

The Kilmichael Glassary Bell-shrine

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ABSTRACT

The Kilmichael Glassary Bell-shrine is one of the treasures of National Museums Scotland. This paper reassesses the circumstances of its discovery, its context and importance, and its role as a relic of a saint, not Moluag, as previously suggested, but possibly Columba. The wider use of handbells in the early medieval church is also considered. The bell-shrine was found in 1814, on the farm of Torbhlaren, in the parish of Kilmichael Glassary, in mainland Argyll, probably near to where it was venerated. The bell inside it dates to the 7th–9th century, the shrine to the first half of the 12th century. The latter bears evidence in its design of a mixed artistic heritage, including local, Irish and Scandinavian influence. Alternative hypotheses, that it represents the artistic output of the Kingdom of the Isles or Dunkeld, in the kingdom of the Scots, are presented. Details are provided of a technological examination of bell and shrine and a list of other early Scottish handbells is included.

INTRODUCTION

The Kilmichael Glassary Bell-shrine [KGBS] is a medieval reliquary in the form of a small copper alloy box which contains an iron handbell (illus 1). Associated with them is a copper alloy chain and cross. This group of artefacts was found in 1814, on the land of John MacNeill of Oakfield, in the parish of Kilmichael Glassary in Argyll, and in 1826, was gifted by him to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, whose collections are now incorporated in National Museums Scotland [NMS]. The bell is registered as H.KA 4, the shrine as H.KA 5, and the cross and chain as H.KA 6.

DISCOVERY AND PROVENANCE

S Webb

The circumstances surrounding the place where bell, shrine, cross and chain were found in the early 1800s are confusing and there are conflicting opinions as to who made this extraordinary discovery. The earliest documentary source giving an account of the find is a letter dated December 1826. This was read to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland by the author, Thomas Thomson, who was also vice-president of the society. Thomson begins his letter by stating that he is

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ILLUS 1 The Kilmichael Glassary bell-shrine (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

authorised by one John MacNeill to present the bell, shrine, cross and chain to the society. The assemblage was probably handed over at this meeting or soon afterwards. The letter was then

published in *Archaeologia Scotica* 4 (1857): 117–18.

Thomson gives a detailed account of the circumstances in which the assemblage came to

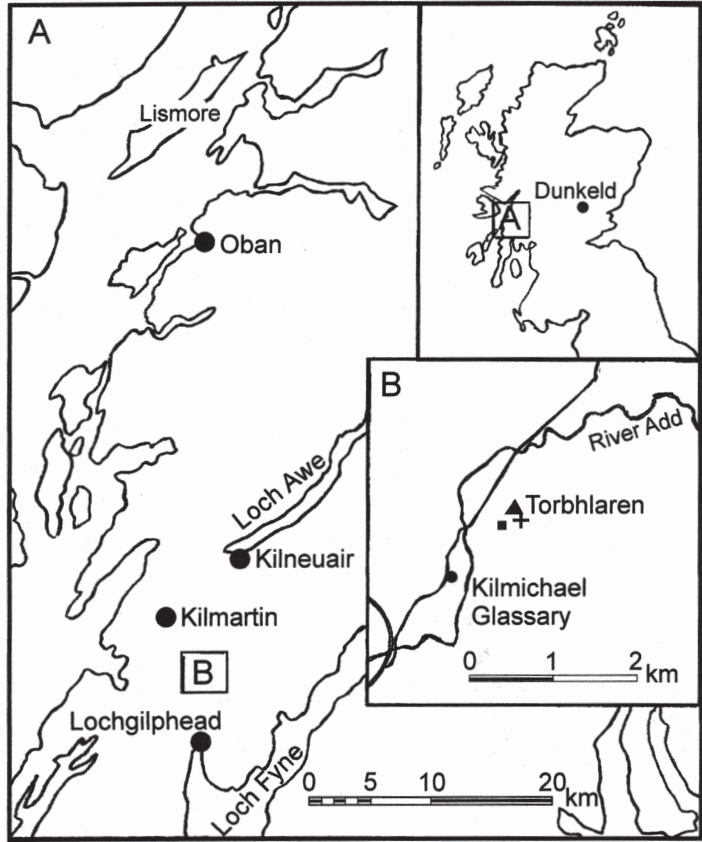
be in the possession of John MacNeill. He reports that it was found accidentally, about 12 years previously, by workmen employed collecting and removing stones for the construction of a dyke, on the farm of Torbhlaran belonging to Mr MacNeill, about a mile and a half from the parish church (illus 2).

The findspot is described in some detail:

[O]n the steep acclivity of a mountain, which forms one side of a narrow and sequestered valley, rising in a conical form to a height of about five hundred feet; but the spot in question is at an elevation of not more than thirty feet from the bottom of the mountain, where the surface is covered with huge blocks of stone, thrown together in the utmost disorder, and where the slope is so very steep as not to admit of the erection of any building of the most trifling magnitude.

Thomson's account makes it clear that the cross and chain, now so firmly associated with the bell and shrine, were found nearby about the same time, rather than the assemblage being discovered in one place. This is a fact also noted by Hibbert in another paper on the KGBS read to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1827 (Hibbert 1857: 120). Hibbert makes no mention of the find spot, assuming, one would imagine, that the details given by Thomson were correct. He was followed in this respect by Daniel Wilson, when he wrote about the KGBS some 60 years later (Wilson 1884: 79).

In 1864, however, a differing account, apparently unknown to Wilson, had appeared in the



ILLUS 2 The area around Torbhlaran with the possible find-spot of the KGBS

Ordnance Survey Name Book, Argyll no 14: 18. Rather than the discovery having been made by workmen – as in Thomson's account – the Name Book identifies the finder as one Lady Campbell, late occupier of Torbhlaran. The circumstances of the find are rather sketchy, it being found during 'the demolition of a ruined wall', rather than the construction of one, as in Thomson's account, but the same year of 1814 is supplied. The exact findspot is given as 'At base of Torr a Bhlaran to the southeast side'. The authority given for the spelling of the placenames (and presumably the account of the bell-shrine being found) is three people of local standing: Mr Martin, the factor of Kilmartin (Poltalloch Estate); Mr Gillies, schoolmaster, Bridgend; and Mr Gillies, Kilmichael Glassary. It is somewhat unusual that

the local minister is not included amongst these persons of authority, as is generally the case in the Name Book accounts.

A typed note, signed by J G Callander, in the archives of the Society of Antiquaries, challenges both accounts of the KGBS' discovery given so far. The note, in full, states:

Dr D. G. Campbell, M.D., C.M., of Elgin, has informed me that the Kilmichael-Glassary Bell and Bell Shrine were not found on the Hill of Torrebhlaran, but they were found at the back of the Manse, about the site of the old Church. Dr Campbell's information came from his father, Rev. Donald Campbell, who was minister of the Parish from 1852–1906, and whose predecessors as ministers of the parish were his Uncle, Rev. Dugald Campbell, 1830–52, and his grandfather Rev. Dugald Campbell, 1779–1830.

The note is not dated, but other correspondence between Callander and others about similar bells is dated 1926 (Callander 1926). Callander was director of the National Museum of Antiquities between 1919 and 1938 (Stevenson 1981: 186, 196) and, therefore, the note was most likely written during this period. Evidently it must have been written after 1906, as the informant's father is said to have served as parish minister until then. Whatever the date of Callander's note, it is safe to assume that he acquired the information from Dr Campbell at a time when anybody involved in discovering, or reporting the unearthing of the KGBS was long dead.

Marion Campbell and Mary Sandeman, in their 1962 archaeological survey of Mid Argyll, note the discrepancy in the findspot and comment that Thomson's account was made some years after the find was made (Campbell & Sandeman 1964: 82), thus implying it might be inaccurate. The same, however, must be said for Callander's typed note, which is fourth-hand and was made considerably later than Thomson's mere second-hand account.

Confusions are further compounded with the publication by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland

(RCAHMS) of their inventory of ancient monuments for Mid Argyll, which, citing Campbell and Sandeman, states that the bell and shrine are believed to have been found about 1814 'in the area between the church and manse' rather than at Torbhlaran, 0.8km to the north-east, as originally reported (RCAHMS 1992: 143). RCAHMS appear, at first glance, to be taking the Callander note as accurate, but their account actually shifts the findspot somewhat: the 'back of the manse about the site of the old Church' of Callander's account, may not have been an 'area between the church and the manse' as cited in RCAHMS. In fact, we cannot be sure where the manse actually stood in 1814 since the existing manse (now a private house) was built in the 1840s (Walker 2000: 350). The Church of Kilmichael Glassary, as it stands today, was built in 1873 (illus 3), replacing an earlier building of 1841, which itself had replaced a building of 1767 on the same spot (RCAHMS 1992: 143). The old church of Callander's account would be the building of 1767.

By the 1840s, the area of land between the manse and church was occupied by a walled garden and substantial farm-steading, both then owned and operated by the minister, along with a residential building of uncertain date. Presumably, all this land was owned by the Church in the early 1800s and was the site of the old manse. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that land between the manse and church was the find spot, and this we believe is a misconception which arose when the RCAHMS volume was being prepared, possibly because an assumption was made that the assemblage was hidden on land belonging to the Church at the time. It can therefore be discounted.

It would appear then, that there are essentially two conflicting accounts of the findspot – Thomson's 'on a farm ... called Torrebhlaun' and Callander's 'at the back of the Manse, about the site of the old Church'. Or could both these accounts in fact be referring to the same place?

The hill of Torbhlaran – *Tòrr a' Bhàrain* (Gaelic – hill of the little level or flat place)



ILLUS 3 The parish church of Kilmichael Glassary, built in 1873 (photo: D H Caldwell)



ILLUS 4 Tòrr a' Bhlàrain (photo: D H Caldwell)

is a very prominent conical-shaped feature in the landscape with good grass on its lower slopes (illus 4). The farmhouse itself nestles into flatter ground at the base of the rocky summit. The manse is a fine Georgian double-fronted house, sheltered by a high wall from the road which leads up Kilmichael Glen, with an outlook to the River Add and the hills beyond. The back of the present manse actually faces the road. We do not know in which direction the old manse was oriented, but assume that it was in the same spot, or thereabouts. The hills which the manse looks onto are now owned by the Forestry Commission, but were actually once part of Torbhlaren Farm. Could it be that Thomson's and Callander's accounts are actually talking about the same place and that the find was made more to the south-east, on the hills of Torbhlaren rather than the actual Hill of Tòrr a' Bhlàrain?

Moreover, the Hill of Tòrr a' Bhlàrain is visible today from the garden of the manse itself, so even if we take the findspot as being on Tòrr a' Bhlàrain, the accounts could still be referring to the same place.

One must also question the strength of the evidence for the KGBS being found on Tòrr a' Bhlàrain itself. Thomson's account 'on a farm ... called Torrebhlaun', is not the same as 'on the Hill of Torrebhlaran' as is given in the Name Book. The findspot of the bell-shrine is marked on the first Edition OS map, published in 1865 (OS 1865), by a cross on the south-east slope of Tòrr a' Bhlàrain, with the words 'bell and shrine found hereabouts' (illus 2). To recap – the evidence for this comes from the Name Book, which is vouched for by a schoolmaster, a factor and one other, but some 50 years after the find had been made. These people, who would have been children at the time, may not have known the exact findspot of this remarkable discovery when it was made, or even been aware that anything of interest had been uncovered.

Thomson gives a detailed description (see above), but he does not actually state the

name of the hill. At first sight, Tòrr a' Bhlàrain matches Thomson's description. It is a conical hill, and the large boulders of stone are present. However, Tòrr a' Bhlàrain is not 500ft (151m) high, nor is it about a mile and a half (2.41km) from the parish church, as he stated. On the farm there are at least two other hills, Cnocan Tairbh and Barran Fuar, both about 500ft (151m) high and about a mile and a half from the church, with strewn boulders on their slopes and associated narrow valleys.

So in fact, the earliest account does not actually state the Hill of Torbhlaren, the findspot which Callander's informant suggests is inaccurate. It could be that Dr Campbell was really attempting to address what he perceived to be an erroneous account in the Name Book rather than the account by Thomson and his informant, MacNeill. As noted above, the vouching of evidence in Name Books is generally the province of ministers. Perhaps there was some sort of dispute, or problem, or lack of knowledge that led to the minister at the time not being invited to perform this function. Or, this conflicting account might be an attempt to claim ownership of the bell for the Church.

There is also disagreement as to who found the bell. John MacNeill, who donated the bell to the Museum, owned Torbhlaren, but it appears he might have rented the farm to a Lady Campbell. If so, is it possible that she could have found the bell? This seems unlikely. To have survived for several hundred years the bell must surely have been buried or hidden by rocks and therefore more likely to have been found by workmen disturbing the rocks. If Lady Campbell did find the bell is it not more likely that she would have kept hold of it rather than passing it to John MacNeill? It seems more probable that workmen employed by MacNeill were the finders and would almost certainly have handed their find over to him rather than any tenant in Torbhlaren.

If we can discount the Name Book account as inaccurate on the exact findspot, then can we also discount it in respect of the finder? John

MacNeill might have faced some disgrace later in life, as his Oakfield estate passed to the hands of his creditors due to bad debts. Perhaps he was not regarded locally as a savoury character?

The estate was sold to Neill Malcolm of Poltalloch in 1837. MacNeill moved to Gigha, and died in 1853. Torbhlaire Farm stayed in the hands of the Malcolm family until the 1950s when the whole farm was sold to the Forestry Commission. Most of the hills to the east of the farmhouse were planted with Sitka spruce. The farmhouse and part of the land was leased to the Black family who eventually purchased this holding from the Forestry Commission and remain there today.

CONCLUSION

Thomson's account, albeit second hand, was made just 12 years after the bell-shrine was found. Callander's account is fourth hand, and made possibly as much as 100 years after the discovery was made. The Name Book account dates to about 50 years after the event. The Callander account might be a reaction to Name Book and OS map inaccuracy, rather than to Thomson's, but might also be an attempt on the part of a family of retired ministers to claim the bell and shrine for the Church, or at least suggest the Church made provision to care for it on church land. Perhaps they were reacting to the publications about the KGBS which they believed inaccurate.

