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The Archaeology of Finlaggan, Islay

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PART IV

AN ASSESSMENT OF FINLAGGAN'S ROLE AND STATUS

The archaeological data presented in Chapters 7–13 backs up historical accounts and traditions that hint at Finlaggan's role as the ceremonial, administrative and judicial centre of a medieval kingdom and successor lordship. In this final part the evidence is reviewed and evaluated.

Structure	Type	Location	Period	Notes
A	Hall, great	10, 11	Early/late medieval	Lime mortared, slate roof
A.1	House	10	Post-medieval	Drystone, in ruins of A
B	House	11	Post-medieval	Mortared walls, central hearth
C	House	15	Late/post-medieval	Lime mortared, later two-storey post-medieval house
D	Gap?	Unexc		
E	House	Unexc	Late medieval?	
F	House	8	Post-medieval	Drystone walls
F1	House	8	Late medieval	Stone wall
G	Kiln	Unexc	Post-medieval	
H	House, stable	8, 6	Late medieval	Drystone, slate roof
H.1	House	8	Early medieval	Stone and turf walls, crucks, central hearth
J	House	8, 1	Late medieval	Drystone, slate roof
K	House	2, 4	Post-medieval	Drystone walls
K.1	Barn?	2	Post-medieval	Same as 12.5? Stone-faced turf walls with post-holes
K.2	Kitchen	2	Late medieval	Same as 12.6? Stone-faced turf walls
K.3	Kitchen?	2	Early medieval?	Deposit of ash, burnt bone etc
L	House	4	Post-medieval	Drystone walls
L.1	Kiln barn?	4	Post-medieval	Lime-mortared walls
M	House	5	Post-medieval	Drystone walls
M.1	Defensive work?	Unexc	Post-medieval	
N	Gap?	Unexc		
P	Hall	5	Post-medieval	Lime mortared, roof supported on crucks
P.1	House	5	Post-medieval	In the ruins of P
P.2	House	5	Post-medieval	In the ruins of P
Q	Chapel	1	Late medieval	Lime-mortared walls, slate roof
R	Cross	1	Late medieval	With lime-mortared plinth in burial ground
S	House	6	Post-medieval	Drystone
S.1	House?	6	Late medieval?	Under str S
T	House	Unexc	Post-medieval	Drystone
U	House	7	Post-medieval	Earth-bonded walls, two rooms
V	Barn?	7	Post-medieval	Earth and stone banks
V.1	House	7	Late medieval	Stone-faced turf walls
V.2	House	7	Early medieval	Clay walls, roof supported on crucks
V.3	House	7	Early medieval	Stake-holes for wattle wall?
W	Enclosure	7	Post-medieval?	Enclosed by turf bank
X	Defensive work?	Unexc	Post-medieval?	
Y	House	Unexc		
Y1	Defensive work?	12	Post-medieval	
Z	Pit	Unexc		Well?
6.1	Tower	6	Post-medieval	Timberwork
6.2	Palisade and bank	6	Post-medieval	
7.1	Post-holes	7	Early to post-medieval	Several structures?
7.2	House?	7	Early medieval	Clay floor and hearth
9.1	House?	9	Early medieval?	Clay-bonded walls
12.0	House/store?	12	Post-medieval	Drystone walls
12.1	House	12	Late medieval	Lime-mortared walls
12.2	House	12	Late medieval	Drystone walls, central hearth
12.3	House	12	Late medieval	Turf walls, stone floor
12.4	House	12	Early medieval	Hearth and bank only
12.5	Barn?	12	Post-medieval	Same as K.1? Stone-faced turf walls with post-holes
12.6	Kitchen	12	Late medieval	Same as K.2? Stone-faced turf walls
12.7	Kitchen?	12	Early medieval	Clay floor, ash
19.1	Fence	19	Post-medieval	Line of post-holes
19.2	House	19	Post-medieval	Vestigial, with central hearth, pre-lazy beds
19.3	Hut circle	19	Prehistoric	Arc of post-holes
19.4	Hut circle	19	Early historic?	Arc of post-holes
19.5	Hut circle	19	Prehistoric	Arc of post-holes

Table 14.1
Finlaggan structures, Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle

Chapter 14

FINLAGGAN: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY

In this chapter we review chronologically what we have learned from our project about Finlaggan from earliest times to the present day. For the scheme of periods and date ranges used as a framework, see Table 2.1. See also the author's historical guide to Islay, Jura and Colonsay (Caldwell 2011). For a list of structures on Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle, see Table 14.1.

Finlaggan, *c* 6500 – *c* 700 BC

The discovery of prehistoric remains in our survey and excavations was not intended but is not surprising. At the least they demonstrate human occupation from Mesolithic times onwards. None of the Mesolithic lithics from excavations on Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle or from the mound at Cnoc Seannda can be shown to have come directly from Mesolithic occupation deposits. Rather the presence of many of them seems to relate to their being dug up with turf needed in later times for construction projects, or the specific use of gravel, with which they were intermixed, for example for making mortar, both clay and lime based.

Nevertheless, these lithics do suggest that Finlaggan was from earliest times favoured as a hunting ground. If so, that may relate to the Bonahaven Fault (see Chapter 3) running south-west by north-east from the head of Loch Finlaggan, creating a geological unconformity where there would have been rock exposures,

Structure	Type	Location	Period	Notes
19.6	Hearth	19	Bronze Age	
19.7	Hearth and pit	19	Early medieval?	
19.8	Hut circle	19	Early historic?	Arc of post-holes
19.9	House?	19	Post-medieval	Arc of post-holes
19.10	House	19	Post-medieval	Vestigial, with hearth, pre-19.2
	Bridge?	18	Post-medieval	Stone plinths for supporting raised walkway
	Burial pit	17	Early medieval?	Multiple inhumations
	Causeway and ditch	18	Early medieval	Access to Eilean Mor
	Charnel pit	14	Late medieval	Disarticulated human remains in chapel foundation trench
	Construction slot	17	Early medieval?	
	Cross-wall	11	Late medieval	Lime mortared, cutting off west end of island
	Drainage ditch	7	Post-medieval	Associated with str V
	Drainage ditch	18	Early medieval	Associated with agricultural activity?
	Enclosure			Area with lazy beds defined by (earlier) banks
	Garden	12	Post-medieval	
	Gatehouse	18	Post-medieval	Turf and timberwork
	Graves	1, 14, 17	Early historic to post-medieval	In and around the chapel
	Jetty	Unexc	Late medieval	Access to cobbled system of roads
	Kiln	8	Post-medieval	In the ruins of str H
	Lazy beds	19, 3, 7	Post-medieval	Within enclosure defined by (earlier) banks
	Middens	6	Early to late medieval	
	Middens	10	Post-medieval	Within ruins of great hall
	Path	12, 9	Late medieval	Cobbled, approximately north/south
	Ploughing	18		[18067]
	Road	6, 9, 10, 11	Late medieval	Cobbled road, great hall to chapel
	Road	9	Early medieval?	Cobbled road, great hall to chapel?
	Road	4, 10	Late medieval	Cobbled road from jetty to great hall
	Road	4	Late medieval	Cobbled road from jetty towards Eilean na Comhairle
	Timberwork defence	17, 8E, 5	Early medieval	Around perimeter of the island

Table 14.1 (*cont.*)
Finlaggan structures, Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle

especially on the Finlaggan River, containing minerals for deer and other animals to lick.

Neither the Neolithic stone axe (X11) from Eilean na Comhairle nor the two leaf-shaped flint arrowheads (X9, SF 19074) from Eilean Mór appear to come from meaningful Neolithic contexts. There is evidence for Bronze Age occupation on Eilean Mór. A hearth, structure 19.6, containing sherds of food vessel type pot (X15–17; SF 19524–26) could not be related to any other house remains, but in the same vicinity the truncated remains of post-holes suggested the presence of two roundhouses, structures 19.3 and 19.5, probably of prehistoric date (Illus 8.35). If the surviving arcs of post-holes for each, respectively with diameters of approximately 14.4m and 19.5m, were for housing a ring of roof posts, then the actual diameters of these houses may have been rather larger, with low exterior walls of turf and stone, like the hut circle excavated by RCAHMS (1984: 134–35; Stevenson 1985) at Cùl a' Bhaile in Jura. On this interpretation, house 19.3, a replacement for 19.5, may have been a particularly large – and prestigious? – building.

Roundhouses – 'hut circles' – mostly thought to be of Bronze Age date, abound in the archaeological record of Islay, rather more than those recorded in the RCAHMS inventory published in 1984. In our Finlaggan survey area there is one at Robolls (site no. 63), and in 2007 a group of three were identified 3km to the east of Finlaggan at Druim a' Chùirn, Carnbeg (NGR NR 420 680) along with a souterrain (Caldwell and Ruckley 2008: 40).

Also possibly of Bronze Age date is a burnt mound (no. 74) in the Finlaggan survey area at Kepollsmore, and another possible one (no. 50) at Cuing-sgeir, Portanellan (Illus 5.36). Only four burnt mounds in Islay were listed by the Royal Commission in its 'Islay Inventory', all at Borraichill Mór, near Bridgend (RCAHMS 1984: no. 246). It is probable that there are many more to be discovered now that there is more awareness of the type.

Burnt mounds (known as *fulachta fiadh* in Ireland) consist of the debris from a type of cooking, often carried out in the open air, that involved the heating of the food – stew, soup or other food with a high liquid content – with stones ('pot-boilers') preheated on a fire. The cooking vessel would often be a wooden trough set in the ground, and the heaps of cracked and broken pot-boilers accumulated round about. Many date to the Bronze Age, and one of the burnt mounds on Borraichill Mór has produced a radiocarbon determination of 1745 BC±60 (GU-1465) (Russell-White 1990: 82). This tradition of cooking survived for a very long time in this part of the world. There is possible evidence of it in medieval times on Eilean Mór (structures 19.7 and V.1), and it was reported as still being practised by the poorer elements in some of the Western Isles as late as the mid-18th century (Burt 1998: letter XXV, pp 271–72). A controversial research project in Ireland has attempted to make the case that *fulachta fiadh* were primarily for the brewing of beer or other alcoholic beverages (Quinn & Moore 2007).

Cnoc Seannda

A small kerb cairn of Late Bronze Age type, containing a cremation burial, was erected on the summit of the mound at Cnoc Seannda (no. 46), a prominent local landmark (Illus 5.29). Such burial monuments are relatively common in Argyll, where they are dated to the years from about 1450 to 1200 BC (Sheridan 2012: 180). The Cnoc Seannda mound might have been one element in a wider ritual landscape, most obviously represented by a nearby standing stone and evidence for at least one other having stood into post-medieval times (nos 47, 70). Prehistoric ritual landscapes with burial cairns, standing stones and other monuments have been identified elsewhere in Argyll, for instance at Kilmartin on the mainland and at Ardnacross and Lochbuie in Mull.

The credentials of Cnoc Seannda as a ritual centre potentially at an even earlier date appear to be suggested by an adjacent feature (the 'chamber'), cut into the summit of the mound, containing a barbed and tanged flint arrowhead (X10) of chalcolithic or Bronze Age type (Illus 7.10). Both chamber and arrowhead, however, present challenges of interpretation. The chamber, approximately 4m long and less than 2m wide, is lined with orthostats. The arrowhead was recovered from clayey silt [21016] in the bottom of the chamber, and there is, therefore, a strong case to regard it as evidence for the date of this structure. There is no meaningful stratigraphic relationship between it and the kerb cairn, but since the latter clearly had a funereal role, it was an obvious line of inquiry to consider that the chamber had been a tomb. In favour of this interpretation that it was a grave were comparisons with a unique, complex Late Neolithic and later burial mound at Millin Bay at the tip of the Ards Peninsula in Co Down, Ireland, excavated in 1953 (Collins & Waterman 1955). This monument was found to include a complicated sequence of structures, including a 'long cist', defined by stone slabs forming a subterranean chamber about 5.5 by 0.8m. It contained the bones of at least 15 individuals, neatly sorted and stacked. Around it were several small cists containing cremation burials.

There are, however, no traces of human bones in the Cnoc Seannda chamber, nor any other clear signs that it functioned as a place of burial. More pertinent than the comparison with the Millin Bay long cist is one of two souterrains excavated just a few miles away in Islay at a prehistoric to earlier medieval site at Kilellan Farm, Ardnave. Souterrain 118 was created in a trench averaging 1.1m wide and 1m deep with battered sides. The souterrain, of unverified length in excess of 5m, was gently curved in plan and came to a rounded end. It was lined with orthostats. There was no evidence for a roof, although horizontal slabs were laid on top of some of the orthostats. Adjacent to this souterrain and apparently of similar date was an oval pit of similar construction, 2.1 by 1.45 by 0.75m deep, with three covering stone lintels still in place. Souterrain and pit belong in the excavator's phase 3.1, Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age. No function was suggested for either in the excavation report (Ritchie 2005: 32–36). Souterrains, although a well-known archaeological phenomenon in late prehistoric and early historic Scotland and beyond, vary considerably in size, structure and supposed function (for example, storage, concealment and escape). The similarity between Kilellan and Cnoc Seannda is particularly close. While a key characteristic of most souterrains is that they were roofed with stone lintels, it may just be a coincidence that both Kilellan and Cnoc Seannda had these removed in antiquity, or perhaps it can be supposed that they were roofed with timbers, as, for instance, some in eastern Scotland (Armit 2000: 581–82).

The chamber contained a thick deposit of rubble [21006] over clayey silt [21016], the two together perhaps representing the one action of filling in or levelling up the void of the chamber when it finally fell out of use. The separation into two archaeological layers resulted from smaller, finer material percolating downwards through the looser rubble. This infill material may have had no direct relationship to the function of the chamber, merely being scraped up or dug out from round about. Apart from arrowhead X10, the clayey silt deposit 21016 also included X30, a bone artefact (Illus 7.9) identified as a whirligig (toy). Comparisons (see Chapter C1 of the Catalogue) suggest an Iron Age date for it, but this is by no means certain. Both artefacts could have been dumped in the chamber when it was being filled in at the end of use. Levelling up the interior of the chamber, over rubble [21006], was a layer of clayey silt [21003] from which were recovered five cattle bones and one red deer bone (Table C9.15r in the Catalogue).

On the basis of this interpretation a date for the construction of the chamber is uncertain, as also the length of time it remained in use. We are inclined, on the basis of its similarity to souterrain 118 at Kilellan, to suggest that it dates to the Late Bronze or the Iron Age. Souterrains appear normally to belong in a domestic context, with a direct relationship with houses or forts. That does not appear to have been the case with the Cnoc Seannda chamber, located on a prominent mound.

Perhaps of relevance is Mine Howe at Tankerness in Orkney (Canmore ID 2998), where there is another example of an underground chamber, datable by sherds of pottery to the Iron Age, dug into the top of a natural mound, about 3m high within an oval ditched enclosure about 41 by 37m. The Mine Howe chamber is considerably more complex than the one at Cnoc Seannda. Its walling is of drystone, and it has steep steps descending to an intermediate landing and two side chambers, and then downwards to a chamber, about 2.8m in length, with a corbelled stone roof and flagged stone floor at a depth of 7.4m from the surface of the mound. Around the mound there is considerable evidence for Iron Age occupation and metalworking activity. Coincidentally (?), the neighbouring glacial moraine of Long Howe is surmounted with a Bronze Age kerb cairn, the make-up of which included several Mesolithic microliths. Downes and Card (2003) have provided a detailed description of the Mine Howe chamber and considered its possible functions. They have noted that it is not set in a domestic context and dismissed the notion that it was primarily a well or a cistern. They favour a ritual interpretation.

A ritual purpose would seem to be a likely, if vague, interpretation for the Cnoc Seannda chamber.

Finlaggan, *c* 700 BC – *c* AD 800

The archaeological evidence for the Iron Age and early historic period in Islay and more generally in Scotland consists primarily of occupation sites, perceived to be high status and often characterised as defended sites. They include forts, duns and crannogs (Nieke 1983: 299-325; Nieke 1984, 2: 114-59). The discovery through our excavations that Eilean na Comhairle had a past including both a dun and a crannog is a significant addition to our understanding of Finlaggan.

Both dun and crannog may have been largely coeval and occupied for a long period of time. The crannog, constructed of brushwood and peat held together by timbers, may be perceived as a reinforcement and extension to a natural island, its origins, on the basis of a radiocarbon determination, lying about the time of Christ. A second radiocarbon date indicates rebuilding or refurbishment in the 7th century AD. For what it is worth, these two dates fit within the two main periods identified by Crone (1994) for Scottish crannogs, from 850 BC to AD 200 and from the 4th to the 7th century AD. The dun, a substantially built roundhouse, can be assumed to be founded on natural rock. Our work at Finlaggan provides no information on the date of this dun or duns in general, but the recovery from the loch of the bronze zoomorphic brooch (X29) of the late 1st century BC at least holds out the prospect that someone of high status was in residence here at that time.

Eilean na Comhairle is an example of a type of Iron Age settlement site often referred to as island duns and island brochs, well known from work by the University of Edinburgh in Lewis at Dun Bharabhat and Loch na Beirigh (Harding 2000: 311–16). RCAHMS (1984: 153–57) inventoried 11 'crannogs and related structures' in Islay, not including Eilean na Comhairle. Six of them have obvious surface remains of medieval or more recent buildings, but in the light of work at Finlaggan it is possible that further research will show that some of these have a history of occupation extending back to the prehistoric era. The crannog at Ardnave and 'fortified island' in Loch Allalaidh (RCAHMS 1984: 153, 155) look likely to be island duns. The Ardnave crannog has in its centre traces of at least five small slab-built structures resembling cists, on average about 0.6 by 0.5m and 0.5m deep, three with capstones. They are possibly a similar phenomenon to the box-like structure [23038] in the interior of the Eilean na Comhairle dun.

The date of the causeway connecting Eilean na Comhairle to Eilean Mór is not known, but it would seem reasonable to suppose that access to the smaller island by causeway was provided from prehistoric times by way of the larger island. Clear indications of Iron Age occupation of Eilean Mór were not identified, although some of the truncated features in trench 19, especially the possible roundhouses 19.4 and 19.8, might tentatively be advanced as candidates.

The discovery of a lintel grave [1050] in trench 1 pushes burials on Eilean Mór back to the 7th century, still well short of the lifetime of Columba (521–97) and his follower Findlugán, but more excavation backed by research on dating might well have bridged this chronological gap. Graves of Early Christian date, including lintel graves and long cists, often occur in large groups with no obvious signs of an enclosure or church (Thomas 1971: 50; Maldonado 2011, 2013, 2016). The distribution of such cemeteries extends to Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland in the Early Christian period (Thomas 1971: 48–58; Edwards and Lane 1992: *passim*). They are known at the important religious centre at Whithorn in Galloway. There a substantial group has been excavated in a cemetery dating to the period from *c* 500 to *c* 730 AD. Some were wholly or partly lined or covered with wood rather than stone (Hill 1997: 70–73). Another classic example is on the Isle of Man at Balladoole, Arbory, where lintel graves are sandwiched stratigraphically between a small Iron Age fort and a pagan Norse boat-burial of the 9th century (Bersu and Wilson 1966: 10–13). In Ireland lintel graves are usually dated to the 7th century or later (O'Brien 2003: 67).

Lintel graves have been excavated in the West Highlands and Islands, a notable example being those (described as 'cists') at Galson in Lewis (Ponting 1990). A radiocarbon determination from a leg bone in one of them suggests a burial date in the late 4th century. This seems surprisingly early, but there is no good evidence to equate such graves with Christian burial. One lintel grave and two graves with side slabs but no capstones ('long cists') have also been excavated at Chapelhall, Innellan, on the east coast of Cowal, along with other burials. A radiocarbon determination from a long bone in the lintel grave suggests a burial date about the late 10th century (Atkinson 2002: 654–56). Four lintel graves are recorded at Poltalloch in the Kilmartin area of mainland Argyll (RCAHMS 1992: no. 91) and others at Glenforsa in Mull (Fisher 1997: 194).

The association of St Findlugán with Eilean Mór in Loch Finlaggan does perhaps suggest that this was from early times a place of worship. It is not impossible that some of the tenuous traces of structures in trench 17 relate to an early historic chapel. There appears, however, to be no compelling reason to accept the suggestion picked up by RCAHMS (1984: 224) that the small D-shaped enclosure (our no. 44 D) near the Portanellan/Finlaggan loch edge was a burial ground, whether of early historic or more recent date.

The naming of Eilean Mór after St Findlugán and the possible presence of an early burial ground raise the question of whether the island might have been an important religious centre, a monastery, in early times. There is evidence for early monasteries in Islay, most obviously at Kilchoman and on Nave Island in the form of large enclosures and the presence of early historic sculpture (Caldwell 2011: 148–50, 155–56; Caldwell 2017: 25, 341 n38). None of the traces of enclosure banks or fortifications excavated on Eilean Mór, of which more below, could be attributed to the early historic period, and there is no early sculpture.

A potential comparison between Kilchoman and Finlaggan in early historic times is worth further examination, since these two places are known to have been the main Islay residences of the lords of the Isles in the later medieval period. At Kilchoman the predecessor of the medieval lordly residence would appear to have been a multivallate fort, now flattened and built over, primarily known from aerial photographs. It must have been either in or adjacent to the supposed early monastic enclosure. It can be compared to the two well-preserved multivallate forts in Islay, Dùn Nosebridge and Dùn Gùaidhre, neither of which can be dated, but both of which are suspected to have been occupied in early historic times (Caldwell 2011: 131–32, 134; Caldwell 2017: 21). So at Kilchoman a medieval lordship centre may have been prefigured by an early monastic centre with an associated lordly residence.

The case for a similar development at Finlaggan is very slight. It would depend on the recognition of the Eilean na Comhairle dun as a significant early, high-status centre. It would also require very considerable assumptions to be made about lintel grave 1050 on Eilean Mór being evidence for an associated cemetery and early church. If they existed, positioned on the flat, level summit of the island, which would have been deemed the best plot of land, then, perhaps that could be taken as an indication of the primacy of an ecclesiastical authority over a secular one, as far as occupation and use of Finlaggan in historic times is concerned. It is difficult to see how any of the excavated remains on Eilean Mór could provide corroboration for such a development.

It is worth recalling at this point that there is no evidence that Eilean Mór was known as 'the Island of St Finlaggan' any earlier than the 15th century, and that Adomnán's account of Findlugán saving St Columba's life provides no information on Findlugán other than that he was one of Columba's brethren (Sharpe 1991: 173). The possibility should be considered that the cult of Findlugán was brought to Islay from Ireland comparatively late. The place there with which he is particularly associated is the civil parish of Tamlaght Finlagan (Co Londonderry) in the barony of Keenaght, from the 12th century the territory of the O'Cathans. Angus Òg, the chief of the MacDonalds who fought for King Robert Bruce at Bannockburn in 1314, married Áine Ní Chatháin, daughter of the chief of the O'Cathans. Her wedding retinue is said to have included the ancestors of several families in the Isles and Highlands (MacPhail 1914: 20). Perhaps Áine also introduced veneration for Findlugán.

Unless or until more evidence, probably archaeological, becomes available for religious activity on Eilean Mór in early historic times, it would seem wise not to assume that it was a monastic centre.

Other Iron Age or early historic occupation of our study area is not particularly obvious. The island dwelling (no. 61) of Eilean Mhuireill in Loch Finlaggan, adjacent to the land of Robolls, is clearly later medieval or post-medieval in its present form, but, as with Eilean na Comhairle, its origins as a settlement site may lie very much earlier. The fort (no. 69), Dùn Cheapasaidh Mór, does not appear to be typical of many other Iron Age forts in that its stone rampart, of which there are only slight traces, seems to have been set back from the edge of the summit on which it is positioned. There is at least the possibility that it was an estate centre or farm for an early historic predecessor of the medieval and later land of Kepollsmore. A sub-circular enclosure at Druim a' Chùirn (no. 22), Sean-ghairt, defined by a low turf-covered rubble bank, has been suggested as a palisaded enclosure or fort – of Iron Age date? Whether the occupation of these sites was contemporary or overlapping could probably only be ascertained by further fieldwork and excavation.

It is to be hoped that a major environmental and geographical research project – Waves of Colonisation in the Sea of Moyle – now underway and led by the University of Southampton will throw some light on local weather, land use, etc at Finlaggan, as well as the issue of whether there was a significant influx of human populations at any time in this period.

Finlaggan, *c* AD 800 – *c* 1300

No structures or deposits on either Eilean na Comhairle or Eilean Mór deemed to be of the Viking age (*c* 800 – *c* 1100) have been identified.

The Finlaggan castle

There can be no doubting that Finlaggan was a centre of importance in the earlier medieval period (*c* 1100 – *c* 1300). The most obvious sign of that is the large stone tower on Eilean na Comhairle (Illus 6.22). Its presence was not suspected prior to excavation, not least because there are no early records of such a stronghold.

Remarkably, we do not even know its name. Eilean Mór was described as the island of St Finlaggan when a charter was given out there in 1427 (Munro & Munro 1986: no. 21), but the first mention of Eilean na Comhairle is in Donald Monro's 1549 description of it as the site of a council house (Munro 1961: 56–57). It cannot be identified among the castles listed in the description of the Hebrides incorporated in John of Fordun's *Chronicle of the Scottish Nation* (Skene 1872: 2.39–40). The date and authorship of this account are the subject of debate (Oram 2017: 256), but for Islay, in recording only two mansions and the castle of Dunyvaig as residences of the lords of the Isles, it can be deduced that it is reflecting a situation when an earlier fort at Kilchoman and the castle at Finlaggan had disappeared to be replaced by 'mansions', and a time prior to Dunyvaig Castle being granted to John, the progenitor of the MacDonalds of Dunyvaig, by his father, John, the first lord of the Isles, who probably died in 1387 (Caldwell 2017: 55–58).

