'CLOTHING FOR THE SOUL DIVINE':
BURIALS AT THE TOMB OF ST NINIAN

Excavations at Whithorn Priory, 1957–67

༄

Archaeology Report no 3

CHRISTOPHER LOWE

with specialist contributions by

Carol Christiansen, Gordon Cook, Magnar Dalland, Kirsty Dingwall, Julie Franklin, Virginia Glenn, David Henderson, Janet Montgomery, Gundula Müldner and Richard Oram

illustrations by

Caroline Norrman, Marion O'Neil, Thomas Small and Craig Williams

Edinburgh 2009

Chapter 8

The Medieval Bishops of Whithorn, their Cathedral and their Tombs

RICHARD ORAM

8.1 THE PRE-REFORMATION BISHOPS OF WHITHORN OR GALLOWAY

8.1.1 Introduction: historiographical background

Although the diocese of Whithorn is amongst the more poorly documented of Scotland's medieval sees, its bishops have been the subject of considerably more historical research than their counterparts in wealthier, more influential and better documented dioceses such as Moray, Aberdeen, St Andrews or Glasgow. Much of this research has been stimulated by the successive programmes of modern excavation at the ruins of their cathedral at Whithorn, commencing in 1949 with C A Ralegh Radford's work in the nave and at the extreme east end of the choir (Radford 1956). In conjunction with that work, which formed part of a Ministry of Works project aimed at improving public access to, and interpretation of, the ruins of the cathedral-priory and the Early Christian remains at St Ninian's Cave and Kirkmadrine, the late Gordon Donaldson produced a re-analysis of the medieval bishops and priors which considerably expanded upon the pioneering study of all Scottish pre-Reformation bishops by Bishop John Dowden (1912). Donaldson's work was undertaken at the beginning of Ralegh Radford's excavations and subsequently formed the core of the historical sections of the Ministry of Works' 'Blue Guide' to Whithorn and Kirkmadrine: indeed, it still does in its current revised form (Donaldson 1949; Radford & Donaldson 1953; Radford & Donaldson 1984).

Donaldson's study was followed through the 1950s by a cluster of articles relating to Whithorn and its medieval clergy. Most of this material came as offshoots of research in the York archiepiscopal registers and focused on particular episodes and details of procedures in elections and the administration of the see of Whithorn during episcopal vacancies in the pre-1300 period. The main contributor to this work was the American scholar Robert J Brentano, who explored the Whithorn–York relationship and, especially, the vacancy following the death of Bishop Henry in 1293 (Brentano 1952, 1953a, 1953b). The equally contentious vacancy and election of 1235 was the subject of a detailed

study by Anne Ashley (1959), which expanded significantly upon Donaldson's 1949 paper. After this fruitful decade, however, active research into the medieval episcopate at Whithorn appears to have ceased, with not even the exciting discovery of the series of high-status ecclesiastical burials in the east end of the cathedral ruins during Ritchie's 1957–67 excavations serving to stimulate fresh academic interest.

In the 1960s and 1970s, two major projects which focused on aspects of the medieval Scottish Church generally cast considerable fresh light on the bishops of Whithorn. The first was the second draft of the *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, edited by the late Donald Watt and published in 1969 by the Scottish Records Society (Watt 1969). This was a major collaborative project by members of the Scottish Medievalists and involved the identification in published and unpublished primary sources of data which would allow the careers of the senior secular clergy of the kingdom to be established with greater clarity. The second contribution was also a product of Donald Watt's endeavours. The *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Graduates to AD 1410* (Watt 1977) was a monumental exercise which charted the careers of most medieval clerical graduates down to the establishment of the first Scottish university. Watt's *Dictionary* pulled together information on several of the more obscure incumbents of the see in the 14th and 15th centuries as well as the more prominent individuals, but it presents its data from the perspective of the wider clerical community in Scotland rather than from the episcopate alone.

Renewed research commenced in 1983–8 with the present writer's PhD thesis on the *Lordship of Galloway c 1000 – c 1250*. This development coincided with the resumption of excavations at Whithorn in 1984 and then on a major scale from 1986, which led to 'spin-off' publications on the medieval diocese and its administrative institutions (eg Brooke 1987). The first new study of the pre-1250 bishops came in 1991 with publication of material extracted from the present writer's thesis (Oram 1991) and the late Donald Watt's major revision of his *Fasti* list published in the *Series Episcoporum* (Watt 1991). Commemoration of the nominal 1600th anniversary of the death of St Ninian in 1997 resulted in further examination of the medieval succession

of bishops of Whithorn, published as part of the Roman Catholic diocese of Galloway's celebrations in that year (Oram 1997). While more recent analysis has concentrated on the development of the Premonstratensian priory at Whithorn and its estates, the medieval bishops have continued to be a target of largely unpublished research. The following narrative outline of the careers of the bishops is a synthesis of the last six decades of research.

8.1.2 The bishops c 1128 to 1558 (Table 8.1)

Gille-aldan c 1128–1151x54

Whithorn's succession of medieval bishops begins in c 1128, when, after a silence of nearly 200 years in the surviving documentary records, reference to an un-named electus first occurs (Watt 1991, 24). The document, a letter from Pope Honorius II (1124–30), appears to have been written in response to an enquiry from the bishop-elect of Whithorn concerning his consecration (Raine 1894, iii, 48–9). Written in the midst of the growing controversy between the bishops of the Scottish Church and the Archbishops of York over the latter's claims to metropolitan supremacy over the former, it ordered the candidate to go to 'his appropriate (or proper) metropolitan', Archbishop Thurstan of York, to receive consecration. Shortly afterwards, the oath of obedience to Thurstan of one Gille-aldan, elect of Whithorn, is preserved in the York records (Raine 1894, iii, 60). Little is known about the origins or career of this

Table 8.1: The bishops of Whithorn, c. 1128 – 1558

Bishops	Dates	Place of burial
Gille-aldan	c 1128–1151x54	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Christian	1154–86	Holmcultram Abbey, Cumberland
John	1189–1209	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Walter	1209–35	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Gilbert	1235–53	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Henry	1253–93	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Thomas	1294–1324x26	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Simon	1326–55	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Michael	1355–8x59	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Thomas	1359–62	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Adam	1363–78	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
Thomas	1379–93x1406	Unknown (possibly in France)
Eliseus	1406–12x15	Unknown (probably in Whithorn)
Thomas	1415–20x22	Unknown (probably in Whithorn)
Alexander	1422–50	Unknown (probably in Whithorn)
Thomas	1450–8	Translated to Aberdeen in 1458, buried in Edinburgh
Ninian	1458–80x82	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
George	1482–1508	Unknown (probably Whithorn)
David	1508–26	Unknown
Henry	1526–41	Unknown (possibly Dundrennan or Whithorn)
Andrew	1541–58	Unknown (perhaps Edinburgh)

man, the circumstances of his election or the nature of the community over which he presided, other than that his name points to a probably local background and an association with the Cuthbert cult in Galloway (Oram 2000, 164–5, 170–4). It was probably during Gille-aldan's episcopate that work commenced on the new cathedral church at Whithorn and it was perhaps there that he was buried sometime between June 1151, when he is last noted as alive in a York record, and December 1154, when his successor, Christian, was consecrated. He may have been interred before the high altar of his cathedral, but as is demonstrated by the example of Bishop Jocelin of Glasgow, who was responsible for the rebuilding and consecration of his cathedral but who died at Melrose Abbey and was buried in the monks' choir there, bishops could and did choose alternative places of burial.

Christian 1154–86

As little is known of the origins of Bishop Christian as of Gille-aldan (Watt 1991, 25). Christian was consecrated as bishop at Bermondsey Abbey in Surrey on 19 December 1154 by the Archbishop of Rouen (Anderson & Anderson 1938, 127). The circumstances of his election and consecration suggest that he had strong connections with the Cistercians and may have been a Cistercian monk himself, possibly from one of the Yorkshire communities of that order (Oram 2000, 176). Christian's name may represent a latinisation of the Gaelic *Gille-crist*, but there is no hard evidence to confirm that view. The names of four of his kinsmen (a brother and three nephews), who all appear to have served in his household in the second half of his episcopate, are recorded in one of his charters (Bannatyne Club 1840, No. 25). Three of these are unremarkable and quite common English forms (Walter, Nicholas and James), but one nephew is called 'Malbet', derived apparently from Mælbeth, the name given in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in 1031 for one of the north–west British rulers who submitted to King Knútr (Garmonsway 1972, version E, s.a. 1031), itself an Anglo-Saxon scribe's effort to transliterate the Gael *Máel Bethad*. Names of this type were apparently common in the 11th and 12th centuries on both sides of the Solway and the personal links which Christian later showed with English Cumbria could point to a north–western English (Cumberland, Westmorland, Furness) origin, or to connections with the Norse-Gaelic community in Galloway. Certainly, most of the surviving evidence for his activities points to a very strong personal association with Carlisle diocese, although this perception may be distorted by the poor survival of documentation relating to his own see. The English pipe rolls for 1159 and 1160 record the payment to Bishop Christian on King Henry II's instructions of 14s 8d in

each year from the noutgeld receipts (a tax levied on cattle) from the sheriffdom of Carlisle (Bain 1881, i, nos 67, 72). That Christian was in receipt of such payments could indicate that he was active in the diocese of Carlisle providing episcopal services during the long vacancy there which followed the death of Bishop Aethelwold, but on what basis is unknown. It is possible also that he was resident in Cumberland at this time on account of the civil wars in Galloway between Fergus of Galloway and his sons, Gillebrigte and Uhtred.

Despite the poverty of the surviving record sources for Christian's activities within his diocese, it appears from the fragments which have been preserved that his episcopate saw the institution of a more formalised structure of ecclesiastical government within the see. His favour to the Cistercian order, which is well-recorded later in his career, suggests that he identified himself closely with the reformist clergy of the mid-12th century who were actively undertaking a systematic restructuring of the secular (and monastic) Church in northern England, Scotland and Ireland at this date. Christian's reformist credentials can perhaps be seen in the appearance soon after 1154 of an archdeacon of Whithorn or Galloway, Robert, and c 1165 of two Deans of Christianity, Salmon and Macbeth (Bannatyne Club 1840, No. 52; Watt 1969, 136, 138). Together, these men would have formed the core of an administration responsible for the enforcement of ecclesiastical discipline over the other diocesan clergy, the implementation of canon law within the diocese, and the establishment of ecclesiastical courts to deal with spiritual and moral issues. A still clearer sign of his commitment to ecclesiastical reform at Whithorn can be seen in his establishment of a convent of canons regular there by c 1177 (Cowan & Easson 1976, 103). It has generally been assumed that the earlier 12th-century cathedral had been served by a community of secular clerks and priests, the successor clergy of the 'minster' which may have functioned on the site following the demise of the late Northumbrian monastery. Given the excavated evidence for continuity on the monastic site from the mid-9th to early 12th centuries, this is a reasonable supposition, but there is in fact no documentary evidence for the existence of such a religious community. Analogy from elsewhere in Scotland and northern England, however, supports the model of a transition from colleges of secular clerks to regular monastic communities in processes often directed or encouraged by the local diocesan (see, for example,Veitch 1999).At Whithorn, it has been argued that the community which served Gille-aldan's cathedral was converted first into Augustinian canons before subsequently adopting the more austere Premonstratensian rule (Backmund 1953). Unlike in England, where many of the older diocesan centres were served by convents of regular clergy, only Whithorn and St

Andrews in Scotland were associated with monasteries. In the case of St Andrews, an unreformed community of *céli dé* had been replaced by a priory of Augustinian canons in a process that was perhaps paralleled by developments at Whithorn. It is possible, however, given Christian's apparent personal association with north–western England and the archdiocese of York, that the example of Carlisle, where an Augustinian priory was attached to the new cathedral, provided a more direct inspiration for developments at Whithorn.

The possible north–western English links of Christian may have helped to produce a very marked attachment to the see of York from the outset of his career as bishop. The strength of that bond was underscored by his maintenance of his obedience to the archbishops throughout the extended and bitter controversy surrounding the question of metropolitan supremacy over Scotland which troubled the 1170s and 1180s. York's claim to the spiritual overlordship of the Scottish Church had been advanced regularly through the 12th century but the Scots had been generally successful in preventing the archbishops from exercising any effective authority over them. In 1174, however, following the capture of King William the Lion during a raid into northern England, Archbishop Roger of York had secured inclusion within the treaty by which the Scottish king obtained his release of a clause requiring the Scottish bishops to submit to English metropolitan supremacy. When the Scottish bishops came to Northampton in 1176 for a council of the English Church at which they would make their submission, however, a dispute broke out between the archbishops of Canterbury and York over, amongst other issues, their rival claims to metropolitan supremacy over Scotland. The council broke up in confusion and acrimony without the oaths being given, but in 1177 the pope despatched a legate to Scotland specifically to settle the issue (Barrell 1995). In July 1177, the papal legate, Cardinal Vivian, had summoned a council of the Scottish Church to assemble at Edinburgh with all the bishops being required to attend (Stubbs 1867, i, 166). Christian, however, refused to attend, claiming that he was a suffragan of York and that his own archbishop also held a legatine commission which nullified Vivian's authority over him. The bishop did not share the views of his Scottish colleagues and had already made his position abundantly clear in March 1177 when he alone of the 'Scottish' clergy had attended a council of the English Church at London. Vivian's response was to excommunicate Christian but, with Archbishop Roger's support, he continued in office (Oram 1997, 58).

Christian may have succeeded in preserving the historic link between his diocese and the Church of York but the victory for him may have been hollow. Perhaps always closer politically to Uhtred of Galloway, who had strong personal and marital ties with English Cumbria, than to his half-brother, Gillebrigte, the bishop appears to have been forced out of his diocese for much of the last nine years of his life due to the hostility of Gillebrigte and his supporters in the aftermath of their murder of Uhtred (Oram 2000, 176–8). From 1177 until his death in October 1186, Christian's presence at Whithorn cannot be established and he appears to have spent most of his time as a roving representative of the Archbishop of York in Carlisle and York dioceses. As he neared his death, he affirmed his personal association with Cumberland and the Cistercian order in a confirmation of a charter in favour of the monks of Holmcultram, in whose abbey he expressed a wish to be buried (Grainger & Collingwood 1929, no. 141). It was at Holmcultram that Christian took up residence in his last days, dying there on 7 October 1186 and being buried in the abbey (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1186). His tomb does not survive.

John 1189–1209

Christian's death was followed by a three-year vacancy at Whithorn. This prolonged gap was probably a result of Henry II of England's policy of extending episcopal vacancies to secure the maximum profit from the temporary royal control of the temporalities of bishoprics and is perhaps a reflection of the degree of influence which the English king continued to enjoy in Galloway after Roland's homage to him in 1186. It was also exacerbated by the even longer vacancy at York, where there had been no consecrated archbishop since the death of Roger of Pont-l'eveque in 1181. Following King Henry's death in July 1189, however, his successor, Richard I, acted swiftly to fill vacant bishoprics in England, and Whithorn appears to have been included in this process (Oram 2000, 179–80).

On 3 September 1189, John, bishop-elect of Whithorn, was amongst the clergy who assembled at Westminster for King Richard's coronation (Stubbs 1867, ii, 79). There is no indication of his origins but his status as 'electus' less than three months after Henry II's death could point to his being a royal clerk provided to the see by the new king. John's consecration took place at Pipewell Abbey in Northamptonshire on 17 September at the hands of the archbishops of Dublin and Trier and the bishop of Annaghdown, since his own archbishop-elect, Geoffrey Plantagenet, had not even yet been ordained as a priest (Stubbs 1867, ii, 87). The following week at Southwell, just inside the diocese of York, he ordained Geoffrey, circumventing the prohibition placed on the other English bishops by Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury who wished to ordain Geoffrey himself to enforce his claims of primacy over York (Stubbs 1867, ii, 88). Baldwin's prohibition,

however, had neglected to name John, who had not yet been consecrated at the date of its issuing. Through this act, from the very outset of his career as bishop, John proclaimed his loyalties to York, cementing the ties between Whithorn and its metropolitan.

Following Geoffrey's ordination, John, together with the bishops of Durham and Glasgow, were given a papal mandate to consecrate him as Archbishop of York, but the ceremony was delayed until 1191 and took place at Tours without any of the mandated bishops (Watt 1991, 27). There is little further evidence for John's role as a suffragan of York: in 1190–4 he witnessed one of the Archbishop's charters and in March 1194 accompanied him to a council of the English Church at Nottingham (Brown 1913, i, 227; Stubbs 1871, iii, 241). The confirmation of the separation of the Scottish Church from the metropolitan jurisdiction of York by the bull *Cum universi*, moreover, effectively excluded him from any active role in Scottish ecclesiastical affairs, although he was appointed on at least one occasion as a papal judge-delegate to settle a Scottish case (Ferguson 1997, 212, no. 11; Bannatyne Club 1843, no. 84). Despite the prominence of Roland of Galloway and his son and successor, Alan, in the political life of William the Lion's kingdom, John never occurs as a witness to any surviving Scottish royal act: his orientation was firmly directed towards York.

On stylistic grounds, the original vaulting of the undercroft of the east end of the extended cathedral has been dated to *c* 1200 (Oram, Chapter 8.2 below; Radford & Donaldson 1953, 31–2), suggesting that it may have been Bishop John who was responsible for the construction of the new eastern limb. John, moreover, was probably the first interment in the new building on his death in 1209 (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1209). This forms the starting point of Lowe's analysis of the burial sequence in Chapter 9.

Walter 1209–35

John's successor as bishop was Walter, a clerk who served as chamberlain of the household of Alan, lord of Galloway (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1209). By the early 13th century, the lord of Galloway was a man who held estates scattered throughout Scotland and England as well as in Galloway itself and whose kinship and marriage connections brought men into his service from throughout Britain. In earlier generations, Walter might reasonably be assumed to have been of native Galwegian stock, but by the time of Alan he could have come from anywhere with which the lords of Galloway had connections.

As with information concerning his origins, there is little evidence for his career as bishop. Like his predecessors, he does appear to have been active in northern England as a deputy for the archbishop. He apparently provided episcopal services in York diocese during the vacancy between Archbishop Geoffrey Plantagenet's death in 1207 and the election of Walter de Gray in 1215. As late as January 1215 King John ordered his administrator in York diocese to pay Walter 20 merks for his expenses until the proper daily rate due to him was determined (Bain 1881, i, No. 614). Details of his administration of his own see are equally sketchy. Only one of his charters, a confirmation of the appropriation of the church of St Fillan or Sorbie to Dryburgh Abbey, appears to have survived, albeit as a 15th-century transumpt (Bannatyne Club 1847, no. 80). Likewise, there is little remaining evidence for his wider spiritual activities, but his appearance as the principal witness to two charters of Affrica, lady of Nithsdale, in favour of the Premonstratensian abbey of Dercongal or Holywood, which may have been a daughter house of Whithorn (Bannatyne Club 1837b, nos 199, 200), shows that he was active in south-west Scotland outside his own diocese. His death in late 1234 or January/February 1235 coincided with the political crisis in Galloway which followed the death of Alan, the last of its male line of rulers, and provided King Alexander II of Scotland with an opportunity to intrude his own candidate into an office which commanded considerable regional influence.

Gilbert 1235–53

For the preceding half century, Galloway had been drawn progressively into a closer relationship with the kingdom of the Scots. The death of Alan of Galloway in 1234, leaving only three legitimate daughters and one illegitimate son as his heirs, provided the Scottish king with the opening to absorb the lordship firmly into his kingdom (for discussion of the post-1234 situation in Galloway see Oram 2000, Chapter 5). The death of Bishop Walter presented King Alexander with a further mechanism for tightening his grip on the lordship for, although he could not overturn the papal settlement which had confirmed the independence of the Scottish Church and the inclusion of Whithorn within the province of York, he could ensure that the next incumbent of the see was at least favourable to the Scots. Events, however, did not proceed smoothly for another candidate quickly emerged as a rival to the king's preferred choice. The dispute which resulted dragged on for several years.