Thomson's account, we suggest, is largely correct. The assemblage was found by workmen on the farm, possibly, but not necessarily on the slopes of Tòrr a' Bhlàrain. There is a dun on the summit of the hill itself (RCAHMS 1988: 196–7). If the association between the KGBS and Tòrr a' Bhlàrain is real, then it is appropriate to draw attention to the discovery of another medieval bell-shrine, deemed to have been influenced by the KGBS, within a fort at Drumadoon in Northern Ireland (Bourke 2009). It is described further below. The fort on Tòrr a' Bhlàrain and the fort at Drumadoon could have

provided security for these bell-shrines and been the residences of their keepers.

THE HANDBELL

D H Caldwell

DESCRIPTION

The iron handbell was found inside the shrine when its bottom was removed, about a year after its discovery, by Thomas Thomson, Deputy Clerk Register. He describes how the bell had been 'enveloped in a piece of woollen cloth, the texture and consistency of which was almost entirely decayed' (Thomson 1857: 118). Regrettably, none of this has survived to this day, but in a survey of early textiles in Scotland, Audrey Henshall (1952: 18) noted traces in the corrosion products on the bell of woollen cloth. She thought it was unevenly woven, one set of



ILLUS 5 The iron handbell contained inside the KGBS
(© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

threads spun S and the other Z, and suggested it might date to when the bell was placed in the reliquary, in her opinion in the early 12th century.

The bell is four-sided, 47mm by 40mm at its rim by 82mm in height (illus 5). The broader front and back are quadrilateral in shape while the shorter sides are triangular, all four faces sloping gently to a rounded horizontal ridge, originally surmounted by a loop handle. There is no clapper in the interior, only the remains of the iron loop from which it hung. The bell is in a severely corroded condition with almost all of two adjacent sides missing. It is not clear if the bell was complete, or already fragmentary, when it was enclosed in the shrine.

A technological examination (Tate & Kirk 2010c) indicates that the iron of the bell is extensively mineralised and coated with thick lacquer. There are traces of green corrosion, and in some areas these show the presence of copper alloy elements – copper, lead and tin. These may be evidence for a surface layer of copper alloy on the bell rather than corrosion products from the bell-shrine.

DISCUSSION

Several early, quadrangular handbells survive from Ireland, Wales and Scotland, and according to a recent typology by Cormac Bourke, can be divided into two classes. Class 1 are made of iron, coated with bronze, and class 2 bells are of cast bronze. Both classes appear mostly to belong to the period 700–900, class 1 originating in the 7th century. Bourke (1980: 55–61) based this assessment on a study of the evidence from Ireland – representations on sculpture and in manuscript illustrations, and art historical analyses of decorative details. He further believed that class 2 is a derivative of class 1, albeit both might be contemporary for a considerable length of time. There is no additional evidence from Scotland that would impact on this proposed chronology or suggest that the Scottish bells are of different date than

the Irish examples. Bourke (1983: 465–6) has, however, speculated that the Scottish class 1 bells might specifically relate to the activities of the Columban Church in Scotland. The KGBS bell clearly belongs to class 1, and although too corroded to confirm so, we may assume it was made by cutting a sheet of iron to a double-trapezoid shape and bending and riveting it to shape. A penannular iron bar was fed through two holes made in the top of the bell, to form a handle externally and a loop for a clapper internally. The bell was then coated with bronze. This process is described in more detail and illustrated in Bourke (1980: 52–4).

The 44 class 1 bells from Ireland range in height from 143mm to 306mm (exclusive of handles) while the 14 Scottish ones (see below) vary from 60mm to 326mm. The KGBS bell is, in fact, the second smallest known from either country, the smallest being one from the Broch of Burrian in Orkney (Bourke 1983: 464). The KGBS bell is the only class 1 bell known from Argyll (though the bell-shrine from Guthrie in Angus is almost certainly from the west) and there is only one class 2 bell from that region (associated with St Finan's Chapel, on an island in Loch Shiel). The majority of bells of both classes are from east central Scotland. The numbers involved, 22 in total, are not so great as to draw hard conclusions from this distribution. That these surviving Scottish handbells are all, or mostly, associated with the early church and demonstrate influence from the church in Ireland, seems a reasonable conclusion (cf Bourke 1983: 464–6).

THE BELL-SHRINE

D H Caldwell, S Kirk and J Tate

DESCRIPTION

The bell-shrine is 95mm by 85mm by 148mm high. It is made of copper alloy and mimics the quadrangular, tapered shape of the bell inside (illus 1). It consists of four panels forming the



ILLUS 6 The back of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

sides and a fifth covering the base, all contained in a frame composed of angle brackets, bottom straps and top with handle. The brackets terminate in little feet formed as animal heads,

two of them now missing, and the straps reinforcing the bottom edges of the sides are not folded round the base. The top of the reliquary, including the handle and segments of the four



ILLUS 7 The left side of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

angle brackets, is cast in one piece, the other brackets and straps separately. The *Corpus*, or Body of Christ crucified, applied to the front panel, is also cast.

The reliquary is decorated on all surfaces, apart from its base. The main element in its design is a Crucifixion, which marks one of the broader sides as the front. The Christ-figure is



ILLUS 8 The right side of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

shown dead, his head inclined slightly forward and to his right, his bulging eyes shut. He has a long sharp nose and neatly trimmed beard and moustache. He wears an open crown with three fleurs-de-lis and the long strands of his hair

cascade over both naked shoulders. Although his body appears taut, with a prominent ribcage, his knees are slightly bent and his arms consequently are angled upwards to where his hands are fixed to the ends of the crossbar. He

is wrapped in a loin cloth, ornamented with stippling, decoratively crossed in front, so that it neither forms an even horizontal line at top or bottom. Its top edge is neatly rolled over and tied in a prominent knot on his right hip, with a loose end cascading down the front. Nails – actually the rivets holding the *Corpus* to the shrine – pass through his hands but his feet are shown side by side, slightly out-turned with no nails. Instead, a securing rivet is discreetly positioned between his legs. Above his head, a relatively large hand, the *Manus Dei* (Hand of God), pointing downwards over the cross, with index and middle finger extended, represents God the

Father. It is cast as one with the reliquary's top and is pierced horizontally.

The Christ-figure appears rather big for its crucifix, the shaft of which is outlined on the front plate of the shrine. The cross is plain, but for an engraved line forming a narrow margin around its edges, and it has prominent crossbars at top and bottom. The main crossbar, however, is a separate strip of metal, engraved with a running Z-pattern, or key-pattern, in two registers, held in place by the nails/rivets through Christ's hands.

To left and right of the cross-shaft are paired vine designs. Each undulating stem ends, top



ILLUS 9 The top of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

and bottom, in a bud and has three side branches, each of which develops into three shoots, two with buds, the third with a three-lobed leaf. One shoot in each group curves round under its branch. All these decorative motifs are reserved against a stippled background. The dots have a curving, linear arrangement, aligned to the stems and branches of the vines.

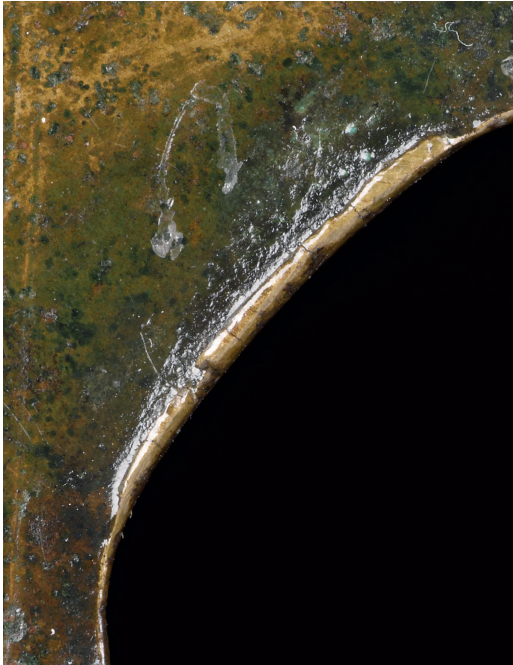
The back panel (illus 6) is engraved with a symmetrical double vine design. The stems are bound together, forming a short stalk with paired side branches turning upwards and downwards to form large open swirls. The two bottom ones each develop into six shoots, five ending in buds, the sixth in a four-lobed leaf. One of the shoots in each group curves round under its branch. The two upper swirls each have seven shoots, similarly with buds and three-lobed leaves. A bud is formed at the junction of the two upper

branches, and two others where the upper and lower branches on each side diverge beyond a binding strip. At the bottom of the stalk, the two stems sub-divide and intertwine to form a dome-shaped support. The whole design is reserved against a stippled background, the dots arrayed in linear fashion.

Both side panels have loop handles attached centrally, each with leafy terminals, different in character from each other. The side to the left of the front panel (hereafter ‘the left side’) has two registers of leaf patterns, the lower a series of palmettes in intersecting arcs, the upper with palmettes grouped as triangles (illus 7). Above these, two triangular panels, with lightly dotted cascading lines, flank the handle. The fourth, or right side, has six rectangular panels in two registers, one panel with a key pattern with a central saltire, the other five with interlace



ILLUS 10 The base of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)



ILLUS 11 Detail of smooth edge around hole in base of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

designs with crude hatching in the interstices (illus 8). Four of these panels are interlace knots while the fifth is composed of long thin ovals forming a saltire. Above, and flanking the handle, are two undulating vines with buds and one four-lobed leaf, reserved against a partially hatched background.

The handle at the top of the bell-shrine is modelled with two monster's heads, each with long ears, a fringe of hair, a long narrow nose with small nostrils and large almond-shaped eyes. The large lipped mouths are spread to grip the top of the shrine. The details of both are not identical. The top of the shrine has two rectangular panels of leaf patterns in triangles, and in a narrow panel above the Hand of God, an egg and dart pattern, rather irregularly laid out (illus 9).

The four angle brackets are all decorated on both faces with a continuous pattern of triangular

three-lobed leaves, zig-zag fashion. The strap along the bottom of the left side is similarly decorated, but the one at the bottom of the front has a band of leaves in lozenges and triangles. On the back and right side, the bottom straps have bands of panels with key patterns with central saltires. The lower edges of the shrine top are ornamented with pendant palmettes and leafy knobs.

Overall, the bell-shrine is in good condition. Apart from the loss of the feet flanking the left side, the upper portion of the corner bracket, between the front and the right side, is cracked through. The corner bracket between the back and the right side is rubbed along its length. The base (illus 10) shows signs of its removal, being now held in place by only one of the four rivets that originally secured it. They passed through the centre of up-turned flanges. A roughly circular hole has been cut in the centre of the

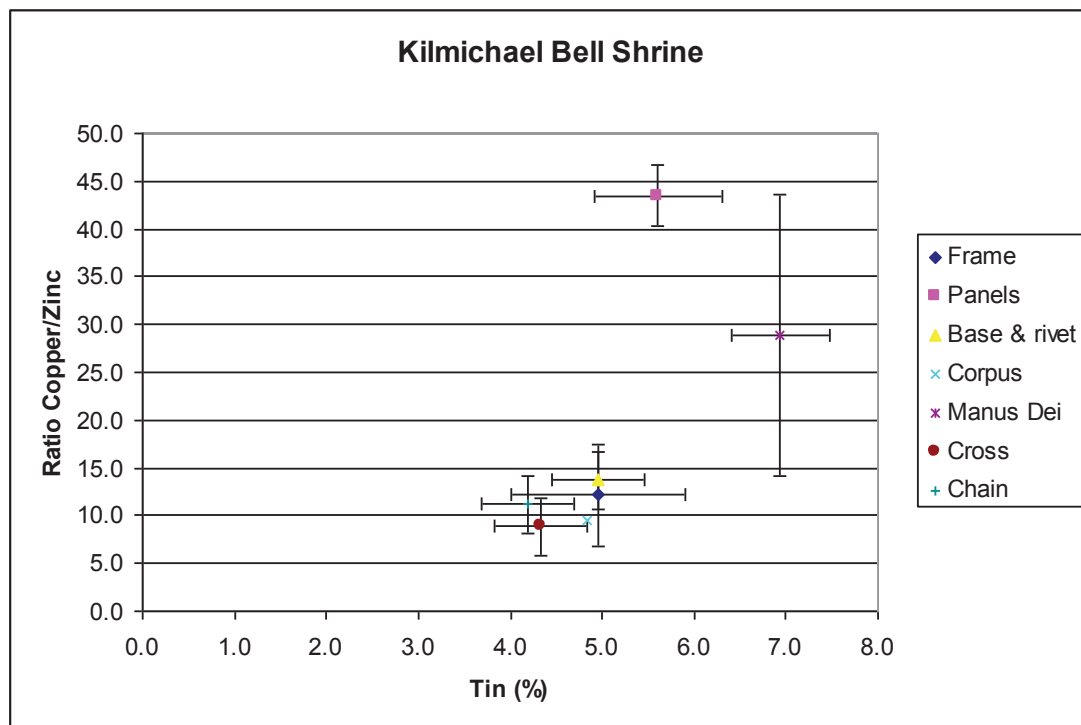


ILLUS 12 Detail of casting flaw in angle bracket (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

TABLE 1 and GRAPH

Averages of the XRF surface analyses of various components of the bell-shrine and chain. The associated graph indicates estimated scatter (standard deviation where there were sufficient measurements indicated). Arsenic and silver were at or below detection limits, no nickel was detected.

