some other way of explaining their differing distributions. Before doing so, however, an attempt has to be made to identify some of the above mentioned topographical settlement-

⁶W.F.H.Nicolaisen ‘Place-Name Maps-How Reliable Are They?’ in *Studia Onomastica* (1989), 265

⁷Crawford *Scand.Scot.*, 111.

⁸Fellows-Jensen ‘Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles’, 154

names. These could then be mapped and their distribution compared with that of the habitative generics.

Topographical names are difficult to deal with, for, of course, they need not necessarily be attached to settlements. However, to ignore them would be to ignore the evidence from other areas of Norse settlement, and to conclude that the settlement of the West of Scotland was somehow radically different. Just how important topographical settlement-names are can be gauged by looking at the other Norse colonies. In a study of the similarities and differences between the place-names of the Faroe Islands and Shetland, L.J.MacGregor⁹ shows that the initial Norse settlers in the Faroes overwhelmingly preferred to call their farms by topographical terms. The potential for inland settlement was limited, because the precipitous slopes effectively ruled out any settlement at any distance from the sea, and therefore restricted it to the coastal fringes of the fjords. The landscape also caused secondary settlement to be nucleated around the parent site. This group of secondary settlements was called a *bygð*, and it retained, as a general name for the whole settlement, the name of the earliest farm. This tended to be a topographical name.

Of the 85 *bygðir* in the Faroes, 17 have simplex topographical names, that is 21% of the original farms. Of these 17, 13 relate to coastal features, including names such as Strendur (ON *strǫnd* 'strand'), Eiði (ON *eið* 'isthmus'), Sandur (ON *sandr* 'sand') and Vágur (ON *vágr* 'bay'). Alongside these simplex examples there also occur compound topographical names, 42 of them, that is c.50%, and, of these, 37 relate to coastal features. Among these are 14 examples, about 12%, in *-vík*, (Skalavík,

⁹L.J.MacGregor 'Norse Naming Elements in Shetland and Faroe: a Comparative Study' in *NS* 23 (1986), 84-101

Húsavík, Klaksvík) and 5 examples, 4.25%, in *-fjorð*. Therefore, c.70% of all the Faroese original settlements bear topographical names, and c.59% of all settlement names relate to coastal features.

In Shetland, MacGregor¹⁰ has argued that the original settlement name probably survives in the name of the *scattald* or common grazing. MacGregor states that, in Shetland as a whole, there are 41 simplex topographical *scattald* names, and around 53 compound topographical examples, which, as in the Faroes, have a preponderance of coastal terminology. Of the 10 *scattalds* of Fetlar¹¹, 7 bear simplex topographical names, of which 4 relate to coastal features.

The early Norse settlers in these two archipelagoes obviously had a marked preference for calling their newly acquired farms after topographical features, especially coastal features, which is only to be expected, because they first saw their new land, and prospective farms, from the sea. These settlers were not unique. The popularity of topographical farm-names can also be seen in Orkney. N.P.Thuesen¹², studying the parishes of South Ronaldsay, Rousay, Deerness and Harray, suggested that, of the 28 primary farms, 14 had topographical names, with 4 in *-vík*, 3 in *-nes*, 2 each in *-eið*, *-land* and *-vágr*, and 1 in *-klettr*. *Orkneyinga Saga* also features settlements with topographical names. There are 7 in *-nes* (eg. Hreppines, now Rapness) and 2 in *vík* (Þrásvík now Freswick and the simplex Vík, present day Wick).

Orkney, Shetland and the Faroes, which together provide evidence for Norse settlements in areas both with and without a previous population, all

¹⁰L.J.MacGregor 'Sources for a Study of Norse Settlement in Shetland and Faroe' in *Essays in Shetland History* ed. B.E.Crawford (1984), 1-17

¹¹J.Stewart 'Place-names of Fetlar' in *Fifth Viking Congress*, 174-185

¹²N.P.Thuesen 'Norrøn Bosetning på Orknøyene' (Thesis, University of Oslo, 1978)

show the preference for topographical names, both simplex and compound, when the Norse were naming their oldest settlements. It is logical to assume that the Norse settlers in the west of Scotland would have followed the same naming practices and given their initial settlements topographical names. An argument in addition is that the Norse settlers were, prior to their movement west, used to calling their biggest and best farms by topographical names. Farms with names like Vik, Haug, Nes, Hol are even today amongst the biggest and best farms in Norway. They appear to be amongst the oldest Norwegian farms and they paid the most tax in the Middle Ages¹³.

It is difficult to ascertain at this remove which of the many Norse toponyms actually represent Norse settlements, but I would suggest that those borne by present-day settlements must surely make good candidates. It is illogical to suggest that the modern *bygð* name Strendur in the Faroes represents an initial settlement in *strönd* 'strand', while the modern settlement called Strond in Harris does not. I would further suggest that a map of such settlements may show, in a skeletal manner, the distribution of primary Norse settlement in the west of Scotland (see fig.5)¹⁴. There are two provisos, however: it must be understood that it cannot be proved that all of the individual examples originally represented *bona fide* primary Norse settlements and not simply topographical features, and, *vice versa*, that many of the other Norse toponyms which do not survive as the names of modern settlements may also have been primary Norse settlements. Thus the map can only be taken as a rough guide.

¹³This argument was suggested to me by A.Kruse (Norwegian lecturer in Edinburgh University) in personal conversation.

¹⁴The modern settlements which I have included on figure 5 are taken from the OS 1:50000 series maps and are listed in the appendix to this chapter, see *infra*, 29-37

It can immediately be seen that this map of potential Norse primary settlement provides a wider distribution of Norse settlement than that suggested by the *bólstaðr* generic. Those areas formerly regarded as having been heavily settled remain so, but there are many additional settlements on the western littoral. For example, around Kyle of Lochalsh there is a settlement in *-vík*, Erbusaig, and two in *-nes*, Avernish and Duirinish, while on Arran in the Clyde estuary, there are two present-day settlements with names in *-vík*, Sannox and Brodick, and a settlement in *-dalr*, Kiscadale. This suggested distribution of Norse settlement is similar to that posited by M.Oftedal¹⁵ (see fig.6).

The appendix to this chapter shows that the map is sprinkled with the same types of generics found applied to initial settlements in the Faroes, Shetland and Orkney, generics like *-nes*, *-dalr*, *-vík* (for example, there are three settlements in Kintyre called Skipness, Carradale and Crossaig¹⁶) and generics like *-vágr*, *-klettr* and *-land* (for example Stornoway, Carloway, Breasclete in Lewis and Swordland in North Morar). The names in *vík* ‘bay’, I would suggest, are particularly good candidates for primary settlement sites. *Vík* was the most common topographical settlement generic in Thuesen’s study of Orkney and in MacGregor’s study of the Faroes. Since settlers in the west of Scotland were no less reliant on their ships nor less aware of the advantages of settling on the coast, there is no reason for supposing it was any the less popular amongst them.

¹⁵Oftedal ‘Scandinavian place-names in Celtic territory’, 168

¹⁶Corroborative evidence for Norse settlement in the south-western Mainland is provided by the place-name Smerby in Kintyre and Soroba near Oban. These are place-names in *-bær*, which are regarded in Orkney as denoting primary settlement, see H.Marwick *Orkney Farm-names* (1952), 249.

The importance of *vík* in the west of Scotland has not been overlooked. I. Fraser¹⁷ examined a selected number along the west coast in an attempt to ascertain their suitability for settlement. It has to be understood, however, that he feels topographical names are not ‘genuine’ settlement names. In this belief, he is following Nicolaisen’s 1970s views. In another paper¹⁸, however, Fraser did suggest that a “proportion of the topographical names represent either secondary, infilling settlements, or settlement of a temporary nature.” It is interesting that, although presumably aware of the primary and permanent nature of settlements with topographical names in other areas, he did not wish to apply this knowledge to the western littoral. Therefore, in his study, when he isolates a particularly attractive *vík* as evidence for Norse settlement, he is still thinking of occupation only on a seasonal basis, perhaps for specific purposes like fishing, hunting or timber-felling. This seems to be his attempt to reconcile the good evidence for *víks* being ideal settlement sites, which he himself has uncovered, with the mistaken premise that, to have been a permanent Norse settlement, the name had to include one of the farm generics. There is no need for this strained reconciliation: *vík*, as suggested above, was considered a fine name for an initial farming settlement. One only has to look at Iceland’s first settlement, Reykjavík, founded by Iceland’s first settler, Ingólfur Arnason. Fraser also noted that most of the *vík* locations he examined have attracted settlements, “some of which are substantial and of seemingly long standing.”¹⁹

¹⁷I. Fraser ‘What is a Vík? An investigation into an Old Norse Coastal Toponym’ Typecopy, to be published in a forthcoming *NS*.

¹⁸I. Fraser ‘The Norse Element in Sutherland Placenames’ in *Scottish Literary Journal Supplement* no.9 (1979), 23

¹⁹Fraser ‘What is a Vík’, 3

He examined 18 examples from Enard Bay to Loch Duich, each one of which exhibits good settlement qualities. Not all are included in figure 5., for some are no longer settlements. Fraser isolated the four characteristics which combine to establish a *vík* place-name:

- (i) the availability of shelter, good anchorage or beaching possibilities
- (ii) an available supply of arable land
- (iii) supplies of water for fishing, timber or game
- (iv) access to the sea-routes.

He then applied these criteria to his examples, showing in the process, the advantages of settling at Scorraig, which flourished in the last century, and Shildaig, with its deep anchorage and arable land (both these settlements are in Wester Ross). Fraser isolated the criteria for considering *vík* as a primary settlement name, as in the other colonies, but seems reluctant to admit it. However, he does not give any reason why they should not be seen as early, permanent settlements.

Nicolaisen²⁰, in a paper which hypothesised the existence of connotative names, added an important theoretical dimension to the discussion. He suggested that a name like *Sandvík* 'sand bay' is not only the correct name for a bay with a sandy bottom and/or a sandy beach, it is also the appropriate name for a farm (or other human settlement) situated or built near such a bay. Similarly, a farm founded near a 'calm bay' could be called *Kyrvík* and so on.

If modern settlements with Norse topographical names do represent Norse settlement, this would explain problems like that posed by Gairloch parish on the west coast. There is a notable spread of Norse place-names

²⁰W.F.H.Nicolaisen 'Early Scandinavian naming in the Western and Northern Isles' in *Northern Scotland* III (1979-80), 105-122

within its boundaries, but no farm generics. The parish contains Norse river names, for example, Abhainn Chearraidh (ON *kjarrá* ‘copseriver’)²¹ and the Boor (ON *búrá* ‘bowerriver’), and names in *-dalr*, for example Inverasdale (ON *aspidalr* ‘aspendale’). The Parish also contains names in *-vík*, for example, Melvaig (ON *melarvík* ‘bent-grass bay’), Tournaig (ON obscure) and Shildaig (ON *síldvík* ‘herring-bay’). G.Henderson²² recorded 34 Norse place-names in Gairloch Parish in all. Without the adhesive of a permanent Norse settlement, represented by topographical settlement names, it is difficult to account for the presence of these names on the mainland.

A similar problem to the above is also faced by islands like Barra, Raasay and Colonsay which also have many Norse place-names but no farm generics. In the case of the latter, this is probably an initial settlement name in *-ey* ‘island’, with the ON fore-name *Kolbein* as the specific. Island-names as farm-names are very common in the Faroes²³. There are several other islands in the Hebrides which have fore-names as specifics, for example, there are two with the fore-name *Eiríkr*, Eriska and Eriskay, perhaps recording the name of the initial Norse settler in both cases.

If the distribution of topographical names does provide a picture of the geographical extent of Norse settlement, it is striking, as stated above, how much more widespread the distribution of this settlement appears to have been than the settlement area represented by the distribution of the generic *bólstaðr*. How does one account for this, and for the even more restricted distributions of *staðir* and *sætr / setr*? In an attempt to find an answer, it is necessary to review the criticisms of Nicolaisen’s theories.

²¹The interpretations of the names are from, I.A.Fraser *The Settlement Names of Gairloch Parish* (undated)

²²G.Henderson *The Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland* (1910), 158

²³G.Holm ed. *En diskussion om sta-namnen* (1967), 101

Crawford²⁴ points out that the distribution map of *staðir* names, Nicolaisen's earliest habitative generic, does not include the Isle of Man, which is unfortunate, because twelve exist on the island, a fact which immediately makes the hypothesis of gradually encroaching Norse settlement from north to south look problematic. It also casts doubt on Nicolaisen's date for its deposition, because the date at which Norse settlement is considered to have begun on Man is under debate. D.M.Wilson²⁵, on the basis of archaeological evidence, considers that the island was not colonised until the end of the ninth century²⁶. This is too late for Nicolaisen's schema. The latter's attribution of the date c.850 as a general average for *staðir* deposition also ignores its popularity in Iceland, where there are 1165 examples, and settlement did not begin there until the 870s. It must have taken several decades for such a number to have been set down in the landscape.

Nicolaisen's interpretation of *staðir* farms as primary Norse settlements is contradicted both in the original homeland of Norway and in other overseas colonies. M.Olsen²⁷ suggested that, in Norway, farms with names in *staðir*, represented small settlement units detached from an old estate centre. Fellows-Jensen²⁸ claimed that in Iceland *staðir* farms represented secondary settlements, originally dependant on an older farm with a topographical name. S.Rafnsson²⁹ noted that Icelandic *staðir* farms were

²⁴Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 108

²⁵D.M.Wilson *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man* (1974)

²⁶However, C.J.S.Marstrander dated the beginnings of settlement in Man to c.800, see C.J.S.Marstrander 'Remarks on the Place-Names of the Isle of Man', in *NTS* vii (1934), 289

²⁷M.Olsen *Ættegård og helligdom* (1926), 83-94

²⁸Fellows-Jensen 'Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles', 158

²⁹S.Rafnsson *Studier i Landnámabók* (1974), 193

generally of low status, and were looked upon as sources of income for those living on the primary farm. The *staðir*-farms of Orkney were also likely to be secondary settlements, because in the area of Mainland where they occur most frequently, they have an inland rather than a coastal distribution, which suggested to A.Fenton³⁰ that they represent a gradual penetration inland away from the sea.

The great number of personal names occurring with this generic can also be seen as evidence for its secondary nature, because when a holding was divided, very often the name of the owner of the new farm would be used to differentiate the new, 'hived-off' settlement from the old. Many such examples occur in Scotland. In Shetland, there is the example of Girlsta - 'Geirhildr's farm', from Orkney, Hourston - 'Þorir's farm', and, from Lewis, Torastay - 'Torfi's farm', Caversta - 'Kofri's farm', Tolsta - 'Þolfr's farm', and perhaps Mangersta - 'Magnus' farm' and Skegirsta - 'Skeggi's farm'. Further, of the three *staðir* names recorded in *Orkneyinga Saga*, which are, in fact, the only three habitative names proper out of fifteen Orkney farm names therein, all have personal names as specifics: Skeggbiarnarstaðir (no longer extant), Knarrarstaðir (Knairston) and Kjarrekstaðir (Cairston).

Further evidence that *staðir* farms were secondary and not primary settlements comes from a study of Hebridean place-names carried out by D.Olson³¹. In his study he considered the optimum geographical positioning for a primary farm, ie. its proximity to the sea and the quality of the land, and then he compared the generic *staðir* to this ideal. He found that, in the specific areas of the Hebrides that he studied, which included North Lewis, West Uig, West Trotternish, and the Southern Rhinns and the Oa peninsula

³⁰A.Fenton *The Northern Isles: Orkney and Shetland* (1978), 27

³¹D.Olson 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides, an Interdisciplinary Study' (Thesis Oslo 1983)

of Islay, an area which contained 29% of all *staðir* names in the West of Scotland, only 30% were in a primary position, while 60% fitted the definition of secondary settlements, and 10% he classified as peripheral. He concluded that, “*staðir* was a usual name used for ‘farm’ when the primary units were dismembered.”³² This is close to Fellows-Jensen’s stated opinion on *staðir* names; “the generic *staðir* may have had the same kind of function in the Atlantic islands as *bý* ‘farm’ had in the Scandinavian colonies in England. Both generics are frequently compounded with personal names and both seem to denote some kind of secondary settlement.”³³

It would seem that the weight of evidence and scholarly opinion favours *staðir* as the name given to some kind of secondary farm in the Hebrides. Similarly, *setr* / *sætr*-names also present difficulties for the old theory, and do not make good candidates for primary settlement status. It is now not possible to differentiate between the two Norse generics, *setr* ‘dwelling’ and *sætr* ‘shieling’, when determining the etymon of present place-names, and most of the Hebridean examples could be either. However, where a few Shetland examples have early recorded forms, the etymon seems to be *-sætr*³⁴. In fact, it is possible that *setr* itself is something to do with transhumance. In a study of these elements in Norway³⁵, it has been argued that both originally denoted shielings or outfields, since farms that now bear the names in *setr* tend to lie on the outskirts of areas of cultivation and give the impression of being comparatively young secondary settlements. Nicolaisen’s date of c.850-880 was based on the fact that *setr*

³²Olson ‘Norse Settlement in the Hebrides’, 227

³³Fellows-Jensen ‘Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles’, 159

³⁴J.Jakobsen, *The Place-Names of Shetland* (1936), 94-5

³⁵O.Beito *Norske Sæternamn in Norsk Stadnamnleksikon* eds. J.Sandnes & O.Stemshaug (1976)

does not occur in Iceland, however *sætr* does, and it also occurs in place-names in England.

As with *staðir* names, there seems to be a growing consensus concerning the nature of *setr*/*sætr* farms. D.Olson³⁶ interpreted those in Skye, some of which were definitely secondary to other farms having names in *bolstaðr*, as evidence for the consolidation of settlement on previously pastoral land. Crawford³⁷ also sees them as representing internal expansion into peripheral, often inland, pastoral areas around earlier farms. Fellows-Jensen³⁸ concurs: "It is tempting to assume that the names originally denoted a shieling or at least some unit of exploitation in a pastoral economy." The almost completely exclusive distributions in the west of Scotland of *setr/sætr* and Old Gaelic *áirge* 'shieling' (borrowed into ON as *-ærgi*) as shown by E.Megaw's map (see fig. 7)³⁹, does suggest strongly that the two terms were equivalent. E.Ekwall⁴⁰ pointed out that *-ærgi* is actually stated to be the equivalent to Scandinavian *-sætr*, ("erg det kalle vi setter", cap.103) in a passage preserved in the sixteenth century Danish version of *Orkneyinga Saga*. Rather than than following Nicolaisen's original hypothesis, it would probably be correct to envisage *setr/sætr* names as representing shielings surrounding older farm settlements, which later became farming settlements themselves under the influence of population pressure.

Clearly, *bólstaðr* farms need not have been founded later than those in *staðir* or *setr* (even if the latter were originally farms, which now seems

³⁶Olson 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 110-12

³⁷Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 110

³⁸Fellows-Jensen 'Viking Settlement', 162

³⁹E.Megaw 'The Manx "Eary" and its Significance', in Davey, P., ed. *Man and Environment in the Isle of Man*. (BAR British Series 1978), 336

⁴⁰E.Ekwall *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-West of England* (1918), 75

doubtful). D.Olson's figures show that those in *bólstaðr* appear to have been in slightly more advantageous positions than those in *staðir* (31.6% were in primary positions and 47.4% were in secondary positions) while, as has already been noted, the *setr/sætr* farms were often peripheral to them. The derivation of the name *bólstaðr* is from *ON ból* 'share', which suggests the division of an older settlement. Nicolaisen⁴¹ thought too much store should not be put on their etymology, and that, at the time these names were being set down in Scotland, *bólstaðr* just meant farm. However, Crawford⁴² feels that a division of older, bigger units is exactly what one should be thinking of with respect to *bólstaðr* farms. She points to the example of the close grouping of three *bólstaðr* settlements on Loch Slapin in Skye, which might reflect the division of an older settlement. There is another similar grouping in Skye, at Tote. Nicolaisen's map of *bólstaðir* settlements cannot be seen as an indication of the extension of primary settlement beyond the confines of the *setr/sætr* area. Rather, it seems to show the geographical area where secondary settlement took place through the subdivision of primary farms, which one supposes must have had topographical names.

MacGregor's aforementioned study of the similarities and differences between the Norse settlement of the Faroes and Shetland is particularly pertinent to the discussion, providing corroborative evidence for the secondary nature of Nicolaisen's habitative generics. In the Faroes, unlike in Shetland, there are no *staðir*, *bólstaðr* or *setr* farms, with the one possible exception of *Velbastaður* (*ON ?Vé-bólstaðr*). MacGregor concluded that this lack was because the types of settlement which these generics represent were absent from the Faroes. MacGregor⁴³ felt capable of defining these types:

⁴¹Nicolaisen *Scottish Place-names*, 92

⁴²Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 110

⁴³MacGregor, 'Norse Naming Elements', *NS* 23, 99

-*staðir*-names were applied to secondary but favourable sites, separate from primary farms;

-*bólstaðr*-names were given to large farms established on existing cultivated fields or on divisions of existing farms;

-*setr/sætr*-names were given to marginal settlements on hill-grazing land.

All these types of settlement are absent from the Faroes because of the constraints of the landscape, which, being of a much more extreme and precipitous nature than that of Shetland, did not provide enough available land for these types of secondary settlement to develop.

If these definitions are applied to the west of Scotland, Nicolaisen's distribution maps take on a new importance, because they would now show the areas where different types of secondary settlement took place. His *bólstaðr* map would show where primary farms were divided, his *staðir* map would show where secondary farms were founded on favourable land at a distance from the primary farm, while the *setr/sætr* map would show where farms developed on earlier shieling sites.

The differing distributions of *bólstaðr* and *staðir*⁴⁴ are interesting, and the question immediately arises, if these generics represent different types of secondary settlement, why is there variation in the distribution? Why do some areas exhibit both generics, while in other areas only *bólstaðr* can be found, and in yet other areas only topographical names exist? In an attempt to answer this question, I have divided the Norse settlement area into three zones on an east-west axis (see fig.8) based on the distributions of the farm generics and on that of the topographical names.

⁴⁴In the west of Scotland the distribution of *staðir* and *setr/sætr* is essentially the same.

Zone 1, the most easterly zone, comprises the west coast mainland, Arran, much of Mull and Jura, and the islands of Rum, Muck, Eigg and Canna. Here, topographical names occur, but Nicolaisen maps no *staðir*-names, and *bólstaðr*-names are very few (Nicolaisen maps only five along the whole length of the western mainland- Unapool, Ullapool, Meoble, Arnapol and Resipole- and one on Luing, Cullipool⁴⁵). So, in this Zone, Norse settlement occurred, but was essentially still-born, because, for some reason, it did not go on to develop a secondary phase to any great extent⁴⁶.

Zone 2, the middle zone, is mainly restricted to the Inner Hebrides, including the west of Mull and Jura, part of southern Skye⁴⁷ and Islay, bar the Rhinns. Here, *bólstaðr*-names are common, but *staðir*-names do not occur. Using Nicolaisen's map, one would also be tempted to include the Outer Hebridean islands of Benbecula, South Uist and Barra in this zone. However, according to Olson⁴⁸, Nicolaisen missed out an example of *staðir* from South Uist. This fact and the general Norse ambience of the toponymy of these islands would tend to favour the placing of all the Outer Hebrides

⁴⁵A.Small has identified another example on the western mainland in the Kyle of Lochalsh. However, this does not upset the basic premise that *bólstaðr*-names are very rare in Zone 1. See A.Small, 'Norse settlement in Skye', in '*Les Vikings et leur civilisation*', ed.R.Boyer, Bibliothèque Artique et Antartique, v (1976), 29-37, fig.2.

⁴⁶There are some Norse place-names in *skiki* 'strip' on the Mainland, for example Toscaig in Applecross, and Loch Sionascaig and Loch Oiscaig in the Assynt area, which may indicate a little more secondary settlement than that suggested by the distribution of *bólstaðr*. However, I do not see why these could not equally well have been primary settlements.

⁴⁷On Nicolaisen's map more of southern Skye should be included, for A.Small 'Norse Settlement in Skye', has identified four *staðir* place-names there missed by Nicolaisen. Small has thirteen *staðir* place-names in Skye altogether, while Nicolaisen has six.

⁴⁸Olson 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 222

in Zone 3. If MacGregor's definition is followed, in Zone 2 there was secondary settlement, but it was restricted to within the boundaries of primary farms.

Zone 3, the western zone, comprises the Rhinns of Islay, Coll, Tiree, northern, and part of southern, Skye and the Outer Hebrides. Here, both *bólstaðr* and *staðir*-names occur. The major portion of this zone lies north of Ardnamurchan, in Skye and Lewis, where the *staðir*-names are concentrated. Again following MacGregor, in Zone 3, secondary settlements were established, both within the boundaries of existing settlements and on favourable sites outwith these. It would seem that the further west and north one goes, the less restriction there seems to have been upon the development of Norse settlement.

The boundaries of the Zones ought to be taken as a rough guide and should not to be considered immutable, because the details of these boundaries may alter slightly with further study. For example, in his thesis, Olson⁴⁹ claims Nicolaisen not only missed out an example of *staðir* in South Uist, he also missed an example in Morvern and one on the Ross of Mull, although Olson does not name them. If the last example is genuine it can easily be fitted into the picture by including this, the most westerly peninsula of Mull, in Zone 3. An isolated example in Morvern, the only one on the Mainland, does not disprove the general theme of the argument, and indeed it may be the exception that proves the rule.

Perhaps, in certain areas, landscape was influential in restricting the development of secondary settlement or defining its type, as in the Faroes. However, although this may explain the lack of farm-generics in some areas, it is unlikely to be the whole answer, because the Zones would appear to

⁴⁹Ibid

form a clear pattern of increasing freedom of secondary settlement the further west one goes. I would suggest that a more likely answer to this variation of development is a variation in the survival of pre-Norse power structures and native influences on the Norse settlers.

In Zone 1, where one might naturally expect that native influence would be heavy, considering it incorporates the western mainland and the heartland of Dalriadic power, it is perhaps not surprising to find the development of Norse settlement at its most restricted. One could posit that the lack of Norse farm-generics in this Zone might be due to the Norse settlers in this area settling amongst a dense native population, going rapidly native themselves, and adopting the native language, in this case Gaelic, before the time came when primary settlements were divided and secondary settlements were created.

If the Norse were using Gaelic in this zone when the secondary settlements developed, what generics did they use to describe them? The question for the present must remain unanswered, but it could be posited that one of the generics they adopted was *achadh* 'field', because this is much more common in Zone 1 than in either of the other two (see fig.9). Indeed, *achadh* makes a reasonable Gaelic equivalent for *bólstaðr*, in the sense that its survival in a placename usually signifies a new settlement on cultivated fields within an existing farm, one of the definitions offered for *bólstaðr*. This has exciting implications for the dating of the *achadh* placename element.

In Zone 2, after the primary phase, secondary settlement was dense but, following MacGregor, it was apparently restricted to the founding of new farms within the boundaries of the original farm settlements (as it was in those few examples of secondary settlement in Zone 1). This would suggest that new land outside that occupied by the original settlements was

not available to the Norse (as was also the case with Zone 1). The simplest explanation for this lack of availability is that the Norse arrivals were living, as in Zone 1, alongside a remnant Gaelic landholding population who had managed to retain some of their land, and consequently some power and influence, during the invasion period. In a situation in which Gael and Norse had reached accord, part of which would presumably have related to land rights, land would not have been available for the founding of *staðir* farms on favourable land away from the primary settlement. Norse influence was undoubtedly greater here than in Zone 1, because the settlers were obviously still using Norse when the time came to divide their initial settlements.

Following this train of thought, Norse settlement in Zone 3 must have been substantially different from the other two zones, because here there was apparently much less restriction on its development. It could be posited that either there was little native population surviving around the initial Norse settlements, leaving available territory into which the Norse could further expand, or, if there was such a population, it was apparently powerless to stop further territory being taken from it by the Norse. It suggests a relationship between the two populations in which the balance of power was very much in favour of the latter. The “Norseness” of this Zone can be appreciated by the fact that not only did *staðir* farms come into being, but even *sætr/seter* farms on peripheral arable areas were created within a Norse-speaking context. This Zone looks like the Northern Isles in onomastic terms.

The hypothetical course of Norse settlement in the three Zones can be represented figuratively (see fig.10).

To reiterate the hypothesis, it is postulated that, in addition to the islands, the west coast also saw primary Norse settlements with topographic

names, but that different areas saw differing developments in Norse settlement. These areas, the three Zones, appear to be connected to the survival of natives, with the development of Norse settlement being, apparently, directly related to the distance from the centre of Dál Riata; the further from this centre, the greater the freedom of Norse settlement development.

There is corroborative evidence to show the progressive “Norseness” of the toponymy as one travels west, particularly north-west. The quoted numbers make this clear. In the parishes on the west coast mainland, the numbers of Norse place-names, although significant, are small, for example, 34 in Gairloch, 13 in Applecross, 6 in Loch Carron and 11 in Loch Alsh⁵⁰. However, in contrast, further west, in Trotternish in Zone 3, it has been estimated⁵¹ that Norse settlement names outnumber Gaelic ones by 2 to 1, ie. 66% of the settlement names in this part of Skye are of Norse origin. In Lewis, the percentage is even higher. Oftedal⁵², in his study of Lewis village-names, showed that, of the 126 studied, 99 were of Norse origin, which is 79%. Of the 20 of clear Gaelic origin, 9 were Gaelic in structure but contained Norse loan-elements. Fellows-Jensen⁵³ has pointed out that these figures quoted for North Skye and Lewis are higher than those for the areas of England where Scandinavian settlement was densest, namely the North Riding of Yorkshire, where about 44% of the settlement names are purely Scandinavian, and Lindsey, where the percentage is 45.

There are clear examples of toponymic continuity from the pre-Norse period in Zones 1 and 2, which helps to corroborate the posited survival of

⁵⁰Henderson *Norse Influence*, 158

⁵¹B.Gordon, ‘Some Norse Place-names in Trotternish’, *SGS* x (1963-5), 82

⁵²M.Oftedal ‘The Village Names of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides’ in *NTS* xvii (1954), 405-6

⁵³Fellows-Jensen ‘Viking Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles’, 151

the pre-Norse population. There is a lack of such examples from Zone 3, which again indicates its difference from the other two areas (see fig.11) and poses the question of whether there was native continuity at all in this area.

The Celtic Church monasteries of Applecross⁵⁴ and Lismore (modern Gaelic *Lios Mór*), both in Zone 1, retained their names through the Norse period, as did *I* 'Iona' in Zone 2. The first name appears in the record in *AU* of the death in 802 of Mac Oige of Applecross, abbot of Bennchor: (*M.Oigi Apuír Chrosan abbas Bennchai*). The name Lismore is recorded in the obit of Echuid, its abbot, in *AU*, under the year 635 (*Echuid Liss Moir*⁵⁵). *I* is mentioned many times in the pre-Norse period, but one example is sufficient: the death of Artgal, son of Cathal, king of Connacht, in Iona was recorded in *AU*, under the year 791 (*Artgal m.Cathail rex Connacht in Hi*).

W.J.Watson⁵⁶ in his study of the Celtic place-names of Scotland has provided us with examples of such toponymic continuity from the pre-Norse period in Zones 1 and 2. For example, the two river Shiels have pre-Norse names, both the one which flows into Loch Duich and the one which flows from Loch Shiel into Loch Moidart. Shiel is an old Celtic river-name **Salia*, (modern Gaelic *Loch Seile*). The Moidart example was recorded as *Sale* by

⁵⁴The old name is now preserved only in an English form (already *Ablecross* in 1275), the modern Gaelic name is *a' Chomraich*. There is, what appears to be, another example of a pre-Norse place-name in *aber* 'confluence, river-mouth' in Zone 2; at Strollamus, in southern Skye, there is a bay called Ob Apoldoire. Ob is a Gaelic borrowing from Norse *hóp* 'bay', but *apol*, like the apple in Applecross, is presumably the generic *aber*.

⁵⁵For more annalistic evidence concerning the names of these monasteries see A.D.S.MacDonald 'Iona's Style of Government among the Picts and Scots: The Toponymic Evidence of Adomnán's Life of Columba' in *Peritia* 4 (1985), 174-186

⁵⁶Watson *Celtic Place-names*

Adamnan in the seventh century. The Garvellachs (modern Gaelic *Na h-Eileacha Naomha*), off the south-east coast of Mull, appear to retain their sixth century name, because it was probably here that Brendan of Clonfert, prior to 524⁵⁷, founded a monastery. The island on which the monastery was built was called *Ailech*⁵⁸.

Watson points to two pre-Norse place-names in *bearn/bearna* 'gap', Morvern⁵⁹, (**Mor-Bhearn* 'Sea gap', modern Gaelic *a'Mhorbhairn*), and Loch Hourn⁶⁰ (**Subh-Bhearna* 'Berry gap', modern Gaelic *Loch Shubhairne*). Watson considered the former was the pre-Norse name for Loch Sunart. Loch Hourn, or possibly Loch Nevis⁶¹ which is another pre-Norse name, may have been called **Knútsfjorðr*⁶² (Knoydart, modern Gaelic *Cnòideart*) by the Norse. However, the new Norse name could not displace the earlier one, which was retained in Gaelic.

Watson also points to two pre-Norse names in *dobhar* 'water', Mórar⁶³ (**Mórdhobhar* 'Big water') and Tot-Arder⁶⁴ (**Ard-Dobhar* 'High Water') which is in Bracadale, Skye (just outside Zone 2). The latter was

⁵⁷See *ES* i, 17-18

⁵⁸Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 81

⁵⁹*Ibid* 123. Professor W.Gillies, of Edinburgh University Celtic Department, has suggested to me, however, that the etymon in both cases could be *maoirne* 'stewartry'.

⁶⁰Watson, *Celtic Place-names*, 81

⁶¹Nicolaisen considers that Nevis comes from an old Celtic root **nebh* 'moist,water', giving a meaning of "the moist one; the one that abounds in water", see W.F.H.Nicolaisen 'Nevis' in *Notes on Scottish Place-Names in SS III* (1959), 216.

⁶²The Norse derivation of Knoydart is from Henderson *Norse Influence*,. 159, but even if his derivation is in error it appears to be a name in *fjorðr*.

⁶³Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 124

⁶⁴*Ibid*, 75

the only *dobhar* known to Watson in the Islands. He notes the possibility that Tot-Arder might be the *Dobur Artbranani* mentioned by Adomnán⁶⁵.

In Zones 1 and 2, Watson also notes Glen Elg⁶⁶ (from Gaelic *Eilg* ‘Ireland’), which is an early Scottish colonial name, like Atholl and Loch Earn, dating to the period when Gaelic speakers first settled in that area, presumably prior to the arrival of the Norse. He also notes the *Coire Bhreacáin*⁶⁷ whirlpool, called *Charybdis Brecani* by Adamnan, and Dunaverty⁶⁸, a tribal centre of the Cenél Gabráin, in Kintyre recorded under 712 in *AU* (*Obsesio Aberte apud Selbachum* ‘The siege of Aberte by Selbach’).

The tribal centres of the Cenél Loairn, Dunadd and Dunollie, also have names which pre-date the Norse settlement. It is recorded in *AU* that in 735 Dunadd was seized by Aengus king of the Picts (*Oengus m. Fergusso, rex Pictorum, uastauit regiones Dail Riatai ocus obtenuit Dun At*), while in 714 Selbach reconstructed Dunollie, after having destroyed it in 701 (*Dun Ollaigh construitur apud Selbachum*). Indeed, the tribal-name Cenél Loairn survives itself in the territorial designation Lorne.

Nicolaisen, after studying and plotting the generic *sliabh* ‘mountain’, suggested, because of its distribution (see fig.12), that it might well be assignable to the pre-Norse period⁶⁹. If so, this would be further evidence for some toponymic continuity in Zones 1 and 2.

⁶⁵Ibid, 75

⁶⁶Ibid, 231

⁶⁷Ibid, 94

⁶⁸Ibid, 237

⁶⁹Nicolaisen *Scottish Place-names*, 39-45. He also suggested that *cill* ‘church’ might also be assignable to the pre-Norse period, however, I leave discussion of this generic until Chapter 4, see *infra*, 123-129

There may be a great deal of toponymic continuity going unrecognised, because Gaelic is very conservative in its usage of its toponymic lexicon, making it difficult to isolate early Gaelic place-names. Nicolaisen's comments on this problem are succinct: "At first sight, the Gaelic stratum in the Scottish place-nomenclature, a layer 1400 years 'deep' in places, appears to be almost impenetrable with regard to the further isolation of strata within the stratum, since most lexical items used toponymically seem to have been employed ever since the first Gaelic place-name was coined in Scotland, while still being productive now, both in Scotland and in Ireland. The difficulty in pin-pointing elements to which more limited chronological usage may be attributed is especially frustrating in the search for criteria which might be helpful in recognising pre-Norse Gaelic place-names in those parts of Scotland - mainly the Hebrides and the adjacent mainland - in which Norse became a linguistic adstratum and subsequent superstratum."⁷⁰ This leaves open the possibility that many of the lexically obvious Gaelic place-names in the west of Scotland are pre-Norse, but, without early written accounts, this suggestion cannot be verified.

However, it is an important possibility to take cognisance of, especially when Zone 3 is considered. It might cast doubt on Oftedal's⁷¹ considered opinion that, since the Gaelic place-names of Lewis are so readily interpretable through modern Gaelic, they cannot be very old, and that Norse must have been, for some period, either long or short, the only language on the island. He could be in error if many of the apparently modern Gaelic place-names were actually old in origin. However, as modern archaeological

⁷⁰Nicolaisen *Scottish Place-names*, 122

⁷¹ M.Oftedal 'Norske namn på framand grunn' in *Stedsnavn/stadnamn* ed. B.Helleland (1975), 145-156

research suggests that the Western Isles were Pictish prior to the Norse settlement⁷², and as neither Oftedal nor Watson were able to recognise any obviously pre-Norse place-names in Zone 3, the Gaelic place-names therein are likely to be younger than the Norse ones. It was certainly reasonable for Watson to conclude that: "In the Long Island from the Butt of Lewis to Barra Head, Norse must long have been the predominant language, if not the only one."⁷³.

Further evidence of a distinct difference between the more easterly and westerly areas of Western Scotland can be seen in the modern Gaelic forms of the island-names. The Gaelic names of the major islands in the Outer Hebrides appear to have developed from Norse forms, whereas most of their counterparts in the Inner Hebrides do not⁷⁴.

Leodhas 'Lewis' is from Norse *Ljóðhús*⁷⁵, *Uist* comes from *Ívist*, while *na Hearradh* 'Harris' is Norse *Herað*. Both *Ljóðhús* and *Ívist* would appear to be Norse rationalisations of pre-existing and otherwise unknown names, the former meaning 'Song homestead, or people homestead' and the latter 'Place for dwelling in'. Harris is a Norse administrative term: a *herað* was a district with its own *Þing* 'public assembly'. *Barraigh* 'Barra' is also from Norse *Barreyjar* 'Barr's islands', Barr or Finbarr was a Celtic Church saint.

⁷²See *infra*, 50-1

⁷³Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 234.

⁷⁴The major exception, of course, is the island of Jura.

⁷⁵The earliest Norse forms of the names of the Hebridean islands appear in Björn Krepphendi's late eleventh century poem about the attacks of Magnus Barelegs on the Hebrides. An account of Magnus career, and the poem, appears in *Morkinskinna*. ed. F.Jónsson (1932), 297-337, and in *Heimskringla* ed. B.Aðalbjarnarson (1941-51), iii, 210-37.

In Zones 1 and 2, the modern Gaelic forms seem to have developed straight from their pre-Norse versions. For example, *Muile* 'Mull' has come from *Malaios* as recorded by Ptolemy, later *Malea insula* of Adamnan and *Íle* 'Islay' was recorded as *Ili* in *FM* under the year 568.

Norse versions of the names of the Inner Hebridean islands existed, but the Gaelic forms prevailed. Interestingly, in the case of Tiree, both the pre-Norse and the Norse version appear to be used, the former for the island name, and the latter for a 'Tireeman'. The Norse form was *Tyrvist*. This is not reflected in either of the modern forms *Tireadh* or *Tir-idhe* - the former is preferred by the people of Tiree and the latter by Gaelic-speakers furth of the island - but it is present in the modern *Tiristeach* 'Tiree man'⁷⁶.

Finally, it is necessary to say something about chronology. It is easy to provide a *tempus post quem* for the age of the Norse place-names. The historical evidence indicates that the large scale settlement movement can be dated between the years 795 and 825⁷⁷. I believe that this was the period when many of the primary settlement place-names were laid down, that is to say, the topographical settlement names, although there may also have been some secondary settlement within this period. I would suggest that the geographical extent of the 795-825 settlement is coterminous with the area covered by the posited topographical settlement names.

On the question of the *tempus ante quem* of the Norse place-names, it is probable that they would have continued to be coined as long as Norse remained a spoken language in the west, and there is evidence that it was spoken at some level in society throughout the tenth century and beyond in Zone 3⁷⁸. However, it is likely that most of the Norse place-names in the

⁷⁶Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 85-6

⁷⁷See *infra*, 153-159

⁷⁸See *infra*, 87-103

west of Scotland were laid down within the ninth century, when the actual physical settlement was taking place.

The modern settlements with Norse topographical names shown on Fig.5, which I have taken from OS 50000 series maps.

<u>Topographical Place-names</u>	<u>Ordnance Survey ref. no.</u>
<u>1. Names in -vík.</u>	
ARISAIG	NM6686
ASCOG	NS1062
ASGOG	NR9468
BEACRAVIK	NG1190
BEDERSAIG	NA9911
BORNESKETAIG	NG3772
BORRERAIG	NG1853
BREIVIG	NL6998
BREVIK	NL6998
BRODICK	NS0136
BROGAIG	NG4768
CARSAIG	NM5421
CLAONIG	NR8656
CORNAIGBEG	NM2462
CORNAIGMORE	NL9846
CROSSAIG	NR8351
CRULVIG	NB1733
CUAIG	NG8153
DIABAIG	NG8060
EIGNAIG	NM7944
ERBUSAIG	NG7629
FISKAIVAIG	NG3234
FRACKERSAIG	NM8240
GOVIG	NB0109
ISLIVIG	NA9927
KEARVAIG	NC2972
KIRIVICK	NB2041
LAIG	NM4687
LAPHROAIG	NR3845
MAARUIG	NB1906
MALLAIG	NM6795
MARVIG	NB4118
MEAVAIG	NB0908

MELVAIG	NG7486	30
MIAVAIG	NB0834	
MILOVAIG	NG1550	
OLDSHORE	NC2058	
ORMSAIG	NM4763	
ORMSAIGBEG	NM4763	
OSTAIG	NG6405	
PORT ASKAIG	NM4369	
RAMASAIG	NG1644	
RERAIG	NG8127	
ROAG	NG2744	
SAASAIG	NG6608	
SANAIGMORE	NR2370	
SANDAIG	NL9343	
SANDAIG	NG7101	
SANDAIG	NG7714	
SANDWICK	NB4432	
SANDWICK	NF8243	
SANNAIG	NR5164	
SANNOX	NS0145	
SCALASAIG	NR3894	
SCOLPAIG	NF7275	
SCORRAIG	NH0096	
SHIELDAIG	NG8153	
SHIELDAIG	NG8072	
TARSKAVAIG	NG5810	
TOKAVAIG	NG6012	
TORVAIG	NG4844	
TOTAIG	NG2050	
TOURNAIG	NG8783	
UIG	NG3963	
UIG	NB0534	
UIG	NG1952	
UIG	NM1654	
UIGEN	NB0934	
URAGAIG	NR3898	

2. Names in -dalr.

ALLASDALE	NF6603
ARMADALE	NG6404
ARNISDALE	NG8410
BARRISDALE	NG8605
BERNISDALE	NG4050
BIRGIDALE CRIEFF	NS0759
BOISDALE	NF7820
BORRODALE	NM7086
BRACADALE	NG3538
BROSDALE	NR4963
CARRADALE	NR8138
CATTADALE	NR3860
CLEADALE	NM4789
CRUBASDALE	NR6740
DAILL	NR3662
DRIMSDALE	NF7637
DUISDALEMORE	NG6913
EASDALE	NM7417
EORADALE	NB5362
ETTRICKDALE	NS0668
FASCADALE	NM8484
FASCADALE	NM5070
GALMISDALE	NM4784
GRAMISDALE	NF8155
GRIGADALE	NM4367
GUESDALE	NR7733
HOLMISDALE	NG1848
IFFERDALE	NR7633
KEOLDALE	NC3866
KERRYSDALE	NG8273
KISCADALE	NS0426
LAUDALE	NM7459
LAXDALE	NB4234
LIDDESDALE	NM7859
LUNDALE	NB1832
LYNDALE	NG3657

MERKADALE	NG3831
MUASDALE	NR6840
MUNGASDALE	NG9693
MUSDALE	NM9322
NORTH DELL	NB5058
NORTH ERRADALE	NG7481
ORMIDALE	NS0081
OSDALE	NG3241
REUDLE	NM3646
RHENIGIDALE	NB2201
RHONADALE	NR7838
RHUDIL	NR8494
RODEL	NG0483
ROMESDAL	NG4053
SADDELL	NR7832
SAMADALAN	NG7305
SCALLASTLE	NM6938
SCAMADALE	NM7090
SCAMMADALE	NM8820
SLATTADALE	NG8871
SORISDALE	NM2763
SOUTH ERRADALE	NG7471
SULADALE	NG3753
SWORDALE	NB4930
SWORDLE	NM5470
SUNADALE	NR8145
TALLADALE	NG9270
TANGASDALE	NF6500
TORMISDALE	NR1958
TORRISDALE	NR7737
UGADALE	NR7828

3. Names in -nes

AIGNISH	NB4832
ASKNISH	NR9291
ASKERNISH	NF7323
AVERNISH	NG8426
BORNISH	NF7329

BRENISH	NA9926
BRUERNISH	NF7102
CALLANISH	NB2133
CARINISH	NF8159
CARMINISH	NG0284
CARNISH	NB0232
DEGNISH	NM7812
DUIRINISH	NG7931
DURNESS	NC4067
GASHERNISH	NF8343
GRESHORNISH	NG3454
GRIMINISH	NF7851
GRIMINISH	NF7951
HEANISH	NM0343
HUSHINISH	NA9812
HYNISH	NL9839
MANISH	NG1089
NESS	NB5261
POLNISH	NM7582
QUIDNISH	NG0987
QUINISH	NM4254
RANISH	NB4024
ROSINISH	NF8012
SCARINISH	NM0444
SCOTNISH	NR7588
SIDINISH	NF8763
SHILTENISH	NB2819
SKERINISH	NG4151
SKIPNESS	NR8957
STEINISH	NB4433
STREMNISHMORE	NR3140
SUISNISH	NG5916
SUISNISH	NG5535
TRESHNISH	NM3348
TRUDERNISH	NR4652
UIGINISH	NG2448
ULLINISH	NG3237
WEST GEIRINISH	NF7741

4. Names in -klettr.

BREACLETE	NB1536
BREASCLETE	NB2135
BRECKLATE	NR6912
CLEAT	ND4584
DIRACLETT	NG1598
ENACLETE	NB1228
HACKLET	NF8148
HACKLETE	NB1534
HORSACLEIT	NG1496
LINICLATE	NF7949
MALACLETE	NF7974
ORMICLATE	NF7431
SMERCLATE	NF7415

5. Miscellaneous names.

AIROR	NG7205
AMOD	NR7038
ARNISORT	NG3453
ARNOL	NB3148
AROS	NM5051
BACK	NB4840
BACKS	NR6921
BARVAS	NB3649
BERIE	NB1035
BLASHAVAL	NF8970
BOOR	NG8481
BORSHAM	NG0885
BORVE	NB4055
BORVE	NG3452
BORVE	NG0394
BORVE	NF9181
BORVE	NF7650
BORVE	NF6501
BORVE	NG4448
BURG	NM3745
CARLOWAY	NB2041

CATACOL	NR9149
CLIASMOL	NB0706
CLIFF	NB0835
CLIFF	NM6769
COLL	NB4739
COLLAM	NG1591
CROSS	NB5061
ELGOL	NG5214
EYNORT	NG3729
EYRE	NG4152
EYRE	NG5734
FINSBAY	NG0786
FLODABAY	NG0988
FORSAY	NM6877
FRIESLAND	NM1853
GALTRIGILL	NG1854
GEISGEL	NC1741
GISLA	NB1126
GRAVIR	NB3715
GREEP	NG2642
GRESS	NB4842
GROSEBAY	NG1592
GRUINARD	NG9692
GRUINART	NM2767
HAMARAMORE	NG1649
HAUN	NF7911
HOLM	NB4531
HOLMAR	NF8342
HOUGH	NL9346
HOWMORE	NF7636
IDRIGILL	NG3863
KEOSE	NB3521
KILERIVAGH	NF8248
KISHORN	NG8340
KNEEP	NB0936
LACKALEE	NG1292
LANGA	NR6724
LANGAL	NM7069
LANGAMULL	NM3853

LANGASS	NF8365
LEE	NM4022
LEMREWAY	NB3711
LINGARABAY	NG0684
MEAVAG	NG1596
MELFORT	NM8314
MIAL	NG7977
OSE	NG3442
OSKAMULL	NM4540
RASSAL	NG8442
REEF	NB1134
REIFF	NB9614
ROSSAL	NM5427
SALIGO	NR2066
SALUM	NM0848
SAND	NG9091
SAND	NG7579
SANDAVORE	NM4784
SANGOBEG	NC4266
SANNA	NM4469
SCADABAY	NG1792
SCOTTAS	NG7500
SCUDDABORG	NG3764
SKULAMUS	NG6622
STAFFIN	NG4967
STEIN	NG2656
STOER	NC0428
STONEYBRIDGE	NF7433
STORNOWAY	NB4333
STROLLAMUS	NG6026
STROMEMORE	NG8635
STROND	NG0384
SUNDERLAND	NR2464
SWORDLAND	NM7891
TALISKER	NG3230
TONG	NB4436
TRODIGAL	NR6520
UDRIGILL	NG8993
URGHA	NG1799