On 25 February 1235, the 'clergy and people' of the diocese had elected a certain Gilbert, at that time a monk of Melrose Abbey but formerly abbot of Glenluce Abbey in Galloway (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1235). Election by clergy and people was the traditional practice throughout much of western Christendom down to the early 13th century, but was a formula which allowed considerable lay interference in the process. In 1235, although the leading figures in the secular clergy of the

diocese, including the archdeacon, had apparently selected Gilbert, there was a strong probability that the king had exerted pressure to ensure that his candidate was chosen. The fact that Gilbert was a Melrose monk gives further support to the likelihood that he was the king's nominee, for that abbey enjoyed a particularly close relationship with Alexander II and provided him with reliable bishops for a number of politically sensitive sees in his kingdom (Oram 1998). Gilbert, however, was not just an outsider being intruded into Galloway by the crown. His name, which may represent a Latinising of the Gaelic *Gille-brigte*, and his former position as abbot of one of the Galloway Cistercian houses (which were not part of the Melrose filiation), suggest that he may have been of Galloway background and selected by the king on account of his knowledge of south-western affairs.

The speed with which Gilbert was 'elected' so soon after the death of Bishop Walter suggests the importance which King Alexander placed on securing control of the see by a reliable agent. It may have caught the Whithorn chapter off-guard, but three weeks later the prior and canons elected a certain Odo Ydone, formerly the abbot of Holywood in Nithsdale and a fellow canon at Whithorn (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1235). His electors regarded themselves as constituting the cathedral chapter and, since the popes had been advancing the principle that rights of election to bishoprics lay in the hands of such chapters, their stance commanded support amongst the clergy of the province of York. It has been suggested that their advancing of a rival candidate was an indication of their anti-Scottish outlook and support for the rebellion in Galloway against Alexander II's attempted partition of the lordship between the heiresses of Alan (Ashley 1959), and certainly they chose to dress it up in that fashion, but their motives were probably altogether less honourable. It was not uncommon for there to be tensions between bishops, who were nominally heads of monastic houses attached to their cathedrals but often not members of even the same order, and the members of those communities, as the relationship between successive bishops of St Andrews and the Augustinian priory there attest, and it is possible that they sought to end such problems by electing one of their own number as bishop (Donaldson 1949, note 17a).

The principal obstacle to be overcome by either candidate in securing their consecration as bishop was the need to obtain the approval of the archbishop of York. On 23 April 1235, King Alexander wrote to the archdeacon and clergy of Whithorn diocese, a copy of the letter also apparently being sent to Archbishop Walter de Gray, from what appears to have been an assembly of the Scottish royal council at Newbattle Abbey in Midlothian (Raine 1870, 173). The letter stated that Gilbert, monk of Melrose, had

been elected unanimously and canonically by them, that the king approved their choice and agreed that the elect should be consecrated. Archbishop de Gray must already have known by this date that the claim of unanimous election was untrue, for Duncan, prior of Whithorn, and the canons had also written to him to inform him of the election of Odo (Raine 1870, 170, 171–2). Their letter claimed that they had sought – but, significantly, not obtained – the approval of King Alexander 'who presently holds Galloway', a turn of phrase which has been taken to suggest the canons' hostility to the recent Scottish interference in the affairs of the lordship (Ashley 1959, 66). The choice of Odo, they stressed, was unanimous and followed the current papally approved custom of capitular election. Therefore, they requested that the archbishop consecrate Odo.

On 19 May, King Alexander wrote to York countering the claims of the prior (Raine 1870, 172). The convent, he stated, had neither sought his permission for the election nor gained his assent to it, as was customary. Consequently, he demanded that the archbishop should not consecrate Odo and sent procurators to make a formal appeal against his candidature. This action appears to have prompted a counterclaim from the canons which reveals that Archbishop de Gray had called a council at York to hear the case, to which he had summoned the canons. They, however, replied that they could not come 'on account of the war of the king of Scots against Galloway', but sent one of their own number as their procurator with the power to make an appeal if it should prove necessary (Raine 1870, 170–1). Although Odo appears to have commanded significant support at York in 1235, he had been unable to secure a final settlement in his favour and Archbishop de Gray had consecrated Gilbert: the political influence of the king of Scots was too great. This result, however, did not end the matter and Odo embarked on a protracted round of litigation and appeals, leading ultimately to an appeal to Rome in 1241 and the appointment of judges-delegate by Pope Gregory IX to settle the dispute finally (Ashley 1959, 62–4). No judgement from that tribunal has survived, but the fact that Gilbert continued to serve as bishop of Whithorn suggests that it had settled against Odo.

Almost immediately after his consecration at York on 2 September 1235, Gilbert was to demonstrate his worth to King Alexander. In the autumn of 1235, the men of Galloway rose in rebellion in support of Thomas, the bastard son of Alan of Galloway. A royal campaign dispersed the first rising, but Thomas and his allies had returned with Irish mercenary support. Bishop Gilbert, it is claimed, with the assistance of the Abbot of Melrose and the Earl of Dunbar, however, secured Thomas's negotiated surrender, ending the threat to Scottish control (Bannatyne Club

1837b, s.a. 1235). Apart from a second ill-fated rebellion in Galloway against the Scottish crown in 1247, these turbulent affairs at the start of Gilbert's episcopate appear to have been the only disturbances in what was otherwise a relatively uneventful career (Oram 1997, 63–4; Oram 2000, 185–6). The 1247 rising, however, demonstrated that Galloway was still not wholly reconciled to its place within the Scottish kingdom so, on the Gilbert's death in 1253 (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1253), his successor was also drawn from a monastery associated closely with the Scottish crown.

Henry of Holyrood 1253–93

The man nominated to succeed Gilbert was Henry, abbot of Holyrood Abbey (Bannatyne Club 1837a, 59). Holyrood possessed extensive interests in Galloway, through which it is likely that Henry possessed a good knowledge of the political situation in the region (Bannatyne Club 1840, nos 23–7, 49–54, 72–4, 80 etc). This qualification may have recommended him to the council dominated by the Comyn family which was governing Scotland at that time in the name of the boy-king, Alexander III. His election, however, was challenged by John Balliol I of Barnard Castle, husband of Dervorgilla, the youngest daughter of Alan of Galloway, and one of the most powerful landowners in eastern Galloway, who claimed to have some rights in the process. Balliol protested on the grounds that the rights of the people of Galloway had been ignored, an argument which seems to hark back to the 1235 claims that the authority to elect lay with the clergy and people of the diocese (Bannatyne Club 1837a; for the hearing at York, see Raine 1870, 120–2; Raine 1873). No rival candidate appears to have been advanced by Balliol, but Henry's consecration was delayed until possibly as late as early 1256, probably due as much to the political upheavals in Scotland and the vacancy at York which followed the death of Walter de Gray as to any litigation over the validity of the election process (Watt 1969, 129).

Henry's long episcopate was largely unremarkable, characterised mainly by conscientious efforts to maintain the standards of parochial service in his diocese and loyal and active service as a suffragan of York (Oram 1997, 65). Like Walter and Gilbert before him, he took steps to ensure that suitable vicars were installed in appropriated parish churches and that adequate stipends were assigned to them (Bannatyne Club 1840, no. 83; Bannatyne Club 1847, nos. 67, 70). Down into the mid-1280s, he was regularly employed to deputise for the archbishops of York, dedicating and reconciling churches, chapels and graveyards in the western part of York diocese (Brown 1907, nos 385, 456, 690). In 1286 he was at Hexham, where on 9 September he gave his profession of obedience to the recently consecrated Archbishop John le Romeyn (Brown 1916, no.

1342). The following day, the archbishop excused Henry from his duty of an annual attendance on him at York, relaxing this obligation on account of the bishop's great age and the attendant rigours of the journey (Brown 1916, 85). It was at this time that the archbishop also issued an indulgence to all who contributed towards the repair of the cathedral at Whithorn which had been damaged during raids on Galloway by the Bruce family in the disturbances which had followed the death of King Alexander III of Scotland (Brown 1913, 8–9; see Chapter 8.2, *Later Medieval Building Work*).

The attack on Whithorn in 1286 had been part of a wider campaign in Galloway which appears to have been highly destructive of property. The exchequer accounts for 1286–7 of John Comyn, earl of Buchan, sheriff of Wigtown, refer to land lying uncultivated 'on account of the war moved by the Earl of Carrick after the king's death' (Stuart and Burnett 1878, 39). Damage inflicted on the bishop's estates and causing a general reduction in his income from spiritualities across the diocese as a consequence of this raid may have been the source of the 'adverse oppressions' of which Henry had written to Archbishop le Romeyn early in 1287 (Brown 1916, no. 1346). In reply, the archbishop asked Henry to deputise for him during his imminent absence from the archdiocese, particularly within the archdeaconry of Richmond, promising him payment for his troubles (Brown 1916, no. 1346). Henry appears to have seized the opportunity to boost his income and as early as 9 April 1287 received a commission with Bishop of Carlisle to reconcile the church of Hornby (Brown 1916, no. 1347). In August, he consecrated seven more parish churches in York diocese (Brown 1913, 166–7). Given that Henry's age had been cited as a reason for pardoning him from coming to York in 1286, it is remarkable that as late as October 1291 he was still accepting commissions to deputise for Archbishop le Romeyn within his diocese (Brown 1916, no. 1366). He died on 1 November 1293 (Bannatyne Club 1837a, 154–5).

Thomas de Dalton (or de Kirkcudbright or de Galloway) 1294–c 1324

Within a month of Bishop Henry's death, Archbishop le Romeyn had appointed an official *sede vacante*, Master Ralph de Ponthieu, to administer the see until the election and consecration of a successor (Brown 1916, no. 1386). Early in January 1294, John Balliol, king of Scots, wrote to the archbishop from his family castle at Buittle in eastern Galloway, informing him of the election of Thomas of Kirkcudbright by the prior and canons of Whithorn and un-named clergy of the diocese, but warning him that the process was tainted with simony. The king therefore

requested that the archbishop should not consecrate Thomas until two royal clerks had provided him with the facts of the case (Brown 1916, 115). On examining the evidence provided, however, Romeyn decided that there was no case to answer and advised the king of his decision by letter on 22 January (Brown 1916, 115–6). No record survives of what information King John had laid before the archbishop, but the survival of a letter from Robert Bruce, lord of Annandale, to Romeyn on behalf of Master Thomas de Kirkcudbright, elect of Whithorn, describing him as 'our dear clerk and supporter', suggests that the king's objection was bound up in the competition between the Balliol and Bruce families for power in the kingdom (Brown 1916, 116). The aged Robert Bruce, grandfather of the future king, had somehow managed to secure the election of one of his own household clerks to a bishopric that could have been considered as firmly under the domination of John Balliol and his Comyn allies. The various designations by which Master Thomas was known – of Dalton, Kirkcudbright or Galloway – imply, however, that he was of local background and perhaps enjoyed wider support within the diocese than the traditional identification of him as a Bruce man intruded into Whithorn by dubious means allows. After all, even King John in his letter to Romeyn commented that he had been elected by the canons of Whithorn and other diocesan clergy.

Although he had found nothing uncanonical in the process of election in January, Romeyn had not confirmed the election. On 1 May 1294 he set a date for formal closure of the treating over the case, subject to King John raising no further objections (Brown 1916, 126–7). The king finally gave his assent on 19 May and on 30 May Romeyn confirmed Thomas's election and requested that he be given possession of the temporalities of his see (Brown 1916, 127, 128–9). His consecration was originally meant to take place at Hexham, was moved to Ripon, and finally took place at Gedling on 10 October 1294, with instructions being issued to the archdeacon of York on 14 October to enthrone him at Whithorn (Brown 1916, 129–32).

As Scotland and England slid towards war in early 1296, Thomas found himself with a conflict of interests. Although Galloway was by then well integrated into the kingdom of Scotland, he had professed obedience to the archbishop of York and his diocese was still regarded as suffragan of York. Furthermore, since the Bruce family with which he had close personal ties had mainly aligned against King John and his Comyn supporters, he may have found himself trying to reconcile divided loyalties. The swift defeat of the Scots in April 1296 may have seemed to offer the bishop a route out of these difficulties. In common with the other senior clergy of the kingdom, Thomas was at Berwick on 28 August for his fealty to

Edward I to be recorded formally (Bain 1881, i, no. 196). The extension of Edward's authority over Scotland, however, had one negative consequence for the bishop: on 1 September, still at Berwick, he was required to acknowledge his debts to a York merchant and agree a date for their settlement on the security of his lands and goods in Dumfriesshire (Bain 1881, i, no. 831).

There is no record of Thomas's attitudes or actions in the rising against the English occupation led initially from 1297 by William Wallace and Andrew Murray. When the Comyns threw their support behind the attempt, however, the bishop could not avoid involvement, particularly in 1300 when Edward I planned a campaign into western Galloway. It was Thomas whom the Comyns sent as an envoy to King Edward in what proved to be a futile effort to secure a truce (Riley 1865, 440). The bishop's support for the Scottish resistance, however, may have been dependent upon the stance of the young Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, for it is clear that by 1302 he had followed the earl back into King Edward's peace. On 19 April 1302, he gave his belated profession of obedience at Burton by Beverley in Yorkshire to Romeyn's successor as archbishop of York, Thomas of Corbridge, who had been consecrated in 1300 (Brown 1928, 153).

Following his re-entry into Edward's peace, Bishop Thomas found himself still caught between a rock and a hard place. He appears to have returned to his see in 1302–3, receiving dispensation to absent himself from York for three years, probably on account of the continuing warfare in south-west Scotland where the Comyns still occupied a strong position (Brown 1928, 154). The Bruces, however, appear to have expected him to work in their interest and were disappointed that he failed to serve them well. Early in 1304, Robert Bruce, lord of Annandale, the son of the man who had secured the bishopric for him, wrote to Archbishop Thomas to complain that the property of his son, Alexander Bruce, rector of Kirkinner, had been plundered by certain 'secular men' of the diocese of Whithorn and put to their own use without the permission of either the bishop or the rector (Brown 1928, 156–7). Robert requested that the archbishop write to Bishop Thomas and order him to employ the spiritual powers of his office to force these men to make restitution, and that he should not let himself be swayed by fear of any secular person. The 'secular men' were, presumably, supporters of the Comyn and Balliol families who had seen the kirklands of the parish of Kirkinner as Bruce property and ripe for targeting, but whom the bishop, despite his personal links with the Bruces, was unwilling to challenge. On 25 February, Archbishop Thomas wrote to him directing him to order the restoration of the seized property and instructing him to bring full ecclesiastical censures to bear against the

culprits (Brown 1928, 155). Fortunately for the bishop, the letter was overtaken by events, for the Scots completed a negotiated surrender to Edward I that same month.

Stability was not of long duration, however, for on 10 February 1306, Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, murdered John Comyn, lord of Badenoch, in the church of the Dominicans at Dumfries and immediately launched a bid for the throne of Scotland. For Thomas, the sacrilege and usurpation was too great an offence to pardon and he remained firmly in the peace of the English king. On 26 June 1306, Thomas gave his profession of obedience to the new Archbishop of York, William Greenfield (Brown & Thompson 1938, v, 53–4), underscoring his separation from the Bruce family. The breach with his old patrons was confirmed in September 1306 when Greenfield instructed the appropriation of the church of Kirkinner, held by the younger brother of Robert Bruce, to the episcopal mensa, citing the poverty of the bishop caused by the ravages of warfare as a reason for the appropriation (Brown & Thompson 1938, v, 59–60). When King Robert relaunched his bid to secure control of Scotland in early 1307, operating out of bases in the hills of southern Carrick and northern Galloway, Bishop Thomas may quickly have had cause to regret his actions.

From early 1310, as King Robert and his younger brother, Edward Bruce, gained control of Galloway, Thomas appears to have been regularly resident in York diocese. On 13 February 1310, Archbishop Greenfield gave Thomas a commission of oversight of all properties of the Hospitallers in the archdiocese of York (Brown & Thompson 1938, iii, 94–5). From the summer of 1310, Thomas occurs regularly in the archiepiscopal registers providing episcopal services throughout York diocese, and from 1311 to 1314 he was regularly commissioned to act as Greenfield's deputy during the archbishop's absences from his diocese (Brown & Thompson 1938, i, 41, 223–4, 227; ii, 97; iii, 98–9, 212, 321–2, 328–33; v, 72, 73, 100, 109, 136–7, 141). After King Robert's victory at Bannockburn in June 1314, Thomas may have used the regular Anglo-Scottish truces as opportunities to visit his diocese, but, despite doubts concerning his loyalty that were circulating in England by 1319, there is no sign that he was ever formally reconciled with the Bruce regime (Watt 1969, 130). It is perhaps significant that while there is evidence that the Bruces attempted to woo the canons of Whithorn with a series of property grants and confirmations in the 1310s and 1320s, there is no evidence of similar favour being shown to Bishop Thomas.

Thomas's last years are very obscure. For long it was believed that he died in c 1319 (Donaldson 1949, 132). This belief was based on a misdated charter of his successor (Watt 1969, 130). In April 1323, the Archbishop of York was wrongly informed that Thomas had died and, in light

of rumours that an un-named bishop-elect of Whithorn was seeking confirmation and consecration from the pope, appointed an official *sede vacante* and wrote to the curia to protest that the *electus* be sent to York as was traditional. This confusion suggests that Thomas may have been resident in his own diocese after c 1319 and had effectively lost contact with York. At the time of Simon of Wedale's election as bishop of Whithorn on 23 September 1326, Thomas was described as 'recently dead' (*Northern Registers*, 335). There is no record of his place of death or burial.

Simon of Wedale 1326–55

After the problems of Bishop Thomas's episcopate, it was probably inevitable that King Robert would ensure that a staunchly pro-Bruce candidate was installed at Whithorn. As an area with a strong tradition of pro-Balliol loyalties and lingering anti-Bruce sentiments, it was vital that the key secular and ecclesiastical offices of Galloway should be occupied by reliable men. The individual elected was Simon of Wedale, abbot of Holyrood, a man whose name suggests origins in the valley of the Gala Water in southern Midlothian. Like Bishop Henry in the later 13th century before him. both the close association between his monastery and the crown and also Holyrood's extensive propertied interests in Galloway probably commended him to King Robert. He was elected on 23 September 1326 and on 16 October Archbishop Melton of York instructed an examination of the process of election (Watt 1969, 130). The election occurred during a period of truce, so Simon was able to travel south to secure confirmation of his election from Melton: there was no question of attempting to sever Whithorn's ties with York despite the traumas of the previous 30 years. On 16 December, he received Melton's confirmation and possibly remained at York over the Christmas period. He perhaps travelled south with the archbishop to London early in 1327 in preparation for the coronation of King Edward III. Simon was finally consecrated at Westminster on 1 February, the same day as Edward was crowned, and gave his profession of obedience to Archbishop Melton on 8 February at Tottenham (Watt 1969, 130).

