

1467 MS: The Gillanderses

The historian Stephen Boardman once referred to ‘the enigmatic Gaelic Manuscript 1467 in the National Library of Scotland’.¹ He was of course referring to the famous – or infamous – genealogies that occupy the first folio of NLS Adv. MS 72.1.1, written rather crudely by Dubhghall Albanach mac mhic Cathail, who was probably a servitor of John, lord of the Isles. The Gillanders pedigree, which appears at column d, lines 34–38 (i.e. d34–d38), is a pretty good example of the kind of enigma that Boardman had in mind.

The text at this point has been variously and quite properly described as the genealogy of the Clann Ainnrias, the Clan Andres or the Clan Gillanders. There is an issue as to whether we are entitled to refer to them as the Rosses, which would be neater. The late Rev. William Matheson once wrote that the *Clann Ghille Ainnriais* are ‘apparently to be identified as the clan who later adopted the surname Ross’, pointing out that the seventeenth-century historian John MacKenzie of Applecross referred to Leod Mac Gille Ainnriais as ‘predecessor of Balnagawn’.² Against this, David Sellar quoted Sir Robert Gordon as saying (when read carefully) ‘that the Rosses of Balnagawn descend from the O’Beolan earls, and that the Clan Gillanders do not, although they too took the surname of Ross’.³ More recently however, Alexander Grant declared firmly that ‘the Gillanders were the kindred of Paul Mactire, not the Rosses’.⁴ So the safest thing to do is to refer to the family as the Gillanderses. In fact, looked at from the old Gaelic point of view, *Ros* is a place, not a person, and the issue is the other way round. The author of the ‘Breve Cronicle of the Earlis of Ross’ tells us that Walter Ross, 3rd laird of Balnagawn, ‘had to his wyffe Paull McTyres dochter callit Katherene, quhairby the Ross are callit Clanlanders’.⁵ In other words, we are being told that in Gaelic usage, Walter and his posterity took on the identity of his wife’s clan, and presumably therefore the surname *Mac Gille Ainnrias* or Gillanders. It is an interesting statement about the relative power and importance of these two families in the fifteenth century.

The fundamental issues about this pedigree itself are that it traces the Gillanderses to Gille Eoin na h-Àirde (d37), who is also named as the ancestor of the MacKenzies and Mathesons, and that it gives Gille Eoin na h-Àirde a clear Dalriadic descent from Cormac son of Airbheartach, who is cited in different parts of the manuscript as a progenitor of the Green Abbot, the MacGregors, the MacDuffies, the MacMillans, the MacNeils, the MacQuarries and the MacKinnons. That is to say, Dubhghall Albanach portrays the Gillanderses (in terms of kin-based society) as natural subjects of John, lord of the Isles and earl of Ross. As I have pointed out in recent articles, the same may be said of the MacKenzies and Mathesons.⁶ William Matheson claimed that there is reason for regarding the 1467 MS account of the Gillanderses’ ancestry as an invention, ‘and for giving more weight to the tradition of an early connection with the MacLeods, as recorded in MSS. both in Easter Ross and Harris’.⁷ Sellar endorsed this, saying that ‘Matheson has argued persuasively that Clan Gillanders original tradition of descent was a Scandinavian one, and that they are to be associated with the MacLeods rather than

the Mathesons and MacKenzies'.⁸ Matheson intended to deal more fully with the matter on another occasion, but as far as I know he never did.⁹ The result is that our entire text appears to have been condemned out of hand. What is necessary here, then, is our usual judicious approach – an attempt to determine which part or parts of our text (if any) appear to have some validity, and which part or parts (if any) seem likely to be fictitious. First of all, however, I feel it is necessary to subject William Matheson's claim to scrutiny. Judging from the references he provides, his 'MSS. both in Easter Ross and Harris' are a 'memorial drawn up for the nineteenth chief of Dunvegan in 1767' and the anonymous 'Breve Cronicle of the Earlis of Ross', written prior to 1615 and published in 1850 and 1924.¹⁰

There are five manuscripts of the memorial, numbered 44/1–5 in the archives at Dunvegan Castle, of which 44/5 is the original rough draft, and the others are edited copies. In each case the text begins with an account (attributed to the Manx Chronicle and Camden's *Britannia*) of successive kings of Man and the Isles – Godred Crovan, Lagman, Olave the Red, Godred, and Olave the Black. After describing the vicissitudes suffered by the last-named, we are told in 44/5, p. 6: "Olave became again sole King of Mann & the Isles and died Anno 1237 – leaving by his first wife 3 sons, Harald Reginald & Magnus & by his third wife Christina daughter to Ferquhar Earl of Ross had Three Sons, Guin or Gun of whome the Guns in Southerland; Leoid, Loyd or Leod of Whome the Clan McLeod & Leaundrish, of whome the Rosses of Balnagowan, a great part of whose Estate is to this day call'd in the Galic language Ross chlann Leaundrish, or that part of Ross belonging to the Childeren of Leaundrish Clan Leandrish in Ross." The deleted words are omitted in the four edited versions, Dunvegan Archives 44/1–4.¹¹