	<i>Fe</i>	<i>Cu</i>	<i>Zn</i>	<i>As</i>	<i>Pb</i>	<i>Ag</i>	<i>Sn</i>	<i>Sb</i>	<i>No. of analyses</i>
Frame	0.4	85.4	7.0	0.1	1.8	0.1	5.0	0.3	10
Panels	0.3	90.4	2.1	0.1	1.2	0.1	5.6	0.2	7
Base	0.1	86.9	6.4	0.1	1.2	0.1	5.0	0.3	3
Corpus	0.3	83.2	8.7	0.1	2.3	0.1	4.8	0.3	3
Manus Dei	0.3	87.0	3.0	0.1	2.1	0.1	6.9	0.5	5
Cross	0.2	84.6	9.6	0.2	1.0	0.1	4.3	0.1	3
Chain	0.2	86.0	7.7	0.1	1.6	0.1	4.2	0.2	2



The ratio of copper to zinc plotted against tin for the different components of the bell shrine and the chain. The graph shows the average values of the analyses, with the scatter (standard deviation where there were sufficient measurements) indicated.

base, about 20mm in diameter. Thomson (1857: 118) believed it had been ‘recently made’, presumably meaning between its discovery in 1814 and it coming into his hands in the following year.

TECHNOLOGICAL EXAMINATION

Technological examination was undertaken on the bell-shrine in the Analytical Research Section of NMS. For a full report see Tate & Kirk (2010a). Low-powered optical microscopy was used to examine the surface of the panels and mounts, different aspects of the decoration being recorded as photomicrographs. The different component parts were analysed by X-ray fluorescence (XRF) with no surface preparation. Because the surfaces are covered with a thick layer of lacquer and, judging from the colour, have different amounts of dirt and corrosion, these measurements can only be used as semi-quantitative analyses. The reliquary was also X-rayed at three different settings. X-rays were recorded with the film placed beneath the reliquary as it lay on each of its four faces in turn.

The XRF analyses (table 1 and graph) show that all the elements of the shrine are made of gunmetal. This alloy is composed of copper, zinc and tin, with small and varying amounts of lead and antimony. The scatter in the compositions obtained probably results from the extent of corrosion to the alloy, the accumulated dirt and lacquer, and the non-uniform surfaces being analysed. However, it could also be the result of a range of alloys of different composition being used in making the component parts from melted down scrap. Unfortunately, without more interventive sampling, where the surface layer is removed, we cannot distinguish between these two possibilities.

The principle finding is that there is a consistent difference between the four panels when compared with the angle brackets, bottom straps and top. The panels have a more tightly grouped composition, there being more copper

and lower and more consistent zinc (averaging 2% zinc as oppose to averaging 5–7% for the other parts). Similar low zinc levels were found around the base of the *Manus Dei*, but here possibly because of the attachment of the hand to the body metal. The rivets have a composition with around 6% zinc. There does not appear to be any consistent difference between the figure of Christ and the alloy composition of the brackets and straps, the top and the handles; but as noted, the range of composition is quite variable, possibly suggesting that all these components were cast without a great deal of quality control of the mixture that went into the melt.

Although close in composition as a group, there are small variations in composition of the



ILLUS 13 Detail of join between an angle bracket and the top of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

four panels, but it is not possible to say from these data that they are due to different initial compositions or are a result of different degrees of corrosion or surface treatment. The base has a composition similar to the main frame, surprisingly not the same as the panels. It is quite distorted and the edges of the hole in it do not show any of the characteristics which might allow an assessment to be made of how it was produced – with a drill, snips, chisel or saw. One side is slightly torn and folded back, but the rest of the edge looks as if it has been rubbed over a period of time by a rod or some other object passing through it (illus 11). A possible explanation is that this was a mount or core,

perhaps used both before and after the shrine came to NMS, to balance it and keep it steady when on display. There must, however, be a reasonable suspicion that Thomson (1857: 118) was mistaken in thinking the hole was recent. An obvious explanation for it is that it was made in antiquity so that the fingers of the devout could touch the bell within. This would readily explain the wear around its edge.

The appearance of the frame, including the top, indicates its pieces are of cast metal with casting faults and air bubbles (illus 12). There are no signs of seams, such as would be in evidence if these pieces had been cast in a part mould, although it is perfectly possible that these

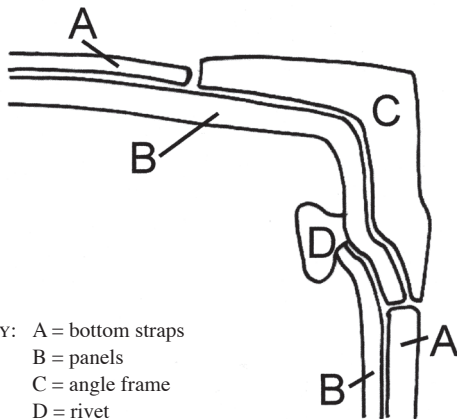
would have been ground down and removed in the finished object. They were presumably made using the lost-wax method with their decoration being carved in the original wax model. We suggest that the wax model for the whole frame was originally carved in one piece and that this model was then cut into the sections identified in the description above and cast separately to simplify the whole process and make it easier to ensure that all was of good quality. Slight differences in each casting have resulted in minor size discrepancies, detectable where the angle brackets join the top (illus 13). The XRF results suggest that there could be a brazed joint attaching the *Manus Dei* to the top but this could not be confirmed in the X-rays.



ILLUS 14 Details of decoration on the front panel and on one of the bottom straps of the KGBS (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)



ILLUS 15 Details of bottom of KGBS showing overlapping panels (at corners with missing feet) (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)



KEY: A = bottom straps
B = panels
C = angle frame
D = rivet

Although no unambiguous evidence was detected, it seems likely that the panels would have been decorated after they had been cast and worked as flat sheets. The panel decoration is contrasted with that on one of the bottom straps in illus 14. A significant difference in sharpness can be seen, the panel decoration being finer, with incisions typically about 0.5mm wide, while the design on the strap has grooves between 0.5mm and 1mm across.

No traces could be detected of niello. This would be difficult to confirm given the extent of corrosion in the decoration and the layer of lacquer. Since the possibility could only be explored further by the removal of samples it was decided not to pursue that at this stage.

The X-radiographs helped confirm the overall construction of the bell-shrine. Within the frame the panels are folded and joined at their edges, as can also be seen at the bottom corners where the legs have been broken off (illus 15). The rivets holding the panels to the frame can also be seen. The panels do not meet at the top, so that without the cast top section they would not form a closed bell-shaped container.

THE CROSS AND CHAIN

D H Caldwell, S Kirk and J Tate

DESCRIPTION

The copper alloy chain, 1.07m in length, is composed of S-shaped links made of wire with a diameter of about 1.3mm. The links vary in length from 14mm to 15mm and the opposed ends of each are typically flared and cut with two notches – vaguely suggesting animal heads (illus 16). The chain is of complex construction, with two series (A and B) of unconnected links, making a total of 137. Interconnections are provided from one series to the other. Thus links of series A are each interconnected to two in series B and links in series B are each interconnected to two in series A. This is done in a consistent pattern and has produced a chain of considerable strength. There is evidence for at least one repair, with a broken link and two further links missing.

The chain is joined at both ends to loops in the opposing arms of a copper alloy cross, 45mm by 35mm in overall size. It is a cross pattée with square shoulders, and has another loop on one of its other arms.



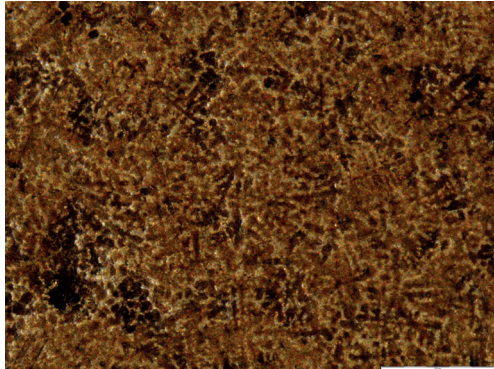
ILLUS 16 The cross and chain (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

TECHNOLOGICAL EXAMINATION

The cross and chain were also subjected to scientific analysis using optical microscopy, XRF and scanning electron microscopy with energy dispersive analysis (Tate & Kirk 2010b). The XRF analysis shows that the cross is of similar composition to the cast elements of the shrine. It is a gunmetal alloy of copper, zinc and tin with small and varying amounts of lead and antimony. Low-powered microscopy of the cross' surface shows the characteristic dendritic

pattern of a cast object (illus 17). It is possible that this is now so visible through some cleaning process that has etched the surface since its recovery from the ground.

The composition of the chain was found to be similar to the cross. There is much evidence for surface corrosion and stress or working marks. Longitudinal striations on some of the links (illus 18), visible through microscopy, are likely to be evidence for the wire, of which they are formed, having been drawn.



ILLUS 17 Detail of the surface of the cross showing dendritic pattern (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

DISCUSSION

D H Caldwell

THE FORM AND CONSTRUCTION OF IRISH AND SCOTTISH BELL-SHRINES

The KGBS is one of two bell-shrines that survive from medieval Scotland. The other (NMS: H.KA 21) was kept at Guthrie Castle, in Angus, prior to being acquired by NMS in 1925 and is generally considered to be a work made in the West Highlands or Islands, dating substantially to the 12th century. Glenn (2003: 94–8) suggests that it may have been made in Iona. There is also a handle in NMS from the site of Inchaffray Abbey in Perthshire, decorated in the Irish version of the Scandinavian Ringerike style of the 11th century, which is most likely from another bell-shrine (Graham-Campbell & Batey 2005: 103 & fig 6.6). There are eight substantially complete bell-shrines from Ireland (Crawford 1923: 157–63, nos 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10; Mahr 1976, vol 2, 156–7, 165; Bourke 2009). These shrines can be divided into two groups: those like the Kilmichael Glassary one that are containers for their bells, and others, like

the Guthrie Bell-shrine, in which the decorative elements are attached to the surface of the bell itself. Four of the Irish bell-shrines are of the first group and four of the second group.

Nine of the ten substantially complete bell-shrines from Ireland and Scotland, on the basis of art historical analyses, range in date from the end of the 11th century through the 12th century, albeit most show signs of re-working and additions of later medieval date. The tenth, the Bell-shrine of St Conall Cael, in the collection of the British Museum (Mahr 1976, pls 124–5), belongs to the 15th century. Several other Irish and Scottish shrines and reliquaries also date to the 12th century, and there is evidence from Ireland for the exhumation of relics from the graves of saints at that period (Lucas 1986: 7). Although it may be supposed that the associations of all the enshrined bells with early saints was well known, none include representations of



ILLUS 18 Detail of striations on chain link (© Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland)

these saints in their decoration. At least seven have, or have had, prominent Crucifixions.

The form and ornamentation of the KGBS cannot be closely paralleled in any of the others. The most similar is the bell-shrine recently discovered at a rath at Drumadoon in County Antrim (Bourke 2009). It is currently on display in the Ulster Museum, Belfast. With a height of 167mm, breadth of 109mm and depth of 77mm it is not significantly larger, it is also entirely made of copper alloy and is raised on four feet. It is thought to date to the second half of the 12th century, but has a Crucifixion on what was originally its back face, utilising a 13th-century *Corpus* of Limoges workmanship. Bourke (2009: 160) suggests that the Drumadoon bell-shrine may even have been made or modified in imitation of the KGBS.

Certainly the provision of feet, not present on any other bell-shrine, provides a link between these two. The KGBS, however, has a loop handle on top, clearly designed for use, whereas the Drumadoon Shrine, like many of the others, does not. In type II bell-shrines the bell handle is covered over, like St Mura's Bell-shrine in the Wallace Collection, London (Crawford 1922: 4–5, pl II; Mahr 1976: pl 81). The Guthrie Bell-shrine shows signs that its handle was similarly enclosed. In place of a handle, type I bell-shrines normally have a crest, as the Drumadoon Shrine and, for example, the Shrine of St Patrick's Bell (Henry 1970: pls 22, 23; Mahr 1976: pls 79, 80; Mitchell 1977: no 61) and the Clogán Óir, the bell-shrine of St Senan from Scattery Island in Co Clare (Mahr 1976, vol 2: pl 82; Ó Floinn 1994: photo 17), both now in the National Museum of Ireland [NMI].

Thomson's account of the discovery of the KGBS says that the cross and chain – 'a brass chain or collar, of rude workmanship, three feet six inches long, the extremities of which are connected by a small Cross pattée of the same metal, the pendent of which (whether of metal or stone) has been lost' – were found near to the findspot of the bell-shrine at about the same time (Thomson 1857: 118). Despite

the vagueness or ambiguity of this statement on their provenance, there appears no good reason to doubt that the cross and chain belong with the bell-shrine. The description of the two confirms that they have not been significantly tampered with since discovery. If the chain was a collar and the cross had supported a pendant, that would surely have been the bell-shrine itself, thus carried by a cleric or keeper on important occasions.

Another cross and chain from Kingoldrum in Angus may be of relevance since they may have been associated with a large class 1 handbell. The cross and chain were found in 1843, in a cist grave containing a flexed skeleton, beyond the precincts of the burial ground around the old church (Chalmers 1855: 191). The bell was discovered at the same time, along with two objects, described as a bronze chalice and a glass bowl, neither of which appear to have survived. The chalice and bowl were contained inside the bell, along with its detached tongue (Wilson 1863, vol 2: 473–4). The bell (X.KA 3) and cross and chain (X.FX 151–2) are in NMS. The Kingoldrum cross is 41mm across and of copper alloy, with arms of approximately equal length, with a suspension loop on the back of one of them. The front is decoratively notched, has an empty setting at its centre for a jewel, and enamel spots, now white, at the tips of its arms. The Museum currently suggests an 11th- or 12th-century date for it. All that survives of the chain is 10 copper alloy S-shaped links. Chains made of S-shaped links are a typical medieval form, but the particular construction of the KGBS chain with two series of links, presumably for extra strength, is more unusual. A few dating to the 14th or 15th century have been recovered from London (Egan & Pritchard 1991: 318–20).