While Edward III was being crowned and Simon consecrated at Westminster, the Scots launched a major raid into northern England. On the failure of the English counter-campaign to bring the Scots to battle, Edward's mother, Queen Isabella, and her lover Roger Mortimer, who exercised real power in England in the name of the young king, opened serious negotiations for peace. The result, in 1328, was the Treaty of Edinburgh, a settlement which envisaged a return to the pre-1296 status quo in Anglo-Scottish affairs. A restoration of a stable relationship between the two kingdoms would have permitted Simon

to resume an active role as a suffragan of York without the complication of divided loyalties in the midst of conflict between the Scots and the English. Unfortunately for the bishop, however, the peace lasted only four years before Edward Balliol, the son of the deposed King John Balliol, returned to Scotland with Edward III's backing and began what would prove to be a 24-year struggle first to secure, then to hold on to, his father's lost throne. Reverting to its pro-Balliol loyalties, Galloway became one of the chief centres of King Edward Balliol's power down to the mid-1350s and it is unlikely that Simon, if he maintained his loyalty to Robert I's heir, the young King David II, would have been able to function within his diocese (For discussion of the post-1332 position in Galloway, see Oram 1992, especially 43–7).

Given the turbulence of Galloway for most of this period, it is unsurprising that little record survives of Bishop Simon's activities within his diocese. The gradual slackening of the ties to York which the breakdown in Anglo-Scottish relations produced, moreover, has contributed further to the lack of sources for Simon and his successors, who figure rarely in the archiepiscopal registers which are a major source of data for their predecessors. Like many leading clerics in Scotland in the early 1330s, when it appeared that the Bruce cause was effectively lost, he may have temporarily come into the peace of the English crown. On 1 November 1335, described as being in the peace and faith of King Edward, he was given royal letters of protection for one year (Macpherson *et al* 1814, i, 385b). No further record of such protections survive, which might suggest that Simon reverted to his pro-Bruce loyalties as the cause of David II began to recover in the later 1330s.

Michael Malconhalgh or Mackenlagh 1355–8/9

After over a century of attempting to place one of their own number in the bishopric, on the death of Bishop Simon the canons of Whithorn had the satisfaction of securing the election of their prior, Michael (Watt 1969, 130). His election had occurred before 4 June 1355 and was confirmed by Archbishop John de Thoresby on 26 June, with his consecration following at the hands of commissioners on 12 July. There is, however, no record of a profession of obedience having been offered and, although Whithorn remained technically suffragan of York for a further 117 years, Malconhalgh's episcopate appears to mark a decisive watershed in Galloway's centuries-old ecclesiastical relationship with northern England. For the bishops of Whithorn, the future lay firmly in a Scottish context.

By 1355, support for Edward Balliol in western Galloway had been almost wholly extinguished and it is probable that Malconhalgh's election should be seen in the context of efforts by the Bruce regime to underpin their

newly gained hold on the region through installation of an influential local figure into the bishopric. It is unfortunate that there is little evidence to indicate Michael's role in the reintegration of Galloway into the political community of the kingdom or of his relationship with the ruling regime. He is last recorded alive in January 1358 (*Foedera* iii, 387) and may have died in the course of that year. It is unknown where he was buried, but given his personal connection with Whithorn as former prior and bishop it is likely that his is one of the later burials at the east end.

Thomas 1359–62

Malconhalgh's episcopate had marked a watershed in more ways than one. Although his election seemed to mark a final triumph for the capitular formula which had been favoured by the papacy since the early 13th century, it also marked the last instance of a successful application of the principle. His successors were generally set in place through papal provision, where individuals petitioned for and, usually for payment of so-called 'common services', received appointment to benefices. Understandably, it was a system open to considerable abuse and, despite the generally high standard of the papal administration's record-keeping, also led to discord and dispute where more than one individual could produce documented evidence for their promised provision.

Following Malconhalgh's death, there appears to have been an attempt locally to elect Thomas MacDowell as his successor. His name indicates that he was a local man, connected with one of the most influential Galwegian kindreds. Although he claimed to have been elected unanimously, presumably by the canons of Whithorn, and pursued his claim actively until early 1360 (*CPP*, i, 351), he was unable to secure confirmation or consecration in the face of the papal provisee. His successful opponent was another Thomas, of unknown origins, who secured provision and consecration at Avignon by 31 December 1359 (Watt 1969, 130). Almost nothing is known of his career, which spanned little more than three years. He was still alive on 2 September 1362 (Bannatyne Club 1843, ii, 271) but was dead before mid-November 1363 when his successor was elected.

Adam of Lanark 1363–78

Thomas's successor was Adam of Lanark, a Dominican friar who claimed to have been elected but was also provided to the see by the pope on 17 November 1363 (Watt 1969, 130). Adam was a very well-connected cleric, having served as an emissary during the negotiations for the release of David II in 1356–7 and later as his confessor, and should probably be regarded as a king's man inserted into a politically sensitive see, in just the same manner as Alexander Bur was appointed to the see of Moray at around

the same date (Macpherson *et al* 1814, i, 802a; *RRS* vi, no. 142; Oram 1999). His was a political appointment and he may have been involved more frequently on business in the king's service than in Galloway. He was apparently consecrated at Avignon by 2 January 1364 and on 20 February a safe conduct was issued for him, 'already overseas' presumably in France, to return through England on King David's business (Macpherson *et al* 1814, i, 808a). His closeness to the king was further emphasised in 1365 when he was one of an exclusive group of 15 men forming a 'congregation' of close advisors and leading clerics who gathered in Perth to discuss the king's policies (Penman 2004, 338).

There is frustratingly little evidence for his later career. Still alive on 16 December 1370, he effectively disappears from the record following the death of King David II in February 1371. Although it is possible that Adam himself may have died at around the same period, it is also a strong possibility that his former closeness to the late king may have made him politically undesirable at the court of the new king Robert II (Watt 1977, 325–6). Given that a first attempt to provide a successor occurred in 1378, it is more likely that he died during the vacancy which followed the death of Pope Gregory IX on 27 March 1378 (Watt 1969, 130–1). There is no record of his place of interment. On the basis of the results of the radiocarbon dating programme (Table 7.1: Lowe, Chapter 9), Bishop Adam would appear to be the latest possible contender who could be considered for inclusion as one of our bishops' graves.

Thomas Rossy 1379–93×1406

The vacancy during which Bishop Adam probably died was ended in 1378 with the election of Pope Urban VI. At some stage during this vacancy Oswald, the claustral prior of the Cistercian abbey of Glenluce, had been elected to the bishopric and an approach was made to Pope Urban for his formal provision. Oswald appears to have travelled to the Continent for consecration, which had occurred before 26 March 1379 when he was in England and about to return to his see (Watt 1969, 131; Macpherson *et al* 1814, ii, 14). However, the new bishop had already been overtaken by events beyond his control, for on 20 September 1378 the College of Cardinals, alarmed by Urban's autocratic style of government, had declared him deposed and elected in his place Robert of Geneva, who took the name of Pope Clement VII. International politics saw the escalation of the Schism in the Church as western Christendom divided into Urbanist and Clementist camps. England had declared for Urban by 5 November 1378 while France, largely on account of Urban's anti-French stance and the kinship between King Charles V and Clement,

declared for the latter, who continued to base himself at Avignon. Scotland, probably chiefly on account of England's alignment with Urban, followed their French allies in backing Clement. Oswald was in an invidious position. He had been returning from his consecration carrying various bulls and letters from Pope Urban to Scottish recipients when the Schism had erupted. Protected by an English safe-conduct issued on 26 March 1379. he returned to his see only to find that he had a rival.

Sometime between 31 October 1378 and 26 February 1379, Clement VII had also provided a new bishop to Whithorn. His candidate was the secular clerk Ingram of Kettins, archdeacon of Dunkeld (*CPP*, iv, 540). Made aware of Oswald's provision by Urban VI, Clement cancelled the rival provision before the end of February 1379. Ingram, however, was unwilling to accept the provision and Clement issued a mandate to the bishops of St Andrews and Glasgow to investigate the situation. If they found that Ingram was indeed unwilling to accept the see they were to provide instead Thomas Rossy, a Franciscan friar whose surname suggests possible east Angus connections (*CPL Clement VII*, 26; Watt 1977, 471–3. For a detailed discussion of Rossy's background and career, see McEwan 1957). Although Oswald in the interim had returned to Whithorn, perhaps being enthroned in his cathedral, when Ingram's refusal was confirmed Rossy was provided and consecrated in his place (*CPL Clement VII*, 70). giving the see two formally consecrated bishops. Despite his original provision and consecration by Urban, it was to Clement that Oswald appealed, but by October 1381 the Avignon pope found in favour of Rossy. Ousted from his see, Oswald had little option but to return to Urbanist allegiance and fled to England. There, continuing to style himself 'Bishop of Whithorn', he served in York diocese until his death in 1417 (Storey 1956–70, v, 90–1, 108).

At Whithorn, his learned rival Rossy became a leading intellectual supporter of Clement VII, writing a long treatise on the controversies of the Schism, of which two manuscripts survive (Watt 1977, 472). He was, however, more than an academic warrior and was identified as a possible ecclesiastical leader of a Scottish attack on schismatic England in *c* 1382–3. Although this proposed invasion never materialised, his militant support for Pope Clement was expressed physically in a challenge to single combat made in 1384 to the English warrior-cleric, Henry Despenser, bishop of Norwich (Watt 1977, 473; Nicholson 1974, 193). Active in Scotland down into the early 1390s – he preached a sermon at the coronation of Robert III in August 1390 – he appears to have spent much of the latter stages of his life at Avignon. The last clear evidence for Rossy being alive occurs on 6 September 1397, when he was again at Avignon, but it is likely that he died shortly before the

provision of his successor on 28 May 1406 (Watt 1969, 131; Watt 1977, 473; *CPP*, iv, 577). It is not known if he returned to Scotland or where he died, but the balance of evidence seems to point towards his death abroad. Whether or not his remains were returned for burial at Whithorn is unknown. The implications, however, given the date of his *obit* and the results of the radiocarbon dating programme (Table 7.1: Lowe, Chapter 9) – even if he was returned – are that he is not among the excavated graves at the east end of the church.

Eliseus Adougan 1406–12x1415

Like Oswald in 1378, Eliseus Adougan was 'elected' in his own diocese before securing his provision from the second Avignonese pope, Benedict XIII, on 28 May 1406 (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 151). Adougan appears to have been a Galloway man and had already gained prominence through attachment to the household of Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas, from whom he had received the provostry of the rich collegiate church of Lincluden. There is perhaps no greater testimony to the degree of control over the internal affairs of Galloway exercised by the Black Douglas family than the election of Adougan to the bishopric. The new bishop was a committed pluralist who used the need of both Avignonese and Roman popes to court favour to secure papal authorisation to hold several incompatible benefices simultaneously. Shortly after his formal provision, he secured letters from Benedict XIII which permitted him to hold both the parsonage of Kirkmahoe and the provostry of Lincluden conjointly with his new bishopric (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 153). There was no spiritual reason for this arrangement; Eliseus was concerned principally in maintaining possession of two lucrative benefices which would greatly augment the income he could receive from what was then one of the poorest of the Scottish bishoprics.

Given his pluralism and his use of indulgences and dispensations as money-making devices, it is difficult not to view with some cynicism his efforts in 1408 to force the canons of Whithorn to contribute towards the costs of repairs to the cathedral church. The bishop's letter to Benedict XIII has not survived, but on 11 April 1408 the pope issued a commission in response to his appeal to the archdeacon of Glasgow to compel the prior and canons to contribute from their income towards rebuilding costs. The wording of the commission probably repeats the language of Adougan's letter (*CPL Benedict* XIII, 173; for the full text, see Reid 1960, no. 1; see also Oram, Chapter 8.2 *Later Medieval Building Work*). There is no record of the result of the archdeacon's investigation. Adougan's relationship with the canons was further damaged by a second appeal which sought to force them to yield property in Whithorn

to him to allow the building of a suitable residence in the burgh (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 174). It is possible that his predecessors, in fact, had no separate residence and, like the pre-13th-century bishops of St Andrews, occupied part of the monastic complex when in residence at Whithorn. Eliseus claimed that his nearest private residence, which is not named in the letter but is clearly The Clary (between Newton Stewart and Wigtown), was too remote from his cathedral to permit him to properly fulfil his spiritual functions. Again, we do not know the outcome of the appeal, but the later medieval bishops of Whithorn possessed Balnespick or Bishopton, just to the north of the cathedral-priory.

There is little evidence for his active career as bishop other than some records of his installation of priests to vacant benefices (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 291). One dispensation by him survives, arising from powers granted to him by papal bull to dispense ten persons of his choice of either sex within his diocese, to contract marriage within the prohibited degrees. This was given on 8 September 1412 to Alexander Stewart of Torbane and Elizabeth Stewart, daughter of Sir John Stewart, lord of Cally, permitting them to marry despite their relationship in the fourth degree of consanguinity (NAS GD10/348). These powers had been granted to Eliseus as far back as February 1407, when he had received two separate indults from Pope Benedict XIII, the first allowing him to dispense 12 people from 'defect of birth' to be promoted to holy orders and the second permitting the marriage of 12 individuals related in the fourth degree (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 160–1).

As with his predecessors, we have no firm evidence for his exact date of death, but papal letters concerning appointment of a successor were issued from 14 June 1415 (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 317–9). He was described as dying 'outside the curia', probably in his diocese. While there is no record of his place of burial, it is likely that he was interred at Whithorn. It is clear, however, given the date of his *obit* and the results of the radiocarbon dating programme (Table 7.1: Lowe, Chapter 9) that he cannot be among the group at the east end of the church.

Thomas of Buittle 1415–20x22

The death of Bishop Eliseus resulted in yet another disputed succession to the bishopric, this time occasioned by the reservation of provision to the see by the pope conflicting with the rights of the chapter. The canons of Whithorn had probably moved swiftly on the bishop's death to elect a man suitable to both themselves and their lay patron, Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas. Their choice was Gilbert Cavan, rector of Kirkinner, a mature and well-educated cleric with a career extending back to the early 1380s (Watt 1977, 93–4). He was connected very closely with the earl's household and secured

a number of appointments to benefices through service to him. In the years immediately before his election to the bishopric, Cavan was employed in negotiations for Douglas's ransom arrangements in England, and in the early 1420s he was a member of the earl's household and tutor of the future 5th earl. These connections, however, were inadequate to secure confirmation of his election from Benedict XIII, who on 14 June 1415 provided instead Thomas of Buittle, archdeacon of Galloway and a papal chaplain and auditor of appeals (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 317–8).

Like Cavan, Thomas was a highly educated clerk who had already had a prominent career and who was linked closely to the household of the Black Douglases (Watt 1977, 70–2). He was already in possession of a substantial portfolio of benefices in Scotland when provided to the bishopric, but had recently gained papal favour through his service in the curia and consistent loyalty to Benedict XIII at a time when the 'Avignonese' cause was losing support throughout Europe. He appears to have been consecrated before 5 September 1415, when he was no longer described as 'elect' in papal letters (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 326). Shortly after securing the bishopric, however, he appears to have transferred his allegiance from Benedict to the Council of Constance, which was seeking a way of bringing a formal end to the Schism. This shift may reflect the gradual detachment of Earl Archibald from the 'Avignonese' allegiance and his growing support for the Conciliar movement which would culminate in 1418–9 with the earl's active role in formally bringing the 40-year period of Schism to an end (Brown 1998, 196–8).

Throughout his career and despite the extensive collection of church offices which he held in Scotland, Thomas appears to have been mainly an absentee incumbent. There is little evidence to show his regular presence in Scotland, let alone in his own diocese, after 1415 and his involvement in the denouement of the Schism probably ensured that he was rarely at home for long. He was present in Scotland in March 1416, possibly in conjunction with formal installation and enthronement as bishop, attending a gathering of senior clerics at Perth (Bannatyne Club 1843, no. 325). He did not attend a provincial council of the Scottish Church at Perth in July 1420, sending instead a proctor (Robertson 1866, ii, no. 166). This may be an indication of failing health but all that can be said with certainty was that he was dead before 4 December 1422 when his successor was named (Watt 1969, 131). His place of death and burial are unknown but it is likely that he died in Scotland and was buried in his cathedral.

Alexander Vaus 1422–50

The new bishop was Alexander Vaus, who had been bishop of Caithness from 1414. His translation to Whithorn

represented a career advance as, though still low in the hierarchy of Scottish dioceses, the Church of Galloway was still far wealthier than the most northerly mainland see. Vaus, unlike his immediate predecessors, was apparently not university educated and may have owed his promotion to personal connections and good fortune. Gordon Donaldson suggested that he may have been a son of William Vaus, lord of Dirleton, whom he noted as dying *c* 1392 (Donaldson 1949, 141), but his earlier career seems to have been focused entirely on northern Scotland and there is no evidence for any immediate connection with the Dirleton line. This northern connection may point to a relationship with the cadet line of the Vaus family who held lands in Easter Ross in the 1400s and who were associated with Whithorn priory's daughter-house at Fearn, but their connection with the senior, Dirleton line of the family and their date of establishment in Ross is unknown. Before 1398 he was precentor of Caithness and was promoted in July that year to the archdeaconry (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 88). He was provided to the bishopric of Orkney by Pope Benedict XIII before 20 November 1407 but, despite receiving faculty permitting his consecration in Scotland in February 1408, he had still not been consecrated by 22 January 1415 several months after his translation to the bishopric of Caithness (*CPL Benedict XIII*, 166, 170, 309). In December 1422 he was at the curia, where Pope Martin V instructed his translation to Whithorn and from where he was later to seek papal absolution for his possible error in having left to take possession of his new see before having secured the requisite papal letters (Watt 1969, 131; *CSSR 1423–8*, 215).

Despite his long episcopate, Alexander Vaus has left little evidence for his tenure of the see. The earliest surviving records for his activities show him involved in settling financial disputes, possibly indicating anxiety over settlement of the common services payments which he would have been obliged to make to the curia in return for his provision. As part of this process, he reached agreement on a range of issues concerning appointment of parish priests and payment of moneys due to the bishop as ordinary of the diocese by the abbey of Holyrood, which was one of the biggest holders of appropriated parish churches in Galloway (NAS RH6/251, RH6/280, both dated 4 August 1429; Reid 1960, no. 5, 4 August 1429). He does appear, however, to have been concerned about the spiritual health of his see, sometime before February 1433 removing from post a parish priest who was unable to perform his duties and who had absented himself from his charge without making proper provision for a curate (*CSSR 1433–47*, no. 25). In 1434, he authorised the appropriation of the church of Longcastle to the chaplainry in the cathedral which Prior Thomas was setting up (Chapter 8.2.1). His last surviving act appears to be the charter of 20

September 1448 which granted lands in Kirkcolm parish to Thomas McDowell of Garthland and his wife, Margaret, daughter of Robert Vaus (Reid 1960, no. 135). The relationship between Robert Vaus and Bishop Alexander is unknown, but there seems to be some close kinship connection. Robert appears to have been the first of his family to secure a significant landholding in Wigtownshire, purchasing the properties of Barnbarroch and Barglass in Kirkinner parish from William, 8th earl of Douglas, in January 1452 (Reid 1960, nos 136, 137).

By the time that Robert Vaus was making his mark as a landholder, Bishop Alexander had resigned his see. In 1450, the bishop was probably around 80 years old, and age and infirmity, reasons which he himself had used to justify the removal of a parish priest nearly two decades earlier, seem to have prompted him to resign his position (Donaldson 1949, 141; Watt 1969, 131). On 8 January 1450, his resignation in favour of Thomas Spens was received at the Apostolic Camera (Watt 1969, 131). His exact date of death is unknown but he appears to have lived into the early 1450s. No burial place is recorded but it seems likely that he was interred in the cathedral at Whithorn.

