

1467 MS: The MacMillans

The pedigree of the MacMillans falls in the most difficult part of the 1467 MS, column 1re – the right-hand side of the recto, which has been badly affected by rubbing and staining. It consists of only five lines of text, 1re30–34. It is preceded at 1re19–29 by the pedigree of the Lamonts (no. 21 in the manuscript), which I discussed in an earlier article, and followed at 1re35–41 by that of *mac a’ Bharain Fhearchair*, the son of Baron Fearchar (no. 23 in the manuscript), which I hope to tackle next time. Compared to these two, the MacMillan pedigree comes as a little piece of light relief: not only is it short, but it also exists in Irish manuscripts, and these clarify almost everything.

I will begin as always by citing the text as given by Skene in *Collectanea*, then as given by Skene in *Celtic Scotland*, then as given by my wife Máire and myself in our website (2009). I will add two Irish versions, both taken from Nollaig Ó Muraíle, ed., *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach: The Great Book of Irish Genealogies Compiled (1645–66) by Dubhaltach Mac Fhirbhisigh* (5 vols, Dublin, 2003). Ó Muraíle’s source in each case is the principal text of MacFirbis’s genealogies, University College Dublin Add. Ir. MS 14. Other Irish versions appear to derive from this, or from some very closely related manuscript, so there is no need to cite them. For ease of comparison, the texts are presented here according to the five-line structure found in the 1467 MS, even though only two, *Collectanea* and the website version, derive solely from our manuscript.

(1) *Collectanea*:

30 Genelach ic Gillemaoil Gillecolm
31 mc Gillecolm moir ic
32 mc Eoin
33 mc Gillchrist mc
34 mc Cormac mc Oirbertaigh.

30 Genealogy of the MacMillans—Malcolm
31 son of Malcolm mor, son of
32 son of John
33 son of Gillchrist, son of
34 son of Cormac, son of Oirbertaigh.¹

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

30 GENEALACH MHIC GILLA MAOIL* Gillacoluim og
31 mac Gillacoluim moir mhic Maolmuire
32 mhic Cainn mhic Dubgaill mhic Gillacoluim

- 33 mhic Gillacrist dar comhaimn an Gillamaol agus Clann an Mail
 34 mhic Cormaic mhic Airbeartaigh reamraieith a se an tairbertach sin do aitreabh da
 threibh deg i Fionnlochlanach .i. Greagraidhe na ngaisgeathach das comainim
 Muile agus Tir no Tire aodha agus Cruibhinis, no Craobhinis

* From MS. 1467 and MacFirbis.

- 30 GENEALOGY OF THE MACMILLANS. Malcolm the young,
 31 son of Malcolm mor son of Maolmure
 32 son of Cainn son of Dougall son of Malcolm
 33 son of Gillchrist, called an Gillamaol or the tonsured servant, from whom are
 the Clan an Mail or MacMillans,
 34 son of Cormac son of Airbertach aforesaid. This Airbertach had twelve tribes
 inhabiting the Norwegian territory, viz. Greagraid of the Champions, commonly
 called Mull and Tiraoda (Tiree) and Cruibhinis or Craobhinis or Island of
 Bushes.*

* This is said to be an old name for Iona.²

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

- 30 genelach mhic gillamaeil gillacolaim
 31 mac gilla colaim moir mhic *mael muire*
 32 mhic cainnig mhic *gila maeill oig**
 33 mhic gill *crist* dar comainm in gilla *maeil* [or *mor*?]
 34 mhic cormaic mhic *airbertaigh*

* or ‘mhic cainnig mhic dubgaill mhic gilla colaim’ – this is Mac Firbis’s reading of the line, and it does look as if ‘mhic (gi)la maeill’ has been altered to ‘mhic dubgaill’ or vice versa. Everything in the line following ‘maeill’ or ‘dubgaill’ is illegible, so it is impossible to say whether it once contained ‘mhic gilla colaim’ or not.

- 30 The genealogy of MacMillan: Gille Colaim
 31 son of big/great Gille Colaim son of Maol Muire
 32 son of Kenneth son of young(?) Gille Maol*
 33 son of Gille Críost nicknamed the big(?) Gille Maol(?)
 34 son of Cormac son of Airbheartach.