The KGBS not only has a handle at the top but also side loops and an aperture in the *Manus Dei* which could also be used for suspension. This suggests the intention of supporting and carrying the shrine in a way similar to a censer, with three chains, one from each loop

on the cross to the loops and *Manus Dei* on the shrine. The wear apparent on the corner bracket between the back and right side might have resulted from it swinging against some other object. Side loops are present on three of the Irish bell-shrines already mentioned – the Shrine of St Patrick’s Bell; St Mura’s Bell; and the Bell-shrine of St Conall Cael, which has a chain associated with it, some of the links of which are S-shaped. The Drumadoon Bell-shrine has circular bosses applied to its side, pierced for taking the terminals of a strap or chain.

TECHNOLOGICAL ORIGINS AND PARALLELS

The assembly of the KGBS with angle brackets and straps also separates it out from the other bell-shrines, most of which, like other Irish shrines and reliquaries, are edged with tubular or round-sectioned bars. Angle brackets reinforce wood on the late 12th-century ‘St Manchan’s Shrine’ at Boher, County Offaly (Kendrick & Senior 1937; Mahr 1976: pl 104), and also the wooden box that is the basis of the 14th-century book shrine in NMI known as the Domnach Airgid (Mahr 1976: pls 11–18; Mitchell 1977: no 66). In constructional terms, the KGBS, along with these two Irish shrines, may be displaying the influence of a medieval Scandinavian tradition that dates back at least as far as the 12th century. In particular, it can be seen in large house-shaped reliquaries, covered with copper alloy panels, in a framework of straps and angle brackets, like the 13th-century Thomas Becket Chest in Hedalen Stave church, Valdres, Uppland, Norway, and the reliquary shrine from Vatnås in Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen. Glenn (2001: 281–2; 2003: 102, fig 21) specifically draws attention to one from Eriksberg in Västergötland, Sweden, now in the Statens Historiska Museum in Stockholm, which dates to the second half of the 12th century (see also Roesdahl & Wilson 1992: 212, 350).

The metal of the KGBS is close to the gunmetal alloy of the Guthrie Bell-shrine (Tate & Kirk 2010a: 3; Eremin & Tate 2003) and a

preliminary survey of medieval copper alloy artefacts from Finlaggan, Islay, indicates that many considered to be of local manufacture are also of gunmetal, possibly because they were made from a range of recycled zinc-rich and tin-rich copper alloys (Caldwell & Eremin 1999). Bloch (1992: 29–30) lists 76 readings for the composition of ‘Romanesque bronze crucifixes’. The majority are of brass – an alloy of copper with zinc and a smaller amount of lead. Only one can be considered to be of bronze – copper alloyed with tin and a little lead. Only three can be considered to be of gunmetal like the KGBS. Clearly much more in-depth analysis is needed of these reliquaries and crucifixes, but at least the results so far are consistent with the KGBS being of local manufacture.

THE WORK OF MORE THAN ONE CRAFTSMAN?

Unlike many other shrines and relics, the KGBS appears to be of a unified design with no major changes or additions. It is possible, nevertheless, to detect the hand of more than one individual in its manufacture. This is most evident from an examination of the engraved designs on the four panels (illus 1, 6–8). Those on the front and back are regularly and competently laid out, while the patterns on the sides are more hesitant and untidy. This might result from a division of labour between a master and his apprentice with the latter being restricted to working on the less important sides of the shrine.

We are not aware of any need to suppose that the cast work on the shrine would have been produced by a different craftsman from the one who produced the panels, but it is worth noting two peculiarities about the Crucifixion. First, the Christ figure is clearly too large for the Cross. Second, the Cross is unusual in only having cross-bars top and bottom and not also at the ends of its arms to make a cross potent, characteristic of 12th-century Crucifixions. A possible explanation for this is that the *Corpus* came from a different source or workshop, already attached to the arms of the cross. It must

be said that the metal analyses reported above do not provide any solid clues as to whether this might, or might not be the case.

THE FORM AND ICONOGRAPHY OF THE CRUCIFIXION

The *Corpus* is crowned to represent the triumph of Christ through the Crucifixion, a not untypical attribute of many other contemporary images of the Saviour. A recent survey of Romanesque bronze crucifixes (excluding the products of the enamellers of Limoges in France) by Peter Bloch (1992) identified about 630, not including the one in question. All have loin cloths, and the form and arrangement of these underlies Bloch's typology. He recognises two main groupings, those with loin cloths with a horizontal edge, and those with loin cloths with a diagonal edge. There are transitional types and numerous variations taking account of other features – like the arrangement of the feet and hair and the presence or absence of a crown. There are also 46 which do not fall readily into this classification, and the KGBS Crucifix, on the basis of the elaborate arrangement of its loin cloth, would be another.

Of more relevance than Bloch's typology is one advanced for 15 surviving Irish Romanesque Crucifix figures by Ragnall Ó Floinn (1987), which should not be surprising given Ireland's political and cultural links with Scotland, particularly Argyll and the Isles, in the 12th century. Ó Floinn distinguishes two groups: group I with geometric, symmetrically arranged loin cloths, with no attempt to represent the folds of the drapery naturalistically; and group II with more naturalistically treated loin cloths. The faces, torsos and hair of group II are also treated less summarily than in group I. On this basis, the KGBS *Corpus* belongs to group II, and, indeed, bears more than a passing similarity to some of these Irish figures.

Even closer stylistically, and in terms of its provenance, is a bronze Crucifix figure from MacEwan's Castle, Cowal, some nine miles

away from Torbhlaren, as the crow flies. It has a crown, a similar pose, hair and loin cloth to the KGBS *Corpus*, but is not so fine, and has its arms bent round the back of its neck, perhaps indicating that when it was lost it was intended for the melting pot. It is considerably larger, 100mm tall, an appropriate height for an altar crucifix. It is now in the collections of Glasgow Museums (Caldwell 1982: 23–4). The closest parallel, however, to the KGBS *Corpus* is one, now lost, from Dunfermline, known only from a late 18th-century drawing by the noted antiquary, Francis Grose (Glenn 2003: 102, fig 22). The penannular or heart-shaped ends to the strands of hair over the shoulders and the knotted end of the loin cloth are mannerisms only to be found on these *Corpus* from Kilmichael Glassary and Dunfermline. This is a strong argument for both, along with the one from MacEwan's Castle, being of local manufacture, either in the Kingdom of the Scots or in the Kingdom of the Isles. This is a point to which we will return below.

Representations of the Passion in the 12th century and earlier often include the *Manus Dei*, coming from heaven above and confirming the divinity of Christ. The only other one known from Scotland is a large stone rood from Kinneil Church in West Lothian for which dates from the 11th to the early 13th century have been suggested (Hunter 1960: 194–6; Fawcett 2002: 294, illus 4.63). The *Manus Dei* appears on many 12th-century bronze crucifixes from other parts of Europe, normally pointing with the index and middle finger together, and sometimes with an indication of clouds above (Bloch 1992: Taf 181–207). Some of these are of Scandinavian origin, for example, one from Onsbjerg in Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen, and another from Unislaw, now in a collection in Pelplin (Bloch 1992: Taf 203, 205). The *Manus Dei* also features on large 12th-century Danish altar crucifixes, for example, one from Odder and another from Tirstup, both in Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen (Langberg 1979, tav 13, 14).

In our description of the KGBS, we described a narrow panel above the Hand of God with an egg and dart pattern, rather irregularly laid out (illus 9). This design has had a very different interpretation placed on it by some scholars, namely that it is a rendering of an invocation to Allah – God – in Arabic script. This possibility was first published by the distinguished scholar, Daniel Wilson, in 1884, after consultation with experts on the Arab language. It appears that these experts, with the possible exception of one described as more courageous than the rest, did not advance their Arabic interpretations with any great conviction, and Wilson himself clearly believed that an Arabic explanation was most unlikely on religious, if not on other, grounds. He concluded that the design was a representation of clouds, with the three dots incorporated in it possibly being an allusion to the Trinity (Wilson 1884: 86–93).

This possibility of an Arabic inscription on the bell-shrine was explored again a few years ago by Virginia Glenn, who was not inclined to accept Wilson's cloud explanation. Her Arabic expert advisers led her to suggest that it might be an attempt by a Scandinavian craftsman to copy an Arabic inscription for its supposed talismanic value. She drew attention to the availability in the Scandinavian world of large quantities of Islamic coins and other items which could have provided a model for the design (Glenn 2003: 102–4), and, indeed, such coins were copied, Arabic inscriptions as well, by west European kings in the 8th century, including Offa of Mercia in the English Midlands (Webster & Backhouse 1991: 190).

That a craftsman in north-west Europe, in the 12th century, might incorporate a pseudo-Arabic inscription in his work is not inherently unlikely, although possible parallels to the supposed script on the KGBS have still to be identified. Pseudo-Arabic as a pattern is one thing, but used on a Christian religious reliquary where it would have been identified as having religious meaning, is quite another. In the opinion of the present authors, this would have been most improbable.

Unlike Glenn, we see no difficulty in identifying the panel as an attempt to represent the clouds from which the *Manus Dei*, as in many other representations, emanates. Insofar as the design is made up from curves and dots, it is composed of the same elements as the stylised clouds beneath the bust of St Fillan on the Coigrich, the crozier reliquary of that saint preserved in NMS (Glenn 2003: 107–14). The bust probably dates to the 14th century. Similarly rendered clouds appear on the privy seal of King David II (1329–71), with arms issuing from them to support the royal arms (Laing 1850: 8, no 29; pl I, fig 4).

DATE

Bourke (1997: 176–7) has suggested that the bell-shrine may have been rescued from Dunkeld Cathedral at the time of the Reformation and taken to the west for safe-keeping. Its relatively good condition and the lack of evidence of additions or alterations to its design are, however, surely arguments in favour of it having been buried at a relatively early date after its manufacture. When exactly that was is difficult to determine. NMS has for long displayed it as 12th century and Glenn (2003: 100) has suggested the middle part of that century. The only methodology currently available for determining its date is through a process of comparisons with other works, and in this respect one of the most striking things to consider is how different it appears from the Guthrie Bell-shrine, also believed to be a work of the 12th century. This may, of course, result from their manufacture by different craftsmen in different centres, or, a hypothesis we wish to pursue, be a consequence of them being of different date.

Here we will concentrate on the Christ figures. That on the Guthrie Bell-shrine has the feet, one over the other, fixed by a single nail. This has been recognised as a particular development which Munn (2010: 98–100), in a recent study of British crucifixion iconography, dates as early as the second half of the 12th century, citing the Guthrie Bell-shrine *Corpus* and a detached one

from Dunvegan in Skye (Caldwell 1982: 25) as early examples. The dating of the latter that early is not too secure, but the former clearly belongs with a 12th-century iconographic scheme, both in terms of design and the similarity of its alloy to other elements on the shrine (Glenn 2001: 277; Glenn 2003: 98–9). We can only suggest, however, that on typological grounds the Guthrie Bell-shrine *Corpus* ought to be later than the KGBS and that a date in the first half of the 12th century for the latter would be appropriate.

POSSIBLE PLACE OF MANUFACTURE

There is no absolutely convincing evidence for identifying a specific place or workshop for the manufacture of the KGBS. All we can do here is review parallels for its design and decoration. Given that its date is not particularly secure, we have ranged widely through the corpus of art dating from the late 11th to the early 13th century.

The KGBS was found in territory which was part of the Scottish kingdom. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to consider whether it might be of Scottish workmanship. As noted above, the closest parallel for the Christ figure is a now lost one from Dunfermline Abbey. The apparent Scandinavian character of some of its decoration, identified below, would not preclude the possibility of manufacture in an important Scottish centre, some of which may well have been influenced by Scandinavian work.

Kilmichael Glassary is in mainland Argyll, which formed a separate diocese named Argyll, but prior to 1183 x 89 was part of the diocese of Dunkeld (Cowan & Easson 1976: 210). Cormac Bourke has drawn attention to this Dunkeld connection and suggested that the KGBS may originally have belonged in the cathedral there. In support of this hypothesis, he compares the KGBS cross and chain to that attached to a representation of a Dunkeld crosier (Bourke 1997: 176–7). The depiction in question is on the second chapter seal of the cathedral, one that replaced an earlier seal which was still in

use about 1221 (Stevenson & Wood 1940, vol 1: 145). The second seal probably dates to about 1320, the date given by Glenn (2003: 124) to the cathedral chapter's seal 'ad causas', which looks like it was made by the same craftsman. This comparison of chains and crosses may not have much force in identifying a specific provenance like Dunkeld when it is remembered that at least one other early Scottish bell, the one from Kingoldrum, has a cross and chain, and a 12th-century crosier drop from Loch Shiel in Argyll has a small loop ideal for attaching a chain (Glenn 2003: 105). There is no similarity of style or date to unite these objects.

By 1827, a case was already developed by Hibbert (1857) for the Scandinavian character of the KGBS. His views were adopted by the English ecclesiastical historian, Howson (1841a: 91; 1841b: 177), but were totally rejected by Daniel Wilson in his *Prehistoric Annals* (1863, vol 2: 461) and more fully in a later paper devoted to this bell-shrine (1884: 82–6). In the earlier paper, Wilson stressed the Irish nature of the relic and the associations of the bell itself to an early, local or Irish saint. In the later paper he sought artistic comparisons in Anglo-Saxon and Norman work, and in the case of the Crucifix, with the enamelled bronzes of Limoges. While there is evidence of works from that production centre getting to Scotland (eg Glenn 2003: 38, 41–3), no more than superficial comparisons can be made between the KGBS *Corpus* and the Limoges ones (see Thoby 1953), as is the case with the 630 bronze crucifixes published by Bloch (1992).

That other great Victorian Scottish antiquary, Joseph Anderson, was curiously reticent in his writings on the cultural links of the bell-shrine, discussing it solely as a relic of the 'Celtic Church' (Anderson 1881: 206–8; 1910: 274–5). Anderson's 'Celtic Church' was one derived from and closely related to Ireland. It is remarkable, however, how few meaningful comparisons on a detailed basis can be made between the KGBS and Irish works. As a bell-shrine, it is a type that belongs in the Scoto-Irish

world and, as noted above, there is a group of generally similar Christ figures from Ireland; but, although vine scrolls, interlace and key patterns are motifs well used by Irish craftsmen, a survey of the considerable body of surviving Irish relics fails to detect anything quite like the effect achieved by these in the decoration of the KGBS.

