St Ethernan: A Philological and Historical Case-Study of a Pictish Saint

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Kelly A. Kilpatrick

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I. Introduction: The Pictish Saints

The persistant endurance of local saints' cults is an attribute of the ecclesiastical culture of the medieval Celtic societies.[1] Many of these early saints are historically obscure, and this is equally true of the Pictish regions where evidence of early Christian figures is scanty and poorly documented, although much of the material of the later medieval saints' cults in Scotland is derived from the eighth through tenth centuries.[2] We find that the majority of the saints' cults in Scotland are to Irish-born ecclesiastics associated with the Columban Church. Most of these saints flourished between years 563 (the year in which St Colum Cille founded the monastery of Iona), and c. 710 when the Pictish king Nechton mac Derili (c. 709-724) converted to the Roman tradition by means of Northumbrian influences.[3]

One striking feature of the cults of Celtic saints in Scotland is that very few are to Pictish ecclesiastics, and it is surprising, moreover, that the predominant kingdom of the Picts in Northern Britain would have so few distinguished early ecclesiastics of its own. The few known saints of Pictish origin are St Nechtan Nér (also known as St Nathalan), St Drostan and Fergus the Pict, with other possible saints of Pictish birth such as St Talorgan, and I would also argue St Ethernan. But one must ask, why do we have so few commemorations to Pictish saints in comparison with their more numerous Irish contemporaries? A more important question is why did the cults of these few Pictish saints survive at all after the eclipse of the Pictish kingdom in the mid-ninth century? A toponymic approach to this Pictish problem indicates that many of these Pictish saints are local saints in the former areas that were once Pictish. Most of them have consecrated place-name sites throughout the former Pictish regions, indicating either an early

[1] R.Sharpe, *Medieval Irish Saints Lives: And Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae* (Oxford, 1991), 5.
[2] P. Dransart, 'Saints, Stones and Shrines: the Cults of Sts. Moluag and Geradine in Pictland' in J. Cartwright (ed.), *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults* (Cardiff, 2003), 232.
[3] Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.21 (ed. and tr. B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford Medieval Texts [Oxford, 1969], 532-552.

medieval cult site or a rejuvination of the saint's cult in the later Middle Ages.[4] However, it is equally likely that dedications to obscure early figures are probably derived from the early Christian period.[5]

A known Pictish saint is St Fergus, who was a bishop either in Ireland or in Dálriada, who is known to be a Pict because he attended a council in Rome in 721 and signed the canon as 'Fergus Episcopatus Scotiae Pictus'.[6] Fergus the Pict is possibly to be identified with the 'Forcus' on the famous St Vigeans inscription, dated to the eighth century.[7] St Fergus is remembered at Wick in Caithness, Longley in Buchan, Strageath in Strathearn, and in Scone.[8] His feast day was on 15 or 18 November.

Another early saint of Pictish origin is St Nechtan Nér (known as St Nathalan in eastern Scotland), whose death is recorded in the Annals in 679.[9] The second element of his name, Nér, has been associated with Deer in Buchan.[10] He is remembered in Kilnaughton in Islay, Tullich and Bethelnie in Aberdeenshire, and Cowie in Kincardinshire; there is also a Cornwall and Devon saint called St Nechtan, and there is a saint in Brittany by the same name, Neizan (see below, 31-32).[11] His brief *Vita* in the *Aberdeen Breviary* associates him with Tullich, and list him as a bishop and confessor.[12] His relics were also allegedly preserved at Tullich until the Reformation, and local tradition holds that he was burried in the chapelyard of Tullich.[13]

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[4] For examples of early medieval ecclesiastical sites indicated by archaeological surveys, see A.D.S. MacDonald & L. Laing, 'Early Ecclesiastical Sites in Scotland: A Field Survey, Pts. 1, 2', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 100 (1967-1968), 123-134, vol. 102 (1969-1970), 129-144.

[5] L. Laing, *The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland c. 400-1200 AD* (London, 1975), 375.

[6] A.W. Haddan & W. Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vol. II part. I (Oxford, 1964), 7.

[7] J.M.P. Calise, *Pictish Sourcebook: Documents of Medieval Legend and Dark Age History* (London, 2002), 224.

[8] William J. Watson, *The Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1926). 322-323.

[9] [*Annals of Ulster* 679] 'Dormitatio Nectain Neir'; [*Annals of Tigernach* 678] 'Dormitacio Nechtain'. (Henceforth the Irish Annals will be abbreviated as *Annals of Ulster* AU, *Annals of Tigernach* AT, *Chronicum Scottorum* CS and *Annals of Innisfallen* AI).

[10] It has been suggested by T.F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology* (Dublin, 1946), 373-4, ff.1: '...but there cannot, I think, be any doubt that *Nér* is the old form of the name of Deer in the north of Aberdeenshire. In the Book of Deer the name has become *Dér* and *Déar*, and by folk-etymology is equated with *dé(a)r* 'tear'. As *i Nér* and *i nDér* sounded alike, the change of initial is easily accounted for, and is parallelled in other place-names...'. See also M.O. Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* (Einburgh, 1973), 8, ff.34: who states that if O'Rahilly's toponymic suggestion is correct, then 'this is the only monastery in the Pictish region to be mentioned in the annals before 740.'

[11] J.M.P. Calise, *Pictish Sourcebook*, 244. See also: Watson, *Celtic Place-Names*, 330-331.

[12] *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS De.1/1/53-54, Pars Estivalis, fol. xxvi).

[13] D. Simpson, 'Tullich and Saint Nathalan', *The Deeside Field* (1922), 16-17.

There is another obscure Pictish saint, St Talorgan, of whom nothing is known, except that his name occurs in various place-names in the north of Scotland. He is commemorated at Portree in Skye, and there is a parish bearing this name in Inverness-shire, Killtarlity, where he was remembered as St Thalargus.[14] There is also the place-name of Logyn-talargy in Buchan, and he is also the patron saint of Fordyce in northern Aberdeenshire.[15] Talorgan was a very common Pictish name, and it is likely that the figure commemorated at these sites was a Pict, though unfortunately nothing else is known of him.

Another recognized Pictish saint with numerous commemorations, in part due to his connections with St Colum Cille, is St Drostan.[16] He is associated with Aberdour and Deer in Buchan. According to *The Book of Deer*, St Drostan and St Colum Cille were the founders.[17] The name of this saint is also preserved at ecclesiastical sites in Westfield and Brabster in Caithness, Rothiemay in Banffshire, Dunnachton in Badenoch, Glen Urqhuart, North Uist, Glenesk and Lochlee in Forfarshire, and Markinch in Fife.[18] His *Vita* in the *Aberdeen Breviary* list him as an abbot, and states that he was the founder of Glenesk and Aberdour, yet it ironically does not mention Deer in association with him.[19]

This brings us to the early figure of St Ethernan. Like the other aforementioned Pictish saints, Ethernan as a historical figure appears in the same light of obscurity. He is probably the Itarnan mentioned in AU, AT, and CS as dying among the Picts in 669.

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[14] J. Grant & W. Leslie, *A Survey of the Province of Moray; Historical, Geographical, and Political* (Aberdeen, 1798), 232.

[15] Watons, *Celtic Place-Names*, 298. See also: 'St Talorgan's Old Kirk', *Aberdeenshire Historic Kirkyards Project* (visited 13/08/98).

[16] For early Scottish saints associated St Colum Cille see: S. Taylor, 'Seventh-century Iona abbots in Scottish Place-Names', in D. Broun & T. O. Clancy (eds.), *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots* (Edinburgh, 1999), 38.

[17] K. Jackson, *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (Cambridge, 1972), 4-7: 'The foundation legend makes him son of a certain Coscrach (a Gaelic name), unknown, and disciple of St Columba. The two come to Aberdour, on the north coast of Buchan about 12 miles north-north-west of Old Deer, where the Pictish mormaer grants them land for a monastery, and afterwards to Deer, with the same result'.

[18] Watson, *Celtic Place-Names*, 317-318: Watson suggested that St Drostan was either of Brittish or Dálriadaic origin based on the *Aberdeen Breviary* which states that he was from the royalty of the Scoti. *John of Fordun's Chronicle of the Scottish Nation*, (ed. W.F. Skene, vol. 1 [Edinburgh 1872; repr. Dyfed, 1993], 108-109): states that he was the son of a king of Demetia and Fynewennis, a granddaughter of Aedan mac Gábrain. S. Taylor, 'Seventh-century Iona abbots in Scottish Place-Names', 38: suggests that St Drostan was a Pict.

[19] *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS De.1/1/53-54, Pars Estivalis, fols. xix-xx). See also: K. Jackson, *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (Cambridge, 1972), 5: 'It is curious that the Breviary has nothing to say about Deer'.

However, of particular interest to the study of Ethernan are the early Pictish inscriptions bearing this name. Of the extant ogham corpus from Scotland (thirty-seven in total, eight oghams on Pictish symbol stones) three ogham inscriptions bear this name on the Newton, Brodie and Scoonie stones, and this name is also seen on the Fordoun Insular inscription. St Ethernan is likewise remebered in many place-names and medieval church dedications in Scotland, and all are in areas descending from the earlier Pictish regions, such as Rathen in Buchan, Kilrenny, Aithernie, Scoonie, and the Isle of May in Fife, as well as Madderty in Perthshire. The Ethernan related place-names and dedications provide a plausible comparison between the other aforementioned Pictish saints, and invite attention to the possibility that Ethernan had a prominent role in the ecclesiastical history of the Picts. The case of comparison, however, seems likely because of legendary references to Ethernan's involvement with either St Colum Cille or the Columban Church. Indeed, most Ethernan sources point to an association with Iona, and the issue of Ionan relevance pertaining to St Ethernan shall be duly discussed throughout this discourse.

Viewed in this light, it would appear that Ethernan had an enduring cult that persisted from the Pictish period into the later Middle Ages. Yet Ethernan as a historical figure is as enigmatic as many of the other Pictish saints, and falls subject to the historical dilemma of the problem of the Picts. I am inclined, moreover, to believe that there is no problem of the Picts, but it is rather the Pictish puzzle that creates the dilemma. The history of St Ethernan likewise fits into this Pictish mould, in which the lacuna enforces the utilization of other methods of research necessary in order to facilitate probable conclusions. If we consider the study of the Picts in this manner it is comparable to the field of finite mathematics, in which we have a small sample of evidence, and must correctly assert this into all the probable equations to come up with the most accurate answer. In regards to Pictish equations, thorough document analysis, toponymics, archaeology and philological analysis will prove to be vital aspects, especially when dealing with early ecclesiastical figures. Therefore, this thesis will leave no stone unturned, and as thoroughly as possible present all the known evidence pertaining to St Ethernan, to see precisely how much information can be gleaned about this enigmatic saint of the Picts from the paucity of sources available.

II. Annal Evidence of *Ethernan*

The earliest orthographic evidence of Ethernan is found in the Irish Annals. This name is recorded once in AU [c. 668] '*Itarnan* ⁊ *Corindu apud pictores defuncti sunt*, AT [c. 669] '*Itharnan et Corindu apud Pictores defuincti sunt*', and CS [c. 665] '*Iturnan et Corinda apud Pictones defuncti sunt*'. This passage literally translates, '*Itarnan* and *Corindu* died amongst the Picts'. There is no other mention of a name even similar to the *Itarnan* mentioned in the Annals that I have come across, and this is likewise true for the name *Corindu*. Though there is little manuscript evidence to work with, in the instance of these three practically identical passages a closer analysis of the terminology will prove important.

A term that is of particular interest from the above entry is the use of *defuncti sunt*, the perfect passive participle, third person plural of *defungor*. The use of *defuncti sunt* in the Annals is a very infrequent term to denote 'died'.[20] More commonly used terminology for an *obit* are expressions such as *mortuus est, obiit, dormitatio* or often *quies* for those of ecclesiastical rank.[21] This use of the perfect participle of *defungor* is most commonly seen in AU, which has preserved this term in ten instances, whereas AT only has two, and CS only in this single instance, and there is no use of this term at all in AI.[22] This is also the only reference in the early medieval portion of the Irish Annals where at least three (i.e. AU, AT, and CS) all concur on the use of *defuncti sunt* as opposed to another term used for 'died'.

We also find from analyzing references in the Annals to Scottish events, relating to Iona in particular, that there is a marked consistency of the records in AU, AT, and CS; whereas there are only two Ionan-related records in which AU, AT, AI, and CS all agree on the terminology (i.e.. 595, 598 and 605-though AU uses *obitus* instead of *quieuit*). There is a marked consistency in agreement between AU, AT, and CS in the entries: 519, 563, 595, 598, 605, 624, 635, 651. Then there is a ten year interval, where only two

[20] I owe a very special thanks to Ms. Nora Harris for indicating this to me in AT.
[21] For this comparison, since the reference is to an event in Pictland (or Scotland), I have only chosen to analyze the kalends in the Annals until 842, the traditional date of the decline of the Picts.
[22] In AT, the only other example of this term is found in the second fragment. The entry pertaining to *Itarnan* and *Corindu* is not mentioned in AI.

Ionan references are mentioned (657, 660), and then a further twenty-two years with eight Ionan references where the terminology is almost identical between AU, AT and CS; these entries are: 668/669, 669, 673, 673, 676, 679, 687 and 691. Only two of these references are mentioned in AI (668/669, 679), and then Ionan references in AI fall off abruptly after the *obit* of Adomnán in 704. Unfortunately further comparison cannot be analyzed to see if this is a later trend as well with AU, AT, and CS, for CS is fragmented from the years 718-804. However, for the rest of the Ionan records in AU and AT, there is a marked similarity through the last reference to 729. What this indicates is that the *obit* of *Itarnan* and *Corindu*, as well as these other references to ecclesiastical events in Scotland, were derived from the same source, and most inferences point to Iona as the originator.

The terminology of this passage alone indicates that the source was written outside of Pictland. The mention of their death amongst the Picts is also a significant sign that this *obit* in the Annals perhaps came from an Ionan source, though now missing and only suriving in various portions of the Irish Annals, which is commonly referred to as an *Iona Chronicle*.[23] The obit of *Itarnan* and *Corindu* is one of these many entries that would appear to be derived from an *Iona Chronicle*.[24] Iona was very involved in the Pictish church, and even the English church for a while; indeed Iona had associates of Irish, British, English and Pictish monks. The annalist at Iona was also apprently interested in Pictish, British and English events as well as Irish affairs.[25]

One thing that is clear regarding the *obit* of *Itarnan* and *Corindu* is the absence of patronymics after the names of these individuals. This fact leads one to presume that they were churchmen.[26] This is often seen in the early Irish ecclesiastical rules, derived

[23] Entries in AU and AT pertaining to Scotland begin around 573 with the recording of the death of Conaill mac Comgaill and Colum Cille's reception of Iona, and abruptly end after 740. See J. Bannerman, *Studies in the History of Dalriada* (Edinburgh, 1974), 25: "All the evidence so far presented suggests that the *Iona Chronicle*, as we have it now, came to an end about 740."

[24] J. Bannerman, 'Scottish Entries in the Early Irish Annals', *Scottish Gaelic Studies* (1968), 153: here Bannerman was referring to the *obit* of Cummine, abbot of Iona in 669. I have also chosen to include the second reference to *Itarnan* and *Corindu* as an Ionan record of Pictish ecclesiastics or missionaries to the Picts. See also D. Ó Cróinín, 'Early Irish Annals from Easter Tables: A Case Restated', *Peritia* II (1983), 86: discusses the possibility of Iona being the originator of the methodological compilation of the Annals.

[25] T. M. Charles-Edwards, *The Chronicle of Ireland*, vol. I (Liverpool, 2006), 8.