The description 'castle' was not used in connection with Finlaggan until recent times, for example by RCAHMS in their inventory (1984: 275). That Finlaggan at an early stage had a castle name is surely hinted at by a shieling on the land of Portanellan called Airigh nan Caisteal (no. 34).

The castle consisted not just of the tower on Eilean na Comhairle but also of a bailey occupying all of Eilean Mór (Illus 14.1). It thus conformed in plan and concept to a European model in which there was a strong tower or donjon, which provided living quarters and extra security for the lord, and adjacent to it one or more baileys or courtyards containing other facilities. These might include a hall, kitchens, a chapel, workshops, other accommodation and storage space. What was unique about Finlaggan was that this castle occupied two islands. Integral to its plan were two causeways, one providing access from the loch-side to the bailey (Eilean Mór) and the other connecting the bailey with the tower. A point that might be worth exploring in any future campaign of archaeological research is whether the later medieval separation of the west end of Eilean Mór from the main part of the island by a cross-wall reflects an earlier division between an inner and outer bailey.

The limited evidence from our excavations on Eilean Mór does not necessarily indicate that the perimeter timberwork was a serious defence, even taking account of the obstacle provided by the surrounding loch. Its primary functions may have been to define the physical limits of the site and provide a barrier for unauthorised access or egress by either humans or animals. Short lengths of it were identified in trenches 5 and 8E and less certainly in trench 17, all of which we have cautiously identified as the one system. In trench 5 a turf bank faced with stone supported the stakes of a palisade. Stratigraphically it was earlier than a later medieval cobbled path. In trench 8E a palisade slot was identified on the steep edge of the island, possibly with an associated defensive tower, and the continuation of this palisade slot was possibly picked up in trench 17. The main access to the island may have been via the stone causeway to the apex of Eilean Mór, crossing a ditch [18032], perhaps more to do with drainage than defence. If there were a gatehouse or gate it may have been totally destroyed by later activity, its outer edge being reflected by the drainage gully 18050. The archaeological evidence for the presence of this causeway in the earlier medieval period or earlier depends on the recovery of a sherd of pottery (SF 18126) and a

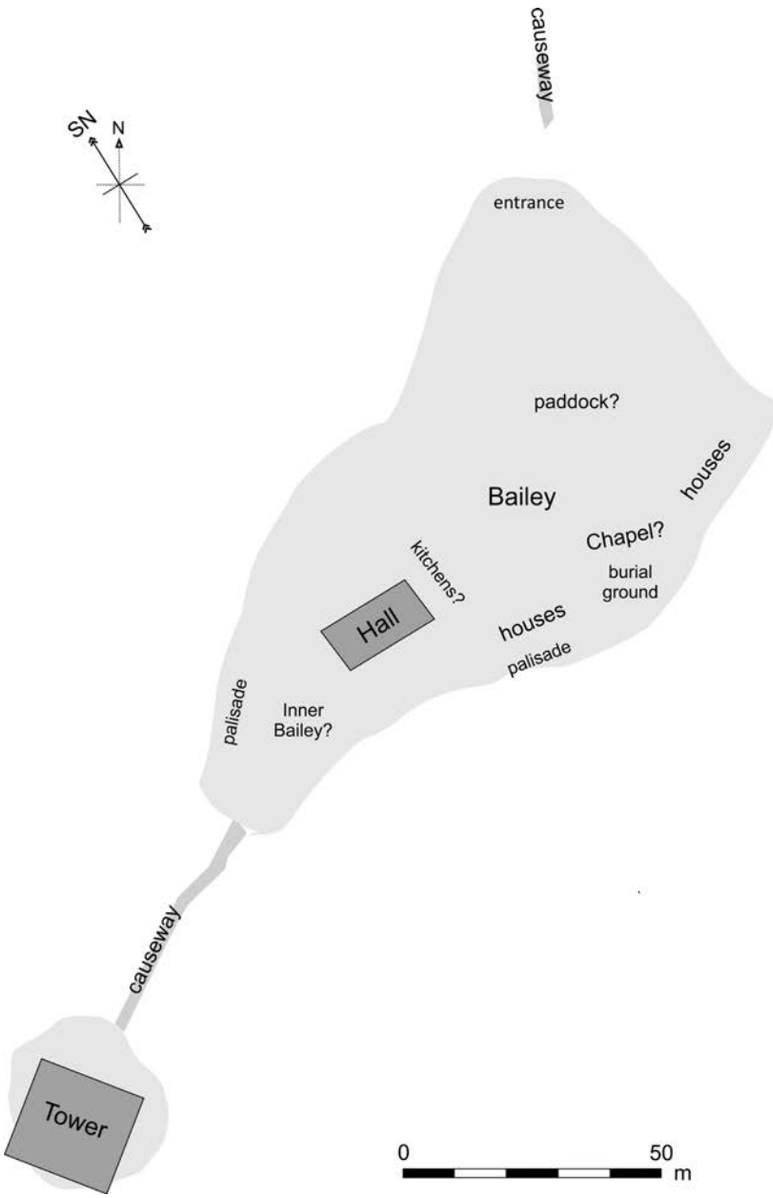

Illustration 14.1
Plan of the castle, earlier medieval Finlaggan

dress pin (C10) from the cobbled path extending from the causeway on to the island.

Islands in freshwater lochs were often chosen by magnates and lairds in what is now Scotland for the erection of castles. Examples from the 13th century include the Earl of Carrick's castle in Loch Doon, Ayrshire (Canmore ID 63601); Lochindorb Castle, a stronghold of the Comyns in Moray (Canmore ID 15463); and the Campbell castle of Innis Chonnel in Loch Awe, Argyll (Canmore ID 23162). Excavation in the future may well show that these and other island castles superseded undefended centres or timberwork defences.

Practically all medieval castles in the West Highlands and Islands were constructed adjacent to the sea – hence the recent

Illustration 14.2
John de Courcy's late 12th-century tower at Carrickfergus in Ulster

interest among castellologists in the concept of 'galley castles', ones which dominated the seaways of the Hebrides and west coasts of Scotland (Martin 2017). None of them appear to be close parallels in architectural terms to Finlaggan. As we will argue below, perhaps there were particular reasons to do with administration and state ritual that made Finlaggan an appropriate place for a major castle.

Excavation was too limited to comment much on the range of structures at Finlaggan and their function, apart from the tower and hall. The need for a great hall on Eilean Mór as well as a large stone tower on Eilean na Comhairle, where, on the basis of the midden material excavated in trench 25, feasting took place, defines the importance of the castle. The presence of both suggests a division between private and more public space, as well as clearly indicating the high status of its lords, the extent of the resources they commanded, and their need for ostentatious display and giving. In having both a large stone tower and a separate hall, the castle at Finlaggan compares with John de Courcy's castle at Carrickfergus in Ulster in the late 12th century (Illus 14.2). The presence of both at Finlaggan probably reflects the considerable numbers in the lords' retinue and the need to provide food and shelter, both within the hall for many of them.

Earlier medieval (1100–1300) material was found in most trenches on Eilean Mór (see Table 14.1), albeit mostly in small areas due to the limited extent of our excavations. This would appear to suggest that this island was fully occupied at least some of the time in this period. No obvious traces of earlier medieval buildings, with the possible exception of structure 19.7, a hearth and pit, were identified in trench 19, although an area of 100 sq m was excavated to natural deposits. These were covered with spreads of silty loam and other sediments identified as subsoil (Table 8.4, Illus 8.26, 8.27) underlying later lazy beds and post-medieval houses. It is possible that these so-called subsoil deposits represent the residual remains of an earlier medieval phase of agricultural activity. The recovery from trench 19 of F51, a horseshoe, and F52, a horseshoe nail, both datable to the 13th or 14th century, raises the possibility that this area of the island might have served as a paddock.

Limited excavation in trenches 2 and 12 suggests the presence of earlier medieval buildings, structures K.3, 12.4 and 12.7. The concentration of sherds of wheel-made pottery recovered from later medieval and post-medieval contexts in trench 12, many apparently grubbed up from earlier medieval deposits, might suggest that, just as in later times, this was a food preparation area associated with the great hall.

More substantial evidence for a house was recovered from trench 8. House H.1 there consisted of the residual remains of a turf-walled house with central hearth and roof supported on crucks, probably dating prior to about 1220 (Illus 14.3 A). It was perhaps about 12 by 7m in overall size, assuming that house H,

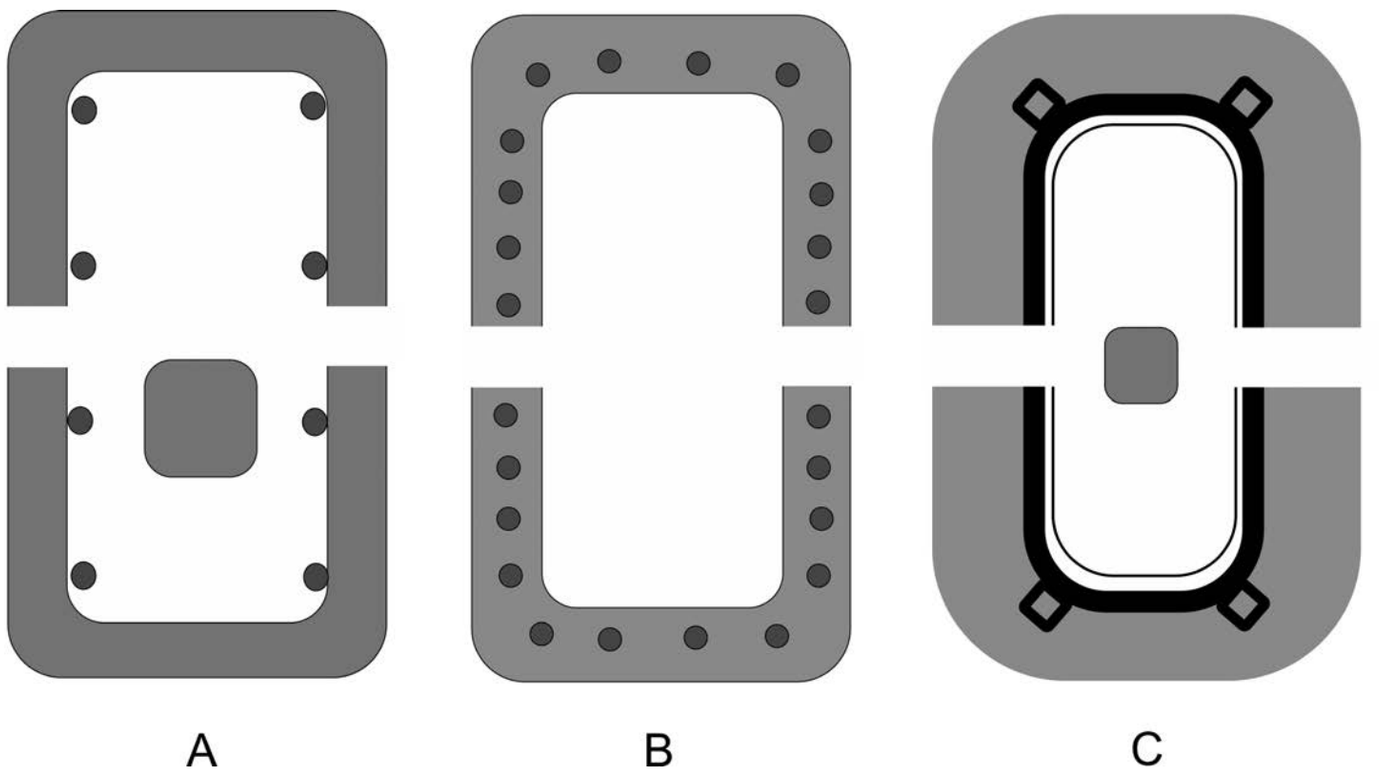

Illustration 14.3
Diagrammatic plans, not to scale, of medieval house types. (A) house (based on structure H.1) with turf and stone walls and post-holes internally for supporting crucks for the roof. There is a central hearth. (B) house (based on structure V.1) with post-holes within its turf and stone walls for supporting the upper walls and roof. (C) house (based on structure 12.2) with turf walls faced internally with stone and wattling. There is a central hearth and corner-stone settings for supporting roof couples

which succeeded it, had the same footprint. Iron artefacts were recovered from two of its post-holes – F90, a possible rake tooth, and the shank of a nail (SF 8440). These could just have been deposited accidentally, but, as with an iron knife found under a post-pad in a 13th-century house at Kilchoman, Islay (Ellis 2015: 24), some deliberate ritual or magic intent may have been involved. Other more obvious examples of this can be found in later medieval and post-medieval contexts at Finlaggan.

Structure H.1 is an early example of our broad category of type A houses, described in Chapter 5 as oval or barrel-shaped in plan, or rectangular with rounded corners. They were of turf and/or drystone construction, often with opposed entrances in their long sides. Neither H.1 nor V.2 had load-bearing walls, and they relied on crucks for supporting their roofs. A mid-13th-century house that is broadly comparable has been excavated at Tildarg in Co Antrim. It had low sod and clay walls with an overall size of about 16 by 6m, and the excavator suggested that it had a hipped roof supported on crucks. There was evidence for a line of stake-holes against the interior of one internal end wall (Brannon 1984; Horning 2001: 377–81). Comparisons between any medieval and later houses at Finlaggan and 'Irish cabins', 'creats' and the like, some represented on 16th- and 17th-century plans (Horning 2001: 376–79; Andrews 2008: 54), will remain very general until there is more detailed archaeological research.

Remains of houses, probably of earlier medieval date, were also partially excavated in trench 7. Structure V.3 was merely represented by a cut in the natural clay edged with stake-holes. Perhaps this is a glimpse at a house with wattle-work walls, such as were prevalent in Scandinavian towns and settlements, for instance Dublin (Wallace 1992), in earlier medieval times. Enough of V.2 was uncovered to suggest a building with an internal width of a bit less than 4m, and a roof supported on crucks, or timber uprights adjacent to the interior wall faces. The interior of V.2 appears to have been cut out of the natural clay, creating a sunken floor. If so, parallels may be sought with sunken-floored buildings elsewhere in the Scandinavian world. There was a central hearth adjacent to a rectangular pit about 1.45 by 0.75m, by 0.5m deep, possibly originally lined with wood or containing a wooden trough. The recovery from it of a sherd (SF 7323) of oxidised gritty ware indicates a date no earlier than the 12th century. No heat-affected stones, such as might have been used for heating liquid, were observed or collected in or adjacent to the trough, and so, perhaps, it was not used for cooking or brewing but for some other industrial process, like retaining water used in quenching iron being worked by a smith. A small 10th-century sunken-floored building (A5) next to the feasting hall at Hofstaðir in Iceland has been interpreted as a smithy (Lucas 2009: 103–07).

The largest and most imposing structure on Eilean Mór was phase 1 of building A, representing the remains of a relatively large, prestigious hall, the main public building on the island. As originally built in the 12th or 13th century it probably had an earth or paved floor and a central fireplace. It may have been roofed with type A and B slates. Reused jamb stones in the phase 2 hall door, if from the phase 1 hall, suggest an entrance of some grandeur. If two fragments of sandstone (R.32, R.21) recovered from the wall of building B are from the same source, then it had nail-head decoration and, probably, a hood-mould with stops in the form of human heads (Illus 14.4).

Halls of various sizes, shapes and materials, mostly for domestic occupation, were a typical component of high-status residences

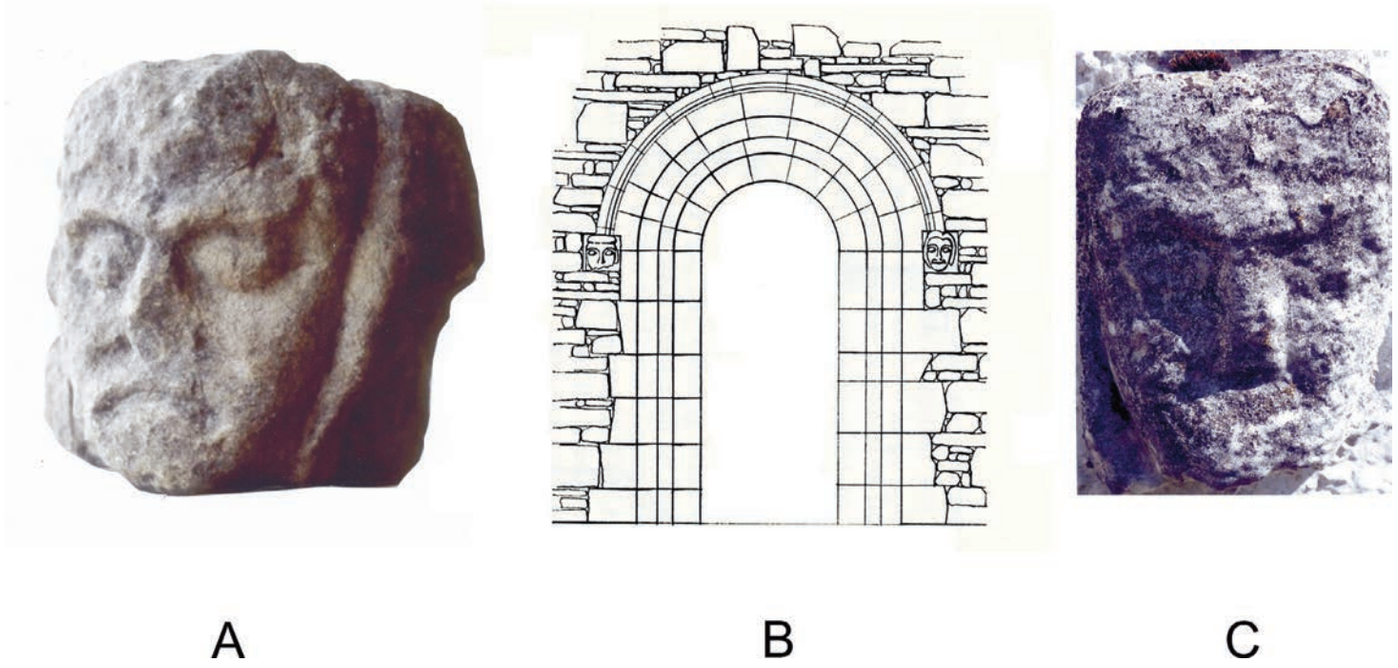

Illustration 14.4
(A) probable label stop (R32) from Finlaggan compared with (B) exterior of a doorway in the south wall of the choir of the cathedral on Lismore (after RCAHMS 1975: fig 150); (C) detail of one of the Lismore label stops (photo: Robert Hay)

in the wider European world in earlier medieval times. Useful comparisons for the Finlaggan phase I hall can be limited to rectangular masonry structures of similar or larger size. With an internal size of about 16.3 by 7m, the great hall is not too different from those of other major magnates in Scotland, like the earls of Carrick in Turnberry Castle, on the Ayrshire coast (Dixon & Wyeth 2021: 38), and the bishops of Aberdeen on an island in Bishop's Loch, Aberdeenshire, which dates prior to 1280 (Cruickshank 1944; RCAHMS 2007: 442, fig 8.26). It is considerably smaller than the mid-13th-century hall of the earls of Mar in Kildrummy Castle, Aberdeenshire. It is marginally smaller than another hall within the area of the Kingdom and Lordship of the Isles of which there are fragmentary remains in Castle Camus, Skye. That has a latrine chute near one corner and is constructed with type 1 masonry like the Finlaggan hall (Caldwell & Ruckley 2005: 113). It is, however, not much more than a quarter of the size of the hall built for King Hakon of Norway at Bergen in the mid-13th century (Simpson 1961). The hall in Caernarfon Castle, built by Edward I of England in the early 1290s as his main administrative centre in north Wales, was comparable in size to Bergen (Peers 1917: 36), while King Henry III's hall of the mid-13th century in Dublin Castle can be deduced from early plans to have been even larger (McNeill 1997: 46–47). All of these were completely dwarfed in size by King William Rufus's hall at Westminster, built in 1097. These comparisons may be seen as useful context in further considerations of the significance of the kingdom or lordship of which Finlaggan may have been the administrative hub.

There is evidence for earlier medieval lime-mortared masonry halls in Orkney, for instance at Tuquoy on Westray (Owen 2003: 139–41; 2023: 230, 232), but none appear to have been as large as the Finlaggan hall, with the exception of the bishop's palace in Kirkwall, Orkney, possibly dating to the 12th century. This hall, almost 26 by about 7.6m internally, was at first-floor level (Simpson 1961: 65–77). This was a typical arrangement in many earlier medieval halls, with ground-floor storage and food preparation areas. That was how King Hakon's hall in Bergen (actually at second-floor level) was designed (Simpson 1961: 23–29). There are examples of earlier medieval first-floor halls (some of them called 'hall-houses' by architectural historians) in the west of Scotland and Ireland, including a 13th-century one of the MacNaughtons on Fraoch Eilean on Loch Awe (RCAHMS 1974: 213) and Greencastle in Co Down, erected by Hugh de Lacy II in the mid-13th century (McNeill 1997: 88–91). If the Finlaggan phase I hall were at first-floor level, the flooring of such a wide space would have required the floor joists to be given sufficient rigidity by the insertion of Samson posts supporting a central bressumer or girder. This was the case at Fraoch Eilean and less certainly for the hall of Achanduin Castle, Lismore, a residence built about 1295–1310, probably by the MacDougalls (Caldwell & Stell 2017: 28, 57, 58).

There are good reasons, which will be explained more fully below, for assigning a late 14th-century date to the chapel on Eilean Mór, but it may incorporate walling from an earlier medieval predecessor or occupy the site of one. The recovery of two pieces of type B roof slates from 17004, the make-up layer created prior to the erection of the chapel, might also be seen as a clue that there was an earlier building here. Some of the sandstone fragments recorded from the chapel ruins, including R22, a piece of red sandstone with a roll moulding, may also be recycled from an earlier church. R30, a possible fragment of the cap of a nook shaft found in nearby trench 6, could have strayed when an earlier chapel was destroyed or demolished. They might, however, be recycled stonework from the demolition of the tower on Eilean na Comhairle.

The case can certainly be made that the burial ground was in use in earlier medieval times, perhaps even continuously so since early historic times. The charnel deposit of disarticulated human bones packed into the foundation trench of the chapel's north wall is best interpreted as a gathering of remains from burials disturbed when the chapel was being erected. Cut by it was an earlier coffin burial [grave 14.6] capped with stones.

The foundation trench for the chapel's east wall cuts into a burial pit [17025] containing at least two adults and a child (Illus 9.25 and 9.26). The only further dating evidence that can be provided for it is the observation that its fill contains pieces of mortar, interpreted as contamination from the erection or destruction of a nearby building. It is unlikely that lime mortar would have been in use locally any earlier than the 12th century. This burial pit is markedly different in character from the medieval and later graves encountered elsewhere in the burial ground, and was presumably always at the edge of the area of burials, if not separated from them by a predecessor of the present chapel. In general, multiple graves are not the norm in medieval Europe. We may be witnessing here, as in later medieval times, the interment of individuals whose deposition in the main burial ground was sanctioned, for one reason or another. A possible explanation is that they were victims of a plague or epidemic.

R6 and R7 are high-status grave-slabs that the author believes date to earlier medieval times and show considerable Scandinavian influence. The ancestry that the MacDonalds claimed for themselves was Irish and 'Celtic', distinctly not Scandinavian, despite their descent from Somerled (Old Norse Sumarliði, 'summer warrior'). These slabs are important evidence for the ongoing impact of Scandinavian culture (Caldwell 2024: 69). In trench 9, 9013 looks like it might be a predecessor of the later medieval cobbled road running from the great hall to the chapel.

The stone tower on Eilean na Comhairle would have been the most conspicuous structure at earlier medieval Finlaggan in terms of its bulk and role as lordly residence. No evidence was traced for a defensive wall around Eilean na Comhairle or for a gate at the causeway end on that island. There was no readily usable space around the tower exterior, and the island edge may only have been reinforced with boulders (Illus 6.20). There is evidence for other rectangular stone towers in Orkney and Caithness, believed to have been erected for Norse noblemen. The best known are Cubbie Roo's Castle on the island of Wyre, the mid-12th-century home of Kolbein Hruga, and Old Wick Castle on the coast of Caithness, possibly built by Earl Harald Maddadson about 1200 (Gibbon 2017). These towers, however, were very much smaller than the one at Finlaggan. Cubbie Roo's was less than 8m square overall, and Old Wick was only about 7.3 by 5m. They probably belonged to a different architectural tradition and functioned in a different way than the Finlaggan tower.

The Finlaggan tower was of a size and type identified in castle studies as 'Norman keeps'. The use of sandstone dressings

and the internal cross-wall are features of other large masonry towers built in Britain and Ireland in the 12th and 13th centuries. While towers of this type and date may have been erected in royal castles at Edinburgh (Fernie 1987: 401) and Jedburgh (Canmore ID 57114), any expectation by castle experts that any more will be discovered within the bounds of present-day Scotland is not apparent.

