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Cox, Richard

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# SCOTTISH GAELIC *SANNDÀ* AND ITS ALIASES

RICHARD A.V. COX  
*Sabhal Mòr Ostaig*



## §1 Introduction

The Scottish Gaelic names *Àbhainn*, *Sannda* and *An Spàin* all denote the small island that lies off the southern tip of Kintyre, within the parish of Southend. The following article looks at the history and etymology of these forms.<sup>1</sup>

## §2 *Avona Porticosa*

Francis Groome's *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland* (1884, 93) describes *Aven* as 'a modern provincial abbreviation of "Avona Porticosa", the ancient name of the island Sanda in Southend parish, Argyllshire.' Of the island's natural harbour, his 1896 edition states that:

[It] was a common station of the Scandinavian fleets during the contests for the possession of Kintyre and The Hebrides. The island, in this connection, was then called Avona Porticosa – a name which it still retains, in the abbreviated form of Avon, among the Highlanders; but it figures, under its more proper name of Sanda, in the more ancient record of Adamnan's Life of Columba.

Francis Groome, *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland*, 1896, 318

Similar descriptions go back to the late 18th century:

SANDA, an island, in the parish of Southend, district of Cantyre, county of Argyll; containing 11 inhabitants. This is a small island, lying near the outer extremity of the peninsula of Cantyre, and measuring about a mile and a half in length and half a mile in breadth; its name is of Scandinavian origin, and signifies 'Sand Island.' It possesses a good natural harbour, although between the island and the main land the sea is extremely turbulent and dangerous, and for two or three months in the year the place cannot be approached by a small boat. Sanda was a common station for the Scandinavian fleets during the contests so long carried on for the possession of Cantyre and the neighbouring islands.

Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Scotland*, 1846: s.n. *Sanda*

<sup>1</sup> A version of this article was presented at the Scottish Place-Name Society's one-day conference at the University of Glasgow on the 7th November 2009.

The island of Sanda, separated from the main land by a channel three miles across, is of irregular form, about four miles in circumference, and being covered with good pasture, serves the purpose of a large sheep-farm. It has passed, at different times, under different names, though its present appellation is considered the most ancient, on the authority of Adomnan, Abbot of Iona, who wrote the life of St. Columba in the year 680. During the visits of the Scandinavians to these coasts, and their attacks upon the district for the possession of Cantyre and the adjacent islands, Sanda, according to the historian Buchanan, was an important station for their fleets; when the Danish fleet assembled here the isle was called Avona Porticosa, and by the natives it is still termed Aven. The sound is much frequented for its anchorage by small vessels sailing up the Frith of Clyde, which has about twelve fathoms of water at three miles from the shore.

Ibid.: s.n. *Southend*

At the time [Sanda] was the rendezvous of the Danish fleet, it was called Avona Porticosa; and is still called Aven by the Highlanders. Sanda, however, is the more ancient name, as appears from the life of St Columba, written by Adomnan, Abbot of Iona, in the year 680.

*New Statistical Account*, 1834–45, Vol. 7: Argyll, Southend, 415

[Sanda's] ancient importance, as the station of the Scandinavian fleets during the contests for the possession of Cantyre and the neighbouring islands, is well known; and the anchorage is still frequented by the smaller classes of vessels which navigate the Clyde.

John Macculloch, *A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1819 II, 440

In former days, this anchorage was of more importance than it is now; Sanda having been a common station for the Scandinavian fleets during the contests so long carried on for the possession of Cantyre and the neighbouring islands. The name Avona and Avon, by which it was known, is a corruption of the Danish Hafn, a haven.

John Macculloch, *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland*, 1824 II, 68–69

*Sunda* island, above a mile and a half in length, and half a mile in breadth, is noted as the place of rendezvous for the Danish fleet, in their descents

on those coasts: hence it was called Avona Porticosa ...

James Playfair, *A Geographical and Statistical Description of Scotland*, 1819 II, 7

Not far from this rock is the island of Sanda, above a mile and a half in length, and half a mile in breadth, famed as the place of rendezvous for the Danish fleet, in their excursions to these coasts. Hence it went under the name of Avona Porticosa, and is still sometimes called Aven. Sanda, however, is the more ancient, as well as the more common name as appears from St Columba's life by Adomnan.

*Statistical Account of Scotland*, 1791–99, Vol. 3: Argyll, Southend, 363

The salient elements within these accounts are that the primary name of the island is *Sanda* §3, meaning 'sand'; the island offers good anchorage or harbourage, which was formerly used by the Scandinavians; the island was previously known as *Avona Porticosa*, or *Avon* (*Aven*) for short. The form *Sanda*, however, is seen as the older name, 'as appears from St Columba's life' (*SAS*); and Macculloch takes the name *Avon* to be from the Danish word 'Hafn, a haven'.

A considerable degree of interdependence is apparent between these descriptions, but all would appear to go back ultimately, although not necessarily directly, to George Buchanan's description of 1582:

A promontorio Cantiera paullo plus mille passus abest Avona, id est, portuosa; id cognomen adepta ab statione navium, quod, cum Dani insulas tenebant, ad eam classes eorum cursus dirigebant.

Robert Fribarn's edition:  
George Buchanan, *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, 1727, 22

'From the Promontory of Kintyre a little over a mile lies Avona, i.e. "well supplied with a harbour"; having got that name from the anchoring of ships, because, when the Danes held the islands, their fleets would set course for it.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Sutton 2009, §32: A promontorio Cantera paulo plus mille passus abest Avona, id est portuosa. Id cognomen adepta ab statione navium, quod cum Dani insulas tenebant ad eam classes eorum cursus dirigebant (<<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/scotlist/1lat.html#I.32>>); 'From the promontory of Cantyre, a little more than a mile, lies Avona, now Sanda, called Portuosa, i.e., fit for a port. It got that name from being a road for ships, for when the Danes possessed those islands their fleets directed their course thither for shelter' (<<http://www.philological.bham.ac.uk/>

Buchanan's *portuosa* is Lat. *portūōsa* f. adj. 'full of harbours, or well supplied with a harbour' and is an attempt at giving the meaning of *Avona*, according to its folk etymology. The *Avona Porticosa* of later descriptions is thus explained as a truncation of Buchanan's 'Avona, id est, portuosa', as was correctly deduced by John MacMaster Campbell (1924, 11) in his essay, 'The Island and House of Sanda'.<sup>3</sup>

Buchanan's own version may be based upon Dean Donald Monro's description of 1549:<sup>4</sup>

Avoyne. Befor the south poynt of the promontory of Kyntyre, lyes be ane myle of sea, ane iyle neire ane myle lange, callit the iyle Avoyne, quhilke iyle is obtained that name fra the armies of Denmark, quhilke armies callit it in their leid Havin, it is inhabit and manurit, and guid for shippis to lay one ankers.

Donald Monro, *Description of the western isles of Scotland, called Hybrides ... 1549, 1774*, 6

'Avoyne. To the extent of one sea mile off the southern promontory of Kintyre lies an island nearly a mile long called the Isle Avoyne, which island obtained that name from Denmark's armies, which armies called it Haven in their language; it is inhabited and fertile and good for ships to lie at anchor.'<sup>5</sup>

scothist/1eng.html#I.32>). Aikman (1827, 43) translates: 'Little more than a mile from the promontory of Cantyre lies Avona, [now Sanda,] that is Portuosa, full of havens, a name affixed on account of its being a naval station; for, when the Danes had possession of these islands, it was the general rendezvous for their fleets.'

<sup>3</sup> A particularly debased form of Buchanan's *Avona Portuosa*, whose development (presumably based upon both a mistranscription and a supposed etymology) defies reconstruction, occurs in an anonymous description of the first half of the 17th century: 'And eastward from Dunawardie two mylls off the land there is ane litle Illand of ane Myll length and half ane myll breadth called Awin, which the Romans did call in the tyme of Julius Cæsar, Porta Eosa Avona. Upon the Landsyde of it, next to Cantyre is a verie good harborie. On the east end of it is the Sheep Illand where there is verie manie Coneys and arrettis. The streame runns so swiftlie that no shippis can remaine near it, except they be within the harborie. In this Illand of Awin there is ane litle Chappell ...' (from 'Ane Description of Certaine Pairts of the Highlands of Scotland' in Mitchell 1907–08 II, 144–92: 187; Mitchell (ibid., xxiii) notes that 'Sibbald says in his Repertory of Manuscripts, p. 22, that this was a communication to Robert Gordon, and Bishop Nicholson says that it was "by a Native"').

<sup>4</sup> This is the view of R.W. Munro (2002, 291).

<sup>5</sup> An almost identical version is printed in MacFarlane's *Geographical Collections*:

Our oldest source, however, is John of Fordun (1384 x 1387, Skene 1871–72 I, xiv).<sup>6</sup> His list, *de insulis Scocie*, includes:

Insula Awyn, ubi cella Sancti Adamnani, ibique pro transgressoribus refugium.

Walter Goodall's 1759 edition [Edinburgh College Library MS]:  
*Joannis de Fordun Scotichronicon* I, lib. ii, cap. x, 45

'The Isle of Awyn, where the chapel of St Adomnán is, and where there is a refuge for transgressors.'

In other MSS, this reads:

Insula Awyne, ubi capella Sancti Anniani, ibique pro transgressoribus refugium.

Thomas Hearne's 1722 edition [Trinity College, Cambridge MS]:  
*Johannis de Fordun Scotichronicon*, lib. ii, cap. x, 81

Insula Aweryne, ubi capella sancti Sannani, ibique pro transgressoribus refugium.<sup>7</sup>

William F. Skene's 1871–72 edition [The Wolfenbüttel MS]:  
*Johannis de Fordun: Chronica Gentis Scotorum* I, lib. ii, cap. x, 43

'Avoyne. Befor the south poynt of the promontory of Kyntyre lyes be ane myle of sea, ane lyle neire ane myle lange callit the lyle of Avoyne quhilke lyle is obteneit that name fra the armies of Denmark, quhilke armies callit it in their leid Havin. It is inhabit and manurit and guid for shippis to lay one ankers.' (Donald Monro, *A Description of the westerne isles of Scotland by Mr. Donald Monro, quho travelled through maney of them in Anno 1549* in Mitchell 1907–08 III, 262–302: 265). From a different MS: 'Before the south poynt of the Promonterie of Kintyre lyes be ane lang myle of sea ane lyle neire ane myle lang callit the lyle of Avoin, quhilke lyle has obteneit that name fra the Armes of Denmark, quhilke Armes are callit in their leid Havoin, inhabite and manurit, gude for schippis to ly on ankeris' (Monro [1549] 2002, 301).

<sup>6</sup> While Buchanan is known to have used John of Fordun as a source for his own history (Innes [1729] 1885, 201–15), this was not the case in his preliminary description of Scotland. Thomas Pennant (1772, 218 and note) summarises both Buchanan and Monro: '*Sanda*, or *Avoyne*, or island of the harbours'.

