

THE BENEDICTINES WERE NOT “THE BUILDERS”
OF IONA ABBEY 1205-1250.

IT’S THE *KING’S ABBEY* AND THE *KING’S MASTER MASON*.
NOT THE ABBOT’S.

SOMERLED began castle building from 1154.

Claig Castle, Heather I. (S/W off Jura).

The Normans built castles and *“added substantially to the number of stone-built abbeys, cathedrals and parish churches”*.

“The archaeology of early medieval Ireland”; Edwards, Nancy; 1990. p.192

IONA ABBEY CONSTRUCTION

- “Reginald, the son of Somerled, undertook the rebuilding of the monastery” *

KING REGINALD ‘ERECTED’ THE ABBEY;

- “.... the likelihood that Reginald's masons were drawn from Ireland,” **

KING REGINALD'S MASTER MASON

(THE DERRY O'BROLCHANS – PRIME WRIGHTS OF IRELAND.)

* David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross; “THE ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE OF SCOTLAND”; VOL III; pps 48, 49; 1897.

(T. Ross was appointed as a founder commissioner of the [Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland](#), RCAHMS, in 1908.)

** Professor Richard Fawcett, OBE, PhD; “SCOTTISH MEDIEVAL CHURCHES.” [Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate](#), Edinburgh. 1985.

IT'S THE **KING'S ABBEY** AND THE **KING'S MASTER MASON**.

Donnachadh (O'Carrol), King of Airghialla, ...

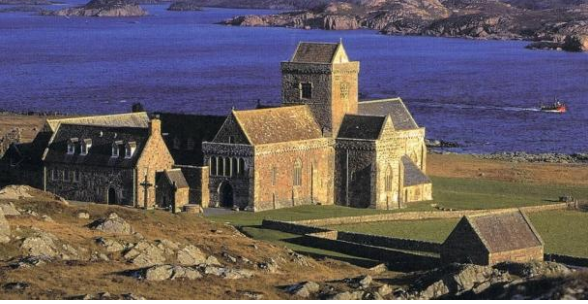
....“provided the territory, land, stone and timber, books, furniture, farming implements and gold”... for Mellifont Abbey; (Annals 1157)

and ...

....“according to tradition it was MacDonnell Galloglaigh that commenced the erection of the Armagh monastery.” (Annals 1264)



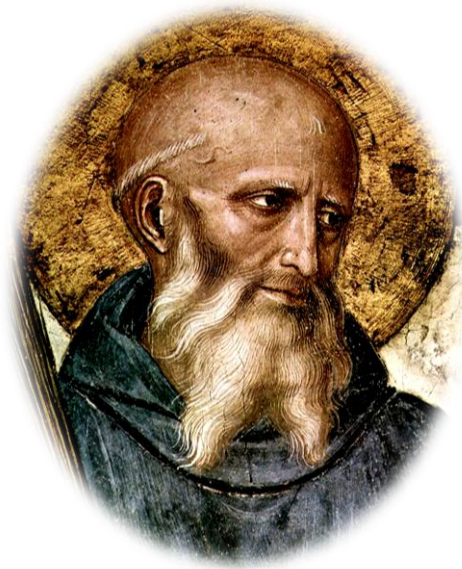
Saint Benedict of Nursia
(c. 480–543)

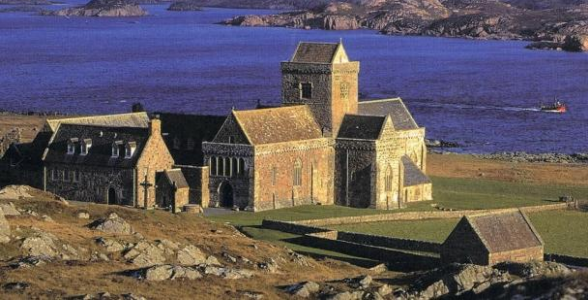


THE BENEDICTINES WERE NOT “THE BUILDERS”
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EACH BENEDICTINE ABBEY :