The Finlaggan tower, estimated to have been about 19 by 19m overall (about 21m square including a plinth), would have been of a handsome size compared with other better documented and preserved examples, for instance that of the bishops of Durham in Norham Castle on the border with Scotland, about 25.6 by 18.3m, as rebuilt in the second half of the 12th century (Dixon & Marshall 1993); Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland, about 17 by 17.7m, erected by John de Courcy from about 1178 to 1195 (McNeill 1981: 42); and the keep in Carlisle Castle, begun by King Henry I of England, 17.9 by 20m, and completed by King David I of Scotland (McCarthy et al 1990: 119–20). The only other such tower within the lands of the Kingdom of the Isles is at Castle Rushen in the Isle of Man. Of these three towers – Carrickfergus, Carlisle and Rushen – Carrickfergus is the closest to Finlaggan in terms of distance, less than 80 miles (125km) as the crow flies and not much further in sailing distance.

Castle Rushen was one of the main administrative and residential centres of the kings of the Isles. At its core is a rectangular tower, about 18 by 19m, not much of which survives or is readily visible. Its masonry is described as limestone rubble, roughly dressed (Illus 14.5), but never really squared (8–18 inches long; *c* 203–457mm) and as a rule fairly well coursed (*c* 8 inches to the course) (O'Neil 1951: 2). This is similar to the surviving Finlaggan wall facing (Illus 13.8). Castle Rushen was built for a king of the Isles in the late 12th or early 13th century. Recent scholarship favours the idea that the king in question was Rognvald Godredsson, great-grandson of Godred Crovan, who reigned 1188–1226 (Davey 2013: 57, 63). He can be considered as a contender to be the builder of the Finlaggan tower.

Although the breakup of the Isles into two separate kingdoms may only finally have come about in the mid-13th century (Caldwell 2009a), many of the Isles may have been under the effective lordship of Somerled and then his descendants continuously from the 1150s. The first MacSorley clearly identified in contemporary sources with the lordship of Islay was Angus Mor,

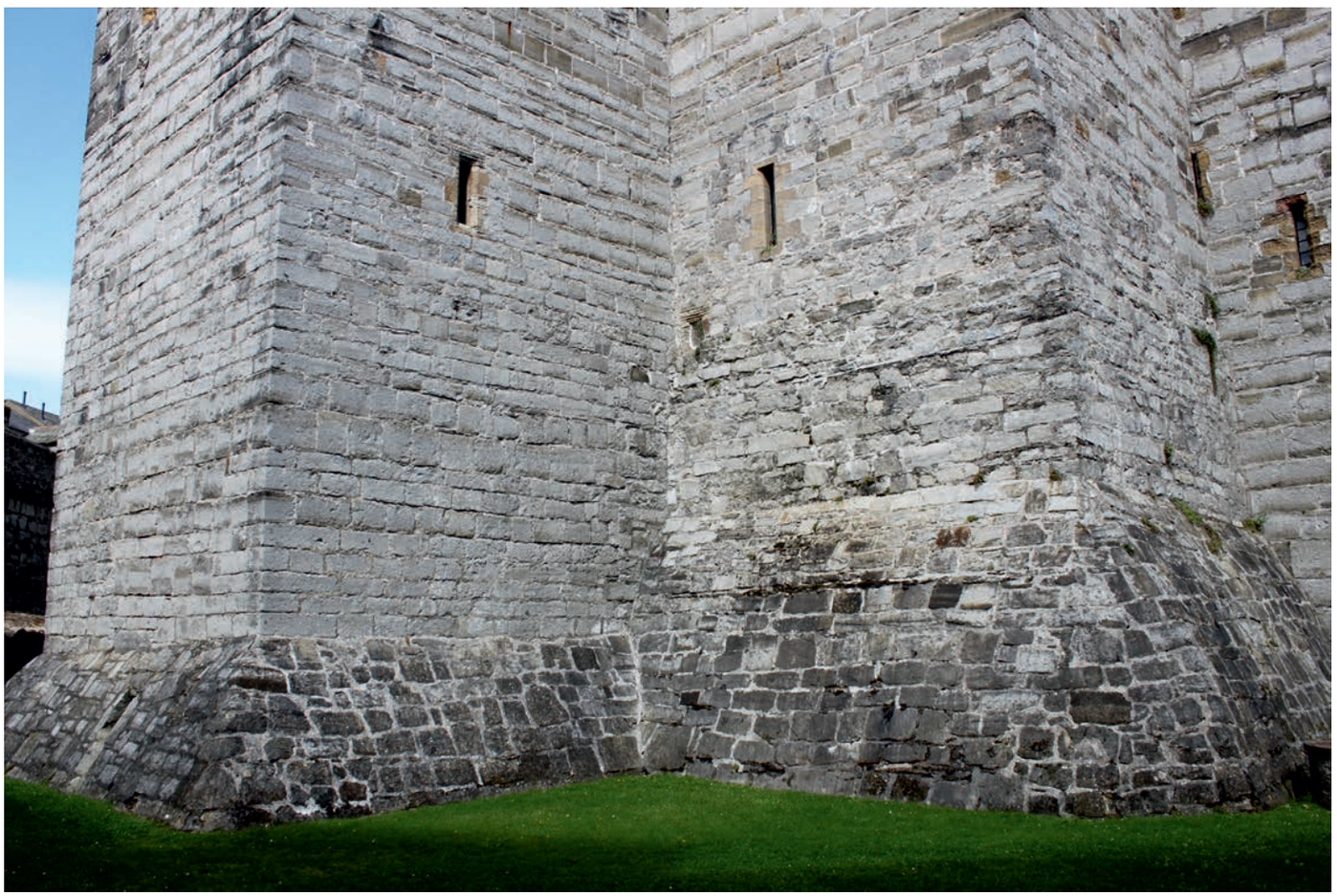

Illustration 14.5
Castle Rushen tower, Isle of Man, from south-west. The phase 1 masonry of similar date and style to the Finlaggan tower can be seen in the main block above the large plinth

who flourished in the second half of the 13th century (Caldwell 2017: 33–47). Angus was a great-grandson of Somerled and grandfather of John MacDonald, first lord of the Isles. Angus could well have inherited Islay, including the castle at Finlaggan, from his father, Donald, and grandfather Ranald. Ranald, who possibly died in 1207 and was described in contemporary sources as a king, has to be considered as an alternative candidate to King Rognvald as the builder of the Finlaggan tower. There is potential confusion, as pointed out by David Sellar (2000: 195–98), in early sources between King Rognvald and Ranald, son of Somerled, a problem not solved, in this writer's opinion, by Archie Duncan's analysis of the original text of one of the main sources for their deeds, the *Chronica* of Roger of Howden (Duncan 1999: 143 and n51; cf McDonald 2007: 110).

In Britain and Ireland the erection of large rectangular stone towers was essentially limited to great Anglo-French lords and kings. None are known to have been built by Scottish magnates. The erection of two within the Kingdom of the Isles must be interpreted as a political statement, as well as a sign of the wealth and connections of the ruling class.

Alan Macniven has drawn attention to a group of farm names around or close to Loch Finlaggan (Illus 14.6). They consist of the Gaelic generic *baile* ('town') followed by a personal name – thus Ballachlaven, Ballighillan, Ballimartin, Balole and Balulive, the townships, respectively, of Clement, Gillan, Martin, Olaf and Uilbh (Macniven 2015: 64–67; Caldwell 2017: 142). Macniven surmises that these names were coined in the 12th or 13th century and may reflect a restructuring of estates and new grants of lands to these named individuals. The obvious context would be a takeover of Islay from the descendants of Godred Crovan by Somerled and his progeny in the years after Somerled's victory over King Godred Olafsson in 1156. The clustering of the lands of these named individuals around Finlaggan might suggest that they were an elite group with obligations to their lord, including defence of his castle.

Whether or not one of them was the actual builder of the castle at Finlaggan, its occupancy by the MacSorleys for most of

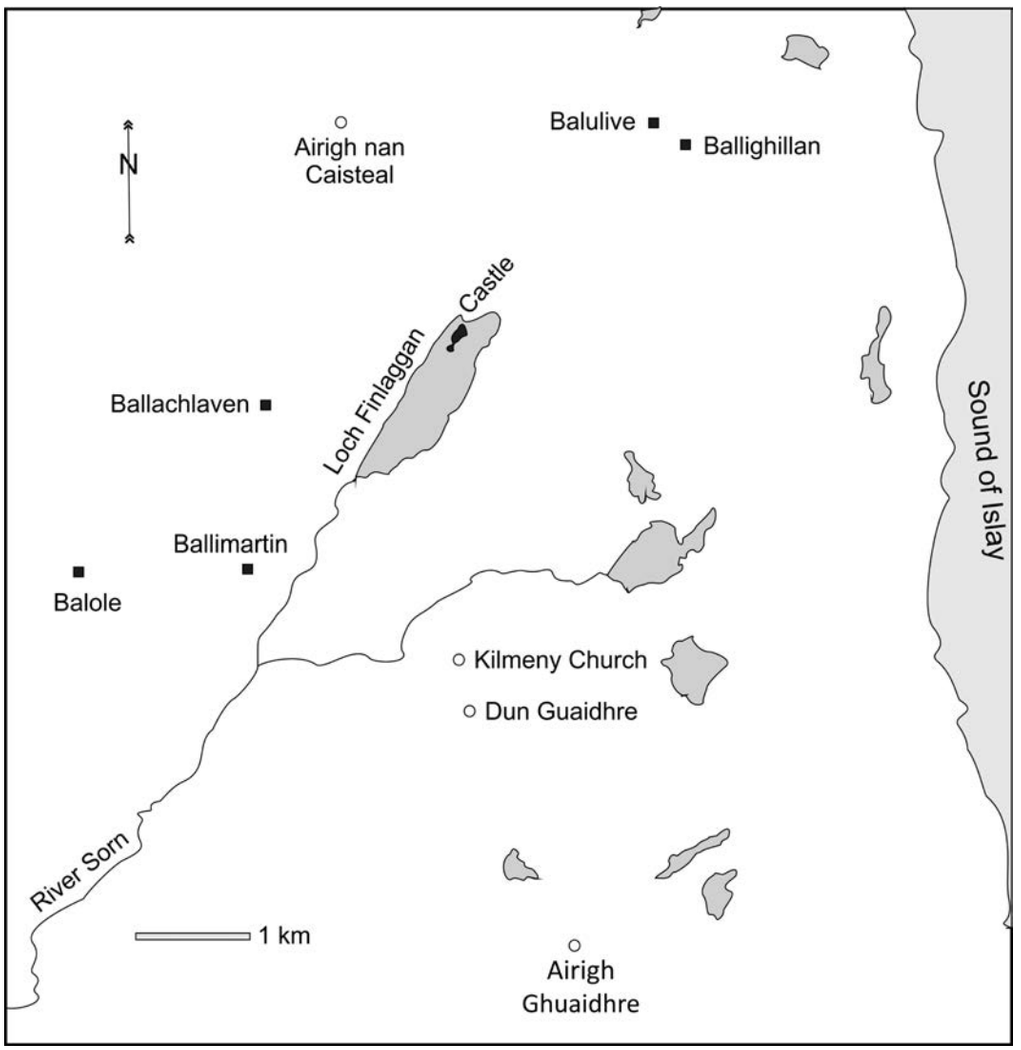

Illustration 14.6
Map of the area round Loch Finlaggan with names of places of possible relevance to the castle at Finlaggan

its existence is strongly suggested by the contents of the midden adjacent to Eilean na Comhairle, with its many sherds of pottery from Lowland Scotland but none from England nor the Isle of Man. The midden in any case is best interpreted as the refuse from fine dining or feasting by a lordly household, not that of an administrative officer or a garrison. Their diet was probably broadly similar to that of other aristocratic households across much of northern Europe (Bertelsen 2011: 132). Nowadays Islay is home in winter to large flocks of wild geese, especially Greenland white-fronted and greylag geese. There are few bones of such birds from the midden (Table C10.2 in the Catalogue), perhaps indicating that occupation of the tower was largely seasonal, confined to the summer months.

The meat consumed consisted of good cuts of meat of the four main food animals, cattle, sheep, pig and deer, all raised locally and much of it served up at table roasted rather than in stews. From her study of the age structure of the cattle cull (Catalogue chapter C9), Nicola Murray has deduced that the production of quality beef and veal for upper-class dining was as important as dairying, presumably mostly the making of butter and cheese. The cull pattern for ovicaprids (all or mostly sheep, rather than goats?), with almost all animals being killed in their second or third year, also suggests that they were valued for their meat rather than their wool.

Once the large assemblage of larger mammal bones recovered from excavations at Peel Castle, Isle of Man, is fully published, there may be useful comparisons to be made with Finlaggan. For the periods from the 8th to the 12th century and in the 13th century the majority of the bones are cattle, with fewer sheep and far fewer pig (Freke 2002: 248–49). At Coileagan an Udail (the Udal) on North Uist, the seat of 'a local magnate' in the 12th and 13th century (Gaelo-Norse Period, Udal North, phases VII–IX), excavations led to the recovery of large quantities of animal bones, a study of which has been published in advance of the final excavation report. The large mammal bones are almost all cattle and sheep – almost a third cattle, two thirds sheep and a small quantity of pig. On the one hand, the high percentage of cattle slaughtered at birth is believed to be indicative of an economy that needed to produce butter and cheese rather than fine cuts of meat. On the other hand, the culling of sheep from two to five years suggests that the consumption of lamb and mutton was not the only or most important consideration in raising these animals but that acquiring their wool was a major consideration (Serjeantson 2013: 52, 56, 61).

At Cille Pheadair in South Uist, a Late Norse farmstead (phases 6–8, about 1100–1200), there was, similarly, just a small number of pigs represented, but sheep were about 58% of the whole large mammal assemblage and cattle only about 35%. As at the Udal, a high percentage of the cattle were culled in their first year (Parker Pearson et al 2018: 419–48). A similar pattern can be detected at the larger Late Norse settlement at Bornais in South Uist (Sharples et al 2015: 249–51).

The large mammal bone assemblages from six Late Norse (about 1050 to 1350) settlement sites in the Northern Isles have been conveniently compared and reviewed by Ingrid Mainland (2023). The ratio of cattle to sheep varies considerably from site to site, and, as at Finlaggan and the sites in the Uists, a high proportion of the cattle were culled in their first few months at Snugar and Quoygrew. The numbers of pigs at these northern sites is higher than at the Uist sites. Earl's Bu, the residence of the earls of Orkney, provides an especially interesting comparison with Finlaggan, with relative frequencies of about 45% for cattle, 24% for sheep and 30% for pig. The figures for the midden [25008] off Eilean na Comhairle at Finlaggan are 44% cattle, 23% sheep/goat and 21% pig. Finlaggan also has 8% red deer.

In general for most of these sites in the Hebrides and Northern Isles, cattle and sheep formed the largest element of meat, but the desire to have tender, succulent cuts was off-set by a need to produce dairy products and wool, not to mention other animal products like hide and horn. Pig husbandry was evidently very limited at most sites, but the evidence for its importance at Finlaggan is worthy of further comment. The pork is considered to be from domesticated rather than wild animals, and Nicola Murray draws attention in her report in Chapter C9 to the numerous boars' heads, suggesting that they might have made centrepieces at feasts. Pig bones are not present in later midden material from Eilean Mór, and while 16th-century and later rentals of Islay provide copious information on the animals and other products that each farm owed yearly, including cattle, sheep and poultry, there is no mention of pigs (Smith 1895: 484–543). Perhaps of relevance, however, is the name of an Islay farm, Eilean na Muice Duibhe (Gaelic: 'island of the black pig'), first recorded in 1494, but of unknown date (Caldwell 2017: 306–07).

There is no evidence for sty-based pig husbandry in Islay or neighbouring parts until recent times. The pork served up at Eilean na Comhairle probably came from pigs that were allowed to graze local woodland and other uncleared ground, which may have been in very limited supply after the 13th century as the land was cleared for agriculture and grazing cattle. Much of the carpentry waste recovered from the medieval midden in trench 25 is oak, very probably of local origin. Oak woods were ideal for pigs.

Excavations at another Lordship of the Isles stronghold, Castle Sween in Knapdale, produced evidence for a higher than expected consumption of pork in the period from the early 14th to the 16th century, possibly because pigs could still graze there in woods dominated by oak (McCormick 1996: 553). The roots of tormentil, which still grows at Finlaggan and which is represented in the medieval midden adjacent to Eilean na Comhairle, may also have been a major part of pig fodder. Elsewhere in the lands of the lordship, evidence from North Uist demonstrates a turning away in medieval times from pig raising, which had been prevalent in earlier times. A similar phenomenon has been noted in the Faroe Islands, and in both areas it has been supposed that one of the main reasons for the demise of this form of animal husbandry was the detrimental effect on the land caused by free-range pannage, pigs breaking up fragile soils in their search for food (Arge et al 2009: 24; Serjeantson 2013: 96).

Recent studies of pigs in the earlier medieval West have concluded that landed elites often ate a higher percentage of pork relative to the average consumption of other meats (Kreiner 2020: 151). Of particular relevance for Finlaggan is a study of Late Norse commensality in Orkney with evidence from the earl's farm (the Earl's Bu) at Orphir that demonstrates this (Mainland & Batey 2019).

Domestic fowl and marine fish, especially cod, were also part of the diet.Although there was an extensive business in preparing and trading stock-fish in northern Europe in the 13th century

(Barrett 2016: 257–62), it is probable that the fish were mostly locally caught around the shores of Islay and by line fishing from inshore boats. Fish were required for the numerous days when the Church forbad the consumption of meat.

The presence of fine-quality cuts of venison is another key indicator of the high status of the residents of Eilean na Comhairle in the earlier medieval period. Hunting, primarily deer, was a noble pursuit from which lesser mortals were excluded. The driving of deer, in which game was rounded up from a wide area and directed to a spot where the hunters were waiting to slaughter them, was a favourite among Scottish and Irish aristocracy throughout medieval times, and probably earlier (Gilbert 1979: 52–68; McManus 2018). This activity required access to vast areas of uncultivated land, such as would seem to have been available in the north of Islay, to the north-west and north of Finlaggan. Large numbers of men (known as the 'tinchell' in Scotland) were also needed to flush out the deer and drive them for distances of miles to the spot (sometimes called the 'elrick' in Scotland) where the nobles were waiting to slaughter them. Hunting dogs of two types were employed, those which hunted by scent (compare beagles) and hounds which hunted by sight (McManus 2018: 160–61). Dogs are carved, attacking deer, on several later medieval West Highland grave monuments, apparently demonstrating that the chasing of deer was also, at least by that time, popular in the West Highlands and Islands (Caldwell 2012: 54–55; Gilbert 1979: 55–56).

In Chapter C4 of the Catalogue a group of copper alloy mounts, C83–C90, has been identified as belonging to dog collars or leashes. C87–C90 possibly represent a pair of collars with gilt mounts datable to the 13th century. C9, a piece of copper alloy chain, may be part of a leash. They bring to mind the mid-13th-century praise poem to Angus Mor (see Chapter 2) which describes how Angus inherited his hounds with their leashes from his father, Donald (Clancy 1998: 288). The similarity noted in Chapter C4 between the animal heads ornamenting these mounts and those on silver spoons from a hoard buried in the nunnery on Iona suggests that both groups of objects might be the work of craftsmen based in the Isles (cf Caldwell 2014b: 87). The small silver brooch (S3) from the midden adjacent to Eilean na Comhairle may not be local work, but also suggests ownership by someone of status. A piece of copper alloy wire also from the midden next to Eilean na Comhairle may be identified as a string from a musical instrument, most likely the clarsach of a professional harper.

A small but significant element in the food refuse in the 25008 midden consists of imported luxury products like almonds, walnuts and cherries. The sherds of pottery jugs from the Saintonge region of France can be regarded as a clue to the purchase of claret, the jugs either being acquired already containing choice vintage wine, or else being used to decant wine from casks and serve it at table. While all of these products are likely to have come from southern Europe or the Mediterranean, it is not necessary to envisage that this was via direct trading links. It is probable that locally based merchants could sell their wares and buy luxuries from further afield in Scottish, English and Irish ports. Since, with few exceptions, the wheel-made pottery from Finlaggan, considered mostly to have arrived on-site prior to about 1300, is from kiln sites in the Scottish Lowlands, it may have been the case that the main trade links were with ports on the Firth of Clyde like Ayr, erected as a royal burgh 1203 x 1206 (Pryde 1965: 16). It is known that Alexander Lord of the Isles held the lands of Greenan on the coast near Ayr by 1456 (Munro & Munro 1986: p xxxvii–xxxviii). It is possible that this was the continuation of an arrangement of much earlier date that facilitated trade.

There are 10 coins of short-cross and long-cross types from Finlaggan, dating to the period from 1180 to 1278, and a further 11 single-cross pennies minted in the period from 1279 to about 1314. All were individual, no doubt accidental, losses. They may reflect the role Finlaggan would have had as a rent-gathering centre and may also be viewed as evidence for a money economy, at least from the later 13th century.

Seven crucible sherds and a complete vessel were recovered from trench 25, all supposed to have been associated with metalworking. Two of these, P108, a possible lid, and P109, a complete crucible, were from the earlier medieval midden [25008]. There is also a sherd of another crucible (SF 12546) associated with house 12.4. Iron slag from that midden and Eilean na Comhairle itself (Table C5.1) may largely relate to the building of the castle. The same explanation can be offered for some of the woodworking debris from midden 25008. The leather from the latter context, perhaps from just one throw-out incident, could represent the activities of a visiting cobbler or shoemaker. W26 may be one of the cobbler's awls.

A study of later documentation (see Chapter 3) suggests that in the later medieval period all the land around Loch Finlaggan, apart from Robolls (Illus 3.6), was held in demesne by the lords of the Isles, a situation which might well have pertained in earlier medieval times as well. In that case there would have been significant quantities of produce, animal and vegetable, being brought in from the immediate locality for consumption and storage, and yet more as rent in kind from a much wider area. The enclosed field systems at Sean-ghairt (no. 16), Cuing-sgeir, (no. 18), An Tàmhanachd (no. 20) and Dùn Cheapasaidh Mór (no. 21) are likely to be at least as old as the castle.

Finlaggan, *c* 1300 – *c* 1500

The later medieval period at Finlaggan, about 1300 to 1500, coincides with the time of the lordship of the chiefs of Clan Donald, Lords of the Isles. There is evidence that the castle came to a definite end. The tower on Eilean na Comhairle was reduced to ground-floor level and even its foundations have been partially dug out. These remains were not notably encumbered with collapsed stonework and other debris. It is conceivable that the tower was never completed. It may have been dismantled because it was structurally unsound. Its erection over a ruined dun did not necessarily provide the surest of foundations. It is also possible that the demise of the whole castle was largely due to enemy action. There is no archaeological evidence for this, but the destruction of captured castles in the national wars of the late 13th and early 14th century is well documented. A possible context in the case of Finlaggan is 1297, when the then chief of Clan Donald, Alexander, son of Angus Mor, reported that his lands had been devastated and burnt and his people killed by Alexander (MacDougall) of Argyll (Caldwell 2017: 44).

The Finlaggan palace (Illus 14.7)

The new Finlaggan that began to take shape in the 14th century was not a castle. It can best be described as a palace. The great tower on Eilean na Comhairle was not replaced by a stronghold of any sort, and the perimeter timberwork fence around Eilean Mór was removed and built over by other structures.

If more of the structures and buildings of earlier medieval date on Eilean Mór had been excavated it is probable that more evidence of continuity into later medieval times would have been observed, at least in the overall planning of the island. The basic layout of building plots may largely have been in place prior to the 14th century. Nevertheless, the impression formed from our excavations is of a great rebuild, with buildings deliberately positioned in an overall plan.

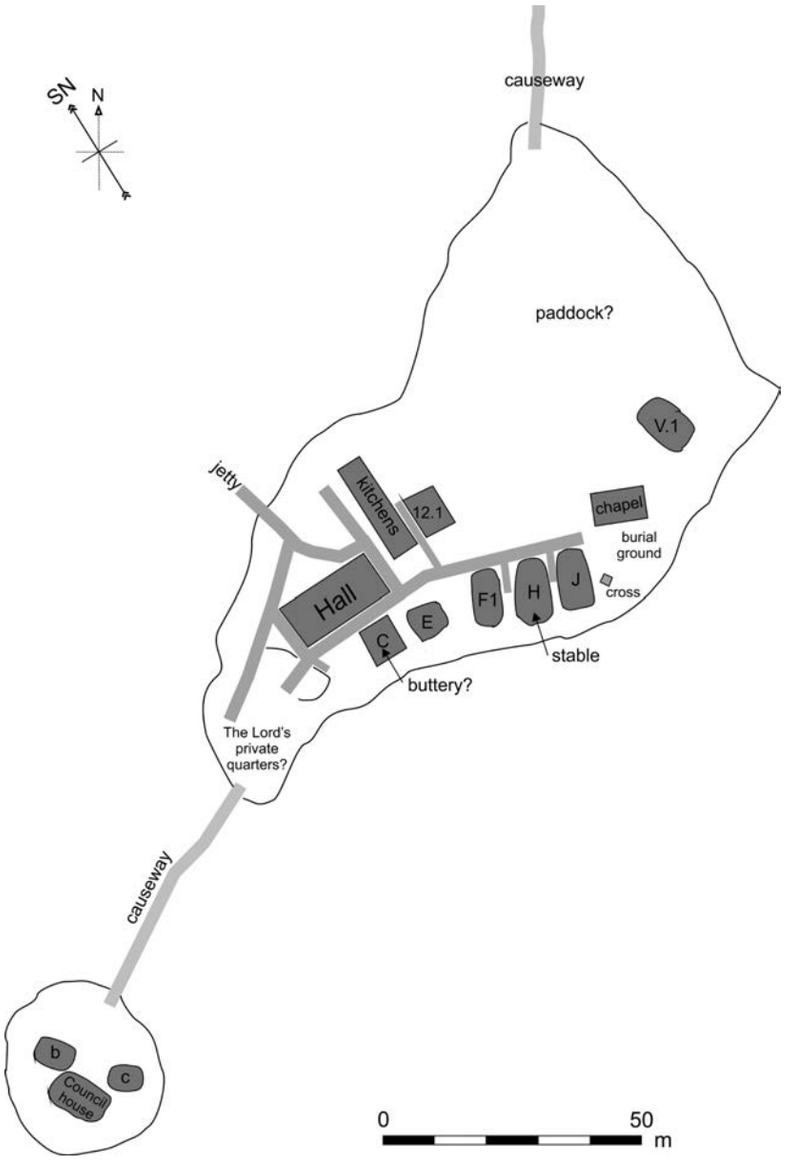

Illustration 14.7
Plan of the later medieval palace on Eilean Mór and Eilean na Comhairle

Access to Eilean Mór was now by boat from the loch-side to a jetty from which roads branched out to the great hall, the chapel and Eilean na Comhairle. Lesser cobbled paths led off these main arteries to the doors of individual buildings, which were positioned side by side and parallel to each other like a contemporary urban setting. This built-up area excluded the east end of the island, already identified as a possible paddock, and the status at this time of the causeway to the loch-side is not known. It and the causeway from Eilean Mór to Eilean na Comhairle are likely to have remained in use.