[26] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland: An Edited Corpus* (Unpublished Harvard Dissertation, 1996), 490: 'No further information is given, though it seems plausible from the context that they are churchmen.' The later medieval ecclesiastical consecrations would appear to confirm this.

from Matthew [23: 9] 'And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven'.[27] If they were holders of ecclesiastical office, it would also not necessarily be expected that a descriptive term as such would be included in the Annals, for it would have been common knowledge at the time. The term *epscop* or *epscuip* 'bishop' is frequently used in the Annals to denote the death of a bishop, but we also find in AU and AT the death of St Colum Cille, with no mention of *ab* or *abbaith* 'abbot' used, though we know that he was the first abbot and founder of Iona from other sources.[28] Likewise, their mention in an *Iona Chronicle* would likely indicate that they were churchmen associated with the monastery.

There are also three different dates for this *obit* in AU, AT, and CS. AU was once thought to have been the most authoritative of the early Irish Annals, though Daniel McCarthy's computus has proven that AT and CS are more accurate than once thought.[29] However, from a contemporary perspective, ferial dating would be unlikely to be seriously mistaken, since it depended which day of the week the first of January was on. A thorough calibration of the Irish Annals places the date of this entry in the year 669. Given this date as the year *Itarnan* and *Corindu* died, it is possible to interpret events that were occurring in Pictland and Iona relative to this time.

What sources have survived illuminating events in seventh century Pictland seem to indicate that it was a time of internal unrest and oppression from neighbouring kingdoms. This period in Pictish history is often viewed as a time of Northumbrian domination, as Isabel Henderson described, "It was from Northumbria, however, that the Picts received a severe blow in the seventh century, losing outright a considerable portion of the southern part of the kingdom for nearly thirty years."[30] We know from Bede that this territorial overlordship was under the rule of the Northumbrian kings Oswald (c. 634-

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[27] Also see *The Rule of Comghall*, (ed. and tr. U. Ó Maidín, *The Celtic Monk: Rules and Writings of Early Irish Monks* [Massachusetts, 1996], 35): 'If you have a son or a family, and have decided to leave them, you are then to regard yourself as dead; you must not seek out your relations, or even think about them.'

[28] [AU 594]: 'Quies Coluim Cille .u. Id Iuini anno etatis sue'; [AT 595] 'Quies Coluim cille in nocte dominica pentecostes, quintídh Iuin anno perigrinac[i]onis sue .xxxu. etates uero. Lxx.uii.'. See also: R.Sharpe (tr.), *Life of St Columba*, (London, 1995), I: the exact date of St Colum Cille's death was on 9 June 597.

[29] D. McCarthy, 'The Chronology and Sources of the Early Irish Annals', *Early Medieval Europe*, vol. 10, issue 3 (November 2001), 324.

[30] I. Henderson, *The Picts*, (London, 1967), 51.

642),and his brother Oswiu (642-670).[31] Oswiu's son, Ecgfrith (670-685) also inherited the same territories as his father, until they were recovered by the Picts (and also the Gaels of Dálriada and the Strathclyde Britons) after Ecgfrith's defeat at the hands of the Picts under Brude mac Bili (673-693) at the Battle of Dunnichen on 20 May 685.[32] An earlier Pictish king, Talorgen mac Eanfrith (657-660), is reputedly the son of Eanfrith (king of Bernicia from 633/634), the older brother of kings Oswald and Oswiu. It has been postulated that Talorgen's reign is considered unique, and should not necessarily reflect the notion of Pictish matrilineal succession and exogamy. Alfred P. Smyth even suggested that 'Talorgen was chosen as a puppet king by his uncle Oswiu'.[33] A further indication of internal unrest in Pictland also occured in the year 672, when the Pictish kin (663-672/3) was expelled from the kingdom for an unknown reason, though he possibly abdicated or was expelled for supporting Northumbrian legitimacy in Pictland.[34]

Regarding ecclesiastical history, the year 669 was five years after the influential Synod of Whitby, held under the auspices of King Oswiu in 664 to settle the debate on the calculation of Easter. The synod was held between the Celtic and Roman factions, the latter of which superceded at the synod and the Roman method of calucation was subsequently implemented in Northumbria, and not enforced in Pictland until around 710, and at Iona in 716. It is uncertain whether or not the Synod of Whitby directly affected the Picts. It was not until the reign of Nechtan mac Derili (c. 710) that the Picts were converted to the Roman observance, and it is likely that Nechtan chose this action to prevent further division between the Roman and Columban traditions within his kingdom.[35] As was previously mentioned, in 716 Iona converted to the Roman tonsure, and a year later in 717 there is an entry which states that Nechtan expelled the family of Iona across the Druim Alban.[36] Thus we can presume that during the seventh century as

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[31] Bede, *HE*), V.1, 150-151: 'sextus Osuald, et ipse Nordanhym; brorum rex Christianissimus, hisdem finibus regnum tenuit—septimus Osuiu frater eius, aequalibus pene terminis regnum nonnullo tempore chercens, Pictorum / quoque atque Scottorum gentes, que septentrionales Brittaniae fines tenent, maxima ex parte perdomuit ac tributaras fecit.'

[32] *HE* iv. 26: "Nam et Picti terram possessionis suae quam tenuerunt Angli, et Scotti qui erant in Brittania, Brettonum quoque parts nonnulla libertatem receperunt; quam et hactenus habent per annos circiter XLVI.

[33] A.P. Smyth, *Warlords and Holy Men: Scotland AD 800-1000* (Edinburgh, 1984), 61.

[34] [AU 672] 'Expulsio Drosto de regno ד combustio Bennchair Brittonum'; [AT 672] 'Expulsió Drostó de reghno et combustio Bennchair Britonum'.

[35] D.P. Kirby, 'Bede and the Pictish Church', *Innes Review*, vol. 24 (Spring 1973), 19.

[36] [AU 717] and [AT 717]: 'Expulsio familie Ie, trans Dorsum Brittanie, a Nectano rege'.

Henderson suggested, "Iona may have kept a fairly firm hold on the Columban Church in Pictland, particularly after the defection of Northumbria, and have continued to supply at least its leaders throughout its history."[37] Perhaps the Pictish church should be viewed as a controversial entity in the Pictish kingdom, in which both parties (Roman and Columban) were vying for dominance. In 669 Wilfrid was consecrated as the bishop of York, and Bede described his jurisdiction as comprising all of Northumbria and even the Picts, 'as far as Oswiu's power extended'.[38] Later, in 684 Bishop Trumwine was placed over the Picts by Ecgfrith with his see at Abercorn, but the members of Abercorn promptly fled Pictland in 685 after the Pictish victory at Dunnichen. It is doubtful, given Bede's descriptions, that Wilfrid would have been tolerant of the Easter calculation or the Columban traditions in Pictland.[39] It appears, however, from references of Adomnán and Bede that the Picts were 'thoroughly conformist' of the Columban institution.[40] As Bede explicitly stated, Wilfrid's jurisdiction only extended as far as there was Northumbrian control in Pictland, and this is most likely over the southern Picts. Surely within the first few years after the Synod of Whitby if there was a Columban abbot or bishop in these regions of southern Pictland, then Oswiu (only recently converted to the Roman tradition) would not have ousted him and replaced him with a Roman bishop. If this were the case, however, then all sources are silent on the matter. It is tantalizing, moreover, to suggest that the mention of Wilfrid's jurisdiction over the Picts might be due in part to a vacancy in Pictland, that possibly being *Itarnan* who died in the same year. This, however, is merely speculation and not supported by any surviving evidence, though most later sources seem to indicate that Ethernan (*Itarnan*) was a figure of high ecclesiastical rank, who is also associated with the southern Pictish regions.

The historical background of the Pictish kingdom in the late seventh century during the time when *Itarnan* and *Corindu* were amongst the Picts was clearly a pivotal period in Pictish history. *Itarnan* died in Pictland during the reign of the Drust mac

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[37] I. Henderson, *The Picts* (Edinburgh, 1967), 79.

[38] *HE* iv.3 :'Uilfrido administrante episcopatum Eboracensis ecclesiae necnon et omnium Nordanhymbrorum sed et Pictorum, quousque rex Osuiu imperium protendere poterat.'

[39] *HE* iii.28: 'Veniens quoque Brittaniam Uilfrid iam episcopus factus et ipse perplura catholica obseruationis moderamina ecclesiis Anglorum sua doctrina contulit. Vnde factum est ut, crescente per dies institutione catholica, Scottis omnes, qui inter Anglos morabantur, aut his manus darent aut suam redirent ad patriam.'

[40] I. Henderson, *The Picts* (Edinburgh, 1967), 80.

Donual, during the Northumbrian domination over southern Pictland, and shortly after the Synod of Whitby, and likewise, three years before the death of Oswiu. *Itarnan* and *Corindu* apparently played an important ecclesiastical role in Pictland, hence their mention in the Annals, which was likely derived from an *Iona Chronicle*, provided that the entries are contemporary, which indeed they may be. However, *Itarnan's* history amongst the Picts does not end with the single *obit* mentioned in the Annals, for this name has been found extant on no less than four inscriptions from the Pictish regions, which we shall now consider in detail.

III. Epigraphic Evidence of *Ethernan*

Of the corpus of early medieval inscriptions found in Scotland, it is highly significant that four of these inscriptions, in ogham and Insular characters, all bear consistent orthographic forms of the name *Ethernan*, which is the same name as the *Itarnan* mentioned in the Annals. It is relatively safe to date the Scottish oghams as being extant and utilized from the sixth through tenth centuries respectively.[41] Of the corpus of Scottish ogham inscriptions eight are present on Pictish symbol stones, three of which are this name, thus making it a significant majority of the names found on the Pictish oghams.

Beginning with the Newton Pillar Stone, it is regarded to be one of the few examples found in Scotland that is a classical ogham similar to those found in Ireland, and dates from the seventh century or earlier.[42] There are two inscriptions found on the pillar-stone, the ogham, and one horizontal inscription of possible debased-Latin characters, which has yet to be translated. However, as Katherine Forsyth stated, "One thing which is clear is that the horizontal inscription is not a transliteration of the

[41] A. Ritchie, *Carved Stones* (Historic Scotland, 2003), leaflet. See also: A. Ritchie, 'The Picto-Scottish Interface in Material Culture', in A. Small (ed.), *The Picts: A New Look at old Problems* (Dundee, 1987), 66: 'They belong to a sphere of Irish influence that was probably disseminated by the Church or rather by Celtic missionaries, and their associated archaeological date in Pictland suggests that they were used in much the same variety of ways as in Ireland itself and as in other areas of export such as Wales.'

[42] Unfortunately I was unable to acquire a photograph of this stone and the nearby Newton Symbol Stone during my research trip. These stones are found at NJ 6623 2972. For the dating of the Pictish oghams, see: A. Ritchie, 'The Picto-Scottish Interface in Material Culture', 64.

ogham."[43] A Class I Pictish symbol stone, known as the Newton Symbol Stone, is found closely associated with the Newton Pillar Stone, and it bears on one face a notched double-disc above a serpent and z-rod.[44] Both the pillar stone and the symbol stone are incised on blue-gneiss, and they are both respectively the same height.[45] John Stuart described that the stones were found in the same thicket, and that the one with the serpent was subsequently moved to the Newton House.[46] The symbol stone was probably moved around 1794 to the Newton House, and Forsyth has suggested that there 'is ample evidence' that the ogham pillar 'was still *in situ* in the 1830s'.[47]

Stuart also relates that when the ground around the original location of the stones was being 'trenched' that 'several graves were discovered in a sandy ridge near to the stone, in which there was only a little black mould'.[48] Stuart also stated that it was described to him that the apparent graves were made in hard gravel, and without flagstones.[49] Unfortunately, nothing now remains and there are no graves to be seen, although from Stuart's description it does not sound like Bronze Age cists, and they were more likely to be Late Iron Age or early Christian graves.[50] Pictish graves are typically of the cist-type, where the grave is lined and covered with stone slabs, and they were often covered by a 'round or square mound of earth or stones'.[51] Long cists Pictish cemeteries were also typically unenclosed and in rural areas not associated with buildings or a church.[52] The Pictish evidence within the immediate vicinity of these stones is the name Pitmachie, which is a later borrowing of the Pictish *pet-* with a personal name *Malechi* see in the *Book of Deer* as the suffix (1362 *Petmalchy*).[53] The Don River Valley in Aberdeenshire is also a region abundant with Pictish symbol stones and Pictish sites.

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[43] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 439.
[44] Both the Newton Pillar Stone and the Newton Symbol Stone are now located at the National Grid Reference NJ 6623 2972.
[45] E. Sutherland, *A Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones* (Edinburgh, 1997), 95.
[46] J. Stuart, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, I (Aberdeen, 1856), 1.
[47] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 421.
[48] J. Stuart, *Sculptured Stones of Scotland*, I (Aberdeen, 1856), 1.
[49] Ibid. 1.
[50] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland,* 422.
[51] A. Ritchie, *Early Historic Scotland* (Historic Scotland, 2003), leaflet.
[52] E. Proudfoot, 'Archaeology and Early Christianity in Scotland', in E.H. Nicoll (ed.), *A Pictish Panorama* (Angus, 1995), 27.
[53] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 423. See also: K. Jackson, *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (Cambridge, 1972), and *The Book of Deer* (ed. J. Stuart, for the Spalding Club [Edinburgh,

The ogham has been, after two centuries of variant readings, transliterated to read IDDARRNNNVORENNIxO(t/c/)(c/e) (i/r)OSR(r/n).[54] The first name in this sequence is IDDARRNNN (the personal name *Idarnnn*). This name is etymologically the same as in the manuscript *obit* recording the death of *Itarnan* in 669, and also appears albeit in the same phonological form. The Newton Stone is one of the earliest ogham inscriptions from Pictland, and if it does actually indicate the same *Itarnan* of the Annal *obits,* then considering the trend that most monuments of this type were set up to commemorate an individual, then the Newton Stone would have a *terminus post* 669. The second name, VORENN according to Forsyth resembles the name *Forann*, an Irish 'male personal name'.[55] The transliteration of the ogham 'V' (equivalent of an earlier 'w') developed phonetically into an /f/ in Old-Irish, and is seen in manuscripts as such; however, in Welsh /w/ evolved to /gw/ by the eighth century.[56] In the *Pictish Chronicle,* the spelling of ogham /v/ would be initial /uu/ within a Pictish context. In the Irish genealogies, the name Foran is seen in the genealogy of the Ciarraige, and a similar name, Forannnán was particularly popular amongst the Airgialla.[57] However, since this inscription is in Pictland proper, this name may be similar to the Welsh *Guoren*. The VOR- of VORENN is the prefix meaning 'great' or 'high', seen in the early Welsh genealogies as *gor-*, in Irish as *for-*, both stemming from an earlier Celtic *ver-*.[58] In any case, the first two names are clear, and they do not follow the typical 'X MAQQ Y' formula, so presumably VORENN is not the patronymic of IDDARRNNN. The next character following VORENN is 'I', which Forsyth assumed was not a genitive ending.[59]

The remainder of the inscription has caused much difficulty for transliteration. The *x-forfid* of the next character after the second word has been variously interpretated, although Forsyth believes it to be '/k/, /χ/, or /E/', and it may possibly stand for P from

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1869] 94: 'malechí acuscómgell acusgillecrist mac fingúni…[Malechi and Comgell and Gille-Christ son of Fingune].'

[54] Ibid. 427-431. For the remainder of these ogham inscriptions heavy reliance will be placed on K. Forsyth's transliterations, which I view as the most valid transliterations for these stones.

[55] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland,* 436.