<sup>7</sup> 'Aweryne (Sanday), where is the chapel of Saint Sannian, and a sanctuary for transgressors' (Skene 1871–72 II, 39; Skene writes *Averyne* in his notes (p. 386)). Skene gives a footnote to two other MS readings (including Trinity College's) of the saint's name, but not of the place-name (ibid I, 43). In his (later) edition of *Vita Columbae*, however, Skene (1874, cxlviii) quotes Goodall's 1759 edition: 'Insula

Of equal importance is the title of a c.1644–51 description of the island (see Appendix), which contains our earliest genuinely Gaelic form of the name:

Insulae Sandae seu Avoniae, Hibernice Abhuinn, Brevis Descriptio. R. P. fratris Edmundi mac Cana  
 ‘A short description of the Island of Sanda, or Avon, in Irish Abhuinn, by the Reverend Father, Brother Edmund MacCana’

The latest of our early forms are Robert Gordon c.1636–52 (map of Kintyre: *Cantyre*) *Yl. Avon or Sanda* and Blaeu 1654 (surveyed by Timothy Pont between 1583–96) *Avon or Sanda*.<sup>8</sup> In addition to his map’s *Avon*, Blaeu’s texts give latinised *Avona* and *Avena*.<sup>9</sup> For the modern form and etymology of this name, see §5.

Awyn ...’, as above. The editors of *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (II, 9) translate ‘Isle Awyn’, also following Goodall’s edition.

<sup>8</sup> The editors of *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (I, 9) state that Timothy Pont gives ‘Yl Avon or Sanda’; however, although *Yl* occurs frequently in island names given by Pont, this is not the case in this instance on the map that I have had access to: Stone 1991, Plate 19, and NLS <<http://www.nls.uk/maps/atlas/blaeu/page.cfm?id=81>>. Martin Martin (1703, 228) gives ‘The Isle *Avon*’. KAS (1938, 5) gives forms cited in *Origines Parochialis Scotiae*: ‘Aven, Avon, Avona Porticosa’, adding, ‘Old Name for Sanda’.

<sup>9</sup> Blaeu’s description (f. 119) of Sanda is taken directly from George Buchanan: ‘A promontorio Cantera paulo plus mille passus abest *Avona*, id est, portuosa: id cognomen adepta ab statione navium: quod cum Dani insulas tenebant, ad eam classes eorum cursus dirigebant’, although he adds in italics, ‘*Avonam vide in tabula Kantera*’ (NLS: <[http://www.nls.uk:8080/StyleServer/calcrn?cat=Maps&item=/00000478.sid&style=maps.xml&wid=700&hei=500&browser=win\\_ie&plugin=false](http://www.nls.uk:8080/StyleServer/calcrn?cat=Maps&item=/00000478.sid&style=maps.xml&wid=700&hei=500&browser=win_ie&plugin=false)>), which Ian Cunningham translates as, ‘A little more than a mile from the promontory of Kintyre is Sanda Island, that is with a harbour; the name is taken from an anchorage for ships; because when the Danes held the islands, their fleets directed their course to it. See *Avon on the map of Kintyre*.’ (NLS: <<http://www.nls.uk/maps/atlas/blaeu/page.cfm?id=974>>). Also in Blaeu’s atlas, the form *Avena* (f. 9v; not *Avenna* as in Gammeltoft 2006, 77) occurs in Andreae Melvini Scotiae Topographia, Andrew Melville’s ‘Topography of Scotland’, a long poem to Prince Henry Frederick, at this point evidently based upon Buchanan’s own text: ‘A promontorio Canteira abscessit Avena / Passus mille, sua naves statione receptans; // Dirigeret cum cursum ad eam olim Danica classis.’ (NLS: <<http://www.nls.uk/maps/atlas/blaeu/BlaeuAtlas-LatinText.pdf>>), which Cunningham translates as ‘A mile distant from the promontory of Kintyre is Sanda, receiving ships in its anchorage, since once the Danish fleet directed its course to it.’ (NLS: <<http://www.nls.uk/maps/atlas/blaeu/page.cfm?seq=12>>). *Avona* and its variants are omitted from later maps.

### §3 SANNDA

The island is known as *Sandey* in Hákon Hákonsson’s Saga, written shortly after King Hákon’s death in 1263:<sup>10</sup>

Eftir þat sigldi Hakon konungr vndan Melansej ok laa vm nottina vndir Hersey ok þadan vndir Sandey ok sua til Satirismula ok kom vm naattina norðr vndir Gudey. þadan sigldi hann vt i JIarsund ok laa þar .ij. nætr.

Vigfusson and Unger’s edition:  
 ‘Hákonar Saga hins gamla’, *Flateyjarbok* III, 227, §281<sup>11</sup>

‘After that King Hakon sailed away from Holy Island, Lamlash, and lay during the night off Arran and then off Sanda and so to the Mull of Kintyre and came during the night northwards off Gigha; then he sailed out into the Sound of Islay and lay there two nights.’<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, in Magnus Barefoot’s Saga, in *Heimskringla*, written c.1230 of events about the turn of the 11th century (1093–1103):

Vítt bar snjallr á slétta  
 Sandey konungr randir

Linder and Haggson’s edition:  
 ‘Saga Magnús konungs berfoetts’, *Heimskringla*, §10<sup>13</sup>

Vitt bar sniallr a sletta Sandey konvngr rander

Finnur Jónsson’s edition:  
 [Magnus Barefoot’s Saga], *Eirspennill*, Chap. 7, 118<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> In 1264–65 by Sturla Þórðarson (Pulsiano and Wolf 1993, 259).

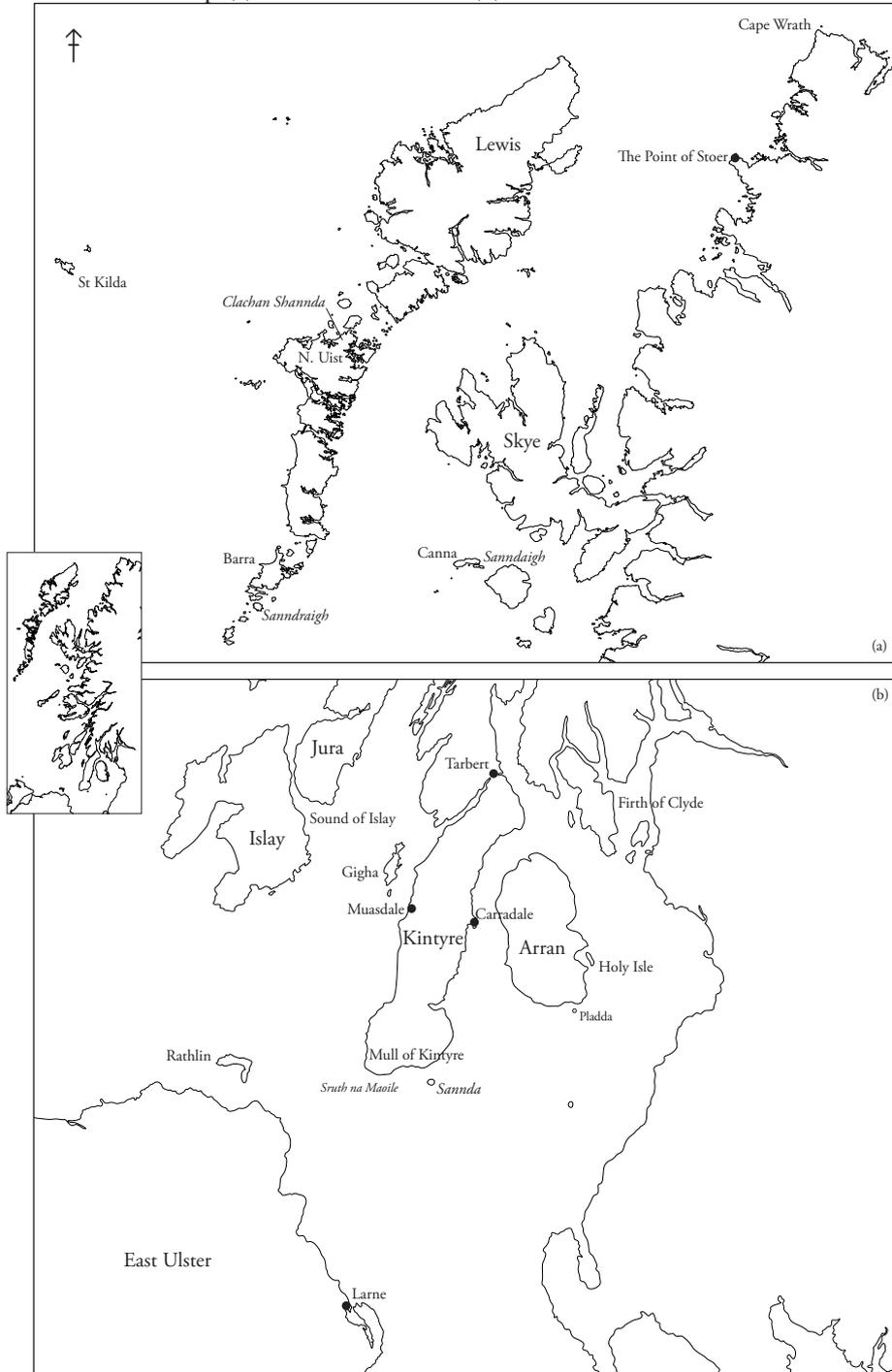
<sup>11</sup> The reference HSH.326 *Sandey* in Gammeltoft 2006, 67, 77 is expanded in error as in the *Eirspennill* redaction.

<sup>12</sup> Bremner 1923, 251 (after Dasent [1894] 1997 II, chap. 326, p. 362): ‘After that king Hacon sailed away from Malas-isle (Lamlash), and lay for a night under Arran, and thence under Sandisle, and so to the Mull of Cantire, and came in the night north under Gudey. And thence he sailed out into the Islay-sound, and lay there two nights.’ Munch (1859, 446) translates into Norwegian: ‘Derefter seilede Kong Haakon fra Melasø og laa om Natten under Herø; derfra seilede han under Sandø og forbi Santíresmulen og kom om Natten nord til Gudø. Derfra seilede han til Ilarsund, hvor han laa i to Nætter ...’

<sup>13</sup> An older version occurs in *Morkinskinna*, 317 §132: ‘Vitt ber snar asletta / Sandey konvngr randir’.

<sup>14</sup> The reference MSB.9 *Sandey* is given in error in Gammeltoft 2006, 77.

Map (a) The Northern and (b) the Southern Hebrides



‘The valiant king bore far the shields upon the plain of Sandey’<sup>15</sup>

Campbell (1924, 11) notes – without expansion – that ‘[t]he island is on occasion written of as Sanderey’,<sup>16</sup> taking it to be an ‘elaboration of the shorter name’ and echoing Paterson and Renwick’s (1900, 203) ‘Another name for Sanda is Sanderey, which may mean Sand eyr ey, Sand beach island ...’ However, these assertions appear to be the result of confusion with a superficially similar name or names in the Outer Hebrides: Captain Thomas (1880, 365) states that ‘[i]n 1202 Olaf was in Sanday (*Sandarey*, Barra; or Sand (*Sandar*), North Uist).’<sup>17</sup> Thomas’s reference is to *Hrafn’s Saga*.<sup>18</sup>

Þessu næst kómu þeir skipi sínu í góða höfn við ey þá, er Sandey heitir, ok þar reistu kaupmenn hafnarmark. Svá segir Grímr:

Hér hefir beitt at brattri  
Bótólfr skipi fljótu,  
áðr fell sær um súðir,  
Sandeyju, skæ branda.