VALTOS

NB0936

37

VALTOS

NG5163

VATTEN

NG2843

VAUL

NM0448

WATERSTEIN

NG1447

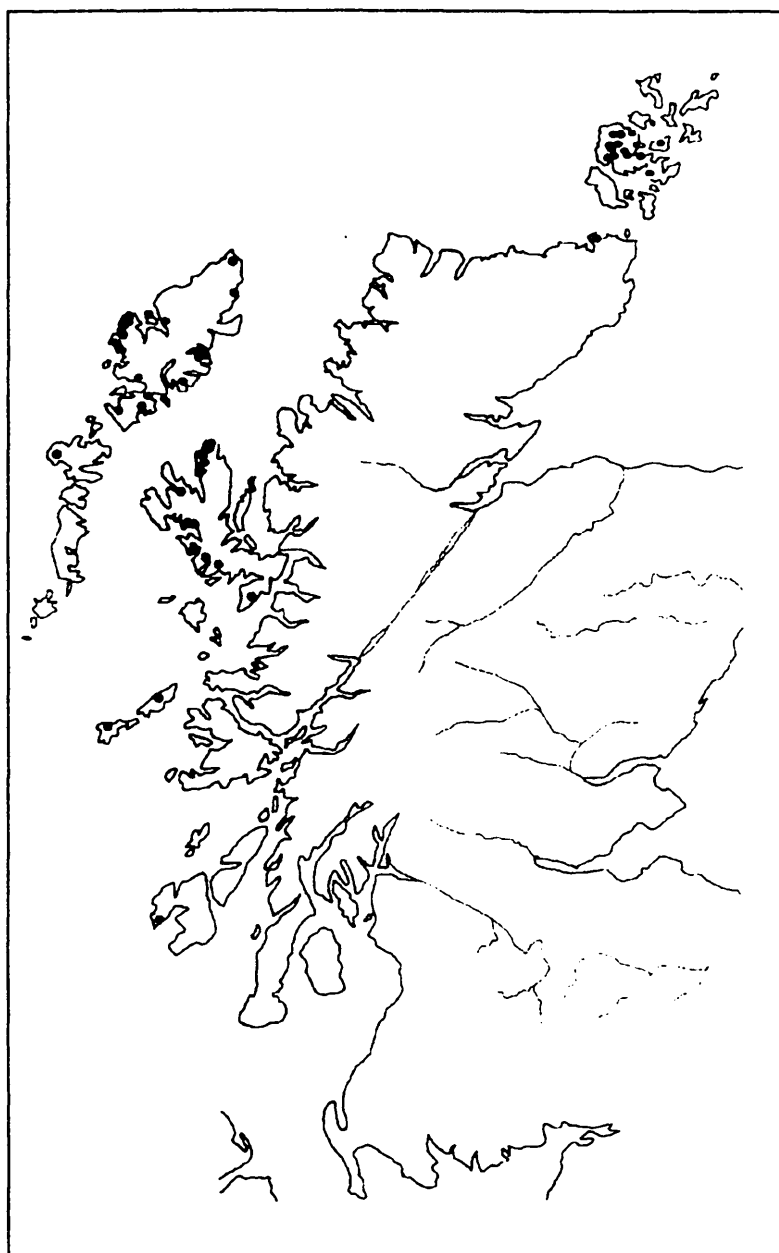


Fig.1. The distribution of place-names in *-staðr* (after W.F.H.Nicolaisen)

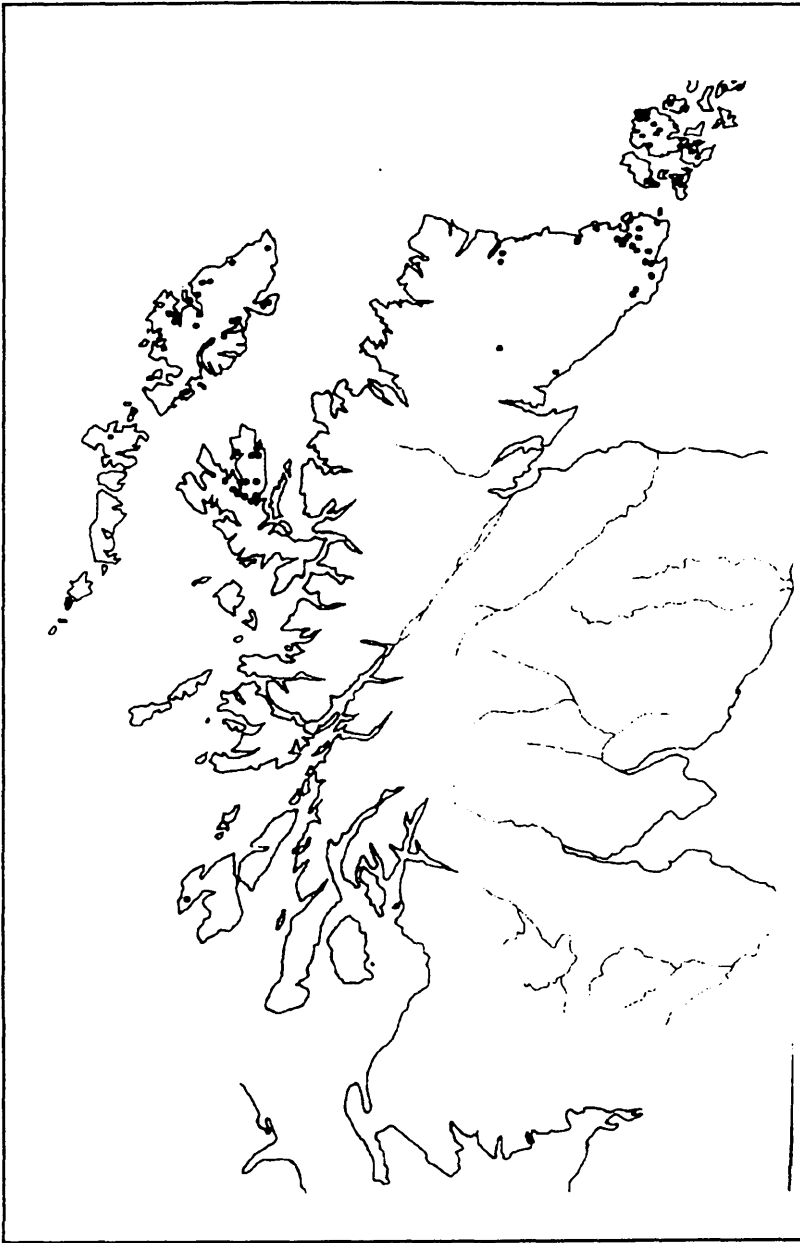


Fig.2. The distribution of place-names in *-setr/sætr* (after W.F.H.Nicolaisen)

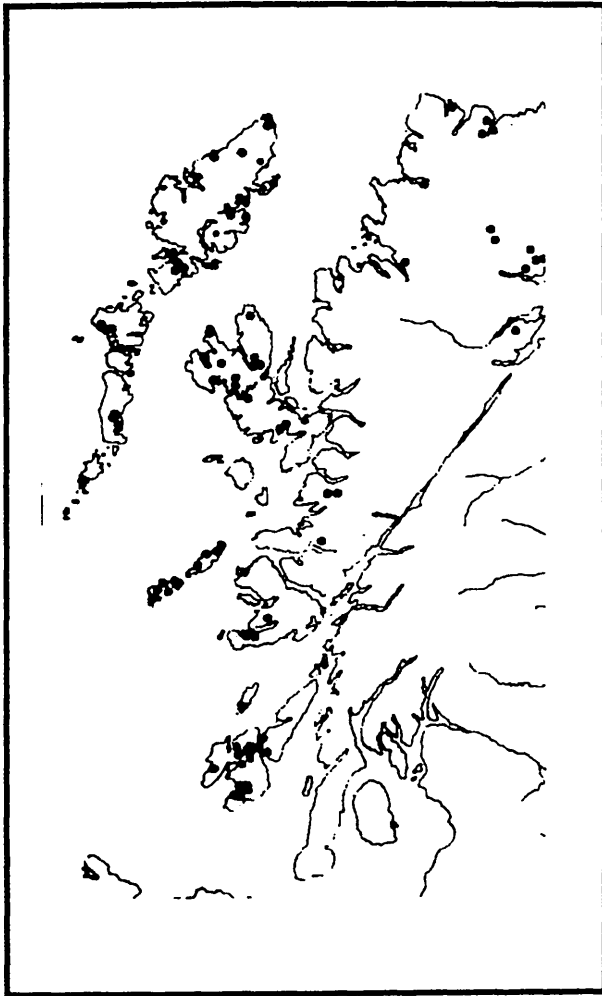


Fig.3. The distribution of place-names in *-bólstačř* (after W.F.H. Nicolaisen)



Fig.4. The distribution of *dalr* (after W.F.H.Nicolaisen)

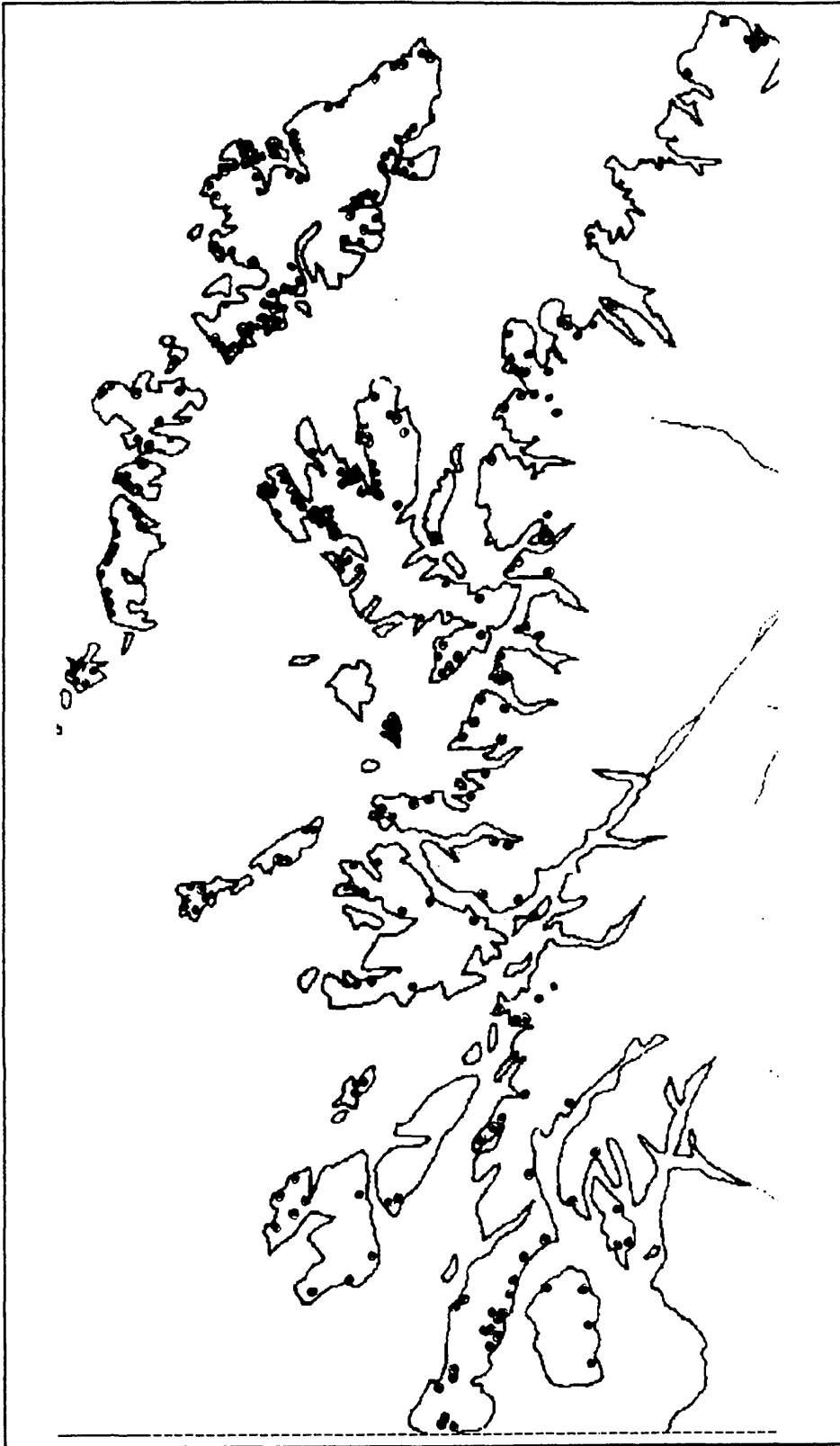


Fig.5. Modern settlements with Norse topographical names.



Fig.6. The distribution of Norse settlement (after M.Oftedal)

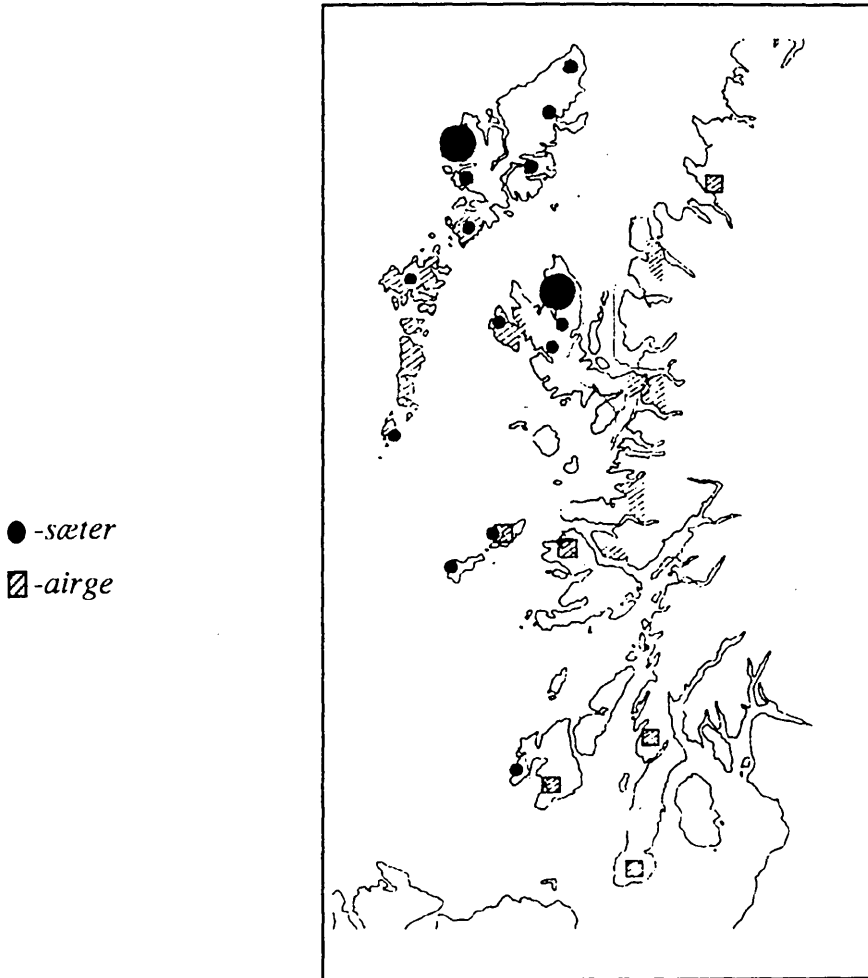


Fig.7. Distribution of *-sætr* and *-airge* (after E.Megaw)

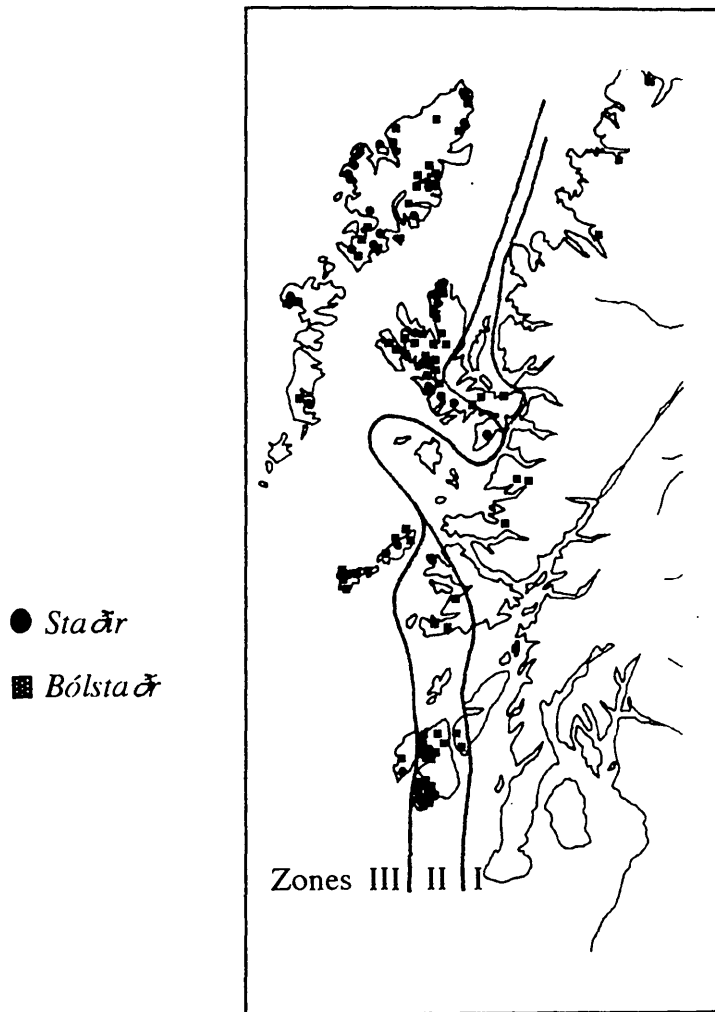


Fig.8. The hypothetical Zones of Norse settlement

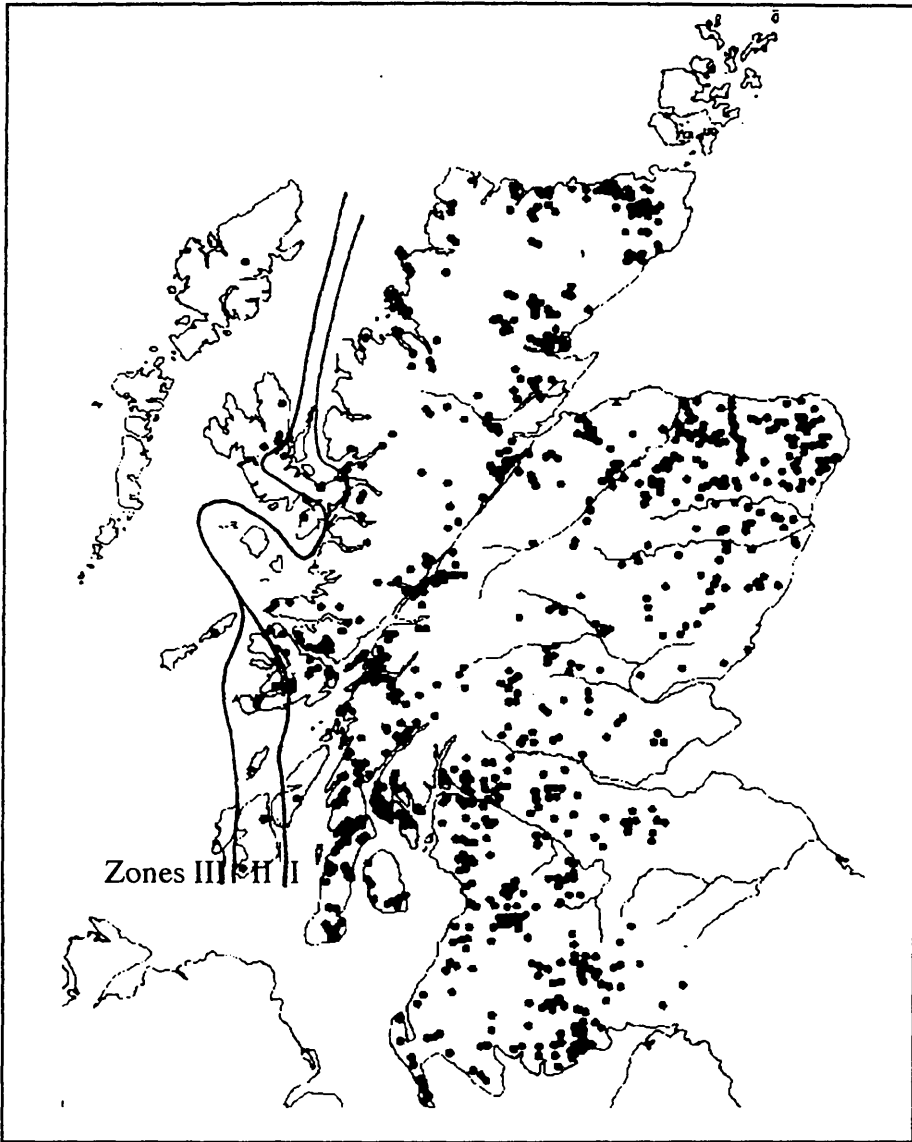


Fig.9. The distribution of *achadh* (after W.F.H.Nicolaisen)

Primary Settlement
with Topographical
Name

Development of Primary Settlement

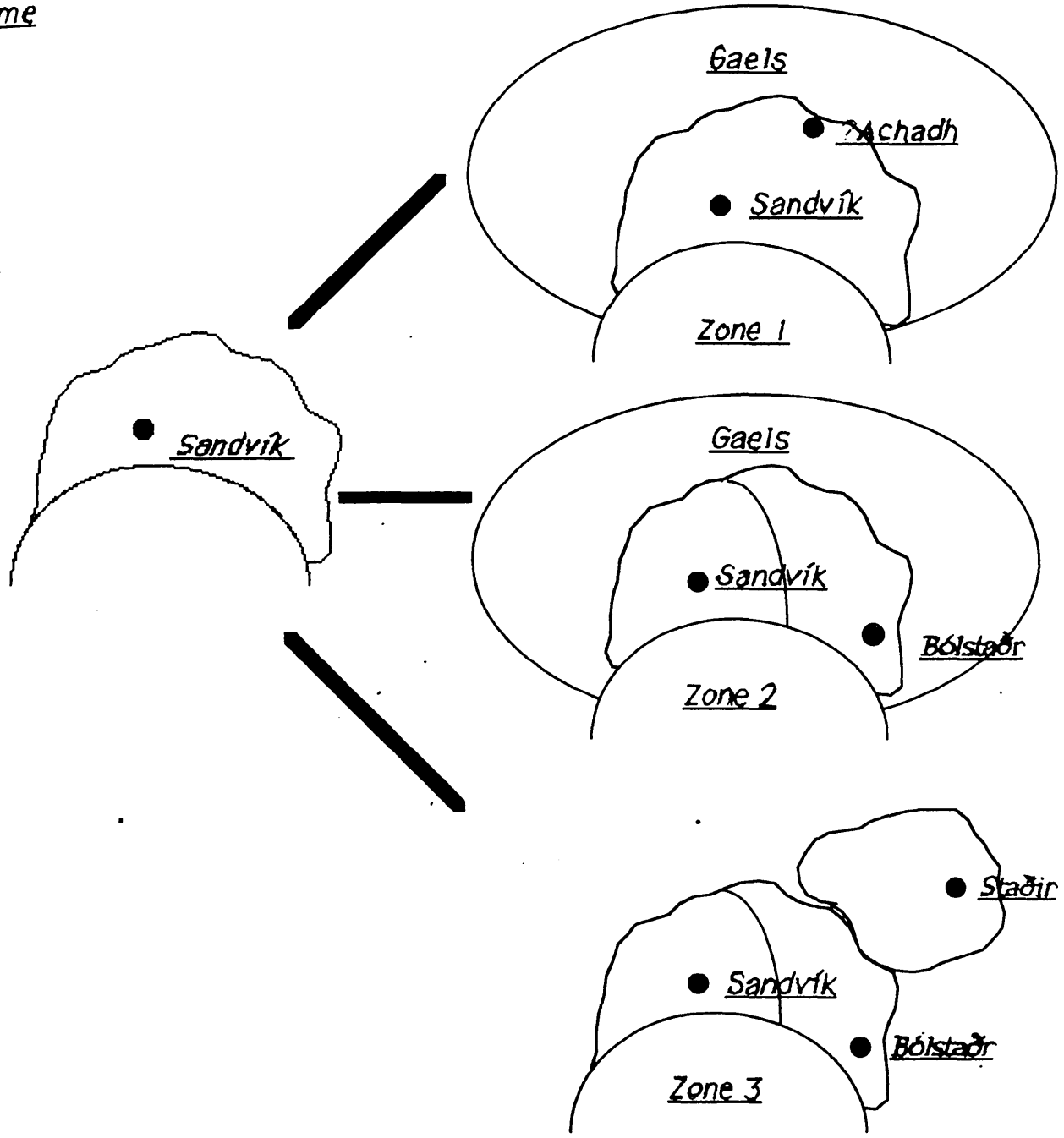


Fig. 10 The Hypothetical Course of Development of the Norse Settlement in the West of Scotland

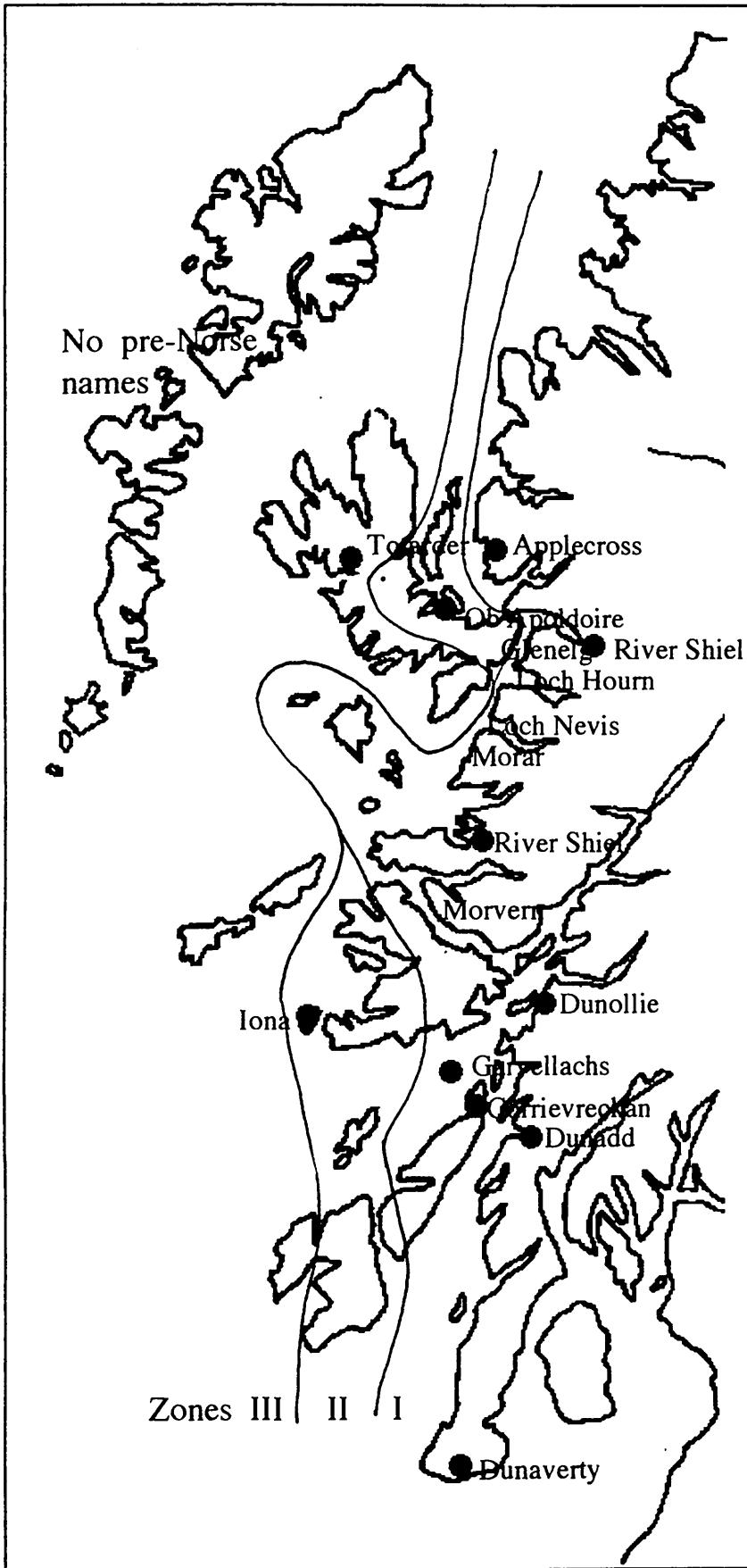


Fig.11. Examples of Pre-Norse continuity from the text.

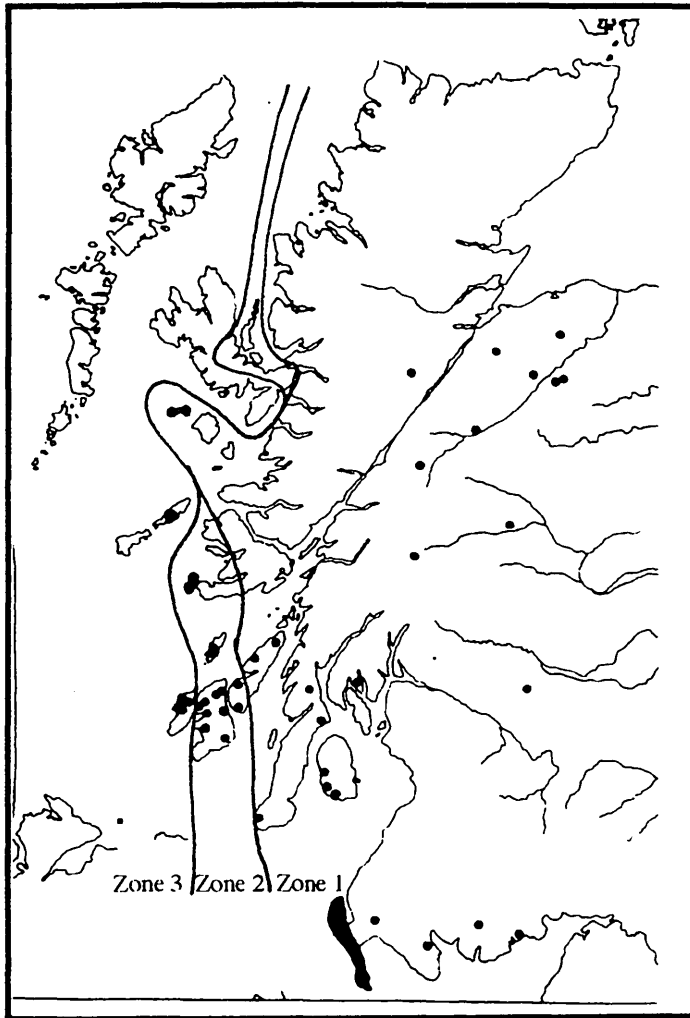


Fig.12. The distribution of *sliabh* (after W.F.H.Nicolaisen)

The purpose of this chapter will be to present the archaeological evidence for the Norse presence, for native survival, and, where possible, for the contacts and mixing of peoples in Western Scotland. Despite the problem of interpreting the archaeological material, it can be noted at the outset that there is evidence for both Norse and native physical cultural traditions continuing side by side within the total area of the West of Scotland, and there is archaeological evidence for some mixing. Indeed, the evidence tends to support the division of Western Scotland into the Zones posited on the basis of onomastics.

It is important to note that, according to the most recent appraisal¹ of the archaeological evidence for the period, prior to the arrival of the Norse, Western Scotland was broadly divided into two contrasting areas, one 'Pictish' the other 'Dalriadic'. The Inner Hebrides belonged to the latter, while the Outer Hebrides had much more in common with Caithness and the Northern Isles. This division is an interesting parallel with the post-Norse situation, with Zones 1 and 2 on the one hand, and Zone 3 on the other. Indeed, so similar are the pre-Norse Outer Hebrides and Orkney archaeologically that I.Armit has suggested² they were linked together, "No mention of events in the western Atlantic province or the Shetlands is made in written records of the period. This cannot be wholly explained by remoteness since the Scots of Dalriada would have been in relatively close proximity to the Western Isles. It would appear more likely that the Orcadian sphere of influence, if not direct control, took in the rest of the Atlantic province not under Dalriadic influence. This interpretation would fit the regional divergence between the Western Isles and Shetlands and the

¹I.Armit ed. *Beyond the Brochs: Changing Perspectives on the Later Iron Age in Atlantic Scotland* (1990)

²I.Armit 'Epilogue' *ibid*, 207-8

Orkneys, with the latter area seen as the core of an Atlantic province of the Pictish kingdom.”

The quantity of available archaeological material from which to extrapolate a meaningful picture of the cultural situation after the arrival of the Norse is not great, and, unfortunately, some of the possible information has been lost because many of the finds uncovered in the past were poorly excavated and poorly documented. At the present state of knowledge, there are only two, or possibly three³, known Norse settlement sites, and approximately forty-three⁴ Norse pagan burials in the West of Scotland (see fig.13). Unfortunately, only an approximate number of graves can be given, because some of the so-called graves may be nothing more than stray finds, and, at the time of writing, new burials are being unearthed by a team of archaeologists from Edinburgh University at Uig in Lewis. This number can be compared unfavourably with the 308 graves from 154 localities which had been found in Iceland by 1981, a number which itself was considered unimpressive by K.Eldjárn⁵. Just how unimpressive can be seen from the fact that, since an estimated 20000 people initially settled in Iceland, with the population rising reasonably quickly to c.60000⁶, one might expect to find tens of thousands of graves. Likewise, considering the many Norsemen and women who must have lived in the Hebrides during the ninth and tenth

³See infra, 70-1 for the site excavated at Machrins on Colonsay

⁴This number is taken from the map in Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 117, which is probably the most accurate estimate. A good study is still the work of H.Shetelig 'The Viking Graves', in *Viking Antiquities VI*, and S.Grieg 'Viking Antiquities in Scotland', in *Viking Antiquities II*, although these are inevitably out of date, there being several important finds since their publication.

⁵K.Eldjárn 'Graves and grave-goods: survey and evaluation' in *Northern and Western Isles*,

4

⁶P.G.Foote & D.M.Wilson *The Viking Achievement* (1980), 53



centuries, the number of burials unearthed is scarcely impressive. However, there can be little argument that, since the graves in our area of study include approximately 15 whose incumbents are females, these graves bear witness to a real settlement of foreign people, although, as a corollary to this statement, it must be remembered that each and every grave need not be the grave of a settler. Some could be graves of foreign merchants or voyaging warriors.

It can only be hoped that this small sample is representative, but it warns us that any conclusions drawn must be tentative. The apparent lack of pagan graves in the Hebrides could be due to more than the vagaries of mere chance. A reasonable conclusion might be that the scarcity of numbers reflects a situation whereby the majority of Norse settlers quickly adopted Christianity and abandoned their old burial customs. K.Eldjárn⁷ believes it is plausible to regard the Norse burials as primarily the graves of the first generation, the heathen emigrants from Norway, who stuck to the burial customs of their forefathers, and that their children, having adopted Christianity, were then buried in the native fashion.

The graves inherently provide information on the geographical spread of Norse settlement in the West of Scotland. Although their distribution has certain peculiarities, for example the concentration on small apparently unimportant islands such as Oronsay and Colonsay, on which there are eleven (about 25% of the total), and Eigg, on which there are three, it matches the distribution of place-names, although in a much patchier manner, giving a Norse presence from Arran in the south (where there are two finds), to Lewis in the north (where there are at least four with new excavations taking place at present). There are also examples on most of the

⁷Eldjárn 'Graves and grave-goods', 7

islands in between these two extremes, including St Kilda, and a few examples (possibly three) on the western littoral.

It has been suggested by Eldjárn⁸ that the relatively abundant burials on the smaller Inner Hebrides, which include the richest graves in a Scottish context, make an impression somewhat different from that of the graves in the Northern Isles and Outer Hebrides. He concludes that, in the latter two archipelagoes, there was a settlement of farming people, but, in the Inner Hebrides, the graves belong to people more like Vikings in the true sense of the word. B.E.Crawford⁹ paraphrases this by suggesting that the grave-finds represent an aristocratic class of Norsemen living in the Inner Hebrides. However, it is impossible to ascertain how real this distinction is: it may only appear so due to the chance nature of archaeological discovery.

The graves provide the largest body of Norse material from which to date the Norse settlement, yet even so, as D.M.Wilson¹⁰ points out, it is not easy to date them closely. This is because most have been dated on a typological basis, rather than using radio-carbon dating. However, archaeologists have found it possible to postulate the following, a *tempus post quem* for the graves and therefore settlement, and a chronological bracket for the graves.

A *tempus post quem* is provided by both O.Klindt-Jensen¹¹, who concludes that there is no Scandinavian find from the Scottish islands which can be dated before 800A.D., and Wilson¹², who concurs with this view,

⁸Eldjárn 'Graves and grave-goods', 7-8

⁹Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 125

¹⁰D.M.Wilson 'Scandinavian settlement in the north and west of the British Isles- an archaeological point of view' *TRHS*, xxvi (1976), 100

¹¹O.Klindt-Jensen 'The Two Viking Ages of Britain-A Discussion' in *Med. Scand* 2 (1969), 194

¹²Wilson 'Scandinavian settlement', 100

suggesting that there are no finds which necessarily indicate contact between Scotland and Scandinavia before 800AD.

A chronological bracket for the graves has been suggested by Wilson¹³, who states that ninth and early tenth century graves are relatively common. Crawford¹⁴ concludes that the majority of graves are likely to be from the ninth century.

There have been a few eighth century artefacts discovered, including an early single-edged sword, a scramasax, from Lamlash in Arran¹⁵. H.Shetelig¹⁶ suggested, if it had been found in a Norwegian grave, it would have been dated to the eighth century. This scramasax, along with an eighth century sword from a grave at Pierowall¹⁷ in Orkney, do not prove, however, that there were eighth century Norse burials in Scotland. These objects are probably to be regarded as heirlooms, like the eighth century Celtic brooch¹⁸ found in the tenth century Norse female grave at Westness, Rousay, Orkney¹⁹, and their existence are timely reminders of the difficulties that can be created by trusting to typology.

The earliest possible burial is at Machrins²⁰ on Colonsay providing a radiocarbon date of 780±70ad, which means that it took place sometime within the period 710-850AD. The body lay in a flexed position within a sand-filled cist, with a dog deliberately laid over the knees. There is

¹³Ibid

¹⁴Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 120

¹⁵Grieg 'Viking Antiquities', 57

¹⁶H.Shetelig 'An introduction to the Viking history of Western Europe', in *Viking Antiquities I*, 120

¹⁷L.Laing, *The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland* (1975), 184

¹⁸R.B.K.Stevenson, 'The brooch from Westness, Orkney', *Fifth Viking Congress*, 25-31

¹⁹H.Shetelig 'The Viking Graves', 97-9

²⁰J.N.Graham Ritchie, 'Excavations at Machrins, Colonsay' *PSAS*, cxi (1981), 263-281

apparently a tenth century grave on Gigha, because a tenth century balance was found in what appears to have been a stone cist²¹. Kneep²², at Uig in Lewis, has also provided a tenth century inhumation, indeed apparently from the late tenth century, because the buried woman had a ringed pin of a later tenth/early eleventh century type, discussed by T.Fanning²³, which can be dated on the basis of parallels among pins recovered from excavations in Dublin. These three burials bear out Wilson's conclusion as to the chronological span of the graves.

The existence of some Norse graves with grave-goods in the tenth century shows that paganism, or, at least certain aspects of the heathen Norse religion, continued, though perhaps not extensively, amongst the Norse settlers in the West of Scotland during the ninth and tenth centuries. In areas of dense Norse settlement far from Iona, like Kneep in the west of Lewis, one would expect Norse religious traditions to remain strong. The survival of a certain amount of Norse paganism need not be surprising because, during the tenth century, the Hebrides were closely linked with Dublin²⁴, where there may be evidence for heathenism continuing even after King Amlaíb Cuarán, who had converted to Christianity in 943, retired to Iona in 980. In *FM* it is recorded that, in 994, a relic perhaps belonging to the God Þor, his ring (*fail Tomhair*), was carried off from Dublin, and, in the year 1000, according to *CGG*, Brian Boru laid waste a wood which

²¹*RCAHMS* Argyll: Kintyre, I (1971), 97

²²R.D.E.Welander, C.Batey and T.G.Cowie, 'A viking burial from Kneep, Uig, Isle of Lewis', *PSAS*, cxvii (1987), 149-174

²³T.Fanning 'Some aspects of the bronze ringed pin in Scotland', in *From the Stone-Age to the 'Forty-Five*, ed. A.O'Connor & D.V.Clarke (1983), 324-42

²⁴See *infra* Chapter 8

may have been dedicated to Þor (*caill Tomrair*), after the battle of Gleann Mama²⁵.

However, it is difficult to ascertain whether being buried with jewellery, some of which was for fastening clothing, and a few implements like a sickle and a knife, as in the Kneep grave, necessarily indicates paganism. It may reflect nothing more than the survival of earlier burial customs.

The two definite settlement sites are both in Zone 3 (see fig.13), Coileagan an Udail²⁶ in North Uist, and Drimore²⁷ in South Uist. There is a possible example, in the problematical settlement at Machrins²⁸ on Colonsay in Zone 2. Such a small sample adds nothing to the picture of the distribution of Norse settlement suggested by onomastics and the graves, and an extrapolation of the general nature of Norse settlement based upon such a small number of examples must of necessity be tentative.

The Udal is an important site for three reasons, it shows clear physical contiguity with Norse deposits, consequently providing direct evidence for the nature of the initial contact between Norse and native, it provides dating evidence for the Norse settlement and it was continuously occupied during the Norse and into the Medieval periods, thus providing archaeological evidence for contacts, or otherwise, between this part of the Outer Hebrides and other areas.

²⁵For information on the survival of Þór's cult in Dublin see C.Marstrander, 'Thor en Irlande' *Revue Celtique*, 36 (1915-16), 241-253

²⁶I.A.Crawford, 'Scot? Norseman and Gael' in *SAF* vi (1974), 1-16

²⁷A.MacLaren, 'A Norse House on Drimore Machair, South Uist', *Glasgow Archaeological Journal* III (1974), 9-18

²⁸J.N.Graham Ritchie, 'Excavations at Machrins, Colonsay', *PSAS* cxi (1981), 263-281

At the Udal, a rectilinear Norse house lies directly on top of three curvilinear native houses, consisting of bellied main chambers with simple or multiple side cells. These belong to a type called 'figure-of-eight' houses which have been found in other pre-Norse Pictish areas like Yarrows in Caithness and Buckquoy in Orkney²⁹. The Norse building of Phase X of the excavation is an overwhelming change from the earlier pre-Norse houses of Phase XI, which represent a sample at the end of a five hundred year, and apparently continuous, evolution of settlement type from the Late Iron Age. The Norse settlers took over an existing native farming settlement and built their own house on top.

A gilt pin which lay outside the doorway of one of the houses of Level XI, the immediate pre-Norse level, has been dated by J.Graham-Campbell³⁰ to c.800, while Level X at the Udal has provided a radiocarbon date of 859±40ad, which probably indicates, taking the margin of error into account, that the natives were displaced and that Norse settlement began at the site sometime in the first half of the ninth century. Crawford³¹ plumps for a date between 825 to 850, but the radiocarbon date does not contradict the conclusion arrived at in Chapter 6, that most of the Norse settlement occurred between c.795 and 825, that is during the period of the recorded raids on the Hebrides³².

This initial phase of Norse occupation of the site lasted until c.950, when there was a substantial structural extension. The next level IXc is dated by two radiocarbon determinations and special finds, including a silver

²⁹G. and A. Ritchie *Scotland: Archaeology and early history* (1981), 181

³⁰J.Graham-Campbell 'A preliminary note on certain small-finds of Viking-Age date from the Udal excavations, North Uist' *SAF* VI (1974), 17

³¹Crawford 'Scot? Norseman and Gael', 11

³²See *infra*, 149

penny of Harald Hardrada (1055-65) and a tenth to twelfth century bronze stick pin, from c.950 to c.1100. This level was also identified as Norse, by Crawford³³ on artefactual terms.

In his summary of the excavation, Crawford³⁴ claims that the Udal evidence provides a blue-print of what must have happened to the people of the Outer Hebrides when Norse colonisation took place in the ninth century: they were forcibly dispossessed. He suggests that, since the Norse arrival caused such discontinuity between the Norse layer and the earlier local material culture, the archaeological evidence is as conclusively in favour of violent conquest as is ever likely to be found. The impression of violence is sustained by the discovery of a small, rectangular fort with massive stone walling built by the Norse settlers. Its use as such was very short, however, probably only for the first decade or so of Norse occupation of the site. It is logical to assume that the settlement of the Norse at the Udal could only have been accompanied by violence towards the native population who were being disinherited, and this may have held good wherever the Norse replaced the indigenous population in this way.

It is, however, dangerous to extrapolate a general principle from only one site, and just because the natives were displaced at the Udal does not automatically mean that all the natives of the Outer Hebrides were similarly dispossessed, driven out or exterminated. The extent to which the Udal site is typical is simply unknown. The Udal seems to have been a high status site, and a centre of power in the later medieval period, when it is associated traditionally with *Clann Ruairi*³⁵, the rulers of Uist and

³³I.A.Crawford 'Scot? Norseman and Gael', 13

³⁴I.A.Crawford 'War or peace-Viking colonisation in the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland reviewed' in *Eighth Viking Congress*, 267

³⁵Crawford Scot? Norseman and Gael', 13

Garmoran. Its importance may have extended backwards into the pre-Norse period, which might mean that it was treated differently by the incoming Norse from more lowly settlements, where a native population might have remained. Classifying the Udal as some kind of local power-centre when the Norse arrived would explain the fort: it could be postulated that it took about a decade for the Norse to assert their control over the area to which ownership of the site of the Udal entitled them, during which time they needed to protect themselves.

Excavation of the Drimore house on South Uist did not provide a Norse-native horizon. It appears to have been a simple type of Norse farmstead with close parallels in House I at Jarlshof³⁶ and at Buckquoy³⁷. It does not provide a radiocarbon date, but the small finds show that it was inhabited during the second half of the ninth century and the earlier part of the tenth century. A hogbacked comb was found, comparable to examples from phase I and II at Jarlshof and dating to the second half of the ninth century, as were three nail-headed pins, which find their counterparts in phase III at Jarlshof, in the late ninth or early tenth century. A. MacLaren³⁸ interprets these finds to show Drimore was built during the second half of the ninth century or even the earlier part of the tenth, which, if his dating is accepted, suggests Drimore represents a secondary settlement, and consequently a growth in the Norse population of South Uist during the late ninth or early tenth century.

The similarity between the site at Drimore and Jarlshof is important, because it implies the people of Zone 3 were, in the late ninth into the

³⁶J.R.C.Hamilton, *Excavations at Jarlshof, Shetland* (1956), 107-9, fig.52

³⁷A.Ritchie, 'Excavation of Pictish and Viking-age farmsteads at Buckquoy, Orkney', *PSAS* cviii (1976-7), 174-227

³⁸MacLaren 'A Norse House on Drimore Machair', 15

tenth century, leading a materially Norse life, as in Shetland. The Udal extends the continuity of Norse material culture up to the twelfth century. Although there are very few finds at Drimore, the owners had Norse tastes and there does not seem to be anything of recognisably native origin. The comb and the pins are of Norse type, which is actually in contrast to Buckquoy in Orkney, where the pins and combs found in the Norse levels were of native Pictish manufacture. The archaeological impression of continuity of Norse cultural traits in Zone 3 agrees with the linguistic evidence for the continuity of Norse speech in this zone throughout the tenth century.³⁹

The amount of archaeological evidence for native continuity in the West of Scotland is, like the amount of evidence for Norse settlement, scarce. However, in Zones 1 and 2, some of the native defensive sites, duns, including important Dalriadic political centres, continued to be occupied during the period of Norse settlement, and there was continuity at Iona, the premier Christian site. In Zone 3, it is even possible to demonstrate that a native community may have survived on St Kilda throughout the Norse period.

A penannular brooch of ninth century date was found during an excavation of the dun at Kildonan Bay⁴⁰ in Kintyre. It has been suggested that Kildonan dun was reoccupied in the ninth century, when it was perhaps rebuilt⁴¹. At Dunadd⁴², one of the major political centres of Dál Riada, a

³⁹See *infra*, 87-103

⁴⁰*RCAHMS Argyll: Kintyre, I* (1971), 88-90

⁴¹G.Ritchie & M.Harman *Exploring Scotland's Heritage: Argyll and the Western Isles RCAHMS* (1985), 135

⁴²L.R.Laing 'The Norse House', in *Settlement Types in Post-Roman Scotland* (*BAR* 13 1975), 21-2

trial piece for a ninth century penannular brooch was found, as was a trial piece with Ringerike-style decoration which can be dated to the eleventh century⁴³. This would suggest that there was occupation at the site from the ninth through to the eleventh centuries, although it cannot be proved to have been continuous. At Dun Ollaigh⁴⁴, another of the Dalriadic political centres, occupation in Phase B of the site, which began with an enlargement of the fortification in the eighth century, probably continued for some centuries. Three iron knives with sharply angled blades were found, which can be dated to the eighth or ninth centuries.

The archaeological evidence for the continuity of monastic life on Iona is relatively abundant, and it goes hand in hand with the historical evidence⁴⁵. It consists of a church now called St Columba's Shrine, and a number of carved crosses and slabs.

