R. Andrew McDonald

"FAR IS ROME FROM LOCHLONG": Gaels and Scandinavians on Pilgrimage and Crusade, c. 1000 - c. 1300

The thirteenth-century Gaelic poet Muiredach Albanach Ó Dalaigh, returning from travels in the eastern Mediterranean that included a pilgrimage to Rome, is supposed to have remarked, as he sat down at the head of Loch Long in Argyll, in western Scotland:

> As I sit on the hillock of Tears,
> Without skin on either toe or sole;
> O King! Peter and Paul!
> Far is Rome from Lochlong! (Mackintosh 190-191)

Were it not for the survival of other of Muiredach's verses in more contemporary versions, we might be inclined to regard the proverb as purely apocryphal, and relegate his Mediterranean cruise to the realm of Gaelic folklore. But the connection between a Gaelic bard of the thirteenth century and the lands ringing the Mediterranean immediately raises a host of other questions: if one Gaelic poet could undertake such an adventure, were there others, pilgrims or warriors as well as poets? To what extent was the Mediterranean *terra incognita* to the inhabitants of the fringes of northwestern Europe — Gaels and Scandinavians — in the central Middle Ages? The aim of this paper is to explore these basic questions, with particular emphasis on the centuries between A.D. 1000 and 1300, a period that coincides with the so-called "Golden Age" of pilgrimage in the eleventh century, and the era of the Crusades, that remarkable phenomenon which brought northern Europe back into close contact with the Mediterranean between 1095 and 1291.

Background: Gaelic and Scandinavian Contacts with the Mediterranean Before A.D.1000

Before addressing these basic questions, however, it is appropriate to begin by considering an earlier era, in order to demonstrate that traditions of Gaelic and Scandinavian contact with the Mediterranean did not emerge from a blank slate in the eleventh century. One example serves above all others to illustrate this fact. Sometime between 679 and 683 a bishop of Merovingian Gaul named Arculf, returning from extensive travels in the eastern Mediterranean, was driven by storms into the waters off the west coast of Britain. He eventually ended up on the tiny Hebridean island of Iona, where he was received warmly by the abbot of the monastic community there, Adamnan. During what appears to have been a comfortable sojourn on Iona, Arculf narrated his experiences to his host, who, as he says, "wrote it all down on tablets" (Meehan 36-37; Shirley-Price 293-95). From these notes, Adamnán produced a fascinating work entitled *De locis sanctis*. Popular enough in the Middle Ages that some twenty-two manuscripts survive today, the text is relatively little known, perhaps because Adamnán himself went on to bigger and better things, writing a *Life* of St. Columba of Iona, and promulgating his "Law of the Innocents" at the end of the seventh century (Smyth 123-137). The connections represented by *De locis sanctis* provide a wealth of information on the horizons of a place like Iona in the early Middle Ages: a Frankish bishop, shipwrecked on this Hebridean island, narrates to the Irish abbot his account of travels in the Holy Land, Alexandria, Crete, and Constantinople, thereby drawing together the diverse early medieval worlds of Byzantium, Islam, and Northwestern Europe.

In fact, it is evident from historical, literary, and archaeological sources that there were considerable cultural, economic, and religious links between Northwestern Europe and the Mediterranean from the fifth century. Iona, as we have seen, had close contacts with the eastern Mediterranean. Indeed, it might well be more than coincidence that this tiny island was one of the very few places in the early medieval west where motifs of the Virgin and Child, in stone (on St Martin's Cross) or parchment (the Book of Kells), were produced — inspired, it is thought, by an eastern original (Smyth 126-127). Archaeological excavations at the Dalriadic hillfort of Dunadd, a sixth-

to eighth-century high status site, have yielded the largest known collection of imported pottery (known as E-ware) from the southwest of France, as well as a lump of yellow orpiment (sulphide of arsenic), a pigment obtained from Italy and Asia Minor and used in the production of illuminated manuscripts (Laing and Laing 98). Excavations on Iona have turned up E-ware as well as the rim of a bowl produced in fifth- or sixth-century North Africa; as one archaeologist has written, "There was thus clearly a far-ranging trade network available in the sixth to eighth centuries, with ships sailing through the Irish Sea to bring wine, olive oil, and other goods in exchange for fine hides, wool, and, from lay communities, slaves" (Ritchie 43). Indeed, in the fifth and sixth centuries especially, the source of most of the pottery imported into Celtic Britain was the eastern Mediterranean (Alcock 208). Scandinavian contact with the east in the early Middle Ages is probably better known: Swedish merchants sailed up Russia's rivers to trade with the east, and their ranks were swelled by Viking mercenaries eager to join the Emperor's elite bodyguard at Constantinople. About a hundred rune-stones in Sweden commemorate men who died in the east and are good contemporary evidence of Viking activity there, but they do not usually indicate the purpose of the journey (Sawyer 1982, 113-30; Jones 241-68).

Given the transmarine contacts that linked Celtic Britain to the continent and the Mediterranean from the fifth century, it is not surprising that a longstanding tradition of pilgrimage from Britain to Rome and the Holy Land was already in existence by the eighth century (Moore 82). Two of the most well-known early pilgrims were Bishop Wilfrid of Hexham (c. 633-709) and Benedict Biscop (628-89), abbot of Wearmouth, but others are known and an exhaustive list would be very long indeed. Sometimes, of course, it is difficult to separate religious, cultural, and economic aspects of contact: on his fourth trip to Rome, in circa 671, Benedict Biscop "brought back a large number of books on all branches of sacred knowledge, some bought at a favourable price, others the gifts of well-wishers" (Webb and Farmer 188). It is this phenomenon that will serve as our point of departure, for it was an upsurge of pilgrims in the eleventh century that led to some of the most immediate and direct contacts between northwestern Europe and the Mediterranean.

Northern Pilgrims in the Mediterranean

Pilgrimage, defined simply as, "a journey undertaken from religious motives to a sacred place" (Kollek and Pearlman 10), is not, of course, exclusive to Christianity. But Christian pilgrims were making the trip to the Holy Land before the end of the fourth century, and by the seventh century the journey to Rome was common among Frankish and English nobles. In the wake of the passing of the Millennium a growing number of pilgrims were taking to the roads; as one historian has put it, "Since the Second Coming had failed to transpire in 1000 A.D., 1050 was a good year to visit the Eternal City" (Cowan 128). Indeed, the eleventh century was something of a Golden Age of pilgrimage, and it is clear from a variety of sources that many of the pilgrims on the roads to Rome and the Holy Land were Gaelic speakers from the northwest of Europe.