* or perhaps ‘son of Kenneth son of Dugald [son of Gille Colaim]’ as in Mac Firbis

(4) Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach*, vol. 2, pp. 146–47:

30 **Genealach Cloinne an Mail <no Mec an Mhaíl>** Giolla Coluim Og
31 mac Giolla Coluim Mhóir m. Maoilmuire
32 <m. Cainnigh> m. Dubhgaill m. Giolla Choluim
33 m. Giolla Chríod, dar comainm an Giolla Máol, a quo [],³
34 m. Cormaic m. Airbheartuigh reamhraite; as é an tAirbeartach sin do aitreabh
da trebh dég i fFionnlochlanuibh (?) .i. Greagraidh (?) na nGaisgeadhach, dar
comainm Muil<e>, agus Tír <no Tiri> <nó Tire> Aodha, agus Cruibhinis <no
Craoibhinis>.

30 **The genealogy of Clann an Mhaoil, or Mac an Mhaoil** Giolla Coluim Óg
31 s. Giolla Coluim Mór s. Maol Muire
32 s. Cainneach s. Dubhghall s. Giolla Coluim
33 s. Giolla Críost, who was also named An Giolla Maol, from whom is [],
34 s. Cormac s. Airbheartach aforesaid; it was that Airbheartach who settled twelve
households in Fionnlochlainn, i.e. Greagraidh na nGaisceadhach, which was
also named Muile, and Tír (or Tíre) Aodha and Cruibhinis (or Craoibhinis).

(5) Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach*, vol. 3, pp. 492–93. In footnotes Ó
Muraíle supplies minor variant readings from Royal Irish Academy MS 585 (24 N 2).
These add little of interest so I omit them here.

30 **Genealach Cloinne an Mail (no Mhec an Mhaíl)** Gille Coluim Og
31 mac Gille Coluim Mhoir mec Maoilmhuire
32 meic Cainnigh mc Dubhgaill mc Gille Choluim
33 meic Gille Chríost, dar comhainm an Gille Maol, a quo
34 Mac Cormaic (reamhráite) mc Airbeartaigh. As é an tAi[r]beartach [] do
aitreabh da threabh décc i bFionnlachland, no i bFionnlochluinn .i. Dreoluinn na
nGaisgeadh, darob comhainm Muile agus Tiri agus Craoibhinis; no Greagraighe
na nGaisgeadhach, dar comainm Muile, agus Tirí Aodha agus Cruibhinis.

30 **The genealogy of Clann an Mhaoil, or Mac an Mhaoil** Giolla Coluim Óg
31 s. Giolla Coluim Mór s. Maol Muire
32 s. Cainneach s. Dubhghall s. Giolla Coluim
33 s. Giolla Críost, who was also named An Giolla Maol, from whom is
34 Mac Cormaic (aforesaid) s. Airbheartach. It was that Airbheartach who settled
twelve households in Fionnlochlainn, i.e. Dreólainn na nGaisceadh, which was
also named Muile, and Tíre and Craoibhinis, or Greagraighe na nGaisceadhach,
which was also named Muile and Tíre Aodha and Cruibhinis.

These place-names of MacFirbis's deserve some comment. *Fionnlochlan* and *Fionnghall* ('Fair Scandinavia', 'Fair Stranger') are generally assumed to refer to Norway and Norwegians, as opposed to *Dubhlochlan* and *Dubhghall* ('Black Scandinavia', 'Black Stranger'), whose associations are with Denmark and the Danes.⁴ In one specific instance *Fionnlochlan* is equated with Orkney.⁵ Airbheartach's Gaelic settlements, then, were in Norwegian territory, or indeed 'among the Norwegians', *i fFionnlochlanuibh*, a dative or locative plural. The origins of *an Dreólainn* are probably to be found in Greek or Latin sources (Trier and Troy, Latin *Trevorum* and *Troia*, spring to mind); the late Alan Bruford commented that as used in Gaelic tales it 'may be anywhere', though in his accompanying map he puts it roughly in Poland. In Scottish Gaelic verse it came, as he says, to be used for Mull, or indeed for Greater Mull: a much-needed term for the kingdom, or empire, of the MacLeans.⁶ *Dreoluinn na nGaisgeadh* 'Dreólainn of the Heroes' (or 'of the champions', as Skene has it) therefore needs no comment. MacFirbis helpfully defines the region as consisting of Mull, Tiree and *Craoibhinis* or *Cruibhinis*. Skene tells us that this last means 'Island of Bushes' and 'is said to be an old name for Iona'; clearly he prefers bushes to trees because there are, or were, no trees in Iona. He offers no proof and I do not believe that there is any. Nor do I think that *Craoibhinis/Cruibhinis* is Coll. As viewed from MacFirbis's Ireland, it is best seen vaguely as those tree-filled lands beyond Mull and Tiree which came eventually to be so precious to the MacLeans: Morvern, Ardgour and so on. The ending *-inis* need not signify an island, as is shown by *Croiginis*, Craignish.