The church is a small building with projecting antae and a length to breadth proportion of almost three to two, which closely resembles in shape and size some of the earliest Irish stone churches⁴⁶. These churches are generally dated to the tenth and eleventh centuries⁴⁷, but the *RCAHMS* report suggests a eighth or ninth century date⁴⁸. Either dating places the structure neatly within the Norse period.

Slabs bearing ringed crosses (nos.18-21,44)⁴⁹ comprise the biggest single group of monuments on Iona, and these can be seen to have been

⁴³Ringerike-style appears early in the first quarter of the eleventh century see Foote & Wilson *The Viking Achievement* (1980), 307.

⁴⁴L.Alcock *Excavations at Dun Ollaigh, Oban, Argyll, 1978. An Interim Report.* (1978)

⁴⁵See *infra*, 108-113, 154-8

⁴⁶*RCAHMS Argyll: IV Iona* (1982), 41-2

⁴⁷A.Hamlin 'Iona: a view from Ireland', *PSAS*. cxvii (1987), 17-22

⁴⁸*RCAHMS Iona*, 41

⁴⁹Catalogue numbers and dates are taken from the *RCAHMS* report.

manufactured for several centuries. Four bear Old Irish inscriptions (nos.37,45-7), all in a standard form requesting a prayer for the person named, which can be dated epigraphically to the eighth century, but three examples (nos.57-9) show projecting rolls attached to the inside of the ring, a style that is probably ninth or tenth century. There is also one slab (no.70) with a cross with double-curved arms and interlace, which probably dates from the ninth or tenth century. It is unlikely that the slabs carved in relief, with both ringless (nos.27-33) and ringed (nos.61-6) crosses, are any earlier than the eighth century, and some may be several centuries later in date.

Freestanding crosses, and fragments of the same, also survive on Iona from the ninth and tenth century⁵⁰. There is the St Matthew's Cross (no.84), which is different from the earlier St Martin's, St Oran's and St John's Crosses in being a typical Irish cross of the ninth century. St Matthew's cross has a representation of Adam and Eve, which has a direct counterpart in the broken West Cross at Kells. It also shares with the Kells cross the iconographic peculiarity of the tail of the serpent being knotted round the forked root of the tree. This is a particularly interesting cross, because it is a highly skilled piece of work, not what one would expect if the monastery had been severely depleted by Norse attacks. There must have been highly-trained sculptors with pattern-books present, working within the current traditions of native stone carving. It is made of coarse grey sandstone or greywacke, probably originating in Colonsay.

The Abbey Museum contains a series of fragmentary cross-heads and shafts (nos.85-93) which show that the production of less ambitious crosses

⁵⁰Iona is not alone in having such crosses,. On Eilean Mór in Loch Sween there is a cross fragment, the shaft and lower part of the head of a shist cross, which can be dated to the tenth century, see *RCAHMS Argyll: Mid Argyll and Cowal*, VII (1992), 70-2

of Irish type continued during the ninth and tenth centuries, and perhaps as late as the twelfth century. One cross-head (no.86) has half-rolls on the inside of the ring, which are a feature of many Irish crosses of the tenth century and later date. A cross (no.89), of which only part of the shaft remains, is related to the sculpture of Eastern Scotland. It has on one face two frontally-disposed human figures and above them a legless creature whose outstretched arms return downwards as wings protecting them. The lower extension of the wings may represent the side-posts of a chair, as seen on carvings of probable tenth century date at St Vigeans, Angus, and Lethendy, Perthshire, and the scene probably depicts ecclesiastics sheltered by a guardian angel, a motif found on the same two stones and also on the eleventh century shrine of the Stowe Missal. A cross (no.92), which is represented by part of its arm, has a six-petalled marigold carved in false relief within a beaded border. The form of the cross-arm reproduces that found in some European crosses of eleventh and twelfth century date.

Finally, the excavation of 1983 to the east of the abbey provided a radiocarbon date and pottery which could perhaps be added to the accumulating evidence of ninth and tenth century occupation. The date was calibrated to 640-940ad.

There is no certain proof, at the present time, for native settlements continuing alongside Norse ones in Zone 3 and I.A.Crawford⁵¹ claims that Norse colonisation was totally oblitative in terms of local material culture. However, it may be possible to infer that some native settlements continued to exist in the Long Island, because in the islands of St Kilda, which lie some 55 km WNW of North Uist, there is evidence of a native settlement which might have been occupied throughout the Norse period and beyond.

⁵¹Crawford 'War and Peace', 267

In a study of the archaeological remains of St Kilda, M.B.Cottam⁵² pays particular attention to the intriguing remains in Gleann Mór, which he attempts to classify and put into a typological sequence⁵³. The structures in Gleann Mór are unique, not only in a St Kildan context, but apparently there are no directly comparable monuments recorded elsewhere in the British Isles or Europe. Cottam⁵⁴ believes the monuments to be indigenous to St Kilda and that they may have evolved locally. The glen lies in the northwest of Hirta, the main island of the group, and is separated from Village Bay, the only other low-lying habitable area, by a col some 240m high. In the glen lie houses called “horned structures”, of which there are 20 identified. In their simplest form, these consist of a court, rather square in shape, but with rounded corners, off which open two or three corbelled cells. These cells were roofed with large stone slabs, and were entirely coated in turf. From the entrance of the court two walls lead away, and these appear in the plan as horns. In its more elaborate form, this type of structure may have two or even three courts with a multiplicity of cells.

From this basic form, there seems to have evolved a structure called a “chambered mound”, typified by the so-called “Amazon’s House”. The technique of corbelling used in the construction of the cells became more highly developed so that larger structures could be built, which could be described as “chambers”. The corbelling is of excellent quality and the chamber can be up to 3m in diameter and 2m high. Where this new

⁵²M. B.Cottam ‘Archaeology’ in *A St Kilda Handbook: University of Dundee Department of Geography Occasional Paper N^o 5* ed. A.Small (1986), 36-61

⁵³It must be noted that Cottam’s opinions are based on field-survey rather than excavation.

⁵⁴Cottam ‘Archaeology’, 55

structure supplanted the old, Cottam⁵⁵ suggests the cells of the older dwellings were used for the storage of goods and possibly for food. Evidence for the degeneration of function is seen in the modification of the cells. Out of this simple adaptation of the cells it is possible to see the inception of that most characteristic building of St Kilda, the freestanding cleit.

Cottam⁵⁶ postulates that the settlement in Gleann Mór began in the period from the sixth to the eighth centuries AD., during a period of population growth, which put pressure on the land resources in Village Bay. This means that, during the early Christian period, unlike at a later date, there may have been two thriving communities on St Kilda. He believes that the abandonment of the Gleann Mór site post-dates the Norse period.

Cottam⁵⁷ suggests the abandonment of Gleann Mór preserved the buildings, while later rebuilding at Village Bay destroyed the “horned structures” and “chambered mounds” in that area. However, there may have been some continuity of building technique: the medieval settlement at Village Bay seems to have consisted of buildings which appear to have developed from these structures, rather than from Norse types. At the time of Martin Martin’s visit to St Kilda in 1696⁵⁸, he found the community living at Village Bay in houses consisting of a corbelled chamber with one or more beehive cells attached. One of these, the “Calum Mór House”, still survives, and Cottam⁵⁹ suggests that it could well be regarded as a degenerate form of the “chambered mound”. If it were so regarded, this would mean that,

⁵⁵Cottam ‘Archaeology’, 58

⁵⁶Ibid, 60

⁵⁷Ibid

⁵⁸M.Martin *A Late Voyage to St Kilda* (1698)

⁵⁹Cottam ‘Archaeology’, 61

as late as 1696, indeed even into the nineteenth century, before the new village was built at Village Bay, the St Kildans were apparently living in houses which were the direct descendants of those built in Gleann Mór before the Norse arrived in the West, while right up to the date of their evacuation in 1930, they were still using their cleits.

It might be argued that native building techniques survived in St Kilda because the islands were isolated, and that perhaps they did not experience much contact with the Norse. However, there are Norse place-names on St Kilda and a pair of oval Norse brooches was found on Hirta in the early nineteenth century, indicating a Norse female grave. The presence of a Norse female is generally taken to be an indication of settlement, as are the field names recorded by K.MacAuley⁶⁰ and identified as Norse by A.B.Taylor⁶¹. A.Small⁶² postulated that any Norse farmstead would almost certainly have been in the Village Bay area, where the later use of stones would make it extremely difficult to identify. He suggests a possible location for the farmstead near the Norse field-names to the east of Tobar Childa Chalda and above the present village street. If so, this would mean that on Hirta, during the Norse period, there were, simultaneously, a Norse settlement in Village Bay and a continuing native settlement in Gleann Mór.

St Kilda may provide an example which could be more widely applied throughout the Hebrides. Further excavation and discovery may show that the Long Island also consisted of a patchwork of the two different

⁶⁰K.MacAuley *The History of St Kilda* (1764)

⁶¹A.B.Taylor 'The Norsemen in St Kilda'. *Saga-Book* 17 (1968), 116-44

⁶²A.Small 'Norse and Post Norse St Kilda' in *A St Kilda Handbook* ed. A Small (1986), 62-68

archaeological cultures existing together, with the Norse generally living on the better ground and on the higher status sites.

The archaeological evidence, meagre though it is, demonstrates the existence of differing cultures existing simultaneously in the west of Scotland. It also indicates a distinction between the Outer Hebrides on the one hand, and the Inner Hebrides with the western Mainland on the other, which echoes evidence presented by onomastics evidence and the situation in the pre-Norse era. Zone 3 appears to be more Norse than Zones 1 and 2. In the case of the former area, there is the evidence from the Udal, Drimore and Kneep, which shows that Norse material culture would appear to have been the norm in the tenth century (with the proviso that, if native culture survived on St Kilda, similar sites may await discovery in the Long Island), while, from the latter area, there is the evidence from Iona, Dunadd and elsewhere, that the pre-Norse culture continued without interruption despite the Norse presence in the area.

That Zone 3 formed a different cultural province from Zones 1 and 2, is further indicated by the work done on Hebridean pottery by A.Lane⁶³. He has defined a 'Viking' type. Both Norse layers at the Udal, levels X and IXc, produce a new style of pottery which differs from the earlier 'Plain' style, which had originated in the third and fourth centuries AD. This new pottery has sagging, and flat-based, bowls and cups, and flat pottery disks or platters. Some of the new pottery is grass-marked and some simple decoration of rims is found. The distribution of this 'Viking' style pottery is entirely within Zone 3 (see fig. 14).

⁶³A.Lane 'Hebridean Pottery: Problems of Definition, Chronology, Presence and Absence' in I.Armit ed. *Beyond the Brochs* (1990), 108-130

One would expect that the communities living together in western Scotland would have influenced one another, and that there would be some archaeological evidence for the mixing of culture. There is a piece of negative archaeological evidence. It has already been mentioned that Eldjárn⁶⁴ believes the scarcity of pagan graves in the area may reflect the adoption of Christianity and local burial customs by the Norse settlers. But there is also more positive evidence. Some of the graves show that the Norse settlers liked to wear Celtic brooches, which suggests that the Norse were to some extent influenced by native styles. The woman's grave from Valtos⁶⁵ in Lewis, of probable ninth century date, contained, along with two "tortoise" brooches of Norse manufacture, a Celtic circular brooch and belt buckle, while on Eigg⁶⁶ two graves of men, probably also from the ninth century, contained two bronze penannular brooches. B.E.Crawford⁶⁷ notes that Orkney, where there are actually fewer objects of Celtic provenance than in graves in Norway, can be contrasted with the west, where graves in the Hebrides and particularly in Man, have produced Celtic material showing strong connections with Scotto-Irish culture, which may have resulted from inter-marriage and/or trade. Indeed, Celtic brooches need not have come into their owners' possession as loot: they may have gained access to them by patronising local craftsmen and legal purchase⁶⁸.

⁶⁴Eldjárn 'Graves and grave-goods', 7

⁶⁵Grieg, 'Viking Antiquities', 75-7

⁶⁶N.MacPherson, 'Notes on antiquities from the island of Eigg', *PSAS* xii (1876-8), 577-597

⁶⁷Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 126

⁶⁸C.Blindheim, 'Trade problems in the Viking age: some reflections on insular metal-work found in Norwegian graves of the Viking age', in *The Vikings*, ed. T.Andersson and K.J.Sandred (1978), 173

The Udal may provide a piece of evidence for some mixing of culture in Zone 3. An interesting fragment of a decorated bronze-strap end⁶⁹ was found in the primary Norse phase. J.A.Graham-Campbell⁷⁰ describes it as of specifically Celtic type and claims it is paralleled from Ireland by an example from Dunbel, Co.Kilkenny and by one from the recent excavations at High Street, Dublin, while a further example formed part of the contents of the Viking grave at Cronk Moar, Isle of Man⁷¹. However, the Udal example is unique because on one side it is decorated with a poor version of an interlaced knot-pattern in the Scandinavian Borre style. Graham-Campbell⁷² has dated it on typological and stylistic grounds to within the century 850 to 950, with the likelihood that it cannot be much later than c.900. It obviously comes from a mixed milieu.

The burial at Kiloran Bay⁷³ on Colonsay shows that influence from native culture could go deeper than merely the adoption of jewellery. This richly furnished burial, probably from the second half of the ninth century⁷⁴, which looks pagan because the buried warrior was laid in his boat along with his horse, had two crosses scratched on two of the stone slabs which surrounded the grave-enclosure. This warrior, or his family, must have been influenced by Christianity to such an extent that it was felt

⁶⁹See J.A.Graham-Campbell, 'A Fragmentary Viking Period Bronze Strap-End from the Udal, North Uist', *Medieval Archaeology* xvii (1973), 128-131 and Graham-Campbell, 'A preliminary note on certain small-finds of Viking-Age date from the Udal excavations, North Uist' *SAF* vi (1974), 17-22

⁷⁰Graham-Campbell 'A preliminary note', 18

⁷¹G.Bersu & D.M.Wilson *Three Viking Graves in the Isle of Man* (1966), 75-6, 84-7

⁷²Graham-Campbell 'A Fragmentary Viking Period Bronze Strap-End', 130

⁷³H.Shetelig, 'Ship-burial at Kiloran Bay, Colonsay, Scotland', *Saga-Book* V (1906-7), 172-4

⁷⁴*RCAHMS Argyll: V Islay, Jura, Colonsay and Oronsay* (1984), 31

necessary to include the cross along with the traditional burial rites. This burial is an interesting contrast to the late pagan grave at Kneep, and it conveys again the impression of greater native influence in Zones 1 and 2.

The confusing site of Machrins on Colonsay also seems to show some contact between the two cultures, because here there appears to be an association of pagan grave with native houses, however, the precise interpretation of their relationship is difficult. Excavation revealed four single-roomed "houses", of which the plan-form and building technique were of native tradition, set in hollows in the sand. A large amount of animal bone was discovered, from which radiocarbon analysis of the collagen produced a date of 800 ± 70 ad. The flimsy nature of the stonework suggested to J.N.G Ritchie⁷⁵ that they were little more than stances for impermanent structures, but the sequence of hearths in houses 2 and 4 indicated more prolonged occupation, or at least occupation on a number of occasions. He further suggested that the most likely interpretation is that they were used during some seasonal activity at some distance from the permanent settlement.

The grave lay some 14m E.S.E of the houses and produced a radiocarbon date of 780 ± 70 ad. The broad contemporaneity of radiocarbon dates suggest that the grave and the settlement were associated, which leads to the question of how to interpret the site. It could be the first evidence that the Norse, as well as building their own style of house in the west of Scotland, may also have adopted native house styles. It may be relevant that the two diagnostically Norse houses, at the Udal and Drimore, are both in the Outer Hebrides, while the site of Machrins is in the Inner Hebrides.

⁷⁵J.N.G.Ritchie 'Excavations at Machrins, Colonsay', 268

The Scandinavians, when they settled in England, Russia and Dublin, adopted local house styles. According to D.M.Wilson⁷⁶, in Russia there is not a single house built in an undoubted Scandinavian style in those areas which the Scandinavians controlled, while similarly, in the Scandinavian areas of England, the few houses of Viking Age date cannot be identified as being of Scandinavian style. In Dublin, most of the houses were of post-and-wattle construction in the Irish style. Wilson⁷⁷ suggests the Scandinavians put the local populace in their new territories to work, which included building houses. However, the adoption of local styles in house building may just have been the natural result of cohabitation and the mixing of populations in a given area.

It is possible that the Machrins grave may hold a native woman buried in Norse style, which would indicate marriage with a Norseman. Unfortunately, few of the features of the skeleton most useful in deciding sex survived, but the bones were neither large nor robust, and a small part of the occipital bone which remained showed no strong muscular markings, suggesting to M.Harman⁷⁸ that the person may have been female. If this is indeed the grave of a woman, it is interesting that the grave lacks a pair of "tortoise" brooches, the diagnostic feature of Norse female graves. This might suggest that she was native rather than Norse. The excavated female grave on St Patrick's Isle at Peel, Isle of Man, which likewise does not contain "tortoise" brooches, has been interpreted in this way⁷⁹.

⁷⁶Wilson 'Scandinavian settlement', 112

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸M.Harman, 'Appendix 4; Human Remains from Machrins, Colonsay' in 'Excavations at Machrins, Colonsay' *PSAS*, cxi (1981), 276

⁷⁹D.J.Freke, *Peel Castle Excavations: Interim Report 1984* (1985), 15

Finally, there is the small corpus of crosses from the Hebrides, which, by exhibiting both Norse and native artistic traditions, are concrete proof that the tenth and eleventh century Norse and Gaelic communities in the West of Scotland were interacting. First, there are a number from Iona⁸⁰, which add to the evidence for continuity on the island during the Norse period.

A slab (no.70) bears a Celtic ringed cross with rounded and sunken armpits and expanded foot. The cross is outlined by a bead-moulding and ornamented with interlace, knotted in the arms and plaited or looped at the centre, common in Scandinavian-influenced sculpture elsewhere in Britain. A date of the ninth or tenth century is probably accurate.

The fragmentary cross head (no.94), of probable tenth century date, also has the ring of a Celtic cross, but Scandinavian ornament with vertical and horizontal interlace. The stone closely resembles certain slabs from Man. Indeed, as the light-grey shaly sandstone from which it is made can be matched in the Isle of Man, it may be an import, rather than being of Hebridean manufacture.

Likewise, a cross fragment (no.95), the lower part of the shaft of a free-standing cross or a narrow cross-slab, closely resembles Manx products in general design. On one face, it has a dragonesque creature along with a great deal of poorly executed double-beaded plaitwork of Scandinavian origin, while, on the other face, there is a ship scene, together with a smith and his tools.

Along with these should be included cross-slab (no.69), which, although it does not have a blend of artistic styles, does exhibit a mixture of cultures, because it has a type of Celtic cross combined with an

⁸⁰The numbers are again from the *RCAHMS* report.

apparently contemporary runic inscription. It is a broken grave-stone on which is carved an “expansional” cross with parallels in Ireland⁸¹. This cross seems to be a crude copy of another earlier Iona stone, and appears to be of late tenth century date.

The Celtic cross head found near the chapel of St Marnock on the Island of Inchmarnock⁸², off the west coast of Bute, also has a runic inscription which is not fully interpretable. The cross head is a very simple ringed cross, without decoration.

The Kilbar cross-slab from Barra⁸³ is a good example of the mixture of styles. It consists of a Celtic cross decorated with Scandinavian interlace ornament, with a runic inscription on the back. It is particularly interesting because it seems to be connected with the Manx Crosses. B.E.Crawford⁸⁴ suggests that the Kilbar stone was possibly derived from a Manx prototype, because it bears such a resemblance to the KirkMichael 2 cross, from the Isle of Man, carved by a person called Gautr, as the runic inscription on it tells us. A.Liestøl⁸⁵ thought its similarity to Gaut's cross from Kirk Michael on Man was so close that it could have been made by a member of Gaut's family. However, instead of deriving it from a Manx prototype he suggests it may predate the Manx example and have been carved by Gaut's father. This is not too far-fetched because, in another runic inscription, on the Andreas1 cross, also Gaut's work, it is claimed that his father Bjørn came from *Kuli*, which has been translated as the island of Coll in the

⁸¹See A.Liestøl, 'An Iona Rune Stone and Man', in *Ninth Viking Congress*, 92

⁸²A.Liestøl 'Runes', in *Northern and Western Isles*, 229

⁸³J.Close-Brooks & R.B.K.Stevenson *Dark Age Sculpture* (1982), 43

⁸⁴Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 177

⁸⁵Liestøl 'An Iona Rune Stone and Man', 92

Hebrides⁸⁶. Liestøl⁸⁷ suggests that Bjørn may have been a professional carver based in the Hebrides, who moved to the wealthier and more promising Isle of Man to build up his reputation and train his son in the trade. If his interpretation is correct, the Kilbar cross would suggest that the Manx tradition of stone carving was derived ultimately from the mixed cultural milieu of the southern Hebrides, especially as the two crosses known definitely to have been carved by Gautr on Man, Kirk Michael 2 and Andreas 1, are probably the earliest Manx crosses in existence. If this scenario is acceptable, it provides the Kilbar cross with a date before c.930-950, because this is the floruit calculated for Gaut's career on Man⁸⁸.

The final cross-slab from the Hebrides of mixed cultural tradition is the Doid Mhairi⁸⁹ stone from Islay. It has a rough, plain-ringed cross with irregular ribbon interlace, with foliage terminals on either side of the shaft, in a local version of Norse Ringerike-style, which dates the stone to the eleventh century. This cross, probably the latest of the crosses mentioned, is proof of the continuity of mixed sculptural traditions into the eleventh century, and the continuing access to Scandinavian prototypes by the inhabitants of the Hebrides.

⁸⁶C.J.S.Marstrander 'Suderøyingen Gaut Bjørnson' *NTS* X (1938), 381 and accepted as such by Liestøl see 'Runes' 228

⁸⁷Liestøl 'Runes', 228

⁸⁸S.Margeson 'On the iconography of the Manx crosses,' in *Ninth Viking Congress*, 104. However, the cross-slab has also been dated to the later tenth or early eleventh century, a not unlikely suggestion if it is taken to be a derivative of the Manx style see. Close-Brooks & Stevenson *Dark-Age Sculpture*, 43

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 44

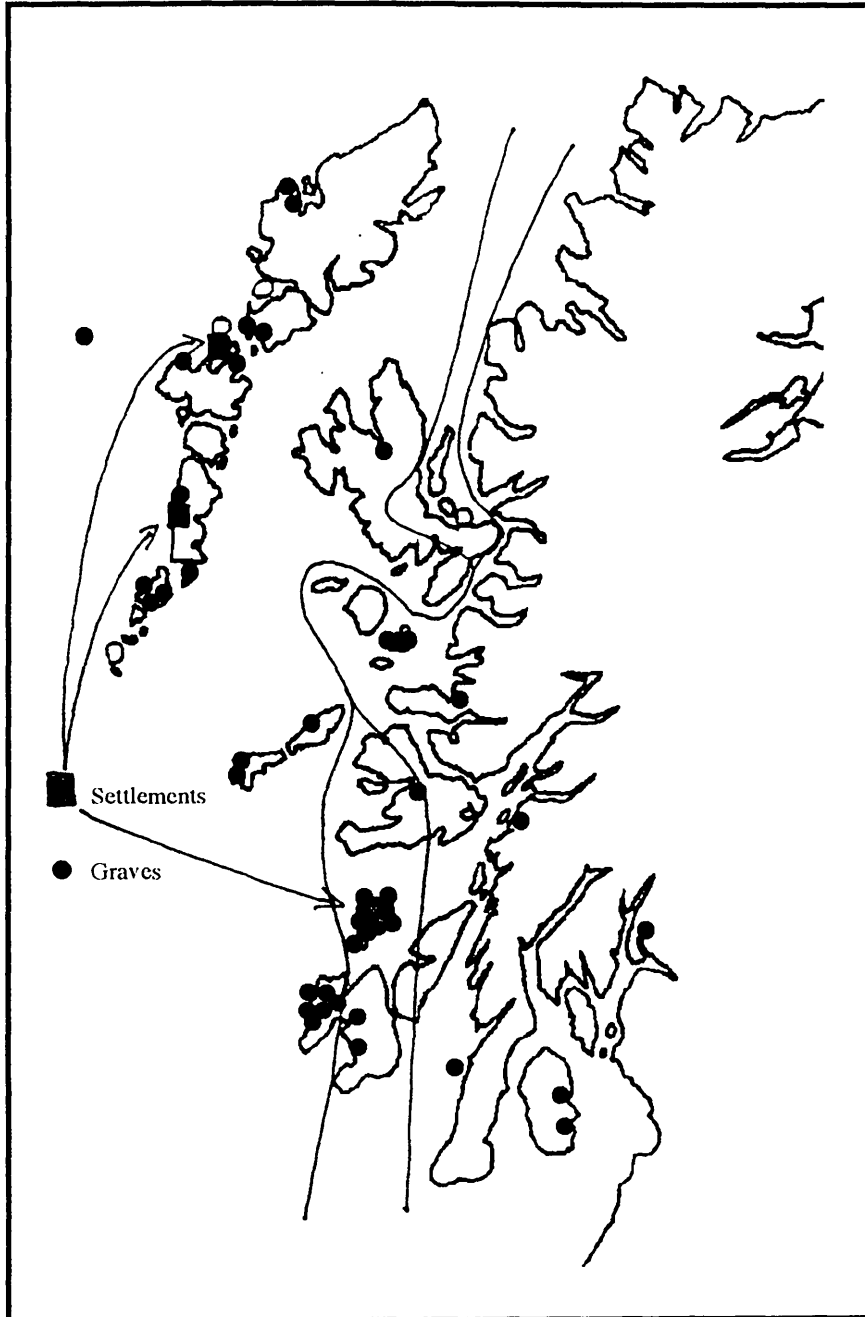


Fig.13. Norse settlements and graves (graves after B.E.Crawford)

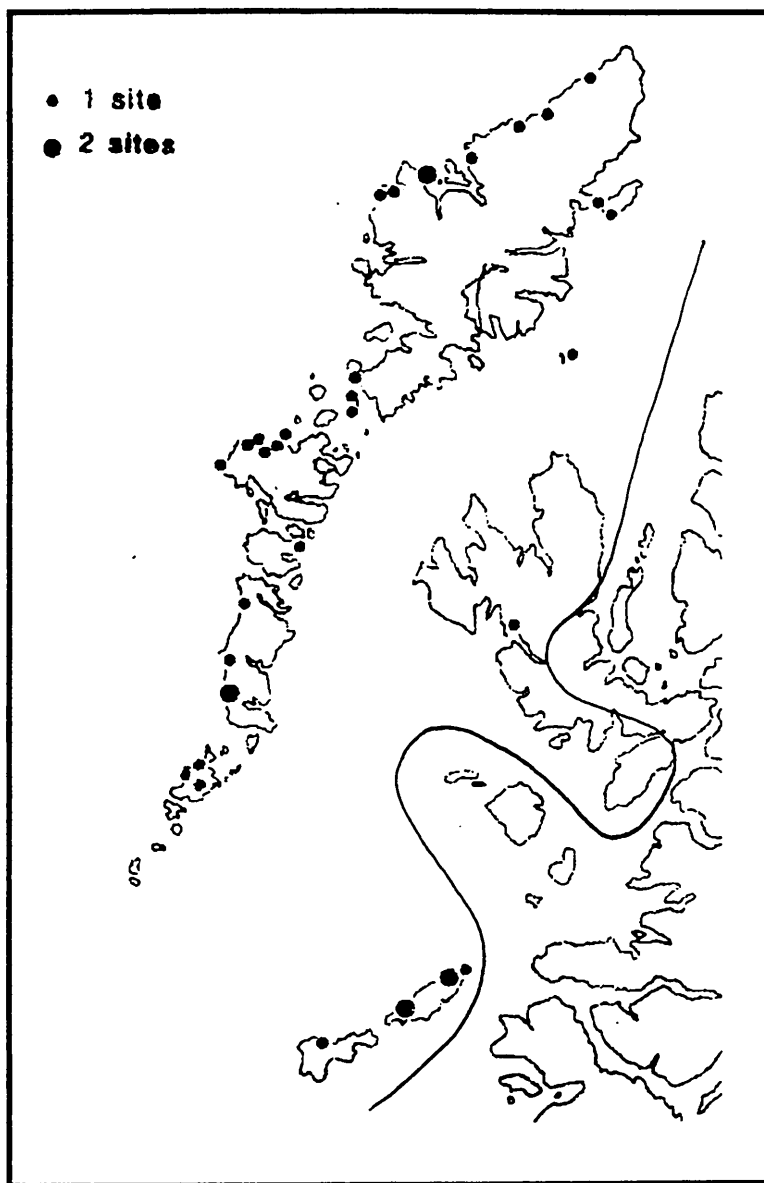


Fig.14 Distribution of 'Viking' Pottery (after A.Lane)

I will attempt in this chapter to assess the evidence for the presence of both Norse and Gaelic speech in the west of Scotland during the ninth and tenth centuries, in order to provide a picture of the linguistic situation, and, in the process, to geographically define areas where, on the one hand, Norse and, on the other, Gaelic appear to have been dominant. I will deal with the question chronologically, and will therefore begin with the ninth century.

A picture of the linguistic situation in western Scotland has been partially provided in the chapter dealing with place-names, where I divided western Scotland into three Zones. I suggested that there was a substantial difference between Zone 3, the Outer Hebrides with Northern Skye, Coll and Tiree, on the one hand, and Zones 1 and 2, the other Inner Hebrides with the West coast Mainland, on the other. The variability in Norse settlement development, and in the survival of obvious pre-Norse place-names, suggested that a Gaelic-speaking landholding population survived in Zones 1 and 2, alongside the Norse settlers. However, in Zone 3 the survival of a native landholding population was not nearly so clear. Norse influence on the toponymy was so strong in Zone 3 that it has suggested to eminent scholars like Watson¹ and Oftedal² that, in the Outer Hebrides, Norse may have been, for a period, the only language spoken. This division of western Scotland, into an area of obviously mixed population and an area populated by people of more purely Norse origin, appears to be corroborated by other available evidence.

¹Watson *Celtic Place-Names*, 233-4

²M.Oftedal 'Norske namn på framand grunn' in *Stedsnavn/stadnamn* ed. B.Helleland Oslo (1975), 145-156

The mixed population of Zones 1 and 2 make their appearance in the Irish annals as the people called Gall-Gaidheil. Some scholars³ have wished to see them as an Irish phenomenon, but it will become apparent that they came from the west of Scotland, as other scholars have suggested⁴.

AU refer to Gall-Gaidheil on three occasions,

856 *Cogadh mor eter gennii ocus Mael Sechlainn co nGall-ghoidhelaib leis*

“Great warfare between the heathens and Mael Sechnaill, supported by the Gall-Gaidheil”

856 *Roiniudh mor re nAedh m. Neill for Gallgaeidhelu i nGlinn Foichle co ralad leis ar dimhor diib.*

“Aed son of Niall inflicted a great rout on the Gall-Gaidheil in Glenn Foichle and a vast number of them were slaughtered by him.”

857 *Roiniudh re nImar ocus re nAmlaiph for Caittil Find cona Gallgaedhelaibh hi tiribh Muman*

“Imar and Amlaib inflicted a rout on Caitil the Fair and his Gall-Gaidheil in the lands of Munster”.

Although Gall-Gaidheil means literally ‘Stranger-Gaidheil’, by the 850s *gall* was a term applied more or less exclusively in the Irish annals to Scandinavians, so the inference would be that it should be translated

³See A. Walsh *Scandinavian Relations with Ireland during the Viking period* (1922), 10, D. Ó Corrain *Ireland Before the Normans* (1972), 70 and *Fragmentary Annals of Ireland* ed. J.N.Radner (1978), 198. In his edition of *AU*, which was prepared for publication by G. Mac Niocaill, S. MacAirt translates *Gallgaedhelaibh* as Norse-Irish.

⁴O’ Flaherty *Ogygia* (1685) chp.75, 360, states, “*Gallgaidelos vero existimo Gaidelios insulas Britanniae adjacentes tum incolentes Nam Donaldum filium Thadæi O Brian, quem Anno Christi 1075 Manniæ ac Insularum proceres regni sui protectorem acceperunt, Inse Gall & Gallgaedelu regum Hiberniæ dictum reperio. Hebrides vero sunt, quas nostri Inse-Gall dixerunt.*” See also N.K.Chadwick ‘The Vikings and the western world’, in *PICCS*, 26 and Smyth *Warlords*, 157

‘Scandinavian-Gaidheil’. This being the case, it is logical to suggest that the name was created to describe people of mixed Gaelic and Norse ethnicity⁵.

Ethnically mixed people of this type could only have appeared in an area where Gaidheil and Norse had been in intimate contact for some considerable time, which excludes Zone 3, if the archaeological interpretation that the Outer Hebrides were Pictish prior to the arrival of the Norse is correct⁶. Prior to the 850s, the likeliest locus for such a development is Zones 1 and 2 in Western Scotland, because a mixed Gaelic / Norse population is as yet unlikely to have appeared in Ireland. Unlike in Western Scotland, there is no evidence for Scandinavian settlement in Ireland prior to the establishment of the first Scandinavian bases there in 841. Indeed, the nature of the Scandinavian settlement in Ireland, when it came, was probably not conducive to early mixing with the natives, because they established themselves at specific points along the coast in what can loosely be described as urban settlements. These presumably kept the Scandinavians together in quite densely populated pockets.

Although, on empirical grounds, the Gall-Gaidheil are unlikely to have been an Irish phenomenon, it is best to dispel the doubt cast by two annal entries which might support such a conclusion. The first appears in *FM* for the year 858.

Maidhm ria cCearball, tighearna Osraige ocus ria nIomhar hi ccrich Aradh Tire, for Cenal Fiachach, co nGallgaidhealaibh Leithe Cuinn.

⁵A conflicting explanation might tentatively be proffered, that it was a term created to describe Gaidheil who had adopted the behaviour of the Scandinavians, but this seems unlikely, because although in *AU*, for the year 847, the Luigni and Gailenga, two Irish kindreds, are described as plundering and raiding territories *more gentiliun*, they are not described as Gall-Gaidheil.

⁶See *supra*, 50-1

“A victory by Cearbhall lord of Osraige and by Imhar in territory of Aradh-tire over the Cenel Fiachach with the Gall-Gaidheil of Leth Chuinn.”

Leth Chuinn ‘Conn’s Half’, means the northern half of Ireland, which could be interpreted to mean that the Gall-Gaidheil originated there. However, it will be shown that it is more likely to mean they were based in the territories of the preeminent king of *Leth Chuinn*, namely Mael Sechnaill, king of Tara⁷.

The second entry which might be used to support an Irish origin appears in *FA* for the year 856.

Cath do thabhairt d’ Aodh, do righ Ailigh, i. don righ as fearr eangn[a]mh ‘na aimsir, do loingius na nGall nGaidheal, i. Scuit iad, ocus daltai do Normainnoibh iad, ocus tan ann adbearar cidh // Normainnigh friu. Maidhidh forra re nd-Aodh, ocus cuirthear a ndeargar na nGall-ghaidheal, ocus cinn imdha do bhreith do Aodh leis; ocus ra dhlighsiot na hEireannaigh an marbhadh soin, uair amhail do nidis na Lochlannaig, do nidis-siomh.

“Aed, king of Ailech, the king of greatest prowess in his time, gave battle to the fleet of the Gall-Gaideil (that is, they are Scotti and foster-children of the Norse, and sometimes they are even called Norsemen). Aed defeated them and slaughtered the Gall-Gaideil, and Aed brought many heads away with him. And the Irish deserved that killing, for as the Norwegians acted, so they also acted.”

This entry appears to equate the Gall-Gaidheil with *Eireannaich* ‘Irish’⁸. However, when J.N.Radner’s thoughts on the subject are considered, the equation need not be taken too seriously.

⁷See *infra*, 189

⁸Professor W. Gillies has indicated to me that from a purely grammatical stand-point, the *Eireannaich* could equally be Aed and his forces. However, the reference to their behaving like *Lochlannaich* suggests otherwise, as such behaviour is viewed with opprobrium in the second entry from *FA*, see *infra*, 81.

Radner⁹, in her edition of *FA*, suggests that to the original version of the annals, which was probably compiled in the eleventh century, there were later additions and embellishments. These, she believes, included the information concerning the Gall-Gaidheil. She suggests that this took the form of glosses added to the text at a time when the Gall-Gaidheil were nearly forgotten. She agrees with F. T. Wainwright¹⁰ that this happened before 1200. If she is correct, this identification of the Gall-Gaidheil with *Eireannaich* is not contemporary, and is no more than a learned, and ultimately inaccurate, twelfth century attempt to explain a troublesome term. A comparison of the *FA* entry with its equivalent in *AU* corroborates her suggestion.

Roiniudh mor re nAedh m. Neill for Gallgaeidhelu i nGlinn Foichle co ralad leis ar dimhor diib.

“Aed son of Niall inflicted a great defeat on the Gall-Gaidheil in Glenelly and a vast number of them were slaughtered by him.”

There is no attempt here to define the Gall-Gaidheil for the reader, nor any suggestion that they are *Eireannaich*.

That the twelfth century descriptions of the Gall-Gaidheil in *FA* have to be treated with caution is further indicated by another annal entry, that for 858.

Ra chuaidh Maoilseac[h]lainn don Mumhain, go rabha re re mis og ionnradh Mumhan a nnEimli, go ttug braighde Muman o Comur tri nUisge go hInnse Tarbna ar nEirinn. Cath Cairn Lughdhach sain. Isin chath soin ro marbadh Maolcroin mhac Muireadhaig, leithrigh na nDeisi. Gen go ttiosadh Maolseac[h]lainn an turus so do ghabhail righe Mumhan do fen, ro bo thuidheachta do mharbadh an ro marbadh do Ghall-ghaoidhealaibh ann, uair

⁹Radner *Fragmentary Annals*, vii-xxxvii

¹⁰F.T.Wainwright ‘Ingimund’s Invasion’ in *EHR* lxiii (1948), 158

daoine ar tregadh a mbaiste iad-saidhe, agus adbertais Normannaigh friu, uair bes Normannach aca, agus a n-altrum forra, agus ger bo olc na Normannaigh bunaidh dona heaglaisibh, ba measa go mor iad-saidhe, .i. an lucht sa, gach conair fo Eirinn a mbidis.

“Mael Sechlainn went to Munster, and he was at Imlech for a month, raiding Munster, so that he took the hostages of Munster from Comar Tri n-Uisce to Inis Tarbna in the west of Ireland. That was the battle of Carn Lugdach. In that battle Mael Croin son of Muiredach, one of the two kings of the Deissi, was killed. Although Mael Sechnaill did not make this expedition to take the kingship of Munster for himself, it was worth coming in order to kill those Gall-Gaidheil who were slain there, for they were men who had forsaken their baptism, and they used to be called Norsemen, for they had the customs of the Norse, and had been fostered by them, and though the original Norsemen were evil to the churches, these were much worse, these people, wherever in Ireland they were.”

The attempt in this entry to portray the Gall-Gaidheil as heathen converts can be consigned to the realms of hearsay. The contemporary entries in *AU* exhibit no evidence to suggest that they were pagan. Indeed, in the entry for 856, they are contrasted with the *gennti* ‘heathen’, with whom they fought in support of Mael Sechnaill, king of Tara. Nor is there any contemporary evidence that they behaved ‘evilly’ towards churches, for again the entries in *AU* do not mention any such attacks by them.

It is possible to suggest an origin for this rumour. There is a contemporary annal entry, just prior to the appearance of the Gall-Gaidheil, which refers to Gaidheil in Ireland who appear to have become apostate. Under the year 847 in *AU*, there is the following report of a force of the Luigni and Gailenga who were defeated by Mael Sechnaill.

Toghal Innsi Locha Muinremair la Mael Sechnaill for fianlach mar di maccaibh bais Luigne ocus Galeng ro batar oc indriudh na tuath more gentiliun

“Mael Sechnaill destroyed the Island of Loch Muinremor, overcoming there a large band of wicked men of Luigni and Gailenga, who had been plundering the territories in the manner of the heathens.”

Maccaibh bais ‘sons of death’, although simply translated wicked men by MacNiocaill, probably indicates that these people were no longer within the salvation of the Church and had abandoned Christianity¹¹. It is not unreasonable to suggest that the proximity of this entry in *AU* to those recording the presence of the Gall-Gaidheil, influenced later interpretations of the latter.

Having excluded Zone 3 already, and having shown that the annal entries which might suggest an Irish origin for the Gall-Gaidheil do not hold much weight, I will now present corroborative evidence for placing their origin in Zones 1 and 2.

Caittil Find, who appears in *AU*, under the year 857, has an ideal name for a leader of the Gall-Gaidheil. His fore-name is Norse Ketill, while his nick-name is Gaelic *fīnn* ‘white, fair (as in hair) or handsome’. He can be identified with a figure who appears in Icelandic tradition as Ketill flatnefr ‘Ketil Flat-nose’, the ancestor of some of the leading Icelandic

¹¹In *DIL* it is suggested that this term is the opposite of *mac bethad* ‘son of life’, a righteous *mān* (often applied to a professed religious man), so presumably it can mean especially irreligious men. Smyth *Warlords*, 129 suggests they were outwith the church’s salvation. For a discussion of the term, and of the evidence for robber bands abandoning Christianity in Ireland in this and previous centuries, see R.Sharpe ‘Hiberno-Latin ‘laicus’, Irish ‘láech’ and the Devil’s men’, *Eriu* 30 (1979), 75-92.

settlers. This is important because Icelandic tradition links Ketill with the west of Scotland. In *Landnámabók*¹² it maintains,

“Ketil conquered the entire Hebrides, and became chieftain over them.”¹³

In *Eyrbyggja saga*¹⁴:

“After having landed in the west, Ketil fought a number of battles, and won them all. He conquered and took charge of the Hebrides, making peace and alliances with all the leading men there in the west.”¹⁵

E. W. Robertson¹⁶ was the first to make the identification between Caittil and Ketill Flatnefr and W. F. Skene¹⁷ accepted it as likely. A. P. Smyth¹⁸ has recently argued cogently for the identification. He shows¹⁹ that the internal

¹²Benediktsson, *Landnámabók*

¹³Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, 23

¹⁴*Eyrbyggja saga* ed. E.O.Sveinsson, (Íslensk fornrit iv Reykjavík 1935)

¹⁵*Eyrbyggja saga* (trans) H.Pálsson & P.Edwards (1989), 26

¹⁶E.W.Robertson *Scotland Under her Early Kings* (1862), 44

¹⁷W.F.Skene *Celtic Scotland: a history of ancient Alban* (1876-80) vol.1, 311-2 Some scholars have disagreed with this identification. For example, A.O.Anderson believed there was not enough evidence, see *ES* i, 315, while J.H.Todd put forward the unconvincing argument that, because the *CGG* claimed Caittil was killed in the battle of 857 in Ireland, while Ketil, according to *Laxdæla Saga*, was still alive when his sons went to Iceland post 874, they cannot have been the same. However, since both these sources are late (twelfth and thirteenth century respectively) and literary, this sort of argument has little weight, see *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh* ed. J.H.Todd (1867) lxxv

¹⁸Smyth *Warlords*, 116-126

¹⁹Smyth *Warlords*, 118-119. *Eyrbyggja Saga* relates the tradition that Björn, Ketil's son, arrived in the Hebrides in 880-884, ten years after Ingólfr Arnarson settled in Iceland. He found his father was already dead. *Laxdæla saga*, although it sometimes disagrees with *Eyrbyggja* and *Landnámabók*, agrees with them that Ketill was not young when Iceland

evidence of the Icelandic traditions, as far as they can be trusted, indicates that Ketill lived in the period some two generations before Harald Fairhair of Norway, namely about the mid ninth century, which means he lived at the same time as Caittil.

However, the clinching reason for making the identification is that the family of Ketill Flatnefr can be seen, even through the distortion of Icelandic tradition, to have belonged, like Caittil Find, to the mixed milieu of the Gall-Gaidheil. *Landnámabók* claims his daughter Auðr inn djúpauðga ‘Auð the Deep-minded’, his nephew Orlyggr Hrappson, and his grandson Ketill inn fíflski ‘Ketil the Foolish’ were Christian²⁰, while his son Helgi bjólan and his great-grandson Óláfr feilan bore Gaelic nick-names.

Helgi bjólan had a nick-name which appears to be a diminutive of Old Gaelic *bél* ‘mouth’ (although the diminutive does not appear in *DIL*, it does occur in modern Gaelic *beulan* ‘little mouth or orifice’), while Óláfr feilan had a nick-name which means ‘little wolf’ from Old Gaelic *fáelan* ²¹. Both these names also occurred in Gaelic as fore-names, Beollán and Fáelán.²²

Finally, two geographical references which place the Gall-Gaidheil firmly within Zones 1 and 2, are to be found in the *Félire Oengusso Céli Dé*²³. The *Félire* is a versified calendar of saints which was composed

became of interest to would-be settlers, for it preserves a tradition that, when his sons decided to go to Iceland, he is reputed to have said, “That fishing-place will never see me in my old age”. This centres Ketil’s life-span around the middle of the ninth century, namely at the same time as Caittil.

²⁰See *infra*, 114-7

²¹Smyth *Warlords*, 123 points out that these nicknames provide an indication of very strong Gaelic influence on this family.

²²See D.O. Corráin & F. Maguire *Gaelic Personal Names* (1981), 31, 92-3

²³*Félire Oengusso Céli Dé* ed W. Stokes, (1905)

originally c. 800. But the different manuscript versions have a selection of notes added later, and amongst these are the following, which are of value to the present study.

Téit iarum Donnán i Gallgáidelu ocus geibid aitreb ann

“Donnán went after that among the Gall-Gaidheil, and took up his abode there.”²⁴

Bláán .i. Baláán epscop Cinn Garad hi nGallgaidelaib

“Bláán ie. Baláán bishop of Kingarth among Gall-Gaidheil”²⁵

It is known that St Donnán had his monastery on Eigg in the Inner Hebrides, and it was there, according to *AU* in 617, that he and a hundred and fifty followers were martyred. Hence, the annotator was drawing a direct connection between Eigg and the Gall-Gaidheil, and as far as he was concerned, the Gall-Gaidheil were situated in the west of Scotland. Kingarth is on the island of Bute, so again a connection is being made between one of the islands in the west of Scotland and the Gall-Gaidheil. Both islands are in Zone 1. Of course, Donnán and Bláán belonged to a much earlier period than the Gall-Gaidheil, but, at the time these notes were added, the Gall-Gaidheil must have been identifiable in that area.

It is interesting that the *FA* glossator, despite casting aspersions of apostasy, does not suggest that the Gall-Gaidheil were Gaidheil who had forsaken their language and now spoke Norse. He apparently understood Gaidheil to be primarily a linguistic, rather than a social/genetic term. This is certainly the case in modern Gaelic. A person cannot be described as a *Gaidheal* unless he or she speaks Gaelic. As this is the case today, and was

²⁴Ibid., 116 Lebor Br MS

²⁵Ibid, 184 Rawlinson B 505 MS

the case in the twelfth century, there is every reason to assume that it was also the case in the ninth century²⁶. I would suggest that this indicates that the identifiable, and presumably dominant, language of the Gall-Gaidheil, and by extension of Zones 1 and 2, was Gaelic.

Indeed, the status of Gaelic in this area need not be doubted. After all, we have already seen that Caittil had a Gaelic nick-name, as did members of his family according to Icelandic tradition. It will be shown that the Gall-Gaidheil were Christian²⁷, and, as the insular monastic church continued, this presupposes a respect for the language of the Gaelic-speaking monks. In the person of Gofraid mac Fhergusa, the Airgialla, a native Gaelic kindred, which can also be placed in Zones 1 and 2²⁸, appears to have provided a *Rí Innse Gall*, or 'ruler of the Hebrides', between the years c.839 and 851²⁹. Gofraid was presumably Caittil Find's immediate predecessor. He was perhaps even more obviously a Gall-Gaidheil (although he died just prior to the first recorded usage of the term), because he bore a Norse fore-name which he may have received from a Norse mother, while he belonged to a native kindred through his father.

However, despite the existence of the Gaelic speaking Gall-Gaidheil in Zones 1 and 2 by c.850, the evidence shows that Norse continued to be spoken in the west in the tenth century. This evidence consists of three runic inscriptions, four fragments of scaldic poetry composed by tenth century Hebridean poets, and a number of Icelandic traditions concerning

²⁶This is certainly the feeling of Dr. J. Bannerman (Edinburgh) (personal conversation).

²⁷See *infra*, 114-7.

²⁸Bannerman *Dalriada*, 118 suggests, that Gofraid's kindred were settled in those islands pertaining to the Cenél Loairn, namely somewhere in the group of Colonsay, Mull, Coll and Tiree.

²⁹For an in-depth look at Gofraid see *infra*, 166-175

tenth century Norse-speaking Hebrideans. Where a specific geographical origin is recorded or suggested, the Norse-speakers can all be placed in Zone 3, so it is, perhaps, from this Zone that the others also originated.

The three runic inscriptions appear on memorial stones, which must have been dedicated to, or commissioned by, important members of society—the Kilbar cross, the fragmentary Inchmarnock cross-head and the Iona slab (no.69)³⁰. All the inscriptions would appear to be dateable to the tenth or early eleventh century³¹.

The Kilbar cross, on Barra, was erected in memory of a woman, according to the inscription.

Eptir Þorgerðu Steinars dóttur es kross sjá reistr

“After Þorgerð Steinar’s daughter is this cross erected”

It is quite an impressive monument, indeed a unique monument in the Scottish context, and would surely have been an “expensive” item, raised to a woman of high social class. Þorgerð was presumably a Barra noblewoman.

The inscription from Inchmarnock, Bute, is, unfortunately, only partially preserved, and A Liestøl³² was unable to say much about it.

