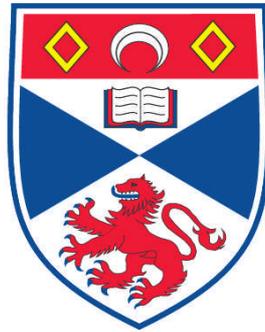


**NORSE SETTLEMENT IN THE INNER HEBRIDES CA. 800-1300;  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ISLANDS OF MULL, COLL  
AND TIREE**

**Anne R. Johnston**

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
University of St. Andrews**



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**Norse settlement in the Inner Hebrides ca 800-1300 with  
special reference to the islands of Mull, Coll and Tiree**

A thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Anne R Johnston  
Department of Mediaeval History  
University of St Andrews

November 1990



DECLARATIONS

I, Anne Rollason Johnston, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 110,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Date...26.11.90.....Signature of Candidate.. ..

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No.12 in October 1985 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D in October 1986; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St.Andrews between 1985 and 1990.

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## ABSTRACT

The thesis aims to elucidate the form, extent and chronological development of Norse colonial settlement in the Inner Hebridean islands of Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore in the period ca 800-1300. Tiree, Coll and Lismore are studied in their entirety while an area from each of the parochial divisions on Mull is selected.

Historically Mull, Coll and Tiree have an essential territorial unity in that they formed part of the territory of the *cénél Loairn* within the kingdom of Dalriada in the pre-Norse period. With the division of the Isles in 1156 all three islands fell into the hands of Somerled of Argyll and in the immediate post-Norse period remained as a unit in the possession of the MacDougals.

Geographically the islands differ greatly from one another and show a wide range of geological structures, landforms, soil types and vegetation, and climatic conditions. They thus offer an opportunity for analysing settlement location, development and expansion within a relatively small geographical area and yet one which encompasses a variety of natural incentives and constraints. Lismore, lying to the north-west of the above group and strategically situated at the mouth of the Great Glen was important in the pre-Norse period as a major Celtic monastic centre. The island is included by way of contrast, for its site and situation and close proximity to mainland Scotland suggested that the Norse settlement of the island may have been of a different character to that found on Mull, Coll and Tiree.

An area of the Norwegian 'homeland', the Sunnmøre islands lying off the west coast of Norway is looked at for comparative purposes. This allows an investigation of the evolution of Norse settlement and the coining of names within a purely Norse environment. This helps clarify the process of settlement development and expansion and the accompanying naming practices in a colonial setting where, particularly on Mull and Lismore, a dense Gaelic overlay often obscures salient features of the Norse settlement pattern.

The methodology employed is both inter-disciplinary and retrospective allowing successive layers of settlement to be 'peeled back' in order to expose the pattern of settlement as it may have existed in the Norse period.

The thesis divides into two parts. The first analyses settlement by settlement, the islands in question. The second concentrates on the major issues pertinent to settlement evolution. Norse and Gaelic settlement names are discussed together with the administrative and ecclesiastical organisation of the Isles. This leads to the formulation of a 'model for Norse settlement' for the Inner Hebrides.

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### ***Acknowledgements***

'Geological sketch maps' of Coll, Tiree and Mull are taken from J.A.Steers, The Coastline of Scotland, (1973),141,145.

The 'Land Capability for Agriculture' map of Lismore is adapted from the Macaulay Institute's Soil Survey of Scotland, Land Capability for Agriculture, Sheet 4, Western Scotland, 1;25,000,(1982).

The maps of Mull, Coll and Tiree showing the 'Estates of Iona Abbey and Nunnery' and the 'Churches of Iona Abbey and Nunnery' are taken from the RCAHMS Argyll 4, Iona, (1982),146.

## ABBREVIATIONS

adj	adjective
ca	circa
cm	centimetre
def art	definite article
dim	diminutive
ed	editor
edn	edition
f	feminine
gen	genitive
km	kilometre
m	masculine
mk	mark
n	neuter
no	number
p	page
pers	personal
pd	pund
pl	plural
prep	preposition
pt	part
s	singular
sq	square
vol	volume
G	Gaelic
OI	Old Irish
ON	Old Norse
Sc	Scots

Bibliographical abbreviations (full details in bibliography)

AB	Aslak Bolt's Jordebog 1432-1449
Coll de Reb Alba	Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis
DN	Diplomatarium Norvegicum
HP	Highland Papers
JK	Jordeskifte Arkivet
MR	Møre og Romsdal
NGN	Norske Gaards Navne
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NRA	Norske Riks Arkivet
NRJ	Norske Regnskaber og Jordeboger 1521-1541
NRR	Norske Rigs-Registranter
OPS	Origines Parochiales Scotiae
OS	Ordnance Survey
RCAHMS	Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland
RMS	Registrum Magni Sigilli Regum Scottorum
SA	Sound Archives of the School of Scottish Studies University of Edinburgh
SM	Skattematrikellen Møre og Romsdal vol.13
SRO	Scottish Record Office
SRO GD	Scottish Record Office Gifts and Deposits
SRO RHP	Scottish Record Office Register House Plan

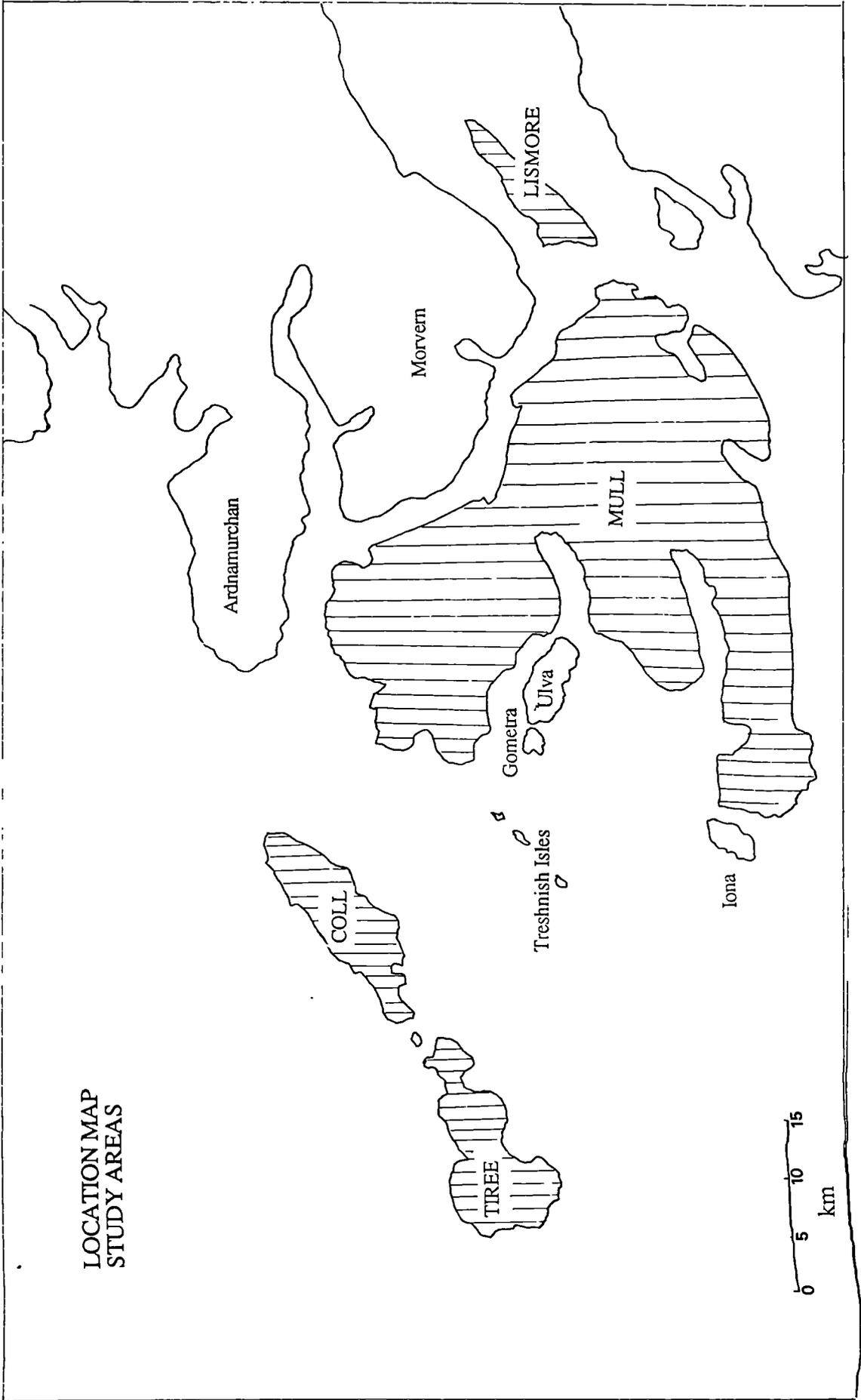
## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Aims of Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to examine the form, extent and chronological development of Norse Colonial settlement in the Inner Hebrides concentrating on the islands of Tiree, Coll, Mull and Lismore. It will trace the process of settlement expansion and division within each of these islands, look at the development of the naming of settlements and relate this to other areas of the Inner and Outer Hebrides.

The Norse period in the Inner Hebrides extends from the late eighth century to the mid thirteenth century. The former date is based on archaeological approximation and the latter on the conditions of the Treaty of Perth of 1266 whereby the Western Isles were ceded from the Norwegian to the Scottish crown. At the onset of the Norse period these islands were populated by a Gaelic speaking people, culturally and linguistically distinct from the Norse incomers. A comparative study of indigenous Norse settlement patterns within a purely Norse environment was undertaken in order to assess the degree to which the Norse adapted their basic settlement pattern to incorporate past or contemporary features of Gaelic settlement, or alternatively superimposed their own distinctive settlement pattern upon that already existing. A study of settlement on the Sunnmøre islands of Giske, Godøya, Vigra, Valderøya and Ellingsøya, which lie off the west Norwegian mainland allows a comparative approach to the Scottish material enabling those features of colonial settlement peculiar to the Inner Hebrides to be isolated and their origins examined. Central to the study of Norse settlement patterns in these islands is an interdisciplinary approach to the diverse source material which extends before and beyond the Norse period in the Isles. Only by the collection and collation of many different types of evidence, ranging from the study of place-names to soil analysis, can the complex and diverse nature of settlement in this geographical area be understood. Such an interdisciplinary approach gives an essential overview and is crucial in determining the influence of pre-Norse settlement on Norse settlement patterns. It also highlights the salient features of post-Norse Gaelic settlement thus enabling the essentially Norse features of the settlement pattern to be discerned and allowing a theoretical reconstruction of that pattern as it might have existed in the Norse period.



LOCATION MAP  
STUDY AREAS

0 5 10 15  
km

## 1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

The islands of the Inner Hebrides lie to the west of the Scottish mainland. Mull, the largest of this diverse group, is separated from the Argyll mainland by the Sound of Mull which measures only 2km at its narrowest extent. Coll lies 7km west of the north-west tip of Mull and a short crossing across the 1.5km wide Sound of Gunna links it with the neighbouring island of Tiree to the south-west. Lismore, in contrast to the exposed islands of Tiree and Coll, lies at the confluence of three sea ways, the Sound of Mull, Firth of Lorn and Loch Linnhe. It occupies a strategic position at the mouth of the Great Glen also known as Glen Albyn or Glen Mór.

All four islands experience a maritime climate because of their geographical location at the eastern edge of the Atlantic ocean in a predominantly south-westerly air-stream.<sup>1</sup> The rainfall on Coll, Tiree and the Ross of Mull is relatively low, the average rainfall for Tiree in the period 1931-1960 being 1128mm per annum.<sup>2</sup> Coll and Lismore show a similar pattern with an average rainfall of below 1200mm while in the highlands of Mull rainfall can be above 2400mm. Low rainfall totals on Tiree are accompanied by a high annual average of hours of sunlight which at 1450 per annum are amongst the highest in Britain. These islands sustain the full force of the winds from the North Atlantic where mean wind speeds of 10.3 m/sec are reached in winter.<sup>3</sup> The islands of Coll and Tiree are devoid of trees, although Mull is wooded in the less exposed areas.

Climatically Coll, Tiree and Lismore are classified as having a 'warm and moist' climate. Mull has several climatic regions ranging from 'very cold and wet' on the highlands to 'warm and wet' and 'warm and moist' in the lower coastal regions. The growing season in the lowland areas of Mull and in Coll and Tiree, defined by the length of time for which the daily air temperature is above 5.6 c, is approximately 250 days.<sup>4</sup> As geology, landform and climate are intricately interwoven factors affecting soil development and hence settlement, these will be dealt with in greater detail in the discussions of the individual areas and islands.

Studies of earlier climatic conditions suggest that, following the disappearance of the last major ice sheets from Britain and Scandinavia ca 8,000-7,000 BC, temperatures gradually rose, reaching a postglacial climatic optimum ca 4,000-2,000 BC. In this 'Atlantic' climatic period characterised by warm summers and mild

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<sup>1</sup>J.S.Bibby,G.Hudson and D.J.Henderson, Soil and Land Capability for Agriculture in Western Scotland, (1982),12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid..

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.,18.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.,17.

winters, deciduous forest and grasslands spread northwards over Europe beyond present-day limits. The exposed coastal areas of north-west Scotland were wooded as were the Northern and Western Isles.<sup>5</sup> A decline from this climatic optimum heralded by climatic instability and increased rainfall resulted in forests receding from the Atlantic coasts and heights, although the extent of de-forestation in the Bronze and Iron Age periods is confused by the effects of human interference. The latter stages of this 'sub-Boreal' climatic period were characterised by drier and cooler periods conducive to the spread of coniferous trees.<sup>6</sup> A secondary climatic optimum occurred in the period ca 400 AD to 1200 AD. The amelioration of the climate coupled with relative immunity from severe storms in the North Sea and Atlantic areas must have provided an impetus for Scandinavian voyages of exploration. In the Northern and Western Isles, Faroe, Iceland and Greenland the northern limits for the cultivation of grain expanded with the result that areas classified today as being 'marginal' in terms of agricultural potential proved attractive for settlement in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries. By the late thirteenth century a deterioration in the climate is discernible throughout all the areas of Norse colonisation. Settlements in areas of Iceland and Greenland were abandoned when it was no longer possible to cultivate arable crops. Elsewhere marginal areas went out of cultivation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>H.H. Lamb, Selected Papers. The Changing Climate,(1966),172-3.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.,174.

<sup>7</sup>H.H.Lamb, Climate,History and the Modern World,(1982),163,172.

### 1.3 SOURCES

#### 1.3.1 Literary Sources

Although there is no single contemporary document originating from the Western Isles during the entire Norse period there exists an early Celtic source from the Dal Riadic period the Senchus Fer nAlban (History of the men of Scotland), a tenth century copy of a seventh century document.<sup>8</sup> The Senchus, part survey and part genealogy, tells of the social and political conditions in the Scottish kingdom of Dal Riada, an area roughly corresponding to that of modern Argyll and settled by Scots from Ireland in the fifth century.

Adomnan's Life of Columba, a hagiographical work of the seventh century traces the life story of the Celtic Saint Columba and mentions the islands of Mull, Coll and Tiree but, like the Senchus, does not pinpoint individual pre-Norse settlements.<sup>9</sup> The first records of the incursions of the Norse into Celtic territory come from the Irish Annals with references to raids on the Inner Hebrides in the Annals of Ulster,<sup>10</sup> Annals of Tigernach,<sup>11</sup> Annals of Innisfallen,<sup>12</sup> and Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters.<sup>13</sup> The importance of the monastery at Iona ensured that its fate was closely followed by the Irish monastic communities. As a contemporary account of Norse activity the Annals are a reliable source, although they can give little more than a scant indication of areas and monasteries which became the focii for repeated attacks.

For the Norse period, the Icelandic sagas, written in the thirteenth century and relating events based upon characters and families living in the tenth and eleventh centuries, give a retrospective interpretation of aspects of Norse history both in Norway and the colonies. Orkneyinga Saga is most pertinent to Norse settlement in the Scottish Isles but is primarily concerned with the establishment and subsequent history of the Orkney Earldom.<sup>14</sup> References to the Western Isles are few, mainly concerned with raiding parties, and again do not mention specific settlements. Njals Saga,<sup>15</sup> Eyrbyggja Saga,<sup>16</sup> Laxdaela Saga<sup>17</sup> and Landnámabók<sup>18</sup> the Icelandic 'Book

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<sup>8</sup>J. Bannerman, Studies in the History of Dalriada,(1974),68.

<sup>9</sup>Adomnan's Life of Columba, eds. A.O. Anderson and M.O. Anderson,(1961).

<sup>10</sup>The Annals of Ulster (to AD 1131) I, eds. S. MacAirt and G. MacNiocaill,(1983).

<sup>11</sup>The Annals of Tigernach, eds. Meyer and Rawlinson,(1909).

<sup>12</sup>The Annals of Innisfallen, ed. S. MacAirt,(1951).

<sup>13</sup>The Annals of the Four Masters, ed. J. O'Donovan,(1981).

<sup>14</sup>Orkneyinga Saga, ed. A.B. Taylor,(1954).

<sup>15</sup>Njals Saga, eds.. M. Magnusson and H. Palsson,(1964).

<sup>16</sup>Erbyggja Saga, eds. H. Palsson and P.E. Edwards, (1973).

of Settlements', are more informative as to the historical personages living in the Isles, and mention characters such as Ketil Flatnef, a Hebridean Chieftain, Olaf of Dublin and Earl Gilli of Coll. The value of the sagas as historical sources has long been a matter for debate, with supporters of the 'free prose' theory advocating that the written sagas were strictly based upon oral tradition. Those in favour of the 'bookprose' theory conversely argue that they are the literary creation of individual authors. Anderson neatly sums up the various opposing theories by suggesting that

the writer undoubtedly could and did use written sources, supplementary oral sources, his own imagination, and above all his own words but his art and presumably the framework of his story were given him by tradition.<sup>19</sup>

As a blend of historical information and entertainment it would be unwise to place too much weight upon saga evidence. They are particularly unreliable in terms of dating in the early Norse period. It is a feature common to the whole Icelandic literature that it erroneously explains the emigration from Norway and the colonisation of the islands as due to the policies of Harald Fair Hair. Sturla Pordarson's Saga, Hakonar Saga Hakonarsonar,<sup>20</sup> written in the thirteenth century, is more reliable as a source for the later period. Sturla wrote of contemporary or near-contemporary events and documented the political events of the last decades of Norse hegemony in the Western Isles.

Landnámabók is arguably the most valuable of the Icelandic texts for it is an attempt to document the settlement of Iceland by Norsemen from ca 870 AD. Prior to this date Iceland had been inhabited by communities of Irish hermits to whom the Norse gave the name papar, (ON *papi*, priest). The Irish monks appear to have left Iceland at the onset of the Norse 'Age of Settlements' which spanned the period ca 890-930 and to all intents and purposes the Norse settlers were faced with an empty landscape devoid of settlement. Landnámabók gives an insight into the way in which the settlers named an unnamed landscape and also documents the way in which land was apportioned out among the leading settlers. In addition, Landnámabók is concerned with the origins of the Icelandic settlers, many of whom came from the Hebrides and from Ireland. It is impossible to calculate, from the evidence contained in Landnámabók alone, the percentage of Celts among the first settlers in the country. Landnámabók is concerned primarily with the upper classes of Norse society and

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<sup>17</sup>Laxdaela Saga, ed. E.O.Sveinsson,(1934).

<sup>18</sup>The Book of Settlements, (Landnámabók), eds. H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,(1972).

<sup>19</sup>T.Anderson, The Problem of Iceland Saga Origins,(1964),143.

<sup>20</sup>Hakonars Saga Hakonarsonar, ed. M. Mund,(1977).

those who were independent settlers although it also mentions a large number of Celtic slaves and servants who accompanied the high ranking settlers from the Hebrides and Ireland.<sup>21</sup> Chapter 212 of Landnámabók describes one independent settler,

Bard the Hebridean (who) took possession  
of land between Stifla and Mjordale river.<sup>22</sup>

but this account is unrepresentative of the status of many of the Celtic settlers. It has been estimated that 30% to 40% of the total number of first generation settlers in Iceland were of Celtic origin although their presence is not commented upon in either Landnámabók or Islendingabók.<sup>23</sup> Landnámabók also sheds some light on the relationship between Norse and native in the Western Isles. Many of the Hebridean settlers in Iceland brought with them Celtic Christianity as in the case of Ketil the Foolish who

went from the Hebrides to Iceland. He was a  
Christian. He took possession of land between  
Geirlands and the Fjordar river, above Nykoni.<sup>24</sup>

This suggests that Christianity was adopted at an early date by the Norse in the Western Isles and speaks of early contact between Norse and native in the islands.

Two chronicles, the Scottish Chronicle and the Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys,<sup>25</sup> record events in the Western Isles but are of limited value. The Scottish Chronicle survives in several versions, some of which date from the later Middle Ages but its accuracy cannot be relied upon in relating the attacks of the Norsemen in the ninth century. The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys, believed to have been composed at Rushen Abbey on Man, traces the establishment of the Manx dynasty and the political history of Man and the Western Isles. As a historical source it too is unreliable as there are many problems with the dating of the events mentioned. A further native text, the Cogadh Gaedhael re Galliaibh (The War of the Gael with the Gall),<sup>26</sup> is a work of propaganda concerned with the Irish king Brian Boru and written two and a half centuries after the events it describes. A final body of literary material stems from a far later date: the accounts of travellers in the Isles in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Monro's Western Isles and Genealogy of the Clans, written in

<sup>21</sup>G. Sigurdsson, Gaelic Influence in Iceland, Studia Islandica,46(1988),28.

<sup>22</sup>The Book of Settlements, eds. H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,196.

<sup>23</sup>J. Steffensen, 'Tólfraedilegt mat á liffradilegn gildi frasagna Landnamu af att og þjóðerni land némanna', in Saga, 9(1971),21-39 .

<sup>24</sup>Book of Settlements, eds.H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,

<sup>25</sup>The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys, eds. P.A.Munch and Rev. Dr.Goss,(1874).

<sup>26</sup>Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh, ed J.H.Todd,1867.

1549, is the earliest of these.<sup>27</sup> Martin Martin's A Description of the Western Isles of Scotland, written after a tour in 1695, is in a similar vein.<sup>28</sup> Both accounts trace a tour around the Western Isles and are valuable for their comments on land use, the location of ecclesiastical sites, references to land-holding and settlement names.

In a slightly different tradition is McFarlane's Geographical Collections, a compilation of descriptions of Scotland dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of various authorship containing for example 'ane answer to Sir Robert Sybalds queries for the Yles of Tirry, Gunna, Colla and Icomkill'.<sup>29</sup> Of a later date is Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799 which includes the Western Isles.<sup>30</sup> Sinclair's compilation is of value because its descriptions were written by the resident clergy in the islands. They therefore have the added authority of an island resident instead of an outside observer.

### 1.3.2 Documentary Sources. Charters, Retours and Sasines.

Most of the written source material stems from the centuries post-dating the Norse period in the Isles, the earliest being charters conferring grants of land. These range from grants of substantial estates as in the case of David II's grant of the island of Tiree to John of Islay in 1343<sup>31</sup> to grants of individual settlements. Complementing the charters are the sasines, a sasine being the deed or document recording the transference of landed property. These contain a fairly full record of changes of land ownership in Scotland from 1617 onwards. Both the 'Particular Register of Sasines' and the 'General Register of Sasines' for Argyll have been transcribed and edited by Campbell.<sup>32</sup> Retours, the written form of a return sent by a Jury or Inquest to Chancery declaring a successor heir to his ancestry, complement the sasines. These too are available in printed form.<sup>33</sup> Charters, sasines and retours are valuable for their recording of the early written forms of settlement names. In addition they frequently contain information as to the valuation of settlements. Retours in

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<sup>27</sup>Monro's Western Isles and Genealogy of the Clans 1549, ed. R.W. Munro,(1961).

<sup>28</sup>Martin Martin, Description of the Western Isles of Scotland ca 1695,(1884).

<sup>29</sup>MacFarlane's Geographical Collections, ed. A.Mitchell, SHS 52,(1907).

<sup>30</sup>The Western Isles 1791-1799, Vol. 20 of The Statistical Account of Scotland, ed. J. Sinclair, (1983).

<sup>31</sup>Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, Annals of Scotland from the Accession of Malcolm III to the Accession of the House of Stewart, 2nd edn. 3(1797),381-3.

<sup>32</sup>Abstract of the Particular and General Register of Sasines for Argyll,Bute and Dunbarton otherwise known as the Argyll Sasines, ed. H.Campbell, vols.1 and 2,(1934).

<sup>33</sup>Inquisitionum ad Capellum Domini Regis Retournatarum quae in Publicis Archivis Scotiae adhuc Servantur abbreviato, vols.I, II and III, ed. T. Thomson, (1811- 16).

particular always contained the annual taxable value of the inherited land as assessed under the Old or New Extent.

### 1.3.3 Rentals

The rentals form a substantial portion of the documentary material. These include ecclesiastical rentals, for example, the 1561 Rental of the Bishopric of the Isles,<sup>34</sup> Crown Rentals, for example the 1541 Rental of the Isles,<sup>35</sup> and the local rentals of landowners in the various islands. The latter category forms the largest class with, for example, a good series of rentals relating to Lismore spanning the period 1611-1700.<sup>36</sup> Those relating to the Duart lands in Mull, Coll and Tiree at the time of their transfer to the Campbells in 1674 are particularly comprehensive with meticulous listing of all the MacLean lands in these areas.<sup>37</sup> Like the aforementioned sources, the rentals too list settlement names, settlement valuations and the amount of rent payable from the settlement unit or its component parts. The Argyll Valuation Rolls spanning the period 1643-1853 similarly record settlement names and land valuations.<sup>38</sup>

### 1.3.4 Cartographic material

The earliest maps of the Hebrides treating the island groups as a whole are from the late sixteenth century and show little detail as in the case of Porcaccio's Isole Hebride et Orcadie of 1572,<sup>39</sup> which shows the broad outline of the islands and the major settlements. By contrast, Blaeu's map of the Hebrides in his Atlas of 1654 deals with the islands individually and consequently has a greater wealth of detail showing both major and minor settlements, and is particularly useful for the location of settlements mentioned in the early documentary record but no longer in existence.<sup>40</sup>

It is, however, not these early maps but the estate maps of the late eighteenth century which are the most valuable sources of information. During the

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<sup>34</sup>1561, Rental of the Bishopric of the Isles, in Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, ed. Iona Club,(1847)1-3

<sup>35</sup>1541, Rentalia Domini Regis, in Exchequer Rolls, vol.13,611-651.

<sup>36</sup>SRO, GD 112/9/13, Campbell of Glenorchy Papers.

<sup>37</sup>Rental of the Lands and Estates of Dowart 1679 in Highland Papers, 1. ed. J.R.N. MacPhail, SHR, 2nd series, vol. 5, (1914),293-311.

<sup>38</sup>SRO, E106.

<sup>39</sup>T. Porcaccio, Isole de Hebride et Orcadie, 1572.

<sup>40</sup>Blaeu, Atlas of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, 1654,(1974).

period of the tenurial and agricultural re-organisation roughly spanning the era 1720-1810 landowners undertook detailed surveys of their estates to enable the planning for the improvement of their lands. So complicated was the existing system of land tenure and so radical were the changes to be made that it was customary to have at least two surveys; the first resulting in plans showing the old unimproved terrain and the second the laying out with drawing office precision of field grids, new roads and other features.<sup>41</sup> The Fifth Duke of Argyll whose improving policies changed the face of the landscape over much of Argyll and the islands commissioned a surveyor, Turnbull, to survey his property in Tiree. Turnbull surveyed the island of Tiree in 1768-69 and produced 'A general description of the island of Tirij in Argyl-shire and a particular account of the quantity and quality of land in each farm referring to a plan of the island'. The written description records in minute detail soil quality, the extent of sandblow, harbour facilities, settlement boundaries and the amount of infield, outfield and rough grazing pertaining to each settlement together with the total acreage of that settlement and its valuation expressed in merklands and the local denomination of maillands. The accompanying map provides a clear and accurate representation of the information contained in the written description showing the exact location of settlements, their size and relationship to each other.<sup>42</sup>

Turnbull's exceptional survey is unparalleled and the cartographic material for Coll, Mull and Lismore seems poor by comparison. Coll was surveyed in 1794 by George Langland. Langland's map shows clearly the settlement boundaries and land divisions and, like Turnbull's map, records the relative ratios of infield to outfield in each settlement and the amount of common grazing.<sup>43</sup> Langland also surveyed Lismore in 1778.<sup>44</sup> The only eighteenth century map of Mull is that by John Ainslie in 1783<sup>45</sup> and is not as informative as the early nineteenth century maps of various Mull estates for example Wylie's 'Plan of the lands of Lochbuie 1849'<sup>46</sup> or his 'Plan of the lands of Scallastle' completed in 1848.<sup>47</sup> The former again records the amount of land given over to 'arable, pasture, wood, lochs and rivers'.

The earliest Ordnance Survey maps on the scale 6" to 1 mile stem from the late nineteenth century. These are particularly useful when compared with the 1:25,000 maps, the most recent editions of the OS, in particular for those areas where the face of the landscape has changed, for example due to sandblow in Tiree.

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<sup>41</sup>B. Hird, 'The Significance of Scottish Estate Plans and Associated Documents', in *Scottish Studies*, I (1957), 39.

<sup>42</sup>SRO, RHP 8826/1-2, 'A General Description of the Island of Tiree in Argyl-shire.' J. Turnbull, 1768.

<sup>43</sup>SRO, RHP 3368, Plan of the Island of Coll.

<sup>44</sup>SRO, RHP 8180, Plan of Lismore Estate.

<sup>45</sup>J. Ainslie, 'Scotland drawn from a series of angles and observations', 1783.

<sup>46</sup>SRO, RHP 3519, Plan of the Lands of Lochbuie.

<sup>47</sup>SRO, RHP 23452, Plan of the Lands of Scallastle.

The publications of the MacAulay Institute for Soil Research, both the Soil Survey of Scotland<sup>48</sup> and the Land Capability for Agriculture,<sup>49</sup> have proved invaluable in isolating those areas in the islands likely to have been attractive to early settlers practising a subsistence farming economy reliant in part on arable crops.

### 1.3.5 Archaeology.

Archaeological interest in the Norse period in the Inner Hebrides has fallen behind that of the Northern Isles. There are no known Norse settlements in the areas studied and only two sites have been excavated in the Outer Hebrides, at Drimmore, South Uist,<sup>50</sup> and The Udal, North Uist.<sup>51</sup> The reasons for this are complex; systematic fieldwork has been lacking in most of the islands and the lack of a resident archaeologist based in the Inner Hebrides means that there is no consistent observation of the landscape. Work that has been done in attempting to locate Norse Settlements has concentrated on sites, now deserted and yet believed from place name evidence to have been settled in the Norse period, as in the attempts to locate a Scandinavian settlement at Burg, (ON *borg*, fortification), Treshnish, Mull.<sup>52</sup> Constant rebuilding on the same sites in areas where good land is at a premium and the accompanying re-utilisation of building materials may have obliterated all traces of early settlement and 'it may be that large and developed settlements are the last places we should search for Norse structures'.<sup>53</sup> The potential of sandblow and machair areas for preserving and revealing archaeological features has been noted both in Alcock's work at Cruach Mhor, Islay,<sup>54</sup> and Crawford's excavations at the Udal.<sup>55</sup> This is particularly important in relation to the west coasts of Tiree and Coll where extensive sandblow has occurred and documentary evidence exists as to the obliteration of settlements by sandblow as at Hough on Tiree and Mibost on Coll and these areas urgently require consistent observation and recording.

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<sup>48</sup>MacAulay Institute for Soil Research, Soil Survey of Scotland, Soil, Sheet 4, Western Scotland, 1:25,000, (1982).

<sup>49</sup>MacAulay Institute for Soil Research, Soil Survey of Scotland, Land Capability for Agriculture, Sheet 4, Western Scotland, 1:25,000, (1983).

<sup>50</sup>A. MacLaren, 'A Norse House on Drimmore Machair, South Uist', in Glasgow Archaeological Journal, 3 (1974),9-18.

<sup>51</sup>I.A. Crawford, 'Contributions to a history of domestic settlement in North Uist', in Scottish Studies, 9 (1965),34-63.

<sup>52</sup>L.Alcock and E.Alcock, 'Scandinavian settlement in the Inner Hebrides: recent research on place-names and in the field', in SAF 10(1980),61-73.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.,66.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.,67.

<sup>55</sup>I.A. Crawford and R. Switsur, 'Sandscaping C14. TheUdal. North Uist', in Antiquity, 51(1977),124-136.

In the absence of excavated settlement sites per se, graves provide an indication of settlement and are also useful for dating purposes: inhumation graves of the pagan period contain dateable grave goods. With the increasing influence of Christianity in the Western Isles, and the abandonment of the practice of burying personal belongings, this useful source of information dries up in the tenth century.<sup>56</sup> The number of Viking Age graves recorded from the Inner and Outer Hebrides is not large, Islay and Colonsay having the greatest density. Again the Western Isles compare unfavourably with Orkney where more graves have been located.

Only one grave has been found on Mull with two 'tortoise' brooches diagnostic of a Norse female burial.<sup>57</sup> On Tiree a similar pair of tortoise brooches and a bronze pin were found in 1872, although no further details of the burial are known.<sup>58</sup> The site of further possible Viking burials on Tiree is believed to be at Cornaigbeg, where in the eighteenth century, iron swords, shields and helmets were discovered.<sup>59</sup> The finds are now lost and therefore cannot with any certainty be said to be of Viking Age in origin. On Coll the presence of an iron spearhead found in association with an inhumation burial close to Grishipoll Farm likewise suggests a Viking burial.<sup>60</sup>

The grave goods of Mull, Coll and Tiree are characteristic of burials of the Viking pagan period found throughout the Northern and Western Isles. Elsewhere in the Inner Hebrides graves and grave goods are more informative. A ship burial on Colonsay yielded Anglo Saxon coins datable to the reign of the government of Eanred (AD 808-840) and Archbishop Vigmund of York (831-854) and also a bronze pair of scales and accompanying set of weights.<sup>61</sup> The presence of weighing scales in graves from the Western Isles may point to trading activities or conversely to raiding activities, the scales being necessary for the division of booty. Rich burials such as that mentioned above on Colonsay and a similar grave from Eigg are both suggestive of chieftains' graves and are more richly equipped than those found in the Northern Isles. It has been suggested that the grave finds from the Inner Hebrides represent an aristocratic class of Norsemen who had taken up residence in the ninth century. The Orkney material points more to settled farming activity.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>B.E. Crawford, 'Viking Graves', in *An Historical Atlas of Scotland*, eds. P. McNeill and R. Nicholson, (1975),16.

<sup>57</sup>J.Anderson, 'Notes on the contents of two Viking graves in Islay', in *PSAS*,10(1872-74),554.

<sup>58</sup>J.Anderson, 'Notes on the relics of the Viking period of the Northmen in Scotland', in *PSAS*,14 (1879-80),72.

<sup>59</sup>*Statistical Account of Scotland*, 10(1794),402.

<sup>60</sup>RCAHMS, *Argyll 3. Mull.Tiree.Coll and Northern Argyll*, (1980),119.

<sup>61</sup>*Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed.S.Grieg, 2(1940),55-61.

<sup>62</sup>B.E. Crawford, *Scandinavian Scotland*,125.

For the pre-Norse period in the islands Beveridge's survey of the Iron Age monuments of Tiree and Coll forms a comprehensive guide to the brochs, forts and duns of those islands<sup>63</sup> and also describes the ecclesiastical antiquities. The surveys of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland provide a detailed and full description of all archaeological monuments in the Isles collating all the information recorded in, for example, the Proceedings of the Society of Antiquities of Scotland, local journals, oral accounts, documentary research and so forth.<sup>64</sup> Their work is also particularly useful for the information it contains about man-made features in the landscape relating to the post-Norse, mediaeval and modern periods.

### 1.3.6 Oral Tradition.

The main value of oral sources and oral tradition for present purposes has been in relation to gaining information concerning the organisation of the present-day landscape of the islands. This is a necessary precursor to peeling away layers of landscape history and unravelling the complexities of both modern and nineteenth century landscape management and farming policies. Information contained in the Sound Archives of the School of Scottish Studies, at the University of Edinburgh for Tiree.<sup>65</sup> has yielded information of such subjects as field names, land quality, location of 'sean-bhaile',<sup>66</sup> and the interpretation of 'local' landscape and settlement names. It has been particularly useful for accounts of the nature and date of sandblow in the south-west of the island and the location of settlements now abandoned. Oral traditions about 'the Vikings' exist in the islands and these have been used primarily in conjunction with other source material rather than as evidence in their own right.

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<sup>63</sup>E. Beveridge, Coll and Tiree, their prehistoric forts and ecclesiastical antiquities, (1903).

<sup>64</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll.3., RCAHMS, Lorn, (1975)., RCAHMS, Argyll 4, Iona., (1982).

<sup>65</sup>The Tiree Project. School of Scottish Studies Sound Archives. University of Edinburgh.

<sup>66</sup>The Gaelic term sean-bhaile (old township) is found as a place name throughout Scotland, as for example in the settlement of Shenovall, Morrenish, Mull. The name points to the sites of old townships no longer extant. The tenorial revolution of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often involved the physical removal of one site to another and the old site would come to be known by the term Sean-bhaile.

### 1.3.7 Onomastic Sources.

Place names have provided the richest source for a study of Norse settlement. Topographical names point to the Norse naming of the physical environment, to landscape and coastal features and to the waterways. Some topographical names were also adopted as settlement names and complement the habitative names which describe man-made structures for example ON gardr, enclosure, and ON stadir, farm, in denoting settlements.

Settlement names, whether topographical or habitative, may be termed as simplex where they contain only one element, usually a noun as in for example ON nes headland, or compound where two or more elements are contained in the name as in the name Crossapoll, (ON *kross bolstadr*, cross farm). In the latter example, the second element or suffix, bolstadr is the generic while the first element or prefix is the specific. Specifics qualifying a generic incorporate many grammatical elements, mainly proper nouns, personal names, adjectives, prepositions and appellatives.

Both before and after the Norse period in the Inner Hebrides, Gaelic was spoken in the islands. No Gaelic names can be said with any degree of certainty to date from the pre-Norse period and it may be assumed that the majority of Gaelic settlement names discernible today stem from the post-Norse era. Many of the Gaelic settlement names, however, mask the presence of earlier Norse names either by the addition of Gaelic elements to an existing Norse name as in the case of the name Ballyhough on Coll where G baile forms an addition to the Norse noun haugr, or by the Gaelic re-naming of settlements originally known by a Norse name. Additionally a Norse name may have become so 'gaelicised' that it is difficult to ascertain in which language the name originated. For this and other reasons, it is important to trace settlement names in the documentary record to their earliest written form. The settlement name Sorisdal on Coll is first mentioned in the documentary record in 1203 in the form Sotsdal which reveals that the name was coined before the early thirteenth century.<sup>67</sup> Only in exceptional circumstances do place names give absolute dating of settlements and there are no known examples of this from the Norse period in the Isles although elements can be used as indicators of a terminus post quem; for example the presence of a Christian personal name in a settlement name dates that name to the post-pagan period.

Settlement names can also be placed in relative chronologies. Work on the Norse generics rud, vin, heimr, setr, stadir and bolstadr in Norway have established that rud and vin relate to the pre-Viking era while stadir and bolstadr were

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<sup>67</sup>Diplomatarium Norvegicum, vol.7,4-5.

productive in the period of Norse expansion overseas.<sup>68</sup> Rud, vin and heimr are absent from the Inner Hebrides, although heimr is present in Orkney suggesting that Orkney witnessed an earlier phase of settlement than the Inner Hebrides. It is, however, only the habitative names which can be treated chronologically. Topographical names cannot be discussed in terms of relative dating as they could conceivably have been coined at any period.

Settlement names may be classified further as being commemorative, connotative or innovative. The commemorative names are those clearly transplanted from specific localities in Norway to settlements in the colonies. Connotative names are those which are composed of elements in use in the Norwegian homeland at the time of colonisation overseas. Connotative names are therefore names of a similar type and containing similar elements to those which were being coined in Norway at the same period. Innovative names, and many of the settlement names in the Hebrides fall into this category, were clearly coined by Scandinavian speakers but were only loosely based upon the 'traditional' naming patterns of the homeland. Innovative names evolved in response to the different conditions, landscapes and forms of settlement found in the colonies.

Additionally, settlement names can elucidate the character of a settlement. Names compounded with the Norse element saetr, for example, indicate low status settlements and/or summer shielings while ON bu incorporated in a name may have represented a high status dwelling associated with a high ranking individual.

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<sup>68</sup>M.Olson, Farms and Fanes of Ancient Norway, (1928).

#### 1.4 HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore are first mentioned in the historical sources in the context of the kingdom of Dal Riata. All four islands fell within the territory of the *cénél Loairn*, one of the three major clans of Dal Riata whose lands also included the island of Colonsay and the mainland territories of Ardnamurchan, Lorn and Morvern. To the south of the lands of the *cénél Loairn* the *cénél nGabrain* held Bute, Arran and Jura and the mainland districts of Cowal and Kintyre. The third kin group, the *cénél nOengusa*, controlled the island of Islay. The impact of the Norse incursions into the Inner Hebrides and adjacent mainland areas may have had a significant effect on the kingdom of Dal Riata. The Scots were forced eastwards into Pictland as a result of the intense Norse raids and the threat of the Norsemen may have been instrumental in effecting the union of the Picts and the Scots in 843.<sup>69</sup>

The arrival of the Norse into the Inner Hebrides is first glimpsed in the Irish Annals which record a succession of hostile and brutal attacks upon monastic houses. The Annals of Ulster record how in 798 'the Hebrides and Ireland were plundered by the heathens'.<sup>70</sup> Iona features in the various annals as having borne the brunt of continued raids partly because of its reputation of monastic wealth and exposed position on the western seaboard but also because the fate of Iona was of great importance to the other Irish monastic communities and events in that island were therefore closely followed and recorded. This inevitable bias of the evidence towards the fate of the monastic houses means that little else is known of the initial incursions of the Norse into Celtic territory and we are left with a picture of the Norse, drawn by their victims, as marauding barbarians intent upon pillage and destruction. There is no contemporary literature from the Norse period to counteract this view and indeed later Icelandic sagas recounting the traditions of the early period speak of repeated raiding excursions to the Western Isles. It is important to distinguish between the various phases of Norse activity in the islands; sporadic raiding attacks led to a period of semi-permanent habitation as the Norsemen 'during the winter stayed in the islands beyond the sea'.<sup>71</sup> The existence of headland dykes in some Orkney islands suggests that a process of 'ness taking' (ON *nesnam*) occurred, the objective of which was to provide bases for raids.<sup>72</sup> Such overwintering must have led to permanent settlement as the agricultural potential of the islands was realised.

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<sup>69</sup>A.P.Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men*, (1984),176,180,189.

<sup>70</sup>*The Annals of Ulster*, eds. S. McAirt and C. MacNiocaill,255.

<sup>71</sup>*Heimskringla. Saga of Harald Fair Hair*,ed. L.M. Hollander, (1964),77.

<sup>72</sup>B.E.Crawford, *Scandinavian Scotland*,47.

Viking graves give evidence of settlement to counteract the picture of looting and raiding in the written sources. Settlement, whether of a permanent or transient nature, must have led to some degree of contact between the Norse and the native populations. Datable finds in Viking graves decrease from the end of the ninth century due to the increasing influence of Celtic Christianity and the resulting decline of the pagan custom of burying grave goods with the dead. Additional evidence for the intermingling of cultures comes from the literary sources which mention the presence of warriors known by the name Gall-Gaedhill, the foreign Gael. The noun Gall is used in native sources to describe the Norse and is also seen in the Gaelic name for the Hebrides in this period, the 'Innse Gall', the islands of the foreigners. To the Norse themselves the islands were known as the sudreyar, the Southern Isles, which differentiated between the Western Isles and the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland which were known collectively to the Norse by the name Nordreyar, the Northern Isles.<sup>73</sup>

Little is known of any centralised authority, political overlordship or independent rulers exerting their power and influence over the islands in this early settlement phase. The sagas unite in attributing the settlement of the Hebrides to Harald Fine Hair who

...went on a Viking Expedition west across the sea as is written in his Saga. He conquered the entire Hebrides, so far west that since then no-one has conquered further but as soon as he'd gone back to Norway, Vikings, Scots and Irishmen invaded the islands, plundering and killing every-where. King Harald heard about this and he sent Ketil Flatnose, the son of Bjørn Buna, to reconquer the islands.<sup>74</sup>

Ketil Flatnose is mentioned in both Icelandic and Irish Sources as one of the most powerful of the early settlers. Landnámabók goes on to record how

Ketil conquered the entire Hebrides and became chieftain over them, but paid none of the tribute to King Harald that had been agreed upon.<sup>75</sup>

Erbyggja saga records a similar tradition whereby Ketil

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<sup>73</sup>The term Nordreyar, the Northern Isles, is used in the 'Historia Norvegia' to describe the islands of Shetland and Orkney, while in Orkneyinga Saga the 'Northern Isles' refers only to the northern islands of the Orkney group.

<sup>74</sup>Book of Settlements, eds.H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,50-51.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid..

Conquered and took over the Hebrides, making peace and alliances with all the leading men there in the west.<sup>76</sup>

The traditional account of King Harald's expedition to the Hebrides has been shown to be part of a literary convention whereby the major events in the early Viking era are portrayed in the sagas as relating to the time of the reign of King Harald who is primarily remembered for his unification of the kingdom of Norway.<sup>77</sup> The story of Ketil Flatnose is similarly taken out of its true historical context and 'forced into a cycle of stories centring on Harald's reign'.<sup>78</sup> It has been suggested that Ketil's rule in the Hebrides is datable not to the reign of Harald Fine Hair but to that of Olaf Guthfrithsson of Vestfold (also known as Olaf the White and Olaf of Dublin) who brought order to Dublin in the mid-ninth century.<sup>79</sup> Olaf is mentioned in Landnámabók as going 'on a Viking expedition to the British Isles. He conquered Dublin in Ireland and made himself king over it.'<sup>80</sup> The Annals of Ulster in 857 record a conflict between Olaf of Dublin and Ketil the White who was the leader of the Gall-Gaedhill and it is the identification of Ketil Flatnose with Ketil the White which indicates that Ketil Flatnose was a contemporary of Olaf of Dublin, although this identification is by no means proven.<sup>81</sup> Landnámabók also links Ketil Flatnose with Olaf of Dublin for 'he [Olaf] married Aud the Deepminded, daughter of Ketil Flatnose'.<sup>82</sup> With the establishment of the Orkney Earldom in the late ninth century at a time when the Irish overlordship in the Hebrides appears to have been weakened, the focus of power shifts from south to north. Orkneyinga Saga which relates the history of the Orkney earldom, is reticent as to events in the Hebrides, and the degree of influence exerted by successive earls is consequently difficult to ascertain. Earl Sigurd the Stout is mentioned as exercising some form of control over the Western Isles in the last quarter of the tenth century. Erbyggja Saga recounts how

Earl Sigurd Hlodvesson of Orkney had been raiding in the Hebrides and Isles of Man. The Earl 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 payed in refined silver.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Eyrbyggja Saga, eds.H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,100.

<sup>77</sup>A.P.Smythe, Warlords,155.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.,156.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid..

<sup>80</sup>Book of Settlements, eds.H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,50-51.

<sup>81</sup>B.E.Crawford, Scandinavian Scotland,47.

<sup>82</sup>Book of Settlements, eds.H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,52.

<sup>83</sup>Eyrbyggja Saga,eds.H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,100.

Orkneyinga Saga frequently records that successive earls went on raiding expeditions to the Hebrides. This argues for a lack of centralised authority in the Western Isles and also perhaps points to the different nature of settlement in that area in this period. Unlike the Orkney islands whose fertile lands must have attracted settlement from an early date and whose contacts with the Norwegian homeland remained strong, the Western Isles may have supported a transient population in some areas whose livelihood depended on the trade routes between Dublin and the Northern Isles.

There are, however, indications of semi-autonomous rulers presiding over individual islands, recorded in sagas and encountered in the oral traditions of the islands. Orkneyinga Saga mentions 'a great chieftain', Holdbodi, who resided on Tiree in the early twelfth century<sup>84</sup> while Njals Saga speaks of Earl Gilli on Coll in the early eleventh century.<sup>85</sup> Both seem to have functioned as semi-independent rulers in the islands. Holdbodi's position is clearly one of an inferior, he is described as being a faithful 'bondi' a term suggestive of one who holds a subservient position. Earl Gilli, by contrast, is portrayed as a man of substantial means and allied by marriage to Earl Sigurd of Orkney through Gilli's marriage to the Earl's daughter. Earl Gilli appears to have held an administrative position on Coll and to have been responsible for the collection of dues from the Hebrides which were passed to the Earl of Orkney. Njals saga records how

Kari was one of Sigurd's body guards  
and he had been taking taxes from the  
Hebrides from Earl Gilli.<sup>86</sup>

There is nothing in the sources to suggest that tribute or tax was exacted from the Hebrides on a regular basis by the Orkney Earldom and this again suggests an independent status for the Hebridean colonies. The rigid delineation of the islands of Coll and Tiree into ouncelands suggests that the islands paid tax or tribute from the early landnam period but to whom and on what basis is unknown.

Earl Sigurd is said to have 'owned this dominion in Scotland: Ross and Moray, Sutherland and the Dales'. There has been discussion as to whether the latter refers to the valleys of the Argyllshire seaboard, which would indicate that Sigurd had nominal control of the Argyll mainland and islands, or to the Dales of Caithness.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Orkneyinga Saga, ed A.B.Taylor,210.

<sup>85</sup>Njals Saga, eds M. Magnusson and H. Palsson,181.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid,182

<sup>88</sup>B.E.Crawford, Scandinavian Scotland ,65.

A.P. Smythe, Warlords,150.

W.F. Skene, Celtic Scotland, 1(1877),375-6.

Certainly at the battle of Clontarf in 1014, at which Earl Gilli was present and at which Sigurd himself was killed, the Earl was able to muster forces from all the Western Isles.

After Clontarf, the Earls of Orkney, Kings of Dublin and rulers of Man all tried to exercise authority over the Isles. Thorfinn, son of Sigurd, is credited with controlling a vast area in the northern and western seaboard:

Earl Thorfinn, Sigurd's son has been the noblest Earl in the islands and has had the greatest dominion of all the Earls of the Orkneymen. He possessed Shetland and Orkney [and] the Hebrides and he had also a great dominion in Scotland and Ireland.<sup>89</sup>

He also sent Kalv Arnesson, a member of the powerful Norwegian Armmodling family and allied by marriage to the Earl, to the Hebrides to make sure of his authority there, and secure support.<sup>90</sup> 1079 marks the beginning of a new era in this area with the arrival of Godred Crovan, the founder of the dynasty of Man and the Isles.<sup>91</sup> Renewed interest in the Isles by the Norwegian crown is seen in the two expeditions of King Magnus Barelegs in 1098 and 1102, the former resulting in an agreement between Scotland and Norway where, for the first time, the Norse conquest of the Isles was acknowledged.<sup>92</sup> After Magnus' expedition the Kings of the Isles possibly paid, irregularly, a money tribute to the Norwegian crown in recognition of Norwegian sovereignty and from the mid twelfth century onwards it is probable that the kings of the Hebrides received their kingdom as a fief with an obligation to pay every new Norwegian king ten gold marks to re-establish their right to it. As far as annual taxes are concerned, the populations of Man and the Hebrides at this period were taxable by their own Kings and the church alone.<sup>93</sup> The Norwegian monarchy did not personally interfere in the west until Hakon's expedition of 1263.<sup>94</sup> The mid-thirteenth century saw the rise to power in Argyll of Somerled. There have been many attempts to trace the ancestry of Somerled to either Irish or Norse origins. The name itself derives from the ON *Sommer Lidi*, (summer warrior) a name popular in the western colonies. Somerled gained control of Argyll and, it would seem, Kintyre but

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<sup>89</sup>Heimskringla, *St. Olaf's Saga*, ed. L.M. Hollander, (1964).

<sup>90</sup>*Orkneyinga Saga*, ed. A.B.Taylor,181.

<sup>91</sup>D. Sellars, 'The Western Isles c. 1095-1286', in *An Historical Atlas of Scotland*, ed. P.McNeill and R. Nicholson,(1974),51.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid..

<sup>93</sup>A.O.Johnsen, 'The payments from the Hebrides and the Isle of Man to the Crown of Norway 1152-1263', in *SHR*48(1969),33.

<sup>94</sup>A.A.M. Duncan and A.L. Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the Earlier Middle Ages', in *PSAS*,90(1956-7),192-220.

the reasons for and the nature of this conquest are not known. Until 1153 he remained loyal to the king but in 1156 turned his attention to the conquest of the Isles ruled by the King of Man, Godfrey Crovan, under Norwegian suzerainty. In 1156 there was a

naval battle between Godred and Somerled with great slaughter on both sides. When daylight came they made peace and shared between them the kingdom of the Isles.<sup>95</sup>

Godfrey's line kept Man, Lewis and Skye while Somerled acquired the island groups centring on Mull and Islay. This territorial division which remained until the death of the last King of Man in 1265 is recorded in the chronicle of Man;

thus was the kingdom of the Isles ruined from the time that the sons of Somerled got possession of it.<sup>96</sup>

Somerled's descendants divided the original area acquired by Somerled so that the MacDonalds came to possess the Islay group of Islands while the MacDougalls controlled Mull, Coll and Tiree and the Lords of Garmoran retained mainland Argyll. All three lines of the family held mainland properties from the Scottish crown and island territories from the Norwegian crown. From 1188 the kingdom of Man was ruled by King Reginald in Man whose brother Olaf controlled the Outer Isles of the Lewis group.

Despite the presence of strong local rulers in each of the island groups, the mid-thirteenth century saw renewed attempts on the part of the Norwegian monarchy to reassert their authority over the Hebrides resulting in the battle of Largs in 1263 and the subsequent Treaty of Perth in 1266. The treaty saw the

terminations of the dissensions regarding Man and the Sodor Isles by which the said Lord Magnus, king of Norway hath ceded Man together with the other Sodor Isles and all the other islands of the west and south of the Great Sea with all regions therein to himself or his forefathers from time of old belonging.. ...given up, resigned and surrendered all claim to sue or to seize for himself and his heirs, the said Isles, to be ever kept, held and possessed by the said Lord Alexander, king of Scotland and his heirs...<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Chronical of Man and the Sudreys, eds.P.A. Munch and Rev.Dr. Goss,69.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid..

<sup>97</sup>Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland,ed.T.Thomson and C.Innes,1(1814),101-3.

Up until the mid-thirteenth century the political history of Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore can only be reviewed within the context of the history of the Inner Hebrides as a whole. 1266 essentially marks the termination of Norse political dominance in the Western Isles and a return to mainstream Gaelic culture and influence bringing the Isles into line with mainland Scotland. The term 'Gaelic revival' has been used to describe this time of amalgamation indicating a move towards Gaelic speech and traditions. Such changes are gradual and in some areas, like Mull and Lismore, geographically close to mainland Scotland, they are likely to have been ongoing from an early date. Smythe suggests that 'the Gaelic language seems to have re-emerged in the Hebrides by the eleventh century, if not earlier'.<sup>98</sup>

The mid-thirteenth century also saw a change in the composition of the balance of overlordship in the Hebrides with the division of the Isles between the three lines of the descendants of Somerled. Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore fell within the territory of Clan Dougall who also held land in mainland Lorn, Benderloch, North Jura, the Garvellachs and the Treshnish Isles. Throughout the Wars of Independence these lands frequently changed hands between the MacDougalls and MacDonalads, most finally remaining with the MacDonalads, Lords of the Isles.<sup>99</sup> In 1354 John of Lorn quitclaimed to John of Islay the isles of Mull, Treshnish, Garvellachs, North Jura and part of Tiree. Coll and that part of Tiree nearest to it were retained by the MacDougalls.<sup>100</sup> In 1409 the Lord of the Isles granted land in Coll to the MacLeans of Duart who also held extensive estates in Mull.<sup>101</sup> The landowning situation in Mull was complex compared with most of the other islands of the Inner Hebrides. Several branches of the MacLeans held land, the MacLeans of Duart having the largest estate which encompassed the districts of Duart and Aros in the east of the island and the pre-Reformation church lands of the Ross of Mull, in the south-west, together with the island of Iona. The MacLaines of Loch Buie held lands in the south-east while the MacLeans of Coll had the Quinish peninsula, the neighbouring Mishnish headland being the property of the McKinnons of Strath. There were also other, minor, MacLean proprietors. Ulva was the property of the MacQuarries.

1679 saw the conquest and annexation of the estate of MacLean of Duart by the ninth Earl of Argyll. The Campbells of Argyll, one of the most powerful landowners in Western Scotland, gained the bulk of Mull and Morvern, part of Coll and almost the whole of Tiree.<sup>102</sup> Lismore was among the lands of the Earldom of

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<sup>98</sup>A.P.Smythe, *Warlords*, 157.

<sup>99</sup>*Acts of the Lords of the Isles 1336-1493*, eds. J.Munro and R.W.Munro, *SHS*, 4th series, 22(1986), xxxvii.

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, 5-8.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, 27-28.

<sup>102</sup>*Highland Papers 1*, ed. J.R.N. MacPhail, 293-311.

Argyll but had long before been granted by the Earl to a cadet branch of the family, the Campbells of Glenorchy, as part of a division of the Lordship of Lorn. In the course of the seventeenth century feu charters were granted by both Argyll and Glenorchy of quite small portions of land in Lismore, sometimes single townships.<sup>103</sup>

The greatest change in the Inner Hebrides came not through successive shifts in land ownership but through the re-organisation and improvements of estates to accommodate new forms of farming on a commercial rather than a subsistence basis. This re-organisation was accompanied by a change in the systems of land tenure; the tenurial re-organisation of Mull, Coll and Tiree, which began in 1737 under the auspices of land reform, radically and unalterably changed the face of the landscape and the settlement patterns which had evolved over the preceding millennia.

## 1.5 METHODOLOGY.

The nature of the source material is such that only an interdisciplinary and retrospective approach can be employed. Little ground work has been done in this geographical area and it has been necessary to collect and collate a wide-ranging and varied corpus of evidence in order to trace the process of the development of settlement. The sources, which cover different time-spans and very different types of evidence complement one another in allowing a composite picture to be drawn up.

All settlements mentioned in the sources, whether physically discernible or not and regardless of the origin of the settlement name, are considered. Several qualitative and quantitative favourability factors are then taken into consideration to allow the classification of settlements into three categories: primary, secondary or peripheral. Primary settlements represent the earliest settlement in a given area while secondary and peripheral settlements point to expansion resulting in the division of the original units. In the following list of criteria it is assumed that fresh water is readily available as this is a fundamental requisite for the location of any settlement.

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<sup>103</sup>F. Shaw, The Northern and Western Isles of Scotland. Their economy and society in the seventeenth century, (1980),20.

### 1.5.1 Soil quality and arable extent.

The quality of the soil was crucial to the location of early Norse settlement. A distinct correlation can be seen between the limited areas of good land on Mull and the incidence of settlements bearing Norse names. On Coll, settlement is associated with the fertile machair fringe while on Tiree the superior quality of much of the land on the island does not restrict the location of early settlement to any particular area. When evaluating the fertility of the land at any one settlement site the type of soil is considered using the soil survey maps. For Tiree, Turnbull's survey mentions land quality for individual settlements prior to the date of the improvements. No such data survives for Mull where arable land is very scarce. In all the islands areas of good soils have been successively worked, improved and enlarged over several centuries.

Closely linked to the potential productivity of the soil is the arable extent of a settlement. This cannot be assessed qualitatively due to the differing agricultural needs of the Norse period when compared to the data available from the eighteenth century to the present day. Again, though, both Turnbull and Langland record the proportions of arable land, outfield, woods, lochs and moorland pertaining to each settlement which provides a rough guide to cultivable land.

### 1.5.2 Harbour facilities and distance from the sea.

The sea was crucial to the Norse both as a means of transport and as a supplementary food resource. Settlements needed both access to the sea and safe harbours, or beaching points for boats. The assessment of these factors is somewhat subjective and dependent upon obtaining local knowledge of favourable landing places. On Coll and Tiree the sandblow in many areas has changed the face of the coastal strip and obliterated many of the early landing stages. Small changes in the sea level also make it difficult to assess boat naust objectively.

Distance from the sea has been included as a favourability factor to complement the harbour facilities. It cannot be measured accurately as the sites of present day settlements do not necessarily occupy those of earlier ones and on small islands such as Coll, Tiree and Lismore no settlement was far from the sea. This favourability factor is best used when considering the location of inland settlements, although the character of inland sites, for example their use as shielings, may preclude the necessity for access to the sea.

### 1.5.3 Fiscal analysis.

One of the clearest indications of the former status of a settlement is seen through its fiscal evaluation. The method of fiscal analysis was first evolved in Norway where it was primarily concerned with dating settlement name generics chronologically.<sup>104</sup> The basic principle involved was that the higher the average (median) annual payment of rent or tax for a given generic group in relation to other groups, the older the generic group in relation to other groups. This method of dating settlement name elements can also be used with limited value in Scotland.

An adaptation of this form of fiscal analysis can also be used to give a relative date for individual groups of settlements. In the Hebridean written sources, the charters and particularly the rentals, it is not the annual payment of rent which is so important but the fixed valuation of a settlement. This is variously expressed in terms of uncelsands, pennylands, merklands, maillands or monetary denominations. All these evaluations were originally a measure of land quality and productivity rather than of size or extent and formed a basis for both taxation and rent. Although the payments of tax and rent show fluctuation and change in the records, the valuation of the settlements remain remarkably consistent. On the analogy that a high valuation is indicative of high quality land and that high quality land often attracted early settlement it follows that a settlement with a high valuation will likely predate a settlement in the nearby vicinity with a lower valuation.

When considered with the other favourability factors this method can prove a reliable guide to the ranking of settlements. However, it can only be used within certain limits. Great variations in land quality from island to island and within distinct regions of larger islands make direct comparison of the fiscal valuations and indeed the ranking of individual settlements on an island to island basis inadvisable. A prime site on Mull with a high evaluation, for example, may have poorer quality soil and be inferior to that with a similar valuation and ranking on Tiree where conditions are superior.

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<sup>104</sup>J. Sandness, 'Datering av Navneklasser ved Landskyld Metoden', in Maal og Minne, 1-2(1973),12-28.

#### 1.5.4 Geometrical method.

Documentary material from the post-Norse period together with maps gives a picture of settlement several centuries removed from that of the Norse period. Extensive expansion of settlement has occurred with the accompanying division of early, primary settlement units into component parts. In Norway the method of geometrical analysis has been employed where the shapes of holdings are studied and fitted together in an effort to re-trace the original boundaries of settlement units.<sup>105</sup> This method relies heavily both on the assumption that the settlement boundaries have remained constant over time and on the survival of early cartographic material. Maps relating to Ellingsøya, Sunnmøre have allowed a limited success in the use of this method for holdings on that island, but such material is not available for the study areas in Scotland.

The re-grouping of component parts of older settlement units in the Hebrides can be achieved through the fiscal record. The primary unit in Coll and Tiree was the unceland, also known as a six merkland. In Tiree the settlement of Heylipoll is mentioned as one unciata or six merklands in 1390. In 1674 its valuation is recorded as being 4 merklands while adjacent Crossapoll, a subdivision of Kirkapoll, is evaluated as 2 merklands. Similarly on Coll the 6 merkland (one unceland) unit of Cliad was evidently subdivided into four 1 1/2 merkland divisions, those of Cliad, Mibost, Arnabost and Grishipoll.

#### 1.5.5 Presence of Ecclesiastical Monuments

A settlement displaying all the aforementioned favourability factors will frequently develop into a centre of social, economic or political importance. An indication of this is the presence of a church or chapel. This is most relevant to Tiree where it would appear that the primary unceland units formed an integral part in the pre-parochial ecclesiastical organisation of the island with a pattern of one chapel per unceland.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Q.Farbregd, 'Gardgrenser og Geometrisk Analyse, Teori og Metodisk Prinsipp', in Heimen, I (1984),33-50.

<sup>106</sup>See p.259

## 1.6 PREVIOUS RESEARCH.

Early interest in the Norse period in the Western Isles concentrated on the political history of the islands and encompassed such key issues as the origin of the settlers,<sup>107</sup> the nature and reasons for the emigrations from Scandinavia<sup>108</sup> and the nature of both the initial incursions into Celtic territory and the subsequent relationship between Norse and native.<sup>109</sup> General studies of the Norse period such as Henderson's The Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland<sup>110</sup> and Hunter-Marshall's The Sudreys in Early Viking Times<sup>111</sup> relied heavily on saga material and failed to distinguish between geographical areas and the distinct phases of Viking activity. Almost a century later than Goodrich-Freer's article on 'The Norsemen in the Hebrides'<sup>112</sup> Smythe provides exhaustive coverage of the political scene in the Hebrides in the Norse period. In War Lords and Holy Men, he collates the wide-ranging written sources and discusses the Norse era in relation to the preceding periods, firmly tying in events in the Isles with the history of the Irish Sea province as a whole.<sup>113</sup> This political framework provides a background against which Norse settlement may be studied.

Shetelig's Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland is essentially an annotated catalogue of artefacts relating to the Norse period.<sup>114</sup> More recent approaches have concentrated on individual settlement sites, concerned with the typological development of Norse settlement<sup>115</sup> and with the interaction between Norse and Gael.<sup>116</sup> This latter point has become the focus for linguistic studies which seek to determine the influence of Old Norse on Scottish Gaelic.<sup>117</sup> In place-name studies early works again cover wide geographical areas.<sup>118</sup> Oftedal's work on the settlement names of Lewis<sup>119</sup> shows a later trend in studying, in depth, smaller

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107 A.W. Brøgger, Ancient Emigrants, (1929).

108 J.A. Worsaae, An Account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland and Ireland, (1952).

109 P. DuChailly, The Viking Age, (1889).

110 G. Henderson, The Norse Influence on Celtic Scotland, (1910).

111 D.W. Hunter-Marshall, The Sudreys in Early Viking Times, (1929).

112 A. Goodrich-Freer, 'The Norsemen in the Hebrides', in Saga Book of the Viking Club, 2 part 1 (1897), 51-74.

113 A.P. Smythe, Warlords.

114 H. Shetelig, Viking Antiquities in Great Britain and Ireland, vol. 2 of Viking Antiquities, ed. S. Grieg, (1940).

115 A. MacLaren, 'A Norse House on Drimore Machair'.

116 I.A. Crawford, 'Viking Colonisation in the Northern and Western Isles of Scotland', in Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress, (1981), 263.

117 Borgstrøm, 'On the Influence of Norse on Scottish Gaelic', in Lochlann, 6(1974).

118 W.J. Watson, The History of the Celtic Place Names of Scotland, (1926)

119 M. Oftedal, 'The Viking Names of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides', in Norsk Tidkrift for Sprogvidenskap, 17(1954), 356-409.

regions and this is seen also in, for example, Gordon's work on Skye<sup>120</sup> and MacEachern's discussion of settlement names on Coll.<sup>121</sup> All these studies aim at providing a linguistic analysis of settlement names, ascertaining their origin, whether Gaelic, Norse, Scots or English, and providing an interpretation of the name. Bremner was perhaps the first to realise the potential of settlement name studies in elucidating other aspects of Norse settlement when he used the ratio of Gaelic to Old Norse names in individual islands to illustrate the decreasing density of Norse settlements from north to south in the Western Isles.<sup>122</sup> Nicolaison's extensive works show a further move towards using place names, both of topographical features and settlements, as an aid to settlement studies with his placing of name generics into a relative chronology intended to illustrate the differing phases of Norse colonisation, settlement and expansion.<sup>123</sup> His extensive use of cartographic material to visually illustrate the density of name generics in different areas also provided an innovative approach.

Interdisciplinary studies concerned primarily with the subject of Norse settlement in the Western Isles are few; most work of this nature has focused upon the Northern Isles. Wainwright's Archaeology, Place-Names and History is a unique study of the differing sources of evidence which have to be mastered for the period but does not relate specifically to any one area.<sup>124</sup> Small in 'Norse settlement in Skye' adopted an interdisciplinary approach with a distinct bias to the place-name material,<sup>125</sup> while Neike's analysis of Iron Age and Norse settlement patterns on Islay relies heavily on archaeological material.<sup>126</sup>

Alcock and Alcock adopted a different approach in the Inner Hebrides, isolating three settlements with Norse names on the islands of Mull, Tiree and Islay and surveying those townships in an attempt to locate buildings indicative of the Norse period.<sup>127</sup> In Shetland an interdisciplinary study concerned with a single site

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<sup>120</sup>B.Gordon, 'Some Norse Place Names in Trotternish, Isle of Skye', in Scottish Gaelic Studies, 10 part I (1963),82-112.

<sup>121</sup>D.MacEachern, 'The Place Names of Coll', in TGSI, 29(1914-19)314-335.

<sup>122</sup>R.L.Bremner, 'Some Notes on the Norsemen in Argyllshire and on the Clyde', in Saga Book of the Viking Society, 3(1904),338-80.

<sup>123</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles, Some place-name evidence', in SHR, 48(1969),6-17.

----- Scottish Place Names,(1976).

----- 'Early Scandinavian Naming in the Northern and Western Isles', in Northern Scotland, 3(1977-80),5-22.

----- 'The Viking Settlement of Scotland: Evidence of Place Names', in The Vikings, ed.R.T.Farrell, (1982),95-115.

<sup>124</sup>F.T. Wainwright, Archaeology, Place-Names and History, (1962).

<sup>125</sup>A. Small, 'Norse Settlement in Skye', in 'Les Vikings et leur civilisation: problemes actuels', ed. R. Boyer, in Bibliothèque Arctique et Antartique, 5(1976),29-37.

<sup>126</sup>M. Neike, 'Settlement Patterns in the 1st Millenium AD: a case study of the island of Islay', in Settlement in North Britain 1000 BC - AD 1000, ed. J.C. Chapman and H.C.Mytum, BAR,118 (1983),95-115.

<sup>127</sup>L.Alcock and E.Alcock, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the Inner Hebrides,61-73.

and involving archaeological excavation is seen in the study of 'The Biggings', Papa Stour,<sup>128</sup> but no similar studies have been carried out in the Western Isles.

Interdisciplinary investigations concerned with all the settlement sites of a given geographical area and concentrating on the Norse period have been undertaken by Macgregor<sup>129</sup> and Petersen<sup>130</sup> for areas in Shetland, by Thuesson for areas of Orkney,<sup>131</sup> and by Fløistad for Man.<sup>132</sup> The only detailed study of the Western Isles is that undertaken by Olsen in 1983 which concentrates on areas of Lewis, Skye and Islay.<sup>133</sup> There have been no studies which concentrate exclusively on the islands of the Inner Hebrides, and those islands showing a large number of Gaelic settlement names have been particularly neglected. This study will concentrate on four islands of the Inner Hebridean group where a wide range of settlement types is found within a relatively small geographical area. It will highlight features of the settlement pattern peculiar to the Inner Hebrides in the Norse period and attempt to further the understanding of colonial settlement and name giving in an area which, previous and subsequent to the Norse era, was populated by Gaelic speaking peoples.

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<sup>128</sup>B.E.Crawford, 'The Biggings, Papa Stour: a multi-disciplinary investigation, in Shetland Archaeology, ed. B. Smith,(1985),128-58.

<sup>129</sup>L.J. Macgregor, 'Norse Settlement in Shetland and Faroe. A comparative study', Ph. D. Thesis, University of St. Andrews, (1987).

<sup>130</sup>S.Petersen, 'Norrøn bosetning på Shetlandøyene'. Hovedoppgave, University of Oslo. (1981).

<sup>131</sup>N.P.Thuessen, 'Gardbosetning på Orknøyene i Norrøn tid. Et studium av South Ronaldsay, Rousay, Harray og Deerness', Hovedoppgave, University of Oslo, (1978).

<sup>132</sup>G.Fløistad, 'Trekk av Bosetning på Isle of Man i Norrøn periode', Hovedoppgave, University of Oslo, (1980).

<sup>133</sup>D.Olsen, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides. An Interdisciplinary Study', Hovedoppgave, University of Oslo, (1983).

## PART ONE

## Chapter Two

### NORWAY THE SUNNMØRE ISLANDS

#### 2.1 Introduction

The settlers who colonized the Scottish islands originated from the west Norwegian coastal districts. An area on the western coast, the Sunnmøre islands, was therefore picked for comparative study. These islands have at no time since the close of the migration period experienced a substantial influx of settlers from outwith the country; neither has the movement of population within Norway been of any magnitude. Indigenous organic settlement growth has developed largely uninterrupted by external factors and, unlike western Scotland, the Norwegian coastal districts have been little influenced by other cultural and linguistic groups.

Five islands, Giske, Godøya, Vigra, Valderøya and Ellingsøya, have been chosen for comparative study for a variety of reasons. They represent some of the oldest settled areas in Norway, by virtue of their geographical position and the fertility of the land. The climate and variety of landforms found on the islands is comparable to those of the islands of the Inner Hebrides. Giske, for example, is flat, low-lying and exceptionally fertile, as is Tiree. Politically, Sunnmøre had connections with the Northern Isles in the Norse period and landowners based in Sunnmøre held lands in Shetland.<sup>1</sup> The documentary sources for Sunnmøre span roughly the same period as those for the Inner Hebrides; the earliest rental for Coll and Tiree is the crown rental of 1541<sup>2</sup> while the earliest estate account for Giske dates from 1563.<sup>3</sup> The district of Sunnmøre derives its name from the ON sudr moer, the southern sea, and lies 245 km north-north-east of the west coast 'capital' of Bergen. It is bounded to the north by the district of Romsdal and to the south by that of Nordfjord. Coastal Sunnmøre is characterised by its many fjords. Each fjord is an individual region and within a single fjord the difference between the seaward parts and those inland can be profound. A complex chain of large and small islands is a distinctive feature of the Sunnmøre coastal fringe. Godøya, Giske, Vigra and Valderøya lie to the west of the Sunnmøre town of Ålesund while the larger island of Ellingsøya is situated to the east of the above group, and closer to the mainland. These islands by virtue of their westerly position are comparable to those of the Inner Hebrides in having a maritime climate. Along this area of the Norwegian coast the difference between the mean temperature of the hottest and

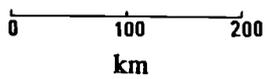
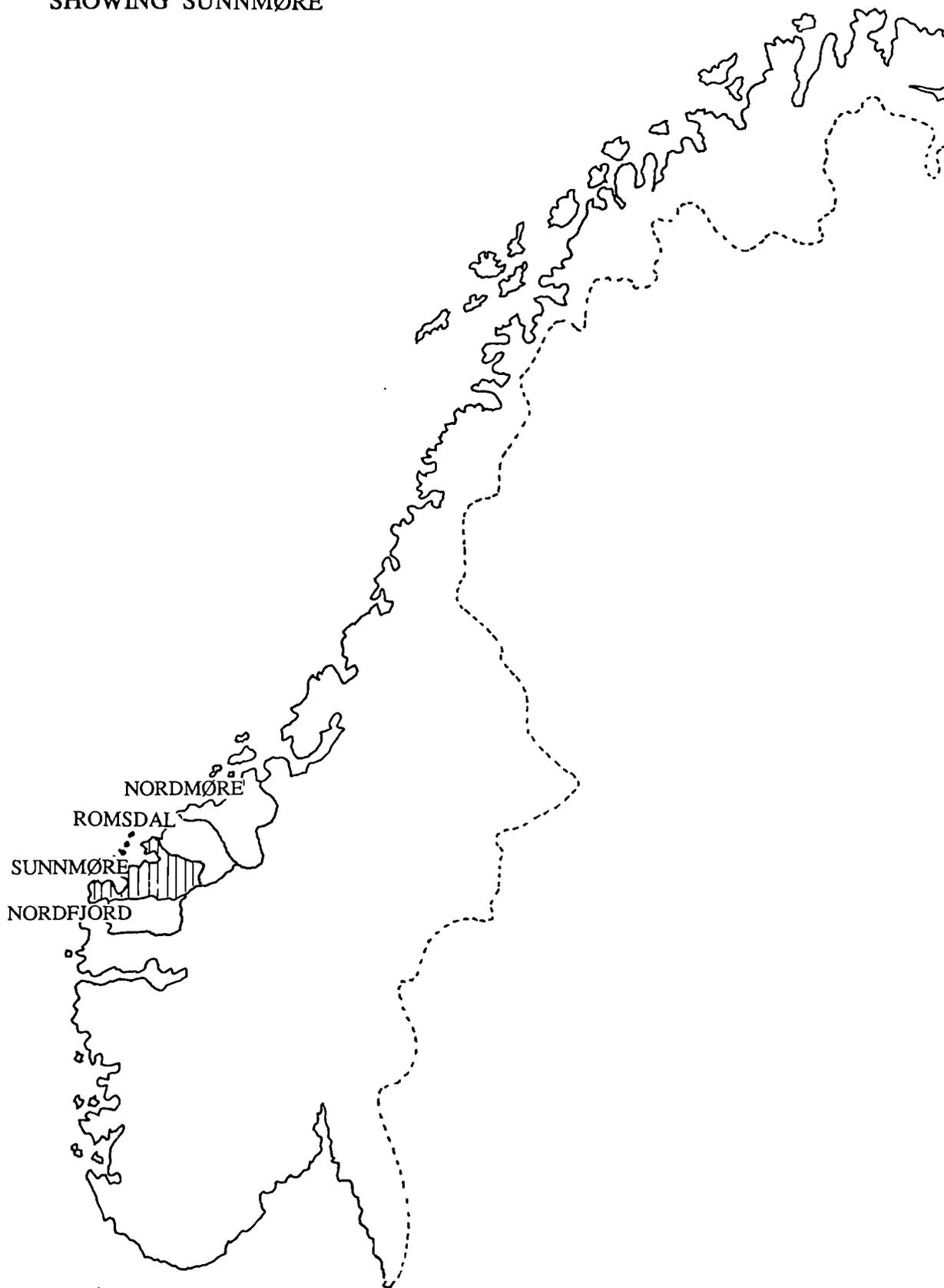
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<sup>1</sup>NRR vol.2 nos.457,572,581.

<sup>2</sup>Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.647.

<sup>3</sup>Inntektsregnskabene for Fru Gørvild Fadersdatters Nordenfjelske Gods in 1563. Innlånt Diplomer. NRA 4AO 7635. Avskriftsamlingen pakke 233.

LOCATION MAP. NORWAY  
SHOWING SUNNMØRE



coldest months is less than 14 degrees centigrade.<sup>4</sup> Precipitation is also low with islands such as low-lying Giske receiving an annual total of less than 1000mm.<sup>5</sup> The growing season, shorter than that found in western Scotland, is of approximately 180 days duration.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest discernible traces of settlement are those of the hunter-gatherer 'Fosnakultur' with settlement sites located at, for example, Hov, Ellingsøya.<sup>7</sup> There are abundant remains dating from the Bronze and Iron Ages throughout the islands. Early work on the prehistoric periods concerned with Bronze and Iron Age settlement led Bøe to argue strongly, on the basis of the exceptionally large grave monuments to be found on the islands of Giske, Godøya, Vigra and Valderøya, that each island represented a centre of economic, political and social power serving a distinct and defined area.<sup>8</sup> These islands, he believed, were settled early and densely, with the administrative demarcations showing continuity from the Bronze to the Iron Age.<sup>9</sup> There is little indication as to the character of these five local communities or of the type/function of the organisational systems. The grave mounds may point to a familial dynasty or political power. There has been little attempt to challenge Bøe's theories and recent archaeological work has concentrated on surveying and recording the existing monuments.<sup>10</sup> Fett's work has also shown that economic continuity is discernible in the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age with early Iron Age dynasties occupying the same central sites as had been utilized by their Bronze Age predecessors.<sup>11</sup> This is in part due to the relatively limited amount of land suitable for arable use. Continuity is also reflected in the grave monuments. Into the primary Bronze Age grave mound at Mjeltehaugen, Giske, a secondary female grave was inserted ca 200 AD.<sup>12</sup> Similarly the Bronze Age Ellefrøysa burial on Godøya shows a secondary grave insertion dating from ca 100 AD.<sup>13</sup>

In the early Viking Age this multiplicity of local communities is overshadowed by the rise to power of the Arnung dynasty on Giske<sup>14</sup> and the Blindheim dynasty on Vigra.<sup>15</sup> Their prominence was due to their acquisition of land and followers and control of the rich natural resources. There is some discrepancy as to the origin of these powerful dynasties and Kvalsund suggests that Giske was in the hands of the 'Finnane' long before the 'Arnungane' came to Giske from

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<sup>4</sup>B.John, *A New Geography of Scandinavia*,(1984),75.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid..

<sup>6</sup>Ibid..

<sup>7</sup>P.Fett, 'Landnåmet i Borgund og Giske', in *Borgund og Giske*, ed. R.Øvrelid, 1(1957),65.

<sup>8</sup>J.Bøe, 'Fra Ledens fortid. Et Forsøk', in *Viking Tidsskrift for Norrøn Arkaeologi*, 4(1942),188.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid..

<sup>10</sup>P.Fett, *Forhistoriske Minne på Sunnmøre*, (1950-51).

<sup>11</sup>P.Fett, 'Landnåmet',95.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid..

<sup>13</sup>Ibid..

<sup>14</sup>O.Kvalsund, 'Sagn tida og den første historiske tida ', in *Borgund og Giske* 1(1957),150-51.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.,192,219.

LOCATION MAP  
MID SUNNMØRE ISLANDS



0 5 10 15 20  
km

Onundarfjord.<sup>16</sup> Contemporaneous with the Arnung and Blindheim dynasties were the Earls of Møre who appear to have been in control of both the mainland and some of the islands of Sunnmøre.<sup>17</sup> Snorre and Orkneyinga Saga preserve the traditional account of how

'Earl Rognvald assisted Harald Fine Hair to conquer the country (Norway) and Harald granted him the two Møre and Romsdal to rule over'.<sup>18</sup>

That same year, 874, Ivar, the son of Earl Rognvald, fell in battle and in compensation Harald Fine Hair 'gave to Earl Rognvald Shetland and the Orkneys'.<sup>19</sup> Earl Rognvald, however, gave both island groups to his brother Sigurd and

'when the king sailed from the west he gave Sigurd the title of Earl and Sigurd stayed out in the west'.<sup>20</sup>

Thus were the regions of Sunnmøre, Orkney and Shetland linked politically from an early date. It has been suggested that both the Arnungane and the Earls of Møre had contact with the Northern Isles of Scotland from as early as 790.<sup>21</sup> Orkneyinga Saga is reticent as to any further contact between Sunnmøre and the Northern Isles. Other sagas refer to the continued importance of the Sunnmøre islands. Egils Saga mentions the settlement of Blindheim on Vigra being 'a very great estate' and the residence of 'a nobleman ... called Fridgeir'.<sup>22</sup> Giske is frequently mentioned in Hakon Saga Hakonarssonar<sup>23</sup> and the island of Godøya is referred to as the residence of a local ruler in Olaf Tryggvassons Saga.<sup>24</sup>

The continued economic prosperity of the entire Sunnmøre region in the late Viking period can be seen in the establishment of a trading centre at Borgund where excavations have shown continuous activity on the site from the ninth century to the later Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup> Borgund developed not only as centre for trade and as an administrative and political focal point but also as a religious centre.

Continuity in landownership is seen in the Sunnmøre properties belonging to the Giske estate. Already by 1195 much of the Shetland estate had become

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.,171.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.,150,155,159.

<sup>18</sup>Orkneyinga Saga, ed. A.B.Taylor,138.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid..

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.,139.

<sup>21</sup>O.Kvalsund, 'Sagn tíða',151.

<sup>22</sup>Egil's Saga, ed. C.Fell,117.

<sup>23</sup>Hakon Saga Hakonarssonar, ed M.Mundt,101,105,109,156,158-9.

<sup>24</sup>Saga Olafs Tryggvasonar, ed.F.Jónsson,(1932),117.

<sup>25</sup>A.E.Herteig, 'Kaupangen i Borgund', in Borgund and Giske, 1(1957),421-473.

the property of the Giske family.<sup>26</sup> By the sixteenth century the Giske estate formed the largest noble estate in Norway and was surpassed in size only by the church and royal estates. The single landowner of the Giske estate in the mid-sixteenth century was Fru Gørvild Fadersdatter (b 1510). Swedish by birth she inherited three separate estate complexes. From her paternal grandfather, son of Alf Knutsson and the largest landowner in Norway in the latter half of the fifteenth century, she acquired the core of the Giske estate and lands in Sunnmøre, Romsdal, Bjarkøy and Shetland. Two other branches of the family brought her extensive properties in Finne, Grefsheim and Gudbrandsdalen.<sup>27</sup> From 1582 onwards in the course of several transactions, Fru Gørvild Faddersdatter transferred the bulk of her landed estates in Norway, Sweden and Denmark to the Danish crown.<sup>28</sup>

Administratively, Sunnmøre in the seventeenth century formed part of Bergenhus len, the country at that time being divided into 9 lens.<sup>29</sup> Each len was subdivided into several fogderi. The fogderi were made up of several smaller units having their origins in diverse administrative systems, that is in the ecclesiastical system (*sogn*, and *prestegjeld*, districts), in the old leidang, ship levy, system (the *skipreide* and *mantallett*) and in the judicial system (the *tinglag*). In addition, the herred also functioned as an administrative unit. Giske, Godøya, Vigra, Valderøya and Ellingsøya fell within Borgund skipreide and herred.

There are many documentary sources relevant to the Giske estate. The most comprehensive and complete surveys of the estate, listing the individual farms, their status and tax payments are the 1563<sup>30</sup> and 1586<sup>31</sup> accounts registers. These are supplemented by those documents concerned with the whole of Sunnmøre which list properties not owned by Giske, for example the Sunnmøre accounts record for 1626 which covers the whole of the Sunnmøre region. Complementing the above sources are the records of individual land transactions.<sup>32</sup> The *skattematrikkelen* of 1647<sup>33</sup> complements the estate papers from Giske and covers the whole of Sunnmøre. This tax register, the oldest in Norway, lists farms individually together with the amount of tax to be paid, the type of ownership and name of the owner and/or tenant. The matrikkelen arose out of the tax reforms of 1644 whereby many small, local and diverse taxes were replaced by a nationally comprehensive tax system originally known by the term 'contributions' and later as land tax (*landskylde*). A classification system whereby farms

<sup>26</sup>P.Ø.Sandberg, *Gørvel Fadersdatters Regnskap over Giske og Giske Godset*, 1563, (1986),9.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid..

<sup>28</sup>NRR vol.2 p.453.

<sup>29</sup>R.Flady, 'Administrativ Inndeling' in *Den Eldste Matrikkelen, En Innfallsport til Historien*, ed.R.Flady and H.Winge,29.

<sup>30</sup>NRA 4AO7635. Avsriftsamlingen pakke 233.

<sup>31</sup>NRR vol.2 p.651-4.

<sup>32</sup>Giske Gods. NRA Statholder Arkivet. D1X 3 Ja 5-12.

<sup>33</sup>'Skatte Matrikkelen 1647', in *Den Eldste Matrikkelen, En Innfallsport til Historien*, eds. R.Flady and H.Winge,10.

were evaluated as having the status of 'full farms', 'half farms' or 'deserted farms' was introduced. Under the farm classification system a full farm was liable for full tax, a half farm for half tax and a deserted farm for quarter tax.<sup>34</sup> The latter category originally only comprehended deserted farms from the later Middle Ages which had begun to be cleared and re-settled but was widened to include all newly cleared areas and other small farms all of which paid the quarter tax. The new tax took some time to implement and information from the tax list of 1651 has been used to supplement that of 1647.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>H.Winge 'Skatt,gård og skyld', in 'DenEldste Matrikkelen. En Infallsport til Historien,10.

<sup>35</sup>Skatte Matrikkelen 1647 Vol.13 Møre og Romsdal Fylke, eds. R.Fladby and S.Imsen,(1957),9.

## 2.2.1

ISLAND OF GISKE

The island of Giske lies 5km north-west of Ålesund and 2.5km west of the island of Valderøya. To the south-east, Giskesundet separates Giske from the neighbouring island of Godøya. Giske is one of the smallest of the Sunnmøre islands being only 2.76 sq km in extent. The underlying rock formation is composed of Caledonian gneisses and granites<sup>36</sup> which give rise to broad terraces in the south of the island. Nowhere does the land rise above the 20m contour and the north of the island is characterised by the two low-lying headlands of Kvalneset and Staurneset. A small area of moorland lies in the centre of the island. In 1820 Giske paid a tax comparable to that of the richest farming areas of Norway, in Hedemark,<sup>37</sup> which is illustrative of the exceptional fertility of the island. The name Giske is obscure.

2.2.2 Settlement AnalysisSettlement Unit Giske

Giske 1120 II 47 33

Gizska	1291	DN vol.3 no.30
Gidzska	1344	DN vol.5 no.171
Gidska	1347	DN vol.2 no.279
Gizska	1353	DN vol.1 no.338
Gidzskæ	1477	DN vol.2 no.903
Giedsche	1666	NGN vol.13 p.188
Giedsche	1723	“

ON Gizki ?

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age mounds including four excavated inhumation burials. Viking inhumation burial (female). Twelfth century stone chapel.

Giske, the primary settlement which shares the island name, lies in the south of the island on the flattest and most fertile land. The wealth of archaeological evidence regarding Iron Age settlement suggests successive use of the site in that period and into the Viking Age. The Viking burial yielded the diagnostic tortoise shaped brooches of a female grave and a silver arm ring.<sup>38</sup> When expansion of settlement

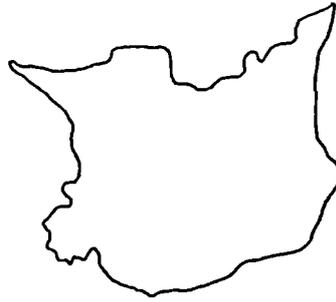
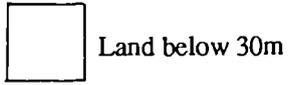
<sup>36</sup>H.Kaldhol, 'Oversyn over Geologien i Borgund', in Borgund og Giske,1(1957),30.

<sup>37</sup>A.Holmsen, Gård og Gods i Norge i Eldre Tid, (1980),15.

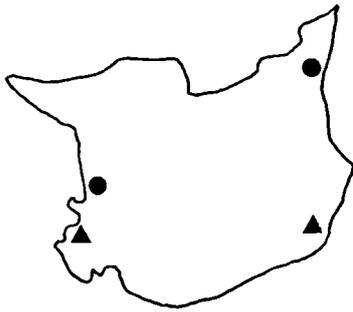
<sup>38</sup>P.Fett, Gamle Sunnmørske Bygder, 1952,25.

# GISKE

## SKETCH MAP PHYSICAL RELIEF



## LOCATION OF IRON AGE AND VIKING AGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

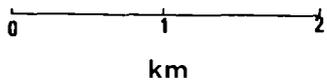


▲ Viking Age

● Iron Age

## SETTLEMENT DIVISIONS CA.1850

----- Farm Boundary



from the primary unit occurred the core of the primary settlement came to be known by the term Giskegaard.

As the centre of the Giske estate and seat of the Giske family, neither island nor farm are included in the taxation documents of 1563.

Giskegjerdet 1120 II 48 34

ON Gizki,m gerdi,n (The enclosed field of Giske)

Archaeological Monuments: Bronze and Iron Age mounds including the excavated Mjeltehaugen with inserted female inhumation burial from 200 AD.

The noun gerdi, occurs frequently in Sunnmøre settlement names, both in the simplex form Gjerde (12 examples), with the direct object Gjerdet (31 examples) or in a compound form as in the names Gjerdshaugen, Gjerdsviken. It most commonly denotes an enclosed area of infield.<sup>39</sup> Giskegjerdet lies on the same fertile terrace of land as the primary farm of Giske and clearly forms secondary settlement expansion on the infield of that settlement.

Giske Øygaarden 1120 II 48 33.

ON Gizke,m øde,adj gaard,m (Giske deserted farm)

Archaeological Monuments: Three (?) Viking Age burial mounds.

The settlement lies in the north-east of the island bounded to the north by the settlement of Staurneset and to the west by Kvalneset. It is not clear why the settlement became known as the Ødegaard, the deserted farm. The name is a common one throughout Norway and usually indicates a settlement which became deserted after the svartedauden (Black Death) of the fourteenth century, when a much depleted population was to be found concentrated on the most fertile areas of land. The abandoned farms were usually those on the poorer soils. The presence of an Ødegaard name is therefore a good indication of a marginal area, one settled late and liable to go out of use when pressure on resources declined due to a fall in population.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup>C.Vigfusson and R.Cleasby, Icelandic-English Dictionary, (1957),197.

<sup>40</sup>S.Gisel, E.Jutikkala, E.Osterberg, J.Sandnes and B.Teitson, Desertion and Land Colonisation in the Nordic Countries c.1300-1600,(1981)14.

In the mid-eighteenth century Giske Øygaarden was also known by the name Giske-groften (ON *groft*, hollow) the name referring to a site east of the settlement where there is a large hollow in the ground.

Staurneset 1120 II 48 35.  
ON Stor,adj nes,n (Big headland)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age mounds including two female inhumation burials.

The Staurnes headland, an elongated and narrow promontory, lies at the north-eastern extremity of the island. To the east lies Staursundet, the big sound, incorporating the same element ON stor, which in the name Staurneset refers either to the size of the headland (larger than that of Kvalneset) or its nearness to Staursundet. Rygh suggests the alternative derivation that the first element in the name stems from ON stor, a sturgeon fish, and likens the shape of the headland to the shape of that fish.<sup>41</sup> This suggestion can largely be disclaimed as the name Staurnes occurs twice more in Sunnmøre, in Kornstad and Bjørnor herreds, in each case it is plainly associated with a prominent headland.

The modern settlement division of Staurneset was developed from areas of Giskegaard outfield in the 1850s.

Kvalneset 1120 II 47 34.  
ON Hvalr,m nes,n (Whale headland)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age mounds.

Kvalneset, the north-western headland on Giske, is flat and very low-lying. This coupled with its exposed position makes it particularly vulnerable to the westerly winds and it is now devoid of settlement. Like Staurneset, the exposed position and slightly less favourable soil conditions suggest that the settlement developed after that of Giskegaard.

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<sup>41</sup>NGN vol.13,189.

### 1.2.3 Summary

Table 1 Classification of settlement

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Archaeological Monuments</u>	<u>1647 Landskyld</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Giske	IA VA	–	Primary
Giskegjerdet	IA	–	Secondary
Giskeøygaard	IA VA	–	Secondary
Kvalneset	IA	–	Peripheral
Staurneset	IA	–	Peripheral

Table 2 Settlement Names

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total Habitative</u>	<u>Total Topogrphaical</u>
Primary	1	–	1
Secondary	2	1	1
Peripheral	2	–	2

## 2.3.1

ISLAND OF GODØYA

Godøya lies to the south-west of Giske and is bounded to the south by Breisundet and to the east by Valderhaugfjorden. The 10.87 sq km island divides naturally into two distinct parts along an axis running from Furkenholmen in the north-east to Reiskjeret in the south-west. To the east of this line the land is flat and low-lying, rising gently towards the west. By contrast, west of the line, the land rises steeply to the summit of Storhornet at 497m and drops by 245m westwards to Alnesvatnet. The northerly headland of Alsnes is comparable to the eastern portion of the island although its exposed position and the problem of sandblow limit its value for settlement.