Reisti sjálfr, ok sýsti,  
snarr félagi harra  
hafnarmark, fyrir hrefnis  
happsverk gota sterkan.

Þeir lágu við Suðreyjar í góðu lægi nokkurar nær. Þá réð fyrir Suðreyjum Óláfr konungr.

‘*Hrafn’s Saga*’ (Helgadóttir 1987, 21–22)

<sup>15</sup> *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis*, 1847, 348: ‘The valiant king bore far and wide / The shields upon the plain / Isle of Sandey.’

<sup>16</sup> So KAS 1938, 29.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas’s view is repeated in the form of a letter published posthumously by Vigfussen in his *Icelandic Sagas* (1887, xxxvii note 1) and cited verbatim in Tjomsland 1951, 59–60. (Vigfussen (*ibid.*, xxxviii) refers to Thomas’s 1880 article as ‘Proc. Antiq. Scot. Vol. XI’, in error for ‘... XIV’.)

<sup>18</sup> Specifically to Vigfussen’s edition of *Hrafn’s Saga* (1878 II, 292, Chap. 11): ‘Þessu næst kómu þeir í góða höfn við ey þá er Sandey heitir, ok þar reistu kaupmenn hafnar-mark. Svá sagði Grímr: ¶ Hér hefir beitt at brattri Bótólfr skipi fljótu / (áðr fell sær um súðir) Sandeyju skæ branda: / Reisti sjálfr, ok sýsti, snarr félagi harra, hafnar-mark fyrir hrefnis, happs-verk, gota sterkan. ¶ Þeir lágu við Suðreyjar í akkeris lægi nokkurar nær. Þá réð fyrir Suðreyjum Óláfr konungr.’

‘After that they came into a good harbor on an island called Sandey, and there the merchants raised a harbor mark.

‘Grím said:

Here Bótólf has brought the swift ship to the steep Sandey  
After the strong waves powerfully washed the sides of the ship.  
The brave companion of kings himself raised the harbor mark  
And performed a good deed for the strong ship.

‘They lay at anchor off the Sudreys for some nights. King Ólaf ruled the Sudreys at this time.’

(Tjomsland 1951, 28–29)<sup>19</sup>

Apart, however, from Olaf’s connection with Lewis – which, in Thomas’s view (loc. cit.) ‘probably included the whole Long Island or Outer Hebrides’ – there is no reason to associate Hrafn’s Saga’s *Sandey* with either the Barra or Uist name. Thomas’s *Sandarey* is ScG *Sanndraigh*, an island lying between Vatersay and Pabbay, south of Barra. His North Uist *Sandar* is a speculative plural (Norse) form, i.e. ‘[the] sands’: the name survives in Eng. *Clachan Sands* (NF873765), OS1882 *Clachan Sanda*, and ScG *Clachan Shannda*, which Iain Mac an Tàilleir (Mac an Tàilleir, s.n. Clachan Sands) translates as ‘“The churchyard of Sanda”, which is “sand river”, from Norse’. However, besides there being no river at the location, ScG [‘sāũndə’]<sup>20</sup> is genitive of \**Sannd*, from ON *Sand* acc. [‘the] sand’. Certainly, ScG *Sanndraigh* is not derived from ON *Sand-ey* ‘sand-isle’, which consists of the stem form of *sandr* m. ‘sand’ and *ey* f. ‘island’, and which yields ScG *Sanndaigh* off Canna in the Small Isles and *Sannda* off Kintyre (see below).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> A translation of the prose element is also found in Anderson 1922 II, 359: ‘Next, they came into good harbourage, beside an island that is called Sand-ey. And there the merchants raised a harbour mark ... They lay beside the Hebrides, at anchor, for some nights. King Olaf ruled then over the Hebrides.’

<sup>20</sup> Lenited in the context of ScG *Clachan Shannda* [‘k<sup>h</sup>laxan ‘hāũndə] (Eairdsidh MacGilleathain, Solas); as opposed to a ScG \*['sāũnda], for ON *Sand-á* ‘sand-river’. Cleasby and Vigfusson (1874 s.v.) note the frequent use of Icelandic *sandr* (sg) and *sandar* (pl.), as well as compound forms, in local place-names in Iceland. On the west of North Uist, unrelated OS 1881 *Sandary* (NF7367) is a shieling name in ON *-argi* nt.; so also *Horisary* and *Loch Dusary*, to the west of *Sandary*.

<sup>21</sup> The ScG reflex of ON *-ey* ‘island’ in island names in the southern Inner Hebrides is usually *-a* [-a]. ScG *Sanndraigh* (Blau 1654 *Sandrerá*, Monro [1549] 1774, 30

Hrafn’s Saga’s *Sandey*, then, is likely to refer to one of these two islands: *Sanndaigh* Canna or *Sannda* Kintyre. Alan Anderson tentatively suggests *Sanndaigh* (1922 II, 787).<sup>22</sup> Guðrún Helgadóttir (1987, 76) goes further, supporting the identification by noting the suitability of the island as a place of residence for a Highland chieftain (whom Hrafn and his company call upon).<sup>23</sup> However, a similar, perhaps better, case could be made on this basis in conjunction with Kintyre’s *Sannda*. Nor is the saga evidence incontrovertible. At the start of their summer journey from Iceland to Norway, Hrafn and his companions spend a long time at sea, before getting a favourable wind. Eventually, they are driven southwards until they come across birds from Ireland and are finally carried to Scotland, where they lie *fyrir Stauri* ‘off [the] Staurr’.<sup>24</sup> A southerly gale drives them in a sea so strong it is like nothing experienced even *undan Hvarfinu á Skotlandi* ‘off Cape Wrath in Scotland’. They avoid shipwreck via miraculous intervention and proceed through the Hebrides, Hrafn acting as pilot, until they arrive at *Sandey*. The same voyage is recounted, although in far less detail, in Bishop Gudmund’s Saga (Vigfussen

*Sanderay*, [1549] 2002, 324 idem) is probably from ON *Sand-eyrarey* ‘[the] island of the sand-(gravel)bank’, with gen. sg. of *eyrr* f. ‘(gravel)bank’, which is suitable topographically.

<sup>22</sup> Anne Tjomsland (1951, 59–60) supports Captain Thomas in placing *Sandey* in the Outer Hebrides (cf. note 17, above).

<sup>23</sup> Power 2005, 12, and Jesch, forthcoming, also identify *Sandey* with *Sanndaigh* Canna.

<sup>24</sup> Which is taken to be The Point of Stoer in Assynt (Anderson loc. cit.; Tjomsland 1951, 26), although other features may have borne such a Norse name. John MacKay (1890, 121) derives Stoer from either Gaelic or Old Norse. Scots/Eng. Stoer is in fact from ScG *Stòr*, which in turn is a loan-name from ON *Staur*(in) acc. m. ‘(the) stake’ (cf. Watson 1906, 367–68; Henderson 1910, 351), in reference to the rock stack, Scots/Eng. The Old Man of Stoer; cf. a similar rock formation in Skye, ScG *Bod Stòir* ‘the penis of Stòir’, which has been sanitised as ScG *Bodach Stòir*, now *Bodach an Stòir* under the influence of Scots/Eng. The Old Man of Storr (Dwelly, s.n. Storr, Old Man of: ‘Bod Stòir [source: W.J. Watson] (euphemistically Bodach Stòir)’; note also Marwick 1923, 261: ‘Professor Watson informs me that the Old Man of Storr in Skye is a mere euphemism; the real name is Bod Storr—the phallus of Storr’). The Assynt ScG name has now acquired the article – An Stòr (Mac an Tàilleir, s.n. Stoer) – presumably under the influence of Scots/Eng. The Old Man of Stoer, which is rendered *Bodach an Stòir* in Gaelic, so also *Rubha an Stòir* for *Rubha Stòir* (cf. <[http://www.ambaile.org.uk/gd/item/item\\_writtenword.jsp?item\\_id=43320](http://www.ambaile.org.uk/gd/item/item_writtenword.jsp?item_id=43320)>: *Bodach an Stòir*, *Rubha an Stòir*). The difference between ScG *stòrr* (Skye) and ScG *stòr* (Assynt), if orthographic forms represent an (historical) difference in pronunciation, arises as follows: ON *staurr* nom. yields ScG *stòrr*; ON *staur* acc. yields ScG *stòr* (cf. ScG *sgòd* < ON *skaut* nt. (Cox 2002, 297)). Formally, gen. sg. of ScG *stòrr* is *stòir*, although this falls together in sound with *stòrr* through assimilation of non-palatalised and palatalised unlenited rr, hence written forms in (gen. sg.) *stòrr*; the gen. sg. of ScG *stòr* is *stòir*; furthermore, ScG written forms may be confused with Scot/Eng. forms in *storr*.

1905, 613): a north-westerly wind drives the company southwards to *Hirtir* (St Kilda), after which they continue south by Ireland, sailing south of Ireland until they come up against stormy weather. Having made appropriate vows, the storm abates and they are able to sail directly to Norway. From the detail of these two accounts, it would appear that neither *Sanndaigh* Canna nor *Sannda* Kintyre can be ruled out entirely.

Kintyre's *Sannda* appears in Latin in texts at the beginning and end of the 17th century: in *Retours*, (Argyll 21) 1619 *20 solidatis terrarum insulae de Sanda* and (Argyll 93) 1695 *20 solidatas terrarum insulae de Sanda*; and in a number of documents relating to the Franciscan mission to Scotland in the early part of the century: in Edmund MacCana's description of the island (see Appendix) c.1644–51 (gen.) *Insula Sanda*, (nom.) *Insula Sanda*, *Sanda*; in a letter from Patrick Hegarty to Hugh de Burgo (Giblin 1964, 33) 1624 *in Sandam insulam*; in a report by Cornelius Ward (ibid., 50) 1625, or soon after, *in Sandam insulam*; and in a report by Cornelius Ward (ibid., 149) post 1631 *Sanda insula*.

In addition to Blaeu 1654 and Gordon c.1636–52 (see above), map forms include Moll 1745 *Sanda I.*, Roy 1747–55 *Sanda I<sup>d</sup>*, van Keulen c.1780 *Sana I.*, Thomson 1820 *Island of Sanda* and OS 1869 *Sanda Island*.

Scots/Eng. *Sanda*<sup>25</sup> and *Sanda Island*<sup>26</sup> are, of course, from ScG *Sannda*, Kintyre Gaelic /sANda/ (Holmer 1962: 17, recorded 1937/38),<sup>27</sup> a loan-name from ON *Sand-ey* (see above). The Norse name presumably refers to the nature of the north-facing bay, opposite Kintyre, which is sandy.<sup>28</sup> Hamish Haswell-Smith's (2004, 5) suggested derivation from 'ON *sandtange* [leg. *sand-tangi*] "sandspit"' is unlikely from a topographical point of view and is formally impossible from a phonological one.