Irish scholars have long recognized that the decades from the 1020s to the 1060s are remarkable for the number of Irish princes and kings who made the trip to Rome (Hughes 255). In 1026 the king of Cenél Conaill embarked on pilgrimage to Clonfert; from Clonfert he travelled to Iona (still an important centre of pilgrimage in the Gaelic world), and finally, from Iona to Rome (MacAirt 192-93). This example is doubly interesting because it shows us how traditional, local shrines of pilgrimage could give way in the eleventh century to new, international sites, like Rome. A few years later, in 1028, Sitric Silkenbeard, the most famous king of the Ostmen of Dublin in the eleventh century (989-1036), set off for Rome, along with his neighbour, Flannacan, king of Brega in Meath (Hennessy 1:30-31), and in 1034, Amhlaíb, Sitric's son, "was slain by Saxons in going to Rome" (Hennessy 1: 36-37). Meanwhile, in 1030, Flaithbertach Ó Néill, king of Ailech, departed for Rome, returning in 1031; in Irish tradition he is known as Flaithbertach "of the pilgrim's staff" (Hennessy and McCarthy 1: 562-63). In 1051 Laighnen, king of Gailenga in Meath, along with his queen, went on pilgrimage to Rome, where he died, showing that women as well as men could and did make the journey (Hennessy 1: 49-51). Finally, in 1064 Donnchad, the son of the famous Munster king, Brian Boru, who was slain at the Battle of Clontarf on Good Friday 1014, departed for Rome, where he, too, died; his companion on the journey was Echmarcach, king of the Isle of Man. The Irish chronicler Marianus Scottus, writing on the

continent, recorded that, "Duncan, Brian's son, king of Ireland, and Echmarcach... men not ignoble among their own people, came to Rome, and died" (Anderson 1: 592).

Taken as a group, these Irish pilgrims to Rome in the first half of the eleventh century are striking indeed. One Irish scholar has remarked that, "no parallel is known... in any other century of Irish history" for the phenomenon (Gwynn 36); moreover, it was not confined to one particular region of Ireland, for pilgrims came from almost every province, and their doings were noted by chroniclers from every region. Two important and related issues concern the causes for the sudden upsurge of Irish pilgrims in the late 1020s, and the equally sudden decline after the 1060s. The passing of the Millennium might hold part of the answer, and certainly the eleventh century in general was a time of tremendous expansion across Europe as a whole, but some of the explanation must lie in specific events related to the opening of the pilgrim routes — which I will address in a moment. The decline of Irish pilgrims following Donnchad Ó Briain in 1064 proves more baffling, especially considering that the Irish Annals are particularly full and complete for the next 70 years. At least one historian, has sought the answer in the political events of England in the latter half of the eleventh century, and suggested that the decline of Irish pilgrims after the 1060s was a result of the attempts of the Norman kings and churchmen to dominate the Irish church, including the pilgrim routes (Gwynn 38). Whatever the case may be, there is certainly a striking absence of Irish pilgrims to Rome in the decades following 1064; not until the 1130s do we encounter further Irish pilgrims: in 1134, Ímar Ua hÁedacáin, a distinguished cleric from Armagh, "died on his pilgrimage to Rome" (Hennessy 1: 134-35). His disciple, St. Malachy (Máel Máedoc Ua Morgain, 1094-1148), the famous Irish saint and reformer, made the trip in 1138/39 and set off again in 1148 (Meyer 51-53, 84-89). It seems difficult to overstate the importance of these pilgrimages in Irish history — among other things they heralded closer contact between the Irish church and the continental reform movement (Hughes 256), a fact which is aptly represented by the death of St. Malachy of Armagh at Clairvaux in 1148 (Meyer 84-89), or the writing of a "Life of Malachy" by the formidable St. Bernard.

As impressive as is this roster of Irish pilgrims to Rome in the eleventh century, it would be a mistake to think that Irish

kings and princes were the only ones making their way to the Eternal City from the northwest. They were joined by Scottish and Scandinavian pilgrims, too. One of the most famous visitors to Rome from the north was surely the Dane Cnut, king of England from 1016 and of Denmark from 1019, who ruled this northern Empire until his death in 1035. He made at least one, and possibly two visits to Rome. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* states, in its brief entry for 1031, that "King Cnut went to Rome" (Garmonsway 156-57). But a letter of 26 March 1027, shows that Cnut was in Rome at that time (Whitelock 416-18), and, although the entry in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* might be misplaced, the most recent biographer of this formidable king does not rule out the possibility of two separate visits to the Eternal City (Lawson 100-104). In his letter, Cnut says, "I give most humble thanks to my Almighty God, who has granted me in my lifetime to visit his holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, and every sacred place which I could learn of within the city of Rome and outside it, and in person to worship and adore there according to my desire" (Whitelock 416-18). Among other things, Cnut goes on to state that he complained to the pope of the heavy taxes levied on northern pilgrims by Rudolf II, king of Burgundy, and that his grievances were supported by the Emperor Conrad II, whose coronation Cnut had attended. It would thus appear that Cnut was largely responsible for opening up the pilgrim roads from northern Europe to Rome, and his negotiations might well account for the upsurge of Irish pilgrimages beginning in the late 1020s (Gwynn 36-37). Certainly Cnut has been regarded as introducing a fashion for royal pilgrimages to Rome (Marsden 194).

A king of Strathclyde in the southwest of what is now Scotland had visited Rome in 975 (Anderson 1: 480), but a more famous Scottish pilgrim was Macbeth, the king of the Scots from 1040 to 1057, who, according to a contemporary and well-informed chronicler, "scattered money like seed to the poor at Rome" in 1050 (Anderson 1: 588). Persistent doubts about the authenticity of Macbeth's pilgrimage by generations of Scottish historians seem groundless when we place Macbeth in the larger eleventh century context of royal pilgrimages from the northwest to Rome. Peter Berresford Ellis offers speculation on Macbeth's activities in Rome, including an audience with the pope at Easter (75-77). While we may be fairly certain that, like Cnut, the Scottish king visited the holy places, the fact of

the matter is that we have no information at all on what transpired beyond the single, laconic line of the chronicler already cited. It may, however, be more than just coincidence that Macbeth's pilgrimage coincides with the approximate date at which the monastery of *Sanctae Trinitatis Scottorum* (Holy Trinity of the Scots and/or Irish) in Rome appears on the record (Wilmart 218-30). Although this foundation is often considered strictly in light of Irish pilgrimage, it is important to note that the division between Irish and Scots in this period was a largely artificial one, as Ireland and Scotland formed a single cultural area into the twelfth century (Hudson 1991, 63-64), and this monastery has been regarded as an important factor in drawing Gaelic rulers to Rome (Marsden 194). It has even been suggested that Macbeth's distribution of largesse was not as general as the chronicler Marianus implies, and that his patronage of this Gaelic monastery in Rome might be one reason Macbeth enjoyed a favourable report among contemporary chroniclers — who were, of course, churchmen (Hudson 1994, 142). Whether he should be linked with this Gaelic monastery in Rome or not, Macbeth was back in Scotland by 1052, when he took into his service some of those Normans who had recently been exiled from England (Kapelle 46).