There are 3 settlements on Godøya, one of which shares the same name as the island, ON Gud, ey, God's island. Local tradition holds that 'the Gods' used Alnesvatnet as a bathing place.<sup>42</sup>

2.3.2 Settlement AnalysisSettlement Unit Godøya

<u>Godøya</u>	1119 I 44 30		
Gudoey	1351	DN vol.1 no.236	
Gudey	1353	DN vol.1 no.338	
Guden	1421	DN vol.2 no. 662	
Gwdøn	1516	DN vol.1 no.1049	4 våger 5 mæler
Gudøenn	1563	NRA 4AO 7635	16 våger 15mæler
Gudøen	1582	NRR vol.2 p.453	16 våger 15 mæler
Gudøenn	1603, 1606,	NGN vol.13 p.188	25 våger 1pd. 18mk
Gudøenn	1617	"	
Gudøen	1647	SM p.18	21 våger

ON Gud,m ey,m (God's island)

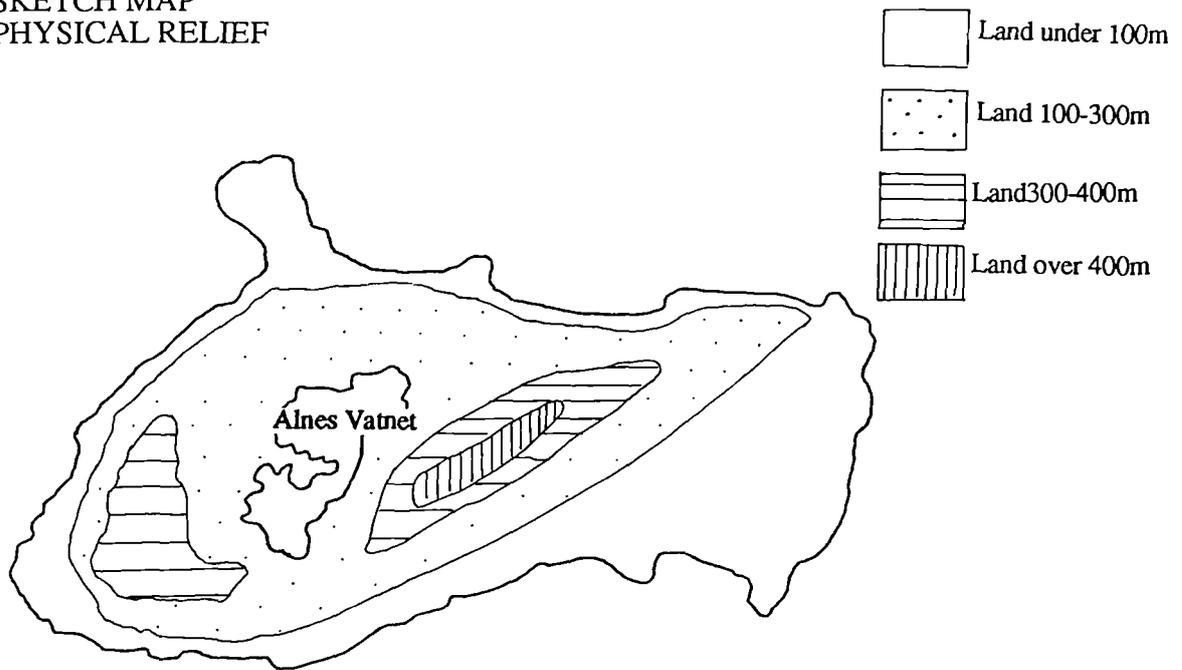
Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age mounds, including Elleyfrøysa with a female grave insertion from 200 AD.

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<sup>42</sup>NGN vol.13,200.

# GODØYA

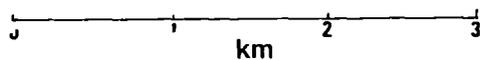
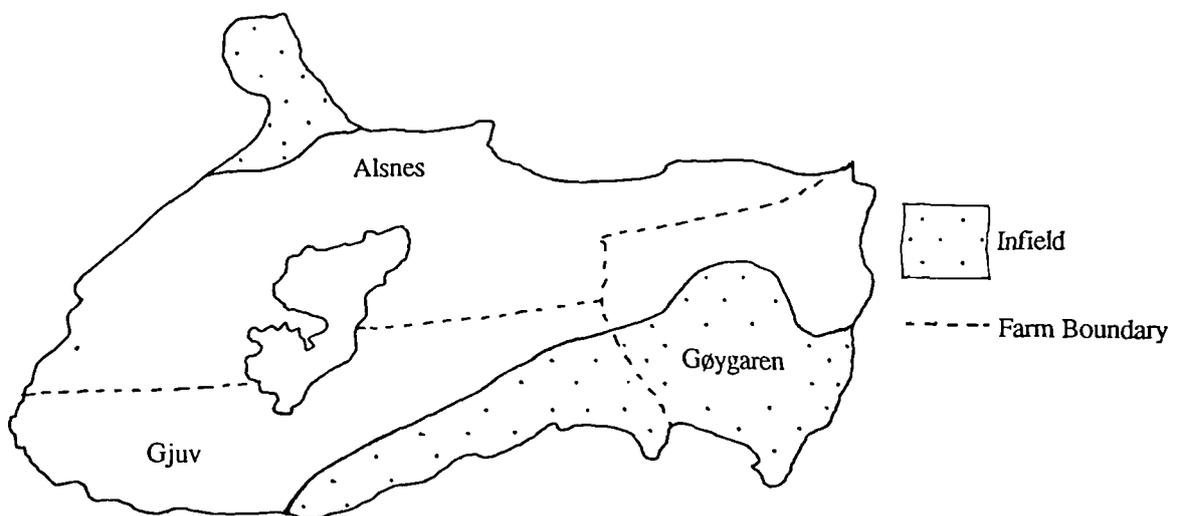
## SKETCH MAP PHYSICAL RELIEF



## LOCATION OF IRON AGE AND VIKING AGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



## TRIPARTITE DIVISION OF GODØYA CA. 1800



The settlement of Godøya occupies the most fertile land on the island and originally encompassed the entire eastern portion of the island. The great density of Iron Age mounds testifies to the early settlement of this area. The largest of these, Ellefrøysa, is traditionally believed to be the burial mound of Earl Ellef,<sup>43</sup> a legendary figure.

The farm is documented as forming part of the Giske estate from 1351 when it came into the hands of Erling Vidkunsson.<sup>44</sup> Like the farm of Giske, Godøya was also known as the home farm of the island although the most commonly used name for the settlement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was Gøygaarden.

Gjuv 1119 I 44 30

Guifue	1440	AB 79	
Giwff	1514	NRJ vol.2 p.99	
Giwff	1516	DN vol.1 no.1049	
Dyiff	1563	NRA 4AO 7365	4 våger
Dyff	1582	NRR vol.2 p.453	4 våger 5 mæler
Dyff	1626	NGN vol.13 p.188	6 våger
Dyff	1647	SM p.18	
Duib	1723	NGN vol.13 p.188	

ON GJA, ? (Gully)

Archaeological Monuments: Stone age artefacts. Iron Age mounds including two excavated inhumation burials.

The settlement of Gjuv lies towards the western extremity of the eastern coastal plain. Its site and situation argue for its being classified as a secondary settlement and a division of the primary settlement of Godøya. To the north-west of the settlement an ancient pathway links Gjuv with Alnes. To the south the slightly indented coastline provides an excellent boat 'naust'.

In 1516 the farm was the property of the Archbishop of Trondheim's estate<sup>45</sup> before passing to Giske estate in 1582.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup>N.Nicolaysen, Nogle Gamle Norske Aetleg, (1862),44.

<sup>44</sup>DN vol.1, no.236.

<sup>45</sup>DN vol.1, no.1049.

<sup>46</sup>DN vol.1, no.757.

Alnes 1119 I 43 32

Alness	1514	NRJ vol.2 p.99	
Alnes	1520	Mantallet	
Alsnes	1563	NRA 4AO 7635	
Alnes	1582	NRR vol.2 p.453	12 våger 15
Alness	1626	SA DIX 3Ja 7	18 våger
Allness	1647	SM p.17	17 våger
Alnes	1682	NGN vol.13 p.188	4.5 våger

ON ? Qlmer,m nes,n (Headland of the river Qlmr)

Archaeological monuments: Iron Age mounds.

The settlement of Alnes lies on the moraine deposits of the Alnes headland 1km north of and 325m below Alnesvatnet. The headland is vulnerable to bad weather conditions and in 1682 the settlement was devastated by a storm, the effects of which are reflected in the much lower landskyld for that year. Sandblow more recently has been responsible for the continued destruction of the fields.

The name Alnes occurs once more in Sunnmøre at Alnes, Grytten herred. Rygh suggests that in both instances the prefix derives from a river name Qlm while a differing explanation is that it derives from ON almr a type of tree believed once to have grown on the island.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>NGN vol.13,188.

### 1.3.3 Summary

**Table 1 Settlement Classification**

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Archaeological Monuments</u>	<u>1647 Landskyld</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Godøya	IA	–	Primary
Gjuv	IA	–	Secondary
Alnes	IA VA	17 våger	Peripheral

**Table 2 Settlement Names**

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total Habitative</u>	<u>Total Topographical</u>
Primary	1	–	1
Secondary	1	–	1
Peripheral	1	–	1

## 2.4.1

ISLAND OF VALDERØYA

The island of Valderøya lies to the south of Vigra, to which it is now connected by a causeway. Orientated north-south it measures 3.75km by 2km with an areal extent of 9.25 sq km. Geologically Valderøya is predominantly composed of gneisses with an outcrop of quartz in the north. Fertile glacial moraines are located around the primary settlement of Valderhaug with outliers at Skjong marking the western extremity of glacial activity.<sup>48</sup> The interior of the island is mountainous with the summit of Storfjellet reaching to 231m and the steepest slopes found in the north-west of the island. Such is the gradient of the land in this area that it is totally devoid of settlement. By contrast the eastern coastal strip is characterized by a broad plain at the foot of the hills, and it is here that the greatest concentration of settlement is found. The many Iron Age mounds testify to the presence of early settlers on the island. The first documentary reference to Valderøya comes from Egils Saga describing a meeting 'to fight on the island named Vorl'.<sup>49</sup>

The late seventeenth century saw a substantial change in the settlement pattern with the dividing up of settlement units. Valderhaugstranda and Jangaarden developed from the lands of Valderhaug, and Ytreland was cleared for settlement from the outfield of Skjong. An increase in population in the nineteenth century led to the further development of west coast settlement with Hushamna being divided out from Skjong in 1874.

1.4.2 Settlement AnalysisSettlement Unit Valderhaug

<u>Valderhaug</u>	1120 II 52 34		
Wallerhug	1520	Skattemantallet	
Wallerhug	1563	NRA 4A0 7635	4 dalr
Wallerhug	1582	NRR vol.2 p.453	5 våger 5 mæler
Wallerhaugh	1647	SM p.23	6 våger 2 pd fisk
Walderhaug	1666	NGN vol.13 p.196	
Walderhaug	1723	“	

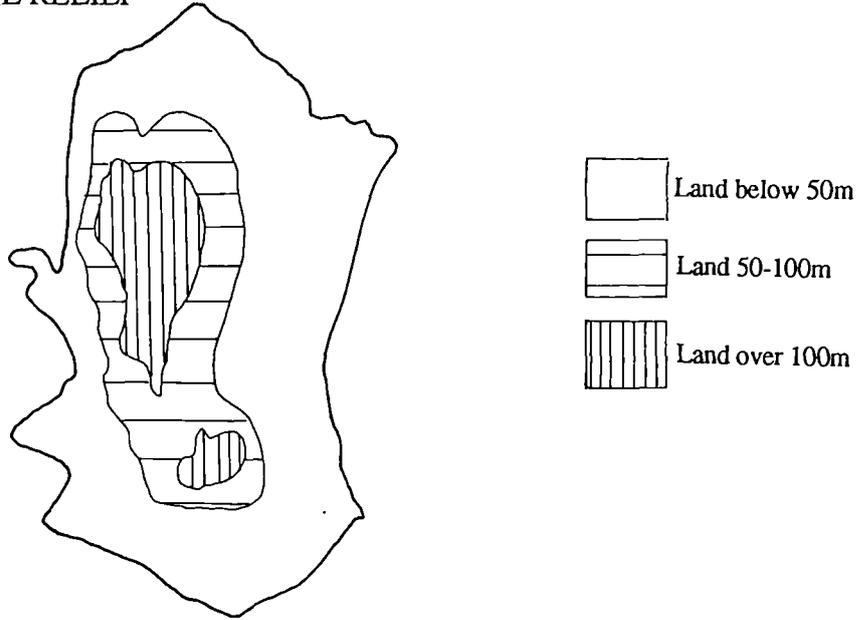
ON Vold,f haugr,m (Vold burial mound).

<sup>48</sup>H.Kaldhol, 'Oversyn over Geologien i Borgund', in Borgund og Giske,30.

<sup>49</sup>Egils Saga, ed, C.Fell,118.

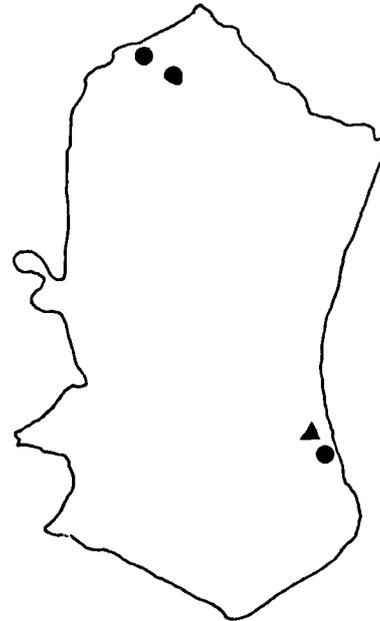
# VALDERØYA

## SKETCH MAP PHYSICAL RELIEF

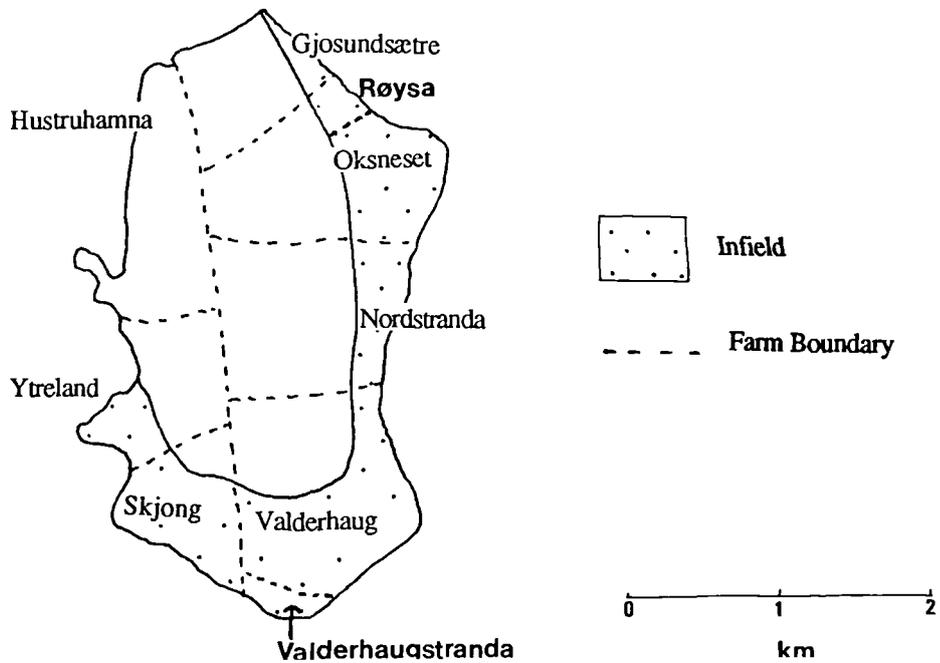


## LOCATION OF IRON AGE AND VIKING AGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

- Iron Age
- ▲ Viking Age



## LAND DIVISIONS CA 1700



Archaeological Monuments: Excavated Bronze Age stone mound containing remains of boat of a similar type to the Ås Hjørtspring boat. Seven Iron Age burial mounds including Valderhaug.

The island name Vorl is duplicated in the name of the primary settlement of Valderhaug. Rygh offers the explanation that both island and settlement name derive from ON vold.<sup>50</sup> The prefix is found in names elsewhere in Norway in Volden herred, Sunnmøre and Vorl, Moss, in all instances connected with the name of a river or fjord. Walderhaugfjorden separates Valderøya from Ellingsøya to the east. While Rygh offers no explanation as to the meaning of 'vorl', the suffix in the name Valderhaug clearly stems from the dominating presence of a large Iron Age burial mound, 1m high and 11m in diameter, close to the settlement site. Island tradition claims that this is the burial mound of a chieftain 'Valder' although a conflicting opinion states that 'King Valder' remains buried at Kongshaugen, Jangaarden. One of the nearby burial mounds yielded 'two oval brooches',<sup>51</sup> now lost which could point to the presence of Viking Age burials at the same site.

The settlement of Valderhaug occupies the prime land on the island and most probably originally encompassed the entire south-east portion of the island. Its importance is reflected in the high landskyld values.

<u>Valderhaugstranda</u>	1119 I 52 33		
Walderhaugstrand	1646	NGN vol.13 p.196	1 våger
Strand	1647	SM p.23	
Walderhaugstrand	1666, 1723	NGN vol.13 p.196	

ON Vold,f haugr,m strandr,m (Valderhaug beach)

Archaeological Monuments: Stone mounds.(? Iron Age)

Sharing the fertile coastal plain of Valderhaug with that settlement, Valderhaugstranda lies at the southernmost tip of the island. The settlement first appears as an independent tax-paying farm in 1646 and forms secondary expansion from Valderhaug.

<sup>50</sup>NGN vol.13,196.

<sup>51</sup>P.Fett, Gamle Sunnmørske Bygder,57.

Oksnes 1120 II 52 35  
 ON Ups,f nes,n (Rocky promontary)

The Oknes promontary lies in the north-east of Valderøya. Here the gently undulating land only once rises above 10m. Despite its seemingly favourable location the headland has not formed a focus for settlement due to the rocky nature of the soil. The settlement of Oksnes represents secondary expansion from that of the primary unit of Valderhaug 2.5km to the south.

Nordstrand 1120 II 52 35.  
 ON Nord,adj strandr,m (North beach)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age stone mounds.

Nordstrand lies midway between the settlements of Oksnes and Valderhaug and represents peripheral settlement growth from one or both of these units. Recent infilling of the settlement pattern has resulted in the coastal stretch between Oknes in the north and Valderhaugstrand in the south being densely settled along the belt of land between hills and sea.

Røysa 1120 II 51 36.  
 ON Rois, f (Stone mound)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age stone mounds.

Settlement names compounded with ON rois are common on the Norwegian coastal stretch between Kristianafjorden and Sondhordland. The settlement of Røysa in the north of Valderøya takes its name from several stone mounds which dominate the flat coastal plain. The settlement represents secondary expansion from that of Oksnes.

Giovaag

Giovaag	1666	NGN vol.13 p.198
Giovaag	1723	“

ON Gjodr,m vagr,m (Seabird bay).

Giovaag is no longer extant but is believed to have been situated in the vicinity of Røysa close to the sound, Gjøsund, from which its name derives.

<u>Gjøsundsætre</u>	<u>1120 II 52 36</u>		
Giosund	1647	SM p.23	5 våger
Setter med Giøwog	1666	NGN vol.13 p.198	
Sæter med Giovaag	1723	“	

ON Gjodr,m sundr,m sætr,n (Seabird sound shieling).

Gjøsundsætra is no longer extent but presumably lay on the eastern slopes of Storfjellet where the name Sætre dalen (shieling valley) is found.

Settlement unit Skjong

<u>Skjong</u>	<u>1120 II 50 30.</u>		
Skionghe	1514	NRJ vol.2 p.101	
Skedanger	1516	DN vol.2 no.1049	
Skedanger	1526	DN vol.11 no.440	
Skieanger	1563	NRA 4AO 7365	5 våger, 5 mæler.
Skianger	1582	NRR vol.2 p.453	5 våger, 5 mæler
Skiavig	1603	NGN vol.13 p.197	
Skiaaong	1617	“	
Skhiong	1647	SM p.23	6 våger

ON Skeid,n angr,m (Trackway bay).

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age burial mounds.

Skjong lies adjacent to a broad shallow bay on the west of the island in the only area of the west of Valderøya where the land between the hills and the sea is wide enough and flat enough to support settlement. The suffix angr in the name is one

frequently used of bays in Western Norway. The skeid, trackway, referred to in the prefix of the name alludes to the route across the shoulder of the hills to Valdenhaug.

Skong represents the only primary settlement in the west of Valderøya.

<u>Ytrland</u>	1120 II 51 34		
Ytterland	1627	NGN vol.13 p.198	2 Pd.
Ytrland	1647	SM p.23	2.5 Pd
Yttre-land	1723	NGN vol.13 p.198	

ON Ytre,adj land,m (Outlying land/farm)

The settlement of Ytterland lies at the head of Ytterlandsvíka 1.25km north of Skjong. The land pertaining to Ytterland formerly formed part of the outfield of Skjong, the division into Yttreland occurring in the early seventeenth century. Ytterland occupies a narrow strip of land between the steep hills to the east and the Sound to the west. To the north of Ytterland Hustruhamna forms the best natural harbour on the island.

1.4.3 SummaryTable 1 Settlement Classification

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Archaeological</u>			<u>1674</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
	<u>Monuments</u>			<u>Landskyld</u>	
	BA	IA	VA		
Valderhaug				–	Primary
Valderhaugstranda		IA		1 pd	Secondary
Nordstrand		–		6 våger, 2 pd	Peripheral
Oksnes		–		–	Secondary
Røysa		IA		–	Secondary
Giovaag		–			Secondary
Gjøsundsætre		–		5 våger	Peripheral
Skjong		–		6 våger	Primary
Ytterland		–		2.5 pd	Secondary

Table 2 Settlement Names

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total Habitative</u>	<u>Total Topographical</u>
Primary	2	–	2
Secondary	3	–	3
Peripheral	4	1	3

## 2.5.1

ISLAND OF VIGRA

The island of Vigra, ca 18 sq km lies to the north of Valderøya, the southern tip of Vigra being separated from Valderøya by Gjørsund sound. The island has an indented coastline with several large bays, the largest being Víkebukta in the south and Rorvíkvågen in the north. In contrast to Valderøya, Vigra, like Giske, is low-lying with only three small hills breaking up the landscape, Molnesfjellet in the north (123m), Blindheimsfjellet (77m) and Synesfjellet (87m). In the west of the island the land is low-lying but this is not matched by a corresponding land fertility as the area is characterised by wide tracts of bog moorland. Settlement is therefore concentrated in three areas, on the Langenes peninsula in the north, on the Synes peninsula in the south-west and in the vicinity of Blindheimsfjellet.

The island name Vigra is not unique to Sunnmøre being also the name of a small island in north-west Iceland. Rygh suggests that the name derives from ON vigr, a spear, the shape of the island being like that of a spearhead. <sup>52</sup>

2.5.2 Settlement AnalysisSettlement unit Blindheim

<u>Blindheim.</u>	1120 II 49 40	
Blyndym	1514	NRJ vol.2 p.102
Blindheimi		Egil's Saga p.118
Blindem	1516	DN vol.2 no.1049
Blindem	1526	DN vol.11 no.440
Blindem	1603	NGN vol.13 p.201
Blindem	1647	SM p.19

ON ?Blind, heimr,m (? dwelling)

Archaeological Monuments. Iron Age Mounds.

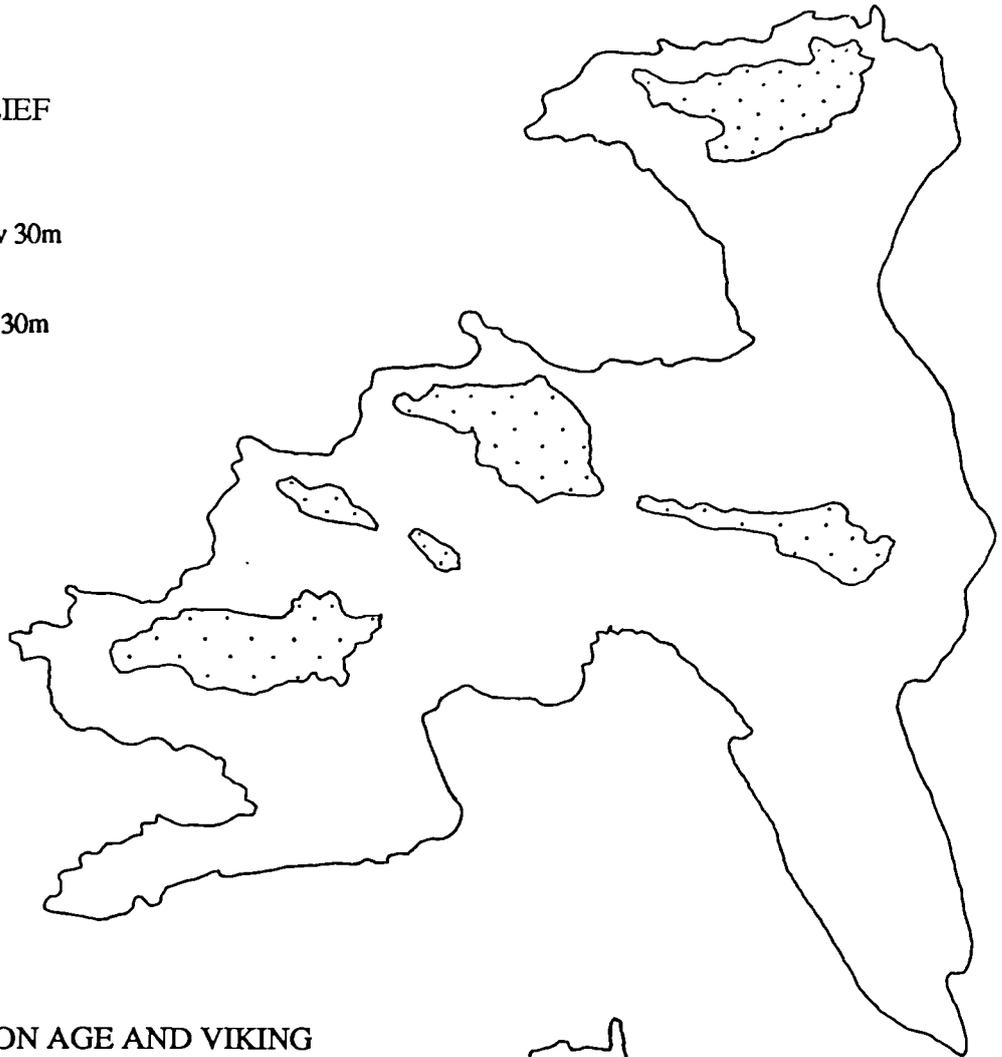
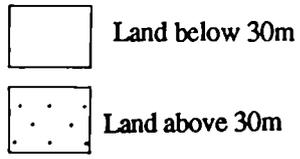
The settlement of Blindheim lies in the western portion of Vigra directly to the south east of Blindheimsfjellet (77m). This fertile area in the vicinity of Blindheimsfjellet seems to have formed the focal point for settlement on the island. A collection of Iron Age grave mounds to the north of the present settlement is evidence of a substantial population in that period while in the Viking Age Blindheim formed the

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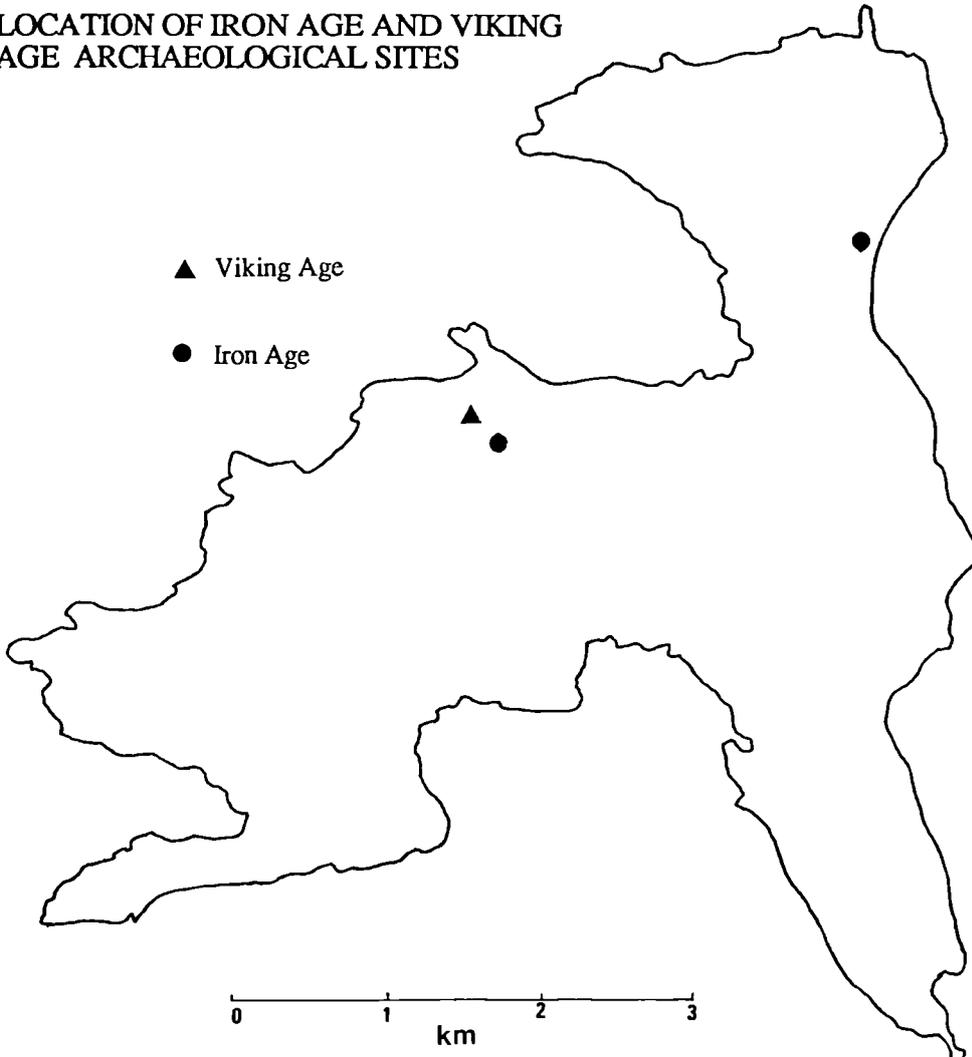
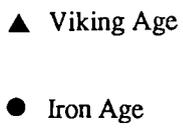
<sup>52</sup>NGN vol.13,200.

# VIGRA

## SKETCH MAP PHYSICAL RELIEF

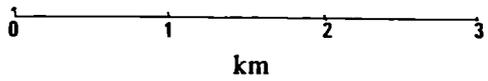


## LOCATION OF IRON AGE AND VIKING AGE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



# VIGRA

## SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION



centre for the powerful 'Blindheimsæte', (Blindheim dynasty), equal in status to that of Giske. Egils Saga describes Blindheim as a storgaard, a large central farm.<sup>53</sup> The prefix of the name is obscure although the suffix is the Norse generic heimr. The generic is found in settlement names throughout Norway and is believed to have been in production from ca 100 AD until the early Viking period.<sup>54</sup> It has been suggested that many heimr names originally had legendary connotations as the names of homes of mythological characters. Frequently, as in the case of Blindheim, they denote the old ancestral farm.<sup>55</sup>

Blindheimsvíka                      1120 II 49 39.  
ON Blind, heimr,m vík,f (Blindheim's bay)

Blindheimsvíka lies on the small headland at the head of Víkabukt bay. It represents secondary expansion from Blindheim onto an area of inferior land bounded to the north by marshland.

<u>Rossvík</u>		1120 II 48 40	
Rorwich	1514	NRJ vol.2 p.102	
Roswiken	1516	DN vol.2 no.1049	
Rosæwigen	1526	DN vol.11 no.440	
Roswiig	1539	DN vol.2 no.1131	
Røswig	1603	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Roszuigen	1647	SM p.19	7.5 våger
Roswig	1666	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Røsvigen	1723	“	

ON Hross,n vík,f (Horse bay).

The settlement of Rossvík lies 1km south-west of Blindheim on flat land around the northern end of Rossvíkvågen. Rygh suggests that the area was used to give horses access to the sea and that the area pertained to the primary settlement of Blindheim.<sup>56</sup> Rossvík clearly forms secondary expansion from Blindheim.

<sup>53</sup>Egil's Saga, ed C.Fell,115.

<sup>54</sup>M.Olson, Farms and Fanes of Ancient Norway, (1928),74,175.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.,175.

<sup>56</sup>NGN vol.13,201.

<u>Rørvík</u>	1120 II 50 40.		
Rørwik	1440	AB p.79	
Rørwigh	1514	NRJ vol.2 p.102	
Rørrwighen	1516	DN vol.1 no.1049	
Røhrwig	1603	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Rorwig	1606,1617	“	
Roervig	1647	SM p.19	18 våger
Røerwig	1666	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Rørvigen	1723	“	

ON Royrr,m vík,f (Stone mound bay)

Rygh offers two explanations of this common place name, the first being that it derives from ON royrr, a stone mound, or, secondly, that it contains the river name Royra. He favours the second explanation due to the presence of a beck in the vicinity.<sup>57</sup> The settlement is situated on the south of Rorvíkvagen on extremely flat land. It forms secondary expansion from Blindheim.

### Settlement unit Roald

<u>Roald</u>	1120 II 52 42.		
Roel	1514	NRJ vol.2 p. 102	
Rouell	1603	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Royell	1606	“	
Roell	1616, 1617, 1666	“	
Rouell	1647	SM p.18	17 våger
Roall	1723	NGN vol.13 p.201	

ON ?

### Archaeological Monuments Bronze Age burial. Iron Age Mounds.

The settlement of Roald lies on the eastern side of the most northerly peninsula in Vigra. The peninsula is dominated by Molnesfjellet in the north while a narrow neck of land separates it from the remainder of Vigra in the south. It is likely that the Roald peninsula previously formed a separate island. Rygh, drawing comparisons with the island of Rolla in Senjen, suggests that Roald was an island name

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid..

originally and that the name Vigra formerly only described what is now the southern portion of the island of Vigra.<sup>58</sup> The fact that Roald is also the name of the herred in which Vigra lies would also suggest that Roald was formerly an island/district name.

The settlement itself lies on the best land in the peninsula to the east of Molnesfjellet and ranks as primary. Settlement has now expanded northwards to Roaldsness and southwards to Roaldsanden along the line of the Roaldslenska bay.

<u>Molsnes</u>	1120 II 50 42.		
Malnes	1516	DN vol.2 no.1049	
Molnes	1539	DN vol. 2 no.1131	
Mollnes	1603	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Molnes	1616, 1666	“	
Mollnes	1647	SM p.20	7 våger
Moldnes	1723	NGN vol.13 p.201	

ON Mol,f nes,n (Bank of small stones on a beach and headland)

The settlement of Molnes lies 2km west of Roald on the northern shore of Rorvíkvagen. To the north of the settlement, Molnesfjellet, the highest hill on Vigra at 123m, rises steeply from near sea level. East of the settlement a small sandy bay is known by the name Naustneset, suggesting its use as a boat shelter. The north coast of the Roald peninsula is now devoid of settlement. Linear settlement expansion now links the primary settlement of Roald with the secondary settlement of Molsnes.

<u>Gjøsund.</u>	1120 II 52 37.		
Gydasund	1440	AB p.79	
Groiswndh	1514	NRJ vol.2 p.101	
Giosundt	1563	NRA 4AO 7635	
Giostad	1603	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Gioesund	1617	“	
Gjøsund	1647	SM p.20	4 våger
Giosund	1666	NGN vol.13 p.201	

ON Gjódr,m Sundr,m (Seabird sound).

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.,200.

Gjøsund occupies a marginal location in the south of the island where poor land gives way to an expanse of marshy moorland to the north. The nearest settlement nucleus is found at Roaldsanden 4km to the north and Gjøsund forms peripheral expansion from this unit. The name is duplicated in Gjøsundneset to the south, in the name of the sea channel between Vigra and Valderøya and in that of Gjosundsætre on Valderøya.

### Settlement unit Synes

Synes 1120 II 47 37

Synes	1429	DN vol.1 no.724	
Synes	1516	DN vol.2 no.1049	
Synes offregard	1563	NRA 4AO 7635	5 våger 5 mæler
Synes mithgard	1563	“	5 våger 5 mæler
Sioness	1603	NGN vol.13 p.201	
Synis	1647	SM p.20	16.5 våger 1 pd.
Synes	1682	NGN vol.13 p.201	5 våger 4.5 mæler

ON Sudr,adj nes,n (Sound headland)

Synes lies at the head of the Synes peninsula, an elongated promontary in the south-west of the island. North of the settlement lies Synesfjellet (87m) and Synesvågen at the mouth of which lies Synesholmen. The bay to the south is Synesvåkane. The recurrence of the settlement name in the names of all the major landscape features suggests that the entire south-west of the island pertained to the primary settlement of Synes. The division of the settlement prior to 1563 into Synes Offregaard (Synes upper farm) and Synes Mithgard (Synes middle farm) points to the large area of fertile land pertaining to this settlement.

Several alternatives may be offered as interpretations of the name. Rygh points to the names Synhaugen, Hogesyn and Synningen, all of which have their roots the Norse syn, sight, and suggests that Synes derives from ON syn nes and was transferred from Synesfjellet, the highest point in the area with a panoramic view out over the headland.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

### 1.4.3 Summary

Table 1 Settlement Classification

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Archaeological Monuments</u>	<u>1674 Landskyld</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Molsnes	–	7 våger	Secondary
Roald	IA	17 våger	Primary
Blindheim	IA	–	Primary
Rossvík	–	7.5 våger	Secondary
Rørvík	–	18 våger	Secondary
Synes	–	16.5 våger 1 pd	Primary
Gjø Sund	–	4 våger	Peripheral
Blindheimsvika	–	–	Secondary

Table 2 Settlement Names

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total Habitative</u>	<u>Total Topographical</u>
Primary	3	1	1
Secondary	4	–	–
Peripheral	1	–	–

## 2.6.1

ISLAND OF ELLINGSØYA

Ellingsøya is bounded by Grytefjorden to the north and Ellingsøyfjorden to the south and covers an area of 22.30 sq km . The southern coastal strip is the most attractive for settlement with moraine deposits running from Grytebust to Stor Årset, and overlying the gneisses which stretch from Myklebust to Taftesund.<sup>60</sup> On the northern coast settlement is concentrated between Bunes bay and Vollstadvika. The remainder of the northern coast is uninhabited as a result of the tracts of marshland (Årsetmyrane and Stokkemyrane) found in this area. The interior of the island is hilly in the west with Myklebosthornt rising to 320m, and Rome to 295m. With the exception of the Hov peninsula Ellingsøya is wooded, particularly in the east of the island where the land lies below 150m. In this Ellingsøya shows more affinity with mainland Sunnmøre than with the other islands.

The name possibly derives from the Norse male personal name Erlingr coupled with ON ey, island.

2.6.2 Settlement AnalysisSettlement unit Hov

<u>Hov.</u>	1119 I 56 33.		
Hoff	1517	NRJ vol.2	p.106.
Hoghi	1603	NGN vol.13	p.191
Hof	1606, 1616	“	
Hof	1627	“	3 våger 2 pd. 12 mk.
Hoffli	1647	SM	p.21

ON Hof,n (Heathen Temple)

Archaeological Monuments. Stone Age artefacts. Iron agemounds. Viking Age soapstone artefacts

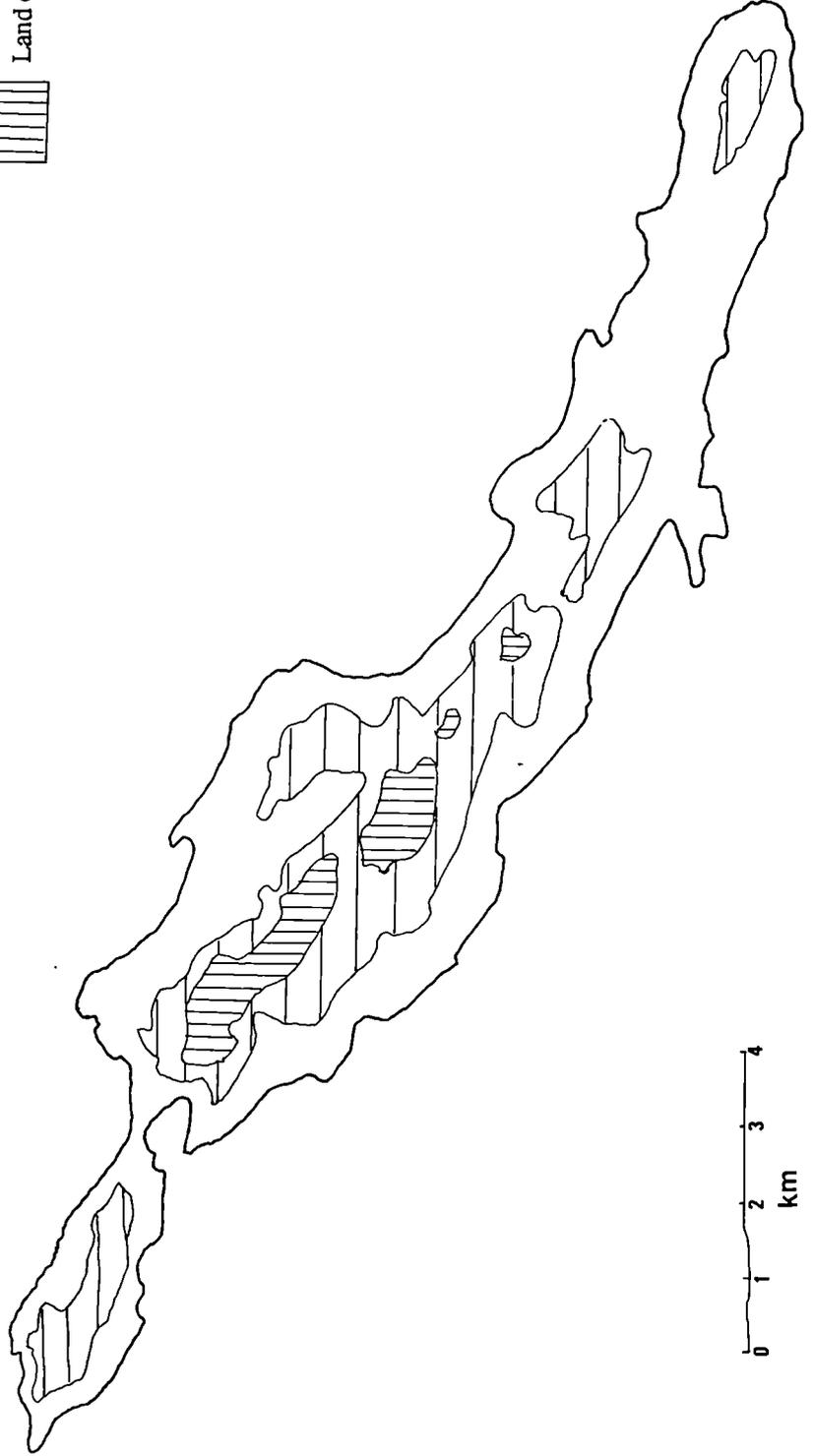
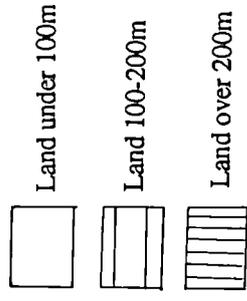
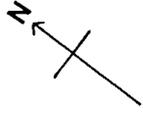
The Hov peninsula forms the western extremity of Ellingsøya. The noun hof, heathen temple, is thought to date from before the Viking Age.<sup>61</sup> The name is found throughout Norway and is usually in a compound form as in the name Hofvin

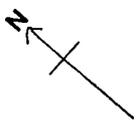
<sup>60</sup>H.Kaldhol, 'Oversyn over Geologien',31.

<sup>61</sup>M.Olson, Farms and Fanes,57.

ELLINGSØYA

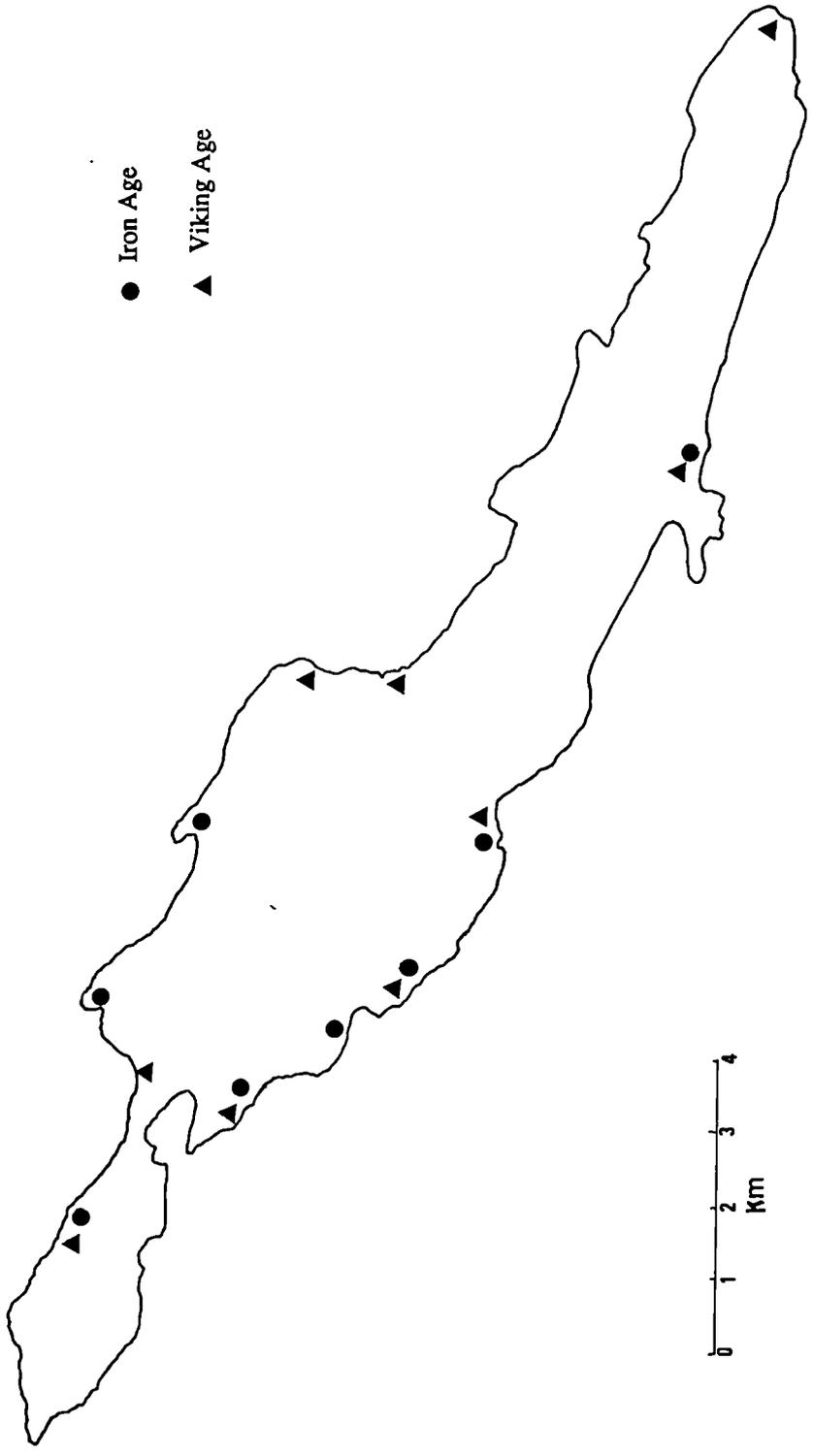
SKETCH MAP  
PHYSICAL RELIEF





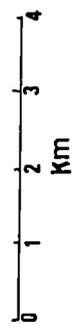
ELLINGSØYA

LOCATION OF IRON AGE AND VIKING AGE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES



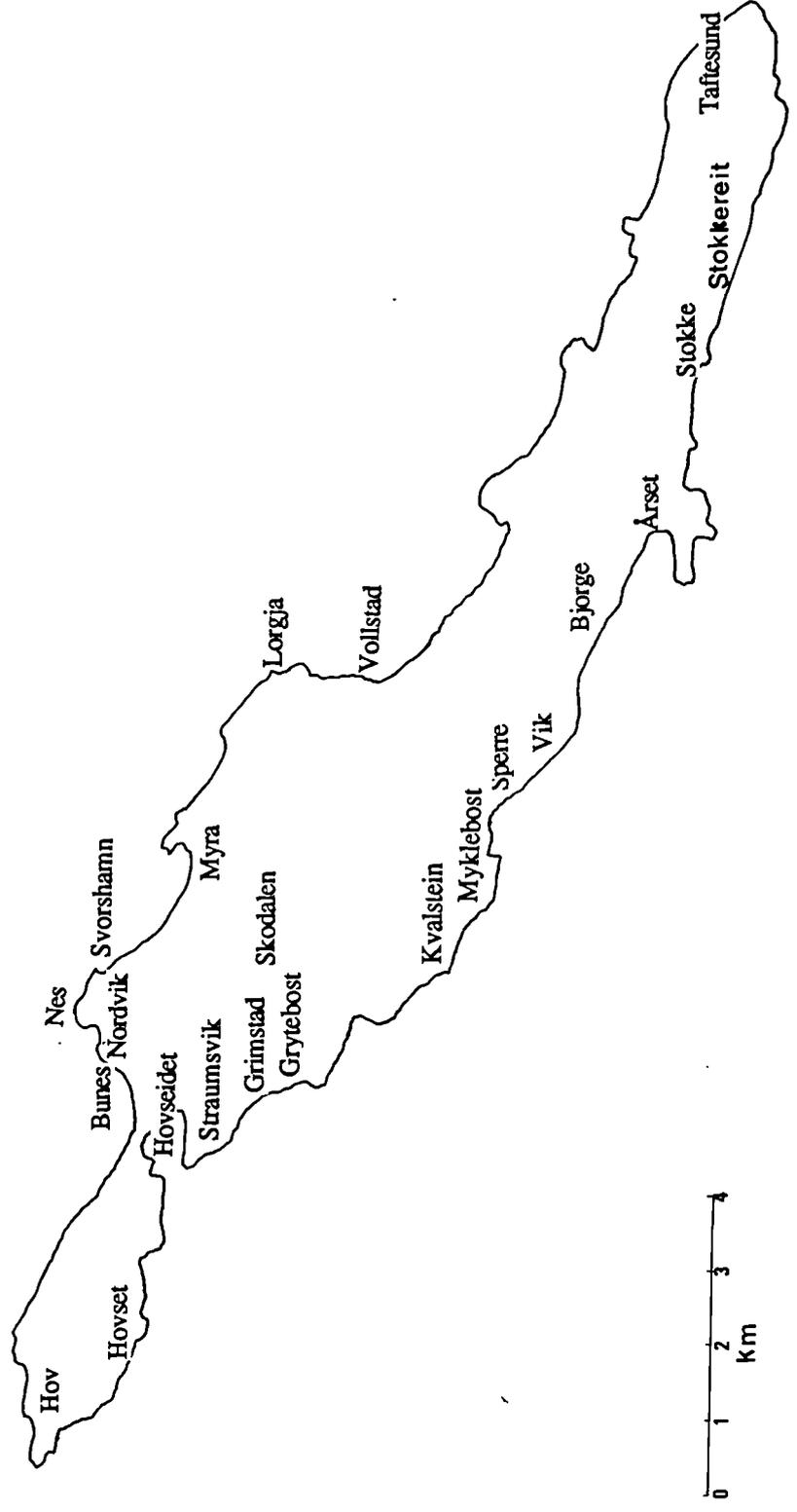
● Iron Age

▲ Viking Age



# ELLINGSØYA

## SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION



in Horland and is also often coupled with the name of a God as in the names Odinshof and Porshof.

Sites with pagan connotations frequently had a continued religious importance in the Christian period. Of the approximately 600 names indicative of pagan holy places in Norway, 150 are found on churchlands while several parochial names in south-east Norway incorporate the element hof.<sup>62</sup> Settlements with a hof name are often of a high status, occupying good, fertile land. Hov, Ellingsøya clearly forms one of the primary settlements on the island with secondary expansion to Hovseidet and Hovset.

<u>Hovset</u>	1119 I 55 32	
Hasetter	1520	Skattemantallet
Howsetter	1603	NGN vol.13 p.191
Hoffsetter	1606, 1617	“
Hofsett	1647	SM p.91
Hoffsett	1666	NGN vol.13 p.191
Ovre og nedre		

ON Hof,n sætr,m (Temple shieling)

Hovset lies 1.25km south-west of Hov. The seventeenth century division into upper and lower Hovset emphasises the fertility of the land on the headland. The western most tip of the Hov peninsula, 0.5km west of Hovset is known by the name Kverre, a name also used to describe the whole peninsula. Kverre derives from ON hverfi, corner/angle, and is frequently used of distinctive headlands at the meeting of two or more sea lanes. The same element is found in the name Cape Wrath in the north-west of Scotland.

<u>Hovseidet</u>	1120 II 57 33.	
Hoffseid	1603	NGN vol.13 p.191
Hoffseidt	1627	“ 1 våger 9 mk.
Hoffseid	1647	SM p.91
Hoffseid	1666	NGN vol.13 p.191 1 våger 18 mk.

ON Hof,n eid,n (Temple isthmus)

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<sup>62</sup>NGN vol.13,31.

Archaeological Monuments. 2 (unexcavated) Viking Age grave mounds. Iron Age mounds.

Hovseidet is situated on the narrow isthmus which links the Hov peninsula with the remainder of Ellingsøya. To the south is Eidsvågen (isthmus bay), which forms a good natural anchorage to the west of which are located the Iron Age and Viking Age burial mounds.

Straumsvík 1120 III 58 33.

ON Straumr,m vík,f (Stream bay).

Straumsvík represents peripheral expansion from Hoffseidet being situated west of this settlement where the land rises steeply to the summit of Rorre. A narrow coastal strip runs parallel to the east shore of Eidsvågen affording a small area of flat arable land.

#### Settlement unit Nes

<u>Nes</u>	1220 III 58 34.	
Ness	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106
Nes	1520	Skattemantallet.
Nes	1603	NGN vol.13 p.191
Nes	1627	“ 3 våger
Naes	1647	SM p.21 2.5 våger 9 mk.

ON Nes,n (Headland)

Archaeological Monuments: Stone mounds. (?Iron Age). including Larshaugen. Viking Age artefacts.

Nes lies on the fertile headland to the north of Husefjellet (97m) where a relatively wide plain is found between the hills and Sandvíka bay. Nes forms the primary settlement in this area with secondary expansion to Bunes and Nordvík.

Bunes 1220 III 58 34.

ON Bud,f nes,n (Fishing booth headland)

Bunes lies south west of Nes. No early written forms of the name survive but a comparison of other Norwegian names sharing the modern form Bunes suggests a derivation from ON bud. Although the literal meaning of bud translates as 'booth' it is possible that the name denotes a settlement having access to good harbour facilities.<sup>63</sup> The name is also found in Bunessan, Mull. The site and situation of Bunes coupled with its absence from the documentary record suggests its ranking as a peripheral settlement. Although the settlement site possibly originated as an anchorage point for nearby Nes, and lay within the boundary of Nes, the modern settlement dates from 1740 when it was created from land belonging to Nes.<sup>64</sup>

Nordvík        1220 III 58 34.  
ON Nordr,adj   vík,f     (North bay)

The settlement of Nordvík lies only 0.25km east south- east of Nes at the eastern end of the Nes coastal plain. East of Nordvík the stretch of fertile land is abruptly terminated by a wide expanse of bog moorland devoid of settlement.

Svorshamn        1220 III 61 34,  
ON Svorf,n   hamn,n (Landslip harbour)

Svorshamn is the most northerly settlement on Ellingsøya lying on flat land on the periphery of the expanse of moorland which dominates this area of Ellingsøya. A natural harbour facing towards Grytafjorden lies to the east of Svorshamn. The land offers no agricultural potential due to the marshy nature of the soil and the settlement ranks as peripheral.

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<sup>63</sup>NGN vol.13,191.

<sup>64</sup>JK MR 2139.

**Settlement unit Vollstad**

<u>Vollstad</u>	1220 III 62 33		
Volstad	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106	
Wolstad	1603	NGN vol.13 p.191	
Volstad	1616,1617	“	
Wolstad	1647	SM p.15	1.5 våger
Wolstad Offner and Neere	1666	NGN vol.13 p.191	
Wolstad Ovre and Nedre	1723	“	
Vollstad	1868	JK MR 584	

ON (?) Vala stadir,m (Vala farm)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age (?) stone mounds. Viking Age male inhumation burial.

Vollstad lies at the western end of Vollstadvika. The derivation of the prefix is uncertain, although it occurs elsewhere in Sunnmøre, at Voldsæter Sunnelven and Volstad, Trondenes. Rygh suggests that the element refers to the name of the river running through the settlement.<sup>65</sup> Alternatively it may derive from ON volr a round stone.

A division into upper and lower Vollstad can be seen in the mid-seventeenth century. A nineteenth century map shows lower Vollstad as lying to the east of Upper Vollstad<sup>66</sup> and lower Vollstad probably represents the site of the original settlement nucleus on the flattest most fertile land. Vollstad forms the primary settlement in the area with secondary expansion occurring eastwards to Lorgja.

Lorgja 1220 II 61 34.

Lurren	1582	NRR vol.2 p.453	1 våger
Lurren	1617	NGN vol.13 p.191	
Lorgja	1647	SM p.18	1.5 våger
Lorgen	1723	NGN vol.13 p.191	
Lorgja	1871	JK MR 589.	

ON Lorg,f (Inland lake)

Archaeological Monuments: Viking Age male inhumation burial at Litleberghaugen.

<sup>65</sup>NGN vol.13,191.

<sup>66</sup>MR JK 2139/2.

Lorgja lies north of Vollstad. The name is obscure there being only one other which is possibly the same, Lorje in Borre. Rygh suggests it may derive from ON lorg, a noun used of an inland lake, referring in this instance to a lake on the north slopes of Myklebosthornet.<sup>67</sup> 2km south-west of Lorgja. Alternatively it may derive from ON lorg, timber.

<u>Myra</u>	1220 III 62 34.		
Myra	1647	SM p.19	2.5 våger

ON Myrr.f (Bog/swamp)

Myra lies 1.5km east of Svorhamn on the edge of the marshland from which its name derives. Myrr is a *common settlement name in Sunnmøre both in its simplex form and in compound form as for example in the names Myrset, Myrvaag and Mybostad*. The situation of Myra suggests its ranking as a peripheral settlement.

#### Settlement unit Taftesund

<u>Taftesund</u>	1220 III 69 34.		
Saftesunnd	1603	NGN vol. 13 p.193	
Thaftesundt	1606, 1617	“	
Taftesund	1647	SM p.14	1.5 våger
Taftesund	1723	NGN vol.13 p.193	
Taftesund	1868	JK MR 585	

ON Tuþtir pl of tuþt sundr.n (Sound of the ruins)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age mounds.

Taftesund is the eastern most settlement on Ellingsøya lying on a narrow belt of land at the tip of the headland and flanked by bog moorland to the west. The second element in the name relates to the narrow sound, now spanned by a causeway, running between Ellingsøya and the mainland. The second element derives from ON tuþt a noun used to describe remains of buildings. The name occurs also in the Scottish Western and Northern Isles as in the names Tufter, Birsay, Orkney and Totronald and Totamore, Coll. On Ellingsøya it may (possibly) refer to the remains of Iron Age burial mounds.

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<sup>67</sup>NGN vol.13,191.

Settlement unit Stokke

<u>Rot</u>	1220 III 69 33.		
Rwud	1516	DN vol.2 no.1049	1516
Roudt	1539	DN vol.2 no.1131	
Rode	1603	NGN vol.13 p.193	
Rotte	1606	“	
Rod och	1647	SM p.14	1.5 våger
Taftesund			
Roed	1666, 1723	NGN vol.13 p.193	
Rot	1868	JK MR 585.	

ON Rot,f ? (Tree root)

Rot lies on the edge of moorland Ssouth-west of Taftesund and clearly forms secondary settlement expansion from that settlement. The name is a common one in Trondelag and Nordland. The name derives from ON rot but its precise meaning when used as a place name component is unclear.

<u>Stokke</u>	1220 III 67 33		
Stacke	1603	NGN vol.13 p.193	
Stocke	1606, 1617	“	
Stoche	1723	“	
Stokke	1882	JK MR 792	

ON Stokkar,m (Wood/timber)

The settlement name Stokke occurs seven times in its simplex form in Sunnmøre and twice in compound form, Stokkset and Stokkland. Although the name essentially means timber/logs, its precise meaning in place names is not clear. Rygh notes how the name Stokke often relates to the name of a sound, as in this case between Stokkoen and the mainland in Fosen. It is possible that Stokke has its origins in Norse verb stokkar, to jump. Alternatively, a derivation from ON stokkar, may suggest an area, which was cleared of timber for settlement. This latter meaning is apparent in Norse law where Stokklands refers to cleared land. Alternatively it may simply have been an area known for abundant and good timber.

Stokke, Ellingsøya lies on a narrow belt of fertile land south of Årset and Stokke moors looking out across Ellingsøyfjorden. The 1882 map<sup>68</sup> shows Stokke outfield stretching northwards across the island to Grytefjorden suggesting early demarcation of land units in this area where settlements had access to both coasts.

<u>Stokkereit</u>	1220 III 68 33.	
Reitte	1666	NGN vol.13 p.193
Reite	1723	"
Stockereit	1882	JK MR 792.

ON Stokkar,m reitr,m (Square of marked out land pertaining to Stokke)

Stokkereit lies east of Stokke with Stokke moorland stretching away to the north. The 1882 map<sup>69</sup> clearly shows that Stokkereit was created out of the infield of Stokke with common outfield stretching to Grytafjorden.

### Settlement unit Årset

Årset 1220 III 66 32.

#### Årset Lille

Aarsetter	1603	NGN vol.13 p.193
Arsetter	1606	"
Aarsett	1616, 1666, 1723	"
Arset	1892	JK MR 910.

#### Årset Store

Aalasethir	1490	DN vol.1 no.996
Ordsettir	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106
Aaresetter	1530	NGN vol.13 p.193
Aarsetter	1606	"
Aarsett	1616, 1666	"
Aarsett	1723	"
Arset	1892,	JK MR 910.

ON Ormr,m / Olr,m / Arf setr,n (? farm)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age stone mounds. Ellingshaugen Viking Age grave. Kjerneberget.

<sup>68</sup>JK MR 792.

<sup>69</sup>JK MR 792.

Årset lies at the eastern side of Årset vågen. The settlement was acquired by the Giske estate in 1490. The large areal extent of the settlement is reflected in the early division into large and small Årset. Topographical names in the vicinity, Årsetmyrene and Årsetneset suggests that the primary settlement division as at Stokke ran from the north coast to the south, from Årsetneset to Årsetvagen. This division persists in the nineteenth century record of the settlement.<sup>70</sup> The area has clearly formed a focus for settlement from early times. An unexcavated mound, Ellingshaugen (*Erlingr's haug* Erling's mound) lies within the boundary of Årset, believed to be the grave mound of the ancestral chieftain of Ellingsøya.

The prefix ar occurs in 27 Sunnmøre names, 4 of which are a duplication of Årset. There are several interpretations of the prefix. Firstly that it derives from the male personal name ON Ormr, secondly that it derives from ON ar the genitive form of ON á, a river, or thirdly that it stems from ON olmr, a type of tree. Any of these explanations would be equally valid for Årset, Ellingsøya. Given the obviously primary nature of the settlement the suffix set must derive from ON setr, dwelling, and not from ON sætr, shieling.

<u>Bjorge</u>	1220 III 64 32.	
Bierg	1603	NGN vol.13 p.192
and Bierg Ødegaard		
Bierg	1606	"
Bioerge	1617	"
Biørge	1666, 1723	"

ON Bjargir,pl. of Bjorg,n (Prominent broad hill)

The small settlement of Bjorge lies at the head of Årsetvagen opposite Bjorgeholmen on a narrow strip of land between the hillside and the sea. It represents secondary expansion along the coastline from Årset.

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<sup>70</sup>JK MR 910.

**Settlement unit Vík**Vík. 1220 III 63 32.

Vigh	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106.	
Wig	1603, 1616, 1617	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Wiig	1647	SM p.15	3 våger
Wiig	1666, 1723	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Vík	1883	JK MR 793	

ON Vík,f (Bay)

Vík lies on the promontary midway between the two bays of Sperrevík and Årsetvågen although the name probably referred to the former. It represents a primary settlement with secondary expansion at Hagen to the East.

Hagen 1220 III 64 32.

Haige	1603, 1606, 1617	NGN vol.13 p.193
Hagge	1647	SM p.15
Hage	1723	NGN vol.13 p.193
Hagen	1907	JK MR 1426.

ON Hagi,m (Outfield)

Hagen lies 1km east north-east of Vík on inferior land. The name suggests that it once formed part of the infield of Vík before developing as a separate unit.

**Settlement unit Myklebost**

<u>Myklebost</u>	1220 III 60 32.		
Mokelbolsted	1495	DN II 725	
Moglebostad	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106	
Myklebostd	1530	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Mochebost	1603	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Mocklebostad	1606	“	
Mochelbust	1647	SM p.15	2.5 våger 18 mk.
Mochlebust	1723	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Myklebost	1892	JK MR 1061	

ON Mikli,adj bolstadr,m (Large farm)

Archaeological Monuments: Iron Age mounds. Tinghaugen and Skipshaugen. Viking Age artefacts.

Myklebost lies on the broad headland to the west of Sperrevik. The specific mikli is the most commonly occurring specific in Norwegian bolstadr compounds, with 45 examples accounting for almost half the Norwegian bolstadr names. There are 11 examples in Sunnmøre. The precise significance of miklibolstadr is not apparent. It has been suggested that 'this name initially came about through the division of a farm, the largest division receiving the name miklibolstadr at the expense of the original farm name'.<sup>71</sup> If this were so, one would expect a corresponding number of small farms known by the name Litlebolstadr adjacent to the large ones. Litlebolstadr occurs only once in Sunnmøre in the farm name Litlebostad, Sande. An alternative explanation is that miklibolstadr simply denoted a large independent farm.

Fett notes how many of the Sunnmøre miklibolstadr settlements have burial mounds within their boundaries, some of which contain Iron Age artefacts which suggests early occupation on the sites.<sup>72</sup> This is true of Myklebost Sunnmøre, the largest mound Skipshaugen measuring 20m in length. Close to Skipshaugen is Tinghaugen, believed to be an artificially constructed mound.<sup>73</sup> The name suggests its usage as a meeting place for the formulation and implementation of laws in a similar way to the name Tingvöllr, 'parliament' field. Mykebost forms a primary settlement with secondary expansion at Sperre to the east and Kvalstein to the west.

<sup>71</sup>P.Fett, Gamle Sunnmøre Bygder,12.

<sup>72</sup>P.Fett, Forhistoriske Minne,3-11,27-8.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.,29.

Sperre 1220 III 62 32

Spordh	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106	
Sperre	1606, 1616	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Spere	1647	SM p.15	3 våger 18 mk
Sperre	1723	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Sperre	1916	JK MR 1650	

ON ? Sperra,f (Rafter)

The name is obscure. Rygh suggests that it has its origins in ON spodr,<sup>74</sup> the tail of a fish, and that this was a descriptive name for the stream running through the settlement. The settlement represents secondary expansion from Myklebost.

<u>Kvalstein</u>	1220 III 60 32.		
Kolsten	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106	
Qualsteen	1582	NRR vol.2 p.453	2 pd
Quallsteen	1647	SM p.17	1.5 våger
Qvalsteen	1723	NRR vol.2 p.453	
Kvalstein	1872	JK MR 587	

ON Hvalr,m stein,m (Whale stone)

Archaeological Monuments. Viking Age burial mound.

Kvalstein lies 1km west of Myklebost on the lower slopes of Myklebosthoret. Local tradition holds that the name derives from a whale-shaped stone on the headland. It could alternatively stem from ON hval, an isolated rounded hump.

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<sup>74</sup>NGN vol.13,192.

**Settlement unit Grytebost**

<u>Grytebost</u>	1220 II 59 32		
Gridebostad	1517	NRJ vol.2 p.106	
Grytebostad	1520	Skattemanntallet	
Grodebust	1603	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Grodbostadt	1606	“	
Grydebostad	1617	“	
Grytebost	1647	SM p.14	3 våger
Grydebust	1666	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Grytebust	1723	“	
Grytebost	1874	JK MR 637	

ON Grjót,n bolstadr,m (Gravel/shingle farm)

Archaeological Monuments. Iron Age mounds. Viking Age male inhumation burial.

Grytebost lies 0.75km east of Grimstad where Skodalen stream enters the sea. The settlement has an excellent harbour and this is reflected in the name of the nearby skerries Austholmane. The settlement name is duplicated in that of the fjord, Grytafjorden, running to the north of Ellingsøya.

It is not clear whether Grytebost originally formed an independent primary settlement or whether, together with Myklebost, it represents a subdivision of an earlier, larger unit.

<u>Slottsvík</u>	1120 III 59 32.	
Slotzwigen	1603	NGN vol.13 p.192
Slodzuig	1606, 1666.	“
Slodsvig	1723	“

ON ? Vík,f (? bay)

Slottsvík, lying 1km west of Grytebost represents secondary expansion from that settlement. The prefix in the name is obscure. The obvious derivation would be from ON slott, castle but there are no fortified structures in the vicinity of the site.

Skodalen 1120 III 59 33.  
ON Skogr,m dalr,m (Wooded dale)

Skodalen represents peripheral expansion from Grytebost, situated on the 100m contour close to the Skodalen river. It possibly formed a sætr for the main farm.

<u>Grimstad</u>	1220 III 57 32		
Grimstad	1603	NGN vol.13 p.192	
Grimbstadt	1617	“	
Grimstad	1627	“	1 våger
Grimstad	1647	SM p.91	3 våger
Grimstadt	1667	“	1 våger 9mk.

ON Grimmr, m pers name stadir,m (Grimm's farm)

Archaeological Monuments. Iron Age mounds. Viking Age artefacts.

Grimstad lies west of Grytebost on a narrow strip of land bordering the shore. The land rises steeply beyond the settlement leaving only a limited area suitable for cultivation.

The status of Grimstad is unclear. It appears to be secondary to Grytebost although it is possible that both formed component parts of one unit. The entire area from Grimstad to Myklebost may originally have formed one primary unit (known by the name Grimstad ?) with a secondary division into the two bolstadr farms of Myklebost and Grytebost.

### 1.6.3 Summary

Table 1 Settlement Classification

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Archaeological Monuments</u>	<u>1647 Landskyld</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Hov	IA VA	–	Primary
Hovset		–	Secondary
Hovseidet	IA	–	Secondary
Straumsvík	–	–	Peripheral
Bunes		–	Secondary
Nes	IA VA	2.5 våger 9 mk	Primary
Nordvík		–	Secondary
Svorshamn	–	–	Peripheral
Myra		2.5 våger	Peripheral
Lorgja	VA	1.5 våger	Secondary
Vollstad	VA	1.5 våger	Primary
Taftesund	VA	1.5 våger	Primary
Rot	–	1.5 våger	Secondary
Stokke	–	–	Primary
Stokkereit			Secondary
Arset	IA VA	3 våger	Primary
Bjorge	–	–	Secondary
Hagen	–	–	Secondary
Vík	VA	3 våger	Primary
Sperre	VA	3 våger 18 mk	Secondary
Myklebost	IA VA	2.5 våger 18 mk	Primary
Kvalstein	IA VA	1.5 våger	Secondary
Slottsvík	–	–	Secondary
Skodalen	–	–	Peripheral
Grytebost	IA VA	3 våger	Primary
Grimstad	IA VA	3 våger	Secondary

Table2 Settlement Names

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total Habitative</u>	<u>Total Topographical</u>
Primary	9	4	5
Secondary	13	2	11
Peripheral	4	–	4

## 2.7 Summary.

On the smaller islands of Giske, Godøya and Valderøya the evolution of settlement is clear. On each island the primary settlement is situated on the most fertile land, reflected in a high landskyld evaluation, and the settlement name incorporates that of the island. This is also true of the northern portion of Vigra where the primary settlement name Roald retains the name of the one time island of Roald now joined by a narrow neck of land to the remainder of Vigra. On Ellingsøya the island name is retained only in the name of a topographical feature Ellingshaugen. On Valderøya the island name is duplicated in the name of the primary settlement of Valderhaug.

A comparison of Viking Age and Iron Age archaeological remains with the location of primary settlement sites shows a positive correlation. This in turn indicates a continuity of site from Iron Age to Viking Age. While the archaeological and documentary evidence available cannot give a precise indication of the exact line of settlement boundaries, and thence the areal extent of Iron Age and Viking Age settlement units, it would appear that primary units relate to natural divisions in the landscape, as well as to areas of fertile soils. The Hov peninsula on Ellingsøya forms one such primary unit as does the Synes peninsula on Vigra.

On Giske and Godøya the smallness of the island and hence the limited area for expansion make it easy to trace the development of settlement from the primary unit. On Giske this has taken the form of a tripartite division of the original settlement area with Giske-gaard, the home farm retaining both the name of the primary unit and the greater portion of the land. On Godøya a division of the primary settlement into two also resulted in the original unit retaining the primary name and the largest area of land. Secondary settlement on both these islands can best be described as having been created from the infield of the primary farm. On both Giske and Godøya tertiary settlement expansion has taken the form of the colonisation of outlying headlands, geographically distanced from the primary farm and on inferior land as at Alnes (Godøya), and Staurneset and Kvalneset (Giske). On Valderøya two primary nuclei are discernible at Valderhaug and Skjong with corresponding linear settlement expansion along the east and west coasts. Skjong represents a primary settlement in a 'secondary' location in

that it post dates the development of Valderhaug and yet pre-dates settlement expansion from that unit. Settlement expansion from the primary nucleus at Valderhaug has resulted in the colonisation of the two extremities of the island with the establishment of the settlements of Valderhaugstranda and Oksneset. Peripheral settlement expansion has taken the form of an infilling of the coastal plain with the growth of two small, low status settlements at Røysa and Nordstranda. A further development not seen on the smaller islands of Giske and Godøya is the establishment of a shieling in the extreme north of the island at Gjøundsætre within the boundaries of Oksneset. This, in time, came to be exploited as a permanent habitation site.

On Vigra and Ellingsøya the greater number of settlements afforded primary status make it difficult to determine the earliest focus for settlement on the island. On Vigra documentary evidence of the existence of a storgaard associated with a ruling dynasty points to the site of Blindheim as possibly having formed the earliest settlement site on the island. The large areal extent of the settlement is indicated by the duplication of the settlement name in that of the peripheral ranking settlement of Blindheimsvíka, a wide bay lying to the south of Blindheim. This suggests that the original settlement unit stretched from north to south across the island and encompassed the entire central portion of Vigra. The same duplication of names is also seen on Valderøya where the secondary ranking settlement of Valderhaugstranda incorporates the names of the primary unit of Valderhaug and on Ellingsøya where the peripheral ranking settlement of Stokkereit incorporates the names of the secondary settlement of Stokke.

On Ellingsøya 8 settlements are afforded primary status. Two locations stand out as having formed the earliest settlement areas, the Hov peninsula in the west and the southern coastal plain from Grimstad to Årset. On the Hov peninsula the process of settlement expansion is clear cut. The primary unit of Hov shows a progression of settlement expansion from the primary site to the secondary units of Hovseidet and Hovset. A similar pattern is exemplified in connection with the primary unit of Nes to the north-east of Hov with secondary settlement developing at Bunes and peripheral settlements at Nordvík and Svørshamn. On the southern coastal plain the pattern of settlement is more akin to that found on the islands of Giske and Godøya where secondary settlement has developed on the infield of the primary farm. In the case of the settlement unit of Myklebost the primary settlement unit has been subdivided to such an extent that it is no longer possible to ascertain which, if any of the settlements, represents the original unit. At Vollstad on Ellingsøya division of the primary unit led to the name of the primary farm being incorporated in both of the secondary units to give the names Øvre Vollstad and Nedre Vollstad (upper and lower Vollstad). This is also seen in the division of the primary settlement of Årset on Ellingsøya into Store Årset and Lille Årset, (large and small Årset) which would suggest that the division was not one into two equal parts.

Table I Settlement Names

<u>Ranking</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total habitative</u>	<u>Total simplex topographical</u>	<u>Total compound topographical</u>
Primary	16	5	6	5
Secondary	25	3	7	15
Peripheral	10	1	1	8

The above table shows the distribution of place name components throughout all the islands under consideration. In the primary settlement category the simplex topographical names form the largest category while in the secondary and peripheral classes compound topographical names are the most numerous. This suggests that the first settlement in any area was named after the most distinctive landscape feature; a headland, as in the simplex topographical name nes, on Ellingsøya, or a bay as in the name vík on the same island. Only when expansion of settlement began to take place within the primary unit did it become necessary to incorporate differentiating specifics into the names of the secondary and peripheral settlements. Hence Bunes is situated within the bounds of the original primary unit of Nes. The same principle holds true for settlement areas where one 'primary' unit may be regarded as being 'secondary' to another in that it occupies a less favourable location.

Returning to the above table, nowhere do the number of habitative names (those compounded with the generics stadir, bolstadr, setr/saetr, heimr, and gardr) outnumber the combined topographical classes, the ratios of topographical to habitative names being as follows:

Primary settlements	11:5
Secondary settlements	22:3
Peripheral settlements	9:1

The number of habitative generics included in the survey scarcely forms a large enough sample to draw any valid conclusions as to the relationship between a habitative name and the status of the settlement to which it refers. The sole example of heimr is used only of a primary settlement as is setr, while stadir and bolstadr are used of both primary and secondary settlements and saetre only of those having peripheral status. The following table shows the breakdown of settlement names on the islands lying to the north and south of those considered here.

Table 2

<u>Island</u>	<u>Total Settlements</u>	<u>Total habitative</u>	<u>Total simplex topographical</u>	<u>Total compound topographical</u>
Sandøy	4	–	–	4
Ona	1	1	–	–
Finnøy	4	2	–	2
Hanøy	39	7	–	32
Orta	4	–	–	4
Fjortoft	21	2	1	18
Midøy	25	5		20
Skuløy	20	1	1	18
Haramsøya	12	1	3	9
Lovsøya	5	4		1
Runde	4	–	1	3
Nerlandsøya	6	1	–	5
Rimøya	3	–	–	3
Bergsøya	11	1	1	9
Dimnøya	12	–	3	9

Again, on the smaller islands, there are few habitative names and the settlements take their names from topographical features. It is on the larger islands where a greater area results in more room for expansion that the habitative names are found and these primarily relate to secondary settlements.

## Chapter Three

### TIREE

#### 3.1 Introduction

The irregular shaped island of Tiree measuring 19km long and 10km at its greatest breadth lies ca 30km west of the Morrenish headland on Mull, and ca 50km to the west of the Argyll mainland. Geologically Tiree is more closely related to the Outer Hebrides than to either Mull or mainland Argyll. The solid rocks are all ancient, with the exception of occasional dykes. The base is Lewisian gneiss within which are small areas of dark hornblende gneiss and pink granite gneiss.<sup>1</sup> The most striking feature of the island is the lowlying nature of the land which nowhere rises above 141m. The flat landscape is broken only by the hills of Beinn Hough, Beinn Ceann a'Mhara and Ben Hynish which contrast sharply with the flat areas of blown sand found around the western coastline, in the north-west and also in a large plain, the Reef, which extends from Balephetrish Bay in the north to Traigh Bhagh in the south, effectively dividing the island into two distinct parts. Much of the island's surface is covered by raised beach deposits, particularly in the western part while other areas are covered with blown sand which forms true machair. Two types of soil are recognised on Tiree, a relatively siliceous drift produced by the weathering of the gneiss and a younger calcareous soil.<sup>2</sup> Climatically Tiree is something of an anomaly among the islands off the west coast of Scotland. It has a low average annual rainfall of 1128mm and the hours of bright sunlight (1450 hours yearly average) are among the highest in Britain.<sup>3</sup> Additionally the island shows no great variation between summer and winter temperatures. These and other factors, particularly the occurrence of freely drained calcareous soils mean that Tiree is an island of exceptional fertility. Recurrent high winds however have an adverse effect and are responsible for the devastation of large areas by sandblow.

Tiree's fertility coupled with its geographical location has ensured that the island has acted as a focus for settlement from the mesolithic period to the present day. Flints and stone tools recovered from the west of the island near the settlement of Ballevuillin indicate the seasonal presence of mesolithic peoples.<sup>4</sup> There are no known neolithic monuments on the island and pottery found in the sand dunes suggests that the

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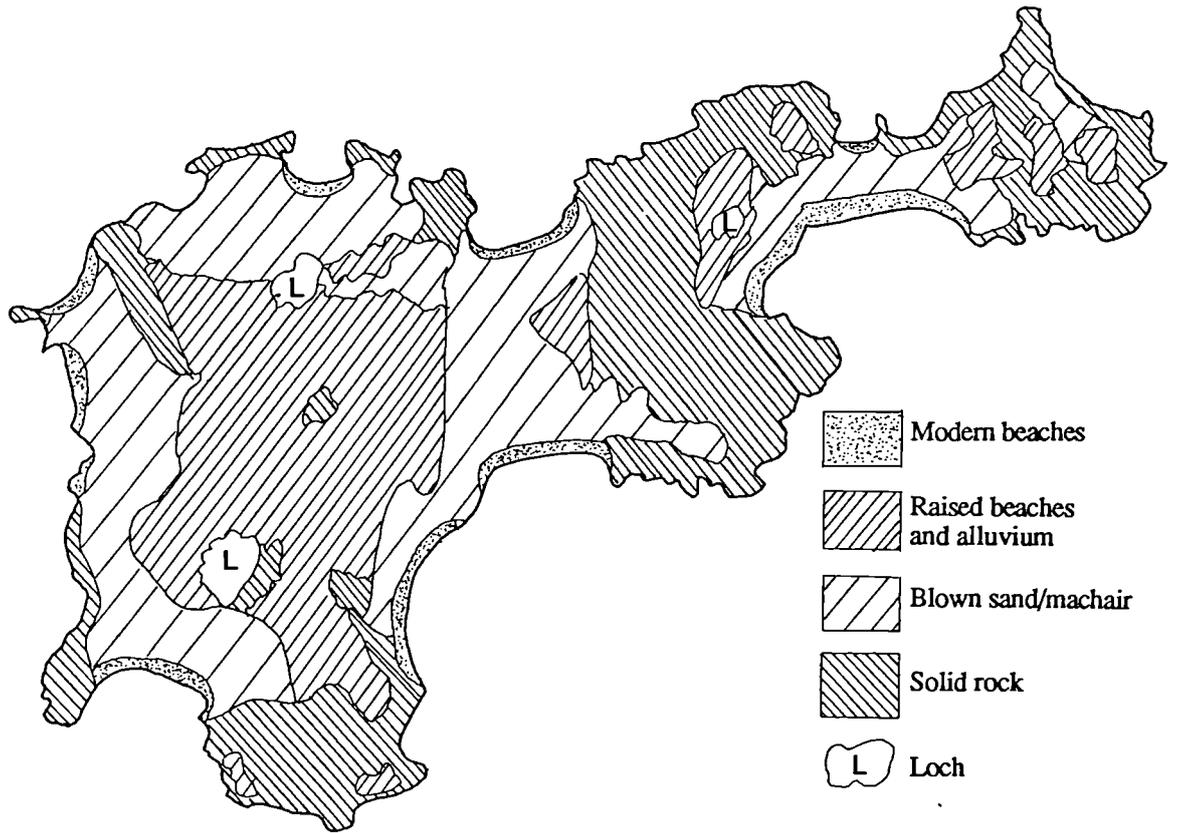
<sup>1</sup>J.A Steers, The Coastline of Scotland,(1973),140.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid,142.

<sup>3</sup>J.S.Bibby, G.Hudson and D.J.Henderson, Soil and Land Capability for Agriculture, Western Scotland, (1982),14-15.

<sup>4</sup>R.G.Livens, 'Three Fanged Flint Points from Scotland' in PSAS,89(1955-56),439-441.

GEOLOGICAL SKETCH MAP



PHYSICAL RELIEF

SKETCH MAP



Bronze Age beaker people were the first to occupy the island in any numbers.<sup>5</sup> Evidence for Iron Age settlement far outstrips that of the preceding millennia and Tiree is ringed with a chain of brochs, forts and duns. Beveridge, in his survey of the archaeological monuments of Tiree, completed in 1903 noted how all these defensive structures lie in such a position as to be clearly in view of the neighbouring structure.<sup>6</sup> Whilst this observation clearly ignores any chronological differentiation between the various classes of monuments it does serve to stress the density of structures, 5 forts, 14 duns and 2 brochs within an island covering ca 70 km.<sup>2</sup>

For the period prior to the arrival of Norse raiders and colonists Adomnan's Life of Columba mentions monastic communities on Tiree. The foundation of the Columban monastery of Iona in ca 573 provided the catalyst for the establishment of several other monasteries on islands off the western mainland. Adomnan mentions a community on Tiree known as 'Mag Luinge' or 'Campus Luinge' recording how Columba appointed 'his pupil Baithene, then prior of Mag Luinge in Tiree as his successor' (to Iona).<sup>7</sup> The Annals of Ulster record the burning of Mag Luinge under the year 673.<sup>8</sup> The Latin lives of Brendan of Clonfert and Comgall of Bangor whom Adomnan describes as being 'holy founders of monasteries'<sup>9</sup> record that these saints too founded monasteries on the island. St. Findchan is also described as 'founder of the monastery that is in Irish called Artchain in the land of Eth'.<sup>10</sup> A multiplicity of foundations is further attested to by Adomnan when he writes of a plague which swept over the island and as a result of which 'many in the other monasteries of the same island died of the disease'.<sup>11</sup> Despite such references in the written record and the church dedications on the island to Columba, Findchan, Moluac, Cainnech, Brigid, Patrick and Bhi it is only at the site of St. Patrick's temple Ceann a'Mhara that remains indicative of an 'eremitic monastery' or 'communal hermitage' have been found.<sup>12</sup> The sources do not hint as to the relationship between these monastic houses nor to any defined system of ecclesiastical organisation within Tiree itself or incorporating Tiree as part of the Columban paruchia, although it has been suggested that there was 'a strong hint of bitter competition between these rival communities which were clearly overcrowding Tiree'.<sup>13</sup> The onset of the Viking period probably found Tiree

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<sup>5</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,7,10.

<sup>6</sup>E.Beveridge, Coll and Tiree, Their Prehistoric Forts and Ecclesiastical Monuments,(1903)9.

<sup>7</sup>Adomnan's Life of Columba, eds.A.O and M.O.Anderson,(1961),525.

<sup>8</sup>A.O Anderson, ed. Early Sources for Scottish History,1(1922),182.

<sup>9</sup>Adomnan's Life of Columba, eds.A.O and M.O.Anderson,501.

<sup>10</sup>ibid.,279.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.,483.

<sup>12</sup>RCAHMS. Argyll 3.,28.

<sup>13</sup>A.P.Smythe, Warlords,101.

with several monastic communities certainly equal in size and population, if not prestige, to that of Iona.

The Irish Annals do not mention any close contact between Tiree and Iona and yet the repeated Viking raids on Iona and subsequent scattering of that community in the early ninth century cannot have had but a profound effect on neighbouring communities. There are no documentary references to Norse raids on Tiree but the islands exposed and vulnerable position on the western seaboard flanked to the west by the sound of Mull would have made it an inviting place to raid and subsequently settle. Local oral tradition recalls several confrontations between Norse and native, the most well-known of which is the 'battle of the sheaves'.<sup>14</sup>

The impact of the Norsemen firstly as raiders and then as settled farmers clearly interrupted the development of indigenous settlement. There is little indication as to the period in which it can be said that Tiree could be classed as a 'Norse colony', for the written sources are entirely silent until Orkneyinga saga records, under the year 1136, the presence of 'a man called Holdbodi, who was the son of Hundi. He was a great chief'.<sup>15</sup> Little else is known of Holdbodi save that he was forced to flee to Man in the face of marauding Welshmen who, in 1140, 'burnt him out of house and home and made off with much booty'.<sup>16</sup> Obviously a chieftain of some means Holdbodi may have resided at Bee (ON *bu*, farmstead) on the island.<sup>17</sup>

Archaeologically no settlement sites have been located and Viking Age artefacts have been discovered by chance rather than by controlled excavation. With the exception of the hoard of weaponry discovered at Cornaigmore,<sup>18</sup> the sole material remains of the Viking Age are two tortoise shell shaped brooches (now lost) of which nothing is known concerning their circumstances save that they were found in a grave.<sup>19</sup> Loose finds picked up on the dunes between Ballevullin and Cornaigmore in the early twentieth century may have been of Norse provenance. The finds were donated to the island school, no record was made and they are now lost. Many of the Tiree townships have lands covering a large acreage and in many instances the site of the township itself has been re-located as a result of either nineteenth century agricultural policies or sand blow. Other settlements have disappeared entirely, again primarily as a result of sandblow. It cannot therefore be assumed that building and re-building always occurred at one specific site, particularly as

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<sup>14</sup>See p.104.

<sup>15</sup>Orkneyinga Saga, ed. A.B.Taylor,264.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid..

<sup>17</sup>See p.108.

<sup>18</sup>See p.104.

<sup>19</sup>J.Anderson, 'Notes on Relics of the Viking Period of the Northmen in Scotland', in PSAS,10,pt.2(1874),554-5.

both the nature of the landscape and the fertility of the soil on Tiree did not impose natural limitations concerning the availability of land for settlement building.

The derivation of the island name is somewhat obscure. The Irish Annals record the form Terra Insula, Regio Hyth or simply Hith, while Adomnan uses the form Ethica Insula, Etha Terra or Eth.<sup>20</sup> Orkneyinga saga records the name Tyrvist<sup>21</sup> while other early written forms include Tereyd (1354),<sup>22</sup> Tyriage (1390)<sup>23</sup> and Tyrryf (1622).<sup>24</sup> Local modern pronunciation of the name gives 'Tireadh' but outside the island the corresponding pronunciation is Tir-idhe or Tir-ithe.<sup>25</sup> The prefix 'tir' is probably derived from G tir, land. The suffix is more obscure. Reeves favoured a derivation from OI ith gen of etho, corn, thus transcribing the name as 'land of corn' a reference, he believed, to the islands exceptional fertility.<sup>26</sup> Watson disputes this arguing for its origin in a pre-Celtic language.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.2 Settlement Analysis

#### Settlement unit Caolas

<u>Caolas</u>	NL 94/NM 04	GR 084 487	
Kilis	1541	Exchequer Rolls. vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Keylis	1587/88	RMS vol.4 no.1491	6 merklands
Kyllis	1628	Sasine vol.2 no.235	6 merklands
Kelis	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.75	48 maillands
			680 Scots acres

G Caolas,m (Sea strait)

The six merklands of Caolas form the eastern most settlement unit on the island. In the mid eighteenth century it was also the largest, covering 680 Scots acres and being divided into Caolas, Caolas East Quarter and Down Caolas although these divisions are no longer adhered to. The area is made up of several different component soils ranging from the brown calcareous soils in the east with associated raised beach terraces and

<sup>20</sup>Adomnan's Life of Columba eds A.O and M.O.Anderson,357.

<sup>21</sup>Orkneyinga Saga, ed. A.B.Taylor,118,244,264,374,385.

<sup>22</sup>NLS Adv. Ms 35.4.8(1),172.

<sup>23</sup>RMS vol.2 no.2264 (1495 confirmation of charter of 1390).

<sup>24</sup>N.D.Campbell, 'An Old Tiree Rental of 1622', in SHR 96(1911-12)343-4.

<sup>25</sup>I.A. Fraser, 'The Place names of Argyll. An Historical Perspective' in TGSI, 54(1988),7.

<sup>26</sup>W.Reeves, 'The Island of Tiree', in Ulster Journal of Archaeology ,2(1854),234.

<sup>27</sup>W.J.Watson, Celtic Place Names,86.

machair, to the peaty gleys giving rise to bog heather moor in the area surrounding Loch an t-Sleibh Dheirg, close to the boundary with Ruaig.<sup>28</sup> Much of the settlement unit can support both arable and permanent pastures, and Turnbull in 1768, described the infield as being 'good soil, some of the best land on the island'.<sup>29</sup>

The eastern coastline of the settlement is extremely rocky. Natural harbours are found at Acarseid an Duin (G *acarseid*, port/harbour/anchorage), which lies to the south of Dun Mor a'Chaolais, one of the two brochs on the island. The harbour is accessible only at high tide but is reknowned for being a safe anchorage. To the west of Acarseid an Duin lies Port Sgibinis (G *port*, harbour, ON *skip nes*, ship headland). Sgeir Sgibinis stands at the entrance to the harbour with the remains of Dun Sgibinis standing on the headland. East of Acarseid lie the smaller anchorages of port nan guirean (G *port nan guirean*, whelk harbour) and Lonamer Harbour. On the northern coastline Port Ban, (G *port ban*, white harbour) is the setting for a folk tale involving a battle between the local inhabitants and a band of Vikings at which the protagonists escaped only at the expense of leaving their oars behind, hence the local name for the bay, 'Glach nan Ramh', hollow of the oars. Two further harbours are found on the eastern shoreline, at Port Ruadh (G *port ruadh*, red harbour) and Port Neill (G *port Neill*, Neill's harbour). The wide expanses of sandy beach along the north facing shore afford several beaching places for small boats but no deep harbours.

Place names in the vicinity of the standing stone at GR 077 483 testify to the presence of an ancient chapel and burial ground of which there are now no identifiable remains. The chapel was said to stand at Cnoc na h'Annaid on land now occupied by a croft at Crois na Chaolais.<sup>30</sup> Reeves recorded how 'only the faintest traces remain of the ancient burial ground at Crois a'Chaolais ... opposite the burial ground are two large stones and between these the cross is said to have stood'.<sup>31</sup> An area of enclosed fields on either side of the road to Milton of Caolas is known locally as 'An Annaid.' *Annaid*, (OI *Andoit*) has the connotation, old church, and is often associated with a church site abandoned in the ninth to tenth century and not subsequently re-used as the site of an ecclesiastical building.<sup>32</sup>

At GR 092 408 a small hillock has the name Mullach nan Gall. The Gaelic noun *gall* occurs in place names throughout the Western Isles where it has the meaning of 'non Gaelic speaking foreigners',<sup>33</sup> the 'foreigners' being the Norsemen. The Hebrides

<sup>28</sup>Soil Survey of Scotland, *Coll and Tirec*, Sheet 46, 1:50000, Provisional Soil Map. (1984).

