

1467 MS: The Campbells

In 1981 David Sellar, now Lord Lyon, remarked that the 1467 MS, ‘vital as it is, is a very uncertain guide, and a modern critical edition of it an urgent need’.¹ The present enterprise is not quite what he had in mind, but represents progress towards it. That is, a complete text has been established in the form of a website (www.1467manuscript.co.uk) in which the genealogies are ‘mapped’ and numbered 1–35, and the editor of *WHN&Q* has now kindly agreed to make space for a series of studies, one kindred at a time, in no particular order. Queries, comments and requests will be welcome. As in the website, the principal aim is to establish exactly what the 1467 MS says, but this time all known previous analyses will be taken into account. If we can get through the thirty-five kindreds in this way, we should have the bones of a ‘modern critical edition’.

My first such study, on the MacLerans, demonstrated the problems involved in dealing with an unknown or little-known kindred in a semi-legible part of the manuscript (no. 19).² Here, in my second, I will deal with a well-known kindred in an almost completely legible part of it (no. 15). In this way some parameters can be laid down.

The MacLerans are in the top right-hand corner of the recto, in the fifth column (NLS Adv. MS 72.1.1, f. 1r5–10). The Campbells are two-thirds of the way down the fourth column, 1rd39–43, between the Clan Gillanders (no. 14) and the MacKays of Ugadale (no. 16). This position is by no means random. The scribe, Dubhghall Albanach mac mhic Cathail, had begun with the kings of Scotland (nos. 1–3), moved on through a miscellany of Argyll and Lochaber kindreds (nos. 4–10), then dealt with three other northern ones (MacKenzies, Mathesons, Nicolson, nos. 11–13) before reaching the Clan Gillanders. The Campbells begin a long series of Argyll and Lennox kindreds stretching as far as no. 29 (MacSorleys of Monydrain) before Dubhghall comes finally, on the verso, to his own masters, the MacDonalds, whom he traces, uniquely, to Adam (nos. 30–35). In this way he gives the Campbells a sort of grudging precedence: if we view the text as falling into three chapters, they begin the middle one.

Dubhghall could hardly do less. By 1467 Colin Campbell, great-grandson of the ‘young Colin’ with whom he begins the pedigree, had already been made earl of Argyll (1455–58), a member of the king’s council (1462), and master of his household (1464). As a mark of his ‘singular favour’ James III went on to raise Inveraray to the status of a burgh of barony (1474) and to make Colin his chancellor of the realm (1483).³

This begs the question of Dubhghall’s relationship to the text. Was he its author, its redactor, or merely its copyist? After all, ‘young Colin’ had died in 1412 or 1413, and my late friend John Bannerman took the view that the text as a whole was ‘originally made c. 1400’ and that ‘its form and content leave no doubt that its compiler’s intention was to set down the pedigrees of the chiefs of important clans who, in his opinion, recognised the authority of the Lord of the Isles at that

time'.⁴ This is the defining, if not quite perhaps the definitive statement about the manuscript; one of the secondary purposes of this series will be to test it. I have long thought, for example, that the words 'chiefs of important clans' were ill-advised, and that 'heads of some kindreds' might be more judicious.

In line with the pattern laid down last time, I will begin by setting out text and translation three times: first as given by Skene in *Collectanea* (1839), then as given by Skene in *Celtic Scotland* (1880), then as given by my wife Máire and myself in our website (2009). For ease of comparison I will make Skene's material correspond to the lines of the original (39–43). Then I will make some general comments on each of the three editions, and finally I will discuss specific cruxes in detail.

(1) *Collectanea*:

39 *Genelach clann Cailin anso.*—Cailin og ic Gillaesp
40 mc Cailin ic Ailin ic Neill ic Ailin moir ic Gilleesp
41 mc Dubgall ic Donch ic Gilleesp ic Gillecolm
42 renabarta ic Duibne ic Duibne ic Eirenaid
43 mc Meirbe ic Artuir ic Uibar .i. rig in dom aingarusam.