[56] Ibid. xl.

[57] Rawlinson B. 502 in M.A. O'Brien, *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1962) *i,* 139-153, and 299 (159 b 49).

[58] H.M. Chadwick, *Early Scotland: The Picts, the Scots and the Welsh of Southern Scotland* (Cambridge, 1949), 4: 'Its earliest form is *ver-*, which may be seen in such names as Vertigernus and Vercingetorix, literally 'great king' (or 'high-king') and 'great hero king' respectically.'

[59] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland,* 434.

the apparent Pictish word *ipe* (speculated to mean 'son of') also seen on the St Vigean's stone, and also at Fordoun .[60] If it is an 'I' then it would produce the standard XOI or KOI, a formula common on earlier Irish and Welsh oghams.[61] The 'XOI' formula (meaning 'here') commonly occurs in ogham in the second position, and generally follows a genitive case.[62] The following characters on the drawn-in stem-line are even more difficult to transliterate, though Forsyth favoured the opinion that it was ROSRR/ROSIR, which was a common name for the founders of dynasties, a saint's name, and is also seen in Scottish toponyms.[63] Richard Cox, however, transliterated the entire Newton inscription to read IDDARQNNNVORRENNIKOTC-ROSQC, and he considered the last word continuing up the inserted stem-line C-ROSQC to mean 'cross'.[64] Despite the discrepancies between all the translations as to the last portion of this inscription, the first two words are clear, and the first name is equal to the manuscript form of *Ethernan*.

On art historical grounds, the second oldest inscription bearing this name is the Fordoun stone, which is a class II symbol stone/cross-slab (now housed in Auchenblae Parish Kirk) in Kincardineshire, which has the spelling in Insular script **P**IDARNOIN (see Plate I)**.**[65] This stone was found under the pulpit of the old Fordoun Parish kirk when it was demolished in the 1780s.[66] W.A. Cummins has suggested that it was possibly hidden under the pulpit during the Reformation.[67] The stone is incised on one face, with a cross flanked by fish-monsters, three riders, and two hounds. Beneath the cross is a double-disc and z-rod symbol, and above the left arm of the cross is an inscription in an Insular miniscule which clearly reads **P**IDARNOIN, the only portion of the inscription to

[60] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland,* 429.
[61] Ibid. 433.
[62] P. Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain: Phonology and Chronology, c. 400-1200* (Oxford, 2003), 27, ff 25: 'It is preceded by names in the genitive in the ogam inscriptions, but this simply reflects the prevalence of that case in the corpus and does not mean that XOI requires or 'governs' the genitive case.'
[63] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland,* 434-5.
[64] R. Cox, *The Language of the Ogam Inscriptions of Scotland: Contributions to the Study of Ogam, Runic, and Roman Alphabet Inscriptions in Scotland* (Aberdeen, 1999), 77.
[65] The Fordoun stone is located at National Grid Reference NO 7261 7841. The **P** in **P**IDARNOIN has been indicated in bold-font because the **P** is far larger than the –IDARNOIN, thus indicating that it is probably continuous from the previous line of the inscription, which is now missing.
[66] A. Mack, A *Field Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones* (Angus, 1997), 75.
[67] W.A. Cummins, *The Picts and Their Symbols* (London, 1999), 73.

survive (the top portion of the slab has been fragmented).[68] Elizabeth Sutherland stated that this name may be associated with St Palladius, who was supposedly buried in this area; there is also St Palladius' Well nearby, and there are a few kirks in the vicinity dedicated to St Palladius.[69] The inscription, however, does not resemble the name Palladius, and therefore this theory is not upheld here.

Regarding the inscription, F.C. Diack suggested that the initial **P** stood for Latin *pax* 'peace', and that the latter portion of the inscription would therefore be in the dative case.[70] Conversely, however, it is now believed, given the fragmentation of the top portion of the stone, that the **P** stood for *ip*, shortened for *ipe* also seen prefixed to *Uoret* on the St Vigeans stone.[71] The inscription appears to be, as described by R.A.S. Macalister ' in at least three lines', and he likewise interpreted the surviving portion of the inscription as the personal name *Idarnoin*.[72] The /-oi-/ in this instance perhaps reflects an Irish genitive common to o-stems which retain a palatal in the genitive singular.[73] Also in regards to this inscription, the fact that it is carved in Insular miniscule seems to indicate knowledge of a book-hand within the area, and it is a very plausible early monastic site.

Also of Pictish interest near this site was the discovery of the traces of a timber hall from aerial photography in 1982 and 1983 at nearby Monboddo, which may be 'attributable to the Pictish period'.[74] It is plausible that this site, and other nearby 'embryo souterrains' were extant from the early centuries of the AD period, and

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[68] A. Mack, A *Field Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones* (Angus, 1997), 76.
[69] E. Sutherland, *A Guide to the Pictish Stones* (Edinburgh, 1997), 86.
[70] F.C. Diack, *The Inscriptions of Pictland: An Essay on the Sculptured and Inscribed Stones of the North-East and North of Scotland: with other Writings and Collections* (Aberdeen, 1944), 76.
[71] K. Jackson, 'The Pictish Language', in F.T. Wainwright (ed.), *The Problem of the Picts* (Edinburgh, 1955), 140: 'Thus the St Vigeans stone, in spite of the three Celtic names and what is presumably the Latin *et* (spelt *ett*), has a word *ipe* prefixed to *Uoret*, perhaps also found on the Fordoun stone prefixed to *Idarnoin*, which is quite unknown. From the context it might mean 'and', or it might be 'son of', 'nephew of, or the like, but these are guesses...'. RCAHMS, *Pictish Symbol Stones: An Illustrated Gazeteer* (Edinburgh, 1999), 23: provides an alternate reading for *ipe* as *ire* for *i re* meaning 'in the time of', or 'in the reign of'. However, as suggested by: W.A. Cummins, *The Picts and Their Symbols* (Great Britain, 1999), 71: states that it appears more likely to be a 'P' rather than an 'R'; also, 74: 'The initial P is probably the end of *ip* meaning son of'.
[72] R.A. S. Macalister, 'The Inscriptions and Language of the Picts,' J. Ryan (ed.)., *Féil-Sgríbhinn Eóin Mhic Néill. Essays and Studies Presented to Professor Eoin MacNeill* (Dublin, 1940), 198.
[73] R. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old-Irish* (Dublin, 1947), 176.
[74] I. Ralston, 'Notes on the Archaeology of Kincardine and Deeside District', *The Deeside Field*, 18 (1984), 75.

Monboddo has been compared with another similar site at Doon Hill as being of potential early medieval significance.[75] There are also four nearby *Pit-* place-names: Pitrennie Mill, Pittengardner, Pitarrow, and Pitskelly. Another nearby place-name that also might have Pictish origins is Kinmonth a short distance to the north.

The two remaining ogham inscriptions bearing this name are both on class II cross-slabs, transliterating identically to (Brodie, Moray) EDDARRNON (see Plate II) and (Scoonie, Fife) EDDARRNONN (see Plate III).[76] The Brodie Stone, also known as Rodney's Stone, was found in the foundation of the church of Dyke and Moy, and was afterward moved to Dyke to commemorate the victory of Admiral Rodney in 1782.[77] The cross, two-beast, 'Pictish beast' and double-disc and z-rod symbols are all decorated with intricate interlace. Unfortunately the lengthy ogham inscription on the vertical sides of the stone has been badly defaced, although it is advantageous that one name in this inscription survives. Reading upwards from the bottom of the stone before the first fragment is the name EDDARRNON, and after the fragment the letters QI are visible. This inscription was first equated by James Carnegie, Earl of Southesk, in 1885 as an equivalent of the name *Ethernan*.[78] Forsyth has also suggested that Dyke was 'a centre of Pictish secular administration'.[79] The survival of the cross-slab likewise indicates early ecclesiastical activity in the vicinity, and local residents in Dyke maintain that the modern church is atop of a much older site. There are also no toponymics of Pictish origin in the near vicinity, though the Brodie Stone and other nearby sites such as Burghead are attributable to the Pictish period. Forsyth has also suggested that the Brodie Stone could possibly be associated with a cult of St Ethernan in Morayshire.[80]

The Scoonie cross-slab (see Plate III) is incised on sandstone, with a cross on one side, much of which has now disappeared, and on the opposite side is a 'Pictish beast'

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[75] I. Ralston, 'Portknockie: Promontory Forts and Pictish Settlement in the North-East', in A. Small (ed.). *The Picts: a New Look at Old Problems* (Dundee, 1987), 24.
[76] Brodie Stone at NH 990 584, and Scoonie at NO 3840 0167.
[77] J. R. Allen & J. Anderson, *ECMS*, ii, 132.
[78] J. Carnegie (Earl of Southesk), 'The Oghams on the Brodie and Aquhollie Stones, with Notes on the Inscriptions of the Golspie and Newton Stones, and a List of the Oghams in Scotland,' *PSAS*, III (1885-1886), 17-18.
[79] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 141: 'Dyke church sits on a large mound within an oval enclosure, two features usually taken as diagnostic of an early medieval antecedence.'
[80] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland* , 156.

above a hunting scene with three riders and hounds pursuing a stag.[81] The stone was found in the old churchyard of Scoonie.[82] The transliteration of the ogham is clear, EDDARRNONN, and has thus been equated with the other three inscriptions bearing similar epigraphic forms of this name, particularly the Brodie inscription. Considering the distance between the Brodie Stone and the Scoonie Stone, it is remarkable that they are consistent in spelling.

A key aspect of these stones, with the one exception of the Newton Stone, is that they are all cross-slabs, and therefore surviving artifacts of an early ecclesiastial site. Though Richard Cox suggested the transliteration of the oblique section of the Newton Stone to be 'cross', there is no evidence in the vicinity of an early ecclesiastical site, unless we presume the graves mentioned by Stuart to be early Christian graves, and one must bear in mind that these stones have been moved throughout history. Regarding the dating of these stones, most Class I stones date from the sixth through seventh century, and Class II from the eighth through ninth century respectively, though one must allow for an overlap in date. A key feature of Class II stones is the presence of a cross in relief on the monument. Obviously the Class II stones are associated with the church, and would have been used by ecclesiastics to minister and instruct a local congregation.[83] Both Class I and Class II stones are also prominent public monuments, intended for display, also very likely revealing aristocratic patronage. Almost all Class II stones have various forms of epigraphic designs presented on the four panels around the cross, such as interlace, figures of saints, ecclesiastics, the Evangelists, hunting scenes and Biblical as well as secular iconography.[84] They also include Pictish symbols, and a very plausible and upstanding suggestion for the meaning of the Pictish symbols are to commemorate individuals; a good comparison would be later medieval heraldry.[85] But how then should one interpret the presence of an ogham on these stones? Are they a translation of the symbols? W.A. Cummins associated the ogham EDDARRNONN as a transliteration of

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[81]RCAHMS, *Pictish Symbol Stones: An Illustrated Gazeteer* (Edinburgh, 1999), 25.
[82] J. R. Allen & J. Anderson, *ECMS*, ii, 347.
[83] E. Sutherland, *A Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones* (Edinburgh, 1997), 12: Sutherland compares the purpose of Class II stones to medieval stained-glass windows for the purpose of educating the illiterate.
[84] L. Laing, *The Archeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland c. 400-1200 AD* (London, 1975), 62. See also: L. Laing, 'The Date and Context of the Glamis, Angus, Carved Pictish Stones', *PSAS*, 131 (2001), 227: for a comparison of manuscript models on the Angus Pictish symbol stones.
[85] W.A. Cummins, *The Picts and Their Symbols* (United Kingdom, 1999), 23.

the 'Pictish beast' because of the presence of this symbol on the Brodie and Scoonie stones.[86] I remain sceptical of this theory due to the fact that there is no 'beast' on the Newton Symbol Stone (closely associated with the Newton Stone), nor is there one on the Fordoun Stone.

Taking into consideration the distribution of ogham inscribed Pictish symbol stones, most ogham inscriptions are not found at major ecclesiastical sites, but rather at smaller settlement sites.[87] Another feature of these early Christian sites is that the survivial of these stones indicates that there was either literacy of ogham or of manuscript book-hand present at these locations. This also suggests that there were individuals who were literate in engraving and translating ogham inscriptions (or Insular script, indicating the knowledge of manuscript writing) in these areas, and the intrinsically consistent orthography between the Brodie and Scoonie Stones likewise indicates that there was consistent orthography for this name in ogham.

Regarding the plausible lack of patronymics on these inscriptions, Forsyth has pointed out that many roman alphabet inscriptions in Ireland with a single name are 'commonly prefaced with a request for a prayer', and many single-name inscriptions are found in Wales.[88] This could be the case with the Scoonie Stone, though fragmented, would probably have only required a few more centimeters of height in order to complete the cross and the Pictish 'beast'. Indeed, the Scoonie Stone actually appears to honour St Ethernan. This could also be the case on the Newton Stone, where the first two names apparently do not follow the 'X MAQQ Y' formula, but with the obscurity of Pictish case structure, it is difficult to discern whether or not the name VORENN is the genitive. Forsyth stated that 'it is tempting to interpret some or all of these inscriptions as honouring the saint rather than a string of local magnates coincidentally all called Ethernan'.[89] Indeed there are examples of Irish oghams dedicated to saints. Though this obviously involves the nature of the sites, it is tempting to suggest that the presence of inscriptions at these locations all bearing the name *Ethernan* may be an aspect of his

[86] Ibid., 65-66.
[87] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, , 158: 'The dichotomy, which is mirrored elsewhere in Scotland, may reflect a contrast in the nature of the sites invovled. Crudely put, on a continuum running from small domestic habitation sites to major monasteries, the more 'ecclesiastical' a site, the less likely one is to find ogham there.'
[88] Ibid, 492 & 433.
[89] Ibid, 489.

early cult if they are intended to represent the same individual. This appears more likely when one considers that this name is the most predominantly found on the Pictish inscriptions, for which we have no other Pictish attestations of this name. The Fordoun and Brodie Stones, on the other hand, cause some discrepency with this theory. The **P** at the beginning of the Fordoun Stone, appearing to be a continuum from what would have been the second line of the inscription, is possibly for *ipe*. The long Brodie inscription is likewise so fragmented, and bears such a badly weathered inscription, that one should not necessarily presume the absense of a patronymic. What is important about these oghams, even if all of them actually do not refer to St Ethernan, is that they attest the currency of this name in Pictland (c. seventh through ninth centuries), and that it is apparently associated with the church. These ogham inscriptions may be indicative of patronage, either from an individual named *Ethernan*, requesting a prayer from *Ethernan*, or dedicating the site to the honour of *Ethernan*. It is now necessary to review a thorough etymology for this name, of which the inscriptions are a vital source.

IV. The Etymology of *Ethernan*

This chapter will briefly focus on a closer analysis of the name *Ethernan* to better illustrate its relevance in the use of loanwords in the Pictish language and on Pictish ogham inscriptions. Much of the controversy regarding the name *Ethernan* is whether or not it is Pictish, Irish, Welsh, and it has even been proposed that this name was non-Celtic, although this theory is no longer upheld by philologists.[90] As stated by Peter Yeoman, "The name is rare, being of either Irish or Pictish origin."[91] Fortunately, from the corpus of ogham inscriptions found on Pictish Stones (ten total, ogham and Insular), it is remarkable that four of these inscriptions bearing this name are almost consistent in orthography. These can likewise be evaluated with other similar inscriptions that have been discovered outside the Pictish region, to formulate linguistic comparisons. Not only

[90] K. Jackson 'The Pictish Language', 139-140, argued that this name was not Celtic. For other arguments against the name *Ethernan* being a non-Celtic name, see K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 486-493 and K. Forsyth, *Language in Pictland*: *the Case Against Non-Indo-European Pictish* (Utrecht, 1997), 35.