In looking for Irish influences, the most promising design element to focus on is the animal heads on the handle. This decorative feature on handles and mounts was very general in Scottish and Irish art. In the particular case of bell-shrines, they decorate the caps of two early 12th-century examples, the Shrine of St Patrick's Bell (Mitchell 1977, no 61) and the Bearnán Conaill in the BM (Henry 1970: 102–3, pl 18; Mahr 1976: 157, pl 83). Both, however, are seen as outstanding examples of the adoption of Scandinavian styles of decoration by the Irish. The ornamentation on the former is an example of the Irish Urnes style while the latter has Irish Ringerike decoration. From Scotland can be added the Inchaffray Abbey mount (Graham-Campbell & Batey 2005: 103 and fig 6.6), another example of Irish Ringerike work, and attention should also be drawn to the class 2 handbell of St Fillan, from Strathfillan, Perthshire, that has a handle with animal head terminals (NMS: H.KA 2).

Curiously, the animal heads which have the most meaningful similarity to those on the KGBS handle can be found terminating the broad central grips on the forepillars of the three surviving medieval Scoto-Irish harps or clarsachs – one in Trinity College, Dublin (Mitchell 1977, no 68), the other two, which are believed to have come from Argyll, in NMS (Caldwell 1982: 60–1; H.LT 1 & 2). The strength of the comparison lies in the broad, sucking lips of the beasts and, to a lesser extent, the pointed oval eyes on the shrine as well as on the Trinity College Harp and the Queen Mary Harp. Unfortunately, judging the worth of these resemblances is not easy in the present state of our knowledge. In the light of other research currently being undertaken on

the harps, it is likely that the 15th-century dates now given to all three may have to be reassessed and their integrity as single-period works re-evaluated (Loomis et al 2012). At best, they provide evidence that the KGBS beasts are part of a tradition of sucking beast heads, but not a tradition which was peculiarly Irish.

In more recent times, the possible Scandinavian links of the KGBS have again attracted attention. When it was displayed in a major exhibition on art and patronage in Medieval Scotland, in 1982, it was said to be in a Scoto-Irish tradition of art, but to show characteristics that are Scandinavian (Caldwell 1982: 23). Glenn (2003: 100–4) considered that it was made in Argyll, noted that it differed from the Guthrie Bell-shrine and most of the Irish ones, and adduced parallels for its decoration in Scandinavia. Prior to 1266, the Hebrides formed a separate Kingdom of the Isles with a Scandinavian dynasty of kings based in the Isle of Man and noblemen with power and influence straddling the Isles and mainland Argyll. There is every reason to think that works of art fashioned or used in Argyll might reflect the culture and patronage of the Kingdom of the Isles and its links with Norway.

One of the Scandinavian comparisons Hibbert (1857: 120) made that is worth remembering is between the cross on the chain and representations of crosses on Norwegian and Swedish runic monuments which date to the 11th and 12th centuries. Many of these are crosses pattée, some with shoulders, not unlike the form of the Kilmichael Glassary one, or variations on 'St George's cross' as they are called in a recent study of these monuments (Sawyer 2000: 194). Parallels include crosses on stones from Nora, Tåby, Broby and Håmo (Sawyer 2000: pls 14, 19, 20, 33). The tradition seems to have survived longer as in the bronze cross of this form inscribed with AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA from a 14th-century archbishop's grave at Trondheim (Jondell 1997: 77).

Whereas meaningful comparisons of decoration on a detailed basis cannot be made with Irish

shrines and reliquaries, Scandinavian parallels are easier to find. The Eriksberg Reliquary in Stockholm (Roesdahl & Wilson 1992: 212, 350; Glenn 2001: fig 25.9; Glenn 2003: fig 21), and two crucifixes in Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen – one from Odder (Langberg 1979, tav 13) and the other from Lundø (Backhouse et al 1984: 204–6) – all have leaf designs which are very similar to those on the angle brackets and top of the KGBS. Attention should also be drawn to the bulging eyes of the KGBS Christ which may be a Scandinavian trait, certainly much in evidence in the late 12th-century ivory chessmen from a hoard discovered in the Isle of Lewis (Caldwell et al 2009: 189–90).

Vine scrolls are endemic in medieval European art, but the particular patterns on the front and back panels of the KGBS, with relatively open scrolls, small buds and leaves, and an overall tendril-like appearance, can best be compared to sculptures in some of the 12th-century stave churches of Norway. The double vine design with bound stems on the back is typical of the way vine scroll patterns are constructed in these wood carvings (Bergendahl Hohler 1999, vol 1: 38–9, 43; vol 2: 66–7).

The cultural and political connections of the Kingdom of the Isles encompassed much more than Scandinavia. Artistic links with England are manifested by the so-called Iona Psalter in the National Library of Scotland (Caldwell 1982: 18), an English work of c1180–1220, possibly made for Bethoc, daughter of Somerled, the first prioress of the nunnery of Iona, and possibly by the group of four silver spoons of about 1200 found in the Iona Nunnery (Glenn 2003: 19–23). Like many other manuscripts of the period, produced in many different European centres, spaces at the ends of lines in the Iona Psalter are filled with decorative details – geometric patterns, foliage scrolls and animals, including heads. The designs on the angle brackets, straps, feet, cross and side panels of the KGBS can all be matched here, even the panel with egg and dart or a pseudo-Arabic inscription. The KGBS is likely to be of earlier date (see above) than

the psalter, but many such decorative motifs had a long life and a wide currency, and were not specific to particular areas or cultures.

In conclusion, the decoration of the KGBS places it firmly in a wider world of European art. Perhaps surprisingly, given its form and function, it appears more Scandinavian in its inspiration than Scoto-Irish, but such comparisons as can be made with the art of Scandinavia are not close enough for us readily to entertain that it could have been manufactured there. Its artistic mixed heritage suggests to this author that it was made in Argyll or the Western Isles, a region with a mixed Scandinavian and Gaelic population, with political links with Norway and an involvement by its leading men in a wider world including Ireland, Scotland and England. For a contrary view on its origin see Márkus below.

THE SAINT CULTED BY THE BELL AND BELL-SHRINE

G Márkus

INTRODUCTION

Bells appear in some of the earliest surviving literature of the Insular Church. Though no bell is mentioned in the two works written by St Patrick in the 5th century (his *Confessio* and his *Epistola* to Coroticus), by about AD 600 the bell appears to have become such an accepted part of the Christian landscape that a monk's response to its sound can be regarded as one of the distinguishing features of a life of holiness. Colmán mac Béognae (if he really was the author of the text) wrote a sort of beginner's guide to monastic life, now known as *Apgitir Chrábaid*, 'the alphabet of devotion'. Some of it is constructed in a pattern of binary opposites: what reveals truth versus what conceals truth, the strengths of the soul versus the enemies of the soul, what should be learned versus what should be avoided. One of the things to be learned is 'rising at first summons', while its opposite, to

be avoided, is ‘laziness at the bell’ (Clancy & Márkus 1995: 201). Clearly the bell has become, at least on Iona where Colmán seems to have learned his monastic practice, a regular part of the liturgical life: the monks are summoned to prayer (and perhaps to other kinds of assembly) by the sound of a bell.

This use of bells is confirmed by Adomnán, 9th abbot of Iona, who mentions the use of a bell several times in his *Life of Columba*, written towards the end of the 7th century. A bell rings out for midnight Office, for example, calling the monks to the church shortly before the death of Columba, who then dies in the arms of his brethren at the foot of the altar (VC iii: 23). The bell is important in this story in that it marks not only the call to prayer but also the time of day: in this case it announces, in the darkness of Saturday night, the first moment of Sunday, the day of Christ’s Resurrection and therefore a promise of the new life promised to all those who die in Christ. It is at this very moment that the bell calls the brethren of Iona to the side of their dying father, to witness his departure. This Saturday he says is his ‘Sabbath’ (the medieval ‘Sabbath’ was Saturday, not Sunday). He says it is his day of rest, when he shall rest from the labours of his life, but the bell declares that he is dying, not into mere rest, but into the risen life of Christ, the new creation of Sunday. In this instance – and in many other moments of the liturgical day, the week and the year – the bell’s voice articulated a theology of time, uttering to those immersed in biblical and patristic writings the narrative of their salvation.

At other moments in the *Life of Columba* we find the bell used to call monks to prayer on a more ad hoc basis, at moments of crisis. The bell is rung at Columba’s command to call his monks together to pray for King Áedán as he goes into battle on some distant field, miraculously seen by Columba. The prayers of the monks called by the bell seem to have brought victory to Áedán (VC i: 8).

When the Iona monk Cormac Ua Liatháin sails off to seek a place of retreat in the ocean,

he is placed in extreme danger by a swarm of ‘exceedingly dangerous small creatures ... about the size of frogs and very injurious by reason of their stings’ (VC ii: 42). Columba himself rings the bell on this occasion, calling the monks to pray for Cormac, and by their prayers, Columba and his monks change the direction of the wind to bring Cormac’s boat out of danger.

Finally, the bell comes into play when Columba rings it to summon his brethren to pray for some drowning monks – not his own, but those of Comgall of Bangor. He does so not to save them, since they have already drowned, but to call his own monks to join their prayers to the prayers of Comgall’s monks who are fighting demons in order to save the soul of a visitor who was drowned along with them (VC iii: 13).

The purpose of describing these incidents in VC is not only to show that bells were seen as a normal part of monastic life by the late 7th century, though it does show that. What these passages also suggest is first of all that a monastic bell was associated with the authority of an abbot. In one of the ad hoc passages cited above, the bell is rung at Columba’s command; in the other two passages he rings the bell himself. For Adomnán there seems to be a close connection between the bell and abbatial authority – and in this case between the bell and saintly power, since the abbot in question is the saintly subject of the *Vita*.

Perhaps something similar can be inferred from the opening sentence of Tírechán’s account of St Patrick: ‘Patrick bore with him across the Shannon fifty bells (*quinquaginta clocos*), fifty patens, fifty chalices, altars, books of the law, books of the Gospel, and he left them in the new churches’ (Bieler 1979: 122). I translate *locis nouis* ‘in the new churches’ since *locus* was used very specifically to refer to churches in early sources. As a description of Patrick’s mission to convert the Irish with large quantities of liturgical equipment, it is interesting that not only are bells listed among these prerequisites of church foundation, but that they appear first in the list. But we might also suspect from this

account, written *c* AD 670, that by this time churches which claimed a Patrician foundation were also claiming to possess objects which Patrick brought with him when he founded them, including bells.

In Iona the bell was closely associated with the founding abbot. In writings associated with Armagh other bells were becoming associated with a founding bishop – *the* founding bishop, we might say, in Armagh’s view – of many churches

It is also surely significant that in all three cases when Columba’s bell is rung for non-liturgical purposes (what I earlier called the *ad hoc* ringings) it is rung in response to some dramatic crisis: at the outset of a battle, when a monk is in mortal danger, and when the soul of a drowned man is being seized by demons. And in each case, the prayers of the abbot and his monks, summoned by the bell, are powerful and effective. The bell is already associated, it seems, with power – the saintly power of an abbot and his community of praying monks. I would suggest that what these passages reveal is a transitional moment in the history of the bell in the Gàidhealtachd: it is being transformed from simple liturgical object into potent relic.

The subsequent history of bells in the Gaelic church is one which I will not rehearse in detail here (see Lucas 1986; Doherty 1984; Márkus 2009a). Suffice it to say, in brief outline, that early medieval handbells associated with saints became objects of enormous value to subsequent generations. Possession of such a bell might reinforce the claim of an abbot or bishop to be the legitimate successor of an original saintly owner. Bells were used in the ‘circuits’ of ecclesiastical leaders, in the collection of tribute from their territories and in the imposition of laws. A central function of the bell as a relic was in the administration of oaths: indeed, the Gaelic word *mionn* means both ‘oath’ and ‘relic’, and even ‘bell’, according to Dwelly (1949, *sn mionn*) – a clear reflection of the centrality of bells and other relics in the administration of oaths, and

therefore in the whole process of law. Bells were also used to bless armies before battle, and to put a stop to violence and send armies back home. They are on record as having been used for the inauguration of kings, to curse enemies, to heal the sick, to accompany the dead to their graves, to enforce ecclesiastical sanctuary and protection, to detect stolen cattle, and much more. Such was their power and importance that the ‘Old Irish Penitential’ composed in the 8th or 9th century declared that, ‘Anyone who plunders an altar or shrine, or steals a Gospel-book, [must do] seven years penance. If it be a bell, or crosier or service set, it is 40 years on bread and water’ (Bieler 1975: 267). It is hard to imagine a more eloquent testimony to the importance of the bell in the early medieval Gaelic church.

The bell-relic was explicitly associated with the power of its original saintly owner, the bell often known as ‘the bell of St X’, sometimes in Gaelic ‘the *Bearnan* (‘gapped one’) of St X’. The power of the bell was sometimes wielded by a clerical owner or minister, sometimes by a hereditary lay custodian, a *deòradh* or dewar. Sometimes there was a certain tension between ecclesiastical and lay control of such relics. The *deòradh* often appears in the documentary record holding a croft of land, which might later be regarded as kirk-land, as part of the arrangement by which he held the bell and conducted the rituals in which it played a part. For a study of the uses of bells and the place of the *deòradh* in Scotland, see Márkus (2009a; 2009b). For the very similar profile of the cult of bells in Ireland, see especially Lucas (1986); also Doherty (1984).

