

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA

THE ORIGINS OF THE MACLELLANS

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The MacLellans are a clan mostly associated with the south west of Scotland, where their development in the later middle ages has been thoroughly documented by Richard Torrance in *The McClellans in Galloway* (2 Volumes, Scottish Genealogy Society, 1993 & 1996). He reports the tradition that there were 14 knights of that name in the region in 1422, and remarks in some puzzlement that although in the course of the 15th century "the MacClellans populated and came to own large tracts of Galloway with amazing rapidity...", references to them in the province prior to that are very few and far between. Neither he nor local historian Daphne Brooke, who has also written about the clan in medieval Galloway, is able to give any account of the ancestry of this extremely important kindred. So who were they, and from where did they so suddenly spring up in Galloway?

MacLellan is a name that also appears in other parts of Scotland: most notably in Ross-shire and the Outer Hebrides, where there was a tradition linking it to the MacRaes; and in Perthshire, where it is usually associated with the MacNabs. This latter connection is explained by the origin of the name: MacLellan is a phonetic form of the Gaelic *MacGhille-Fhaolain* (the "c" of Mac elides with the following "G", and the "Fh" is not pronounced: so *Mac'ille'aolain*, *Maclelan*), which means "Son of the Servant (or Devotee) of Fillan"; and Saint Fillan is supposed to have founded the monastery in Glen Dochart of which the MacNab's eponymous was abbot. Fillan is also reported to have evangelised parts of Wester Ross and Argyll where place, as well as local kindred names recall the alleged connection. Kilellan in Kintyre is said to have been so-named by descendants of the old lairds of Craignish called McGillellan - another phonetic form of *MacGhille-Fhaolain* - who are reported in Lorn traditions to have been associated with the eponymous of the Ross-shire MacRaes. Another form of the same surname is MacGilligan or MacKillican (*MacGhille-Fhaolagain* - "Son of the Devotee of Little Fillan"), which in Scotland was considered a sept of Clan Chattan in Moray, Ross and Perthshire, and in northern Ireland was to be found in County Coleraine associated with the O'Millans as followers of the O'Cahans.²

Daphne Brooke thinks that the MacLellans were imported into Galloway from the north during the 14th century "perhaps to repair depopulation resulting from the war or the plague" - a conclusion that Richard Torrance seems inclined to accept - though as Brooke herself points out, the first recorded member of the kindred can be found in the area as early as 1273. *Cane McGillolane* appears then in Devorgilla Balliol's foundation charter for Sweetheart Abbey; and since his fellow witnesses were the leading men in the lordship, he was clearly a very significant figure. His family's importance is confirmed by the appearance seventeen years later of his son Douenald le fit Can as one of the Barons du Realm de Escocce who signed the Treaty of Birgham with king Edward I of England.³

Sir Donald MacCan is first documented in 1285, in association with the Balliols; and he later appears frequently taking a leading part on behalf of the Balliol faction in the civil and independence wars in Galloway. Like many other native leaders recorded in the English records at this time, his name is rendered in various ways in different languages: i.e. in other Norman French versions, such as *Dovenald le fitz Kan* and *Sir Dovenald fitz Cane*; or in Latin as *Dovenaldo filio Can*. Barbour calls him *Donald McCan* in mentioning his capture by Bruce's forces in 1308 at the Battle of the River Dee; and he is simply called "the lord Donald" in another English record referring to his son and successor.⁴

Gilbert, son of the lord Donald also appears with his name rendered variously: e.g. in 1323 as *forti filio Dofnaldi* and, sometime in the reign of king David II, as *Gilberti McGillolane*. Four of

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Gilbert's sons appear on the record: *Patricii filii Gilberti M'Lolan, John son of Gilbert son of Donald Mackane, Gilbert son of Gilbert M'Lolan, and Matthew M'Lolan, knight*, who also appears elsewhere in David II's reign as *Meteledi son of Gilbert*, and with his son John in 1354 as *Sir Mathew MacLollan*. Church records and histories of the Isle of Man record another prominent early member of this kindred, *Gillebertus MacLelan Galvediensis*, who was Bishop of Sodor (i.e. Man and the Isles) in the 1320s; and he is also mentioned in the Scottish Exchequer Rolls for 1329 which document a payment to *Cudberto, fratri domini Gilberti, quondam episcopi Sodorensis*.... "Cudberto" is almost certainly the *Cuthbert M'Cane* who is recorded in Galloway in 1304, and a *Gibbon fitz Kan* also appears in the region between 1298 and 1303.⁵

When Cane's grandson appears in the Scottish royal records as Gilbert MacGillolane, it's in an entry that recognises him as the "*Captain of Clenconnan*"; i.e. chief of Clan Cannan. It's generally assumed that this kindred took its name from Cane, and the surnames and place-names associated with it in Galloway – the place Ironmacannie and the family Acannane/Cannon of Killochie – are indeed to be found close to the Clann Ghille-Fhaolain township Balmacellan. Versions of the surname MacCane can be found too in Lorn, where as we've seen MacGillolanes also appear, and in Cowal where a kindred called *Clann a'Chainich* lived in Glendaruel; and in both cases a possible link can be made between these occurrences and the Galloway kindred (see below). That any clan, let alone such a widespread one, should take its name from Cane is another indication of his importance; so it seems inconceivable that there should be but the one record of him, and no apparent account of his ancestry either in writing or in oral traditions.⁶

In searching for other references to this man called Cane/Kan one must start with the name itself. As it stands it seems to be almost unique in the Scottish record; but if one looks at northern Ireland, which was intimately connected with Scotland at this time – especially Galloway and Argyll – there are phonetic forms of a well known surname that might provide a clue as to its origins. The important kindred name O'Cahan/O'Cathain appears in English records at this time as *Ochaan* (1272) and *Ocaan* (1277). It usually appears later in Ulster as O'Kane, and is sometimes also Anglicised as Cane or Cain/Caine. This branch of the northern *Ui Neill* derived its name from an individual called Cathan after the sixth century saint who, according to Irish traditions, was buried in the abbey of Derry.

The cult of Saint Catan was enormously important throughout the western highlands and islands of Scotland, where some accounts have him buried at Eye (Braighe) on the Isle of Lewis. Dedications to him were still being made as late as the 13th century (Ardchattan Priory in Lorn) by the descendants of the Gall-Gaidhel, the people who gave their name to the province of Galloway. There must be a strong possibility therefore that Cane MacGillolane's given-name stands for Cathan; and when one looks amongst the genealogies of kindreds connected to the original Scottish "Clan Chattan" one does indeed find an individual named Cainn who it appears could have lived at about the same time as *Cane Macgillolane*.⁷

The genealogy in question is the MS. 1467 account of the MacMillans, a kindred who, though no longer associated with Clan Chattan, were at one time amongst the leaders of this then widespread and powerful west coast confederation. The MacMillan pedigree starts with a man who was also the progenitor of a number of other clans shown in MS. 1467 – Cormac mac Airbertach – who can now be reasonably identified as the Cormac who was Bishop of Dunkeld c. 1115-1135.⁸

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Cormac | Cainn |
| Gilchrist "Gillemaol" (or "Maolan") | Maolmuire |
| – from whom <i>MacGhillemhaoil</i> (or <i>MacMhaolain</i>) | Malcolm Mor |
| Malcolm | Malcolm Og |
| Dougal | |

Gilchrist "Gillemaol/Maolan" is documented in the Book of Deer with his father Bishop Cormac in the year 1132. If one comes forward from Gilchrist, calculating on the basis of the usual 30 to 40 years per generation, we find that Cainn "MacMillan" would have lived in the 1220s or 1250s. If one also calculates back on the same basis from the last name on the list – Malcolm Og – who is presumed to have been chief of the clan when the genealogy was compiled, which is now generally thought to have been in about 1400, one arrives at a floruit of the 1280s to the 1310s. Given that the 40 year per generation period is sometimes considered more appropriate for highland clans, that puts Cainn mac Dougal "MacMillan" as having lived sometime between the 1250s and the 1280s which is precisely when we find *Cane McGillolane* on the record.⁹

When one begins to look for evidence of connections between the MacMillans and the devotees of Saint Fillan they are not hard to find. In Galloway the MacMillan lands in the Glenkens lay immediately adjacent to the MacLellan lands, and the earliest identified members there of both clans were loyal supporters of the Balliols. In Perthshire the ancestors of the MacMillans of Knap are supposed to have lived on Loch Tayside next to the MacNabs in Glen Dochart and Strathfillan; while other descendants of Maolan using the surname MacMaoldonich lived in Strathearn, to the east of St. Fillans. A third Perthshire branch of the same kindred were the de Lanys or Lemmies of that ilk, whose seat of Leny is just outside modern Callander, and whose lands were supposed to have been secured by a symbolic charter consisting of a tooth of Saint Fillan and the sword of their ancestor Gilespe Mor.¹⁰