By coincidence, it was also about 1050 that one of Macbeth's northern neighbours and persistent foes, Thorfinn "the Mighty," earl of Orkney (d. 1065), also set off for Rome. The story of Thorfinn's pilgrimage is recorded in the late twelfth or early thirteenth-century *Orkneyinga Saga*, which relates the history of the Norse earls of Orkney. The saga tells how, on a visit to the King of Denmark, Thorfinn announced his intentions, visited the Eternal City, had an audience with the pope, and "received absolution from him for all his sins." Upon returning home, Thorfinn was a changed man: "By now he was finished with piracy and devoted all his time to the government of his people and country and to the making of new laws." He also "built and dedicated to Christ a fine minster, the seat of the first bishop of Orkney" (Palsson and Edwards 74-75). The exact location of this church is a contentious issue for historians and archaeologists — there are two good candidates at Birsay on Orkney — but the remains of a church, possibly of mid-eleventh-century date, near the earl's residence at the Brough of Birsay, is a strong candidate. Whether or not this church is actually the structure built by earl Thorfinn is an open

question, but it certainly remains "a fine memorial to the piety of the converted Norse earls" (Crawford 184-190).

Apart from representing a fairly impressive roster of Gaelic, Scandinavian, or Hiberno-Norse rulers who made the pilgrimage from northwestern Europe to Rome in the eleventh century, what generalizations can be made from this list? First, there is the high status of the individuals concerned, and the question arises of whether this is an exclusively royal or noble phenomenon. The problem is not one of status, however, but rather of documentation, since the annalistic genre of medieval writing paid little attention to the doings of non-royal or non-noble individuals. In fact, there are a few, scattered references that offer tantalizing glimpses of lower-status individuals who were also making the trip from northwestern Europe to the Holy Land at about this time. In 946, for example, Otto I (936-73) granted a charter in favour of "certain servants of God coming from Scotia by grace of pilgrimage"[1] who wished to follow the Rule of St. Benedict, and communities of Irish monks abroad, especially in Germany, are a well-known phenomenon of the tenth and eleventh centuries (Hughes 253; Gwynn 42-43). One of the more prominent of these Irish exiles included Marianus Scottus (Máel Brigte), who settled in Cologne in 1056 before moving to Fulda in 1059 and ending up in Mainz in 1069 where he died (Anderson 1: lxxvii-lxxviii). Marianus is notable for his chronicle (*Chronicon*), which included information on Gaels abroad — and is, incidentally, our only source of information on Macbeth's pilgrimage. Finally, there is an interesting entry in the Irish Annals for 1095 which states enigmatically that "Eógan head of the monks of the Gaedil in Rome" died (MacAirt 254-55); this cryptic passage is illuminated by late eleventh-century documents from the small Roman monastery of Santa Maria in Palladio on the Palatine hill which include a list of names of Irish monks (Gwynn 38).

Second, we should also note that Rome is the most common pilgrimage destination (apart from the local shrines like Clonmacnoise, which were always popular). With few exceptions, Jerusalem and the Holy Land do not appear to have been popular destinations in the eleventh century, at least for Gaels,

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[1] The term *Scotia* in a tenth-century context refers to Ireland; even as late as the twelfth century the term *Scoti* could refer to either Irish or Scots.

Scandinavians, and Hiberno-Norse — although a few made the journey, including a king of the Déisi who "went to Jerusalem" in 1080 (MacAirt 234-35). This would change in the twelfth century of course, in the wake of the success of the First Crusade, but Rome rather than Jerusalem seems to have captured the imagination of the eleventh century pilgrims from the northern world.

Finally, there is the question of motivation. With very few exceptions, the sources are silent on this important issue. We must therefore fit the motivation of these eleventh century travellers into the larger context of devotional or, from the eighth century, penitential pilgrimages; the desire to be healed at the shrine of a powerful saint, or else just plain curiosity, no doubt also played their parts. Cnut's pilgrimage(s), for example, have been seen by historians as part of an attempt by the king to present himself as a thoroughly Christian ruler: it is worthwhile bearing in mind that Christianity was only a few generations old in Denmark at the time of Cnut's succession, and although he was probably Christian at the time he took the throne of England, it would have been important for him, in the face of the ancient and well established English church, to play up his Christian image. Here is what he says in his letter of 1027:

> I have accomplished this [pilgrimage] because I learned from wise men that the holy Apostle Peter had received from the Lord great power to bind and to loose, and was the keeper of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and I considered it very profitable diligently to seek his special favour before God. (Whitelock 416-417)

As a modern biographer has stated, Cnut was shrewd enough to know that "good religion could be good politics, good politics could require good religion, and there can be no question that Cnut threw himself into certain aspects of his role with zest" (Lawson 133).

In the case of Donnchad Ó Briain, who went to Rome in 1064, the political context is particularly important: in the power struggles that followed Brian Boru's death in 1014, Donnchad was muscled aside by his rival Diarmait mac Máel na mBó (king of Leinster, 1047-72) and eventually forced to abdicate in 1064. His pilgrimage was evidently an exile from which it was expected the ousted king would never return. In

this context it is interesting to note that Donnchad's companion on the pilgrim roads was Echmarcach, king of Man, who also had been ousted by Diarmait in 1061 (Duffy 38-39). Another northern exile who took to the pilgrim routes was Swein Godwinson, the brother of Harold Godwinson, king of England for nine months in 1066. Swein and other members of his family had fled England during a downturn in their fortunes in 1051; contemporary sources note that he had gone from Bruges to Jerusalem and died of exposure in Lycia on his way home (Garmonsway 182; Stephenson 1987, 123). It would appear that the political exiles made up some of the traffic on the pilgrim roads.

Efforts have been made to view the pilgrimage of Macbeth as an act of penance for either the slaying of King Duncan, his predecessor, in 1040, or the suppression of the revolt of Duncan's father, Crinan, abbot of Dunkeld, in 1045, in the course of which Crinan, was killed (Ellis 74-75). Unfortunately not a shred of evidence in support of either theory survives, and it is just as likely that Macbeth was doing what so many of his neighbours with more or less settled kingdoms had done in the course of the eleventh century — making a devotional pilgrimage to Rome in the wake of the Millennium.

We cannot leave the eleventh century without considering one final and very formidable northern visitor to the Mediterranean: Harald Sigurdsson, also known as Hardrada (Hard Ruler), the king of Norway who was renowned as the greatest warrior in northern Europe at the time of his death at the battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066. Most of our information on Harald's career comes from his saga, which forms part of Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, a series of royal biographies of the rulers of Norway from the half-mythical past up to 1177, but other corroborative information is provided by contemporary Byzantine sources.

Harald's career began at the age of 15, when he fought alongside his half-brother, King Olaf, at the battle of Stiklestad in 1030. In the wake of the defeat of the royal forces, Harald became a fugitive, fleeing first to Sweden, then to Russia, and eventually making his way to Constantinople. One of Harald's court poets captured the scene as the Viking ships arrived at the great city, illustrating something of the fascination that Byzantium held for the Scandinavians:

The great prince saw ahead
The copper roofs of Byzantium;
His swan-breasted ships swept
Towards the tall-towered city.