One name remains, variously spelt *Greagraid*, *Greagraidh*, *Greagraighe* (also *Greacruigh*, in RIA MS 585). Neither Skene nor Ó Muraíle offers a translation, but it is clear enough. The suffix *-raidh* indicates 'people', as does its cognate '-ry' in English: *eachraidh* 'cavalry', *ceòlraidh* 'muses', *laochraidh* 'warrior band', and so on. *Gréagraidh na ngaisgeadhach* are 'the band of Hellenistic heroes', probably again a reflection of geography: in MacFirbis's day the MacLeans, like the Greeks, enjoyed both mainland and island territories. MacFirbis is not of course speaking of MacLeans but of their predecessors in the region; this is a point which I will pick up below in my discussion of line 34.

I will now proceed to my line-by-line analysis of Dubhghall Albanach's 1467 MS text using pen-and-ink sketches. As always, these are based on spectrally imaged colour photographs which are superior to those in the website. Italics are used for the expansion of the less obvious contractions, and transcriptions derived from external evidence are given in square brackets.

30 

genelach mhic gillamaeil gill[acolaim og] = "The genealogy of MacMillan: young Gille Colaim"

Apart from the fact that the *m* of *gillamaeil* appears to contain a minim too many, most of the line is straightforward. On the other hand the end of it is impossible to read; even if we did not have MacFirbis, however, the presence of *Gille Colaim Mór* in line 31 is enough to suggest the reading *Gille Colaim* or *Gille Colaim Óg*. The word meaning ‘boy, lad, servant’ may be spelt *gilla*, *giolla* or *gille*. In modern Scottish Gaelic it is *gille*. The fact that it appears as *gilla* in the middle of the line does not mean that it will necessarily be spelt *gilla* at the end. This allows us to rationalise the mess at the end as *gille*, followed by *c*, followed by a meaningless mark like an *l* (an error of anticipation?), followed by *o*, followed by a faint *l*, followed by an extremely faint mark which could be the remains of *og* – thus bringing *Col[aim]* into conformity with the way it is contracted in line 31.

Line 30 raises the issue of the name ‘MacMillan’. At its root is *maol*, earlier *máel*, ‘bald, tonsured’. This gave a forename *an Gille Maol* ‘the Bald/Tonsured Fellow’, which we are told at line 33 was merely a nickname. If written in full *mhic gillamaeil* would be *Mhic an Ghiolla Mháeil*, Scottish Gaelic *Mhic a’ Ghille Mhaoil*, contractable again to *MhicilleMhaoil*. In forms like *maol*, *maolan* and *maoilean* the word became a noun meaning ‘a baldy, a monk’. That is what MacFirbis gives us: *Clann an Mhaoil* ‘the Children of the Monk’, *Mac an Mhaoil* ‘the Son of the Monk’. It is also what lies behind the English form of the name, MacMillan: *Mac a’ Mhaolain*, *Mac a’ Mhaoilein* ‘the Son of the Monk’. In one part of the Gaelic-speaking area, Benbecula, *manach* was used instead, giving *Mac a’ Mhanaich*, now anglicised ‘Monk’. As monasticism was widespread in the middle ages we would expect any or all of these names to appear spontaneously in different parts of Scotland without there being any necessary genealogical connection between them, and such is indeed the case. The late Rev. Somerled MacMillan, who should have known better, assumed such connections wherever he found them, and constructed a composite picture of a family of MacMillans who appeared in Aberdeenshire in the twelfth century, then moved to Perthshire soon afterwards, and on to Argyllshire in the fourteenth. This will not wash, and indeed the evidence of the 1467 MS and of MacFirbis, of which the Rev. Somerled was well aware, is completely against it. Quite simply, Airbheartach got land in Argyllshire in the twelfth century, and his direct descendants were still there in the fifteenth. The nonsense of this kind that we find in *The MacMillans and their Septs* can be pernicious, as of course such productions have the status of definitive works on their respective kindreds; it is good, therefore, to find that the authors of glossy books about the Highland clans, who usually copy each other, have not bought into it. One says for example: “MacMillans were to be found in many different parts of the country and the connection between them, if there was one, would be hard to trace.”⁷