The notion that the name *Sannda* goes back to Adomnán §2 begins with the first *Statistical Account*. It is unclear, however, since the name in any form is not mentioned in *Vita Columbae*, how the idea developed.<sup>29</sup> Campbell (1924, 10–

<sup>25</sup> E.g. Fraser-MacIntosh 1895, 36: 'The island of Sanda, of old Avon ...'.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. Holmer 1957, 49.

<sup>27</sup> (Lenited) genitive in Murchison 1960, 64: 'chaidh a' cheud "Chlansman" air tìr air eilean Shannda' ('the first *Clansman* went aground on the island of Sannda'). Less appropriately, Skene (1871–72 II, 39) writes *Sanday* and the website <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanda\\_Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanda_Island)> gives Gaelic *Sandaigh* (for the final syllable, see note 21, above). ON *-nd* is treated in Scottish Gaelic as an (originally geminate) unlenited non-palatalised /N/ – a velarised dental nasal – plus stop. The preceding stressed vowel is lengthened (diphthongised) in this environment in most Scottish Gaelic dialects, e.g. *Sanndaig* ['sãũntɪkʲ] (Lewis; Cox 2002 s.n.) (O'Rahilly 1976, 49–52; Ó Baoill 1990, 131; Cox 2000, 213–16), the exceptions being the dialects of Argyllshire, Arran, East Perthshire and parts of Aberdeenshire (Grann 2000, 53–54, 138; *SGDS*, e.g. items 163, 196, 329).

11) surmises that the connection was made through a misidentification with Adomnán's *Sainea*,<sup>30</sup> this seems plausible. Additionally, a conflation of John of Fordun's note on the dedication on the island – *cella Sancti Adamnani* (Goodall 1759 I, 45; Edinburgh College Library MS (which Reeves 1857, 87 quotes)); *capella Sancti Anniani* (Hearne 1722, 81; Trinity College, Cambridge MS)<sup>31</sup> – with the island's name (although it is not (Lat.) *Sanda* but *Awyn*, *Awyne*, respectively, that John mentions) may have aided the misidentification.<sup>32</sup>

#### §4 AN SPÀIN

Campbell (1924, 11) comments that ScG *An Spain* [leg. *An Spàin*, with ScG *spàin* 'spoon'] or Scots/Eng. *The Spoon* 'is known to the people on the south of Arran' – from where the eastern end of *Sannda* resembles the bowl and the western end the handle of an upturned spoon – while Duncan Colville (KAS 1938, 29 and 31) notes that *An Spain* [*sic*] or *Spoon Island* is '[s]aid to be used by mariners for Sanda Island', for 'Sanda resembles a spoon when seen from Pladda or Ireland' (p. 31).<sup>33</sup> Whether the Gaelic or English form here came first is perhaps open to question.

#### §5 ÀBHAINN

While *Avona Porticosa* §2 is a ghost name,<sup>34</sup> Buchanan's *Avona* is a latinised form of MacCana's c.1644–51 *Abhuinn* (MS *Abhuin*, see Appendix), modern

<sup>28</sup> Martin 2009, 31: 'It ought to be Old Scandinavian *Sandey*, sandy island, but it is hard to see why such a name would be bestowed on a rocky island, unless it could relate to the sandy seabed at the approaches to the harbour on the north side of the island.' For an aerial view, see Google Earth (<<http://earth.google.co.uk/>>): Sanda, UK.

<sup>29</sup> At any rate, the island is probably unlikely to have borne a Norse name during the seventh century.

<sup>30</sup> Which has otherwise not been identified with certainty. Anderson and Anderson (1991, lxxiv) suggest possibly Colonsay; Dr Reeves and Wentworth Huyshe suggest Shuna (cited in Campbell loc. cit.).

<sup>31</sup> *capella sancti Sanniani* (Skene 1871–72 I, 43; Wolfenbüttel MS).

<sup>32</sup> Skene (1871–72 II, 386) concludes the dedication is to Senchan; the editors of *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (II, 9 and note 12) to Ninian. Edmund MacCana (c.1644–51) is clear that the chapel was dedicated to St Ninnian and that the sons of a most holy man, Senchan, were buried there (see Appendix).

<sup>33</sup> Pladda lies just off the south-east coast of Arran. (There is no connection between the name *An Spàin* and Uri Geller, famous for his spoon bending, who early in 2009 bought The Lamb, an uninhabited lump of volcanic rock in the Firth of Forth (<[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/edinburgh\\_and\\_east/7883836.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/edinburgh_and_east/7883836.stm)> – accessed 28/10/09).)

<sup>34</sup> Parallel to the term GHOST WORD – a word that has entered the language through the perpetuation, in dictionaries etc., of an error (*Collins*) – the term GHOST NAME refers to a name that has entered the nomenclature through the perpetuation, in written or oral sources, of an error.

ScG *Àbhainn* (e.g. Dwelly, s.n. *Sanda Id.*); cf. Kintyre Gaelic *dol do dh'Àbhuinn* 'going to Sanda' (Henderson 1910, 180)<sup>35</sup> and Arran Gaelic *tha tigh solus ann an Àbhuinn /ha: tɛj soʔəs an ə nɛ:vin/*<sup>36</sup> 'there is a lighthouse on Sanda Island' (Holmer 1957, 49), the pronunciation of which is reflected in W.J. Watson's orthographic representations (1926, 91) of Arran Gaelic, viz *Èibhinn* and *Eubhainn*.<sup>37</sup>

Without offering any grounds, Watson (1926, 91) states that '[t]he pre-Norse name of Sanda is preserved in Gaelic still as *Àbhainn*'. As for *Àbhainn* being pre-Norse, nothing places it for certain earlier than John of Fordun (1384 × 1387, §2), although there are no internal (i.e. linguistic) dating criteria that prevent it being older. Watson does not state explicitly whether he thought *Àbhainn* was Gaelic in origin or not.

#### §6 ADOMNÁN'S *OMMON*

Skene's (1874, 328) tentative suggestion<sup>38</sup> that John of Fordun's *Awyn* (supposing an original Old Gaelic lenited *-b-* *-[β]-*) is connected with Adomnán's *Ommon* (with geminate *-mm-*) (Reeves 1857, lib. i, cap. 36, p. 70; Skene 1874, lib. i, cap. 29, p. 136) is disposed of correctly by Watson (1926, 91) on phonological grounds.<sup>39</sup>

#### §7 EG *ABHUINN*, ScG *ABHAINN* 'RIVER'

It has been suggested that *Àbhainn* is simply ScG *abhainn* f. 'river'.<sup>40</sup> Campbell (1924, 11: *Abhuinn [sic]*) implies that this was a local folk etymology for the name: 'the explanation rendered is the geographic fact that, as it is expressed by Dean Monro' [rather by the anonymous author of 'Ane Description of Certain Pairts of the Highlands of Scotland' (note 3, above)], '[t]he streame runns so swiftlie that no shipps can remaine near it, except they be within the harborie' (Mitchell 1907–08 II, 187). The derivation is ruled out topographically,

<sup>35</sup> KAS (1938, 16 and 29) gives *Eilean Abhainn*, noting (p. 2) that 'grave and acute accents in a number of Gaelic words are omitted in printing' – in fact, lengthmarks appear to have been omitted from the printing process entirely in this publication.

<sup>36</sup> In which *solus (solas)* fails to show genitive inflexion.

<sup>37</sup> Mac an Tàilleir (2003, 103) writes 'Àbhainn or Eabhainn [leg. Èabhainn]'. Martin (2009, 8) quotes Watson's forms without lengthmarks. The latter name form is similarly misspelt Eabhainn on the Tìr Chaluim Chille (2003) map.

<sup>38</sup> A suggestion quoted by Fowler (1894, 47 note 4) in his edition of Columba's life.

<sup>39</sup> *Ommon* remains unidentified (Sharpe 1995, 298 note 160; Anderson and Anderson 1991, lxxv).

<sup>40</sup> E.g. Haswell-Smith (2004, 5); further, '[the name] could also be a reference to the Scottish Gaelic "abhainn" which means a river' (<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanda\\_Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanda_Island)>).

however, because (a) there are no rivers on the island and (b) because the Gaelic term for the stream (i.e. race or current) of the description is *sruth*<sup>41</sup> – off the Mull of Kintyre, specifically *Sruth na Maoile*.<sup>42</sup> Formally, the derivation would also be ruled out phonologically because of the mismatch between the long stressed vowel of the place-name, on the one hand, and the short vowel of the appellative, on the other, but see the discussion on vowel length below §10.

#### §8 ScG *AMHAINN* 'OVEN'

Haswell-Smith (2004, 8) notes that '[t]he central valley [in the island] traps the heat as it is sheltered from all the prevailing winds.' The valley is now

<sup>41</sup> Although this has not prevented the supposed lexical sense of the name of the island being extended to 'current' in the case of '*Abhuinn* (le courant)' (<[http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanda\\_\(%C3%89cosse\)](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanda_(%C3%89cosse))>).

<sup>42</sup> Literally 'the stream of *A' Mhaol* ('the mull')' (cf. *The Sea of Moyle*). Specifically between Kintyre and Sanda, this is 'Tiompanach, The. The name given to the swift current in the Sound of Sanda' (KAS 1938, 32), ScG *An Tiompanach* (Dòmhnall Iain MacAonghais, Scarp: 'an sruth aig ceann an iar an eilein' ('the current at the western end of the island', pers. comm.)). *Tiompan* is used occasionally of hills, e.g. *Tiompan* ['tʰiʰũmpʰan] of a headland or bluff (Lewis; Cox 2002, 381), *Maoil an Tiompain* (Loch Broom; Watson 1976, 247), *Knocktimpen* (Dumfries and Galloway; Watson 1924, 144), *Màm an tiompain* (Gillies 1906, 218) and possibly *Trumpan* (Skye; Forbes 1923, 435), and derives, via OG *timpán* 'timbrel, drum; some kind of stringed instrument', from Lat. *tympanum* (*DIL*). John Purser (pers. comm.) assures me that *tiompan* refers historically only to a stringed instrument in Scottish Gaelic tradition (see also Purser 2007, 35). In place-names, however, the sense of hill may have arisen via biblical usage: while the Old Testament was translated into Gaelic – published between 1783–1801 – from Hebrew (which uses Hebrew *toph* 'timbrel, tambourine'), Gaelic *tiompan* acc. sg. (Job 21:12; Psalms 81:2), *tiompan* dat. sg. (Psalms 149:3, 150:4) and *tiompanaibh* dat. pl. (Exodus 15:20, Judges 11.34, 2 Samuel 6:5, 1 Chron 13:8) are used consistently for the Latin Vulgate's *tympanum* acc. sg. (Job 21:12; Psalms 81:2), *tympano* dat. sg. (Psalms 149:3, 150:4) and *tympanis* dat. pl. (Exodus 15:20, Judges 11.34, 2 Samuel 6:5, 1 Chron 13:8), all of which are rendered *timbrel* in the King James Version. Cormac's 10th-century definition, or rather etymology, of *timpán* reads, 'Timpán .i. tim (.i. boc [added from another MS]) .i. sail 7 bán .i. umæ bis inti. Uel quasi simpán a simphonia .i. òn bindius.' (Meyer 1994, 109 §1258) ('*Timpán*, i.e. pliant (i.e. soft), i.e. [?like] willow + [?]bright, i.e. it is made of copper. Or like *simpán* from *simphonia*, i.e. from the sweetness of sound.'). Whether \**An Tiompanach* (<*tiompan* + suffix of place (Cox 2002, 60)) is a transferred name and once referred to a headland or nearby hill is unknown; alternatively, it may have referred to eddies or whirlpools in the current, in the same way that ScG *coire* 'cauldron' has been used in a similar sense elsewhere, e.g. *Coire Bhreacain* (Cox 1998, 26–28). For the semantic extension of *tiompan*, cf. *Eolas an Spealaidh / Cum bogha air do chorp / 'S cum a mach do thiumpan. / Tiumpan = the posterior = Deireadh*. ['Scythe lore: keep your body bowed (arched) and stick your bottom out. Tiumpan = posterior = rear.'] (Alexander Carmichael's fieldwork notes (Stübbhart 2009, 142)).