(Magnusson and Palsson 48)

Harald served in the Varangian guard for about nine years, fighting in campaigns against the Muslims in Sicily between 1038-40 and against the Bulgars in 1041. Harald's *Saga* tells how he campaigned in the Holy Land, swam in the River Jordan, and gave treasure generously to several sacred sites (Magnusson and Palsson 59-60). Unfortunately the saga seems to be unreliable here, and Byzantine sources, which mention the campaigns in Sicily and Bulgaria, know nothing of campaigns in Palestine (which are almost certainly entirely fictitious). Moreover, in 1036 the Emperor had renewed a treaty with the Caliph whereby the Byzantines were allowed to make repairs to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Under these circumstances it is difficult to see how Harald could have been fighting in the Holy Land, although some historians have seen his role as that of the commander of a Varangian escort for Byzantine craftsmen (Runciman 1: 47). Perhaps the saga, which is not contemporary, inflated this escort duty into full-fledged battle, but whatever the case may have been, Byzantine sources note that even after returning to the north, Harald "kept faith and friendship towards the Romans" (Davidson 209).

Harald was neither the first nor the last warrior from the North to make his presence felt in the Mediterranean, but his career reveals just what sort of an impact the Scandinavians could make in the East — and what an impact it could make on them. The Varangians had a tradition of service to the emperor stretching back to the late 980s, and Harald's employment in Imperial service was nothing unusual (Davidson 177-192). Whether we should regard Harald as moved by the same sort of motivations that inspired most pilgrims to visit Rome and the Holy Land is, however, doubtful. He was more likely interested in fame and booty — certainly the latter was foremost on his mind during his years in Byzantium. After returning to the North, he is reputed to have gathered "a hoard of wealth so immense that no one in northern Europe had ever seen the like of it in one man's possession before" (Magnusson and

Palsson 64). But whether these motives were mixed inextricably with religious ones it is difficult to tell. A foremost historian of the Crusades, Sir Steven Runciman, notes that the habit had arisen among the Varangians of spending a leave in the Holy Land (Runciman 1: 47), and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Harald Hardrada did indeed bathe in the Jordan in the custom of pilgrims. Whatever the case may be, no account of visitors to the eastern Mediterranean in the eleventh century would be complete without the figure of Harald Sigurdsson, whose career certainly demonstrates some of the complex links that existed between the Mediterranean and the North in this period (Davidson 207-229; Haywood 124-25).

Gaels and Scandinavians on Crusade

Within fifty years of the departure of Harald Hardrada from Constantinople, the Crusades reintroduced northern Europe to the eastern Mediterranean on a large scale. From 1095, when the First Crusade was launched, until the fall of the last Christian outpost in the Holy Land in 1291, the Crusading movement was a dominant theme in both European and Mediterranean history. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of the causes, course, and consequences of the Crusades. In summary, the Crusading movement has its immediate origin in 1095, when the First Crusade was launched in late November at the Council of Clermont, where Pope Urban II called for the recovery of the Holy Places from the Muslims. Within four years the crusaders had attained their goal: Jerusalem fell on 15 July, 1099. From then until 1291 there was a continual Christian presence in the Holy Land, but from the mid-twelfth century the Crusader states were gradually eroded as the Muslims won back territories in piecemeal fashion. Despite numerous subsequent expeditions to the Holy Land, by 1291 Acre was the only significant Christian stronghold in Palestine, and it fell in May of that year. The Crusading ideal retained much of its appeal in the centuries after 1291, but the Christians never succeeded in recapturing the Holy Land, and the fourteenth and fifteenth century Crusades had other objectives. The fall of Acre in 1291, therefore, is a significant event in the history of the Crusades, and so provides a convenient terminus for our investigation.

With the period of the Crusades, a paradox emerges in our investigation. On the one hand, as we have seen, there were abundant contacts between the northwest of Europe and the Mediterranean in the eleventh century, so that the Mediterranean was hardly *terra incognita* to the Gaels and Scandinavians; indeed, for the Scandinavians, at least, it probably represented a land of adventure. But on the other hand, modern historians have generally had little to say of Gaelic and Scandinavian participation in the Crusading Movement, partly because it is thought that the call of Clermont came at a time when these regions were isolated from the centre of western Christendom. The Irish historian Michael Dolley has written:

> On 15 July 1099, to shouts of "God wills it," a random and ragged but reasonably representative array of the chivalry of Western Europe stormed Jerusalem...We should not be surprised that there were no Irishmen among these knights, and the event was in fact ignored by contemporary chroniclers. (1)

Such a statement seems difficult to accept on two counts. First, there was the strong tradition of pilgrimage from the northwest to the Mediterranean that has already been discussed. And second, there is the fact that, to contemporaries, at least, the Crusades were seen in terms of armed pilgrimages and the Crusaders as armed pilgrims: "The crusade was a logical extension of the pilgrimage. It would never have occurred to anyone to march out to conquer the Holy Land if men had not made pilgrimages there for century after century" (Mayer 14-15). Given these facts, it is almost impossible to see how northwestern Europe could have remained uninfluenced by the Crusading movement, and, indeed, historians like MacQuarrie, McRoberts, and Riant have shown that the northwest did not stand aloof from the contemporary zeal for the Crusades.

Although Pope Urban had aimed his appeal most directly at the French nobility, and the recruiting for the First Crusade was conducted mainly in France, early chroniclers indicate that the call of Clermont in November 1095 extended throughout western Europe, and word reached the British Isles in early 1096. The early twelfth-century English chronicler William of Malmesbury described how, "The Welshman left his hunting; the Scot his fellowship with vermin; the Dane his drinking party; the Norwegian his raw fish" in order to join the crusade

(Stephenson 1989, 86). Although William is somewhat notorious for his derogatory characterizations of England's neighbours, his account is in line with many others, which all suggest that the First Crusade, if primarily a Frankish endeavour, also had an international dimension: "Enthusiasm for the crusade was most intense in France, Italy, and western Germany, but few areas of Latin Christendom were entirely unaffected" (Bull 33).