As published in 1850, the 'Breve Cronicle' says this. "Thair was thrie sones of the King of Denmark, callit Gwine, Loid, and Leandres, quha came be sea out of Denmarke and landit in the north parts of Scotland, to conquest lands to themselffis be the sworde. Gwine conquest the Hieland brayes of Cathness. Loid conquest the Lewes, of quhome M'Loid hus [= *MacLeod's house*] is descendit. Lendres conquest Braychat be the sworde; qlk the erll of Sutherland, and the lairdis of Duffus and Foullis, bruikis [= *owns*] now within the parochin of Creich, Stracharron, and Strahoykill, and Friewater; his hall beand within Glenbeg, qlk was and is the laird of Balnagoune his heritage. His son Tyre, and his oy [= *grandson*] Paull M'Tyre, followed Lendres footsteps; sua of this Lendres rase up the surname Clan Lendres, becaus Paul M'Tyre M'Lendres married his dochter, callit Catharene, upon the Laird of Balnagoune, callit Walter Ross, alias Clugganache. The foresaid thrie men Gwine, Loid, and Lendres, had no richt of the Kings of Scotland of ony thing they conquest. Bot the Lard of Balnagown, and his posterite, holds of the Kingis of Scotland, as thair evidentis proportis."¹² As published in 1924 from the same manuscript, albeit at this point a jumbled and difficult one, 'Gwine' becomes 'Ewine' and 'Glenbeg' becomes 'Glenvey', for which the editor suggests 'Strathvaich?'; both changes may be ignored.¹³

As the author of the memorial makes very clear, 'Gwine' is *Guinne* (the eponym of the Gunns), 'Loid' is *Leód* (the eponym of the MacLeods), and 'Leandres' is *Gille Ainnrias* (the eponym of the Gillanderses). *Guinne* conquers the braes (uplands)

of Caithness, Leód conquers Lewis, Gille Ainnrias conquers Braychat (*Bràighe Chat* ‘the Upland of Sutherland’ or, more literally, ‘of Cats’). These have little in common. The first is well inside the territory of the earls of Orkney, subsequently of the earls of Caithness. The second, Lewis, is a far-flung part of the kingdom of Man and the Isles, ceded to the king of Scots in 1266. The third, Braychat, straddles the boundary between the territories of the earls of Orkney and the kings of Scots. The lands of Braychat are here defined as Creich, Strath Oykeell, Strath Carron, Freevater and Glenbeg, i.e. extending south and west through the province of Ross from within the Sutherland marches into the far high hills east of Loch Broom, with a ‘hall’ in lonely Glenbeg surrounded by an impregnable mountain rampart: in short, what would later become the two huge parishes of Creich and Kincardine. Our confidence in the anonymous author has to be severely shaken by his misinterpretation of ‘Paull M‘Tyre’ as Paul son of Tyre (see notes on d34 below). Finally, when he says ‘of this Lendres rase up the surname Clan Lendres’, he appears simply to mean that the Gillanderses achieved social respectability by their connection, through Catherine’s marriage, with the Rosses of Balnagown, the descendants of the old earls of Ross.

The tradition contained in the memorial is summarised as follows by R. C. MacLeod. “This tradition says that Olaf the Black, King of Man, had three sons by his third wife, Christina, daughter of the Earl of Ross, whom he probably married about 1225: (1) Guin, or Gunn, of whom are descended the Clan Gunn in Sutherland; (2) Leoid, or Leod; (3) Leandres, of whom descend the Clan Leandres in Ross. It goes on to say that Leod was fostered in the house of Pol, or Paul, the son of Bok, the Sheriff of Skye, who was a constant and firm friend to his father in all his dangers and difficulties; that Pol gave to Leod the island of Harris, and that Leod married the daughter of McCrauld Armuinn, and received Dunvegan and all the Skye estates of the family as her dowry.”¹⁴

There are signs here that this tradition is not entirely independent of the other. We may note the order in which the brothers are cited. On the other hand, their background is entirely different. Instead of being sons of the king of Denmark, they are now sons of Olaf the Black, king of Man, by his wife Christina, who is very well known to have been a daughter of Fearchar mac an t-sagairt, 1st earl of Ross (they were married by 1223).¹⁵ This makes better sense of the fact that while Guinne and Leód are Norse names, Gille Ainnrias is Gaelic. It also makes better sense of the ‘conquests’. Lewis is a far-flung territory of the father’s family, Braychat is a far-flung territory of the mother’s family, and by the mid-thirteenth century Highland Caithness, though still the domain of the Norse earls of Orkney, is becoming exposed to raids from the newly-created earldom of Sutherland, held for the Scots crown by William de Moravia. But the idea of three territories for three brothers is redolent of folklore rather than history. While we may wish to accept the likelihood that Braychat was colonised from the neighbouring earldom of Ross, we may wish to reject the idea that its governor was a brother of Guinne and Leod. And there are three other historical weaknesses in these traditions. For one thing, the Gunns’ crownship provides them with an alternative origin-legend.¹⁶ For another, while the Easter Ross manuscript has it that Leod conquered

Lewis, so hinting at the precedence of *Siol Torcaill*, the MacLeod manuscript has it that he conquered Harris, so hinting at the precedence of *Siol Tormoid*. The latter is certainly more probable, as Lewis is known to have come to Siol Torcaill by marriage with a Nicolson heiress.¹⁷ And for another, see notes on line d34 below.