<sup>29</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.75.

<sup>30</sup>SA 1976/123/B5.

<sup>31</sup>W.Reeves, 'The Island of Tirec', 243.

<sup>32</sup>See p.256

<sup>33</sup>E.Dwelly, *The Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary*, (1901), 474.

were known collectively as the Innse Gall, the Isles of the foreigners. The noun also occurs in the name of a fort, Fort nan Gall, on the Ceann a'Mhara headland in the south-west of the island (GR 934 408).

The settlement of Caolas is consistently evaluated at 6 merklands, or one ounceland. The Norse name of the settlement unit may have been ON *skip nes*, ship headland, a name often given to headlands where there were several good harbours. The same name is also found at Skipness, Mull. There has been no major division of the primary settlement of Caolas into secondary units although there are now several peripheral settlements located within the boundaries of the settlement area. The largest of these is Milltown which takes its name from the disused mill at Clach a'Mhuillin.<sup>34</sup> Other peripheral settlements are at Rossgill (ON *hross gil*, Horse gully), Urvaig (ON *Urdr vík*, Flat stone bay), Carnan (G *Carn an*, Little cairn), Dunbeg (G *Dun beag*, Small dun) and Miodar (G *Miodar*, Meadow/good pasture).

#### Settlement unit Ruaig

<u>Ruaig</u>	NL 94/NM 04	GR 070 477	
Rocbaig	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13	p.216
Roweg	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16	p.647
Rowbeig	1674	Retour. vol.1 no.82	
Revaig	1674	HP vol.1 p.291	
& Vuill			
Ruaig	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.71	
			44 maillands
			418 Scots acres

ON Raudr, adj (?) *vík*, f (Red bay)

Ruaig lies to the west of Caolas. The land in the boundary area between the two settlements supports permanent pasture on the alluvial soils and humic gleys. The remainder of the settlement unit lies on brown calcareous soils and calcareous regosols which give rise to arable and permanent pasture land. To the south of Ruaig the tidal island of Soa (ON *saudr ey*, Sheep island) provides additional outfield, although it was also used as arable land.<sup>35</sup> The main harbour for the settlement lies on the southern side of Soa at Acarseid Folaich (G *acarseid falach*, concealed harbour). Sand blow at

<sup>34</sup>SA 1969/158/1AB

<sup>35</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.71.

Ruaig has badly affected the area lying between Traigh Mhor and Traigh Chrionaig rendering it useless for arable purposes.<sup>36</sup>

The etymology of the township name is unclear. Whilst the generic derives from ON vík, the specific cannot be so easily identified. It possibly derives from ON raudr, an adjective used to denote the reddish colour of bogs and moorland which pointed to the presence of iron in the soil.<sup>37</sup> Cameron suggests the interpretation ON rud, a clearing.<sup>38</sup> This is unlikely; not only is the generic rud absent from all areas of the Western Isles, but in Norway rud had ceased to be a functioning naming element before the beginning of the period of overseas expansion. Furthermore, rud is a generic which was used to denote secondary settlements on the outskirts of primary settled areas.<sup>39</sup>

<u>Salum</u>	NL 94/NM 04	GR 067 487	
Salem	1628	Sasine. vol.2 no.235	20s
Salim	1674	HP vol.1 p.291	1.5 merklands
Salum	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.73	12 maillands 178 Scots acres

G Sailean (Small tidal basin/salting)

Salum lies at the head of Salum bay to the north of Ruaig. At the east end of the bay lies the (possible) dun of An Dunan standing on a rocky islet only 5m above sea level and linked to the shore by a causeway. To the north-east of the dun lies the once tidal island of Fadamull (ON vadill muli, shallow water that can be traversed on horseback, ford/promontary), now linked to the mainland of Tiree by deep deposits of sand. The name Salum is a common one throughout the Inner Hebrides and mainland Argyll being found also at Salen, Mull, Salen, Lismore, and Salen, Ardnamurchan. The Gaelic term sailean usually describes inlets which are shallow and mud covered at low tide and in this instance the name has clearly replaced the Norse name vadill, ford.

The low evaluation of the settlement and its proximity to Ruaig suggests that it forms peripheral expansion from that primary unit.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid..

<sup>37</sup>R.Cleasby, G.Vigfusson and W.A.Craigie, An Icelandic - English Dictionary,(1957),484.

<sup>38</sup>A Cameron, Guide to the Islands of Tiree and Coll,(1930),127.

<sup>39</sup>M.Olson, Farms and Fanes,61

Settlement unit Vault

<u>Vault</u>	NL 94/NM 04	GR 048 487	
Wall	1509	Exchequer Rolls	vol.13 p.216
Wall	1541	Exchequer Rolls	vol.16 p.647
Vault	1561	Col.de Reb.Alba	p.3
Vault	1628	Sasine.	vol.2 no.235
Vault	1686	SRO E60/7/3	p.6
Vault	1674	HP vol.1	p.291
Vault	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2	p.69
			6 merklands
			6 merklands
			6 merklands
			48 maillands
			365 Scots acres

ON Fjäll, m pl (Hills)

Turnbull's survey shows the settlement unit of Vault occupying a large area which stretches from Loch Sandaig in the west to the boundary with Ruaig in the east.<sup>40</sup> To the east of the township a large machair plain cuts across the island from north to south. To the north of the township 'on the summit of an isolated rocky knoll stand the exceptionally well preserved remains of a broch and its outworks'.<sup>41</sup> 400m to the east of the broch are the remains of a dun and its outworks. The soil surrounding the township is of poor quality composed of peaty gleys and peaty rankers giving way to soils derived from shelly sands to the east although this area has suffered from sand blow.

The etymology of the name is not entirely clear. The early written forms suggest a derivation from ON vagar, pl of vagr, bays, which may relate to the twin bays of Vault and Salum. The same derivation is suggested by Marwick for the Orkney settlement name Walls.<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere in Tiree the Norse noun vagr has resulted in the settlement name Baugh.<sup>43</sup> An alternative suggestion for the derivation of Vault is that the name derives from ON fjäll, hills, pl of ON fjell and that it refers to the conspicuous and adjacent tops on which Dun Mór and Dun Beag stand.

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<sup>40</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.69.

<sup>41</sup>RCAHMS., Argyll 3,92.

<sup>42</sup>H.Marwick, Orkney Farm Names,(1952),17.

<sup>43</sup>See p.87.

Settlement unit Kirkapoll

<u>Kirkapoll</u>	NL 94/NM 04	GR 042 473	
Kirkepoll	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	6 merklands
Kirkapost	1561	Coll. de Reb. Alba p.3	
Kirkebold	1587/88	RMS vol.4 no.1491	6 merklands
Kirkapoll	1631	Retour vol.1 no.40	
Kirkapeill	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	6 merklands
Kirkaboall	1686	SRO E60/7/3 p.6	
Kirkapoll	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.67	24 maillands
			245 Scots Acres
ON <u>Kirkju</u> , f	<u>bolstadr</u> m	(Church farm)	

Kirkapoll is situated at the head of Gott bay. The land bordering the bay is machair land with the characteristic undulating dunes which afford permanent pasture land. Further inland the machair gives way to gently sloping rocky ground covered with bog and northern bog heather moor.<sup>44</sup> Within the boundaries of the township stand the remains of the old Parish Church and chapel lying 0.4km north of the present parish church of Kirkapoll. The church is first mentioned in the documentary record in 1375<sup>45</sup> and the dedication is to Columba. Kirkapoll formed the mediaeval parish of the eastern part of Tiree and in 1618 was joined with those of Soroby and Coll to form one united parish.<sup>46</sup> Approximately 44m south-east of the old parish church is a walled cemetery known as Cladh Odhrain or Cladh Mor.<sup>47</sup> The foundations of a building were revealed within the enclosure in the early nineteenth century<sup>48</sup> and were tentatively identified by Reeves as being an early chapel site.<sup>49</sup> The settlement name kirkjubolstadr is found at five locations in the Western Isles, including Tiree, at Kirkibost, North Uist; Kirkibost, Lewis; Kirkibost, Skye and Kirkibost, Bernera.<sup>50</sup> The name is totally absent from Islay which otherwise shows the greatest density of bolstadr names in the Hebrides. There are 10 examples of kirkjubolstadr in Orkney and 5 in Shetland. Matras records only 1 example in Faroe.<sup>51</sup> In Iceland the corresponding fixed compound is not kirkjubolstadr but kirkjubaer.

<sup>44</sup>Soil Survey, Coll and Tiree.

<sup>45</sup>P.A.Munch and Rev. Dr. Goss, The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys, vol.2,401-2.

<sup>46</sup>QPS, vol.2 pt.2 (1854),330-1.

<sup>47</sup>RCAHMS. Argyll 3,153.

<sup>48</sup>E.Beveridge, Coll and Tiree,148.

<sup>49</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tiree', 241.

<sup>50</sup>See map p.258.

<sup>51</sup>C.Matras, 'Stednavne paa de Faeroske Nordurøyar', in Aarbogen for Nordisk Oldkyndighed og Historie, 22(1932),57.

In Norway the specific kirkju is also found coupled with baer, giving names such as Kyrkjebøen, Sunnmøre. It is only in the Northern and Western Isles that kirkju is found coupled exclusively with the generic bolstadr.

The peculiar significance of the fixed kirkjubolstadr compounds is open to several interpretations. Discussions to date have revolved around four main suggestions. Firstly that kirkjubolstadr denoted a farm built upon church land or owned by the church. Secondly, that the name was applied to a farm which had within its bounds ecclesiastical structures of the pre-Norse era. Thirdly, that existing Norse farms were renamed kirkjubolstadr when a church was built on the land pertaining to that farm and finally that the name kirkjubolstadr can be related to a specific phase of Norse church building.

It is highly unlikely that kirkjubolstadr farms were those established on church land. In the early mediaeval period church building was proprietorial with individual landowners taking responsibility for the erection of churches and their subsequent upkeep. The Icelandic law code Grágás contains the clause beginning 'Ef yngri menn eigo Kirkiubolstad' (if young men own kirkjubolstadr)<sup>52</sup> suggesting that the name refers to a specific type of farm and not to the ownership of the land on which the farm lay.

Olson suggests that 'the name simply describes Celtic chapels which existed upon the arrival of the Norse.'<sup>53</sup> Although 3 out of the 4 kirkjubolstadr sites in the Hebrides have associations with early ecclesiastical remains, none can be said with any degree of certainty to relate to the Celtic Christian era. Furthermore, where the Norse recognised the presence of Celtic Christian places they named them papar.<sup>54</sup> Two of the Hebridean kirkjubolstadr farms are however situated on small islands, at Kirkibost island, North Uist, and Kirkibost, Great Bernera, Lewis, which is consistent with the Celtic monastic ideal of habitation in isolated places. Landnámabók describes how, in Iceland, the association of a site with the Celtic ecclesiastics led to the incorporation of the noun kirkju in a settlement name.

Ketil went from the Hebrides to Iceland. He was a Christian ... Ketil made his home at Kirkby (ON kirkjubaer) where the papar had been living before.<sup>55</sup>

While there is a tenuous connection between some sites of known pre-Norse Christianity in the Western Isles and Iceland there are 'no obvious links between pre-Norse settlement and

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<sup>52</sup>Grágás, Stadarholsbók, ed.V.Finsen, (1974 reprint of 1879 edition),19.

<sup>53</sup>D.Olson 'Norse Settlement in the Inner Hebrides: an interdisciplinary study',236.

<sup>54</sup>See p.256

<sup>55</sup>Book of Settlements, eds.H.Palsson and P.Edwards,123.

Kirkibister farms in Orkney and Shetland'.<sup>56</sup> If it is doubtful that kirkjubolstadr relates to pre-Norse ecclesiastical sites then it is plausible that the name refers to buildings of the Norse period itself. The presence of Norse chapels is not, however, confined to farms named kirkjubolstadr. Many bolstadr settlements have a church within their bounds. This would suggest that farms did not automatically become known by the name kirkjubolstadr when they acquired a church. It is therefore probable that the kirkjubolstadr farms relate to an early phase of private church building before Christianity became widely accepted.<sup>57</sup> This appears to hold true for Orkney although this view has been challenged by Crawford who assigns the kirkjubolstadr farms to a later phase of church building.<sup>58</sup> Macgregor concluded that the Shetland kirkjubolstadr names point to an 'early phase of church building, probably of the earliest Norse Christians in Shetland'.<sup>59</sup> It has also been noted that neither the Orkney nor the Shetland kirkjubolstadr farms tend to be of primary status, the explanation put forward being that the kirkjubolstadr farms were established by early Christian settlers at a time when 'the foremost settlers on the primary farms were still pagan'.<sup>60</sup> This contrasts with the situation in the Western Isles. Kirkapoll, Tiree, is clearly a primary settlement and consistently evaluated at 6 merklands - one ounceland. The imposition of the ounceland system on Tiree is near contemporaneous with the landnam division into primary settlement units<sup>61</sup> which suggests that the name kirkjubolstadr belongs to the earliest phase of settlement on the island. Kirkibost, Lewis, is also a primary settlement, as is Kirkibost, Skye, and also Kirkibost island, North Uist. Norse settlers in the Western Isles clearly came into contact with Celtic Christianity at an early date and it is plausible that the first farms to have a church were named kirkjubolstadr.

The settlement of Kirkapoll was surveyed by Alcock and Alcock whilst investigating the possibility that 'Scandinavian place-names can be used as a guide to the location of individual Scandinavian settlements in the field.'<sup>62</sup> Survey results failed to reveal 'hints of early buildings' and it was suggested that 'techniques of pre-historic settlement examination would seem appropriate : phosphate analysis and geophysical prospecting, leading to an open area excavation.'<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>L.J.Macgregor, 'Norse settlement in Shetland and Faroe',419.

<sup>57</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,343.

<sup>58</sup>B.E.Crawford, Scandinavian Scotland,180.

<sup>59</sup>L.J.Macgregor, 'Norse settlement in Shetland and Faroe',420.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.,419.

<sup>61</sup>See p.248

<sup>62</sup>L. and A. Alcock, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the Inner Hebrides: Recent Research on Place-Names and in the Field',61

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.,64.

<u>Gott</u>	NL 94/NM04 037 462	
God	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.216      24s 8d
God	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648      2 merklands
Godd	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82
Gott	1674	HP vol.1 p.291      1 merkland
Gott	1721	Justiciary Court Records p.359
Gott	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.63      12 maillands
		267 Scots acres

ON God, m (Pathway)

The settlement of Gott lies on a narrow strip of fertile to the west of Kirkapoll and is bounded to the north by bog moorland. The name Gott is found in Shetland and in a landscape name, Beinn Ghot, on Benbecula. In both instances it may have the meaning of pathway.

Despite the fact that by the time that the name Gott appears in the written record the settlement is evaluated firstly as a 2 merklands and then as a 1 merkland unit the landscape names in the surrounding areas, (the settlement name is preserved in the names Gott Bay, Abhainn Ghott, Beinn Ghott and Sidhean Beinn Ghott), suggests that Gott functioned as a settlement of some importance. Gott is coupled together with the settlement of Vuill in Turnbull's survey.

### Woyll

Will	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol. 16 p.648	1 merkland
Wyall	1587/88	RMS vol.4 no. 1491	1 merkland
Weill	1622	Blaeu	
Wail	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	
ON ?			

The settlement of Woyll is no longer extant although it would appear to have been situated in the vicinity of Gott where the name 'The Wyle' is still known locally as referring to the boundary region of An Fhaodhail. The 1588 charter records that the settlement was the property of the Abbey of Iona at that date.<sup>64</sup> The settlement is no longer extant but the name Weill is marked on Blaeu's map as lying adjacent to that of Gott. In the 1674 rental the settlement name Vuill is coupled together with that of Ruaig.<sup>65</sup> Vuill cannot

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<sup>64</sup>RMS vol.4 no.1491.

<sup>65</sup>Retour vol.1 no.82.

be confused with the settlement of Vaul, as both Vaul and Vuill are mentioned in the 1674 document.

### Settlement unit Scarinish

Scarinish NL94/NM04 043 445

Skervinch	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.216	40s
Skevenis	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	3 merklands
Skervenis	1573/4	SRO GD112/5/8 p.20	
Skareniche	1616	RMS vol.7 no.1386	
Scarveneis	1674	HP vol.1 p.289	3 merklands
Scarrinish	1721	Justiciary Court Records p.359	
Scarinish	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.61	18 maillands
			271 Scots acres

ON Skarfr,m nes,n (Cormorant headland)

Scarinish lies at the head of a sandy bay which forms a natural and safe harbour. The surrounding area is composed of machair giving way to moorland to the west. Turnbull noted that sand blow was already a problem in the eighteenth century.<sup>66</sup> Beveridge stated that the remains of a chapel and burial ground, Caibéal Thomais lay immediately to the north-west of the township<sup>67</sup> although no traces of this are now visible. The Nunnery of Iona owned the lands of Scarinish in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and an early parish church was erected there in 1776.<sup>68</sup>

Scarinish clearly forms the primary settlement in this area. The headland is one of the most distinctive on the island. Landnámabók speaks of the importance of 'nes-taking' in the early phases of settlement of Iceland and stresses that the headlands were the first areas to be settled.<sup>69</sup> While in Iceland this process had a lot to do with the infertility of the interior, elsewhere 'nes-taking' functioned primarily as a defensive measure. In Orkney the existence of headland dykes on some of the islands is indicative of the same process of the early acquisitions of the headlands and is thought to be the pre-cursor of permanent settlement.<sup>70</sup> On Tiree no headlands dykes have been found although the many headlands are characterised by Norse names ending in nes, headland, as in the names Hynish, Heanish, Scarinish and Skipnish and these are also associated with an early phase of

<sup>66</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.61.

<sup>67</sup>E.Beveridge, Coll and Tiree,156.

<sup>68</sup>RCAHMS Argyll 3,158.

<sup>69</sup>Book of Settlements eds.H.Palsson and P.Edwards,63.

<sup>70</sup>B.E.Crawford, Scandinavian Scotland,46.

settlement. Clearly the headlands formed easily defensible sites and focal points for early settlement on an already populated island.

To the north-east of the township lies the settlement of Deobedal. The first element in the name stems from ON *djúp*, deep, and most probably has some connection with the deep waters of the harbour lying to the east of the settlement where the modern pier now stands. The name Dibadal (ON *djúpidalr*, deep valley) is found in Lewis where it is also used of a fishing port.<sup>71</sup>

Heanish NM 94/NL 04 038 438

Haynish	1509	Exchequer Rolls. vol.13 p.216	40s
Haynish	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	3 merklands
Haynes	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	
Heannish	1674	HP vol.1 p.289	
Hianish	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.59	24 maillands 242 Scots acres

ON Hjá,adj nes,n (Outlying headland)

Heanish headland is one of the most distinctive on Tiree. The township lies on a small (ca 0.25 sq km) area of machair which is bounded to the north and west by moorland. Turnbull noted in 1768 that the township had only one small area of infield lying immediately to the west of the settlement area and described it as being composed of 'a light soil with many rocks'. Both the pasture and the outfield were of a poor quality.<sup>72</sup> It is possible that Heannish formed part of the outfield of the adjacent primary settlement of Scarinish. The adjective *hjá* is used in settlement names to describe outlying areas of land in relation to other settlements in such habitative names as *hjá bu* and *hjá land* in Orkney, but is rarely found in compound topographical names.<sup>73</sup> No other example is known from the Western Isles.

Dun Heannish, sited at the southern extremity of the headland occupies a defensive position unparalleled on Tiree. The land drops steeply to Traigh an Duin to the north and to Bagh Chotain to the west. The latter bay was formerly known as Heannish harbour.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup>M.Oftedal, 'The Village Names of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides', in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap* 17(1954),390.

<sup>72</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.59.

<sup>73</sup>C.Vigfusson, *Dictionary*,226.

<sup>74</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.57.

<u>Baugh</u>	NL 94/ NM04 026 438	
Baw	1541 Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	3 merklands
Baw	1674 Retour vol.1 no.82	3 merklands
Baugh	1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.57	24 maillands
		235 Scots acres

ON Vagr, m (Bay)

The township of Baugh, like that of Heanish lies on machair with moorland to the north. Turbull noted sand blow as a problem south of the township and also relates that an area around Dun Ibrig was drained in 1755.<sup>75</sup> The western boundary of Baugh is marked by marshy land surrounding An Fhaodhail (*G fadhail*, ford, ON *vadill*, ford). To the west of An Fhaodhail stretches the 2km long Traigh Bhagh. The bay, now known as Hynish Bay (and encompassing Soroby Bay to the south-west) was previously known as Baugh Bay.

Peripheral settlement expansion from Baugh has occurred inland at Orisgal. A similar name is found on Hoy, Orkney, at Orgill. In both instances the derivation would seem to stem from ON ár gill, stream gully.<sup>76</sup>

### Settlement unit Heylipoll

<u>Heylipoll</u>	NL 94/ NM 04 973 434	
Hindebollis	1390 SRO C2/xiii/300	<i>n o ?</i> 1/2 unciata
Hindebollis	1495 RMS vol.2 no. 2264	1 unciata
Tillipole	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.217	4 lib
Hynnepolls	1541 Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	4 merklands
Hurnepolls	1674 HP vol.1 p.290	5 merklands
Heylipoll	1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.21	40 maillands
		545 Scots acres

ON ? Helgi,adj bolstadr,m (Holy farm)

<sup>75</sup>Ibid..

<sup>76</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,180.

The township of Heylipoll, one of the largest on the island, is sited on 'good arable land'.<sup>77</sup> Towards the boundaries with Balinoe and Kilmoluag this gives way to 'moss and sand, all upon a rocky bottom, the rocks in many parts appearing above ground'.<sup>78</sup> Thus this area is known locally as 'Cruaidh Ghoirtean', the hard field.<sup>79</sup> The sean bhaile lies between Kilmoluag and the site of the present township of Heylipoll, close to the old common grazing dyke.<sup>80</sup>

The derivation of the specific is unclear. The earliest written forms suggest that its origin lies in the Norse adjective hindra, farthest away/most distant, as in the Orkney farm names Hinderayre and Hindatun.<sup>81</sup> This would suggest that Heylipoll was named for its relationship to a specific (unknown) point of reference. This is hardly consistent with the primary status of the settlement and its evaluation of one ounceland. Secondary and peripheral ranking settlements often have names which describe their position, or status in relation to the primary settlement but this naming process does not seem to occur with primary settlements. The position of Heylipoll on Tiree is relatively central and in no way distant or outlying and this also points to the specific deriving from another source.

The more modern written forms of the name, together with the present day local pronunciation, point to two alternatives. Firstly that the specific derives from ON hella, a flat rock which may describe the rocky nature of much of the settlement land. Secondly that it stems from ON helgi, holy. Helgibolstadr is a fixed bolstadr compound known from Western Norway where 13 out of 90 bolstadr farms have this name. There is one example of a helgibolstadr farm from Shetland, Heglabister, and none from Orkney although the adjectival specific helgi is found in the names Heylie, Wyre and Hellihowe, Sanday. Of the latter name Marwick remarked that 'association with the supernatural survived long in connection with the mound' at Hellihowe.<sup>82</sup> In Norway the helgibolstadr compound is also believed to have had associations with heathen cult practices.<sup>83</sup> Heylipoll, Tiree, is the only (possible) example of a helgibolstadr name in the Western Isles. There are no known traditions of the site having any associations with the supernatural or specific heathen cults. Immediately to the west of Heyloipoll is the site of the settlement of Soroby (ON saurboer, sour/swampy farm). The name Soroby is a fixed compound and one which Gudmundson believed denoted an association with the

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<sup>77</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.21.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid..

<sup>79</sup>SA 1976/128/A2

<sup>80</sup>Ibid..

<sup>81</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names, 122, 145.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid, 10.

<sup>83</sup>O.Rygh, NGN, Innledning, 93.

worship of heathen cults. Heylipoll is adjacent to Crossapoll, a settlement which may have had early Christian associations. Often the sacred places of one religion became the cult centre of another. In Iceland for example, Aud the Deepminded's crosses at Kross hill became the site for a heathen temple.<sup>84</sup> Possibly Heylipoll had similar associations. There is a tradition of an ancient chapel site on a plot of land called Templefield, a little to the south of island house.<sup>85</sup> This had already been ploughed out by the mid nineteenth-century and there is no means of ascertaining an approximate date for the structure. The present modern church also lies within the township boundaries and may point to continuity of site.

<u>Crossapoll</u>	NL 94/NM 04	995 445	
Crosoboll	1496	RMS vol.2 no. 2329	
Crossipole	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.217	
Crosopell	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	2 merklands
Crossiboill	1674	HP vol.1 p.288	1 merkland
Crossapoll	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.55	8 maillands
			236 scots acres

ON Kross,m bolstadr,m (Cross farm)

The modern township of Crossapoll lies 1km inland from Traigh Baugh at the western boundary of Tìree aerodrome. Turnbull places the nucleus of the township inland from Crossapoll point where Crossapoll farm now stands, on the east bank of Crossapoll burn which drains from Loch an Eilean.

Krossbolstadr is a fixed compound which is found at five locations in the Western Isles at Crosspoll, Islay; Crossbost Lewis; Crossapoll, Coll; and Crossapoll, Mull.<sup>86</sup> It is absent from the place name nomenclature of Orkney, and Shetland has only two examples, at Crossbister Fetlar, and Crossbister Unst. Krossbolstadr is also absent from Iceland and is scarce in Norway. The specific kross is found in all areas of Norse colonisation both in its simplex form as is seen in the names Cross, Lewis and Cross, Sanday, Orkney, and compounded with both habitative and topographical generics as in the names Krossdalr and Krossavík, Iceland.

The exact significance of the incorporation of the noun kross into the settlement name on Tìree is not clear. It may relate to the presence of a Celtic stone cross of the type that were erected at specific locations as preaching crosses or alternatively marked

<sup>84</sup>Book of Settlements, eds. H.Palsson and P.Edwards,52.

<sup>85</sup>W.Reeves,'Island of Tìree',243.

<sup>86</sup>See map between pages 258 – 259

the boundaries of monastic enclosures. No such material remains are known from Crossapoll although stone crosses are found at Kirkapoll and Soroby but 'the complete absence of associated inscriptions, and the persistence with which basic forms of cross are liable to re-appear at any time, mean that such carvings cannot be closely dated'.<sup>87</sup> The tradition of free standing crosses was also a feature of Norse Christianity. In Iceland devotional crosses were erected by individuals and were an important visible sign of the new religion (officially established in 1000) brought to Iceland by Hebridean settlers. And the Deepminded, an early settler,

'used to say prayers at Kross Hills; she had crosses erected there, for she'd been baptised and was a devout Christian...'<sup>88</sup>

Such crosses were most probably carved from wood and, unlike the stone Celtic crosses, these have not survived anywhere.

Crossapoll, Tiree shares a common boundary with Heykipoll (ON *helgi bolstadr*, holy Farm). Together they have an evaluation of 1 ounceland (1541 Heylipoll 4 merklands, Crossapoll 2 merklands; 1674 Heylipoll 5 merklands, Crossapoll 1 merkland) pointing to an original distinct settlement unit. Crossapoll appears to form a secondary division of the primary unit of Heylipoll.

### Settlement unit Soroby

Soroby NL 94/NM 04

Soreby 1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.217

Soiribe 1561 Coll. de Reb. Alba. p.3

Sorobie 1674 HP vol.1 p.289 1.25 merklands

ON Saur, adj baer, m (Marsh/swamp farm)

The settlement of Soroby is no longer extant although the name is preserved in the names of Cladh Soroby, Traigh Shorobaidh and Soroby Bay. This is the only settlement name on the island compounded with ON baer. Marwick in his chronology of Orkney farm name generics considered boer names to be of early origin and noted that many now survive only as field names. He considered their origin to be in the breaking up

<sup>87</sup>RCAHMS. Argyll 3,29.

<sup>88</sup>Book of Settlements eds.H.Palsson and P.Edwards,53.

of old territorial units, the component parts of which then received new names.<sup>89</sup> Fellows-Jensen disputed this classifying boer names as secondary names which replaced the name of a primary farm,<sup>90</sup> a view upheld by Gordon who concluded that such farms 'lie on the fringes of land bearing such primary elements as vík, and boer may therefore be regarded as a secondary settlement name'.<sup>91</sup>

The specific saur is defined by Vigfusson as meaning muddy, swampy and marshy.<sup>92</sup> To these Gudmundson also added the diverse connotations 'mire, quagmire, excrement, urine, mud, semen, seed, weed.' In Iceland 21 farms are named saurbaer, one of which is also a parish name. Gudmundson advocated that the saurbaer farms were associated with the female deity Freyr and were specifically important for heathen fertility rites.<sup>93</sup> He further noted that 5 of the 21 saurbaer farms were church farms,<sup>94</sup> as frequently heathen cult centres became the focus for Christian worship after the official 'conversion' of the country in 1000 AD. This is especially noticeable in the case of farm names which incorporate the element hof, temple. Many hof farms later became church farms.

Saurbaer names are found throughout western Scotland, both on the islands and on the mainland. Landnámabók contains several illustrations of the coining of the name saurbaer. Steinolf the Short, for example, built his farm and 'he called it Saurby, because it was very boggy'.<sup>95</sup> Saurby Tíree lay in the vicinity of Bailephuill (*G Baile phuill*, marshy township) close to Loch Phuill so called because it encompasses the wettest and marshiest area on the island. The land bordering Soroby bay is freely drained machair but further inland non-calcareous gleys impede the downwards passage of surface water and the corresponding vegetation is moist Atlantic heather moorland and sedge mires. The area thus adequately fulfils the criteria for a saurbaer farm as described in Landnámabók.

Close to Soroby bay lies the site of the old Parish Church and burial ground of Soroby (GR 984416). Reeves suggests that this was also the site of the Columban monastery of Campus Lunge.<sup>96</sup> The church is said to have occupied a site near the north-west corner of what is now a walled burial ground that can be ascribed to the thirteenth century. The burial ground contains an early Christian carved stone and an eleventh century

<sup>89</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,243-4.

<sup>90</sup>G.Fellows-Jensen, 'Viking settlement in the Northern and Western Isles.The place-name evidence as seen from Denmark and the Danclaw', in Fenton,A. and Palsson, H. (eds),The Northern and Western Isles. Survival, Continuity and Change,298.

<sup>91</sup>B.Gordon, 'Some Norse place names in Trotternish, Isle of Skye', in Scottish Gaelic Studies, 10(1963),107.

<sup>92</sup>C.Vigfusson, Dictionary,515.

<sup>93</sup>B.Gudmundsson, The Origins of the Icelanders, (1967),46.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid.. .

<sup>95</sup>Book of Settlements, eds.P.Edwards and H. Palsson,59.

<sup>96</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tíree',239.

cruciform slab.<sup>97</sup> The mediaeval church at Soroby, like that of Kirkapoll, was dedicated to Columba and formed the parish church of the parish of Soroby which encompassed the western half of the island. It is possible that this was the 'church of St Columba of Tiree' which was annexed by Ardchattan priory before the end of the thirteenth century and confirmed in the possession of that house in 1380. By 1421 the Church of St Columba of Soroby had been appropriated by Iona Abbey with which it remained until the Reformation.<sup>98</sup> In Galloway the settlement name saurbaer has also been elevated to a parish name.

At Soroby Tiree there is thus the possible progression from an early Christian monastic site to that of a Norse heathen cult site with the eventual emergence of Soroby as a focus for continuing Christian activity after the conversion of the Norse incomers.

Balinoe NM 94/ NL 04

Ballenoe	1674 HP vol.1 p.288	1.5 merklands
Ballinoe	1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.23	30 maillands
and Quyeish		440 Scots acres

G Baile, m nodha, adj (New township)

Balinoe, also known as Balure, (*G Baile ur*, New township) lies inland from Traigh Shorobaidh. The subsidiary settlement of Cu Dheis (*G Cuil Dia*, God's Corner) and marked as Cowelche on Turnbull's map lies adjacent to the burial ground at Soroby<sup>99</sup>. Clearly Balinoe lies within the area once known by the name Soroby.

Balemartine NM 94/NL 04 986 413

Ballemartyne	1674 HP vol.1 p.289	1.5 merklands
Balemartine	1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.25	22 maillands
		250 Scots acres

G Baile,m Martin,m pers name (Martin's township)

<sup>97</sup>RCAHMS., Argyll 3.,166.

<sup>98</sup>I.B.Cowan , The Parishes of Medieval Scotland. SRS 11(1961),

<sup>99</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.23

The origin of the name is not clear. Balemartine now forms a focal point in west Tiree as one of the largest townships. Like the adjacent settlement of Balinoe it possibly lies on land formerly part of the settlement unit of Soroby.

### Settlement unit Mannal

Mannal NM 94/NL04 987 403

Mannawallis	1390	SRO C2/xiii/300	1 unciata
Mannawallis	1495	RMS vol.2 no.2264	1 unciata
Manwell	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.217	4 lib.
Manvall	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	6 merklands
Mannal	1674	HP vol.1 p.289	3.25 merklands
Mannal	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.25	72 maillands
			659 Scots acres

ON Mon,f völr,m (Hillocky field).

Mannal lies south of Balemartine. The soils bordering the coast are brown calcareous soils supporting machair. Inland this gives way to bog heather moorland. The prefix man(n) in Hebridean settlement names is a common one as in the names Manish, Harris and Mannal, Lewis. It is also common in Norway where Rygh gives its meaning as a 'hillocky landscape feature'.<sup>100</sup> Mannal has a good natural harbour at Port Tunna, is evaluated at one ounceland, and clearly formed one of the primary Norse settlement units on the island.

### Settlement unit Hynish

Hynish NM 94/NL 04 985 395

Haynish	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	6 merklands
Tayneish	1674	HP vol.1 p.289	6 merklands
Haynish	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.27	72 maillands
and Mannal			659 Scots acres

ON Heidr,f nes,n (Heath headland)

Hynish forms the southern most point on the island. Save for the fertile strip running westwards from the township to Millport house the land is covered in bog heather

<sup>100</sup>O.Rygh, NGN, vol.14 p.356

moorland, blanketbog and moist Atlantic heather moor. The slopes of Ben Hynish dominate the landscape leading upto the islands highest summit, that of Carnan Mor at 141m. At the southern most tip of the headland lies the fort of Dun na Cleite occupying a strong defensive site. To the north-east of this are the remains of a fort. 1km west of Port Snoig stands Dun Shiader. The names derives from ON saetr, sheiling and is indicative of seasonal transhumance. Its location on the most remote hillside on Tiree helps to explain the absence of this generic from the remainder of the island. Elsewhere on Tiree the density of settlement and the nature of the land would preclude any neccessity for sheilings.<sup>101</sup>

The remains of an ancient chapel and burial ground were said to lie at GR 977 395 on the banks of Alt Ban.<sup>102</sup> The dedication is unknown and the site is now known as Cladh Beg. Three carved stones are believed to have come from the burial ground. A four sided boulder bore a sunken latin cross on one face and probably served as a boundary marker. A slab and unworked block of stone also bore incised linear crosses.<sup>103</sup> Peripheral settlement expansion from the settlement nucleus around Hynish pier is seen on the western slopes of Ben Hynish.

### Settlement unit Balephuill

Balephuill NL 94/ NM 04

Ballefoyle	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.217	4 lib
Ballequhoile	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Ballephuill	1561	Coll.de Reb.Alba p.3	4 ðb
Bailephuile	1587/88	RMS vol.4 no. 1491	
Ballfulze	1674	Retour vol.2 no.82	6 merklands
Balephuill	1686	SRO E60/7/3 p.3	
Balephuill	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.27	32 maillands
			464 Scots acres

G Baile,m ?

Bailephuill is situated on low lying ground to the south-east of Loch a'Phuil. East of the township lies moorland while to the west are sedge mires and rush pastures. A narrow strip of machair borders Traigh a'Bheide via Abhain a 'Bheide. The name Bhi commemorates the Celtic saint usually known as Do-Bhi. The names is a variant on Mo-

<sup>101</sup>See p. 294

<sup>102</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tiree',243.

<sup>103</sup>RCAHMS.,Argyll 3,29,135-6.

Bhi Mac Beoain, that of an Irish saint believed to have been the Abbot of Innis Cuiscaird in Ireland. The saint's name is preserved in the names Cill-da-Bhi in Kintyre and Cladh da Bhi, Loch Tay. The remains of a chapel, said to have stood in the vicinity of Cnoc Grialal (GR 964 418), were possibly dedicated to this saint. Close by, the farm of Baile Mhic Bheoitha (GR 964 418) is said to lie on land which was originally a pendicle of the church.<sup>104</sup> 1.5 km north-west of the township stands the fort of Dunan Nighean (fort of the maidens). This is the setting for a local folktale where Norse raiders are said to have rounded up all the women of the island and incarcerated them in the dun. Another folk tale purports to locate the burial mound of the daughter of a Norwegian king within the boundaries of Balephuill township.<sup>105</sup> Balephuill is consistently evaluated at 6 merklands and ranks as a primary settlement. Only one subsidiary settlement has developed, to the west of Balephuill at Meningie. South of Meningie severe sandblow has adversely affected the area.

### Settlement unit Ceann a'Mhara

Ceann a'Mhara NM 94/ NL 04

Kenmarre	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	3.5 merklands
Kennavar	1674	HP vol.1 p.289	3.5 merklands
Kenvar	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.29	64 maillands
and Barrepoll			829 Scots acres

G Ceann,m a' prep mara, gen sing of muir,m (Sea headland)

The Ceann a'Mhara headland lies at the western end of Traigh Bheide. The township lands bordering the bay and stretching northwards towards the boundary with Barrapoll have been severely affected by sandblow, the entire area is now covered with undulating sand dunes. The headland itself was reckoned by Turnbull to be 'the second best pasturage on the island.'<sup>106</sup> Two forts stand on the headland; Dun nan Gall occupies a position of great natural strength on the west of the headland while Eilean na Ba occupies a rocky promontory at the southern tip of the headland separated from Beinn Ceann a'Mhara by a 16.5 m deep gorge.

Adjacent to Eilean na Ba stand the remains of St. Patrick's chapel (GR 937 401). 7m to the north of the chapel lies a sub-rectangular enclosure which suggests that the

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<sup>104</sup>Ibid..

<sup>105</sup>SA 1974/85/B1

<sup>106</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.29

site is possibly that of a cahel or monastery of the early Christian period. Two stone slabs inscribed with incised crosses stand inside the chapel. A natural boulder, also decorated with a sunken latin cross, stands outside.<sup>107</sup> To the south-east of the chapel coastal rocks bear the name Rinn Chircnis (ON *kirkju nes*, church headland) clearly a Norse acknowledgement of the presence of the ecclesiastical site and possibly the original Norse name for the headland.

The township of Ceann a' Mhara is itself no longer extant due to the devastation of the area by sandblow.

### Settlement unit Barrapoll

<u>Barrapoll</u>		NM 94/ NL 04	
Barrapole	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.134 p.217	4 lib
Barrepoill	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Barrapoill	1674	IIP vol.1 p.289	4.5 merklands
Barrapoll	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.31	64 maillands
and Kenvar			829 Scots acres

ON Barr,n bolstadr,m (Barley farm)

The township lands of Barrapoll are known locally as having a tripartite division into Goirtean Domhail, the Low Portion of Barrapoll and Baile Mhic Uighe.<sup>108</sup> Turnbull noted a bipartite division into Barrapoll, lying north-west of Loch A' Phuill and Gartendoal lying to the north of it.<sup>109</sup> Close to the boundary with Middleton lies a hill named Cnoc a' Claidh<sup>110</sup> which Reeves noted as having a 'ancient burial ground' although no traces of this are now apparent. Much of the soil around the settlement is composed of humic iron podsols and alluvial soils supporting arable and permanent pasture. To the east is an area of moorland and to the west the machair lands. Port Bharapoll lies 1 km to the west. Despite its comparatively inland situation Barrapoll clearly ranks as a primary settlement.

### Settlement unit Sandaig

<u>Sandaig</u>	NM 94/ NL 04	942 343	
Samdaig	1674	HP vol.1 p.289	1.5 merklands

<sup>107</sup>RCAHMS. *Argyll* 3,156-6.

<sup>108</sup>SA.1971/90/B8

<sup>109</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.31.

<sup>110</sup>SA 1976/123/B4ab

Sandaig 1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.35 12 maillands  
68 Scots acres

ON Sandr,m vík,f (Sand bay)

Sandaig lies at the southern end of Traigh Ghrianal , a small sandy bay which must originally have been known by the Norse name sandr vík. Together with the settlements of Balmenoch and Grianal it formed an original (6 merkland) settlement unit with Sandaig most probably forming the original nucleus.

Grianal NM 94/ NL 04 942 349

Grianal 1674 RHP vol.1 p.289 1.5 merklands

Grianal 1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.35 24 maillands  
104 Scots acres

ON Grænn, adj völlr, m (Green field)

The settlement of Grianal is no longer extant the name being retained only in the name Traigh Ghrianal and the anglicised name Greenhill house. The name is paralleled in the farm name Greenwall, Shapinsay Orkney. Turnbull clearly marks Grianal as lying between the settlements of Sandaig and Kilkenneth.<sup>111</sup>

Balmeanach NM 94/ NL 04

Ballamanach 1541 Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647 3 merklands

Ballemeanach 1674 HP vol.1 p.289 3 merklands

Balmenoch 1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.33 24 maillands  
314 Scots acres

G Baile, m meadhonach, adj (Middle township)

Balmeanach, (the name on the modern OS map is now anglicized to Middleton), lies midway between Sandaig and Barrapoll on predominantly poor quality land. Turnbull however shows the settlement unit as occupying a 1km wide belt of dune land between Kenvar and Sandaig.<sup>112</sup> Sand blow in this area has clearly radically altered the earlier alignment of settlement boundaries. Balmeanach possibly represents secondary expansion from Sandaig.

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<sup>111</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.25.

<sup>112</sup>SRO RHP 8826/1

Settlement unit KillineKillyne NM 94/ NL 04

Killyne 1541 Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647 6 merklands

Killine 1674 Retour vol.1 no.82

G Cille,f Sheathain,m pers name (Church of John)

The settlement of Killyne is no longer extant but due to its high evaluation of 6 merklands in 1541 it can be assumed to have been a large primary unit and one subsequently divided into four component parts. The 1674 rental records the 4 adjacent townships of Kerrefergus, Kerremeanach, Keranokile and Krossiegers each evaluated at 1.5 merklands (1/4 ounceland). The prefix 'kerre' found in 3 of the 4 names stems from G ceathramh, a quarter. Corroborative evidence for these four townships having been created through the subdivision of Killyne is the retention of the prefix cille in the name of the division of Keranokile, (*G cethramh na cille*, church quarter).

There remains the problem of identifying the church or chapel to which the original settlement unit Killyne and the subdivision of Keranokile owe their names. The most likely candidate is the chapel of Kilkenneth. Turnbull's survey marks the township of Keranokile as lying adjacent to those of Kilkennethmore and Kilkennethbeg. The name Kilkenneth is absent from the 1674 rental where Keranokile is mentioned together with all the settlements lying in the vicinity of the (modern) township of Kilkenneth. Alternatively Killyne may stem not, from G cillean church, but from the compound name cille-seathainn, a church dedicated to St John as in the church name Killean, Torosay, Mull. If so, no such dedication is known in this area. Continuous sand blow has led to an obliteration of settlement and a fluidity of settlement boundaries such that in 1768 Turnbull wrote that 'the marchis of the farms being staightened and pastures dividid by me when I was in Tirij'.<sup>113</sup>

Kilkenneth NM 94/ NL04 945 445

Kilcannich 1674 Retour vol.1 no.82

Kilchennichmore 1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.31 12 maillands. 111Scots acres

Kilchennichbeg 1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.31 12 maillands. 113 Scots acres

G Cille,f Cannich, m pers name (Church of Kenneth)

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<sup>113</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.31

Kilkenneth takes its name from the mediaeval chapel and burial ground dedicated to St. Cainnich and dependent on the former parish church of Soroby. A sunken cross on a grave marker can roughly be dated to the eighth to ninth centuries, suggesting that the site had ecclesiastical associations.<sup>114</sup> Dedications to St Cainnech are found throughout the Western Isles at, for example, Kilchainnie Coll, Kilkenneth, Colonsay and Kilchenzie Howmore, South Uist. Turnbull's map shows the settlement divisions of Kilkenneth mór and beg running east to west at the southern end of Traigh Thodhrasdail. The name Thodhrasdail occurs nowhere else in the vicinity of the settlement but is clearly of Norse origin and may represent the presence of a former settlement name.

NM 94/ NL 04

Kerremeanach 1674 HP vol.1 p.290 11.5 merklands

G Ceathramh,m meadhonach ,adj (Middle quarter)

Kerrechrosegar 1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 p.38 12 maillands

G Ceathramh,m ON kross,m gardr,m (Cross enclosure quarter)

Kerrefurgus 1674 HP vol.1 p.290 1.5 merklands

G Ceathramh,m Furgus,m pers name (Furgus' quarter)

Keranokile 1674 HP vol.1 p.290 1.5 merklands

G Ceathramh,m na,prep cille,f (Church quarter)

Kerrehusegar 1768 SRO RIIP 8826/2 p.40 36 maillands

G Ceathramh,m ON hus,n gardr,m (House enclosure quarter)

The above settlements lay in the north-west of the island in an area now composed entirely of sand dunes. No trace of any of the settlements remain although these were clearly visible in the mid nineteenth century. Kerrachrosegar and Kerremeanach were probably one and the same and the name Croisgear is still known as the name of an area of land lying between Hough and Ballevullin. The four settlements formed a subdivision of the primary unit of Killyne. Kerre (G ceathramh quarter) is a common element in Gaelic place names throughout Scotland where it is found in the form kerry, kerro, kera and

<sup>114</sup>RCAHMS Argyll 3,29,146.

kirrie.<sup>115</sup> In Islay cearabh denoted a specific land division, the quarterland. There is no direct evidence of quarterlands on Tiree as such although divisions into quarterlands were known on Coll.<sup>116</sup>

Two of the four 'kerre' settlements have essentially Norse names, Kerrahusegar and Kerachrosegar. The generic in both is the Norse noun gardr as defined by Vigfusson as denoting a 'yard, garth, garden, enclosed space',<sup>117</sup> and by Marwick as denoting simply a 'farm'<sup>118</sup> when incorporated into settlement names in Orkney. Apart from these two examples on Tiree the generic is unknown elsewhere in the Inner Hebrides.

### Moss NM 04/NL 04

The township of Moss is also known by the Gaelic names A'Mhointeach, the Moss and A 'Mhointeach Ruadh, the Red Moss. Turnbull marks it as simply Monighel - the common Moss.<sup>119</sup> This was the only area on the island where the peats were cut. The area is low lying and the township arable was reclaimed only at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>120</sup> Moss ranks as a modern and peripheral settlement.

### Settlement unit Hough

Hough NM 94 / NL 04 952 455

Howe	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.217	4 lib
Howfe	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Hodgh	1674	HP vol.1 p.290	6 merklands
Houff	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	
Hough	1768	SRO RIIP 8826/2 p.42	48 maillands
			454 Scots acres

ON Haugr,m (Burial mound)

The modern settlement of Hough lies east of Beinn Hough on humous iron podzols, humic gleys and alluvial soils. Turnbull shows it as previously having been sited to the west of the hill. The entire area west of Beinn Hough has now been taken over by

<sup>115</sup>A.MacKerrell, 'Ancient denominations of Agricultural Land' in PSAS, 78(1943-4),39.

<sup>116</sup>See p.116

<sup>117</sup>C.Vigfusson, Dictionary,191.

<sup>118</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,163.

<sup>119</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.42.

<sup>120</sup>Cameron Guide,34.

sand dunes. 'Sand blow at Hough in the eighteenth century was so severe that the inhabitants were forced to leave and settle at Kilmoluag'.<sup>121</sup>

Approximately 1 km south of Hough House lie two prehistoric mound complexes standing 0.5 m high from which the settlement derives its name.

### Settlement unit Murtost

Murtost NM 94/ NI04

Murtod	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.217	4 lib.
Murtost	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Murdoll	1674	HP vol.1 p.290	3.5 merklands
Murtosk	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	
Muirdale	1801	Estate Instructions	

ON Myrr, f bolstadr,m (Moor farm)

The township of Murtost is no longer extant. The prefix in the name is preserved in the name of the top to the immediate south of Beinn Hough ( Gr 947 458), Beinn Mhurstat. The 1674 rental records that the settlement was 'all wast' and it is absent from Turnbull's survey. Local informants maintain that the settlement was still in existence up until 1815 when extensive sand blow forced the inhabitants to leave.<sup>122</sup> The first edition of the OS 6" map of Tiree shows the settlement of Muirdal as lying immediately south of the farm of Hough. It was also known by the name Murstal.<sup>123</sup> The 1541 written form of the name<sup>124</sup> shows a contraction of bolstadr more usually associated with the Outer Hebrides while the reference in 1674<sup>125</sup> is more consistent with the southern Hebridean contraction to bol and pol. The hill name Beinn Mhurstat and the local name Murstal open up another line of enquiry as the suffix stat is more in line with a derivation from ON stadir than from ON bolstadr. It is plausible that there were two adjacent settlements , myrr stadir and myrr bolstadr, although it is also possible that myrr bolstadr replaced the name myrr stadir. The 1541 reference would suggest the presence of a primary settlement which subsequently may have been subdivided.

<sup>121</sup>SA 1977/173/B1

<sup>122</sup>SA 1974/134/A1

<sup>123</sup>E.Creegeen, *Argyll Estate Instructions 1771-1805*, SHS,(1964),57.

<sup>124</sup>Exchequer Rolls, vol.16 p.627

<sup>125</sup>R.N MacPhail, HP, vol.1 p.290

**Settlement unit Ballevuillin****Balevullin** NM94 / NL 04 955 462

Ballemuling	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Ballewilling	1674	HP vol.1 p.290	6 merklands
Ballemulling	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82.	
Balewilline	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.44	48 maillands
			431 Scots acres

G Baile,m muileann,m (Mill township)

Balevuillin lies to the west of Beinn Bail a' mhuillin. A 2km sq area of blown sand, locally nick-named 'the Sahara' lies between the township and the bay. Within this area Bronze age settlement and burials have been uncovered. Oral tradition records that this was the location of the 'Battle of the Sheaves', a mighty confrontation between a band of Norse warriors and the island natives.<sup>126</sup>

Peripheral settlement expansion from this primary unit has occurred at Sraid Ruadh (Red Street) north of Balevullin on the banks of Abhainn Ban where the mill once stood.

**Settlement unit Kilmoluag (?Bhiosta)****Kilmoluag** NM 94 / NL 04 973 464

Kilmoluag	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Kilmaluag	1674	HP vol.1 p.290	6 merklands
Kilmaluaig	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.46	51 maillands
			567 Scots acres

G Cille,f Moluac, m pers name (Church of Moluac)

The township takes its name from the chapel and burial ground dedicated to St Moluac. There are now no identifiable remains of either burial ground or chapel although they probably occupied a site to the south of the farm of Crois,<sup>127</sup> located close to Mullach na Croise (GR 968 479). Moluac is believed to have been a disciple of St. Comgall of Bangor or St Brendan of Clonfert both of whom had connections with

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<sup>126</sup>SA 1968/2477/B

<sup>127</sup>W.Reeves,'Island of Tirce,' 242.

monastic foundations on Tiree. Dedications to St. Moluac are found throughout the Western Isles.

The fertile lands of Kilmoluag cover a wide area, one which incorporates the former settlements of Bister, Bhirceapoll, Bhasapoll and Bhiosta. The western end of Traigh Chornaig is known as Rubha Port Bhiosd and the hillock to the south of Loch Bhassapoll as Cnoc Bhiosta. Both names would appear to indicate the presence of a stadir farm in this area. The distance between Rubha Port Bhiost and Cnoc Bhiosta is ca 2.5 km. Midway between the two lies Loch Bhassapoll (ON *vassr bolstadr*, fresh water farm). 1.5 km south of Loch Bhasapoll lies a hillock Cnoc Bhirceapoll. Within the area now covered by Kilmoluag there are therefore three possible bolstadr names and one stadir name, none of which exist as settlement names today. Possibly this area shows the naming of an original and geographically large area as a primary stadir farm. Subsequent settlement division may have resulted in three adjacent bolstadr farms, none of which retained in their name the specific associated with the primary stadir name. All three finally became incorporated into the settlement unit of Kilmoluag, thereby losing any separate identity.

Bister NM 94 / NL 04

Bister	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	3 merklands
Bistie	1654	Blaue	
Brister	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	
Bist and	1674	HP vol.1 p.290	3 merklands
Beist	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.48	24 maillands
			161 Scots acres

ON Bolstadr,m (Farm)

The township of Bister is no longer extant. Turnbull locates it as lying to the north of Loch Bhassapoll bounded to the west by Kilmoluag and to the east by Cornaigmore. The wide bay at Traigh Chornaig was formerly known as Beist Bay and what is now Rubha Port Bhiosd as Beist Harbour. Clearly as late as the mid eighteenth century Beist was a prospering settlement.

The early written forms of the name point to a derivation from ON bolstadr. This is unusual on two counts. Firstly it is extremely rare to find the generic bolstadr in its simplex form without an accompanying descriptive specific, particularly so on an island with a comparatively dense cluster of bolstadr farms. Secondly the contraction of bolstadr to bister or bist is one found not in the Western Isles but in the Northern Isles. In areas of Norse colonisation which subsequently became Gaelic speaking bolstadr is found in the

contracted from bol, pol, bost, bust or bus. The name Beist is found at Harray Orkney, but lack of early written forms of the name make its origin uncertain.<sup>128</sup>

### Settlement unit Cornaig

<u>Cornaigmore</u>	NM 94 /NL 04	979 469	
Cornagmore	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.216	6 lib
with Bassapole			
Cornekmoir	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	7.5 merklands
Cornagmore	1674	HP vol.1 p.290	5.5 merklands
Cornagmore	1725	Justiciary Court Records p.258	
Cornaigmore	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.49	40.5 maillands

ON Korn,m vík,f mór,adj (Big corn bay)

Cornaigmore lies west of Loch Bhassapoll. Much of the soil bordering the Loch consists of humous iron podzols, peaty gleys and alluvial soils. East and west of Port Fada are found the brown calcareous soils and associated machair landscape.

Chapel remains dedicated to St. Bridget are said to have been situated at Lag na Cruach (GR 978 468).<sup>129</sup> An area of level ground in the south-west corner of the former stackyard may represent the site of the burial ground.<sup>130</sup> A hillslope Creag Bhrìde stands south of the supposed chapel site.

Cornaigmore is important in island tradition in association with the 'battle of the sheaves'. Norse warriors defeated in battle by the island natives at harvest in an area between Loch Bhassapoll and Cornaig beach are believed to have been buried at Lag na Cruach.<sup>131</sup> This association was enhanced by the discovery in the eighteenth century of a number of burials accompanied by iron swords, shields, helmets and a spear.<sup>132</sup> No further details are known and the finds are now lost. They were possibly of Viking date. Peripheral settlement expansion is seen at Clachan Mór.

<sup>128</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,163.

<sup>129</sup>W.Reeves' Island of Tirec,241.

<sup>130</sup>RCAHMS. Argyll 3,136.

<sup>131</sup>SA 1968/247/B.

<sup>132</sup>J.Anderson, 'Notes on the Relics of the Viking Period', in PSAS, 10(1872-74),555.

<u>Cornaigbeg</u>	NM94 / NL 04	985 465	
Cornagbeg	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.216	4 lib
Cornigbeg	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	3 merklands
Cornagbeg	1674	IIP vol.1 p.290	3 merklands
Cornaigbeg	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.51	40.5 maillands 296 Scots acres

ON Korn,n vík,f G beag, adj (Small corn bay)

Cornaigbeg lies east of Cornaigmore. Its lower evaluation, smaller area and Gaelic suffix all point to its being the smaller part of a divided primary settlement known by the Norse name kornvík. The Gaelic comparatives mór and beag are, however, locally believed to refer to the size of the bays rather than to the size of the townships. Cornaigbeg was also referred to as simply 'the baile'.<sup>133</sup> A landscape name 'Torosa' is found within the boundaries of Cornaigbeg and whilst this name is clearly Norse the lack of any early written forms make it difficult to speculate on the meaning. The same name is found on Coll where it has been suggested that it derives from ON Thors stadir.

### Settlement unit Kenoway

<u>Kenoway</u>	NM94 /NL 04		
Keway	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	6 merklands
Kinoway	1674	Retour vol.1 no. 82	
Kenavay	1674	HP vol.1 p.291	6 merklands
Kenovay	1768	SRO RIIP 8826/2 p.53	48 maillands 547 Scots acres

G Ceann, m a' prep bagh, m (Head of the bay)

Turnbull noted the exceptional fertility of the lands of Kenoway describing how the infield covered three quarters of the total area and how the outfield and pasture were of 'exceptional good quality'.<sup>134</sup>

The remains of a former burial ground and (possible) chapel dedicated to St. Finnen stand at the western end of Balephetirsh bay (GR 993 467).<sup>135</sup> The township of

<sup>133</sup>SA 1969/163/B5A

<sup>134</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.53.

<sup>135</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,143.

Kennoway today is a linear settlement divided into Barriston, the Sheiling and Rossbhu. The name Rossbhu may derive from ON hross bu, Horse farm. The generic bu is rarely found in the Western Isles, although bu in Orkney denoted a substantial farm, usually one urisland, and often associated with the residence of an Earl as in the case of the Bu of Orphir.<sup>136</sup> The name is almost always found in its simplex form with the indirect object.

Kennoway is clearly a primary settlement of some importance, evaluated at one unceland and was once possibly known by the name Rossbhu.

### Settlement unit Balephetrish

Balephetrish NM 94 / NI 04

Ballepeteris	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.647	4 merklands
Balliphetrish	1628	Sasine vol.2 no.235	3 merklands
Ballephetrish	1674	HP vol.1 p.291	4 merklands
and Balwag			
Ballephetrish	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.65	32 maillands 547 Scots acres

G Baile, m ? ( ? township)

The township lies to the south-east of Balephetrish Hill (Cnoc Iolaireach) the summit of which is crowned by Dun Balephetrish. 600m north of Balephetrish farm house stand the remains of another dun, An Dun. 0.7 km east of Balephetrish farm (GR 019 474) lies the site of a chapel and burial ground dedicated to St Finnen, a form of the name Findbarr. Reeves argues for this being the site of the early Christain monastery of Artchain supposedly founded on Tiree by St Finnen in AD 565.<sup>137</sup> There is no corroborative evidence to support this theory. West of Balephetrish hill is the topographical name Ard Chicnis (ON *kirkju nes* church headland) suggesting that the site had ecclesiastical associations at that time of the Norse settlement of the island. The derivation of the settlement name is unclear. Cameron suggests some connection with an Angus mac Phetrish mentioned in a papal bull of 1375 to the Bishop of Lismore in which MacPhetrish is described as the parish vicar of the church of St Columba at Kirkapoll.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>136</sup>J.Storer-Clouston, 'The Orkney Bus', in POAS,5(1926-27),41-51.

<sup>137</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tiree',242.

<sup>138</sup>A.Cameron, Guide,21.

<u>Herne</u>	NM 94 /NL 04		
Herne	1496	RMS vol.2 no.2329	
Iryne	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648	20s
Herne	1674	Blaue	
Eyrme	1674	HP vol.1 p.289	1 merkland

The settlement of Herne is geographically and etymologically obscure. The name is retained only in that of the topographical feature Cnoc Earnal (GR 033 477) which lies 2 km east of Balephetrish. Blaue also locates Herne in the vicinity of Balephetrish.

Cameron equates the name with that of a castle 'standing on an island on Loch Kirkapoll' (Loch Riaghainn).<sup>139</sup> There is nothing to substantiate this claim and the author is probably confusing Loch Kirkapoll with Eilean Heylipoll where there are the remains of a castle.

#### The Reef NM 94 / NL 04

ON Rif,m (Reef)

The Reef, known locally as An Ruighe (*G righe*, field) formed one of the common pasture areas on Tiree. It covers an area stretching from the Kennoway boundary in the north to Traigh Bhagh in the south. At the eastern end of the Reef the river An Fhaodhail traditionally divided the east and west areas of the island and 'the eastern parish from the western one'<sup>140</sup>.

The Reef is devoid of any settlement, archaeological or ecclesiastical remains. Turnbull called it 'the Great Green Plain' and described it as an 'extensive and most beautiful green plain and all a sandy soil'.<sup>141</sup> The latter factor accounts for the Reef's unsuitability for anything other than pasture land.

The same element is found in the farm name Reef in Lewis<sup>142</sup>, in the name Reve in Jæren in south-west Norway<sup>143</sup> and in the Shetland names De Riv and De Rif.

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<sup>139</sup>Ibid..

<sup>140</sup>SA 1977/99/A18.

<sup>141</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.31.

<sup>142</sup>M.Oftedal, 'Village Names in Lewis', 387.

<sup>143</sup>O.Rygh, NGN vol.10 p.134.

### Lost Settlements

Bee NM94 / NL 04

Bee 1541 Exchequer Rolls vol.16 p.648 3 merkland

ON Bu, n (Farm)

The settlement of Bee is no longer extant, nor is there any indication as to where it may have been situated, unless the name may be equated with that of Rossbhu, Kennoway. The simplex form of the name is consistent with the Orkney bu names although there is little to suggest that bu, Tiree, was a high ranking settlement. There is however the (remote) possibility that the name Bee may indicate the location of the residence of Holdbodi 'a great Chief' mentioned in Orkneyinga saga as residing on Tiree.<sup>144</sup>

### 3.3 Summary

Over 50% of the total recorded settlement names on Tiree are Norse. Of the 20 settlements classified as primary, 12 have Norse names, 2 of which are in a simplex topographical form. Of the 8 remaining, Gaelic, primary settlement names, 2 may mask earlier Norse names at Kilmoluag (Bhiosta) and Kennoway (Rossbhu). The Tiree rental of 1662 states that a 'a tirung (ounceland) is a 6 merkland and is dividid into 48 maillis or 20 pennylands'. The extent of Tiree is 120 tirungs or 120 merklands and 5 shillings more.<sup>145</sup> There are 13 discernible 6 merkland units on the island centred on the townships of Caolas (6), Kirikapoll (6), Heylipoll (1 ounceland), Mannal ( 6 merklands, 1 uncuiata), Hynish (6), Balephuill (6), Barrapoll ( 6), Hough (6), Balevullin (6), Kilmoluag (6), Killine (6) Vaull (6), and Murtost (6). To these may be added Ruaig (7) and the Reef (12) which has a valuation equivalent to 2 ouncelands. With the exception of Reef and Murtost all these 6 merkland/ounceland units are primary settlements. Groupings of other settlements as is seen in the grouping of Baugh, and Scarinish (6), Balephetrish and Earnal (6), Balmeanach, Sandaig and Grianal (6) also suggest the former presence of ounceland units. There is enough evidence to suggest that the island was at some period completely divided into ouncelands. The neatness and rigidity of the pattern which lasted until the seventeenth century is such as to suggest that this was the result of a conscious descision (from above

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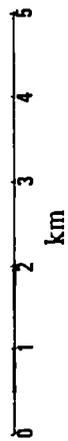
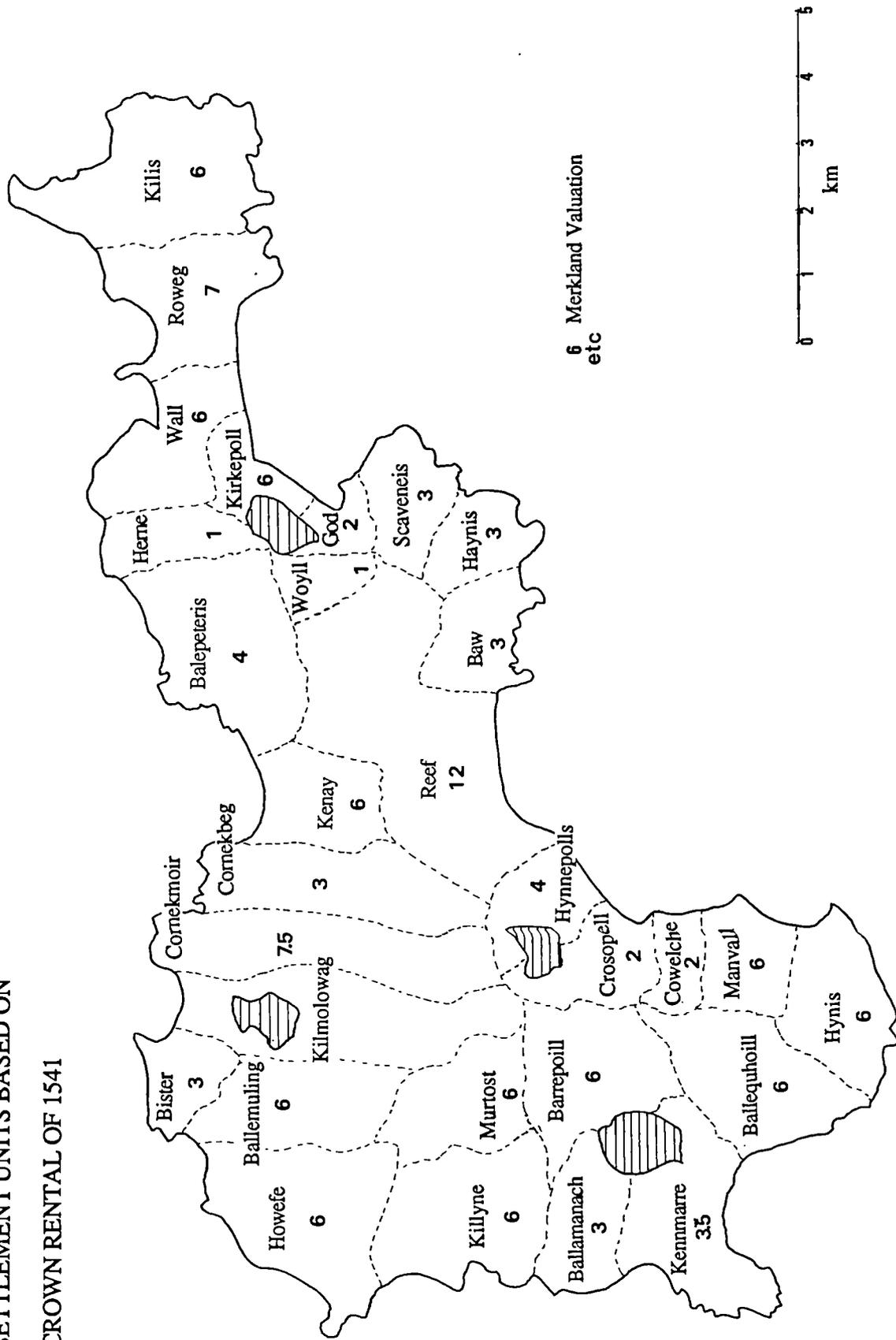
<sup>144</sup>Orkneyinga Saga, ed.A.B.Taylor,244,264,374.

<sup>145</sup>N.D.Campbell, 'An old Tiree Rental of 1622',343-4.

TREE

SETTLEMENT UNITS BASED ON

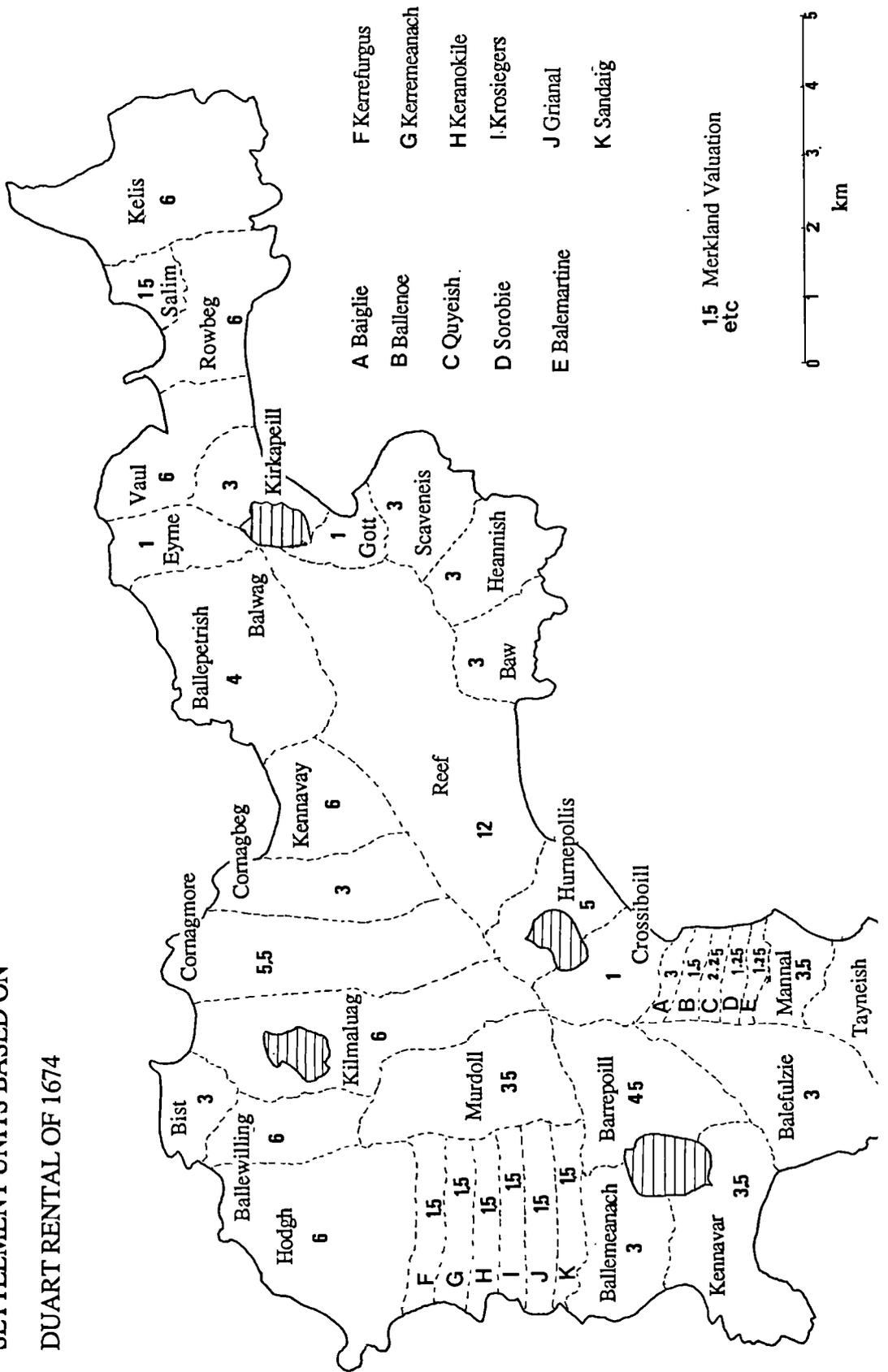
CROWN RENTAL OF 1541



TREE

SETTLEMENT UNITS BASED ON

DUART RENTAL OF 1674





?) rather than as a direct result of organic growth (from below). The clearest deliniation into ouncelands is seen in the east of the island where modern settlement expansion has not served to distort the picture. The western area has seen considerable more fluidity in settlement divisions with the re-orientation of boundaries, due in part to changes in the physical landscape as a result of the encroachment of sand.

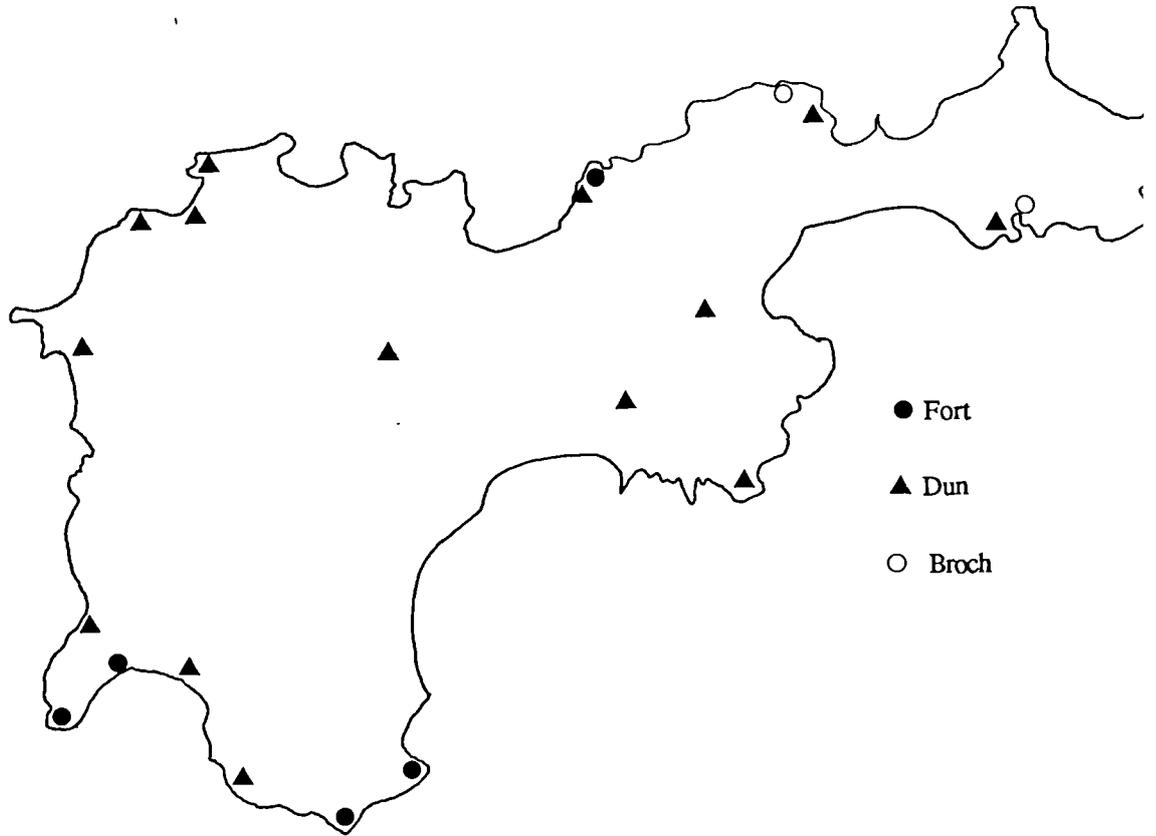
Secondary expansion from a primary settlement is seen to take place within the framework of the ounceland, either by the division of the primary unit into several component parts, as in the division of Bhiosta into Bhirceapoll, Bhassapoll, Murtost and Bist or by the separation of a parcel of land from the primary farm which itself remains intact, as appears to have happened at Kirkapoll and Gott. In the east of the island, in the case of the settlements of Ruaig, Caolas and Vaul the original primary farm appears to have continued as a single unit until modern peripheral settlement occurred.

While Norse names are found throughout the island, the habitative generics, with the exception of the name Kirkapoll, are found exclusively in the western half of the island while in the east the topographical names predominate. Five habitative generics are represented in west Tiree, stadir, bolstadr, bu, hus and gardr, of which bolstadr is the most numerous with 7 examples. The bolstadr settlements are found in close proximity to each other and most share a common boundary as is seen at Heylipoll and Crossapoll for example. This is also a feature of bolstadr settlements in the northern Hebrides and the Northern Isles although the reciprocative specifics diagnostic of bolstadr names in the Northern Isles are not found in Tiree. The stadir, bu, hus and gardr names are now lost. Soroby, Kerahusegar and Kerachrosegar all class as secondary settlements and probably went out of existence due to the marginality of site caused by sand blow in the case of Kerahusegar and Kerachrosegar and poorly drained wet soils in the case of Soroby.

Neither the Norse or Gaelic toponyms allude to any density of shielings on the island. Three sheiling names are found, An Aridhean, Airidh aon Oidche and that retained in the name Dun Hiader. Clearly the flat fertile land precluded any necessity for seasonal transhumance.

Much of the modern development of settlement has been an infilling of the essentially Norse pattern by low ranking settlements having Gaelic names, many of which incorporate the habitative generics baile and cille. Again these are all found in the western portion of the island. Missing entirely is the Gaelic generic achadh which occurs throughout the southern Hebrides.

DISTRIBUTION OF IRON  
AGE FORTIFICATIONS



DISTRIBUTION OF NORSE  
HABITATIVE GENERICS

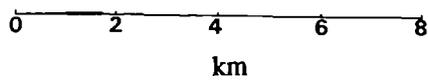


Table 1A Existing Settlements

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Caolas	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Ruaig	1509	6 merklands	Primary
Salem	1628	20s	Peripheral
Vaul	1509	6 merklands	Primary
Kirkapoll	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Gott	1541	2 merklands	Secondary
Scarinish	1509	40s	Primary
Heannish	1674	3 merklands	Secondary
Baugh	1541	3 merklands	Secondary
Crossapoll	1496	2 merklands	Secondary
Heylipoll	1390	1 ounce land	Primary
Balinoe	1674	1.5 merklands	Peripheral
Balemartine	1674	1.5 merklands	Peripheral
Mannal	1390	1 ounce land	Primary
Haynish	1541	3 merklands	Primary
Balephuill	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Ceann a'Mhara	1541	3.5 merklands	Primary
Barrapoll	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Balmeanach	1541	3 merklands	Secondary
Sandaig	1674	1.5 merklands	Primary
Kilkenneth	1674	1.5 merklands	Secondary
Hough	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Balevullin	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Kilmoluag	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Cornaigmore	1541	7.5 merklands	Primary
Cornaigbeg	1541	3 merklands	Secondary
Kenovay	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Balephetrish	1541	4 merklands	Primary

Table 1B Settlements mentioned in the documentary record, identified but no longer extant.

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Woyll	1541	1 merkland	Secondary
Soroby	1563	–	Primary
Grianal	1674	1.5 merklands	Secondary
Killyne	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Keremeanach	1768	12 maillands	Secondary
Kerrechrosegar	1768	12 maillands	Secondary
Kerrefurgus	1674	1.5 merklands	Secondary
Kerrahusegar	1768	12 maillands	Secondary
Keranokile	1674	1.5 merklands	Secondary
Murtost	1541	6 merklands	Primary
Bister	1541	3 merklands	Secondary
Moss	–	–	Peripheral
Bhasapoll	1768	–	Secondary
Herne	1496	20s	Peripheral
Balwag	1509	14s 4d	Peripheral

Table 1C Settlements recorded in the documentary record but not identified

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
Bee	1541	3 merklands

Table 2

<u>Settlement</u> <u>Classification</u>	<u>Total number</u> <u>of settlements</u>	<u>Total ON</u> <u>names</u>	<u>Total G</u> <u>names</u>
Primary	20	12	8
Secondary	16	10	6
Peripheral	8	1	7

<u>Settlement</u> <u>classification</u>	<u>ON habitative</u> <u>names</u>	<u>ON simplex</u> <u>topographical names</u>	<u>G habitative</u> <u>names</u>
Primary	5	3	–
Secondary	5	1	1
Peripheral	2	–	3

Table 3

Total number of settlements	44
Total having ON names	23 (52.2%)
Total having G names	21 (47.8%)

## Chapter Four

### COLL

#### 4.1 Introduction

Coll lies 4 km to the north-east of Tiree. The island measures ca 19km in length, averages 4km in breadth and is wholly composed of crystalline metamorphics which are cut by much later minor intrusions.<sup>1</sup> Like neighbouring Tiree, Coll is lowlying, most of the island being less than 61m above sea level, with only Beinn Hough rising above 100m.

The west coast is characterised by several areas of machair and blown sand most of which have encroached further inland during historic times. At Crossapoll in the south-west of the island a 4 sq km area of dunes now stretches from Traigh Crossapoll in the south to Traigh Feall in the north effectively cutting off the townships of Caolas and Crossapoll from the remainder of the island. The east coast with its rocky and indented coastline forms a sharp contrast to the west. Extensive peat deposits cover most of the island and large tracts of peaty moorland are characteristic of the land bordering the east coast. Martin Martin writing in 1695 observed that 'the southern side is generally composed of little rocky hills and covered with peat. The north side is much plainer with arable land affording barley and oats.'<sup>2</sup> Coll is partly surrounded by many small islets and rocks, some of which are tied to the main island by sands covered at high tide.<sup>3</sup>

Not surprisingly it is the fertile western coastal strip which formed the focus for early settlement on the island. Prehistoric sandhill sites have been uncovered at Beinn Feall, Bousd, Coalas Ban, Cliad, Crossapoll, Grishipoll, Hough and Torastan.<sup>4</sup> Beveridge noted undated burial sites at Bousd, Gallanach, Torastan, Cliad and Totronald.<sup>5</sup> Brochs, forts and duns testifying to Iron Age settlement show a marked concentration in the central portion of the island. In contrast to Tiree there is no great wealth of written or archaeological material relating to settlement on the island prior to the advent of the Norse. None of the ecclesiastical sites on the island can be said with any certainty to date from the early Christian period, although Lamont identifies the chapel site at Gunna with Columba's Hinba, his earliest base in Scotland before settling on Iona in 574.<sup>5a</sup> Adomnan's Life gives the first known documentary reference to Coll in the account of the pursuance and subsequent capture of a thief, Erc.

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<sup>1</sup>J.A.Steers, The Coastline of Scotland, 139.

<sup>2</sup>Martin Martin, 'Description of the Western Isles', 217.

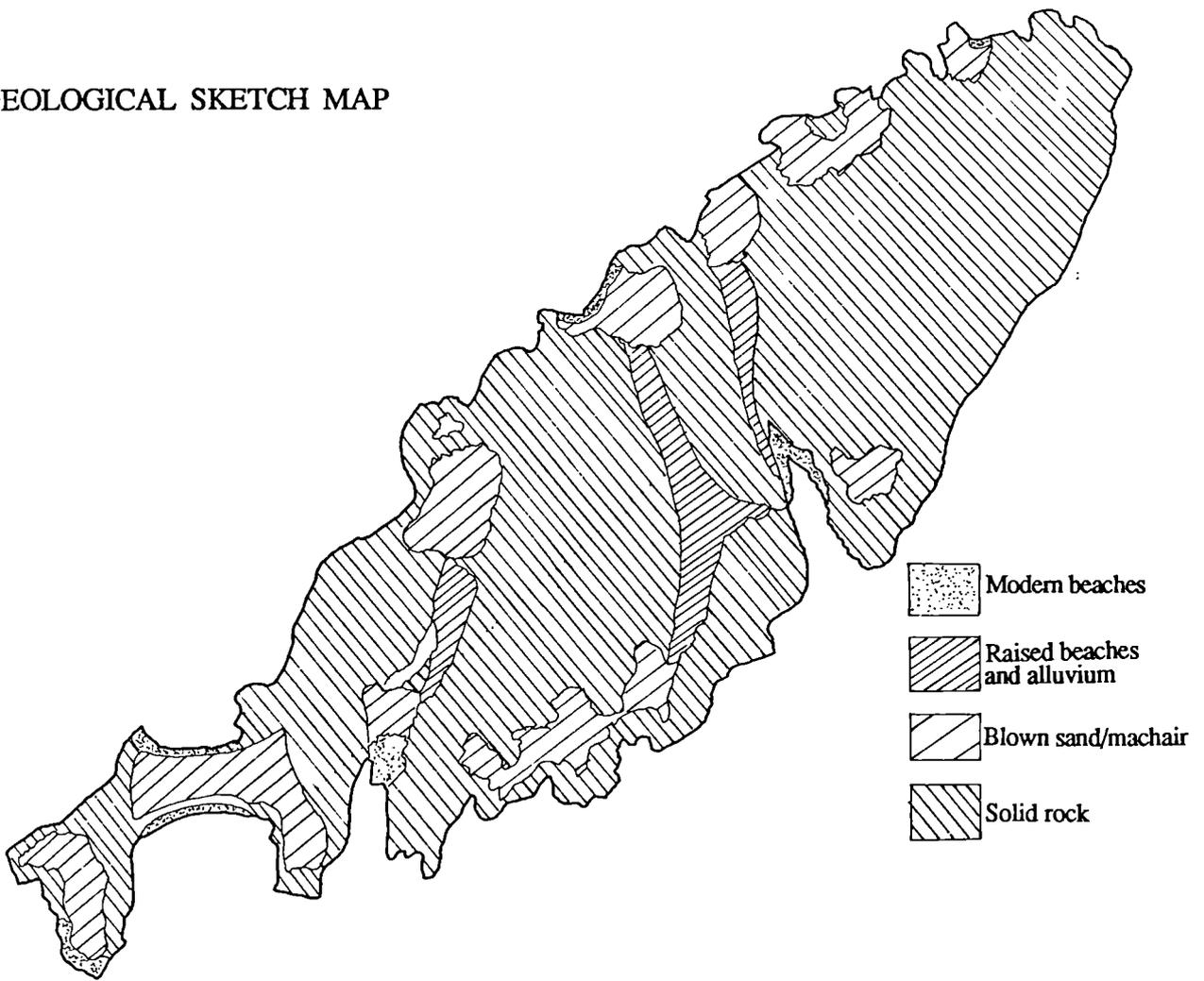
<sup>3</sup>J.A.Steers, Coastline of Scotland, 140.

<sup>4</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3, 15.

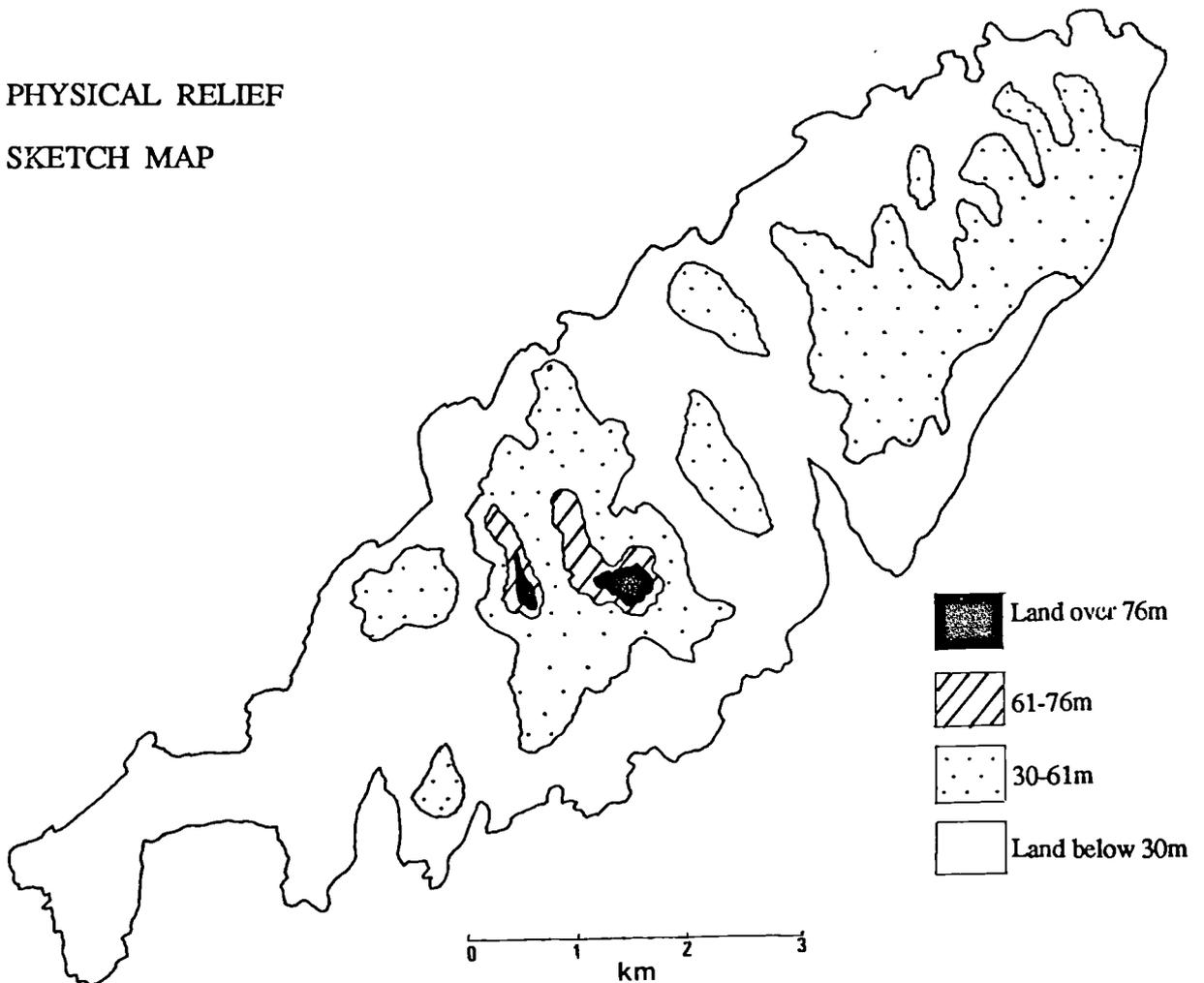
<sup>5</sup>E.Beveridge, Coll and Tiree, 38.

<sup>5a</sup>W.D. Lamont, 'Gunna', in West Highland Notes and Queries, 8(1978)12.

# GEOLOGICAL SKETCH MAP



# PHYSICAL RELIEF SKETCH MAP



'Now cross the strait to the island of Male (Mull) and look for the thief Erc...he came secretly last night from the island of Colossus (Coll)'.<sup>6</sup>

Coll features less than Tiree in Adomnan's account there being no reference to any monastic foundations on the island although it has been suggested that the monastery of Mag Luing on Tiree may have had some form of ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Coll.<sup>7</sup>

The sources are silent as to the impact of the pagan Norse on the island and the archaeological record is surprisingly blank. The only knowledge of any Viking Age remains from Coll come from the report of an inhumation burial discovered at Grishipoll farm in the 1950's, which included a spearhead 'the presence of which may suggest a Viking date'.<sup>8</sup> References to Coll in the sagas are limited to several entries in Njals saga, all concerned with a certain Earl Gilli. He is introduced in chapter 85.

'The ruler at that time was Earl Sigurd Hlodvisson. Kari was one of his retainers and had been collecting tribute for him from Earl Gilli in the Hebrides'.<sup>9</sup>

Earl Gilli's association with Coll and his relationship with Earl Sigurd is further elucidated in chapter 89 where the author relates how

'...from there they [Kari and the Njalssons] headed north to Coll, where they met Earl Gilli, he made them welcome...*The Earl* then sailed with them to Orkney to meet Earl Sigurd. In the spring Earl Sigurd gave his daughter Nereid to Earl Gilli in marriage. Earl Gilli then returned to the Hebrides'.<sup>10</sup>

Finally Earl Gilli experiences a dream concerning the outcome of the battle of Clontarf (1014) and then disappears from the saga having magnanimously bestowed 'a ship [and] a load of silver' upon one of the central characters in the narrative.<sup>11</sup> Njals saga makes no explicit claim to historical truth. The translators note that 'dating of events are impossible as there are all manner of inconsistencies, both within the saga itself and in relation to the known historical framework of Iceland and Scandinavia'.<sup>12</sup> Earl Gilli is not mentioned in any other literary or historical saga, yet in Njals saga he is portrayed as a man of substantial means and allied by marriage to Earl Sigurd of Orkney. He is

<sup>6</sup>Adomnan Columba, eds A.O and M.O Anderson,295.

<sup>7</sup>A.P.Smythe, Warlords,100.

<sup>8</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,119.

<sup>9</sup>Njals Saga, eds. M.Magnusson and H. Palsson,182.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.,196.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.,352.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid..

described as having an administrative position in the west and as a Hebridean chieftain is clearly in a subordinate position to the Earl of Orkney. Fact or fiction Earl Gilli is remembered as a Norse overlord in island folklore, and is believed to have had his residence at Cnoc Ghille Bhrìde at Gallanach.

The derivation of the island name is open to several interpretations. In Adomnan's Life Coll is referred to as Collossus. Skene disputes that this was Coll and suggests that the name referred to the island of Colonsay.<sup>13</sup> Watson suggests that Colonsay derives from ON *Kolbein's Ey* but offers no alternative explanation for the derivation of the name Coll save to suggest that it may be pre-celtic<sup>14</sup> MacBain suggests that Coll derives from G calltinn, hazel,<sup>15</sup> which is unlikely although MacEachern is in agreement with this view saying that hazel once grew on Coll.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.2 Settlement Analysis

<u>Gunna</u>	NM 05/15/25		
Guna	1573/4	SRO GD 112/5/8 p.21	
Gunna	1654	Blaue	
Gunna	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2	8 maillands

ON Gunnar m pers name ey,m (Gunna's island)

Gunna lies 0.5 km off the south-west end of Coll. Munro in 1549 described Gunna as being 'manurit and inhabite, guide for corn store and fishing'.<sup>17</sup> Over two centuries later Turnbull described how 'this uninhabited island consists of outfield and blown sand, the latter of which is concentrated at the east end of the island now given over entirely to sand dunes'.<sup>18</sup> To the west of the dunes lies an area of bog heather moorland. Turnbull noted how 'there are four small harbours in this isle, proper only for small boats to touch at. MacNeills harbour is the best while the three others are very indifferent harbours, the straits between Gunna and Coll being very dangerous'.<sup>19</sup> In the west of the island, at Port na cille, stand the remains of a chapel which Lamont identified as the site of the Columban monastery of Hinba mentioned in Adomnan's Life. The Life contains three references to Columba's sojourn on Hinba recording how 'four holy founders of monasteries crossed over from Ireland to visit St

<sup>13</sup>W.F.Skene, Celtic Scotland,1,379.

<sup>14</sup>W.J.Watson, Celtic Place Names,84-5.

<sup>15</sup>A.MacBain, Place Names,349.

<sup>16</sup>D.MacEachern, 'Place Names of Coll',319.

<sup>17</sup>W.Monro, Description of the Western Isles,119.

<sup>18</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.42

<sup>19</sup>Ibid..

Columba and found him in the island of 'Hinba'.<sup>20</sup> After Columba's decisive move to Iona he continued to rule Hinba through a prior.<sup>21</sup> The island of Hinba has not been convincingly identified and there is little to substantiate Lamont's claim. There are now no traces of the chapel on Gunna and the dedication is unknown.<sup>22</sup> The island was part of the property of the nunnery of Iona in the sixteenth century<sup>23</sup> and formed part of the parish of Coll.<sup>24</sup>

Gunna is now devoid of settlement. Apart from the island name itself and that of the islet lying off the north eastern shore, Soa Gunna (ON *saudr ey*, sheep island) there is now no evidence of Norse settlement names in the toponymy of the island.