Gille-easbuig Mor, "the Great Bishop", was Cormac of Dunkeld; and it cannot just be a coincidence that the three mainland churches dedicated to Saint Cormac – after whom the bishop was probably named – are to be found in Knapdale, on Loch Tayside, and south of the MacMillan lands in the Glenkens of Galloway. The last of these, Kirkcormack, was one of a group of churches built in Galloway in the 11th and 12th centuries on land once held by the abbey of Iona and dedicated to saints venerated by the Gall-Gaidhel; and it is close to the important MacLellan seat of Gelston, whose lairds at one time owned it.¹¹

The most striking evidence connecting the MacLellans and the MacMillans is heraldic. Both clans have two sets of coats of arms which appear to be more or less related. The first set, which are obviously very closely connected, are also the most obscure; so much so that in one old armorial manuscript the MacLellan version is credited to Richardson of Smeaton, though that accreditation has later been crossed out and "MacLellan of that ilk" reinstated. The first of the MacMillan arms also appear in some sources credited to another kindred – called MacRanald (but not the branch of Clan Donald) – and this may be an indication that these arms relate to MacLellans and MacMillans outwith Galloway.¹²



MACLELLAN
Red Stars, Lion & Bars



MACMILLAN 1
Red Lion & Bars
Blue Stars



MACMILLAN 2
Black Lion, Red Bars
Blue Stars



MACMILLAN 3
Black Lion & Bars
Blue Stars

The three different versions of this MacMillan coat suggest that the colour differences with the MacLellan coat are not significant beside the identical nature of the designs, and therefore that all

these coats of arms belonged to members of the same kindred. None of these coats are borne by modern members of either clan, though the MacMillan of Knap arms feature the three mullets (stars) and a lion; albeit the lion is rampant rather than, as here, passant. The mullets, which are supposed to represent the clan's original descent from the royal house of Moray, also appear in the second set of MacMillan arms; and these are the ones associated with the Galloway branch of the clan:¹³



MACMILLAN
IN ENGLAND
Black Stars & Chevron



MACMILLAN
IN SCOTLAND
*Black Stars & Chevron
Yellow Circles*



MACMILLAN
IN ULSTER
*Red Stars & Border
Black Chevron, Yellow Circles*

The second set of MacLellan arms are also those associated with Galloway, and like the above MacMillan arms they also feature chevrons/chevronels; though beyond that there is no other obvious connection. They are shown below with another set of arms that would, as drawn, appear to be related; and they are accredited to a family whose origin is unknown, but whose name may well explain any connection:¹⁴



CANNE
Red & Yellow Chevronels



EARLY LAIRDS
OF GELSTON
Black & White Chevronels



LATER GELSTON
& MACLELLANS OF
Black & White Chevron



MACLELLAN
OF BOMBIE
*Black & Yellow Chevron,
Yellow Background*

The MacLellans of Bombie were the Galloway clan chiefs in the 16th century, and their coat of arms would suggest they were descended from the early lairds of Gelston, where an important branch of the MacLellans can be documented from about 1420. The latter's coat of arms is the same as that borne by earlier lairds of Gelston who didn't use the surname MacLellan. They can be traced back to the 13th century, when one of them is recorded bearing three chevronels instead of the two chevrons that came down to the MacLellans. It may be significant that, apart from the unknown but significantly named family of Canne, the other Scottish arms appearing to bear three chevronels are a coat accredited to the MacLarens, a clan from Perthshire whose lands lay between that of the MacNabs in Glen Dochart and the descendants of Maolan in Leny; and a family called Kine or Kynn, which looks very much like another version of Cane or Cainn. The obvious conclusion would appear to be that the early lairds of Gelston did indeed belong to the same kindred as Cane MacGillolane.¹⁵

Richard Torrance, however, suggests that far from being Celtic devotees of Fillan from

Perthshire, the “de Gevelstones” - as they usually appear in the contemporary records - were actually Anglo-Normans from Cumberland, who gave up their Scottish fief following the Wars of Independence; and were succeeded in Gelston by a branch of MacLellans who inherited their coat of arms along with their lands. Daphne Brooke seems to agree, and between them they cite two main reasons for this conclusion: Firstly that the de Gevelstones appeared in Galloway at a time when the then native lord, Lachlan/Roland mac Uchtred is said to have been importing “Anglo-Norman” families from northern England to bolster his fight against his uncle Gilbert mac Fergus of Carrick; and secondly the fact that these early de Gevelstones are never recorded, as the MacCanes and later MacLellans of Gelston are, with a Gaelic patronymic or surname, but only ever with the name of their fief.¹⁶

Both of these arguments are however open to question. The fact that a 13th century Galloway family had lands in Cumberland does not necessarily suggest an Anglo-Norman descent, since that area of modern England had far stronger historical connections at this time with the Scots than with the English; and especially with the people and rulers of Galloway. In the post-Roman era the ancient British/Welsh kingdoms of Cumbria from time-to-time straddled the Solway; and in the eighth and ninth centuries modern Cumberland was, along with much of Galloway, part of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria. In the tenth century it was apparently - and most significantly in respect of the de Gevelstone's origins - heavily settled and culturally dominated by the Gall-Gaidhel; and in the early eleventh century it formed part of Scots prince David mac Malcolm's appanage of Strathclyde-Cumbria. David's nephew William mac Duncan was lord of Allerdale and Copeland; huge lordships which encompassed the entire north and west coasts of Cumberland, and stretched inland to the watershed of the Cumbrian Mountains. Hoton-John, the Cumberland manor associated with Sir John of Gevelstone and his son Dougall in 1296, lies at the south-eastern edge of Allerdale; and it had probably been granted by the Scots overlord William mac Duncan or one of his heirs to the family of *William de Hotonis*, who in Scotland may have been known as William of Gelston (and a Sir William de Gevelstone is on record in 1217).¹⁷

The identification of a family at this time by the name of their lands rather than that of their kindred is also no proof of Anglo-Norman descent. We have already referred to one particularly well documented example of a Picto-Scots family in the same situation; i.e. the descendants of Gilchrist “Gillemaol/Maolan” who were known as *de Lany*. There are many other more well known examples, such as the *de Ile* family (the MacDonalds “of Islay”), *de Ergayel* (MacDougalls “of Argyll”) and *de Glendoghrad* (MacNabs and/or MacGregors “of Glen Dochart”). Examples can also be found closer to Gelston itself. Thomas lord of Workington in Cumberland was a younger son of William mac Duncan's cousin Cospatrick earl of Dunbar - a descendant of king Duncan I's brother Maldred mac Crinan - and he was granted the fief of Colvend in Galloway by Lachlan/Roland mac Uchtred; and though he was recorded at the time with the patronymic style “fitz Cospatrick”, his descendants were later called *de Culwen* after their lands.¹⁸

Richard Torrance also points to the de Gevelstones' intimacy with the Plantagenet royal family in the course of the Wars of Independence as a possible indication of their origins; but that was also shared at the same time by plainly Celtic kindreds such as the earls of Strathearn, and the MacDougalls and McDowells, as a result of the exigencies of those long and bitter conflicts. The de Gevelstones' style and their English connections cannot therefore be taken as an indication that the early lairds of Gelston were Anglo-Normans. On the contrary, one of the most extraordinary English records relating to this family at the time of the wars quite clearly suggests that they were Gaels, and also provides a key piece of evidence to connect the MacLellans - to whom Celtic “de Gevelstones” must surely have been related - and the MacMillans.