All in all, therefore, Dubhghall Albanach's entirely non-Norse pedigree of the Gillanderses deserves respect. I will now give it exactly as it stands in the editions and notes known to me: W. F. Skene's *Collectanea* of 1839, his *Celtic Scotland* of 1880, and the on-line version published by my wife Máire and myself in 2009. For ease of comparison, the texts are all presented here according to the five-line structure in which they appear in the manuscript.

(1) *Collectanea* 1839, with Skene's note:

d34 *Genelach clann Anrias.*—Pal* ic Tire ic Eogan ic
d35 Muiredaigh ic Poil ic Gilleanrias ic Martain
d36 ic Poil ic Cainig ic Cranin ic Eogan ic Cainig ic Cranin
d37 mc Gilleeoin na hairde ic Eirc ic Loirn ic Fearchar
d38 mc Cormac ic Airbertaig ic Feradaig.

d34 THE GENEALOGY OF THE CLAN ANDRES.—Paul* son of Tire son of Ewen son of
d35 Murdoch son of Paul son of Gilleanrias son of Martin
d36 son of Paul son of Keneth son of Crinan son of Ewen son of Keneth son of
Crinan
d37 son of Gilleoin of the Aird son of Erc son of Lorn son of Ferchar
d38 son of Cormac son of Oirbertaigh son of Feradach.

* Paul Mactyre had a charter from William Earl of Ross, Lord of Sky, of the lands of Gerloch, 1366. Clan Andres is the Gaelic appellation of the surname of Ross in Ross-shire to the present day.¹⁸

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

d34 GENEALACH CLANN AINNRIAS* Pal mac Tire mhic Eogain mhic
d35 Muredaig mhic Poil mhic Gilleainnrias mhic Martain
d36 mhic Poil mhic Cainnig mhic Cristin mhic Eogain mhic Cainnig mhic Cristin
d37 mhic Gillaeoin na hairde mhic Eirc mhic Loairn mhic Ferchair
d38 mhic Cormac mhic Airbertaigh mhic Fearadhach

* From MS. 1467. The Earl of Ross grants a charter in 1366 to Paul Mactyre of the lands of Gerloch.

d34 GENEALOGY OF THE CLAN ANDRES. Paul son of Tire son of Ewen son of
d35 Muredach son of Paul son of Gillandres son of Martin
d36 son of Paul son of Kenneth son of Cristin son of Ewen son of Kenneth son of
Cristin
d37 son of Gillaeoin of the Aird, son of Erc son of Lorn son of Ferchard
d38 son of Cormac son of Airbertach *son of Feradach*.¹⁹

(3) www.1467manuscript.co.uk:

d34 genelach cloinni ainnrias pal mac tire mac eoghain mhic
d35 muiredhaigh mhic fail mhic gille ainnrias mhic martain
d36 mhic foil mhic cainnigh mhic cristin mhic eoghain mhic cainnigh mhic cristin
d37 mhic gille eoin na hairde mhic eirc mhic loairn mhic ferchair
d38 mhic cormaic mhic airbertaigh mhic feradhaigh

d34 The genealogy of the Clan Gillanders: Paul ‘the Wolf’ son of Eoghan son
d35 of Muiredhach son of Paul son of Gillanders son of Martin
d36 son of Paul son of Kenneth son of Cristin son of Eoghan son of Kenneth son of
Cristin
d37 son of Gilleoin of the Aird son of Earc son of Loarn son of Fearchar
d38 son of Cormac son of Airbheartach son of Fearadhach . . .

I move now to my usual line-by-line discussion of Dubhghall Albanach’s 1467 text using pen-and-ink sketches, based on spectrally-imaged colour photographs which are superior to those in the website. As always, square brackets indicate illegible, indistinct or uncertain text, italics indicate expanded contractions (the less obvious ones, at least).

d34

genelach cloinni ainnrias pal mac tire mac eoghain mhic = “The genealogy of the Clann Ainnrias. Paul ‘the Wolf’ son of Eoghan son of”

The kindred name *Clann Ainnrias* is notable. One would have expected *Clann Ghille Ainnrias*. According to the medieval Gaelic system of nomenclature, *Ainnrias* is St Andrew, *Gille Ainnrias* is the secular forename. Technically *Clann Ainnrias* therefore means ‘St Andrew’s Clan’. However, *Ainnrias* also occurs in the MacGregor pedigree (1rc47), sacred *Pól* occurs here and there in addition to secular *Pál*, and we are about to meet *Martan* (not *Gille Mhartain*) and *Cainneach* (not *Gille Chainnich*), so it is clear that the system was breaking down by Dubhghall’s time.