39 THE GENEALOGY OF THE CLAN CAILIN.—(Campbells) Colin og son of Gillespic
40 son of Colin son of Colin son of Niell son of Colin mor son of Gillespic
41 son of Dugald son of Duncan son of Gillespic son of Malcolm
42 called "Macduino" son of Duino son of Erenad
43 son of Merve son of Arthur son of Uther (Pendragon).⁵

(2) *Celtic Scotland*, with Skene's footnotes:

39 GENELACH CLANN CAILIN ANNSO* Cailin oig mac Gillaeaspic ruaidh
40 mic Cailin mic Neill mic Cailin moir mic Gilleesp
41 mic Dubgaill Cambel a quo mic Donnchach mic Gillaeaspic mic Gillacolaim
42 renabarta mic Duibne mic Duibne** on raithir mic Eiranaid or Fearadoig
43 mic Smeirbi mic Artuir mic Uibher .i. rig andomain***

* From the MS. 1467, Kilbride MS., c. 1540, and MacFirbis's Gen. MS.⁶

** The later spurious pedigrees made this Duibhne, son of Diarmaid McDuimhn, by Graine his wife, from whom the Campbells were called Siol Diarmaid, *i.e.* Diarmed's seed, and place between him and Earanaid seven imaginary Duimhns, Arthurs, and Fearathors (Campbell's *West Highland Tales*, iii. p. 89), thus importing the Ossianic hero Diarmed o Duine into the pedigree from mere similarity of name. There is no reason to suppose that the clan were ever really called Siol Diarmed.

*** MS. 1467 stops here, but elsewhere says the Cambells and Macleods were descended from Nemedius. The earlier part is taken from two other MSS. MacFirbis gives a different list of names, eleven in number, but likewise terminating with Briotan, son of Fergus Lethderg. They are 'Iobar or Uther Mac Lidir mic Brearnaird mic Muiris mic Magoth mic Coiel mic Catogain mic Caidimoir mic Catogain mic Bende mic Mebrec mic Griffin mic Briotain, o taid Bretnaig, mic Fergusa Leithderg mic Nemid,' etc.

- 39 GENEALOGY OF THE CLAN COLIN OR CABELLS, NOW CAMPBELLS. Sir Colin Cambell of Lochaw (chr. in 1407) son of Sir Archibald Cambell (has a chr. in 1368 of lands as freely as his progenitor Duncan Mac Duine)
- 40 son of Sir Colin Cambell of Lochow son of Sir Neill Cambell of Lochaw son of Sir Colin Mor Cambell of Lochaw son of Gillespic Cambell (1266, Exch. Rolls)
- 41 son of Dugald Cambel, from whom came the name of Cambell, son of Duncan son of Gillespic son of Malcolm,
- 42 called Mac Duine, son of Duibhne, from whom the name is taken, son of Fearadoig
- 43 son of Smerioe son of Arthur son of Uibher, king of the world (Uther Pendragon)⁷

(3) www.1467manuscript.co.uk, with our footnotes:

- 39 genelach cloinni cailin ann so cailin og mac gille easpuig
 40 mhic cailin mhic ailin mhic neill mhic ailin moir mhic gille espuig
 41 mhic dubgaill mhic donnchaidh mhic gille easpuig mhic gille colaim
 42 renabartha mac duibne mhic duibne mhic eirenai[n]
 43 mhic meirbi mhic artuir mhic iubair*.i. righ in domain gan rusan**

* Uther Pendragon, father of King Arthur is clearly the person Dubhghall has in mind here.

** “gan imresan” is a common expression in these manuscripts meaning “without contention”. He must have meant this.

- 39 The genealogy of the Clan Colin here: young Colin son of Archibald
 40 son of Colin son of Allan son of Neil son of great (big) Allan son of Archibald
 41 son of Dugald son of Duncan son of Archibald son of Gille Colaim
 42 (who is called Mac Duibhne) son of Duibhne son of Eirenan
 43 son of Smeirbhe son of Arthur son of Uther i.e. the unopposed king of the world.