Thomas Spens 1450–8

The man in whose favour Alexander Vaus resigned was Thomas Spens, an ambitious cleric who had started his career in the service of the Black Douglases. It is possible that he had been coadjutor to Vaus before his elevation to the bishopric (Donaldson 1949, 141), but no concrete evidence for this role has survived. Spens may have been one of many former servants of the Douglas family who had been alienated by the events of 1440 which had seen the judicial murder of William, 6th earl of Douglas, and his younger brother, David, and the succession of their great uncle, James 'the Gross', earl of Avondale, to the main Douglas titles. While he probably owed his first senior position – the provostship of Lincluden – to Douglas patronage, his later career was advanced with the support of King James II (Brown 1998, 286). The late and often unreliable account of Hector Boece suggests that he was appointed by King James to the archdeaconry of Galloway (Moir 1894, 37), which, if true, would suggest that he was a key agent in James II's policy of encroachment on the Douglases' power-base in Galloway. From 1450, he was very closely identified with the crown interest and witnessed numerous royal charters, his alignment with the crown being emphasised graphically in 1455 when he was one of two ambassadors sent to France by the king to explain his actions against the Douglases to King Charles VII (Oram 1997, 74). He was keeper of the Privy Seal before 1458 (NAS GD93/20). In 1457, James attempted to reward Spens for his services through translation to

Aberdeen, with Thomas Vaus, dean of Glasgow, advanced as his successor at Whithorn (Donaldson 1949, 141–2; Watt 1969, 131). The attempted translation in 1457 was ineffective. However, in December 1458 he was again translated to Aberdeen, this time successfully. On this occasion, Thomas Vaus was not advanced as his replacement. Spens served as bishop of Aberdeen for a further 22 years and was buried in the collegiate church of the Holy Trinity in Edinburgh, which had been founded by James II's widow, Mary of Gueldres (Chapter 8.2.3).

Ninian Spot 1458–80x82

The replacement for Spens at Whithorn, Ninian Spot, was another crown servant. Prior to his provision he had been a canon of Dunkeld and served James II as Comptroller (the 'roller of accounts' who shared responsibility for management of the royal finances with the Treasurer) from 1457 to 1459. Spot was provided by Pope Pius II on 15 December 1458 as part of the arrangement which saw Thomas Spens translated to Aberdeen (Watt 1969, 132). He was consecrated between 12 March and 16 April 1459, and on 27 April King James issued instructions for his formal admission to the temporalities of the diocese (RMS, ii, no. 698). Spot continued to serve as a member of royal councils down to 1476 and witnessed over 20 crown charters during that period (RMS, ii, nos 686, 687, 706, 731, 734–7, 739, 743, 746, 748–53, 811, 990, 993, 1035, 1043, 1062, 1241, 1246, 1248, 1249), but he was apparently not a member of the inner circle of royal servants. His main service occurred in the last years of James II's reign and he fades from view during the early years of the minority of James III from 1460 to 1464. It is possible that he was out of favour with the Boyd family, who dominated Scottish government down to 1469, for he re-emerges as a witness to royal documents between 1470 and 1476. His last surviving incidence as a charter witness is in July 1476, his disappearance thereafter probably being more a consequence of advancing age than hostility towards him from James III. Ninian was still alive in June 1480 when he is mentioned in the Exchequer Rolls, but was dead before 9 December 1482 when his successor was provided (Watt 1969, 132). There is no record of his place of burial but the main record for the second part of his career indicates that he was most regularly resident in Galloway and the likelihood is that he was buried in his cathedral.

George Vaus 1482–1508

George Vaus, another member of the family which seems to have been established in Wigtownshire through the good offices of their kinsman, Bishop Alexander Vaus, was rector of Wigtown before his provision on 9 December 1482 (Donaldson 1949, 142; Reid 1960, 174 n. 1; Watt

1969, 132). His promotion may have been an act of James III but, coming as it did in the midst of the political crisis of 1482–3 which had perhaps seen the imprisonment and threatened deposition of the king (Macdougall 1982, Chapter 8), it is more likely that his provision as bishop was arranged by some of the men who controlled royal government at this time. Association with the political opposition in 1482 may account for his comparative invisibility for the remainder of James III's reign. George, however, cannot have been entirely out of royal favour for in July 1488 he was apparently Dean of the Chapel Royal (Macdougall 1997, 53), a position to which he was apparently appointed by the late king. The account of the events of summer 1488 offered by the 16th-century chronicler, Robert Lindsay of Pitscottie, suggests that Vaus enjoyed a close relationship with James IV as a spiritual and political advisor (Scottish Text Society 1899, i, 218–9). Indeed, in June 1488 he was named as one of the close group of nobles and clerics around the young king and who formed the core of the new regime. Certainly, Vaus was named in October 1489 in the list of complaints sent to James IV by the western nobles involved in the rising of that year against the narrow Hepburn- and Hume-dominated council which controlled the government as one of the 'parciall personis' who had sewn up the government between them against the true interests of the young James (Macdougall 1997, 71). Vaus, moreover, was one of the men who provided the king with substantial funds to raise men and equipment to counter the rising (Macdougall 1997, 75). After 1489, however, the bishop drops out of this inner circle of advisors. This change, however, does not appear to have been a consequence of disfavour, for Whithorn was subsequently to benefit significantly from James IV's patronage, not least on account of his regular visits to the shrine of St Ninian, and when the Chapel Royal was erected into a bishopric in 1501 Vaus was its first bishop. Despite that, however, he appears rarely as a witness to royal charters and seems to have focused his efforts within his diocese.

George was a very worldly man who fits easily into the rather distorted stereotype of the late medieval, pre-Reformation cleric. He had at least two illegitimate children, a son, Abraham, who was provided by his father with the lands of Portincalzie in the Rhinns (NAS GD138/1/18 and GD138/1/211), and a daughter, Margaret, who was married to Patrick Dunbar of Clugstoun (NAS GD138). He was an active nepotist, benefiting various relatives including his two children. In 1502, his daughter and son-in-law were appointed joint castellans and keepers of the episcopal 'palace and fortalice of Balnespyk', together with the 100/- lands of Balnespyk (now Bishopton on the northern side of Whithorn) and the six merklands

of Balchure (now Bailiewhir; NAS GD138/1/11), while in August 1506 he directed the collation of his kinsman, John Vaus, to the rectory of Wigtown (Reid 1960, no. 93), and other relatives secured positions in the service of the priory and as tenants of episcopal and priory properties. His son Abraham also benefited from his father's patronage as assignee in land settlements arising from distraint for debts. In April 1506, Abraham was assigned various lands in the estate of Craigcaffie, belonging to Hugh Neilson, who owed £148 10s to Bishop George Vaus (*RMS*, ii, no. 2956). It is likely that George's son was the Abraham Vaus who in 1532 secured some interest in the commendatorship of Whithorn, but who proved unsuccessful in securing his title (Watt & Shead 2001, 219). By the time of George's death in late 1507 or very early 1508 (Watt 1969, 132), the Vaus family had been firmly established as a leading member of the local political and landholding community. There is no record of where the bishop was buried but, given the apparently extensive rebuilding work undertaken at Whithorn under his direction (Radford & Donaldson 1953, 28, 30) and his close personal involvement in his diocese, it seems probable that it was within his cathedral.

David Arnot 1508–26

On Vaus's death, the crown nominated James Betoun, commendator of Dunfermline, to the bishopric (Watt 1969, 132; Donaldson 1949, 142). Nominated on 1 March, formally provided by Pope Julius II on 12 May, and granted the temporalities of the see on 17 July, on 9 November 1508 Betoun was elected Archbishop of Glasgow and translated to his new diocese on 19 January 1509 without ever having been consecrated at Whithorn. The day before Betoun's election to Glasgow, James IV had nominated David Arnot, abbot of Cambuskenneth, as bishop of Whithorn, and the pope granted formal provision on 29 January 1509 (Watt 1969, 132; Donaldson 1949, 142). Arnot had been a loyal servant of King James III since the late 1470s and had remained in his service through and after the crisis of 1482–3. This identification with the old regime probably made him an acceptable figure to those who sought to purge James IV's household and administration of those closely identified with the overthrow of the late king and the apparent mismanagement of royal finances between 1488 and 1492. In August 1492, Arnot was appointed Treasurer in place of the discredited William Knollis (Macdougall 1997, 96–7), and his dutiful service to James IV saw its first reward in 1503 when he was provided to the abbacy of Cambuskenneth (Watt & Shead 2001, 27). Elevation to the bishopric in 1508/9 was fitting culmination of a distinguished career of loyal service to the crown.

Like Vaus before him, Arnot seems to have used his new authority to advance the interests of his family in the diocese. The Arnots were a minor landholding family from North-

145

east Fife and had no previous interest in Galloway. By 1529, a Henry Arnot was in dispute over the parish clerkship of Inch, a parish annexed to the episcopal mensa since the 1290s, while a Patrick Arnot and an Andrew Arnot held the archdeaconry of Galloway in 1529–42 and 1543–75 respectively (Reid 1960, nos 123, 273, 316; Watt 1969, 138). He does not, however, appear to have intruded his illegitimate offspring into lands and offices associated with the bishopric.

Arnot's closeness to the king brought further benefits which considerably increased his power and wealth within Galloway. In 1509/10, he secured nomination and provision to the commendatorship of Tongland, which he retained down to 1529 (Watt & Shead 2001, 211). This combination of royal favour and local wealth, however, appears to have given Arnot a rather elevated view of his own authority in the diocese which, coupled with aggressive litigation against various influential local lairds, including Patrick Dunbar and Margaret Vaus over the lands of Bishopton and Bailiewhir, quickly led to friction and discord between the bishop and his flock (Reid 1960, 6–7). His relationship with the abbot and monks of Glenluce was particularly fraught, and in 1524 he procured letters of cursing directed against them (Reid 1960, 46). A forceful visitation of the abbey in July 1524, which saw extensive damage committed on the monks' property by the large retinue of laymen whom Arnot brought with him, brought matters to a head and the litigation which resulted led directly to the bishop's enforced resignation in January 1526 (Reid 1960, 7, 46–7; Watt 1969, 132). Although evidently disgraced by the events of 1524/5, Arnot succeeded in reserving a pension of half the fruits of the diocese and episcopal property plus a right to return to the office, together with the revenues of Tongland Abbey (against the king's will). He continued to draw the episcopal pension until his death sometime between 10 July 1536 and 25 August 1537 (Watt 1969, 132). It is not known where he was interred.

Henry Wemyss 1526–41

The man in whose favour Arnot was induced to resign was Henry Wemyss, archdeacon of Galloway since 1522 and previously Official of the diocese (Watt 1969, 138, 140). Another Fifer, it is possible that there was some kinship tie between the two men, but any such relationship has not been established. Wemyss emerged into political prominence in 1528 as a member of the political opposition to the Red Douglas regime headed by the Earl of Angus which had controlled the kingdom for much of the minority of King James V. In July 1528 he was a member of the party which accompanied the king from Stirling to Edinburgh in the opening round of the royal coup against the Douglases (Cameron 1998, 25). He remained thereafter a close servant of the king and probably served amongst the Lords of Council (Cameron 1998, 292). His closeness to James V probably hastened the settlement of

his dispute with Arnot over the revenues of Tongland, which the former bishop was forced to yield up in 1529. At that time, James V proposed the permanent annexation of the revenues of the abbey to the see of Galloway and the Chapel Royal (Hannay & Hay 1954, 162). Wemyss, however, did not immediately secure the commendatorship for himself, which passed instead briefly to a royal kinsman, William Stewart, before finally coming to Wemyss in 1530/1 (Watt & Shead 2001, 211–2). Wemyss, however, did not suffer financially, for in October 1529 the king nominated him to the commendatorship of the far wealthier Dundrennan Abbey, whose revenues he was to hold until his death in 1541 (Hannay & Hay 1954, 160; Watt & Shead 2001, 66). Following the death of Arnot in 1537 and the return of his predecessor's reserved half of the fruits of the bishopric, Wemyss was unquestionably the wealthiest and notionally most powerful man to occupy the see of Whithorn.

Wemyss' wealth was offset by the increased financial obligations which James V imposed on the Church in Scotland in the 1530s, notionally for the establishment and maintenance of the College of Justice but mainly appropriated for his lavish expenditure on building and projection of the royal image. As a consequence, most of the records which survive of Bishop Wemyss' activities in the diocese relate to the feuing of episcopal properties to secure revenue. Beginning in 1531 but more regularly in 1536–8, for example, he issued letters of tack or assedation on several episcopal properties in Wigtownshire (Reid 1960, nos 23, 24, 24a, 26, 251, 265). Most of these property deals, however, involved families who had been tightening their hold over portions of kirklands in the diocese for some time, most notably the Kennedies, Vauses and Maxwells. The Kennedies, headed by the Earl of Cassilis, had been extending their influence south from Carrick into Wigtownshire for some time, and in 1516 had secured their position when Bishop Arnot had given the 1st earl the office of bailie of the episcopal estate in Wigtownshire, plus the offices of captain, constable and keeper of the episcopal manor on its island in Loch Inch (Reid 1960, no. 15a). The Kennedies tightened their grip on Inch thereafter and in 1546 were at litigation with Wemyss's successor, Andrew Durie, who was attempting to regain control of the castle (Reid 1960, no 296). It had been a similar infeftment by George Vaus in respect of the episcopal palace at Whithorn itself which Arnot had attempted to reverse. Despite his position, Weymss was obliged to abandon his predecessor's efforts to regain physical possession of Bishopton and Bailiewhir and in November 1539 he confirmed Margaret Dunbar, Bishop Arnot's grand-daughter, in possession (GD138/1/54).

Henry Wemyss died between 14 March and 21 May 1541. His place of burial is not recorded but is likely to have been at Whithorn or Dundrennan.

Andrew Durie 1541–58

The last of the effective pre-Reformation bishops at Whithorn, Andrew Durie, does not enjoy a good reputation. Already abbot of Melrose when he was nominated by James V in July 1541 (Hannay & Hay 1954, 425; Watt 1969, 132; Donaldson 1949, 142), his administration of that monastery was hardly an example of spiritual or moral rectitude (Fawcett & Oram 2004, 56–8, 240, 267; Oram 1997, 78–9) and would not have inspired confidence in his abilities to dispense adequately his duties as bishop. He was, however, riding high in the king's favour and was to retain for life a substantial annuity from the abbey's revenues in addition to the enlarged revenues of the bishopric. Despite his reputation as a money-seeker, Durie did also enjoy a prominent position in the official reaction to the spread of heresy in the kingdom in the 1540s and 1550s, being remembered after his death by John Knox as 'our enemy of God' (Dickinson 1949, 116, 129; Laing 1846–64, i, 242, 261–2). He was an important player in the political life of the kingdom during the early stages of the minority of Queen Mary after December 1542, and in July 1543 was one of four bishops who joined Cardinal Beaton and the earls of Huntly, Argyll, Lennox, Bothwell, Sutherland and Menteith in a bond to protest against the pro-English administration of the kingdom headed by the Regent Arran (Wormald 1991, 56; Wormald 1985, 404, no 7). Having signed up to this declaration of support for the traditional religious hierarchy and the French alliance, there is little other sign that he was engaged actively in stemming the tide of religious dissent.

Like Arnot before him, the main record for Durie's actions at Whithorn is in his disposal of kirklands at feu (Reid 1960, nos 346, 347). For the most part, however, he seems to have been obliged to accept the disposal of property instituted by his predecessor, confirming, for example, the position of the Earl of Cassilis as bailie of the episcopal estate in Wigtownshire and keeper of the manor at Inch (Reid 1960, nos 296, 243). How frequently he was resident in his see is unclear, for he appears to have been an important figure in the service of the Queen-Regent, Mary of Guise. According to Knox, he died of an apoplectic fit in Edinburgh on receiving news of a Protestant riot. His place of burial is not recorded.

Although Durie was succeeded by Alexander Gordon as bishop, Gordon quickly aligned with the Reformers in 1560 and retained control of Whithorn as a Protestant bishop (Oram 1997, 79–80; Watt 1969, 132). Durie's death can be taken to mark the end of the medieval succession of bishops and the last possible interment in the still functioning liturgical east end of the cathedral. By the time of Gordon's death in 1575, it is likely that the eastern limb of the cathedral was already in an advanced state of ruin. His place of burial, and the graves of his Protestant successors, are unidentified.

8.2 THE BUILDINGS

8.2.1 Liturgical and devotional arrangements and the position of the tombs

The 12th-century church at Whithorn

It was the view of Ralegh Radford and Donaldson, writing in 1949, that the earliest part of the visible remains of the medieval cathedral-priory at Whithorn were those of a Romanesque church, 'cruciform, with a short nave, unlike the lengthy churches of the reformed monastic orders', perhaps built in the time of Bishop Gille-aldan (Radford 1949, 102). They identified it as similar in form to churches of the mid-12th century built in the 'Celtic' monasteries of Wales. On the basis of the surviving 12th-century stonework in the south wall of the nave, they proposed that Gille-aldan's church had a western limb of perhaps less than half the length of the existing structure (plan in Radford & Donaldson 1953, 35; and revised version in Radford & Donaldson 1984, 16). Their original implication was that the east end of the building was of greater length than the nave, but in their post-excavation 1953 account of the building they commented more cautiously that the 12th-century church was 'a cruciform building the full extent of which is not known' (Radford & Donaldson 1953, 28). Given the steep fall in the ground towards the east from around midway along the length of the existing eastern limb, it is possible that the original liturgical east end may not have extended more than 20m east of the present east gable of the nave. If Gille-aldan was buried in this church, unless his tomb was moved to a new position within the later, enlarged choir, it is probable that his remains lay much further to the west. While it is most likely that his tomb lay in front of the high altar of his church, or perhaps in a grave close to the small chapel which contained the supposed burial-place of St Ninian, the 12th-century tomb recess in the base of the pulpitum at the west end of the nave suggests a high-status burial for whom there is no obvious secular candidate (Radford & Donaldson 1953, 31).

Such a compact cathedral as Ralegh Radford & Donaldson proposed may have been adequate for whatever community of clergy served Gille-aldan's cathedral, but it was probably quickly inadequate for the needs of both the swelling ranks of the episcopal household and diocesan administration which was developed at Whithorn in the later 12th and early 13th centuries, and for the convent of canons regular which was established there by his successor, Bishop Christian. There is no firm date known for when the community at Whithorn adopted regular life, but they appear to have followed a route favoured by other unreformed secular colleges and may at first have

147

assumed the Augustinian rule before adopting the more austere rule of the Premonstratensians in 1175x1177 (Veitch 1999; Radford & Donaldson 1953, 15–6; Easson 1957, 88; Cowan & Easson 1976, 103). Whatever other political and cultural changes were involved in the process of regularisation, the adoption of a monastic rule would have required significant development of the complex of religious and domestic buildings which probably had formed the core of the community as it had evolved in the early 12th century. The most obvious change would have been the construction of an enclosed cloister to the north of the Romanesque church of Gille-Aldan, which, from the significant differences between the masonry of the north and south walls of the nave, appears to have involved the rebuilding of the north wall from foundations up. The layout of the cloister at Whithorn has never been determined satisfactorily. It may only have had ranges on its east and north quarters, with a simple screen wall at the west end – the plan employed at Prémontré itself and visible elsewhere in Britain at, for example, Alnwick and Dryburgh abbeys (Fawcett & Oram 2005, 129–30 and Figs 1 and 10; Hope 1887, 337–46). Beyond the identification of portions of the north range in trial work by C J Tabraham in the 1970s and fragments of what was probably the reredorter at the northern end of the east range during the construction of the present parish church in the 1820s, details of its layout are unknown (Tabraham 1979).