- **WAS COMPLETELY AUTONOMOUS. AN INDEPENDENT, INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY.**





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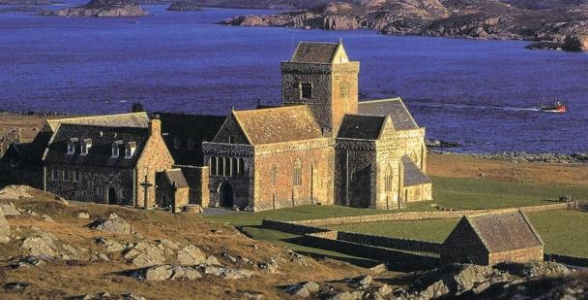


The **Order of Saint Benedict** is a Roman Catholic religious *order* of **independent monastic communities** that observe the Rule of Saint Benedict.

* “SCOTTISH MEDIEVAL CHURCHES.”

Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate, Edinburgh. 1985.

Professor Richard Fawcett, OBE, PhD, FRSE, FSA, FSA Scot..... Most of his career was in the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments of Historic Scotland,



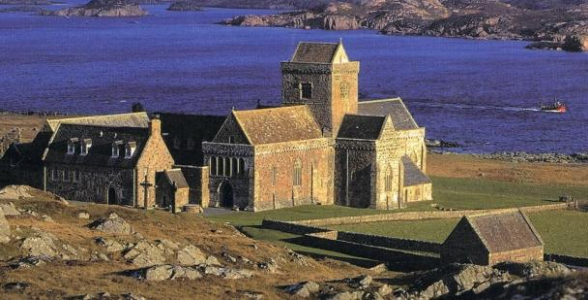
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“Benedictine monasticism is fundamentally different from other Western religious orders insofar as :- its individual communities are not part of a religious order with "Generalates" and "Superiors General“.



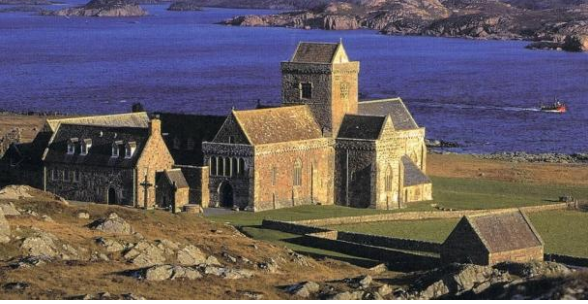
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“Within the order, each individual community
(which may be a monastery, a priory or abbey) maintains its own autonomy.”

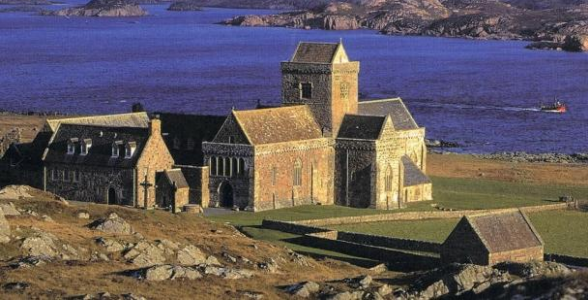


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- THEY WERE NOT PART OF THE FORMAL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF, OR FUNDED BY ROMAN CHURCH.



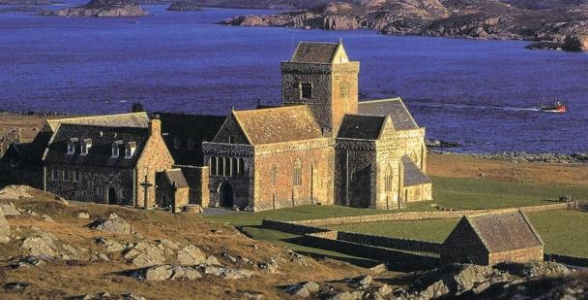


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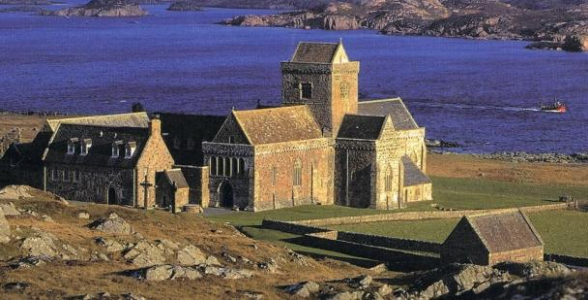