One of the more interesting accounts of the northern participants on the Crusade comes from Guibert of Nogent (c. 1053-1124), abbot of the monastery of Nogent, who wrote a history of the First Crusade (*Gesta Dei Per Francos*) in which he described some of the strange folk that could be seen passing through Europe in the early twelfth century:

> You might see the soldiers of the Scots, fierce in their own country, unwarlike elsewhere, bare-legged, with their shaggy cloaks, a scrip hanging *ex humeris*, coming from their marshy homeland, and presenting the help of their faith and devotion to us, to whom their numerous arms would be ridiculous. (Migne 156: 686; trans. Duncan 211)

The remarks of Guibert are interesting on several levels. Most importantly, they suggest some Scottish participation in the First Crusade — for even though the term *Scoti* could still be used to refer to the Irish as late as the twelfth century, Guibert uses it in another context to refer to Scots (Duncan 211-12). But Guibert's comments also reveal something of how outlandish the Scots seemed to their contemporaries on the continent: he goes on to relate how uncouth their language was and how they had to indicate their intentions of participating on the Crusade by making the sign of the cross with their fingers. Part of the uncouth impression conveyed by the Scots abroad derived from their clothing, and it seems pretty clear from Guibert's observations that Scottish dress was well-known on the Continent by this time. There is, however, some dispute over whether the scrip carried *ex humeris* was hanging from the hip or the shoulder; if the former, we might have one of the earliest descriptions of that distinguishing Scottish accessory, the sporran! (Duncan 211-212; cf. MacQuarrie 1985, 10)

That Scottish dress was widely-known on the continent, probably by virtue of Scottish pilgrims or Crusaders travelling to the Holy Places, is illustrated by two other examples. In the first, the English chronicler Jocelin of Brakelond records how

abbot Samson of Bury St. Edmunds disguised himself as a Scot in order to pass through the territory of the anti-pope on his way to Rome: "But [abbot Samson says] I pretended that I was a Scot, and putting on Scottish garb, and bearing myself after the fashion of a Scot, I often thrust out my staff as if it were a javelin against those that mocked me, uttering threatening words after the fashion of the Scots..." (Butler 48-49). Once again we note the distinguishing Scottish garb, as well as the fact that the Scots were perceived by the Europeans to be rather uncouth. The second example sheds further light on the nature of Scottish garb. It comes from a twelfth-century Premonstratensian canon of Cambrai:

> In our own times in western Scotland not all of the people wear drawers, but all the knights and townsfolk do wear them; the rest make do with a general covering which is closed over at the front and back, but which underneath is open at the sides... This was related to me by certain clerics who had come from these parts...And it was clearly seen that some of these people, who were travelling through our land on pilgrimage, were not wearing drawers. (Migne 203: 730; trans. MacQuarrie 1985, 19)

If this passage represents the earliest known speculation on what the Scotsman wears under his kilt, it also provides other important information. Since the Crusaders were described by contemporaries as pilgrims, it is possible that the author was describing Scottish Crusaders making their way to the Holy Land. And since the work was written before 1183, it is likely that the author was describing Scottish participants on the Second Crusade (1145-49, and a truly international venture); some Scots are known to have taken part and joined an Anglo-Flemish fleet in early 1147. (MacQuarrie 1981, 134)

What is lacking from these rather generic accounts is a sense of exactly who these Scots and other northern participants were. The references are incidental, and it could be argued that they tell us more about Continental attitudes toward the Scots than they do about Scottish participation in the Crusade. Unlike the eleventh century, when the roster of pilgrims to Rome reads like a northern Who's Who, by the twelfth century biographical details are hard to come by. This might well be accounted for by the fact that the First Crusade was almost exclusively a noble rather than a royal venture, and also that it coincides with a period when, for the Scottish sources, at least,

our information is at a premium. In fact, only one northern participant in the First Crusade is known by name. This was Lagmann, the son of the mighty Godfrey Crovan, the king of Man and the Isles who died in 1095. Lagmann had blinded and castrated one of his brothers in a power struggle, but later, possibly in 1096, he repented of his actions, "and resigned his kingdom voluntarily: and, marked with the sign of the Lord's cross, took the road to Jerusalem; where he also died" (Anderson 2: 98). Because the chronology of the Manx chronicle, our source for this information, is so confused at this point, it is difficult to date Lagmann's journey precisely, and accordingly to know whether Lagmann went as penitential pilgrim or armed crusader. I am less sure than some historians (MacQuarrie 1985, 11) that Lagmann actually participated in the crusade, but we cannot rule out this possibility, either.

Whatever the case may have been, we do not know how Lagmann and the other northern Crusaders fared subsequently; but the chronicler Fulcher of Chartres, himself a participant in the Crusade, included Scots among his list of the various peoples trekking across Asia Minor in 1097 (Ryan 88). After this, we lose sight of the northern Crusaders; we do not know whether they endured the siege of Antioch in 1098, or whether they were among those who stormed the walls of Jerusalem in July of 1099. Tantalizing clues in the archaeological and written records suggest that some Scots, at least, participated in the climactic events of the Crusades. A North African coin bearing the date AH 491 (AD 1097) was uncovered in the churchyard at Monymusk, Aberdeenshire; it was nearly uncirculated at the time of its burial, and one possible interpretation is that it represents a souvenir brought back by a Scottish Crusader (Mac Quarrie 1985, 12). Moreover, there is a most curious entry in the Irish *Annals of Inisfallen* under the year 1105: "In the above year a camel, an animal of remarkable size, was brought from the king of Alba to Muirchertach Ó Briain [king of Thomond, 1086-1119]" (MacAirt 262-63). Among other things, this entry raises the question of how the king of Alba, that is, Edgar, king of Scots from 1097 to 1107, acquired a camel, and not surprisingly some historians have seen the arrival of this exotic beast in Scotland as somehow connected to the return of Scottish Crusaders from the Holy Land in the years around 1100 (MacQuarrie 1985, 12). Once again, the timing is certainly coincidental and the explanation plausible, but other means of ac-

counting for a camel in Scotland might be found. Henry I of England (1100-1135) kept a menagerie of exotic animals including lions, leopards, lynxes, camels, and a porcupine (Poole 19), and since Henry had married Matilda, the sister of Edgar in 1101 (Anderson 2: 120-121), it seems possible that the camel came to Scotland as a gift from the English monarch rather than with a returning Scottish Crusader. These examples hardly stand as concrete proof of Scottish participation in the Crusade, but they might be interpreted as such. What they do demonstrate, however, is the fragmentary nature of the evidence and the difficulties in interpreting it.

At this point it is necessary to pause in order to consider briefly how the geographical parameters of our investigation were in flux from the twelfth century. Thus far, when the term "Gaels" has been used, it has referred to the peoples of the Gaelic-speaking regions of Northwestern Europe, in particular Ireland and almost all of Scotland. But in the course of the twelfth century, the expanse of territory in which Gaelic was spoken began to recede, which means that the region under consideration in this paper was, in effect, shrinking. In Scotland this process began in about 1100, and was brought about by many factors, so that, by the fourteenth century, Gaelic had receded to the highlands while English (Scots) dominated in the lowlands (McNeill and MacQueen, 426-7). In Ireland, beginning in the second half of the twelfth century, the establishment of the English colony not only limited the areas in which Gaelic was spoken, but also provided a major crisis that would preoccupy the native Irish chieftains for centuries. Accordingly, while in the eleventh century the term Gaeldom was synonymous with virtually all of Ireland and almost all of Scotland, by about 1200-1250 this was no longer the case. From about 1200 onward, then, it was possible, and quite common, for non-Gaelic speakers to set off on pilgrimage or Crusade from both Ireland and Scotland (one example would be John, bishop of Glasgow, who set off for Rome and the Holy Land in 1122 and returned in 1123 (Anderson 2: 164-65). Our focus, however, will remain firmly fixed on the Gaidhealtacht (Gaelic-speaking areas), as well as the Scandinavian north.