The *Collectanea* version is straightforward and helpful. Skene translates *Ailin* as ‘Colin’, which is historically correct. In isolation *Ailin* is ‘Allan’; following the *c* of *mac* or *mhic* it can represent either ‘Allan’ or a sort of scribal shorthand for *Cailin* ‘Colin’. Skene does not translate the concluding words *.i. righ in dom aingarusam*, presumably because he did not understand them.

The *Celtic Scotland* version, as Skene admits, represents a conflation of three manuscripts. As a representation of the 1467 MS it is misleading and inaccurate. At pp. 459–60 Skene continues it up to Nemed from the Kilbride MS and MacFirbis, printing his translation from ‘son of Fearadoig son of Smerioe’ onwards in italic, as if to imply that what precedes this is from the 1467 MS only (or something of the kind). In fact, where the 1467 MS is at variance with the two later ones (*ic ailin* in line 40, giving an extra generation), the other two are preferred. The name ‘Cambel’ does not appear anywhere in the 1467 MS; this reinforces my suspicion that in fifteenth-century Gaelic it was an uncomplimentary nickname (‘bent mouth’), and that it did not re-enter the language as a surname until the following century.

Skene’s footnote on ‘Siol Diarmed’ is accurate and helpful, the following one a little less so. His claim that the 1467 MS says that ‘the Cambells and Macleods

were descended from Nemedius' refers not to the fifteenth-century text at all but to a semi-legible marginal note on the verso by the Rev. John Beaton (c.1640–1714): '7 frater eius Feara . . . quo venit Nimodus . . . inter posteris eius Mac Callin Mór 7 Mac Leo(id) 7c'. By 'earlier part' Skene of course means the latter (chronologically earlier) part, roughly the bit which he translates in italics. Since he cites MacFirbis's text in his note, he would have done well to say simply that his italicised text was taken from the Kilbride MS. Where it varies from Kilbride, the variations are not from MacFirbis or 1467 but from other sources or his own head.

Celtic Scotland appears to have left historians confused as to what is in the 1467 MS and what is not. Alastair Campbell of Airds, for example, begins his three-volume account of the Campbells with a comparative table setting out their pedigree from 'Cailin Moir' backwards according to 1467, Kilbride, MacFirbis, MacEwan and 'Ane Accompt'.⁸ His 1467 column includes 'Eiranaid or Feradoig', Ambrose, Constantine, Adam and God. Skene can be blamed for the first four of these names but not the last two. No MacDonald genealogist would have dreamed of tracing the Campbells to the Almighty.

Finally, the website version can be criticised as being pedantic in translating *mhic ailin* as 'son of Allan', and anachronistic, perhaps, in translating *gille espuig* as 'Archibald'.

The principal crux in the text, already referred to, is the last name in line 42: *Ḃḡḡḡḡ*. Skene rendered it in 1839 as *Eirenaid* and in 1880 as *Eiranaid*. In 1839 he translated it as 'Erenad'. He refers to 'Earanaid' in one of his footnotes but omits the name entirely from his translation in *Celtic Scotland*, preferring the Kilbride reading *Fearadoig*. Other readings are possible. While endorsing *eirenaid*, William Gillies has pointed out that it could be *eirenaiti*.⁹ David Sellar has suggested *eirenaia*.¹⁰ Our website tentatively makes it *eirenain*; this was on the grounds of resemblance to the name of St Columba's uncle Ernán.¹¹ We might equally have suggested *eirenaiu*, on the grounds of resemblance to that of St Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, the first great Catholic theologian.¹²

In themselves none of these mean much (or anything). The only scholar to back up one of them with reasoned argument has been David Sellar, who pointed to the intrusion into the Campbell pedigree of the Fingalian hero Diarmaid Ó Duibhne, and to the concomitant reinvention of the clan as the 'Siol Diarmaid', so disparagingly referred to by Skene.¹³ Could *eirenaia*, Sellar argued, not be a corruption or mistranscription of *ieremaia*, Jeremiah, which came to be used as the Latin and English equivalent of Diarmaid?