³⁰To this small collection can probably be added a fourth inscription, which is on the impressive Hunterston brooch. This, although found in Ayrshire, may have belonged to a Hebridean called Máel Brigitte, who had his name carved in runes on the brooch.. The Hunterston brooch could have been manufactured in the Hebrides or the western mainland in the late seventh or early eighth century, because, in the metalworking deposits found at Dunadd in the excavations of 1980-1, several moulds of annular brooches of similar size to it were found. See the contribution by E.Campbell in *'The Work of Angels' Masterpieces of Celtic Metalwork, 6th-9th centuries AD* ed. S.Youngs (1990), 191.

³¹See supra, 73-4

³²A.Liestøl 'Runes' in *Northern and Western Isles*, .229

However, the name *Guðleifr* or *Guðleikr* appears. It was found near the chapel of St Marnock, but where his ultimate origin lies is impossible to say.

The Iona inscription reads.

Kali Ólvisson lagði stein þensi yfir Fogl bróður sinn

“Kali Ólvisson laid this stone over his brother Fogl”

The fact that Fogl, who is commemorated on the Iona stone, was buried on Iona, the centre of Hebridean Christianity, shows he was of high status. Liestøl³³ points out that Ólvir and his sons Kali and Fogl must have belonged to a leading family in the west for Fogl to have merited burial near the shrine of St Columba, and close to the road leading from the abbey to the cemetery of Reilig Odhrain. It is possible that they came from Lewis. Liestøl suggests that Fogl may have been an ancestor of the only other Hebridean Fogl known to him, Fogl Liotolfsson, member of an important Lewis family, who is mentioned a number of times in the *Orkneyinga Saga* during the mid twelfth century. The two Fogls may well have been related, because the name is rare³⁴, and it was not uncommon for certain families to use the same personal names, even over the course of centuries- amongst the MacLeods, for example, the names *Torquil* and *Tormod*, both gaelicised forms of Norse forenames, keep reappearing. Another link between the personal name *Fogl* and Lewis appears in the genealogy of the MacNicol or Nicolsons. They are associated in tradition with Lewis, being considered the owners of the island prior to the

³³Liestøl ‘An Iona Rune Stone and Man’ in *Ninth Viking Congress*, 87

³⁴For the occurrence of the fore-name Fogl in the Hebrides see A.P.Jennings ‘Fugl/Fogl- An unusual Hebridean personal name’ in *Notes and Queries* (1991), 1-5

MacLeods³⁵. In MS1467³⁶, one of their ancestors is called Fogaill son of Poil.

Before leaving inscriptions, Gautr, the reknowned stone carver on Man, must be mentioned. His work on Man has been dated c.930-950³⁷. According to his own words, he made all crosses in Man: on the Kirk Michael 2 stone, he carved *Kaut x kirþi:þans:auk ala:imaun x* “Gautr made it and all in Man”. As we have already noted³⁸, he appears to have been of Hebridean origin, for, according to his other extant runic inscription, his father Björn was from Coll, in Zone 3.

The first of two Hebridean skalds was the tenth or eleventh century Orm *Barreyiarskáld* ‘poet of the Barra islands’³⁹, who therefore belongs to Zone 3. Two fragments of his work survive. The meaning of the first is obscure, but the second refers to the sea.

³⁵See W.Matheson ‘The MacLeods of Lewis’ *TGSI* vol.51 (1978-80), 320-337

³⁶*NLS*, Adv.ms 72.1.1. (‘MS 1467)

³⁷S.Margeson ‘On the iconography of the Manx crosses,’ in *Ninth Viking Congress* (1983), 104.

³⁸See supra 74

³⁹Date given by A.Faulkes, see Snorri Sturluson *Edda* (trans) A.Faulkes (1987), 241. Orm is referred to in the account of the wedding feast at Reykjarholt in 1119 in *Þorgils Saga ok Hafliða*.

(1) *Hvergi es draupnis drógar dís (ramman spyr ek vísa)*

(Sá ræðr valdr fyr veldi vagn-brautar) mer fagnar.

“However mighty, goddess of Draupnir’s band, I learn the lord is- he rules his realm - the ruler of the constellation’s path will welcome me”

(2) *Utan gnyrr á eyri Ymiss blóð fara góðra*

“Out on the sand-bank of good vessels Ymir’s blood roars.”

These occur in Snorri Sturluson’s *Edda*⁴⁰.

The other two extant fragments of Hebridean skaldic poetry are all that survive of the lost late tenth century poem *Hafgerðingadrápa*, ‘The Lay of the Sea Mountains’. A *hafgerðing* or ‘sea mountain’ was a type of huge wave, occasionally encountered off the coast of Greenland. These fragments appear in versions of *Landnámabók* and *Grænlandinga Saga*⁴¹.

(1) *Allir hlýði ossu fulli amra fialla Dvalins hallar*

“Let us hearken to the cup of the dwarves’ halls [poetry]”

(2) *Mínar bid ek munka reyni, meinalausan farar beina*

heidis haldi hárar foldar, hallar drótinn of mér stalli

“I beseech the immaculate Master of monks to steer my journeys;

May the Lord of the lofty heavens hold his strong hand over me”

According to *Landnámabók*, this poem was composed by an anonymous Christian Hebridean who sailed to Greenland on Herjolf Barðarson’s ship in c.985-990.

⁴⁰*Edda Snorra Sturlusonar*, ed. F.Jónsson (1931) see A.Faulkes *Edda*, 89, 91 for translations of fragments.

⁴¹The first fragment occurs in *Hauksbók* and the second in *Sturlubók*. The translation of the first fragment is taken from *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* eds. G.Vigfusson & F.Y.Powell Vol.II (1883), 54, while the second is taken from Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, 50. The second fragment also appears in *Grænlandinga Saga* ed. M.Þórðarson (1935).

“There was a man called Herjolf, son of Bard, son of Herjolf, a kinsman of Ingolf the Settler. To Herjolf and his family, Ingolf granted land between Vog and Reykjaness. Herjolf the Younger went to Greenland when Eirik colonized it. Aboard with him was a Christian Hebridean who composed the *Hafgerðinga Lay* which has this refrain...”⁴²

It is important to realise that, for there to have been Hebridean poets capable of composing poetry in Norse, there must also have been an audience able to understand their compositions. The poets themselves are likely to have been of high status.

It has actually been suggested that both poets were Orkneymen. A.Faulkes⁴³ claims that Orm may have been from Orkney, but without providing a reason, while J.Benediktsson⁴⁴ and B.Fidjestøl⁴⁵ doubt that *Hafgerðingadrápa* was composed by a Hebridean. The latter believes that its metre, *hrynhent*, of which it is the first known example, is too radical an innovation to have been created by an anonymous person cast about in high seas. However, as the rhythm of *hrynhent* probably has as its model contemporary Christian poetry in Latin, it is perfectly reasonable to suggest that it originated in the Hebrides. The tenth century Norse population of Zone 3 was affected by Christian influences: some of them were, after all, commemorating their dead with crosses, indeed the poet was a Christian. I cannot see any reason why a Hebridean poet could not have been using

⁴²Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, 49-50

⁴³A.Faulkes *Edda*, 241

⁴⁴J.Benediktsson ‘Hafgerðingadrápa’ in *Speculum norrænum* (Fest. Turville-Petre) (1981), 27-32

⁴⁵B.Fidjestøl ‘Arnórr Þórðarson: Skald of the Orkney Jarls’ in *Northern and Western Isles*, 239-257

hrynhent in the latter part of the tenth century. In the case of both these poets, it seems almost perverse to doubt their stated origin.

To the evidence of the fragments of skaldic poetry can perhaps be added the eddaic poem *Rígsþula*⁴⁶. Gaelic influence on this poem has long been recognised and is generally accepted⁴⁷. The poem tells of the origins of three classes of society. A figure called Rígr travels from one married couple to another and sleeps with each woman in turn, thus begetting the forefathers of slaves, freemen and earls. The name Rígr is taken to be derived from Old Gaelic *ríg*, genitive singular of *rí* 'king'. Dates as different as the early tenth to the thirteenth centuries have been given for the poem, but E.O.Sveinsson thinks it was probably composed in the tenth century. He has presented several parallels between the poem and Gaelic material⁴⁸. It is possible that the poem was composed in Iceland by a poet who once had had close contact with either Ireland or Scotland. However, as the mythology present in the poem had no radical deep-felt influence in Iceland in terms of its mythological tradition, it is perhaps more likely that it was composed in an area more open to Gaelic influences. N.K.Chadwick⁴⁹ compared Rígr, also known as Heimdallr, with Manannán mac Lír, the god of the sea in Gaelic mythology, who is particularly associated with the Hebrides and Man, and pointed out their similarities. From this, she posited that the Hebrides were "the centre of distribution of the whole mythological

⁴⁶*Rígsþula* in *Norræn fornkvæði* ed. S.Bugge (1867), 141-9

⁴⁷See G.Sigurðsson 'Gaelic Influence in Iceland' *Studia Islandica* 46 (1988), 82-5

⁴⁸For E.Ó. Sveinsson's study of this poem see E.Ó. Sveinsson *Islenzkar bókmenntir í fornöld* (1965), 251-3, 287-91 see also J.I.Young 'Does *Rígsþula* betray Irish Influence?' in *Arkiv för nordisk Filologi* 49 (1933), 97-107

⁴⁹N.K.Chadwick 'Celtic and Pictish Marriage in Early Literary Tradition' in *SGS* viii (1955), 111-15

and literary nucleus”⁵⁰ connected with these two figures. It may very well be that *Rígsþula* was composed in the Hebrides, most likely again in Zone 3.

There are a number of traditions preserved in Icelandic sources about tenth century Norse-speaking Hebrideans. *Eyrbyggja Saga*⁵¹ contains stories about two called Álfgeir and Þorgunna. The former was the captain of a trading ship, with a crew half Norwegian and half Hebridean, which arrived in Iceland in c.960. He stayed with Þorarinn the Black at Mavahlid, on whose side he fought in a local feud, acquitting himself well. He apparently had no trouble with Norse, which is no surprise, considering he was a trader and a captain to boot.

Þorgunna arrived in Iceland in 1000, according to the saga, on a trading ship from Dublin, which was manned by a crew mostly from Ireland and the Hebrides. She was apparently wealthy, and had brought valuable objects with her which caught the attention of the wife of her host. She may be the same person as the Þorgunna who appears in *Eirik's saga*⁵², with whom Leifr Eiríksson fell in love, and on whom he fathered a child when he was blown off course to the Hebrides, although there are the typical chronological difficulties one finds in sagas with this identification. Of Leif's Þorgunna, a particular point is made about her status: it is said that she was of noble birth and Leif's excuse for not taking her with him to Greenland was that he and his men were too few to abduct so well-born a woman in a foreign country. In an interesting addendum to the story, she then told Leifr that she would give birth to a boy whom she would send to Greenland when he was old enough to travel with others. The boy was

⁵⁰Chadwick 'Celtic and Pictish Marriage', 115

⁵¹*Eyrbyggja Saga* ed. E.O.Sveinsson (1935) see chapters. 18, 19, 21, 25, 50, 51, 53, 55.

⁵²*Eirik's Saga* (trans) M.Magnusson & H.Pálsson (1965), 84-5.

named Þorgils. He later arrived in Greenland, and was acknowledged by Leifr as his son. Þorgils is then the second Hebridean whom we know to have gone to Greenland. However, even if the two ladies are not seen as one and the same, *Eyrbyggja's* Þorgunna was presumably of high status, considering the goods she is purported to have taken to Iceland and the fact that she would surely have had to pay her passage. She was supposed to have had with her a set of bed-clothes, including English sheets, a silk-covered quilt, bed-curtains and a canopy, the likes of which noone at the farm could remember having seen before. After her death, Þorgunna went on to haunt Frodriver, in what became a famous example of Icelandic haunting.

*Njal's saga*⁵³ contains traditions about a couple of tenth century Hebridean figures, Þjostolfr, foster-father of Hallgerðr Longlegs, and Gilli, a jarl in the Hebrides. The former had a floruit in the first half of the tenth century, because Hallgerðr was born c.940. As she was the daughter of the Icelander Hǫskuldr Dala-Kollsson, who had an impeccable aristocratic lineage, being the grandson of Þorsteinn the Red, a probable ninth century ruler of the Hebrides⁵⁴, Þjostolfr must have been a figure of considerable importance. He was certainly of an extremely violent character. According to the saga, "He was strong and skilled in arms; he had killed many men and paid compensation for none of them."⁵⁵ He took it upon himself to widow his foster-daughter twice. It is interesting to note that a link may have been maintained between Þorstein's descendants and the Hebrides.

Jarl Gilli could undoubtedly speak Norse. In the saga, he entertained the Njálssons from Iceland at his base on Coll in Zone 3 for a while, and

⁵³*Brennu-Njáls Saga* ed. E.O.Sveinsson (*Íslensk fornrit* xii 1954), see chapters 9, 11, 12, 17, 85, 89, 154, 157

⁵⁴See *infra*, 198-200

⁵⁵ *Njál's Saga* (trans) M.Magnusson & H.Pálsson (1960), 56.

then accompanied them to the court of Jarl Sigurðr digri 'the stout', where he married the latter's daughter. During the campaign which led to the battle of Clontarf in 1014, another Iclander, Flosi, was his guest, and, after the battle, he supposedly dreamed that a man called Herfid came to him, and when he asked what had happened at the battle, Herfid answered with an old Norse poem.

*Laxdæla saga*⁵⁶ contains strange supernatural stories about the Norse-speaking Hebrideans, Killer-Hrapp, and Kotkel the sorcerer and family. Of course, although these stories cannot be considered as historical, they do contribute to the impression already gained that there were tenth century Hebrideans who could speak Norse.

Hrapp lived in the first half of the tenth century. He fled to Iceland because he apparently refused to pay compensation for his misdeeds in the Hebrides. When he arrived, he bought himself a farm which was considered to be both extensive and valuable. He must have been a figure of note because, in Iceland, he married Vigdis, a granddaughter of Þorsteinn the Red, and he claimed he would make life difficult for any of his neighbours who considered anyone superior to himself. Hrapp, like Þorgunna, was supposed to have taken up haunting after death.

Kotkel and family arrived in Iceland in c.993. It is difficult to be sure if they were of high status, but as they were taken in and given land by the chieftain Hallsteinn the Priest, it is possible that they were. Various uncanny happenings were associated with these unsavoury figures, including drowning by sorcery and burning vegetation with the evil-eye.

⁵⁶*Laxdæla Saga* ed.E.O.Sveinsson (*Islensk Fornrit*, v 1934), see chapters 10, 17, 18, 24, 35, 36, 37, 38

The obscure *Lagmainn*, who appear in two annal entries in *FM* for the years 962 and 974, would appear to be further evidence for the existence of Norse-speakers in the Hebrides during the tenth century. It is stated in the latter entry that they came from the Isles, and that they were accompanying Magnus son of Harald, who was the king of the Hebrides and Man.

Orgain Inse Cáthaigh do Mhaghnuis, mac Arailt co Llagmannaibh na ninnsedh imbi, ocus Iomar ticchearna Gall Luimnigh do brith esti, ocus sárughadh Seanáin imbi.

“The plundering of Inis Cáthaig by Magnus mac Aralt with the Lagmainn of the Islands along with him, and Imar Lord of the Norse of Limerick was carried off from the island and the violation of Seanan thereby.”

The earlier annal entry refers to an expedition which they made to Ireland with a son of Óláfr (perhaps a son of one of the kings of Dublin).

Loingeas meic Amhlaiph, ocus na Ladgmainn do theacht i nErinn, co ro ortatar Conaille ocus Ettar co hInis mic Neassáin, co ndeachatar na Ladgmainn iarttain co fíoraibh Mumhan, do dhíoghail a mbráthar .i. Oin.

“The fleet of the son of Amlaib and of the Lagmainn came to Ireland and plundered Conaille and Edar, as far as Inis-mac-Neasain, and the Lagmainn afterwards went to Munster, to avenge their brother i. Oin”.

Lagmainn is a Gaelic word, which, as Ó Murchadha⁵⁷ points out, belongs to the same category of Old Gaelic plural (-o stem) tribal-names as *Bretain*, *Nordmainn* or *Finn-gaill*. It is created from the Norse word *lōgmann*, accusative singular of *lōgmaðr* ‘lawman’, in the same way that *nordmainn* was created from Norse *norðmann*, accusative singular of *norðmaðr*

⁵⁷D.O Murchadha ‘Lagmainn, Lōgmenn’ in *Ainm* Vol II (1987), 137

'northman'. It would appear from the context that *Lagmainn* was the Irish annalist's name for the Islanders.

There is no evidence that *lōgmaðr*, or its accusative *lōgmann*, was ever borrowed as a common noun into Gaelic. This is in contrast to the Norse title of *ármann*, accusative of *ármaðr* 'steward', which gives Gaelic *armunn*. However, in the tenth century, *Lagmann* became a Norse personal-name⁵⁸, and, like other Norse personal-names, for example *Magnus* or *Þormoðr*, was eventually borrowed into Scottish Gaelic. The eponym of the Lamonts (Gaelic *Mac Laomuinn*) was a certain Laumon (fl.1240-1292) who was descended from Flaithbhertach an Trosdain king of Ailech (d.1036)⁵⁹. The name also appears in the Domesday Book as *Laghemann* and *Lagman*.

The fact that *Lagmann* had become a Norse personal-name suggests a possible explanation for the use of *Lagmainn* as a people-name. It might have been used in the same way as 'Jocks' or 'Geordies' are used today. But, if it only became a personal name among the Norse in the tenth century, it can hardly have been popular enough in the Hebrides to be an appropriate nick-name to apply to Hebrideans in the second half of the same century. A more likely suggestion to account for the people-name might be the presence of actual *lōgmenn* in the Hebrides and in their fleets.

There is very little information about the *lōgmenn* in Norway prior to the thirteenth century, when they begin to appear as royal officers appointed by the king and representing royal power, but what there is, is

⁵⁸Amlaim m. Laghmaind, listed as one of the Scandinavian dead at the battle of Clontarf, appears in *AU*, under the year 1014. His father must have been born in the mid tenth century.

⁵⁹see W.D.H.Sellar 'Family Origins in Cowal and Knapdale' in *SS*, 15 (1971), 21-37

surely relevant to the Hebrides. In *KLNM*⁶⁰, it is explained that *lögmaðr* had the usual meaning of a man knowledgeable in the law, but that early on, it also became a title for a circle of men who were trusted for their knowledge of law and, therefore, had certain responsibilities in the legal sphere.

Logmenn are mentioned three times in the regional laws, which were set down in writing just prior to 1100, twice in *Eidsivatingslagen* and once in *Frostatingslagen*. Moreover, they appear in Sigurd Ranesson's process (1114-15)⁶¹. In these sources, the word is used in the plural, suggesting several *logmenn* must have performed simultaneously at the Þings, local assemblies. They do not represent any authority outwith the community of free-men, but rather they were members of that community. They appear to have been the farmers' legally knowledgeable representatives, and their work was attached to both the local community Þings and the law-Þing.

The farming-community *lögmaðr* appears to have had three functions: he spoke the law; he gave *órskurðr* a statement of what the appropriate law was in the case being dealt with; he probably held public recitations of the law, as did the Swedish lawman and the Icelandic *lögsögumaður*. The Norwegian lawman's *órskurðr* was not legally binding, rather it was a knowledgeable statement, not a judgement. The accounts of Sigurd Ranesson's process seem, however, to show that a unanimous statement from the lawmen had such great weight that it was followed.

The Swedish lawman and the Icelandic *lögsögumaður* had a fixed office, but this does not seem to have been the case with the Norwegian

⁶⁰All the following information about the *lögmaðr* in Norway is taken from *KLNM* Vol X (1965), 152-162

⁶¹G.Storm *Sigurd Ranessøns proces* (1877)

lawman. Here the office appears to have been of a less precise character. There is no evidence that the farmers took part in any formal election.

Although the evidence is meagre, it would appear that the Norwegian *løgmaðr* cannot be seen as an equivalent of the Gaelic *breithem* 'arbiter, judge'. Whereas the latter was a professional, the former seems to have been primarily a free-farmer who was respected by his peers for his legal knowledge.

The age of the lawman's office in Norway is a much debated point. K.Maurer⁶² asserted that it existed prior to the exodus to Iceland, while K.Robberstad thought the institution was probably older than the *lagtings* creation⁶³, and that it developed in association with the old *alltings*. *KLNM*⁶⁴ suggests that it could be very old, but no secure sources exist which mention the lawman at an early date. The word appears in *Egil's Saga*, supposedly during the reign of Eiríkr Bood-Axe, namely in the 940s, but of course this is not a contemporary account. However, the existence of the personal-name Lagmann by the mid tenth century in the west, and the putative presence of *lōgmenn* in the two aforementioned fleets, would suggest that the office existed prior to the emigration of settlers from Norway to Scotland.

If it is accepted that there were *lōgmenn* in the Hebrides, the question has to be asked, what did their title mean in a Hebridean context? We cannot know for certain but, as in Norway, it probably referred to

⁶²K.Maurer *Das Alter des Gesetzssprecheramtes in Norwegen* (1875) and K.Maurer *Vorlesungen über altnord. Rechtsgesch.* I (1907)

⁶³Representatives, rather than all the free-men, went to the *lagting*. These new organisations appear to have developed in Norway during the tenth century, perhaps due to the influence of Håkon Adalsteinsfostre c.950.

⁶⁴*KLNM* Vol X, 154

respected legally-knowledgeable members of the community of free-men whose presence was required at the Þing. There is evidence for the existence of such assemblies in Man, namely the Tynwald, and in the Hebrides. In Skye, B.Gordon⁶⁵ suggests that Glen Hinnisdale in Trotternish derives from *Þings-dalr*. In Lewis, R.Cox⁶⁶ notes a **tionalairigh* in Tolstadh, from *Þingvöllr*, while the place-name Harris itself derives from *hérað* which was a district with its own Þing.

The *loqmenn* must have been sufficiently notable within Norse Hebridean society, either in recent memory, or still in existence, for an Irish annalist to use the word as a people-name. It is surely significant that two *Þing* and one *hérað* place-name are in Zone 3. It would be in Zone 3 that we would expect to see most of the *loqmenn*, if they were still operational in the mid to late tenth century. It is reasonable to group the Hebridean *loqmenn* with the two skalds to show the continuity of Norse language and culture within Zone 3 during the tenth century.

There were Norse-speakers in Zone 3 in later centuries. An interesting list of territories occurs in the Ulster Cycle story of *Cath Ruis na Ríg*⁶⁷ (probably of twelfth century date⁶⁸) which clearly equates Lewis with Shetland and the Orkneys. In the story, Conchobar has to reinforce his exhausted army, so, on his druid Cathbad's advice, he sends word to Conall Cernach, who is away levying tribute in *Leódús* (Lewis), *Inis Cadd* (Shetland), *Inis Orc* (the Orkneys), *Scithia*, *Dacia*, *Gotia* and *Northmainn*. Clearly, in the mind of the story-teller, Lewis was part of the greater Scandinavian world.

⁶⁵B.Gordon 'Some Norse Place-names in Trotternish' in *SGS* vol.X (1963-65), 90.

⁶⁶R.Cox *Place-Names of the Carloway Registry* (PhD Thesis Glasgow 1987), 243

⁶⁷*Cath Ruis na Ríg* ed. E.Hogan (1892)

⁶⁸P.MacCana 'The Influence of the Vikings on Celtic Literature' in *PICCS*, 82

*Orkneyinga saga*⁶⁹ has information about twelfth century Norse-speakers from Zone 3. In 1117, one of St. Magnus' two companions, who was present at his martyrdom, was a certain Holdboði, described as an honest farmer from the Hebrides⁷⁰. To him was attributed the recollection of the final conversation, in Norse, of St Magnus with his cousin Jarl Hákon, where the former made three offers to the latter, in an attempt to avoid death. This Holdboði is to be identified with Holdboði Hundason, who appears elsewhere in the saga. When Svein Ásleifarson murdered Svein Breast-Rope in 1136⁷¹, he sought refuge with Bishop William on Egilsay. The bishop thanked him for the killing and afterwards sent him to Tiree, in Zone 3, to Holdboði Hundason, who is now described as a great chieftain. The difference in status need not concern us. *Orkneyinga Saga* is a composite text, and we should not expect complete consistency. Perhaps to emphasise St Magnus' humbleness, it was felt better to categorise Holdboði as an honest farmer. There are several reasons for making this identification. Despite what the Saga claims, it is perhaps unlikely that St Magnus would have had an ordinary farmer as one of his close companions, and chronologically the identification seems sound. Also *a priori* we would expect a Zone 3 origin for St Magnus' Norse-speaking Hebridean companion.

There is also the prominent family of the aforementioned Fogl Ljotolfson. He came from Lewis. We know this, because the saga says a ship was stolen from him by his father's friend the Orkneyman Svein Ásleifarson, in Scapa after he had travelled back north from visiting his

⁶⁹*Orkneyinga Saga* ed. F.Guðmundsson (*Islensk fornrit*, vol.34, 1965) see chapters 49, 66, 67, 74, 78, 79, 82, 92, 93, 94

⁷⁰*Orkneyinga Saga* (trans) H.Pálsson & P.Edwards (1978), 94

⁷¹ES ii, 192 for date

father Ljotolf in Lewis. Their kinsman Anakol was the foster-father of Jarl Erlend Haraldson of Orkney (d.1154), and his counsellor: of him, the saga says,

“There was a man called Anakol who had fostered Erlend and had more influence over him than anyone. Anakol was a viking, a ruthless man of Hebridean origins with a good family background, and he was Erlend’s counsellor.”⁷²

Further investigation of this particular topic, namely the survival of Norse-speech in the west of Scotland beyond 1000, is not within the remit of this chapter. However, Norse may have been eroded in Zone 3 over the subsequent two centuries. By the late twelfth century, it was perhaps not maintained to any great extent below the highest échelon of society. This implication could be drawn from the fact that, when King Reginald of Man overran Angelsey in 1193, the episode was referred to in a Welsh poem, which is probably contemporary, as *haf y gwydyl* ‘the summer of the Gael’⁷³. B.Megaw⁷⁴ has used this as evidence that Gaelic was the common tongue in Man by this date. True, but as Lewis and Skye were also part of the Manx Kingdom at this date and are likely to have contributed levies, this description may apply to them too.

Although there may have been a Norse-only period in Zone 3 initially, and Norse remained the dominant language therein during the tenth century, it is unlikely that Zones 1 and 2 on the one hand, and Zone 3 on the other, by the tenth century, formed two opposing monolingual blocks. I have already suggested that some of the Gall-Gaidheil were bilingual, and it would not be surprising if bilingualism of some sort had begun to appear

⁷²*Orkneyinga Saga* (trans) H.Pálsson & P.Edwards (1978), 184

⁷³Megaw ‘Norse and Native’, 18

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

amongst the Norse population of Zone 3. However, it is difficult to prove, because there is no definite evidence for Gaelic-speech during the tenth century in Zone 3.

My reasons for suggesting there might have been some bilingualism are based on circumstantial evidence. Logic suggests that links must have been intimate between all the Hebridean islands, and a knowledge of Gaelic would have been intrinsically useful. There would also have been marriages across Zones. Icelandic tradition mentions one which must have taken place in the late ninth century, that of the Gall-Gaidheal Óláfr feilan and Álfdrís of Barra- interestingly her father was called by the Gaelic name of Konal. There are the Gaelic cultural influences in *Rígsþula*, which may have been composed in Zone 3. However, most importantly, there were Christians in Zone 3 by the tenth century, namely the aforementioned Þorgunna, the anonymous composer of *Hafgerðingadrápa*, Þorgerð and so on. The form of Christianity practised in Zone 3 would have been Celtic, as evidenced by the dedications to, and apparent reverence for, Celtic Church saints⁷⁵. Therefore, the population of Zone 3 would have been in contact with Gaelic-speaking clergy. Indeed, Iona, the centre of the Celtic Church in the Hebrides, would appear to have been a focal point for western Norsemen in the tenth century, Fogl was commemorated and presumably buried there, and Óláfr Cuarán, king of Dublin, went on a pilgrimage there in 980.

Corroboration that the Norse of Zone 3 were open to Gaelic cultural influence and were therefore different may exist in Icelandic tradition, which often portrays them in a peculiar light. They appear as awkward characters and, given their small number, are particularly associated with the supernatural, in a way which seems to set them apart from Orkneymen or

⁷⁵See *infra*, 129-133

Norwegians. This suggests to me that they were not considered to be quite *kosher* Norse by the Icelanders. Was this because they exhibited certain non-Norse cultural characteristics?

My suggestion that Gaelic was making inroads into Zone 3 during the tenth century is not intrinsically unlikely, because current scholarship would suggest something similar was happening to the Scandinavian society of Dublin. Dublin would appear to be a viable comparison because, as in Zone 3, Norse would appear to have remained a spoken language at some level of society into the twelfth century, indeed at least up to the time of the English invasion of 1169⁷⁶. This can be seen from the fact that Norse place-names in Ireland only survive in English speech, and, consequently, must have been borrowed by English speakers. Speakers of Gaelic use different names for the same localities. As English was not spoken in Ireland prior to the invasion, the borrowing must have taken place after this date⁷⁷. Also there is evidence that Dublin was politically linked with the Hebrides during the tenth century: the king of Dublin appears to have been overking of Hebrides for some of the period.

However, there is no evidence to suggest that Dublin was a monolingual community at the time of the English invasion. Indeed, there is positive evidence for bilingualism in Dublin, at least within the ruling family, as early as the mid tenth century. Alongside the Icelandic poets who visited

⁷⁶M.Oftedal 'Scandinavian place-names in Ireland' in *Seventh Viking Congress*, 126 and D.Green 'The influence of Scandinavian on Irish' in *Seventh Viking Congress*, 81

⁷⁷Donnchadh Ó Corráin also believes Norse was spoken in twelfth century Dublin, because the story in *Njáls saga* concerning the battle of Clontarf and the death of Brian Boróimhe seems to derive originally from a saga about Brian, the internal motivation of which can only mean that it was written in Dublin x1114, D.Ó Corráin 'Brjánssaga: an Old-Norse saga written in Ireland' a lecture delivered at Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies (1992)

the Dublin court during that and the following century, Gaelic-speaking poets were also made welcome. Brian Bóroimhe's chief poet Mac Liag, and Mac Coisse, bard and story-teller of Mael Sechnaill II, both spent a whole year at the court of King Sitric⁷⁸ (king of Dublin from 989 to 1036), and the important poet Cinaed úa hArtacáin, who died in 975, dedicated one of his poems to Óláfr Cuarán, father of Sitric⁷⁹. In the poem, it says that the poet was rewarded for it⁸⁰. These poets would surely not have been employed if they had not been understood by their patrons.

Óláfr's nickname is Gaelic. A *cúarán* was a shoe or a sock (modern Gaelic *cuaran* "sock, brogue of untanned skin"), but the *DIL* suggests his epithet means "crooked" or "stooped". However, the important thing to note is that he was unlikely to bear an epithet that he did not understand, and indeed, when B.Megaw⁸¹ discussed the application of Gaelic epithets by the Manx kings from the late eleventh century, he suggested that this was a guide to the every-day language of the Manx court-circle. Although this is not necessarily the case with the Dublin court, Óláfr does appear to have assimilated some Gaelic culture as he gave some of his children Gaelic names. He had a son called Glúniarainn, who died in 989, another called Dugald, who died at Clontarf in 1014, and a daughter called Maelmuire, who is mentioned in the *FM* under 1021.

It is unclear how widely a knowledge of Gaelic was spread throughout Dublin society in the tenth century. However, since the

⁷⁸A.Walsh *Scandinavian Relations with Ireland during the Viking Period* (1922), 70

⁷⁹Mac Cana 'The Influence of the Vikings on Celtic Literature', 103

⁸⁰ *Amlaib Átha Cliath cétaig rogab rígi i mBeind Étair;*
tallus lúag mo dúane de, ech d'echaib ána Aichle.
 "Amlaib of Ath Cliath the hundred-strong, who gained the kingship in Bend Etair;
 I bore off from him as price of my song a horse of the horses of Achall."

E.Gwynn (ed. and translation) *The Metrical Dindsenchas* (1903), 52-3

⁸¹Megaw 'Norse and Native', 16

population of Dublin was engaged in trade with its Irish neighbours, the town being a great entrepôt for foreign trade goods into Ireland, many of the inhabitants must have been able to speak Gaelic in order to carry out these transactions. The adoption by many Dubliners of Christianity during the tenth century⁸² is also likely to have encouraged Gaelic speech, as is argued for Zone 3. So perhaps it is not unlikely that a bilingual situation pertained amongst a sizeable section of the Dublin population in the tenth century, and for another two centuries. Indeed M.Dolley⁸³ is of the opinion that most, if not all, of the later tenth century Dubliners were bilingual.

⁸²Mac Cana suggests the virtual dropping of the term *genti* by AU in the year 923 indicates that the Dubliners had become largely Christianized by the first quarter of the tenth century, see Mac Cana 'The Influence of the Vikings on Celtic Literature', 102-3

⁸³M.Dolley 'The palimpsest of Viking settlement on Man' in *Eighth Viking Congress*, 177

This Chapter is an investigation of the evidence for the survival of Christianity in the west of Scotland, beginning with Zones 1 and 2.

At the outset, it can be stated that Christianity does not appear to have been extirpated from these Zones. Instead, it seems to have survived to influence the Norse settlers. It is clear from historical sources¹ that the Columban monastery of Iona survived the posited Norse settlement period of c.795-825. Indeed, as it continued to house the relics of St Columba, its founding father, it did not merely survive, but remained the political head of the Columban federation of monasteries until 849, when his relics were divided between the monasteries of Dunkeld and Kells. That is to say, for about 24 years after the posited end of Norse settlement, it continued to be the most important Scottish monastery, and one of the premier monasteries in the wider Gaelic-speaking world.

The demotion of Iona in political terms within the Columban Church does not appear to have had anything to do with the Norse. Instead, it had everything to do with King Cináed mac Ailpín². The division of Columba's relics was probably his plan to bring the administrative centre of the Columban church in Scotland east of Druim Alban into the area where his power was now based. To placate Irish interests, some of Columba's relics had to be sent to Ireland, and the Columban Church was consequently split in two.

There continued to be a monastery on Iona after it ceased to be the political centre of the Columban Church, as can be seen from archaeological evidence already presented³ and from the following obits of Iona churchmen.

¹See *infra*, 154-8

²J.Bannerman 'Comarba Coluim Chille and the Relics of Columba' *Innes Review* vol.xliv No.1 (1993), 42,43

³See *supra*, 61-3

AU865 *Cellach m. Ailella, abbas Cille Daro et abbas Ia, dormiuit in regione Pictorum.*

“Cellach son of Ailill, Abbot of Cell Dara and Iona, fell asleep in the country of the Picts.”

AU880 *Feradach m.Cormaicc, abbas Iae, pausauit.*

“Feradach son of Cormac, Abbot of Iona, rested.”

AU891 *Flann m. Maele Duin, abbas Ia, in pace quiéuit.*

“Flann son of Mael Dúin, Abbot of Iona, rested in peace”.

FM937 *Aonghus mac Muirchertaigh, saoi, angcoire ocus tanaisi abbaidh Iae, décc.*

“Angus son of Muirchertach, a learned man, anchorite and Tanist abbot of Iona, died.”

A *tánaise abhad* was also a very important figure in the monastery. He acted as prior of the monastery and was the abbot designate⁴.

FM947 *Caonchomhracc, abb Ia...décc.*

“Cainchomrac, Abbot of Iona...died.”

AU978 *Fiachra, airchinnech Ia, quiéuit.*

“Fiachra, superior of Iona, rested.”

The title of *aircinnech* or *princeps* in Latin was often applied to an abbot from the tenth century onwards. It probably reflects his increasingly secular interests. K.Hughes⁵ believed that much of the abbot’s energy was spent on trying to collect revenue and keep his church inviolate from physical harm in the face of Scandinavian pressure.

⁴K.Hughes *The Church in Early Irish Society* (1966), 211

⁵*Ibid.*, 223

According to *AU*, in the year 986, the next abbot met with an unpleasant fate.

I Colum Cille do arcain do Danaraibh aidhchi Nollaic coro marbsat in apaidh ocus .xv. uiros do srúthibh na cille.

“Iona of Colum Cille was plundered by the Danes on Christmas Night, and they killed the abbot and fifteen of the elders of the monastery.”

Either the abbot or one of the elders killed would appear to have been the bishop, according to *AI*.

Indred dano Colum Cille do Gallaib, ocus na Inse do fásugud doib, ocus escop Iae do marbad doib.

“I Colum Cille plundered by foreigners and the islands were wasted by them, and the bishop of Iona was killed by them.”

It was certainly not unknown for the abbot of a Celtic monastery to have fulfilled two functions and to have also been the bishop, although it is unusual in the context of Iona. It is worth noting that, in the Celtic Church, the bishop’s job was to minister to the spiritual needs of the community of the monastery. He did not have territorial responsibility over a diocese as in the Roman Church, but he would have been the premier priest of the monastery and its associated churches and chapels. However, he was under the control of the abbot in matters of temporal administration and organisation.

There is evidence for a further two such tenth century bishops at Iona, and also, perhaps, for a ninth century one called Patrick⁶. There is the interesting entry in *FM* under the year 963:

⁶See *infra*, 115-116

Fothadh mac Brain, scribhidh ocus epscop insi alban [dccc].

"Fothad Bran's son, scribe, and bishop of the islands of Scotland. [died]."

This may have been the same as the Bishop Fothad who had been resident at Kinriment, and whose obit occurs in the *Scottish Chronicle*⁸. Andrew of Wyntoun in his *Chronicle*⁹ claims Fothad was expelled from Kinriment by King Indulf (d.962). In the context of the Celtic Church, as just stated, it would be wrong to imagine that Fothad ruled a diocese incorporating the Hebrides. Rather, it can be inferred that Fothad went to Iona to become the bishop there, because, although the *FM* entry does not actually say he was resident in Iona, the honorific title of bishop of the Islands of Scotland would surely have been given to the bishop of the most important monastery therein. This monastery would have been none other than Iona. Fothad's honorific title bears comparison with the similar title of *prim-epscop Fortrenn* 'chief bishop of Fortriu', which occurs in *AU*, under the year 865.

Tuathal m. Artgusso prim-epscop Fortrenn ocus abbas Duin Cailleim, dormierunt

"Tuathal son of Artgus, chief bishop of Fortriu and abbot of Dunkeld, fell asleep."

⁷As it stands, the text actually reads 'island of Scotland'. However, as 'bishop of the island of Scotland' is meaningless, I would suggest that the Gaelic text needs amending. I believe the annalist forgot an 'n'. He should have written *insi n-Alban*.

⁸*Scottish Chronicle* (or *Chronicle of the Kings of Scotland version A*) in *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (1973, revised 1980) ed. M.O.Anderson, 249-53. A new edition for publication has been prepared by B.T.Hudson. He calls it the *Old Scottish Chronicle*.

⁹Andrew of Wyntoun *The Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland (to 1408)* ed. D.Laing (1872),

Again Tuathal's title does not imply diocesan responsibility. Rather, it means that, as well as being abbot of Dunkeld, he was also bishop of the community of Dunkeld, namely the bishop of the most important monastery in Fortriu. So, the existence of Fothad's title, although honorific, would imply that Iona continued to be an important and influential force in the Hebrides.

Fothad's successor as bishop resident at Iona was a certain Fingin, whose obit appears under the year 966 in *CS*,

Fingin, epscop muintire Iae, quievit.

"Fingin, Bishop of the community of Iona, rested."

Here Fingin's title exactly expresses the position of bishops within a Celtic Church monastery.

The annal entries surely indicate that it was business as usual in Iona after 849. Indeed, Scottish kings were buried at the monastery, in preference to Dunkeld, long after the centre of the Scottish kingdom had moved east, at least according to the *Chronicle of the Kings of Scots* Version D¹⁰. However, as there are no contemporary records for this, and the references to these burials may have been added to the Chronicle for political reasons in c.1097¹¹, they must be treated with caution, although there is nothing inherently unlikely about the burials themselves. The Chronicle claims Cináed mac Alpín was interred on Iona in 858, as was his brother Domnall in 862 and his sons Causantín in 877 and Áed in 878. It further claims Giric mac Dúngail was buried there in 889, and Domnall mac Causantín in 900.

¹⁰Ed. M.O.Anderson *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (Edinburgh 1973; revised 1980), 266-267

¹¹Dr.D.Brown (lecturer in Scottish History at Glasgow University), personal conversation.

However, it makes an exception of Causantín mac Aeda who died and was buried in St Andrews in 952, after serving as abbot of the *céli-dé* there, a fact which actually strengthens the case for their authenticity.

However, whether kings of Scots were buried on Iona or not, it still remained a monastery of high status and a place of pilgrimage during the tenth and subsequent centuries. Noteably, there was the pilgrimage to Iona of Olaf Cuarán, king of Dublin, and sometime overking of the Hebrides¹², recorded in *FM* under 980. He died there, and was presumably buried on the island.

Co ndeachaidh Amhlaoph iaromh tar muir co nerbail in I Colaim Cille.

“After this Amlaib went across the sea and died at Iona.”

According to *AI* in 1026 Mael Ruanaid ua Maíl Doraid, King of the Cenél Conaill, Columba's own kindred, went on a pilgrimage, and, as well as going to Rome, he visited Iona.

Moel Ruanaid Hua Maíl Doraid, rí in tuascirt, ina ailithre co Cluain Ferta Brenainn, co ndeochaid as side co Hii Coluim Cille ocus as side co Róim Letha.

‘Mael Ruanaid Ua Maíl Doraid, king of the North, [went] on his pilgrimage to Cluain Ferta, Brénainn, and proceeded from there to Í Coluim Chille, and thence to Rome.’

The apparently continuous and continuing existence of the cultural and religious powerhouse of Iona within the area of Zones 1 and 2 cannot have failed to have exerted a powerful influence on the Norse settlers. The fact that there is no record of a Norse attack on the monastery after 825

¹²See *infra*, 209-210

suggests the respect in which it must have been held. Indeed, there is evidence to show that the Norse settlers quickly adopted Christianity, and the mixed population which had developed in Zones 1 and 2 by the 850s, namely the Gall-Gaidheil, can be regarded as Christian. Such a course of events is not unprecedented, because in England and Normandy, where native and Scandinavian populations also mixed, there is evidence, at least amongst the upper levels of society, for the latter quickly adopting the former's religion. For example, King Guðfrið of York who died in 895, 19 years after the Danish colonisation, became a Christian, and was buried in Yorkminster, while William Longsword (927?-942), son of Rollo the pagan 1st Duke of Normandy, was a convinced Christian who reestablished monasticism in the Duchy.

There can be little doubt that the Gall-Gaidheil were identifiably Christian, at least relative to the Scandinavian settlers of Dublin. Despite the slanderous accounts in *FA* to the effect that they had forsaken their baptism¹³, they are clearly contrasted with the *gennti* 'heathens' in *AU*, under the year 856.

Icelandic tradition corroborates this impression, for when the Gall-Gaidheil appear therein, they can be seen to be Christian. *Landnámabók* preserves the following traditions concerning the family of Ketill Flatnose (the Gall-Gaidheil leader Caittil Find¹⁴). The family came to Iceland in the later ninth century. Of Ketil's daughter Auðr it states,

¹³See supra, 82

¹⁴The only member of Ketil's family whom Icelandic tradition does not make Christian is Björn the Easterner. However, this is not a problem because Icelandic tradition is obviously in error about other aspects of Björn's life. See infra, 182-3

“Aud (Ketil’s daughter) took possession of the entire Dales district at the head of the fjord, between the Dogurdar and Skraumuhlaups Rivers. She made her home at Hvamm near Aurrida River Estuary, at a place now called Audartoft. She used to say prayers at Kross Hills; she had crosses erected there, for she’d been baptized and was a devout Christian.”¹⁵

“That very night she (Aud) died, and she was buried at the high water mark as she’d ordered, because having been baptized, she didn’t wish to lie in unconsecrated earth.”¹⁶

Landnámabók also contains an account of Ketill Flat-Nose’s grandson, Ketill the Foolish, so named because he was a Christian.

“There was a man called Ketil the Foolish, son of Jorunn Wisdom-Slope, Ketil Flat-Nose’s daughter. Ketil went from the Hebrides to Iceland. He was a Christian. He took possession of land between Geirlands and Fjardar Rivers, above Nykomi.

Ketil made his home at Kirkby, where the Papar had been living before and where no heathen was allowed to stay.”¹⁷

It could be inferred that Ketill had a predetermined destination in mind when he set off for Iceland. He may have intentionally headed for an abandoned pre-Norse settlement of Celtic Church monks called *Papar*¹⁸, perhaps to reestablish a church or chapel of some kind there. This might seem far fetched if it were not for the fact that we appear to have, in the tradition concerning Ketill Flat-Nose’s nephew Örlyggr Hrappson, a clear example of a settler being directed to find a specific place in Iceland by a Celtic

¹⁵Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, 52

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 55

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 123

¹⁸See *infra* 118-123 for the *papar*.

churchman, and being told to found a church there, dedicated to *Kolumkilla* or *Colum Cille*, Columba's Gaelic name, which means 'dove of the church'.

"Hrapp, Bjorn Buna's son, had a son called Orlyg whom he gave in fosterage to the Holy Bishop Patrick of the Hebrides. He had a great desire to go to Iceland, and asked the bishop for guidance. The bishop provided him with church timber, an old iron bell, a plenarium, and consecrated earth which Orlyg was to place beneath the corner posts of his church. The bishop told him to settle at a place where from the sea he could keep two mountains in view, each with its valley. He was to make his home below the southern mountain where he was to build a house and a church dedicated to Saint Columba. On board Orlyg's ship were his blood-brother Koll, Thorbjorn Sparrow and Thorbjorn's brother Thorbjorn Skuma, the sons of Bodvar Bladder-Bald.

Orlyg and his men put out to sea, and had such a rough passage they'd no idea where they were. Then Orlyg made a solemn vow to Bishop Patrick that if they made land he'd name the place after him. Shortly afterwards they sighted land, having drifted west of Iceland. They came ashore at a place now called Orlygshaven, but the fjord that cut into the land from there they called Patreksfjord. They stayed there over winter. In the spring Orlyg got his ship ready to sail, but some of his crew settled down there, as will be described later. Orlyg journeyed east round Bard, and once he'd gone beyond Snæfellsness Glacier and sailed into the bay, he could see two mountains, each of them with a valley cutting into it. Then he knew this was the place he'd been guided to, so he made for the southern mountain. This was Kjalarness, which his cousin Helgi had already claimed. Orlyg stayed the first winter with him, and in the spring with Helgi's approval he laid claim to the land between Mogils River and Osvifs brook, making his home at Esjuberg where he built a church as he had promised....Orlyg and his kinsmen put their faith in St.Columba."¹⁹

There surely cannot be any clearer implication of the predominantly Christian milieu of the Gall-Gaidheil than this story about Örlyggr. It could be posited that Örlyg's fosterfather was bishop of the community of Iona, considering his status. Unfortunately, there is no native record of a Bishop Patrick in

¹⁹Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements.*, 23-4

Iona. However, there is no surviving record of the names of any of the ninth century bishops of Iona.

One of the particularly interesting aspects of this story is the fact that Örlyggr took a *plenarium* (*plenarius*) or plenary with him to Iceland. This is a book of the gospels or epistles and homilies read at the Eucharist. Such an item would have been useless unless someone could read Latin, perhaps Örlyggr himself if he had been fostered by a bishop.

It is certainly not impossible that some of the Gall-Gaidheil settlers in Iceland could read. Ári in his *Íslendingabók*²⁰ (written sometime after 1122) relates that the *papar* left behind them *bækr írskar ok bjǫllur ok bagla* “Irish books and bells and croziers”. He continues: *Af því mátti skilja, at þeir váru menn írskir* “Therefore one could perceive that they were Irish men”. As V.Skard²¹ suggests, this presupposes that, amongst the settlers, there were people who knew enough about writing to realise that they were faced with Irish books. It is surely amongst the Gall-Gaidheil, such as Örlyggr, that these people were to be found.

It is important to realise that, although the Gall-Gaidheil might have been predominantly Christian, it is likely that some would have been of mixed belief, especially amongst those at the Norse end of the spectrum. It would have taken time for all the pagan influences and beliefs brought by the Norse settlers to dissipate. This posited mixture can, perhaps, be seen in the Kiloran Bay burial, on Colonsay²². In this grave, dated from associated Anglo-Saxon coins to the second half of the ninth century, alongside a

²⁰*Íslendingabók* ed. J.Benediktsson (*Íslensk fornrit* 1968)

²¹V.Skard *Norsk Språkhistorie*, Vol 1 (1973), 69, “Ares tradisjon forutsetter altså at det blant landnåmsmennene var folk som har kjent så mye til skrift at de kunne skjønne de her stod overfor irske bøker.”

²²*RCAHMS Argyll V*, 30, no.298, 150

sacrificed horse and a boat, there are two cross inscribed stones set at the eastern and western ends. This is the grave of a rich and important member of society probably at once a merchant, by the evidence of the scales and weights interred with him, and a warrior, judging by his collection of weapons, which included sword, spear, axe, shield and arrow-heads. He, or his family, would appear to have been of mixed faith.

It cannot seriously be doubted that the pre-Norse Christian population in Zones 1 and 2 survived, and the Norse who settled amongst them quickly converted. The situation in Zone 3 was probably rather different, considering that the Norse presence there appears to have been much more disruptive to the pre-Norse population and their culture and language. This provides us with a good *a priori* reason for suggesting that Christian worship in Zone 3 may have been likewise severely disrupted for a period, during which time Norse paganism would have dominated. Indeed, the situation in Zone 3 is likely, at least initially, to have had much in common with that which existed in the Northern Isles.