If Ralegh Radford's short nave theory is correct, then its extension was probably consequent on the adoption of the Premonstratensian rule in the later 12th century and the development of a monastic cloister. Part of this development may have been driven by the need to accommodate a growing secular population in the parish, for the nave housed the parish altar in the pre-Reformation period, but the physical requirements of the cloister layout was perhaps the primary determinant. The one surviving 13th-century lancet in the nave's south wall and the cut down bases of two more in the present 18th-century wall-head on the north suggest that the main building episode occurred after 1200 and possibly as late as c 1250. This later date might accord well with interpreted evidence from the 1984–91 excavations which appears to indicate a major post-1250 replanning of the outer precinct of the cathedral-priory, at least on its south and west sides (Hill 1997, 60–5). However, on the basis of the radiocarbon dates, the burial sequence and the grave assemblages, the results of the current study suggest a construction date in the first decade of the 13th century for the eastward extension of the church (Chapter 9).

The 13th-century extensions to the monastic church and rearrangement of the outer precinct were presumably also driven by a substantial growth in the size of the monastic community. By 1235, the Whithorn community was amongst the larger monastic establishments in Scotland, with 22 canons recorded in documents concerning the election of Odo Ydone, canon of Holywood Abbey, as bishop (Raine 1870, 172). This number represents a substantial convent and, when the unrecorded numbers of potential novices, chaplains and lay servitors attached to both the monastic household and the bishops' establishments are taken into account, it emerges as a major community which would have occupied an extensive complex of domestic and ancillary buildings in addition to the church and cloister in the inner precinct.

The growth and form of shrines

Growth of the building footprint was probably also stimulated by the increasing popularity of the shrine of St Ninian. Although Ralegh Radford's excavated evidence is open to different interpretation, it appears that what was believed in the 11th and 12th centuries to be the saint's tomb was housed in a free-standing chapel down the slope from the probable east end of the first Romanesque church (Radford 1949, 106–19). An increased flow of pilgrims to this shrine may have helped to generate the revenues necessary to finance major construction work, part of which involved the eastwards extension of the choir and presbytery of the monastic church to wholly subsume the earlier shrine chapel. Such an expansion and the planning behind it is entirely in keeping with the identified trends in popular religion which developed through the course of the 12th century. These trends saw a proliferation of cult centres and new arrangements being made for popular devotion at such sites, often driven by a need to secure a stable flow of revenues to fund building projects (Morris 1972, 55–60). The location of the shrine in a purpose-built chapel behind the position of the high altar is a common manifestation of this trend, but has its origins in Early Christian traditions of the burial of relics in or under altars.

Provision of an enhanced setting for a shrine at Whithorn was part of a general development in the treatment of relics in Western Christendom which had begun in the 4th century. Around that time, the practice emerged of burying saints, especially martyred saints, beneath altars (Toynbee & Ward Perkins 1956, 195–229). By the 7th century the practice of elevating the saints' bodies in shrines rather than disposing of them in the ground had become established in the West, as the example of the disinterring and placing of Cuthbert's remains in a sarcophagus beside the altar of the church at Lindisfarne (*HE* iv, 30), or the arrangement that may have been adopted for the relics of Castantin at St Andrews. At Lindisfarne and St Andrews, provision was being made for the re-housing

of complete corpses, but in most cases it seems likely that only selected pieces of the corpse (or possibly simply items associated with the saint in question) were removed from the main tomb and encased in a portable reliquary. These reliquaries were displayed on altars, placed in the crypt on or adjacent to the tomb, or kept in treasuries and placed on display or processed only on feast days (Wilson 1977, 5 and note 8). This was the probable arrangement for the display of the relics of St Columba at Dunkeld in the later medieval period (Yeoman 1999, 86–7).

While the shrines containing the complete physical remains could be very elaborate, few were located in grand settings which allowed large numbers to congregate around them. The cramped location of the shrine of St Cuthbert in the late 11th-century apse behind the high altar at Durham is a case in point. When the saint's remains were translated from their 10th-century grave into the new, elevated shrine, only a select few could be accommodated in the confined space. The development in the 11th and 12th centuries of the cult of saints with the growth in belief in their intercessory powers saw an explosion in pilgrim numbers which in turn led to a huge expansion in the provision of suitable physical settings for the more popular shrines which would allow public access while minimising the impact of their presence on the liturgical routine of the clergy. Rather than relocate the shrines from their most common positions east of the high altar, elaborate ambulatories were devised as a means of carrying the pilgrim traffic in a flowing route around and behind the choir areas. The main European manifestation of this style was for the construction of a semi-circular ambulatory aisle or chevet round an apsidal east end, with chapels radiating from the outer wall of the aisle. The form developed particularly in a series of major pilgrimage churches in southern France built in the late 11th and early 12th centuries, which derived their plan from the now destroyed great shrine church of St Martin at Tours. The surviving exemplars of the style in France are Sainte-Foy at Conques or Sainte-Sernin at Toulouse, but the largest and most influential building in this tradition was Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain, where the ambulatory and eastern chapels were constructed between 1075 and 1105 (Barral i Altet 2001, 61–9; Laule & Laule 1997, 144–9). In all of these buildings, however, the shrine remained located in a crypt chapel beneath the east end, with the shrine structure itself lying immediately below the high altar in the Early Christian tradition best represented in St Peter's at Rome. Given the traditional relationship between Tours and Whithorn, the location of the shrine vis-à-vis the high altar at the former may have been of influence in the planning of the extended east end at the latter. There is no way of proving this conjectured influence, but the possibility must be considered that the

high altar of the post-1200 church at Whithorn lay further to the east, possibly directly over the believed location of the tomb in the crypt.

An alternative form for the public presentation of relics emerged in northern France in the mid-12th century. At the abbey of St-Denis in Paris, Abbot Suger began a major reconstruction and eastwards extension in 1140–4 of the east end of the church to allow for the large numbers of pilgrims coming to the shrine. Here, however, rather than moving the high altar into the new east end it was left in its original position and the additional space provided behind it was used to house the shrine, to which access was gained via a grand chevet with ambulatory (Panofsky 1979; Binski 1996, 78). This basic form of shrine-behind-altar is the layout which was to gain most favour in shrine churches built or rebuilt within Britain from the later 12th century onwards. The closest parallel for the use of the chevet is Canterbury, where the great Trinity Chapel or Corona at the extreme east end of the cathedral was begun in 1174 as a setting for the tomb and shrine of St Thomas Becket. Recent analysis has emphasised the influences of St-Denis on the design at Canterbury, particularly in the form of the elevated eastern chapel with ambulatory. The Trinity Chapel at Canterbury was a two-storey structure, the lower crypt stage housing the archbishop's empty tomb while the upper portion contained the feretory carried on a richly decorated base (Binski 2004, 3–23). Single-storey architectural settings were employed from 1245 for Henry III's grand new east end at Westminster Abbey, a chevet in plan and designed to house the new shrine of St Edward the Confessor, while at Hailes Abbey in Gloucestershire, founded in 1246 by Henry's younger brother, Richard of Cornwall, and to which he gave a relic of the Holy Blood, the gifts of the pilgrims paid for the construction of a great eastern chevet at the centre of which was the shrine housing his gift (Binski 2004, 144–6; Midmer 1979, 156). Despite the royal patronage of these major examples, the chevet did not gain wider popularity within Britain and, although the St-Denis arrangement of a shrine chapel east of the high altar did become widely adopted the east ends at most shrine churches in the British Isles took the form of a rectangular chapel projecting east from a rectangular choir and presbytery.

In Scotland, this rectangular arrangement was the form adopted at St Andrews, where building work on the new cathedral commenced under Bishop Arnold (1160–2). The inspiration for the plan at St Andrews has been identified as the church built by Archbishop Thomas of York at Southwell in Nottinghamshire, whose plan had already been followed in the priory church at Jedburgh, which was commenced in the 1140s. At St Andrews, however, the eastern extension may originally have been conceived

of as a presbytery with the high altar placed against the east gable, but the altar was subsequently placed further to the west and the space behind it developed instead as a reliquary chapel (Fawcett 1997, 26). Unlike St-Denis or Canterbury, there was no two-tier arrangement, the eastern chapel at St Andrews having no crypt. To what extent this chapel was intended for public access is unclear, for late medieval alterations involving the at least partial blocking of part of the access into it from the north choir aisle would have severely restricted any flow of pilgrim traffic. Access would have been easier before the insertion of a tomb in the easternmost arcade of the north choir aisle, but it is possible that the relics of St Andrew (which comprised only the right arm from elbow to palm, three fingers of the right hand, the right kneecap, a tooth and portions of the skull: Baxter 1930, 120) were contained in a portable reliquary rather than displayed in a large feretory upon a monumental base such as that employed at Canterbury or Westminster, and were brought out from the chapel into the main body of the church when necessary. An alternative interpretation of the arrangements at St Andrews is explored by Yeoman (1999, 65–7). Setting aside the presence of a crypt, in its general form of a reliquary chapel behind the high altar, this may have been the plan adopted at Whithorn.

The extended east end at Whithorn

Construction of an enlarged east end may have provided both a more elaborate setting for devotions at a separate tomb and shrine of St Ninian and also accommodation for more sophisticated liturgical arrangements associated with the growing monastic community. Eastward expansion of the church could only be achieved by constructing a platform out from the falling ground to carry the presbytery (Chapter 3 Fig 3.5). This platform encased the earlier shrine chapel but also provided controlled access to it, perhaps reflecting a need to manage more carefully pilgrim traffic through what was now the ritual focus of a regular monastic community (Cruden 1986, 89–90). The exact structural layout of the 13th-century church cannot be determined from the surviving ruins, but a number of conjectural restorations have been proposed based on extrapolation from the visible fragments and other architectural elements exposed during grave-digging operations in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The earliest detailed analysis, offered by David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross but based on the architect William Galloway's plans drawn up during the course of the Marquis of Bute's excavation and consolidation of the east end of the ruins, suggested that the eastern limb was an aisleless structure with large transepts, possibly with chapels on their east walls (MacGibbon & Ross 1896, 481). Galloway, in his clearance of the crypts, had exposed the

lower part of a staircase descending from the north side of the choir to the two vaulted chambers which supported the floor of the easternmost portion of the church. How these separate components joined into a functioning structure, however, was not considered by them. The Galloway/ MacGibbon and Ross aisleless plan was reproduced by the Royal Commission in the Wigtownshire inventory of ancient monuments (RCAHMS 1912, Figure 101), and it remained the standard interpretation until 1934 when Henry Kerr offered a re-analysis of the standing remains which proposed that there had been a north aisle running for five bays east of the central crossing, with a further one bay unaisled extension housing the eastern chapel projecting beyond that over the vaulted crypt (Kerr 1934, 31–8). Kerr's interpretation was of a long, narrow church with shallowly projecting transepts of only one bay's depth to north and south. The shallowness of this projection was based on his identification of 'a foundation of cross form' which he interpreted as the remains of south-east angle of a south transept (Kerr 1934, 34). He adhered to the earlier suggestion of a chapterhouse immediately to the north of the north transept, which again limited the potential northern extent of the crossing. Small traces of wall foundations running east on the same alignment as the upstanding remains of the nave were interpreted as the south wall of the choir, but the position of the small sub-rectangular building to the north of the eastern crypt led him to argue that there was probably an aisle on this side from which that building, interpreted by him as a sacristy, could be entered (Kerr 1934, 34, 36). He also argued that the stair leading down into the crypt on its north side was probably accessed from an aisle rather than descending within the thickness of the wall. Despite the conjectural nature of what Kerr had proposed, by the time of the programme of excavations at the site begun in 1949 by Ralegh Radford, the aisled choir plan had become a largely accepted fact.

Ralegh Radford's main work focused on the early chapel underlying the east end of the cathedral and in the nave, but a north–south trench opened up parallel with the western side of the access path to the current parish church was intended to define the extent of the transepts. No surviving evidence for the walls of the south transept were found, but, reinterpreting the building on the north side of the choir which Galloway and Kerr had thought to be the chapterhouse as a more extensive north transept and the cross-shaped foundation which Kerr had believed to be the south-east angle of the south transept as the north–east junction of transept and choir, Ralegh Radford proposed that the north and south transepts were three bays deep and had eastern chapels in the two outer bays (Radford & Donaldson, 1953, Fig 4). More importantly, however, although no physical evidence was found to support his

interpretation, he also proposed that the choir was aisled for four bays on *both* sides, with only the two easternmost bays' lengths, carried on the substructure formed by the crypt, unaisled (Radford & Donaldson 1953, 31). This interpretation was based on the view that pilgrim access to St Ninian's shrine and tomb would have to be channelled to either side of the central aisle where the canons' stalls were located, to avoid disruption of the monastic services. Ralegh Radford further argued that, to allow access to the easternmost chapel over the crypt, which he saw as containing a new shrine housing the relics of Ninian, the high altar of the cathedral was placed against a screen three bays east of the crossing (Radford & Donaldson 1953, 31). From the fourth bay of the north aisle, a straight flight of stairs descended eastwards to provide access to the crypt, and, to smooth and speed the flow of pilgrims, a second flight of stairs probably connected the crypt and the fourth bay of the south aisle, but all trace of this has been obliterated by the construction of a south-eastern chapel in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. This arrangement, it was argued, provided a means for pilgrims to circulate behind the high altar to visit the reliquary shrine, descend into the tomb by the northern stair, then re-ascend into the church and exit via the south aisle, a plan similar in design if much smaller and simpler in scale and execution than that adopted at Glasgow (Cruden 1986, 90, 160).

Ralegh Radford's interpretation was modified in the 1980s, mainly by the shortening of the transepts and the extension of the north aisle to provide a link with the upper portion of the curious detached structure which stands to the north of the eastern chapel, but his general outline was still regarded as sound (and revised version in Radford & Donaldson 1984, 16). Stewart Cruden, however, argued that the crypt stairs — a matching pair was by then accepted as fact — descended in the thickness of the wall rather than through the floor of the aisles (Cruden 1986, 90). His comparison of this plan with the scheme employed at Glasgow has been significantly elaborated upon by Peter Yeoman, whose interpretation of the devotional arrangements of the east end suggests a sophisticated and carefully managed venue for maximising the spiritual impact on the pilgrims (Yeoman 1999, 39–41).

As discussed above, there are good analogies for the location of shrine chapels east of the high altar at other pilgrimage churches in Scotland and elsewhere in Britain. The most obvious Scottish parallels for an unaisled chapel housing a feretory in this location are St Andrews, discussed above, where the unaisled presbytery is believed to have housed the apostle's reliquary, and Dunfermline, where the stepped base which supported the feretory containing St Margaret's relics can still be seen in the ruins of the eastern chapel (Yeoman 1999, 65–7, 71–4). At St Andrews, the east

end of the cathedral was laid out as part of the grand new scheme commenced in *c* 1160 by Bishop Arnold, while at Dunfermline the shrine chapel was part of the new choir limb built in the mid-13th century and sufficiently complete by 1250 for the translation of St Margaret's relics to their new location (Fawcett 2005, 49). At Glasgow, the arrangements of crypt, choir and feretory chapel, constructed as part of a major rebuilding programme which commenced *c* 1240, are significantly more complex than at any other Scottish medieval pilgrimage church, but the original early 12th-century east end may have been closer in form to the plan adopted at Whithorn (Mentel 1998, 46–7; Yeoman 1999, 18–24). The developed 13th-century plan, however, provided a new feretory chapel east of the high altar while preserving the empty tomb of St Kentigern for veneration by pilgrims in the crypt. At Whithorn, no dating evidence survives for the superstructure of the choir, but the architectural details of the surviving corbels and springers for the original ribbed vault of the crypt, which are exposed in the north–east and north–west angles and mid way along the north wall, indicate that work probably commenced on this portion of the church soon after 1200 (Radford & Donaldson 1953, 32). If Scottish inspiration for its design is sought, then Glasgow offers more obvious parallels than any church in the archdiocese of York.

It must be stressed at this point that, although it is possible that the east end at Whithorn was modelled on the arrangements at Glasgow, there is actually no surviving documentary record dateable to before 1501–6 which gives any indication of the physical layout of the pilgrimage arrangements at the former. All the elaborate reconstructions of the 13th/15th-century church are based on backward projection from the records of James IV's pilgrimages to the shrine (see below) coupled with speculative analogy with other sites. Key to all of these reconstructions is the location of the high altar, which has been largely accepted on no solid grounds to have stood around two bays west of the east gable, but could equally have stood directly in front of the gable itself, over the tomb. These observations are of potentially crucial significance when the position of the bishops' tombs is discussed below. Alternative schemes of this type which may have influenced the design at Whithorn were already well developed by the 12th century, not least the arrangements derived from the forms developed at Tours where the tomb and shrine remained in a crypt directly beneath the high altar.

Clearly, the interpretations of the structural remains at Whithorn have changed several times over the centuries. As a result of this present study, the most likely arrangement is that the high altar lay right at the east end of the church, against the gable wall, with the bishops' burials immediately to the west of it.

Later medieval building work

In 1286, the enlarged 13th-century church suffered what was claimed to be significant damage from fire. An indulgence offering 40 days' remission from purgatory to all who contributed to the costs of restoration and rebuilding of the church of Whithorn, which had been destroyed by fire, was granted on 10 September 1286 by Archbishop John le Romeyn of York (Brown 1913, 8–9; Brown 1916, 83–5). While the date of the fire could be entirely coincidental, it seems likely that the damage to the cathedral-priory was inflicted in the course of the raids launched from Carrick by Robert VI Bruce, earl of Carrick, against Balliol and Comyn interests in Galloway as part of his family's manoeuvring for power in the months following the death of King Alexander III in March 1286 (Oram 1992, 30–1). A further indication of the Bruces' responsibility for this damage is perhaps to be seen in Edward Bruce's support for the convent after he was awarded the lordship of Galloway in *c* 1310, and his brother, King Robert's patronage of the canons down to his death in June 1329 (*RRS*, v, 275). The bulk of their gifts seem to have been made in recompense for damage inflicted on the priory and its interests during the campaigns in Galloway after 1306 and more especially in 1310–2, but others were more probably offerings intended to secure the canons' masses and prayers for the king. For example, in 1322 the king made provision for the maintenance of the fabric of the church during a visit to Galloway, possibly whilst on pilgrimage, when he granted the canons the teind of various crown revenues from Wigtownshire and a teind of income from the churches of the then vacant see of Whithorn (*RMS* i, appendix 1, no 21).

Despite the 1286 indulgence and the early 14th-century grants of revenue, there is no evidence for significant building work having been undertaken at Whithorn until the 1350s, probably on account of the long periods of political disturbance in the region down to 1312 and again from 1332 until the early 1350s. What may have been the final stage of an extensive programme of repair work was carried out on the eastern limb of the church in the middle of the century when Sir Fergus MacDowall, the probable head of the powerful MacDowall kin, came on a pilgrimage to the shrine and paid to have the 'quere rycht wele tyle' (the choir well roofed with tile/slate) as a thanks-offering for the miraculous aid supposedly given by St Ninian in defeating a force of English raiders in eastern Galloway (Metcalfe 1904, 68). This roofing work perhaps constituted a completion of a programme of repairs to the church that had started over half a century earlier, but could equally well have been a specific piece of maintenance work.