Sellar speaks of 'some difficulties in supporting this theory of a Campbell ancestor named Jeremiah, not least the rarity of the name', which suggests that he wished to view Jeremiah not as a piece of fakery but as a real person who bore that name and no other. That Jeremiah came to be used in modern times as equivalent to Diarmaid is not in doubt; it would be interesting to know if this was already true in 1467. The reason why Jeremiah had to be seen as genuine was that he was the father of Duibhne, not his grandson; any fabricator whose purpose was to insert Diarmaid Ó Duibhne into the pedigree would have put them the other way round. And indeed a glance at the MacEwan version of the pedigree shows that this was duly achieved

by making Duibhne son of Diarmad Ó Duibhne, son of Ferither, son of Duibhne, son of Ferither, son of Arthur, son of Duibhne. ‘Ane Accompt’ is similar.


Sellar’s argument is ingenious, but cannot be substantiated. It falls down on too many points. ‘Jeremia’ demands initial ‘ie’, not ‘ei’; the mark above the middle ‘e’ is clearly for ‘n’, not ‘m’; the last letter shows evidence of fakery, or at least of fudging. My study of the MacLerans revealed the presence in the 1467 text of both meaningful and meaningless alterations (including deletions), designed to remove evidence for the Norse descent of that kindred.¹⁴ Now we have a character which can equally be read as ‘d’, ‘ti’, ‘a’, ‘n’ or ‘u’, but which is not *quite* any of those; if we can accept that it, too, may have been doctored, the possibility immediately presents itself that it is a ‘g’ (𐌵) with the hook largely removed (𐌶) and a minim added (𐌷). That would give us *eirenaig* ‘Irishman’. We need not be surprised at the lack of a double *n*-stroke (*eirennai*g); there is no other example of the term in the text, but we have *eren*(d), genitive of *Éire*, twice, both times with a single stroke: **ēīen** (1ra53) and **eīī** (1ra56). Since *eirenai*(g) comes in where later genealogies have *Fearadoig*, *Fearadaigh* or (when anglicised) *Ferither*, there need be no doubt about the Irishman’s name.

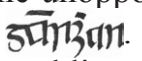


Why *eirenaig* should come in at this point is easy to see – in chronological terms, his is the first of a continuous series of Gaelic names, while his father *Meirbi* (Smeirbhe) is the last of the Arthurians. In fact, Campbell historians used Meirbi/Smeirbhe quite cynically to imply that Myrddin/Merlin, the Arthurian ‘wild man of the woods’, and Suibhne Geilt, the Irish ‘wild man of the woods’, were one and the same. Duncanson wrote in ‘Ane Accompt’:

Smereviemore (or as others writes Sr mereviemore) though he did not succeed to his father’s crown in regaird he was lurking and unknown, but Constantin, the son of Cartill one of the Captains in King Arthor’s army, was chosen to succeed him, yet was a great and famous person of whom diverse and strange things are spoken in the Irish traditions; it is said that he was born in Dumbarton on the south syde thereof, in a place called the redd hall or in Irish Tour in Talla Dherig that is the Tower of the redd hall or redd house, he was called to his agnomen or by-name the foo[l] of the forrest because he was a wild undaunted person. He was married to a sister of King Aiden the 49 King of Scotland . . . fferrither uor son to Smereviemore married (as Neill mc Eun saith) a daughter of the Duke of Valentia, of whom he begot Duibhne, from whom some reckons the name of Clannoduibhne.¹⁵

As to the reason for interference, the desire to eradicate the MacLerans’ Norse origins suggests a possible model – someone appears not to have wanted the Campbells to be Irish. If that someone was Dubhghall himself, it must have been because Irishness meant respectability and legitimacy; if a Campbell, it is conceivable that the reason was the opposite! If it is objected that *eirenaia*, *eirenaid* or whatever is a remarkably modest alteration, Sellar’s arguments about Jeremiah and Diarmaid may then be brought into play.