called *Lag nan Gàidheal* ‘the hollow of the Gaels’ (OS1869 *Lag nan Gael*; KAS 24, idem), but we might speculate that it was once called ‘the oven’. It is not known what the Southend Gaelic form of the Gaelic word for ‘oven’ was, but were it anything like Jura Gaelic *òbhan* [ˈo:vəɲ] (with a non-nasal stressed vowel (George Jones, pers. comm.)), as opposed to, for example, Lewis Gaelic *àmhainn* [ˈã:VINˠ]), it might conceivably have developed into *Àbhainn*. However, such a name would be relatively recent and would be more likely to occur along with its article. For these reasons, ScG *àmhainn*, or similar, may be excluded from further consideration.

#### §9 ON *HÓFR* ‘HOOF’ OR ON *HÁFR* ‘BAG-NET’

*Àbhainn* might derive from an Old Norse form with a suffixed article, e.g. ON *Hófrinn* acc. ‘the hoof’, with *hófr* m.,<sup>43</sup> or ON *Háfinn* acc. ‘the bag-net’, with *háfr* m.,<sup>44</sup> either of which might have been applied, on account of its shape, to the central valley, or perhaps even the bay itself. With loss of initial *h-*, and with or without *o - a* alternation, either form might yield *Àbhainn*.

#### §10 ON *HQFN*

Monro implicitly and Macculloch explicitly, however, take the name to be from ‘Danish *havin/hafn*’ (i.e. ON *hofn*) ‘haven, harbour’.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, one of the most significant physical features concerning the island is the bay, which offers protection from both south-westerlies and strong tidal currents (*Sruth na Maoile* §7, and *An Tiompanach* note 42), affording safe anchorage and a beach where boats can be dragged clear of the water. ON *hofn* f. ‘haven’ is, therefore, a natural candidate for a derivation of *Àbhainn*.<sup>46</sup> ON *hofn* occurs in several place-names in the Hebrides, e.g. *Tamnabhagh* (Lewis), *Tamhnaraigh* (Lewis and the Summer Isles), *Na Hamhn* (Eriskay and Mull) and *Port na h-Àbhainn(e)* (earlier *Port na h-Abhann*; Islay) (Cox 2008). As in *Port na h-Àbhainn(e)*, though, we should expect a short stressed vowel here, which would nominally rule out *hofn*’s candidacy.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Mod. Norwegian *Hoven* and *Hestehoven* (Møre og Romsdal; id. 269358 and 261897, respectively) (<<http://www.edd.uio.no/perl/search/search.cgi>>).

<sup>44</sup> A word borrowed into Scottish Gaelic (Oftedal 1956, 106).

<sup>45</sup> So KAS (1938, 19): ‘Havin. Name given to Sanda by the Scandinavians.’

<sup>46</sup> In spite of the evidence from John of Fordun to Groome §2, there is no justification for saying that ‘The Norse sometimes referred to Sanda as ‘Havn’ because it provided a reasonable offshore haven or harbour for boats’ (Haswell-Smith 2003, 3).

<sup>47</sup> The diphthongisation in *Tamhnaraigh* and *Na Hamhn* is due to the vocalisation of the Early Gaelic nasal fricative *mh* [β̥] < ON *f* [β] (ibid., 54–55).

Lengthening of short stressed vowels, however, has been recorded in the Gaelic dialect of Kintyre. Neil MacDougall of Carradale was recorded by Derick Thomson in 1951 for the Linguistic Survey of Scotland (for whose Gaelic results, see the *Survey of the Gaelic Dialects of Scotland* (SGDS)). The resulting tapes were transcribed by Anthony Dilworth – point 36 throughout – who marks a degree of lengthening in some originally (and, elsewhere, normally) short stressed vowels: half-long, with several examples before *-r*, in *arbhar* (SGDS item 54), *bradan* (120), *carbad* (153), *farsuing* (399) and *marbh* (602); long in *fasdaidh* (400); but short in *aran* (53) and short before the nasal labio-dental fricative in *amharc* (36<sup>48</sup>) and *sgamhan* (758). Due to a misunderstanding – as Cathair Ó Dochartaigh, SGDS editor, explains (ibid. I, 85) – MacDougall was also interviewed using the Survey’s questionnaire by Fred MacAulay in 1954. Ó Dochartaigh remarks that there are a number of ‘striking differences’ between Dilworth’s and MacAulay’s transcriptions. Some of these, he continues, ‘may be due to the quality of the tape recording used for point 36 [which was rather poor], others to the fact that [Dilworth] had been working on dialects of the north-centre mainland and was not familiar with Kintyre Gaelic.’ For all of the above items (although *fasdaidh* was not recorded), MacAulay – point 37 throughout – gives short vowels.

Anthony Dilworth, however, also transcribed tapes for the Survey – point 38 throughout – of John Taylor of Muasdale, recorded by Derick Thomson that same year. Of the nine items above, four show greater lengthening in Muasdale, one greater lengthening in Carradale (point 36) (Fig. 1).

Stressed-vowel lengthening in Carradale and Muasdale, Kintyre, in SGDS data Fig. 1

SGDS item	Stressed-vowel quantity in Carradale (pt 36) and Muasdale (pt 38)					
	short		half-long		long	
2 <i>abhainn</i>			36	38		
36 <i>amharc</i>	36	38		38		
53 <i>aran</i>	36			38		
54 <i>arbhar</i>			36	38		
120 <i>bradan</i>		38	36			
153 <i>carbad</i>			36			38
399 <i>farsuing</i>			36	38		
400 <i>fasdaidh</i>					36	38
602 <i>marbh</i>			36			38
758 <i>sgamhan</i>	36			38		

<sup>48</sup> Point 36 has a bilabial rather than a labio-dental fricative.

The same phenomenon is recorded in the *Linguistic Atlas of the Survey of Irish Dialects (LASID)*, for which Colm Ó Baoill undertook fieldwork in 1961; indeed, the following examples of lengthening of short stressed vowels (Fig. 2) derive from his interview with the same Neil MacDougall that had been interviewed for *SGDS* in 1951 and 1954. The list is not intended to be exhaustive but illustrative of the fact that there is a tendency to lengthening, at least with this speaker.

Stressed-vowel lengthening in Carradale, Kintyre, in *LASID* data Fig. 2

<i>LASID</i> item	Stressed-vowel quantity in <i>LASID</i> IV, 212–17		
	short	half-long	long
1 <i>tarbh</i>	Carradale	Carradale	
2 <i>reic</i>			Carradale
2, 3 <i>crodh</i>	Carradale	Carradale	
22 <i>bainne</i>			Carradale
28 <i>tabhann</i>		Carradale	
30 <i>mart</i>		Carradale	Carradale
30 <i>agad</i>			Carradale
39 <i>feasgar</i>			Carradale
42 <i>cartadh</i>		Carradale	
44 <i>uisge</i>		Carradale	Carradale
125 <i>gairm</i>			Carradale
138 <i>coileach</i>			Carradale
139 <i>briste</i>			Carradale
178 <i>marcachd</i>			Carradale
205, 206, 208 <i>cat</i>		Carradale	Carradale
209 <i>craiceann</i>			Carradale
212 <i>losgadh</i>			Carradale
220 <i>a-nis</i>			Carradale
239 <i>boireannach</i>		Carradale	
242 <i>cleachdte</i>			Carradale
246, 248 <i>teanga</i>		Carradale	
265 <i>deasachadh</i>			Carradale
339 <i>litir</i>			Carradale
340 <i>goirid</i>			Carradale

The same phenomenon occurs with Ó Baoill's informant from Muasdale, Neil Thomson (Fig. 3).<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Some similar traits are found in the responses of Neil Thomson's cousin, George Thomson, also interviewed by Colm Ó Baoill for the Linguistic Survey, e.g. short and half-long 558, 559, 560 *seachad*; half-long 544 *cidsin*; half-long and long 576, 577, 578 *losgadh*; long 576 *ochd*.

Stressed-vowel lengthening in Muasdale, Kintyre, in *LASID* data Fig. 3

<i>LASID</i> item	Stressed-vowel quantity in <i>LASID</i> IV, 212–17		
	short	half-long	long
608, 609, 629 <i>achadh</i>		Muasdale	Muasdale
645 <i>coisich</i>		Muasdale	
620, 655, 663 <i>coirc</i>		Muasdale	Muasdale
656 <i>seagal</i>		Muasdale	
701 <i>marbh</i>		Muasdale	
710, 934 <i>math</i>	Muasdale		Muasdale
710 <i>obair</i>		Muasdale	
718 <i>tarann</i>		Muasdale	
732, 733, 734, 1013 <i>dhachaigh</i>	Muasdale	Muasdale	Muasdale
742 <i>agam</i>		Muasdale	
750 <i>botal</i>		Muasdale	
751, 752 <i>deoch</i>			Muasdale
757, 773 <i>bochd</i>		Muasdale	Muasdale
791 <i>seirbheis</i>		Muasdale	
847 <i>uisge</i>			Muasdale
858 <i>fasgadh</i>		Muasdale	
866, 867 <i>fliuch</i>		Muasdale	Muasdale
880 <i>marbhadh</i>	Muasdale		
872, 976, 1043 <i>goirid</i>	Muasdale		Muasdale
977 <i>loch</i>			Muasdale