On the 12th March 1318 King Edward of England made a grant ...to the King's vallet Duugal

Gyvelstone, and his heirs, for his good service to his father and himself, of Suny Magurke's lands in Knapedale and Glenarewyle in Scotland, forfeited by the treason of John de Menetethe....¹⁹

Knapdale was one of the most bitterly fought over parts of the Gaidhealtachd, with the MacDougalls to the north and the MacDonalds to the south using the local clans as proxies in a struggle for supremacy within Clann Somerhairle that was fuelled by English money. The idea that an Anglo-Norman family could succeed in driving out the Menteiths – a branch of the Stewarts who were allied with the MacDonalds – where the native MacSweens had failed, is nonsensical; but employing somebody from the same west coast-connected kindred that Cainn mac Dougal belonged to would make very good sense. A similar thing occurred some eight years later, when Robert the Bruce appointed John de Lany as the Constable of Tarbert Castle in Knapdale. Looked at as a member of a lowland family of civil servants and churchmen – as many 14th century Lennies were – John de Lany would appear an equally strange appointment; but when considered as a member of the predominantly highland Clan MacMillan, who in the next century were to become the lords of Knap, then his appointment looks entirely different.²⁰

The de Gevelstone grant of 1318 also points to other connections between Argyll and Galloway, and MacLellans and MacMillans. Glenarewyle is almost certainly Glendaruel in Cowal, and as previously observed, this was later home to a kindred called Cannan. These MacCanes had neighbours called MacGibbons, and if the early lairds of Gelston did belong to the same kindred as Cane MacGillolane, then the chances are that these MacGibbons might have been named for his son *Gibbon fitz Kan*; while yet another name found later in Glendaruel is Baxter, which is a sept of MacMillan.²¹

Also in Cowal, as early as 1270, there was a witness to a Lamont charter called *Reginald son of Macrath*, and the relatively rare name Macrath appears too at about the same time in the histories of both Craignish and Galloway. According to Lorn traditions, a man called Macrath was cousin in the late 13th century to *Dugall of Cragins*, and thus a member of the kindred known locally as MacGillolanes (although the Campbells have long claimed that the Craignish “MacCouls” - i.e. MacDougalls - were by this time a branch of their clan; a claim that does not stand up in the murky light of contradictory accounts written by the Campbells themselves, let alone in the brief flashes of illumination afforded by the fragmentary contemporary records). Another surname associated with the old ruling family of Craignish – and in one account, specifically with Macrath – was *MacIyell/McVeil*. This apparently obscure name is a mangled and mistranscribed form of MacIlveil/Mac'illemhaoil (i.e. MacMillan), and also appears as *MacIgheil/McGeill*. The form *McGill* is recorded later in Kintyre, where MacGillolanes are said to have settled when the Campbells took Craignish, and there it was apparently acknowledged as meaning MacMillan. Back in Craignish, the story telling how Macrath fled from Lorn, eventually to end up in Wester Ross as namefather to the MacRaths or MacRaes, states quite explicitly that his followers in Lorn were the *Gillean Maola Dubh* - i.e. Black MacMillans.²²

In 1296 in Dumfriesshire a *Macrath ap Molegan* gave homage to King Edward of England alongside *Dovenald fitz Can* and *Johan de Gevelestone* (father of the Dougal who received the grant of Knapdale twenty two years later). Macrath's style “ap Maolagain” means “son of the little tonsured one” and is therefore a British/Welsh form of MacMillan; and from it come the septnames Mulligan/Milliken. Versions of this name can later be found alongside MacMillans in Perthshire (where the Gaelic *McMhaoiligan* is on record) and in Galloway where in the 16th and 17th centuries the *Amuliganes/Millikins* were lairds of Blackmyre in Nithsdale, to the north of places called *Milliganton* and *McCheynston* (i.e. Mac Cain's Town). In the 17th century Milliganes can be found living over the watershed on the MacMillan lands in the upper reaches of the Ken, and at that time *Myllighame*

of *Blackmyre* also owned lands to the south, in the parishes of Dalry and Balmaclellan.²³

There is circumstantial evidence therefore to connect MacGillolanes and MacGillemaols in Lorn, and probably in the late 13th and early 14th centuries (though the Campbell histories of Craignish most likely condense events that actually took place over some two centuries). There is a documented connection in the early 14th century between the lairds of Gelston, who were almost certainly MacLellans even then, and Knapdale which was probably even then already home to MacMillans - as the subsequent appointment of John de Lany to Tarbert Castle would suggest. The Leny connection shows that descendants of Gillemaol/Maolan were devotees of the cult of Fillan; and in that saint's homeland of Perthshire, MacMillans as well as Lennies were neighbours of - and, if *MS 1467* is to be entirely believed, kin to - the chief devotees of Fillan, the MacNabs. Early MacLellans and MacMillans shared almost identical coats of arms, and later MacLellans and MacMillans lived next to each other in Galloway, and alongside MacCaines and MacCormacs. Churches dedicated to Saint Cormac were to be found adjacent to, and probably originally on, the lands of both the MacMillans and the MacLellans; and both kindreds descended from an ancestor with the almost unique name of Caine, who lived in the mid-to-late 13th century.²⁴

In addition to the above strong, though still only circumstantial evidence, there are a number of other weaker signs that might be considered to point in the same direction. For instance, the fact that the first MacMillan recorded in Galloway is called Gilbert, which is not a name found elsewhere in the clan until later; but which was, as we've already noted, frequently to be found amongst the early Galloway MacLellans. Also, one of the other most prominent given names amongst the 15th century MacLellans is Dougal; which in fact gives rise to the MacLellan septname Dougalson (or, as it often appears early on, Dongalson). Dougal was the name of Cainn MacMillan's father, and of course of the laird of Gelston who was granted Knapdale in 1318. Indeed, when one studies the tortured story of the old lairds of Craignish, amongst whom the name Dougal was even more prominent, one eventually comes to the conclusion that the original "devotee of Fillan" after whom they were also called MacGillolane was probably the same Dougal mac Malcolm mhic Mhaolain. If that was so, and this Cainn was indeed the same man as Cane McGillolane, then he bore the appellation "MacLellan" not as a surname but as a patronymic style; and the first appearance of it as a genuine surname would be the record in the 1320s of his son Gilbert as bishop of Sodor.

We need to be clear at this point about how Caine could have been both a MacLellan and a MacMillan, the suggestion of which to many modern members of both clans may appear impossible. The simple fact is that Caine would probably not have considered himself to be a member of either of these clans, insofar as they existed as "clans" at this time. He would more probably have identified himself with a wider kindred sharing descent from a more distant and more illustrious ancestor than Gillefhaolain (whoever he was), or Gillemaol/Maolan. The most likely kindred with which he might have been identified would probably have been Clann Cormaic - the descendants of Cormac bishop of Dunkeld - in exactly the same way as his contemporaries who belonged to the nascent clans MacDougall, MacRuari and MacDonald were at this time most often called "MacSomhairle" after Cormac's contemporary, Somerled king of the isles. Though there are no equivalent contemporary references to men called MacCormac, that surname is later associated in Scotland both with Mull and Lorn (where other kindreds descended from Bishop Cormac had their lands) and in the Glenkens of Galloway alongside MacLellans, MacCaines and MacMillans.²⁵

The process of clan and surname evolution is complicated; but remembering one thing above all others does help: No clan, however great, was immaculately conceived; the eponymous of every clan belonged to another clan; and to understand the early history of any clan one will almost certainly need to know something of the history of the parent kindred. So once again to choose the most obvious

example: To understand the evolution of the MacAlisters one must know about the MacDonalds and the rest of Clann Somerhaire; and one must appreciate that insofar as the sons and grandsons of Alasdair Mor mac Donald would ever have identified themselves with a surname – and they would probably not have done, though chroniclers and royal clerks might have done so on their behalf – it could have been any of: MacSorley, MacRanald, MacDonald or (for grandsons and thereafter) MacAlister. The descendants of Alasdair Mor's contemporary Cainn mac Dougall would have had a similar choice: MacCormac, MacGilchrist, MacMalcolm, MacDougall or MacCainn; and in this case with the option of a surname coming from the nicknames Gillemaol/Maolan, and – if we are right about the equation of Cainn and Cane – perhaps from Gillefhaolain too.²⁶

Whether MacLellans are prepared to accept the probability – and it can never be more than that on the basis of the evidence available – that their Cane McGillolane was the same man as the MacMillan's ancestor Cane mac Dougall will be a matter for individual judgement; but it's worth bearing in mind Daphne Brooke's assertion that the Gaelic speakers of the Glenkens in particular were not using surnames consistently even as late as the 16th century. The true explanation therefore for the apparently amazing claim that there were 14 MacLellan knights in Galloway in 1422, may be that there were something like that number of knighted members of the kindred of Caine MacGillolane at that time; but that many of them were called MacMillan, Amuligain, and Milliken, as well as Dougalson, MacCannie, and Acannan – in so far as any of them actually used a surname at all.