However, there may be some evidence that disruption need not indicate total eradication and, just as in Orkney and Shetland, it is possible that *papar*-names may represent monastic communities which weathered the Norse settlement period, not unlike Greek Orthodox monasteries cast adrift in a sea of Islam. Similarly, the generic *cill* may represent pre-Norse churches which survived the buffeting of Norse settlement. Unfortunately, with both *papar*-names and the generic *cill*, it is difficult to establish exactly what they imply.

The word *papar* is a borrowing into Norse of the Gaelic *popa/pupu* 'father/priest', which is itself a borrowing from Latin *papa* 'father'. The Norse used it to refer to Christian priests. References to them in Iceland,

and descriptions of them, occur in both Ári the Learned's *Islendingabók* (1) and in *Landnámabók* (2).

1."At that time (the settlement period), Christian men were here, whom the Norwegians called *papar*; but they departed afterwards, because they would not be here with heathen men; and they left behind them Irish books, and bells, and croziers. Therefore one could perceive that they were Irish men."²³

2."But before Iceland was settled from Norway there were other people there, called *Papar* by the Norwegians. They were Christians and were thought to have come overseas from the west, because people found Irish books, bells, croziers, and lots of other things, so it was clear they must have been Irish."²⁴

Ári predates *Landnámabók*, and considering the similarity of the accounts, it would appear that the second account was based on his. There seems to be little doubt from these traditions that the *papar* were Gaels and adherents of the Celtic Church.

Ári's account is particularly interesting, because it implies that the *papar* were still present in Iceland when the Norse settlers arrived there, post-874. This contrasts with Dicuil who, writing in 825 in his *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae*²⁵, reported that the Faroes, because of the depredations of Norse pirates, had been emptied of anchorites. Ári could be wrong, but there is the possibility that after 825, Celtic Church activity picked up again, and Celtic monks once more took to sailing northern waters. This would have important ramifications for Zone 3, which does not lie nearly as far away from the centres of the Celtic Church as Iceland.

²³Translation *ES* i 340

²⁴Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, 15

²⁵*Dicuili Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae* ed. J.J.Tierney (1967) see *infra* 165.

The author of *Historia Norvegiæ*²⁶, possibly written in Orkney c.1200, understood the *papar* to have been an important component of the population of Orkney prior to the arrival of the Norse. However, he was mistaken about their religious affiliation.

"These islands (the Orkneys) were at first inhabited by the Peti (Picts) and Papac...And the Papac have been named from their white robes, which they wore like priests; whence priests are all called papac in the Teutonic tongue. An island is still called, after them, Papey. But, as is observed from their habit and the writings of their books abandoned there, they were Africans, adhering to Judaism."

As indicated by the author of *Historia Norvegiæ*, *papa* appears as a generic in place-names, occurring in Scotland, the Faroes and Iceland. The generic appears at least 27 times in the Northern Isles and Hebrides. In the Hebrides, we have Pabbay (Skye), Pabay Mor and Beg (Lewis), Pabbay (Harris), two small islands called Pabbay (S.Uist) and Pabbay (Barra) all from *paparöy* 'priests' isle'. Bayble (Lewis), Paible (Taransay) and Paible (N.Uist) derive from *papahýl* 'priests' dwellings' and Papadil (Rum) from *papadalr* 'priests' dale'. The great majority of these examples lie in Zone 3, and, as can be seen, (see fig.15) the element occurs nowhere in the Hebrides south of Ardnamurchan.

It is unclear what kind of priestly establishments originally existed at these sites. It has been suggested by A.MacDonald²⁷ that, because *papar* names are concentrated on small islands, tending to avoid large land masses, they may indicate a strong eremitical element amongst their communities.

²⁶*Historia Norvegiæ* in *Monumenta Historica Norvegiæ*, ed. G.Storm (1880). Translation from *ES* i, 330-1.

²⁷A.MacDonald "On 'Papar' names in N. and W. Scotland" in *NS* ix (1977), 28-9

However, B.E.Crawford²⁸ has pointed out that some of the sites called after them were in no way marginal. The Pabbays on Lewis and Harris were from time to time the residence of the MacLeod chiefs. Papa Stour, in Shetland, was the seat of powerful Norwegian officials in the Middle Ages and supported a population of several hundred in the last century. Crawford suggests that they may represent tribal-monastic communities which served the needs of local secular society. The *papar* in Iceland, considering the fact that there was no secular society prior to the Norse on the island, are likely to have been eremitical, but the same is not necessarily true of those in Scotland. It is probably unwise to try to restrict the meaning of *papar*: to the Norse it may have been no more than a general term for Celtic Church monks²⁹.

It is also unclear whether *papa* place-names represent communities which were living contemporaneously with the Norse, whether they represent sites where monks were living at the time of the arrival of the Norse settlers, or whether they represent sites which monks had abandoned prior to the arrival of the Norse. H.Marwick³⁰ believed that the place-name evidence showed that the *papar* on Papa Westray in Orkney weathered the Norse storm and were left undisturbed on their island. B.E.Crawford³¹ remarks that, since the *papar* were remembered in Orkney as having worn white robes and having books associated with them, they may have survived the initial phase of raids and settlements, and been in contact with the Norse. However, it is also possible that *papa* place-names could have been applied

²⁸Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 166

²⁹A.MacDonald 'On 'Papar' names', 30 suggests it is likely to have been a colloquial blanket-term..

³⁰H.Marwick 'Antiquarian Notes on Papa Westray', in *POAS* iii (1924-5), 36

³¹Crawford *Scand.Scot.* 166

by the Norse to sites where they realised there had been monks and which had visible remains of the *papar* on them, such as ruins and carved stones. However, the fact that the church-dedications on Papa Westray continued to be to St Triduana (called *Trollhöna* by the Norse) and St Boniface, both saints unlikely to have been invoked without the stimulus of local tradition³², does suggest contact between the *papar* and the Norse. I also wonder whether we can infer anything from the fact that it was the Gaelic word *pupu* instead of *sacart* 'priest' or *manach* 'monk' which was borrowed by the Norse. *Pupu*, meaning 'father', as stated previously, was a respectful name for a priest, which could imply that the Norse were being respectful to monks of the Celtic Church.

There is also evidence, as on Papa Westray in Orkney, of contact between Norse and *papar* on Taransay, off the coast of Harris. There were *papar* on the island as shown by the place-name Paible, and they would appear to have been in contact with the Norse, because Taransay, an unusual Norse place-name, means 'Taran's Isle', the Taran in question being St Tarannán or Torannán. His veneration continued for centuries on the island, where stand the remains of a church called Teampull Tharáin³³ along with another called Teampull Ché (Keith). Martin Martin relates that the natives of the island believed that a man must not be buried in St Tarain's and a woman must not be buried in St Keith's³⁴. Similarly, on Pabbay (Harris), there are chapels dedicated to the Virgin Mary and to St Mo-Luóc, Abbot of Lismore (d.592AU) and there is also a rock dedicated to St Curitan³⁵.

³²Crawford *Scand.Scot*, 167

³³*The Old Statistical Account* Vol.20, 83

³⁴M.Martin *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland* (1716), 49

³⁵R.MacilleDhuibh *West Highland Free Press* 3/5/91

probably the Bishop of Rosemarkie who signed *Cáin Adamnáin* in 697³⁶ and the same as the St Boniface aforementioned.

It is possible, therefore, that some of the *papar*-sites may have continued in occupation through the period of Norse settlement in Zone 3, especially if they were supported by monastic communities like Iona in Zones 1 and 2. However, there is a caveat to the whole question of continuity at *papar* sites. It is important to note that the word *papar* was still the current Norse word for Celtic Church monks when Iceland was settled in the later ninth century. Therefore, the *papar* place-names in Zone 3, and perhaps also in the Northern Isles, might post-date the Norse settlement therein. They might refer to settlements of monks established amongst the Norse by the Celtic Church expanding again, furth of its posited retrenched position in the Inner Hebrides and Mainland Scotland. A.MacDonald³⁷ accepts the possibility that ecclesiastical sites could have been reoccupied by Celtic Church ecclesiastics when conditions became less turbulent.

It is interesting that the Hebridean *papar* place-names are overwhelmingly concentrated in the Long Island, and none occur south of Ardnamurchan, in the area where one would perhaps most expect to find them, and where there must have been large numbers of Celtic Church monks. This is further evidence to suggest that Zone 3 had, for some time, a generally Norse linguistic and religious milieu like the Northern Isles, whereas Zones 1 and 2 did not. In Zone 3, the *papar* were something unusual and thus worthy of mention in a Norse context.

³⁶A.P.Smyth *Warlords*, 127

³⁷A.MacDonald 'On 'Papar' names', 30

The other possible evidence that there was continuity of Christian worship through the Norse-settlement period in Zone 3 is the place-name generic *cill*, and its later replacement *teampull*. *Cill* is the usual toponymic generic in Gaelic-speaking Scotland, broadly denoting 'church', but its modern colloquial usage 'graveyard' may reflect its original meaning. It is the dative singular of *ceall*, a borrowing from Latin *cella*. C.Thomas³⁸ suggests that it may have been borrowed originally into Gaelic from the continental phrase *cella memoriae*, to denote specially marked graves in an undeveloped cemetery, that it then came to denote an enclosed developed cemetery, and later a church with its burial ground, or simply a church.

This process probably took place quite quickly, because it was used as an ecclesiastical settlement term by the seventh century. Adomnán, in his *Vita S. Columbae*³⁹, uses *cella* twice, one of which appears in the name of a recently founded monastery called *Cella Diuni* beside Loch Awe. He also mentions a church called *Cell-Roiss* in Ireland in a prophecy ascribed to Columba, suggesting, therefore, a sixth century usage. The word also occurs in the *Amra Choluimb Chille*⁴⁰, a lament for Columba, composed by the secular poet Dallán Forgaill shortly after Columba's death in 597. It is the only significant church term used.

D.Flanagan⁴¹ has shown that, during the eighth century and onwards, as annalistic entries become more detailed, there is a marked increase in the incidence of *cill*. In fact, *cill* can be seen to be the standard ecclesiastical settlement term from the period of the monastic church. It seems to have been the correlative of *dun*, the major secular unit, as can be seen from the

³⁸C.Thomas *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain* (1971), 87-8

³⁹*Adomnán's Life of Columba* eds. A.O. & M.O.Anderson (1961)

⁴⁰*Amra Choluimb Chille* ed W. Stokes (1872)

⁴¹D.Flanagan "Common elements in Irish place-names" in *BUPNS Series 2* vol 2. (1979), 4

expression *coro ort a n-ule cella ocus dune* "he spoiled all their churches and forts" in *AI*, under the year 971.

A. MacDonald⁴², in his study of Scottish *cill* place-names, agrees with the above, and considers that there are *a priori* reasons for seeing this generic as the classic place-name element of early Irish monasticism within those areas settled by the Scots. He suggests that most sites denoted by the generic *cill*, were probably originally the lesser and least churches of monastic *paruchia*, essentially minor monasteries which very often became medieval parish churches.

A. MacDonald also agrees with W.F.H. Nicolaisen⁴³ that the overall distribution of *cill* place-names accords well with what is known of the development of Scottish settlement between the sixth and ninth centuries (see fig.16). These names occur most densely in mainland Argyll and the adjacent islands, from where they spread up along the west coast and into Skye, the Small Isles, Uist and Barra. They also spread up the Great Glen and across into Fife. However, they are markedly rare throughout the region between the Moray Firth and the Tay valley. They are also largely or wholly absent from Wester Ross and West Sutherland, Lewis and Harris. The paucity of *cill* place-names in what was central Pictland suggested to MacDonald and Nicolaisen that *cill* had ceased to be a productive place-name forming element before the Scots were in a position to move into this area in large numbers, namely prior to the ninth century.

The absence of *cill* place-names in Lewis and Harris may be more apparent than real. A. MacDonald⁴⁴ suggests that the generic *teampull* is a

⁴²A. MacDonald "Gaelic Cill (Kil(l)-) in Scottish Place-Names" in *BUPNS* Series 2 vol 2 (1979), 9

⁴³Nicolaisen *Scottish Placenames*, 143

⁴⁴A. MacDonald 'Gaelic *Cill* (Kil(l)-)', 14

dialectal replacement, at a comparatively late date of *cill* in Lewis, Harris, North Uist, Benbecula and parts of Skye (see fig.17). For example, he notes that, on Pont's map, (published in 1654) instead of the present day Teampull na Trianaid at Carinish in North Uist, the form *Kil Trinidad* occurs. Similarly Teampull Chaluim Chille on Benbecula was *Kil Columbkil* on Blaeu's map of 1662. Where *teampull* is now the generic, *cill* can still occur as the qualifying element in associated names. For example, in Pabbay (Harris), Teampull Mhoire and Teampull Beag are situated at Baile na cille. The qualifying dedications in *teampull* place-names are frequently the same as those qualifying *cill*, for example to St Columba, Christ, St Orain etc, indicating that *teampull* was often a replacement for *cill*.

Following A.MacDonald, the spread of *cill* and *teampull* generics together would appear to show that the distribution of ecclesiastical settlements of the Celtic Church, probably the lesser churches of monastic paruchia, included Lewis and Harris, and, following his dating, they would appear to have been established prior to the ninth century. The presence of *cill* and *teampull* sites in Zone 3, if they do represent churches founded and named prior to the arrival of the Norse, might suggest the concomitant survival of a Christian population through the settlement period in these areas.

However, before jumping to any conclusions, it is worth considering that although many, if not most, of the *cill* place-names in the Hebrides and Argyll probably do predate the ninth century, the paucity of the *cill* generic in central Pictland may be due to factors other than *cill* having ceased to be a productive generic. For example, most of the churches in that area may already have been founded and named prior to the arrival of the Gaels after 800. Further, for Ireland D.Flanagan provides a wider chronological band for the generic. She suggests that most of the documented instances of *cill* refer

to the period of Irish monasticism up to the great changes in the Irish Church in the twelfth century, giving *cill* a productive life-span of a further two to three hundred years. Moreover, she goes on to show that *cill* was still being used, to some extent, in new coinages in the medieval period, for example Killone (County Clare), *Cill Eoin*, an abbey of St John the Baptist built for Augustinian nuns c.1189.

Post-800 examples do occur in Scotland. The most prestigious late creation is *Cill Ribhinn*, a Gaelic rendering of the earlier *Cindrighmonai* (*AU* 747) and *Cind ri(g)monaidh* (*CS* 965), now St Andrews. The earliest form in *cill* is from the twelfth century (*Chilrimunt* in a charter of King David 1⁴⁵). This, along with the Irish evidence, suggests that it is unwise to assume that all the *cill* and *teampull* place-names in Zone 3 pre-date the Norse settlement. Indeed, there are two examples which clearly do not, Kilaulay in South Uist and Teampull na Trianaid in North Uist. The former is likely to commemorate St Olaf, who is also venerated at Gress in Lewis. He was made a saint in 1031, and was the last western saint to be accepted as such by the Eastern Orthodox Church. Therefore, this *cill* place-name must post-date 1031. Teampull na Trianaid, previously Cill na Trianaid, as we saw, is reputed to have been founded by Beathag, daughter of Somerled in the twelfth century. Indeed, if, as Flanagan implies, *cill* place-names continued to be created by the monastic Celtic Church as long as it survived, this means that there is no reason why they could not have been created well into the twelfth century in the Hebrides, as in Ireland. There was still a Celtic Church community on Iona in 1164, as can be seen from *AU*.

⁴⁵This a charter by David granting to the church of St Andrews the church of St Mary at Haddington c.1139 see A.C.Lawrie ed. *Early Scottish Charters: Prior to AD1153* (1905), 94

In that year, at the instigation of Somerled and the men of Argyll and the Isles, Augustin *sacart mór*, Dubsíde *fer légin*, MacGilladuib *disertach* and MacForcellaig, head of the *Céli Dé*, whose titles are eloquent evidence for the survival of the Celtic Church, invited Flaithbertach O Broichán to become abbot of Iona.

If the Celtic Church was still using *cill* when it reestablished itself in Zone 3, it is possible that all *cill* and *teampull* place-names in Zone 3 might post-date the Norse settlement. However, it is also a fact that some of the dedications are to obscure Celtic Church saints, for example to St Rónán, perhaps the abbot of *Cenn Garadh* or Kingarth on Bute, whose obit is recorded in *AU* under the year 737, at Teampull Rónaig at Eoropie in Lewis. Such obscure figures are unlikely to have been commemorated by a resurgent Celtic Church without the benefit of surviving tradition.

At least two of the *cill*-names, then, are post-Norse creations, and can, perhaps, be interpreted as showing the spread of the Celtic Church back into Zone 3. There may be others, especially, perhaps, those dedicated to major saints of the Celtic Church, like St Brigit. There are Kilbrides on Coll, Tiree, Skye, Uist and Harris. E.G.Bowen⁴⁶ has suggested that her cult continued to spread well into the eleventh century, which could account for the three dedications to her in Orkney and the two in Shetland. Similarly, some of the dedications to St Columba might be added to this group. In the version of *Landnámabók* in *Hauksbók*⁴⁷, it is claimed that Halldor the Red dedicated a church to *Kolumkilli* in Akranes in Iceland in the late tenth century.

If there were *cill* names in Zone 3, created in the pre-Norse period, their survival does not require a native population to have survived in the

⁴⁶E.G.Bowen 'The Cult of St Brigit' *Studia Celtica* 7-9 (1972-74), 35

⁴⁷Benediktsson, *Landnámabók*, Chp 21

vicinity of each site. If A.MacDonald is correct in regarding a *cill* as the lesser church of a monastic paruchia, it is unlikely that the monasteries in Zones 1 and 2 would have forgotten them. They would surely have kept records of their lands and dependant churches⁴⁸. When the situation had stabilised in Zone 3, the monasteries are likely to have sent out monks to reestablish their smaller outlying chapels and oratories.

There is some corroboration that such a process was beginning early in the ninth century. The traditions preserved in *Landnámabók* concerning Örlyggr and Ketill the Foolish are relevant here, because they imply that the Celtic Church was reestablishing itself at previously abandoned, but not yet forgotten, sites by the later ninth century. Indeed, Ári's account of the *papar* in Iceland would imply that, prior to these two setting forth, the Celtic Church had begun its reexpansion. If we accept that this was happening as far afield as Iceland, it can be inferred that the Celtic Church was also reestablishing itself in Zone 3. Indeed, the process is likely to have begun earlier in Zone 3. If the Church had not forgotten abandoned sites in Iceland, it is unlikely that it would have done so in the Outer Hebrides, North Skye, Coll or Tiree. It could be posited that, if the territory ruled first by Gofraid mac Fhergusu, and then by Caittil Find, included the Outer Hebrides, Celtic Church influences could have been reentering Zone 3 by the 850s. That Celtic Church influence must have been infiltrating Zone 3 soon after Norse settlement would appear to be corroborated by the fact that, during the tenth century, we find evidence for Norse Christians therein.

Whether we believe that a pre-Norse Christian population survived around each *cill*-site, or whether we accept that Celtic Church influence in

⁴⁸We have an example of this in the notitia of the Book of Deer, see K.H.Jackson *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (1972)

Zone 3 appeared after Norse settlement. It is important to note just how influential the Celtic Church must have been in Zone 3. This can be seen at a glance from the map of *cill* and *teampull* place-names, and from the numerous commemorations to Celtic Church Saints⁴⁹, both common and uncommon, and also in the existence of Norse place-names based on the names of Celtic Saints like Taransay.

Saints associated with Iona are common, as would be expected, because Iona's paruchia of churches would presumably have been the most extensive in the area prior to the Norse arrival, and it is likely to have been the major centre from which Celtic Church influences would have reentered Zone 3. There are a number of commemorations to St Columba as befits the leading Hebridean saint⁵⁰, including chapels on Troday (Skye), on Fladda Chuain (Skye), at Howmore (S. Uist), on Berneray (Harris) and on St Kilda. There is a Teampull Chaluim Chille in Benbecula, a Loch Chaluim Chille in Benbecula and a Tobar Chalum Chille in North Uist. The medieval and now ruined cathedral of the Isles on Skeabost Island in Skye is dedicated to him, and, on Lewis, so is Eye Church and a now unidentifiable site in Barvas, recorded by Martin Martin. Finally, there is an Eilean Choluim Chille in Loch Erisort.

Other saints may owe their commemoration to the influence of Iona. A.MacDonald⁵¹ suggests that dedications to saints such as St Brénaid of Birr, St Ciarán of Cluain mac Nois and St Cainnech of Achadh Bó arose within the paruchia of Iona. There is a church to St Ciarán at Lianishader in

⁴⁹M.Redford in her M.Litt Thesis *Commemorations of saints of the Celtic Church in Scotland* (1989) has mapped these throughout Scotland.

⁵⁰For a list of commemorations to St Columba see Redford *Commemorations of saints*, 161-4.

⁵¹A.MacDonald 'Gaelic *Cill* (Kil(l)-)', 15

Barvas. Lewis. and a Cill Choinnigh in South Uist⁵². Dedications to St Torranán and St Rónán may have a similar origin. As previously stated, Taransay is called after St Torranán, and there was a chapel dedicated to him on the island. There was also an oratory on an islet, now a peninsula, in Loch Chaluim Chille near Baile a' Mhanaich. According to Uist tradition⁵³, he dedicated his oratory to St Columba. He appears to have been the 'patron' saint of Benbecula, and a spring on Ruaival, called *Gamhnach* 'Farrow cow', was supposedly created by his prayers. There is a story in the fifteenth century manuscript collection *Lebar Brecc* which also links him with St Columba. It claims the latter gave St Torranán a crozier he had made himself⁵⁴.

St Rónán, as well as being commemorated at Teampull Rónain at Eoropie, is also associated with the remote island of North Rona or Ronaidh an t-Haf, the most northerly of the Hebrides. There is a Teampull Rónain there also, which consists of a bee-hive cell with associated chapel. As suggested, he is perhaps to be identified with Rónán, abbot of Cenn Garadh. The chapel of Saint Rónán, on North Rona, was being used by the inhabitants of Rona in the late seventeenth century⁵⁵. According to Ness tradition recorded in the last century⁵⁶, Rónán had a half brother called Flannán, whose name is retained in na h-Eileanan Flanain 'The Flannan Isles', the remote island group off the west coast of Lewis. My reason for suggesting that the dedications to St Rónán may have originated within the

⁵²Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 276

⁵³For traditions about St Torranán see A.Carmichael *Carmina Gadelica* (reprint 1992), 609-11

⁵⁴*Lebar Brecc RIA* (1876), 33 a.

⁵⁵Martin Martin *Western Islands*, 22

⁵⁶W.Watson *Carmichael Watson Collection* MS95, 48-55

paruchia of Iona is that there is a dedication to him on Iona itself. Teampull Rónaig is believed to have been Iona's old parish church.

Dedications to Saints associated with other monasteries in the West of Scotland also occur in Zone 3, for example St Donnán of Eigg, St Mael-rubha of Applecross and St Mo-luóc of Lismore. The annals are devoid of information concerning these sites during the ninth and subsequent centuries, but there is no necessity, nor indeed evidence, to suggest that these monasteries failed to survive the Norse settlement. In the case of Applecross, Ferchar mac an t-sacairt, who put down the MacWilliam revolt in Ross and Moray in 1215, is thought to have been the son of the lay patron of the monastery⁵⁷, which naturally implies that Applecross survived the Norse settlement period. The survival of the cults of their leading saints suggests that these monasteries did survive, and were involved, along with Iona, in the reestablishment of the Celtic Church in Zone 3.

St Donnán, who founded the monastery on Eigg, and was martyred there in 617, according to *AU*, is remembered in Cill Donnáin, or Kildonan, in Skye and also on Uist. There was also a church dedicated to him on Little Berneray off the west coast of Lewis⁵⁸.

St Mael-rubha founder of the monastery of Applecross, whose obit is recorded in *AU*, under the year 722, is commemorated in Aird Ma-Ruibhe on Berneray, Harris, Cill Ma-Ruibhe or Kilmarie, and Aiseag Ma-Ruibhe in Strath, Skye, and Cill Ma-Ruibhe, Kilmolruy (Blaeu), in Bracadale, Skye. According to the Rev.M.Maclean⁵⁹, the asservation "*Ma-Ruibhe!*" was often heard in Harris.

⁵⁷see J.Munro 'The Earldom of Ross and the Lordship of the Isles' in *Firthlands of Ross and Sutherland* ed. J.R.Baldwin (1986), 59.

⁵⁸Martin Martin *Western Islands*, 27

⁵⁹Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 288

Saint Mo-Luóc, the founder of the island monastery of Lismore, which after the reorganisation of the church became the seat of the Bishop of Argyll, died in 592, according to *AU*. He is commemorated in Cill Mo-Luáig, Kilmaluag, on Tiree, and in Trotternish, Skye, where Kilmaluag is the old name for Kilmuir parish⁶⁰. Teampull Mo-Luigh exists in Eorapie, Lewis, and there was a chapel dedicated to him on Pabbay, Harris.

Along with Taransay, the Norse place-name of Barra takes its name from a Celtic Church Saint, namely St Finbarr, or simply St Barr, of Cork, who died c.610. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that there is a Cill Bharr, Kilbarr on Barra. Þorgerðr Steinar's daughter was buried and commemorated on a stone cross-slab there in the tenth or early eleventh century. Even as late as c1700, there was a wooden image of the Saint being venerated within the church⁶¹.

Many small islands in the West of Scotland are called after Saints, for example, Eilean Trostain in the Parish of North Uist from St Drostan, founder of the monastery of Deer, and stated in the Book of Deer to be a disciple of Columba, Eilean Mhunna in Loch Leven from St Munnu or Mo-Findu, the Flannan Isles from the aforementioned St Flannán, who had a chapel on Eilean Mór where fowlers went to pray before beginning the hunt⁶², Inchmarnock off Bute from Saint Mo-Ernóc, Eilean Mo-Laise, the Gaelic name for Holy Island, which still survives in the name of the town of Lamlash, commemorating St Laisrén, and Eilean Da-Bharr at Campbelltown is another island which takes its name from St Barr.

Finally, as already noted, there is evidence that there were Christians amongst the population of Zone 3 during the tenth century. There is the

⁶⁰Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 292

⁶¹Martin Martin *Western Islands*, 92

⁶²Ibid, 17

evidence of the cross-slabs. The Kilbarr cross on Barra commemorates Þorgerðr Steinar's daughter, and the cross-slab on Iona was laid over Fogl, who was probably from Lewis⁶³. There is also the *Hafgerðingadrápa*⁶⁴ composed by a Christian Hebridean in c.985-990, using the metre of *hrynhent* apparently based on contemporary Latin poetry. In this, the poet refers to God as the 'Master of monks', which supports the view that it was the Celtic Church whose influence was being felt in Zone 3. However, it is perhaps unlikely that Zone 3 became completely Christian at least until the end of the tenth century, because the burial of that date at Kneep Uig⁶⁵ would suggest that some pagan influences continued.

⁶³See supra, 89

⁶⁴See supra, 91-2

⁶⁵See supra, 55-6

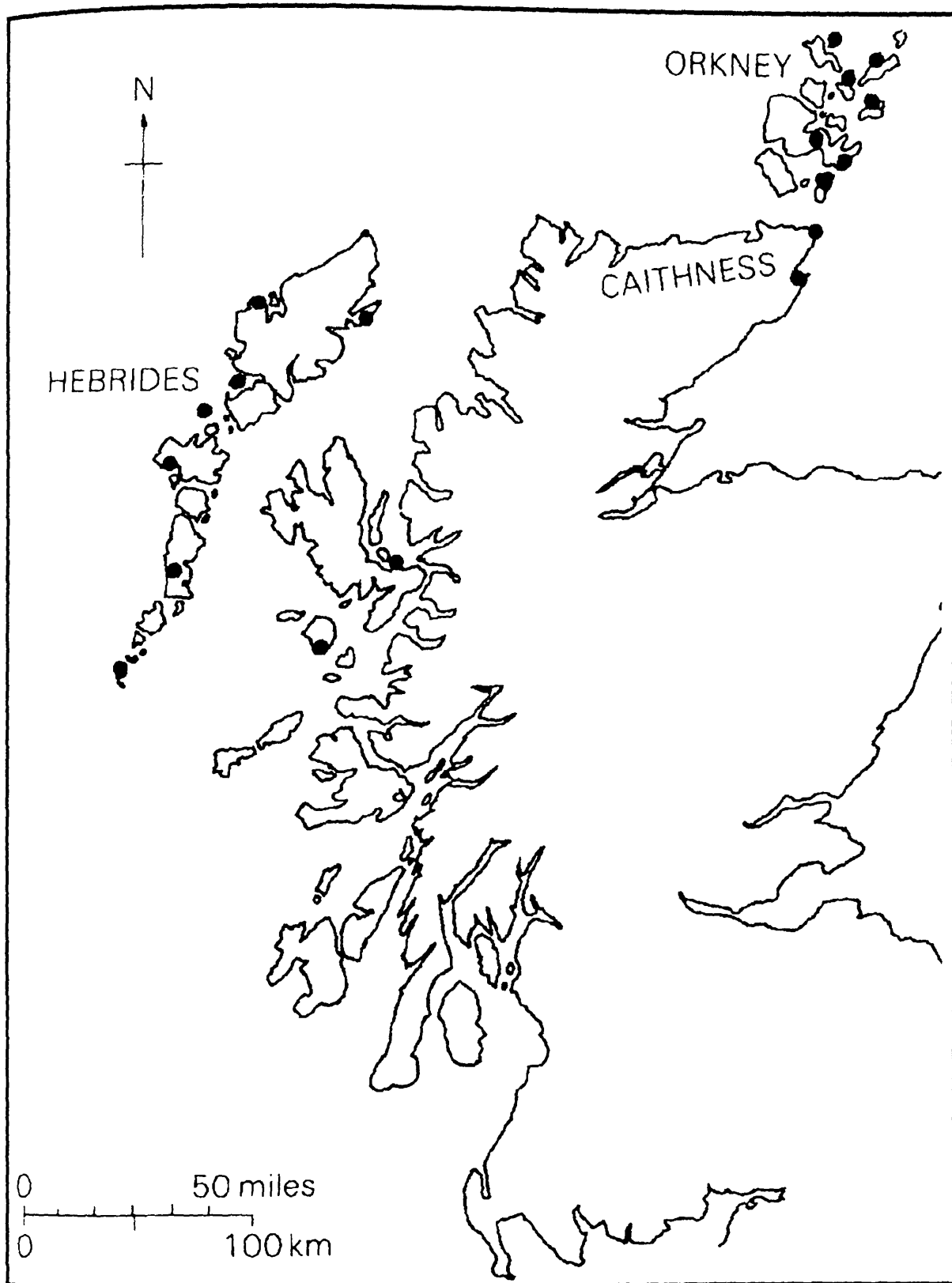


Fig.15. *Papa* place-names (after A.MacDonald)

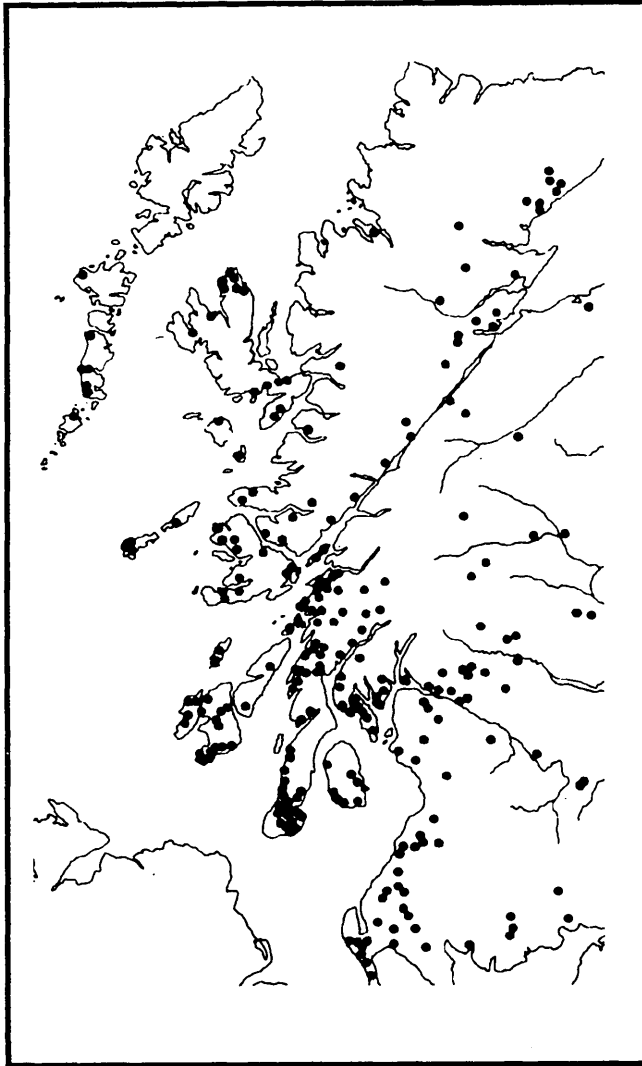


Fig.16. The distribution of *cill* (after W.F.H.Nicolaisen)



Fig.17. The distribution of *teampull*.

Until the publication of the recent volume on Galloway by the *Scottish Society for Northern Studies*¹, it was the received wisdom of people such as Skene, Watson, MacQueen and Kirby that Galloway took its name from the people called Gall-Gaidheil, although there was some confusion as to who these people actually were. Unfortunately, inability to define the Gall-Gaidheil has led to D.Brooke doubting this scenario². She has tried, in the aforementioned book, to sever the link between the Gall-Gaidheil and Galloway. Indeed, she suggests that Galloway originally may have been an old toponym, perhaps the unlikely *Coit Celidon* 'Caledonian Forest'. Her reservations have started to sow seeds of doubt amongst other scholars³. However, having defined the Gall-Gaidheil in preceding chapters, I feel able to comment on the matter, and would suggest that it is too early to consign the links between the Gall-Gaidheil and Galloway to the midden of failed historical hypotheses.

Despite Brooke's reservations, the territory of Galloway does take its name from the Gall-Gaidheil. Watson showed⁴ that the English form, Galloway, was originally from the Gaelic dative plural of Gall-Gaidheil, *i nGall Gaidhealaibh* 'amongst the Gall-Gaidheil', and as such it belongs to a group of people or tribal-names which became Gaelic territorial names, for example, *Arcaibh* for earlier *i nOrcaibh* 'among the Orcs', *Gallaibh* for *i nGallaibh* 'among the foreigners' and *Cataibh* for *i Cataibh* 'among the Cats'.

Watson also explained satisfactorily how the various Latin forms of Galloway, for example, *Galwedra*, which appear in miscellaneous Scottish

¹*Galloway Land and Lordship* eds. R.D.Oram & G.P.Stell (1991)

²D.Brooke, 'Gall-Gaidhil and Galloway', in *Galloway: Land and Lordship*, 97-116

³For example E.Cowan, who says, '...Daphne Brooke convincingly argues that the time is perhaps appropriate to sunder the Gall-Gaidhil from Galloway'. See E.Cowan 'The Vikings in Galloway: A Review of the Evidence', in *Galloway: Land and Lordship*, 72

⁴Watson *Celtic Place-Names*, 100, 173

and English documentary sources can similarly be derived from Gall-Gaidheil⁵. He compared *Galwedra* with *Ergadia*, from *Oirer Gáidheil* ‘Coastland of the Gael’, Argyll. He explained that the *w* need not indicate Welsh influence: the *o* of Galloway represents an indeterminate vowel developed in Gaelic between two parts of the compound (*Galla-Gaidheil*), and after this vowel *gh* would readily become *w*. Other Latin forms of the name exist, like *Galwegia*, where *g* represents *dh*, and *Galweithia* and *Galweia*, where *dh* has disappeared.

There being little doubt that the territory of Galloway was called after Gall-Gaidheil, the question has to be asked what is meant by the people-name in this context? Were they the same Gall-Gaidheil which I established were living in Zones 1 and 2 by the 850s, or were they named by analogy with these? Were they a mixture of Gaidheil and some kind of Gall, Norse or Briton, which developed in Galloway itself, or was there a migration of Gall-Gaidheil from Zones 1 and 2 into the area?

A.Easson’s important study of Scottish land-measurements⁶ appears to corroborate the migration hypothesis. She argues convincingly for a movement from Argyll and the Hebrides into Galloway of Gaelic-speaking people, who brought with them their land-measurements, the *davach* and the *peighinn*, which were ultimately based on the *tech* ‘house’ system of assessment visible in seventh century Dál Riata⁷. She dates their arrival in South-West Scotland to the tenth century. Her reasons for this date are that the settlers can only have moved from Zones 1 and 2 to Galloway after the *davach* had replaced the 20 house unit, which must have happened before

⁵For a list of these Latin forms see Brooke, ‘Gall-Gaidhil and Galloway’, 113

⁶A.Easson *Ouncelands and pennylands in the West Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (PHD Thesis Edinburgh 1987), 122-3

⁷This is further evidence for the survival, and ultimate predominance of pre-Norse traits amongst the Gall-Gaidheil. For an explanation of this system see Bannerman *Dalriada*, 27-156.

850, because *davach* was used by the Scots when they moved east into Pictland. Secondly, they must have moved after the *peighinn* had replaced the 1 house unit. This happened after 850, because *peighinn* does not appear in Eastern Scotland, so it was not a land-measurement being used by the Scots prior to their take-over of Pictland⁸. However, these settlers must have arrived in Galloway before the *davach* was itself replaced in Western Scotland by the *tír unga* or ounceland, because there is no evidence for this measurement in Galloway itself. Easson⁹ suggests the replacement of the *davach* by the *tír unga* should probably be dated post tenth century. All this evidence taken together would imply a date in the tenth century for the arrival of the Gall-Gaidheil in Galloway. The map of the distribution of documentary references to penny-lands before 1600 makes apparent the close relationship between the Western Highlands and Islands and 'greater' Galloway (see fig.18). G.W.S.Barrow has defined Galloway in its widest sense as denoting the whole of Scotland south and west of Clydesdale and Teviotdale¹⁰.

A migration theory is inherently likely when it is remembered that the Gall-Gaidheil of Zones 1 and 2 were a sea-faring people, a fact which is made clear from their presence in Ireland fighting for Máel Sechnaill, king of Tara, against assorted enemies¹¹. Their fleet is actually mentioned in *FA*, under the year 856 when they were engaged in fighting Áed Finnliath, king of the Northern Uí Néill.

It should come as no surprise that they were sea-going, as they were the offspring of two sea-faring peoples, the Scots of Dál Riata and the

⁸I suggest a possible date of between 948 and 952 for the implimentation of the penny-tax on the 'house', see *infra* 209

⁹Easson *Ouncelands and pennylands* 170-1

¹⁰G.W.S.Barrow (ed) *Regesta Regum Scotorum* (1960) i., 38-9

¹¹See *infra*. 185-191. I have been able to show that all the appearances of the Gall-Gaidheil in Ireland during the 850s can be attributed to their aiding Máel Sechnaill.

Norse. It could be argued with some justification that the former were as much a people of the sea as the latter. There is plenty of evidence to support this statement: for example, the mid-seventh century *Senchus Fer nAlban*¹² indicates how important naval forces were to Dál Riata. It records the method of recruiting oarsmen and allows calculations of the numbers of these that the various tribal kingdoms commanded. Entries in AU make clear the use to which their fleet was put. In 580, Aedán mac Gabráin, king of Dál Riata, attacked Orkney. In 582, he attacked the Isle of Man, while in 719, the first sea-battle on record in the British Isles was fought between the two Dalriadic tribes of Cenél nGabráin and Cenél Loairn.

It was not only to Ireland that the Gall-Gaidheil sailed. Some took part in the settlement of Iceland, where they gave rise to some famous Icelandic families: for example, the children of Caittil Find, leader of the Gall-Gaidheil according to AU857, Auðr, Björn and Helgi Bjólan all settled there. Others would appear to have settled in Cumbria and even in Normandy, where the existence of Gaelic personal-names in place-names and charters betrays their presence.

E.Ekwall¹³ drew up a list of Gaelic fore-names which occur in the place-names and early charters of north-west England. Almost all the names listed do occur in Irish sources, and so might be attributable to Irish Gaels settling alongside the Scandinavians of Dublin, but, as A.P.Smyth¹⁴ pointed out, some of the fore-names are distinctively Scottish, for example Murdoch,

¹² J.Bannerman *Studies in the History of Dalriada* (1974) 27-156

¹³ E.Ekwall *Scandinavians and Celts in the North-West of England* (1918), 66-72

¹⁴ A.P.Smyth *Scandinavian York and Dublin I* (1975), 82, 91. Some of the names claimed by Smyth as belonging to this period of settlement (the first half of the tenth century) cannot do so, namely Gilandreas, Gilchrist, Gilmichael and Gilmor. This type of name using *gilla* 'servant' does not appear until late in the tenth century. The first person to bear such a name in AU is Gilla Coluim ua Canannáin whose obit appears in 977. These names probably relate to a movement of Scots into the area in the eleventh century.

Duncan and Kenneth. He also noted that several of the names on Ekwall's list, namely *Patric*, *Belan*, *Kilan*, *Bekan* and *Nel*, are recorded in Icelandic sources as being borne by settlers from Western Scotland. Smyth is surely right to be convinced that the heavy Scandinavian settlement of this area of England involved a proportion of settlers from Western Scotland.

Some of the same Gaelic personal-names also occur in Normandy, particularly in those areas ceded to the Duchy after 925 and 933¹⁵, namely the regions of Western and Central Normandy. The names Duncan, Kenneth, Murdoch, Patrick and Niall occur in the onomastic record: for example, there is a place called Doncanville in Anneville-en-Seine, and another in Valcanville. The Gaelic-named settlers of Normandy were apparently of high status, because these Gaelic fore-names survive independently as personal-names: for example, William the Conqueror had two contemporaries whose father was called Murdoch, *Rodbertus filius Murdaci*, who witnessed a royal charter of 1081, and his brother *Rogerus filius Murdaci*, whose name appears in a charter of 1082¹⁶. This was a feat not achieved by English personal-names which only occur in place-names. The Gaelic fore-names attested in use in Normandy are Beccan, Duncan, Murdoch, Niall, Patrick and Colman.

Given that they had fleets and that they settled, individually at least, in areas as far apart as Iceland and Normandy, it is reasonable to suggest that the Gall-Gaidheil would also have found the area across the Clyde, in what later became known as Galloway, tempting territory for settlement.

¹⁵For further information about Celtic participation in the Scandinavian settlement of Normandy, see L.Musset 'Participation de Vikings venus des pays Celtes a la colonisation scandinave de la Normandie', in *Cahiers du Centre de Recherche sur les Pays du Nord et du Nordouest* I (1978), 107-117, and L.Musset 'Pour l'étude Comparative de Deux Fondations Politiques des Vikings: Le Royaume d'York et le Duché de Rouen', in *Northern History* x (1975), 40-54.

¹⁶Musset 'Participation de Vikings', 109

The earliest recorded form of the name Galloway appears in *AU*, in the annal for the year 1034. This corroborates Easson's suggestion that the Gall-Gaidheil migration appears to have taken place during the tenth century.

Suibne m. Cinaedha, ri Gallgaidhel, mortuus est.

Although *rí Gallgaidhel* translates literally as king of the Gall-Gaidheil, the obit should be translated "Suibne mac Cináeda, king of Galloway, died." Watson also gave this translation¹⁷.

Brooke¹⁸, misinterpreting Watson, wrongly suggested that this Suibne could be placed in Kintyre and that he was the eponym of the MacSweens of Knapdale. However, all Watson¹⁹ pointed out was that there was a Dubhghall mac Suibne (*Dufgallus filius Syfyn*²⁰) Lord of Kintyre in the thirteenth century. Chronologically, there can be no link between the two Suibnes. The Suibne who was Dubhghall's father, and whose name appears in Castle Sween and Loch Sween, is a different person.

W.D.H.Sellar²¹ in a study of the MacSweens and their related kindreds in Cowal and Knapdale, has shown that Suibne, the eponymous ancestor of the MacSweens, lived in the late twelfth to early thirteenth century. He can be placed four generations below his ancestor Anrothán, who must have been born about 1030. Anrothán, son of Aodh Athlamhan king of Ailech, was the first member of the family to leave Ireland, and he did not arrive in Scotland until the mid eleventh century. There is no evidence, therefore, to link the Suibne who died in 1034 to the later Suibne

¹⁷Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 173

¹⁸D.Brooke 'Gall-Gaidhil and Galloway', 99

¹⁹Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 173 n.4

²⁰*Registrum Monasterii de Passelet*. (Maitland Club, Edinburgh 1832), 120-22

²¹W.D.H.Sellar 'Family Origins in Cowal and Knapdale' *SS* Vol 15 (1971), 21-37

even as a possible ancestor, and so no connection with Kintyre can be made.

Watson's view that Galloway is being referred to in the 1034 entry is substantiated by the use of the title *Rí Gall-Gaidheil*. Such a title has never otherwise existed in either Argyll or the Isles. However, it was applied in *AU* to another two leaders who were undoubtedly rulers of Galloway, namely Rollant mac Uchtraigh, who died in 1199, and his son and successor Ailín, who died in 1234.

From 1034, the name of the Gall-Gaidheil was clearly being applied territorially to Galloway in Irish sources. However, there was an interesting side-effect to this, which can be clearly seen in a note in *Lebar Laignech*²², compiled in the twelfth century, and that is that, once Gall-Gaidheil was applied territorially to Galloway, it was no longer used of the people of Zones 1 and 2.

Aldasain .i. carrac etir Gallgedelu ocus Cendtíri i n-a camar immuigh

“Ailsa Craig is a rock between Galloway²³ and Kintyre, facing them out to sea.”

As Ailsa Craig is described as being between *Gall Gedelu* and Kintyre, this clearly indicates that Kintyre was no longer considered to be *i nGall Gaidhealaibh* ‘amongst the Gall-Gaidheil’.

This transplantation of a people-name across water is not unique, and we have a good precedent in Scottish history. The Latin name *Scotti*, which was originally applied to the inhabitants of Ireland, became ultimately the exclusive property of the Scots, ie. those Irish who moved across the Irish Sea, to the exclusion of those who remained in their homeland. This, of

²²*Book of Leinster* RIA MS. H.2.18. For this note see Watson *Celtic Place-names*, 173

²³*Gallgedelu* is the accusative of Gall-Gaidheil.

course, happened over a longer time-scale than that posited for Gall-Gaidheil.

There is an entry in the *FM* which has been read on occasion to imply that the people of the Inner Hebrides and the Western Mainland might still be called Gall-Gaidheil as late as 1154.

Do chuas ó Chenel Eoghain ocus o Mhuirchertach, mac Néill dar muir co ruaiclidis .i. go cendcadís longas Gallghaoidhel, Arann, Cinntíre, Manann ocus Centair Alban archena ocus mac Scelling i ccennas forra
 “People were sent by the Cenel Eoghan and Muircheartach, son of Niall, to make liable (ie. to purchase) the shipping of Galloway, of Arran, of Kintyre, of Man and the territory of Scotland in general, over which MacScelling was in command.”

Taking Gall-Gaidheil literally and omitting a comma, it could be understood to mean that the people of Arran, Kintyre, Man and the territory of Scotland were all Gall-Gaidheil. However, Gall-Gaidheil should here, as before, be translated Galloway, as was done by A.O.Anderson²⁴. If the annalist had meant Gall-Gaidheil to apply to the men on Arran and so forth, he could have inserted .i. ‘ie.’ in the text. What we have here is a list of areas where fleets-for-hire were available, and these included Galloway. Indeed, this entry is further evidence that Gall-Gaidheil was now applicable exclusively to Galloway.

Galloway certainly had a fleet by the thirteenth century. Thomas, brother of Rollant, used it in conjunction with the sons of Ragnall, son of Somerled, in 1212, according to *AU*, when together they destroyed Derry. MacScelling, who was in ultimate command of the expedition of 1154, has been identified as a son of Somerled²⁵. Finally, *Ailín Rí Gall Gaidheil*

²⁴*ES* ii, 227

²⁵Sellar ‘Family Origins’, 35, suggests that he was the Gall macSgillin, son of Somerled, who appears in the *Book of Clanranald*.

commanded a formidable sea-going force, which made him one of the great magnates of the Western sea-board. He conducted his own military ventures in Ulster, Man and the Southern Hebrides²⁶.

In conclusion, rather than severing the Gall-Gaidheil from Galloway, I believe we have a reasonable hypothesis to explain the existence of the territorial name. I would suggest that, originally, in the ninth century, Gall-Gaidheil was a specific descriptive term defining one group of people, the mixed population of Zones 1 and 2. During the tenth century, some of these people migrated to the south-west bringing their name with them. They also brought with them, from their land of origin, their land-measurements and their language, namely Gaelic. J.MacQueen²⁷ is likely to be correct in attributing the creation of the great majority of Gaelic place-names in the south-west to them. The existence of Suibne mac Cináeda as *rí Gallgaidheil* indicates that they were well established there by 1034, in order for their new territory to be called after them. Once the territorial use of Gall-Gaidheil for Galloway becomes established, we find that it comes to be used for this area exclusively.