THE KILMICHAEL GLASSARY BELL AND SHRINE

To understand the Kilmichael Glassary bell and shrine we must consider it against the background of this kind of historical development. The early medieval iron bell was clearly being treated as a relic by the 12th century, when its

shrine was created. Its enshrinement witnesses to its use as something more than a mere bell. Indeed, it is worth recalling that the bell was wrapped in wool before it was enshrined. If it is true that this woollen packing was woven in the 12th century, more or less contemporary with the shrine as has been suggested above (p 208; Henshall 1952: 18), then it is almost certain that it was placed in the shrine with the bell in the 12th century. This means that the bell can no longer have functioned as a bell in any straightforward way thereafter. It is unlikely that it would have been taken out of the shrine to be rung and afterwards replaced in the shrine with the same piece of wool over and over again, and it could not have been rung *in* the shrine. The bell may in any case have become so rusty and damaged by the time of its enshrinement that it was no longer possible to ring it. Such a situation would correspond to Bourke's observation that 'the exclusive enshrinement of iron bells (as distinct from the later generation of cast bronze handbells) should be seen as their creative adaptation to cult purposes when superannuated by physical deterioration' (Bourke 2008: 26).

There are many things we should like to know about the Kilmichael Glassary bell and its shrine. Where did it come from? Where was it kept during the Medieval Period when it must have been an important object of social ritual? Who was its keeper – a *deòradh* or a cleric? Above all, who was the saint associated with the bell? I fear that at present there simply is not sufficient information about the bell to answer these questions with any certainty. What we may be able to do, however, is to clear up one or two misunderstandings, and to offer some plausible speculations.

THE ONE AND THE MANY: ST MOLUAG'S BELL

Perhaps the first misunderstanding to confront is the suggestion that the Kilmichael Glassary bell is actually the long-lost bell of St Moluag of Lismore, which was supposed to be on the

island of Lismore in the early 16th century. The evidence for the existence of St Moluag's bell comes from the second lesson of the liturgy for that saint's feast-day in *The Aberdeen Breviary* (c 1510):

But one day, when he held the making of a square iron bell to be very necessary for his church, and earnestly entreated a local blacksmith to do the work, the smith falsely asserted that he could not make such a thing because of a lack of charcoal. So Moluag, having put his trust in the supreme mercy of the most high God himself, going out of the smith's forge, immediately brought him a bundle of reeds or rushes, and asked him to use them as charcoal. Enraged, the blacksmith took the bundle with the iron and threw it into the furnace, so that it might then be easily consumed while he watched. But, to the amazement of all, that bundle, although it might otherwise have seemed that it would be very easily consumed, nonetheless by divine will fully supplied and performed the function of charcoal, and from that moment made the iron suitable to be worked. From it he made a bell, which until now has been held in great honour in the church of Lismore to the present day (Macquarrie 2012: 151).

The 19th-century scholar, Joseph Anderson, was struck by the fact that one bell known and celebrated in late medieval Argyll had disappeared, while another bell, without provenance and whose patron saint was unknown, had recently been discovered at Torbhlaren in Argyll. He put two and two together and made five, suggesting that the recently found bell might be the long-lost bell of Moluag of Lismore (Anderson 1881: 207–8). Though he stated this only as a 'possibility' in 1881, a few years later he felt rather more confident and stated that 'the Kilmichael Glassary shrine ... contains a small iron bell, *probably* that of Moluag of Lismore' (Anderson 1910: 274; my italics). This probability has become accepted in some quarters as something approaching a certainty, though it lacks any supporting evidence at all.

As a warning against the identification of Moluag's bell with the one found at Kilmichael

Glassary, we should remind ourselves of just how common holy bells were. If there were dozens of such objects being used in medieval Scotland, we can see that it is less probable that the bells of Lismore and Kilmichael are one and the same. It therefore seems worthwhile to make a list of all the Scottish holy bells that we know of. Most of the surviving bells, the early iron type and the later cast bronze type, were identified by Cormac Bourke (1983: 467), but these are not by any means the only medieval handbells we know of. I will list the surviving bells, those described by Bourke and one other that he missed, and other bells that we know of or whose existence we might suspect from documentary sources. The reader will find this list in the Appendix. I should note that for present purposes this list is meant to do little more than illustrate how common such bells were, and the notes on each bell are therefore, by and large, cursory in the extreme. The list may prove useful, however, for future work on the cult of saints or the diffusion of a particular ecclesiastical influence, and for this reason where there is any evidence to suggest the saint whose cult is associated with a particular bell that evidence is noted. In many cases, a great deal more is known about the bell than I will offer in this context.

The list shows that early medieval handbells were in common use throughout Scotland, as relics and as ritual objects. Even if some of those listed in the appendix (eg, Airlie and Lintrathen) are actually two references to the same bell, and even if we cannot be certain that there was a bell at Balinclog, there are still about three dozen bells accounted for. Those listed happen to have survived, or documentary records of their existence happen to have survived. But given that for many of those appearing in the documentary record they appear only once, in one document, we might imagine there were several more such bells for which no documents survive, and therefore we are ignorant of their existence, and will remain so unless a bell or some new documentation should be found.

The multiplicity of such bells, as I have said, casts doubt on Anderson's claim that the Kilmichael Glassary bell was 'probably' St Moluag's bell from Lismore. We may wish therefore to ask if any other evidence might point towards a saint who might have been associated with the Kilmichael Glassary bell.

COLUMBA AND THE PARISH OF GLASSARY

In the list of medieval handbells it seems that some bells were associated with the saints who were patrons of the parishes or chapels where the bells were held. It is worth noting in the case of the Kilmichael Glassary bell, therefore, that it was found in the parish of Glassary which was dedicated to St Columba. Though the parish church of Glassary is now at Kilmichael, 'church of (St) Michael', the parish church has only been there since the mid-17th century. The medieval parish church was at Kilneuair, on the shore of Loch Awe, and that church (and therefore the parish as a whole) was dedicated to St Columba. The church appears as '*ecclesia sancti Columbi* [sic] *de Kyllenuire*' in 1391 (Vatican Secret Archive, Reg Suppl 78, folio 143 v). This is the name that has in the past been misread through minim-confusion as *Kyllemine*, which has resulted in a strange legend that the parish church was at some early date moved (quite literally, stone by stone) from Killewin on Loch Fyne to Kilneuair (Bliss 1896: 576; *OPS* ii: 43; for the correction of this misreading of the manuscript see Butter 2009: 68–9).

The parish of Glassary, with its church at Kilneuair, was a very large one, and clearly one of high status since it became the principal church of a deanery in the diocese of Argyll (the deanery of Glassary). It is possible that its very name is suggestive of importance: though placenames coined in Gaelic *cill* 'church' plus a saint's name are very common and may be applied to small churches or chapels, most of the very important churches in Scotland are not named in this way. Iona, Abernethy, Dunkeld, Dunblane, Kinrymont (now St Andrews), Kingarth, Applecross spring

to mind immediately, while in Ireland, the greatest churches of the Early Medieval Period include places such as Derry, Durrow, Kells, Armagh, Clonmacnoise and Kildare. Of these, only Kildare contains Gaelic *cill*, and it is followed by Gaelic *doire* ‘wood’, not by a saint’s name. The fact that the church of Glassary is called in Gaelic *cill an iubhair* ‘church of the yew tree’ may possibly suggest that it has a higher status than other *cill*-churches.

We know that Iona had a daughter house, a small monastery, ‘beside the loch of the River Awe’, that is, on Loch Awe, as early as the 7th century (possibly as early as the 6th century, since Adomnán says that Columba himself sent two monks there). Adomnán calls the monastery *Cella Diuni* (VC ii: 31), and though we do not know exactly where on the loch it was, it is clear that Iona’s influence was strong enough in the area of Loch Awe to sustain a monastery in this area, and this must indicate sufficient secular support for the Columban monks among the lords of Loch Awe-side for a grant of land to have been made or, at least, for the secular rulers who controlled the territory around Loch Awe to give permission to Columban monks to settle there in the 6th or 7th century.

Finally, it is perhaps worth examining the assemblage of objects found at Kilmichael to see if it might offer any clues as to its origin or to the identity of its supposed saintly owner. Of particular importance in this respect are the cross and chain, which we must assume belonged originally to the bell and shrine. Although these are probably 12th-century artefacts, contemporary with the shrine rather than with the bell, they may help us to shed some light on the cult associated with the bell. As we have seen (above, p 226), the form of the cross found on the chain at Kilmichael, a cross pattée, is well represented in Scandinavian artefacts of the 11th and 12th centuries, but a very unusual style in Scotland for this period. But it may be that we have evidence of another cross of similar form from about the same period, and performing a similar function, decorating another reliquary.

Cormac Bourke refers to the common seal of the chapter of the church of Dunkeld in the 13th century, which showed what seems to be a large church-shaped architectural shrine contained within an arched construction, which itself stands within a larger building (the church of Dunkeld, presumably), and is honoured by angels with censers. Beneath the shrine are three figures in postures of prayer. Bourke’s interpretation of this seal is surely correct: it depicts a reliquary of St Columba, whose relics were brought to Dunkeld by Cinaed mac Ailpín in the year 849. Most importantly for our purposes, a crosier is shown immediately above the shrine, therefore in close association with the presumed relics inside it. That it is a separate object, and not some kind of strange architectural feature attached to the ‘roof’ of the shrine, is proved by an earlier seal from Dunkeld, made in the 12th century, which shows a similar, if simpler, image of a shrine with a crosier behind it. In the earlier seal, the shrine is raised above the ground, and in the space below it, the foot of the crosier is clearly visible reaching down to the ground. Although the 13th-century seal does not show the crosier’s foot, the head of it, decorated with a pattern of lozenges on the curved part and the upper shaft, is clearly shown. Both these images are most likely representations of the *Cathbhuidh* or ‘Battle Victory’, the crosier-relic of St Columba which seems to have been kept at Dunkeld. Hanging from the drop of the crosier in the 13th-century seal is a chain with a cross pattée bearing some resemblance to the cross and chain found with the Kilmichael Glassary bell and shrine (Bourke 1997: 176–7). As Bourke remarks, ‘so distinctive is the conjunction of chain(s) and equal-armed cross that the bell-shrine and the *Cathbhuidh* might well have been specifically connected. Is it beyond the bounds of possibility that they were made *en suite* for 12th-century Dunkeld, that the shrine was rescued from destruction there in 1560 and taken for safe-keeping to the west, and that the bell housed inside it was revered as a relic of Columba?’ (ibid).

Far from being ‘beyond the bounds of possibility’, this suggestion seems highly plausible. The fact that these two relics (one depicted on a seal, the other still in existence) are enshrined in what Bourke argues are 12th-century metalwork, both bear chains and a style of cross which is most unexpected in 12th-century Scotland, and both are associated with Columban churches, is quite remarkable. Bourke’s suggestion that they might have been made *en suite* is surely the most compelling explanation of what would otherwise be an improbable series of coincidences. The scenario which he envisages for the arrival of the bell and its shrine in Argyll is also plausible, meaning that the bell and shrine had only been in Glassary since around 1560. But building on Bourke’s connection of the two relics, and the implication that they were made for Dunkeld in the 12th century, another possible explanation for the westward migration of the bell should be considered.

Up till the late 12th century, the diocese of Dunkeld stretched to the west coast of Scotland. This fact, incidentally, means that although stylistic aspects of the bell-shrine might point towards an artist working in the Scandinavian-influenced west (see p 227 above) it need not militate against the view that the bell and shrine were made for Dunkeld and were originally kept at Dunkeld, or were even made there, since ‘the west’ was part of the diocese of Dunkeld when the shrine was made, and the diocese as a whole must have absorbed cultural influences from its various parts. It is worth noting in this context that a man with the Scandinavian-sounding name ‘Harald’ was chaplain to the bishop of Dunkeld at the end of the 12th century, illustrating the connection between Dunkeld and Scandinavian culture. A Scandinavian artistic tradition at Dunkeld is also strongly suggested by the presence of the recumbent coped monument that survives there, now in the west tower of the cathedral. It is sometimes referred to as a ‘hogback stone’, a type of monument of markedly Scandinavian type – though it should

perhaps be seen as a later development of the hogback tradition, showing the tegulation on its sloping ‘roof’ that was characteristic of the classical hogbacks. Given this Scandinavian cultural presence in the diocese, and in Dunkeld itself, we could entertain the possibilities that the KGBS was made in the Scandinavian west of the diocese and brought to Dunkeld, or made by an artist working in Dunkeld in the same Scandinavian tradition that created the hogback-style coped monument and the cross pattée shown on the 13th-century seal.

At the end of the 12th century, the bishop of Dunkeld split his diocese in two, creating out of its western area a new diocese of Argyll, appointing Harald as its first bishop (Watt & Murray 2003: 34). This event suggests an alternative context for the suggested westward migration of the bell and shrine from Dunkeld to Argyll, in which the division of Dunkeld into two dioceses was accompanied by the division of Columba’s relics into two ‘packages’, so that both bishops could display relics that would legitimate their authority, declaring them heirs of the saint’s authority in their respective territories. The decision to establish the See of Argyll on the island of Lismore may have created some slight difficulty, since Lismore was associated with Moluag rather than Columba, and the bishop might therefore have installed a Columban bell-relic in an important and ancient Columban church – perhaps *the* important Columban church – in his new diocese: Kilneuair.

Of course, this is a highly speculative account, and none of it can be supported by firm evidence. There is no firm evidence. But such fragments of evidence as we have do fit the suggestion of a Columban dedication.

