



Society of Antiquaries
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The Archaeology of Finlaggan, Islay

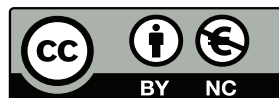
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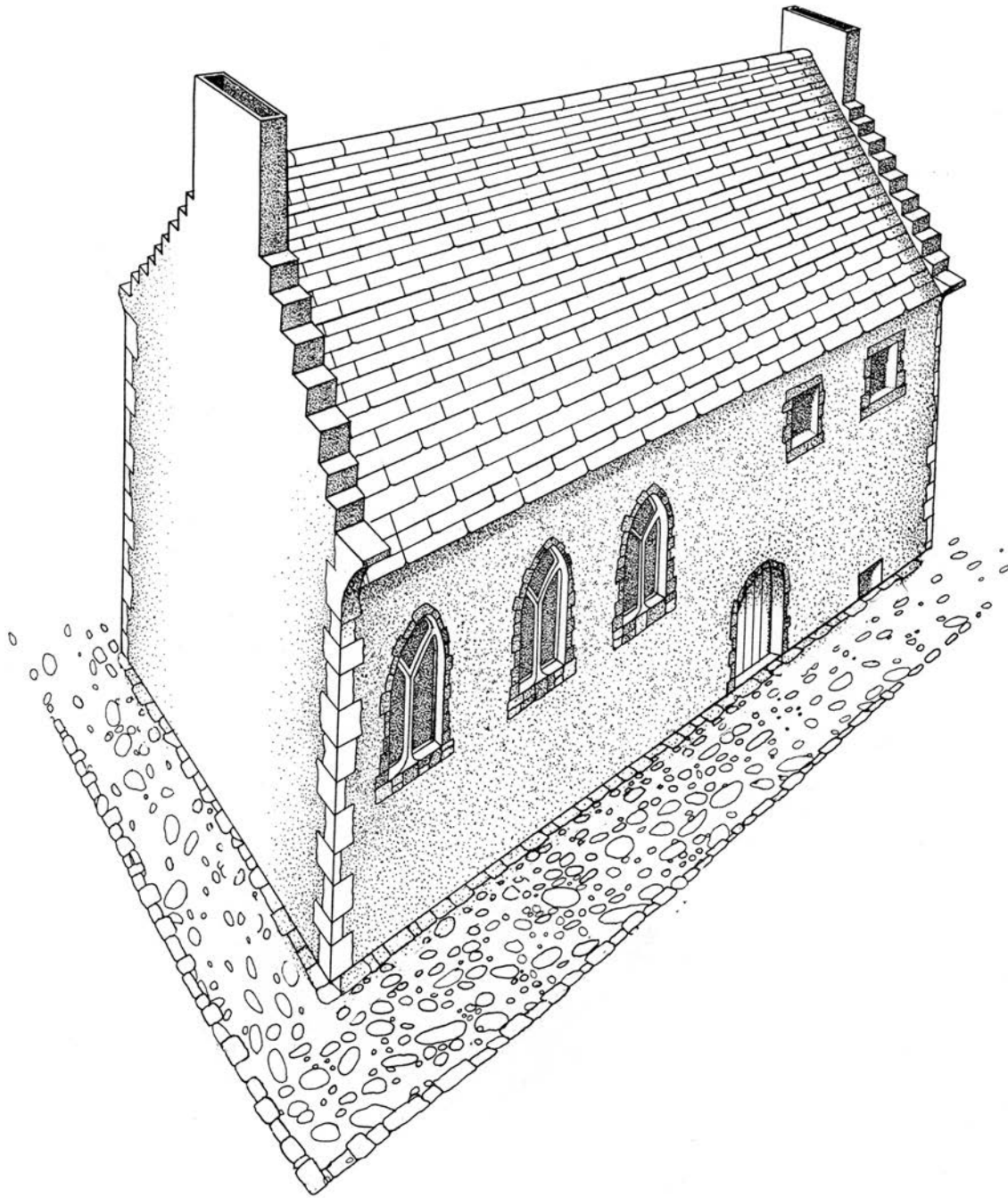


Illustration A1.1
Reconstruction of the great hall in later medieval times

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Reconstructing medieval Finlaggan

It was always an aim of the author to reconstruct what Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle looked like in medieval times. There were never appropriate or realistic options to restore or rebuild any of the structures on the two islands, although potential opportunities might still be considered to experiment with the erection off-site of buildings similar to those identified in the excavations.