[91] P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St. Ethernan: the Archaeology of an Early Saint of the Picts and Scots,' in B.E. Crawford (ed.), *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World* (St. John's House Papers, no. 8, St. Andrews, 1998), 75.

do we have the corpus of inscriptions, but also early manuscript forms of the name in the Irish Annals, as well as in early Welsh genealogies.

The earliest attested written forms of the name are the aforementioned entries found in AU *Itarnan*, AT *Itharnan*, and in CS as *Iturnan*. Regarding the spelling in CS, Forsyth argued that the 'u' could possibly be a scribal error, although she also indicated that /u/, like /a/, is a back vowel.[92] This orthography is also consistent on the Pictish ogham and insular inscriptions, which shall be further analyzed in close detail: (Newton) IDDARRNNN, (Brodie) EDDARRNONN, (Scoonie) EDDARRNONN, and (Fordoun) **P**IDARNOIN or –IDARNOIN.[93]

It has been proposed by Oliver J. Padel that the name is derived from Latin *(A)eternus* > Vulgar Latin *Eternus* ('eternal'), based on the previous assumption stated by Kenneth Jackson that the name was non-Celtic.[94] Francis C. Diack proposed that the name was derived from 'Primitive **Idarnognos*' which would go to '*Idarnōn, Edarnōn*', that would form a modern form in '**Eadharnan*'.[95] J.T. Koch asserted that it appeared to be formed from a 'CC *isarno-*, OI ïarn, OB hoiarn, ïarn, W haearn'.[96] Koch then further goes on to state, "If this etymology is right, the Pritenic development was **isarnonos* > **iiarnonos* > **ijarnon-* > **iδarnon*."[97] If we take Koch's supposed Continental Celtic form *isarno-*, which developed into W. haearn 'iron', it seems unlikely considering that the name was hardened in the eastern Scots Gaelic dialects to *Eddran* in the later medieval period, and I believe that this firmly reflects the continuance of a plosive consonant as opposed to a fricative. The most likely etymological suggestions noted above are Padel's and Diack's.

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[92] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 487.
[93] A. Mack, *Field Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones* (Balgavies, 1997), 72 suggested that the inscription on the Brandsbutt, Inverurie Class I symbol stone reading IRATADDOARENS- is possibly a corrupt version of Ethernan, however, this suggestion is not upheld here.
[94] See O.J. Padel, *Inscriptions of Pictland* (Unpublished University of Edinburgh M.Litt Dissertation, 1972), 33-34: 'Since it does not seem to be Celtic in origin it might be worth suggesting a possible derivation (which would, however, disobey the rules of the development of Welsh): the Latin Æternus gave rise to a Welsh name, found as Eterni (Genitive) on the Clydai Stone (CIIC.430), and as Edern in the written sources...It is by no means impossible that the Picts should have borrowed a name from Latin (or from the Northern Britains, though its subsequent development would be irregular by Welsh standards.'
[95] F.C. Diack, *The Inscriptions of Pictland*, 67.
[96] J.T. Koch, 'The Loss of Final Syllables and Loss of Declension in Brittonic', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 30, parts III & IV (1983), 217.
[97] J.T. Koch, 'The Loss of Final Syllables and Loss of Declension in Brittonic', 217.

There are also four surviving Celtic British inscriptions dating to the Brittonic and Irish periods respectively (*c*. first half of the sixth century) which serve as examples of an earlier use of 'eternal' as a name. These are: 389/97 ETERNI, 430/306 ETTERNI, 408/229/848 ETERNALI, and 414/271 AETERN[I] or AETERN[E].[98] There is also a surviving example of a similar inscription from Gaul, reading AETERNE.[99]

Turning the attention to the initial vowel 'i' or 'e', if this name did develop from the Latin, this would have stemmed from the Latin diphthong 'æ'. The /æ/ diphthong in Latin was commonly spelled 'e' in Vulgar Latin.[100] The Latin /æ/ developed in Brittonic and also in Irish as a short /e/.[101] The Vulgar Latin *Eternus* found on the Celtic British inscriptions 389/97 ETERNI and 430/306 ETTERNI (both in the genitive) rendered the British **Edernus*, which developed into the Middle Welsh name *Edern* or *Edyrn* (discussed below). Evidently it would appear that the initial 'e' of the name EDDARNON(N) on the Scoonie and Brodie inscriptions, probably retains a Brythonic equivalent that developed from the Vulgar Latin /æ/ > /e/. How then does this correlate to the initial 'i' present in the manuscript form and on the earlier Newton and Fordoun stones? In these regards, Forsyth considered the difference between the /e/ and the /i/ to possibly be dialectical differences, although she asserted that 'date may be more relevant'.[102] Rudolf Thurneysen has illustrated that in Old-Irish an original /e/ and /o/ would frequently become /i/ or /u/ when the /e/ or /o/ were separated 'by a single (lenited) or geminated (unlenited) voiced consonant'.[103] The manuscript /t/ or /d/ both represent a voiced consonant in Old-Irish, so this can most probably explain the change from /e/ to /i/ in the manuscript form of this name. On the Pictish inscriptions they are also in geminate form, though the pronunciation would still be /t/ or /d/, which could further indicate the raising from /i/ to /e/ and vice versa. What is clear, as Forsyth has pointed out, is that the orthography of the Newton stone and that of Fordoun are 'closer to the roman alphabet spellings of this name, both manuscript and epigraphic'.[104] The Newton stone also

[98] P. Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain*, 98.
[99] M. L'Hour, 'Un Site Sous-Marin sur la cote de l'armorique l'epave antique de ploumanac'h'. *Review Archeologique de l'ouest* (1987), 120.
[100] C.H. Grandgent, *An Introduction to Vulgar Latin* (New York, 1962), 88.
[101] K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain* (Edinburgh, 1953), 335.
[102] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 487.
[103] R. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1949), 47.
[104] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 435.

probably dates to the seventh century, which makes it more contemporary with the obit of *Itarnan* mentioned in the Annals.

The first consonantal sound (as was previously mentioned) governing these names on the Pictish stones, British inscriptions (as well as in the manuscript orthography) is the /t/, /d/, and possibly the /th/ of AT. The /d/ of the epigraphic inscriptions often transferred into Old-Irish orthography as a voiced spirant, and the /th/ of the AT orthography would represent an interdental voiceless spirant of the voiced /d/.[105] The orthography of AT, however, is also considered to be less consistent than AU, so in any case the /th/ in *Itharnan* may perhaps be due to scribal error. However, in later Irish this would have been softened, as is seen in the rarely occuring name Eithern, the equivalent of the British Edern. An instance in Irish of this name is seen in the Genealogies of Irish saints for the bishop Eithern.[106] This occurence in Irish of the softening of this first consonantal group would subsequently explain the later softening of the name to Ethernan.

On the Pictish inscriptions, however, the /dd/ of Newton, Brodie, and Scoonie stones are examples of gemination, which is the result of combining two consonants.[107] The evolution of gemination developed in Irish, as adequately described by Damian McManus (which could also subsequently explain the later softening of *Idarnon*/*Itarnon* to *Ethernan*):

> The process involved a weakening in the articulation of consonants in certain positions, particularly intervocalic and, in the case of stops as well as *m* and *s*, between a vowel and l, n, or r, whereby formerly long, intense or geminated stops were reduced to single stops and former single stops passed into their lenited or fricative equivalents. Thus *dd, gg, bb, kk, tt* became */d/, /g/, /b/, k/* and */t/* respectively, while *d, g, b, c, t,* became /δ/, /γ/, /β/, /x/, and /θ/. [108]

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[105] R. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1949), 21-22.
[106] *The Book of Leinster* (ed. A. O'Sullivan, Vol. VI [Dublin, 1983], 1548: 'Epscop Eithern m. Laithbe m. Mes Nube m. Mugdorn Duib de Ultaib'.
[107] D. Macmanus, *A Guide to Ogam* (Maynooth, 1991), 84: also, from Primitive Irish geminates, 'To this third category belongs, for examples, the loss of *n* before *t* and *k* resulting in the voicing of the latter to the long (or geminated) sounds *dd* and gg.' See also: R. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1949), 91: 'Geminates often arise from a combination of two identical consonants which have been brought together either in composition or through the loss of a vowel'.
[108] D. McManus, *A Guide to Ogam*, 85.

Initially it would appear that this might also be the same on the Latin ogham 430/306 ETTERNI. Jackson believed that the /tt/ of ETTERNI was an emphasis of the Latin /t/, (Brythonic /d/), which would have produced the Brythonic **Edernus*.[109] Patrick Sims-Williams concurred that the /tt/ stood for a Latin /t/.[110] Therefore, the doubling of 430/306 is most likely the case of the gemination of ogham orthography that the epigrapher would have been accustomed to. Gemination of consonants is very common in Irish, Welsh and Pictish oghams, and gemination particularly of non-initial D is commonly found within the ogham corpus in Scotland; however, as Forsyth stated, 'whether this had phonetic significance is unclear'.[111] In any case, the /dd/ is likely to represent a British (or in this instance Pictish) /d/ which was often interchangeable with the Latin /t/, much like the /i/ and /e/ for /æ/ as we have already seen from examining the initial vowel. In the Irish manuscript tradition, much of which was borrowed from the British Latin tradition, non-initial /d/, /g/, and /b/ found on ogham inscriptions became *t*, *c*, and *p* in the Latin manuscript orthography.[112] Moreover, both 'd' and 't' are hard consonants, and due to the ambiguous nature of geminated consonants on ogham inscriptions, the /dd/ on the Pictish inscriptions in this discussion, as we have seen, most likely represents the /t/ seen in *Itarnan* in AU and *It[h]arnan* of AT.

The third element of this name, *-arn*, is also consistent in both manuscript and epigraphic forms. In Brythonic, there is little evidence pointing to the raising of /e/ or /o/ before a *liquid + consonant form*, however, most evidence that does exists seems to indicate that this typically occured before /–rn/.[113] One of the few examples of this is from the Vulgar Latin *Eternus*, also British **Edernus* > Middle Welsh *Edyrn* beside *Edern*; also *Paternus*, VL **Patarnus* > W *Padarn*[114]. The particularly indicative feature of this raising is that it only occurred from Latin loanwords, and Jackson suggested that typically, 'Brit. *ern* gives WCB. *arn*,' and that a possible reason for the raising of er>ar is a characteristic derived from the Vulgar Latin spoken in Britain.[115] Gathering from the fact that *ern>arn* in Welsh, Cornish, and Breton, it is not unlikely that this would

[109] K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain*, 183.
[110] P. Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain*, 52.
[111] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 176.
[112] D. McManus, *A Guide to Ogam*, 123
[113] P. Schrijver, *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology* (Amsterdam, 1995), 65.
[114] P. Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain*, 99.
[115] K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain*, 280-281.

have also occurred in Pictland as well. Apparently the Middle Welsh *Edern/Edyrn* is the only example of this kind where the /e/ is raised to an /i/ before /-rn/. Gathering from the /-*arn*/ retained within all forms of this name, does this indicate a Brythonic name derived from a Latin loanword? Considering the fact that Edern is the Brythonic equivalent of Ethernan, we should expect the same effect, which appears to be the case. Thus, gathering from the comparative Brythonic anylisis, it would appear that Padel's suggestion that the name was derived from Latin *Æternus* holds much weight. Perhaps a final analysis of the ending will help to clarify this question.

The *–an* ending in the orthographic forms and the –NNN (Newton), -OIN (Fordoun), and –ON(N) (Brodie and Scoonie) appears to be a diminutive ending similar to other Celtic diminutives. In Archaic Irish this developed from apocope in which the original ogham diminutive –AGNI evolved to –AN,-ANN (*-ān*); this is also the most frequent diminutive suffix.[116] The –án is characteristic of o-stem diminutive endings in Old-Irish. Interestingly enough, the development of o-stems in the Irish language 'is the only sound change for which the Ogam inscriptions are our sole source of information' and from this process '*a*' eventually became the 'composition vowel'.[117] The orthographic forms of this name retain '-an' as opposed to the epigraphic '-on' forms.[118] Many inscriptions from the Welsh corpus retain what would appear to be '-on' endings. In the Irish ogham corpus, the reading found on 1069/Ok. PictApp I. [B]ETON, C]ETON, [E]ETON, or [T]ETON may be a Pictish word according to Sims-William.[119] Incidentally, this inscription also retains an '-on' ending. The diminutive in /-oi-/ on the Fordoun Inscription is likewise indicative of an o-stem.

The diminutive endings on these particular Pictish ogham inscriptions are also paralleled by various Pictish names found in the *Pictish Chronicle* in thirteen of the kings

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[116] D. McManus, *A Guide to Ogam*, 89, 107: 89: e.g. '145 RON[A]NN (later Rónain), all genitives with the suffix **-agnas*'. Also 107: '88 BRANAN (*Branán, bran* 'raven').'

[117] D. McManus, *A Guide to Ogam*, 84-85 continues: 'it would not be recoverable from historical reconstruction as *o* and *a* have precisely for the same effect on neighbouring consonants and the vowels of preceding syllables. This is reflected in the gen. sg. of consonantal stems which are invariably written –AS (viz. *-os* > *-as*) in Ogam.' This is also seen in the genitive singular o-stem endings *–os* > *-as* and *–on*> *-an*.

[118] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 487: Here Forsyth suggests that that –an is a Gaelicized ending. See also: R. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1949), 173: lists it as one of the most common terminations

[119] P. Sims-Williams, *The Celtic Inscriptions of Britain*, 115.

listed.[120] For example, the name *Talorc*, which is commonly found with a diminutive *Talorcan*, in Group A we find the forms: Talorc, Talorg, Talore, Talorcen, and Talorgen, the /-en/ apparently being only seen in these Pictish instances.[121]

The consistency of the diminutive ending in the orthographic and epigraphic inscriptions of the name *Ethernan* is striking, and not paralleled by the Welsh (Edern) and Irish (Eithern) equivalents of the name. W.A. Cummins suggested that the '-on' ending on the Brodie and Scoonie stones may be similar to the genitive endings spelled as such in Latin and ogham Welsh inscriptions.[122] Although extremely little is known of Pictish case structure (if Pictish did have cases), in comparison with earlier Irish oghams the diminutive is also found in this form, and is clearly in the genitive.[123] The diminutive ending is also retained in the Annals, and in the structure of *Itarnan*, in the entry the name is clearly in the nominative case, and the diminutive is still included in the name. The Insular Fordoun inscription, **P**IDARNOIN, may actually reflect a genitive similar to Irish with the inserted /-i/ before palatal /-n/.[124] The Newton ending –NNN may be indicative of a 'weakening of the final syllable after a strong penultimate, or anti-penultimate, stress'.[125] In any case, it is obvious that the diminutive is not separable from the prefix in this name as we have evidence of it from the Pictish regions and in manuscript form.

Diminutive endings also retain the gender, and in this instance since the Old Irish diminutive –án is an o-stem, it is either masculine or neuter. Therefore, the name *Ethernan* is apparently masculine. Diminutives are also used to designate smallness, and they can also serve as 'hypocoristic and shortened forms' of nouns.[126] In this case, the name is most likely a hypocoristic form meaning 'eternal'. Similarly with the Pictish

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[120] A comparison will be made using Marjorie Anderson's classification system of Groups A, considered to be the most *Pictish*, and Group B that is *Pictish* to a certain extent, though it retains numerous Gaelicised forms. *Poppleton Manuscript*: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Ms Latin 4126 and 'Pictish Regnal Lists in Lebor Bretnach' in Bodleian Laud 610 (ed. M. Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* [Edinburgh, 1973], 245-249, 262-263.