### Settlement Unit Caolas

<u>Caolas</u>	NM 05/15/25	125 528	
Kelis	1573/4	SRO GD 112/5/8 p.21	Terunga de Kelis
Keylass	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67	Tanunga de Keylass
Keylas	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	Terivug de Keylss
Kelis	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.45	44 maillands

### G Caolas,m (Strait/sea sound)

Bounded by the sea to the south, west and east the tirunga or ounceland of Caolas effectively forms a peninsula as the most westerly land unit on Coll. A narrow sound, Caolas Ban, lies between Caolas and the island of Gunna. 3 km to the south-east across Gunna sound lies the township of Caolas, Tiree. It is common to find that the two townships lying on either side of a narrow sea crossing both incorporate caolas in the name, as in the names Kyleakin, Skye and Kyle lying on the adjacent mainland.

The land pertaining to Caolas covers ca 3 sq km and in the written records is consistently evaluated at one ounceland. A grant in 1616 by James VI to Andrew, Bishop of the Isles describes the area as 'the west end of Coll extending to seven quarters land, formerly belonging to the Nunnery of Iona'.<sup>25</sup> It is not entirely clear which townships this includes and the evaluation of land as quarterlands is, outwith the context of this grant, unknown on Coll. It is plausible that the quarterland refers to a quarter of an ounceland as the majority of townships on the island are

<sup>20</sup>Adomnan Columba, eds.A.O. and M.O Anderson,501.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.,79.

<sup>22</sup>RCAHMS., Argyll 3,138.

<sup>23</sup>SRO GD112/5/8 p.21.

<sup>24</sup>OPS, vol.2 pt.1,331.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.,333.

evaluated at 1.5 merklands/20s which is equivalent to a quarter ounceland. The 'seven quarters' possibly then refers to the 4 quarters of Caolas, the 1 quarter of Crossapoll evaluated as 1.5 merklands and the 2 quarters of Feall, evaluated at 3 merklands in the sixteenth century.

Turnbull's description of Caolas observed that 'despite a good infield soil of loam, clay and sand, blown sand is extensive being near the half of the farm...nothing grows upon it.'<sup>26</sup> The modern township of Caolas lies on the eastern edge of a tract of moorland. The original site of the settlement possibly lay in the area affected by sandblow. Reeves records the presence of 'the foundations of a chapel and traces of a cemetery still visible at Caolas opposite Gunna'<sup>27</sup> the location of which is now unknown, there being no traces of either ecclesiastical place names or identifiable structures.

<u>Brae</u>	NM 05/15/25	16 52		
Brae	1768	SRO RHP 8826/1		4 maillands
Brarie	1794	SRO RHP 3368		

ON ? Breid adj eid,n (Broad isthmus ?)

At the time of Turnbull's survey, the 'pendicle of Brae pertained to Caolas' and was evaluated at 4 maillands.<sup>28</sup> Langland's map shows Brae as lying adjacent to the pendicles of Usairt and Feranagoinen and sharing its eastern boundary with that of Goirtean. Like the other two pendicles, Brae consisted only of outfield, pasture and moss. The name is retained also in the fort name Carn a Bhraighe.

### Settlement Unit Feall

<u>Feall</u>	NM 05/15/25/	14 54		
Tyrvunghafeal	1409	SRO C2/x111/300		6 merklands
Tyrungafael	1495	RMS vol.2 no.2264		6 merklands
Fealda	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712		3 merklands
Faill	1654	Blaeu		
Fauill	1751	E106/3/2 p.72		1.5 merklands
Feaul	1794	SRO RHP 3368		427 Scots acres

ON Fjell,n (Hill)

<sup>26</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.45.

<sup>27</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tiree',243.

<sup>28</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.45.

The township of Feall no longer exists and much of the former township lands are now covered in sand dunes. The consistent devaluation of the merkland values ascribed to Feall, from the 6 merklands in 1409 to a mere 1.5 merklands in 1751 emphasizes the devastating effects of sand blow in this area. Beinn Feal rising to 66m, stands out as a dominant landscape feature surrounded by dunes. The name itself is a tautology, the Gaelic noun beinn, mountain, having been added to the Norse noun fjell, hill, at a period when the Norse name was no longer lexically comprehensible to Gaelic namers.

The two earliest written forms of the name 'tyrungafael' and 'tyrvunghafeal' incorporate the Gaelic term for an ounceland, the 'tirunga'. This is unusual, only one other example being known in a reference to 'tyrungachornage' the ounceland of Cornaig on Coll in 1558.<sup>29</sup> On Uist the settlement name Unganab, Abbot's ounceland, is found. This too incorporates the evaluation of the settlement, as one ounceland, in the name.

Feall clearly forms the focus of one of the primary settlement divisions on the island. Its position may also be interpreted as being defensive, as an Iron Age fort occupies the lower slope of Beinn Feall. The excellent harbour at Port an t-Saoir is also in keeping with a high ranking settlement.

<u>Crossapoll</u>	NM 05/15/25	128 532	
Crocepoldo	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Crocepoldo	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	20s
Crossapell	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	
Crossipoll	1794	SRO RHP 3368	278 Scots acres

ON Kross,m    bolstadr,m    (Cross farm)

Crossapoll lies close to the boundary with Caolas on a small area of brown calcareous soils. East of the settlement a 3 sq km area of sand dunes cuts across the island from north to south effectively cutting off the Caolas peninsula from the remainder of the island. This area is now devoid of settlement although a hut circle at GR 134 535 would suggest that in prehistoric times the area was not without agricultural potential. The topographical names Traigh Chrossapoll and Crossapoll Bay may point to the area bordering the bay once having fallen within the boundary of Crossapoll.

At the western end of Traigh Gharbh, an extension of Traigh Chrossapoll, stands a burial ground. Reeves noted that 'the foundations of a chapel are

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<sup>29</sup>OPS vol.2 pt.1,334.

also to be seen<sup>30</sup> although these are now no longer discernible. It has been suggested that the mediaeval parish church of Coll stood at Crossapoll<sup>31</sup> although a more recent survey suggests that this stood at Killynaig, the structure at Crossapoll being merely a dependent chapel.<sup>32</sup> MacEachern noted that in the 1860's the site at Crossapoll had the shaft of a fine sculptured cross which 'disappeared'.<sup>33</sup> The two earliest written forms of the name suggest that the suffix in the name may derive from a noun other than ON bolstadr. The 1528 charter however records Arnebost as Arnepoldo and Grishipoll as Grecepoldo. It is unclear how the generic bolstadr came to be reduced to the bi-syllabic 'poldo'. There are wide variations in the written forms of many of the settlement names in the same document, for example Cocorunald for Totronald and Brakache for Breacachadh which suggests that transcriptional error may be the cause.

### Settlement unit Uig

<u>Uig</u>	NM 05/15/25	170 545	
Wig	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Wig	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	20s
Uig	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72 p.	1.5 merklands
Uig	1794	SRO RHP 3368	1.5 merklands

ON Vik,f (Bay)

Uig lies on an area of bog moorland 1km to the north of Loch Breacachadh the wide sea loch to which the settlement name relates. Uig formed the primary settlement unit in this area although by the date of the earliest written assessment the original settlement unit can be seen to have been sub-divided so that the valuation given to Uig is only 1.5 merklands. The original settlement unit probably encompassed the area around what is now Breacachadh bay and probably extended northwards on either side of the Alt Mór where fertile podzols and alluvial soils are found.

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<sup>30</sup>Reeves, 'Island of Tiree', 244.

<sup>31</sup>I.B.Cowan, The Parishes of Mediaeval Scotland, SRS, 93(1967), 19, 33.

<sup>32</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3, 137.

<sup>33</sup>D.MacEachern, 'Place Names of Coll', 322.

<u>Breacachadh</u>	NM 05/15/25	150 541	
Brakauche	1528	RMS vol.3 no712	3 merklands
Brakauche	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	3 merklands
Breakeach	1654	Blaue	
Breakacha	1794	SRO RHP 3368	591 Scots acres

G Breac,adj achadh,m (Spotted field)

Breacachadh lies at the head Breacachadh bay and forms a subdivision of the primary unit of Uig. The soil is composed of humus-iron podzols and alluvium. At the east end of the bay stands the (restored) castle of Breachadh occupying a site chosen primarily for its accessibility to sea borne traffic and the protection it can afford to beached vessels. The etymology of the name is not entirely clear. The suffix derives from G achadh and the specific most probably from G brec (spotted, speckled). The same compound occurs at Breakachy, Badenoch and in the field name Breac Achadh, Mull. MacEachern however notes that on Coll, 'the old people maintained that it was originally 'Brochacha' referring to a broch, borg, or fort'.<sup>34</sup> There is, however, no evidence of any Iron age defensive structures within the bounds of Breacachadh. An alternative explanation is that the prefix derives from the ON brekka, a slope. This element is found in many Icelandic place names, sometimes denoting a hill where public meetings were held.<sup>35</sup> Brekka is also a common topographical element in the Northern Isles and Outer Hebrides where it is used almost exclusively of landscape features. It is only rarely seen adopted as a settlement name as in the case of the settlement of Brek, Birsay, Orkney.

Arileod NM 05/15/25 161 549

Arileod 1794 SRO RHP 3368

G Airidh,f ON Ljótr,m,pers name (Leod's shieling)

Arileod lies inland from Breacachadh bay on northern bog heather moorland overlying peaty gleys and peat. Arileod probably formed the shieling for the primary settlement of Uig. The derivation of the prefix is possibly that noted above although the Gaelic word order suggests that the suffix should be Gaelic in origin. A further peripheral settlement lies at Ballard (G *baile aird*, High township) 0.5 km north east of Arileod (GR 165 552).

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.,327.

<sup>35</sup>R.Cleasby and G.Vigfusson, Dictionary,78-9.

**Settlement Unit Ardnish**Ardnish NM 05/15/25 15 25

Ardnisse Upper and Nether	1573/4	SRO GD 112/5/8 p.21	
Ardneish Superior and Inferior	1622	Retour vol.2 no.67	
Ardneish Ovir and Nether	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	
Ardnish	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.46	20 maillands
Soa Ardnish	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.46	0.5 maillands
Ardnish	1794	SRO RHP 3368	

G Airde,f ON nes,n (Headland/promontory)

The settlement name is a tautology, both the Gaelic prefix and the Norse suffix referring to the headland bounded to the east by Breacachadh bay, to the west by Crossapoll bay and to the south by the open sea. The area would at one time have been known by the Norse simplex topographical noun nes.

Turnbull wrote of a 'good loamy infield' but added that 'the blown sand of Ardnish is now pretty extensive and the ground that is on the west end of the farm marching with Crossapoll is more blown than any of the Duke of Argyll's property on Coll, neither bent nor grass growing'.<sup>36</sup> The sand blow has increased to such an extent that the promontory is now devoid of settlement. The earliest written sources however allude to a division of Ardnish into two parts which is a mark of a former high value and a further indication of the primary nature of the site. Two areas on the Ceann Fasachd provided additional infield while Soa (ON *saudr ey*, sheep island) provided additional outfield.

Turnbull mentions the presence of 'an old chapel on the boundary between the outfield and pasture'<sup>37</sup> whilst Reeves noted 'a chapel and cemetery called Ardnish the ruins of which were removed by the tenant for building purposes'.<sup>38</sup> The RCAHMS survey affirms that the remains are still discernible.<sup>39</sup>

Usairt NM 05/15/25 16 52

Usairt 1768 SRO RHP 8826/2 1.5 maillands

Fearanagoinen NM 05/15/25 16 52<sup>36</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.,46.<sup>37</sup>Ibid..<sup>38</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tiree',244.<sup>39</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,123.

Fearanagoinen            1768   SRO RHP 8826/2            2 maillands

Turnbull mentions 'the two pendicles of Usairt and Feranagoinen which join with Brae on the east and belong to the farm of Ardnish'. Both lie on the southern tip of Ceann Fasachd, an area now devoid of settlement and both names are now absent from the nomenclature of the island. Regarding the land quality Turnbull notes 'these two pieces are all arable of a good black loamy soil, particularly on the north-west end'. Both rank as peripheral settlements.

### Settlement unit Friesland

<u>Friesland</u>	NM 05/15/25	190538	
Fresland	1573/4	SRO GD 112/5/8 p.21	
Freezeland	1672	HP vol.1 p.192	
Friesland	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	
Fresland	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.46	4 maillands
Frisland	1794	SRO RHP 3368	

ON Thrasi,m pers name    Land,n (Thrasi's farm)

Friesland lies at the head of Friesland Bay which Turnbull refers to as Vikistill harbour and which is probably the harbour of 'Frigasvik' mentioned in Langland's survey. Turnbull noted that the 'arable is of good black loamy soil part of it inclining to Moss'.

The etymology of the name is unclear. MacEachern suggests a derivation from Thrasland or Thresland, incorporating the male personal name Thrasi, as in the name Freswick in Caithness written Thraswick in early sources. MacBain notes only one example of the specific fres, in the name Fresgill, Durness, where fres clearly derives from ON fraes, noise. It is possible that Friesland and Frigasvick are one and the same and incorporate the name of the Norse Goddess Freyr. The generic land is not known elsewhere in Inner Hebridean place names. Regarding the Orkney land names Marwick concluded that 'in general they are substantial farms...without doubt very early settlements'. Frieslands situation on some of the best land on the east coast of Coll and its association with the good harbour at Vikistill/Frigasvik suggests that it ranks as the primary settlement in this area.

<u>Kilbride</u>	NM 05/15/25	195 548	
Kilbryde	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	2.25 merklands
Kilbride	1794	SRO RHP 3368	230 Scots acres

Cille,f Bridged,f pers name (Bridget's Church)

Kilbride lies on 'moist Atlantic heather moor' 1.75 km inland from Friesland Bay. Reeves records that 'at Kilbride, south of Gallanach, was a chapel and cemetery',<sup>40</sup> while the RCAHMS note the remains of an enclosure of roughly circular plan which may occupy the site of a burial ground' at GR 194 545.<sup>41</sup> The dedication is to Bridged and is an indication of the site's early ecclesiastical origins. The name Bridged is borne by more than one female saint and Bridged is the most common female saints dedication in Argyll. Churches bearing this name are found amongst others, on Tiree, Islay, Seil and Bute. It is likely that the majority of examples commemorate Bridged of Kildare, Ireland (ca452-552).<sup>42</sup> 5 km south-south-east of Kilbride is the topographical name Cnoc Shoirbidh, once also the name of the settlement of Soroby (ON *saur baer*, marshy/ muddy farm) a name believed to have been associated with pagan religious sites.<sup>43</sup> Like Soroby Tiree, Cnoc Shoirbidh is in an area of imperfectly drained soils. The 1751 Valuation roll couples Kilbride with Frigasvick (ON *Freya vik*, Freya's bay). The association of a name commemorating a pagan God, a Soroby name and an early Christian site is also seen on Tiree and in both cases would appear to indicate continuous religious activity in the same area.

Kilbride ranks as a secondary settlement despite its location on poor soils, owing its importance to its function as a religious centre.

<u>Acha</u>	NM 05/15/25	185 548	
Acha	1794	SRO RHP 3368	111 Scots acres

G Achadh,m (Field)

The township of Acha shares boundaries with the townships of Kilbride, Gortan and Grimsary thus having no direct access to the sea. The latter factor, together with the absence of Acha from the early documentary record and subsequent lack of land evaluation and location on inferior soils suggests its ranking as a peripheral settlement.

<sup>40</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tiree',244.

<sup>41</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,143.

<sup>42</sup>J.M.MacKinlay, The Reformation Church and Scottish Place-Names,(1904),91-3.

<sup>43</sup>See p.91

While the Gaelic generic achadh is found throughout the Western Isles as a settlement name component it is only rarely found in its simplex form. There are only two other achadh settlement names on the island, at Achamore and Gallanach. The name achadh may originally have started out as a field name<sup>44</sup> to be subsequently adopted as a settlement name when population increased and settlement expanded from the primary unit of Friesland.

To the north of Acha lies Loch Anlaimh and Loch nan Cinneachan (Loch Olaf and Loch of the Gentiles/ Heathen). Both lochs have crannogs which are reputed in island tradition to have been Norse strongholds. The crannog lying 45 m from the east shore of Loch nan Cinneachan is believed to be the scene of the final battle between the Norse and the native on the island.<sup>45</sup> The use of the Gaelic noun cinneach to describe the heathen/Norse is unusual, the preferred noun usually being Gall, as in the name Gallanach on the same island.

South of Acha lies Dun an Achaidh known locally as 'Dun Bhorlum mhic Anlaimh rìgh Lochlìnn', fort of the son of Olaf King of Norway, and believed to have been a Norse stronghold. There was however an antiquarian tradition to ascribe all the Iron Age fortifications on the islands to the Norse, and Beveridge in 1903 refers to many of them as 'Danish Forts'.<sup>46</sup>

<u>Gortan</u>	NM 05/15/25	178 536	
Gortane	1528 RMS	vol.3 no.712	20s
Gartane	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	10s
Gortan	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Gortan	1794	SRO RHP 3368	764 Scots acres

G Gortean,m (Little corn field/small patch of arable land)

Gortan lies at the head of Loch Gortan. An area of moorland surrounds the settlement, save for a small area of sand dunes at the head of Traigh Ghortain. The evaluation at a quarter unceland and the early reference to the settlement in the documentary sources coupled with its good harbour and large area suggest that it formed secondary expansion from Friesland and at one time included also the 'pendicles' of Usairt and Feranagoinen.

The Gaelic habitative element goirtean derives from the Old Irish element gort, an enclosure, which becomes gart in Scots Gaelic. Its original meaning

<sup>44</sup>See p.280

<sup>45</sup>B.MacDougall, Guide to Coll,21.

<sup>46</sup>E.Beveridge, Coll and Tiree,17.

was simply 'field' or cornfield but in Scots Gaelic it most frequently denotes an area of ploughed land. Goirtean is the diminutive. Names in goirtean are common in Argyll but tend to refer to fields and clearings in woodlands rather to farms and settlement names. Other examples of goirtean referring to settlement sites are seen in the names Gortanilvorrie, Islay and Gortendoil, Mull.<sup>47</sup>

Hyne NM 05/15/25 203 542  
Hine 1794 SRO RHP 3368

ON Heidr,m (?) (Heath)

Hyne lies at the head of Port na h-Eathar where Lon Hyne forms an excellent and sheltered harbour, one of the best on the east coast of Coll. Hyne is small in area and situated on bog heather moorland. Its absence from the early documentary record suggests its classification as a peripheral settlement.

The lack of early written forms of the name leave it open to various interpretations of which ON heidr is the most likely, adequately describing the character of the landscape around the settlement.

Arintluic NM 05/15/25 216 553  
Arintluic 1794 SRO RHP 3368

G Airidh,f an,prep sluic,m (Gully sheiling)

Arintluic lies on an area of moorland on the east coast of Coll and originally formed a shieling for one of the west coast settlements. The small natural harbour south of the settlement forms a beaching point for small vessels, and its steep sides and narrow aperture account for the name.

Reeves is alone in recording that there was at Arintluic 'was a chapel and a cemetery'.<sup>48</sup> He makes no mention of any physical remains and none were recorded at the time of the RCAHMS survey in 1980.

The Gaelic noun sloc (gen sluic) has a variety of related meanings ranging from pit, hole and den to gully,<sup>49</sup> and is often used as a topographical term for coastal features. It would appear that the precise meaning of sloc varies from island to island. On Coll it is used only of small and steep side sea inlets as at Sloc Adhairair

<sup>47</sup>I.A.Fraser, 'The Place Names of Argyll. An Historical Perspective', in TGSI, 54(1985),11-12.

<sup>48</sup>W.Reeves, 'Island of Tiree',244.

<sup>49</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary,885.

Mór and Beg, Sloc na Maoile, Sloc Glas and Sloc na Gamhna, all found along the rocky eastern coast. On Harris and Lewis sloc is applied as a descriptive term for narrow inlets smaller in size than those denoted by the Gaelic term geodha, a noun having its origins in ON giá. Fraser notes how sloc has largely replaced geodha in Watersay, Mingulay and the surrounding Isles of the Outer Hebrides.<sup>50</sup> The total absence of geodha in Coll in favour of sloc and the general scarcity of geodha in the Inner Hebrides as a whole is illustrative of a general distribution pattern regarding Norse or Norse derived names found in coastal nomenclature. The relative density of Norse to Gaelic names decreases southwards and eastwards from Lewis. However it is also possible that the absence of geodha in Coll, Tiree, Mull and Lismore is due to the less rugged coastal topography of these islands making its application inapplicable.

Fiskary NM 05/15/25 212 572

Fiskara 1794 SRO RHP 3368 373 Scots acres

ON Fiskr,m ON œrgi, (Fish shieling)

Fiskary lies to the west of Arintluic at the head of a narrow sea inlet. Geographically and fiscally it ranks as a peripheral settlement. As with the settlement name Grimsary the Norse word order and the Norse specific suggests that the suffix derives from ON œrgi and not from Gaelic airidh.<sup>51</sup>

### Settlement unit Hough

Ballyhough NM 05/15/25 174 581

Balehow	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
How	1654	Blaue	
Ballehow	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	
Balihoigh	1751	SRO E 106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Ballahough	1794	SRO RHP 3368	387 Scots acres

G Baile,m ON haugr,m (Burial mound)

Ballyhough lies at the north eastern end of Traigh Hough. The earlier name of the settlement unit would have been the Norse simplex topographical name haugr referring to the burial cairn that stands on the summit of Beinn Hough. The simplex name is retained in the topographical names Beinn Hogh, Traigh Hogh ,

<sup>50</sup>I.A.Fraser, 'Gaelic and Norse Elements in Coastal Place Names in the Western Isles', in TGSI 50(1976-78)242-3.

<sup>51</sup>See p.294

Rubha Hagh and Hagh Bay illustrating how the name of a primary settlement unit often appears in the nomenclature of the surrounding landscape and can be used as an indication of the former extent of that settlement. Beinn Hagh at 103m is the highest hill on the island. The defensive potential of the location is seen in the remains of a fort at GR 171 158, known locally as An Caisteal (the castle).

<u>Totronald</u>	NM 05/15/25	168 563	
Cocorunald	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Tottorunnald	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	20s
Totterainal	1654	Blaue	
Totoranald	1751	SRO E 106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Totranald	1794	SRO RHP 3368	415 Scots acres

ON Tuþt, Rognvaldr m pers.name (Rognvald's holding)

Totronald lies at the western end of a small strip of fertile land composed of brown calcareous soils now the site of the island's airstrip. Langland's map shows the settlement lands including the machair bordering Hagh Bay and an area of moorland to the west of the settlement.

The specific 'tot' has its origin in ON tuþt, a noun used to describe 'a piece of ground, a homestead, ruins'.<sup>52</sup> The noun was adopted into Gaelic where it takes the form tobhta which, like the Norse noun may also refer to a ruin. 'Tot' as a specific, is found primarily in settlement names in the Outer Hebrides as at Tota and Totaichean, Lewis and Totscore and Totarder, Skye. These examples together with Totranald and Totamore on Coll follow the Gaelic word order with the generic preceding the specific. It is therefore not certain that the name Totronald can be interpreted as incorporating ON tuþt, for Totronald may equally well have originated as a purely Gaelic name *Tobhta Raonuill*. If the former holds true however then tuþt was probably a Norse simplex name which referred to a secondary division of Hough, subsequently divided into Totronald and Totamore after the end of the period of Norse linguistic dominance on the island. The special significance of the personal name Rognvaldr is not apparent although two lochans on the island also incorporate this name. MacDougall refers to 'an old Irish poem' alluding to Reginald, King of Coll, thought to be the son of Godfrey, King of the Isles in the thirteenth century'.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup>R.Cleasby and G.Vigfusson, Dictionary,636.

<sup>53</sup>B.MacDougall, Guide to Coll,21.

<u>Totamore</u>	NM 05/15/25	178 568	
Totmore	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Tottamore	1794	SRO RHP 3368	335 Scots acres

ON Tupt,m G mór,adj (Large holding)

The O.S 1:25,000 map shows the settlement name Totamore at two locations GR 178 568 and GR 178 568, of which the former represents the core of the original settlement lying on good land adjacent to the machair bordering Hough Bay. Several topographical names in the vicinity incorporate the specific tupt, Cnoc nan Tota, Machair na Totadh and Totan deighean, all of which point to the original secondary unit, of which Totamore forms a later subdivision, being known by the simplex name tupt.

<u>Grimsary</u>	NM 05/15/25	178 563	
Gremysare	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Gremysare	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	20s
Grimsary	1751	SRO E 106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Grimsary	1794	SRO RHP 3368	780 Scots acres

ON Grimmr adj ON aergi,f (Grim/ugly shieling)

Grimsary is shown on Langeland's map as occupying a vast area of land extending southwards from Traigh Hogh to the boundary with Hyne. The name has now disappeared entirely from the place name nomenclature of the island. The township as shown on the 1895 OS map stood at GR 178 563, in an area now known as Creag an Airidh, which name also alludes to a shieling. The settlement area pertaining to Grimsary consists entirely of moorland, the poor quality of the land clearly accounting for the abandonment of the township when pressure of population decreased.

The large areal extent of Grimsary, its high evaluation and west coast location set it apart from the other shieling settlements on the island (whether known by ON aergi or G airidh), all of which are small and situated on the east coast. The prefix grimm is frequently found coupled with generics denoting shielings not only in the Inner Hebrides but also in the Outer Isles and Orkney and Shetland (where the generic used to denote a sheiling is the Norse noun saetr) as in the names Grimshader, Lewis; Grimsetter, Orkney; and Greemsetter, Shetland. This combination is also found in Norway as at Grimshader, Ellingsøya. It would seem likely that the prefix thus

stems not from ON Grimm, a personal name but from the Norse adj grimr, meaning grim/ugly which would refer to the poor land quality often associated with sheilings

### Settlement unit Cliad

Cliad NM 26 202 595

Clayd	1528	RMS vol.7 no 1652	20s
Clayd	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	20s
Klaad	1654	Blaue	
Cliad	1751	SRO E106 /3/2 p.72	2.25 merklands
Cliad	1794	SRO RHP 3368	470 Scots acres

ON Klettr,m (Rock)

Cliad lies at the northern end of an elongated fertile plain which extends to Arinagour. The encroachment of sand dunes to the north of the settlement greatly reduced the acreage of the township lands in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. The name suggests that the first settlement may have stood on an area of rocky ground. The name is paralleled in that of the farm name Cleat in Uist, which also lies in a fertile area, the settlement itself being sited on a rocky ridge.

Cliad clearly formed the primary settlement in this area. This unit, known by a simplex topographical name, was subsequently divided into four secondary settlements. Cliad retained the most favourable portion of the land and also the name of the primary unit while the three remaining secondary divisions were known by habitative names incorporating the generic bolstadr.

Beveridge notes the discovery of a loose find, a pennanular brooch, now lost, at Cliad in 1880 which may date from the Norse period.<sup>54</sup>

Grishipoll NM 05/15/25 187 594

Gropoldo	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Grotpoldo	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	
Grisbol	1654	Blaue	
Gricipol	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	2.25 merklands
Grishoboll	1794	SRO RHP 3368	993 Scots acres

ON Grót,m bolstadr m (Pebble/gravel farm)

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.,38.

Grishipoll is situated on an area of fertile land at the head of Grishipoll bay. The surrounding land is of poor quality, the soil being interspersed with outcrops of rocks. The etymology of the specific is unclear as the earliest written forms suggest a derivation from ON grjót, gravel/pebbles which is more in keeping with the surrounding landscape than a derivation from ON Griss, a male personal name or griss, pig.

To the north-west of the township the fort of Dun Dubh is reputed in island tradition to be a Norse stronghold. South of the township lies Carnan Mhic an Righ. Beveridge records that in 1765 a group of 'Scandinavians came to the island, opened the cairn and removed the contents, believing them to be part of their ancestral heritage'.<sup>55</sup> There is, unfortunately, no record of what they removed. In the early 1950's the discovery of an inhumation burial 750m north-north-east of Grishipoll revealed spearheads thought to be of Viking Age.<sup>56</sup>

Mibost NM 16 198 598  
 Mebois 1528 RMS vol.7 no.1652 10s  
 Mebois 1642 Retour vol.1 no.59  
 Mibost 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.72  
 Mibost 1895 OS

ON Mjór,adj bolstadr,m (Narrow farm)

The settlement of Mibost is no longer extant. The first edition of the OS map (1895) locates it at GR 198 598 in an area now devoid of settlement and covered by sand dunes. The derivation of the specific is not entirely clear but likely to be the same as that found in the Skye settlement name Meabost, or in the name Meavaig, Lewis, which in both cases would appear to derive from ON mœr/mjór/mjár, slim/narrow. In his discussion of the Lewis name Oftedal also suggested that the specific may derive from ON midr/midja, central.<sup>57</sup> Either of these derivations would hold good for Mibost, Coll.

<sup>55</sup>E.Beveridge, Coll and Tiree,38.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.,1-3.

<sup>57</sup>M.Oftedal, 'Village Names of Lewis',386.

<u>Arnabost</u>	NM 26	209 601	
Arnapoldo	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Arnapoldo	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	
Arnabost	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Arnabost	1794	SRO RHP 3368	477 Scots acres

ON Arni, m pers name bolstadr,m (Arne's farm)

Arnabost lies on an area of fertile soil 1km inland from Cliad bay. To the north of the township the encroachment of sand dunes has obliterated much of the settlement lands. Together with Grishipoll and Mibost Arnabost forms a secondary division of the primary unit of Cliad.

<u>Arinagour</u>	NM 05/15/25	224 572	
Arinagour	1794	SRO RHP 3368	373 Sc. acres

G Airidh,f nan,prep gobhar,f pl (Shieling of the goats)

Arinagour lies at the southern end of the fertile strip of land which extends northwards to Cliad. To the east of the settlement lies Loch Urbhaig (ON *urdr*, *vik*, stony bay) which may have been the original name of the sea loch now known by the name Loch Eatharna. The harbour at Arinagour provides a safe anchorage for deeper vessels with the pier lying 0.5km to the south-west of the settlement. 2km south of Arinagour lies Isle Ormsay (ON *Orfirs ey* ebb island), a tidal island.

### Settlement unit Gallanach

<u>Gallanach</u>	NM26	213 608	
Galdanach	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	40s
Galdanach	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59.	40s
Gallanach	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	3 merklands
Gallanach	1794	SRO RHP 3368	765 Scots acres

G Gall,m an, prep achadh,m (Field of the foreigners)

Gallanach lies on an area of fertile humus iron podzols and alluvial soils midway between the dunes bordering Cliad bay and Bagh an Trailleich. The etymology of the name is open to several interpretations. MacEachern suggests a derivation from

G gallan, a rhubarb like plant 'which used to be plentiful on the island'.<sup>58</sup> Dwelly records several diverse meanings of gallan which range from a sapling to a standing stone<sup>59</sup> all of which allude to a straight and tall object. A standing stone is indeed found within the township boundaries midway between Gallanach and Arnabost and this distinctive monument may have resulted in the Gaelic name 'Gallanach', field of the stone, although the word order with the specific preceding the generic is more suggestive of a Norse derivation of the name. Beveridge offers the alternative interpretation *Gall Aonach*, hill, or moor of the foreigners.<sup>60</sup> The name Gallanach is also found as a settlement name on Kerrera and as a field name on Mull.

A rocky hillside close to Gallanach is known as Cnoc Ghillebhreide and associated in island folklore with Earl Gille.

Trials NM 26 218 607

Treela	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712.	20s
Trealan	1654	Blaue	
Trialan	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	2 merklands
Triallan	1776	List of Inhabitants	723 Scots acres
Trials	1794	SRO RHP 3368	723 Scots acres

ON Prœll,n (? Slaves/unfree)

The township of Trials is no longer extant having been cleared together with that of Torastan to augment the lands of Gallanach. Local informants place the township at GR 218 607, at Cnoc Eilebruig on the eastern end of the flat and fertile plain shared with Gallanach. The settlement name is retained in the name Bagh a' Trailleach and Langland shows an elongated settlement division lying parallel to Gallanach and running from north-west to south-east.

The derivation of the name is unclear. The prefix possibly stems from ON tre, wood, and MacEachern records the name as 'tri alum' which suggests a derivation from ON tre holmr. Alternatively the name may have some similarity with the settlement name Treallabhigh found on the east coast the prefix of which derives from ON prœll (the unfree). It is unlikely however that the noun would stand on its own as a settlement name although it bears similarity to the Irish noun traill borrowed into Irish Gaelic from ON prœll. Trials is, however, a high ranking settlement and would appear to represent secondary division from the primary unit of Gallanach.

<sup>58</sup>D. MacEachern, 'Place Names of Coll',327.

<sup>59</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary,474.

<sup>60</sup>E.Beveridge, Coll and Tiree,13.

**Settlement unit Torastan****Torastan** NM 26 228 619

Torressa	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Torressa	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	
Torristy	1654	Blaeu	
Torastan	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Toristan	1794	SRO RHP 3368	909 Scots acres

ON Thor,m pers name stadir,m (Thor's farm)

Torastan lies on an area of peaty gleys and podzols on the edge of the moorland. Extensive dune formation to the north of the settlement has clearly taken over some of the best land pertaining to the settlement. The settlement name is the only example of a stadir compound on Coll although the earliest written forms do not irrevocably prove this. The same name is found on Tiree although absence from the documentary record and the settlements insignificant location mean that the Tiree name cannot unequivocally be classified as a stadir name. Torrestan, Coll, has many of the characteristics associated with a primary settlement although the constant movement of sand on the shoreline make it impossible to determine the quality of boat anchorages.

The addition of a male personal name as the specific conforms to the pattern seen elsewhere in the Western Isles where the generic stadir is compounded with personal names. The male name Thor is frequently found as a specific in Norwegian place names as in for example Torvik, Torset and Torness in Sunnmøre but is considerably less common in Scotland.

Knock NM 26 213 608

Knock	1528	RMS vol.3 no.712	20s
Knock	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	
Knock	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Knock	1794	SRO RHP 3368	638 Scots acres
A'chroic	1895	OS	

G Cnoc,m (Hill)

The settlement of Knock is no longer geographically discernible, presumably having been added to the settlement lands of Gallanach together with the townships of Trialls and Torastan. Langland's map shows Knock as being an elongated settlement unit, characteristic of north-east Coll, including Feisdium within its bounds at the most southerly point.

The settlement name Knock is a common one in all Gaelic speaking areas. Cnoc describes a small grassy hill and unlike most mountain and hill terms is frequently adopted as a settlement name. Knock represents secondary expansion from Torastan.

Killunaig NM 26 221 617

Kilynaig	1433	HP vol.1 p. 84	
Kirktown	1528	RMS vol.7 no.1652	20s
Kirktown	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	
Kilynaig	1654	Blaeu	
Kill	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.72	1.5 merklands
Kilfinnaig	1854	Reeves p.244	

G Cille,f Findoca/Fynnoga,m pers name (Church of Findoca)

The township of Killunaig is no longer extant but once lay in the area now covered by sand dunes between Gallanach and Torastan. The remains of the mediaeval church still stand within a walled burial ground 80m west of the Arnabost - Sorisdal road. The church belonged in 1433 to the Nunnery of Iona and has been identified as being the mediaeval parish church of Coll.<sup>61</sup> A dedication to St Findoca is also found at the church of Killunaig, Mull.

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<sup>61</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,137.

<u>Gar</u>	NM 26 22 62			
Gar (and Knock)	1528	RMS	vol.3 no.1652	20s
Gare	1642	Retour	vol.1 no.59	10s

ON Gardr,m (Enclosure/farm)

The settlement of Gar is no longer extant but would appear to have been situated on the north-east boundary of Torastan where the name is retained in the name of the beach at Traigh Gharbh (GR 225 627 ). The name Garbh is however locally associated with that of Iain Garbh, (G *garbh*, rough), 1st MacLean of Coll whose name is commemorated at other sites on the island at Traigh Gharbh (NM 05/15/25 11 15) and Port Gharbh (NM 01/15/25 15 53).

Gardr is a common generic in the Northern Isles where Marwick classifies it as referring to settlements which were early but not of primary status.<sup>62</sup> There are too few examples of gardr in the Inner Hebrides to come to any such conclusions although both Gar on Coll and Kerahusagar and Kerrachrosegar on Tìre represent secondary settlements.

<u>Feisdlum</u>	NM 26 248 587			
Fislum	1794	SRO RHP	3368	56 Scots acres

ON Fiskr,m (?) holmr,m (Fish holm)

Fislum is situated in the southern portion of the settlement unit of Knock. The settlement developed from a shieling to a sizeable township with the building of piers in the late eighteenth century. The etymology of the name is unclear although it is possible that the second element stems from ON land on the analogy that the Norse name *Boreland* becomes *Borlum* in Gaelic areas

<u>Treallabhigh</u>	NM 26 288 597			
Trelvick north and south	1794	SRO RHP	3368	59 Scots acres

ON Præll,m vik,f (Bay of the unfree)

Langland's map shows north and south Trelvick as forming the south-east portion of the settlement unit of Torastan. The name is now retained only in the name of the bay at Port Treallabhigh. The specific probably derives from , ON præll,

<sup>62</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,232.

an unfree member of a Lord's following or household, probably native. MacEachern suggests a derivation from ON troll, saying that the area around Treallabhigh had supernatural associations.<sup>63</sup>

### Settlement unit Cornaig

Cornaigbeg NM 26 240 629

Chornack	1558	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.333	'Tirunga de Chornak'
Corneik	1616	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.333	
Kornaigbeg	1654	Blaue	
Cornaigbeg	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.46	10 maillands

ON Korn,m vik,f G beag,adj (Small corn bay)

Cornaigmore NM 26 245 632

Cornakmore	1558	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.333	
Corneik	1616	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.333	
Kornaigmore	1654	Blaue	
Cornaigmore	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.46	10 maillands

ON Korn,m vik,f G mór,adj. (Large corn bay)

In 1558 Hector MacLean of Coll was granted the 6 merklands of the 'tirung of Chornak, Sedustill, Pollis Cornakmore and Cornakbeg'.<sup>64</sup> This suggests that 'Chornak' formed a primary settlement unit, evaluated as one ounceland and subsequently divided into Sorasdal and Bousd with the primary farm itself being subdivided to form Cornaigmore and Cornaigbeg. Both Cornaigmore and Cornaigbeg lie on the edge of the machair bounded to the south by the moorland. The obvious fertility of the area is seen in the prefix of the name ON korn, found also in the name Cornaig Tíree and Cornabus, (ON *korn bolstadr* ) Islay.

Cornaigmore lies only 0.5km east of Cornaigbeg. Despite the equal (although late) evaluation of both settlements it seems that Cornaigmore retained the focus of the original settlement area being situated at the head of the bay. Both Sloc na Luinge (boat gully) and Cornaig bay are good harbours. Sandblow here has adversely affected this area. Turnbull suggested that 'experiments ought to be made in order to prevent sand blowing'.<sup>65</sup> Sand dunes now extend from the township northwards to the bay.

<sup>63</sup> D.MacEachern, 'Place Names of Coll',324.

<sup>64</sup>OPS vol.2 pt.1,333.

<sup>65</sup>SRO RHP 8826/2 p.46.

<u>Bousd</u>	NM 26	253 634	
Pollis	1558	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.333	
Bolstig	1654	Blaue	
Bowest	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.47	10 maillands

ON ? Bolstadr,m (Farm)

Bousd lies inland from Traigh Bousd and Sgeir Bousd, the nucleus of the township having moved inland with the encroachment of the sand. Despite a seemingly prime site and situation, Turnbull writes that 'the infield is of good loamy soil but mixed with rocks and lies wet, it does not answer to ploughing owing to its being interspersed with rocks. The outfield is not extensive and is of a light sandy soil'.<sup>66</sup> The derivation of the name is open to a number of interpretations. The most modern written forms would suggest that the root word was ON bu stadir, farmstead, as in for example the names Busta, North Ronaldsay; Busta, Flotta; and Busta, Sandness, all in Orkney. The compound bu stadir is rarely found in the Western Isles and 'it is rare in Norwegian settlement names when compared to bolstadr'. The 1558 and 1622 written forms argue for a derivation from ON bolstadr, in its simplex form, as in the Tiree name Bist and the Lewis name Bosta.

Eileraig NM 26 262 639

ON ? Vik,f (? Bay)

Eileraig is situated at the head of Traigh Eileraig. Its absence from the documentary record and peripheral situation suggest that it represents expansion from Bousd. It has a small harbour of which Turnbull wrote 'Eileraig harbour which divided Bowest from Soadisdal on the north side is a bad one.'<sup>67</sup>

<u>Sorisdale</u>	NM 26	272 633	
Sotesdal	1203	Diplom. Norveg. vol.7 p.4-5.	
Sedustill	1558	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.333	
Sodtsdel	1654	Blaue	
Soadjsdal	1768	SRO RHP 8826/2 p.47	10 maillands
Sodisdale	1895	OS	

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid..

<sup>67</sup>Ibid..

ON ? Saudr,m dalr, m (Sheep dale)

Sorisdal lies on humus-iron podzols and alluvial soils at the head of Sorisdale bay. To the east a small valley winds between rocky outcrops.

The prefix is open to several interpretations. MacEachern suggests the personal name Soti<sup>68</sup> while Jacobsen in discussing the Shetland name Sodersdale, Walls suggests that Soder derives from ON saetr.<sup>69</sup> The same elements are seen in the Papa Stour name Sotra water. Another derivation could be saudrsdalr, sheep dale.

### **Lost Names**

#### **Cardnaha**

Cardnaha	1528	RMS vol.3 no.1652	20s
Cardnaha	1642	Retour vol.1 no.59	20s

Cardnaha from it's listing in the 1528 charter may have lain in the vicinity of Ballyhough and Grimsary. There is nothing to indicate the exact location of the settlement or its relationship to other settlements. The name is also obscure but undoubtedly Gaelic in origin.

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<sup>68</sup>D.MacEachern, 'Place Names of Coll',320.

<sup>69</sup>J.Jakobsen, Shetland Farm Names,95.

### 4.3 Summary

The physical discrepancy between the fertile areas on the west coast and the more inhospitable terrain of the east coast has resulted in a distinctive form of settlement pattern on the island: narrow and elongated land divisions stretching from coast to coast. Langland's map shows this most clearly in the northern portion of Coll where each township has access to areas of machair and infield on the west coast and also to areas of outfield and rough grazing towards the east. There is much to suggest that the divisions delineated on Langland's eighteenth century map preserve the broad outlines of Norse settlement divisions on the island with the primary demarcations into ouncelands centring on the townships of Feall, Caolas, Hough, Uig, Friesland, Gallanach, Cornaig, Torastan, Cliad and Ardnish. The island of Gunna essentially forms a separate unit although for ecclesiastical and administrative purposes it came to form an extension of Coll.

The division into ouncelands corresponds to natural divisions in the landscape. 9 out of the 10 primary settlement names are Norse and over half of these are in the form of simplex topographical names describing distinctive landscape features ON vik (Uig), haugr, (Hough), fjell (Feall), nes, ([Ard]nish) and klettr (Cliad). Of the remainder of the Norse primary names, kornvik, (Cornaig) describes the settlement area in terms of the quality of the land whilst Thorstadir (Torastan) preserves the personal name of a Norseman who may have been amongst the first settlers on the island. Of the 2 Gaelic primary settlement names Caolas shows a similar pre-occupation with a distinctive landscape feature while Gall an Achadh (Gallanach) describes the settlement unit in the terms of the nationality of the settlers. It is, however, possible that this unit was earlier known by a different (Norse) name.

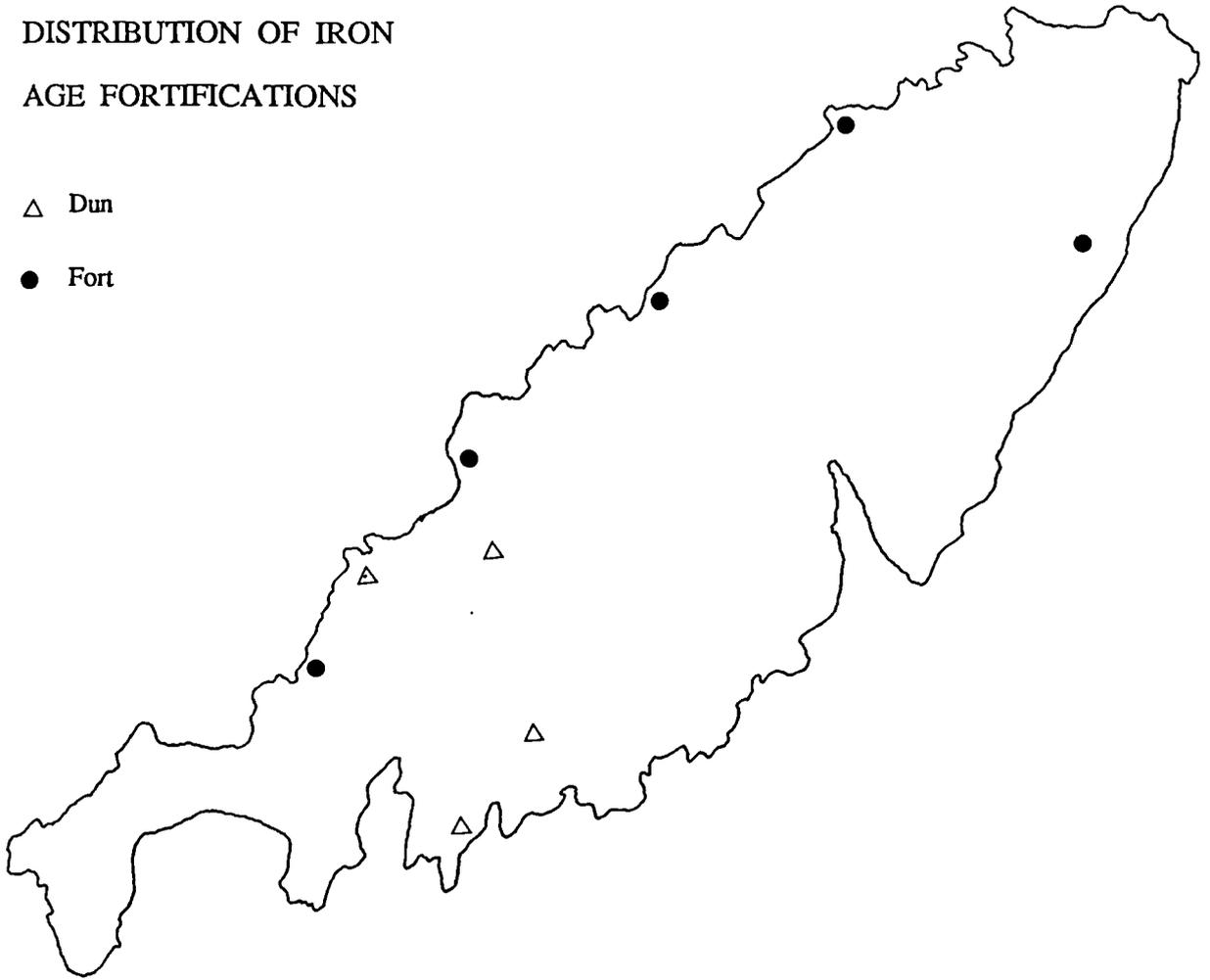
The distribution of Iron Age forts and duns on Coll shows some correlation with the primary division into ouncelands in the Norse period. The distribution of forts and duns may be taken as giving as near a representation as possible of the area of settlement in the centuries leading up to the Norse period. The distribution map of Iron Age fortifications shows that these are concentrated on areas of agricultural potential, mainly along the west coast and in the east coast area in the vicinity of the settlements of Uig, Ardnish and Friesland. This suggests that the Norse simply re-utilised pre-existing units and their boundaries which conformed to the natural divisions inherent in the landscape and named them after the most outstanding physical feature when establishing primary settlements during the 'landnam' period. On Islay, Nieke mapped the distribution of Iron Age defended settlements and Norse habitative toponyms and found little correlation between the two leading her to conclude that Norse settlement on the island was essentially an infilling around areas already settled by previous groups.<sup>70</sup> On Skye, Small similarly found little similarity between

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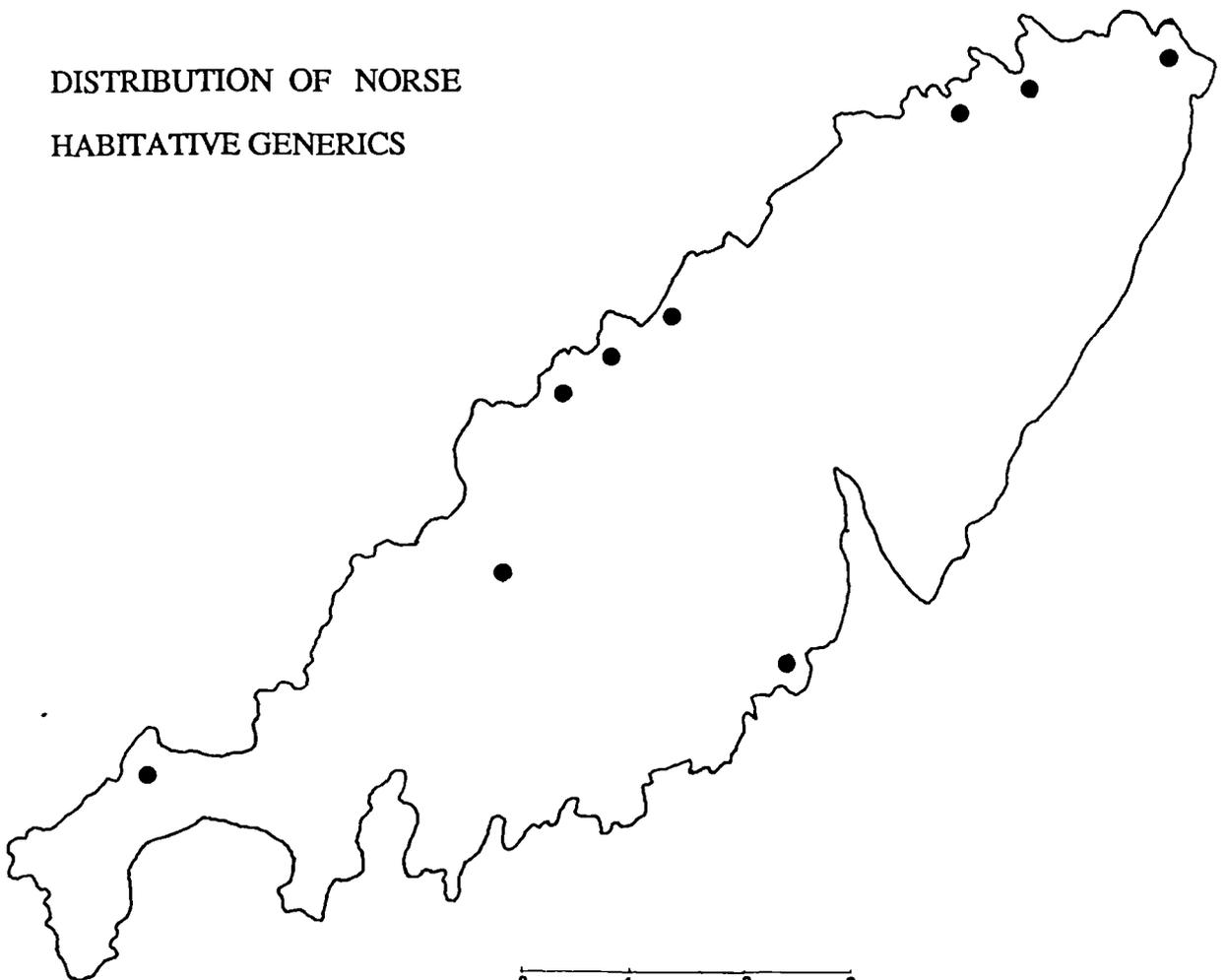
<sup>70</sup>M.Nieke, 'Settlement patterns in the first millenium AD: a case study of the island of Islay', 313.

DISTRIBUTION OF IRON  
AGE FORTIFICATIONS

- △ Dun
- Fort



DISTRIBUTION OF NORSE  
HABITATIVE GENERICS



0 1 2 3  
km

the distribution of Iron Age brochs and duns and Norse habitative toponyms resulting in the hypothesis that Norse and native occupied distinct and separate areas of the island and that a 'relatively peaceful co-existence occurred'.<sup>71</sup> On Coll the distribution map of Norse habitative generics similarly does not relate well to that of the Iron Age fortifications simply because it is the simplex topographical names which should be used as the most reliable indicators of Norse primary settlement units.

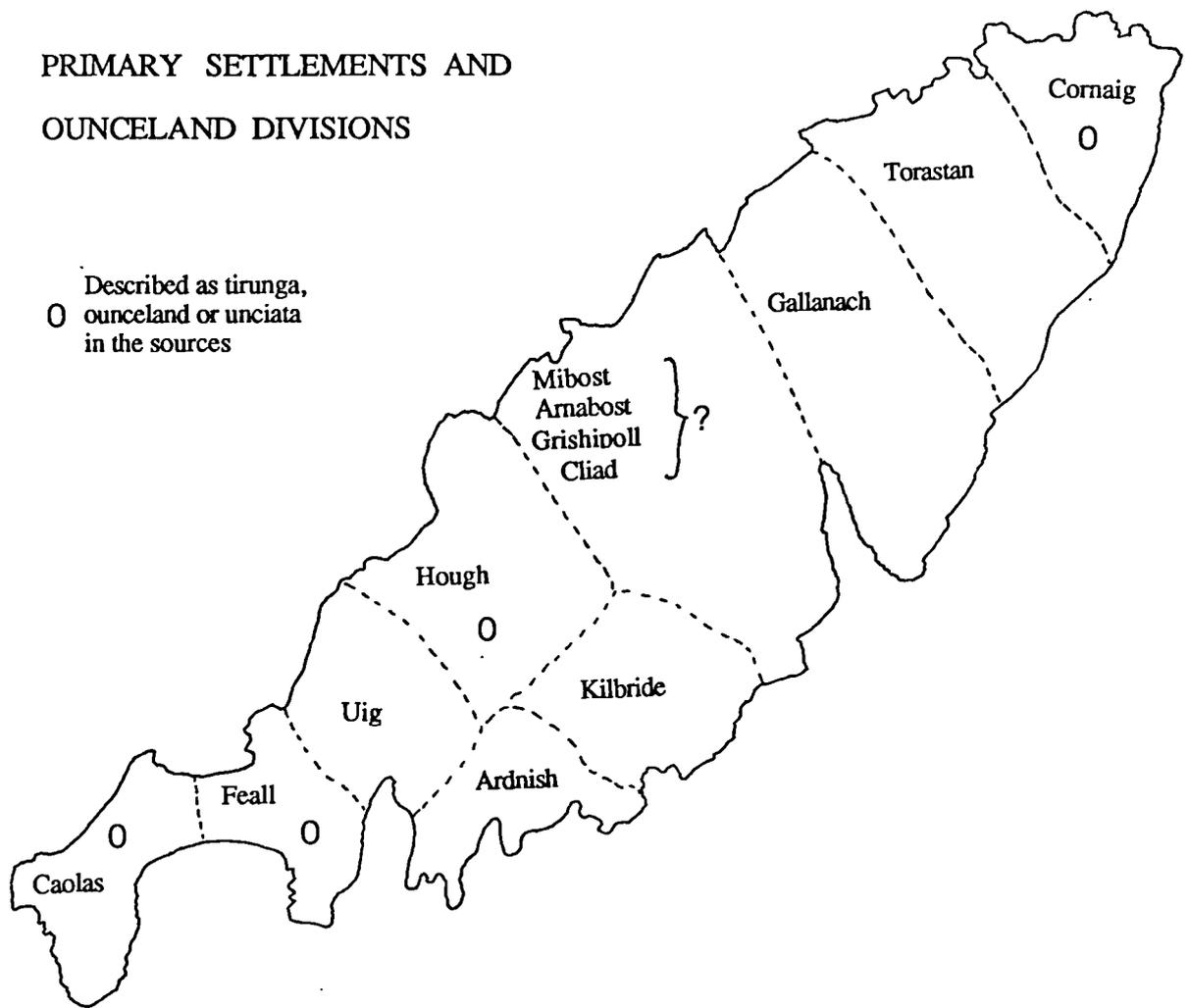
Secondary expansion from the primary unit shows a clear cut and distinctive form on Coll suggesting that it developed according to a set pattern rather than as a result of organic growth. Several of the primary units on Coll show a division into two or more secondary units where all the secondary divisions are of equal status and the name of the primary unit is retained by one of the new divisions.

<u>Hough</u>	<u>Ballyhough</u>	1.5 merklands
	Totronald	1.5 merklands
	Grimsary	1.5 merklands
	Totamore	1.5 merklands
<u>Torastan</u>	<u>Torastan</u>	1.5 merklands
	Knock	1.5 merklands
	Killynaig	1.5 merklands
	Gar	1.5 merklands
<u>Cliad</u>	<u>Cliad</u>	1.5 merklands
	Mibost	0.75 merklands
	Arnabost	1.5 merklands
	Grishipoll	1.5 merklands
<u>Cornaig</u> (1 ounceland)	<u>Cornaigmore</u>	1.5 merklands
	<u>Cornaigbeg</u>	1.5 merklands
	Bousd	1.25 merklands
	Sorisdale	1.25 merklands

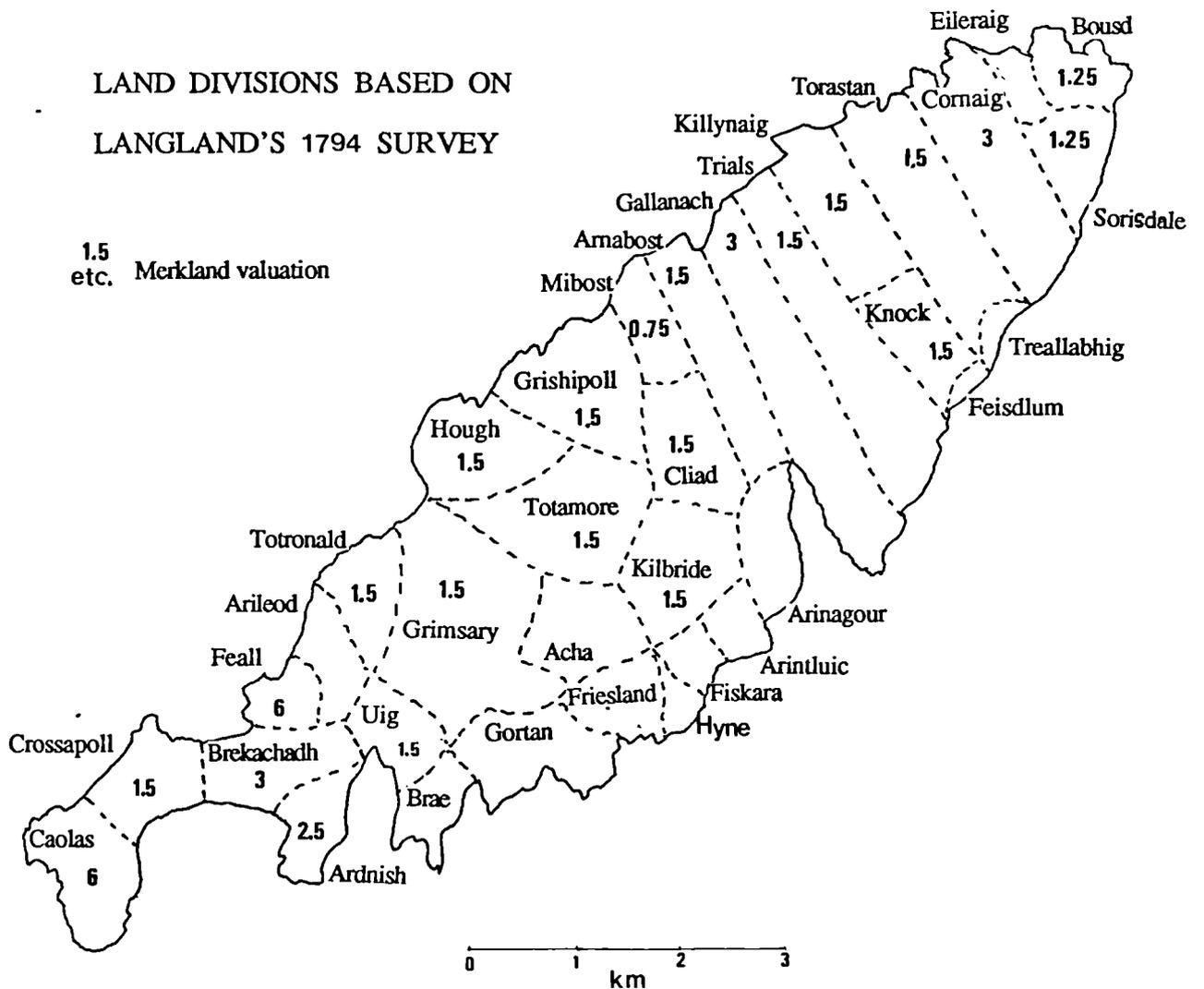
32% of the secondary settlement names are Norse and over half of these are habitative compounds. The majority of the Norse secondary settlement names are compounded with the habitative generic bolstadr, Crossapoll, Grishipoll, Arnabost, Mibost and ?Bousd. Again the specifics describe some distinguishing feature about the farm; ownership (Arnabolstadr), shape of the settlement unit (Mjórbolstadr) or a distinctive landmark (Krossbolstadr). Only at Bousd is a discriminatory specific

<sup>71</sup>A.Small, 'Norse Settlement in Skye', 36.

PRIMARY SETTLEMENTS AND  
OUNCELAND DIVISIONS



LAND DIVISIONS BASED ON  
LANGLAND'S 1794 SURVEY



lacking suggesting that the name was self explanatory to the namers in that it conveyed the sense of a particular type of farm. Grishipoll, Mibost and Arnabost are situated in close proximity to each other therefore necessitating the addition of a discriminatory specific to qualify the generic. Of the secondary settlements bearing Gaelic names, 2 show how the secondary unit originated. Goirtean testifies to the clearance and enclosing of land while Acha describes the ancillary agricultural activity of the settlers descendants and shows how enclosed arable land became land subsequently used as a farm unit.

Peripheral settlement expansion on Coll has primarily taken the form of the development of seasonal shielings into permanent habitation. The shielings are found almost exclusively along the east coast as at Fiskary, Arintluic and Arinagour. Grimsary is a notable exception being situated on the west coast where its good harbour, large areal extent and high evaluation merit its classification as a secondary settlement. Both the names Fiskary and Grimsary are compounded with the Norse generic aergi while the remaining shielings on the island are known by the Gaelic term airidh.

The Norse noun for a shieling, saetr, is unknown on Coll although the name Soresdale may incorporate ON saetr. On Coll the small overall size of the island make it unlikely that Norse shieling drift was practised as known in Norway, involving a considerable amount of time spent away from the main farm. The shieling name Airigh Aon Oidche (one night shieling) suggests that time spent away from the main farm was the exception rather than the rule. Shieling names on Coll in many cases describe the type of activity connected with them. Fiskary (Fish shieling) and Arinagour (Goat shieling) while others refer to ownership as in the name Arileod (Ljótr's shieling).

Other peripheral settlement expansion has taken the form of the development of small units at the heads of bays as at Treallabhig and Fislán and also through the elevation of peninsulas of land to settlement units in their own right as at Usairt and Feranagoinen. Several Gaelic names, for example Clachard, Feadan and Ballard, refer to nineteenth century settlements which essentially represent a late infilling of the existing settlement pattern.

Table 1A  
Existing Settlements

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Gunna	1574	–	Primary
Caolas	1574	1 ounceland	Primary
Brae	1794	–	Peripheral
Crossapoll	1528	20s	Secondary
Feall	1409	1 ounceland	Primary
Uig	1528	20s	Primary
Breacachadh	1528	3 merklands	Secondary
Ardnish	1574	–	Primary
Usairt	1768	1.5 maillands	Peripheral
Arileod	1794	–	Peripheral
Kilbride	1751	2.25 merklands	Peripheral
Acha	1794	–	Secondary
Gortan	1528	20s	Secondary
Friesland	1574	–	Primary
Hyne	1794	–	Peripheral
Totronald	1528	20s	Secondary
Totamore	1751	–	Secondary
Grimsary	1528	20s	Secondary
Ballyhough	1528	20s	Primary
Grishipoll	1528	20s	Secondary
Cliad	1528	20s	Primary
Arnabost	1528	20s	Secondary
Arintluic	1794	–	Peripheral
Fiskary	1794	–	Peripheral
Arinagour	1794	–	Peripheral
Gallanach	1528	40s	Primary
Trials	1528	20s	Secondary
Torastan	1528	20s	Primary
Knock	1528	20s	Secondary
Killynaig	1433	–	Secondary
Feisdlum	1794	–	Peripheral
Treallabhigh	1794	–	Peripheral
Cornaigmore	1558	1 ounceland	Primary
Cornaigbeg	1558	–	Secondary
Bousd	1558	–	Secondary

Eileraig	1794	–	Peripheral
Sorisdal	1203	–	Secondary

Table 1B

Settlements mentioned in the documentary record, identified but no longer extant

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Mibost	1528	10s	? Secondary
Gar	1528	20s	? Secondary

Table 1C

Settlements mentioned in the documentary record but not identified.

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
Cardnaha	1528	20s

Table 2

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Total number of</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Classification</u>	<u>settlements</u>	<u>ON names</u>	<u>G names</u>
Primary	11	9	2
Secondary	19	7	12
Peripheral	10	4	8

<u>Settlement</u> <u>Classification</u>	<u>ON habitative</u> <u>names</u>	<u>ON simplex</u> <u>topographical names</u>	<u>G habitative</u> <u>names</u>
Primary	1	4	1
Secondary	5	–	1
Peripheral	1	–	4

Table 3

Total number of settlements	40
Total having ON names	20 (50%)
Total having G names	20 (50%)

## Chapter Five

### MULL

#### 5.1 Introduction

The island of Mull lies at the mouth of Loch Linnhe and the Firth of Lorn, separated from mainland Ardnamurchan only by the 2km wide Sound of Mull. Mull is the largest of the Inner Hebridean islands measuring 41km from north to south and 30km at its widest extent, from Ardmeanach point to Duart point.

In sharp contrast to the islands of Coll and Tiree which are flat and lowlying, Mull rises in many places to over 800m in the interior and the climate is noticeably damp in consequence. Munro, writing in the mid sixteenth century described Mull as 'ane great rock Isle'.<sup>1</sup> In the east and south a great plutonic complex predominates while most of the remainder of the island is composed of great lava flows.<sup>2</sup> The predominant soils are acidic and of little agricultural value. Away from the coastal stretches, rough moorland and barren rock covers much of the landscape. 71% of the total land surface of the island comes under the soil survey's classification of 'land with severe limitations which confines its use to rough grazing'.<sup>3</sup> A mere 1.6% is classified as 'land suitable to the growth of arable crops and grass in rotation'.<sup>4</sup> The latter lies primarily in small pockets of less than 2 hectares along the coastal plains and in the lower reaches of the river valleys.

Geographically and geologically the island falls naturally into three distinct regions; the north, the south and east and the south-west known also as the Ross of Mull. In the north the hills only once rise to above 425m and rapid erosion of a former lava plateau has resulted in hills with distinctive terraced slopes where intrusive rocks stand as higher uplands.<sup>5</sup> To the south of the narrow neck of land at Loch na Keal the landscape is more rugged and the hills are higher with the highest, Ben More reaching to 996m. Glacial deposits and fluvio glacial material are found in this region in a strip running from Loch Spelve to Loch Buie where calcareous drifts cover the region.<sup>6</sup> Consequently this area is sometimes referred to as the 'Garden of Mull'. The remaining area, the Ross of Mull itself falls into two regions. West of Bunnessan the red Ross of Mull granite has weathered to form low lying, rounded hills while to the

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<sup>1</sup>Munro's Western Isles and Genealogy of the Clans, 1549, ed.J.W. Munro,118.

<sup>2</sup>J.A.Steers,Coastline of Scotland,142.

<sup>3</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid..

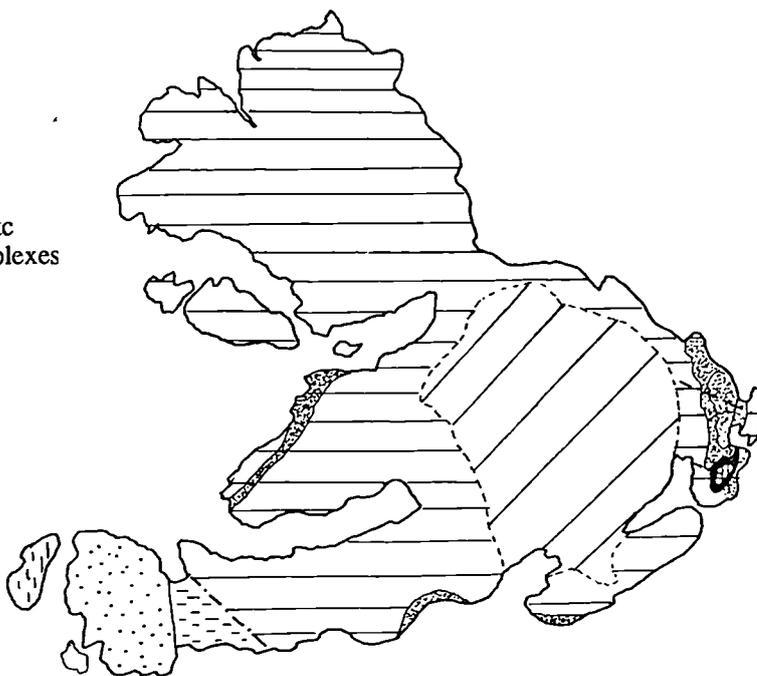
<sup>5</sup>A.C.O'Dell and K.Watson,The Highlands and Islands of Scotland, (1962),306.

<sup>6</sup>J.A.Steers, Coastline of Scotland,142.

# MULL

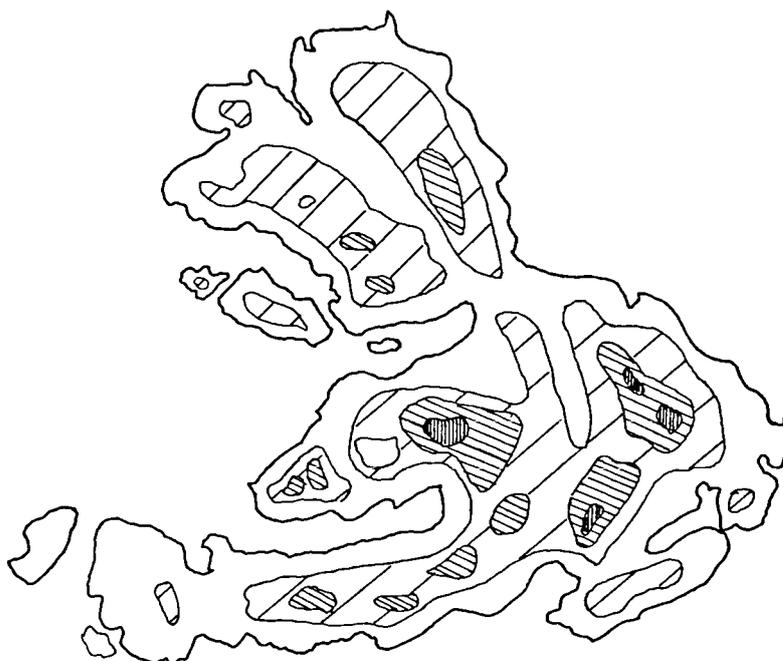
## SKETCH MAP GEOLOGY

-  Tertiary basalt lavas  
outside central intrusive  
complexes
-  Tertiary igneous rocks etc  
of central intrusive complexes
-  Mesozoic sediments
-  Lower Old Red  
Sandstone lavas  
and sediments
-  Granites of  
Caledonian Suite
-  Dalriadan Schists
-  Moine Schists  
and Gneisses
-  Lewisian Gneiss
-  Fault



## SKETCH MAP PHYSICAL RELIEF

-  Land over 600m
-  400-600m
-  100 - 400m
-  Land below 100m



0 5 10 15 20  
km

east the high and steep sided cliffs have more in common with the Ardmearach peninsula. 146

The topographical limitations of the island have inevitably influenced the location of early settlement on Mull. A distribution map of Iron Age settlement sites characterised by brochs, forts and duns shows a marked concentration in the Morrenish and Treshnish peninsulas and a lesser concentration in the west of the Ross of Mull. There are no known settlements in the interior and a mere 3 are found along the eastern coast. A series of 3 duns and a fort span the isthmus dividing the present day parishes of Kilninian and Kilmore and Torosay.

Despite the proximity of the Columban foundation on the island of Iona there is virtually no written material referring to the island of Mull in the early Christian period. In Adomnan's 'Life' Mull features only twice, in an account of the pursuance and subsequent capture of a thief, Erc.<sup>7</sup> Despite a lack of references to monastic activity on the island, place names and archaeological remains attest to an early Christian presence on Mull, again concentrated in Morrenish and the Ross of Mull. There are numerous burial grounds on the island many of which incorporate in their names the Gaelic generic *cille*, church, although the only visible remains for which an early date seems probable are at the circular enclosures of Cillchriosd, Morrenish, and Kilbrennan, Ross of Mull. The place name Torr na h-Annaid at Bunnessan also points to an early christain presence as do the many early Christian incised crosses in the 'Nun's cave' near Carsaig, also in the Ross of Mull.

It has been suggested that 'the impact of the Norse raiders on this area must have been considerable given the proximity of Iona which was sacked four times between 795 and 826'.<sup>8</sup> While this may be true for sporadic raids the impact of the incoming Norse in terms of permanent settlement is considerably harder to assess. There are no known settlement sites of the early Norse period on the island and the only material remains come from the silver hoard uncovered at Inchkenneth.<sup>9</sup> Settlement names however, particularly in the north-west, together with the names of topographical features in this area would certainly point to a Norse presence on the island.

The end of the Norse period saw the division of the Western Isles between the descendants of Somerled. Mull came under the overlordship of the MacDougalls and subsequently fell into the hands of the MacLeans.<sup>10</sup> Most of the island was annexed by the Campbells in 1674.<sup>11</sup> The Benedictine Abbey and the

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<sup>7</sup>Adomnan's *Life of Columba*, eds.A.O and M.O. Anderson,152.

<sup>8</sup>RCAHMS, *Argyll* 3,29.

<sup>9</sup>J.A.Graham Campbell, 'The Viking-age silver and gold hoards of Scandinavian character from Scotland' in *PSAS*, 107(1975-6),129.

<sup>10</sup>*Acts of the Lords of the Isles 1336-1493*, eds. J. and R.W. Munro, *SHS* 4th series, 22(1986) xxvii.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*,xxviii.

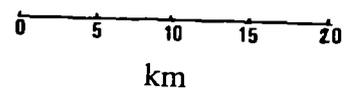
DISTRIBUTION OF  
IRON AGE FORTIFICATIONS

- Dun
- Fort
- ▲ Broch



DISTRIBUTION OF NORSE  
HABITATIVE GENERICS

- Stadir
- ▲ Bolstadr
- Saetre



Nunnery of Iona also owned estates throughout the island with most of their land concentrated in the Ross of Mull.<sup>12</sup> 147

Unlike Coll and Tiree it is not clear that Mull was ever totally divided into ouncelands. There are only two direct references to ouncelands on Mull, one being in the 1390 charter of the Lord of the Isles to John MacLean granting him 'an unciata of the land of Torosay'<sup>13</sup> while the other, in a charter of 1343, refers to the 'two ouncelands of the lands of Morynish'.<sup>14</sup> On Mull the smaller land divisions are expressed in terms of pennylands, a fact reflected in several names on the island which incorporate the Gaelic noun peighinn, penny, as in the names Pennygael and Penniemor. In many of the Crown charters and rentals, settlement evaluation is expressed in terms of pounds, shillings and pence and also in merklands. Land evaluated in one source as a pennyland for example, may appear in another source as a '16s 8d land of the Old Extent'. A sasine of 1620 categorically states the 'the extent of a pennylands is 16s 8d'. Furthermore a pennyland, or 16s 8d land, may also be described as a merkland. In 1494 James IV granted to McLean of Lochboy seventeen and a half merklands in Morloss. The value of each settlement is expressed in terms of pennylands and the total in merklands. It would appear that the three different systems were to a certain extent interchangeable but that the pennyland formed the basis for subsequent forms of evaluation.

The derivation of the name Mull is debateable. Anderson suggests that it stems from male the Old Irish form of the name given by Ptolemy as malaois.<sup>15</sup> Watson agrees that the modern name Mull (G *Eilean Muileach*) derives from OI male, the intermediate satge being Adomnans' Malea Insula.<sup>16</sup> Alternatively the name may derive from ON muli, a headland, referring to one or other of the prominent headlands of the island seen from the sea on the approach to the island. Muli is incorporated into the name Langamull in the north-east of the island where it describes an elongated promontory.

The sheer size of the island makes it difficult to study Mull in its entirety within the scope of this investigation. Three regions have been isolated for an in depth study, one from each of the geographical/parochial divisions although the names of all the settlements recorded in the documentary record have been noted.

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<sup>12</sup>RCAHMS., *Iona*, (1982)146-7.

<sup>13</sup>RMS vol.2 no. 2264.

<sup>14</sup>RMS vol.1 app.1 no.114.

<sup>15</sup>*Adomnan's Life of Columba*, eds. A.O. and M.O.Anderson,152.

<sup>16</sup>W.J. Watson, *Celtic Place Names*,38.

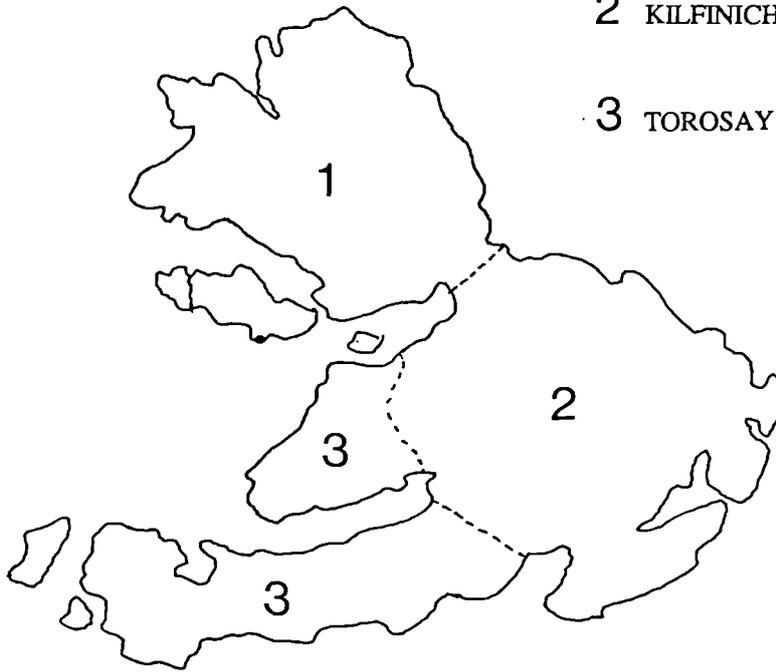
# MULL

## PAROCHIAL DIVISIONS

1 KILNINIAN AND KILMORE

2 KILFINICHEN AND KILVICUEN

3 TOROSAY

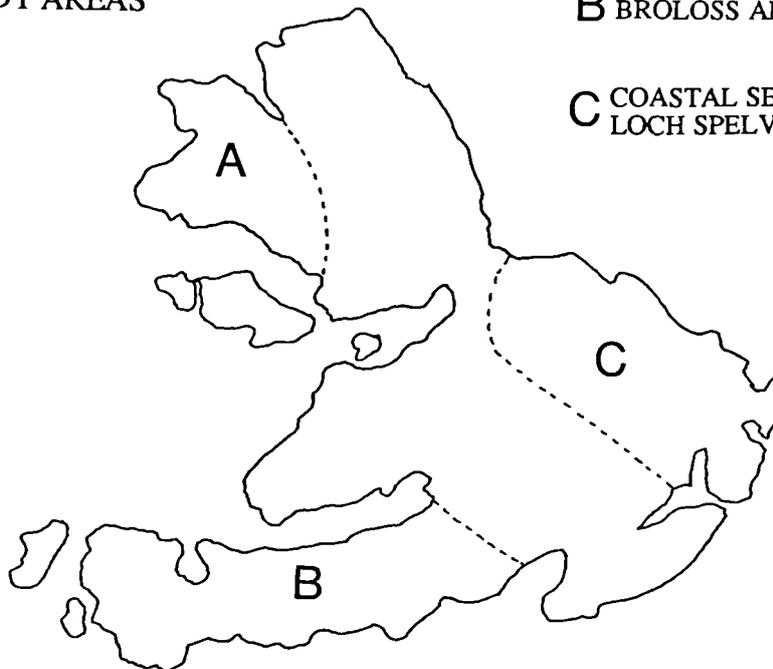


A MORRENISH AND TRESHNISH HEADLANDS

B BROLOSS AND ROSS OF MULL

C COASTAL SETTLEMENTS SALEN TO LOCH SPELVE GLEN FORSAY

## STUDY AREAS



0 5 10 15 20  
km

## 5.2.1

PARISH OF KILNINIAN AND KILMORE

The parish of Kilninian and Kilmore forms the northern parish of Mull stretching northwards from the isthmus at Loch na Keal. Prior to 1618 the adjacent islands of Gometra and Ulva lying off the west of mainland Mull formed separate parishes and Kilninian and Kilmore was itself divided. Kilninian formed the western section composed of the Morrenish and Treshnish peninsulas and the lands of Mingary and Torloisk while the parish of Kilmore (Kilcolmkill) included the districts of Quinish, Mishnish and Aros in the east.<sup>17</sup>

The parish divided naturally into the regions noted above, following the physical divisions inherent in the landscape. This is reflected in the documentary record where for example reference is made to the '18 merkland of Cowinis (Qunish)' in 1528<sup>18</sup> and to the '20 merkland of Meynish (Mishnish)' in 1542.<sup>19</sup> In 1343 a Crown Grant from David II refers to the 'two unciata of land in Mull called Morynis'. As discussed earlier it would appear that the crown evaluation of 16s 8d or 1 merkland equalled the local, and more commonly used, evaluation of one pennyland. This being the case the 18 or 20 merklands/pennylands of the Mishnish and Quinish headlands may possibly point to each headland having previously been evaluated at one uncencand; on the analogy that in the Outer Isles 20 pennylands clearly formed one uncencand while in Orkney the figure was 18.

## 5.2.2

The Morrenish and Treshnish Headlands

The Morrenish and Treshnish headlands form the north-western portion of the parish of Kilninian and Kilmore. The dominant landscape is of terraced hills with slopes greater than 6 degrees where poorly drained peat soils predominate. The landscape around Caliach point in the extreme north-west is more dramatic with steep scarp slopes reaching to 150m. The Morrenish headland may be divided into two areas; that of Morrenish itself bounded on the west by the ocean and on the east by the Allt Chriosd river valley and the Langamull headland to the east of Allt Chriosd which forms a separate unit.

The Treshnish headland lies south of Morrenish. Geographically the boundary between the two clearly falls at Calgary bay although traditionally the Ensay

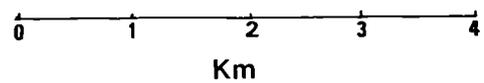
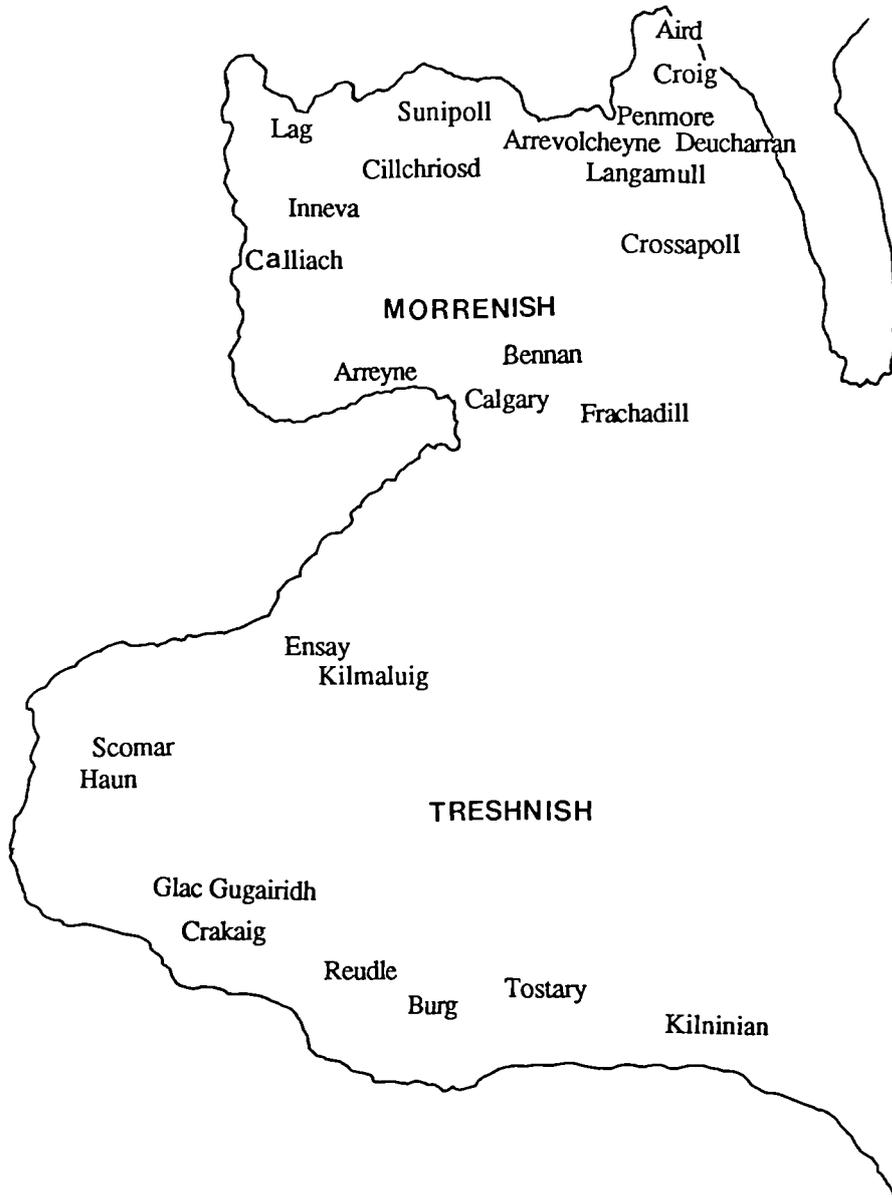
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<sup>17</sup>OPS vol.2 pt.1,320.

<sup>18</sup>RMS vol.3 no. 2739.

<sup>19</sup>RMS vol.1 app.1 no.114.

MORRENISH AND TRESHNISH HEADLANDS  
SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION



burn has formed the dividing line. Treshnish is more mountainous than Morrenish with<sup>149</sup> the summit of Beinn Bhuidhe reaching to 289m and that of Cruachan Odhar at 256m. Only the valleys of the Ensay Burn and Allt na Cille penetrate into the highland mass. The dominant parent soil on the headland derives from Colluvian moraines and residual from Olivine basalt. The topsoils are subsequently primarily wet confining land use to rough grazing. Only on a narrow belt around the coast are the Treshnish brown calcareous and brown forest soils found.<sup>20</sup>

5 km to the south-west of Treshnish point lie the Treshnish Isles. Traditionally these isles have formed the boundary between the 'Nordreyar', the Northern Isles and the 'Sudreyar', the Southern Isles, undoubtedly because of their strategic position at the main inner west coast sea lane at the southern approach to the Inner Hebrides. A castle stands on the island of Cairn na Burgh Mor which lies at the north eastern end of the Treshnish chain.<sup>21</sup> Hakon Hakonsson's Saga records that in 1249 the castle was one of four held by Ewen Lord of Lorne from Hakon of Norway.<sup>22</sup> The castle, which appears under the name Biarnaborg and Karnaborg in its oldest written forms, continued to be regarded as a royal castle by the Scottish crown after the treaty of Perth in 1266.<sup>23</sup>

The first written reference to Morrenish comes in 1343 with a reference to the 'two unciata of land in Mull called Morynish'.<sup>24</sup> This is the only direct reference to ounculands in the parish and points to the peninsula having been regarded as a distinct administrative entity. It is possible that the proximity of Treshnish and Morrenish led to their being evaluated as two separate parts of one whole. From 1390 onwards Treshnish is included in grants of land with Morrenish and the earliest reference to Treshnish as a separate unit comes in 1510 with a reference to the 'seven pennylands of Chressniss'.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>21</sup>RCAHMS., Argyll 3,186.

<sup>22</sup>A.O.Anderson, Early Sources, vol.2,556.

<sup>23</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,186.

<sup>24</sup>RMS vol.1 app.1 no.114.

<sup>25</sup>RMS vol.2 no.3440.

### 5.2.3 Settlement Analysis

#### Settlement unit Penmore

<u>Penmore</u>	NM 45/55	GR 399 535	
Peynmore	1496	RMS vol.2 no.2329	
Pennymore and Aderensis	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	0.5 pennylands
Penmore	1622	Blaue	
Peinmore and Penmore	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	1.5 pennylands
Pennmore	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	1.5 pennylands

G Peighinn,f mór,adj (Large pennyland)

The township of Penmore is no longer extant, the name being retained only in Penmore House (GR 402 529) and Penmore Mill (GR 408 525). It would appear that the township originally lay at GR 399 535, at a site now known as Sean-bhaile. The proximity of this site to the settlement of Aird, with which Pennymore is coupled in the 1674 rental would also support this. Penmore lies on land which is imperfectly drained, in common with all other land on the Aird peninsula although the soil survey notes of the land immediately surrounding Penmore that 'small areas are cultivable'.

It is unclear why Pennymore received the name 'large pennyland' unless the adjective mór referred to the areal extent of the settlement. Close to Penmore house lies the fort of Dun nan Gall, fort of the foreigners. A fort at Kilbrennan, also on Mull, is known by the same name.

Croig NM 45/55 GR 402 539.

Croag 1824 SRO RHP

G Crog,m (Claw like)

Croig, a subsidiary settlement to Penmore lies at the head of a narrow, elongated sea inlet only accessible at high tide. The entrance to the inlet is 'guarded' to the west by a fort and to the east by a dun. Etymologically the name is somewhat obscure but may possibly derive from G crog, claw like, as a descriptive term for the shape of the inlet. Alternatively Watson notes that crog derives from early celtic crouc;

G cruach, a hill'.<sup>26</sup> Croig however stands on noticeably flat land on the 10m contour.  
 The name Croigary is found on Lewis where the first element is said to derive from ON kró, cattle fold.<sup>27</sup> There is therefore the possibility that Croig on Mull also derives from the same noun although the lack of Norse settlement names in the immediate vicinity of Croig suggests that this is unlikely.

<u>Arrevolcheyn</u>	NM 35		
Arremelkeyne	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1.5 pennylands
Arrevolcheyne	1674	HP vol.1 p. 280	1.5 pennylands
Arivolchan	1679	HP vol.1 p.316	
Arrivolchoan	1801	SRO RHP 3368	

G Airidh,f mheilichean,m (Shieling of the hollows)

The settlement of Arrevolcheyn, no longer geographically discernible, is listed in the 1674 rental as being in the vicinity of Penmoir and Deucharran. The same rental also describes the settlement as being 'wast'. Given the above average valuation of the township it is unusual that both settlement site and name have disappeared so completely from the area and from the documentary record. One plausible explanation may be that the shieling settlement developed into a permanent settlement at a period of population expansion and subsequently became one of the first to go out of use when pressure on the land eased off. The 1801 map shows Arrivolchoan lying at GR 436 503 in Glen Bellant, close to a place marked 'shieling' on the modern OS map.

<u>Deucharran</u>	NM 35		
Doischorring	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1.5 pennylands
Duchoren	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Duchiren	1622	Retour vol.2 no.67	
Dowkarren	1654	Blaue	
Deucharren	1674	HP vol.1 p.280	1.5 pennylands
Dowchorren	1679	HP vol.1 p.316	

G ? Carran,m ( ? weed growing amongst corn )

The Duart rental of 1674 records the settlement as being in the vicinity of Penmore and is described as 'all waste'. Like Arrevolcheyne it had a slightly higher

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<sup>26</sup>W.J.Watson, Celtic Place Names,78.  
<sup>27</sup>M.Oftedal 'Village Names on Lewis',401.

than average pennyland evaluation but by the time of the 1751 valuation had entirely<sup>152</sup> disappeared from the list of occupied settlements.

### Settlement unit Langamull

#### Langamull

Langavill	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Langamull & Crossapoll	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	3.75 pennylands

ON Langr,adj muli,m (Long promontary)

Langamull farm lies midway between Allt Chrossapoll and Allt Cill da Bhidhe. The latter name, river of the Church of Bhidhe, is also found on Tìree where two landscape names, Abhainn a'Bheide and Traigh Bhi commemorate the Celtic saint known as Do-Bhi or Mo Bhi believed to be Abbot of Causcaird in Ireland.<sup>28</sup> Clearly the name Cill da Bhidhe refers to the same saint. There are however, no ecclesiastical remains known in the vicinity of Langamull save for that of Cillchriosd and no evidence to suggest that the latter name succeeded the former at the same site. A further church dedication to St. Bhi is found at Cill da Bhi at Kintyre.

The name Langamull must at an early period have been the topographical name given to what is now known as the Aird peninsula, Rubha an Aird. To the west lies Port Langamull. Despite a lack of early written references to Langamull and consequently little indication of the settlements evaluation it would seem that the name applied to a primary settlement unit stretching eastwards from Port Langamull to Loar a'Chumhainn.

Langamull is the only peninsula name in north-west Mull to be compounded with the Norse generic muli as oppose to the generic nes, as in the names Treshnish, Quinish and Morrenish. This may be due to the distinctive snout like appearance of the peninsula.

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<sup>28</sup>A.Cameron, Guide,19.

Aird NM 35 GR 392 544.

Aird 1616 RMS vol.7 no.1386 1 pennyland

Aird 1674 HP vol.1 p.279

Aird 1801 SRO RHP 3368

G Airde,f (Height/promont ry)

Aird is the most northerly township in Morrenish situated on the Langamull peninsula the head of which is now known as Rubha an Aird. A sheltered natural harbour lies on the eastern shore of the point at Port na Ba, only 0.5km north of the settlement. There is some confusion as to whether the settlement of Aird is one and the same as the, unlocated, settlement of Arderensis 1496,<sup>29</sup> Arderensis 1615,<sup>30</sup> and Arderbiruis 1672.<sup>31</sup> A further unlocated settlement name in Morrenish, also compounded with the Gaelic generic airde is that of Airdbalkniche mentioned only in 1510 and evaluated at 1 pennyland.<sup>32</sup>

#### Settlement unit Cillchriosd

Cillchriosd NM 35 GR 375 536

Gilzacrest 1496 RMS vol.2 no.2329

Gillochrist 1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214 16s 8d

Gilchrist 1510 RMS vol.2 no.3440 1 pennyland

Gilchrist 1615 Retour vol.1 no.16

Kilchrist 1622 Blaue

Kilchreist 1674 HP vol.1 p.279 1 pennyland

Killichrist 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.67 1 pennyland

G Cille,f Chriosd (Christ's Church)

The township of Cillchriosd lies 0.25 km inland from Port Langamull at the confluence of Allt Cillchriosd with a tributary stream. A roughly circular enclosure 100m south-east of Cillchriosd farmhouse is identified as being the site of a burial ground. A similar circular enclosure is found at Kilbrennan. Of these two sites the RCAHMS concluded that 'although burial grounds, many incorporating the element cille in their names are numerous, the only visible remains for which an early date seems probable are at Kilbrennan and Cillchriosd'.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup>RMS vol.2 no.2329.