While the excavations were underway, the author experimented with reconstruction sketches to help his understanding of what was being excavated. Illus A1.1 visualises the great hall in later medieval times. It possibly gives a reasonable impression of what it may have looked like. The form of the three large windows is derived from the hall building at Aros Castle in Mull, possibly of similar date and also built for a lord of the Isles.

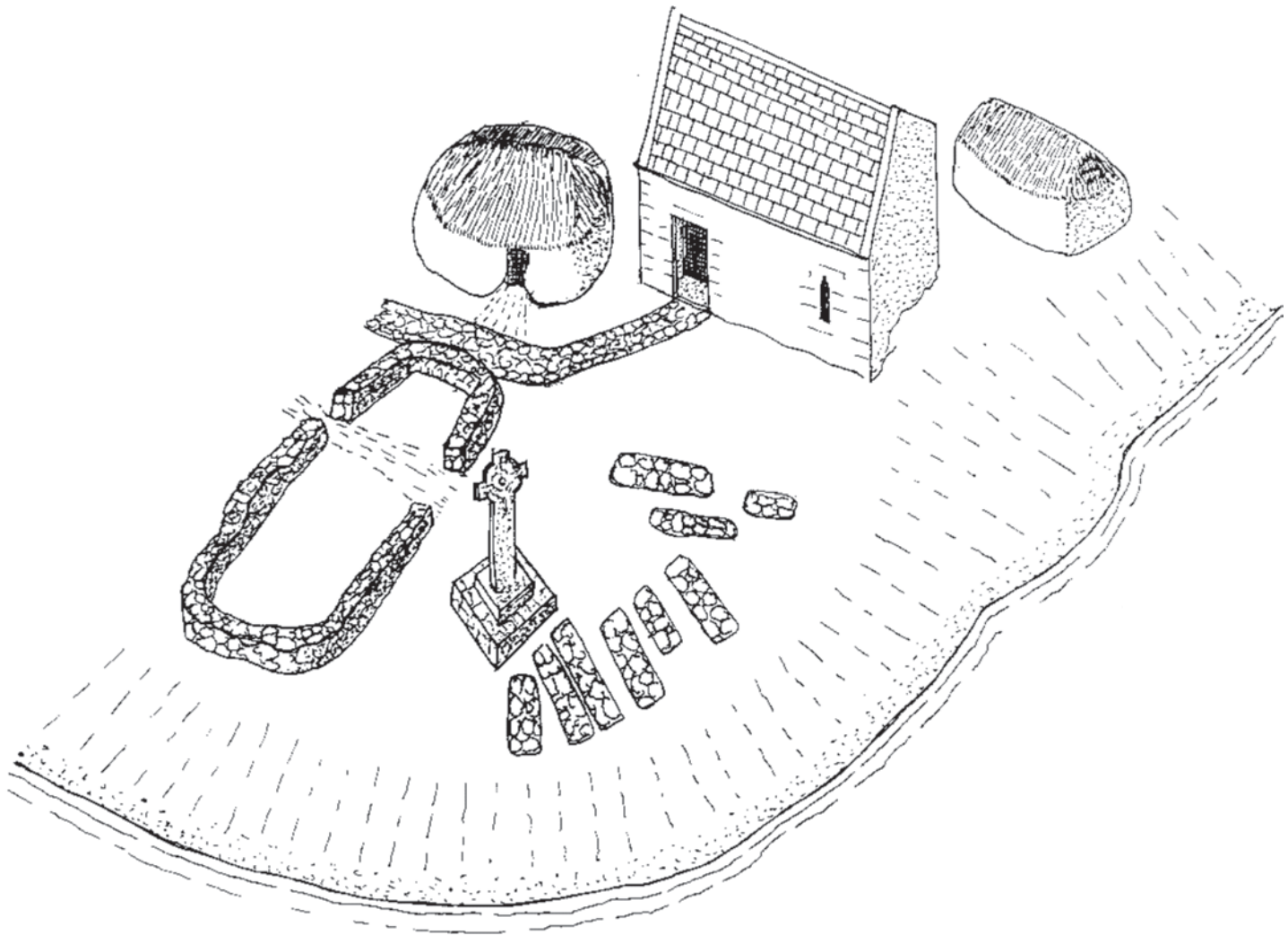


Illustration A1.2
Reconstruction of the chapel and burial ground in the 16th century