References

- ¹ D. Richard Torrance, *The McClellans in Galloway* (2 Vols, Edinburgh, 1993 & 1996), I, 2-4; Daphne Brooke, *The Glenkens 1275-1456* in TDGNHAS, LIX (1984), 49-51; Daphne Brooke, *Wild Men and Holy Places* (Edinburgh, 1994), 156.
- ² The Hebridean tradition is reported by Dr. Johnson following his meeting in Glen Shiel with the "McCraas": R. W. Chapman (ed), *Johnson and Boswell's Tour to the Hebrides* (Oxford, 1934), 37. For the MacNab association see Frank Adam, *Clans, Septs and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands* (Edinburgh, 1975), 336; and for Saint Fillan: Marjorie O. Anderson, *Columba and Other Irish Saints in Scotland* in HISTORICAL STUDIES 5 (1965), 26. For the "McGillellans" in Craignish see "MS History of Craignish" ("Craignish MS"). *SHS Miscellany IV* (1926); for the Irish "McGilligans" see Edward MacLysaght, *More Irish Families* (Blackrock 1982), 109 & map on page 221; and for the Scots "McKilligans", R. G. W. Mackilligan, *Followers of Saint Fillan* (Privately Published, N.D.). The name *Gillafaelan* appears in the MacNab pedigree in *MS. 1467*, and a *Gille Faolan le Rous* from the county of Stirling gave homage to Edward I in 1296. The latter record in particular suggests that not all MacGillellans/ MacLellans have to be descended from the Cane MacGhille-Fhaolain who is documented in Galloway in 1273.
- ³ APS, I, 85.
- ⁴ Richard Oram, *Lordship of Galloway* (Edinburgh, 2000), 208; CDS, II, 447, No. 1664; CDS, II, 215-6, No. 824; J. Stevenson (ed), *Docs. Illustrative of History of Scotland*, (2 Vols, Edinburgh, 1870), I, 177, No. ccccxvii.
- ⁵ CDS, I, V, 208, No. 490; RRS, Robert I, 505, No. 235; CDS, IV, 389; RRS, Robert I, 622; Papal Letters, III, 396; RMS, I, App. 2, No. 1022; CDS, III, 288-9, No. 1578; ER, I, 152; CDS, II, Nos. 1049, 1588.
- ⁶ For the family of *Acannane* (i.e. *ap Cannain* for *mac Channain*) see D. V. Cannon & R. C. Reid, *The Cannan Family in Galloway* in TDGNHAS, XXXL (1952-3), 78-120. For *Duncan Makcane* in Lorn see OPS, II, Pt. 1, 46, and for the *Makanes/M'Channanichs/Caniches* in Glendaruel, who later changed their name to Buchanan, see Highland Papers II, 175-6; Archibald Brown, "History of Cowal", 36, 84, 93; Adam, op.cit., 575, Appendix V.
- ⁷ Rev. T. H. Mullin & Rev. J. E. Mullan, *The Ulster Clans O'Mullan, O' Kane and O'Mellan* (Belfast, 1966), 49-50 & 230-1; D. Farmer (ed), *Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (1997), 99. The Scottish traditions regarding St. Catan's burial are mentioned in Lachlan Shaw, *History of the Province of Moray* (3 Vols., Glasgow, 1882), I, 273; and the foundation of Ardcathann Priory in c. 1230 is discussed in R. Andrew McDonald, *The Kingdom of the Isles* (East Linton, 1997), 93-4. The traditional derivation of the name "Galloway" from the Gall-Gaidhel, and the connections of the people of the province and those inhabiting the Hebrides and the neighbouring

The CLAN MACGREGOR

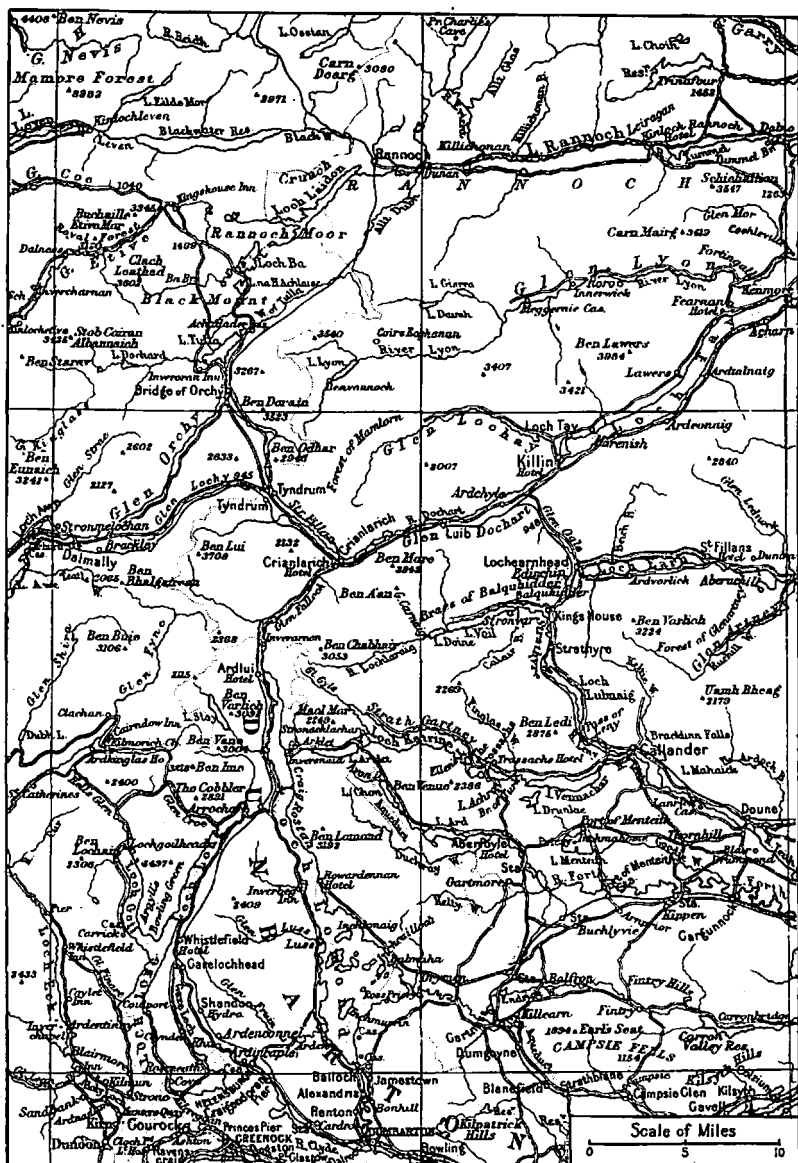
CLAN GREGOR



W. R. KERMACK

JOHNSTON'S CLAN HISTORIES

00008



MAP OF MACGREGOR COUNTRY, NORTHWARDS FROM GLASGOW



PERSONAL ARMS OF MACGREGOR OF MACGREGOR,
CHIEF OF CLAN MACGREGOR

JOHNSTON'S CLAN HISTORIES

THE CLAN MACGREGOR

(CLAN GREGOR)



Clansman's Badge

Donated by Nancy Campbell 3/23

JOHNSTON'S CLAN HISTORIES

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THE CLAN MACGREGOR

(CLAN GREGOR)

THE NAMELESS CLAN

BY

W. R. KERMACK

*Author of Here's Scotland's Story, The Scottish Highlands,
The Scottish Borders*

With Tartans and Chief's Arms in Colour, and a Map

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



JOHNSTON & BACON PUBLISHERS

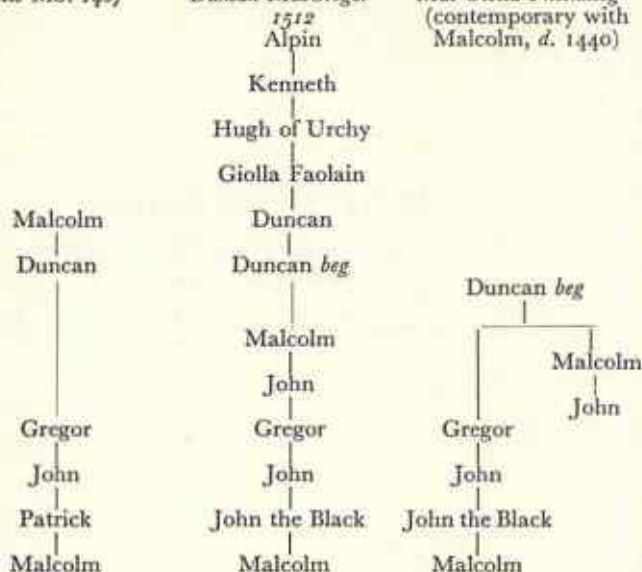
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

Genealogies of the House of Glenorchy

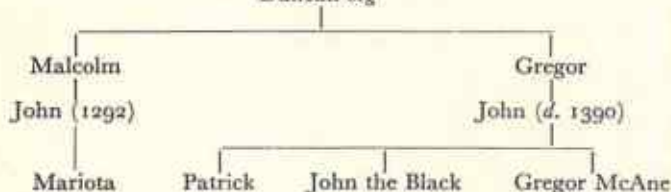
Gaelic MS. 1467

Duncan MacGregor

Mac Giolla Fhionntóg
(contemporary with
Malcolm, d. 1440)



SUGGESTED RE-ARRANGEMENT
Duncan *beg*



Glenorchy

WEST of Tyndrum ("the house of the ridge") the main route between Argyll and Perthshire crosses the watershed that divides the western from the eastern Highlands. East of the water-shed is Strathfillan, the upper part of Glendochart. West of the water-shed the Lochy flows to join the Orchy, of which the Water of Tulla is the head-stream, while a mile below Bridge of Orchy the Allt Chonoghlaish comes in from the back of Beinn Dorain. By the Allt Chonoghlaish there is access to the long glen of the Lyon in Perthshire. The Strae, its last tributary, joins the Orchy just before the river enters Loch Awe. It seems logical to identify the Orchy, the Strae, and the Lochy as the MacGregors' "three glens," though Glenlyon and Glendochart also have been suggested. The best land was the Strath of Orchy below its junction with the Lochy; Glenstrae is narrow and only eight miles long. The hill country, however, was a fit hunting-ground for kings.