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- **1216** : THIS WAS AFTER IONA RE-FOUNDED, LET ALONE THEM HAVING A CO-ORDINATED NETWORK AND SYSTEMATIC ORGANISATION OF ANY SORT.



**BUT A MAJOR FLAW WITH HOW
IONA ABBEY SITE IS CURRENTLY
INTERPRETED IS THE VIEW THAT :-**

**NONE OF IT, OR VERY LITTLE, HAS
ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE EARLY
CLAN DONALD.**

WHY?

EARLY CHRISTAIN (& VIKING PERIOD) : 560 – 1150.

ST COLUM CILLE

- MANY PEOPLE ONLY PERCEIVE THE EXISTING ABBEY AS AN *EXTENSION* OR REVIVAL OF THE ALL PERVADING, WORLD FAMOUS EARY CHRISTAIN MONASTERY OF **ST COLUM CILLE**.

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MEDIEVAL PERIOD 1200-1500 :

INADEQUATE OFFICIAL “HISTORICAL” INTERPRETATION :-

(IONA CONFERENCE 2012 - *Statement of Cultural Significance ; Research Framework .*)

1. HISTORIC SCOTLAND STATE : THE IMPACT OF THE *LORDS OF THE ISLES* ON IONA ABBEY
“*IS NOT UNDERSTOOD*” – WITH “MAJOR GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING”. THEY SAY :-
2. REGINALD, KING OF THE ISLES, WAS “*PROBABLY*” THE FOUNDER OF THE BENEDICTINE ABBEY
EARLY 12TH CENTURY;
3. NEVER ONCE MENTIONED “CLAN DONALD” IN THEIR OFFICIAL 2012 IONA CONFERENCE PAPERS.
4. ONLY THAT THE *LORDS OF ISLES* (AND *LORDS OF LORN*) WERE “UNRIVALLED MONASTIC **PATRONS**”
AND “GENEROUS **BENEFACTORS** THROUGHOUT”. **THIS IS NOT A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY.**

(2004 Iona Abbey “*Official Souvenir Guide*”; pps 38-9.)

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3. THE LORDS OF THE ISLES WERE GENEROUS BENEFACTORS AND WERE FORFEITED 1493.
4. THEY ARE BURIED IN ST ORAN’S CHAPEL 200 YARDS AWAY.

THE MISTS OF TIME & THE VICTOR’S INDELLIBLE PEN : **1500 – PRESENT**

- 
1. **THE LORDSHIP OF THE ISLES DEFEATED AND DISINTEGRATED;**
(AND THEY ARE BURIED IN ST ORAN’S CHAPEL, 200 YARDS AWAY FROM THE ABBEY.)
 2. **THE REFORMATION AND DISSOLUTION OF ABBEYS;**
 3. **‘DAUNTING OF THE ISLES’ (READ: DESTRUCTION OF CLAN DONALD *)**
 4. **THE RISE OF “THE CAMPBELLS”.**

* “The House of Argyll as Agents of the Crown in Subjugating the West Highlands”; Cregeen, E R; 1966 (Uni. Edinburgh ; “History and Anthropology”).