In interpreting later medieval Finlaggan it is important to consider the description provided in 1549 by Donald Monro, dean of the Isles, given in full in Chapter 2 above. He wrote that the lords of the Isles often stayed on Eilean Mór when they were meeting with their council, because the island was well built in traditional palace-work and there was a fine chapel. This palace-work may all have been gone prior to Monro's birth, but there would still have been memories of it at the time he wrote.

By palace-work Monro may have meant a complex of separate buildings, perhaps single-storey structures. This would be in contrast to castles elsewhere in his time, with rooms piled one on top of the other in a tower-house, or else houses with connecting wings. This interpretation is backed up by the observations of Alexander Myln, writing approximately the same time as Monro about the bishop's palace at Dunkeld. At the beginning of the 15th century it had been constructed in the Highland fashion of large ground-floor houses. These were later replaced by a tower (-house), along with a first-floor hall with larder and granaries underneath (Myln 1823: 16; Hannay 1915: 336).

In later medieval times Finlaggan had no obvious defences. The lack of them may be another factor in Donald Monro's description of Eilean Mór as being well built in traditional palace fashion. The absence of both stone defensive walls and a tower-house distinguished Finlaggan from the residences of important lordship chiefs like the Macleans, MacKinnons, MacNeills, MacLeods and other MacDonald chiefs. Their tower-houses were status symbols, normally housing the castellans and their families. With battlements and other defensive features they were intended to project an image of strength. Perhaps Finlaggan, specifically its great hall, was consciously intended to look welcoming and accessible. The mark of a truly great man like the lord of the Isles was the ability and desire to entertain.

Cobbled roads and paths on Eilean Mór provided access to kitchens, guesthouses, a chapel and probably storehouses. Apart, it may be supposed, from private quarters for the lord and his family when they were in residence, there was a house and stable, perhaps the main dwelling of the chaplain, and other houses for lordship officials and household members. Such may have been the main building on Eilean na Comhairle used as the council house. Many of the main buildings had slate roofs and lime-mortared walls. Dressed freestone, much of it probably recycled from earlier buildings, was used sparingly, especially for door and window openings. The layout was orderly, with buildings arranged side by side, no doubt according to an overall plan.

The wider landscape around Loch Finlaggan was mostly farmed land, much of it held in demesne by the lords of the Isles, but not Robolls with its island settlement of Eilean Mhuireill (no. 61), the residence of MacIan of Ardnamurchan, the bailie of Islay

in the late 15th century (Caldwell 2017: 70). It has the foundations of two buildings, possibly as early as that. They are not dissimilar in size to buildings (a) and (b) on Eilean na Comhairle, and may be interpreted as a dwelling house and a barn.

The millstone reused as an oven base in the kitchen (structure K.2) on Eilean Mór would presumably have come from the mill (no. 44 G), the traces of which survive by the Finlaggan River near where it flows into the loch. Martin Martin believed in the late 17th century that he could identify the houses on the loch-side of the bodyguard of the lords of the Isles (Martin 1703: 240). Possibly he was referring to the remains of various turf huts on the farm of Portanellan, including those described in our survey of sites and monuments under no. 44.

The council house and other structures on Eilean na Comhairle

On Eilean na Comhairle the development of a ground surface over the tower ruins, prior to the erection of houses (a) and (b), suggests that there was a gap in time, not necessarily of more than a few years, between the comprehensive robbing and removal of castle masonry and the erection of these later buildings. Building (a), now reduced to its foundations, was rectangular with rounded corners, having an overall size of 10.8 by 6.7m and opposed entrances in its long sides (Illus 14.8 A). Its walls were lime mortared and had substantial foundations. Its floor was of earth. It lay broadside on to the causeway from Eilean Mór, fronted by a flat area, probably a crudely cobbled courtyard. There was a cobbled path along its rear.

Building (a) can best be reconstructed as a single-storey hall with an open roof, probably covered with thatch (there are no roof slates from Eilean na Comhairle). As such, it probably belonged in a local tradition of hall building. Others of similar size, reduced to turf-covered foundations, can be traced as the principal structures on other island sites and residences of chiefs and lairds elsewhere in Argyll. Without excavation the date of any of them is difficult to know, but it is a reasonable assumption that many are of post-medieval date. A good candidate to be of similar age to building (a) on Eilean na Comhairle is a structure with an overall size of 12.8 by 6.8m, of similar shape with opposed entrances (RCAHMS 1992: 303, no. 141). It is on Eilean dà Gallagain in West Loch Tarbert, known to have been visited by John Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles in 1455 (Munro & Munro 1986: 86–87, no. 58).

Owing to later landscaping and clearance work on Eilean na Comhairle, there were no surviving internal features or artefacts associated with building (a) which could throw any light on its occupancy. It can, however, be identified as the council house mentioned in 1549 by Donald Monro as the place where the

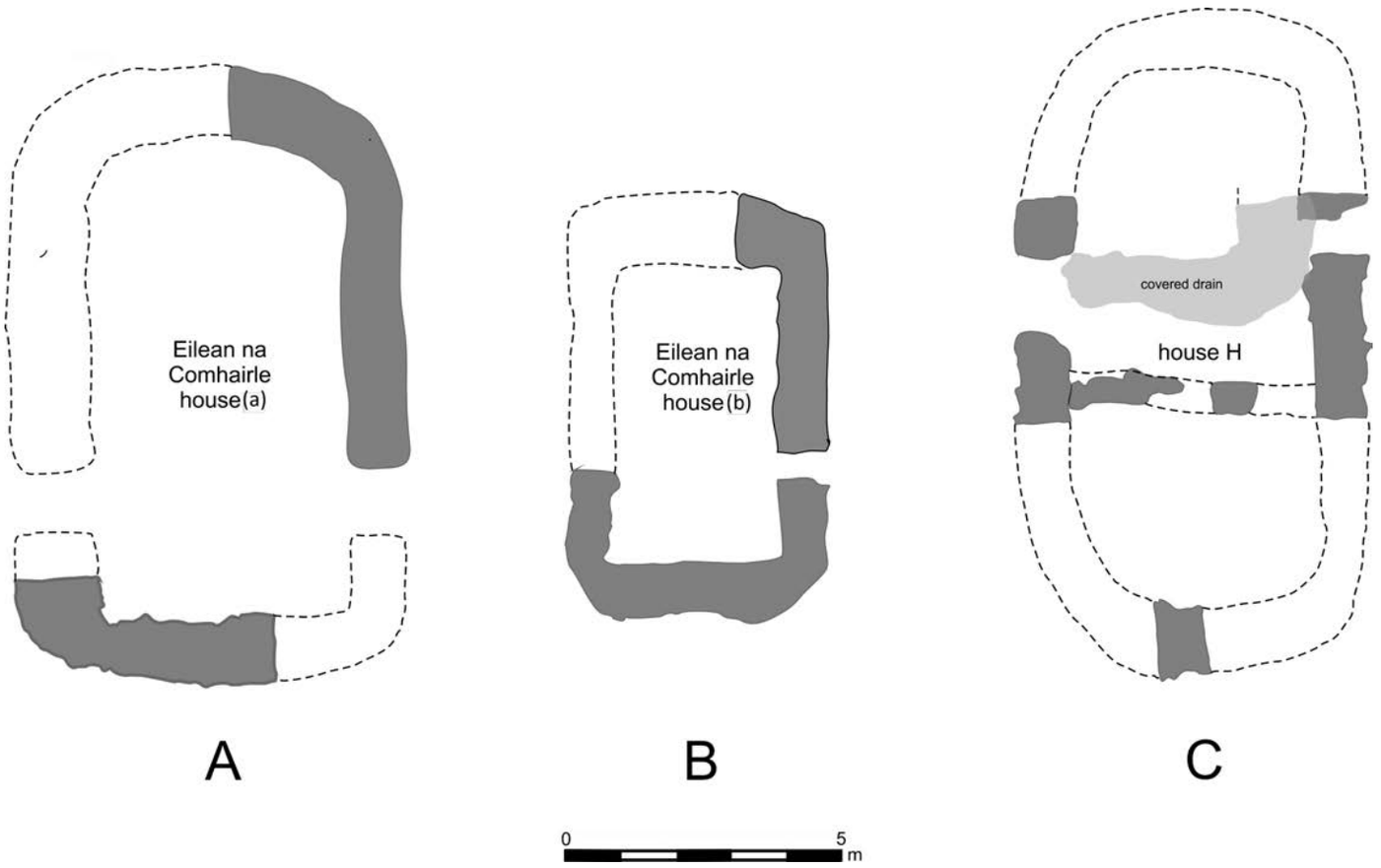

Illustration 14.8
Plans of later medieval houses: (A) Eilean na Comhairle house (a) (council house?); (B) Eilean na Comhairle house (b); (C) house H

Council of the Isles met in the time of the Lordship of the Isles (Munro 1961: 56–57). If it were not for this information provided by Monro – and the author sees no good reason to doubt it – it would probably have seemed logical to identify building (a) as the private hall of the lords of the Isles. Apart from the very few days in the year when it housed the Council of the Isles, perhaps it acted as a base for an officer of the lords' household, one of status with responsibility for managing Finlaggan throughout the year.

The extensive midden sampled in trench 25 produced no material or artefacts that could confidently be dated later than the 13th century, and our assumption is that the end of feasting and occupancy of Eilean na Comhairle by a high-status household coincided with the removal of the tower. If the island was regularly or permanently occupied in the 14th and 15th centuries, it must be supposed that different arrangements were made for rubbish disposal.

Building (b) was another rectangular house with rounded corners, about 4.8 by 7.5m overall, with an entrance in its east wall. Its south-west corner was adjacent to the north-east corner of (a). Its south, east and north walls were all founded on earlier castle walls. It had an earth floor and its stonework was set in poor-quality lime mortar (Illus 14.8 B). As with building (a), later clearance work removed evidence for how structure (b) was used. Building (c), hardly touched by our excavations, might well be of more recent date than structures (a) and (b).

The private quarters of the lords?

The west end of Eilean Mór was divided from the rest of the island by a cross-wall with a gate, through which passed the cobbled road from the chapel to the great hall and onwards towards the causeway to Eilean na Comhairle. RCAHMS (1984: 278) suggested that the wall separated the private quarters of the lords of the Isles from the rest of the island, and that seems to us a plausible explanation. The main structure here, building P, as we will explain below, appears to be of 16th-century date, but it may well have been erected above the ruins of medieval structures and partially over a cobbled road along its north-west side. Erosion at this end of the island may have been responsible for removing medieval buildings, one represented by the foundations of a wall projecting north-westwards from near the west corner of building P. Elsewhere in the 14th century, great lords built themselves massive tower-houses as their private residences, set alongside halls and other structures for more public use. A particularly relevant example is the Douglas castle at Threave in Galloway, which, as we will discuss below, has other points of similarity to Finlaggan. The lords of the Isles do not appear to have built tower-houses for their private use at other castles in their lordship. There is no good reason to speculate that there might have been one on Eilean Mór.

The great hall

One building, or at least significant portions of its walls, did survive from the earlier medieval castle, and that was the great hall (Illus 14.9 C). A cross-wall, incorporating two doorways, was inserted near its east end to separate off a service area and storage for food and drink. It might be supposed that there would have been a door from the service area to the nearby kitchens, but this would have to be verified by further excavation. There was also an upper chamber at the east end with its own latrine, perhaps intended for the use of the steward of the lord of the Isles' household, at least three of whom are recorded from the late 14th and 15th century (Munro & Munro 1986: 246). It is not yet clear where and how access was provided to this upper chamber. Although there is no evidence for one, there may also have been a gallery opening on to the hall for the use of musicians. Documentary evidence for the lords retaining a family of hereditary harpers (Steer & Bannerman 1977: 146) and the recovery of musical instrument pegs, and possibly strings, from Finlaggan (C121–C126) indicate the importance of musical entertainment.

The hall itself now had a large fireplace in its east gable wall and was entered through its south wall. The hall entrance was

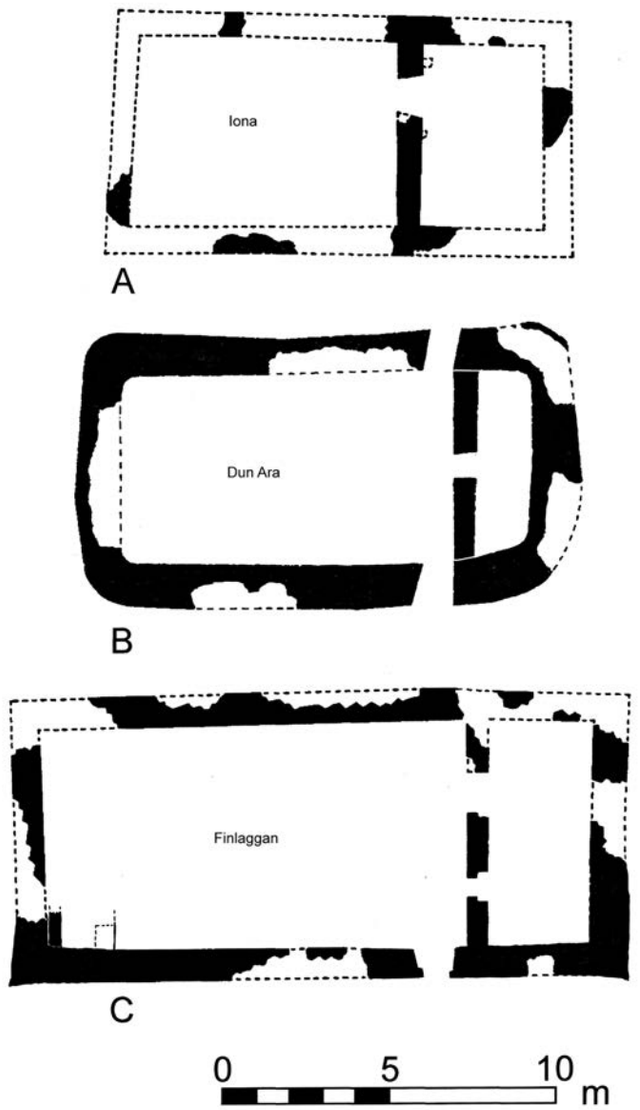

Illustration 14.9
Hall plans: (A) the bishop's house, Iona; (B) Dun Ara Castle, Mull; (C) Finlaggan

rebuilt or repositioned in the south wall. The whole building had a slate roof and, probably, sprung-timber floors. A large hall in another MacDonald castle at Strome in Wester Ross also appears to have had a sprung-timber floor (Cullen & Driscoll 1995: 21). In a survey of medieval and later Irish praise poems addressed to Gaelic and Anglo-Irish lords, Katharine Simms (2001) has drawn attention to descriptions of the interior decoration of their houses, including hangings, wooden panelling and paintings or carvings of hunting scenes. It may be supposed that the Finlaggan hall would have been similarly well appointed.

Some fragments of copper alloy vessels recovered from Eilean Mór, including C138, C142, C145 and C147, may be from the ewers or aquamaniles which would have been used for pouring water for washing the hands of diners at the beginning and end of meals (Henisch 1976: 165–69). P69 and P70, sherds of polychrome ceramic from the Saintonge region of France recovered from a nearby midden, could well have belonged to one or two jugs which graced the tables of the diners during meals.

Dun Ara in Mull (RCAHMS 1980: 200–02), a castle of the MacKinnons, appears to be another Hebridean castle with a later medieval hall with service areas at one end (Illus 14.9 B). The clearest parallel is the bishop's house in Iona (Illus 14.9 A). It measures about 14 by 7m over walls 0.6 to 0.8m thick, now all reduced to grass-covered foundations except for the partition wall, standing to a height of 3.7m. On the evidence of this the structure has walls of uncoursed boulders and blocks with pinnings and lime mortar. From a description of the building, then in ruins, by William Sacheverell in 1688 (Sacheverell 1859: 103), and the illustration of Iona in Pennant's *Tour in Scotland* (1774: pl XXI), showing it complete but for its roof, it is possible to deduce much more about its plan. The larger western chamber was the hall proper, open to the roof and containing a fireplace with a chimney in the west gable. The smaller eastern chamber, described as the buttery, was entered by a door in the cross-wall, and there was an upper chamber here in the roof, possibly reached by a ladder and lit by a window in the east gable. The Royal Commission (RCAHMS 1982: 252, no. 14) supposed the bishop's house dates to the 1630s. It may either be of earlier date or reflect a local tradition extending back into the medieval period to the time of the great hall at Finlaggan.

There are two other halls in the lands of the Lordship of the Isles which are relevant to Finlaggan. They are at Dun Aros in Mull and Ardtornish in Morvern. Both are centres particularly associated with the lords themselves, and both are described in 15th-century documents as castles (RCAHMS 1980: 173–76; Munro & Munro 1986: 28, 29). The former has, contained within a stone curtain wall, a large first-floor hall (also referred to as a hall-house, and more recently as the north-west block), which can now be dated to the 14th century thanks to a scientific analysis of the mortar used in its walls (Thacker 2021). Internally at first-floor level it was about 21.4 by 7.9m, but probably included in that length was a solar with access to a latrine-tower. The Ardtornish hall can be estimated to have been 17.2 by 8.8m, also, perhaps, including a solar. There is also evidence for access to a latrine. On the basis of these observations, whatever household and retinue the lords of the Isles accommodated in the great hall at Finlaggan could also be contained in the halls at Dun Aros and Ardtornish.

A buttery?

Building C on Eilean Mór has largely survived until today as a roofless ruin since it was rebuilt in the 16th century (Illus 11.2, 11.3). It was erected adjacent to the great hall as a rectangular house, 7.3 by 6.4m overall, probably of more than one storey. Coin evidence indicates that it dates to the 14th century. The pieces of red sandstone and perhaps most of the rest of the stones used in its lime-mortared walls may have been recycled from the tower on Eilean na Comhairle. In searching for an explanation for the putlog holes in the gables, the possibility was entertained that they supported a timber gallery overlooking the loch and a passageway to an upper chamber at the east end of the great hall. The evidence for either is not convincing. Parallels can be drawn to other medieval buildings in the Isles which show similar constructional characteristics. These include a church at Kilmory, Loch Eynort, in Skye; the small church (of St Columba) on Skeabost island, Skye; and Teampull na Trionaid at Carinish in North Uist. A better understanding of these features is needed.

Given the attention paid to security and the hatch in the wall facing the hall, it seems an obvious interpretation for building C that it was erected as a buttery, a place to store wine and other comestibles for consumption in the hall. If that were the case, it may have been planned prior to the decision to remodel the hall with its own service and storage facilities.

Kitchens

Evidence from trenches 2 and 12 demonstrated that kitchens and food preparation facilities were positioned to the east and north-east of the great hall. They probably took the form of a long rectangular multi-roomed building, excavated in trench 2 as structure K.2 and in trench 12 as structure 12.6 (Illus 14.10 A). It contained evidence for several ovens or kilns and C141, the leg of a large cast-metal cooking pot. The internal area of about 76.5 sq m (not factoring in internal walls) compares with the free space in the remodelled hall of about 70.35 sq m. This appears to be a generous provision of space, perhaps indicating a need for catering on a large scale.

The only obvious parallel to the Finlaggan kitchens in the area of the Lordship of the Isles is a building at Iona Abbey (Illus 14.10 B), excavated in the late 1960s, identified as the medieval bakehouse and brewhouse, with an internal area little different from that of Finlaggan K.2/12.6. It had lime-mortared rubble walls. Down the centre of the building there was a series of slabs identified as pad-stones for wooden roof supports. Interpretation as a food preparation area is based on the excavation of hearths, layers of ash, stone-filled soakaway-pits and a deposit of charred barley (Reece 1981: 29–37; RCAHMS 1982: 138). The stone footings of a building (A), 20.7 by 9.1m overall, in Dun Aros Castle are a candidate for identification as kitchens to service the adjacent hall (RCAHMS 1980: 174, fig 203).

An interesting comparison from outside the lordship can be made with Threave Castle in Kirkcudbrightshire, a residence of the 'Black' Douglases. In 1369 Archibald Douglas (from 1388, third Earl of Douglas) acquired the Lordship of Galloway, the successor to an earlier, independent native lordship that was absorbed into the Kingdom of Scotland as was the Kingdom of

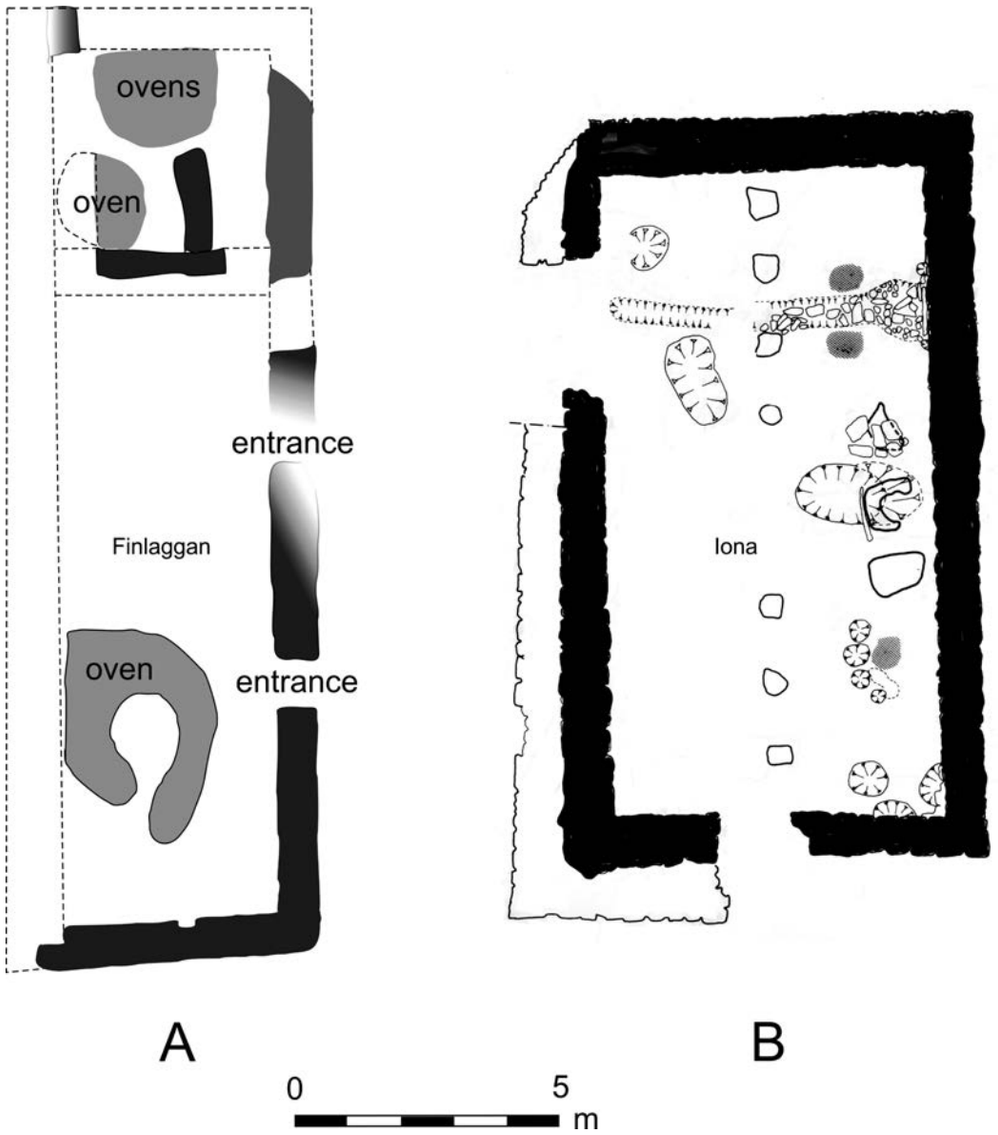

Illustration 14.10
(A) Finlaggan, structure K.2/12.6 – the kitchens; (B) Iona Abbey, medieval bakehouse and brewhouse

the Isles. Threave, also an island site, was probably one of the main Galwegian centres of power from early times, but what is most obvious now is the massive tower-house erected by the third earl, probably soon after he acquired the Galloway lordship. Beside it the reduced walls of two substantial rectangular buildings, apparently of similar date to the tower-house, were laid bare in excavations undertaken in the 1970s (Good & Tabraham 1981).