[121] *Poppleton Manuscript*: Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Ms Latin 4126 (ed. M. Anderson, *Kings and Kingship in Early Scotland* [Edinburgh, 1973], 245-249.

[122] W.A. Cummins, *The Picts and Their Symbols* (United Kingdom, 1999), 66.

[123] J.T. Koch, 'The Loss of Final Syllables and Loss of Declension in Brittonic', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 30 (1983), 220: Koch concluded that 'Pritenic had no declension'.

[124] F.C. Diack, *The Inscriptions of Pictland*, 76: postulated that is was in the dative case based off of the assumption that the **P-** stood for Latin 'pax'.

[125] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 435.

[126] R. Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish* (Dublin, 1949), 173.

name *Nechtan*, which is also seen as the god Nuada Necht pertaining to the River Boyne.[127]

Also of particular interest to the etymology of *Ethernan* is its aforementioned Middle Welsh equivalent, *Edern*, which is a very common name in the early genealogies of North Wales. Perhaps one of the earliest genealogies where this name is preserved is the genealogy of Cunedda, who lived around the end of the fourth century or at the beginning of the fifth century. According to the legend, Cunedda left Manaw Gododdin (around the Forth, seen in the place-names Clackmannan and Slamannan) with his sons, expelled the Irish from Gwynedd, and founded a dynasty in North Wales. In the genealogy, Cunedda's father's name is Ætern, and his father's name was Patern, and the name of his father was Tacit (for Latin Tacitus, and later Welsh Tegit).[128] The name Patern is also one of the only examples of the raising of a liquid before '–rn' like *Edern*, and is likewise a Latin name. Cunedda's sons, Osmail, Rumaun, Dunaut, Ceretic, Abloyc, Enniaun, Docmail, and Etern, according to legend each founded local dynasties. The name Edeirnion in the region of Northern Powys is supposedly where Edern map Cunedda founded his dynasty.[129] Two of Cunedda's ancestors bore Latin names, and he also named three of his sons Latin names, Edern being one of them. A.H. Williams has suggested the probability that Cunedda was a Duke of Britain in charge of defending Hadrian's Wall, given the region of Manaw Gododdin as the family's original location; that Cunedda had connection with the Roman administration is not unlikely.[130]

It is interesting to note the connection between the genealogies of Cunedda and the region of southern Pictland. H.M. Chadwick even suggested that some of the names further back in Cunedda's genealogies are of Pictish nomenclature.[131] It is now believed by philologists that the Pictish language was a Brythonic language of Gallo-Brittonic descent, and a language related to Welsh, Cornish, and Breton. It would appear that the name *Ethernan* was derived from the Vulgar Latin *Eternus* or the Brittonic form

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[127] J.M.P. Calise, *Pictish Sourcebook*, 244.
[128] 'Cuneda map Ætern map Patern pesrut map Tacit..' Harleian MS. 3859 (ed. P.C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, [Cardiff, 1966], 9). See also: *Genealogy of Cunedda* (Bodl. Jesus College MS 20, fol. 35 recto). For a facsimilie see: P.C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*, Jesus College MS. 20 and Wynnstay MS. 10.
[129] A.H. Williams, *An Introduction to the History of Wales*, 2 vols. (Cardiff: 1948-9), 70 & 115.
[130] Ibid. 69.
[131] H.M. Chadwick, *Early Scotland*, 73.

**Edernus* also seen in the Northern Welsh genealogies as *Edern*/*Edyrn*. Considering the close links between the region of Manaw Gododdin and Pictland, then perhaps this name could have originated in Southern Pictland, where its borrowing in the northern Brythonic dialects would be more likely due to the earlier Roman presence. The of Roman influence throughout the regions of Scotland that would later have developed into Pictland was temporarily quite explicit. It is perhaps very significant that this name developed similarly to its Brythonic counterpart, *Edern*. Moreover, what this also indicates is that the '-on' ending found on these later Pictish oghams is the possible retention of the earlier form of the Celtic o-stem, that by this point in time had evolved to an -án in Old-Irish. Clearly, as has been detailed in the thorough etymology above, every aspect of this name is the Celtic form derived from a Latin (or in this case Vulgar Latin) loanword borrowed into the Brythonic languages and parallel in comparison with Old-Irish. The etymology of the name in written and epigraphic form also seems to indicate that it is more akin to its Welsh equivalent. This, therefore, thoroughly disproves Jackson's statement that this name 'is apparently not Celtic'.[132] However, perhaps Jackson, Padel and Forsyth are correct in their assertions regarding this name—*Ethernan* is the Celtic form of a Latin name; therefore, it is not Celtic in origin, but was assimilated into the Celtic languages. The name Ethernan, only existing in the name Edern/Edyrn and Eithern outside of the Pictish reigons, would appear to be a Pictish name, thus making the figure in question a very plausible Pict. If we believe Padel's suggestion, then in Pictish the name would mean 'eternal'. The occurance of the inscriptions at ecclesiastical sites in Pictland indicate that these figures commemorated, if they are not a reference to St Ethernan, were associated with the church. Therefore, this name may be a Pictish name for a man who held status in the Pictish church.

V. The Cult of St Ethernan in Medieval Scotland

The majority of church dedications in Scotland are to early Irish saints, which suggest that they belong to a period after the conquest of the Scots in the mid-ninth

[132] K. Jackson, 'The Pictish Language', 140.

century.[133] However, as stated by Lloyd Laing, "It has been suggested that many dedications to Irish saints in Scotland were derived from commemorative lists used in the liturgies of the mother houses of the monastic *paruchiae*."[134] In most cases, sites dedicated to an early saint do not indicate that the saint was the founder, but rather that it is a later medieval cult revival to the veneration of that particular saint or 'deliberate antiquarianism'.[135] However, as stated by Simon Taylor, "But the corollary of this is that the less important or kneckspeckle a native saint, the more likely it is that dedications or place-names containing that saint's name point to genuine early associations."[136] For comparison, many saints' cults in early Ireland were involved with the promotion of the cult by members of the saint's family 'over a wide geographical area', and this practice may be equally true in the Pictish regions.[137] Though the history of early Scottish saints is obscure, in many cases, as in medieval Wales, later medieval dedicated sites to a particular saint usually stemmed from the expansion of the principal centre of the saint's cult, many of which 'presumably housed their tombs'.[138]

The sites dedicated to St Ethernan span the Pictish regions, including Rathen in Buchan, there was an annual fair held in his honour at Forfar, Madderty in Perthshire, Kilrenny, Scoonie, and the Isle of May in Fife. In comparison with the other Pictish saints, St Drostan's commemorations for example, indicate that his cult was between Montrose to Kingussie and predominantly in Aberdeenshire.[139] Another Pictish example would be St Nechtan Nér, whose cult sites are at Tullich and Bethelnie in Aberdeenshire and Cowie in Kincardineshire.[140] Clearly it would appear that the cult sites pertaining to St Ethernan are more vast in the former Pictish regions than those of these other two

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[133] D.P. Kirby, 'Bede and the Pictish Church' *Innes Review* (Spring 1973, vol. xxiv no.1), 24.
[134] L. Laing, *The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland*, 376.
[135] Ibid, 376.
[136] S. Taylor, 'Seventh-century Iona Abbots in Scottish Place-Names,' in D. Broun & T.O.Clancy (eds.), *Spes Scotorum: Hope of Scots* (Edinburgh, 1999), 35. See also 36: 'What is certainly true is that we cannot afford to disregard any evidence relating to the early saints, be it dedications, fair days, place-names, relics, saints' lives, or local legends.'
[137] S. Taylor, *Settlement-Names in Fife* (Unpublished Edinburgh Phd., vol. 1, 1995**)**, 168.
[138] A. Thacker, 'Loca Sanctorum: the Significance of Place in the Study of the Saints', in A. Thacker & R. Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford, 2002), 33.
[139] For the cult sites of St Drostan, see: K. Jackson, *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (Cambridge, 1972), 5-6.
[140] W. J. Watson, *The Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, 329-330.

known Pictish saints, and though most of these cult sites are later medieval in origin, some of them are indicative of early medieval occupation and early medieval cult sites.

The most promising location dedicated to St Ethernan with early medieval origins is the Isle of May off the coast of Fife (see Plate IV). The current visible remains on the Isle of May date from the medieval Benedictine priory, which was established between 1141 and 1150 when a community of Reading cluniacs from the Thames Valley re-colonized the May.[141] The main Benedictine house, founded during the reign of David I by the Reading Cluniacs, was known as St Adrian's Chapel. The ruins on the May show evidence of a very long ecclesiastial history, and recent excavations have indicated that skeletal remains found under a cairn and two long-cist cemeteries, the early monastic burial grounds, date from between AD 434-610 to AD 647-682, the latter date spanning a time when St Ethernan's presence on the May was very likely.[142] St Ethernan is reputed in legend to be associated with the Isle of May. The earliest mention we find of an altar to St Ethernan on the May is in a charter from Gospatrick the Earl of Dunbar (1147-1180) who dedicated his toft at Bele to 'St Ethernan of May and the Brethren serving God there'.[143] The second earliest source is a charter from Alexander Comyn, Earl of Buchan, stating his dedication of a stone of wax (or forty shillings) annually for the lights of St Ethernan's alter on the Isle of May.[144] Both charters confirm the May as a medieval cult site dedicated to Ethernan. In the excavation conducted on the May in 1996 the post-medieval walls of the Benedictine church were removed, revealing four phases of rebuilding, the earliest of which used drystone foundations 'suggesting a mortuary chapel or oratory (possibly to house the bones of St Ethernan and other early monks)'.[145] This monastery, dedicated to his veneration (St Ethernan's Priory) indicated by the charter

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[141] G.W.S. Barrow, *The Kingdom of the Scots: Government, Church and Society from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century* (London, 1973; repr. Edinburgh, 2003), 166.

[142] P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St Ethernan', 82-83: of the fourteen skeletons sampled. See also: P. Yeoman, *Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland* (London, 1999), 63. See also: H. James & P. Yeoman, 'St. Adrian's Priory, Isle of May,' *Discovery and Excavation Scotland* (1992), 34.

[143] 'Carta Gospatricii comitis de Dunbar' (ed. A.A.M. Duncan, 'Documents Relating to the Priory of the Isle of May', *PSAS*, XC [1956-1957], 74-75): 'Salutem sciatis me concessisse et in perpetuam elemosinam dedisse sancto Yðernino de Mai et fratribus ibidem Deo seruientibus unum plenarium toftum'.

[144] 'Carta Alexandri Comyn comitis de Buchan. De quadraginta debariis' (ed. J. Stuart, *Records from the Priory of the Isle of May*, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland [Edinburgh, 1868], 18-19): 'Et ad luminarium sancti Ethirnini de insula de May'.

[145] H. James & P. Yeoman, 'Isle of May,' *DES* (1996), 44.

from Alexander Comyn, has now been excavated.[146] As stated by Peter Yeoman, "We can be sure however, that his shrine was here, accompanied by the firm belief that the body of the saint was also here, sufficient to allow the cult to develop."[147]

Another famous saint associated with the May is St Adrian, who was also confused with St Ethernan in the later medieval period. Like Ethernan, Adrian is an enigmatic saint, who came from Hungary to Pictland during the mid-ninth century during the demise of the Pictish kingdom, who retired to the Isle of May where he was supposedly martyred during the Viking incursion in 875.[148] A coin of Burgred, the King of Merica (852-874), was discovered in a coffin found in the cemetery, thus adding weight to Wyntoun's mention of a Viking raid on the May.[149] St Ethernan was probably confused with St Adrian due to the hardening of *Ethernan* to *Eddran* in the eastern Scots dialect. The confusion must have occured sometime between the charter of Alexander Comyn and the fifteenth century.[150] In the Scottish church calendars, however, they have two different feast days, St Adrian being venerated on 4 March (and also confused with St Adrian of Nicomedia) and St Ethernan on 2 December.

The Isle of May was a prominent pilgrimage site during the later medieval period, situated about eight kilometers from Anstruther on the Fife coast, and a convenient stopping point for pilgrims bound for St Andrews and the Firth of Forth. Skeletal remains found on the May dating to the ninth century of individuals with chronic bone diseases and infections have been excavated; they were presumably pilgrims to the shrine of St Adrian or St Ethernan.[151] One of the medieval skeletal remains found on the May was the burial of a young man in his twenties with a scallop shell placed into his mouth,

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[146] 'The Isle of May: St Ethernan Revealed' *Current Archaeology* (January & February, 1999), 192. For the excavation of St Ethernan's Priory, see H. James & P. Yeoman, 'Isle of May Environmental Interpretation Project', *DES* (1995), 25-26.
[147] P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St Ethernan', 87.
[148] See J. Stuart, *Records of the Priory of the Isle of May* (Edinburgh, 1868), i-ii & viii. The obscure mystery that St Adrian was martyred on the May was mentioned by Andrew of Wyntoun (ed. F.J. Amours, *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, Vol. IV [The Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh, 1906), 176-179), and reiterated in the *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh Univeristy MS. De.1/1/53-54, Vol. II Pars Estivalis, fol. lxiii).
[149] Andrew of yntoun (ed. F.J. Amours, *The Original Chronicle of Andrew of Wyntoun*, Vol. IV [The Scottish Text Society Edinburgh, 1906], 176-179). See also: 'The Isle of May: St Ethernan Revealed' *Current Archaeology* 161 (January & February 1999), 195. See also: P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St Ethernan', 82-83.
[150] P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St Ethernan', 79.
[151] 'The Isle of May: St Ethernan Revealed', *Current Archaeology* 161 (January & February 1999), 195.

indicating that he was probalby a pilgrim to St James the Great at Santiago de Compostela in the northwest of Spain, and returned from Spain where he died on the May.[152] During the War of Independence, Wallace expelled the Reading monks from the May after the Battle of Stirling Bridge (11 September 1297), and there is evidence from the Aberdeen Breviary that the priory on the May was burned during the war.[153] Around 1288 the abbey was purchased by William Fraser, bishop of St Andrews, to replace the English Reading monks with Augustinian canons from St Andrews; it would appear that shortly afterwards the prior of the May (and presumably the rest of the monks) abandoned the May and moved to the May priory at Pittenweem.[154] The May continued to be a pilgrimage site, and it was also reported that barren women wanting to become pregnant would travel to the May due to the many miracles that occured there.[155] Perhaps one of the more distinguished pilgrims to the May was king James IV of Scotland, who made numerous pilgrimages to the May between 1500 and 1508; at this time in the early sixteenth century, the Isle of May was one of the most prominent pilgrimage sites in Scotland.[156] The holy well at Pilgrim's Haven on the western shores of the island still survives.[157]

The early medieval ecclesiastical site of Kilrenny on the mainland coast of Fife is likewise a site associated with St Ethernan. It is also very plausible that it was a mainland monastery established by monks from the Isle of May. It has been suggested that the name *Kilrenny*, deriving from an earlier *Kilrethni* (c. 1170), is a hypocoristic form of the name of a chapel dedicated to St Ethernan.[158] *Kil-* place-names originate from an earlier Gaelic *cill-* meaning 'chapel' or 'cell' and are toponyms indicative of an

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[152] Ibid, 197.