²⁶For example see *CDS*, i, Nos.529, 533; *CDS*, v, No.9

²⁷J.MacQueen 'The Gaelic Speakers of Galloway and Carrick' in *SS* 17 (1973), 27

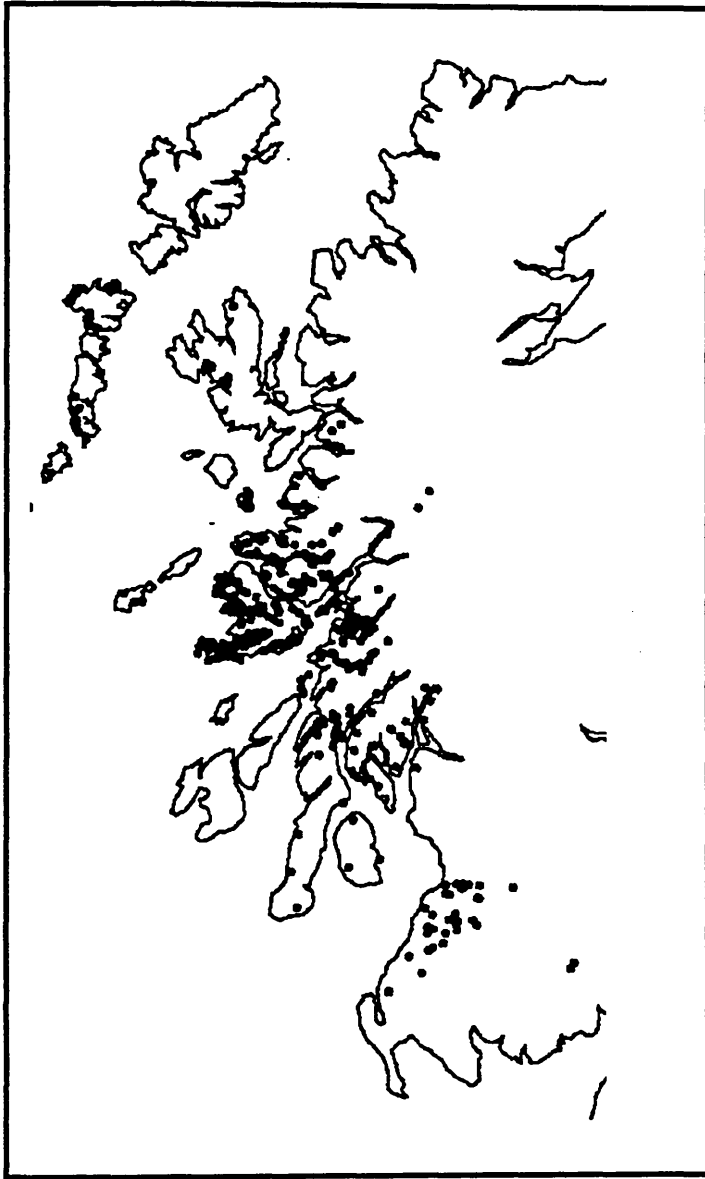


Fig.18 Individual documentary references to pennylands before 1600 (after A.Easson)

The purpose of this chapter is theoretically simple: it is to examine, as far as the evidence allows, the political and historical developments taking place in the West of Scotland during the first half of the ninth century, the period when this area first experienced contact with the Norse.

Theoretically simple it may be. However, unfortunately the historical resources, available for the study of the interaction of native and Norseman in Western Scotland, both at this period and later, are scarce. When one looks at the other areas of Western Europe where the Norse either raided or settled, Ireland, England and France, they are all better served by the source material. Only Shetland and Orkney are worse off. Indeed, so sparse are the sources that they fail to mention the most important event during this period in Western Scotland, the actual settlement of the Norse, the evidence for which is most clearly provided by onomastics.

However, scanty though the historical resources are, it is possible to come to some viable conclusions about the general events and developments which took place in the Western Scotland, from the date of the initial Norse raids in the 790s. The annal entries, although few, provide a skeleton of fact which is contemporary and internally coherent. The inferences drawn from this skeleton can be checked and fleshed out by comparing them with what is known of the development of those other areas which were settled by the Scandinavians, but for which more information survives, namely the Danelaw and Normandy.

The history of the Norse presence in the west of Scotland begins with a short catalogue of violent raids over a span of thirty years, recorded thus in the Irish annals:

AU795 *Loscadh Rechrainne o geinntib ocus Sci do [cho]scradh ocus do lomradh*

“The burning of Rechrú¹ by the heathens, and Skye was overwhelmed and laid waste.”

AI795 *Orcain Iae Coluim Chille*

“Ravaging of Iona.”

AU802 *I Columbe Cille a gentibus combusta est*

“Iona was burned by the heathens.”

AU806 *Familia Iae occisa est a gentilibus, id est lxxviii*

“The community of Iona, to the number of 68, was killed by the heathens.”

AU825 *Martre Blaimhicc m. Flainn o gentib in Hi Coluim Cille*

“Violent death of Blathmac son of Flann at the hands of the heathens in Iona.”²

Iona was the specific target for four of the above-mentioned attacks, presumably not because of its religious importance, but rather because of its position as an important and identifiable centre in the Hebrides, where wealth would be concentrated. It is clear that one major aspect of the initial Norse interest in the Hebrides was the typical piratical desire for moveable

¹This is probably the island of Rathlin off the coast of Ulster.

²There is another raid mentioned in *AU*, under the year 794, which probably ought to be regarded as also referring to the Hebrides, in part at least, although it does not mention them directly:

Vastatio omnium insularum Britannie a gentilibus
 “Devastation of all the islands of Britain by heathens.”

J. Bannerman suggests the reference in *CGG* to an attack on Iona, in 839 or shortly thereafter, need be given no more credence than its claim that Eoganán son of Oengus was killed in battle against a Scandinavian fleet in the waters between Ireland and Scotland. In *AU*, under the year 839, Eoganán was killed fighting the Scandinavians in Fortriu in the east of Scotland. See Bannerman ‘*Comarba Coluim Chille and the Relics of Columba*’ *Innes Review* vol. xlv No 1, (1993), 33 n.2

wealth, whatever could be picked up and taken aboard ship, from bullion to women. Gold and silver might be deposited in the monastery by local laymen for its protection (as was probably the case with the St Ninian's Isle hoard in Shetland) or in the form of a gift. It was also present in the form of reliquaries, book covers and hanging bowls, etc. As an island monastery, Iona was particularly vulnerable to attack by sea-borne raiders. The plunderers of Iona had exactly the same motives, and were part of the same movement, as those who looted Lindisfarne in Northumbria in 793, Inisbofin, Inismurray and Lambay Island in Ireland in 795 and Noirmoutier in France in 799.

Presumably, Iona was not the only monastic centre in the Hebrides and on the west coast mainland to suffer raids, and, although the sources are mute, other monastic communities like St Donnan's monastery on Eigg, if it survived into the Norse period, or Maelrubha's foundation in Applecross, are highly unlikely to have escaped unmolested. It is probably safe to use Iona as a barometer for what was taking place throughout the area, because the processes that affected the major monastic centre would be unlikely to have passed the other centres by.

It is possible that the *AU* entry of 795, which relates how Skye was "overwhelmed and laid waste", may be referring to a wide-scale sacking of the various ecclesiastical communities on the island. On the other hand, although one cannot be categorical about what the annalist intended with this entry, it could be evidence that it was not only churches that were suffering attacks during this early phase, but, simultaneously, more extensive areas of secular settlement. There is no reason to suppose that the annalist was exaggerating when he claimed that the island of Skye was overwhelmed, because this annal entry and the others are all couched in a "matter-of-fact" manner.

There was, perhaps, something especially violent or wide-scale about the raid on Skye, which merited its inclusion in the annals. Hebridean entries in *AU* are common before 740, but much less so after this date. This is because the *Iona Chronicle*, which underlies the earliest part of *AU*, seems to have come to an end at around this time³. Therefore, whereas a chronicler based in Iona would have been automatically closer to and more interested in Hebridean affairs, and would have recorded events of less moment, one has to assume that a chronicler in Ireland would only be interested in, or only come to hear of the more spectacular news from the Hebrides. This is also, perhaps, the explanation of why there are reports of raids on Iona, the most important Hebridean monastery, but not on any others of lesser importance.

Although the very first Scandinavian impact on England and France was characterised by “hit-and-run” raids, carried out by a few boat-loads of warriors on island monasteries, this need not necessarily have been the case with the Hebrides. The fortuitous survival of the Skye annal entry suggests that the Norse interest in the Hebrides, in the 790s, was on a more comprehensive scale than that experienced by either England or France at this time. Not only were the Hebrides suffering raids on monastic sites, they may also have been experiencing a simultaneous attack involving larger forces, directed against the secular population.

As can be seen, there is no specific indication in these annal entries of the commencement of Norse settlement, but if it is correct to regard the early raids on the Hebrides as also consisting of large-scale attacks on existing secular communities, this would have been an excellent preliminary for settlement. Even if those particular raiders who devastated Skye in 795

³See Bannerman *Dalriada*, 9-26

had no intention of settling the island themselves, their raid, and others like it, for example, possible unrecorded ones on Lewis and the other Outer Hebrides, could have weakened the native defences sufficiently to make settlement an easier proposition for later Norse arrivals.

The association of these early raids, in some undefined way, with settlement is generally agreed by modern scholarship. Most experts would now accept that settlement began within a decade either side of 800A.D. H.Arbmann⁴ has written of the Norse arrival in the Hebrides: "This large-scale colonisation was connected with the activity in the Irish Sea about A.D.800". The association of raids and settlement also finds tacit support from I.A.Crawford⁵, who has argued convincingly that the Norse settlement of the Hebrides, initially at least, must have been, *per se*, a violent affair. To paraphrase his argument, natives happily ensconced on their farms would not easily be persuaded to peacefully hand them over to incomers. His excavations at the Udal⁶ show clearly that an existing native settlement site was taken over and a new dwelling of Norse design built directly on top of the pre-existing native one. This, along with a small sub-rectangular fort beside the house, and the absence of an inter-occupational level, provides the clearest archaeological evidence of violent take-over one is likely to find. So, although it is impossible to prove that the Skye entry has anything directly to do with settlement itself, it is perhaps not too fanciful to see it as covert evidence of settlement, or at least of its initial prerequisite, the phase of softening up the native territories. Actual settlement could have followed

⁴H.Arbmann *The Vikings* (1961), 52

⁵I.A.Crawford 'War or Peace- Viking Colonisation in the Northern and Western Isles Reviewed' *Eighth Viking Congress*, 263

⁶See *supra*

almost immediately. Indeed, it is not impossible that what was to an Irish annalist a laying waste of territory was settlement to the Norse.

It is instructive to look at two examples from the contemporary Frankish *Annals of St-Bertin*⁷, which provide evidence that in France, at the slightly later period of 843 and 845, when raiding was on a larger scale and large populated areas were suffering, as posited for Western Scotland in the 790s, raiding and settlement were by no means mutually exclusive activities. There seems no reason why these entries could not, by changing the place-names, just as easily be describing the posited situation in Western Scotland some fifty years previously,

“Northmen pirates attacked Nantes, slew the bishop and many clergy and lay people of both sexes, and sacked the civitas. Then they attacked the western parts of Aquitaine to devastate them too. Finally they landed on a certain island, brought their households over from the mainland and decided to winter there in something like a permanent settlement.”

“The Danes, who had ravaged Aquitaine the year before, returned and attacked Saintouge. They won the fight, and settled down there to stay quietly for a while.”

It is possible to build on the suggestion that settlement was occurring simultaneously with raiding, and to posit a reasonable *tempus post* and *tempus ante quem* for the main body of settlement. The *tempus post quem* of settlement is unlikely to have been any earlier than the records of the first raids in the 790s, because one would expect that any kind of activity involving the Norse in the Hebrides at an earlier date would have been noted by the annalists, and also archaeological evidence is against it⁸. The

⁷*Annales de Saint-Bertin*, ed. F.Grat (1964) translation from J.L.Nelson (1991)

⁸See supra 54.

conclusion has been reached that not a single Scandinavian archaeological find exists from the Scottish islands which can be dated positively to earlier than c.800⁹. Of course, this conclusion still leaves the actual date for the commencement of settlement open at any time post c.800. However, the implication from the annals is that the West of Scotland entered into a period of relative calm post 825, after the suggested storm of the previous 30 years, and I believe this is likely to be the *tempus ante quem* for the Norse settlement.

After 825, there are no more recorded raids on Iona in contemporary sources, although the monastery can be seen to survive. A *Life of Saint Blathmac*, three Irish annal entries, and an entry from the *Scottish Chronicle* combine to show that Iona continued as a working monastery. This is interesting, because the Irish monasteries post 825 suffered many such attacks.

The martyrdom of Blathmac is treated to a full account in a contemporary poem by Walahfrid Strabo¹⁰, in which the relevant facts become clear.

“Golden dawn shone forth, parting the dewy dusk, and the brilliant sun glittered with beautiful orb, when this holy teacher, celebrating the holy service of mass, stood before the sacred altar as a calf without blemish, a pleasing offering to God, to be sacrificed by the threatening sword. The others of the company were prostrate, commending to the Thunderer with tears and prayers their souls, about to depart from the burden of the flesh. See, the violent cursed host came rushing through the open buildings, threatening cruel perils to the blessed men;

⁹O.Klindt-Jensen ‘The Two Viking Ages of Britian-A Discussion’ in *Medieval Scandinavia* 2 (1969), 194

¹⁰*Vita Sancti Blaithmaic Martyris* ed. Pinkerton, *Vitæ*, 459-463 translation from *ES* i. 263-265. Walahfrid Strabo was abbot of Reichenau when he died on August 18th, 849, see J.F.Kenny *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical* (1979), 550.

and after slaying with mad savagery the rest of the associates, they approached the holy father, to compel him to give up the precious metals wherein lie the holy bones of St Columba; but [the monks] had lifted the shrine from its pediments, and had placed it in the earth, in a hollowed barrow, under a thick layer of turf; because they knew then of the wicked destruction [to come]. This booty the Danes¹¹ desired; but the saint remained with unarmed hand, and with unshaken purpose of mind; [he had been] trained to stand against the foe, and to arouse the fight, and [was] unused to yield.

There he spoke to thee, barbarian, in words such as these:- "I know nothing at all of the gold you seek, where it is placed in the ground or in what hiding-place it is concealed. And if by Christ's permission it were granted me to know it, never would our lips relate it to thy ears. Barbarian, draw thy sword, grasp the hilt, and slay; gracious God, to thy aid I commend me humbly."

Therefore the pious sacrifice was torn limb from limb. And what the fierce soldier could not purchase by gifts, he began to seek by wounds in the cold bowels [of the earth]. It is not strange, for there always were, and there always reappear, those that are spurred on by evil rage against all the servants of the Lord; so that what Christ's decision has appointed for all, this they all do for Christ, although with unequal deeds.

Thus (Blathmac) became a martyr for Christ's name; and, as rumour bears witness, he rests in the same place, and there many miracles are given for his holy merits. There the Lord is worshipped reverently with fitting honour, with the saints by whose merits I believe my faults are washed away."¹²

From our point of view, this work is exceptionally important for two reasons, because it shows that, at the time of writing, as far as Strabo, Blathmac's contemporary, was aware, Iona was functioning as a working monastery. Strabo also provides the information that Blathmac was martyred because he would not reveal the hiding place of Columba's shrine, which

¹¹Dane was used often as the generic term for Scandinavian, and it does not prove that these raiders were actually Danish, rather than Norwegian.

¹²Translation from *ES* i 265

had been buried by the monks. The raiders dug about, but the impression is left that they were unable to find his holy relics. Therefore, in 825, Columba's shrine was on Iona, and it presumably remained there after that date because the Norse raiders could not lay their hands on it. This is an important fact, because it means that there was still something worth stealing from Iona after 825 ie. the shrine of the founder saint. This implies that it was not a poor depleted site, but would still have retained interest for the sea-borne raider.

Here are the three annal entries from *AU* (829, 831, 849) followed by the entry in the *Scottish Chronicle* (c.849) which help to corroborate the evidence in Strabo's account that Iona remained a working monastery.

Diarmait, abbas Iae, do dhul a nAlbain co minnaib Coiuim Cille

"Diarmait, abbot of Iona, went to Scotland with the halidoms of Colum Cille."

Diarmait do tiachtain i nHerinn co mindaibh Coluim Cille

"Diarmait came to Ireland with the halidoms of Colum Cille."

Indrechtach, abbas Iae, do thiachtain dochum nEreinn co mindaibh Coluim Cille

"Indrechtach, abbot of Iona, came to Ireland with the halidoms of Colum Cille."

Septimo anno regni sui reliquias sancti Columbe transportavit ad ecclesiam, quam construxit

“In the seventh year of his (Cináed mac Alpín’s) reign, he transported the relics of St Columba to a church he had built”

The first two entries show that Abbot Diarmait, the head of the Columban Church, was travelling backwards and forwards across the Irish Sea between Ireland and Scotland, presumably between Iona and the Columban paruchia in Ireland¹³. It might look as if Diarmait was based in Ireland from these two entries, but it is more likely, considering the next two entries, that two halves of two separate visits, rather than one return visit, are being referred to here¹⁴. The “halidoms” with which he was travelling, were his badge of office¹⁵. The last two entries make it plain that Iona was still the most important Columban house in Scotland, and the major relics were still housed there. These entries refer to the division of Columba’s relics, which seems to have taken place in 849¹⁶. Indrechtach, Abbot of Iona, delivered one set to Kells in Ireland, whilst the other portion went to Dunkeld in Perthshire. This was a natural consequence of Cináed having successfully taken over Pictland. J.W.M.Bannerman¹⁷ shows that the division of Columba’s relics was a plan to bring the administrative centre of the Columban church in Scotland east of Druim Alban into the area where the new political centre was now based. It must be understood that the monastery holding the relics of the founder saint was the administrative

¹³Dr. J.Bannerman , personal communication.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵For a discussion of the movements of Columba’s relics see Bannerman ‘*Comarba Coluim Chille and the Relics of Columba*’, 14-47

¹⁶A division of the relics at this date was first suggested by A.O.Anderson see *ES* i 279

¹⁷Bannerman ‘*Comarba Coluim Chille*, 42,43

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¹⁷Bannerman ‘*Comarba Coluim Chille*, 42,43

centre of its particular paruchia. The division of Columba's relics meant that the Columban paruchia of monasteries was split in two, with an Irish portion administered from Kells, and a Scottish portion from Dunkeld. One must assume, since self-evidently the relics were neither housed in Dunkeld nor Kells previous to this date, they must have remained *in situ*, on Iona, along with their resident quota of monks to look after and guard them. Furthermore, as the relics continued to be housed in Iona from 825 to 849, Iona must have remained the administrative centre of the Columban paruchia both in Ireland and Scotland. Bannerman¹⁸ shows that from 814, the year of the foundation of Kells, to 849, the Abbot of Iona also held the abbacy of Kells.

Ireland, in contrast to the Hebrides, continued to suffer many raids on its monasteries after 825. Indeed, the number of Scandinavian attacks on Irish churches actually peaks during the decade beginning 830, with *AU* recording no fewer than 25. This being so, why was the leading and, as we have shown, still wealthy monastic community in the Hebrides left alone? If Iona had been suffering attacks after 825, these would have been newsworthy. The annals would have recorded them, because they were noting important events concerning the Columban church in Scotland.

The most likely scenario is that Iona was not attacked after 825, because Western Scotland had entered a more "peaceful" period, which was not mirrored contemporaneously in Ireland. I would suggest that, after 825, Western Scotland had entered the post-settlement phase. The annal entries show that the period from 795 to 825 was a time of disruption and chaos, without parallel in the rest of the ninth century. There being no other such

¹⁸Bannerman 'Comarba Coluim Chille', 32-3, 43.

comparable period within the century, it is reasonable to suggest that it was during this period that disruptive Norse settlement took place.

It is relevant to the discussion that in Ireland there is a decrease in the quantity of raids on monasteries after settlement. The number of Norse raids on monasteries starts falling off from the high of 25 in the 830s, to 10 in the 840s and down to 2 in the 850s. This fits chronologically with the initial period of Norse settlement, which began in the 840s¹⁹. It has been suggested as one of the reasons for this decrease that the Scandinavians had lost their competitive edge, since they themselves were now open to counter-attack²⁰. Furthermore, the Scandinavians may have been showing an increasing respect towards monastic communities. It is possible that many of the Norse settlers were becoming, at least nominally, Christian. Indeed, the words used by the contemporary annalists to describe the Scandinavians may reflect a general change among the invaders. In the first half of the ninth century, they are commonly called *genni* 'gentiles', but after 850 such descriptions become much rarer, suggesting to P.Sawyer that many were no longer pagan²¹.

We can see from other areas settled by Scandinavians that a period of 30 years is not too short a time-bracket for the Norse settlement in Western Scotland to have taken place. Indeed, it conforms to expectations.

In Iceland, all the available land, which obviously amounts to a far greater area than the Hebrides and the West coast mainland, is generally considered to have been occupied by settlers within the space of a mere 60 years, beginning in c. 874 and ending c.930²². It required only 60 years to

¹⁹See *supra* 79.

²⁰P.Sawyer *Kings and Vikings* (1982), 84

²¹*Ibid*, 137

²²P.Johannesson in *Iceland 874-1974*, eds J.Nordal & V.Kristinsson (1975), 33

divide out all the suitable land in a country of 103000km², and a country that was rather difficult for would-be settlers to reach at that. The settlement of Iceland was carried out by a whole series of individuals, taking, on their own initiative, a portion of empty land. There was no need to work in a large group under the control of a military leader or leaders, because there was no opposition to overcome. Settlement must have been a fairly peaceful business, because, for sixty years, there was enough land for the land hungry.

However, other than being an example of the short chronological span needed for large-scale settlement, Iceland is perhaps not the best parallel for Western Scotland. This area was not, after all, unpopulated when the Norse appeared. Perhaps, for a more accurate parallel to the situation in Western Scotland, one ought to compare the lengths of those settlement periods experienced by areas which had an existing population.

The Scandinavian settlements in previously populated areas, in Ireland, the Danelaw and Normandy, all had one thing in common: they involved armed men who settled their respective territories extremely swiftly, but they also all contrasted in certain ways.

In Ireland, the Scandinavians originally settled and remained in what one might class as fortified urban centres along the coast, for example, Dublin, Waterford and Limerick, without taking control of any sizeable extent of rural territory. This was either due to the effectiveness of native resistance, or the perceived difficulty in gaining control for any length of time of the complex political alignments of highly fragmented Irish society.

In England, the Danes took large amounts of rural territory, corresponding to existing kingdoms, despite the best efforts of English

kings²³. A Scandinavian army landed in East Anglia in 865. It took advantage in 866 of a civil war that was being waged in Northumbria between King Osberht and his challenger Ælla to seize York. The Northumbrians reunited under the threat, and attempted to recapture the town in 867, but failed. Both king and challenger were killed, and the Scandinavians set up a puppet-king to rule for their benefit. The army then turned away to ravage first Mercia, and then East Anglia. After they had killed Edmund, the East Anglian king, in 870, they then turned on Wessex. The year 871 was spent in conflict with King Æthelred and, after his death, with his brother King Alfred. During the following years 872-874, Mercia was destroyed. Burgred of Mercia fled and was replaced by the puppet-king Ceolwulf. The army then split, with one half under Halfdan returning to Northumbria to consolidate the conquest. This was achieved by dividing out territory amongst his men, and the military settlement of the area approximating to modern Yorkshire was apparently completed within the year, because in 876, according to ASC, the military leader Hálfðan,

“Shared out the lands of Northumbria, and they (the Scandinavians) were engaged in ploughing and in making a living for themselves.”

The other half of the army attacked Wessex. They seem to have been forced back into Mercia, which in 877 they proceeded to divide up. One half was left to puppet-king Ceolwulf, but the other half, including the medieval shires of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby and Leicester, was partitioned amongst those in the army who desired it. Some members of the army were not yet willing to settle down, however, and they, under the leadership of Guðrum,

²³For an in depth review of the Danish conquests see F.Stenton *Anglo-Saxon England* 3rd ed. (1971)

set upon Wessex and King Alfred. However, they were broken in battle by Alfred, at Edington, and they decided to come to terms. Guðrum and his army moved into East Anglia in 879 and proceeded systematically to occupy it.

Perhaps in England, we have a parallel to Western Scotland. The Scandinavians, Danes in this case, took a mere 13 years to conquer and divide up, two complete kingdoms, Northumbria and East Anglia, as well as half of Mercia, which amounts in all to about half of what is now England.

Normandy²⁴ provides another example of large-scale rural settlement taking place within a short time-scale. One of the bands of warriors based in the estuary of the Seine, under their leader Rollo (*ON Hrólfr*), was ceded Rouen and Upper Normandy in 911 at the treaty of *Saint Claire sur Epte*, by Charles the Bald. Rollo divided this area up amongst his men, and according to F. Stenton, "There can be no serious doubt that the Scandinavian occupation of Upper Normandy had taken place by the year 918."²⁵ In 924, Rollo was ceded another large area, between the rivers Charentonne and the Vire, ie. about a third of the Duchy, and in 933, after Rollo's death, the Cotentin was granted to his son William. The area now under William's control was essentially the whole of modern Normandy.

Ireland does not provide any examples of wide-scale rural settlement, but it does provide another example of politically influential settlement taking a short time to reach fruition. The initial settlement of Dublin began in 841-842²⁶, when the Norse did not abandon their *longphort* 'camp, temporary

²⁴For a detailed account of the Scandinavian presence in Normandy see. J.Renaud *Les Vikings et la Normandie* (1989)

²⁵F.Stenton 'The Scandinavian Colonies in England and Normandy' in TRHS XXVII (1945), 1

²⁶For an account of the course of the Scandinavian raids and settlements in Ireland see. D.OCorrain *Ireland before the Normans* (1972), 80-110

stronghold', but remained over the winter. By 847, according to *AU*, there were enough of them present²⁷, under their leader Hákon, to suffer a slaughter of 1200 men, inflicted on them by Cerball son of Dungal.

Roiniudh mar re Cerball m.Dungaile for Agonn in quo ceciderunt da cet deac

"Cerball son of Dúngal inflicted a great rout on Hákon, in which twelve hundred fell."

By 860-62, it can be seen that Dublin and its settlers had become absorbed into purely Irish struggles; for, during these years, the Northern Uí Neill allied with Dublin in order to catch their rivals, the Southern Uí Neill, in a pincer movement. So, within the space of 20 years, it could be said that the Dublin settlement had "matured" from a winter base into the urban equivalent of a small Irish kingdom.

As Western Scotland was already populated, Norse settlement therein would be likely to involve military action of some kind. However, because no leader's name appears in the annals nor in later Scandinavian tradition, it is probably safe to postulate that the land-taking was carried out by relatively small independent groups of warriors rather than by large forces under some central command. But to fit the impression left by the raid on Skye in 795, and the evidence of excavation at the Udal, we do need to postulate violence. However, even if a more peaceful model is followed, Norse settlement of Western Scotland could easily have been completed within the space of 30 years.

There is corroborative evidence for the hypothesis that Norse settlement took place between c.795 and 825 from both Icelandic and Irish sources, in the figures of Grímr Kamban and Gofraid mac Fherguson. Both of these would appear to have been born between 795 and 825. They also

²⁷O'Corrain *Ireland before the Vikings*. 92 claims these Norse were based at Dublin.

both embody evidence that there was close interaction between the Gaels and the Norse settlers who therefore must have reached some mutual understanding.

Grimr Kamban, traditionally the first settler in the Faroes, was apparently a Gaelic-speaker, because he bears an interesting Gaelic nickname, **camban* ‘a shinty stick’ (modern Gaelic *caman*). He appears in the Icelandic source, the *Færeyinga saga*²⁸, where it is stated: *Hann byggði fyrstr Færeyjar*, “He first settled the Faroes”. Of course, this source is not contemporary with Grimr, but the survival of his nickname, which was, presumably, unintelligible to the later Faroese and Icelanders, suggests that it cannot have been made up by them and, therefore, that we are dealing with authentic tradition. Although it is impossible to prove that he was the first coloniser of the Faroese archipelago, it is likely that the name of the first settler would be the one to be remembered in tradition, as seems to be the case for both Ingólfr Arnarson in Iceland and Eiríkr the Red in Greenland.

Unfortunately, the saga does not say when Grim’s settlement actually occurred, but archaeologists and place-name scholars tend to place the beginnings of Faroese settlement in the first half of the ninth century. The Faroese scholar C. Matras²⁹ suggests c.825, based on interpretations of the work of Dicuil, an Irish monk, who was probably a member of the community on Iona for a time³⁰. He wrote an account in 825 of what seems to be the Faroes in his *Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae*³¹.

²⁸*Færeyinga Saga* ed. C.C.Rafn (1833). This is a reconstructed saga found primarily in *Flateyjarbók*, ed. C.R.Unger & G.Vigfusson (1859-1868).

²⁹C.Matras ‘Írsk orð í føyroyskum’ in *Álmanakki* (1966), 22

³⁰See J.F.Kenney *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland*, vol 1: *Ecclesiastical* (1929), 545

³¹*Diculi Liber de Mensura Orbis Terrae* ed. J.J.Tierney (1967)

“There is another set of small islands, nearly all separated by narrow stretches of water; in these for nearly a hundred years hermits sailing from our country, Ireland, have lived. But just as they were always deserted from the beginning of the world, so now because of the Northman pirates they are emptied of anchorites, and filled with countless sheep and very many diverse kinds of sea-birds. I have never found these islands mentioned in the authorities”³²

It is not obvious whether this should be taken to mean that, by 825, the Faroes were again devoid of all human settlement or just of the anchorites. But, perhaps, the former interpretation is more likely, and the resettlement should be considered to have taken place post 825. However, it must have occurred soon after this date, because the Icelandic sources aver that the Faroes were settled long before Iceland. In *Landnámabók* it is claimed that Grim’s grandson, Þórólfr Þorsteinsson, accompanied Hrafna Flóki on his unsuccessful journey to colonise Iceland in c. 870, a tradition which easily pushes Grim’s floruit back to c. 825.

The linguistic form of his nickname is no barrier to this chronological scenario. **Camban* is interesting because the *mb* was obviously being pronounced in Gaelic when the name was borrowed. This consonantal group was tending to become *mm* in the ninth century. The *Milan Glosses* written sometime in the ninth century, post 839, have examples both of words which have, and which have not yet undergone this transition. One which has is the dative plural of *camb* ‘crooked’ (the root of **camban*) which appears as *cammaib*³³. This can be added to the other factors that tend to establish Grim’s historical authenticity and floruit.

The fact that he bore a Gaelic nickname is obvious evidence that he came from an area where there was close contact between Gael and Norse,

³²*Dicuili Liber* Tierney, 76-7

³³R.Thurneysen *A Grammar of Old Irish* (1980), 5, 94

which might suggest that he himself was of mixed parentage. He cannot have come from Ireland, because there is no evidence that there had been any Norse settlement early enough to have furnished Grimr with his epithet. We saw that the first attempts at settlement in Ireland belong to the early 840s

If Ireland can be excluded, Western Scotland is the only viable candidate for the appropriate area of contact. Thus, in the story of Grimr, with his Norse fore-name and Gaelic nick-name, we would appear to have corroboration for the posited settlement of the Norse in Western Scotland, and also for an early interaction between them and the existing Gaelic population.

Gofraid mac Fhergusu appears in 2 entries in *FM* under the years 835 and 851. The first would seem to conflict with the theory that mixed names can only have come about in Western Scotland, because he is seen coming from Ireland, but the second entry and further study of him reveal his undoubted Hebridean links. Indeed, as suggested by our discussion of Grimr Kamban, the very fact that he bears a Norse name should be enough to link him with the Western Scotland.

Gofraidh mac Ferghusa, toiseach Oirghiall, do imthecht go hAlbain do nertughadh Dhail Riada tre fhorchongradh Chionathe mic Ailpin.

“Gofraid mac Fhergusa, a nobleman of the Airgialla, went to Scotland to strengthen the Dal Riata, at the request of Cináed mac Alpín.”

Gofraidh mac Feargusa, toiseach Innsi Gall, decc

“Gofraid mac Fhergusa, toiseach Innse Gall, died.”

It is a pity that Gofraid appears only in this set of annals, because it is not as accurate a collection as *AU*. *FM* is a seventeenth century compilation, whose authority is not irrefutable³⁴. However, its compilers were four of the greatest scholars of the age, who had access to materials now lost, including, perhaps, a complete set of the *Annals of Tigernach*³⁵ which now survives in a form with a lacuna between the years 766 and 974³⁶. W.D.H.Sellar³⁷ has argued effectively for the genuineness of these *FM* annal entries and for the consequent historicity of this figure, while Bannerman³⁸ has shown how Gofraid and the entries fit cogently into a pattern of contacts, which can be seen to have existed between a section of the Airgialla and Dál Riata during the early Dark Ages.

Sellar lists three criticisms that could be levelled against the reliability of these two entries. He then argues convincingly against them. The possible criticisms are as follows: that they are misplaced and ought to belong to a later period, that they were invented to flatter the Clan Donald,

³⁴See P. Walsh *The Four Masters and their Work* (1944)

³⁵W.D.H.Sellar ‘The Origins and Ancestry of Somerled’ in *SHR* 45 (1966), 134

³⁶For information on the *Annals of Tigernach* see K. Hughes *Early Christian Ireland: Introduction to the Sources* (1972), 105

³⁷Sellar ‘Origins and Ancestry’, 134-7

³⁸Bannerman *Dalriada*, 115-18

because a Godfrey son of Fergus appears in their genealogies as an ancestor of Somerled and the Lords of the Isles, and that they incorporate linguistic problems, some of which seem anachronistic.

Sellar overturns the first criticism by pointing out the fact that Cináed mac Alpín, king of Dál Riata, who became king of Picts from 842³⁹, and who died in 858, according to *AU*, is mentioned. This does not mean that the actual calendar dates are correct, but it does mean that the events are to be placed within the reign of Cináed. A date of 835 would appear to be too early for Gofraid to have come to aid Cináed, because Cináed would not have been in a position to ask for his aid until he became king of Dál Riata. This must have been after 839, when Eoganán son of Oengus, king of Dál Riata, was killed, and in fact Cináed seems to have acceded to the kingship in 840⁴⁰.

He also dismisses the second criticism. The compilers are unlikely to have invented these entries to flatter the Clan Donald, because they show no other evidence of being particularly interested in the Clan Donald or knowledgeable about their history. For example, they fail to mention the death of Somerled under its correct date of 1164, recording it instead under 1083, thereby misplacing the annal by 81 years, and further, when they record the death of Angus Og in 1490, they mistakenly call him John Og.

The third criticism, that the entries are linguistically difficult, is based on three considerations: the use of the term *Toísech Airgialla*, the expression *Innse Gall* and the borrowing of the name *Gofraid*.

³⁹Date from M.O.Anderson 'Dalriada and the creation of the kingdom of the Scots', in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe*, eds.D.Whitlock, R.MacKitterick and D.Dumville (1982), 115

⁴⁰According to M.O.Anderson *ibid.*, 112

The term *Toísech Airgialla* is problematical and if it is translated 'Lord of the Airgialla'⁴¹ in the sense of 'ruler of all the Airgialla', the term could be questioned and might be used as evidence that the Four Masters had tampered with the original entry, because Gofraid is nowhere else so recorded⁴². However, it is possible to translate the phrase in another way which is equally correct linguistically, 'a leader/chief⁴³ of the Airgialla', with the emphasis on the indefinite article, suggesting that Gofraid was the ruler of one of the constituent *tuatha*, 'tribes', of the Airgialla. Sellar⁴⁴, by careful analysis of the Clan Donald genealogies, has suggested that Gofraid was a member of a junior, now forgotten, branch of the Uí Maic Charthind, who were a constituent part of the northern Uí Maic Uais.

The term *Innse Gall* 'Islands of the Foreigners' ie. the Hebrides, has been seen as anachronistic. Sellar claims either that the term may have been used consciously in an anachronistic manner by the compilers for the sake of clarity, replacing some older form, or that it actually might have been a term in use by 851. Linguistically, *Innse Gall* does not have to be an anachronism. The word *Gall* was the contemporary Gaelic for a Scandinavian, first appearing in *AU* in the year 827, when there was, "a plundering of the *Goill* of the East". The word *Innis* is old. In fact, it was replaced by the word *eilean* in the post-Norse period, and was demonstrably being used contemporaneously in *AU*, for example, *Innis Patraic* in 798, *Inis Muiredaig* in 807 and *Inis Celtra* in 837. Therefore, the only reason one might have for assuming that the Hebrides could not have been called

⁴¹As in *ES* i 267, and Crawford *Scand.Scot.*, 47

⁴²Gofraid does not appear in the index of *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae*, Vol 1 ed. M.A.O Brien (1976)

⁴³The translation of the term in *DIL*

⁴⁴Sellar 'Origins and Ancestry', 141

Innse Gall by 851 would be if one believed that the Norse settlement had not happened by this time, which is against the whole tenor of the argument. In fact its very appearance in 851 fits nicely with the posited scenario of Norse settlement having taken place in Western Scotland between 795 and 825.

In a similar vein, it might be suggested that the name Gofraid is not acceptable, because it could not have been borrowed by the Gaels early enough for him to have been an adult by the 840s. This criticism is based on the same assumption as the one above, that Norse settlement had not taken place at a sufficiently early date for a mixing of cultures. In an Irish context, this would be correct and Gofraid's name would be anachronistic, because, as stated previously, Scandinavian settlement had not yet begun in Ireland. However, rather than being seen negatively, his name is positive evidence that his family was linked with an area where Norse settlement had taken place. It can be shown that the Airgialla, and more particularly the northern Uí Maic Uais, to which Gofraid seems to have belonged, had long had such links.

The *Senchus Fer nAlban*⁴⁵, a seventh century civil survey of Dalriada, says that the Cenél Loairn, one of the three main tribes, could muster seven hundred men in time of war, the seventh hundred of which were Airgialla. There is a reference in *AU* to the Airgialla fighting for the Cenél Loairn in the year 727.

*Congressio Irrois Foichne, ubi quidam ceciderunt dendibh Airgiallaib,
inter Selbacham et familiam Ehdach nepotis Domnaill*

“The encounter of Irros Foichnae between Selbach and the ‘family’ of Echaid, grandson of Domnall, in which some of the Airgialla fell.”

Selbach was the king of the Cenél Loairn at this time.

⁴⁵For a history, translation and commentary of the *Senchus* see Bannerman, *Dalriada*.

The particular group of the Airgialla who served the Cenél Loairn is suggested by the succession of Conamail, a member of the Airgialla, to the abbacy of Iona in 704. He was of the tribe of the Northern Uí Maic Uais, and Bannerman⁴⁶ has suggested that his elevation to the post of abbot was due to his tribe's link with the Cenél Loairn, who were, at this time, the dominant people in Dalriada.

One can posit the likely scenario that Gofraid went from Ireland to take over the leadership of that portion of his tribe which had long been settled in Dál Riata. Bannerman⁴⁷ sees Gofraid's removal to the Hebrides as an echo of the advent of the Dalriadic dynasty in the person of Fergus mac Eirc c. 500, who also arrived from Ireland to take over a pre-existing settlement of his particular people. He further suggests that the Dalriadic kindred of Airgialla were settled in those islands belonging to the Cenél Loairn, namely somewhere in the group of Colonsay, Mull, Coll and Tiree. This suggestion fits the scenario necessary for the borrowing of the Norse name, because, if the Airgialla of Dál Riata had been settled in the Southern Inner Hebrides by this time, they would have experienced the Norse settlement between c.795 and 825. They were in an ideal position to pick up Norse names, and to relay them to their ruling dynasty. It is possible to suggest that Gofraid's father married a Norse wife from a Norse settlement in Uí Maic Uais lands in the Hebrides. Accepting these close links between Gofraid's kindred and the Hebrides, there is no reason to view his name as an anachronism.

The criticisms raised against the annal entries having been adequately countered, Gofraid can be regarded as an historical figure. He can be used,

⁴⁶Bannerman *Dalriada*, 117

⁴⁷*Ibid*, 118

therefore, as corroboration, along with Grimr Kamban, for my hypothesis that Norse settlement was taking place between c.795 and c.825. Settlement and some mixing of populations must have occurred before he was born, namely in c.840 minus his adult age at that time, which fits easily into the c.795 to c.825 bracket. In other words, he was of the Gall-Gaidheil, a people who, as we have seen, first appear under the name in the 850s, and who can be placed in Zones 1 and 2⁴⁸.

The existence of both these figures with their apparently mixed Gaelic-Norse identity suggests that some kind of *modus vivendi* was reached between the two peoples during the settlement period. I would restrict this rapprochement to Zones 1 and 2, because it is only within this area that Gael and Norseman can clearly be seen to have cohabited, and Gofraid's family can be placed therein. That they did reach some kind of *modus vivendi* is not a far-fetched suggestion, because corroborative examples of Scandinavian settlers and natives, reaching a compromise for coexistence, can be seen in other areas⁴⁹.

As the evidence appears to support the contention that Scandinavian settlement in Western Scotland was similar in pattern to that seen elsewhere, it is appropriate to return to Gofraid mac Fhergusu. His existence argues for the ultimate survival of Dalriadic power and influence over Western Scotland.

How Gofraid is viewed and his importance assessed hinges on how the title *Toísech Innse Gall*, used to describe him in his obit in 851, should be translated. There are two possibilities, both of which give Gofraid status, but one gives him far more than the other. The minimalist interpretation of *Toísech Innse Gall* would have it mean 'a lord of the Hebrides'. This

⁴⁸See supra, 78-86

⁴⁹See supra, 114, 162

would make Gofraid one of a coterie of powerful men in the Isles, but not necessarily the most powerful. This would certainly imply that the Gaels had either maintained some political standing or reasserted themselves to a certain extent during or after the posited Norse settlement. However, this may not be the whole story, and there is the option of a maximalist interpretation. It has been pointed out that *Toísech Innse Gall* bears a very close resemblance to the title *Rí Innse Gall* 'Ruler of the Isles', and, in fact, it can be so understood⁵⁰, because, although *toísech* is anachronistic applied at this level of society in the ninth century, it did take the place of *rí* eventually. Understanding the title in this way obviously puts a different complexion on Gofraid's position. *Rí Innse Gall* was the title borne by Somerled, a famous descendant of Gofraid's, when he met his death in 1164, while attacking the king of Scots. He earned it because he dominated all the Hebrides and probably Man also, from 1158, having in that year driven out Godfrey king of Man who fled to Norway⁵¹. The title was thereafter borne by the leading descendants of Somerled, being the Gaelic original from which the later Latin title of *Dominus Insularum* 'Lord of the Isles' was derived.⁵²

The bearer of the title *Rí Innse Gall* was undoubtedly the most powerful figure in the Hebrides. The title, however, was not created for Somerled, because it can be traced prior to his life-time. There is an example from the eleventh century when Gofraid Crobhan is called *Rí Áth*

⁵⁰Steer & Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, 201

⁵¹See A.A.M.Duncan & A.L.Brown 'Argyll and the Isles in the Earlier Middle Ages' in *PSAS*. (1956-57), 196-7

⁵²See Steer & Bannerman, *Monumental Sculpture*, 201-213 for the historical background to the Lordship of the Isles, and a discussion of the relationship between the terms *Rí Innse Gall* and *Dominus Insularum*.

Cliath ocus Innse Gall ‘king of Dublin and the Isles’ on his death from pestilence, in 1095, according to AI. From the century before that, there is the example of Gofraid mac Arailt who bore this title in his obit, recorded in *AU* under 989.

Gofraidh m.Arailt, ri Innsi Gall, do marbad i nDal Riatai
“Gofraid mac Arailt, Rí Innse Gall, was killed in Dalriada.”

That the maximalist interpretation of Gofraid’s title in *FM* is the correct one should be accepted for the following reasons. The fact that he is recorded at all does suggest there was something special about him. No other mere noble from the Hebrides merits a mention in the annals, in this or the next two centuries. Any other named figure who is associated with the Hebrides seems to have connections with the Hebridean or Dublin royal families. The Clan Donald regarded Gofraid as a particularly important ancestor⁵³. Monro⁵⁴ says that the Clan Donald were known as *Clann Gofraidh* until the time of Donald Gorm of Sleat, who died in 1539. This may have been because Gofraid was the first of his line to take up residence in the Hebrides, but one could speculate whether this in itself was reason enough. The MacDonald Lords of the Isles may have held him in such high regard because they considered him to be their first ancestor to hold an estate as high as their own, or as that of their esteemed Somerled, whom they credited with recovering the heritage of his forebears. Gofraid’s association with Cináed mac Alpín, both in the 835 annal entry and Clan Donald tradition, would tend to suggest that here was a figure whose importance was of the first order. The 835 annal entry states that Gofraid

⁵³See Sellar ‘Origins and Ancestry’, 133 for Clan Donald traditions about Gofraid

⁵⁴D.Monro *Monro’s Western Isles of Scotland* (1961), 93

came from Ireland at the request of Cináed, to strengthen Dál Riata. He came with reinforcements, presumably to aid Cináed against the Picts. Their relationship may have been cemented by marriage, because there is a MacDonald tradition which claims that Cináed married a daughter of Gofraid⁵⁵.

Particularly convincing, however, is the fact that *FM* did on occasion replace *rí* with *toísech*. The kings of Dublin, called *ríga* in *AU*, could be referred to as *toísich* in *FM*. Thus, in *AU*, under the year 863, Olaf, Imar and Auisle, are referred to as kings, *.iii. righ Gall...i. Amhlaim ocus Ímhar ocus Auisle* “Three kings of the foreigners...ie. Olaf and Imar and Auisle”, whilst in the version contained in *FM* they are referred to as *Amhlaoibh, Iomhar ocus hUisli, tri toísich Gall*. This suggests that in the original annalistic source, now lost, Gofraid’s contemporary title was *rí*.

The above reasons would lead to the conclusion that ‘Ruler of the Isles’ is likely to be the correct translation of Gofraid’s title. Translating his title thus has much to commend it, for, when taken together with his relationship with Cináed mac Alpín, it presents a cogent insight into the latter’s policy in the west of Scotland after he had removed himself to the east. It helps to answer the question of what happened in Dál Riata in Cináed’s absence.

Cináed “came to Pictavia” in 842, according to the *Scottish Chronicle*. and then set about conquering the Picts, leaving Dál Riata behind, and it has been suggested that he abandoned Dál Riata because it was threatened by violent Norse incursions. A.P.Smyth⁵⁶ claims that Cináed and his people had to move into the East to escape the fate of King Ælla of

⁵⁵A.MacDonald, *The Clan Donald* iii (1904), 178. The origin of this tradition is not clear according to Sellar *Origins and Ancestry*, 133

⁵⁶Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 152

Northumbria, namely conquest and violent death. B. E. Crawford⁵⁷ follows his lead and suggests that it is very likely that Norse pressure in the west caused dramatic upheavals and did impel the Scots eastwards, forcing them into conflict with the Picts, a conflict which they “surprisingly” won. However, there seem to be at least two fundamental flaws in this scenario.

First, if the pressure was so great as to force the Scots out of their lands, why did Gofraid mac Fhergusu, who was of ruling Gaelic stock and an ally of Cináed’s, not follow him into Pictland? Secondly, where is the evidence for such unbearable pressure at this date? It has been shown to be a reasonable hypothesis that the Norse attacks on and settlement in parts of Dál Riata, in contrast to Ireland, were primarily before 825 and there is no record of any raids on this kingdom after this point. The evidence and the drift of the argument suggest that a *modus vivendi* had been reached between the two communities in the west. Gofraid himself, even if the minimalist view were to be taken of his title, is proof that Gaels had high status, which is not evidence for inimical Norse pressure.

In fact, there seems to be little evidence that the Scandinavians had any great effect on the relationship between Dál Riata and Pictland, even during the period of the most intense raiding on their part, except perhaps in an indirect way with the violent attack on Fortriu or Southern Pictland in 839, which may have weakened Pictland as a whole, making it easier rather than otherwise for Cináed to subsequently take it over.

Smyth⁵⁸, however, believes the Scandinavians did have direct influence on the relationship between the two kingdoms, and posits that the people of Dál Riata had pushed into Pictland a generation before Cináed,

⁵⁷Crawford *Scand.Scot.*, 49

⁵⁸Smyth *Warlords*, 180

during the period which coincides with the most intense Norse raiding. He might have had an unassailable point, if it could be proved that the Scottish conquest of Pictland had begun in the period 795-825. However, the evidence leads to the conclusion that Scottish presence and influence in the east was independent of Norse pressure.

Prior to the takeover of Cináed, there were kings of the Picts who were Gaels of the royal Dalriadic line of the Cenél nGabráin⁵⁹. They were eligible for this kingship, either because they were related matrilineally to the royal kindred of Fortriu⁶⁰, or because Causantín, the first of these, had conquered Southern Pictland. Causantín son of Fergus (789-820)⁶¹, his brother, Oengus son of Fergus (820-832 or 834), the former's son, Drest (832/4-836), and the latter's son, Eóganan (836-839) are the kings in question. These kings are real evidence that Gaelic influence, and presumably Dalriadic power, had been spreading into Pictland prior to the takeover of Cináed. However, Causantín's dates show that this family had made its base in the east before the arrival of the Norse on the scene. Causantín was already king in Fortriu, possibly even of Pictland as a whole, at the time of the first documented Norse raid on the Hebrides, either in 794 or in 795, and, therefore, he had a secure base in the east before, if one follows Smyth's hypothesis, he felt the necessity to escape there. Causantín and Oengus also became kings of Dál Riata during the period of most Norse pressure, from 811-832/4, which led M.O.Anderson⁶² to suggest that it was

⁵⁹For a detailed account of the last kings of the Picts and Cináed mac Alpín see M.O.Anderson 'Dalriada and the creation', 106-32

⁶⁰As suggested by M.O.Anderson *ibid*, 109

⁶¹The dates of these kings are taken from the study of M.O.Anderson *ibid*. The beginning of the reign of Causantín is recorded in the *AU* entry for the year 789 *Bellum inter Pictos ubi Conall m. Taidhg uictus est oculus euassit; oculus Constantin uictor fuit*.

⁶²M.O.Anderson 'Dalriada and the creation', 110

because of this secure base in the east, and their great resources, that the people of Dál Riata looked favourably upon them as rulers. Norse pressure may have been causing the natives of the west to look east for support. It is possible that this link between east and west may have encouraged some Scots to move, but this is a different thing from suggesting that the Scots' dynasty moved east under duress and that Pictland was overwhelmed by Scots trying to escape from their dangerous homeland. Rather, the hypothesis that Dál Riata might have been buoyed up at a dangerous period with support from the east, could provide a possible explanation of how the Gaels managed to hold their own in Zones 1 and 2.