Nevertheless, there is a huge amount of useful detail in *The MacMillans and their Septs*, as there is in all the Rev. Somerled’s books, so I will reference it in what follows. The MacMillan pedigree is summarised in a fold-out. The first nine names are as in the 1467 MS. Malcolm Óg’s son is Lachlan, killed at Harlaw in 1411. After him come

Lachlan Òg, who is out at the Douglas Rising in 1455, and who has a daughter Eve, mother of John Brayach McIan, who holds lands in Islay in 1497; then Alexander, who marries Erca MacNeil, heiress of Castle Sween. The Rev. Somerled dated the forfeiture of the MacMillan lands in Knapdale to 1505, during the chiefship of Alexander's son Malcolm (or Malcolm's brother Hector), but John Bannerman brought it forward to 1478, during Alexander's time.⁸ After this the remnants of the chiefly line are found in South Kintyre. The Rev. Somerled traces the important MacMillan families of Clachbreck and Dunmore from Malcolm, who was chief in 1505.⁹ Then we find Duncan, a witness at Dunadd in 1533;¹⁰ Donald, a witness in Kilchenzie parish, Kintyre, in 1576; Malcolm, possibly Donald's son and heir, a witness at Taynish in 1589, who met a murky end; and others.¹¹

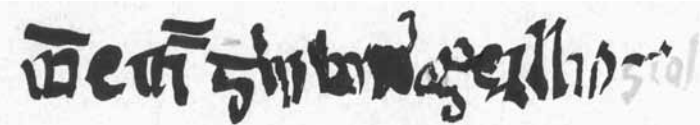
The Rev. Somerled provides a full account of the MacMillans in Lochaber and elsewhere in the north. He traces their origin to the generation of our line 30 – a son of 'Malcolm Mor's son, presumably John, who fled from Kilchamaig around 1365, after he had killed a troublesome neighbour named Marallach Mor'.¹² I see no need to dispute the truth of this legend.

31 

mac gille colaim mhoir mhic [m]jael m[uire] = “son of the elder Gille Colaim son of Maol Muire”

At the beginning of the line MacFirbis confirms what we could probably have guessed. The contraction of *gille* to *g.* is very natural the third time round. At the end of the line, however, we are faced with what looks like *rdaelm* or possibly *rdaelin*. MacFirbis resolves this for us, but why Dubhghall Albanach should have written *mael* as *rdael* is beyond comprehension. There does not seem to be any interference at this point. Without MacFirbis we would have been lost.

Our ‘elder Gille Colaim’ is the Rev. Somerled’s ‘Malcolm Mor of Knap’, who, he claims wrongly, arrived in Argyllshire *c.* 1360 at the invitation of the Lord of the Isles.¹³

32 

mhic cainn[i]gh [mhic dubgha]ill [mhic gille colaim] = “son of Kenneth son of Dugald son of Gille Colaim”

We are basically reliant on MacFirbis for all the key elements in this line. With regard to the first, it is only with hindsight that the reading *cainn[i]gh* becomes clear. In 1847 Skene read *eoin* ‘John’. It looks like *eainn*, but again that would mean ‘John’. It is by no means obvious that the following *g* is part of the name, as there is a gap where the second *i* should be. Nor is it obvious that the three minims following *g* constitute the *m* of *mhic*, given that Dubhghall Albanach usually (though not always) writes this with a single minim when it occurs in the interior of a line.

It is only by considering MacFirbis’s reading *Dubhgaill* that we can begin to make sense of the line as a whole. Following the *m* is a *d* which has been altered by means of a vertical stroke, making it look more like a *b*. After this is a curve or minim which may originally have been part of the *d*, followed by a dark mass which must have contained all or part of the *u*. The key is the tall ascender. If we take it together with the circular character that follows, we distinguish the general shape of a *b*. After that it is possible to distinguish *g*, seemingly dotted to give *gh*, followed by what looks like *e* (but must be read *a*), then *ill*, giving *dubgheill* or rather *dubghaill*.