Illustration A1.3
Visualisation of the castle, Finlaggan (© David Simon)



Illustration A1.4
Visualisation of later medieval Finlaggan (© David Simon)



Illustration A1.5
Visualisation of later medieval Finlaggan (Open Virtual Worlds at University of St Andrews)

Illus A1.2 shows how the chapel and burial ground on Eilean Mór might have looked in the 16th century.

Illus A1.3 and A1.4 are visualisations of medieval Finlaggan by an experienced professional historical illustrator, David Simon. For the earlier of the two, the castle, in the lack of extensive archaeological evidence, much of the detail is derived from a process of projecting information on later structures and features back in time. The influence of Richard Bartlett's images of post-medieval fortifications in Ulster (Andrews 2008) will be evident. The device of representing the tower on Eilean na Comhairle as being unfinished and clad in scaffolding stemmed from a supposition that it may not have been completed prior to being dismantled. One of the main intentions in the later of the two views (Illus A1.4) was to suggest how built-up Eilean Mór was in later medieval times, and the artist has achieved that effect admirably. Since, however, the picture was completed, the author has reassessed the archaeological evidence and concluded that there was more open ground, probably a paddock for horses. In the distance the Cnoc Seannnda mound is identified by a hedge around its base. There is no archaeological evidence for that, but it seems a very likely feature to have been present.

Illus A1.5 and A1.6 are two of many images of medieval Finlaggan developed by the Open Virtual Worlds Team at the University of St Andrews in 2019 on behalf of the Finlaggan Trust. The interior view of the great hall is an authentic reimagining in terms of the furnishings, utensils and clothing of those present, but is not based on a particular Finlaggan dataset. Perhaps the most

controversial feature of this view (this author's suggestion) is the tartan wall hangings rather than tapestries.

All of these illustrations should be seen as part of an ongoing process of better visualising Finlaggan in its heyday. There is much more that could and should be done.

Appendix 2: Site archive contents

The archive consists of six main elements:

(A) Finds and Samples. The soil samples at the time of writing (June 2023) have now all been jettisoned.

(B) Key Data: Guides and Lists, including:

- Information on the site grid
- Statistics on areas of trenches
- List of archaeological contexts
- Harris matrices for all the trenches
- List of Finlaggan plans
- List of record photos
- List of finds with contexts, coordinates and levels
- Finds illustrations
- List of soil samples.

(C) The Primary Site Record

This is the original documentation on fieldwork and excavations, mostly generated on-site during the campaigns in Islay from 1989 to 1998. It includes:



Illustration A1.6

Visualisation of the interior of the later medieval great hall at Finlaggan (Open Virtual Worlds at University of St Andrews)

- Diary
- Trench notebooks
- Context sheets
- Finds and samples record sheets
- Plans of trenches, sections, record drawings of upstanding walls, etc
- Slides and photographs
- Survey notes and levels
- Environmental data.

For trenches 1 to 13 (1990–92), most recording was done in the trench notebooks, with information on finds and samples being logged in separate finds notebooks. For trenches 8, 12, 14–25 (1993–97), context sheets, finds record sheets and sample record sheets were used. Record photography of the excavations was done using 35mm single-lens reflex cameras loaded with colour slide film and black and white film for producing prints.

(D) Post-Excavation and Contextual Data, including:

- Interim reports
- Correspondence
- Specialists reports and data on finds, environmental material, etc
- Report on bathymetric survey in Loch Finlaggan
- Radiographs of finds, mostly ironwork
- Data on C14 and archaeomagnetic dating
- Geological data

- Survey material on sites and monuments in the Finlaggan Survey Area.

(E) The Final Report: a complete paper copy of the report for publication, as completed by D Caldwell in June 2023.

(F) Digitised Data, including much of the material listed in sections B, D and E, other relevant reports and illustrations.

At the time of writing the allocation of (A), the finds and samples, was still to be made through the Treasure Trove process. The rest of the archive (B–F) is now lodged in the Historic Environment Scotland Archives (collection number 551/2513).