If Norse pressure between 795 and 825 can be discounted, it is unlikely to have had any influence on Cináed who, as king of Dál Riata, belongs to the following period when no Norse raiding activity in the west was recorded at all. If he was not being forced eastwards by Norse pressure, it should perhaps be accepted that his takeover of Pictland was the culmination of a process of attrition by the Scots intended to achieve just such a result, and begun long before the Norse appeared on the scene. The tenth century *Scottish Chronicle* claims that not only did he destroy the Picts, he invaded England⁶³ six times, and he seized and burned Dunbar and Melrose. Such a formidable figure is surely unlikely to have abandoned control over his home territory of Dál Riata.

It is in such a context that Gofraid's title should be considered. It may reflect his position as the trusted father-in-law who was left in charge of the west when Cináed moved eastwards. It has been suggested by Bannerman⁶⁴ that the Uí Maic Uais waxed in power in the vacuum caused

⁶³Presumably what is now eastern Scotland south of the Forth.

⁶⁴ J.Bannerman 'The Scots of Dalriada' in *Who are the Scots?* ed. G.Menzies (1971), 77

by the removal of the ruling Dalriadic kindreds eastwards, after the take-over of Pictland by the Scots in the 840s, and that this new-found power and influence persuaded Gofraid to remain in the Hebrides. This seems inherently plausible, and perhaps this waxing was positively encouraged by Cináed to protect his back, even to the extent of recognising a new title in *Rí Innse Gall*.

In summation, a working hypothesis has been established, which seems to chart satisfactorily the course of events in the early ninth century in Western Scotland. The period 795-825 can be characterised as one of violent raid and settlement by the Norse, coupled with the initial contact between the two peoples. After 825, Norse depredations ceased abruptly, nowhere more obviously exemplified than by the fact that Iona, apparently still the administrative centre of the extensive Columban paruchia, was not attacked beyond this date, although many Irish monasteries were. This dichotomy in the experience of the church in the two areas suggests that a major change had come over the Hebrides, and that the Norse settlers were becoming acclimatised to their new territory. Indeed, in Zones 1 and 2, they were being absorbed into the fabric of Gaelic society. These developments were probably assisted by a resurgence of Dál Riata under Cináed mac Alpín, a hypothesis which gains credence from the existence of his ally Gofraid mac Fhergusu, who seems to have been *Rí Innse Gall* on his death in 851.

After the death of Gofraid mac Fherghusa *Rí Innse Gall*, the next important figure who can be placed in western Scotland is Caittil *Find*, who appears in *AU*, under the year 857, as leader of the Gall-Gaidheil. I have suggested¹ that Gall-Gaidheil was the name of the mixed population of Zones 1 and 2 who appear in Ireland in the 850s. Caittil Find can be identified with Ketill Flat-Nose² of Icelandic tradition.

Some stories were related about him in Iceland. In *Landnámabók* and *Eyrbyggja Saga*, Ketil is considered to have conquered the Hebrides at the behest of King Harald Fine-Hair. Extract 1. is from *Landnámabók*, while extract 2. is from *Eyrbyggja Saga*.

1."Harald Fine-Hair went on a viking expedition west across the sea, as written in his saga. He conquered the entire Hebrides, so far west that since then no one has ever conquered further, but as soon as he'd gone back to Norway, vikings, Scots and Irishmen invaded the islands, plundering and killing everywhere. When King Harald heard this, he sent Ketil Flat-Nose, the son of Bjorn Buna, to reconquer the islands.

Ketil was married to Yngvild, daughter of Ketil Wether of Ringerike Province. Their sons were Bjorn the Easterner, and Helgi Bjolan, and their daughters Aud the Deep-Minded and Thorunn Hyrna. When Ketil went west, he left his son Björn in charge. Ketil conquered the entire Hebrides, and became chieftain over them, but paid none of the tribute to King Harald that had been agreed upon, so the king confiscated all his possessions and banished Ketil's son Bjorn."³

¹See supra, 78-86

²See supra, 83-5

³Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, .23.

2."There was a great chieftain in Norway called Ketil Flat-nose, the son of Bjorn Buna, son of Grim, one of the leading men in Sogn. Ketil was married to Yngvild, the daughter of Ketil Wether, a chieftain in Romerike. Their sons were Bjorn and Helgi, and their daughters Aud the Deep-Minded, Thorunn Hyrna, and Jorunn Wisdom-Slope. Bjorn Ketilsson was brought up east in Jamtaland by Earl Kjallak, a wise man and very highly thought of...

Just about that time King Harald Fairhair was forcing his way to power in Norway. During the campaign many men of high standing abandoned their estates in Norway, some emigrating east...some west over the North Sea. Others used to winter in the Hebrides or in Orkney, then spend the summers raiding in Harald's kingdom, causing plenty of damage. When the farmers complained about it to the king and asked him to get rid of these trouble makers, he planned an expedition west over sea with Ketil Flat-Nose in command. Ketil tried to talk his way out of it, but the king was determined to have his own way, Ketil got ready for the voyage, taking his wife along and those children of his who happened to be with him. After having landed in the west, Ketil fought a number of battles, and won them all. He conquered and took charge of the Hebrides, making peace and alliances with all the leading men there in the west. After that, Ketil sent the troops back to Norway. When they came to Harald, they told him how Ketil Flat-Nose had taken over in the Hebrides, but without doing much to bring the islands under King Harald's rule. Once the king heard this, he confiscated all Ketil's estates in Norway."⁴

⁴*Eyrbyggja Saga* (trans) H.Pálsson & P.Edwards (1989), 25-6

These Icelandic stories about Caittil Find, associating him with Harald Fine-Hair, must be considered fabrications in large part. Caittil lived about two generations before King Harald Fine-Hair, who died in the 930s. Harald was in no position to mount an expedition across the sea until he had dominated Western Norway, a feat which he only achieved after winning the decisive battle of Hafrsfjord, where he defeated the chieftains of the Norwegian west coast. This battle has been dated variously to the 880s⁵ or the 890s⁶, some 30 to 40 years after Caittil's appearance in *AU*. Indeed, Shetelig doubted whether Harald actually mounted such an expedition at all⁷, while P.Sawyer⁸ has suggested that the stories of his exploits were based anachronistically on the expeditions of Magnus Barelegs in the late eleventh century. Harald's invasion must surely be considered unlikely as it does not appear in the Irish annals. Although A.P.Smyth⁹ argues cogently that the account of the expedition has a basis in fact, he claims that the traditions of Harald's conquests were based on those of Amlaíb, king of Dublin, who appears in *AU*, under the year 853¹⁰.

However, the chronological discrepancy of linking Caittil with Harald would tend to disprove the whole tradition, including the part which states that Caittil came from Norway to conquer the Hebrides. Further doubt can be cast on this by considering Caittil's son Björn. He was supposed to have been fostered in Sweden and left behind in Norway after Caittil sailed to the Hebrides. However, his foster-father's name Kjallak implies that

⁵P.S.Andersen *Samlingen av Norge og Kristningen av Landet* (1977), 83

⁶P.G.Foote & D.M. Wilson *The Viking Achievement* (1970), 41

⁷H.Shetelig 'An Introduction to the Viking history of Western Europe' in *Viking Antiquities*, I, 24

⁸P.H.Sawyer *Kings and Vikings* (1982), 13

⁹Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 121-2

¹⁰See *infra*, 193

Björn was a man of the west. This is the Gaelic name Ceallach, which implies that Björn was reared in a Gaelic-speaking area, doubtless amongst the Gall-Gaidheil. There is no reason to seriously doubt the historicity of Kjallak, because Björn named his son Kjallak the Old after him. The second Kjallak was well known, being the eponym of the kindred of the Kjalleklings, who take a central part in *Eyrbyggja Saga*. I would suggest that these stories of Caittil's Norwegian origins were created when his true origins were forgotten.

This hypothesis, that the Icelanders were unsure of Caittil's origins, is strengthened by the fact that a rival story about Caittil survives in *Laxdæla Saga*. This story is quite different from those in *Landnámabók* and *Eyrbyggja Saga*, but equally confused. In *Laxdæla Saga*, Caittil is considered to have fled from Norway, to escape the power of Harald. It claims he settled in Scotland, in preference to Iceland, but it does not state that he ruled in the Hebrides. *Laxdæla Saga* also claims that Helgi Bjólan, Caittil's son, went straight from Norway to Iceland, without staying in Scotland at all. As Helgi had a Gaelic nick-name, this is not very likely.

It is generally accepted¹¹ that there is considerable confusion in the early Icelandic sources about when Caittil and his family left Norway. I would ascribe this to the fact that they were never actually in Norway. There may have been a traditional link between Caittil and the area of Sogn, or Romsdal where *Laxdæla Saga* claims Caittil was a chieftain prior to coming to Scotland. It is entirely possible that his ancestors originated there, but I do not believe that he himself did. It is surely more likely that Caittil Find, as a leader of Gall-Gaidheil, was a Gall-Gaidheil himself. This is what he appears to be in *AU*, with his contemporary Gaelic nickname *find*,

¹¹*Laxdæla Saga* trans. M.Magnusson & H.Pálsson (1969), 50 n.2

while the extent of Gaelic influences on his family recorded in Icelandic tradition would further imply that he was a member of the mixed population of Zones 1 and 2.

The only reasonably trustworthy details in the Icelandic traditions are likely to be the claims that Caittil ruled in the Hebrides, which indeed he would if he were a leader of the Gall-Gaidheil, and that he had to fight to achieve this position. The latter point seems inherently likely, because there is no evidence that he belonged to Gofraid's kindred. Indeed, he would appear to have been a kind of mirror image of Gofraid, in that whereas the latter's family roots were originally in Ireland, Caittil's were in Norway.

Caittil can probably be seen as Gofraid's successor as *Rí Innse Gall*. *Landnámabók* claims that he ruled the entire Hebrides. This has interesting ramifications for cultural and linguistic matters if it is an accurate description of the powers of the *Rí Innse Gall*. It would mean that he ruled not only Zones 1 and 2, but also Zone 3, in other words, both the Gall-Gaidheil and the more clearly Norse areas. I believe this description can be cautiously accepted because, as already noted, this would seem to be the status of his predecessor Gofraid.

The annals record the presence of the Gall-Gaidheil in Ireland in the 850s. For example, they appear thrice in *AU*, twice in 856 and once in 857, once in *FM*, under the year 858, and twice in *FA*, in 856 and 858.. The question has to be asked: what were they doing there? It has proved difficult for scholars to answer. N.K.Chadwick¹² thought they were acting in a free-lance capacity, like a 'foreign legion' without a fixed term of reference, as did A. Walsh¹³, who saw them, in true mercenary style,

¹²N.K.Chadwick 'The Vikings and the western world', in *PICCS*, 26

¹³A.Walsh *Scandinavian relations with Ireland during the Viking Period* (1922), 11

fighting on different sides. However, their actions do appear to conform to a coherent pattern, and there was probably a good reason for their being active in Ireland at this particular time.

When the Gall-Gaidheil first appear in *AU*, in 856, there is no doubt about what they are doing- they are fighting for Máel Sechnaill mac Máel Ruanaid, king of the Southern Uí Néill, against the Scandinavians of Dublin.

Cogadh mor eter gennti ocus Mael Sechlainn co nGall-ghoidhelaib leis

“Great warfare between the heathens and Mael Sechnaill, supported by the Gall-Gaidheil”

To understand their presence in Ireland, it is necessary to know something of the career of Máel Sechnaill. This formidable king belonged to Clann Cholmáin, the major dynasty of the Southern Uí Néill. According to *AU*, he succeeded to the kingship of Tara in 847, while in 848, he routed a Viking force near Skreen and slew 700 of them. In 850, he was attacked by Cináed mac Conaing with the Scandinavians of Dublin. In 851, he drowned Cináed. In the same year, at a royal conference held at Armagh in the presence of the abbot and clergy, the king of the Ulaid acknowledged his supremacy. This was the first time that the Ulaid recognized the suzerainty of an Uí Néill overking. In 854, according to *AU*, Máel Sechnaill marched into Munster and took hostages from the province. In 856, he marched to Cashel and again took hostages from Munster. However, another expedition was required to completely subdue this province, and, in 858, he took hostages from the entire kingdom of Munster. This was the first occasion that the supremacy of the king of Tara was fully acknowledged by the king of Munster. In 859, he was attacked by the kings of Dublin together with their ally Cerball, king of Osraige. However, within the same year, at the

royal conference held at Ráith Aeda Meic Bric, Cerball changed sides, and the powerful kingdom of Osraige, which held the passes between Munster and Leinster, came under Máel Sechnaill's sovereignty. On his death in 862, he was recorded in *AU* as *ri Herenn uile* 'king of all Ireland', a title he had earned to a degree by being the first king of Tara to be overking of both the Ulaid and Munster.

However, in addition to contending with Dubliners and Cerball of Osraige, he also had to face powerful opposition from the king of the Northern Uí Néill, Aed Finnliath mac Néill, his eventual successor as king of Tara. In 855, according to *AU*, Aed attacked the Ulaid, and in 859 he did not attend the royal conference at Ráith Aeda Meic Bric, which was intended to make peace and amity between the men of Ireland. In 860, Máel Sechlainn campaigned against Aed. However, he was not curbed, and in 861 and 862 Aed, aided by the Dubliners and Flann mac Conaing king of northern Brega, invaded and plundered Mide, Máel Sechnaill's home territory.

A.P.Smyth¹⁴ suggests that Mael Sechnaill decided to move against the Scandinavians of Dublin in 856, because he had just completed the successful foray to Cashel, the chief caput of Munster, and had taken hostages from that province. This mission being accomplished, he now felt strong enough to lead an offensive against the foreigners. Judging by their prominent billing in the annal entry, the Gall-Gaidheil would appear to have played a conspicuous part in the warfare. Unfortunately, however, the outcome of their effort is not recorded.

¹⁴Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 131

At a later point in the same year, a fleet of Gall-Gaidheil arrived in the territory of Aed Finnliath mac Néill, but they were defeated by him at Glenelly in Tyrone.

AU856 *Roiniudh mor re nAedh m. Neill for Gallgaeidhelu i nGlinn Foichle co ralad leis ar dimhor düib.*

“Aed son of Niall inflicted a great defeat on the Gall-Gaidheil in Glenelly and a vast number of them were slaughtered by him.”

FA856 *Cath do thabhairt d'Aodh, do righ Ailigh, i. don righ as fearr eangn[a]mh 'na aimisir, do loingius na nGall nGaidheal, ... Maidhidh forra re nd-Aodh, ocus cuirthear a ndeargar na nGall-ghaidheal, ocus cinn imdha do bhreith do Aodh leis;*

...

“Aed, king of Ailech, the king of greatest prowess in his time, gave battle to the fleet of the Gall-Gaideil...Aed defeated them, and slaughtered the Gall-Gaideil and Aed brought many heads away with him...”

J.N.Radner¹⁵ thinks it probable that Aed was attacked, because the Gall-Gaidheil were still supporting Máel Sechnaill. Aed Finnliath, as already mentioned, attacked the Ulaid in 855, probably in an attempt to extend his control over this kingdom. His attack, although apparently unsuccessful, represented a threat to Máel Sechnaill's status as overlord of the Ulaid. Aed's raid is likely, therefore, to have met with a response from Máel Sechnaill, for it must be assumed that he would not have allowed his power to be disputed. It is in this light that I would see the Gall-Gaidheil naval expedition of the following year. They were probably sent on a mission to

¹⁵Radner *Fragmentary Annals*, 198

punish Aed, and, as they had a fleet, they were well equipped to strike unexpectedly in the territories of Máel Sechnaill's enemies.

Here, therefore, are two examples of the Gall-Gaidheil fighting for Máel Sechnaill. It is likely that the other apparently unconnected appearances of the Gall-Gaidheil in Ireland can similarly be linked to him. It is surely indicative that none of their battles recorded in *AU* or *FM*, were fought against him, and none took place in the territory under his direct control, namely Mide. They are always in opposition to those with whom he was, at some time, in competition. As already noted, the great pre-occupations of the last decade of Máel Sechnaill's life were the conquest of Munster, the countering of the threats posed by Aed Finnliath and of those posed by the Dublin Scandinavians, who allied with Aed on occasion. It is surely no coincidence then that the Gall-Gaidheil, having attacked Aed on behalf of Máel Sechnaill, were also found at war in Munster and in conflict with the Dubliners. In 857, according to *AU*, they were defeated by Imar and Amlaib, kings of Dublin, in Munster, while, according *FM*, they suffered another defeat there in 858, this time at the hands of Cerball and Imar.

AU857 Roiniudh re nImar ocus re nAmlaiph for Caittil Find cona Gallgaedhelaibh hi tiribh Muman

“Imar and Amlaib inflicted a rout on Caittil the Fair and his Gall-Gaidheil in the lands of Munster”.

FM858 Maidhm ria cCearball, tighearna Osraige ocus ria nImhar hi ccrich Aradh Tire, for Cenel Fiachach, co nGallgaidhealaibh Leithe Cuinn.

“A victory by Cearbhall lord of Osraige and by Imhar in territory of Aradh-tire over the Cenel Fiachach with the Gall-Gaidheil of Leth Chuinn.”

The presence of the Gall-Gaidheil in Munster would make sense as part of Máel Sechnaill's extended campaign to gain control of the province. Was the

great army under Amlaíb, Imar and Cerball which invaded Mide in 859, according to *AU*, a counter-attack for these two previous encounters?

The *FM* entry for 858 provides further evidence for suggesting that the Gall-Gaidheil were still fighting for Máel Sechnaill. They were fighting alongside the warriors of one of Máel Sechnaill's sub-kingdoms, the Cenél Fiachach, who were also of the Southern Uí Néill¹⁶. The Gall-Gaidheil are said to be of *Leth Chuinn* (the northern half of Ireland). This does not mean they originated there¹⁷, but rather is a reference to the fact that they were fighting for Máel Sechnaill, the preeminent king of *Leth Chuinn*.

The hypothesis that the Gall-Gaidheil always fought on the side of Máel Sechnaill would appear to be contradicted by an entry in *FA*, in the year 858.

Ra chuaidh Maoilseac[h]lainn don Mumhain, go rabha re re mis og ionnradh Mumhan a nEimli, go ttug braighde Muman o Comur tri nUisce go hInnse Tarbna ar nEirinn. Cath Cairn Lughdach sain. Isin chath soin ro marbadh Maolcroin mhac Muireadhaig, leithrigh na nDeisi. Gen go ttiosadh Maolseac[h]lainn an turus so do ghabhail righe Mumhan do fen, ro bo thuidheachta do mharbadh an ro marbadh do Ghallghaoidhealaibh ann, uair daoine ar ttregadh a mbaiste iad-saidhe, ocus adbertais Normannaigh friu, uair bes Normannach aca, ocus a n-altrum forra, ocus ger bo olc na Normannaigh bunaidh dona h-eaglaisibh, ba measa go mor iad-saidhe, .i. an lucht sa, gach conair fo Eirinn a mbidis.

“Mael Sechlainn went to Munster, and he was at Imlech for a month, raiding Munster, so that he took the hostages of Munster from Comar Tri n-Uisce to Inis Tarbna off the (west) coast of Ireland. That was the battle of Carn Lugdach. In that battle, Mael Croin son of Muiredach, one of the two kings of the Deissi, was killed. Although Mael Sechnaill did not make this expedition to take the kingship of Munster for himself, it

¹⁶See D.O'Corrain *Ireland before the Normans* (1972), 21-2 for a description of the various sub-kingdoms of the Southern Uí Néill.

¹⁷Radner *Fragmentary Annals*, 198 n.27 suggests that the use of this term means they were based in Ireland. However, to be based in Leth Chuinn does not necessarily mean to originate there.

was worth coming in order to kill those Gall-Gaidheil who were slain there, for they were men who had forsaken their baptism, and they used to be called Norsemen, for they had the customs of the Norse, and had been fostered by them, and though the original Norsemen were evil to the churches, these were much worse, these people, wherever in Ireland they were.”

This would mean, if correct, that the Gall-Gaidheil were no longer on the side of Máel Sechnaill, at least by 858. However, it has already been noted that the part of the annal entry dealing with the Gall-Gaidheil is an inaccurate gloss added sometime in the twelfth century¹⁸. *AU* provides the contemporary report of the event upon which the *FA* entry is based.

Mael Sechnaill m. Mael Ruanaigh co feraib Erenn do tuidhecht hi tire Muman co ndeisidh x. n-aithci oc Neim, ocus a n-innred co muir fadess iar madmaim fora rriga oc Carn Lughdach, co fargbadh ann lethri na nDeise, Maelcron m. Muiredhaigh. Tuc Mael Sechlainn iarum giallu Muman o Belut Gabrain co Insi Tarbnai iar nÉre, ocus o Dun Cermnai co hArainn nAirthir.

“Mael Sechnaill son of Mael Ruanaid came with the men of Ireland to the lands of Mumu and halted for ten nights at Niam; and he plundered them to the south as far as the sea, after their kings had been defeated at Carn Lughdach, Maelchrón son of Muiredach, king of the Déisi, being left [dead] there. Mael Sechnaill then took the hostages of Mumu from Belat Gabráin to Inis Tarbnai off the Irish coast, and from Dún Cermna to Ára Airthir.”

As can be seen, there is no mention made here of the Gall-Gaidheil, nor of a victory over them by Máel Sechnaill, so the hypothesis still holds. The glossator of *FA* may have been confused by the fact that the Gall-Gaidheil were present in Munster in 857 and 858, and that they did suffer a defeat there. However, the entry in *AU* for the year 857 and the entry in *FM* for

¹⁸See supra, 81

the year 858 make it clear that they were fighting Cerball of Osraige and the kings of Dublin.

Leaving aside the mistaken gloss in *FA*, the appearances of the Gall-Gaidheil in Ireland can all be fitted into a coherent pattern if they are regarded as foreign soldiers fighting for Máel Sechnaill. They can probably be seen as the pre-cursors of the *gallóclaig*, or galloglasses, hired soldiers from Argyll and the Hebrides who began to settle in Ulster in the thirteenth century, and who subsequently established a monopoly of mercenary service throughout Ireland¹⁹. In other words, the *gallóclaig*, coming from the same area and still distinguished by the epithet *gall*, were their direct descendants.

According to *AU*, a major event in the history of the Scandinavian settlements in the west took place in 853 with the arrival of *Amhlaim mac righ Laithlinde* "Olaf son of the king of Norway". He was apparently a figure of such eminence that both Norwegians and Danes in Ireland laid aside their enmity and submitted to him.

Amhlaim m. righ Laithlinde do tuidhecht a nErinn coro giallsat Gaill Erenn dó, ocus cis o Goidhelaib.

"Amlaib, son of the king of Lochlann, came to Ireland, and the foreigners of Ireland submitted to him, and he took tribute from the Gaidheil."

The Scandinavians of Ireland, both Norwegian and Dane (who had arrived in 851, according to *AU*), had been indulging in internecine strife. According to *AU*, in 851, the Danes had slaughtered the Norwegians of Dublin, while in 852, 160 Norwegian ships came to Snám Aigneach and did battle with the Danes for 3 days and 3 nights.

¹⁹For a definitive account of the *gallóclaig* and later Scottish mercenary forces in Ireland see G.H.Hayes-McCoy *Scots Mercenary Forces in Ireland* (1937)

Amlaíb is seen to be a formidable figure. According to *AU*, he was one of the leaders of an attack on Fortriú in 866, and, in 870, he and his ally Imar laid siege to Dumbarton, and after four months they took and destroyed it.

A.P.Smyth²⁰ has identified him convincingly with Óláfr the White, whom *Eyrbyggja saga* calls, “The greatest warrior-king at that time in the British Isles”. Following J.Johannesson²¹ and J.Steffensen²², he also considers Amlaíb to be the same person as the Norwegian king Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr who ruled in Vestfold, sometime previous to Harald Finehair. *Ynglingatal*, a poem composed by Þjóðólfr c.880-900²³, describes Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr as a warrior-king (*herkonungr*) who “ruled over *Vestmari* far and wide”²⁴. This latter term was believed to be a synonym for Vestfold in Norway, but Johannesson and Steffensen have both independently shown that it was an early Norse form for the North (or “western”) Sea. The almost contemporary poetic reference suggests, therefore, that Óláfr ruled an extensive area west of the North Sea.

It is not unlikely that the arrival of a figure like Amlaíb in the west would have caused instability in the territories of the *Rí Innse Gall*. Amlaíb and his fleet must have posed a threat to the communities living therein, both Gall-Gaidheil and Norse. It is possible that Amlaíb subjugated the Hebrides on his way from Norway to Ireland. As aforementioned, Smyth²⁵ suggests that the stories about Harald Fine-Hair’s expedition and his

²⁰Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 101-17

²¹J.Johannesson ‘Ólafur konungur Goðröðarson’, in *Skirnir*, cxxx (1956), 51-63

²²J.Steffensen ‘A Fragment of Viking History’, in *Saga-Book*. xviii (1970-1), 59-78

²³Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 111; L.Hollander, *The Skalds, a Selection of their Poems* (1968), 38-9; G.Turville-Petre, *The Heroic Age of Scandinavia* (1951), 42, 112, 168

²⁴*Heimskringla*(*Ynglingatal*) ed.Aðalbjarnarson, (*Islensk fornrit*, xxvi i. 1941), 81-2.

²⁵Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 121-2

supposed conquest of the Hebrides were, in fact, misplaced traditions about Amlaíb's exploits. This transferring in Icelandic tradition of Amlaíb's deeds to Harald would have been an easy matter. If Amlaíb is to be identified with Óláfr Geirstaðaálfr, as Steffensen and Johannesson suggest, the statement in *Ynglingatal* that Óláfr, "ruled over *Vestmari* far and wide", would imply that Amlaíb's territory was more extensive than merely Dublin. With this identification, it would not be surprising if the exploits of Amlaíb were transposed to the more famous Harald, because both Harald and Óláfr were kings of Vestfold. According to tradition the latter was Harald's uncle.

The presence of Amlaíb would provide an additional reason for the Gall-Gaidheil allying with Máel Sechnaill, rather than merely being mercenaries. Any attempt by Amlaíb to subjugate the Hebrides would have met with understandable resistance from Caittil Find, Gall-Gaidheil and *Rí Innse Gall*, and in this context it would not be surprising to see Gall-Gaidheil present in Ireland supporting Máel Sechnaill, considering that he was the major enemy of the Scandinavians of Dublin.

Although there is no direct statement in the Irish annals to the effect that Amlaíb attempted to conquer, or actually succeeded in conquering any part of Western Scotland, there is an annal entry in *AU*, under the year 866, which might imply that such an event had happened.

Amlaiph ocus Auisle do dul i Fortrenn co nGallaib Erenn ocus Alban cor innriset Cruithentuath n-uile ocus co tucsat a ngiallo.

“Amlaib and Auisle²⁶ went with the foreigners of Ireland and Scotland to Fortriu, plundered the entire Pictish country and took away hostages from them.”

Gaill Alban appears to be an all-embracing term which implies that the kings of Dublin were accompanied by *Gaill* from various parts of Scotland, presumably including those from within the territory of the *Rí Innse Gall*. Indeed, the *Gall-Gaidheil* themselves might have been included amongst the *Gaill Alban*, because, if they were fighting alongside groups of *Gaill* instead of against them, there would be no need for them to be distinguished from, or contrasted with them. Smyth²⁷ reasonably suggests that these *Gaill Alban* must have been drawn from the Scottish Islands and the western shores of the mainland.

Corroborative evidence that some kind of relationship was established between Caittil *Rí Innse Gall* and Amlaíb exists in Icelandic tradition. *Landnámabók* claims Auðr, daughter of Ketill Flat-Nose, married Óláfr the White. Smyth claims that this marriage occurred in Norway²⁸, but given my suggestion that Caittil was a Gall-Gaidheil, it surely occurred after Óláfr had conquered Dublin in 853, indeed perhaps as some kind of peace agreement after 857.

If forces from Western Scotland are to be included amongst the *Gaill Alban*, fighting alongside Amlaíb and the Scandinavians of Dublin in Fortriu in 866, this would imply a change in the allegiance of the *Rí Innse Gall*. As already argued, Gofraid mac Fherguson was very close to Cináed mac

²⁶Auisle was one of the kings of Dublin alongside Óláfr, his brother according to *FA*, under the year 867 *Teagmhail eidir Óisle, mac rí[gh] Lochlann, ocus Amlaoibh a brathar*. “There was an encounter between Óisle, son of the king of Norway, and Amlaib, his brother.”

²⁷Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 151

²⁸Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 124

Alpín, who was probably his overlord. If the *Rí Innse Gall* was now fighting in Fortriu, this would mean he was fighting against the Mac Alpín dynasty, which implies a major political development, and overlordship of the Hebrides imposed by Amlaíb would fit the bill.

Smyth²⁹ argues against a change of allegiance, because he claims that this raid was not directed against Causantín mac Cináeda (862-76), but against a resurgent Pictish Fortriu, over which he was king. He makes this suggestion because, in a later raid on Alba by the kings of Dublin, recorded in *AU* under 871, the list of captives does not include Scots, although it does mention Picts. Therefore, he posits that the Scandinavians were aiding Cináed's sons against some recalcitrant Picts who did not accept Scottish control. However, this hypothesis of an alliance between Dublin and the kings of Scots at this time against the Picts is untenable. Smyth has misunderstood an annalistic convention: Cináed, his brother Domnall, and his sons Causantín and Aed were all entitled *Reges Pictorum* in their respective obits in *AU*, thereby highlighting the achievement of the Scots in taking over Pictland. Victorious people were sometimes identified in the annals by the name of the people whom they had conquered³⁰.

Possible corroboration that the kings of Dublin extended their sway over the Hebrides is to be seen in the obit of Imar king of Dublin in 873, according to *AU*.

Imhar, rex Nordmannorum totius Hibernie ocus Brittanie, uitam finiuit.

“Imar, king of the Norsemen of all Ireland and Britain, ended his life.”

²⁹Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 143-53

³⁰See Ó Corráin *Ireland before the Normans*, 30-1

Imar was Amlaíb's successor, Amlaíb having returned to Norway in 871 according to *FA*. This left Imar to reign supreme for two years. There is no reason why the annalist should have flattered Imar, and, consequently, no reason to doubt the entry's accuracy. If Imar was king of all the *Gaill* of both Britain and Ireland, one would assume his power also extended over the *Rí Innse Gall*. Imar was the ancestor of the later kings of Dublin, who were called Uí Imar (the descendants of Imar) in consequence.

After 873, the political situation in Western Scotland becomes even more unclear than previously, because our only information comes from the unverifiable shifting sand of Icelandic tradition. There might have been a period of turbulence, which might explain the departure to Iceland of Caittil's sons, Helgi and Björn. Helgi Bjólan is the fifth settler named in *Landnámabók*, and he might have arrived in Iceland as early as 877³¹. He was supposedly in contact with Ingólfr Arnason, Iceland's first settler, marrying the latter's daughter according to *Kjalnesinga Saga*³², and settling nearby. Björn may have arrived somewhat later, as *Eyrbyggja Saga* relates the erroneous tale that he came to the Hebrides from Norway ten years after Ingólfr settled in Iceland in 874. Björn supposedly remained in the Hebrides for two years before sailing himself to Iceland. However, just how little weight can be placed on these traditions can be seen by the fact that according to *Eyrbyggja Saga*, Helgi was still in the Hebrides when Björn arrived. *Laxdæla Saga* claims that Björn and Helgi went simultaneously to Iceland, and suggests that Ketil's sons felt compelled to go, although it ascribes the compulsion to the Icelandic *bête noir*, Harald Finehair, and suggests they went straight from Norway. The saga relates:

³¹See *ES* i 347

³²See *Kjalnesinga Saga* chp 1 in *Íslendinga Sögur*, vol ii (1847)

“Ketil’s son Björn replied: “I can make my intentions clear at once: I want to follow the example of other eminent men and leave this country {Norway}. I could not see how it would benefit me to sit at home waiting for King Harald’s slaves to hound us off our lands or put us all to death...and so it was settled that they would leave the country, for Ketil’s sons urged it strongly and noone spoke against it”³³

It is impossible to know whether this tradition has any basis in fact. It is certainly unlikely that Harald Fine-hair would have forced them to leave. The saga is mistaken in placing the action in Norway instead of the Hebrides. However, setting the story in the wrong place does not automatically negate the possibility that they came to Iceland because they were compelled to leave Western Scotland.

If the kings of Dublin had become overlords of the *Rí Innse Gall* by 866, as suggested, it may be relevant that there was turmoil between the Norwegian and Danish factions amongst the Scandinavians of Dublin after the death of Imar in 873. The peace and unity of purpose among the Scandinavians, which had held good for 20 years between Amlaíb and Imar, and had seen them fighting on joint campaigns, broke down after the death of the latter. In 875, according to *AU*, Oistin Amlaíb’s son was killed by Albann, who has been identified³⁴ with Hálfðan, Danish king of Northumbria and brother of Imar, and, in 877 according to *AU*, there was a battle between the two factions at Loch Cuan, when Albann was killed. It is possible that this instability and warfare was reflected in Western Scotland.

³³*Laxdæla Saga* Magnusson & Pálsson 48-9

³⁴Smyth *Scandinavian Kings*, 263 n.31

The struggles between the families of Imar and Amlaíb may have led to the arrival of Þorsteinn the Red in Scotland from Dublin. He was the grandson of Caittil Find, the son of Amlaíb and Caittil's daughter Auðr, and was remembered in Icelandic tradition as a heroic figure. He must have been born sometime after the arrival of Amlaíb in the West in 853, and probably after the Gall-Gaidheil defeats in Ireland, that is after 857, when I suggested the relationship between Caittil and Amlaíb was established. He would presumably have been coming -of-age in the later 870s or early 880s. *Landnámabók* claims that he and his mother came to the Hebrides, where he married and had children, after his father died fighting in Ireland. There is no contemporary evidence for Amlaíb's death, but Icelandic tradition might be correct in implying that Ireland was no longer a safe place for a son of Amlaíb. He was, after all, a member of the kindred which ultimately lost in the Dublin kingship stakes. It is certainly interesting that Þorsteinn's saga reputation was founded on deeds purported to have been achieved in Scotland rather than Dublin.

Þorsteinn may have been Caittil's successor as *Rí Innse Gall*. Icelandic tradition does not actually state that Þorsteinn ruled in the Hebrides, but the claims made for his achievements do suggest that he must have had access to substantial reserves of manpower and resources.

(1) "Thorstein the Red became a warrior king, and joined forces with Earl Sigurd the Powerful, son of Eystein Clatterer; they conquered Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Moray, and more than half of Scotland. Thorstein ruled over these territories as king until he was betrayed by the Scots and killed there in battle."³⁵

³⁵Pálsson & Edwards *Settlements*, 51

(2)“Earl Sigurd became a great ruler. He joined forces with Þorstein the Red, the son of Olaf the White, and Aud the Deep-minded and together they conquered the whole of Caithness and a large part of Argyll, Moray and Ross.”³⁶

(3)“Þorsteinn Red, the son of Olaf White and Aud the Wealthy, came into alliance with {Sigurd}. They plundered in Scotland, and acquired Caithness and all Sutherland, as far as Ekkialsbakki.”³⁷

(4)“Þorsteinn went to war at once. He raided far and wide throughout Scotland and was everywhere victorious. Later he made a treaty with the Scots and became king over the half of Scotland they ceded to him. The Scots did not honour the treaty for long; they treacherously broke their truce with him and he was killed in Caithness.”³⁸

Landnámabók, *Orkneyinga saga* and *Heimskringla* all claim that Þorsteinn allied with Earl Sigurðr the Mighty of Orkney, and together they conquered much of northern Scotland. However, as can be seen, the extent of their conquests are in doubt. *Heimskringla* excludes Moray and Ross from the reckoning, and restricts their success to a conquest of the old Pictish Province of Cait, the southern border of which R.G.Cant³⁹ would place on the Dornoch Firth and the River Oyckell. B.E..Crawford⁴⁰ sees this episode as a deliberate partnership, which combined the resources of these two powerful leaders. It would be logical to infer that Sigurðr, as earl of Orkney, had the resources of Orkney at his disposal, while Þorsteinn, as *Rí*

³⁶*Orkneyinga Saga* trans. H.Pálsson, & P.Edwards, (1978), 27

³⁷*Heimskringla* trans. in *ES*. i. 370

³⁸*Laxdæla Saga* Magnusson & Pálsson, 51

³⁹R.G.Cant ‘The Medieval Church in the North: Contrasting Influences in the Dioceses of Ross and Caithness’ in *Firthlands of Ross and Sutherland* ed. J.R.Baldwin (1986), 51

⁴⁰Crawford *Scand.Scot.*, 57

Innse Gall, drew his from the Hebrides. A.O.Anderson⁴¹ suggested reasonably that the conquests of Þorsteinn and Sigurðr were being referred to in the *Scottish Chronicle*, when during the reign of Domnall mac Causantín (889 x 900), it is said that “The Northmen wasted Pictland at that time”.

There is another interesting, but essentially obscure, entry in the *Scottish Chronicle*, in the reign of Domnall mac Causantín. A battle is noted between Danes and Scots *innisibsolian* where the victory went to the Scots. B.J.Hudson⁴² suggests that the place-name should be read *innisib*, dative plural of *inis* ‘island’, plus *Solian*, which is an attempt to write an oblique form of *Sóil*, modern Gaelic *Saoil* ‘Seil’. He further suggests that the use of the dative plural suggests another island, perhaps Islay, has been omitted from the entry. It could be tentatively suggested that this is a reference to an attack on the Southern Inner Hebrides by the Dubliners. However, Professor W.Gillies⁴³ is doubtful as to whether this is a reference to Seil.

Further turbulence in Western Scotland may be indicated by the fact that, after Þorstein’s death, at some unspecified date in the later ninth century, Icelandic tradition claims that his mother Auðr escaped to Iceland with his children, although *Landámabók* and *Laxdæla Saga* claim she fled from Caithness. Despite the fact that *Landnámabók* claims Þorsteinn was betrayed and killed by the Scots, the reason for Auð’s flight to Iceland is unknown.

⁴¹*ES* i p.395, followed by Crawford *ibid*.

⁴²B.J.Hudson *The Old Scottish Chronicle* (forthcoming), 5

⁴³Personal correspondence.

This chapter is a study of the political situation in the west of Scotland during the tenth century, with particular reference to the evidence for continuing contact between the population of the Hebrides and the town of Dublin, and the relationship between the *Rí Innse Gall*, a title for which there is further evidence during the tenth century, and the *Rí Átha Cliath* 'king of Dublin', who would appear on occasion to be the overking of the former.

There seems to have been a population surplus in Western Scotland in the tenth century, because there appears to have been an expansion of Gall-Gaidheil into other areas. Their presence can be plotted in Galloway, where their numbers must have been dense enough to give the territory their name¹. Gaelic personal names in Cumbria and Normandy appear to show their presence there².

The period given for the settlement of Scandinavians in Cumbria is from c.900 to c.950³. It has been linked to the campaigns of the Dublin kings in England⁴. The area of Normandy which saw some Gall-Gaidheil settlement was the Cotentin, where they had probably arrived pre-933, if that was the date at which this territory was ceded to the Dukes of Normandy. However, it has recently been suggested that the Dukes did not acquire

¹The territory must have been heavily settled prior to 1034 when Suibne mac Cináeda died see supra, 143

²See supra, 141-2 for information concerning Gall-Gaidheil in Cumbria and Normandy. Hebrideans of a more Norse slant, from Zone 3, are also likely to have been present in these areas, especially as I continue to posit the existence of a Dublin overlordship of the Hebrides. However, being more Scandinavian, it is not possible to distinguish them from the Dubliners or Manx.

³M.Higham in *The Scandinavians in Cumbria* (1985), 49

⁴Ibid

control of the Cotentin until the arrival of reinforcements in the 960s⁵, which would suggest that the Gall-Gaidheil settlers could have arrived up until this time.

The presence of Gall-Gaidheil amongst the Scandinavian settlers in Cumbria probably indicates that they were involved with the kings of Dublin, as they would appear to have been in the days of Amlaíb and Ímar. Their presence suggests that the posited earlier Dublin overlordship of the Hebrides continued after the death of Ímar in 873. There is evidence that there were Hebrideans involved in the English campaigns of the most successful member of the Uí Ímair, Amlaíb Gothfrith's son, because they appear to have been present, under the *Rí Innse Gall*, at the Battle of Brunanburh in 937.

In the account of the Battle of Brunanburh contained in *ACL*, there is a list, not present in any other source, of leaders slain in the battle. Although these annals are a seventeenth-century English translation of a source now lost, there is no reason to doubt the essential accuracy of the list⁶, which is important for us because a king of the Hebrides is recorded. However, the totality of the account should not be taken literally, because it has suffered from exaggeration.

“The Danes of Loghrie arrived at Dublin. Awley with all the Danes of Dublin and north part of Ireland departed and went over seas. The Danes that departed from Dublin arrived in England, and by the help of the Danes of that kingdom, they gave battle to the Saxons on the plaines of Othlyn, where there was a great slaughter of Normans and Danes, among which these ensueing captaines

⁵E.Searle ‘Fact and pattern in heroic history: Dudo of Saint-Quentin’, in *Viator* 15 (1984), 132

⁶A.Campbell in his in depth study of the Battle of Brunanburh considered the list to be accurate . see A.Campbell *The Battle of Brunanburh* (1938), 56

were slaine, viz Sithfrey and Ofsle ye 2 sones of Sithrick Gale, Awley Ffroit, and Moylemorrey the sons of Cosse Warce, Moyle Isa, *Gebeachan king of the Islands*, Ceallagh prince of Scotland with 30000 together with 800 captives about Awley mc Godfrey, and abbot of Arick mc Brith, Iloa Deck, Imar, the king of Denmark's owen son with 4000 souldiers in his guard were all slaine."

Gebeachan bears a Gaelic fore-name. Properly Gébennach, which has suffered metathesis. His title 'king of the Islands' is a translation of *Rí na nInnse*, which is an alternative to *Rí Innse Gall*. That these are alternatives can be seen in the obits recorded in *AU* of Gothfrith son of Aralt, called *Rí Innse Gall*, and his son Ragnall called *Rí na nInnse*, in 989 and 1005 respectively. Also the Latin title of the medieval Lords of the Isles, *Dominus Insularum*, was a direct translation of *Rí na nInnse*, while their Gaelic title was *Rí Innse Gall*.

Gébennach may have been present at the battle in the rôle of Amlaíb Gothfrithson's under-king. This impression, although not present in the *ACL* entry, is gained from the account of the battle contained in the twelfth century chronicle attributed to Florence of Worcester⁷, who died in 1118.

"*Anlaf, the pagan king of the Irish and of many islands besides, at the instigation of his father-in-law Constantine, king of the Scots, entered the mouth of the river Humber with a powerful fleet. King Æthelstan and his brother, Edmund the atheling, met him with their army at a place called Brunanburh; and after a battle which lasted from daybreak until evening, slew 5 reguli and 7 earls, whom the enemy had brought with them as auxiliaries.*"

Florence, or whoever compiled the chronicle, derived his information from many different sources, including a now lost version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. F.M.Stenton⁸ regarded Florence's chronicle as an important text, pointing to the miscellaneous character of the chronicler's materials which increased the positive value of the work. This particular account of the

⁷*Florentii Wigorniensis Monachi Chronicon Ex Chronicis* ed. B.Thorpe (1848-9)

⁸Stenton *Anglo-Saxon England*, 691-2

Battle of Brunanburh contains three items of valuable information from a lost source, found nowhere else. These are that: Constantine was Amlaíb's father-in-law, Amlaíb entered the Humber on his way to the battle, and Amlaíb was the *Hiberniensium multarumque insularum rex*, "king of the Irish and the many islands", which last doubtless included the Hebrides.

Item one is intrinsically likely, and is accepted by A.P.Smyth⁹. Constantine was in alliance with Amlaíb at Brunanburh, and it would have been natural for that relationship to have been cemented by marriage. Doubts have been expressed about whether a sea-force coming from Dublin would have sailed up an east coast river. However, it had to join with Constantine's Scottish army which would have been based in the north, and Smyth¹⁰ has suggested, convincingly, that the major communication route between Dublin and York lay across the central belt of Scotland. It is possible, therefore, that Amlaíb's fleet sailed up the Clyde, dragged its ships across to the Forth, and was joined by the Scottish army. The combined force then continued on its way, sailing down the east coast towards the Humber.

As the first two items of otherwise unknown material are acceptable, and it is postulated that all three came from the same lost source, weight is added to the likelihood of the third piece of information also being likely, with the caveat that Amlaíb was not, of course, king of the Irish, but rather of the Scandinavians in Ireland. It looks as if, by 937 the Dublin kings, in the person of Amlaíb Gothfrith's son, had reestablished, if they had ever lost, overlordship of the Hebrides. Gébennach, posited *Rí Innse Gall*, would then presumably be included in the number of the *reguli*, who

⁹Smyth *Warlords*, 192

¹⁰Smyth *ibid.*, 194-5. 198

were acting as Amlaíb's auxiliaries, perhaps one of the five dead *reguli*, since a possible successor to Gébennach is named in 941. Gébennach¹¹, with his Gaelic fore-name, may be further evidence that the *Rí Innse Gall* tended to come from amongst the Gall-Gaidheil, as suggested for Gofraid mac Fhergusa and Caittil Find.

The wording of the Brunanburh entry in *AU* would tend to confirm the impression that Amlaíb was the leading figure in the battle and over-king of all the *Goill* who accompanied him to Brunanburh.

Bellum ingens lacrimabile atque horribile inter Saxones atque Nordmannos crudeliter gestum est, in quo plurima milia Nordmannorum que non numerata sunt, ceciderunt, sed rex cum paucis euassit, .i. Amlaiph. Ex altera autem parte multitudo Saxonum cecidit. Adalstan autem rex Saxonum, magna uictoria ditatus est.

“A great, lamentable and horrible battle was cruelly fought between the Saxons and the Norsemen, in which several thousands of Norsemen, who are uncounted, fell, but their king, Amlaíb, escaped with a few followers. A large number of Saxons fell on the other side, but Athelstan, king of the Saxons, enjoyed a great victory.”

If Amlaíb was commanding Gébennach and his Hebridean force in 937, there may have been Hebrideans involved in his successful assault on Northumbria in 939, and in his further campaigns in England, although their presence is not mentioned specifically in any source.

Corroborative evidence for the link between Dublin and the Hebrides, during this period, appears in 941, when the Uí Fhailgi inflicted a rout on the Scandinavians of Dublin, and *FM*, in their notice of this battle, record the death of a certain figure called Áed Albanach.

¹¹Gébennach is actually a Gaelic nickname ‘he of the fetters/bondages’, but some Gaelic fore-names are of this type, for example, Selbach

Cathraoineadh for Ghallaibh Atha Cliath ria nUibh fFailge .i. ria nAimhirgin mac Cionaetha, tighearna Ua fFailge, dú i ttorcair míle do Ghallaibh im Aodh nAlbanach co toisechaibh iomdha cen mu tháromh.

“A battle was gained over the Scandinavians of Áth Cliath by the Uí Fhailge ie. by Amargein son of Cináed, Lord of the Uí Fhailge, where there fell a thousand of the Scandinavians, with Áed Albanach, and many chieftains besides him.”

Not only does Áed bear a Gaelic forename but his epithet means ‘Scotsman’ which, considering that he is apparently numbered amongst the *Goill*, strongly suggests that he was one of the Gall-Gaidheil from western Scotland. There is an intriguing piece of evidence, from a tradition contained in an independent source, which suggests he was, in fact, successor to Gébennach, as *Rí Innse Gall*. In the *Caithréim Cellacháin Caisil*¹², a historical saga composed in the second half of the eleventh century, commemorating the life of Cellachán, who was king of Munster until his death in 951, there is a reference to a meeting between Cellachán and a woman called Mor,

“Mor ingen Áedha meic Eachach misi,” ar an ingen, “ingen righ Innsi Gall”.

“Mor daughter of Áed son of Echu am I”, said the woman, “daughter of the king of the Hebrides.”¹³

CCC will be referred to twice more in this chapter, because it contains two other pieces of evidence relating to the Hebrides, found nowhere else¹⁴. It

¹²*Caithréim Cellacháin Caisil* ed. A. Bugge (1905)

¹³*Ibid*, 75

¹⁴R.T.Christiansen *Vikings and the Viking Wars in Irish and Gaelic Tradition* (1930), 392, thought there was probably some historical truth in the *CCC*.

seems likely that Áed mac Echach was the same person as Áed Albanach¹⁵. The identification fits chronologically, and it would explain why the latter's death was considered worthy of mention in *FM*. If he was the king of the Hebrides, his presence in Dublin would be explained by the fact that he was fighting for his over-lord, the king of Dublin, as his predecessor Gébennach had done at Brunanburh. This identification may also provide an explanation for an apparently unique and unprecedented event, the attack on the Hebrides by Muirchertach mac Néill, king of the Northern Uí Néill, in 941, which is recorded in *CS*.

Murcablach la Muircertach mac Néill go ttug orgain a hinsib Alban.

“A fleet was fitted out by Muirchertach mac Néill and he brought plunder from the islands of Scotland.”

If Áed Albannach were *Rí Innse Gall*, it could be postulated that his death caused considerable turmoil in the archipelago, creating a situation which could have been exploited by Muirchertach, for the latter was in competition with the Scandinavians of Dublin. According to *AU*, he had, in alliance with Donnchad mac Flainn, king of Tara, besieged Dublin and ravaged the surrounding lands of the Scandinavians in 938, and, in 943, he was killed in battle by the Dubliners in Fir Rois. His raid on the Hebrides may have been an extension of his efforts against the Kingdom of Dublin, striking at its sub-kingdom, weakened by the loss of its king.