<sup>30</sup>Retour vol.1 no.16.

<sup>31</sup>1672 Decriet of Mailes HP vol.1 p.252.

<sup>32</sup>RMS vol.2 no.3440

<sup>33</sup>RCAHMS Argyll 3,133

Dedications to Christ are not uncommon in the Western Isles and adjacent mainland being found at, for example, Teampull Chrìosd, North Uist; Kilchrist, Strath, Skye; and in the parish church of Kilchrist in Rosshire. Norse dedications to Christ were primarily reserved for cathedral churches as at Christchurch Birsay and in Norway, at Bergen.

The early Christian site here arguably forms the primary settlement in the area with secondary settlement developing at Crossapoll and Sunipoll.

<u>Crossapoll</u>	NM 35		
Chorsboll	1510	RMS vol. 2 no. 3440	1 pennyland
Crossopolle	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Crossopol	1622	Retour vol.2 no.67	
Crossopoll	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	3.75 pennylands

ON Kross,m bolstadr,m (Farm of the cross)

The settlement of Crossapoll lies 1.25 km inland from Bagh Chrossapoll, a small and well sheltered natural harbour. Crossapoll is situated on the banks of a stream which runs from Dun Mhadaidh northwards into the sea at Bagh Chrossapoll. Allt Chrossapoll runs parallel to this, 0.5 west of the settlement. The land in this area falls into the soil surveys classification of 'land suited to use as grassland and improved pasture'.

0.5km south of Crossapoll a hill retains the name *An Crosan* (the small cross). Whether or not a votive cross stood at this location is unknown; although given the proximity of the church at Cillchrìosd this is likely.

<u>Sunipoll</u>	NM 35	GR 373 538	
Sonebol	1496	RMS vol.2 no.2329	
Sonyboll	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	16s 8d
Suneboll	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Sonepoile	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Sunniboill	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	1 pennyland
Swyneboll	1679	HP vol.1 p.316	1 pennyland
Sunipoll	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	1 pennyland

ON Sunnr,adj bolstadr,m (South facing farm)

The derivation of the prefix is unclear. MacQuarrie suggests a derivation from the Norse personal name Suni.<sup>34</sup> An alternative explanation would be a derivation from the adjective sunnr meaning southerly or south facing. The adjective sunnr is found frequently in Norwegian settlement names as in Sunndalen and Sunnaholten both of which lie within the district of Sunnmøre. If the prefix in Sunnipoll stems from the directional adjective southern or southerly there is the assumption that the settlement is being defined by its position south of another known feature in the same way that Sunnmøre lies to the south of Nordmøre in Norway. Sunnipoll lies on the northern coast of Morrenish, south only to the open sea. It also lies 2km to the north of the settlement of Crossapoll. It is therefore possible that Sunipoll may be interpreted as denoting a south facing settlement.

Like Crossapoll, Sunipoll lies in an area 'suited to use as grassland and improved pasture'.<sup>35</sup> This exposed northern coast seems to have attracted settlement from the Iron Age onwards. Midway between Sunnipoll and Cillchriod on the summit of a rocky knoll is the fort of Cillchriod while immediately to the south lies a Dun.

<u>Lag</u>	NM 35 GR 361 538		
Lag	1496	RMS vol.2 no.2329	
Laigh	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Laggan	1622	Blaeu	
Lag	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	1 pennyland
Lag and and Calgary, Frackadill and Calhoan	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	5.75 pennylands

G Lag,m (Hollow between two hills)

Lag lies 1km west of Sunipoll and forms secondary expansion from that settlement. Its peripheral nature is primarily due to the quality of the land which is described as having 'rocky outcrops, peaty surfaces and wet subsoils'. The land rises sharply to the south of the settlement to the twin tops of Bruach na Sean-Peighinn (bank of the old pennyland) reaching to 158 and 159m.

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<sup>34</sup>A.MacQuarrie, Place Names of Mull,8.  
<sup>35</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

Settlement unit CalliachCalliach NM 35 GR 356 534.

Challich	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Kailllach	1622	Blaue	
Coullouch	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	1 pennyland
Kailloch	1679	HP vol.1 p.316	1 pennyland
Coulloch	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	5.75 pennylands

G Caillich,f (Old woman)

The western most point of the Morrenish peninsula is known by the name Caillich point (*Rubha Chaillich*). MacQuarrie records that 'the rock formation had the appearance of a female head before the nose part broke away'.<sup>36</sup> The name is also retained in Allt na Caillich and Port na Caillich. The township lies in the Allt na Caillich valley between the lower slopes of Bruach na Sean-pheighinne to the east and a 72m high hill to the west.

Arreyne NM 35 GR 357 527

Areyn	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	2 pennylands
Arin	1622	Blaue	
Arreyne	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	1.5 pennylands
Arein	1679	HP vol.1 p.316	
Arine	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	1.25 pennylands
Arine	1801	SRO RHP 3368	

G Airidh,f ceann,m (? Head sheiling)

The township of Arreyne is no longer extant. Blaue places it in the vicinity of Calliach and Innevea, a fact confirmed by the listing of townships in the 1674 rental where Arreyne is recorded between Innevea and Calliach. The settlement may correspond to the shielings on the lower slopes of Bruach na Sean Pheighinne although this is not confirmed by Langland's map of 1801 which records Arine at GR 354 514. If the settlement name does indeed correspond to a derivation from Airidh Ceann - the most extreme shieling/the shieling furthest away - then this corresponds well to Langlands positioning of the township at the south-west extremity of the Morrenish peninsula. Despite the poor quality of the land described as having 'severe limitations' due to the steep slope of the land <sup>37</sup> Arreyne had a consistently high

<sup>36</sup>A.MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull,9.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

pennyland evaluation. This is something of an anomaly as both site and situation, and<sup>157</sup> land quality would suggest that the settlement be classified as peripheral.

Innevea NM 35 GR (?) 355 525.

Enynvay	1496	RMS vol.2 no.2329	
Inveyan	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	16s 8d
Ynigway	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Innea	1622	Blaeu	
Innevea	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	'wast'
Innevey	1679	HP vol.1 p.316	'wast'
Inva	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	1 pennyland
Inneva	1801	SRO RHP 3368	

G ? Peighinn,f (Penny ? )

This township described as being 'wast' in 1674 cannot be located with any certainty. Blaeu's map shows it possibly corresponding to the shielings at GR 355 525 on the western slope of Bruach na Sean Peighinne. It is, however, absent from Langland's map of 1801. The name is obscure but may possibly incorporate the element peighinn. The settlement lies on land suitable only for rough grazing thereby meriting classification as a peripheral settlement.

Settlement unit Frachadill

Frachadill NM 35 GR 384 516.

Frakadill	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	16s 8d
Frefitill	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1.5 pennylands
Freckedell	1622	Blaeu	
Frackadill	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	1.5 pennylands
Frockdail	1674	Sasine vol.1 no.585 p.219	
Frackadill	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	5.75 pennylands

and Crossapoll, Couulloch and Lag

ON Frakki,m. pers name dalr,m (Frakki's dale)

The township of Frachadil lies on the lower slopes of a rounded hill 1km inland from Calgary Bay. The narrow stream valley of Allt Dubh Frackadill, with its steep slopes is undoubtedly responsible for the incorporation of the Norse generic dalr in the name. The specific fraka most likely derives from the male personal name

Frakki itself deriving from ON frakka, denoting a spear. The name Frachadale is also<sup>158</sup> found in the Oa district of Islay while the specific frakka is found also in the settlement name Frackersaig on Lismore. An alternative derivation of the specific is possibly from the G frach/fraoch heather.

The settlement of Frachadil has a higher elevation than the surrounding settlements, being located in a more favourable position just below the 100m contour. While the settlement itself lies on land 'suited to use as grassland and improved pasture'<sup>38</sup> the area immediately to the west is composed of peat soils confining the land use to rough grazing.

<u>Calgary</u>	NM 35 GR 378 517		
Callogary	1496	RMS vol.2 no.2329	
Callogarrie	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	25s
Calwegar	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1.5 pennylands
Calgorie	1674	HP vol.1 p.279	2 pennylands
(and Fladd)			
Callogarie	1674	Sasine vol.1 no.585 p.219	
Calgary	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.67	5.75 pennylands
and Couulloch, Lag and Frackadill			

G Caladh,m gearraidh,m (Harbour land)

Calgary lies 0.50km inland from the head of Calgary bay. The bay head consists of a 0.5km long stretch of sand running north to south and protected and sheltered by steeply rising land to the north and south, thereby forming a natural harbour. The approach to the bay is protected on the northern shore by an Iron Age fort at GR 352 514 and Dun at GR 367 514. An area of comparatively fertile land 'moderately suited to agricultural use'<sup>39</sup> lies at the head of the bay. The presence of 3 equally fertile and adjacent areas to the north-east make this the most fertile single area on the Morrenish headland.

At GR 375 511 lies Calgary burial ground, a rectangular enclosure formerly known as Cladh Mhuire. The dedication is to the Virgin Mary.<sup>40</sup> Two early Christian grave markers, one of which bears an incised cross on two opposite faces and the other a sunken latin cross testify to the early Christian origins of the cemetery.

Clearly Calgary bay has formed the focus for settlement in the area by virtue of unparalleled beaching facilities and good land. Modern expansion of

<sup>38</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid..

<sup>40</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,126.

settlement has seen the building of a small Gothic mansion in 1823 south from Calgary<sup>159</sup> farm and the building of a row of cottages.

The etymology of the name is unclear. Whilst Calgary on Coll arguably derives from ON kaldr G airidh, cold shieling, the site and situation, harbour, quality of land and presence of an early Christian foundation argue against Calgary, Mull, ever having functioned primarily as a shieling site. The generic in the settlement name more likely stems from G gearraidh as defined by Dwelly who recorded the name in different areas of the isles and which has several related but nonetheless separate and distinct meanings, viz.

1. The land between the machair and the moor where the houses stand [Lewis]
2. Green pasture land about a township
3. Point or knuckle end of land, often used in place names in Uist as at Houghgarry.
4. Fenced field
5. Enclosed grazing between arable land and open moor [Wester Ross]
6. Common grazing and arable land between the moor and crofts
7. Place where shielings are built [Skye]<sup>41</sup>

Clearly the use of the generic gearraidh to describe the area subsequently known as Calgary referred to a specific type of land use not known in other settlements in the vicinity.

The specific in the settlement name is also open to various interpretations. The most appropriate is G caladh, harbour/port or haven, although MacQuarrie also suggests the male personal name Cala.<sup>42</sup> The word order in the name conforms to the Norse pattern placing the specific before the generic which lends weight to MacQuarrie's suggestion. Gearraidh like airidh, appears to have been adopted as a Gaelic loan word into Norse at an early date.

Bennan NM 35 GR 377 523

G Beinn,f an, dim (Little hill)

Bennan lies 0.25 km north from Calgary and clearly forms peripheral expansion from that settlement, lying on poorer ground on the lower slopes of Cruach Sleibhe. The settlement name is absent from the documentary record. Midway between Bennan and Calgary lies the small cluster of houses known as Geat nan Croisean

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<sup>41</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary,486.

<sup>42</sup>A.MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull,9.

(arable land of the cross). This may indicate the site of a votive cross connected with the graveyard at Calgary. <sup>160</sup>

### Settlement unit Ensay

Ensay NM 24/34 GR 362 489.

Enighsay	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	2 pennylands
Ewinsay	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Einsay	1657	Sasine vol.2 no.959 p.313	2 pennylands
Ensay	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.68	1.5 pennylands
Ensay	1801	SRO RHP 3368	
Ensay	1837	SRO RHP 12783	

The township of Ensay lies above Ensay burn on the north-west lower slopes of Beinn Bhuide. Ensay burn, running from Beinn na Lochain to the sea, is the largest of the Treshnish rivers with dramatic waterfalls on the lower reaches.

Traditionally the Ensay burn formed the boundary between Morrenish and Treshnish.<sup>43</sup> The derivation of the name is open to several interpretations. The termination ay would suggest a derivation from ON ey as in the island name Ensay (ON *engis ey*, meadow island) off the coast of Harris. Site and situation however argue against this. Ensay, Treshnish lies 0.5 km inland, neither is there an offshore island from which the name could have been transferred. MacQuarrie suggests that the name stems from G eas, ath, the waterfall of the ford, which clearly ties in with local conditions.<sup>44</sup> Gillies suggests a less likely interpretation, that Ensay derives from ON endi, the end. Ensay has a high pennyland evaluation, the highest of the Treshnish settlements and lies on the only area of sandy/loamy soil on the peninsula which is 'suited to the growth of arable crops and grass in rotation'.<sup>45</sup> The surrounding area is characteristically that of rocky outcrops, peaty surfaces and wet subsoils. There is therefore much to suggest that Ensay formed the primary settlement in this area.

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<sup>43</sup>SRO RHP 979.

SRO RHP 44714 (1-4).

<sup>44</sup>A. MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull, 9.

<sup>45</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

Kilmaluig NM 24/34 GR 353 488

Kilmolowok	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	25s
Kilmoloag	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.17 p.622	25s 4d
Kilmolowaig	1654	Blaeu	
Kilmaluag	1674	Sasine vol.1 no.585 p.219	

G Cille,f Moluac,m pers name (Church of Moluag)

The settlement takes its name from the ancient burial ground at GR 355 488. There are now no remains of the chapel which once stood there dedicated to St. Lugaith.<sup>46</sup> Many early churches in the Inner Hebrides and adjacent mainland are dedicated to this Irish saint, including the church of Kilmaluag on Tiree and the Cathedral church of Kilmaluag on Lismore. Kilmaluag settlement lies west of Ensay on the lower slopes of Cruachan Treshnish where the land slopes gently to the Ensay burn.

### Settlement unit Haun

Haun NM 24/34 GR 338 477

Hawhonne	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	34s 4d
Nahawin	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.17 p.622	16s 8d
Nahawinn	1654	Blaeu	
Hawn	1674	Sasine vol.1 no.585 p.219	

ON Haugr en, def art (The mound)

Haun township is the most westerly township in Treshnish situated on the northern lower slopes on Beinn Duill. 0.5km south-west of the settlement is the harbour of Port Haunn. Clearly this natural beaching point, the only one on the Treshnish headland, was of strategic importance. At the southern end of Port Haunn lies the fort of Dun Haunn (GR 333 470) on the level summit of a rocky stack in a position of great natural strength protected by sheer rock cliffs. 250m north of Dun Haun lies another fortified site also known as Dun Haun occupying 'an exceptionally strong position'.<sup>47</sup> The etymology of the name is unclear. The most modern written forms would suggest a derivation from ON haugr but the earlier written forms indicate a polysyllabic name. In Orkney, however, the settlement name Howan is derived from ON haugr with the definite article and it is probable that this is also the case with Haun.

<sup>46</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,170.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid..79.

<u>Scomar</u>	NM 24/34	GR 338 480	
Skonnet	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.17 p.622	16s 8d
Skomeir	1674	Sasine vol.1 no.585 p.219	
Sknaneir	1672	HP vol.1 p.251	
Scomar	1824	SRO RHP 3354	

ON ?

The settlement of Scomar is no longer geographically discernible but is marked on the 1824 estate map as lying north of Haunn to the south of Cnoc an Sleibhe. The settlement appears to have developed as secondary settlement expansion from Haun. The name is clearly Norse in origin but its precise meaning is obscure.

#### Settlement unit Crackaig

<u>Crackaig</u>	NM 24/34	GR 352 463	
Cragag	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	16s 8d
Cragaert	1541	Exchequer Rolls vol.17 p.622	16s 8d
Cragart	1674	Sasine vol.1 no.585 p.219	
Cragaig	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p67	1 pennyland

ON Krakra,m vík,f (Crows bay)

The ruined township of Cragaig lies on the lower, southern, slopes of Cruachan Treshnish. The land slopes very steeply down to a small, flat promontory at GR 351 459 where there are the remains of a chapel and burial ground of which the RCAHMS notes that 'the site appears to have no recorded history but the general character of the remains suggest that the building was a chapel of mediaeval date.<sup>48</sup>

<u>Glac Gugairidh</u>	NM 24/34	GR 534 465	
Glaichagare	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Kengarry	1622	Blaue	
Glaikiegarrie	1674	HP vol.1 p.280	1.5 pennylands

G Glac,f gu , prep. gearraidh,f [? airidh]

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid..

Glac Gugairidh lies approximately 0.25km north of, and 20m above the settlement of Crackaig. The small township lies at the confluence of two streams on land described as having 'severe limitations which confine its use to rough grazing due to severe wetness and patterns of rock and soil'.<sup>49</sup> Glac Gugairidh is clearly a product of secondary expansion from Crackaig. The generic gearraidh in the settlement name defines Glac Gugairidh in terms of its relationship to the pattern of land use employed by Crackaig.

### Settlement unit Reudle

<u>Reudle</u>	NM 24/34	GR 367 463	
Redgill	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1.5 pennylands
Rewdill	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Redil	1654	Blaue	
Reidle	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.68	1 pennyland
Rutile	1801	SRO RHP 3368	

ON Raudr,adj gil,n (Red narrow glen)

The township is situated on the lower south eastern slope of Beinn Reudle, on the banks of Allt Reudle where the river is fordable. The river runs southwards through a deep and steep sided valley to join with Allt Dubhaig, entering the sea at Lon Reudle where a small shingle beach makes a natural harbour. Soil quality in the area surrounding the river valley is such that 'small areas are cultivable';<sup>50</sup> this is in marked contrast to the surrounding hillslopes where 'severe wetness and patterns of rock and soil' confine land use to rough grazing.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>Macaulay institute, Soil map.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid..

<sup>51</sup>Ibid..

Settlement unit Burg

<u>Burg</u>	NM 24/34	GR 380 457	
Burg	1495	RMS vol.2 no.2264	1 pennyland
Burgbeg	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Burgmor	1615	Retour vol.1 no.16	
Burg	1631	Sasine vol.2 no.366 p.118	1 pennyland
Burg	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p68	1.5 pennylands

ON Borg,f (Fortification)

Roughly 0.5 km south-south-west of the settlement of Burg lies Dun Aisgeann (GR 377 452) 'a galleried dun occupying a conspicuous position on the summit of a low rocky knoll'.<sup>52</sup> The settlement clearly owes its name to either this Iron Age monument or alternatively to that of Dun Ban at the eastern end of Port Burg. The settlement lies 0.5 km inland from Port Burg in the Allt Bhurg valley to the east of Ard Dubh Bhurg which rises to 192m. The large number of topographical names incorporating the noun borg, as in the name Aoineadh Bhurg, suggests that the settlement area was a large one a fact reflected in the 1495 charter which lists Burg as a 'magnum denarium'.<sup>53</sup>

The settlement area in the vicinity of the broch was investigated by Alcock and Alcock in an attempt to 'detect the settlement of Scandinavian date at Burg'. Research failed to reveal any trace of Norse buildings.<sup>54</sup>

Tostary NM 24/34 GR 370 456.

Tostary 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.68 1 pennyland

G Tosd,adj airidh,m (Quiet shieling)

Tostary township is sited on land 'suitable only for rough grazing',<sup>55</sup> at an altitude of 150m on the lower slopes of Sron Tostary. Situated midway between Kilninian and Burg the settlement may originally have functioned as a shieling for one or both of these settlements. The absence of Tostary from the documentary record suggests that development from shieling to permanent settlement was a late one.

<sup>52</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,101.

<sup>53</sup>RMS vol.2 no. 2264.

<sup>54</sup>L. and A. Alcock, 'Scandinavian Settlement in the Inner Hebrides', 62-63.

<sup>55</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

**Settlement unit Kilninian****Kilninian** NM 24/34 GR 378 457**Keil Neoning** 1561 Bishop's Rental**Kilninyne** 1674 Retour vol.1 no.82 1 pennyland**Kilninian** 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.67 3 pennylands

(and Torloisk)

**G Cille,f Ninian,m pers.name (Church of St. Ninian)**

The township derives its name from the church of Kilninian formerly pertaining to the Abbot of Iona. Although the present building dates from 1755 it is probable that it occupies the site of a mediaeval church. Kilninian was the parish church before the unification of the parishes of Kilninian and Kilmore in 1618.

The settlement lies on land offering small areas suitable for cultivation. To the east of Kilninian Allt na Cille forms the boundary between the regions of Treshnish and Torloisk.

#### 5.2.4 Summary

The Morrenish and Treshnish headlands have attracted settlement from prehistoric times. The density of Iron Age forts and duns may in part be explained by the superior quality of soil in this area of Mull but may also reflect the strategic importance of the headlands and subsequent need for defensive constructions. 40% of the island's Iron Age fortifications are located in the north-west of Mull.

The benefits of settling this area which flanks the approach by sea to the southern Hebrides must also have been apparent to the incoming Norse. The strategic importance of the Treshnish Isles for controlling this area has been noted. The castle built on the islands may have been built on the site of a former Norse stronghold hence the name Bjarnaborg incorporating the suffix ON borg, fortification. In contrast to many of the headlands and promontories on Mull, most of which are described by the Gaelic topographical terms rubha or aird, the promontories in the north-west are known by Norse terms. Treshnish, Mishnish, Quinish and Morrenish contain the Norse generic nes, headland, while Langamull is compounded with ON muli, snout. These headlands are distinctive and easily seen by any sea-going traffic journeying in the western sea lane and may from an early date have been known as clearly defined landmarks. The necessity of controlling this sea route may have resulted in permanent settlement on the adjacent coastal areas at an early date. This is seen clearly when the percentage of Norse to Gaelic settlement names in Morrenish and Treshnish, 40% and 60%, is compared to the Norse to Gaelic percentage for the parish of Kilninian and Kilmore as a whole, 20% and 80%.

In Morrenish and Treshnish 7 of the 11 settlements classified as being of primary status have names clearly Norse in origin. Of the 4 primary settlements which have Gaelic names 2 incorporate the Gaelic generic cille. One of the primary Norse settlements, Ensay, is situated so close to the settlement of Kilmoluag that it is not entirely clear which is to be classified as secondary and which as primary.

To the south of the Treshnish peninsula the islands of Gometra [Godrmadr ey], Ulva [Ulfr ey], Staffa [Stafr ey] and Little Colonsay [Kolbeins ey] all have names which are Norse in origin. Of these islands Ulva, the largest, most fertile and most densely settled shows particularly clearly the density of Norse settlement in the area. Of 14 settlement names known from the documentary record half are Norse; Abost, Soriby, Ormaig, Crackaig, Trealbhan, Bearnus and Culinish. A further Norse settlement name may be retained in the name of the hill Beinn Eolasary incorporating the same prefix as is found in the name Eoligaray; Skye. Ulva, described in 1541 as being 'rich for its size both in corn and pasture'<sup>56</sup> was, in 1679, evaluated at 20

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<sup>56</sup>Munro's Western Isles 1549,18.

merklands<sup>57</sup> (? one ounceland). The adjacent settlement on the mainland, Laggan U<sup>167</sup>va, also sited on fertile ground was evaluated at 5 pennylands, ( 1/4 ounceland ?).<sup>58</sup> The smaller island of Gometra appears in the documentary record at the far earlier date of 1390 being evaluated at 4 pennylands.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>J.R.N. Macphail ,Highland Papers, vol.1,316.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid..

<sup>59</sup>RMS vol.2 no.2264.

Table 1

Parish of Kilninian and Kilmore. Settlement names recorded in the documentary record. [Ranking included for settlements investigated]

<u>Settlement Name</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Aird	1496	1 pennyland	Secondary
Arrevolcheyne	1510	1.5 pennylands	Peripheral
Arreyne	1510	1.5 pennylands	Peripheral
Aros	1751	2 pennylands	
Achnacross	1751	3.5 pennylands	
Acharn	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Acharranich	1751	0.75 pennylands	
Arle	1751	3 pennylands	
Ardskipnish	1751	1 pennyland	
Achinasaul	1751	1.5 pennylands	
Achinluin	1751	1 pennyland	
Arinagannichan	1751	1 pennyland	
Achar	1751	1 pennyland	
Ardnacallich	1751	1 pennyland	
Ardcallum	1751	1 pennyland	
Abost	1510	1 pennyland	
Ardow	–	–	
Ardbeg	–	–	
Achafraoich	–	–	
Ardalum	–	–	
Bennan	–	–	Peripheral
Burg	1495	1.5 pennylands	Primary
Blarcharnan (and others)	1751	3.75 pennylands	
Branasich (and others)	1751	3.75 pennylands	
Baliscal	1751	1.5 pennylands	
Ballichrich	1751	2 pennylands	
Balliclough	1751	1 pennyland	
Beich	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Balligartan	1751	1.75 pennylands	
Crannich	1751	1 pennyland	
Calgary	1496	1.5 pennylands	Secondary
Corkamull	1510	1.5 pennylands	
Couin	1751	1 pennyland	
Cove	1751	1 pennyland	

			169
Culinish	1751	1 pennyland	
Cragaig	1509	1 pennyland	Primary
Culloch	1674	1 pennyland	
Cillchriosd	1496	1 pennyland	Primary
Crossapoll	1510	1 pennyland	Secondary
Croig	1895	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Deucharren	1510	1.5 pennylands	Peripheral
Drimnacraish	1751	0.75 pennylands	
Dervaig	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Druimgigha	1751	1 pennyland	
Ensay	1510	2 pennylands	Primary
Eolisary	1751	1 pennyland	
Frackadill	1510	1.5 pennylands	Primary
Fanmore	1510	2 pennylands	
Farinary	1674	0.75 pennylands	
Glasfane	1541	8s 4d	
Glacgugarrie	1510	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Glacknagellan	1751	1 pennyland	
Haun	1541	1 pennyland	Primary
Inneva	1496	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Kilbeg	1496	0.5 pennylands	Secondary
Kellan	1587/88	1 pennyland	
Kilmozzie	1751	1.25 pennylands	
Kingaror	1751	0.75 pennylands	
Kilninian	1561	1 pennyland	Primary
Kilmichael	1510	1.5 pennylands	
Kilemor	1510	0.5 pennylands	
Kilchronan	1622	3 pennylands	
Kilmoluag	1541	25s	Secondary
Lag	1496	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Laggan Ulva	1647	5 pennylands	
Ledmore	1751	1 pennyland	
Ledbeg	1751	1 pennyland	
Mingary	1647	2.25 pennylands	
Oskamull	1510	1 pennyland	
Ormaigmore	1510	1 pennyland	
Ormaigbeg	1510	1 pennyland	
Pennymore	1510	1 pennyland	
Penmollochmore	1751	1 pennyland	
Penmollochbeg	1751	1 pennyland	

Penalbannach	–	–	170
Pentallich	1509	16s 8d	
Penlag	1509	16s 8d	
Reudle	1510	16s 8d	Primary
Scomar	1541	1 pennyland	Secondary
Sunipol	1496	1 pennyland	Secondary
Soriby	1751	0.75 pennylands	
Tostary	1895	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Tengie	1895	1 pennyland	

Table 2Morrenish and Treshnish

<u>Settlement classification</u>	<u>Total number of settlements</u>	<u>Total ON names</u>	<u>Total G names</u>
Primary	11	7	4
Secondary	7	3	4
Peripheral	7	0	7

<u>Settlement classification</u>	<u>ON habitative names</u>	<u>ON simplex topographical names</u>	<u>G habitative names</u>
Primary	–	2	–
Secondary	2	–	1
Peripheral	–	–	4

Table 3Kilninian and Kilmore

Total number of settlements	82
Total having ON names	16 (19.5%)
Total having G names	66 (79.5%)

Morrenish and Treshnish

Total number of settlements	25
Total having ON names	10 (40%)
Total having G names	15 (60%)

### 5.3.1 PARISH OF KILFINICHEN AND KILVICUEN

The parish of Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen is more generally known as Ross. Subsequent to the Reformation Kilfinichen, Kilvicuen, Torosay and Inch Kenneth were united to form one parish. Torosay was afterwards disjoined and the other three remained united under the name Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen. Kilfinichen included the whole of the Ardmeanach peninsula lying on the north of Loch Scriadan while Kilvicuen incorporated the lands of Ross, Morloss and Broloss on the Ross peninsula.<sup>60</sup> The two regions form distinct geographical units. The Ardmeanach peninsula has much in common with the lands of Torosay being mountainous with Ben More, the highest reaching to 996m. By contrast the Ross of Mull, particularly west of Bunessan, is more characteristic of the Outer Isles with its lochans and low-lying rounded hills. The north-west and north coast of the Ardmeanach peninsula is classified by the soil survey as being composed of 'rock, cliff and active scree'<sup>61</sup> of little grazing value. The interior of the headland is primarily composed of peat soils with blanket bog and bog heather moor as the dominant vegetational communities. This has resulted in land of low and very low hill grazing value. Only around Kilfinichen bay, and in the valley of Abhainn Ball a' Mhuillin is the soil of a sufficiently high quality to encourage the growth of arable crops.

By contrast the Ross of Mull shows a far greater variety of soil types with small areas of fertile land being found throughout the peninsula. Only on the coastal stretch south-east of Carsaig are cliffs found which are comparable to those of Ardmeanach.

### 5.3.2 Ross of Mull and Broloss

The dividing line between the area known as Ross of Mull and that of Broloss falls at the Beach river. In 1390 Donald of Islay granted to Lachlann MacLean 'the 12 3/4 pennylands of Broglos'.<sup>62</sup> This is the only written evaluation of Broloss as a whole expressed in terms of pennylands. There is no equivalent early evaluation given for the lands of Ross. In 1509 the exchequer rolls record 'the 20 merklands of Mullinross',<sup>63</sup> while in 1561 the Bishop's rental refers to the '20 pound lands of

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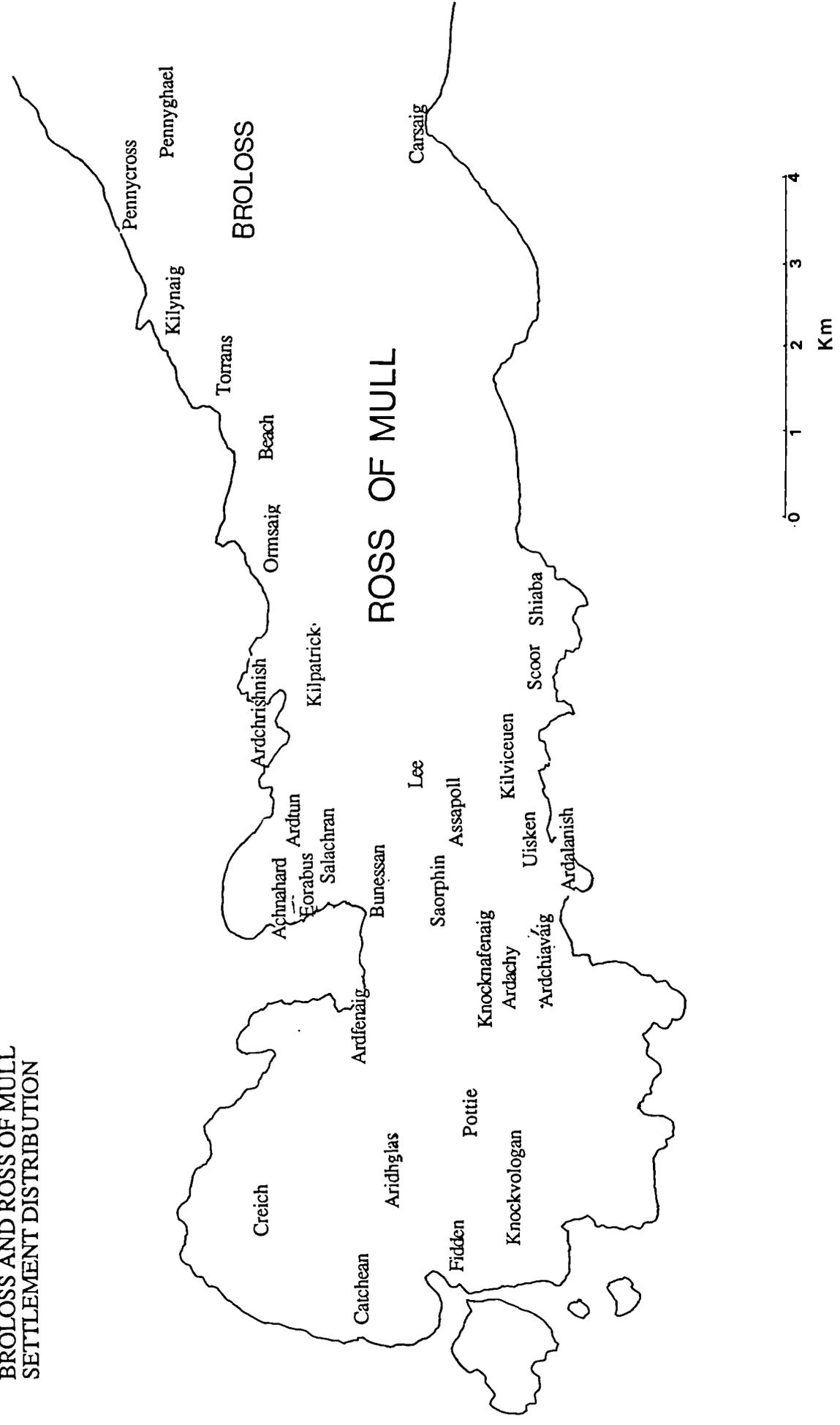
<sup>60</sup>OPS vol.1 pt.2,314.

<sup>61</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>62</sup>RMS vol.2 no.2264.

<sup>63</sup>Exchequer Rolls, vol.9,p.214.

**BROLOSS AND ROSS OF MULL  
SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION**



Rosse'.<sup>64</sup> There is no explicit reference to ounculands in this area. It is difficult within<sup>173</sup> the different regions of the peninsula to pinpoint any smaller subdivisions for administrative or fiscal purposes, save for the Ardtun headland which appears to have formed a distinct unit and is evaluated at 5 pennylands. While it was possible to isolate with some degree of certainty the settlement units in the Morrenish and Treshnish headlands and thence the relationship between primary, secondary and peripheral ranking settlements lying in the immediate vicinity of one another this has proved to be considerably less easy for areas of the Ross of Mull and Broloss. The 'settlement unit' designations cannot be regarded with the same degree of confidence as those suggested for Morrenish and Treshnish. For example it is probable, given the relationship of adjacent bolstadr units in Coll, Tiree and Morrenish that the bolstadr settlements of Eurobus and Vassapoll in the Ross of Mull originally formed part of a large primary settlement unit, but the dense post-Norse settlement of the area, exemplified by Gaelic names, in and around both settlements has obscured the pattern. Although some of the 'settlement units' are therefore somewhat artificial in that they band together settlements of varying status which lie in the vicinity of one another, even though the relationship between the settlements is unclear, it was decided to give a tentative 'settlement unit' designation where this seemed appropriate.

### 5.3.3 Settlement Analysis

#### Settlement unit Killynaig

<u>Kilynaig</u>		NM 42/52 GR 492 256.	
Killinak	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	
Kilneoning	1561	Bishop's Rental	16s 4d
Kilynaig	1622	Blaue	

G Cille,f Findoca,m pers name (Church of Findoca)

The settlement derives its name from the burial ground and church, no longer extant, dedicated to St. Findoca. The same dedication is found at the church of Kilynaig on Coll. The quality of the land is good, being 'moderately suited to the growth of arable crops'.<sup>65</sup> Killynaig pertained to the Abbey of Iona.

<sup>64</sup>Bishop's Rental 1561 in Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, ed. Iona Club, 1-3.

<sup>65</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<u>Torrans</u>	NM 42/52 GR 483 252	
Tornanach and Tornecheir	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p 214	
Thorin	1587/88 RMS vol.5 no.1491	1 pennyland
Thorrin	1662 Retour vol.1 no.67	1 pennyland
Thornie	1674 Retour vol.1 no.82	1 pennyland
Torranbeg and Torranuachlrich	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70	2 pennylands
Torranbeg	1801 SRO RHP 3368	

G Torr,m an,dim (Small rounded hill)

The settlement of Torrans is situated on good land on the banks of Abhainn nan Torr 0.25km inland from Port na Cloidheig. South of Torrans lies the settlement of Toran Machdrach and to the south-west that of Torran Iochadarach. The settlement was clearly divided into smaller component parts at an early date as these divisions are already apparent in 1509. The area encompassed by the original settlement must have been extensive. Within this area the fort of An Dunan occupies the summit of a rocky knoll 350m north of Torrans farmhouse.

<u>Pennycross</u>	NM 42/52 GR 157 259	
Penyngross	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	
Bingros	1654 Blaue	
Pennycross	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.71	1 pennyland

G Peighinn,m crois, f (Penny cross)

Pennycross lies at the foot of Tom a' Choillich where Allt Ruadh enters the sea. The settlement is said to derive its name from the roughly hewn latin cross known as Crois an Ellaimh (the beaten cross) which stands 800m west of the junction with the road to Carsaig.<sup>66</sup> The date inscribed on the cross is 1582, the discrepancy between this date and the date of the first written record of the settlement name suggests the existence of an earlier cross on the same site.

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.,159.

<u>Pennyghael</u>	NM 42/52 GR 517 264.	
Penyegile	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	
Pennyghae	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.71	3 pennylands
Fynnachy, Corsak & Glenlidel		
Pennygoile	1801 SRO RIIP 3368	

**G Peighinn,m Gaidheal,m** (Pennyland of the Gaelic speakers)

Pennygael is situated at the mouth of Glen Leidle where the Leidle river enters the sea. The land is of poor quality and inferior to that found at Pennycross. The settlement is now divided, both units retaining the name Pennygael. The name is a curious one, gaidheal is a term used only of Gaelic speakers and may have referred to a distinctive group of Gaels, possibly those speaking a different dialect.

**Settlement unit Ormsaig**

<u>Ormsaig</u>	NM 42/52 GR 446 239	
Ormissaig	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	12s 4d
Ormissaig	1510 RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Ormissaig	1679 IIP vol.1 p.315	
Ormsaig & Ardchrishnish	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.71	2 pennylands

**ON Ormr,m vík,f** (Worm/snake bay)

The settlement of Ormsaig lies on land of the highest quality found in Mull being 'moderately suited to agricultural use and composed of sandy loamy soils'.<sup>67</sup> Three beaching points are found only 0.5 km from the township, at Port a' Chaomhain, Port Luirigean and Port Mór. The generic vík in the settlement name may refer to any of these although the harbour at Port Mór, a small and indented bay, is most characteristic of a vík. The specific ormr in the name may refer to the prevalence of snakes or more probably eels in this area. Alternatively it may derive from the Norse male personal name Ormr or Ormarr which has the connotation serpent-like. The name is also found at Ormaig, Glen Forsay and Ormaig, Ulva.

Secondary modern settlement has developed 1km west of Ormsaig at Coillenangabhar. 0.25km south of this settlement is the torr of Seann-talaimh, old

<sup>67</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

arable land/cultivated lots of a crofting township, suggesting that the lands of Ormsaig stretched as far as the Allt Bun an Easan valley.

Beach NM 42/52 GR 462 238

Beauchis	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol. 13 p.214	
Beith	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	2 pennylands
Beith	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67	2 pennylands
Beach	1686	SRO E/60/7/3	33s 4d
Beach	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70	1.5 pennylands
<u>&amp; Correvalg</u>			
Beach	1801	SRO RHP 3368	

G Beith, f (Birchwood)

The settlement of Beach lies at the foot of Beinn Bhugan to the west of Beach river which runs through Gleann Airigh na Searsain entering the sea at Traigh nan Beach. The river valley forms the boundary between the regions of Broloss to the east and Ross to the west. To the west of Traigh nan Beach lies Port nan Beach while to the east a broad sandy bay protected by Eilean nan Caorach, a tidal islet, forms another beaching point.

The township lies on land having *rocky outcrops, peaty surfaces and wet subsoils* with only small areas suitable for cultivation. It is surprising therefore that the pennyland evaluation of the settlement is consistently high, twice that of, for example, Ormsaig to the west which has noticeably superior land quality. The 1686 Bishop's rental records that Beach pertained to the Abbey of Iona<sup>68</sup> and it may be that the areal extent of the settlement was considerably larger than the surrounding settlements. Alternatively, the explanation of the high evaluation may lie in the derivation of the settlement name. The earlier written forms suggest a derivation from G beith, birchwood. This is borne out by the presence of deciduous woodland at Port nan Beach and also in the settlement name Coillenangabhar (G *coille nan gobhar*, wood of the goats) 2km to the west. The presence of woodland in an otherwise moorland dominated landscape could be such a valuable commodity as to raise the pennyland evaluation of the land. Alternatively the earliest written form of the name may point to a derivation from ON beit, pasture.

<sup>68</sup>Bishop's Rental 1636, SRO E60/7/3.

Settlement unit Kilpatrick

<u>Kilpatrick</u>	NM 42/52 GR 419 234	
Gilpatrick	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	16s 8d
Kilphadrick	1679 HP vol.1 p.315	
Kilpatrick	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70	1 pennyland

G Cille,f Patrick,m pers name (Church of St Patrick)

The settlement is no longer extant but clearly took its name from the church of St. Patrick of which there are no longer any visible remains. The RCAHMS notes that a drawing of 1770 showed the remains of a sub-rectangular enclosure at the site together with a cross base.<sup>69</sup> The dedication to St. Patrick suggests an early date, there being another chapel dedicated to the same saint in Glen Forsay. The 1509 Crown Rental records that Kilpatrick was owned by Iona Abbey.<sup>70</sup> 1 km south-west of the site the name An Crosan (the small cross) denotes the possible presence of a votive cross on the hillside above the settlement.

<u>Ardchrishnish</u>	NM 42/52 GR 423 242	
Ardchrishnish	1751 Valuation Roll	1 pennyland
Ardchreshnish	1801 SRO RHP 3368	

G Airde,f ON kirkju,f nes,n (Church promontory)

The settlement of Ardchrishnish lies on a small headland jutting out into Loch Scriadan, north of Kilpatrick. The settlement clearly forms secondary expansion from Kilpatrick. It is possible that the name derives from the ON kirkju nes (see also Circnis, Tiree), the presence of the church influencing the choice of name for the headland. The specific airde would have been added a later date when the meaning of nes was no longer understood by native Gaelic speakers.

<sup>69</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3.,151.

<sup>70</sup>Exchequer Rolls vol.9 p.214.

Settlement unit Ardtun

<u>Ardtun</u>	NM 42/52 GR 395 233	
Ardtwn	1587/88 RMS vol.5 no.1491	5 pennylands
Ardtun	1662 Retour vol.1 no.67	5 pennylands
Ardtunis	1674 Retour vol.1 no.82	5 pennylands
Ardtun,	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70	4.5 pennylands
Lie and Sieba		

G Airde,f tunnadh,adj (Headland of the booming waves)

The peninsula of Ardtun roughly 5 sqkm in areal extent lies to the east of Loch na Lathaich. The land is low-lying, nowhere rising above the 50m contour with areas of fertile land found around Lochan Mor bay. The remainder of the headland is described as being 'land with severe limitations which confine its use to rough grazing'.<sup>71</sup> The headland was consistently evaluated at 5 pennylands (? 1/4 of an ounceland) and clearly must have formed a distinct administrative unit. The township of Ardtun lies on land classified as being 'moderately suited to arable use'<sup>72</sup> at the head of Lochan Mor. A natural and well-sheltered harbour formed here at Port Cul a' Mhill from which 'a cavern at certain tidal conditions emits a loud boom'.<sup>73</sup> The importance of this small bay, the only accessible one on the headland is seen by the presence of an Iron Age fort standing on Eilean nan Damh, a tidal island at the entrance to the bay and protected on three sides by steep cliffs.

Modern division of the settlement has resulted in the development of Lower Ardtun at GR 382 227. The 1679 rental records a division into Ardtunichtrach and Ardtunnachtrich. Secondary expansion eastwards from Ardtun is seen in the settlements of Achadaphail (G *achadh da fal*, field of the two folds) and Knockan (G *cnoc an*, small hill) to the east and at Taoslin, 0.25km to the south.

Achnahard NM 42/52 GR 394 237

G Achadh,m. na h',prep. airde,f (Field of the height)

The township of Achnahard is absent from the documentary record suggesting that it forms recent settlement expansion from Ardtun. It lies, however, on soil which is of the highest quality found in Mull to the east of Lochan Mor bay. Originally this land must have pertained to Ardtun.

<sup>71</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid..

<sup>73</sup>A.MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull,47.

<u>Salachran</u>	NM 42/52 GR 389 234		
Sailquhir	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	1 pennyland
Salquhir	1674	Retour vol.1 no.82	1 pennyland
Salchur, Sothie, Fiddan & Elanread	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70	2 pennylands

? G Seileach,m (Place where willows grow)

The township of Salachran lies on an area of land classified as having 'intense patterns of rock and shallow soils' but which is of superior quality to the surrounding moorland. The etymology of the name is not entirely clear. MacQuarrie suggests the above derivation and also the possibility that the final element may incorporate G crann, tree.<sup>74</sup> This, however, corresponds only to the modern written form.

### ? Settlement unit Eorabus

Eorabus NM 42/52 GR 382 236  
ON ? Jorunnar,m pers.name bolstadr,m (Jorunn's farm)

Eorabus occupies the prime site on the Ardtun headland. The township lies on fertile land where the parent soils (calluvian moraines and residuum from olivine basalt) have formed freely drained topsoils. This is in stark contrast to the interior of the headland. Eorabus lies also at the head of Traigh Mhor, a wide, sandy and well-sheltered bay on the eastern shore of Loch na Lathaich. An additional beaching point is found at Glas Phont.

The suffix bus in the name points to a derivation from ON bolstadr. The interpretation of the prefix is less clear cut. Three other settlement names in the Western Isles incorporate the same specific, eoro/eara, as in Eorabus, Islay; Eoropie, Lewis, and Eoradale also in Lewis. Oftedal, in discussing the Lewis names (*eoroboer* and *eoradalr*) suggested a derivation from the Norse personal name Jorunnar whilst disclaiming any suggestion that the prefix could stem from ON eyr, a sandbank.<sup>75</sup> An alternative Norse derivation of the name would be from ON eyrar, a gravelly beach as in the names Airan and Erraby in Orkney.

Despite the presence of what must surely rank as a primary Norse settlement in this area the surrounding landscape nomenclature is, now, entirely devoid

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.,94.

<sup>75</sup>M.Oftedal, 'Village names of Lewis' in Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap, 17(1954),371.

of any Norse names. Only a small skerry 1km to the south commemorates, in Gaelic,<sup>180</sup> the presence of Norse settlers, Sgeir nan Gall (skerry of the foreigners).

<u>Bunessan</u>	NM 42/52 GR 383217		
Boessane	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	
Boesane	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67	3.5 pennylands
Bonnessan	1674	HP vol.1 p.282	0.5 pennylands
Bunessan	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70	1.5 pennylands

G Bun,m eass,m an,dim (River mouth with the small waterfall)

Bunessan, now the main village/centre in the Ross of Mull, lies at the head of Port a Chladaich on a small area of flat land where the river Bunessan runs from Loch Assapoll to the sea. The land found along the river valley is some of the most fertile in the Ross of Mull on account of the alluvial soils. This fertility is reflected in the high pennyland evaluation of the settlement. Within the river valley Dun An Caisteal occupies a conspicuous position on the summit of a rocky crag which projects from the steep north-east face of Torr a' Bhacain.

1 km west of Bunessan a small hill (85m) is known by the name Torr na h-Annaid pointing to the presence of an early Christian site. A further 0.5 km to the south-west An Crosan denotes a possible votive cross site (as at Kilpatrick). The bay immediately to the north of Torr na h-Annaid is known as Camas na Criatha (bay of the grave) into which runs Allt Camas na Criatha. The ecclesiastical associations of these names all confirm that a church must have stood in the vicinity.

Peripheral settlement expansion has developed at Gowanbrae and Cnoc Raib on the eastern side of Bunessan Bay.

<u>Assapoll</u>	NM 42/52 GR 402 212.		
Assabald	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	1 pennyland
Assabald	1662	Retour vol.2 no.67	0.5 pennylands
Assiboill (& Cromgart)	1674	HP vol.1 p.282	1 pennyland
Assapoll	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70	1 pennyland
Vassipoll	1801	SRO RHP 3368	

ON Vassr,m bolsatdr,m (Fresh water farm)

The settlement of Assapoll lies on the northern shore of loch Assapoll. In this area rocky low hills run north-west to south-east. The soil quality ranks among

the highest in the Ross of Mull. The settlement lies on comparatively flat land which<sup>181</sup> leads into the valley of the Bunnessan river and the settlements on the Ardtun peninsula. The name is also found on Tiree and in Caithness. In all instances the prefix yassr refers to a fresh water loch.

<u>Lee</u>	NM 42/52 GR 408 219.	
Ley	1587/88 RMS vol.5 no.1491	2 pennylands
Ley	1662 Retour vol.1 no.67	2 pennylands
Lay	1674 Retour vol.1 no.82	2 pennylands
Ley,	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70	4.5 pennylands

Ardtun & Sheba

ON Hlid,f (Grassy slope)

The settlement of Lee lies on the western slopes of Beinn Lighe on land with peaty surfaces and wet subsoils. It is difficult to account for the high pennyland evaluation of the settlement, especially as Assapoll to the south-east, sited on considerably better ground, is only evaluated at 1 pennyland. Despite this anomaly it would seem that Lee formed secondary expansion from Assapoll. Peripheral modern settlement expansion is seen at High Lee.

<u>Saorphin</u>	NM 21/31 GR 398 20	
Seirpen	1587/88 RMS vol.5 no.1491	2 pennylands
Seirpen	1662 Retour vol.1 no.67	2 pennylands
Seorphene	1674 IIP vol.1 p.281	2 pennylands
Scarpine	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70	1 pennyland

G Saor,adj peighinn,m (The free pennyland)

The interpretation of the name is not entirely clear. A derivation as above suggests that the prefix stems from the Gaelic adjective saor, meaning exempt/clear/gratuitous, presumably from fiscal obligation. Alternatively the prefix may stem from ON saur, boggy/marshy etc. Saorphin lies on land west of Loch Assapoll. Here soil conditions are markedly different from the east of the loch, Saorphin lies on soil which is imperfectly and poorly drained while the surrounding area is covered with well drained till derived from schist, granite and basalt. The proximity of the Norse settlement names at Assapoll and Lee also argue for Saorphin having a Norse

derivation. It is, however, unusual to find the Gaelic suffix peighinn coupled with a<sup>182</sup> Norse prefix. All the other peighinn names on Mull are coupled with Gaelic prefixes.

Ardfenaig NM 42/52 GR 343 231  
Ardinaig 1679 IIP vol.1 p.311  
Ardfinnaig 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70 1.5 pennylands

G Airde,f ON finnr,adj vík,f (Headland of the narrow bay)

Ardfenaig lies at the head of Loch Caol, a small and narrow sea loch (G *caol*, narrow) which forms the western arm of Loch na Lathaich. MacQuarrie suggests that the settlement name stems from Gaelic finneag, crowberry, but the distinctive elongated inlet of Loch Caol makes it more likely that the area was known by the Norse term finnr vík. The heavy silting of the upper reaches of the loch has resulted in the blockage of what was previously a good and sheltered harbour. The quality of the soil is such as to impede drainage although the land is of a superior quality to that found on the An t-Aird headland north of the settlement.

A further beaching point is found to the north of Ardfenaig at Camas Tuath, now the site of a disused fishing station.

### Settlement unit Creich

Creich NM 42/52 GR 313 244  
Crewich inferiore 1587/88 RMS vol.5 no.1491  
Crewich superiore 1587/88 RMS vol.4 no.1491  
Crewich inferiore 1662 Retour vol.1 no.67 0.5 pennylands  
Crewich superiore 1662 Retour vol.1 no.67 0.5 pennylands  
Creich 1674 IIP vol.1 p.282 0.5 pennylands  
Crevich & Calchant 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70 1 pennyland

G Crioch,f (Boundary/border)

The settlement of Creich lies in the western end of the Ross of Mull. Dwelly defines G crioch as denoting a border, boundary, march or frontier landmark.<sup>76</sup> MacQuarrie suggests that this refers to the boundary between the parish of Kilfinichen

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<sup>76</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary,271.

and Kilvicuen and that of Iona to the west.<sup>77</sup> The name is also found in Sutherland,<sup>183</sup> in the parish name of Creich.

The settlement area is geographically large encompassing the peripheral settlements of Kintra (GR 315 256), Catchean (GR 308 237), Gortain Ur (GR 316 252), Drumbuie (GR 316 248), Braighcreaich (GR 324 244) and Gortain a' Ghibain (GR 326 242). The settlement was itself divided at the time of the earliest written record. The quality of the land is such that there are small areas of sandy loamy soils suitable for the growth of arable crops amongst large tracts of infertile moorland. This accounts for the proliferation of small settlement offshoots from the nucleus at Creich. The names of two of these, Gortain Ur (New Clearing) and Gortain a'Ghibain attest to the clearing and improvement of the land.

Catchean                      NM 42/52 gr 308 237.  
Calchant                      1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70      1 pennyland  
& Crevich

? G Cat,m    ceann,m              (Cat headland)

Catchean lies 1km south-west of Creich sheltered by the southern slopes of Torr Mór. The derivation of the name is unclear. MacQuarrie suggests cat-cinn, catkins.<sup>78</sup> Another explanation would be 'catceann', cat headland, perhaps more plausible given the proximity of a nearby hillock named Creag a' Chait, crag of the cat.

0.5 km south of Catchean is the township of Fionnphort (*G fionn port*, the white/fair harbour) the ferry terminal now for access to the island of Iona.

Aridhglas                      NM 42/52 GR 317 234  
G Airidh,m    glas,adj                      (Grey/green shieling)

Aridhglas is situated at the north-east end of Loch Poit na h-I on good land. The land quality and favourable position are unusual for a shieling site, but the settlements absence from the documentary record would seem to confirm its ranking as a secondary (or peripheral) settlement. Further settlement expansion has developed to the west of Achaban and to the north at Maolbuidhe.

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<sup>77</sup>A. MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull, 64.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 55.

<u>Fidden</u>	NM 22/32 GR 302 214	
Fiddin	1674 IIP vol.1 p.281	0.5 pennylands
Fiddan	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70	2 pennylands
& Sottie, Salchur		
& Elannead		
Feddán	1801 SRO RIIP 3368	

G Fidean,m (Place uncovered at high tide)

Fidden lies at the western extremity of the Ross of Mull on land designated 'moderately suited to arable use'.<sup>79</sup> The settlement possibly derives its name from the tidal islet Eilean nan Bo 0.25km to the north-west or from the proliferation of small tidal skerries immediately to the west of the settlement. Subsidiary settlement is located at Toba Bhreaca (GR 314 214) and at Gaineamach.

#### Settlement unit Knockvologan

<u>Knockvologan</u>	NM 22/32 GR 314 204.	
Knocktellegan	1674 IIP vol.1 p.282	2 pennylands
& Knockinley		
Knockvologan	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70	3 pennylands
& Knocknafinnag		

G Cnoc,n ? (? hill )

Knockvologan is situated in a shallow depression between the twin 'summits' (55 and 56m) of Cnoc an t-Suidhe at the head of a large sandy bay at An Caolas. Secondary settlement has developed at Cul-a-Bhaile 0.25km to the north. A narrow tidal sound separates Knockvologan from the tidal island of Erraid. The land on the island is of poor quality with the exception of the area around Dun Aoidhean which occupies a rocky knoll overlooking the north-eastern end of Erraid Sound.

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<sup>79</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<u>Pottie</u>	NM 21/31 GR 324 227.	
Poty	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491 1.5 pennylands
Poty	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67 1.5 pennylands
Pottie	1674	HP vol.1 p.281 1 pennyland
Sottie, 1751		SRO E106/3/2 p.70 2 pennylands
Salchur, Fiddan & Elanread		

G ? Poit,f (Depression from which peats have been cut)

The settlement of Pottie lies east of Loch Poit na h-I. The settlement now has two nuclei, Pottie at GR 324 227 and Pottie at GR 324 217 1km to the south. Both settlements lie on land with imperfectly drained soils giving them limited potential for agricultural usage. The derivation of the name is not entirely clear but may stem from G poit meaning a depression from which peats have been cut. The name of the loch to the west of the settlement also includes the noun poit, in loch poit na h-I; the island referred to in the name is the crannog located in the north east of the loch.

[Abbey Lands NM 21/31]

In the extreme south-west of the Ross of Mull are several landscape names which incorporate the generic cille ie Baigh Tir Cille GR 324 184; Allt na Traigh Gile; Tir Cille GR 329 184 and Cille Mhuire GR 332 189. There are no ecclesiastical remains in the vicinity and two of the names Tir Chille and Bagh Tir Chille suggest that this area was owned by the church. This is confirmed by entries in 1509 Exchequer Rolls,<sup>80</sup> the 1581/88 Charter<sup>81</sup> and the Bishop's Rentals of 1561<sup>82</sup> and 1686<sup>83</sup> which show that the area pertained to the Abbey of Iona.

The land is of poor quality consisting of rough moorland stretching southwards to the Aird Mor headland (GR 32 17). The area is devoid of settlement save for the township of Tirlagan which once stood at GR 338 186 (1801 Langlands map).<sup>84</sup>

### Settlement unit Ardalanish

<u>Ardalanish</u>	NM 21/31 GR 373 193	
Ardellaneish	1674	HP vol.1 p.271 1.5 pennylands
Ardalanish	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70 1 pennyland

G Airde,f ? ON nes,n (? headland)

<sup>80</sup>Exchequer Rolls vol.9.p.214.

<sup>81</sup>Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, ed. Iona Club, 161-179.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.,1-3.

<sup>83</sup>SRO E/60/7/3.

<sup>84</sup>SRO RHP 3368.

The bay of Ardalanish has attracted settlement from Iron Age times with an impressive fort standing on the summit of an isolated headland overlooking the western shore of the bay.

The soils at the head of Ardalanish bay are calcareous and freely drained making this area one of moderate fertility surrounded by peat moorland. The beach at Ardalanish bay is wide, sandy and relatively sheltered, an adequate beaching point at port na h' Uillin and Port Mor. The pennyland evaluation of the settlement is high reflecting the land conditions and also pointing to large areal extent. The township lands reach to Rubh' Ardalanish in the south and to Loch Beg Ardalanish in the north. Between the two extremities the settlement name 'seanbhaile' is indicative of former settlement expansion.

The derivation of the name is not entirely clear although the prefix is Gaelic airde and the final element ON nes which suggests that the name originally was of Norse origin.

<u>Ardachy</u>	NM 21/31 GR 375 194		
Ardachig	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	1 pennyland
Ardachig	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67	1 pennyland
Ardachie	1674	IIP vol.1 p.271	0.5 pennylands
Ardachy	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70	0.5 pennylands

G Airde,f achadh,m (Field/height)

Ardachy, clearly forms a secondary settlement to Ardalanish, lying 0.75km inland from Ardalanish bay on high quality land but slightly inferior to that of Ardalanish. Several bronze age cists, two of which contained inhumation burials were uncovered, in 1892, on the sea shore south of Ardachy.<sup>85</sup>

<u>Ardchiavaig</u>	NM 21/31 GR 389 187.		
Ardkevaig	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	0.5 pennylands
Ardkeboig	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67	0.5 pennylands
Ardehivag	1674	IIP vol.1 p. 271	0.5 pennylands
Arddchaivaig	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70	0.5 pennylands

<sup>85</sup>Sir Arthur Mitchell, 'Scottish burials and skulls probably belonging to the Bronze Age' in PSAS, 7(1896-7)115-121.

G Airde,f ON kyrr,adj vík,f (Quiet bay)

Ardchiavaig represents peripheral settlement expansion from Ardalanish and Ardachy. The settlement lies on land having 'imperfect and poor drainage'<sup>86</sup> which is therefore only moderately suited to arable use. Due south of the settlement is a small and well sheltered bay from which the name derives.

Uisken NM 21/31 GR 389 194.

Uskane 1587/88 RMS vol.5 no.1491 1 pennyland

Uskeyn 1674 HP vol.1 p.281 0.5 pennylands

G Uisge,m an,dim (Small watery place)

Due south of Uisken, Dun a' Chiabaig stands on a prominent rocky knoll 300m from the shore at port Uisken. The settlement is sited on sandy soil which is moderately suited to arable use. The presence of springs at Uisken possibly account for the settlement name. Subsidiary, modern settlement has developed at An Fan to the north-west.

Knocknafenaig NM 21/31 GR 369 198.

Knocknnefineg 1587/88 RMS vol.5 no.1491 1 pennyland

Knocknafileg 1674 Retour vol.1 no.82 1 pennyland

Knocknafinnaig 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.70 3 pennylands

& Knockvologan

G Cnoc,n na, prep feannag,f (Hill of the lazy beds)

Knocknafenaig lies 1 km north of Ardalanish on an area of poor soils. The Gaelic term feannag refers to a distinctive form of cultivation carried out where soil was scarce and bog land could not be cultivated in any other way. Knocknafenaig forms peripheral settlement expansion from the nucleus of Ardalanish.

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<sup>86</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

Settlement unit Kilvicuen

<u>Kilvicuen</u>	NM 42/52 GR 412 197.		
Kilmakewin	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	4 pennylands
Kilmakellan	1622	Retour vol.2 no.67	4 pennylands
Kilvvickewn	1674	IIP vol.1 p.280	4 pennylands

G Cille,f (?) Ernan,m pers name (Church of Ernan)

The church of Kilvicuen stands within its burial ground close to the east shore of loch Assapoll. The RCAHMS notes that 'nothing is known of the early history of the church'.<sup>87</sup> The existing fabric stems from the thirteenth century. In the early fifteenth century the church is described as the church of Eugenius but the dedication, as at Kilvicueuen on Ulva, was probably to Ernan, son of Eoghan and nephew of St. Columba. Due east of the site the name An Crosan points to the site of a votive cross which occupied the summit of the highest hill in the vicinity (GR 427 197).

The exceptionally high pennyland evaluation of the land, 4 pennylands, can in part be as a result of the high land quality but may also reflect the existence of an administrative unit centred upon the church.

Settlement unit Shiaba

<u>Shiaba</u>	NM 42/52 GR 408 194.		
Schabbay	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	4 pennylands
Shirbar	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67	4 pennylands
Sheba	1674	IIP vol.1 p.282	4 pennylands

G ?

The etymology of the name is unclear. The same name is found describing the settlement of Shiebie on Berneray although that name may stem from G siaba, a form of maram grass. This would be unlikely to be applicable as a descriptive term for Shiaba, Mull. Alternatively the name may incorporate the same specific as that found in the Lewis name Shiabost ON sa, sea.<sup>88</sup> The pennyland evaluation is very high as the settlement lies on a large tract of land of the highest quality found in Mull. 1km to the south Traigh Ban provides a very well sheltered and protected harbour.

<sup>87</sup>RCAHMS. Argyll 3.

<sup>88</sup>M.Oftedal, 'Village Names of Lewis', 377.

Scoor NM 42/52 GR 419 192

Scur	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	1.5 pennylands
Scur	1662	Retour vol.1 no.67	1.5 pennylands
Scour	1674	IIP vol.1 p.280	0.5 pennylands
Scour	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.70	1 pennyland
Scour	1801	SRO RIIP 3368	

G Sgúrr,f (Sharp, pointed hill)

The settlement takes its name from Maol na Sgurra a steep sided hill rising sharply to 102m above Traigh Bhan na Sgurra. The settlement lies 0.25 km to the west of the hill on land suited to use as grassland and improved pasture.

#### Settlement unit Carsaig

<u>Carsaig</u>	NM 42/52 GR 540 219.		
Corsok	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.214	
Cairsage	1561	Bishop's Rental	1 pennyland
Carsaig	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	1 pennyland
Carswick	1622	Blaeu	
Carsaig	1686	SRO E/60/7/3	

? ON vík,f (? bay)

Carsaig pertained to the Abbey of Iona. The settlement lies at the head of the only wide sandy bay on the southern coast of Ross. To the west the cliffs stretch for 12 km bounding areas of rough moorland. To the east the coastal scenery is similarly dramatic with steeply sloping coalescing alluvial fans and scree slopes. Around Carsaig bay alluvium derived soils together with freely drained raised beach and outwash gravels give fertile land. To the north-east Beinn Carsaig rises steeply to 449m.

Settlement is concentrated on the flat land at the bayhead in the vicinity of the site of St. Marys chapel and burial ground. Within the burial ground boundary lies an early Christian decorated stone cross while the west wall of the Nuns Cave 2 km south-west of Carsaig bears numerous incised cross carvings, some of which are of sixth to ninth century date. Inniemore Lodge to the east of Carsaig is marked by Bla as Pinniemore, G peighinn mór, the large pennyland.

Modern peripheral ranking settlement is found at Finachag, Feorlinn and An Leitir.

#### 5.3.4 Summary

In terms of density of settlement the area studied falls into two parts: that to the east of Cruachan (376m) and that to the west. In the eastern region the limitations of the physical terrain have ensured that settlement is confined to the narrow coastal belt, primarily where rivers enter the sea as, for example, at Beith. By contrast, the lower relief and greater diversity of soils in the western area have resulted in the development of settlement inland in the belt of land stretching from Loch Lathaich in the north to Ardalanish Bay in the south. The Ardtun peninsula and the area around Loch Assapoll also show a comparatively high density of settlement and it is also in this region that the highest pennyland evaluations are found at Ardtun, 5 pennylands; Kilvicuen, 4 pennylands; Shiaba, 4 pennylands; and Bunessan, 3.5 pennylands. This differs greatly from the settlement evaluations further east where even the prime site of Carsaig is evaluated at only 1 pennyland. The two primary settlements of Eorabus and Assapoll are found within the fertile western area and are the only examples of Norse habitative settlement names in the Ross of Mull.

The extreme western extremity of the Ross shows a similar density of settlement on the superior soils found around Loch Poit na h-I. Throughout the region however there is a similar pattern in the ranking of settlement. 31% of the settlement names rank as primary, a further 43% as secondary and 26% are of peripheral status.

Table 1Parish of Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen. Settlements recorded in the documentary record.[Ranking included for settlements investigated]

<u>Settlement Name</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Ardtun	1587	5 pennylands	Primary
Achnahard	1674	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Ardthenaig	1587	2 pennylands	Secondary
Ardwellane	1587	2 pennylands	
Ardchrishnish	1751	2 pennylands	Secondary
Ardfenaig	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Aridghlas	1801	–	Peripheral
Ardalanish	1674	1.5 pennylands	Primary
Ardachy	1801	1 pennyland	Secondary
Ardchiavaig	1587	0.5 pennylands	Secondary
Assapoll	1587	1 pennyland	Secondary
Ballevullin	1895	–	
Burg	1496	1 pennyland	
Bernis	1587	1 pennyland	
Baillimor	1587	4 pennylands	
Beach	1509	2 pennylands	Secondary
Bunnessan	1587	3.5 pennylands	Secondary
Culliemor	1493	0.5 pennylands	
Camis	1493	1 pennyland	
Carvalge	1561	1 pennyland	
Carsaig	1561	1 pennyland	Primary
Callegowan	1587	2.5 pennylands	
Cronygart	1587	2 pennylands	
Creich	1587	1 pennyland	Primary
Catchean	1751	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Decreach	1895	–	
Eorabus	1801	–	Primary
Eddiralloch	1587	0.5 pennylands	
Elan Calmen	1587	0.5 pennylands	
Fidden	1674	0.5 pennylands	Secondary
Glaswilder	1561	0.5 pennylands	
Knockroy	1493	2 pennylands	
Killemorm	1561	0.75 pennylands	
Kilvicuen	1587	4 pennylands	Primary
Kealline	1561	1 pennyland	

Kilbrandane	1561	1 pennyland	
Knocktaytorlat	1587	1 pennyland	
Kilpatrick	1509	1 pennyland	Primary
Kintra	1801	—	
Knockvologan	1674	2 pennylands	Primary
Knocknafennaig	1587	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Killunaig	1509	1 pennyland	Primary
Larakhin	1587	1 pennyland	
Lewone	1587	0.5 pennyland	
Lee	1587	2 pennylands	Secondary
Ormsaig	1509	1 pennyland	Primary
Pennycross	1509	1 pennyland	Secondary
Pennyghael	1509	1 pennyland	Secondary
Penniemor	1622	1 pennyland	
Pottie	1587	1.5 pennylands	Peripheral
Shionell	1493	1 pennyland	
Scobull	1493	1 pennyland	
Salachran	1587	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Stockadill	1587	2 pennylands	
Swie	1674	0.5 pennylands	
Salquhir	1587	1 pennyland	
Scoor	1587	1.5 pennylands	Secondary
Shiaba	1587	4 pennylands	Secondary
Saorphin	1587	2 pennylands	
Tirouran	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Taypull	1193	0.5 pennylands	
Torrans	1587	1 pennyland	Secondary
Tiraghoil	1622	1 pennyland	
Traysan	1587	2 pennylands	
Tiergill	1587	1 pennyland	
Teregill	1587	2 pennylands	
Teirgargane	1587	1 pennyland	
Teirchladane	1587	2 pennylands	
Uisken	1587	1 pennyland	Peripheral

Table 2. Ross of Mull and Broloss

<u>Settlement</u> <u>Classification</u>	<u>Total number of</u> <u>settlements</u>	<u>Total ON</u> <u>names</u>	<u>Total G</u> <u>names</u>
Primary	10	4	6
Secondary	14	4	10
Peripheral	8	–	8

<u>Settlement</u> <u>classification</u>	<u>ON habitative</u> <u>names</u>	<u>ON simplex</u> <u>topographical names</u>	<u>G habitative</u> <u>names</u>
Primary	1	–	–
Secondary	–	1	–
Peripheral	–	–	1

Table 3Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen

Total number of settlements	69
Total having ON names	12 (17.4%)
Total having G names	57 (82.6%)

Ross of Mull and Broloss

Total number of settlements	32
Total having ON names	4 (12.5%)
Total having G names	28 (87.5%)

## 5.4.1

PARISH OF TOROSAY

The parish of Torosay, formerly known as the parish of Killean in Torosay essentially covers the eastern part of the island of Mull. Geographically the parish may be divided further into three smaller regions following the watersheds of the Glen Forsay, Glen Leirein and Glen Móre river valleys. With the exception of the relatively fertile narrow strip of land stretching from Loch Buie to Loch Spelve and known as the 'Garden of Mull' the parish is predominantly made up of steep sided hills and rough moorland. Here peat soils with accompanying poor drainage limit land use to rough grazing. The calcareous glacial drifts found in the 'Garden of Mull' account for its greater fertility.

The first written reference to Torosay comes in 1390 and describes the area as being evaluated at 'one unciata'.<sup>87</sup> In 1495 the area is again referred to as one ounceland.<sup>88</sup> In 1494 Glen Forsay is evaluated at 20 pennylands<sup>89</sup> (? one ounceland). Both these figures suggest early settlement demarcations based upon the *distinct geographical divisions mentioned above.*

5.4.2 Coastal settlements. Saen to Loch Spelve and Glen Forsay.

The coastal strip Saen to Loch Spelve covers the eastern most part of the parish. The area lies close to the mainland of Argyll and is the most densely settled region in Torosay. The Glen Forsay valley has been included as it represents settlement in the 'interior' of Mull where land use is confined to shielings. It was hoped that it would be possible to ascertain the primary settlement unit to which the shielings belonged and thereby give some indication of the distance between the shieling and the main farm. The lack of documentary evidence for the shielings has, however, largely made this a matter for conjecture, and it would appear that the development of shielings into permanent habitation was largely a post Norse phenomenon.

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<sup>87</sup>RMS vol.1 app.1 no.114.

<sup>88</sup>RMS vol.2 no.2264.

<sup>89</sup>RMS vol.2 no.2200.

COASTAL SETTLEMENTS SALEN TO LOCH SPELVE: GLEN FORSAY  
SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION



0 1 2 3 4  
Km

### 5.4.3 Settlement Analysis

#### Settlement unit Salen

Salen NM 44/54 GR 573 455.

G Sailean,m (Small tidal basin/salting)

Salen is situated at the head of Salen bay on an area of land 'moderately suited to agricultural use' where Allt na Searmon runs into the sea. Salen is the northern most settlement in the parish of Torosay and situated at the eastern end of the narrow neck of land (4.5 km wide) which separates Loch na Keal from the Sound of Mull. The low lying nature of the land and ease of access from the east to the west of Mull has made the area one of strategic importance. At Salen bay an Iron Age fort occupies a rocky promontary overlooking the eastern shore of Salen Bay. Salen has now developed into the main settlement for the east of Mull.

#### Settlement unit Pennygowan

Pennygowan NM 44/54 GR 597 428.

Pengown	1493/4	RMS vol.2 no.2200	1 pennyland
Penyegoune	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	16s 8d
Pennygowan	1743	SRO GD 174/715	1 pennyland
Pennygowan	1781	SRO GD 174/789/14	2 pennylands

(& Lettir)

G Peighinn, f gobhainn, m (Smith's pennyland)

The settlement of Pennygowan lies at the head of Glen Forsa, on flat land to the immediate east of the river Forsa. This area is one of the most fertile in Torosay where alluvial soils have developed along the lower reaches of the river. The name Pennygowan is common throughout the Western Isles being found also at, for example, Peingown, Trotternish Skye. The noun gobhainn is also found coupled with the Gaelic generic baile as at Ballygowan in the parish of Kilninian and Kilmóre.

On the flat land to the west of the settlement (GR 588 429) a number of graves were uncovered in 1960. Although the site had no known ecclesiastical associations, the character of the graves suggested a date in the early Christian or mediaeval

period.<sup>90</sup> 1km to the west lies Pennygowen chapel (GR 604 432) possibly of thirteenth century date which served the northern portion of the parish of Torosay.<sup>91</sup> Pennygowen clearly ranks as a primary settlement.

<u>Callachally</u>	NM 44/54 GR 592 423.	
Callachilly	1743 SRO GD 174/715	1.25 pennylands
Callachilly	1781 SRO GD 174/789/14	1 pennyland

G ? achadh,m liath,adj (? grey field)

Callachilly lies 0.75km south-west of Pennygowen on flat land at the foot of Beinn Bhuidhe. The quality of land is similar to that found at Pennygowen as Callachilly too lies within the flood plain of the Forsa river. The specific in the settlement name is unclear. MacQuarrie, erroneously suggests a derivation from ON kyarr, brushwood.<sup>92</sup>

<u>Kilbeg</u>	NM 64/74	
Kelbeg	1493/4 RMS vol.2 no.2200	
Killebeg	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	16s 8d
Kilbeg	1620 Sasine vol.2 no.83 p.25	0.5 pennylands
Kilbeg	1743 SRO GD 174/715	0.75 pennylands
Kilbeg	1781 SRO GD 174/789/14	0.75 pennylands

G Cille,f beag,adj (Small church)

The settlement of Kilbeg lies just above the 20m contour to the west of the river Forsa. The RCAHMS notes that 'this site may be represented by traces of a stony bank forming an irregular enclosure about 23m in width'.<sup>93</sup> No information has been obtained concerning the history of the site.

<sup>90</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,138.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid..

<sup>92</sup>A.MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull,53.

<sup>93</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3,147.

Baile Geamhraidh NM 64/74 GR 632 428.

G Baile,m Geamhraidh,m (Winter township)

The significance of the settlements name is unclear although it may in part refer to its exposed position on the eastern coast. Baile Geamraidh lies 0.25 km inland on the lower slopes of Maol Bhuidhe. The site is a peripheral one, the soils poor and the township is absent from the documentary record. Linear expansion of settlement has developed to the west running parallel with the main road at Achadh Fada and Croit na Sgulan.

### Settlement unit Fishnish

<u>Fishnish</u>	NM 64/74 GR 645 415.	
Fynchennis	1493/4 RMS vol.1 no.2200	1 pennyland
Fenschenis	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	16s 8d
Fishnish (& Balmeanoch)	1743 SRO GD 174/715	2 pennylands
Fishnish (& Balmeanoch)	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66	2 pennylands

ON Fiskr,m nes,n (Fish promontary)

Fishnish point, at the head of the Fishnish peninsula lies only 2 km south-east of Rubha Dearg on the western coast of the Argyll mainland. To the east of the Fishnish headland Fishnish Bay, a wide and sandy bay forms a natural harbour with the settlement of Fishnish lying at its head. A hill in the middle of the headland rising to 59m is known by the name Cnoc an Teine (fire/beacon hill) indicating the importance of the headland as a recognizable and well known landmark. The two most modern written forms of the name would suggest a derivation from ON fiskr nes although this is less clear from the earlier examples. If so, the Fishnish headland is one of only a few landscape features in this area bearing Norse names, and, like the headlands of Morrenish and Treshnish suggests that the sea channels were well known routes for the Scandinavians in this area.

Leiter NM 64/74 GR 638 418.

Lettir	1493/4	RMS vol.2 no.2200	1 pennyland
& Arnacreil			
Lettir	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	16s 8d
Lettir	1743	SRO GD 174/715	1 pennyland
Lettir	1781	SRO GD 174/789/14	2 pennylands

(& Pennygowen)

GLeth,m    tir,m    (Half land)

Leiter is situated on the lower eastern slopes of Maol Buidhe where Allt na Criche and Allt a' Mhuillin run into Fishnish Bay. The alluvial soils here, as at Salen, merit the lands classification as 'moderately suited to agricultural use'.<sup>94</sup> The area originally pertaining to the settlement was a large one as evidenced by the place names in the vicinity such as Leth Beinn, Leth Allt, Guala na Leitreach and *Rubha na Leitreach*.

The element lettir, half land, is a common one in Gaelic speaking areas. Gillies elucidates this as being 'a term always perfectly descriptive in meaning a hillside without another opposite'<sup>95</sup> which adequately describes Leiters position facing the Sound of Mull with the steep sides of Maol Buidhe to the south-east and north-east. Peripheral settlement spreading out from Leiter has developed at Goirtean Driseach, Doire Dorch and An Craaiche along the main road between Leiter and Baile Geamhraidh.

<u>Corrynachenchy</u>	NM 64/74 GR 642 414.	
Corinahenoch	1743 SRO GD 174/715	0.25 pennylands
Corrinahennagan	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66	0.5 pennylands
Corrinahinich	1781 SRO GD 174/789/14	0.5 pennylands

G Coire, m    nan,prep    eunachair, m pl    (Corrie of the birds)

Corrynachenchy is situated at the western end of Fishnish bay, 0.25 km inland on the banks of Allt Mór Coire nam Eunachair and 300m below Beinn Coire nam Eunachair from which the settlement takes its name. The steepness of the surrounding hills and the small area of flat land available for settlement account for Corrynachenchys consistently low evaluation and its land use classification as 'land suited to use as grassland and improved pasture'.

<sup>94</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>95</sup>H.Cameron Gillies, Place -names of Argyll,21.

Bailemeonach NM 64/74 GR 657 414.

Balmeanoch 1743 SRO GD 174/715 2 pennylands  
& Fishnish

Balmeanoch 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66 2 pennylands  
& Fishnish

G Baile, m meadhonach,adj (Middle township)

Bailemeonach lies midway between Fishnish and Bailefraoich on land which falls within the soil surveys classification of land with 'intense patterns of rock and shallow soils which cause cultivation difficulties'. Only areas of less than 2 ha are cultivable. 0.25 km south east of Bailemeonach a rounded hillock has the name Druim na Cille which may have associations with the church site at Garmony further to the south-east.

### Settlement unit Garmony

Garmony NM 64/74 GR 669 404

Garemown 1493/4 RMS vol.2 no.2200 1 pennyland

Garmony 1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213 16s 8d

Garmony 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.67 1 pennyland

G Garbh,adj monadh,m (Rough moorland)

Garmony lies north of Garmony burn where the burn enters the sea at Garmony point, together with Allt Achadh na Moine. Near the mouth of the latter stream stand the remains of Dun Earba. The above derivation of the name fails to equate with the fact that the township lies on land of the highest quality found in Mull. An alternative suggestion is hard to find. The adjective garbh is frequently incorporated in place names in this area (and also on Coll) as in Garmonruich at Kinlochbory, Mull.

North-north-east of Garmony at Lag na Cille are the barely identifiable remains of a chapel with no known recorded history. Site and situation, harbour facilities and a moderate valuation suggest that Garmony formed the primary settlement in this area.

Bailefraoich NM 64/74 GR 670 411.

G Baile,m fraoch,m (Heather/heath township)

Bailefraoich forms secondary settlement expansion from Garmony. The township is absent from the documentary record and lies on land having rocky outcrops, peaty surfaces and wet subsoils suitable for rough grazing and little else.

**Settlement unit Scallastle**

<u>Scallastle</u>	NM 63/73 GR 699 382.	
Skowlestillmore	1493/4 RMS vol.2 no.2200	1 pennyland
Skowlestillbeg	1493/4 RMS vol.2 no.2200	1 pennyland
Scallistillmór	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	16s 8d
Scallistillbeg	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	16s 8d
Skallestillmore	1624 Sasine vol.2 no.181 p.58	1 pennyland
Skallestillbeg	1624 Sasine vol.2 no.181 p.58	1 pennyland
Skarrisdill	1679 HP vol.1 p.311	
& Eorsay		
Scallastillbeg	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66	1 pennyland
Scallastillmór	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66	1 pennyland
Scallasdale	1801 SRO RHP 3368	
Scallastle	1848 SRO RHP 23452	

ON Skalli, m dalr, m (Dale of dry and stony rising land)

Scallastle lies at the east end of Scallastle bay on the raised wave cut platform. Here and at a Java point freely drained calcareous soils and gravels derived from mixed acidic and basic rocks give areas of fertile land suitable for the growth of arable crops. This is in marked contrast to the surrounding areas where peaty soils and rocky outcrops characteristic of Torosay as a whole are found. A natural harbour is found in the shelter of Sgeir Mhic Chomhain at the eastern end of the bay. The high evaluation of the settlement and the fact that it was, from the time of the earliest record in 1493,<sup>96</sup> divided in two, emphasises the superior site, situation and land quality. The settlement ranks as primary. Secondary settlement is shown on Langland's map as being at Altirich, 1km to the north-west.

The settlement name is open to an alternative interpretation; that the prefix derives from ON Skali, dwelling/shieling/ hall, as in the name Scalloway, Shetland.

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<sup>96</sup>RMS vol.2 no. 2209

Java NM 63/73 GR 714 379.

The township of Java lies on the western side of Craignure Bay where the harbour of Port na Luinge (boat harbour) is protected by Java point. Like the adjacent settlement of Scallastle the land is of a particularly high quality. The origin, or transference of the name Java is now lost. MacQuarrie suggests that the area was previously known as Rubha Cuidhernis - point of the burial place, there being a modern eighteenth century graveyard nearby at GR 710 376. Traditionally Craignure bay formed the boundary between the lands of MacLeans of Duart and MacLains of Lochbuie.<sup>97</sup> The absence of the settlement name from the documentary record, under either of the above names would maybe suggest that this area was previously known as Scallastle beg and that the whole headland was once referred to by the name Scallastle, Scallastle Mór being where the present settlement of Scallastle stands.

Craignure NM 63/73 GR 722 367.

G Creag,f an, prep Iubhair,m (Crag/rock of the yew tree)

Craignure is absent from the documentary record which is puzzling given its prime location on fertile land at the south-east end of Craignure bay. Natural beaching facilities have been improved upon so that Craignure now forms a ferry terminal for the Oban to Mull ferry. Secondary settlement to Craignure has developed to the south of DruMóire.

### Settlement unit Torosay

<u>Torosay</u>	NM 63/73 GR 726 356.	
Torosay	1495 RMS vol.2 no.2264	1 unciata
Torosay	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	
Thorrissan	1510 RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Toirrasa	1561 Bishop's Rental	
Torosay	1603 Retour vol.1 no.7	1 pennyland
Torosay	1642 Sasine vol.50 no.683	18s
Torosay	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66	

ON Thorr, m pers name ey,m (Thors island?)

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<sup>97</sup>A MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull,77.

The settlement of Torosay lies 0.25 km inland to the west of Duart bay. Here the bay of Camas Mór has silted over leaving a large muddy area. Clearly there has been a marked change in the coastal features in this area. The small headland, Sgeir a' Bhriogain, which divides Camas Mór from Duart beach is also known by the name Eilean Trianach, suggesting that this was once an island. Further along the coast, west of Torosay, natural harbours are found at Port an t-Seiliseir and Port an t-Eathair, the latter now upgraded with the erection of a jetty. The land at the head of Camas Mór is sandy and well drained and 'suited to the growth of arable crops and grass in rotation'.<sup>98</sup>

There is much to suggest that Torosay was a primary settlement of some importance on the island. The earliest reference to Torosay occurs in 1390<sup>99</sup> where it has the evaluation of one unciata, one ounce-land. Clearly this refers to a large district within which lay other settlements. The mediaeval parish of Torosay also built upon this earlier division.

The derivation of the name is not entirely clear although it is almost certain that the prefix stems from the Norse personal name Thorir, gen Thoris as in the name Torrisdale, Tongue. The origin of the suffix is open to two interpretations. With the exception of the 1561 entry in the Bishops rental of 1561 all the written forms record the termination -ay, suggesting a derivation from ON ey, island. The area is totally devoid of islands. However the Eilean Trianach point may at one time have formed a small tidal island, 1 km east of Torosay township. Alternatively the name Torosay may have its origins in the compound habitative generic Thoris-stadir, as it is possibly found in the name Thorastan (Coll) and Torressa (Tiree) and also in the name of a small settlement Torressa, south of Loch a' Chumhain in the parish of Kilninian and KilMóire. The entry in the 1510 charter, Thorrissan<sup>100</sup>, and that of 1561 Toirrasa<sup>101</sup>, would appear to confirm this view. A final (less likely) interpretation might lie in the coupling of Thorir with the Norse generic eid, isthmus, referring to the narrow neck of land from Loch na Keal across to Salen, which divides Torosay from the area now known as Kilninian and KilMóire.

Given the obvious importance of Torosay it is worthy of comment that none of the landscape features in the vicinity of the settlement incorporate this name; neither river nor hillside include any reference to Torosay, again stressing its primary function as a district name.

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<sup>98</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>99</sup>RMS vol.1 app.1 no.114.

<sup>100</sup>RMS vol.2 no.3340.

<sup>101</sup>Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis, ed.Iona Club,1-3.

<u>Achnacroish</u>	NM 63/73 GR 724 349.	
Ardnagrose	1510 RMS vol.2 no.3440	3 pennylands
Achnacroiss	1674 HP vol.1 p.284	3 pennylands
Achnacroish,	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66	3 pennylands
Toryormaig & Derrychulen		

G Achadh,m na, prep crois,f (Field of the cross)

The settlement name is now retained only in the name Upper Achnacroish suggesting that the settlement had, at one time been divided. The settlement lies upstream from Torosay and has a surprisingly high pennyland evaluation which, together with the directional prefix 'upper', is suggestive of large areal extent.

There is no sign of a cross at this location but the proximity of the early Christian chapel at Kilpatrick may indicate that this was once the site of a votive cross.

#### **Settlement unit Kilpatrick**

<u>Kilpatrick</u>	NM 63/73 GR 738 344.	
Kilpatrick	1509 Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	
Kilpatrick	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66	1.25 pennylands
& 1/4 of Barna		

G Cille,f Patrick, m pers name (Church of Patrick)

Kilpatrick lies on an area pocket of fertile land 0.25 km inland from Duart bay. The burial ground contains no identifiable tombstones earlier than 1707 but the dedication to St. Patrick suggests that this may be the site of an earlier chapel.

Barna (?) NM 63/73

In the 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66, Kilpatrick is coupled with '1/4 of Barna'.

This settlement is no longer discernible but in the vicinity of Kilpatrick 4 small parcels of land incorporate the Gaelic noun barr (height/hill)

ie. Barr nan Muc	GR 735 333
Barr Leathan	GR 729 343
Barr nan Friar	GR 742 332
Barr Suiseig	GR 739 339

These may originally have formed component parts of one settlement.

DruimÓrmaig NM 63/73 GR 742 343.

G Druim,m ON Ormr,m vík,f (Ridge of the hill of bay of snakes)

The settlement lies at the head of Duart bay on land consisting of rocky outcrops, peaty surfaces and wet subsoils. It would appear that the Gaelic noun druim has been added to an existing Norse settlement name Ormr-vík. This name is also found at Ormaig, Ross of Mull and at Ormaig Ulva. To the north of Camas Mór at the north-eastern end of Duart bay Langland's map records the presence of another settlement which possibly incorporates the same name Ormaig in the settlement name Tomgormick. Both names suggest the possibility that this wide silty bay was previously known by the name Ormaig and that the transference of the district name Torosay to the area occurred at a later date.

### Settlement unit Duart

Duart NM 63/73 GR 748 354.

Dewart	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	34s 4d
Dewart	1679	HP vol.1 p.311	
Dewart	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.66	

G Dubh,adj airde, f (Black headland)

Duart point at the eastern end of Duart bay is the site of the stronghold of the McLeans of Duart.<sup>102</sup> The castle stands upon a rocky headland and 'is one of the most

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<sup>102</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3.191.

commanding in the western seaboard lying at the intersection of three major waterways, viz the Sound of Mull, Firth of Lorn and the mouth of Loch Linnhe.<sup>103</sup> The earliest part of the castle dates to the thirteenth century. Anchorage facilities at Duart bay are adequate except in very bad weather.

Ardchoirk                      NM 63/73 GR 742 332.  
 Ardchoig                      1510 RMS vol.2 no.3440    1 pennyland  
 Dowart Ardchoirk,            1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66    3.5 pennylands  
 Barna FeolineMór & Shenovail

G Airde,f coirce, m.            (Headland of oats/corn)

Ardchoirk lies due south of Drui~~m~~ormaig on the banks of the Loch Don estuary. The name may originally have referred to the entire headland both south and east of Duart point. Both the land immediately surrounding the settlement and that to the south of it has a high ranking land use qualification.

Gorten                      NM 63/73 GR 746 324.  
 G Gortean,m            (Small clearing/patch of arable land)

Gorten lies on a small area of high quality land in the southern portion of the Ardchoirk headland. The silting up of the estuary in this region has resulted in large muddy bays at Camas na Leideig to the south-west and Camas Lon to the south, and also at Bhrian Phort to the south-east, all of which must have adversely affected the potential of the area for beaching boats.

Lochdon                      NM 63/73 GR 730 335.  
 G Loch,f            ? don/ dona,adj            (Deteriorating /dangerous loch)

The settlement of Loch Don is situated at the head of the sea loch. As the name suggests, severe silting of the estuary has resulted in only a narrow dangerous

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid..

channel of water between extensive mudflats surviving in what may at one time have been a deep navigable arm of the sea. The land at the head of the loch is classified as having 'intense patterns of rock and shallow soils'<sup>104</sup> limiting land use to grassland and improved pasture'.

The linear settlement of Loch Don which curves around the bay head shows secondary expansion at Ardohin to the east and at Oakbank and Hazelbank to the south-west.

### Settlement unit Ardnadrochit

Ardnadrochit NM 63/73 GR 732 320.

Ardnadhrogit	1510	RMS vol.2 no.3440	1 pennyland
Ardnadrochit	1674	HP vol.1 p.271	1 pennyland
Ardindrochite	1679	HP vol.1 p.311	1 pennyland
Ardnadrochit	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.66	2 pennylands
Stradow, Lornaskiathh & 1/4 of Barna			

G Airde,f na,prep drochaid,f (Height of the bridge)

The settlement of Ardnadrochit lies at the northern tip of Druim Mór Aird na Drochaide and 0.25 km to the south west of a bridging point on Abhainn Lirein which drains into Loch Don. Here there are two small areas (less than 2 hectares) of cultivable land.

Auchnacraig NM 63/73 GR 737 302.

Achnacraig & Leirfedaig	1674	HP vol.1 p.283	2 pennylands
Achnacraig & Ardchyll	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.66	3.75 pennylands

G Achadh,m na,prep creag,f (Field of the craggy hill)

Auchnacraig is situated to the south-east of groos point on an area of good land. Immediately to the north is the hill Creag a' Chait (cat crag) from which the settlement possibly derives its name. Two harbours are found at the east end of the flat coastal plain at

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<sup>104</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

Port an t-Sasunnaich and Port na Roilinn. To the south of the settlement the names Barr Mheadonach and Cnoc an-t sean bhaile are indicative of a once denser settlement pattern on the headland. A small harbour between the two is known by the name Port na Tairbeirt while further south is the wide sandy bay of Port Douain.

### Settlement unit Killean

Killean NM 63/73 GR 715 289

Killane	1509	Exchequer Rolls vol.13 p.213	33s 4d
et Callequholehous			
Keillean	1561	Bishop's Rental	
Kellin	1587/88	RMS vol.5 no.1491	1 pennyland
Killane	1631	Bishop's Rental	1 pennyland
Kellin	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.66	

G Cille,f Iain,m pers.name (Church of John)

The settlement takes its name from the mediaeval church of Killean which lies 0.75 km south of the settlement and 0.5 km inland from Rubha na Cille. The dedication is to St. John, the church being once the parish church of the parish of Killean known as Killean in Torosay.<sup>105</sup>

Gulancaolish NM 63/73 GR 715 285.

Gualchelish	1679	HP vol.1 p.311	1 pennyland
Gualknelish,	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.66	1.75 pennylands
Ardura & part of Carnaig & Shenovaille			

G Gualann,f caolas,m (Shoulder of the strait)

Gulancaolis lies beneath the distinctive shoulder of Carn Ban on the northern side of the narrow entrance to Loch Spelve. The settlement clearly forms secondary expansion from Killean.

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<sup>105</sup>OPS vol.1 pt.2,307.

Achdabeg NM 62/72 GR 717 299.  
 Auchatabeg 1674 HP vol.1 p.284 'wast'  
 & Shenball

G Achadh,m beag,adj (Small field)

Achdabeg forms secondary settlement expansion northwards from Killean on the north eastern lower slopes of Carn Ban. On the small island of Eilean Amlanish just off the coast west of Achdabeg stand the remains of a fortification erected to guard the nearby anchorage at the north east end of Loch Spelve. The fortification is possibly of mediaeval date.<sup>106</sup>

Gortenanrue NM 63/73 GR 729 277.

G Goirtean,m an,prep ruig,f (Border clearing)

Gortenanrue forms the southernmost settlement on the headland to the east of Loch Spelve, on an area of flat land beneath the steep slopes of Carn Ban. Its absence from the documentary record together with the use of the noun goirtean in the name suggest that the settlement is of recent origin. The suffix in the name many refer to Gortenanrue's position bordering the narrow entrance to Loch Spelve.