[153] *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS. De.1/1/53-54, Vol. Pars Estivalis, fol. lxiii): 'In prefata insula de maya ad honorem dei omnipotentis sanctorumque eius martyrum egregio lapideo tabulatu antinquriam structum monasterium fuerat quod ab anglorum gente belorum insultu destructum est sed ibidem hactenus restat ecclesia saepe a fideli populo propter tot virtutum prodigia indies frequentata ubi mulieres spe prolium habendi venientes non defraudantur restat insuperibi cimiterium quam celebre ubi illius et supercelestis chorus roseo sanguine candidati legionis corpora requiescunt.' See also: A.A.M. Duncan, 'Documents Relating to the Priory of the Isle of May', *PSAS*, XC (1956-1957), 63.

[154] A.A.M. Duncan, 'Documents Relating to the Priory of the Isle of May', 61-64.

[155] J. Stuart, *Records of the Priory of the Isle of May* (Edinburgh, 1868), xli.

[156] See J. Stuart, *Records from the Priory of the Isle of May* (Edinburgh, 1868), lxxvi: 'Extracts from the Accounts of the Lord High Treasures of Scotland' regarding the accounts of King John IV's pilgrimages to the May. See also: P. Yeoman, *Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland* (London, 1999), 64.

[157] P. Yeoman, *Pilgrimage in Medieval Scotland* (London, 1999), 64.

[158] S. Taylor, 'Place-Names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland', in B.E. Crawford (ed.), *Scotland in Dark Age Britain* (St. Andrews, 1996), 99.

ecclesiastical site. William J. Watson believed that the name Kilrenny stood for *Cill-reithnich*, for *raithneach* meaning 'bracken'.[159] Given St Ethernan's connections with the nearby Isle of May, and similar place-names such as Aithernie in Scoonie, it would seem more probable that he is the saint commemorated in this dedication.

Kilrenny is also one of the numerous *Kil-* place-names in Fife. This toponym is a rare occurance not seen in the north-east or in the Border Countries, and predominantly seen in the west of Scotland. This toponymic distribution would not have developed in the area until the arrival of Gaelic speakers probably shortly before and after the eclipse of the Pictish kingdom in the mid-ninth century. This has led W.F.H. Nicolaisen to suggest that they are not likely to have been formed prior to c. 800.[160] The second element of the *Kil-* place-names of Fife are likewise all to saints belonging to the sixth, seventh, or eighth centuries respectively.[161]

The Kilrenny site is early medieval in origin, and situated on a promotory near a burn. In 1993 a fragment of a cross-slab with interlace was found at the church site.[162] A short distance from the site in Upper Kilrenny, a *chi-rho* style cross was found, known as the Skeith Stone. *Chi-rho* crosses are rare in the British Isles, and crosses of this type that have been discovered in northern Britain appear to be a cultural aspect of the Ninianic tradition prior to the development of Columban and Northumbrian influence.[163] This suggests that the site might represent an earlier Ninianic mission as well.

The church of Kilrenny features significantly in many medieval charters. It was granted to the church of Dryburgh by Countess Ada (the mother of William the Lion) around 1160, and was affirmed by Pope Alexander III around 1161.[164] It was confirmed

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[159] W.J. Watson, *Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* , 519-520.
[160] W.F.H. Nicolaisen, *Scottish Place-Names* (Edinburgh, 1976, reprinted 2001), 183-185.
[161] Ibid, 184-185. See also A. Macquarrie, *The Saints of Scotland: Essays in Scottish Church History AD 450-1093* (Edinburgh, 1997), 39.
[162] E. Proudfoot, 'Kilrenny', *Discovery and Excavation* Scotland (1993), 31. See also E. Proudfoot, 'Archaeology and Early Christianity in Scotland,' E. H. Nicoll (ed.), *A Pictish Panorama* (Angus, 1995), 28.
[163] R. Trench-Jellicoe, 'The Skeith Stone, Upper Kilrenny, Fife,' *Pictish Arts Society Journal* (12, Spring 1998), 16. Also, 16-17: Moreover as both Whithorn and Maughold are considered to be examples of early monastics settlements (both also have examples of literacy), the possible connection with Ethernan at Kilrenny suggests that we ought also to think of Kilrenny not only as a potentially Pictish monastery but also one of early date, perhaps functioning before AD 650.'
[164] I. B. Cowan, *The Parishes of Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1967), 109.

in a charter by William Comyn, the Earl of Buchan, for use as an abbey in 1220.[165] Also, we find in the *Pontificale Ecclesiae Sancti Andreae* used by Bishop David de Bernham, that *St. Ethernanus* was venerated at Kilrenny.[166] Local tradition holds that fishermen described the church tower at Kilrenny as 'St Ierny'.[167] It has been suggested that this is a hypocoristic form of the name St Irenacus, a bishop of Lyons, or possibly St Ringan, a corrupt colloquial form of St Ninian.[168] Another suggestion for the name, if it does indeed refer to an actual saint, would be that 'Ierny' evolved from 'Ernan', a hypocoristic form of Ethernan.[169]

Also in Fife, the place-name Aithernie, found near Scoonie in the parish of Leven, has been associated with St Ethernan, in part due to the Scoonie stone found in the old parish kirk. The church lies between Largo and Scoonie, and was granted to the nuns of North Berwick in 1160 by Duncan, the Earl of Fife.[170] This name is seen in many charters from the earls of Fife, to the nuns of North Berwick, such as: Adhernin (1178), Athernin (1178), Adernin (1199), Æthernin (1212-1214), Adherenin and Cnocderenin (1220) and Athernin (c. 1228).[171] Peter Yeoman suggested that this place-name may stem from the name 'St Atherniscus' mentioned in de Bernham's rededication, which is very close to the name Ethernan.[172] St Atherniscus, variously spelt, Itharnaisc who is commemorated at Leuchars and Lathrisk (both in Fife), is St Itharnaisc of Cloenad, whose feast day was on 22 May according to the *Calendar of Oengus*.[173] There is a *Vita*

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[165] *Dryburgh Cartulary* (National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS.9A.1.4, fol. xviii): 'Confirmatio comitis de Buchan super Ecclesia de Kilreny'.

[166] *Pontificale Ecclesiae S. Andreae used by David de Bernham, Bishop of St Andrews (1239-1253)* (Edinburgh, 1885).

[167] A.H. Miller, *Fife: Pictoral and Historical: its People, Burghs, Castles, and Mansions*, Vol. I, Edinburgh, 1895), 391.

[168] Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments and Constructions of Scotland, *Eleventh Report with Inventory of Monuments and Constructions in the Counties of Fife, Kinross, and Clackmannan* (Edinburgh, 1933): 167-168.

[169] K. Forsyth, *The Ogham Inscriptions of Scotland*, 491: 'It is possible that other Ethernan commemorations lie behind dedications to *Ernan* etc.'.

[170] A.H. Miller, *Fife: Pictoral and Historical*, Vol. II, 47.

[171] 'Carta Duncani comitis de Fif super terra que dicitur Gillecamestone ד *c*' (c. 1178); 'Confirmacio de athirne Malthrif glcamston ד hospitalibus' (c. 1178); 'Confirmatio Regis Willelmi' (c. 1199-1214); 'Vniustis **sce mris** ecctie filiis' (c. 1220); 'Carta comitis malcomus de **eccijs oibius** de fyf **nob ptibus** ד de terra **eijsct** ד do logy' (c. 1228), (ed. C. Innes, *Carta Monialium de Northberwic: Prioratus Cisterciensis B. Marie de Northberwic Munimenta Vetusta que Supersunt* [Edinburgh, 1847],3-6, 8-10).

[172] P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St Ethernan', 78.

[173] *Calendar of Oengus* (Bodl. Laud Misc. MS 610, fol. 70 verso). See also: *Calendar of Oengus* (Bodl. Rawl. MS B. 505, fol. 220).

in the Aberdeen Breviary of *St. Ethernasci* (spelled as such in the *Vita* although the folio title is incorrectly spelled *Sancti Ethernaici*), and it specifically mentions that he is the patron saint of Lathrisk.[174] The Itharnaisc or Atherniscus of de Bernham and the Ethernasci of the Aberdeen Breviary are probably one in the same, and not St Ethernan. Though the names are similar, it would appear that we are dealing with two different saints, and they should probably be considered separately in toponymic terms. The various spellings of this name in the charters from the earl of Fife are more akin to the name Ethernan, all retaining a diminutive (though it is /-in/ as opposed to /-an/). The last mentioned name, *Cnocderenin* is the Gaelic *cnoc* 'hill' + the name *erenin*, which is most likely a hypocoristic form of Ethernan. These names, moreover, do not appear to represent the name Athernasc, and in fact, the names in all of these early charters more closely resemble the name Ethernan rather than Athernasc. Simon Taylor likewise believes that the name Ethernan is preserved in Aithernie, being further exemplified by the ogham inscription of the Scoonie Stone found in the old parish kirk.[175]

The church of Madderty in Perthshire was founded between 1175-1185 by Gilbert, the Earl of Strathearn (born before 1150, d. 1223) and it was dedicated to St Ethernan.[176] The lands of Madderty (as well as Kinveachy, Ure and Lethindie) were given to Gilbert by King William the Lion.[177] In 1200 Earl Gilbert established the Abbey of Inchaffray, and in the same year the church of Madderty was granted to Inchaffray, which became the first Augustinian community in Perthshire.[178]. The church of Madderty was confirmed by Pope Innocent III in 1203 and later by John II, bishop of Dunkeld in 1211.[179]

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[174] *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS. De.1/1/53-54, Vol. II Pars Estivalis, fol. xxi-xxii): 'Sancti Ethernasci confessoris patroni lanthresk.' He is also titled 'episopus et confesso', unlike St Ethernan who, according to the Breviary is 'episcopus'.

[175] S. Taylor, 'Place-Names and the Early Church in Eastern Scotland', 99.

[176] G.H. White (ed.), *The Complete Peerage or a History of the House of Lords and All its Members from the Earliest Times* (Vol. XII, London, 1953), 381.

[177] Ibid, 381.

[178] A.A.M. Duncan, *Scotland: the Making of a Kingdom* (Edinburgh, 1975), 179: 'He was also responsible for bringing the rule of the Augustinian canons to a community of clergy headed by a hermit at Inchaffray, not far from another 'unreformed' community at Muthill'.

[179] I.B. Cowan, *The Parishes of Medieval Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1967), 142. See also: 'Magna Carta Gilberti Comitis Super Fundatione Monasterii' (c. 1200); 'Gilbertus comes de Stratheryn' (c. 1200); 'Magna Protectio et Confirmation Innocentii III Pape' (c. 1203), (W.A. Lindsay, *Charters, Bulls and Other Documents Relating to the Abbey of Inchaffray* [Edinburgh, 1908], 6-8, fol. ix; 13-14, fol. xiv; 19-20, fol. xxi).

Further regarding the church of St Ethernan at Madderty, there are a series of surviving charters variously spelling the name Ethernan, which does provide some interesting detail into the orthography of the name in the medieval period. For example, we have the first charter from Gilbert the Earl of Strathearn c. 1200, spelling it as 'sancti Ethernani de Madernin' and later in that year as 'sancti Ethirnani de Maddirnyn'.[180] In the confirmation letter from Pope Innocent III in 1211 it is spelled 'sancti Ethernani de Madernin', and in a charter from 1219 as 'ecclesiam sancti iþernanj de madernj', and from the confirmation of King Alexander II as 'sancti Ethirnani de Maddeirnyne'.[181] William Lindsay suggested that the name Madderty might have some connection with St Ethernan, with the Gaelic endearing prefix *mo* > *ma*, 'my' + *Ethernan*, which could hypothetically become *Mathérnan*, which would have subsequently developed into the older Madernin.[182] I have seen no other sources supporting this toponymic suggestion, although one should consider the aforementioned charters pertaining to Aithernie in Scoonie Parish, which closely resemble the suffix in the older form *Madernin* (i.e. Athernin [c. 1178) and Adernin [c. 1178]). The spelling of Madderty in an earlier grant as *Maddiryne* sounds suspiciously like the name 'St Ierny' near Kilrenny (see above, 24).[183] If we consider these other place-names associated with St Ethernan, spelling the suffix as such at about the same period in which Madderty was founded, then it appears likely that a hypocoristic form of the name Ethernan would appear in this toponymic. If we were to presume the name of Madderty being older than the establishement of the church their between 1175 and 1185, then it would appear that the suffix of this name may record an earlier site dedicated to this particular saint.

The final prominent ecclesiastical site associated with St Ethernan is the church of Rathen in Buchan (see Plate V). The present ruins of the church of Rathen date to at least 1646 based on an inscription above an arched doorway to Alexander Fraser Philorth, and

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[180] 'Magna Protectio et Confirmation Innocentii III Pape' (c. 1203) (W.A. Lindsay, *Charters, Bulls and Other Documents Relating to the Abbey of Inchaffray* [Edinburgh, 1908], 6-8, fol. ix: 'sancti Ethernani de Madernin'. 'Gilbertus comes de Stratheryn' (c. 1200) (Ibid, 12-14, fol. xiv): 'Sancti Ethirnani de de Maddirnyn'.

[181] 'Carta.terrarum.videlicet' (c. 1219) (Ibid, 32-34, fol. xxxix): 'sancti Iþernanj de Maderny'. 'Confirmatio Regis Alexandri' (c. 1219/20) (Ibid, 34-35, fol. xl): 'sancti Ethirnani de Maddirnyne.'

[182] W.A. Lindsay, *Charters, Bulls and Other Documents Relating to the Abbey of Inchaffray* (Edinburgh, 1908), 324-325.

[183] 'Carta terrarum videlicet de Achlour', (ed. C. Innes, *Liber Insule Missarum: Abbacie Canonicorum Regularium B. Virginis et S. Johannis de Inchaffery*, Bannatyne Clube [Edinburgh, 1847], 7-8).

the bellcote is dated to 1782.[184] Rathen is first mentioned in 1207 regarding its parson and again in 1228, and we do not find specific charters pertaining to the church of Rathen until 1327/8.[185] Earlier than the first two charters, the church of Rathen is included in the tax collections of Aberdeen, c. 1275.[186] The church of Rathen was presumably under the diocese of Mortlach, until it was granted by Robert I to the diocese of Aberdeen in 1327/8 to convert the revenues to Aberdeen, though it would appear that Rathen was already paying taxes and revenues to Aberdeen. It is known that St Ethernan was the venerated saint at this site, as is seen in the Aberdeen Breviary (which states that he was the founder and first bishop of Rathen) and the Martyrology of Aberdeen, where Ethernan is listed as the patron saint of Rathen.[187] Despite the Aberdeen Breviary's claim that he was the 'first bishop of Rathin', there is actually no evidence to support that Rathen was ever a bishopric.[188]

There is also a well near the church which is believed to have been consecrated by St Ethernan, and it used to supply the village of Rathen (see Plate V.3). Also in the vicinity, on the eastern side of nearby Mormond Hill is an area known as 'St Ethernan's Slack' or 'St Eddran's Slack', which was legendarily reputed to be his hermitage site.[189] Mormond Hill, for *mórmhonadh* meaning 'big hill' is Pictish in origin, *monadh* apparently being a Pictish term for 'hill'.[190]

The final site of discussion associated with St Ethernan was an annual fair held in Forfar dedicated to him. On his feast day (2 December), a fair was held in Forfar called St. Tuetheren's fair. According to Bisop Forbes, accounts from the burgh described the

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[184] 'St. Ethernan's Parish Kirk, Rathen' *Aberdeenshire Historic Kirkyards Project* (date visited 21/07/98). (See also Plate V).

[185] 'Carta Robertii Regis de iure patronatus ecclesie de Rathyn' (c. 1327), (*Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis: Ecclesie Cathedralis Aberdonensis, Regesta que extant in unum collecta*, Vol. 1 [Edinburgh, 1845], 47-48).