So much for line 42. There are two readings to be discussed in line 43. The first is *Uibar* / *Uibher* / *iubair*, worth mentioning mainly because Sellar says that it is ‘difficult to read’.¹⁶ That is putting it a little strongly. No one disputes that it is the





name of King Arthur's father as given by Geoffrey of Monmouth. The manuscript has , with a little staining around and below the initial letter, as if the scribe began to have second thoughts when the ink was nearly dry, and drew his finger down through it. The 'i' is particularly clear in one of the coloured photographs provided last year by NLS.¹⁷ MacFirbis here has *Iobhair* and Niall MacMhuirich has *iomhair*, essentially the same name.¹⁸

The final crux is the description of Uther Pendragon as *riġh in domain gan rusan*, largely ignored by Skene, but translated in our website as 'the unopposed king of the world'. The last two words appear in the manuscript as . In addition, there is a faint mark, or marks, above the final letter 'n', resembling a dot with a short horizontal stroke above it () , fusing perhaps into a little T (). It is also impossible to be sure that the letter itself does not consist of three minims rather than two – i.e. that it is not an 'n' at all but an 'm', as Skene thought in 1839. That is because, as is clearly shown in the website, it comes up against the carelessly-drawn vertical line that divides columns d and e.

William Gillies has referred to these words on several occasions. In 1978 he wrote:

It is worth noting that 'MS 1467' concludes its Campbell genealogy as follows: ' . . . son of Arthur son of (?) Uther, i.e. the King of the World – no doubt'. I believe that the compiler's comment 'no doubt' indicates that he at least *did* have a doubt, and that the equation was perhaps not very old at that time.¹⁹

He explains in a note that he is reading *ganrusam*, that this represents a copyist's mistake for *gan amrus*, and that by a similar transposition the scribe makes *mar aen le* 'together with' appear as *aenmarle* in the genealogy of the MacLachlans. In 1994 he translated the phrase as 'King of the world, without doubt'.²⁰ Then, in 1999, he backed up the idea of reading *gan amrus* for *ganrusam* by remarking that 'faint strokes visible above the *us* and *m* may have meant "transpose"'.²¹

I have to confess that I disagree with him on several points. The words  are in the top margin of the verso. They are to be found at kindred no. 28 of our website, of which David Sellar has written that 'the possibility that these may be MacDougalls . . . is raised to a certainty by a pedigree given in *An Leabhar Donn*'.²² The words mean 'same mother as' (*aen máthair le*), not 'together with'; the alleged 'similar transposition' thus falls away. The expression *riġh cen imresan* or *gan imresain* ('undisputed king') is common in Irish genealogical texts. The compendium  represents 's' preceded by a vowel – any vowel. It is at least as likely that the marks above  and  represent 'im' and 'i' as that they mean 'transpose'. Finally, irrespective of whether the words mean 'without doubt' or 'without dispute' (between which there is little semantic difference anyway!) I see no need to assume the presence of sarcasm.²³