There is clear evidence of interference, then, and as it is unlikely that Dubhghall Albanach would doctor away his own forename, we have to guess that the culprit is the same person who appears elsewhere in our manuscript to take particular exception to Norse names – of which Dubhghall is an example, given that it represents ‘Dark Stranger’, euphemistic for a Viking.¹⁴

Two very different points are worth making about this. The first is that in the fifteenth century the MacMillans of Knap fell victim to two minor kindreds which were almost certainly of Viking origin, the *Clann Dubhghaill* of Craignish and the MacIvers of Asknish, both of which protected themselves by taking on a Campbell identity. This is a big subject, and I will say no more about it here because I propose to pursue it elsewhere. The second is that the pedigree of the MacDougalls of Lorn appears elsewhere in the manuscript, apparently unvandalised – but, then, it is on the verso, which is much cleaner in every way, and was perhaps never spotted by our vandal. For all that, it is a curious fact that it lacks a title, almost as if afraid to draw too much attention to the apparently sensitive name Dubhghall.

There is almost nothing left of the end of line 32. As MacFirbis tells us to look for *m. Giolla Choluim*, however, we can find it. The three minims following *ill* give us *m*, and something has survived of *g col* for *g. col[aim]*.

The Rev. Somerled traces the Ayrshire and Galloway MacMillans (of whom he gives an otherwise valuable account) from Kenneth, whom he calls ‘Cainn’, as in *Celtic Scotland*.¹⁵ It is perfectly possible that they were connected to the Argyllshire family, especially as the name is also common in Arran, but the real nature of the connection is unknowable. And in the course of his equally excellent description of the Perthshire MacMillans he tells us that their first chief may have been Malcolm, ‘or possibly his son Dougall’, again referring to our line 32. This is certainly untrue.¹⁶



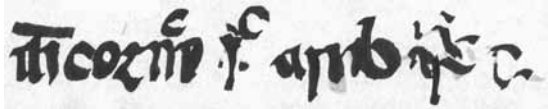
mhic gill[e] cr[iost] dar comhainm in g[ille mael] = “son of Gille Críost who was also named *an Gille Maol*”

In the first name, there seems to be no trace of the final syllable of *gille*. More importantly, the usual contraction for *Críost* in this manuscript is *cr* topped by a superscript stroke; here the stroke is displaced to the right, above *d*, which is odd. The following word *dar* is clear, but a heavy vertical mark appears to have been drawn through the *d*, just as was done in the previous line. This time there are no particular difficulties at the end of the line: we appear to have *in g.m* (in which the *m* is not really legible, but may be inferred from *MacFirbis*), heavily contracted because it relates back to *mhic gillamaeil* in line 30.

It seems a little strange to be told that Gille Críost ‘was also named *an Gille Maol*’, as if the pedigree were being fabricated. I think what is meant is that *an Gille Maol* was originally bestowed on Gille Críost as a nickname, but came to be used as a given name. It may mean ‘the Tonsured Fellow’, but it could just as easily mean ‘the Bald Fellow’, and have nothing to do with monasticism. It was not as widespread in Scotland as, say, *an Gille Dubh*, and may even have been unique to the MacMillans. Neither *an Gille Maol* nor *an Gille Dubh* is listed in O’Brien’s *Irish Corpus*, though thirty-six *gille* (*gilla*) names are given, ranging from *Gilla-Áeda* to *Gilla-Ultáin*. Of course the commonest *gille* name in Scotland is *Gille Easbaig*, *Gilleasbaig*, translated first as *Celestine*, then as *Archibald*, also as *Gillespie*; as *Gilla Epscoip* or *Giolla Easpaig*, it is among eleven *gilla* names given by Ó Corráin and Maguire.¹⁷

According to the Rev. Somerled, ‘tradition strongly affirms’ that Gille Críost and his family were ‘attached to the Culdee preaching-station at Old Spynie’. He seems to derive this extraordinary statement from Robert Young’s *Parish of Spynie*. In the *Book of Deer* he finds the names *Gille-Críst mac Cormaic* and *Mal-Coluim mac Molíni*. The latter had been inadvisedly translated by the Rev. Dr Thomas Maclauchlan as ‘*Malcolm McMillan*’ (the most recent edition gives it simply as ‘*Mael-Coluim son of Moílíne*’). These little coincidences were enough to induce the Rev. Somerled to locate the main stem of the MacMillans in Aberdeenshire. As if this were not bad enough, he has them being removed by King Malcolm IV (1153–65) from Old Spynie to Locharkaigside, spending no more than twenty-eight years there before being given crown lands around Loch Tay in 1160, all of which, he says again, ‘tradition strongly affirms’.¹⁸

To give him some credit, the Rev. Somerled dropped most of this nonsense in his later work *Families of Knapdale*. Instead, he concentrated on an attempt to reconstruct the later chiefly line, which was a little safer.¹⁹



mhic cormaic mhic airb[ertaigh] = “son of Cormac son of Airbheartach.”