[186] *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis: Ecclesie Cathedralis Aberdonensis, Regesta que extant in unum collecta* (Vol. II Edinburgh, 1845), 52-53, see *Tabula: 'Taxacio ecclesiarum et beneficiorum per episcopatum Aberdonensem* c. 1275 under '*Decantus de Buchania*': 'Rathyn .xxxiv.marce'.

[187] *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS. De.1/1/53-54, Vol. II Pars Estivalis, fol. vi-vii). See also: 'Martyrologium secundum usum ecclesie Aberdonensis' in *Registrum Episcopatus Aberdonensis: Ecclesie Cathedralis Aberdonensis, Regesta que extant in unum collecta*, Vol. I (Edinburgh, 1845), Appendix I.

[188] K. Jackson, 'The Pictish Language', 139: supported the statement in the Breviary, though there is no evidence outside of the Breviary to uphold this claim, nor is there an indication of an early medeival ecclesiastical site in the vicinity.

[189] For examples, see W.J. Watson, *History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*.

[190] W.J. Watson, *History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland*, 404.

fair as, "For proclaiming of Saint Tuetheren's fair at the Croce of Brechin, and in the crofts thereof."[191]

It is impossible to deduce precisely which of the above mentioned ecclesiastical sites associated with St Ethernan would be the mother house branching out to form the other consecrated sites, although the Isle of May would appear to be a plausible mother house for the site at Kilrenny. As was previously mentioned, it is interesting that there were numerous dedications to St Ethernan from the Scottish earls, whereas we do not find charters of such venerations from kings.[192] As was previously mentioned in the charter from Gospatrick, Earl of Dunbar, he dedicated his toft at Bele. His son Edward also dedicated a chalder of meal annually to the monks on the May.[193] It is also interesting that Alexander Comyn dedicated lights to the altar of St Ethernan, and his father, William Comyn also took an interest in Kilrenny. A connection between the Fife Ethernan-related sites and Madderty in Perthshire is plausible, though a direct correlation is unattested.

Beginning with the earldom of Buchan, the Comyn family was one of the most powerful families in thirteenth century Scotland. William Comyn, the first Norman earl of Scotland, acquired lordships from his father, Richard Comyn, in 'Kirkintilloch and Lenzie plus Machan (in the Glasgow area); West Linton (Peeblesshire); Bedrule (Roxburghshire); Dalswinton (Dumfrieshire) and important lands in Tynedale'.[194] William Comyn was also the Justiciar of Scotland from 1205-1233. In 1212 William Comyn took as his second wife, Margaret the Countess of Buchan, the only daughter and heiress of the last Celtic earl of Buchan, Earl Fergus, who was living about 1170 and died before 1199.[195] When William married Margaret, he also inherited the lands owned by her father, Earl Fergus, at Fordoun in the Mearns, Kennoway, Fithkil (Leslie), Balmullo (Leuchars), and Kilrenny in Fife.[196] It is interesting that two sites potentially associated

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[191] A.P. Forbes, *Kalendars of Scottish Saints* (Edinburgh, 1872), 333.
[192] A.A.M. Duncan, 'Documents Relating to the Prioryu of the Isle of May', 55 (regarding King David I): 'The island was indeed associated with a ninth century missionary, St. Ethernan, but there is no evidence that the king was inspired with devotion to his cult, and his name does not occur in the royal charters'.
[193] J. Balfour, *The Scots Peerage*, Vol. III (Edinburgh, 1906), 248 (the meal dedicated to the May in this charter was for the annual feast of St Cuthbert).
[194] A. Young, *Robert the Bruce's Rivals: the Comyns, 1212-1314* (East Lothian, 1997), 23.
[195] V. Gibbs (ed.), *The Complete Peerage*, Vol. II, 374-375, 374: Margaret was widowed prior to her marriage to William Comyn, though the name of her first husband is not known.
[196] A. Young, *Robert the Bruce's Rivals: the Comyns, 1212-1314* (East Lothian, 1997), 25-26.

with St Ethernan (i.e. Fordoun and Kilrenny) were notably in the possession of the Celtic Earls of Buchan.

William Comyn also took an interest in ecclesiastical patronage. As was previously mentioned, the church of Kilrenny was granted to Dryburgh by him for use as an abbey in 1220. [197] William Comyn also founded the Cistercian Abbey of Deer in Buchan in 1233. It is reputed that he was buried before the high altar in the Abbey of Deer.[198] William Comyn's son, Alexander Comyn (Earl of Buchan), likewise inherited his father's possessions, and was Justiciar of Scotland between 1251-1255 and again from 1257-1289, and he also held the office of Constable.[199] As was previously mentioned, he is the one who granted lights to the altar of St Ethernan's chapel on the Isle of May.

The Comyn family, as described by Alan Young, appeared 'to have readily combined the Celtic system of organization around personal relationships with the Norman feudal system based on tenure'.[200] Prior to William Comyn's marriage to Margaret, her father, Earl Fergus, was the last in the line of the Celtic earls of Buchan. The Celtic earldoms originated from the office of mórmaer, which was a position equated with 'earl', and it would appear that the mórmaers of Scotland held the equivalent of lesser Irish kings at the time.[201] The office of mórmaer appears to have been a Pictish system of governance, the word (much like *davoch*) not occuring in Irish, and there were likewise only six earldoms (each deriving from earlier mórmaers) in Scotland; an earldom was not created in Argyll (the original settlement of the Dálriadan Gaels) until 1453.[202] Earl Fergus's lineage, though obscure, can be traced back to Gartnach, Mórmaer of Buchan (c.1115).[203]

Gilbert, Earl of Strathearn, was likewise a descendent of the mórmaers, his lineage tracing back to Malise, a probable mórmaer of Strathearn (*ante* 1124). He was

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[197] *Dryburgh Cartullary*, (National Library of Scotland, Adv. MS.9A.1.4, fol. xviii): 'Confirmatio comitis de Buchan super Ecclesia de Kilreny'.
[198] J. B. Paul (ed.), *The Scots Peerage* (Vol. II Edinburgh, 1905), 252.
[199] V. Gibbs (ed). *The Complete Peerage* (Vol. II London, 1912), 374-375.
[200] A. Young, 'The Earls and Earldom of Buchan in the Thirteenth Century,' in A. Grant & K. Stringer (eds), *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community* (Edinburgh, 1993),181. See also: A. Young, *Robert the Bruce's Rivals: the Comyns, 1212-1314* (East Lothian, 1997), 29-30.
[201] W.A. Cummins, *The Lost Language of the Picts* (Balgavies, 2001), 24.
[202] Ibid, 24-25.
[203] V. Gibbs (ed.), *The Complete Peerage* (Vol. II London, 1912), 374.

the son of Ferteth, the last Celtic earl of Strathearn (*ante* 1160). As was previously mentioned, the lands of Madderty were granted to Gilbert by King William the Lion between 1175 and 1185. Gilbert was given Madderty because the lands had been forfeited by a certain Gillecolm Marescall, who had committed an unkown felony against King William.[204] A connection between William the Lion's mother, Countess Ada, and her involvement with Kilrenny and Gilbert's dedication of Madderty to St Ethernan seems very hypothetical. A more likely reason would be either that the saint's legacy survived in local legends in this vicinity, or that Gilbert chose the dedication from a martyrology list. From the name Madderty, it would appear that the name Ethernan is present in the suffix of the toponym, therefore making it likely that he was remembered and venerated in the area.

The previously mentioned charter from Gospatrick, Earl of Dunbar, to the monks on the Isle of May, is the earliest source indicating St Ethernan's veneration at the priory. The creation of the Dunbar earldom is incredibly obscure, though they were presumably of Celtic origin; this Earldom did not descend from a mórmaership, since it was south of the Forth.[205] Of all the dedications to sites associated with St Ethernan, the Earls of Dunbar are the only family we have evidence of who venerated St Ethernan south of the Firth of Forth. The coastal site of Dunbar in East Lothian, moreover, would enable easy to the May by boat, so this might explain the connection.

It is possible that St Ethernan was a dynastic saint of the Pictish mórmaers and subsequently venerated by these Celtic earls and aristocrats descended from Celtic families. There are no surviving royal charters mentioning a dedication to St Ethernan, so he was obviously not venerated by the kings of Scotland.[206] A saint of a similar name, St Edern of Gwynedd, was likewise a dynastic saint (see below, 32). Considering that both Earl Fergus, William Comyn by marriage and even Gilbert the Earl of Strathern are not far removed from their ancestors bearing the title 'mórmaer', it seems plausible to suggest that the veneration of St Ethernan and his cult could very likely have been supported and promoted by the Pictish mórmaers and the preceeding Celtic aristocracy.

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[204] C. Innes, *Liber Insule Missarum: Abbacie Canonicorum Regularium B. Virginis et S. Johannis de Inchaffray* (Edinburgh, 1847), vi-viii.
[205] J. Balfour, *The Scots Peerage*, Vol. III, 239.
[206] A.A.M. Duncan, 'Documents Relating to the Priory of the Isle of May', 55.

The toponymics, churchs and venerations to these sites by the Scottish earls are quite numerous. From these it would appear that St Ethernan's cult either persisted into the later middle ages or that his cult was rejuninated. His veneration by the Celtic and later Norman earls appears to be a continuance of this saint's cult in the Scottish aristocracy. After the charters from Gospatrick (1147-1180) and Alexander Comyn (1285), there are no other surviving source mentioning a deciation to St Ethernan. This leads one to presume that the height of his cult in the medieval period was between the twelfth and late thirteenth century. Perhaps the later confusion with St Adrian could explain a decline in dedications to the cult of St Ethernan. However, His legend survived in many of these areas throughout the medieval period and into the modern era. The later medieval period is also the time in which numerous church calendars were composed, and also when the famous Aberdeen Breviary was printed. Besides the above mentioned charters mentioning the name of Ethernan, the Aberdeen Breviary is an important later medieval source pertaining to St Ethernan, and shall now be briefly considered.

VI. The Aberdeen Breviary: *De Sancto Ethernano*

The Aberdeen Breviary was the first book to be published in Scotland between 1509 and 1510 and was also the first national breviary to be published in Europe. Bishop William Elphinstone of Aberdeen (1431-1514), also the founder of the University of Aberdeen, was the overseer of its collections and its publication. Elphinstone and his assistants had begun working on the project between 1494 and 1504 by compiling a martyrology for the diocese.[207] The Aberdeen Breviary is recognized as one of the most important sources for the *Vitae* of Scottish saints.[208] The process by which the Breviary was edited indicates that it was conducted on a nationalist basis. For example, when examining the Calendar of a Sarum breviary 'it becomes strikingly obvious that Elphinstone's assistants have removed many English saints and substituted in their place

[207] L. J. Macfarlane, *William Elphinstone and the Kingdom of Scotland 1431-1514: the Struggle for Order* (Aberdeen, 1985), 234-235.
[208] P. Dransart, 'Saints, Stones and Shrines', 233.

a large number of early Scottish saints'.[209] Elphinstone and his assistants likewise avoided local 'particularism' and selected saints on a national level, including Deeside saints and saints from other dioceses, thus increasing the elevation of many of these Scottish saints.[210] Elphinstone's assistants also relied heavily on local legends of saints as opposed to existing *Vitae*, such as those of St Ninian and St Kentigern for example.[211] The Aberdeen Breivary also retains the only surviving *Vita* of St Ethernan, though it likewise appears to be derived from legend and not a preceeding *Vita*. The most likely place in Aberdeen where Elphinstone's assistants would have drawn this material from would have been Rathen in Buchan, as his *Vita* indicates.

Though there is probably little historical value in Ethernan's brief *Vita* in the Aberdeen Breviary, being removed by at least 841 years after the Annal obits of 669, it is worth noting nevertheless for grains of historical relevance. The *Vita* states that Ethernan was from Scotland, that he was born to a noble family, and that his parents (who were Christians), presented him to the church to be educated, he readily grasped reading and writing even 'spending his years in literate leisure beyond what most adults do'.[212] Then the *Vita* states that he traveled to Ireland where he learned and preached with other men of Christ; while in Ireland he received a prophecy from God that he was to become a bishop, and he was elevated to the episcopacy.[213] Then the *Vita* continues that Ethernan accompanied by a few students, preachers and clerics, returned to Scotland where they

[209] L. J. Macfarlane, *William Elphinstone and the Kingdom of Scotland 1431-1514: the Struggle for Order* (Aberdeen, 1985), 237.
[210] Ibid, 237.
[211] Ibid, 239.
[212] *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS. De.1/1/53-54, Pars Estivalis, fol. vii): 'Ethernanus episcopus ex scotis non ignobili familia genitus: a cunabulis et iuuenilibus annis bonarum arcium studiis per parentes professoribus Christi traditus imbuendus sub quorum dicione in omni genere dicendi et diuini numinis miracula cognoscendi atque ipsius summi dei que christianus omnibus maxime opere precium est catholicam fidem intelligendi officionsissime militauit: frugalitatis parcimonie tantum modo contentus: ut ad litteras capescendas aptius animum acommodaret: otio literatorio suos supra adultos traduxit annos et ad altioris intellectus acumen aspirabat.'
[213]*Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS. De.1/1/53-54, Pars Estivalis, fol. vii): 'Hinc hyberniam prouinciam et ibidem christi doctores viros vite approbatissimos perlustrauit et peciit: ubi ecclesiasticis ab eisdem eruditus discipulis verbum dei doctrine et exemplo palam, cunctis predicauit. Ubi non longe post hoc diuinitus ab angelo accepto oraculo in episcopum spiritus illustante gracia sublimatus est assumpto autem eo in episcopum verbi dei semina non cessauit nocte dieque vigiliis et lucubracionibus plurimus propelare...'

lived as hermits, and that he later founded the church of Rathen in Buchan and was its first bishop.[214]

A concept pertaining to St Ethernan mentioned in the Breviary is that he might have actually been a bishop. There is no early medieval evidence to support this, and the absense of the term 'epscop' or 'epscuip' along with his entry in AU, AT, and CS makes this notion theoretical, though the period of his life would coincide with Pictish conformity to the Columban institution. The head of the Columban Church would have been the abbot of Iona, to whom other abbots and even bishops would have been subject, and a bishop of Iona is not mentioned until c. 711.[215] Unfortunately we can only speculate about the nature of the Columban Church in Pictland, while simultaneously understanding that it was apparently conformist. Gordon Donaldson has discussed in detail the importance of Scottish bishops prior to the reign of David I, and it is likely that this preceeding status of bishops was derived from the Pictish period.[216] We do have evidence of one Pictish bishop, the aforementioned St Fergus the Pict, who was a bishop in Ireland or Dálriada. The Breviary also list St Nechtan Nér as a bishop and confessor, and St Drostan as an abbot. It would appear that the known Pictish saints held high ecclesiastical status. It is likely that St Ethernan was more than a solitary priest and hermit, who held status as either a bishop or an abbot. It is unfortunate that there are no earlier records pertaining to St Ethernan other than the Aberdeen Breviary, and the *Vita* appears to be very pseudo-historical in nature, and was probably derived from local legends at Rathen.