The work of Alan MacQuarrie has shown that Scotland was an active participant in the crusading movement, but it is notable that after the First Crusade, Gaelic involvement became much less prominent. Almost all of the Scottish Crusaders

after about 1100 came, not from the Gaelic-speaking regions, but rather from the Anglo-Norman families who had settled in Scotland beginning in the early twelfth century. We know by name no Gaelic-speaking Scots who made the trip in the twelfth century, although, as the passages cited earlier suggest, that does not mean none went. But we do know of at least one Scottish king who was keen to go on Crusade: David I (1124-1153). David was the youngest son of King Malcolm III and Queen Margaret, and the brother of King Edgar who received the camel in 1105. Born in Scotland in the 1080s, he was raised at the court of the Norman kings of England, and accordingly had one foot in both Anglo-Norman and Gaelic camps — a "balance of new and old" as one historian has seen him (Barrow 1985). When, in 1144, Edessa fell to the Muslims, the news shocked western Europe and the call went out for a new Crusade, spearheaded by the formidable Cistercian saint and scholar, St. Bernard of Clairvaux (c. 1090-1153). David seems to have been moved by the appeal, and a well-informed and contemporary source relates how, "he would have resigned his throne, laid down his sceptre, and betaken himself to holy warfare on the spot where Our Lord suffered and rose again, had he not been turned back by the advice of priests and abbots..." It is further noted that, "though he was kept back in body, he was not in mind and wishes." (Skene 234). Judging by David's generosity to the military religious orders, this is true: he was a patron of both the Templars and Hospitallers, granting them lands and holding them in high esteem (MacQuarrie 1985, 15-17; Cowan, Mackay, and MacQuarrie xix-xx, xxviii-ix).

Moving into the heart of the Gaidhealtachd, in the Hebrides, we find a candidate for a Gaelic Crusader in the person of Ranald MacSorley, the king of the Isles who died sometime in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The evidence for Ranald's departure on Crusade does not, at first sight, inspire a great deal of confidence, consisting as it does of seventeenth-century MacDonald tradition, where it is said that Ranald "received a cross from Jerusalem" (Cameron 157). We might be inclined to dismiss the reference altogether as fabrication, but it has been shown that these clan histories do contain kernels of historical evidence, and that they correspond remarkably well with the general outline of historical events (Sellar 137). It is known, too, that the Fourth Crusade was preached in Ireland in

1201-02, and that John de Courcy, the Lord of Ulster, departed in 1204 (Hennessy 1: 222-23, 234-35). Given Ranald's status as a sea-king and the maritime connections he maintained, it is not impossible that he heard of the Crusade and decided to take part. If we should doubt that a supposedly barbaric, piratical, sea-king on the furthest fringes of western Europe might be moved by contemporary religious impulses, we might take note of the fact that Ranald was a patron of Benedictine monks, Augustinian canonesses, and Cistercian monks, showing that he was imbued with a piety and religious sensitivity typical of the age (McDonald, 218-23). Moreover, sometimes even the doings of great men on Crusade were poorly recorded: William Marshal (1147-1219) spent two years in the Holy Land, but his biography (the only surviving biography, save one, of a layman of that time who was not a king) is silent on what he did there (Crouch 49-52).

Taken altogether, the Scottish evidence shows that, on the one hand, there was at least some Scottish involvement in the Crusades, but on the other hand, few Gaelic-speaking Scots seem to have taken part. In part this is, no doubt, an illusion created by the nature of the sources. After 1100 we possess less evidence from the highlands and Gaelic-speaking regions and an abundance from the lowland areas of the kingdom; our view is slanted toward the latter at the expense of the former (Barrow 1981, 13-16). If we look hard enough and dig deep enough, we can find a few shreds of evidence to suggest that even the inhabitants of the highlands and islands could participate in the crusading movement, and it would be wrong to view these areas as isolated backwaters divorced entirely from the rest of medieval Europe and the Mediterranean. Indeed, there is a rich body of folklore which links the Scottish Gaidhealtachd with the Crusades, and if it is impossible to seek much by way of fact behind the legends, this material reveals that the crusading movement captured the imagination of Gaelic Scotland along with the rest of western Europe (MacQuarrie 1981, 130-31).

With Ireland the problem of the "two nations" makes itself keenly felt. As one of the very few historians to inquire into Irish involvement in the Crusades has noted, and despite the comments of Dolley already cited, men from Ireland certainly participated in the Crusades, but those whose names we know are mainly Anglo-Norman or Anglo-Irish (Costello, 263-77). Of

native or Gaelic-Irish Crusaders and pilgrims there is much less evidence. No doubt the English conquest of Ireland, which began in the late 1160s and forms a major theme in Irish medieval history, deflected much of the Irish chieftains' attention away from such far-flung objectives as Jerusalem and toward more immediate ones in their own backyards. As a result, it is probably not terribly surprising that we find little in the way of native Irish involvement in the Crusades in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, although there are still references in the Irish Annals to Irish pilgrims setting off on their journeys. In 1216, for example, Irish Annals record that Echdonn Mac Gilla Uidir, archbishop of Armagh (1202-16) died in Rome, while two more men with native Irish names (Gilla Croichefraich and the priest O'Celli) died after they had "crossed themselves and determined to go to the river (Jordan)" (Hennessy 1: 254-55). In 1224 Áed, the son of Conchobar Máenmaige, the king of Connacht, died while returning from Jerusalem (Hennessy 1: 270-71), possibly having taken part in the Fifth Crusade. Flaithbertach Ó Flannagáin died after taking the cross in 1231, while Ualgarg Ó Ruairc, king of Bréifne, died in pilgrimage on the way to Jerusalem in the same year (Hennessy 1: 306-09). And in 1249 Máel Muire Ó Lachnain, Archbishop of Tuam (1236-49), died; he was described in his *obit* as a "palmer from Jordan stream" (Freeman 101). It is interesting that many of those just discussed were ecclesiastics, and that there is very little direct evidence for native Irish involvement in military aspects of the Crusade. If Ireland was not totally divorced from contemporary affairs, it is also probably true to say that its turbulent history in the later Middle Ages prevented many from embarking on Crusade. With native Irish chieftains locked in struggle against the English, it would seem that older traditions of pilgrimage continued while military participation in the Crusades was limited at best.

If we know relatively little of Gaelic, and especially Irish, Crusaders from c. 1100 to 1300, more is known of Scandinavian participants in the Crusades. King Eirik of Denmark had been to Rome twice and Bari once (to visit the shrine of St. Nicholas) before setting off for Jerusalem. After stopping at Constantinople where he addressed the Varangian guard and received relics from the emperor, he departed for Jerusalem, but died at Cyprus in 1103 (Christiansen 102-104). More prominent Scandinavian Crusaders of the twelfth century were Sigurd,

the King of Norway (d. 1130) and Rognvald, earl of Orkney (d. 1158).