Mac Tíre ‘Son of Land’, a kenning for the wolf, is clearly Paul’s nickname. He was presumably called this because of his frightening reputation. “This Paul M‘Tyre was ane takand [= *greedy*] man,” says the anonymous author of the *Breve Cronicle*, “and conquest all that he had through capitanrie and sworde. He reft [= *plundered*] Strahocill, Strath[c]arron, and Fleschillis, with mekill of Sutherland; caused Cathnes pay him meikill black maill. It was said that Paul M‘Tyre himselff tuike nyne scoir kyne yeirlie out of Caithnes for his black maill, sua lang as he himselff might travell.”²⁰ Again, that is the 1850 reading: this time the 1924 reading offers an improvement in the shape of ‘Sleschillis’ for ‘Fleschillis’, which the editor glosses as ‘Slios a Chaolais, now Strathkyle’.²¹ Strathkyle is, I believe, the south side of Strathoykell, extending as far down as the shore of the Kyle of Sutherland.

At first sight, this seems to cast doubt on the same author's claim that Paul's father or grandfather 'Lendres' was in possession of Strathoykell and Strathcarron. But then, as line d35 is about to show, 'Lendres' was neither his father nor his grandfather but his great-great-grandfather. It would now appear that the story of the three all-conquering brothers is holed below the water-line. The conqueror was Paul himself.

William Matheson considered that Paul's rapacious reputation 'hardly squares with the record evidence, which shows that he had legal possession of extensive lands', and that 'it would seem that the family owed its prosperity to the favour of the old Earls of Ross', the last of whom died in 1372. I do not see in what way the two sides of his character are mutually exclusive.²² Here is a greedy, ambitious, violent man who takes advantage of the weakness of others to amass a large estate, on which he lives peacefully at the end of his life, so establishing the fifth of the five great families of the earldom of Ross – the Green Abbot's, the MacKenzies, the Mathesons, the Nicolsons, the Gillanderses. This is the order in which they appear in the 1467 MS. Among the lands possessed by Paul were Strathoykell (granted by Hugh Ross, lord of Philorth, in 1365) and Gairloch (granted by William, earl of Ross, in 1366, confirmed by Robert II in 1372).²³ To these we may add the places mentioned by Sir Robert Gordon in his intriguing account of the end of Paul's days. "Balnagowne had the lands of Strath-charran, Strath-oikill, and Westray, by the mariage of Paull-Mactire his daughter, who wes heretor of these lands . . ."²⁴ Paul-Mactire (heir mentioned) was a man of great power and possessions. In his tyme he possessed the lands of Creich, in Sutherland, and built a house ther, (called Doun-creich) with such a kynd of hard mortar, that at this day it cannot be knowne wherof it wes maid. As he wes building this hous and fortresse, he had intelligence that his onlie sone wes slain in Catteynes, in company with one Murthow Reawich, ane outlaw and valiant captane in these dayes; which maid him decist from further building, when he had almost finished the seme. Ther are many things fabulouslie reported of this Paul-Macktire among the wulgure people, which I doe omitt to relate."²⁵

The *Breve Cronicle* gives Paul two sons, 'Murthow Reoch(e)' (*Murchadh Riabhach*) and 'Gillespik' (*Gille Easpaig*), of whom Murchadh, the elder, is killed at the Spittalhill in Caithness, and Gille Easpaig, the younger, brings the sad news home.²⁶

Pál Mac Tíre's nickname was not unique. A 'Rury Gar makteir Makmurquhy' (*Ruairidh Gearr 'Mac Tíre' mac Mhurchaidh*, 'Short Roderick "the Wolf" son of Murdoch') appears in a list, dated 12 May 1492, of persons who should be distrained for plundering Hugh Rose of Kilravock's lands in the Black Isle.²⁷ No doubt there were others. The 'Wolf of Badenoch' was a name bestowed on Robert II's son Alexander Stewart (d. 1405), 'vulgarly', as the chronicler Walter Bower put it in the 1440s.²⁸ There is no evidence that *mac tíre* lay behind it, but if it did it would have been in irony, for the King's spoiled brat was far from being a 'son of land'.

Eoghan will have lived c. 1370.

d35 *m̃j aĩs .ĩ fail .ĩ sille aĩm̃k aĩ .ĩ maĩt aĩ*

muiredhaigh mhic fail mhic gille ainnrias mhic martain = “Muiredhach son of Paul son of Gillanders son of Martin”

William Matheson pointed out that the third name in this line is presumably that of the eponymous ancestor of the Gillanderses.²⁹ Muiredhach will have lived *c.* 1340, Paul *c.* 1310, Gillanders *c.* 1280 and Martin *c.* 1250.

d36 *aĩ pol .ĩ caĩĩs .ĩ cĩm̃n .ĩ eoĩĩĩ .ĩ caĩĩs .ĩ cĩm̃*

mhic foil mhic cainnigh mhic cristin mhic eoghain mhic cainnigh mhic cristin = “son of Paul son of Kenneth son of Crístin son of Eoghan son of Kenneth son of Crístin”