At Fortingall on the Lyon, Tulaich a' Mhuilinn was occupied at the beginning of the sixteenth century by two MacGregor brothers, whose ancestor about a hundred years earlier had managed to procure for himself and his heirs the vicarage of Fortingall and a lease of the church lands. The elder brother, James, was Vicar of Fortingall and Dean of Lismore in Argyll. To him and to his brother Duncan was due the collection of the mass of Gaelic verse preserved in the *Book of the Dean of Lismore*. This fortunately includes the compositions of five bards in praise of MacGregor chiefs, which supplement our scanty information on the early history of the clan.

The name "Clan Gregor" means "the children of

Gregor," but the earliest kinsfolk of the clan of whom we have knowledge did not use this name. They took their style from their territory. From the Act of Parliament by which in 1292 King John Baliol formed a sheriffdom of Argyll, we find that sheriffdom included the lands of a certain John of Glenorchy. In 1296 he was made prisoner by the English at Dunbar, and did homage to Edward I of England, when his lands were apparently restored to him on the condition of fighting for Edward in France. In the *Book of the Dean of Lismore* there is a genealogy of Clan Gregor in which John Eoin is the name of the father of the only Gregor mentioned. It seems an inevitable conclusion that, from this Gregor, Clan Gregor took their name, for it is hardly to be imagined that a genealogy of the clan would omit the individual after whom the clan were named; and John of Glenorchy of 1292 might be identified as his father. There is reason, however, to doubt whether this can be accepted. In the Dean's genealogy Gregor is the son of John, son of Malcolm, son of Duncan *beg* ("the little"). But a poem by the bard Mac Giolla Fhionntóg in the Dean's Book refers to Duncan *beg* as the father of Gregor as well as of Malcolm; while in another Clan Gregor genealogy, included in a Gaelic manuscript of 1467, Gregor is shown as the son of Duncan, son of Malcolm. These sources of evidence, both earlier than the Dean's genealogy, thus agree that Gregor's father was Duncan, who was father of Malcolm except in the 1467 genealogy where the name of Duncan's son *may* in error have been given to Duncan's father. Malcolm is surely to be identified as the father of John who possessed Glenorchy; Malcolm was therefore presumably older—it is likely, much older—than Gregor, if Gregor was his brother or half-brother, in which case Gregor's descendants were a junior branch of the house of Glenorchy.

From Duncan *beg* the Dean's genealogy carries the ancestry of Clan Gregor three generations back to Hugh of Urchy, in Gaelic *Aodh Urchaidh*; and the name of Hugh's son, Giolla Faolain, "the servant of St. Fillan," points to a connection with the neighbouring Celtic monastery of St. Fillan in Glendochart. The abbot of Glendochart, in the Law called Claremathan about the beginning of the thirteenth century, takes part on the same footing as the Earl of Atholl in the administration of justice in Central Argyll, and thus in Glenorchy. Hugh of Urchy may then have been a native ruler in Argyll in this way brought into contact with the abbey, or he may have become established in Glenorchy through a connection with the family of the abbot. The Macnabs—*Clann an Aba*, "children of the abbot"—probably descend from an abbot of Glendochart; and Malcolm and Patrick of Glendochart, who were evidently laymen holding lands in Glendochart, submitted, like John of Glenorchy, to Edward in 1296. "Glenorchy" apparently comprised also Glen Lochy and Glenstrae.

When John of Glenorchy's lands were specifically included in the sheriffdom of Argyll, he must have held them directly from the king. His line apparently ended in an heiress (daughter or granddaughter), Mariota de Glenurquhay, to whom, and to her husband John Campbell (considered by *The Scots Peerage* probably to have been the son of Sir Colin Campbell of Lochawe), Glenorchy was granted by royal charter in 1357. It is possible that the Glenorchy family had already lost the position of tenants-in-chief of the Crown, if Glenorchy was included in the barony of Lochawe, of which Robert Bruce gave a charter in 1315 to Sir Colin Campbell, John Campbell's father. In that case Glenorchy would have been taken out of the barony in order to provide for John Campbell and his bride, who may have been the

ward of Lochawe. Even so, from the precedence given to Mariota in the grant, she seems likely to have been the heiress of Glenorchy. John Campbell and Mariota's line evidently failed, presumably from lack of an heir ; when either Gregor or (more probably) his son must have come into Glenorchy as the heir male of the original Glenorchy family, since the death of John of Glenorchy, son of Gregor, is recorded in 1390. This seems additional evidence that, even if Gregor *was* a son of John of Glenorchy (1292), he was a younger son, and his line was junior to that represented by Mariota. Gregor's family would call themselves MacGregors after their founder. Moreover, for several generations from Hugh of Urchy, branches of his house had doubtless received tacks or leases in the "three glens." They would look on the contemporary head of Hugh's house as the chief of their clan ; and they too, when Gregor's line became the principal family, may have taken the surname MacGregor.

It is probable, however, that the house of Glenorchy had now irrevocably lost their position as tenants-in-chief of the Crown ; that after John Campbell's death the Campbells continued to claim superiority over Glenorchy ; and that neither Gregor nor his descendants ever held Glenorchy except as tenants of Lochawe, thus marking the first step in the eventual shattering of Clan Gregor. At any rate, in 1432, Sir Duncan Campbell of Lochawe was in a position to grant his property lands of Glenorchy to his son Colin, who became the first Campbell Laird of Glenorchy under this new grant, and confirmed his hold by building the castle of Kilchurn on Loch Awe. For this final loss by the MacGregors of Glenorchy, so long the home of their race, the way must presumably have been cleared by the death of a MacGregor tenant of Glenorchy who left no direct male heir. The 1467 genealogy gives John of Glenorchy (the son of



MACGREGOR



"ROB ROY" TARTAN

MACGREGOR TARTANS

The Rob Roy tartan, which is accepted by some authorities as the genuine MacGregor tartan, is a simple check arrangement in black and red, the pattern having been copied from paintings said to depict Rob Roy. Simple two-colour check arrangements were common in the Highlands in red and black, blue and black, green and red, green and black and so on, and were used for trews and plaids.

The MacGregor tartan was first described in print by James Logan in "The Scottish Gael" (1831), and is now accepted as the Clan tartan. Variants of the design are known under other names, such as MacGregor of Balquhiddy and MacGregor of Glenstrae.

For day or "hunting" wear, many Macgregors have chosen to render their clan sett more sombre by substituting a dark red for the original scarlet.

Gregor) an eldest son, Patrick. He or a son Malcolm may have died in 1432 leaving no heir. Glenstrae, indeed, was not included in the grant of Glenorchy to Colin Campbell. It continued to be held by Malcolm, son of John the Black, son of John of Glenorchy. Malcolm succeeded to the chiefship, and he, his son Patrick, and Patrick's son, a second John the Black, occupied Glenstrae as tenants of Lochawe. Similarly the descendants of Gregor McAne, a third son of John of Glenorchy, held Brackley of Lochawe as superior. But this final loss of Glenorchy was crippling. It compelled MacGregors, for whom there was no room in the meagre clan territory, to live outside it, dispersed under alien landlords. This event was the second and decisive factor which brought about the downfall of the clan.

