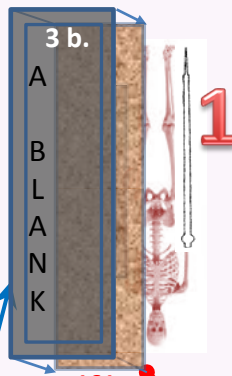


[A] Why is it the right slab for founder? It is "transitional", ie, pre-Iona school; earlier, very "much worn". It is the only St Oran's slab with rare ecclesiastical power symbol – motif, a rare pilgrim staff {like one in tomb of West Minster founder "Edward the Confessor"}. It is sandstone [usually earlier material] same as original alter base and this patron normally be beside the alter. It is the right period, right designs 'right' material for Reginald mac Somerled, the founder. [B] Why is the position beside the alter right for founder? *Deposito ad Sanctos*; and "founder standard position" = Status – custom; contemporary Irish ritual precedent, King and son each side of alter. [C] Why isn't the slab beside the alter? It was uplifted, with no detail or plans made, for 66 years {no 'memory'} and then "re-instated" by Public Works in the wrong location. [D] IS THERE A 'MATCH'? A COMMON DENOMINATOR? 161 is the only non-tapered [rectangular] slab in the chapel. This utter "blank" beside altar "1" is extremely close to rectangular {3b}. [rectangular is by far the much less common shape in Reilig Odhrain]. Both are bevelled edged. RCAHMS : Only 'a few cases appear' not to be ornamented {p.219; most sandstone}; St Oran's Chapel "7 set graveslabs only 2 decorated". A ridiculous proportion not ornamented – and all in one spot, AND the least likely spot of all! "Founder/Kings/Lords of Isles having undecorated slabs? Never! 13th century flat slabs were ornamented; no Iona School "Class" was undecorated. They are simply not medieval slabs! And far too many. Why was a totally blank 'replica' bevel edged? Slab 161 and the "blank" next to the altar are almost the same unique shape within the chapel, have the same edge treatment. are very close to the same size.



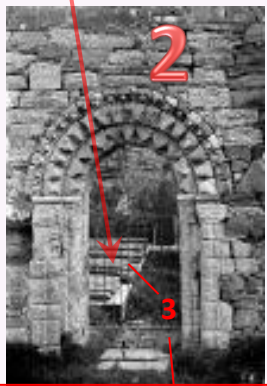
altar relics

Somerled

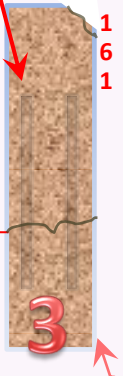
1. 1207 : REGINALD – ABBEY FOUNDER {with his pilgrim staff?} *"Deposito ad sanctos"* – proximity to saints relics = status. The Gospel side - "This came to be the standard position for the burial of founding patrons." Irish ritual precedent, eg, of contemporary O'Connor Kings; the father, the son, "Solidarity of kindred" – other side Somerled [Epistle].

2. 1860, 1st uplift. Slab {only} by Iona Club and displayed in a position N-S along north wall on "blocks" {pic 2}. 8 UPLIFTED – BUT NO PLANS MADE OF EACH SLAB'S LOCATION. Graham's 1850 'record', pl. 6, through the door is useless.

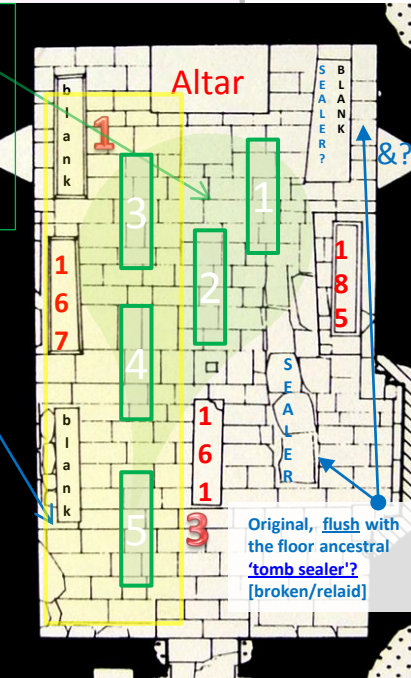
1977 uplift – 5 good condition graveslabs. {3 "much worn" are left.} Floor openings replaced by ordinary floor pavers, not replica slab "blanks", because they were not marking exact original graves. These 5 taken to the cloister. 4 returned to Nth wall. 150, Angus Og's, was left there, wrongly attributed, and a "ring-in" replaced it.



NB : When [3] is done, the Sth side is being "re-instated" first. No. 161 is put in the soil backfilled 1860 disturbed location. After 2 others relaid, the large concrete blocks are removed and Nth side {yellowed} begun, revealing intact floor opening [1] near altar, matching 161's near parallel shape? 'Blank' marker made for it and west one –both very slightly tapered. No. 167 and 3 other graveslabs {3,4,5} 'reinstated' Nth side.



Tapered blank. Ends 390 and 350mm. Is "match" to slab No. 126 [see my p.139 and App. 1 a.]



Original, flush with the floor ancestral 'tomb sealer'? [broken/relaid]

3a. 1921-5, No. 161 is "Re-instated", with no plans, not in original position by Public Works [under Trustees] and the paved floor relaid {Sth side first}. Why 161 in this high wear area with nothing to indicate it should go there? Possibly because it was the only one with a broken corner and cracked in half {done 1860?} and being sandstone and 2nd earliest was likely already very worn {later becoming "much worn"}. Not uplifted in 1977 because it was by then worse and already deemed "beyond conservation". [Slab 161 is easily confused as indicated in my proposed 'original position' for it as per '1' on this RCAHMS plan on p.246, ARGYLL VOL 4 :- "only two, decorated" {of total 7; ie, 5? sealers/blanks?} are "161 and 167", ie, as denoted by a border, "set into the floor". On this plan '3', 161, is shown as an undecorated 'blank', ie, denoted by not having a border, eventhough it has faint decoration and has bevelled edges. It shows a bottom corner missing but that alone is not unusual or prescriptive. {No 185, "much worn, decorated", is on blocks, recess, Sth wall, done 1921-5.}] NB : Question? Is there any such thing as an original undecorated, flat medieval graveslab slab of any type on Iona? "few"?- RCAHMS.



3 b. 1926, RELACEMENT BLANK REPLICIA - A marker "GRAVESLAB" {Does not appear to be medieval}. INSERTED IN 1926 AFTER MOVEMENT 3a is complete, and after the concrete blocks {2} are destroyed. It is not worn smooth at all. It has a uniformly "rough" flat finish {so 19th c?; 1926?} slightly smaller size to fit inside the space left – not overlap on top? These blanks exactly? EXCEED number of known burials + ornamented slabs of Lords of Isles in chapel. The 5 "undecorated" so-called graveslabs end up matching in number the 5 real ones removed – co-incidence???