Building 1, with an overall size of 22.4 by 12m, was believed by the excavators to be a two-storey structure with a hall or dormitory over an undercroft. This writer, however, thinks it should be interpreted as a ground-floor hall with a massive fireplace in its east end, supported on a central pier (K59). A layer of broken slates provided evidence of how it was roofed. Building 2, at right angles to building 1, had clay-bonded walls, an overall size of 21.6 by 6.7m, and evidence for two internal partition walls. There is a small wing at its south-east corner and, externally, two structures that can be identified as ovens (L115 and L148). Burnt deposits in the interior provide a basis for interpreting it as a kitchen block.

The chapel and burial ground

The chapel on Eilean Mór may quite simply be a work of the late 14th century. That is the reasonable conclusion to be drawn from the inclusion of N24, a silver halfgroat of Robert II (1371–1390) deposited in its south wall. While a political message may have been intended by its selection and deposition, it can be understood that there was much more to it than that. A groat was valued at four pence and a halfgroat, therefore, was worth two pence, quite a substantial sum of money in the late 14th century. The coin would appear to have been deliberately bent, an action that

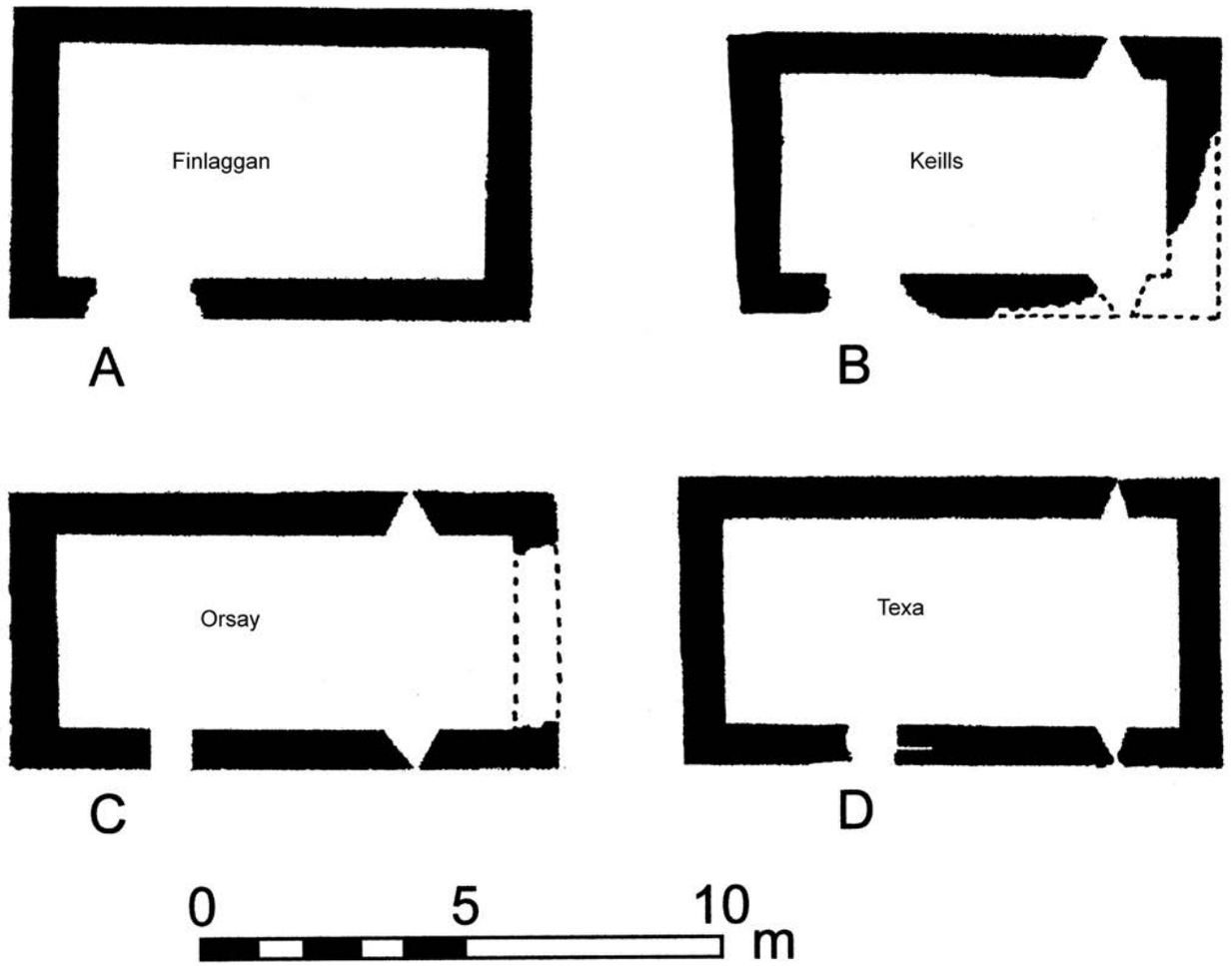

Illustration 14.11
Chapel plans: (A) Finlaggan; (B) Keills, Islay; (C) Orsay; (D) Texa

required a reasonable amount of force, more than could have been applied by most just with bare hands.

There is evidence from England that coins were deposited by pilgrims and worshippers at churches and shrines, the coins being bent as a sign that they were being dedicated for the use of the local saint (Hall 2012: 81). Perhaps one of the builders on Eilean Mór was a devotee of Findlugán, or a visiting pilgrim was able to deposit the coin in the fresh mortar of the unfinished chapel when nobody was looking. A more likely explanation may relate the coin's deposition to the chapel's supposed founder, John I Lord of the Isles, who died in 1387. He himself might have required the coin to be bent and deposited, or else his wife, the Princess Margaret, as a symbol of their devotion to the Church and St Findlugán. It is also of significance that the King Robert represented on the coin by a crowned bust with a sceptre was Margaret's father. It is possible that that link would be seen to be strengthened by the deposition of the coin, and not necessarily just in a religious context. The chapel, or the adjacent burial ground, may have been the place where important pronouncements were made and documents witnessed, their integrity protected by God and his local saint, Findlugán. Some of those proclamations and documents would have related to dealings with the king whose authority was represented by the coin.

It is possible that the deposition of a silver coin in the wall of a church will be found to be a feature of customs and beliefs in the medieval West Highlands and Islands. A penny of Edward I was excavated from a supposed chapel at Baliscate in Mull, and its excavator judged that it had possibly originally been deposited in one of its walls (Ellis 2017: 72, 100).

The Finlaggan Chapel (Illus 6.8, 14.11 A) was a relatively simple rectangular building, 10.1 by 6.1m in overall size, with walls of random rubble, lime mortared and laid roughly in courses (type 4 according to Caldwell and Ruckley 2005: 103). The exterior walls were covered with harling, no doubt leaving the dressings exposed. The quoins were of grey-yellow sandstone. The interior walls were plastered. The door was at the west end of the south wall and might well have been a relatively simple opening with a flat lintel, possibly R33, a metabasite slab recovered from collapsed material within the chapel walls. R26, a grey-yellow sandstone moulding found in the burial ground, might be interpreted as part of a jamb of such a door, similar to the one in the chapel on the island of Texa, off the south coast of Islay. It is likely to date to the 14th century (RCAHMS 1984: 259–61).

The chapel could have had windows in its north and south walls, positioned to shed light on the altar. Graham (1895: 28) wrote that there were indications of a double window at the east end, meaning, apparently, of the south wall. He does not specify what exactly he saw. Possibly, and not necessarily then in situ, it was R29, a carved, grey-yellow block of sandstone that can be identified as a mullion, recovered from the tumble around the chapel in 1998. It does not, however, match two pieces of light yellowish-brown sandstone (R27 and SF 1101), fallen from the north and south walls of the chapel respectively, that appear to be broken rybats, grooved to take glass. They are similar to those of the original fenestration of the church of Oronsay Priory, narrow windows with trefoil-cusped heads splaying out to segmental arched embrasures in the interior (RCAHMS 1984: fig 236B). That church is also the work of John I Lord of the Isles.

A MacDonald clan history of the late 17th or early 18th century in the *Red Book of Clanranald* recorded that John I Lord of the Isles 'covered' the Chapel of Oilen Fionlagain (Cameron 1894: 2.159). The Gaelic word *comhdaich* (covered) used here may have been intended to mean, quite simply, that John built the chapel. The author, however, is grateful to Ronald Black for suggesting to him that it might have the sense of 'permanently covered' as opposed to *thugh*, 'thatched'. This is of significance since it appears that the chapel had a slate roof. Several fragments of roof slate, especially of type A, were recovered from within and around the chapel ruins, and three pieces of grey-yellow sandstone roof ridge (R24, R25 and SF 19040) were discovered nearby.

There may have been a font or holy water stoup. R19, a piece of stone, now missing, discovered under the ruins at the east end about 1830, has been interpreted as part of one. The only other interior fitting identified is the altar (Illus 9.31, 9.32), which may be the original one. It appears to have had a chlorite schist as covering and to have contained, as a holy relic, a piece of an ivory crucifix (B6). Perhaps it was believed to have belonged to St Findlugán. Few other medieval altars survive in a sufficient state of repair to make meaningful comparisons, but it may be noted that the altar in the chapel on Inch Kenneth, Mull, similarly has dressed sandstone blocks at its front corners. That chapel can be dated to the 13th century (RCAHMS 1980: no. 288). Another medieval West Highland church, St Patrick's Chapel, Ceann a' Mhara, Tiree, has remains of an altar of lime-mortared rubble (RCAHMS 1980: no. 325).

In size and plan, with its door at the west end of its south wall and windows to right and left of the altar, the chapel on Eilean Mór is typical of others in the West Highlands (Dunbar 1981: 62). A particularly apt comparison is with the chapel (Illus 14.11 C) on the island of Orsay off the end of the Rhinns of Islay, since it is also said, not unreasonably, by a 17th-century MacDonald historian to have been built by John I Lord of the Isles (Cameron 1894: 2.159). The Orsay Chapel (RCAHMS 1984: no. 387), the walls of which are largely upstanding, is almost the same length but narrower, and has no freestone dressings. Its door has a pointed arch, and its window embrasures have segmental arches. Its walls, built in the same fashion (type 4) as those of Finlaggan, have also been harled.

It is also useful to compare the chapels nearby at Keills and on Texa (Illus 14.11 B, D; RCAHMS 1984: nos 327, 391). The chapel at Keills was dedicated to St Columba, was only marginally shorter and narrower than the Finlaggan Chapel, and, although much ruined, can be seen to have had its entrance similarly positioned and two narrow splayed windows on either side of the altar. The masonry is also type 4, but uncoursed, with many split boulders and much use of pinnings. There remains a broken piece of orange sandstone as a dressing in the north window embrasure, but it evidently did not have freestone quoins. Since, on the evidence of presentations to the chaplaincy (*RSS* 1: no. 911; 2: no. 4566), the patronage of Keills had passed to the crown in the 16th century, it must have belonged to the lords of the Isles prior to that. The differences in its masonry may suggest, however, that it was not part of the same building campaign that saw the erection of the chapels at Finlaggan and on Orsay.

Texa is a small island adjacent to the MacDonald castle of Dunyvaig on the south coast of Islay. It has upstanding walls and is almost identical in size to Orsay. It has similar type 4 harled masonry. Its two windows are too ruinous to indicate whether they had freestone dressings, but some of grey sandstone survive in the door opening, indicating jambs with a chamfered surround externally and, probably, a flat-lintel head. The window embrasures are also lintelled. Texa Chapel is probably of similar date to Finlaggan and Orsay, and to have been built for a senior member of Clan Donald. It may be of relevance that its graveyard had a commemorative cross to John I Lord's son Ranald, the eponym of Clanranald. Its shaft is now in the collections of the National Museum of Scotland.

Chapels within residences were by no means common in medieval Scotland. They are to be found in royal castles and palaces, for example Edinburgh (late 12th century) and Linlithgow (late 15th century). Kildrummy in Aberdeenshire (late 13th century), a residence of the earls of Mar, is unusual in having a substantial purpose-built one. The only other example in the Lordship of the Isles is the island fortress of Cairnburgh Castle in the Treshnish Isles. It possibly dates to the 15th century (RCAHMS 1980: no. 335). The remoteness of Cairnburgh from other churches, and the likelihood it at times held a large garrison, no doubt offers some explanation for the presence of a chapel there.

Finlaggan is nearly 5 miles (8km) by road from the medieval parish church of Kilarrow, at Bridgend, a not inconsiderable distance, but there were two other churches much closer to hand – the chapel at Keills, about 1½ miles (2.4km) to the east, and the

church 2 miles (3.2km) to the south at Kilmeny. It is not known whether Keills and Kilmeny are earlier or later in date than the Finlaggan Chapel, but this concentration of churches is remarkable. Kilmeny is described as a parish church in 1549 (Munro 1961: 57) and had possibly been separated from Kilarrow much earlier.

The main reason for a chapel at Finlaggan in the medieval period may relate to the need for clergy in the household of the lords of the Isles and their role in officiating at major events, most notably the inauguration ceremonies of new lords, said to have taken place at Finlaggan. The Council of the Isles which met here every year is said to have included the bishop of the Isles and the abbot of Iona (Munro 1961: 57). The chaplains included in the lords' household would not have been the only officials in clerical orders, but there would also have been, for instance, the secretaries (Munro & Munro 1986: liii, 245–46). When a notarial instrument was drawn up and witnessed on 14 June 1456 to record a decision of John II Lord of the Isles, it is specifically said to have been done in the chapel (Munro & Munro 1986: no. 62). This was probably the normal place for such business to be transacted.

Given that the chapel was not a parish church, it is surprising that there is considerable evidence for burials. Its extent, including the chapel and taking into account possible loss around the edge due to erosion, might have been about 325 sq m. It should be expected that it was enclosed, but our excavations were not placed to trace evidence for this, except to the north of the chapel where the supposed perimeter timberwork defence encountered in trench 17 would also have served as the graveyard boundary. Excavation of grave 1008 combined with sondage 3 suggests the possibility that there might be the remains of nine or more bodies – perhaps considerably more – in any one square metre. These are very rough-and-ready calculations based on very limited evidence, but nevertheless suggest that there were thousands interred in this graveyard.

Apart from the early historic lintel grave [1050] excavated in the burial ground, four further horizons of burials have been recognised (Illus 9.5). These have been distinguished on the basis of stratigraphy, grouping and orientation as:

- Early graves
- Group 1 graves
- Group 2 graves
- Group 3 graves.

It is probable that they range in date from before 1300 and into post-medieval times.

There has been little archaeological work on other medieval West Highland graves. Excavations at Keills Chapel in Knapdale (Brooks 1979), the chapel and burial ground on the Isle of Ensay in the Outer Isles (Miles 1989) and a medieval cemetery at Colonsay House (Johnston & Roberts 2001) have provided little useful comparative material on the form of the graves themselves. As, for example, at Jedburgh Abbey (Lewis & Ewart 1995) and the Carmelite friaries at Aberdeen, Linlithgow and Perth (Stones 1989), many of the dead appear to have been deposited in simple pits, large enough, and no more, for the body to be laid out full length, with no permanent marker above the ground.

Three graves in the early group [1041, 1043 and 1046] encountered, but not excavated, have pieces of limestone in their fill. These did not appear to be capstones in the sense of being supported by side slabs or overlapping the sides of the burial pit. A similar phenomenon of 'grave-associated' stones has been discovered in many of the 11th- to 12th-century graves excavated in a cemetery at Newhall Point, Balblair, Ross and Cromarty. There the excavator has suggested, not implausibly, that the phenomenon mimics lintel graves, the latter being higher status or more expensive (Reed 1996: 790).

Different from these graves with limestone slabs in their fill are those of groups 1, 2 and 3, covered with longitudinal arrangements of boulders. In these the stonework lies over, rather than in, the grave fill. These crude stone coverings could have functioned as supports for grave-slabs. Without such support, grave-slabs would have sunk quite quickly below the turf, through both their own weight and the activity of earthworms. To date no complete medieval grave-slab still in its original relationship to its burial has been excavated anywhere in the West Highlands.

The Christian tradition for interments is to bury the body on an east–west alignment, the head to the west. Arriving at the correct orientation was not a matter of science but required only an approximation. The result at Finlaggan, and no doubt many other cemeteries, was graves facing different directions, we suppose not totally at random, but in series with successive graves tending to be aligned with the immediately previous one.

Position of the grave in the burial ground or chapel is a factor indicative of status. On the one hand, burial inside the chapel might be expected to be reserved for clerics and those of some rank in society. On the other hand, the burials of a baby [17020] and adult [17032], hidden away behind the chapel, presumably while it was still in use, suggest outcasts or individuals who had in some way offended against social norms. A late 19th-century account of Eigg by an antiquary notes how the ruined church of St Donan (of late 16th-century date) was still used for burials by the Catholic population, with unbaptised infants being buried outside its north wall (MacPherson 1878: 582).

It is likely that the majority of bodies of all dates were simply deposited in their graves, having first been wrapped in a shroud. A small iron pin (SF 17001), recovered from the topsoil in trench 17, and an unstratified broken bone object (SF 17005) from the same trench, identified as a peg, are the only evidence collected of possible fastenings. The fragment of a knife (?) grip from grave 14006 might, however, suggest someone buried in his clothes. The engraved fragment of slate (SF 17004) from the grave of a child [17020] may not have been deposited with the body on purpose. Other slates with doodles have been recovered elsewhere in the Finlaggan excavations.

The presence of pieces of white quartz has been noted in the fill of two of the graves [17020 and 17032] outside the east end of the chapel, and also in the fill of the pit [17026] pre-dating the chapel, containing at least a further three burials. Most of the pieces are less than 70mm across, like other pieces of quartz that are part of the make-up of the gravel spread 1007 in the burial ground, and white quartz occurs commonly in the area around Finlaggan. White quartz pebbles and other white stones were clearly, however, deliberately deposited in graves at Whithorn dating to the period from *c* 1250 to *c* 1600 (Hill 1997: 472–73) and also at the nearby chapel at Barhobble, Wigtownshire, in graves dating from the 11th to the 13th century (Cormack 1995: 35–36).

They have been found in post-medieval graves at St Ronan's Church, Iona, and the practice may have been widespread around the Irish Sea over a long period of time (O'Sullivan 1995: 358–59; Edmonds 2019: 28–29). The practice may relate to the white stones referred to in Revelations 2: 17, apparently as a symbol of innocence. We may tentatively conclude that the presence of white quartz in the Finlaggan graves is not fortuitous, but that it was placed there as part of the funerary ritual. The majority of the quartz found in grave fills and other deposits around the chapel at Finlaggan are not water-worn stones from the shore of the loch, but pieces smashed from larger rocks or deposits.

On the one hand, animal bone fragments, some burnt, from off the gravel surface 1007 could be dismissed as domestic rubbish which has spread here at a time when the graveyard was out of use. On the other hand, it might be more appropriate to see these as evidence for the feasting which has always been associated with funerals.

There are at least 18 medieval carved West Highland grave-slabs ranging in date from the 13th to the 16th century. Detailed descriptions of them are provided in the catalogue of West Highland sculpture in Chapter C2 of the Catalogue. The more complete ones are now displayed under protective glass covers within the walls of the chapel. When excavations commenced on Eilean Mór in 1990, they were laid out in two rows in the burial ground. A photograph taken in 1963 (Canmore image SC 2523902) shows several of them leaning against the chapel wall.

Four of the Finlaggan grave-slabs are of small size and might, therefore, be identified as belonging to children (R1, R2, R3, R14). This is of interest given the tradition recorded by Thomas Pennant in 1772 (1774: 259) that the wives and children of the lords of the Isles were buried at Finlaggan, while they themselves were taken to Iona for interment. There is a certain amount of evidence from medieval Ireland that women and children were sometimes buried in separate burial grounds to their men (Fry 1999: 176–80). Martin Martin records at the end of the 17th century that this had long been the case on the island of Taransay in the Outer Hebrides (Martin 1703: 123–24), and a post-medieval women's cemetery, possibly carrying on a medieval practice, has been excavated at St Ronan's Church in Iona (O'Sullivan 1995: 359–60). The tradition for Finlaggan recorded by Pennant and backed up by the presence of small medieval grave-slabs can be considered plausible, but only for some of the period the burial ground was in use. As the report on human bones indicates, there were several adult males interred at one time or another. Small medieval grave-slabs are relatively uncommon in the West Highlands. There are singletons at Dalmally in Glenorchy and at Kilchoman on Islay (RCAHMS 1974: pl 26D; RCAHMS 1984: 201, no. 21).

One medieval slab at Finlaggan (R7) provides a clue to ownership. It is an early monument, perhaps of the 13th century, but has had a representation of an anvil added to the design later in the medieval period. This is surely an indication that it was purloined to commemorate a smith, perhaps one of the hereditary armourers or smiths of the lords of the Isles. An early 19th-century source recorded a tradition that these craftsmen lived near Finlaggan (Macnicol 1852: 363).

Commemorative stone crosses are a feature of many burial grounds in the West Highlands. In stylistic terms the Finlaggan cross (R20) can be compared with others at Kildalton and Kilarrow in Islay (RCAHMS 1984: 186 (10), 213 (8)) and at Lochaline in Morvern (RCAHMS 1980: pl 21 A–B), all in locations dominated in medieval times by Clan Donald. RCAHMS, following the work of Steer & Bannerman (1977) on later medieval West Highland sculpture, considered that such crosses were Iona School work – that is, carved on that island in the 14th or 15th century. The author has written elsewhere (eg Caldwell et al 2010: 18–20) about the tenuous nature of the evidence for an Iona School and considers it is probable that they were carved in Islay or Kintyre.

The stratigraphical relationships of the Finlaggan cross plinth indicates it was erected prior to the chapel. It may well date to the mid- or late 14th century. It is possible that, as with the cross at Lochaline, it was originally surmounted by a solid stone slab with a slot for the cross-shaft. If not, then the incorporation of a piece of quern (SF 1084) in its top surface could be of significance. The hole for its handle may have mimicked the cups ground in monuments elsewhere. An apt comparison in Islay is with the cross at Kilchoman, the stone plinth of which has four cups worn by the turning of a stone pestle. It is claimed that expectant mothers anxious to conceive a boy turn the pestle in the hollow, but originally this act may have been associated with cursing or seeking a blessing (Caldwell 2017:13).

A unique design feature of the Finlaggan cross is the cross-crosslet positioned prominently on the front face. It is probable that it should be read as a heraldic allusion. A hand grasping a cross-crosslet features in several MacDonald arms, including the MacDonalds of Dunyvaig and the Glens, for whom it was also a crest. If the cross commemorated one of that family it would have been John (Iain Mór), the founder of the family, younger brother of Donald Lord of the Isles, died in or before 1427 (Munro & Munro 1986: 293).

It is clear from our excavations that the cross was not associated with a particular grave. Rather, it may have been about clan identity, as can be supposed for many others in the West Highlands and Isles. Perhaps it could be 'read' by visitors and locals alike as marking the dominant local power.

Later medieval houses

Along the spine of Eilean Mór, between the chapel and building C, was a range of houses, E, F1, H and J. A significant amount of information was gathered from the excavation of house H and to a lesser extent house J, both with drystone walls and apparently roofed with slate. Not enough information was gathered to suggest the function of house J, but its substantial design, position next to the chapel and an entrance directly into the burial ground suggests the possibility that it was the house of the chaplain serving the chapel and that at nearby Keills. He would also have had an administrative role for the lords and been viewed as a person of considerable status.

Adjacent building H could be accessed directly across an alley from house J, and it has been identified as being a stable at ground-floor level, possibly with an upper storey (Illus 14.8 C). Perhaps it also belonged to the chaplain, a man who would have been a year-round resident of Islay and would have had a need to travel. R68, a fragment of a slate gaming board, was recovered from the

foundation trench of one of its walls, where it might, possibly, have been deliberately deposited.

Structures 12.3, 12.2 and V.1 are other buildings identified as residences. Building 12.3 had turf walls, probably faced internally with timber boards. The evidence for this is clench bolts, believed to have fixed such boards together in clinker fashion. In an earlier phase (12.3B) the floor was at least partially covered with sandstone slabs. Later (phase 12.3A) the internal timber facings were replaced by drystone walling, and the sandstone slabs were superseded by a clay floor. House 12.3 can be viewed as another example of the Scandinavian heritage of Finlaggan. Viking and later turf-walled houses have been well studied in other northern countries, especially Iceland (Stefánsson 2019). Our interpretation, however, that house 12.3 was lined internally with wooden boards, clinker fashion, may be a Scottish development. Elsewhere tongue and groove boards may have been more normal.

Structure V.1, possibly with more than one room, also had turf walls faced internally with stonework. The recovery of several rivets and nails may indicate that the upper walls had timber cladding. From the floor deposits came several sherds of pottery, both local handmade and wheel-turned imports from the Scottish Lowlands, and flotation of a sample demonstrated the presence of carbonised wheat and oats. There was also a type VI groat of James III (N34) showing no obvious signs of wear. These coins were minted about 1485.