Sigurd was the son of Magnus Barelegs, and succeeded jointly, along with his two brothers, on the death of their formidable father in 1103. The saga of Magnus's sons, part of Heimskringla, relates how, soon after the succession of the three brothers, some Norse mercenaries who had been abroad in Palestine and Byzantium returned, their tales of wealth and opportunity striking a chord at the Norwegian court. These mercenaries requested that either Sigurd or his brother, Eystein, should lead an expedition to the eastern Mediterranean, and so it was that in 1107 Sigurd set out from Bergen with some sixty ships. Calling at England, Castile, Portugal, Ibiza, and Minorca on his way, Sigurd also stopped off for a visit with Duke Roger of Sicily, before finally arriving in Palestine in the early summer of 1110 (Hollander 688-94). Fulcher of Chartres mentions the arrival of "Norwegian people," "whom God had inspired to make the pilgrimage from the Western Sea to Jerusalem," at Joppa with fifty-five ships (Ryan 199). The saga proudly relates that, "King Sigurth [sic] crossed the Greek Sea on his way to Palestine, then marched up to Jerusalem and there met Balduin [sic], the king of Jerusalem. King Balduin received Sigurth most graciously, and with him rode to the River Jordan." (Hollander 695-96). During his stay in the Holy Land, Sigurd was entertained by Baldwin, received a splinter of the True Cross, and assisted with the siege and capture of Sidon in December. On the return trip, Sigurd stopped off at Byzantium, where he was treated to the spectacle of games at the hippodrome as the emperor's guest. It is interesting to note that, because Sigurd had presented his ships to the emperor as a gift, the return journey was made overland. The saga sums up its account of Sigurd's adventure with the comment that, "It was thought that no more honourable expedition had ever sailed from Norway than this one" (Hollander 696-98). Indeed, Sigurd's career became the stuff of legend and emulation: he has gone down in Scandinavian history as Sigurd "Jorsalafarer" or Jerusalem-farer.

The deeds of Rognvald, earl of Orkney (and the grandson of earl Thorfinn), are equally heroic; in fact, at many points they mirror those of King Sigurd. Whether this is because Rognvald set out to deliberately emulate the Jerusalem-farer or whether it is because the *Orkneyinga Saga* was used as a source by Snorri

Sturluson, the author of Heimskringla, is not entirely clear; but Rognvald's Crusade, dated by historians to 1151-53, is certainly not in doubt. Rognvald was the last Scandinavian leader to visit Constantinople and the Holy Land. His adventure began in similar fashion to that of Sigurd, with mercenaries from Byzantium returning to tell their (by now familiar) tale of wealth and opportunity. One of these adventurers, Eindridi, urged Rognvald to take up the challenge: "Men of ability like you are just the kind who ought to go there [the Holy Land]. It would bring you great respect if you were to mix with people from the noblest families." It was about two years before the expedition finally got underway, and included in Rognvald's company was the Paris-educated bishop William of Orkney, invited, we are told, because the Earl wanted him as an interpreter — an interesting sidelight on what must have been a common problem for the northern crusaders. This was, evidently, a large-scale expedition. It included no less than fifteen ships, specially made in Norway, and the Earl's ship was magnificently decked out with gold inlay. The journey was an exciting one, with fighting and plunder on the way. Once through the straits of Gibraltar, Eindridi parted company with the earl; Rognvald and his ships sailed to Africa, where, just off the coast, there was a memorable battle with a giant Muslim merchant ship called a dromond, which yielded still more booty. After a brief stop at a Muslim city for trading purposes, the fleet finally reached Acre. One of Rognvald's companions made a verse as the Orkneymen waded ashore:

> Now swiftly and surely
> my shield's borne
> alongside the Earl
> to ocean-sprayed Acre.

From Acre the earl and his companions made their way to Jerusalem and visited the Holy Places, including the River Jordan, where they bathed. As they approached Jerusalem, the earl himself composed a rhyme:

> A cross on this bard's
> breast, on his back
> a palm branch: peacefully
> we pace the hillside.

Like Sigurd, Rognvald and his party made a stop at Byzantium as part of their return itinerary; from there they went to Rome, and then departed for home overland (Palsson and Edwards 155-182).

On the surface, at least, Eirik, Sigurd, and Rognvald appear more in the mold of pilgrims and crusaders than did their predecessor, Harald Hardrada. King Eiric of Denmark, for instance, sought entry into the city of Constantinople "for the purpose of worshipping at its holy places, stating that he was brought to the place chiefly through his love of religious exercises" (Christiansen 102). King Sigurd reverently accepted a splinter of the True Cross, while the warlike Rognvald composed some very unwarlike verses near Jerusalem. Yet perhaps, beneath the surface, little had changed after all. Fame and booty, those driving engines of pagan Scandinavian society, are as much in evidence in Sigurd's and Rognvald's expeditions as they were in Harald Hardrada's. Both Sigurd and Rognvald were motivated by the promise of fame and fortune to be had in the east. Sigurd and his followers on several occasions carried off "much booty" as they emerged victorious from various encounters on their way to the Holy Land. And Earl Rognvald and his men fretted that "they hadn't searched the dromond carefully enough for money and that all the gold and silver had melted in the fire" as they watched the Muslim ship sink, burning, beneath the waves off the North African coast (Palsson and Edwards 177). The desire for fame is deemed praiseworthy in a bragging match in which Sigurd engaged with his brother soon after returning home. Comparing their feats, Sigurd boasts, "It is people's opinion that the expedition abroad which I undertook has been a rather chieftainly one. Meanwhile, you stayed at home as though you were the daughter of your father." Later Sigurd states that "I journeyed to the River Jordan and swam across it. And beyond, on the river bank, there is a thicket, and there I tied a knot and spoke words over it to the effect that you were to undo it, brother, or else have such challenge as was laid on it" (Hollander 703-04). The swimming of the river and the tying of the knot were seen as proof that a pilgrim had kept the vow, but could also, as we see here, be turned into a boast and a challenge to those who had not undertaken the adventure. In short:

> It becomes apparent that the Christian kings and jarls from the North on pilgrimage were not so different after all from earlier Vikings who sought out Constantinople as the place where they might win wealth and renown and establish their superiority over those who had remained at home. (Davidson 265)

While it may seem difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile these disparate images of the Scandinavian Crusaders, the issue may be brought into focus by considering the tremendous changes that had been wrought in Scandinavian society between 800 and 1100. In the ninth century the Vikings were outsiders, pagan raiders for whom violence was a fact of life and the Christian sanctuaries readily accessible sources of wealth. By the twelfth century, the Vikings had been assimilated into the Christian framework of western Europe, but the process, while complete, had also been syncretic, as aspects of the pagan past were grafted into the Christian framework (Brown 299-320, Fletcher 228-84, 369-416). Indeed, as one expert has put it: "The pacifying effects of Christianity may be doubted" (Sawyer 1989, 17). Hence, I think, the dualistic nature of these Scandinavian ventures, appearing at once as both plundering forays and expressions of devotion. Indeed, the Crusade, in essence a holy war fought against the enemies of Christ, may well have offered an outlet for traditional Norse activities no longer deemed acceptable within the Christian framework of western European society in the twelfth century. By embarking on Crusade, then, the Scandinavians could at once satisfy the desire for plunder and fame, while demonstrating their piety by visiting the holy places. The biggest irony of all may well be that the Vikings, who started out in the ninth century as pagan raiders of Christian sanctuaries, ended up in the twelfth century as Christian warriors taking on the Muslims!