Yet, apparently, no trace of such a phenomenon appears in Nils Holmer's study of Kintyre Gaelic, for which he undertook fieldwork in 1937 (Holmer 1957, vii), which included interviews with both Neil MacDougall (Ca 1) (Holmer 1962, 4), and Neil Thomson (La 12) (*ibid.*, 3) – unless it be in his note 2 on p. 36 (*ibid.*): having discussed the glottal stop between vowels in Kintyre Gaelic, Holmer turns to the question of syllabification and syllable limits, adding, 'Some people even make a short stop before the syllable-ending consonant, as *teine* /tʃe'n'ə/ 'fire' ..., *coileach* /ke'lax/ 'rooster' ..., *gealach* /g'a'tax/ 'moon' ..., *sileadh* /ʃi'ləy/ 'drizzling' ...' (The symbol /' / in Holmer's transcription here signifies a slight narrowing, but not occlusion, of the vocal chords, resulting in 'a reduction in intensity of a preceding vowel' (*ibid.*, 35), rather than a half-long vowel, as it does in this article, in *SGDS* (I, 113) and *LASID* (I, xxiii).) We may speculate that what was a sporadic, weak glottal stop after stressed vowels in the more southerly dialect of Kintyre developed during the middle of the 20th century into (sporadic) lengthening of the stressed vowel. From the evidence above, it appears that the development could occur in open syllables (*crodh*, *math*), before voiceless (*cat*, *litir*) and voiced stops (*obair*,

*bradan, seagal*), before *-s* and *s*-clusters (*deasachadh, uisge*), at least some *l*- and *n*-phonemes (*coileach, bainne*), and particularly before *-r* and *r*-clusters (*tarann, tarbh*); there is also evidence of lengthening before the voiceless fricative *-ch* (*deoch*), as well as voiced fricatives (*abhainn, amharc*).<sup>50</sup>

According to the *SGDS* data (Fig. 4), lengthening of short stressed vowels is mainly restricted to southern Kintyre; outwith southern Kintyre, lengthening occurs only in one instance: *amharc* in Arran. Glottal stops, which occur only in short reflexes of stressed vowels, not in half-long or long varieties, are found mostly outwith southern Kintyre: 25% in northern Kintyre (nine out of 36 examples) and 10.77% in Arran (seven out of 65). Of the four examples in southern Kintyre (which represent 8% of the 50 examples), two are from point 37, Carradale, and two from point 39, Killean and Kilmory (about two and a half miles north of Muasdale), all recorded by MacAulay.

Glottalisation & lengthening of stressed vowels in Kintyre & Arran in *SGDS* data Fig. 4

<i>SGDS</i> item	pts 31–35 (Arran), 36–39 (s. Kintyre), 40–42 (Gigha + n. Kintyre)												
	short								half-long	long			
2 <i>abhainn</i>	<b>31</b>	32	<b>33</b>	34	35	37	39	<b>40</b>	41	42	36, 38		
36 <i>amharc</i>		32		34		36	37	39	<b>40</b>	41	42	38	31, 33, 35
53 <i>aran</i>	31	32	33	34	35	36		<b>39</b>		41		38	
54 <i>arbhar</i>	31	32	33	34	35	37	39	40	41	42	36, 38		
120 <i>bradan</i>	<b>31</b>	32	33	34	<b>35</b>	37	38	39	<b>40</b>	41	42	36	
153 <i>carbad</i>	31	32	33	34	35	37	39	40	41	42	36	38	
399 <i>farsuing</i>	31	32	33	34	35	37	39	40	41	42	36, 38		
400 <i>fasdaidh</i>	31	32	33	34	35		39	40	41			36, 38	
601 <i>marbh</i>	31	32	33	34	35	37	39	40	41	42	36	38	
690 <i>radan</i>	<b>31</b>	32	33	34	35	<b>37</b>	39	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	42	36, 38		
726 <i>sabhal†</i>	<b>31</b>	32	<b>33</b>	34	35	37	39	<b>40</b>	41	42	36, 38		
727 <i>sagart</i>	31	32	33	34	35	36	<b>37</b>	38	39	<b>40</b>	41	42	38‡
758 <i>sgamhan</i>	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	<b>39</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	42	38	

† (*-bh-*: 36 [ʔ], 38 [w], 42 zero, elsewhere [v])

‡ examples occur with both short and half-long stressed vowels

Key: Bold = stressed vowel with glottal stop.

Points where absent were not recorded.

<sup>50</sup> For more on the incidence of glottal stops in Argyllshire, particularly Jura, see Jones 2000. Grann'd's (2000) comparative study of Islay Gaelic with Argyllshire and Arran Gaelic is restricted largely to lexical variation and word geography and provides no evidence here.

The evidence, then, suggests that the incidence of glottal stops before consonants and pausa and lengthening of stressed vowels are in more or less complementary distribution within the area as a whole. Lengthening may initially have been a development from a stressed vowel + glottal stop; in general, however, it may have been a parallel, but alternative development more or less restricted to southern Kintyre. (Indeed, a stressed vowel following a weak glottal stop may have occasionally been perceived as a half-long or long vowel by fieldworkers.<sup>51</sup>)

While this feature of lengthening may have had its focus within southern Kintyre, it would be wrong to restrict the area of lengthening entirely to southern Kintyre. Ó Baoill's informant from Tarbert in northern Kintyre, Mary MacKinnon, also shows signs of the same development, e.g. half-long 48 *achadh*, 63, 66 *goirt*, 87 *olann*; short and long 89 *lomamb* (for *lomadh*); and short, half-long and long 61, 66, 68, 73 *bainne* (*LASID* IV, 212). On the other hand, she appears to use glottals stops more often than Carradale or Muasdale informants, e.g. 54, 55, 56 *bleoghann*, 72 *soitheach*, although it is difficult to make comparisons between one informant and another due to differences in the substance and volume of data-sets. Similarly, *LASID* data

<sup>51</sup> Yet the question of the differences in vowel length in Neil MacDougall's speech as recorded by Anthony Dilworth and Fred MacAulay remains unresolved: Dilworth's lengthened vowels are not matched by glottal stops in MacAulay's transcriptions. Dilworth's examples of lengthening are supported independently by Colm Ó Baoill's transcriptions, which begs the question whether MacAulay may have unconsciously normalised apparently irregular vowel lengths in his own material. Fred MacAulay (1925–2003), from Solas, North Uist, took a diploma in phonetics at Edinburgh before working on the Linguistic Survey between 1951–54, taking up a full-time post as fieldworker in 1952. Anthony Dilworth had already heard Kintyre Gaelic, among many other dialects, as a student, before joining the Linguistic Survey as a fieldworker in 1954, with which he continued for three years. Of the transcription process, he recalls the excellent sound-editing facility, with its capacity to isolate and/or compare words or sequences of words, provided by Tony Anthony in the Department of Phonetics at Edinburgh: 'Bha an t-inneal-èisteachd a rinn Tony Anthony ann an Roinn nam Foneataigs fìor mhath dha-rìreadh. Dh'fhaodadh tu an aon fhacal no sreath a chluinntinn uair is uair agus bha sin a' toirt cothrom dhut na fuaimean a sgrìobhadh ann am foneataigs air do shocair gu math ceart. Cha bhiodh tu an urrainn a bhith ag iarraidh air seann sluagh faclan a' cheisteachain a ràdh ach a dhà no trì tursan air neo dh'fhàsadh iad searbh den chùis oir bha tòrr cheistean ann. Bha e comasach cuideachd an aon fhacal o dheifr àiteachan a chur air lùib teip agus coimeas a dhèanamh eatarra.' (pers. comm.). Although Heinrich Wagner comments in the introduction to *LASID* IV (p. viii) that Ó Baoill, 'having gained some further experience in the field of Scottish Gaelic phonetics, ... is now not pleased with some of his transcriptions which were partly made from tape ...', the general picture of lengthening in stressed vowels remains.

for Arran (also recorded by Colm Ó Baoill) shows a tendency, albeit a less pronounced one, for lengthening short stressed vowels (Fig. 5).

Sporadic stressed-vowel lengthening in Arran in *LASID* data Fig. 5

<i>LASID</i> item	Stressed vowel quantity in <i>LASID</i> IV, 212–17		
	short	half-long	long
1 <i>tarbh</i>		Arran	Arran
2 <i>reic</i>	Arran		
22 <i>bainne</i>		Arran	
28 <i>tabhann</i>		Arran	
30 <i>agad</i>		Arran	
44 <i>uisge</i>	Arran		
45 <i>thàinig</i>		Arran	
125 <i>gairm</i>		Arran	
138 <i>coileach</i>	Arran		
139 <i>briste</i>	Arran		
178 <i>marcachd</i>	Arran		
205, 206, 208 <i>cat</i>	Arran		
209 <i>craiceann</i>	Arran		
242 <i>cleachdte</i>	Arran		
339 <i>litir</i>	Arran		

However, unless Holmer simply failed to record examples of lengthened short vowels (cf. his Rathlin *abhainn* [o'ín] [o'ə́n] (with hiatus, Holmer 1942, 156), as opposed to *LASID*'s (I, 280) lengthened form, [o:ə́n] (point 67)), the negative evidence of his description of Kintyre Gaelic would suggest that the development of sporadic lengthening of short-stressed vowels in southern Kintyre may post-date George Henderson's *Ábhuin* (1910) and Watson's *Éibhinn* and *Eubhainn* (1926). If so, we should look for an alternative cause for the lengthening of the stressed vowel in *Ábhainn*.

There may be an alternative. Like most folk etymologies, ours may contain an element of truth, and the conflicting claims of a connection with both ON *hofn* and ScG *abhainn* may indeed have some basis in fact.

On the one hand, the relative importance of *Sannda*'s harbour within the area is highlighted consistently in early descriptions by reference to the Norse use of the harbour and their naming it *Hofn*. This scenario is supported by the topography of the island's anchorage and the nature of *Sruth na Maoile*; by the fact that the island is a stepping-stone between Ireland and Scotland,

and between Arran and Gigha and Islay;<sup>52</sup> and by the frequency with which the Norse element *hofn* occurs in Norse loan-names throughout the *Sudreyjar*. From this perspective, ON *hofn* is the perfect candidate for the derivation of *Ábhainn*. On the other hand, the place-name is traditionally said to be synonymous with the Scottish Gaelic term *abhainn* 'river'.

We know little of the Gaelic dialect of Southend, i.e. of the Mull of Kintyre and *Sannda*. Holmer remarks that in his time – 1937 – the dialect 'hardly survives'; 'it was different from the north Kintyre dialect, and more like Irish' (Holmer 1962, 1–2), but the little we do know appears to add nothing to the discussion on vowel length (ibid., 2 and 106–07). Yet, we can be certain that, as part of a linguistic continuum,<sup>53</sup> the dialect of Southend would have held affinities with both Ireland and Scotland.

In an East Ulster Irish context, lengthening of the stressed vowel in *abhainn* 'river' occurs through vocalisation of the intervocalic fricative.<sup>54</sup> Thus *LASID* (I, 280) records Rathlin [o:ə́n] (point 67), Omeath [o:ə́N<sup>j</sup>] (point 65) and Inishowen [o:N<sup>j</sup>] (point 68). Although this is in contrast to Holmer's Rathlin [o'ín] [o'ə́n] (1942, 156, in which the superscript dot (·) indicates hiatus<sup>55</sup>), it is possible that Southend Gaelic *abhainn* was pronounced something like \*[<sup>h</sup>a'ɪŋ] or \*[<sup>h</sup>a:ɪŋ] with a half-long or long stressed vowel after vocalisation of the fricative,<sup>56</sup> and this is supported by the Ulster form of the name, [i'niŋ] 'o'ín],<sup>57</sup> with a half-long stressed vowel.