A feature of the construction of building V.1 which was not adequately explored was the apparent incorporation of timber uprights in stone settings within the thickness of its walls (Illus 14.3 B). The same constructional approach was clearly seen in a post-medieval building, K.1/12.5, on Eilean Mór (Illus 14.12), and in both cases it is our interpretation that the upper walls were of timber construction. A parallel for this type of build comes from a site excavated at Kilchoman on Islay. In 2013 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the Shepherd's Cottage there, actually within the area of the fort described above, although its relationship to it was not established. This led to the partial excavation of a sub-rectangular house of unknown length but about 3.5m in internal width with pit hearth. The walls were made of sand, with an internal stone revetment and posts within the main bulk of the wall, some of which were supported on slate post-pads. The house was dated by the excavator to the 13th century (Ellis 2014). An even earlier example of a structure (1a/b, site VII) with stone-faced, earth or turf walls incorporating post-holes was uncovered on the Brough of Birsay, Orkney. It was dated by its excavator to the 8th or 9th century (Hunter 1986: 80, illus 24).

This type of wall construction may have been much commoner over a long period of time than is implied by the paucity of examples recovered archaeologically. In many archaeological contexts it might be difficult to detect the settings for these wall posts, or in other cases the surviving walls have been reduced to below the level of the settings. At Finlaggan building V.1 (and the post-medieval building 12.5) the stone and turf bases of the walls appear to be preserved to their full height. The nails and rivets recovered from the interior of V.1 and more widely spread in later deposits might have secured upper walls composed of wooden boards.

House 12.2, barrel-shaped in plan, was recessed into the earlier remains of 12.3. It may have been lined internally with

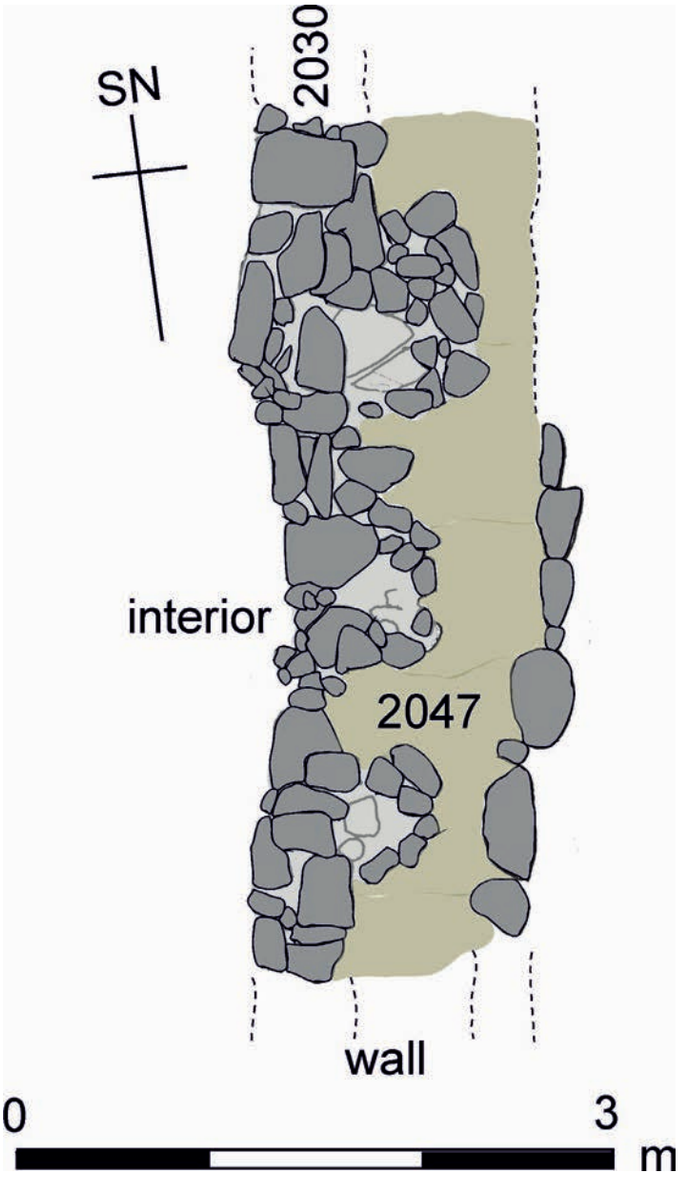

Illustration 14.12
Plan detail of the wall of structure K.1 with settings for timber uprights

upright posts supporting wattling (Illus 14.3 C). It had a central hearth and produced several finds, including bone playing pieces (B1, B2), a purse mount (F14), the remains of a drinking (?) horn (B8), a whetstone (R96) and metal mounts identified as being from a casket and chest (C95, F103, F110). It is perhaps notable that there were no sherds of pottery. Might this be because house 12.2 was a lodging for guests who dined in the great hall?

A note of caution that should be registered about our interpretation of buildings 12.2 and 12.3 is that it is conceivable that the ends of large, long houses were excavated, rather than, as has been assumed in this report, the sides of relatively small structures.

House 12.2 on the plot to the east of the kitchens was replaced by building 12.1, probably sometime in the 15th century. Its

excavated remains were very slight, but, as a relatively large rectangular building with lime-mortared walls, in the context of Finlaggan it is likely to have had a prestigious use – guest accommodation for notable visitors to replace earlier such lodgings represented by houses 12.2 and 12.3?

People

The large corpus of small finds from Finlaggan provides much information on people in later medieval times, their pursuits and quality of life. A silver signet ring (S2) is one of the very few objects that can be related to a particular individual, in this case a man called Robert. The need for a signet to authenticate or seal documents suggests a person of some standing, perhaps a merchant. There is also L5, a lead seal matrix of an unidentified cleric, perhaps a member of the lords of the Isles' household or administration. Religious devotion is also suggested by L1, a base-metal pilgrim badge from Rome, perhaps recording a trip there by a layman rather than a cleric.

The lords of the Isles retained the services of a family of hereditary harpers, the MacIlschenochs (Steer & Bannerman 1977: 146). The harp pins and lengths of wire (C121–C126) identified as possible strings are likely to have belonged to them. The presence of high-status warriors is suggested by C58, a small enamelled shield with the French royal coat of arms. Links of mail, including C131, F26 and F27, are probably an indication that armour was being worn at times by men at Finlaggan.

The evidence, or at least our understanding of how to interpret it, seems to be heavily biased in favour of men. It is in fact difficult to point to any single artefact in the Finlaggan medieval assemblage and claim it as unambiguously the belonging of a woman or a child. Yet, women and children there must have been. It often seems to be supposed that annular brooches like C1-C3 were only worn by women. The basis for this was an account of the island of Skye, written at the end of the 17th century, in which it was claimed that only women then used brooches ('buckles') for their arisaids (plaids worn by women), with the men fastening their plaids with a pin (Martin 1703: 208–09). It is not clear that this is a fashion statement of relevance to medieval times. Nor should it be assumed that mirrors, represented by C132 and L4, or a needle (C127) necessarily belonged to women. For further discussion of mirrors in the Lordship of the Isles, see Caldwell (2014c: 247).

No assumptions are made about the gender of the owners of other personal items reviewed here, prominent among which are knives, the main function of most of which would have been cutting and picking up food. It appears to have been the norm in medieval times for all classes of people to supply their own knives when at their own table or invited to dine out (Henisch 1976: 178). Knives could be hung on or attached to belts and girdles, represented in the finds assemblage by various mounts and buckles, mostly of copper alloy.

Playing pieces, ranging from finely carved bone tablemen to crudely roughed-out discs of slate, provide evidence of the importance of board games as a pastime. F53, a Jew's harp, is a not untypical find.

Administration, trade and industry

The concentration of mounts and keys (C91–C107, C112, C113, C115) that can be identified as belonging to caskets is a key indicator of Finlaggan's status and role as a centre of administration. This is postulated on the basis that the function of the caskets was to protect documents and other valuables, including money. Mark Hall suggests in his report on stone discoids and tablemen in Chapter C2 of the Catalogue that they might also be for holding gaming pieces. The remarkable quantity of casket mounts and keys suggests that the losses reflect rather more than the private property of one aristocratic family. Our suggestion is that they relate to administrative or judicial processes by which caskets, primarily their contents, changed hands as power and authority was delegated or resigned as the lords of the Isles exercised control over their lands and lordship. Some copper alloy mounts and clasps (C41–C44) have less certainly been identified as coming from book bindings, possibly devotional books, but administrative registers and the like are another possibility.

There are five groats and halfgroats from the late 14th and early 15th centuries. All of these coins would individually have had high purchasing power, small change only being represented by seven billon pennies of James I, II and III. The discovery in house 12.2 on Eilean Mór, occupied in the 15th century, of F14, a purse, represented by its iron mount, also implies a daily need for coins. Three class VI groats of James III (*c* 1484–89) are thought to relate in some way to the end of medieval occupation at Finlaggan, the demise of the lordship.

There is little clear evidence for imports, either luxuries or everyday essentials. Much of the metalwork from Finlaggan, whether of iron or copper alloy, looks little different in type and design from material that might turn up anywhere else in medieval Britain. Analysis of copper alloy artefacts using XRF demonstrated that most were composed of gunmetal, an alloy of copper with tin, zinc and lead. It is likely that this was because they were made from a range of recycled zinc-rich and tin-rich copper alloys rather than imported, unworked metals. This does not prove one way or another whether objects are imports, but there are clues from Finlaggan for local manufacture of copper alloy artefacts. Fragments of crucibles may all be of 13th rather than 14th- to 15th-century date, but it is worth noting that the residues from the rim of one (SF 25446), recovered from beach deposits [25002] adjacent to Eilean na Comhairle, were analysed and found to contain copper, zinc, lead and tin, suggesting that it was used for mixed copper alloys. One copper alloy object (C123), identified as an unfinished harp peg, might on the basis of its incompleteness be seen as locally made.

It is clearly the case that wheel-turned pottery was not manufactured locally but imported from the Scottish Lowlands. It is possible that many of the sherds recovered from 14th and 15th century contexts are actually residual, that is, the vessels they are from had long been broken and discarded when the deposits from which they were recovered were formed. Nevertheless it was probably the case that reduced gritty and oxidised gritty ware fabrics were still in use as late as about 1500, as indicated by sherds of both from the floor deposits of building V.1 in trench 7. A few sherds of North French wares (P73–P75), one of Beauvais stoneware (P76) and stoneware from the Rhineland (P77) may relate to luxury imports.

Lack of imported wheel-turned pottery is compensated for by over 1,100 sherds of handmade pottery. Unlike the wheel-made pottery, this is not the work of professional potters. The majority of sherds are from globular pots with everted rims ('croggans'), many used for cooking, but at least one vessel copied a wheel-made jug. Handmade pottery is not represented at all in most assemblages of material from medieval sites in mainland Scotland, and can in this case be seen as largely made in the vicinity of Finlaggan, perhaps with some coming in from other islands and Ireland. Much of it is indistinguishable from Ulster coarse ware. It is almost all from contexts of 14th-century or later date. There is a suggestion here, which has to be followed up in future work, that in the time of the lordship there was less requirement than previously for the import of wheel-made pottery. This may have been down to different patterns of food consumption, or because, for instance, the stuff previously imported in ceramic vessels now came in larger quantities in barrels. L6, a small lead sealing, is a clue to the import of materials or commodities from elsewhere, perhaps continental Europe.

The work of local smiths is evident in the nails and other ironwork recovered from the excavations. To what extent they operated as armourers and sword smiths, as tradition avers, is not altogether clear. Grave-slab R7 at the chapel on Eilean Mór has been identified as a monument for one of them. There are relatively few tools in the ironwork assemblage. Some, like awls F89 and F99, may have belonged to leather-workers, and two auger bits (F91, F96) and F98, a possible reamer, may have been lost by woodworkers. Not surprisingly there are the remains of agricultural tools, including a ploughshare (F85), a possible sickle (F93) and two teeth, F87 and F90, possibly from rakes. Other teeth, F88, F92 and F100, have provisionally been identified as coming from heckles. There is otherwise no evidence for flax cultivation.

Furnishings

No actual wooden furniture survives, but there are two iron hasps, F107 and F108, which might have secured the lids of large chests. Such chests might have been fully jointed, with no other metalwork apart from a staple to connect with the hasp and a lock to secure the two together. F108 was recovered from building 12.2. Some keys, for instance F116, a padlock key from building V.1, and two keys, F118 and F119 from building H, may also be from locks securing chests or other furnishings.

Ceramics, imported and local, have already been reviewed. None are obviously tableware but rather jugs and ewers for storing or decanting liquid, and storage and cooking vessels. A small group of metal fragments, L14–L17, may be from one or more base-metal drinking vessels, and several pieces of cast bronze vessels, C138–C148, may all or mostly be from imported cooking vessels.

Finlaggan, *c* 1500 – *c* 1700

There is no dating evidence for the demise of buildings (a) and (b) on Eilean na Comhairle, but in 1549 Donald Monro spoke of the council house in the past tense. Likewise, he does not create the impression that the well-built palace-work on Eilean Mór and the chapel there were still intact (Munro 1961: 56–57).

Illustration 14.13
Composite interpretative plan of post-medieval structures on Eilean Mór

The archaeological evidence from Eilean Mór indicates a major change from the administrative, ritual and residential centre of a great lordship at the end of the later medieval period to more diverse settlement and use in post-medieval times (Illus 14.13). The James III type VI groat (N34) in good condition from house V.1 points in the direction of that building's occupation ending not long after the death of that monarch in 1488. Other James III coins from Finlaggan include two other type VI groats and two billon pennies. From the succeeding reign of James IV (d 1513) there is a halfgroat and two placks. None of these coins

come from a useful context in terms of providing dating evidence for the use and demolition of structures, but they are the most recent coins from the site apart from a handful of Victorian and 20th-century losses.

The coins mark an ending somewhere in the region of AD 1500. Inevitably that invites an association to be sought with the arrest of the leaders of Clann Iain Mhóir at Finlaggan in 1499, recorded in a clan history (see 'Finlaggan in history and tradition' in Chapter 2). The perpetrator of that deed, John MacIan of Ardnamurchan, was acting as an agent of King James IV, then intent on supressing the Lordship of the Isles and preventing any new lords emerging from Clan Donald. MacIan may have had instructions from his royal master not only to arrest the leading MacDonalds but also to destroy Finlaggan to prevent further inauguration ceremonies and the convening of councils of the Isles.

Some of the medieval road system may have been refurbished and/or maintained in post-medieval times, but some stretches were built over or destroyed, for example by structures B and L. At some point the causeways connecting Eilean na Comhairle with Eilean Mór and the latter with the loch-side were dismantled, possibly as part of the programme of destruction about 1500. One building on Eilean Mór which may have survived undamaged from medieval times or been refurbished was the chapel. The archaeological evidence from it includes paving around the altar, almost certainly secondary and of post-medieval date, since it includes pieces of type A roof slate. It is probable that the building originally had an earth floor, with the passage of time set with grave-slabs, although a fragment of pink sandstone (R23), recovered from clearance work in 1998, has been identified as part of a paving slab. We have noted above (in 'Finlaggan in history and tradition' in Chapter 2) how there was a gap from the early years of the 16th century to 1527 when there was no chaplain, perhaps reflecting the turmoil consequent on the forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles, if not the destruction of Finlaggan. Another chaplain was appointed as late as 1542, although this cannot be taken with any certainty as evidence that he had a roofed chapel in which to say Mass.

The burial ground probably remained in use, and, inside the chapel, coffin burials 14.6 and 14.2 are suggestive of wealth. Both were capped by stones that may have helped support grave-slabs laid flush with the floor – in the case of burial 14.2, the slab (R11) with the effigy of Donald MacGillespie, the crown tenant of Portanellan/Finlaggan in the 1540s.

A good case has been made that a number of medieval commemorative crosses in Kintyre had their heads knocked off in 1647 by soldiers in the Covenanting army led by General David Leslie in pursuit of Alasdair MacColla and his royalist forces. These crosses would have been viewed as monuments of idolatry, an unacceptable reminder of the old religion. It may also have been at this time that a more sympathetic Marquis of Argyll rescued two fine crosses, had the figures and crucifixions erased from them, and planted them as market crosses at Inverary and Campbeltown (Rixson 1988).

This same army, with the Marquis of Argyll as one of its officers, moved into Islay in 1647 to besiege Alasdair MacColla's supporters in Dunyvaig Castle (Smith 1895: 399–400). Perhaps it was at this time that the Finlaggan cross (R20) was vandalised. The cross-head lies where it fell, and the end of grave 1016 partially covers it. Since none of the graves are likely to be later than the mid-17th century, by which time ministers of the Reformed Church were firmly established, this gives a *terminus ante quem* for this act of destruction. The shaft has probably been removed for use as a lintel.

Trapped under the cross-head was a bullaun (R82, Illus 9.8). This Irish term is now used to describe a variety of stone features associated with churches and burial grounds in Ireland and parts of Scotland, often containing holes or hollows. Sometimes these are carved in the living rock, sometimes they are free-standing basins and the like (cf Hamlin 2008: 144–54). At church sites in Islay, bullauns include a prehistoric cup-marked slab at Kilchiaran Church (RCAHMS 1984: 62) and a saddle quern at the church at Kilnave. It is not known what these stones would have been called in Islay in earlier times, or to what extent it is legitimate to view them all as the same phenomenon. The Finlaggan bullaun is unusually small, and with its six hollows, one in each face, apparently unique. It is probably no coincidence that it was in the burial ground adjacent to the cross.

If, as suggested above, the Finlaggan cross had its head knocked off by soldiers of the Covenanting army in 1647, they might equally have wrecked a chapel that they considered had associations with popery. It took a long time for the reformed faith to establish itself in Islay. It was noted in a report written in 1615 about the suppression of the MacDonald uprising that the people of Islay still adhered to the old religion and that many religious images were rooted out and burnt (MacPhail 1920: 185). Islay is known to have been fertile ground for the Irish Franciscan missionaries who operated in Argyll in the first half of the 17th century, and the high altar of the priory church on the neighbouring island of Oronsay seems to have been restored for Catholic worship in 1624 (Giblin 1964; RCAHMS 1984: 238, 254). It would not be surprising if the chapel was also used for Catholic worship about that time. It had certainly been abandoned by about 1695, when Martin Martin (1703: 240) specifically describes it as being ruinous.

Another medieval building that survived, at least partially, for reuse was building C. Its remodelling into the structure we see today cannot be dated with any certainty. It probably took place in the 16th century. It could have served as a dwelling house for someone of some status locally. There are no obvious parallels elsewhere in the West Highlands and Islands. The provision for shutters secured with bars in the windows in the new work in the upper storey indicates that security remained a prime concern.

Eilean Mór was covered with several buildings and structures in the 16th and 17th centuries, the dates and relationships of which are not altogether clear. Our interpretation (Illus 14.13, 14.14) recognises three main complexes:

- A high-status residential complex at the west end of the island
- A timber and earthwork fortification at the east end of the island
- A farming township with houses, barns, other structures and gardens spread across the whole island.

The earliest of these is likely to be the residential complex, perhaps already being developed about 1500, with construction and

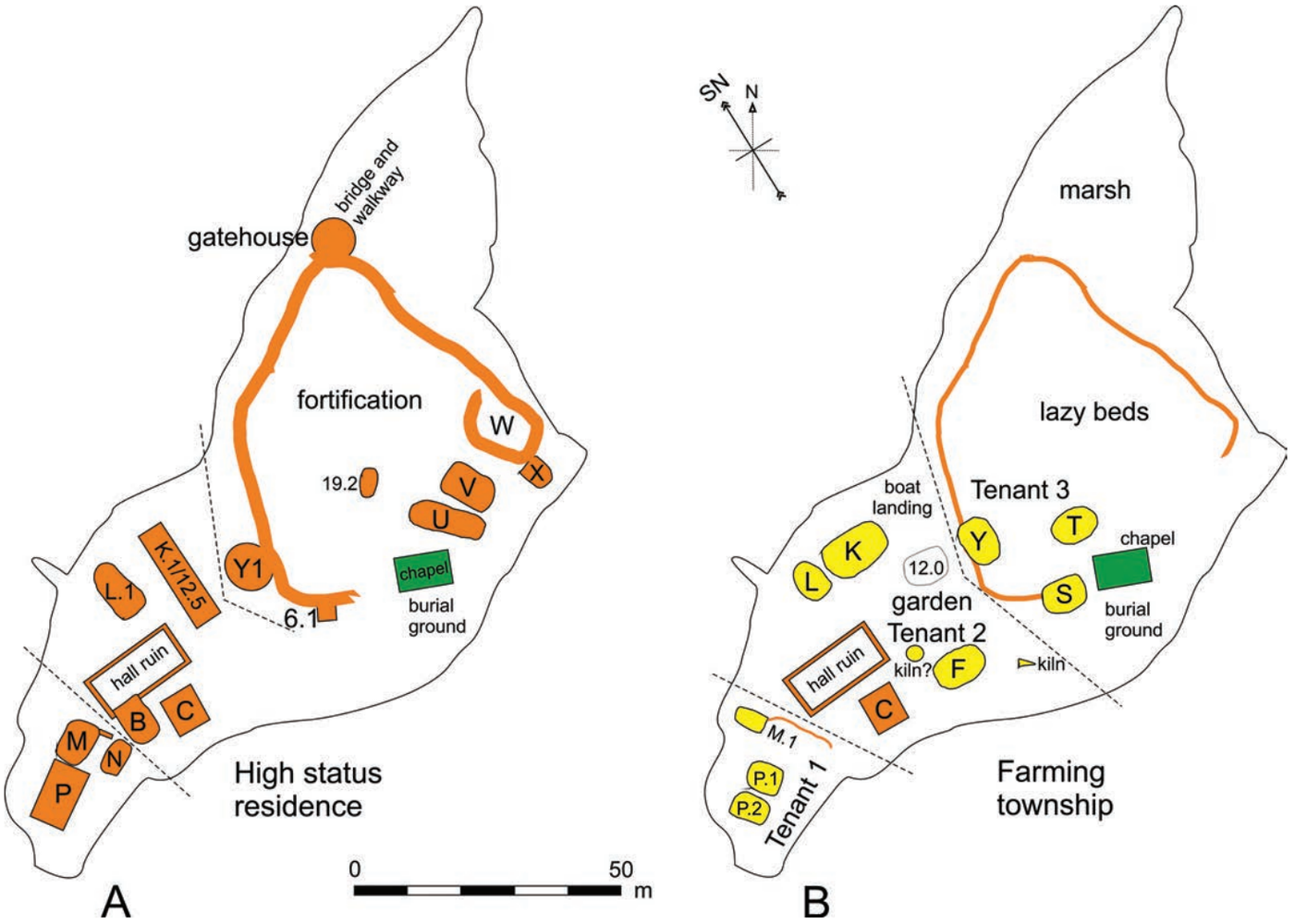

Illustration 14.14
Plans of post-medieval occupation of Eilean Mór, distinguishing (A) a high status residence and fortification and (B) a joint tenancy farming township

occupancy of some of its buildings extending through the 16th century. It makes substantial use of the ruins of the medieval buildings. The fortification may overlap with it chronologically. It has not proved possible to pin a precise date on its erection, but parallels for it cited below suggest that it may date to the late 16th century. The farming township demonstrably supersedes both, since its buildings and gardens overlie their remains. At earliest it may have developed in the late 16th century, and its occupancy may not have extended very far into the 17th century. The chapel and burial ground were there for all three. No artefacts known to be typical of sites of all types occupied elsewhere in Scotland in the 17th and 18th centuries, including Throsk type earthenware, glass bottles, clay tobacco pipes (with one exception) and appropriate low denomination coins, have been recovered from the two islands.

High-status residential complex

This complex includes the remodelled building C, houses B, M and P, a probable barn (K.1/12.5) and structure L.1 (Illus 14.14 A). It is probable that it grew and evolved over many years. The group is divided in two by a cross-wall, surviving from medieval times, spanning the relatively narrow width of the island at this point. The cross-wall separated buildings P and M from the other structures, with access between the two being provided by a door or gateway. Not much can be said of structure M other than it was a building with drystone walls, probably contemporary with P.