Architectural fragments from around the site and from within the adjoining burgh, as well as details of the upstanding remains, point to a series of building operations in the church through the 15th century. Some of this work may have been undertaken during the episcopate of Bishop Elisaeus Adougan (1406–*c* 1414), following his claim in a letter to the pope that the church was in a dilapidated state. Adougan's relations with the prior and canons were poor, however, and his appeal to the papacy may have been motivated by a desire to extract revenue from the convent to support the bishop's designs. On 11 April 1408 Pope Benedict XIII issued a commission to the archdeacon of Glasgow to force the prior and canons, of whom he says there were only 12 (marking nearly a halving of their number since 1235), to contribute from their income towards rebuilding costs. The wording of the papal letter appears to repeat the language used in the bishop's original complaint, which has not itself survived (*CPL-Benedict XIII*, 173; for the full text, see Reid 1960, no 1). It stated that the church, which was a popular place of pilgrimage, was 'unsound' (*debilem*), 'mean' (*vilem*) and 'old, more than is fitting for such a church'. The commission claimed that Adougan had wanted to contribute as much as possible from his own resources, but they were insufficient for the task in hand, while the canons, despite their small numbers but with an income in excess of 500 merks, had repeatedly refused to make any payment towards the costs. The archdeacon was instructed to investigate the situation and, if Adougan's claims were proven true, to assign half of the priory's revenues to rebuilding work for the next ten years. There is no record of the archdeacon's investigation or its findings, but there does appear to have been building work undertaken around this time.

Firm evidence for new building work on the cathedral dates from the 1420s, when the patronage of the Black Douglas family, who had secured the lordship of western Galloway in the 1370s, paid for some further extensions. The principal benefactress was Margaret Stewart, duchess of Touraine and countess of Douglas, wife of Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas, who in March 1424 granted the priory part of her demesne lands at Cruggleton to provide rental income to fund construction of a new chapel and to pay for one of the canons to celebrate mass in it daily (*RMS* ii, no 12). There is no indication of where this chapel was in the priory church, but in April 1431 there is the first surviving record of a Chapel of St Mary or Lady Chapel. Reference to it occurs in a supplication by Prior Thomas Mcgilliachnisy of Whithorn to the pope, seeking ratification of the annexation by the priory chapter of the revenues of the parish of Longcastle for the support of the chapel he had begun to build (Dunlop & Cowan 1970, 175–6). The petition includes details of the services to be offered in the chapel, beginning daily at eight o'clock with a mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with music

provided by the canons and chantors, and with the officiating priest saying a special collect and the psalm *De Profundis* for the prior's soul, plus a collect and a sermon delivered to the public attending the service. From the details of the petition, this new building was clearly intended to be a chantry chapel for Prior Thomas, who stipulated that the canons should say mass annually on the date of his death, and that one of the canons should say mass daily in the chapel. The petition was confirmed and the process of annexation and any building was completed in January 1433 when Bishop Alexander confirmed the assignment of the revenues of the rectory of the parish church of St Nicholas of Longcastle to the priory and assigned its revenues in common to the canons. The canons, in return, were obligated to celebrate mass in the Lady Chapel, which the bishop's charter described as 'adjacent to the choir of the priory church' (Reid 1960, no 6). On the basis of this description, the more recent interpretations of the plan of the priory church have proposed that the eastern extremity of the choir limb housed this Lady Chapel (see plan in Radford & Donaldson 1984, 16). There is, however, no documentary evidence to confirm this positioning and the altar of St Mary could as easily have been located in a north or south choir aisle, as was the case at Dunfermline Abbey or Elgin Cathedral (Fawcett 1999a, 14). Bearing in mind what appears to be a strong parallel between the arrangements of the east end at Glasgow and that at Whithorn, however, it is important to note that at Glasgow the Lady Chapel lay in the crypt to the east of the site of St Kentigern's tomb (Fawcett 1998, 4). The South Chapel, erected over the barrel-vaulted undercroft that extends southwards from the fourth and fifth bays of the choir and apparently dating to *c* 1490–1500, may represent a later enlargement of an earlier 15th-century Lady Chapel, but there is also no concrete evidence for that identification (Radford & Donaldson 1953, 31–2). Further repairs or enlargements may have been undertaken in the 1460s, perhaps paid for by the indulgences which the pope in 1462 permitted to be sold to pilgrims who visited the shrine on Palm Sunday, Easter Day, the Feast of the Nativity of John the Baptist (Midsummer), Lammas (1 August) and St Ninian's Day (16 September) (*CPP* xii).

The early sixteenth-century east end and relic display

Substantial building work appears to have been underway at the end of the 15th century. When James IV paid his first visit to Whithorn in November 1491, amongst his pious disbursements he also gave 18s 'to the drink' to the masons working on the building (Dickson 1877, i, 182). On the basis of the architectural details of the doorway linking the 13th-century crypt with the undercroft of the South Chapel, it has generally been assumed that this work was

focused on the building of this chapel, but there are several other architectural elements of similar date to be seen in the priory complex, including the gatehouse and the reinserted south-eastern doorway in the nave, which points to a much more general programme of work. Such work was apparently still in progress down to August 1502 when he ordered payments of 14s 'drinksilver' to the masons (Dickson 1877, ii, 104, 157), and may well have continued further. This building activity, however, needs to be borne in mind when considering the physical arrangements for display of, and devotions at, the relics of the saint in the early 1500s; we have no way of knowing whether these had been substantially altered in the course of that work.

The South Chapel, which survives only to the level of the pavement over the barrel-vaulted undercroft, is a structure whose exact relationship with the east end of the priory church has been the subject of quite elaborate conjecture in the past. Its construction was apparently part of a major operation which may have involved significant alteration to the superstructure of the 13th-century eastern chapel, for the groined vault of the original crypt, which had been carried on a single central column, was removed and replaced by two parallel barrel vaults supported on a transverse wall. Probably at the same time, a round-headed doorway with simple late 15th-century mouldings was cut through the south wall of the western of the two new chambers formed in the 13th-century crypt. The mouldings on this doorway are on its 'outer' or southern face, which suggests that the crypt under the east end of the church remained the higher status chamber rather than the new undercroft beneath the South Chapel into which it opened. While the replacement of the 13th-century groined vault and reduction of the internal space through the introduction of a transverse wall would have significantly reduced the visual impact of the original crypt chamber, it appears that it remained an important 'public' space whose status was emphasised by the positioning of the mouldings on its new south doorway: you passed from a high-status space in the crypt into a lower-status space beneath the South Chapel. These new arrangements suggest a major restructuring of access provision to what was probably still believed to be the site of St Ninian's tomb in the 13th-century crypt. As a consequence of the erection of the new South Chapel, any southern stair descending from the choir parallel to that which remains on the north side of the crypt appears to have been swept away, removing any possibility of smooth circulation of pilgrims as proposed by Peter Yeoman (1999, 39–41). From *c* 1500, the main flow of pilgrims probably descended into the 13th-century crypt via the remaining northern stair, then exited via the south door into the undercroft of the South Chapel and out by the door at its south end. Indeed, such a rearrangement is what has been

demonstrated in this study (Chapter 3.2.5), along with the possibility of further crypts under the South Transept.

Such substantial alterations to the sub-structure of the east end of the church perhaps implies significant alterations to the building which they carried. The new South Chapel would alone have required the breaking through of the south wall of the choir, and the creation of access into the South Chapel from the choir, of which 'Galloway's box' is evidence (Chapter 3.2.5). Despite the various plans and conjectural reconstructions which have been offered to show how this was arranged (eg Kerr 1934; Ralegh Radford & Donaldson 1953 and 1984; or that by David Simon reproduced in Yeoman 1999, 40), the only feature of the post-1500 structure which could previously proposed with any confidence is that, on the evidence of the location of a large projecting buttress in the middle of the east wall of the south-east undercroft, the structure above was divided into two compartments. These probably both held altars beneath large windows in the sections of wall divided by the buttress.

The construction of this South Chapel should probably be seen as a manifestation of the late medieval proliferation of altars in major churches, associated in particular with the later medieval 'cult of death' and provision for the saying of *pro anima* masses. Parallels for the development of such chapels at shrine churches can be seen at both Iona and Glasgow, where enlarged southern chapels were added to the buildings. At Iona, the south transept of the cruciform early 13th-century church was massively extended in an operation perhaps intended to provide a new setting for the shrine of St Columba, but this work appears to have been abandoned uncompleted in the 14th century and was swept away in a mid-15th-century reconstruction of the eastern limb of the abbey (Yeoman 1999, 82–4 and fig 58). The southern chapel at Glasgow, although named the Blackadder Aisle and associated with that late 15th-century archbishop, appears to have been part of the scheme of work commenced by Bishop William de Bondington around 1240. It was possibly intended to house some subsidiary cult associated with St Kentigern, but was never completed. As at Whithorn, it was intended to be a two-storey structure, presumably with a chapel on its upper level, but this was never completed and appears never to have advanced much beyond the height of the lower vault (Fawcett 1998, 5). Both these examples, however, are of mid to late-13th-century date, whereas that at Whithorn was of late 15th- to early 16th-century construction. Closer functional parallels can perhaps be seen in the large chantry chapels added in the late 15th and early 16th centuries to the south side of the presbyteries at churches such as Arbuthnott in the Mearns or Guthrie in Angus. A further factor with a potential bearing on the alterations and enlargement at the east end which should be borne

in mind is the possible proliferation of relics and the need for better facilities for their display to maximise access to pilgrims and, concomitantly, revenue from offerings made at each venue. Indications of such a proliferation of foci for devotions can be seen in the records of James IV's offerings in 1501 and 1506 (see below). The existence of, for example, the separate portable reliquary which contained the arm-bone of St Ninian, could point to the dispersal of the saint's physical remains around the church rather than their concentration in a single feretory.

Apart from the 15th-century references to altars and chapels of the Blessed Virgin Mary, there is no surviving record of the liturgical layout of the 13th- to late 15th-century cathedral-priory which would give a pointer to its structural form. It is only in the early 1500s that some indication can be obtained of the late medieval liturgical and devotional arrangements from records of James IV's alms-giving during his pilgrimages to Whithorn. Although most modern analyses of the building have interpreted the east end arrangements as revealing a dual focus in upper and lower chapels, the first documentary evidence to support the existence of a separate shrine and a tomb of St Ninian, possibly but not necessarily similar to the 13th-century arrangements at Glasgow, dates only from the king's visit on the night of 22 April 1501. Records of his disbursements reveal that he made separate offerings 'at the towme and at the reliques', possibly indicating that what were believed to have been Ninian's remains had been translated from his grave to a feretory. The account, however, does not make clear if the tomb and relics were at that date in separate locations within the church. On 23 April, King James made further offerings at the tomb and the relics, but the accounts record that on this occasion he also left offerings at the 'hie altar', which presumably lay in the canons' quire, and the 'Rude [rood] altar', which probably lay in front of the pulpitum at the east end of the nave, an arrangement which suggests his involvement in a series of acts of devotion and participation in masses offered at the altars (Dickson 1877, ii, 72).

The financial accounts of James IV's visit with Queen Margaret in August 1506 offer more detail. On this occasion, the king made offerings at the rood altar and high altar in the church as before, but also at 'the ferter' (feretory). This is the first documented record of the housing of the saint's remains in an elaborate shrine for public display. Further offerings were made in the 'utir [outer] kyrk' (usually meaning the nave), 'at the reliques', and at the Lady altar (Dickson 1877, iii, 280). The order in which these locations are listed perhaps reveals a defined pilgrimage route through the church, starting at the rood altar in the nave, moving through into the chancel and passing on to the feretory housing the saint's remains, perhaps in a chapel behind the

high altar. From there, pilgrims may have descended into the crypt to the saint's tomb and other relics by the steps to the north of the high altar, perhaps returning to the church by the south stair (if it still existed at that date) to make an offering at the high altar, then progressing to the lady chapel, which this schedule suggests was perhaps housed in the southern chapel, before exiting the church.

Aisles or aisle-less?

A final issue which has a direct bearing on the position of the bishops' tombs within the east end of the enlarged church is how the choir was separated from the supposed feretory chapel. The plans offered by Ralegh Radford and reproduced by Historic Scotland down to the present simply suggest that the central aisle compartment of the choir carried through as an unbroken space to the east gable, with the division between the choir and feretory chapel being provided only by a screen behind the high altar at the third pier east of the crossing. There is, however, some debate as to whether the eastern chapel was carried up to the same height as the rest of the eastern limb of the church. If it was a lower structure, rising perhaps only to the height of the putative aisle walls, there would have had to have been a gable positioned probably on the line of the suggested third or fourth piers east of the crossing. This is the arrangement suggested by David Simon in his speculative reconstruction of the eastern shrine chapel and crypt and in the associated schematic floor plans of the structure (Yeoman 1999, figs 20 and 21). His reconstruction, however, suggests that there was a pier positioned midway between the north and south aisle piers, dividing the choir from the feretory chapel by a two-bay arcade and leaving an ambulatory between it and the screen behind the high altar one bay further to the west. There is, it must be stressed, no evidence for the existence of such a pier, and the arrangement seems to be based entirely on Henry Kerr's wholly speculative 1933–4 reconstruction of a soaring shrine chapel separated from the choir by a two-tiered arcade in this position (Kerr 1934, plates 1 and 5).

An important alternative to the arrangements proposed over the last 75 years by Kerr, Ralegh Radford, Cruden and Yeoman is that the eastern limb of the cathedral was entirely or largely without lateral aisles throughout its history. Only Kerr considered this possibility in the speculative plan which he published in 1934, based on William Galloway's earlier proposal of a simple, unaisled rectangle. Nevertheless, it needs to be borne in mind that only four of Scotland's medieval cathedrals had aisled eastern limbs, while the cathedrals of even comparatively wealthy sees like Aberdeen and Dunkeld seem never to have been intended to be anything other than unaisled (Fawcett 1997, 118–22). While Dornoch, Aberdeen, Brechin, Dunkeld

and Dunblane had aisled naves and unaisled chancels. Fortrose and Lismore were conceived originally as extended rectangular structures with no clear structural differentiation between nave and choir space. If Whithorn had an aisled (or partly aisled) choir and unaisled nave, this would be unparalleled in Scottish cathedral architecture. Even allowing for the constraints of space for expansion imposed by the presence of the cloister to the north of the cathedral church, it is highly unusual that there was no attempt to expand the nave to provide additional space for chapels in side aisles later in the Middle Ages. This, we must allow, could account for the possible expansion at the east end, particularly the provision of the South Chapel in the late 15th or early 16th century. Without excavation, this question will perhaps never be resolved satisfactorily. There is, however, one possible analogy to consider: Whithorn's daughter-house at Fearn in Easter Ross.

Although Fearn was founded originally in the 1220s. nothing obvious survives of the first stone buildings erected on its second site. The surviving church is believed largely to be a product of the central two quarters of the 14th century, with some minor late medieval additions and a post-Reformation truncation of its nave (Fawcett 1994, 77, 134). As it stands, this is basically a simple rectangular church with no obvious external (or internal) structural differentiation between the nave and choir portions of the building. While this plain form at Fearn cannot be taken as proof positive of the plan at Whithorn, it must be considered as a possibility along with all the implications which this design would have for the speculative liturgical and devotional arrangements in the cathedral.

The above reconstructions of liturgical arrangements in and pilgrim circulation routes around the cathedral are mainly predicated upon the positioning of the post-1200 high altar and the possible existence of a shrine chapel behind that altar. While this has been since the late 1940s the preferred model for the cathedral's layout in the early 13th to late 15th centuries, bearing in mind that no solid evidence survives for the existence of the lateral aisles which would have made this arrangement possible, we must consider the possibility that the high altar stood immediately in front of the east gable of the 13th-century extended east end. This was the position occupied by the high altars at Dornoch, (probably) Fortrose, Lismore, Elgin, Aberdeen, Brechin, Dunkeld and Dunblane. Of these churches, only Elgin was provided with aisles in its eastern limb, while at the others the choir stalls were apparently positioned immediately against the side walls of the chancel without any passage behind them. At Whithorn, given the recorded size of the monastic community in 1235, the narrowness of the central compartment of even an aisled church would have made the easy flow of

pilgrims through the choir area very difficult. There is no problem with allowing for the stairs to the crypt to have descended intramurally from the choir, as indeed this study has now demonstrated (Chapter 2.3.2), or for the feretory also to have been housed originally in the crypt. Indeed, the only problem with this plan is perhaps in reconciling it with modern perceptions of what a great medieval shrine church *should* have looked like. If we accept that it was a plain, unaisled rectangle throughout its history, the form taken by Scotland's one largely intact major late medieval reliquary church at Tain in Easter Ross, and that access to the crypts was via intramural stairs, this plan has significant

implications for the apparent positioning of the bishops' graves within the cathedral.

Bishops' and priors' tombs?
Before considering the location of the graves, their traditional labelling requires discussion. Almost since the time of the first discovery of the group of burials which lay towards the eastern end of the ruins of the medieval cathedral-priory at Whithorn the interments have been known collectively as the 'bishops' and priors' tombs'. While some of the earliest of the graves may belong to the heads of the religious community which perhaps survived at this site between the

Table 8.2: The Priors of Whithorn, to 1516

Priors	Dates	Place of burial
Adam	-	No record survives of the places of burial of the priors of Whithorn, except for the possible record of Prior Thomas's arrangements in the 1430s for interment in the chapel of St Mary which he had endowed in the cathedral church
William	-	
Michael	-	
Malcolm	-	
Paul	-	
Duncan	-	
Gregory	-	
Duncan	-	
Dungal	-	
Thomas	-	
John	-	
Maurice	-	
Michael	-	
Gilbert	1382–1413	
Thomas	1413–31	(Possibly in Chapel of St Mary in the cathedral)
James	-	
William	1447–67x68	
Fergus	1466–1470	
Roger	-	
Patrick	1474–1503	
Henry	1503–14x16	

For outline dates of priors down to 1382, see list in Watt & Shead 2001, 216–17. After 1516, the priory was held by a series of commendators

end of the recorded succession of Northumbrian bishops in the 830s and the emergence of the first of the medieval succession in the later 1120s, comparison with monasteries elsewhere in Scotland and more widely in the British Isles suggests that it is unlikely that any of the burials belong to the priors of the Premonstratensian community founded here in c 1177 (Table 8.2). The only prior for whom there is some evidence for burial on the site of the east end of the cathedral is Thomas Mcgilliachnisy, who in the early 1430s was making endowments for a chantry at the altar of St Mary in the church (discussed above). His arrangements suggest that he may have planned to be buried in St Mary's chapel, but there is no surviving evidence that this was the case.

What appears to have been the most common burial place for the heads of monastic communities was the chapter house or the cloister alley immediately outside the entrance to the chapter house. This tradition does not appear to be unique to any one monastic order, but is common to all orders present in Britain by the early 13th century, both orders of monks and also of canons regular. It was the prevailing arrangement down into the mid-14th century, when burials in the church begin to become more common, and seems to have all but ended in the 15th century, when changes in practice relating to post-mortem commemoration of the dead and increased provision of requiem masses for the individual led to construction of monumental tombs and chantry chapels by monastic heads. This shift is manifest physically in the commissioning of substantial free-standing or mural monuments, such as those of Finlay McFaid at Fearn, Bricius MacKinnon at Iona, or the unidentified late 15th-century abbot whose effigy was discovered at Lindores in the 19th century (RCAHMS 1933, 219), or richly carved slabs, like the magnificent memorial of Abbot John Schanwell (1480–1506) at Coupar Angus (Adams & McAneny 1984, 25). What is believed to have been the burial chamber below the tomb of Prior James Haldenstone (1417–43) at St Andrews points to the former presence of a magnificent mural tomb, located in the north choir chapel immediately adjacent to an area of the cathedral which had been extensively remodelled under his direction (Fawcett 2002, 308, fig 4.80). It needs also to be remembered that other privileged individuals could also secure the right to be buried in the chapter house. At Melrose, for example, the royal chamberlain, Philip de Valognes, and his son William were interred in the chapter house in 1215 and 1219 respectively, as was Gervase Avenel, whose family were major benefactors of the abbey (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1215, 129; Fawcett & Oram 2004, 25–6). Consequently, a number of the interments identified in rather crowded chapter house burials, like those at Jedburgh (see below), could belong to lay folk who had obtained burial rights there.