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NOTES

- 1 David Sellar, 'Highland Family Origins – Pedigree Making and Pedigree Faking', in *The Middle Ages in the Highlands*, ed. by Loraine Maclean of Dochgarroch (Inverness Field Club, 1981), pp. 103–16: 105.
- 2 Ronald Black, 'The MacLerans', *WHN&Q*, ser. 3, no. 18 (Jan. 2012), pp. 3–17.
- 3 Eric R. Cregeen, 'The Changing Role of the House of Argyll in the Scottish Highlands', in *History and Social Anthropology*, ed. by I. M. Lewis (London, 1968), pp. 153–92: 155; Stephen Boardman, *The Campbells 1250–1513* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 169, 182, 185–86, 203, 204, 223, 238.
- 4 K. A. Steer and J. W. M. Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh, 1977), p. 205.
- 5 The Iona Club, *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Edinburgh, 1839), pp. 54–55.
- 6 The so-called Kilbride MS is notionally NLS Adv. MS 72.1.32, but has been missing since the time of Thomas Thomson, depute clerk register (1768–1852). It contains Campbell and MacLeod genealogies dating from c. 1540. These were published by Skene in *Collectanea*, part 2 (Edinburgh, 1847), pp. 360–61. The Campbell pedigree from the genealogical manuscript compiled by Dubhaltach MacFirbis (c. 1600–71) may be found in Toirdhealbhadh Ó Raithbheartaigh, ed., *Genealogical Tracts I* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 1932), p. 52. The Welsh names in it have been discussed in detail by William Gillies, 'The "British" Genealogy of the Campbells', *Celtica*, vol. 23 (1999), pp. 82–95.
- 7 William F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1876–80), vol. 3, pp. 458–59.
- 8 Alastair Campbell of Airds, *A History of Clan Campbell* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 2000–04), vol. 1, p. xx. His MacEwan version is from NAS GD/112/57/8/21. 'Ane Accompt' refers to 'Ane Accompt of the Genealogie of the Campbells', in *Highland Papers*, vol. 2, ed. by J. R. N. Macphail (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1916), pp. 69–111. Its author was Robert Duncanson, see W. D. H. Sellar, 'The Earliest Campbells – Norman, Briton or Gael?', *Scottish Studies*, vol. 17 (1973), pp. 109–25: 113.
- 9 'The "British" Genealogy of the Campbells', p. 84.
- 10 'The Earliest Campbells', pp. 117–18.
- 11 Adomnán of Iona, *Life of Columba*, ed. by Richard Sharpe (London, 1995), pp. 147–48; William J. Watson, *The History of the Celtic Place-Names of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1926), pp. 83, 305, 321.
- 12 Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1977), p. 264; Watson, *Celtic Place-Names*, pp. 519–20.
- 13 In the Book of the Dean of Lismore (1512–42) Diarmaid is Ó Duibhne ('Grandson of D.'), *Mac Uí Dhuibhne* (Son of the Grandson of D.), or in one case *mac mheic Dhuibhne* ('son of the son of D.'). In later sources he is *Mac O Duibhne* or *Mac Rìgh Dhuibhne* – 'King's Son of D.', 'Son of the King of D.', clearly a corruption of *Mac Uí Dhuibhne*. See Neil Ross, ed., *Heroic Poetry from the Book of the Dean of Lismore* (Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, Edinburgh, 1939), pp. 2, 34, 70–77, 120; J. F. Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne* (London, 1872), pp. 158–64; J. F. Campbell, *Popular Tales of the West Highlands*, 2nd edn, vol. 3 (Paisley, 1892), pp. 74–87; John Gregorson Campbell, *The Fians* (London, 1891), pp. 60–62.
- 14 Could anti-Norse bias explain the omission of the MacLeod pedigree from the manuscript?

- 15 Macphail, *Highland Papers*, vol. 2, pp. 76–77; see also Sellar, ‘The Earliest Campbells’, pp. 113, 119, 120, 123.
- 16 ‘The Earliest Campbells’, p. 117.
- 17 Black, ‘The MacLerans’, p. 16.
- 18 The version of the pedigree by Niall MacMhuirich (c.1637–1726) is in NLS Adv. MS 72.2.2, f. 40r. In most other respects it is similar to Kilbride.
- 19 William Gillies, ‘Some Aspects of Campbell History’, *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness*, vol. 50 (1976–78), pp. 256–95: 282, 294.
- 20 William Gillies, ‘The Invention of Tradition, Highland-Style’, in *The Renaissance in Scotland*, ed. by A. A. MacDonald, Michael Lynch and Ian B. Cowan (Leiden, 1994), pp. 144–56: 149, note 18.
- 21 ‘The “British” Genealogy of the Campbells’, p. 84.
- 22 W. David H. Sellar, ‘MacDougall Pedigrees in MS 1467’, *WHN&Q*, first ser., no. 29 (Aug. 1986), pp. 3–18: 14.
- 23 For reasons explained in ‘The MacLerans’, p. 15, the illustrations in these articles are not reproduced photographically from the manuscript but done by myself in pen and ink. The original images can be viewed on www.1467manuscript.co.uk.