### Settlement unit Ardachoil

Ardachoil NM 63/73 GR 174 310  
 Ardcheyll 1674 HP vol.1 p.284 1 pennyland  
 Ardachydyl 1679 HP vol.1 p.312 1 pennyland  
 Ardachyll 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66 3.75 pennylands  
 & Auchnacraig

G Airde,f a' prep caolas,m (Headland of the strait)

The settlement of Ardachoil is situated at the head of a small peninsula, Rubha Aird a' Chaoll, which juts out into the head of Loch Spelve. To the east the head of the loch forms a natural deep and sheltered harbour. The level land here is of a

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<sup>106</sup>RCAHMS, Argyll 3.,120.

higher quality than that of the surrounding area. Langlands 1801 map shows a subsidiary settlement of Tayinrubich lying approximately 0.25 km to the east of Ardachaol, now no longer discernible.

Strathcoil NM 63/73 GR 685 307.

G Strath caolas,m (Strait of the lowlying part of a valley)

The settlement of Strathcoil lies on the lowlying level land at the mouth of the river. Here the estuary has silted up forming a wide and elongated bay. The lower reaches of the valley have shallow soils not conducive to permanent arable use but are of higher quality than the surrounding hillslopes. It is therefore puzzling that Strathcoil is absent from the documentary record.

Ardura NM 63/73 GR 685 304.

Ardewro 1674 HP vol.1 p.284 0.5 pennylands

Ardewra 1679 HP vol.1 p.312 0.5 pennylands

Ardura and 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66 1.75 pennylands

Guaknelish and part of Carnaig and Shenovaille

G Airde,f ura, adj (Green headland)

Ardura lies on land of the highest quality found in Mull across the river from the settlement of Strathcoil. Deciduous woodland on the hillside above the settlement may account for the settlement name.

Glen Forsay Sheilings

Gaodhail NM 64/74 GR 610 385  
 Gedderly 1801 SRO RHP 3368

G Gaoth,f ? ON dair,n (Windy or marshy dale)

The settlement of Gaodhail is situated at the confluence of the Gaodhail river with that of the river Forsa. The land below the 50m contour on either side of the river Forsa is made up of peat soils greater than 50cm in depth which have 'severe wetness problems'<sup>107</sup> limiting the land use to rough grazing. Above the 50m contour however, where all the settlements are found, the land quality is marginally better although rocky outcrops, peaty surfaces and wet subsoils still dominate.

Tomsleibhe NM 63/73 GR 618 312  
 Tomslea 1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.66 0.25 pennylands  
 Tomslea 1781 SRO GD 174/789/14 0.25 pennylands  
 Tomslea 1801 SRO RHP 3368

G Tom,m sliabh,m (Rounded hillocky hillside)

Tomsleibhe lies on the narrow belt of marginally better land between the river valley bottom and the steep slopes of Beinn na Duatharach. It is one of only two settlements in the valley to have a documented pennyland evaluation. The low valuation and small areal extent of the settlement mark it out, together with the other Glen Forsay settlements as being of peripheral status.

Langland's map notes two other settlements in the vicinity, Liaderry at GR 613 367 and Bradillatrich at GR 620 373.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.  
<sup>108</sup>RHP 3368.

Achadh Luirginn NM 63/73 GR 638 366.

G Achadh,m Lurgainn,f (Field of the ridge of the hill extending gradually into a plain)

Achadh Luirginn lies above the 80m contour on the banks of Allt Achadh Luirginn on the on the lower slopes of Beinn Thunicaraidh. The comparatively gentle slope of the hillside here at one time also supported another settlement. Langland's 1801 map shows the settlement of Bradildubh lying opposite that of Bradilatrigh at GR 637 370.<sup>109</sup>

Rhoail NM 63/73 GR 633 314

Rolulimóre	1743	SRO GD 174/715	1 pennyland
Rolulibeg	1743	SRO GD 174/715	0.25 pennylands
Rochilmóre	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.66	1 pennyland
Rochilbeg	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.66	1 pennyland
Roile	1781	SRO GD 174/789/14	1 pennyland
Rollul	1801	SRO RHP 3368	

G. ? Roilbh,f (Mountainous hillside)

The etymology of the name is unclear. MacQuarrie suggests the derivation Ro-Choill, the thick or great wood<sup>110</sup> which is singularly inappropriate given the nature of the waterlogged peaty soil. An alternative may stem from G roilbh, mountainous hillside which in an area comprised totally of mountainous hillsides would not appear to be a name giving a precise description of the settlement site.

Rhaoil has a considerably higher pennyland value than neighbouring Tomsleibhe, due no doubt to greater areal extent, seen in the division of the settlement into Roulil móre and beg and the less steeply sloping land.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid..

<sup>110</sup>A. MacQuarrie, Place names of Mull,90.

#### 5.4.4 Summary

This area of Mull shows a particularly low ratio of Norse to Gaelic settlement names 11.7% ON to 88.3% Gaelic, This may be accounted for in two ways: firstly that the figure genuinely reflects a low density of Norse settlement in the area or secondly that the proximity of the Gaelic speaking Argyll mainland exerted over time a moderating influence whereby many of the smaller settlement names became totally gaelicised or lost altogether.

It is significant that of the 4 indisputably Norse names in the region 3 are the names of primary settlements and the fourth, retained in the name of a peripheral ranking settlement, Druim Ormaig may point to the presence of a further primary settlement name Ormaig. Fishnish remains the name of an important bay on the east coast. The name Ormaig may also refer to one of the east coast harbours. Scallastle refers to a significant river valley and Torosay became the name not only of the geographical region but also of the later parish of the east of Mull. To these 4 may be added the name of the Glen Forsa river at the mouth of which is the only large area (over 1 sq km) of fertile land in the entire parish. Both Torosay and Glen Forsa also appear to have been the focal areas for primary divisions into ouncelands. The above evidence therefore suggests that not only was the strategic importance of the east coast known to the Norse but that the region was systematically included in their sphere of influence. The Norse names however do appear to cluster along the north east portion of Torosay. Surprisingly there is little place name evidence of Norse settlement around the Loch Don estuary and also a lack of Norse names around the vast sheltered 'harbour' at Loch Spelve.

Inevitably in this region of Mull the very small area of land suitable for settlement exercised natural restraint on the choice of location. The primary settlements are clustered at the heads of the bays where rivers enter the sea. This is similar to the pattern of settlement found in Treshnish. Secondary settlement is located slightly higher on the hillsides or on the extreme margins of the fertile land. Three settlement names incorporating the Gaelic noun achadh are classified as secondary suggesting settlement expansion on to land once used as fields. Peripheral tertiary settlement expansion shows a markedly linear growth along the coastal strip with settlements such as Bailegeamhraidh and Bailemeanoch developing between primary settlement nuclei. Surprisingly this area shows a reversal of the general chronology of Gaelic settlement names known elsewhere as for example on Coll and Lismore. In Torosay settlement names compounded with G achadh would point to settlements which developed earlier than those whose names incorporate the Gaelic noun baile. The three baile settlements in Torosay are all classified as peripheral, of the 4 achadh

names only Achadh Luigeinn ranks as peripheral. The settlements of Gortenruie and Gorten point to late clearance of land for settlement, in areas previously devoid of settlement.

Table 1Parish of Torosay. Settlements recorded in the documentary record.[Ranking included for settlements investigated]

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Achadh Luirgin	–	–	Peripheral
Ardnadrochit	1510	1 pennyland	Primary
Achnacraig	1674	1 pennyland	Secondary
Ardachoil	1674	1 pennyland	Primary
Ardchoirk	1510	1 pennyland	Secondary
Ardnacroish	1510	3 pennylands	Secondary
Ardura	1751	0.5 pennylands	Secondary
Achabeg	1674	1 pennyland	Secondary
Bailefraoich	1895	–	Peripheral
Berhanundroman	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Bourg	1751	1 pennyland	
Braidillaloch	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Barichindromain	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Beich	1587	1 pennyland	
Braidildre	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Barna	1679	1 pennyland	Secondary
Balmeanoch	1751	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Barnasraivnagowan	1679	–	
Bailegeamhraidh	1895	–	Peripheral
Cameron	1743	1 pennyland	
Carrabus	1751	2 pennylands	
Craggan	1781	1 pennyland	
Croggan	1743	1.5 pennylands	
Caylemór	1587	1 pennyland	
Cairegarrin	1781	0.25 pennylands	
Carrache	1743	0.75 pennylands	
Corrinahinch	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Correnahenchie	1751	0.25 pennylands	Peripheral
Clachaig	1679	–	
Callachally	1743	1.25 pennylands	Secondary
Dermaculen	1751	0.5 pennylands	
Drumnalen	1751	1 pennyland	

Drimnataline	1743	1.5 pennylands	
Diranaculin	1743	0.75 pennylands	
Derrycuaig	1751	0.75 pennylands	
Dewart	1679	–	Primary
Druimórmaig	1751	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Fishnish	1743	2 pennylands	Primary
Gulanachaolish	1679	–	Peripheral
Garmonry	1493/4	0.5 pennylands	Primary
Glenbar	1781	1.5 pennylands	
Gochline	1781	1.5 pennylands	
Grahne	1743	2 pennylands	
Gortenbuy	1751	1 pennyland	
Glenannell	1751	1 pennyland	
Graman	1743	1 pennyland	
Glaswilder	1587	1 pennyland	
Gilderue	1781	1 pennyland	
Gruline	1781	2 pennylands	
Gallachelly	1751	1.25 pennylands	
Geiderlaw	1751	1.25 pennylands	
Garmruich	1751	1 pennyland	
Gaodhail	1801	–	Peripheral
Hellinoe	1743	1 pennyland	
Inegarl	1781	1.5 pennylands	
Ieronan	1743	1 pennyland	
Ione	1743	0.5 pennylands	
Java	–	–	Secondary
Kinlochspelve	1743	1 pennyland	
Kingargara	1587	1 pennyland	
Kilvrany	1587	1 pennyland	
Kilphobil	1587	1 pennyland	
Kilpatrick	1509	1 pennyland	Primary
Kilmórie	1587	0.75 pennylands	
Kellin	1587	1 pennyland	
Kilbeg	1743	0.75 pennylands	
Killean	1743	1 pennyland	
Laggan	1751	1 pennyland	
Leaderda	1743	0.25 pennylands	

Leiderkille	1743	1 pennyland	
Lettir	1493/3	1 pennyland	Secondary
Lornaskiach	1751	1 pennyland	
Moy	1781	2.5 pennylands	
Pennmollochbeg	1622	23s 4d	
Pennmollochmóre	1622	23s 4d	
Pennygown	1493/4	1 pennyland	Primary
Rossal	1743	1 pennyland	
Rolulibeg	1743	0.25 pennylands	Peripheral
Rolulimóre	1743	1 pennyland	Peripheral
Roile	1743	1 pennyland	
Seadir	1756	1 pennyland	
Skydane	1587	1 pennyland	
Stradow	1751	1 pennyland	
Scallastle	1743	2 pennylands	Primary
Salen	1679	–	Primary
Strathcoil	–	–	Secondary
Thorrin	1587	1 pennyland	
Tomslea	1781	0.25 pennylands	Peripheral
Toryormaig	1751	0.25 pennylands	
Tornskioch	1679	–	
Torosay	1390	1 ounceland	Primary

Table 2Coastal settlements, Salen to Loch Spelve, Glen Forsay.

<u>Settlement classification</u>	<u>Total no. of settlements</u>	<u>Total ON names</u>	<u>Total G names</u>
Primary	8	3	15
Secondary	14	–	14
Peripheral	12	1	11

<u>Settlement classification</u>	<u>ON habitative names</u>	<u>ON simplex topographical names</u>	<u>G habitative names</u>
Primary	1	–	–
Secondary	–	–	–
Peripheral	–	–	–

Table 3Torosay

Total number of settlements	90
Total having ON names	10 (11%)
Total having G names	80 (89%)

Table 4Coastal settlements, Salen to Loch Spelve, Glen Forsay.

Total number of settlements	36
Total having ON names	4 (11.7%)
Total having G names	32 (88.3%)

## 5.5 Summary

The ratio of ON:G settlement names in the three parishes differs with Kilninian and Kilmore having 85% G to 15% ON, Torosay 89% G to 11% ON and the Ross of Mull 83% G to 17% ON. This indicates a far greater density of Norse settlement in the west of the island, decreasing to the east. The figures alone do not highlight the fact that within each parish the Norse names cluster in certain areas. In Kilninian and Kilmore they are found predominantly on the Morrenish and Treshnish headlands and around the islands of Gometra and Ulva; in Torosay the area between Fishnish and Duart bay shows the greatest density and in Ross of Mull Norse names predominate in the strip of land between Ardtun and Loch Assapoll and also on the southern coast of the Ardmeanach peninsula. All these areas are those having some strategic advantage over surrounding areas. Morrenish and Treshnish are adjacent to the western sea lane linking the north and south Hebrides, the coastal stretch in east Torosay links sea routes from the Firth of Lorne through the Sound of Mull to Loch Linnhe while the area around Ardtun controls not only the excellent harbour at Eorabus but also the exposed western end of the Ross of Mull. The importance of the narrow neck of land at Loch na Keal has already been stressed, but here too, Norse names are found at the western approach to the 'isthmus'.

The range and type of Norse names is limited and there are few habitative generics. Possibly the name Torosay points to a compound name incorporating ON stadir but if so it is the only one. Four bolstadr compounds are found at Crossapoll, Sunipoll, Eorabus and Assapoll with a possible fifth at Carrabus, Torosay although this settlement has not been located. Of these four, Crossapoll and Sunipoll are of secondary status, the primary settlement being at Cillchriosd while Eorabus and Assapoll appear to be primary settlements. There is one, unlocated, shieling name which derives from ON saetr, noted as 'seadir' in Glen Forsay in the 1509 rental.<sup>111</sup>

The majority of Norse names are simplex and compound topographical names; names which describe the major landscape features both on a large scale, as in the case of the peninsulas, and on a smaller scale as in the case of individual settlements.

It is the areas having Norse district names which show the clearest traces of a one time division into ounculands ie the ounceland of Torosay, the 20 merklands of Ross of Mull, the 20 merklands of Mishnish, the 18 merklands of Quinish, and the two

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<sup>111</sup>Exchequer Rolls vol. 13 p.213

ouncelands of Morrenish. Ulva too is described, in 1679, as having a valuation of 20 merklands,<sup>112</sup> while the Ardtun headland is consistently evaluated at 5 pennylands (? 1/4 ounceland). Glen Forsay too at 20 merklands, may also have been an ounceland district. Throughout the island the commonest settlement evaluation is 1 pennyland, reflected also in such names as Pennycross, Pennygael, Pennygown etc, any evaluation significantly higher than this, as at Ardtun, or Gometra, 4 pennylands, may point to a fraction of an ounceland division. This correlation between Norse district names and divisions into ouncelands would seem to suggest that, whatever the origin of the ounceland/pennyland system (with various subsequent re-evaluations) in Mull, as on Coll and Tiree the incoming Norse utilised the system in the organisation and administration of the island.

As has been noted earlier, distinct geographical districts on Mull correspond to the oldest parochial divisions and also in part to the Norse divisions mentioned above. The degree to which the presence of the early Christian church on the island, and the continuing presence of ecclesiastical estates, influenced or has helped to preserve these divisions needs to be explored further. Significantly though many of the primary settlements on Mull show a correlation with early Christian sites. This is reflected in some cases by the adoption of the church name in the township name as at Cillchriosd, Kilbrennan, Kilmoluaig and Kilfinichen while at others an early Christian church is found within the settlement boundary as is also found at Bunnessan at the site of An t-Annaid and Carsaig at the site of St. Marys. Arguably, however, the limited amount of land available for settlement may have resulted in the juxtaposition of such settlement areas to a greater extent than is found elsewhere.

The limitations of the landscape have in all regions of Mull created a settlement pattern whereby settlement is primarily confined to the coastal plains and the lower reaches of the river valleys. The fact that the number of peripheral settlements within each region does not exceed the number of primary or secondary settlements reflects the fact of limited land for expansion. This is also seen in the very small number of settlements which have names compounded with the Gaelic generic airidh. Unlike Coll, few seasonal shieling sites have developed into permanent settlements because of the extremely poor quality of the land they occupy and difficult situation in terms of access. The high proportion of Gaelic names on Mull as a whole reflects not only the infilling of the settlement pattern by Gaelic speakers after the end of the era of Norse domination but also poses the question of the extent of bilingualism on the island, the degree of contact with a Gaelic speaking mainland and the degree of overall control by Scandinavians in the island.

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<sup>112</sup>Rental of Mull 1679 in J.R.N. MacPhail ed. Highland Papers,311-16.

## Chapter Six

### LISMORE

#### 6.1 Introduction

Lismore lies at the mouth of Loch Linnhe where the loch joins the Sound of Mull and the Firth of Lorn. Geologically the island is very different from the adjacent mainland areas of Morvern, Appin and Lorn being composed of limestone and calcareous schists.<sup>1</sup> Much of the coast of Lismore is fringed by a raised beach corresponding with the '25-ft' level, and a line of fossil cliffs.<sup>2</sup> The land is low-lying rising to only 127m at the highest point in the south-west. The predominant soil association on the island is Deecastle with the soil parent material being drifts derived from Dalriadan limestones and calc-silicate rocks. The corresponding soil associations are the brown forest soils, brown rankers and non-calcareous gleys which support rich bent fescue grassland and arable and permanent pastures.<sup>3</sup> In the south-west of the island an area of lithosols supports heather moor, rush pastures and sedge mires, while in the north-east non-calcareous gleys and peat, derived from a parent material of estuarine and lacustrine raised beach silts and clays, supports rush pastures, sedge mires, arable and permanent pasture.<sup>4</sup>

The fertility of the island is reflected in the density of Bronze and Iron Age archaeological sites. In the absence of any known Bronze Age settlement sites the thirteen burial cairns on the island represent to some extent the settlement pattern of their builders.<sup>5</sup> The monuments of the Iron Age period, 7 duns, 2 brochs and 2 forts are predominantly situated in the south of the island, along the coastal stretch between Dalnarrow and Achnacroish.<sup>6</sup>

The influence of the Christian church reached Lismore early with the foundation of a major monastic community on the island in the second half of the sixth century under the auspices of St Moluag.<sup>7</sup> The site of the monastery is believed to lie in the vicinity of the later mediaeval church situated at Clachan, a township lying 4.5km south of the north end of the island. The outline of an enclosure at Clachan appears to represent the outline of the monastic vallum which surrounded monasteries of early Irish type and which

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<sup>1</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil survey,5.

<sup>2</sup>J.A.Steers, Coastline of Scotland,86.

<sup>3</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

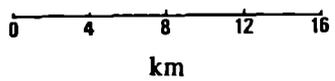
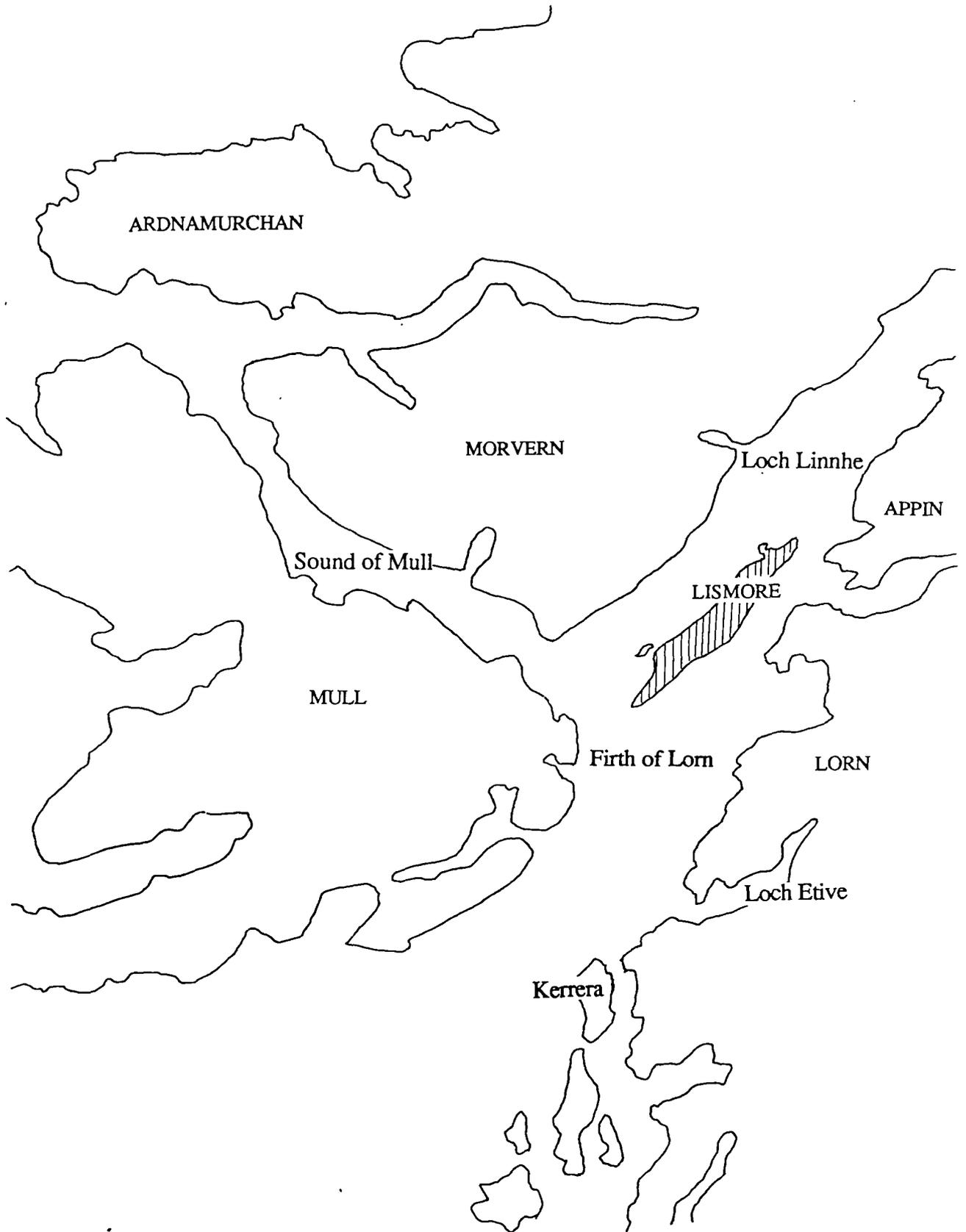
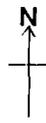
<sup>4</sup>Ibid..

<sup>5</sup>RCAHMS., Lorn,vii.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.,17.

<sup>7</sup>A.MacDonald, 'Early Monasteries',48.

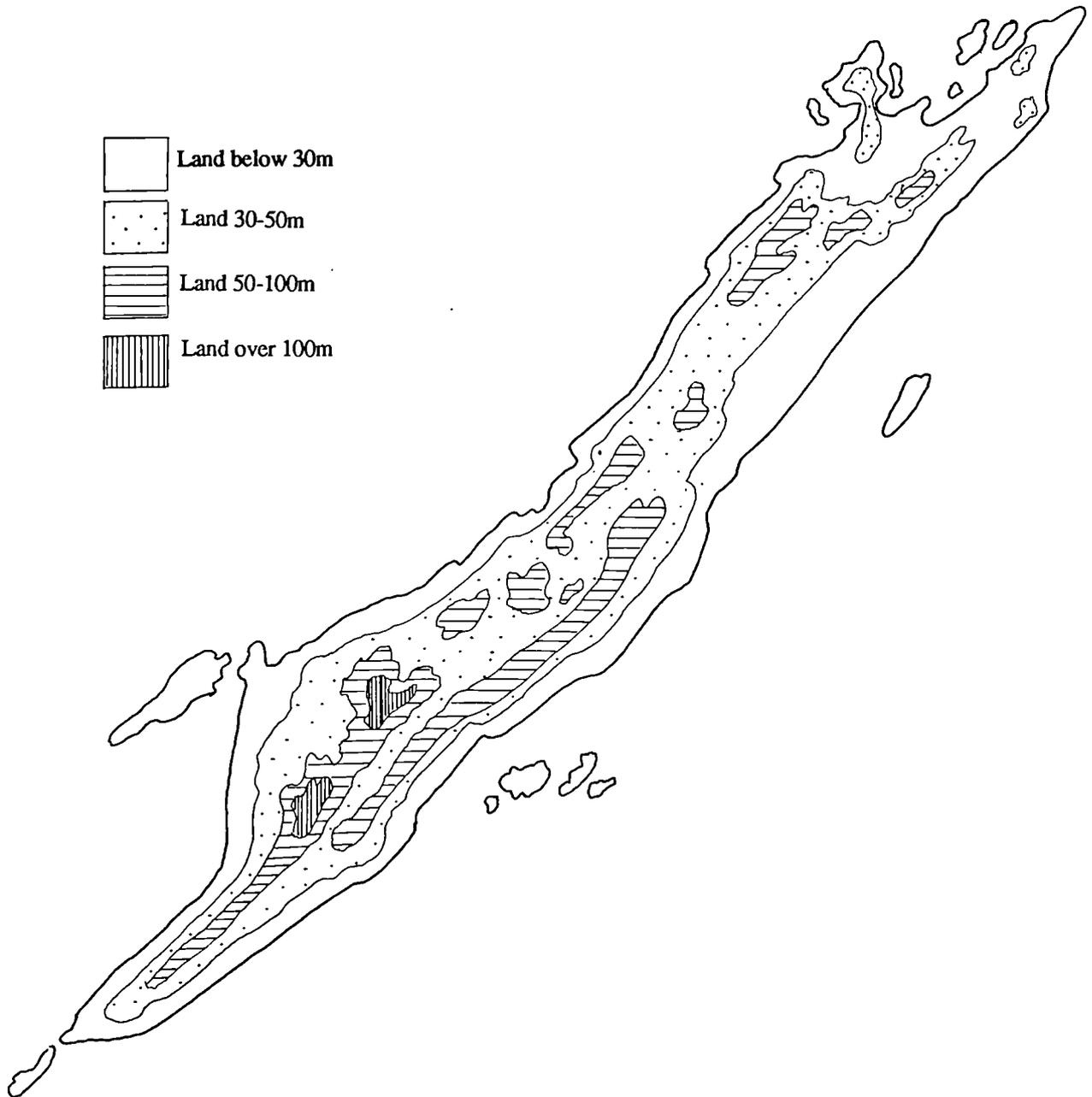
LOCATION MAP



# LISMORE



## SKETCH MAP PHYSICAL RELIEF



0 1 2 3 4  
km

are also found at Iona, Kingarth and Applecross.<sup>8</sup> The chapel sites at Cill-an-Suidhe and Clachan have been tentatively identified as having cemeteries of an early Christian date.<sup>9</sup>

There is no documentary evidence to suggest that the monastic community on Lismore suffered the same fate as that of Iona at the commencement of Viking activity along the western seaboard. Lismore is not mentioned in the Irish Annals after the recording of the death of St. Moluag in 592.<sup>10</sup> The silence of the annalists as to events concerning Lismore may in part be due to the foundation of a monastery of the same name in Co. Waterford, Ireland in ca 638.<sup>11</sup> It is probable that annalistic entries relating to both the Scottish and Irish Lismore became confused. Oral tradition exists concerning Viking raids on Lismore<sup>12</sup> but none refer to the monastic community and it has been suggested that the community may have continued in existence as late as the twelfth century.<sup>13</sup>

Control of the island of Lismore must have been of vital importance to the Norse as it occupies a strategic position at the mouth of Loch Linnhe. Loch Linnhe forms the south-western end of the Great Glen, a major thoroughfare which links Argyll and the Southern Hebrides with the Firthlands of north-east Scotland. The Great Glen formed a major communications route between Northern Pictland and Scottish Dal Riata<sup>14</sup> and it is probable that it continued to be used by the Norse as a route-way into mainland Argyll, and as a direct linkage between their territories in the Hebrides and those in the Moray and Cromarty Firth regions.<sup>15</sup> *Orkneyinga Saga* records how Earl Sigurd the Stout 'owned Ross and Moray, Sutherland and the Dales.'<sup>16</sup> If, as has been suggested, 'the Dales' refer to the sea lochs and valleys of coastal Argyll<sup>17</sup> then this would point to the Great Glen having been used as an access route between the two areas. Lismore also lies at the meeting point of the Firth of Lorn and Sound of Mull. In sight to the south-east lie the Iron Age stronghold of Dunollie and mediaeval fortification of Dunstaffnage. Control of this confluence of sea routes would have been of vital importance to the Norse in their attempts to maintain control over the Inner Hebrides and the heartland of Argyll.

In the thirteenth century, Lismore fell within the MacDougall Lordship of Lorn. The strategic importance of Lismore is again seen in the construction of Castle Coeffin which stands on the north shore of the island with commanding views of the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 51, 56.

<sup>9</sup>RCAHMS., *Lorn*, 21.

<sup>10</sup>A.O. Anderson, *Early Sources*, vol. 1, 95.

<sup>11</sup>A. MacDonald, 'Early Monasteries', 49.

<sup>12</sup>B. Fairweather, *Lismore*, 2.

<sup>13</sup>A. MacDonald, 'Early Monasteries', 49.

<sup>14</sup>L. Alcock et al., *Excavations at Urquhart and Dunottar Castle*, Interim Report, (1982), 2.

<sup>15</sup>B.E. Crawford *Scandinavian Scotland*, 22, 24.

<sup>16</sup>*Orkneyinga Saga*, ed. A.B. Taylor, 401.

<sup>17</sup>B.E. Crawford, 'The making of a frontier: The firthlands from the ninth to the twelfth centuries', in *Firthlands of Ross and Sutherland*, ed. J.R. Baldwin, (1986), 41.

important seaways. The forfeiture of the MacDougalls in the fourteenth century led to the dispersal of their territories although Lismore was regained by John of Lorn in the reign of David II.<sup>18</sup> In 1388 the island was sold to John Stewart of Innermeath<sup>19</sup> and in 1469-70, in an exchange of lands between the Stewart and Campbell families, came into the hands of the 1st Earl of Argyll.<sup>20</sup> Lismore was not only important as a focal point in the Lordships of Lorn and Argyll but retained its position as an ecclesiastical centre. The diocese of Argyll was created from the diocese of Dunkeld between 1183 and 1189 and Lismore was selected as the site of the cathedral<sup>21</sup> which lies adjacent to the site of the early monastery of St. Moluag.<sup>22</sup>

The name Lismore is said to derive from G lios mór . There are varying interpretations of the prefix lios. Dwelly records over ten meanings of the noun including garden, palace, court and fortified place.<sup>23</sup> Gillies suggests that Lismore has the meaning of 'large garden', a name which reflects both the fertility of the island and its abundant water supply.<sup>24</sup> Alternatively Lismore may have the meaning of the 'large enclosure', referring to the monastic vallum surrounding the early Christian monastery. A final suggestion is that the name refers to one or other of the island's fortifications.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>W. and J. Munro, The Lordship of the Isles, xx.

<sup>19</sup>OPS, vol.2 pt.1 p.164.

<sup>20</sup>SRO GD 112/2/109/1.

<sup>21</sup>D.E.R. Watt, Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae Medii Aevi ad annum 1638, (1969), 26-36.

<sup>22</sup>A. MacDonald, 'Early Monasteries', 50.

<sup>23</sup>E. Dwelly, Dictionary, 592.

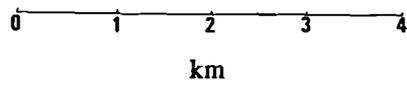
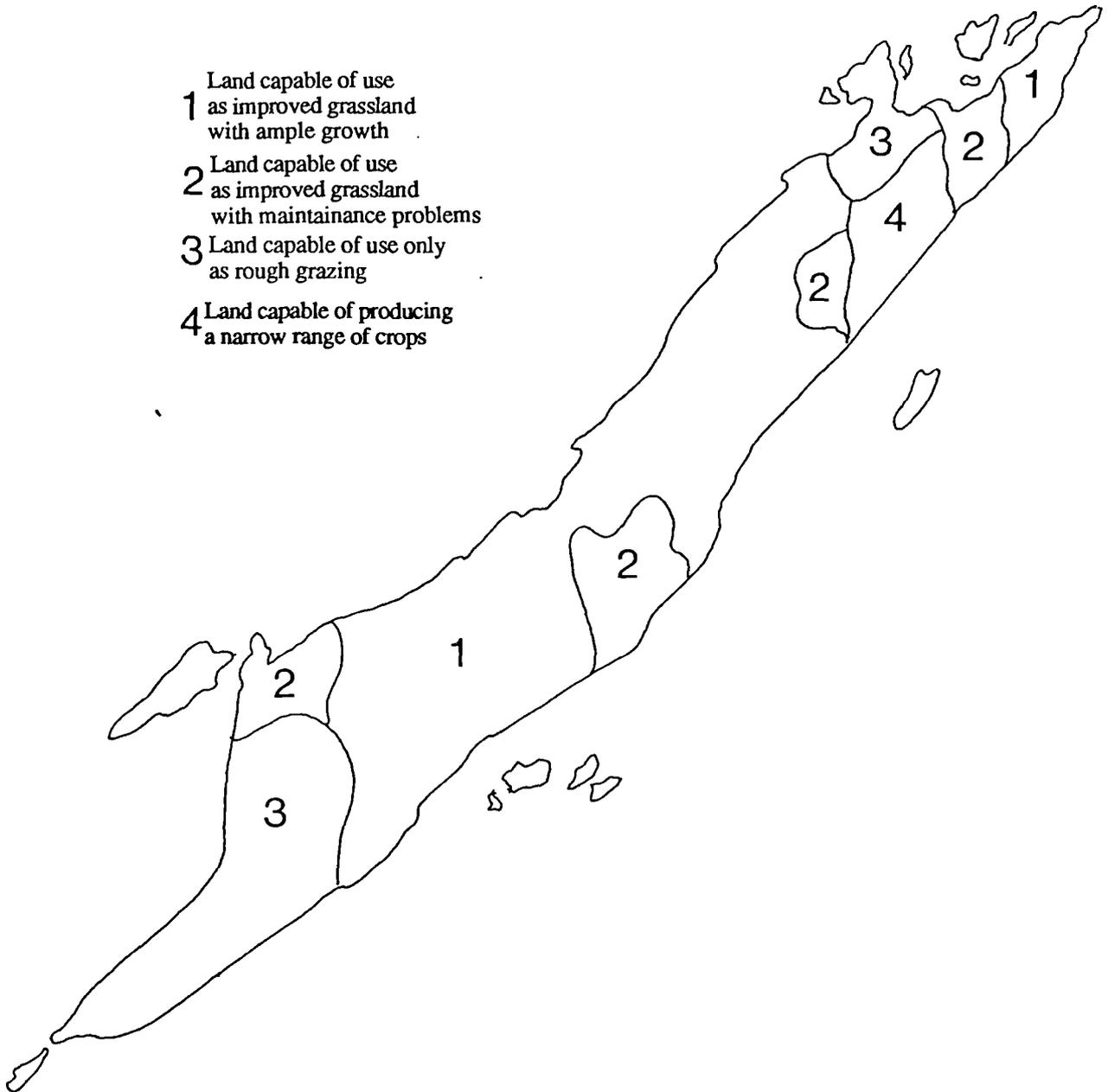
<sup>24</sup>H.C. Gillies, Place Names of Argyll, 73.

<sup>25</sup>A. MacBain, Place Names. Highlands and Islands of Scotland, 77.



LAND CAPABILITY  
FOR AGRICULTURE

- 1 Land capable of use as improved grassland with ample growth
- 2 Land capable of use as improved grassland with maintainance problems
- 3 Land capable of use only as rough grazing
- 4 Land capable of producing a narrow range of crops

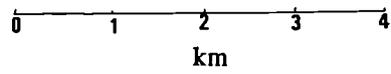
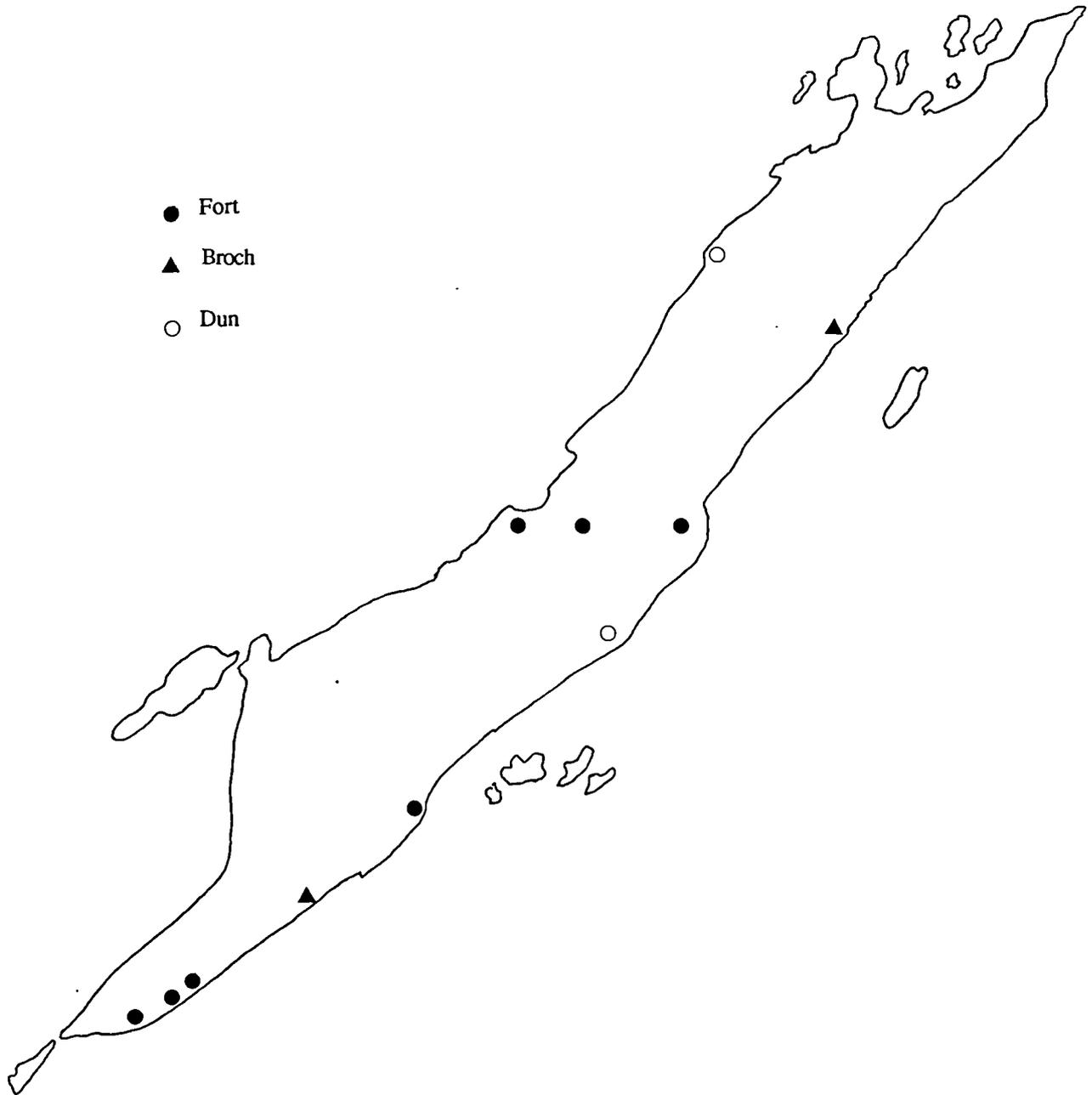


LISMORE



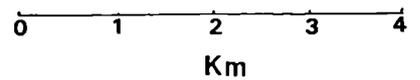
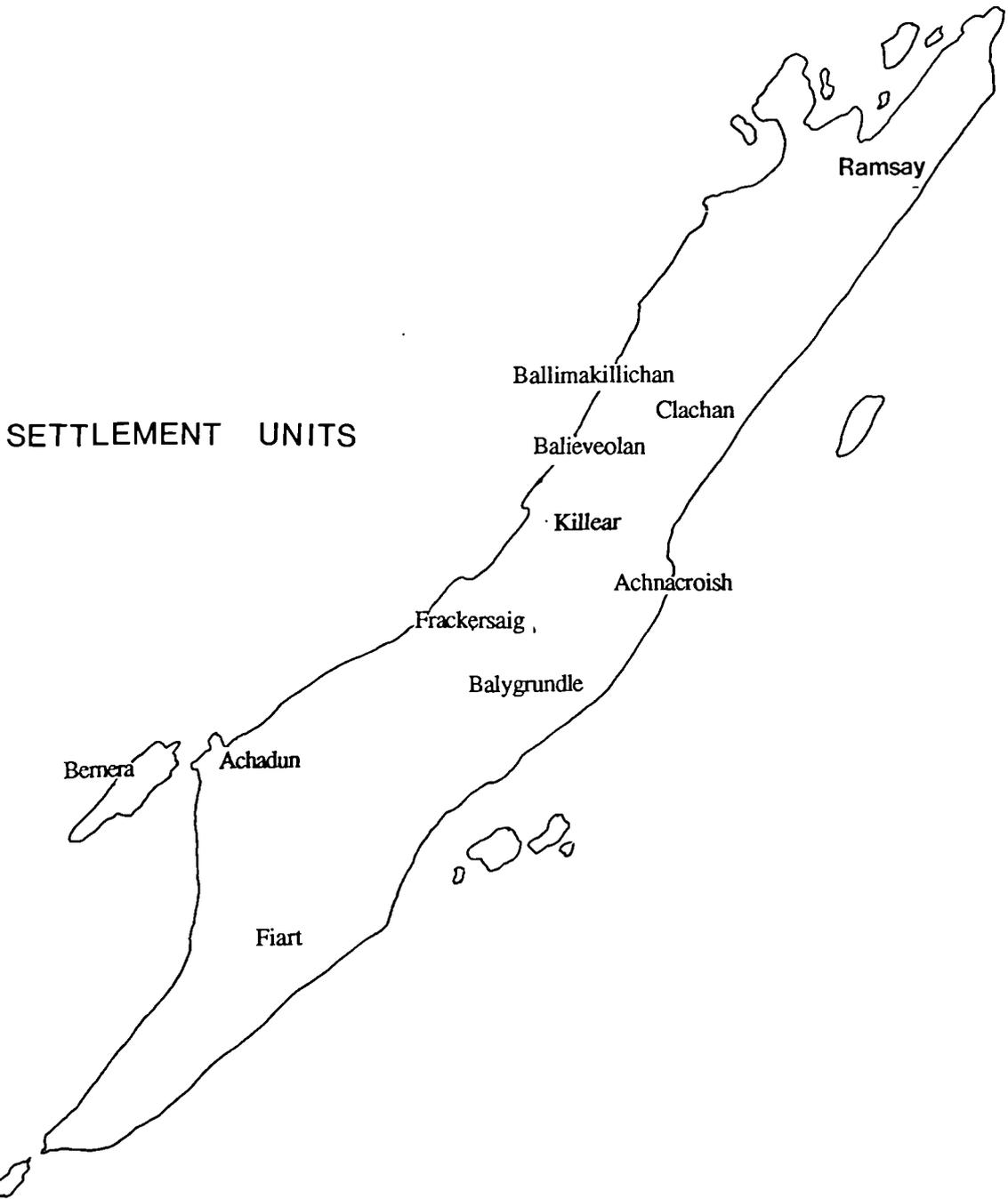
LOCATION OF IRON  
AGE MONUMENTS

- Fort
- ▲ Broch
- Dun





SETTLEMENT DISTRIBUTION



## 6.2 Settlement Analysis

### Settlement Unit Fiart

Fiart NM 83/93 GR 808 371

Fiart 1815 SRO RHP 9488

ON Fjördr.m (Fjord)

Fiart lies to the south of Loch Fiart and to the north of a small dun standing on a small coastal headland. 1km north-north-east of Fiart stand the remains of a broch, An Dun, occupying a naturally defensive position on a ridge.<sup>26</sup> The stretch of coastline running north-east of the settlement offers three natural harbours at Miller's Port, Port Ruadh and Port Balure. The 1815 plan shows the boundaries of Fiart running from north-west to south-east across the island giving the settlement access to both coasts. This division ensures access to an area of rough grazing (Fiart common) lying to the west of Loch Fiart and to the fertile, flatter land found to the east.

The name Fiart is obscure and not mentioned in the documentary sources before 1815. It possibly derives from ON fjördr and relates to the settlements position at the southern end of the island at the mouth of the Great Glen. A settlement name Pennyfurt is recorded in 1574,<sup>27</sup> 1596,<sup>28</sup> 1622,<sup>29</sup> 1628<sup>30</sup> and 1643.<sup>31</sup> There is no known settlement of that name on the island today. It is probable that Pennyfurt and Fiart are one and the same. The high evaluation given to Pennyfurt, 4 merklands in 1596, falling to 1 merkland in 1638 and 1643 is consistent with the primary status of the settlement of Fiart. It is possible that the prefix penny (*G peighinn*) was dropped from the name when land in Lismore ceased to be evaluated in pennylands and was instead evaluated in merklands. Thirteenth century references to land in Lismore are expressed exclusively in pennylands, while from the early fourteenth century onwards evaluations are expressed in merklands.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>RCAHMS. Lom, 89.

<sup>27</sup>SRO GD 112/2/106/2

<sup>28</sup>SRO GD 112/5/8 p.19.

<sup>29</sup>Sasine vol.2 no.41.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., no.82.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., vol.1 no.77.

<sup>32</sup>The only exception is a reference to Clachan evaluated as 40 pennylands in 1470.

Dalnarrow NM 63/73 GR 792 362  
 Dalnarrow 1815 RHP 9448

ON Dalr,m ? (dale ?)

The 1815 'plan of the farms of Dalnarrow, Fiart and Achadh nan Aird' shows the entire southern tip of the island pertaining to the settlement of Dalnarrow. Dalnarrow lies to the north of Port Chruban beside which Dun Chruban stands 'in a conspicuous position overlooking the shore'.<sup>33</sup> To the north-east of Dalnarrow, Druim Mór, one of the least fertile areas on Lismore provides rough grazing.

Achadh nan Aird NM 83/93 GR 810 382  
 Achanard 1622 Blaue  
 Auchinard East 1815 SRO RHP 9448  
 Auchinard West 1815 SRO RHP 9448

G Aachadh,m nan prep airde,f (Field of the promontary)

The settlement of Achadh nan Aird lay to the north of Loch Fiart on the poorest quality land on the island. While the suffix airde may have the meaning of height and refer to the hill top Barr Mor, to the north of Achadh nan Aird it is more likely that airde in this instance denotes a promontory and refers to the entire elongated southern tip of the island.. The settlement may originally have formed a unit together with the settlements of Fiart and Dalnarrow. The early nineteenth century map of the island shows a division of Achadh nan Aird into two component parts running east to west across the island, although these divisions are no longer discernible today.

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<sup>33</sup>RCAHMS., Lom,19.

**Settlement unit Bernera**

<u>Benera</u>	NM 63/73 GR 79 39
Barnaray	1251 OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.164
Benera	1654 Blaeu

ON Björn,m pers name ey,n (Björn's island)

The tidal island of Bernera measuring 0.5 sq.km, lies west of Achinduin . The island name Bernera is a common one throughout the Western Isles and is used for example of the island lying between Harris and North Uist, that lying off the southern tip of Barra and of the two islands lying to the west of Lewis. In both the Inner and Outer Hebrides the fixed compound 'Bernera' it is used exclusively of small islands lying close to adjacent, larger islands. Although the prefix suggests a derivation from ON Björn, a male personal name it is likely that Bernera had a more specific meaning referring to the size and/or situation of the island. The name is absent from both Orkney and Shetland.

The remains of a chapel and burial ground are found on Bernera, the date and dedication of which are unknown.<sup>34</sup> To the immediate east of the island Sgeir an Teampull, Church skerry, also records the presence of an ecclesiastical site.

**Settlement unit Achinduin**

<u>Achinduin</u>	NM 83/93 GR 814 394	
Achacendune	1240 <sup>35</sup>	2 pennylands
Achacendune	1251 OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.164	2.5 pennylands
Achycendone	1304 RMS vol.2 no.3136	
Achacendone	1507 SRO GD 112/106/1	2 pennylands

G Achadh,m ? (Field ?)

The settlement is divided into Mid Achinduin (GR 814 934) and South Achinduin (GR 815 396) which lie 1km to the east of the remains of Achadun castle. This thirteenth century castle, excavated in 1970-73 was the residence of the bishops of Argyll, and remained as an episcopal residence until the early sixteenth century.<sup>36</sup> The derivation of the name is not entirely clear. The early written forms suggest that the name transcribes as

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.,117.

<sup>35</sup>Cited in A.A.M Duncan and A.L.Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the Earlier Middle Ages', appendix 3 in PSAS,150(1956-57),219.

<sup>36</sup>RCAHMS., Lorn,169-71.

achadh a' ceann dun, field at the head of the fortification, although there are no known duns in the vicinity and the noun dun was not used of fortified Iron Age sites until the nineteenth century.

Achadun bay lying east of the settlement is protected by the headland of Rubh' Aird Eirnish which preserves the Norse name eir nes, peaceful headland.

Kilcheran                    NM 83/93 GR 824 388.  
Kilcheren                    1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.51

G Cille,f            Ciaran,m pers name        (Church of Ciaran).

Kilcheran lies 0.25km inland from the harbour of port Kilcheran. A fort occupies a prominent ridge to the immediate north-east of the harbour while 1km to the south-west are the remains of a dun.<sup>37</sup> The name suggests that the site had early ecclesiastical origins. This cannot be confirmed as the only ecclesiastical remains in the vicinity are those of an eighteenth century chapel.<sup>38</sup> The dedication to St. Ciaran, Abbot of Clonmacnoise (b. ca 515) is a relatively common one in western Scotland with examples at Kilcheran Lewis, Kilcheran, Islay and Kilcheran, Bute.

Clachlea                    NM 83/93  
Clachleach            1640 Sasine vol.2 p.210  
Clachlea                1654 Blaeu  
Clachleah            1651 Sasine vol.1 p.119.            2 merklands  
Clachlea                1659 Sasine vol.1 p.143

G Clach,f ?        (Stone ?)

The settlement of Clachlea is no longer extant. Blaeu places it to the west of Kilcheran on the lower slopes of Barr Mor. This unfavourable location and the settlements subsequent disappearance from both the physical landscape and the written record suggests that it ranks as a peripheral settlement.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid..

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.,146.

**Settlement unit Balygrundle****Balygrundle** NM 83/93 834 396

Ballegrounvolalva	1470	SRO GD 112/2/109/1	5 pennylands
Balegrwnelee	1507	SRO GD 112/106/1	5 pennylands
Ballegrundill	1585	SRO GD 112/5/8	5 merklands
Balliegrundill	1597	SRO GD 112/2/106/8	5 merklands
Balegrwnelee	1603	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.165	5 merklands
Balchundill	1654	Blaue	
Ballegrundell and Tirewen	1698	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.165	6 merklands
Balegrundell	1729	SRO GD 112/2/6/54.	
Baligrundell	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.56	4 merklands

G Baile,m ON grænn,adj völlr,m (Green field township)

The precise derivation of this compound name is not entirely clear. The earliest written form, that of 1470, would suggest a derivation from ON grænn völlr. This name is also found at Grianal, Tíree and at Greenwall, Shapinsay, Orkney. It is clear that the Gaelic generic baile is a later addition, post dating the formation of the Norse name. The later written forms offer no alternative convincing explanation.

Balygrundle is situated on a fertile stretch of land suited to improved grassland and rough grazing. The 1:25,000 OS map records 4 settlements with the name Balygrundle within a 2 sq km area at the following locations,

Baligrundle	NM 84/94	838 408
Balygrundle	NM 84/94	839 401
Balygrundle no 1	NM 84/94	844 402
Baligrundle	NM 83/93	835 395.

The duplication of the name not once but three times and with no corresponding differentiating specifics relating to either direction, size or function of the settlements is unusual. The proximity of the settlements to each other argues forcibly for their being component parts of one, much larger, whole. The very high merkland evaluation is also suggestive of a large areal extent. The eighteenth century plan of the lands of Ballygrundle,<sup>39</sup> showing clearly the settlement's northern boundary with Achnacroish,

<sup>39</sup>SRO RHP 12324.

does not delineate the (?more modern) divisions into the 4 Balygrundles. The settlement land is divided into component parts named Leorlin, Achnasclockmore and beg, Shenvalli, Glackmore and Cullandmor; all of these names are now lost.

The sheer size of the settlement, coupled with its high evaluation and topographical Norse name suggest that Balygrundle ranks as a primary settlement.

### Teirwin

Teirewin	1574	SRO GD 112/2/106/2	2 merklands
Teirewin	1596	SRO GD 112/5/8	4 merklands
Teirewin	1622	Sasine vol.2 p.107	1 merkland
Teirewin	1638	Sasine vol.2 p.205	1 merkland
Tirewen and Balygrundell	1698	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.166	6 merklands
Tirowne	1729	SRO GD 112/2/106/54	

G Tir,m Ewan,m pers name (Land of Ewan)

The settlement of Teirwin is no longer extant although its coupling with Balygrundle in 1698 suggests its proximity to that settlement. The high merkland evaluation of 1596 suggests a settlement of no small extent at that date while the most modern reference suggests that it became incorporated into the larger land unit of Balygrundle.

### Settlement unit Frackersaig

<u>Frackersaig</u>	NM 84/94 GR 825 404.		
Frakkisaig	1630	Sasine vol.2 p.102	
Frackersaid	1650	Sasine vol.1 p.109	4 merklands
Frakkisaig	1654	Blaue	
Frackersaig	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.57	4 merklands

ON Frakki,m pers. name vik,f (Frakki's bay)

Frackersaig lies on the west coast of the island midway between the bays of Port nan Gallan and Port nan Leadaig. The former name possibly contains the Gaelic noun gall, foreigner, and the bay may originally have been known as Frackersaig. Alternatively

the Norse name Frackersaig may originally have referred to Sailean bay lying 1km north of the settlement. The high evaluation of the settlement is suggestive of large areal extent and Frackersaig may have encompassed a large tract of land. The specific frakki is found also in Morrenish Mull, and the Oa, Islay.

To the south-west of the settlement stand the scant remains of Dun Cuilein.<sup>40</sup> To the east of the dun, the name Birgidile may preserve the Norse noun borg, fortification.

Salen NM 84/94 GR 833 411

Sailean 1815 RHP 3254

G Sailean,m (Inlet of the sea with a deep bay)

Salen lies at the head of the wide bay An Sailean which lies 1km north of Frackersaig and forms the best harbour on the west coast of Lismore. The settlement ranks as a peripheral one and must have originated as a subdivision of Frackersaig.

### Settlement unit Craiganich

#### Craiganich

Craiganiche	1619	Sasine vol.1 p.24	2 merklands
Craiganich	1623	Sasine vol.2 p.48	4 merklands
Kreiganich	1622	Blaeu	
Craigniche	1815	SRO RHP 3254	
Craigniche	1836	SRO RHP 5236	

G Creag,f (Crag) ON nes,n (Crag promontory ?)

The settlement of Craiganich is no longer discernible although the name is recorded as an estate name in the nineteenth century. The estate included the settlement of Sailean. Blaeu marks Craiganich as lying to the south of Frackersaig at approximately GR 814 402 where a small bay breaks up a stretch of rocky coastline in the vicinity of Brynalen. While the suffix of the settlement is unclear the prefix derives from the Gaelic topographical term creag describing the coastline.

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<sup>40</sup>RCAHMS., Lorn,149.

**Settlement unit Achnacroish**

<u>Achnacroish</u>	NM 84/94 GR 852 409.	
Auchnacroshe	1574 SRO GD 112/5/8	4 merklands
Auchanacrosche	1596 OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.166	
Auchanacrosh	1623 SRO GD 112/2/106/21	4 merklands
Auchanacroishce	1643 Sasine vol.1 p.77	4 merklands
Auchncroish	1691 SRO GD 112/2/106/3	4 merklands
Achnacroish	1751 SRO E106/3/2 p.56	3 merklands

G Achadh,m na, prep crois,f (Field of the cross)

Achnacroish lies on the east coast of Lismore on fertile land capable of supporting both arable and permanent pastures.<sup>41</sup> This fertility is reflected in both the settlement name generic achadh, (field) and also in the high evaluation of the settlement.

The specific crois suggests that Achnacroish had associations with the chapel and burial ground of Cill-an Suidhe (GR 848 405), 0.75km to the south-west. The RCAHMS notes that 'this is probably the site of the former chapel of Killeen' and that 'the burial ground appears to belong to a class of circular ditched enclosures for which an early Christian date has been postulated'.<sup>42</sup> More precisely crois may have its origins in the site of a votive cross. The name Achnacroish is also retained in the name of a croft lying close to the site of the cathedral.

<u>Tirlaggan</u>	NM 84/94 GR 844 411	
Teirlagane	1573 GD 112/5/8	3 merklands
Tyrlagan	1622 Blaue	
Tirlaggan	1721 SRO GD 112/9/40	

G Tir,m lag,n an,dim (Land of the little hollow)

Tirlaggan lies 0.75km west of Achnacroish. Its situation inland with no independent access to the sea suggests that it represents secondary expansion from Achnacroish.

<sup>41</sup>Macaulay Institute, Soil map.

<sup>42</sup>RCAHMS, Lorn,118.

**Settlement unit Killean**

<b><u>Killean</u></b>	NM 84/94 GR 846 414		
<b>Killene</b>	1574	SRO GD 112/2/106/2	2 merklands
<b>Killen</b>	1596	SRO GD 112/5/8	4 merklands
<b>Killin</b>	1622	Blaue	
<b>Killin</b>	1643	Sasine vol.1 p.77	2 merklands
<b>Killen</b>	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.56	2 merklands

G Cille,f Sheathain,m pers.name. (Church of John)

The settlement of Killean as it stands today lies 1km north-north-west of the site of the former chapel of Killean. The eighteenth century plan of Killean shows that the name was used of a wide area which encompassed the settlements of Achmore and Achbeg, Drumskiathmore and Drumskiathbeg, Tuair and Lagmore and Lagbeg,<sup>43</sup> none of which are discernible today. This suggests that the settlement be afforded primary status.

**Settlement unit Baleveolan**

<b><u>Baleveolan</u></b>	NM 84/94 GR 846 422		
<b>Baileveolane</b>	1470	SRO GD 112/2/109/1	3 merklands
<b>Balleveolan</b>	1721	SRO GD 112/9/40	

G Baile,m (? township)

The settlement of Baleveolan lies west of Balnagown. The high evaluation is suggestive of a large areal extent and this is reflected in the use of the name Balliveolan which covers an area to the south of the settlement. As in the case of Killean the district of Balleveolan may have encompassed several small settlements, the names of which have not been preserved in the documentary record.

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<sup>43</sup>SRO RHP 12324.

Balnagown NM 84/94 GR 857 419  
 Ballynagowan 1622 Blaue

G Baile,m na, prep. gobhainn,m (Smith's township)

Balnagown lies south of Loch Baile a'Ghobhainn. As with many of the settlements on the island the settlement has a bipartite division, both parts being known by the same name. The Gaelic suffix gobhainn is found throughout western Scotland and is most frequently coupled with either G baile or peighinn.

Killandrist NM 84/94 GR 856 426  
 Keilandrist 1511 OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.165 3.5 merklands  
 Kilandryis 1622 Blaue  
 Killandreist 1651 Sasine vol.1 p.119 2 merklands  
 Killandrish 1778 SRO RHP 8180

G Cille,f Andrais,m pers name (Church of Andrew)

Killandrist lies west of Loch Baile a'Gobhainn and arguably formed the primary settlement in this area. The settlement name derives from the chapel dedicated to St. Andrew which once stood at GR 858 427 although there are now no visible remains at the site.<sup>44</sup> The name is preserved in that of St. Andrew's Well which lies to the east of the settlement. Peripheral settlement expansion is seen at Balnasack to the south.

Tirefour NM 84/94 GR 868 429  
 Teirfour 1573 SRO GD 112/5/8 1 merkland  
 Tyrfour 1654 Blaue

G Tir,m fuir,adj (Cold land)

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<sup>44</sup>RCAHMS., Lorn,149.

Tirefour lies east of Loch Baile a'Ghobhainn. To the north-west of the settlement stands the remains of Tirefour Castle, a broch which 'occupies a prominent position on the highest point of an elongated limestone ridge'.<sup>45</sup>

Balure NM 84/94 GR 857 419

G Baile,m ur adj (New township)

The settlement name is absent from the documentary record, confirming what the name suggests, that the settlement belongs to a modern phase of settlement expansion and represents an infilling of the existing settlement pattern.

Baileouchdarach NM 84/94 GR 872 435

G Baile,m ? (? township)

Baileouchdarach lies to the north-east of Balure. Like Balure, it is absent from the documentary record and of recent origin.

#### Settlement unit Ballimakillichan

Balimakillichan NM 84/94 GR 859 438

Ballemakillichan 1470 SRO GD 112/2/109/1 2 merklands

Ballikillechan 1567 OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.165 4 merklands

Balleinakinchan 1654 Blaue

Ballimakillichan 1751 Sro E106/3/2 p.56 3 merklands

G Baile,m na, prep. cille,f an, dim. (Township of the small church)

Balimackillichan lies 1km east of Castle Coeffin, the thirteenth century residence of the MacDougalls of Lorn. The castle stands in a prominent position on a small promontary which gives extensive views of Loch Linnhe and the Sound of Mull. Adjacent to the castle stands an Iron Age fort which also clearly utilised this natural defensive site. Local tradition holds that the castle name Coeffin derives from the name of a legendary Norse prince Caifean. The 'Anonymous Description' gives the name of the castle as

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.,75.

Bealwothar<sup>46</sup> a name which has been linked to that of Caifean's supposed sister Beothail.<sup>47</sup> Balimackillichan lies to the north of the cathedral church and the element cille in the name may refer to site of the early Christian monastery believed to occupy the same site as that of the mediaeval cathedral.

<u>Portcharren</u>	NM 83/93 approx. 862 447		
Portcarrane	1470	SRO GD 112/2/109/1	20s
Portcarrane	1501	OPS vol.2 pt.1 p.165	20s
Portcarran	1511	“	3.5 merklands
Port Charren	1622	Blaue	
Portcharren	1660	Sasine vol.1 pp.173-4	20s
Portcharren	1751	SRO E106/3/2 p.56	1 merkland

G Port,m carran,m (Harbour of the scurvy grass?)

The settlement of Portcharren is no longer extant. Blaue locates it as lying north-north-east of Castle Coeffin at the south-west extremity of the small Sron Port na Moralachd headland. A more sheltered harbour than that at the western side of the headland is found to the north-east at Port na Moralachd. The land is also flatter here; both of these factors arguing for the settlement site being close to Port na Moralachd.

The derivation of the Gaelic specific carran is not entirely clear. It may refer to carran, scurvy grass found on many sandy stretches of coastline in western Scotland. Alternatively 'carran' may derive from the saint's name Ciaran or Kieran, the name being also commemorated in the settlement name Kilcheran.

### Settlement unit Clachan

<u>Clachan</u>	NM 84/94 GR 856 430		
Keanaclachane	1470	SRRO GD 112/2/109/1	40 pennylands
Clachan	1778	SRO RHP 8180	

G Clachan,m (Hamlet, village)

<sup>46</sup>'Anonymous Description of the Western Isles' in W.F.Skene ed., Celtic Scotland, vol.3,435.

<sup>47</sup>RCAHMS., Lorn,187.

Clachan was formerly the most important of the early settlements on the island. Dwelly defines the Gaelic noun clachan as 'denoting a hamlet or village in which there is a parish church, inn and smithy'.<sup>48</sup> Prior to the development of Achnacroish as the primary township on Lismore with the ferry link to Oban, Clachan formed the most important centre on the island.

The remains of the mediaeval cathedral church of St. Moluag stand at Clachan where the remains of the choir of the mediaeval church form the parish church of Lismore. The site was known as Kilmoluag from the sixteenth century onwards.<sup>49</sup> It has been suggested that a sub-rectangular enclosure seen in the nineteenth century field boundaries, and incorporating much of the natural hollow in which Clachan lies represent the outline of the monastic vallum which would have surrounded the early Christian monastery of St. Moluac.<sup>50</sup> To the south-west of Clachan a smaller, circular enclosure marks the site of a possible early Christian burial ground.<sup>51</sup> The present burial ground at Clachan was formerly known as 'The Cross'. A cross socket still exists and represents the Irish practice of defining the boundaries of monastic enclosures with free-standing crosses.<sup>52</sup> Further evidence of free-standing crosses comes from the croft of Achnacroish (field of the cross) lying west of the Manse, from Clach na h-Ealadh, a cross slab close to the graveyard, and from a chrois dubh, the 'black cross' lying in the vicinity of the church.<sup>53</sup> Clachan has an exceptionally high pennyland evaluation which is unique on the island and emphasises the primary status of the settlement. It may possibly indicate a division of two ouncelands.

Bachuill            NM 84/94 GR 863 438  
G Bachall,m            (Crozier)

Bachuill, which lies to the north of Clachan is not mentioned in the documentary record. Gillies suggests that the name stems from G ba choill, cattle wood as to the north of the settlement is found one of only two remaining areas of deciduous woodland on the island.<sup>54</sup> It is more likely that the name relates to the genitive form of G bachall a crozier. The crozier believed to have been that of the St. Moluag and known as the Bachal Mór

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<sup>48</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary,200.

<sup>49</sup>OPS vol.2 pt.1,159.

<sup>50</sup>A.MacDonald, 'Early Monasteries',53-56.

<sup>51</sup>RCAHMS., Lorn, 119.

<sup>52</sup>A.MacDonald, 'Early Monasteries',56.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 56-57.

<sup>54</sup>H.C.Gillies, Place Names of Argyll,74.

belonged to the Livingstones of Bachuil in the nineteenth century and is still in the Keeper's possession.<sup>55</sup> The name of the settlement clearly derives from its association with this high status object.

### Settlement unit Ramsay

Port Ramsay NM 84/94 GR 884 454

Ramsa 1654 Blaue

G Port,m ON Hraun,n ey,n (Rocky island)

Port Ramsay lies on the north-eastern headland of Lismore. To the west of the headland lies Eilean Ramsay. The termination ON ey, island, suggests that the name was transferred from the island to mainland Lismore. Port Ramsay was founded as a fishing village in the nineteenth century. The name Ramsay also occurs in the Isle of Man.

Secondary, modern, settlement expansion from Port Ramsay has occurred at Fenachrochan at the head of a silted bay at GR 875 452 and to the north of Port Ramsay at Taybhalaich.

Achuaran NM 84/94 GR 878 445 / 879 446

G Aachadh,m uaran,m (Fresh water field)

Achuaran lies 1km south-west of Stronacroibh. The township has two nuclei, at GR 878 445 and the adjacent cluster of buildings at 879 446. The presence of several streams which rise in this area accounts for the name.

Stronachroibh NM 84/94 GR 884 445

G Sron,m a, prep craoibhe,f (Tree promontary)

Stronachroibh lies 1.25km south-east of Port Ramsay on land suitable only for pasture. To the north of the settlement the land becomes flatter and marshier. The name suggests that the headland was, at one time, wooded. Prior to 1800 large areas of the island were covered in woodland but on an island also devoid of peat the woodland was sacrificed for fuel.

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<sup>55</sup>OPS vol.2 pt.1,159.

### 6.3 Summary

Lismore shows a high ratio of Gaelic to Norse settlement names. The Gaelic to Norse ratio of the total recorded settlements stands at 8:1. None of the names of unidentified or 'lost' settlements recorded in the written sources can be said with any certainty to be of Norse origin with the exception of Penyngscanliach.

5 Norse settlement names are recorded in the documentary record: Frackersaig, Ramsay, Bernera, Fiart and (Balie)grundill. 3 of these refer to small islands lying off the coast of Lismore. All of these names describe topographical features, whether a bay, vik, (Frackersaig); island, ey, (Bernera, Ramsay), fjördr (Fiart) or field, völlr, ([Bali]Grundill). The association of the primary names with prominent landscape features has clearly ensured their survival up to the present day.

The strategic importance of Lismore, controlling as it does the mouth of the Great Glen and the mouth of the Firth of Lorn, cannot have escaped the sea-based Norsemen. The names of the small islands around Lismore are witness to Norse seafaring activity in Loch Linnhe; the islands of Branra and Pladda lie to the east of Lismore in Loch Linnhe, and the island of Musdile immediately to the south. To the north-east of Lismore lies the island of Shuna whilst further south lies the larger island of Eriska. Furthermore, Norse names on the Lorne and Morvern mainland confirm the presence of Scandinavian speakers. To the west of Lismore in Kingairloch are Glen Sanda and Camas Chrionaig whilst to the east in Lorn lie the settlements of Stockdale, Dallens, Mucknish and Steallaig. Again these names refer to prominent landscape features.

The Norse simplex topographical names indicative of the earliest phase of settlement elsewhere in the Inner Hebrides and often associated with primary landnam divisions, are unknown on Lismore and in the surrounding area. The compound topographical names describing the small islands around the coast of Lismore may indicate the earliest settled areas. The habitative generics, particularly stadir and bolstadr clearly associated with primary and secondary settlement phases on Mull, Coll and Tiree are also absent from the islands nomenclature. This suggests the naming of mainland features and small islands from the sea, and it may be that permanent settlement in these areas was only incidental to their importance as navigational markers on sea routes.

Of the 5 settlements on Lismore having Norse names, valuations are known only for Frackersaig, (4 merklands), and Baligrundle, (5 merklands). Both of these are slightly higher than the average merkland evaluations on Lismore, with the majority of settlements being evaluated at 2-3 merklands. Both settlements classify as primary by

virtue of their high evaluation, the high quality of the land and, in the case of Frackersaig, access to an excellent harbour. Both lie in the fertile stretch of land in the centre of the island and share a common boundary. The relationship between the two settlements is unclear. The high valuation of each suggests the presence of two adjacent primary units although it is also possible that they formed component secondary divisions of an original primary unit which may have stretched from coast to coast. The land units as they stand today give little indication of any early administrative divisions, Norse or other, on the island and any reference to the *ounceland* or *davach* is missing. In part this may be due to a lack of early sources. Only the high evaluations of the above two settlements is suggestive of the existence of administrative demarcations, in much the same way that the high evaluation of the Ardtun promontory in the Ross of Mull may indicate the former presence of a wider territorial/administrative unit. Whilst the *merkland* evaluation is that most commonly used, documentary evidence confirms that pennylands were also employed on Lismore as with the evaluation of Clachan at 40 pennylands. Two settlement names, Pennyfurt and Penyngscanliach also attest to a (?local) division of land into pennylands.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which post-Norse settlement development by Gaelic speakers has obscured a Norse settlement pattern on Lismore if the Norse settlement was ever denser than the 4 settlement units discussed above. Most of the settlement units having Gaelic names are concentrated to the north of the settlements of Frackersaig and Baligrundill, on fertile land in the vicinity of the site of the cathedral. Of the total 54 settlement names on the islands, 8 are formed with the Gaelic generic baile. The coupling of the generic with, for example, the Norse name grænvöllr to produce the name Bailegrundill suggests that this generic post-dates the Norse period on the island. While the names Ballimakillichan, Baliveolan and Balnagown are recorded as early as 1470 and would rank as primary and secondary settlements, Balmeanach and Balure both clearly represent a more recent infilling of an existing settlement pattern. 8 out of the 54 settlement names are compounded with the Gaelic generic achadh, 6 of which rank as peripheral settlements. Whilst achadh and baile settlement names may be contemporaneous the achadh settlements appear to be of a lower status than the baile ones. Together the achadh and baile settlements account for 28% of the total settlement names on the island.

Two interpretations of the character of the settlement pattern on Lismore may be offered. Firstly it can be argued that the influx of Gaelic speakers and settlers in the post-Norse era successfully obliterated almost all traces of any Norse settlement pattern which may have existed on the island. The establishment of the episcopal cathedral on Lismore and the proximity of the island to mainland Scotland may both have been important factors in adversely influencing the retention of Norse settlement and landscape

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names and consolidating Gaelic settlement on Lismore. Secondly it is possible that Norse settlement of Lismore was never denser than is indicated by the presence of the 5 Norse settlement names mentioned above and that settlement on the island was largely of an 'incidental' nature along a well known sea route. The evidence also suggests that Lismore, like Iona, was largely ignored by the Norse who nonetheless recognised its importance as a focal point for sea routes at the mouth of the Great Glen.

Table 1A  
Existing Settlements

<u>Settlement name</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Achinduin	1240	2 pennylands	Primary
Achnacroish	1574	4 merklands	Primary
Achuaran	–	–	Peripheral
Ballimakillichan	1470	2 merklands	Primary
Balygrundle	1470	5 merklands	Primary
Balnagown	1622	–	Secondary
Balure	–	–	Peripheral
Baileveolan	1470	3 merklands	Primary
Balnasack	–	–	Secondary
Balchuil	–	–	Secondary
Baileouchdarach	–	–	Peripheral
Bernera	1251	–	Primary
Clachan	1470	40 pennylands	Primary
Dalnarrow	1815	–	Peripheral
Fiart	1622	–	Primary
Frackersaig	1622	4 merklands	Primary
Fenachrochan	–	–	Peripheral
Killean	1596	4 merklands	Primary
Killandrist	1511	3.5 merklands	Secondary
Kilcheran	1721	–	Secondary
Port Ramsa	1622	–	Primary
Salen	–	–	Peripheral
Stronacroibh	–	–	Peripheral
Taybhalaich	–	–	Peripheral
Tirefour	1573	1 merkland	Peripheral
Tirlaggan	1573	1 merkland	Secondary

**Table 1B****Settlements mentioned in the documentary record, identified but no longer extant**

<u>Settlement Name</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Achadh nan Aird	1622	–	Peripheral
Achmore and Beg	18th century	–	Peripheral
Achnasclockmore and beg	18th century	–	Peripheral
Clachlea	1622	2 merklands	Peripheral
Craiganich	1619	4 merklands	Primary
Cullandmore	18th century	–	Peripheral
Drumskiath more and beg	18th century	–	Peripheral
Glackmore	18th century	–	Peripheral
Lagmore and beg	18th century	–	Peripheral
Portcharren	1470	20s	Primary
Shenvalli	18th century	–	Peripheral
Tuair	18th century	–	Peripheral

Table 1CSettlements mentioned in the documentary record but not identified.

<u>Settlement Name</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
Achavaich	1617	6 merklands
Achaworranbeg	1651	2 merklands
Achychnahunsen	1304	2 pennylands
Balmeanach		
Chaben	1470	2 merklands
Drumchulochir	1251	1 pennyland
Feyard	1617	6 merklands
Geyle	1304	1.5 merklands
Pennyfurt	1596	4 merklands
Pennyngscanliach	1251	1 pennyland
Tenga	1251	1.5 pennylands
Teirferirlach	1304	1 pennyland
Tyrknane	1257	2 pennylands
Tyrchulene	1257	5 pennylands
Teirwin	1596	4 merklands

Table 2

<u>Settlement classification</u>	<u>Total number of settlements</u>	<u>Total ON names</u>	<u>Total G names</u>
Primary	12	5	7
Secondary	7	0	7
Peripheral	16	0	16

<u>Settlement classification</u>	<u>ON habitative names</u>	<u>ON simplex topographical names</u>	<u>G habitative names</u>
Primary	0	1	2
Secondary	0	0	4
Peripheral	0	0	3

Table 3A

Total of unidentified settlements	15	
Total having ON names	2	( 13.3 %)
Total having G names	13	(86.7 %)

Table 3B

Total existing settlements	26	
Total having ON names	5	(19.2%)
Total having G names	21	(80.8%)

Table 3C

Total of all recorded settlements (existing, unidentified and lost)	54	
Total having ON names	7	(14.6%)
Total having G names	48	(85.4% )

## PART TWO

Chapter seven

ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS AND SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

7.1 Ouncelands, pennylands and merklands

The administrative units in the Inner Hebrides as discernible in the settlement patterns point to several district and yet overlapping systems; these being fiscal, legal, economic, social and ecclesiastical. As the main body of source material in this study is a series of rentals, the overall picture obtained is inevitably biased towards the clearly recognizable fiscal systems. The complex and diverse administrative patterns alluded to in the sources of the later Middle Ages and early Modern period have their origins in three distinct earlier periods; in the pre-Norse period, the Norse period and the post-Norse period. The extent to which the various systems built upon or replaced those of their predecessors has been a matter for continuous debate.

The earliest surviving written evidence alluding to pre-Norse administrative systems in the Inner Hebrides concerns the kingdom of Dalriada. The Dalriadic *Senchus fer n-h'Alba* gives the first reference to the division of land, including within its survey data a list of the houses within the territory of each of the three kindred of Dalriada.<sup>1</sup> In the case of the clans N'Oengusa (whose territory was that of Islay) and N'Gabraín (whose lands included Cowal, Kintyre, Bute, Jura and Arran) the number of individual houses are given and grouped according to geographical districts. The grouping of Clan Loairn (who controlled Mull, Coll, Tiree, Lismore, Colonsay, Morvern, Lorn and Ardnamurchan) differs from that of the N'Oengusa and N'Gabraín in that the house grouping revolves around the individual 'nobles' or leaders of the various subdivisions of the clan. All the house listings are assessed in multiples of five. Bannerman concluded that the house listing was linked to the payment of tribute and that the organisational system of Dalriada was one based upon twenty house units. Related to the number of houses apportioned to each subdivision of the clan this would mean that each subdivision tended to hold 1/4, 1/2, 3/4 or one whole unit.<sup>2</sup>

The twenty house unit appears to have been replaced by the *davach* (G *dabhach*) at some date after 650 and before 850.<sup>3</sup> The term *davach* is found as a unit of land assessment primarily in the west, south-west and south-east of Scotland. It is absent from the Northern Isles and in Northern Scotland the only indication of the presence of the *davach* comes from place names. These rarely allude to the *davach* itself

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<sup>1</sup>J. Bannerman, *Dalriada*, 132-3.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, 131-46.

<sup>3</sup>A.R. Easson, 'Systems of land assessment in Scotland before 1400', Ph.D thesis, Edinburgh University, (1987), 271.

but to fractions of it, as in names containing the elements haddo, leffen and lettoch for a half davach, kirrie for a quarter davach and coig, for a fifth of a davach.

The exact origins and development of the davach have been hotly debated. Dodgshon concluded that 'whilst the davach may have started out as a measure of tribute, it was only later that it was adapted as a land measurement.'<sup>4</sup> Oram, after reviewing the works of earlier writers MacKerrel,<sup>5</sup> Jackson,<sup>6</sup> Megaw<sup>7</sup> and MacQueen<sup>8</sup> concluded that 'in the west and south-west the davach was essentially a fiscal unit and in the north-east it was a large territorial measure of arable capacity.'<sup>9</sup> Easson states that the davach was a 'tangible permanent unit whose shape would largely be defined by natural boundaries' and that they were found in the most fertile landscapes of the regions in which they were present.<sup>10</sup> The davach as such is entirely absent from the Inner Hebrides where the comparable unit of assessment is the ounceland, also known in the written sources by the Gaelic term tirunga (lit. land ounce) and by the latin name unciata. The ounceland is found primarily in those areas where the davach is absent; in Orkney and Shetland, the Outer Hebrides and north-west mainland; and the davach where the ounceland is absent as it is in Galloway. Ouncelands and davachs are not, however, mutually exclusive occurring in juxtaposition in Uist for example. As the davach is found mainly in those areas of Scotland apparently devoid of any traces of Norse settlement it has been suggested that the reason for the absence of the davach in the Inner Hebrides (and elsewhere) is that it was replaced by the ounceland; ie the ounceland took over completely and absolutely the davach unit in all its functions. This view involving a mere change in terminology has perhaps been oversimplified. In many instances both ouncelands and davachs correspond to distinct named geographical areas having natural boundaries such as watersheds, coastlines, rivers or hills. This is clearly seen for example in the ounceland divisions of the eastern end of Tiree where the Caolas headland forms one ounceland and again on Mull where the Morrenish and Treshnish headlands were each evaluated at one ounceland. The island of Ulva is also evaluated at one ounceland as it forms a distinct geographical unit. It is likely that these 'territories' have shown a continuity and stability from the Iron Age onwards in that successive groups of peoples have utilized the natural divisions of the landscape for a variety of purposes. This

<sup>4</sup>R.A.Dodgshon, Land and Society in Early Scotland,(1981),75-6.

<sup>5</sup>A.MacKerrel 'Ancient Denominations of Agricultural Land in Eastern Scotland. A Summary of recorded opinion', in PSAS,78(1943-4),39-80.

<sup>6</sup>K.Jackson, The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer,(1972).

<sup>7</sup>B.Megaw, 'Pennyland and Davach in South West Scotland' in Scottish Studies, 23(1976),75-77.

<sup>8</sup>J.MacQueen, Pennyland and Davach in South West Scotland: A preliminary note.', in Ouncelands and Pennylands, eds. L.J. Macgregor and B.E.Crawford,46-59.

<sup>9</sup>R.D.Oram, 'Davachs and Pennylands in south-west Scotland. A review of the evidence', in Ouncelands and Pennylands, eds. L.J.Macgregor and B.E.Crawford,46-59.

<sup>10</sup>A.Easson, 'Systems of Land Assessment', 66.

stability is also noted in Thomson's work on the ouncelands of Orkney and Shetland.<sup>11</sup> Thus it is quite plausible that the Norse adopted and adapted pre-existing land divisions, be they *davachs* or not, for their own purposes.

A crucial factor in the discussion of the origins and development of the ounceland system must surely be the date of its imposition. In Coll and Tiree the clear cut delineation of the islands into ouncelands appears to have followed quickly upon the establishment of the primary settlement units in the *landnam* era and yet before expansion of settlement occurred with the secondary divisions of the primary farms. Certainly the ounceland formed the principal territorial unit within which settlement expansion occurred. This would argue for an early date for the imposition of the ounceland in Coll and Tiree and it is possible that the system was first introduced into these areas before its adoption in the Northern Isles and the Scottish mainland. Easson dates its introduction to the second half of the ninth century.<sup>12</sup>

In Orkney and Shetland agricultural land was divided into *eyrislands* for the purpose of taxation. There are broad similarities between the Hebridean ounceland, the Orkney *eyrisland* and the Manx land division the *treen*. It has been suggested that all three land divisions date from the time of Earl Sigurd's conquest of the Isle of Man and the subsequent exaction of tribute;<sup>13</sup> or that an assessment system already in use in the Northern Isles 'could have been extended to the Hebrides and western mainland of Scotland during the period of [Earl] Sigurd's or his son Thorfinn's conquest of the Hebrides in the early eleventh century'.<sup>14</sup> *Eyrbyggja Saga* recalls how the Earl returned home 'leaving his agents to pay the tax which was to be paid in refined silver'.<sup>15</sup> There is little indication as to how the tax levied on the ounceland was collected in the west. *Njals Saga* records how 'Kari was one of [Earl] Sigurd's body guards and he had been taking taxes from the Hebrides, from Earl Gilli', suggesting that dues were collected by the local rulers and then conveyed to the Orkney Earldom or Kings of Man. Steinness located four *huseby* farms in Orkney which he understood to be centrally located royal administrative farms responsible for the collection of tax.<sup>16</sup> There is no evidence of the existence of *huseby* farms in the Inner Hebrides and 'by the the end of the Norse period it is probable that the populations of the Hebrides were taxable by their own kings alone'.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>W.P.L.Thomson,'Ouncelands and Pennylands in Orkney and Shetland', in *Ouncelands and Pennylands*, eds. L.J.Macgregor and B.E.Crawford,34.

<sup>12</sup>A.Easson, 'Systems of Land Assessment', 271.

<sup>13</sup>W.P.L.Thomson,'Ouncelands and Pennylands in Orkney and Shetland',34.

<sup>14</sup>B.E.Crawford, *Scandinavian Scotland*,90.

<sup>15</sup>*Eyrbyggja Saga*, eds. H.Palsson and P.Edwards,100.

<sup>16</sup>A.Steinness,'The Huseby System in Orkney', in *SHR*,38(1959),36-46.

<sup>17</sup>A.O.Johnson, 'The payments from the Hebrides and Isle of Man to the Crown of Norway 1152-1263', in *SHR* 48(1969),18-34.

As the name suggests the ounceland was an area of land rendering one ounce of silver in tax. In Norway the term is unknown where the primary tax was a personal one connected with an individual's obligation to serve in the Royal Fleet, the leidang (ON *leidangr*). In order to raise the levy the country was divided into skipreide (ON *skipreidur*) each skipreide being responsible for the provision of one vessel. The skipreide was itself divided into 3 manngerd (ON *manngerde*). A manngerd was made up of approximately 3 farm units and was the district responsible for the sending and equipping of one man to the royal fleet. Bjørkevik points out that the farms grouped together into the manngerd were neighbouring farms which made up a unit as a result of the constraints of the physical landscape, thereby forming a natural territorial grouping.<sup>18</sup> There have been many attempts to try and correlate the Norwegian system with the administrative systems of the colonies. Marstrander argued for the Manx treens and sheadings having their origins in the leidang system<sup>19</sup> while Marwick believed that the (uncommon) Orkney Skattlands could be related to the manngerd.<sup>20</sup> These tenuous links between the Isles and Norway have recently been challenged by Thomson who concluded that 'the origins of the skatt paying ounceland organisation are not to be found in the naval levy'.<sup>21</sup>

Both the ounculands of the Western Isles and those of Orkney and Shetland were divided into pennylands. The pennyland, unlike the ounceland, did not denote a fixed area of land but referred to the fiscal assessment of the named area in question. The Inner Hebridean ounceland, divided into 20 pennylands, varied from that of the Northern Isles and the Northern Hebrides which was divided into 18 pennylands. Various explanations have been offered to explain this discrepancy between the 18 pennylands of the north and the 20 pennylands of the west. Bannerman<sup>22</sup> and more recently Easson<sup>23</sup> equated the 20 pennylands of the Hebridean ounceland with the Dalriadic grouping of 20 house units, stating that 'the pennyland began to replace the individual house somewhere between the mid-ninth century and mid-tenth century'.<sup>24</sup> This infers that the pennyland may have pre-dated the ounceland. On Coll and Tiree where the ounceland appears to have been imposed in the latter half of the ninth century there is no evidence that the island was ever divided into pennylands. MacKerrell suggests that the difference between the 18 and 20 pennylands stemmed from a difference in the value of the silver ounce concerned: the silver ounce

<sup>18</sup>Bjørkevik, 'Manngerd', in *KLNM*, 10(1965),323.

<sup>19</sup>C.J.S.Marstrander, 'Det Norske Landnam på Man', in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*, 6(1932),386.

<sup>20</sup>H.Marwick, 'Naval Defence in Norse Scotland', in *SHR*,28(1949),8.

<sup>21</sup>W.P.L.Thomson, 'Ounculands and Pennylands in Orkney and Shetland',34.

<sup>22</sup>J.Bannerman, *Dalriada*,141.

<sup>23</sup>A.Easson, 'Systems of Land Assessment',171.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*.

being used in Orkney and Shetland (and Lewis?) weighing slightly less than the ounce in circulation in the Southern Hebrides. The southern ounce, said to conform to the English tower weight, weighed more and was divided into 20 pennies.<sup>25</sup>

As well as the unceland and pennyland denominations, land units in the Hebrides were also expressed in terms of merklands. The merkland represents a post-Norse fiscal arrangement. With the cession of the Isles to the Scottish crown in 1266 the crown found it necessary to know exactly how much revenue could come to be relied on from each of the newly acquired estates. This resulted in the introduction of the merkland. A merkland was a unit of land assessed to pay a yearly rental of 13s 4d and bore no fixed relationship to the physical extent of the land. In this the merkland is comparable to the pennyland in being a measure of productivity rather than of area.

Ouncelands, pennylands and merklands are found juxtaposed throughout the Western Isles and the problem of correlating and explaining the multiplicity of gradations found in any one area has occupied writers since the sixteenth century when the author of the 'Anonymous Description of the Isles' gave a detailed summary of the kinds of units in use in the various islands.<sup>26</sup> Most recent studies have concentrated on treating the islands as a whole although Lamont's study of the Islay denominations provides an in depth analysis of the situation in one island.<sup>27</sup> This allows a comparison with the situation found on Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore.

One of the most striking observations to emerge from such studies is the relative geographical distribution of land valuations in uncelands and pennylands when compared to the distribution of valuations in merklands. Areas which are expressed in terms of merklands are very rarely assessed in pennylands and vice versa; for example from the fourteenth century onwards, land in Mull, Ardnamurchan and Lorne was always evaluated in pennylands, occasionally in uncelands and never in merklands. In Coll, Tiree, Islay and Rhum the predominant unit was the merkland and the unceland and never the pennyland. As late as 1674 the Duart rental at the time of the transfer of lands to the Campbells describes land in all areas of Mull in pennylands while in the same rental lands in Tiree and Morvern are expressed in merklands.<sup>28</sup> Lewis and Harris show a distinct similarity to Mull with townships described as fractions or multiples of pennylands but never as merklands. The juxtaposition of unceland, pennyland and merkland is not completely unknown. Skye, Bute and Arran were assessed in all three.

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<sup>25</sup>A.MacKerrell, 'Ancient Denominations of Agricultural Land', 55.

<sup>26</sup>'Anonymous Description', in W.F.Skene, *Celtic Scotland*, vol.3 app.3,428-40.

<sup>27</sup>W.D.Lamont, 'Old Land Denominations and 'Old Extent' in Islay,' in *Scottish Studies* 2(1957),183-203.

<sup>28</sup>R.N.Macphail, *Highland Papers*,1,277-293.

The reason for the predominance of the pennyland in some areas and its near total absence in favour of the merkland in others can be explained by examining the way in which the merkland was introduced. As noted above pennylands and merklands do not form part of the same scale of values. The ouncelands and pennylands belong to an older system than that of the thirteenth century merkland. It appears that the introduction of the merkland into the Isles was based upon the existing divisions into ouncelands seemingly ignoring any real or supposed division into pennylands. On Coll, Tiree, Islay and Rhum the land was re-assessed at 6 merks to the ounce with an assessment of 10 merks to the ounce found in Kintyre, Bute, and Arran. Skye and the adjacent mainland were evaluated at 4 merks to the ounce.

### The Mull Pennylands.

Mull provides one of the clearest examples of an island where the pennyland formed the predominant unit. The ounceland on Mull, unlike that of Coll and Tiree, was used of large geographical areas, headlands and river valleys while the pennyland was associated with settlement units. Fifteenth and sixteenth century charters show that the commonest size of holding in that period was a single pennyland. In the 1588 charter to MacLean of Duart, containing a rental of the Duart lands, 16 out of 24 holdings in Torosay were assessed as one pennyland.<sup>29</sup> The later rentals of the Lochbuie lands in Mull which span the period 1715-1806 also show the majority of holdings assessed at one pennyland.<sup>30</sup> The predominance of the one pennyland unit is also seen in the number of settlement names incorporating the prefix peighinn as in the names Pennygowan, Pennyghael and Pinnimore. The predominance of one pennyland units on Mull contrasts sharply with other areas assessed in pennylands. In Lewis, Harris and the Uists the presence of 5 and 10 penny units are common, (relating to 1/2 and 1/4 ouncelands ?) reflected in such names as Five Penny Borve, Lewis - and it is only rarely that settlements were assessed as a single pennyland. Since in Mull the one pennyland unit is frequently associated with a single township it is useful to examine the internal division of this unit as expressed in the rentals. The 1781 rental of the Lochboy estates for example lists each district in which the Lochboys held land.<sup>31</sup> Beneath this the townships are tabulated and the pennyland evaluations given, eg

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<sup>29</sup>RMS.vol.4 no.1491.

<sup>30</sup>SRO GD 174/710  
SRO GD 174/710

<sup>31</sup>SRO GD 174/789/14

Ardmeanach

1d	Taypol
1d	Calimore
1/2d	Scobul
1d	Tirouran
	etc

Within this division additional information is given concerning the number of tenants, the rent due from the township as a whole and how this was apportioned out among the various tenants.

<u>Baile</u>	<u>Tenant</u>	<u>Wedders</u>	<u>£ s d</u>
1d Calimore	1/8	1	4 -
	1/8	1	4 -
	1/8	1	4 -
	1/8	1	4 -
	1/8	1	4 -
	1/8	1	4 -
	1/4	2	8 -

The division of the pennyland into consistent fractions is enumerated as above, most usually taking the form of a division into quarters, eighths or sixteenths, although sixths and sevenths are also known. This division of the pennylands on Mull is analogous to the divisions of the merkland elsewhere. In the 1588 charter the total annual rental expected to be paid from one pennyland on Mull was consistently either £1 4s 2d or £1 2s 6d while that due from a Tiree merkland was £1 4s 0d. In the sixteenth century then both the pennyland and the merkland were still meaningful units on which basis it was possible to calculate the amount of rent due from a township.

In the crown rental of 1541 where land in Tiree and Islay is expressed in terms of shillings and pence, a pennyland on Mull was evaluated at 16s 8d.<sup>32</sup> A later sasine of 1620 which records the transfer of land in the Ross of Mull also explicitly states that a pennyland on Mull was the equivalent of a 16s 8d land.<sup>33</sup> In Islay the 16s 8d was the most common size of holding which in the local rentals was equated with one merkland, and in the state papers where the Old Extent had been imposed at the rate of 33s 4d (ie 2 1/2 merks) to the quarter, it was the equivalent of 1/8 land. There is

<sup>32</sup>Exchequer Rolls vol.17 p.622

<sup>33</sup>H.Campbell, (ed), The Argyll Sasines, vol.2,25.

therefore an implied similarity between the Mull pennyland and the merklands of Tiree, Coll and Islay.

#### Land Evaluations on Islay.

Islay is something of an anomaly among the islands of the Inner Hebrides. The island was seemingly never assessed in ouncelands and/or pennylands and the Islay records show that a bewildering number of land denominations were in use at any one period.<sup>34</sup> The basic unit to be found in Islay before the imposition of the 'old extent' was the 1/4 davach. This appears to have continued in use throughout the Norse period with no change in terminology to ounceland. That the Celtic unit should survive intact in an area where the place names argue for a dense Norse settlement over a long period of time is curious when compared with the situation in other islands. In Islay the 'Old Extent' was imposed upon the pre-existing celtic divisions at a rate of 20s to the celtic 1/4 land (which consisted of 6 cowlands). It is this system which is adhered to in the local rentals and results in land being described in terms of pounds, shillings and merks. The forfeiture of the lordship in 1493 necessitated a further change in order that the burdens due to the crown were properly apportioned out over the island as many decades of rebellion and disorganization had resulted in the old extent becoming meaningless in that the correct dues were rarely paid. The crown commissioners therefore recreated a system for distributing the burden of crown dues over the Islay lands. This led to the re-grouping of land as 'towns', each town being assessed at 33s 4d (ie 2 1/2 mks). These towns were also known as 1/4 lands but were in no way related to the old celtic 1/4 lands.