Building P had lime-mortared walls and a roof, possibly covered with slates (Illus 14.15 A). It is not dissimilar in size and shape to other Islay buildings known only from unexcavated ruins but likely to be later medieval or post-medieval high-status houses. At two of them, cruck slots are visible, which is likely to indicate that they were single-storey structures with turf and thatch roofs. One of these is on Nave Island, adjacent to the enclosure wall of the burial ground round the 13th-century chapel (Illus 14.15 C). It is labelled as building F by RCAHMS (1984: no. 383). Nave Island was part of an extensive estate belonging in the medieval period to the Abbey of Iona (Caldwell 2017: 36-7), and building F may have been the hall or house of a local manager or substantial tenant. There is no dating evidence for it. The other building is the hall (structure A) incorporated in a 1615 earthwork

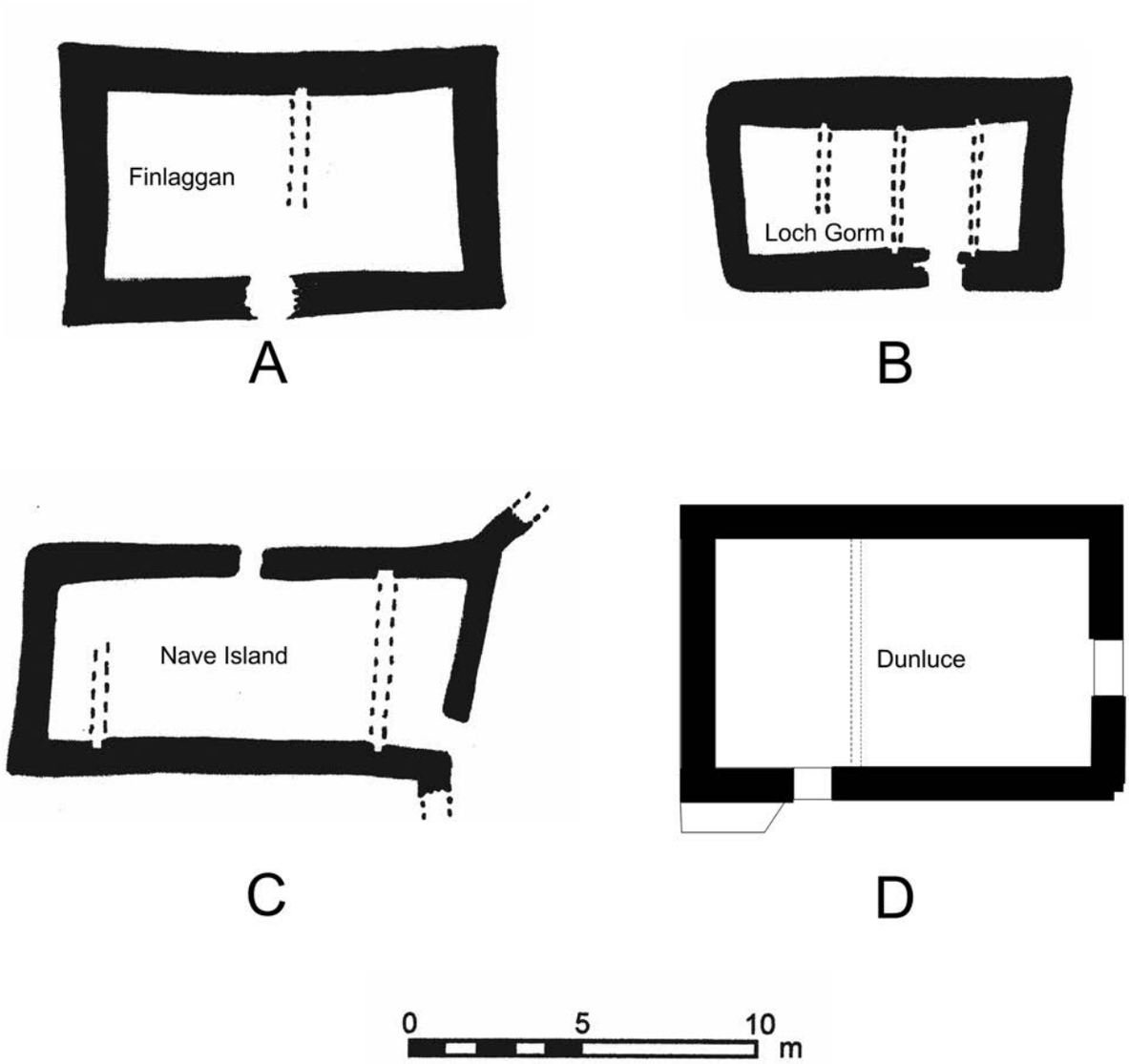

Illustration 14.15
(A) building P at Finlaggan; (B) structure A in Loch Gorm Castle; (C) building F on Nave Island; (D) the buttery in Dunluce Castle

fortification, the castle in Loch Gorm (Illus 14.15 B; RCAHMS 1984: no. 406; Caldwell & Ruckley 2005: 110–11).

Attention is drawn to these here because it would be possible to think of building P at Finlaggan as being a similar structure with the slot excavated in its north-west wall being for a cruck. If, alternatively, it is identified as a slot for securing a wooden partition wall, dividing the interior of P into two rooms, then more appropriate comparisons may be made with a building in Dunluce Castle, County Antrim, now known as the buttery (Illus 14.15 D). It is similar in size to building P (internally 10.05 by 6.07m) and its lime-mortared walls are largely upstanding, incorporated in the later 'Jacobean House'. It has two stories, the lower divided by a wooden partition into two similar sized chambers. It is considered to date between about 1585 and 1611 and to have been a 'small hall' erected by the 'MacDonnell' chief, owner of the castle, for receiving visitors (Breen 2012: 89, 108). That chief is most likely to have been Sorley Boy or either of his sons, James of Dunluce or Randal (later Earl of Antrim). Sorley Boy's elder brother, James MacDonald of Dunyvaig and the Glens, received a tack of the lands of Portanellan (Finlaggan) from Queen Mary in 1562 (*RSS* 5/1: no. 1112; Smith 1895: 67–69, 78), but it is probable that that was merely recognising the reality of MacDonald occupation and/or control for some time beforehand. We might expect that this James MacDonald (d 1565) or his sons Archibald (dead by 1569) or Angus (forfeited 1594) would have had use for a 'high-status residential complex' at Finlaggan.

Building C, as remodelled in post-medieval times, is likely to have been a residence for someone of status (Illus 11.3). Its physical separation from building P by the cross-wall might be a clue that that was not an actual MacDonald chief. A possible candidate is Donald MacGillespie, crown tenant of Portanellan in the 1540s, whose grave-slab is in the chapel. Although not vaulted, it

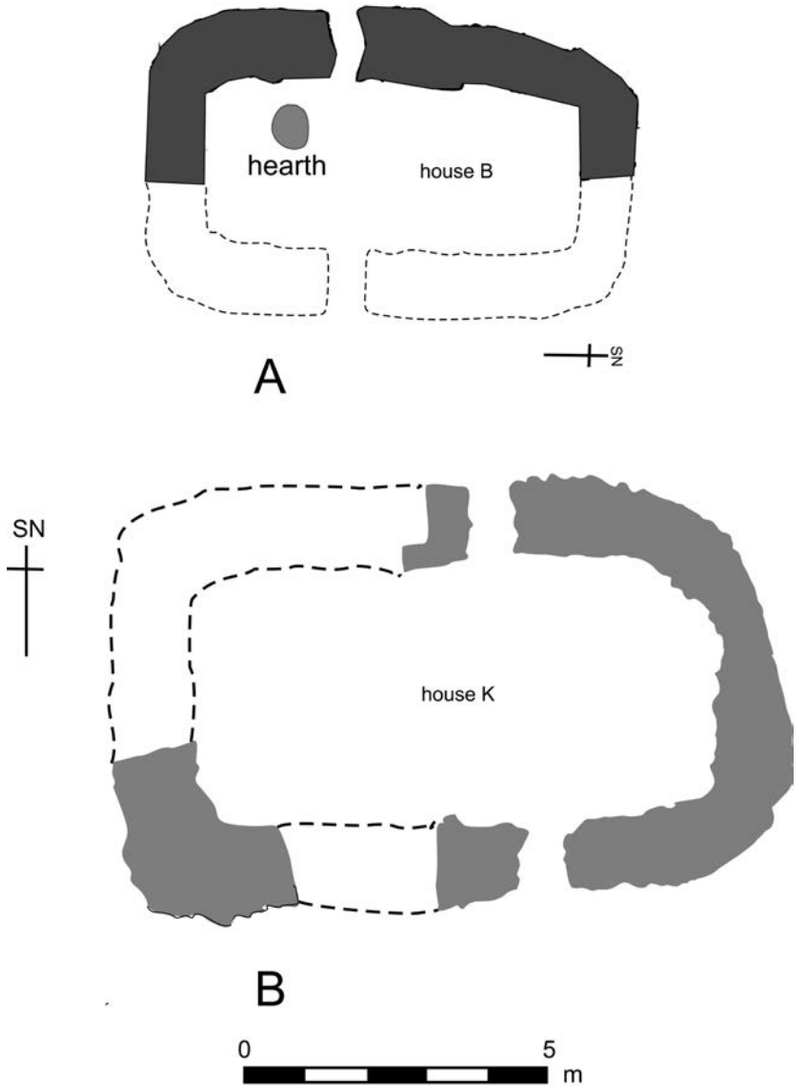

Illustration 14.16
Plans of post-medieval houses: (A) house B; (B) house K

provides an interesting parallel to the bastle houses of the border regions of Scotland and England, many of which are also surrounded by farming townships, like the 17th-century one excavated at Glenochar in Clydesdale (Ward 1998). The possibility cannot be discounted that building C remained, or was adapted to be, the residence of one of the incoming Campbell lairds in the 17th century, specifically George Campbell, younger brother of Sir John Campbell of Cawdor, who had a feu by 1628 of a large estate in the region of Finlaggan, including Staoisha, Portanellan (Finlaggan), Mulreesh, Mullinmadagan and Margadale (Caldwell 2017: 109, 133).

To the east of the cross-wall and adjacent to building C was house B (Illus 14.16 A). It had mortared walls, opposed entrances and a central hearth. Its end wall was founded on the reduced south wall of the medieval great hall which had ruthlessly been removed. Incorporated in the wall of building B adjacent to one of its entrances (see Illus 11.23 for this location) was R.32, a sandstone human head, possibly a label stop or corbel from the entrance to the great hall. This has the appearance of being a deliberate positioning, for reasons we do not understand.

The lower portions of the hall walls may have been retained to form an enclosure or yard for house B. Spilling from it was an extensive midden. Although the cattle bones mostly indicated the use of high-quality meat joints, poor-quality mutton meat was also represented, along with considerable quantities of shells, especially limpets. This midden may represent the cooking and serving up of portions of stew for large numbers, but when exactly is not clear. It could relate to the feeding of a military force. It can be compared to the evidence for a food stall serving visitors to the annual fair at Dunluce in Ireland in the earlier 18th century (Breen 2012: 177–79). Structure A.1 might turn out to have been a serving booth.

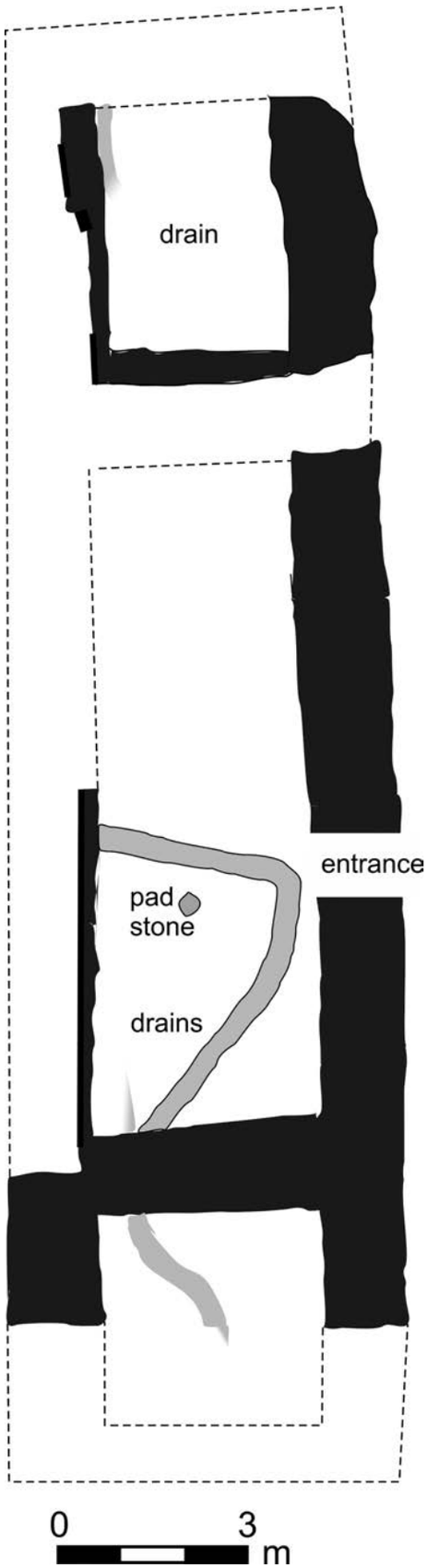

Illustration 14.17
Post-medieval structure K.1/12.5, possibly a barn

Further west was a substantial long narrow building, K.1/12.5, possibly of more than one storey, erected over the flattened remains of the medieval kitchen (Illus 14.17). On the one hand, a system of drains and a quern (R90) recovered from its floor, along with a lack of domestic material, might suggest that it should be identified as a barn. On the other hand, as a long narrow building, possibly of two stories, it might have functioned as barracks, like those in Cairnburgh Castle (actually on Cairn na Burgh More), Treshnish Isles (RCAHMS 1980: no. 335). The ruined barracks there had stone walls of two stories, 16.2 by 6.3m over walls 0.7m thick. An internal cross-wall divided the ground floor into two unequal chambers, and there was an upper storey or loft. RCAHMS believed they could be dated to either the 16th or 17th century. In the 16th century Cairnburgh Castle belonged to the Macleans of Duart, who, like the MacDonalds of Dunyvaig and the Glens, retained warriors as bodyguards and for service as mercenaries (Caldwell 2014a, 2015).

Views of forts in Ulster by the English surveyor Richard Bartlett about 1602 show buildings which may have been similar, although there is no supporting information for their function. The main fort at Charlemont, actually erected in 1602, contains two long narrow oblong buildings, covered with tiles, slates or shingles. One of them is of two stories with a hipped roof and a chimney, perhaps indicating some sort of industrial activity. The other is single storied and with gable end(s) (Hayes-McCoy 1964: IV and p 7; Andrews 2008: 54, pl 9). Although the fort was English, the houses in it may have reflected local Irish building traditions. Another long house of two stories, this time with a ridged thatched roof, is represented in Inisloughan Fort, Co Antrim, captured by the English from Brian MacArt O'Neill in August 1602 (Hayes-McCoy 1964: IV and p 7; Andrews 2008: pl 14).

An iron ploughshare (F85) appears to have been deliberately positioned under one of the settings for an upright post in the east wall of structure K.1 at Finlaggan, though what this was intended to achieve is not now apparent. Less certain as a ritual deposit is the inclusion in the same wall of R84, a piece of slate scratched with a heraldic lion and other beasts.

Only a small part of structure L.1, to the west of 12.5/K.1, was located by excavation, but enough to suggest that it might be a kiln-barn, perhaps in use at the same time as 12.5/K.1. A later medieval kiln-barn has been excavated at Bornais in South Uist (Sharples 2005: 89–93), but at Baliscate in Mull a corn-drying kiln of the 12th century was deemed by the excavator to have been inserted in a long house when it was already in ruins (Ellis 2017: 96). The tradition of having corn-kilns within barns continued in the Hebrides into post-medieval times (Whitaker 1957). The wall of L.1 partially covered the cobbled road leading from the jetty that had been the main access to Eilean Mór in later medieval times. This may be a clue that the island was again approached from the east, now via a bridge and wooden walkway across the alluvial tail.

Our tentative interpretation of this building complex is that it represents an estate centre for the chiefs of Clann Iain Mhóir, perhaps normally the residence of a tenant – in 1541, Donald MacGillespie. Despite the forfeiture of the lords of the Isles in 1493 and the capture of the MacDonald chiefs at Finlaggan soon afterwards, perhaps they remained in control there all through the 16th century. Their main Islay residence was Dunyvaig Castle,

Illustration 14.18
Augher island, 1602 (National Library of Ireland, MS 2656, x)

but that had been granted by King James IV to MacIan of Ardnamurchan sometime prior to 1506 and seems only to have been regained by the family in the early 1520s (Caldwell 2017: 70–71, 78–79). That might suggest a need for Finlaggan as a residence for MacDonald chiefs in the early 16th century.

In 1540 James Canochson (MacDonald), chief of Clann Iain Mhóir, was captured, possibly in Islay (see Chapter 2 above), by King James V during his expedition to the Isles. He was imprisoned for over two years and royal garrisons were installed in Islay (Caldwell 2017: 82). The payment of fees to their captain, Archibald Stewart, along with three gunners, are recorded in royal financial records (*TA* 7: 238, 438; *ER* 17: 278, 279), the writers of which were clearly confused or misinformed. They note that the 'castles of Dunnewik and Iland, Lochbrum in Ilay' were garrisoned. 'Lochbrum' is reasonably a mistake for Loch Gorm, captained by Archibald Stewart's brother, but it is not clear if 'Iland' was a third castle. If it were, Eilean Mór at Finlaggan would be the obvious candidate.

Gunners at this time, and in this context, would have been artillery specialists rather than men equipped with firearms. An observation worth making is that three probable pieces of round shot for artillery have been recovered from Finlaggan, two of stone (R98, R99) from Eilean na Comhairle, and the third (L10) a composite piece of lead and stone from trench 19 on Eilean Mór. Both have damage consistent with their having been fired. Round shot like these are most likely to date to the 16th century and to be associated with the guns of a royal expedition. James V's expedition of 1540 is certainly a possible context for their loss. In Chapter C5 of the Catalogue the possibility is also considered that some of the arrowheads (F29–F38) from the two islands might relate to one or more actual attacks.

Timber and earthwork fortification (Illus 14.14 A)

RCAHMS plotted a substantial bank ('dyke') enclosing two sides of a triangular area of lazy beds at the east end of Eilean Mór. They opined that this enclosure had originally been a garden but offered no further interpretation for the bank. A working hypothesis for the author during the excavations was that it was the remains of a medieval perimeter timberwork defence, consisting of a palisade set in a turf bank, a view that (mistakenly) seemed to be confirmed as a result of excavations in trench 3 in 1990. It is still the writer's interpretation that there was such a defensive work in the earlier medieval period, and the bank may overlie the

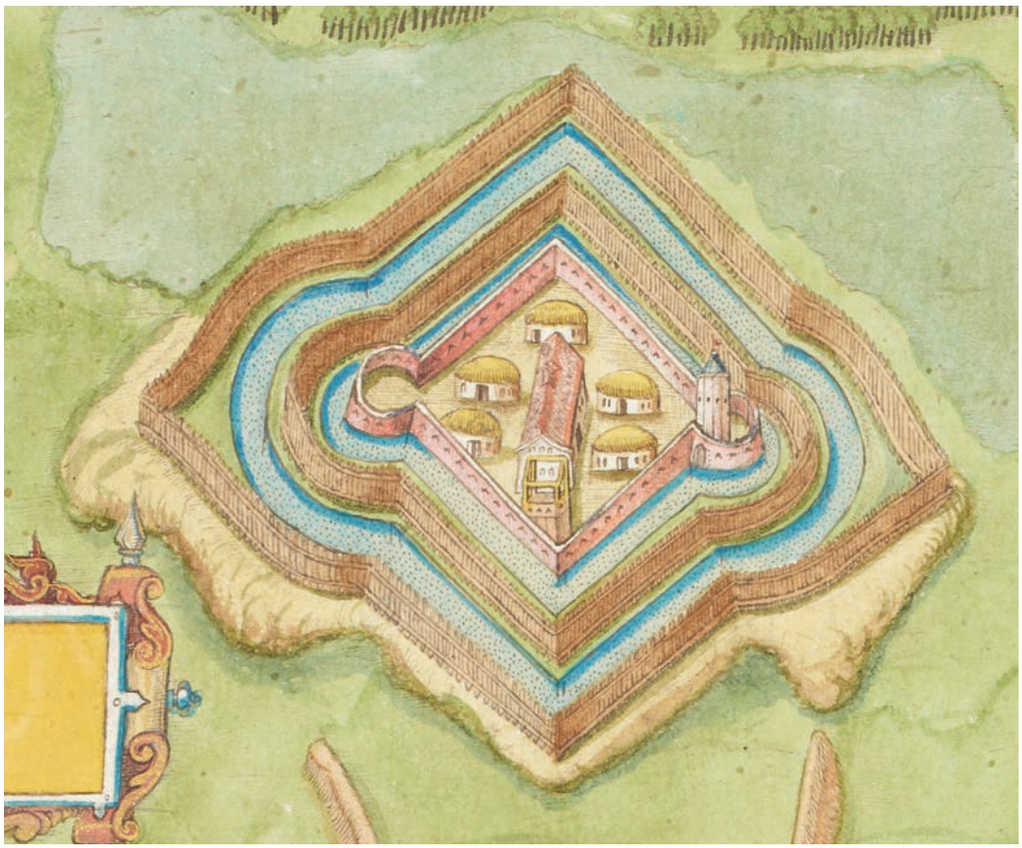

Illustration 14.19
Inisloughan Fort, 1602 (National Library of Ireland, MS 2656, vi)

remains of some of it. It is now clear, however, that the bank as it survives is a work of more recent date, and that it had bastions or towers, one identified as a gatehouse. The dating evidence is provided by considerations to do with stratigraphy, especially in trench 6; the occurrence of roof slates in trench 18, either as debris or recycled from later medieval structures; and comparisons with other late 16th-century fortifications.

This does appear to have been a serious fortification, but one that only enclosed about half of Eilean Mór (excluding the alluvial tail). In spatial terms it is separate from the high-status residential complex just described, and so both could have co-existed for much of their lifespan. The line of fortification between structure X and the later house S is not clear. It is possible that the chapel and burial ground were excluded from the fort.

The bank was partially excavated in trenches 3 and 6, and was found in the latter to have been faced on the exterior with stone and to have supported a series of upright posts. The post-hole for one of these produced a knife (F62), perhaps deliberately deposited after being broken in two. The posts may have been for supporting a wattle fence. Such wattle fence defences are known to have been employed in native Irish fortifications. They can, for instance, be seen in English illustrations of about 1602 of Augher Fort (Illus 14.18) and Ulster crannogs under siege (Hayes-McCoy 1964: V, X, XI; Andrews 2008: pls 10, 15, 16). Palisades or wattle fences backed by a fighting platform or step are typical of earth and timber fortifications of the medieval period in Europe (Higham & Barker 2004: 244–325).

The short length of the bank excavated in trench 3 also had post-holes for a fence or palisade, backed by a firing step for the defenders. Here the bank replaced, and cut into the back of, a circular flattened bastion at the apex of the fortification, identified as a gatehouse. No dating evidence was recovered for this section of bank, but it is supposed that it represents a remodelling dating to a time when the fortification was still functioning as such.

The gatehouse was possibly similar in overall appearance to a tower sited in a circular bastion at one corner of the O'Neill stronghold at Inisloughan (Illus 14.19) (Hayes-McCoy 1964: VI; Andrews 2008: pl 14; MacDonald et al 2012). This tower was tall and the colour in Richard Bartlett's contemporary view evidently indicates it was of wood, while the conical roof might be covered with slate. In our account of excavations in trench 18 (Chapter 8) we dismissed the idea that the Finlaggan gatehouse had a slate roof. That is an interpretation that might be revisited, especially if more excavation were to be undertaken. The Inisloughan tower was either circular or polygonal in plan, with vertical lines in its illustration representing the junctures between wooden boards. Small slit windows are indicated in an upper storey.

The Finlaggan gatehouse was approached across the alluvial tail by a bridge and wooden walkway which would have been dismantled at the same time as the gatehouse. Access to the fort,

and more generally Eilean Mór thereafter, may still have been across the alluvial tail or by boat from other points around the loch shore. The north edge of the island between house K and the fort could have functioned well as a boat-landing. Tenuous clues that the gatehouse may have witnessed military activity, including an arrowhead (F37) and two pieces of lead shot (L9 and SF 18170), have already been noted (Chapter 8). See also the lead shot and sprues listed in Chapter C4 of the Catalogue. F135, the remains of an iron mechanism recovered from the gatehouse's demolition deposit, might possibly be a firing device from a handgun.

Judging by surface remains and limited excavation in trench 12, structure Y1 might have been another circular bastion projecting from the fortification towards the residential complex at the west end of Eilean Mór. A third, smaller bastion may be represented by structure X, the foundations of which can be traced at the water's edge. None of it was included in the excavations, but a path leading to it from within the enclosure was detected in trench 7.

In trench 6, structure 6.1 was identified as the remains of a rectangular wooden watch tower added to the exterior of the palisade bank at the highest point of the island outside of the burial ground. Two rectangular timber towers are shown in English views of native Irish forts in Ulster in 1602, already referred to. The O'Neill stronghold of Inisloughan has one in an angle of its enceinte (Illus 14.19). It appears to be of comparable height to a large two-storey building. It has gun-loops below a flat top surrounded by a wooden handrail. The other is in an unidentified crannog, perhaps one in Roughan Lough, County Tyrone, captured by the English in 1602 (Andrews 2008: 30, pl 16). The crannog has three single-storey thatched houses and a wooden tower within a wattled palisade. The tower is shown only as a framework of timbers – four corner-posts braced together at top and bottom by cross-beams. Perhaps it was erected hurriedly in anticipation of the siege but left incomplete.

Significant areas of the interior of this fortification were excavated in trenches 7 and 19, and residual traces of three houses, structures 19.2, 19.9 and 19.10, were recovered despite subsequent damage over most of the area by the digging of lazy beds. House U and enclosure W may both also relate to the use of the fort.

This timber and earthwork fort at Finlaggan does not appear to belong with the artillery forts with round bastions – Loch Gorm in Islay and Loch an Sgoltaire in Colonsay – which were erected in 1615 during the uprising led by Sir James MacDonald of Knockrinsay (RCAHMS 1984: nos 405–06; Caldwell 2009b: 89–110; 2011: 184–86). A possible context for its construction might be the deadly feud in the 1590s between the MacDonalds and the Macleans of Duart, and their machinations to provide mercenaries for the wars in Ireland, the MacDonalds in support of the Earl of Tyrone and the Macleans to bolster the efforts of the English administration. In July 1595 Lachlan Mor Maclean of Duart wrote to Robert Bowes, the English agent in Edinburgh, that he had just disbanded a force of 600 men whom he had had in garrison for three months (*CSP Scot* 11, no. 581). Lachlan was angling to get paid by the English for his services and was hoping to discourage the two MacDonald chiefs, Angus of Dunyvaig and Donald Gorm of Sleat (Skye), from joining in an expedition to Ireland to support Tyrone. It is probable that his force of 600 men was garrisoned at Breacachadh Castle in Coll, where there is evidence, largely from a contemporary report, that he had created an extensive fort with timber and earthwork defences around the medieval castle (Caldwell 2014a, 2015: 361).