At this crisis of their fortune, the clan were heartened by an assurance that their ancestry was royal. The genealogy in the Dean's Book, by Duncan, brother of the Dean, is stated to have been written in 1512, and to have been taken "from the books of the genealogies of the kings." It traces the descent of his chief, through Hugh of Urchy, from Alpin, the father of Kenneth, "High King of Scotland," Hugh being recorded as Kenneth's son. Certainly belief in descent from Alpin became a conviction; the clan used the motto, "Royal is my Race," *'S Rioghal Mo Dhream*. At some point, however, it was realised that three hundred years must have separated King Kenneth from Hugh of Urchy; and then Gregor, said to have been the third son of Alpin, was substituted for Kenneth as the clan's ancestor and for the genealogies' Gregor as the source of their Name. This claim to descent from Alpin led to the formation of Bonds of Friendship between MacGregor chiefs and chiefs of other clans who had traditions of the same ancestry. In 1501 Alasdair MacGregor of Glenstrae

and Aulay Macaulay of Ardincaple, "understanding ourselves and our name to be M'Calppins of auld and to be our just and trew surname whereof we are all cumin," bind themselves to aid each other against all persons, excepting only the king. In 1671 James MacGregor of MacGregor and Lauchlan Mackinnon of Strathardill in Skye bound themselves similarly as being "descended lawfully frae twa brethren of auld descent." This tradition of Alpin as a common ancestor, held also by a number of other clans, is paralleled by the attribution of the Scots fir as a badge to all those clans. In the Gaelic lament for MacGregor of Roro, perhaps as early as about 1603, there is an allusion to this as the MacGregor emblem. A "sword and fir-tree crossit beneath ane croun" are mentioned in a bitter verse, "Of the MacGregor's Arms," written into a book belonging to Black Duncan, Laird of Glenorchy 1583-1631, and appear also in the arms of "Macgregoyre" in an English MS. of 1589. On the other hand, in an earlier Scottish MS. (c. 1565-66) and in the modern arms the place of the fir-tree is taken by an oak, perhaps to distinguish the MacGregor arms from the general "Clan Alpin" badge.

Glenstrae

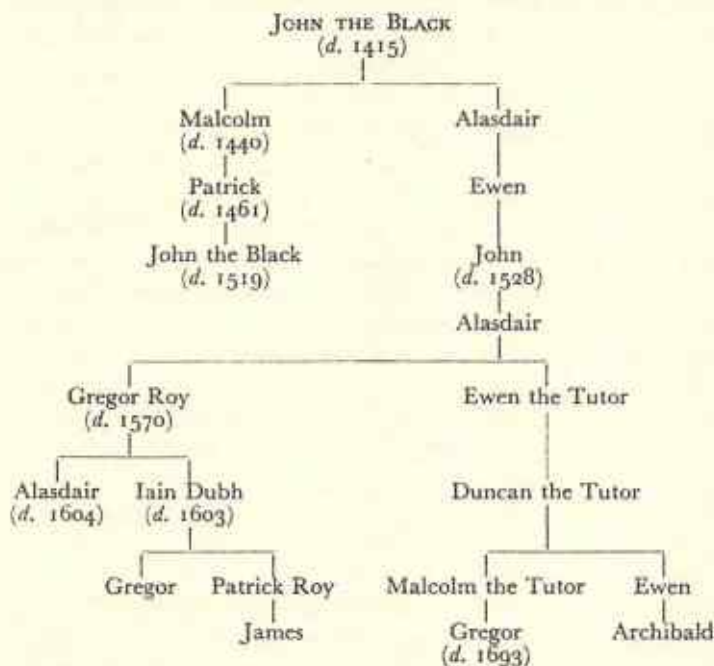
AFTER their loss of Glenorchy the MacGregor chiefs lived at Stronmelochan at the foot of Glenstrae. Their burial place was in Glenorchy at Dysart (*Discart Chonndáin*—Connán's Hermitage), Dalmally. The poems in the Dean's Book show them defiantly claiming their ancestors' possessions. John the Black, Malcolm's grandson, is still "white-toothed falcon of the three glens," and "chief of Glenlyon." To Malcolm "the hunting of Scotland belongs"; while John the Black is "the king at lifting

cattle." Clan Gregor "show no fear, even when with the king they strive." This was dangerous doctrine.

John the Black left no heir, but Lochawe (now Earl of Argyll) accepted as his tenant in Glenstrae another

THE HOUSE OF GLENSTRAE

(According to A. G. Murray MacGregor, *History of the Clan Gregor*)



John MacGregor, presumably because he had married a Campbell. The whole clan may not at once have taken him as chief. Miss Murray MacGregor, in her *History of the Clan Gregor*, holds him to have been John the Black's second cousin. The contemporary *Black Book of Taymouth*,

however, says that he was "not righteous air to the McGregor," but was "principal" of the branch of Clan Gregor called Clan Dougal Ciar ("dusky") after its founder, whose name only is known. At the end of the century there were considered to be three "houses," or branches, referred to, probably contemptuously, by Sir Alexander Hay, Clerk of the Privy Council, as (1) "the laird's ain gang" (i.e., Glenstrae); (2) "the gang and hous of Roro," in Glenlyon; and (3) "the hous and gang of Gregor McAne." This Gregor (who died in 1415) was a son of John (Eoin) of Glenorchy, and a (younger?) brother of the earlier John the Black. The author of the *History of the Clan Gregor* holds that one of his sons was the founder of the House of Roro, another was Dougal Ciar, and another, John, senior to both, got Brackley in Glenorchy. John's descendants were "the hous of Gregor McAne," to the senior line of which belonged Duncan Ladasach, of whom hereafter. A junior line succeeded to Brackley; members were Keepers of Kilchurn castle for the Campbells of Glenorchy during strife with Glenstrae. If, however, John, who obtained Glenstrae in 1519, was "principal" of the Clan Dougal Ciar, disinheritance of the "righteous air" endangered the chiefs' hold over the clan: this also contributed to their downfall.

Members of all these branches were scattered widely, wherever they could find holdings. For, just as the Campbells' acquisition of Glenorchy facilitated their expansion eastwards into Breadalbane, so the MacGregors' loss of Glenorchy, in 1357 and again in 1432, probably enforced an eastward dispersion of Clan Gregor. The original family of Glenorchy, their ancestors, may have had lands in Perthshire by connection with the abbey of Glendochart. MacGregors may have been in Glenlyon, perhaps, for instance, as royal officials or Crown tenants in the Toiseachd of Roro (a stretch of about four

miles on the south bank of the river excluded from the Barony of Glenlyon) before it was granted to Menzies of Weem early in the fifteenth century. But there is little actual evidence that MacGregors were extensively settled outside Argyll before their loss of Glenorchy, the family of the Vicar of Fortingall at Tulaich a' Mhuilinn being obviously an exceptional case. A John MacGregor was Lord of Ardenconnel in Dunbartonshire in 1429; but the first mentions of MacGregors in Glenlyon are at "Coreheynan" (if that is Coire Eoghanan in upper Glenlyon) in 1468 and the death of Duncan Beg at Roro in 1477. Duncan's descendants were in Roro, apparently as tenants of Menzies, for nearly three hundred years. By 1504 a MacGregor was at Innerwick on the north bank of the Lyon; and, probably from Glenlyon, MacGregors spread eastwards into the Dale of Fortingall as tenants of its successive proprietors, and, under similar conditions, to Loch Tay. They seem to have been at Balloch (Taymouth) by 1491, and at Morenish by 1503; but from Balloch they were ejected by Campbell of Glenorchy in 1552.

The dispersal of Highland clansmen under alien landlords was fairly common at this time, and became more common later. Unfortunately for Clan Gregor, their clansmen thus dispersed soon came to comprise by far the majority of the clan. To the alien landlord his MacGregor tenants paid their rents; but their allegiance was still to Glenstrae, the chief of their own Name. To him their "calp" had been given, i.e., the promised payment at their death of their best beast. It was the alien landlord, however, who by law was answerable for these tenants, of whose services in "hosting (war) and hunting" he was thus deprived. With mutual restraint this position was tolerable; but if the alien landlord turned out his MacGregor tenants, they lost their means

of honest living, and their chief became responsible for clansmen who must henceforth be landless "broken men." The only solution, if eviction was to be avoided, was that MacGregors under an alien landlord should give to him their calps and bonds of manrent, or service, and renounce their allegiance to Glenstrae. This the clan were certain to oppose; but it became increasingly difficult for the chief to control his dispersed clansmen, the difficulty naturally being greater the farther they were from Glenstrae. The only alternative to his desertion of his people in a crisis, perhaps of their own creation, was apt to be his acceptance of full responsibility for their actions by placing himself at their head.

Serious trouble seems to have arisen first in Rannoch; for in this wild and remote glen also MacGregors had settled, coming, it is thought, north from Glenlyon. There Duncan called Ladasach ("lordly")—from whose estate of Ardchoille ("height of the wood" or "high wood"), now Ardchyle in Glendochart, the MacGregors' war cry is held to be derived—had made himself leader of the wilder spirits, and, with a long career of lawlessness behind him, kept Perthshire far and wide in fear. In a luckless hour for Clan Gregor his reputation and his seniority¹ enabled him, during a young chief's minority, to assume the leadership of the clan, and when that chief, Alasdair, came of age, to bring him under his influence. It was at this period that, in the words of a modern biographer, Clan Gregor "acquired the evil reputation that dogged their steps and thwarted every attempt to save them." Menzies, the king's bailie for the Crown lands north of Loch Rannoch, protested his inability to keep order (1523); and it was probably in his stead

¹ Moncreiffe (*Highland Clans*) says Ladasach (a descendant of Gregor McAné) represented the line kept out of Glenstrae; he was probably the rightful chief. Their activities kept embroiling the clan with the Government.

that Atholl and Robertson of Struan subsequently "policed" Rannoch. In turn Alasdair and Duncan Ladasach in 1545 burned Struan's house at Trochry in Strath Bran, and carried off Struan himself. Ladasach also fell upon the MacLarens. When Alasdair died, Duncan Ladasach became Tutor of his heir.