Referring to the MacPhails/Polsons, William Matheson pointed out that the first person named in this line is ‘probably the eponymous ancestor of the clan’. He then went a little further, however, suggesting that he may perhaps be identified with Páll Bálkason, an early thirteenth-century *vice-comes* of Skye under Olaf, king of Man, and a possible ancestor of the MacLeods. It is an appealing argument, for the simple reason that our Paul’s floruit falls at *c.* 1220, precisely the right time for Bálkason. Matheson backs it up by pointing out that the territory of the earls of Ross extended to Skye, that they may have brought families from there to enter their service and rewarded them with grants of land, that a celebrated fourteenth-century Gillanders was called Leod, and that tradition in both Easter Ross and Harris held that the Gillanderses were kin to the MacLeods (see introduction above). “The Norse name *Ljótr*,” he says, “is very rare at any time, even in Norway and Iceland, and its occurrence among Clann Ghille Ainnriais can hardly be explained except on the assumption of a link with the MacLeods.”³⁰ Of course the argument falls down like a house of cards on one simple point – our manuscript gives Paul’s father’s name not as Balkr but as Kenneth. This is, however, no obstacle if one views the 1467 MS as propaganda rather than truth, and that is the line taken by Sellar, who remarks that ‘the Gillanders pedigree in *MS 1467* may be accurate as far back as the third Paul’.³¹ But it is possible to point to weaknesses in Matheson’s case. For one thing, the name *Ljótr* may be rare in Norway and Iceland, but the name *Leód* is by no means unknown in the east of Scotland. It occurs in the Mackintosh pedigree in our manuscript, and Professor Barrow speaks of two individuals called Leod – one whose *nepos* (grandson?) Donald was a leading cleric in western Fife in the early twelfth century, and another who was a lay abbot of Brechin in the same period.³² For all that, it seems likely enough that Leód Mac Gille Anndrais, who is associated with Gairloch in Wester Ross and Moniack in the Aird, was named after a MacLeod forebear, but the connection could have been on his mother’s side. And

given his celebrity – he is well remembered in Gairloch for being hunted down and slaughtered by one of the early MacKenzies – it is no surprise that the Gillanderses should have been thought of as kin to the MacLeods in places as far apart as Harris and Easter Ross.³³

If historical, Kenneth will have lived *c.* 1190, Crístín *c.* 1160, Eoghan *c.* 1130, Kenneth *c.* 1100 and Crístín *c.* 1070. There is a connection here with the MacKenzie and Matheson pedigrees. That of the Mathesons brings us only as far back as Kenneth *c.* 1190 son of Crístín *c.* 1160, leaving us to assume that the rest corresponds to the Gillanders pedigree. The MacKenzie pedigree, however, brings us as far back as Gilleoin junior *c.* 1190 son of Gilleoin of the Aird *c.* 1160; as I pointed out in an earlier article, this is clearly at odds with that of the Gillanderses, which reaches Gilleoin of the Aird *c.* 1040.³⁴

d37 

mhic gille eoin na hairde mhic eirc mhic loairn mhic ferchair = “son of Gilleoin of the Aird son of Earc son of Loarn son of Farquhar”

The Aird is the area west of Inverness, north of Loch Ness and south of the Beaully Firth. David Sellar has presented a convincing case for identifying Gilleoin of the Aird as an ancestor of the del Ard family. Its earliest recorded member is John, *fl.* 1275x97, who is variously on record as *Johanne filio Cristini*, *Johanne filio Christini MacGillo* and *Johanne filio Cristene MacGillone*. *MacGillo* and *MacGillone* certainly represent *mac Gille Eoin*, and we have already come across the name Crístín twice in our pedigree. This does not mean that our Gilleoin of the Aird was John’s grandfather, as the dating is out: according to our pedigree, John’s grandfather would have lived *c.* 1220, Gilleoin of the Aird *c.* 1040. What it tells us is that the del Ard family was of Gaelic descent, that they used Gilleoin as a baptismal name, and that they may also have used *Mac Gille Eoin* as a surname which linked them to a celebrated ancestor.

Sellar presents evidence which shows the del Ards as connected with the Aird of Inverness and the earldom of Ross. Briefly, John del Ard, mentioned above, witnesses charters to the Priory of Beaully by David de Innerlunan *c.* 1275 and Andrew de Bosco and his wife Elizabeth Bisset in 1278. His son Sir Cristin del Ard appears several times on record between 1296 and 1329. In 1296 he is taken prisoner by the English, along with the earl of Ross, at the battle of Dunbar. In 1297 the English governor of Urquhart Castle petitions Edward I for his release, describing his father John of the Aird as ‘a certain noble man’ who has great influence in the area and is well disposed to the English. In 1306 he is paid by Edward I for carrying letters to his master the earl of Ross and a number of western chiefs. Two years later the earl of Ross switches his support to Bruce, and Sir Cristin follows suit. In due course he receives grants of land in Moray and at the Bught near Inverness. In 1328 he witnesses a charter to Beaully; further Beaully charters are witnessed around the

same time by *Johanne filio Cristini del Ard*, presumably his son, and *Haraldo filio Dofnaldi del Ard*. The Norse name Harald, Gaelic *Arailt*, is worth noting: it occurs three times in the Nicolson pedigree, but, more importantly, the sons of Harald Foulson (*Arailt MacPháil*) are on record as killing some of the earl of Moray's men in 1385, at a point when the Wolf of Badenoch was earl of Ross by right of his wife, and it was the Wolf of Badenoch who was expected to pursue them – all of which puts Harald Foulson into the same time and place as *Haraldus filius Dofnaldi del Ard*, thus seemingly providing us with the family's Gaelic surname, MacPháil.