On this count, it is conceivable that ScG *Ábhainn* derives from ON *Hofn* /hɔβn/, via Early Gaelic \**Abhan* \*/<sup>h</sup>aβə́n/, dat. \**Abhain* \*/<sup>h</sup>aβin'/, with a short

<sup>52</sup> The island is described as 'within dangerously easy reach of Clann Dòmhnail [Islay] and their Mac Aoidh allies [Kintyre and Bute]' (Forte 2008, 211).

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Ó Baoill 1978 and 2000.

<sup>54</sup> This phenomenon is unconnected to the lengthening of stressed vowels in Kintyre and its environs discussed above.

<sup>55</sup> 'In Rathlin the hiatus is not so clearly marked as in Scotland: cumhang "narrow" may rime with uan "lamb"' (loc. cit.).

<sup>56</sup> In Mid-Argyllshire, the fricative has generally been replaced by hiatus, in Islay generally by a glottal stop (see *SGDS* II, 3), and it is curious that Holmer (1938, 116) records [ɔ:ŋj] in Islay.

<sup>57</sup> Brian McLaughlin, whose family was from Carnlough (in sight of *Sannda*), eight miles north of Larne, as told to him by his father, who reported that his own grandmother (Margaret McLaughlin, c.1840–1933, from Slanesallagh, four miles from Carnlough) had told him that this was *Sannda*'s proper name. Margaret's mother, Catherine's, family seems to have been engaged in transporting salt from Carrickfergus to Scotland. Catherine may have been a Gaelic speaker: she was born close to the Glens of Antrim and her father, Para Bán 'fair Para', was nicknamed Brochan Scallta ('paltry porridge'), apparently in reference to his employment during the Great Famine (1845–49) in the distribution of what was considered to be poor quality Indian meal. (Brian McLaughlin, pers. comm.)

stressed vowel (cf. John of Fordun's late 14th-century Scots form, *Awyn*). Later the bilabial fricative develops into a labio-dental fricative in Scottish Gaelic, viz \**Abhan* \*/'avən/, dat. \**Abhain* \*/'avin'/ (cf. Monro 1549 *Avoyne*, Mac Cana 1621–22 *Abhuinn*, SAS 1791–99 *Aven*) but is vocalised in Southend Gaelic, as in the case of intervocalic *-bh-* in *abhainn* in East Ulster Irish, with compensatory lengthening of the stressed vowel yielding \**Abhan* \*/'a:ən/, dat. \**Abhain* \*/'a:in'/. We may assume that this dative form was homophonous, or nearly so, with the local pronunciation of *abhainn* 'river', which thus gave rise to the folk etymology that the name meant 'river' – although the sense had to be altered to 'stream' and the currents of *Sruth na Maoile*, in order for the etymology to be credible. If this is so, neighbouring communities (e.g. Arran /ɛ:vin'/ (Holmer 1957, 49; §5, above)<sup>58</sup>) appear to have adopted the long stressed vowel of \*/'a:in'/, while preserving the labio-dental fricative of earlier \*/'avin'/.

Meanwhile, radical \**Abhan* may survive in George Campbell Hay's Tarbert form,<sup>59</sup> *Àbhann* (rad. *an latha thogas Àbhann* 'when we set course on Sanda', Byrne 2000 I, 424 (also 277, 316), dat. *'s i 'seòladh mach o Àbhann* 'as out she sails from Sanda', 425), whose development was presumably on the analogy of the development of \**Abhain* > \**Àbhainn*.<sup>60</sup>

## §II CONCLUSION

Of the various possible derivations of *Àbhainn* discussed above, ON *Hofn* seems contextually to be the most likely. The historical phonology for the development of *Àbhainn* from ON *Hofn*, however, is not entirely clear. Our knowledge of the Gaelic dialect of Southend is very limited. There is evidence that some lengthening of short stressed vowels took place in southern Kintyre and there is evidence to suggest that lengthening was in more or less complementary distribution with the development of a glottal stop in similar environments in neighbouring areas, although the sporadic nature of the lengthening may suggest that the development was one of free variation. On the face of it, the lack of comment on lengthening of short stressed vowels in Holmer's description of Kintyre Gaelic suggests that the phenomenon was a developing one during the 20th century, one which may be too late to account

<sup>58</sup> The reflex /ɛ:/ may occur for /a:/ in Arran and, to a lesser extent, in Kintyre; see Holmer 1957, 49, and 1962, 41.

<sup>59</sup> During his formative years, Hay learnt Gaelic from his maternal great-aunts in Tarbert, Kintyre, and from local fishermen (Martin 1984, 48–71; Byrne 2000 II, 3–6).

<sup>60</sup> EG *abann*, a form derived from *ab* as a fem. *n*-stem (*DIL*, s.v.; Vendryes, s.v.), dat. *abainn*, so modern nominativised *abhainn*.

for lengthening in *Àbhainn*. Alternatively, lengthening of \**Abhainn* to *Àbhainn* may have paralleled the development of the appellative *abhainn* 'river' > \**àainn* in the local Gaelic dialect, assuming that this was the same as that which took place in Ulster, cf. Rathlin [o:ən] 'river'. If so, while neighbouring dialects, by virtue of the presence of a long stressed vowel, have in effect re-borrowed the name, they have preserved earlier intervocalic *-bh-*, perhaps on account of the long-standing folk etymological connection with *abhainn* 'river'. It remains to be seen, however, whether further evidence will come to light which can support one or other of these hypotheses.

It is possible, then, although not certain, that we here have two different Norse names: one for the island itself, ON *Sandey* (yielding ScG *Sannda*), and one for the harbour, ON *Hofn* (yielding ScG *Àbhainn*).<sup>61</sup> One can suppose that in general the latter might have held greater significance for shipping as, in times of need, boats would have set course for the haven, *Àbhainn*, rather than the island, *Sannda*, and this may help explain why *Àbhainn*, as opposed to *Sannda*, survives in Arran Gaelic. While the onomastic meaning of *Àbhainn* transfers to the island in Gaelic usage – ousting use of *Sannda* in some communities, acquiring equivalent sense in others – it is the original island name that is borrowed into Scots/English, hence *Sanda*, a fact which presumably reflects administrative usage. The shape of the island as seen from the sea gives rise to a third form, *An Spàin*. If ScG *Àbhainn* ever had a hold in modern Scots/English usage, it has been eclipsed by the English form of *An Spàin*, *Spoon Island*.<sup>62</sup>

In the early part of the 20th century, it is probable that *Sannda*, *Àbhainn* and *An Spàin* belonged to different user groups (Cox 1990, 46–48): *Sannda* to the islanders themselves and to the people of Kintyre – Eng. *Sanda* to officialdom; *Àbhainn* to the fishing communities of Kintyre and Arran; and *An Spàin* or *Spoon Island* to the people of south Arran and to a principally non-fishing, boating community.

## PHONETIC NOTE

[ ] enclose phonetic transcriptions, whose symbols represent actual pronunciation.

/ / enclose phonemic transcriptions, whose symbols represent contrastive units of sound within the dialect or language concerned.

ScG [d] is devoiced; [d t L N N<sup>h</sup>] are dentals; [L N] are velarised; both [ʲ] and / / indicate palatal consonants.

<sup>61</sup> There are parallels, albeit that the islands concerned are larger than *Sannda*: *Na Hamhn* on Eriskay (ON *Eiriksey* 'Eirik's isle'), *Na Hamhn* and *Na Hamhnan* on Mull (ON *Mjál*), as well as *Port na h-Abhann* (< \**Abhann*) on Islay (ON *Íl*), all from ON *Hofn* (Cox 2008, 51–55).

<sup>62</sup> E.g. <<http://www.ourscotland.co.uk/clydeislands/>>.

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## APPENDIX

A Description of Sanda  
by the Rev. Father Edmund MacCana

## INTRODUCTION

On the 4th of January 1619, as missionaries for the revival of Catholicism in the Western Highlands and Islands of Scotland, two Irish-speaking priests from Ulster, Patrick Brady and Edmund MacCana, along with laybrother John Stuart, travelled from the Irish Franciscan College of St Anthony at Louvain, arriving in Scotland about the middle of March. Patrick Brady chose the Highlands as his territory; Father MacCana concentrated on the Isles (Giblin 1964, ix–xii). 'Towards the end of 1620, [MacCana] was arrested and kept in prison for two years, after which he was banished and ordered not to enter England or Scotland again under pain of death' (ibid., x). Appointed by Pope Urban VIII in 1623 (Stevenson 1980, 53), MacCana was one of four missionaries to go from Louvain to Scotland in 1624: '[h]e definitely laboured on the mission, but it is not possible to say how long he actually stayed there, and of the four missionaries least of all is known about his activities' (Giblin 1964, xi).

It is uncertain when MacCana wrote his description of *Sannda*. The editors of *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* (II, 820 note 5) date the MS to c.1600, so also Campbell (1924, 3: 'presumed to be dated Circa 1600'), while Reeves (1864, 133) suggests 'the early part of the seventeenth century'. These dates may be too early. On the 15 July 1624, Patrick Hegarty 'explained the meaning of the sacred vestments to the islanders, and preached to them; they had been instructed in the elements of the faith four years before by another Irish Franciscan, but had seen

no priest since then' (Giblin 1964, 32–33). It is likely that this other Franciscan was Edmund MacCana. His description, then, which we may infer from its contents was not written on *Sannda*, may date at the earliest from c.1621–22 and the period of his imprisonment in Scotland. Nevertheless, as indicated above, MacCana returned to Scotland in 1624, and, although it is not clear when he left the country again, the Franciscan mission to Scotland lasted until c.1637 (ibid., xv). However, reference within the description to MacCana's poor recollection (*quorum mihi ... memoria non suppetit ...*) and to 'this war' (*ante hoc bellum*) may indicate an even later date, perhaps some time between 1644–1651 and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.<sup>63</sup> This accords with William Reeves's (1854, 44) dating of MacCana's *Itinerarium in Hibernia ex relatione R. P. Fratris Edmundi MacCana*, which 'appears from internal evidence to have been written shortly after 1643, and to have been intended as a topographical contribution to the antiquarian store which the Irish Franciscans of Louvain had, with such laudable zeal, been for years accumulating in the service of their beloved country.'

## THE MANUSCRIPT (PLATES 1–2)

The MS is housed in Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, 5301–20 fos 276–77, and is cited in the following:

Bindon (1847, 491), in his catalogue of MSS relating to Ireland in the Burgundian Library: '[Vol. XVIII] No. 5308. "Descriptio Insulae Sandae," ... commences, "Insula Sanda est."'

Smith (1854, 217): 'Insulæ Sandæ, seu Auoniae, *Hibernicé* ABHUIN, brevis descriptio, R. P. fr<sup>is</sup> Edmundi Mac Cana.'

*Origines Parochiales Scotiae* II, 1855, 820, note 5: 'MS. in the Burgundian Library at Brussels, circa 1600, entitled *Insulæ Sandae seu Auoniae Hibernice Abhuinn Brevis Descriptio*, by Friar Edmund M<sup>c</sup>Cana.'