In Breadalbane a dozen or so MacGregor families by the middle of the sixteenth century were settled near Loch Tay; and in Breadalbane the Campbells of Glenorchy had now become supreme, a cadet branch being in Glenlyon. For a time they remained content with rents from their MacGregor tenants. Grey Colin, the sixth Laird, however, converted into feudal tenures leases formerly held from the Church or from the Crown, and naturally required of his tenants not only rents but military service. He set about obtaining the dependence of individual MacGregors, and in 1550 took a bond of manrent from the tenant of Morenish, Alasdair called Odhar ("pale"). By Alasdair's defection the integrity of the clan probably seemed threatened; he was murdered by Duncan Ladasach, perhaps in his capacity as Tutor of Glenstrae. Grey Colin, however, caught and executed Ladasach; and within six months nine MacGregor families gave him their bonds of manrent. This may well have convinced Grey Colin that what stood between him and the service of his MacGregor tenants was the proximity of a MacGregor chief. At any rate he bought from Argyll his superiority over Glenstrae, and in 1560 refused to accept Gregor Roy, the son of Alasdair, as his tenant when the young chief came of age.

Only their possession of Glenstrae now gave the MacGregor chiefs a status better than that of leaders of "broken men." At once the clan revolted, Glenorchy's MacGregor tenants in Breadalbane renouncing their bonds of manrent to him. For ten years Gregor Roy

carried on a private war with Grey Colin, in the course of which Glenorchy, as deputy for Menzies, brought in Camerons and Macdonalds of Keppoch to clear the MacGregors from Rannoch. These, however, were unlikely to prove satisfactory tenants; Menzies complained to the Queen, and was authorised to reinstate the MacGregors. But in his probable main object Grey Colin was successful. Driven to ever more desperate actions, Gregor Roy was outlawed, and in the end was captured and beheaded at Kenmore. His widow, Marion, a daughter of Glenlyon, mourned her beloved in terms to us strangely primitive: "They poured his blood on the ground; oh! had I a cup I would drink of it my fill"; while his clan laid waste the glen of the Orchy to the castle of Kilchurn.

In spite, or because of this, Grey Colin did not molest Glenstrae; and Gregor's boys grew to manhood at Stronmelochan in years of respite secured by their uncle Ewen's success, as Tutor, in obtaining the patronage of Campbell of Calder, a cadet of Argyll. The young chief, Alasdair, became a noted hunter and archer, and won for himself the bye-name of the *Arrow of Glenlyon*. From Dr. A. A. W. Ramsay's biography under that title it is clear that his sense of duty to his clansmen, and his determination never to fail them, led both chief and clan to disaster in the end. He applied, when he came of age in 1588, to be invested in Glenstrae. As his father was refused by Grey Colin, so was he refused by Black Duncan, the new Laird of Glenorchy. Unlike his father, he appealed to the sheriff court; but by Glenorchy's personal opposition, the proceedings were stopped. Alasdair could only consider himself cheated of his heritage. Bitterly resentful, he was presently called to make an instant decision in a crisis due to the action of MacGregors remote from his control. This time the

trouble did not affect Rannoch or Breadalbane in Central Perthshire. It was perilously near the Lowland border, coming from the glens between Ben More and Ben Lomond that were the home of Clan Dougal Ciar.

It is rather surprising to find this branch of Clan Gregor in Balquhiddel, Glengyle, and the valley of the Avondhu, a head-stream of the Forth, with its subsidiary, Glen Arklet, stretching westwards to Loch Lomond. Even the abbots of Glendochart could hardly have established the clan's ancestors so far south of Glendochart; and no bard in the *Book of the Dean of Lismore* claims this territory for the MacGregor chiefs. Their presence is most likely to have been the result of migration, perhaps by Glen Falloch, since it was the western portions of the three main glens that they occupied. The feudal superiors of those three glens, from south to north, were the Earl of Menteith, the Laird of Buchanan, and Murray of Tullibardine. It is as tenants of Menteith on Loch Ard and Loch Chon in the Avondhu valley that MacGregors are first mentioned in this region in 1499-1500; and it is in connection with trouble in 1533 between the Earl and Malcolm MacGregor "McCoule Kere" that Clan Dougal Ciar are first specifically linked with this neighbourhood. Twelve years later Duncan "McCoulekerry" of Corracklet took part in an attack on troops of the Regent Arran, then engaged in a siege of Dumbarton. Such a proximity to important Lowland centres gave the activities of Clan Dougal Ciar a dangerous notoriety. In 1574 they are mentioned in Balquhiddel. By 1581 Gregor Dubh, a son of Malcolm "McCoule Kere," was in Glengyle; if he did not actually owe his tenancy to his marriage with a Buchanan, it must have confirmed his position. Five years later his brother, Patrick Roy, is known to have been in Strathyre.

It was not Clan Dougal Ciar who in 1589 murdered

the King's forester, Drummond of Drummond-Ernock, in Glenartney. This seems to have been a chance act of MacGregor vengeance for kinsmen hanged for poaching deer, carried out by some of Ladasach's descendants known as MacEagh—Children of the Mist. But it was to Balquhiddar that the murderers fled; at Balquhiddar Kirk that Alasdair mustered the clan, laid his hand upon the dead man's severed head, and took upon himself the blood-guilt, as did they all. This was a desperate course. An Act of 1581 had authorised reprisals, even death, against any member of an offender's clan in the offender's stead. Parliament's "General Band" of 1587 bound a chief to find hostages for the fulfilment of his obligation to surrender guilty clansmen, which failing, he was to be "persewit with fire and sword." But Alasdair had no real choice. Drummond-Ernock was Clan Gregor's enemy; and even if the chief had wished to hand the murderers over to justice, the clan would hardly have allowed this. For such an act a chief of Keppoch was deposed.

Though outlawed and condemned to death, Clan Gregor survived. Fiercely they defended themselves. "Chief of Stronmelochan, child of the king! Like the storm was thy face in the field." The Government, moreover, having no military force of its own, had to entrust the execution of its decrees to local great landowners. This Glenorchy and the kinsfolk of the murdered man alone undertook, to the extent of entering neighbours' territories in arms—a procedure to which they naturally objected. The outlaws were sheltered not only by Atholl and Menzies, but through Calder's influence even in Argyll. It was Calder, too, who eventually obtained for Alasdair and his people a pardon for their crime. Their escape was a narrow one, for a month later Calder was murdered.

Clan Gregor could expect no second chance. Their

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these conditions apparently continued to maintain themselves illegally in Rannoch, since Menzies was excused responsibility for "the Clan Greigour in Rannoch." But later Lairds did not reside there. Malcolm the Tutor, his son Gregor, who succeeded James, son of Patrick Roy as Laird, and the next Laird, Gregor's cousin Archibald, all lived near Loch Lomond, on which Archibald purchased the estate of Craig Rostan. Their move southwards is likely to have been influenced by the fact that the territory of Clan Dougal Ciar provided here a clan "country" that was compact (being the upper western portions of their three glens), more ample than the properties which the MacGregors held in Rannoch, and comparable to Rannoch in security, though less remote. MacGregor of Glengyle, their chieftain, could probably muster some two hundred fighting men, for these glens must have been much more densely peopled than they are to-day. In Glen Arklet, fifty years later, through excessive sub-letting, one hundred and fifty families lived, however poorly, around Inversnaid. The Glengyle estate was in 1703 bought for the chieftain from the Duke of Montrose; and two years later Clan Dougal Ciar's territory was rounded off when Rob Roy, Glengyle's uncle, acquired Craig Rostan from the Laird of MacGregor. From the Lowlands this territory was accessible only by tracks through the Passes of Leny, Achray, Aberfoyle, and Balmaha; and the whole district was unsuitable for "policing" by the regular troops who had replaced previous Governments' necessary reliance on neighbouring landlords. Inversnaid could indeed be reached by water from Dumbarton *via* the river Leven and Loch Lomond, for which reason the Government built a fort there to control the MacGregors. It seems, however, to have been incomplete in 1715, and in 1745 was captured by Glengyle.