At Whithorn we are forced to argue from negative evidence, given that no structural remains of the chapter house survive, that not even its exact location can be fixed with absolute certainty, and no documentary record dating from before the 1430s survives to give any indication of the place of burial of the earlier priors. It is difficult, too, to make analogies with other Premonstratensian houses in Scotland, for most are even less well preserved than at Whithorn, no structural remains being visible above ground at Soulseat and Holywood and only a tiny fragment incorporating a relocated doorway surviving at Tongland. At Fearn nothing remains of the cloister and the possible burials of the 13th- and 14th-century abbots; the surviving tomb and effigy of Abbot Finlay McFaid (d 1486), however, rests in a lateral chapel said to have been built by him and attached to the south side of the 14th-century church (Fawcett 1994, 77; MacGibbon & Ross 1896, ii, 546). The absence of demonstrably earlier burials in the church at Fearn suggests that the general trend away from chapter-house towards church interments in the later Middle Ages is recorded here. Only at Dryburgh are there substantial structural remains of church and cloister, and here the chapter house again seems to have been the location for the 12th- and 13th-century abbots' graves. In Westmorland at the small Premonstratensian abbey of Shap, one coffin is still visible in the floor of the chapter house, while two plain slabs lie in the floor of the eastern alley of the cloister walk immediately outside the chapter house door (as seen by the present writer – these features are not mentioned in Colvin & Gilyard-Beer 1963). Fragmentary though this Premonstratensian evidence is, however, it does seem to indicate that the church was not a common venue for burials of the heads of the community until the later medieval period.

Comparison with other orders appears to bear this observation out. As a consequence of the major programme of excavation at Jedburgh Abbey in 1984 and documentary records relating to St Andrews cathedral-priory, perhaps more is known about the burials of Augustinian abbots and priors than of most other orders in Scotland. At St Andrews, the only other cathedral-priory in Scotland, it is known that all priors between John of Haddington (d 1304) and James Bisset (d 1416) were buried in the chapter house or its vestibule (Cruden 1950, 16; RCAHMS 1933, 237). The location of the pre-14th-century priors' graves there is less certain, but were probably also in the chapter house. Bisset's successor, James Haldenston, was the first to be buried in the cathedral church, where his monument may have been an integral part of the major programme of renovations which he oversaw during his priorship (see above). Excavations within the chapter house at Jedburgh revealed 17 burials (Lewis, Ewart et al 1995, 32–3, 118–26). Here, most of the interments appear to date from the 12th to 14th centuries,

few evidently being inserted after a major remodelling of the chamber which involved the construction of a central pier to support a stone vault in the late 15th or early 16th century (Lewis, Ewart *et al* 1995, 145–6).

In Cistercian houses, it was also standard practice for the burials of the heads of the community to be made in the chapter house. At Melrose, the first Cistercian foundation in Scotland, the early abbots were also buried in the chapter house, where the remains of Abbot Waltheof (d 1159) were in 1171 re-entombed under a polished marble slab and where a more elaborate shrine was later constructed for the saintly abbot (Fawcett & Oram 2004, 23, 24, 184; Richardson & Wood 1949, 18–19). In 1240, the remains of the early abbots were recorded as having been moved from their original tombs next to the entrance of the chamber to new locations at the east end of the enlarged building (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1240). One of the finest surviving groups of Cistercian abbatial burials in Scotland can be seen at Dundrennan, where five graveslabs of later 12th- and 13th-century date survive in the pavement of the chamber and a superb late 12th-century recumbent effigy of an abbot is also on display at the west end of the nave (Richardson 1981, 8 fig 4, 9, 14 figs 11–13, 15). At Sweetheart, the late 13th- or early 14th-century coffin-lid of the first head of the convent, Abbot John, and a broken portion of the coffin-lid of an unknown later medieval successor, are misleadingly displayed in the south transept of the abbey church as part of a collection of medieval sculptural fragments, but seem to have been recovered originally from the ruins of the chapter house (Richardson 1951, 13, 14–15). Comparisons outwith Scotland show the practice to have been common to all Cistercian monasteries. At Jervaulx in Yorkshire, for example, nine slabs survive in the chapter house marking the sites of abbatial interments (Breakspear 1968, 282). Further examples can be seen in Yorkshire at Byland, Fountains (where 19 abbots are buried in the chapter house, the last interred in 1346), and Rievaulx, where, as at Melrose, the tomb of a saintly abbot was developed into an elaborate shrine at the entrance to the chamber (Peers 1952, 10; Peers 1967, 8–10; Gilyard-Beer 1970, 46).

There has been limited archaeological investigation of monasteries of other orders in Scotland, a problem compounded by the obliteration of the physical remains of the chapter houses or entire claustral complexes. Kelso's cloister, for example, survives only in a single element of its west range – an outer parlour – while the area of the cloister garth and east range is overlain by a post-Reformation cemetery. A similar situation occurs at Dunfermline where, although substantial sections of the south range survive, the east range has been almost entirely destroyed and its site taken over for post-Reformation burials (Bridgland 2005, 93–4; RCAHMS 1933, 115). There is, however, still potential

for the recovery of information at some sites where the superstructures of the chapter houses have long vanished. At Arbroath, where only a single buttress forming the SE angle of the chapter house remains, clearance of the site in 1938 revealed the remains of ten high status interments, probably all of them abbots (Mackie & Cruden 1954, 36). Although the burials contained fragments of clothing and footwear, all, unfortunately, had been plundered for valuables in the post-Reformation period.

Considering the importance of these communities in the religious, cultural and political life of medieval Scotland, it is surprising how little is known about the men who guided and managed them. It is also surprising, given the number of monasteries whose sites are in State guardianship, how little is known about the high-status burials which occurred within them. Indeed, there seems to be no easily accessible data-base recording either known places of interment or surviving visible remains of tombs and monuments. This problem becomes even more acute when considering the burials of the medieval episcopate, considered below.

8.2.2 The location of the bishops' tombs

Given the levels of destruction at most of Scotland's pre-Reformation cathedrals, it is perhaps unsurprising that so little is known of the nature and location of Scottish bishops' tombs. A significant number of bishops' tombs, however, have survived at most of the medieval Scottish cathedrals, albeit usually in mutilated and plundered states. Most which do remain, however, date from the later Middle Ages, mainly from the 15th and early 16th centuries, but a number of 13th-century examples are known. This discussion does not include reference to Kirkwall where a number of important medieval episcopal tombs survive in what was also a major reliquary church (of SS Magnus and Rognvald). Although there are strong parallels with late 12th- and early 13th-century English forms, it was decided to concentrate on the sees which lay within the *Ecclesia Scoticana* for this present study and to explore parallels chiefly with York archdiocese, of which Whithorn was suffragan.

The existing examples follow a clearly recognisable pattern in terms of their general location and relationship with the main liturgical components of the cathedrals within which they lie. Comparison with episcopal burials in the cathedrals in the archdiocese of York (Carlisle, Durham and York) shows similar traditions there. Three distinct categories emerge. First, there are those cathedrals which do not contain any, or only a minor, shrine. Second, there are those cathedrals which do contain an important shrine but where the saint in question is not the apostolic predecessor of the medieval bishops. Finally, there are the

cathedrals which contain a shrine and where the medieval bishops were considered to be the apostolic successor of the saint in question. What emerges from a survey of the surviving tombs is the potentially unique arrangement of the burials at Whithorn, not only in Scotland but also within the archdiocese of York.

Cathedrals without a major shrine

In the first category, the position of the medieval episcopal interments in the cathedrals at Brechin and Lismore are unknown (MacGibbon & Ross 1896, ii, 203–15; RCAHMS 1974, no 267). The irregular succession of bishops of Argyll in the 13th century and the appointment of Lowlanders to the see by the crown in the 15th century may have produced a situation at Lismore where few bishops chose to be buried in their cathedral. Bishop Robert Colquhoun (1475–96) is the only one for whom a burial place is known. He appears to have chosen to be buried amongst his kinsmen at Luss on Loch Lomondside (in the diocese of Glasgow), where his much restored effigy survives (Lacaille 1934), rather than on Lismore.

The best surviving group of episcopal grave monuments in Scotland is in Elgin Cathedral. These have been discussed in detail by Richard Fawcett (1999a, 67–75) and the following is offered only as a summary of his work. It is believed that 18 of the pre-Reformation bishops of Moray were buried at Elgin, seven of them apparently within the central space of the choir in the eastern limb. The earliest of these, that of Bishop Andrew de Moravia (1224–42) who relocated his cathedral from Spynie to Elgin, may be marked by a later slab of Tournai marble with a rectangular inset for a memorial brass which lies just in front of the first of the three steps which rise within the presbytery, towards the south side and in front of the opening from the south aisle into the presbytery (Fawcett 1999a, 67, 70). This is not unlikely to have been the location of Bishop Andrew's tomb, but the monument itself probably dates from after the later medieval restoration of the east end of the church, possibly replacing an earlier monument damaged in the 1390 fire. The oldest surviving tomb, believed to be that of Bishop Archibald (1253–98), comprises a gabled mural recess on the north side of the presbytery (Fawcett 1999a, 45, 67, fig 84). This was apparently a highly favoured position for tombs, especially of founders or rebuilders, as the monument was often used as an Easter Sepulchre. It was possibly the effigy from this tomb that was discovered in 1936 buried on the west side of the chapter house (Fawcett 1999a, 12, fig 9). The last surviving bishops' tomb within the choir lies in the opening from the presbytery into the north aisle. The tomb chest itself and all recognisable heraldry or inscriptions have been lost, but it is suggested to have been the burial-place of Bishop

(1482–1501) (Fawcett 1999a, 67, fig 138). While the earliest tombs in the cathedral appear to have been located close to the high altar in the presbytery, in the 15th century the bishops were choosing to be buried in more visible and less cramped sites further west in the church. Further bishops' tombs do survive in the south aisle of the choir, that of Bishop John Winchester (1437–58) at its east end beside the altar of St Mary, and possibly that of Bishop William Tulloch (1477–82) midway down the north side of the aisle. In Tulloch's tomb there has been inserted an effigy from an earlier tomb, possibly belonging to either Bishop John Pilmuir (1326–62) or Bishop Alexander Bur (1362–97), but where the grave which it originally covered lay is not known (Fawcett 1999a, 70–71, figs 140-2, 144–5). Three further sites are known. In the south transept there are two recessed tombs in its south wall both of which now contain the effigy of knights. The eastern of the two is identified on the basis of its heraldry as that of Bishop James Stewart (1458–60), and the western as that of his brother and successor, Bishop David Stewart (1460–75) (Fawcett 1999a, 72, 74, fig 149). The remaining tomb identified was that of Bishop John Innes (1407–14). This stood against the north–western pier of the crossing tower and was completely swept away in the collapse of the tower in 1711. A damaged effigy of a kneeling bishop now placed in the south transept is believed to have come from Innes's tomb and indicates that it was a splendid monument similar in execution to examples from England and France (Fawcett 1999a, 6, 75, fig 153). What the surviving group at Elgin reveals is the range of forms which such high-status tombs could take. While most are mural recessed tombs which originally housed monumental effigies, others were free-standing chest tombs (again with effigies), but slab or ledger monuments were also present, some with inset memorial brasses. Changes in fashion are evident in the forms of some of the tombs, and certain styles of monument have clear chronological brackets, but it is apparent from what remains that monuments of all types could be constructed at almost any period. What does seem to occur, however, is quite a dispersed pattern of burial originally focused on the eastern limb but with a subsequent drift away from the presbytery as the chosen location for episcopal burials in the later medieval period.

All the pre-15th-century bishops' tombs at Aberdeen appear to have been lost in the post-Reformation destruction of the choir and presbytery of the cathedral. The lower levels of the transept walls have survived, however, dating from a protracted rebuilding operation which was started by Bishop Henry Lichton (1422–40) and completed by Bishop William Elphinstone (1483–1514), who completed the tower over the crossing and rebuilt the choir. Of the earlier bishops, the first for whom record of a place of burial

survives is William de Deyn (1344–50), whom Hector Boece stated had been buried in the choir of the cathedral (Moir 1894, 21). Deyn's successors, John Rait (1350–4) and Alexander de Kinninmonth (1355–80) were also buried in the choir, the latter's tomb being located in front of the high altar (Moir 1894, 22, 24). The burial place of the next bishop, Adam de Tyninghame, is not recorded, but his successor, Gilbert Greenlaw (1390–1421), was also interred in the choir at Aberdeen (Moir 1894, 31). Lichton himself arranged for his own burial to take place in the chapel of St John the Evangelist in the cathedral, 'which he had built for that purpose' (Moir 1894, 34). The precise location of this chapel is uncertain but may have been in the eastern limb, where his successor, Bishop Ingram Lindsay (1441–58), was buried (Moir 1894, 37). Boece describes his monument in the choir of the cathedral as decorated 'with a stone effigy sculpted with considerable skill'. After Lindsay, there was a hiatus of 60 years before another bishop of Aberdeen was buried in his own church, when Alexander Gordon (1515–8) was interred in the newly-completed choir (Moir 1894, 114). Of Gordon's three predecessors, Thomas Spens (1458–80) had been buried in the collegiate church of the Holy Trinity in Edinburgh, and William Elphinstone before the high altar of King's College Chapel at Aberdeen, while Robert Blackadder had been translated in 1483 to the see of Glasgow (Moir 1894, 54, 109). Gordon may have been the last burial in the choir, his successor Gavin Dunbar (1518–32), being interred in the south transept, where the richly decorated arched recess of his tomb survives in the south wall. As with the bishops of Moray, the medieval bishops of Aberdeen – at least since the mid-14th century and probably since its establishment as the seat of their see – appear to have displayed a strong attachment to their cathedral church. As at Elgin, however, their tombs appear to have been dispersed throughout the eastern limb of the church rather than being clustered around an obvious cult focus.

At Dunblane, only two medieval episcopal burials are represented by still visible monuments. The probably older of the two is against the north wall of the choir and consists of the recumbent effigy of a bishop in full mass pontificals. This has been identified traditionally as the monument of Bishop Finlay Dermoch (1403–19) but its location close to the high altar in the choir as reconstructed in the second quarter of the 13th century has led to suggestions that it marks the burial place of Bishop Clement (1233–58), under whom the rebuilding of the cathedral commenced (MacGibbon & Ross 1896, ii, 110, fig 531, 112). The second monument, which is much more heavily wasted through post-Reformation exposure to the elements, lies in a mural recess in the most easterly bay of the south aisle of the nave, a favoured location for the establishment of a chantry chapel. It, too, consists of a bishop's effigy showing

him in full pontificals. The monument is believed to be that of Bishop Michael Ochiltree (1429–45) (MacGibbon & Ross 1896, ii, 112), but there appears to be no hard evidence for that identification. These two monuments seem to reflect the trend recognised at Elgin, where the earlier episcopal burials were located in the eastern limb and those from the later 14th or early 15th centuries show a drift in location into the crossing and nave.

Cathedrals containing a shrine but not of an apostolic predecessor of the medieval bishops.

In the second category are the cathedrals of St Andrews and Dunkeld, the former housing relics of the Apostle Andrew, the latter relics of Columba brought to it from Iona in the 9th century. We are fortunate in the case of St Andrews to have a number of medieval sources which record the interment of medieval bishops within their cathedral, in some cases providing quite precise detail as to the location of their tombs. The reliquary chapel in the later medieval period at the cathedral occupied the four bays in the eastern half of the choir limb of the church, entered through the fifth bay of the choir arcade, while the high altar stood in front of a reredos forming a screen across the presbytery between the fourth piers of the arcade, an arrangement similar in concept to that proposed for post-1200 Whithorn (Fawcett 1994, 37–8 and fig 19).

No monuments to any of the pre-14th-century bishops of St Andrews have survived *in situ* and, of the 14th- to 16th-century bishops the only tomb to survive largely intact is that of Bishop James Kennedy (1440–65), which is located in the collegiate chapel of St Salvator which he had founded (Fawcett 2002, 314 and fig 4.88; RCAHMS 1933, no 461). Of the tombs in the cathedral which can be identified tentatively, that of Bishop Henry Wardlaw (1403–40) occupied a position similar to that of Andrew Stewart at Elgin (see above), apparently being an integral portion of a screen separating the presbytery from the north choir aisle (Fawcett 2002, 306–7 and fig 4.78). The tomb in the north wall of the second bay of the nave, in the past identified as that of Bishop William Landallis (1342–85), does not accord with chronicle references to his burial beneath the pavement of the vestibule of the west door (Cruden 1950, 13). No further tombs or monuments survive in their original positions. Two fragments of a very fine bishop's effigy (the head and the lower part of the chausuble) are preserved in the cathedral museum, pointing to the former existence of free-standing chest tombs or mural monuments with rich sculptural decoration (Cruden 1950, 18; RCAHMS 1933, fig 389). In the centre of the presbytery lies a great slab of Tournai limestone (3.18m x 2.32m), cut to receive memorial brasses. This slab, which is not in its original location, is the last vestige of an extremely

expensive grave monument, perhaps that of one of the late 15th or early 16th century archbishops (RCAHMS 1933, 237).

Although Dunkeld has a long history as an episcopal see, the earliest recorded interment of one of its bishops in the cathedral is that of Bishop Geoffrey (1236–49). Of his predecessors, Bishop John the Scot (d 1203) had been buried in the choir of Newbattle Abbey, while bishops Richard de Prebenda (d 1210), John de Leicester (d 1214) and Gilbert (d 1235) were interred in Inchcolm Abbey, with which the bishops of Dunkeld had a very close relationship (Bannatyne Club 1831, 6, 8, 9; Easson & MacDonald 1938, xxii–xxiii; Wood 1950, 4–5; Paterson & McRoberts 1978, 6–7, 19; Fawcett 1999b, 99). When the church at Inchcolm was rebuilt in the later 13th century, the tombs of all three bishops were relocated, Richard and Gilbert's tombs being sited in recesses on the north side of the choir, close to the high altar and John's in a recess on the south side, part of the painted plaster decoration of which, showing a procession of clergy, has survived. Interments at Inchcolm continued through the medieval period. In 1483, for example, Bishop James Livingstone was buried in the abbey (Bannatyne Club 1831, 11, 26). At Dunkeld itself, only two bishops' tombs have survived of the various interments recorded in the cathedral. The older is that of Bishop William Sinclair (1312–37), which was decribed in the early 1500s by Alexander Myln as lying originally 'at the presbytery step in the midst of the choir, where his body is buried, covered with a marble stone' (Bannatyne Club 1831, 13). He added that a fine alabaster effigy of the bishop had lain on this slab but 'in case by any chance it should be destroyed, or should be an obstacle in front of the altar … it has now been set up close to the steps of the high altar at the western part of the north window of the choir'. It survives, although mutilated and lacking its head, in a mural recess in that location. The finer of the two surviving tombs is that of Bishop Robert de Cardeny (1398–1437), which is located in the chapel of St Ninian which occupied the two easternmost bays of the south aisle of the nave. It occupies a mural recess in the south wall but may originally have been intended to be free-standing within one of the chapel arcades (Fawcett 1997, 87 and fig 58; Wood 1950, 15). This position is very similar to that of Bishop Winchester at Elgin. Cardeny's tomb and the chapel in which it lies should probably be seen as a single component, built as a chantry for the bishop.