Later in the fourteenth century a Weland del Ard marries Matilda, daughter of Malise, earl of Strathearn, Orkney and Caithness. Their son Alexander is at one point a claimant to the Orkney earldom, but appears to have died without issue. His sister and heir, Margaret, marries Alexander Chisholm, apparently a co-portioner of the Bisset inheritance. Their descendants are the Chisholms of Comar.³⁵

As stated above, we may reject the idea that Gilleoin of the Aird was the grandfather of John, *fl.* 1275x97, *filius Cristene MacGillone*, which would have given Gilleoin a floruit of *c.* 1215x37. Unfortunately our pedigree does not synchronise with that of the MacKenzies on this point. Ours places him at *c.* 1040, that of the MacKenzies at *c.* 1160. There is a complicating factor: as far as it goes, the Matheson pedigree, which we would expect to agree with that of the MacKenzies, agrees instead with that of the Gillanderses. William Matheson resolved the dilemma by pointing to the Gillanderses' possible descent from Páll Bálkason, dismissing everything else in d36–d37 as a fabrication, and adjusting the MacKenzie and Matheson pedigrees to make them fit each other. Sellar supported him, remarking of everything beyond Paul in line d36 that 'the likelihood is that is [*sic*] has been simply tacked on, perhaps inadvertently, to that of the true descendants of Gilleoin of the Aird'.³⁶ One wonders what he means by 'inadvertently'. It is difficult to imagine anything being entirely inadvertent in a MacDonald text relating to the earldom of Ross in the early 1400s, for nothing was more important to the MacDonalds in that period than having and holding the earldom. Either the 1467 MS is accurate at this point, or it is a conscious fabrication. It is in fact perfectly possible that Gilleoin of the Aird lived *c.* 1040, that the Gillanders and Matheson pedigrees are accurate, that the MacKenzie pedigree is four generations short, and that the MacKenzie/Matheson split occurred much earlier than William Matheson thought. One very small argument can be deployed in support of this, and it concerns the rest of this line. If the pedigree were historically accurate, Earc would have lived *c.* 1010, Loarn *c.* 980 and Farquhar *c.* 950. It is difficult to believe that the inclusion of Earc and Loarn at this point can be anything other than an attempt to invoke the Gillanderses' Dalriadic credentials. If Loarn son of Earc, eponym of the Cenél Loairn, is to be regarded as a historical figure, he lived not in the tenth century but the fifth or sixth, so we should be sympathetic to anything that pushes our dating back rather than pulling it forward. Our author, whoever he was, has crossed a line into a world of pure fantasy, and it may well be that by making Earc the son of Loarn rather than his father, he is showing us that he knows it.

mhic cormaic mhic airbertaigh mhic feradhaigh [finn? mhic? mhic? rath? . . . rl~] = “son of Cormac son of Airbheartach son of Fearadhach [Fionn? son? of? Mac? Raith? . . . etc.?”]

It appears that after completing this line the scribe drew his finger through the final third in order to erase it. The traces that survive are very faint, but it is possible that they include some of the material suggested. These suggestions are made partly on the basis of recognisable letter-forms, partly on the basis of credibility: Fearadhach’s epithet is given as *finn* at 1rc49 (MacGregors) and 1rd20 (?MacLaverties), the MacRaes are said to be descendants of Gilleoin of the Aird, which suggests that the baptismal name *Mac Raith* may appear in his pedigree, and *7rl~* is frequently used as a conclusion in other genealogical manuscripts (though not in ours).

If historical, Cormac would have lived *c.* 920, Airbheartach *c.* 890 and Fearadhach *c.* 860. As Skene pointed out long ago, the 1467 MS shows quite a number of clans claiming descent from Cormac mac Airbheartaigh. It will be of interest here to compare the portions of text in which he appears, indicating in each case the floruit assigned to him by the logic of the text in question. In the Green Abbot’s pedigree we have *loarn mac ferchair mhic cormaic mhic oirbertaigh mhic erc*, placing Cormac *c.* 950, which corresponds pretty well with our text. In the MacDuffie pedigree we have *fearchar mac cormaic mhic airbertaigh*, placing Cormac *c.* 1040. In the MacNeil pedigree we have *gillaagan mor mac cormaic mhic airbertaigh*, placing him *c.* 1100–30. In the MacGregor pedigree we have *ainnrias mac cormaic mhic airbertaigh*, placing him *c.* 1100. In the MacKinnon pedigree we have *finnguine mac cormaic mhic airbertaigh*, placing him *c.* 1190. In the MacMillan pedigree we have *in gilla mael mac cormaic mhic airbertaigh*, placing him *c.* 1220. And in the MacQuarrie pedigree we have *guaire mac cormaic mhic airbertaigh*, which places him, again, *c.* 1220. In fact (as I pointed out years ago in my article on the MacMillans) John Bannerman saw Cormac and his father Airbheartach as wholly historical figures who lived in the twelfth century: this dating makes Airbheartach a contemporary of Somerled, and the geographical scattering of his kindred follows the pattern that we would expect of a family that supported ‘the rising star of Somerled and his descendants’.³⁷