This complicated state of affairs on Islay illustrates one important point, namely that the requirement of the local social economy and that of the Royal Exchequer were not necessarily one and the same thing. It was quite possible, and useful, to have two systems operating side by side. This exaggerated situation on Islay may help to clarify discrepancies encountered elsewhere. It also explains why, in charters, large areas of land are given a total extent in merklands although the lands, or more precisely the component townships, are totalled in terms of pennylands, for example a charter conveying land in Eigg in 1498 reads;

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<sup>34</sup>G.G.Smith, The book of Islay. Documents illustrating the history of the island. (1895).

'... the 10d land of Galmastal, 5d land of Grydling-ardean, 1d land of Sandabeg, 3d land of Knockelnok, 7d land of Claytall and the 4d land of Ballemeanach extending in all to 9 merks ...'<sup>35</sup>

Similarly in a charter of 1494 in which James IV granted lands in Mull to John of Lochboy there is found

'... 1d land of Taypoull, 1/2d land of Kailtrene, 1/2d land of Kaylemoir, 1d land of Scoabull, 1/2d land of Teyrehoward, 1/2d land of Brekach, 2d land of Knockhow, 1/2d land of Sowconmyll, 1d land of Camus in Ardmeanach ... extending in all to 12 mks ...'<sup>36</sup>

In Mull then, although the merkland is absent in the local documentation it appears that the evaluation in merks, imposed in the thirteenth century, operated purely within the confines of official documentation. As on Islay, the local land divisions for administrative purposes co-existed with those of the uniform system imposed by the crown.

### The Tiree Maillands

On Tiree a local land denomination, the mailland was used as a land evaluation. The name probably derives from the Norse noun maelir, a measure of grain. The mailland was equal to one forty-eighth of an ounce-land and eight maillands and subsequently came to equal one merkland. The mailland is known only on Tiree although the term mail, mele is known elsewhere in Scotland. In Shetland the term landmail was used of rent or feu duty for land paid to the crown<sup>37</sup> while in the Outer Hebrides a male was used as a measure of grain.<sup>38</sup> On Tiree as in Islay and Mull, the local land denominations co-existed with those imposed by the crown and continued in use until the nineteenth century.

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<sup>35</sup>RMS' vol.2 no. 2438

<sup>36</sup>RMS vol.2 no. 2200.

<sup>37</sup>Scottish National Dictionary, ed A.J.Aitken, 4(1971)15.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid..

## 7.2 The Influence of the Church on the formation and consolidation of Norse settlement patterns

The influence of the Church on the formation and consolidation of Norse settlement patterns was a prominent and lasting one. For the early period prior to the encroachment of the Norse into Celtic territory it is the Irish Annals, in the absence of native written sources, which provide the sole information as to the extent of Celtic monastic activity in Western Scotland. Coupled with archaeological remains the sources point to several monastic communities on Tiree, and major communities at Lismore, Kildonnan, Kingarth, Applecross and Iona. The precise number of religious communities in the Inner Hebrides, their size, status and sphere of influence is not known. Mention of the Scottish monasteries in the Irish sources tend to reflect the status of the communities and not their physical or numerical extent.<sup>39</sup> Archaeologically early monasteries are difficult to detect. The expected survival rate of material at a monastic site is not high as domestic buildings in a monastic complex were generally built of wood and leave little trace in the archaeological record. Where sufficient remains do exist there is evidence to suggest that the randomly organized domestic buildings together with the ecclesiastical buildings were contained within curvilinear surrounding enclosures, the *valuum monasterii*.<sup>40</sup> The *valuum monasterii*, although similar in form to a defensive enclosure functioned primarily as a legal and symbolic boundary.

It has been suggested that the monasteries in the west may have utilized existing defended areas, the hillforts and deserted earthworks of the Iron Age which may have been the gift of local rulers.<sup>41</sup> If this theory proves acceptable it would indicate that some monasteries in utilizing pre-existing centres of population and/or power were inherently an integral part of a territorial system, acknowledging pre-existing land divisions and boundaries although the monasteries were themselves not 'territorial'. At Iona and also at Lismore the monasteries appear to have had associations with pre-Christian ceremonial sites. The name Lismore (*G lios mór*) the great enclosure, may refer to such a site or alternatively to a royal residence.<sup>42</sup> While at Iona the outer enclosure of the monastery is a large earthwork,<sup>43</sup> there is also the probability that monasteries were founded at the cemeteries of the local lay population, where burial sites perhaps continued from the pre-Christian to the Christian eras.<sup>44</sup> A

<sup>39</sup>A.Macdonald, 'Major Early Monasteries: some procedural problems for field archaeologists', in D.Breeze ed. *Studies in Scottish Antiquity*, (1984), 73.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 81-2.

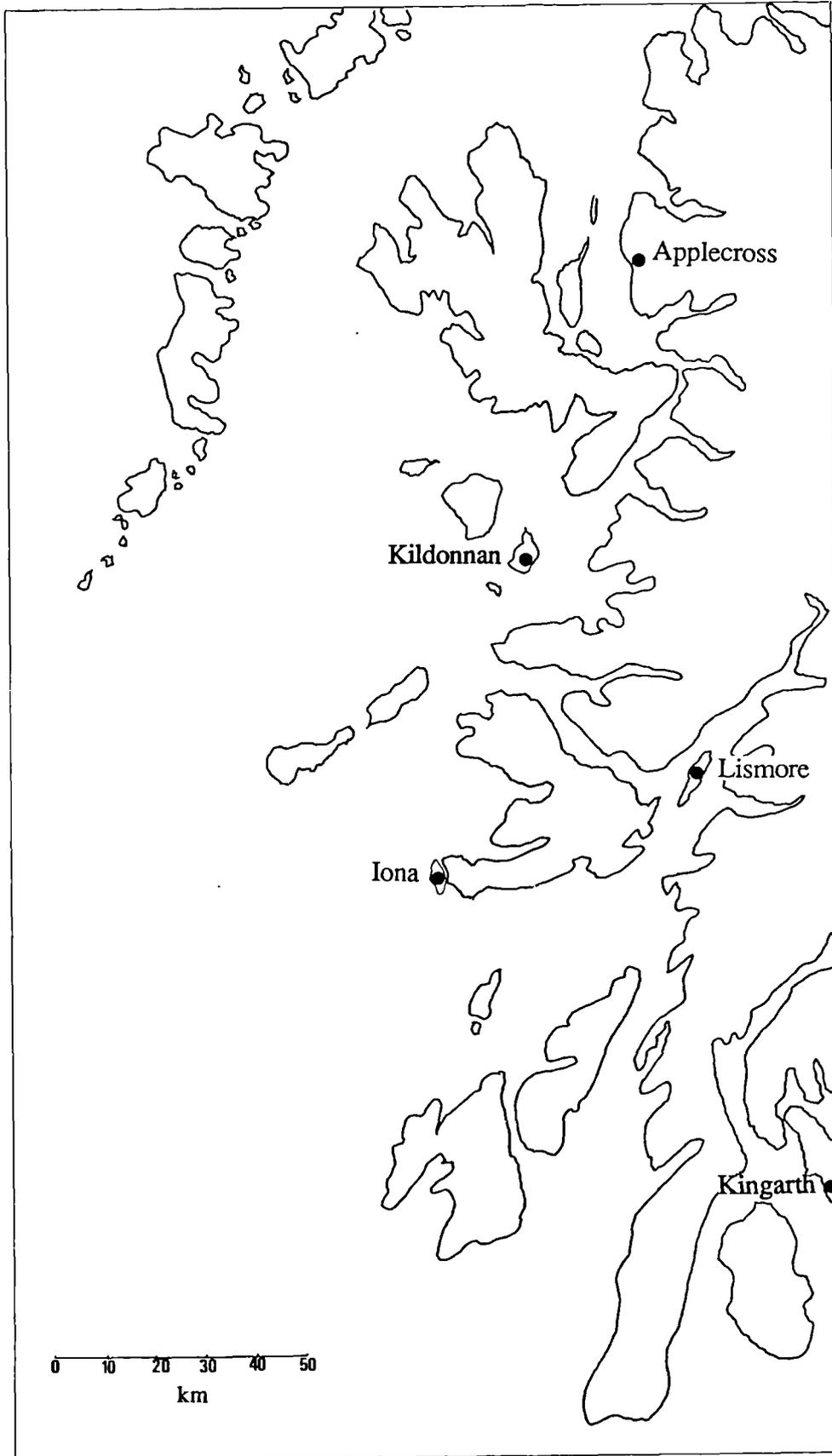
<sup>41</sup>C.Thomas, *The Early Christian Archaeology of North Britain*, (1971), 27-43.

<sup>42</sup>A.Macdonald, 'Major Early Monasteries', 81-2.

<sup>43</sup>O.G.S.Crawford, 'Iona', in *Antiquity*, 7(1933), 453-7.

<sup>44</sup>R.Cramp, 'Anglo-Saxon Monasteries of the North', in *SAF*, 5(1973), 115, 121.

MAJOR MONASTERIES OF THE IRISH MONASTIC  
TYPE. EIGHTH TO TENTH CENTURIES.



connection with pre-Christian sites cannot be proven in all instances. On Tiree the site of St. Patrick's monastery occupies the poorest land and lies in the most isolated area on the island in the south-west on the Ceann a'Mhara headland. This is consistent with the monastic requirement for solitude and yet within reach of fertile land. The supposed site of the monastery of Mag Luinge, a daughter house of Iona, is also situated on poor land on Tiree. The poor land quality was recognized by the Norse settlers who named the area saurby, a name alluding to the marshy nature of the soil.

In terms of place names there is nothing in Scotland to point unequivocally towards celtic monastic establishments. Church sites are often known by the gaelic prefixes cille, and teampull, and by the Scots term kirk. Many early Christian sites were most probably known only by the pre-existing name of the site on which they were founded.<sup>45</sup> It has been suggested that the oldest ecclesiastical term in the islands is represented by the place name Annat (*G annaid OI anndoit*), as at Torr na h'-Annaid, Bunnessan Mull, in the field name Annat, Caolas, Tiree and in the mention of the name the 'Croft of Annat' in the documentary record relating to Lismore.<sup>46</sup> Annat has been defined as being 'peculiar to the celtic church and, in Scotland representing the Mother church of a monastic community and of the earliest Christian settlement in the district'.<sup>47</sup> Macdonald concluded that annat had the connotation of 'old church' and was 'a ninth to tenth century term for a church site of any kind abandoned during that period and not subsequently re-used as the site of a focal church'.<sup>48</sup> The abandonment of church sites in the Inner Hebrides at this period may have been as a direct result of the Viking threat. In the Outer Hebrides and in the Northern Isles there is evidence that the Norse recognized the existence of Celtic Christian places. Throughout these areas names incorporating the Norse noun papi, priest are found, as in the island of Pabbay which lies off the coast of North Uist. It is probable that the name denoted church sites temporarily abandoned at the arrival of the Norse. Papa names are entirely absent from the Inner Hebrides and it is possible that annat is a comparative and complementary term in the Inner Hebrides fulfilling much the same function in designating an early abandoned church site. Several of the papa and annat sites came to be associated with church or graveyard sites of the medieval period. Three of the Orkney papa sites and two of those in Shetland re-emerged as the site of the mediaeval parish church.

Other names in the Inner Hebrides also show that the Norse recognized the presence of celtic church sites. On Tiree the name Chircnish (ON

<sup>45</sup>A.Macdonald, 'Early Monasteries',81.

<sup>46</sup>SRO E106/3/2 p.56.

<sup>47</sup>A.MacBain, Place Names,283-5.

W.J.Watson, Celtic Place Names,250.

<sup>48</sup>A.Macdonald, 'Annat in Scotland. A Provisional Review', in Scottish Studies,17 part 2(1973),139.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GAELIC  
GENERIC ANNAID IN SCOTLAND



*kirkjunes*, church headland) occurs twice, once in relation to the ecclesiastical site at Ceann a'Mhara and once in the vicinity of the supposed Celtic site at Balephetrish.

The initial contact of the Norse with centres of Celtic Christianity is seen, in the Irish Annals, only in terms of brutal attacks on religious communities, and the bulk of the source material is concerned with the community at Iona. There is, however, much to suggest that in some areas monasticism not only survived the initial raids and upheavals but continued as a dynamic force in areas fast becoming dense with Norse settlers. The community at Iona itself survived, although its nature and size is uncertain in the years following the foundation of Kells in 804. The less wealthy, and smaller monasteries can have held little attraction for the Norse settlers. Many of the monastic complexes occupied marginal land in boundary areas between different territories. As discussed above<sup>49</sup> the Norse seemingly based their primary landnam divisions upon the pre-existing Celtic divisions, themselves conforming to the natural divisions inherent in the landscape. The monastic complexes situated on marginal land can thus have posed little obstruction to the first phase of settlement. On Tiree the site of St. Patrick's monastery is geographically distanced from the areas of primary settlement. It is possible that the Norse actively chose to avoid those areas inhabited by the Celtic ecclesiastics and not only as a result of the inferior quality of the land on which the monasteries were sited. Iona was seemingly never settled by the Norse despite the fertility of the soil and the defensive position of the island, situated at the western extremity of the Ross of Mull. On Lismore the Norse settlement on the island is not found in the area around the site of the early monastery, and in the immediate vicinity of the site at Applecross there are few indications of Norse activity as represented in the place name record.

The Norsemen who settled the islands in the ninth century must have been subjected to the influence of Christianity from an early date. It has been suggested that as early as 900 much of the Hebridean archipelago had become Christian.<sup>50</sup> The conversion of the Norse appears to have been gradual and to have taken place over a long period of time. This contrasts with the situation in Orkney where the islands are said to have been 'converted' in 995 when Olaf Tryggvasson forced Earl Sigurd the Stout to be baptised.<sup>51</sup> Evidence for the increasing influence of Christianity in the Western Isles is seen in the disappearance of grave goods from graves from the tenth century onwards. Settlement names indicative of Norse pagan activity such as the Hov names found throughout Norway are absent in Scotland. So too are those names alluding to pagan Gods with the possible exception of the settlement name Frigaswick on Coll. This too suggests that the pagan religion barely took hold in the Inner

<sup>49</sup>See p.139

<sup>50</sup>B.Megaw, 'Norseman and Native in the kingdom of the Isles', 290.

<sup>51</sup>Orkneyinga Saga, ed. A.B.Taylor, 149-50.

Hebrides before succumbing to the influence of Christianity. Further evidence for the early adoption of christianity in the Inner Hebrides comes from the Icelandic colony. Settlers from the Hebrides took with them the cult of the Celtic Saint Columba.<sup>52</sup> At Soroby Tiree there is the possibility that an early Christain site became the focal point for a pagan religious centre. Further continuity of religious activity at Soroby is seen in the establishment of the Mediaeval parish church for the west of Tiree there. At Kirkapoll (ON *kirkjubolstadr*) continuity of site is also apparent, with the area forming a centre of ecclesiastical importance in the pre-Norse, Norse and post-Norse periods. As with Soroby, Kirkapoll became the site of the parish church serving the eastern portion of Tiree. Thus both of the mediaeval parishes on Tiree appear to bear some relation to Norse religious centres on the island. On Coll, the primary settlement area of Friesland/Frigasvick possibly had Norse pagan connotations and here too religious activity continued with the establishment (or continuing use) of the church of Kilbride within the bounds of the primary unit. On Mull the Norse settlement site of Crossaspoll (ON *krossbolstadr*) lies adjacent to the early Christian burial ground at Cill Chrìosd. In all these examples continuity of site suggests both the recognition and utilization of early Christain sites by the Norse (either for pagan purposes or as a focus for Norse Christian activity) and the continued use of some Norse Christian sites into the mediaeval period.

The exact way in which Christianity came to be organized under the Norse in the Isles is open to debate. The first Norse chapels were probably proprietorial, built under the auspices of the leading families. Settlement names indicative of ecclesiastical activity are almost solely confined to the frequently occurring *kirkjubolstadr* and *krossbolstadr*<sup>53</sup> compounds the precise significance of which has yet to be established. In Orkney there is a close connection between the pattern of chapel distribution and the system of land assessment based on the eyrisland, with one chapel per eyrisland/ounceland.<sup>54</sup> Cant argues that this system was probably imposed by the Orkney Earldom under the auspices of the Norwegian monarchy and notes how in some of the Orkney eyrislands, at Hoy, Orphir and Birsay the parish church was located beside the Earls Bu.<sup>55</sup> On Tiree there is a close association of ouncelands and chapel sites, with nearly every ounceland/6 merkland grouping having a chapel within its bounds.

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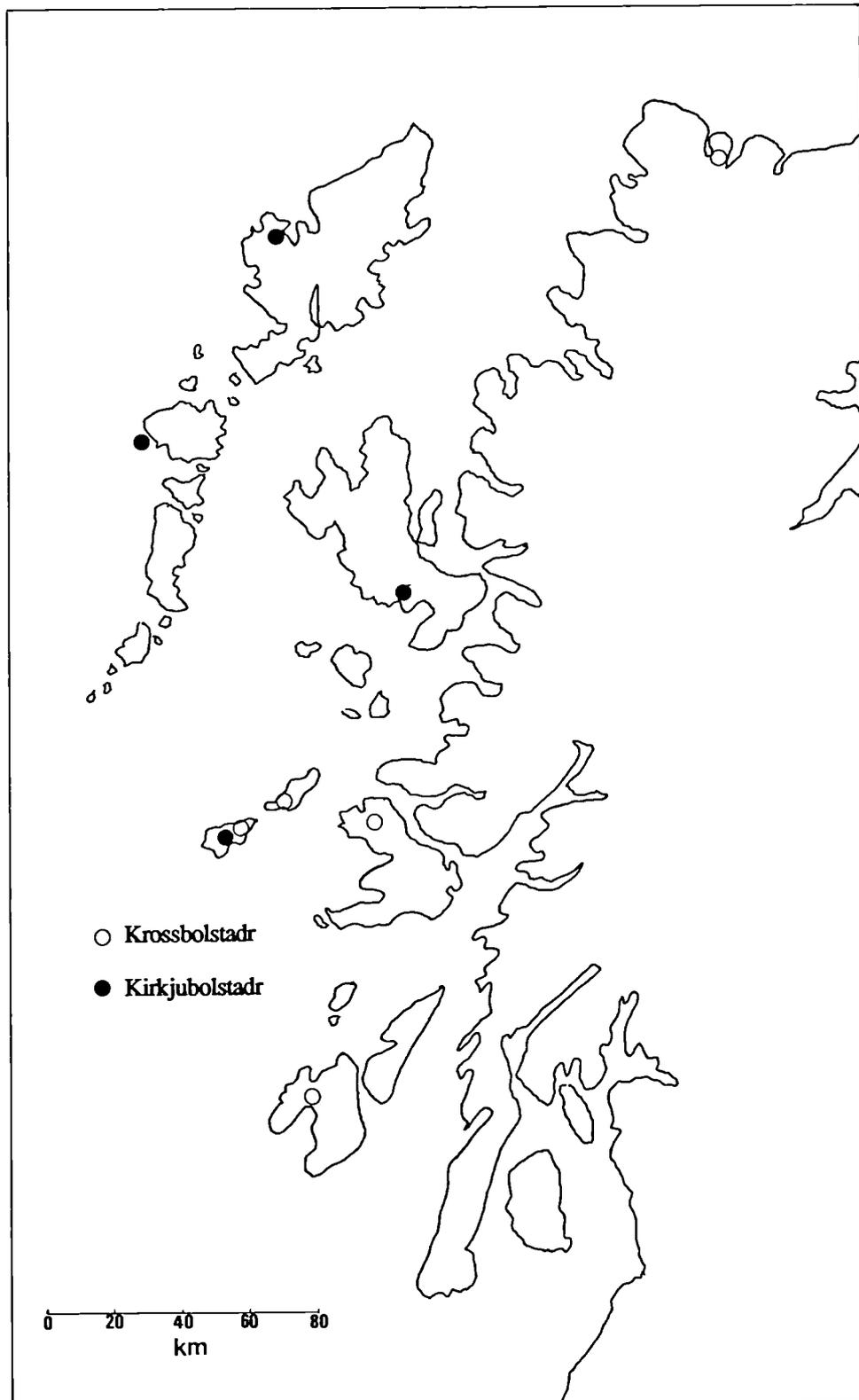
<sup>52</sup>Book of Settlements, ed. H.Palsson and P.Edwards,

<sup>53</sup>See pp.82,89.

<sup>54</sup>J.Stourer-Clouston, 'The Old Chapels of Orkney', in SHR,15(1918),89-105.

<sup>55</sup>R.Cant,'Settlement,Society and Church Organisation in the Northern Isles', in The Northern and Western Isles in the Viking World. Survival, Continuity and Change, ed. A. Fenton and H.Palsson,177-8.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE NORSE HABITATIVE COMPOUNDS  
KIRKJUBOLSTADR AND KROSSBOLSTADR IN THE  
WESTERN HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS



Ecclesiastical remains on Tiree tabulated against merkland value of townships. (6 merklands = 1 ounceland).

<u>Chapel</u>	<u>Township</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
Kirkapoll	Kirkapoll	6 mks
Claodh Ohrain	Kirkapoll	6 mks
Crois a'Chaolais	Kelis	6 mks
Ardkirknish	Balephetrish	4 mks
Kilfinian	Kenovay	6 mks
Kilbride	Cornaigmore	5 mks
Kilchennich	Kilkenneth	
Kerahusegar	Killine	6 mks
Kerachosegar	“	
Keranokile	“	
Knock a'Cladh	Barnapoll	6 mks
Cladh Beg	Heynish	6 mks
Temple Patrick	Ceann a'Mhara	6 mks
Soroby	Balemartine	2 mks
Templefield	Heylipoll	6 mks
Kilmoluag	Kilmoluag	6 mks

On Coll the pattern of ounceland chapels is less clearly recognizable than on Tiree with indications of ounceland chapels only apparent at Caolas and Torastan. On Mull no such pattern is discernible due in part to the differing nature of the ounceland unit in that island. On Lismore the total absence of the ounceland precludes any conclusions. In North Uist the church is closely linked with the ounceland and pennyland units,<sup>56</sup> and this is reflected in the settlement name Unganab the Abbot's ounceland. A major problem in correlating church sites and ouncelands throughout Western Scotland is the difficulty of obtaining a precise date for ecclesiastical sites and the neatness of the results for Tiree may simply be due to the fact that in the course of time every township eventually secured a chapel of its own. In Shetland where the primary unit for taxation and defence was the scattald, this developed as a pre-parochial ecclesiastical unit with one chapel per scattald. In Man where the primary unit was the treen, each treen had its keill.

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<sup>56</sup>A.Easson, 'Systems of Land Assessment', 150.

The progression from a multiplicity of independent local chapels to a fully functioning parochial system is somewhat unclear. The developed network however shows a close affinity with that found in Norway. Throughout Norway parishes were grouped into 'priests districts' under the auspices of Bishops. The oldest churches appear to have been established by royal initiative and many are on or near the site of heathen temples (ON *hov*).<sup>57</sup> The parish boundaries show a high incidence of correlation with the land divisions surrounding major temples (the *hovudhof*), these in turn being related to the major judicial land divisions, the ting districts. A high percentage of the Norwegian parish names incorporate names of heathen Gods or heathen sacred sites as in the case of Hof parish, Borgund Sunnmøre. Although evidence for the grouping of parishes into priests districts in the west of Scotland is scanty and inconclusive it is probable that the two parishes of Tiree, Soroby and Kirkapoll, formed one priest's district. In the north and south-west of Mull three parishes, Kilninian, Kilmore and Ulva appear to have formed one priest's district leaving the south-east of the island as one vast priest's district encompassing the parishes of Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen, and Inchkenneth with the principal chapel at Killean. Islay had a tripartite division corresponding to the three geographical units of the island with priests districts centring on the parishes of Kilninian and Kilmore, Kilchoman and Kildalton and the Oa. On Lewis the four great parishes of the island, Barvas, Lochs, Uig and Stornoway are themselves suggestive of former priests districts with that of Harris to the South forming only one, centred upon the church at Rodel.<sup>58</sup>

In the decades following the death of the last known Bishop of Iona in 986 there is no evidence as to how episcopal authority was exercised in the islands. The area may possibly have been attached to the diocese of Orkney.<sup>59</sup> In the late eleventh century, under the auspices of Godred Crovan, the Isles clearly came to form a separate ecclesiastical entity from that of Orkney with separate lines of Bishops on Skye and Man. In 1134 King Olaf of Man introduced a single diocese, based on Man, and known as the diocese of Sodor. In 1153 this diocese became part of a new province of Nidaros (Trondheim).

The second half of the twelfth century saw the introduction of monastic orders into Scotland and the reform of existing communities. A new Benedictine order was founded on Iona ca 1200. The lands belonging to the monastery as described in the original endowment of 1203 comprised the site of the monastery; (land) in the islands of Iona, Mull, Colonsay, Oronsay, Canna and Calve; the lands of Sotesdal

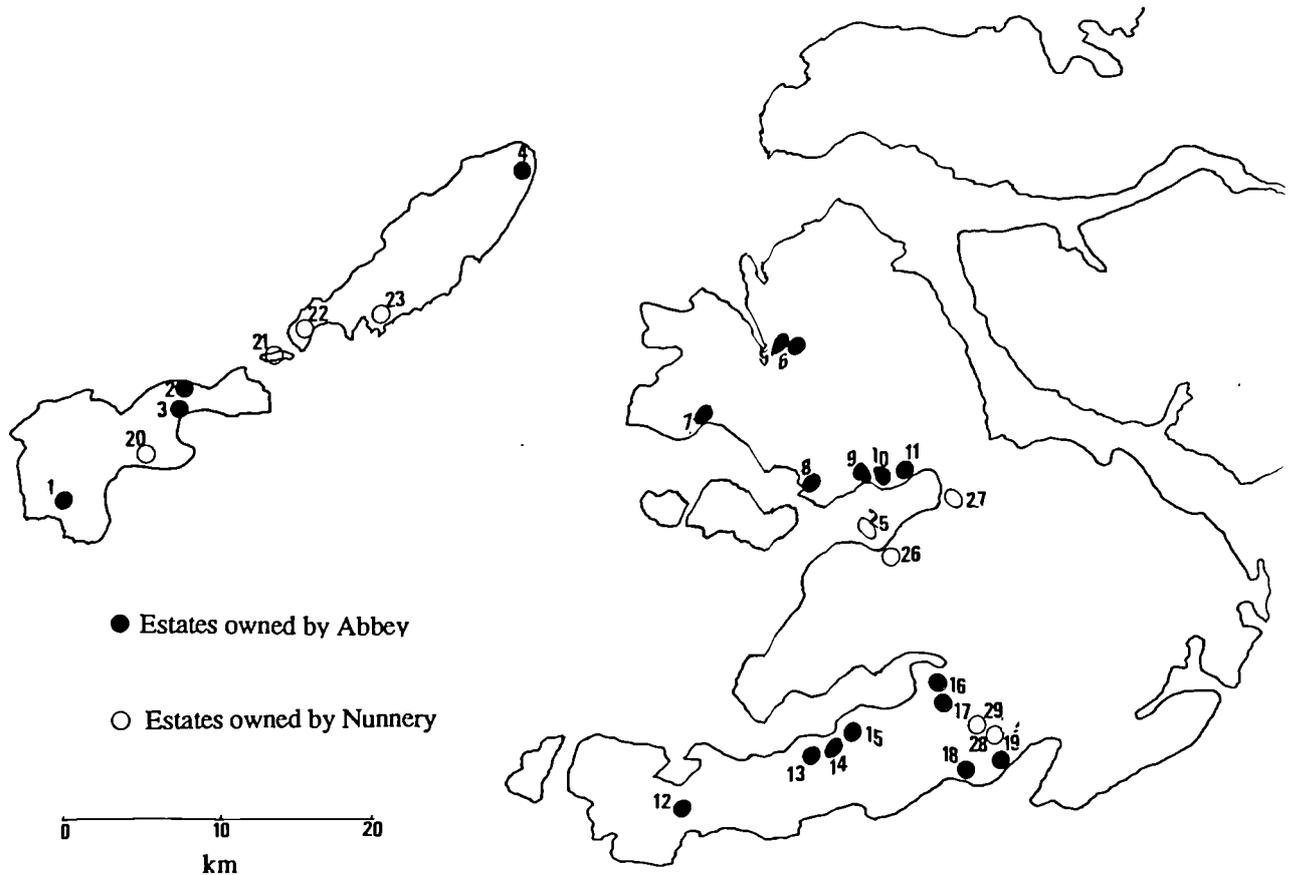
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<sup>57</sup>T.Dahlerup, 'Sogn', in *KLNM*, 16(1972),374-75.

<sup>58</sup>R.G.Cant, 'Norse Influence in the Organisation of the Mediaeval Church in the Western Isles', in *Northern Studies*, 21(1984),1-14.

<sup>59</sup>D.E.R.Watt, *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*,19.

MULL, COLL AND TIREE. ESTATES OF  
IONA ABBEY AND IONA NUNNERY



Abbey Lands

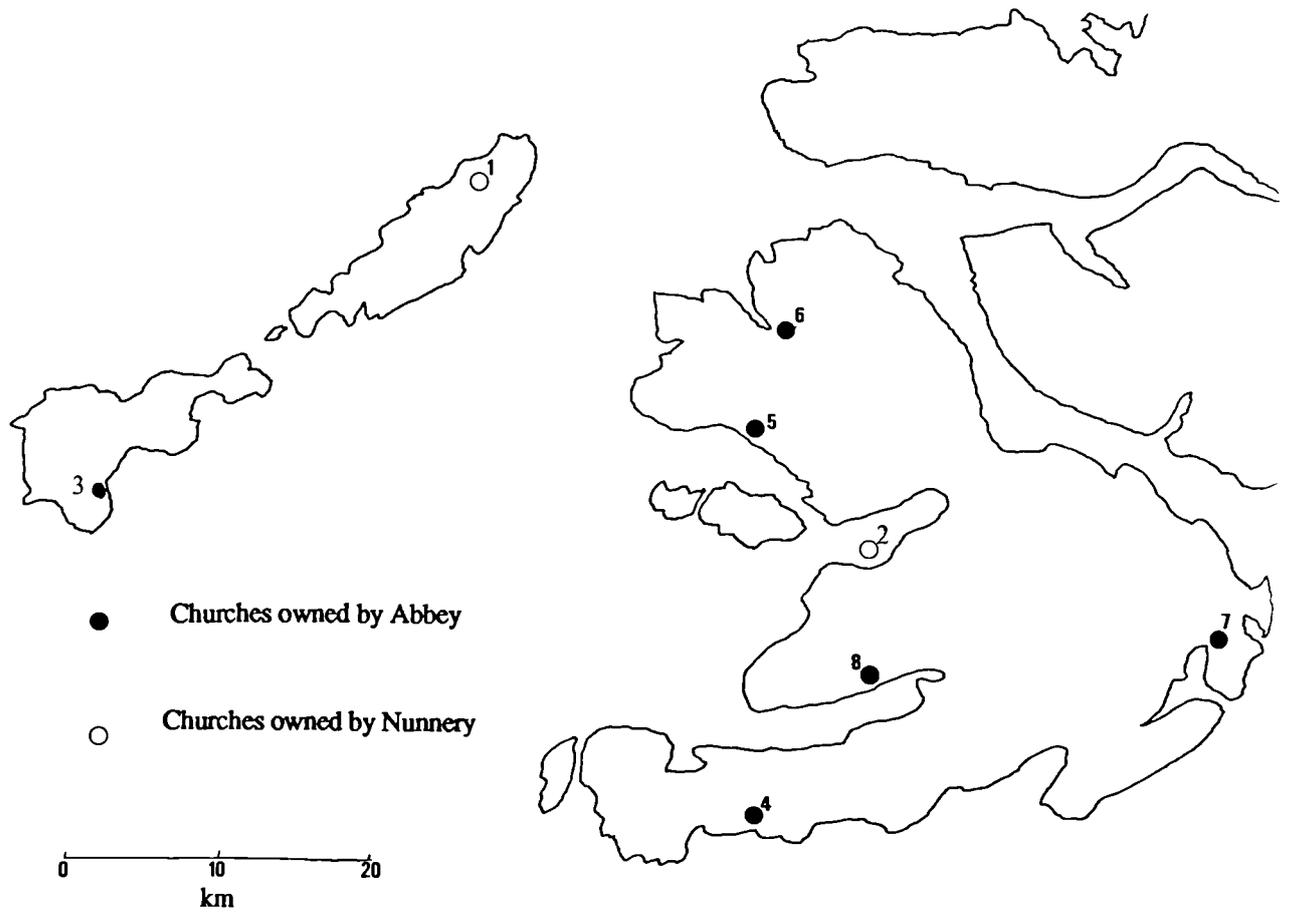
- 1 Balephuill (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 2 Vuill (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 3 Kirkapoll (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 4 Sorisdale (1203)
- 5 Kingharair (1561,1588,1686)
- 6 Kilmorie (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 7 Kilnminian (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 8 Kilbrenan (1485,1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 9 Killiemor (1509,1561,1686)
- 10 Kellan (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 11 Kilphubill (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 12 Ross of Mull (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 13 Kilpatrick (1509)
- 14 Beach (1509,1588,1686)
- 15 Torran Iochdarach (1561,1588,1686)
- 16 Scriadain and Aird (1588,1686)

- 17 Glasveildre and Lyalt (1509,1565,1588,1686)
- 18 Carsaig (1509,1561,1588,1686)
- 19 Carvalog (1509,1561)
- 20 Scarinish (1509,1574,1616)
- 21 Gunna (1574,1616)

Nunnery Lands

- 22 Caolas (1574,1616)
- 23 Ardnish and Friesland (1574,1616)
- 24 Inchkenneth (1549,1574)
- 25 Eorsa (1549,1574,1616)
- 26 Gribun (1574,1616)
- 27 Leimacalloch (1574,1616,1635)
- 28 Glen Leidle (1574,1616)
- 29 Inagart (1574)

MULL, COLL AND TIREE. CHURCHES OF  
IONA ABBEY AND IONA NUNNERY



- 1 Coll
- 2 Inchkenneth
- 3 Soroby
- 4 Kilvickuen
- 5 Kilninian
- 6 Kilmore
- 7 Torosay
- 8 Kilfinichen

[Sorisdale] Coll, the lands of Magenbug and Mangecheles in Islay and Herilean (?Islay). The lands and the Abbacy in Islay, of Muckairn in Lorne and of lands in Melfort.<sup>60</sup> The property was augmented in the fourteenth and fifteenth century by gifts and endowments and also diminished by the endowment of Oronsay Priory by John Lord of the Isles in the second half of the fourteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

In many instances the church lands show a greater stability of boundaries, areas and ownership than do those in secular hands. The Abbey lands on Tiree, at Balephuill, Vault and Kirkapoll are associated with distinct ounceland units and primary settlements. The Nunnery Lands on Coll are also associated with the ounceland unit at Caolas and with the primary settlements of Ardnish and Friesland. On Tiree these units have remained virtually intact although secondary expansion of settlement has occurred at Kirkapoll. The settlement area of Kirkapoll is associated with early Christian monuments and the name suggests that it was also important in the ecclesiastical organisation of the island under the Norse. At Vault the ounceland unit encompasses an area to the south of two Iron Age duns on land inferior to that of Kirkapoll and at Balephuill the land is among the poorest on the island. On Coll, at Sorisdale, the Abbey lands lie on the poorer soils and this pattern is repeated on the Ross of Mull where the church land consists exclusively of rough moorland. It is possible that the poor land quality was a contributory factor in ensuring that these areas remained intact. On the Ross of Mull in an area now devoid of settlement the topographical names Tir Cille (church land) and Cille Mhuire (church moor) still confirm that the area once belonged to the church. Elsewhere on Mull church lands are associated with primary settlement units known by Norse names, as at Carsaig (parish of Kilninian and Kilmore) where incised cross slabs point to continuous ecclesiastical activity from the early Christian period.

Ecclesiastical lands frequently point to 'stable' settlement divisions in the landscape. When these correlate with primary settlement units and ounceland divisions they show a continuity from some of the earliest Norse settlement units to the early modern period.

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<sup>60</sup>*Diplomatarium Norvegicum*. vol.7 p.4-5.

<sup>61</sup>RCAHMS, *Iona*, 145.

## Chapter Eight

### NORSE SETTLEMENT NAMES

#### 8.1 Topographical Settlement Names

The topographical names as a class account for the greatest percentage of Norse settlement names in the Isles. They are also the hardest to place in relative chronologies as they could conceivably have been formed at any period in time.

In the study area of the Sunnmøre Islands topographical names, whether in simplex or compound form far outnumber the habitative names. On the small island of Godøya 100% of the settlement names contain topographical elements. On Valderøya the figure is 88%, on Vigra 87%, on Giske 83% and on the considerably larger island of Ellingsøya the figure falls to 77%. On the smaller islands the primary settlement name is simply the same as that of the island. On Ellingsøya the simplex topographical names appear to represent the oldest settlement layer giving rise to such names as Vík, Nes and Stokke. This corresponds to the findings of Stemshaug who, in a survey of Norwegian farm names, advocated that simplex topographical names without the definite article incorporated in the name were of the most advanced age.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that the first inhabitants in an area named their settlements after the most outstanding physical feature in the immediately vicinity of the settlement site.

In the Inner Hebrides the same pattern is found. It is the simplex topographical names describing prominent coastal features which point to some of the earliest settled areas resulting in such farm names as Uig, (ON *vík*) on Coll, Baugh, (ON *vagr*) on Tiree, and (Ard)nish, (ON *nes*) on Coll. Other topographical names if not relating to coastal features per se, describe prominent landmarks easily recognizable from the sea to the first sea-faring explorers as in the case of the settlement name Feall (ON *fjell*, hill) on Coll and Vaul, (ON *fjäll*, hills) on Tiree. The small islands lying off the coasts of Mull, Tiree, Lismore and Coll are almost exclusively known by Norse names all of which incorporate the Norse topographical element *ey* (island) giving the termination *a* or *ay* in the name. This is seen in the island name Gunna, lying between Coll and Tiree, Bernera and Ramsay off Lismore and Gometra, Ulva, and Fladda lying off Mull.

On Coll 40% of the primary settlement names are Norse simplex topographical names, on Lismore 20%, on Mull the figure falls to 17%, and on Tiree to

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<sup>1</sup>O. Stemshaug, *Namn i Noreg*, (1973), 91.

15%. On Coll the simplex topographical names clearly relate to ounceland units as in the case of the 'tirunga of Feall'<sup>2</sup>, explicitly referred to as an ounceland in the sources and that of Uig which is seen to have originally been evaluated at one ounceland by implication of the later merkland evaluations of the component parts of the settlement unit.<sup>3</sup> This association of simplex topographical names with ounceland units is also seen on Tiree where for example Vaull and Hough were both clearly primary ounceland divisions. Compound topographical names relating to both primary settlements and ounceland divisions are rare but not unknown. On Tiree the settlement name Mannal (ON *monn völlr*, stony field) was consistently evaluated at one ounceland, while on Lismore the settlement name Balygrundle, relating to a primary settlement on the island, preserves the Norse compound topographical name *grönnvöllr*, green field. On Tiree the headland names Scarinish and Haynish and the bay name Sandaig are found, all of which relate to primary settlements.

On Mull, where primary ounceland divisions relate to distinct and large geographical areas and not to single settlements, it is the major headlands evaluated as ouncelands which retain Norse topographical elements in their names. The most common topographical term employed is ON *nes*, headland, as in the names Treshnish, Quinish and Morrenish. The fact that these headlands lie in close proximity to one another in the north-west of Mull clearly necessitated the addition of a differentiating specific to the generic *nes* resulting in a compound name. To the east of the above headlands lies the Langamull peninsula (ON *langr muli*, long headland). The distinct rounded and snout-like appearance of this headland obviously suggested the use of a different descriptive element.

Secondary settlements on the island show a high percentage of Norse topographical names, primarily topographical compounds. As settlement expansion occurred it became necessary to differentiate between topographical features. The simplex topographical name Uig (ON *vík*) on Coll is used of one of the major sea lochs on the island. Other settlement names on Coll which also incorporate the generic *vík* required a differentiating specific to give such names as Treallabhig, Frigasvick and Eileraig. As in the above examples, many of the secondary compound names relate to coastal features.

As the density of settlement (and therefore settlement names) increased with time many of the secondary topographical names relate to inland features which fell within the larger primary divisions known by coastal topographical terms. This gives such names as Hyne (ON *heidr*, heath) on Coll and Stockadill (ON *stokkar dalr*, wooded dale) on Mull. Inland names also include topographical descriptive terms for man-made features in the

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<sup>2</sup>SRO C2/xiii/300

<sup>3</sup>See p.119

landscape resulting from earlier habitations and giving rise to such simplex topographical names as Hough (ON *haugr*, burial mound) on Tiree and Burg (ON *borg*, fortification) on Mull. One of the most common topographical elements relating to inland features is the Norse noun yöllr, field/grassy plain as in the Rossall (ON *hross yöllr*, horse field) on Mull. Another common element found in both primary and secondary settlement names is ON dalr, dale/valley as in the names Sorasdal, Coll, Dalnarrow, Lismore and Frackadill, Mull.

In all the Hebridean islands studied the majority of peripheral settlement names are Gaelic. Those which are Norse are formed almost exclusively of topographical elements. Norse topographical names account for 36% of all peripheral settlement names on Coll, with figures of 13% for Tiree, ca 10% for Mull and 0% for Lismore. Most of the names relate to coastal features. On Coll many of the peripheral settlement names are compounded with ON *vík* and refer to the small bays lying on the infertile east coast of the island, the last area to be taken into permanent habitation in the Norse period.

The most common topographical elements found in settlement names in the Inner Hebrides are the coastal terms *vík*, *vagr*, *ey* and *nes*. To these may be added the single example of *muli*. Inland features are predominantly described by the terms *ffjell*, *yöllr* and *dalr*, with one example of *kletr*. This shows a much narrower range of topographical elements than is found in the Outer Hebrides where Olsen lists the following topographical elements which occur as simplex topographical names: *eyrr* (sandbank), *ra* (border), *rif* (reef), *hnúþ* (steep mountain), *hóll* (hill) and *gill* (ravine) in addition to the Inner Hebridean examples noted above.<sup>4</sup> The range of topographical names found in the Outer Isles shows a greater affinity with those found in Orkney and Shetland. While all the topographical elements found in the Inner Hebrides are also common in Norway the western Norwegian coastal districts show a far greater range of terms than is found in Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore. On Ellingsøya for example the elements *myrra*, *bjorg*, *rois*, *sperre* and *rot* are found relating to inland features and *strandr* and *sund* relating to coastal features.

In compound topographical names the topographical element is found combined with personal names, for example, Gunna (ON *Gunnar's ey*, Gunnar's island); adjectives, for example Ruaig (ON *raudr vík*, red bay), Tiree and directional prefixes as in the name Sunnipol (ON *sudr bolstadr*), Mull. This too reflects the types of names found in the Norwegian homeland. One major difference is that none of the Hebridean topographical names are found combined with the definite article as in the Sunnmøre names *Kvalneset* and *Staurneset*. However it is not possible to tell whether this is a result of the Gaelicisation

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<sup>4</sup>D.Olson, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 183.

of the names or whether the definite article was never used by the Norse settlers in naming topographical features in the Hebrides. The one possible example of the incorporation of the definite article into a settlement name is seen in the name Haun on Mull (?ON *haugr en*).

The use of a topographical name as a settlement name may indicate the naming of both topographical feature and settlement at one and the same time. Alternatively it may represent the transference of a topographical name from a physical landmark to a habitation site. Not all topographical names had a dual function as a settlement name. The high percentage of Norse settlement names in the Inner Hebrides whether habitative or topographical in origin suggests that at some period the island's inhabitants were entirely Norse speaking.<sup>5</sup> This in turn suggests that the landscape must have been described purely by Norse terms. Few, if any of the Gaelic topographical names on the islands can be said with any degree of certainty to date from the pre-Norse period. Nicolaison argues that 'it is almost irrelevant who the pre-Scandinavian namers were or how many there were of them as relevant contact between them was so minimal that none of the place name types which normally emerge from language and cultures in contact can be expected to have arisen'.<sup>6</sup> This suggests that the Norse settlers were faced with 'a virtually nameless landscape and the need to name effectively, densely and quickly'.<sup>7</sup> Drawing upon the range of name types available in the Norwegian homeland, whether in an imitative or innovative way, the Norsemen thus created in effect a 'transferred landscape' in the new colonies. A distribution map of Norse topographical elements found in the topographical names of landscape features in Scotland points therefore not to permanent Norse settlement but rather to the sphere of Norse influence. Nicolaison in mapping the incidence of the Norse generic *dalr* suggested that it illustrated 'those areas adjacent to permanent settlement in which seasonal exploits such as hunting, fishing and summer grazing were carried out'.<sup>8</sup>

Very few of the topographical names now found on Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore which relate only to topographical features can be seen to contain Norse elements. This contrasts sharply with the situation found in the Outer Hebrides where Oftedal studied

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<sup>5</sup>There has been much debate surrounding the issue of Norse linguistic dominance and/or Gaelic-Norse bilingualism in the Hebrides. Oftedal concluded that 'Lewis was completely Norse speaking in a limited period, but there must have been many bilingual individuals'. M.Oftedal, 'Norse Place Names in Celtic Scotland', in *Proceedings of the International Congress of Celtic Studies*, ed.B.O.Cúiv, (1959),45. Megaw, in reviewing the situation in Man, probably more akin to the Inner Hebrides argued for much contact between Norse and native and believed that a bi-lingual situation predominated where Norse was spoken primarily by the ruling classes. B.Megaw, 'Norsemen and native in the kingdom of the Isles, a re-assessment of the Manx evidence', in *Man and Environment in the Isle of Man*, ed. E.Dwelly, *BAR* 554(2),(1978),288

<sup>6</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'Early Scandinavian Naming',109.

<sup>7</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'The Viking Settlement of Scotland',97.

<sup>8</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaison, 'Norse settlement in the Northern and Western Isles',16.

272 loch names on the island of Lewis and found that 18% were purely Norse and that a further 28% contained Norse elements.<sup>9</sup> On Tiree a handful of Norse topographical names exist in the landscape names found today as in the names of the coastal features Traigh Thodrasdail, Rubha Craiginis, Traigh Thallasgair, Sgeir Sgibinis, Traigh Chrionaig and the inland loch name Loch Mulaig all of which are now preceded by a Gaelic topographical element.

The fact that so few Norse topographical landscape names survive, together with the belief that few Gaelic names survive from the pre-Norse period points to the renaming of the (Norse) landscape at a time when the Norse names were no longer lexically transparent to the Gaelic speakers. The date at which Norse ceased to be spoken in the Hebrides is debateable. In the Outer Isles Oftedal suggested for Lewis that 'Norse succumbed to Gaelic just before 1500'.<sup>10</sup> In the Inner Hebrides the date is likely to be much earlier due to the proximity of the Gaelic speaking Scottish mainland and it has been suggested that 'the Gaelic language re-emerged in the Hebrides by the eleventh century if not earlier'.<sup>11</sup> It is, however, inadvisable to treat the Inner Hebrides as a whole for the situation clearly differed on each island. On Coll and Tiree Norse may have continued as the dominant language much later than it did in the east of Mull and on Lismore where it is doubtful if Gaelic ever succumbed entirely to Norse.

Clear evidence for a Gaelic renaming of the landscape comes from the addition of Gaelic topographical terms to existing Norse topographical names, whether relating to settlements or to topographical features, to give tautologies as in the names Ardnish (G *airde*, headland, ON *nes*, headland) on Lismore; and Beinn Feall (G *beinn*, hill, ON  *fjell*, hill), on Coll. Several Norse topographical terms were however adopted by Gaelic speakers to give Norse loan words in the Gaelic onomastic vocabulary. The Gaelic term *baugh*, bay, derives from ON *yagr* as in the settlement name Baugh, Tiree: Gaelic *geodha*, a steep indented sea inlet, from ON *gjá*; G *gil*, a steep sided narrow valley, from ON *gil* as in the settlement name Tirgill, Mull; and G *fhaodhail*, ford, from ON *vadill* as in the landscape name An Fhaodhail, Tiree.

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<sup>9</sup>M.Oftedal, 'Names of Lakes on the Isles of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides', in *Proceedings of the Eighth Viking Congress*, eds. H.Bekker-Nielson, P.Foote and O.Olsen, (1981),197

<sup>10</sup>M.Oftedal, 'Scandinavian Place Names in Celtic Territory - an attempt at linguistic classification', in *Norma Rapporter*,17(1980),81.

<sup>11</sup>A.P.Smythe, *Warlords*,157.

## 8.2 Habitative Generics

Whilst topographical names may conceivably have been coined at any date when the naming elements were a living part of the language of the settlers, habitative names are thought to be dateable to broad periods of time. Much of the attention focussed on the problem of the dating and classification of habitative names has been approached via attempts to place generics into relative, if not absolute chronologies. In Norway, Rygh<sup>12</sup> and Olsen<sup>13</sup> placed the Norwegian habitative generics vin, rud, heimr, stadir and setr into chronological sequence. More recently Sandnes<sup>14</sup> and Nicolaison<sup>15</sup> have concentrated on determining the relative age and period of productivity of the generics setr, stadir and bolstadr both in Norway and in the colonial settlements.

Most studies have assessed the following criteria in developing relative chronologies: the site and situation of the farm; its association with dateable archaeological artefacts and an analysis of the specifics combined with the generics in compound settlement names; for example, the incorporation of a Christian personal name can date a settlement to the post pagan era. Sandnes included comparative studies of the landskyld owed annually by individual farms working on the surmise that the higher the average landskyld of farm names with a certain generic, the greater the age of that generic when compared with other generics having a lower landskyld evaluation.<sup>16</sup> In Trondelag for example, the 74 stadir farms had an average landskyld of 2 spann 2 øre as compared with the 1 spann and 5 marks of the 28 setr farms, thereby allowing the placing of stadir before setr in Sandnes' chronology.<sup>17</sup>

Whilst a comparison with Norwegian name chronologies is important 'the placing of the individual generics in the chronological sequence of Norwegian farm names is of little relevance for the determination of the relative chronology of the generics in newly settled areas.'<sup>18</sup> The period of productivity of generics found in the Western Isles and their peculiar significance in Hebridean naming patterns must be determined as an independent enquiry. Nicolaison's study of the generics stadir, setr and bolstadr in Scotland started

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<sup>12</sup>O.Rygh, NGN. Innledning

<sup>13</sup>M.Olsen, Farms and Fanes.

<sup>14</sup>J.Sandnes, 'Datering av navneklasser ved landskyld metoden', in Maal og Minne, 1-2(1973)12-28.

<sup>15</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles', 6-17.

<sup>16</sup>J.Sandnes, 'Gardsnavne pa -stadir og -setr, litt om navne klassenes absolutt og relativt kronologi spesielt i Trøndelag', in Maal og Minne,(1956),88.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.,86

<sup>18</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaison, 'Early Scandinavian Naming',224.

from the premise that 'difference in geographical spread equals distinction in time'.<sup>19</sup> While this led to a clear cut chronological framework in which stadir preceded setr and setr preceded bolstadr on the timescale, Nicolaison fails to examine fully the reasons for the prevalence of certain generics in some areas and their absence in others. A recent critique of Nicolaison's work states that 'the rigid chronological sequencing of these place name elements does not seem necessary or realistic'<sup>20</sup>, leading Nicolaison to qualify his theory and to suggest instead that 'differences in the extent of a distribution do not necessarily imply differences in the length of time during which names whose distribution is depicted were productive'.<sup>21</sup> Thus his early conclusions must be treated with caution.

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<sup>19</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaisen, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles', 6

<sup>20</sup>B.E. Crawford, Scandinavian Scotland, 108

<sup>21</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaisen, 'Place-Name Maps-How Reliable Are They?', in Studia Onomastica. Festschrift til Thorsten Andersson, 1989, 264.

### 8.3 Stadir

The Norse generic stadir is found in settlement names almost exclusively in the plural form and is thought to refer collectively to the lands and buildings of a farm. In Norway stadir is one of the most common habitative generics where 2,500 examples have been recorded.<sup>22</sup> Olsen classified the Norwegian stadir farms as being of secondary status but seldom remote or outlying. Many are situated close to large central farms, often being divisions of boer farms.<sup>23</sup> The majority of the Norwegian stadir farms are found in the 6 south-east fylke of Norway, accounting for half the total of the stadir names. While many are clearly of secondary status, a significant number appear to be of primary status, of an independent nature and most probably established as a result of new clearance.<sup>24</sup> In Gudbrandsdalen stadir farms are commonly seen to be separately held divisions of primary farms although the area also shows a high incidence of independent stadir farms. In Sunnmøre the majority of stadir farms are of primary status occupying prime sites. 121 stadir names are listed in the 1647 Sunnmøre matrikkeln. Only 2 of these, Vollstad and Grimstad on the island of Ellingsøya fall within the case study areas. Both are situated on fertile ground, have archaeological remains dating back to the Iron Age and both are unquestionably of primary status.

The majority of the specifics combined with stadir in Norway are personal names. Topographical prefixes are not uncommon but are less proliferant than the personal names. Specifics referring to the farms location in relation to other settlements for example Offrestad, Upper farm, Sunnmøre are rare as are specifics relating to agricultural or other activities, for example in the name Linstad, Flax farm, Sunnmøre.

Iceland has 1150 stadir settlements. Most of them appear to be of secondary status, located within the boundaries of larger territories and functioning as independent farms. Landnámabók records the way in which many of these farms were established. Chapter 11 relates that

There was a man called Thord Skeggi  
Thord went to Iceland and with Ingolfs  
approval settled upon land claimed by  
Ingolf between Ulfar's river and Levin  
Creek. He made his home at Skeggjarstead.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup>H.Stal, '-stad', in KLMN, 16(1971), 565.

<sup>23</sup> M.Olsen, Farms and Fanes, 97-99.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 99-103.

<sup>25</sup>Book of Settlements, eds H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards, 22.

As in Norway most of the specifics combined with stadir in Iceland are personal names. These contrast with the names of primary settlements which are almost exclusively topographical compounds. This is well illustrated by chapter 39 of Landnámabók where a stadir name relates to a secondary division of a primary farm known by a compound topographical name.

There was a man called Grimm who took possession of land south of Giljar up to Grunsgill. his sons were Thorgills Anger of Angerstead and Hrani of Thrannastead, father of Gruin who farmed at Stafngruinstead now called Sigmundarstead...<sup>26</sup>

While stadir is ubiquitous in Iceland, the generic is entirely absent from Faroe where stadir 'was not pertinent to the type of nucleated settlement expansion in the immediate vicinity of the primary farm'.<sup>27</sup>

Stadir is found in the Northern Isles where the modern suffix in the Orkney names is -ston and earlier written forms are -stath or -staith. Marwick recorded 23 examples in the Orkney rentals and noted that they were almost solely confined to the mainland with no examples being found on the islands of Sanday, Stronsay, Westray and Shapinsay. Marwick classified the Orkney stadir compounds as relating to settlements of secondary status which did not date back to the period of the original settlements.<sup>28</sup> As in Norway the majority of the stadir names incorporate personal names as the specific.

In Shetland 37 examples of stadir compounds are found with the modern suffix -sta. Macgregor concluded that stadir in Shetland 'is given to high status sites which were probably colonised after the most favourable coastal sites had already been settled and before it became necessary to take recourse to the very marginal inland saetr sites.'<sup>29</sup> As in Orkney, personal names form the most common specifics. The significance of personal names combined with stadir suggests several interpretations. Nicolaison advocates that they point 'to the individual ownership of the settlements referred to and making re-naming possible whenever a proprietor changed'.<sup>30</sup> In Caithness

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid.,31.

<sup>27</sup>L.J.Macgregor, 'Norse Settlement in Shetland and Faroe',252.

<sup>28</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,235.

<sup>29</sup>L.J.Macgregor, 'Norse Settlement in Shetland and Faroe',465.

<sup>30</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaison, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles',10.

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there are few stadir names and Waugh offered the alternative explanation that the personal names possibly 'point to a farm group in control of one person'.<sup>31</sup>

In the Western Isles the greatest concentration of stadir names with the modern suffix -sta is to be found in Lewis and Skye, in all accounting for 31 examples. The generic is almost entirely absent from the Inner Hebrides with the exception of the two examples on Coll and Tiree, Bhiosta and Torastan, and that of Oilstadh on Islay. On Coll, the primary settlement name Torastan also preserves a personal name and possibly that of the Norse God Thor. The settlement as it stands today has become divided into component parts of Knock and Killynaig with a third part retaining the original name Torastan. On Tiree, the sole settlement name in stadir is now retained only as a landscape name Cnoc Bhiosta. The prefix is obscure. There is much to suggest that the name originally referred to a primary unit on the island now only discernible by its component parts, the bolstadr settlements of Bhirceapoll, Beist, Murtost and Bhassapoll. The association of a stadir unit with several adjacent bolstadr units (possibly divisions of the stadir farm) is also clearly seen on Harris where the settlements of Horgabost and Selibost are found adjacent to the primary unit of Scarista. A precise definition of stadir in the Inner Hebrides is difficult to achieve. Its usage to denote both a secondary division of settlement and also a primary unit, itself subsequently divided, precludes any narrow categorisation.

In a study of the 29 stadir names in Lewis and Skye Olson noted that 30% were of primary status, 60% of secondary status and a mere 10% of peripheral status. He also noted that many of the stadir farms lie adjacent to other stadir farms, often sharing a common boundary, as in the case of Crowlista and Erista at Uig on Lewis.<sup>32</sup> Once again the specifics are predominantly personal names.

An assessment of the period of productivity of stadir as a generic in the Western Isles is difficult to make due to the low number of examples although it appears to relate to an early phase of settlement. In Norway Olsen dated stadir compounds to the period 400-800 arguing that the generic had passed out of production by the end of the Viking Age as no Christian personal names, with the exception of one, in the name Jonsstadir, are found coupled with stadir.<sup>33</sup> In terms of relative chronologies Sandnes stressed that the oldest stadir names were those *not* compounded with personal names. On the basis of comparing the relative landskyld evaluations of setr and stadir farms recorded in the Skattematrikkeln of 1640 and that of 1660 in Western Norway he further concluded

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<sup>31</sup>D.Waugh, 'The Scandinavian element stadir in Caithness, Orkney and Shetland', in Nomina, 11(1987), 61.

<sup>32</sup>D.Olson, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 227.

<sup>33</sup>M.Olsen, Farms and Fanes, 116

that stadir farms on the whole were of a greater age than setr farms.<sup>34</sup> The fact that 63 stadir farm names were elevated to parish names in Norway compared to only 5 out of 900 setr names emphasises this point.

In the west Nicolaison dates the stadir settlements to an 'early phase of settlement' (ca 850)<sup>35</sup> adding that there is 'little doubt that the stadir map represents the extent of Scandinavian settlement within the first generation or two of settlers from Norway'<sup>36</sup> In Man where stadir names are largely confined to the north of the island they are believed to 'date from fairly soon after the period when the first viking settlers either took over existing estates or established primary farms'.<sup>37</sup> In Norway stadir certainly appears to have fallen out of use by the close of the 'Viking' period. Both the date given to stadir settlements on Man and the period of productivity of stadir in Norway suggests that Nicolaison is correct in assigning an early date to the stadir settlements of the Western Isles. However, the location map of stadir settlements cannot be said to 'represent the extent of Scandinavian settlement within the first generation or two of settlers'<sup>38</sup> as topographical names are a more reliable indicator of early permanent habitation. The lack of stadir names in the southern Hebrides need not reflect a lack of early Norse settlement but rather shows that the application of the generic stadir was not pertinent to the pattern of colonisation and settlement division found in these areas. In many instances the function and form of a stadir farm in the Northern Hebrides and in Orkney and Shetland is apparently mirrored by those designated bolstadr in the Inner Hebrides.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>J.Sandnes, 'Gardsnavne på -stadir og -setr',86

<sup>35</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles',11.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid..

<sup>37</sup>G.Fellows-Jensen,'Scandinavian Settlement in the Isle of Man and North-west England: the place-name evidence', in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Ninth Viking Congress*,eds C.Fell, J.Graham-Campbell, P.Foote and R.Thomson,42.

<sup>38</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles',11.

<sup>39</sup>See p.281

#### 8.4 Setr

The distribution map of ON setr in Scotland shows that the generic is found densely and ubiquitous throughout Shetland and more sparsely in Orkney. In the Northern Hebrides, Lewis and Skye show the greatest density with isolated examples found in the Uists and in Harris and on Vatersay. The generic is all but absent from the Inner Hebrides with the exception of 4 examples on the islands of Tiree, Islay, Mull and Bute.

It is difficult to assign a precise definition to setr in the Western Isles. In Norway two contemporary and near comparative terms saetr and setr coalesced and are now indistinguishable from one another in settlement names containing the suffix seter or set. The former, saetr, originally had the meaning of shieling or pasture while the latter, setr, referred to a dwelling. Hovda notes the existence of 2,600 setr names in Norway and isolated 1,700 as referring to shielings and the remaining 900 as being farm dwellings.<sup>40</sup> 247 setr names are now found in Møre and Romsdal accounting for approximately 10.5% of the Norwegian total. The 1647 matrikelen lists the higher figure of 269 setr names many of which are found in the simplex form set, setra, setre or seter. Often the prefix is a descriptive term describing the location of the settlement either in terms of nearby landscape features as in the name Myrset, Ellingsøya or in terms of its relationship to other settlements as in the name Øvresetre, Sunnmøre and the reciprocating nearby farm name Nedreseter, Sunnmøre. In the case of Flemsetr the setr name incorporates the name of the parent farm Flemma. Prefixes relating to the type of activity connected with the setr are equally common; Linset, flax shieling; Svinneset, pig shieling; Dyrset, animal shieling and Melset, corn shieling. The coupling of personal names with setr is rare and those found are likely to be the names of heathen Gods as in the names Fromset, and Torset in Sunnmøre. Hovda noted that a significant proportion of setr names throughout Norway show a connection with a heathen place.<sup>41</sup> This would point to the setr element deriving from setr, seat or dwelling and not from saetre, shieling. Only 4 examples of setr are found in the areas studied in Sunnmøre;

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<sup>40</sup>P.Hovda, '-set', in *KLMN* 15(1970),156-57.

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

<u>Name</u>	<u>1647 Landskyld</u>	<u>Classification</u>
Årset	3 vågr	Primary
Hovset	–	Secondary
Gjøsundsætra	5 ort	Peripheral
Myrset	–	Peripheral

The prime site, large areal extent and high valuation of Årset suggests that the suffix derives from setr, dwelling, while the peripheral situation of Gjøsundsætra clearly shows that the suffix is derived from saetr, shieling. In his analysis of setr sites in districts of western Norway Sandnes compared the overall landskyld evaluation of 28 setr farms with that of a larger sample of stadir farms. The average landskyld of the stadir group was almost double that of the setr group suggesting that the fiscal superiority of stadir over setr points to the stadir group being of a greater age<sup>42</sup>. This view was in conflict with Peterson's findings who dated both the stadir and setr farms in Trøndelag to ca 600-1000 on the basis of archaeological and topographical evidence. Olsen similarly advocated that setr settlements are of a greater age, largely on the basis that the generic is unknown in Iceland.<sup>43</sup> The absence of setr in Iceland has often been explained by the suggestion that by the time Iceland came to be settled, setr was no longer a productive name type in Norway.<sup>44</sup> A more likely explanation is that the social, economic and land use conditions in Iceland made the application of setr inapplicable. Shieling drift was not unknown in Iceland where a comparable term, sel was employed. The generic sel was originally used of the building at a saetr site which would be lived in temporarily while people were at the shieling.<sup>45</sup> 30 examples of sel are known in Norway<sup>46</sup> but it is only in Iceland that sel was transferred from the shieling building to the shieling site, to become synonymous with saetr. Sel is not found in any other of the Norse colonies. An alternative explanation for the absence of saetre in Iceland is that many of the Norwegian settlers in Iceland are believed to have originated from the south-west of Norway where saetr is less common. Landnámabók also makes the point that several of the Icelandic settlers were secondary immigrants from the Hebrides where the term setr is largely confined to the Isle of Lewis.

<sup>42</sup>J.Sandnes, 'Gards Navne pa -stadir og -setr',87.

<sup>43</sup>M.Olsen, Farms and Fanes,74.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>P.Hovda, '-sel', in KLMN, 15(1970),104

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.105

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In the Norse colonies, Shetland shows the greatest density of setr names, where the modern suffix is -ster, with 170 examples accounting for 5 % of all farm names. Stewart classified the generic as referring to 'early secondary settlements which first developed as pastures'<sup>47</sup> Macgregor's analysis showed setr settlements to be low status, small and often unskatted settlements.<sup>48</sup> In Orkney the density of setr settlements is considerably less than in Shetland. Marwick recorded 25 examples of setr settlements in the early Orkney rentals, where the termination is -ster or -setter noting how none are found on the islands of Rousay or Westray. He concluded that 'the general impression is that these setr farms are smallish, secondary settlements of a relatively late date.'<sup>49</sup> In the Hebrides the greatest concentration of setr settlements is found in Lewis and Skye. Approximately 45 examples are known with setr occurring in the form of the suffix -shader. Olson's survey noted how such settlements are 'rarely mentioned in the rentals, they lie on poor peaty soil and are predominantly secondary or peripheral in status and of pastoral origin'.<sup>50</sup> Of the 45 examples, 27 have specifics identifiable with some degree of certainty. Of these 27, 8 are appellatives, 7 incorporate Norse personal names and 12 have qualifiers pointing to agricultural activity.

Setr occurs only twice in the areas studied, in the simplex form shader retained only in the name of a Dun, Dun Hiader in south-west Tiree and in the name of a peripheral settlement, Seadir in Torosay, Mull. The fact that both examples of the generic are found in the simplex form stresses the fact that setr was not a common name. Where so few examples are found the use of a differentiating specific was not required. There are several possible explanations for the absence of setr in the Inner Hebrides. On Tiree the flat and fertile nature of the land clearly precluded the use of shielings. The one example is found in the remote and infertile area, the Ceann a'Mhara headland. The absence of the equivalent Gaelic term, airidh from the island also suggests that shieling drift was not a part of the farming activities of the islands inhabitants. On Coll, Lismore and Mull, however, airidh names are found throughout the island but again, bar the one example on Mull, setr is unknown. It has been argued that the Norse in the Hebrides adopted and adapted the Gaelic term airidh, giving ON aergi, which gives the modern termination -ary, to denote a shieling.<sup>51</sup> This is illustrated by the settlement names Fiskary and Grimsary on Coll where both settlement names follow the Norse word order with the specific preceding the

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<sup>47</sup>J. Stewart, 'Shetland Farm Names', in *The Fourth Viking Congress*, ed A. Small, (1965), 200.

<sup>48</sup>L.J. Macgregor, 'Norse Settlement in Shetland and Faroe', 491.

<sup>49</sup>H. Marwick, *Farm Names*, 229-30

<sup>50</sup>D. Olson, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 240

<sup>51</sup>G. Fellows-Jensen, 'Common Gaelic Aergi, Old Scandinavian Aergi or Erg ? ', in *Nomina* 4(1984)70.

generic. Where the generic derives from G airidh and not from ON aergi the name follows the Gaelic word order with the generic preceding the specific as in the Coll settlement names Arinagour and Arintluic.<sup>52</sup>

One possible distinction between the setr settlements of Orkney and Shetland and those of the Western Isles is that setr in the west appears to relate primarily to shieling activity on marginal sites where as in the Northern Isles many of the setr names may have had their origin in setr, dwelling, not saetr, shieling, and denoted not seasonal transhumance but the site of permanent habitation.

Nicolaison places setr between the generics stadir and bolstadr in his relative chronology seeing setr as representative of 'a gradual progressive spreading of settlement which mirrors both the consolidation and greater density of population in the areas already settled in the stadir period'.<sup>53</sup> He dates the period of productivity of the generic in the Isles to the mid ninth century believing that setr remained productive longer than stadir. In Shetland Macgregor argues that setr sites were only taken into permanent exploitation in the period 1000 - 1200.<sup>54</sup> A similar pattern is seen on Coll when the permanent shieling settlements on the south-east coast were taken into habitation only after the consolidation and expansion of settlement on the north -west side of the island, although this process cannot be dated with any certainty.

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<sup>52</sup>See p.125,131.

<sup>53</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'The Viking Settlement of Scotland',100.

<sup>54</sup>L.J.Macgregor, 'Norse settlement in Shetland and Faroe',491.

## 8.5 Bolstadr

The Norse generic bolstadr is found in all areas of Norse settlement. In Norway 90 examples are known, most of which lie in the area between Sognefjord and Tingvolvfjord. The greatest density occurs in Sunnmøre where 25% of the total bolstadr names are found. Bolstadr would appear to derive from ON ból, a lot or field and the singular stadir, farm.<sup>55</sup> Olsen described bolstadr as 'first implying the consolidation of formerly split up bóler, into single home field units with their own farm yards'. He also suggested that bolstadr designated a specific type of boer, a farm having only one lot.<sup>56</sup>

Half of the Norwegian bolstadr compounds have the specific *mikli* as in the name Miklibost Ellingsøya. The predominance of this specific in connection with bolstadr is hard to explain: *mikli* is not found compounded with any other habitative generic. Fett suggested that Myklebost was the name given to the greater part of a divided farm.<sup>57</sup> One might then expect a corresponding number of names incorporating the specific *lille*, little, to give the compound name Lillebolstadr. Such names are rare. In Sunnmøre the 1647 matrikkelen records 12 examples of Myklebost and only one of Litlebostad. Myklebost could alternatively simply have the meaning of an independent large farm. Many of the Sunnmøre myklebost farms show archaeological evidence of early Iron Age settlement suggesting that myklebost sites were among the earliest settled areas.<sup>58</sup> There are no examples of miklibolstadr in the Norse colonies. Miklibolstadr is not the only fixed bolstadr compound in Norway. 13 examples of helgibolstadr, Holy Farm, believed to be associated with heathen cult places are known, 2 of which, Hellbostad and Hellebost, lie in Sunnmøre. Again the compound is virtually unknown in the western colonies with only one example in Shetland and one possible example, Heylipoll on Tiree.

The majority of bolstadr settlements in Sunnmøre appear to be independent secondary settlements having a fiscal assessment on par with stadir settlements although they in general occupy sites slightly inferior to the stadir farms. In some instances bolstadr settlements share a common boundary with other bolstadr settlements as in the case of Myklebost and Grytebost, Ellingsøya, although this phenomenon is by no means as common in Norway as it is in the Western Isles.

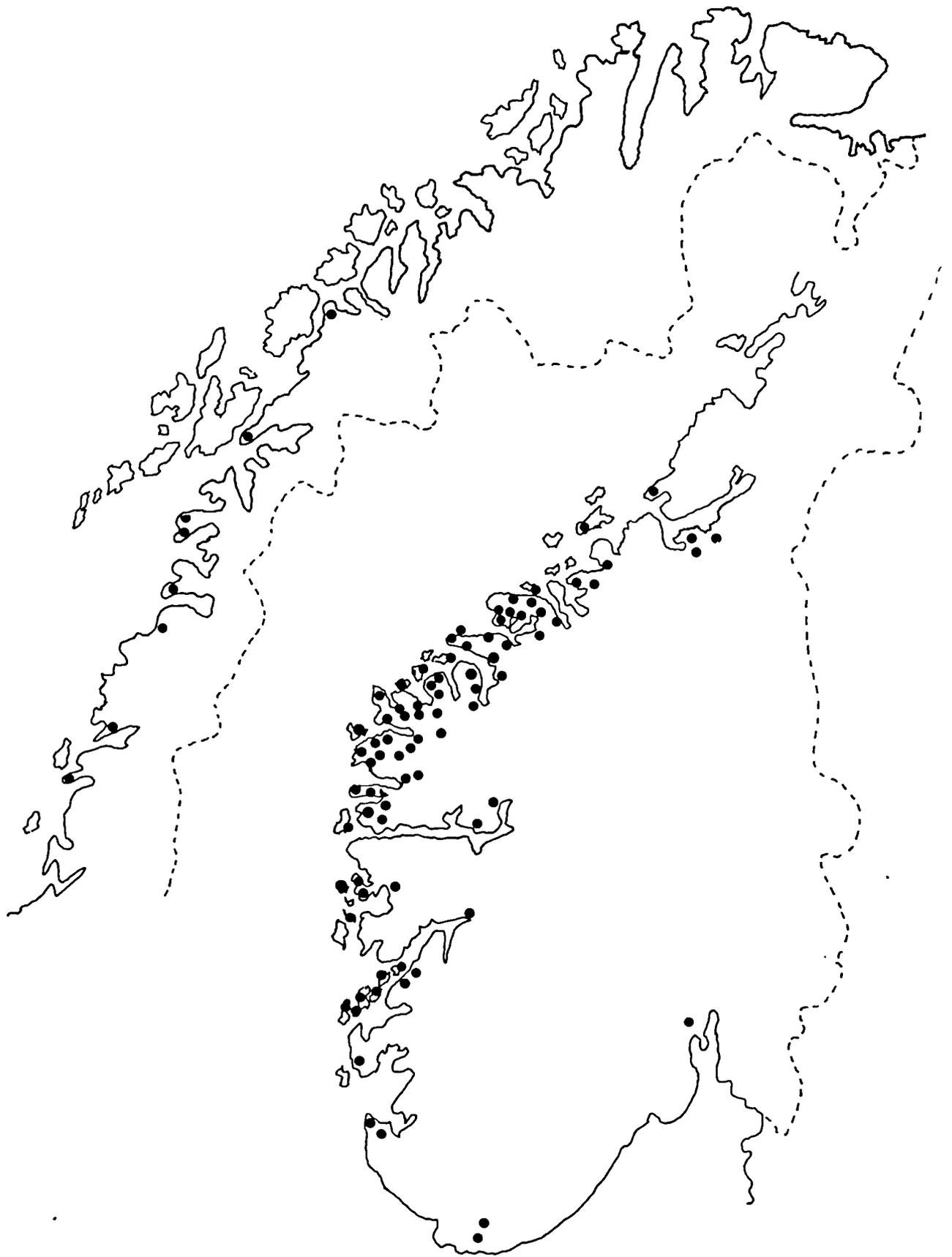
<sup>55</sup>D.Olsen, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 228.

<sup>56</sup>M.Olsen, Farms and Fanes, 58

<sup>57</sup>P.Fett, 'Gamle Sunnmørske Bygder' in Bergens Universitetets Årbok, (1952)12-15.

<sup>58</sup>See p.64.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GENERIC  
BOLSTADR IN NORWAY



0 50 100  
km

Bolstadr is found 17 times in Iceland where the fixed compound breidabolstadr occurs 11 times. Bolstadr appears simply to have the connotation 'farm', the generic functioning in much the same way as stadir in denoting early, but rarely primary settlement on good land. Landnámabók gives the following example:

Onund Broadbeard, son of Ulfar...took possession of the whole tongue of land between Hrit river and Rikjadale river and lived at Breidabólstead.<sup>59</sup>

Shetland has 50 bolstadr settlements where the generic contracts to the form -bister. Macgregor in looking at the naming pattern, geographical distribution and situation of the Shetland bolstadr settlements suggested that the bolstadr element referred originally not to farms but to fields, leading her to the conclusion that the Shetland bolstadr farms may have begun as cultivated fields, either on a primary farm or at a distance from the primary farm and that the name may have indicated a farm established on a cultivated field'.<sup>60</sup> This view is upheld by Waugh who, in an analysis of the 30 Caithness bolstadr farms, concluded that 'bolstadr seems to occupy the same onomastic slot as the ubiquitous Gaelic achadh which applied originally to a cultivated field and then to a farm established in a cultivated area.'<sup>61</sup> In Orkney too, bolstadr is one of several generics associated with secondary settlement. Of the approximately 50 examples of bolstadr in the Orkney rentals, in the form -bister, -bist and -bust, 11 were whole Urislands. This suggests that, although secondary, they were of high status. Marwick summarised the bolstadr settlements as 'occupying relatively central positions in their various parishes; at any event they embraced good old fertile land, and the large size of so many of them shows that they were relatively early settlements'.<sup>62</sup>

In the Western Isles bolstadr is the most common of the Norse habitative generics. The 100 or so Hebridean examples exceeds the total number found in the Norwegian homeland. In the Outer Hebrides bolstadr contracts to -bost and in the Inner Hebrides most usually to -poll or -boll although in Islay the modern form of the suffix is -bus. Nicolaison suggested that the monosyllabic termination -poll or -boll found in the Inner Hebrides was due to Gaelic influence apparently producing a stronger stress on the first syllable of bolstadr.<sup>63</sup> This can be disputed as all 4 terminations -bost, -bus, -poll and

<sup>59</sup>Book of Settlements, eds H.Palsson and P.E.Edwards,30.

<sup>60</sup>L.J.Macgregor, 'Norse Settlement in Shetland and Faroe',469.

<sup>61</sup>D.Waugh,'The Scandinavian element stadir',67.

<sup>62</sup>H.Marwick, Farm Names,233.

<sup>63</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, 'Norse Settlement in the Northern and Western Isles', 15.

-boll are found within a small geographical area on Mull and Coll in the settlement names Arnabost, Eurobus, Crossapoll and Scobóll. It is also possible that the termination -poll or -boll relates to a derivation from ON ból and not from bolstadr. In the areas studied 19 examples of bolstadr settlements are known accounting for 19% of the Hebridean total. 12 of these refer to existing settlements while 7 names are recorded only in the documentary record or retained in the names of landscape features such as Vassapoll (ON *vassr bolstadr*) now only a loch name on Tiree.

Bolstadr Settlements on the Island of Mull, Coll and Tiree.

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Classification</u>
<u>Tiree</u>		
Heylipoll	6 merklands	Primary
Kirkapoll	6 merklands	Primary
Crossapoll	2 merklands	Secondary
Beist	—	Secondary
Vassapoll	—	Secondary
Bhirceapoll	—	Secondary
Barrapoll	6 merklands	Primary
? Murtost	—	? Secondary
<u>Coll</u>		
Crossapoll	2 merklands	Secondary
Grishipoll	1.5 merklands	Secondary
Arnabost	1.5 merklands	Secondary
Mibost	1.5 merklands	Secondary
<u>Mull</u>		
Crossapoll	1 pennyland	Secondary
Sunipoll	1 pennyland	Secondary
Eorabus	5 pennylands	Primary
Vassapoll	1 pennyland	Secondary
Abost	1 pennyland	(Unidentified)
Scobóll	1 pennyland	Secondary
Taypoll	0.5 pennylands	Secondary

DISTRIBUTION OF THE NORSE  
GENERIC BOLSTADR IN SCOTLAND



Of the above 19 settlements, 14 are ranked as secondary while the remaining 4 are of primary status. In the case of the primary bolstadr settlements, all 3 of the Tiree examples are ouncelands: Heylipoll and Kirkapoll being described as 'unciata' in the rentals and Barrapoll by implication its consistent 6 merkland evaluation. In this there is some similarity with the situation in Orkney where 11 bolstadr settlements were evaluated at 1 urisland and they, like the Tiree bolstadr settlements, occupied good fertile land. The secondary bolstadr settlements are all situated on relatively good land. This pattern contrasts with that found on Islay where Olson noted that many of the bolstadr farms were of peripheral status. In the Outer Isles bolstadr settlements conform to the pattern seen on Mull, Tiree and Coll, the majority of settlements being high status secondary units. In the Western Isles many of the bolstadr farms lie adjacent to each other often resulting in a cluster sharing a common boundary. This is clearly seen on Tiree where Crossapoll is situated next to Kirkapoll and with the grouping of Beist, Vassapoll, Bhirceapoll. and Murtost. On Coll, Mibost, Arnabost and Grishipoll seem to have formed component secondary divisions of one primary unit as they lie adjacent to one another in the north-west of the island. In Morrenish, Mull, Sunipoll and Crossapoll share a common boundary while in the west of the Ross of Mull the primary unit of Eurobus lies close to the secondary settlement of Vassapoll. This clustering is not confined to the Inner Hebrides; an example from Harris shows Sulibost lying next to Habost and close to the primary stadir unit of Scarista. On Tiree the secondary settlements of Beist, Vassapoll, Murtost and Bhirceapoll appear to have some relationship with the nearby primary stadir settlement, Bhiosta.

Despite this grouping of bolstadr settlements very few of the specifics combined with bolstadr in the Inner Hebrides describe the settlements in terms of their relationship with other bolstadr settlements. Adjectives such as *lille* as in Litlebostd, Sunnmøre or *øvre* as in Øvrebostad, Sunnmøre are lacking. There are only 3 examples of adjectives of position, location or direction in the Hebrides which contrasts with 11 examples in Shetland, 10 in Orkney and 8 in Norway. Topographical appellatives form the largest group in the Hebrides accounting for 25% of the total Hebridean examples against 10% in Shetland, 14% in Orkney and a mere 2% in Norway. Personal names form a large proportion of the Hebridean bolstadr prefixes giving rise to such names as Arnabost, Arne's farm, Coll and Eurobus, ?Jorunn's farm, on Mull. Prefixes formed of personal names are unknown in Shetland while in Orkney only 3 examples have been recorded, with 2 examples from Norway and a single instance of the name from Iceland. Fixed compounds similar to the Norwegian myklebost and Icelandic breidabost are also found,

the most common compounds being Crossbost (ON *Krossbolstadr*, Cross farm), as in Crossapoll found on Mull, Coll and Tiree<sup>64</sup> and Kirkabost (*kirkjubolstadr*, Church farm) as in Kirkapoll, Tiree.<sup>65</sup> Bolstadr in its simplex form is rare but found in the settlement name Beist, Tiree. The simplex form can often be confused with derivations from ON bustadir or byrstadir giving rise to such names as Busta, Orkney and Shetland, and Bousd, Coll.

Nicolaison in his relative chronology, and noting the much wider distribution of bolstadr than either setr or stadir advocated that 'a distribution map of names containing bolstadr is the map of Norse settlement in the Northern and Western Isles when such settlement was at its most extensive and Norse power at its height.'<sup>66</sup> The density of bolstadr, particularly in the Western Isles, may be accounted for in other ways. Bolstadr in the Inner Hebrides appears to combine the characteristics of stadir and bolstadr in the Northern Isles. The personal names so often found coupled with stadir in the Northern Isles find a comparison in the bolstadr settlements of the Western Isles. The correlation of bolstadr names with primary uncultivated settlements on Tiree make it unlikely that bolstadr in the west designated a farm established on a cultivated field as it may have done in Shetland. Bolstadr in the Inner Hebrides seems simply to have meant 'farm'. The proliferation of bolstadr in the Hebrides and the new dimension seen in the different range of specifics suggests that the period of productivity of the generic extended beyond that of bolstadr elsewhere.

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<sup>64</sup>See p.89.

<sup>65</sup>See p.81.

<sup>66</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaison, 'Norse settlement in the Northern and Western Isles', 14.

## 8.6 Summary

Topographical names, particularly those in simplex form point to some of the earliest settled areas in the Inner Hebrides. Many of these describe prominent coastal features and relate to primary *ounceland* divisions. Compound topographical names and the habitative generics stadir and bolstadr are seen to denote a secondary phase of settlement expansion inland from the coastal areas. Bolstadr and stadir appear interchangeable in denoting both the subdivision of former primary units and the establishment of younger/newer settlements in 'secondary locations'. The wide geographical distribution and large number of bolstadr names in the Hebrides suggests that the generic remained in production longer than stadir. Peripheral ranking settlements are known primarily by compound topographical names. The use of the generic setr, which in Shetland denotes a final phase of settlement expansion and the permanent habitation of seasonal shieling sites, is virtually unknown in the Inner Hebrides.

The type and range of habitative generics and topographical names found in the Inner Hebrides clearly owes much to the naming practices and name forms found in the Norwegian homeland during the initial phase of Norse settlement abroad. Only name types in use in Norway in the 'Viking Age' have their counterparts in Hebridean settlement nomenclature. The habitative generics rud and vin for example which were no longer productive in Norway at the commencement of the voyages overseas are missing from the settlement names of the Scottish colonial settlements. There is also a marked difference between the range of habitative name types found in the Inner Hebrides and those found in Orkney and Shetland. The generics land, gardr, bu, kvi and skali are all known in the Northern Isles but are absent from the Inner Hebrides with the exception of one (possible) instance of bu on Tiree in the settlement name Bee. This may reflect the differing character of Norse settlement in the Northern Isles, particularly in Orkney where settlement expansion and apportionment of land appears to have been more regulated, perhaps due to a greater density of settlement in a more fertile area and/or the degree of control exercised by the Orkney Earldom. Differentiation between different types of settlement (or a lack of differing types of settlement ?) was for some reason not so necessary in the Inner Hebrides where the use of a single habitative generic, bolstadr, seems to have sufficed to denote a 'farm'.

The way in which the first settlers drew upon the onomastic resources of the Norwegian homeland in naming the landscape they found on their arrival in the Scottish islands, and subsequently their settlements, differs between the Northern and Western

Isles. Direct transference of names is less common in the Inner Hebrides than in Orkney and Shetland or in the Outer Hebrides. Nicolaison explains how 'once a certain association was made with regard to a certain place requiring a name, then only one name could be given'.<sup>67</sup> Tidal islands for example are always called Oronsay (ON *orfirs ey*) in the Hebrides and islands used for sheep grazing are always called Soa or Soay (ON *saudr ey*). Other examples of this type of naming common in the Northern Isles, for example the fixed compounds Tingwall, (ON *ping völlr*), Shandwick (ON *sandr vlk*), and Lerwick (ON *leir vlk*) are unknown in the Inner Hebrides. It would appear that the Hebridean settlers were more inclined to name in an innovative rather than an imitative, connotative or commemorative way when establishing new settlements in the Inner Hebrides.

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<sup>67</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaison, 'Viking Settlement of Scotland', 98.

## Chapter Nine

### Gaelic Settlement Names

While this study is concerned primarily with Norse settlement patterns and thence Norse settlement names it is important to look also at the Gaelic names in the islands studied as these illustrate the continuing development of the settlement pattern in the post-Norse period. Unlike the Norse language, Gaelic continued to be spoken in the Inner Hebrides up until the present day and minor Gaelic names are still being coined. However, as Gaelic succumbs to the advance of English the geographical extent and quantity of new names being created diminishes.

One topographical generic achadh, field, will be investigated and the two habitative generics, baile and airidh. In addition the generic cille, church, will also be considered as in some instances examples of cille date from the pre-Norse period. The generic peighinn is also discussed as it has a wide distribution in the Inner Hebrides and is of questionable origin.

#### 9.1 Topographical Settlement Names

Gaelic topographical settlement names outnumber those containing habitative elements, as do their Norse counterparts. The topographical names show a wide range of generics and specifics relating to both land and coastal features. On Mull and Lismore the Gaelic names show a wider range of descriptive elements than do the Norse topographical names and are often concerned with descriptions of the minutiae of landscape features in a very localised setting. Although none of the Gaelic toponyms can be proven to date from the pre-Norse period it is not inconceivable that some topographical elements, secondarily incorporated into settlement names after the close of the Norse era, may be pre-Norse in origin.

If it is assumed that the Gaelic settlement names stem from the post-Norse period and that they came into being either as 'new' names or through the transference of an already existing topographical name to a newly created settlement, then it follows that they post-date the establishment and development of the Norse settlement pattern. In the majority of instances they thus represent an infilling of that settlement pattern as it must have existed at the close of the Norse period in the Isles. In some cases Gaelic names replaced existing Norse names, or a Gaelic prefix was added to an existing Norse name as in the case of the settlement name Ardnish on Coll (*G airde ON nes*). In other examples Norse names have become so 'Gaelicized' that the original Norse meaning is no longer

apparent in the modern spelling and pronunciation, as has happened in the case of the settlement name (Baile)grundill (ON *grænn völlr* ) on Lismore.

As with the Norse topographical names those in simplex form seemingly predate those composed of more than one element or incorporating a more complex grammatical construction. On Coll and Tiree there are singularly few simplex topographical names. On Tiree the name Caolas relates to the easternmost headland on the island, a primary settlement unit and one consistently evaluated at one ounceland. The association of this name with a clearly defined primary settlement unit suggests that the Gaelic name has replaced a former Norse name, that of Skipnish (ON *skip nes*), which initially described the headland, in much the same way that the Ceann a'Mhara headland on the same island, also evaluated at one ounceland, may once have been known by the name Circnis (ON *kirkju nes*). On both Coll and Tiree Gaelic compound topographical names relate only to peripheral settlements of recent origin.

On Mull and Lismore where Gaelic names as a whole far outnumber those of Norse origin, topographical names are found relating to primary, secondary and peripheral settlements. Again there are surprisingly few simplex topographical names, the majority being of a compound nature.

## 9.2 Achadh

The Gaelic generic achadh, field, is found as a component in settlement names throughout mainland Scotland. It is absent as a toponym from many of the islands of the Inner and Outer Hebrides being found only on Lewis (1 example) Skye (7), Islay (2), Jura (1), Arran (8), Coll (4) and Mull (15).

Achadh names must have originated as field names. They are therefore not always direct evidence for settlement but rather point to the ancilliary agricultural activities of the settlers.<sup>1</sup> The suffixes attached to the generic achadh in the names of the areas studied are primarily descriptive nouns or adjectives as in the settlement names Achabeg, small field, Achadh Fada, long field, Achadh nan Aird, high field, and Achafraoich, heather field. On Mull and on Lismore the name Achnacraoish possibly commemorates the siting of a votive cross. In none of the names is achadh combined with a habitative suffix, and only on Coll does achadh appear in its simplex form in the settlement name Acha. With the exception of three settlement names on Coll, Breacachadh, Cardnaha and Gallanach, the achadh names all follow the Gaelic word order with the generic preceding the specific. Again excluding the above three examples the specifics are all Gaelic.

None of the settlements investigated can be shown to be of primary status, although two settlements on Lismore, Auchavaich (6 merklands, unidentified), and Achnacraoish (4 merklands) have high valuations. The majority of the settlements conform to the pattern exemplified by, for example, Achinasaul, Mull being small peripheral settlements sited on comparatively poor land and clearly the result of an infilling of the settlement pattern at a period post-dating the establishment of the primary and secondary settlement units. Nicolaison notes that 'achadh names are by definition not primarily associated with settlement structures and must have been transferred to such at a later date'.<sup>2</sup> More precisely when expansion of settlement occurred, either in the form of the sub-division of existing settlements or with the formation of 'new' settlements in 'secondary' locations, areas earlier designated achadh became sites of permanent habitation. There is also the possibility that achadh came to be used as a settlement name element in its own right and not merely as a result of the transference or elevation of a field name. It is not possible to be precise as to the timescale over which this occurred. As with all Gaelic generics it is not possible to trace achadh back to the period prior to the onset of the first phase of Norse settlement in the Isles.

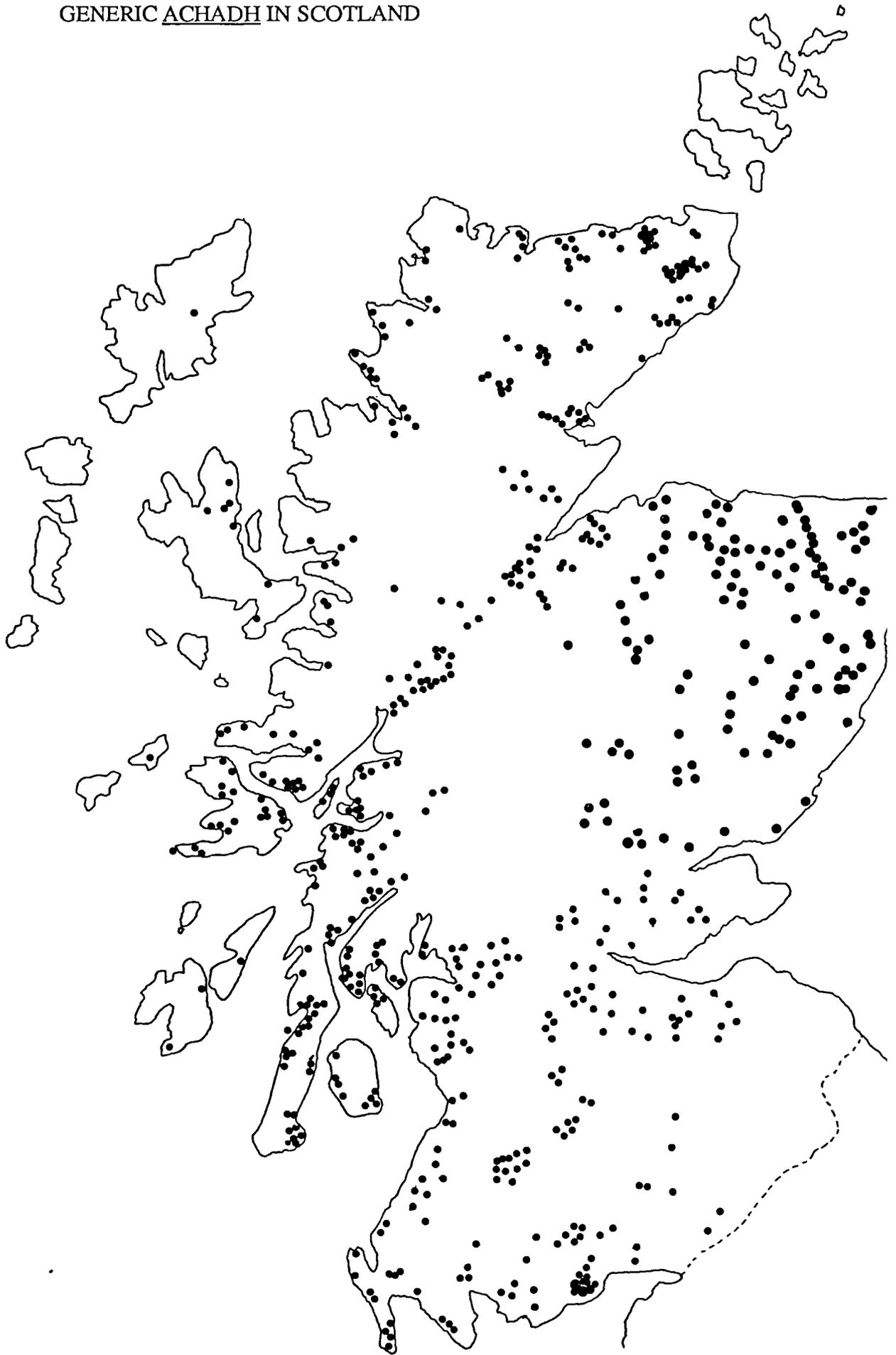
As mentioned above the vast majority of achadh names are unquestionably Gaelic in that they follow the Gaelic word order and are composed solely of Gaelic

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<sup>1</sup>W.H.F., Nicolaison, *Scottish Place Names*, 128.