Skene (1874, clxviii): 'Father Mac Cana's MS account of the island states that in Irish it is called *Abhuinn*, Latinized *Avonia*.'

van Den Gheyn (1907, 49), in his catalogue of MSS in Bibliothèque royale de Belgique: '[4641 (5301–20)] 12. (F. 140–41 [*leg.* 276–277]) Insulæ

<sup>63</sup> *cogadh sa na tri Rioghachtuibh* 'this war of the three Kingdoms' (Gille-Críost MacBheatha – Christopher Beaton – writing in what is now known as the Book of Clanranald during the 1690s or early 1700s (Cameron 1892, 176; Bannerman 1998, 16–17)).

Sandae seu Avoniae Hibernie [*sic*] Abhyn brevis descriptio R. P. fratris Edmundi Mac Cana.’

Campbell (1924, 3–4): ‘A short description of the Island of Sanda, or Avon – in Irish Abhuinn by the Reverend Father, Brother Edmund McCana.’

#### TRANSCRIPTION

While the original has been edited for punctuation and capitalisation, and abbreviations expanded silently, deletions have not been reproduced. On the few occasions where characters against the right margin, having been obscured by the binding process, are no longer visible, recourse has been made to Charles Mac Donnell’s transcription in Reeves 1864, 133–34. Diacritics have been ignored and allographs (e.g. <u, v> < i, j>) rationalised.

[fo. 276]

Insulæ Sandæ seu Avoniæ, Hibernice Abhuinn,<sup>64</sup>  
Brevis Descriptio. R. P. fratris Edmundi mac Cana

Insula Sanda est in oceano Scotico ad occasum, uno milliari a Kinntiriæ continenti sejuncta; complectitur in circuitu unum magnum milliare. Solum jucundum, fructuum ac frugum, si coleretur, ferax. In ea est ædicula S. Ninniano sacra, ad cujus cænobium in Galvidia tota insula spectat. Coniunctum huic ædiculæ est ossarium sive sepulchretum quatuordecim filiorum sanctissimi viri Senchanii Hiberni, sanctitate illustrium. Saxeo murulo septum, in quo sunt septem grandia et polita saxa, quibus sanctissima corpora teguntur, in quorum medio stat obeliscus, altior hominis statura (ut mihi jam suggerit memoria). Nemo mortalium impune ingreditur illum murulum. Lepidum est quod mihi retulerunt insulani: gallinam id loci ingressam ova peperisse et exclusisse; pullos, cum jam præ ætate egredi poterant, omnes intortis collis – insigni spectaculo – processisse. Retulit mihi etiam grandior natu insulanorum, et ferme omnium pater, hoc prodigium quod subscribo. Ængussius Mac-Donellus, Kenntiriæ ac Insulæ Ilæ dinasta (quem ipse jam olim vidi), ingressus est aliquando insulam, multa comitante caterva, inter quos etiam fuit præcipua Kinntiriæ juvenus. Cum forte dinasta ac cæteri nobiles de rebus seriis tractarent, juvenus, ut solet, se pilæ ac clavarum ludo exercebat; pila vi clavæ impulsæ, priusquam ab adversa manu juvenum excipi posset, altius in sacrum sepulchretum volavit. Juvenis, memor loci

<sup>64</sup> MS *Abhuinn*.

religionis, iniecit tantum alterum pedem et manum, ad extrahendam pilam. Ab incolis reprehenditur, quod sacri loci majestatem violaverit idque criminis eum impune minime laturum denunciant. Ille lusum nihilominus cum sociis persequitur. Exacto lusu, ac appetente nocte, in hospitium se recipit, ad focum sedet; cooriuntur statim ingentes dolores in toto pede quem in sepulchretum intulit. Insulani significant divinam esse ultionem læsæ religionis. Intumuit mirum in modum pes, adeo inflatus divina ultione ut equi magnitudinem exequaret.

[fo. 277]

Sub mediam noctem juvenis expirat. Omnes Deum laudant; sancta corpora deinceps religiosius venerantur. Hinc descendum quantam habeat rationem et curam sanctorum suorum Deus optimus maximus, quorum sacrilegam irrisionem et contemptum impius Calvinus, novus evangelista, orbi intulit, aut potius intrusit. Magnum hoc miraculum excitavit in animis spectatorum et ex ipsis audientium, etiam a nostra religione aversorum, sanctorum hominum reverentiam.

In illa insula fuit repertum brachium Sancti Ultani, quod, thecæ argenteæ inclusum, ante hoc bellum religiose servabatur a viro generoso ex inclyta Mac Donellorum familia. Fons est ibi non procul a sacello perennis aquæ, miraculis, ut insulani et multi ex continenti mihi dixere, nobilis. Frequentabatur quidem meo tempore ab accolis circumquaque, maxime ab iis in quorum animis aliquæ reliquiæ priscae religionis residebant. Sunt multa alia mira et jucunda quæ homines mihi fide dignissimi de hoc loco retulerunt, quorum mihi et memoria non suppetit et tempore excludor.

Illis sacris cineribus hoc quod sequitur rude epitaphium cum ibi essem posui; atque ad illud sacrum sepulchretum tertio sacris misteriiis cum magna animi mei recreatione sum operatus.

Corpora bis septem, totum veneranda per orbem,  
Senchanii<sup>65</sup> natum Sanda beata tenet.  
Doctorum divumque parens, Hibernia quondam  
Quos genuit sanctos Scotia terra tegit.  
Scotia dicta minor, multis celebrata trophæis,<sup>66</sup>  
Matris in amplexu, pignora cara tenet.

<sup>65</sup> MS *Senchanii*.

<sup>66</sup> Inserted interlineally above *multis celebrata trophæis* are the words *genuit quæ > Scotia major*.



Sanda tibi cedit, veterum celebrata Camœnis,  
 Bettiginum gazæ, ripa beata Tagi.  
 Hos igitur sacros cineres devotus adora,  
 Quisquis in Hebrigenum littora tuta venis.

[The following lines have been added as a footnote]

Corpora bis septem, septem conduntur in urnis,  
 Ut natu gemini, sic videantur humo.

TRANSLATION<sup>67</sup>

A short description of the Island of Sanda, or Avon, in Irish Abhuinn, by the Reverend Father, Brother Edmund MacCana.

[fo. 276]

‘Sanda is an island to the west in the Scottish sea, separated by a mile from the mainland of Kintyre; in circumference it is just over a mile. The soil is agreeable and, if cultivated, would be prolific in crops and fruits. In it is a chapel consecrated to St Ninian, to whose monastery in Galloway the whole island belongs. Adjoining this shrine is the ossuary or burial place of the fourteen sons of a most holy man, Senchan, an Irishman, who were renowned for their sanctity. It is surrounded by a low stone wall, in which are seven large polished stones, by which the most sacred bodies are covered, in the middle of which stands an obelisk higher than a man’s stature (as it now occurs to my memory). No mortal enters that enclosure with impunity. What the islanders have told me is charming: a hen, having entered the place, laid its eggs and hatched them; the chicks, when they were old enough to come out, all appeared with twisted necks – a remarkable sight! One of the older inhabitants of the islands, and father of nearly all the rest, also related to me this amazing story which I append. Angus MacDonell, Lord of Kintyre and of the Island of Islay (whom I myself saw once), entered the island one time, a large crowd in attendance, among whom were the principal youth of Kintyre. When, as it happened, the lord and other nobles were discussing serious matters, the youths, as is their wont, exercised themselves at a game of shinty [‘ball and sticks’]; a ball hit by a caman stroke flew over into the sacred cemetery, before it could be caught by a hand of the opposing youths. The young man, mindful of the place’s religious significance, entered it

<sup>67</sup> A sometimes inflated translation is given by the Rev. Father Butler in Campbell 1924, 3–4, a heavily truncated one in *Origines Parochiales Scotiae* II, 820.

using only one foot and only one hand to extract the ball. He is taken to task by the natives because he had violated the dignity of the holy place; and they declare that his crime will not go unpunished. Nevertheless, he continues that game with his companions. The game being finished, and the night approaching, he goes to the guests’ lodging, and seats himself at the fireplace; great pains suddenly break out throughout the foot which he had put into the cemetery. The islanders indicate the divine vengeance is for lack of piety. The foot swelled to an astonishing extent, thus inflated by divine wrath until it equalled a horse’s in size.

[fo. 277]

‘During the middle of the night the youth expires. All praise God, and subsequently they venerate the sacred bodies with greater devotion. Hence it is learnt to what extent the most good and most high God keeps the reckoning and care of his saints, whose sacreligious mockery and contempt unholy Calvin, the new Evangelist, has introduced, or rather intruded, into the world. This great spectacle kindled in the minds of the spectators, and even among those who just heard about it, even those who had turned away from our creed, a reverence for holy men.

‘In that island the forearm of Saint Ultan was found, which, enclosed in a silver case, was carefully preserved before this war by a nobleman of the renowned family of the MacDonnells. There is a perpetual water spring there not far from the chapel, known for miracles, as the islanders and many from the mainland have told me. Indeed it was frequented in my own time by neighbours on all sides, especially by those in whose minds any vestige of the old religion remained. There were many other wonderful and delightful things that men most worthy of confidence reported to me about this place, which for me both memory fails and time excludes.

‘When I was there I placed over those sacred ashes the rough epitaph which follows, and at that sacred cemetery I thrice performed the sacred mysteries with great refreshment of mind.

‘Fourteen bodies, throughout the world revered,  
 Of Senchanius born blessed Sanda holds.  
 Ireland, the mother of divine teachers, once  
 Begat the saints whom Scotland’s soil covers.

Scotland the minor, famed for its many memorials,  
 Holds these beloved pledges in a mother's embrace.  
 Sanda, renowned for its ancient poetry, yields to you,  
 Treasures of Mount Bettigo, blessed shores of the River Tagus.<sup>68</sup>  
 O faithful one, entreat these sacred ashes, then,  
 you who comes to the safe shores of the Hebrigenae.<sup>69</sup>

[Footnote]

'Fourteen bodies, preserved in seven urns,  
 as they were twins at birth, so are they seen in the earth.'

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<sup>68</sup> *Bettigo* in India (Ptolemy, e.g. Lib. VII, cap. 1 §33, ἀπὸ τοῦ Βηττιγῶ ὄρους (Nobbe 1843–45 II, 148) 'from the mountain of Βηττιγῶ) and the *Tagus* in the Iberian Peninsula (Ptolemy, Lib. II, cap. 5 §4, Τάγου ποταμοῦ ἐκβολαί (Nobbe, ibid. I, 80) 'the mouth of the river Τάγος') may be being used here to represent natural wonders of the world.

<sup>69</sup> Nom. pl. of *Hebrigenum*, which is taken to be a short form of *Hebrigenarum* 'of the Hebrideans', gen. pl. of a compound, *Hebrigena* 'Hebridean' (as in *Romigena* 'Roman' and the ninth-century theologian Johannes Scotus Eriugena's name, whose pseudonym contains *Ériu* 'Ireland'), cf. John Milton's *penè totis finibus Angligenum* ('Ad Joannem Rousium', Beeching 1900, 170.32) 'almost all the lands of the English'.

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