The position of the kings of Dublin as overlords of the Hebrides may have been contested by Eirikr Bloodaxe, ex-king of Norway, for a period. He arrived in northern England from Norway, after being driven out of the kingdom by his brother and popular revolt in 947, and, due to his

¹⁵I do not believe this identification has been made before.

status, was immediately accepted as king of York. *Heimskringla*¹⁶, the thirteenth century *magnum opus* of the Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson, records the tradition that, after Eiríkr's abandonment of York (placed inaccurately by this work during the reign of King Edmund (939x946), but which actually took place in 948 due to the pressure exerted by King Eadred) Eiríkr went to the Hebrides. He was accompanied by Jarls Arnkel and Erlend of Orkney, because the Orkney islands were already under his control. In the Hebrides, many Hebrideans reportedly joined his forces.

“The word passed about that King Edmund (recte Eadred) would put another king over Northumbria. And when King Eiríkr learned that, he went into western piracy; and he took with him from the Orkneys Arnkel and Erlend, sons of Turf-Einar. Then he went to the Hebrides; and there were many vikings and war-kings there, and they joined the army of King Eiríkr.”¹⁷

This tradition of Hebrideans joining Eiríkr's army may be evidence for his taking over the archipelago, because there is an independent reference in the CCC which mentions a certain *Éiric, Rí na n-innse* “Eiríkr, king of the Isles”, who was contemporary with Cellachán of Caisil. A. Bugge¹⁸ believed this to be Eiríkr Bloodaxe. Smyth¹⁹ agrees, and he suggests that Eiríkr used Orkney and the Hebrides as a base during the period of his exile from York, between 948 and 952.

If Eiríkr did indeed take control of the Hebrides, then these four years saw the first and last occasion in which York, Orkney and the Hebrides were drawn together under one controlling authority. Evidence for

¹⁶Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla* ed. B. Aðalbjarnarson, (*Íslensk fornrit*, xxvi-xxviii 1941-51)

¹⁷Translation from ES i., 459

¹⁸Bugge *Caithréim*, 148

¹⁹Smyth *York and Dublin*, 176

Eirík's overlordship of the Hebrides may exist in the land measurement called *peighinn* 'pennyland'. At some point in the tenth century²⁰, a tax of one penny was raised on the pre-existing land-unit of the *tech* 'house' in western Scotland, and the land-unit then became known as *peighinn*. As pennylands also exist in the Northern Isles, although in groups of 18 rather than 20, a common origin for all pennylands could be posited. The control of both areas by Eiríkr between 948 and 952 would fit the bill. To exercise his authority, he may have raised a tax of one penny on the pre-existing land units in both areas²¹.

Authority over the Hebrides would appear to have reverted to Dublin at some date after the death of Eirík in 954 at Stainmore²², because, according to *AU*, Hebridean forces can be seen aiding Amlaíb Cuarán at the Battle of Tara in 980.

Cath Temrach ria Mael Sechnaill m. nDomnaill for Gallaibh Atho Cliath ocus na nIndsedh i rroladh derg-ar Gall ocus nert Gall a hÉrinn, dú i torchair Ragnall m. Amhlaim m. rig Gall, ocus Conamhal m. airri Gall, ocus alii multi.

"The battle of Tara [was won] by Mael Sechnaill son of Domnall against the foreigners of Áth Cliath and the Isles, and very great slaughter was inflicted on the foreigners therein, and foreign power [ejected] from Ireland [as a result]. There fell therein Ragnall son of Amlaíb, the son of the king of the foreigners, and Conamal, son of a tributary king of the foreigners, and many others."

This annal entry seems to be expressed in a symmetrical way, forming a simple pattern: the *Goill* of Dublin are mentioned along with their most important casualty, Ragnall, son of Amlaíb Cuarán, and, similarly, the *Goill*

²⁰See supra, 139-40.

²¹As no penny-lands exist in the Isle of Man, it would not appear to have been linked with the Hebrides at this time.

²²The 10th century poem *Eiríksmál* relates that Eiríkr was accompanied to Valhøll by five kings. The 13th century Icelandic manuscript *Fagrskinna*, interpreted this to mean that Eiríkr was joined on the campaign, which ended at Stainmore, by five kings. In Snorri's *Hákonar saga góða* they were provided with names. A. Seeberg, in a study of these five kings, suggested that the stanza was misinterpreted by later writers. He believes the five kings owe their presence in Valhøll to Eirík's own action, and may be a reference to the five kings killed at Brunanburh, as Eirík might have fought there on Athelstan's side. These figures, which Snorri calls Gottorm, Ívar, Hárek, Sigurd and Rognvald, cannot be used to show that the *Rí Innse Gall* was present or killed at Stainmore. See A. Seeberg *Saga-Book* xx (1978-9) 106-113

of the Isles are noted with, presumably, their most serious loss, Conamail *mac airrí Gall*. Linking Conamail with the Hebrideans is logical. His father appears to have been a ruler of a kingdom of the *Goill* subject to the overall authority of the king of Dublin. This can have been none other than the Hebrides, because, by 980, Amlaíb Cuarán was no longer king of any English territory, and no *Goill* from other Scandinavian centres in Ireland are mentioned as being present. Conamail's Gaelic name also hints strongly at his Hebridean origin. If Conamail's father was king of the Hebrides²², we would appear to have here an explicit expression of the status of the *Rí Innse Gall* in relation to the *Rí Átha Cliath* (or *Rí Gall*) in 980. The former is the *airrí* 'tributary king' of the latter.

Corroboration that Dublin and the Hebrides were again closely linked, at least by 980, is found in *AT*, where it states that, after the Battle of Tara, Amlaíb Cuarán went to Iona in penitence and pilgrimage. He died, and was presumably buried there. That Amlaíb chose to make a pilgrimage to Iona would accord with his position as over-king of the Hebrides.

It is impossible to ascertain exactly when this reassertion of Dublin overlordship occurred, whether it was immediately after the death of Eiríkr in 954, or at some later point closer to 980. However, during this intervening period, links between Dublin and the Hebrides seem to continue in the person of the shadowy Mac Amlaíb who, according to *FM*, came to Ireland, in 962, with a fleet of Hebrideans, called *Lagmainn*²³. Mac

²²Conamail was perhaps the son of Gofraid mac Arailt, because he was probably *Rí Innse Gall* at this date, see *infra*, 216. The *Annals of Tigernach* appear to contradict this, because they state that Conamail was the son of *Gilli Airi*. However, although *Gilli* is an appropriate name for a Hebridean, the annalist seems merely to have miscopied *airri Gall*.

²³For a discussion of the *Lagmainn* see *supra* 97-101

Amlaíb's patronymic suggests a Dublin connection. If a figure is known solely by a patronymic, this often indicates that he had a well-known father, and Dublin provides the two most famous candidates, Amlaíb Gothfrith's son and Amlaíb Cuarán..

There is also evidence that the Hebrides were in contact with the Norse town of Limerick²⁴ during the tenth century: for example, in *CCC* mention is made of the death, in Limerick, of a hero called Morann from Lewis.

Morann mongach muintergharbh moirmenmach .i. mac righ loingsi Leoghasa

"Long-haired, high spirited Morann of the fierce people, ie. the son of the "fleet-king" of Lewis.²⁵"

Limerick was founded by the Scandinavians at some unknown point in the ninth century²⁶, but its period of importance dates from the early part of the tenth century, when there is evidence that Limerick and Dublin, the two major Scandinavian colonies in Ireland, were in competition. According to *AU*, in 924, Gothfrith, king of Dublin, made an expedition to Limerick, but was driven away by Tomrair, son of Ailche, with the loss of a very large company. In 928, Tomrair took the Limerick fleet east to Loch Neagh, into the area that could be considered the Dublin sphere of influence. In 937, according to *FM*, a triumphant return was made by the Dubliners, when Amlaíb Gothfrithson defeated the Limerick people at Lough Ree, and, according to *CS*, carried them off to Dublin, thereby proving that Dublin was the preeminent Scandinavian settlement in Ireland. This defeat of

²⁴See J.C.H.R.Steenstrup *Normannerne* (1882), 213 and Walsh *Scandinavian relations*, 25 for the connection of Limerick and the Hebrides.

²⁵Can also be translated "son of the Lewis exiles" or "marauders".

²⁶For a brief résumé of the history of Limerick see Walsh *Scandinavian relations*, 23-5.

Limerick ensured Amlaíb could set off for Brunanburh in the knowledge that his main Scandinavian rival in Ireland had been quashed.

A. Walsh²⁷ believed that the two towns had no connections during the tenth century, but, in fact, after 937 it looks as if the contrary was true. The obit of Aralt, who was the first king of Limerick after Amlaíb's victory, appears in 940 in *CS* and shows him to have been a member of the Uí Ímair.

Aralt mac .h. Imair .i. mac Sitric, Rí gall Luimnigh do marbadh la Connachtoibh.

“Aralt son of the grandson of Ímar, ie. son of Sitric, king of the foreigners of Limerick, was killed by Connachtmen.”

His predecessors in the kingship, Tomrair and a certain Colla, the grandson of Barid, who died in 933, on the other hand, did not belong to the royal kindred of Dublin. This opens up the reasonable possibility that Aralt was placed in the kingship of Limerick by Amlaíb Gothfrith's son.

One of Aralt's sons arrived in Ireland in 974, according to *AT*, with a large force at the mouth of the River Shannon.

Macc Arailt co mmórthinól mór timchell hErend coro ort Inis Cathaig, ocus ruc Ímair lais i mbrait esse.

“The son of Aralt made a circuit of Ireland with a great company, and plundered Innis Cathaig and brought Ímar from it into captivity”.

The fact that Mac Arailt took Ímar, who was the king of Limerick, captive, suggests he was attempting to regain control of the town. *FM* add more

²⁷Walsh *ibid*, 24

detail including the name of Aralt's son, and the fact that he is leading a force from the Hebrides.

Orgain Inse Cáthaigh do Mhagnus, mac Arailt co Llagmannaibh na ninnsedh imbi, ocus Iomar ticchearna Gall Luimnigh do brith esti, ocus sárughadh Seanáin imbi.

“The plundering of Inis Cáthaig by Magnus mac Aralt with the Lagmainn of the Islands along with him, and Imar lord of the Goill of Limerick was carried off from the island and the violation of Seanan thereby.”

This association of Magnus with the Hebrideans finds corroboration in a list preserved by Florence of Worcester of the various kings of Britain who attended a parley in Chester in 973. Magnus' true position as *Rí Innse Gall* is made clear. He is here called Maccus²⁸.

“Some time afterwards, after sailing round northern Britain with a huge fleet, he (King Edgar) landed at the city of Chester; and eight underkings met him, as he commanded them, and swore that they would stand by him as his vassals, both on land and on sea: namely Kenneth, king of the Scots; Malcolm, king of the Cumbrians; *Maccus, king of the very many islands*; and other five:—Dufnal, Sigfrith, Higuél, Jacob, Ulfkil.”²⁹

This account is based on a statement in Ælfric's tenth century life of St Swithun, where it was claimed,

²⁸This is perhaps a more correct form of his name, for he is known as Madog, Macht or Mactus in Welsh sources. However, there is no doubt that the same figure is being alluded to in each of these cases.

²⁹*Florentii Wigorniensis*, 142-3

“All the kings of the Cymry and the Scots that were in the island, came to Edgar, once upon a day, being eight kings, and they all bowed themselves to Edgar’s rule.”³⁰

However, as can be seen, Ælfric does not record the names of the kings. The essential accuracy of Florence’s twelfth century list is believed by F.M.Stenton³¹, although the tone of the entry as a whole is propagandist. King Edgar of Wessex was in no position to command the attendance of Kenneth II, king of Scots, or of Magnus *plurimarum rex insularum*, at Chester. There was no Anglo-Saxon suzerainty over Britain. A.P.Smyth³² is surely correct in considering this event to have been the equivalent of the Irish *ríg-dál* ‘royal conference’ or ‘meeting of kings’. Smyth believes Kenneth may have attended in order to gain recognition of his hold on English territory, including Lothian. Presumably, the other kings also had political motives for attending. It may be possible to ascertain what Magnus’ were.

If one were to postulate that Magnus controlled the Isle of Man, he might have a good reason to attend the conference on his own behalf. For one thing, the presence of Edgar’s fleet at Chester would have presented a worrying prospect. True, the term *Innse Gall* means the Hebrides in Modern Gaelic, and does not include Man. However, even if that was always the case, it does not preclude Magnus from having ruled the island. The title *Rí Innse Gall* was applied to his brother and successor Gofraid in his obit in 989 in *AU*, but he was known also as the king of Man in Norse sources. Gofraid Méréanach, who is elsewhere known as Godfrey Crovan, king of

³⁰ Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*, ed. W.W.Skeat (1881), 468

³¹ Stenton *Anglo-Saxon England*, 369

³² Smyth *Warlords*, 228

Man and the Isles, is called in his obit of 1095, in *AI, Rí Átha Cliath ocus Inse Gall*.

If Magnus held Man, this would provide a reason for the arrival of Edgar's fleet in Chester in the first place: perhaps he was replying to the threat that the former posed to the western sea-board of England. If Magnus' position on Florence's list correctly reflects his power in relation to the other kings, he would have posed a substantial threat to western England. He is placed after Kenneth king of Scots, and Malcolm, king of Strathclyde, but ahead of Iago (called Jacob) king of Gwynedd.

Evidence that Magnus ruled not only the Hebrides, but Man as well, is to be seen in the fact that he and his brother Gofraid, according to the Welsh annals, attacked Anglesey. In 971 according to *AC*

"Anglesey was devastated by the sons of Harald"

while in 971 and 972 according to *BT*.

"Madog son of Harald ravaged Penmon."

"Godfrey son of Harald ravaged the island of Anglesey."

At first sight, it might seem strange that a son of a *rí Gall Luimnigh*, 'king of the Foreigners of Limerick', came to rule the Hebrides, but it is possible to ascertain how it came about. It is reasonable to surmise that his membership of the Uí Ímair, who ruled Dublin, worked positively in his favour. Indeed, it can be posited that, as with Aralt his father, who may have been placed in the kingship of Limerick, so with Magnus; perhaps he was placed in *Innse Gall*. He appears to have been the first of Uí Ímair to hold the kingship of the Isles directly, or at least, he is the first

ruler who can be positively identified as belonging to this kindred. There is no evidence that Gébennach or Áed Albannach belonged to this family. If this suggestion of placement is accurate, it would provide a *tempus ante quem* of 971 for the reassertion of Dublin control of the Hebrides, which is when the sons of Harald first appeared in the annalistic record. If Amlaíb Cuarán had to place members of the Uí Ímair in the Isles, it would suggest that there was some difficulty in regaining the allegiance of the Hebrideans and the overlordship of the Isles after the episode with Eiríkr Bloodaxe.

Magnus' brother Gofraid continued to carry out raids. According to *BT* in 980, Gothfrith, who was now probably ³³ *Rí Innse Gall*, raided north-west Wales in association with Custennin, son of Iago.

“Custennin ap Iago and Godfrey son of Harald ravaged Llyn and Angelsey”

This is evidence that Gofraid was getting involved in, and seeking some benefit from, the internal struggles of the Kingdom of Gwynedd. Custennin's father, Iago, had been king, but the kingdom had not passed to him. It had instead gone to Hywel ab Ieuf, king of Gwynedd from 979 to 985. This attack by Gofraid, and his later ones, reinforce the impression gained from Magnus' career that the Isle of Man was now controlled by *rí Innse Gall*, and indeed that it may have formed his base by the 980s.

According to *ASC*, in 980 there was a raid carried out on Cheshire and Chester by unnamed assailants, but probably by Gofraid from his posited base in Man. If so, it accords with King Edgar's attempts to come

³³No further mention is made in the sources of Magnus, so it can be assumed that he was now dead, leaving his brother Gofraid as king. The *AI* entry for 984 mentions the sons of Aralt, which might mean that Magnus still lived, but it is more likely to mean that Gofraid had another otherwise unattested sibling.

to terms with Magnus in the preceeding decade. Edgar had died in 975, however, and the weaker Æthelred had acceded to the English throne in 978. A simultaneous raid was made on the east of England, at Thanet, by the Danes. Stenton³⁴ thought it was unlikely to be mere coincidence that, within two years of Æthelred's accession, Scandinavian raiding parties were again attacking England. Gofraid was probably making use of the opportunity offered by a weak English king. If so, 980 was a busy year for Gofraid, because he may also have been in Ireland, leading the Hebridean forces at the Battle of Tara.

There is further evidence from the annals that Gofraid was an energetic figure, because he can be seen to be involved in other actions on both sides of the Irish Sea. In 982, according to *AC*, he again attacked Wales. This time, however, it was the Kingdom of Dyved and the community of St David's (Menevia) that suffered severely.

“The devastation of Dyved and Menevia by Godfrey son of Harald”.

Two years later in 984, according to *AI*, he again got involved in Irish politics. He, and an unknown brother, allied with Brian Boróimhe to attack Dublin.

Muirfolud mór na macc nArait co Port Lárgge coro chloemclaisset giallu and ocus mc. Cennetich im imthaircc sluagid do dul ar Áth Cliath. Tarrinolta fir Muman co mMairg Laigen coro fortatatar in Gaill Hu Censelaig ocus co ndechatar dar muir.

“A great sea force by the sons of Aralt to Waterford and they and the son of Cennétig exchanged hostages there as a guarantee of both providing a hosting to attack Dublin. The men of Mumu assembled and proceeded to

³⁴Stenton *Anglo-Saxon England*, 374

Maig Laigen and the Gaill (Gofraid's men) overcame the Uí Chennselaig and went over (the) sea".

It is interesting that Gofraid should be involved in an alliance against Dublin, an action against the tenor of the behaviour of the *Rí Innse Gall* as posited so far, at least since Caittil Find in the 850s. The reason for this is perhaps best understood in the context of the aftermath of both the defeat of 980 at Tara, which *AU* make out was a major setback in terms of power and influence for the Dublin Norse, and of the death of the once powerful Amlaíb Cuarán in the succeeding year: perhaps the energetic Gofraid was making use of the opportunity provided by weakness in Dublin to assert his independence. His presence at the hosting in 984 surely shows he had nothing to fear from Dublin reprisals. It could even be postulated that Gofraid was seeking the kingship of Dublin for himself- he was, after all, descended from Ímar.

Gofraid was again in Wales in 987, when he undertook a major attack on Anglesey. It was a great success, and he captured a large number of prisoners. Maredudd ab Owain king of Dyfed, who had invaded and conquered Gwynedd in 986, was forced to retreat from the north to Ceredigion and Dyfed, with the remainder of his army, as *AC* relate,

"Gofraid son of Harald with the black gentiles devastated Mon and captured 2000 men; thereupon Maredudd took the remainder with him to Ceredigion and Dyfed."

However, his success did not last forever, and he met his death two years later in 989, as *AU* record, while engaged on yet another raid, this time in Ireland against the Dál Riata³⁵.

Gofraidh m. Arailt, ri Innsi Gall, do marbad i nDál Riatai.

"Gofraid son of Aralt king of Innse Gall was killed in Dál Riata".

Gofraid's reign, from the evidence of the native sources, can be considered a success, especially if, after the battle of Tara in 980, he became independent of the kingdom of Dublin. Under his leadership, his kingdom could energetically impinge itself on its neighbours by mounting attacks on Ireland, England, and Wales, with such notable success as the attack on Anglesey in 987, proving it must have been a force to be reckoned with. The geographical spread of Gofraid's actions again suggests that, as with his brother, the Isle of Man was a main base. However, despite Gofraid's attested military prowess, the Kingdom of the Isles itself suffered an attack by unidentified Scandinavians. They arrived off the coast of Dál Riata in 986, and, after suffering an initial defeat, Iona, the Christian centre of the kingdom which had not been attacked in 150 years, was plundered by them on Christmas night, and the abbot, according to *AU*, and/or the bishop, according to *AI*, was killed.

Í Coluim Cille do arcaim do Danaraibh aidhchi Notlaic coro marbsat in apaidh ocus .xii. uiros do sruithibh na cille.

³⁵ J.Bannerman (personal communication) considers that it is almost certainly Dál Riata in Ireland which is being referred to here, that is to say, the area of County Antrim, because the *Innsi Gall* themselves were part of Dál Riata in Scotland, and by this time too Dál Riata in Scotland had been subsumed in the new kingdom of Alba.

“Iona of Colum Cille was plundered by the Danes on Christmas Night, and they killed the abbot and fifteen of the elders of the monastery.”

Indred dano Coluim Cille do Gallaib, ocus na Inse do fásugud doib, ocus escop Iae do marbad doib.

“I Coluim Cille plundered by foreigners and the islands were wasted by them, and the bishop of Iona was killed by them.”

It is unclear who these ‘Danes’ were. The term ‘Dane’ appears for the first time in *AU* in this year and is used twice, twice again in 987, and once in 990, when Derry was burned, and then it was abandoned. If the term had been used instead of *Gall* in this four year period, then there was always the possibility that what we had was a new annalist, who preferred to call Scandinavians, ‘Danes’, rather than the normal *Goill*. However, in the same period, *Gall* is used three times: one instance refers to the Hebrideans, in Gofraid’s obit in 989 where he is entitled *Rí Innse Gall*, and the other two from the same annal refer to the Dubliners. This makes it likely that the term Dane was being applied as a generic term for ‘new’ Scandinavians, that is Scandinavians who were new to the annalist.

Two separate groups of Scandinavians seem to be involved. Firstly, there is the group that attacked Iona in 986. Perhaps Orkney men as suggested by B.E.Crawford³⁶. Whoever they were, according to *AU*, they suffered slaughter for their pains in the following year.

Ár mor forsna Danaraibh ro oirg I coro marbtha tri .xx. ocus tri cét díibh.

“A great slaughter of the Danes who plundered Iona, and three score and three hundred of them were slain.”

³⁶Crawford *Scand.Scot*, 66.

It is unknown who inflicted this slaughter, but perhaps the likelihood is that it was Gofraid. It was, after all, the religious centre of his kingdom that had been plundered, and he was probably Christian, although of Dublin stock. However, some must have survived and continued in the area, for Derry was not attacked by 'Danes' until 990. Secondly, in *AU*, under the year 987, there seems to be a group which aided Gofraid.

Cath Manand ria m. Aralt ocus riasna Danaraibh ubi mille occisi sunt

"The Battle of Manu won by Haraldsson, and by Danes, and a thousand were slain there"

There has been some confusion over this annal entry, because it has been misread. It was thought that it recorded a battle fought between Gofraid and the Danes in the Isle of Man, which of course would have suggested that there was but one group of Danes attacking Gofraid's kingdom. However, the annal actually says that Gofraid fought alongwith the Danes, that is on the same side³⁷. They are surely of a different origin from the Iona raiders. If the first group are identified as Orkneymen, it could be postulated that the second group of Danes were actually direct from Denmark, because fresh Danish raids had begun on England during the 980s.

The battle fought by Gofraid and his Danish allies is surely the same event as his successful attack recorded in the Welsh sources under that year, where Gofraid with the aid of the black gentiles attacked *Mon*, 'Anglesey'. *Manu* is the Gaelic form of *Mona* recorded by the Romans, which could be

³⁷For this to have been the record of a battle between Gofraid and the Danes, the preposition *eter* 'between' would have been used, as in the record of a battle in *AU* in the year 1004

Cath Craibe Telcha eter Ultu ocus Cenel nEogain
 "The battle of Craeb Tulcha between the Ulaid and the Cenél Eógain."

either the Isle of Man, or Anglesey. The latter is to be preferred in this case. It is surely a measure of its scale, and the extent of Gofraid's victory, that a Welsh battle got into the Irish annals.

After Gofraid's death in 989 the kingdom of the Isles was not immune from attack, if Man remained under the control of *rí Innse Gall*, for that island suffered two onslaughts in the next ten years. According to *AC* in 995, Svein Forkbeard of Denmark ravaged the island during his raids on England, and, in 1000, according to *ASC*, the fleet of Æthelfrith of England did the same. Ragnall, Gofraid's son, is known to have ruled the kingdom of the Isles, at some point after his father, because on his death in 1005, *AU* call him *Ragnall m. Gothraidh, Rí na nInnsi*, 'king of the Islands'. However, it is not known whether he succeeded his father immediately upon his death in 989, or whether there was a hiatus or period of instability.

The removal of Dublin influence in the Hebrides after the defeat of the Battle of Tara, as well as apparently allowing Gofraid the freedom to act independently, may have opened the door for the extension of influence into the Hebridean area from another quarter, namely, from Orkney. It was believed by P.A.Munch³⁸ that this amounted to a take-over of the Hebrides by Jarl Sigurðr the Stout, Jarl of Orkney (c.985-1014)³⁹, in 982. But there does not seem to be firm evidence for this view, not least because Sigurðr does not appear to have been jarl of Orkney as early as 982. However, the Norse sources do suggest that Sigurðr did take an interest in the archipelago. These sources seem to fall into two groups when it comes to quantifying this interest. *Orkneyinga Saga* and *Eyrbyggja Saga* combine to

³⁸P.A.Munch *Chronicon Regum Manniæ* (1860), 44

³⁹Sigurð's dates are from Crawford *Scand.Scot*, 65

suggest that Sigurðr did no more than harry the Hebrides and extort “Danegeld”, while the account in *Njál’s Saga*⁴⁰, of Sigurðr’s relationship with Gilli, a Hebridean noble, may make a case for believing Sigurðr actually had a more tangible influence in the archipelago. These sources are worth looking at, but the differences between them makes it difficult to come to an accurate assessment of Sigurðr’s contact with the Hebrides.

Orkneyinga Saga has surprisingly few traditions concerning Sigurðr, but what information it does have about his territories, although vague, suggests that the Hebrides did not form part of them.

“After Hlodvir, his son Sigurd took over the earldom. He was another great chieftain and ruled over several dominions. He was powerful enough to defend Caithness against the Scots and he used to go on viking expeditions every summer as well, plundering in the Hebrides, Scotland and Ireland.”⁴¹

The Hebrides are apparently grouped with Scotland and Ireland as the areas which Sigurðr did not rule: logically if the Hebrides had formed one of his several dominions, it is unlikely that Sigurðr would have raided them. The attack on Iona in 986 may have been one of Sigurðr’s raids.

Eyrbyggja saga records a tradition about Sigurðr’s contact with Man and the Hebrides, where Sigurðr can be seen to be extorting “Danegeld” from the people of Man.

“Jarl Sigurd Hlodvesson of Orkney had been raiding in the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. The Jarl forced the people of Man to pay him tribute, and once agreement had been reached, he sailed back to Orkney, leaving his agents to collect the tax, which was to be paid in refined silver.”⁴²

⁴⁰*Njál’s Saga* ed. E. Ól. Sveinsson (1954)

⁴¹*Orkneyinga Saga* Pálsson & Edwards, 36

⁴²*Eyrbyggja Saga* trans. H.Pálsson & P.Edwards (1989), 80

The context of the passage suggests that “tax” here does not mean the type due to a ruler, but rather the “one-off” payment expected by a raider in order to persuade him to cease his attacks, a form of payment favoured by the Danes in England in the tenth century. According to this tradition, the Hebrideans again do not seem to be under Sigurð’s control, because, when the ship carrying the “tax” is shipwrecked, the sailors entreat a passing Icelander called Thorodd to save them from the Hebrideans.

“Still they kept pressing them, for they were convinced that their lives and property were at stake and that the people of Ireland and the Hebrides where they had been raiding could easily make slaves of them.”⁴³

Njál’s saga contains a tradition of a raid on the Hebrides and Man during the reign of King Gofraid. Kari, a member of Sigurð’s bodyguard, and the Njálssons, after raiding extensively in the West of Scotland, battled King Gofraid, here called “of Man”, and defeated him.

“They raided around Angelsey in the south and all round the Hebrides, then made for Kintyre and landed there. They fought the inhabitants and gathered rich booty before returning to their ships. From there they went south to Wales and raided, and then to the Isle of Man, where they fought and defeated King Gudrod of Man, killing his son Dungal and taking good spoils. From there they headed north to Coll, where they met Jarl Gilli; he made them welcome and they stayed there for a while.”⁴⁴

⁴³Ibid, 80-1

⁴⁴*Njal’s Saga* trans. M.Magnusson & H.Pálsson (1960), 196

Now that the battle of *Manu* in 987 is seen to refer to Anglesey, there is no contemporary, native record of this attack on, and defeat of, Gofraid by an Orkney force, although there is nothing inherently unlikely about it.

Gilli, from whom the raiders of Man got hospitality, is a problematical figure, because his relationship with Sigurðr suggests that Sigurðr was the overlord of at least part of the Hebrides. Gilli's relationship with Sigurðr seems, in the saga, to be that of Sigurðr's friend and subordinate. *Njáls Saga* relates the tradition that tribute, apparently not "Danegeld", because there is no hint of extortion, was gathered by Sigurðr's bodyguard from him. From the context in the saga, this was supposed to be taking place during the reign of Gofraid.

"The ruler of Orkney at that time was Jarl Sigurd Hlodvisson. Kari was one of his retainers, and had been collecting tribute from Jarl Gilli in the Hebrides."⁴⁵

The closeness of the relationship between the two Jarls is made clear when Gilli sails to Orkney with Sigurðr's men and marries Sigurðr's sister.

"In the spring, Jarl Sigurd gave his sister Nereid to Jarl Gilli in marriage. Jarl Gilli then returned to the Hebrides."⁴⁶

It is possible that there is some truth behind these traditions concerning Gilli, and that Sigurðr was intriguing with powerful figures in the Hebrides during the reign of Gofraid, indeed it is inherently likely. Later history has many examples of disunity within the Hebrides, and magnates thereof seeking outside help against their rulers. However, the implication in

⁴⁵Ibid., 182

⁴⁶Ibid., 196

Njal's Saga that there was some kind of division between Man and the Hebrides during Gofraid's reign, with the Hebrideans, in the figure of Gilli, owing some kind of allegiance to Sigurðr, is a problem, because there does not seem in reality to have been such a division. On his death in 989, Gofraid is called *Rí Innse Gall*, which means, of course, that he was king over the Hebrides, not just of Man as *Njal's Saga* suggests. Therefore, either the tradition concerning Gilli is a chimaera, or perhaps more likely the internal chronology of the saga is erroneous, and Sigurðr may have formed his relationship with Gilli and taken tribute from the Isles or a part thereof as their overlord after the reign of Gofraid. It is not unusual for Icelandic sagas to place events in the reigns of the wrong foreign kings.

If the second possibility is accepted, and *Njal's Saga* was seen to contain genuine tradition, the extension of Sigurð's power into the Hebrides would, perhaps, have to be placed after the death of Ragnall Gofraid's son, in 1005. However, the sources are too unclear to form an accurate picture of Sigurð's contacts with the Hebrides, and to decide whether he ruled them or merely raided them on occasion.

As an addendum to this discussion of Sigurð's relationship with the Hebrides, there appears to be one interesting, but hardly historical, reference to Sigurðr as king of the Hebrides. It appears in the twelfth century Ulster cycle text *Cath Ruis na Ríg for Bóinn*⁴⁷.

In this tale, Conchobar, king of Ulster, decides to exact vengeance on the other four provinces of Ireland, so he sends word to his Norse friends to come and aid him. The story includes a list of these allies

⁴⁷*Cath Ruis na Ríg* ed. E.Hogan (1892). P.Mac Cana 'The Influence of the Vikings on Celtic Literature' in *PICCS*, 83 is of the view that the author of this work was almost certainly the man who wrote the versions of *Táin Bó Cuailgne* and *Mesca Ulad* found in the *Book of Leinster*, which, therefore, dates the work to the twelfth century.

amongst whom is a certain *Siugraid Soga ríġ Súdiam*. It would appear that this figure is Jarl Sigurðr. *Siugraid* is a Gaelicised form of *Sigurðr*, and although his normal epithet in Norse was *inn Digri* ‘the stout’, *soga* makes a plausible alternative. It appears to be a rendition of *ON.sugga* ‘sow’ and by extention ‘fat person’. J.Jakobsen⁴⁸ recorded that in Shetland *sogg* could mean a ‘fat, stout person’ as in the phrase, ‘a sogg o’ a body’. Apparently this text records, therefore, a hitherto unknown Norse variant of Sigurð’s epithet.

If this figure was Jarl Sigurðr, it is interesting that he is recorded as being king of *Súdiam*, because as P.MacCana⁴⁹ points out, this appears to be the dative plural of *Suðeyjum*, the Norse word for the Hebrides, so *Ríġ Súdiam* is a Gaelicised Norse version of *Rí Innse Gall*.

He appears in the list after two figures called *Brotor Roth* and *Brotor Fiúit*, which suggests that this story is based loosely on the reality of the Battle of Clontarf fought in 1014, where Scandinavians from many parts came to the aid of King Sitriuc of Dublin, including Jarl Sigurðr himself and Brotor, who was, according to *AU*, *toisech na loingsi Lochlannaighi*, “the chief of the Scandinavian fleet”. Considering that both Brotor and Sigurðr bear Norse epithets in this tale, it is possible that the author had access to a Norse tradition of the Battle of Clontarf, perhaps current in Dublin but now lost, in which it was claimed that Sigurðr was, by 1014, king of the Hebrides.

From the scraps of information gathered, it is therefore possible to build up a tentative picture of the political developments in the west of Scotland during the tenth century. It is unfortunate that much of this

⁴⁸J.Jakobsen *An Etymological Dictionary of the Norn Language in Shetland* (1928-32)

⁴⁹P.MacCana ‘The Influence of the Vikings’, 83

evidence is contained in narrative sources like *CCC*, of a generally late date. However, there does seem to be a certain coherency to the picture which lends it credence. The most important aspect is that the Hebrides and Dublin appear to have been intimately linked throughout much of the tenth century, and the *Rí Innse Gall* seems to have been subordinate to the *Rí Átha Cliath*.

From c.900 to c.950, there is some evidence for the presence of Gall-Gaidheil in Cumbria, who were presumably accompanied by the less apparent Zone 3 Hebrideans. Hebridean presence in Cumbria would be understandable if they were present in the armies of the Kings of Dublin, then attempting to rule Northern England. Gébennach, *Rí Innse Gall*, of unknown family origin, died at Brunnanburh in 937 while leading the Hebridean contingent for Amlaíb Gothfrith's son. His successor as *Rí Innse Gall*, Áed Albannach mac Echach, again of unknown family, met a similar fate when he fought alongside the Dubliners against the Uí Fhailge in 941.

These links were presumably maintained until the arrival of Eiríkr Bloodaxe, who, it can be argued, took over the Hebrides between 948 and 954. Amlaíb Cuarán was unable to reassert himself over York, but he apparently managed to do so over the Hebrides, because, in 980, a Hebridean contingent was defeated alongside his own at the Battle of Tara. Conamail, who was perhaps the son of Gofraid mac Arailt, *Rí Innse Gall*, died there, and his father's title *airrí Gall* makes explicit the relationship between the two kings. The sons of Arailt are probably evidence that Amlaíb regained control of the Hebrides, by placing members of his own kindred, the Uí Ímair, in the kingship.

Gofraid seems to have pursued an independent course after 980, as his hosting in favour of Brian Boru against Dublin in 984 would suggest,

and, in his person, the *Rí Innse Gall* definitely became a figure to be reckoned with.

Sigurðr, Jarl of Orkney, seems to have become interested in the Hebrides, during Gofraid's reign, but the nature of this interest is difficult to assess. However, it is possible that he started to wield influence in the archipelago by intriguing with some of the Hebridean magnates, particularly after the death of Ragnall Gofraid's son in 1005.

P.Sawyer¹ has argued, in some depth, that, in several respects, the cultures of the Gael and Norse, both representing outlying branches of Indo-European society which escaped the transforming power of the Roman Empire, were very similar. With reference to hierarchy in their societies, he states: "their social stratification- lords, freemen and slaves- was in practice identical"². As both the Gaels and the Norse had slaves, it is, perhaps, not unsurprising that there is evidence that the Gall-Gaidheil, a mixture of both peoples, also kept them. A comparison of slave-keeping in the two societies bears out Sawyer's impression, and clearly brings out the similarities between the two peoples with respect to slavery.

In Gaelic society³, the bottom rung was occupied by the *mug* 'male slave' and the *cumal* 'female slave'. They seem to have originated as prisoners of war, foreigners picked up by slave-traders, or people who could not pay a fine. However, by the ninth century, many were born into slavery. The rights of the slave were very restricted: he could not act as a witness, nor make any contract except under his master's orders; he had no legal protection against ill-treatment or death at the hands of his master.

Slavery appears to have been of considerable economic importance to Gaelic society. The number of references to slaves in Old Irish texts, for example in the law-tracts, sagas and saints' lives, indicates this; as does the use of the word *cumal* 'slave woman' as a unit of value (the honour-price of the *rí tuaithe*, the lowest level of king, was valued at seven *cumal*⁴). It appears that most of the menial work around the farm, like herding, was done by the *mug*, while the *cumal* worked at the quern and other domestic

¹P.Sawyer 'Vikings in Ireland', in *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. D.Whiteclock, R.McKitterick and D.Dumville (1982), 345-361

²Ibid, 359

³The information on slavery in Gaelic society is taken from ed. F.Kelly *A Guide to Early Irish Law* Vol 111 (1988), 95-98, 215-216

⁴G.Mac Niocaill *Ireland before the Vikings* (1972), 42

tasks. The author of the law-text *Di Astud Chirt ocus Dligid* was strongly disapproving of the release of slaves⁵, including it among the things that make a lord's corn, milk and fruit to fail. This suggests that the author regarded slavery as basic to the lord's prosperity.

In the Scottish context, the taking of slaves by Scottish kings on plundering expeditions in the North of England is probably a further indication of their economic value in Gaelic society. Malcolm II raided as far as the Tees in 949, seizing a multitude of people and cattle in the process⁶, while Malcolm III took slaves from Northumbria in 1061, 1065, 1070, 1077⁷. The Life of his queen Margaret, written by a contemporary, probably her confessor Turgot, tells of her concerns for Angles reduced to slavery "throughout the provinces of the Scots"⁸.

In Norse society, a person became a slave (usually *þræll* in Old Norse) in various ways⁹, for example, he could be born a slave, there being an indigenous hereditary caste of Scandinavian thralls, or he could be a freeman, usually foreign, captured in battle or on slave-raids; human beings were probably the commonest commodity that the Vikings dealt in.

Originally¹⁰, as in Gaelic society, the slave had extremely restricted rights. Indeed, legally he was not really a human being. He was a chattel, who could take no part in any business transaction or process of law. If he

⁵See F.Kelly, *Early Irish Law*, 96

⁶ES i, 452

⁷W.E.Kapelle, *The Norman Conquest of the North* (1979), 90, 92, 99, 124

⁸Translation from ES ii, 76.

⁹For an account of slavery in the various Scandinavian countries in English see R.Karras *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia* (1988), P.G.Foote & D.M.Wilson *The Viking Achievement* (1970), 65-78.

¹⁰In Iceland, the thrall appears to have had some legal recognition, and a more liberal attitude may have pertained under the new circumstances of the colonisation, Foote & Wilson *Viking Achievement*, 70. Christianity also seems to have effected modifications to traditional law.

was killed or injured, whether accidentally or on purpose, it was only necessary to make good his loss to his master. It appears that the law upheld the arbitrary right of the owner to treat with and dispose of his slaves as he saw fit.

Before the development of a pool of landless labour, ie. before the 11th century in Iceland and later in the other Scandinavian countries¹¹, thralls must have been of great economic value and, as in Gaelic society, they did the menial farm work, like dunging fields and herding. There seem to have been large numbers of them, although what proportion of the population they constituted is impossible to ascertain.

Given that slavery was a prominent feature of Gaelic and Norse societies and, given the nature of these societies, economically essential, it should come as no surprise that we have documentary evidence to show that the Gall-Gaidheil practised the custom of slave keeping. In *Landnámabók*¹² appear the names of several notable thralls freed by Auðr, daughter of Ketill Flat-nose, whom we have identified as a Gall-Gaidheil¹³, and given land. These were Vífill, whose granddaughter Guðríður married Eiríkr the Red's son Hundi, specifically described as Scots, and whose name may be a translation of a Gaelic name like Cuilen or Madadh¹⁴, Sǫkkólfr, from whom many people descended, and Erpr, son of an unattested Scottish earl called Meldún (Gaelic Máel-dúin) and an Irish princess Myrgjol (Gaelic Muirgel), from whom a famous Icelandic kindred called the Erplings descended. Erpr, with his potentially Pictish name¹⁵, was said to be captured along with his

¹¹This is the reason put forward by R.Karras for the decline of slavery in Scandinavia, R.Karras 'Slavery' in *Medieval Scandinavia: an Encyclopedia* (1993), 599

¹²Benediktsson, *Landnámabók*, 138-142

¹³See supra 83-85

¹⁴See *Landnámabók*, 141 n.7

¹⁵See *Landnámabók*, 138 n.3, it could be the Pictish name *Erp* or a version of the Norse name *Jarpr*.

mother by Jarl Sigurðr the Mighty of Orkney, after he had killed Earl Meldún in battle somewhere on the mainland of Scotland. Auðr purchased these slaves in Orkney at a great price. Although they are a useful indication of slave-keeping amongst the Gall-Gaidheil, they cannot be regarded as run-of-the-mill slaves. We must presume that Auðr had other thralls whose names have not been recorded because they were neither the originators of Icelandic families, nor people of high status fallen on hard times.

Other Gall-Gaidheil settlers in Iceland brought slaves with them. A tradition which survives to indicate the existence of these anonymous minions is that concerning Kýlan¹⁶. He and his brother Kalman are likely to have been Gall-Gaidheil, as they bear the Gaelic names Cuilén and Colmán and are described as *suðreyiskur* "Hebridean". Kýlan had a son called Kári, who egged on a thrall to slay a certain Karli Konálsson, another Gall-Gaidheil judging by his father's name. After the thrall had done the deed, Kári slew him. Kýlan was murdered in revenge by Karli's son.

Another story concerns Ketill *gufa* Ørlygsson¹⁷. He had been on *vestrvíking*, and had taken Irish slaves called Þormóðr, Flóki, Kóri, Svartr and Skorrar. Ketil's nickname *gufa* appears to be the Gaelic word *goba* "smith", which suggests he ought to be included amongst the Gall-Gaidheil. If he is so regarded, this could indicate that the Gall-Gaidheil were taking part in slave-raiding in Ireland or buying slaves from Dublin¹⁸. *Landnámabók*¹⁹ also records that Ásmundur, the grandson of a Hebridean Váli the Strong, who may or may not have been a Gall-Gaidheil, was buried in a Howe in a ship with a thrall to accompany him.

¹⁶*Landnámabók*, 82

¹⁷*Landnámabók*, 166-169

¹⁸The names of the thralls are Norse, if accurately remembered, which is unlikely, and may have been given them by Ketill: if so Ketill would appear to have been at the Norse end of the Gall-Gaidheil spectrum.

¹⁹*Landnámabók*, 102-105

It is reasonable to assume that the Gall-Gaidheil inherited a hereditary class of Gaelic slaves from their ancestors, the pre-Norse Gael of Western Scotland, along with Norse thralls brought from Norway by their Norwegian ancestors. The assumption that the Gall-Gaidheil had Gaelic slaves need not lead us to reassess the relationship between their two constituent peoples. There does not appear to be anything in the Icelandic written evidence which would make us reevaluate our assessment of the relationship between the Norse and Gael in Zones 1 and 2, developed in the thesis: because Auðr had two Scottish thralls²⁰, it does not follow that the Gaelic population of these Zones was enslaved by the Norse. The Icelandic evidence actually indicates the importance of the Gaelic cultural component in the make-up of the Gall-Gaidheil, ie. Gaelic nick- and first names and Celtic Christianity. It seems entirely possible, however, that the pre-Norse inhabitants of Zone 3 were enslaved. This would provide a cogent explanation for the apparently complete norsification of this Zone.

Thralls from Scotland are not a particularly noticeable feature in *Landnámabók*, although there is the example of the thralls taken by Hallsteinn Þórólfsson²¹ on a raid in Scotland. Irish thralls are more prominent²². We have already mentioned the Irish thralls of Ketill gufa Ørlygsson. The most famous story regarding thralls in *Landnámabók* is probably that concerning Hjørleifr²³, foster-brother of Ingólfr Arnarson, Iceland's first settler. He harried in Ireland and got hold of ten thralls there. The names of five were recorded, Dufþakr, Geirrøðr, Skjaldbjörn, Halldórr and Drafdittr. Then he sailed to Iceland. There his thralls rebelled and

²⁰Indeed, one of these, Erpr, and perhaps both, appears to have come from some mainland territory.

²¹*Landnámabók*, 164

²²However, it ought to be realised that even Irish thralls are not mentioned very often. Thralls were, after all, not likely to be mentioned unless under exceptional circumstances.

²³*Landnámabók*, 41-45

murdered him. They then sailed off to some islands. Ingólfr followed them and slew them there, after which the islands were known as the *Vestmannaeyjar* "Islands of the Westmen (Irish)".

Thralls with an Irish link, such as those above, probably made up the majority of the population of Celtic slaves, postulated by some, to have existed in large numbers in Iceland, although thralls owned by Gall-Gaidheil and other Hebridean settlers in Iceland would have formed their part.

There has long been a debate about the Celtic component in the early Icelandic population²⁴. Although only about 2% of the names in *Lundnámabók* are Gaelic, this has not discouraged the scholar J.Steffensen²⁵ from estimating that 20% of the first inhabitants of Iceland were Celtic slaves²⁶, a further 10% -20% being free Celtic settlers. A.Agnarsdóttir and R.Árnason²⁷ have further argued that, given the great demand for manpower during the settlement period, the percentage of slaves may have been as high as 30% - 40%. The difficult genetic evidence appears to corroborate the suggestion that the Icelanders have a large component of non-Norwegian blood in their veins²⁸. With regard to blood-group frequencies, blood-group O is most common in Iceland, while A is least frequent: this is the same situation as in Ireland and Scotland, but the reverse of that in Norway.

²⁴For a thorough account of the debate see G.Sigurðsson "Gaelic Influence in Iceland" *Studia Islandica* 46 (1988), 24-40

²⁵J.Steffensen "Tölfræðilegt mat á líffræðilegu gildi frásagna af ætt og þjóðerni landnemanna", in *Menning og meinsemdir* (1975), 100

²⁶C.Williams believed, however, that slaves did not make up such a high percentage of the Icelandic population see C.Williams *Thralldom in Ancient Iceland* (1937), 36. He estimated there were never more than 2000 at any one time, i.e. 3.3%. P.Foote has also argued that slaves were never numerous or important in Iceland see P.Foote "Þrælahald á Íslandi" in *Saga* 15 (1977), 59-60, 72

²⁷A.Agnarsdóttir & R.Árnason "Þrælahald á Þjóðveldisöld" in *Saga* 21 (1983), 20

²⁸For a discussion of this subject see G.Sigurðsson, Gaelic Influence, 35-40.

Unfortunately, we do not yet sufficiently understand genetic information to ascertain the exact percentage of Celt to Norwegian in Icelandic ancestry. This can be seen by the simple fact that different genetic tests give different results. E.A.Thompson's²⁹ study, based on five serological loci, suggested the unlikely conclusion that the Icelandic nation was almost totally Celtic in origin, while E.M.Wisjman³⁰ by making certain assumptions about genetic drift and sampling error, estimated that, of the early settlers, 86% were of Norwegian origin and only 14% of "Irish".

However, it is hard to ignore the genetic differences between the Icelanders and the Norwegians, and a large component of Celtic slaves in the original population would certainly have aided the settlement of Iceland. If there was such, it is probably to the Dublin slave-market that we should look for the supply rather than to the Gall-Gaidheil, because, from the 860s, there is evidence that the Dubliners took part, for the first time, in large slave-raids on Celtic territories. P.Holm³¹, who has produced a stimulating study of the Dublin slave-trade, believes the evidence shows that it was Olaf, king of Dublin, who initiated the Viking practice of large-scale slave-taking. According to AU, in 869 he plundered and burned Armagh, killing or taking prisoner 1000 people³². This, according to Holm³³, was the first major supply to the postulated slave-market of Dublin. The next major supply came with Olaf and Ivar's triumphant return to Dublin in 871 with 200 ships,

²⁹E.A.Thompson "The Icelandic Admixture Problem" in *Annals of Human Genetics* 37, 77-79

³⁰E.M.Wisjman "Techniques for estimating genetic admixture and applications to the problem of the origins of the Icelanders and the Ashkenazi Jews", in *Human Genetics* 67, 441-48

³¹P.Holm "The Slave Trade of Dublin" in *Peritia* 5 (1986), 317-345

³²H.Pálsson has suggested that Hjørleif's slaves may have come from amongst those taken from Armagh in 869. See H.Pálsson "Vesturviking Hjørleifs", in *Saga II* (1954-58), 311

³³Holm, Slave Trade, 321

after their sacking of Dumbarton in Strathclyde. Holm³⁴ suggests that military tactics do not imply large-scale slave-raiding in the period 800 to 850, but that the political situation in the 860s made it imperative for Olaf to prove his bravery and prowess and slave-raiding was an expression of this. Sigurðsson³⁵ has suggested that there was a link between this boom in the slave-trade and Icelandic settlement: as these events were virtually contemporaneous, colonization may have been encouraged by the availability of slaves to help break new land.

Finally, it is more than likely that the inhabitants of Western Scotland benefited by their close relationship with Dublin and had easy access to the Dublin slave-market. Perhaps we can see the presence of the Gaelic place-name element *airge* "shieling" in Norse compounds in the Outer Hebrides as evidence of Gaelic slaves taken thither from Dublin. Indeed, Gall-Gaidheil and other Hebrideans may have sold slaves at the Dublin market. This is perhaps what happened to the 2000 men that Gofraid *Rí Innse Gall* is reported to have taken captive in Angelsey in 986 according to AC.

³⁴*ibid.*, 322

³⁵G. Sigurðsson, *Gaelic Influence*, 32-33

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