The Scottish Church Calendars, however, provide interesting insight into the later medieval consensus of Ethernan's ecclesiastical status. In the Calender of David Chambers (1530-1592), he is listed as 'Sanctus Ethernanus Abbas et Confessor, Sancti Columbae ex fratre nepos,' implying that he was an abbot, and the nephew of St Columba. In the *Menologium Scotorum* (early seventeenth-century)he is listed under 24 January as 'In Iona Ethernani abbatis et episcope', and on December 22 as 'In Scotia

[214] *Aberdeen Breviary* (Edinburgh University MS. De.1/1/53-54, Pars Estivalis, fol. vii): 'Scociam vero denuoreursus paucis assumptis secum scolasticis presbiteris et clerecis qui secum ad heremi deserta commitabantum in qua vitam heremeticam durit et artam Pane et qua interdum contentus' ... 'Deinde ecclesiam de rathine in buchanie confinibus omnipotenti deo consecrauit que usque hodie in honore ipsius in presens dedicate est Tandem correptus egritudine quarto nonas decembirs conualit ad superos.'
[215] AT [710] 'Ceode espoc Iae pausat.' AU [711/712] 'Coeddi, episcopus Iae pausat.'
[216] G. Donaldson, 'Scottish Bishops' Sees Before the Reign of David I,' *PSAS* (1952-53), 108.

Ethernani episcope, qui in Insulis Scoticis natus, sancti Columbae discipulus fuit.' These later calenders would initially appear to be consistent with the Breviary in listing him as a bishop, except in the Calendar of David Chambers where he is also listed as an abbot, and in the *Menologium Scotorum* where he is said to have been in Iona and an abbot as well as a bishop. In all of the above he is either a relative or disciple of St Colum Cille and is associated with Iona.

VII. Ethernan and Iona

The later medeival calendars mentioned above associate Ethernan with St Colum Cille and Iona. Indeed, the period of Ethernan's life would coincide with Columban dominance in Pictland. As has been previously mentioned, the entry of the death of *Itarnan* and *Corindu* amongst the Picts in AU, AT, and CS was most likely a source derived from an *Iona Chronicle*. Recent archaeological discoveries on the Isle of May also indicate an Iona connection. White quartz pebbles were discovered in some of the early medieval graves on the May, and it is not a naturally occuring geological formation on the May. White quartz pebbles are commonly found in prehistoric and early Christian graves, these have also been uncovered from Ionan graves.[217] The layout of the early monastic enclosure on the May is also comparible with other known Ionan houses, such as Applecross, Kingarth, Canna (A'Chill), and Lismore.[218] Various legends also suggest that Adomnán, the ninth abbot of Iona, was associated with the May.[219] The ecclesiastical foundation on the Isle of May would also have been a likely choice for a Columban Church, consistent with other island centres such as Iona and Canna.[220]

The Aberdeen Breviary also states that Ethernan left Scotland and traveled to Ireland where he learned and preached with the learned men of Christ.[221] It may be the

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[217] P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St Ethernan',89.
[218] Ibid.,89.
[219] See 'Life of St Servanus' (W.F. Skene, *Chronicles of the Picts and Scots* [Edinburgh, 1867], 417).
[220] S. Stevenson (ed.), *Historic Royal Burgh of Kilrenny and Anstruther: Churches, Manses and Schools* (Kilrenny and Anstruther Burgh Collection, 2001), 3: 'The choice of an island base is in keeping with the pattern of the Celtic Church of which Columba and Iona are models.'
[221] Aberdeen Breviary (MS. De.1/1/53-54, Vol. II Pars Estivalis, fol. vii): 'Hinc hyberniam prouinciam et ibidem christi doctores viros vite approbatissimos perlustrauit et peciit: ut ecclesiasticis ab eisdem eruditus discipulis verbus dei doctrina et exemplo palam, cunctis predicauit.'

case that Ethernan studied at Iona in Dálriada, which would have been considered part of Ireland at the time. Considering all the possibilites, it appears likely that Ethernan and his partner Corindu were probably Iona-trained ecclesiastics.[222] Another possibility is that they were trained by an Ionan daughter house.

Little mention has been made so far of the other figure associated with Ethernan, Corindu, mentioned in AU, AT, and CS in the 669 entry. Corindu is even more obscure than St Ethernan. The name is a compound-name, *Corin* + *dubh* literally meaning 'dark Corin'. The retention of the /-in/ diminutive in the name is unusual, though the name would appear to be of Irish nomenclature, although the name is not attested in Irish. The name Corindu, like *Itarnan*, is only seen in this single instance in the Annals. It is, moreover, a thoroughly Celtic name. There are two consecrated sites, one in Kincardineshire and one in Aberdeenshire dedicated to a St Coran, and they are possibly dedications to this individual. If Corindu were beatified, it is unfortunate that he does not have a surviving *Vita* in the Aberdeen Breviary, nor does the Breviary mention this name in Ethernan's *Vita*.

VIII. St Edern of Wales and St Edern (St Ethernan) of Brittany

A comparative history of St Ethernan with other saints of similar nomenclature does not just encompass the former Pictish regions of Scotland, but rather extends to North Wales and the Continent. There are also two other saints, St. Edern venerated in Gwynedd, and St Edern of Brittany, the latter of which was with St Ethernan of Scotland. It has already been demonstrated that Edern is the Brythonic equivalent of Ethernan. The name Edern is an eponym of the cwmwd of Edeirnion in Northern Powys, located in the cantref of Penllyn. The region of Powys was independent c. 600-850, and later came under Gwynedd rule.[223] As has been previously mentioned, Edeirnion is supposedly the region of a dynasty founded by Edern map Cunedda.[224] Edern map Nudd was a Gwynedd born saint (c. seventh-century), with his toponym at Bodedern in the parish of

[222] P. Yeoman, 'Pilgrims to St Ethernan', 87.
[223] A. H. Williams, *An Introduction to the History of Wales* (Vol. I, Cardiff, 1949), 115.
[224] M. Miller, *The Saints of Gwynedd* (New Jersey, 1979), 2: 'A late source gives Penllyn a non-Cuneddan dynastyof its own; and Edeirnion itself is sometimes not in Gwynedd but in Powys.'

Caergybi on the Isle of Anglesey, and he is also commemorated at the church of Llanedern in Caernarfon.[225] He was also a dynastic saint, and his name was later added to the parish of Cybi, and the parish of Llyn near Penmaen.[226] Similarly, Edern map Cunedda was also a dynastic saint added to these later pedigrees.[227] It is interesting to that there was a saint with a similar name to Ethernan also thriving in the seventh century. There is also another Welsh saint known as Edeyrn map Gwrgtheyrn (Vortigern), who was one of the congregation of Saint Germanus, and who supposedly established a monastery at Llanedeurn in Glamorgan; his name is indicative in the toponym.[228]

In Brittany there is a saint recognized as St Edern, who has an alternative name as St Ethernan. He is venereated in several villages such as: Guerlesquin, Plougar (Finistère), and Plouha (Côte-du-Nord).[229] Also, the parishes of Lannedern, Plouedern, and Edern (all bearing his toponym) are under his invocation. It is said that the tomb of the saint is in the church of Saint-Edern de Lannedern. In Brittany the saint is also iconographically portrayed riding a deer. According to tradition, a deer was being chased by a hunter and Edern invited it into his hermitage, and the deer never left his side. There is a statue of him riding a stag in the church of Saint-Edern de Lannedern, a similar statue in the same bourg, and in the church of Sainte-Anne de Lannedern there is an old tablet representing his legend.[230] Also inside the churches of Plogonnec (in Finistère) and Plougar are statues of him riding a stag, and in the church of Saint-Nicolas in Locqueffret (also in Finistère) is a representation of his martyrdom.[231] It has been suggested that the statues of St Edern riding a dear is a Christian transformation of an earlier Gaulish god Cernunnos; there is no information to bolster this claim, and it is highly speculative.[232] In Brittany St Edern was known as an Irish friar who was a nephew of St Colum Cille, who

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[225] F.G. Holweck, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Saints* (London, 1924).
[226] M. Miller, *The Saints of Gwynedd* (New Jersey, 1979), 67.
[227] Ibid, 108.
[228] F.G. Holweck, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Saints* (London, 1924).
[229] P. J. Hélias, *Dictionaire des Saints Bretons* (Paris, 1979), 121.
[230] P.J. Hélias, *Dictionaire des Saints Bretons* (Paris, 1979), 122: 'Dans la chapelle Sainte-Anne, à Lannedern, un tableau ancien represénte sa légende'.
[231] *Ibid*, 122: 'Dans l'église de Plogonnec (Finistèstre), une statue le figure, chevauchant un cerf. Autre statue dans l'église de Plougar/ Enfin on peut voir un calvaire, dit de Saint-Edern, près de la chapelle Saint-Nicolas à Locqueffret (Finistère)'.
[232] Louis Pape, *Les Saints Bretons*, (Rennes, 1981), 78.

went with him to Britain in the sixth century. It becomes more confusing, however, in the case of Lannedern, who believe that Edern was a welsh hermit who went to Brittany in the ninth century, and who was perhaps the same St Edern map Nudd of Gwynedd. It could be possible that the mention of his familial relation with St Colum Cille might have been acquired from a Scottish legend associating him with St Colum Cille. It is not unusual to find early Scottish saints being venerated in Brittany, for St Nechtan Nér was also known in Brittany as St Neizan. A possible site from where this may have originated could be the Isle of May, since it was such a prominent pilgrimage site at its height. It is also known that the waters around the May and its harbours were very popular amongst fishermen, even attracting fishermen from France and Belgium.[233] However, no evidence exists that I have come across to prove whether or not the saint venerated in Brittany is the Ethernan of Scotland or the Edern of North Wales. The alternative name of St Edern in Brittany as Ethernan would seem to confirm the relationship between these two names in lieu of the etymology of Ethernan, thus making it a fact that the names are one and the same.

X. Conclusions

With all the known evidence of St Ethernan presented throughout this discourse, it is still most unfortunate that he remains an enigmatic historical figure. The lacuna of early medieval orthographic sources, save for the Irish Annals, enables us with only his *obit* entry with which to work. Beneficial to this, moreover, is the fact that it would appear that this entry stemmed from a now missing *Iona Chronicle*, thus possibly linking Ethernan with Iona. The most vital aspect to the study of St Ethernan is the prevalence with which this name occurs on the Pictish inscriptions. Though it would be truly amazing if all the inscriptions bearing this name actually do refer to St Ethernan, since it is very hypothetical that they actually do, at least they serve as a evidence to the currency of this name in Pictland between the seventh and ninth-centuries, thus making the name a Pictish name for which we have no other attestations. In these regards, the etymology of the name of Ethernan indicate that it is a Pictish name, which developed from a Latin

[233] A.A.M. Duncan, 'Documents Relating to the Priory of the Isle of May', 56.

loanword and was likewise borrowed into the Brythonic languages. The *Itarnan* of the Annal entries is also philologically the same as the name Ethernan, seen in the later medieval cult-site dedications, so presumably the note of *Itarnan's* death amongst the Picts must be the individual in question. All the early medieval evidence combined seems to indicate that Ethernan (*Itarnan*) and Corindu were ecclesiastics, and his later cult appears to affirm this. We shoudl also presume that St Ethernan's cult began in the Pictish period, as the single-name inscription on the Scoonie Stone would indicate(and possibly the other inscriptions). This would likewise explain either the continuince or the rejuvination of his cult in the later Middle Ages. The possibility that a hypocoristic form of his name is seen in many place-names associated with him, such as Kilrenny, Aithernie and Madderty also attest to an earlier development of his cult. Theoretically, Ethernan's veneration by the earldoms of Buchan, Strathearn and Dunbar appear to originate from the preceeding Celtic earldoms and noble families. From this it is possible to postulate that St Ethernan was a saint honoured by the Pictish nobles and mórmaers, since we do not see later medieval honours to St Ethernan in royal charters. St Ethernan is also still remembered in these respective regions in Scotland, especially in Kilrenny, in local legends pertaining to the Isle of May and also at Rathen. Even recently, a play was written for the Rathen primary school to instruct the children of the importance of their patron saint.[234] In all thoroughness, Ethernan still remains a rather enigmatic saint of the Picts, although the various methodologies utilized in this dissertaion and the thorough analysis of all the evidence pertaining to St Ethernan provides many outlets for postulation about this Pictish saint.

[234] I owe a special thanks to Mrs. Nora Murray for relating this to me, and for also providing me with information and photographs of the old Rathen Parish Kirk.



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Fordoun Pictish Symbol Stone, now housed in Auchenblae Parish Kirk



Photography by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Inscription of the Fordoun stone, reading **P**IDARNOIN.



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

St Palladius Kirk, Auchenblae: The site where the Fordoun Stone was discovered.



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Brodie Stone (front)



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Brodie Stone (Reverse)



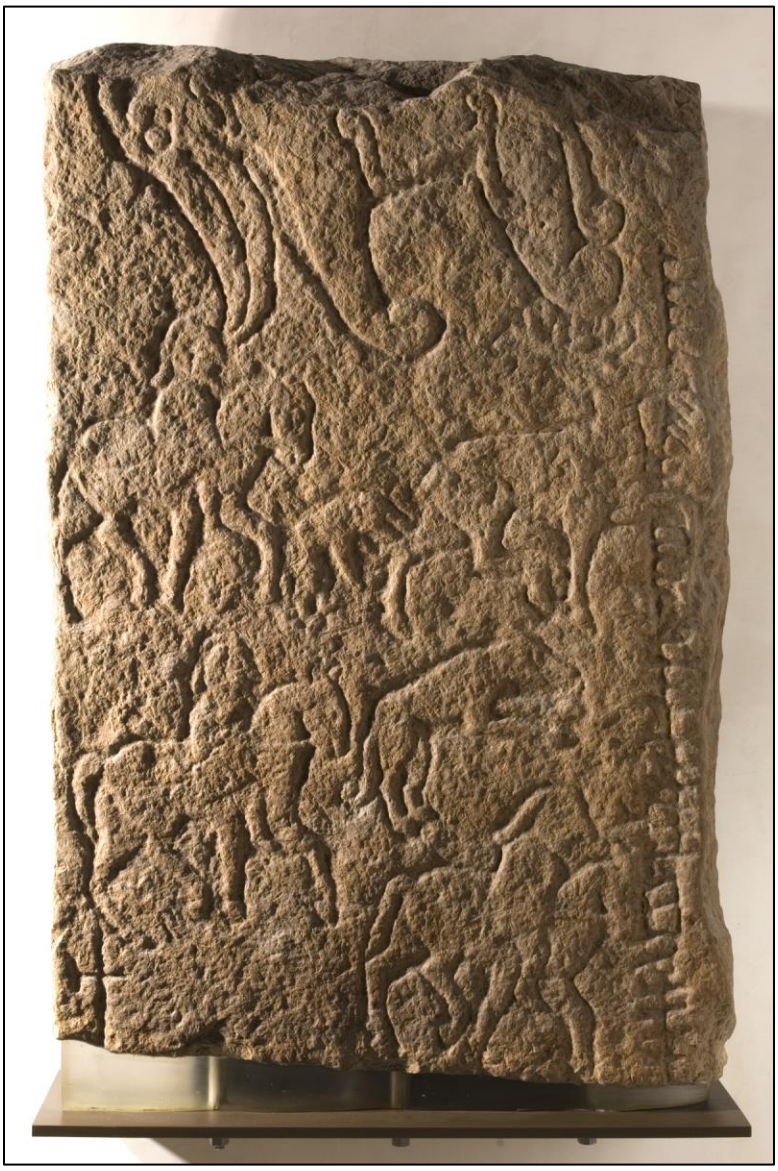
Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Brodie Stone ogham inscription



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Dyce Parish Kirk, where the Brodie Stone was discovered



(c) Trustess of the National Museum of Scotland

Scoonie Stone (front panel of cross-slab)



Photograph by Kelly Kilpatrick

The site of the old Scoonie parish kirk where the Scoonie Stone was discovered.



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

The Isle of May in the distance from the mainland of Fife.



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Rathen Old Parish Kirk.



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

Rathen Old Parish Kirk



Photograph by Kelly A. Kilpatrick

St Ethernan’s consecrated well. The well used to supply the village with water.

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