A number of points arise from this. Firstly, if Bannerman’s judgement is correct, the only one of these pedigrees which can be relied upon is that of the MacKinnons. Those of the MacMillans and MacQuarries appear to be too short; those of the Gillanderses, the Green Abbot, MacDuffies, MacNeils and MacGregors appear to be too long. Our Gillanders pedigree, in particular, is out by eight or nine generations. Removing Earc and Loarn from line d37 is not enough to ‘fix’ it; we need to remove most of the names in line d36 as well, exactly as David Sellar recommended. Secondly, it will be noticed that the Gillanderses are keeping

interesting company. Two other kindreds, the Green Abbot's and the MacDuffies, share with them not only an early dating from Cormac, but common descent from Cormac's son Farquhar, who must have lived *c.* 1200. With respect to origins it is difficult to imagine three more disparate kindreds than the Gillanderses, the MacDuffies and the tribe of the Green Abbot, but our author contrives to bring them together anyway.

Received wisdom has it that the claim of the ruling family of Moray to be of the Cenél Loairn resulted from a northward migration of Gaelic-speaking people from Argyll through the Great Glen – under Viking pressure – during the ninth century.³⁸ This fits well with the view that the leading Gaelic kindreds of Ross-shire shared a common descent from the ruling family of the Aird, which was part of the province of Moray and had never been under Norse control. We are now faced with an alternative scenario in which the founder of the Aird family was a mere generation or two removed from the ancestor of the MacDuffies of Colonsay – in other words, to make the chronology work, we have after all to entertain the possibility that Gilleoin of the Aird (*c.* 1230) was a son of Farquhar (*c.* 1200), son of Cormac (*c.* 1170), son of Airbheartach (*c.* 1140). We can see why Dubhghall Albanach might wish to say this, but the fact is that he has not said it. Our conclusion has to be that we should treat Bannerman's verdict on Cormac mac Airbheartaigh with caution. Even if Cormac was a historical figure, it does not necessarily follow that all citations of him in the 1467 MS should be read as literal truth. In the case of the Gillanders pedigree, then, Cormac, Airbheartach and Fearadhach perform the same function as Loarn and Farquhar who precede them: they are there to symbolise the Gillanderses' Dalriadic credentials, nothing more nor less.

In any event we have to entertain the possibility, raised by Aonghas MacCoinnich and flagged up in my article on the Mathesons, that the Gillanderses' alleged connection to the del Ard family is spurious, and that they had in fact arrived in Ross-shire from Argyll in the mid- or late fourteenth century – the time of Eoghan son of Muireadhach, d34 – in support of the lord of the Isles' claim to the earldom of Ross.³⁹ Could they have been an offshoot of the Kintyre MacEacherns, amongst whom the name *Gille Ainndrias* was so prominent, and who were certainly servitors to the lords of the Isles?⁴⁰

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NOTES

- 1 Stephen Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings: Robert II and Robert III, 1371–1406* (E. Linton, 1996), p. 208.
- 2 William Matheson, 'The Pape Riot and its Sequel in Lewis', *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* [TGSi], vol. 48 (1972–74), pp. 395–434: 434, n. 113.
- 3 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, Inverness, 1981), pp. 103–16: 111, cf. Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun, *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland* (Edinburgh, 1813), p. 36.