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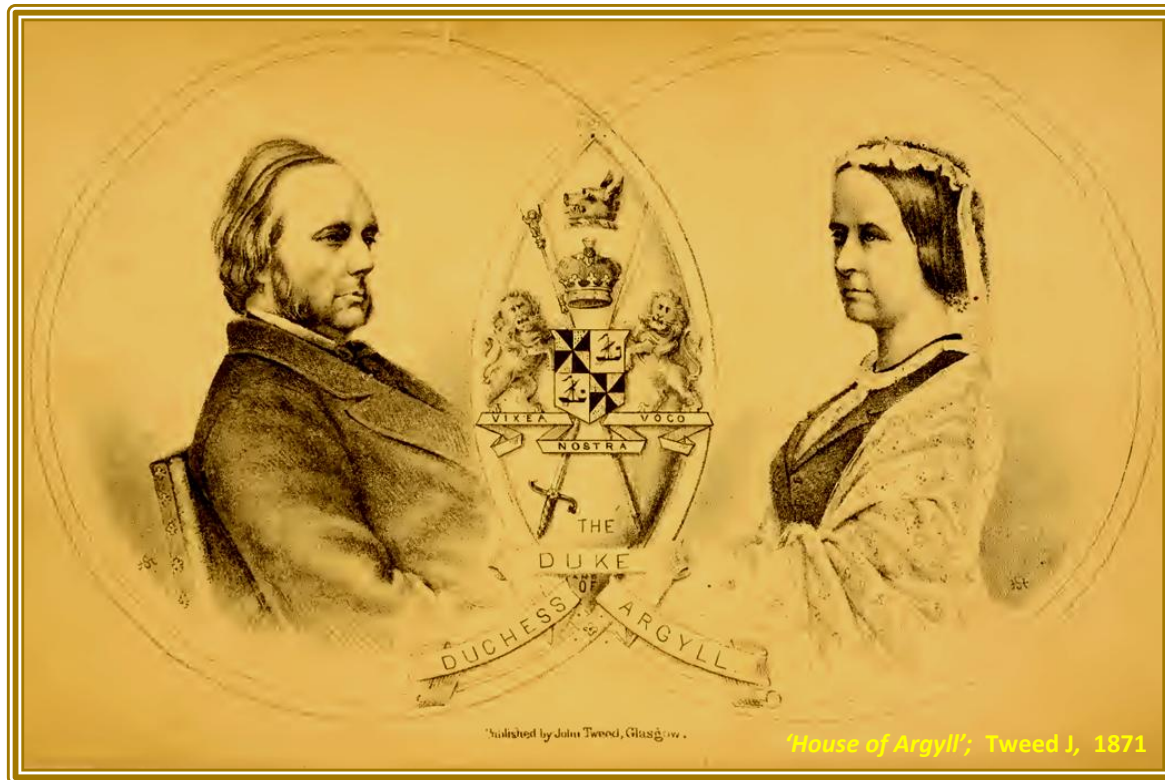
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CURRENT PUBLIC MYTHOLOGY THAT HAS "USURPED" THE FADED PAST IS THAT :-

1. **THE CAMPBELL EARLS OF ARGYLL RAISED THE ABBEY CHURCH TO CATHEDRAL STATUS;**
2. **THAT 8TH DUKE GAVE IONA BACK TO THE PEOPLE...** "Heavy estate taxes led the 12th Duke of Argyll to sell the island of Iona. The Hugh Fraser Foundation buys Iona for the nation; ownership transferred to the National Trust for Scotland."
3. **AND THE FICTION THAT :- AFTER THE TERRIBLE DAMAGE OF THE REFORMATION AND CIVIL WAR (IE, BY HIS DYNASTY, THE EARLS OF ARGYLL) THE 8TH DUKE OF ARGYLL HAD THE VISION AND GREAT GENEROSITY TO RESTORE THE ABBEY AND CATHEDRAL AND RETURN IT ALL TO THE PEOPLE FOR ECUMENICAL WORSHIP**



This is not a direct criticism of the 8th Duke.

It is a statement on other's *hagiographic* (Saintly) gloss on him and their narrowness of cause and affect.

They make Irish panegyric (praise) poetry seem reserved.