Cathedrals with shrines of canonised apostolic predecessors
In the third category there are four examples in medieval Scotland: Glasgow, Fortrose, Dornoch and Whithorn itself. Glasgow, as has already been observed, offers in many ways the closest Scottish parallel to Whithorn. Not only

are there physical similarities in the architectural responses to the problems of a sloping site but there seems also to have been a similar approach to the location of the main pilgrimage foci within the cathedral. There is the added parallel that at both cathedrals the focus of the cult was on an individual who was regarded as the lineal predecessor of the medieval bishops, Ninian at Whithorn and Kentigern at Glasgow. Perhaps surprisingly in view of this relationship between sainted predecessor and the later bishops, very few of the medieval succession were buried within their cathedral (Stones 1969, 37–46). Indeed, what is most striking is that none of the three bishops who oversaw the major building operations at Glasgow – John (1118–47), Jocelin (1174–99) and William de Bondington (1232–58) – were buried there. Bishop John, the man responsible for the fixing of the see at Glasgow and the construction of the first 12th-century cathedral, was buried in the Augustinian priory at Jedburgh which he had founded (*Historia Regum*: Arnold 1885, 321). Bishop Jocelin, who greatly extended the cathedral in the later 12th century and probably first developed the laigh kirk housing Kentigern's tomb and the elevated east end containing the shrine, was buried on the north side of the choir at Melrose Abbey, where he had formerly been abbot (*Chron. Howden*, iv, 85). Bishop Bondington, in whose episcopate the major portion of the east end of the present building was constructed, who died at the episcopal manor house at Ancrum in Teviotdale, was also buried at Melrose 'beside the large altar' (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1258). Six of their successors, who remained as bishops at Glasgow until death, were also apparently buried elsewhere than in the cathedral (Stones 1969, 40).

Of the five bishops of Glasgow who can be identified with some certainty to have been buried within their own cathedral, little evidence survives of their tombs (Stones 1969, 38–9). Three of these interments are said to have been in the 'lower church' or crypt, close to St Kentigern's tomb. Of these, the possible elements of only one, that identified as the tomb of Bishop Robert Wishart (1271–1316), survives albeit in a much altered condition and probably no longer contains the bishop's remains (Stones 1969, 38, 41–5, 46). This was located under the arcade between the chapel of St Peter and St Paul and the chapel of St Andrew, the two central chapels in the four which occupied the sub-vault of the ambulatory at the east end of the church (Driscoll 1998, 25–34, fig 1 for position of the altars in the lower church). The tomb of Bishop John Lindsay (1317–35) is said to have been located 'nigh to the altar of the Blessed Virgin', ie the altar of the Lady Chapel, which occupied the central compartment of the lower church between the easternmost two bays of the main body of the crypt (Stones 1969, 39). The remaining episcopal tomb in the lower church may have been that of Bishop John Laing (1474–83), but its

precise location is unknown. Neither of the two recumbent slabs preserved in the laigh kirk at Glasgow and formerly identified as belonging to bishops' tombs is identifiable as a grave-marker for either of these men and they seem rather to have been the memorials of other cathedral dignitaries rather than of bishops (Stones 1969, 39, 41). Three further episcopal burials are suggested to have occurred in the cathedral, but only two of these can be attested with any certainty from a pre-Reformation source. The earlier of the three and least securely attested is said to have been that of Bishop Andrew Durisdeer (1455–73), which Alexander Nisbet in 1722 described as having been in the choir (Stones 1969, 39). The second burial, of which the tomb itself no longer survives, was that of Archbishop Robert Blackadder (1483–1508). He instructed that his tomb should be placed before the great rood in the nave of the church, between the altars of The Name of Jesus and Our Lady of Pity which he had founded (Fawcett 2002, 305; Durkan 1972). The last, which can be attested on more secure historical grounds, was that of Archbishop Gavin Dunbar (1524–47), which was located in the chancel of the cathedral. Dunbar's will sets out payments for requiem masses and arrangements at his tomb, but does not give a precise location for it in the building (Blair 1886, 110, 112). What was believed to have been Dunbar's tomb was discovered in 1804 and opened again in 1856. This, apparently, lay on the south side of the choir between the pillars of the second bay, with the burial occupying a void opened in the cavities over the vault of the lower church, although an alternative tradition reports that it was in the vicinity of the Lady Chapel (Stones 1969, 45–6; Rogers 1857, 327–9). Amongst items believed to have been removed from the grave in 1804 were part of a crozier and ring, which were displayed at the 1888 Glasgow Exhibition but whose whereabouts seem now to be unknown. There may have been other pre-Reformation bishops' burials in the cathedral but there is no surviving record to support this suggestion. What seems clear from the limited evidence available is that the medieval bishops of Glasgow did not feel it imperative to be buried in their cathedral or, indeed, to be buried close to the tomb of their saintly predecessor. The distribution of burial sites around the cathedral seems closer to the practice evident at, for example, Elgin and bears no obvious relationship to the location of Kentigern's tomb or shrine.

The original seat of the bishops of Ross appears to have been at Rosemarkie, where an early 8th-century bishop, Boniface or Curitan, is believed to have founded a monastery and later been buried. There is no record of a regular succession of bishops of the see down to the 12th century and it appears that the Bishop Macbeth on record in the early 1100s was the first of a revived succession. Bishop Macbeth's see appears to have been fixed at Rosemarkie,

where it remained until the time of Bishop Robert I (1214–49) and his major re-organisation of the diocese, its chapter and location of its cathedral. Bishop Robert I, who may have been under some considerable pressure from Earl Ferchar of Ross to move his seat to the earl's new Premonstratensian abbey at Fearn, responded instead by relocating his cathedral to a new site only a mile to the west of Rosemarkie at Fortrose (Cant 1986, 54–5). It is not clear if Boniface's remains were translated from the early church at Rosemarkie or to what extent the new cathedral at Fortrose made provision for a shrine within it, and the post-Reformation destruction of the main compartment of the building has removed all evidence for the tombs of the 13th- and 14th-century bishops. A similar drift in the location of burials away from the liturgical east end of the church to more prominent locations in the western compartments as is evident at Elgin, however, may also be detected at Fortrose. The early tombs were probably located in the wholly demolished east end, but two late medieval episcopal tombs do remain in the still upstanding south aisle and south chapel of the nave. Both are chest tombs, one inserted into the western arcade of the southern chapel, the second in an arcaded opening cut into what had originally been a section of blank wall between the aisle and chapel arcades. This latter has been identified as the tomb of Bishop Fraser (1497–1507) and the former as that of Bishop Robert Cairncross (1538–45) (Fawcett 1987, 22; Fawcett 2002, 318 and fig 4.94). When what was believed to have been Bishop Fraser's tomb was opened in 1797, it was found still to contain the bishop's body and well-preserved remains of the mass vestments in which he had been buried, together with parts of a wooden crozier (Stuart 1854; for the crozier, which is now on display in the National Museum of Scotland, see Fawcett 1987, 25).

Although the 13th-century cathedral of the see of Caithness at Dornoch has survived as a functioning church in the post-Reformation period, no trace within it has survived of any shrine of St Gilbert, bishop 1223–c 1244, of his predecessor, 'St' Adam (1213–22), or of the tombs of their successors. The cruciform church, of which the crossing and eastern limb survive in restored condition, was largely constructed during Gilbert's lifetime and shows no sign of subsequent adaptation to accommodate a shrine. Adam's remains had been translated in 1239 from their original burial place in the church of Halkirk in Caithness, beside the site of the episcopal manor-house where he was murdered in 1222, and it seems that his successor, Gilbert, had plans to develop a saint's cult around his 'martyred' predecessor (Bannatyne Club 1837b, s.a. 1239). The translation occurred during the building of the cathedral at Dornoch but the plan of the church makes no obvious provision for a shrine chapel, and it is unlikely that there

were distinct shrines of either Adam or of Gilbert himself located within it. Gilbert, presumably, was interred in the choir of the church which he had built but specific relics are on record in 1522 as being touched by John Mackay of Strathnaver as part of the process whereby he legally bound himself to do service to Alexander, Master of Sutherland (Fraser 1892, no 69, dated 6 July 1522). The act involved touching the Holy Evangels and the 'relics of the gracious Gilbert', which could be interpreted as indicating that some relic of the bishop had been removed from his tomb and was kept in a portable reliquary for just such purposes. Certainly, there is no surviving reference to a shrine or feretory of St Gilbert (nor, indeed, of St Adam), and there is no remnant of his original tomb. The only medieval monument to survive in the cathedral is a mutilated mid-13th-century effigy of a knight, believed to be from the tomb of Bishop Gilbert's brother, Richard de Moravia, which has been placed in the reconstructed nave (Gifford 1992, 566).

The position at Whithorn has been explored in more detail above. It simply needs to be reiterated here that the evidence points towards the majority of the 12th- to 16th-century bishops being buried in their cathedral and the strong likelihood that most were buried at the eastern chapel rather than further west in the choir, crossing or nave. It is unlikely that any of the burials identified are those of the medieval priors, the majority of who down to the 15th century were probably buried in the chapter house. There is no evidence for the provision of elaborate chest tombs and all evidence for mural monuments has been swept away in the destruction of the eastern limb (although three mural recesses survive in the nave). However, as Kirsty Dingwall's study of the indented stones and lost monumental brasses now shows (Chapter 6.12), one or more of Whithorn's medieval bishops provided themselves with what was clearly an expensive grave monument of foreign manufacture, set into the pavement at the east end of the church.

Archdiocese of York

Within the archdiocese of York, perhaps the closest parallels with pre-1100 Whithorn could be expected at Hexham, with which there seems to have been a close relationship in the Northumbrian period, but for the post-1100 period it is perhaps Durham, where the cathedral contained the shrine of St Cuthbert, the canonised predecessor of the medieval bishops of Durham, that is more relevant. It was also a monastic church, served from 1083 by a convent of Benedictine monks which replaced an earlier college of secular canons. As at Whithorn, the cathedral as developed in the late 11th and early 12th century contained a shrine chapel which housed Cuthbert's remains, still entombed in

their late 10th-century grave, located immediately east of the high altar and later screened from the choir by the reredos. Cuthbert's relics were translated to a new shrine in 1104, comprising an ornate coffin raised on a slab carried by nine columns, set immediately behind and rising above the high altar (Wilson 1977, fig 2b). This rebuilding programme was begun under the direction of Bishop William de St Calais (1080–96), but he was not buried within his new church. Instead, his tomb lies at the western end of the chapter house. William de St Calais set something of a precedent, for his four immediate successors – Ranulf Flambard (1099–1128), Geoffrey Rufus (1133–41) and William de Ste Barbe (1143–52) and Hugh du Puiset (1153–95) – were buried alongside him, as later were Robert de Insula (1274–83) and Richard Kellaw (1311–6) (Cheetham 1968, 126). None of the late 11th- to early 14th-century bishops who were buried at Durham was buried close to the tomb of Cuthbert. Indeed, even the later bishops were entombed in various locations around their cathedral – Anthony Bek (1284–1311) and Richard of Bury (1333–45) in the Chapel of the Nine Altars at the extreme east end of the cathedral; Lewis de Beaumont (1317–33) in front of the high altar steps; Thomas Hatfield (1345–81) in his monumental tomb under his throne in the fourth bay of the south aisle arcade of the choir; and Robert Neville (1438–57) in the nave (Queckett & Cheetham 1968, 100, 107, 108, 118) – but none was interred within the somewhat cramped shrine chapel. If anything, there seems to be almost an anxiety to avoid interment anywhere close to the shrine on the part of the earlier bishops, while their 14th- and 15th-century successors appear to show the same interest in proximity to the high altar already noted for their counterparts in Scotland.

At York itself, despite the fact that five pre-10th-century archbishops had been canonised, all were buried elsewhere and the Minster acquired a major cult focus only in the 13th century when Archbishop William FitzHerbert (d 1154) was canonised in 1227 (Wilson 1977, 8 and n. 19). William's tomb lay at the east end of the nave in front of the nave altar and, despite the canonisation, received no great elaboration before the late 13th century. In 1284, Bishop Anthony Bek of Durham paid for the ceremonial translation of William's remains to a splendid new shrine located behind the medieval high altar of the Minster, which stood one bay further west than the present high altar (Wilson 1977, 8 and n. 20). This new shrine became the main focus for pilgrims, but medieval records record the existence also of a portable feretory in addition to this fixed one, plus a head shrine or reliquary containing the saint's skull. The portable feretory appears to have been kept at the otherwise empty original tomb (Wilson 1977, 8–9 and notes), an arrangement which may have been replicated at Whithorn and which may be

reflected in the sequence of devotions recorded for James IV in the early 1500s.

While the lateness of the development of the cult of St William of York may be one reason for the lack of focus in the disposition of archiepiscopal burials around the Minster, it is very striking that the tomb remained isolated in the nave after 1227 and the shrine never came to form a focus for the interments of the archbishops post-1284. Walter de Gray (1215–55), in whose episcopate St William was canonised, was buried in the northern bay of the south transept, flanked by his two successors, Sewal de Bovil (1256–8) and Godfrey de Ludham (1258–65), to his north and south respectively. Of the pre-Reformation archbishops from the time of the translation onwards, only William Greenfield (1306–16), Richard le Scrope (1398–1405), Henry Bowet (1407–23), Thomas Rotherham (1480–1500) and Thomas Savage (1501–7) were buried in the eastern limb of the church, all of them except Savage in the easternmost chapels behind the shrine. Again, it is clear that there was no focus on the main shrine, or the earlier tomb, as a place of burial for William FitzHerbert's successors.

8.3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The above overview raises several very interesting questions relating to the burial arrangements at Whithorn plus the planning and use of the eastern limb of the cathedral church. What is clear, however, is that the intensity of burials within a comparatively small space is unique amongst the cathedral churches of Scotland, northern England and, indeed, the wider British Isles and northern mainland Europe. This density of interment is inexplicable, given the patterns and trends which are evident elsewhere, and raises several important questions concerning the layout of the post-1200 church.

A first question is whether or not the eastern extremity of the church comprised a shrine-chapel behind the high altar, or presbytery with the high altar against the east gable. If the former were the case, then the position of the bishops' burials becomes even more unusual for they would be crowded into a narrow space of no more than one bay's length between the reredos behind the high altar and the front of the putative shrine-base supporting the feretory. At no other cathedral housing a shrine in this fashion is this clustering into such a cramped space encountered. Glasgow offers the most obvious analogy in Scotland, but there the burials were dispersed throughout both the Laigh and Upper Kirks. The situation at Durham should also be considered, where the bishops chose to be buried in the chapter house rather than in the cathedral church until after c 1300. If the eastern chapel at Whithorn was a

presbytery with high altar, then the location of the tombs is slightly less unusual. Bishops were interred before the high altars of numerous cathedrals, such as Elgin or Dunkeld. Again, however, the density of the Whithorn bishops' burials is without parallel in a cathedral and bears closer similarity to the position in some English parish churches, like Cobham in Kent, where the floor in front of the sanctuary area is entirely composed of the tomb slabs of the local lords of the manor (Binski 1996, 89). The mentality which produced this density of interment at Whithorn is lost to us. Was it a desire for proximity to Ninian's tomb or relics, or indeed for burial within what was regarded as a particularly holy location in a church where the earlier chapel on the same site was treated as a relic in itself?

A second key issue concerns the consequences of the use of the eastern extremity as a reliquary chapel. If this chapel did contain a feretory and, in common with shrines located behind the high altars at other British and European cathedrals, was entered from north and south through the most easterly bays of the choir arcade, the proposed location of the reredos at Whithorn would have meant that the floor area occupied by the bishops' graves would have been that part of the chapel most trodden over by the pilgrims. This is not in itself a problem but, given the later medieval emphasis on the individual and the desire for personal commemoration (as evident in Prior Thomas's arrangements for requiem masses and prayers in the 1430s), the prospective interment would have had to weigh up the benefits of burial in so holy and prominent a location against the damage likely to be inflicted on his monument.

There is also a third question to consider. Most of the Phase 3 burials at Whithorn are male and the paraphernalia associated with them points to priestly, if not purely episcopal office. The radiocarbon dates (Chapter 7) indicate that these burials date to the 13th and 14th centuries and this raises the question of where Whithorn's later ecclesiastics were buried.

The later medieval trend away from burials in the presbytery of the cathedral churches towards interment in transeptal or aisle chapels is probably linked to the increasing elaboration of ritual in the so-called 'cult of death'. From the 14th century onwards, gaining pace especially after the first catastrophic outbreak of plague in 1348–50, there developed a much greater focus on preparation for death, commemoration and post mortem care of the soul. An important dimension of this development was the increased provision for *pro anima* masses, with the institution of separate altars and, for the wealthy, separate chapels and chaplains, to offer up those masses and prayers for the souls of the founder and their family. Frequently, these chapels housed the tombs of the founders, located close to the altar where their souls would derive maximum spiritual benefit

from the services offered. The most sophisticated examples of such provision were the collegiate churches founded from the mid-14th century onwards, such as Lincluden in eastern Galloway, where the tomb of Archibald, 4th earl of Douglas, and his wife, Margaret Stewart, forms an integral element of the design of the chancel. In most cases, however, chapels were added to existing structures, which appears to be the case with the chapel of St Mary at Whithorn begun in 1431 by Prior Thomas Mcgilliachnisy (Chapter 8.2.1: *Later medieval building work*).

Loss of the bulk of the medieval records of Whithorn priory has possibly distorted the picture of the patterns of interments and the development of separate chaplainries or chantry chapels within the cathedral church, but the absence of any reference at any date to anything other than the Chapel of St Mary is unusual. Indeed, the records only reveal the existence of three altars – the rood altar, high altar and altar of St Mary – and, while there must have been others, if only to provide for the number of canons within the community even in the immediate pre-Reformation period, the numbers seem always to have been small.

This lack of proliferation of altars, even in the later 15th and 16th centuries, can be interpreted in two main ways, as a matter of funding or as an issue of space. It is possible, for example, that there was a lack of significant lay patronage from which the endowment of such altars or chapels most commonly arose. We know, however, that the Douglases endowed a chapel in the 1420s and that they were not alone in seeking to extend their influence within the priory in the 15th and 16th centuries. There is also clear evidence, given the presence of women among the Phase 3 burials, that lay patrons were seeking burial at Whithorn. If money was no object, then this points to

our second alternative – that the lack of proliferation of altars was due to the fact that there was limited space for the physical expansion of the church to accommodate additional chapels. Here may be evidence for at worst the absence of aisles which could be partitioned by screens to form separate chapels, or at best the need to keep the aisles unencumbered by such screens to smooth the flow of pilgrims around the pressure areas in the east end of the church. Add in the unusual concentration of episcopal burials in the relatively cramped block in the east end of the church and the likelihood emerges that they were buried there because there were few other places where they could have been interred without resorting to major structural enlargement of the cathedral. The concentration of interments in the one, densely-packed space is probably the strongest argument for an absence of lateral aisles in the choir, for space for burials could have been found under the choir arcades or in the aisle walls (the solution adopted at Dunkeld, Dunblane, Aberdeen etc). The outer walls of an aisle-less choir would have been unavailable for burials, moreover, as the canons' stalls and the bishop's throne would have needed to have been placed against the wall surface, while space on the walls within the presbytery would have been occupied by the door(s?) to the stair(s?) leading to the crypt, sedilia for the officiants at the mass, piscina and, possibly, aumbries for storage of mass paraphernalia. That no attempt was made to provide a south aisle on the nave (as was adopted as a space solution at the much less cramped cathedral site at Fortrose), coupled with the conflict over finances for building operations in the early 15th century, perhaps implies that, as Bishop Eliseus claimed, his see was impoverished and the cathedral mean, old and unsound.