But whatever the motivation of these Scandinavian adventures, it is important not to underestimate their contribution to the crusading movement as a whole. This is especially true for Sigurd, who was the first western European ruler to visit the Holy Land in the wake of the success of the First Crusade in 1099 and the establishment of the Latin Kingdom. One of the great problems faced by the Latin rulers of Jerusalem was a lack of manpower: many Crusaders, having embarked for the Holy Land and having reached their objective, turned around and headed home; many others, whose fortunes took a downturn on

the roads to Jerusalem, never reached their objective or left their bones in foreign lands (Riley-Smith 61-63). According to Fulcher of Chartres, King Baldwin was delighted when the Norwegians arrived, and requested their aid in the siege of Sidon. Sigurd is said to have replied that, "wherever the king wished to go with his army, there they [the Norwegians] would gladly go by sea at the same time...." Fulcher goes on to report that the Norwegians blockaded the port by sea while Baldwin's forces encircled it by land, and the Muslim inhabitants were eventually forced to capitulate (Ryan 199; Babcock and Krey 1: 486).

References to the rank and file of Crusaders and pilgrims from the north are, not surprisingly, rare. The annals and sagas were interested in the activities of high-status individuals like kings and jarls, bishops and abbots, and had little to say about the lower-status travellers from the north. Occasionally, however, there are chance references, like those of Guibert or Fulcher already cited, or that which records, under the year 1144, that "pilgrims from Wales were drowned in the Sea of Greece, going as crusaders to Jerusalem" (Jones 119). And there is the remarkable testimonial of the fraternity book of the Benedictine abbey of Reichenau, located on a little island on the western arm of Lake Constance. This lists the names of some 40 000 pilgrims who visited the abbey on their way to Rome in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: about 700 of those pilgrims had Scandinavian names; they were mostly Danish, but with a few Norwegians and Icelanders mixed in (Liebgott 110-111).

The whole topic can be drawn together and brought into focus by considering some Gaelic poems composed in the Mediterranean in the thirteenth century. These verses serve as a stark reminder of the involvement of peoples from the northwest of Europe in the Crusades, and they also take us into the world of those lower-status Crusaders. The first poem was written by Gilla Brigde Albanach, a Scottish poet who was active in the first half of the thirteenth century. The second is by Muiredach Albanach Ó Dailaig, an Irish poet who ended up in Scotland and was active at about the same time. Both seem to have set off on the Fifth Crusade, which captured Damietta in 1219; it is possible that the Irish king Áed mac Conchobar Máenmaige, who died in 1224, also participated (MacQuarrie 1985, 37). Both poets reveal the human side of the Crusades, providing a valuable human perspective that stands in stark contrast to the

laconic chronicles and warlike sagas that have been cited throughout this essay.

Gilla Brigde captured the anxiety of the Crusaders as they sailed from Acre to Damietta in poor weather:

> Let us make a hard decision;
> these clouds are from the northeast;
> let us leave the bases of the rough mountains of Greece;
> let us strive to make Damietta.
>
> These clouds from the east are dark
> as they drive us from Acre;
> come, Mary Magdalen,
> and wholly clear the air. (Murphy 72)

Muiredach seemed to be in a melancholy, homesick mood as he composed his verses off Monte Gargano in the Adriatic:

> Help from Cruachain is far off
> across the wave-bordered Mediterranean sea;
> the journeying of spring separates us
> from those green-branched glens.
>
> I give God thanks...
> up against Monte Gargano;
> Between Monte Gargano and the fair-ditched land of Cruachain
> the distance is not small.
>
> It would be as the reward of heaven tonight,
> to touch Scotland of the lofty manors;
> that we might see the haven...
> Or whiff the air of Ireland. (Murphy 76)

How common these sentiments must have been among all Crusaders, not just Gaels and Scandinavians, we can, perhaps, only imagine.

The remark of Muiredach Albanach Ó Dailigh that, "Far is Rome from Lochlong," might well represent the view of generations of historians who have held that the northwestern periphery of Medieval Europe was too remote to share fully in contemporary trends like the Crusade, or to have much impact on events thousands of miles away in the Holy Land. Yet the very fact that the words are attributed to a Gaelic bard who had just returned from the Mediterranean — and who left behind the verses to prove it — shows just how unsteady are the

foundations of that particular interpretation. Whether embarking as penitential pilgrims or seeking employment with the Byzantine emperor, and whether joining the other peoples of Western Europe in the armies converging on Jerusalem at the end of the eleventh century or embarking on more individual adventures not directly associated with any particular Crusade, it is clear from scattered references in contemporary sources that the Mediterranean was not *terra incognita* to the Gaels and Scandinavians. Indeed, contemporary chroniclers betray, by their remarks on the outlandish nature of Scottish dress and speech, the fact that Gaelic pilgrims and Crusaders, if not ubiquitous, were at least not an uncommon sight on the continent in the twelfth century. Yet more important, perhaps, than simply compiling a prosopography of Gaelic and Scandinavian pilgrims and Crusaders of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, is an appreciation that, by participating in these movements, the Gaels and Scandinavians were entering fully into the mainstream of western European politics and society. And it is precisely in this light that we should see Muiredach's comment: the Mediterranean (Rome) was, indeed, a long way from northwestern Europe (Lochlong) in the thirteenth century (linguistically and culturally as well as geographically), but it would be wrong to overemphasize the extent to which the latter was isolated from the former. Professor Duncan's assessment of the Scottish situation seems applicable in the broader context of our examination: "...It seems clear that the call to the Holy War, going out from the Council of Clermont, must have reached Scotland, in no ineffective manner, at a time when its church was, as has hitherto been thought, divorced from the rest of Europe. It may be that...we shall have to reconsider the verdict of isolation...." (212). It is, then, difficult to sustain the thesis that the Gaelic and Scandinavian periphery of western Europe was a land apart in the Middle Ages. Indeed, such a sentiment might well have surprised a man like Muiredach Albanach Ó Dailigh, who boasted in a poem written shortly after his return to Ireland in about 1228:

> I come...
> From over the bright-surfaced Mediterranean;
> I am going round the world. (Bergin, 261)

University of Toronto

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