There are no real difficulties here. Cormac mac Airbheartaigh appears in seven other places in our manuscript, as well as in MacFirbis. The second and third letters of *Airbheartaigh* look more like *ri* than *ir*, but that is a very minor slip. It would be foolish to assume that another *r* can be seen towards the end of the name, as in the other seven cases Dubhghall either writes *ear* as a suspension-stroke (six times) or omits it by accident (once).

The seven other instances are in the pedigrees of the *Clann Ainnrias* (Gillanders), the Green Abbot, the MacKinnons, the MacGregors, the MacDuffies, the MacQuarries and the son of Baron Fearchar. This means, of course, that they are held to share a common descent. The traditional kinship between MacGregors, MacKinnons and MacQuarries is well known.²⁰ Ours is the only case in which the pedigree is taken no further; the others reveal a bewildering variety of descents for Airbheartach. The Gillanders and Baron Fearchar pedigrees simply give his father’s name as Fearadhach. The MacGregor pedigree takes this two steps further – Fearadhach son of Fearchar Fada son of Fearadhach Fionn. The MacDuffie pedigree omits the younger Fearadhach and gives Airbheartach’s father as Fearchar Fada son of Fearadhach. The Green Abbot’s pedigree inserts two fresh names: son of Earc son of Domhnall Donn son of Fearchar Abhradhruadh son of Fearadhach. The MacKinnon pedigree gives Airbheartach’s father as Murchadh son of Fearchar Óg. This implies of course that there was an older Fearchar, and he is duly supplied by the MacQuarrie pedigree, which gives Airbheartach the longest lineage of all – son of Murchadh, son of Fearchar, son of Beathach, son of Finlay, son of Fearchar Fada, son of Fearadhach, son of Fergus. (Beathach son of Finlay is King Macbeth, no less, who reigned 1040–57.) These inconsistencies are rather endearing: they reveal the text of our manuscript as honestly drawn from a number of different sources with no attempt at further redaction.

What it all means in practical terms is that Airbheartach and his son Cormac were well-known figures without an established pedigree – no wonder, given that they were outsiders. MacFirbis tells us that Airbheartach established twelve households (*dá threabh décc*, coincidentally the same word as in *Trevorum*) in Mull and neighbouring territories. The identities of ten of these twelve households are supplied by the 1467 MS. In fact, in the case of the MacKinnons, MacFirbis repeats the beginning of his statement: “As é an tAirbeartach sin do aitreabh dhá threabh dég i bhFionnlochluinn. (It was that Airbheartach who settled twelve holdings in Fionnlochlainn.)”²¹ Noting a MacKinnon grave-slab in Iona commemorating *Fingone mac Carmaic*, my good friend John Bannerman saw Cormac and his father Airbheartach as wholly historical figures who lived in the twelfth century. He stated that Cormac ‘figures, along with his

father Airbertach, in no less than ten of the legible clan pedigrees, including that of the MacKinnons, in *MS 1467* – which is true, at least in the sense that the MacKenzies and Mathesons are shown to be descended from Gilleoin of the Aird, who is shown in the Gillanders pedigree to be Cormac’s great-great-grandson. John went on to point out that the twelfth-century dating makes Airbheartach a contemporary of Somerled, and that the geographical scattering of Airbheartach’s kindred follows the pattern that we would expect of a family that supported ‘the rising star of Somerled and his descendants’.²²

The 1467 MS tells us, in its accounts of various kindreds, that Cormac had five sons in addition to Gille Críost: Fearchar (the Green Abbot, Gillanders, MacDuffie), Ainnreas or Andrew (MacGregor), Guaire (MacQuarrie), Finnghuine (MacKinnon) and Gille Ádhagáin (Baron Fearchar).