<sup>2</sup>W.H.F., Nicolaison, 'Gaelic Place-Names', in P.McNeill and R.Nicholson, (eds) *An Historical Atlas of Scotland*, 4.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE GAELIC  
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0 20 40 60 80  
km

elements. There are only three exceptions to this seen in the names Gallanach, Breacachadh and Cardnaha, all found on the island of Coll. The derivation of breac in Breacachadh is not clear. It may conceivably stem from G breac, spotted, with an alternative explanation being a derivation from ON brekki, a slope. The derivation of Cardnaha is obscure but the word order and prefix are suggestive of Norse origin. The name Gallanach may not even include the generic achadh if the suffix instead derives from G gonach. These names are thus of questionable origin and cannot be said with any certainty to have been formed in the Norse period by Norse speakers. In the case of both Breacachadh and Cardnaha it is however possible that achadh was added to an existing Norse name after the period at which Norse was spoken in the island. The earliest written record of an achadh name in the areas studied is that of Achinduin recorded in 1240<sup>3</sup> suggesting that achadh was a productive name form, at least in Lismore, in the early thirteenth century. There is no evidence to suggest a similar early date from other areas.

The peripheral status of many of the sites designated achadh suggests that in most instances the generic can be dated to the post Norse period although, as suggested above, on Lismore where the influence of the Gaelic speaking mainland was stronger achadh may be dateable to an earlier period. The fact that achadh refers primarily to small peripheral settlements may in part also account for its absence from the documentary record. Achadh settlements often form component parts of larger settlement units, the larger unit being the one to be recorded.

Nicolaison in describing the distribution of achadh in Western Scotland suggests that the absence of achadh names in many areas of the Hebrides can be explained by the 'possible substitution of Scandinavian loan word'.<sup>4</sup> In the Outer Hebrides the Norse noun gerdi, an enclosed pasture, was adopted into Gaelic to give the generic gearraidh. Gearraidh is absent from the nomenclature of the areas studied, with the exception of one possible example on Mull, which suggests that the Norse noun gerdi was never used in the islands of the Inner Hebrides. Both achadh and gearraidh are entirely absent from the place name nomenclature of Tiree, the island showing the greatest density of Norse settlement names and there is nothing to suggest that any Norse loan word was employed in the post Norse era to designate a field name elevated to a settlement name. In a study of the Caithness achadh settlement names Waugh concluded that achadh can be seen to fulfill the same function as the Norse generic bolstadr in denoting a farm developed on a cultivated field.<sup>5</sup> In the Inner Hebrides bolstadr appears to simply denote a farm and the majority of bolstadr settlements are high ranking unlike the peripheral ranking achadh settlements. The 26 Caithness names in achadh show a development not seen in the

<sup>3</sup>Cited in A.A.M., Duncan and A.L.Brown, 'Argyll and the Isles in the Earlier Middle Ages', appendix 3 in *PSAS* 150(1956-57)129.

<sup>4</sup>W.H.F., Nicolaison, 'Gaelic Place-Names', 4.

<sup>5</sup>D. Waugh, 'Caithness Place Names', in *Nomina*, 8(1984), 22.

Hebridean example, with the possible exception of the name Breacachadh, as in several instances the Gaelic generic forms an addition to an already existing Norse name as in the case of the name Achunabust where achadh is combined with bolstadr in a compound name. No such examples are known from the Inner Hebrides.

Settlement names compounded with the Gaelic generic achadh

<u>Settlement name</u>	<u>Earliest reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
<u>Lismore</u>		
Auchavaich	1617	6 merklands
Achaworrenbeg	1651	2 merklands
Achynahunsen	1304	2 pennylands
Achadh nan Aird	1622	–
Achinduin	1240	2 pennylands
Achnacroish	1574	4 merklands
Achuaran	–	–
<u>Mull</u>		
Achnasaul	1751	0.5 pennylands
Achinluin	1751	1 pennyland
Achabeg	1674	1 pennyland
Achnahard	1674	1 pennyland
Achadhaphail	–	–
Achaban	–	–
Achnacroish	–	–
Acharonich	–	–
Achandrish	–	–
Achafraoich	1721	1 pennyland
Achdaloist	1721	1 pennyland
Achadh Fada	–	–
Achnacraig	–	–
Achnaha	–	–
Achlek	–	–
<u>Coll</u>		
Acha	1794	–
Achamore	–	–
Breacachadh	1652	3 merklands
Cardnaha	1528	20s
Gallanach	1528	40s

### 9.3 Baile

Settlement names incorporating G baile, township, are found throughout Scotland. In the west, the greatest concentration lies south of Ardnamurchan Point. The generic is relatively scarce in the north-west of the country and in Lewis and Harris. Baile in modern Gaelic usage has the meaning of 'township' and describes any large farming unit irrespective of origin or original status. The term has not, however, always had the connotation 'township' nor is it clear that the noun baile always functioned as a generic. Dwelly defines baile variously as 'a village or hamlet, a farm and a home'.<sup>6</sup> Olson suggests that the noun may have originated as the descriptive term for an agricultural unit.<sup>7</sup> Baile is a common component in Irish settlement names and its origins and significance has been the subject of much debate. The earliest documentary reference to baile comes from the Annals of Ulster in 1010 AD where baile seems to have the meaning of enclosure or dwelling.<sup>8</sup> It is not before the twelfth century though that baile appears to be found in the formation of place names. In the twelfth century documents baile seems to have the meaning of a 'piece of land' or simply 'place'.<sup>9</sup> More specifically McCourt would see baile originating as a descriptive term for a 'share of land held by freemen within a wider tribal territory'.<sup>10</sup> Proudfoot traces baile further back suggesting that settlement units known by the term baile were geographically complementary to the Irish raths (fortified single family farmsteads) in the first millenium AD.<sup>11</sup> An alternative suggestion is that baile functioned merely as an alternative to rath and that the distribution of baile settlements in Ireland broadly reflects the extent of Irish settlement prior to the eleventh century.<sup>12</sup>

It is possible that baile was a functional term in Ireland as early as 100AD. It is therefore probable that the generic was introduced into Scotland, from Ireland with the settlement of the Dalriadic Scots in the south-west of the country in the fifth century. The earliest written source relating to the Dalriadic kingdom, the Senchus fer n'Alban makes no mention of the term baile. MacKerrel however attempts to equate, by implication, the Dalriadic fiscal unit, the davach, with the baile.<sup>13</sup> Of the 130 baile names found in the Western Isles 35 are located in the areas studied. All the names follow the Gaelic word order with baile forming the prefix in the form bal-, baillie-, ballie- or bally-. The majority

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<sup>6</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary,59.

<sup>7</sup>D.Olson, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides',192.

<sup>8</sup>Annals of Ulster, ed.W.D.Hennessey,vol.1,525.

<sup>9</sup>L.Price, 'A Note on the use of the Word Baile in Place Names', in Celtica 6(1963),119.

<sup>10</sup>D.McCourt, 'The Dynamic Quality of Irish Rural Settlement', in E.Jones and D.McCourt (eds) Man and His Habitat. Essays Presented to Estyn Evans,(1971),152-3.

<sup>11</sup>B.Proudfoot, 'Clachans in Ireland', in Gwerin,2,3(1959),152.

<sup>12</sup>S.MacAirt, 'Co.Armagh; toponymy and history', in Proceedings of the Irish Catholic Historical Committee,(1955),2-3.

<sup>13</sup>A.MacKerrel, 'Ancient Denominations of Agricultural land',119-20.

have suffixes which describe size (*Bailiemor*, Large township), situation in relation to nearby settlement units (*Balmeanoch*, Middle township), topographical situation (*Balnahard*, High township) or a form of activity with which the settlement was associated (*Balevulin*, Mill township). Only two suffixes incorporate a Gaelic personal name in the names Balemartine, and Balephetrish, both on Tiree. Price, in his survey of Irish baile names, concluded that the oldest examples are those incorporating a Gaelic family name while those compounded with a Gaelic Christian name are relatively younger. By the sixteenth century by far the most common suffixes were those of a descriptive nature.<sup>14</sup> Watson notes that names of a phrasal type eg. Balnahard (*baile na h-aird*) are of recent origin. In the areas studied only two names combine a personal name with baile. Balephetrish is also the only baile name to rank above peripheral status in terms of settlement classification emphasising the obviously earlier nature of the settlement name. Ballyhough on Coll and Ballygrundle on Lismore do rank as primary but in both instances the generic baile has been added to an existing, Norse, settlement name ON haugr and ON grœnn yöllr at a period when the Norse names must have been incomprehensible to Gaelic speakers. On Tiree the unidentified Balwag would similarly combine baile with the Norse topographical term vagr. There are no examples of baile forming an addition to an Norse habitative name.

On the Isle of Man it has been suggested that a 'relatively great number of balla names have replaced Norse settlement names that were characteristic of the family farm unit' and that baile names possibly replaced Norse farm names known by the generic bolstadr.<sup>15</sup> There is nothing to indicate a similar re-naming process in the Inner Hebrides and the secondary nature of the majority of baile names would rather suggest that these names referred to sub-divisions of the primary Norse settlement units, which came into being after the period of Norse domination.

The peripheral status of many of the baile names in the Inner Hebrides suggests that baile became a productive generic only subsequent to the Norse period. Only on Islay are a significant number of baile names associated with primary settlements found.<sup>16</sup> In the Northern Hebrides the density of baile names is significantly less than that found in the Inner Hebrides and all the names refer to settlements of peripheral status. This possibly reflects a gradual spread of the generic from south to north.

In his relative chronology of the Gaelic settlement generics sliabh (and carraig), cill, baile, achadh Nicolaison notes that 'none of the baile names belongs to the earliest stratum of Gaelic names in Scotland'.<sup>17</sup> If the specifics combined with baile in the

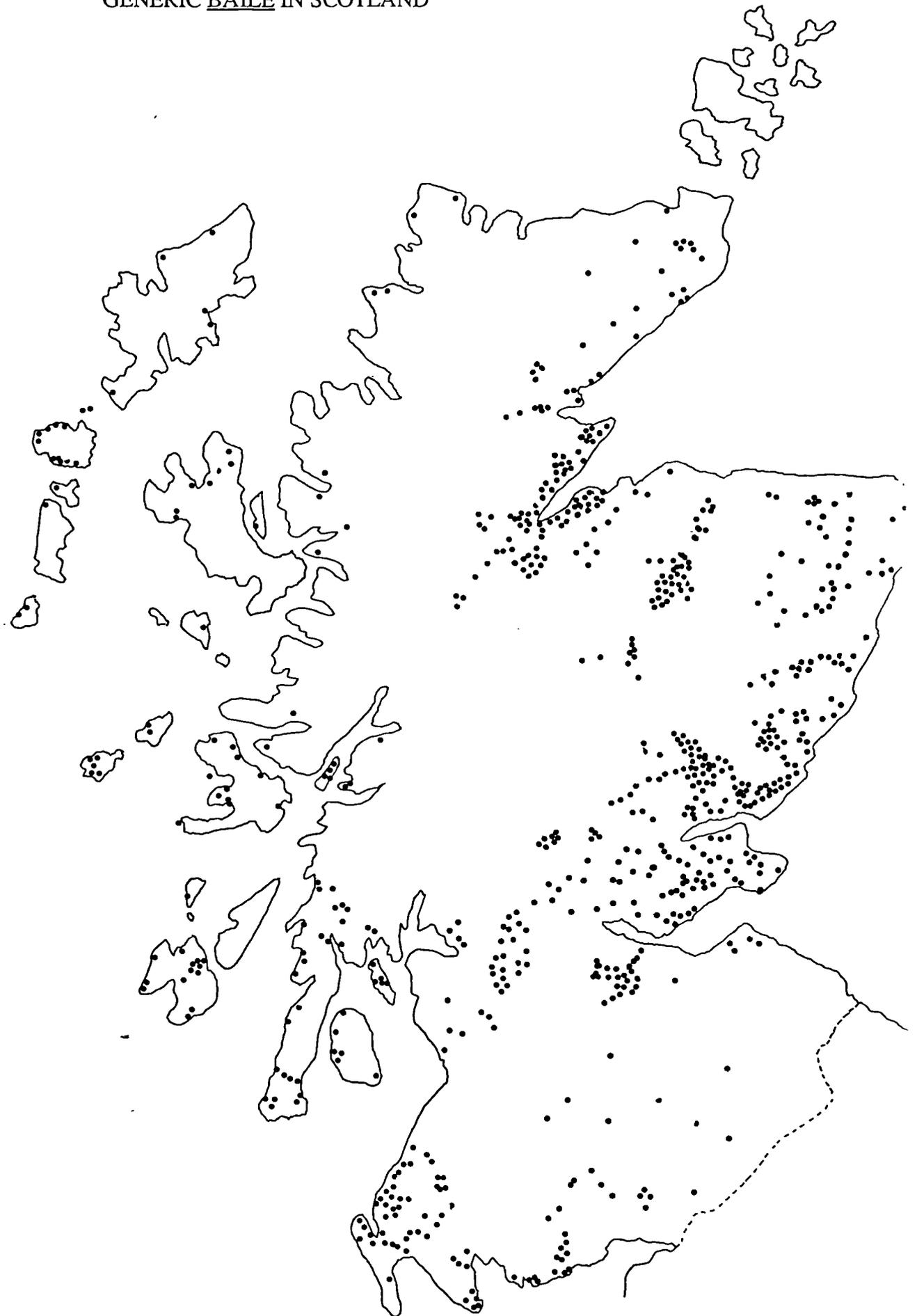
<sup>14</sup>L.Price, 'A Note on the use of the Word Baile', 119-20.

<sup>15</sup>P.S.Anderson, 'To what extent did the balley/balla(baile) names in the Isle of Man supplant place names of Norse origin?', in *The Viking Age in the Isle of Man. Ninth Viking Congress*, 164, 167.

<sup>16</sup>D.Olson, 'Norse settlement in the Hebrides', 196.

<sup>17</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaison, 'Gaelic Place-Names', 4

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0 20 40 60 80  
km

study areas are considered it is seen that many refer directly or obliquely to the relative age of the settlement as in the names Balure, Balinoe (new settlement), Baligortan (cleared settlement) and Balmeanoch (middle settlement), all of which would confirm that baile relates to a post Norse infilling of the settlement pattern.

Settlements names compounded with the Gaelic generic baile

<u>Settlement Name</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
<u>Mull</u>		
Baliscal	1751	1.5 merklands
Ballichrich	1751	2 merklands
Balliclough	1751	1 merkland
Balligartan	1751	1.75 merklands
Bailegeamhraidh	—	—
Bailemeonach	1743	2 pennylands
Bailefraoich	—	—
Balevullin	1895	—
Bailemore	1587	4 pennylands
Balgaurie	—	—
Balure	—	—
Ballegown	—	—
Balnahard	—	—
Balmeanach	—	—
Baliacrach	—	—
Balimeanach	—	—
Baliscate	—	—
Baligortan	—	—
<u>Lismore</u>		
Ballimakilichan	1470	2 merklands
Bachuil	—	—
Balygrundle	1470	5 merklands
Balnagown	1622	—
Balnasack	—	—
Balmeanach	—	—
Baileouchdarach	—	—

Coll

Ballard	1892	–
Ballyhough	1528	20s

Tiree

Balinoe	1674	1.5 merklands
Balemartine	1674	1.5 merklands
Balephuill	1541	6 merklands
Balmeanoch	1541	3 merklands
Balevullin	1541	6 merklands
Balephetrish	1541	4 merklands
Balwag	1541	4 merklands

#### 9.4 Airidh

The settlement name generic airidh is found throughout western Scotland. It is, however, absent from the islands of Tiree and Lismore. Airidh has a general meaning of 'shieling' and is defined by Dwelly as indicating a 'summer residence for herdsmen and cattle, a hill pasture, a level green among the hills.'<sup>18</sup> The term may also embrace many types of shieling activity ranging from a one night stop over, as the name Airigh aon Oidche, one night shieling, on Coll suggests, to a period of several months spent away from the main farm. This study is concerned only with those shielings which were taken into permanent occupation as a result of pressure of increasing population on resources. The shieling settlements were also the first to be abandoned when populations decreased. With the exception of Grimsary on Coll all the airidh settlements rank as peripheral. The Mull airidh settlements are situated inland on areas of poor soils while those on Coll lie in the east of the island where moorland predominates and along the southern coast. The lack of airidh settlements on Tiree and Lismore can best be explained in terms of the nature of the land. Both islands are exceptionally fertile and lowlying and there would have been little need to practice shieling drift. Lismore is also comparatively small in size. On Tiree animals were pastured on the wide machair common, the Reef, which lies in the centre of the island.

On Coll 5 settlement names are compounded with airidh. Three of these follow the Gaelic word order while the remaining two, Fiskary and Grimsary, follow the Norse word order and incorporate a Norse specific. It would appear that the Norse adopted and adapted the Gaelic term airidh, in the form œrgi, and used it when coining names in other areas. In Faroe for example the term œrgi is found to denote shielings. Several suggestions have been put forward to explain this Norse utilization of a native Gaelic word. It is possible that the Vikings were not familiar with a 'seter' economy in Norway at the commencement of overseas expansion.<sup>19</sup> Alternatively airidh may have been adopted as a name for a specific type of shieling. This in turn would suggest that there was something distinctive about Gaelic shieling drift in the island colonies which was not known to the Norse settlers in their homeland and that the lack of a descriptive term in the Norse language lead to the adoption of that used by the native Gaelic population. It has been suggested that the Norse may have used airidh to indicate a *heimsetter*, a low lying shieling close to the main farm,<sup>20</sup> in much the same way that on the Outer Hebridean Island of Bernera the term airidh was used of a 'half way house' where cattle were kept on return from the summer pasturage in the hills and before transference to the village pasture for the

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<sup>18</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary,20.

<sup>19</sup>G.Fellows-Jensen, 'Common gaelic Airge, old Scandinavian Aergi, or erg?', in Nomina 4(1984),71.

<sup>20</sup>A-B.Ø.Borchgrevink, 'The "seter" Areas of Rural Norway - a Traditional Multipurpose Resource', in Northern Studies, 9(1977),3-24.

winter months<sup>21</sup>. The shielings on Coll all fit into this category, none of them lying more than 5km away from the primary settlement.

**Table 5**

**Settlement names compounded with the Gaelic generic airidh**

<u>Settlement name</u>	<u>Earliest reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
<u>Mull</u>		
Arrevolcheyne	1496	1 pennyland
Arreyne	1510	1.5 pennylands
Arinagannichan	1751	1 pennyland
Aridhglas	1801	—
<u>Coll</u>		
Fiskary	1794	—
Arinagour	1794	—
Arintluic	1794	—
Grimsary	1528	—
Arileod	1794	—

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<sup>21</sup>D.MacAulay, 'Studying the Place Names of Bernera', in TGSI 47(1971-72),313,317.

## 9.5 Cille

Place names incorporating the generic cille (G *cille*, church), which is found in settlement names in the form kil-, are found throughout the Inner Hebrides and adjacent mainland areas although they are absent from Lewis, Harris, Orkney, Shetland and Sutherland. The greatest concentration, in south-west Scotland, appears to roughly correlate with an area colonised by Dalriadic Scots in the fifth century. Nicolaison suggests that the many of the kil names are dateable to the pre-Norse period and that the end of their period of productivity is dateable to the middle of the ninth century.<sup>22</sup> A study of the element kil may therefore give an opportunity for dating some of the earlier settlements. Gordon, after studying the kil names of Trotternish, Skye, offers an alternative explanation suggesting that 'it may be safely assumed that most kil names are later than the eleventh century.'<sup>23</sup> The table overleaf tabulates the 29 kil names in the areas studied. The majority of these have a commemorative suffix, that of a Celtic or Roman saint. 14 of the names are compounded with the Celtic saints names Moluac, Findoca, Ninian, Earnan, Cannich, Patrick and Bridgit. A further 6 allude to Roman saints, John Andrew and Michael while 4 are compounded with the adjectival suffixes beg or mór. None of the names show kil combined with a Norse suffix although such names are entirely absent from the Isles with two dedications to St. Olaf at St. Aula, Lewis, and Kilauley, North Uist. On Skye the name Kilvaxter may be interpreted as kil bakkastadir suggesting that here the G kil was an addition to a fully formed Norse settlement name.

The suffixes are helpful in elucidating the relative, if not absolute date of kil names. In the Celtic church, dedications almost always commemorated the name of the founder of the church.<sup>24</sup> It has been suggested that in some instances the dedications can be linked to identifiable historical, holy men. Simpson for example attempted to map the missions of St. Maelruba and Ninian by locating church dedications to these saints.<sup>25</sup> Two factors prevent an easy correlation of saint and site. Firstly, after the Council of Whitby in 664 the Roman practice of dedicating churches to any saint on the Roman calendar was introduced<sup>26</sup> as dedications to John and Michael in Mull illustrate. The tradition of dedications to deceased Celtic saints also emerged, as Celtic saints were adopted into the Roman calendar. Dedications to Columba, Ninian and Moluac continued into the late Middle Ages. Secondly, two or more Celtic saints may have shared the same name making it impossible to pin-point the individual in question as in the proliferation of names commemorating one or other of the Irish saints known by the name Bridget. The absolute

<sup>22</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, Scottish Place Names,130.

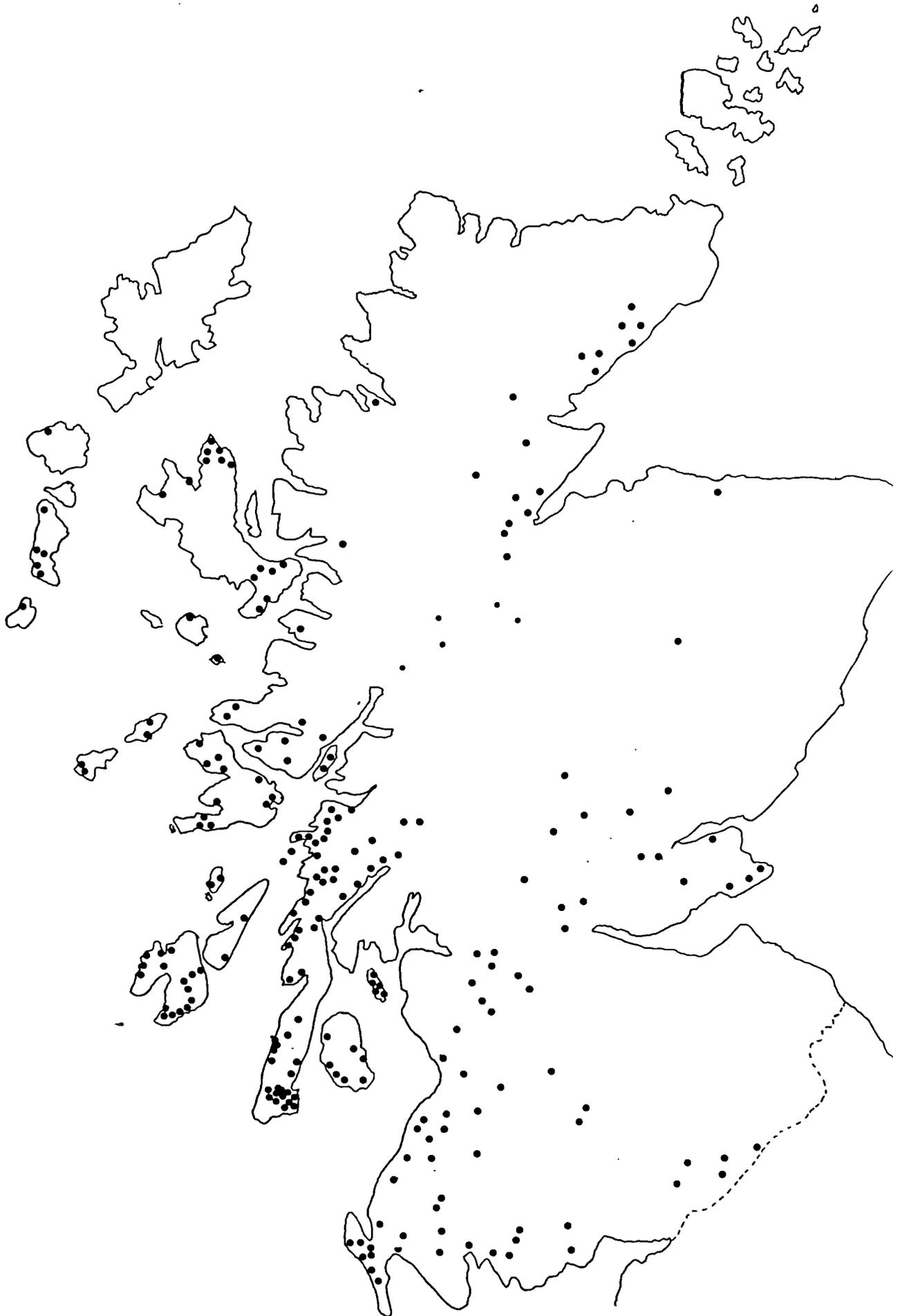
<sup>23</sup>B.Gordon, 'Norse Place Names in Trotternish',93.

<sup>24</sup>W.D.Simpson, The Celtic Church in Scotland,80.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid..

<sup>26</sup>B.Gordon, 'Place names in Trotternish',92.

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dating of sites in terms of the dedication is not possible as the archaeological dating of church remains, for the early period is not precise enough to establish the antiquity of the kil names with which they are associated.

If the distribution of the suffixes is considered it is seen that dedications to the Norwegian St. Olaf and to St. Peter and Mary are found exclusively in the Northern Hebrides. The latter two dedications point to churches established only after the full Romanisation of the church in the period 1085 - 1097,<sup>27</sup> the former to the spread of the cult of St. Olaf in the latter half of the eleventh century. These dedications are unknown in the southern Hebrides where the dedications are purely Celtic. In the southern Hebrides it is possible that 'a much larger number of kil names surely pre-date the Viking period',<sup>28</sup> although this is difficult to prove. The earliest documentary reference to a kil name in the areas studied is to Killynaig on Coll in 1433.

Given that the documentary references to kil names all post date the Norse period the ranking of kil settlements and their relationship to adjacent settlements known by Norse names may give an indication as to the relative age of the generic. 8 out of the 29 kil names in the areas studied relate to primary settlements:

Killean (Lismore)  
 Killyne (Tiree)  
 Kilmoluag (Tiree)  
 Cillchriosd (Kilninian and Kilmore, Mull)  
 Kilninian (Kilninian and Kilmore; Mull)  
 Kilmore " " "  
 Kilvicuen (Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen; Mull)  
 Kilmore " " "

3 out of these 7 also became parish names. On Tiree the primary settlement unit known by the name Kilmoluag may earlier have been known by a stadir name. It is only at the settlement of Cillchriosd Mull, that archaeological remains indicate that the name may have originated in the early Christian period. Cillchriosd is a primary settlement unit with secondary settlement divisions known by the Norse bolstadr names Crossapoll and Sunipoll; the former name possibly alludes to the siting of a votive cross. Elsewhere on Mull the relationship between kil names and Norse settlement names is less clear cut. The late nature of the documentary evidence and the difficulty experienced in 'ranking' the settlements in some areas poses problems in assessing the status of some of the kil settlements. In many instances the 'primary' nature of the settlement site owes much to the

<sup>27</sup>W.J. Watson, *Celtic Place Names*, 71.

<sup>28</sup>D. Olson, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 203.

development of the settlement pattern in the post-Norse period. On Coll the exact status of the settlement of Kilbride is ambiguous. The settlement lies adjacent to the primary unit of Frigasvik, a name which may preserve that of a Norse God, and which may point to the presence of a pagan site of worship. It is possible that name Kilbride was already in existence at the commencement of the Norse period and that it represents an example of a kil name surviving the Norse era.

The majority of kil names in the Inner Hebrides are of peripheral or secondary status. Many early church sites were located on marginal land or on the boundaries between territories. The low ranking nature of many of the kil sites and their absence from the early documentary record may mask the fact that some may possibly relate to the early Christian period.

Settlement names compounded with the Gaelic generic cille

<u>Settlement Name</u>	<u>Dedication</u>	<u>Earliest reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
<u>Mull</u>			
Kilmaluig	Lugaidh	1541	25s
Kilbeg	–	1496	0.5 pennylands
Kilvickeunrich	?	1751	0.5 pennylands
Kilvickuen brach	?	1751	0.5 pennylands
Kilmozzie	?	1751	1.25 pennylands
Kilninian	Ninian	1561	1 pennyland
Kilmichael	Michael	1510	1.5 pennylands
Killiemor	–	1510	0.1 pennylands
Kilvrany	Brendan	1587	1 pennyland
Kilphobil	?	1587	1 pennyland
Kilpatrick	Patrick	1751	1 pennyland
Kilmorrie	–	1587	0.75 pennylands
Kilbeg	–	1743	0.75 pennylands
Killean	John	1743	1 pennyland
Kilpatrick	Patrick	1509	1 pennyland
Kilvicuen	Ernan	1587	4 pennylands
Kilynaig	Findoca	1509	1 pennyland
Killiemor	–	1561	0.75 pennylands
Kealline	? John	1561	1 pennyland
Killbrandane	Brendan	1561	1 pennyland
<u>Lismore</u>			
Kilcheran	Ciaran	1721	–
Killean	John	1596	4 merklands
Killandrist	Andrew	1511	3.5 merklands

Coll

Kilkenneth	Cainnech	1622	—
Kilbride	Brigid	1751	2.75 merklands
Killunaig	Findoca	1433	—

Tiree

Kilkenneth	Cainnech	1674	1.5 merklands
Kilmoluag	Lugaidh	1541	6 merklands
Killyne	? John	1541	6 merklands

## 9.6 Peighinn

Settlement names compounded with the Gaelic generic peighinn are located solely in the west of Scotland with the greatest concentrations found in Kintyre and Galloway on the mainland and on the islands of Mull and Skye. Peighinn is entirely absent from the north and east of Scotland, Orkney and Shetland and from the Inner Hebridean islands of Coll, Tiree, Jura and Islay.

Clearly peighinn is directly associated with the administrative system found in western Scotland whereby an ounceland was divided into 20 pennylands.<sup>29</sup> A pennyland was a unit of land which originally rendered one penny in tax. As the pennyland was essentially a measure of land productivity it follows that the areal extent of pennylands differed from one another. The association of a peighinn settlement name with an area of land evaluated at one penny is clear from the many examples on Mull. Of the 11 peighinn names on the island 5 are evaluated at 1 penny and a further 2 at 16s 8d ; a pennyland on Mull being also known as a 16s 8d land and occasionally as a merkland

While pennylands formed part of a system which, if not entirely Norse in origin, owed a great deal to Norse influence, the adoption of the Gaelic term peighinn into the place name nomenclature of the Western Isles appears to be a post-Norse phenomenon. Of the 13 peighinn names in the areas studied (accounting for 15% of all peighinn names in Scotland) most, with the exception of the name Pennynscanliach on Lismore and the possible exception of the name Saorphin on Mull, are unquestionably Gaelic as they conform to the Gaelic word order and are compounded with a Gaelic suffix. Saorphin is something of an anomaly; while the suffix suggests a derivation from peighinn the prefix may derive from ON saur or from G saor. If the former is correct then, together with the settlement name Penharsbrekk (G peighinn ON *forsbrekka*), Trotternish, Skye it is one of only two names in the Isles where peighinn is found compounded with a Norse element. In the case of Penharsbrekk the addition of peighinn clearly postdated the formation of the original Norse name.

Peighinn is absent from those islands showing the greatest density of Norse settlement names; only 4 examples are found in the Outer Isles and the generic is unknown in Coll, Tiree and Islay. Only on Skye is there a distinct concentration in an area of predominantly Norse place names. The term peighinn and the associated land division, the pennyland, are absent from the Northern Isles and are unknown in Faroe and Island. The earliest written reference to a peighinn name in the Inner Hebrides is in the name Pennynscanliach recorded in 1251 on the island of Lismore. The precise origin of the generic peighinn is not certain. Gordon suggests that peighinn derives from ON penningr,

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<sup>29</sup>See p.249



penny, as would be confirmed by the single example of the incorporation of penningr in the name Pennynscanliach on Lismore. Olson traces the development of peighinn from the Anglo Saxon via Old Norse as a loan word into Gaelic.<sup>30</sup>

With regard to the peighinn names on Mull and Lismore none describe settlements of primary status with the possible exception of Penmolloch (unidentified) which was divided, prior to 1622, into Penmollochmore and Penmollochbeg; the divided settlements having a combined valuation considerably higher than those of the other peighinn settlements on Mull. This lack of primary settlements associated with peighinn argues for the relatively young age of the generic in its Gaelic form. Gordon concluded that all of the peighinn names in Trotternish, Skye probably date from the post-Norse period.<sup>31</sup> Lack of early documentary references to peighinn names in Mull make it difficult to form any conclusions regarding the period of productivity of the generic on the island although the Gaelic word order suggests that most, if not all, the peighinn names on the island date to the post Norse period.

Peighinn was still in use in the Outer Hebrides at the beginning of the century where it was used to denote an area of dyke pertaining to a croft. This was described as 'the peighinn' of the croft.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>D.Olson, 'Norse Settlement in the Hebrides', 204

<sup>31</sup>B.Gordon, 'Place names in Trotternish', 95.

<sup>32</sup>E.Dwelly, Dictionary, 719.

Settlement names compounded with the Gaelic generic peighinn

<u>Settlement Name</u>	<u>Earliest Reference</u>	<u>Valuation</u>
<u>Mull</u>		
Pennygown	1493	1 pennyland
Penmore	1622	1 pennyland
Penalbanach	–	–
Pennycross	1509	1 pennyland
Pennyghael	1509	1 pennyland
Pinniemore	1622	1 pennyland
Pennmollochmore	1622	23s 4d
Pennmollochbeg	1622	23s 4d
Saorphin	1622	–
Pentallach	1509	16s 8d
Penlag	1509	16s 8d
<u>Lismore</u>		
Pennyfurt	1596	4 merklands
Penyngscanliach	1251	1 pennyland

## 9.8 Summary

Two of the Gaelic elements here considered, cille and airidh, may represent the survival in the Inner Hebrides of Gaelic settlement names coined in the pre-Norse era. The association of several cille names with primary settlements supports this view. The same criteria cannot be applied to settlements designated airidh as by definition such settlements are of peripheral status. However, as none of the settlement names on Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore incorporating the generics cille and airidh can be proven to be pre-Norse in origin it is assumed that the majority of the Gaelic names in these islands are of more recent origin and secondary in time to the Norse names.

The generic airidh represents the transference of a settlement name element from one language to the other. The fact that airidh was adopted into the Norse vocabulary, in the form œrgi, suggests that the Gaelic term was in use at the commencement if not throughout the Norse period. It is not possible to tell if names in airidh continued to be coined in the Norse period nor if any of the airidh names can consequently be said to stem from the pre-Norse era. Similarly the possibility of peighinn deriving from ON penningr may indicate the adoption of a Norse term into the Gaelic language. The single example of the incorporation of ON penningr into a settlement name on Lismore, Penningscanliach, suggests that the noun in its Norse form was used in Lismore. Whether or not it was adopted into Gaelic in the form peighinn in the Norse period, or whether peighinn represents the Gaelic naming of land evaluation developed in or at the close of the Norse period is a matter for debate.

While a small number of examples of the generics cille, airidh and peighinn in settlement names may represent pre-Norse Gaelic survivals the generics baile and achadh are best classified as pointing to an infilling of the Norse settlement pattern as that pattern must have existed at the close of the Norse period. While it is not possible to assign definite time scales Nicolaison may be correct in suggesting that 'the terms primary and secondary may be usefully employed in describing distinctions between baile and achadh'<sup>33</sup>. In the areas studied a greater proportion of baile names relate to substantial secondary units than to those afforded peripheral status and several form additions to already existing Norse names. Conversely the majority of achadh names refer to settlements having peripheral status.

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<sup>33</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, Scottish Place Names,141.

## NORSE SETTLEMENT IN THE INNER HEBRIDES

### 10.1 Models for Settlement

It was originally anticipated that an in-depth analysis of all the settlements on Coll, Tiree and Lismore and a representative sample from each of the three parochial divisions on Mull would allow for the formulation of a 'model for settlement', illustrative of the chronological development and expansion of settlement in the Inner Hebrides as a whole. This has not proven to be the case for the discernible Norse settlement pattern on each of the islands is unique to the island in question. The 'balance' of many interwoven factors such as the limitations of the physical terrain, the presence or absence of a recognisable administrative and/or ecclesiastical framework, and the influence of the settlement distribution of the pre-Norse population differs for each island. On Mull for example the constraints of the physical environment exercised the greatest formulating influence on the location of settlement and the way in which it subsequently expanded, while on the flat and fertile island of Tiree settlement boundaries and settlement development can best be discussed in terms of the *ounceland* unit. A further initial aim was to attempt a correlation of the various settlement name generics with each recognisable settlement phase allowing a relative if not absolute chronology to be drawn up to be seen in conjunction with the model for settlement. However, as the range of Norse habitative generics found on the islands is represented by only 2 examples of stadir, 2 of gardr, 2 of sœtre and 16 examples of bolstadr such a chronology is of limited value; at best it merely illustrates the chronological differentiation between the use of topographical and habitative names; topographical names being primarily associated with the primary and tertiary phases of settlement and the habitative generic bolstadr being used to designate both primary settlement in secondary locations and the secondary sub-divisions of primary farms.

In terms of settlement models Coll and Tiree can be considered together. On both islands the isolation of primary settlement sites gives a clear indication of the location of primary settlement units, ie. the total area pertaining to the primary settlement in terms of infield, outfield and rough grazing. On both islands this primary settlement unit was one and the same as the administrative division the *ounceland*. The *ounceland* demarcations show a distinct correlation with natural divisions inherent in the landscape. On Tiree the first areas to be settled were the distinctive headlands, evaluated at one *ounceland* and known by the compound topographical names Scarinish (ON *Skarf nes*), Haynish (ON *Hjá nes*), Skipnish (ON *Skip nes*) and Cirknish (ON *Kirkju nes*). Other primary settlement areas were also named after distinctive coastal features and prominent landmarks easily recognisable from the sea

and known by such topographical names as Vaul (ON *fjäll*) and Hough (ON *Haugr*). All these primary settlement units lie around the coastal fringe of the island. On Coll the smaller overall size of the island and its elongated shape gave rise to a different form of primary settlement units in the northern portion of the island with divisions stretching from coast to coast having infield on the west coast and outfield and rough grazing to the east. The southern portion of the island shows a settlement pattern more akin to that described above for Tiree with primary units concentrated around distinctive natural features, the headland of [Ard]nish (ON *Nes*) the bay of Uig (ON *Vik*), and the hill of Feall (ON *Fjell*).

On Tiree a 'secondary phase' of primary settlement is discernible with the establishment of primary settlements in secondary, inland locations and represented by the settlements of Barrapoll and Bhiosta, both of which are ounceland units. The neatness and rigidity of the ounceland demarcations on the islands of Coll and Tiree suggests that the imposition of the ounceland system may have been contemporaneous with, or followed swiftly upon the initial phases of settlement and establishment of the primary units. It is possible that the ounceland divisions came about as the result of a conscious decision to demarcate the islands into several interlocking units for administrative purposes. This in turn suggests the presence of a strong central authority having control over one or both of the islands. Alternatively the ounceland system may have been imposed on already existing settlement units which had developed as a natural result of organic growth, the boundaries of which followed the natural divisions of the landscape. In either case the 'binding' together of the component parts of the original primary unit by an obligation to pay a common tax or other dues ensured a cohesiveness, such that the ounceland units formed a basis for all subsequent evaluation. The tight network of interlocking ouncelands and their correlation with natural boundaries on the islands ensured that the basic settlement demarcations on Coll and Tiree were still geographically discernible at the time that the islands were mapped in the late eighteenth century.

Secondary and peripheral expansion from the primary settlement on Coll and Tiree can be seen to have taken place within the ounceland unit. The division of the primary unit to incorporate secondary expansion occurs in two ways. Firstly by the division of the primary settlement into two or more near equal parts, equal in land quality but not necessarily in size with each division having a portion of infield, outfield and rough grazing. In this case all the resulting units must be regarded as secondary even if the original core settlement is recognisable<sup>1</sup>. The original name of the former

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<sup>1</sup>The classification of the settlements in the 'settlement analysis' of each chapter also notes such divided settlement units under the name of the original primary unit. Thus the unit comprising of Hough, Totamore and Totronald, and Grimsary is designated *Settlement unit Hough.*, even though it is recognised that by the time of the earliest documentary reference to the settlement Bailehough clearly

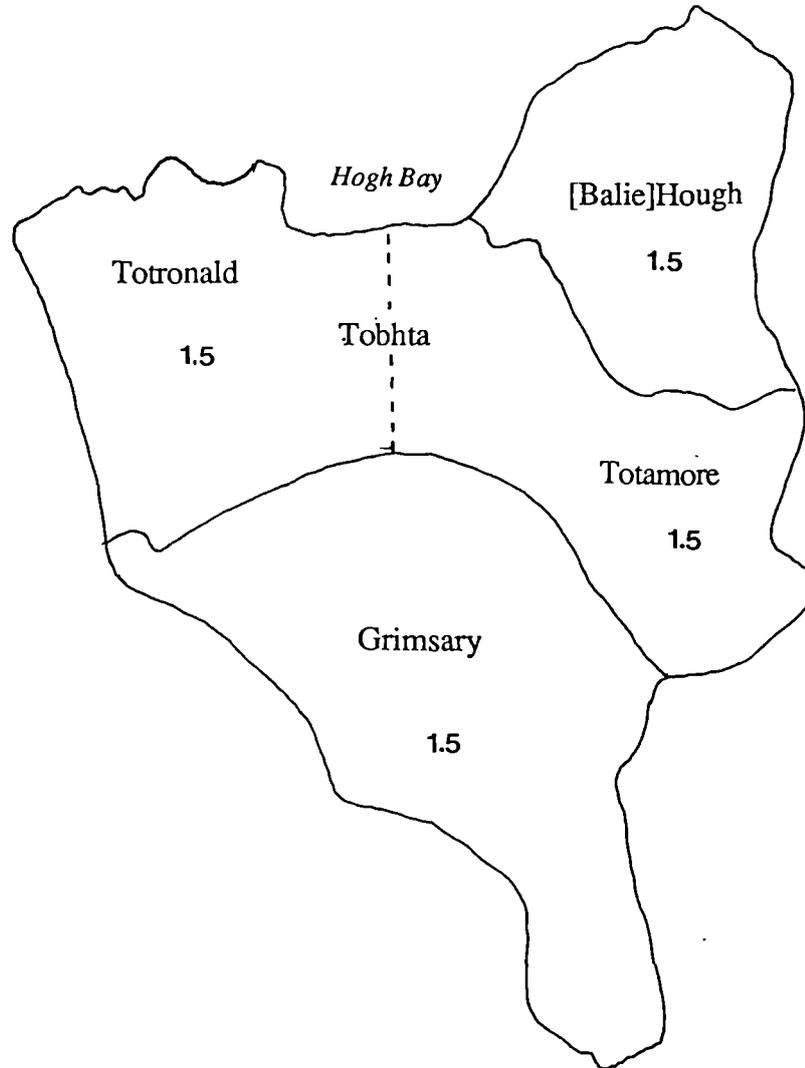
primary settlement is often apparent. This pattern is clearly seen in the case of the ounceland of Hough on Coll (see figure 1). The ounceland as discernible today is formed by the four secondary settlement of Ballyhough, Totronald, Totamore and Grimsary, all of which were evaluated at 1.5 merklands, a quarter ounceland. In this instance the name of the primary unit is retained in one of them to give the name Ballyhough where the addition of the Gaelic prefix baile has been added to the simplex Norse name haugr. A similar pattern of settlement division is seen in the case of the settlement unit of Cliad on Coll. (see figure 2). A division of the primary unit known by the Norse simplex topographical name klettr (Cliad) into four component parts is discernible and represented by the three bolstadr settlements of Arnabost, Mibost and Grishipoll. The name of the fourth secondary division Cliad retains the name of the primary unit. A similar division of settlement, although one which is less clear cut, is seen in the division of the primary (stadir) settlement of Bhiosta on Tiree into component parts of Bhirceapoll, Vassapoll and Bist, secondary names which are all compounded with the generic bolstadr. A second form of secondary expansion sees the separation of a land parcel from a primary settlement. This parcel retains a substantial portion of agricultural potential. The adjacent 'mother' settlement may still be regarded as a primary unit if it still retains superior favourability factors. This is illustrated by the settlement unit of Kirkapoll on Tiree where the adjacent settlement of Gott represents a separation of an area of good quality land from the primary settlement of Kirkapoll, to form an independent secondary unit (see figure 3). Similarly in the case of the settlement unit of Heylipoll, the settlement of Crossapoll represents secondary expansion within the ounceland unit (see figure 4). The majority of settlements on Coll and Tiree seen to have developed within the first and secondary phases of settlement are known by Norse names. Primary settlements are predominantly known by topographical names, several of which are in a simplex form. Primary settlements in secondary locations are often designated bolstadr, although bolstadr is most frequently used of divisions of primary units. Where Gaelic names occur as designating primary and secondary settlements they can often be shown to mask earlier Norse names, either by the addition of a Gaelic prefix to an already existing Norse name, as in the case of the name Ballyhough on Coll or by the substitution of a Gaelic name for a Norse name as in the case of the name Caolas on Tiree which replaced the Norse name Skipnish.

Peripheral settlement expansion on Coll and Tiree differs. On Coll it has primarily taken the form of the development of seasonal shielings into permanent habitation. These shielings are situated on the infertile eastern coast of the island and are known by Norse names incorporating the generic ørgi. On Tiree there is little evidence

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formed a subdivision of the original unit and is of equal status to the adjacent three units of Totamore, Totronald and Grimsary.

SETTLEMENT UNIT HOUGH  
COLL



Suggested expansion of settlement

Primary

Secondary

Hough

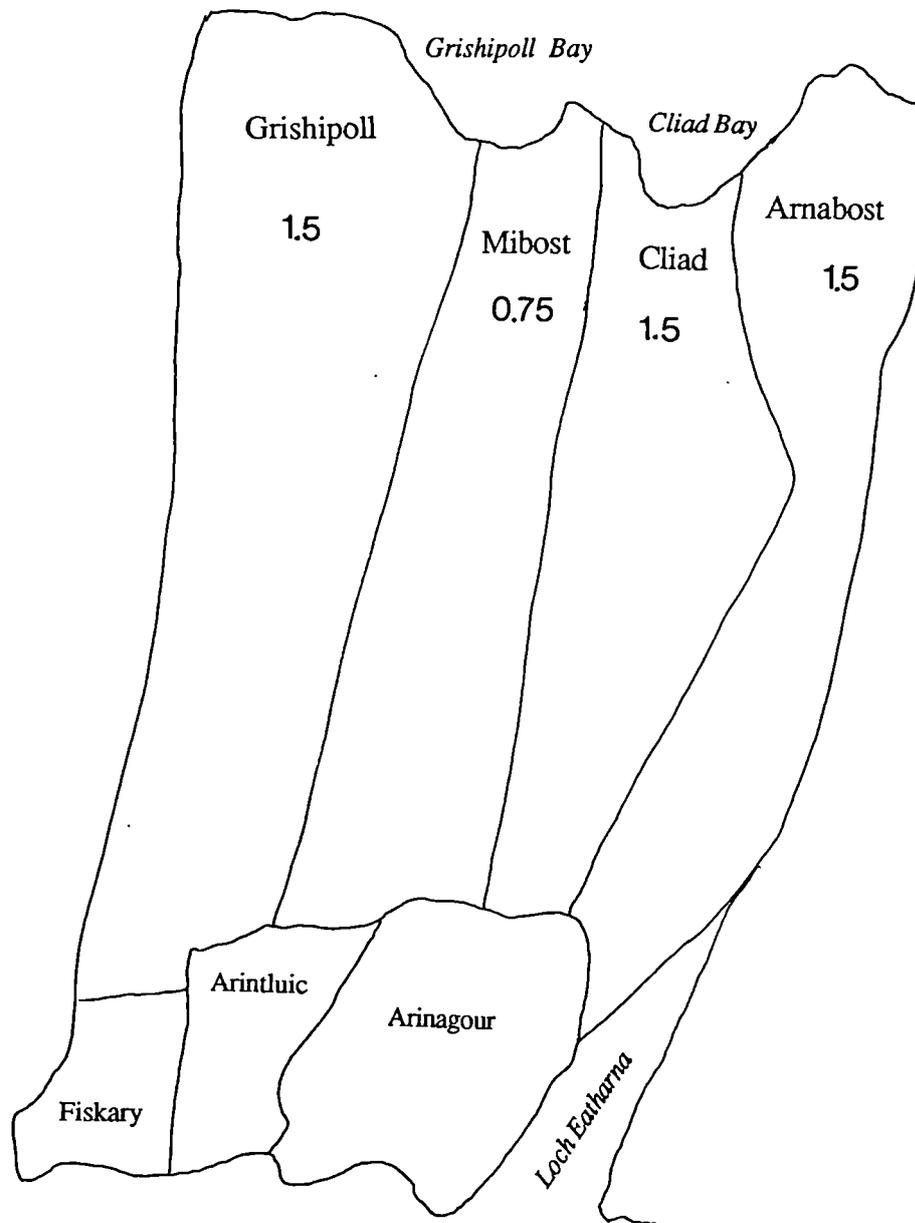


- Tobhta
- (Totronald+
- Totamore)
- Grimsary

Figure 2

SETTLEMENT UNIT CLIAD  
COLL

Merkland Valuations 1528



Suggested expansion of settlement

Primary

Secondary

Peripheral

? [Cliad]



{ Grishipoll  
Mibost  
Arnabost  
Cliad }

→

→

→

Fiskary

Arintluic

Arinagour

SETTLEMENT UNIT KIRKAPOLL  
TREE

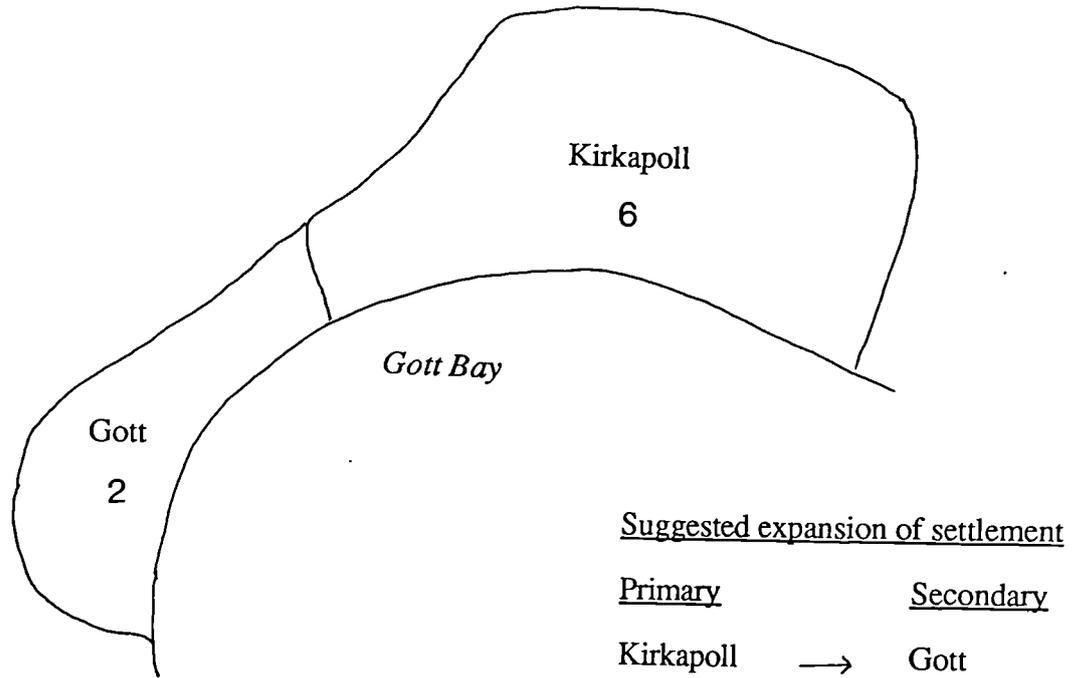
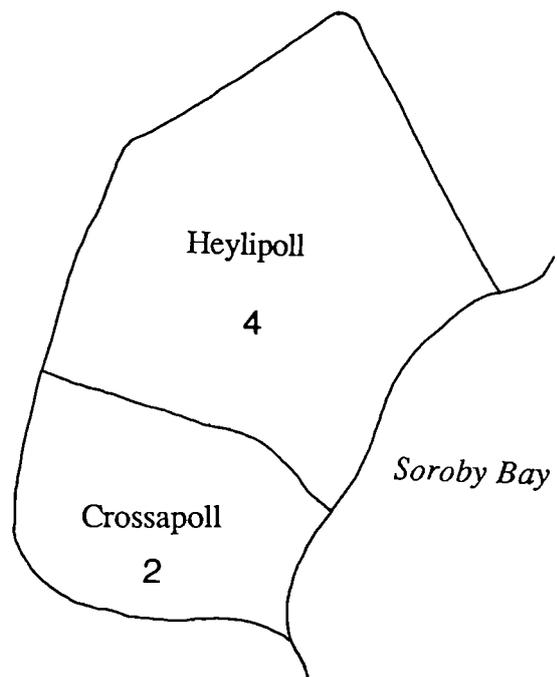


Figure 4

SETTLEMENT UNIT HEYLIPOLL  
TREE

Suggested expansion of settlement  
Primary                      Secondary  
Heylipoll                      →                      Crossapoll



of peripheral settlement expansion in the Norse period. Peripheral expansion where it does occur (and as the majority of peripheral settlements have Gaelic names it can be argued that this was a post-Norse phenomenon) most commonly results from a late apportioning out of land within the boundaries of secondary units. In some instances though the primary ounceland unit has remained intact until the late development of peripheral settlement, as has happened at Ruaig and Vaul in the east of the island.

Figure 5 shows a composite model for settlement based on the situation in the islands of Coll and Tiree. A1 represents a primary settlement with most of the favourability factors. A2 shows a primary settlement where two portions of good arable have become independent secondary settlements [B2]. A4 represents a primary settlement in a secondary location, withdrawn from the sea. B3 shows three secondary units of equal worth, originally they formed a primary settlement A3. C illustrates peripheral units which have developed on the perimeter of the original settlement areas.

The first phase of settlement on Mull can be equated with that seen on Coll and Tiree although on a larger scale. Primary settlement areas again show a correlation with ounceland units. This pattern is most obvious in the north-west of the island with ounceland units corresponding to the distinctive headlands known by the Norse compound topographical names incorporating the noun nes: Treshnish, Mishnish, Morrenish and Quinish. Here the similarity with Coll and Tiree ends for the sheer size of the ouncelands on Mull is such that each ounceland incorporates several further primary settlement units.<sup>2</sup> The divisions into ouncelands in Mull is akin to the early 'landnam' divisions described in Landnámabók. In Iceland the first settlers acquired vast areas of land, often headlands. Smaller parcels of land in the headlands were subsequently apportioned out to other settlers whose settlements could still be described as being of primary status. Landnámabók describes the territorial claims of individual settlers, for example 'Ingolf's land-claim and those [who] settled within his territory.'<sup>3</sup> Chapter 388 of Landnámabók relates how one settler, Grimm who went to Iceland and took possession of the whole of Grimsness.<sup>4</sup> The following section goes on to describe the location of the settlements of those who settled within Grimm's land claim. Such a portioning out of vast land claims may also be envisaged for Mull both in the north-west of the island, on the island of Gometra, within the ounceland of Torosay in the east and in the area around Ardtunin the Ross of Mull. Within these ounceland

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<sup>2</sup>The Morrenish and Treshnish headlands cover approximately 17 sq km while the area of the primary settlement unit of Uig on Coll is approximately 2 sq km, that of Caolas on Tiree approximately 3 sq km.

<sup>3</sup>Book of settlements, eds, H.Palsson and P.E Edwards, 145.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 144.

Figure 5

MODEL FOR SETTLEMENT  
BASED ON COLL AND TIREE

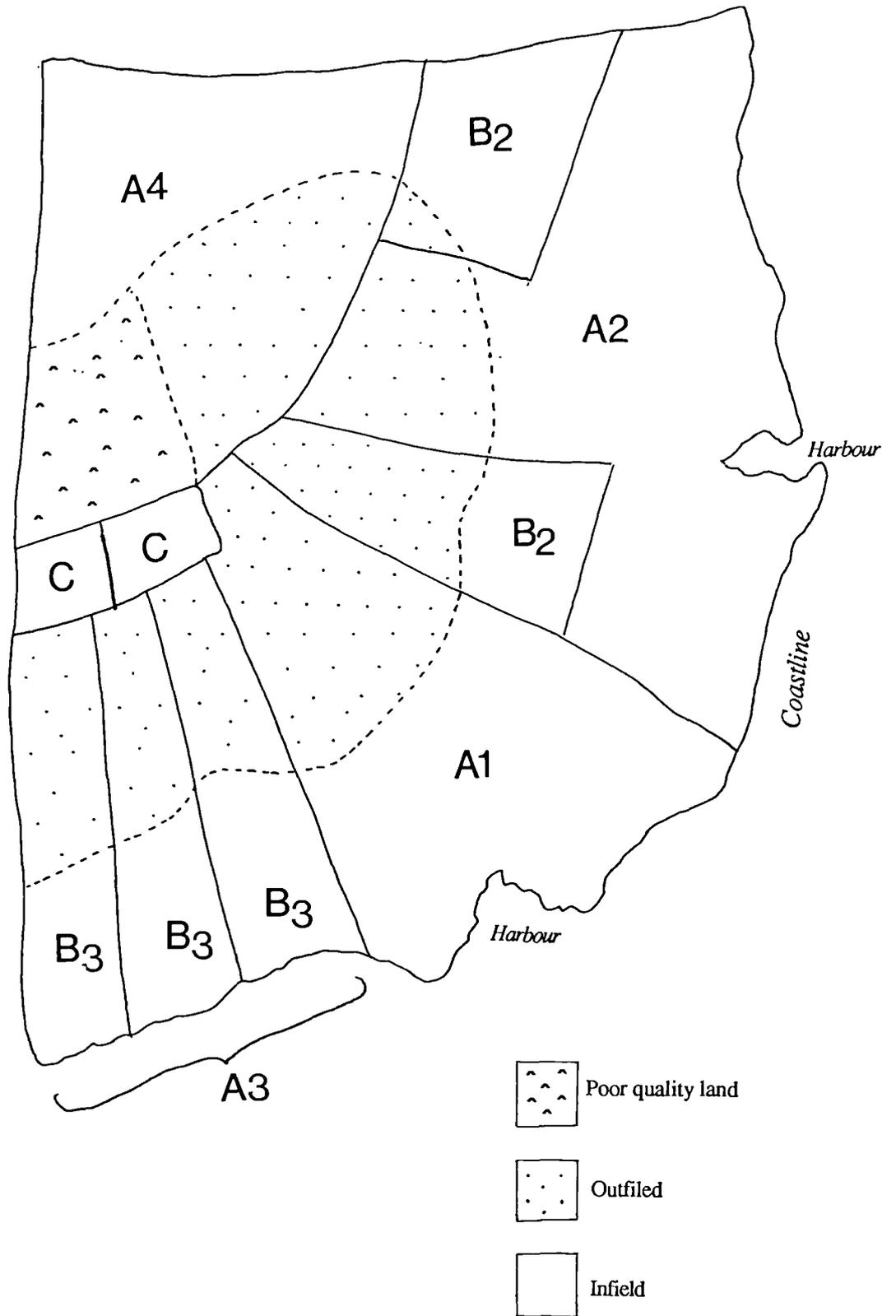
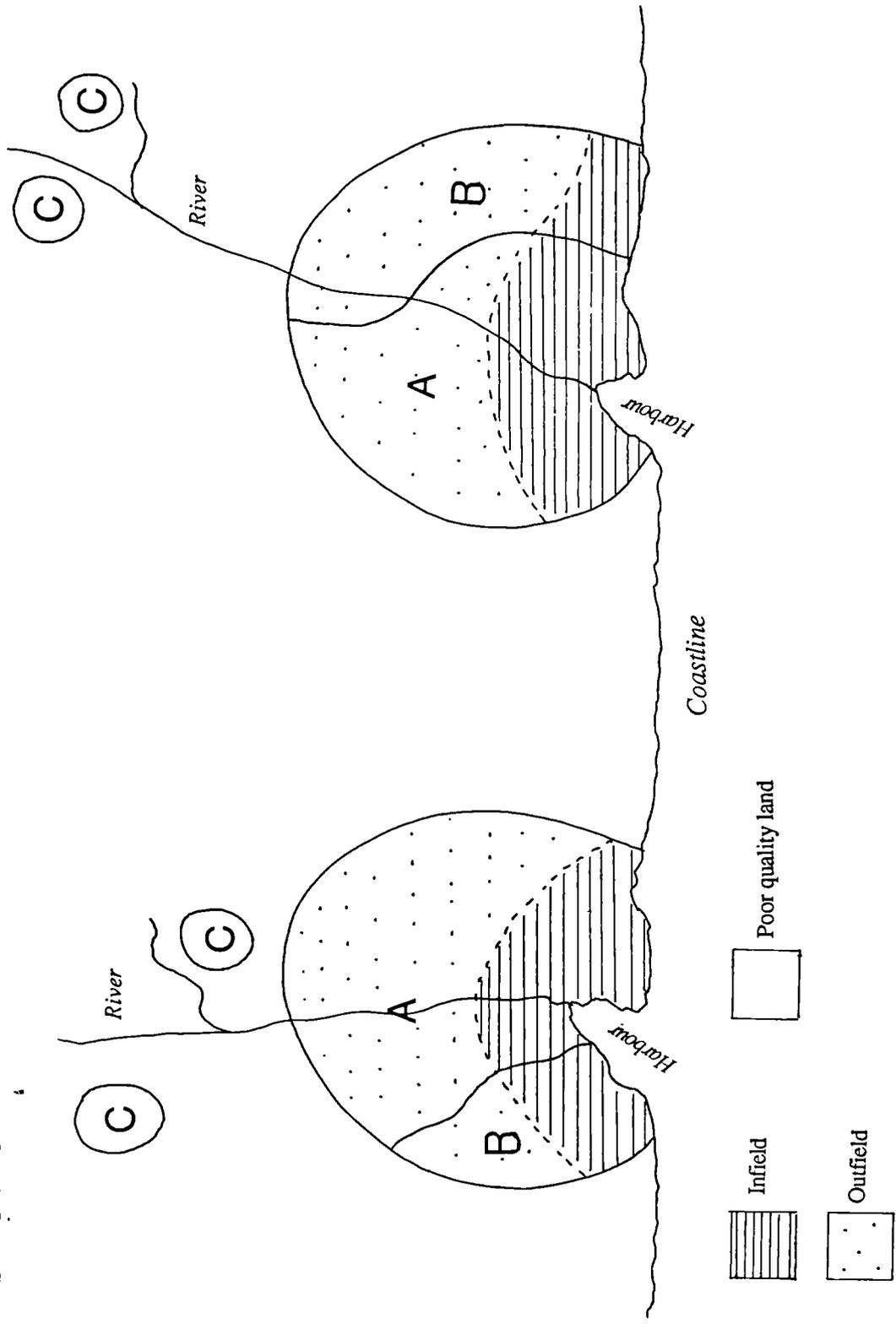


Figure 6  
 MODEL FOR SETTLEMENT  
 BASED ON MULL



units primary settlements relate to the smaller natural divisions of the landscape. The settlement unit of Frachadill in Morrenish for example lies in a lowlying fertile inland dale.

Mull shows a variety of different forms of settlement expansion. In much of Morrenish and Treshnish and along the coastal strip in Broloss settlement is confined to the lower reaches of the river valleys and to the coast. Treshnish for example has the 4 primary settlements of Haun, Ensay, Burg and Reudle strung out along the coast of the peninsula. Settlement expansion on Mull in these areas thus differs from that found on Coll and Tiree. Frequently the area in which a primary settlement is located can only support one settlement. There is little subdivision into secondary settlements and where this does occur it takes the form of the apportioning out of a parcel of land belonging to the primary settlement and within the bounds of the original settlement unit. There are no examples of the division of a primary settlement into several equal component parts as seen on Coll and Tiree. Figure 6 is a hypothetical model for settlement for Mull showing the limited form of expansion discussed above. Two settlement sites are illustrated indicating that the same basic 'model' is often repeated within a small geographical area. A represents a primary farm in a coastal location with secondary expansion represented by B where a portion of land pertaining to the primary farm has become an independent secondary settlement. C illustrates several peripheral units, remote, small in size and situated on poor land at some distance from the primary farm.

Elsewhere on Mull, in particular in the area around the Ardtun peninsula in the Ross of Mull the discernible process of settlement expansion has more in common with that seen on Coll and Tiree. The presence of two adjacent bolstadr names in the fertile area in the central portion of the Ross of Mull may indicate the division of a primary unit into two or more equal portions. The same pattern is seen in the Morrenish peninsula where the two bolstadr settlements of Crossapoll and Sunipoll possibly formed secondary subdivisions of the same primary unit.

Peripheral settlement expansion on Mull takes a variety of forms. Figure 6 shows the colonisation of areas of inferior land often at some distance from the primary farm and not necessarily within the bounds of the original primary unit. Few such peripheral settlements on Mull have Norse names which suggests that Norse settlement expansion beyond the confines of the primary unit did not occur, and that the tertiary phase of settlement expansion may be dated to the post-Norse period. Only in Glen Forsay does the place name Seadir (ON *sætre*) occur suggesting the development of seasonal dwellings into permanent habitation in the Norse period. The use of this name in its simplex form would suggest that this was the exception rather than the rule. In Torosay another form of peripheral expansion is witnessed with the

infilling of the coastal strip between primary units, as is evidenced by the settlements of Balmeanoch and Bailegeamhraidh. As is the case with Tiree it would appear that much of the tertiary expansion phase in all areas of Mull can be dated to the post Norse period.

On Lismore the pattern of Norse settlement is difficult to categorise. The sources show little indication of a division into ouncelands or any other Norse administrative divisions. However, it is possible that the high evaluation of the settlement of Clachan at 40 pennylands points to two ounceland units stretching across the fertile central portion of the island and that the presence of the name Pennynscanliach may indicate a division into pennylands in the Norse period. Lack of corroborative evidence for both the above statements suggests that little weight can be placed upon them. Norse settlement on Lismore may be regarded as being of an 'incidental' character, the result of settlement along a well travelled sea-route. Most of the Norse settlements on Lismore are independent units having no common boundaries with other Norse settlements on the island, with the notable exception of the settlements of Frackersaig and [Bali]grundill which lie on the fertile tract of land in the centre of the island and which may have formed part of a primary unit which stretched from coast to coast. There is nothing on Lismore to compare with the interlocking units seen on Coll or Tiree or indeed the proximity of Norse settlements to one another found in certain areas of Mull. Two of the Norse settlements on Lismore are sited on small islands off the coast and show little indication of having been subdivided in the Norse period. Secondary and peripheral settlements on Lismore are exclusively known by Gaelic names. The presence of the ecclesiastical centre on the island from the twelfth century onwards and an increased number of Gaelic speakers must have had an adverse effect on the development of Norse settlement.

## 10.2 Discussion

### 10.2.1 Norse settlement development and expansion

Three layers of pre-Norse settlement are discernible on the islands. Archaeologically the brochs, forts and duns of the Iron Age give an indication as to the distribution of the settlement units of the indigenous population in the period 600 BC to AD 400. References in the documentary record attest to the administrative organisation of the Dalriadic kingdom in the sixth century and the presence of early Christian ecclesiastical sites together with the documentary references to monastic complexes, gives an approximate indication as to the location of centres of population in the period prior to the incursions of the Norse.

The mapping of the distribution of brochs, forts and duns shows that archaeological remains of the Iron Age stand in areas settled in the first phases of Norse expansion into the islands. The primary Norse settlement units and Iron Age habitation sites both show a correlation with areas of fertile land, for example the west coast of Coll, and with areas having a natural defensive potential as in the case of the headlands which formed the focii for early settlement on Tiree. This suggests that both the Iron Age populations and the Norse settlers utilized the same pre-existing natural 'boundaries' in the landscape when establishing settlement units. In many instances the Norse recognised the presence of defended Iron Age sites and called them borg, fortification, as in the two settlement names Burg found on Mull. Nieke's analysis of the relationship between Iron Age structures and Norse settlement sites in areas of Islay led her to conclude that Norse settlement on the island was essentially an infilling around areas already settled by previous groups.<sup>5</sup> Small concluded that in Skye Norse and native occupied separate regions on that island,<sup>6</sup> although there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the fortified dwellings of the Iron Age were still inhabited in the late eight and early ninth centuries. Both these theories must be treated with caution as they were based on the negative correlation of Iron Age sites and Norse habitative generics. It has been shown that in Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore it is the simplex topographical-names which are the most reliable indicators of primary settlement areas. Olson's survey of Iron Age and Norse settlement areas in Lewis, Skye and Islay, which also used the correlation of Norse topographical names, reached a similar conclusion to that suggested here for the Mull group of islands.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>M.Nieke, 'Settlement patterns in the first millenium AD: a case study of the island of Islay',313.

<sup>6</sup>A.Small, 'Norse settlement in Skye',36.

<sup>7</sup>D.Olson, 'Norse settlement in the Inner Hebrides',251.

It is considerably harder to pinpoint the habitation sites of the native population living in the islands in the period immediately prior to the advent of Norse settlement. Archaeological evidence is confined to the remains of ecclesiastical sites, most of which cannot be dated. The distribution of ecclesiastical sites cannot be taken as being representative of the distribution of settlement throughout any of the islands as monastic sites often lay in the boundary regions between territories and occupied marginal sites. At best it can be said that in Coll, Tiree and Mull there is no evidence to suggest that the Norse incomers actively avoided those sites occupied by the Celtic ecclesiastics in the first phases of settlement. The site of the monastery of St Patrick's on Tiree is situated on some of the least fertile land in the island and lies within one of the primary Norse land divisions on the island on the Ceann a'Mhara headland. The Norse recognised the presence of the Celtic ecclesiastic site and called the headland Cìrcnish (ON *kirkju nes*, church headland). It is impossible to speculate as to whether the monastery was still inhabited in the period when Norse settlement was established on the headland. On Mull the two adjacent *bolstadr* farms in Morrenish clearly lie within the area of settlement centred around the early Christian site of Cillchriosd which suggests that, in this instance, the quest for fertile land in the secondary settlement phase was the most important factor in the siting of the settlements. In some cases it would also appear that the Norse actively re-utilized centres of Celtic Christianity for their own religious purposes, as in the case of the sites of Soroby, Tiree and Frigasvick, Coll.

The situation on the island of Lismore differs from that on Mull, Coll and Tiree and is more akin to that found on Iona. On Lismore the incoming settlers appear to have avoided the area around the Celtic monastic complex. The Irish Annals record repeated raids on Iona in the early ninth century and the monastery on Lismore must have suffered a similar fate. Early permanent settlement in the vicinity of both monastic sites may have been avoided in the expectation that if the monasteries were left alone to recuperate their losses they would, at some later period, provide the opportunity for additional exploitation. In all four islands the early colonisation of the headlands as the first sites for semi-permanent and then permanent habitation, before movement on to the fertile lands along the coastal stretches, is suggestive of a need for a defended site against the perceived threat of a potentially hostile native population.

Throughout the thesis discussions of the chronological development of Norse settlement has used the terms 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary' to differentiate between the various phases of settlement expansion both within the framework of individual settlement units and within each island as a whole. Such categorisations are of limited value when it becomes necessary to make comparisons on an island to island basis. A chronological framework would be useful and indeed is

necessary when one attempts to investigate the relationship between, for example, the 'first phase of settlement' on Tiree and the 'first phase of settlement' on Mull. It might then be possible to ascertain if the first phase of settlement on Mull, characterised by the acquisition of the headlands was contemporaneous with the colonisation of the headlands on Tiree. The use of a purely relative chronology is useful in some instances; for example the tertiary settlement phase on Coll characterised by the habitation of seasonal dwellings on a permanent basis in the Norse period cannot be equated with the tertiary settlement phase on Lismore, where the site, situation and Gaelic names of the peripheral ranking settlement sites suggest that they developed in the post-Norse era. Clearly though the introduction of absolute dates into such a vague chronology would be advantageous. Nicolaisen in a general survey of the distribution of Scandinavian settlement in Scotland as evidenced by Norse settlement names mapped the incidence of the three habitative generics *stadir*, *bolstadr* and *setr* and concluded that 'the names in *stadir* provide a picture of what the Norse settlement area was like before and up to the middle of the ninth century whereas *setr* names speak of colonisation and expansion well into the second half of the century. The map of *bolstadr* supplies an overall vision of Scandinavian settlement in the north and west when at its most extensive'.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned overleaf the lack of a large enough sample of the three habitative generics most commonly associated with settlement in the islands under consideration makes it inadvisable to attempt the formulation of such a chronology firmly anchored to definite historical periods. The date given in the Irish Annals for the raids on the monastery at Iona indicate a Norse sea faring presence in the area around Mull in the last decade of the eighth century. Sporadic raiding may have led to over wintering in the islands, in easily defensible sites such as the headlands of Coll and Tiree. The first phase of semi-permanent settlement, characterised by the coining of simplex topographical names and the naming of distinctive landscape and seascape features, may tentatively be dated to the last decades of the eighth century and opening decades of the ninth. The suggestion of hypothetical dates for the development of secondary and tertiary settlement units in the islands would be of little value and these phases of settlement are best viewed in relative terms.

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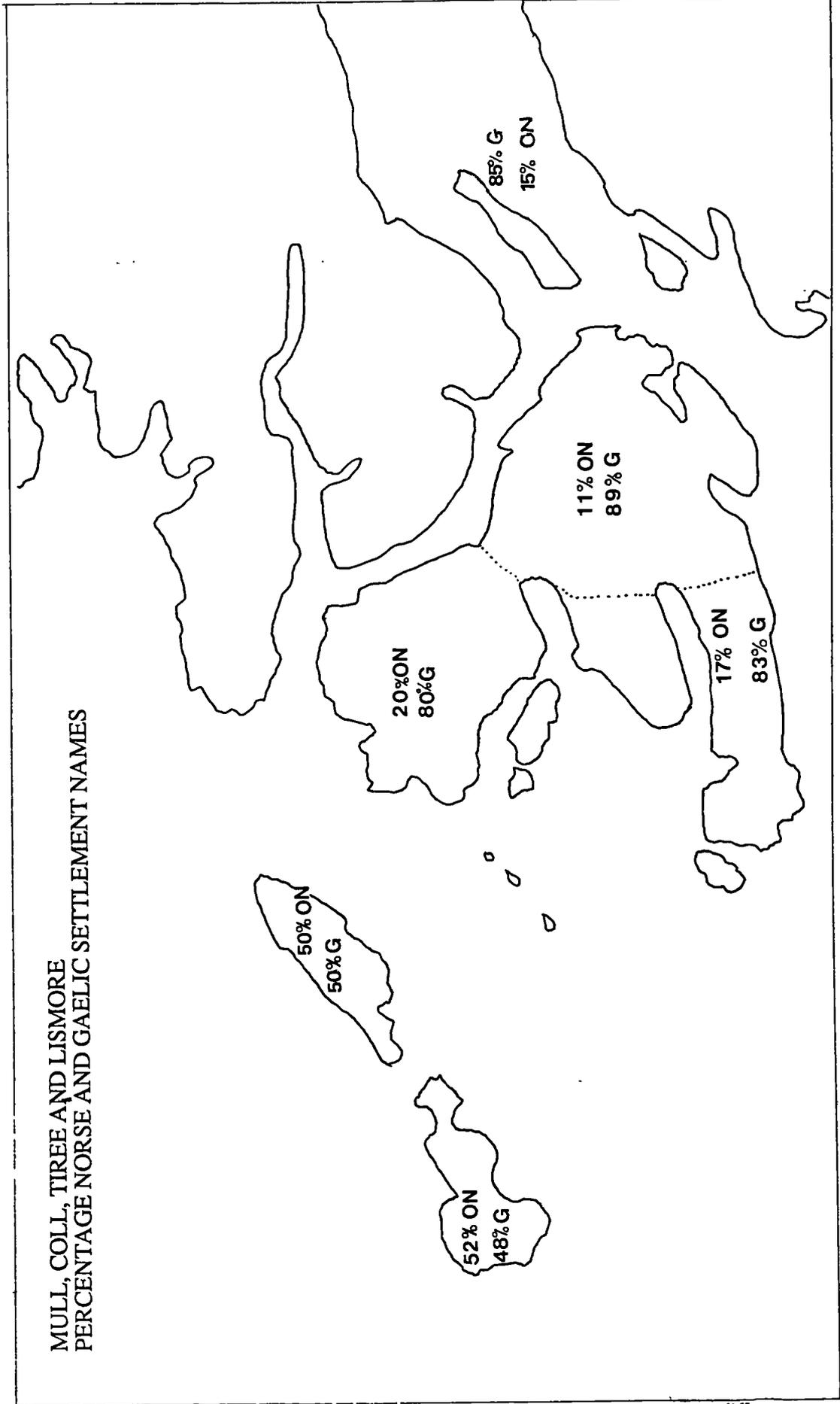
<sup>8</sup>W.H.F. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place Names*, 96.

### 10.2.2 Ratio of Norse to Gaelic names

The map overleaf shows the relative percentages of Norse to Gaelic settlement names in the islands. The overall ratio of Norse to Gaelic names on Coll stands at 1:1 with the majority of primary settlement sites being known by Norse names. On Tiree the ratio is the same as that for Coll with several of the primary and secondary sites on the island having Gaelic names, most of which are compounded with the Gaelic generics cille and baile as in the primary names Ballevullin, Ballephuill, Kilmoluag and Killine. Some of these names may mask earlier Norse names and the real figure for Tiree may be higher than that for Coll. On Mull the ratio of Norse to Gaelic names differs within each geographical/parochial division. In the north-west the figure is 1:4 where many of the primary and secondary settlement names are Norse, particularly along the Treshnish coastal strip and on the islands of Gometra and Ulva. In the Ross of Mull the figure falls to 1:5 with most of the Norse settlement names concentrated in the fertile strip of land running south from Ardtun and on the south of the Ardmeanach peninsula. In the east of the island the figure is considerably lower with the ratio of Norse to Gaelic names standing at 1:8. Lismore has a ratio of 1:5, the same as that for the Ross of Mull, although on Lismore the Norse names relate exclusively to primary settlements.

While such ratios are useful they cannot be used in isolation as an indication of either the density of settlement or the sphere of Norse influence in the islands. The ratio of Norse to Gaelic settlement names in the east of Mull is lower than that found in the Ross of Mull, and in the north-west of the island. If however one looks more closely at the names themselves, not just as statistical representations of the incidence of a Norse or a Gaelic name, but on an individual basis as names that were coined for a particular reason, it is seen that the Norse names in the east of Mull and on Lismore relate to important landscape features. Glen Forsay is the name of a valley leading inland from one of the primary settlement areas and offering access into the interior of the island. Torosay describes an administrative district encompassing much of the east of Mull and the names of important harbours along the eastern coastal stretch are all Norse. On Lismore the Norse names also show an affinity with prominent coastal landmarks, as is the case with the settlement name Fiart (ON *fjördr*) which derives its name from the settlements location at the western end of the island at the mouth of the Great Glen. All the names of the small islands around the shores of Lismore are Norse. This would suggest that the Norse were in control of the sea routes along the sound of Mull and at the mouth of the Great Glen. The control of the seaways

MULL, COLL, TIRRE AND LISMORE  
PERCENTAGE NORSE AND GAELIC SETTLEMENT NAMES



is also seen in the concentration of Norse names in the north-west of Mull and on Gometra and Ulva.

The use of ratios also fails to illustrate the relative number of Norse and Gaelic speakers in the Viking period, as none of the Gaelic names can be said with any certainty to have been coined before the end of the period of Norse domination; also a large number of place names does not necessarily reveal a large number of individuals. The average agricultural unit in the fertile areas of Coll, Lismore and Tiree could support a larger population than the same sized unit in some of the less fertile areas of Mull. Comparisons with ratios for other areas of the isles is of limited value for detailed analysis has only been undertaken for regions in Lewis, Skye and Islay.<sup>9</sup> Bremner's suggested ratios for islands in the Inner Hebrides are of limited value,<sup>10</sup> for he relies on a general geographical overview which fails to highlight the differences within the different regions of the larger islands and also records only names in use at the present time.<sup>11</sup> The table below tabulates the available information for the Mull group, Islay, Skye and Lewis.

<u>Mull</u>	
Kilninian and Kilmore	1:4
Kilfinichen and Kilvicuen	1:5
Torosay	1:8
<u>Lismore</u>	1:5
<u>Coll</u>	1:1
<u>Tiree</u>	1:1
<u>Lewis*</u>	
North Lewis	3:1
Western Uig	8:1
<u>Skye*</u>	
Western Trotternish	1:1
<u>Islay*</u>	
South Rhinns	5:6
Eastern Oa	7:1

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<sup>9</sup>D.Olson, 'Norse Settlement in the Inner Hebrides',253. \* in following table indicates figures obtained from D.Olson.

<sup>10</sup>R.L.Bremner, 'Some notes on the Norse men in Argyllshire and on the Clyde',373.

<sup>11</sup>Bremner's figures are as follows; Lewis 4:1, Skye and North Uist 3:2, Islay 1:2, Kintyre 1:4 and Arran 1:8. These figures have been quoted by successive authors when discussing the relative numbers of Norse to Gaelic names in the islands as in the discussion by Sir Lindsay Scott in his article 'The Norse in the Hebrides',191., and by M.Oftedal who stated that the incidence of Norse place-names decreases from 'a very large percentage in Skye to a rather lower one in Arran'. M.Oftedal, 'Norse Place-Names in the Hebrides',107.

The figures for both Lewis and Islay illustrate a similar pattern to that found on Mull where different regions show a marked difference in the incidence of Norse names. The figures would indicate that the density of Norse settlement decreases from west to east, those areas lying closest to mainland Scotland having the lowest ratio of Norse to Gaelic names. The incidence of Norse settlement names also decreases from the northern to the southern Hebrides.

The use of ratios also fails to highlight the range of names encountered in the various islands. The generic bolstadr, found throughout the islands, is absent from those areas where Gaelic names outnumber Norse names at a ratio of 8:1, in the east of Mull and also on Lismore. The reason for this is not clear. In the east of Mull single examples of the habitative generics stadir and søetre are found and one would then expect to find at least a corresponding number of bolstadr names, particularly as bolstadr is found in the north-west of the island, in Ardmeanach and in the Ross of Mull. In Lismore the absence of bolstadr and indeed any other Norse habitative generic may be explained by the fact that secondary and peripheral expansion of primary units does not appear to have occurred at a period when the Norse language was still spoken in the island.

The range of generics both habitative and topographical found in the Mull group of islands is not so wide as that found elsewhere in the Inner Hebrides. There are singularly few examples of stadir and setr/søetre and the derivations of (single examples) of names possibly compounded with the generics hus, gardr and byr/bu are not certain. A comparison with the range of names found in the Northern Isles particularly in Orkney shows that names describing a wide range of habitation types are missing from the Inner Hebrides. There are no examples of the generics skali, kvi, land and bustadir and none of such fixed compound names as huseby. The lack of such names in the Inner Hebrides possibly reflects a society where wide differentiation in the status of settlement sites was not known. The Orkney bu names are believed to be associated with the residences of Earls and/or local rulers. There is only one, possible, example of a bu name in the Inner Hebrides on Tiree, where the documentary sources record the name Bee. As has been discussed,<sup>12</sup> it is possible that the demarcation of the island into ounculands followed swiftly upon the establishment of the primary units and that the divisions may indicate the presence of a local ruler. Huseby names in Orkney point to the presence of administrative farms of a military character important in the administrative organisation of the Orkney islands for the collection of tax and under the control of the Earl of Orkney.<sup>13</sup> The administrative system in the Inner Hebrides although showing some similarity with that found in the

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<sup>12</sup>See p.251.

<sup>13</sup>B.E.Crawford, *Scandinavian Scotland*, 83.

Northern Isles appears to have developed along different lines from that of Orkney and Shetland and it is therefore probable that the use of the name huseby to describe a dwelling was not applicable in the west.

### 10.2.3 Relationship of Norse and native

The nature of the relationship between the Norse colonial settlers and the native Gaelic speaking population is open to several interpretations, not least because in the absence of excavated settlement sites the issue must be viewed from a linguistic stand point. None of the Gaelic names in the Hebrides can be said with any degree of certainty to date from the post Norse period. Taken at face value this statement suggests that throughout the period of Norse domination the inhabitants of the Isles were Norse speaking and that a move towards Gaelic speech and traditions, the so called 'Gaelic revival'<sup>14</sup> only followed upon the collapse of Norwegian political authority in the mid thirteenth century. In the post Norse period Gaelic speakers continued to use the Norse names for Norse settlement sites, ensuring the survival of these names up to the present day. Any new settlements developing in the post Norse period, the result of the sub division of existing units or the clearing of land for new settlement sites, would be known by Gaelic names.

This is clearly an oversimplification. On Coll and Tiree the high ratio of Norse to Gaelic settlement names, particularly those associated with the first phase of settlement, suggests that the incoming settlers faced little opposition in acquiring prime sites and that re-naming of existing settlement areas occurred. This in turn suggests a dispersal of the native population either onto the less favourable sites within the same islands or in a movement eastwards towards the (Gaelic speaking) mainland of Scotland. The large number of secondary and peripheral ranking settlement sites on Coll and Tiree bearing Norse names suggests that the Norse language continued to be spoken in these islands in the period when secondary and tertiary division of primary settlement units occurred. However, this need not point to the demise of the Gaelic language in the islands and the large number of Norse settlement names may simply be interpreted as Gaelic speakers adopting Norse names for Norse settlements. Several names on both islands argue for some degree of contact between Norse and native. These names suggest that Gaelic continued to be spoken in the Norse period and that many individuals must have been to some extent bilingual.

On Coll the settlement name Treallavík (ON *præll vík*, bay of the unfree) suggests that a proportion of the islands inhabitants were in a subordinate position to the ruling class. That this probably referred to the native population is

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<sup>14</sup>A.P.Smythe, Warlords, 157.

suggested by entries in Landnámabók where Icelandic settlers originating from the Western Isles took with them Celtic slaves. Several sites on Coll and Tiree incorporate the Gaelic element gall, foreigner, as in the topographical names Mullach nan Gall, Dun nan Gall and Camus nan Gall, all of which commemorate, in Gaelic, the presence of the Norse settlers and suggest that the names were coined in the Norse period. Further evidence for the co-existence of both races and a degree of bilingualism is seen in the Norse adoption of the Gaelic term airidh, shieling, to give ON œrgi, as in the names Fiskary and Grimsary on Coll.

One of the pitfalls of this survey is the fact that only names relating to settlement sites have been considered. If topographical names are included the ratio of Gaelic to Norse names rises dramatically. On Coll and Tiree only a handful of topographical names can be seen to be Norse in origin; the figure is lower for Mull and Lismore. On Lewis where a large percentage of the settlement names are clearly Norse or of Norse origin the figure falls considerably where the names of topographical features are considered, the majority of these being Gaelic. This led Oftedal to conclude that 'the moors and hills were chiefly the domain of a subjugated Celtic speaking class whose tasks were, among others to attend to the shielings, the sheep and the peat bogs, activities in which it was necessary to know the names of topographical features.'<sup>15</sup> Many of these topographical names may at a later date have become settlement names.

It has been suggested that 'in the Southern Hebrides Gaelic place-names *either* survived in greater number [than in the Northern Hebrides] *or* ousted Norse place names in a post Norse period of revival.'<sup>16</sup> For Coll, Tiree, Mull and Lismore it would appear that the two statements are not mutually exclusive for some Gaelic place names not only survived the period of Norse linguistic domination but continued to be coined in the Norse period. Complete re-naming of Norse settlement sites with Gaelic names did occur in the post Norse period as is seen in the case of the settlements of Skipnes and Kirkjunes on Tiree now known by the Gaelic names Caolas and Ceann a'Mhara, and with the addition of Gaelic prefixes to Norse settlement names as in the case of the settlement name Baliehough on Coll and Balwag on Tiree, although such examples are the exception rather than the rule.

On Mull and Lismore where the ratio of Norse to Gaelic names is considerably lower than on Coll and Tiree and decreases with proximity to the Scottish mainland it is suggested that the Gaelic language retained a stronger position. Norse settlement names in the east of Mull and on Lismore relate almost exclusively to primary settlements, the Gaelic names to secondary and peripheral ranking settlements. This suggests that by the time that the primary units came to be subdivided Norse was

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<sup>15</sup>M.Oftedal, 'Names of Lakes on the Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides', 187.

<sup>16</sup>B.E.Crawford, Scandinavian Scotland, 102.

no longer spoken in the islands. It has been suggested that 'Gaelic seems to have re-emerged in the southern Hebrides by the eleventh century if not earlier'.<sup>17</sup> In the case of the east of Mull and Lismore it is doubtful if the Gaelic language ever gave way to Norse. In the west of Mull the higher number of Norse settlement names and the fact that many relate to secondary settlement phases suggests that Norse influence was not only stronger in the west of the island than in the east but also existed over a longer period of time. This undoubtedly had much to do with the necessity of controlling the sea routes to the west of Mull.

#### 10.2.4 Future Research

Earlier discussions of the pattern and process of Norse settlement expansion in the Scottish islands which have included Mull, Coll, Tiree and Lismore in a general overview<sup>18</sup> have failed to pinpoint the immense differences in the density, form and character of Norse settlement in the various islands. It is only through studying the site, situation and historical background of individual settlements that it becomes possible to draw up a picture of the development of settlement. By the listing of all settlements in any one area and the drawing up of relative chronologies it has been possible to show that the earliest phase of Norse settlement is characterised not by the coining of the habitative generic stadir but by the use of topographical names. The value of the study of topographical elements in determining the chronological development of Norse settlement was largely ignored by earlier researchers,<sup>19</sup> and yet this has proved to have been invaluable in locating the primary settlement units.

The study of one geographical area has also highlighted the need for similar regional investigations in other areas of the Isles, particularly in those areas which seemingly show a great density of Gaelic names. This would not only give a greater sample of settlement types and settlement names from which to draw conclusions but would also allow for comparisons to be made between the different islands. The Scottish mainland, particularly the Argyllshire mainland, has also been neglected in studies of Norse settlement and it would be beneficial to include the coastal stretches in future investigations.

While the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Norse settlement patterns in the isles is apparent the 'inbalance' amongst the various

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<sup>17</sup>A.P.Smythe, Warlords,157.

<sup>18</sup>Sir Lindsay Scott, 'The Norse in the Hebrides'.  
A Goodrich-Freer, 'The Norsemen in the Hebrides', in Saga Book of the Viking Club 2(1897-1900),52-74.

<sup>19</sup>W.H.F.Nicolaison, Scottish Place Names.

sources is worthy of comment. A great deal of weight has been placed on onomastic sources and very little on archaeological investigation. Future research would do well to concentrate on one island, particularly Tiree, and concentrate on the archaeological aspects of Norse settlement. This would involve constant fieldwalking particularly in those areas which have been devastated by sand blow. Such an approach is time consuming and was therefore outwith the scope of this study. There can be little advance in the understanding of Norse settlement in the Inner Hebrides until individual examples of Norse settlement sites have been located and investigated. Only then will it be possible to isolate different types of settlement which in turn might clarify the use of certain names to describe certain sites.

As mentioned above this study has relied heavily on the onomastic sources. There is a need for work to be done on the Gaelic settlement names in the Isles. This would hopefully lead to the development of relative chronologies for Gaelic names and hence to an understanding of the development of Gaelic settlement patterns in the immediate post-Norse era. This would be useful in isolating the possible Norse features of the settlement pattern in areas where many of the names are Gaelic, for example in the east of Mull where the secondary and tertiary phases of Norse settlement, if they ever existed, have been blurred by settlement expansion in the post-Norse era.

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KLNM	Kulturhistorisk Leksikon for Nordisk Middelalder.
Northern Studies	Journal of the Scottish Society for Northern Studies.
PSAS	Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.
SAF	Scottish Archaeological Forum.
SHR	Scottish Historical Review.
SHS	Scottish History Society.
SRS	Scottish Record Society.
TGSI	Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness.
NGN	Norske Gaards Navne

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SRO GD 112	Breadalbane Muniments
SRO GD 170/223	Lismore Muniments
SRO GD 174	MacLaine of Lochboy Muniments
SRO E/60/7/3	Tax Roll of the Bishopric of the Isles (1686)
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PUBLISHED MAPS

*MacAulay Institute for Soil Research  
Soil Survey of Scotland*

Island of Mull  
Land Use Capability  
Part Sheets 43/44/51/52  
1: 63 000

Western Scotland  
Land Capability for Agriculture  
Sheet 4  
1: 25 000

Western Scotland  
Soil  
Sheet 4  
1:25 000

*Ordnance Survey 1: 25 000*

Tiree  
NL 94/NM 04

Coll  
NM 05/15/25 Arinagour  
NM 26 North Coll

Lismore  
NM 84/94 Loch Linnhe (south)  
NM 83/93 Oban (north)  
NM 85/95 Mid Loch Linnhe

Mull  
NM 42/52 Loch Scridain  
NM 35 Calgary Bay  
NM 43/53 Ben More  
NM 62/72 Firth of Lorn  
NM 63/73 Duart Point  
NM 64/74 Loch Aline  
NM 45/55 Tobermory  
NM 24/34 Treshinish Isles  
NM 21/31 Torran Rocks  
NM 44/54 Salen  
NM 33 - Ulva  
NM 22/32 Iona

*Norges Geografisk Oppmåling*  
*1: 50 00*

Sheet 1219 1V  
Sykkylven

Sheet 1220 II  
Bratlvåg

Sheet 1119 IV  
Fosnavåg

Sheet 1220 IV  
Ona

Sheet 1120 II  
Vigra

Sheet 1119 I  
Ålesund

UNPUBLISHED MAPSMull**SRO RHP 3273**

Plan of Estate of Jarvisfield 1826

**SRO RHP 12783**

Plan of the farm of Ensay and hill of Calgary 1837

**SRO RHP 979**

Plan of Morrenish Estate 1866

**SRO RHP 3354**

Plan of Estate of Tenga late 19th century

**SRO RHP 23452**

Plan of the lands of Scallastle 1848

**SRO RHP 3519**

Plan of the lands of Lochbuie 1849

Tiree**SRO RHP 8826/1**

Plan of the Island of Tiree 1769

**SRO RHP 6795**

Photostat copy of a sketch plan of Tiree ca 1680

Coll**SRO RHP 3368**

Photostat plan of the island of Coll 1794

Lismore**SRO RHP 12324**

Plan of the lands of Balygrundle. Eighteenth century

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Plan of the farms of Dalnarrow, Fiart and Achadh nan Aird 1815

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Plan of the Estate of Craiganich. Nineteenth century

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Plan of the lands of Killean

**SRO RHP 8180**

Plan of the lands of Killean

*Jordskifteverkets Kartarkiv  
Fylke nr.13  
Borgunds herred  
Sunnmøre fogderi*

Ellingsøya

Archive Number

811	Indmarken til gaarden Hoff	1882
812	Udmarken til gaarden Hoff	1882
813	Stoke - Stokkereit	1882
814	Stokke	1882
637	Indmaerken til Grytebust	1874
587	Indmarken til Kvalstein	1873
588	Udmarken til Kvalstein	1873
1061	Myklebust	1892
1603	Vollstad udmark	1915
793	Vik	1883