Both Roro and Glengyle led their followers to support King James VII in 1689 ; too late to fight at Killiecrankie, MacGregors fought under Dundee's successor, Cannon, at Dunkeld. They fought in vain. The Revolution brought King William and Queen Mary to the throne ; and the penal statutes against the MacGregors were re-imposed in 1693. The clan thus became again Nameless ; and the death of Archibald, the last representative of the House of Glenstrae, presently left them also Chiefless. Some of the principal MacGregor families, however, saw the offer of pensions to Highland chiefs by Queen Anne's Tory Government as a favourable opportunity to reconstitute the clan. Only to a chief would the Queen's pension be paid ; if official recognition of a MacGregor chief could be obtained, the clan would seem to have anticipated that the repeal of the penal laws against them would follow. On the understanding that he would share the royal bounty with them, Roro, Glengyle, and Brackley with nine gentlemen of the clan in July 1714 declared Alexander MacGregor, or Drummond, of Balhaldie, as chief of Clan Gregor, the chiefship to continue hereditarily in his family.

This careful scheme to reconstitute Clan Gregor was frustrated. Balhaldie's claim to the chiefship was contested. His family were only junior cadets of Roro ; and while Roro, Glengyle, and Brackley had waived their claims in his favour, another candidate had been passed over, perhaps because, although a Jacobite, he was less active as such than Balhaldie. This was John MacGregor, or Murray, the representative of the family of Duncan Ladasach, and thereby, according to the historian of Clan Gregor, the representative of the House of Gregor McAné, senior to Brackley in that House and also to Roro and Glengyle in the clan. This latter seniority was perhaps not universally accepted. John MacGregor

did not "come out" in 1715. Subsequently, however, he bought an estate in Balquhiddar, from which he became known as MacGregor of Glencarnaig (or Glencarnoch). This was significant, for probably only Clan Dougal Ciar could now put a considerable body of clansmen in the field. Since 1633, for example, Roro held merely the Mains of Roro, and that under a wadset, or mortgage. In other areas MacGregors were more intermingled with other clans than they were in Clan Dougal Ciar's, and were apt to prefer living on good terms with their neighbours to fighting them for the sake of the exiled Stuarts. The clan's Name had been banned for over twenty years; young "MacGregors" had never borne that Name. Another formidable obstacle still hampered Clan Gregor. By law military service was due to feudal superiors, not to clan chiefs, as such. It is ironical to reflect that the abolition of heritable jurisdictions, actually effected in 1747, would at an earlier date have assisted the reconstitution of Clan Gregor by removing this obligation, which among them practically only Clan Dougal Ciar seem to have been able to ignore. Under these circumstances any scheme for the reconstitution of the clan could go forward hopefully only under conditions of peace, and with a Government in power which was at least not actively anti-Jacobite. In August, however, Queen Anne died. With the accession of King George I the payment of pensions to Highland chiefs ceased; and with this any hope of the official recognition of a chief of Clan Gregor perished. Thirteen months later began the Rising of 1715.

Those MacGregors who joined the Earl of Mar, possibly on his promise of the repeal of the penal statutes against them, were chiefly Clan Dougal Ciar under Gregor Glun Dubh ("Black Knee") of Glengyle, his uncle, Rob Roy, and Balhaldie. Of these, Rob Roy was

probably the most influential. He was the only leading member of the clan to fight for King James VIII at Glenshiel in 1719; but in 1715 he seems to have been less interested in the Jacobite cause than in a private war with the Duke of Montrose, who had acquired the Menteith and Buchanan estates. Montrose's tenants were forced to buy immunity from the MacGregors' depredations by paying "black-mail" to Rob Roy. His exploits have made him possibly the best known of all Highlanders. In his own day they served his clan ill by perpetuating the reputation that "plunder and Booty is their Bussiness." Such reputation, it must be admitted, under the conditions imposed upon them while their Name was proscribed, they had done enough to earn. Hence MacGregors were excluded from the Pardon granted in 1717.

Rob Roy kept John MacGregor Murray out of Glencarnraig for five years, and thus out of the only locality where he could win significant support. Nevertheless by 1745 Robert, his son and heir, was able to bring to Prince Charles Edward's army a contingent larger than that of Glengyle. Although many MacGregors seem to have received him as their chief, he accepted the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the clan regiment under Glengyle. Glun Dubh, however, was elderly; and it was Glencarnraig who commanded the regiment at Prestonpans (where they won honour) and on the march to Derby. William of Balhaldie, Alexander's son and successor, was not in Scotland in 1745.

The penal statutes against the MacGregors were not repealed until November 1774, when it became lawful for the *Griogaraich* again to bear their Name. Thereupon a gathering of over eight hundred clansmen acknowledged as their chief John Murray of Lanrick, a nephew of Glencarnraig of the Forty-Five. In 1795

the Lord Lyon King of Arms confirmed to Sir John Murray (now a Baronet) the chief arms of Clan Gregor, and he became MacGregor of MacGregor. In 1798 he bought the estate of Edinchip, near Lochearnhead, in Perthshire, which has remained the seat of the chiefs of Clan Gregor. The present chief, Lt.-Col. Sir Gregor MacGregor of MacGregor, sixth Baronet, was born in 1925. His heir is his elder son, Malcolm Gregor Charles, born 1959.

Pipe Music of Clan Gregor

A gifted MacGregor family of Glenlyon called the Clann an Sgeulaiche, or Race of the Story-teller, was noted for its succession of musicians, bards, and sennachies. The pipers were pipers to their chiefs until well into the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century members were pipers to Rob Roy, Simon Lord Lovat, Menzies of Menzies, the Duke of Atholl, the Earl of Breadalbane, the Highland Society of London, and Prince Charles Edward himself. From 1781 to 1813 at least seventeen of the family competed in the Highland Society's Edinburgh competitions commenced in 1781. Twelve were first prize winners, and of these all probably were descendants of a single man, John MacGregor (1708-1789). This John joined the Prince at Glenfinnan and served him as piper and personal attendant throughout the campaign. He was wounded at Culloden, but managed to get home and for the rest of his life was piper to Col. Campbell of Glenlyon. His four piper sons and eight grandsons were all eminent. His last known prize-winning descendant was piper to Menzies and died in 1921.

Always excepting the MacCrimmons, the Clann an Sgeulaiche seems to have been the most distinguished piping family of which we have any record. It is said that, at one time, they had a piping school at Drumcharry in Glenlyon and used to send their best pupil for a year to Skye to the MacCrimmons.

We do not know whether this galaxy of playing talent composed any of the many fine piobaireachds which have come down to us without authors' names. The only tune traditionally ascribed to a member of the family (a somewhat shadowy Duncan Mor) is *Ruaig Ghlinn Fraoin* (The Rout of Glenfruin) to which the Campbell Canntaireachd MS. (c. 1790) gives the alternative name of "MacGrigor's March." It is one of the finest in existence.

Another MacGregor piobaireachd, also much esteemed nowadays, but of unknown authorship, is The MacGregors' Salute or Gathering. The

author of *Albyn's Anthology*, Alexander Campbell, was given it in canntaireachd, syllabic notation, in 1815 by Capt. Neil MacLeod of Gesto in Skye. With some trouble he was able to translate and extract from it an air for Sir Walter Scott's song, *The MacGregors' Gathering*, which nowadays is sung to a different air. Campbell's original air will be found in the second volume of *Albyn's Anthology* (1818).

A third piobaireachd is one of several names and several versions. It is listed as a possible Fraser tune on p. 29 of *The Clan Fraser of Lovat* by C. I. Fraser of Reelig (1952). But the oldest record, *The Campbell Canntaireachd*, calls it "MacGrigor's Gathering," and for that reason it may be a MacGregor tune, and also because most of the other names, Castle Menzies, Menzie of that Ilk, Piobaireachd Uaimh, Fraser's Lament and Fraser's Salute could be links with the Clann an Sgeulaiche. More than one of that family were pipers to Menzies at Weem, and Ewen MacGregor, Simon Lord Lovat's piper, and by repute a great player, was also a member of it.

A well-known slow air, MacGregor of Ruaro, to which a song of that name is sung, can be included in the Clan Pipe Music. It is sometimes called MacGregor's Lament, and appears to be ancient.

ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL OF KILBERRY

Clan Gregor Names

(From *Clans, Septs, and Regiments of the Scottish Highlands*, By Frank Adam. Seventh Edition, revised by Sir Thomas Innes of Learney, Lord Lyon King of Arms.)

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Black | Grierson | Maccrouther | MacNie |
| Caird | Grigor | Macgrewar | MacNish |
| Comrie | Gruer | Macgrowther | MacPeter |
| Dochart | King | Macgruder | MacPetrie |
| Fletcher | Leckie | Macgruther | Malloch |
| Gregor | Lecky | Macilduy | Neish |
| Gregonson | MacAdam | MacLeister | Nish |
| Gregory | Macara | MacLiver | Peter |
| Greig | Macaree | MacNee | White |
| Grewar | MacChoiter | MacNeish | Whyte |
| Grier | MacConachie | | |

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