- 4 Alexander Grant, 'The Province of Ross and the Kingdom of Alba', in *Alba: Celtic Scotland in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Edward J. Cowan and R. Andrew McDonald (2nd edn, Edinburgh, 2012 [1st edn E. Linton 2000]), pp. 88–126: 114.
- 5 [W. R. Baillie, ed.], *Ane Breve Cronicle of the Earlis of Ross. Including Notices of the Abbots of Fearn, and of the Family of Ross of Balnagown* (Edinburgh, 1850), p. 26, cf. p. 41; W. Macgill, 'The "Breve Cronicle of the Erllis of Ross"', *Transactions of the Glasgow Archaeological Society*, new ser., vol. 7, part 3 (1924), pp. 313–29: 327.
- 6 Ronald Black, '1467 MS: The MacKenzies', *WHN&Q*, ser. 4, no. 8 (Nov. 2018), pp. 10–18; Ronald Black, '1467 MS: The Mathesons', *WHN&Q*, forthcoming.
- 7 William Matheson, 'Traditions of the MacKenzies', *TGSI*, vol. 39/40 (1942–50), pp. 193–228: 196.
- 8 Sellar, 'Highland Family Origins', p. 111.
- 9 Matheson, 'Traditions of the MacKenzies', p. 225, note 9.
- 10 The Dunvegan document is referred to as 'a Memorial drawn up for John Norman, 24th Chief, in 1767' by I. F. Grant, *The MacLeods: The History of a Clan 1200–1956* (London, 1959), p. 21. For the 'Breve Cronicle' see note 5.
- 11 I am grateful to Mr Jeroen Roskam, Dunvegan Castle custodian, for providing scans of these documents. Thanks also to Dr Alison Rosie of the National Register of Archives for Scotland.
- 12 Baillie, *Ane Breve Cronicle*, pp. 30–31. 'Clugganache' will be *cluigeanach* 'jingling', as of little bells (*cluigeana*). This is confirmed by Macgill, who helpfully glosses 'Walter Cluganach' as *of the Earring* ('Breve Cronicle', p. 327).
- 13 Macgill, 'Breve Cronicle', p. 327. Other differences between the two published editions of the manuscript are explained by Macgill's statement (p. 317) that Baillie included in his text 'additions obtained from two much more recent copies or versions belonging one to George Ross of Pitcalnie and the other to Mr. A. Deuchar'.
- 14 Rev. Canon R. C. MacLeod of MacLeod, *The MacLeods of Dunvegan* (Edinburgh, 1927), p. 4.
- 15 Grant, 'The Province of Ross', p. 123.
- 16 Mark Rugg Gunn, *History of the Clan Gunn* (Glasgow, [1969]), pp. 43–57.
- 17 Ronald Black, '1467 MS: The Nicolsons', *WHN&Q*, ser. 4, no. 7 (July 2018), pp. 3–18: 4.
- 18 The Iona Club, *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Edinburgh, 1839), pp. 54–55, 62.
- 19 William F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1876–80), vol. 3, pp. 484–85. Presumably Skene italicises 'son of Feradach' to complement his overall heading (for the Gillanderses, MacKenzies and Mathesons) of 'CLANS said to be descended from FERADACH FINN through Cormac mac Airbeartach'.
- 20 Baillie, *Ane Breve Cronicle*, p. 31.
- 21 Macgill, 'Breve Cronicle', p. 328.
- 22 Matheson, 'Pape Riot', p. 426.
- 23 Baillie, *Ane Breve Cronicle*, pp. 31 (n. 1), 38–41; Cosmo Innes, ed., *Origines Parochiales Scotiae*, vol. 2, part 2 (Bannatyne Club, Edinburgh, 1855), p. 406; 'Matheson, 'Pape Riot', p. 426.
- 24 Westray is the old name for the Ross-shire parish of Edderton, see W. J. Watson, *Place-Names of Ross and Cromarty* (Inverness, 1904), p. 28.
- 25 Gordon, *Genealogical History*, pp. 36–37.
- 26 Baillie, *Ane Breve Cronicle*, pp. 31–32; Macgill, 'Breve Cronicle', p. 329.
- 27 William Matheson, 'Genealogies of the Mathesons', *TGSI*, vol. 47 (1971–72), pp. 172–217: 173.

- 28 Alexander Grant, 'The Wolf of Badenoch', in *Moray: Province and People*, ed. by W. D. H. Sellar (Scottish Society for Northern Studies, Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 143–61: 143.
- 29 Matheson, 'Pape Riot', p. 426.
- 30 Matheson, 'Pape Riot', p. 427.
- 31 Sellar, 'Highland Family Origins', p. 111.
- 32 G. W. S. Barrow, 'The Lost Gàidhealtachd of Medieval Scotland', in *Gaelic and Scotland: Alba agus a' Ghàidhlig*, ed. by William Gillies (Edinburgh, 1989), pp. 67–88: 71–72.
- 33 John H. Dixon, *Gairloch* (Edinburgh, 1886, repr. by Ross and Cromarty Heritage Society, Gairloch, 1974), pp. 12–13; William Mackay, ed., *Chronicles of the Frasers: The Wardlaw Manuscript . . . by Master James Fraser* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1905), p. 94.
- 34 Black, '1467 MS: The Mathesons', forthcoming.
- 35 William Alexander Lindsay *et al.*, eds, *Charters, Bulls and Other Documents Relating to the Abbey of Inchaffray* (Scottish History Society, Edinburgh, 1908), pp. lxx–lxxi; Sellar, 'Highland Family Origins', pp. 112–14; W. D. H. Sellar, 'John Mak Nakyl – An Early Hebridean Nicolson?', *WHN&Q*, ser. 2, no. 7 (May 1991), pp. 3–6: 3–4; Grant, 'Wolf of Badenoch', pp. 150, 156; Boardman, *The Early Stewart Kings*, p. 75; W. David H. Sellar, 'History of the Clan', in W. David H. Sellar and Alasdair Maclean, *The Highland Clan MacNeacail (MacNicol): A History of the Nicolsons of Scorrybreac* (Lochbay, Waternish, 1999), pp. 3–41: 6–7; Grant, 'The Province of Ross', p. 112.
- 36 Sellar, 'Highland Family Origins', p. 111.
- 37 K. A. Steer and J. W. M. Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1977), pp. 103–05; Ronald Black, '1467 MS: The MacMillans', *WHN&Q*, ser. 3, no. 28 (Aug. 2015), pp. 4–14: 12–13.
- 38 Alex Woolf, *From Pictland to Alba 789–1070* (Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 220–30, 341.
- 39 Black, '1467 MS: The Mathesons', forthcoming.
- 40 Ronald Black, '1467 MS: The MacEacherns', *WHN&Q*, ser. 4, no. 5 (Nov. 2017), pp. 5–18: 9, 10, 13, 14–15.