Conclusion

It will be noted that although he made his collection in the mid-seventeenth century, MacFirbis’s version of the MacMillan pedigree is essentially the same as Dubhghall Albanach’s: it begins with Gille Colaim who lived *c.* 1400 and ends with Airbheartach who lived *c.* 1160. It seems that some great compilation of genealogies was made in Scotland about 1400, perhaps ordered by Donald, Lord of the Isles, that it became canonical, and that it was seized upon by Irish antiquarians. What is not so clear is why MacFirbis should have treated us to five of the pedigrees and not the others, and on what basis the selection was made – MacMillans, MacLeans, MacQuarries, MacKinnons and the kings of Scotland. The only answer I can think of is a mundane one: apart from the kings of Scotland, these form a continuous sequence (nos. 22, 24, 25 and 26) in our manuscript, broken only by no. 23, the son of Baron Fearchar. Did these perhaps come to MacFirbis on a single page? Had the son of Baron Fearchar been omitted as too obscure?

At any rate, it is as well that MacFirbis gave us back the MacMillans, because we have been dependent on him for almost the entire pedigree. Not that it has been anything other than a worthwhile exercise: we have found still more evidence of vandalism, especially (though not exclusively) where Norse origins are involved, and the exercise of reading such a difficult part of the manuscript with MacFirbis’s help has been like having a kindly seventeenth-century tutor breathing over our shoulder.

Finally, I make no excuse for dwelling on the errors of the Rev. Somerled MacMillan. The historiography of the 1467 MS has been developed not only by Skene, but by innumerable monographs on the Highland clans such as *The MacMillans and their Septs* which are likely to be regarded by their users as definitive. It is important that their failings be understood, and ultimately put right.

Ronald Black

Notes

- 1 The Iona Club, *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Edinburgh, 1847), pp. 358, 359.
- 2 William F. Skene, *Celtic Scotland* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1876–80), vol. 3, p. 489.
- 3 A transcript of this genealogy in Skene's papers, NLS Adv. MS 73.1.16, f. 72v, gives *a q[u]o clann an mhail* at this point.
- 4 Royal Irish Academy, *Dictionary of the Irish Language*, s.v. *dub*.
- 5 Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, 'Literary Lochlann', in *Cànan & Cùltar / Language & Culture: Rannsachadh na Gàidhlig 3*, ed. by Wilson McLeod *et al.* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 25–37: 31.
- 6 Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-Tales and Mediæval Romances* (Folklore of Ireland Society, Dublin, 1969), pp. 20, 21, 22. For more extended discussion of the name see Colm Ó Baoill, ed., *Eachann Bacach and Other Maclean Poets* (Scottish Gaelic Texts Society, Edinburgh, 1979), pp. 233–34.
- 7 Neil Grant, *Scottish Clans & Tartans* (Twickenham, 1987), p. 197.
- 8 Somerled MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs* (Glasgow, 1952), pp. 34–40; Somerled MacMillan, *Families of Knapdale: Their History and their Place-Names* (Paisley, 1960), pp. 13–14; K. A. Steer and J. W. M. Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands* (RCAHMS, Edinburgh, 1977), p. 152.
- 9 MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, pp. 44–64, and *Families of Knapdale*, pp. 19–21.
- 10 Steer and Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture*, p. 153, cf. MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, p. 41, and *Families of Knapdale*, p. 14.
- 11 MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, pp. 41–44, corrected and amplified in *Families of Knapdale*, pp. 14–18.
- 12 MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, pp. 33, 74–97, and *Families of Knapdale*, p. 12.
- 13 MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, p. 29, and *Families of Knapdale*, p. 12.
- 14 Donnchadh Ó Corráin and Fidelma Maguire, *Irish Names* (2nd edn, Dublin, 1990), p. 79.
- 15 MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, fold-out pedigree and pp. 98–110.
- 16 MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, pp. 23–28.
- 17 M. A. O'Brien, ed., *Corpus Genealogiarum Hiberniae* (Dublin, 1976), pp. 660–61; Ó Corráin and Maguire, *Irish Names*, pp. 111–12.
- 18 MacMillan, *The MacMillans and their Septs*, pp. 16–23; Katherine Forsyth, ed., *Studies on the Book of Deer* (Dublin, 2008), pp. 138–41. Jackson's edition of the Book of Deer is much easier to use; he translates the name as 'Mal-Coluim son of Moíléne', see Kenneth Jackson, *The Gaelic Notes in the Book of Deer* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 35.
- 19 MacMillan, *Families of Knapdale*, pp. 11–18.
- 20 See for example David Stevenson, *The Hunt for Rob Roy: The Man and the Myths* (Edinburgh, 2004), p. 202.
- 21 Ó Muraíle, *Leabhar Mór na nGenealach*, vol. 2, pp. 146–47.
- 22 Steer and Bannerman, *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture*, pp. 103–05.