THE BELL IN USE

Wherever the bell was originally kept and eventually enshrined, whether at Dunkeld or elsewhere, and however it ended up in Glassary parish, we can be fairly sure that it was used in some of the ways outlined above, as a potent

relic of the saint associated with it. It is not at all clear when the hole in the base of the shrine was made, nor indeed *how* it was made (see p 216 above). However, the comment that the edge of the hole ‘looks as if it has been rubbed over a period of time’ raises the possibility that the hole has been rubbed by innumerable fingers being poked into it. It has to be borne in mind that one of the principal functions of relics of this sort in the medieval Gàidhealtachd was to ensure the truthfulness of swearing witnesses – recall the derivation of Gaelic *mionn* ‘oath’ from Gaelic *mionn* ‘relic, bell’ (Márkus 2009a: 118–24). We must also remember that countless charters declare that their witnesses, jurors, perambulators, etc swore oaths that they would give true evidence, and that a standard formula for the indication that such oaths had been sworn involved the phrase *tactis sacrosanctis*, ‘the holy things having been touched’. Sometimes the holy things touched were Gospel-books (*tactis sacrosanctis euangeliis*), but in other instances, they were relics. In either case, the use of the word *tactis* should remind us that the swearing of an oath was both a verbal and a physical act (much as a witness in a modern court swears an oath with a bible in their right hand). The holy things (*sacrosancta*) must be touched (*tacta*). I would suggest that the hole in the bottom of the shrine may have been made to allow jurors this kind of tactile access to the relic, the touching of which was the guarantee of their truthfulness. Others who wanted to touch the enshrined bell as a gesture of prayer would also, of course, be enabled to do so by this hole.

I have not been able to find any records of the bell being kept or used in Glassary prior to its discovery, nor of any family of hereditary keepers who are said to have held the bell and administered oaths, and so on. Nor do any local placenames shed any clear light on the matter (as placenames like Pitlug and Balinclog, mentioned below, pp 239–40, might have done). It has been suggested in the past that the keepers of the bell might have been the MacLachlan family of Dunadd, in Glassary parish (see, for example,

Lane & Campbell 2000: 39). This suggestion arises from the appearance of Alan MacLachlan of Dunadd, in 1436, in a document granting him ‘the offices of *seneschall* and *thoisseachdeowra* of our land of Glassary lying in the barony of Glassary’. The assumption has been made that the second part of the word *thoisseachdeowra* represents Gaelic *deòradh* ‘dewar’, and therefore that MacLachlan may have been the keeper of a relic, perhaps the Kilmichael Glassary bell. But it has since been shown that the *toschederach* and the *deòradh* are completely different and unconnected offices, and there is no record of any *toschederach* anywhere having any responsibility for any relic (Márkus 2009a: 98–103). We cannot look to the MacLachlans of Dunadd as potential keepers of the bell.

One avenue of exploration that might yield some fruit lies in the fact that there was a family of people in the area called Macindeor (from Gaelic *mac an deòraidh* ‘son of the dewar’). There were people of this name in Glassary in 1692: Neil McIndoir and Donald McIndoir were listed in 1692, at the farm of Fincharn in the north of the parish (Begg 2002: 48). Though Begg lists others called Macindeor (or Dewar) in other parts of the parish, these are, by far, the earliest. Also the fact that they are named as belonging to Fincharn is perhaps significant: the lands of Fincharn lie immediately to the east of St Columba’s Church of Kilneuir, the medieval parish church of Glassary. If the Macindeor family were a long established presence here at Fincharn, there would be a strong temptation to identify them as the possible keepers of the Kilmichael Glassary Bell, both from their family name and from the proximity of their family home to the church of St Columba.

There was also a family of this name who held Kilchoan, in neighbouring Kilmartin parish, at least as early 1659, when ‘Lucas M’Indeor of Kilchoan’ is listed as a witness in a court case (Cameron 1949: no 393). These people may have been, in fact, a branch of the Macindeor family of Glassary parish (Black 1946: 516). A short distance to the west of

Kilchoan, where Lucas Macindeor and his descendants lived, is *Port an Deora* ‘port of the dewar’ (NGR NR 793 963), which may also point towards this family having possession of a relic. It would be unusual for the keepers of a relic belonging to one parish to hold land in another parish, since the relic gave its keeper the right to certain lands associated with it and those lands would be in the parish (and often close to the parish church) of the saint whose relic he held. If the Macindeors of Kilchoan are to be regarded as actual dewars, rather than simply people who have inherited the surname, we might suggest various options:

1. They were not keepers of the Kilmichael Glassary bell, but of an entirely different relic associated with Kilmartin parish, and perhaps, in particular, with their farm at Kilchoan (which name probably represents ‘church or chapel of Comgan’).
2. They were keepers of the Kilmichael Glassary Bell, but that bell originally belonged to Kilmartin parish – in which case all the speculation above about Columba and Dunkeld is little more than a red herring.
3. They were keepers of the Kilmichael Glassary Bell, which really did belong to Glassary, but they had, for some reason, left the lands in Glassary to which they had rights by virtue of their office, and had settled in Kilmartin.

There seems to be no good reason to prefer one of these explanations over the others.

In sum, therefore, it appears that the records do not allow us to identify with any certainty who were the medieval keepers of the Kilmichael Glassary Bell, nor what lands they held. There are various pointers, but they point in several different directions.

Furthermore, there is no certainty as to who was the saint associated with the bell. Again, there are aspects of the assemblage itself and the place of its finding which point towards a

Columban dedication and a Dunkeld connection, but this is by no means certain and alternative hypotheses could be formulated on the basis of the fragmentary evidence available.

ENVOI

This study of the bell, bell-shrine, cross and chain from Torbhlaren confirms the assemblage’s importance as a treasure of National Museums Scotland. It provides a context for its presence in the parish of Kilmichael Glassary and suggests it may have Columban associations. The bell’s date of manufacture is placed in the 7th–9th century, while the shrine is assigned to the first half of the 12th century. It is clear that the bell must have been considered as a relic of considerable importance, worthy of veneration.

The authors have presented two alternative hypotheses about the place of manufacture of the bell-shrine. On the one hand, its Scandinavian artistic traits might indicate that it reflects the culture and patronage of the Kingdom of the Isles. On the other hand, a case has been made for the bell and shrine originating in Dunkeld and having been sent west after the diocese of Argyll was separated off from that of Dunkeld in the 1180s. There is clearly a need to gain a greater understanding of the material culture of these lands, and the power and status of the Kingdom of the Isles *vis-à-vis* the Kingdom of the Scots in the 12th century. It should not be doubted, however, that just as some secular and ecclesiastical leaders occupied both these worlds, or moved easily from one to the other, there must have been a considerable interpenetration of cultures.

APPENDIX

A list of surviving early medieval holy bells and bell-shrines (or fragments) in Scotland and those known from literary or toponymic evidence.

In this list, the objects are grouped together under the counties in which they were found, or in which they were last mentioned. Within each county the surviving objects are listed first, followed by those

which are known of only from textual or placename evidence. The counties in which the objects were found, or in which they are mentioned in textual sources, are dealt with in turn, moving from north to south and from west to east.

ORKNEY

1. *Birsay* An iron bell. Anderson discusses the circumstances of its discovery (1881: 167–71). There is no evidence of any particular saint's cult attached to this bell, which is now in the Tankerness House Museum, Kirkwall.
2. *Burrian* An iron bell. The circumstances of its discovery in the collapsed remains of a broch, in the company of an early Christian carved cross with ogham inscription, are discussed by Anderson (1881: 173–5). No saint can be assigned to the bell, which is now in NMS.
3. *Saevar Howe* An iron bell. This was discovered in the 1860s, in an excavation conducted by James Farrer at the mound of Saevar Howe, along with a long cist cemetery, only about 1km south of Birsay, where number 1 was discovered (Jedges 1983). Like the other Orcadian bells, it is impossible to attach any saint to it. It is now in NMS.

ROSS & CROMARTY

4. *Tain* The Gaelic name for Tain is *Baile Dhubhthaich* '(St) Dubhthach's town', and in 1505 a payment was made in Tain 'to the man that beris Sanct Duthois bell' (Anderson 1881: 213, n 2). The bell has not survived.

INVERNESS-SHIRE

5. *Insh* A bronze bell. The parish is dedicated to St Adomnán, 9th abbot of Iona, and the bell was probably also associated with his memory in local cult. A legend states that if it was ever removed from where it was kept in the church it would cry out *Tom Eunan, Tom Eunan* until it was returned there. The name means 'Adomnán's hillock'; it is the place where the church stands. The bell is still kept in the parish church.
6. *Strath* (Isle of Skye) Anderson mentions a legend here of a bell of St Maelrubha which used to hang from a tree at Ashig (*Askimilrubby*)

until it was taken to a church (1881: 213). It is impossible to say whether this was a medieval handbell and its location is now unknown.

7. *Nuntown* (Benbecula) Anderson was told of an 'ancient bell that used to lie in the ruins of Kilmory at Nuntown ... but it was carried off by a tinker for old metal' (1881: 213). Again it is impossible to be certain that this was a medieval handbell. A 17th-century history of the Macdonalds suggests that the medieval church of Benbecula was dedicated to St Columba, as does the modern name Teampull Chaluim Chille ('St Columba's Church'), which might indicate the saint associated with the bell (MacPhail 1914: 26). Although the bell was recorded at Kilmory ('St Mary's chapel') rather than at the medieval parish kirk of Teampull Chaluim Chille, the two places are close together, and a Columban bell may have found its way from the kirk to the nearby chapel for any number of reasons. The bell is, in any case, unlikely to have been treated as a relic of the Blessed Virgin.

NAIRNSHIRE

8. *Barevan* An iron bell. Barevan is in the parish of Cawdor, which was formerly known as Barevan, possibly Gaelic *bàrr Eibhinn*, 'the hill of (St) Eibhin or Aoibhinn'. The church appears as 'ecclesiam de *Even*' in 1226 (*Scon Lib*, no 103). The bell is now kept in Cawdor Castle.

MORAY

9. *Birnie* An iron bell. It is sometimes suggested that the medieval parish was dedicated to St Brendan (Anderson 1881: 177–8; Mackinlay 1914: 69), but this seems to be an assumption based on the apparent similarity between the placename and the saint's name. Birnie is likely to derive not from Brendan but from Gaelic *braonach* 'moist place', with locational dative *braonaigh* giving medieval forms such as *Brennath* (1210 and 1239), *Birneth* (1421), *Byrneth* (1451) (Watson 1926: 189). Birnie was probably an early medieval church, given the curvilinear enclosure of its kirkyard, the presence of a Pictish symbol-stone, and the fact that it formerly served as the episcopal see for Moray. The bell is now kept in the parish kirk.

ARGYLL

10. *Kilmichael Glassary* A bell of iron, and a shrine of copper alloy dated to the 12th century. The dedicatory saint is unknown. It is now in NMS.
11. *Loch Shiel* A bronze bell, it was still being used in funeral processions when Anderson wrote of it (1881: 198). It was associated with St Finnan, patron of the chapel on Eilean Fhianain ('St Finnan's island') where the bell is now kept.
12. *Lismore* *The Aberdeen Breviary's* legend of the making of St Moluag's Bell, as told above, suggests that this was an iron bell. The bell was still held in 'high honour', according to the same source, c 1510. Since Anderson's assertion that this lost bell had 'probably' reappeared at Kilmichael must be doubted, this bell can be considered as still lost.
13. *Ardchattan* In the 19th century a bell of St Baodán was revered at Ardchattan for its healing miracles (Smith 1885: 275–6). The alternative name of this parish was *Kilbedan* (1600, 1630, 1697) or 'church of (St) Baodáin', the parish kirk lying on the hillside a short distance to the north of the priory of Ardchattan (see Márkus 2009c: 58–9). The ruined church is labelled *Baile Mhaodain* (recte *Baile Bhaodáin*) on the OS 6 inch map (OS 1871), near to *Tobar Mhaodain*, 'St Baodán's Well'.

PERTSHIRE

14. *Balnahannait* An iron bell. It was discovered in 1870, 'between the wall and the eaves of an old cart-shed on the farm of Balnahannait in Glenlyon' (Anderson 1881: 181–2), perhaps hidden there from the disapproving eyes of the clergy or the Kirk Session. It is much mutilated. I do not know where the bell is now located.
15. *Forteviot* A bronze bell, listed by Bourke (1983: 467) as one of the medieval handbells of Scotland. However, he has had second thoughts about this bell, observing that it bears a mark on once face 'having all the appearance of a letter M', and having compared it to similar markings in other, later contexts, he concludes that 'I can no longer regard the Forteviot bell as a survival of the early medieval church ... and would now assign it to the 17th century' (Bourke 2008: 25–6). It may very well be,

however, that it is a 'replica or reproduction of a medieval predecessor, perhaps even using the original metal' (ibid). I would add that it is difficult to explain otherwise why a 17th-century artisan would make a bell in this form. We might imagine circumstances where a replica of an original holy bell might be made from the original metal: the original might have got cracked or broken, and the community decided that re-casting it in its original form, using the original metal, would restore what was effectively the original bell. It is now in Forteviot parish church. The saint associated with the bell is unknown, and we do not even know which saint was culted at Forteviot.

16. *Fortingall* An iron bell. Described by Anderson (1881: 180–1), it was, at that time, in the manse of Fortingall parish, but is now in the church itself. Anderson's suggestion that Fortingall was dedicated to St Catherine was based on a misunderstanding of the name of the old fair held in the parish, which he says was called *Feile Ceite*. The saint celebrated here is not 'Kate', but almost certainly Coeddi or Céti, the bishop of Iona who died in AD 712 and whose cult was also celebrated a little farther down the River Tay to the east, at the important power-centre of Logierait. Logierait was called *Login Mahedd* in the late 12th century (*RRS* ii, no 336), a name which contains a hypocoristic form of the name Céti. If Fortingall's dedication was to Céti, we might therefore surmise that the bell was associated with Bishop Céti of Iona, but there is no firm evidence for this.
17. *Inchaffray* Though no bell survives, the handle from the site of Inchaffray Abbey, whose decoration shows influence of Scandinavian *Ringerike* style, is almost certainly the handle of a bell-shrine, witnessing to the former existence of a bell, now presumably lost (see p 218 above).
18. *Kerrowmore* An iron bell. Anderson described it as having been kept for centuries at *Cladh Bhrennu* (now Cladh Bhranno), the cemetery of a now vanished chapel (OS grid reference NN581467). He adds that 'the name of the saint to whom it was attributed, and the dedication of the church which stood in the cemetery, are no longer remembered (1881: 178–9), but the placename *Cladh Bhrennu*

may be Gaelic for ‘the churchyard of (Saint) B’. It is not clear who this Saint B would be. It could possibly be Brendan, but this saint’s name does not normally lose its final *-n* in placenames, although Kilbirnie may represent this saint (Watson 1926: 189), in which case we have a precedent which makes *Cladh Bhrennu* seem more plausible. Against this suggestion is the fact that a 13th-century charter granting the kirk of Dull to St Andrews Priory excerpts from the grant ‘capella de *Branboth* in *Glenliun*’ (*St A Lib*, 295–6), and if this is the same place as *Cladh Bhrennu* in Glenlyon, as seems likely, ‘churchyard of Brendan’ must be seen as a less likely explanation of the name.