Meanwhile, Angus of Dunyvaig was under serious threat from the government in Edinburgh for his bad behaviour. He had been forced to submit to a royal army led against him by Sir William Stewart, commendator of Pittenweem, and among the penalties he was to suffer was the loss of Dunyvaig Castle (Caldwell 2017: 91). In the following years, until the MacDonald uprising in 1615, Dunyvaig Castle changed hands more than once between the MacDonalds and royal garrisons. It would therefore not be surprising if sometime in those years Angus MacDonald, or his son and heir, James MacDonald of Knockrinsay, found it expedient to have a fort at Finlaggan for concentrating local forces prior to military campaigns in Ireland or elsewhere in the Isles. It is known that the number of fighting men that Islay was meant to produce at that time was 800 (Caldwell 2015: 359), the majority of whom would have been MacDonald clansmen or supporters.

Farming township (Illus 14.14 B)

Several of the more obvious, turfed-over structures visible today on Eilean Mór are the ruins of the houses, barns and stores of a farming township. They appear to have been abandoned, their walls collapsing in situ and not obviously robbed for building materials for use elsewhere. It can be deduced that they represent the final occupation of Eilean Mór before settlement was relocated off the island. They include houses P.1, P.2, M.1, L, K, Y, T, S and F, all of which appear to have been of drystone construction, largely made up of recycled blocks and boulders. Their roofs of turf and thatch were probably removed for use as manure and their roof timbers taken away for reuse prior to the houses being abandoned. As a consequence their walls became unstable and collapsed.

All these buildings, whether occupied as homes or used as barns or stores or for other purposes, are generally of a form described in Chapter 5 as type A houses. Regrettably our excavations did not provide any substantial information on how they were used or furnished. Of the houses listed, the one that was most substantially excavated was house K (Illus 14.16 B), partially built over the ruins of structure K.1/12.5. It had opposed entrances, from one of which were recovered some nails, perhaps from a door, and the remains of a padlock (F124). It is assumed to have been a dwelling house, although excavations in trench 2 were not extensive enough to locate a central hearth. The floor was of earth and, like others in medieval and later houses on Eilean Mór, would have been prepared in the same way as that employed by the natives of St Kilda in the mid-18th century. They spread peat ash over the area of the floor, adding a mixture of earth and peat dust before watering and treading this into a mulch that was then dried off with a fire. This process was repeated regularly. These floors could be dug out seasonally to provide manure for growing crops (Gannon & Geddes 2015: 77).

The distribution and grouping of these buildings might imply a joint tenancy farm with at least three tenants, with tenant one based in building M.1, along with P.1 and P.2 nestling in the ruined walls of building P. Tenant one's holding would have been

separated from the neighbouring tenant's by the medieval cross-wall. Tenant two would have occupied the paired structures K and L, with house L serving as a storehouse for the occupiers of house K. They may have tended the adjacent garden partially excavated in trench 12. Another supposed storehouse nearby, structure 12.0, was removed by gardening activity, probably by the occupants of house K. Separated from house K by a garden was building F, with a corn-drying kiln in the ruins of building H, and possibly another kiln (G, between the ruin of the hall and structure F), close by. Building F was not excavated, but it would not be unreasonable to surmise that it may have been a barn. The banked enclosure left by the timberwork fortification at the east end of the island made a good area for the digging of lazy beds, possibly by a third tenant based in buildings Y, T and S.

Two other possible early joint tenancy farms have been identified in Islay. One consists of the ruins of seven houses on an island in Loch Ballygrant, Ellan Charrin (RCAHMS 1984: 155), suggested in Chapter 3 to be where Donald Dubh convened a meeting of the Council of the Isles in 1545. The island, belonging with the land of Scanistle, was by 1549 another residence of the Macleans. At Ballore, near the deserted township of Creagfinn in Kildalton Parish, there is a group of five stone houses like those at Finlaggan, nestling on a low rise overlooked by a rocky outcrop. This too may be a 16th-century settlement (Caldwell 2017: 173, fig 9.6).

Whether the chapel and building C remained in use throughout the whole time of the occupancy of the island by joint tenants is not known. Nor is the exact date when Eilean Mór was abandoned as a settlement. If the island had been occupied or regularly visited between the early 17th century and modern times, artefacts like tobacco pipes, bottle glass, sherds of pottery and small denomination coins might have been jettisoned. Instead there is practically no artefactual material to fill this time slot. After the civil wars of the mid-17th century it may have been obvious that there was no advantage from a security point of view for tenants to be cut off from their land by the waters of the loch. A shift of settlement to Portanellan may have been encouraged by the Laird of Islay.

The wider Finlaggan study area

In Islay the houses on the island in Loch Ballygrant and at Ballore all appear to be of our type A, and like those at Finlaggan to have stone walls. Similar houses can be identified elsewhere, some with turf walls. In the Finlaggan study area examples have been identified at Druim a' Chùirn, Sean-ghairt (no. 22, house H); Rudh' a' Chròcuin (no. 38) on the shore of Loch Finlaggan; at Cuingsgeir, Portanellan (no. 51); and at An Tàmhanachd, Robolls (nos 57, 58). All of these, except house H at Druim a' Chùirn, are in, or adjacent to, systems of small, irregular enclosed fields containing rigs, representing farms abandoned prior to the modern period.

One of these houses at Rudh' a' Chròcuin was excavated (Chapter 7, trench 20), demonstrating that it had a central hearth and was possibly lined inside with wattling. It was probably similar to other houses, sometimes called creel houses, known from the mainland, especially the Highlands. A good description of such a house is given by an English army officer, Edmund Burt, based in Inverness in the 1720s and 1730s. The skeleton of the 'hut' was formed of 'small crooked timber' with a large beam for the roof. The walls were about 4ft (1.2m) high, lined with sticks 'wattled like a hurdle', built on the outside with turf. Thin 'divets' of turf were also used for covering the roof, and the floor was of earth. There was a small peat fire in the centre with a small hole in the roof to let the smoke escape (Burt 1998: 169–70; Noble, 1984, 2000). Reconstructions of such houses have been erected at the Highland Folk Museum at Newtonmore and the National Trust for Scotland Visitor Centre in Glencoe.

Unfortunately no dating material was collected from this house at Rudh' a' Chròcuin, a predecessor to it or a larger unexcavated turf-walled house adjacent to it which was thought likely to be a barn. A question for future research is whether there is a chronological or other distinction between these type A houses of stone and those of turf, or whether the difference is to do with mundane matters like the availability of building materials. A preference for building turf-walled houses might have been brought to Islay by the Campbells of Cawdor and their tenants in the 17th century. Turf or creel houses had spread elsewhere in the West Highlands and Islands by the 18th century (Dodgshon 1994: 422).

The shieling huts occupied in the summer months, for instance two groups (nos 26, 27) on the land of Sean-ghairt below the summit of Cnoc an Tighe, also appear to have been erected in a similar fashion. These huts are circular or oval in shape, varying in diameter from about 5 to 10m. None of them have been excavated, but there is an illustration and account of some still in use in 1772 on the neighbouring island of Jura in Thomas Pennant's *Tour* (Illus 14.20; Pennant 1774: pl XV). No furnishings were observed apart from two blankets and a rug, some dairy vessels and pendent shelves of basketwork to hold the cheese that was being produced. Jura was in the hands of other branches of the Campbells from 1614. A relatively large but poor island, it was heavily influenced by developments in Islay.

Fieldwork around Loch Finlaggan and elsewhere in Islay has amply provided evidence for an infield–outfield system of agriculture which likely developed over several generations. One of the main impetuses behind its introduction to the island may have been the incoming Campbells bringing in mainland practices, including runrig, with which they were familiar. The MacDonalds and Macleans had notoriously not paid the rents and fees they owed the crown, except under duress. From 1614 continued possession of Islay by the Campbells depended on the payment of these dues in full, while they garnered profits for themselves. A shake-up in farming methods was part of the solution.

Surviving rentals demonstrate that the Campbell lairds required a higher proportion of their rents to be paid to them in money rather than in produce. The most likely source of that money for many tenants was through the sale of livestock, principally cattle. In the 1630s the laird was exporting between 100 and 200 cattle per year. By the 1680s, 1,000 or more head of cattle were being exported yearly from the island (Innes 1859: 351–52; Cawdor muniments, 590, nos 3, 25, 41, 47, 77, 78). Increased interest in cattle raising by the 1630s is perhaps also demonstrated by a shift in the rentals from payment of cheese (made from the milk of sheep or goats?) to butter, which could only be produced from cow's milk. More cattle meant more manure, and thus it

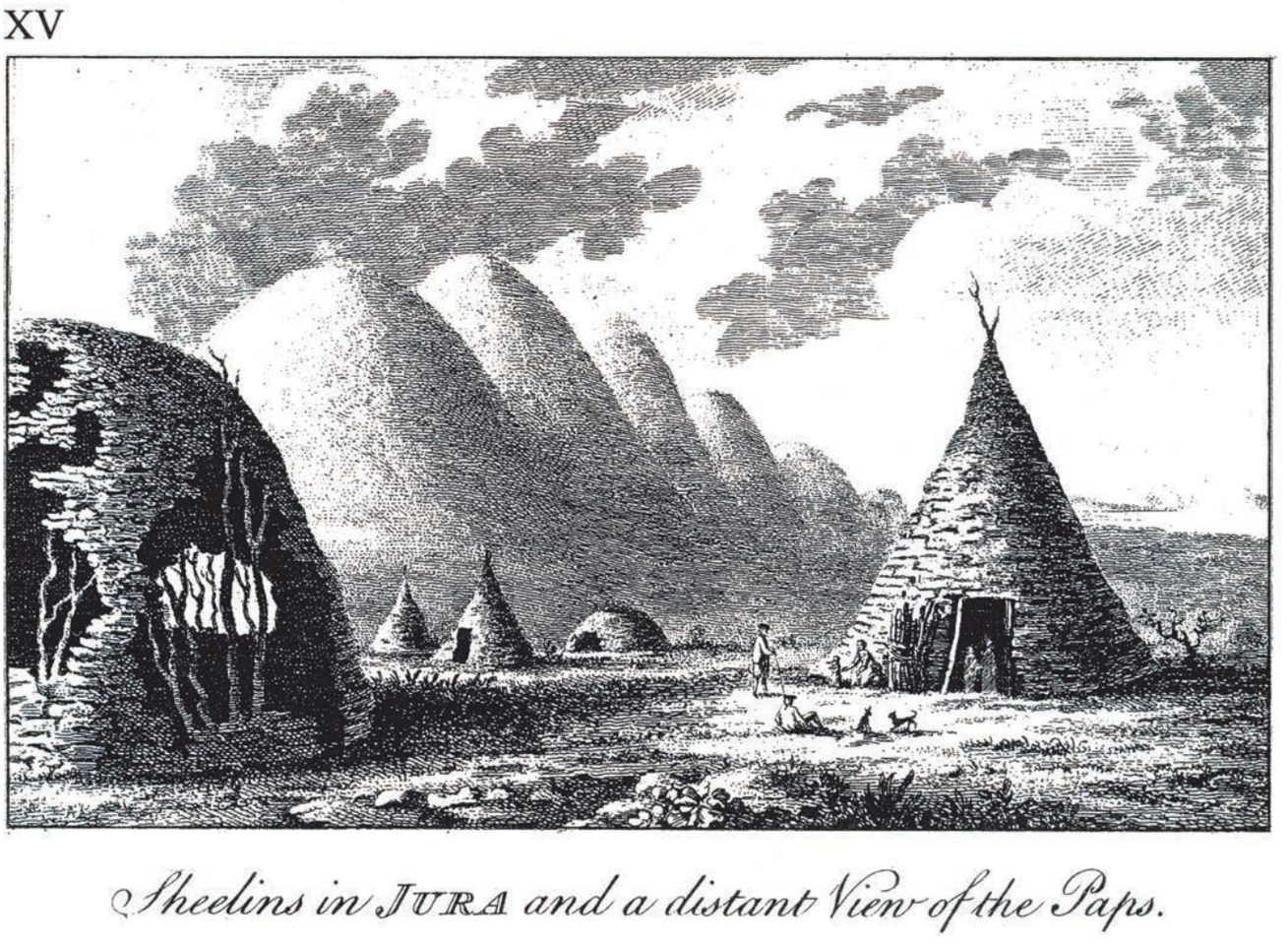

Illustration 14.20
Sheilings in Jura in 1772 (Pennant 1774: opposite p 204)

became feasible to manure not just the infield but also parts of the outfield by folding the cattle into areas intended for crops. Indeed, it is likely that the development of infield–outfield cultivation on Islay depended on an increase in the number of cattle.

One of the main archaeological characteristics of an infield–outfield system is a 'head dyke' at the normal limit of cultivation to prevent cattle and other beasts pastured on the moors in the summer straying on to the growing crops. Since protection for them was provided by the head dyke, there was no need for them to be enclosed as previously in small fields. The infield, normally the best land nearest the settlements, was regularly manured or fertilised and was intensively farmed. It is characterised by open fields – unenclosed groups of rigs. Other groups of unenclosed rigs are to be found in the outfield, the less intensively farmed area between the infield and the head dyke. Crops would be sown in parts of the outfield for a couple of years or so which were then left fallow for several years. A runrig system of farm management in which the tenants' rigs were intermingled and reallocated from time to time in proportion to the extent of their holding is implied. Lord Teignmouth recorded that runrig was still prevalent in Islay in 1836, with rigs being exchanged at three-yearly intervals (Teignmouth 1836: 308).

Head dykes and areas of infield and outfield are best identified on the farms of Sean-ghairt and Robolls (Illus 4.21 and 4.25). At Sean-ghairt, overlooking the west shore of Loch Finlaggan, there are traces of open fields that probably remained in use until the 1860s. Regular series of rigs are grouped around two clusters of houses (nos 22 and 23), with occasional groups of rigs further out. A head dyke marks the division between green and rough pasture, part of it serving as the march with the neighbouring farm of Ballachlaven. Direct access to rough pasture on the neighbouring moor, for summer grazing, thus seems to have been cut off for the Sean-ghairt farmers who were sub-tenants of the Campbells of Ballachlaven in the 17th and early 18th centuries (Chapter 4, no. 15).

It is notable that shieling huts sometimes occur just outside the line of head dykes. Small groups of them are to be found near the head dyke of Sean-ghairt (nos 26, 27). Is it possible that these represent a phase before the erection of the head dyke and that the line of the head dyke consciously abuts a zone of shielings? These shielings could mark the nearest point to the arable land

where beasts would be tolerated in the growing season. There is plenty of evidence for other groups of shieling huts further out on the moors. Those that may have been occupied by the tenants of Ballachlaven and Sean-ghairt are at Airigh na Creige (NGR NR 363 693), Airigh Ruadh (369 689), Airigh an t-Sagairt (368 698), Airigh an t-Sluic (363 699) and Airigh nan Sidhean (366 715). The nearest, Airigh Ruadh, is about half a mile (0.8km) away from the head dyke, while the furthest, Airigh nan Sidhean, is over 2 miles (3km) away. It is likely they were not all in use at the same period. At Robolls (no. 20) our interpretation of the complex series of dykes, rigs and other features shows a system of small enclosed fields being superseded by an infield–outfield system.

Finlaggan, *c* 1700 – *c* 2020

In general the landscape around Loch Finlaggan shows considerable traces of 'improved' methods of agriculture, a subject dealt with more fully for Islay as a whole by the writer elsewhere (Caldwell 2017: 152–83, 199–208). Some of the more obvious signs are the replacement of sinuous turf banks by straight drystone dykes and wire fences. By the time Islay was first mapped by the Ordnance Survey in 1878, new field systems had swept away earlier infield–outfield systems with their unenclosed rigs, all over the island. These are to a large extent the fields that can be seen today, the old rigs and dykes ploughed flat and drainage provided not by surface run-off between the rigs but by subsoil drains. Some of the small kilns around Finlaggan, for instance four on the land of Kepollsmore (nos 65, 67, 68, 71), will have been used for burning lime for dressing the arable fields. The continued importance into the 19th century of pasturing beasts on the moors in the summer months is demonstrated by the building of little rectangular stone houses for the use of herdsmen at some shieling sites (nos 34, 36). Growing population pressure in the late 18th and earlier 19th century is hinted at by the colonisation of old shielings with houses, probably occupied all year round, and lazy beds (nos 31, 35, and probably 32 and 33).

Our Finlaggan study area contains several houses and structures, mostly ruins grouped in abandoned farming townships on the lands of Sean-ghairt, Portanellan/Finlaggan, Mulreesh, Robolls and Kepollsmore. They are inventoried in Chapters 4

Illustration 14.21
A weaver's house between Bowmore and Kilarrow (Bridgend) in 1772 (Pennant 1774: opposite p 204)

and 5 and documentation for them is surveyed in Chapter 3. No excavation was undertaken by us on any of these, but, given the quality of some of the remains and the documentary record, some further analysis is offered here. Most of the houses in question have been labelled as type C by us, essentially meaning that they are rectangular with drystone or clay-bonded walls.

Features of type C houses which appear to be of typological, if not chronological, significance should be noted here – first, the relative width of the structures, and second, whether they are largely constructed of field stones or quarried material. Gailey (1962: 170) has suggested that there may be a tendency for earlier drystone houses to be narrower than later ones, since their builders may have been slow to take advantage of the relative ease of spanning wider spaces from load-bearing walls. The use of quarried stone suggests professional input, and perhaps the involvement of landowners in introducing improvements. In multi-phase structures, walls of quarried stone are sometimes added on to structures made from field stones, but apparently never vice versa.

These houses all appear to date from the late 18th century to the middle of the 19th century. None of those inventoried in our study area were in such a condition that woodwork or roofing (thatch) survived, nor was there evidence in their depleted walls for the slots that would have housed crucks for supporting the roof couples. Nevertheless, on the basis of comparative data from better preserved or documented type C houses elsewhere in Argyll, it seems reasonable to suppose that the couples were anchored in such a way (eg RCAHMS 1984: 307; 1992: 462). Crucks and couples were either formed from single timbers or pegged together.

One of the best descriptions of such a house, with illustrations of its exterior and interior, was provided by Joseph Banks, when he visited Islay in 1772 in the company of Thomas Pennant (Illus 14.21). The house was between Bowmore and Kilarrow (Bridgend) and occupied by a weaver:

> A highland house so miserably constructed that it tempted us to have drawings made of every particular in it. Twas built of stones so loosely laid together that wind & rain could scarcely be stopd in their course by them. There were two door ways one of which servd at all times for a window for the house was furnished with only one door or rather substitute for one a faggot of sticks not more closely tied up than faggots in general are which was occasionally placd in one or the other doorway as the family found it most convenient.
>
> In the middle of the house was the fire over which hung a pothook not in the chimney but under that hole which was made in the roof as an expedient to let out a part of the smoak which it did but not till after the house was full so that none seemed to be lookd upon as superfluous but the more overflowings. Round this upon miserable benches sat the family consisting of a weaver his wife her mother a stranger woman & six children. These had two beds to accommodate them. The rest of the furniture consisted of a loom & a lamp. (Rauschenberg 1973: 201)

On the basis of one of the illustrations, but unmentioned by Banks, the house had an extension – a barn or byre? – broader in width, with its wall shored up by a buttress. The upper part of the gable end of the house is shown to be of turfs.

The 1855 'Valuation of Wood' excerpted in Chapter 3 (Mitchell Library: TD 1338/2/2/34) also contains sufficient detail to allow houses, apparently all of type C, in the Finlaggan study area to be characterised (Table 14.2). Their approximate sizes can be computed by the enumeration of 'couples with rubbs' in each. Houses still with couples or observable cruck slots tend to have then spaced about 7ft or 2m apart. So a house with five couples might have an internal length of about 12m, or up to 14m overall, externally.

Perhaps with a programme of research excavations it will be possible to match the buildings listed in 1855 with the ruins still traceable today. Here it is worth noting that two of the houses at Mulreesh, those of Duncan McDermid and John Campbell, appear to have been byre dwellings, since their woodwork included ravels (rails) for six and five cows respectively. Mantle pieces in a house at Portanellan and three at Kepollsmore imply fireplaces with flues in the gable walls. The chimney vent in a house at Sean-ghairt indicates a centrally placed open fireplace, with a hanging chimney through the thatch to help disperse smoke. Several houses had lofts and furniture.

There is evidence for the extraction of galena (lead ore) in Islay at least from the early 13th century and in the 16th century (Caldwell 2014b: 84; 2017). Trials or open-cast works within the Finlaggan study area at Robolls and Mulreesh probably date back at least as early as post-medieval times, with a considerable expansion of activity from the later 18th century through the following century, all described in Chapter 4. The most recent, late 19th-century, mining activity at Mulreesh is represented by a serious of buildings, open or only partially filled-in shafts and other features.

Farm	Tenant	Structure	Couples	Notes
Sean-ghairt	Donald Lamont	Room and kitchen	5	3 doors, 2 windows
		Barn	2	
		Stable	1	Loft with 2 joists
		Stirk house	2	
Sean-ghairt	Duncan MacNab	Room and kitchen	3	3 doors, 2 windows, loft
		Stable and byre	2	
		Stable	1	
		Barn	2	
		Cart house		
		Sheep house	2	
Sean-ghairt	Neil MacCallum	Room and kitchen	5	
		Stable	2	
		Sheep and stirk house	2	
Sean-ghairt	Donald MacCallum	House		Loft with 3 joists, chimney vent
Portanellan	John Smith	Room and kitchen	4	2 windows, 3 doors, loft with 3 joists
		Stable	2	
		Barn	2	
		Pig house		
		Cottar's house	2	
Portanellan	Archibald Bell	Room and kitchen	4	Loft, 4 doors, 4 windows
		Stable	1	
		Byre	1	
		Byre	2	
		Stable	2	1 manger 13.5 ft [4m] long
		Barn	3	
		Cart house		
		Two pig houses	2	
		Cottar's house	1	
		Cottar's house	3	
		Cottar's house	3	
		Cottar's house	3	
		Cottar's house	1	
Portanellan	Malcolm Bell	Room and kitchen	4	4 doors, 2 windows, loft with 4 joists
		Byre	2	
		Byre	1	
		Byre	2	
		Barn	3	
		Stable	1	
		Cart house		
		Pig house		
		Sheep house	1	
		Cottar's house	3	
		Cottar's house	3	
Portanellan	Neil Bell	Room and kitchen	6	3 doors, 2 windows, loft
		Barn	5	
		Stable	2	
		Byre	2	
		Stirk house		
		Calf house		
		Cottar's house	3	
		Cottar's house	3	
Portanellan	Gilbert Lamond heirs	Room and kitchen	6	Loft, mantelpiece etc
		Milk house		
		Barn	4	
		Byre	2	
		Byre	4	
		Byre	2	
		Byre	4	
		Byre	1	
		Stable	2	
		Potato house	3	
		Turnip house	2	
		Cart house		
		Stirk house		
		Young cattle house	1	
		Sheep and pig house	1	

Table 14.2
Buildings and their tenants in the Finlaggan study area listed in the 1855 'Valuation of Wood'

Farm	Tenant	Structure	Couples	Notes
		Potato house	2	
		Cottar's house	3	
		Cottar's house	3	
		Cottar's house	3	
Mulreesh	Hugh MacDermid	Dwelling house	3	Window, 2 doors
		Son's house	2	Door, window
		Barn	4	
		Stable	2	
		Byre	2	
		Potato house	2	
Mulreesh	Duncan MacDermid	Room and kitchen	4	Byre dwelling?
		Barn	4	
		Potato house	2	
		Byre	2	
		Stirk house	2	
		Turnip house	4	
		Stable	1	
		Sheep house	1	
		Two cart houses		
		Cottar's house	2	
		Cottar's house	2	
		Cottar's house		
Mulreesh	John Campbell	Room and kitchen	8	Byre dwelling?
		Byre	3	
		Stable	2	
		Barn	4	
		Sheep house	2	
		Cottar's house	2	
		Cottar's house	1	
Kepollsmore	Dugald MacNiven	Room and kitchen	6	Mantlepiece, 3 doors, 3 windows
		Byre	2	
		Barn	2	
		Barn	2	
		Stable	4	
		Sheep house	2	
		Cart house		
Kepollsmore	John Shaw	Room and kitchen	6	Mantlepiece, 3 doors, 2 windows
		Barn	4	
		Stable	4	
		Sheep house	2	
Kepollsmore	Donald MacKay, jr	Room and kitchen	4	Wooden partition, loft etc
		Barn	3	
		Stable	1	
		Byre	2	
		Stirk house	2	
		Sheep house	4	
		Potato house	1	
Kepollsmore	Donald Shaw	Room and kitchen	5	2 doors, 2 windows, mantelpiece
		Barn	4	
		Stable	2	
Kepollsmore	Hugh Fletcher	Room and kitchen	4	Partition, furnishings etc
		Barn	4	
		Byre	3	
		Stable	2	
		Potato house	3	
		Sheep house	3	
Kepollsmore	Donald MacKay	Room and kitchen	3	3 doors, 2 windows, loft
		Barn	2	
		Byre	2	
Kepollsmore	John Smith	Room and kitchen	5	3 doors, 2 windows, joists
		Barn	4	
		Byre	1	
		Stable	2	
		Pig house		
Kepollsmore	Donald Currie	Byre	1	
		Barn	2	

Table 14.2 (*cont.*)
Buildings and their tenants in the Finlaggan study area listed in the 1855 'Valuation of Wood'