Local tradition, on the other hand, connects the bell with St Adomnán, a saint whose cult is most vigorous in the surrounding area. *Cladh Bhranno* lies in the parish of Dull, whose kirk was dedicated to Adomnán, and various placenames in the immediate vicinity of the bell’s home show the strength of his cult in Glen Lyon: *Eilean Eonain* (NN574465), *Milton Eonan* (NN570463) and *St Adomnán’s Cross* (NN625476). The bell is now kept in the church of Innerwick, 920m from *Cladh Bhranno*.

19. *Little Dunkeld* A bronze bell associated with Dunkeld, formerly in NMS, now kept in Little Dunkeld church. The saint associated with it is unknown.
20. *Strathfillan* A bronze bell kept at the holy pool of St Fillan, in Strathfillan, until it was stolen from there in 1798 and was eventually returned to Scotland (Anderson 1881: 191). It is now in NMS (H.KA 2)
21. *Struan* An iron bell, locally known as ‘the *Buidhean*’ (Anderson 1881: 183). The parish church appears to have been dedicated to Fillan, and the bell itself may have been regarded as that saint’s bell. It is now in Perth Museum.
22. *Barnachills* In 1474, John Drummond of Cargill received a charter giving him, among other things, ‘the lands of Struthill and Barnakill, with the chapel and bell of St Kessog, the lands and mill of *Cultichaldith* ...’ etc. (NAS, GD1601/17). I do not know where Barnakill is, but Struthill is in Muthill parish (OS grid reference NN852150), and a short distance from it in the same parish is

the modern settlement of Culticheldoch (the *Cultichaldith* of 1474). As Struthill is joined to Barnakill in this charter, and both together are connected with St Kessog’s chapel and bell, we may guess that Barnakill was also in Muthill parish. Two centuries later, James, earl of Perth, was retoured in the lands of *Barnachills* ‘with the chapel and holy bell of St Kessog’ (Anderson 1881: 212).

23. *Logierait* In the late 19th century, Robert Dow, a sawmiller in Auchnabeach in Logierait parish, told a story of a group of boys who one night broke into the church there to steal ‘*am Buidhean*’ (Robertson & Dilworth 2009: 266–7). This term is used of other holy bells, and the story makes it clear that *am Buidhean* would reveal itself in the dark by making a noise if the boys threw gravel at it. It seems therefore that the boys were intent on stealing a bell. The church of Logierait was dedicated to Céti, known by his hypocoristic name *Mo-Ched*, the bishop of Iona who died in the early 8th century, and the bell may have been a relic of that saint. Its location is now unknown.
24. *Kilmahog* In 1572, one Donald Dewar was granted the 40 penny lands of *Garrindewar* ‘which were once established for the ringing of a bell before the dead in the parish of Kilmahog (*Kilmahug*) in the time of papistry, but which have returned to the king by reason of the change of the religious regime and the abolition of the aforesaid service’ (*RMS* iv, no 2092). This was another bell that Anderson attributed to St Moluag (Anderson 1881: 208), this time because he misread *Kilmahug* in the *RMS* document as *Kilmaluig*. *Garrindewar*, ‘the dewar’s field’ is in Kilmahog parish, and the bell was probably associated with the patron saint of that parish, **Mo-chog* (though who this saint was is not clear). The bell is now lost.
25. *Kincardine-in-Menteith* In the late 12th century, William I granted to the monastery of Cambuskenneth the church of Kincardine, with chapels etc, and ‘thirteen acres of arable land, and the brewer’s toft with a garden, and a toft belonging to St Lolan’s bell with a garden, and a toft belonging to St Lolan’s *bachall* (crosier), with a garden’ (*RRS* ii, no 372). This seems to indicate a bell of St Lolan, cared for by a dewar in this parish

who enjoyed possession of a parcel of land by virtue of his office. The bell is now lost. There is no reason to suppose that the iron handbell now on display in St Mungo's Museum, Glasgow, is St Lolan's Bell, in spite of a rather hopeful tradition that it is. It was supposedly found in the River Forth, in the 1920s, but it is in far too good a condition for it to be a medieval bell which has lain in water for several centuries.

26. *Strowan* Anderson recorded a bell in the house of J G Graham Stirling of Strowan, but noted that 'it differs ... in form and material from the bells of the early Celtic church, being of cast metal and having the common round shape of the bell now in use. It has a loop handle inserted into the top of the bell, however, which is of a different metal, and seems older than the bell itself' (Anderson 1881: 182). There may be some doubt about the antiquity of the bell in its present form, but it was recorded in the 18th century that the bell had a dewar who held three acres of land in association with the bell (Anderson 1881: 183) while in 1572, the *Dewarisland* of Strowan was occupied by Thomas Dewar (*RMS* iv, no 2062). If the bell, round though it is, is not a medieval one, there must certainly have been a predecessor bell here which was cared for by the dewars of Strowan. The bell recorded by Anderson may have been a re-casting of an earlier bell (compare what was said about the Forteviot bell, number 15 above). The church of Strowan was probably dedicated to St Ronan, since there was a *Pol Ronan* in the River Earn just north of the church, and a *St Ronan's Well* nearby (OS 1863), and *Feil Ronain* or St Ronan's Fair was held at *Strowan Market Place* (shown on the same map immediately to the west of the church) (Anderson 1881: 183–4). It is likely that the bell (either this one or the original) was associated with the same saint.

ANGUS

27. *Guthrie* A bell of iron in a later medieval shrine of copper alloy. It is said to have come from the parish church of Guthrie. The dedicatory saint is unknown. It is now in NMS.
28. *Kingoldrum* An iron bell found close to Kingoldrum parish church in 1843, it was

found with a cross and chain associated. The parish church seems to have been dedicated to St Meddan. There was a St Meddan's Well near to the church, and a *Cairn of St Medons Ridge* and a *Well of St Medons Ridge*, near the north-western boundary of the parish, are recorded on a plan made in 1790 (NAS RHP1048). The neighbouring parishes of Lintrathen and Airlie are also said to have been dedicated to St Meddan, and there are records of a bell associated with both these parishes (see Airlie and Lintrathen below), either or both of which may have been the bell found in Kingoldrum. It is now in NMS.

29. *Airlie* Anderson reports in 1881 that 'about twenty years ago ... when an aged woman died at Burnside of Airlie, and her effects were disposed of by public roup "an auld rustic thing like a flagon, that fouk ca'd Maidie's Bell" was sold with a lot of rubbish. What became of it nobody knew' (Anderson 1881: 212). The parish of Airlie was dedicated to St Medan (Mackinlay 1914: 150), but so was neighbouring Kingoldrum, where a bell was found which still survives (see Kingoldrum, number 28 in this list), as was neighbouring Lintrathen parish where a bell of St Medan is also recorded (number 30). It is possible that Maidie's Bell in Airlie was identical with either the Kingoldrum bell or the Lintrathen bell, or both.
30. *Lintrathen* A charter of 1447 reveals that there was a bell of St Medan held, at that time, by a man called Michael David, evidently a *deòradh* or hereditary keeper, who resigned the bell to Sir John Ogilvy, lord of Lintrathen, who was 'superior of the said bell'. He then gave it to his wife Margaret who was formally seised in possession of the bell in Lintrathen – presumably together with any lands or rights that accompanied it (Mackinlay 1914: 150). Note that Lintrathen and the parishes of Kingoldrum and Airlie all lie adjacent to each other, and all seem to have been dedicated to St Medan – perhaps the vestige of some early medieval church settlement and its lands. A bell of St Medan was known in Airlie (number 29), while a bell was discovered near Kingoldrum Kirk in 1843 (number 28). The Lintrathen bell may be identical with either or both of these.

KINCARDINESHIRE

31. *Banchory Ternan* A ‘*campanam Sancti Ternani de Banchory*’ is recorded in 1445, and appears in various transactions thereafter. The bell was resigned by its *deòradh*, John Stalker, into the hands of the vicar of the parish in 1490 (see Márkus 2009a: 136–9 for discussion of the bell and its *deòradh*). A small square iron bell was dug up by workmen when the railway was being built near Banchory Ternan, in the 19th century, and this may have been the same bell, but it is now lost (Anderson 1881: 211).
32. *Lawrencekirk* In 1646 there is a record of a ‘*Diracraft alias Belaikeris* then called *lie Kirktown de Conveth alias Sanct-Lawrence*’ (RMS ix, no 1668). The place must be ‘dewar’s croft’, and its by-name of *Belaikeris* indicates that the dewar who held this croft, or these acres, did so by virtue of his custody of a bell. The bell is now lost.

STIRLINGSHIRE

33. *Buchanan* The forty-pound lands of Buchanan (formerly a detached part of Luss parish) are associated in various charters and retours with ‘the bell and alms of St Kessog’ (Márkus 2008a: 80–2). This bell may have been the one that was known as St Kessog’s bell and was placed on *Tom a’ Chluig* (‘hill of the bell’), on the island of Inchtavannach, in Loch Lomond, until the beginning of the 18th century (Lacaille 1928: 86). The location of this bell (or these two bells if they were not one and the same) is unknown.

FIFE

34. *Mares Craig Quarry* An iron bell. Mares Craig is on the boundary of Abdie parish, and in the heart of the territory which formed the *paruchia* of the monastery of Abernethy up to the end of the 12th century (Márkus 2008b: 121–6). Abernethy was dedicated to St Brigit – a dedication which appears to go back to, at least, as early as its foundation legend of about the 9th century. Whether the bell was associated with Brigit is unknown. There may have been a long-cist cemetery near the find site (Close-Brooks 1986: 179). The bell is now in Perth Museum.

35. *Pitlug* The early forms of this name in Monimail parish include the following: *Petycla<u>k* (1296); *Petynglug* (c 1350); *Pittinluck* (c 1500); *Pettinluig* (1513), and the name seems to be Gaelic *pett an cloic* ‘farm of the bell’, indicating the possible presence of a bell-relic (Taylor & Márkus 2010: 601).

DUNBARTONSHIRE

36. *Dumbarton* A cast bronze bell now held by West Dunbartonshire Council. It is discussed briefly and illustrated by Clouston, who states that it has been in the hands of the Council since the early seventeenth century, and that it was ‘latterly used as the dead bell’ (1948: 174–5, facing 152). It was not included in Bourke’s list (1983: 467). It is on display in the Dumbarton Museum.

LANARKSHIRE

37. *Glasgow* St Mungo or Kentigern of Glasgow is associated with a bell in the later Middle Ages. His bell first appears on the seal of the Cathedral Chapter in the 14th century (Anderson 1881: 21), and *The Aberdeen Breviary* has an antiphon on his feast, ‘A holy bell does him service in the heavens’. Various records survive of the bell being used as a ‘dead bell’ – to be rung in memory of the dead – even as late as the 1590s, and it may have been extant as late as 1630 (MacGeorge 1880: 23–5). The bell is now lost.
38. *Lesmahagow* A bell of St Mahago or Mo-Fhéchu is recorded in 1527 in an agreement between James Tait and his wife on the one hand, and Roland Hamilton on the other: the Taites must keep their *madayne* or daughter securely between now and Martinmas, by which time Hamilton will have returned with ‘ane bell quhilk is callit Sanct Mahagoeos bell’, earlier referred to as ‘ane relyk’. The bell appears to have been kept at Lesmahagow (Imrie 1960: 86). It is worth noting that while the placename Lesmahagow refers to St Mo-Fhéchu (a hypocoristic form of Féchín), the church dedication there was re-defined from the 12th century as being to St Mochutus, probably under the influence of the Tironensian monks of Kelso who had then acquired the church. In spite of this re-alignment of the church-dedication, the local holy bell appears

to have retained its old saintly association with Mo-Fhéchu.

PEEBLESSHIRE

39. *Traquair* A small iron bell coated with bronze was found at Minchmoor, near Traquair. There is no record of what saint, if any, it might have been associated with. It is now in the NMS (H.KA 26).

AYRSHIRE

40. *Balinclug* The name, probably in Tarbolton parish, seems to represent a medieval Gaelic name, *baile an cloic* (modern Gaelic *baile a' chluig*) 'farm of the bell'. It was the name of a parish in the 13th century (Márkus 2009c). The name may have been translated into Clockstone, the name of a modern farm in Tarbolton parish, or indeed Balinclug may have been a Gaelicisation of an earlier Old English **clokistūn* 'bell farm'. In any case, the parish (and later the farm) may have been named for the possession of a bell regarded as a relic. This cannot be regarded as certain, however, and no such bell is now known.

BERWICKSHIRE

41. *Ednam* An iron bell. The church of Ednam seems to have been dedicated to St Cuthbert, but whether the bell was also associated with him is not known. It is now in NMS.

WIGTOWNSHIRE

42. *Penningham* There was a bell of St Ninian here, close to Whithorn, since on 17 March 1506, James IV paid nine shillings to 'ane man that bure Sanct Ninianes bell' (TA 3: 374; Eeles & Clouston 1976: 268). It is possible, however, that the bell appearing at Penningham was not kept there but was rather accompanying the king on his journey to Ninian's shrine. In either case, however, the document shows that such a bell existed. It is now lost.

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